

Harvard Professor Michael J. Sandel's Lecture (August 19th at AIPS)

Opening Address

Dr. Chung: Professor Sandel is not only one of the finest political philosophers of our times, but also one of the greatest teachers who has revived the lost art of teaching. He has the rare gift of inspiring young people and leading people to debate the most intractable, often uncomfortable and controversial issues in a spirited but always rational and civil manner. I hope I am correct. As I have done by watching videos of his famous lectures, you can see how effective his Socratic method is. Because of Professor Sandel, people are now rediscovering the joy and art of public debate and the sense of the community. I am happy that today we will have a chance to experience firsthand Professor Sandel's justly famous lecture. As a politician like my colleagues here, I am usually confronted with the question, "what is the right thing to do?" Politicians have to make practical policy decisions that can impact the lives of many people. In a society such as Korea, which is undergoing rapid changes, the criteria by which we make life changing decisions seem to be in a flux as well. When we are able to find the criteria, they often conflict with one another. I think the reason why Professor Sandel's book has become such a bestseller in Korea is not only because he shows us a way to think through difficult issues but also discover what the underlying principles are for many of the moral and political positions that we make. We are extremely happy that The Asan Institute for Policy Studies is able to invite Professor Sandel. It is with great expectations that we look forward to lecture today. This morning I met with Professor Sandel briefly and I was very glad to learn that your first name initials, MJ, are same as mine. For your information, I want to tell you that actually there are many MJ's in the world. Recently in South Africa during the World Cup tournament, I met with the one of the most famous MJ's, Mick Jagger. My wife ran to take picture of him. We also know Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, and finally we are very glad to find the very intellectual philosopher, MJ Sandel. Thank you very much.

Lecture

Sandel: Thank you very much for that very warm welcome, Dr. Chung and Director Hahm. Dr. Chung and I are now on a first name basis, MJ. We call each other MJ. I was very happy to come to Korea and find that I shared initials with someone more elevated, more dignified than Michael Jackson. I learned little bit already about the ideals that led Dr. Chung to found The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, which honors his father and the village from which his father came. And I find it a remarkable story and it says something very powerful about the connection between the past and the future, which I have already begun to understand, the spirit in which the Asan Institute was launched. So it is a special honor and privilege for me to be invited here to join you in discussion. I have almost no idea, no way of explaining really, the warm and generous reception of my book. My reaction is to be grateful, humble, and very surprised. I had no idea that a book about philosophy would find readers in the way that it has. I have a hunch and it's only a speculation that there is in many of our countries, in many democracies around the world, a widespread frustration with politics as it is. In a sense for the past few decades, in many ways our societies have been successful economically, increasing affluence even despite the recent financial crisis. Yet there is a frustration with politics in many democratic societies. Certainly in the one in which I come from, the United States. I think the frustration has to do with the fundamental fact about the contemporary democratic life, which is that economics for all its success has crowded out politics. When I say economics has crowded out politics, of course, we have politics and political bickering, wrangling, disagreement, often very bitter and partisan. What I mean is that economics has crowded out politics in a larger, more elevated sense of deliberation among citizens about the common good. I think there is a great hunger, a yearning among citizens generally, in my country and perhaps also in Korea. You are better judges of that than I. A great hunger for a politics of larger meaning, for a way of conducting our disagreements that reaches questions that people care about, including even moral and spiritual questions. So the question I would like to address tonight is what a new politics of the common good might look like and what it would be about. I would like to suggest that a new politics of the common good would consist of a public discussion, public debate about two questions. Two fundamental questions about values. The first is the meaning a fair society. Just a few days ago President Lee in his Independence Day address spoke about the idea of a fair society. As an outsider I am not sure what he meant by it. All of

you will know better than I what he meant by it. Perhaps it can be the beginning of a public discussion about the meaning of a fair society. So that's the one topic. What is a fair society? Are there competing conceptions of what makes a society fair? Then there is a second subject of debate that needs attention these days in our politics that is related to the question of a fair society, but it's a separate question and that's the question of what makes for a good society? Now we haven't had much debate recently in democratic societies about the second question, we do have some debate about the first. What is the difference between a fair society and a good society? The difference I have in mind is this. A fair society is how a political community distributes goods. By goods I mean income, wealth, opportunities, powers, honors, and offices. A fair society is about distributing goods. How should goods be distributed? According to what principles? When we argue about the meaning of a good society, we are arguing not only about distributing goods, we are asking, how should we value goods? Debates about the good society are the debates about the proper evaluation, the proper way to value goods. Now there may be some connection between our debates about how we should distribute goods and how we should value goods. But these are two broader questions. And in societies like ours - democratic, capitalist societies, broadly speaking - there is one answer, one possible answer to both of these questions that appeals to markets and the role of the market. So one way of framing a debate about the meaning of a fair society and a good society is to ask, what should be the role of markets in achieving a fair society? And what should be the role of markets in achieving a good society? The first question about what makes for a fair society is more familiar in contemporary political debate and most of the arguments we have in democratic societies about a fair society revolve around two different answers to the question. Some say a fair society is a society governed by the free market and the right way to distribute goods, the right way to distribute income, wealth, and opportunity is through the use of the market.

