

Towards the Dialogue of Asian Civilization and Culture

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1, Civilization as Destiny

Civilization and culture are the destiny which we could not escape from. Then the question comes up if we are destined to have the clash of civilization in Asia.

A famous American late professor, Samuel Huntington answered to this question, “Yes, you are destined to the clash of civilization and culture.”

However, we are beginning to talk about either civilization or culture in Asia in a singular form rather than in a plural form as Yasushi Akashi, Ex-Under Secretary General of the UN talked in his speech in the opening session of the Conference.

His remark implies that we are beginning to talk about the single Asian civilization and culture against the prescription of Professor Huntington.

In other words, we are destined to have and possibly strengthen the single common culture towards the community building based on the common civilization.

The new questions come up why we are beginning to talk about the same single culture and how we could enjoy the common culture in Asia.

The answers lie in the following current stage of Asian development and governance, which have been put into practice thorough the community building processes in the region in the last decades. It is the results of the 21st century industrial revolution of information. It is the techno-economic processes of the third wave of globalization.

2, The Third Wave of Globalization

The third wave of globalization has brought about the entirely new world, or the new century. Symbolically speaking, everything, men or money, goods or technology, moves instantly beyond the national borders and enjoy the maximization of interests in the regions at large.

The series of FTA agreements embody the core nature of the deep interdependencies among nations in the Asian region under the 21st industrial revolution. We now live in the century when one automobile car is assembled and produced not in a single country but in several countries, more or less those of five or six, through the supply and value chains in Asia. The spread of value chains of production has pushed the developmental phases of East Asian countries into those of the middle-class peoples with the large reduction of poverty. The middle-class city culture a la Asia has been born and grown up on the bases of the Asian traditional pluralistic and polytheistic religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Islamism.

Then the Asian countries have begun to talk about and enjoy the common interests in the regional markets as well as the common culture of huge amount of population through the networking of the production and consumption in the Asian markets which have continued to strengthen the common culture and civilization in Asia.

The traditional population “onus” of more than 40 billion peoples in China, India, ASEAN and other nations in Asia has changed itself into the huge amount of population “bonus” in Asia.

To the population bonus we could add the space “bonus” and the social “bonus” as the bases for the emerging Asian styled middle-income common culture and interests towards the Asian communality. They have turn out to be the potential momentum for the sustainable growth and community building on the Eurasian continent through the current movements of the Belt and Road Initiative pronounced by President Xi Jinping in 2013.

3, The Cores of Asian Diplomatic Governance

As the style of the global governance, the Asian nations would not choose the Western styled diplomatic culture symbolized by traditional military alliance and deterrence, economic sanction and coercion. The Asian nations and culture will tend to pick up the different ways of diplomacy. They observe, firstly the political partnerships between the nations, secondly socio-economic connectivity between nations and peoples, thirdly sustainability for regional stability against global warming, fourthly inclusiveness for development and poverty reduction in the advancing areas on the globe.

The essences of the Eastern common diplomatic culture could be rooted in the Charter of the United Nations which was reconfirmed and embodied in the Bandung Conference in 1955. It issued the ten principles of the Bandung Declaration. They included such principles of non-intervention, non-alliance, neutrality and respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity as the core principles of diplomacy. Those principles have been developed into the regional integration called the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 which was comprised such five original member nations as Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. Afterwards in 1976, they promoted the ASEAN and Asian way of diplomacy into the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) which has been complied of 28 nations and regions including China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and even the USA.

Asian way diplomacy was further crystalized into the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. The trials to create the East Asian community building between China, Japan and South Korea since the Asian Currency Crises in the late 1990s through mid-2010th failed mainly by the political intervention of the United States which had tried to promote the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement) against East Asian community building. It has been in fail under the Trump government by her own withdrawal from TPP as well as from the other essential international agreements led both by the UN and the EU, since late 2016.

4, Towards Easternization

We could locate these American ways of trials, failures and fiasco as the end of Pax-Americana and Western international order. The Belt and Road Initiative promoted by China since 2013 symbolize the beginning of the century of Asia and the Pax-Asiana founded on the rapid and sustainable development in the industrializing countries in the Asian region which has been extending to the central and western parts of Eurasian continent as well as East African and Latin American continents.

The Belt and Road Initiative in those senses could be paraphrased as the newly born global governance and the spearhead of Easternization. It would imply the end of the modern world order led by the Western Europe since 16th century as well as the United States of America until the last decades.

We are now facing with the rise of Easternization based on the Belt and Road Initiative way of new global governance after the twilight of America.

Then the last question will come up how we could exchange the dialogues of the different cultures and civilizations in order to reach to the fruitful dialectics for the new global governance in the coming centuries.

The answer certainly lies in our pragmatic proposal to set up the BRI version of OECD (Organization of Economic Development) utilizing the Silk-road Fund. The Japan Research Center for the Belt and Road Initiative could play as the indispensable role of the Cooperative Association of such the regional independent think-tanks for the Belt and Road Initiative as represents Japan as No 2 power in the region. It would play the essential role of the liaison with China to promote the dialectics between Japan and China as well as between the East and the West for coming new global governance.