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Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions

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Sometimes they originated from China and reached other parts of the world as well as Korea and Japan.

Political leaders in the three countries sometimes regarded impacts of globalization as welcome gifts, while at other times they attempted to resist them. In particular, the Koreans and Japanese were often receptive to ideologies and culture from China. But it should be stressed that they did not simply absorb the global religions, ideologies, and value systems. Rather, they often selectively adapted and modified them in accordance with their needs and local traditions. Since the early modern era, the pattern of globalization has become more persistent, compulsory, aggressive, and often antagonistic.

Moreover, Japan is no longer merely a receiver of global gifts from China or Korea. It has become an important contributor to the global flow of things, just as China was during the premodern period. To resist or accommodate the new global values—namely modernization, nationalism, and communism—political leaders in East Asia have had to build a nation and a state out of their own domains. It was a process of resistance, selection, imitation, localization, counter-blow, and, ultimately, “glocalization.”

As of today, the channels of globalization have become more diversified and complicated and, in a sense, reciprocal. We believe that the way the East Asian region “responds in fairness to globalization” will be important for all of humanity. We are hopeful that the resurgence of human and intellectual resources in East Asia—which once had a splendid tradition and made great contributions to humanity—will act as a new alternative foundation for the post-globalized world by interacting with other great traditions everywhere.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

Civil Society in East Asia

Jim Dator

WHAT DOES “civil society” mean within an East Asian perspective? To the extent that East Asian societies are based on Confucian traditions, it might seem at first blush that there is no indigenous concept of civil society in the region. As Nosco and Rosemont tell it, the classical Confucian view of the state is quite similar to what Ehrenberg described, above, about Western ancient and medieval times, a “fused state” in which civilization is made possible only by a strong and all-encompassing government from which there is no legitimate separation or independence.

The discussion of Confucian perspectives on the boundary between civil society and the state . . . is thoroughly speculative, for classical Confucianism never

envisioned a society inclusive of secular, voluntary associations of the sort suggestive of my understanding of civil society. This kind of society requires not just a sense of the integrity of the individual as an actor capable of negotiating his/her interactions in a responsible and ultimately socially constructive manner (something Confucianism would affirm) but also an acknowledged sphere of privacy granted by the state and society to its individual and corporate members to enable unauthorized voluntary associations, and Confucianism has generally not distinguished between privacy and selfishness in these contexts. (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 337)

The closest classical Confucianism comes to a concept of civil society is in the well-known series of mutual obligations from child to parent upward to the ruler and the ruled. In the family and village/labor community there is a sphere of relations, functionally similar to that of a civil society, but ultimately connected to the emperor, with his Mandate from Heaven at the top.

Confucianism’s five relationships (ruler/subject, parent/child, husband/wife, elder brother/younger brother, and friend/friend) explicitly acknowledge the importance and value of such voluntary and consensual relationships. But it is also abundantly clear that Confucianism gives priority to those relationships that are found within the household, and to those relations in which there is a clear benefactor and beneficiary, since these are the relationships that prepare one for citizenship and train one in goodness. (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 343)

In this regard it is important to note that the word for “human being” in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese is composed of two characters. The first is a kind of stylized picture of a single person (pronounced “*ren*” in Mandarin Chinese, “*in*” in Korean, and “*nin*” in Japanese). The second character means “between” and is pronounced “*jian*” in Chinese, “*k’an*” in Korean, and “*gen*” in Japanese—thus “*renjian*,” “*ink’an*,” and “*ningen*.” But the point is that to be a “human being” in these cultures, even the written language reminds you, you must be with others. You are not alone. Being human is to be among others, performing your assigned, or assumed, roles. As Rosemont puts it,

If I am the sum of the roles I live, then I am not truly living except when I am in the company of others. As Confucius himself said, “I cannot herd with the birds and beasts. If I do not live in the midst of other persons, how can I live?” While this view may seem strange to us, it is actually straightforward: in order to *be* a friend, neighbor, or lover, for example, I must *have* a friend, neighbor or lover.

(Rosemont, "Commentary and Addenda on Nosco's 'Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,'" 365)

The classical difference between Western and Eastern political philosophy (and attitudes toward political design) rests in this point. Western (especially American) traditional political philosophy assumes that all humans are evil and self-centered and cannot be fundamentally reformed and certainly not perfected. This point is made throughout *The Federalist Papers* (the seminal document for understanding American political philosophy), but nowhere more vividly than in the following passage from *The Federalist* No. 51.