So one answer points to the free market and political parties in countries around the world, many of them devoted to the idea of distributing goods according to the free market. And then there are others in a familiar argument in contemporary politics, who say that a fair society has a welfare state that limits and, to some degree, regulates the operation of welfare markets to provide a social safety net for those who fall behind. We are familiar with the debate between advocates of the free market and advocates of the welfare state. In philosophical terms, it's a debate between libertarians, defenders of the free market, and egalitarians, defenders of the

welfare state. Now you might say that the way we choose between these two approaches, the way the debate should go about the fair society is to ask which system, which philosophy will maximize GDP, which will create more affluence and prosperity? Defenders of the free market say that market incentives will produce greater output and defenders of the welfare state say unless you provide a social safety net for those who fall behind or for those who lose their jobs, then there will be no social cohesion and the entire system will unravel. But I think that a line behind both answers, both positions, both views about a fair society - the free market view and the social welfare view - is a deeper question of moral philosophy, a question of principle. That question of principle has to do with what should govern success and failure. To what extent is success in a market society the result of our own efforts and to what extent is success determined by luck, by factors beyond our control. That's the underlining question of moral philosophy that is at stake in the debate between libertarian and egalitarian views. One libertarian philosopher, defender of the free market, gives an example of a great basketball player whom many people want to see. We can use an example of Michael Jordan. We can call him MJ for short. A lot of people want to see Michael Jordan play basketball. They are willing to pay for the tickets to see him play. He commands a great income, 31 million dollars in his last year with the Chicago Bulls. From the stand point of the libertarian or free market idea, to tax Michael Jordan's earnings would be unjust because it would be forcing him, it would be coercing him to contribute to the welfare of other people against his will. That's the pure libertarian objection to taxing Michael Jordan or anyone who succeeds in market societies - taxing them to help those at the bottom. It's the argument of principle. And it is an argument of principle that depends heavily on the idea that Michael Jordan's success in making 31 million dollars is something that he morally deserves because it is the product of his own effort, he worked hard, he practiced in order to become the great basketball player that he is.

What is the egalitarian reply to this argument of principle by the libertarian? One line of reply says that Michael Jordan may have practiced a lot and devoted a lot of effort, but take some other basketball players, not particularly good basketball players who tried even harder, who practiced even longer hours, who devoted even more effort, who perspired even more than Michael Jordan in training but whom people don't want to see. He's just not that good. Even the defender of the libertarian view would not say that the basketball player deserves to make more than Michael Jordan because of effort. There is a further objection to the idea that success is

the product of effort and, therefore, gives rise to moral desert. That's the idea that not only effort determines success in our society, but also luck, the accident of birth. Michael Jordan may have practiced hard, but he has great gifts, great skills. Many of us are fortunate to have other skills, not his. Skills that happen to be prized and rewarded by the societies in which we live. But is it our doing, the egalitarian might argue, is it our doing that we happen to have an abundance the skills that our society happens to reward? Michael Jordan is lucky to live in a society that heaps enormously rewards on people who play basketball well. But is that his doing? Consider other accidents of birth. Consider the Rio Grande River. It runs along the border separating Texas from Mexico. I was born north of the Rio Grande River in the United States. Mexicans are born south of the Rio Grande River. My life prospects and opportunities, whatever I may have made of them are vastly different from theirs simply in virtue of the accident, the moral accident of my being born north of the Rio Grande and their being born south of it. Or consider the 38th Parallel. It's not our doing, is it? This would be the reply to the argument of effort and moral desert. Is it our doing? Is it our moral credit that we are born north of the Rio Grande River or the south of the 38th Parallel? Or is that an accident of birth that is morally arbitrary and, therefore, not our own doing, and, therefore, not the basis of moral desert? When I discuss this question with my students at Harvard, we discuss the question of who deserves to be admitted to Harvard. Many of the students argue that they morally deserve to be admitted to Harvard because they worked very hard, they studied very hard. No doubt they did. An argument about effort and moral desert. But what about moral accident? Moral contingency beyond our own doing? Psychologists tell us that birth order where in the family you are born, makes a big difference in effort striving, and determination. I don't know if it's true. But they claim that first-born children, maybe because their parents have very demanding expectations, psychologists say that first-born children are strivers. They work very hard. And so I ask the students in my class at Harvard. I take a survey. I asked them how many of you here are first in birth order and about 80 percent of the hands go up. Birth order. Is it effort? Or is it luck? Moral accident, whether I was the first born in my family or the second, or the fourth, or the sixth. When they look around and see all of those hands go up, some of those who confidently defended the idea that they morally deserve their admission because they worked hard, there was a kind of gasp and then a questioning. So underlying the free market principle, the libertarian idea and the welfare state principle, the egalitarian idea, is a big moral question about the role of effort and the role of luck, and a broader question of who deserves what. How

