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Changes in China and East Asian Countries
and Area Studies

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1. Significance of "Area Studies"

It goes without saying that the purposes of "area studies," the main theme of this international symposium, after all lie in how to understand the behavior patterns and peculiar properties of different peoples of other countries. This understanding is "easier said than done" in the world of our time, but only an approach like "area studies" would open a way to avoid credibility gaps, frictions, tensions, and conflicts among states and among ethnic groups. It also makes intercultural exchanges truly possible by minimizing communication gaps and cultural conflicts.

The "area studies" are therefore important as a means to "surmount the cultures." Taking up the position that a heterogeneous culture is always despotic for the people of one country unless it has been grasped and appreciated by them. Herein exists the root of all hinderances to the understanding of foreign countries; Professor Edward T. Hall, a cultural anthropologist, describes as follows in his distinguished writing *Beyond Culture* (1976): "Understanding man, understanding culture, and understanding the world and unraveling the irrational are inseparable aspects of the same process. Culturally based paradigms place obstacles in the path to understanding because culture equips each of us with built-in blinders, hidden and unstated assumptions that control our thoughts and block the unraveling of cultural processes."

Thus, the importance of "area studies" is applicable not only to academic research and general foreign-country recognition; it can also be said about the foreign policy of a state.

The year 1987 falls on the 15th anniversary of the reopening of diplomatic relations between China and Japan but a serious friction has already shaped up in the past 15 years despite their friendship qualified as "t'ung wen t'ung chung" (meaning "same culture, same category"). This friction is the Sino-Japanese conflict centering around the court case of *Koko-ryo*, a student dormitory in Kyoto. China claims that the decision by the Osaka High Court, which admitted Taiwan's ownership of the *Koko-ryo*, is a violation of the principles declared in the Japan-China Joint Communiqué. This "principle" diplomacy forms China's official grounds for deciding its attitude towards overseas nations. Because Japan responded to the claim with its own principle of so-called Power Separation (i.e., separation of administration, legislation, and judiciary), the friction between the two countries has overheated pointlessly. For China, these principles represent a matter of "mien tsu" (face or honor) beyond which they cannot compromise. Japan's expressing helplessness over the presence of Taiwan (Nationalist China), rather than the *Koko-ryo* judgment itself, runs counter to the principles of China and, what is worse, damages its face.

Meanwhile, sticking to "principles" and "face" is usually accompanied by an attitude of thinking much of "reputation." So, it is another way of reaction in Chinese diplomacy that, only if

their face is esteemed and their principles can be defended at least nominally; they do not hesitate to adapt their policy measures to a realistic stance on the side of the other party.

Not only the idiom "both in name and reality" is often mentioned, but there is also a proverb "Name is the guest of reality" among what Chuang-tzu said a long time ago. This implies that "reality" (shih) is more important than "name" (ming) and that "name" has to be respected as a mere guest (pin) of "reality," or by courtesy. However, keeping the courtesy, i.e., "name" turns out to be the maintenance of the "principles" or "face" of China and we must fully understand the nature of this type political culture such as this.

Therefore, it is something of a rule that China normally takes considerably flexible and reasonable attitudes in applying its policies as long as its "principles" and "face" are appreciated. In fact, the word "flexibility" is expressed as "ling huohsing" in Chinese. As the word "ling huohsing" exactly indicates, flexibility in China bears a considerably "active" connotation; although its principles are very stiff, there are some areas around the firm core that are not affected by the principles (representing a certain room for compromise), and how Japan sees these areas is critical to the diplomatic relations between the two countries. A success in probing the extent of this tolerance will be a key to maintaining better relationship with China, I believe.

Speaking of the recent diplomatic movement in Japan, however, both the government and the foreign ministry have persisted in replying to China that they would not concede the

principle of Power Separation, either, when the Chinese side brought up the principles issue. This naturally led to a confrontation. Japan's unskillfulness in dealing with China was reflected in the event for sure.

Professor Chie Nakane made the following observation in her recent discourse on "Multifariousness in Asia -- From the Social Anthropological Standpoint" (*Collection of Lectures*, Japan Academy, October 1987): "The world of the Chinese is common with that of the Indians, rather than of the Japanese, and both of them are highly logical. In contrast, the world of the Japanese shares its base with the Southeast Asian countries, and it is the Japanese people who tend to leave a matter unexamined deeply and keep on smiling shyly without pushing the "principles" to the fore. This is indeed an observation like her.

The late Professor Mikisaburo Mori of Osaka University on the other hand called the Chinese culture a "Culture of Name" and the Japanese culture a "Culture of Shame." However, the Japanese people seem to view the "shame" as a virtue, not as a negative evaluation. If the "principles" are claimed by the Chinese, the Japanese must think of how to accept the claim within the confines of their traditional sensibilities, and not press their claims legalistically. In doing so, a sort of area-studies approach, which aims at clearly understanding the unique political culture, political structure and behavior pattern of China, is indispensable. One thing I realized after a closer look at the recent Sino-Japanese dispute is that what is missing from the Japanese government policies towards China,

including those of the foreign ministry, is such an area-studies oriented approach.

