

# East Asia as a Discovery

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## East Asia as a Discovery

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As its name suggests, the Northeast Asian History Foundation was established for the purpose of academic research and policy formulation in connection with the need to settle and overcome problems experienced by countries in the region concerning territorial boundaries and regional history, as such matters are regarded as serious obstacles to the peace and development of the region. In this respect, the foundation's publication of an English-language edition of this book, which presents a number of questions about the identity of East Asia and discusses the significance of the region from various perspectives, may be regarded as an event of some significance.

We chose *East Asia as a Discovery* instead of *The Discovery of East Asia* as the title of the book, as the latter could have led to the misconception that the identity of East Asia is something that has long been firmly fixed. In reality, the identity of East Asia has developed amid a process of constant change, in which the spread of cultures and the interaction of acculturation between countries have had a profound influence on the region, rather than developing as something fixed. We also feel that its formation should be viewed from an open perspective, as that process of transformation has been affected by multi-faceted and multi-tiered factors.

East Asia has not freed itself completely from a number of historical conflicts, as evidenced by the continuing schism between the two Koreas and the frequent disputes relating to the past history that begot imperialism, although it is generally said that the region fell under the influence of imperialism in the mid-19th century and only really began to extricate itself from that yoke in the mid-20th century. Such a fact makes it clear that

the history of East Asia is not independent of world history and rather the last conflict of world history. In this sense, this book does not overlook its connection with world history, although the main object of its focus is of course East Asia.

The articles in this book are framed as discourses that ask what East Asia ultimately means from various perspectives and then seek to answer that question. We experienced many difficulties in our effort to have them translated and published, as the articles were written in different languages, and many of the terms adopted by the writers differ in meaning. It is our sincere hope that this book will be widely read by people all around the world and that it will help them understand the true nature and identity of East Asia. We would like to thank both the writers for allowing us to translate their articles into English and all those who contributed to the translation and publication of the book.

September 2009

Chung Jaejeong

President

Northeast Asian History Foundation

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*Part 1*

# Presentation



동북아시아연구소 재단  
NORTHEAST ASIA LABORATORY FOUNDATION

SECTION 1

*Inquiring Again  
About East Asia*

동북아시아학  
연구회

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연구회

동북아시아학  
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# East Asia in Transition: From a Geopolitical View to a Geocultural View

Former Professor, Hallym University

Looking ahead to the twenty first century, East Asian intellectuals are also among those who feel that East Asian identity must be regarded as an issue. In the case of Europe, intellectuals are continuously problematizing European identity even as the European Community takes concrete shape.

According to a 1995 lecture entitled “France’s Intellectuals Since the Dreyfus Affair,”<sup>1</sup> given in Japan by Christophe Charle, a history professor at the University of Paris 1, an issue raised by the French intellectuals of today is the fight for separation of church and state and the pursuit of European ideas. The former specifically has to do with how generous one should be with regard to the use of the chador by Islamic women in French society, while the latter is related to shared European culture.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that these two issues could be regarded as the same, in that they deal with the problematization of the identity of a multicultural Europe in terms of facts. Even as each one carries its own traditions, culture and consequent identity, they problematize still another identity located above the universality of Europe’s tradition and culture. At the same time, they are presenting the question of how liberal one can be with regard to tradi-

<sup>1</sup> *Shiso* (Feb. 1997), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Shiso*, p. 54.

tions and cultures outside of Europe. Europe's unity and identity cannot be something closed off that excludes the outside world, nor can it be something running counter to the universality of humankind. Thus, France's intellectuals as well are essentially problematizing freedom and liberation as the most pressing modern tasks, along with their self-awareness between national and international concerns.

Such a reality facing France or Europe must serve as a large frame of reference today as we "inquire once again into East Asia" and ask about the East Asian identity. This is because, just as they seek to overcome "the conflicts and contradictions that had to be endured for so long among the different countries of Europe,"<sup>3</sup> we too feel that we must embrace and agonize over the same issue in East Asia. First, I would like to present my own perspective in viewing the history and reality of East Asia.

## 1. Historical Inquiry Today

The English historian Arnold Toynbee, in an opening passage entitled "My View of History,"<sup>4</sup> left some very modest words on his own view of history.<sup>5</sup>

My view of history is itself a tiny piece of history; and this mainly other people's history and not my own.

It seems that he had a strong distaste for making claims that one's own historical account represents the truth and acting as though there is history carrying universal values. He studied Greek and Roman history, but as he

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<sup>3</sup> *Shiso*, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West* (The World Publishing Company, 1958), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, p. 1.

experienced World War I in 1914 he had no choice but to seek to analyze modern history as well. It must be said that this is something a historian cannot avoid if he is to survive the modern day.

Thus, historians felt that, in the words of E. H. Carr, history must start from the present and return to the present.<sup>6</sup> Referring to the present and the past, Toynbee came to speak of the “philosophical contemporaneity”<sup>7</sup> of all civilizations. This means that compared with the Earth’s history of billions of years and the process of human development over hundreds of thousands of years, humans’ 5,000-year so-called “age of history” is nothing more than the contemporary era. When we speak of the “contemporary era,” we should be able to point out the repetition or parallelism of history there.

If we refer to Toynbee’s historical view in this way, it seems that it would be fair to say that we can see the repetition or parallelism we speak of between the history of the late twentieth century and that of the late nineteenth century. In this sense, it could be said that the expressions frequently used by our predecessors, such as “*ongo jishin*” (溫故知新—understand the new by reviewing the old), “*gowang jirae*” (告往知來—know the future by reporting the past), and “*gwanwang jirae*” (觀往知來—know the future by observing the past) are reasonable, and that it is actually an idea natural to us to seek to examine the past in order to judge the present.

It could be said that Toynbee’s historical view was formed through the historical experience he underwent in World War I, which broke out in 1914. There he saw “social disintegration,” and thus came to shift his attention to “the death of one civilization” and “the birth of another.”<sup>8</sup>

Then what is our historical question today? What kind of questions will

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<sup>6</sup> E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Penguin Books, 1990), p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, p. 24.

we ask about history as we stand upon the historical experience of Korea in the late twentieth century? Of course, that too is without a doubt a “tiny sliver” of history, to use Toynbee’s words, and the history of many other individuals, not my own.

In connection with this issue, I would like to express my agreement with the idea of Walter Benjamin. He viewed the “*moderne*” as “The Age of Hell,” and said, “The determination of the whole of the characteristics that show ‘the modern’ vividly is merely the depiction of this Hell.”<sup>9</sup> It could be said that this is a natural historical view for someone who was chased from place to place by the Nazis. This is really the understanding of history of a generation on the run. Thus, he quoted the following in his *Das Passagen-Werk* from an 1844 text of France’s Turgot, *Tableau philosophique des progrès successifs de l’esprit humain*.<sup>10</sup>

What kind of spectacle is the continuity that connects people’s opinions without interruption? I looked there for traces of the progression of the human spirit, but almost all that I saw was a history of human error.

In this view, I too would like to establish the premise that I am viewing the recent modern history of a Korea and East Asia fraught with error standing at the end of this century.

## 2. About the Modern History of East Asia

Here, when I speak of the modern history of East Asia, I am referring to the period from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, or more specifically, the period of approximately

<sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk* V, Japanese edition (Iwanami shoten), p. 199.

<sup>10</sup> *Das Passagen-Werk* IV, p. 50.

one century from the 1840-1842 Opium War to the end of World War II in 1945.

The so-called Seven Years' War ended in 1763 with a decisive victory by the British in a war between the armies of the British East India Company and the French East India Company. Thus, the British East India Company gained the right to assume control of the region of Bengal, and assumed a monopoly on opium in the region at the end of the eighteenth century. Here, British-engineered international capitalism came to land in East Asia.

The British imported tea and raw silk from China. However, because China was not willing to buy the mass quantities of wool or cotton fabrics produced by machine in the United Kingdom, the U.K. was fearful of a possible trade deficit. Thus, the British trade policy turned to exporting the opium of Bengal to China in a bid to create a surplus. If the opium exports increased, the Bengali peasants would come to possess at least some part of the financial means needed to buy British industrial goods. And with the profits earned in China, i.e., the silver coins they received there, the British would be able to pay for the costs of the raw cotton being brought in from the southern part of the U.S. In this way, trade took the form of a three-party deal involving U.K. India and China, or an expanded international trade order that also included the United States.

One might say that under these circumstances, the Opium War was inevitable. And the subsequent loss of the Qing Dynasty, as a result of this war, meant that the imperial system based on the Mandate of Heaven that had long existed within China was in a state of decisive collapse. The imperial system included a Chinese-barbarian ideology and relationships of tribute payment based in Chinese thinking. As this system collapsed, the self-sufficient feudal economy that had been sustained until then also collapsed, and China came to disintegrate into a semi-colony. This term “se-

mi-colony,” which Sun Yat-sen referred to as “secondary colony (次殖民地)” while speaking of nationalism in his lecture entitled “Three Principles of the People,” refers to a situation of literally nothing more than exploitation, a status inferior to that of a colony, without even minimal guarantees from the colonizing country.<sup>11</sup> Within this situation, an anti-feudal and anti-colonial struggle in China became inevitable.

The collapse of the imperial system in China soon came to mean the collapse of the order that had ruled over all of East Asia until that time. In his *Japan and Its World: Two Centuries of Change* (1976), Marius B. Jansen offered a very interesting explanation of this process of collapse occurring in Japan. He examined the second half of the eighteenth century and said that it was an important time when “ways of thinking that rejected the ideological model of Chinese scholarship began to appear.”<sup>12</sup> In a word, it was at that time that Japan began to de-sinify itself in earnest.

Jansen said that in Japan this de-sinification was accompanied by academic research tinged with very nationalistic tendencies, “emphasizing Japan’s distinctiveness and Japan’s essence,”<sup>13</sup> including the “national literature movement,” while the country at the same time came to accept “Western learning,” and, further, “the Western model” through Western texts obtained from Dutch traders.<sup>14</sup> It would be impossible to deny that the modernization of Japan was prompted by the fact that, through the process of de-sinification, Japanese nationalism came to the fore on one hand, and on the other the Japanese accepted modern Western civilization. These two elements became an inseparable whole, leading the Japanese to escape from the past Sinocentric system of order in East Asia and de-

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<sup>11</sup> Horikawa Tetsuo, *Chugoku kindai no seiji to shakai* (Horitsu bunkasha, 1988), pp. 26-27.

<sup>12</sup> Marius B. Jansen, trans., Jang Hwagyeong *Japan and Its World* (Sohwa, 1999), pp. 41-42.

<sup>13</sup> *Japan and Its World*, p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Japan and Its World*, p. 48.

termining the character of Japanese modernization.

As a specific example of Japanese acceptance of the “Western model,” Jansen cited the translation of a Dutch version of the German anatomy chart *Tafel Anatomia* as *New Text on Dissection* by Sugida Genbaku et al. At this point the new word *ran’gaku* (蘭學—Dutch studies) was coined and the era opened for the active translation of Western texts.<sup>15</sup>

In this way, Japan stood on the road toward full-blown de-sinification, and went from accepting the Western model indirectly through translation to directly observing the West around the time of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, and from there to the open promulgation of the “Datsuaron” by Fukuzawa Yukichi in 1885. Here more than 100 years had passed since the *Kaitai shinsho*, and the “existing hierarchy of prestige centered on China” had crumbled decisively.<sup>16</sup>

In reference to Korea and China, Fukuzawa said there was “no room for our country to wait for the enlightenment of neighboring countries and raise up Asia together with them,” and claimed that by “leaving those ranks and casting our lot with the civilized nations of the West,” “we must deal with [neighboring countries] according to the method with which Westerners approach them.”<sup>17</sup> It must be said that this argument for leaving Asia is the ideology that would support and promote the Sino-Japanese War to follow 10 years later and that would underpin Japan’s subsequent invasions.

Thus, as Jansen said, the “hierarchy of prestige” that had thus far centered on China was collapsing, but that also meant the collapse of the domestic and international order that had ruled over East Asia. It should be mentioned that, as it witnessed the victory of Japan in the Sino-Japanese

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<sup>15</sup> *Japan and Its World*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>16</sup> *Japan and Its World*, p. 110.

<sup>17</sup> *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshu* 7 (Iwanami shoten, 1981), p. 224.

War, the Korean Peninsula saw a complete about-face among traditional Confucian intellectuals. Reformist intellectuals came to rise in power en masse. However, as Japan came to “deal with,” i.e., invade, Asia along with European forces as Fukuzawa had suggested, Korean intellectuals had no choice but to proceed with an anti-feudal/anti-colonial, in other words anti-Japanese, resistance movement.

Of course, in China as well, a rapid shift toward anti-Japanese conflict was taking place. At the time of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, eight countries (Germany, Great Britain, the United States, France, Russia, Austria, Italy and Japan) combined to dispatch forces. Out of the total forces of 36,000 troops, Japan constituted the bulk of the force with 22,000 troops. Already Japan’s intervention in China was assured, and in the place of the “existing hierarchy of prestige centered on China,” the age of “a new order of force centered on Japan” began. Thus, China’s anti-colonial struggle could only intensify further from an anti-Western one to an anti-Japanese one.

Here it is necessary to conduct an analytical review of the “existing hierarchy of prestige” and the new Japanese order of force. The long-standing hierarchy of prestige centered on China was really something civilized and cultural, based on authority, and was a peaceful order where violence was scarcely present. It was a cultural order forged upon the same values and ethics, and in that sense was the order of “righteousness” as indicated by Yi Hangno.<sup>18</sup> In fact, even Japan’s classical scholars “regarded the Chinese land as the symbol of one value system rather than as one country.”<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, the new order controlled by Japan professed civilization, but was violent, immoral and anti-Asian. As stated in Korea’s March 1, 1919,

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<sup>18</sup> Chi Myongkwan, *Hanguk Munhwasa* (Sammin, 1985), p. 271.

<sup>19</sup> *Japan and Its World*, p. 46.

Declaration of Independence, it was an “evil course (邪路)” and anti-East Asian, a betrayal of East Asian values. Most of all, unlike the old order, it was an order accompanied by suffering that gave rise to resistance to and conflict with it.

Here I feel that it is necessary to examine the Asian invasions brought about by Japan’s “leaving Asia” ideology and its violent rule in slightly more depth. It appears that Japan’s imperialism, as a retrograde form of imperialism, should be viewed as belonging to the category of “continental imperialism” described by Hannah Arendt with reference to the Nazis.

This was something fundamentally different from the “overseas imperialism” that could be seen in the cases of imperialistic nations of the First World like Great Britain, Belgium, Holland and France.<sup>20</sup> Continental imperialism could be found in countries geographically close to the colonizing country, countries bearing the same history of civilization, so to speak, as the colonizing country. Also, this was a “Pan-movement” that professed “racial nationalism.” Arendt includes Naziism and Communism here, and refers to them as “Pan-Germanism” and “Pan-Slavism.”<sup>21</sup>

In the same way, Japan’s continental imperialism, based in “racial nationalism,” could be called a “Pan-Japanism” movement. The Japanese too professed a cosmopolitanism or “Asianism” at the same time that they proclaimed the absolute superiority of their own race, just as had been the case in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. They emphasized ideological homogeneity and occasionally colonized by force, as seen in the case of Korea, and in other cases, they established puppet governments like Manchukuo or the Nanjing Government of Wang Chaoming.

In Korea, they promoted the idea of “Korea and Japan as one body” (*naeseon ilche*) and drafted a policy of assimilation, and in Manchuria, they

<sup>20</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Harcourt, Brace 1951), pp. 222-223.

<sup>21</sup> *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 222, p. 227.

put forth the slogans of “Harmony of the Five Races” and, further, the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.” Furthermore, they did not hesitate to persecute with imprisonment or execution those who did not follow their Pan-Japanist movement. After the end of the war, they produced pro-Japanese rebellious factions such as the Han Jian in China and the Chinilpa Party in Korea. This was something second only to the injuries inflicted by Nazi and Communist rule.

Thus far we have called this continental imperialism of Japan the ideology of “leaving Asia,” based on the words of Fukuzawa Yukichi. However, it must be stated that if Japan proceeded along this road of leaving Asia, the whole of Asia had no choice but to follow down that road as well. This is because there was no other way but to depend on Western powers to hold Japan in check, a sort of “using barbarians for the barbarians” profit’ tactic. Just in the case of Korea alone, the fact that the Koreans sent a secret emissary to The Hague in 1907, not knowing of the secret Taft-Katsura Agreement formed in 1905, and placed their hopes with the United States in the March First Independence Movement of 1919 shows clearly that with the “leaving Asia” ideology of Japan, the “leaving Asia” ideology of Korea as well was inevitable. However, this anticipation of American help was, needless to say, a vain hope in light of the dynamic relationships existing within international politics of the time.

In fact, American imperialism was at the time moving ahead of Great Britain and establishing hegemony in China. At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States completed the process of national unification and concluded its “first stage of American history,” the “dissolution of the frontier line” domestically, and entered into an era that dreamed of imperialistic expansion, seeking the second stage’s “frontier of the sea.” In 1898 the United States recorded a victory at Manila Bay in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War and came to view the Philippines as a base for

its advancement into China. Belatedly arriving in China, the United States demanded the “maintenance of territorial integrity” and an “open-door policy” in China, and once Japanese forces began to expand into China, these demands began to gradually shift toward Japan, with increasing indications of a collision between Japan and the United States. The conflict between the United States and Japan over the China issue gradually developed into a more serious situation.

World War I broke out, and before long Japan had quickly presented its notorious “21 Demands,” in five groupings, to the Chinese government on January 18, 1915. For example, in Group 2 it demanded the expansion of interests in southern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia and essentially demanded that the period be extended indefinitely. In Group 5, it stated that Japan would intervene in the political, financial and military affairs of the Chinese government.

The 1922 Washington Naval Treaty, specifically the Nine-Power Treaty on China formed by the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, China, and Japan, was intended to deal a decisive blow to these demands and this stance of Japan, under American initiative. Japan said that China, in contrast with the cases of several other European countries, was a “lifeline” related to Japan’s survival and that the interests they had assumed there were “special benefits,” but with this treaty such a claim was thwarted and, as a way to restrain Japan’s advantage, “respect for the integrity of China’s sovereignty, independence and territory, an open-door policy and equality of opportunity” were even more strictly prescribed. Hosokawa Karoku described the Washington Treaty as follows:<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Hosokawa karoku, *Ajia minzoku seisakuron* (Toyo keizai shinposha, 1940), p. 156.

The Nine-Power Treaty, which Britain and the United States are presently claiming as inviolable code, was the final completion in international form of the United States' claims, which had developed from 1899 to 1900, at the 1922 Washington meeting.

Resisting this, Japan established the Manchukuo puppet government in northeast China in 1932 and in 1933 withdrew from the League of Nations, which had criticized its action. Japan then expelled Western forces from China and attempted to solidify its control of East Asia. They would claim that it was an effort to drive away Western, and specifically American, imperialistic control in China and substitute it with Japanese control, but Japanese control was even more brutal and inflicted more intense suffering. It should be remembered here as well that, while American imperialism was, by Arendt's definition, overseas imperialism, Japan's was continental imperialism. As such, East Asia had to pin its hopes, consciously or unconsciously, on the West to suppress Japan and allow escape from its shackles.

Thus, what is clear here is that for East Asia, a schema was established where Japan's "leaving Asia" meant the "leaving Asia" of East Asia or Asia. It could be said that 1945 was the year that brought an end to this tragedy.

### 3. On the Modern History of East Asia

The modern history mentioned here refers to the period of slightly over a half-century from 1945 to the present day. During this time East Asia came to pursue the task of establishing the modern nation-states that had been thwarted under the control or hegemony of Japan. The process of modernization should be called a path of pursuing national goals, including the formation of nation-states and industrialization.

However, this path had to be established under the Cold War regime, which developed throughout the world after the war's end. After a long period of upheaval, China took the path of socialism in 1949. The Chinese-Soviet dispute that began in the late 1950s derived from China's resistance to the Soviet intention of following in Japan's footsteps of hegemony.

On the Korean Peninsula, the Cold War led to its territorial division into North Korea and South Korea, and the two Koreas came to implement modernization, the process of establishing nation-states and industrialization, within differing ideologies and social systems. Here I feel that it would be useful to consider the processes by which several countries of the world have thus far pursued modernization, distinguishing between eras.

For a dictionary meaning of modernization, one could cite the establishment of a modern capitalist economy for the first time through the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the 1760s. It could be said that in general, the group of countries belonging to the first stage of successful modernization appeared during this time. Britain, France, and the United States, which achieved independence in 1776, could be said to belong to this first group.

In comparison, it can be seen that countries like Germany, Italy and Japan only began to take this route about a century later. Germany established the German Empire in 1871, and it was only in 1870 that Italy formed its modern unified state, while Japan began to follow the path of a modern unified state with the 1868 Meiji Restoration.

These countries of the second-stage of modernization exerted all their energies to follow the example of the forerunners and as they rushed through a process of compressed growth, so to speak, they rejected democratic reforms and adopted the path of dictatorial rule, only to meet with frustration. Japan, as a member of this later-starting group, was long judged

to be a unique example of a non-Western country that succeeded in modernization. As mentioned before, it could be said that, generally speaking, the first-comers pursued overseas imperialism, while the late-comers pursued continental imperialism. Arendt predicted that in comparison with overseas imperialism, continental imperialism would fail miserably.

To categorize other countries, I would classify China and our own North Korea and South Korea as members of the third group of countries seeking modernization, most of which were liberated from imperialist rule after 1945 and could never dream of their own future imperialism. Perhaps Central America and South America and several Southeast Asian countries could be placed into a fourth group. In any event, the countries belonging to these third and fourth groups were obliged to follow the course of modernization under the Cold War regime, and thus had no choice but to try to identify themselves with one particular goal and value system within a system that regarded the United States or the Soviet Union (the predecessor of today's Russia) to be at the apex. Within this security system, economy and culture, they made plans to accelerate growth as well, ultimately meeting with frustration.

Because the United States ultimately triumphed in the Cold War, the Soviet Union and its satellite states were forced into a path of ruin. On the Korean Peninsula, the two countries and their processes of modernization formed a sharp contrast and a relationship of antagonism. Viewed from the axis of East Asia, all of its states "left Asia" and joined with either the United States or the Soviet Union, and it seems that this could reflect them being unable to break away from the "leaving Asia" state of affairs prior to 1945 and still suffering from its aftereffects.

If this could be called an East Asian "leaving Asia" phenomenon occurring due to external causes, it may be stated that another aftereffect of the "leaving Asia" ideology resulting from internal factors in East Asia over-

lapped with these. To raise Japan as an example, Koreans cannot help but recall the Korean-Japanese confrontation surrounding the issue of accountability for the past resulting from the 1965 agreement between the two neighboring countries. Compared with Germany, Japan's sense of repentance for its past history was close to nonexistent.

There was much political and cultural criticism of this. Ruth Benedict, for example, was of the opinion that Japan's culture was one of shame rather than guilt. She also recalled that Japan, in its modern history, had cultivated an attitude of contempt for or discrimination against other Asians for the sake of Asian domination. In fact, this was already all too apparent in Fukuzawa's *Datsuaron*. He took the example of Confucianism in Korea and China and mercilessly criticized its conservatism.<sup>23</sup>

Even at this vigorous stage where culture grows newer day by day, if you discuss education they speak of Confucianism; and in terms of doctrines they speak of the traditional Confucian values of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom; and in every detail they indulge in only external affectation; and in reality, they appear to be individuals without the slightest sense of self-reflection, who not only have no discernment for principles of truth, their morals themselves are debased, reaching an extreme of brutal shamelessness and yet persisting in arrogance.

In this way, Fukuzawa enumerated the wartime cruelties, ignorance and brutality of China and Korea, and deplored the idea that Westerners might view the Japanese in the same way because they too were Asians. He even said that because "there has actually been no small number of cases where that influence appeared and proved an indirect hindrance to our diplomatic image," this was "the great misfortune of our country of Japan."<sup>24</sup> Thus,

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<sup>23</sup> *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshu* 7, p. 222.

<sup>24</sup> *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshu* 7, pp. 223-224.

a tendency for contempt toward Asia predominated among the Japanese people. In order to invade other countries that shared the East Asian culture with them during Japan's long history, they naturally emphasized Japan's racial superiority and justified its continental imperialism. It should be said that the discriminatory consciousness formed in this way remained within the psychology of the Japanese people as something inextinguishable even after the war.

However, it is needless to say that this political and cultural criticism of Japan alone is insufficient to explain its postwar "leaving Asia" ideology. Because the postwar Korean Peninsula and China long endured political turbulence and economic poverty, they escaped from the interests of the Japanese. To give an example, as late as the time of the 1965 Korea-Japan Conference, the amount of trade between Korea and Japan amounted to a mere USD 211,000,000.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Japan was passive even toward the normalization of diplomatic relations with Korea. In contrast, postwar Germany sought an immediate return to European society. To them, accounting for the past was an urgent issue. To speak somewhat unsparingly, Japan had no intention of returning to Asia. They felt that they only needed to maintain the orientation toward the West that had originated with the Meiji period. It may be this Japan that Asians attacked, demanding that they apologize and atone for their past deeds. In fact, it could be said that the claim that Japan lacks a consciousness of history or an awareness of the past means that, unlike Germany, Japan has no idea how serious their continental imperialism was.

Thus, even in postwar East Asia, the nationalistic conflicts starting in the nineteenth century could only continue. It could be said that the confrontational structure, typified by oppression and resistance, continued even

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<sup>25</sup> Chi Myongkwan, *Nikkan kankeishi kenkyu* (Shinkyō shuppansha, 1999), pp. 176-177.

after the political conflict situation itself had ended. It may thus be said that the “leaving Asia” situation has been prolonged until this day. Here we may find the reason why, like Turgot, we can only say, “I looked there for traces of the progression of the human spirit, but almost all that I saw was a history of human error.”

However, Turgot went on to say that when a shoot sprouts from the ground, its leaflets emerge and wilt, emerge and wilt, and as they do so the stem emerges, and flowers and fruit form a crown to decorate it. He called this “a symbol of late-maturing truth.”<sup>26</sup>

Toynbee, as well, recalled the teaching of the Greek comedian Aeschylus at the end of his “My View of History”: “Learning comes through suffering.”<sup>27</sup> He added that, “the learning that comes through suffering caused by the failures of civilizations may be the sovereign means of progress.”<sup>28</sup> If so, we come to ask what is the wisdom and determination brought to us today by the failures and subsequent suffering of East Asian civilization for the period of more than a century and a half since 1840.

#### 4. Looking Ahead to the twenty-first century in East Asia

It seems now that no matter what wisdom or determination we pledge, it must be called a belated wisdom and practice that we should have possessed in the late nineteenth century or by 1945 at the latest. In any event, I would like to bring the “principle of montage”<sup>29</sup> into history in order to

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<sup>26</sup> *Das Passagen-Werk* IV, pp. 50-51.

<sup>27</sup> *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West*, p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> *Das Passagen-Werk* IV, p. 14. Adorno said that Benjamin’s intent was “to abandon clear analysis of the whole and show meaning solely through a shocking montage of material.”

once again find the “commentary on reality,”<sup>30</sup> in the words of Benjamin.

In 1999, the European single currency euro made its appearance as a form of resistance to the dollar. And not long ago the NATO army, led by the United States and joined by Great Britain, France and Germany among other countries, made an attack on Yugoslavia lasting several days. As I witnessed these events of world history, I thought of a passage on the Opium War by Crane Brinton in *The History of World Culture*.<sup>31</sup>

In 1841, Great Britain carried out the ‘Opium War,’ which was unpleasant but could not be called unjust, and made an important step in foiling China’s plan to shut out foreigners.

I came to think of the situation in Yugoslavia in light of this European view. As the West was shouting for an “open-door policy” and “equality of opportunity” in China, the two were opposed to each other and yet one. As can be seen in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, it was possible to deploy a combined military force consisting of eight countries’ troops. It is true that factors capable of bringing this about existed within China. However, this does not mean that the attack was justifiable. It cannot be simply said that the Opium War “was unpleasant but could not be called unjust,” and it cannot be simply judged as having succeeded at “foiling China’s plan to shut out foreigners.”

Will this history once again progress toward Asia with the combination of the dollar and the euro? Will the century and a half of Western supremacy and domination continue, this time under the American flag? What is the direction now for Japan, which deployed the greatest number of troops

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*Das Passagen-Werk* V, Appendix, note 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Das Passagen-Werk* IV, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Crane Brinton et al. (trans. Yang Byungwoo et al.), *Segyemunhwaswa* 2 (Euryu munhwaswa, 1963), p. 214.

out of the eight countries responding to the Boxer Rebellion and participated in the partitioning that was the “disposition” of Asia? What lesson can we learn today from East Asia, divided in its history since the late nineteenth century? Here we may feel that it is difficult to simply dismiss the following opinion of scholars who have studied the Third World.<sup>32</sup>

Imperialism exists in various ages under various forms. The job of the historian is to explain the transition from one form to another.

Here we need to look back on how the East Asia of the past survived in the face of Western imperialist encroachment. In the past, our nations of East Asia as well sought only geopolitical advantage. This was based on the idea of nationalistic conflict or antagonistic relationships. Toynbee said that the “spiritual enlightenment” awakened through hardship among the “displaced persons” in the collapse of a civilization sheds light on the next age. In this sense, it seems that Korea should examine matters once again as it greets the eightieth anniversary of the March 1st Declaration of Independence.

The Chosun Independence Newspaper said that it was making Japan escape from the “road of vice” and bear the “heavy responsibility of supporter of East Asia,” that it was helping China escape from the “anxious terror of being unable to avoid even Mongolian invasions,” and “creating a necessary passage toward a world peace and human happiness that regards East Asian peace as an important part.” It appears that cooperation toward the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula could be a road leading to East Asia’s peace and prosperity and world peace as well today. I feel that this is not seeking geopolitical advantage, but building the geo-

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<sup>32</sup> Henk Wesseling, “Overseas History” (Peter Burke ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Japanese edition, Jinbun Shoin), p. 101.

cultural, a course for the pursuit of an East Asian cultural community. This may be said in some sense to mean abstaining dialectically from the community lost in the late nineteenth century in the modern era.

The geoculture mentioned here is not at all a culture that some nation with a geopolitical advantage could use as a tool to accomplish imperialistic encroachment. It is not the powerful tool for Westernization, culture as the “underside of geopolitics,” that he speaks of.<sup>33</sup> It refers to the kind of culture that could also be called the “spiritual enlightenment” generated while being violated by a dominant national power. It is a culture that can bring an end to that geopolitical dominance and those encroachments.

Presently, a paradigm shift is demanded in this age. This may be called a theory of East Asian peace, where the East Asian geocultural thought that spouted forth in 1919 returns after having passed through the 1980s and various complications. It is the world of universal values that our predecessors cried out for with strangled voices, for the salvation of the whole of East Asia, after Western imperialism, which had mainly followed the course of overseas imperialism, gave way to the rising influence of a Japan following the path of an even more brutal continental imperialism.

In the lecture quoted at the opening of this chapter, Christophe Charle continued on to say that in a Europe seeking unification, “They must transcend the conflicts and contradictions that had to be endured for so long among the other nations of Europe and create a higher unity at a cultural level.”<sup>34</sup>

Even if we grant that there are different nations, humans are the same everywhere. There are various, more general values that transcend them all. Cultural values are not in shrinking back inside of oneself, but, on the contrary, in various cultures

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<sup>33</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 139.

<sup>34</sup> *Shiso*, p. 54.

influencing and being influenced by each other and in everyone speaking the other's language. In the eighteenth century there was a Europe in the French language, but today it is possible to have a Europe in all languages. What is needed is mutual exchange. It is necessary to blend to achieve a higher unity.

Here, Charle emphasizes the “creation of a new space of ideas” by “intellectuals and people involved in culture” to accomplish this, and concludes by saying:<sup>35</sup>

It has always been a space in terms of ideas, but it is also the only means of preventing the plan that is Europe from remaining merely a region for free trade.

It may be that in Europe as well a new geoculture, defined differently from Wallerstein's, is being considered. I would call it something that emphasizes personal awareness within conflicts between the national and international, and at the same time speaks of a liberation and freedom that transcends it. This may be the most important human issue in the twenty-first century. If so, what does this appeal mean to the intellectuals and cultural figures of East Asia?

I will add one more thing so that this does not become too abstract a suggestion. The realistic choice given to us in the face of an immense power is to reject it while accepting it. In this view, East Asia must now follow a path of building itself up while looking back on its bitter history since the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>35</sup> *Shiso*, p. 55.

# A Korea-Based Alternative or an East Asia-Based Alternative?: Korea and East Asia

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## 1. The Balance between Sinocentrism and Japanocentrism

To begin with, I should qualify two terms used frequently here.

First, “Korea.” This refers to the Republic of Korea, or South Korea. As you know, the Korean Peninsula was divided into North and South after its liberation (1945) from the Japanese colonial yoke. Of course, with the outbreak of war on June 25, 1950, there was some disturbance with the 38th Parallel, which had been the line of demarcation immediately after liberation, but through the achievement of a cessation of hostilities (1953) with a slight alteration of the 38th Parallel, the temporary division took root as an unstable territorial border system afterwards. There are indeed many different perspectives analyzing this international civil war, but viewed broadly, the external factor of the postwar division in the anti-fascist democratic Allied Forces that had enjoyed a victory in World War II overwhelmed internal causes. The Soviet Union, by assuming the northern half of the divided Korean Peninsula under its influence immediately following the war, partially realized its long-standing dream since the era of czarist Russia, and the United States, by occupying Japan and directly/

indirectly controlling the southern half of the Korean Peninsula, plunged belatedly into imperialist competition following its Civil War of 1861-1865, assuming a historic supremacy in East Asia that was unlike the prewar advancement into East Asia, where they were forced to use Japan as a subordinate partner.

According to Immanuel Wallerstein, who interpreted both World Wars as competitions between the United States and Germany to assume the position formerly held by the British Empire at the center of the nineteenth century world order, the twentieth century was the century of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Even so, as a phenomenon socialism increased its influence in East Asia immediately after World War II. The success of the 1949 revolution in China was a decisive indicator. This was because the American structure, which in replacing prewar Japan regarded the Chinese Kuomintang government as a stronghold of its policy toward East Asia, collapsed with the victory of Mao Zedong. In view of this, the collision of world powers exploding within the fragile framework of the divided Korean Peninsula may have been an inevitable course of geopolitical events.

This does not mean that blame for the eruption of the Korean conflict on June 25 can only be assigned elsewhere. One must have the discernment to recall the foolishness of North and South alike drawing in outside forces and struggling with each other within the same race. Were not the unification through southward expansion adopted by the Northern leadership early in the hostilities and the northward expansion pursued by the Southern leadership following the Incheon landing operations both based in a very naïve analysis of the geopolitical situation faced by the Korean Peninsula? This is because from the beginning the Korean Peninsula, containing four world superpowers in the United States, the Soviet Union, China and

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, "The So-Called Asian Crisis: Geopolitics in the Longue Durée" (paper presented at the 1998 International Studies Association), p. 3.

Japan, could be deemed a kind of node that would not allow exclusive rule by any one side, South or North.

Thus, there are deep suspicions that unification, internally abandoned but externally professed by successive administrations of postwar North and South Korea, is something for domestic use, like the doctrine of northward subjugation policy of the ruling classes in the Joseon Kingdom (predecessor of Korea) following the 1636 Byeongja Horan (second Manchu invasion of Korea).

As is clearly shown by the fact that both the Northern and Southern administrations, which should have taken responsibility for this war after hostilities ended, instead solidified their own autocratic systems, the outbreak of hostilities became a decisive starting point that set in place “the system of hostile coexistence between South and North, that is, the system of division” (Paik Nakchung). Furthermore, attention must be paid to the fact that, as fierce battle followed fierce battle in the Korean conflict, the whole of the Korean Peninsula was reduced to ruins and regional establishment was replaced by a permanent fluidity, and that by pursuing the dissolution of the agricultural sector, which would become a stumbling block in the pursuit of the industrialization that would bolster the autocratic systems in the North and South, the Koreas established a beneficial starting point to pursue once again the colonial industrialization promoted by imperialist Japan in the 1930s. It is already common knowledge that within this unforeseen effect, rapid industrialization developed first with an advantage to the North, and following the 1970s with the South in the dominant position. However, one must be attentive to the fact that Southern industrialization was closely tied with the growth of popular movements in South Korea along with a consciousness of competition with North Korea—just as capitalism restores its vitality by constantly remaining conscious of socialism. Also, I would like to add that we must have the presence of

mind to confront the fact that the established accomplishments of Southern industrialization were realized under the umbrella of the Cold War system, the anti-socialist competition of the United States and Japan, which had experienced a rebirth as a subordinate partner of the United States once again following the Chinese revolution. In fact, the United States exhibited a peculiar image of consistently winning ultimately in retreat in East Asia following World War II, with a major failure in China in 1949, a partial failure in the Korean conflict, and a defeat in the Vietnam War. And since 1989, the moment when the victory of the United States was confirmed, the system of the divided Korea has fallen into an extremely fluid situation of late, as can be seen with the twin eruptions of the North's food crisis and the South's financial crisis. How can this situation be overcome wisely? The heart of the problem lies here.

I have presented Korea while bearing all of this in mind. Of course I am not attempting to exclude North Korea as a subject by downgrading it or anything like that. It is an expression of my feeling as a citizen of the whole Korean Peninsula and yet one who is inevitably faithful to the South Korean experience that, while I accept these conditions of my reality as a flaw, I should also view them as a privilege, with a compound perspective.

Next, there is East Asia. Generally speaking, the geographic range of East Asia includes Southeast Asia as well as Northeast Asia. However, the East Asian theory recently being discussed in Korea generally focuses on Korea, China and Japan. Of course, this is not to suggest that Southeast Asia should be excluded. Historical memories throughout Asia, including Southeast Asia, India and Southwest Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, began accumulating even before the modern era, to say nothing of the recent past when the West revealed its overwhelming presence within the historical strata of a narrowly defined East Asia of Korea, China and Japan, and as such, if we can penetrate Korea, China and Japan there is

likely to be a wider possibility of communicating with Asia. Thus the present stage of a Korean East Asian theory centered on Korea, China and Japan may be fairly called our boundary. While humbly acknowledging this boundary, I would like to set aside the possibility of some reversal in search of a new breakthrough by staying faithful to experiential limitations. The northeastern frontier of the Chinese system has now been partitioned and absorbed by China and Russia, but prior to the modern era it was a kind of East Asian powder keg that combined tensions with the northern nomadic people who posed a permanent threat to the entire region and the continuous competition of China and Japan regarding the Korean Peninsula. There is no need to reiterate that this powder keg showed even more volatility with the landing of the West beginning in the modern era. Perhaps if the problem of the Korean Peninsula can be solved, East Asia and the rest of the world can be solved as well. The fact that Korean intellectual circles have been immersed in East Asian theory of late may be an expression of this anticipation.

Why did we choose the term “East Asia,” despite the possible apprehensions of other regions of Asia? In particular, we understand how Southeast Asia cannot conceal a touch of caution toward East Asian theory in light of suspicions that the three nations of Northeast Asia are aiming at a new hegemony. In fact, such elements are present. This is because, in addition to China and Japan, there is indeed an orientation in certain corners of Korea as well to take charge of East Asian theory with the nationalistic expansion of the upstart Korea. Frequently, this kind of East Asian theory, which unilaterally privileges Korea based on a psychology of reparations, collapses into a comical imitation of pre-modern Chinese Sinocentrism and modern Japanese Orientalism. This futile fancy, which carries on in the manner of saying, “Instead of China and Japan, now it is Korea’s turn!” offers nothing beneficial to Korea, in contrast with its

intentions of subjectivity. In order to obtain a proper terrain for Korea's East Asian theory, the issue should not be a consciousness of how to replace Sinocentrism or Japonocentrism, but how to maintain a balanced perception between them. As you know, Sinocentrism is a belief system entirely centered on China dating back to the pre-modern era and present as much as ever today, while Orientalism is a belief system centered on Japan that inflicted great disasters on the peoples of the region in Northeast and Southeast Asia as it mounted a challenge to Sinocentrism in the modern era and that lingers on in the Japanese mainstream since its resurgence in the postwar restoration process. Korea's East Asian theory is not focused on criticizing the existing Japan- or China-centered beliefs and establishing a new center, but on adjusting the point of balance outside, or between, the "centers" as it thoroughly dispels the beliefs themselves. In the storehouse of historical memories that is the Korean Peninsula, where not only the Korean people but the Chinese and Japanese people as well suffered as both aggressors and victims with the continuous collision of Sinocentrism and Nippocentrism, "East Asia" could only be the starting point for the search for a new alternative that transcends "Chinese Empire" and "Japan's Orient."

## 2. Rethinking East Asia After Watching *Kagemusha*

I recently very much enjoyed watching *Kagemusha*, directed by Kurosawa Akira. Because this film premiered and was awarded the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival in 1980, this was an absurdly belated viewing. That I was able to see this film at all was thanks to the Korean government's opening of its film market to Japanese popular culture, after some controversy, and it was completely worthy of the reputation of this world

director coming from Japan.

The film is set within the background of the Battle of Nagashino (1575), at the end of the Sengoku period,<sup>2</sup> when the mighty Takeda clan was defeated by the allied forces of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu following the death of Takeda Shingen. As I watched this film, what drew my attention the most was the matchlock rifle. In particular, the scene of the Battle of Nagashino, where Takeda's glorious cavalry is annihilated by the prosaic allied force spearheaded by an infantry armed with matchlock rifles, is a definite highlight. The Battle of Nagashino was a truly revolutionary moment in the history of Japanese warfare.<sup>3</sup>

The rifles, provided by the Portuguese in 1543, had already been used as principal weapons when the Mōri clan attacked the Amako clan in 1563, but it was Nobunaga who used them systematically to reap great rewards. At this point, the situation became such that victory could only come to the individual with not only the economic means to procure large amounts of ammunition, but a high enough productivity in his territory that he had the economic and social conditions to take large numbers of peasants from the farming villages and furnish a reserve infantry.

The army of the newly powerful Nobunaga, who had transcended the long-standing divisions of the Sengoku period and opened a road to unification, was already Westernized and modern, and thus the collapse of the Takeda clan was a foregone conclusion. The Battle of Nagashino represented the failure of the traditional warrior's code, or a tragic elegy convey-

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<sup>2</sup> The Sengoku period refers to the period of approximately 100 years of division, as the Muromachi *bakufu* began to crumble following the Ōnin War, which began in 1467, and the feudal lords fell into armed conflict with one another until unification was achieved in 1590 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Min Dugi (ed.), *Ilbon eui yeoksa* (Jisik saneopsa, 1998), p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Ilbon eui yeoksa*, p. 118.

ing the end of that code.

There is an interesting anecdote that shares something of the discontinuity between the time before and after Nobunaga. Uesugi Kenshin, who had vied for supremacy with Shingen, heard of the hardship of his rival Takeda, who was suffering from a shortage of salt, and sent salt to him with the famous words, “I fight with swords, not salt.”<sup>4</sup> Of course, the feudal lords of the Sengoku period, including Shingen and Kenshin, were not traditional lords but new lords who had risen up through mutiny. Even so, before Nobunaga, the traditional disposition of the warrior code had been passed down from generation to generation. However, the noble virtue of the traditional warrior crumbled in an instant with the crackle of rifle fire.

What was the identity of the rifle-bearing infantry that suddenly appeared to show its mighty force at the Battle of Nagashino, the foot-soldiers who replaced the cavalry of the traditional warrior’s code? These soldiers were the *ashigaru*. The *ashigaru*, who first appeared after the Ōnin War, were originally lightly-dressed foot-soldiers drafted from the ranks of the peasants or lower classes of the cities. As the outbreak of war prompted the deepening divisions of the Sengoku period, they separated from their identities as peasants and were conscripted into the ranks of retainers.<sup>5</sup> In addition, with the furnishing of rifles, the arming of *ashigaru* with firearms created an epochal shift from the existing battles centered on elite *samurai*, and the democratic character of the military was strengthened substantially. In *Kagemusha*, the passage where Shingen is fatally wounded by an *ashigaru* sharpshooter and ultimately meets his end carries deep significance.

<sup>4</sup> Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (Charles E. Tuttle, 1969), p. 35. Nitobe’s *Bushido* was originally published in English in the United States in 1899. This book, written as a guidebook on Japan for Westerners, contributed greatly to understanding of the Japanese warrior’s code, but attention must be paid to its limitation of disregarding the historicity of this code.

<sup>5</sup> *Ilbon eui yeoksa*, p. 115-116.

The appearance of the *ashigaru* gave rise to a greater increase in mutiny during the Sengoku period, and as such it is highly symbolic that Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who unified Japan after Nobunaga, was the son of a lowly *ashigaru*. The power that overcame the divisions of the Sengoku Period and achieved unification was based in the popular vitality of the *ashigaru* rather than in the code of the warrior.

How did this premature occurrence, which transcended the closed-off nature of Japanese society with its rigidly defined social groups and caused an eruption of popular strength in the Japan of this era, come about? Is it not the case that this disintegrating force came not from inside Japan but from outside, namely the West, which had already arrived in Southeast Asia? Here our attention is drawn to Portugal, the ruler of the “Age of Discovery,” which had arrived early in Southeast Asia and had active contact with China and Japan. Portugal, which assumed early control of Indian sea routes, colonized Malacca in 1511, and proceeded to broaden its horizon of activity to Japan with Macao as its new stronghold.<sup>6</sup>

The advent of the Portuguese in Japan originated from one merchant ship that was traveling along the Chinese coast in 1543 and drifted to the island of Tanegashima, south of Satsuma. They provide two bird rifles to the Japanese residents of the island, and this new weapon, the matchlock, made the Japanese marvel, ‘It is capable of making a hole in an iron wall.’

With this fortuitous contact as the starting point, civilian interchange between the two countries in the form of a mixture of evangelism and trade proceeded to expand, and thus Japan had already been connected with the capitalist world system well before the arrival of the “Black Ships” in 1853. It is fair to say that the emergence of the *ashigaru*, who led Japan

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<sup>6</sup> *Ilbon eui yeoksa*, p. 134.

to unification, originated with two rifles provided by the Portuguese.

At this point, let us think once again of the 1592-1598 Japanese invasion of Korea (generally referred to as “Imjin Waeran” in Korean history), the end of which is now greeting its 400th anniversary. Why did Toyotomi, who achieved the great work of unifying Japan as the son of an *ashigaru*, set forth on an invasion of Korea that would bring about his own collapse? His fantasy of creating a Greater Asian Empire did indeed have a strategic character of attempting to channel the dissatisfaction of the fallen warriors in the direction of foreign lands, but fundamentally it was based on the interests of Japanese merchants and Western Japanese regional lords who sought overseas trade expansion. Because they were no match for the Portuguese traders, they abandoned the course of southern invasions and turned their attention to the north, namely Korea. The Japanese army that invaded Korea was an unwitting tool of Western merchants who arrived in Southeast Asia and sought to expand their market northward. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the fact that the first Westerner to arrive in Korea was the Portuguese priest Cespedes, who served in the army of the devoutly Catholic lord Konishi Yukinaga at the time of the Korean invasion.<sup>7</sup> The academic world has hitherto regarded this incident merely as an incidental episode unrelated to Korea, but in itself the fact that this Western priest, who was, consciously or unconsciously, a tool of market expansion led by the West, stayed within in the ranks of the Japanese already, carries vast significance. The fact that the West was standing behind the Japanese army is a decisive indicator distinguishing the Korean invasion from traditional warfare. In other words, the Imjin invasion was an early surprise attack by the West, which used Japan as an instrument in its designs on a medieval Korea standing outside the market. If the Middle

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<sup>7</sup> Lee Sangbaek, *Hanguksa [keunse hugi]*, (Euryu munhwasa, 1971), pp. 497-498.

Ages were the era of the land, the modern era is the era of the sea. The Imjin invasion was a premature indicator heralding the arrival of the era of the sea in sixteenth century East Asia.

Thus the medieval troops of Korea collapsed quickly in the onslaught of Japan's modernized *ashigaru*. Why did Japan ultimately fail in spite of its mighty forces? We must recall the guerilla activity of Korean loyalists rising in revolt in every region following the decimation of the central government army, the brilliant victory of the Korean naval forces around Admiral Yi Sunsin and the participation of Ming China. The fact that the era of the sea had arrived, but that it had not grown enough to overturn the East Asian Chinese system, was likely at the root of Toyotomi's failure. Even if the Ming Dynasty collapsed from the aftereffects of this war, the reorganization of the Chinese system under the Qing Dynasty was accomplished, such that it was still as much the era of land as ever.

However, the Imjin invasion was a prelude of the 19 century political disturbances. With the flowering of modern capitalism in the West, the sea once again began to roil, and modern Japan imitated the Black Ships to attack Korea once again. The Sino-Japanese War (1894) was an expanded reproduction of the Imjin invasion. Japan was successful at this second challenge. The long-standing Chinese system collapsed in one stroke. There is no need to restate what road Japanese imperialism followed afterwards. However, success in the Sino-Japanese War was the seed of another failure, and the failure of Japan in its pretensions of becoming a leader of the "East" and challenging the American century was also a new reproduction of Toyotomi.

### 3. Post–Cold War East Asia: Transcending the Lack of Asian Consciousness

In the war between the United States and Germany over who would inherit the hegemony of the British Empire, the United States seized firm dominance after World War II. After Japan, which joined forces with Germany and challenged the United States, was defeated in the Pacific War, American domination was evident in Asia as well. Japan, which had grown into the police state of Asia under the support of the United States and Great Britain, stepped back, and the Soviet influence increased in this vacuum of power. In the midst of these changes, China, long suffering in its status as semi-colony, revealed its colossal image as an independent state with its successful revolution. If we view the outbreak of the Korean War from this perspective, there is indeed the aspect of a challenge to the United States, made by the North Korea under the patronage of the Soviet Union and China with the goal of inheriting the East Asian hegemony held by Japan in the twentieth century.

After this war ended in a peculiar compromise, neither victory or failure, a new challenge erupted with the Vietnam conflict. The American military lost in the Vietnam conflict, but at a global level the vitality of existing socialism began to fall sharply, such that the revolution in Eastern Europe in 1989 was essentially an expression of the crisis bottled up during that time. However, the true irony is that at this point where American dominance over the Soviet Union was becoming apparent, there was a renewed challenge from Japan, which had taken the opportunity of the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam to grow into an economic superpower. Wallerstein predicted that the course of the decline of the United States and “the rise of Japan, or of Japan and China, or of Japan and East Asia” would not change despite the Asian financial crisis because the modern world system in

which we live has entered a structural crisis. I conditionally accept this prediction. When Japan abandoned its fantasy of becoming the ruler of “East Asia” by strengthening its control of the Korean Peninsula—namely, at the time of the Imjin invasion and the following wars modeled after it—it was with the strict condition of a pledge, and practice, that such an experience of failure would not be repeated.

And then there is the giant of China. Taking a belated leap into the market, China is anxiously rushing into nationalism unsuited to a superpower. The nationalism that is currently generating the enthusiasm of China, rather than being the self-sufficient Sinocentrism that China enjoyed before the modern era, is instead another variety of the Japanese-style Orientalism that was an inverted imitation of Occidentalism. However, the rivalry between Japan and China, where each assumes an odd aspect of outwardly feuding with the United States while inwardly seeking its validation, ultimately has some facets of becoming entangled in the United States’ rule through division. Because of this, the East Asia of the post-Cold War era may be in a situation fraught with a subtle tension as it was on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War.

Let us look back on *Kagemusha* once again. With this film, Kurosawa vividly recreated the dynamic nature of sixteenth century Japan within a grand image, summarized by the conflict between the modern army of Nobunaga, based on the *ashigaru*, and the medieval army of Takeda, depending on a cavalry. The director maintains a position of strict neutrality between the two colliding forces. I can see the characteristic fatalism of Japanese high art in his attitude of accepting the inevitability of a man bringing disaster upon himself with his foolish endeavors, even while he may deeply mourn the failure of the traditional code of the warrior. There is a quietism deeply imbued in this film, noting that it is fundamentally impossible to modify the reality of this existence, where victories and fail-

ures accumulate as one is drawn by the karma of a previous life and its blind strength. Of course this film also contains a scathing criticism of authority. It is significant in itself that this film's main character is the Shadow Warrior, a one-time thief who jeers at Shingen, "You are all greater thieves than I." However, a reversal occurs as the thief, who had built his own small territory of freedom on the outside of the power structure, stands in for Shingen as the Shadow Warrior. Because the thief is truly reborn with an ideology of loyalty to authority, even when his identity is revealed and he is chased away, he appears again at the Battle of Nagashino and shares the fate of Shingen's army in the bewildering final scene. There are few other examples that show so dramatically the nationalistic inclination of the Japanese people to unify authority and the self. As shown by the presence of the Shadow Warrior, as well as the *ashigaru*, who have already been incorporated among the rank and file of the power structure, the individuality of the Japanese popular domain is relatively narrowly defined. In this regard, there can be seen an interesting contrast with the loyalists of the Korean Peninsula, who rose in revolt when the government forces fell; perhaps this is also the origin of the perspicacity of Kurosawa toward the fundamentally closed character of Japanese society, which seems, unlike Korea or China, to already have a strong modern character. Thus, the director does not permit the intrusion of any good faith, but instead simply stays faithful to representing the sad reality of this life where the chain of reincarnation is perpetually repeated.

To whom is the director showing this? As shown straightforwardly through the image of the Western priests blessing Nobunaga's entry into battle atop the fortress, this film is closed to Asia and open to the West. Within the structure of this film, where out of the three heroes who brought an end to the Sengoku period only Toyotomi does not appear, there is scarcely a hint of any critical awareness that this modern force drawing Japan

toward unification would soon pour into the invasion of Korea. The limitation of this excellent film would be in its lack of an Asian consciousness. It seems that the greatest issue faced by Japan is how to overcome the absence of an Asian consciousness that is in harmony with its fatalistic clear-sightedness toward authority.

However, this does not only apply to Japan. From a different point of view from that of Japan, with its island country's basis in a sense of geographic isolation, China as well is captivated by universalism. First and foremost, China and Japan must recognize once again that they are members of the upper group of Asian power. In China, the conflict between East and West is referred to as the conflict between China and the West. China's challenge is fundamentally doomed to failure unless it can overcome that long-standing Sinocentrism holding that China is the East. What about Japan? Unless it can overcome its pseudo-Western consciousness, where Asian consciousness is absent and only its consciousness of how to deal with Asia is prominent, it cannot realize the dream of total independence it has held since the Meiji Restoration. China and Japan must return to Asia. For China and Japan to break out of the Cold War era model of each approaching the divided Korean Peninsula merely as an object subject to its control, what is needed most urgently is the communication of knowledge between the intellectuals of East Asia with the Korean Peninsula as a link in the chain. That is because only in this situation can there be a transcendence of Western European capitalism and Eastern European socialism, and of East Asian capitalism and East Asian socialism, and can the endeavor of finding a new cultural alternative begin properly.

Here it goes with saying that as a counterweight in East Asia, the Korean Peninsula, particularly South Korea, is in need of a mature self-awareness. This is because, in fact, the frequent outbreaks of conflict in the region during this time can indeed be attributed in some regard to the

weakness of the Korean Peninsula. For example, the logic of some modern Japanese (ultra-)rightists, who stood the invasion of Korea up as a form of vengeance on the pretext that Korea conspired as a participant in the invading army during the Mongolian conquest of Japan in the late thirteenth century, is outrageous, but it is an undeniable fact that the plight of Korea succumbing to Mongolian pressure offered an excuse. Whether before, when they lived comfortably as part of the frontier of the Chinese system and scorned Japan, or conversely in the present day, where they look askance at China and Russia under the umbrella of the United States or Japan, Korea urgently needs a shift in thinking where it abandons these two tendencies and considers the fate of the Korean Peninsula as a rich node where the sea and the land meet. In short, the issue at the heart of things is how to shift the Cold War era relationship of Korea, China and Japan to a post-Cold War era tripartite relationship.

To realize this, it is essential that the Korean Peninsula primarily discontinue its hostile status resulting from territorial division and, further, develop a new road to unification that transcends the prevailing ethnic state model, bringing an end to the confusion of our consciousness where nationalism and post-nationalism are mixed together in a permanent state of conflict as sub-selfhood and sub-otherness. “The same thing is different and the different thing is the same. The different is inside of the same and the same is inside of the different.” In accordance with Silla Kingdom-era priest Wonhyo’s spirit of harmonization as represented by this quote, when Korea is faithful to its duty as a mid-sized state of absorbing the shock of the new Sinocentrism and the new Orientalism, there will be a new possibility of truly moving past the twentieth century, where it sank instead into self-destructive struggle and conflict in the face of the shock of the West. Is this not the equilibrium point of the search for a Korea-based or East Asia-based alternative? Before criticizing Japan’s rightist movement or wor-

rying about China's growing power, Korea must place its intellectual maturity first and foremost. Whether China and Japan will once again follow a path of collision or proceed with a fruitful meeting that can bring true peace to this region, this as well will depend especially on the role of Korea.



# Conceptualizing “Asia” in the Modern Chinese Mind: A Korean Perspective

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Books that provocatively contend that one aspect of a thing represents in fact the entire entity often become the bestsellers in Korea. One of the most notable examples of this phenomenon is *Our Nation Would Survive Only With the Death of Confucius*. Even though it is a controversial and open question as to whether or not, and, if so, how much, Confucian ideas and practices influence contemporary Korea, this book has nevertheless become an object of great media attention. Its theme dovetails nicely with the New Liberalism that has dominated the country since the “1997-98 financial crisis,” triggered by foreign exchange shortage and later solved by bailout funds provided from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The book owes its success to its clear (and even reckless) argument condemning Confucius (Confucianism) as the very cause of the economic crisis of development in Korean society. A bestseller a few years earlier that represented the actual vanguard of this trend in publishing was *There is No Japan*. This book relates many episodes, but its message is simple and clear. The author, a correspondent in Japan, based on his experience living in that country, came to the conclusion that the “Japan” that many Koreans have for years idealized and held up as a model for Korea to emulate, does not, in fact, exist. This book sparked a tremendous response in Korean so-

ciety because it satisfies the nationalist sentiments of Koreans who possess mixed feelings of hatred and envy of Japan.

I have opposed this publishing trend because it may dampen the critical consciousness of the readers and hinder them from recognizing all the dimensions of an issue. However, if I were to oversimplify the argument of this paper, it would be something like this: There is no “Asia” in China. As far as I know, Chinese intellectuals do not often think of themselves in terms of an “Asian perspective,” particularly in the context of East Asia.<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that they have strong consciousness of China as an entity directly facing the world but they rarely retain any horizontal awareness of their neighboring East Asian societies. This tendency was undeniably manifested when a critical Chinese intellectual, who is well known both in and out of China, was criticized for wanting “horizontal consciousness.”<sup>2</sup>

My own experience reinforces this impression. Two years ago when I was editing a book, *The Conceptualization of “East” in East Asia*, and again recently in the course of organizing this conference, I intimated to my Chinese acquaintances that I wished to find someone who could address the question of China’s position in East Asia. In neither case was I able to find anyone. My Chinese acquaintances explained that most Chinese are not much concerned with the rest of Asia. It is for this reason that I, a Korean student of Chinese history, am giving a speech on Chinese perspectives on East Asia, even though it seems more fitting that Chinese take this part,

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<sup>1</sup> Asia may give an impression of the continent but here I confine it to mean East Asia. This includes three nations of Korea, China, and Japan and the various ethnicities and regions within their borders. Though tentatively categorized in this way, the territory of China includes much of the continent of Asia. Thus, we may need to expand our concern to include the whole continent. That again will depend on the expansion of our activities with them.

<sup>2</sup> Leo Ou-fan Lee, a specialist on Chinese literature and active in the United States, criticized Wang Hui for his ‘Insufficient horizontal consciousness’ (see Lee 1998:57).

especially considering the international feature of this conference.

Making this conference “look” international is not the only concern here, however. The conventional belief that only a Chinese scholar can really do justice to the issue of China’s role in Asia as a whole because no non-Chinese can understand China as well as a Chinese, is an idea that well illustrates a kind of Orientalism. I believe to the contrary that a Korean scholar can significantly contribute to the understanding of China in his or her own way. I am not arguing for a privileged role of Koreans, but rather I am trying to emphasize the significance of a perspective that views East Asia as a unit, because Korea, here, means “Korea in the context of East Asia.”

What I mean by an East Asian perspective in this paper is “East Asia in intellectual praxis.” As I examine below in detail, two concepts of East Asia-as “a civilization” and as a “regional solidarity”-have attracted the attention of many Chinese thinkers in the twentieth century, but neither of these two concepts entails a horizontal way of thinking about China’s East Asian neighbors. Both concentrate rather on the question of how to help build China as a nation-state. While critically examining these Chinese experiences, I arrived at the conclusion that what we need for the future of East Asia, including China, is not to discover East Asian identity as if it were something of a fixed entity (whether cultural or regional), but rather to cultivate a self-reflective attitude that requires us to look simultaneously at ourselves within the context of East Asia, and at East Asia within us. Of course, the “West” has definitely influenced East Asia’s conceptualization of itself. However, no less important than Western influence is the intellectual experiments initiated by East Asian peoples and societies themselves in a search for an East Asian identity. This concept of “East Asia in intellectual praxis” also intends to emphasize the need of stimulating further discourse on East Asia as a unit. This concept also has its origins

in the intellectual explorations of those Koreans who have reflected on unusually intensive experiences of the last 100 years of their country's history, which have amply demonstrated the evils, as well as the virtues, of the nation-state.

Even though I have intentionally oversimplified my theme by contending that there is no "Asia" in China, this does not imply that there has been no discussion of Asia among the Chinese. Historically China considered itself as the center of a world system composed of a multi-layered structure with different ranks much as a wave of water becomes weaker the further it gets from the center. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Chinese world system began to be destroyed by the Sino-Japanese War and the abortive Reform of 1898, leading many Chinese to recognize that China was in danger of disappearing both as a state and a nation. It was at this time that the Chinese began to hold a new consciousness of world geography. Forcibly incorporated into the international system as a nation-state in a period of change, deservedly known as the time of "a great turn in the conceptualization of civilization," some Chinese intellectuals began to see Asia with different eyes, now as a new subject of solidarity.<sup>3</sup>

A notable figure manifesting this kind of Chinese consciousness of Asia was Liang Qichao. As he propagated many new terms imported from Japan, Liang, adopted the transliterating term for Asia, "yazhou," showed his deep concern for the fate of the Asian continent as one constituent of several comprising the world. When China was on the verge of being divided and ruled by the great powers after the Sino-Japanese War, Liang thought that China was now in the same situation as the African states, facing humiliation from the West and being treated as beast-like, uncivilized people, rather than as the center of the world. Thus, feeling solid-

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<sup>3</sup> For the argument that contends that Asia was newly created in this process. See Rebecca E. Karl (1998:1110-1115).

arity with Asian neighbors that were in the same situation as China, he watched for an opportunity to resist the imperialism of the white race on the basis of Asian solidarity. His argument was therefore able to generate an enormous response from intellectuals in many Asian states including Korea and Vietnam (Baik 1997a).<sup>4</sup>

Liang's concern for Asia, however, was part of the reform movement transforming China into a nation-state. Thus, he proposed to build an Asian solidarity initiated by Japan, expecting Japan to curb the Western powers that were then thwarting the reform of Chinese society. But he had to give up his vision when Japan emerged as the dominant power in East Asia after the Russo-Japanese War. In addition to this, Liang's concept of Asia included a concept that could be suspected as racist. While explaining the opposition between Asia and the West as that of the "yellow" and the "white" races, Liang was outspoken in depicting the "colored races," except the "yellow," as idle, though he did include the Philippines and Vietnam in the category of the "yellow race." His purpose in using biology to categorize the peoples of the world according to color was to buttress his "scientific" claim that only the "yellow race" could compete with the "white race." The supposed superiority of the "yellow race" meant that China possessed the ability to colonize and manage South America and Africa. He was sure the day would come when China would acquire colonies in parallel with the Western powers. Thus, he entered the twentieth century with the dream of a powerful China, saying that "in the twentieth century China would inevitably achieve a great leap in the whole world" and "this time would come after a few decades" (Baik 1999a:3-4).

The underpinnings of Chinese concerns when dealing with the concept of Asia in the twentieth century are also revealed in the theory of Eastern

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<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of the meaning of publishing a Korean translation of the history of the ruin of the Vietnamese and the Philippine Wars, see Choi (1995).

civilization that emerged during World War I. This theory can be defined as “Asia as a civilization” and marks itself in its expectation that Eastern civilization could play a redemptive role in place of Western culture.<sup>5</sup>

Here again we need to focus on Liang’s consciousness. Following the Sino-Japanese War, Liang changed his view of civilization and accepted the concept of lineal progress and “universal” civilization. However, when witnessing the horrors that Europe underwent during World War I and receiving encouragement from Western intellectuals who viewed the future of Western civilization with great pessimism, Liang stressed the need to overcome the sense of inferiority to Western civilization. He hoped for a combination of East and West, in which the role of the East would be paramount. Of course, there were opponents to Liang’s vision, which resulted in the so-called “controversy of Eastern and Western culture.”

The way of understanding civilization implicit in this discourse included a paradox: the Chinese had to deny imperialism but at the same time their denial should be justifiable from the West. There arose a vogueish way of thinking of dichotomies between East and West excavating certain elements of traditional culture that were contradictory to the Western “Civilization” and raising them to the status of “pure” Eastern culture. (For example, it became a commonplace to contrast the movement, reason, flesh and materialism that were alleged to represent Western civilization to the stillness, intuition, soul, and spirituality that supposedly characterized Eastern culture.) As Chinese gained confidence that in some areas they were at least equal to the West, a trend emerged to combine the two civilizations, thus bestowing authority on the resistance to imperialist civilization, while securing national identity.

This concept of Eastern civilization was created in a Japanese forum

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<sup>5</sup> For more details on the theory of civilization, refer to my thesis, “Theory of civilization and nation-state in East Asia” (Baik 1999b).

and found acceptance throughout the entire region of East Asia. Indeed, if we look only at this commonality, the theory of “East Asia as a civilization” seemed to gain a new universality, at least in East Asia. However, there existed in fact significant contradictions among East Asian societies. The major contradiction concerned the question of who would take the initiative in combining the civilizations of East and West. In Japan, this resulted in a concept of Asianism in which Japan would take the lead in incorporating the two civilizations and also in propagating throughout Asia the “new civilization” resulting from that incorporation. In China, it could not help but be construed as the task of the Chinese to launch the unification of civilizations since Eastern civilization, many Chinese believed, was nothing but Chinese civilization.

The Chinese belief that Eastern civilization meant Chinese civilization is affirmed in the arguments of three discussants who prominently participated in the controversy over Eastern and Western culture. First, let us examine the case of Liang Qichao. The Eastern culture he proposed was nothing but Chinese culture. Thus, he finished his life as a “Great Master of National Studies” applying scientific methods in studying the Chinese cultural essence that could contribute to “culture of the entire humankind.” Hu Shi, in contrast to Liang, vehemently attacked Confucianism as “culture in politics” or “culture in power.” His well-known desire for “wholesale Westernization” (what he actually intended was “wholehearted modernization”) rested upon his belief that the habitual force of traditional culture was so strong that an attempt to carry out wholehearted Westernization would naturally result in compromise and balance. Hu’s theory was premised on the very recreation of Chinese civilization, that he, though propagating the Western culture “like a missionary,” actually engaged in himself through the “Reorganization of the Heritage” movement. This movement aimed to objectively reevaluate Chinese traditional culture not only Confucianism but

also its other elements from the perspective of historical evolution and to utilize its insight in creating Chinese civilization.

Liang Shuming, unlike Hu Shi, placed a high value on Eastern civilization. Moreover, in his eyes, “Eastern civilization” was not restricted to China alone but also included Indian culture. Liang believed that human civilization was to pass through three developmental stages in sequence, from the Western, to the Chinese and finally to the Indian. Unfortunately, however, both Chinese culture, with its stress placed on harmony and the golden mean, and Indian culture, with its emphasis on asceticism, had too early become high cultures without having first fully digested the initial stage of progressive Western culture. Thus, the attitude Chinese should take right now, he wrote, was to refuse Indian culture, which would bloom only in the far future and to thoroughly adopt Western culture in a way accordable with the basic spirit of Chinese culture. As he got older, Liang Shuming became more distanced from Western culture and tried to find in Chinese tradition a way to solve the Chinese crisis. Leaning toward the notion of building a new society on the basis of Chinese tradition, he led a campaign for rural community reconstruction that aimed to realize “*socialism ruled by virtue (li)*” or “*Confucian modernization.*”

In the end, various ideas of Eastern civilization presented in the arguments of the three Chinese scholars discussed above were the very intellectual products of their social reform projects designed to make China a rich and strong nation-state. Their differences simply resided in which aspects of the cultures of the East and the West that they would emphasize on the road toward implementing their common aims. Their concept of Eastern civilization was far from being a comprehensive theory of civilization able to capture the sympathy of East Asians beyond their borders.

Distinguished from “Asia as a civilization” also simultaneously connected with it was another stream of thought, that is “Asia as a regional

solidarity.”<sup>6</sup> This concept, having already been manifested in the writings of Liang Qiqiao, was formulated from the two dimensions of state power and civil society.

First, I will examine the idea of Great Asianism proposed by Sun Wen, a politician involved in the National Revolution. Sun Wen presented this idea in a speech in 1924 in Japan, where he acknowledged the emerging power of Japan, then rapidly rising up since the Russo-Japanese War, and proposed that the “yellow race” should strive for solidarity in its confrontation with the “white race.” To that end, Sun proposed that Eastern culture should be based on Confucianism, which, he claimed, had as its foundation principles of morality, and benevolence and righteousness. These, he believed, were factors common to both Chinese and Japanese cultures. Moreover, China and Japan should promote an Eastern “rule of right (*Wangdao*)” while denying the Western “rule of force (*Badao*)” that was grounded in utility and compulsion. This concept of Great Asianism may be translated into transnationalism (Duara 1997:1038-1039). However, here I want to lay more emphasis on strategic considerations of Sun Wen, who had recently seen his domestic political power diminish and thus yearned to gain Japan’s support. In this situation, he could not but restrain himself from criticizing Japanese expansionism in his speech and give more consideration to establishing a cooperative relationship between China and Japan while almost neglecting solidarity with weak and small nations such as colonized Korea. Just because of that, most Korean newspapers raised their voices instantly in disapproval of Sun’s ideas, characterizing them as “careless” and “clumsy.” It is natural for Koreans to denounce Sun, who believed that the Chinese leader should have at least raised the problem

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<sup>6</sup> For the main sources and my evaluation of the major figures such as Liu Shippei, Li Dazhao, Sun Wen, and Wang Jingwei, who were referred to in the following discussion of the thesis, see Baik (1997b).

of Korea under Japanese colonial rule even if he could not push the point too strongly.