But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others. The provision for defence must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack. Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions. (Hamilton, Jay, and Madison, *The Federalist*, 337)

Thus though religion and moral education do the best they can to make humans as good as they can be, they can never be trusted with unrestrained political power. It the words of Lord Acton, which have become a cliché (but nonetheless true), "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." In creating governance, you must assume evil and self-centeredness, not trust and goodwill. It is only through structural constraints that "good-enough governance" is possible. Structure matters.

In contrast, Nosco points out that "Confucianism fundamentally distrusts such axiomatic propositions in European and North American political culture as the 'rule of law,' instead preferring to foster a sense of self-worth that, it is assumed, will cause individual persons to regard any misconduct as demeaning

and shameful” (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 348).

And yet on closer examination, there may not be as wide a gulf between Eastern and Western political theory as was imagined. In East Asia, to be human does not mean to be free to do whatever you want. It is always to be “between” other humans, performing reciprocally beneficial roles.

Confucianism does not suggest that, for this reason, individuals are in their solitary conditions self-worthy, as others in [the] European classical liberal tradition have suggested. Where classical European liberalism might argue that individual integrity is akin to an inward capacity of the soul, and that persons thus enjoy an inherent measure of self-worth, Confucianism by contrast is uncompromising in its understanding of human worth as something manifested fundamentally in the context of relationship. (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 348)

This is structure! Perhaps structure that works better than the Federalists’ “auxiliary precautions,” judging by the low levels of crime in East Asian countries compared to the United States.

Rosemont also shows that in addition to the kinds of “space” mentioned so far, there is good reason to say that support for civil society is exemplified by Confucianism itself: “Now if it is free, autonomous individuals who come together in voluntary association—and thus form civil society, it follows that there will not be any voluntary associations of this kind in early Confucian thought (although there were some in practice)” (Rosemont, “Commentary and Addenda,” 361). “There were such voluntary associations, one of which is clearly reflected in the *Analects* itself: the association of Confucius and his disciples, who lived, studied, worked, and traveled together. After his death, at least three of the disciples formed associations of their own, as did several of these disciples in turn” (Rosemont, “Commentary and Addenda,” 363). Thus Confucianism itself suggests that a kind of civil society existed even in early times.

So far, the discussion has mainly focused on the original Confucian tradition in China from AD 220 until 960. After that, the situation becomes more complex, with varying forms of neo-Confucianism developing in China, Korea, and Japan.

Historically, however, as societies in East Asia acquired the conditions of early modernity, a kind of “space” did indeed open between the state and the citizen, Confucian misgivings towards such space notwithstanding.

The factors responsible for this development are not unlike those identified

with comparable developments in Europe: increased urbanization, with individuals uprooted from traditional village communities, and endeavoring to create new forms of association to combat the anomie and alienation that accompany such changes; an expansion of surplus wealth and the market, with an ever-increasing volume of transactions, including the commodification of a broad range of cultural products; a developed communication and transportation infrastructure, which contributes to the spread of literacy throughout the society, as well as increased opportunities for personal travel; and in religion, one observes the rise of “protestant” movements in East Asia, as in Europe, such as the Pure Land denominations of Buddhism, which privilege the individual’s capacity to negotiate salvation on the basis of personal faith, and which at least conceptually diminish the role of the *ecclesia* as a mediating agency in this process. (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 339)

John Duncan describes the situation in Korea the following way.

[W]e can see that just as anti-Confucianism has been used by a wide variety of people for what are often diametrically opposite purposes, so, too, has pro-Confucianism been used by different groups and individuals for mutually contradictory goals. In some cases, . . . this may mean nothing more than the cynical manipulation of Confucian values for crass political purposes. But in other instances, such as those . . . who criticized one strand of Confucian learning while upholding others, it hints at the richness of the Confucian tradition, which included many different schools and many competing ideas about how best to order society. In short, what we call Confucianism is complex, difficult to define, and subject to appropriation for a wide range of political and social purposes. (Duncan, “The Problematic Modernity of Confucianism,” 41)

