

**Perspectives
on Asia's Futures III**

THE FUTURES OF ASIAN CULTURES

THIRD MEETING

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INTRODUCTION



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**INFORMAL MEETING ON
FUTURES OF CULTURE IN
THE ASIA - PACIFIC REGION**

11 FEBRUARY 1997 D. NEW



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Futures of Cultures Project (that started at the beginning of 1990) is to examine the important cultural changes taking place in Africa and Latin America (Part One) and then in Asia (Part Two). Two publications have been issued in relation to changes in Africa and Latin America under the Future Oriented Transverse Program. The section of the Project on Asia was developed with a series of papers discussed at the meeting, hosted by UNESCO's Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok), headed by Dr Yogesh Atal. The meeting was attended by the contributors themselves and by other scholars and a few representatives from other UN agencies. The papers are contained in this volume.

A working definition of the term "culture" was first discussed in Phase One of the Project and generally accepted by participants. This definition is in accord with the definition accepted by UNESCO at the Mexico Conference in 1982. The debate on the definition of "culture" naturally continued at the Bangkok meeting, where it was particularly stressed that, over and beyond the important contribution of scholars to the conceptualization of culture, recent and continuing historical events (whether related to the modernization process or to conflicts arising between people in different parts of the globe) seem increasingly to define culture as an important basis for such processes and conflicts.

As culture determines people's behaviour (something acknowledged by all scholars), in a world apparently moving increasingly toward individual and collective affirmation of autonomy, culture continues to define itself not only as a concept, but as a leading force in processes of change or of reaction to change. Indeed, future generations might even gain a better understanding

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of this particular historical moment precisely through its specification to culture.

The Project highlights the deep contradictions and consequently tensions characterizing this historical moment as well as the positive possibilities of heightened awareness. To some degree, the contradictions confirm the basic hypothesis of the Project, namely that cultures and their futures, rather than technological and economic developments, are at the core of humankind's highly uncertain future. Some of the participants in the Asia part of the Project expressed the view that culture may well prove to be the last resort for the salvation of humankind.

Some particularly enlightened anthropological scholars, such as Ruth Benedict, had anticipated the existence of cultures and not culture, stressing that the many cultures existing in the world today, whatever their status (dominant, resistant or dying), have a contribution to make and will, in certain cases, even insist on making it. This was one of the major topics discussed in Bangkok. Although processes such as modernization, Westernization and globalization are more visible, other processes are present and contribute to the more general processes. This was defined by Kinhide Mushakoji in his paper as the "theory of occultation". The view that cultures "resist" and maintain their possibility of expression was also shared by Susantha Goonatilake and Ashis Nandy. The latter stressed that such cultures are able to contribute because of their differences. No culture is complete in itself but the globalizing forces often utilize such differences.

Perhaps the distinctive feature of our time is that cultures now come together, come into contact with each other, far more rapidly than in the past and, therefore, have a different impact and less time to adapt or integrate. This may be due to a variety of factors, be it increasing migration -- for economic, political or ecological reasons -- or the rapidity of communications -- visual and verbal -- or whatever. This particular aspect was well described by the contributors to both parts of the Project (Africa, Latin America and Asia).

The questions which arise and which the Project has endeavoured to address are the following: To what extent can a given culture be considered a dominant one? To what extent do cultures, not generally considered to be dominant, have a possibly more subtle influence on other cultures? Is there a limit beyond which a culture loses its original connotation and becomes the another culture? How strong are cultural influences from one generation to

next? What elements cause one culture to be more resistant than another culture? This latter issue of resistance to change was discussed in some depth in the course of discussions, especially in terms of whether resistance was related only to changes imposed by the dominant culture or also to change in general.

Denis Goulet answered some of these questions in his paper on Latin America, stressing that if cultures are to resist, they must have some economic basis. In Bangkok, Yogesh Atal stressed that not only do cultures themselves resist but there is also a sort of general "culture of resistance" developing and possibly growing in various areas.

An important issue, then, is the relation between culture and development and the capacity of a given culture to reject the principles of development as deriving from, or being generated by one dominant culture. Could it be that there is a two-pronged view of development, one striving toward material well-being and the other toward freedom of choice and independence, as claimed by Goulet? Or is there no alternative but to progress by stages of economic development, as suggested by Qin Linzheng, steps which however still do not prevent the Chinese culture from maintaining its identity?

Perhaps the only solution for the survival of humanity may be the existence of a heterogeneity of cultures, as claimed by Susantha Goonatilake, Yogesh Atal and Ashis Nandy. This, in my view, may be what Bertrand de Jouvenel called the "desirable" future; in this case, becoming necessary for survival. Ziauddin Sardar's pessimistic view that the strength of the dominant culture is such that it will inevitably lead to the destruction of all non-Western cultures seems to be in contradiction with what Elikia M'Bokolo claimed in the African part of the Project. According to M'Bokolo, Western culture uses the threat of the danger of extinction of African culture as an excuse to determine it, whereas African culture is in itself strong and has the capacity to survive in the long run.

The co-existence of a heterogeneity of cultures, as suggested in the Asia part of the Project, implies that the different cultures have a basic mutual understanding and knowledge of each other. In fact one of the causes of the conflicts characterizing the present phase of cultural co-existence could be ignorance of the basic characteristics of each society and their development over time.

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However, the Project also showed that it may be necessary to accept some degree of globalization. The fact that certain common traits may be enforced in future societies seems to be accepted as inevitable by most of the contributors to the Project. It remains to be seen whether this process will take place at the deep level or more superficially, at the level of the periphery and not of the core of the culture, as highlighted by Godwin Sogolo in the African part of the project. This concept seemed to emerge also in the contributions by Qin Linzheng and Mushakoji on the strength of the Chinese and Japanese cultures and their capacity to maintain their identity. This point also came up in what was said by one of the Thai participants, Juree Vichit Vadakan.

The Project stresses the need to avoid what M'Bokolo called a "museum" conception of culture and address living cultures, those which have a power within them. Care must be taken by all observers (benevolent or malevolent) not to push cultures into a position which ultimately kills them.

The Project also tried to avoid viewing the futures of cultures from the outside. Only people from the specific regions involved were asked to provide descriptions from their own point of view, though of course this approach is still influenced, whether acknowledged or not, by factors external to the writer expressing his or her opinion. Sohail Inayatullah sees a sort of schizophrenia as an ever-growing problem of those living in cultures other than their own in different moments of their lives.

Indeed, this dichotomy within one's self as an individual and as belonging to a given culture (and even division of self into different parts) may perhaps be considered a feature of our time. In facing challenges from cultures and issues not pertaining to one's specific group, the easy solution is to shut one's self up inside the safe cocoon of one's own culture, ignoring the others. The permanent questioning of one's being, acknowledged by the Latin Americans, cannot overcome the duality of origin and produces what the Project referred to as a "constant metamorphosis". Further, it may also produce ethnocide. More recently, there have been indications of a strong revival of surviving cultures, even in a metamorphosis situation such as the one in Latin America as indicated by the Nobel-prize-winner Rigoberta Menchu, of a sort of ethno-development looking inward.

Inevitably many of the issues discussed in the Latin American and African part of the Project spilled over into the Asia and Pacific phase and are reflected in the papers presented in this volume. What emerged more

forcefully in the Asian part was the "culture of resistance" and the capacity of non-Western cultures to maintain their identity even in the acceptance of capitalist indications for economic development.

In the Latin American part of the project, there was more stress on the constant process of metamorphosis and the more recent revival of cultural self-recognition on the part of the indigenous population. In Africa, indications were that African culture was just beginning to show the will to preserve forms of culture other than the dominant one. This may be something of which not even Africans are fully aware.

There may be signs, then, that the globalizing effect on culture is starting to decline and that many more possibilities are starting to come to the fore. If we accept the basic hypothesis of this Project, which is that culture is basic to the future, then important changes can feasibly be expected in the futures of cultures.

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Yogesh Atal

ASIAN CULTURES : WHAT DESTINATION ? Resumé of the Debate



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ASIAN CULTURES : WHAT DESTINATION? *Resume of the Debate*

We are on the threshold of the 21st Century. In less than seven years from now the present century will become a past tense. The impending departure of the twentieth century has invoked scholars to shift their orientation from the present to the future. There is an increasing scholarly activity in this new terrain. Rather than answering the query as to "what will be" some scholars are devoting their time and attention in prescribing as to "what should be". The magic figure of the year 2000 has, somehow, prompted a threefold activity : reviewing the past to gauge the trends of change and learn the lessons from past experience to improve performance by modifying or changing the strategy of Development; predicting the future shape of the globe in the light of emerging trends; and constructing the desirable images of future. There is in evidence a rising desire to fashion a future of our liking by stemming the unwanted trends and initiating the desirable ones. No one wishes to enter an uncertain and unknown future. This has given rise to a new science of futurology. *Future Studies* has become a new academic specialty built on the cutting edges of various social science disciplines.

True to its mandate, UNESCO has responded to this growing intellectual concern and developed its own programme of future studies which has a three-fold orientation:

- i. Review of the existing literature to decipher the trends of change in UNESCO's spheres of competence, so that its priorities are readjusted;
- ii. Stimulate and catalyze thinking and research on Future; and

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- iii. Promote systematization of theories and methodologies being evolved for the investigation of FUTURE so that this specialty gets professionalised.

In the Asia-Pacific region, RUSHSAP undertook four projects in 1986-87 under which 28 different studies were prepared. These projects were:

1. Reviews and Analysis of Development Strategies of selected countries;
2. Review of existing literature on country-specific future studies;
3. Future Orientation of Socialist Societies;
4. Regional scenarios of Future in regard to:

Communication
Education
Economic development
Women
Youth
Environment
Science and Technology

We also very much wanted then to have yet another regional scenario prepared on the "Futures of Cultures", but we did not succeed. We were also not able to locate any specific studies in this area. We, therefore, consoled ourselves by arguing that the seven thematic regional scenarios that we prepared are, in fact, different facets of Culture itself understood in the broad anthropological sense. Hence these seven scenarios together should provide an idea of the futures of Asian cultures.

This was not denying the need for an independent exercise on the future of cultures itself. It is, therefore, welcome that the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) developed a project on this theme and with UNESCO's support -- both intellectual and financial -- it is being carried out.

As part of this Project, regional meetings were earlier held in Africa and in Latin America. The meeting for the Asia-Pacific region was organized by WFSF in collaboration with UNESCO's Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific, from February 8 through 11, 1993. The papers included in this Volume were initially presented at that meeting, and have been revised by the authors in the light of the discussion.

Rather than attempting to summarize the contents of these well-thought out papers, what I attempt here is to provide a capsule summary of the key concerns of social scientists in regard to Future and then synthesize in my own way the outcome of the most enriching discussion that took place at the meeting.

I

How do we approach the question about the future of cultures? Perhaps it may be better to ask : why are we concerned about the future of culture? Is it because we are interested in knowing the *shape* of things to come? Or are we worried about the "*fate*" of cultures? The latter question implies that cultures, that is, *traditional cultures*, will vanish with the onslaught of modernizing influences brought about by rapidly advancing science and technology.

The key concerns regarding the futures of cultures are generally expressed in questions such as these: Will economic and technological progress destroy the cultural diversity and bastardize our cultures? Will we witness a return of intolerant chauvinism that would make cultures retreat to their shells? Will there be a judicious fit between the old and the new? Where are we going? Can we change the course?

It may be said that *Future Shift* in intellectual orientation is, in a way, linked with the societal commitment to *Development*. Began as a process of decolonization -- which was negative in its orientation -- *Development* became, in the countries of the so-called Third World, an ideology for rapid planned, and directed culture change. Newly independent nations began to move in the predetermined direction with defined goals and targets and preconceived strategies. The planners and administrators took on the role of the "fashioners" of Future. Developing countries got involved in the *revolution of*

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rising expectations. The West served as the *reference group* and even proxied many decisions. *Westernization* and *Modernization* became synonyms of Development.

But expectations have led to frustrations because of the mixed gains of development. It was a mistake, it is now realized, to blindly imitate the West. Development did not succeed in homogenizing the world. Traditions did not oblige their obituary writers. The process of development, in fact, created greater disparities, broadened the divide between the rich and the poor, and falsified many tenets of modernization. Alongside of modernization grew the process of revival and resurgence of tradition and even of religious fundamentalism.

Those who take the pessimistic view of the future of cultures feel that all cultures will lose their pristinity through hybridization and will be reduced to their ornamental roles. The optimists, on the other hand, feel that cultural communities will plunge into their indigenous roots and come up with their own recipes for survival and advancement.

The narrow specialists of Culture --the so-called "culture people" such as prehistorians, archaeologists, the traditionalists, and the fundamentalists-- are at best "preservationists". They have mostly engaged themselves in the rediscovery of the past and its glorification through sheer adumbrationism. They are worried about the dilapidation of the physical structures (such as monuments) because of their gross neglect, or about the damages done to them by natural hazards or irresponsible human actions. Their guiding motto is: "preserve", "protect", and "renovate". "Change" does not exist in their vocabulary; Culture, to them, is a mere *museum of tradition*. The first generation of anthropologists, for example, regarded all forms of culture contacts with the outside world as disruptive to the "primitive" way of life and, therefore, they wanted the primitives to maintain their *status quo*; they were dubbed as advocates of *anthropological zoos*. Their protests against culture contacts notwithstanding, what has happened even in regard to the tribal groups the world over is quite astonishing : no tribe has remained completely *insulated* from the outside world maintaining its pristine, exotic existence; and many of the material cultural traits of various non-Western societies have travelled far and wide to become showpieces in modern drawing rooms. There is a discernible trend towards, what may be called, "*museumization*" of the drawing rooms.

Cultural specialists, including many anthropologists, hold the view that the cultures of the developing countries have been the *victims of Development*. The development specialists, on the other hand, have attributed all the failures of planned development programmes to Culture; they regard Culture as an *obstacle to Development*.

Anthropological literature exhibits a peculiar ambivalence towards "Change". It is significant to note that while ethnological theories have focused on "Evolution" and "Diffusion", earlier ethnographies of particular tribal groups did not assign any space to the description and analysis of change occurring in them. These monographs were written in the idiom of eternal present; the tribal communities were regarded by them as *no-change* or *slow-change* societies. It is only in the late 1940s that some anthropologists began ending their ethnographies with a postscript on Change. Fuller studies of change in tribal and village communities are rather recent, started somewhere in the mid-1950s when newly independent countries initiated an era of planned and directed socio-cultural change. The term, "*Directed Culture Change*", was evolved to signify exogenous changes -- changes brought from without. The analysts of directed culture change either attributed costly failures of any innovation to the "neglect" of the "cultural" factor, or impressed upon the planners and administrators to have a holistic view of culture and assess the ramifying influence of change brought about in a particular sector of social life. But interestingly enough, whatever we have by way of literature on Culture-Development interface¹ is mainly anecdotal. There are narrations of stories of (mainly) failures highlighting the importance of the cultural factors. But no guidelines exist as to how to plan a change that will not meet a failure. Wisdom of hindsight can only provide an awareness of the importance of the cultural variables but cannot equip a social scientist to offer readymade recipes to planners of change. Similarly, the planners have also not yet improved their planning protocol to incorporate the cultural variable in the planning process to ensure that it will not cause hindrance. We all recognize that there is a cultural dimension to development but we feel ill-equipped to handle it.

II

Socialization for the future is possible only when we know the contours of the emerging scenario. In traditional societies, where change was rather slow and orthogenetic, and brought about from within, socialization posed no particular problems. New members of the society were trained to enter into a known future. But rapidity of changes in the modern world have really enlarged the range of uncertainties. It is essential that we develop our powers of prediction of at least those features that will arrive almost inevitably. Moreover, we can even establish our own blueprints of the future society, and take steps to realize that architecture. In the light of such inevitabilities, and the realizable prophecies -- and not the unattainable utopias -- we have to reorder our priorities and plan our efforts. It is for the thinking people to decide what prophecies be fulfilled and what others be cancelled. One must, however, admit the enormous possibilities of "unintended consequences" that could be "functional", "dysfunctional", or simply "non-functional".

The major achievement of this round-table was that it tried to clear many conceptual cobwebs, although no consensus could be reached; and it offered different perspectives to view the Future.

Despite differences in approach, all the authors in this volume agree that there is no going back to our cultural shells by isolating and insulating the cultures from each other. Cultural oysters are no longer possible. The opening out, the intercultural dialogue, the cross-cultural fertilization have brought into play two seemingly contradictory processes of globalization and localization or *indigenization*. The coexistence of these processes is, in fact, indicative of resilience of cultures. There is a need to know how these twin processes relate and operate in different cultural settings and how new equations are worked out. The fact remains that while cultures are no longer completely *insulated*, their opening out of *apertures*² has not uprooted them. They are able to maintain their *core*, retain their identity. How should that core be defined? and how does a culture maintain its core? are the questions that need examination.

Let me now recapitulate the main trends of discussion in terms of the issues raised.

1. The concept of CULTURE

A living culture can not be treated as a mere *Museum of Tradition*, or as an *Anthropological Zoo*. There is a need to adopt a broader definition of Culture -- as a way of life of a given people. To talk of only material culture, or sophistication (arts, music, dance, literature), is to take a narrow view of culture.

Some of the key characteristics of Culture are to be found in the following expressions, each one of which is a one-sided accentuation. However, they are helpful in evolving a suitable definition.

"Culture is social reconstruction of reality by its mediators."

"Culture is inner-directed."

"Culture is resistance".

"Culture is an expression of the world view. If the world view is ossified, the culture will be stagnated."

"Culture is a blueprint."

"Culture helps create unity and accounts for a society's survival".

"Culture is a means of managing the environment -- a filtration of the cultural baggage coming from the outside."

"Culture is learned, shared, and transmitted."

2. Handling of Culture

There are three prominent strategies employed in the name of saving the culture, namely

- i. Reservationist strategy: protection of sites, insulating people from outside influences, "caging" the cultures in museums, or zoos.
- ii. Display : Putting the "Culture" on stage; cultural performances for outsiders where they are torn out of context, and become a "show".
- iii. Displacement : through thefts of cultural artifacts, or their faking, some aspects of a given culture get displaced. Acquisition of these artifacts results into *museumization* of the drawing rooms in other settings. Bereft of their cultural meaning, such traditional artifacts from other cultures become symbols of modernity in the developed world. In some sense, modernization partly involves "transfers of traditions" -- Western traditions of long standing (including Christianity) came to the non-Western cultures as part of the modernization package; and similarly, material cultural elements from the primitive and other non-Western societies enter the Western drawing rooms to modernize them. Modernization has, thus, displaced and dislocated traditions.

3. CULTURAL IDENTITY

In the midst of sea change experienced by non-Western societies, one notices a reassertion of their respective cultural identities. The resurgence and revival of traditions are manifestations of this assertion.

What is the function of Cultural Identity? Does it create solidarity among the people who belong to that culture? or does this process lead to the emergence of sub-regional loyalties which may become secessionist? What happens when a person is sandwiched between dual loyalties -- for example, religious identity vs cultural identity? The Indonesian Muslims enacting Hindu Ramayana justify their action by saying: "*Islam is our religion; Ramayana is our culture*".

How does culture give identity to its people? Can newer identities be created by manipulating cultural symbols? Do identities really empower? or are they fictitious?

4. CULTURAL VALUES

It is not very easy to define and identify "core values". Nevertheless, cultural values are brought in as explanatory variables when evaluating the success or failure of an innovation. It is important to note that values of the outsiders are a major source for distorting the reality or misreading it. They are also used to condemn a reality. Both insiders and outsiders have their own angles to view reality and to judge its significance. What is good or bad depends upon these perceptions. What an outsider regards bad may be a highly cherished value amongst the insiders, and vice versa. So, whose values should or would prevail? who should fashion the future -- the outsiders or the insiders? Should a futurist impose his own ideological predilections while predicting or prescribing future? Or should he accept value diversity and acknowledge the powers of living cultures to find their own ways of moving ahead?

5. Role of COLONIALISM

Most of the developing societies had experienced colonialism; those societies which were not directly colonized have gone through, what may be called, *vicarious colonization* (for example, Thailand, Nepal, and Afghanistan of the pre- communist era). However, differences exist in terms of the *source* of colonization (British, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, or American) and also the *type* of colonization -- political, economic, cultural. There also appears to be a link between the type of communalism and the type of colonial experience. The trends of change in a given society are also associated with the exposure to the wider world during and after political colonization. The phenomenon of the rise of autochthonous groups challenging the so-called dominant culture is another post-colonial development. All these forces and processes will contribute to the future shape of culture in a given society. It is, therefore, essential to analyze these factors so that a dependable prognosis can be made.

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6. Concepts of RESISTANCE and RESILIENCE

An extreme view of Culture equates it with RESISTANCE. What does Resistance mean? There are at least seven connotations of the word:

- i. Culture is resistance -- it does not admit of any change; in this sense, culture becomes just another name of tradition.
- ii. Culture develops skills and attitudes to resist change.
- iii. Culture resists changes from within.
- iv. Culture resists changes from without.
- v. Culture resists changes from within but accepts changes from without.
- vi. Culture accepts changes from within but resists changes from without.
- vii. Each culture has a subculture of resistance.

However, it must be admitted that resistance is a negative concept. Resistance cannot become a goal of any culture. Since all cultures change, it can be assumed that cultural resistances somehow break down and innovations are allowed entry into the core of cultures.

In this context, the concept of RESILIENCE of cultures seems quite important in explaining the phenomenon of continuity in societies that are going through a phase of rapid transformation. The retention of cultural identities alongside of modernization can be explained in terms of resilience. But this concept is still vague and is used in a variety of ways; for example:

- i. Accounting for the unchangeables in Society.
- ii. Capability of a Culture to "withstand shock" so as not to allow "deformation", "rupture", "fracture" of the cultural and social system. Resiliencè can be equated with the pliancy of the bamboo -- "bending with the storm but not breaking".

- iii. As a synonym of "homeostasis" or "Gaia": springing back to former position: recidivism, cultural resurgence, fundamentalism, conservatism.
- iv. Adaptability, Integration, Accommodation, Plasticity.
- v. Creative response to cope with Change : symbiosis, encapsulation, cultural reinterpretation, indigenization.
- vi. Opposite of stability.

It remains to be found out whether resilience occurs in all societies, or only in certain societies -- for example, developing Asian societies. If the latter is the case, then what are the contexts that give rise to resilience? Questions also need to be raised in regard to the measurement of resilience, spheres of its manifestation, role of exogenous and endogenous forces in invoking resilience, types of processes through which resilience manifests itself, and the manipulability of resilience.

One also notices a trend towards *indigenization* of social sciences³ by promoting the use of native categories of thought. Is this a form of cultural resistance? or of cultural resilience? If through such use knowledge becomes *parochialized* and the culture gets *insulated*, then this will be a retrogressive step. Present day social science is caged in western, parochial concepts and theories. It needs to be *deparochialized*; but this cannot be done by creating other parochial categories and concepts.

7. Concept of SANDWICH CULTURES⁴

Increasing geographical mobility and resettlement of migrant groups in different lands has made most cultures plural societies. The migrant groups evolve their own mechanisms to preserve their cultural identity and yet develop interfaces with the culture of the host society. The emerging culture of the immigrants is the result of sandwiching between the forces of the host culture and the parent culture. Since host cultures vary, the sandwich cultures of peoples originating from the same country but settled in different countries also differ. The existence of sandwich cultures will make native cultures more diverse and heterogenous.

8. The concept of CHOICE

Every Culture limits the choices that a given individual has. Initial socialization is not determined by the person concerned but by the accident of his birth. Even the later exposures to the wider world are conditioned by this fact. China, for example, remained a closed society by planting insulations on its borders -- restricting both the entry of foreigners and exit of the natives. Its own language served as a big insulator -- natives not knowing any other language were insulated from others in terms of communication; similarly, foreigners also found Chinese to be a difficult language to learn and master. Now with its policy of opening out -- i.e. removal of *insulators* and creation of *apertures* -- the range of choices for her people has become wider than before. However, there are human and cultural limits to change. People do not shed their cultural identities even when they are a weakening influence. A complete submersion in another culture is just impossible. But globalization is occurring through migration of peoples -- transient population of tourists and sojourners, immigrants, refugees, etc.; technological innovations ("electronic immigrant"); and expansion of the knowledge base. But such globalization has not been able to stop the simultaneous process of localization. This raises doubts about the presumed phenomenon of "global hegemonic blanket".

9. Processes of CHANGE

There is a need to establish a relationship between the concepts of "Change" and "Future". In my view, both concepts are diachronic, but Change is past-oriented and Future is forward-looking. One is rooted in history, the other is dependent upon our powers of prediction. Analysts of Change often indulge in the glorification of the past; prognosticians of Future tend to exaggerate the glory of their vision of future or decry the prospects of an unwanted future. Those concerned with future either talk of *appropriating* the PAST, or of *displacing* the PRESENT, or of *colonizing the FUTURE*. Are our visions of Future, and their propagation, an attempt towards the colonization of the Future? And can we really colonize it given the existence of several variables that tend to influence any cultural change? Who determines what is good or bad for a given society? The conspiracy allegation implicit in our critiques of the past and the present is based on our wisdom of the hindsight. How can we say that our imposition of the vision of the Future is not yet another conspiracy? There has been ample criticism of the West as a

colonizer responsible for destroying Asian cultures; but the fact is that the West itself is disintegrating in some respects and that despite a spate of changes in Asian cultures, their *cores* are still intact.

III

Asia is home to major civilizations and religions; it is indeed a cultural mosaic. All Asian societies and cultures are simultaneously experiencing the twin processes of globalization and indigenization. The universal desire for change notwithstanding, societies are making an equally emphatic assertion of their respective cultural identities. The forces of change have not transformed cultures even into look-alike societies. Industrializing Thailand cannot be mistaken for Taiwan, or the roaring tiger of South Korea for Japan.

What one witnesses in Asian cultures is a growing heterogeneity -- a queer mixture of tradition and modernity : jumbo jets and bullock carts; mosques and science labs; traditional attire and western paraphernalia. Through the exposure to the wider world, each culture has certain elements of a global culture which itself is now greatly differentiated rather than being merely "western". The migration of people and their settlement in other cultures has given rise to, what I have called, *Sandwich Cultures* -- sandwiched between the forces of the parent culture and the host culture. It is not only Japan or China that have come to, for example, Bangladesh, but Bangladesh has also reached these destinations. Chinese restaurants in different lands, to take another example, have popularized Chinese food, but in each country Chinese food tastes differently because of its adaptation to the local taste. The way English is spoken by the people of different countries demonstrates cultural ingenuity to adapt outside elements.

Fears do exist in terms of the possibilities that open out with each technological advancement. Some people argue that growth of science heralded the end of Nature, that genetic engineering now heralds the end of Culture, and that robotics in future will cause the end of Species. This is a horrible scenario for the future in which no one will like to enter. However, it must be stressed that whatever is technologically feasible is not always socially desirable and culturally acceptable. To the same innovation, different cultures respond differently. While it is true that technology has helped in

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widening the cognitive horizons and enlarging the range of choices, its global "hegemonic blanket" is incapable of shrouding all cultural specificities. To what uses a given technology is put is still very much dependent on the *people*. The resurgence and revival of tradition alongside of development puts question marks on the "conspiracy" theory that alleges the West for all the ills of development.

There are several unintended consequences of the development process. Reinforcement of cultural identity is one of them. Modern media have done a great deal to revive and diffuse tradition. People have become mobile -- both physically and psychologically. Not only do they cross the cultural boundaries, they are enabled to travel into the corridors of their cultural past.

Change has now become a key concept and its inevitability is recognized. It is acknowledged that the desire for change is universal; all societies -- big or small, modern or primitive, Western or non-Western -- share this desire. At the same time, one also notices a newfound attachment to one's own culture; there is in evidence an effective assertion of cultural identity. No society would wish to lose its cultural roots. No culture would allow itself to be engulfed by another dominant culture. These two tendencies -- desire for change, and keenness to maintain identity-- have resulted into increasing modernization of the societies, on the one hand; and revival and resurgence of tradition, on the other. Forces of change have not homogenized the globe into a common culture. The individual cultures have certainly changed and expanded, both in material and non-material terms, but they have not all become even *look-alike* societies. Religion and tradition have constantly tried to establish new equations with external forces of change. There is an accretion of new cultural elements -- either invented within or innovated from the outside; simultaneously, there is also an attrition of some old cultural traits -- deliberately or otherwise.

One may ask : Does disappearance of certain cultural traits amount to the destruction of a culture? If the answer is in the affirmative then we may pose the question : how does the culture grow ? Or, is Culture just another name for the deadwood? I would submit the point that changes occurring in the ambit of culture do not always erase its identity; it may, however, confuse its identification. Accretion and attrition are the processes that operate in all living cultures; that is how they grow and express their vitality.