Sun's concept of Asia was also shared by the leading members of the KMT. One of his staff, Dai Jitao, expanded the concept and even suggested that a "National International," envisioned as an international organization working on the behalf of oppressed peoples, be created to compete with the "International League" and the "Comintern." This remained only an idea but another of Sun's intimates, Wang Jingwei, did attempt to implement an Asianist program in the middle of the anti-Japanese War. Wang was condemned later as a national traitor because of this, but his subjective intention was to establish "co-existence and symbiosis" on the basis of reconciliation with Japan. Wang believed that both the Chinese state and nation might be destroyed if the Chinese people, like the KMT led by his competitor, Jiang Jieshi, compromised with the CCP and persisted in their fight against Japan. By inheriting Sun's Asianism and excluding jingoism and Communism, he hoped to bring about peace and begin a restoration of East Asia. With Japanese help, Wang established "the reorganized nationalist government" in Shanghai and maintained this regime until the end of the war.

KMT leaders' conceptions of Asia and their activities clearly demonstrated the fact that regional solidarity in Asia derived from state power tended to be easily appropriated under then political circumstances, by the existing state system (especially imperialism as an expansive form of state), dissolving any possibility of realizing regional solidarity.

Regional solidarity as it was conceptualized from the dimension of civil society allowed more room for imagining a radical solidarity of Asian peoples formed from the bottom up. It was anarchism that stimulated Chinese (as well as East Asians) to conceptualize regional solidarity beyond state boundaries. For example, in the early twentieth century Liu Shipai pro-

posed building a great union of weak and small countries of Asia beyond the territorial boundaries of each state and to resist the influential power of the white race. He also characterized the powerful Japanese as “vermin,” who should be denounced by Asians. Li Dazhao, who was under the influence of anarchism immediately after World War I, proclaimed a “New Asianism,” in which he denounced Japanese Asianism as nothing more than “Greater Japanism,” whose purpose was the annexation of China. “New Asianism,” Li proclaimed, meant first to achieve national liberation of the oppressed peoples of Asia, then to organize an “Asian federation” as a regional council, and finally, contribute to world humanism by participating in a world federation with other regional councils.

Discourse on regional solidarity in Asia was not confined to an idea itself, but also involved various kinds of organizations that attempted to translate the idea into action, beginning early in the twentieth century. Asian political refugees frequently met each other in Japan and in the process began to form organizations such as the “Asian Friendship Society” (Karl 1998:1111). After Korea had been colonized by Japan, Korean and Chinese activists critical of Japan’s Asianism began to implement various ideas for forming an anti-imperialist solidarity. Thus the Chinese revolutionary movement was strongly supported by Koreans who had been looking to China’s 1911 Revolution for ideas and inspiration and had come to believe the Chinese movement could lay the basis for national liberation in Korea. Experience of solidarity between China and Korea had accumulated mainly through Koreans residing in China (Mizuno 1994). In addition to this, the ideas (combining Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism) and activities of religious organizations that were born in Manchuria and influenced not only inside of China and thought but also the outside world, may be regarded as “redemptive transnationalisms” (Duara 1997:1033-1034).

It deserves our attention that the ideas and activities of Asian regional

solidarity stemming from considerations of civil society represented “a space of popular action heralding a new future” (Karl 1998:1108) and its historical vestiges still remain to be more thoroughly excavated. However, the historical fact that the transnationalism of religious organizations in Manchuria was utilized by Japanese nationalists warns us not to neglect the deficiencies of Asian solidarity as it was formulated by civilians from the bottom up. The greatest weakness of the movement lay in its ephemerality. I want to emphasize the significance of ephemerality not to belatedly point out the failure of the attempt but to illuminate the truth that its failure originated in its distance from a sense of reality felt by ordinary peoples in their every day lives. To East Asians who survived into the twentieth century, the establishment of the nation-state was an inevitable task. To them, “modern history” often meant “national history.” This was acutely manifested in the fact that for Koreans, after becoming Japan’s colony in 1910, it was not an urgent task to conceptualize the whole of Asia as a single unit. The concept of Asia either “as a civilization” or “as a regional solidarity” was closely connected with the task of building a nation-state. Thus, Korean intellectuals actively discussed these issues only before Japan’s forcible annexation of Korea. Under colonial rule, any such discussion amounted to little more than empty talk.<sup>7</sup> I believe the same held true for those Chinese who lived in a semi-colonial status.

As discussed above, the newly-born horizontal way of thinking in China was not fully realized in Chinese experience during the first half of the twentieth century, but was this to be actualized in the latter half of the century? The first subject that comes to mind is the overseas Chinese.

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<sup>7</sup> See my ‘“East” in Korean historical experience’ (Baik 1999c). In this thesis, I presented a negative image of the Chinese in Korea deriving from the conflict in the labor market between Koreans and Chinese workers, in contrast to Korean intellectual’s concern for East Asian civilization.

Giovanni Arrighi has noted that there have existed non-official civilian networks among overseas Chinese population from at least the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, initiated by those overseas Chinese who had successfully found a niche in the tribute system of East Asia.<sup>8</sup> Recently, their roles are again drawing enormous attention; so much so that the term “Greater China,” which includes ethnic Chinese living not only in Hong Kong and Taiwan but also Southeast Asia, has entered into common parlance. This deserves attention as an example of “a lived reality of transnationalism” (Duara 1997:1043).<sup>9</sup> The existence of “multi-national ethnic community” also unquestionably helps underscore the oppressive nature of national culture and a nation-state. However, we should not forget that their concept of identity was to some extent formulated in close relation to the nationalism of their homeland, especially the October Revolution of 1911, the anti-Japanese war and the division of the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, if overseas Chinese are in fact more used to adapting themselves to the realities of global capitalism than to involving themselves in structural reform of the state in either China or their country of residence, their capacity to approach East Asia from a horizontal perspective is seriously compromised.

I also want to consider the Chinese Communist Party government that initially propagated internationalism, even though under the Chinese Communists nationalism soon superseded internationalism. Their proposition of solidarity with the Third World on the basis of the revolutionary theory of Mao Zedong revealed some possibility of formulating horizontal thinking of Asia in the Chinese mind. In the middle of the anti-Japanese war the Chinese communists indeed proclaimed, as a way of realizing a

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to a series of individual and group researches led by Giovanni Arrighi. Their non-published papers can be found in <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/papers.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Not only overseas Chinese, but also Korean networks comprising of the Koreans scattered all over the world might possibly be ‘open community of new century’ (Kang 1999).

united front, the political structure of federation allowing autonomy to the minorities. However, after the establishment of the communist regime, they denied it in principle. If I look at the history of Chinese policies toward national minorities (in which China is frequently characterized as a “multinational state with one distinguished ethnicity”), then I have to hesitate to say that this history includes any kind of horizontal thinking toward the surrounding nationalities (Kazuko 1998). Furthermore, party policies, on the one hand, have persistently tried to integrate China into global capitalism since the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping, while on the other hand they use nationalism and socialist spiritual culture in an attempt to overcome the structural crisis that is derived from that integration. Both approaches fan a dream of a powerful Chinese state. Because the influence of these policies is strong not only in official culture but also among both intellectuals and the masses, the problem is even more serious.

Because a horizontal way of conceptualizing Asia has been lacking in Chinese historical experience, the ghost of “a theory of the Chinese threat” (though it was fabricated in Euro-America) can be found floating around China. In this situation, a horizontal concern for East Asia as a whole is desperately needed not only for China but also for its neighbors.

In order to recall the significance of a horizontal way of thinking, the idea of “Asia in intellectual praxis” is, I believe, needed, beside the concepts of “Asia as a civilization,” or “Asia as a regional solidarity.” This idea of “East Asian intellectual praxis” is (tentatively) offered as a means to emphasize my intention that we need to see East Asia as a process of formulating an identity, not as an entity. “Intellectual praxis” means here to conceptualize East Asia not as a fixed entity, but as a way of thinking that understands East Asia to be in a state of flux, always subject to self-reflection, and it includes a process of practice on the basis of this understanding. It is my belief that if the nations of East Asia internalize this attitude the result will

be self-reflective subjects who see themselves within an East Asian context and East Asia within themselves.

How effective can the idea of “East Asia in intellectual praxis” be in helping us understand the current realities of East Asia? First, it brings into relief the significance of the task of creating a compound state structure. As the recent trend to reconsider modernity has become more popular, so too has the tendency to delineate the failings of the nation-state grown stronger, thus raising the issue of transnationalism as a new problem. But this tendency can easily fall into the trap of becoming simple anti-statism. Mere anti-statism will inevitably result in alienating itself from the actual feelings of the people in their daily life. In fact, the ambivalence of the twentieth century is derived from the fact that it is both “a history of the people” and “a history suppressing the people.” Therefore, at this moment we desperately need the notion of a “compound state” that can be articulated in the process of simultaneously achieving the double tasks<sup>10</sup> of coping with the nation-state and overcoming it. The notion of a “compound state” does not mean a unitary state, but indicates a most inclusive concept embracing all kinds of state forms, including confederations, federations and so forth.<sup>11</sup> If this concept were applied to China, new meanings could be read into the future. Such a project would mean experimenting with various forms of complicated states from “the one state/two systems” formula that was applied to Hong Kong when it was returned to China, to the “one state/ three systems” idea that has been proposed to Taiwan and finally to

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<sup>10</sup> This idea of mine is to apply to the question of nation-state the concept of the ‘double project of adapting to and overcoming modernity’ developed by Paik, Nakchung. For more discussion of ‘the double project,’ see Paik (2000).

<sup>11</sup> The compound state distinguishing itself as comprehensive and yet confining merely to principle is practical suggestion to creatively solve the question of sovereignty when trying to overcome the divisional system of Korean peninsula. For more detailed analysis, refer to Paik (1998:172-208).

the idea of federation upheld by overseas democratic movement leaders, even though in this process the role of the CCP in uniting the enormous area would probably change, looking like disintegration of a nation-state. This experiment of a “compound state” could therefore be the means of solving the questions of Taiwan and Tibet (or Xinjiang), and at the same time it can be a driving force for building a horizontal way of thinking of East Asia. Similarly, the effort to overcome various conflicts arising from territorial division of the Korean peninsula may require another “intellectual praxis” to activate a way of thinking in terms of regions beyond existing national boundaries.

“East Asia in intellectual praxis” also helps us clearly recognize the role of East Asia as a mediating place between the global capitalist order and its main constituent, a nation-state that contributes to the smooth operation of global capitalism. Emphasis on this way of thinking that treats East Asia as a unit often faces the criticism that East Asia is here privileged by explaining the world in the eyes of a dichotomy between Asia and non-Asia. However, East Asia in this concept of “intellectual praxis” indicates not only a geographical region but also includes an orientation to intervening in the transformation of global capitalism. Borrowing Arif Dirlik’s description, this can be called as a “critical regionalism.”<sup>12</sup> The process of creating a subject to carry out this idea in the region of East Asia, I believe, will naturally generate its solidarity with the critical thinkers and movements of other regions.

In fact, East Asia is not an entity sharing of a “pure” civilization (or culture) but a place where various constituents comprising the region of East Asia connect with each other while competing and compromising. Here greater attention should be paid to the “peripheral” members, espe-

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<sup>12</sup> For more discussion on the idea of ‘critical regionalism’ that focuses on both regional and transregional foundation of resistance, see Arif Dirlik (1994:105-113).

cially to the roles of various ethnic groups and regions (naturally including minorities in a nation-state) which are often neglected because of the attention directed to the two big states, China and Japan. This intellectual praxis of viewing China and Japan from a “peripheral” perspective is an inevitable element in the concept of “Asia in intellectual praxis.”<sup>13</sup>

Last, I want to clarify the idea of “East Asia in intellectual praxis” by explaining why I, living in a southern part of the Korean peninsula that is also one of the peripheral subjects of China, became interested in this idea.

As I have discussed elsewhere in detail (Baik 1997b), Koreans had shown a serious concern for East Asia before they were colonized by Japan. Once Korea had become a colony, however, all serious discussion of the idea of East Asia ceased, only to be resurrected with great fanfare in the 1990s. Though at first sight this reemergence seems sudden, it is in fact the result of the intermingling of those factors that lay behind the emergence of “Asian values” in some parts of Asia. However, among those many factors I want to especially emphasize the theoretical probing of the national democratic movement wing of Korea.

In face of the changing internal and external situations, Korea’s militant national democratic movement of the 1970s-1980s began to look for an alternative ideology to existing nationalism. As a result, the “East Asian perspective” emerged as an agent for mediating the perspectives of a state and a world system. When we, living in South Korea, begin to build our concern for areas beyond our borders, East Asia will become a welcoming place for us to exercise our ideas and plans. If we do not insist on a privileged attitude that excludes (or discriminates against) other areas, the places relatively closer to us, both historically and geographically, naturally become

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<sup>13</sup> This idea was introduced to Chinese readers in the thesis, ‘Rethinking East Asia at the convergence of two centuries’ (Baik 1999a).

the object of our concern. Also does not the medium size of Korea, being neither a big nor a small state, sufficiently qualify us for carrying out the task of articulating a concept of “East Asia in intellectual praxis?” On the basis of this concept, we can first start the work of solving the problem of local conflict (especially in Southeast Asia) that accompanied Korean capital’s march into the outside world. It can also help aid in unraveling the problem of human rights of Asian workers in Korea (some of whom are illegal aliens); it can be used to help secure a place for realizing the greater tasks of overcoming the divided system of Korea and of creatively conceptualizing new forms of the compound state and finally it is of use in resisting the homogenizing power of global capital.

It is still uncertain how much the region of East Asia will contribute to creating a more humane historical system, but when we share our experience of actively discussing and practicing beyond our borders while centering on the term “Asia,” there will be, I believe, more subjects to meet in the road to human liberation. Is not this conference a small but significant stop in the middle of this path?

1. Asia may give an impression of the continent but here I confine it to mean East Asia. This includes three nations of Korea, China, and Japan and the various ethnicities and regions within their borders. Though tentatively categorized in this way, the territory of China includes much of the continent of Asia. Thus, we may need to expand our concern to include the whole continent. That again will depend on the expansion of our activities with them.
2. Leo Ou-fan Lee, a specialist on Chinese literature and active in the United States, criticized Wang Hui for his ‘Insufficient horizontal consciousness’ (see Lee 1998:57).
3. For the argument that contends that Asia was newly created in this proc-

- ess, see Rebecca E. Karl (1998:1110-1115).
4. For an analysis of the meaning of publishing a Korean translation of the history of the ruin of the Vietnamese and the Philippine Wars, see Choi (1995).
  5. For more details on the theory of civilization, refer to my thesis, “Theory of civilization and nation-state in East Asia” (Baik 1999b).
  6. For the main sources and my evaluation of the major figures such as Liu Shippei, Li Dazhao, Sun Wen, and Wang Jingwei, who were referred to in the following discussion of the thesis, see Baik (1997b).
  7. See my ‘“East” in Korean historical experience’ (Baik 1999c). In this thesis, I presented a negative image of the Chinese in Korea deriving from the conflict in the labor market between Koreans and Chinese workers, in contrast to Korean intellectual’s concern for East Asian civilization.
  8. Refer to a series of individual and group researches led by Giovanni Arrighi. Their non-published papers can be found in <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/papers.htm>.
  9. Not only overseas Chinese, but also Korean networks comprising of the Koreans scattered all over the world might possibly be “open community of new century” (Kang 1999).
  10. This idea of mine is to apply to the question of nation-state the concept of the “double project of adapting to and overcoming modernity” developed by Paik, Nakchung. For more discussion of “the double project,” see Paik (2000).
  11. The compound state distinguishing itself as comprehensive and yet confining merely to principle is practical suggestion to creatively solve the question of sovereignty when trying to overcome the divisional system of Korean peninsula. For more detailed analysis, refer to Paik (1998: 172-208).

12. For more discussion on the idea of “critical regionalism” that focuses on both regional and transregional foundation of resistance, see Arif Dirlik (1994:105-113).
13. This idea was introduced to Chinese readers in the thesis, “Rethinking East Asia at the convergence of two centuries” (Baik 1999a).



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## “Japan’s Asia” and Regional Unity

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I have chosen to examine the possibility (as well as the limitations) of regionalism in East Asia as it deals with the vestiges of the Cold War even after its collapse, while focusing on the East Asian view of Japan’s past and present.

In answer to the question of why Japan’s awareness of East Asia is coming to the fore as a major issue, the first reason is that Japan’s financial support based on its absolute economic might in the region is very significant to all countries in Asia, including Korea, as clearly seen in the Asian financial crisis. Second, the capitalist global standard centered on the United States landed a direct hit on Asian economies with weak financial systems, including Japan, leading to the beginning of a search between Korea and Japan for regional economic consolidation that transcends the nations’ boundaries. And third, even ignoring such issues, it is needless to say that there have been Japanese imperialistic invasions as it constructed a wide-ranging colonial empire in the region since the late nineteenth century with the decisive starting point of the regional appellation of “Asia” imposed by the West being recognized as one space with a fixed geo-cultural image. That is to say that Japan’s imperialistic encroachments in Asia came to create an awareness of one unified regional order called Asia

in this vast region, and at the same time the nations of Asia, through resistance to Japan imperialism and independence movements, proceeded to gain their own national identity and cultural oneness.

In this writing, while bearing in mind the importance of this Japanese involvement in Asia, I intend to examine the questions of, first, how post-war Japan came to in fact lose its political-cultural interest in the region of East Asia, as though shifting toward the opposite pole from its prewar history, and instead follow a path that could be called something like “the new leaving Asia and entering Europe,” becoming the largest “Far East Agency” of Americanism in Asia. I intend to examine the reasons for this by looking back upon the status quo of postwar Japan and, while bringing into relief “America’s shadow” under the Cold War system, reveal the course of events where the anti-Communist regional alliance imposed “from above” (by the United States) in East Asia came to serve as a stumbling block to promoting the mutual understanding of the citizens of the countries of East Asia, including Japan.

Next, I examine how, in spite of this, the movement of the pendulum of Japanese awareness toward other countries has been shifting toward Asia following the end of the Cold War and the progression of globalism, and I review the history of the “Asianism” or “Asian identity” and Japanese nationalism that is imminent as a mood within the “return to Asia.”

To state it at a risk of being misunderstood, the concepts of “an East Asian community,” “a new East Asian order,” and “East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere” presented outwardly by Japan in the process of rushing from the Manchurian Incident into the Sino-Japanese War and Japanese-American conflict in World War II were mostly nothing more than empty slogans without substance, and yet this was a form of regional unity forcibly imposed “from above” with Japan as its center. Especially in East Asia, the fact that Asianism reached its zenith at exactly the time when a situation

was arising where the “Asian Community,” which regarded the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan as colonies of “inland extension” and ruled the puppet state of Manchukuo, was confronting the nationalism of the Chinese mainland and Japan was becoming decisively estranged from Asia, can only be called an irony of history.

However, if one turns attention to the wide-ranging Asian rule of imperial Japan and its internal circumstances, it can be seen that no unified order of rule had been attained. The order of imperial rule and its concept differed in each of the regions, including the “inland extension” colonies of the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan, Manchukuo (where “harmony of the five races” was put forth in order to approach the region), and Southeast Asia and the South Seas Island scattered in their outer reaches, and the broad colonial empire was composed from a complex order of lineage bearing substantial differences.

How was an “Asian community” formed as an area bearing such complicated differences? I intend to show this by relating it to an Asian awareness within the “leaving Asia and entering Europe” ideology.

To start from the conclusion, Asianism and “Asian identity” were not an image of Asia in direct opposition with the contemptuous view toward Asia of the “leaving Asia and entering Europe” ideology; both represented the repetition of a pendulum movement of nationalism, leading sometimes toward “leaving Asia” and sometimes returning to “Asianism” in accordance with the national power and quality of self-image of Japan in response to a crisis.

As such, my third point is that in envisioning an East Asian regionalism, it is needless to say that it is no longer at all possible to imagine the “Asian community” as an autarchy centered on one’s own people. Then, if Japan would be able to play an important part in regional unity in the age of globalism, what should it do?

In other words, in order to imagine the “Asian community” not as a concentric expansion of Japanese nationalism but as an open network where peoples and cultures, values and traditions coexist multidimensionally and combine freely, what role can be assigned to Japan?

First, there is a need to establish it in such a way that there is no dramatic upheaval in Japan’s Asian awareness. To this end, what is important is institutional and cultural deliberation on how to diminish the strength and status of Japan’s nationalism as much as possible. Specifically, there is a need to spread throughout Japan the living rule of a civic society that permits multidimensional values and identities.

If we examine recent trends, a nationalistic tendency equating the state with the public is gaining force together with the establishment of various kinds of legislation for national management, and even discussions on amending the postwar Peace Constitution are rising to the fore. Of course, this does not mean a return to “prewar Japan.” Instead, it could be called a ‘global standardization’ of postwar nations. That is to say that they are seeking a security of international status like that of Germany, which escaped from the “restraints” of the postwar constitution formed in cooperation with the United States and participated in NATO’s strike on Yugoslavia.

The activation of post-postwar national conceptualization will cause various repercussions in the nations of East Asia. For Japan, which has completed a process of sudden rise, development and maturity of nationalism, as well as transmutation and downfall, from the Meiji Period through the twentieth century, it is no wonder that the nations of East Asia, having established a foothold as only recently unified states, appear to be encountering a peak in nationalism. This ultimately shows the subtle spread both of a “resistance nationalism” discourse stating that, as nationalism recovers its power in the other nations of East Asia besides Japan, Japan too must

consolidate its position with nationalism, and of the theory of the Chinese threat.

To avoid the nightmare of the nations of East Asia attempting to climb this spiral of nationalism, it is essential that efforts be made in Korea and mainland China to reduce the strength of nationalism as much as possible. To accomplish this, maintenance of a stable and peaceful environment through the establishment of safety guarantees by multinational groups in East Asia is absolutely essential. And most of all, a system of peaceful coexistence on the Korean Peninsula must be situated at the heart of it. To realize this, the inter-Korean relations must maintain a balance, and a network of stable multinational relationships must be formed.

The first step is the normalization of the relations between North Korea and the United States, and based on this the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between North Korea and Japan. By doing so, both North and South Korea will be able to form normal relationships with the surrounding four superpowers (the United States, China, Russia and Japan) and balance can be restored to the asymmetrical international relationship of North and South Korea.

A multinational forum for achieving peaceful coexistence on the Korean Peninsula, involving North Korea and South Korea and the four superpowers, must be formed, establishing negotiations for arms reduction from the two Koreas and the establishment of a peace treaty and non-aggression agreement on a reciprocal basis. To this end, though it may be more or less mere idealism, there is a need for Japan, South Korea and North Korea to work together toward conceiving of a non-nuclear East Asia. Establishing a system that fundamentally forbids the production, disposition and outflow of nuclear weapons and having the islands of Japan and the Korean Peninsula play a pioneering role in the regional unification of a non-nuclear East Asia would be beneficial to both countries, which are surrounded by

the nuclear superpowers of the United States, China and Russia.

Does it not seem that, in this attempt, the contours of a system of collective security assurance in East Asia come to mind for the first time? Even if it is difficult to apply experiments such as the unification of Europe to Asia without any changes, it is obvious that security assurance and peaceful international organizations are necessary conditions for regional economic integration.

As we have seen thus far, a conception such as this one is completely impossible without the active participation of Japan. It is still impossible to predict precisely whether Japan will be able to succeed in playing such an active role for this purpose, or whether there will instead be a re-emergence of the envisioned creation of an “Asian community” under a new guise and Japan will proceed with expanding its power. However, in order for it to be possible to steer toward the previous course, it is undoubtedly essential that modern Japan’s view of Asia be fundamentally reexamined.

# Culture Against History? The “West” in the Search for an East Asian Identity

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I would like to take up below some problems that pertain to the question of an Asian identity in its relationship to the idea of “the West.” I would like to do so by taking a brief detour through changes over the last three decades in attitudes toward culture in the definition of identity. As the problems I raise are by now familiar ones, my goal here is primarily to draw attention to the contrast between contemporary approaches to the question and those that prevailed only a few decades ago, offer some thoughts on change in the world situation that may account for the transformation, and conclude with a few comments on the possibilities offered by a historical perspective to better comprehend contemporary problems that may contribute also to overcoming some of the dilemmas that they present.

In a book written more than two decades ago, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual*, the Moroccan intellectual Abdallah Laroui took up a question that he believed to be fundamental to non-Western intellectuals’ confrontation with the West: the question of historical or cultural “retardation.” The ascription of native cultural backwardness as an explanation of Western domination presented the native intellectual with a seemingly insuperable dilemma: to escape the past by Westernization, in which case the native intellectual could no longer claim a historical identity of any kind,

or to reaffirm the past as the source of identity in resignation to perpetual retardation. Laroui located the crisis to which the title of the book referred in this entrapment between “the West” and the “past.” Whatever the solution chosen, the choice condemned the intellectual to alienation from his/her present. As he put it, now there are two types of alienation: the one is visible and openly criticized, the other all the more insidious as it is denied on principle. Westernization indeed signifies an alienation, a way of becoming other, an avenue to self-division (though one’s estimation of this transformation may be positive or negative, according to one’s ideology). But there exists another form of alienation in modern Arab society, one that is prevalent but veiled: this is the exaggerated medievalization obtained through quasi-magical identification with the great period of classical Arab culture.

We may observe, further, with the hindsight of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, published two years later, that these two “alienations” (the liberal and the fundamentalist, respectively) were moreover entangled in Western hegemony insofar as they were premised on representations of Arab culture in Western Orientalism; whether rejected or reaffirmed, the past referred to was a product of Orientalism, now internalized by the Orientals themselves—what I have described elsewhere as “self-Orientalization,” and others as “Orientalism in reverse.”

Laroui’s own answer to the dilemma was a radical Marxist historicism that would reconnect the individual with the concrete present of his/her society: Historicism we are leading up to, one that is in many respects instrumental, is not the passive acceptance of any past whatsoever and above all not the acceptance of one’s own national past; rather, it is the voluntary choice of realizing the unity of historical meaning by the re-appropriation of a selective past. This choice is motivated by pragmatic considerations, perhaps, by modesty, above all by nationalism in the most

natural sense of the word; the will to gain the respect of others by the shortest possible route. In this perspective, we see clearly that it is not the moderate liberal who is being realistic, for he chooses to believe in the improbable equality of nations. Rather, it is the radical nationalist who is the realist; provided that he affirms his existence, he cares little if he loses his essence (his authenticity).

Voluntarism suggested by the phrase, “the reappropriation of a selective past,” is somewhat misleading, because Laroui’s argument in its main thrust suggests that the reappropriation of the past will be part of a process of struggle for existence in the present, a process that involved not just a struggle for national liberation but also a class struggle to overcome alienation within the nation; “praxis,” he notes on the same page, “is historicism in action.” What he had to say concerning the creation of a new culture through revolutionary praxis had a parallel a decade earlier in Franz Fanon’s statement that, a national culture is not a folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people’s true nature. It is not made up of the inert dregs of gratuitous actions, that is to say actions which are less and less attached to the ever-present reality of the people. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought of describe, justify and praise the action through which the people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. A national culture in underdeveloped countries should therefore take its place at the very heart of the struggle for freedom which these countries are carrying on.

These were attitudes, I have suggested elsewhere, that were common to the understanding of culture in most national liberation struggles of the late colonial period, from Morocco and Algeria to Cuba and China. They represented a notion of cultural creation that sought to transcend entrapment in the oppositions of “the West” and “the past,” or “modernity” and “tradition,” by taking their point of departure in a situation where both “the

past” and the “West” were inextricable constituents of “the ever-present reality of the people.” And what they sought to create was not just a national culture, but a national culture that was part of a greater struggle for freedom and justice.

National liberation movements are now of the past and, so apparently are the solutions to the question of cultural identity offered by national liberation leaders and theorists from Frantz Fanon to Abdallah Laroui, Ernesto Che Guevara to Mao Zedong. But the question of cultural identity is still very much there; indeed has come to the foreground insistently as it has been divorced from its ties to questions of political economy from which it seemed to be inseparable in earlier, primarily Marxist conceptualizations. It is also rephrased now in the language of globalization that has replaced modernization as a paradigm of change, but without providing any solution to either the problems inherited from the past, or the proliferation of cultural conflicts under its regime. While these conflicts endow the question with a new urgency, there are no new answers perceptible on the global cultural horizon. If anything, a cynicism toward the claims of all universalizing solutions has replaced the utopianism of an earlier period, that had been sparked by the end of colonialism, and fueled by hopes that post-colonial regimes (The Third World) could regenerate a universalism that had been betrayed by both capitalism and Soviet-style socialism. The failure of national liberation regimes, a consequence partly of their own failings, including the exaggerated utopian hopes which they invested in themselves, but also due in no small measure to the engineering of global policies designed to guarantee their failure, has resulted in a world-wide retreat from imagining alternatives to the present; while the so-called globalization itself has added new dimensions to the question of cultural identity. Traditions once condemned to the past have made a comeback with a vengeance. The critique of liberal scholarship beginning in the 1970s repu-

diated the modernity-tradition distinction as an issue of Eurocentrism, and such critique lives on in contemporary cultural studies which is even more adamant in repudiating the distinction. But such critiques seem to be irrelevant to what goes on in the world, where the erstwhile colonized peoples insist on their traditions; this time around not as remnants of the past but with their own claims to modernity. Surely, one of the crucial questions that we must all ask is why, in the midst of globalization, the world is being fragmented in so many ways that few dare to speak these days of universalism, while particularisms of all kinds, including some that were previously unimagined, have assumed such pervasiveness as to define existence universally.

Laroui acknowledged the direct inspiration in his analysis of the work of Joseph Levenson on the fate of Confucianism in modern China. In his seminal work published in the early 1960s, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, Joseph Levenson argued that Marxist historicism had resolved a problem that had plagued Chinese intellectuals ever since the encounter with the Modern West forced a parochialization of Confucian values from their universalistic status into the circumscribed endowment of a national past that was inconsistent with the struggle for modernity; a problem he described in terms of a tension between value and history. While not a Marxist himself, and not particularly sympathetic to the Chinese Revolution, Levenson nevertheless recognized the Communist Revolution in its own right as a historical phenomenon, and to understand the source of the appeals of Marxism; which he found in the ability of Marxist historicism to resolve this fundamental tension in Chinese intellectual life by relegating Confucianism into the museum, salvaging Confucius for the nation, but also rendering him irrelevant to the living present. As he put it, “Confucius ... redeemed from both the class aberration (feudal) of idolization and the class aberration (bourgeois) of destruction, might be kept

as a national monument, unworshipped, yet also unshattered. In effect, the disdain of a modern pro-Western bourgeoisie for Confucius cancelled out, for the dialecticians, a feudal class's pre-modern devotion. The Communists, driving History to a classless synthetic fulfillment, retired Confucius honorably into the silence of the museum."

It may be one of the profound ironies of our time that this situation has been reversed since Levenson wrote his analysis: Confucius has been brought out of the museum once again, while it is the revolution that is on its way to being museumified; not by feudal worshippers of Confucius, moreover, but by the bourgeoisie who once disdained Confucius. And it is not just the revolution that is at issue. Levenson's analysis, and his evaluation of what the revolution had achieved in resolving the tension between the past and the present, was informed by a teleology of modernity; that the claims of the values of ancient civilizations must inevitably be relegated to the past with the victory of modernity. If the pasts of those civilizations have been resurrected once again, it is not only because of the passing of revolutions, but more importantly the questioning of this teleology that has come to the fore as globalization has replaced modernization as a paradigm of contemporary change.

The passing of the Chinese Revolution, as of socialist revolutions in general, may be attributed to their particular failings. Similarly, advocates of the Confucian revival may attribute the revival to the particular virtues inherent in Confucianism. While there may be something to be said of such views, in my view they suffer from a debilitating parochialism that fails to account for a larger historical context where it is not just socialist revolutions that are relegated to the past but the very idea of revolution, and it is not just the Confucian tradition that is at issue, but the return of traditions in general. Nor do such views explain attempts to articulate Confucianism to values of entire regions, such as East and Southeast Asia, or of an entire

continent, such as Asia. Further complicating the situation are conflicts that attend these efforts. For all the talk about Asia and Asian values over the last few years, the idea of Asia remains quite problematic, and so do the ideological and cultural sources from which Asian values are to be derived. The most visible competitor to the Confucian revival may be the Islamic revival that has also become visible during this same period; but the period has also witnessed a Hindu revival in India, and right-wing nationalists in Turkey, echoing East Asian nationalists and their EuroAmerican cheerleaders, have resurrected earlier Pan-Turanian utopias to assert that the twenty-first century will be a Turkish century. In other societies in Asia, Buddhism continues to hold sway. It is difficult to avoid an inference that all these revivals, coinciding temporally, are products of the same world situation, though they obviously have local inflections depending on social context and ideological claims. On the other hand, their differences from one another are quite significant, and feed intra-Asian conflicts that have a variety of sources. In some cases, most notably in the case of Islam but also to some extent the Confucian revival which involves diasporic East Asians (especially Chinese) living outside of Asia, the ideological movements at issue extend beyond continental boundaries, calling into question, this time from a global perspective, anything that we could describe as “Asia” with any sense of concrete referentiality.

A rapidly changing world situation rules out any confident analysis of these developments, but it is still worth thinking through some of the phenomena that have attended their emergence. And their implications for contemporary ideas of East and West. Somehow all this has to do with what is called globalization. But Globalization as a paradigm is itself still very much uncertain in its implications. It is at once a description of certain changes at work in reshaping world, and a new discourse that seeks to perpetuate older hegemonies in new guise, a reincarnation of United States im-

perialism, as some would have it. Whatever its eventual outcome may be, however, it parts ways with the earlier modernization discourse in raising questions about a teleology of modernity that pointed to EuroAmerica as the end of history, and in its assault on the nation as the principal unit of political organization. From different directions, each of these departures from the regime of modernity may contribute to the emergence of cultural forces that counteract cultural globalization. The dislodging of EuroAmerica from the center of history enables the reemergence of national traditions that had been relegated to backwardness under the regime of modernity. The reassertion of national traditions derives additional force from the attack on the nation, which may in fact serve the purposes of the powerful who stand to benefit the most from globalization; not just powerful nations such as the United States, but transnational corporate forces of one kind or another. The cultural industry that is for the most part based in what used to be called the First World but seeks to recruit consumers from around the world, itself contributes in the name of globalization to the reification of national traditions which are commodified and relayed back to the people who claim them, further sharpening boundaries between such traditions. The seemingly benign policies of multiculturalism in the First World, in particular in the United States, owe their origins to the efforts of transnational corporations to accommodate the diversification of producers and consumers that has accompanied the process of transnationalization. While few could object to cultural tolerance, multiculturalism, too, reifies cultural divisions and translates, under adverse situations, into deadly cultural conflict.

It seems to me that the search for an Asian, or East Asian, identity, or a national identity within an Asian or an East Asian context, is entangled in this new situation, and illustrative of its problems, if only because East and Southeast Asian societies in their economic success have contributed

more than any other region of the world to the ascendancy of the new paradigm of globalization. I do not mean to imply here that the question of these identities is itself new. The question of national identity has been a perpetual question in East Asia since the beginnings of “Western” domination starting in the eighteenth century, and becoming inescapably evident by the nineteenth century, which was to compel a quest for nationhood, and with it, the definition of national identity. We could even suggest that the problem of national identity, in the case of Japan, even predated contact with the “West,” as Japanese thinkers in the eighteenth century began to raise questions concerning the relationship of Japanese identity to the Confucian ingredients in Japanese culture. An East Asian identity was bound to present itself as a problem when the China-centered world system in East and Southeast Asia broke down politically during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Its effects were felt deeply in Qing China, which now found itself relocated from the center of a world long assumed to be the world to the margins of a greater world; marginalized even in its world by the rapidly ascendant Japan. The relationship of national identity to not just the “West,” but to the preceding Confucian world order, was to emerge as a problem during this period in both Korea and Vietnam, mainstays of “the Chinese world order.”

The question of identity nevertheless has a history which has been occluded in much of the recent discussion of East Asian or Asian identities. I have argued elsewhere that while the Confucian revival may express long standing grievances against the Eurocentric suppression of East Asian pasts, it has been empowered in its most recent manifestation by the economic success of East Asian societies that were able, therefore, to assert their own cultural prerogatives against Europe and North America. I say “was,” because the resurrection of Confucius coincided with a moment of crisis in the global capitalist economy of the late seventies and the eighties, but may

be in jeopardy once again, now that the European and American economies have recovered, and it is the Asian economies that find themselves in trouble, calling into question the whole project of globalization, and once again turning miraculous Confucian capitalisms into historically condemned “crony capitalism.” Be that as it may, in its heyday Confucian capitalism served not only to fuel the argument for globalization, but was endowed with the task of salvaging a faltering capitalism. Involved in the promotion of the idea were not just intellectuals from East Asian societies, but perhaps more importantly American intellectuals of East Asian origin, as well as American intellectuals whose relationship to East Asia was exclusively ideological. For some East Asian intellectuals Confucianism had never been dead, needless to say, but it was a global investment of faith in East and Southeast Asian economies that endowed them with a new voice. It was the same faith that encouraged others to rediscover their Confucianism, and even their Asianness, as in the case, for example, of many Americans of Chinese descent. It was this same faith that played a part in the projection of the newfound success within global capitalism upon Asia as a whole, or the imaginary region of Asia Pacific; leading to bold assertions of a forthcoming Chinese, Asian, or Pacific century. How this will play out remains to be seen. For the time being, Asia as the motor force of the world economy has turned once again into an Asia that requires Western guidance to save it from itself, or even an Asia that may be a threat to global order.

All this suggests one thing: that even at the moment of a seeming assertion of an autonomous self against the West, the West has been very much part of an Asian self-discovery either as an active or an absent presence. United States policy theorizers from Herman Kahn to John Berger to Samuel Huntington played a direct part in the theorization of Confucian or Neo-Confucian culture as a dynamic force in the emergence of East and Southeast Asian economic vitality. They also provide theorists of East

Asian origin with theoretical legitimacy. At the same time, the West, and an urge to overcome a century of humiliation at Western hands has been very much on the minds of advocates of an East Asian or Asian revival among those intellectuals who themselves hail from those regions. Most importantly, the geography of Orientalism. It is no coincidence that the revival has expressed itself in terms of geographical regions that were in the first place products of EuroAmerican spatializations of Asia in Orientalist scholarship and, subsequently, the area studies of post World War II vintage.

It may be possible to suggest that East Asia (and parts of Southeast Asia) has a cultural reality beyond the constructs of Orientalism, as societies in those regions they are unified not only by long-standing historical exchanges but also by common textual traditions. That the relationships between these societies have been marked also by conflicts does not render them into any less of a culture area. After all, deadly conflicts between European societies have not prevented Europeans from claiming a common heritage based on origins in classical civilizations, or the legacy of the enlightenment. We may not be that the idea of Europe, too, has been called into question by some (not to speak of a unitary entity called “the West,” that lumps together Europe and North America, or the Americas in general). That aside, however, a claim for East Asia as a culture area based on textual unities calls for strategies of analysis different from those that have been employed in discussions of the Confucian revival; strategies of analysis that not only factor in historical conflicts, modern nationalisms that expressed themselves in renunciation of this common legacy, and intra-East Asian imperialism, but also existence of intellectual and popular traditions that provided alternatives to the so-called Confucian tradition, and also divided these societies from one another. Where does Confucianism stop and Daoism and Buddhism begin? How does Shinto play into Japanese Confucianism,

or shamanic practices into Korean? How do popular traditions come into a definition of these societies in terms of Confucian culture? We may have no farther to go than the current popularity in China of the Falun gong against a regime that seeks to bolster its faltering socialist legacy with Confucian homilies to illustrate that Confucianism by no means suffices in the cultural definition of China—much less East Asia—but is, on the contrary, bound up with state and class interests against other possible cultural definitions of China. These complexities have been absent from discussions of Confucian China, or a Confucian East Asia, which have engaged instead in a cultural reification not only of entire societies but of an entire region that coincides suspiciously to Orientalist cultural geography.

Claims to Asia and Asian values provide even more egregious illustration of the legacy of Eurocentric Orientalism. The ideology of an Asian identity, Pan-Asianism, dates back to the late nineteenth century, and coincided, ironically, with the emergence of national consciousness in one Asian society after another in the same period. East Asians did not realize that they lived in Asia until they saw themselves so located in maps from Europe; the term “Asia” was introduced into Chinese by Jesuits in the seventeenth century, but there is little indication that this made much of an impression on the Chinese until the nineteenth century, when world geography acquired an urgent importance in efforts to understand the new world into which China, and East Asia in general, were drawn inexorably. The geography of imperialism, ironically, also shaped the geography of resistance to it. Radical nationalists from various societies, circulating around Asia in search of ideas, funds and constituents for their nation-building efforts, through their encounters became aware of the common plight of their societies—and their “Asianness”—which would produce a common radical discourse around the idea of Asia. Others more inclined to a cultural nationalism of sorts, of whom the most prominent representative may be the

Indian poet and thinker Rabindranath Tagore, drew upon a distinction in European Orientalism to promote the idea of a spiritual Asia against a materialistic West.

In either case, however, there was a predicament built into Pan-Asianism that derived from a confounding of national aspirations with continental ascriptions; appropriating supposedly continental characteristics for national ends, while also projecting upon the continent what were taken to be national characteristics. The instability of the idea has been manifested in the course of the twentieth century in the diametrically opposed uses to which it has been put. Pan-Asian solidarity could motivate common revolutionary struggles, as it did in China in the 1920s and 1930s when Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese radicals fought side by side with the Chinese in a revolutionary struggle that would liberate not only China, but also launch the liberation of Asia as a whole, Pan-Asianism could also justify, and even legitimize, intra Asian imperialism where one society could take it upon itself to liberate all of Asia from Western (and Communist) imperialism, in the process subjecting other Asian societies to its domination- as in the case of Japanese imperialism in the thirties and forties.

If Europeans created the idea of Asia, they served also as midwives to the birth of Pan-Asianism, which has been an added source of instability in the comprehension and uses of Pan-Asianism. Changing relationships to the “West,” the context for both Asia and Pan-Asianism, has played a part in shaping the relationship of societies in Asia to one another, and to the idea of Asia. Having created the notion of Asia in the first place, EuroAmerican involvement in Asia has repeatedly exposed the illusoriness of pretensions to continental consciousness. It is important to remember here that the first “Asian” nations to qualify for admission into modernity according to its gatekeepers, Turkey and Japan at the two extremities of Asia, qualified for the admission to the new world order by “escaping from

Asia,” Japan from the late nineteenth century, and Turkey after the Ataturk reforms after 1923. It is equally instructive to remember that “escaping Asia,” while qualifying these societies for candidacy for this new world order, has not meant actual admission into the ranks per se, as their “Asianness” still handicaps them, for all their efforts, from becoming “Western.” And that, in spite of the fact that Japan proved itself as capable of imperialism against its Asian neighbors as any power from the “West,” and Turkey enthusiastically entered the War in Korea to prove that it was on the side of the good guys against bad Asians!

The very idea of “Asia,” then, has the West as an inextricable constituent. In the words of the prominent Indian thinker, Ashis Nandy, whose influential works have consistently drawn attention to the fact that the West is no longer an outside to Asia and Asians, but is very much internalized in the Asian self-consciousness, Asia is a geographical, not cultural entity. Though many Asians have defined their continent Culturally during the last 150 years, that definition can be read as an artifact of Asian reactions to Western colonialism rather than as a search for larger cultural similarities... Cultural definitions of Asia have been mainly a psychological defense against the internalized imperial fantasy of the continent as a location of ancient civilizations that had once been great and were now decadent, decrepit and senile.

The search for East Asian or Asian identity as exemplified by the Confucian revival does not represent the only response to Eurocentrism, or a search for alternatives to it. Postcolonial discourse in our day, in contrast to earlier days of national liberation, would seem to be obsessed with the problem of exorcizing the EuroAmerican ghost that has become part of a global legacy. The exorcism seems to take a different form according to political and cultural disposition. The search for an East Asian or Asian identity would seem to be most favored by those who have never given

up on those traditions, but also by states and capital who perceive in those traditions not only a means of self-identification, but also a means to keeping in check the disorganizing effects of success in the capitalist economy without questioning capitalism as such. Their orientation coincides with the urgent need felt by large sectors of the population (as in the case of China, for example) for some sense of national identity in the face of cultural globalization—i.e., the invasion of local cultures by the technology of global consumption culture. The latter, in turn, plays up local cultures and traditions as part of global marketing strategies, producing ethnic and national cultures even as it draws all societies into the seemingly irresistible, and inexhaustible, vortex of a market culture.

Others, mostly cosmopolitan intellectuals of a critical bent who are quite aware not only that national cultures themselves are products of the history of EuroAmerican modernity, but also that the reification of national culture itself provides occasion for oppression within and aggression without, point to ambivalence and ambiguity if not as a solution to anything, at least as a way of avoiding the harm done by cultural reification at the national, regional or global level. As one such intellectual writes, with reference to a text produced by a Korean American, I believe that the ambivalence in this text is irreducible. This is because, on the one hand, the need to fight against imperialist oppression—which may well require manufacture in the future of the national community as the subject of resistance—is far from diminished in the world today, and, on the other hand, the homogenization of the national community could too often lead to the tremendous victimization of those who are culturally and linguistically heterogeneous. However unbearable it may be, the text seems to say, we have to live with this ambivalence.

Ambivalence here arises from a recognition of the aporia presented by cultural choice, or even the definition of culture as such. The very notion

of “ambivalence” has acquired currency in recent years as an antidote to cultural reification and bigotry. On the other hand, there is no way of avoiding a sense that it is also an expression of hopelessness, and, even more seriously, that it betrays an obliviousness to a historical situation in which the ambiguity of texts the ambivalence of intellectuals may be out of step with proliferating demands for identity.

A third option, perhaps most appealing to activist intellectuals who continue to believe in the possibility of radical transformation, is the option of dialogue from the bottom up; dialogue among Asian intellectuals from different locations within Asia, that seeks nevertheless to avoid national, regional or continental reifications of culture. In some ways, this option represents the transportation to Asian locations of what has been called “globalization from below.” It is non-exclusive in the sense both of refusing to draw a wedge between “east” and “west,” but also in recognizing common problems that unite many in Asia with populations elsewhere, from Africa to Latin America to Europe and North America. A representative sampling of this position is to be found in the volume, *Trajectories*, where the editors and the various contributors self-consciously take up positions that acknowledge the legacy of earlier radicalisms, without trying to avoid the recognition of new problems that have emerged with changing times. What may be most important in the undertaking, as one of the contributors puts it, is a recognition of the pathologies both of a Eurocentric domination of the world, and those of Asian societies themselves, which have become inextricable from one another over the history of modernity. The point is how to overcome these pathologies without entrapment in oppositions that are no longer relevant. Overcoming the colonial legacy of modernity as well as the destructive consequences of globality requires attention to life at the everyday level, where the various strands of the past and the west are intertwined to form many local cultures that are rendered invisible in

notions of culture that are incapable of looking past continent, region or nation.

Globalization discourse has revealed contradictions within Eurocentrism more explicitly than ever before, and allowed for the resurfacing of traditionalist discourses that question EuroAmerican claims to modernity. But this does not mean the end of Eurocentrism. Ien Ang in a recent article argues cogently the persistence within Europe of assumptions of European superiority, which is expressed in a persistent self-image of Europe as the savior of the world. I have already noted that globalization itself is in many ways a rephrasing of United States economic and cultural hegemony, and serves as an excuse for exporting worldwide American economic, political and cultural practices. Even multiculturalism serves to contain cultural difference in a manner consistent with those practices.

I am more interested here, however, in the persistence of Eurocentrism in more insidious ways even in the rejection of Eurocentrism. This is what I have argued above with regard to the Confucian revival of the last two decades, and the quest for East Asian or Asian values, which, for all their efforts to assert autonomous values against the hegemony of Eurocentrism, are marked nevertheless by the temporalities and spatialities of a Eurocentric conceptualization of the world. This is evident also in the re-interpretation of so-called Confucian or Asian values to accord with the demands of capitalism, with all its developmentalist premises, which goes unquestioned in much of the discussion. In fact, some critics of Eurocentrism in Europe and North America have sought in recent years to divorce capitalism from EuroAmerican modernity, making it into an endowment of Asian societies as well, which raises questions concerning EuroAmerican claims to modernity, and may be complimentary to non-European societies which are now demonstrated to have had the same potential for development as modern Europe. What is less noticed is that this kind of revisionism rewrites the

history of the world after the model of EuroAmerican capitalist modernity; in the process making capitalism into a fate of humankind globally that erases alternatives to EuroAmerican capitalist modernity to be found in these different historical traditions. It is in many ways a Eurocentrism with a vengeance. Eurocentrism casts its shadow even on those attempts to escape its legacy as in the radical efforts to overcome both Eurocentrism and Asia-centrism to which I referred above; for EuroAmerican institutions are quick to insinuate themselves into any dialogue even between non-Western radicals; as in the case of a forthcoming conference intended to discuss “Asian” paradigms in the study of Asian societies, which is funded, according to the announcement, by the Ford Foundation!

Does this mean that Eurocentrism is a historical prison-house from which there is no exit? This may be a self-defeating way of posing a question that could be phrased differently: does the repudiation of Eurocentrism require a denial of the historical role played by European and American societies, which in many ways also constitutes a denial of history to the society of the self? It is this denial that issues either in unconscious slip-page into Eurocentrism by writing world history along the paradigms and problems that are products of the EuroAmerican organization of the world in the first place, or in escapes into traditions that became conscious of themselves as traditions in the face of EuroAmerican cultural negation of alternative pasts. It makes much more sense, under the circumstances, to historicize both Europe and societies of the self, to recognize that while EuroAmerican modernity may have been product of a particular conjuncture in history, the forces unleashed by this modernity—from capitalism to the Enlightenment, the nation-state to colonialism—nevertheless had a transformative role globally. This transformative role needs to be distinguished from global homogenization, as it was articulated at all times through a dialectic of the global and the local, but it was transformative

nevertheless. Any consideration of alternative futures, therefore, needs to take its point of departure not in some pre-modern past, which may be unknowable except through its textual traces, but through present realities in which, to recall Laroui, pasts and Wests are ever co-present in constantly shifting configurations. To take recourse to the past or the West as if they were entities frozen forever in time is to refuse the dialectic that endows the terms with their historical meanings; perhaps even to freeze them so as to acquire some control over the direction of history. But, if I may recall a fundamental insight of Marxism, any effort to act in history in order to have some say over the future, requires not the denial but the recognition of historicity; in Laroui's words, "praxis as historicism in action." We need not subscribe to any Marxist, or modernist, teleology to acknowledge the importance not only of recognizing the historicity of the past and the present, but the historicity of our own efforts to intervene in the process, or even to write about it, which may be a different form of intervention.

SECTION 2

*East Asian  
Environment/ Nature/ Cities*

동북아시아역사연구소  
동북아시아역사연구소

동북아시아역사연구소  
NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY RESEARCH FOUNDATION

# Economic Relationship and Environmental Problems in East Asia

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## 1. Introduction

Currently, the East Asian economic crisis appears, based on macroeconomic indicators, to have entered into a state of remarkable recovery. However, the social and environmental shocks of this crisis still remain, and concerns have been presented that it will only stabilize to any real extent after two to three more years. In this respect, the East Asian crisis could be said to be not simply an economic crisis, but also a social and environmental crisis (World Bank, 1998, Ch. 6; Habito, 1998; Choi, 1999). In fact, it may be said that before this crisis became visible in mid-1997, it was already immanent in the course of the rapid growth in this region. In particular, the underside of the economic growth so compressed and rapid as to be referred to as a 'miracle' could be said to be predicated upon the sacrifice of the region's labor and environment (Page, 1993; Krugman, 1994). In spite of this, once the economic crisis erupted, businesses and the state intended first and foremost to cut back on expenses for social welfare and the environment, and even dissolved or relaxed environmental regulations as part of a strategy to overcome the economic crisis.

While this crisis, where the East Asian economy and environment meet,

may of course be partially attributed to individual countries' problems or to the so-called weakness of Asian values, it could be said to have occurred due to the global economic and environmental regime or the so-called globalization process, namely the spread of Western material civilization taking place on a global scale, and its limitations. This was possible because the development of East Asia did indeed embrace the Western economic and political system easily compared to any other region of the world, and through this was able to actively incorporate itself into the global system once again. However, entry into this capitalist world system led to a situation that could generate crises due to the unbalanced development, competitive conflict and perpetual instability inherent within this system.

If the East Asian economic crisis originated with the acceptance of the capitalist global economic system and entry into it, the East Asian environmental crisis could be said to originate most of all from values that place the highest priority on economic concerns, the environment view that came into being together with the development of the capitalist system. In other words, efforts to accept the capitalist global economic system and enter into it led to the disappearance of the traditional environmental consciousness held by East Asia and instead led to the introduction and diffusion of an instrumental or technology-centered environmental view. Due to this consciousness or value system, the countries of East Asia urgently require regional environmental cooperation to solve the domestic and international environmental problems that they face, but, because of various conflicts resulting from economic and technological interests accompanying the differences in levels of economic development, it appears that this will be difficult to put into practice properly.

At the present time, with the twenty first century ahead of us, we must work hard to go forward with developing a society where new (or alternative) ecological interests, not Western (i.e., capitalist) economic interests,

combine with East Asian values. With this kind of critical consciousness and goal, in this writing I will (1) attempt first to analyze the impact of the globalization process on the East Asian economy and environment; (2) consider the process of increasing East Asian economic development and environmental problems unfolding under the rules of this globalization; (3) discuss how the increase in economic interdependency among the countries of East Asia, each of which had particularly different developmental stages in their industrial structure, is leading to the transfer of environmental problems; (4) point out that, despite the urgent need for regional cooperation on the environment within this situation, such cooperation cannot proceed actively due to economic interests; and (5) finally, emphasize the need to locate a shift, from an ecological aspect, toward a new set of values that can break free from these economic interests.

## 2. Globalization and Its Impact on East Asia

At one time, East Asian economic growth, often called a “miracle,” was more something achieved within the backdrop of the global economy rather than something accomplished in itself. That is to say that for the last few decades, East Asian economic development was possible through the introduction of and entry into the capitalistic economic system inherent within the dynamic nature of the global economy, and the recent East Asian economic crisis as well could be said to be the result of a certain type of pitfall created by the globalization of this capitalistic economic system, some flaw of the capitalist globalization process. Accordingly, we must first establish a basic understanding of the globalization process.

The advanced economies of the West, which were able to achieve considerable economic development based on a relatively stable foundation of

accumulation following World War II, fell into severe economic stagnation beginning in the mid-1970s. This problem resulted from the overlapping of internal and external factors. This means that the Western capitalist economy of the 1970s on one hand endured falling profit rates and rising unemployment due to excessive investment in large-scale production processes derived from the system of mass production and mass consumption (the so-called Fordist system of accumulation). On the other hand, the fluctuations in petroleum that occurred within this situation further aggravated the Western economies, leading them to race into stagflation, where the prices of goods rose even as idle production equipment and goods in stock increased. This situation of economic crisis overlapped with a situation of ecological crisis (O'Conner, 1989). In other words, the system of mass production and consumption that had enabled stable economic development during that time was accelerating the exhaustion of resources and increasing the emission of pollutants. As well, ecological campaigns opposed to this began to appear with great frequency and spread far and wide.

Faced with such a situation of economic and ecological crisis, Western nations have worked to reduce the depletion of raw materials and energy sources and lower the degree of environment pollution by expanding investment in the area of scientific technology in order to develop new materials and production processes. Furthermore, Western economies have developed industries based in cutting-edge technology, such as microelectronics, thus continuing the accumulation of capital and restoring relatively high profit rates on one hand, and solving problems of resources and pollution to a considerable extent on the other. However, in this process, Western industries and governments have not only restructured business into a form of energy conservation/pollution minimization, they have also sought to export their existing antiquated and heavily polluting production equipment to Third World nations with lax environmental regulations. Accordingly,

Western society has not only given rise to a new stratification of the global economy centered on Western technology-intensive cutting-edge industries, they have also moved their own domestic polluting industries and goods (and even their industrial waste) overseas, resulting in a worldwide spread of environmental problems.

These economic and political changes in the West have had a huge influence on the region of East Asia. First, the nations of East Asia, which had once been divided into socialist and capitalist, have settled the political, military and ideological conflicts resulting from this division, and have instead come to make a priority of realizing economic interests and entry into the global capitalist economic system. The political and economic obstacles that had formed under the Cold War system have disappeared, and multinational enterprises and investment capital in particular have come to assume a superspatial mobility based on the elimination of traditional national boundaries and the development of global information technology, flowing freely to wherever surplus value could be obtained.

In this process of capitalist globalization, the countries of East Asia not only wanted to enter the global market through the development of light industries that used cheap domestic labor, they intended to stimulate economic growth by introducing the relatively low-grade (or standardized) production facilities moving in from Western economies. The countries of East Asia raised these first as import substitution industries, and then went on to form a production system within a relationship of fixed vertical integration with developed countries, i.e., a relationship of subcontracting. Accordingly, economic interdependence and international cooperation became visible among the countries of East Asia, but on the other hand unbalanced regional development and differentiation in economic growth stages for each country were promoted.

Second, as not only developed countries but developing countries came

to enter the global economy and pursue economic interests competitively, a new regionalism came to appear that sought to form exclusive relationships between geographically contiguous nations, and this was embodied by the formation of economic blocs in continental units. This means that the European Union (EU), with its long history, is attempting not only the free movement of goods and manpower but the unification of all countries' currency through the euro. As well, in the region of North America, the United States, Canada and Mexico are devising the exclusive protection of industries and trade within the region through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In addition, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is holding more active meetings to promote economic relationships among the nations of this region.

The continuing emergence of such regional economic blocs has increased the exchange of goods and capital within the regions, and at the same time increased interdependence among the nations of each region. In particular, as the global economy shifted from the existing bipolar system formed during the Cold War to a new tripolar system centered on the EU, the United States and Japan, emphasis was particularly placed on the role of Japan in East Asia's economy and politics. As such, not only did the role of Japan in the global economy come into sharp relief, Japan also came to occupy a position of absolute importance within the region of East Asia. In this regard, the East Asian economic structure is also often described as the "flying geese" model, a stratified model with Japan at the front, followed by the two city-states of Hong Kong and Singapore, then Korea and Taiwan, then the newly-developing economies of Thailand and Indonesia, and beyond them countries like the Philippines and Vietnam.

Third, as environmental problems spread throughout the world with the process of capitalist globalization, an appropriate response became necessary. Thus, for the past 30 years, beginning with the 1972 Stockholm

UN Conference on the Human Environment and continuing through the 1992 Rio UN Conference on Environmental and Development, many international environmental meetings have been held and several environmental pacts have been signed. On one hand, this international effort is dealing with the earth's environmental problems amid ever-worsening environmental pollution and has also offered the concept of "sustainable development" and "Agenda 21," a platform of practice to be translated into action, for an industrial society faced with a marginal situation. However, the international environmental regulations further tightened in this process enabled new intervention of developed countries in international trade that had abandoned the establishment process of the WTO free trade system, and furthermore, environmental imperialist tendencies of interfering in other countries' resource use and industrial activity under the pretext of preserving the environment were also revealed.

The countries of East Asia, in the process of promoting rapid economic growth, had been relatively neglectful of environmental issues, but they became sensitive to such international environmental agreements and the subsequent regulations. In response, the countries of East Asia (with the exception of Japan) sought to justify their economic growth process, and on the other hand attempted, through the establishment of a regional system of environmental cooperation, to solve not only the environmental problems occurring between their countries but also the resource depletion and environmental contamination issues worsening in their own countries. However, regional environmental cooperation in East Asia has been deferred, on one hand due to conflicting economic interests resulting from the difference in the countries' respective stages of economic development, and on the other due to the position of Japan, which has the economic and technological capacity to solve environmental problems within the region, hitting a barrier (that of the intransigence of economic and technological interests).

Fourth, the East Asian economic crisis erupted in this global context, and as a result the environment was devastated even further. There is no doubt that the economies of East Asian nations are harboring serious problems within themselves, but it could be said that the fact that this was expressed in the form of crisis was tied to the global economy. In other words, just as East Asian economic growth was accomplished within the context of the global economy, the East Asian economic crisis is also understood within this context. As an example among the many discussions of the East Asian crisis, Lipietz (1998) claimed that within the East Asian crisis lurked “an overaccumulation that occurred as too much foreign capital, especially capital borrowed from Japan, was transformed into the productive capital of other East Asian countries,” and that in this way the crisis occurred as “East Asian capitalism, organized around the superiority of productive capital, was overwhelmed by American/British capitalism, organized around the predominance of financial capital.”

The shock of the East Asian economic crisis is giving rise to a further exacerbation of the environment problems that have accumulated from the past. Faced with the crisis, governments of these countries have relaxed their interest in the environment and reduced the portion of budget earmarked for it, and businesses have come to reduce investment in the environment as they decrease operation of equipment related to it. Not only that, several nations faced with crisis have eased regulations on real estate markets and systems related to the environment on the pretext of economic stimulation, ultimately employing a strategy of accelerating environmental ruin. The East Asian economic crisis has not only brought a decline in public interest in environmental issues and a reduction in actual investment in and regulation of the environment in these countries, it has focused almost all attention on economic recovery internationally as well, weakening the function of international forums on environmental issues discussion.

### 3. East Asia's Economic Development and Environmental Problems

The countries of East Asia have maintained long historical relationships economically and politically, and share many aspects in the forms of their cultural lives as well. Also, most of the countries endured either colonial rule through the expansion of Japanese imperialism in the early part of this century or the suffering that accompanied it. They recovered political independence and social stability after World War II, but as they were divided into groups of socialist or capitalist nations, they had to endure ensuing political, military and ideological conflicts. However, with the recent process of capitalist globalization, the nations of this region are ending their confrontational relationship and working actively to realize their economic interests. Accordingly, most East Asian countries have sought industrial advancement since the 1960s, chalking up high rates of economic growth and rapidly expanding the amount of their international trade as well.

In this way, almost all of the countries (with the exception of North Korea) have prioritized the realization of economic development, and thus, despite attaining noteworthy economic development on a global scale, the countries are actually each faced with very different situations. Thus, if one considers South Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, they are each very different in terms of their ability to mobilize all of the elements of production, such as the labor force appearing in population figures, the amount of national resources, which is heavily determined by geographic area, and the development of capital and technology dependent upon the degree of economic growth. Not only this, each of these economies also has an industrial structure showing different stages of economic development.

As can be seen in Table 1, around 1980 South Korea showed value-

added production equivalent to around 20% in each area of industry, but in the 1980s, while industries that could be called technology-intensive grew substantially, food production industries fell sharply, and other industries as well showed a relative decrease overall. Korea's technology-intensive industries grew even further, and in 1995 came to account for 40.4% of all manufacturing industry value-added production. The Japanese economy was already based in capital-intensive and technology-intensive industries in the early 1980s, and since then has been developing technology-intensive industries even further. On the other hand, China instead increased the share occupied by natural resources and processing industries out of its total value-added production during the 1980s, while reducing the component ratio of technology-centered industries.

If we can infer from these changes in the industrial structure of East Asian countries, the Japanese economy has already reached a stage of high-level development where it can obtain high productivity even if the labor and environment within the country is seriously damaged. South Korea has recently increased its emphasis on machine/technology-intensive industry greatly, but rather than actually being based in technology, in general it depends largely on standardized electronic appliance or automotive industries. In addition, while it could be said that South Korea has escaped to some extent from the previously existing capital-intensive heavy and chemical industries, they still maintain a fixed portion of the base. In the case of China, the country is showing a very high rate of economic growth, but it could be said that this has been made possible at the cost of labor sacrifice, exhaustion of resources and environmental pollution (even though it may be said that in 1998 the component ratio of the exceedingly standardized mechanical and technological industries was the largest).

**Table 1** Changes in the Industrial Structure of Major Countries in East Asia

Classification		South Korea				China		Japan	
		1980	1988	1995	1998	1988	1980	1988	1998
natural resource processing industries	labor	16.8	17.0	12.1	12.3	16.6	14.5	14.0	12.9
	added value	19.9	17.1	14.5	12.3	20.7	17.2	15.2	13.1
food processing industries	labor	9.2	7.4	7.2	9.1	10.6	11.3	11.7	12.4
	added value	17.3	11.8	8.4	12.4	11.9	9.7	10.0	11.1
labor-intensive industries	labor	38.5	33.4	27.5	13.4	17.5	21.2	18.0	20.1
	added value	23.3	21.0	15.9	22.2	18.4	12.5	9.8	11.6
capital-intensive industries	labor	13.0	12.3	16.0	25.4	20.4	16.6	15.4	16.1
	added value	20.5	19.3	20.9	25.1	22.2	24.4	23.6	19.8
machine/technology-intensive industries	labor	22.6	29.9	37.3	39.9	35.0	36.4	40.9	38.6
	added value	19.0	30.8	40.4	27.9	26.9	36.2	41.4	44.4

\*Data: U.N., *Industrial Statistics Yearbook 1998*, Vol. 1: PECC, *Pacific Economic Report 1992-1993*, No Jae-bong and Yu Jae-won (1992), cited on p. 36; NSO, R. of Korea (1997), *Report on Mining and Manufacturing Survey*; SBSC, Japan (1999), *Japan Statistical Yearbook* (<http://www.stat.go.jp/1.htm>).

We can examine the environmental problems of East Asian nations with regard to this point. Thus, as can be seen in Table 2, South Korea has shown an increase of more than 10 times, China 3 times, and Japan 2 times in primary energy consumption for the last 25 years. The absolute amount of energy consumption is important as well, but the amount of consumption per capita and per GNP unit also have great significance. For primary energy consumption in 1997, South Korea's per capita consumption was twice as high as Japan's, and consumption per GNP unit was three times as high. This shows us that the Korean economy has been formed with a very energy-inefficient industrial structure compared to Japan. Similarly, in the case of China, per capita energy consumption is only 8% of Korea's, but viewed

in terms of GNP units it is nearly three times that of Korea. In terms of types of energy, Korea and Japan, which lack energy resources within their own countries, are heavily dependent on imported oil, while China is expanding its production and consumption of coal, and as a result its emission of atmospheric pollutants is greatly increasing.

This becomes more certain if one examines the characteristics of quantities of pollutants discharged by the major economies of East Asia. Thus, the characteristics of their pollutant emissions show a similar form to their consumption of energy resources. In Korea, the discharge of water pollutants per GNP unit has been greatly improving since the 1980s, but the amount discharged in 1996 was still twice that of Japan. Also, with regard to the discharge of carbon dioxide, which is recognized as a greenhouse gas and requires global regulations for industries emitting it, Korea's amount of discharge per GNP unit was 3.6 times that of Japan. China's emission of pollutants is even more severe than that of Korea (Edmonds, 1994). Unlike Korea and Japan, China has shown almost no change in the amount of water pollutants and carbon dioxide discharged per GNP unit, and accordingly its amount of water pollution discharge was 15.5 times that of Korea and 32.3 times that of Japan, while its amount of carbon dioxide emission corresponded to 4.4 times that of Korea and 16.1 times that of Japan.

Resource consumption and pollutant emission are closely related to industrial structure. The heavy and chemical industries, which the Korean economy has greatly depended upon as mainstay industries since the 1970s, could be considered industries that induce serious resource consumption and discharge of pollutants. As shown in Table 1, by the 1990s Korea's industrial structure shifted considerably toward technology-intensive industries that were less sensitive to environmental issues, but it is still made up of industries that consume energy and discharge pollutants to a relatively greater degree than the technology-intensive industries of Japan. It

could be said that Japan's industrial structure has already advanced toward technology-intensive industries, and thus while it met with serious environmental problems in the early stages of industrialization, it was able to solve them through a shift in the industrial mechanism. In addition, Japan increased opportunities for creating new profits by developing environmental industries and technology during this process. China is relatively inefficient

**Table 2** Changes in the Primary Energy Consumption of Major Countries in East Asia

Classification	South Korea				China				Japan			
	1972	1980	1990	1997	1972	1980	1990	1997	1973	1980	1990	1997
total (millions of TOE)	17	36	83	180	281	387	625	872	258	299	400	506
per capita (kg)	509	944	2,084	8,483	335	393	568	701	2,373	2,563	3,238	4,027
per GNP unit (kg/USD)	1.59	0.60	0.34	0.38	-	1.30	1.69	0.95	0.85	0.28	0.14	0.12
coal (millions of TOE)	6	13	25	35	235	297	509	649	52	55	84	90
oil (millions of TOE)	11	23	41	110	37	72	91	186	194	206	211	266

\* Data: Korea National Statistical Office, *Principal Overseas Economic Indicators*, 1992; *International Statistics Annual Report*, 1999.

**Table 3** Pollutant Discharge Quantities of Major Countries in East Asia

Classification	South Korea			China			Japan			
	1980	1993	1996	1980	1993	1996	1980	1993	1996	
water pollutants	total (1,000 tons)	103	131	129	1,233	1,949	3,235	531	565	540
	per worker (kg)	51.1	47.5	43.8	51.1	54.8	47.5	51.1	51.1	51.1
	per GNP unit (kg/1000\$)	1.70	0.40	0.25	4.13	3.56	3.88	0.50	0.13	0.12
carbon dioxide	total (millions of tons)	146	439	473	1,477	3,193	3,364	920	1,127	1,168
	per capita (tons)	3.8	9.7	10.4	1.5	2.7	2.8	7.9	9.0	9.3
	per GNP unit (kg/1000\$)	2.41	1.34	0.91	4.95	5.84	4.03	0.87	0.26	0.25

\* Data: Korea National Statistical Office, *International Statistics Annual Report*, 1999.

in terms of economic productivity, and is made up of industries that require excessive energy consumption and discharge of waste matter. As such, China has become integrated competitively into the regional economic system of East Asia, but it might be said that this goal depends on natural resource processing and labor-intensive industries that are predicated upon the sacrifice of labor and nature (Smith, 1997).

#### 4. The Increase of Interdependence and the Transfer of Environmental Problems

The industrial structure of a region or nation, rather than changing in itself, is formed and transformed within a close relationship to other neighboring regions or countries. In this regard, the industrial structure of East Asian countries and its changes can also frequently be explained based on the perspective of regional “comparative advantage” with regard to expenses for elements of production such as labor, resources, capital and technology (Perkins, 1997). However, this explanation is focused on visibly apparent phenomena, and does not show a structural grasp of the relationships between countries formed according to regionally organized systems of production and spatial division of labor. In other words, the industrial structure of East Asian countries and its changes must be understood according to differences in stages of economic development and the dynamic nature of the economic relationships formed between them. Diagram 1 is a schematic representation of the changes in the industrial structure of the main nations of East Asia and the relationships between them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This diagram does not mean to suggest that all nations’ industry structures proceed from labor-intensive industries, through natural resource processing and resource-intensive industries and into technology-intensive industries, but is intended to describe the shift of

According to this diagram, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Japanese economy had already followed the advanced economies of the West and grown rapidly based on industries of processing imported materials, in the form of labor-intensive industries and import substitution industries. Since the 1970s Japan has passed through fierce competition with Western countries to become one of the few countries to reach the highest level in capitalist economic development. However, in the process, Japan transferred its antiquated existing industries (production facilities and technology) to such neighboring rising industrial countries as South Korea. This transfer of industries on one hand subordinated these countries by establishing subcontracting factories and cooperative enterprises and subsuming them into the vertical division of labor of the production system, while on the other hand gave rise to the outcome of transferring these characteristically energy-consuming and heavily polluting industries and transferring or exporting the problems of resources and pollution to neighboring countries.