should we go about debating the role of markets in achieving the good society? If by the good society, we mean deciding how to value important goods and social practices. On a purely free market view, there is a simple and straightforward answer to the question on how we should value goods. The answer is this. We should not try to achieve any collective view about how to value goods. We should simply let each person place whatever value on goods he or she wants and let the market determine the evaluation of goods.

But there is also a challenge to the market solution about valuing goods. And it's a challenge that says when markets value goods when we decide that certain things should be bought and sold, we are making a decision about how those things are properly valued. Let me give you an example. Take military service. It is a social practice that embodies certain goods. How should military service be valued, should it be bought and sold in the labor market or should it be valued in some other way? In the United States, the first draft law was enacted by Abraham Lincoln during the U.S. Civil War. It provided for conscription. They needed soldiers to fight the Civil War but it had an unusual feature. If you are drafted, but didn't want to fight in the Civil War, you could hire a substitute to take your place. People put ads and newspapers, offering a certain amount of money, 500 dollars up to 1,500 dollars, which was a lot back then in 1861 and 1863. Hiring a substitute to take their place. Andrew Carnegie, the great industrialist, was drafted and hired a substitute to take his place. Now if you are a believer in the pure free market, there is something attractive about that idea because there is a voluntary exchange and the person, Andrew Carnegie, didn't want to fight. It was worth it to him to hire someone else, the person who took his place considered it a job for a pay that was worth it to him. A voluntary exchange, both parties seemingly are better off. So, according to market logic, the proper way of valuing military service is to allow it to be bought and sold for money and yet there seems something morally questionable about this system. When I put this question to my students, I ask whether they consider it a fair system or not. And the vast majority say no. It's not fair. Then I ask them why. And their answers, for the most part, are that it's not fair because the affluent should not be able to hire their less advantaged fellow citizens to risk their lives in fighting wars. Then, I ask the students how many favor the current U.S. system of an all-volunteer Army. We don't have conscription now. It's an all-volunteer Army. The word volunteer is a little bit misleading. People volunteer only in the sense that everyone in the labor market volunteers. It's a job for pay, it's a paid army. Almost everyone in the class raises his or

her hand, saying yes they favor the all-volunteer Army. But then I put to them the obvious question. Almost all of them object to the Civil War system of hiring someone to take your place. Why does the same principle not lead them to object to the current system of a labor market to allocate military service? The effect they worried about is the same. The affluent essentially buy their way out of military service. And those who fight are disproportionately drawn from the lower, middle class. So if the Civil War system is unjust, can it be argued that the all-volunteer Army used by most countries, though not Korea, is just? What exactly is the objection, if there is one? What's the principal objection to allowing the affluent to buy their way out? One objection would be an argument about fairness. It's not fair if those with few life alternatives have to take a job that involves the risks of life, risk of losing their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan. But suppose for the sake of the argument, we were imagining an all-volunteer Army in a society where there was not a big gap between the rich and the poor. The fairness argument would disappear. Would there still be an objection? Maybe so, what would it be? You might object to allocating military service by the labor market on different grounds. On the grounds that military service is a civic duty or a civic obligation that all citizens should be equally liable to perform, an expression of citizenship. For example, we don't like people buying and selling votes. Why not? According to economic reasoning, if you think about it, there ought to be a free market in votes. Some people care a lot about the outcome of elections. Other people don't. Some people stay at home, they don't even use their votes so why shouldn't they be free if they want to sell their votes to someone who cares more than they do about the outcome? But we don't have markets in votes because we think of voting as a civic duty or a civic obligation rather than a commodity, something we own.

But if the vote is a civic duty, is military service more like a vote, more like voting? Or is it more like just another job? To decide that question, we have to have a public debate about how to value the good, in this case, of military service. What is its connection to citizenship and civic duty? Is it more like a job or a civic responsibility? In some American cities, there is great frustration with poor academic performance by poor kids in bad neighborhoods. And so they have launched an experiment in some cities to pay children for scoring high grades on standardized tests, to motivate them. In Dallas, there is a program to pay young children 2 dollars for each book they read. It's the use of the market mechanism, market incentive to try to improve education, to motivate the kids. Now what do you think about paying kids to read