The phenomenon of cultural continuity has challenged the "homogenization" hypothesis. While individual cultures are experiencing vast changes, they are not becoming similar, not even look-alike. Even their own homogeneity has suffered; they are becoming heterogeneous both in terms of their demographic composition, and cultural constitution. The so-called World Culture's monocultural stance is no longer tenable. The plausible perspective is to view both culture and future in their plurality. No single future can be imposed on all cultures. Cultures have their ingenuity to respond to changes and bring about new equations between the old and the new.

In this sense we can not talk of "future" (in singular) of "cultures" (in plural). Of course, there will be a single, empirical future of a given culture, but scholars may present alternative scenarios -- these would be in the nature of "prescriptions" and not as "predictions". Similarly, predictive futurists may sound optimistic or pessimistic depending upon the premises of their prediction. That is why we use both culture and future as plurals in this discourse. Plurality goes even further: most nation-societies are plural -- both in terms of ethnic composition and in cultural constitution, thanks to decades of culture contact which is now greatly accelerated by the modern means of rapid transportation and communication. Each society consists of multiple layers of Culture. At least three strata can be easily identified:

- i. Universal, international (global) culture of science and technology, modern industry, bureaucracy, transport and communication, emerging Infosphere;
- ii. Emergent national culture, deriving civilizational base and giving the country its cultural identity; and
- iii. Regional and local, parochial cultures; *sandwich cultures* -- cultures of migrant groups which emerge as a result of sandwiching between the forces of the parent culture and the host country culture.

Asia has proved the falsity of the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. They are not polar opposites. There are elements of modernity in tradition, and modernization has helped in the propagation of tradition. The rise of ethnic restaurants, the modernization of the architecture of mosques and temples, the popularization of mythical epics through their televization

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are cases in point. Jumbo jets have not replaced the bullock cart as a mode of transport; allopathy has not made Indian *ayurved* or the Chinese acupuncture redundant; not only forks and knives are used by non-Chinese to eat Chinese food, chopsticks are, likewise, employed by the Chinese and the Japanese while eating Western cuisine. It seems that the co-existence principle has overshadowed the replacement and transplantation paradigm of Western development. There is a symbiosis of the elements of tradition and modernity, and since traditions represent a given culture's uniqueness, the symbiosis has resulted into different profiles of emergent cultures in different societies. Cultures will not be dead, they will be different both from their past, and from other cultures. What is difficult to foretell is the exact chemistry of this difference.

What can be predicted, however, is the outcome of irreversible trends -- trends that can not be halted, and therefore what is inevitable to happen. For example, in case of Asia it can be said that it is inevitable that literacy levels will rise in the near future; that urbanization and industrialization processes will further accelerate; that information revolution will transform the styles of management -- both of governments, and of private business; that environmental pollution and depletion of natural resources will increasingly become difficult to stem; that there will be more people inhabiting the region; and that there will be more scientism in our mode of thinking.

What appears possible are the following: stabilization of population growth around 1 per cent level; a near total literacy by the year 2010; rise of mixed economies and virtual collapse of communism; greater democratization of political regimes; continuation of poverty and widening disparities; continued global and regional conflicts; rise of religious fundamentalism and parochial loyalties; emergence of stronger supranational forms of co-operation (process of epigenesis).

As to what is desirable, there cannot be a consensus. This will remain only an intellectual pastime of the pundits of future. Real societies do not blindly accept prescriptions.

There is nothing strange in culture change. What a culture retains and what it gives up, or what it receives from the outside after a thorough cultural screening and redefinition, is a complicated process. Living cultures do not oblige spectators who would like to put the culture " on stage ", or make it a show piece, an anthropological zoo. It is common knowledge that

tourists arriving in traditional societies to observe "exotic" cultures have been primarily responsible for disturbing their status quo. But such disturbance may not be regarded as "dysfunctional" by those who live that culture. Surely, their culture will not remain the same, but changes in it need not be symptomatic of an impending demise. And views may differ on what is good or bad; what the "outsiders" may like to retain may be the one that the "insiders" would like to discard, and vice versa.

It can be said that all cultures in future will look different from what they are today with changes in the profiles of their demography and literacy, and with the continuing onslaught of technology and its attendant ramifications. But they will remain, and remain different with their own identities. Similarities in material culture -- the externalia -- will not obliterate differences in values and ways of life. Neither will there be a single future for the globe, nor will there be a single global culture.

Multiple cultures will have multiple futures.

Heterogeneity will prevail.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Yogesh ATAL edited *Culture-Development Interface*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1991.
2. For use of the concepts of *Insulators* and *Apertures*, see Yogesh ATAL, *Building a Nation : Essays on India*, New Delhi, Abhinav Publications, 1981, Chapter 1 : "Insulators and Apertures: Dynamics of Nation Building".
3. See Yogesh ATAL, "The call for Indigenization" in *International Social Science Journal*, Vol.XXXIII, No.1, pp.189-197.
4. See Yogesh ATAL, "Outsiders as Insiders : The Phenomenon of Sandwich Culture -- Prefatorial to a possible theory" in *Sociological Bulletin (India)*, 38(1), March 1989, pp. 23-41.

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**THE FUTURES OF CULTURES :
AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE**



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**THE FUTURE OF CULTURES :
AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Those who despair at the spread of mass-culture in our time have already signed the epitaph of culture. They expect all cultures in the long run to be either annihilated by a global mass culture or to tamely survive as ethnic baroque. Even those who defend mass culture as a contemporary version of working class culture of the past--they confuse popular culture and mass culture -- cannot escape the nagging suspicion that something manufactured by a powerful culture industry which manipulates homogenized, atomized, passive consumers into conformity and submission does not qualify to be culture. For culture, whether classical or popular, must be inner-directed, not outer-directed. It must be a historically and psychologically rooted meaning system that is sensitive to spatially and temporally defined social change; it cannot come to mean centrally produced entertainment promoted by the State or the market.

It is not just the State, market, or culture industry which has brought into question the future of cultures. The open-endedness, the valuelessness, the apparent objectivity of science and the demonstrable effectiveness of technology have together, progressively stripped away reasons to value intrinsically one meaning system or way of life above another. Science is insensitive to the nuances of historically grown cultures much the same way as it discards superseded theories within science itself. A world which is only a causal mechanism necessarily rejects the meaning of life. And the survival of culture does imply defiance of the notion of supersession and the endurance of a hierarchy or prioritization of human values and meanings. It also implies a life ordered by aesthetic ideals and criteria. The scientific enterprise cannot

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accept this. Witness what Marxist scientific socialism has to say about the 'epiphenomenon' that is culture.

We are, thus, left with not only a disenchanted world but very weak capabilities to sustain or defend the core of any culture which cannot be validated by the criteria thrown up, directly or indirectly, by modern science. Many kinds of meaning systems survive in modern societies. But they are seen as handy, transient means of organizing unavoidable human subjectivity, all potentially trivial in their epistemological and political status, even if unequal in their moral standing. No one ascribes any transcendental value to them; no one believes them to be eternal in their relevance.

In Europe, it was the aspiration of the Enlightenment which started the erosion of cultures. The Enlightenment preached that with reason as the arbiter of human affairs, human beings would shed their traditional allegiances and particularistic identities and unite in a universal civilization grounded in generic humanity and rational ethics. In the non-European world, cultures came to be destroyed by the combined hegemony of the Enlightenment project and its product -- modern science and technology. Both were introduced into that world by colonialism. And they were accepted with alacrity by the non-European elites in order to overcome their perceived cultural 'backwardness' and for alleviating the new poverty which was a by-product of colonialism itself. Contrast this with the spread of Buddhism from India which enriched other cultures without replacing them.

Once culture was made to vacate much of the space it previously occupied, what filled the void gradually in the West was mass-produced entertainment. It occupied large spaces where the society had already been homogenized and atomized by the vigorous processes of industrialization and urbanization. Popular culture of the pre-industrial era also came under siege. With the widening of the cultural gap between the aristocracy and the upper classes on one hand, and the rural and urban lower classes on the other, especially with the spread of democratic sentiments among the latter, the upper classes began to perceive both a cultural and political threat from the 'vile, unwashed multitudes'. Popular culture came to be seen as the very antithesis of the classical culture inherited by the upper classes --vulgar, rude and devoid of any lasting value.

The newly rising, ascetically-minded bourgeoisie, too, considered popular culture unfit for the making of a modern civilization which, they believed, required prudent industriousness, not rustic celebration. The only

social group to uphold popular culture did so as a critique of both the courtly and the bourgeois culture and often out of populist romanticism, a kind of nostalgia for pre-industrial community. In the nineteenth century it comprised intellectuals, many of them leftists. In our times, some from roughly the same social and ideological background defend mass culture as the contemporary version of popular culture.

The intellectuals were fighting for a lost cause; the popular culture they were celebrating could not simply be sustained in the increasingly changing industrial and urban milieu. It gave way to mass culture first among the 'philistine middle-class masses' who, because of the rapid spread of literacy and the technology of printing had developed non-classical tastes. Later, as tabloids, photo-journals, the radio and television spread among the upwardly mobile lower classes, mass culture marginalized both high (classical) and bourgeois cultures. Nor could traditional folk cultures survive under such circumstances.

In the non-West, most societies have not yet been homogenized and atomized. Middle classes in them are small and constitute political minorities. Nevertheless, these minorities have a disproportionately bigger say in matters of public policy and in setting the tone of public culture. As a result, mass-produced entertainment even in these countries is now seeking to rapidly supplant and eventually replace the traditional cultures. (In India, for example, some may argue that the television versions of the epics *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana* have already superseded the folk versions.) In the process, what actually may break the back of culture in such societies are (i) the Enlightenment's concept of progress that seeks to supersede the shared idea of culture and identifies it with a sterile rag-bag of superstitions resisting modernity or, for that matter, social change in general; and (ii) the colonial political economy, still alive and well under the new dispensation which continues to subvert the life-support systems of those who maintain some semblance of a community life outside the expanding sphere of modernity in the non-western world.¹

That is the push factor. There is also a pull factor at work. The non-Western elites have, during the period of colonial rule, accepted their cultural 'backwardness' as judged by the criteria of the Enlightenment. Also, they have wholeheartedly accepted science and technology as the only cure for overcoming the apparently endemic poverty in their societies. These two elements, two sides of the same Western coin, have become important consti-

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tments of their nationalism, even their anti-westernism. Such a nationalism is bound to suffer from a deep internal contradiction. To measure one's backwardness by the standards of an alien culture, and to seek to overcome it by imitating that culture, means at least a partial loss of the same self-esteem that all nationalists seek. The redoubled quest for self-esteem, therefore, often takes the form of cultural self-affirmation. This also means confused attempts to retain the unique features of one's culture while meeting the requirements of progress. In visual terms, the cupolas and the curved cement roofs put on top of inverted soap- or match-boxes in modern Indian or Chinese architecture bear this out.

The whole project is, thus, imitative and at the same time hostile to the model it imitates. It is also contradictory in another respect. On closer inspection, most of the features of one's culture identified as unique, turn out to be *impediments to progress* -- even if the political 'elites' do not realize this, the social scientists bring it to their notice -- and yet these unique features must be cherished as the essence of one's self-identity. One way of seemingly overcoming this contradiction is to invent a golden past; this has become a standard project of all newly independent countries. While this device may do something for one's identity as well as self-esteem, it is implicitly admitted that the golden past simply cannot be recreated in the present; what can be retained are only some visible symbols of traditional culture, such as some 'colourful' rituals plucked out of context and re-packaged for the entertainment of those who have lost faith in the rituals, art taken out of its traditional setting commoditized for the consumption of the economic and cultural 'elites', everyday traditional costumes worn for special occasions, and so forth. As it becomes slowly obvious that the past cannot be recreated, the alien culture, with a few scattered disconnected symbols, becomes even more of an alternative and a model for imitations. The result is a deeper ambivalence towards one's own culture as well as the alien culture. Paradoxically, this ambivalence may serve the cause of culture in the future. More about that later.

Both forms of encroachment on culture, the Enlightenment project and a political economy based on science, technology and development, continue to be resisted by those who have not yet been massified. Even within the massified, atomized sections, resistance comes from two sources: (i) loss of a community life which is still a living memory in almost all non-western societies (the atomized life does not allow either self-constitution or social recognition; there is no symbolic interaction of the kind that earlier shaped social roles and are even now necessary to regulate the satisfaction of

What distinguishes the new assertions of culture from the lived culture of the past are two things. One is self-awareness about belonging to a culture and acting upon it.⁴ Temple building and avoidance of beef by Hindu immigrants in the West, for example. Practices which came naturally in the past now become acts of awareness. This can, of course, be read as another indicator of the loss of culture or of a decline in confidence in one's own culture. One becomes conscious of one's breathing only when it goes wrong. As the expatriate Indians in the West begin to fear the loss of culture either in their own lifetime or in that of their children, they begin to own up and flaunt their cultural roots more aggressively. Culture becomes the marker of one's threatened selfhood in a mass society.

The second difference is participation in political life as cultural entities. It is this that accounts for the violence and conflict when asserting one's culture in a hostile cultural *milieu*. In fact, fighting for one's culture in a different cultural terrain becomes a means of fending off the awareness that one might be losing one's culture inside. The future of cultures is, thus, very much tied up with the politics of culture. And that politics in turn can be very much a symbolic act, even involving violence and terror.

That technology contributes to cultural change is a truism. The humble stirrup, one theory goes, led to the end of feudalism. The printing press, particularly movable type, brought about numerous cultural changes, as did rapid means of transportation and communication. But it is now abundantly clear that technology does not determine cultural change on a one-to-one basis. The same technologies, whether of mass production or communication or information management impact differently on different cultural entities, depending on how strong their core beliefs are and how these beliefs are patterned. Rapid transportation can lead to melting cultural differences but it can equally produce cultural awareness through greater interpersonal encounters. And computers can be put to the service of astrology. Culture confidence, whether traditionally maintained or newly acquired, can shape not only the changes in cultural content but can change the technologies themselves. Electrically stimulated acupuncture is a small example that readily comes to mind. And going beyond technology, confident cultures can take scientific creativity in directions away from the path charted by Baconian science. An Indian scientist has already put forward a new concept of energy, *shakti*, to challenge the second law of thermodynamics.⁵ Incommensurability of scientific paradigms, as among Western, Islamic and Chinese, instead of posing a problem of sorting out which among them represents scientific truth, may then enrich the global scientific enterprise.

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The impact of culture on science and technology is observable in theoretical physics, computing and the life-sciences. For close to three centuries, classical physics had progressively marginalized all other physical theories but quantum mechanics has now suddenly restored respectability to traditional cosmologies and notions of time and space. Similarly, the software for fourth-generation computers has restored the use of some traditional mathematical and even linguistic concepts. In the field of technologies associated with the life-sciences, the concept of ecology is making the scientists to look into traditional practices with a reverence unimaginable in the past.

The '*Gaia*' hypothesis, biological pest-control, biological nitrogen fixation, and fermentation-technologies, are only a few examples of technological changes brought about by traditional beliefs and practices. The spread and the growing popularity of alternative medicine is a clear case of traditional theories challenging, with increasing success conventional modern medicine. Although alternative theories, technologies, and practices still remain on the periphery, the attitude within the scientific and technological community has moved from total rejection, to cautious curiosity to partial acceptance. A recovery of the respectability traditionally given to tradition has become possible because (a) the deep structures of traditional culture have survived -- they always do -- and (b) the hegemonizing modern knowledge-system is beginning to be seen as deeply flawed.

In addition, unlike many traditional sciences and technologies which openly define their own limits in terms of geography, time and culture, the knowledge system of modern science and technology is not only steam-rolling and relentlessly universalizing in its thrust, but also ethnocidal; it does not stop at neglecting culture, it seeks to destroy it. This is the other side of the much-vaunted universality of modern science. For example, many aspects of the 'culture' of modern science and technology have shown remarkable cross-cultural resilience, 'reliability', and 'validity'. The nuclear research establishments everywhere in the world have spawned the same culture, with the same configuration of areas of secrecy, surveillance, and miniaturized police-State-like estates. They resemble each other even in their architecture. Similarly, technologically modernized military systems all over the world look alike and think alike.

While celebrating the return of cultures, in defiance of the universalizing thrust of mass-produced culture, what the relationship will be among the reasserted, born-again, or 'returned' cultures -- and between the returned

cultures, such as that of the expatriate Indians in Britain, and the living cultures of those unself-consciously immersed traditions in India -- is an open question. In the history of humankind, with the partial exceptions of India and China, cultural entities have been, for the most part, in conflict with one another. Such conflictual relationships may well be exacerbated when returned or reasserted cultures become even more politically active. Cultural militancy has already appeared on the world scene and may get worse, in the process stripping away all the shine off the cultures: witness Yugoslavia and the constituent units of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

This is by no means inevitable. Cultural encounters are always ambiguous; assertion and accommodation often go together. While competition for cultural space has been the norm, particularly if the cultures happen to be the ones given to evangelical monotheism or begin to model themselves on Christian evangelism of the colonial period, the humankind is becoming wary of self-destructive competition. After a millennia of warfare, when it came to nuclear nihilism, better sense began to prevail. Now the nuclear arms-race is being reversed. Ecological concerns are asserting themselves in the development process after decades-long quest for unlimited economic growth. Attempts are being made to moderate cut-throat economic competition. Alternative medicine manages to co-live with conventional medicine.

In short, there arise trends towards an ecology of existence if only to banish the specter of ethnocide. Despite periods of madness, people discover that the self is the other of the other and even confrontation with the other leads to a response to the other. A *Gaia* of the cultural world is today distinctly imaginable for the future of cultures.

Such a *Gaia* of cultures may have a number of specific features. Two of them could turn out to be particularly important.

A strong version of the *Gaia* hypothesis insists, as we know, that if the humankind comes to pose a threat to the survival of the biosphere, the latter may, being a self-correcting system, eliminate the humankind as a biological species, as it has already done in the case of some other species. A *Gaia* of cultures may similarly establish a cultural order where ethnocidal cultures -- such as the modern 'universal' one -- might be destroyed in the long run through the natural process of cultural change. There are already signs that the presently dominant global mass culture has begun to eat into the vitals of western culture, its mother culture, itself.

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Secondly, such a *gaia* of culture assumes that a culture's self-definition is always in dialogue with the cultural selves of other cultures. No culture has ever been an island entirely unto itself. Each culture uses one or more cultural others as means of self-enrichment and creative internal changes. That is, no cultural self-definition is ever complete without taking into account--and without the capacity to take into account--other cultures and their self-definitions. If any culture is to have a future, many cultures, too, need to have a lively existence in the future.

SUMMARY

An Asian perspective on the future of cultures must acknowledge the severe threats to traditional cultures posed by officially sanctioned and centrally produced mass culture and the absolute legitimacy increasingly enjoyed by the worldview of modern science. Traditional culture now survives as an unofficial, uninvited presence, opposed to the technologically sponsored, state-supported mass culture and as tamed 'traditional' cultures museumized, commoditized and rendered consumable.

But this ability to survive the onslaught of the dominant global culture also makes traditional cultures a symbol of dissent, resistance, and counter-imaginings seeking expression in the public domain and seeking to pluralize an increasingly monolithic worldview that is becoming a global currency of thought. The worldwide resurgence of ethnicity, often in a violent form, has made at least some thinkers aware of what awaits the world if cultures not compatible with modernity and development are sought to be further marginalized.

Such a rediscovery of cultures *may* lead to a new *Gaia* of cultures in the future. Such a *Gaia*, apart from moderating the extremes of conflict among the hitherto marginalized cultures and facilitating inter-cultural dialogue, may ensure their co-survival in a world hostile to them.

1. See a general introduction in Ashis Nandy, 'Development : A Primer for the Unsuspecting', Festschrift for Yoshikazu Sakamoto, Tokyo, forthcoming. There books directly dealing with these issues are Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1988) Ashis Nandy (ed.), *Science, Hegemony and Violence : A Requiem for Modernity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Claude Alvares, *Science, Development and Violence: The revolt Against Modernity* (Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1992).
2. That use of Hellenism was not balanced, impartial or objective; it certainly did not do justice to the entirety of the culture of ancient Greece. It also was at one plane an invention of a tradition for contemporary purposes.
3. On the chinese mainland, a strong belife persists among many sections of the people that Mao Zedong's posthumous misfortunes are traceable to the bad *feng shui* of his mausoleum.
4. In the past, practising culture came naturally to most people. Somewhat like the well-known character in Molliere, they practised culture without being aware that they were being cultural. Such absence of self-awareness probably has a different meaning in the traditional societies. The sage Confucius is quoted as having said; 'Let the people do but do not let them know'. The Marxist interpretation of this aphorism is that the 'feudal' thinker wanted his 'class' to have the monopoly of knowledge while exploiting the working masses. An alternative interpretation is that he wanted them to act righteously without even thinking about it.
5. C.V. Seshadri, *Development and Thermodynamics* (Madras: Sri A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiyar Research Centre, 1982).

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**ASIAN CULTURES :
BETWEEN PROGRAMMED
AND DESIRED FUTURES**



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Asian Cultures : Between Programmed and Desired Futures

Culture is a notoriously ambiguous concept. There are as many definitions of it as there are anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists and other varieties of social scientists. It was the German ethnographer Gustav E. Kleman who, in 1843, first gave an anthropological meaning to the word. The classic -- that is most often quoted -- definition was, however, provided by E. B. Tylor in 1871 in the opening lines of his *Primitive Cultures*: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

Before Kleman, 'culture' in the West meant to cultivate, same sense in which we use it as suffix in 'agriculture' -- 'to cultivate the soil'. This was the basis of the word 'cultured', meaning refinement of tastes and manners. Cultivators -- those who 'cultivated the soil' -- considered themselves a step above the non-cultivators, -- such as hunters or fishermen. There was thus an inherent two layer hierarchy within the concept as it evolved in Europe.

The linguistic implications of the term have ever had real referents for Western society. Much of what became colonial space was considered ripe for domination because its native inhabitants were considered to have no 'dominium', rights of ownership, over their own land. The lack of ownership derived from their *failure to cultivate the land*, according to European usage. In the European imagination, the semantic field of the term *cultivate* has always included the notion of the application of science, technology, and energy to effect manifest transformation of the environment. The low impact, divergently scientific and technological agricultural way of many indigenous people rendered their property 'free land' available to the first Europeans to take an interest in its possession.

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The Age of Reason and Enlightenment -- the historic era that followed the first burst of colonial activity -- extended the meaning off the word to include cultivation of human mind. Thus in More, Hobbs, and Johnson, culture signifies mental and intellectual evolution. Henceforth, educated urban elite occupied the top rung of culture, the farmers and peasants dropped a notch and the swidden cultivators and hunter-gatherers were regarded as totally devoid of culture. The semantic implications, thereby, kept pace with the sophistry of the justifications for colonial domination.

Kleman used culture in the same sense in which civilization was used in the eighteenth and nineteenth century universal histories and philosophies of such authors as Hagel, Ernest Renan, Gustav Le Bon, and Oswald Spangler. The *'General Cultural History of Mankind* (1843-52) spangler traced the evolution of man from savagery, through domestication, to freedom. Enlightenment thought worked within the theory of three Ages: stone, bronze and iron. This was a neat inversion of the classical construct, as used for example by Lucretius, where the passage from gold to silver, bronze and iron, represented the declining moral state of man; iron being an era of present time for classical writers. The inversion to produce an upward trajectory of the rise of civilization coincided with the growing perception that Europeans were outstripping the achievements of the ancients, not least of which was subduing whole areas of the globe unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome.

To the Enlightenment these ages represented the history of civilization as a technological progress. It was sometime before the aspect of moral decline was submerged and detached from the conceptual schema, that Adam Ferguson (1767), a leading figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, began the anthropological practice of equating these ages with specific social and cultural features which led to a threefold ranking of living cultures: savagery, barbarism and civilization. From the outset, however, civilization was a unitary term: savagery and barbarism were seen as transitional phases in the progress of the emergence of a true, full blown civilization, the highest achievements of which were represented by European society. To achieve its eminence, European society had progressed through the stages of savagery and barbarism. Contemporaneous savage and barbarians societies were viewed as vestiges, survivals of an actual history that Europe had transcended by an intensifying process of cultivation of technology and other refinements.

Anthropologists like Morgan and Tylor, further ingrained the notion of hierarchy into the concept of culture. Each of the specific rungs of the ladder of civilization was associated with specific cultural traits, everything from material technology to marriage customs, kinship systems, and social and political organization. Yet to Tylor the terms culture and civilization were interchangeable and were used exclusively in the singular. All cultures and civilizations were records of what in another context was termed the manifest destiny of civilization to progress to its apex: European or Western civilization. Other cultures had failed to cultivate the dynamic conditions for transformation and remained static and tradition bound at their respective place on the social evolutionary scale.

When anthropology and sociology discovered the concept of multiplicity -- the plurality of other 'cultures' and 'civilizations' -- they did so by becoming explicitly ahistorical disciplines, detaching themselves from the study of evolutionary framework of their predecessors. Malinowski (1944) pioneered the abandonment of the concept of history, except as a limited contextual charter of events that make the present work. He made history into an invented realm of human social and cultural construction. The corollary of this move to ahistoricity was increased emphasis on tradition and stasis. 'Cultures' came to be seen as bounded systems of perennial human reinvention whose objective was to remain unchanged. In consequence, it became impossible for anthropology to envisage or substantiate any theory of social change, except as a result of external imposition or the effect of outside influence.

While a constant source of controversy, formulation and reformulation, the basic idea of culture has not changed much during the last centuries. However, over the last decade, postmodernism has changed the perception of what actually 'cultivates'. In modernity, and post-Enlightenment thought, 'culture' had a second application as an accolade accorded to those human endeavors that epitomized the pursuit of the cultivation of the intellect and mental refinement. 'Culture', in this general sense, was really 'high culture': Western art, literature, theater, dance. Every other form of human behaviour that could not be described as culture was really second class and inferior. In postmodernism, the distinction between 'high' and 'low culture' has been erased: all culture is good; and almost every human activity is now seen as cultivating the mind and the body. Gilbert Adair, a British *guru* of postmodern culture says thus: 'Prizes, festival, magazine profiles, newspaper reviews, biographies, bestseller lists,

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questionnaires, publicized feuds, gala premiers, suits for plagiarism, scandals, personal appearances, interviews, obituaries, anthologies, manifestos, readings, signing sessions...(all) 'that' is the stuff of which contemporary culture is made' (Adair, 1992 : 5).

Underlying the Western notion of culture, from its origins in colonial period to its modifications in modernity and reformulation in postmodernism, are two basic assumptions. The first assumption is that culture is essentially a product of human behaviour. 'Primitive culture' is what 'primitive people' do. 'High culture' is what the elites and the ruling classes do. And contemporary culture is what the young and not so young, throughout the world, and what present-day global icons do in their private and public lives. The second assumption is that culture is an integral part of the environment. Primitive cultures are primitive because of the primitive conditions in which they exist. To evolve and move towards modern and high culture, primitive societies have to change their environment -- give up their primitive notions and values and material conditions -- and become modern. And to partake in contemporary culture, one has to imbibe Western pop music, popular fiction, Hollywood film, scandals, French perfume, consumer goods and all the paraphernalia that goes with postmodern lifestyles.

From the perspective of Asia, these are absurd, not to say perverse, notions.

Asia is a home to two of the oldest, and one of the youngest, civilizations of the world. Chinese, Indian, and Islamik civilizations have rich cultural heritage and distance worldviews that are best described as traditional -- that is to say, these civilizations are alive to history and to their unique and sentient traditions. For these civilizations, culture is not what people do, but it is an attitude of mind, a mental outlook, a worldview. While they evolve, grow and even get modified, Asian cultures do not, indeed cannot, cut themselves from their sustaining roots. To a very large extent, Asian cultures are *a priori* individuals move in a culture towards a collective ideal of society. Human behaviour may modify a culture but it does not define it. The definition comes from the worldview which the society accepts as a matter of faith.

The defining attributes of Asian culture are, thus, its modes of knowing, being and doing. It encompasses a society's view of knowledge : what it believes to be its rightful sources. It embodies a society's way of

becoming: what it sees as the goals of human existence. And it incorporates a society's ideals of behaviour : what it holds as essential, valuable and desirable in norms of human conduct. Asian cultures, indeed most non-Western cultures, guide individual behaviour towards what the society holds as essential, valuable, and desirable; it is in this sense that culture forms the basis of choices, transactions and human relations of Asian societies. Thus the Asian idea of culture is diametrically opposed to the concept of culture as it has evolved in the West.