**Diagram 1** Diagram of Industrial Structure Changes of Major Countries in East Asia

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Japan	labor-intensive industries →	natural resource processing industries →	capital-intensive industries →	technology-intensive industries →	→
South Korea		labor-intensive industries →	natural resource processing industries →	capital-intensive industries →	technology-intensive industries →
China			labor-intensive industries →	natural resource processing industries →	capital-intensive industries →

one country's industry structure within a fixed (subordinate) relationship with the industry structures of neighboring countries.

South Korea came to experience rapid economic growth through the fostering of labor-intensive light industries in the 1960s, capital-intensive heavy and chemical industries since the 1970s, and technology-intensive machine / assembly industries more recently. However, this industrial development was accomplished within a relationship of international division of labor, specifically with Japan, and thus was premised upon not only related technology and production equipment, but also large-scale capital inflow through loans or direct investment. Prior to the 1970s, the Chinese economy was composed mainly of primary industry and low-productivity labor-intensive industries, but since that time has shifted to resource-intensive and capital-intensive industries. In the process, the Chinese economy has become gradually more dependent upon capitalist regional/global economies, and, especially with regard to changes in its industrial structure, upon the importation of Japanese production equipment and the introduction of direct investment. While it may be an important competitive nation in the world market along with South Korea, it could be said that as a late-developing country it was subject to the influence of changes occurring at home and abroad in the process of transforming its industrial structure.

This explanation of the process of changing industrial structure within the background of international relationships is supported by more specific empirical data. First, if one views the changes in amounts of goods exchanged, the amount of mutual trade among South Korea, China and Japan increased by 560% between 1989 and 1995, a very high figure in comparison with the increase in total global trade of 162%. This means that the region showed high economic growth on a global scale, and that accordingly the amount of trade within the region increased greatly as well. However, the direction and composition of trade among the countries are very different. Thus, while the weight of South Korea and China in Japan's trade amounts to about 5% each, the weight of Japan in the trade of South Korea and

Japan tops 20-25%, showing a situation of imbalance.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, if one views the balance of trade with each nation, the profits obtained by Japan through trade with South Korea increased tremendously from USD 4.8 billion in 1980 to USD 14.2 billion in 1995. Conversely, Japan registered approximately USD 1 billion from trade with China in 1980, but in 1995 showed a deficit of USD 14 billion. In addition, the details of this international trade structure can be seen through the forms of goods that Japan exports to and imports from South Korea and China. Among the goods that Japan exports to South Korea and China, the greatest weight is held by mechanical equipment and assembly parts. Conversely, the goods that Japan imports from Korea are weighted somewhat heavily toward food products and other products (labor-intensive manufactured goods), and since the 1990s the weight of manufactured goods related to machinery has increased greatly. Also, the bulk of the manufactured goods that Japan imports from China are natural resources and other products.

Similarly, the process of unbalanced trade expansion in Northeast Asia also includes the transfer of polluting goods. The goods exported by Japan to neighboring countries are general technology-intensive machinery and assembly components, but the portion occupied by polluting goods among Japan's exports is not very low in comparison with South Korea or China. While it is somewhat old data, Table 4 shows the relative importance of polluting goods among the exports of South Korea, China and Japan in 1988. For South Korea and Japan, the steel industry occupies a major position out of polluting manufacturers. In this situation, if the exportation of

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<sup>2</sup> If we examine more specifically, the weight of the amount of materials exported by Japan to Korea out of Japan's total exports increased from 4.1% in 1980 to 7.1% in 1995, and exports to China increased from 3.9% in 1980 to 4.9% in 1995. However, if we examine the percentage of the amount of materials imported by Korea from Japan, it was 24.1% in 1980 and 23.2% in 1995, and in the case of China was 25.5% in 1980 and 17.0% in 1995.

polluting goods is strongly regulated by international environmental compacts, South Korea or China will suffer a worse blow than Japan. In addition, if international environmental regulations are strengthened overall, Japan's polluting industries will transfer to countries where environmental regulations are relatively weak at the level of individual nations.

The increase of interdependency on a regional and global basis can also be verified through the increase of foreign direct investment (FDI) from advanced countries to rising industrial countries. Japan's FDI in East Asia countries outwardly was a major driver in enabling the countries of the region to accomplish rapid economic growth, but inwardly was intended to exploit their relatively cheap labor force and relatively lax environmental regulations (Zarsky, 1999).<sup>3</sup> In this regard, Japan's FDI in East Asian countries could be said to focus on relatively low-productivity industries that demand the sacrifice of wages and the natural environment. This can be observed in the recent situation of South Korea's FDI in China. Thus, South Korea began FDI in China in earnest from 1992, and between 1992

**Table 4** Exportation of Polluting Goods by Major Countries in East Asia (1998)

	Total	component ratio by product					Percentage of Total World Polluting Goods	Percentage of Total Exports within Country
	(billions of dollars)	steel products	nonmetallic minerals	petroleum products	metal products	paper		
South Korea	6.6	48.0	5.8	6.5	24.4	3.9	1.7	11.8
China	5.2	17.9	17.3	14.4	21.8	2.6	1.4	9.6
Japan	18.9	50.5	8.8	1.2	20.5	5.4	4.9	8.1

\* Data: Kim, J.-H. et al. (1993), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Japan gave approximately USD 6.6 billion in FDI to South Korea between 1951 and 1997, and about 60% of this was given before 1990. Also, during this period Japan gave approximately USD 17.7 billion in FDI to China, and, somewhat differently from South Korea, this was mostly done in the 1990s.

and 1995 that amount reached USD 6.79 billion (This is second only to Japan's FDI in China during the same period of USD 7.41 billion.) However, South Korea's FDI in China generally could be said to be in labor-intensive and resource processing industries

The flow of capital from developed countries to rising industrial nations not only allows them to solve the program of excessive accumulation occurring within their own markets, it also functions to shift pollutant discharge and its treatment expenses outward. However, although the countries receiving this FDI may claim that they can achieve a higher rate of economic growth with it, it could be said that they are doing so on the premise of sacrificing labor and environment within their own country. Recently the nations of East Asia in particular, including South Korea, have been able to continue their outward growth not only by luring this kind of FDI but by drawing in massive foreign loans from advanced economies, especially Japan; however, this ultimately came to appear as a financial crisis, triggered by a shortage of foreign exchange due to the speculative onslaught of international financial capital, leading to the revelation of an underlying crisis of excessive investment.

## 5. Regional Economic Cooperation and Economic Boundaries

As stated before, the nations of East Asia were able to achieve rapid economic growth within the background of the capitalist globalization process, and concomitantly triggered serious environmental problems. Thus each nation has come to urgently require regional economic and environmental cooperation to face the global economic system more appropriately as it forms into blocs and to solve the environmental problems arising within

individual countries and between countries. However, the countries of East Asia are facing different stages of economic development, and differ in their capacity to deal with environmental problems. Thus, they have different economic interests and different consciousness of the environment. As such, it could be said that economic and environmental cooperation in the region of East Asia is in fact difficult to realize.

In this situation, we can assume two types of conditions for regional environmental cooperation to take place smoothly. This means that to accomplish economic cooperation in a situation where each nation forms competitive relationships with its own economic interests, we can set the situation or condition first that all nations within the region suffer together due to the worsening of regional environment problems, or second that the nations involved earn some kind of benefits through regional environmental cooperation. The possibility of successful regional cooperation under the first condition (i.e., cooperation to deal with environmental problems occurring between countries) is greater than that of regional cooperation under the second condition (i.e., cooperation to deal with environmental problems occurring within one individual country), but the question of whether this kind of environmental cooperation can be successful is connected with the issues of how each country acknowledges environmental degradation and how it can wisely deal with the economic interests producing this environmental degradation.

If we consider the first condition, we can say that it is possible to beef up regional environmental cooperation to deal with regional environmental problems that are gradually worsening or spreading.<sup>4</sup> However, if the de-

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<sup>4</sup> We can cite the well-known example of atmospheric pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and heavy metals arising from China's industrial regions and crossing national boundaries, harming the atmospheres of South Korea and Japan and causing acid rain, and atmospheric pollutants arising in South Korea adding to this as well. Also, we can point out the

gree to which each country acknowledges the regional environmental problems that are occurring between countries is different, it will be difficult to realize cooperation. If either China or South Korea does not consider the phenomenon of atmospheric pollutants crossing borders to be serious, or if efforts to reduce it bring initial losses to their own countries, environmental cooperation cannot be accomplished properly. Of course, if the spread of environmental problems between countries becomes more serious, new tensions and conflicts will erupt around it, and in this regard certain demands for so-called “environmental security” will be emphasized (Dupont, 1998).

If we consider the second condition, environmental cooperation will be organized, even if each nation has different interests, if these interests can be satisfied. In fact, most of the nations of East Asia, with the exception of Japan, are faced with serious environmental problems within their own borders, and thus urgently require regional environmental cooperation to provide a plan for dealing with them. However, for the environmental cooperation necessary to this demand to be realized, Japan will come to play an important role. This is to say that, just as the nations of East Asia emphasize the role of Japan in tackling the economic crisis, they are in a position where they must depend on Japan to resolve environmental problems as well. Thus, the countries wish to receive developed environmental control supplies and environmental technology from Japan, free of charge if possible—so-called “green aid.” However, will this be possible? Even if Japan accedes to the demands of other countries, it will seek to strengthen its own political and economic influence, taking advantage

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gradually more serious pollution of the Yellow Sea between Korea and China and the East Sea between Korea and Japan. This atmospheric and oceanic pollution (as well as ecological problems such as the migration of birds) could be said to require environmental cooperation among the nations in the region.

of the transfer of its environmental supplies and technology to those countries in need of them.

Let us consider the role of Japan under this condition in more detail. The Japanese government offered approximately USD 15 billion over the five years from 1991 to 1995 under the pretext of international environmental cooperation for rising industrial nations. However, 65.8% of this money was offered contingent upon compensation, and only 16.3% was offered free of charge (see Table 5). This type of international environmental cooperation could increase the burden of massive external debt shouldered by each nation, and thus in the long run can lead to further development to repay the debt and subsequent damage to the environment. In addition, if Japan demands some other compensation as a precondition of its environmental cooperation, namely the expansion of its economic or political influence, economic, political and environmental conflicts in the East Asian region could instead worsen as a result.

**Table 5** Japan's International Environmental Collaboration (units: billions of yen)

	free of charge	compensated	technology	other	total
1991	241.5 (21.6)	666.6 (59.7)	131.0 (11.7)	77.5 (6.9)	1,116.6 (100.0)
1992	310.6 (11.1)	2,212.5 (78.9)	174.1 (6.2)	105.7 (3.8)	2,802.9 (100.0)
1993	377.1 (16.5)	1,526.5 (67.0)	214.1 (9.4)	162.0 (7.1)	2,279.7 (100.0)
1994	414.3 (21.3)	1,054.9 (54.3)	218.7 (11.3)	253.3 (13.0)	1,941.2 (100.0)
1995	428.2 (15.5)	1,708.2 (61.9)	222.9 (8.1)	400.3 (14.5)	2,759.6 (100.0)
1991~1995 total	1,771.7 (16.3)	7,168.7 (65.8)	960.8 (8.8)	998.8 (9.2)	10,900.0 (100.0)

\* Data: Environment Agency of Japan, *Environmental White Paper*, 1997, p. 317.

On top of this, another point that could be deemed more important is that the worsening of regional environmental problems in East Asia is becoming an opportunity to expand and diversify the market for environmental industries to deal with them, and this East Asian environmental market is controlled by Japan. The global market for environment-related products

and technology is expanding rapidly, and though they are generally intended to solve environmental problems within one's own country, the amount of trade in them is gradually increasing. Thus, in 1992 the global environmental market was scaled at USD 377.7 billion, and since then has increased at an annual average of 7% to 8%, and is expected to reach USD 633 billion by 2003. Japan accounted for 16% of this global environmental market in the case of 1994, while the rest of Asia excluding Japan constituted 3.5%. While the growth rate of the Japanese internal environmental market in particular is quite low, the growth rate of the rest of Asia excluding Japan is the most highly recorded in the world. The export of goods related to the environment produced by Japanese environmental industries has a particularly small portion in Japanese environmental industry production, but the nations to which they are exported to are concentrated in East Asia.<sup>5</sup>

In short, it can be said that environmental cooperation in the region of East Asia is restricted because of different positions in each nation's pursuit of economic interests. The other nations besides Japan expect Japan to play a greater role in environmental collaboration and are demanding the transfer of environment-related supplies and technology free of charge, with no financial burden. However, this demand runs counter to the Japanese policy of seeking economic interest through the export of environment-related supplies and technology by environmental industries and enterprises on a commercial basis. If Japan accedes to the expectations of neighboring countries and transfers environmental supplies and technology to them free of charge, it will disregard its economic interests and in return demand the expansion of other economic/political influence or (particularly with regard to China)

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in 1990 Japan's environmental industry production amounted to a total of 785 billion yen, and of this exports accounted for 29.1 billion yen, or approximately 3.7%. The weight of Southeast Asia in this total amount of exports was 69.3%.

the assurance of a stable source for supplying resources. In this situation, the problems of resources and the environment in East Asia could grow worse, and could also produce more serious economic and environmental conflicts.

## 6. Alternative Values for the Resolution of Regional Environmental Problems

The majority of nations in East Asia accomplished rapid economic growth in the late twentieth century, but differences are still being formed in the fixed hierarchical structure of nations in the region, namely their stages of economic development. This hierarchy can assume a function of mutual compensation during times of economic prosperity and lead to rapid expansion, but during periods of fragile economy the entire regional economy faces a situation of crisis due to excessive investment and overheated competition. In addition, it could be said that the economic growth of East Asian nations during this time was accomplished at the cost of sacrificing labor and the environment within individual nations. Especially in situations of economic crisis, even minimal interest in such environmental issues becomes disregarded. As such, in order to overcome the economic and environmental crises faced by the nations of East Asia (and all nations of the world), the following plans must be carefully sought out.

First, each country must pursue economic development within a range permissible for its environment. This external condition of production will allow economic growth strategies that exceed natural limitations to accumulate national wealth and exert influence on relatively underdeveloped nations. However, such strategies will give rise to depletion of resources and excessive discharge of pollutants within countries, and ultimately make

any further economic development impossible.

Second, all nations, and relatively developed nations in particular, must abstain from exporting polluting products or industries to relatively underdeveloped nations. The transfer of such products or industries externalizes the environmental cost onto other nations, enabling countries to resolve their own environmental problems to some degree. However, the transfer of environmental problems leads to the spread of environmental problems, causes serious environmental problems within the whole region, and can cause not only subsequent environmental damage but also international environmental conflicts surrounding it, making environmental collaboration impossible.

Third, while all nations must work as a group to solve regional environmental problems, relatively developed nations in particular must bear a larger responsibility. Japan, which has the highest capacity to deal with environmental problems out of the nations of East Asia, must provide environmental supplies and technology free of charge to solve environmental problems occurring within and between neighboring countries. To do so, Japan must set aside its own economic interests and not expect any expansion of other economic or political influence.

Fourth, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of East Asia must form a close mutual network, enabling them to prevent nations from pursuing reckless economic growth at the cost of labor and the environment and from transferring polluting industries and products (as well as industrial waste) between nations. As well, these civic environmental groups and the organization of networks between them must work to create new ecological values that can overcome East Asia's widespread economic interests and develop a system (eco-democratic system) based on these values.

The few alternative plans suggested above in fact carry great significance for the resolution of environmental problems, and they are all

things that have been noted a great deal during this time. However, for these plans to be put into practice, it is necessary first and foremost to escape from the economic interests (economic values) that have concentrated their attention on rapid economic growth, and this requires the search for new ecological values. Of course, the establishment of a new set of values is not possible in a vacuum, but presupposes changes in the material foundation. However, the formation of new values is required even for the practice of devising changes in this material foundation.

The establishment of new or alternative values can be accomplished not only through a resurgence in traditional East Asian values through reanalysis, but through combination with various ecological discourses that have been newly presented in Western society. To this end, a few conceptual development stages that can be established—namely, simple development → sustainable development → environmental justice → combination of an Eastern environmental perspective—can be discussed more concretely as follows.

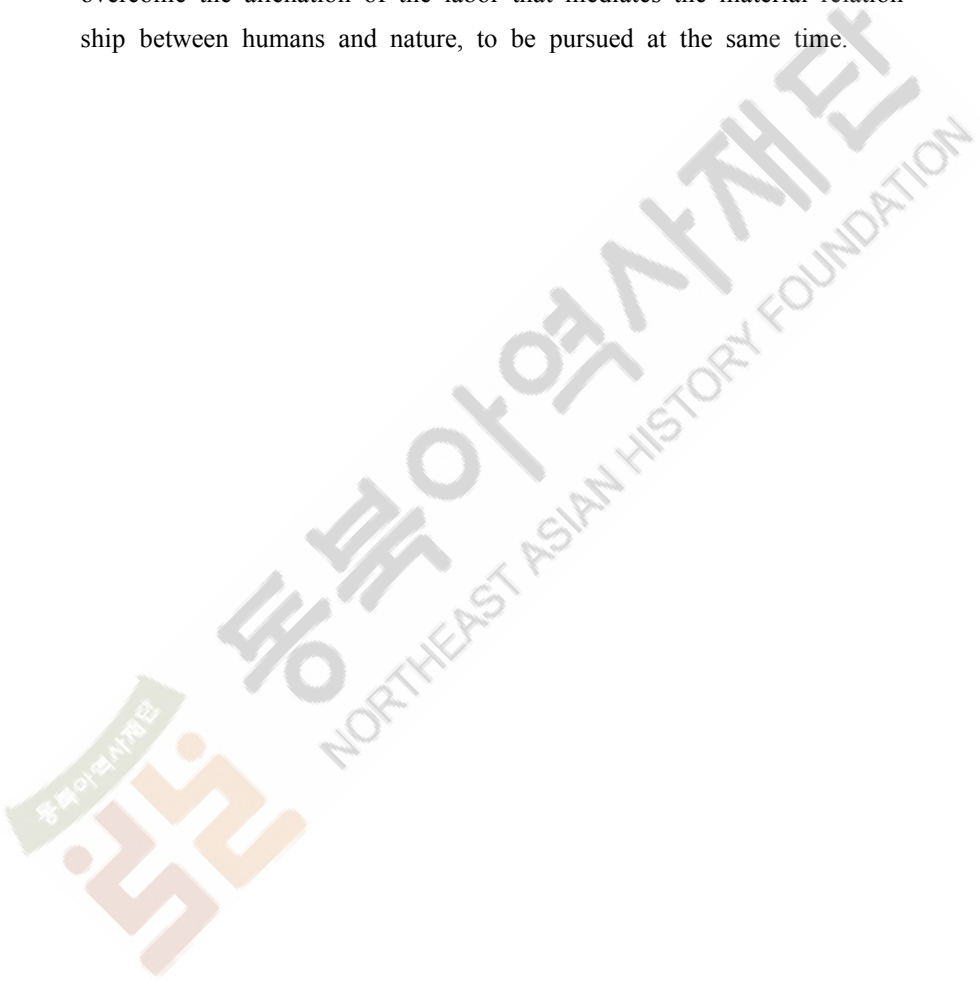
First, there is a need to proceed from the “development” paradigm (or developmentalism) to a concept of sustainable development. Thus far, the nations of East Asia have concentrated all of their energies on satisfying economic interests based on a so-called development paradigm or strategy of developmentalism, and this strategy has basically paid the price of sacrificing national labor and environment. However, this development paradigm has exceeded the given environmental capacity, creating a situation where any future development is impossible. It could be said that the concept of “sustainable development” was presented to overcome precisely this situation. That is to say that in response to a situation where the economic modernization process pursued thus far has made it impossible to proceed any further, sustainable development is presented as an alternative in the pursuit of ecological modernization, so to speak, to overcome this (Moon,

1995).

Second, there is a need to proceed from sustainable development to a pursuit of environmental justice. The concept of sustainable development is intended to overcome the existing developmentalism, but it is still more biased toward the economy. Thus, the natural environment is considered to be an economic resource, and the satisfaction of basic needs and the improvement of quality of life is understood as something to be achieved through the additional production of commodities. Such a concept of sustainable development very importantly presupposes a pursuit of balance between generations, nations and strata. As such, there is a need to overcome the economic leanings inherent in sustainable development and further refine these concepts of equity or justice. Indeed, if the concept of sustainable development is something suggested by Western elites, the concept of environmental justice has been proclaimed through these countries' popular movements. Currently discussions on this kind of environmental justice have mainly been limited to justice in the material distribution of resources among people, or distributional environmental justice (Choi, 1999, see Ch. 9).

Third, there is a need to proceed from this (distributional) environmental justice to develop a new view of justice in the relationship between humans and nature. In terms of the relationship between humans, justice does not demand merely justice in material distribution, but also justice in symbolic or emotional relationships, and this justice is understood within the concept of mutual respect and mutual acknowledgement. There is a need to expand this concept of mutual acknowledgement to the relationship between humans and nature. However, the concept of mutual acknowledgement between humans and nature (or mutual supervision or care) is difficult to find in Western consciousness, and can only be found in the Native American or Eastern views of nature (such as transmigratism in Buddhism

or the Daoist belief of non-action with regard to nature). Of course, it cannot be complete merely with this “acknowledgement justice” focusing on symbolic interrelationships; there is also a need for “distributional justice” of resources to satisfy humans’ basic needs, and “productive justice” to overcome the alienation of the labor that mediates the material relationship between humans and nature, to be pursued at the same time.



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# The Spiritual Meaning of Nature for Us: The Meaning of Nature Examined in the Context of Urbanization

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I would venture to say that the city is a gigantic heap of artificial products. It is nothing more than artificial materials constructed from steel, cement and plastic. In addition, if we use the lives of city dwellers, faithful to the rhythms of the city, as an example, their concept of day and night is driven by electric lighting, their seasons are regulated by climate control, and even their landscapes are essentially contained within frames and flower pots. In short, it could be said that this life is moving farther away from nature each day. Perhaps it is for this reason that city dwellers have gradually come to long for nature more and more.

City dwellers do indeed have emotional feelings about nature. Some of them are people who greatly dislike taking care of their elderly parents, yet raise their pets with lavish amounts of money and effort. Others cannot tolerate inconveniences caused by others for a moment, yet will spend the whole day taking painstaking care of one indoor tree or a plot of grass the size of the palm of their hand and not notice the time going by. In addition, they often stare vacantly at the blue sky beyond the window or fence and use pen and paper or their computers to compose some lofty verse or philosophy extolling the country, and even though they may never have had a red earth log cabin in the suburbs or country, they put on lei-

sure clothes and arrange something to eat and a map, and express their devotion by regularly going to see their beloved nature every other month or year.

When they approach nature, what are they looking for? Oxygen? Negative ions? Chlorophyll? Ultraviolet rays? Unchanging natural colors? Endless tranquility? Or are they doing this for physical training and serenity of mind? In fact, just as with artificial civilization, all of these things can be offered more spectacularly in terms of quality and quantity, on occasion quickly to fit the necessary schedule, enough to make one wonder at how convenient it all is. With oxygen masks and hospital oxygen supply hoses, one can feel a faithful recreation of the sweat-soaked sensation of mountain climbing at any time. Not only that, the image of foothills to be found anywhere in the global village and beautiful scenery floating in the color of water can be recreated intact through the television screen.

However, if all of these things are still unable to make people abandon their impulse to get closer to nature, or if this indicates an act of preengagement that causes regularly occurring holidays and vacations to beckon the people of the civilized world toward nature just as in the past and that in fact directs them toward nature, we can reach one important conclusion from just this fact: that we are still far, far away from the day when artificial goods can replace nature. In addition, we can be confident about one thing from this, which is that what people are searching for in nature is not things like oxygen, but some other kind of thing.

Perhaps what people are searching for is “individual difference” in itself. If we view from the perspective of nature’s creation, “individual difference” simply means there is no such thing in the world as two tree leaves that look exactly alike, or that as individuals no two people have lives that are completely the same. But this kind of phenomenon has entered a state where it becomes more unusual each day for the people of the civilized

world living buried in cities. Not only do they live facing monotonous high-rise apartments, they also live dealing with monotonous television sets, fast food and schedules to and from work. Thus, they are simply, inevitably becoming habitually immune to the disappearance of “difference” as beauty that is happening in full swing around them.

Even artworks, where one must be sensitive to the aesthetics of difference above all else, are revealing a situation of Teletubby versions of stultifying sameness under the influence of the spread of the culture industry’s reproductive technology. It is a state of affairs where a “don’t ask” phenomenon, in which we end up losing sight of the important aesthetics of difference that must undeniably exist in everything, whether a soap opera or a picture book, is being widely tolerated by various people. As modern industrial products are generally produced through reliance on the mass-production assembly line, even the glittering creativity of a handicraft artisan is disallowed at the source. Even if those things are produced through superior design, their differences are nothing more than the difference in product form or model, and not at all differences in each individual product. Their kinds and quantities are always finite, and products belonging to the same model number always demand strict standard sizes and mass production. This point is essentially the goal that producers long for even in their dreams. Regulated unity in size is in full swing as the standard of high-precision technology, and mass production has become the most important characteristic of an economy of thrift. A telephone produced in form A must remain form A the thousandth time, no matter what, and telephone B must be form B even if it is the ten thousandth produced, so for such things ‘individual difference’ is a fundamentally fatal taboo. Thus, the fact that they appear in front of us in perfect uniform order implies that they all must have the same function and price, and this becomes an absurd landscape for it to be any kind of wondrous discovery to people.

Only when these things have become rare curios do they become symbols based in a kind of revivalist psychology that presupposes the mass abandonment of identical varieties of products, and barely come to find a point of connection with people's aesthetic interest. Thus, they do not at all embody the mystery and richness of the countless changes that nature offers us. Without a doubt, it is the primal state of nature with its inexhaustible creation that is the root of the individual's life and the garden of human nature that each of us looks back upon time and time again.

I would conjecture that people may still be looking for the eternal. However, in a general sense the lifespan of artificial goods is very short, so the problem becomes more complicated. Even steel, which could be called the most solid of the man-made products, becomes corroded rapidly once it rusts, making it look positively shoddy in the face of the lifespan of dirt and river water as they remain changeless through the ages. In addition, it has no genetic function, so when compared with the life and death of animals or the flourishing and withering of plants, the continuous will or energy to live is in fact absent. One weed by the side of the road boasts the same appearance from thousands or tens of thousands of years ago, but a telephone or car changes its appearance pitifully with every season, so that even if it is the latest model, it has the lifespan of a mayfly, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

Nowadays, or in other words amid a rapidly changing trend where modern industrial goods change and become new each day, disposable goods that are used briefly and thrown away are already universal, such that people use everything from paper cups and one-touch cans to even towels and socks just once and discard them. This pattern of consumption is accompanied with profits for the producer, and thus after using advertisements and creating fashions to dig rapidly into the masses, they have finally achieved a general trend among the people. In this context, modern industry

is strengthening the process of driving all man-made goods into the garbage dump, and at the same time it could be said that they are taking a step forward in weakening whatever affection is formed between humans and their goods. Ultimately, humans' eternal sense, or to concede a little their relatively permanent sense, has fallen into a situation where it is progressively more difficult to connect with their goods. Occasionally, when we are caught up in worry and make a firm vow, we can swear on heaven and earth, but how could people want to swear to something like a necktie or a high-quality sofa? And when we cannot hide our frustration and turn our backs on the hometown, which we could not bear to leave, we could soothe our hearts by gathering a fistful of our hometown dirt, but how could people want to entrust their hearts to an electronics accessory in a house in their hometown? With the exception of the ageless mountains, the inexhaustible sea and the indestructible sun, can any of those things create a material form that corresponds closely with the immortal spirit under the emotional logic shared by all members of humankind? And can any aesthetic aspect assume more distinctively the eternal nobility connected with the faith that those things afford us?

That nature can make our hearts beat faster if we expend a bit more effort to feel it perhaps is the essence of everything being "a single ideal where each thing encompasses the other." But in people's worldly lives civilization means the creation of wealth and at the same time the order and rules of wealth. In this case, man-made goods are consistently divided and seized based on power and interests. All artificial goods are products made by humans, and thus, since they are products, a specific person's own rights follow within them, placing them in an inseparable relationship with rights of possession and control. Regardless of individual or group possession, all buildings, houses, machinery, clothes and food must have a person providing financial support, and thus all acts of exercising the rights

of others beyond the limits of their power or spiritually exercising familiarity or entry without permission are flatly and coldly denied. It is for precisely this reason that it is becoming difficult for people even to have affection for others' possessions. For example, it has become that difficult for a person to feel good about their neighbors' clock or their attractive large wardrobe.

Thus, the feelings that people have toward their countries or homes are likely to be toward things of nature where power and interests do not exist – things like the sun, stars, clouds, wind, rain, meadows, rivers, foothills, forests or seas. These things, with their brilliant colors and sweet sounds, may have already seen the black hand of worldly privilege thrust itself inside, at least with the entry of villages or country homes or hideaways, but, no matter what, these impure intrusions likely have a limit, such that the grand nature, as a supreme and enormous entity, has at least not yet become the property or possession of any one person and has maintained its status as the common possession of all humankind. What rights the individual has in the face of nature are nothing more than a kind of localized infection related to a disease of civilization. The feelings given to us by worldly privilege and profit, for example the feeling of becoming rich, feelings of humility, of superiority, or weakness, or might, meet a soft reconciliation and dissolution like melting snow in the spring wind in the face of great mountains and river waters. All worldly profits and losses become trivial without exception before nature. Our predecessors understood this, and thus there are the accounts that “The landscape of nature is never for a second caught in a fixed mold, and thus the person who enjoys it at leisure is the real owner,” or that “Mountains dissolve the worldly, and the waters wash away foolishness.” These simple psychological experiences point to how nature generously embraces all people. This point is almost equal in value to a class in Zhuangzi's *qiwulun* (齊物論: the philosophy

of making all things equal), and is of equal value to a republican political ethics class, and it shows us transcendence of the worldly, the vast boundaries of life where the things of creation and the ego burst forth from within the heart and simply become one.

Of course, these things are not the whole of nature. Among the things that people can find within nature, there are at the very least cruel and harsh ordeals. There are typhoons, as well as floods, sandstorms, lightning and earthquakes, and all of these things show brutal and terrifying aspects. However, people can avoid such disasters only by relying on civilization. In a sense, the method of the food chain within the natural world, in other words the essence of nature itself, is realized with the mouths of thousands of desires, and may mean nothing more than living by remorselessly eating each other, where you die and I live. If you examine the facts, no living being, whether a surpassingly imposing bull or a trivial blade of grass, has a moment of self-satisfaction, and all of them regard their own existence as a presupposition, heartlessly capturing and eating other living beings. Even under the most tranquil and still plot of grass, this fierce war is constantly taking place. Primitive humans who existed outside of the advancement of civilization in the same way formed one perfectly passive ring of the food chain. The bloody sword fighting that occurred between villages in the forests may have been nothing more than a lesson learned from nature, or, to put it into another context, one method of generally conforming to the law of nature, and thus coincides closely with examples of the battles for survival often fought between wild animals. If there is a weakness to wild animals, it is that they lack the logical means seen in civilized people, from taking care of their own kind to respecting each other and solving their problems while spilling less blood. However, even these rational morals and laws have disappeared without a trace during situations of emergency like world wars, and thus this too cannot be seen as particularly

credible.

It is when viewed within this framework that the nature beloved by the people of the civilized world is in fact merely the nature chosen, felt and conceived by them. Thus, it would be more correct to say that they love the civilized person's own understanding of nature in itself rather than love nature. In other words, the more accurate view would be to judge them as immersing themselves in the meaning afforded by a nature that is regarded as corresponding to profit from the standpoint of civilization, rather than having interest in nature itself. That cloud in the blue sky or new moon suspended among the tree branches that makes their hearts seem to burst with emotion is only a reflection within this kind of nature and a kind of interchangeable part called upon to criticize the flaws of civilization. Their powerful emotions prove no other thing at all, and as it happens become evidence confirming the high level of their own civilization. In other words, their attitude toward nature always examines and reveals the quality of existing human civilization by itself. They now feel the chronic disease of civilization acutely through their skin, and only after earnestly realizing that the patternized rules of real-world society are threatening the aesthetics of difference, and moreover having the real sense that the rules of this world are threatening the truth of eternal changelessness while the rules of power and profit are erasing the ideals of the human community, do they accept and transform nature into an increasingly important cultural code and thus regard it as a means for their own self-examination, self-criticism and reformation with regard to civilization. The kind of "green worship" that they display toward nature is not only something intended to improve the environment for their survival, but another more important fact is that they hope to treat the unseen wounds embedded deeply in their minds.

Classical Chinese philosophy emphasizes the ways of "oneness of God and man" and "nature and man adapting to live together," appealing to the

harmonious development of nature and society. Early on Laozi preached that, “There is no greater root of evil than not knowing satisfaction, and there is no greater calamity than endless desire,”<sup>1</sup> giving his warning against human covetousness and desire. Zhuangzi also said, “Nature and man have no way of transcending one another, and it is the man who is faithful to this whom we can call the true human,”<sup>2</sup> expressing his opposition to the series of conquests and exploitations committed by humans toward nature.

Sadly, however, as the wave of industrialization and modernization that has rushed in like a rising tide beginning in this century proceeds throughout China, on one hand through the unlimited inflation of people’s greed through capitalist culture and on the other through China’s being still unable to bear the historical conditions of Western developed nations early on saddling poorer nations with their environmental costs, the country of China is presently in a maelstrom of contradictions of overpopulation and lack of resources that is being more acute each day.

Recent statistics saying that 7 of the 10 worst cities in the world in terms of air pollution are located in China are making many people’s hearts lurch. The phenomenon of water ceasing to flow in China’s second largest river, the Yellow River, lasted for more than 200 days in 1998, and the longest river, the Yangtze, has seen constant flooding in recent years. Amid all of that, one symbolic incident was the arrival in Beijing of garbage dumps transported in secret from the United States in 1997. One might think, what’s the big deal? But this is not the case at all. The modernization project is in full swing, converting certain regions into global cities, but at the same time it is relegating more regions to the outer edge of the world, and may even end up reducing those places to the status of “garbage

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<sup>1</sup> *Laozi*, Chapter 46. The original reads, “禍莫大于知不足, 咎莫大于欲得.”

<sup>2</sup> Zhuangzi’s “Great Teacher of the Source.” The original reads, “天與人不相勝也, 是之謂真人.”

dumps of the outskirts.”

China, as it falls into the status of “outskirts,” is awakening the nation’s intellectuals to a renewed recognition of the duty and necessity of reflecting on their attitude toward nature. To go a step further, there is a need for reflection to not only regard nature as a material resource for “fattening the bodies” of humans, but to solidify the view that regards it as a spiritual resource for “fostering the human heart” at the same time, and there is a need to raise up the relationship of humans and nature once again from the roots.

Until the present, religion has continuously led people to renew their awareness of civilization toward nature. As the act of building churches and sancta away from noisy places, in valleys deep in the mountains, has become more general, it serves the purpose of making a journey to draw people into nature. Faithful adherents become followers of strict diets of simple fare, or at least come to possess beliefs and habits of forbidding murder and valuing life.

Art has thus far led the awareness of civilization toward nature. Creators of music, art and culture foster the admiration and sympathy of all humans toward a single blossom, a blade of grass, a single animal or piece of livestock, and all of them know the harmony of nature and sentiment and the principle of coexistence. They always regard nature as the beautiful and emotional stage and background of humanity. If they do not stop at rejection or criticism of civilization and state that there is significance in a more positive aesthetic appreciation or more constructive spiritual trust, their gazes inevitably must escape from the civilized world or the limited field of vision of artificial goods. Through direct or indirect methods, their poetical sentiment awakens brightly on its own within the comfort or essence of nature. Their minds always transcend the limits and sympathize with some boundary of nature beyond the horizon. Without a doubt, the

red cliffs of China's Su Shi, the steppes of Russia's Chekhov, the sunflowers of the Dutch Van Gogh all have meaning as places of refuge for the spirit. It is at this point that religion and art reveal differences with general practical scholarship and their own important characteristics. They ask again and again about the ultimate value of civilization, and with their deep interest in that spirit make their own roots spread into the natural world.

As an activity of civilization, they do not signify the only relationship between man and nature. In most cases, the mainstream of civilization is made up instead of the survival method, with the characteristics of using, conquering, altering and even destroying nature. Modern businessmen even see into the possibilities for profit hidden within a human's yearning for nature. Thus they produce technical products related to realization and emotion, as well as goods with natural materials, and have reached the point of carving out a consumer market with nature as its subject.

Under this drive of the mainstream, religion has long been stirred by the market, and its spaces of activity are turning into countless tourism sites for travelers to visit. Even its various ceremonies are exciting travelers and being transformed into performance events to increase admissions. In addition, art likewise has long been driven by the market. Mysterious and wondrous landscapes and unique and colorful customs have been collected and displayed, becoming the motivation for various creative works of writing and imagery and being produced as travel guide materials to lure visitors to faraway places or as materials to substitute for travel. The slogan "If we lift the culture up high, the economy will rise" is being used by numerous Chinese local governments, and as the territory of art is being co-opted bit by bit by the travel industry as it grows day by day, this situation is presiding over the poetical relationship between man and nature. They find some secluded bit of nature where people rarely go and use roads, bars,

first class hotels and sightseeing entertainment facilities to gather together all of the natural landscapes under the sun and produce them as fast and simple programs for viewing. Even if it does not go this far, at a minimum they have used advanced modern visual imaging technology or products such as scenic photography, landscape videos or novels with exotic atmosphere to trap the corpse of nature inside of various widely reproduced media and degraded nature into items of indoor consumption for the industrial age.

Travel is proceeding quietly from economic development to the conquest of culture itself. Since the 1950s, the Western superpowers have stimulated the development of the entire world's travel industries so that banks and large enterprises can recoup the investments they have poured into the aviation industry. In the same way, many late-developing nations of Asia, including China, are aggressively advertising their natural endowments to Western travelers to bring in foreign currency, and have transformed their forests, plains and rivers into dollars. Thus travel has formed an interchange or exchange where bullish regions of civilization and bearish regions of civilization regard each other as "the other." As a result, it has, generally speaking, been equivalent to a tyrannical victory or a universal unification accomplished in all territories by the integration process of bullish civilization, and at the same time a victorious expansion/development or infiltration into the nature of civilization. It has brought new markets, profits and material prosperity, and moreover has been enough to satisfy the thirst for profit of the aviation and hotel industries.

In some sense it has also brought many travelers the benefit of broadening their fields of vision. However, its industrialization and consumerization has at the same time led to the destruction and damage of large amounts of natural resources. More importantly, they have created material oppression and damage to the mind. It is in this regard that the travel agen-

cy has a character constantly running counter to nature. At the same time, the travel industry has transformed the relationship between man and nature into relationships of occupier and occupied, developer and developed, and has changed nature into cash. If a man has money he can have nature, and thus the rich man comes to have more nature than the poor man.

The problem is in whether, amid this nature driven by money, we can find the familiar differences, the eternal and common ideals, and whether we can find the silent moments where our ancestors obtained great echoes and realization in the face of nature. This travel industry is realizing the material occupation of nature by humans, but at the same time it is obscuring or eroding nature's spiritual value to humans.

If you can have a smile without affection or a performance without art, naturally you can have travel without nature. Perhaps one might say that amid material nature, there is no spirit of nature. Nature as an object of travel demands deeper thinking from us on the following questions: Were we not moved early in life by seeing a single blade of grass? What kind of emotion was that? And what meaning does that emotion hold in our future? Today, as the sun is setting on the twentieth century, the era of industrialization, urbanization and capitalism has become almost uncontrollable, and we are merely racing ahead with a turbo engine. This is the era of travelers moving frantically, and of having to buy some thing or another. In short, nature has simply become a range of price and destination on a person's ticket. As we approach our destination, the loud sounds of the sale of travel goods, the sounds of bubbles on imported beer and the colorful swimsuits and parasols have already arrived. Perhaps by chance some modern traveler may suddenly realize that the road she is taking toward nature is becoming in fact a more difficult and distant one.

# “Un-Paradigmatic” Practice in Architecture and Urbanism in the East Asian Part of the World

Architect, Principal of Seoul Forum Inc

## 1. At the Beginning of a New Millennium, On the Scene of the East Asians' Dilemma

This paper is not at all a scholarly text. It is a perspective on the scene from a business worker. My location of activity is South Korea, mainly Seoul. Japan is located across the sea, and China is located on the other side of North Korea and the Yellow Sea.

My experience with East Asian urban construction includes the academic exchanges and China-related projects I experienced through participation in MIT's "East Asian Urbanization Program," my one-month stay as a studio tutor at Beijing's Tsinghua University in 1992, participation in a workshop on "young Asian leadership" held by Australia's Asia-Australia Institute in 1997, and a presentation on "a comparison between Shanghai and Seoul and their future" at the 1998 International Business Leaders' Advisory Council for the Mayor of Shanghai.

With Japan as well, my experience has mainly consisted only of brief visits. In 1997 I participated in four international meetings in Tokyo, including a presentation at ARCASIA. For a somewhat longer experience, I traveled Japan for 15 days in 1998 at the invitation of The Japan

Foundation, and had the opportunity to see the scene in slightly more detail and converse in more detail with prominent individuals in Japan.

Even this was only a brief experience. Despite that fact, as an “East Asian” or “Korean,” I always receive a variety of questions from “non-Asians” about “Asia.” As though I were representing Asia, a member of a larger group of Asians bundled together by non-Asians, I have effectively been silently coerced into representing and speaking for the Asian identity. It is perplexing.

One notable personal experience was the international exhibition entitled “Cities on the Move: Cities in Asia,” which began in late 1997 at the Vienna Secession. Participating in the Vienna exhibition, which was later held as a series in six parts going back and forth between Europe and the American continent, I could also see the later results of the exhibition through indirect data and confirm once again what I had normally questioned in the motivations for and character of the interest in Asia non-Asians had in a cultural perspective.

To state the dynamics of cultural contact simply, the following three characteristics can be observed.

- Lumping Asia together  
Attempting to view it as some particular “identity.”
- Portraying it with “exoticism”  
Attempting to find in it only what is different from “non-Asians.”
- Locating “an alternate essence”  
Asking the people to present a certain “cultural essence.”

Of course there are other dynamics. These are the dynamics that occur in the urbanization business world, the so-called “market.”

- Viewing it as a “market” for development

Compared to “non-Asia” it is a positively thriving market.

- Attempting to sell their standard products

There is a presupposition that they are superior and more popular.

- Attempting to finish with “the deal” if possible

Rather than viewing continuously, they view each market in terms of different. Could this be called a businessman’s perspective or a tourist’s perspective?

These dynamics of culture and the market could also in some sense be viewed as a natural state of affairs. These presuppositions can also underlie the perspective by which Asia views non-Asia. However, the dilemma for the East Asian business worker is that we cannot help becoming relatively sensitive to this situation. Furthermore, a greater dilemma has been approaching recently with exposure to the rising tide of global capitalization.

This may be the essence of the dilemma that East Asians face in the world at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century. On one hand, within the world they are approaching, they are categorized, and within those categories they are lumped together and oversimplified and suffer under demands to “demonstrate their characteristics,” and yet on the other hand are subject to the demand for “sameness” or “assimilation” in “one world.” It is typical for East Asians in this age to be torn psychologically and in terms of consciousness and actions between these two situations.

## 2. On the Site of Urbanization: Questions and Thoughts, Series 10

Let me present as follows the questions that I myself frequently receive

or that are usually expressed with regard to urbanization in East Asia (or South Korea, or Seoul), and express my thoughts on them.

### 1) What Makes East Asia East Asia? What are the Conditions of East Asia?

I mainly hear this question from non-Asians, and I often give a different definition for each of them.

As for the conditions? Without question, they are “the reality of East Asia.” It is a reality that no one can deny. The reality of urban conditions in East Asia, which is all the more shocking when viewed from outside, is different from that of the so-called developed society of non-Asia. It is a reality as a phenomenon and a structural reality.

- Density  
Density is high in terms of population, space and use.
- Speed of change  
Speed of change is rapid. Periods of change are short. These are closely related to economic upheaval.
- Size of intervention  
The scale of intervention is huge, including redevelopment and new development, the formation of large enterprises and the dinosaur-type development process of the government.
- Parallel formality and marginality  
People “living well” and “living poorly” live side by side.
- Extreme contrast of scale  
Large-scale super-high-rise buildings and tiny buildings are mixed together in one site.
- Limitless elements in one scene  
Especially information communication elements, including placards,

signs, text and colors.

- Disorder / chaos?

Thus it is said to be chaotic. It is said to be confusing. It is said to be disorderly. This is the first impression of non-Asians, but is that all there is to it?

## **2) What Do East Asian People Hope for in Their Own Environment?**

Then, how do the people of East Asia feel about this reality of East Asia? It may usually be “aversion” or “desire to escape.” Areas of dissatisfaction are expressed along the lines of “traffic congestion, air pollution, housing problems, disorderly urban environment, lack of cultural facilities and lack of greenery”; to put it simply, people’s attitudes as they live within this reality are predominantly negative rather than positive.

## **3) Then, Do They Seek a “Model” from Non-Asian Countries? Are They Searching for a “Paradigm”?**

Thus they dream of the so-called “advanced” model. For example, East Asian people who have traveled overseas often criticize their own environment all the more. They ask, can we not do that? Why can’t we have such a beautiful environment? Why must we live in such a complicated environment? Thus they usually consider the European city as the model of urban beauty, among these the baroque Paris (an orderly city transformed by nineteenth century redevelopment), or they dream of the beauty of bucolic small- and mid-sized towns, a well-preserved historical environment, well-kept tourist sites and a well-maintained natural environment. As well, they see the business parks and theme parks of cities in the United States and consider as models the grandeur, the peerlessly swift efficiency, the well-controlled system and the business mind.

The people in the position of commanding the environment (I will mainly call them architectural clients, though they may be public or private) read these orders and order them as such. They propose designing a business environment that is orderly, systemic, beautiful and suited to the “world standard.”

#### **4) So, Can Asian City Construction Indeed Proceed According to the Desired Model?**

I feel that it is totally impossible. It is because of the conditions of East Asia from Item I (with reservations regarding the last, dubious condition, “disorder/chaos”). It is because of the variables of density conditions, speed of change, scale of intervention, extreme polarization, contrast of scale, and countless information elements.

Of course it is possible to make an “oasis in the desert” or a “mirage in the desert.” In fact, such is the case with fully controlled private constructions (enterprise-engineered constructions) or business spaces (for example, hotels and shopping complexes). Public constructions are the same way. They are “publicly used privatized spaces” with completeness and solidity on the interior. They are “point-wise” illusory spaces made according to some model.

With the exception of this small amount of special intervention, there are large structural conditions preventing the European and American urbanization models from being established in East Asia. They are not at all merely the phenomena of “density conditions, speed of change, scale of intervention, extreme polarization, contrast of scale and countless information elements,” but also structural factors providing a background dictating that these things be expressed. This is the case with, for example, methods of political and economic intervention, industrial structure, trade structure and information communication systems. In addition, as clearly

physical factors, abilities related to expenses and investment (procurement) and differences in economic level obviously also play a large role.

There are other factors. Relatively poor public investment capacity (of course, each country is different in this regard) and the multiple elements of the already existing urban environment (such as distortions from the rapid urbanization process of the twentieth century, the process of urbanization by colonial forces and the process of industrial urbanization by centralized drives) create a complicated nature that cannot be compared with European cities, whose structures were created in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries when the speed of change was relatively slow, or with American cities.

## 5) Then What are East Asians Doing in Their Reality?

It seems that there are two kinds of diametrically opposed actions.

- At one extreme: pseudo-paradigm
- At the other extreme: survival tactics

Perhaps we can call the “pseudo-paradigm” the “Let’s follow suit” style. This is based in a linear model where there is a “good model” and a “paradigm” appropriate to it, so on-site practice requires a subsequent strategy. It presupposes that there is a path for execution according to some established norms and stages. This is an idea that public sectors (policy establishment and business promotion) and so-called idealist expert groups aspire to (and are infatuated with). It is a kind of “pseudo-paradigm” that appears directly in the question, “How can we find advanced examples and apply them to this site?” Why do I say “pseudo”? It is because it is not a fresh action coming from reality, but something borrowed.

“Survival tactics” are things done by countless agents at the scene. It

is the action of responding strategically by using as many “creative” methods as possible in a bid to survive within fierce market conditions and the framework of the legal system. This action finds tactically beneficial paths for oneself, whether in the construction of an apartment complex, altering a specified-use region and building taller and bigger houses, building one’s own house or hanging up gaudy signs.

### **6) Can a Real Site Consciousness and Affirmation of Reality be Achieved?**

To put it simply, the business site of urbanization is the location of the collision or parallel operation of these two extremes of behavior. There are the worlds of “pseudo-paradigmatic” theory and policy-making, as well as (monopolistic and unquestioning) specialized industries serving them, and there are countless construction agents running around for their tactical survival in the market situation regardless of the whole, as well as expert industries serving them (blindly, like army ants).

Both forms of behavior (and ways of thinking) are based in a denial of reality. The “pseudo-paradigm” denies reality in that it is essentially the finding of a “different fantasy,” while “survival tactics,” though they may be straightforward, constitute another denial in that they cling to survival, unaware of the stark reality.

Is it possible for there to be a true realistic consciousness that arises from affirmation and understanding of and sympathy with reality? That is likely a question of what must be done in this place, in this country, at this site, at this time. It cannot help being the core issue encountered everywhere in East Asia. To put it simply, we are searching for urbanization as a way of thinking, an action and a form of expression that suit our country, our society and our system.

## 7) What is the Concept of Spatial Construction in East Asian Urbanization and What are Its Tendencies?

However, we should look once again into the deeper background of East Asian urbanization. There are not only the structural phenomena of reality cited in Part 1, but a deeper historical and cultural background as well. What distinguishes East Asian urbanization and non-Asian urbanization? At the risk of generalizing, I will enumerate the following. (These are tendencies that have been continuously imbued in the tradition of urban construction for thousands of years until the present.)

- There is a relative lack of concern with visible order. (Symbolic order is more important.)
- There are only rules from a larger framework, and remaining individual actions are ignored.
- However, the rules prescribing individual actions are shared through socio-cultural and technical standards.
- A single construction is relatively unimportant. It is not the “*objet* city” but the “city of spaces/cracks in between.”
- There is a logic of “strategic placement.” The whole is not drawn out at first. One event creates the next event.
- “Territory” is more important than “path.” (The spatial territory is also a socio-cultural territory.)
- Rather than “the wall of buildings,” “the barrier of earth” is used to regulate territory.
- There is no hesitation in “variability” or “change.” (Buildings can always be replaced.)

Bearing this comparison in mind, there is a sharp contrast with the strong consciousness of order felt in non-Asian cities (this distinction also lumps

together elements excessively) in the pursuit of

Strict visible order, a framework constructed around the whole, laws regulating individual actions, systematic frameworks, constructions as conspicuous *objets*, master plans regulating everything according to plan, controlled cities, the division of the “road” into public space and communication space and the viewing of the road as the most important public property, walls as devices where buildings and roads meet, and the relative permanence of buildings.

Here we can see that the impression of non-Asians on East Asian cities that appeared in Part 1, expressed as “disorder/chaos,” is a frank expression emerging from their cultural experiences. However, do East Asians really live without order in the East Asian urbanization environment? Of course not. Though it appears chaotic, and with its higher density feels even more so, there are consistent “invisible norms,” “experiential order” and societal “embedded agreements.”

### **8) What Differences Exist in East Asian Urbanization Traditions?**

This question is sometimes asked by non-Asians, but it is mainly a question that East Asians ask each other. At the same time that it is a question intended to reveal differences within a region sharing the same cultural roots, it is also a “comparative perspective” designed to seek something we can study in each other. Of course there are differences in each country and city. The histories of modernization periods are different, religious and philosophical traditions are different, and regional conditions are different. Here are a few comprehensive examples:

- Methods of using land are as different as the differences in natural topography. (For example, they do not have the same “*feng shui*.”)
- China’s standing-style thinking and Japan and Korea’s sitting-style

thinking are very different in their use of space.

- The early-formed high-density development of Chinese and Japanese cities and the low-density-centered development of South Korea are different.
- While standardization is emphasized in China, Korea and Japan are free to apply non-standard forms.
- China and South Korea have many walls within their domains, while Japan has a large openness of furnishing.
- If Japan was independently open to European modern construction in the late nineteenth century and this style was infused into “another country within China” and operated side-by-side as another culture within China, Korea was subjected to much distortion in the course of the modern urbanization of the Japanese occupation.
- If the concept of circulatory order prevails in Japanese industrial cities, the concept of authoritative order prevails in China’s cities of power and the concept of natural order prevails in South Korea’s environmental cities.

The reason that I bring up these differences is to indicate that it is impossible to lump East Asia together as a thing in itself. The urbanization milieu is, to a certain extent, a micro-level response within a micro-level environment. There are countless transformations in kinds of actions that are possible in that country, in that place, at that time.

### **9) Is the East Asian Tradition of Urbanization a Concept of the Organism, a Concept of Communication or a Concept of the Network?**

Despite the differences mentioned in Part 8, we should look again at Part 7.

If you look closely at Part 7, this is not at all the paradigmatic thinking of the West. Even with “high principles (occasionally a symbolic dimension),” it is a way of thinking that permits freedom in individual acts. It is a way of thinking that has the constituent individuals who create society sharing principles not in a visible way but in a habitual way. One might say that it is basically “un-paradigmatic” thinking.

Let us bring up one more dimension. The concepts flowing within the East Asian tradition of urbanization resemble the concept of the organism, that of communication and that of the network unfolding together with the formation of an information society. It uses a different approach from the mechanistic concept of the part being determined by the whole or the vertical and systematic thinking that determines the outline of the discussion and its itemized parts. Through horizontal thinking, through the organic concept where any part of the whole has autonomous functions, through the concept where one person/act/event leads to another person/act/event, and through the network concept, where even with a larger framework the individual acts within are determined by the free choice of the agent, the whole has limitless possibilities for change and an ever-animated concept of the organism.

I would like to call this “East Asian un-paradigmatic” thinking. This is intended in a positive sense.

## **10) How Can we Bring the East Asian “Non-Paradigm” in Step Within Reality?**

Now the question returns once again to Part 1. It seems that the core question is how to rescue East Asian un-paradigmatic thinking as a feasible concept within the East Asian society, or reality of urbanization of the present, or near future.

What is often pointed out with regard to the dual nature of East Asian

society, namely the situation where the outside and inside are said to be different, or where within the city or construction the experiences of the outer world and inner world are said to be different, or where the so-called Western style and Eastern cultural style interact in their own peculiar way within the phenomenon of life in East Asia, is in fact entirely natural within the system of “un-paradigmatic” thinking.

Rather than viewing this as a contradiction, it can be viewed as a situation where multi-dimensional, complex qualities interact naturally. These are “assets.” The main issue is how we can make these into “shared assets” or “assets with sustainable development.”

### 3. What is the Future of East Asian Urbanization Within the “Non-Paradigm”?

The present of East Asia has its share of difference, but it is realized through “compressed time and concentrated space.” It is a world where there are multiple time zones in one place, and multiple spaces unfolding at one time (scene). “Multi-time” and “multi-spaces” are taking place.

Is this chaos? Is it lack of order? Is it something that must be fixed? Is it something that must be shunned? Is it something that absolutely must be replaced with another paradigm?

I would like to express my reservations about paradigmatic thinking. I think that it agrees with reality to accept the contractions within East Asia, its complex nature, its multifaceted qualities, and its multidimensional nature. We can dispense with the question of “How should it be?” Furthermore, we can dispense with the question of “How should it be?” even more so in the case of the “borrowed pseudo-paradigm.”

The acceptance of “un-paradigmatic” thinking in terms of East Asia’s

time zones and spatial zones is much more characteristic of “sustainable development.” There may be an acceptable two-sidedness that can be both extremely abstract and practical, as well as an extremely dry, businesslike world, but it seems that if there can be an urbanization that portrays the reality of this country as it is, with its ability to embrace the curved side streets that spread like nerves or tentacles, that in itself would be an attraction. That complex and organic nature is the attraction and asset of East Asian urbanization.

I sense the limits of Europe’s “Eurocentricity” or the “universalism” of the American cultural sphere. It seems that it is a limitation with regard to collision with other cultural spheres such as East Asia rather than a limitation within its own world. It does not have enough power to embrace. Its scope is not wide enough. Its attraction as well is insufficient. As time goes by, I am losing my attraction to American and European cities. It seems as though they become tiresome after being seen a few times and that the well-organized control is suffocating. In East Asia as well, there is no charm in the well-kept “pseudo-paradigmatic” city of Singapore. Rather, I feel a breathtaking attraction to the “relaxed beauty” and “multifaceted quality where a new analysis is always possible” within East Asian cities.

East Asian cities have a peculiar charm, in South Korea, in Japan and in China, (I once described China’s character of “dualistic intersection” with the seven paired characteristics of “domestic and foreign, economy and politics, duality of urban and rural, abstractness and concreteness, symmetrical order and organic order, walls and structures, and pride and prejudice in a book called *Splendid China*.) as well as the hybrid city of Hong Kong.

This “urbanization as a hybrid organism” is a “unique cultural phenomenon accomplished by East Asia in the twentieth century.” It is similar to the way in which countless individuals join hands to create a unique, oxy-

moronic world in the cyber-world and the world of the Internet network. Three tasks remain for East Asian urbanization.

First, we should be skeptical of the artificial thinking that seeks to establish a “paradigm,” and in particular of the trap of the attitude of making “a borrowed paradigm into a pseudo-paradigm.” The concept of the “paradigm shift” is already paradigmatic thinking, a kind that is extremely non-Asian, called “substitution.” Rather than that, it would be better to pursue “embracing.” Some “hybrid” nature may appear, but the “hybrid world” will be the most important global view in the age of globalization in the new millennium.

Second is concern over a socio-cultural infrastructure to support a world that will become more complex and more hybrid in nature. Perhaps this may be a “seam” where the paradigm and non-paradigm merge. It is the task of East Asia to create a sympathetic logic regarding that seam.

Third, there is the task of mobilizing creative imaginations to enjoy and express the charm of East Asian urbanization. It is not abstraction, but the act of looking within at a micro-level in any country, construction or city and making something out of it. Imaginative power will take flight in the affirmation of a “non-paradigm” of reality.

SECTION 3

*East Asian  
Family/Gender/Community*

동북아시아역사  
연구재단

동북아시아역사  
연구재단

동북아시아역사  
연구재단  
NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY  
FOUNDATION

# The “East Asian Family” in Question

Professor, Dongguk University

## 1. Introduction

The question “Is there an ‘East Asian family?’” may be a more specific and less perplexing one than “Is there a family?”<sup>1</sup> Recently, the family has been defined as a contested terrain where differing views and interests become entangled. In the same vein, the discourse of the ‘East Asian family’ is another controversial terrain in which family values and ideologies compete. The ‘East Asian family’ discourse has triggered questions about the specificity of the East Asian family, the so-called Japanese *ie* or family, the Korean male family head system, *hojuje* and the Chinese family, *tsu*, which are not necessarily traditional East Asian family characteristics, but inventions of the East Asian modernization process (Sand, 1988; Muta, 1999; Yang Hyeona, 1999; Barlow, 1993). If the East Asian family is a mere function of East Asian modernity, a new issue must be added to the East Asian family discourse. Here, we have to ask what the East Asian family refers to: the families actually living within the region called East Asia or the families institutionalized within East Asia the ‘East Asian fam-

<sup>1</sup> The questions raised in the controversy over the “family crisis” and “family as ideology” (see Gittens, 1985; Thorne, 1992; Barret and McIntosh, 1982).

ily' as idealized from the perspective of Western modernity or the so-called 'self-orientalized' family that came into being as a result of the modernization process? This paper's interest in the discourse of the East Asian family has been more related to the third and fourth concern. Accordingly, the interest in the East Asian family does not simply center around the families living in the region of East Asia, but is more concerned with the Orientalism attached to the East Asian family as a contrivance of modernity that has been idealized as something fundamentally different from the Western family. The question of whether or not there is the 'East Asian family' begs the question of why there is so much interest in the East Asian family in the first place. In other words, this is related to the way East Asia is problematized and to the context of utilizing the East Asian Family discourse.

This paper focuses more on the way of problematizing the East Asian family in Korean society, rather than the reality or systems of the East Asian families. We come to meet conflicting concerns and approaches to the East Asian family: Specifically two camps are competing with over the East Asian Family discourse : one strives to highlight the East Asian family in the context of the Asian values, and the other is concerned with the East Asian modernization project. The former is mainly supported by advocates of 'Confucian familism,' while the latter is more problematized by modernity and feminist scholars. These views represent the politics of 'East Asian family' discourse.

## 2. Asian Values and the East Asian Family

The controversies of 'East Asian values' or 'Asian values' triggered by the controversy over the East Asian economy model de facto leads to con-

troveries over the East Asian family. At the heart of the discourse stating that “specific East Asian values exist in East Asia,” assumptions that East Asian families exist in a fundamentally different way from western ones are presupposed (Fukuyama, 1996; Lao Geping, 1998; Mizoguchi, 1998). The East Asian family value supporters try to emphasize that the East Asian family that is centered around a Confucian ethical order are the main elements in the East Asian economic growth model. The East Asian strong sense of familism that bears community bonds, and diligence and high aspiration for education in particular, were highly evaluated as the energizer for the East Asian model of rapid growth.<sup>2</sup> However, under the neo-liberal global capitalist market system, East Asian countries were no longer able to sustain the existing economic pattern. Confucian capitalism was symbolized as ‘crony capitalism’ and corruption. And Asian values themselves came to under attack as causes of the Asian economic crisis (Naisbitt, 1996). Still, even at a time when the East Asian economy was faced with a crisis, the Confucian East Asian family was still excluded from the East Asian value critique. Instead, the view that the economic crisis could be solved by relying on Confucian family values was encouraged (Takahashi, 1997; Du Weiming, 1996). In the case of South Korea in particular, the family was idealized as the only haven to supply energy to overcome the IMF economic crisis.

The core of the East Asian family discourse clothed with the ‘East Asian values’ concept are as follows: One is how to make use of the East Asian family to create a welfare society without paying welfare expenses.

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<sup>2</sup> Until the late 1980s and 1990s, when the Asian economy displayed rapid growth, there arose the terminology ‘East Asian model’ and ‘Asian values,’ to explain this. One representative example related to the ‘East Asian model’ (see Clive Hamilton, 1983; Pedro B. Bernaldez, 1998; Kim Heunggyeong, 1999) is for perspectives seeking to explain the motivating power for the Asian economic miracle through Asian values or Confucian capitalism.

Here the East Asian family is an alternative model to the crisis-stricken Western family.<sup>3</sup> In this case, *hyo* (filial piety) gains symbolic meaning as the main value of the East Asian family. It is highlighted as a concept in order to solve the problem of the elderly and aging society as a means of maintaining the modern nuclear family system.

Another concern is that of how to mobilize certain principles of the 'East Asian' family for economic development as a part of the 'modernization project.' Proponents of the East Asian family values claim that the Confucian patriarchal family offers a very efficient system to create solidarity, social cohesion, and a strong sense of responsibility toward the family, thus promoting economic development (Lee Gwanggyu et al., 1989). The main point of interest here is how Confucian principles were translated into the governing principles of East Asia. This is encapsulated in the way that the politics of Confucianism were transformed into State-propelled developmentalism. The family-centric and family-like social order of Confucianism was transformed into the family capitalism, utilized for engendering harmonious labor relations. Further, it is claimed that Confucianism's emphasis on education resulted in human resources development (Lao Geping, 1998).

In this way, the East Asian patriarchal family system is finally romanticized in the name of 'East Asian family' values. The East Asian family is conceptualized as the prototype of an East Asian collectivism placed in opposition to Western individualism. The high dissolution of the family seen in Europe and the United States is blamed for excessive individualism as opposed to the argument that the family in Asia is relatively stable, which enables East Asian economic development (Fukugawa, 1998).

It is no wonder that it is assumed that the stability of the East Asian family depends on women loyal to the gender division of labor and patri-

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<sup>3</sup> In particular, controversy in Korea was centered around the theme of family at the international conference held in 1988 at the time of the Seoul Olympics.

archical authority, the very core of the Confucian patriarchy. From a feminist perspective, what one cannot fail to notice is that “when Asian men say that they dislike Western values, what they often mean is that they dislike the Western concept of gender.” And further “with the individualism they dislike, it is not simply negative feelings toward political laissez-faire, but more toward liberal family relations. (Kim Hyesuk, 1995: 9798). Proponents of the ‘East Asian family’ even arrive at the conclusion that women’s entry into the labor market will soon lead to a Western-style disintegration of the family.<sup>4</sup> In this debate, the conditions of intimacy in which the mode of production has changed and the space of affinity and affection outside the family has expanded, is not mentioned. Further, it is neglected that the ‘distinctiveness of the Asian’ has disappeared (Gu Seunghoe, 1999). Here we cannot help but pay closer attention to the links between the East Asian family, the modernization project, and the development ideology.

### 3. The Modernization Project and the ‘East Asian family’

#### 1) Modernization and Family in Japan and China

The technologies of mobilizing the family in Japan’s modernization project offer many suggestions about how the East Asian family has been invented. The modernization experience in Japan can be broadly divided into two periods, which can also be applied with a time difference to other East Asians who experienced Japan’s colonization. The former is the period of accumulation through imperialism, lasting from 1868 to 1945, and the latter is the

<sup>4</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Asian Values Disappear in the Wake of the Crisis.” *Sindonga* August 1998, p. 263.

period of accumulation through democratization from 1945 to the present. Though both these periods show different modernization experiences, they both also display the same pattern of the family being subordinated to the state, and no boundary being set to distinguish between family and state (Okano, 1999).

The new claims about the family that arose with the appearance of modernization in Japan can be summarized as follows (Muta, 1999). The first, a pro-Western/antiEastern discourse, suggests the acceptance of the family model of the West, admitting its practices are the hallmark of an advanced civilization. It was argued that traditional family practices should be abolished “to make Japan become a powerful state in the world.” The second claim is that a reformation of the family is needed for the purpose of industrialization. The third claim is that the state should take precedence over the family. Thus, the modernization of Japan occurred in parallel with expansionism through militarization, imperialism, and colonialism with the establishment of the family state in East Asia.<sup>5</sup> The strong state and the development of society was to take priority over the personal interests of the family. The traditional system of the extended family was to be reformed<sup>6</sup> because it did not fit into the future development of Japanese society. The new characteristic of the domestic family centered on the child and housewife was something necessary not for the happiness of any in-

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<sup>5</sup> As can be seen with the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890, social codes for children such as responsibility, devotion, harmony, humility and good deeds constituted a national code connected to the Emperor, the head of national families. By appealing to the virtue of ‘family,’ the most brutal political powers were disguised as a restoration of the natural order in order to change interpersonal relations (Muta, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> In fact, in the case of Japan, the Meiji Restoration, the legal conflicts around 1890, the amendment of the Civil Code with a provisional law for a general inquiry commission in the 1920s, and the postwar reformation of the family system all involved fierce controversy surrounding the family, and there was a close relationship between the transformation of the national system and the family (Toshitani Nobuyoshi, 1987).

dividual family member but for the prosperous state. In addition, the concept of a family state played a decisive role for Japan's national accumulation under the imperialist system. Under the ideology of the family state, there is no clear distinction between the 'public' and 'private,'<sup>7</sup> thus the public and private are not separated but hierarchical. The public and private are connected under the same principle, in which the latter is subordinate to the former.

China too mobilized the family in the modernization process not only from the time of the Communist Revolution but also after the Cultural Revolution. In the former case, the traditional patriarchal family became the object of attack on occasion, but the discourse of national liberation subordinated women to the national agenda, as well as it did the family (Liu, 1993). The Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s adjusted the commune into a contractual system, and with the promotion of a "one child policy," the family became a mobilization unit of modernization. In the process of the Communist Revolution, the *tsu* (traditional family) became the object of attack, but the domestic domain of the *tsu* became the governing territory of the centralized state (Park Hogang et al., 1999). In the process, women were able to participate in large-scale social production and the public sphere, with the support of the state however, they were not exempt from household tasks and the responsibility of child rearing when they participated in the political arena, (Han Chialing, 1999). Currently, the Chinese government holds a strong centralized authority equivalent to that of the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Women's status has not

<sup>7</sup> In Japan, the word corresponding to 'public,' *oyake* (公的), is etymologically derived from *yake*, a classical unit of agricultural community, and each *yake* was subordinated within a larger *yake*, the *oyake* (in Japanese, *o* means "big"). Thus, the 'private' was one lower tier of the 'public.' The 'public' also becomes 'private' in the face of a larger 'public.' The relationship between 'private' and 'public' is not an indigenous part, but is stratified within a hierarchical relationship (Okano, 1999).

risen accordingly. Instead, the centralized government of China serves as a major agency in maintaining the Confucian patriarchal system (Chao Qian, 1989).

Discourse on the family has always been contradictory in the modernization stage of East Asia. Discussion on the ideal family life has been invisible from the public sphere, although the family and the state are closely connected. The same thing happens in both China and Japan. During the modernization process, Japan encapsulated people into the slogans of “a wealthy country with a powerful army” and “promoting industrialization.” From the very start of modernization, female subjectivity was an important agenda for discussion. At the outset of the Meiji Restoration, most intellectuals, came to hold western values and attitudes, and aspired to accept Western ‘enlightenment’ in order to catch up with the Western powers in terms of capitalism, national authority, and politics (Okano, 1999: 40). However, they criticized the excessive Western influence on the family to emphasize the Japanese “good wife and wise mother” obedient to the husband and home. What is interesting is that in the case of Japan, this particular image of women was encouraged during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars (Muta, 1999). More interestingly the concept of the “good wife and wise mother created in Japan” was exported and translated to China and Korea, in the process inventing a “Korean” or Asian tradition of motherhood. (Kawamoto, 1999). Thus, Japan’s modernization project did not end with the modernization of Japan, but was infused into a “pre-modern” or semi-modern East Asia where Japan could exert its influence, resulting in the ‘modern’ East Asia family.

## 2) The ‘Development State’ and the Korean Family

The South Korean modernization project went into action in the 1960s in

a very real sense, proceeding along two crucial axes<sup>8</sup>: cheap labor and family planning. The first economic development plan started with a 1964 fertility study on one hand, and a cheap labor pool with a family-like industrial relationship between labor and management on the other. The workforce of young women sacrificing themselves for their families was the core of the cheap labor pool for the economic development project. In the early stages of the South Korean modernization project, restoration of the nation and spiritual modernization was emphasized. The family was a basic unit of the national restoration (Kim Hyeonmi, 1999). The Park Chunghee military government in particular suppressed the voices of various social forces erupting in the course of rapid societal change, emphasizing the need for “strong leadership for reconstruction of the nation.” It stressed the stability of the family for the perpetuation of tradition and the development of public morals as the basis of so called “South Korean style democracy,” which was tailored to specific South Korean political circumstances. South Korea’s “development state” model could not but rely upon the family.<sup>9</sup> This kind of “development state” brought about compressed development or compressed modernization, as they are commonly expressed. In fact, a large part of the cost for this compressed modernization was passed off onto the shoulders of the “South Korean family” (Sin Yongha and Jang Gyeongseop,

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<sup>8</sup> If the use of ethnicity as an organizing principle and stepping forth as a subjective entity in world history are considered necessary conditions of modernity, our examination of the “modernization project” must center on the period following liberation from Japanese imperialism, and the 1960s are viewed as the beginning of this in that the political watchword of modernization was then stated in earnest (Im Hyeonjin, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> The concept of the developmentalist state is very suggestive in understanding the policies toward women of the South Korean state in the 1960s. The Park Chunghee regime drew up a series of development targets centered on the Economic Planning Board and worked toward reaching them. In addition, the policy toward women also reflects the state’s interest in mobilizing and educating women and the family in order to reach such development targets.