books? From the standpoint of market reasoning, you might say the goal is to increase reading among kids, money is an incentive and while some children may read books because they love reading, others may only read books if you pay them. So aren't two incentives better than one? Well, maybe. But, maybe not. What's the worry? The worry is that if you pay kids to read books, they will get in the habit of reading for the sake of making money and that market value may crowd out for them the intrinsic value of reading for the love of learning. So it's possible, this is our worry and so far as we worry about that plan, I think it has to do with the idea that markets don't only allocate goods and provide incentives, they imply certain ways of valuing goods. Markets are not neutral instruments for allocating goods. Markets convey, they express and they promote certain norms, certain ways of valuing goods. And insofar as we worry or hesitate to pay kids to read books, it's because we sense intuitively that the market norm might crowd out the intrinsic norm, the love of learning. So in order to decide whether it's a good idea to pay children to read books, we have to decide and debate a question about how to value, how properly to value the good of learning and of reading. And we have to figure out whether this is the case where marketizing the good crowds out non-market norms, non-market values, reading for the love of it. Sometimes this happens. We know it happens because economists who have done some experiments shows that market norms can crowd out non-market values.

There were some daycare centers in Israel where economists did an experiment of this kind. Some of you may be heard about this. Is this familiar? The daycare centers for young children had a familiar problem. Parents often came late to pick up their children at the end of the day. And so, teachers would have to stay past the ending time in order to look after the children. So with the help of some economists, they did an experiment. They said that any parent who comes late will have to pay a fine. What do you suppose happened when they instituted the fine for late pick-ups? What do you think happened? The late pick-ups increased. Now according to market reasoning, this is a puzzling result. If you provide a monetary incentive on top of the already existing norm, you would think two incentives should work better than one and more parents would come on time. So how do you explain that late pick-ups increased once there was a fine? Well, here is a case where a monetary payment put a price on a late pick-up and you no longer felt guilty when you came late to pick up your child. You felt that you were paying for a service. So here is the case where marketizing a practice actually increased the incidents of the late pick-ups rather than decreased it because the norm of showing up on

time out of respect for the teachers was replaced by a market norm. You are paying for a service. You are paying the teachers to stay late. Why feel guilty?

In order to decide how to value showing up on time to collect your children at the end of the day at the daycare center, now you might say, well, they are paying for a service why not use the market? We have to decide how to value the good of showing up on time, in this case, to pick up one's child.

A final example. A sociologist, some years ago, Richard Titmuss, a British sociologist, did a study about blood donation, comparing Britain and the United States. In the United States, blood for transfusion, blood donors can be paid to increase the incentive to give blood. In Britain, there is no payment for blood. It's only voluntary. And according to the famous study by the sociologist, the British system, which bans payment, actually produced a greater supply and a better quality of blood than the U.S. system, which provided a financial incentive. Here is another case where the market norm commodifying the good crowded out a sense of altruism of donating blood like the reading of books. Now you might say that we still need to ask in any given case whether market incentives will increase the good that we care about. We have to weigh that against the effect on norms, fair enough. But what I am suggesting is that in order to decide what moral norms or what goods should govern social practices, whether education or military service or healthcare or the provision of blood or daycare centers, we have to have a public discussion, case by case, about what are the goods at stake, how are those goods properly valued, and to what extent the market norms corrode those values? We have to decide how to value goods. So, what I am suggesting is that if we are going to elevate our political debate and if we are going to reconnect it with large questions about justice, ethics, and the meaning of the common good, the shape of that debate might take could be along these two lines. A debate about the meaning of a fair society, what is the fair way of distributing goods and what is the role of markets in distributing goods? And the second parallel debate about what is a good society? And how should we value the central goods and social practices of our common life: health, education, welfare, citizenship, military service, environmental protection, and the like. And what role should markets play in allocating goods and where should markets not extend their reach insofar as they erode important social norms? There are two reasons, two possible objections to the way of arguing about politics and about values that I have suggested. One of them points to the fact that we disagree in modern societies about moral

and spiritual questions. And, if as I'm suggesting the way to elevate our public discourse is to debate the meaning of the fair society and of the good society, and if that debate requires us to enter into morally controversial questions about the right way to value goods, that's a recipe for hopeless disagreement. This is the objection. It's a recipe for disagreement at best, and maybe coercion and intolerance at worst. And how can we deal with the fact that in pluralist societies like ours, we have deep disagreements on moral and spiritual questions, isn't it better to keep those questions out of politics? My answer to that objection is I see the force of the argument. We do disagree about moral and spiritual questions. But the attempt to empty politics of moral and spiritual argument does not make for a politics that respects people's differences. It makes for a politics that ignores and suppresses those differences. People know when their moral convictions are being listened to, whether or not they prevail, and they know when they are being shunted aside. And I think a lot of what we see in contemporary politics is a kind of emptiness at the heart of the politics for fear of entering into controversial moral questions. I think that a better, richer mode of respect is not to ignore the moral and spiritual convictions that citizens of pluralist societies bring to public life. I think a better mode of respect is a politics that engages directly with those moral disagreements. Not because it will lead us all to agree, but because it makes for a healthier, more robust democratic life.