I have hitherto reviewed the importance of "area studies" from the viewpoint of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, a field very familiar to me. But, needless to say, the interdisciplinary general science known as "area studies" is not only useful as a means for avoiding friction in such diplomatic relations or exchanges between different cultures. It neither is intended only for extracting the cultural patterns and habits of ethnic groups/states. Although it would not be overdone however strongly the importance of the cultural aspect of "area studies" is emphasized, there is a big trap one might be caught in while pursuing the theory of "area studies": the way of looking upon the ethnical and cultural peculiarities of individual nations or groups with much respect leads not only to lead to a lack of tension in facing the reality, but also can bring about a vulgar and easygoing approach of culturalism. Richard H. Solomon's valuable work *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* is a typical example of a success in grasping China's political culture in the context of correlations to the Chinese Revolution. However, because China is a microcosm containing numberless cultural values, explaining domestic and foreign policies or political developments in China with most emphasis placed on the cultural aspect may also produce only an arbitrary extraction of those cultural tendencies required to interpret the current situation favorably to ourselves.

The accomplished scholar Benjamin I. Schwartz has pointed

out aptly, "In dealing with non-Western societies we easily slip into the vulgar cultural anthropological mode." "The effort to explain China's present international policies and posture in terms of Chinese culture may lead to a stress on precisely those strains in the culture which presumably avored the current development. If there were counter tendencies within this millennial culture, these are not likely to be mentioned. The net result may be not an illumination of the present but a simplification of China's complex and turbulent past" (This comment appeared in *Communism and China: Ideology in Flux*). A cultural approach is mandatory for throwing light on the Chinese society, but we at the same time have to hold such a unified standpoint of view that can imminently explore the dynamics of Chinese politics by means of the efficient manipulation of socioscientific methods. Excessive empathy with China, too naïve culture-relativism, or specific China syndrome is often seen in analyses of China which lack this standpoint of view.

In summary, "area studies" relies on how exactly the rhythm and dynamics of social changes in a target area can be grasped by getting rid of the entangled methodological arguments.

2. Contemporary China as a Target of Area Studies

How China should be recognized is, so to speak, an everlasting world-historic theme; however, China in any case is a gigantic target which will not afford to be trifled with by

the researcher's own arbitrary images. Herein lies the singularity of China, or "China Difference," that the way of recognizing China always remains an actual international subject. For this reason, a genre called "Sinology" in previous years and "Contemporary China Studies" in present days continues to exist exceptionally in the academic sphere of area studies. Many journalists and experts have been working hard day and night in the task of watching the movement of contemporary China, which casts various problems over the contemporary history of our time.

As is generally known, this distinctive China represents one of the great civilization of the world, with its history of three or four thousand years. And the microcosm of China in some cases riles entirely in the raging billows of commotion, while at other times it quiesces within a harmonious interchange between man and nature as if it were going back into its eternal traditional world.

There have been various arguments up until now about what angle of vision to choose for analyzing this deep and fluctuating China (see Chalmers Johnson's article "What's Wrong with Chinese Political Studies?" in *Asian Survey*, October 1982 for the arguments in the United States of America; and the book by Claude Aubert, Lucien Bianco, Claude Cadart and Jean-Luc Domemach, *Regards froids sur la Chine* for the arguments in France). I also have touched upon this point occasionally. (See my writings *Beijing in Flux* (*Pekin Retsuretsu*) and *Politics and Civilization of Contemporary China* (*Bunmei no Saichuzo wo mezasu Chugoku*).)

Of these arguments, what attracts the attention of we Japanese most is by no means the following remark made by Hotsumi Uzaki who died on the scaffold due to the famous Sorge incident. He said in the preface of his distinguished writing *On Contemporary China (Gendai Shina ron)*: "However, for an appropriate understanding of China, not local but total grasping seems necessary. ... It must not be like a necrotomy. Being like a vivisection is essential above all. Energy has been saved in fact in China which looks to be in a state of apparent death at a glance, and even a new law of motion is acting upon it." This stance of his underscores his mastery of a critical sense of China studies methodology, besides being an accurate discernment of the development of the situation in China.