The signal difference is that culture in Asia denominates a core of conceptual principles that underpin traditional ways of knowing, being, and doing. These acts of knowing, being, and doing are not static. Change is an integral part of human experience, a potential of human ingenuity and refinement. Yet change is a qualitative term, positive or negative, its quality is determined by reference to the enduring principles of one's tradition. What cultures do can change as a function of what is conventionally termed tradition. Traditional culture is an adaptative resource to keep people in touch with those principles they consider essential, valuable, and desirable.

Moreover, the Asian notion of culture is non-hierarchical. In the Western framework, it is unthinkable that a peasant -- simply because he/she is a peasant -- will appreciate Wordsworth, Shelley or Eliot. But stop a peasant in the Punjab and ask him about his favourite poet. The person will not only defend the choice in words but recite numerous complete from the writings of his favoured poet. In Europe, only a certain class of individuals go to the opera. In the Subcontinent, *mushairas* or poetry recitals or *quawwalis* or music concerts are patronized by people of all classes. Similarly, as is widely acknowledged, there is no distinction in Asian art between aesthetic and utility. Beautiful art objects and master craftsmanship is produced not just to be appreciated but also to be used, this is unlike the West where pieces of art are produced for the museums. Cultural expression and creativity in Asia have not been a privilege of a select class or a group of individuals. All can participate in cultural expression; all can appreciate and 'consume' the end products of creativity; and there has never been such a thing as a 'high' or 'low' culture.

This distinction between culture as it has evolved and is understood in the Western framework and as it is seen within the perspective of Asian civilizations is important for understanding Asia's present, as well as in thinking about its future.

Suffocating Past, Fragmented Present

Contemporary Asia is a product of a colonial past and a fragmented and unstable present. Colonial powers systematically and consciously suppressed traditional cultures in Asia and tried, with somewhat success, in replacing them with their own cultural traits and patterns. For example, they replaced a number of images that Asian societies had of their own cultures and therefore of themselves and of their own identities, with one dominant image: the image of Western culture as a standard for civilization. The most pernicious aspect of colonialism is that it convinced the colonized societies that the only way to dignity and identity was to be like the West. This transformed the self-perception and self-image of Asian societies.

In traditional societies of Asia, cultural images condition the operative reality of the individuals. Individuals move in a sea of culture which defines the norms and boundaries of behaviour. The imposition of the Western framework of culture on Asian societies, played havoc with the defining parameters of the identities of individuals' -- Muslim, Hindu, Chinese. Individuals who clung to tradition were like "fish out of water" in the dominant and imposed culture of colonial powers. Those who internalized the dominant image came to regard their traditional selves, their past, their societies, their worldviews as inferior and, thus, developed a schizophrenic perception of reality: they sought to mould a largely traditional environment (both self and social) into the diametrically opposite framework of Western culture.

The departing colonial powers left two not-so-departing legacies. The first of these is a class of the ruling elite which had totally internalized the image of the West as the yardstick for cultural behaviour. Thus, after independence in the late forties and early fifties, most Asian countries followed a westernized pattern of cultural and political 'progress' and 'development'. The classical definition of development conceived a total transformation of Third World societies, including their culture and belief systems. Development was synonymous with modernization and was defined as 'the process by which a society comes to be characterized by a belief in the rational and scientific control of men's physical and social environment and the application of technology to that end' (Kautsky, 1972 : 20). This process of transformation further entrenched and institutionalized the denigration and marginalisation of traditional culture and worldview and the rupture between the political and cultural leadership and the populace in Asian countries. The last forty years have witnessed a constant tension

between the elitist leadership with its occidental world-view and images, and the common citizens with their, generally, traditional outlook and images. The idea of Western culture as zenith of civilization, and its associated hierarchy which places local cultures squarely at the bottom has become such an integral part of the self of Asian elites that nothing can knock it from its pedestal. Indeed, its removal will destroy the self-image of Asian elites and all that they stand for. Preservation of this image is, thus, a matter of both life and death metaphorical as well as literal. This is why all the rethinking in development studies has had no impact on development policies of Asian countries. No matter how development is redefined, no matter how much it emphasises respect for, and 'preservation' of, traditional cultures, no matter how much it is hedged with notions of 'sustainability' and concerns for local ways of knowing, being and doing, the westernized patterns and strategies continue unabated. The physical environment of Asia continues to be transformed to suit the conditions of western cultural behaviour; the mental outlook is constantly promoted, elevated and privileged (Banuri, 1990).

The second colonial inheritance was the eighteenth century European concept of the nation-states. The imperialists colonized a diverse array of Asian empires, kingdoms and communities; they left behind uniformly unstable nation-states, artificially created with fabricated boundaries enclosing clusters of discrete communities and ethnic cultures. In many cases, ethnic and religious communities were divided into a number of different states: the Kurds found themselves spread between Iran, Iraq and Turkey; the Muslims of colonial India shared between Pakistan and India; the Malaysian confronted with equal number of Chinese, and so on. This ripping apart of religious and ethnic communities was to ensure permanent instability in the region. But the nation-state is not simply a geographical terrain -- it is also a mental landscape. The physical manifestation of the nation-state in Asia has also produced mental boundaries amongst the cultures and ethnic communities of the region. So Asia is not just off balance physically with various unstable nation-states laying claims to each other's territories, it is also mentally unbalanced with each ethnic group cerebrally locked into seeking fulfillment through a 'national identity'. Thus throughout Asia, ethnic minorities are engaged in constant battles to create their own sovereign nation states. And the existing states themselves spend a sizable proportion of their resources in suppressing both the indigenous breakaway and independence movements. The more an imported and artificial national identity is imposed by the Westernized elites, the more alienated the ethnic minorities becomes; the more they desire cultural autonomy, the more they get suppressed.

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Just as imperial powers rewarded the Westernized elites during the colonial times by giving them positions in the civil service, access to Westernized education and other benefits that enhanced their power and prestige in society, so they granted certain concessions and favourable economic terms to selected nation-states which showed potential to become Asian extensions of Western culture. Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore have joined the status of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) not because they have some inherently superior work ethic, but because they have been consciously and systematically nursed and nurtured as islands of Westernized prosperity in a sea of traditional poverty. They provide shining examples of how adoption of Western culture leads to industrialization and economic prosperity and how traditional worldviews, habits, customs and social structures obstruct the achievement of high levels of economic growth. The Newly Industrialized Countries have been constructed, and are there, as a demonstration of the innate inferiority of the traditional, non-Western outlooks.

Colonialism and the last forty odd years of post-colonial 'development' have thus instilled a deep inferiority complex in the vast majority of Asian people. All that is local, indigenous, and low impact is considered inferior; and all that is imported, conspicuous, and consumer oriented is believed to be superior. Asian societies have become perfect markets for Western cultural products and consumer goods! Mentally, they have been placed in a prison without walls -- a prison that has led to the incarceration of the very soul of Asian people.

It is natural, then, for certain segments of Asian society to try and break out of this cultural prison. Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism, to a very large extent, is a reaction -- albeit an extreme reaction -- against the imposition of the Western patterns of cultural thought and behaviour. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, for example, was a direct consequence of the rampant, and quite insane, Westernized development policies, and the attendant suppression and denigration of Islamic thought and customs implemented by the Shah (Graham, 1978). Most fundamentalists -- certainly those who are not manipulating the religious sentiments of devout people for their own political ends -- perceive their struggle in terms of preserving their religious and traditional identities, in terms of recovering their self-respect and dignity of their lifestyles.

Asia is now beset with a totally unstable and fragmented present. The fragmentation is evident at all levels: individual, communal, national and

regional. The individual is split between his or her traditional identity and a 'modernized' environment that labels that identity as intrinsically inferior. The communities have no avenues for the creative expressions of cultural authenticity and are locked in a life and death struggle between religious fundamentalism on the one hand, and unchecked Westernisation, on the other. Nations are being torn apart by the ruling elite with their own cultural visions and by the vast majority of citizens who wish to proceed in a diametrically opposite direction. And the region itself is divided between small, thoroughly westernized economic heavens and extensive, densely populated countries where people with traditional outlooks have been submerged in an ocean of poverty. On the whole, cultural alienation, social dislocation, religious and secular fundamentalism, rampant Westernisation, independence movements, banal violence, and pockets of conspicuous affluence are the norm. In thinking about the future of Asian cultures, we need to keep this fragmented present, as well as the suffocating colonial past, firmly in view.

Three Scenarios

Asia faces three possible cultural futures in the next twenty years. The first of these we can call the '*more of the same*' scenario. Here, a delicate balance is reached within the overall pattern of fragmentation and imbalance. The demands for cultural autonomy from various ethnic minorities continue but so does the suppression of cultural groups by nation-states without satisfactory resolutions, in endlessly perpetual cycles. Internal strife and violence will drain the resources of many countries drawing them away from such important areas as education, rural development, and poverty eradication. Thus illiteracy, urbanization, unemployment, social strife, ethnic violence, poverty in absolute terms and the gap between the conspicuously rich and abjectly poor - as described in numerous ESCAP reports, (eg. *Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond*, 1992) will increase across the region in general, and South Asia, Central Asia and Indonesia and the Philippines in South-East Asia in particular. The newly industrailised countries as well as those seeking to attain the status will continue on their present trajectory in the near future till they hit the inevitable protectionist measures from the United States and the European Community. Japan will own a great deal of the assets in the newly industrialized states and will become the main (economic) imperial power in Asia.

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Cultural fragmentation and alienation will thus become the norm in the region. Many indigenous cultures and ethnic groups such as the tribal cultures of Thailand and the forest people of Borneo could be displaced and suffer irreparable damage Wijeyewardene, 1990. Constant strife between ethnic groups pursuing cultural authenticity and expression and ruling and urban westernized elites seeking to suppress them in the name of progress and national identity will make all cultural exchanges banal and meaningless. All this will lead to pile-up after pile-up on the highway of future history. The second possible future can be termed the *fossilization of alternatives* (from Atal, 1988) scenario. This involves the ruling elite, with the power and the military might of the states behind them, winning the day for Western secularism and market economies. The fundamentalists and movements for cultural and territorial autonomy are not just forcefully suppressed but their political and economic options are shown to be demonstrably fossilized in history and tradition and thus quite irrelevant to the modern world. To some extent, the fundamentalists are already doing this: they look back to a romanticized past and project an arcane and obscurantist framework of thought. Their political programmes -- where these actually exist -- are unreal and their experience with managing a modern state is either non-existent or has been a dismal failure (for example, the Jamaat-e-Islami participation in the General Zia government of Pakistan or the management of Kalantan state in Malaysia by PAS, the Malaysian Islamic opposition). It can also be shown that many independent movements in Asia are seeking to establish states which would not be economically viable. Thus an independent *Khalistan*, or an independent Sind, will suffer with what is known in the development literature as 'small country problems'; such states would not possess enough resources to survive economically and would become client states of their big neighbours.

The 'fossilization of the alternatives' would actually mean a large scale -- but not total, since there will always be cultures which will resist Westernisation -- triumph of the monolithic and hierarchical culture of the Western civilization with all its implications for globalization and standardization. Asia would become a large bazaar where all sorts of consumable local worldviews and artefacts will vie for attention with Western consumer goods, fashionable lifestyles, and cultural artefacts. Authentic Asian traditions will cave in and exist only as exotic consumables. Postmodernism would rule.

Asian Cultures : Between Programmed and Desired Futures

One future expression of the 'fossilization of alternatives' could be the 'Singaporization' of much of Asia. By 'Singaporization' is meant attempts at duplication of the success of the city-state model of Singapore: sanitized, semi-authoritarian, open markets with an ethnic gloss over a thoroughly solid Westernized core. The emerging tigers like Thailand could become like Singapore reflecting its economic success as well as its total assimilation and absorption in Western culture; Taipei and Seoul, to a very large extent, already look like Singapore. Other South-East Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines would culturally emulate Singapore without actually acquiring its economic benefits. Elsewhere, special economic zones and Westernized enclaves developed to attract foreign investment will become Westernized city-states within traditional nation-states.

In this scenario, all aspects of culture will become commodified. Genuine traditional culture would exist only as artefacts in museums. Tradition will become a voyeuristic commodity to be packaged and paraded in front of tourists. Just as the sensuality of some cultures has been packaged as modern sex industry, aspects of traditional lifestyles, customs, artforms and performing arts will be packaged as commodities for increasing number of tourists and for export abroad. Living, breathing, and authentic expressions of non-Western cultures and lifestyles will be buried under the shear weight, power of projection, and the insatiable ability to penetrate every aspect of human thought and behaviour, of Western culture. To some extent this is already happening.

A possible silver lining in this scenario is the 'Malaysian Model'. Countries on the verge of industrialization, like Thailand and Indonesia, and countries with a reasonably developed scientific and technological infrastructure, like India and Pakistan, could choose to follow the example of Malaysia rather than Singapore. Here, different -- ethnic, religious and class based -- cultures actually share power within an agreed framework instead of the state being dominated by single, self-interested, authoritarian, westernized elite. This enables different cultural groups to guard and enhance what they think are the important aspects of their culture. Political power at the disposal of minorities ensures some measure of success in promoting cultural authenticity and traditional lifestyles. In Malaysia, there is an oasis of a modicum of authenticity and cultural expression within an overall pattern of Westernization -- the top end of postmodernism.

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The adaptation of the Malaysian model by other Asian states depends on two basic factors. To begin with, it hangs on the continuing economic success of Malaysia as well as its ability to inspire others with its model by achieving genuine multiculturalism. And, it requires not just democracy, but also a negotiated system of power sharing amongst different cultural groups. This means a level of cultural awareness amongst the ruling elite that has hitherto been absent elsewhere in Asia.

The third option for cultural futures in Asia is the 'balkanization' scenario. Here, the Asian states collapse under the weight of virulent nationalism, the forces of fundamentalism and demands for independence from ethnic minorities. China, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia all have ethnic minorities actively seeking to break up the state. Some of these countries have a long history of minority groups engaged in a bloody struggle for liberation and self-rule. Although success has eluded liberation movements so far, it is always possible that they may succeed in the near future.

The first domino to fall would probably be China -- perhaps the most transparently artificial nation-states of our time -- simply because ideologically it is almost totally exhausted. Many of the fifty-five 'nations' which have been forcibly confined to the territorial state called China are clamouring for old fashion liberation. For example, the sixty million Muslims in China are drawing inspiration from the newly liberated Central Asian Muslim republics hoping to follow on their footsteps. In the event of collapse of the People's Republic another half-dozen Muslim republics in the region may be produced. Initially, China would then be divided into two: southern China, including Hong Kong, where capitalism and market economy will rule; and northern China where socialism will maintain a presence. This is already an undeclared official policy. However, immediately after the death of the old guard communists, the new generation of Chinese decision makers would move ahead with democratization and a national free market economy. Henceforth, China would follow much the same path as the old Soviet Union with much the same results.

The next probable candidate for balkanization is India which could, by the first decade of the next century, be further partitioned. Should that happen, it would have a direct impact on Pakistan which would also break down into smaller states. The breakdown of South Asia will indirectly inspire and promote balkanization of other states in the region.

This is a bloody and fighting scenario. It could lead to a total destabilization of the region with all its attendant consequences. While balkanisation would lead to a more authentic cultural expression and lifestyle for certain minorities -- for example, the Muslims in China, for others, self-rule in a small, unstable nation-state, could mean suppression of cultural expression by abject economic dependency. A hungry and homeless population does not care much for cultural expression. The experience of Bangladesh provides us with a good example. After 'East Pakistan' broke away from 'West Pakistan', and became Bangladesh, the standard and quality of life dropped sharply in the new country: absolute poverty, homelessness and unemployment increased dramatically. Today, Bangladesh is so economically crippled that it has almost been written off as a future viable economy. In addition, the Bihari community, born and bred in East Pakistan but urdu speaking, found itself in the wrong home. They were not only totally marginalized within Bangladesh but were also seen as the enemies of the new country. Their plight was only resolved when they threatened mass suicide. It is quite insane to talk of cultural expression and promotion of traditional lifestyles under such circumstances. It is highly likely that self-rule for many ethnic minorities in Asia will produce similar experiences.

The three scenarios for cultural futures in Asia are not totally independent from each other. It is probable that balkanization may proceed with Westernization thus further suppressing the emergence of any viable cultural and political alternatives. In social and cultural spheres, the industrial world's control over Asian people could increase exponentially. Already, Asian states have consciously or unconsciously imported models of education, communication, cognitive structures, health care systems, population planning, cooperatives, housing and transportation systems, even modes for expression of dissent. These models are not just profoundly unsuitable and inappropriate for solving the basic needs problems of the majority of people in Asia, but they also promote self-fulfillment and self-realization of the three future scenarios of Asian cultures. The existing models of thought and action could thus propel Asia towards three, highly tenacious and contentious, cultural futures.

None of the above scenarios is desirable. More desirable cultural futures for Asia will not come about automatically. Unlike the 'more of the same', 'the fossilization of the alternatives' and 'balkanization' scenarios, which have been programmed both in the past and the present of Asia, desirable futures would have to be delineated consciously, planned much

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more acutely and worked for systematically. Desirable futures are thus a totally different enterprise.

Desirable Futures

The articulation of desirable cultural futures begins with an awareness of what is likely to happen if the present trends continue; only then can one develop strategies of resistance and viable alternatives. The underlying theme of the three possible scenarios is the perpetual tension at best, and conflict at worst, between tradition and modernity in Asia. What is cultural in Asian societies is simultaneously traditional. Cultural anxiety, cultural expression, cultural conflict, cultural domination -- everything cultural is intrinsically connected with the image and perception of tradition in Asian societies. Working towards desirable futures thus requires tackling tradition; and that means evolving strategies for promoting cultural authenticity and cultural autonomy.

Within the historic experience of Western civilization tradition has constantly been employed to validate, justify and provide a gloss for profound novelty and substantive change. It was only when they contemplated non-Western societies that tradition acquired the implication of invariant unchanging modes of thought and action, the very antithesis of the possibility of autonomous change. It is the confused, complex, and wholly unworkable notion of what constitutes tradition that has to be rethought globally. Not least of the areas where this rethinking is an urgent priority is the social sciences where the rejection of nineteenth century social evolutionism and the impact of Darwinian evolutionary thought has resulted in a theoretical mess of the most fundamental kind making any discourse on tradition a 'cul de sac' of impenetrable imponderables.

In the Asian context the rethinking of the concept of tradition is more a process of recovery of its indigenous meaning and a development of its inherent potential to author stable autochthonous change. It principally requires serious attention to the means by which the corpus of traditional worldviews get ossified and become fossilized; an examination of the mechanism by which tradition was confined and removed from authority over increasing areas of social, political and economic life and made into a preserve of private, domestic and exotic peasant 'cultural' expression. The corollary of this inquiry is the recovery of an understanding of the flexibility, adaptability and wide parameters of what tradition actually meant and was, and can again be, capable of achieving. Only under the tutelage of a recovery

of indigenous history can tradition make the 'volte face' from being a backward looking imposition of the formal attributes of a romanticized golden age to being an appreciation of principles of the past that are future oriented.

Cultural authenticity simply means that traditional physical, intellectual and spiritual environments and values should be respected and accorded their proper place in society. How could this be done? First, by seeing traditional systems as a source of strength and a reservoir for solutions of people's problems. Second, by emphasising indigenous development stemming from traditions and encouraging norms, language, beliefs, arts and crafts of a people -- the very factors which provide meaning, identity and richness to the lives of Asian people. The corollary of all this is a sensible check on the onslaught of Western patterns of consumption and those consumer goods that represent the omnipotence of technology - the very factors which induce dependency, thwart self-reliance, and expose Asian societies to physical and mental domination. As A. K. N. Reddy has so elegantly pointed out, appropriate technology is more sophisticated intellectually and just as technological as the dominant consumer variant. The distinction is that appropriate technology submits itself to more demanding, indigenous culture and humane social and economic criteria (Reddy, 1988). What is important is not the abandonment of technological advance but the refashioning of what criteria determine whether an advance has been made, and the devising of whole new criteria to generate new forms of production process and products locally to satisfy local needs. The very expression of cultural authenticity, leading to a degree of self-reliance, self-respect, and pride, transforms a culture into a force of resistance. Desirable futures require declination and articulation of strategies for cultural authenticity and hence transformation of traditions into cultures of resistance.

But we must not be romantic about traditions and traditional cultures. They do not, and cannot, provide us with answers to every problem that the modern world throws at Asian societies. There is also a great deal in Asian cultures that is not at all desirable. 'Cultures' have always been in the process of internal debate. Many of the features deemed negative can be shown to be recent acquisitions induced as traditional resistance, a function of the imposed stifling and marginalization of traditional debate under the impact of colonial tutelage and control and later 'development' and Westernisation. Any debate, of course, assumes the existence of divergence of opinion and behaviour. Not all the negative aspects of tradition are products of deformation induced by dislocation and rupture: many are

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genuine local products. What has been unnatural is the acquisition of a conception of tradition that insists that everything that is termed tradition is beyond question, debate, and change. There has always been indigenous obscurantism, and all other characteristics that generate negative traits, by whatever standards this is judged. Moreover, Asian cultures suffer from a great deal of ossification and obscurantism. However, there is nothing 'per se' in Asian cultures that circumvents change, growth, evolution. It is change forced by external and dominating influences that produce disjunctions and rupture that are cause for concern and are often resisted. The issue is to change within meaningful boundaries without destroying the very roots which give Asian cultures their defining characteristics. The desirable futures option makes it necessary to work towards releasing internal forces of dynamism and change that are intrinsic to all cultures. For example, within Islam the dynamic principle of *ijtihad* -- sustained and reasoned struggle for innovation and adjusting to change -- has been neglected and forgotten for centuries. A strategy for desirable future for Islamic cultures would articulate methods for the rediscovery of this principle -- a rediscovery which would lead to reformulation of Islamic tradition into contemporary configurations. Other cultures have similar principles hidden from view: the challenge is to bring them to the fore and use them to rediscover cultural heritage in forms that empower and resist the onslaught of virulent modernity and postmodernism. In other words, desirable futures require Asian cultures to define and shape their own modernity. Desirable futures can only be conceived of and planned for where plural processes of autonomous cultural adaptation are the accepted norm.

Just as we can document the transition in Western discourse in the usage of the term culture and civilization from the singular to the plural form, so we need to effect a change in the usage and meaningful content of the term *modernity*. At present, the term means, and implies, only one thing: the slavish (one ought to say traditional) replication of the process of social, cultural, political and economic transformation that occurred in Europe and in the Western civilization.

In shaping their unique modernities, Asian cultures would need to rediscover and apply their modes of knowing and doing to contemporary problems and situations. Exciting work in this regard has already begun and needs to be enhanced and promoted. For example, the work on rediscovering Indian logic, philosophy and mathematics, described by Goonatilake (1992) and Sirinivas (1988) is designed to 'de-fossilise' and breath life into genuine

alternatives. Similarly, recent developments in rediscovering a contemporary Islamic science, 'the *Islamization of knowledge*' debate discussed by Davies (1988), the extensive research and practical work done on Islamic economics (Chapra, 1992 and numerous others), and the increasing awareness of shaping authentic Islamic Futures (Sardar 1979; 1985), are producing both theoretical and practical alternatives to western ways of thinking and acting. It is developments such as these which will transform Asian cultures into contesting cultures and demonstrate the existence of pragmatic alternatives to the dominant cultures of the West.

Desirable futures also demand strategies for cultural autonomy. Cultural autonomy does not mean isolating a culture from the outside world; or shunning the benefits of modern society. It means simply the ability and the power to make one's own choices based on one's own culture and tradition. Contrary to popular belief, cultural autonomy does not compromise 'national sovereignty', it is not an invariant threat to unstable nation-states. There are two dimensions of cultural autonomy. The external dimension requires Asian countries to seek their economic and political development with the accent on local traditions and cultures. The internal dimension requires nation-states to provide space and freedom for ethnic minorities within its boundaries to realize their full cultural potential, make their own choices and articulate their own cultural alternatives. Cultural autonomy has to be seen as a dialectical concept. It embraces both the macro level of cultural, religious or ethnic groups and the micro level of human mind. It begins with the simple idea that cultures and individuals within cultures have a right to self-expression and leads to the blooming of pluralism and multiculturalism. It is mere historic accident that the European definition of nationalism and hence the nation-state should emphasise one unique and dominating cultural identity. In part, this is derived from the cultural homogeneity of European community. Its other prop was the historic legacy of a system of thought that defined the only rightful citizen as the orthodox, that is one who subscribed to the orthodox beliefs of the Church which underpinned the whole concept of governance. When religious orthodoxy broke down in Reformation Europe so new political entities were formed. Where this did not happen, populations' changed their religious affiliation to match that of the sovereign. The quest for liberty of conscience is the origin of both the movement for political enfranchisement and citizens' rights and the secularization of thought and society in Europe. Even then it was a quest that did not imply an accepted place for multiculturalism and heterogeneity since the religious dissenting citizens shared the same cultural ancestry and, in many respects, culture as the rest

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of the nation-state. The Asian experience has been quite different. Genuine heterogeneity of culture, within communities and system of governance, has been an integral part of Asian history and experience. Recovery of tradition should focus on the rediscovery of the means of stable plurality within communities and states. Asia is virtually the only place where this desperately needed human resource can be championed. Ironically, given contemporary events, it is the only logical place to search for actual, working, historic models of pluralism and multiculturalism that are not based on secularism. It should also lead to preservation of what is good and life enhancing in traditional thought; legal, economic and political arrangements for the equal participation of all cultures in wealth and social opportunity; elimination of distrust between cultural groups; the encouragement of meaningful communication between peoples and cultures; and elimination of extremist positions and actions. Thus, strategies for cultural autonomy are 'sine qua non' for shaping desirable futures.

There is nothing inevitable about the future of cultures in Asia. If awareness of our violated past and fractured present is translated into visions, alternatives, methodologies and strategies for desirable futures, Asia will be true to its rich and varied heritage of cultures and traditions. Asian cultures will not only survive with their sanity intact, but will flower and enrich the entire globe. The programmed futures, the extension and continuation of current trends will leave Asia, and the world, a much diminished place.

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**POST - MODERN
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
IN EAST ASIA**

**Beyond the Japanese Version
of Confucianism**

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Post-Modern Cultural Development in East Asia : Beyond the Japanes Version of Confucianism

I. The Problematique

In the not too remote past, it was generally agreed that there was in East Asia as in other regions of the world a process of "*modernization*" going on. This process was bringing in this region *industrialization* and *Westernization*. It was pointed out that Japan and the East Asian NIEs had succeeded in preserving some of their traditional values, but nobody questioned the assumption that, Japan included, East Asia would sooner or later modernize and absorb the modern Western industrial civilization. Now, it is said that these countries, all influenced by Confucianism, will develop more rapidly their industrial productivity thanks to their common cultural roots.¹

Although this culturalist interpretation of the "success" story of Japan and of the Asian NIEs is not necessarily accepted by all authorities on industrial development, the traditional theory assuming that industrial societies were going to become Westernized is no more as strongly supported as it was in the 1960s when economic development was seen to follow the same path everywhere. Historical sociologists and social anthropologists point out, from different angles, the fact that the development of capitalism in Japan and in Europe had quite different consequences on their respective cultures, and there is no sign of convergence between Western and JapaNIEs cultures as we will see later on in this paper.²

The impact of modernization, in East Asia as in other regions, has generated a number of cultural trends and movements with quite diverse orientations. It is necessary to renounce the simplistic way to treat cultures as Western or Eastern, pre-modern or modern. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the pluralism built in the so-called process of modernization in Japan and the NIEs countries sharing a common development model which may be called the JapaNIEs model which is based, some say, on Confucian values of harmony, obedience, and hardworking dedication to the community.³ We will propose a conceptual framework which can facilitate the understanding of the dynamism of cultural development in these East Asian countries. They all belong to a region where contradictory trends and movements accompany the process of a particularly efficiently industrializing cultural development.⁴

II. The Multi-Layered Structure of Cultural Processes in East Asia

We will start from the assumption that there are different cultural processes taking place simultaneously in East Asia. This assumption is based on two reasons for which the modernist paradigm has failed to grasp the non-convergence of cultures at the end of a "modernization process". Firstly, the believers in modernization *qua* Westernization have failed to understand that under the cover of Westernized socio-cultural and economic-political institutions, there have been, in the past, and there is going to be in the future, always some non-Western endogenous cultural development processes.⁵

This is true in all non-Western regions, but more relevant in East Asia where Japan and the NIEs have kept their traditional values, sometimes called Confucian, and used them to make the most profitable use of their cultural heritage in maximizing industrial productivity and efficient transfer of technology. Political and economic institutions, etc., were adopted without necessarily absorbing the ethos underlying them, such as the concept of individualism and the values of basic human rights.