The last objection to the politics of the common good, the morally robust public discourse that I am arguing for comes from an economist. A distinguished economist named Kenneth Arrow wrote a skeptical book review about blood donation that I referred to a moment ago. Arrow wrote the following. He said, "like many economists, I do not want to rely too heavily on substituting ethics for self-interest. I think it is best," he wrote, "that the requirement of ethical behavior be confined to those circumstances where the price system can't work. We do not wish to use up recklessly the scarce resources of altruistic motivation." This was the economist Kenneth Arrow and it is an idea that is familiar among economists. Only rely on values, on ethics, on altruism when you have no other choice, otherwise you will use it up. It's a scarce resource. Economists look at the world that way. They look at values as scarce resources. I think that's a mistake but it's an influential mistake. The idea that ethics, altruism, and fellow feeling, the idea that these are scarce resources whose supply is fixed once and for all, and diminished with use, this seems to me, if you think about it, an absurd idea, even though it's an influential

idea. I think it's more plausible to think that the virtues of democratic life - community, solidarity, trust, civic friendship - these values are not like commodities which are diminished with use. They are more like muscles which develop and grow stronger with exercise. I suppose what I am suggesting is that rather than trying to avoid or to conserve the scarce resources of community, altruism, fellow feeling, and civic friendship, we should exercise them more strenuously. What I am suggesting today is that our public life would go better if we conduct it in a way that demand it more rather than less from one another as citizens. Thank you very much.

Q&A Session

Question 1: Thank you very much, Professor Michael Sandel. My name is Choi Byong-il, an economist and professor like someone you mentioned in your lecture who appreciates the allocation of scarce resource. I have a question related to the relationship between a fair society and a good society, especially on the example of what is going on in the U.S., which tends to encourage so-called high-risk society in terms of financial compensations to CEO's and executives. In the U.S., the finest young minds tend to go to business school and they brag about earning such a tremendous amount of money early in their careers. And in that society, the high-risk is really two-way. If they are successful, they are going to claim all the credit, but in case something is not going well, fallouts are going to be recovered by citizens. So, it looks to me it is neither a fair society nor a good society. And in that regard, how is your moral philosophy related to this discussion and what is happening in the U.S. in that discourse? Thank you very much.

Sandel: I think the compensation of Wall Street Bankers and hedge fund managers in the United States is very hard to defend either from the stand point of a fair society or a good society. It's very difficult to argue that the contribution to the common good made by those who spend their days, not producing things but manipulating financial instruments; it's very hard to argue that contribution to the common good deserves the disproportionate pay that

currently goes to people in those professions. After the financial crash, some CEO's of Wall Street firms were called to testify for Congress and they were asked what should they have done to prevent it – essentially the bankruptcy of their firms. And some of them said that they thought long and hard about the subject and they decided that given what they knew, they had done everything possible and that they were victims of forces beyond their control. They called it a "Financial Tsunami." They may have been right about that they were victims of a financial tsunami. But if that's right, it carries far-reaching implications. Because if it's true, the success of the stock market or their financial firms was largely the result of economic forces beyond their control. That might lessen their culpability when things go bad. But it would also call into the question their claims to huge bonuses and payments when the economy was flourishing and when the financial industry was flourishing in the 90s and early 2000s. So, if the financial tsunami was responsible for their bad years, what about when the sun was shining, when the weather was good? And when the stock market was going up? Then, they reaped the rewards and claimed that the rewards were the results of their own efforts. When things were bad, it was the financial tsunami over which they had no control. They can't have it both ways. So my hope is that the admission they made in trying to explain why things were bad will lead to a broader debate about compensation practices in the financial industry even when times are good again. Whether it will have that effect, whether it will have that debate, I am not so sure, but I hope so.

Question 2: Hello, I am Hwang Kyung-Sig teaching philosophy at Seoul National University. I was very impressed with the arguments you presented at your last lecture to our philosophical group three or four years ago. You seem to prefer communitarian ideas to liberal individualism. Korean society has traditionally been under Confucianism with emphasis on communitarianism which offers both advantages and disadvantages. Now Korean society is suffering from the downsides of communitarian ideas both socially and politically. Korea is shifting away from traditional values to Western individualism to ensure protection of freedom and rights of individuals. So what messages can your communitarian view deliver to Korean society and can your view co-exist with individualistic values? Thank you.

