



For the Asia -
Pacific Age



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First, let me express my heartfelt gratitude to the many participants that came long distances to this symposium today and joined the earnest discussion. The theme of today's morning session was "Asia's Encounter with the West: A Balance Sheet." In this session, the many ways of thought about this theme were presented from the many backgrounds of the participants. I cannot sum up these various opinions very well. Then I would like to play my role of summing-up by telling my general impressions that I had in this discussion.

Asia's Encounter with modern Europe

As everyone knows, since the beginning of the 19th century or before, the countries of Asia were subjected to the overwhelming power of modern European civilization. Since then, modernization and westernization have been great subjects of Asian nations. Most Asian countries were colonized by the great powers of Europe. In these countries, the modernization movement was combined with the movement toward independence from European colonization.

On the other hand, the countries of Asia which were not colonized, such as Japan and Thailand, accepted positively the new civilization which advanced on them from Europe. Through this voluntary Europeanization, these countries avoided European colonization. Whether they advanced in this direction or that, the Europeanization and thus modernization was a supreme order for them. It was an unavoidable fate.

Since then, we have had to suffer from the conflict between modernization and tradition. Whether we attempted independence from Europe or ranking on a level with Europe, we have had to destroy the old and traditional society

at any cost. We faced a crisis of losing our own identity. The statesmen and intellectuals have thanked Europeanization as the supreme order and have emphasized that the old and traditional culture is out of date and must be gotten rid of. On the other hand, those who attached importance to tradition and emphasized the identity of the nation denounced the Europeanization and modernization which endangered the basis of social existence.

Toynbee pointed out in "A Study of History" that two opposite reactions occur when one civilization encounters another. He named these reactions of repulsion and assimilation "Zealotism and Herodianism," respectively, on the model of two reactions which the ancient civilization of Judea showed when it came into contact with the Greek civilization. These two opposite reactions appeared in Asia toward the European civilization in the 19th and 20th centuries, too.

Now, what are the results of the cultural complications between Zealotism and Herodianism in Asia during these past 200 years? Directly speaking, in relation to the traditional culture of Asia, two aspects are clear: one aspect is that we have lost the old and good tradition, and another aspect is that we have made the most of this tradition. By encountering the modern European civilization, we have had to transform or reform considerable parts of our own tradition that is good, such as morality and faith. In this point, it is sure that considerable parts of the old and good things have been lost.

But there is also the phase that the core of traditional culture has been useful for modernization and Europeanization. And thus, the movement of independence or equalization in Asian countries toward European powers mostly advanced in this direction. They built nice modern states while maintaining their respective traditions. It was the common experience for Asian countries to accept modern European civilization while making efforts to maintain their own identity on encounter with it.

Thus, looking at the situation of today's Asia, the Asian countries

could achieve independence from Europe after World War II. This is because they had advanced toward state-building by taxing their own ingenuity and keeping the balance between modernization and tradition through a long battle of approximately 200 years. By this fact, these countries could overthrow the egocentrism of Europe which had been dominant for over 400 years since the 16th century. This was the result of an encounter between two civilizations. Today's remarkable economic development of East Asia is on this extension, and it is in part responsible for the end of the Cold War between East and West. Now it is possible for us to have a vision of a new world order in the 21st century.

The Case of Japan

If you look back on the modern history of Japan, you will find that the invasion of modern European civilization played a large role in its development. In this case, Japan showed simultaneously the reactions of "Zealotism and Herodianism" toward the modern European civilization. Generally speaking, however, Japan has realized comparatively skillfully a balanced modernization between tradition and modernism. Japan put up the slogan "Japanese spirit and western knowledge" about 120 years ago. Understanding from this, Japan has been seeking the coexistence of contrary things by keeping the core of traditional spirit while at the same time carrying quickly forward with the modern Europeanization.

In fact, the elite played a leading part in the development process of this modern Europeanization. Most of them belonged to the lower Samurai class and were bred in the feudal society at the end of the Edo age. They had a strong Bushido background which was based on the Confucian spirit. This Bushido spirit contributed to the modernization and Europeanization of Japan because Bushido taught above all the ethic of the leader : its essence was self-sacrifice for the whole.

Moreover, Japan was basically an agrarian society. The spirit which this

society cultivated in its long history was the idea that "We can gain surely the fruit if we endeavor to work with our whole heart." This idea contributed in nurturing modern capitalism since the Edo age. The idea of labor contributed further to form modern industrial society after the Meiji age. The Japanese view of the holy labor, which had been cultivated since the Edo age, combined with the insight of the elite from the Samurai class, have contributed to the development of modern industry from light to heavy. We have the inheritance of the Edo age behind the modern Europeanization of Japan after the Meiji age. This social tradition has contributed to modernization.

The modified culture of the old agrarian society remains still on the basis of today's Japan as the highly developed and super-modern society. For example, the way of Japanese company management, which was developed after 1960, has modified the modern industrial civilization which has been brought up in the western contract society. The culture of the Japanese non-contract society places great importance upon human relations. It has succeeded in bringing about the consensus of the whole and the will of the laborer. Most Japanese have much regard for delicate human relations and manage problems flexibly. This ability was cultivated in the traditional village-community, which centered around agriculture. Clearly, Japan has imitated the west and has taken aim at overtaking and outstripping it during the past 100 years and a few decades of the modern age. But, in fact, Japan has always transformed the western modern civilization in its own tradition and advanced on the coexistence of modernization and tradition. Today, Japan is exceeding Europe and America in economic ability. This is caused by keeping the balance of development and culture. Modernization and tradition have to complement one another; modernization has to make the most of traditional culture. Modernization which treasures tradition, that is, development which does not lose the cultural core, is needed and is not impossible.

The Idea of the Asia-Pacific age

Today's world society is going toward unification on the three big axes : the Europe-circle, the America-circle and the Asia-circle. Particularly when viewing East Asia, we seem to start correcting the gaps between north and south. Looking on the economic side, East Asia has turned from the vertical division of industry to the level, and the possibility of the mutual multiplicative prosperity of the north and the south has come into sight. The economic prosperity of South East Asia proves it. In the liberal world of East Asia at least, the realization of peace and prosperity is not impossible. We are on the stage from which we can foresee that matter.

What has brought about the unification of East Asia is the development of science, technology, and economics. On the other hand, we are conscious from the cultural side of the difference between one another. We are going in the direction of unification technologically and economically, while maintaining our cultural diversity. Then we can find the essence of this Asia-Pacific age in the idea of "Unity in Multiplicity." The society in which many nations keep their own cultures and are united at the same time is formed toward the 21st century. This society is no longer the field of opposition between the western and eastern ideologies, neither is it between the worlds of north and south, nor is it between the European and non-European circles. It will be the field on which those oppositions will be overcome. Certainly, Asia varies in language, religion, culture, political systems, and in the degree of modernization. However, this multiplicity is not a hindrance but a help, because we must aim at a unification that keeps respective cultural traditions.

The traditions of these countries are various, but there is also a common idea. The building of a state and the development of technology based on cultural pluralism is not impossible. "Unity in Multiplicity" or "One is Many, Many is One," these are philosophies that lead the Asia-Pacific age. At the same time, it will be the idea of civilization on earth in the 21st

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