

『Comments by Mineo Nakajima』 『Asia in the 1980s-1982』

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Asia in the 1980s: Interdependence, Peace, and Development

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Comments by Mineo Nakajima

With regard to the paper delivered by Mr. Wilson, Professor Nakajima said that it was a very sophisticated report and that in fact the views expressed do not diverge very far from his own, particularly concerning the point about China going through repeated waves of political turbulence into the future. Of these, the political change in 1976 and the Third Plenum of the Central Committee in December 1978 have served as major turning points placing China at the point of no return. The country is facing a great many difficulties in this situation and, over a very long period of time, it would be inevitable for China to go through phases of internal stagnation time and again. The political turbulences in the past were repeated stepwise in the form of rapid strides followed by slowdowns. In the 1970s, this mode of development, in Chinese terms expressed as waves and counter-waves, went through balance to imbalance in the end due to the political change in Peking, and has since lost its momentum.

Moreover, after the rapprochement with the West, particularly relations with Japan are about to face a deadlock. Already this is manifesting itself in the form of a series of cancellation of contracts. Furthermore, the future leadership of China can only become bureaucratic and, when the turn of events takes that direction, because the factors which gave rise to the Sino-Soviet conflict are disappearing, and in the course of the expected de-Maoization, Sino-Soviet relations may improve. To what degree will they improve, and on what level, and what impact will it have on the relations with Japan and the West? In the world of expanding interdependence, trade relations with the Soviet Union are still being maintained and, despite the resurgence of the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States after the crisis in Afghanistan, China has continued to purchase large-scale helicopters from the Soviet Union. There are also people in the People's Liberation Army who fear relations with the United States going too far, and there are still many channels for maintaining the Sino-Soviet relationship.

If international relations become more balanced in future and if the Sino-Soviet relations improve within this context there is no need to fear the outcome too much. The other framework for discussion which can be considered is that, since both China and the Soviet Union are facing the same economic difficulties and serious internal political situation, the two countries may shake hands again, and the relationship may improve in the form of confirmation between the two countries that they can do better together because they are both socialist countries.

If events turn in this direction, how it will influence other countries must be considered. If it serves to be a beginning of internal disruption, such as in Poland, then there is reason to be somewhat optimistic. However, despite all the difficulties, if international communism revives, or if the relations between the Communist Party of Japan and the Communist Party of the PRC and the Soviet Union improve, and together with North Korea and Vietnam work toward solidarity heading for the creation of Asian communism, there may be a possibility that revolutionary activities will reoccur. The kind of conciliation that will evolve between the USSR and China affects our future.

On the paper by Mr. Kojima, Professor Nakajima said that he could not agree with much of what it had to say although he was much impressed.

He questioned the evaluation that the thirty years of Chinese economic performance was remarkable. Considered in terms of the evolutionary stages of history this is true, but he said that we are now in a time when we do not take history as a vertical development. The meaning of socialism and revolution would be put to question if, despite the great sacrifices and the confusion experienced over the past thirty years, the standard of the economy stays where it is today. Moreover, he questioned whether the orientation toward equality and rationalization will be accepted. On the point of unemployment, if a rigid comparison is to be made with our society, the unemployment rate of the PRC can be calculated as somewhere around the 20 per cent level. Our own labor situation is very tight, while they are suffering from surplus labor.

On the point of the elimination of illiteracy, he said that he had held the same view as Mr. Kojima, but was told by a person of responsibility in the PRC during his visit to Peking last year, that although the elimination of illiteracy was said to be one of the outstanding achievements of the Chinese Revolution, this was only a myth, and that at present about 40 per cent of the people are illiterate just as it was published in the *Renmin ribao*. This leads to the fundamental question of what has the Communist Party of the PRC been doing for the modernization of China. He said that Mr. Kojima was probably of the view that there was a rationale in the Cultural Revolution and that the rationale of Mao was appropriate in terms of his framework of performance, but he said that he takes the view that China is in trouble because it is now paying for what the Cultural Revolution did. The Cultural Revolution is not considered to be acceptable in terms of logic, and there are youths in the remote areas who have been driven away from the urban centers and who are grievous and dissatisfied with the situation they have been placed in. Until these people are brought back to the cities and are given job opportunities, the social reality brought forth by the Great Cultural Revolution will remain. In effect, irrespective of attempts to justify the Great Cultural Revolution in terms of logic, the real consequences of the event are there and the reality cannot be wiped away easily.

He went on to describe that 60 per cent of the 38 million Communist Party members joined the party at the time of the Great Cultural Revolution. Even those members in the lowest echelons of the organization are people who have won membership after great hardship. At the provincial level, there are still many people staying as Communist Party members. This is also a social reality resulting from the Great Cultural Revolution.

The commentator has been against the Great Cultural Revolution and is of the opinion that it has left great constraints in Chinese society that are hard to remove, making it difficult for China to recover.

Comments by He Fang

After expressing his appreciation for the invitation extended by the Institute of Developing Economies to the Symposium, Mr. He Fang began his remarks by addressing himself to three main issues: the path of modernization of China, the problem of present economic adjustment, and Chinese external relations.

On modernization, he said that China was still in the process of trying to find the path to tread. There is no existing model that it can emulate. It must find a way that is appropriate to the reality of China today.