Meanwhile, some observers consider it natural to never actually get a real image of the research target, China, because of the unusual amplitude of its oscillation, and tend to compare China analysis to what we call "the blind investigating an elephant with their fingers." Yet I do not side with them in this negative way of looking, in light of my long experience during which I was obliged to cope with the fluctuating China for myself. Professor A. Doak Barnett, known as a contemporary China expert of the United States, describes in his masterpiece *Uncertain Passage: China's Transition to the Post-Mao Era* that: "As any serious student of Chinese affairs knows, the one thing that is certain about China is that one must expect the unexpected." These mediocre words explicitly express the difficulty in conducting analysis or observation on China, though, I take it for granted that, apart from the individual

plots and scenes making up a political drama in China, the outline or undercurrent of this scenario can be estimated as long as the analysis of China today, which has passed through iterant fluctuations, is pursued from the viewpoint of "Contemporary China Studies."

Needless to say, wide knowledge and deep study of China are required, and the steps of sorting and retrieving information or data daily are inevitable, for this pursuit. More fundamentally, it is important to faithfully meet those reasonable primary premises that one must acquire an objective and manipulative methodology for China analysis and know of the uniqueness of China's political culture and Chinese way of thinking as well as the traditional features of the Chinese society. And, as long as one remained faithful to the said premises, he should have been able to catch the reality of China under the Cultural Revolution properly (refer to my book *Beijing in Flux (Pekin Ketsuretsu)* for details on this point).

In the area studies targeting China, anyway, such flexible and profound coordinate axes of China recognition that can afford to immanently grasp the gigantic dynamics and its abyss of the Chinese society and that would not be perturbed by the changes of China in the future are essential above all.

Now let me point out the basic elements which might constitute these axes of China recognition.

The first element relates the dynamics of today's Chinese society, i.e., a movement with contradictory outlooks or a double-sided status quo. The present-day China, which has rid itself of the restraints of Maoism and is stepping forward on

the course of modernization, faces a new possibility for the future for the first time in history on one hand and the huge backwardness, on the other hand, that cannot help but be conspicuous by the new-born prospects. Thus, China precisely stands in the middle of contraries.

This turnover in contemporary China is unprecedented in the sense that a huge state with a quarter of the world's population has launched a takeoff in real earnest, attempting "one fundamental reform of the greatest and oldest civilization." It can be said that, for the first time in 30 years after its foundation, China has succeeded in emerging from a revolution centered on power struggles to a total revolution of society and culture.

Moreover, this turnover has a very symbolic connotation in that it was brought about by the following two distinctive pressures.

The first pressure came from the horizontal international comparisons which occurred when China recognized the external world for the first time, for the country basically had been engaged in a violent domestic movement of ethnocentrism called "Chinese Nationalism" or exclusionism typically seen in the Thoughts of Mao Zedong, despite many "Western impacts" since the Opium War, and had thereby achieved internal fulfillment. The second pressure has been a vertical one originating from a fear of falling behind the times, since this self-centered movement in China had hampered the harmonic growth of the Chinese society and produced no sufficient economic fruits within the period of nation-building for 30 years. The recent drastic

change, therefore, may reflect a dynamic historical passage being shaken up and down through the influence of the double amplitude made up of the two pressures. Consequently, all contradictions in this passage are also subject to change.

The nationalism or exclusionism, which China continued to keep up traditionally as a counteragent to the horizontal pressure, acted on the gap between "the proud conveyed from ancient times and the poverty shown in daily life." This turned into an important impetus to push the reform and growth forward and, at the same time, was the source of the so-called "Chinese Image of World Order," as John King Fairbank pointed out (*The United States and China* in 1979, and *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* in 1968). But, because this Chinese nationalism or exclusionism will not disappear whichever way China turns, the question remains whether it can maintain for long the current feeling of awakening to the external world. The more severely China is swung by the vertical pressure, the more the China-specific cultural nationalism will be corroded with the progress of de-Maoization, although it now remains stronger than the integrative social ideology or modern nationalism. And China, in that case, will have to face another big contradiction. This is that the base, on which it has continued to exist as an extraordinary "ideological state" constantly from Confucianism to Maoism might be weakened independently of the commonly accepted theory which predicts the disappearance of the symbol of the megalo-state unity in China in the post-Mao era.

The second major point for China recognition is a

relationship between the ethnic properties of the Chinese people and modernization/industrialization. What should be investigated here are "collectiveness" and "monism" above all other national traits.

Generally speaking, a dictatorial political power is required for the modernization and national unification of a developing or underdeveloped country. But the theory that the efficiency of these two tasks goes up as the power grows quasi-moralistic (like, say, the Meiji Tenno regime, or military-Bonapartism), is unlikely to apply to China directly.

This exception can also be sensed in the following thread of argument: whereas a view that resistance or insurgency by minorities would threaten the unity of the Chinese people sounds appropriate as a generality because China is no doubt a multination state (despite the overwhelmingly dominant position in terms of population ratios of the Han Chinese), the possibility of this threat is actually quite remote.