1996; Kim Dongchun, 1999). It is this “compressed development” that clouds over the present day family culture of South Korea in various ways and as a part of daily lives (Cho Uhn, 1997).

This kind of compressed development was possible due to the traditional Confucian patriarchal governance in Korean society, namely the morality of Confucian masculinity, strictness, “face” and responsibility for the family’s happiness, which was embedded into the modernization project itself (Kim Hyeonmi, 1999). Here, the state was another version of the patriarchal family state. The modernization project of the Park Chunghee administration was an example of “hypermasculine state developmentalism” (Han and Ling, 1998). The “hypermasculine state” refers to the formerly colonized states of Asia. In their pursuit of the modernization process, these states regarded a reactionary and powerful masculinity as an ideology of development in order to maintain internal solidarity within the country, while imitating the imperialistic and strong masculinity of the west.<sup>10</sup> Just before his death, President Park Chunghee, the head of the hypermasculine developmentalist state, emphasized the importance of moral education based on “the culture of the traditional spirit” in his New Year visit to the Ministry of Education. He emphasized that its core was humanism and that filial piety was itself the foundation of Korean humanism. Since then, the traditional norms and values have become a favorite topic among moralists, who were worried about the decay of traditional Confucian ethics under the waves of rapid modernization and urbanization. When the South Korean modernization project was at its height, many scholars took on the task of reestablishing filial piety for the general public to accept as a central moral tenet. Some companies included filial piety in their orientation programs. Even in the central districts of major cities, large signs were

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<sup>10</sup> “Hypermasculinity” is a term that comes from *The Intimate Enemy* (1983) by the Indian writer Ashis Nandy (Kim Hyeonmi, 1999).

posted asking, “What have you done for your parents lately?” It was a campaign designed to build a nationwide movement to rebuild traditional family ethics (Jang Yunsik, 1989:123). This reconstruction of “traditional” family ethics targeted young women to make them want to willingly sacrifice themselves for the family on the one hand, while willingly providing cheap labor for export-driven industrialization on the other. In this period, the primary composition of the South Korean working class mainly consisted of young, lower-class women. This was a strategy of “attraction” to draw foreign capital to mobilize cheap labor. This strategy of capital accumulation allowed Asia’s developing countries to conform to Western orientalism while perpetually adhering to a compliant and submissive feminine image, thus resulting in the formation of self-orientalism (Kim Hyeonmi, 1999).

On the other hand, the hypermasculinity of the state demanded a relatively high degree of “feminization” in all social domains. It even reinforced the indigenous cultural characteristics of the pre-capitalist stage. In the case of South Korea, Confucian masculinity was restored and reinvented. The ‘traditional Korean family values’ were more highly emphasized. Accordingly, elective affinity between the “growth” ideology and modern family ethics were strongly bound together (Gwon Myeonga, 1998).

#### 4. The Politics of the East Asian Family Discourse

This essay does not seek to answer the questions of whether the East Asian family is alike or different from other regions or attempt to define the so-called characteristics of the East Asian family themselves. Instead, it raises the question what the East Asian family really “means,” and problematizes the politics of the “East Asian family” discourse itself. The reason for the lack of boundaries between the state and family in Japan should not

be used to refer to Japan's pre-modernity, but to a modernization process that relied on a war demanding further attention as it offered important implications for discourse on the modern "East Asian family." The families living in East Asia are not identical with the East Asian family idealized and symbolized by "Asian values." No wonder the East Asian family no longer exists in any agreed upon or given form. The East Asian family is not defined by the exceptions of the diversity and volatility of the modern family, where a loose relationship is connected with other social systems. Gradually, it is becoming impossible for a definition of the family to be given in a fixed form (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Collier et al., 1992). In the same way, the East Asian family cannot be fixed nor be treated as a given form. The East Asian family presents a dislocation within the institutionalized East Asian family. This is not a difference from the Western family but a *différance* in the Derridan sense. If the debate over the East Asian family continues without concern or insight regarding how East Asian tradition is enmeshed in modernity or will be enmeshed in post-modernity with certain political and social forces, it may reproduce yet another vain ideology of the 'imaginary community.'

The debate over Asian values is related to Western hegemony, and likewise is the debate over East Asian family values. Furthermore, the latter should be related to patriarchal hegemony. The politics of the "East Asian family" discourse that seeks to advocate or reproduce the distinctiveness of the East "Asian" requires attention equal to the 'crisis' discourse regarding the Western family. The 'East Asian family' discourse must be approached more analytically. In whose framework the so-called East Asian family values are being recreated and circulated is as much a complicated and political question as one calling into question the reality of the East Asian family itself.

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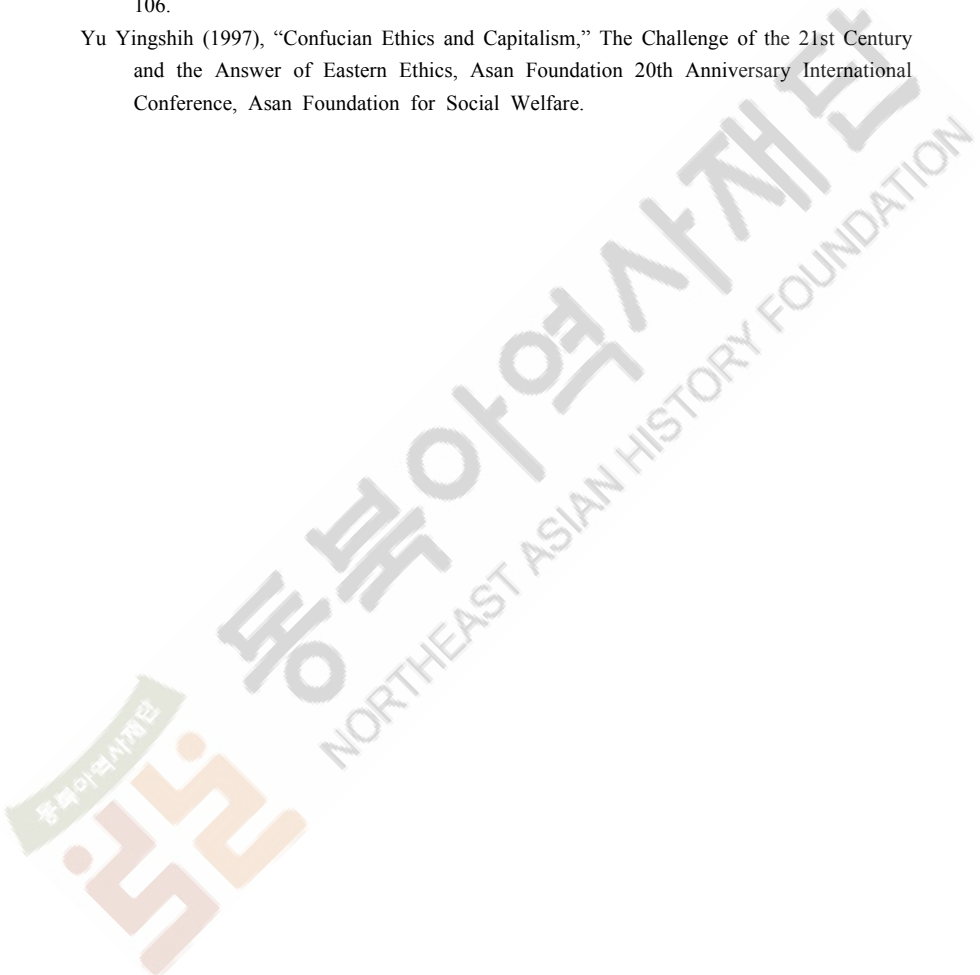
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# The East Asian Concept of “Public / Private” and Gender: The Modern State, Race and Gender, with a Focus on the Comparison between Korea and Japan

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## 1. Blind Spots of “East Asian Studies”

Amid growing awareness of the exclusion of women from public domains, the concept of public and private has begun to be dealt with as an important issue in feminist debate. This discussion of public and private, as part of feminism and its theoretical endeavors that were newly revived in the West in the 1970s, has since drawn attention and been developed by many scholars in particular. However, despite the important political implications of this debate, it has been criticized from various angles. Among these criticisms, one important criticism has been that of its Western-centeredness. The distinction between public and private domains is based in Western culture. The focus on the West, and the white middle class in particular, in feminist research has been criticized recently from many sides, and thus a new theoretical search for minority ethnic groups and black women is taking place within Western society, and feminist research in non-Western regions as well is becoming worthy of attention. Among the “mid-range” groups putting together the experience of women, including minority ethnic groups, non-white races and colonized races, “East Asia” is gaining ground as a very potent analytic unit.

East Asia has been becoming an important issue recently not only in feminist research, but in various other academic fields such as the social sciences and cultural studies. Scholars in such fields are seeking to find similarity in the fact that, in addition to their geographic proximity, the countries of East Asia also belong to the same Confucian cultural sphere. Owing in particular to the economic success attained in East Asia as seen in Japan, South Korea and China, this is also leading into attempts to conceive of an alternative model for social upheaval in opposition to theories of modernization based on the Western experience. Just as Western scholars, including Max Weber, searched for the “reason why modern capitalism was only possible in the West,” they search for the “reason why among the late starters only East Asia has enjoyed success.” At the root is the presupposition of special features of East Asia, different from the West and different from other non-Western regions. The discussion of East Asian women being attempted recently in feminist studies also could be seen as occurring within a context of such attempts. Thus, they are attempting to conceptualize a unique East Asian situation for women, quite different from that of the West and different from that of other non-Western regions as well.

It is true that such attempts are reaping considerable results. However, there is a great pitfall within such a theory of East Asia. This is because unlike various Western countries, where not only the present situation but the experience of modernity have been relatively similar, there exist very different experiences of modernity among the nations of East Asia. Japan, which began modernity with its colonial occupation; South Korea and Taiwan, which began modernization subject to colonial control; and China, which went through war from a semi-colonial state—each has had a very different experience. Moreover, this relationship of colonial ruler and ruled was formed among East Asian countries, the economic and political/social

inequality and hegemony were not greatly rectified following decolonialization, and most importantly the structure of control and victimization has not disappeared from within the consciousness of the people. As units of analysis, these points indicate that an analysis cannot be exact if it overlooks the differences among the various countries of East Asia, and at the same time serve to emphasize that the mechanism of complicated relationships existing among the countries is itself an important qualification of analysis. More normatively, they present the course that in order to become an East Asia that competes as a unified block against other regional units, including the West, this is possible only if such a Japanese hegemony within is rectified.

I would like to regard the starting point of this paper to be the point that in women's studies as well, we must recognize the blind spots of this theory of East Asia if we are to analyze the situation in East Asia. The goal of this paper is a comparison and analysis of how the situation of women has not only been determined by cultural/historical and social/economic conditions of society but has been heavily influenced by the relationship between countries and racial issues within the modernization process of East Asia in general and Korea and Japan in particular.

## 2. East Asian Views of the Family State, Class and Gender

The concept of public and private, introduced in the West since the 1970s as an important means of analyzing the situation of women, had assumed a historical tradition beginning in Greek thought and continuing to modern liberalist thought, and while in the process its contents have changed somewhat, at the core is the division between the state and the personal domain

without the state's intervention (Huh Ra-keum, 1996). Since the first onset of modernity, society has appeared in the territory in between, and the public domain has greatly expanded, and the meaning of "public" as well has expanded. But the state is still at the heart of the concept of opposition in the private domain, and the character of the relationship between state and individual can be seen as determining the character of public and private in all domains of that society. The character of women's participation in and exclusion from public and private domains is also directly influenced by this.

Discussion of the East Asian characteristics of the concept of public and private starts from the fact that the boundaries between the state as a public domain and the family as a private domain are not clearly defined as they are in the West. State and family not only do not have clearly defined boundaries, the so-called family-state principle stating that the compositional logic of the two is similar appears as the prevailing view in Japan, although it is also discussed in other Asian countries, including China. I will not deal with the issue in this paper, but the mixture of this logic of private and public is seen in social domains that have newly expanded with the advent of capitalism, and notable indications occur in the form of family enterprises.

In China, where active research on women's issues has recently begun, female scholars have observed that China's state and family do not have conflicting characters as in the West, but have the same structure. The state is a large family, and the family expresses a small-scale model of the state (Zang, 1999). This social character, which could be termed a family state, in fact appeared as a characteristic of the process of forming a modern state and family system in Japan. Together with a recognition of the Emperor as a great father and of the state as an expansion of the family, a family-state ideology that actually viewed the state as formed from the Emperor's

family as the “modern family” and the people’s families as “subsidiary families” had already formed in the 1880s and was reflected in the Meiji Constitution (1889) and the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890). In the 1930s the family state structure became the foundation for the consolidation of a system for the war. This view of the family state is advocated in the *Kokutai no Hongi* (1937) and the *Way of the Subjects* (1941) (Miyake, 1991: 268-71). Maruyama Masao (1964) points out that the fascism that formed the course of modern Japanese social development has characteristics that distinguish it from fascism in the West, and among the most important is its tendency of family-centeredness.

Comparative studies on the traditional East Asian family (Lee Gwang-gyu, 1989) observe that loyalty (忠) has been emphasized over filial piety (孝) in Japan Japano-centric to China and Korea, and that the composition of the Japanese family has been based in economic principles more in comparison with China and Japan. It can be seen that the domains and principles of public and private were more mixed in Japan.

This similarity among the nations of East Asia cannot conceal fundamental differences resulting from their unequal modernization processes and, moreover, the Japanocentric Asianism that became apparent in the colonial rule of Japan and the conception of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere in the 1930s. In the case of Korea, the formation of the modern state was delayed until after liberation, but with colonial annexation private domains and as yet undiscovered social domains were under the powerful control of the colonial state, and the traditional family system was heavily modified under Japanese influence. Japan’s view of the family state broadened its scope with the Asianism that was an important discourse in Japan during this time and began to include other Asian nations, including colonial Korea, and at this point the colonized territories and China were located along the periphery of a system centered on the Emperor (Hong

Il-pyo, 1999). Korea's private domains became the lower classes subjugated by the Japanese state or the surrounding classes. Thus, in the case of Korea, the relationship of public and private domains became more complicated with the consideration of racial relationships, and this could be summarized as a more powerful oppression in public domains. It will be discussed in the next section, but in Korea, where modernization began coupled with colonialization, these traces of the early stages continue to determine many areas.

In comparison with the West, where the distinction between public and private domains is more definite and where women are discussed as being limited to private domains (Kim Eun-shil, 1996), the mixture of these domains found in East Asia of course does not mean women's active participation in both public and private domains. As discussed before, the public domain subsumes the organizational principle of the private domain and demonstrates a hierarchical structure that holds sway over private domains, and women, being limited to private domains, are subject to the firm control of the public domain. With the development of capitalism, women were emerging into the arena of labor, a new public domain, but this control of women by the state and participation of women in public domains was achieved while reflecting the class structure being formed at the time. In the case of Korea, as it achieved capitalist development under the Japanese colonial occupation, the compelling power of the public domain came to control even the deepest recesses of the private domain more oppressively, and women not only were firmly controlled by the introduction of various systems of the compelling power of the colonial state, they experienced compulsory modernization in the process of colonial capitalist transformation. Racial elements were applied more firmly in gender-based control.

### 3. Intervention and Stratification in the Gender Relationships of the Modern State: The Case of Japan

Japan, which established various systems related to women in the early stages of modernization, mobilized women in various ways as it rushed into the wartime system. The Japanese welfare state, which restored national competitiveness following the war, intervened to mobilize labor and protect the family, and it can be seen that consciousness of women still could not be raised conspicuously in the face of the state's excessive power.

#### 1) Women's Policy in the Early Stages of Modernization

##### (1) Formation of the *ie* System and Motherhood with a Public Character

As a system that began developing in the mid Edo Period and formed continuously until the end of the Edo Period, the *ie* (house) system, with its content prescribed by the Meiji government in the Constitution and civil code, was characterized by an absolute authority of the patriarch toward wife and child, and authority and obedience were basic principles (Nakane, 1983:7). Women with the status of wife became powerless under the law and were not permitted to participate in economic activity or make any meaningful decisions under the law, and as the property of the husband could not act without the husband's permission (Tsunoda, 1989:197).

Aside from the *ie* system, Japan noticed as it established the country in the mid-nineteenth century that motherhood had been prevalent as a means of modernizing the people for Western imperial civilizations. In this period, where the necessity of citizen education was strongly propounded, the Meiji government immediately established a policy imposing a new role upon motherhood, that of education, and the intellectuals who promoted

modernization translated and introduced documents on the mother-as-educator that appeared in the West in the nineteenth century. The ideology of the “mother as educator,” with the feminine virtues and knowledge to enable children to become good citizens, spread throughout Japanese society, and was particularly widely accepted and generalized among middle-class women.<sup>1</sup>

With the beginnings of the modern government, the first policies related to motherhood were the prohibition of abortion, a policy for population increase and support for child-raising, though it was recognized that a qualitative improvement needed to occur in tandem with a quantitative increase in the number of citizens for the modernization of the state. Here the educational role of the mother was proclaimed, and it is in this context that the ideology of the mother-as-educator appeared. In the preface to one of his translations in 1869, Fukuzawa Yukichi emphasized that the roots of national interest lay in constitutional government and citizen education, and that in citizen education, education by the mother was important along with elementary school education.<sup>2</sup> The government as well positively accepted the advancement of citizen education and its correlation with the education of the mother, and in the 1870s the Ministry of Education worked out a formula for elementary education for women and equality of education for men and women, revising the educational content of the traditional moral education to focus its efforts on the broadening of knowledge, and even promoting study abroad for women. In 1885 the Education Minister stated that women were in charge of family education and were a medium for

<sup>1</sup> The fact that “motherhood” (母性) was first introduced into the Japanese vocabulary in 1904 in the periodical *Women’s Education* shows the central role of the image of woman as educator at this time (Niwa, 1993:76).

<sup>2</sup> Besides this, he espoused monogamy and criticized the traditional view of marriage that showed contempt for women, presenting a new image of the married couple (Kōda, 1990: 107-178).

infusing absolute patriotism into children, and even his political opponents said that they agreed (Kōda, 1990:101-119).

In this way, the new conception of motherhood with a public character occurred as one part of the modernization process during the Meiji period (Ueno, 1996:7).

By the 1890s, the ideology of the mother-as-educator could be seen giving way to the view centered on the “good wife and wise mother.” In Japan, the ideology of the good wife and wise mother has two aspects, those of modernity and reaction.<sup>3</sup> First and foremost, it is a product of the modernization process. It is difficult to find the image of the good wife and wise mother in the Edo period (1603-1868), because it was proclaimed together with the necessity of women’s education in the process of building a modern state. This is because the role of the spouse raising and educating children and taking responsibility for work in the household was not only housework, but was emphasized for the development of the state (Koyana, 1994:1931).

However, if one views the historical process in more detail, the shift in the focus of debate from the mother-as-educator to the good wife and wise mother arose from a process of conservative transformation beginning in the mid Meiji period. It can be seen that in the 1890s the concept of the good wife and wise mother was being used with a clearly reactionary sense. The principle of the good wife and wise mother raised its head with criticisms that women’s education emphasizing knowledge led to the collapse of feminine virtue and claims of the need to develop characteristics of chastity and fidelity in Japanese women, and this resulted from the strengthening and firm establishment of the principles of a gender-based division of labor, which criticized claims of gender equality and women’s

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<sup>3</sup> Discussion of the principle of the good wife and wise mother has made considerable progress in Japan (Katano, 1978; Koyama, 1992; Nagahara, 1982).

independence and insisted that women stay within the home as wives and mothers (Kōda, 1990:124-125).

## (2) Establishment of the System of Licensed Prostitution

While discourse and policy on the family system and the role of women within it was taking place, a system of licensed prostitution was being developed to supplement it. This system, a system of publicly authorized prostitution where the state gave permission to proprietors and prostitutes and received taxes in return, was established during the time of Tokugawa Ieyasu and spread throughout the country during the Meiji period. Prostitution developed as a commodification of gender according to the capitalist development of the preceding period, but the establishment and propagation of prostitution centered on red-light districts found its direct motivation in providing a formal setting where warriors troubled by the protracted chaos of war could satisfy their sexual desires, preventing the disturbances in the family system that these could lead to, and creating psychological stability in order to control rebellious tendencies (Fukae, 1989:202-205). This was accomplished through a recognition where men's escapist desires were viewed as natural and prostitution as a necessary evil to protect the home (Hayashi, 1992:125). The Meiji government implemented syphilis examinations for prostitutes (Yamashita, 1992:6-7), and it can be seen that the goal in this was protection of the patriarchal home, in particular that of the warrior class, rather than concern for the prostitutes. Similarly, as the two pillars of the patriarchal system whereby the imperial system controlled women were the family system and the system of licensed prostitution, this was based no less in an ideology of contempt for women, and at the same time reflected a fundamentally class-based discriminatory consciousness toward women and became the basis for their mutual coexistence.

### (3) Women's Participation in Public Domains

While the private domain was under the state's control in this way during the modernization process, women, who had been trapped in the private domain, became part of the labor force and began to participate in the public domain. This spread not only in the lower working classes but in the middle classes, because in the course of industrial development in Japan, secondary education developed as well and a middle class was forming in the cities. At this point, the Japanese state had already adopted measures for the protection of motherhood. In the 1910s, secondary education for women was expanded in Japan, and while a middle class formed in the cities and the nuclear family was born, various forms of female labor expanded in addition to that of factory laborer, including office worker, shop worker and typist. The "new woman" of the West was introduced and the New Women's Association was created (1920), and as leagues of women laborers came into existence for the first time, women's socialist groups were created as well. As information about European women during World War I proving their latent ability as they replaced their husbands, who had gone out into the battlefield and participated in activities outside the home, as well as various other meritorious activities of women, was introduced through newspapers and magazines, the government soon reacted to this. As Japanese industrialization proceeded and the number of women working increased in the 1910s, especially after the start of World War I, new women's movements in the West were introduced, and it became impossible to satisfy the newly demanded image of the woman as simply a good wife and wise mother. At this point, a new theory of the wise mother and good wife appeared, supporting the combination of work inside the home and labor outside the home for women. The government recognized the problematic nature of education centered on the good wife and wise mother and began discussing the improvement of women's status in connection with

the expansion of national power. They acknowledged that, for the sake of the country, women could not simply stay within the home but needed to participate in social activity, and arrived at the point of affirming women's entry into the labor market, as it happened coinciding with an increased demand for labor. However, this was an affirmation with a very limited meaning. Work outside of the home was recognized only insofar as it did not interfere with the central roles of housewife and rearer of children. Thus, it was acceptable if work was done only until marriage or if it was limited to the forms of side jobs that could be done from within the home or self-run businesses (Koyama, 1994:32-42).

Debates on the protection of motherhood held between female intellectuals and movements to protect motherhood among the female working class (Sakurai, 1991:48-51) subsequently formed the background of this national policy.

## **2) Mobilization of Women in the Militarist State**

The militarism that was continuously strengthened following the Meiji Restoration finally led to the provocation of war, and the Japanese people found themselves within a system of war mobilization. Women also were subjects of mobilization. The mobilization of women unfolded in a very complex manner, and was broadly divided into gender mobilization and labor mobilization. With gender mobilization on one hand, motherhood itself became the object of mobilization, and on the other hand there was a mobilization in the process of destroying motherhood to protect that mobilized motherhood. In this situation, class-based and racial discrimination played a part. As it progressed, labor mobilization would cause conflicts with motherhood mobilization.

### (1) Mobilization of Motherhood: The Mother in the Monarchy

Women's reproductive and child-rearing activities were notably emphasized as an efficient means of mobilizing men as soldiers during wartime. Many books were published stressing the great importance of the role of the mother for the country. They stated that the most sacred duty of the woman was to devote herself as a subject of the Emperor by giving birth to and raising children. The Japanese government launched a variety of propaganda campaigns and reward systems to encourage fecundity and mobilized women as mothers with the activities of patriotic groups praising the war, such as the Greater Japanese Women's Association. In addition, it created the first law protecting motherhood, the Mother and Child Protection Law, in 1937. The state came to provide aid to poor widowed mothers with sons younger than 13 years old (Miyake, 1991:271-272). The importance of motherhood was emphasized by the state; however, it was not something protected as a right of individual women, but as an object of national mobilization.

In fact, prominent female scholars and activists participated in this mobilization of motherhood on a large scale. In the case of Hiratsuka, Raichō, her belief in motherhood, which had a social and national character, continued into support for eugenic principles and the imperial system. Ichikawa Fusue, who had been a leader in the suffrage movement, performed the most prominent role beginning in 1937. She praised the country's policy toward motherhood highly, and even led the women of the Greater Japanese Women's Association to see off the soldiers heading to war at the station. This organization also collaborated in the mobilization of women's labor. She judged the state as having offered a role for women to escape the home and contribute to the country (Miyake, 1991:273-274).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> These female leaders who contributed to the war once again occupied central roles in the postwar women's movement. This is a major blemish that has continued to leave a lingering

## (2) Gender Mobilization in the Form of the Destruction of Motherhood:

### The Mobilization of Military Comfort Women

For this type of mobilization of motherhood, motherhood had to be protected, but it was for this protection that the destruction of motherhood took place concurrently. This was the mobilization of military comfort women as articles of consumption who gave their sexuality, and whose sexuality ended up destroyed, for the sake of countless soldiers and subjects of the Emperor. In Japan, this perception of motherhood according to class was prevalent from early on. Women within the *ie* system established following the Meiji Restoration were the possessions of their husbands and held no rights at all, merely assigned the role of bearing and raising children. In order to preserve this *ie* system, there was a need for a place for men to satisfy their deviant desires, and the licensed prostitution system was established as such a place. The women in that system withstood a secondary role where their motherhood was destroyed to protect the motherhood of the women in the *ie* system (Tsunoda, 1989:197; Fukae, 1989:202-205).

This perception of motherhood along class lines was connected to the “founding mother” and military “comfort woman” during wartime. In the consciousness of the Japanese, the military comfort woman was a necessary evil to deal with men’s “natural” sexual desires (Hayashi, 1992:125), and assumed an important role in protecting motherhood at the center of society. This mobilization of the destruction of motherhood, which had been met through licensed prostitution in the preceding period, came to include colonized women in accordance with an increase in the number of soldiers mobilized during wartime and the expansion of demand to an insupportable level. It is common knowledge that the establishment of military “comfort stations,” beginning in the early 1930s centered on regions

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influence in the Japanese women’s movement until the present, and there is controversy among female scholars over how to evaluate this.

such as Manchuria and Shanghai, expanded in 1937 to the Chinese mainland and on to the Pacific islands and South Asia.

### (3) Labor Mobilization and the Protection of Motherhood

As the war progressed, the majority of men were drafted as soldiers, and Japanese industry entered the situation of a conspicuous labor shortage. The mobilization of women's labor had become inevitable. As discussed above, the resources of lower class women working as prostitutes were becoming scarce through mobilization as military comfort women, and thus the objects of labor mobilization became women of precisely that class where motherhood had been emphasized. Amid constant demand for soldiers under the wartime situation, the protection of motherhood and the mobilization of labor created conflict.<sup>5</sup> Controversies arose surrounding the protection of motherhood in the situation of mobilizing women for labor, and the Japanese government took note of this as well. In fact, the government had eschewed the mobilization of women even in the situation of an extreme labor shortage. For the Japanese government, the primary role of women was reproductive. In the course of mobilizing women's labor, the government clarified that those subject to mobilization would be women who did not "form the axis of the family." Indeed, the women mobilized in the women's volunteer labor force were generally single women or widows. Concern for the protection of motherhood can be seen in the ways in which mobilized women were also made to avoid heavy labor as much as possible and placed in positions with a minimum of physical activity, as well as being housed in women's dormitories away from male laborers. However, it has been said that this discussion on the protection of mother-

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<sup>5</sup> It has been said that the wartime Japanese government failed at controlling and using these two roles of women. That is to say that the population did not increase and the conditions of forced labor were wretched (Miyake, 1991:269-270).

hood was merely rhetoric, and the real labor situation was wretched (Miyake, 1991:288-290).

Beginning in 1939, plans for the mobilization of labor settled upon unemployed single women as a source to meet the demand for labor, and in December 1941 women aged 14 to 25 were mobilized as a patriotic labor brigade through a decree for the patriotic cooperation of citizen labor, with the inauguration of female volunteer brigades beginning in October 1943. Besides this, women were mobilized through women's good will corps and the labor personnel system (Yeo Sunju, 1993:15-19).

### **3) The Intervention of the Postwar Welfare State and Women's Feeling of Helplessness**

#### **(1) Dilemmas in the Protection of Motherhood and Labor Mobilization and Policies of the Welfare State**

Following the war, the government implemented a policy to have the women mobilized during the war return to the home. This was instituted along with policies to support the homecoming of many men who had been mobilized as soldiers or laborers in munition industries and were unemployed after the end of the war. In this situation, motherhood was emphasized in terms of policy, and it could be seen as connected with lifestyle measures and the movement to restore the *ie* system as a stronghold of social stability within a situation of economic disorder and rising unemployment (Seiyama, 1988:21-22). Postwar Japan revised a family law based on the modern small family unit and a family register law based on monogamy, but this already included strong notions of policy aimed at the solidification of the family as a support community and prescribed broader family groups sharing clan relations and ancestral rites as secondary units of support (Harada, 1988:319-321). Meanwhile, activities to protect the motherhood of female laborers were resumed at this time with the establishment of holi-

days for menstrual periods by law, for example in the newly enacted Labor Standards Law, and the development of movements for the protection of motherhood within the federation (Sakurai, 1991:69-71).

In general, women were placed in a very complicated position during the period of rapid economic growth between the mid-1950s, when the Japanese economy took a leap with special procurements arising from the Korean War, and the early 1970s, the time of skyrocketing oil prices. When a labor shortage resulted from the economic expansion, women once again were employed as labor. However, phenomena of family disintegration, including an increase in the divorce rate, single-parent families and the increase in single households, were beginning in earnest at the same time, creating a more urgent need for stability in the home, and the birth rate began to drop as well. In this situation, women came to bear the double responsibility of child-raising and nursing the elderly in the home. This was a different situation from when labor mobilization concentrated mainly on single women in order to overcome the contradictions of maternity and labor during wartime. The use of female labor expanded to include not only single women but married women as well, and in a situation where coercion such as that applied during wartime was impossible, the government had to establish various indirect support policies to appropriately attain the twin goals of utilization of labor and motherhood.

From the side of labor, plans were formulated to employ middle-aged married women as simple low-income workers who were free to enter and withdraw as they wished. This was well-suited to an industry situation where the shortage of simple low-income workers was particularly acute amid the formation of a twofold structure in the labor market. Because the status of this labor was incomplete, generally temporary or part-time work, it coincided with the companies' interests and satisfied the conditions of a form of labor that could coexist with home life. Thus, as they faced the

situation of a polarized labor market, they presupposed the functions of a family sustained by the female (Toshitami, 1990:5). The large-scale expansion of child care services for married women was also accomplished during this time. The Japanese government assumed that “one must be able to carry out the double responsibilities of home and work harmoniously,” and announced that it considered supplementation for difficulties through the implementation of welfare policy as a central task. However, as child care centers were considered in such a way as to note the central role of the mother to a certain extent, the caring time available also was set to agree with women’s working hours.

Along these lines, it is important to note that the Japanese government declared the stable nuclear family to be the desirable model of the family and made clear its focus on the raising of families. They placed importance upon the educational functions of the home, the basic environment for raising young children and adolescents, emphasizing the role of women in this, and stressed that care for the elderly was also fundamentally the responsibility of the family (Harada, 1988:320).

As the high growth rate slowed, the government made historic modifications to the welfare policy that had been promulgated during the high-growth period, seeking a change in course toward the new target of building a so-called “Japanese-style welfare society” different from that of Western countries. This ultimately reduced the burden on the government and emphasized the role of the home and region. Women’s responsibilities in the home, not only motherhood but also care for the elderly, were further stressed, leading to the encouragement of homes where three generations lived together.<sup>6</sup> This has also been commented upon as an attempt

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<sup>6</sup> The Japanese government emphasized the three-generation living arrangement as an important asset of Japanese welfare not possessed by the West (*Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare White Paper*, 1978:58).

to reproduce the prewar *ie* system and the various functions of the regional community (Economic Planning Agency of Japan, 1983). What was most worrisome to the Japanese government and society during this time was the severe drop in the birth rate. This was recognized as having resulted from ever-increasing women's labor, the excessive burden on the home and women's low social status, and the government announced that it would strongly support women's job-seeking and its compatibility with childbirth and child-raising. However, the government's policy in this situation lacked consistency, and even as they continued to make efforts toward using women's labor, they stressed that a fair evaluation of women's work in the home was needed, and there was also a broad consideration of full-time housewives.

## (2) Women's Feelings of Helplessness and the Incitement of East Asian Racial Issues

It has been observed that in the face of this elaborate policy of the state toward women, Japanese women have felt a sense of helplessness. The state-led regional women's associations that had been initiated during the Meiji era have not yet lost their base, and while women's movements with a new-society character are active, such as the cooperative living movement, the independent voices of women appear to remain weak. In the 1990s, it can be noted that new forms of women's movements are arising as the women of East Asian countries combine forces and realize the strong connections of racial issues to women's status.

Based on regional women's organizations, including housewives' associations and young ladies' associations, which began forming voluntarily in the late Meiji era, the Japanese government organized women nationwide to build up national power. These organizations regarded national development as the chief priority, adopting the position of deferring claims

to women's rights and opposing the women's suffrage movement unfolding at the time, and constituted the "neighborhood class," the lowest echelon of regional units under the wartime general mobilization system. The regional organizations fostered and mobilized by the state in this way performed the principal activity of women's education in liberal arts and etiquette, then began to broaden their activity to include betterment of living, laying down roots within the region as lifestyle groups. Following the war, the General Military Headquarters (GHQ) dismantled these women's organizations, which had assisted the war, but even then the organizations existed as lifestyle groups. Beginning around 1948, the GHQ, conservative once again, cautioned against left-wing women's movements and restored these organizations for the purpose of planning the fostering of feminine virtue and elevation of morals, as had been their purpose before the war (Abe, 1982:113; Ichibangase, 1978:257-259). With the efforts of a government that planned for organization equivalent to the prewar level, these organizations expanded to include 7 million people before falling off somewhat in the 1960s. Regional organizations participated later in consumer movements and peace movements, but as they basically assumed a business subcontracting function for the administration, they played an important role in conservatization of the Japanese women's movement. The formation of PTAs for each school unit in 1948 and the inauguration of nationwide conferences also resulted from the intentions of the GHQ (Itō, 1977:73). Although these groups played an important role in improving the educational environment, as regional organizations they were tinged with conservatism (Chung Chinsung, 1993).

Leftist women's movements started to develop in Japan in the 1910s as sectional movements of the left wing and flourished in the 1920s (Ishizuki, 1982:195). These movements, where voices were raised toward not only issues of women's labor but general women's issues, including

criticism of the prostitution system and the birthright system, were thwarted under the wartime system of the 1930s, but were momentarily reorganized after the war with the implementation of democratic policies by GHQ. Because these movements dealt with women's issues fundamentally as part of general societal reforms, they could not help being limited as movements for women's basic independence. Thus, these movements lost steam as well with the general absorption of labor movements and socialist movements into formally operated institutions in Japan.

Dependence on the West is also worthy of mention. The motherhood controversy of the 1910s (Kouchi, ed., 1992), the formation of "new women's associations" (Jayawardena, 1986:13) and the suffrage movement, all active in the 1920s, were significantly influenced by Western feminism, and in the 1970s a women's liberation movement "landed" in Japan, showing strong indications of Western radical feminism (Ueno, 1994:3-14). This movement left behind a small number of groups seeking their own revolution, while the majority changed course to pursue general systemic reform of society, converging upon the customary form of social movements,<sup>7</sup> but exerting a powerful influence on the subsequent formation of Japanese feminism. In 1975, the International Year of the Woman as proposed by the UN, a direct opportunity was provided for the women's movement. With large organizations experiencing multiple fissures and small groups in disarray, unified force was lacking in the women's movement, and in this situation preparations were made to participate in international women's meetings, and later in the UN's Decade for Women. Meanwhile, to hold

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<sup>7</sup> Differences of opinion arose over this issue, and there occurred a separation into two groups, the Women Questioning the Group, which emphasized revolution of the self, and the The women's Liberation Confederation for Opposing the Law Forbidding Abortion and for Victory in Opening the Busding, which espoused revolution in the legal system (Inoue, 1975:232).

a Japanese conference for this event, the Fraternity Club for Annual Convention in Japan for International Women was formed in cooperation with 41 women's groups and women's union sectors (Fraternity Club for Annual Convention in Japan for International Women, ed., 1989), and it currently exists as an association with 52 member groups. Following the adoption of an agreement for the abolition of discrimination against women at the UN General Assembly in 1979, it played an important role in leading the Japanese government to ratify the agreement in 1985, and the subsequent enactment of equal hiring practices for men and women can also be deemed to have been accomplished in this context. The Japanese government took the opportunity of the International Year of the Woman and by 1975 had already established an office for the promotion of planning for women's issues in the Prime Minister's Office.<sup>8</sup> Among the changes occurring due to Western feminism, another notable one was the expansion of research in women's studies. There had been the controversies over motherhood in the 1910s, over housewives in the 1950s and over household labor in the 1960s as mentioned before (Maruoka, 1983), and in the early 1970s, under the influence of women's liberation, translations appeared for books such as *The Feminine Mystique* (Betty Friedan) and *Sexual Politics* (Kate Millett). In the late 1970s research in women's studies centered on small groups was carried out with the help of the government, and this continued into university lectures, while women's centers were erected in various places, beginning with the opening of the National Women's Education Center in 1977.

There is a long history to the way in which the New Society movement was deeply absorbed into Japanese feminism. As an organization that was based in regional organizations of the women's movement since before the

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<sup>8</sup> It was in this atmosphere that the City of Tokyo adopted the Resolution for the Improvement of Women's Social Status in 1975 (Itagaki Kisaru et al. [eds.], 1995:19-20).

war and was mainly composed of women, the example of cooperative living, which also included participation in consumer movements, the peace movement and environmental movements after the war, could be cited.<sup>9</sup> Nationwide organizations such as the Housewives' Association and the Voter's League, as well as regional women's groups, revived movement trends from weakness in the 1960s, and started to become aware of issues that had appeared as major problems in all reaches of Japanese society, including waste matter, pollution, living environment facilities, traffic and welfare. The active absorption of the environmental movement by the cooperative living movement is worthy of special attention (Chung Chinsung, 1991, 1996). Regional organizations such as women's associations and PTAs broke away from the administration subcontracting work that they had engaged in until that point and launched themselves into regional resident movements, beginning to form close relationships with autonomous regional systems and devote their energies to improving regional living conditions (Ichibangase, 1978:268).

The women's rights movement, which had to be at the center of these wide-ranging movements, in truth did not develop greatly. Prewar movements for women's education and suffrage had been realized, and contributed to advancing women's rights, but because the groups participating in these movements, including associations for the revision of customs and the League of Women Voters of Japan, continued after the war after being mobilized by the state during wartime or voluntarily cooperating with it, there are disputes about the authenticity of the movement. Movements developed toward goals including stabilization of prices, legislation banning prostitution, maternity protection for workers, peace movements that in-

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<sup>9</sup> In 1995, the 'Gensuibaku taisaku ren'gō uchiawase kai' was formed together with the Housewives' Association and the National Federation of Regional Women's Organizations (Itō, 1977:137).

cluded opposition to rearmament, opposition to the restoration of the family system, and the installation of child care institutions, but it seems that they are not judged as having achieved much activity.

From this development process of movements, a feminist movement in a more essential sense came into being in the early 1970s, one different from existing women's movements that had the character of reflecting one aspect of social movements, and this movement has been becoming more conspicuous in the 1990s. Interestingly, this women's movement in Japan began from the discovery of women outside of Japan, especially women from parts of Asia that Japan had invaded. Through the discovery of Asian women experiencing the double plundering of race and gender, women's consciousness became intensified. This movement, which also fit within the pulse of the peace movement, a continuous endeavor of postwar Japanese women's movements, placed emphasis upon promoting international relationships among Asian women.

After the launching of "Invasion – The Asian Women's Conference to Fight Discrimination," which viewed gender discrimination as occurring within a backdrop of invasion ideology and which noted issues of Asian women subject to double oppression, the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union and Korea Church Women United joined forces in 1973 and waged a movement against Japanese sex tourism. In the same year, 55 small groups and 16 nationwide organizations launched a meeting to face the problem of prostitution and deal with the issue of Japanese men's sexual violence toward Asian women.<sup>10</sup> These groups also focused their attention on issues of female part-time workers, and all of them have recently

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<sup>10</sup> It is noteworthy that major national organizations contributed assistance, including the New Japanese Women's Association, National Federation of Regional Women's Organizations, the Association of Japanese Women's Groups, the League of Japanese Women Voters and the Democratic Women's Club (Baishun Mondai to Torikumukai, 1996).

been working on resolving the problem of comfort women forcibly mobilized for the Japanese military (Komano, 1975:211-212). Organizations such as the Women's Action Association for the International Year of the Woman (formed in 1975),<sup>11</sup> Asian Women's Gathering Network in 1977, the Asian Women's Meeting Network established in 1993 and Asian Women's Data Center in 1995 have been engaged in multifaceted activities, including support for Asian women workers, movements to resolve the issue of comfort women, participation in East Asian women's forums and preparations for the Beijing Conference. In addition, there are many small groups, such as groups for Korean women living in Japan and meetings to help Filipina women, and they link together and with Asian groups according to the Asian issue with which they are helping (The Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association, 1996). Linkages between Japanese groups, however, have not been particularly successful, as can be seen with the recent movement to resolve the issue of comfort women.<sup>12</sup>

These movements, developing consciousness as they link with Asian women's groups, could be judged as opening new horizons for the women's movement. However, more noteworthy is the fact that these movements are finding places as major social forces sending out voices of opposition amid the dizzying atmosphere of the 1990s where Japanese society espouses globalization, yet in fact is infusing its content with a nationalism proclaiming that it will seek out that which is Japanese and propagate it (McCormack, 1994). Equating the fate of Japanese women with that of Asian women can only be an epochal event in Japan, which provided a fresh occasion to find

<sup>11</sup> In 1986 the Women's Action Association for the International year of the Woman changed its name to the Women's Association for Action. It is engaged in action as a major group at present, and now includes male members.

<sup>12</sup> This forms a contrast with South Korea, with more than 20 groups participating in a unified movement centered upon the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery in Japan.

the driving power of its modernization in the desire to escape from Asia.

## 4. Intervention in Gender Relationships of Colonial States and Japan's Influence and Its Traces: The Case of Korea

### 1) Attempts at Modernization and Colonial Government Policy

#### (1) Instrumental Motherhood in the Late Korean Empire and the Introduction of the Japanese Family System by the Colonial Government

At the time of the flowering of the Late Korean Empire, the two important issues faced by Korean society, modernization and independence of the race, collided with each other and dominated people's consciousness.<sup>13</sup> The enlightenment of women surfaced as an important social problem in most reformist thinking, with the exception of the ideology based on expelling foreign influence, which emphasized independence from foreign powers. In the Cheondo religion, plans for social reform for the abolition of social standing included permission for widows to remarry and the abolition of the concubinage system, but it can be seen more positively that the combination of modernism and ethnic nationalism was connected with women's education in the claims of the Independence Party regarding women's education. The pioneering intellectuals of the Independence Party rendered

<sup>13</sup> The attempts at reform during this time are divided into three groups: independence movement forces including the school of "Eastern ways with Western means," the Gabo reformation forces and the independence association movement; popular movements, including the Gabo peasant movement, the Yeonghak Party and the "Robin Hood" movement; and loyalist fighting forces comprised of the ideology based on expulsion of foreign elements, derived from the feudal era, and the peasant class ideology of "serving the country and appeasing the people" (Jeong Changnyeol, 1982).

active support and assistance for women's groups that began forming at the time to help them establish modern educational institutions for women (Sin Yeongsuk, 1994:439). However, it can be seen that the women's education suggested at this time had its necessity limited to the maternal role of home educator and the wifely role of enlightened supporter of the husband (Lee Hyojae, 1989). This tendency continued into the colonial era. There was a growing demand for solidarity of civilized women for promoting the independence of the race, and the importance of education was strongly emphasized, particularly in right-wing ethnic nationalism. Though it was from an instrumental standpoint, in any event this process led to an increase in the number of education institutions for women. The Chanyang Group, which centered on female nobility, established the Sunseong Women's School, many Christian schools were built, and normal schools and women's schools instituted afterward by the colonial government also contributed to greater activity in women's education.

Independent attempts at modernization were thwarted by the colonial annexation, and various Japanese systems were introduced by the colonial government. The government enacted the Family Register Law (1909), which enabled the practice of Japan's family registration system in Korea, and transplanted the Japanese-style family system and the customs regarding women's status within it. In so doing, they excluded women from the right to be head of the family and from hereditary succession, where during the Goryeo and Joseon periods women had been entitled to that status based on the family registration system. In the revised Civil Code of 1930, Japanese versions of Western systems were introduced, and with the 1939 policy of enforced name changes, the system where various family names were possible within one house was revised into a policy of one-name-per-house, centered on the head of the family, forcing wives to take their husband's name (Lee Hyojae, 1996:166-169). This string of policies can

be perceived as having reinforced the patriarchal system in Korea.

## (2) Introduction of the Japanese Prostitution System

As Japan advanced into the Joseon port regions in the late 1890s, the Japanese prostitution system advanced along with them. Once the port of Busan opened in 1876, Japanese prostitution businesses scrambled into Joseon, and soon the industry was thriving with the influx of large Japanese populations in such regions as Wonsan, Incheon, Pyongyang and Sinuiju. Japan recognized the industry in most regions, with the exception of Incheon, where the Western powers' consulates were located, and applied the law for management of prostitution implemented within Japan. As Japanese settlements expanded through the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, Japanese red-light districts also expanded, and though the Korean Empire issued decrees to regulate *gisaeng* (singer-dancer hostesses at pub restaurants) and prostitutes (1908), they were unable to prevent this. Ultimately, the Japanese prostitution business began to debut formally with Japan's forcible annexation of Korea, and in 1916 an omnibus prostitution control law was enacted for implementation throughout Korea. This took effect in Korea until the end of the Japanese colonial rule, distorting Korea's sex culture (Song Yeonok, 1998).

## (3) Compulsory Modernization of Women

The colonial government expanded educational institutions and built modern factories. As women were absorbed into this in large numbers, ultimately it would stimulate women's movements and employment. This was of course intended for control and exploitation, and it is true that women's lives were difficult in many respects, but it can be expressed with the concept of "compulsory modernization," containing a somewhat anomalous component, in that it drew into public domains women who had been trapped

in the traditional mold. Indeed, in many respects such as education, child-birth and employment, various signs surfaced to place emphasis on “women’s modernization” (Chung Chinsung, 1992). In the area of labor in particular, compulsory breaks with tradition and customs appeared in many areas under the iron-handed colonial government. For example, the manual trade that had been carried out within the home was forcibly destroyed by the police, and in its place modern textile factories came to absorb those women, and women were made to work in labor processes where they had not traditionally participated in farming villages and mines. As well, nursery schools were widely established within the regions where this labor took place.

#### (4) Women’s Ethnic Consciousness

Amid this situation, ethnic liberation assumed a central part along with women’s liberation in women’s consciousness. The situation of women themselves, internalizing ethnic nationalism and participating in its movements, formed an important stage in women’s formation of subjectivity. Women’s individual ethnic nationalist movements, including the late Korean Empire’s Chanyang Association, the movement for compensation of the national debt and women’s loyalist military groups, showed that, as with most countries that have experienced colonization, the setting where women first formed groups and waged political movements was in nationalist movements (Jayawardena, 1986:258). That women, who in traditional society had been trapped in private domains, considered the future of the people and formed groups to perform political activity together can only be considered surprising. There is no doubt that this formed an important opportunity for the formation of women’s subjectivity.

The nationalist movement and socialist movement, which had been the principle social movements in Korea during the Japanese occupation, also

made important contributions to women's formation of subjectivity. Women's individual movements developed with the formation of women's nationalist groups like the Korean Patriotic Women's Association (1919), and it can be seen that these became centered on female Christian intellectuals (Bak Yongok, 1984:174) and that women's education and ethnic independence were combined into one goal. This showed a similar process to those of other colonial societies, where the struggle for women's liberation became a central part coinciding with movements of ethnic resistance (Jayawardena, 1986:8).

The awakening of women's social consciousness as they were included in the process of ethnic nationalism that stirred the social consciousness of the colonial people, and the inclusion of desire for ethnic independence and social reform within women's subjective consciousness that occurred in this way, could be viewed as quite natural and inevitable. As discussed earlier, evidence that feminism was not far separated from social reform (Jayawardena, 1986:258) also appeared in Korean society.

However, there were of course limits to the development of women's consciousness in this process. These were women's organizations, but since most of them were formed within a close relationship with other social organizations and it was thus difficult to have independent courses of action or contents, they were heavily swayed by connections and separations between social organizations. The Gunwoo Association, which threw its lot in with the shows an example of this process. Through connection with other social organizations divided in this way, it also became impossible to form unified organizations among women's groups. It is also true that in light of the overwhelming task of ethnic independence, women's liberation was regarded as incidental. Even so, these facts were only limitations, and the dependency of women's consciousness was in itself unable to take a decisive form. During this period, all social movements in Korea,

including the socialist and labor movements, were centered on the issue of ethnic independence, and in the case of the women's movement as well, women's liberation was viewed not as something following ethnic independence, but as part of one goal where both were intertwined.

This ethnic consciousness became even more complicated when combined with Westernization. Although modernization and capitalist transformation was led by Japan in Korean society based on new modern ideologies, many Western ones entered through Japan. The ideas of women's liberation were no exception. In the 1910s various feminist theories were introduced in Japan, including the theories of Ellen Key on motherhood, and the concept of the "new woman" was also introduced. These theories were mainly introduced in Korean society through Japan, with the rare exceptions of women who had studied abroad in the West. Some groups of these new women achieved substantial success in women's education and enlightenment, but it can be seen that they could not overcome the barrier of self-deprecation and gave up, even going so far as to collaborate with the Japanese colonial rulers.

## **2) Mobilization of Women during Wartime**

In the late 1930s, Japan established a full-blown mobilization system for the war, and Korean women were also mobilized for various goals. Mobilization of labor, unlike in Japan, took place with no consideration of the protection of motherhood, and a large-scale maternity-destructive sexual mobilization occurred.

### **(1) Labor Mobilization without Protection of Motherhood**

Beginning in the late 1930s, countless women were forcibly mobilized into Korean factories, farming villages and mines, as well as Japanese munitions factories. With the introduction of the Outline for Student's Patriotic Labor

Groups (1938), female students were mobilized into the cleaning of temples and the sewing of military articles, and with the legislation on patriotic labor and student mobilization, the mobilization of a women's promotional group (1944) was implemented under government mediation. Also, many women were mobilized into Japanese munitions factories through the 1944 decree for women's volunteer labor. It is known that this mobilization had already been implemented through the good offices of the government by the late 1930s and early 1940s, irrespective of the proclamation of any law. In addition, special women's training camps for mobilization into labor and wartime efforts were built throughout Korea (1944). The compulsory modernization experience that they underwent through mobilization, with training, labor and dormitory life, merits deeper discussion. However, what is noteworthy is no records can be found of the discussions of the protection of motherhood that took place in Japan with the mobilization of women at the same time also taking place in colonial Korea (Chung Chinsung, 1997:167-180).

## (2) Large-Scale Mobilization of Military Comfort Women

It can be seen that the mobilization of women's labor was carried out without consideration of the protection of motherhood in the large-scale mobilization through the destruction of motherhood realized upon colonial Korean women. In the early 1930s, as Japan deployed armies to be stationed in Manchuria and China, they began mobilizing women in Korea to satisfy the soldiers' sexual desires. This expanded into a large-scale policy of operating military comfort stations in more systematic and elaborate way as the area of conflict grew and the period of overseas stationing increased following the Japanese invasion of China in 1937. With the initiation of the Japanese Ministry of the Army and the participation of such government organizations as the Ministries of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs, as

well as the colonial governments in Korea and Taiwan, plans were formulated to establish a policy of mobilizing colonial women. It is apparent that a policy of military comfort women, the goal of which was to satisfy a large number of Japanese troops in excess of 7 million by the end of the war, could not be established without the women of colonial Korea as objects of mobilization. There have been many attempts to explain why they chose Korean women,<sup>14</sup> but the basic reason is first and foremost the enormous scale. One may recall that motherhood was emphasized even in the course of mobilizing labor in the case of Japanese women. Thus, while it is a gender issue, it cannot be examined without simultaneously being viewed as an ethnic issue. On the battlefield, especially as the war became protracted, the portions that could not be met with Korean women were filled with women from occupied territories. There are many points of difference between colonial women and women of occupied territories, but it is the difference in postwar treatment between European women in occupied lands and Asian victims<sup>15</sup> that leads to the suggestion of issues of racism.

Viewed from this perspective, the policy of comfort stations had its basic origins in the Japanese prostitution system, but is fundamentally different from it in that racial issues also played a part. The fact that it was a system recognized and organized by the state for men's deviant desires is a racial issue of the comfort station policy such that even as one recognizes the compulsion and enslavement of the prostitution system, the two could never be equated. In addition, research on Korean victims shows that their anger toward Japan is mixed with their resentment toward being victimized as women (Lee Sanghwa, 1993). The movement to resolve this issue taking

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<sup>14</sup> Issues discussed include the virginity of the Korean women or the risk of disclosing military secrets.

<sup>15</sup> Batavia Court.

place in South Korea is centered on women's groups, but has adopted a strategy of forming new, temporary groups including men when the strength of the entire population is needed for fund-raising or special international activities. An awareness is emerging that this is a racial issue at the same time that it is a women's issue.<sup>16</sup>

### **3) Women's Policy in the Developing State and the Lingering Normativity of Ethnic Conditions**

#### **(1) Women's Policy**

South Korean society underwent a truly rapid transformation after liberation. Economic development in particular proceeded quickly under the government initiative, but democratization and the demands of surrounding social strata were ignored. Various policies were developed toward women in the process of national development. It has been pointed out in many discussions on the excessive growth of the state that this overwhelming strength of the state was itself a legacy of the colonial period. Women's policy began to be put into practice in time for the creation of the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Health and Welfare by the American military administration in September 1946. A new civil code was enacted and the right to vote was extended, while the prostitution system was abolished and various measures for the education of women were implemented. Viewed in a broad frame, it can be seen that there was an attempt during the period of American military administration to translate into action a formula of Western-style separation of public and private on top of the existing separa-

<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1993 and 1996-1997 organizations called the National Movement Headquarters and Citizen's Alliance, which included men, were temporarily formed for nationwide fundraising efforts and then disbanded, and the Korean Committee for the Trial of War Criminals was formed with the participation of many scholars of international law for the purpose of civil war criminals trials planned for Tokyo in 2002 with the participation of Japan and victimized countries in Asia.

tion of public and private, but it was unable to escape the mold of before. The prescription of women's domain by the state in itself could be viewed as another form of the previous guidance of the state. The two main trends in women's policy that began with the inauguration of the American administration and continued afterwards as well, education in and promulgation of a modern image of the mother and regulations and crackdowns on poor women who had fallen into prostitution (i.e., protection of the woman "within" the family and regulation of the woman "outside" the family), also resembled the concept of the family state that was seen in early modern Japan and that exerted an influence as far as colonial Korea. After the Korean War, its main task became the emergency aid and relief of women such as widows and prostitutes, and later morals and science, seen as the keynotes of the previous period, were emphasized. In 1959 the enactment of the "Korean Provisional Nutrition Standard" was announced, and in 1955 "Mother's Day" was proclaimed. Under the Park Chunghee administration, the basic outline of a welfare system was formulated, along with basic legislation on social welfare, including the 1961 Livelihood Protection Law and Child Welfare Law and the 1973 Mother and Child Health Law, the implementation of workmen's compensation and medical insurance, and the formation of a national pension scheme. However, in truth the development policy took primacy over welfare, and the responsibility for support fell on the family. With the family planning policy pursued as part of the economic development plan beginning in 1962, the state began to intervene in women's biological childbearing functions (Hwang Jeongmi, 1999).

## (2) Racial Issues in the Mobilization of Labor and Sex

Fundamentally, developmentalist women's policy also brought women into economic development. In the overseas-dependent development process

centered on Japan and the United States, women were mobilized not only into low-income labor, but sexual services as well. A considerable amount of research has gone into the export-oriented industry of the 1970s and 1980s and the low-income women's labor in foreign multinational corporations, including those of Japan. However, only recently has social interest turned to issues of women at American military bases continuing from the post-liberation period to the present and to women's sex industries mainly for Japanese people or advancing toward Japan since the 1970s, and there is still a dearth of research on this. The almost total lack of consideration of this by the state indicates not only that women were simply used for development, but that they were not protected.

The state's developmentalist policy toward women began to change considerably beginning in the late 1980s, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and Infant Care Act were enacted in order to encourage women's participation in economic activity and relieve gender discrimination in the labor market, while the Special Law on Sexual Violence, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Women's Development Act were also enacted, and temporary measures ensuring special consideration were introduced under the concept of equality through a women's hiring quota. Also, enactment of laws related to support for women's businesses and legalizing the prohibition of gender discrimination and rewriting the Equal Employment Opportunity law with items forbidding sexual harassment in the workplace were realized (Jo Hyeong, 1999).

### (3) Ethnic Normativity of Women's Consciousness

A considerable number of these changes resulted from the women's movement. Post-liberation South Korean feminism, until the time that a rather newer situation began to unfold in the 1990s, showed characteristics of social reformist feminism. Immediately after liberation, women's groups

worked together to abolish the prostitution system. After the organization of groups from socialist lineage beginning in 1948, many women's groups were established, and they united in 1959 to form the Korean National Council of Women. Until the 1960s, the women's movement centered on these groups did not develop significantly and was unable to raise social consciousness, and thus they were unable to escape in any significant way from the framework of education to be a wise mother and good wife.<sup>17</sup> Previous groups such as the Legal Aid Center for Family Relations and the League of Women Voters worked in such a way as to promote women's rights, but it can be seen that the formation of women's social consciousness on a broader scale was achieved through the women's labor movement of the 1970s. As they noted the situation of double oppression of women laborers who were absorbed as low-wage workers in the externally-oriented industrialization proceeding from the 1960s, intellectuals, religious figures and female university students expanded their interest in the labor movement. More specifically, the claim was put forth from the late 1970s that the South Korean women's movement needed to be established within the context of the democratization movement and in consideration of territorial division in Korea (Lee Seunghui, 1990:62). This clearly established a basic framework for dealing with women's issues in South Korean society, coinciding with a series of situations that included the introduction of theories from the Western women's liberation movement,<sup>18</sup> the stronger influence of the West with the International Year of the Woman in 1975, and the beginning of women's studies lectures at Ewha

<sup>17</sup> In most countries, women's liberation issues have been unable to achieve recognition as major issues for several years following liberation from colonization, and women's issues were presented for the first time by laborers suffering double oppression (Jayawardena, 1986:260).

<sup>18</sup> Beginning in the mid-1970s, books like Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* were translated and introduced.

Womans University in 1977. In the late 1970s, Christian women's groups and female university students worked together to raise the issue of *gisaeng* tourism and prostitution, but it was women's groups such as the Christian Academy and the Catholic Farmer's Movement that were reflecting this kind of social consciousness. Major women's movements such as the Yeoseong Pyeonguhoe (Women's Equal Friends Association), organized in 1984, held in 1985 the 1st Women's Studies Conference (the first joint conference of women's groups), and Korean Women's Association United (established in 1987 with the unification of various women's groups) were an expression of women's consciousness in seeking to solve women's issues in conjunction with the contradictions of the entire social structure, as the critical awareness of the late 1970s became more serious through the Gwangju Democratization Movement in 1980. This could be called the mainstream trend of women's consciousness in South Korean society, continuing uninterrupted to the unification and peace movements of the late 1990s. Along these lines, a feminism more independent from social problems has been forming since the mid-1980s, and issues of sexuality are being discussed more actively, while housework and day care have been rising as major issues. It is also noteworthy that women's studies has been expanding rapidly, centered on universities and research. Since the late 1980s, women's environmental and educational movements as well have developed along with the expansion of new social movements rampant throughout South Korean society in the 1990s. Women have been drawn into new society movements such as those of the environment, cooperative living, education and child care as major participants.

Women's consciousness, combined with the social reformism of the previous age, occupies a central place even in the appearance of these new trends, and within that current the unification movement is being newly forged, along with a peace movement connected with women's groups from

around the world. One of the most important phenomena occurring in the 1990s has been increased solidarity with foreign women's groups and connecting international issues with the South Korean women's movement. South Korean women's groups have begun to discuss issues such as human rights and peace with other Asian and Western groups. This development into internationalization could be deemed possible only after a process of digesting and overcoming ethnic nationalization individually. The ethnic nationalist consciousness extending to the colonial period could be seen as having shifted into the more universal value of the democratization of South Korean society through the process of post-liberation industrialization.

Nationalist elements can be discerned in the women's movement for unification in addition to awareness of the situation of a divided country. The suggestion was strongly made from the late 1970s to the 1980s that the South Korean women's movement of the divided age had to play a role in unification (Lee Hyojae, 1979; 1985), and this was accepted by the progressive women's group Korean Women's Association United. Meanwhile, the issue of comfort women, buried for the last 50 years, was brought up again by women's groups in 1990, and they have been working toward a resolution of this issue to this date. Women groups' raising of the issue of comfort women is seen as the emergence of criticism directed at the brutality of the militarist state toward women, but at the same time it contains a strong note of resentment toward the oppression of the South Korean people by the Japanese state during the period of colonization. As during the colonial period, the comfort women movement is a typical movement that justifiably combines feminism and nationalism, but unlike in the colonial period, women have occupied an unrivaled position of obtaining support from all of the nation's people and of leading the movement. This movement does not remain within the nationalist dimension, but by joining forces with surrounding Asian countries and wom-

en's groups of the West to raise issues of ethnic unification up as issues of Asian peace, and to raise the issue of comfort women as an issue of women's rights and human rights during wartime, it is setting a good example of feminist internationalism. The unification movement, centered on Christian women's groups and the Korean Women's Association United, in 1991 included women's groups from North Korea and Japan in the development of the forum "Asian Peace and the Role of Women." The comfort women movement is seeking joint meetings with women's groups from victimized countries in Asia and from Japan, and is launching a campaign in international arenas such as the UN together with many of the world's women's groups and human rights groups. "Women Making Peace," created last year, shows the will of South Korean women's groups to participate more actively in the issues of unification and world peace.

#### State Intervention in Gender Relationships A Comparison of Japan and South Korea

	Japan	
Early modernization	Family system	Legalization of the ie system Motherhood with a public character (Western influence)
Colonial period	Gender policy	Establishment of the licensed prostitution system
	Women's participation in public domains	Labor mobilization, protection of motherhood
Wartime Mobilization	Mobilization of motherhood	Emphasis on women's reproductive and child-raising activities
	Sexual mobilization	Limited sexual mobilization
	Labor mobilization	Labor mobilization, protection of motherhood
Postwar	Women's policy	The dilemma of labor mobilization and protection of motherhood: welfare policy, state-manufactured image of the family
	Women's movements	Women's feeling of helplessness Stimulation of East Asian ethnic issues Development of national feminism
	Gender issues	Sexual exploitation by USA immediately following war, soon disappeared

		Korea
Early modernization	Family system	Motherhood with a public character (Western influence) Introduction of Japanese family system through colonial government
	Gender policy	Introduction of Japanese prostitution system through colonial government
Colonial period	Women's participation in public domains	Labor mobilization without protection of motherhood Development of women's consciousness and ethnic consciousness
	Mobilization of motherhood	Partial mobilization of motherhood
Wartime Mobilization	Sexual mobilization	Large-scale sexual mobilization
	Labor mobilization	Labor mobilization without protection of motherhood
Postwar	Women's policy	women's education/protection of weak women—family state view of the development state policy, population policy as part of economic development
	Women's movements	Ethnic normativity of women's consciousness and overcoming this Development of national feminism
	Gender issues	Third World form of labor mobilization, sexual exploitation

#### 4) East Asian Concepts of Public/Private and Gender: Similarities and Differences

Now it is time to compare Japan and South Korea and draw a final conclusion. The lengthy preceding discussion was intended to lead to an extremely simple and clear conclusion about how ethnic issues exert a major influence when comparing the South Korean women's situation with that of Japan.

As East Asian states, both South Korea and Japan have strong tendencies toward the family state in comparison with those in the West, and this shows the characteristics of the state, forming the center of the public domain, and the family, forming the center of the private domain, being based on similar organization principles, and of there being no clear distinction between the two domains. However, South Korea and Japan share the char-

acteristic that interactions between domains is achieved in a situation where there is no equal exchange of forces between the two domains, but rather where the public domain, or the state, exercises overwhelming power over the private domain. As Japan achieved a form of top-down modernization centered on the imperial system, and especially as it strengthened its militaristic tendencies, the family state view became an organizational, ideological and emotional foundation useful to the state in mobilizing all private domains, and it is quite interesting that this family state view appears even in the post-liberation South Korean development state.

Amid all of this, women have been influenced on one hand by a power of patriarchy and on another have been placed under elaborate control by the state. The hazy distinction between public and private domains makes the character of the “patriarchal state” more salient than in any Western country, and thus makes the situation for women more oppressive. Women’s liberationist thinking has been spread from the west, and thus the West’s successful dealing with women’s consciousness has become an important task in both South Korea and Japan. It is also a racial issue shared by South Korea and Japan, where racial issues are intertwined in a complicated way.

However, in South Korea and Japan the situations of women show fundamental differences owing to the differing modernization processes, namely Japan’s colonial rule over Korea. While in the case of Japan, the core of the public domain that exerts control over women is mainly the state, in South Korea the core of control over women is both the state and the ethnic relationship simultaneously. During the colonial period in Korea, the state was a “colonial state,” and after liberation the state and the race were different subjects, but they also determined the situation of women as they combined with each other. In Japan, while the state’s control over women was regulated by class, the control undergone by all women as a race, re-

ardless of class, is very important. In relation to this, the consciousness of women also developed in different forms in the two neighboring countries. In the case of Japan, women's consciousness appeared to be somewhat oppressed by the overwhelming power of the state, and there are also instances of collaboration with the wartime militarism. In the case of South Korea, women's social consciousness began to be awakened through ethnic consciousness, and even after liberation ethnic consciousness continued to assume an important place within women's consciousness. It is very interesting that in Japan, one of the women's movements emerging in the 1990s originated from recognition of the ethnic issues experienced by East Asian women. This shows that in both South Korea and Japan, women's consciousness can be activated to a greater degree in a consciousness of issues suffered by weaker races rather than in "ethnic nationalism."

"East Asia" is not a simple and unified group. However, only when the differences are precisely understood can it become a group where the similarities come into relief. This applies to the situation of women as well.

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# Communitarianism and Liberalism in East Asia: Toward the Dissolution of “Pseudo-Communities” and the Construction of “True Communities”

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## 1. “Freedom” and “Communication”: The Need for Dialectical Harmony

Traditionally, Korea, China and Japan have belonged to the same Confucian cultural sphere and thus shared cultural characteristics that value “community” consciousness. However, in the process of modernization, the three countries have each undergone their own distinctive processes of change in terms of political systems and social ideas. In particular, this is true in that South Korea and Japan followed the path of “liberal democracy” following World War II, while China pursued the path of “socialism.” However, “as can be seen in the 1989 Tiananmen incident,” voices demanding “freedom” and “democracy” have begun to burst forth in China as well, and with the “liberalization of the market” in the future, it is predicted that the voices demanding “political freedom” will become more forceful in China too. This is because, viewed in terms of historical trends hitherto followed by humankind, “freedom” is now no longer a question of “Will we have it or not?” but a question of time, asking “When will we have it?”

“Freedom” is a universal value that must be ensured to guarantee human dignity, but there have been observations that “extreme liberalism”

dismantles community consciousness and gives rise to the situation of a moral vacuum, diluting personal identity and self-consciousness.<sup>1</sup> Viewed in terms of the historical experience of humankind thus far, “freedom” and “community” have shown conflicting and controversial aspects. It has been the general rule experienced by humankind that the more “personal freedom” is permitted, the more the power of “community” to bind is weakened, and the more the binding power of “community” is strengthened, the more “personal freedom” is reduced. However, it is difficult for humans to ensure “meaning to life” and “ego identity” without some “community” worthy of membership. Conversely, it is difficult to ensure “dignity” as a human without “freedom to choose” by oneself. Thus, while “freedom” and “community” are conflicting concepts, they are precious values that must be harmonized dialectically.

For the past century, Western scholars have identified “communitarianism” as a cultural characteristic of East Asia. In the early twentieth century, Max Weber identified, in addition to other elements, communitarian elements such as “family property bureaucracy,” “ancestor worship” and “familiar human relationships” in an attempt to explain the reason that capitalism was unable to occur in Asia. In the 1970s and 1980s, Western scholars identified, in addition to other elements, communitarian elements such as “cooperation,” “solidarity” and “harmonious human relationships” in order to explain the rapid economic development of East Asia. And in the late 1990s, Western scholars have pointed to the abuses of communitarian elements such as “administration methods based on the family principle,” “personal connections” and “favoritism” in order to explain the East Asia economic crisis.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In relation to this, please refer to the essays by Hwang Gyeongsik, Pak Jeongsun, Lee Jinu, Lee Seunghwan and Kim Bihwan in the collection “Liberalism and Communitarianism” in Vol. 45 of *Philosophy Studies* (Summer 1999).

<sup>2</sup> In relation to this, see my “Discursive Analysis of Asian Values” in *Asia jeok gachi*

It is not necessarily correct for Western scholars to point only to communitarian cultural elements in order to explain different phenomena that occurred at different times historically, such as economic backwardness, economic development and economic crisis. However, it cannot be said that these claims are totally unreasonable if one separates and examines the positive and negative aspects and the pure effects and side effects of communitarianism.

Humans cannot live outside of society. They cannot form an “ego identity” without belonging to some “community,” and they cannot find meaning or value in life. For “self-realization,” humans need a “stage for realization,” and for this they need “practice” and “participation” within a community. In this regard, the standpoint of extreme liberalism, which seeks to dismantle the community and maximize personal freedom only is undesirable. However, the perspective of conservatism, which seeks to maintain the distorted image of community contained within reality as it is now, is even more undesirable. This is because, as we can see from immediate historical experiences, the distortion of community consciousness has given rise to irrational outcomes of totalitarianism and oppression, as well as favoritism and the abuse of personal connections. Thus, we must establish community and personal relationships in such a way as to acknowledge personal freedom to the fullest as we transform the societies to which we belong into forms as rational and democratic as possible.