In “Civil Society in East and West,” Bruce Cumings points out that some American scholars are quite critical of civil society in the United States today, saying it is but a sham and shadow of what it once was, Robert Putnam’s famous *Bowling Alone* being the most well-known. At the same time, there is a strand of American scholarship that praises the West, and especially the United States, as the pinnacle of social, economic, and political development, beyond which there can be nothing better. Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* and Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History* are prime exhibits. Similarly, there are Western scholars who criticize Asian societies for not being like America or the West generally, Karel van Wolferen’s *Enigma of Japanese Power* being Cumings’s main example. Cumings writes,

In this discourse, which is quite common in the US, the ills and pathologies of American civil society curiously disappear, to be replaced surreptitiously by an idealized construction drawn from Locke and Tocqueville. Of course no one can claim that East Asian countries have the social pathology obvious on almost any street in any American city, and recent elections in Korea and Taiwan had rates of voter turnout and exuberant participation far above those of American elections. But all that is forgotten in the conjuring of a Western civil society where well-informed citizens debate the important questions of politics and the good life without fear or favor, in contrast to the limited democracies, authoritarian systems and general illiberalism of East Asia, with the People's Republics in China and North Korea taking the cake as the worst-case outcomes of the pathologies of Asian politics. (Cumings, "Civil Society in East and West," 14)

Cumings further argues that using Anglo-American/French history as the best or only model of the pathway to economic and political "development" and thence to "civil society" is misleading, especially in the case of East Asia. He argues that Germany is the better example.

The Germans invented the fused state not to solve the problems of liberty, equality, and fraternity at the dawn of the industrial epoch, but to solve the mid-nineteenth century problems of the second industrial revolution and, more importantly, to catch up with England. A fused state is one that both subsumes civil society, and tries to build it up, but not if these efforts get in the way of industrialization.

Here, in short, is a political theory of late development that put off to a distant future the magnificent obsession of the Anglo-Saxon early industrializers with questions of popular will, democratic representation, public vs. private, or state vs. civil society. It is also a theory that explains much about East Asia's democratic trajectory: Japan, a democracy after 1945 but only after the cataclysm of war and occupation; South Korea, a democracy in 1993 but only after the cataclysm of revolution, war, division, and decades of military dictatorship (1961–1987) and sharp political struggle; Taiwan, a democracy in 1996 but only after a revolution, war, national division, and forty years of martial law (1947–1987). . . .

We had the fused state in South Korea and Taiwan, and now we have a limited form of procedural democracy—just like Japan and Germany. But the path to this end was hardly smooth: instead it was filled with decades of torment and turmoil, *Sturm und Drang*, and then—and only then—democracy. (Cumings, "Civil Society in East and West," 25)

Nosco shows that during the last decades of the seventeenth century and first decades of the eighteenth, Tokugawa Japan was under the influence of a liberal kind of Confucianism during which civil society flourished. Shogun Tsunayoshi “sponsored debates among various schools of Confucianism, and even lectured on the classics before assembled audiences of feudal lords and scholars” (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 341). A wide variety of unofficial cultural forms were permitted as long as they did nothing to disturb the peace. So, for example, “the government . . . showed itself to be utterly unconcerned about either Kabuki staging or the content of its repertoire” (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 342). However, toward the end of the eighteenth century, Matsudaira Sadanobu introduced a severely puritanical form of Confucianism that censored the same activities that had been supported, or permitted, a few decades earlier (Nosco, “Confucian Perspectives on Civil Society and Government,” 346f).

In Japan’s case as well, from the Meiji Restoration onward, in spite of some occasional liberal periods, the sphere of civil society in Japan was comparatively restricted. As Keiko Hirata explains, “The developmental state paid little attention to noneconomic affairs in the realm of civil society, such as respect for individuals’ rights, since the state’s primary goal was rapid economic development. . . . To maintain state control to promote economic growth, the developmental state regulated civil society activities by imposing strict legal restrictions on citizens’ associations” (Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan*, 22).

However, things are different now.

The developmental state, which brought about spectacular economic success in Japan, was eventually eroded by two very powerful forces. One of these was internal, a maturation of industrialization that weakened the need for a developmental system. The second was external, a process of globalization that brought powerful new external forces to bear on Japan’s political economy society and culture. Together these factors have contributed to profound structural and normative changes in Japan, contributing to the rise of Japanese civil society. (Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan*, 26)

Notes

1. Prince Shōtoku became regent under the Empress Suiko, his mother, who was a daughter of the Soga. Prince Shōtoku was said to be extremely gifted, but some historians argue that he did not exist at all.