Both the collectiveness and monism of the Chinese people (including the minorities), which draw a fundamental distinction between them and Western peoples who are characterized by diversity, are the greatest historical elements that can drive out the foregoing mistaken views. It is because of these national traits that the Chinese society did not dissolve whatever political disorder happened. The Chinese Communist rule itself can easily be accomplished through dependence on this collectiveness and monism even if the Communist Party falls into a political disunion just as it did during the Cultural Revolution.

Nonetheless, the historical/traditional soil of the Chinese society might turn to a condition which will invite the difficulties that are, in principle, incompatible with the path to an industrialized society, i.e., an opened China, to which diversity and a rational optimum environment are essential. This inadaptability to an industrialized society must be critical in speculating on the future course of China. The Chinese are inherently superior to the others as a mercantile people; however, they are bad at achieving prosperity through industrialization, namely, an expansion of added values. The underdeveloped status of capitalism in China bears a historical character far more than ascribable to the imperialistic exploitation by great powers. It is necessary to look at the matter, tracing back to the fact that China, being a Confucian state, was in essence a state of bureaucratic commerciality, or commercial-capitalist bureaucracy, just as "the official and commercial circles act as one."

The commercialistic, and non-industrial, nature of the Chinese people would be easily understood even by casting a glance at the process of formation and existing circumstances of the overseas Chinese, who live with such impressive toughness in almost all areas of the world including Southeast Asia. In the closing part of his comprehensive essay on China entitled *Confucianism and Taoism*, Max Weber succeeded in putting a sharp eye on this commercialistic feature of the Chinese people from the angle of utilitarianism.

Although the Chinese nation-state, such as Hongkong and Singapore, is economically brisk at present, its economic

prosperity basically relies on trade and commerce. Even bonded improvement trade, which characterizes their economies, may hardly be counted within the category of modern industries.

Only one exception in this regard is Taiwan. Despite its isolated position on the international stage, Taiwan is making headway as a newly industrializing country (NIC) in terms of its economy. When thinking of Taiwan's remarkable achievements in these days in the field of industrialization, two important facts stand out: that the majority of the people (the so-called Taiwanese) have been sustaining the influence of Japan rather than identifying themselves with Mainland China and that the infrastructure of the Taiwan society had already been established under the colonial rule by Japanese.

Moreover, Taiwan has continued to shift labor forces from the agricultural sectors to the urban, industrial sectors over the past quarter century, raising funds for industrialization at the same time through a foreign currency influx on a very large scale. It has thus achieved a changeover to an industrial structure almost completely. The giant China, on the other hand, is not so nimble enough to make a similar turnaround promptly.

If China continues to linger in this slump in the coming years, too, leaving its structural defects as they are, its future-oriented grand experiment, called "Four Modernizations" might be sucked down into the traditional framework and dispositions of the Chinese society.

Thirdly, there is a point of "constancy" about the Chinese society. When discussing the unprecedented society/state named

China, we should note the question of what standpoint to take so as to view the dynamics, which have been woven by confrontations and correlations between the "revolution" and the "tradition," in an integrated manner.

A number of arguments have already been made on those matters that rural communities shaped on the basis of blood relations (kinship) and/or local identity (hometown identification) are the basic components of the Chinese society, and that these communities have been developed from the traditional family system characterized by despotic patriarchy and family-assets equi-distributism.

As is well known, Karl Marx determined that the base of the so-called "oriental despotism" is the village communities, while Max Weber analyzed the Chinese society of such composition and provided a magnificent concept which asserts China as a state of bureaucratic patrimonialism.

Stimulated by these conceptual definitions, the Chinese society began to be portrayed as a "spectacle" reflecting various historical views and visions; not only enormous data based on much field work (including fact-findings and custom inquiries) have been accumulated in the fields of oriental history, socio-economic history, and sociology, but pros and cons have been repeated in both domestic and international circles about the so-called "community" theory.

Under these circumstances the "Asian-style stagnation" view of history, which considers the Chinese society to have been stagnating in a fixed way, persisted without a break as if it were a separate body of ideology in its own right.

Georg Wilhelm Hegel's concept of "Die orientalische Welt," which asserts that "among the Chinese everything remains exactly as they were in the old days," further brought on Karl Marx's famous conceptual category of the "Asian pattern of production." Thus, the controversy about the interpretation of this "Asian pattern of production," centering on a passage in his *Critique of Political Economy* that "in general the Asian, ancient, feudal, and modern-bourgeois patterns of production are characteristic of all periods during which each economic formation of society keeps on making headway," started in the 1920s and continues to this day.

In this context, those writings by Karl A. Wittfogel, who has been censured by Marxists as an apostate "stealing Marx's ideas of Asian society" (according to Jean Chesneaux), cannot be overlooked. While dependent on Marx's formulas, Wittfogel undertook a grander and careful analysis himself and identified the Chinese society to be a centralized despotic "hydraulic society" born from the needs of large-scale river administration/flood prevention programs, within his masterpiece *China's Economy and Society: Toward a Scientific Analysis of a Large-scale Asian Agrarian Society* in 1931. He, then, conceived the idea of an "Oriental Society" and, after what we call "a conversion," formulated the concept of China as a state of "oriental despotism" in 1957 (*Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Studies of Total Power*, New Haven; Yale University Press).