In other words, as we will see later on, the Japanese and the citizens of the NIEs live within a society where predominantly Western institutions prevail, but where the ethos, or the "cosmology", of the people is quite remote from these institutions being based on specifically Chinese or JapaNIEs cultural values.⁶ The East Asian NIEs countries have adopted, like Japan, many Western institutions, but have kept each their respective cosmology which is in all cases a mixture of Chinese cultural trends combined with each one's endogenous trends.

Secondly, cultural processes related to different sectors of the society do not necessarily go in the same direction. In the short term realities of economic transaction and political competitions, the "majority" culture as source of wealth and power follows one direction. The "success story" of Japan and of the East Asian NIEs is the consequence of the rapidity with which the people of these countries have adopted the Western cultural attitudes favorable to industrialization. They did so thanks to the consonance between their Confucian ethics and certain Western attitudes vis a vis dedication to the collective success of their nation. Their values about technical work had to change, from artisanal to mass production, and they learned this new attitude which was not dissonant to Confucianism. They did not adopt Western individualism and "democratic" values which were clearly dissonant to Confucianism.⁷

On the long range, moral, spiritual, and epistemological levels, culture reflects a slow process of value transformation, sometimes interrupted by sudden change in values and beliefs. The impact of the Western modern culture on the Asian cultures is but one example among so many others of such accelerated cultural change. If we agree to look at the cultural processes more rapidly changing as more superficial, and those changing with a slower pace as belonging to deeper layers, the adoption of Western modern technological and industrial culture belonged to the more shallow layer. In most cases of modernization of Asian societies, the adoption of Western technologies and institutions was led by the modernizing elite when they had succeeded in assuming state power. It was more rapid because it was a major state policy. The "majority" of the "common" peoples were accustomed to be faithful to the directives of the elite, and therefore followed the new cultural trends started by the calculated choice of the "modernizing elite" and supported by the state.⁸

It may be asserted that it was the "majority" or the officially recognized culture, not necessarily shared by non-conformist groups and social movements, which was treated as recalcitrant minority, because we must not forget the existence of cultural elites and masses outside of this "main stream" often opposed to the industrial technocratic culturalization. Some of them were simply not ready to accept industrial values because of their clash with "indigenous" values, others refused either to learn, or accepted to learn too much from the West and began to talk about individual freedom or social justice. They constituted anti-systemic movements: the former, sometimes called "right-wing" oriented, inspired by anti-Western traditional values, and the latter, sometimes called "left-wing", basing their political position on an advocacy of social "liberation" based on the acceptance of Western values.⁹

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It is insufficient to build a selective image of the JapaNIEs cultures ignoring the different counter-trends accompanying it. But it is also not enough to look at cultural transformations in these countries only as a competition between the "main-stream" westernizing/modernizing state-led culture and the anti-systemic movements from both right and left. All of them shared, often in a collective unconscious layer of their cosmology, on the deeper level, a common experience of cultural transformation. Majority and minorities use quite different discourses, but they can not avoid being influenced by the collective discourse giving preference and precedence to "modern" symbols and logics over "traditional" ones. There has been a general tendency in the non-Western societies, especially in East and South-East Asia where the influence of traditional religions was not as strong as in the Moslem World, to consider anything Western more "civilized" and anything indigenous more "backward". This tendency is gradually receding with the new myth of successful non-Western development of which the JapaNIEs model is an example.

In spite of such popular myth, the introduction of Western modern ideas and institutions and the accompanying "modern" discourse is led by the modernizing elite and trickles down from the industrial centres to the rural peripheries. The age dimension also works in the adoption of the "modern" discourse. Different generations use different discourses neither Western nor endogenous, but an ever-changing mixture of both, the younger using more Western than the older.

The post-modern phase of cultural development in East Asia will not continue to be as simple as the preceding one. The rapid development of mass-communication reduces the gap between urban centres and rural peripheries, not necessarily in terms of resources, but definitely in terms of ideas, images, and discourses. In this sense, it becomes, in the post-modern East Asia, too simple-minded to talk about the young generation becoming more Westernized, or to oppose exogenous cultural traits in urban centres to endogenous cultural traits "still" alive in the rural regions.¹⁰

In Japan, as well as in all the rapidly industrializing NIEs countries, culture follows a process of self-organization and self-transformation in the chaotic epistemological and ethical systems created by the impact of the Western modern discourse on the pre-existing endogenous discourses. As we will see below, a rather "neat" concentric regional order has been inherited from Pax Cinica by the modern Asia Pacific regional order based on the JapaNIEs-led division of labour. This order, which characterized the modern

phase of this region, is now going to be replaced by a more complex and chaotic poli-centric chaos. In spite of this disorganization, the region will still remain strongly influenced by the cultural elements inherited from Pax Cinica. This paper will attempt a brief sketch of these elements which remain unobservable as long as we use the "modernization" theory's discourse in our interpretation of what is happening in this region.

The believers in modernization theory ignored both the impacts of political economic cultural conflicts, as well as the consequences of the chaotic interactions between the Western-modern discourse and the other discourses persisting and surviving in spite of all the advantages of the modern discourse. In order to correct this unrealistic perspective, we propose to analyse first the basic characteristics of what we call the JapaNIEs modern culture, i.e. the cultural hybrid between the Western modern culture and Pax Cinica, or more precisely with the pre-existing "endogenous" cultures strongly influenced by the Chinese culture mixed with each peoples' endogenous cultures before the Western impact.

We will, thus, try to look back into the past to see the cultural impact of the integration of the Chinese World, including Japan and the present East Asian NIEs countries, into the modern Western world system, where we will find a strong cultural tension between the state-centered industrially oriented "modernizing" cultures which were at the origin of the modern "majority" JapaNIEs culture and alternative cultural trends in "minority" sectors of its periphery. Simplifying a more complex intellectual picture, these "majority" and "minority" cultures can trace their origin, as we will see below, to the two cultural poles of Pax Cinica -- Confucianism and Daoism.¹¹ In order to understand the now emerging Post-Modern chaos, it is essential to have a clear idea about the process of "modernization", not as one simply determined by the Western impact, but as a process of disorganization and reorganization of Pax Cinica under the regional hegemony of Japan, i.e. the JapaNIEs regional order.

III. The Origins of the Main-Stream JapaNIEs Cultural "Order"

The main-stream culture of Japan and the NIEs countries is characterized by their adoption of Western values related to economic progress and modernization through a process where the preexisting Pax Cinica "majority" culture provided the necessary cosmological framework which enabled the states in the centre of this region to integrate themselves

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more easily onto the Western modern world system and "modernize" themselves more easily than others.

The concept of "modernization", sometimes used interchangeably with another, i.e. "development", is defined as industrial growth fully integrated in the international division of labour of the Western modern world system. It legitimizes any type of cultural mix between Western exogenous and local endogenous element so long as it facilitates the accumulation of wealth by the states through a "well behaved" competition within their private "modern" sector, i.e. accepting the rule of the game of "comparative advantage" and the directives of the state on production and trading so as to make a safe entry into the world market within which each of the non-Western states has to build their own "niche" through import substitution and then export promotion, finally finding sustained economic growth in cooperation with the industrial states and of the transnational firms.

This cultural orientation accepts whatever cultural element perceived as "modern". It rejects, "occults", and "occludes" all the cultural values, attitudes, and realities which stress any kind of self-closure refusing to be integrated into the international division of labour.¹² It delegitimizes all cultural attitudes, cultural traits and discriminates against all peoples whose life-style is Pre-modern, "traditional" and "feudalistic".¹³ This modern industrial culture is promoted by the states and the firms, or more precisely by the technocrats of both modern institutions sometimes called the "technostructure".¹⁴ A World culture is assumed, according to the "good message" propagated by the modernists, to be bound to erase all the sequels of the past non-Western cultures as far as they constitute obstacles to the globalization of the market.

Now, the JapaNIEs example seems to have taken a different direction. In Japan and in the NIEs, this economic progress, i.e. industrialization oriented culture has been imported by these non-Western societies, and a process of exogenous development, called interchangeably, modernization, industrialization, and Westernization followed. But this did not mean a total Westernization of their culture. These processes have in fact reinforced some of the pre-existing cultural elements inherited from the Pax Cinica culture.

For the moment, Japan and the NIEs, which have succeeded in keeping at least some of their cultural traditions, are the only non-Western countries which are considered to have achieved, or are in the process of

achieving "development". The modernization theorists expect all other non-Western states to follow suit, but they assume that the traditional cultural traits will gradually disappear as these countries become fully modern. At the end, all of them will become fully "modern", i.e. "Western", adopting all the key values and institutions of the West both in their economic and political sectors.

However, it is clear, as it is more and more recognized by researchers of different disciplines, that Japan has industrialized but not Westernized.¹⁵ Its capitalism is quite different from the Western version, and is not based on the formal concepts of the individual, etc.. It has accepted selectively only the concepts associated with the state, with economic wealth accumulation, and technic ratio rationalism. Even if the NIEs were to follow the path of Japan, and other non-Western societies were to follow the examples of Japan and the NIEs, they will develop like these emulators of Western modernity, quite different versions of capitalism, basically state-dominated, collectively oriented, and authoritarian, even if they built more or less liberal/democratic institutions depending on the cultural mix they work-out between exogenous and endogenous factors. The examples of Japan and of the NIEs can not, and will not, be simply imitated, but their experience may provide some useful clues about the different problems each of them will have to face, and the range of alternatives in terms of cultural development they may choose from.

The adoption of western concepts and institutions by the non-Western societies, especially Japan and the NIEs, was highly dependent on the culture which preexisted in each specific society. In general, the adoption process was:

1. Highly selective, often based on conscious choices by the state and the leading "modernizing" elite. For example, there has been a combined effort by the state and the industrialist sector supported by it to "modernize" political and economic institutions, and "educate" the people to accept these institutions as part of the "national project" and to develop cultural patterns guaranteeing the good functioning of these institutions. This state-led process took place twice in Japan, following the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and during the American Occupation following Japan's 1945 defeat. In the former case, the Meiji Government chose to combine "Eastern spirit with Western techniques", i.e. combine Confucianism with Western institutions, science, and technology. In the latter case, there was an official policy to democratize the state combined with a covert

attempt to preserve the Emperor system and the Confucian values associated with it. When people talk about a Confucian approach to modernization, whether it is about Japan or about the Asian NIEs, this interpretation is based on the idea that somehow these countries chose to combine Western capitalism with some of their Confucian values. This assumption is shared by us in the sense that the introduction of Western values and institutions was highly selective, and that at least some of the pre-existing values, not necessarily only Confucian yet predominantly Confucian, were kept intact by the ruling elite.

2. In this selective process, it is impossible to overlook the importance of *cultural consonance* which determined the cultural elements accepted by the people because the Western values and attitudes were in harmony with some of the pre-existing cultural factors of the society.¹⁶

To take again a Japanese example, in spite of the translation into Japanese of the works on British liberalism, Marxism and Anarchism, the mainstream Japanese choice rejected any moral system stressing individualism, liberty, and social protest. Faithfulness to the existing power, social harmony, conformity, industriousness, dedication to the collectivity, in brief, all the good Confucian values were strengthened by the introduction of Western ideas including Prussian/German state-centred constitutionalism in political thought resembling Confucian emphasis on the state and bureaucracy, social Darwinist competition based on Confucian meritocratic principles, and hard-work based on Confucian virtue of dedication. What were the pre-existing cultural traits which enabled Japan and the NIEs to make this consonant selection? It was, in brief, the Confucian bureaucratic tradition that was in good harmony with the Western bureaucratic culture and thus provided an ideal preparation for modern technocracy.

3. The selective acceptance of Western concepts and institutions was, therefore, not at all an unconditional and genuine "Westernization". Under the cover of Western formal values and institutions, endogenous cultural values, attitudes and cosmologies survived, often in a "modern" reformulated manner, officially recognized when they supported the efforts of the state and of the "modernizing" elite to

industrialize the society, but otherwise delegitimized, and often forced to take an "occult" form. The political, economic and social life of these societies, developed a facade of liberal-capitalist and parliamentary-democratic institutions. But behind it they kept "occluded" cultural elements inherited from the traditional extended family values, ideologies, and cultural patterns (some of which of Confucian inspiration) often quite alien to the "modern" official values and institutions.¹⁷

For example, the Japanese political party system and parliamentary "democracy", both in their Meiji and post-World War II versions, were based on pseudo-familial faction politics, with strong communal roots, and boss/underling allegiance quite different from the individualistic modern political parties composed by individuals whose solidarity is supposed to be based on the agreement among each of them about a common platform. Nowadays, the majority party tries to mend its facade and hide the fact that it is only a coalition of "familial" factions. It keeps occluded the core Confucian values enabling them to survive, i.e. the unquestioned acceptance of the boss's directives, the avoidance of policy debates which implies open criticism of other faction members, perceived not as critical dialogues on policy between individuals free to disagree with each other, but rather as personal attack breaking the solidarity of the faction. All these unquestioned rules of the game of factional politics were openly recognized as virtuous in the feudal days. Now they survive, but nobody dares to give them open credit since it would clearly contradict the very rules of modern party politics. The fact that all party members realize the gaps between the party institution (basically individualistic, borrowed from the West) and the underlying reality of factions avoiding policy debates does not lead to an attempt to "modernize" party politics introducing individualism and policy discussions. It rather leads to a distinction between the level of open discourse using a Western modern discourse, and the level of untold "occulted" realities of intra-faction (and inter-faction) human relations.

Another aspect of the Japanese and the NIEs capitalism is the system of subcontractors' pyramid with ultra-modern transnational firms at the top and often quite traditional small family factories at the bottom. There again below Western modernity one finds traditional workfloors guided by Confucian discipline. The

relationships between the major company and the sub-contracting ones, as well as the latter with the sub-sub-contractors, are defined using a discourse which is economically and legally based on the Western modern concepts of free competition and contract. The real rules of the game of sub-contractual relations which are based on the feudal values of dedication of the sub-contractor to the protective main company going beyond contractual relationships into more familial ties are practiced well "occluded" in a tacit way. This is why foreign firms who do not understand the untold rules of this game are excluded, thus creating the famous "non-tariff" barrier protecting the Japanese industrial division of labour.¹⁸

4. When we take due account of this "occultation"/"occlusion" phenomena, it becomes clear that it is wrong to imagine that a monolithic process of modernization took place either in Japan or in the NIEs. We must also not forget the fact that there have always existed in these societies critical intellectuals and anti-systemic movements. Their very existence in a society based on avoidance of conflicts, insistence on conformity, and rejection of heterodoxy has always been precarious. They exist, however, thanks to the tolerance of polarity of the Yin/Yang philosophy, not as heterodoxies which may someday replace the present orthodoxy, but as complements of the orthodoxy.

In Japan, the perennial rule by one party, the LDP has been complemented by the opposition parties, Socialists and others. They played the parliamentary game in a subtle way, criticizing the majority policies on principle but turning their opposition into rituals without real harm to the continued functioning of the system. The labour-management relations in this country take the same ritualistic form with the so-called "spring offensives" where strikes are organized in March to strengthen the bargaining power of the unions without harm to the overall growth of the Japanese economy.

It must be recognized that there are also more serious anti-systemic movements. In Japan the minorities are the major actors. The Buraku Liberation League, among others, has developed "denunciation" public meetings where the person or persons who have made discriminatory acts are asked to explain why they did so and make official pledge not to repeat. This is a practice which is difficult to understand in a Western individualistic society, but constitutes the

last resort to redress discrimination in this over-conformist and conflict-avoiding culture. This is an interesting approach to create public awareness about occluded realities.¹⁹

Occlusion of non-modern discourses is also broken by certain artistic activities. A pluralism always existed in different arts in Japan, in the NIEs and in other societies in Asia and the Pacific. In practically all of them, there has been an artistic effort to "modernize" and create modern art forms, i.e. Western style fine arts and music. In Japan, for example, the painters and composers tried to introduce Japanese themes and techniques into their Western-style works and vice-versa. Their efforts became bolder and bolder to the point of inventing new art forms like "avant-guard" calligraphy. The popular culture developed musical styles using Western instruments and harmony to express their enthusiasm and sadness of being involved in the rapidly industrializing and urbanizing trends, uprooted from their traditional village cultures.²⁰ The cultural process of resonant selection has never been a smooth and continuous process from traditionalism to modernity. It was a process full of experiments -- orthodox and heterodox -- which could not be subsumed under the simplistic model of Confucian capitalism.

The situation described above in terms of Japanese examples exists *mutatis mutandis* in all the NIEs. It constitutes the cultural base of modernization with formal Westernization plus informal survival of traditional values. The consonant selective adoption of the former combined with the occlusion of the latter enabled Japan and then the NIEs to follow a path of accelerated industrial development. This was possible because the "modernizing elite" was able to base their social control on the popular belief that what was "modern" was better than what was not. Now, this belief is loosing its unquestionable legitimacy. In the so-called post-modern phase of world history we are entering, what we have written above is rapidly changing. This disenchantment about "Westernization" and "modernization" has been caused on the one hand by the loss of faith in the Western approach to progress, and on the other by the emergence of the new myth about the JapaNIEs miracle. These two post-modern trends contradict each other, since the former recognizes the limits to growth and of technocratic rationality, while the latter claims that growth and rationality can be based on non-Western values such as

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Confucianism. Both are critical of the Western modern pattern of development, but their criticism is based on opposite normative assumptions, one that the end itself has to be modified, the other that it should be reached by other means.

In the situation full of contradictions of this post-modern time, It is especially worthwhile to point out a new trend emerging now across the borders of Japan and the NIEs. Even quite local-specific social movements, endogenous manifestations of identity groups, are rapidly developing a common front across borders by formulating their common cause stressing their common interest in developing "endogenous" cultures and civil societies fusing exogenous and endogenous values and beliefs.²¹

This fusion enables them to go beyond the dichotomy between traditional and modern. For example, they talk about collective rights of peoples, indigenous and other minorities, enabling them to develop their own cultural values and open alternative paths to a better world. The fusion phenomenon seems to characterize also post-modern arts as indicated by the new popular musics fusing Western and endogenous rhythms and melodies.²¹

IV. From the Collapse of the Pax Cinica to the Post-Modern JapaNIEs Chaos

In order to look into the future of this multifarious cultural process taking place in Japan and in the East Asian NIEs, it is necessary to look back into history, and get the necessary overview of the present process.

The Chinese (Central Kingdom) Order has contained in itself two contradictory principles, i.e. the concentric order principle of the centralized authority of the righteous ruler, and the principle of the self-organizing nature of the society (and of nature) where the local communities develop, more or less independently from the central authority of the Emperor, their own communal life based on popular values and traditions relatively free from the central and centralizing authorities.

If the regional process of modernization in the Asia Pacific region, especially its most dynamic part composed of Japan and the NIEs is based on consonant selectivity, as we discussed already, then the most important

contribution of Pax Cinica appears in the isomorphism between the present regional division of labour centred around Japan and the NIEs, and the Pax Cinica division of labour some times defined as a "tributary system". Both systems are characterised by their concentricity. Pax Cinica around the Emperor and his bureaucracy in the capital city as centre, and the contemporary Asia Pacific with Japan at the centre, the NIEs in the semi-periphery, and all the others in the periphery (with a possible distinction between the inner and the outer peripheries).²²

The tributary system of Pax Cinica was not necessarily a stable centralized order as it is generally believed, but contained in itself a dynamic pluralism where tributary states were relatively autonomous, some to the extent of attempting to build their own concentric sub-orders like Vietnam, or even take over the centre like the Mongols. There was, in this way, a dialectical structure built around a centralizing principle constituting the "Yang" side, and a decentralizing principle which was, so to speak, the "Yin" side of Pax Cinica. The former trend has been associated with Confucianism and, simplifying a more complex reality, we may say that the cosmology underlying decentralization was provided by various local beliefs, animism, buddhism etc. often syncretised thanks to Daoism.²³

On the periphery of Pax Cinica, Confucianism was officially adopted by the states and by the ruling elite who were proud of their Confucian knowledge (and supposed wisdom). As is well known, the Meiji Restauration was legitimized as a "renovation" led by the legitimate ruler according to the Pax Cinica definition. This legitimization was possible thanks to the fact that it was the Emperor of Japan who had been recognized (even by the Japanese successive Shogunates which held real power and could have easily abolished this fictitious institution) as the one and only giver of Mandarin titles in this country. It is, by the way, interesting to realize that in the whole world of today, the Emperor of Japan is the only Confucian "ruler" who still bestows Mandarin titles according to the protocol introduced in Japan during the Tang Dynasty. This replication of China by Japan was especially clear during the World War II, when the Mini-Central-Kingdom "project" of the Great East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere under the rule of the Japanese

Emperor was declared. It was but a poor replica of the past all powerful and ma gnanimous Emperor of China ruling over the Central Kingdom with all its tributary states.

Nowadays, Japan does not officially claim to reproduce the concentric Pax Cinica as it did during World War II. It is, however, the centre with a

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concentric sub-contracting vertical division of labour. As was the case in the tributary Pax Cinica, Japanese ODA redistributes part of its accumulated "tribute" and covers part of the club goods of the region. The "Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACS)" was an official "project" of imperial/imperialist Japan. The present concentric vertical division created around Japan is, in a sense, an occluded GEACS. On the official discourse level, the Confucian concentric order idea is not professed as before, yet in the mind of the Japanese and of some of the NIEs leaders such a model is kept secretly. The "geese flight" myth, according to which Japan flies as the leading goose followed by the NIEs and their imitators, is isomorphic with the concentric model with Japan at the centre of the regional division of labour.²⁴

This Japanese version of the concentric Pax Cinica, in both its overt and occluded version, has a basic difference, however, with its Chinese model. Whereas in the latter case the tributary states on the periphery were able to keep their own cultures, in the Japanese concentric order, this freedom is not tolerated. The occupied territories during WWII were forced to adopt all the Japanese values including the cult of the Emperor. In the present concentric division of labour, the sub-contracting firms in the semi-periphery and the periphery are now "more politely" invited to learn Japanese management and quality control. The sub-contractors do not have to adopt the cult of the Japanese Emperor, but they are encouraged to develop the cult of the father company, some even singing the company anthem every morning!

On the other hand, as we saw before, it is important for many reasons not to ignore the counter-Confucian influence of the Daoist traditions *lato sensu*. The Daoist traditions have not disappeared after the Western impact. They have been mixed with different "high culture" and "popular culture" trends which survived the process of modernization. Daoism played an important role, not only as an alternative cosmology (or more precisely cosmogony) to Confucianism, but facilitated the syncretism between Chinese thought and other cultural/intellectual traditions. Already when China broadened its cultural contacts with the surrounding civilized or "barbarian" societies, Daoism facilitated the integration of non-Chinese cultures to the Chinese, and vice-versa. For example, Mahayana Buddhism is known to have received a strong influence from Daoism, and some specialists believe that a Confucian China would not have been able to accept this Indian religion without the mediation of Daoism. Shamanism and Daoism have been mixed in the Japanese Shinto tradition, a religion the very name of which comes from daoism.²⁵

Daoism combined with Confucianism constitutes the heart of the business ethos of the overseas Chinese communities in South East Asia and other parts of the Asia Pacific region. Their family-based networks are animated by Daoist beliefs more horizontal than the Confucian vertical ethics. The Daoist syncretism permits them to adapt to the different cultures of the host societies. Their vitality is based on their adaptive flexibility, a characteristic which is lacking in the Japanese vertical sub-contracting system which transfers down Japanese ethos attached to its technology and management. Daoism has been mostly subservient to the Confucian order, and the overseas Chinese communities are often feared and discriminated by their host state because of their past role which kept the commercial ties of Pax Cinica even during the colonial days.²⁶

Daoism has however, provided a basis from time to time for opposing Mandarin domination. The last manifestation of such a trend can be found in the Great Cultural Revolution under the leadership of Chairman Mao who tried to apply this historically legitimated principle even to correct the technocratic tendencies of the bureaucratic leadership of the CPC.

In a world dominated by Western modern discourses. The attempts to apply in a changing context either Confucian central hegemony or Daoist decentralization failed to produce immediate results. Their influence on the future of the region is still to be seen, especially in the post-modern context of today. The Confucianism/Daoism:Yang/Yin polarity has a modern and post-modern implication which will make the JapaNIEs cultural sphere an interesting testing ground for the World culture of tomorrow. This polarity is in consonance with the polarity of Western modern culture between technocratic rationality and humanistic holism, the contemporary versions of an agelong polarity in the Western modern society between Enlightenment and Hermetism.

In brief, it is quite appropriate to say that the industrial dynamism of the JapaNIEs region can be interpreted as a state-led process of Confucian inspired process of industrialization.

It is, however, insufficient to stress only this *Yang* side of the process, forgetting the *Yin* side which may have an increasingly important cultural message for the survival of humankind. It is important to understand the impact of this side of the Chinese cosmology as well. Daoism is flexible and open enough to generate syncretic discourses consonant with the traditional

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world views of the peripheral peoples of the Pax Cinica. It has also the advantage to legitimize the belief that Chaos was the Way and that it was in vain that the powerful tried to create a fictitious order under their rule. This provided to the small and the weak common people a powerful counter-ideology to the power thrust of the bureaucratic and military rulers.²⁷

The order/chaos concepts constituting the Yin/Yang dialectics which animated Pax Cinica has been distorted by the process of modernization which has fragmented the total vision of the traditional order/chaos complex. It stressed only the "order" side of the traditional world-view and strengthened the state order and aimed at a bureaucratic control of the more or less chaotic modernization process. The authoritarian and patriarchal aspect of Confucianism was stressed, and the chaos-oriented Daoist discourse was permitted to survive only in arts and spiritual practices. Now that Western modernism is put into question, the future of culture in the post-modern JapaNIEs world becomes interesting, because if the present contradictions continue to get more acute, the post-modern world will, sooner or later, come to a bifurcation point where it will be forced to choose either to continue its official Confucian road to unsustainable development, or choose ecological survival by stressing its Daoist tradition.

In face of this approaching crisis, we should not replace the over-simplified myth of Confucian JapaNIEs cultural miracle by a simplistic praise of an enlarged concept of Daoism. It still remains a fact that the JapaNIEs world, like other regions, is faced with the problem of "sustainable" development. The JapaNIEs cultural response to this difficult question is probably going to be influenced by the polarity between technocratic rationality of Confucian style and eco-democratic humanism of Daoist style. However, the polarity will appear, probably, in a quite complex way, not as a fight between two opposite camps. This is because, Yin and Yang co-exist in these societies in a quite complicated manner.

It is not our intention, to suggest that Confucianism is just a prefiguration of technocratic rational management with a basically pro-status-quo position. On the contrary, this school of thought, in its original message, contains a theory of revolution through the change in the mandate from Heaven. This side of Confucianism has been quietly forgotten when adopted by the rulers of the periphery of Pax Cinica.

Confucianism rejects the Western "realist" view that might is right. It tells the rulers and the technocrats that they have obligations and that they have to be "virtuous". "Virtues" being defined not at all in terms of Machiavelli's "virtu" Many intellectuals in Pax Cinica countries have been non-conformist Confucian scholars. Confucianism has a fundamentally "patriarchal" message. The good ruler and the mandarin play a fundamentally father (knows best) role. The Confucian pole in the JapaNIEs cultures is different from the Western pole of "power" based ultimately on brutal force. It is rather the pole of paternalism combining authority and power, carrot with stick. The "beauty" of this model is that it is based on a mandarin/bureaucratic wisdom which can easily be interpreted as technocratic rationality.

Daoism, on its side, has also many faces which, as we saw above, makes it an ideal attractor in the post-modern chaotic cultural situation. Despising technocratic rationality and the artificiality of modern technological culture, Daoism, and the endogenous cultural orientations broadly associated with it, provide an ideal source of alternative cultural creativity. Many artistic trends, from popular music to computer graphics are inspired by this pole of the Chinese cosmology.

Even many "modernizers" in Japan and in the Asian NIEs are Daoist in their own ways. Many Japanese business leaders practice Zen meditation to counter-balance their busy business life. Chaos theory and fuzzy logic are a new fashion in Japan. Automation itself is becoming, in a certain sense, Daoist in its non-Cartesian logic. It is not only the "greens" which is a minority in the JapaNIEs world who praise the virtue of living in harmony with nature. This is not a new fad as it seems to be in the West, but rather a return to ancestral attitudes vis-a-vis life and nature.

This is why, the Yin/Yang polarity of the JapaNIEs societies will not develop into a battle between two camps. It will be fought, inside the government and the firms, inside the neighbourhood communities (e.g. overpopulated cities) and families (The generation-gap), and even within the mind of each individuals. The consequences of the end of the "modernist" ideology will affect the Asia Pacific region in a very particular way, and it is necessary to return to the different aspects of the selective/consonant/occulting process of modernity in this region to get a better picture of the great cultural transformation awaiting us in this region.