Sandel: Well, first I would like to thank Professor Hwang not only for his question, but he's a friend and colleague within the philosophical community, so it's a great privilege to be with you again and thank you for the question. It's a question that is familiar to me, I remember you asked it every time I spoke when you were kind enough to host me. So I can only assume that my answers were not good enough then, so I will have to try to do better now. It is true that I've been called a communitarian. And it's also true that the term has different meanings in different contexts and in different societies. In some ways, I am uncomfortable with the label, communitarian, because in many places to be a communitarian is to accept uncritically the weight and the burden of tradition that may be oppressive or hierarchical or authoritarian. And I am not in favor of the uncritical acceptance of tradition or authority or hierarchy. So to that extent, I renounce the label of communitarian. But there is another meaning of that term, which I suppose does apply to the arguments that I have made in political philosophy. I have been critical of what I see as the excesses of individualism in the Anglo-American world. And especially to the excesses of individualism associated with a certain version of a purely laissez-faire market capitalism, I have been critical of that kind of individualism. And I have argued against those visions of politics and of political discourse that argues that we should be neutral toward competing conceptions of the good life. I have argued against the idea that politics can or should be neutral which connects with some of what I was saying today when I was trying to suggest that contemporary politics is impoverished in so far as it fails to address moral questions and questions of the good life. And in addressing those questions about the good life, I have argued that we need to take account of the claims of the community and of the common good. In this respect, I have been leaning against individualistic tendencies of my own tradition in the Anglo-American world. So, that's the way in which I do and don't accept the communitarian label and I will add this to in reply to my friend Professor Hwang. Though you have emphasized, in the Korean context, liberal individualism and I, in the American context, have emphasized the importance of community and tradition and moral obligations, in certain ways, we are both leaning against what we see as dominant tendencies of our own societies and cultures. So while liberal individualism may be an important corrective to an excessive emphasis on authority, tradition, and community, my emphasis on the politics of the common good, of a morally engaged politics, and claims of civic virtue, are attempts to respond to what I see as the excesses of market-driven individualism in my own society. So, in that respect, we

are both leaning against perhaps the dominant tendencies of our own societies and that I think we have in common. Fair enough? Okay.

Question 3: Hi, thank for an impressive lecture. I am Yoon-Sun Cho, the member of the National Assembly, the Grand National Party. As a spokesperson, I worked with our MJ and he was a representative of our party. And I fully agreed that politics should invite the moral, political, public discussion and as a member of the National Assembly, I would like to ask you a very practical question. How do you think and what do you think is the best methodological suggestion as an institution or as individuals to invite such political, moral questions in politics in actual decision-making procedures?

Sandel: It's a great question and a difficult question. I think we have to start in three or four places at once. Part of the responsibility for the shape of public discourse lies with leading political figures, candidates for office, and political parties. Because in democratic societies, the debate between political parties largely defines the terms of political discourse. So part of the responsibility lies with public officials and political parties. But there has to be receptivity for you to be able to engage in more robust moral discourse in politics. The public has to be open and ready and receptive to it. And so a part of the responsibility lies with you and the political parties. Another part of the responsibility lies with the media which often provides incentives for you to fight with one another and take very hard, clear stance and to speak very briefly. Am I right about that? So part of the responsibility lies with a different kind of media coverage that not only permits but demands a richer kind of public discourse. So the way politics is covered on televisions and newspapers and the press would have to be part of the change. The third necessary element would be the educational system, including especially higher education, which I think has to take more responsibility for equipping students to be effective participants in these kinds of public debate. That means it has to equip students to be able to think and reflect and argue and debate about large principles, politics, and ethics as they enter into politics; because if colleges and universities aren't equipping students for this kind of civic education, it is very difficult to acquire those skills later in life if they had not been cultivated earlier. So, the educational system would be the third aspect. I think that those three are the

prime: the parties, the politicians, the media, and the educational system. And beyond that, we have to try to change the public. I think that the institutions of the civil society can contribute to that, to making the public more actively engaged and more demanding of these kinds of better, more elevated kinds of political discourse. So, it's not easy but that's where I would begin. Does that sound right to you? Thank you.

Question 4: Professor, thank you for your brilliant lecture. I am Chua Thai Keong, I happen to be the Ambassador of Singapore. I have a question similar to what the member of the National Assembly asked you about. I think she was diplomatic, let me ask you more directly. Your thesis, if I understand you correctly, is that we should have more public debate, to get people to value goods and also to discuss the question of how should goods be distributed, the more debate there is the better, broadly speaking. I can understand why such a view would be popular because it would give all sorts of groups, even radicals, philosophical basis for injecting themselves into politic debates. But the problem, Professor, I think you have acknowledged honestly, is that after all the debate, what happens if there is no agreement? And I find that your response to that seems to be boiled down to two points: that mutual respect is required and that it is part of a democratic society. Perhaps there wasn't enough time to expand on the objections you mentioned. I think it's a very serious objection because what happens if people cannot agree to disagree? What is going to stop people from engaging in fist fights in the parliament or protests in the streets, or even radical groups from carrying out terrorism? So, I think there is also a cost of encouraging the whole society to engage in the evaluation of goods and the distribution of the goods, not knowing when the debate will end. And if it does end, whether the parties will go away, still being happy or living in harmony or not. People are emotional and at times irrational, and some people object just for the sake of objecting, especially in politics. So I will go away with these questions and would like to invite you to respond to these.