Wittfogel was attacked by the members of Marxist and other groups in connection with both his conversion and the E. H. Norman incident associated with McCarthyism. He became their

target because of his theory that the power base in China was one of "oriental despotism" while the country was still in the "remarkable" process of collectivization of agriculture. His view of history, however, seems to me so reasonable that it should have been evaluated or criticized more appropriately. This is particularly true when looking at the reality in which China after all turned into a Maoist patriarchy. Yet, at the same time, it would be too hard to grasp the whole picture of today's Chinese society by his historical view alone, because of his preoccupation with the single "hydraulic society" hypothesis. It is even an incisive irony that we rather feel an "oriental despotism" within the so highly bewitching and expounding tone of his historical view.

Therefore, in this regard, I would like to side with Étienne Balazs's way of thinking, who sharply pointed out the importance of getting to the bottom of the "constantly fixed" character of the Chinese society and dared to define such constant fixedness as "la Pérennité" (permanence or constancy) while seizing on it within the framework of the traditional bureaucratic system of China (see Étienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy: Variations on a Theme*).

It can be said that pursuing this "permanence" of the Chinese society will be a large theme for China studies, a part of area studies, beyond the old-fashioned historial views on the rise and fall of dynasties, or the so-called stagnant view of history, concerning the Chinese society.

3. East Asian Vitality and Confucian Culture Area

The wording "the end of the century" is used here and there nowadays, since we only have ten-odd years to come until the 21st century. It is sometimes spoken out as if were calling down a curse on the maturity achieved in this 20th century, which we may call an age of war and revolution or the time of a huge technological civilization. But, despite the dark tone and image of this phrase, Japan and its peripheral areas, or collectively East Asia, are likely to be a brilliant and vigorous world during the years around the centurial period.

Meantime, early in the 20th century, O. Schpengler's *Downfall of the West* happened to make a large impact in intellectual circles after the First World War. The book predicted a cultural rise of the non-Western world, describing the presence of many other variegated civilizations than the Europeans', and from now to the 21st century, the "Confucian culture area" of East Asia would be functioning as the center of the economic and social vitality of the world.

An attempt to examine the background of the economic and social development of the East Asian economic bloc, or East Asian culture region, within a category of civilization theory named "Confucian culture area" is becoming the recent, notable trend.

The late Herman Kahn, who was a sort of prophet with unique ideas, set forth the contribution of Confucian ethics to

the modernization and industrialization as early as 1979, although it was a rough discussion (see *World Economic Development 1979 and Beyond*). However, in the light of my experience, there was another statement by Professor Chalmers Johnson (of the University of California, Berkeley) who recently became a topic of conversation due to his assessment of Japan as a "capitalist developmental state" (CDS); that is, "a post-Confucian era is coming," he said when I met him early in the 1980s. This may be interpreted as an indication of an ongoing transition to the time of those countries which have already passed the confines of the Confucian culture and are growing into economic giants.

In Japan, too, Professor Hajime Nakamura, one of the most prominent scholars of Indian philosophy, expressed the foresight in his keynote paper for a conference attended by a number of Northeast Asian intellectuals in 1981 (sponsored by the Japan Economic Survey Council). This paper, entitled *Traditional Mentality and Modern-time Construction in East Asia*, expressed the view that, although the Western countries have been taking a guiding stance almost completely in the conventional modern civilizations in the world, the East Asian culture region will probably have a great significance for the modern-time construction of the world in and after 1980. Professor Il-gon Kim, who attended the same symposium, made a very unique characteristic analysis of the Confucian culture area in his famous writing *The Social Order and Economy of the Confucian Cultural Region* in 1984.

I myself published what has been viewed as an informative

book a year ago under the title *The 21st Century, a Time for Japan, Taiwan and South Korea: The World Being Led by East Asia*, which includes a chapter of "Why Is the Confucian Culture Area So Strong?" Its translation was immediately released by publishers in several different languages. The book *Le nouveau Monde sinisé* written by Professor Leon Vandermeersch (University of Paris V) and translated into Japanese quite recently is also a demonstrative and highly academic study of the Confucian culture area.

While intellectual interest has been increasing in this way, the remarkable economic growth actually continues both in Japan and in other East Asian countries referred to as "Asian NICs." The share of East Asian countries (including Japan) in the US total amount of trade with overseas continues to be greater than that of the European countries since 1983, and this trend will no longer be reverted. The largest flow of trade in the world now runs across the Pacific, primarily via East Asia, and the world economic movement which focuses on the Confucian countries of East Asia has been clearly indicated by statistics as well.