V. The Post-Modern Challenges and the End of the JapaNIEs Model

Post-Modernity is putting into question the Western modern world view and the different processes of "modernization" which appeared in different non-Western regions. In the Asia Pacific, this implies that the JapaNIEs model is going to be put into serious question.

Firstly, the selective adoption of the consonant aspects of the Western modern culture is likely to be challenged. There is already an increasing number of examples indicating this new tendency. Whereas Japan and the NIEs have carefully selected from among the different Western cultural values only the ones which were helpful to build strong states with a powerful ethos for industrialization, the Western values which have thus been ignored are now demanding to receive official recognition. Concretely speaking, the emergence of anti-systemic movements demanding democratization and respect towards human rights, political as well as social, economic and cultural, is gaining momentum in different parts of the region including Japan, the centre and the most highly selective state actor in the region. Among the three hegemonies of this new age, United States, Europe, and Japan, the former two have already manifested their interest in promoting human rights on a worldwide scale. Their hegemony needs a legitimacy which can not be any more just "modernization" = industrialization, human rights, democracy, peace and security, ecologically sustainable development are their new key values in the hegemonic discourse. This forces Japan to follow suit, and the exogenous, top down imposition of these values come to strengthen the endogenous fight for the same values by the anti-systemic movements.²⁷

This strange alliance between the movements and the hegemonies is very unstable and different strategies are used by the JapaNIEs state and corporate actors to avoid changing their authoritarian development policies. Among others, they fall back on the argument that human rights is a Western concept and thus try to justify their position by stressing the importance of endogenous Confucian values. This is going to force them either to disclaim their selective Westernizing approach, and may lead them to a Confucian fundamentalist position. A new anti-Western trend may complicate the position of the Japanese and JapaNIEs regional hegemony.

To fall back on endogenous values, on the other hand, will not be easy as long as their major part is kept occulted and occluded. Therefore, the second characteristic of the post-modern JapaNIEs model is that it will have to lift the spell which existed on them. In other words, the more change

oriented Confucian values such as the idea of revolution as a changing mandate of heaven will have to be revived, probably not in its original form but as a relativization of the value of allegiance to the state and/or to the firm. The anti-systemic movements will help dispelling the occluded values. The feminists will put into question the patriarchal orientation of Confucianism, and this will have an impact, for example, on the Japanese institutions starting with the Emperor, whose patriarchal symbolism will no longer be kept occluded.

Many Daoist values will become explicitly recognized. This will provide a new ground for the emergence of an endogenous discourse against patriarchal technocracy. It may cover such issues as ecology, raising regional consciousness on the need to acquire a sense of symbiosis putting back humankind in its ecological niche within "nature". It will also cover the issue of decentralization, and a more horizontal division of labour between urban and rural regions, stressing the importance of local self-organizing socio-ecological processes. It may further put into question the concentric regional order and promote regional networking among non-state actors as a base for horizontal cooperation.

The post-modern stage of regional development in Asia and the Pacific will also force Japan to become less centralized and more open. The renunciation to integrate in the concentric JapaNIEs-led regional order of the non-Confucian cultures will be an important challenge forcing the JapaNIEs model to admit that other values than the ones serving productivity and quality-control exist and need to be recognized. The growing cultural diversity introduced by an increasing number of migrant workers will force Japan to renounce its claim to homogeneity and conformism. An often painful cultural change will take place, accompanied by racist reactions and conflicts between the "minorities" and the "majority".²⁸

All these post-modern trends, positive and/or negative will not permit the maintenance of a concentric regional order. The vertical hierarchy of sub-contractors will be destabilized by the emergence of bottom-up initiatives. Already the emergence of new technologies begin to enable, in certain sectors of high technology, the sub-contractors to become the initiators of innovation. A more diversified and decentralized economy may come to replace the concentration of resources and technological power in transnational firms.

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In the field of arts and cultural exchange, the diversity of the region is enhanced by new networks of artists including indigenous ones. It will help the emergence of cultural manifestations of different identities, as well as a proliferation of mixtures and fusions among the various traditions. This may constitute an important counter-trend against the commercial diffusion of films, videos, and CDs from the centre to the periphery, both on the global and regional level, from the United States and from Japan.

In brief, the cultural, social, and political realities of the post-modern age will not leave stable the concentric entre/semi-periphery/periphery hierarchy of the JapaNIEs model in the Asia Pacific region. A chaotic situation will follow, met by an effort on the regional hegemon side to impose order by economic means first, but eventually also by political and military ones. Even if such efforts lead to temporary stand-stills, the regional system is bound to go beyond its JapaNIEs dominated phase into a more diversified phase. Whether this will become a creative chaos or will lead just to disorder is still to be seen.

In any event, three trends seem to emerge in the Asia-Pacific region as it enters into its post-modern phase. Firstly, the Daoist trend will prevail over the Confucian, and the Pax Japonica will gradually fade leaving the leading role to the more flexible variant of the Pax Cinica, i.e. the over-seas Chinese networks. Secondly, this trend will encourage the emergence of different development models based on the sub-regional cultures, and they will strengthen the endogenous initiatives of a Daoistic self-organizing style. Thirdly, this will create in the Asia-Pacific region a less hierarchical (yet containing some factors of verticality) fuzzy structure of overlapping sub-regions and networks.

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NOTES

1. On an extensive exposition of the "Confucian" interpretation of the NIEs performance, see for example: Lucian W. Pye, *ASIAN POWER AND POLITICS: THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF AUTHORITY*, Cambridge Mass., 1985. pp. 215-236.
2. See for example: Samuel N. Eisenstadt "Cultural Premises and Limits to Convergence in Modern Societies." *DIAGENES*, No. 147 (1989), pp. 125-147.
3. See for example: Kim Nichikon, "*Jukyo Bunka-ken no Chitsujo to Keizai* (The Order and Economics in the Confucian Cultural Sphere)" Nagoya, 1984.
4. About the concept of the "JapaNIEs" model, see: Kinhide Mushakoji, "Political and Cultural Background of Conflicts and Global Governance", Kumar Rupesinghe and Michiko Kuroda eds., *EARLY WARNING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION*, New York, 1992, pp. 153-154.
5. On endogenous development, see for example: Jun Nishikawa, "*Naihatsuteki Hattenron no Kigen to Konnichiteki Igi* (The Origins and Contemporary Relevance of Endogenous Development Theory)" Kazuko Tsurumi and Tadashi Kawata eds, *NAIHATSUTEKI HATTENRON (ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT THEORY)*, Tokyo, 1989, PP.3-41.
6. On the gaps between the institutions introduced from the West and endogenous cosmologies, see: Junichi Kyogoku, *Nihon No Seiji* (POLITICS IN JAPAN) Tokyo, 1983, pp. 140-149, 164-173.
7. On consonance see for example: Kinhide Mushakoji, "Multilateralism in a Multi-Cultural World -- Notes for a Theory of Occultation" (Paper presented at the UN University MUNS Project Meeting, Florence, September 1992) p. 10, Note 9.
8. Among the classics of political modernization theory, see for example: Gabriel Almond and James Coleman eds., *THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPING AREAS*, Princeton, 1960.
9. An insightful analysis of these two trends in Africa, see: Ali A. Mazrui, *CULTURAL FORCES IN WORLD POLITICS*, London, 1990. pp. 54-58.
10. On the changing political culture in Japan, see for example: NHK Hoso Seron Kenkyujo ed., *Zusetsu-Sengo Seron-Shi* (VISUALIZED EXPOSITION: A HISTORY OF POST-WAR PUBLIC OPINION) TOKYO, 1982.

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11. On Confucianism and Daoism, the classic is needless to say: Max Weber, *GESAMMELTE AUFSÄTZE ZUR RELIGIONSZOLOGIE. I.* (Photomechanische Gedruckte Auflage) Tübingen, 1947.

It is necessary to warn the reader about the unconventional use of the two concepts quite far from Weber. Our treatment of the two cultural traditions predominant in the Pax Cinica world is not aiming at a sociological analysis of the two "religions", but rather at an understanding of the polarity of the Chinese cultural discourse which is created by the tension between these two poles sometimes treated as orthodoxy vs. heterodoxy. The reality does not permit us to use this dichotomy in the Western sense since Confucianism and Daoism coexist in both their "high" and "low" cultural expressions. We used the Yang/Yin dichotomy to represent the relationship which exists between the two traditions that are both contradictory and complementary.

12. On "occultation"/"occlusion" see Kinhide Mushakoji (1992), p. 31. We have defined these two homonyms as a process influencing the cognitive structure of a society and affecting its discourse through the selective elimination or marginalization of concepts and propositions, which makes it difficult for the society to focus its attention, or even to perceive a certain aspect of the reality which was previously included in its field of attention.
13. As a consequence of occultation/occlusion which touch all concepts alien to the predominant ideology of "progress" and "development", the peoples who are left out of the process of progress = industrialization = Westernization are labeled primitive, pre-modern, traditional or feudalistic. They do not receive the amenities of modern societies and are treated as second-class citizens of the modern states. cf. Kinhide Mushakoji, "Development and Racism in Asia and the Pacific", *PEOPLES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (IMADR Yearbook VOL. 4, 1992) PP.15-30.*
14. On "techno-structure", see for example: J.K. Galbraith, *THE NEW INDUSTRIAL STATE*, New York, 1969.
15. The peculiarity of Japan's modernization is discussed in Samuel Eisenstadt, "Cultural Premises and Limits to Convergence in Modern Societies: an Examination of some Aspects of Japanese Society", *DIOGENES*, No. 147 (1989). pp. 125-147.
16. "Cultural consonance" theory points out the fact that cultural transfers tend to be selective, with the recipient culture introducing only cultural elements from the sending culture to which it has "consonant" elements, i.e. elements which are congruent with the transferred ones.
17. The occlusion takes various forms, sometimes concepts corresponding to an occluded traditional reality such as the Japanese "Emperor" in its post-WWII, receives a modern Western definition based on the Constitution. He is supposed to be a "symbol" of national unity without any religious charisma. Any Japanese can testify to the fact that this legal/institutional definition of the symbolic role does not refer to its semi-religious affective connotation which reinforces the sense of Japanese superiority based on its national "homogeneity".

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18. The hierarchical industrial structure of subcontracting firms has been for a long time reproducing a dual structure where only the mother firms benefit from the accumulation process leaving the sub and sub-sub, etc. firms providing cheaper labour and absorbing the losses caused by economic fluctuations. Their subjugation to the mother firms were unconditional. The situation is now changing in contemporary Japan, especially with sub-contracting firms specialized in certain advanced technologies, where the mother firms loose their unconditional control and the sub-contractors acquire the techno-economic capacity to innovate and develop a more equal contractual relations. This may lead to a new non-familial type of sub-contracting where the bottom level work as innovators, an entirely new industrial culture, less Confucian and more Daoist in its decentralizing and self organization, may emerge.
19. About the Buraku Liberation League and its "denunciation" strategy see for example: Iwakichi Wajima, *Sabetsu Jiken To Kyuudan= Ken* (Cases of Discrimination and the Right to Dununciate) (Jinken Booklet Series 14--Buraku Kaiho Kenkyu-jo), Osaka, 1991.
20. One interesting development in this direction is the creation in 1988 of an international human rights NGO by the initiative of the Buraku Liberation League, the International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism which has as its Japanese base, two minority movements, the Ainu people and the Koreans in Japan.
21. Many east Asian popular singers use Western-origin bands to express endogenous musical expressions. This includes Japanese, Korean, and Singaporean popular singers.
22. The concentric system model used by the Dependencia and the World System schools of thought differs from the Pax Cinica concentric world view in that it is critical about the vertical division of labour between the centre and the peripheries of the system whereas the Pax Cinica system legitimizes the verticality as a consequence of the fact that all virtues emanate from its centre, the Emperor.
23. The yin/yang opposition of Daoism vs. Confucianism is a highly unorthodox at tempt made by the author to explain their respective function within the Pax Cin ica world. Daoism, to begin with, is broadly defined to include besides the thoughts of Laotse (Laoji) and Zhuangji and all the folk traditions and cultural trends associated with Daoism as a popular religion. Whereas Confucianism is a well defined set of beliefs, values and rules with a centripetal authority structure, Daoism, as broadly defined, is characterized generally by a diffuse set of beliefs with diversified ideal and practical manifestations based on a centrifugal, local self-organizing freewheeling ideological orientation.

On Daoism, see for example: Ge Zhaogong, *Daojiao Yu Zhongguo Wenhua*. Shanghai, 1987.

On the complementarity of Daoism and Confucianism, see for example the following classic which stresses the fact that Daoism played a crucial role in the introduction of Buddhism in China: Tenshin Okakura, *Toyō No Risou* (The Ideal of the Orient), Tokyo, 1986, pp. 50-63.

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23. On the "gees flight" myth, see: Kinhide Mushakoji, "Political and Cultural Background of Conflicts and Global Governance", Kumar Rupesinghe and Michiko Kuroda eds., *EARLY WARNING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION*, London, 1992, pp.136-165.
24. On the impact of Daoism on the Japanese traditional culture, see for example: Masaaki Ueda, *Kodai No Dokyo To Chosen Bunka*, Tokyo, 1989. pp. 15-31.
25. On the over-seas Chinese communities, see for example: G. William Skinner, *CHINESE SOCIETY IN THAILAND*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1962.
26. The Japanese epics describing the fall of the Heike clan, the "Heike Monogatari" opens with the idea of Daoist/Buddhist origin that "all powerful peoples are bound to fall"!
27. The argumentation that among human rights the political and civil rights were Western-imposed and culturally unacceptable to Asian states was used by many East and South East Asian governments at the UN World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, June 1993). It was interesting that Japan took side with the Western governments in stressing the universality of all human rights.
28. On discrimination and racism, see: Kinhide Mushakoji, op. cit. *PEOPLES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS*.

6

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**SELECTION
AND RECONSTRUCTION :
CULTURAL CHANGE IN ASIA**



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SELECTION AND RECONSTRUCTION : CULTURAL CHANGE IN ASIA

Cultural change in Asia has long been, and will continue to be, a phenomenon of worldwide interest. Such an interest is aroused, *inter alia*, by the following cultural characteristics of this region -- the world's largest continent:

I. The vitality and influence of its traditional cultures

Unlike the Western cultures, the modern one in particular (which have been characterized as being radical, individual, open and absorbent)¹, most traditional cultures in Asia possess the quality of balanced integration, and of sticking closely to conventions. The cultural identities of Asian countries -- resulting from their history, geographic environment, cultural heritage, national temperament, religious belief, economic development and other factors -- have been created through a process of mutual transfusion and considerable give and take, and ever changing profile of integration through assimilation of outside elements. That is how traditional Asian cultures or traditional Eastern cultures are shaped, contemporary cultural structures in Asia are based and developed on those traditional cultures. The long standing cultures of Asia still play an important role in the forming of value systems, human behaviour, and in organizing social, economic, political and religious life of the people. In an article discussing the place of Chinese culture in the modernizing process, Richard J. Smith, an American historian, argues that "the past will play a larger role in the PRC's future"². Similar to Smith, many scholars -- both insider and outsider -- believe in the great vitality and influence of traditional Chinese and Asian cultures. In fact, without acknowledging the continuity of Asian cultures and the role of the traditional cultures in contemporary Asia, we can hardly understand cultural changes and the futures of cultures in Asia.

II. Asia is a multiethnic land of diverse cultures

The cultural diversity of Asia is one of the important features which deserves our attention. Historically speaking, it is the birthplace of many cultures with a distant source and a long stream, such as the long standing and well-established Chinese culture, Indian culture, Arabic culture etc. In terms of its geographic location, it includes almost all the big cultural areas : the Chinese cultural area (or the "Confucian cultural area", as Herman Kahn put it³, which includes China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Korean peninsula, Japan, Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia), the Japanese cultural area, a part of Arabic cultural area (Southwest Asia), and a part of European cultural area (mainly the Asian component of Russia). In terms of religion, the Asian region has followers of Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Eastern church, Hinduism etc. No matter how we distinguish them from each other, we have to recognize that each culture has its own identity and different behaviour system (the way of living, language, economic system, social organization, religious belief and rites)⁴. All Asian cultures make up a rich and colourful panorama of cultural diversity.

III. The rapid development of mix cultures in Asia

Japan's diversified culture can be cited as the first and the most typical example of such a culture. When discussing the cultural phenomenon and development in Japan, many scholars (including those from Japan) would like to mention the advantages of hybridization. They regard the Westernization of Japan's culture (life style in particular)⁵ as **Americanization**, and point out that the history of cultural development in Japan is highlighted by the combination of traditional Chinese culture and modern western culture. Japan, being on the margin of both the Eastern and Western civilizations, has experienced a long historical accumulation of cultural nourishment from Chinese culture and Euro-American culture⁶. The analysis of Japanese culture reveals the following facts : what is unique in Japanese culture is that Japan did not refuse to accept new European culture even when it was still under the deep influence of traditional Chinese culture, nor did it totally abandon the latter after introducing the former into Japan. Japan has, thus, become a better example of integrating traditional Chinese culture with European culture, where the System of law and market of the Euro-American style at the political and economic level, co-exist with the traditional Chinese style of social organization. Japanese people give full play to their creativity and talent in the light of European humanist thinking, and also apply traditional Chinese ideas to ensure the unity of the whole⁷.

A similar trend can also be seen in East and South Asia, though not so evident as in Japan. In the newly developed industrial countries and areas like the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, cultural integration of East and West is in progress. Like what had happened in Japan, they had all achieved remarkable economic success, and created a veritable cultural mix of East and West. Their experience raises an interesting question : what is the relationship between development and culture?

While retrospectively Asia and the Pacific region, what is frequently mentioned is the economic miracle of Japan, the emergence of the four dragons or NIEs -- the Newly Industrialized Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea, the rapid economic growth of the new dragons, such as Malaysia and Thailand), and the reform and the new open door policy of China. These are examples of an unceasing acceleration of industrialization and modernization processes in the region. In terms of culture, the main subjects for current debate and discussion are the relationship between modernization and culture, the new cultural order or disorder (Westernization, globalization, localization etc.), cultural change and trends, cultural selection and reconstruction.

Culture is considered as a complex social phenomenon. There are so many and so diversified definitions of the concept of culture that discussion on this gets off with different premises making it difficult for the participants to understand each other. There exist, according to an incomplete statistics, about 160 definitions of culture. Some refer culture to the inclusion of all social life and some to the spiritual aspect of society. Some regard it as all that is created by mankind and all that is necessary to satisfy the material and spiritual demands of human being, and as the overall human development -- ability, demands, potential, quality and talent. Some prefer to classify culture into a **broad** or **big** culture and a **narrow** or **small** culture. The latter includes human creative activities (scientific research, artistic creation etc.) and the dissemination of their achievements. While the former covers all achievements and aspects -- both material and spiritual (non-material) culture.

Culture, either big or small, is created by human practice in social history. It exerts, in turn, important influence on human level of understanding, economy, people's way of life, and the speed of social development. When discussing such development in terms of industrialization or modernization in Asia, it is necessary for us to examine the change in content and structure of Asian cultures. Cultural change, which usually expresses itself in the form of innovations of new cultural traits and transformation of the old ones, results from new theories and new inventions produced by mature cultural accumulation, from the introduction of new culture through cultural exchanges.

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The cultural change in Asia may be seen in terms of the social problems it arouses or the social progress it promotes by changing tradition; or with cultural transmission from generation to generation, cultural dissemination or replacement of cultural elements, the gap in time required for mutual adaptation between non-material and material culture, factors of resistance to cultural change and different levels of culture etc. But in this paper, our discussion will be limited to some of these problems, and will concentrate on the interrelationship between cultural development and modernization, cultural selection and reconstruction, and the making of a new intelligence culture in the foreseeable future.

Needless to say, a process of modernization is not only economic growth, but also development in polity, society, culture, and education. The development of both material and non-material culture is an important component of the modernization process. There will be no modernization without modernized culture. In fact, industrialization is merely a modernization process in economic field; it is not overall modernization of the society. A modernized society can be created in a real sense only when the overall social development takes place.

The old argument that Westernization is the only pattern of modernization is no longer tenable. The patterns of modernization can, and should, be varied since each society has its own cultural identity and its own way of cultural development. The industrialization and modernization of Japan, and similar progress achieved by other Asian countries, declared the end of the old modernization theories and revealed the following facts:

1. modernization can be achieved not only in Western but also in Eastern societies;
2. the process of modernization is not uniform, it could be different;
3. the internal factors, including social system and cultural heritage, of the underdeveloped countries were not the necessary cause for their being later comers in modernization;
4. the overall Westernization is not the only way to modernization, and it is also wrong to regard the West as the only centre of modern civilization;

5. cultural selection and reconstruction is of great importance to the realization of modernizing goals of a society, and the decision-makers at the top level play a decisive role in such selection and reconstruction.

When discussing cultural change in Asia and its relation to economic development, cultural selection and reconstruction seem to be fundamental and key to envisaging the futures of Asian cultures.

By cultural selection, we mean making choices in situations of cultural conflict which occurs when different cultures meet. The conflict between the original culture and the receiving culture always indicates a cultural dash to the former, a comparison and competition between the two cultures, and a process of cultural selection and elimination. It is unlucky to have a culture without dash and conflict, for in such a culture, there will be no cultural selection that, either right or wrong, has a decisive influence on the development of a culture and a state.

Cultural reconstruction follows cultural selection. Through the latter cultural comparisons, a society selects its goals and develops strategies to ensure the realization of the goal and to create a desirable future of culture. The process of cultural reconstruction involves at least two stages : the transformation of national cultural structure and the establishment of a new culture with a continued national identity.

Japan and China could serve as two examples in this regard. Both of them had passed through a process of cultural selection and reconstruction in previous historical periods with different results. Japan is regarded as a success story, and China quite the opposite.

The formative process of modern Japanese culture can be roughly divided into three stages : (i) goal selection by extensive cultural comparison (ii) a comprehensive transformation of national cultural structure; (iii) the establishment of a new unique national culture. Cultural challenge from the West resulted in the Meiji reformation of Japan (1868). Learning from the West became a movement. After making a comparison between different cultures of the world, the Japanese intellectuals discovered that any culture could be relatively measured by the degree of its civilization. They regarded the Euro-American civilization as the most civilized one, though it was not at the highest stage of development of human civilization. The "less civilized" Japan, thus, chose the Euro-American civilization as the model to follow.

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Japan's cultural reconstruction started with transforming the structure of national culture which was composed of material culture (science, technology, productive tools etc. -- natural science phenomena), systematic cultural (social system, life style, behavioural norms etc. -- social science phenomena) and spiritual culture (philosophic belief, religious belief, original concept, original psychological state -- subject matter of humanities)⁸. Another step of cultural reconstruction in Japan was to build a new a modern structure by combining the best from the Western culture while retaining the national identity. In this new and unique structure, co-exist the Western and the traditional Japanese cultures.

Almost at the same period of history, a winding passage to cultural selection and reconstruction appeared in China. After the loss of Opium War (1840-1842), China was forced to open its door to outside world and could not but move towards modernization. the course of modernization in Chinese history since 1940, was in fact that of an ongoing cultural selection and reconstruction.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-1864)⁹ perhaps was the first to make a response to the challenge from the West in an unconscious way. By borrowing concepts from Christian culture of the West, it fought against traditional culture and tried to transform such a culture with equalitarianism and asceticism of the Chinese peasant¹⁰. Following the model of traditional culture, it fought against cultural reconstruction during the revolution. That fight turned out to be a tragic drama for it began with an anti-tradition stance and resulted in a return to tradition.

The same thing happened in the so-called Westernization Movement initiated by comprador bureaucrats¹¹ in the latter half of the 19th century. They hoped to preserve the feudal rule of the Qing government by introducing techniques of capitalist production. It was a movement with a clear goal of cultural reconstruction but based on the wrong understanding. The historical task of establishing a new culture in China was, for the first time, raised in a more conscious manner by the reformist thinkers¹² of Constitutional Reform and Modernization (1898)¹³. For inclusion in their basic value concepts were "natural rights", freedom, equality, democracy, and humanity. Based on these value concepts, they put forward an overall challenge to traditional culture and drew a blueprint for the reconstruction of a new one. Unfortunately, the political crisis narrowed the path of cultural reconstruction and put their dreams to an end.

The movement of cultural reconstruction in a real sense, and at a deeper level, was the May 4th Movement of 1919¹⁴. Since then, and restricted by the political struggles and military wars, the Chinese cultural reconstruction went on in two directions : the integration of traditional and Euro-American cultures, and that of traditional culture and Marxist ideology. Although both of them were different in form, they were a mix of traditional and western cultures, for Marxism was also from the West. Cultural reconstruction in China had, thus, lasted for more than a hundred years and is still far from success.

Like Japan and China, other countries in Asia had all gone through a process of cultural selection and reconstruction, successfully or unsuccessfully. And it is the outcome of that process which defines the path of their future. Perhaps the experiences and lessons from Japan, China and other parts of Asia may support the following argument : although the futures of culture or cultural change in Asia still remain uncertain, they will much depend on the decision-making for cultural selection and reconstruction, and their capability of creating a new culture.

As we have already mentioned in regard to Japan and China, selecting correctly a goal for cultural development is of strategic importance. No cultural evolution can separate itself from the historical development of human civilization. As a product of history, culture reflects the spirit of historical age. For most of the Asian countries, the historical spirit of our age is the modernization of the society which transforms a traditional agricultural society into a modern industrial society, an old agricultural civilization into a new industrial civilization. Any selection of a goal for cultural development in these countries should be made in accordance with the needs of modernization.

Even when modernization is pursued by different Asian countries, there are differences in the manner in which this task is handled. Such a diversity comes from the differences in cultural traditions and historical circumstances of each country -- an expression of its cultural identity. Therefore, we may say that the means and ways are always pluricultural commonality of the task notwithstanding. No culture without national identity is real and specific, and no culture that cannot reflect the spirit of the era can remain alive. The unity of national identity and the era's spirit, thus, become the guiding principles of cultural reconstruction. This can also be applied to the modernization-oriented countries in Asia.

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In discussing cultural selection and reconstruction as well as their relation to cultural change or the futures of culture in Asia, we need to consider problems like what is impossible and what is possible (or probable, or desirable).

Two futures of culture in Asia seem impossible : the overall Westernization and the return of tradition. Based on the concept of cultural monism and centrality, they either choose the overall Westernization or the return to old tradition as the goal for cultural development, and try to reconstruct their cultures by following the model of Western culture, or by restoring the old traditional culture in all its dimensions. Apparently, they are the products of such thinkings : there is only one origin of human culture, and only one pattern of evolution and development. For sure, there are also differences between the two futures; for instance, the former emphasizes the spirit of the times, and the latter the national identity. Trying to replace the diversified world cultures and become the global model of cultural reconstruction, the overall Westernization as a future ignores the individuality and particularity of cultures and hopes to create a culture without national identity, with no scope for cultural selection. On the contrary, the return of old tradition as a future disregards the general characteristics of culture and the human race, and degenerates into cultural relativism. It could be regarded as a failure, being unable to understand the unity of human being, hence the unity of culture and the spirit of the times¹⁵.

What are, after all, the possible changes in cultural selection and reconstruction that can lead the Asian cultures to the preferable or desirable futures? Some scholars, argue that the course of development of human culture never ceases, and the human culture always continues, transforms, and reaches a higher level in response to challenge between the anti-traditional vitality engendered by the new productive force and the traditional inactivity, between foreign and national culture¹⁶. Furthermore, they believes that challenges for Asian cultures come from the new scientific and technological revolution, from the internationalization of economy and the globalization of western and new cultures etc. In Asia today, we do face unavoidable challenges which are exerting greater impact on cultural change. The ways in which we take up the challenges for cultural selection and reconstruction mean much to the futures of culture in the region.

For most Asian cultures, a desirable future can be realized if the following requirements are fulfilled : 1) selecting a correct goal for cultural reconstruction based on the need of industrialization and modernization; 2)

reconstructing national culture by casting away ideology and value system which deviate from the spirit of modernization, and by nitpicking, sifting, and examining traditional culture; 3) establishing a pluricultural concept and creating, not mechanically but organically, a cultural life system which unifies the cultural characteristics of a nation and the modernity of our times; 4) enhancing the human quality of culture and modernization which, like value judgement, is also a decisive factor in cultural selection and reconstruction in which people act as subject (the selection, reconstructor, and creator) and need to reconstruct themselves simultaneously. In fact, the most striking changes in Asia are those taken place in cultural selection and reconstruction. Many cultural plans and projects had been designed for new direction and structural change, and for strengthening cultural impact on economy and society. Building an internationalized culture (Japan) and constructing a spiritual civilization (China) are examples of such changes. The cultures in Asia are now preparing, to some extent, for a desirable future, or what we call a pluricultural and civilized future.