Sandel: Well, I think that you are right that there is a risk to the kind of politics that I am suggesting. And it struck me when you describe the risks of engaging in a debate we don't know where it will end. In some ways, not knowing where the debate will end is something to

fear, but I think it is the definition of the democracy. And it's fair enough to ask what if in the end we disagree. I acknowledge that when we argue about moral questions, it's not likely that we are going to agree. What if we disagree? Well, how do we decide? In democratic societies we decide democratically. And sometimes democracies get it wrong, so what's important for democratic societies is that no decision at any given moment be regarded as fixed and final once and for all. That any decision be regarded as provisional, and may be wrong, and open to re-arguments. That's what elections are all about. In my country, in 1787, there was a big moral question about which there was disagreement. That moral question was slavery. They managed to agree to disagree and created the Constitution which allowed slavery to persist. Now the defenders of slavery hoped that answered and settled the question once and for all. But for decades after the Constitution was agreed to, disagreement persisted. And sometimes there were radical, unruly protestors against that settlement. They were called the Abolitionists who thought slavery was morally wrong. Some of them were religiously inspired. There were evangelical Christians who considered slavery as sin. Others simply thought slavery was wrong like Abraham Lincoln. So, there were protests, there were acts of civil disobedience, there was unruly politics. And in the end, the question was only resolved by the Civil War. And the Constitution was changed. We had a new settlement while continuing the debates about race. So I think it's certainly true that to engage in debate about big moral questions carries certain risks. The question is: what's the alternative? The alternative, I think, is basically to give up on democracy. And there could be an argument for that and people should offer that argument. You mentioned the risk of terrorists and fundamentalists. I think that one of the features of contemporary politics that invites fundamentalist and intolerant views is a tendency to empty politics of moral meaning because that creates a moral void that is filled often by the narrowest, the most intolerant, fundamentalist voices. In the United States when Christian fundamentalists gained influence in recent decades, it was because the way had been left open by politics that was largely managerial, technocratic, seemingly neutral. But no democratic society, I would say, can for long live with a purely managerial politics that does not address big moral questions. So, if there were politics that were without risks, if there were politics where we always did know where the debate would end, I am not so sure it would be a safer politics. But I am pretty confident it would not be democratic politics. That would be my answer.

Question 5: Thank for your insightful lecture. I am Han Yong-Sup teaching at the Korea National Defense University. I would like to raise questions about good government by extending the subject to governance and government. I observed that the development-oriented governments tend to employ economics-background bureaucrats in the foreign, unification, and defense ministries where creating visions, community and security-building are important. But as economists extend to those ministries, I am very worried about the phenomenon that you mentioned: economics crowding out politicians. Economists are crowding out people with vision and deep knowledge about their communities as well as foreign and defense policy experts. So how can we address these phenomena that will result in the void of philosophy and policy values in government areas?

Sandel: So, the problem of the economists put in the ministries where broader political visions are required is the question and the concern. I should say, first of all, that some of my best friends are economists. But I think economists should know their place and I think there is a problem for governance if the economists' view of the world becomes the only view to inform the government. So I think I agree with the premise of your question. It is interesting, if you look at governments around the world today, there are far more economists in government than there are philosophers. Why is that? Maybe it's because we care a great deal about getting economies to work right. Although it reminds me when there was a debate in the United States after the Financial Crises about whether the banks should be nationalized, the Big Banks that were requiring huge subsidies from taxpayers. And one economist in the Obama administration, who shall remain nameless, a former colleague of mine, said, well, government officials are not very good at running banks, which I thought was more than a little ironic because I thought we've just learned that bank managers are not very good at running banks, either. Plato argued for the philosopher king. He thought a philosopher should govern and maybe we should reconsider the wisdom of Plato's views about governance, but I think that it isn't just a matter of location and of training and of available talent. I think that what really accounts for the predominance of economists in the government has to do with the extent to which contemporary politics in the government is about economics. And that's what I think we need to question. Economics is hugely important, promoting GDP is very important, but it's not the only point of politics. Aristotle said back in the fourth century B.C. that a real point of politics is not to ease exchange and commerce, or even providing security. It is to enable citizens to

deliberate about the good life. And until we recover that broader vision of politics, I think that we are not going to be able to populate government ministries with fewer economists.