## 2. “National Community” and Totalitarianism

There are various types of community, including “regional communities” based on specific regions; “ideological communities,” which gather people

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(Jeontong gwa Hyeondaesa, 1999).

sharing political beliefs and ideals; “cultural communities,” which are typified by cultural homogeneity; and “faith communities,” based in religious beliefs. The psychological characteristics of the constituent members’ “sense of belonging,” “we-ness,” “solidarity” and “feeling of sameness” underlie the determination of certain forms out of all of society’s diverse forms of groups as “communities.” The members of a community share beliefs and values, and regard dedication, participation and cooperation as virtues rather than the pursuit of personal profits. They regard the common good as equivalent to their own profit, and perceive social relationships not as contractual relationships formed among anonymous individuals, but as relationships of affection, family and kindred spirits among individual subjective entities. The diverse range of groups referred to as “community” can be separated into “strong communities” and “weak communities” according to “degree of cohesiveness” and “duration,” and one can also consider various forms of “sub-communities” intermediate between these two forms.<sup>3</sup>

Traditionally, the East Asian state has shown an image of “strong community.” The basic unit of politics was not the “individual” but the “family,” and this was perceived in terms of an extension of “ruling the country (治國).” Thus, the ethical norms demanded in the relationship between king and government officer were demanded in the context of “moral principles (人倫)” together with the ethical norms operating in family relationships such as father/son, husband/wife and older and younger brother. In particular, human life under the economic system was rooted in “region” and thus obliged to have the characteristics of “fixedness” and “stability,” and the production method of the agricultural economy gave rise to a communitarian culture centered on relationships, bonds and coop-

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<sup>3</sup> Sin Yongha (ed.), *Gongdongche iron*, (Munhak gwa Jiseongsa, 1987).

eration rather than competition, conflict and contracts even in terms of interpersonal relationships.

This communitarian culture, sustained for thousands of years in East Asia, began to change rapidly through the establishment of the modern state. In the case of Korea and Japan, the rural community at the end of the war met an inevitable collapse in the process of social transformation from a pre-modern agricultural society to a modern industrial society, and human relationships within the capitalist system transformed into competitive and contractual relationships based on the desire for profit. In the economic domain as well, the affirmation of personal thirst for profit naturally connected into affirmation of “self-interest” in the political domain and was transformed into a system under the name of “liberty” and “rights.” However, insofar as the shift from pre-modern society to modern state in East Asia was not only excessively compressed and short-term, but also imposed not from the “bottom” (individual realization) up but from the “top” (state) down and from the “outside” (external forces) in, it had to witness serious distortions and side effects. There are several side effects that appeared in this case, but as the most important ones, it is possible to list (1) “nationalism,” which places the state above all values; (2) the repression of individual and autonomous intent and exclusion from political participation; and (3) irrationality and lack of differentiation in all social domains.

Let us first view the situation of Korea, with reference to general East Asian practices that regarded the “state” as a “strong community.” Korea experienced the disintegration and reorganization of its “rural community” for the purposes of tribute to the government and exploitation under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945. Also, once it was liberated, South Korea experienced the transplantation of democracy from “outside,” by the American military administration, but was unable to achieve a ma-

ture political culture due to the lack of maturity in general social systems and the lack of development in civic consciousness. And during the period of military dictatorship lasting more than 30 years from the coup d'état of May 16, 1961, it was forced to follow the course of nationalism, where the people were coerced into regarding the "state" as the highest value under the global Cold War structure and the divided situation of South Korea and North Korea. Within the tragic situation of South Korea in the mid-twentieth century, summarized with the twin axes of "external forces" and "dictatorship," the military administration set forth "modernization of the homeland" as national policy and pursued "imitative modernization." In the process, the traditional virtues of loyalty (忠) and filial piety (孝) were co-opted as ideology for mobilization under the military authoritarian system, and the "state" was cast as an extended image of the "family." Under this system of state as a "pseudo-community," the people's political freedom and freedom of belief, as well as freedom of the body and freedoms of assembly and association, were suppressed as detrimental to the security of the "national community."<sup>4</sup> In the early 1990s, as the military leadership fortunately came to an end and political power was ceded to the people, there has been a trend of gradually expanding political freedom in South Korea, but it could be said that, as long as the system of a divided Korea remains in existence, there is still the possibility of the state being transplanted as a "community of destiny" and leading neatly to a military system. The communitarian state view, which perceives the state as an extension of the family, also appears prominently in North Korea, which has chosen the path of socialism. North Korea has faithfully recreated the customs of the pre-modern "family state view" through the generational transfer of father-to-son power from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il, and has driven

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<sup>4</sup> Lee Seunghwan, "Hanguk eseo Jayujueui Gongdongche jueui noneui neun jeoksilhanga?," *Cheolhak Yeongu* 45 (Summer 1999).

the entire population into a war-time military system and forced them to submit to a patriarchal ideology of instruction. Within such a situation, it is self-evident that the people's freedom and human rights will be repressed, their quality of life will fall, and their human dignity will be ignored.

The nationalist viewpoint, which regards the "state" as a "community of destiny," appeared earlier and more strongly in Japan. The imperial system, which regarded the Emperor's family as the central family of the entire Japanese population, applied with intense propulsive power in the transformation of Japan into a modern state during the period of the Meiji Restoration. However, the intense collectivism and consciousness of exclusion immanent within the imperial system connected into Showa fascism, and functioned as a basis for ideological justification of the implementation of an imperialist policy of expansion in East Asia.<sup>5</sup> Upon the end of World War II, the Emperor was downgraded to a "symbolic entity," but the "national reintegration political strategy" pursued by the Nakasone administration in the early 1980s brought a resurgence in "conservatism" and "nationalism." Nakasone capitalized on the country's status as the second ranked world economy as a foothold to declare the creation of a "great political power" that would perform an active role in international society, and emphasized that he would break away from the "cruel history view," where the Japanese regarded themselves as war criminals who brought about the Pacific War, and boldly put forward an ethnic independence. Even in the late 1990s, neo-nationalists who participate in the so-called "Liberal View of History" movement centering on University of Tokyo Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu insist on the inevitability of the Pacific War triggered by Japan and refute the existence of comfort women, and are

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<sup>5</sup> Yang Hoesik, "Ilbon bosujueui hyeongseong gwajeong," *Ilbon bosujueui wa jeongchi gae-hyeok* (Hangmunsa, 1998).

waging an intense ultra-nationalist movement to eliminate shameful traces of the past from textbooks.<sup>6</sup> When one views them in connection with recent tendencies promoting the creation of a great military power, Japanese neo-nationalist tendencies present a situation that must be closely observed by all in order to maintain future peace in East Asia.

In the case of China, following the assumption of power by the Communist Party in 1949, the government implemented social reforms through totalitarian methods, passing through the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. However, Deng Xiaoping, who rose to power in the wake of Mao Zedong's death in 1976, declared the "liberation of reform" and began taking steps toward pursuing a course of "socialism that accommodates the market economy." Following the 1989 Tiananmen incident, where the ralliers called for freedom and democracy in the face of Beijing authorities" crackdown on democratization campaigners, the conservative faction once again seized control of the party, but it is anticipated that in the future, voices for greater political freedom as well as economic liberalization will become louder. Indeed, it is difficult to expect the image of a national community where the whole population joins forces for the state in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society such as China. However, under the influence of the long-standing Confucian tradition, China has thus far maintained a centralized state system based on patriarchal political authority. Characteristics of the Confucian tradition such as strong leadership, paternalist leaders, respect for seniors and moralistic views have consistently controlled the thinking of the Chinese people even after the declaration of a path of liberation of reform. In modern times as in the past, the Chinese people have considered all authority to come "from the top down," "from the center out" and "from one absolute leader." The

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<sup>6</sup> Komori Yoichi and Takahashi Tetsuya eds. (Lee Kyusu trans.), *Kukkajueui reul neomeoseo* (Samin, 1999). Kim Yongbeom, *Ilbonjueuija eui kkum* (Pureun yeoksa, 1999).

great individuals of modern China representing this “patriarchal leader” include Sun Yatsen, Chiang Kaishek, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. China has maintained a firmly centralized administrative system even after the formation of a socialist state, and has pursued various policies of integration to ensure that the diverse minority ethnic groups do not break away. In the late 1980s, through the breakdown of the East/West Cold War structure, the independence of many ethnic states has been recognized, but China has been exceptional in clinging to ethnic minority autonomous regions such as Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Uighur, and in being unable to escape from the lingering influences of “territorial imperialism.” Also, China has drawn in capital from overseas Chinese residing in Southeast Asia and is pursuing a course of a new Chinese nationalism under the name of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” for the purpose of absorbing Taiwan. Amid the visible realization of predictions that China would rise as a great economic and military power in the twenty first century, it is necessary to stay cautious that these nationalistic tendencies of China do not proceed into trends of hegemony.

We have examined the facts about how the East Asian cultural tradition of the “communitarian view of the state” has been transformed and distorted according to the domestic socio-political situations in Korea, China and Japan in the modern era. In the case of East Asia, which began to tiptoe belatedly toward the status of the modern state with the shock of Western imperialism, the modernization process has appeared in a compressed form covering a short period of time, and the nationalistic element of “from the top down” has appeared as a common characteristic in achieving such compressed modernization. However, this view, which considers the “state” as a “strong community,” presents the danger of transforming into imperialism or hegemony based on the situation, and the possibility of oppression of the people’s freedom and human rights domestically must

not be overlooked. Thus, the modern experience of East Asia, regarded as a “strong community” moving based on one unified goal, must be overcome for the development of democracy. In a democratic society, the “state” must be regarded as a “concentration of wills” determined by a consensus agreed upon among various, autonomous citizens. Of course, it goes without saying that for this to happen, rational communication, procedural agreement and the formation of political parties that transcend class are required first and foremost.

### 3. Communitarian Interpersonal Relationships and the “Instrumental Network of Connections”

The East Asian cultural sphere, where human relationships were traditionally forged within the framework of communitarian bonding, cooperation and harmony, has undergone sudden confusion and distortion through the “capitalist reorganization” of all sections of society in a short time. Human relationships in traditional society were characterized by long-term and stable exchanges between individuals, and valued the family’s honor and reputation especially. However, human relationships in capitalist society are characterized by anonymity, and trust is achieved through the accumulation of one-time contracts. In a transitional society where the capitalist social system has been as yet unable to establish its roots firmly, it is natural for these two forms of human relationship to be mixed together and lack organization. Elements such as authoritarianism, collusion between politics and economics, abuse of connections, favoritism, corruption and bribery, which Western scholars point to as the primary causes of the 1997-1998 East Asian financial crisis, are malignant complications generated by just this kind of transitional chaos. And networks of personal connections, as

in the cases of nepotism or favoritism, are “instrumental networks” depending upon the traditional “communitarian human relationships” and a distorted image of community spawned in a social environment where, amid the vortex of rapid social change, there is no one to trust except family and friends.

In the case of the Korean process of “rough-and-ready modernization” pursued by the military government beginning in 1969, a method of collusion between politics and economics became the rule, where the government offered financial benefits, tax breaks and rights to importation and licensing to specific businesses, while businesses offered political donations to the government. Thus, businesses worked to solidify their connections with the government’s powerful bureaucrats and mobilized social networks of school ties, blood relations and regional connections to obtain permission to open new businesses or obtain import permits for raw materials. These practices of collusion spread to all reaches of society, including officialdom and government and financial circles, and even mushroomed into lower-echelon organizations such as schools, hospitals, neighborhoods offices and police stations. Thus the obscure practices of black money, off-the-books money, bribery, tips, gifts of gratitude and “express charges” paid for quick handling of civil petitions became the norm, and tendencies toward distrust and opportunism among people were widespread. Major players in government and official circles and influential individuals in the financial world formed kinship relationships as first, second and third relations by marriage through marriages of convenience between their children, and amplified the corruption and insolvency of South Korean society.<sup>7</sup> South Korea’s political

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<sup>7</sup> If we briefly examine marriages of convenience between prominent individuals in financial and official circles as an example of the pseudo-communitarian networking that is laying down deep roots throughout society, we can see the following. By forming “pseudo-communitarian connections” through marriages of convenience with powerful individuals in the politi-

parties as well generally tend to be not groups that gather individuals around beliefs or policies, but primitive groups rigged by region and connections. Whenever election season arrives, these parties obtain votes by appealing to primitive regionalistic emotions, while putting forth a platform that is essentially no different from that of other parties. The human relationships based on relations of region, blood or school that are generalized throughout modern South Korean society, instead of being “communitarian” relationships intended for the exchange of feeling or bonding between individuals, are “instrumental” relationships, and thus clearly show the “pseudo-commu-

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cal and financial world, the large conglomerates have protected their profit from the political sphere and have regarded these connections as a foundation for the accumulation of personal wealth. According to the series of articles entitled “Conglomerates and Distinguished Families” printed every Monday in the Seoul Economy newspaper since April 1990, the large conglomerates have formed relations through marriage with former and current presidents, prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, ministers and assembly members. The relations through marriage of the following represent just a few examples: Choe Jonghyun (SK)/Roh Taewoo (President); Shin Myungsu (Dongbang Oil)/Roh Taewoo; Koo Inhoe (LG)/Kim Taedong (Minister of Health and Society); Kim Jonghui (Hanhwa)/Lee Hurak (former Blue House chief secretary); Park Incheon (Kumho)/Lee Janghwan (former Minister of Finance); Lee Byungchul (Samsung)/Hong Jingi (former Secretary of Interior/ Minister of Justice); Lee Wonman (Kolon)/Kim Jongpil (current United Liberal Democrat Party chief), Chung Ilkwon (former Prime Minister), Shin Byunghyun (former Deputy Prime Minister), and Rhee Hyosang (former Speaker of National Assembly); Chung Juyung (Hyundai)/Kim Dongjo (former Minister of Foreign Affairs); Chung Seyung (Hyundai)/ Lho Shinyong (former Prime Minister); Jo Hongje (Hyosung)/Song Insang (former Minister of Finance); and Park Byeonggyu (Haitai)/Kim Uigi (former Assemblyman). The current percentage of the children in their 30s of conglomerate founders affiliated with the Federation of Korean Industries who have formed relationships through marriage with high-ranking government officials at the level of minister/vice-minister or higher was 33.1% in 1990. It should be noted that through marriage, conglomerates and prominent government individuals and officials are becoming connected as first or second degree in-laws. By having everyone enter a relationship of confederation through complex relationships of first, second and third degree in-laws, the ruling classes in the political and financial spheres are taking shape as a group naturally pursuing common profit. Kang Cheolgyu eds., *Jaebeol: Seongjang eui juyeok inga tamyok eui hwasin inga* (Bibong, 1991), pp. 80-81. Seoul gyeongje sinmunsa eds., *Jaebeol gwa gabeol* (Jisik saneobsa, 1991).

nitarian” characteristics possessed by human relationships in our society.

Practices of collusion between political and economic circles are not the exception in Japan either. Japanese politics is characterized by close relations between politics and finance to such an extent that it is referred to as a “plutocracy,” and these practices have a longer history than those of Korea. Chitoshi Yanaga, a supporter of the Japanese *zaibatsu* (chaebol or family-owned business conglomerate) system, even writes that, “It is impossible to run for the position of Prime Minister without first receiving the approval of the *zaibatsu*.”<sup>8</sup> What determines success or failure in any of Japan’s various elections is the amount of political funding secured by each of the factions within the party. The factions within Japanese political parties maintain their own “supporters’ associations,” and with these associations there are likely to be various profit groups, pressure groups and *zaibatsu* lurking behind the scenes. For example, if we reexamine the relationships of supporters’ committees and factions within the Liberal Democratic Party in the 1972 parliamentary election, the Fukuda faction maintained the channel of holding regular economic review meetings (時局經濟懇談會) and Mitsubishi as a pipeline of capital, while the Tanaka faction had secured the Etsuzan kai and civil engineering and building contractors, the Ohira faction had secured the Shinzaisei Research Association and salt industry operators, and the Miki faction had secured Fuji Steel and Nihon Steel as sources of capital.<sup>9</sup> The 39th parliamentary election held in 1990 in particular was a plutocratic election without historical precedent in Japanese politics. The then-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), under the pretext of preserving a “liberal economy,” drew upon massive amounts of election funding from the financial world. It is needless to say that lob-

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<sup>8</sup> Chitoshi Yanaga, *Big Business in Japanese Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 32-33.

<sup>9</sup> Yang Hoesik, *Ilbon bosujueui wa jeongchi gaehyeok*, pp. 114-116.

bying goals for legislation beneficial to industry were behind the provision of election support by the *zaibatsu*. This kind of “pseudo-communitarian network of connections,” represented by favoritism, factions and close relations between government and business guaranteed profit to those involved through the rigging of the system, but it is something that must be rectified in the future in that it brings alienation and disadvantage to those outside of such relationships.

In the case of China, the course of “socialism to accommodate the market economy” has been declared since the early 1980s in order to break out of the underdeveloped economy under the socialist system, and since the introduction of the market economy, various forms of property systems and management methods have been introduced. However, due to the heavy influence of the socialist bureaucratic system, large-scale industries doing business under the control of government officials are encountering numerous side effects in the management process. There is a problem with various “connections” and “factions” within the Communist Party, the center of authority in China, but monopolization of profit and illegal alliances through “connections (關係)” between government and business have also been rearing their heads as serious social problems. In addition graft and misappropriation by public officials and the military through complex connections among the Party, the military and the government have reached a severe extent, and the use of government authority to privatize national possessions has been pointed out as a cancerous phenomenon that is breaking down Chinese society. Officials use government influence to take control of the stocks of state-operated listed enterprises at bargain-basement prices, and earn huge amounts of illegal profits through the execution of large-scale real estate development projects and loans from state-owned banks.<sup>10</sup> It is impossible to calculate the scale of losses resulting from bureaucratic corruption in China exactly, but it is estimated that an amount

of money equal to approximately 4 times the GDP is being transferred from the National Treasury to private coffers. According to a report on government integrity conducted by Germany's University of Goethingen in 1995, which examined 41 countries across the world, China was ranked 40th, Indonesia 41st.<sup>11</sup> In the transitional process of being transformed into a market economy, the traditional community consciousness of "bonding" and "cooperation" between people has been transformed into, and abused as, instrumental networks of connections.

As can be seen from the above, in the East Asian cultural sphere, where a strong consciousness of community has been maintained as a shared cultural legacy, social justice and economic order are being seriously compromised by the distortion of traditional human relationships into instrumental networks of connections that are abused for the pursuit of the profit of specific individuals in the process of the shift into a "modern capitalist society" over a short period of time. It is desirable, and necessary to avoid alienation in an increasingly individualistic modern society, to form individual relationships and communitarian bonding between people. However, it is undesirable for social relationships that should be pure in intent to expand and become distorted into public relationships and harm the public good or social justice. In this regard, community consciousness, maintained as a shared legacy by the East Asian cultural sphere, must be dissolved and rebuilt in a more reasonable and constructive direction in the future.

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<sup>10</sup> He Qinglian, *Xiandai de Xian Jing* (Jinrizhongguochubanshe, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> *Xiandai de Xian Jing*, p. 126.

## 4. The Dissolution of the “Pseudo–Community” and Efforts Toward Building a “Community of Authenticity”

The East Asian cultural sphere has long shared a communitarian line of thinking. However, in the process of historical change shifting from a pre-modern society to a modern society, it has become a general situation in the countries of East Asia that this community consciousness is transformed and distorted so that it threatens a healthy social order. Totalitarian oppression perpetrated under the name of a “national community,” unfair rigging of the system accomplished under the good name of “human relationships,” and exclusive and closed-off group selfishness proceeding through the ties of “blood, region and schooling.” If this “pseudo-communitarian” social structure is not rooted out once and for all, it will be impossible to build a “true community,” and the realization of “social justice” will also be only a distant possibility. To solve these problems faced by East Asia at a turning point, the state system and social structure must become more transparent and democratic, and the human relationships and line of thinking of the citizens must also become more reasonable.

The business of breaking down the distorted structure of East Asian society’s “pseudo-communities” and achieving democratization and rationalization is not something that can be done all at once through either administrative innovations or structural reforms. This is because the connections of pseudo-community have already formed a solid network over the decades of modernization through strategic marriages and human relationships, and through the education system and food chain. Thus, true progress and democratization is not something achieved merely through a change in government or a transformation of the system, but something that can only be possible when the masters of society, the citizens, arm themselves with conscious realization and rational thinking and form a power

base from the bottom up as agents of social management. For the dissolution of “pseudo-community” and the formation of “true community,” a position of limited warfare or stationary warfare is needed, one that continuously expands the political base by starting from specific and individual issues and proceeding gradually toward the larger organization and structure. Efforts to do away with the distorted structure of the “pseudo-community” and establish a “community of authenticity” are unfolding through various civic campaigns and regional community movements in Korea and Japan. The following is intended to examine the process and background of these efforts, as well as their results and prospects.

In Korea, the military dictatorship, which continued for over 30 years, was replaced by the Kim Young-sam-led “civilian government” in 1993, and following this the Kim Dae-jung-led “people’s government” took office in 1998, but the twisted “pseudo-communitarian” structure that has driven recent modern South Korean society into a mire of distortion and distrust that shows no signs of going away easily. The problem of cozy relations between politics and finance shows some degree of hope of changing through economic reform and structural changes, but because the regional influence of political parties and the widespread structure of complicity based on school ties, regional connections and blood relations has set its roots firmly throughout all reaches of society, its eradication is a situation that remains only a possibility for the distant future. Given that the civilian administrations have changed twice each since the end of the military government, and yet the “pseudo-communitarian” character of South Korean society has not changed greatly, Korean progressive movements seeking to create a new society are shifting direction toward various citizens’ movements and regional community movements in a struggle at the national level. Citizens’ voluntary participation and efforts toward correcting the distorted social structure have unfolded through various labor

movements and civic campaigns in the 1990s, and these are changing courses toward regional community movements.

Regional community movements have a character of local warfare, solving the various problems of regional residents' lives by starting with the small things, and in this process their goals are the realization of a community spirit through residents' voluntary participation and the fostering of social management abilities. The following represents the background of the rise to prominence of regional community movements, which are developing around the "Korean People's Alliance for Social Reformation." (1) When the progressive movement ran into the barrier of its own limitations and popular attention began to gradually shift elsewhere in the 1990s, a regional popular movement that employed various cultural means to overcome this and form a close relationship with the living space began to emerge as a major endeavor. (2) When the development of political strength through existing labor movements or farmers' movements alone became impossible, region-based movements became an inevitable means of forming a regional political base through the winning of votes in elections centered around regional constituencies. (3) Because it is possible to organize farmers' movements, women's movements and movements of the poor with regional bases according to their characteristics and the development of these movements is necessarily connected with regional issues, the need to shift to regional movements became highlighted. (4) The existing combative progressive movements hit their limits with democratization, and by focusing their attentions on global lifestyle problems such as the environment, social welfare and culture, they approached the solution of these problems with methods that formed direct and indirect relationships with regional movements. (5) The people, awakened to the "consciousness of rights" through the class movements of the 1980s, began to respond actively to the various problems they experienced directly in

their living spaces, the regional bases. Thus, as the radical matters of the class movements were resolved or alleviated to a certain extent, the direct demands of residents came to burst forth toward issues resulting from the vices of regional administrative authorities. The reason that the direction of social movements shifted toward regional community movements within a dimension of national resistance was in order to solidify a regional base for stationary warfare by turning primary attention to the world of popular life, such as the environment, social welfare and culture, since it was impossible to obtain evenly distributed support among a wide range of classes with existing vocation-based movements such as the labor movement alone.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Japan, various citizens' movements became active in the 1960s, slightly earlier than those of Korea. The background for these is that citizens stepped forward directly to improve the quality of their lives when pollution became more severe in the course of rapid industrialization and urbanization and when the need for repair to housing, roads and waterworks became urgent. Especially when the ability of the ideological political parties, products of the Cold War era, to respond to reality ran into limits under the high degree of economic growth, it was citizens' movements seeking to raise the quality of life within regional communities who were able to respond most effectively to the worsening of quality of life with issues such as intensifying urban problems, pollution problems and welfare problems. Moreover, in a situation where the single-handed administration of the Liberal Democratic Party has been continued over a long period of time, citizens have exercised the function of checking the central government, electing leaders of autonomous regional groups as figures in reformist parties such as the Socialist and Communist parties. With the ex-

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<sup>12</sup> Minju gaehyeok gungmin yeonhap, *Minju gaehyeok, gongdongche undong hwaldongga hullyeon gwajeong jaryojip* (Seoul Seong puranchisuko pijeong eui jip, 1999).

pansion of participatory democracy through “reformist self-governance,” the 1970s in Japan sang the praises of a golden age in regional community movements. However, as the demands of the regional lifestyle base were gradually met and the course of the reformist parties became more conservative in the late 1970s, the course of the regional community movements came to shift toward demands for social justice and such other social concerns as human rights protection and environmental preservation in the 1980s. This change indicated that, as a result of the regional community movements from the 1960s to 1980s, a certain degree of improvement had been accomplished in the areas of region-based facilities such as housing supply and educational issues, and the citizens’ calls for improving lifestyle surroundings had been satisfied almost entirely. With this satisfaction of the twin demands of a high-growth period, citizens’ movements are continuously developing in the late 1990s toward human rights issues such as those of women, the disabled, foreigners and laborers, as well as political reform and improvement of the environment.<sup>13</sup>

In the case of China, unlike Korea or Japan, citizens’ movements to do away with the distorted pseudo-communitarian structure have been unable to achieve much activity. China, which leapt into the market economy system belatedly in comparison with the other nations of East Asia, has been breathlessly walking the road of the far right, placing supreme value on “economic development” in order to catch up with the early starters. Thus, a “new authoritarianism” that seeks to emulate the Korea of the past period of developmentalist dictatorship is being promoted as appropriate to China’s situation by the state-controlled media, and the position of the party that political freedoms must be kept back for the time being for the sake of economic development was firmly set into place on the occasion of the

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<sup>13</sup> Keurisuchyan Akademi sahoe gyoyugwon eds. *Ilbon simin undong gwa jibang jachi* (Hanul, 1996), pp. 9-23.

Tiananmen incident. It has been indicated above that, because of the supreme value placed on economic development, illegal alliances between government and industry have become rampant, and various kinds of corruption, graft, misappropriation and bribery have become everyday affairs.

Another interesting phenomenon related to the subject of “community” is the reemergence of clan code systems centered on families, based on regional units, as the centralized bureaucratic system loosens due to the opening of reform. This reemergence appears to have come about from a desperate desire for self-preservation, where it is felt that the only people who can be trusted are one’s own family, in the absence of faith resulting from collusion between government and business and bureaucratic corruption. China’s clan code systems, traditionally maintained over a long period of time, had been criticized as relics of the old era and showed signs of disappearing within the large-scale “nationalization” and “collectivization” movements launched following the birth of the socialist government in 1949. However, the anthropogeographic conditions where clan code systems set their roots have been preserved intact even within the socialist system, and because the administration has strongly limited freedom of population movement and transfer of residency, regional exclusivity and fixedness has shown a trend of strengthening even more than in the pre-modern era. In 1983, China abolished the people’s commune system and introduced a free market economy based on the unit of the individual family. Accordingly, “intermediate organizations” that had mediated between the “state” and “individual” came to be placed in a vacuum, and organizations of individuals with the same denomination or family name based on blood relations arose as new intermediate organizations protecting personal profit and safety. The newly arising clan code systems are leading the unification of clans by putting large amounts of money into issuing genealogies and repairing shrines, and when the regional government and the

benefit of clans come into conflict, they do not shy away from armed conflict. Also, the clan code organizations make internal regulations among constituent members and independently carry out their own trials and punishments of individuals who break their word, and when conflicts arise with other organizations related to property rights, land or waterways, they are engaged in group warfare, resulting in heavy casualties. The organizations select “suicide squads” and “volunteer combatants” from their own ranks and deploy them for protection of their group’s integrity and armed conflicts with other groups, and also conspire with the region’s “underworld societies” to control profit illegally. In light of this trend of clan code organizations expanding their power in rural Chinese society, it is not at all a fanciful notion to predict the appearance of small-scale independent kingdoms outside the influence of the central government in the future.<sup>14</sup>

## 5. Toward the Simultaneous Realization of “Community” and “Freedom”: A Proposal for the Future of South Korean Society

As we have seen above, the communitarian tradition of East Asia has followed a course of distortion and mutation since World War II. Under the adverse conditions of the horrors of war, sudden societal upheaval, pressure from outside forces, the Cold War system and compressed modernization occurring over a short period of time, the traditional communitarian customs have become distorted as “nationalism” for the preservation of the administration or transformed into “instrumental networks” for group self-interest. The “pseudo-communitarian networks” such as favoritism and

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<sup>14</sup> He Qinglian, *Xiandai de Xian Jing*.

abuse of connections, like maggots propagating in the hole remaining after the destruction of the traditional community under the concentrated artillery barrage of rough-and-ready modernization, are a cancerous phenomenon that must be removed for the establishment of true community.<sup>15</sup>

The business of dismantling the pseudo-communities and reconstructing true communities should not be regarded as separate from the business of creating a more profound democracy. True democracy can be accomplished when the people participate directly in the policy-making and decision-making processes and exercise their sovereign rights and responsibilities to the fullest. The present system of centralized representative democracy is far too limited for the realization of true democracy, and the temptations of vice and corruption are spread throughout. The representatives elected by the voters are focused only on pursuing the benefit of the political parties to which they belong, and in addition to breaching their own election pledges, they allow themselves to be bought off by the financial world or the lobbies of various profit-seeking groups, and do not show the slightest interest in what the people who elected them want. In addition, because all decisions in the process of planning and approving policy are made unilaterally from the central organization, without concern for the wishes of the region's residents, all too often the various and specific wishes of the residents end up ignored. As such, the system of national constituency members and recommendations by local government heads made in coordination with political parties must be done away with, and the grass-roots democracy practice of sending individuals who have obtained the people's

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<sup>15</sup> The modern South Korean "communitarian national view" is something "constructed" as a mobilization ideology in the compressed modernization process of the newly independent country, and the "pseudo-communitarian network of connections" should be viewed as a neo-familism spawned from outside forces due to the lack of trust resulting from the crisis of survival and the horrors of war. Lee Seunghwan, "Jeontong eui isang inkyeok gwa cheonmin jabanjueui jeog byeonyong," *Sahoe bipyeong* 22 (Winter 1999).

confidence into the central government from below, through municipalities, must be fixed into place. In the formation of a modern nation-state, the state has mobilized various brutal means to monopolize power institutionally, and this situation systematically worsened for the more than 30 years after the military government took power in 1961. This centralization of power gave rise to the unbalanced sharing of regional governance by the center/state, and this colonization of regions by the state shows no signs of going away easily even after the reemergence of the system of local self-government.

In response to the recent trend of neoliberal globalization, demands for regionalization, localization and decentralization of power are increasing, and voices criticizing the centralization of power and the phenomena of capitalism are growing for the resolution of environmental problems as well. True democracy requires the problem-solving methods workable under grass-roots democracy, where the people begin by resolving their own specific issues individually by their own efforts through rational conversation and discussion within the local communities to which they belong. As such, in order to overcome “pseudo-communitarianism” and realize true communitarianism, they must reject the centralization of authority, and efforts to create more active systems of regional self-government within local communities must be set as practical goals of citizens’ movements in the future.

The modern state, overloaded with large-scale authority, must now be reborn as a “true community” through the full decentralization of power and the empowerment of the citizens. The activation of regional self-rule based on local communities and of participatory democracy does not mean simply the dispersion of national authority. Regional self-government dominated by a minority of indigenous forces is merely a local reproduction of “nationalism.” True local decentralism means the expansion of the authority

of citizens, with national authority being returned to the residents of small-scale regions of appropriate size.<sup>16</sup> If the citizen becomes a participant in power and direct participatory democracy can be activated, the “state” will move away from its position of power and dedicate itself to the citizens as a “community of communities”<sup>17</sup> or a “union of communities.”

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<sup>16</sup> Kim Seongguk, “Wae dasi anakijeum inga?” Ku Seunghui and Kim Seongguk, *Anaki, hwangyeong, gongdongche* (Mosaeg, 1998), pp. 29-31.

<sup>17</sup> See Peter Marshal, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p. 646.

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SECTION 4

*East Asian  
Culture/Literature/  
Art/Religion*

동북아시아학  
동북아시아학

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# Problematizing the Issue of Cultural Identity Within the Discourse of “East Asia”

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## 1. Background

This chapter begins with two questions: 1) How is the area called “East Asia” unified by the concept of ‘culture’ used within the discourse of East Asian culture? 2) How does the discourse of East Asia, used to explain “us” with a particular East Asian cultural identity, determine or attempt to determine the concrete reality of our society? Through these questions, this chapter attempts to disclose how “East Asia,” a term which has become popular within our society, towards the end of the millennium in late modernity, both comprise the various nation-states within East Asia and signifies the relation among these nation-states. Finally, this chapter attempts to disclose the relation between the concept of “culture,” used within the discourse of East Asian culture, and history, values, norms, and power.

● To South Koreans who became subjectified as national subjects with the liberation from Japanese imperialism, the nation meant nothing less than ‘the world.’ As indicated in the expression, “We are the nation, while outside us in the world there is the United States,” South Koreans experienced the nation as the absolute standard by which to explain the origin and reproduction of the Korean people. In other words, the nation was experienced

as more than a historical artifact that happened to link the national subject with this world.

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s and changes in the world order created by the Cold War system, Korean intellectuals — the producers of discourses — became newly aware of large-scale changes in this “world.” Experience of these changes in Korean society from the late-1980s to mid-1990s, however, was not necessarily accompanied with a better understanding of the modern/Western regime that constructed their worldview. Rather, in continuing to rely on a modern Western-centered framework, positioned themselves on the idea of independent nation-states to understand these changes, many Korean intellectuals simply sought to expand and accommodate themselves to this changing world rather than challenge it in any way.

This attitude was especially evident in discourses of globalization that became popular in Korean society from the mid-1990s. Ideas of turning South Korea into a “first-class nation” and of “conquering the world with Korean things” relied on an ethnocentric construct of the “world” as something that was readily available to the Korean people, while the term “globalization” referred to the ways in which Koreans would come to embrace this world.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, with the IMF Crisis in 1997, Koreans began to experience the effects of this new world order, constructed along radically new principles, within their everyday lives. They also began to feel the keen need for an epistemological shift in understanding this new relation between this

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<sup>18</sup> During this process of constructing an ethnocentric discourse of globalization, the mass media created many programs about the pan-Asianism and pan-worldism of Korean culture. In examining the documentaries of globalization and countries in Asia produced by the two television stations, SBS and MBC, Kim Seongnae (1995) indicates how many of these globalization discourses show imperialist impulses in embodying pan-worldist and pan-Asianist tendencies.

world and themselves. The economic crisis brought to Korean people's attention how the flows of capital that controlled the economy of the Korean nation-state were, in fact, occurring outside this nation that is in the "world." It also made them aware of the powerlessness of the Korean state in controlling these flows and thus in ensuring the security of their lives.

Nor was awareness of these new facts — the fragility of the base and boundaries of the Korean nation-state that once used to define their lives along with the system of knowledge upon which Korean society was built — restricted to intellectuals. With increasing calls from all corners of society for an epistemological shift in understanding the contemporary world, ordinary people also became increasingly aware of how the Korean nation-state was no longer the "world" that absolutely defined their identities. If so, how should Koreans understand the world? Through what boundaries and categories should they define themselves? Through what relationship of Self and Other should Koreans understand their culture and their society? These and other questions began to surface as important issues within Korean society.

This chapter aims to discover the epistemological shifts manifested by the discourse of East Asia, which has emerged in the context of late modernity, when identity, defined through space and region, is undergoing rapid changes. It aims to do so particularly by examining the key points of intersection at which the Korean identity, itself, is being reshaped by the concept of "culture," employed within the East Asian discourse. Rather than providing a detailed analysis of actual discourses of East Asian culture, however, this chapter tries to provide an overview of the larger trends within these discourses and, in so doing, criticize their ethnocentric, normative, ahistorical, apolitical, and abstract nature.

In considering how the discourse of East Asia is also a particular practice of constructing knowledge about Korean society, this critique can si-

multaneously be seen as a discussion of the specific ways in which knowledge about Korean society is currently being produced. In problematizing both the nature and political meanings of the knowledge produced within South Korean intellectual circles, this chapter hopes to provide an opportunity to discuss how knowledge, itself, is socially produced — an aspect normally excluded within role oriented discussions on intellectuality and scholarship.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. The discourse of East Asia and East Asia as a region

Several essays have addressed the discourse of East Asia (Cho 1998; Kim 1999; Jin 1999) and the question of whether East Asia can be defined as a singular unit (Jeong et al. 1995; Han 1995; Jeong 1999). The most popular approaches to addressing the question of East Asia include: 1) discussions that assume East Asia to be an actual region based on a certain regionality; that try to find an essentialized category to unify this region; and that tries to find some essence in this category that transcends capitalism and individual nation-states and provides an alternative to Western modernity; 2) discussions that resist the concept of East Asia as an Other

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<sup>19</sup> In Korean society, discussions about intellectuals tend to focus on their social roles rather than examining who are intellectuals in Korean society and what kind of knowledge they are producing. This is an institutional approach, rendering questions about the authority of these institutions moot. However, I believe that it is necessary to discuss the social processes through which their knowledge is produced and the reality produced by this knowledge. Meanwhile, it is scholars engaging in the issue of the coloniality or postcoloniality of Korean society who have been most active in critiquing the social and historical nature of knowledge, particularly critiquing scholars educated in the West by importing knowledge from the West. However, in my mind, problems do not lie with whether scholars are trained in the West or in Korea. Here the issue is that knowledge itself has not been problematized and politicized much in Korean society.

created by the West, but which then engage in a process of self-Orientalism by trying to find elements of “East Asianism” not possessed by the West, also in order to find an alternative modern spirit; and 3) discussions that criticize the identity or regionality of East Asia and call for historically and contextually-situated research about this area. This chapter engages mainly with discussions in the first two approaches, while partially incorporating discussions by Jeong Jaesuh, who can be considered to be part of the third approach, and Kim Gwangok and Han Gyunggu, who are both critical of the view of East Asian culture as a homogenous category.

Discussions within the first two approaches were chosen because they share a similar context with many discussions that took place within Korean society after the 1990s that both problematized Korean modernity and/or talked about Koreans trying to find their identity within the flows of colonial knowledge and/or Western capitalism; and that played with the idea of creating solidarity beyond nation-states. However, the discussions within these first two approaches distinguish themselves from these earlier discussions both in the way that they reflect on the question of who “we” are and in the way in which they carry out this reflection.

In engaging with scholars of East Asian discourse, this chapter asks: Why has East Asia as an area become a category? Why has East Asia been chosen within Korean society as a potential region for solidarity? What concrete problems that we are faced with can this solidarity solve? Who are the subjects of this solidarity that can potentially solve our shared problems? What is the relationship between the nation-state and East Asia? How will the diverse groups within the nation-states and East Asia or the groups within East Asian countries meet? How can the discourse of East Asia deal with historically concrete issues in East Asia?

The article by Arif Dirlik (1995) provides a good reference point to discuss the process of defining and conceptualizing the idea of “area,”

important in problematizing the discourse of East Asia. The geographical facts used to define an area are also a means of culturally categorizing the spatialized and temporalized movements of human activities occurring within this area. Accordingly, when human activities that comprise this area change, there cannot but be changes in the center and boundaries of this area. If so, at what historical point did East Asia start being bounded as a unit? What meanings are present in defining East Asia as a particular area? Upon what basis can this area be defined as one region? In the context of these questions, research on Japan is useful in showing how Japan came to define itself as a particular spatial-geographical category within modernity.<sup>20</sup>

With the worldwide expansion of Western Europe during modernity, “East Asia” came to be constructed as a historical unit by the West. This construction depended on the boundaries that delimited this unit; however, there was, by definition, no need for the elements within this unit to be homogeneous. Instead, the more important issue was how homogeneity came to be created within the interior through differences defining these

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<sup>20</sup> Research exploring the formation of Japan’s identity shows the historical ways in which Japan came to internalize the Otherness created through its relation with the West as its own identity. In particular, this research shows how the concept of the “East Asia/Orient” was developed in relation to the West (stefan Tanaka 1995); the relation between the changes in the culturalist research methods used to explain Japanese culture and the politics of positioning Japan as either part of the West or Asia (Han Gyunggu 1995); and how resistance against the Otherness and subordination created within Japan’s relation to the United States became the basis of Asian solidarity (Ham Dongju 1993).

A study also shows how Japan’s process of incorporating its own Otherness vis-à-vis the West into its own identity formation results in the suppression of diverse differences within Japan itself (Sakai 1997). These research thus constitutes an important reference point for understanding the concepts of “Orient” or “East Asia” used within the East Asian discourse; the relation between culture and political science; the relation between East Asian solidarity and the nation-state or other countries; and the relation between the discourse of East Asia and the differences within nation-states.

boundaries produced through relations with an outside authority. Accordingly, when defining a particular area as a homogeneous unit, the things that we need to disclose are the social contexts and historical processes through which that something comes to be defined as such at a certain historical moment for a certain reason.<sup>21</sup> That is, the historical and political questions of who, in what context, and with what motivation, tried to use this concept of a singular area, cannot but accompany the question of how the physical area of East Asia came to be seen as a single bounded region.

In understanding the social structure or dynamics of a region's formation, the physical area itself cannot service as an explanatory framework. Rather, it is important to keep in mind how the act of transforming a particular physical area into a concept always occurs within a particular historical context, and the act of constructing this area as a homogeneous unit within a certain discourse. Neither does the act of being designated as a certain area simply occur in relation to external boundaries. Just as the identity of the Orient came to be constructed by Japan, so the people who live in an area don't passively reside within that space. In being defined as the West's Other, an area may become attributed with an Otherness. However, in becoming internalized, this Otherness undergoes further transformation, as the self defines itself in relation to the subject.

The following are all examples of how an area came to be constructed as a particular unit within certain historical, political and social processes: the historical process through which Japan came to understand and explain itself as the "Orient" the textual production through which China came to

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<sup>21</sup> The unifying of Japan, Korea, and China into a single unit of East Asia doesn't simply refer to the act of being named as such by the West. Rather, it refers more to the creation of a new structure that had not previously exist in this area (Dirlik 1995:52). The act of changing one name into another is thus act of starting to compose meanings related to this new name.

know itself as the “Middle Kingdom” (Jeong Jaesu 1996; 1999); the creation of “East Asia” as an object of research in the field of East Asian studies, born after World War II, with the incorporation of area studies as a discipline into the system of American universities; and the emergence of the concept of “(East) Asianess” to explain the historical trajectory of economic development within Asia different from that of the West. As such, just because particular nation-states within East Asia, such as Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, etc., claim a certain regionality doesn’t mean that an East Asian area or East Asian solidarity of the same meanings come to exist. The discourses of “East Asianness” or East Asia produced within South Korea do not and cannot possess the same meanings as those discourses produced in countries with different histories like Japan or China.

Instead, in order to discuss the discourse of East Asia within Korean society, it is necessary to ask what is the “East Asianness” of East Asian discourse discussed within South Korea: Why we are talking about East Asia and not some other area: What we are demanding of Japan, China, or other countries through these discourses. To talk about Japan or China is not the same as talking to Japan or China. Rather, it seems more the case that we need “them” to talk about “us.” If so, why is it that we need to say that “we” are amongst them and that “they” are amongst us in order to explain who we are to ourselves? Having said that, what is the historical process through which people living in the particular locality of South Korea came to identify with the larger area of East Asia?

### 3. The relation between the discourse of East Asia and the Korean nation–state

Choi Wonsik states that the main reason why we need to discuss the East

Asian perspective or the discourse of East Asia is because they are “closely related to our arduous efforts of reunification on the Korean peninsula” (1995:89). According to him, the issue of national division, the Cold War order, and people’s independence movements are all common problems faced by this region of East Asia. Still he cautions against the development of the East Asian discourse to further the national interests of Japan or China. Choi states that we can regain an East Asian perspective by bringing back into consciousness Confucianism, now submerged at the bottom of the East Asia political unconscious (1993:99).

Within Choi’s discourse about East Asia and the East Asian perspective, cultural commonality is what assures the regionality of East Asia. According to Choi, this regional solidarity should be prioritized as the means for solving the problems of Korean people. Meanwhile, this solidarity should take the form of “minjung.” A structure of solidarity based on cultural commonality may very well exist among East Asian countries. However, I still wish to ask the following questions: What is relation between East Asia and the nation-state? And what is the relation between nation-state and minjung? Why, for what reason, do the people within each country and East Asia need to unite? And, if so, what relation does the nation-state have to them? Finally, does the entire area outside East Asia then becomes an object of resistance? Without discussion of how the Korean issues of reunification and nationalism are related to specific issues faced by other countries, and whether these issues are faced by the nation-state as a whole or only by certain members within the nation-state, we cannot explain why we need to rely on “Confucianism” to create solidarity among “minjung,” to complete the task of reunification, and to dismantle the Cold War order.

The proponents of the East Asian discourse also declare that democracy needs to take root in each country in order for East Asian solidarity to occur. Not only that, they make the normative statement that none of

countries should aim for mastery or hegemony within the region. If so, who will listen to these statements and put them into practice? One can wait for democratization to take root in these countries or those fighting for supremacy within each country to engage in self-reflection. However, is it not more realistic and perhaps more “East Asianist” to support the democratization efforts already occurring within those countries, and to fight impulses towards hegemony or supremacy through acts of solidarity?

Once again, it is important to remember how “East Asia,” discussed within the East Asian discourse or the East Asian perspective, is always one that is constructed through particular discourses. Accordingly, not all issues within East Asia may be recognized as “East Asian” issues. Not only that, when the agent of practice within this East Asian discourse is assumed to be universal, many groups who are already active within East Asia around various issues may not be considered relevant to the East Asian discourse or the East Asian perspective. These groups include activists organizing around the issue of comfort women; Korean-Japanese youth engaging in collaborative fieldwork research and cultural exchanges as they try to address the unsolved issues of the colonial era; East Asian human rights groups who are testifying to the experiences of victimization under the Cold War and who are exploring possibilities of coalitions of peace; and environmentalists who are uniting against environmental pollution in East Asia that has resulted from modernization. Despite their importance, many East Asian discourse proponents seem little interested in how the solidarity efforts of these groups are either strengthening or weakening the boundaries of the nation-state; the relations of these groups to the power of the nation-states; the specificities of these groups’ issues in relation to nation-state and/or regionality; the goals and objectives of these solidarity movements; the relation of these movements to the peoples or states in countries like Japan or South Korea; and the terms, concepts, and spaces within which these

solidarity efforts need to be situated.

Having said all this, what is the single most important reason that these solidarity efforts are not being included in the discourse of East Asia even as they are presently taking place? The most important reason, it appears, lies in the particular idea of “East Asianness” within the East Asian discourse. Even though they may live within East Asia, not all people, it appears, have the equal right to be included within this definition of East Asian regionality. With the “East Asia” within the East Asian discourse defined according to particular cultural characteristics, the “East Asian” perspective is seen not to apply to those groups considered not “East Asian” enough or lacking “East Asian” qualities. So what exactly is the “East Asian” culture within the East Asian discourse?

#### 4. The identity of “East Asian culture”: Is it East Asian culture or the culture of East Asia?

What is the East Asian culture that ties unifies East Asia? Many proponents of the East Asian discourse claim the existence of a singular culture that transverses the entirety of East Asia, whether that is the idea of the Chinese cultural region, the cultural region of Chinese characters, or the Confucian cultural region. What is the historical context in which this type of cultural integration or cultural homogeneity came to be discussed?

As noted by many scholars, the recent discussion of cultures in East Asia — whether positive or negative — began in the efforts to discover the particular characteristics of the development of (East) Asian capitalism. Related to these efforts is the discussion of the particular cultural characteristics of East Asian management, seen as enabling the development of (East) Asian capitalism (Dirlik 1995:65; Han Gyeonggu 1996).

These efforts, in turn, can be said to have arisen less from a desire to examine the actual management methods or the internal structures of those companies that have enabled the development of systems of capitalism within these Asian countries, but more from a desire to map and explain, from a Western capitalist perspective, the particularities of East Asian capitalist development. Of interest is how this discussion is based on the modern “worlding” Western epistemology that defines the West in terms of rationalism and scientism and the non-West in terms of irrationalism and culturalism.<sup>22</sup> Is it too simplistic to note the striking resemblances of this discourse of Asia, which tries to provide an alternative perspective to modernity, both in professing Asia’s cultural homogeneity and in explaining South Korea’s “traditional” culture in terms of “Asianness” or “East Asianness,” to the act of self-Orientalism, engaged by Japan to cope with Western Orientalism?

This discourse ties this area into one cultural region by ignoring the internal differences within this area. As such, it shares the same context as the discussion of “Asian values and capitalism,” which combines new forms of capitalist influence with ideas of Asian cultural tradition.<sup>23</sup> This discourse pretends to be a discourse of resistance against Western modernity. In actuality, it is a capitalist power formation that uses regional solidarity as its base. Absent in this discourse is how, in order to explain the present situation of East Asia as a particular type of capitalist system, the historical

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<sup>22</sup> Choi Jeongun (1998) provides a good discussion of how culture and science became separated in Western political science’s discussion of history.

<sup>23</sup> Cho Haejeong (1998) remarks on two groups of Asianists who have newly discovered “Asia.” They include anti-West nationalists who are trying to escape their position of subordination to the West, and capitalists who are trying to cultivate a new market. She remarks on how Asian feminists are engaging in their own forms of solidarity movement, having concluded that this new discourse of Asianism is of little help in improving the lives of women in this region.

continuity of East Asia still needs to be explained.<sup>24</sup> In other words, how did East Asia, despite the endless historical ruptures in social relations within the East Asian region, come to possess both traditional continuity and cultural homogeneity? Or, put in another way, how did this region, despite its cultural homogeneity, come to experience endless ruptures and difference?

For cultural anthropologist Kim Gwangok (1999), the concept of culture embedded within the cultural discourse of East Asia comes under particular critique.<sup>25</sup> With the assertion of cultural homogeneity, itself, an error, what is “recovered” within a certain tradition is not really culture. Culture can be defined as either a form of life or a certain practice of everyday life.

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<sup>24</sup> The work by Ko Byeongik (1995) shows how there is little basis in historical fact to the commonsense beliefs that these countries in the East Asian region possessed strong historical ties or cultural homogeneity. Instead, he reveals these relations to be the products of political discourses.

<sup>25</sup> Of course, not just Kim Gwangok, but many other scholars have critiqued the notion of the East Asian cultural identity. However, the critiques by Kim Gwangok and Han Gyunggu differ from other critiques, which state that there is no such thing as the East Asian culture. Their critiques state that the imaginary belief of a common culture doesn't necessarily lead to an ahistorical entity, which enables some type of solidarity within East Asia. For instance, Cho Byunghan states that East Asia has never served as an economic, political, or cultural unit, nor has it ever possessed the universalist aspirations of a religious culture or the capitalist economy. Even though East Asia has developed along different historical paths in the form of nations, possessing certain peoples, it also formed the basis of imaginary communities, with a common origin that also functioned as the origin of a civilization. Towards the end of the twentieth century, with interdependencies created through economic development and changes in the global order, East Asia comes to experience the possibilities of integration. However, it is necessary to explain both the nature and basis of these integration tendencies toward East Asia, in order to explain how the culture that formed the basis of this imaginary community also developed and functioned. That is, there needs to be an explanation of the regional integration being created through the interdependencies and economic blocs of a capitalist market that demands unlimited competition in late twentieth century, the system of belief in a common East Asian culture, and who will create what type of integration, in order to explain what culture is and, thereby, overcome the mystification of culture.

That is, the act of possessing a certain cultural tradition doesn't necessarily mean that this culture will be practiced. In other words, as Kim Gwangok states, it is a mistake to think that just because Asia possesses certain common "Confucian" or "Daoist" cultures that these cultures will actually be practiced in everyday life. Asserting that there is no transcendent referent to the term "Asia," Jeong Jaeseo (1993) states the importance of engaging in a concrete historical analysis to discover the meanings that have been constructed and produced by the imaginary communities of East Asia and Orient.

Several problems result from this confusion around the term "culture" in the East Asian discourse. One of them is the communicative misunderstanding that may arise between the discussants. Many new relations, mediated by culture and area/space/place, are emerging with the collapse of the Cold War system, the appearance of information networks and popular/mass media, and the wavering of previous boundaries of the nation-state. Through providing new rules and resources, the social economy and cultural environment are mediating imaginary selves and imaginary worlds, as well as providing the actions and practices to enable the novel forms of life. With changes in everyday rules and meanings, and changes in the field of reality that determines the conditions of one's life, the boundaries of region/space/place that once helped to subjectify individuals are changing as well.

It is within this context that culture has emerged as an issue this "turn to culture" can also be seen in expressions such as the twenty-first century being "a century of culture." The term "culture," used here, refers to the power and authority that exist as everyday forms of practice, producing both people's practices and their realities. This culture gives particular historical form to people's consciousness or subjectivity. As such, culture, which arises out of collective behavior as a particular social product, comes

to produce certain types of (cultural) subjects within a given time and space. With the global cultural industry in late modernity bringing important changes to this subject formation by traversing the boundaries of space/ place/region, new forms of convergence are occurring between social identities that once had their basis in a place(i.e. the nation-state) and diverse subjects which are created within the spaces of cultural industries. That is why the generational conflicts within Korean society, occurring over differences in cultural consumption, cannot be simply represented as differences in forms of cultural enjoyment, but need to be seen as new forms of humanity being created with a different consciousness of the world (i.e. X-Generation, New Generation, New Human).

Several understandings of culture exist within our society. We need to be careful of the concept of culture we employ, because the reality that we are trying to read or explain is dependent on this concept. Efforts to be clear about what we mean by culture are a way of clarifying the terms with which many debates about culture are engaged within Korean society. With the beginning of Western modernity, the binary logic of modern and non-modern began to be employed to distinguish the modern West from the pre-modern non-West. While all modern things were considered rational, all non-modern things were considered irrational, subjective, or affective, and thus hard to explain. Within this structure of meaning, it became natural that the concept of culture came to be employed to explain the non-Western societies and their ways of life. Considered to be a form of belief, culture was seen as not needing a methodology to explain it.

With Western anthropology beginning to research other societies, culture became a chief topic of inquiry. In the first products of anthropological research, culture was considered to be a static phenomenon existing within a certain demarcated space. Over the past century, however, culture, first approached as an apolitical and ahistorical phenomenon, became the subject

of countless debates. Especially after the 1960s, the concept of culture underwent rapid changes, especially with the intervention of leftist intellectuals in the West into cultural studies the political independence of countries that used to be objects of anthropological research; and the emergence of anthropologists within formerly colonized countries who began to research their own cultures. Continuing unabated, however, were debates about methodology in determining what culture is and how it should be approached.

What is it that thing we call culture? There are diverse definitions of culture; however, most people still continue to define it as a system of meaning, which determines people's everyday practices; a system of ideology; and a system of knowledge. Accordingly, within traditional societies where both everyday life and/or systems of communication were spatially demarcated, the dominant ideology or system of regulation constituted the most important components of culture. However, in the late twentieth century, when people not only engage in more movements across spatial borders but, due to the electronic media, no longer need to confine their images, senses, and desires to any particular space, what are the factors that compose the culture of Korean society?

With the entrance of South Korea into the WTO system in 1988, the cultural industry, which began to be liberalized as part of the globalization and informatization efforts of the Korean state, began to infiltrate and construct the everyday lives of Koreans. As a result, the images, representations, etc., produced within a post-industrial society, began to lure individual desires and life paths into the trajectories of the Western/global system of desire within late-capitalism, and produce the identities of diverse individuals. Novel forms of cultural logic began to operate in everyday life, including the area of familial obligations, which dominates everyday life in South Korea; in the relation with the Korean state; and in people's

lifestyles. In everyday life under late capitalism, culture became something not separate from either the social system or the economic structure, but a new form of power that functioned to construct the lives of individuals. Viewed from this perspective, the starting point, when discussing the cultural identity of East Asia, should be not East Asia but the politics of culture — more specifically, what process make East Asia operate as one culture? An equally important question is, from what social/cultural location should this discourse be discussed? Only then can we understand what is subjectifying East Asia (whether as an object of economic integration or academic research) and what forms of solidarity are possible.

At the “Asian Center for Women’s Studies” in Ewha Woman’s University, I am part of a team that is developing a university-level women’s studies curriculum to be used in eight Asian countries. At the beginning of this project, there was much controversy over the questions of whether an Asian women’s studies curriculum was possible and whether it was possible to use the term “Asian women’s Studies,” or “Asian patriarchy.” Not only Korean scholars but also scholars from the eight Asian countries and the West engaged in this debate. It’s easy to say that we are creating a women’s studies course curriculum for each country and that we are resisting the patriarchal culture within these countries. More difficult is creating concepts of “Asian women’s studies” and “Asian patriarchy” that are acceptable in those countries. There were debates about what meanings such an Asia would have and to whom. Issues shared by many Asian countries, including the colonial experience, Confucian tradition, and nationalism, are ongoing debates. Through undergoing this experience, however, we, at the “Asian Center for Women’s Studies,” have decided to use the term “Women’s Studies Curriculum in Asia” — not “Asian Women’s Studies Curriculum” — and “patriarchies in Asia” — not “Asian patriarchy for convenience.”

## 5. Concluding Note: Taking about our reflections in recognizing differences and the variety of solidarity movements in East Asia

I consider it a problem, by definition, to assume the existence of an East Asian perspective/alternative based on the idea of a homogeneous Asian culture. However, I wonder whether there is not such a tendency within East Asian discourse, which seems to assume the cultural homogeneity of East Asia; and which seems to consider a discourse “alternative” or “resistant” to the West only if reveals East Asia in essentialized “East Asian” ways. This discourse seems to assume that the “East” can meet the West on an equal footing only if it engages in an act of self-Orientalism.

This assumption elides the issue of why it is so important to consider various Asian countries as possessing a common Confucian culture in the first place. Once again, possessing particular Confucian cultural characteristics is only meaningful within the context of a particular discourse, which gives them meaning. Occurring within a particular context, East Asian discourse needs to be clear about, within what particular relations of Confucianism that East Asian nations, national subjects, and individuals become subjectified as subjects possessing a particular culture; how these identities come to construct particular forms of everyday life; and who are the groups within each country with this discursive power.

The process of modernization and modernity in South Korea, along with East Asia, is closely related to nationalism. Accordingly, even though I talk about individuality, rational forms of thinking, and the refusal of a collective identity, along the flow of transnational capital and nomadic flows of individuals, the construction of an individual identity that is not, in some ways, tied to the state remains very difficult to accomplish in Korean society. It is also difficult to think of a meeting with East Asia that is not,

in some ways, mediated by the state. That is not to say that an East Asian identity unmediated by the state is impossible but that we need to ask what relation this East Asian identity, mediated by the state, has to the interests of diverse groups within each nation-state.

The “national subject” was a universalist and totalitarian figure created by the Korean nation-state — the agent of modernization. Even though our society may have become globalized, we remain confined to the sphere of the nation-state. Most, if not all, of the objects/subjects of the world continue to be mediated through the state. In this situation, we need to problematize the relation that East Asia has to the state and the context within which East Asia enters our everyday discourses.

A more realistic way to discuss the identity of East Asia might also be through asking questions of our nation-state. When we approach the issues in this way, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the present discourses of East Asia are, in general, normative, abstract, conceptual, and ahistorical, possessing little connection to the politics of our internal differences. Meta-level discussions, which discuss issues of decolonization, Cold War, East Asian nationalism, anti-Communism, and Confucianism, without concrete and contextualized questions, make invisible the actual formation of a new cultural topography, the reorganization of the region, the experiences of solidarity within this region, etc. — all occurring at concrete and practical levels. They also make invisible the lives of individuals who are making new histories as they live their lives within this East Asian region.

A discourse, which simply asserts the existence of “East Asians,” seems unable to overcome the limits of the modern and Western-centered epistemological system, which produces knowledge divorced from reality. In such a situation, we need to ask how the social sciences within our universities reproduce concepts of East Asia and Orient, created by the West, and how people internalize these concepts.

Why is it that a discourse of East Asia does not address any of our social problems, even though the main subject of this discourse is not East Asia but “ourselves” and the groups within our society? Many proponents of the East Asian discourse readily assume the meanings of “Asianness” and “our cultural peculiarities.” In so doing, they either exclude these concepts from analysis or whisk them away from sight into the realm of ideology or normative values.

The “Orient,” which has historically provided the Western people with an alternative framework to view their own reality, cannot but have different meanings for us, who are the Other. Thus, I wonder whether the act of saying that there is a particular “Orient” that the West has persisted in believing, and that there is a particular “Oriental” thing that we already possess, isn’t a form of ethnocentrism that completely ignores concepts of history and politics, and that creates a stage where Westerners, and not we, are the invited guests.

In conclusion, how has the social relations composing East Asia been constituted up to now and what are the historical consequences of these forms of language that have unified East Asia as one region? Why have these particular things come into being? It seems, more than ever, we need to ask what role culture has played in articulating these different phenomena.

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# Literature in Korea, China and East Asia: Issues of Identity and Tradition / Modernity

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## 1. Awareness of East Asian Identity and Tradition

The exploration of East Asian identity is the subject of this conference, and it is the task of this paper to carry out that exploration in the field of literature. Thus, what is required is an inquiry into the identity of East Asian literature, but before beginning such an inquiry, I feel that it is necessary to make a brief examination of the general assumptions. First, there is examination of the concept of East Asian identity, and second, there is examination of the method through which it is connected with literature.

Though the Korean term *jeongcheseong* can be translated as identity or self-identification, what is important here is the relationship between the same and different. The same is established by presupposing the different, and conversely, the different is established at the same time by presupposing the same. The current establishment of East Asia as “same” assumes a “different,” namely the West (or Europe and the United States). This is a surprisingly important point. For example, East Asia felt no need to recognize itself as East Asia before the nineteenth century. That recognition could be possible only at a time when an other, the West, is being suppressed. We must actively demonstrate that East Asian awareness and

Western awareness are already destined to be counterparts. Let us consider two conflicting perspectives. First, there is the negative view on the concept of East Asian identity. This perspective views East Asia only in terms of the differences between each country, but with regard to the West generally assumes Western identity as something self-evident. But is the Western identity really so self-evident? This perspective can have its own kind of significance when it fairly recognizes the differences in the countries of the West as well. In contrast, there is the positive view on the concept of East Asian identity. This perspective focuses on creating a distinction with the West, but it is often forgotten that the West is already functioning as a standard in that distinction itself, and as well it merely assumes Western identity as common knowledge, showing no skepticism toward it and seeking only to construct East Asian identity from the position of its differences with Western identity. In fact, both identities, “East Asia” and “the West,” must be explored with skepticism, and inquiries into both must be made within a close, organic connection.

The next problem is finding a way of seeking to discover East Asian identity within tradition. Here, it is regarded as a main indicator that culture is something indigenous and not foreign. Viewed from the temporal horizon of the late nineteenth century and afterwards, the foreign is used to mean the Western and the modern. However, if one views the situation of the West itself, there as well the relationship of tradition and counter-tradition is problematic, and while tradition refers to what prevailed until the nineteenth century, the actual content of this tradition is modernity. Thus, what is problematic in the West are the relationships between tradition/modernity and counter-tradition/present, and it is that relationship that becomes a key issue of Western modernity. In East Asia, in contrast, the tradition/modernity and counter-tradition/present of the West coexist without clear distinction within the category of “the foreign.” This must be pre-

sented as the first issue. Next, viewing tradition mainly from the perspective of its indigenous nature is an aspect that appears commonly not only in East Asia but in other regions outside of the West. However, there is a major fallacy inherent within this perspective. This becomes evident when one recalls that what we think of as tradition nowadays was at some point in the past the foreign. In the case of South Korea, what has been called tradition since modernity is the Confucian culture that started in the Joseon Kingdom (the last kingdom before the birth of the modern Republic of Korea), and this culture actually had its origins in foreign culture. At the time when Confucianism was being imported from China in the late Goryeo period (the precursor of Joseon period), Confucian culture was a foreign culture, not tradition. In the case of China as well, the establishment of Song Confucianism in the Song Dynasty was possible through a combination with the foreign element of Buddhist philosophy. As a superficial example, the pigtail was thought of as a symbol of tradition in the late Qing Dynasty and early stages of democracy, but in truth the pigtail did not exist until the Ming Dynasty, and it originated from the customs of the Manchu people. It was the same with fashion, and what is known as traditional costume in present-day China is imported culture from the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties. If everything foreign in terms of its origins were eliminated, what would be left? If there is such a thing as tradition, it is not something determined by its indigenous quality. It is the function of some kind of power where the existing modifies the foreign and turns it into something indigenous. It is from the function of this power that East Asian identity must be explored. It could be said that presently, as the twentieth century ends and the twenty first century stands before us, we have already long been living within the function of a power that transforms the foreign, the West or, more precisely, the modernity and present of the West, and creates something indigenous, establishing a new tradition

from the coexistence of the West and tradition. This could be regarded as the second issue.

However, when we think of East Asian literature, we inevitably run up against another concern, namely that all literature exists in reality only as literature in the language of a people. Is the link between the mother tongue and literature a benefit or a limitation? In either case, is communication between the literatures of different languages truly possible? This writer feels that it is. Not only is it possible, it is absolutely essential. Comparative literature is the field that has heretofore been involved with that communication. However, comparative literature has mainly sought to view only the relationships of influence and dissemination from an imperialist perspective. Of course, comparative literature itself has undergone many changes and its implications have expanded greatly at present, but it can be said that the tendencies from its origins still remain. East Asian literature is not a simple part of comparative literature. Here the principal method is not, strictly speaking, comparison, but rather contrast (which includes comparison), and this study of East Asian literature is a process that is based in common cultural experiences between the literatures of the countries of East Asia and that pursues the tasks of modernity that are exploring and realizing East Asian identity in the previously examined sense through communication and conversation between those literatures. There is the potential for many fallacies to occur when one is trapped in a single-country perspective of Western literature vs. one's own country's literature. Historically the countries of East Asia have belonged to the same cultural spheres of Chinese language and Confucianism (though this could also be the Daoist cultural sphere at the level of subaltern culture) and equally experienced the Westernization form of modernization since the late nineteenth century, but this historical and modern identity was achieved though the complex and subtle intermixture of the same and the different.

If East Asian universality is drawn out based on a proper understanding of this intermixture, the countries of East Asia can obtain an objective understanding of themselves, and it is possible to restore or recreate themselves in a positive sense following loss or damage due to Westernization. In this writing, it may be possible to carry out the work of illustrating the significance of East Asian literature by selectively examining a few points within the experiences of Korean and Chinese literature. Those points are as follows:

- 1) Lu Xun, Lee Kwangsoo and Hong Myunghee
- 2) Im Hwa, Hu Feng and Zhou Yang
- 3) Lu Xun and Kim Suyong

If (1) and (2) represent useful points in objectifying Korean and Chinese literatures and rediscovering an identity that transcends their differences within a broader horizon through examination of the same and the different, (3) represents a useful point in offering a clue for the task of modernity that is exploring and realizing East Asian identity.

## 2. The Two Aspects of Separation and Unification

### 1) The Case of the Overseas Student Generation in Late 1900s Tokyo

Tokyo of the late 1900s was a truly interesting space. Students from China and Korea were active in Tokyo, as it was the setting for the last years of the Meiji era, symbolized by the boom of modern Japanese literature, the heyday of naturalism, the time of the active introduction of Russian literature, and the period when interest in socialism began to arise. Born

in 1881, Lu Xun arrived in Japan in 1902, studied at the Sendai Professional School of Medicine from 1904 until he dropped out in 1906, moved to Tokyo, and developed a cultural movement within overseas student society before returning to China in 1909. Born in 1888, Hong Myunghee arrived in Japan in 1905 and entered the second year as a pre-med student at Tokyo Commercial School before entering the third year at Taisei Middle School in 1907, studying until 1909 and returning to Korea in 1910.<sup>1</sup> Lee Kwangsoo was born in 1902, went to Japan in 1905, entered Taisei Middle School in 1906 and again entered the third grade of the normal department at the Meiji Academy in the 1907, where he studied for three years. This means that Lu Xun, Hong Myunghee and Lee Kwangsoo were together in Tokyo from 1906 to 1909.

At that time, Lu Xun published criticism such as “The Power of Diabolist Poetry” and “Cultural Inclinations” in the exchange student magazine *Hanam*, translated Russia and Eastern European novels into Chinese together with his younger brother Zhou Zuoren and published the two volumes of *Foreign Novel Collection*, and prepared for the issuing of a cultural movement magazine entitled *Xinsheng* (Rebirth). What drew Lu’s interest at the time were things like the philosophy of Nietzsche, diabolist poetry and Russian novels. Perhaps the most important of Lu’s writings of the time was “The Power of Diabolist Poetry.” This text begins by quoting Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and goes on to introduce each of the diabolist poets in turn. The names that are mentioned here include Byron, Shelley, Pushkin, Lermontov, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Petőfi. In their works, Lu read foresight and resistance, and this played a decisive role in the formation of the young Lu’s romanticism.

Hong Myunghee and Lee Kwangsoo were respectively 7 years and 11

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<sup>1</sup> Kang Yeongju, “Byeokcho Hong Myunghee: Seongjang, suhak, bangnangsidae,” *Yeoksa bipyeong* (Fall 1992).

years younger than Lu and middle school students, but they showed a premature reaction to the cultural environment in which young Lu was placed at the time. Hong was fascinated by Russian novels and enjoyed reading Byron. To give some indication of his love for Byron, it was enough for him to take the pen name of Gain after Byron's work *Cain*. He also enjoyed reading the naturalist writers of Japan,<sup>2</sup> and what Hong sympathized with in them was mainly their diabolist tendencies. In light of this, the reaction of Hong at the time could be said to be very similar to that of Lu. However, Lee Kwangsoo was somewhat different. The friendship between the two men, who met in 1906, is generally regarded as a relationship of Hong leading Lee, but in view of their reading experiences, Hong lent the books that he had bought for Lee to read, and thus Lee also would read Byron, Natsume Soseki, Chekhov, Artsybashev, and the Japanese naturalist writers. However, Lee, to borrow his own expression, had different "literary tastes" from Hong.<sup>3</sup> According to his own description, "It seems like Byron's works, including "Cain," "The Corsair," "Mazeppa" and "Don Juan" have shaken both of our minds."<sup>4</sup> He had the same enthusiasm for Byron as Hong, but Lee felt a distance from the general trends of diabolism. While Hong liked Dostoevsky and disliked Tolstoy,<sup>5</sup> Lee felt that Tolstoy suited

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<sup>2</sup> According to what Hong disclosed in conversations with individuals such as Yu Jino, Hyeon Gidang and Seol Jeongsik, he enjoyed reading authors such as Shimazaki Tōson, Tayama Katai, Tokutomi Roka, Mayama Seika, and Masamune Hakuchō. See Kang Yeongju, *op. cit.*, p. 144. However, the Japanese author with whom Hong, and Lu Xun as well, was most fascinated was Natsume Soseki.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Kwangsoo, "Dananhan bansaeng eui dojeon," *Lee Kwangsoo jeonjib* 14 (Samjungdang, 1964), p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> "Even if he is a Russian author, I was dissatisfied with Tolstoy. If you ask why ... it's usually close to preaching and the like, so Tolstoy is no fun. ... and as for Dostoevsky's works, it was great to see that *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* were translated." Quoted from p. 143, Kang Yeongju, *op. cit.*

his way of thinking.<sup>6</sup>

There are interesting opinions comparing Lu and Lee, describing Lee as the converse of Lu. This opinion is linked to the question of why there was no author like Lu in Korea. However, if we consider the experiences of Tokyo in the late 1910s and the existence of Hong Myunghee, we can discover interesting implications. Following his activities in the 1920s as a critical intellectual and a change in his ideas in the late 1920s, Lu Xun's practices within the socialist movement in the 1930s, which developed with the main base of the League of Left-Wing Writers, followed in step with Hong, who worked as a main member of the socialist ideological groups Society for Research in New Ideas and the Tuesday Society in the 1920s and as a substantial leader of the New Trunk Society, a group combining left- and right-wing forces to fight for unification of the people. However, Hong had no major literary writings to speak of besides his roman-fleuve *Lim Kkeokjeong*, written in the 1930s. Judging by his literary works, Lee Kwangsoo could also be said to occupy Lu's position, but his works ran almost completely counter to Lu's work and its character. It could be said that in the case of the generation of overseas study in Tokyo in the late 1900s, social practice and literary practice were separate in Korea, but a unification of the two was achieved in China. What was the hidden principle of that separation and unification? This is a question where specific exploration is required within the horizon of East Asian literature.