71 | It is of course still necessary for us to carefully check and review the term "Confucian culture area" itself. This is because, (as already mentioned, in the first place,) discussing the development of a nation or ^{dimension} ~~state~~ ^{region} within the cultural framework alone tends to fall into a vulgar and arbitrary culturalist approach.

72 | Secondly, putting stress on the Confucian culture area contains a fear of spelling a sort of anachronism or a

preference for reverting to the old days. It can hardly be said that the Confucian culture of East Asia of today exists in a manner able to be immediately utilized in the actual economic growth. This is true not only in Japan, but even in such countries as South Korea, which is said to have been following the tradition of the Confucian culture most peculiarly, and Taiwan where Confucianism is still valued these days. In that sense, the traditional Confucian culture may have already begun to die out.

② The third point (to be noted) is a bitter experience in the contemporary history of the 20th century that views conforming to the "culture area" concept had to end up in geopolitic determinism or cultural despotism.

③ Although we should give all the above problems our careful consideration, Japan and Asian NICs are certainly located in the Confucian culture area and the economic growth of these countries appears to have become a force driving the world towards the 21st century. For this reason, the question of "Why the Confucian culture area now?" sounds so fresh. The innovative tinge is also sensed when thinking of the future development of the least developed societies within the non-Western developing world (i.e., LDDCs), because the modernization theories dependent on conventional models are being challenged drastically by the amazing successes of the Confucian countries.

On the other hand, the reality, that such socialist countries as the People's Republic of China (PRC), North Korea and Vietnam are economically stagnant although they belong the

④ NICs & NIES to 1/3 GNP catch up

⑤ Mainland China

Market Economy

same Confucian culture area as the forementioned countries, shows how poor the Marxist-pattern socialist model is in efficiency and applicability for modernization/industrialization. There is a more comprehensive system of thought than the socialists' as to the model of modernization. It is Max Weber's way of thinking. He told in his famous writing *Ethics of Protestantism and Spirit of Capitalism* that modernization and industrialization could be attained only in the Western societies where the asceticism and willingness to work, symbolized by the "Protestant work ethic," were regarded as nucleus values -- particularly in England and the United States controlled by the strict ethos of Puritanism named "Weltablehnung" (rejection of mundane world). He, at the same time, tested the question of why Confucian rationalism, which approves gain and affirms the mundane world optimistically, cannot lead to a growth of modern capitalism, through the contrast with the Western Puritan or Protestant society in which gain is denied and the mundane world is strictly rejected. However, beyond his estimations, the Confucian countries are beginning to show a very high possibility actually from the 1980s down to the 21st century.

The fact that the Confucian countries are making remarkable progress in terms of capitalism, too, today would mean that the actual development of these countries has already outrun Weber's model following Marx's, or the reality overtopping the theory.

Now let me touch upon some more modernization theories.

The American rationalism, or pragmatism, aimed at a highly

consumptive mass society has been in a stalemate in these days, as is able to be pointed out from the point of the failure of the American nucleus value sometimes referred to as WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant). But there were development models in the postwar days for the restoration and expansion of the American society represented by the modernization theory of Professor W. W. Rostow.

All these models, however, have generally succeeded to the same fate as the so-called "behavioral science" theory of the future. Just as the highly American-particular Rostow theory, the "product cycle model" proposed late in the 1960s by Professor Raymond Vernon of Harvard University saw multinational enterprises to be a phenomenon unique to the American society, then divided the life of a single product into periods of introduction, maturation, and standardization, and connected them to the processes of Americans' inroads into foreign markets and developing countries' industrialization. This idea of Vernon's was once thrown into the limelight, but has since receded into the background nowadays.

The American models of modernization theory have thus been long deadlocked. Then, early in the 1970s, a "comparative studies of modernization" was tried at both international and interdisciplinary levels by Ms. Kiyoko Takeda and other Japanese scholars/researchers, in reaction to the failures of the past theories. This new approach promises to draw much attention from related circles and has made highly valuable academic contributions. But, because Asian NICs have not yet made a clear-cut appearance on the stage of contemporary history, no

light was put on such Confucian countries as Taiwan and South Korea, although the argument about the modernization of Japan may have been deepened.

After all these passages, some of the scholars and anti-establishment ideologists in the Third World have gotten caught up in the so-called "dependency theory" or "teoria de dependencia," under the circumstances of limited Marxism or post-Marxism. It is an argument finding a large historical significance in the challenges from the "periphery" to the "center" of the world's rule, from the standpoint that the advancement of the central, developed nations on the globe is the result of their colonial exploitation from less developed (or developing) countries and that exchanges between the two groups are to prompt the exploitation, not the development. But this dependency theory, too, has already lost its usefulness (practicability). That the modernization of even a single country cannot succeed by the dependency theory alone is indicated by the realities in all Latin American countries themselves although they were logically the major target of this theory.