Question 6: Hi, I am Kim Ahyoung, a reporter from SBS. I think that your book has been very successful because it was based on your knowledgeable lectures. As a professor, what does it mean for you to teach and why is teaching so important?

Sandel: I don't want them to sleep. You know, I can tell when they fall asleep, even though there are thousands of them there. This is an indirect answer to your question. But, I've learned through experience that an important part of teaching and lecturing is listening. And I used to think coughing is an involuntary physical reflex when you had a cold. But what I noticed is that if I am lecturing well, if students are engaged, nobody coughs. And there will be days when I hear a lot of coughing. And it isn't just because on those days more people have caught colds. It's because I've lost their attention. So people have ways of expressing whether they are engaged or whether they are distracted and bored. And I think that part of good teaching is listening as well as speaking. Why is it important to give good lectures? Well, part of the answer is it isn't. I cheat. And that I don't just lecture, I engage them in discussion. I put questions to them and I invite their response and that promotes a kind of active engagement than learning that will be difficult, I think, for me to achieve just by talking at them. So I suppose that that also involves a kind of listening, a kind of exchange. In a way, I think, all teaching at its essence is a one-on-one tutorial and engagement, a relationship between teachers and students. And when it happens to be a lot of students, still the idea of a dialogue of engaging and of seeing the eyes of students or seeing if they are actually looking at their email or football scores, that's a big part of teaching. And so I think teaching really is about establishing a kind of connection, commanding attention for a time and then doing the best one can to turn that attention into something that matters. Thank you all.

Question 7: Thank you very much for this wonderful lecture, wonderful talks. I am now a politician, a member of the National Assembly. I used to be an economist, a born-again politician from an economist. So, well, first of all, I liked your wonderful talk. I realize that I

agree with you more than I thought. With regards to what you mentioned on Kenneth Arrow's book review, I agree with him. You said that these resources could increase as we use them more. Even if that's true, wouldn't it be also true that in some parts that moral talks could be set aside and the economic view can prevail like in the banking sector. In the sector, I think still government bureaucrats could be less effective than these bankers. That failure happened due to the system. On this point, we might have to agree to disagree. I think in these respects, Ken Arrow's market principles should prevail.

Sandel: I am not sure we need to even reach whatever disagreement we might have about whether market principle should prevail because in the case we were discussing about the banking industry, there was no question of market principles. There were massive, tax-funded bailouts. That's nothing to do with market principles. That's the taxpayers simply bailing out failed banks. So, the context of that discussion has nothing whatsoever to do with market principles and it has to do with radical departure from market principles, namely taxpayers' bailout. And the question there was in exchange for billions of dollars in taxpayers' funds to bail out banks, what form of accountability should there be to the taxpayers by the banks that are reaping a huge non-market windfall. For example, should there have been taxpayers' representatives or public representatives on the boards of the banks since they were essentially being bailed out not by private funds, not by market mechanisms, but by taxpayers. So that was the question.

Dr.Chung: If I understand his question correctly, his question is that there was no proof that the government remedial action is better than the problem itself. Sometimes we see many cases where proposals for solutions are worse than the problem. So, the question is whether market failure, financial disaster can be rectified by the government intervention. Many people worry that the government failure can be more disastrous than market failure.

Sandel: Yes, well, I think that the answer to that question is a practical question, not a philosophical one and it depends and answers may vary case by case. I suppose in the case of the Financial Crisis, if you did not want the government solution, then, that would be an

argument against any taxpayer bailouts and some argue for this. Some argued that the proper handling of the problems with the banks and the financial institutions would be to let them fail and to let the shareholders' value go down to zero. The bondholders would become the shareholders, as happens in the normal bankruptcy according to the market, and then to carry on from there without any government intervention. Some argue that that would have been a better course than bailouts and whether that would have worked better, I don't know. That's a practical judgment that would have worked better. There was one political consequence of doing the bailout, but without very much public accountability and that was an enormous and continuing public resentment because of a deep sense that this was unfair, unjust. That public anger persists to this day and it's changed the face of American politics. The whole tea party movement that you read about – protest movements – focused on the health-care policy of Obama, but what really fueled the anger in the first place was the anger at the bailout. And so, in many ways, just as September 11th created unpredictable transformations of domestic politics, so I think the long-term effects of the bailouts on popular opinion and anger that it created is something that we have not seen. So, the practical questions about how best to work out a financial crisis or some other challenge that the market faces is whether the government should enter. But beyond practical considerations, there is also the broader question of what will work to get the financial system stabilized. There are broader political questions that have to be taken account of: the sense that people have that this is unfair, that this is violating the rules of capitalism that success is rewarded and failure is failure. So in a way, this was the violation of the capitalist system that created a deep sense of grievance and anger that I think continues to shape and re-shape the American political landscape.