## 2) The Case of the Generation of the Proletarian Literature Movement

The cases of Im Hwa, Hu Feng and Zhou Yang show an example of sep-

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<sup>6</sup> "The things that Hong liked and recommended, like Nagai Kafu's *French Stories* and *American Stories* didn't suit my tastes, and I found that instead idealist works like Tolstoy's agreed more with my sensibilities." Lee Kwangsoo, op. cit.

aration and unification that is antithetical to those of Lu Xun, Hong Myunghee and Lee Kwangsoo. Born in 1908, Im Hwa showed interest in dadaist works around 1927 before gradually proceeding to proletarian literature. At first he worked with Park Younghee's group, and then in 1930 went to Tokyo to study while following in the path of Lee Bukman, from the Tokyo branch of KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federatio), returning to Korea in 1931 and becoming the secretary of KAPF. He led as a key theorist in the bolshhevik transformation of KAPF and took control, becoming the secretary-general in 1932. However, in 1931 there had already been a first round of arrests of people involved with KAPF, and with a second round in 1934 a series of situations involving the conversion of KAPF members occurred, leading to the formal disbanding of the federation in 1935. Im himself lapsed into sympathy for Japan entering the 1940s, and upon Korean independence he worked as a high-level cultural theorist for the South Korean Labor Party before crossing into North Korea in 1947, ultimately being executed during the South Korean Labor Party purge of 1953.

Born in the same year as Im Hwa, 1908, Zhou Yang went to study in Japan in 1928, returning to China in 1930 and participating in the proletarian literature movement, acting as party secretary for the League of Left-Wing Writers (Zuolian). Meanwhile, Hu Feng, who was born in 1902 and like Im Hwa was a poet himself, went to study in Japan in 1929 and in 1931 joined NAPF (Japanese Proletarian Arts Federation) while working as a member of the Tokyo branch of Zuolian. He returned to China in 1933 and was appointed successively as the chief of publicity and administrative secretary of Zuolian. Zhou and Hu ran into conflict with each other while working together in Zuolian. Zhou, who had taken on the role of party secretary, linking Zuolian with the Chinese Communist Party, represented the perspective of the Party within the League and rose as the main player

of a new force, while Hu, together with Lu Xun, worked to curb the Zhou faction and preserve the relative autonomy of the League from the Party. While Zhou went to Yanan after the dissolution of Zuolian and consistently worked at the center of literary authority, with the exception of the period of the Cultural Revolution, until his death in 1989, Hu remained in the region controlled by the Kuomintang and developed a movement of critical literature, in particular rejecting the demands of liberated area theorists in the 1940s, who insisted on mechanically applying the literary theories of the liberated area, which were only accurate within that area's conditions, to areas controlled by Kuomintang, and pursuing individual critical and literary qualities that suited the reality of Kuomintang leadership. Following the foundation of the People's Republic of China, he directly criticized the leftward bias and bureaucratization of the Party's literary policy until he was arrested in a purge and suffered a long period in prison. He was rehabilitated in 1980, but suffered from the aftereffects of prison life until his death in 1985.

While it is interesting that these three individuals, Im, Zhou and Hu, studied in Japan at similar times and were influenced by the Japanese proletarian literary movement, what is noteworthy is that, if Im Hwa followed the course of Zhou Yang when he was consistent to the political hard line and stood in the center of authority during the KAPF period and the space of liberation, he followed the course of Hu Feng when he met his "destiny," to borrow Professor Kim Yoonshik's expression, just before his fall into pro-Japanese sentiment and the course toward the Korean War, thus "shattering the subtle sense of balance between political instigation and poetry, and being restored as a poet."<sup>7</sup> We can discover both Zhou Yang and Hu Feng, who showed a relationship of irresolvable conflict and

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<sup>7</sup> Kim Yoonshik, *Imhwa yeongu* (Munhak sasang, 1989), p. 627.

confrontation, in the person of Im Hwa. It appears that we can find an important clue in approaching the individuality of Korean and Chinese proletarian literature and the universality of East Asian proletarian literature when we draw out the principles concealed within this separation and unification. If we are unable to ensure this critical mind, we can all too easily lapse into arbitrary analysis. For example, the theory of criticizing China's Zuolian based on its leftist tendencies is predominant, but when viewed in light of the overall situation of the East Asian proletarian literature movement that included Korea, China and Japan, it becomes evident that it had a broader scope of battle lines for unification and that it possessed far more relative autonomy from the party. The Zuolian had a very similar appearance to the Japanese Confederation of Left-Wing Writers, which was formed on March 13, 1928, at the initiative of Kurahara, an activist in the Japanese proletarian literature movement, and then disbanded after only a few days.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Simultaneous Transcendence of Tradition and Modernity

#### 1) The Case of Kim Suyong

In terms of dates of birth and periods of activity, there is more than a generation of difference between them, but we can discover profound similarities between Lu Xun and Kim Suyong. These are related to their attitude toward the Western, the modern and the traditional.

As has been frequently indicated, the poetry of Kim Suyong started from modernism and ultimately proceeded to a territory that transcended

<sup>8</sup> Jeon Hyungjun, "1920-30 nyeondae Han-Jung puro munhak undong bigyo yeongu 1: jojig munje reul jungsim uro," *Jungjuk munhak* 26 (1996), pp. 335-339.

it. People who are only satisfied with explanations based on a schematic theory of stepwise development tend to look down upon Kim's early poetry and praise his later poetry highly, but if one approaches the text without prejudice, it is only fair to say that the works show a considerable lack of accord with the period in which they were produced and that a transcendence of modernism was realized through them. Choi Wonsik elegantly expressed his view on this transcendence by stating, "In Kim Suyong's best works, we bear witness to the moment of a death-defying leap that is faithful to modernism and yet transcends it, and to the spirit of that place of destiny where the greatest poetry is born."<sup>9</sup> Measuring that transcendence against our current context, we can say that it is essentially a transcendence of the Western and the modern. Then what is the place of that transcendence? Of course it is not a reversion to tradition. Kim did boldly declare in his 1964 work "Colossal Roots" that, "Tradition is good, no matter how dirty it may be," but that statement should not be simply understood as a declaration of the reversion to tradition. This becomes clear upon re-reading his posthumously printed work "Grass."

"Grass" overlaps with a passage in the *Analects of Confucius* that states, "The moral character of the ruler is the wind, and the moral character of the small man is the grass. When the wind blows on the grass, it must bend." The wind for Confucius is an active and subjective entity and the grass is a passive and dependent entity, and the relationship between the two belongs to the traditional world of feudalism. At first glance the grass in Kim's work, which lies down faster than the wind and rises up before the wind, seems to be an active and subjective entity itself that resists the wind's domination. Viewed in this sense, this relationship of wind and

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<sup>9</sup> Choi Wonsik, "Rieollijeum gwa modeonijeum eui hoetong: Jagpum uro eui gwihwan," paper presented at the 100 Years of Modern Korean Literature Symposium sponsored by the Daesan Foundation (Sept. 17, 1999), p. 35.

grass corresponds to a transcendence of tradition, such that the place of transcendence is modernity. However, the work “Grass” actually goes a step further.

1-1) The grass lies down

1-2) Fluttering in the east wind that drives the rain

1-3) The grass lay down and

1-4) Finally cried

1-5) As the day was cloudy, it cried some more, then

1-6) Lay down again

2-1) The grass lies down

2-2) It lies down faster than even the wind

2-3) It cries faster than even the wind, and

2-4) It rises sooner than the wind

3-1) The day is cloudy and the grass lies down

3-2) Up to the ankles

3-3) Up to the soles of the feet, it lies down

3-4) Though it lies down later than the wind

3-5) It rises sooner than the wind, and

3-6) Though it cries later than the wind

3-7) It laughs sooner than the wind

3-8) The day is cloudy, and the roots of the grass lie down

– full text of “Grass” (The numbers before each line indicate the stanza and line.)

If one only views (2-2) and (2-4), the grass that lies down faster than the wind and rises sooner than the wind is the exact opposite of the grass in

the *Analepts*. However, this reading cannot but be problematic in that it takes little account of, or ignores completely, the other parts of the poem, and that it is lacking in an examination of how an account that does not conform to the order of natural phenomena comes to obtain poetic truth. If one looks at the whole of the poem, questions arise such as the following: What does “cry” mean in (2-3)? If “lie down” in (2-2) and “rise” in (2-4) form a set of counterparts, why does “cry” in (2-3), unlike the third stanza, appear by itself without its counterpart “laugh”? Why does the poet say that it lies down faster than the wind and cries faster than the wind in the second stanza, and then mention the case of it lying down and crying later than the wind in the third stanza? Are the relationships between “cry”/“laugh” and “lie down”/“rise” the same or different? In addition, if one views this poem in relation to the order of natural phenomena, it may run up against the “bioecological objection that it is impossible for the grass to dislike the wind that brings the rain,” as indicated by Hwang Dong-gyu (“The Sound of Poetry”), and perhaps because of the abrupt presentation of the second stanza description stating that it lies down faster than the wind and rises sooner than the wind, the analysis of how this description, clearly in violation of the natural order, is established as poetic truth may become questionable. Perhaps the clue to a consistent analysis of the whole can be found in the existence of a speaker, as indicated by Kim Hyeon (“The Experience of Laughter,” 1981). Kim Hyeon indicated clearly, “There is a person within the poem who stands in the grass and feels it lying down.” According to Kim, the ankles and soles of the feet in (3-2) and (3-3) are the ankles and soles of that person standing in a field of grass. Let us then examine “Grass” in detail from the beginning assuming the existence of such a speaker.

First, attention should be paid to tense. The second to sixth lines of the first stanza are in the past tense, and the remainder are in the present.

As is well known, the use of the present tense is not necessarily restricted to showing only the present. It is possible that the present of (1-1) connected to the immediately following use of the past tense and the present of the second and third stanzas are used in different ways. If the present and past in the first stanza are objective facts, the present in the second and third stanzas could be the subjective association or imagination of the speaker. Viewed in this way, it may be natural to make a sudden leap from the description of grass fluttering in the wind and lying down in the first stanza to the description of grass lying down faster than the wind and rising sooner than the wind in the second stanza. In the process, the difference between the descriptions in the second and third stanzas becomes salient instead. The grass, which lies down and cries faster than the wind in the second stanza, lies down and cries later than the wind in the third stanza. Seo Useok (“Kim Suyong: The Joy of Rhythm,” 1977) read this as emphasizing that, even though there are cases where it lies down later than the wind, the fact that it rises sooner than the wind does not change. While this author acknowledges that Seo’s reading makes sense, the following is an attempt to reason from the sense of exploring possibilities for slightly different readings. To wit, it may be possible to say that the present of the second stanza is a time of imagination, and that the present of the third stanza is a time of awareness where the speaker, who despite this imagination cannot help acknowledging the reality that grass lies down and cries later than the wind (if the first three lines of the third stanzas are viewed as this process of recognition, their existence becomes natural), realizes the certain truth that grass nevertheless rises and laughs sooner than the wind. If it makes sense to read it this way, the core of the poetic message of “Grass” comes to be found in the four lines that state, “Though it lies down later than the wind / It rises sooner than the wind, and / Though it cries later than the wind / It laughs sooner than the wind.”

Next, an overall examination should be made of the contrasts between “lie down”/“rise” and “cry”/“laugh.” First, let us consider whether lying down and crying are negative values. If one looks at the first stanza, the grass fluttered in the east wind that drove the rain, lay down and finally cried. If that crying is the sound of friction between the wind and grass, why did the speaker perceive it as crying of all things? Crying can also include crying from joy, but in most cases it is crying from sadness. If it is crying from sadness, this is because lying down is sad. Why would lying down be sad? Is it because lying down in itself is humiliating or painful? Is it because lying down confronts it with the danger of being pulled out at the roots? Let us momentarily reserve answering and examine the second stanza. Does the description of grass lying down and crying faster than the wind assume that the wind also lies down and cries, or does it mean that the grass lies down and cries before the wind would make it lie down and cry? If it is the former, then neither lying down nor crying could be negative values. If it is the latter, does that make lying down and crying faster than the wind positive virtues? Or should one view it as an abrupt change from a negative value for lying down and crying in the first stanza to something value-neutral in the second stanza? “Rise” first appears in the last line of the second stanza, and viewed formally the grass lies down here with the adverb “sooner” rather than “faster.” It is also striking that there is a distinction with “cry.” Why does he distinguish it in this way? Simply to avoid repetition? This may be possible, but it could also have the underlying assumption that rising is a different kind of action from lying down or crying. Here we continue to enumerate questions, and it appears that an answer that consistently resolves all questions is almost impossible, but conversely, if we abandon consistency in the answers and address the preceding questions in connection with the issue of tense mentioned in the first paragraph, the following answer may be possible.

The “lies down” and “cries” of the first stanza are negative values. This belongs to the dimension of fact. In the second stanza, those negative values lose their color and only the sequence of actions, the subjectivity of acts, is of issue. This belongs to the dimension of imagination. In the third stanza as well, the loss of color in the negative values of “lies down” and “cries” is continued, but “rises” and “laughs” take on a clearly positive value, and thus once again awaken the negative value of “lies down” and “cries.” This belongs to the dimension of poetic truth. That the three different dimensions of each of the three stanzas feel continuous, without any clear sense of rupture, is mainly thanks to the characteristic method of repetition employed by Kim Suyong. It is, as Hwang Donggyu aptly noted (“The Space of Honesty,” 1976), a method of repetition used to emphasize and to use emphasis to leap over logic. To be a bit more specific, it is as follows: He seeks to overcome the tragic situation of the first stanza by imagining the preemptiveness of the grass’s action in the second stanza (that is, subjectivity of action), but this imagination does not correspond to reality. That lack of correspondence brings the imagination to a halt, forcing it to stop at “rises” in (2-4) and preventing it from proceeding to “laughs.” In addition, despite the fabrication of a loss in color of values, unconscious consideration of values functions to force the use of the adverb “sooner” in (2-4), which distinguishes it from the two preceding situations, and to interrupt the imagination. Thus, the speaker, whose imagination has been interrupted, returns to reality and views the grass lying up to his ankles and the soles of his feet. The speaker arrives at the awareness that this grass lies down and cries later than the wind, but rises and laughs sooner than the wind. How is such an awareness possible? As was suggested above in the form of a question, the sound of friction between the wind and grass can sound like crying or like laughter depending on the subjectivity of the listener. In a word, the speaker hears the sound made by the grass as it flutters

in the wind as laughter now instead of crying. At this moment, awareness becomes possible. At this moment, the fluttering grass appears to be rising rather than lying down. It can be seen that the secret in this poem lies not in “lies down”/“rises” but in “cries”/“laughs.” When the wind blows, the grass lies down, and when the wind stops the grass rises. This is seen as the order of natural phenomena. Then does the grass correspondingly laugh when the wind blows and cry when the wind stops? It does not. What is important in this poem is the sound of friction between the wind and grass. This sound may sound like crying or like laughter. If the wind stops, this sound stops as well, so there can be no laughter. Thus, “crying”/“laughter” becomes “crying”=“laughter.” Correspondingly, if one looks at “lies down”/“rises,” those are not two clearly distinguished, differing actions or states, but two aspects of one action, one state. The state of fluttering in the wind itself can be lying down or rising. The equalities of “lies down”=“rises” and “cries”=“laughs” are the master, and the transformation from passive and dependent being to active and subjective being is the servant.

In summary, it is as follows. If one views the final stanza of this work, the grass, though it lies down later than the wind, rises sooner than the wind, and, though it cries later than the wind, laughs sooner than the wind. How can this be possible? It is because the perspective of viewing the grass’s movement has changed fundamentally. Here the grass is grass that flutters in the wind. However, in that fluttering, “rises” and “lies down” are not two clearly distinguished, different actions or state, but two aspects of one action or state. It is the same with crying and laughter. This is in fact the sound of friction between the wind and grass, but it can sound like crying or like laughter. If the grass that lies down as it is blown by the wind in the *Analects* is feudal grass, and the grass that forms a precise opposite of the grass in the *Analects* by lying down faster than the wind and rising sooner than the wind is modern grass, then it could be said that

grass wherein lying down/rising and crying/laughing have become two aspects of the same state, thus eliminating the contradiction, is viewed as grass that simultaneously transcends tradition and modernity.

## 2) The Case of Lu Xun

What about Lu Xun? The literature of Lu Xun begins from a clearer and more definite resistance to tradition than that of any other writer. However, Lu was also removed from the perspective of Westernization in all aspects. From his period in Tokyo in the late 1900s, Lu was already distant from and skeptical of the Western and modern. There were reasons for his inclinations toward Nietzsche. It was precisely the simultaneous transcendence of tradition and the West/modernity that was Lu's orientation, and a way he used in the process was to look back while rejecting tradition and to accommodate the West/modernization while resisting it. Lu's Marxism in his later period of activity should be understood in this context as well, and here I will examine where Lu's orientation and methods reached through his early novella "My Old Home" (1921).

In "My Old Home," the first-person narrator returns to his home, which he had been away from for more than 20 years, from a place located more than 1,000 *li* away (*li* is a unit formerly used in Korea to measure distance, and 10 *li* roughly equals 4 kilometers). The narrator, bearing the name of the author, Xun, may be regarded as a character living as an intellectual in a large city such as Peking, and this homecoming is a return for the purpose of leaving his home. During his homecoming, he experiences various different forms of loss of his home, and they can be summarized as follows.

- 1) The landscape of his home as he views it again after more than 20 years is not the same as before.

- 2) By selling the house in his hometown and taking all of his remaining family members to the city, he makes it so that no base remains in his hometown. It does not appear that any arrangement of a base in his hometown will occur again thereafter, nor does it seem that he will have anything to return home for again.
- 3) He meets his childhood friend Run-tu again, but Run-tu has changed too much. The first person narrator recognizes Run-tu instantly, but it is not the Run-tu from his memories. The sense of oneness that had existed between the narrator and Run-tu in the past has disappeared, and an insurmountable sense of alienation rises in its place.

Out of these, the main tendency in analysis of “My Old Home” to date has been to focus on (3). Such analysis was first attempted by Mao Dun, who worked as a critic at the time directly after “My Old Home” was first printed. According to Mao, the central idea of “My Old Home” is interpreted as sadness over the lack of understanding and feeling of alienation between individuals. This analysis follows with a perspective that identifies the narrator Xun in the story with the writer Lu Xun, creating an unyielding mold for analysis. However, there is a deep problem concealed in this mold. If one focuses only on the alienation from Run-tu, the topics of homecoming or loss of the home are treated merely as Run-tu’s equivalent, or background or conditions that make Run-tu possible, receiving no further illumination. And if one identifies the narrator Xun in the story with Lu Xun the writer, the correspondence or lack of correspondence between fact and fiction comes to possess meaning only for the analysis of fiction as compared with fact. There was indeed a childhood friend of Lu’s who recalls the character of Run-tu. This friend’s name was Zhang Yunshui.

The author’s actual meetings with Zhang correspond to four periods of time, and the two meetings between the characters of Xun and Run-tu

correspond to the first and fourth of these. That the narrator Xun and Run-tu meet only twice in the story, once when they are young and once when Xun leaves home, is because the story can only be established in that way. If they were to meet intermittently in between those times, as the writer Lu and Zhang Yunshui did, Run-tu's change would not have been shocking at all. If the central theme of this work were the sense of alienation between individuals, it could be more appropriate to have contemplation of the gradual process of change rather than one shocking change. However, Lu's decision to opt for the shocking change resulted from its being all the more appropriate to the theme of loss of the home. In short, the character of Run-tu has significance as a being within the network of meaning that is loss of the home, not the reverse. Within this network of meaning, one should view the real individual Zhang Yunshui as having transformed into the fictional character of Run-tu.

If one is to summarize the loss of home by the character of Xun in three elements as before, the important items are located in between (1) and (2). Xun denies the account of (1) immediately afterward.<sup>10</sup>

It seems like it was always this way. So I made excuses to myself. Saying that home was essentially this kind of place—there is no progress, but in the same way there may not be any sadness like I felt before.

Following this denial, Xun explains as follows:<sup>11</sup>

It was merely a change in my own mind. Because there has never been any pleasant mind in this homecoming of mine.

After this description there is a detailed description of the situation in (2).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Lu Xun *Quan Ji 1* (Renmin wenxuechubanshe, 1981), p. 476.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

This time I came only to leave home. The old house where my family lived together for so long was sold off to another family after long discussion, and because the deadline for transferring the house was set within this year, I had to say goodbye forever to that old familiar house before the first day of the new year and leave my old familiar hometown far behind, and move to another land where I could make a living.

Thus, in a situation where Xun is about to say goodbye to his old house, to lose his hometown forever, his mind is already prepared in advance to see a different image from the home that he had always longed for over twenty years. Here, there is already an unrest of his mind that says, the longed-for house of my memories is already absent, so there is no need to feel hurt by this departure. This action is something to provide comfort to himself. Also, it transforms Xun's home from something geographical and spatial into something psychological. The geographical and spatial home is merely something value-neutral; what confers meaning and emotion upon it is my own heart. If so, then home exists within my heart. This is where Xun's search for his home begins.

Xun's search for his home is already showing its beginnings between (1) and (2).<sup>13</sup>

The home in my memories was never anything like this. My home was much better. But as soon as I try to remember that beauty and express those good qualities in words, the image disappears and the words to express it vanish as well.

The "home in my memories," of which the image cannot be remembered and which cannot be expressed in words, is a psychological home. The

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

occasion for the image of psychological home to be revealed and expressed in words comes through Run-tu. Once he hears about Run-tu from his mother, a mysterious picture suddenly appears in Xun's mind.<sup>14</sup>

A golden, round moon is hanging in an indigo sky, and underneath is a seaside field of sand, with green watermelons planted as far as the eye can see. Amid this a boy of eleven or twelve years attaches a silver necklace around his neck and raises an iron spear in his hand, spearing at a badger with all of his strength, but the badger twists its body and escapes between his legs.

The boy in this mysterious picture is Run-tu, and the seaside field of sand and watermelons is the village where Run-tu lives. Here we should note two things. First, viewed in geographical and spatial terms, Run-tu's village cannot be Xun's home. The place where Xun was born and grew up was a small city in the region. Life as a boy in this small city was a life of "see[ing] only a square sky above the high fence in the yard," and a life of knowing watermelons "only as something sold in fruit stores." To young Xun, this small city life was merely the common everyday, and life in Run-tu's village was something fresh and mysterious. Xun's psychological home is rooted not in his own geographical, spatial home but in another different place. Second, Xun has never actually been to Run-tu's village. Xun has only heard various stories about the village from Run-tu. This mysterious picture is not a real event that Xun witnessed but an image created in his own imagination after hearing Run-tu's stories. If we view it while taking note of these two points, we must recognize that Xun's psychological home has no relation to his geographical and spatial home (instead it could be said to run counter to it), and furthermore that it has no relationship with the facts. Its true content is an original experience of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 477.

mystery, reconciliation and happiness realized within the imagination.

However, this novella does not stop at portraying this psychological home, but rather begins from this point. As his reunion with Run-tu after nearly 30 years is realized, Xun's psychological image of the home is destroyed in an instant. Here (3) from above rises into the foreground of the novella. When he comes face-to-face with Run-tu, with the general appearance of farming by the seaside, with "his dark red, round face of the past ... already changed to an ashen color, deep wrinkles carved into it, and his eyes, like his father's, completely swollen red at the edges," words such as "woodcock, flying fish, seashell and badger ... only spun around in [his] mind as though they were blocked by something, but did not come out of [his] mouth." Furthermore, at the moment when Run-tu cries, "Master!," Xun "felt as though [he] had gooseflesh" and "realized that a sad wall was already laid warmly between [them]." The last decisive blow comes in the boat as he is leaving his home. He hears the story from his mother that Run-tu had attempted to steal more than 10 plates, putting them away in a pile of ashes. Xun says nothing, but instead falls into deep thought.<sup>15</sup>

The old house grew farther away from me, and even its scenery gradually grew distant, but I felt no lingering attachment at all. I just felt as though I was isolated by myself within a high fence that prevented me from seeing around me, and so I felt very dejected. Even the image of that little hero in the watermelon field with the silver necklace, which had always seemed so vivid, suddenly grew cloudy, and I felt bitterly sad.

It is of course an important unit of meaning that his sense of oneness with Run-tu has now been replaced by isolation, but its real function in terms

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 485.

of the composition is in its destruction of the psychological image of the home. It is this destruction of the image that is the true loss of home.

In the two paragraphs following this passage, Xun considers the relationship between his nephew Hong-er and Run-tu's son Shui-sheng, and hopes that the two children, as well as Xun's juniors, can live a new life without any isolation between individuals. This passage forms the decisive basis in reading this novel as a work that grieves over the isolation between individuals and hopes for the overcoming of that isolation. However, this is only from viewing the surface. This passage is actually not so simple if one probes its layers. The relationship between the two boys is like the relationships between Xun and Run-tu in years past. When Hong-er says to Xun, "Uncle! When are we going back?," it is because Shui-sheng has suggested that Hong-er come visit his house. Why does Hong-er want to visit Shui-sheng's house? It is because, like Xun in years past, Hong-er has heard mysterious stories from Shui-sheng and is fascinated by the place. In a word, a psychological home like that of Xun in the past has been formed in Hong-er as well, and Xun hopes that this psychological home will not be destroyed. Xun makes a noteworthy pronouncement with regard to hope, as follows.<sup>16</sup>

Is this hope I speak of now not also an idol that I made myself?

And a few lines later he makes the following famous observation on hope.<sup>17</sup>

I thought about it. One cannot say that hope essentially exists or does not exist. It is like a road on the ground. In truth, there was never any road on the earth

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

originally; it became a road when many people walked on it.

Where can the basis for his switching from the skepticism of “Is it not an idol?” to the thought that “Hope can appear just like a road appears on the ground” be found? That basis can be found in the following description placed in between those statements.<sup>18</sup>

Amid this haziness, a green sand field by the seaside spread out before my eyes.  
In the indigo sky above it a golden round moon was hanging.

This image created in the process of imagination is a restructuring of the psychological image of his home destroyed through his reunion with Run-tu. As Lee Ukyeon keenly noted, the difference between them is in the presence and absence of the young Run-tu.<sup>19</sup> Xun’s original experience of mystery, reconciliation and happiness has not been completely destroyed by his alienation from Run-tu. It is simply that Run-tu has disappeared from the image; the original image has withstood the destructive attack of reality and survived by readjusting itself. This author agrees completely with Lee’s contention that this survival forms the basis for establishing the thought that “hope can appear like a road appears on the ground.” Through the connection with the preceding and following passages, the thought is aroused in this writer that the image with Run-tu in it may be related to the past and the image without Run-tu may be related to the future. If viewed in this way, the previous psychological home would have as its content the Garden of Eden and the later would have as its content Utopia.

It may be summarized as follows. The basic outline of “My Old Home”

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Yi Ugyeon, “Lu Xun eui soseol changjak gwa gieok eui seosa,” *Jungguk hyeondae munhak* 14 (1998). This essay provided the starting point for the discussion of “Gohyangnon” (Old home) in this paper.

is the story of how the narrator Xun returns home after more than 20 years and is disappointed to see the change in his childhood friend Run-tu. This work is generally read as grieving over the isolation between individuals, but this could be said to only take into account the anti-traditional, modernity-oriented context in this work. At the moment when the adult Run-tu calls Xun “Master,” isolation comes to the fore as something inscrutable. What has produced this isolation is the semi-feudal nature of social reality, and the ideology of this work is the overcoming of that semi-feudal nature and the formation of a modern nation. In this sense, “My Old Home” is trapped in modernism. Since the late 1930s, the main trend has been to read this work within the context of anti-capitalism. Here as well the important point is isolation. However, that isolation is merely understood as having originated from the contradictions of capitalism.

But if one rereads the whole of “My Old Home,” it is the modern experience of loss of home that Lu really seeks to show in this work. Loss of home is a historical experience occurring together with modernization. The most frequently occurring reaction to this experience is nostalgia for the pre-modern, and this likely will ultimately lead to reactionism or defeatism. However, Lu is opening a completely different road in this work. Here the home appears not as something geographical or spatial, but as something psychological. The narrator Xun’s home is found within an image created by his own imagination, an image consisting of the experience of mystery, reconciliation and happiness. This image is destroyed through his meeting with the adult Run-tu. What is more important here is that Xun proceeds with an examination following this loss. The scene from imagination described at the end of this work is the same as the one from before, with the only exception that the young Run-tu has been erased. In a word, the original experience of mystery, reconciliation and happiness has survived the destructive attack of reality and survived by readjusting

itself. This readjustment of the psychological home could be called another road that transcends the return to tradition or accommodation of modernity. As we come to today, when the fissure between the geographical and spatial home and the psychological home grows ever more universal, the inquiry performed by Lu in the early 1920s shines ever more brightly.

Does it not appear that strong implications for the issue that we are now inquiring into, East Asian identity as an issue of modern formation, are hidden within the directions and methods pursued as China's Lu Xun in the early 1920s and Korea's Kim Suyong in the 1960s simultaneously transcended tradition and modernity? That I end this paper with such a question is because I feel it is the honest approach at the present time.

# Daoism as the Subaltern Culture in East Asia: The Cases of China and Korea

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The roots of China are all in Daoism.  
—Lu Xun<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Foreword

The Falun Gong situation, which has recently become a prominent socio-political issue in China, is an example eloquently stating once again how closely Daoism is connected with the lives of the Chinese people. In the early twentieth century, scholars from the Japanese and Western empires paid early attention to this aspect of Daoism. Tachibana Shiraki (1880-1945), a pioneer of studies in Daoism, stayed in the Chinese countryside for more than 40 years investigating Daoism under the belief that “To understand the Chinese people, one must first understand Daoism.”<sup>2</sup> And Henri Maspero (1883-1945), who set the foundation for western studies of Daoism, also sought to understand the background of Chinese culture through an assumption of social/ethnic tradition of French Chinese studies and research in Daoism. The surprising fact that Korea was at least no further behind the rest of the world in initiating such a scholarly approach to Daoism is

<sup>1</sup> Lu Xun, *The Collected Works of Lu Xun* 11, p. 353: “中國根柢全在道教.”

<sup>2</sup> Tachibana Shiraki, “Foreword,” *Dokyo to shinwa densetsu* (Kaizosha, 1948).

shown through *The History of Korean Daoism* by Yi Neunghwa (1868-1945).<sup>3</sup> It is needless to say that Yi's intentions as he showed interest in various fields, not only Daoism but Buddhism, shamanism and popular customs, were to discover the dynamic essence of Korean culture within the general populace. In the case of China, in what may be called a Daoist diaspora, it seems that there was a considerable degree of recognition of its cultural value or disposition toward objective research in comparison with the Western world of academia at the same time. There were on-site studies and the unearthing of data from camps researching popular customs led by Zhong Jingwen and Rong Zhaozu, and Xu Dishan wrote the brief *History of Chinese Daoism* after conducting religious studies in England, but in general Daoism was not a subject that gained much attention in academic circles.

However, Lu Xun, then a distinguished figure in literature, keenly observed the absolute status occupied by Daoism in Chinese popular life and even went so far as to refer to it as "the roots of China." Lu once wrote;<sup>4</sup>

(The Chinese) people often loathe the Buddhist monk or nun, the Muslim or the Christian, but they do not hate the Daoist priest. The one who realizes this logic can grasp the greater part of Chinese culture.

There may be no greater words to express the internal union between the Chinese people in Daoism and the weight occupied by Daoism in Chinese culture.

<sup>3</sup> *The History of Korean Daoism* is estimated to have been completed in the late 1920s or early 1930s. It should be remembered that, as previous research making this possible, there was "Doctrine Demonstrating the Daoist Scriptures in the Immortal Texts of Daoism" (Ojuyeonmun jangeonsango) in *Random Expatiations* by the realist Yi Kyugyeong (1788-?).

<sup>4</sup> Lu Xun. *The Collected Works of Lu Xun* 3, p. 532.

To this point, we have observed how Daoism was particularly noted by scholars in that it is deeply enmeshed with the lives of the majority of Chinese or Korean people and in that it is an important cultural content establishing the base of Chinese or Korean society. However, when we state that we are, within this view, determining Daoism to be a “subaltern culture” and examining the contents and characteristics of “Daoism as a subaltern culture of East Asia,” so to speak, is there no further discrepancy between the terms “Daoism” and “subaltern culture” and their implications?

First, if one gives a dictionary definition of “subaltern culture,” it generally refers to the socioeconomic culture of the lower classes as a bottom-layer culture forming a foundation of the society. The interest in Daoism of the early scholars described above was generally shown toward this character of Daoism as a subaltern culture. For example, when Lu Xun said that to know Daoism was to know the majority of Chinese culture, it was because of the reality that Daoism was in fact the religion of over 90% of Chinese peasants at the time. However, the implications of Daoism are not so simple. Within Daoism, there is the “religious Daoism” that early Daoist scholars recognized as a subaltern culture, but there is also “philosophical Daoism,” also frequently referred to as *daojia*. Since “religious Daoism” itself can be divided in terms of character into “*Danding* Daoism,” as pursued by the intellectual upper class, and “*Fulu* Daoism,” as believed by the lower classes,<sup>5</sup> we are forced to examine the issue of what content of Daoism we must view as the subaltern culture when we speak of “Daoism as a subaltern culture.”

To proceed directly to the main point, the goal in this paper is to grasp

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<sup>5</sup> The prominent Chinese historian Qing Xitai expressed these two tendencies with the terms “official Daoism” and “popular Daoism.” Examples can be seen in his *Historical Overview of Chinese Daoist Thought I* (Sichuan People’s Publishing, 1980).

the concept of the subaltern culture in a broad sense and treat contents that include “Daoism in the philosophical sense” and “*Danding* Daoism,” i.e., the whole of Daoism, as subaltern culture. There are two reasons for this. First, after the historical establishment of Daoism as a religion, the aforementioned tendencies were not distinguished, but always existed organically within the entire system of Daoism. Divided awareness of them is merely an expedient measure of compartmentalized contemporary studies. Second, the contents of “Daoism in a philosophical sense” or “*Danding* Daoism,” when viewed from the perspective of the whole of Chinese culture, has never belonged to the mainstream/dominant culture. Since these as well were certainly cultures bearing a heterodox/peripheral quality from the perspective of the universal Confucian ideology, it seems that it would not be unreasonable for us to treat the concept of subaltern culture within the category of subaltern culture in a broad sense if we are not to limit it to social or economic aspects.

In this paper, the basis for the perspective described above and the historical meaning of Daoism as a subaltern culture will be examined first through both its political and social aspects and cultural perception in turn, and the discussion will conclude with an examination of the contemporary meaning of Daoist culture. For a discussion of Daoism as an East Asian subaltern culture, it is only right that the varieties of Daoism in each of the countries of Northeast and Southeast Asia, such as China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam, be discussed together, but it should be noted that, due to limitations on space and the writer’s ability, this paper will focus on the situations of China and Korea.

## 2. Political/Social Aspects: From Taiping Daoism to Falun Gong

Shandong and Bashu, considered the two major birthplaces of Daoism, are both located in the border regions, and the foundation for the formation of Daoism was in the folk villages. It is the general view in the academic world that Daoism originated from shamanism, and because the foundation for shamanistic activity was with the people, it could be viewed as natural that Daoism as well would assume a popular inclination. If one views the *Liexian Zhuan*, a record of the achievements of early practitioners of Daoism, it can be seen that in most cases their vocations based their lives among the lower class people, such as traveling medicine peddlers, carpenters, shepherds, lumberjacks, fortune-tellers, shoemakers and beggars. This subaltern popular orientation of Daoism is clearly expressed in the *Scripture on Great Peace*, the oldest primitive Daoist text, from the Han Dynasty. This text, which voices hope for the ideal world of “great peace,” evinces interest and concern for the socially and economically weak, such as peasants and women, and goes so far as to inspire a spirit of rebellion against the greed and exploitation of the ruling class and to emphasize the righteousness of this spirit.<sup>6</sup> Let us examine the following passage.<sup>7</sup>

Wealth develops individuals as the possession of heaven, earth and the neutral.  
A house is merely the place where these things happen to have been accumulated.  
As a comparison, a rat living in a warehouse always eats his fill alone, but the grain in the warehouse is not the essential possession of the rat. The treasures in a royal warehouse (likewise) are not essentially to be supplied to one man.

<sup>6</sup> Jung Jaeseo, “Taepyeonggyeong eui seongnip mit sasang e gwanhan siron,” *Ihwa yeodae nonchong* 59 (1991). Yun Chanwon, *Dogyo cheorak eui ihae* (Donbege, 1998), pp. 199-252.

<sup>7</sup> Wang Ming. *Annotated Book of Great Peace*, Vol. 67. “Secret of Six Vices and Ten Treatments,” p. 247.

When they are lacking, they must always be brought out of there.

This idea of equal economic distribution, which could be called revolutionary for the time, ultimately functioned as a background concept for later generations' religious and political movements oriented toward an ideal world. At the end of the Han Dynasty, as the state's order collapsed and the public welfare sank into misery as a result of the disorder and corruption of the administration of eunuchs and the multiple landholdings of powerful families, religious organizations regarding the *Scripture on Great Peace* as their text began to take shape in the farming villages, and this became the Taiping Sect. At a point where the "company," the central point of village community at the time, was breaking down, Taiping (Great Peace) Daoism assumed its overall role and rapidly extended its power.<sup>8</sup> In 184 A.D. in the late Han Dynasty, the founder of the Taiping Sect, Zhang Jiao, finally ordered a nationwide revolt, and the so-called Yellow Turban Rebellion, where the emblem of the overthrow of the house of Han was put forth, was put down temporarily after one year, but the Han Dynasty ultimately met its end from the aftereffects. At a time similar to or slightly earlier than that of the Taiping Sect, a Daoist organization called the Five Pecks of Rice was founded by Zhang Daoling in the region of Bashu. This religious group, which held its text to be the "Laozi Xiang-Er Commentary," mainly performed faith-healing rituals, and created a kind of society of agreement between church and state equipped with its own bureaucratic and administrative systems in the hinterlands of Bashu, maintaining a state of political independence for some time before surrendering to Cao Cao at the time of its third-generation leader, Zhang Lu. Both of these two major Daoist movements in the final period of late Han, the

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<sup>8</sup> Kubota Noritada (Choi Junsik trans.), *Dogyosa* (Bundo chulpansa, 1990), p. 125.

Taiping and the Five Pecks of Rice movements, not only vividly demonstrated the subaltern characteristics of Daoism, their orientation toward an ideal society and character of subverting the establishment had direct and indirect influence on the ideas and courses of the later generations' popular rebellions and secret society movements.<sup>9</sup> However, by the time of the Six Dynasties, Chinese Daoism was becoming progressively more official, and by the time of the Tang Dynasty it came to occupy the status of state religion. Thereafter the subaltern character of Daoism must be seen as having receded.

Now let us turn our attention to Korean Daoism. Due to limitations on the historical record of classical Daoism, Daoism in Korea, unlike in China, appeared with a progressively more popularized tendency with later generations. For example, at the time of King Bojang of Goguryeo, Daoism was encouraged nationally by the courtier Yeongae Somun as a means of suppressing Buddhism.<sup>10</sup> During the Goryeo Period, many royal Daoist temples were constructed, including the Bokwon Palace, and Daoism centered on the rule of the lesson flourished, and while Daoism was unable to avoid losing strength due to Confucianism in the Joseon Dynasty, the state-run shrine Sogyekseo existed through the first period, maintaining the lifeline of official Daoism. Joseon Daoism, after the discontinuation of even the Sogyekseo shrine in the later period, changed completely from the previous Daoism-as-training centered on the gentry to Daoism of a more popular tendency.

The popular Daoist movements of late Joseon can be examined in two aspects. First, there was imported popular Daoism. The great popularity through the Joseon period of books of moral exhortation and the *guandi*

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the rebellions of Sun En and Lu Xun in the late Eastern Jin period occurred under the direct influence of the Five Pecks of Rice movement.

<sup>10</sup> Cha Juhwan, *Hanguk eui Dogyo sasang* (Donghwa chulpangongsa, 1986), pp. 190-193.

faith imported from Ming China was an example of this. Second, there was the mystical popular Daoism centered on texts such as the *Jeonggammok*. It is this trend that we must pay attention to with regard to the subaltern meaning of Daoism. As the people's lives became more difficult and the conflicts within the ruling classes grew more intense in the late Joseon period, with the aftereffects of the Japanese invasion in 1592 and the Manchu invasion of 1636, the trend of mystical Daoism critically evaluating the destiny of the dynasty and prophesying a new world to come in the days ahead enjoyed popularity among the ruined anti-establishment gentry and the masses. Not only was this thinking disseminated further among the people as the limitations of the royal rule came to light, it functioned as well as a background belief in movements of popular rebellion such as that of Hong Gyeongnae. By the late Joseon period, this rebellious popular Daoist ideology was incorporated into popular religious beliefs with the goal of dissolving the existing order and creating a new unification, and expressed in so-called new religion phenomena. These included the Eastern Learning movement founded by Choe Jue in 1860 and Jeungsando, led in 1901 by Gang Ilsun. These movements had beliefs of salvation and were occult in their doctrines, and these characteristics were also shared by the popular Daoist movements of the past such as the Taiping Sect and the Five Pecks of Rice.<sup>11</sup>

Recently, the Falun Gong, a group practicing Daoism in China under the leadership of Li Hongzhi, has been at the center of a controversy over whether it possesses a political nature. The Falun Gong enjoyed rapid growth in an ideological vacuum following liberation, including the decline of the socialist belief system and the psychological devastation resulting from materialism. The conflict between the training culture of Falun

<sup>11</sup> Jung Jaeseo, "Hanguk mingan dogyo eui gyetong mit teukseong," *Hanguk dogyo munhwa eui wisang* (Asea munhwasa, 1993), pp. 195-212.

Gong and the body of state authority that is the Communist Party includes several issues, such as the relationship between the individual and social groups under the Communist government and the autonomy of religious organizations. ever the less, it is a trend that demands considerable attention in that it represents the largest scale of religious organization resisting public authority since the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace, and in that it is a popular organization of Daoism, which has historically carried the origins of an anti-government temperament.

### 3. Cultural Aspects: Sublimation of Adversity and Heterodoxy

Historically, Chinese literature has had the meaning of its existence determined by the Confucian system of ideas. In general, literature has been unable to escape in any significant way from an instrumental status subordinated to the goals of politics and education according to the opinions presented by Confucius in texts such as the *Analects* and the analysis of this by subsequent generations of Confucian scholars. For example, Confucian classical scholars connected literature directly with the reality of politics and understood it in a utilitarian sense in the *Book of Songs*, *Tradition of Mao*, and the Northern Song philosopher Zhou Dunyi advocated “literature as the vehicle of the *dao*” and affirmed the value of literature in an evangelical sense. With the dominance of philosophy, these perspectives were continuously observed as major viewpoints in the cases of both Korea and China.

Daoism was unable to play as influential a role as the Confucian cultural view through the generations, but it was Daoism that performed the functions of instilling life into the rigid consciousness of utilitarianism and

moral prescriptivism and of inspiring the autonomy of literature. It appears that Lao Zhuang early on fundamentally disavowed literature in that it assailed the limits of everyday language, but the spirit of *wu wei* (leaving nature alone) and the consciousness of “roaming freely” in fact greatly assisted literature by respectively helping it escape from the restraints of form and inspiring creative individuality. When the fantastic themes of supernatural ideas that were to become popular afterward came to be added and to break through Confucius’ taboos against the so-called “strange, powerful, chaotic and divine,” Chinese literature first entered a course of romanticism. It was this influence that Daoism, which had always existed outside of the mainstream in the history of ideas, greatly presented as a source for literature.

In terms of individual genres, the novel has formed a major relationship with Daoism since its very beginnings. The beginning point for novelistic genres in Chinese literature is commonly seen as the *zhiguai* (supernatural) novel from the period of the Six Dynasties. However, the main content of these *zhiguai* novels consisted of Daoist narratives, and most of the writers as well were supernaturalists or writers with supernaturalist tendencies. They sought to convey non-traditional knowledge of China’s outlying areas at the time or supernatural/occult theories regarded as heretical within Confucianism through the form of stories, and the content of these novels, which might also be called “narrative knowledge”<sup>12</sup> in the Lyotardian sense, was characterized by a critical sense toward the Confucian humanistic system of awareness. Writers such as Gan Bao, the author of *Sou Shen Ji*, which may be called the representative *zhiguai* novel, as well as the noted

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<sup>12</sup> Narrative knowledge, which exists outside of real authority, does not confer any special value to the issue of self-justification, nor does it depend on proof, but restores its own trust through the pragmatics of delivery. Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jean-Francois Lyotard (Yi Hyeonbok trans.), *Poseuteu modeon jeok jokeon* (Seogwangsa, 1992), pp. 66-68.

Daoist priest Ge Hong, who wrote *Traditions of Divine Transcendents*, possessed such a consciousness. However, the novel in China was unable to ascend to the ranks of legitimate literature until the late Qing Dynasty. This was connected to the novel's popular nature and its norm-shattering character, but it appears that it also had a specific relationship with the subaltern tendencies of Daoism, which operated during its early stages of appearance.

In the case of early Korean novels, the earliest Korean novel, *Tales of Geumo*, had a rich Daoist color, and the writer, Kim Siseup, was a founder of the Joseon School of Alchemy. It is also known that Heo Gyun, the author of the earliest Korean language novel, *The Story of Hong Gildong*, was deeply versed in Daoism. It is certainly an interesting fact corresponding to the discussion of the origins of the Chinese novel above that Kim and Heo were closely connected with the novelistic genre as defiant intellectuals of Daoist leanings.

Next, the area in the genre of poetry that was most heavily influenced by Daoism was *youxian* poetry. *Youxian* was generally written with the intent of transcending the constraints of reality by entrusting the deep emotion emerging from the poet's unfortunate situation to a fantastic supernatural world. The origins of *youxian* were already visible in the "Yuan You," from the *Songs of Ch'u*, and the typical form of *youxian* was established through works from Cao Zhi's "Shen Tian Xing" to the 14 *Youxian Poems* composed by the Eastern Jin Dynasty's Guo Pu. Of these poets, Cao as well was at one time infatuated with Daoism, but Guo was one of the leading lights of the world of Daoism at the time along with Ge Hong and Gan Bao. These individuals were in a highly unfortunate political situation, suffering incarceration and murder, and their psychology of wishing to transcend this situation is clearly expressed in their works. The style of *youxian* was, in this way, frequently used to appease the minds of adherents of Daoism and writers faced with unfortunate situations. After

Guo, the period when *youxian* flourished the most was during the Tang Dynasty. As Daoism was established as the state religion during the Tang Dynasty, great quantities of *youxian* poetry were produced, but at this time it was written mainly as a variation of love poetry rather than with the original intent seen above. It had become somewhat removed from the literary acceptance of Daoism as a subaltern culture that we wish to examine.

In the case of Korea, *youxian* became popular with the dissemination of Tang Dynasty writing style in the mid Joseon period, enjoying a temporary boom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, while Joseon *youxian* was influenced by Tang *youxian*, the realistic underpinnings and consciousness of expression that formed it were different. The composers of Joseon *youxian* were primarily outsiders belonging to the schools of alchemy or writers from the Seoin faction who had lost their status during the factional political strife of the time.<sup>13</sup> Further, the unprecedented strife of the Japanese invasions assumed a major place in one corner of their lives. Thus, the world of consciousness in Joseon *youxian* was a long march of the spirit that sublimated the sorrow of misfortune and the pain of bereavement through war into a fantasy of “roaming in transcendence,” not a carefree territory of simple play with the supernatural. The ranks of the notable composers of *youxian*, including Heo Nansoreon, Heo Gyun, Kweon Pil, Jeong Dugyeong and Kweon Keukjoong lead us to confirm this reasoning.

Finally, Daoism was closely related to one important form in the genre of drama as well. This form, for which the supernatural Daoist enlightenment play based on the story of the Daoist tradition by the Yuan Dynasty’s Quanzhen sect may be called the performed correlative of Daoist asceti-

<sup>13</sup> Jeong Min, “16-17 segi yuseonsi eui jayo gaegwan gwa churyeon dongin,” *Hanguk dogyo sasang eui ihae* (Asea munhwasa, 1990), pp. 121-128.

cism, had therapeutic aspects for delivering catharsis for the resentment of the Han people suffering under brutal Mongol rule through the process of ordinary individuals achieving enlightenment and virtue. The supernatural Daoist enlightenment play did indeed become a form of amusement with the supernatural, a fancied article for the Emperor's house and the aristocracy, but it can be said that even so its original creative intent originated from Daoist subaltern tendencies.

#### 4. The Present of Daoism: In Place of a Conclusion

If one investigates the origins of Daoism in terms of myth, it dates back to the myths of the Yin Dynasty and the Dongyi lineage. These myths were suppressed and concealed beginning in the Zhou Dynasty before its reappearance transformed into Daoism.<sup>14</sup> Viewed from this perspective, the peripheral, heterodox and subaltern tendencies of Daoism could be called something innate, inherent since its beginnings. As we have already seen, this tendency of Daoism was historically displayed unrepentantly in various aspects, including politics, society and culture. We can see that in most cases in the historical reality of East Asia, Daoism stood in an attendant, supplementary position with regard to the dominant ideas and performed the functions of criticism and sublimation. Of course, there were cases where Daoism conspired with royal authority to protect the ruling classes and produced a variety of political side-effects. However, in general it performed the role of injecting vitality and diversity into a rigidified mainstream logic from a non-mainstream angle. In a broad sense, the concept of "Daoism

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<sup>14</sup> Jung Jaeseo, *Bulsa eui sinhwa wa sasang* (Mineumsa, 1994), pp. 245-246. Jung Jaeseo, "Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa eui sinhwa, dogyojeok jejae e daehan saeroun insik," *Dongyang jeogin geoseui seulpeum* (Sallim, 1996), pp. 136-137.

as a subaltern culture” was established exactly with this intent.

Then what of Daoism connecting from the past into the modern era? Lu Xun earlier called Daoism the “roots of China,” but in these words there was actually contained at their root the implication that this was an object of criticism in the process of orienting toward modernism. Indeed, in the modern era, while Confucianism has been denounced as the birthplace of a pre-modern feudal consciousness, Daoism has likely been the object of toppling as a hothouse of non-science and superstition. In its religious and belief-based aspects, Daoism was, in the case of mainland China, suppressed following the establishment of the socialist government and forced into a situation of near extermination before enjoying a revival following recent trends of liberalization.

However, it is still believed as much as ever as a popular religion in regions where overseas Chinese reside, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. It goes without saying that there are societies in existence and Daoist priests active as well. In the case of Korea, the popular Daoism that flourished until the late Joseon period had a considerable portion of its contents integrated into new religions such as Eastern Learning and Jeungsando, and nowadays only traces linger within Buddhism and folk customs. This includes the presence of the Big Dipper shrines and mountain god shrines installed in Buddhist temples and the kitchen gods and local gods enshrined in rural villages.

While the Daoism of these days has been unable to escape from its stagnation with the modern era in terms of adherents, scholastic inquiries into its essence and cultural values have accumulated considerably and show signs of activity. There was already brief mention made in the introduction about objective research on Daoism in the Japanese and Western empires, and now is not the time to elaborate on them at length. However, what I would like to emphasize is that research on Daoism is breaking out

of its prevailing focus on religious studies, philosophy and culture, and proceeding in an educational direction that forms relationships with various avenues, including medicine, the history of science, psychology, sociology, archaeology, folk studies and the study of mythology, and that Chinese Daoism is transcending the concept of a single regional culture and is taking place within the broader unit of East Asian culture. In the academic world of mainland China following the end of the Cultural Revolution, interest in Daoism arose within a revival resulting from a so-called “culture fever” beginning in the 1980s, and research as well began to take on new life. Due to the influence of socialism, the tendencies of this research have ultimately stressed rediscovery of the meaning of private culture, its value for the history of science and its social and economic meanings.

Korea, despite having produced pioneering scholars of Daoism such as Lee Neung-hwa, was unable to avoid a long vacuum of research, and it was only in the late 1980s that institutions specializing in Daoism were formed and earnest exploration began. It is still at an embryonic stage, but during that time Korean Daoist studies have contributed by concentrating on research into Korean Daoism to unearth much new data and by inspiring new awareness of the hitherto ignored status of Daoism within Korean culture. However, it is true that in comparison with the level of overseas Daoist studies, it is still conspicuously deficient in the capacity of its research on general Daoist studies.

Entering the 1990s, Daoism is encountering a new situation in the awareness of its latent cultural value. With the importation of new trends such as late structuralism and postmodernism, which have already exerted overwhelming influence in the West, scholars have come to note the correspondence between the deconstructionist ideas of individuals such as Derrida and Foucault and Daoism’s system of anti-value thinking.<sup>15</sup> Many discussions in the avenue of comparative philosophy currently do not hesi-

tate to evaluate Daoism as a pioneering force in post-modern thinking. With Daoism's feminist tendencies being highlighted in feminism, its concepts of unity with nature in ecology, and its emphasis on physicality in the area of discourse of the body, and with possibilities for its modern application being predicted, the cultural contents possessed by Daoism at its height as a subaltern culture are showing signs of rising in all areas in the era of deconstruction.

We welcome this rehabilitation of Daoist values, but we cannot help anticipating the presence of a shadow hanging over this splendid reemergence. First, the correspondence between late structuralism et al. and Daoism may include an essential kinship and factors such as cultural exchange following the advent of the age of romanticism, but there are indeed ultimately suspicions of reflexive illumination originating from Western self-examination. This type of reflexive illumination often tends to create "rhetoric" for its object and to recreate it as a perfect image. Was Daoism really so perfect? It is likely not the case that the rehabilitation of past values is an acknowledgement of the perfection of the Daoism of the past.

That Daoism as a subaltern culture is being recognized anew is certainly a welcome phenomenon. However, when we remain in a passive position and do not act as producers of critical consciousness, Daoism can only possess glimmers of value as the cultural product of one era and cannot accomplish a true rehabilitation. True rehabilitation is not in raising new discussions of the cultural value of Daoism as though one day taking out a hidden antique and putting it on display, but in thoroughly recontextualizing Daoism through an individually extracted critical consciousness to filter out the dregs and redefine the essence. In this sense, we should try to recall the careful feelings toward new "hope" voiced by Lu Xun at the close of

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<sup>15</sup> Such attention was actually afforded earlier by Western scholars of East Asia from before the predominance of theories such as post-structuralism in East Asian studies.

his novella “My Old Home.” We must impartially examine where our desire for Daoism in this age is not perchance a product of “hope” coming from outside.



SECTION 5

*East Asian  
Politics/Economy*

동북아시아재단

동북아시아재단

NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION

# Political Culture and Political System in East Asia : Critical Considerations

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The mainstream of research in East Asian regional politics has thus far consisted of a cultural approach. Of course, the politics of individual East Asian countries have been studied in various ways, including not only cultural but organizational, behavioral and political economic approaches, but it could be said that the cultural approach has been dominant with regard to political characteristics of the whole of East Asia as a region. It seems that it would be fair to analyze this as being due to the ease of bundling the region together as one cultural territory for the purpose of joining together the diverse political characteristics of East Asia. In this regard, it could be said to share methods with the political economic approach that joins together Northeast Asia as one political economic region in order to trace the development process of the capitalist system.

However, studies of East Asian politics based on these approaches are wholly unsatisfactory in terms of quantity and results. One reason for this would be the fact that it is impossible to avoid clear limitations in explaining the nations of East Asia, which from the outset show diverse characteristics in terms of the characters of their systems and their political processes, by binding them together as one region. Two other important reasons are that cultural theorists display exaggerated or mistaken understandings

of East Asian culture, and furthermore that the cultural approach itself has fundamental limitations in revealing the character of political systems.

This paper aims to offer a critical view of the East Asian political theories presented recently in a wide gamut of debates on East Asian political culture. There are various potential bases for criticism, but this essay will be limited to only one point, namely the fact that although cultural theorists ignore this completely or take a light view of it, East Asians culture and values are demonstrating rapid changes.

## 1. East Asian Politics and Culture: Summary of Existing Discussions

Viewed broadly, cultural approaches to East Asian politics can be divided into two types. One, a more academic discussion, is the political culture argument raised by Western scholars, who extract characteristics of modern politics from Eastern traditional culture, and the other is “Asian-Style Democracy,” introduced with emphasis on the political elite and intellectuals of East Asia. These two approaches demonstrate differences in terms of their goals, value judgments and degrees of academic maturity, but share the fact that they basically search for the characteristics of East Asian politics within the legacy of traditional culture.

### 1) The East Asian Political Culture Theories of Western Scholars

Pioneering efforts in the West’s East Asian political culture argument appear in the works of Max Weber and Karl Wittfogel, although it appears that there is no need to go back as far as those writings here.<sup>1</sup> Among

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<sup>1</sup> Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Daoism* (New York: The Free Press, 1951); Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New

contemporary theorists, Lucian Pye is the most prominent. He modeled himself after those pioneers, characterizing Asian political tradition as the masses' patriarchalist submission to the leader and emphasizing the tradition of the weaker society's subordination to the powerful state. In addition, as characteristics of East Asian political culture he named emphasis on the leader's morality, dependence on the leader of the people, emphasis on stability and unification of systems, strong patriotism, the lack of institutionalization and widespread coercion, and intolerance of opposition forces. He stated that this tradition has exerted an overwhelming influence on East Asian politics from the past to the present, and thus he predicted that even if modernization were accomplished, democratization could not be attained, suggesting a very pessimistic conclusion regarding East Asia's political prospects.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, the importance of political culture has once again been gaining attention riding on a wave of democratization not only in East Asia but around the world. This appears to owe itself to a rediscovery of the very important role that a region's culture plays in the long-term establishment of democracy as opposed to the early stages of attaining democratization.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it appears that the rapid growth of the East Asian economy has increased Westerners' attention to the region's political economy and

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Haven: Yale University Press, 1957). These scholars have exerted an enormous influence on studies of Eastern society in the West, and have contributed equally to the West's prejudices and fixed ideas about the East. Recent East Asian cultural theories have basically been an extension of the perspectives that they put forth.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian Pye with Mary W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985). Norman Jacobs is similar on this point. Norman Jacobs, *The Korean Road to Modernization and Development* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Putnam, *Making Democracies Work: Civic Traditions in Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Larry Diamond (ed.), *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994).

inflated the confidence of the region's elites. Within this changing situation, Daniel A. Bell and a group of other scholars based in Australia and Singapore have put forth claims similar to those of Pye. In describing the politics of East Asia, they have stated that the state is not neutral, but rather intervenes and controls society and public domains; that the law serves as the state's means of social control; and that civil society is subordinate to the state. They have claimed that this tradition is a characteristic of the Asia-Pacific region continuing from the past to the present, and that therefore the political democratization accomplished recently in the region too is merely a measure adopted by the state to better manage the society and economy. As such, they have put forth the diagnosis that democracy in the Asia-Pacific region is ultimately as illiberal as in the past and will continue that way in the future.<sup>4</sup> Like Pye, they ultimately view the power of traditional culture as forming the fundamental conditions for modern political structure. Samuel P. Huntington, who researched several waves of democracy, also considered Confucianism as something essentially functioning counter to democracy, and thought that the development of Eastern democracy would be accomplished through the weakening of Confucian culture.<sup>5</sup>

To summarize the arguments of the Western scholars listed above, they contain slight differences according to the presenter, but claim that, in general, East Asian traditional culture, and specifically within that the authority, hierarchical order, patriarchalism and ideas of group dominance emphasized by Confucian culture, functions as an obstacle to the development of the region's democracy. Further, they say that even in places where democratic systems have been introduced, those systems are nothing more

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel A. Bell et al., *Towards Illiberal Democracy in Pacific Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 300-307.

than strongly illiberal democracies led by the state.

## 2) Asian-Style Democracy<sup>6</sup>

In response to claims by Western scholars that the forecast for East Asian democracy is dim and that the best that can be hoped for is illiberal democracy, the proponents of Asian-Style Democracy would respond, “How fortunate that is!” Because it was presented by the political leaders and official elites of Southeast Asia, centered mainly in Singapore, Asian-Style Democracy does not have a particularly high level of intellectual maturity. Some scholars to whom this does not apply have attempted to understand Eastern politics based on a discussion of “Asian values” or to find the future of Eastern politics within those values, but it is difficult to find substantial discussion worthy of mention here. Because theorists of Asian values have mainly focused on examining the characteristics of economic systems and the factors of economic growth, they tend to have few substantial research results with regard to political aspects. As will be noted later, this proves that it is fundamentally difficult to explain or rationalize Asian politics on the basis of theories of “Asian values.” In any event, it would not be an overstatement to say that Asian-Style Democracy has become a powerful weapon of the East in directly assailing Western criticism of the region’s “backwardness.”<sup>7</sup> The claims that it presents are as follows.

<sup>6</sup> Fareed Zakaria, “Culture Is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs* 73 (March/April 1994), pp. 109-126; Denny Roy, “Singapore, China, and the “Soft Authoritarian” Challenge,” *Asian Survey* 34 (March 1994), pp. 231-242.

<sup>7</sup> Here I mainly referred to Roy’s summary and an interview with Lee Kuan Yew: Denny Roy, “Singapore, China, and the “Soft Authoritarian” Challenge,” p. 3; Fareed Zakaria, “Culture Is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew.” Besides these, see this piece by Singapore’s former Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong: Goh Chok Tong, “Social Values, Singapore Style,” *Current History* 93 (December 1994). More detailed discussion and criticism of these can be found in Kim Yungmyung, Kim Yungmyung, Dong, *Dong Asia baljeon model eui jaegeomto: Hanguk gwa Ilbon* (Sohwa, 1996). Jeon Jeguk, “Asia jeok

First, Asian-Style Democracy directly assails the liberal values of individual rights and democracy on the reasoning that overindulgence in these things has corrupted Western society and its morals. In place of these, it puts forth “Confucian” values such as the importance of the family, ancestor worship, social harmony and a patriarchal relationship between the state and society. Thus, proponents of Asian-Style Democracy regard social order and economic prosperity as more important values than democracy or human rights, and for these things, they claim that respect for tradition and authority is considered essential.

Second, even when they judge values such as democracy, human rights and freedom, these claims suggest different standards from the West. The leaders of Singapore restrict the criterion of democracy to regular elections, and claim that Singapore is a democratic state because it implements these elections. They justify Singapore’s single-party rule, claiming that this system rests upon popular support and guarantees political stability. Lee Kuan Yew has even criticized the “one person, one vote” system, claiming that more educated and older individuals should be given more votes.

Third, proponents of Asian-Style Democracy dismiss Westerners’ criticism of East Asia, namely their criticism of the suppression of democracy and human rights, as the product of prejudice, and criticize it as self-centered and hypocritical. For this, Singapore has also caused many diplomatic problems with the United States.

Then what exactly is this Asian-Style Democracy based on such claims? It is not clear, nor has it been systematically disclosed, what kind of political system its proponents are conceiving. It simply seems to be oriented toward a political economic system that combines communitarian capitalism that prioritizes the state and group over the individual with mild

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gachi nonjaeng eui jae pyeongka,” *Dongasia bipyeong* 2 (Hallym Daehakkyo Asia munhwa yeonguso, 1999).

authoritarianism. These characteristics do in fact appear in most of the present systems of East Asia. One scholar summarized the characteristics of the existing “Asian-Style Democracy” well, describing it as a communitarianism of giving and receiving support, respect for authority, single-party rule and a strong state.<sup>8</sup> This description is essentially the same as that provided with regard to East Asian politics by Western scholars, as seen above.

Viewed in this way, there is little difference between Western cultural theorists and East Asia’s political elites in their analyses of East Asian political phenomena. Their shared description of East Asian politics can be boiled down to (1) a relationship of authoritarian leadership between a strong state and the society, (2) humanism and the emphasis of personal connections, where the individual takes precedence over the law or system, and (3) collectivism or communitarianism where the interests or order of the group take precedence over the individual. In addition, these characteristics, rooted in the traditional culture of East Asia, are understood as continuous political characteristics despite the attainment of economic growth and the development of an ostensibly democratic system. Thus, they either state that Western-style liberal democracy will not be established in the region in the future, or that there is no need for it, and that an indigenous political system (“Asian-Style Democracy”) suited to East Asian values should be established. Many problems could be pointed to with these cultural approaches, but the central problems are the following:

- (1) They exaggerate the illiberal, undemocratic character of traditional Eastern culture, and Confucianism in particular.
- (2) They ignore the fact that the culture of East Asians is rapidly changing.

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<sup>8</sup> Clark D. Nehr, “Asian Style Democracy,” *Asian Survey* Vol. 34 (November 1994), p. 11.

- (3) They overstate the influence culture has on the political system or organization.

As stated in the introduction, this essay will treat the second of these.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The Transformations of East Asian Culture

Cultural theorists speak as though Eastern culture were something fixed. Thus, they frequently quote the words of Confucius from 2,500 years ago and discuss East Asian politics while making reference to cultures and traditions from hundreds of years ago. It is equivalent to discussing Western politics using Jesus Christ and the Bible. According to this logic, Asian politics will ever continue to be patriarchal, authoritarian and communitarian in the future as it was in the past, or that in all things there will be an element of considering oneself to be Eastern. However, the problem is that culture changes just as everything else in human history does. While it is true that Confucianism and its patriarchalism and communitarianism are deeply rooted in East Asian society, there are also many other Eastern religions in existence, namely Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Shinto and shamanism. Also, these Eastern cultures are gradually becoming mixed with more Western, liberal, individualistic and democratic cultures. In this regard, the changes between generations are noteworthy. It is becoming progressively more difficult to distinguish between the actions and consciousness of the younger generations of the East and West. While it is true that they will never become exactly the same, the differences between the East Asians of the past and future are possibly larger than those be-

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<sup>9</sup> For other points of contention, see footnote 7.

tween the younger generations of East and West today. Western values such as democracy and human rights are gradually taking root deeply in this society not only among the younger generation but among the general population as well.

Let us examine the specific aspects of these changes through two publications that summarize research results on the regional value systems of residents of East Asia. One is a summary of a study on the values of residents of the Pacific Rim by the American sociologist Alex Inkeles, while the other represents the results of a study on the political and social values of Koreans collected by the writer of this essay. They will be briefly introduced as follows.

### 1) Inkeles' Study<sup>10</sup>

In order to verify evidence of continuity and change in the values of the Pacific Rim region, Inkeles divided his observations into four aspects: (1) strengthening of tradition, (2) continuation of tradition, (3) change in tradition, and (4) abandonment of tradition and replacement with new attitudes and values. Out of these, change in tradition has been omitted here as it does not have great significance to the goals of this writing.

#### (1) Strengthening of Tradition

A considerable number of Asians are reviving culture that had previously disappeared. For example, reverence for ancestors still assumes a widespread position within Asian cultures. In the case of Taiwan, the percentage of

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<sup>10</sup> Alex Inkeles, "Continuity and Change in Popular Values on the Pacific Rim," (Stanford: Stanford Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, 1997). Gilbert Rozman (ed.), *The East Asian Region: Confucian Heritage and Its Modern Adaptation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), also indicated through a non-statistical discussion that changes in East Asian political culture were increasing the possibilities for democracy.

respondents stating that they had participated in ancestral rites increased from 39% to 75% between 1963 and 1991.<sup>11</sup> Hayashi et al. conducted a study on the power of cultural tradition in Japan, beginning in 1953 and taking samples every 5 years, and one of the values researched was filial piety. The results showed that, contrary to general expectations, preferences toward filial piety had increased every year. Thus, in 1963, the first year of the study, 61% of respondents selected filial piety, but by 1983 this had soared to 73%. And in the 1993 study, too, filial piety appeared as the most important value. As seen here, evidence exists that certain tradition values and behaviors are clearly being reinforced as a reaction against modernization in the Pacific Rim region as in other regions of the globe. However, at the same time it must be noted that this phenomenon is not very strong within the region.

## (2) Continuation of Tradition

In 1990, residents of suburban Shanghai were asked in a survey to evaluate 18 basic values. The result for the value was taken to be the percentage of support for the value minus the percentage of opposition. The highest results observed in the research were obtained by the values of diligence and frugality. They had a value of +86, which indicates that most people did indeed prefer these values and that there were very few people denying their validity. In the case of filial piety, as mentioned above, the conferment of value upon filial piety appeared as a clearly continuous similarity between generations. Thus, approximately 95% of those surveyed from both generations emphasized this value. A result similar to this appeared in a study of Hong Kong residents. In this case, there was no study between generations or over time, but in view of the fact that 88% of those

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<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Marsh, *The Great Transformation: Social Change in Taipei, Taiwan since the 1960s* (Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), Table 7-2.

surveyed responded affirmatively to the item, “Undutiful children should be penalized by the government,” it appears that it would not be unreasonable to view this traditional value as continued.

### (3) Abandonment of Tradition

In spite of the aforementioned results, the most prominent characteristic shown in the value systems of Pacific Rim residents was the large-scale abandonment of tradition. This region is being swept by a powerful wave of industrialization, modernization and globalization. The employment system is changing and various kinds of mass media are spreading into every corner; transportation methods are expanding and people’s movement is becoming wider, deeper and faster; and knowledge is being redefined and reevaluated. In the process, many basic values are being challenged and reformulated, fundamental human relationships are being reconstructed, and many traditional ideas and behaviors are disappearing.

