

1st Cultural Workshop

"The Problems of Rationality in Asia"

The University of Tokyo

Place: Taiwan University

Time: October 27, 1999

Theme: The Problems of Rationality in Asia

Speakers:

Professor Ynhui Park

Pohang University of Science and Technology, Korea

Professor Ying-hsiung Chou

Chung Chen University, Taiwan

Professor Shigehiko Hasumi

The University of Tokyo, Japan

Moderator: Professor Yasunari Takada, Taiwan University, Japan

Participants: 67 (including 36 non-member universities)

The framework of the transaction

On the proposed theme of "The Problems of Rationality in Asia" each speaker gave his own view for about thirty minutes, and discussion followed, inviting responses and opinions from the floor.

Points of Proposals

Professor Ynhui Park, "The Crises of Technological Civilization and the Asian Response":

Today no one can be blind about the global crisis brought about by the challenge of highly advanced technological civilization. The symptoms of the crisis are evident in the philosophical disruption manifested in the worldwide spread of postmodernism, in the ideological and ethnical conflicts taking place in the many regions of the world, in the economical and socio-political turmoil apparent in the struggle between different social classes within a single ethical and cultural society as well as between different racial, cultural blocs, and finally above all in the environmental and ecological deterioration threatening the death of the Earth.

The intent of the present paper is, first, to locate the fundamental cause of this crisis not in scientific technology as such but in the anthropocentric world view underlining the Western Civilization, and second, to propose the way of overcoming it by not rejecting but integrating the Western scientific technology into the Asian world view, which is in its essence fundamentally ecocentric. Finally the paper argues for that objective, and for the urgency of the necessity of intensifying humanistic education, in particular, for scientists, whose education in this area has been increasing devaluated since the last half century.

Professor Ying-hsiung Chou, "Does Modernity Travel? Globalism and/or Regionalism"

This paper examines a number of issues related to modernity: temporal and spatial models of modernity, world-system management, Asian values and transcultural practices. Questions are raised over whether modernity as a Western concept travel well from one socio-cultural context to another. If it does, what does the travel do to the dichotomy of globalism and regionalism (or nativism)?

To highlight the problem, modernity is scrutinized against the two phases of the Age of Discovery, with emphasis placed respectively on temporal and spatial modes of perception and governance. The latter mode

culminates in a reductionist management model in which institutions as well as ideas are made uniform often along the Enlightenment line, e.g. capitalism, democracy, liberalism, and rationality. Whereas this monolithic, and predominant, worldview has often been queried, its counterpart advocating Asian values seems equally dubious. What is needed is a careful reexamination of different transcultural practices in which a universal concept is appropriated and put to specific use in different socio-cultural formations. To illustrate the point, a post May 4th figure, Wen I-to is studied. The textual politics embodied in Wen's writing sheds interesting lights on some of the unique features of individualism and nationalism in the early phase of Chinese modernity.

Professor Shigehiko Hasumi, "On 'ends': A Neurosis of Modernism"

Although there is a strong tendency in the thoughts of the twentieth century to regard themselves as liberated from those of the nineteenth century, the former are still under the spell of the latter in assuming that the nineteenth century has been overcome and has come to an end. For, the intellectual habit of regarding something as coming to an end is nothing but the characteristic legacy of the nineteenth century. The fons et origo of this way of thinking lies, of course, in Hegel. Thus it is that behind the seemingly new design of Francis Fukuyama 阵 The End of History lurks a Hegelian outlook which underwent the Kojevian re-interpretation. I call such obsession with the idea of 义 nd 俞 neurosis of modernity. The problem is that it has been so infectious and pervasive that it has made its appearance, not confined within the boundaries of its proper territory (the West), in Asia, particularly in Japan under the disguise of the so-called "Overcoming Modernity." The seriousness of the matter is, perhaps, that the issue of "Overcoming Modernity" is hardly recognized as another version of what I call "the neurotic thought on the end."