2. Neo-Confucianism was developed in the twelfth century by Zhu Xi, who synthesized Taoist cosmology and Buddhist spirituality with the core Confucian values. Neo-Confucianism became a dominant ideology in the intellectual and spiritual life of East Asian literati in the premodern period.

3. See Sohn Pow-key, Kim Chol-choon, and Hong Yi-sup, *The History of Korea* (Seoul: Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 1984).

4. P. H. P. Mason and J. G. Caiger, *A History of Japan* (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1997), 65. The court moved its capital from Heijokyo in Nara to Heiankyo in Kyoto in 794. The Heian period begins with this capital transformation. Both capitals were designed according to the Chinese style. However, many temples and other constructions in Heiankyo represent Japanese traits, while those in Heijokyo embody Chinese styles.

5. “Wang Yangming” in Chinese characters is pronounced “Öyōmei” in Japanese.

6. Details available at www.chaplaincare.navy.mil/Islam.htm.

7. Soo-Il Jung, “Exploring 1200 Years of Korea and Islam Interchange,” *Sindonga* (May 2001): 424.

8. Yusuf Abdul Rahman, available at www.islamic-world.net/islamic-state/islam_in_china.htm.

9. Ibid.

10. Jung, “Exploring 1200 years of Korea and Islam Interchange,” 425–426.

11. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

12. Samuel H. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998).

13. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 23.

14. Andrew E. Kim, “History of Christianity in Korea: From Its Troubled Beginning to Its Contemporary Success,” available at www.kimsoft.com/1997/xhist.htm.

15. Ibid.

16. Quoted in Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, 503–509.

17. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

18. Ming-fong Kuo and Andreas Weiland, “Modern Literature in Post-War Taiwan,” *Intercultural Studies* no. 1 (Spring 2003). Available at www.intercultural-studies.org/ICSI/Kuo.htm.

19. Belief in the cultural superiority of Chinese civilization and that they are the center of the world.

20. John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 612.

21. Kuo and Weiland, “Modern Literature in Post-War Taiwan.” Available at www.intercultural-studies.org/ICSI/Kuo.htm.

22. D. Eleanor Westney, *Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer of Western Organizational Patterns to Meiji Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).

23. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), chap. 2.

24. Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1985); and Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

25. Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Nobuyuki Yoshida, *Seijukusuru Edo: Nihon no rekishi*, vol. 17 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002).

26. Carter J. Eckert et al., eds., *Korea, Old and New: A History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 203–204.

27. Although the West was conceived as the most advanced and civilized entity, the Korean reformists were greatly influenced by the idea of “the Japanese Imperial Pan-Asian Alliance” against the threats from the West and believed that this was the best way eventually to catch up with the West.

28. Eckert et al., eds., *Korea, Old and New*, 210.

29. *Ibid.*, 210–211.

30. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagine Community: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

31. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

32. Although there was a traditional Chinese concept of state, it was primarily based upon the “Middle Kingdom Principle.” The Chinese saw the state (*kwuo*) as a “cultural community” rather than as a sovereign entity.

33. John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996).

34. *Ibid.*

35. After the 1911 Revolution, the official definition of “Chinese” was expanded to include non-Han ethnicities.

36. The May Fourth Movement is the name given to the student demonstrations against the Paris Peace Conference’s decision to hand over former German concessions in the Shantung Province to Japan instead of China.

37. Available at Wikipedia Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

38. Schwartz suggests that communism outside the Soviet Union did not follow the blueprints for revolution as designed by Marx, nor was there a master plan determined by the Comintern. Benjamin Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951).

39. Throughout the Japanese colonial period, Tonghak played a significant role in maintaining the nationalistic consciousness, such as the mass demonstration of March 1, 1919.

40. Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires: 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 11.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. Kim Jong Il, *On the Juche Idea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 41.

44. *Ibid.*, 38.

45. Along with Confucianism, the Christian tradition was quite strong in the northern region of the Korean peninsula prior to 1945.

46. Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982).

47. Noguchi Yukio, *1940-nen Taisei: Saraba “Senji Keizai”* (Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Shinposha, 1995).

48. Kuo and Weiland, “Modern Literature in Post-War Taiwan.” Available at www.intercultural-studies.org/ICSI/Kuo.htm.