As a large and colorful part of world culture, the Asian cultures have made great contribution to the development of human civilization. Identified as the Eastern culture, its universality and several of its elements are regarded as invaluable part of human heritage. A development model has already been found in the East and South Asia which is considered as a competitor of the Western civilization. The Eastern (based on reason) and Western (based on individual) culture could learn from each other. At a historical period of meeting the challenges and moving along the direction of internationalization, a possible future for Asian cultures is the greater role envisaged for them in the Asian-Pacific rim and the world through their contributions in economic progress, technological development, environmental protection, value system and life style etc. For example, the behavioral principle of co-existence between the human and nature in the Eastern culture, can be effectively applied to the solution of environmental problems of the world.

Last but not the least, is the emergence of a new intelligence culture, with Eastern style. It is a culture with high intellectual faculties engendered by the growing influence of cultural development, new scientific progress and new technology, on the economy and the society as a whole. As a unification of two types of cultures, it integrates mathematics, knowledge of natural science and technology with art and knowledge of humanity and social sciences¹⁷. The rapid development of science and high-techs (including computer, telecommunication network technologies, and artificial intelligence etc.) in Asian countries, especially in Japan and the newly developed

industrial countries and areas (the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and others), is certainly an important product of cultural selection and reconstruction. Quickened by the pace of scientific and technological revolution, and growing in Asian environment, the emerging new culture of intelligence has its own characteristics and distinguishes itself from the similar universal phenomena. The influence of its new value system is increasing rapidly on human behaviour in management, enterprises and social life etc. Deriving itself from the cluster of knowledge based on the most advanced science and technology, and aiming at cosmos, earth, ecology and personal fulfillment, the new culture of intelligence will stand in the forefront of tackling problems of science and technology, economic growth, ecological balance, quality of education and social life, and strengthening human capability of meeting diversified challenges at national, regional and global level.

The new intelligence culture in Asia is in fact still at the early stage of development. The forming of such a culture depends on the level to which the scientification of society or the socialization of science has reached. The course of development of the new culture, though uneven in different part of Asia, will probably go through the following four steps : 1. the development of advanced science and technology; 2. the scientification of productive force by using the achievements of advanced science and technology; 3. the forming of material and non-material culture based on the newest scientific and technological knowledge, concepts and methods; 4. the intellectualization of the whole society through the socialization of intelligence culture.

Since different countries are at different stages of scientific advancement, they will have different arrival points for the new intelligence culture. However the common characteristics of this culture are the following:

1. it consists of human and artificial intelligence. The latter, will greatly enlarge human intelligence and play an important role in creating the new culture;
2. it is mainly advocated by top decision-makers and scientific or technological professionals for purposes of modernization;

3. although growing in an Eastern cultural environment, it is part of the global culture based on the world's newest knowledge and the highest achievements in science and technology -- in other words, it will be a combination of globalized and localized cultures;
4. it emphasizes the role of human, the importance of human development through education, and the harmonic relationship between Man, society, nature and environment; and
5. driven by the interdependence of the world and the need of solving complex problems, it may turn out to be a culture with global and problematic orientations, and its main task is problem solving through multi-disciplinary approach and international cooperation¹⁸.

As a possible future of Asian culture, the development of the new intelligence culture can be seen through some cultural phenomena at the national and regional level. The rapid development of think tank aiming at national, regional and even international markets, can be served as an example of the emergence of such culture. The think tanks in Asia, being the product of new cultural activities and the base for new theories and inventions through multi-disciplinary research, have been active in exerting their influence on decision-making in economic and social life, which will in turn promote the further development of such a new culture.

NOTES

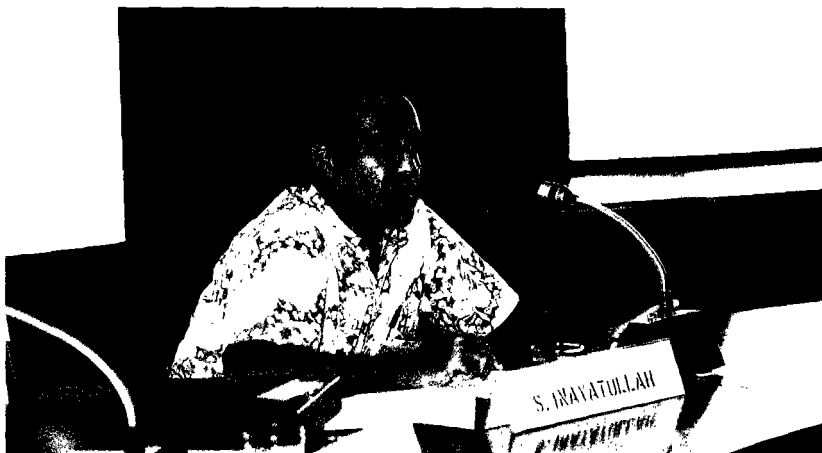
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**FRAMES OF REFERENCE,
THE BREAKDOWN OF THE SELF,
AND THE SEARCH
FOR REINTEGRATION**



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**FRAMES OF REFERENCE, THE BREAKDOWN OF THE
SELF, AND THE SEARCH FOR REINTEGRATION:
Some Perspectives on the Futures of Asian Cultures¹**

Introduction:

Now considered the last unified discourse, culture is believed to be the voice of community, of a coherent set of meanings and relationships, the core of the Good Society, and of humanity itself. Culture appears to be the last hope standing in counter point to the inequity of the market and the obtrusive power of the State. Through the language of civil society--globally and locally--culture presents us with the ideals of love and tolerance; peace and beauty; hope and vision. In this humanist model of society, culture is the last remnant of the past not infiltrated by technocratic capitalist market relations. Culture, is then, the voice of the past and the hope of the future.

Living cultures put on the wayside of the linear march of history are now studied and celebrated (from Ladakh to Indian tribals) because we believe them to have a coherent voice and vision, to exist in a society where social relations stand before instrumental relations, where the transcendental is placed before the secular, and where the body has yet to have been placed in the surveillance grid of modern society. Asian cultures (south, east and south-east) in particular are believed to represent this traditional or ancient relationship with earth and heaven. But this may no longer be the case, for the Asian voice has begun to unravel. Travel, television, video, Westernization, modernity, and independence -- as well as the reaction to the oppressive strength of feudal and hierarchical forces of the past, whether Confucianist, Hindu or Muslim -- all have made problematic a unified Asian self. New technologies, forms of music, patterns of resistance and post-Asian visions of the future may make Asia's contribution to the future of culture far more

unexpected in form and content, more like a novel (a text of many voices) than a serious piece of non-fiction (a consolidated text, often a sermon, with a clear author).

To begin our analysis we need to first distinguish between local, Centre, and pseudo culture. Local culture is often strong at providing *identity* but weak at intellectual, social, capital and physical *mobility*.² Center culture (the culture of the dominant power), in contrast, is weak at identity but strong on capital and individual mobility, that is economic growth. Local culture has survived because of its relationship to the land, in helping members meet basic needs. However, local culture has not been able to compete with modernity's promise of providing economic rewards, of the glitter of city life, where one always hears of someone winning the lottery. Communism met some basic needs but not identity and mobility. Modernity, however, provides unity and identity in the idea of Man--Man as consumer and producer. Instead of the logos of God standing benevolently above the skies, it is the new symbols of Coco-Cola and McDonalds that provide global participation.

Modernity succeeds largely by creating a bridgehead based on pseudo-culture between Core and local culture, leaving local culture ridiculed, weak, and most importantly, inferior. Locals judge their beauty, mind, and history, from the eyes of the foreign culture. Bengali activist and social philosopher Sarkar says it like this:

The subtler and sweeter expressions of human life are generally termed "culture." Human culture is one, but there are some local variations in its expression. That particular community which is motivated by socio-sentiment (race, groupism, nationalism) to exploit others tries to destroy the local cultural expressions of other communities. It forcibly imposes its language, dress and ideas on other communities, and thus paves the way for exploitation by paralysing those people psychologically. So if some people by virtue of their wealth impose (their culture) on others, this will break their backs, they will become paralysed ... If the cultural backbone is broken then all their struggles will end in nothing [1982 : 553-54].

This is pseudo-culture. However -- and this is where we differ from traditional humanists -- efforts to transform pseudo-culture or to criticize colonial culture are often based on an idealized past not an ideal or alternative future. These are attempts to resurrect myths before the changes wrought by colonialism. But rarely are there efforts to envision alternative futures (that take dimensions of traditional and modern yet yearn for a different voice, a post-Asian voice, if you will), except, of course, for more

recent efforts by the peace movements, the ecological groups, the women's groups and a few spiritual movements-- the anti-systemic movements.

Culture as the voice of humanity against the technocratic State machine of late capitalism, may tell us more about a particular idealized past than the futures ahead. While culture as a coherent voice of sanity --the voice of humanity against the technocratic State machine of late capitalism-- may be the illuminated side of the darkness of the present, reflecting the bold vision of the renaissance humanists, of the moral philosophers; it tells us very little of the new forms of cultures emerging, or of the chaos and transformations ahead. As Frantz Fanon (1967) has written, culture often deteriorates into custom losing its critical innovative edge, its spiritual vision and inspiration. Paradoxically, it is after culture has lost its edge that it is glorified and then "museumized." However, even as a particular form of culture may lose its critical edge, so there are always new forms of culture, challenging dominant models of reality, of political-economy, of State power. Living culture is often a step ahead of our mapping abilities, and of our attempts to rationalize and locate it.

In discussing the futures of Asian cultures, we take a variety of approaches. Beginning with an epistemological approach in which we look at how the "cultural" is constituted, particularly official culture, we move to an analysis of culture, gender, and structure. We then examine the futures of cultures from the model of schizophrenia,³ using it as a way to comment on peripheral challenges to center and pseudo-culture. We also examine the impact of new technologies on traditional images of culture; and conclude with an analysis of the cultural construction of time.

Towards a Critical Futures Studies:

Before we can enter into a discussion of the futures of cultures, we need to ask as a preliminary: what are the frames of reference, the meaning boundaries from which this question, and investigation, gains eligibility into our discourse? How is it that we can ask the question: what are the futures of cultures, specifically in a socially-imagined place called Asia?

Futures studies itself, to begin with, can be understood in many ways. Roy Amara, for example, uses the division of preferable, probable and possible (1981). We take an alternative route and use the division of: the predictive, interpretive, and the critical (Inayatullah, 1990).

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The *first* aims at controlling and taming the future and thus making uncertainty less fearful. Finding empirical -- accurate, valid and repeatable -- indicators of culture and cultural futures is the task in this approach. Culture in this perspective is segmented, merely one more variable in a complex cross-impact scenario analysis: that is, culture along with economy and polity.

The *second* is not concerned with predicting the future but with understanding the meanings we give to that future. This view assumes that the future is constructed in distinct ways by different cultures, with cultural comparison and diversity in interpretations being the key here. The task for research is not to know one particular future but to explore a range of alternative futures -- to expand the discourse on what can be and what has been!

The *third* view goes perhaps a step further and asks: what are the knowing boundaries of what can be? From this view, futures research aids not in shedding more light, in giving more answers, but in making events, trends, scenarios and other tools of the future problematic, by asking how is it that we accept conventional categories of analysis in the first place. Michel Foucault (1984), for one, did not seek to predict the future of societies but instead asked how is that we have become a population instead of a subject or a community or a people. The task is not so much to compare or predict (to conduct an analysis based on a prior agreed upon definition) but to bring into the discourse different possible meanings. Culture then ceases to be an essentialized reified category but becomes a particular way of knowing which has historically developed at the expense of other possible cultures. Even though we may construct culture in humanist terms as our possible savior, no culture is innocent, since every reality displaces other possibilities.

This third view, then, looks for the social costs and the politics of a particular culture. In exploring the futures of cultures, we can ask what knowledge interests does a particular social formation serve? How does one vision of the future or one view of the future privilege a particular episteme (historical boundaries of knowledge) and favor a particular interest group or particular class.

Most important even while many discussions of the future of cultures rightly attempt to move culture outside of economic categories, "culture" within this critical framework exists centrally in the "political" : the ability to define what is important and what is insignificant; what is real. This takes

culture out of frivolous discussions of eating, dress, and smell (although these too can tell us a great deal) or even values and habits, to "culture as resistance".⁴

Defining culture as resistance leads to a more critical analysis of the location of culture in social change. In Hawaii, for example, local people have developed a language of resistance called pidgin-english. While ridiculed by U.S. Mainland Americans as poor english, more than anything else pidgin-english serves to differentiate outsiders from insiders, and to help insiders gain some advantage in an Island that has increasingly lost control of its own future through integration into the world capitalist system, particularly US Mainland culture. Through local resistance efforts--in the form of language, music and dance, as well as in efforts to regain lost land--Hawaiian culture intends to return to its traditional cosmology, and thereby cease to represent a romanticized Orientalist narrative of cultural harmony, a land of swaying coconut trees and hula girls. The recovery of Hawaiian cosmology thus becomes the best defense against modernity's commodification of the native (Agard and Dudley, 1990).

Within the critical framework, scenarios are not abandoned, focusing only on critical analysis. Rather, scenarios become textual strategic tools to distance us from the present, to gain a fresh perspective on cultures. This is important for as Franz Kafka has warned us, our consciousness may be more an enemy than an ally, since there is no world out there waiting for us to apprehend. Rather, we are complicit (sic) in creating the reality that is us. In Kafka's story, "The Burrow," the creature digging the burrow cannot tell to what extent the danger it experiences is created by outside enemies or by its own digging.

Eventually, the creature becomes aware that the sole evidence of the existence of its enemies is noise. Beginning in a romanticized state of silence and tranquility, as its efforts to create an impregnable burrow proceed, the creature draws disparate conclusions about the whistling it begins to hear in the walls. Its inability to determine whether noises are produced by its own burrowing or by a predator can be read allegorically as pertaining to interpretation in general [Shapiro, 1992: 123].

How then to distinguish the act of knowing from that which is to be known? One cannot simply look up culture to find its definition. There is no transparent encyclopedia in which the real is cataloged for us. Indeed, the catalog, the index, in itself frames that which we search for; the index is complicit in our definition of culture. Ultimately, there is no culture existing

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out there for us to discover, we are part of the process of discovering, even though we are often ignorant of our own site of understanding.

The humanistic response to this has been a plea for creating conditions for enhancing cultural diversity, for situations wherein the Other culture can reveal things in us that have remained hidden. While this is important, two additional perspectives are needed. One is that "we", ourselves, within this plea for cultural diversity exist in a larger (unknowable to us even as we self-deconstruct) matrix of the real: the historical boundaries of knowledge, and societal constructs of intelligibility that frame our questioning and knowing. At the same time, we need to find an anchor from which to interpret, from which to focus our gaze lest we become lost in a sea of endless relativities with no knowing or positive *action* at all possible. The futures of Asian cultures, for this essay, will be our ground, the landscape in which we hope to create some cultural fruits.

Within this critical framework, we can then attempt to imagine alternative societies (and create) not merely to predict or forecast the future but to gain distance from the present, so as to see it anew. We can ask a range of what-if questions to loosen the bounds of the present, to shift through our terrain and find different spaces of intelligibility. For example, what would a society look like that had no culture?⁵ What would a society look like if it was entirely cultural?⁶ Or entirely a cultural?⁷ What would a culturally rich society look like? Culturally poor? We could also more specifically ask: what would world culture be like if Manila instead of Paris was the cultural capital of the world? These types of questions could lead to a range of dialogues and useful scenario building. At the same time, the empirical view is important in that we have a context from which to enter the future lest scenarios be idiosyncratic reflections of the future. History and structure should guide but not bind our explorations into the future.

State/Airport Culture: Korea's Intangible Asset Program

In our attempts to examine the futures of cultures, we often assume that culture is discernable through our rational mind. But if we assume culture has unconscious mythological/epistemic aspects, that is, culture is an unconscious process -- less visible to official Power and more evasive the closer we seek to define it--then we need to find other avenues of inquiry into the futures of cultures.

As an important case study, both North and South Korea are conscious of the possibility of losing their respective cultures. Japanese imperialism and Westernization (pseudo-culture) have made it imperative to save culture, to collect it for the future.

Culture has become a central strategy in moving forward and competing on the world stage, the Seoul Olympics being the most obvious example. As with other third world nations (conscious of becoming significant actors on the world field)⁸ culture has been given official status, sponsored much as in the feudal era when a wealthy merchant would sponsor an artist. But in Korea this is more than merely creating an Institute for the Arts, to spur creativity, rather culture is seen as a national asset, part of the drive towards full sovereignty.

South Korea has gone even further having established an Office of Cultural Assets which designates certain individuals as Intangible Cultural Assets. Upon designation, a numeral is assigned to each individual so designated. Upon death of the "asset", the senior most student of that person is given intangible asset status (Howard, 1986).

If we examine a brochure from a recent performance in Hawaii, we gain insight into one dimension of the future of Asian culture. For example, Ms. Yang studied with the grand master Kim Juk-Pa, who was recognized as the Intangible Cultural Asset No. 23 by the government of the Republic of Korea. After the death of her teacher, Ms. Yang was assigned by the Korean government in 1988 as the Exclusive Candidate for Intangible Cultural Asset No. 23. She is expected to be officially named an Intangible Cultural Asset when she turns 50" (Center for Korean Studies). Also from the same performance brochure, we learn of Mr. Bark who is designated as "the preserver of the Important Intangible Cultural Asset No. 5" (Center for Korean Studies).

It is the State, then, that bears the onus of cultural preservation. Of course, South Korea believes that it is only in North Korea where culture has been "officialized;" in the South it has tradition that is being kept alive. Yet the contradictions are obvious. *Pansori* or story telling, for example, cannot be preserved through State power. It is a living form of entertainment -- community culture-- based on ridiculing authority, uncovering duplicity in morality, and of frank sexual talk. Attempts to make it eternal do so at the risk of losing the edge, the creative innovativeness, of the art. Art and culture

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as vehicles of limiting power or enhancing cultural resistance become re-situated in the context of the State. In addition, while traditional Confucian culture was community based, in the case of the Intangible Asset Program, culture has become individual based, the group dimension of the art having been re-represented as the Korean State. Ultimately, this is not that different from North Korean efforts to develop art and culture based on the glorification of Kim Il Sung.

In defense of South Korean preservation efforts, without State support there is fear that culture will become modernized -- fast music and commodified culture, and local dress, food, and music will be marginalized.

Even if official recognition preserves the past, it does so at a cost for it forces artists to endear themselves to the special board that decides who will become a cultural asset. Art becomes technical, patterned itself after recent successes, not creative but imitative. Thus, intangible assets remove themselves for that which they claim to represent, the history of the people. Culture becomes museumized even as individual artists gain recognition. Culture is seen either as Western or traditional Korean, with efforts to develop other forms of art having no space in this binary opposition-- moreover if a Post-Asian art or culture developed, would we be able to recognize it as art or culture?

The logical extension of State art is what is commonly seen as *Airport Culture*: a few icons representing past, present and future, to be consumed quickly before one's flight is called.⁹ Hawaii has excelled at this with hula girls, leis and music to greet disembarking passengers (although far more indicative of actual culture would not be the hula but immigration warnings, custom's procedures, dogs in search of contraband, as well as other entry requirements).¹⁰

Commodification and officialization then are the two main trends in the future of Asian culture. In the first, recent Western categories of beauty and culture are imported and Asian categories of thought denied. In the second, culture is controlled by official boards, art is necessary to unify a nation, to use to cast a distance, and as a measure of sovereignty from other cultures. Extrapolating, we can imagine a scenario in which all the world's cultural assets are lined up and numbered. With instant access video technologies, we will be able to easily locate a nation and call for Intangible cultural asset number 4500 and have it played for us. But by that time, real

culture will again have spontaneously developed outside of conventional discourse, in other places. Culture, from this angle, is not State owned or State run, it is resistance, constantly slithering away from attempts to capture it and escaping the official discourse. The Korean word for that is "chôki." It means somewhere else, a place we don't quite know where, but somewhere else.¹¹ Intangible. Neither realizable nor quantifiable. Quite different from the State Intangible program which in its attempt to preserve that which is considered intangible (art, beauty) has left the world of metaphor and interpretation and entered the economic and political discourse. Even dissidence might find itself being allocated cultural asset number.¹² Of course, the positive side is that culture is protected from the commodification of capitalism, from the market--a market which would prefer electric guitars to *kagyam*.¹³ But which cultural period, which Korea, should be protected. Korea, for example, was matriarchal (shamanistic), then Buddhist, then Confucian, and finally modern. During the Japanese occupation, traditional Korean ways were sloganized but these were of the medieval Chôsun period, a time of considerable oppression of women. Nationalist leaders did not choose to recover the social relations of the shamanistic or Buddhist period, rather they took the more State oriented and hierarchically rigid Chôson period to use as a defense against Japanese imperialism.

Each nation or collectivity has many pasts, many cultural histories which can be appropriated in the creation of a future. While through the recovery of the Confucian Chôsun, a strong nation based on "Korean ways" was created, the cost was the suppression of women's rights and labor participation in the political-economy: the championing of one cultural history meant the suppression of another.

Dorothy and the Return to Oz:

We learn much about the problematic nature of culture from the American movie *Return to Oz*. In this movie, Dorothy of Kansas returns to Oz finding it captured by the Gnome King (who is made of solid rock, indeed, a mountain). To rescue her friends, she must go through a range of hazards. In one scene, she tries to escape the wicked witch. To do that, her friend, the pumpkinhead, tells her of a mysterious life creating potent he has seen the witch use. By using a moosehead, some palm leaves and an old couch, she creates a flying mooseplane. To bring it to life she sprinkles the magic potent on the moosehead. Nothing happens. She asks the scarecrow

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what has gone wrong. He says there must be a word that enlivens the potent. She asks what is it. He responds how could he know since he wasn't alive at the time it was used on him. And that is the problem: much of what we want to know, the secrets of life, the grand philosophical questions, the nature of God, the structure of the superconscious are outside of our knowing boundaries (or answers to them are bounded by the episteme that formulates the rule of eligibility). Dorothy's resolution of the problem of Being and Knowing (We are always more than we know¹⁴) is simple. She reads the ingredients and says the magic word. The mooseplane takes off.

For us as well, the answer to our desire to transcend our problems, to remove our fears, is obvious. We read the magic words of Text and the world is made right. Evil disappears and Truth stands firm. Whether Bible, Talmud, Quran, Sayings of Mao-tse Tung, or Geeta, reading re-represents the world to us, we enter the flight of the metaphor and reality no longer appears as concrete. We can fly! We have entered cultural space.

After Dorothy defeats the witch, she travels to the mountain of the Gnome king. It is he who holds the others in captivity, in concrete. Again, she uses the *mantra*, the magic word of "OZ" to bring the kingdom to life. The Gnome king is defeated when he accidentally swallows a chicken egg. As biological life enters him, he falls apart and the world comes alive again. The word represents her Being and when uttered the battle is won and the earlier conditions, the earlier romantic biological -- indeed women's culture -- is regained. All is fine. Culture has defeated evil, metaphor has defeated literalism, and women's biological power has defeated male power.

Structure, Gender and Culture:

While Dorothy raises issues of Being and Knowing, metaphor and literalism, providing us with a way out of our quandaries, in a recent Chinese movie it is structure (patriarchy) that overwhelms culture. In *Raising the Red Lantern*, we gain further insight into the interrelationships between culture, gender and structure.

Sold by her poor countryside father, the newly married wife finds herself as mistress number four. During the first nine days of marriage she has the husband all to herself, but on the tenth day, like the other wives she must stand outside in the courtyard to find out who will receive the red lantern. Not only does the red lantern mean a night with the husband as well

as a foot massage but the right to choose the menu for the next day as well. When she asks why things are done in this way, the new mistress is told by the elderly first wife that these are the family traditions, the family culture. In the span of two hours we see how the architecture of the house and the structure of four vying for one creates competition between the women. Hysteria results. The husband keeps all the women in line by switching the red lantern to whomever is most obedient. But above the visible household structure is another invisible room. Located on the side of the roof, near where the women can meet away from the man, is hidden a small room, where other women who attempted to reverse the patriarchal structure have met their violent death. The new wife tries to look inside but the door is padlocked. Access to this reality is denied. Meanwhile, wife number three having understood the male structure develops a secret lover. This is her only way out of the competitive world the husband has created (she increases the supply of men). Wife number two -- who has gained the confidence of the other wives by pretending to be sweet and nice -- discovers the affair and tells the husband, hoping to gain some leverage. Wife number three is immediately hanged. The newly married mistress upon seeing this cannot keep her self together and she breaks down, unable to explode outwardly (to change patriarchal relations) and unable to violate morality by finding her own lover (as she is from the traditional village), she implodes spending the rest of her life aloof from her previous self, the self created by the male structure. She is now free in the misery of her madness. We are vividly shown the points where culture and structure meet. Culture ceases to be self-evident and is shown to be mediating through various social forces. The movie ends with wife number five arriving asking who is that mad woman there. We should not be surprised at this ending as in male culture there is an endless supply of vessels of pleasure. More rooms can always be built, although only one room is needed far above to keep the entire structure concrete. Resistance then is impossible; cooption to patriarchy is the only possible future. But in the long run, the costs of cooption is the breakdown of the self.

Schizophrenia as the Model of the Future:

Raising the Red Lantern gives us insight into the most important trend of the future: the rise of cultures of schizophrenia, of madness. This implies the breakdown of any coherent self, leading to a variety of selves that are not integrated by any sense of culture, history or any imposed structural self -- the self of the modern world, for example. As a metaphor, schizophrenia helps

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in deconstructing the real and opening up spaces that the modern world has closed. However, as a disease schizophrenia remains one of the most painful human conditions known to humanity. An epistemologically open pluralist self or system with some level of integration is still distant.

An example of a movie that romanticizes mental illness (while making some very important points about work and play, violence and peace) is *The King of Hearts*. In the opening scene, a French town is abandoned by the retreating Germans. The townspeople rush out as well when they discover that the Germans had left behind a bomb that will explode at midnight. A Scottish officer is sent by the liberating allied forces to remove the bomb. When he gets there, the lunatic asylum has been opened and now the schizophrenics have taken the roles of the townspeople (showing again that it is structure that creates selves). One is a duchess, the other a Madame, the third the General, the fourth a barber. Life to them is a game. Time is immediate. Play is central. The Scottish officer desperately tries to warn them of the impending danger, their death. They respond by showing him the whimsical nature of life, its fleeting nature. Finally, when the British and Germans march back into the town, discovering each other, they immediately open fire in which all the soldiers are killed. At that point, one of the schizophrenics comments: "They seem to be overacting"-- that is, taking their roles too seriously, forgetting that the Self is liminal, not solid. It is only when the townspeople return that the lunatics rush back to the asylum understanding that they can no longer freely create time and space, since the social construction of reality now has fallen back to normalcy and the rigidity of common sense has returned. The Scottish officer now must decide to stay with the army and continue fighting (have a fixed self) or enter himself into the asylum. He strips off his clothes leaving behind the self of society and joins the alternative self of the mad. While others have phrased this battle between the self of the desert and the self of the city, the self of the mystic versus the self of the institution, in *King of Hearts* it is the schizophrenic who has seen modernity and rejected it. The Scottish officer leaves the modern world, the modern self, to an earlier historically playful self (or indeed a post industrial self outside of the bondage of work). However, as he walks into the asylum we see him holding a bird in a cage, reminding us that the soul is still imprisoned even in the relative freedom of madness.

While apparently a European movie, the story told is equally valuable for understanding Asian culture. However, in the Asian setting, the schizophrenic has been located less in the medical discourse and more in the

mystical discourse. Like classical Hindu and Buddhist texts, the schizophrenic has understood that life is suffering but instead of transcending the suffering and creating a new self that is enlightened, the self breaks down, neither normal nor enlightened. In the Asian version of the movie, there would be an enlightened soul pointing out to the third alternative¹⁵; neither the world of madness nor the world of normalcy but a third supramental consciousness where reality is viewed as layered -- shallow and deep -- the deeper layers less gross, less material, more ideational and spiritual. The enlightened individual would not remark that killing was overacting but comment instead that death is temporary for the soul lives on with killing a result of ignorance, greed and fear. Unable to transcend ignorance and fear, yet critical of conventional models of Reality, the schizophrenic opts out for an earlier time when life was simple (our mythological vision of traditional society) and everything was play acting. Thus the final scene in an Asian rendering -- Taoist, Buddhist, Hindu, or Sufi -- would have the Scottish officer suddenly realize the incompleteness of both the worlds -- the world of the insane and the world of the normal. Furthermore, in the Asian view, which is more open to many ways of knowing, schizophrenia would be able to find a place to stand in the world with many possible paths, with the 99 names of Allah and a 1000 renderings of Vishnu (*Vishnu Sahastra nam*) and the eternal return of the *bodhisattva*.