In terms of human relationships, there may be none more fundamental than the relationships of family, marriage and kinship, but at the same time there may be no area exceeding this one in terms of the degree to which tradition has changed within the region. For centuries, the family name occupied a nearly sacred and inviolable position within Japan. When a household was unable to produce a male heir, it was necessary to find an appropriate male and bring him into the family name through adoption. Immediately after World War II, Japan endured enormous social disorder for several years, but in a nationwide survey there was a surprising result showing that 73% asserted the necessity of adopting a child to continue the family line “even if there is no blood relationship.” However, as the survey was conducted continuously every five years, the number of people holding this idea was seen gradually dropping. Twenty years later, in 1973, the number of people holding the above idea had fallen by half to 36%,

and more recently, in 1993, it had dropped to 22%, not even one-third of the first survey outcome.<sup>12</sup> Studies conducted in Taiwan also showed similar results.<sup>13</sup>

Let us now observe how marriage partners are selected. A study of the Chengdu region in China showed how the methods residents used to select spouses had almost completely changed. If one looks at Martin Whyte's study on samples from the period of 1933 to 1993, the percentage of 68% of people who had arranged marriages before the Communist Revolution had fallen to 2% in the most recent sample. Similarly, love was chosen by 17% of people as a condition of marriage in the oldest sample, but in the samples from 1977 to 1987, that percentage had increased greatly to 67%.<sup>14</sup> In Taiwan as well, the percentage of cases where parents decided the marriage partner had dropped over time from 53% of respondents to 11%. The percentage of cases where people married without dating beforehand fell from 51% to a mere 4%, and instances of sexual relations before marriage rose from 13% in the first sample to 37% in the case of individuals who married after 1980.<sup>15</sup>

Major changes have also been observed in basic values and rules for living, such that the individual and self have gradually become more central both in social and personal domains than the clan, community or family. In place of prioritizing the common benefit or subordinating the individual and esteeming public goals and the common good, there can be found phenomena of asserting personal satisfaction and individual rights and of at-

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<sup>12</sup> Chikio Hayashi and Tatsuo Suzuki, *Beyond Japanese Social Values* (Tokyo: Institute of Statistical Mathematics, 1990), p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> Marsh, *The Great Transformation*, Table 6-5.

<sup>14</sup> Martin K. Whyte, "From Arranged Marriages to Love Marriages in Urban China," in Chin-Chin Yo (ed.), *Family Formation and Dissolution: Perspectives from East and West* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1995), Table 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 3.

taching gradually more interest to self-realization.

If one views Chu and Ju's study of Shanghai residents, the results of responses regarding life goals showed the choice for the pursuit of "true love" at 11% for persons aged 50 and older and 49% for persons aged 29 and younger, indicating that the younger the generation of respondents, the greater the percentage that favored modern thinking. This discrepancy cannot be explained only through aging, but must be analyzed as a "general" increase in preferences for personal satisfaction over community harmony. As evidence of this, one example would be that only 7% of persons aged 50 and older chose "living happily" as the central meaning of life, but 35% of persons aged 29 and younger selected this.<sup>16</sup>

But the greatest significance of this study can be found in other situations. Chu and Ju obtained help from experts and studied preferences from values that Chinese people "had prized for thousands of years" and "had almost universally accepted from the past." The result was that "diligence and thrift" obtained the highest ratings at +86%. The lowest rating was -64%, and this was given to the Three Bonds and Five Moral Disciplines in Human Relations, regarded by an overwhelming majority as the values that most needed to be abandoned. Other prominent values subject to abandonment were the *Doctrine of the Mean* (-60%), gender discrimination (-60%) and discretion for self-preservation (-56%).<sup>17</sup> Such rejection of values that had long been respected was received by the researchers as a "shocking phenomenon." This shock may have played a part in their decision to call their book *The Great Wall in Ruins*.

The results revealed in a study on Japanese people's "attitude toward

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<sup>16</sup> Goodwin C. Chu and Yanan Ju, *The Great Wall in Ruins: Communication and Cultural Change in China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), Ch. 8, esp. Table 8 and Table 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 222-244.

life” were also clear, namely that self-centered and hedonistic values were gaining force as time went by, while moral and selfless goals were gradually losing popularity in exchange. For example, support for the attitude that “one should live a life suited to one’s tastes and not think about riches or reputation” doubled from 21% in 1953 to the greatest degree of support, 41%, in 1993. In contrast, the item stating that “one should resist evil and live a pure and honest life” showed the greatest frequency at 29% during the same period of time, but in 1993 was chosen by a scant 6%, ending up as one of the least popular values.<sup>18</sup>

Based on the aforementioned research results, Inkeles claimed that it had been proven that the many nations of East Asia were undergoing vast and profound changes in various domains of life, that is, values, attitudes and behavior, in the latter half of the twentieth century. He stated that “tradition” was being abandoned and Western values of individualism and liberalism being introduced at a large scale, and that in the course of economic growth, moral values had decreased and pleasure-seeking values had increased. This is a phenomenon that we can feel clearly with each passing day. It is unfortunate that his study did not clearly include studies on political values, and while the case of South Korea is not referred to, it also shows similar results.

## 2) Changes in South Koreans’ Value Systems

### (1) Collectivism and Individualism

The people of South Korea still show a strong collectivist consciousness. In a 1990 study, 70% of overall respondents answered affirmatively and around 30% negatively to the question, “Should the benefit of the majority be regarded as more important than individual benefit?”<sup>19</sup> A questionnaire

<sup>18</sup> Hayashi and Suzuki, *Beyond Japanese Social Values*, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, June 17, 1999.

by the Sejong Institute given to 1,800 male and female adults nationwide showed a response of 51.7% agreement and 50.3% disagreement to the question of whether “the individual must endure sacrifice for the state.”<sup>20</sup> Viewed in this way, the South Koreans of the 1990s generally appear to follow the line of thinking that the benefit of the community or state must take precedence over personal benefit.

However, young people have recently shown a comparatively individualistic tendency. Thus, the results of the study “Consciousness of the New Generation of University Students,” performed by Hyundai Research on 955 students at one university, showed that around half of the respondents considered themselves to be the new generation, 48.5% of them agreed with the opinion that “I can live the way I like as long as I do not harm others,” and 81.2% responded affirmatively to the question of whether they thought that “recently university students have selfish tendencies.”<sup>21</sup>

In view of this, it can be seen that collectivist consciousness still occupies a profound place in the minds of South Koreans, but overall there is little difference with individualist tendencies, and the more recent and the younger the population observed, the greater the prominence of self-centered and individualistic orientation rather than collectivist or communitarian orientation.

## (2) Familism

The concept of filial piety between parents and children has been known to be especially prominent in South Korea among the three major countries of East Asia. The extended family system may be disappearing almost completely in South Korea, but the strong connection between parents and children is still regarded as a defining characteristic of South Korean

<sup>20</sup> Sejong yeonguso, 1995 *Gungmin euisik josa* (Sejong yeonguso), pp. 26-41.

<sup>21</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, February 2, 1994.

society. However, conspicuous changes are occurring in this area as well. In particular, research results on the attitudes of parents toward their children run counter to the conventional expectations. According to Eo Suyeong's 1990 study,<sup>22</sup> the opinion that "parents should have their own lives and there is no need for parents to go so far as to sacrifice their lives for their children" appeared far more frequently (at 43.8%) than the opinion that "parents must do their best for their children even if it means sacrificing their own lives." The author said that, for the cause, it seemed to reflect the changes occurring rapidly within the family system, namely "anxiety about the position of the elderly within the nuclear family system."<sup>23</sup>

However, in contrast with this, children's sense of obligation to their parents appears to remain high. According to the Uh study, 95% of South Koreans agreed that "children must always respect their parent regardless of the parent's ability or responsibility," while 74% of Americans agreed. In contrast, 6.5% of South Koreans and 26% of Americans agreed that "there is no obligation to respect a parent if the parent's behavior or attitude is not worthy of respect."<sup>24</sup> It can be seen that unlike the case of parents, children have a strong consciousness of traditional filial piety in South Korea. Similar results were seen in a comparative study of youth consciousness in South Korea, China and Japan mentioned above.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to note that, according to this study, the consciousness of filial piety is progressively higher in the order of China-South Korea-Japan, and that

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<sup>22</sup> Eo Suyeong, *Gachi byeonhwa wa samgwa jeongchi: Hanguk, Ilbon, Miguk, Meksiko 4 gaeguk bigyo yeongu* (Ehwa yeoja daehakkyo chulpanbu, 1997), p. 188.

<sup>23</sup> In the United States, which is referred to as a sample of individualism, the opposite result was found. Thus, the scores were respectively 16.2% and 73.5%. This result shatters the prevailing notions of Western individualism and Eastern familialism. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>25</sup> Hanguk cheongsongyeon gaebawon, *Han-Jung-Il cheongsongyeon euisik bigyo yeongu* (Hanguk cheongsongyeon gaebawon, 1997), pp. 38-41.

it thus seems to reflect the degree of socioeconomic development or Westernization. In any event, it has been confirmed that the young people of present-day South Korea have a high degree of consciousness of filial piety.

### (3) Influence of Personal Connections

With regard to this area, there is a dearth of systematic survey research, but generally the influence of personal connections and personality-centered thinking are understood not to have changed. Eo Suyeong views the focus on righteous figures and the personal connection system as constant negative aspects in South Korean political culture in a comparative study of 1984 and 1995. While the average index of emphasis on righteous figures among individuals in their 20s that appeared in 1995 was lower than the same index 10 years before, other generations showed no substantial changes in comparison with 10 years prior. The tendency toward this emphasis on righteous figures does not change even with an increase in level of education. Further, he concludes that this demonstrates a peculiar aspect of South Korean political culture, which in spite of socioeconomic development maintains a continuity of personality-centered thinking, which values individuals as more important than systems, and of the valuing of private relationships. However, he is unable to provide specific research results on the political culture centered on individuals rather than the law or institutional system.<sup>26</sup> Viewing in this way, we can see that South Koreans still have a strong consciousness of the importance of personal connections and a political society centering on relationships, but unfortunately there are no research results to show changes in trends from the past.

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<sup>26</sup> Eo Suyeong, "Hyeondae Hanguk eui jeongchi munhwa," *Kim Untae et al., Hanguk jeonchiron* (Bagyeongsa, 1999), p. 314.

#### (4) Male-Dominant Consciousness

In this area as well, it is difficult to find systematic research. As was the case with the influence of personal connections, male-centered thinking appears to remain strong. This becomes evident in Eo Suyeong's comparison of four countries, where 48.7% of South Korean respondents agreed that "work is fine, but what women really want is a family and children," exceeding 40.1%. Mexico (20.5%) and Japan (19.4%) showed similar rates of agreement, while America recorded the lowest at 12.2%.<sup>27</sup>

Hungkuk Life Insurance conducted a survey on values by gender based on the responses of 638 adult men and women in the Seoul region. While 55.4% of respondents said that they would choose to "be born as a man" if they were born again, only 21.3% said that they would "be born as a woman," while the response "I wouldn't care" accounted for 23%. For female respondents as well, a far higher percentage wanted to be reborn as a man (45%) rather than as a woman (29.6%).<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, in another study, 77.7% of total respondents answered "I agree" to the statement that "when ability and scholastic achievement are identical, women and men should be treated equally," and only 16.2% of respondents disagreed, showing the expansion of a consciousness of equal rights. However, an interesting generational difference can be seen here: the rate of support for this question was 72.5% among the older generation (40 years and up), 76.6% among the middle generation (30-39), and 83.3% for the younger generation (29 and under).<sup>29</sup> In yet another study, young respondents in their 20s and 30s showed an 87.4% rate of agreement with the opinion that "married or not, women should also have their own jobs," while 73.3% agreed that "the Equal Employment Opportunity Law

<sup>27</sup> Eo Suyeong, *Gachi byeonhwa wa samgwa jeongchi*, p. 161.

<sup>28</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, April 6, 1995.

<sup>29</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, June 17, 1990.

should be made compulsory” and 67.8% agree that “hiring quotas should be implemented.”<sup>30</sup>

##### (5) Authoritarianism and Democracy

It can be seen from a comparative analytical study of authoritarian and democratic consciousness by era that the democratic consciousness of South Koreans has been growing greatly. According to Li Namyong’s study comparing 1974 and 1985, it can be seen that in terms of attitudes toward political competition the percentage of people in support of the multi-party system increased from 73% in 1974 to 89% in 1984, and the percentage of people favorably viewing opposition between politicians with differing opinions increased from 57% in 1974 to 71% in 1984.<sup>31</sup> Li arrived at the conclusion that South Koreans in the mid 1980s had not achieved a mature democratic political culture, but that they were gradually accepting democratic attitudes.

Eo Suyeong cited the decrease in disposition toward silent obedience as the largest change in South Koreans’ political consciousness. Agreement with the statement, “It is appropriate to be obedient to superiors or people in higher positions,” dropped from 49.8% in 1984 to 31.6% in 1995, and agreement with the statement, “Society tends to work best when governed by a few excellent leaders rather than by the will of the masses,” dropped sharply in the same period from 40.7% to 23.3%.<sup>32</sup>

Eo concluded that tendencies toward silent obedience do exist among older age groups, groups with lower education levels and in agricultural regions, but that their distribution has grown very narrow, and the groups

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<sup>30</sup> *Hankyoreh Sinmun*, January 1, 1995.

<sup>31</sup> Li Namyong, “Saneophwa wa jeongchi munhwa: Minju euisik byeonhwa reul jungsim euro,” *Hanguk jeongchihak hoebo* 19 (1985).

<sup>32</sup> Eo Suyeong, *Hanguk hyeondae eui jeongchi munhwa*, p. 161.

showing strong tendencies toward silent obedience had fallen greatly compared to 10 years before, indicating that the authoritarian political culture had lost a great amount of its luster. Similarly, it can be seen that tolerance and trust have greatly increased during the same period, especially among younger groups.<sup>33</sup>

According to a study by Gil Seungheum, the South Korean people's consciousness of political participation and feeling of efficacy have steadily improved. Gil studied political consciousness in 1963, 1978 and 1985, showing the steady improvement of political consciousness without regard for the system. For example, affirmative responses to the question, "Do you talk about politics at normal times, not during the election season?" were greater in 1978 than in 1963 and greater in 1985 than in 1978. Also, to the question, "Is there anything you want from the National Assemblymen elected during this election?" the cynical response of "it's useless to ask" showed little change between 1978 and 1985, at 24.5% and 27.9% respectively, but the response of "nothing" fell sharply from 30.9% in 1978 to 16.9% in 1985, and the response of "yes" increased greatly from 35.4% in 1978 to 48.6% in 1985. Gil analyzed these results as indicating a large improvement in the level of awareness and trust of citizens toward the National Assembly.<sup>34</sup>

### 3) Developments of Value Changes

The phenomena occurring in both the Pacific Rim region and in South Korea are that traditional values such as filial piety and the influence of personal connections have continued without being greatly affected by the

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 299-304.

<sup>34</sup> Gil Seungheum, "Hangugin eui jeongchi euisik: 1978 neon gwa 1985 nyeon," *Jeonggyeong munhwa* 249 (1985), pp. 78-79.

passage of time, but that in most other respects the value systems of the regions” residents have been rapidly changing. The direction of these changes is clear: they are changes from authoritarianism to democracy, from communitarianism to liberalism, and from collectivism to individualism. This is a very different outcome from the continuity of traditional values hypothesized by Western theorists of political culture, and to proponents of Asian-Style Democracy a very disappointing trend that shatters their hopes for the future. Cultural theorists show a tendency to pay attention to the traditional values that are continuing and to exaggerate the continuity of traditions by using Western standards to compare even the aspects of values that have changed.

But the changes in culture are real. As one researcher discovered within the changes in values appearing in South Korean advertisements, the speed of these changes is growing geometrically faster. He reported that from the starting point of the 1980s, the values in South Korean advertisements began changing to Western-dominant ones, ultimately showing Western value systems almost completely by 1993, the last year of the study.<sup>35</sup> Of course, this study cannot confirm to what extent the changes in values represented in advertisement reflect changes in the actual values of South Koreans, but one can surmise that the direction and spread of change in the advertisements are not greatly different from those of change in actual values.

There is room for much controversy about how desirable these changes in East Asians’ values are, and it is also impossible to set an exact standard for “traditional-Eastern” values and “modern-Western” values. Thus, it is impossible to offer an exact answer as to how traditional and Western the culture of the residents of East Asia is at this time. Here there are arising differences in analysis and the seeds of controversy over East Asian culture

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<sup>35</sup> Han Sangpil, “Gwanggo e natanan Hangugin eui gachigwan byeonhwa,” Hallym gwahagwon ed., *21 segi reul yeoneun Hangugin eui gachigwan* (Sohwa, 1997).

and politics. However, one indisputable fact is that East Asian culture is gradually losing more of the traditional and transforming into something Western. It is impossible in this paper to have a genuine discussion of the important issue of what significance this holds for East Asian politics, so let us discuss it simply.

First, it is a positive phenomenon that the traditional values of filial piety and diligence are being carried on. The propagation of the concept of filial piety, an expression of family-centered bonds, is of assistance in the formation of a communitarian system. However, when this is limited to exclusive family bonds and not expanded into a sense of unity with the larger community, it can carry over into abuses such as favoritism and excessive influence of personal connections, which are being pointed to as fragile elements which could undermine the East Asian system. In the case of South Korea it appears that the influence of personal connections is being continued, and it is necessary to consider the negative influence this will have on the construction of an open democratic system.

Second, the values of collectivism and communitarianism remain relatively strong, but these are rapidly being replaced by the values of individualism and liberalism. The above values are traditional elements that have provided a basis for the continuation of the state's control over society and unequal relationships between ruler and ruled. This point has given rise to the pessimistic predictions of cultural theorists regarding Eastern democracy. However, the proliferation of individualistic and liberal values provides beneficial conditions for the transformation of the system into a direction where individual interests take precedence over the state's interests and where the power of society over the state increases. Thus, the claim of cultural theorists that East Asian democracy will remain "illiberal" in the future as well is exaggerated. Rather, it is impossible to exclude the possibility of the reverse, that the excessive individualism and self-centered

thinking appearing among the younger generations and the spread of life-style attitudes that indulge only in the individual's daily life rather than contribute to the benefit of society and the community—that is to say, excessive liberalism—will function negatively in the construction of a healthy democracy.

Third, the traditional authoritarian values manifested in unconditional obedience to authority and state-dominant thinking are ceding their place to a democratic consciousness that advocates an awareness of political participation and a philosophy of equality. This change is also noteworthy, and will undoubtedly function as a positive factor in the development of democracy in East Asia.

Fourth, the countries of East Asia are experiencing the confusion of a clash in values between different classes and generations proportional to the rapid change in East Asians' value systems. They are facing chaos in the culture itself and instability of the system due to conflicts between traditional and modern values and between Eastern and Western values. Thus, the political systems of these countries show no signs of settling into something stable. This phenomenon, which shows a degree of difference for each country, appears to be a process that becomes unavoidable the more systems open up and the more they follow a serious course of democracy.

### 3. Conclusion

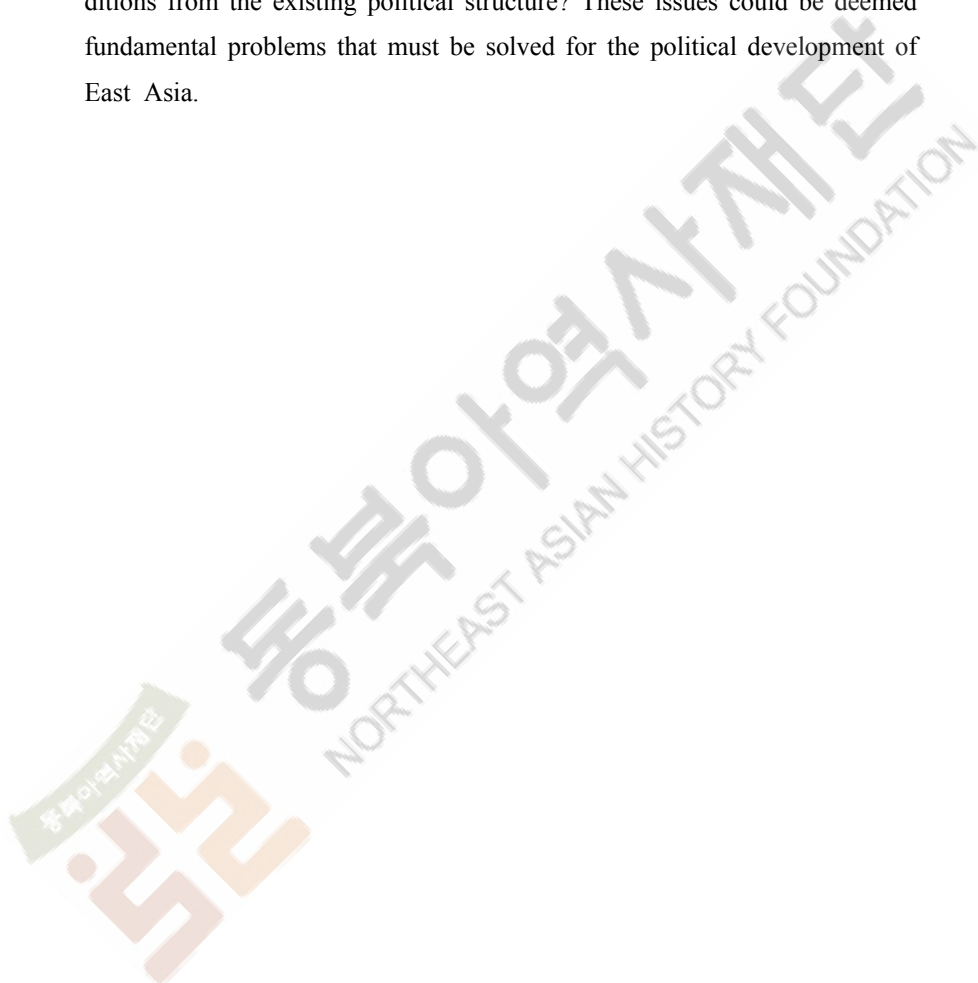
The cultural transformation and systemic changes occurring in East Asia are something real. The authoritarian political culture is weakening and the democratic political culture is gaining force, and the political system itself is evolving in a more democratic and pluralistic direction. As such, claims

that East Asians” cannot or need not possess democracy of a Western standard are unsustainable, at least from the perspective of a cultural theorist. However, this does not mean that the Eastern society, Eastern culture and Eastern political system of the future will be identical to the West of the present or future. Here we must consider what meaning the continuation of filial piety (or familism) and systems of personal connections, particular factors which have not changed greatly in Eastern political culture, will assume in the Eastern politics of the future. Will they continue to avoid change in the future, thus effectively sustaining the position of cultural theorists? However, it is unrealistic to think that only those things will avoid change when all other aspects of culture have been changing. Already considerable changes have occurred in collectivism and familism. The problem is what kind of harmony can be accomplished between the characteristics of a changing culture at a particular point in time and the political system at a particular point in time while developing the politics of East Asia.

It is certain that in the future, “tradition” and “culture” will play definite roles in Eastern politics. Likewise, the process of changes in the political “system” occurring thus far will also certainly form the foundation for the East Asian political structure of the future. The individualistic and atomized liberal democratic system of the West, and the United States in particular, is far from a Utopia. East Asian politics in the future will not become like the Western system, nor does it need to. East Asian culture as well is gradually becoming more like Western culture, but it too will never become exactly the same.

Thus we are faced with very difficult issues. How do we build a suitable (changing) democratic system in our (changing) culture? How do we construct a political system that harmonizes the benefit of the community and the individual while sidestepping the vices of excessive individualism

seen in the system of the West, and the United States in particular? We have been speaking of East Asia in this writing as though it were a single unit, but this is far from the truth. How can the nations of East Asia draw political systems suiting their own values, cultures and socioeconomic conditions from the existing political structure? These issues could be deemed fundamental problems that must be solved for the political development of East Asia.



# Economic Reforms in East Asia : A Comparative Study

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## 1. Structure of the Discussion

This paper is a pilot study on the comparison of the economic reforms in three Northeast Asian countries—China, Japan and South Korea. It examines competitions and cooperation among them, and tries to come out with policy implications for economic cooperation in this region of Northeast Asia.

As generally known, these three countries possess different economic conditions, but show common characteristics, especially in their recent efforts to pursue economic reforms. Of course, as their conditions are not the same, the substances of their economic reforms are bound to be different. Even so, all these three countries show similarities in establishing and developing a market economic order within a larger framework of the economic reforms, which they are now actually pursuing. Giving notice to this point, this study seeks to compare the contents of the reforms in China, Japan and South Korea, related to the development of a market economy order. By doing so, it would be possible to see the prospects of economic cooperation and market competition among them in the future. Based on this, I believe, it would be also possible to suggest plans for policy for

what we now call “Northeast Asian economic cooperation.”

As a preliminary commitment for the research, I will first examine the larger frameworks of economic reform through the twenty first century visions and development strategies presented by the three countries’ official government documents, and compare their economic reforms from the perspective of market structure reform commonly advocated by the three. Finally, I will try to draw out policy implications for economic cooperation in Northeast Asia.

## 2. The twenty first Century Visions and Economic Reform

In China, Prime Minister Li Peng, at the Eighth National People’s Congress, presented the course of the national government for the next 15 years in the “Report on the Outline of the Ninth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives to the Year 2010” (March 5, 1996). From this report, we can see China’s twenty first century vision and the tasks of economic reform to realize its goal.

The vision and tasks can be summarized as shifting the system from a traditionally planned economy to a ‘socialist market economy’, through structural reform to adjust the function of market regulation mechanism. The Chinese government is expected to enhance economic efficiency by performing the role of macro-level adjustment. For this purpose, the report focuses on reform directed towards market economy system, centering in particular on the reform of company systems, while making it clear that there will be a cessation of quantity-based growth by shifting from extensive to intensive growth. The report suggests various strategies including the 9/5 Plan (1996-2000).<sup>1</sup>

This report consistently insists it to be ‘a socialist market economy system.’ In fact it can be understood as stressing the “actively fostering a market system that is unified, open and characterized by a competitive order,” with ‘key points for establishment’ that include “reforming(privatizing) more than 1,000 large and medium-sized state-owned enterprises and developing them as corporate bodies and independent bodies of market management.” Through this, it appears, China is setting its sights on rising to be one of the world’s three economic superpowers along with the United States and Japan in the early twenty first century.

In the case of Japan, the government statements of the twenty first century vision have existed before, but recent announcement issued by the Economic Planning Agency acknowledges the change of situation in the 1990s and includes a package of reforms within an even larger framework, compared to the past’s somewhat technical conceptions (presented in the 1980s).<sup>2</sup> The ideal economic society for Japan to pursue in the twenty first century, as indicated in “The Ideal Type of Socio-economy and the Policy Guideline for Economic Rebirth” (July 1999), establishes its basic concept as ‘diversity and creative innovation’ and its goals as ‘a maximum of freedom and a minimum of dissatisfaction.’ For the tasks, it refers to a society of diverse wisdom, preparation for ageing and low-birth society, harmony

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<sup>1</sup> The items put forth in the “Report on the Outline of the Ninth Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long-Range Objectives to the Year 2010” include expansion of indirect social capital, concentrated development of high-tech, staple and tertiary industries, development of the Midwestern region to alleviate regional imbalance and gaps in income, establishment of a modern enterprise system through the reform of state-owned industries, acceleration of development in scientific technology and education, and more openness towards the outside world. At the same time, there are also clear references to solutions for such factors of social instability as inflation, unemployment and agricultural issues.

<sup>2</sup> Economic Planning Agency of Japan (eds.), *Basic Strategy in the twenty first Century*, Toyo Keizai Shinbun, 1987.

with the environment, the establishment of a proper position in the globalizing world, and the establishment of the role of the government and a new concept of 'public.'

As for the tasks of economic reform, the development of knowledge-based industries corresponding to a 'society of diverse wisdom' has been newly emphasized, based on the *Economic and Social Plans for Structural Reform* publicly pronounced in December 1995. Above all, they are advocating an omnibus overhauling of the market structure, taking bolder steps like deregulations and overall competitive policy, while setting their central task as the 'establishment of a transparent and fair market.' These are pursuing the improvement of market efficiency, including 'creatively innovative commercial management', by forming an internationally attractive business environment and emphasizing the importance of individual freedom, choice and challenge.

For this purpose, the Japanese government emphasizes that it will minimize intervention in commercial activity and industry by reducing the influence of the existing government leadership and by delegating considerable part of the government's functions to private individuals and organizations. Along with this, the government states that it will overhaul its role through maintenance of market regulations, the establishment of a crisis management system, expansion of social security networks, economical management of various expenses, and a system of efficiently responding to market fluctuations. Japan's twenty first century vision is to strengthen the role of Japan as a major player in the changing world economy. Its ambition as well as commitment includes the making of rules for the international financial market, through an 'economy of sustaining growth.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> On this basis, the Japanese economy of 2010 is forecasted 2% growth, 2% increase in the price of goods, and 3.5% to 5% unemployment rate. In connection with this, the indication of problems following reduction in the scale of the economy in "Policies for the

In South Korea, there was only one formal document for a long-term national development policy. It was drafted by Korea Development Institute(KDI), a state-run think-tank, and titled “Vision and Development Strategy for the twenty first Century Korean Economy” (October 1997). This report expressed ambitions of the country becoming a ‘first-rate global state,’ just prior to the financial crisis. Until the time of writing, no comprehensive official government document came out after this. Although not comprehensive or official, however, several documents were issued during that time,<sup>4</sup> including the *Vision and Development Strategy for twenty first Century Korean Industry* (January 1999) by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy. It would be reasonable to access Korea’s twenty first century vision and the direction of economic reform from these documents.

Basically, South Korea sets its priority to overcome the economic crisis and to make a new leap for economic development, bringing the country into the status of advanced nations after its ambition being thwarted at the threshold of march to an advanced country. This may not contain twenty first century vision and comprehensive strategy for the South Korean society. Nevertheless, at least from economic perspective, there is a pronounced intention to rise up as a stronghold of the Northeast Asian economy, by fixing a market economic order through structural reform and strengthening competitiveness with market leadership accompanied by a strategy of knowledge-guided and ‘global-friendly’ development.<sup>5</sup>

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Appropriate form of the Economy and Society and the Rebirth of the Economy” is noteworthy.

<sup>4</sup> *Open Tomorrow with the People*, better known as *DJnomics* (Government of the Republic of Korea, 1998) “Plan for Promoting Restructuring and Mid-Term Vision”(reported data from KDI economic policy coordination meeting, May 1998) and “Recent Economic Trends and the Future Course of Economic Policy” (Lecture by Finance Minister Kang Bonggyun at the twenty firstCentury Managers’ society). Presently the Ministry of Finance is known to be establishing a mid- to long-term vision and development strategy for the Korean economy, but we have been unable to look into their contents.

The basic direction of Korea's economic reform is a firm commitment to establish a market order, such as the removal of regulations and the consolidation of a framework for fair market competition. Supplementation and activation of market functions are also mentioned, but the fact that the basic direction is to establish a market-oriented economy is apparent from every angle. Then the goal is to rise to the ranks of the advanced nations 'as only dreamed of' by cementing a global competitive edge through the development of industries related to knowledge and information by actively responding to the wave of globalization, along with achieving quick development in growth potential. The hopes of being 'ranked such-and-such in the world'<sup>6</sup> were toned down to 'a central nation in Northeast Asia' after the 1997-1998 financial crisis, but it can be said that the contents have practically little difference from the pre-crisis period when 'open market economy' was emphasized for Korea to become an 'advanced country.'

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<sup>5</sup> This is in the same vein with the emphasis on the shift to a 'knowledge-based economy.' Finance Minister Kang Bonggyun as well almost exclusively mentioned the development of knowledge-based industry in reference to the twenty firstcentury strategy in his lecture (cited above, July 25, 1997). According to the plan of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy, during the period from 1999 to 2003, a total of 119.6 trillion won will be required for investment in the newly promising areas of knowledge-based industries: 14 manufacturing industries including mechatronics and aerospace (63.3 trillion won) and 17 service industries including images, recording and Internet (57.3 trillion won). See Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (1999).

<sup>6</sup> Just prior to the financial crisis, the GDP of Korea was forecast at the eighth ranked in the world in 2010 and the seventh in 2020. In addition, per capita income was forecast at \$22,000 and \$32,000, respectively, while the percentage of trade occupied by high-tech industries within the manufacturing sector was forecast at 31.6% and 44.5%, respectively. See the KDI (October 1997).

### 3. A Comparison of the Market Structure Reforms

As seen above, China, Japan and South Korea have all set the establishment of market order as the central task of economic reform at the beginning of the twenty first century. But the three countries are not at all in the same situations. China adheres to socialism, at least nominally, even as it shifts to market economy. While Japan and South Korea are already based on the market economy, they show considerable differences in terms of the degree of market competition and the level of economic development. Therefore, there should be differences in the ways and means corresponding to their current situations of market reform.

Now, I will compare the actual contents of the market structural reform commonly pursued by the three countries.

During the time, China has steadily pursued market-oriented reforms, shifting from a supply-shortage economy to a surplus market economy in response to the advent of a buyer's market in the mid 1980s. Currently, approximately 40% of textile goods are in over capacity, and the number of electronic products in over-supply is known to have increased from 66.5% in 1995 to 75% in 1996. In addition, the rate of capacity utilization for major industries is showing a sign of falling below 50% under the continuous high growth rates observed recently.<sup>7</sup> According to a 1980 survey by Kornai, this is an index showing that the market is being reformed and developed into a competitive structure.

This development should first be seen as the result of accelerated com-

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<sup>7</sup> To examine in more detail, PCs and film are less than 25%, air conditioners, copiers and electric ovens are approximately 30%, color TVs and automobiles are around 40%, and telephones and cameras are around 50%. (See China Academy of Social Science, Industrial Economy Research Center, *Report of Chinese Industrial Development*, Economic Management Publishing, Beijing, 1997).

petition through the entries into the market of not only the local but also foreign industries thanks to reforming and opening the market. According to a recent study conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Science, 36.9% of state-owned industries pointed these privately owned local industries as their main competitors, representing the highest percentage.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, if one sees the weight of foreign-owned industries in total output, it is relatively low for primary and tertiary industries (1.9% and 6.5% respectively), but very high for secondary industry (23%). Even in primary industry, they occupy high percentages of petroleum and gas excavation industries (8.4%). This is also the case of steam power supply in tertiary industry (14.5%). The highest proportion of occupation by foreign-owned company is found in the secondary industry: electric power and communications equipment industry (61.5%).<sup>9</sup> With the rapid advancement of market reform, China is also observing the effects of integration of the domestic economy by market forces. The regional protectionism dominated in the past has been largely broken down, though not completely, allowing for great progress in domestic economic integration. Among those industries examined by the Chinese Academy of Social Science, 76.4% of them responded that regional barriers did not exist, justifying the reform.

In short, with the government policies for reform and openness, China is not merely shifting to a market economy but also rapidly advancing into a competitive market structure. Considering that the key to market reform is not simply creating markets but developing into a competitive market structure, the Chinese market reform so far can be evaluated as a 'success.' Besides, since there are few factors to inhibit this trend in the future, it is not difficult to expect that China will rise as an economic superpower with

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted from Han Donghoon and Lee Geun, 'Is China Skipping Over the East Asian Development Model?', *Economic Development Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1998.

<sup>9</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China, *Chinese Statistical Yearbook*, 1997.

a large and powerful market economy in the twenty first century.

In contrast, the markets of Japan and South Korea remain oligopolies. Due to the lack of data for direct comparison, it is difficult to compare precisely. But, while the concentration ratio of the three largest industries (CR<sub>3</sub>) in Japan is 49.34% on average, more than 60% of Korea's products have a CR<sub>3</sub> greater than 60% (CR<sub>3</sub> > 0.6). In China the concentration ratio for the four largest industries (CR<sub>4</sub>) is only 12.3%. Just by comparing these figures, one can say that the Chinese market is more competitive than that of Japan or South Korea.

The reason that the Japanese and South Korean markets remain monopolistic or oligopolistic in spite of some efforts to solidify the market order lies in the two countries' industrial policies. As well known, in Japan and South Korea alike, the state-engineered industrial policies have long history. Not only do they have relatively small national territory and populations, the degree of regional decentralization is also minimal. The central government systems are well organized, such that national industrial policy can be implemented intensively. 'Grouped' organization of conglomerates and big companies and low presence of foreign-owned industries are considered to be the factors that enabled this kind of market structure. Since protecting domestic market was possible in the 1990s, especially prior to the launch of the WTO regime, this type of industrial policy demonstrated a certain degree of effectiveness. However, with the launch of the WTO system, the effectiveness that generally derived from beneficial international economic environments quickly evaporated. Eventually, Japan and South Korea had no choice but shifting their policy emphasis to the reduction of government intervention, expansion of market functions and expanding support for technological development. This is the background of the market reforms in Japan and South Korea.

However, in spite of similar implementation of national industrial poli-

cies, the contents and effects of the policies in the two countries are widely different. While Japan utilizes industrial policy as a company guideline for innovation, closely linking it with technological development, for example, by forming a beneficial company environment for technological innovation, South Korea has placed its policy emphasis mainly on the export drive. As a result, Japan has performed technological reform to bring off its industrial restructuring rather successfully, whereas it is not exactly the case of South Korea.

Despite the differences, the industrial policies of both Japan and South Korea have blocked the transition to a competitive market structure. They made barriers to market entry, and the reform of the market structure remains far from easy even nowadays. Such policy has not existed in China. Of course, following an early concept of industrial policy forged in time for the creation of the Office of Industrial Policy (1987) and the issuance of the “Key Points of Industrial Policy” by the State Council (1989), China established an automobile industry policy in the 1990s based on the “Outline of Industrial Policy in the 1990s” (1994), but this was somewhat limited to supervision and allopathic intervention. It was not so systematic intervention as observed in Japan and South Korea, could barely be called ‘industrial policy’ comparable to that of Japan or South Korea.<sup>10</sup> Taking that the Chinese ‘industrial policy’ was not effective, development of Chinese industrial structure and organization to date should be regarded as a result by the process of *marketization*.<sup>11</sup>

Japanese and South Korean industrial policies were oriented towards the protection of domestic market from the encroachment of foreign industries. This simultaneously functioned as a barrier to market entry, consequently

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<sup>10</sup> Related to this issue, see Kim Iksoo, *China's Industrial Development Strategy and Industrial Policy*, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, 1993.

<sup>11</sup> This view is expressed in the paper by Han Donghoon and Lee Geun cited above.

delaying the reform of monopolistic and oligopolistic market structure. This result contrasts with China, which, by actively soliciting foreign industry, allowed the market structure to gain a competitive edge from the early stages of reform shifting to a market economy system.

## 4. Prospects and Implications

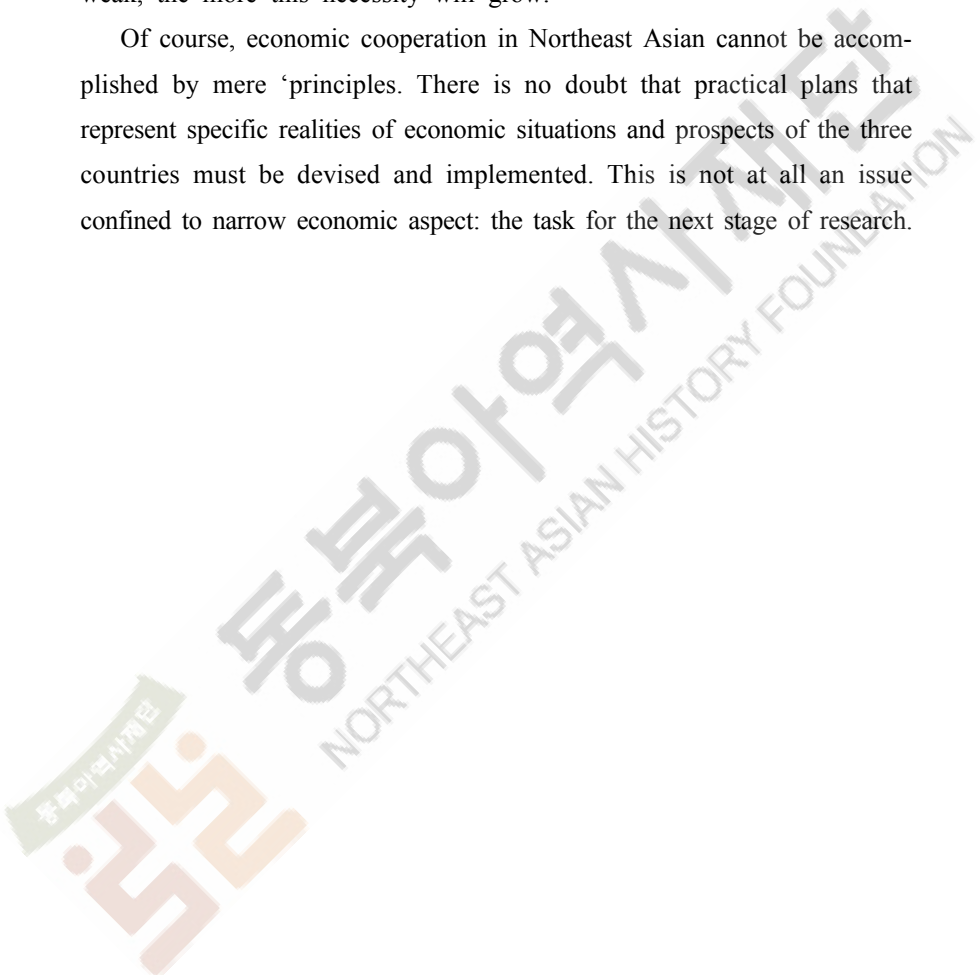
China, Japan and South Korea demonstrate differences in reforming their market structures. Differences are conspicuous between China and Japan/Korea. The Chinese market structure has been more competitive, than those of Japan and South Korea. This could also be viewed as a difference between transformation and reform.

But it is also true that under the WTO system, both Japan and South Korea are now developing more competitive market structures after their markets were opened. As long as the process of opening their markets continues as an inexorable trend, despite differences in speed, their market structures will undergo socio-economic pressures for reform directed to those that are more competitive. Whether it is through transformation or reform, what the three nations of China, Japan and South Korea are pursuing is ultimately strengthening international competitiveness. Each country's pursuit of this goal will lead them into evermore intensifying competitions among themselves.

There may be undeniable aspects of promoting economic cooperation in opening the markets and thus increasing market competition. But this is not all. It must be remembered that there are also aspects of actually inhibiting economic cooperation. Thus, economic cooperation in Northeast Asia cannot be attained merely by opening the three countries' domestic markets and reforming their market structures. What is desperately needed

is a concept of northeast Asian economic cooperation supplemented by the principle of mutual support that transcends the logic of market, and by the principle of unity that differentiates from the logic of competition. The more 'globalization' dominated by the logic of the strong devouring the weak, the more this necessity will grow.

Of course, economic cooperation in Northeast Asian cannot be accomplished by mere 'principles. There is no doubt that practical plans that represent specific realities of economic situations and prospects of the three countries must be devised and implemented. This is not at all an issue confined to narrow economic aspect: the task for the next stage of research.



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# Management Cultures in East Asia : Exploring the Possibilities and Limits<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

It is natural to say that East Asia has an East Asian management culture tailored to its unique values. Chinese managers regard *guanxi* (關係) as the most important thing; in Japan there is “Japanese-style management” and “Theory Z,” and in South Korea they speak of “*han* management,” “Theory W” and “SKMS.” However, these things do not necessarily mean that there is a certain something called “East Asian management” or that it is made up of consistent principles and practices.

The countries of China, Japan and South Korea that make up East Asia to some extent share elements such as Chinese writing, Confucianism, Buddhism and shamanism, but their historical experiences have been very different, and though there was active sea trade from ancient times through the Middle Ages, for the hundreds of years leading to the modern era, volume of mutual trade was also limited in the face of the state’s strict control

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<sup>1</sup> This paper formulates its discussion based upon several papers published during this time, including *The Company as a Community* (1994), “Quest for the East Asian?” *Literature and Society* No. 36, 1996, “Cultural Relativism” *Shininmun*, 1997, and “The Internationalization of Japan: Rhetoric and Cultural Theory” *Comparative Cultural Research Vol. 3*.

of exchanges. Thus, it is such that one could call it very difficult even to discuss “East Asian culture,” let alone “East Asian management culture.” As such, claims have been formed that an East Asian management culture such as the so-called “Japanese-style management” does not exist, and that it cannot even be discussed.

On the other hand, it can be viewed as possible to speak, at least in theory, of something like an “East Asian management culture complex,” mutually contradictory or competitive, but formed of principles and practices bearing a loose relationship. In addition, this East Asian management culture complex can also be cultivated in the future. The hope or claim that an East Asian management culture exists and is superior to or more desirable than the Western management culture has formed the center of recent discussions of Asian values and Confucian capitalism, the search for the causes of the Asian financial crisis and South Korea’s “IMF” crisis, and the debates stating that “Confucius must die/survive for the country to survive.”

However, there is a sense that participants in these discussions occasionally develop differing debates with differing standards. Most of all, these discussions are based in a classical definition of culture that was developed by prewar cultural anthropologists to research small, relatively isolated primitive societies, and do not take into account the fact that the cultural themes may be mutually contradictory or in a relationship of competition and conflict. Further, the concept of culture used in these discussions views culture as norms or values, or rules or models, that determine actions or customs, and ignores the fact that people do not simply follow cultural traditions or the principles and rules of social structure as they are, but analyze and choose among them in a way beneficial to the self and use them instrumentally. In particular, these discussions occasionally use terms such as “Confucianism” and “East Asian culture” as “master symbols” or slogans

rather than precise academic concepts. In consideration of this situation, I intend to discuss the following five topics in this paper.

First, because the discussion on East Asian management culture until recently has been largely rooted in very rigid and ahistorical cultural concepts, it has been giving rise to a great deal of problems and confusion, including unnecessary misunderstandings and conflict. It is necessary to view East Asian culture based on a “process-based” cultural concept that is more flexible and considers temporal dimensions.

Second, when one views East Asian culture within a process-based cultural concept, it can be seen that most of the so-called “Confucianism controversy” is meaningless. This is because this controversy not only does not make clear what kind of “Confucianism” is being discussed, it also does not capture the diverse analyses of the classical teachings based on era and social classification or the dimensions of their use as political instruments and symbols.

Third, the discussion of East Asian management culture to date has been unable to break free from a Western-centered framework. East Asian characteristics, for example, “human-centeredness,” have primarily existed as inverse images of Western management principles and practices. This limitation results from the terrain of the discussion being very narrow, and in particular from a fixation on competing with and overcoming the West. The most important thing is to break free of a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the West, to break free from self-deprecation as well as arrogant self-congratulation.

Fourth, the ultimate goal of the discussion on East Asian management culture needs to be in finding new avenues adaptable to a new environment in the twenty first century rather than in competing with or overcoming the West or in negation and criticism of Western management, and there must be a consciousness of contributing to the human race through this.

Unlike Europe, East Asian countries have been relatively isolated from one another and have been lacking in mutual understanding for the last several centuries. What implications are there in discussing East Asian culture in spite of this clear heterogeneity and isolation within East Asia? What kind of culture are we seeking to create and to what end? East Asia must not become a “second West” with regard to other parts of the world.

Fifth, the discussion of East Asian values in the 1960s and 1970s, when the overwhelming superiority of the West was generally acknowledged and modernization discourse was predominant, had its own meaning in that it expressed protest toward orientalism (Said, 1979) and restored a self-respect that had been entirely trampled. However, the continuation of that discussion since the 1980s, when East Asia had accomplished a certain degree of economic development, has been nothing more than satisfaction of the ego, and has been not only unnecessary but inappropriate in that it might easily bring the effects of retarding necessary improvements.

## 2. The Processual Approach to the Concept of Culture

Modern anthropology shows a strong tendency to regard culture as a contested terrain, where various mutually contradictory and competitive tendencies and themes wage a battle to occupy the dominant position, rather than viewing it as some unified, monolithic entity. In addition, while it acknowledges the historical continuity of culture, at the same time it emphasizes its dynamic nature. The supposition of culture as something integrated is useful as an economical means of briefly relating vast and diverse quantities of cultural data, and also promotes the tendency of grasping culture as an ideal type. In any culture there is a “certain something” giving it consistency, and the position that complicated and diverse real culture can be understood

through a few major themes stemming from attempts to understand culture from within, in the style of the neo-Kantian school, and in particular among the school of the style of Dilthey.

However, even Ruth Benedict (1934), one of the most prominent scholars in researching to understand culture in a unified manner, said, in some cultures, there appears extreme unity, while in some cultures, unity is lacking, noting that, not all cultures balance their countless elements of action and form in a rhythmic pattern. In particular, Benedict emphasized that each culture selects only a part of the countless possibilities for action, and that these chosen elements of action may or may not agree with the overall form. She also indicated that, because in the case of highly complex societies too many elements are complexly interconnected and are too familiar to our eyes, it is impossible to deal with cultural unity successfully. It was for this reason that Benedict did not deal directly with complex Western civilizations, but instead with the primitive civilizations considered comparatively simple. That despite this Benedict came to deal with Japanese culture (1946), which was far larger in scope and more complex and diverse than primitive societies, was because of the particular and inevitable situation of war. This kind of so-called “nationality character studies” resulted in the discovery of many things, but it also carried many problems.

Thus, modern anthropology no longer considers it to be the case that these cultures of vast scale can be unified spatially or temporally enough to be expressed in a few simple words, nor does it make active efforts to compare these large-scale cultures with each other. In particular, it would be impossible not to harbor doubts about the possibility of summarizing with a few catchwords the contemporary or simultaneous essence possessed among societies that were closed off without mutual trade for hundreds of years, as was the case with East Asia.

### 3. East Asian Management Culture and the Confucian Controversy Examined from the Processual Approach to the Concept of Culture

In spite of these points, there is frequently a tendency to make the following assumptions when discussing East Asian management culture. First, that East Asian enterprises, in South Korea, China and Japan, share a considerable number of management qualities, practices and principles. Second, that these management qualities, in spite of their outward differences, are at least to some extent unified and not in contradiction. Thus, these practices and principles must be systematically unified to some extent. Third, that because these qualities of East Asian management have greater suitability to reality than Western management qualities and are competitive, it is desirable to develop them. (Is the modern East Asian organizational structure indeed more efficient and superior competitively in comparison with Western organization? Is it indeed appropriate to say that the economic growth of East Asia is due to the competitive strength of the modern Japanese organizational structure? What role will these modern East Asian organizations play in the process of shifting toward a so-called “post-industrial society” or in the processes of globalization and the information revolution?)

But is there in fact an East Asian management culture that satisfies these conditions? In terms of formal logic, it would not be impossible to discuss “Daoist capitalism,” “Buddhist capitalism,” “Shinto capitalism” or “shamanist capitalism,” but I would like to focus here on the Confucian capitalism that is being actively discussed of late. The discussion of Confucian capitalism, which was introduced to explain the “Japanese success,” has also been used to explain the economic growth of different countries, including South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, and it is also being applied to the rapid economic development of China.

However, what we call Confucian capitalism can in fact mean very different things. This is because the teachings of Confucianism can be analyzed in various ways. In Japan, loyalty (忠) and filial piety (孝) are emphasized in the sense of absolute obedience to one's master and the head of one's household, and in China the more universal virtues of benevolence (仁) and righteousness (義) are emphasized. It is called Confucian to sacrifice the individual for the state or company, but Fei Xiaotong points out that traditional Chinese society as well, where "one can sacrifice the house for oneself, and one can sacrifice the hometown for the house, and one can sacrifice the nation for the hometown," is following the teachings of the Confucian text *The Great Learning*.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, there are analyses that the principles and teachings of Confucianism apply differently to specific points of contention in specific situations. If one analyzes Confucius' instruction of faithfully serving the king (事君以忠) with the sense that "the subject serves with a faithfulness that is not hindered by his conscience," it is sometimes also loyal to go against the will of the king. But if one analyzes this instruction as saying that "the subject must dedicate his entire life to the ruler," it is loyalty to unconditionally obey the king's orders. The king becomes the subject's guide as the father becomes the son's guide, but on the other hand, because the relationship of king and subject is formed as a bond and a king who has lost the Mandate of Heaven is nothing more than an ordinary man, abandoning or conquering the king as a subject is also in accordance with Confucius' teachings.

Thus, when we discuss whether Confucianism has aided capitalist development or whether it will help economic development in the future, we

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<sup>2</sup> Xiangtu Zhongguo 《鄉土中國》 (Rural China). Shanghai: Guancha, 1948. (Translated into Korean by Yi Gyeonggyu in 1995 under the title "Jungguk sahoe eui gibongujo (The Basic Structure of Chinese Society)").

must first make clear “what kind of Confucianism” we are talking about. Also, we should not focus our interest only on the universal meaning of Confucian principles, but we must also pay attention to what it means in specific situations for certain groups to emphasize Confucian principles or teachings—in other words, to what groups use Confucian principles in what ways.

In the course of enculturation, humans acquire the norms and values of the culture into which they were born, and thus could be called the products of culture. However, humans are far from being simple robots moving in accordance with cultural rules, and occasionally they use the norms and values of culture instrumentally, in a way beneficial to the self. In the same way, Asians engrave the teachings of Confucianism within their minds, but they also creatively interpret and give relatively greater emphasis to certain principles in specific situations that conflict sharply with their own interests, creating a beneficial position for themselves. Confucian teachings are also used instrumentally.

Thus, we must examine how Confucianism has been used instrumentally in the East Asian modernization process and how it will be used in the future. If we interpret Confucian teachings conventionally and say that it is Confucianism simply to place importance upon the family and pour efforts into children’s education or to respect elders and form loyal friendships, it could be said that the role of Confucianism is positive.

However, if Confucianism, on the pretext of giving precedence to elders (長幼有序) or the equivalence of the master, teacher and father (君師父一體), has been used to justify authoritarian behavioral codes that deprive subordinate individuals of opportunities to display their abilities by demanding concession, silence and obedience from those individuals in companies, bureaucratic systems, and even universities which reproduces a Dracula-like structure of exploitation where the person whose blood has been sucked

by a vampire transforms into a vampire himself through the exploitation of the efforts of juniors, students or subordinates, then in contrast with the original teachings it has been used negatively. In addition, the act of suppressing the formation of labor unions or the fair demands of laborers with the claim that the company is a family or community and the act of ostracizing intelligent, talented and reasonable colleagues, juniors and subordinates from an organization on the pretext that they obstruct harmonious solidarity are also examples of Confucian values being used negatively.

Under this specific situation, individuals endowed with free and creative critical consciousness or inquiring minds are often criticized as impertinent, unsociable or uneducated, and if they seek to go against the will of the politician or the faction leaders and make their own voices heard, they are treated as ingrates or complete traitors. Cowardice in not opposing the irrationality or injustice of people higher up, opportunistic behavior and flattery are often called loyalty, and nepotism and academic cliquism are justified as elements that reduce transaction expenses.

Early on a considerable number of experts on Japan, perhaps because of an excessive consciousness of Max Weber's explanation of Western capitalism, conducted research on Japan while obsessed with the idea that there must be something "functionally equivalent" to Western Protestantism in Japan, and found the answer in Japanese Neo-Confucianism. Once Japan succeeded in economic growth, Japanese management practices that had been regarded as pre-modern became "Japanese-style management," and Japanese capitalism came to be called Confucian capitalism.

However, in the early 1980s, when the whole world was admiring the dazzling economic development of Japan and looking up to Japan as a model, the economist Morishima Michio wrote the book *Why Has Japan "Succeed"?*, stating that Japanese Confucian capitalism had contributed greatly to an economic development that was supported by a hierarchical

social structure based on length of service and by lifetime employment, but expressing a certain skepticism toward Japan's success by placing quotation marks around the word "succeed." He was stating that, as a price for development, Japanese Confucian capitalism gave rise to exploitation, a dual structure and fascism, and that it could not develop true democracy. The effects of this mechanism appear in psychological, industrial/financial and educational desolation, and the gist of his recent work *Why Is Japan Collapsing?* is that Japan will ultimately collapse.

An emphasis on Confucian capitalism or the role of Confucianism can be an effective force to drive a government that follows along with the logic of globalization and neo-liberalism without modification and that cries out simply for competition and efficiency, and it can also contribute to promoting interest in the weaker members of society and the environment. However, one must be cautious of the fact that, as Chalmers Johnson (1995) noted with regard to Japan, in distinctive cultures there are nationalist, ideological and journalistic motivations included within the search for factors of success. To wit, these efforts are merely intended first to be free of government intervention by explaining competitive edge through primordial characteristics, second to make it so that Asia's workers do not compare themselves with workers in Western capitalist countries, and third, for nationalistic reasons of discovering new slogans, and even to explain very complex socioeconomic development in a conventional way that is easy for newspaper readers to understand.

#### 4. The Western–Centered Character of the Discussion on East Asian Management Culture

However, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that a considerable

number of the things known as characteristics of so-called East Asian management culture are determined as being the opposites of Western characteristics. In addition, there are claims that some qualities are not essentially Asian, and also claims that, in the case of Japan, they are fundamentally different from those of other East Asian countries such as China or South Korea, or that they are characteristics arising from the industrialization process irrespective of categories of East and West.

The categorization of East and West is something we use every day, and it appears to have a long history as well. However, whether we can indeed conceive of East Asia as one region or culture is an entirely different question. Viewed historically, it was after coming into contact with the West that Asia came to recognize itself as a unit different from other regions, and pre-modern East Asia was an entity with its mutual trade of human resources and commodities severed (Go Byeongik, 1995). Thus, the concept of East Asia did not arise indigenously, but was something extrinsic that appeared as a product of modernity from contact with the West.

Furthermore, if one examines the lineage of cultural comparison between East and West, it can be seen how Western-centered the concept of East Asia is. Hegel, Marx and Weber all contrasted East and West, and while at first glance their interest seems to have been in factors related to world history, it can also be seen that for them, the East was actually merely a source for materials to make the rationality and modernity of the West more apparent. To them, the rational, modern and capitalistically developed West was comparatively clearly defined, but the East, as a region where capitalism had not arisen spontaneously, where success in modernization was not realized and where rationality did not make substantial gains across all walks of society, was ultimately defined as “not the West.”

As a result, if one compares the dualism of “West vs. Japan” in Japanese cultural theory and the dualism of “West vs. India” of Gandhi and others,

the idealized character of Indian society appears oddly to be fundamentally equivalent to the idealized character of Japanese society (Han Kyungkoo, 1992). The reason for this is that these two social images were both created as “inverse images” of an idealized Western society. Thus, both India and Japan are defined as cultural units with characteristics that assume and contrast with the concept of the West as a single cultural unit. As such, it is natural that natures of India and Japan would appear in relatively similar forms. Meanwhile, the cultural unit of the “West,” in the case of such macro-level comparisons, is something at a rather abstract level made up of a small number of precisely selected qualities, and appears to be well integrated. Thus, the Japanese of the Meiji Period created the “West” for the purposes of self-definition, and the cultural qualities of Japanese society were created as an inverse image of this idealized Western society. Of course, the West “used” for this goal of self-definition, as noted by Gluck (1985), was decidedly not the West as it actually was. In spite of the diversity and complex nature, contradictions and conflicts, competitions and transformations existing within the real West, it was understood just like a well-integrated unit centered on a small number of leitmotifs or essential qualities. Pace Said (1979), Orientalism is not the exclusive property of Westerners, and the Japanese as well engaged in “Occidentalizing the Occident.”

However, there are also comments to the effect that this East Asian or Japanese capitalism or Japanese-style management<sup>3</sup> is not based in East

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<sup>3</sup> For discussions related to Japanese-style management and ethnographic studies of Japanese industries, see Abegglen (1958), Aoki (1988), Ayusawa (1976), Ballon (1969), Chalmers (1989), Clark (1979), Cole (1971; 1979), Cook (1966), Crawcour (1978), Cusumano (1985), Fruin (1978; 1983), Garon (1987), Hanami (1979), Kawanishi (1986), Kondo (1990), Gordon (1985), Levine (1958), Mannari (1980), Marsh (1971), March and Mannari (1976), Marshall (1967), Marsland (1989), Moore (1983), Okochi et al. (1973), Rohlen (1970; 1974; 1979), Noguchi (1990), Shirai (1983), Tabb (1995), Vogel (1979), Yoshino (1968), Yoshino

Asian (Japanese) tradition but is in fact Western. For example, the *kyōdōtai* (共同體: “community”) is nowadays regarded as a cultural characteristic of Japanese society, and when referring to the *kyōdōtai*, the model is the traditional Japanese agricultural village, but it is necessary to note that the term *kyōdōtai* is a newly invented word that did not exist in Japanese (or in any region using Chinese characters) until the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The term *kyōdōtai* itself was created to translate the Western concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gemeinde* (Han Kyungkoo, 1994).

Emphasis on community has appeared not only in companies but in cities as well. In the twentieth century, the *chōnaikai* (町内會: “town meeting”) came to be formed as a neighborhood organization in Japanese cities in the course of the rapid industrialization and urbanization, and the formation of *chōnaikai* was expanded nationwide according to the instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs, especially in the aftermath of the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923. Kamishima described these *chōnaikai* as *nisemura* (“fictitious villages”) fabricating the relations of the farming village within the city.

In addition, according to Garon (1987), production sites as well imported and Japanified the “Betriebsgemeinschaft,” or works community, of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, denying the class-confrontational character of the relationships between labor and management and emphasizing the communitarian quality of Japanese cultural tradition. In accordance with this, there were even claims that were as though Japanese villages had possessed a communitarian character since the distant past. Furthermore, amid continued economic prosperity during the postwar restoration, a situation arose where the management, who had lost their prewar means of

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and Lifson (1986), and Westney (1987).

<sup>4</sup> The company was also frequently likened to the family, but the term *kazoku* (家族: “family”) was also created during the Meiji Period (Nakane et al., 1989).

controlling laborers, and the labor unions for each industry had been reduced to ruins, and the leaders at the helm of these industry labor unions ultimately came to agree with the management's claims that the company was a "community of destiny" (Han Kyungkoo, 1994).

Meanwhile, as another powerful perspective refuting the East Asian character of this "East Asian capitalism," there is the late development thesis developed by Gerschenkron et al. while studying the Russian industrialization process. For example, Dore (1973), compared companies in the United Kingdom and Japan, which bear very similar scales and characters, and noted that the differences in the two countries' organization, rather than being due to cultural factors, can be explained by the fact that industrialization and economic development occurred relatively late in Japan. Thus, a considerable number of the principal qualities regarded as peculiar to Japan or East Asian culture were things that appear naturally regardless of cultural tradition in a place, whether it be Germany, Russia, or Japan, where industrialization began late and the state to play an important role.

## 5. The Quest for East Asia and the Pursuit of the "Second West"

To some extent, discussions of East Asia management culture or capitalist development are defensive and have a quality of self-vindication. By the nineteenth century, East Asia had developed a high-level civilization and considered its culture to have its own universal validity. The inroad of the West, with military technology and production power far exceeding that of East Asians, came as a great shock, and East Asians' emotions toward the West were very mixed. East Asians facing the crisis of a possible descent into colonial or semi-colonial status could not help having conflicting feel-

ings: confusion and wonder, insult and hate, fear and anxiety. Discussions of East Asia could be said to have come as part of a protest against Western Orientalism. In addition, these discussions have come to take on another meaning after the debate over the so-called “clash of civilizations” and the Asian financial crisis. That Asians need to unite through resistance to the West, and in particular to the scheming and maneuvering of the West.

These discussions began from a defensive perspective, but there are concerns that they might easily transform into a justification for activities that are imperialistic toward other regions and oriented toward the pursuit of hegemony. In other words, they might become little more than an East Asian version of the ethnocentric view that had imposed Western values and standards. Some claim that the East Asian discussion is purely defensive, but discussions on East Asian civilization have a counter-Orientalist character in that they are generalizing, simplifying and selective. The comparisons of Asian and Western civilizations that appeared in *Kokutai no hongī* (Hall, 1949) and *Shūshin* (Hall, 1949) were simultaneously aggressive and defensive.

Thus, it must be acknowledged that discussions of East Asian culture have very practical goals even as they pursue academic interests—that is, that they have an ideological character. It can be said that it is desirable for discussions on the superiority of East Asian culture to contribute confidence and dignity with regard to one’s own society, but there is a great danger of oversimplifying and distorting other cultures and peoples in the process. It is important that we do not commit the same arrogant and prejudiced self-deception and insults toward others as the West committed in the past.

It cannot be denied that Japan and China have political intentions of pursuing East Asian supremacy, and it is for this reason that anxiety and

concern are being expressed, as with the “resolute opposition” to the possible emergence of a new East Asia concept developing into a newly-smouldering Sinocentrism or a new version of Japan’s Greater East Asia doctrine, one that sets up Asia as a cure-all that will transcend capitalist civilization, and then in fact dreams of a discreet revival of hegemony” (Choi Wonsik, 1995).

Of course, these political intentions could be termed something like “Pan-Asian nationalism,” originating from purer or nobler motivations and concerns. One could pursue another regional unity as a very realistic countermeasure in response to regional unification transcending ethnically-based states economically or politically, as with the integration of Europe or North America, and this could take East Asia as a unit. In this case, it appears that it could be a beneficial countermeasure to have an East Asia made up of Japan, which has already passed through a period of high growth and entered into high-level industrial society; South Korea and the little dragons, which are succeeding at high-level growth; and China, which has a vast market and resources and which has commenced with economic growth.

In addition, East Asia could be pursued from the hope, based in somewhat historicphilosophical discussions of the rise and fall of civilizations, that the West, which has led industrial civilization, will collapse, and that East Asia will lead a post-industrial or information society (this is largely inspired by Japan’s economic success), and as the first stage of that one could examine the cultural commonalities of East Asia.

Asia as a whole is not only vast and heterogeneous, it also includes poor regions such as India and regions that could become the object of “economic inroads” such as Southeast Asia, and thus one might have the idea that an East Asia based on Confucianism and Chinese script is an “appropriate” unit. This way of thinking is not difficult to understand if one examines

the development process of Western nationalism that resulted in the appearance of modern nation-states. The nations of enormous scale that transcended regional communities in the Middle Ages were “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983), and the number of independent political units has rapidly decreased as a result of integration into nation-states. If one considers this historical process and foresees as inevitable the possibility of regional unification as symbolized by the European Community (and at the same time the world’s regional partitioning, conflict and competition), it might be natural for East Asia to be seen as a beneficial unit.

At the same time, though, it is impossible to shake off a certain anxiety and bitterness. This kind of attempt at what might be called a “Quest for East Asia” also occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Discussion of a Joseon Strategy that suggested preparing for the West through solidarity among the nations of East Asia was thwarted by Japan’s pursuit of regional supremacy based on the “leaving Asia” thesis. The idea of the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere outwardly expressed “defensive goals” of opposing Asia’s colonization by the West and the formation of regional blocs throughout the world, but it also put forth a logic stating, “For all of Asia to live, Japan must first live, and for this to happen, the peoples of Asia must endure some degree of disadvantages and sacrifices.”

As the country where Confucianism and Chinese script originated, China can claim its qualifications as the “original” East Asian power, and Japan, according to need, may avow or deny its being East Asia. What can South Korea, geographically located between these two powers, pursue by discussing East Asia? Must South Korea also ignore the cause of humankind or world unity that includes all of the peoples and countries of the Third World, struggling within poverty, exploitation and political instability as South Korea did not long ago, and accept global partitioning, conflict and

competition, that is, the “clash of civilizations,” as a self-evident future, joining forces with the “dangerous partners” of China and Japan with the intent of occupying a more favorable position in preparation for this?

## 6. The Issue of Time Relevance in the East Asian Discussion

In addition, there are doubts as to whether the discussion of East Asia in the South Korea of the late 1990s and 2000s indeed has relevance to the times. Emphasis on East Asian values had already begun as a reaction against the rapid Westernization of early Meiji Japan, developing in the 1920s and 1930s, and ultimately contributing as well to the justification of the conception of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.<sup>5</sup> It also arose as a reaction against modernization discourse in the 1960s and 1970s, and was part of the discussion concerning the fall of the West and Japan’s century at one point in the 1980s, but frankly revealed ambitious outlooks and expectations. Then, as globalization came to be discussed in earnest, the West’s overwhelming strength of technology and capital rose up once again as a threat, and the East Asian discussion began to appear with a character of resistance discourse.

Through the main imperialist period of gradual Eastern encroachment of Western forces, the West established its overwhelming dominance in economic, military, political and scientific aspects, and over two world wars this situation grew more serious as the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers. Realistically, modernization appears to have been a goal that all nations and peoples had to pursue, and in the

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<sup>5</sup> For discussions of Japanese culture or the Japanese, see Han Kyungkoo (1994), Befu (1987), Aoki (1990), and Minami (1996).

various fields of social science, including political science, economics and sociology, the so-called “modernization paradigm” became predominant. The convergence theory, stating that all societies, whether capitalist or socialist, gradually change into similar forms as they pass through the industrialization process, fundamentally had its background in theories of linear evolution, and linear evolution of course presumes that all societies must pass through the stages encountered by Western society.

Within this situation of the 1960s and 1970s, Asians’ emphasis on Asian values could be viewed as having a certain degree of validity. Such an emphasis at a time when the modernization paradigm was dominating the world had meaning as a kind of protest against the dominant claims that Western values were absolutely superior and that Asian nations should imitate the West, and was also something very fresh. The discussion of Asian values as a manifestation of rage against the free evaluation and judgment of Asia based on the West’s yardstick was not only something necessary in its own way to preserve a self-respect that had wholly collapsed, it also was able to become a fresh impetus academically.

However, the discussion of Asian values in the modern Korea of the late 1990s and 2000s can be said to be in a different situation. That is because this discussion in modern Korea could easily misunderstand reality and suggest incorrect measures. It is necessary to bear in mind that Japan’s efforts in the 1980s to seek out the secret of Japanese success in “Japanese management”<sup>6</sup> centered on the positive functions of much-discussed negative aspects of Japanese society and culture, ultimately obscuring the necessity and urgency of improvement and retarding reforms in the Japanese structure.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Discussions on the success of Japan include those that emphasize the role of the government, for example, Johnson (1982), and critical perspectives like that of Friedman (1988).

In particular, it is somewhat difficult to understand the claims that the rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s was made possible thanks to government-business collusion or blood ties and regionalism, and that therefore East Asian values or culture played a positive role in economic development. To some businesses or individuals, government-business collusion or favoritism may have helped greatly and made the impossible possible, but to other businesses or individuals, it may have made the possible impossible or functioned as a major obstacle. Such collusion and favoritism is a phenomenon that appeared during a period of high growth, but this does not provide grounds for establishing a claim that these things represent conditions or causes enabling fast growth. Correlation does not immediately indicate causation. Instead, the claim could also be put forth that fast growth was possible in spite of collusion and favoritism.

## 7. Conclusion

The blind pursuit of East Asia is unlikely to guarantee either our cultural survival or our continued economic prosperity. Further, the pursuit of a second West would incur the jealousy and hatred of countless other peoples and nations that have dreamed of an escape from poverty and political independence as we did just a few decades ago but who have been less fortunate than we were. Instead, leading efforts for the mutual prosperity of all humankind through the development of each people's cultural tradition and right to live, while warning against global partitioning based in feelings of cultural superiority and racial prejudice (or the appearance of regional supernationalism that transcends ethnicity) and sympathizing

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<sup>7</sup> For discussions of Japanese structural reform, see Han Kyungkoo (1997), Lee Hocheol (1996), Ōmae (1989), Sakaiya (1991), and Kusaka (1994).

with the positions of all weaker peoples enduring political and economic difficulties, is not only morally proper, it is also an effective means of preserving our own way of life and ensuring our continued prosperity.

Thus, if we are to develop and cultivate an East Asian management culture, it is not enough to wish for something more competitive than that of the West. So called Western management culture has made distinctive assumptions about people, and some of these have been applied beyond the boundaries of culture with the expectation that it would show a new, desirable image of humankind for the future. East Asian management culture has been as yet unable to produce an image of humankind with this kind of universal appeal, and could easily become something exceedingly inflexible, with validity only to East Asians. Thus, our new East Asian management culture must be developed to cope with the new environment of the twenty first century with a view to contributing to humankind.