There also have been some other propositions lately, such as the "theories of world system" evolved macroscopically by I. Wallerstein and others from the dependency theory, and the "concepts of modernization" put forth by H.-U. Wehler to revive the modernization theories in a linkage with historical science (social history) from the standpoint of neo-Marxism. However, each of these propositions was too limited to theoretically explain the East Asian vitalities.

Consequently, new challenges for the Confucian culture area started after almost all models and ideas conceivable within the framework of modernization theories had collapsed or encountered a limit.

Needless to say, the exact contents of the Confucian culture area varies with the individual nations comprising this area. There are also differences in the way the same Confucian ethical codes are accepted, depending on the nationality. Even how the virtues of Confucianism are accepted differs between nations; however, every country in the Confucian culture area currently enjoys outstanding development and growth, as part of an environment in which they are regarded as culturally equal as a whole. We cannot help but pay attention to this favorable actual situation. Consequently, an attempt has begun to grasp the inherent factors bringing the success of economic development of the Confucian countries through a look from the inside of Asia.

In his *The Social Order and Economy of the Confucian Cultural Region*, Professor Il-gon Kim said, "The biggest feature of the Confucian culture seems to be the social order by the family group system The collective (group) culture of the Confucian collective order has been maintained by the history and tradition of collectivism (the group system)." These are very interesting remarks which offer the proposition that the collectivism connected with the Confucian ethics is an important underpinning of the economic development of the countries in the Confucian culture area.

When considering collectivism, there are the ideas of

"vertically structured society" and "small group system" in Japan, advocated by Professor Chie Nakane. The Chinese societies including those of overseas Chinese in Hongkong, Singapore and other South East Asian countries, on the other hand, are horizontally structured societies in which networks of local identity and blood relationship are utilized in full. Therefore, they may be defined as large group societies in principle.

It is an undeniable fact that the family group system is nonetheless the common base of all societies in the Confucian culture area, although varied as described above.

It is seen in big Japanese enterprises today that such a family group system has not been utilized as merely a measure for organizing the labor force but has become an important part of management codes for systematizing the life of all groups including the components (employees) of each enterprise and the employees' families. You can learn this point clearly if you trace the descent of leading tradesmen and artisans in the Edo Era, which later shaped Japanese *zaibatsu* (business conglomerates) like Mitsui and Sumitomo. The system also played in the process of forming financial combines in South Korea. It must not be neglected, either, that the spirit of Confucian "moderation" (the Doctrine of the Mean) or orientation towards "harmony" has become an important cohesive force/affinity for business and industrial activities. Some might have a look at the establishment of the lifetime employment system or industrial unions in connection with the thoughts of Confucianism.

The second feature of the Confucian culture area lies in the intensification of learning, i.e., learned groups/state. The influence of Confucianism is also sensed strongly in the academic studies and researches. It is a well-known fact that those Confucian schools organized for new doctorinal interpretations, especially the Chu-tzu school, meant a great deal to the generation of modern thinking in Japan and for the general progress of modernization as well. In China, too, the Confucian culture had been studied thoroughly for the purpose of taking civil service examinations, etc. I consider, in this context, much importance would rather be attached to the educational and social effects of learning *kanji* characters, since it is the practice common to the forementioned three countries. The respect for learning, and the orientation to learned groups and states have eventually led to today's high educational standards and high literacy rates in all Confucian countries of Asia except for mainland China. Accordingly, knowledge intensified soil exists on both central and local levels in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, and the movement to a learned state of the Japanese pattern, including its examination system, continues to be a general tendency. Although abuses ascribed to this trend are often argued, emphasis on learning will no doubt play a significant role in developing the know-how required for modernization and industrialization, arranging the infrastructure and information networks, etc. So we need to re-think the reality in China where literal reforms, which were as intended to nullify the significance of *kanji* learnings revolutionally and attain the

symbolization or simplest expression of characters according to the thoughts of Mao Zedong, have failed to reach the improvements in the literate rate.

Third feature of Confucian culture is maintaining a sort of ethical, behavior code or norm of action traditionally. Professor Leon Vandermeersch sharply analyzed the essence of Confucianism associated with economic development to be "Famille" (family), "rite" and "mandarinat" (high-officialdom bureaucracy).

In addition to all these characteristics, there is a fourth but most important point: that Confucianism was originally a set of ethical codes, rather than a religious object. As the professor says, "one of the distinctive characters of the Confucian system of communality is being completely free from religious belief." And because Confucianism is not precisely a religion, coexistence with, say, Shintoism was possible in Japan. In other words, Confucianism is an extremely generous doctrine, characterized by the resemblance to social codes or moral discipline rather than a belief. This generosity for other religions and non-bindingness to religion is decisively prominent compared with Islam and Catholicism. Still, the loose, ethical behavior codes of Confucianism may be responsible for inducing a sort of practical scientific spirit and experientialism coupled with the foregoing features, and the inherent mundane-life affirmative rationalistic spirit of the Confucian culture, and thus greatly helped prepare the social base for industrialization.

in traditional
Japanese
society.