While this movie shows the contradictions of the neo-realist paradigm¹⁶--of individuals and nations seeking to maximize self-interest -- the mistake it makes is to believe that schizophrenics would be able to create a conflict-free community of the mentally ill. Like the humanist vision of culture, it is constructed with a coherent past based on a romantic voice of the Good. This perspective reiterates the image of the native or of traditional Asian culture where man lived in harmony with each other. Unfortunately, outside of the movie world there would be many kings (and sovereign nations) with no consensus developing so as to create a community of the mentally different. Each would make claims for leadership and fear the other, at least in the short run. In the long run, with no concrete Self to provide a persistent and consistent Self, peace and non-violence would reassert itself. In any case, in romanticized renderings of mental illness (as with renderings of the traditional Asian self) while the pain of normal society is laid bare, the pain of mental difference, of mental illness, is not. The asylum then becomes our representation of culture outside the instrumental and violent voices of the modern world.

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Moving away from this treatment of schizophrenia, we can speculate on what the world would be like if schizophrenia was the dominant psychological model. To begin with, like the future, we are uncertain as to the nature of schizophrenia, but we know that it demands our attention. There are many discourses that are used to describe both schizophrenia and the future: the technocratic, the biological, the genetic, the spiritual, the social, the political and the economic (Torrey 1988, 1992).

Schizophrenia can be seen in many ways. Most people view it as a brain disease, something that can be cured with the right drug, the technological discourse. Others see it as a dietary problem. Previously, many saw it from the psychological discourse -- bad parenting, conflicts between parents and so forth. While there is a great deal of literature in this area it appears that the biological-chemical discourse has won. But despite this victory, schizophrenia can also be viewed from a cultural perspective, helping us see what each culture thinks as normal and as aberrant behavior. Schizophrenics, for example, confront us with our fears. Sensitive, misunderstood, with nothing to lose, they remind us that the king and queen are naked. Unfortunately for those of us in polite society, they show us by undressing themselves.

But while they show us our reality, they do so from a position of paranoia (an exaggeration of fear) not metanoia (a transcendence of fear). For example, they believe they are God and the rest of us are not. At the same time the breakdown in the self of the "mentally ill" (as shown in the *King of Hearts*) is partly a response to the irrational self of the modernity or Westernization, from the Asian perspective. The self breaks down for it cannot make sense of irrational paradoxes: why is there so much wealth amidst so much hunger; why is there democracy within nations but not a world democracy; why is there so much killing by those who claim the Good, the True and the Beautiful; why don't the poor rise up and smite the rich? While most of us can find rational(ized) explanations to give meanings to these paradoxes, schizophrenics do not. They remain caught, trapped; instead of breaking apart the problem through logic, or living the sensate existence of "eat, drink and be merry," many of them find their self breaking apart, thereby becoming "many people". As Asia continues to modernize and westernize we can but expect increased occurrences of this type of lunacy. And with the breakdown of traditional knowledge systems or with modernization and adoption of Western scientific models schizophrenia will become "medicalized" in Asia as in the West. Urbanization, unemployment,

and penetration of Western Culture will further unravel the Asian self creating the broken down mind -- a mind that can be described in schizophrenic terms, as in the following quote from Louis Sass' *Madness and Civilization* :

Schizophrenia results in detachment from the rational rhythms of the body and entrapment in a sort of morbid wakefulness or hyperawareness. Schizophrenic individuals often describe themselves as feeling dead yet hyperalert -- a sort of corpse with insomnia; thus one such patient spoke of having been 'translated' into what he called a 'death-mood' yet he also experienced his thoughts as somehow electric -- heated up and intensified [Sass, 1992: 7-8].

While Colonialism has created the feeling of death, and modernity has created intensity; the two together have led to a "culture of corpses with insomnia". Which Traditional time, which is cyclical, has broken down yet modernized time in Asia still remains a caricature of the Westernized model.¹⁷ Few have attempted to create a post-Asian model of time, one that includes cyclical, spiritual (timeless), structural, linear, efficient, and women's time (cf. Inayatullah, 1993).

Like postmodernists, schizophrenics understand that the real world is one particular construction of the universe, which has no order, and which is fundamentally unintelligible. They contest the real world, the bottom line, the final cut, making reality much more mysterious, unclear, uncut and, unfortunately for them, frightening and horrifying. Like Eskimos, who answer, "we do not believe, we fear" -- that is, fear is not mediated by external forms such as a global media, pop futurists and other fear mongers (Shapiro, 1992: 126). Fear becomes an epistemological category not something one experiences on the news. For schizophrenics, as well, who might spend a week locked in a mortal combat with a cockroach, fear is not an indulgence, it crawls onto one's back, up the urethra, and into one's eyes.

While historically schizophrenics had their space -- existing in the cultural ecology of the Asian village, now in the city -- we continue to fear them. Their laughter is not in step with our humor. Often for long minutes they may break out into uncontrollable laughter. We can only withdraw our gaze, hoping that they will fall back into conventional behavior, before we are confronted with our own proximity to madness. If common sense is culture then their defiance illuminates the rational. Laughter is fine but only in reference to another's comment. There is a regime or discipline to laughter that we unconsciously follow. As he or she does with other daily events, a

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schizophrenic makes that regime problematic, often leading for calls to have the mentally ill "policized," to be removed from the premises. Those in any society, whether feudal or bourgeois, have rules of where we can stand, how we should act, what type of questions we should ask (questions must be coherent within an intellectual framework, for example). But schizophrenics do not exist in that regime of common sense and culture, they exist in alternative intellectual and social space. They might, for example, respond to "would you leave" by *wood ewe leaf*, thus speaking intelligently but from a different way of knowing.

Through colonialism and modernization, the historical Asian self has broken down and is replaced by adopting a foreign self with foreign categories of reality. More than from the anthropologist or the philosopher it is from the schizophrenic that we can learn a great deal; we can learn about our cultural norms by watching how they disturb us. Among other insights, they show us the tightening grid of the State, of the straitjacket of conventional reality.

But from the viewpoint of modernity, schizophrenics exist in a world of metaphor not burdened with day-to-day data. Living in a world without boundaries, they are postmodernists with a vengeance, moving in and out of metaphor until the metaphor ceases to relate to the empirical world *or* the ideational world, and merely becomes an extravagance until itself.¹⁸

If the battle between the future is between those that exist in metaphor and thus search for "better" (more peaceful or more enabling) not truer model of reality and those that exist in the literal world (living in the objective and true) then schizophrenics offer a third alternative outside of metaphor and literalism. They exist in both but with an extremism, outside the edges of our reality, living in and out of metaphorical relativity and literal truth.

Are we moving to such a global culture where there is no one model of reality but many individual models with no way to communicate, with inter-subjective reality terminally delinked? Schizophrenics when denied their reality, however, do not merely smile. They attack our reality, often with anger and violence; at the same time, they create new versions of their own reality. If the schizophrenic is a king, he becomes an emperor after our denial.

Like the international relations model of the nation-state, each denial leads to an escalation of demands, of desires for further power over reality and the territorial and epistemic expansion of our own particular reality (Shapiro and Der Derian, 1989; Walker and Mendlovitz, 1990). Imagine the world if schizophrenia was the model of social relations. Or is it already? Don't we already exist in commonsense theories of this reality: realism, neo-realism, political science, economics -- the specialisms that make sense of this world such that its extremism, its particularity, its utter madness is inaudible to us.

What voices are we hearing? What are our hallucinations? Leaders fear other Presidents, each thinking that he or she should rule the world. The other nation becomes the enemy. It is the structure of the world system that creates a schizophrenia wherein one can be democratic inside ones borders but totalitarian outside. One can practise voting inside, but war outside. The hallucinations of the schizophrenic become isomorphic with the desire of state leaders for power over others. Increasingly in this structure of power, it becomes difficult to distinguish what is cockroach and what is dragon. All is inflamed and nothing but terminal madness is left.

Within this world system the rational comes to be defined by the epistemological model of the dominant powers. As one goes down the scale from core to periphery, knowledge systems are increasingly seen as irrational. Just as in the present world economic system, where the periphery provides raw material to the core, in the world cultural system, the periphery provides the exotic to the Core. The Core uses culture to devise theories of existence and humanity, to explain its sordid past to itself. Semi-peripheral regions are those that have elements of the irrational and the modern, the rapidly developing East Asian nations, for example.¹⁹

But most people do see through the ability of the powerful to define the rational (to see Asian cultures as irrational or in loyal opposition as the seat of all wisdom).²⁰ The common response to international relations and world politics is: "It is all crazy." Is the system too difficult to understand or does it defy common sense leaving only conventional theories of politics (or rationalizations) to buttress it? Or does the international system violate our basic sense of decency and human culture? Clearly it is crazy. We feel the chasm between the ideal and the world we live in, between our theories and the world they contend to explain.

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Instead of a world capitalist system, we can also talk (loosely) about a world system based on schizophrenia. Each nation sees paranoia all around, delusions of fear and delusions of grander, voices of all around--the idea of an integrated self or an integrated world system without individual selves or nations, but a unity of humanity or even *Gaia* remains unreal. Instead, the real world remains the world of the schizophrenic, fragmented, filled with unintelligible voices and flooded with illusions and delusions.

One possible scenario for the future, then, is a world where we are all schizophrenic. Without any dominant model of the real, and in the midst of the end of the modern world, with the post-Asian yet shaping (ideally an integrated schizophrenic perspective), no coherent vision of self, culture or future exists. Unlike other eras where there was an authoritative discourse (an agreed upon worldview), there exists a plethora of discourses of selves, each vying for supremacy.

Crime and Self:

At the level of the individual, Richard Ball (1985) has argued that the key trend of the future is the lack of a responsible self and the end of any integrated set of experiences and functions. For Ball, there is a direct relationship between criminality and individuation. Early women and men lived in a condition where the group was more *real* than any self. Indeed, according to Julian Jaynes (1976), the brain in itself was not joined, early man located his or her thoughts not as internal voices but as external sounds of Gods and Goddesses. It is in modernity that the self has become integrated causing Michel Foucault (1971) to argue that we are more recent than we think. It was with Freud that criminality became biological with social constraint largely concerned with sexually deviant behavior. Without an essential self, any combinations of beliefs can readily be abandoned in favor of another. The real self of antiquity (the communitarian self of the voice of culture) has been displaced by temporary selves of modernity. Communications perform the function of impression management, law and order cease to provide social limits since the self conducting the illegal act is disconnected with the other self. This is cultural schizophrenia. Within this context, with the breakdown of the self and no self to apprehend, the key problem for society in the future will that be of criminality.

The Asian self, as has been argued above, is particularly susceptible, since it is caught between conflicting cultural demands (tradition, colonialism, nationalism and globalism), between rapid economic growth and rapid impoverishment, between the breakdown of the traditional Asian self and the lack of a new self. Of course, we would expect this to resolve itself differently in East Asia, China, South Asia, South East Asia, and West Asia since cultural forces differ in these regions.

But while Foucault (1971) argues that we are recent and, like a sand castle, are likely to disappear with the next epistemological wave, grand social theorists like Sarkar, Khaldun, Sorokin, or Ssu-Ma Chien remind us that a breakdown in the self (and a search for the self of the prior era) is a predictable occurrence when a society is in between eras -- there is no reality to hang on to, total skepticism or agnosticism hardly being an integrated worldview (Galtung and Inayatullah, 1993). For Sarkar (1984), the world is at the end of the capitalist system and waiting for the next social cultural cycle. No authoritative discourse exists; rather, there is a struggle for the creation and acceptance of a new worldview. For Sorokin (1957), as well, we are in-between his stages of ideational, sensate and idealistic, the break when the sensate world disintegrates, when the world is turned upside down, and the new synthetic era begins. For 14th century macrohistorian Khaldun (1967), unity among and within groups disappears and the world awaits a new authoritative discourse, usually from the periphery not from core political economic or social structures, or selves that are centered, rather from those outside the vortex of the immediate and of the powerful²¹: the social movements, the women's movement, in our interpretation. For ancient Chinese philosopher Ssu-Ma Chien (1958), this cultural decline is part of the natural decline in dynasties when learning and tao disengage and loose opinions spread, that is, when there no longer exists a unified theory of knowledge. Thus, the future consists of breakdown at all levels: self, epistemology, economy and polity; and the search for a new integrative model. Whether this model will be the recovery of a particular past (ancient, classical or feudal) or the creation of a Post-Asian model remains to be seen.

Han and Resentment:

An alternative to the schizophrenic breakdown at the individual level or at the global level of humanity is internal repression, a path followed largely by women, especially Korean women. In *Women and Han in the Chosôn Period*, Young-hee Lee (1992) argues that the rigidity of the neo-

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Confucian structure of male dominance did not give females an escape valve - what resulted was *han*, or deep resentment. This is the inability to transform present conditions, leading to deep inner resentment towards power, particularly male dominance. With further justification from Buddhism, women were told to accept their suffering and live with their *karma*. While men could escape the rigid family structure through *kisaeng* (dancing girls) and mistresses, women could not. Like the wives in *Raising the Red Lantern* they had no way to express their frustration. While Korea is known as the *land of the morning calm*, underneath this calm lies centuries of *han*. Men too enter the *han* discourse, not from the problems of daily life but from the shame of many defeats from the Chinese and the Japanese; it is a territorial *han* based on lack of national sovereignty (now further exacerbated by the division of the Koreas).

Out of this *han*, this sustained suffering, came new fields of women's literature and women's expression. Because women had no way to stay in touch with their families they developed letter writing (also they were compelled to by their in-laws) and special literature and songs called *naebang kasa* (court songs) and *minyo* (popular songs). Because of *han*, a great albeit invisible cultural renaissance resulted.

Is this then the world's future : not structural change or implosion but deep repression and resentment?. Even Shamanism (which has allowed for occasional individual transcendence) and Christianity (which has energized women into social groups but without changing the male neo-confucian social structure) has not succeeded in transforming *han* in the Korean context. The feminist movement has often been sidetracked by nationalist efforts, as the case in Korea, where women's resistance to the Japanese became far more important than the transformation of patriarchy (Bonnie Oh, 1982). Moreover, in the larger Asian context, feminism has been seen as a Western force, so that the search for a women's movement authentic to the history and categories of Asian women is still in its formative phase (Jayawardena, 1986). With further Westernization (in the form of East Asian capitalism) we should expect increased *han*, especially for women, unless an Asian women's perspective (a post-feminist voice), combining ancient shamanistic principles and modern social organization, can transform women's condition.

From the Asian women's perspective, *han* is the dominant cultural formation of the future. *Han* could also be a precursor to the breakdown of the self, especially as Westernization and travel intensify the resentment

women experience. While a united Korea might lead to an attempt to undo thousands of years of *han*, for male Koreans, a transformation of patriarchy still seems far off.

In any case the main point is that any discussion of the futures of Asian cultures must deal with women's experience of their social reality and their efforts to negotiate patriarchal social relations. In addition, Asian strategies in dealing with power -- whether colonialism and developmentalism -- have a strong *han* component: the face shown, for example, to the colonialist (the lazy worker image in the Philippines) is markedly different than the face shown to one's same class and ethnicity.

Part of the return to the shamanistic past will be a recovery of not spirituality (the search for unity of the self with the cosmos) but of spiritualism, a search for connectedness with the dead. This alternative, then, is the search for new forms of association. With the breakdown of modern society and the inability of modern spaces and categories of thought to give answers, it is to other worlds where we will flock. Whether these are ancestral spirits, souls claiming to represent the Anointed One Him or Herself, or nature spirits is unclear, but as the self breaks down and as answers to change and transformation and our world problems become increasingly immediate and pressing, channeling (not changing channels as in the modern response) will be one of the waves and the ways of the future. While this has begun in California and throughout Asia, we should expect new sources of self-sustenance, primarily those from the spirit world. At the same time, we should anticipate an increased and more potent women's movements working alone and tied into ecological, cooperative, and consumer associations. A new Asian women's culture might emerge from these efforts.

Culture as Resistance:

If it is through resistance that new cultural forms will rise, then we need to look at the periphery to better understand the future of cultures. These are the anti-systemic movements, the counter civilizational projects, the spiritual, ecological and social movements that hold the keys for our potential futures.²²

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One former periphery is East Asia. While previously Western culture was paraded before the rest of humanity as the standard, oriental culture has received high marks in recent years. Considered closer to Nature, less rigid than Western epistemology -- more open to contradictions existing in an ecology of truth statements -- and closer to traditional culture when the cosmos, society and individual were in harmony.

But what aspects of Oriental culture might become universal in the next century? Vegetarianism (most likely because of the politics of health and food production), taking shoes off at the door (again likely as ceremonialized politeness), complex social relations in which discourse is understood not by what is uttered but by who utters it and when it is uttered (far less likely, since it is too difficult for other cultures to gain entry into this social network), and spiritual practices (from zen to yoga, again likely, since they can be easily appropriated). Finally, what type of icons might become universal? Most likely stories from the village, the Indian cow (instead of the American mouse), the village well (instead of the shopping mall), and the bodhi tree (instead of the highway). One can imagine a drama with all these symbols coming to life, interacting with each other, creating an East Asian form of universal cultural representation.

But what are some less likely scenarios? One can easily imagine a Manila-Calcutta-Bombay-Dubai link as a major center of culture in the next century. The region represented by these centres has several attractions to cause the return of the cultural pendulum. There is revival of art and deep mysticism, there is spate of indigenous theories of science and society that are refreshingly different from those currently prevalent, and there are significant social, religious and ecological movements. Even in terms of mass culture, Bombay provides a major counter point to Hollywood with Indianized extravaganza of music and dance. Several ingredients of cultural revival are easily identifiable in this circuit.

The other contender would be Hong Kong / Star TV which basically represents some level of Asian creativity but they are still developed within the overarching cultural categories of the West. The question then is: Hong Kong or Calcutta?

A resurgent Philippines also is a possible scenario. Centuries of resistance, of failed revolutions, of cultural eclecticism, of mysticism and pseudo-culture make it a potential cultural center. This is more likely than the present rich Asian states, where modernity and the victory of the official

discourse has produced wealth but at the expense of trimming of deviance--Singapore as the obvious example. Islam as a cultural force is possible but again since politically it is on decline, this may force a rigidification of culture, a straightening of diversity so as to uphold the State and the Text. Conversely, if decline leads to inner reflection and self-criticism then cultural renewal and creativity is possible. Islam then would have to reconstruct itself as a cultural epistemological force and not as a political Statist force. With the breakdown of the USSR and the potential breakdown of China, we could easily see a cultural renaissance in three areas: an Islamic south-west, a Westernized Hong Kong (or Taiwan after 1997), and a Manila-Calcutta-Bombay-Dubai crescent.

Fitting into the Hong Kong/Star TV scenario is the rise of a sensate Asia. Lee Kuan Yew wondered if there was any solution to the rampant sexuality of East Asians.²³ With a new Hong Kong Chinese MTV (Music Television) developing, we can assume that sex is the future of East-Asia. This is possible with Confucianism providing the commodification of women (women as servers of men), and Buddhism removing any guilt related to sex. Instead of 1 billion consumers of coke, we can well imagine one billion sexually repressed Chinese waiting for a modernist China with fast time, fast sex, and fast music. East Asia then would be the center of modernist music, art, and sexuality for the next century, taking over the exhausted West. Only AIDS and virtual sex stand in the way. With developments in the latter, we could see dramatic transformations in both Bangkok and Manila, sex having moved to the virtual mind instead of the bodies of young village girls.

Technology:

So far we have focused on social and political forces, but how might advances in technology transform Asian cultures? Developments in Virtual Reality, Genetic Engineering and Robotics all promise to dramatically alter our perceptions of culture and the cultural. These new technologies will have far wider impact than television and video. In some ways they will intensify Westernization and in other ways they will transform it. These technologies will transform our understanding of social reality, nature, and human culture, displacing all three. New forms of resistance against the technologies will also result. As with electronic culture where faxes, videos, and electronic viruses can be used against official government sponsored reality, these technologies will lead to attacks on the "artificial" world they have created, and on the way that life will be managed through genetic engineering, for example. At the same time, just as television and the video

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bring us the new electronic family hearth, united not by conversation but by viewerism, but at least still united, these new technologies will create their own paradoxes.²⁴

Through *Virtual reality* we can don a helmet and practice safe travel and safe sex (indeed it is this that will bring computers in our homes in the next century, not banking, not games, but virtual reality sex). Technology will have finally captured *nature* -- making it obsolete.²⁵ The problem of the original text especially for fundamentalists will be further complicated since distinctions between types of reality will be blurred. Will religions then offer virtual reality experiences of their image of God? Perhaps the redeemer, whether Jesus, the Mahdi, the *taraka brahma*, is returning and will be available to all, at all times. Will culture then become miniaturized and available to us all in our virtual reality cassettes -- travelogue but with the sensual experience of the place we are traveling to. It would be real since we would (could) not distinguish between the two. Of course, the important job will be creating the miniaturized culture. And the most important question for futures researchers is: what will be the resistance to "virtualized" cultures - a return to natural cultures? But how? And will virtual reality centers be the next museums, the final effort to carry the seeds of the past into our journey to strange new world ahead?

While experiments in *genetic engineering* will start out quite harmless, since all of us want to avoid abnormalities, or various genetic diseases, we will soon all want to be checked by our family genetic engineer. This will lead not only to disease prevention but to capacity enhancement. Intelligence, memory, body type and beauty will all be open for discussion and interpretation. Birthing will eventually be managed by State factories and we will be the last generation to produce children the old fashioned way. It will be the final victory of the feminists and also their final defeat. The biological cycle will have been terminated by technology and women will essentially be not any different than men once their reproductive capabilities become unnecessary. The causes of alarm are there (and the negative scenarios almost infinite: increasing inequity between north-south, between rich-poor and the tightening grid of the surveillance State and the managed genetically engineered self) but perhaps when everyone can be beautiful it will be moral and spiritual potential that will matter the most. With fewer genetic diseases our differences will become once again charming instead of attributes that keep us from uniting as humans. Perhaps genetic engineering will paradoxically lead not to sameness but to difference and to a greater humanity. Of course,

as developed within the present regime of science and center-periphery nations, genetic engineering means only one thing -- the final end of peripheral culture -- and the reversal of demographic patterns that are seeing the rise of Asian and African population and a decrease in American and European populations.

But cultures need not be human, they can also be robotic. *Robots can be sentient creatures* potentially living with humans and potentially displacing humans. Japanese society, for example, already has glorified Mr. Roboto. Often seen as friendly, a helper, it would not be too long before we are engaged in discussions of the rites and rights of robots. Concomitant with ways of thinking that see everything as alive (quantum physics, Hawaiian cosmology, Buddhism, animism and Indian thought) and with advances in artificial intelligence, we can envisage a time when robots will be seen as alive. Their utility value will be surpassed by their existential value. While a robot uprising is unlikely, robots becoming lovable animals and then gaining similar rights as children is quite easy to believe. Conversely, it may be that the robot mind will become the metaphor for our brain, and thus the despiritualization of the self. While it is doubtful if robots will pray five times a day, facing Mecca will be easy but will they feel the unity that this act implies?

For capitalists these new technologies promise a renewal, a rejuvenation from the exhaustion that has set in. They promise to revive the idea of progress and push back cultural revival, ethnic history, and local knowledge. Thus, it is not cultural humanists who will provide the vitality to the dying modern world but the new technologies and the cultural codes embedded in them. These new technologies pose the most dramatic problems for those who consider the natural as fixed instead of as constantly changing and in the process of recreation. Fundamentalists, in particular, will find the next twenty or thirty years the best and worst times for their movements. The best because the forces of tradition will flock to them; worst because the technological imperative and humanity's struggle to constantly recreate itself (and thus nature) will not be easily reversed. Even biological spills will most likely not be controlled by State regulations but by new technologies themselves. However, the answer to these types of problems may be in newer advanced -- physically, mentally and spiritually -- technologies. It is important to remember that technologies in themselves will be redefined in this process as not merely material processes but mental and spiritual processes embedded in particular cultures. This redefinition will come about from non-Western renderings of science (Inayatullah, 1991; Rudreshananda, 1993; Sardar 1984; Sheldrake, 1992).

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Genetic technology or biological technology could yield new viruses, new types of life that end our life. The planet itself, however, might not care. *Gaia*, argues James Lovelock (1988) is a self-regulating mechanism that keeps life alive, so humans might not be needed, just an experiment that went wrong. She might "choose" rabbits instead of monkeys this time, thus ending human culture as we know it or removing the supremacy of humans, making us just one more sentient life form that quietly inhabits the planet with all other creation (Jones, 1989). But this fate is unlikely, as "humanity" then will be caught in a battle against its new creations, the West now competing not only with its own social periphery, but with its own created periphery.

But while the values behind genetic engineering and robotics are based on competition -- on linear models of evolution and time--we can hope for models of the future coming from cooperation. Scientist Lynn Margulis writes that while competition might be natural at the level of mammals, at the microlevel of the cell, an ecology of cooperation where differences lead to higher unity is normal. The cells need each other, through each other they can transform. The success of our cellular system might be a far better model for giving us cultural hope than the failure of the war and competition model.²⁶ In her words: "Destructive species come and go but cooperation increases through time. Mitochondria peacefully inhabit our cells, providing us with energy in return for a place to stay. Evolution either evokes challenge or cooperation" (Margulis, 1992: 27). Once again, while the model of cooperation provides an alternative more hopeful vision of Asia, new technologies promise to continue the process of the unraveling of the Asian self and Asian society and to create the conditions for a Post-Asian culture as well as new forms of cultural resistance. Among the forms of resistance we can expect is a return to the classical life-cycle or seasonal aspects of Asian time. Part of the recovery of culture project is regaining the traditional sense of time -- time as friendship, of sitting around a tree and placing relationships ahead of economic gain or personal ambition, of living in the way God meant the world to be. New technologies, however, enter traditional time disrupting local culture. The automobile is an excellent example. Pakistanis drive as fast as they can to reach a place -- even as far as driving on the sidewalk -- where they then wait for hours for friends to show up or for a bureaucrat to arrive. Or one rushes to get to tea time where one ritually relaxes. In the car then modernity becomes pervasive, the signifier of miles per hour stares at the driver (there is no sun dial or images of the seasons or other historical symbols), the car is an imported technology with no local meanings to it.

With modernization we should expect decreased emphasis of the classical model of time, of the degeneration of time from the golden era to the iron age. In this model, society degenerates with differentiation (as opposed to modernity wherein differentiation leads to evolution) eventually resulting in the iron age of materialism. Time then decreases in value from the golden era characterized by unity and spiritual development to the iron age characterized by materialism, chaos and confusion. At the end of the dark iron age, the redeemer sets the world right and the golden era begins again. The search then is for a redeemer to end the darkness of the present, to create a new future. Decolonization and political independence was to be the beginning of the golden age with the national founders the redeemers. But this has not turned out, leaving the individual unto him or herself.

In recent news, Jesus was to return on October 1992, according to Bank-ik Ha, one of the young prophets allegedly predicted by the Bible (Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1992: A-39). The mark of evil is the computer bar code for it mathematically represents the Beast (666) with the unification of Europe as the final sign before Judgement Day. In Korea, the State in itself attempted to intervene as households left the work force in preparation for the final days. While these might be the final days of the modern world, claims that this is the end of the world are far more problematic. In any case, we still have until 1999 before Judgement day. As it turns out the Prophet was arrested even though he claimed that the world was to end in October 1992; he has recently purchased bonds that would expire in the year 2000!!

Modernity then emphasizes quantitative, linear time. Instead of the appearance of the redeemer to bring on the golden age, it is Confucian capitalism that will herald the new era. Time then in this model cannot be repeated or reversed otherwise we could remember the future. Instead of degeneration there is forward development. Culture as a response to the economism of modernity is precisely about time pluralism, about living in many types of time without allowing any one to dominate, particularly linear time. Others see cultural revival as part of a return to a more natural type of time cognizant that all societies rise and fall, all economies go up and down, what is most important then is one's relationship to nature, to community, and to the transcendental.

When thinking about the futures of cultures, particularly Asian cultures, we should expect increased diversity in the models of time. For the schizophrenic, modern linear time ceases to be important, seasonal and timeless time are far more central to his or her worldview. We should also

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expect increased conflicts between types of time and efforts to synthesize different constructions of time. Clearly an ideal society would be able to find ways to negotiate *the many types of time: seasonal, rise and fall, dramatic, mythological, expansion/contraction, cosmic, linear/efficient, social-cyclical as well as the intervention of the timeless in the world of time*. These must be associated with notions of social structure. In what ways is time personal, in what ways do macrostructures give us time, and how does the role of the transcendental reshape time?