Most importantly, we must pay attention to the fact that East Asians themselves are changing. As Morishima (1999) noted, the generation in Japan that received a prewar education in Confucianism is now disappearing. Likewise, the influence of Confucian education in South Korea and China as well is rapidly waning. We can discuss reviving Confucianism and use it as a master symbol, but the functions of Confucianism revived in such a way would be totally different from those in the past.

It must be remembered that Odaka Kunio (1996 [1983]), who led the way in praising Japanese-style management in the 1960s, by the 1980s was pointing to the success story of Japanese organization and management as a “worrisome situation” and initiating criticism of such management. Odaka warned that the “myth” of Japanese-style management would gradually make the Japanese lose the original image of Japanese management and the desire to eliminate its shortcomings, which were becoming gradually more certain. He even employed an expression that “some advocates with

exceptional minds have used the myth as a joke” and claimed that the myth of Japanese-style management “may have been some kind of “strategy” to relax the minds of Japanese managers and make Japanese management into a mess of shortcomings in order to impede the development of Japanese industry.”

In South Korea, however, attempts to imitate or create a South Korean version of Japanese management were made widely from the 1980s through the mid-1990s in the form of “company culture movements.” Some companies even solicited university research centers to furnish the most desirable methods of developing company culture, and some company directors conducted direct education for employees based on the new company culture of the business they ran, while the employees viewed this as a joke and referred to their managers as “sect leaders.” Discussion of Confucian capitalism, which was active for a time, has also been based in a fundamental confidence in Japanese-style management. Such discussions have lost a certain degree of force, especially following the “IMF crisis,” but as the economy has begun to rebound lately, they have started to gain force again, along with claims that the Asian economic crisis was a Western plot. One can only hope that this myth of Confucian capitalism does not come to play a role like that of the myth of Japanese management.

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*Part 2*  
**Discussion**



SECTION 6

*First Day  
Session*

동북아시아역사재단

동북아시아역사재단

NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION

➤ **Chung Moongil (Chair)**

Now we will start the general discussion. It is primarily an assigned discussion. For each presenter, we have assigned one designated individual for the discussion, an expert in the corresponding field and a person with a high level of interest in the area. Thus, we will allow each designated individual to present his argument to the presenter for each topic and hear the presenter's response. Also, if time allows, we will make efforts to take questions from some individuals from the floor.

First, we will hear questions from Lim Hyungtaek of the Department of Korean Education at Sungkyunkwan University on the topic "A Korea-Based Alternative or an East Asia-Based Alternative?: Korea and East Asia," presented by Choi Wonsik.

➤ **Lim Hyungtaek**

I am Lim Hyungtaek. Choi Wonsik's discussion today included some much-awaited beneficial and interesting contents. I feel that it offered us a reminder that went beyond the communication of knowledge. Recently, the meaning of the interest in East Asian theory from the intellectual world of Korea is understood as a statement containing some very general yet central pathways, indicating that "if we can solve the issue of the Korean

Peninsula, East Asia and the world may be solved as well.” Thus, he fixed a departure point for thinking from Korea to East Asia, conceiving of an international strategy in response to the global era, or a “straightening out of the self.” For this, he warns of the Sinocentrism or great-power chauvinism of China or the Orientalism or rightist tendencies of Japan, claiming that there is a particular demand for self-awareness and maturity in the Korean Peninsula as a counterweight within East Asia. The discussion ends with this sobering statement of assurance: “Will China and Japan follow the path of collision once again, or will they proceed toward a rich meeting that will bring true peace to the region? This as well will depend on the role of the Korean Peninsula, and South Korea in particular.”

I have absolutely no objections to this opinion. The presentation draws upon the director Kurosawa Akira’s *Kagemusha* to present its logic and attempts an interesting analysis; I too went to the theater to see this film after a very long wait. I had many great expectations, as it was my first outing to the theater in a very long time, and I did not feel a strong impression corresponding to its reputation. Now, upon hearing the presentation, I have the feeling that, “Oh, there was that meaning,” and I admire Choi’s discernment. Since I agree and sympathize with the contents of the discussion, I would like to just applaud once again and leave it at that.

However, since I have come here appointed as a commentator, I am in the situation of having to come up with something say. With no other choice, I will bring up two points. It is also one strand of my own opinion on the case of this issue, but I hope it will be of some help in not scratching futilely and in considering the issue at least in small part.

The first is about emphasizing the “era of the sea” as an index of modernity. The presentation includes an analysis stating that the Japanese invasion of 1592 was “an early indicator showing the arrival of the era of

the sea” and that the Sino-Japanese War was an “expanded reproduction of the Imjin invasion.” I recall that I once made a similar remark while talking with Yi Useong in the *Changbi Quarterly*. It is true that the era of modernity began as the West expanded into the sea, and in comparison, the non-Western countries opened up in the process of the doors of the sea opening. This is apparent even if you look at how the concept of “the open port” was regarded as especially important in the history of modernity. However, I had a somewhat awkward feeling about stressing the concept of the “era of the sea” too much, and I also feel that there are some areas to consider when using those words.

The first thing to consider is that the shift toward the sea had already appeared even on the East Asian continent since long before. If you look at the history of China, in the classical period the capital was always located deep in the continent, in places like Changan or Luoyang, and then moved toward the ocean with the Yuan Dynasty. Beijing has been functioning as the center of China for more than a millennium, from when it became the capital of the Yuan Empire to the present. This fact can be explained from various angles, but I wonder if perhaps it was not a reflection of a historical movement from the interior continent, where the principal direction of movement was toward Central Asia, to the sea. It was the same with the sea’s Silk Road, but especially if you look at the western advancement of the fleets led by Zheng He in the fifteenth century, there was definitely an advancement toward the sea being practiced in China as well. It is an undeniable phenomenon that modernity in world history was spearheaded by the eastward infiltration of Western forces, but it is not the case that the region of East Asia at the time simply slept, nor were they without any movements following the flow of global trends, and within the situation of being directly influenced by Western infiltration, one can find actual and ideological correspondences with it in the histories of China

as well as Korea. In short, as a phenomenological explanation, “Middle Ages=era of land” and “modernity=era of the sea” is a very clear juxtaposition, but I feel that we should consider and analyze it while focusing on the China-centered global system of East Asia, the acceptance of and resistance to it by the surrounding region, and the process of its disintegration.

The second is the East Asian view that considers Korea as a counterweight to China and Japan. This too is quite natural when one views it based on their historical relationship, the geopolitical location and the situation of Korea. However, I feel that the aspects that must be considered when one employs this perspective and suggests the formation of this kind of “rich meeting to bring peace to East Asia” are indeed multi-layered and multi-faceted. It seems that if done incorrectly, it would be difficult to avoid being misperceived as regionalism or criticized for lacking reality. Southeast Asia is located close by, and it would certainly be difficult to set Russia to the north off in parentheses. Ultimately I wonder whether our more progressive thinking should not reach as far as the countries of the region of Southeast Asia.

One more important assumption is that it is an inevitable trend that, even though the region of East Asia suffered great upheavals in the modern era within the wave of globalization, in any event it must become part of the global world in the future. Here the problem is the United States. Even were it not for Immanuel Wallerstein’s comment, we have felt in our bodies the fact that the world of the twentieth century has been one of American hegemony. This was also discussed before in Baik Young-seo’s presentation, but in the region of East Asia in the twentieth century in particular, Japanese hegemony, as well as an Asianism that transformed it into ideas, proceeded into the invasion of Korea and the Asian mainland, and the Korean anti-Japanese independence movement and Chinese resist-

ance to Japan that occurred in response even led to the formation of ethnic solidarity between Korea and China. Within the situation of having lost sovereignty and being colonized, not only did mainland China become the base for the struggle for liberation, but many independence activists in Korea felt that “the solution to the Chinese problem is the solution to Korean problem” and participated actively in the ranks of the Chinese movement. From the part of China as well, it is a fact that the position of the Kuomintang government itself supported the Korean liberation movement, and the Chinese Communist Party as well embraced and supported Korean progressive movement forces. I also think that perhaps Baik’s presentation overlooked the facts regarding this point. However, one characteristic of the East Asian region within the competition for imperialist colonization in the twentieth century is that it was realized through antagonism and conflict within the region, and with the end of World War II, the Korean Peninsula was placed within the world order led by the United States; and though the North came to enter the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and communist China, there has been for some time an estranged and confrontational relationship between mainland China and the Korean Peninsula when viewed within a larger frame, as in any event the Korean Peninsula was placed within a process of the development of American hegemony in the history of the twentieth century in this regard as well.

The question is, will American hegemony be extended into the twenty first century? Wallerstein presents a skeptical view, but even if the hegemony of the United States declines or is dissolved, I do not think that the time for that to happen is so close at hand. Currently the trend is that American influence is expanding even with regard to North Korea, and I feel it is true as well that China places more emphasis on and gives more attention to its relationship with the United States, whether in the national

dimension or the private or cultural dimensions, than its relationships with Korea or Japan. Now, if one suggests that we just raise the white flag to a world led by the United States, this discussion itself would be unnecessary, and I feel that this is also not an occasion for continuing to proclaim the so-called “Asian values.” I feel that we should thoroughly consider and foresee objective reality and that our ideas and wisdom should be gathered together so that this claim, that we must search for a development that is peaceful and equal in establishing relationships among the countries of East Asia, and, moreover, search for a happy unity, does not become mere idealism.

I will conclude my comments here. Thank you.

> **Chung Moongil**

Thank you. We will allow Choi Wonsik to respond to Lim’s questions.

> **Choi Wonsik**

I extend my thanks for the comments of the esteemed Lim Hyungtaek. I will answer briefly.

First, Lim indicated that I may have oversimplified too much by speaking of the “age of the sea” as an index of modernity. This is true. I feel that this somewhat rhetorical expression was excessive. As he indicated, it is of course the “age of the sea,” but there should be a bit deeper consideration of the multi-layered and multi-faceted qualities that the “age of the sea” possesses.

And is the “age of the sea” considered in too Western a way, only in terms of what is Western? He mentioned that even before the West began to arrive in East Asia, there were already indications of an independent shift toward the sea from East Asia, and I also believe that. Especially in terms of the establishment of the modern Western capitalist system, there

has recently been much discussion reevaluating the role of the Mongol empire. In a word, the Mongols' construction of a global empire was a decisive precursor in the establishment of the modern Western capitalist system, and I also feel that is interesting. But even so, even with such early indications of a shift to the sea, as seen in the example of the height of the Ming Dynasty, I feel that our objective awareness of why this shift in East Asia, in other words the modern shift, was ultimately voluntarily, internally prevented from being realized, also should be regarded in accordance with an impartial awareness.

Second, he mentions how it seemed that the role of the Korean Peninsula as a counterweight could easily lapse into idealism. This is correct. However, our interest in East Asia did not start from idealism, and in fact, because East Asian theory itself developed as it met with the real and practical problem of how to wisely overcome the divided system of the Korean Peninsula, and as the awareness that it cannot be solved through simple nationalism or national socialism matured, and as the awareness grew of the international character surrounding the problem of North Korea and South Korea and the character of the medium of East Asia, I would like to verify once again that as I heard Lim's comments it was impressed upon me again how East Asian theory needs to not be simple idealism, but needs to proceed by constantly communicating with practical interests to ensure a wise solution to the divided system of the Korean Peninsula. Thank you.

➤ **Chung Moongil**

Next, the novelist and publisher of the magazine *Tianya*, Han Shaogong, will comment on the presentation by Baik Youngseo, "Conceptualizing "Asia" in the Modern Chinese Mind: A Korean Perspective."

### > Han Shaogong

I am very glad to be visiting South Korea for the first time and participating in this international conference held by the Seonam Foundation. I am all the more so because I am basically not a theorist, but a person who writes novels. I feel it an honor that through this meeting I have come to have much intellectual stimulation and many opportunities for growth.

After hearing the lecture by Baik youngseo, a Chinese proverb came to mind. It says, “An outsider understands the inner situation better,” and the reason is that since Baik is not Chinese, for that reason, his perspective in viewing China is much more accurate than that of a Chinese person. As Baik rightly noted, among most Chinese, in other words within Chinese intellectual society, the concept of “Asia” itself, which is the topic of this meeting, has essentially been long absent.

The Chinese people have habitually fixed their gaze upon superpowers like the United States. After those, they have turned their attention to Japan or a few certain European nations. However, this phenomenon itself is perhaps not just something occurring in China. As familiar examples one could cite Japan and Russia; it is a fact that, early on, Japan proclaimed that they should “break free from Asia and advance into the ranks of Europe,” and in the case of Russia, while most of its territory belongs to Asia, the consciousness of Asia in the minds of most Russians is very thin. Thus, when France’s Napoleon, after leading his army and bringing down the fortress of Moscow, said that he had occupied an important city in Asia, many Russian people were taken aback by this and could not contain their surprise.

As Baik said, among many Chinese within China, including many intellectuals in particular, not only is there no Asia, there is perhaps likewise no Southeast Asia, South Asia or Central Asia. This is despite the fact that one very large part of the Chinese territory, Xinjiang, belongs to Central

Asian culture and possesses far more characteristics of Central Asia in terms of culture or geography. Even within the concept of Europe existing in the minds of Chinese people, there is no Eastern Europe and Central Europe. This situation is clearly revealed in attitudes toward literature, include the literary works being translated and introduced in China at present. As a novelist, I have several times expressed my dissatisfaction about this. Of the works in translation being introduced in China presently, American and French works or English and German works constitute an absolute majority. When one considers that, during his lifetime, the great Chinese writer Lu Xun carried out his activity while looking at the literature of far more nations and regions and paying attention to the situation of the literary worlds of those regions, this is an even sadder state of affairs.

However, this situation is fortunately beginning to show signs of introspection already. In my opinion, the essay published by Baik in China recently offered an important opportunity, and its contents include areas that generally coincide closely with the contents he presented today. This work was printed in the most important space of the journal *Dushu*, one of the most important publications circulating in China, and has drawn the attention of Chinese intellectual society. This may have been from this past August or July, but the point is that there is discussion taking place on issues related to the consciousness of Asia, and East Asia as well.

It could be said that this situation has basically demonstrated that some groups of intellectuals within China, and in particular publications like *Dushu*, have already started placing new importance upon the problem of East Asia. This reflective thought within China began directly with the publication of Baik's essay, and to go slightly broader, it began from a joint symposium held at Beijing University under the co-sponsorship of the *Changbi Quarterly* and the Beijing University Department of Chinese Literature in 1998. I recall that Paik Nakchung, Baik Youngseo, and Choi

Wonsik, who are with us here, all participated in that meeting, so this kind of discussion had already started in China as well at that meeting. So I would first like to express my personal thanks to Baik for his contribution, which offered an important opportunity for promoting reflection and debate on this issue in Chinese intellectual society, and also to many friends in Korea.

However, it is clear that it is very difficult to change the situation of a country's intellectual world and world of ideas through one scholarly exchange. Thus, I would like to say that in terms of the attention received by the "Asia" issue in China, a lot of other background has been operating besides this situation. For example, the financial crisis that came upon Asia was an inextricable, important element among these. It has been just over two years, but I will say that in all of our minds the memory is still quite fresh. To cite another example besides that, the formation of the European Community and the surging tide of economic globalization functioned as great shocks to individual Chinese.

Bearing in mind this general background, I would like to talk about two points within the contents presented by Baik. In fact, it is likely one problem, but I will speak about it from two different angles anyway. I call them two aspects, but in fact they are the same problem, like two sides of a coin.

The first thing I would like to say is a problem related to this "East Asian consciousness," or to put it in terms of other aspects, this kind of concept of "multinational" or "regional" itself, which is how it can be done so that it can avoid the possibility of this awareness precipitating itself into an extension, expansion, or transformation of "ethnic nationalism" or "state nationalism." In other words, I am asking in what direction and at what stratum this regionalism should be conceived and practiced so that it can avoid the vices revealed by such ethnic and state nationalism early on with-

in the process of historical development. This is because, if you view in terms of historical aspects, this kind of regional unity with a multinational character has not appeared in the Asian region.

The first example is the logic of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere,” which had an especially profound influence on the Chinese. As you know, this was suggested by the Japanese. Subsequently, turncoats appeared, forces of sympathizers to the Japanese called *hanjian* in Chinese, and this logic was defended at the time by the group of Wang Jingwei. It is an irrefutable fact that under the drive of this logic, a very powerful tendency of the time appeared within that era’s Chinese society—the younger brother of the great Chinese author Lu Xun, named Zhou Zuoren, also participated in this faction—and these individuals proclaimed that East Asia had to unite within Asia. This proclamation was greeted with a more enthusiastic welcome by the people of Southeast Asia at the same time, as far as I am aware. The reason was that the situation in Southeast Asia was completely different from those of China or Korea. This is because, before the Japanese arrived there, the people of Southeast Asia had already been under the colonial rule of France, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Thus, when the Japanese “liberated” them from the control of the white Europeans, many intellectuals and members of the general population in Southeast Asia expressed an enthusiastic welcome. This is a very different situation from those of China and Korea. However, this multinational fantasy, in other words the dream of unity within one region, ultimately would bring great disaster to the peoples of not only East Asia but Southeast Asia as well. The aforementioned is an illustration of the first property.

As a second example, we note that multinational regional unity, or regional collaboration, appeared even in the course of socialist practice. During the time of Mao Zedong, China especially emphasized internationalism. They emphasized that we had to create solidarity with the Third

World peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and resist American imperialism. At that time I was a child attending elementary school, but I participated several times in the ranks of those demonstrations, and I remember participating in required labor and supporting the people of Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea. China at that time was in a very difficult situation economically, but they also dispatched many medical volunteer corps to Africa and Latin America. They sent doctors to treat patients and also provided economic assistance. However, nowadays many Chinese intellectuals snort when they mention this history of the past. They criticize Mao Zedong as a truly unparalleled idiot.

As an example of the specific practice of Third World theory, there is the Indochina collaboration. This is also an illustration mentioned by Arif Dirlik in his presentation, but when Indochina held a meeting in Guangzhou, China, it was a form where the Communist Parties of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were merged together. They called their party the Indochina Communist Party, and the names of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the Laotian Communist Party and the Cambodian Communist Party did not exist at all.

In the 1960s many Chinese students, many middle and high school students, including my friends, participated in the ranks of those supporting the revolution in Vietnam, and there were even people who went there directly themselves and participated in the revolution at the site. Another group among my friends included people who went to Myanmar and participated in the revolution there. But these regional alliances across borders really existed only for a very short time. Soon afterwards, the war erupted between Vietnam and Cambodia, and there also ended up being a war between China and Vietnam.

It may have been a short experience, but when we think nowadays about the historical practical experiences of multinational regional collabo-

ration that we shared during the process of practicing socialism at the time, we cannot help recalling the Greater East Asia doctrine promoted by Japan or the new character of pressure exerted upon China by specific organizations formed around South Korea, Japan and the Chinese province of Taiwan under the American system during the Cold War period after the end of World War II. Of course, these were two multinational regional alliances of very different character. But this practice also left us with a profound historical lesson. It forced us to reflect on ourselves seriously for a long time, and on the other hand to comprehensively consolidate the passive aspects revealed during this experience. The aforementioned is the situation in the historical aspect. So now we should look once again at the realistic aspect.

When you consider the realistic aspect, I think the best illustration would be the European Community. Once I met a friend living in the Netherlands, and he had a rather negative opinion toward the European Community. He confessed that the Netherlands encountered no especially positive aspects through the European Community. He said that their language and culture were being gradually encroached upon, and that they were encountering economic losses as well. For example, he said, after the institution of the system using the currency of the euro, the cost of mail in the Netherlands, that is the cost of sending a letter, greatly increased. I myself do not know exactly how the specific situation is, but I still have a very clear memory of hearing my friend's resentment. The Portuguese writer José Saramago, who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1998, once made a famous comment. I recall that what he said was, "If you say that Europe has no interest in me, a citizen of a small country, I too have no particular interest in Europe." I feel that Saramago definitely represents the feelings of a segment of Portugal's intellectuals and citizens.

If this is the situation, if the European Community inflicts damage upon and slights the interests of some specific group domestically, including cultural and economic interests, what then is the European Community capable of doing overseas? There will be partially positive effects. For example, they could perform the function of controlling American hegemony. This could be said to be something quite positive in its way for us, the peoples of Asia. But this year the European Community took their bombers and attacked Yugoslavia, ultimately setting the lives of that country's people back at least 30 years. Here I am not claiming that there are no problems at all within Yugoslavia. However, in any case I would like to remind people of the need to reflect seriously on how they took weapons of mass destruction for use in war and set the lives of a people back 30 years.

In this context, the general meaning that I would like to put across is that I feel that this claim that we should overcome some of the vices that the "ethnic state model" can bring with the "East Asian consciousness" stressed by Baik, or with a multinational alliance crossing national borders — to borrow an expression from the presentation, a "complex state model" — is a very meaningful, important opinion. I would simply like to say that the multinational community that we are conceiving, this community of regional alliance, needs to be aware of how it could likewise show the mistakes committed by states in the traditional context, that is, modern states, or the contradictions revealed in the process, and be able to prevent this.

Secondly, and I already said this just now, but I agree completely with the assertion made by Baik in his presentation that "the Chinese are relatively lacking in an Asian consciousness." But if I may be allowed to be somewhat presumptuous, when you view this problem in reverse, you ask, if Asianism grows among the Chinese, what image will this Asian consciousness assume? I say this because in China I have seen the appearance

of a great division within the intellectual world in China for the last two to three years, where part of it is the struggle between the left wing and right wing over this and another part of it is the struggle between liberalism and ethnic nationalism. There are always going to be arguments between these two perspectives, but in 1998 and 1999 this argument developed into a very intense confrontation. But, at least in my view, these two perspectives sometimes form one perspective. In other words, this means that they are like two sides of the same coin. If you speak of a difference between the two perspectives, there is only the following minor point. It is that the people proclaiming liberalism or globalism are depending on the wish that “I must live well,” with the belief that America will bring me happy days. Then how about these intellectuals asserting ethnic nationalism? They too have the same wish that “I must live well,” but they say that it is America that destroyed this dream of mine. They say that America prevents me from living this life. In my opinion, it is this point that is the identical starting point shared by both. Thus, they are always saying that they are standing in different positions, and I am instead always emphasizing that they are one.

I once went on a trip to India and Vietnam with some writers, and I discovered the following point among them. When they are on this side of the international stage, that is, within China, they show a highly liberal or America-friendly stance, but when they are on the other side of the international stage, they change their stance and frequently reveal a somewhat nationalist position. The thoughts that they reveal in front of powerful countries they change in front of weaker countries, and they reveal other motives.

So I am not worried that Asianism does not exist within China at present. Rather, it is clear that there will be an Asian consciousness in China before long. The assumption is that it is self-evident that this Asian

consciousness will appear rapidly once China is greatly disappointed by the United States or Europe. But the problem that I am concerned about is what this Asian consciousness will bring to us when it really appears in China. Will it bring us harm? Within the region, will it not likewise bring us a kind of adverse effect toward weaker groups, for example minority ethnic groups or the lower class? Furthermore, there is the question of whether, in another form overseas, this will take on the form of hegemony. Thus, there is a need to seriously consider all of these issues.

In conclusion, regardless of capitalist or socialist practice in China, it is clearly a point requiring long reflection that there is no Asian consciousness in China. However, it is also an important point that, even if an Asian consciousness comes to exist in China, we must likewise not neglect the necessary caution. Thus, I fully agree with Baik's comment that we should maintain an attitude of "critical regionalism." I leave the discussion saying that the most important point is ensuring a critical attitude. Thank you for listening.

➤ **Chung Moongil**

You presented a very passionate defense of aspects lacking in China. Han Shaogong's Baik Youngseo will respond to questions.

➤ **Baik Youngseo**

First, I would like to thank Han Shaogong for closely reading and commenting. What sets my mind at ease the most is that, as I was writing this and presenting it, I worried that Han would say, "These are totally meaningless words and claims," and so I would like to first say, and this is not out of formality or politeness, that I am truly comforted that he said that it was an important raising of issues.

Together with this, I came to learn some things out of the comments

he made here. The first is that, as Han told us of his primary school experiences, he emphasized that there was an internationalist trend, whether it be a socialist movement or solidarity with the Third World within a socialist practice experience. In particular, I did not treat solidarity among nations as very important, and even while I thought I should consider those aspects, I did not put any great weight upon them. That was also an important observation, and I think that I should consider it a bit more. So I came to feel that I should turn my attention not just to anarchism, but to international alliances within the history of the communist movement.

In the meantime, I will try to think about this problem, but right away this thought comes to mind. What influence is this personal primary school experience of Han's having on the regional concept of the middle-aged group that includes Han now? I am skeptical as to whether this experience of international solidarity from primary school remains now as an experience of international solidarity, or as an interest in solidarity with the Third World. I would like to ask: Was it merely a political campaign of the time? Or was it a living historical experience and group experience?

Next, turning to the more important comment. I had not thought along these lines, and I think it was a meaningful observation to say, "OK, fine. Assume that as you say the Chinese possessed an Asian consciousness, assume that they had an East Asian view. What is lost in that situation?"—that is, to comment on the problems or vices that could arise if the Chinese possessed an Asian awareness or East Asian awareness—and I will try to consider it in that direction as well, but I do find it somewhat unsatisfying to limit interest in that region too narrowly, such as comparing it to the EU Community experience and asking what vices would arise if a community like the EU arose in Asia. I think there is a need to consider it a little more broadly. Of course, there is a possibility that what I am saying

now results from my having heard incorrectly. This is because basically, Han agreed about the “critical regionalism” that I talked about and that Arif Dirlik also talked about.

Finally, what I wanted to say in this essay is that regionalism is important because it presents problems related to how to establish a relationship with the state. This problem could also be an answer to the last, significant question presented by Han, about whether this Asian perspective that I am speaking of can really be realized. I am not espousing an abstract theory of Asian solidarity. And I am not proposing that we proclaim some regional solidarity that transcends the nation, as with the transnationalism that’s popular nowadays. What I want to emphasize in this essay is that after seeing the historical experience of the twentieth century, one important reason for speaking of Asia, or Asian solidarity or civilization, is that it has been a theoretical device for reform within the state. So what I want to say is that if, in the process of reforming problem areas within each individual state, you ensure universality, is not that engaging with the Asian perspective? If you accomplish this while connecting it with the important issues of reform within each individual state, I feel that this could be a subjectivity where the East Asian perspective can be realized and a specific method. That is all.

#### > **Chung Moongil**

Next, Park Myoungkyu from Seoul National University will comment on Kang Sangjung’s “Japan’s Asia” and Regionalism.” Of course, the presenter is not present, but as indicated before we will arrange to organize the questions presented today and the contents of the discussion and give them to the presenter, and tomorrow we will hear his response to this in the first part of the general discussion.

➤ **Park Myoungkyu**

I am Park Myoungkyu from Seoul National University. Kang Sangjung's essay is one in which many contents are written in a briefly summarized form, and since I do not know well about the ideas that do not appear in the essay, I have some worries about whether this will be an inappropriate discussion. However, in the sense of considering problems in the same way, I will speak on a few points.

Kang's essay, as I see it, seems to contain two claims. One is that the "leaving Asia" perspective and the Asian perspective that appeared in Japan after World War II were ultimately not two heterogeneous perspectives in conflict, but nothing more than two forms of the Japanese nationalist pendulum movement in response to the crisis. And therefore, the claim that the two were not at all conflicting was one.

It appears that the second claim was that in the future, a new community will be demanded in Asia, and that it needs to proceed toward an open network where the plurality and equality of different peoples are guaranteed, not an expanded form of the view centered on Japanese nationalism as in the past.

Generally, I agree with these two claims. However, during the process of developing his point, it appears that there are some points that are not clear, so I will focus my discussion on these points. I intend to discuss three main points. The first is the question of why he ends up talking about regional unity and regionalism, the second is the question of what kind of specific content the regionalism that Kang is thinking of entails, what form of regionalism he is conceiving, and the third I might call the manner of relation for accomplishing this regionalism—where he is searching for the manner of practicing this solidarity. I will speak about these three things.

Regarding the question of why he is making an issue of regionalism, it appears that Kang spoke of three reasons. One is the increase in the enor-

mous role of Japanese capital in the entire Asian region, the second, which is paired with that, is the economic interrelatedness in Asia seen in the Asian crisis, and the third is the legacy of colonialism. Viewed broadly, since the first two deal with problems of Asian economic integration related with the expansion of the system of global capitalism, it appears that he paid major attention to two aspects along with the problem of the colonial legacy. I feel that both are important, but I feel that there is a rather large difference depending on what critical approach you start from in viewing regionalism. There is a very large difference between the critical approach of overcoming the distrust and conflict within the region resulting from the legacy left by Japanese imperialist rule and the task of Asian economic integration in response to American hegemony. I wonder if perhaps, if you do not examine the difference, there is not a possibility of ultimately reverting to the Asian theory before World War II, creating an antithetical relationship between the West and Asia. This is because I feel the possibility that, if what is mainly highlighted is a form of discussion where the United States and Western Europe are bound as one thing, and Asia is bound as one thing, the actual issue of what kind of method of interaction to pursue within Asia will be treated as secondary. Although this may be a baseless fear resulting from the situation of not being able to read Kang's essay in its entirety.

Secondly, what are the contents of the regionalism that Kang spoke of? He says that there is a need for East Asian regionalism and that the role of Japan is very important to that process, but it seems that there could be too much potential for variation in what the appearance of that regional integration would ultimately be. This also appeared periodically in the previous topics today, but it seems that there could be a search for a mold of complex states conceiving a new interrelatedness while still using the existing state system as a base, and, like Kang, you can also conceive of

a political mold with regional units as new complex bodies of foreigners or groups with various mixed characters that completely transcend the state. It seems that the spectrum could be quite diverse, so I am wondering what kind he ultimately has in mind. At a guess, looking at the emphasis on such things as the importance of an East Asian group security system comparable to NATO and a situation where group security is accomplished politically and militarily while they are united economically, I feel that he may be supposing as a model something like the EU Community, but I would like a bit more discussion about whether that kind of thing is possible in the East Asia of the present, or what differences in conditions there are with Europe.

Also, how is he establishing what Japan's specific role is to be in this situation? I am also very curious about this part. In this essay, there are parts that read as claims that, because Asia has been entirely immersed in the America-centered postwar hegemonic order, an independent Asia must be created, but I feel that it is impossible to view the roles of America and Japan as merely having the aspect of offsetting each other. I have the feeling that, in some aspect, there is a relatively strong complementary relationship between America and Japan in the process of maintaining hegemonic status. As well, from the standpoint of some Asian countries, there clearly exists a tendency to understand the existence of the United States within the role of blocking Japanese expansion, of buffering the formation of Japan as a political and military superpower. When you consider these complex aspects, there clearly must be something different in the role of Japan in Asia from the economic power of Japanese capital or the transformation of Japan into a superpower spoken of in the typical theory of the state, and I end up with the feeling that this content is unclear.

Finally, according to Kang's statement, in any event it would not be good for there to be any extreme shakeup in Japan's Asian awareness. Thus,

it should be made so that Japan is not once again swept away in the form of Japanese nationalism, whether it bears the form of the doctrine of leaving Asia or the form of Asianism. For this to happen, he says, there needs to be a weakening in nationalistic tendencies in Korea and China. Indeed, I feel that because, no matter where the responsibility is placed, strong nationalism from one side leads to the same kind of nationalism in the other side, and as a result a kind of vicious spiral can occur that intensifies the conflicts within Asia, it is important to pay attention to this problem. We cannot regard the nationalist sentiments or orientations currently seen in Korea and China as wholly desirable.

However, one thing I do wonder is whether he is not oversimplifying this and viewing it negatively, as the nationalist tendencies appearing in Korea and China are very complicated in their contents. I wonder whether he feels that it would be expedient for real Asian solidarity to minimize the historical controversies frequently taking place in East Asia at present, namely the criticism of the invasive actions of Japanese imperialism by Korean and Chinese intellectuals with regard to the history of Japanese imperialism, and in particular the constant raising of issues regarding how Japan has never made a clear account for its past history. I am cautious because this essay was very roughly summarized, but while I do not think that Kang would ever make such a simple statement, I have apprehensions that the wish of Japanese intellectuals that nationalist discussions in Korea and China would weaken a little might be connected with an attitude of seeking to avoid areas which the three nations of East Asia all need to reflect upon and consider with regard to prewar imperialism. I would also like to hear Kang's opinion on this as well. Thank you.

➤ **Chung Moongil**

Thank you. Currently there is no response, but tomorrow we anticipate that

there will be responses to Park's various questions.

Finally, Paik Nakchung from Seoul National University will present comments on the presentation by Arif Dirlik, "Culture Against History: The 'West' in the Search for an East Asian Identity." Of course, there is the essay that was distributed beforehand, but since there are some obstacles in hearing the contents presented today at this moment, I am sure the audience and ourselves would appreciate it if you summarized the text and gave your comments. Please.

➤ **Paik Nakchung**

It's a pleasure and an honor to be here today. Actually, I am not someone very connected with research on East Asia, so it seems impertinent for me to be here as a commentator like this. I have merely known today's presenter, Arif Dirlik, since a few years ago, and because he is an individual I respect and because he works together with our preparation committee chair, Choi Wonsik, at the *Changbi Quarterly*, I could not refuse this request. I will speak briefly in reference to the written text of Dirlik's topic and two things that he said.

First, he made some very keen observations on the vast problem that is the pursuit of East Asian identity, or identity, and I personally sympathized with many of them. While it does not apply in particular to the individuals who presented today, in general, when we pursue East Asian or Asian discourse there are various complicated issues that we implicitly overlook, and I feel that he indicated those very perceptively. Moreover, he also did a good job of pointing out the problems of so-called identity discourse itself. In particular, people within non-Western regions have done a lot of dichotomous thinking about the West or the past as they have been placed under the pressure of the West, and at these times, the act of opposing the West and asserting tradition itself unwittingly seems to

compromise itself into a kind of Westerner's orientalism. Do we call this self-orientalization? He spoke using the very amusing expression "self-orientalization." He also said that the situation of the resurgence of traditionalism and the appearance of religious fundamentalist activity occurring all over the world today has a different appearance from previous traditionalism, and I feel that too is an appropriate analysis. In other words, on one hand these activities appear in opposition to the logic of uniformity in the world market during the stages of global capitalism. But ultimately they share the logic of the global market, and they are deeply connected with the phenomena of the decline of the ethnic liberation ideas that once vowed to fight against the logic of the global market and the decline of revolutionary movements. Thus he made the observation that the resurgence of traditionalism of late is in fact a very modern phenomenon, and I too agree with that point.

To make the topic a bit more concrete, he criticized the Confucian revival theory that has been much discussed lately, and I think this too was a very trenchant observation. He says that not only this Confucian revival but Asian values, or movements to revive these things, are in many cases deeply influenced instead by the Eurocentric legacy of orientalism, and I feel that this is an observation that we should heed closely and always bear in mind. So in recent times, the situation of the Confucian revival theory has not only been directly connected with Asian, and specifically East Asian, capitalist development since it first began to arise, but in fact it is proceeding as faithful to the demands of capitalism. Of course, on one hand it represents a challenge to the previous Eurocentrism that viewed modernization as something only found in Europe or the United States, but in fact it faithfully follows along with the Western-centered modernity discourse or the modernist historical view. So, and this appears on page 82 of the Korean language text and page 99 of the English, the phrase describing

the Confucianist revival as “Eurocentrism with a vengeance” is rendered simply as “Eurocentrism” in the Korean, but in some sense it is stronger, saying that this goes a step farther than Eurocentrism. He made a point about it being Western-centeredness that goes a step farther. I would like to say that I agree with this criticism. At the same time, as another, different phenomenon, I also sympathize with another criticism of Dirlik, which said that a perspective that emphasizes “ambiguity,” saying “The problem is not at all simple,” “If you are too certain about the truth, there could be consequences,” cannot be a solution. Another point that I agree with is the claim in the text that besides these two ways, there exists a third way, which is an activity expressed as dialogue from below, so to speak, or globalization from below. This concept on one hand originated from Dirlik’s criticism of previous ethnic liberation movements or existing Marxist theory and practice, but on the other hand it shows the pursuit of creative succession to ethnic liberation movements and Marxist tradition. While I agree in principle with this point, this third option still remains a very general proposition in the presentation, so I would like to add that I would like to see it elaborated upon.

He noted that the concept of East Asia itself is in fact a product of Western intervention, that it is a construct of that. In response to this, I would like to say that this is of course true, but I would also like to call to mind the point that “Asia” and “East Asia” are a bit different. Indeed, though it is not in the text, Dirlik already stated in the process of speaking today that he would take a step back from an all-out criticism of the concept of East Asia. Not only is Asia in fact merely a concept created by Europeans, but it is difficult to this day to say that it exists other than as a geographical unit. But in the case of East Asia, the Korean term *Dong-Asia* places the word *dong*, referring to the “eastern part,” on the word “Asia,” which was made by Westerners, but it seems to be that there

is something more to it corresponding to a real entity. The East Asia that many people spoke of today, and in particular the, shall we say, shared cultural legacy of Korea, China and Japan, possibly also including Vietnam, or the fixed regional exchange that has continued throughout history-because of these things, when we, the people of East Asia, actually use the words “East Asia” or “Asia,” we tend to think of an East Asia centered on Korea, China and Japan rather than the Asian continent. This could also be spoken of as an attitude of being closed to the other parts of Asia, but in any event it also means that there is some basis for our habitually thinking of an East Asia. So in the case of Confucian revivalism as well, the problem is not in the pursuit of an East Asian cultural commonality in itself, and I think the greater problem may be that this effort is in fact proceeding in a direction that adapts itself as is to the logic of the existing capitalist system. So even if there is a revival of Confucianism, I feel that it would be much more meaningful if Confucian tradition were rediscovered within the dimension of asking whether some element of Confucianism might not help in creating an alternative to the current capitalist global system or world market logic. Of course, if you ask the question that way it might become more difficult to answer, but if you ask it that way, rather than limiting East Asian tradition to Confucianism, you at least come to have the much more open attitude of asking whether there is some element in Confucianism, some element in Buddhism and some element in Daoism. And, as with Dirlik’s criticism, past experiences of Asian or East Asian solidarity in revolutionary movements have been almost totally ignored in the course of debate on Confucian capitalism or Confucian revivalism, and I feel that there is the possibility for discussion of Confucianism that once again embraces that past tradition. So the first issue that I will raise in response to Dirlik’s topic is that there is room for somewhat more specific and diverse discussion on East Asia.

The second is that, when we speak of regional identity, there is no need to limit it to any one kind. Just as when we speak of regional identity, we are not ignoring personal identity or global identity as a human, when we speak of East Asian identity as a cultural community, there is no need for it to be a denial of different regional bonds we might possess as Asians. And so, just to speak off the top of my head, if we list the various possible regional identities, the first could be the East Asian identity that we have principally been speaking of today. As the second, we could consider the regional unity of Northeast Asia, including Eastern Russia, which does not belong to East Asia culturally but which clearly belongs to East Asia geographically, and Korea, China and Japan. At the same time, one could pursue an East Asian unity in the broad sense, one that does not assume an exclusive or oppressive attitude toward Southeast Asia, and going further, if it is not totally meaningless to speak of a Pan-Asian identity including all of Asia geographically, it may also be possible to have Pan-Asian unity as well according to the situation. If that is the case, there is also the Asia-Pacific region that is often mentioned lately, and while currently APEC and the like have been instruments to represent the logic of global capitalism, in any event I feel it is possible within the process of solidarity from below to pursue at the same time an Asia-Pacific unity that is not limited just to Asia. So my second point is that I think it would be best to think of the issue of regional identity in a multi-layered way, as a problem where several strata overlap.

The third is that there were many things said today to warn of the dangers of ethnic nationalism or state nationalism. While I myself do agree, the issues of national or ethnic identity are something that cannot at all be separated from the issue of pursuing identity. I feel that the problem is in leading to exclusive adoption of ethnic nationalism or lapsing into state nationalism or chauvinism; within the various kinds of identity that

we can possess, there are naturally things like identity as a Korean or identity as the Korean people, and if these things are gone, there is merely a worldwide, global identity and a wide-ranging regional identity, and since from there, without any mediating elements, it falls directly into a very local, very limited identity, it becomes instead an obstacle to effective practice and activity. The point is that, in establishing and pursuing some national or ethnic task, I think that it is important for it to have the kind of popular, national project that is open toward global dimensions, toward regional dimensions at various levels, and toward various much narrower local dimensions.

Finally, one thing I would like to add is that fortunately, in the case of the Korean people, it is realistically possible to have just this kind of project that is complicated yet closely connects various dimensions, through the task of overcoming the system of division on the Korean Peninsula. Previously, unification was thought of within a simply nationalist dimension, and even now that tendency is strong, but I think that it would be wrong for the overcoming of the system of division on the Korean Peninsula to be established as a purely nationalist issue. Rather than approaching it from the dimension of simply belatedly constructing a unified state, I think it is only possible to achieve real, meaningful unification while living from day to day in South Korean society, starting from local issues such as expansion of women's rights, democratic reforms and environmental protection and leading from there to the resolution of the territorial division of the Korean Peninsula, and at the same time connecting the resolution of peninsular territorial division to the task of changing the global system to a slightly more humane system and civilization. So I believe that it is possible to present such a good example on the Korean Peninsula, but in any event I would like to say that it is also important to connect the issue of pursuing regional identity to that kind of ethnic issue. Thank you.

➤ **Chung Moongil**

Thank you. Lastly we will hear Arif Dirlik's comments on Paik's discussion.

➤ **Arif Dirlik**

Thank you. I would like to thank Paik Nakchung. Actually, I don't have very much to add. In my opinion, I think it is possible to start this discussion while drawing it up to a slightly higher level dialectically.

I would just like to emphasize the points presented by Paik. The first is the issue of having various identities. I feel that it is important to remember that identity is always determined through being overlapped. In other words, in forming identity, more than one element is always introduced. As an example, Paik referred to the various methods by which we can look at regions. We can give names to these regions using various terms. All identity begins at a place, a very specific place, and perhaps it is located within what we call the "world" and all of the other possibilities located in between. The problem is that, just because identity is connected through various elements or determined through overlapping, this does not mean that we can freely choose our identity. We always have historical limitations. Thus, being the constituent of one country is a very real fact, and being the constituent of a village is also a very real fact. Nevertheless, these facts show that we have a few choices.

So now the problem is how we proceed with forming identity, namely whether we are to accept identity as some given thing, something given specially or provisionally, or we should regard identity as something that we have the possibility of creating. The business of setting boundaries to the region (regional establishment) and the world is (at the same time) the creation of various methods, and even while asserting that authority always intervenes in this process, we cannot deny what we call reality. One of the facts accepted by many people recently is that globalization better

serves certain interests rather than others, in most cases a specific kind of power relationship. We could consider movements from below to oppose this. Elsewhere I called these movements region-based movements, region-based politics, and through these it may be possible to demand the creation of networks, alliances and regions, although these new regions and groups could or could not conform to the legacy inherited from the past. I would like to finish here. Thank you.

> **Chung Moongil**

Thank you very much. The main presentation and question-answer discussion has finished. Now would be a very appropriate time to finish, but I feel that it would not be courteous for us to move on without hearing questions from the floor. Because there are more people with more good opinions, we will hear from one or two people within a scope that does not greatly exceed our time limit.

**Audience member**

I would like to ask this question to Arif Dirlik. My name is Lee Sangyong, and I teach Russian literature at Yonsei University. I was pleased to hear your fascinating presentation.

In your presentation text, you referred to “Eurocentrism that continues through crafty methods even in claims that reject Eurocentrism.” I feel the same way, but I was a little unclear on the assumptions underlying your claim. If you look at the literal structural logic, your essay is very well composed. However, the conclusion that you reached came across to me as vague.

So I would like to ask a question about your topic, “Cultural Against History?” Based on your assumption, which of the following do you believe? Do you feel that the attempt to pursue a new Asian cultural identity will

succeed according to its own methods, or do you feel that there is no choice but for it to unfold atop a horizon of Eurocentrism?

> **Chung Moongil**

Thank you. Please give your response very briefly.

> **Arif Dirlik**

Thank you. I will answer briefly. My feeling is that we may be worrying too much over Eurocentrism recently. As today's issue, I would like to distinguish between the necessity of rejecting Eurocentrism and the issue of how we should explain modern history. Regardless of how we feel, I believe that it is nearly impossible to deny that Europe's global domination through the medium of capitalism has shaped modern history and left its mark on all of us. That has now become part of our own history. It is not at all something external; it is part of our history. The writer Ashis Nandy, who I quoted before, is an Indian psychologist who wrote a book called *The Intimate Enemy*. This "intimate enemy" is colonialism, which has become a part of Indian society. This European aspect of history is not something that applies to only us. Of course, intellectuals have participated in this to a considerable extent, and we have all been shaped by a specific kind of education. Of course, to most of the public, modernity dominated by Europe has brought transformative results to all of history. But this does not mean that everyone becomes the same because of this. This does not mean Europe creating a homogeneous world according to its one image, and it does not mean that we must march along with that teleology. What we should oppose is that teleology. And as for the majority of other issues besides identity—if I speak of my situation, they are serious issues regarding capitalism as something for the world's future, issues of what capitalism means for the world's future. Recently we have tended to sepa-

rate cultural issues from political and economic issues. I think that we should combine them together again. In the process, we need to create a new culture, and I think that this culture, in any event, will carry our own regional characters. That's my answer. Did it answer your question? Thank you.

> **Chung Moongil**

Thank you very much. At this late time, I would like to say thank you first of all to all of you who listened to this discussion on the floor. And I would like to express thanks to all of you on the platform who presented and participated in the discussion. The time has gone about 10 minutes or so over, but we will end today's session here.

For tomorrow's schedule, we are going to hold four smaller, slightly more specific sessions from the large topics being discussed now. There will be two sessions starting from 9:30 a.m. One is a session on "East Asian Environment/Nature/Cities." Also, in another room, there will be a session discussing issues of "East Asian Family/Gender/Community." After these two sessions finish, we will have lunch at 12:00, and from 1:30 p.m. the session on "East Asian Culture/Literature/Art/Religion" and two sessions on "East Asian Politics/Economy" will be held in the small room on the second floor, and finally there will be the general discussion in the afternoon. The general discussion starts at 4:20. Before then, we would appreciate it if all of you interested in the four sessions continued to examine the questions, whether it is how East Asia is connected through various issues, or over what characteristics East Asia can mix together or break apart.

SECTION 7

*Second Day  
Session*

동북아시아역사재단

동북아시아역사재단

동북아시아역사재단  
NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION

> **Chung Moongil**

Now we will start question-answer discussion. First, I will briefly summarize the contents of yesterday's topics and discussion. After that, I will allow the chairs for each session, in order from Session I to Session IV, to consolidate and present the issues dealt with in each of their sessions in 15 minutes or less with a brief summary. Later, as time permits, if there are any parts where the reports made by our reporters differ from the contents of the meetings from yesterday or today, or if there is anything that should be added, we will first allow those parts to be included in the general discussion.

Also, there have been many discussions related to the overall theme of "inquiring about East Asia again at the crossroads of two centuries." This is a very complicated issue, starting from the questions of whether we are inquiring again or inquiring for the first time or whether it is something that was always present, and continuing to the question of what this thing called "East Asia" is, but we will adopt the approach of finishing by listening to floor opinions centered on these general issues, including the question of whether it is a kind of modern myth or a post-modern reflection.

First, I will briefly introduce the topic presentation contents and contents related to the discussion of the topics corresponding to the session

yesterday afternoon.

First, as you all know, the first presentation given yesterday was Choi Wonsik's "A Korea-Based Alternative or an East Asia- Based Alternative: Korea and East Asia." For this part, as you know, Choi compressed hundreds of years of history, the history of the whole of Asia and of the three countries of South Korea, China and Japan, and examined them from a new perspective, organizing them from the points-of-view of the challenge of the sea and the arrival of the age of the sea. In so doing, he asks, what new counterweight can South Korea, China and Japan obtain in this new age? In other words, what kind of specific counterweight can there be where, rather than Seoul, Tokyo or Beijing being central points of power for each other, three axes can coexist, so to speak, or what kind of counterweight can these three axes create? Choi states that the search for and expansion of such a counterweight is necessary for the issue of East Asia.

Regarding this topic, the so-called "Mongolian problem" in the East Asian world, omitted from this discussion, was presented by the discussion participant Lim Hyungtaek, and included as something significant. Mongolia's role in the world and in East Asia were accepted.

Next was the topic of Baik Youngseo. This paper, entitled "Conceptualizing "Asia" in Modern Chinese Mind: A Korean Perspective," stated that, first, the Chinese people seem to fundamentally lack a Chinese Asian view anywhere in their various systems of ideas in the modern era or in their general mass or popular movements. In other words, Baik indicated that they are given over to Sinocentrism, or that, when Asianism is discussed according to occasional need, it is limited to China's domestic necessity. Presenting a kind of "East Asia as intellectual experiment," he stated that now is the time for the three nations of East Asia, and China in particular, to consider the East Asian issue.

On this topic, Han Shaogong, who participated in the discussion, asked

a very important question. Namely, he said that China has not thus far had an Asian awareness, but asked whether it had been considered what problems could arise if China becomes aware of Asia and engages with it. In other words, when China does think about East Asian administrative issues, will it have some particular plan in mind in relation to them? He indicated the necessity to also examine what negative or positive effects could emerge there. To put it differently, the positive and negative effects that the Chinese could bring with an Asian awareness must also be examined in a long-term view. However, he said that it is clear that China has thus far not possessed any Asian awareness.

Next was the presentation of Kang Sangjung, but since Kang is presenting for this portion, I will discuss this presentation again later.

The topic of our fourth presenter, Arif Dirlik, was “Culture Against History?: The “West” in the Search for an East Asian Identity,” where it was indicated that the view of the individual as an American of Asian descent is not the Asia or East Asia seen from Western eyes. In fact, when we first recommended Dirlik as a presenter, we did so for a “concept of Asia or East Asia seen from Western eyes” and expected such a response, but during the presentation he stated that clearly, if he said that he was speaking about East Asia from a Western perspective, there was a great likelihood that others might use it against him. He stated that he is a Turk, and that he can only talk about East Asia from the perspective of a Turk or from a global perspective. In the process, he said that the reciprocal relationships of the West and tradition are frequently interchanged for so-called “East Asians,” and that this idea of identity has basically internalized Western-centered thinking, and asked whether the issue of East Asia or the Asian region attaching itself to tradition lately is not also ultimately an internalization of Western thinking. Meanwhile, he stated that the opportunities to examine the issues of East Asia specifically must be found in

everyday life.

Among the comments on this section, Paik Nakchung noted that, while it is true that there is a clear Asia or East Asia as a regional concept, it also seems that there is some essence to the East Asia that we speak of nowadays outside of the regional concept, and asked whether the recent discussion of so-called “Confucian capitalism” might have possibilities for research showing the processes of how Southeast Asia, Asia or East Asia, as representative examples, adjust themselves to capitalism. In particular, the Asian issue has a very intricate and multi-layered connection with regional concepts, including East Asia, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, the whole of Asia and the whole of the Asia-Pacific region. He said that the ways of resolving East Asian issues must include close examination of these multi-layered components, and that when one speaks of East Asia, one must at least not disregard national or ethnic identity. In other words, he asked for simultaneous consideration of globalization and localization.

Finally, the topic of Kang Sangjung, who is with us today, is basically a very short presentation, but as he presents the question of ““Japan’s Asia” and Regionalism,” he states that the Asia of Japan repeats a pendulum movement from two extremes, one the desire to escape from Asia and enter the West, and the other Asianism, or the desire to stay isolated as Asia. Even so, he advocates the establishment, at the present time in particular, of “regionalism,” an East Asian regional community that we can conceive of newly from Japan in spite of this situation, and mentions the establishment of systems of multinational groups to guarantee security or multinational forums.

In response to this, Park Myoungkyu granted the need for such a regionalism, but asked, in connection with this East Asian regionalism, what then would be the perspective carried by this regionalism, what would be its contents, and what dangers could arise if Japanese nationalism is driven

to extremes.

So, first Kang will give a complete response for about 15 minutes, including his response to Park's questions, and then we will give Park another opportunity to ask questions on any parts that are not clear. Kang, we would like to hear your presentation.

> **Kang Sangjung**

How are you? I am Kang Sangjung, a second-generation Korean living in Japan and teaching at the University of Tokyo. At first, I was debating whether to speak in Japanese, in English or in Korean. There are also parts that I cannot speak of in detail with my Korean ability, so I would like to speak in Japanese, while hoping that you will understand that an ethnic Korea living in Japan who speaks Japanese is also a Korean who loves Korea.

First, I will speak on why regional unification in East Asia is important. As all of you know, within the threat of global capitalism, the current situation is the emergence of a Cold War-free American hegemony. I feel that in responding to this, there are limitations as to whether it is possible to respond within single-nation units. One can consider that there are options for possible responses, one being the method of responding like Malaysia, and the other being to accept the method of the European Union, relinquishing the right to integration of sovereign states.

In this situation, if an Asian crisis arises once again, I wonder if Korean society will not be faced with the same crisis of fundamental collapse. Since 1973, Eric J. Hobsbawm has been speaking of "social crisis." This refers to the crisis of social collapse rather than any revolutionary crisis. I feel that if an Asian crisis were to arise now, Korean society would confront the greatest crisis once again. Even so, in East Asia now, the systems capable of bearing part of the responsibility for the danger in this kind of

financial crisis and the system of an Asian monetary fund are in an undeveloped state as systems. This means that, currently, there is no secure safety net transcending national borders.

It can be seen that the role of Japan is now important for the realization of such regional integration. Presently, Japan's GNP has an overwhelming economic power, enough to exceed the GNP of all other Asian countries combined. In that situation, I too, as a Korean living in Japan, could say that I am faced with a two-sided situation.

I recall meeting Kim Huiro once somewhere, and he could be called the alter ego of the Korean living in Japan. But I feel that what sets a boundary between Kim and myself is merely a twist of fate. Thus, I myself could have become a belated Kim Huiro to some extent. With this kind of thing, where Kim Huiro plays such a decisive role, one could imagine a contradiction, and I think that both a Korean living in Japan and a Korean in Korea would have felt that way.

So I will discuss why Japan is important for such regional unification. Within its empire, Japan created the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere in the Asian empire, and this could be thought of as one example. From the 1930s to now in the 1990s, no historical recapitulation has yet been accomplished as to what regional unity is different and what regional unity is the same. Japan has had that decisive flaw in understanding Asia. If you think of Japan's view of Asia, it could be thought of as separated into areas. Once it could be thought of as the "leaving Asia and entering Europe" of Fukuzawa Yukichi and "Asianism." In terms of modernity, those views of Asia are greatly opposed to each other. Thus, "leaving Asia" and "Asianism" are nothing more than two different expressions of Japanese nationalism.

Next, I will speak of why Japan, in viewing Asia, came to arrive at a second "leaving Asia and entering Europe" after the war. John Dower

at MIT uses the expression “collusive Orientalism.” This is the formation of a postwar system through mutual collaboration between the United States and Japan. Ultimately, if you ask why Japan could not return to Asia, it is because it has maintained this present national structure within a relationship of American policy. In the current situation the United States and Japan could ultimately be said to have hybrid personalities.

In the end, Japan’s nationalism could be called American-dependent nationalism. That is to say that they ultimately form two sides of the same coin. This Japanese nationalism has expanded within a relationship of dependence on the United States. I think that when Japan is ultimately unable to bear this situation, this dependent situation, the pendulums of Japan’s “leaving Asia” and Asianism will move each other and proceed more toward Asia. Japan has passed through such a historical course.

In closing, I would like to substitute the conclusion while examining what is getting in the way of regional unity with Japan, China and Korea. I feel that this kind of regional unification was accomplished in Europe because it has multicultural and pluralistic values within a society where the state is subordinate. As factors preventing that kind of thing, I think you could mention the Imperial system in Japan, anti-Communism in South Korea and the one-party dictatorship of the Communist Party in China. In an undeveloped situation where these things are lacking, ultimately there is no choice but to go toward state-centered nationalism. If you look back on these things within the situation of Korea, you can think of a “multinational, multilingual ethnic community” as Paik Nakchung spoke of. I think that may be what can promote regional unity.

As all of you know, in East Asia now there are more than 3 million ethnic Koreans living in Central Asia, China and Japan. I call this the “Korean network.” I think that in Korea now as well, the way of thinking that views these overseas Koreans as inferior people is being criticized.

Viewing from my own personal situation, I was once greatly shocked when a friend committed suicide in my university days, but I wonder whether that friend had not felt estrangement from Japan and South Korea and North Korea. Currently in Korea, nationalism is found within globalism, but I feel that an opportunity is approaching to reach an open nationalism, where the memories of colonialism and anti-communist nationalism have been liberated and pluralistic values are recognized.

For that, I feel that South Korea needs to make active contact with the United States and Japan for the mutual recognition of North and South. I think that it must ultimately be made so that Korea can actively influence Japan. Chi Myongkwan said that, while Japan may be in a situation of not knowing what to do, Korea must respond actively. I would like to end by saying that it seems that Korea could play a crucial role of catalyst in East Asia. Thank you.

> **Chung Moongil**

Thank you very much. At the beginning we asked for the audience's understanding, but because Kang was a day late in arriving in Korea due to illness, we notified you in advance yesterday that he would use this time today to speak. Thus, since we have here with us Park Myoungkyu, who was unofficially selected as the commentator for yesterday, we will offer him another opportunity to ask questions.

> **Park Myoungkyu**

It was of great help in understanding Kang's argument precisely to hear what he had to say. It seems that there is not much time, so I would just like to ask one thing. In your presentation, you said that, in Japan, the pre-war "leaving Asia" tendencies and the Asianist tendencies are ultimately the same thing in terms of character. And regarding the atmosphere in

Japan that is currently shifting toward regionalism, it seems that you judge it relatively positively. Do you feel that the regionalism currently being discussed in Japan has no possibility at all of ultimately reverting to the mold of Japanese nationalism? I would like to hear a little more specific reference to what conditions would allow Japan to escape from the prewar pendulum movement going back and forth between “leaving Asia” and Asianism and to proceed toward the new open network that you spoke of here. I feel that this would only be possible through the shared historical reflection and evaluation of the three countries of Korea, China and Japan on the era of Japanese imperialism in the early twentieth century, and I would like to hear your opinions on this, and if possible, what the thoughts of general Japanese intellectuals are on this.

➤ **Kang Sangjung**

Basically, for me, I feel that asking the question of what will become of the relationship between Japan and the United States in the future is a start to a change in the pendulum movement. This is because Japan was opened by the United States, and after the war ended as well, it was opened by American economic involvement. I feel that the disappearance of this status vis-a-vis the United States may be the starting point for a change in Japan’s awareness of Asia. The second thing that you mentioned is just as you said. I feel that it could be one way of eliminating the fluctuations in Japan’s awareness of Asia within such common understanding between Japan and Korea.

When viewing those things, I come to consider what the role is of the Korean living in Japan, and I imagine that in terms of Japan, criticism of such fanatical nationalism is something that a Korean living in Japan can do. Of course it is not easy, but I feel that the role of the Korean in Japan may be found there.

The following is an abridged version of the general report and discussion contents for each session of the second day.

➤ **Chung Moongil**

Our designated time has now passed, so I will allow the chairs to speak for just two to three minutes. As I said before about self-contradiction, it is the bad habit of the chair to always try to reduce the time for others and increase his own time.

First, when we look over all of the seminars of the last two days, the keynote presentation of the first day and afternoon presentations clearly showed efforts to weave something together, so to speak, based on the three countries of East Asia, starting from a specification of East Asia and asking whether there is substance to it or not. And in a way, one phrase from the March 1st Declaration of Independence spoken of by Professor Chi Myongkwon in his keynote presentation plays a very important part in this situation. He said, “Korean independence is something that forces Japan to depart from the road of vice and assume the responsibility of supporter of the East, that forces China to escape for the uncertainty of terror that they could not be free from even in the Mongol invasion, and that creates a necessary path to world peace and human happiness, which are regarded as important parts of Eastern peace.” And while all three nations must take on this role, in the case of Korea in particular, the four presentations made specific indications as to what those so-called “displaced people” in the situation of a divided country, the Koreans who have been cast out and are literally without a place to stand, must do at this difficult point in time, pursuing the possibility that something can be grasped with respect to this. While it is unclear whether that is really inquiring again about East Asia, grasping it for the first time, or setting a stepping stone for more serious discussion in the future, in any event they discussed this

within a course of interweaving these issues.

But in the four sessions of today, the presenters all gave detailed accounts, but viewing in terms of the overall atmosphere, starting from the question of whether there is something specific to East Asia or Asia other than the geographic situation, opinions gathered along the lines that no matter what East Asia may be, it should perform some global role as an aggregate or region, a combined group that transcends simple geographical concepts. Of course, the opinions do not always agree. Rather, the three countries of East Asia, according to Baik's extreme expression, may go as far as wondering what more there is besides speaking of the American security system, but in any event, in spite of these different opinions, it seems that a considerable degree of agreement has been reached in terms of binding something together and stating that they must play some kind of historically meaningful role within world history. In the future, the Seonam Foundation intends to provide advice in order to fulfill the function of providing assistance to advance these issues further and create more active research in this area.

In any event, this international conference did not necessarily reach a conclusion of the discussion after the participation of more than 40 scholars, but in the future we look forward to this becoming an opportunity for more activity in specific research on East Asia. In particular, in addition to the more than 40 presenters and discussion participants, I would like to express our thanks to all of the audience members who have been with us for the past two days and to all of those who stayed until the end asking questions today. If there were any disappointments along the way, that is the fault of the chair, so I hope you will forgive me and help us in these meetings in the future. I would like to express my gratitude once again. Thank you.

## Contributors

**Chi Myongkwan:** Born in 1924 in Jeongju, North Pyeongan, Chi Myongkwan graduated from the Department of Religion in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree at the graduate school of the same university.

He worked as managing editor of the monthly *Sasanggye* and as a at Tokyo Women's Christian University, and he currently is a at the Hallym Academy of Sciences at Hallym University, as well as director of the Institute of Japanese Studies and a member of the board of directors at KBS.

His works as a writer include *The Jeogori and the Yoro* and *61 Scenes from Modern History that Moved Korea*, published in Korea and Japan, and a number of works published in Japan, including *Japan as Seen from Korea*, *What Are Human Assets?* and *Folk History of Joseon*.

**Choi Wonsik:** Born in 1949 in Incheon, Choi Wonsik graduated from the Department of Korean Literature in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree at the graduate school of the same university with “*A Study of the Literature of Lee Haejo*.”

After working as a in the Department of Korean Literature at Yeungnam University, he is now a of Korean literature at Inha University and is managing editor of the *Changbi Quarterly*.

His works as a writer include *A Manuscript of Modern Korean Literature*, *The Logic of Ethnic Literature*, *Historical Theory of the Modern Korean Novel*, *Cultural Theory of the Korean People* (Japanese edition) and *Toward Productive Conversation*.

**Baik Youngseo:** Born in 1953 in Incheon, Baik Youngseo graduated from the Department of East Asian History at the College of Liberal Arts at Seoul National University, and received his doctoral degree from the same university with *A Study of Chinese University Culture in the 1920s*.

After working as a in the Department of History at Hallym University, he now is a of history at Yonsei University and is a member of the editing committee of the *Changbi Quarterly*.

His works as a writer include *A Study of Modern Chinese University Culture*, *An Analysis of the Chinese People's Revolution* (co-author), *The Dispute over the Character of Chinese Society* (co-editor), and *The "Eastern" Awareness of East Asians: The 19th and 20th Centuries* (co-editor), and he has written numerous of essays on modern Chinese history.

**Kang Sangjung:** Born in 1950 in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, Kang Sangjung graduated from the Department of Political Science at Waseda University as a second generation Korean living in Japan, and received his master's and doctoral degrees in political science at the same university.

After working as a in the Division of Social Sciences at International Christian University, he now is a at the University Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies at the University of Tokyo.

His works as a writer include *Max Weber and Modernity*, *The Japanese Constitution as Seen by Asia*, and *Two Post-Wars and Japan*, and his *Beyond Orientalism* has been translated and published in Korea as well.

**Arif Dirlik:** Born in 1940 in Turkey, Arif Dirlik received a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering at Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey, and received his doctoral degree in History from the University of Rochester in the United States.

He taught at Duke University, and he also served on the editorial board of journals in Chinese studies including *Modern China* and *China Quarterly*.

His works as a writer include *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, *The Origins of Chinese Communism* and *The Postcolonial Aura*, and his *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism* has been translated and published in Korea as well.

He currently is a emeritus professor at Duke University.

**Choi Byungdoo:** Born in 1953, Choi Byungdoo graduated from the Department of Geography at the School of Social Sciences at Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree at the same university with Space and Social Theory: Geographical Criticism and Reconstruction.

After working as a lecturer at Seoul National University and the Korea National University of Education, he now is a in the Department of Geography Education at Daegu University.

His works as a writer include *Space and Environment in Korea*, *Environmental Social Theory and International Environmental Problems*, *Criticism for a Green Society* and *Environmental Conflict and Inequality*.

**Han Shaogong:** Born in 1953 in Changsha, Hunan Province, China, Han Shaogong graduated from the Department of Chinese Literature, Hunan Normal University.

He currently works as a novelist, and is the head of the Hainan Writer's Association and publisher of the representative Chinese journal of ideas and literature, *Tianya*.

His collections of short stories and novellas include *Moon Orchid*, *Across the Blue Sky*, *Temptation*, *The Killer*, and *The Deserted City*, and his prose collections include *Somniloquy* and *The World*.

**Kim Jinae:** Born in 1953, Kim Jinae graduated from the Department of Architecture at the College of Engineering at Seoul National University, and received her doctoral degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with "The Privatization of Public Open Space."

She is an architect who has worked as a researcher at the Laboratory of Architecture and Planning at MIT and as a senior researcher at the Housing Research Institute of the Korean National Housing Corporation. She is currently a principal of Seoul Forum Inc. and SF Inc. Architecture and Planning.

Her works as a writer include *Seoul with All Her Beauties*, *Splendid China*, *Housing in Transition*, *The "Human" Is My Theme*, *The "World" Is My Project* and *Growing into a Pro*.

**Cho Uhn:** Born in 1946, Cho Uhn graduated from the Department of English Literature at Seoul National University and received her master's and doctoral degrees in sociology at the University of Hawaii.

She currently is a professor of sociology at Dongguk University. Her works as a writer include *Social Problems in Korea at a Turning Point*, *Culture in the Age of Information*, *Development Indices in Korea*, *The Transformation of the Modern Family and Women's Issues* and *Future Society and the Women's Movement*.

**Chung Chinsung:** Born in 1953, Chung Chinsung graduated from the School of Sociology at Seoul National University and received her doctoral degree in soci-

ology at the University of Chicago.

After working as a in the Department of Sociology at Duksung Women's University, she now is a of sociology at Seoul National University.

Her works as a writer include co-edited volumes such as *Understanding Korean Social History*, *Modern Korean History and Social Change*, *Motherhood Discourse and Reality*, and *A Structuralist Understanding of Korean Society*, and she has also written a number of essays, including "The Social Integrative Character of the Japanese Women's Movement."

**Lee Seunghwan:** Born in 1956, Lee Seunghwan graduated from the Department of Philosophy at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Korea University, and received his doctoral degree in philosophy from the University of Hawaii.

After working as a full-time lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at Dong-A University, he now is a of philosophy at Korea University.

His works as a writer include *Reinterpretation of Confucianism as a Social Philosophy* and *Life and Symbols* (co-author), and he has written a number of essays, including "Did Confucian Ethics Include a Concept of Rights?," and "Research Trends in the World of Mainland Chinese Philosophy in the Last 10 Years."

**Kim Eunshil:** Born in 1957, Kim Eunshil graduated from the Department of English Literature at Ewha Womans University and received her doctoral degree in anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley.

She currently is a in the Department of Women's Studies at the Graduate School of Ewha Womans University.

Her works as a writer include *Meeting Me in a Strange Place* (co-editor), and she has written a number of essays, including "Ethnic Discourse and Women," "Raising Issues in the Women's Anthropology of Public and Private Domains," "Childbirth Culture and the Woman" and "The Consumer Culture of Women's Health Management and Physical Image."

**Jeon Hyungjun:** Born in Geochang, North Gyeongsang Province in 1956, Jeon Hyungjun graduated from the Department of Chinese Literature in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Seoul National University, and he received his doctoral degree in literature from the same university with "A Study of Realist

Theory in the New Literature Period.”

After working as a in the Department of Chinese Literature at Chungbuk University, he now is a cultural critic and a of Chinese literature at Seoul National University.

His works as a writer include *Intelligence and Practice*, *The Poverty of Literature*, *The Language of Pain*, *the Language of Life*, *Understanding Modern Chinese Literature* and *Modern Chinese Realist Theory*.

**Jung Jaeseo:** Born in 1952, Jung Jaeseo graduated from the Department of Chinese Literature at Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree in literature from the same university with “A Study of Supernatural Stories.”

After working as a of Chinese literature at Keimyung University being and a research at the Harvard-Yenching Institute, he current is a in the Department of Chinese Literature at Ewha Womans University.

His works as a writer include *Annotated Translation of the Shanhai Jing*, *Commentary and Collection of Research Data for “The Dream of the Red Chamber,”* *Immortal Legends and Ideas*, *The Sadness of the Oriental* and *East Asian Studies*, *from Writing to Discourse* (editor).

**Kim Yungmyung:** Born in 1954, Kim Yungmyung graduated from the Department of International Relations in the College of Social Sciences of Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree in political science at the State University of New York, Buffalo.

After working as a researcher at the Asian Policy Institute and the Institute for International Economics, he currently is a in the School of Politics and Public Administration at Hallym University.

His works as a writer include *A Modern Political History of Korea*, *The Poverty of Japan*, “*Japan as a Great Nation*” *Viewed by a Young Korean Scholar* (Japanese edition), *A Reexamination of the East Asian Development Model: Korea and Japan* and *East Asian Political Systems* (editor).

**Kim Daehwan:** Born in 1949, Kim Daehwan graduated from the Department of Economics at the College of Social Sciences of Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree in economics from Oxford University.

After working as a visiting at Oxford, he currently is a in the Division of

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His works as a writer include *Microeconomic Theory*, *Theory of Economic Development*, *British Industry Regulations for Privatization*, *Developmental Economics*, and *Economics Principles and Policy Tasks for a Democratic Market*.

**Han Kyungkoo:** Born in 1956, Han Kyungkoo graduated from the Department of Anthropology at Seoul National University and received his doctoral degree in anthropology from Harvard University.

After working as of anthropology at Kangwon University, he currently works as a of Japanese studies at Kookmin University.

His is a writer include *Japan, Japanese Studies: Arguments and Res-ponsibilities of Modern Japanese Studies* (co-author), *The Company as a Community: An Anthropological Study of Japanese Industry*, *The Global Korean People: Asia-Pacific, A Guide for Improvement of Quality of Life* (co-author), and *Whatever Happened to the People of Sihwa Lake?* (co-author).