In the meantime, there is a famous book Rongo to Soroban (*The Analects of Confucius and an Abacus*) written by the Japanese business world pioneer Eiichi Shibusawa, who learned Sekimon Shingaku, a new Japanese Confucian school affirming the thoughts of "profit" and exerting influence on the *chonin* (townspeople) class in the middle of the Edo Era, and positively re-read *The Analects of Confucius* to remove the Confucian interpretations of the Chu-tzu School and consider the *jingi* (a code of conduct) and *fuki* (wealth and high rank) compatible. The two ideas of business recognized in this book, i.e., Giri-ryozen (integrating morality and profit) and *Chifu-keikoku* (running the state by reaching the wealth) should help to cast new light on the up-to-date framework of Confucian culture area. (See *The Thought of Business* or *Jitsugyo no Shiso* for the ideas and activities of Eiichi Shibusawa.)

It cannot be denied anyway that the doctrine of Confucianism has long been an important ethical support for the modernization and economic development of Asian industrial states, serving as the spiritual and social resource of their vitalities simultaneously.

I have hitherto referred to the subject of this discussion from different angles, though, not all keys of today's successful modernizing and economic achievements of Japan and Asian NICs could easily be broken by merely the idea of "Confucian culture area." I neither dare to say that everything of these countries has been prescribed within the confines of self-identification to the Confucianism or Confucian culture.

It would be easier to catch the development lag of China,

North Korea and Vietnam by taking a look at it as a problem of the socialist system. Moreover, as for the success of Japan, such fundamental and common factors as the continuous and overall acceptance of modern European mental culture and technology since the Meiji Restoration, various domestic reforms in the postwar years, and the huge influence of the contemporary American industrial civilization cannot be neglected.

Regarding the Asian NICs, too, the process of their getting rid of the unfavorable institutional inheritances from the colonial rule overlapped the East-West cold war period after the Second World War, and the NICs "utilized" this international environment for the positive introduction of foreign capital in order to change their industrial structures under a powerful (realpolitico-) dictatorship and then carry out a strategical turnaround from imports-substitution industrialization to export-oriented industrialization of today. So, there is also the need to study these efforts of them on a country/area basis.

Moreover, as a key of the success of East Asian industrial countries including Japan, the efficient functions and structures of bureaucratic organizations, the excellent performance of what Professor Chalmers Johnson calls "relations between the government and business," i.e., the politico-industrial relations (not the military-industrial relations), etc. must be emphasized. In the book *Hidden Differences*, Professor Edward Hall of cultural anthropology, who is now in attendance at this symposium fortunately, discusses the Japanese

business world's decision-making and agreement mechanisms, symbolized by the *ringi* (the process of obtaining sanction from senior executives for a plan by circulating a draft proposal prepared lower down in the organization) and relatively "ritual" executive meetings, as well as the effects of receptions, intermediaries and name cards, from the viewpoint that all these are a culture pattern.

Thus, approach from such different angles are available to analyze East Asian societies, and a majority of researchers and analysts, I believe, do not feel like generalizing the factors of successful modernization and industrialization in the form of the "Confucian culture area."

As was told to me by Mr. Masakazu Yamazaki, who is a famous playwright and a critic in Japan, it is more appropriate to say that the Confucian culture is the so-called "negative force" to the modernization. This means that, if all general factors having brought about successful modernization and industrialization should be "positive," those factors ascribed to the Confucian culture must have worked to the contrary. But, because the Confucian culture had already started to be dying out in the modern and contemporary societies, it was able to remain as a contributive code throughout the past passage of national growth. Professor Vardermeersch said that "it is exactly due to the definite death of Confucianism that its inheritances can be re-invested in a new way of thinking without running counter to the different requirements of development."

For all such unhappy remarks, the possibility of the future development of Confucian countries is still high. Yet,

the years, when Japan continued to be spoken of as if were only one example of successful modernization and industrialization in the non-Western world, have already gone. Japan is now becoming the model to be targeted by those Asian and non-Western societies that are supported by the social growth of the new middle classes born with the progress of economic development. It, therefore, will have to be tested in real earnest by the question of how it should settle the less-armed economic state model of its own in the coming 21st century, in addition to the ongoing serious struggles for internationalization or for an "open Japan."

Under these circumstances, where not only Japan but also the East Asian economic bloc as a whole is about to draw much more attention than ever, we are beginning to encounter pressure for the need to precisely quantify all similarities, rather than the differences, among the countries of this bloc through studies on the cultural phase called "Confucian culture area" in terms of historical significance, self-confirmation, and self-restriction.

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