The ancient cycle alone leads to a culture of fatalism and the linear pattern alone leads to cultural imperialism wherein particular collectivities can be placed along the ladder of economic success. Transcendental time alone leads to focus on the cosmos and neglect of economic progress and social development. While it is joyous, the bills must still be paid. For an empowering theory of the future, all three are needed.

But few manage to include all these characteristics²⁷. Rather, we privilege certain types of time and avoid or marginalize others. Developing a theory of society that coherently integrates the many types of time alluded to above is not an easy task and would be an important task in a global emerging culture. Having an enriched theory of time would be a necessary criterion in an alternative theory of cultural development.²⁸

Conclusion:

We have used Culture in many different ways:

1. Culture in opposition to neo-realist view of economism and power (competing individuals and states);
2. Culture as always changing, creating new forms of society and technology, as essentially alive, always more than our definition of it;
3. Culture as fundamentally an essence, the original state of affairs;
4. Culture as on original state of affairs that declines over time (whether because of internal reasons, creativity to imitation or external reasons, conquest by colonial forms); and,

5. Culture as a social practice; there is no intrinsic "culture" to be found.

We have also discussed many possible cultural futures; the most important being:

1. The unravelling of the traditional Asian self;
2. The breakdown of the self and culture, the schizophrenic model of unending differences;
3. Women's cultural futures particularly the role of resentment as the emotion of future;
4. A new cultural renaissance from the periphery;
5. The rise of East Asian sensate culture;
6. Technological cultures from virtual reality, genetic engineering and robotics; and
7. Conflicts between types of time and a search for a cultural frame that incorporates a diversity of "times."

But when we move away from our critical analysis, what is important is a vision of new cultures, not a vision that takes away the possibility of new cultures, but visions like the *Renaissance* which creates newer visions. In this sense, finding unity within our differences still remains crucial: the imagery of roses in a bouquet (with some of the roses virtual, some genetically grown, and others grown through the soil) symbolizing individual cultures and planetary culture still remains an important integrative dream--a Post-Asian dream perhaps.

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NOTES

1. Among others, I would like to thank Noman Inayatullah for many of the observations contained in this paper.
2. For more on this, see Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* (Vol. 27, No. 3, 1990) and *Development: Goals and Processes* (forthcoming).
3. I have benefitted greatly from conversations with Peter Miller of the University of Hawaii on this subject.
4. I am indebted to Ashis Nandy for this insight. Certainly it makes readings of culture far more interesting than the Orientalist anthropological discourse they have traditionally inhabited.
5. American culture is believed to be non-existent according to the rest of the world, but it could also be argued that American culture -- food, efficiency, language, music icons and, in general, a sensate worldview -- has become universal such that we are all American now. Americans are believed to have culture-less because their culture is ubiquitous.
6. Perhaps the Balinese saying best describes this formation: "We have not art; We do everything the best we can."
7. Perhaps, modernity.
8. Unfortunately, in their efforts to become important they are forced into a situation where they adopt the categories of the Core cultural power, defining importance not within their own tradition or creating new forms of significance but staying within the structural boundaries of Core definitions.
9. Indeed, in one American television show, *Cheers*, one of the main characters spends his week of vacation at the airport since that is the hub of cultural interaction.
10. From these we can learn how a nation sees the Other and discover who can enter freely and who is searched.
11. I am indebted to Marshall Pihl of the University of Hawaii for this term.
12. I am indebted to Ashis Nandy for this intriguing point.
13. Traditional Korean instrument -- a zither.

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14. Cultural historian, William Irwin Thompson's works have developed this. His titles give us a sense of the direction of his work: *At the Edge of History, Evil and World Order*, and *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light*.
15. Ashis Nandy in his "Shamans, Savages, and the Wilderness: On the Audibility of Dissent and the Future of Civilization," *Alternatives* (Vol. 14, No. 3, 1989) points un in the direction of the shaman. The shaman exists on the fringe of respectable society and respectable models of knowledge. His or her existence itself is subversive to institutionalized power.
16. Neo-realism assumes that we are self-interested individuals and nations seek to maximize our interests at the expense of others. Real hard headed economics and politics is the only possible result. The voices of the spirit, of the future, of peace, of the movements outside of the nation-state are immediately silenced -- they have no space in this hegemonic paradigm. See Sohail Inayatullah, "Subverting the Hegemony of the International Relations Paradigm in Pakistan," (forthcoming, 1992).
17. The symbols of modern time might be there, for example, an airline office claiming to open at a specific time yet rarely doing so. Or a post office having special windows for electronic mail but few employees to handle the postage window even though most of the business is for stamps. Both these cases are explained by the traditional feudal structure for it is only office clerks that have to wait and their time is not highly valued, so why be efficient. The "saabs" do not do such menial tasks.
18. As one schizophrenic put it: "All I see is the verisimilitude of reality, not reality itself. I've lost access to reality ... my memories are just memories of themselves ... memories of memories of memories ... I no longer have the original (Sass, 192: 336). And another: "My gaze is fixed like a corpse, my mind has become vague and general; like a nothing or the absolute; I am floating, I am as if I were not (Sass, 1992, 68). Or as stated more theoretically by Jean Baudrillard, "Illusion is no longer possible, because the real is not longer possible (Sass, 1992: 291).
19. Confucianism providing the basis for modernization and taoism/shamanism providing the irrational.
20. As the case with the counter-culture.
21. The bedouins in his social history.
22. Conversely, William Irwin Thompson has argued that it is from the secular that the spiritual takes birth. It is from discoveries of scientists such as Margulis and others that the bases of a new cooperative transcendental civilization is possible. See William Irwin Thompson and David Spangler, *Reimagination of the World*. Sante Fe. New Mexico, Bear and Company, 1991.

23. Of course neo-Confucianism and its oppression of women might have something to do with this. The exact quote is "the libido of the sex crazed yellow races." I am indebted to John Cole for providing this surprisingly racist quote, although the source has yet to be confirmed. But for more on Lee Kuan Yew, see his speech, "The Vision for Asia," *The Muslim* (20 March 1992).
24. Susantha Goonatilake (1992) argues that these technologies are now merging becoming one evolving whole and thus, "the historical sequence of biology giving rise to culture, giving rise to artefact (information associate with machines) ... becomes changed. The artefact now reaches back and changes culture or gene, the glove turns back and changes the hand. Instead of a unilinear sequence, a recursive loop is established. ... An entirely new history begins (11-12).
25. See James Dator, "Its Only A Paper Moon," *Futures* (December 1990). He writes, "We must understand that we *already* live in a largely, and increasingly, irreversibly, *artificial world*. "Nature" and the "natural world" (in the sense of an environment, or parts of an environment, uninfluenced by human activity) scarcely exist *anywhere* and cannot possibly be "preserved" or "restored" (indeed, to attempt to do so would of course itself be to render "nature" artificial), (1086).

The title of this very important article is from "an old 1940s song which went something like this:

It's only a paper moon
Floating over a cardboard sea.
But it wouldn't be make-believe
If you believed in me," (1096).

26. For Jean Houston, the cell membrane is a metaphor for how we differentiate the world, the basic binary distinction between me and the other. In her hopeful model this is breaking down and "we are about to join into one collective organism, planetary humankind ... We have allowed our complexity to create another form of culture." Jean Houston, "Stretched Tight to Breaking," *Edges* (Vol. 4, No. 3, 1992), 23.
27. Historian Sarkar (1987-1991) is useful in that he uses many types of time in his theory. There is the cosmic cycle at one level, the generation, degeneration and regeneration of time; and at another level, there is the individual escape from time and entrance into no time or infinite time. Finally there is social time (his spiral) where the time of exploitation can be reduced through social transformation thus in the long run allowing for the increased possibility of individual escape from time. Sarkar is on the right track attempting to build a model of time that has multiple avenues, that gives meaning at different levels.
28. Other criteria would be: (1) a growth dimension (2) a distribution dimension (3) gender balance, (4) ecology balance (5) epistemological diversity (6) a cooperative organizational structures and the (7) central role of social and civil movements.

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FUTURES OF ASIAN CULTURES : BETWEEN GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION



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Future of Asian Cultures : Between Localization and Globalization

The Asian region is home to several of the major civilizations. Its present population is over 3,100 million which is nearly 60% of the global population.¹ The future cultural dynamics of the region would have a significant impact on the world.

In its different sub regions, there are broad common cultural features which give them different flavors, in the sense that Europe with all its differences, has a common flavor recognizable by a person from a different cultural region. There are also certain threads of common cultures that have criss crossed the different Asian sub-regions, partly arising from shared religious traditions that have spilled over from their areas of origin and had partly woven the sub-regions together into larger wholes. These cross connecting threads included in the past Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, and to a lesser extent Hinduism.

In addition to these common features, there are also many demarcations arising from narrower sub-cultures. Such subcultures are due to differences of language, religion, ethnicity, tribe, class and in South Asia, caste. South Asia probably has the greatest number of such sub-cultures and East Asia probably the least. These regional cultures and local subcultures are today in a dynamic relationship with a globalizing one, which is straddling the world and the roots of which are largely in the European cultural arena. The interplay of these various cultural strands in Asia would determine her cultural future.

However, understanding these processes in late 20th century Asia, requires a set of adequate conceptual tools. The social science conceptual tools we have today were all developed from core theories which emerged to explain the vast changes taking place at another place namely Europe, and at

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another time, namely the 18th and 19th centuries, and carry a distorting baggage, their ethnocentricities. This ethnocentricity colours our social science tools and limits their uses. Generally, in such formulations, non European regions were largely relegated to a mere residual category. One can recall the limitations of these existing Eurocentric theories by referring briefly to Europe's two key theoreticians on culture, Marx and Weber.

To Marx, the engine of social change was the tension between the relations of production and productive forces. His conceptual schemes, at the time he wrote, used both concepts as well as data that were available to him. Asia to him was, following Hegel, a residual category, dormant and stagnant, to be explained by an assumed *Asiatic Mode of Production*.

But Marx's engine becomes limited when one goes beyond the cultural systems outside of his time and region. One can give several examples of key logical inadequacies in the Marxian scheme that come to light when seen in the light of conditions different from 19th century Britain. Let me give one core illustrative example dealing with one aspect of culture.

A recent debate among Marxist theoreticians of science was where to put science in Marx's scheme, whether as part of the infrastructure, as a component of productive forces, or as part of the superstructure -- that is whether to consider it as part of an egg or a chicken. After much debate, it was concluded that it has to be included in both, that is both as cause and effect². In such a formulation, the stepwise flow of history from a presumed slave to feudalism, capitalism and beyond, driven by significant changes in productive forces and production relations breaks down. One is left with a view of history as a mutually interacting spiral between productive forces and production relations.

To Weber, on the other hand, the engine of social change was attitudinal and in the case of Europe, it was the emergence of a Protestant Ethic that was the transformational engine. In his studies of Asia, he purported to demonstrate why other religious systems such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism or Islam could not give rise to industrial capitalism. Many Asian scholars have pointed out the empirical inadequacy and the lack of theoretical validity of his formulations. The most telling rejoinder to Weber's views is that the regions he dumped to the dustbin of history are the very ones with the most vigorous growth today, growth much higher than that of the first industrializing country (Britain) at its height. The region includes

not only Confucian (and partly Buddhist) influenced East and South East Asia, but also Hindu and Islam influenced, South and South East Asia. In a fitting irony, a Confucian ethic has been evoked much like the Protestant Ethic to explain East Asian dynamism³.

Clearly fresh formulations are required that can leap over the Eurocentric confines of 18th and 19th century Europe. These formulations should allow for economic, cultural and technological variables as well as different historical experiences. The present paper uses an alternative approach⁴, culture being considered as a 'flow line'. This lends itself better to the present purpose.

A Fresh Perspective on Conceptualizing Culture

The current revival in social psychology which combines the study of the contents of human's minds -- culture -- with social structure, seems to present a fresh direction. A major impetus to this current rethinking is the West's discovery of the writings of the early Soviet social psychologist Vygotsky⁵ who emphasized that the mind was a social, historical construct. This approach not only reconciles sociological approaches with psychological approaches, but also the more structural Marxist inspired ones with the Weberian culture oriented ones. Culture, the scheme of these historically oriented social psychologists, is transmitted from generation to generation down a human chain set by a historically derived social structure.

Society has structural cleavages dividing it into classes and strata, and the acculturation process occurs essentially within these strata. Subcultures particular to these strata exist and these subcultures are learnt, internalized and transmitted down generations along a framework set by these social cleavages. The social structure becomes the skeletal framework through which culture flows down generations. A particular cultural flow line' associated with a particular social division, whether it be a class or a narrower stratum, thus extends backwards across time to past generations. And this cultural lineage presumably will extend into future generations, if the strata survive into the future. Thus "a given culture trait can be fully understood only if seen as the end point of specific sequences of events reaching back into the remote past".⁶

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Yet culture is the means and the where with all through which humans deal with their environment, the environment being both their social world of fellow human beings as well as the physical environment. So, the transmission line of culture becomes, in essence, a transmission line of how to deal with the environment. Human societies differentiate themselves generally according to their modes of intervening with their physical and social environments and their social structures are deeply conditioned by these interventions. The result is a wide variation within the broad technological limits ("forces of production", say, in the Marxian scheme) of actual societies.⁷

The flow of history, from this new perspective can be viewed as a sequence of changes in the social structure, accompanied by a set of changing cultural flow systems cascading through time. These cultural flow lines stream down the outlines made by the social structure as it interacts with the environment. The different "stages of history" correspond to the different socio-technological systems as the latter correspond to different socio-physical environments. With different means of interacting with the environment ("forces of production"), the flow lines shift when the socio-physical environment changes.

A formulation of social change in the above manner takes into account more meaningfully, the mechanics of actual social transformations and the interactions with culture than the simpler unilinear schemes evolved in the 19th and early 20th century West, to describe what was then but a unique transformation in Europe. With the complexities and nuances and the wide variations that we are today aware of, (in differing initial conditions, in differing actors, in differing key influences etc), we do not have to recourse to simple single factor causes. The suggested scheme allows for a variety of interactions, among others, between technology, social structure and culture, so that the richness of actual historical transformations is captured.⁸

Often, the social dynamics within non-Western countries has been seen through a dichotomous logic of modernity/tradition, or, in the Marxist sense, as being superseded by a more powerful mode of production based on a relatively uniform technology. However, the complexities of the current world are such that different technologies, different forms of ownership, different traditions, and different social stratification arrangements -- not entirely based on one given mode of production -- jostle with each other in a continuously unfolding historical process. This is probably more true of today's Asia than anywhere else.

In South Asia, for example, the different subcultures corresponding to various social divisions such as those of class, creed, ethnicity and caste have their parallel lineages of culture that are transmitted down. There synchronously cut lineages reveal little islands of subcultures on top of greater continents of culture, little universes of specialized information and meanings atop broader more general ones. These islands of lineages often overlap. It is also these lineages that provide the fault lines for conflicts that are taking place in certain parts of the Asian region.

This formulation of lineages as a central organizing principle for viewing culture accommodates the many cultural variations of Asia, which are very removed from the simpler and more homogenous European social and cultural formations. It also allows us to deal with two macro cultural transforming processes that are currently occurring across the globe and which have a major bearing on any discussion of culture.

Globalization and Localization

Today, two contradictory historical processes seem to be operating simultaneously with respect to culture. A globalizing tendency where the world is being brought together as one through several processes including economic and technological ones, and a localizing tendency expressed in its extreme form by a number of insurgencies on ethnic, religious and other local identities. These two processes have a pervasive effect on the Asian region and the future of Asian culture is best viewed through their respective dynamics.

Localization

All contemporary Asian societies possess many historically derived social groups societal forms and their cultural adjuncts. These several cleavages of culture provide many potential fault lines for fissiparousness. The mobilization based on the basis of local identities occurs on cleavages of religion, race, tribe, language, or in the case of India, caste. As different modes of ownership as well as different technologies continuously reshape the socio-economic system, cleavages based on class also form dynamic subcultures.

In the larger entities in Asia, very many of these fault lines of culture exist. Thus, India has all the major religions in the world represented in sizable numbers -- Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, Sikhs,

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and Christians. Her languages belong to several major families, with over a dozen major languages and over a thousand dialects. And in addition, because she possesses all the major modern industries, and forms of industrial ownership, she has all the major class and professional cleavages of the industrial world.

Divisive tendencies based on these social fault lines, specially on ethnicity and religion have today reached a dramatic form globally, illustrated by the number of non inter-state armed conflicts. In 1990, there were 33 major armed internal conflicts, that is those with more than one thousand casualties. In contrast, only one inter-state conflict, namely between India and Pakistan took over thousand lives in that year⁹, but this too has a religious underpinning in that Pakistan was created out of religious reasons and the antagonisms over Kashmir are also based on religion.

Globalization

The expression of an opposite trend to this fissiparousness is seen in several integrating and globalizing tendencies. These are political, economic, cultural, and technological.

The largest of politically integrating factors are international organizations within which nations are members. The largest inter-state organizations include those that regulate telecommunications (ITU), health (WHO), finance (IMF, World Bank) etc, and ultimately inter-state politics, the United Nations.

Problems that require global solutions are also eroding conventional notions of sovereignty. These include the realization of the ocean bed and its resources as the Common Heritage of Mankind, now partly enshrined in the Law of the Sea Convention. Pollution in the ocean and atmosphere carried across boundaries is a similar process. The use of the air and space above national territories by transport systems including satellites also limit the notion of sovereignty. Effects of the erosion of genetic diversity as well as of environmental depletion are also global problems.

Other potential integrating factors include increased physical travel of people. Mass travel and tourism, although limited to the inhabitants of developed countries and the elites of the developing world is a form of

temporary migration that partially, is an act of cross border cultural traffic. This is augmented by more permanent migratory trends such as those of migratory workers and refugees.

A dominant vector in globalizing economic changes is the transnational corporation, making for the globalization of social relations and putting pressure on both national and international state structures.¹⁰ Production, distribution and consumption are partially tending to be on a global basis, being pushed by the growing integration among others, of both economic sectors and technologies.¹¹

If the earlier multinational companies that penetrated the world in the colonial period were associated with one single parent nation, the new multinationals were increasingly becoming more broad based entities. Increasingly, their ownership itself was being traded publicly and across borders and it was becoming increasingly difficult to identify multinational companies with one geographic location.¹² Capital, technology, knowledge and to a lesser extent, labor had become much more mobile in the new emerging global economic order.

Electronically linked financial and currency links now girdle the globe and are growing rapidly. The international daily traffic of currency trading was estimated at the end of 1992 at US \$ 1 (one) trillion dollars, having increased by 50% over the three years period up to 1992. This has limited the ability of individual countries to control their internal financial domains, even defend it in times of crisis. The foreign exchange held by all the world's central banks is estimated as only US \$ one trillion dollars, the same amount traded daily.¹³ This means that today no single government even the US, Japan or any individual member of OECD can by itself defend its financial borders.¹⁴

This financial globalizing tendency is intimately linked to the new information and communications technology. These have added new integrating technological links to the earlier technologies of power, irrigation, roads and rail systems which had increasingly criss-crossed the world. The world telecommunication system is today being integrated with that of computer devices through a rapidly developing pervasive communication network.¹⁵ Global communication had by 1987 become the world's fastest growing industry.¹⁶ An emerging vast network of data girdling the world¹⁷ is growing at an exponential rate.¹⁸ This technology of transborder data flows is also leading to an emerging global redivision of labour, relocating

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certain brain work, parallel to the relocation of brawn work of the last two decades,¹⁹ leading to a new type of global worker, an "electronic immigrant".²⁰

Transborder computerized data flows²¹ raise questions of privacy, sovereignty, cultural identity and vulnerability of countries that have no control over their data flows.²² These tend to strengthen external control and weaken local autonomy, with critical stresses on the concept of sovereignty.²³

Telecommunication links have not penetrated developing countries extensively yet. But as the world's decisions become increasingly integrated, those few that have the telecommunication links in developing countries are those who have influence on decisions within their countries and who, in turn, are affected by global trends. It is through them that global financial transactions and telecommuting decisions take place.

The cultural globalizing tendencies are most evident in common core syllabi that have spread across the globe. School children -- whether they be in Islamic Iran, secular India, or in Buddhist Thailand -- master the same basic mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. As an orientation to the world, this common global socialization provides strong constituents for a core commonality.

An important part of the global hegemonic blanket is the vast outpouring of new knowledge which grows exponentially and feeds into an ever widening web of scientific and technological practitioners around the world.²⁴ This knowledge is still created and distributed unequally in the world. Yet, this web exists and draws the world together.

There are, however, less universal cultural packages being pushed by advertising and media, often projecting Eurocentric commercial and other messages as universal ones. Thus, a total package of culture is often delivered across the globe by a small number of potent media corporations, largely based in the U.S. National media culture is, thus, partly subsumed under transnational corporate interests.²⁵

These processes of cultural globalization are tending to replace local cultural identities.

Communities: Face to Face, Cross-border, and Virtual

What would be the outcome of these two contradictory processes, globalization and localization? To arrive at an acceptable frame of discourse to discuss this, one has to raise some basic questions. How are different cultures kept together, how do they break down, how are they drawn into a larger whole?

Cultures, one should note, are knit together by communication between their members, and they break down or grow into larger wholes when these links and patterns of communication change. It is in the links between these different cultural worlds that one has to see the future of the interplay between globalizing and localizing tendencies.

Thus, there are several types of cultural communities in Asia today. The information contents of these cultural communities inhabit the constituent members' minds and it is the exchange of these contents that binds them together.

First, there are communities that are in the same geographical space having the potential for face-to-face contact with each other. Next, are members of this same community who are in different geographical locations, including through migration to other countries, and so not in a position to have face to face contact. These communities could be based on criteria of religion, race, and ethnicity but transcend national boundaries. Thus over 25% of Sikhs in India live outside the Punjab as do over 60% of Sri Lankan Tamils live among predominantly non Tamil areas. In addition, there are significant segments of these and other separatist communities living in foreign countries.

To the class of transborder communities increasingly belong also people from the professional callings. The modern physicist, doctor and engineer, would have his overseas compatriots talking a near identical professional language as there exists a common universe of discourse. They are bound together by the content of their disciplines, their practices and professional norms. Their subject matter constantly changes every few years and the links across borders are vital for the lateral exchange of knowledge essential for the discipline. The employees of transnational corporations who have to exchange lateral information, specially at the professional level, also belong to this category of transborder community.

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In the same category are the auxiliary staff and skilled workers associated with these professions such as technicians, nurses or skilled workers. The knowledge of these groups changes too, and requires lateral cross border communication to constantly upgrade them. But some of that new information can of course, come diachronically from the professionals in their own territories who had been exposed to newer transborder professional knowledge.

Less influenced by transborder contacts would be the traditional craftsmen like carpenters and masons, who earlier lived professional lives where information was largely handed down from generation to generation within a nation, with little or no knowledge transmitted laterally across borders, because new developments were few and far between.

In addition to these communities, there is another transborder set of communities that are increasingly being linked daily by the global chains of electronic media. These would include bankers and traders of currency and stocks who are bound together by the common electronic transborder data flows. They exchange information very rapidly across borders and have a sense of immediacy as they communicate with, support or compete electronically with foreign based compatriots. These electronic communities generally constitute what have been termed "virtual communities"^{28 27}.

Transborder communities of a less universal kind such as those of religion and ethnicity are also being connected through the exploding telecommunication links. Thus, substantial segments of the population of the areas of ethnic tension live outside their territory, both nationally and internationally and increasingly communicate electronically. The localization tendency is helped by telecommunications across the localizing group. In fact, these tele-links often provide some of the most vital avenues for both information gathering and propaganda for the militant operations of these communities. But these "local" electronic communities are intimately embedded within the larger electronic community, including the latter's massive more universal technology support group.

Dynamics of Inter Penetrating Communities

The future of Asian cultures can be gleaned by asking the question of how do these different communities -- face-to-face, cross-border, and virtual -- interact.

Between Localization and Globalization

Earlier, when communities were simple and relatively isolated, a person had generally one cultural realm which he or she occupied. This was the role to which he or she was inducted, largely through primary socialization. And, by and large, the person lived through out life within this cultural identity, although with some few changes as one crossed different age boundaries. These cultural identities were, in simpler societies, common to the whole community, a person being socialized to almost all the group's activities.

Increased differentiation in society begins to create cultural cleavage which affect cultural identity on its peripheries. But when differentiation is associated with rapid geographical mobility people begin to have multiple identities.

The conventional view of a nation is a group of individuals living in a common territory with common cultural and racial backgrounds, with shared values, customs, traditions, including those of religion and/or language²⁸. But with modern changes in the global cultural processes, through communications, economics, travel, and migration these constituents have split up so that they tend not to coincide in one territory. Different cultural communities spread their tentacles across geographical areas, and draw their members together on several cross boundary links, giving rise to several geographically separated sub-cultures such as those based on ethnic, religious, class or electronic links.

Thus one may be born in country A, get primary socialization through a religion B, secondary socialization through predominantly European science C, military training D on Chinese military strategy, work in country E, have as employer an internationally traded company F, upgrade or change the profession through a new training G, receive a transnational global cultural package H through the radio and TV, and travel in country J. Today's self is encroached upon dynamically by many shifting cultures. Much of this phenomenon may, in some of the poorer countries, be limited only to certain migratory sections or refugees or to the country's elite. But in the last case, the multiple cultural residues on the elite are then transmitted at least partially down to the rest of the population.

It is in the above shifting subcultures that the drama of the future of Asian cultures, between globalization and localization is being played out. Although cultures exist in different social groups, their contents are physically located in different human minds. It is in minds that cultural residues

collect, accommodating and jostling with each other. It is in these mental reservoirs that the various urges for globalization and localization occur.

One individual self, it should be noted, could today live in several of these cultural worlds. An individual could today generally be a member of his face-to-face community, his transborder expatriate community, or his virtual electronic community. Each of these communities could also have different subgroups within them. The contents of a citizen's mind is, thus, increasingly composed of elements not exclusive to a country, ethnic group, or religion. Thus, no firm separatism within the internal cultural world of an individual, is objectively possible, nor viable in a real sense in today's world. A cultural 'Lebanonization' of the mind occurs, with multiple frames of reference for action, corresponding to each subculture. In fact, such multiple frames had been shown to occur in actual studies of industrial organizations of developing countries in rapid transformation, even before the advent of electronic communities.²⁹

In this sense, unlike in the case of a remote past, searches for absolute fundamentalist sovereignty are doomed. Today, one cannot without contradictions build socialism in one country or a regime of pure Islam. Eastern Europe, China and Cambodia all have, in this sense, imploded from their earlier searches for purity, because of the dynamics of these multiple identities. The enemy is no longer across the border, it is within, it is part of oneself.

Separatist struggles for cultural purity today, whether it be based on ethnicity, religion, or class -- ultimately lead only to partial and pyrrhic cultural victories. For some time, the victorious separatist unit could exist isolated in its collective, conscious imagination. But in its unconscious psyche, the 'enemy' is regrouping within, reestablishing tentacles across mental boundaries, tentacles that reach to the inner individual soul. No single subculture has exclusive access to an individual mind, no one culture owns it exclusively.

If one were to view the mind as a vessel with different layers of cultural packages stored in it, one would get a "measure" of the relative importance of these multiple cultural contents. One can get such a measure by considering the rates of growth of knowledge and the length of socialization in the several domains. The relative rates of growth in this multilayered cultural system are not all equal. Revealed religion, or strongly held political positions are, by their very definition, sacred to varying degrees

and so not subject to much change. But the other contents change very rapidly. The contents of the scientific professions double according to some estimates every ten years or so.³⁰ The electronic globalizing processes change this knowledge much more rapidly, so much so that keeping up with it now becomes as difficult as 'drinking water from a fire hose'.³¹ The static puriscore of culture increasingly becomes a smaller and smaller residue, as the accelerated growth in the other cultural packages continue.

The relative 'amounts' of the different contents of cultures are also indicated by the length of time require to acquire them. In simpler societies, where the total knowledge held by society is small, there is a very simple division of labour and all individuals have a large amount of knowledge in common.³² In classical pre-industrial societies, with a relatively low division of labour, the individual learns all that is to be learnt in that culture within a few years through participation in family, religion, and economy. Only in a few cases longer apprenticeship is required.³³

In an industrial society, on the other hand, 11 to 16 years of formal full time instruction is necessary³⁴. For more exacting roles, this period of training both within the formal education system, such as school or university, as well as at work place, could be extended up to another ten years. And in the last decade or so, there has been calls for life-long learning, a demand now more urgent because of the rapid growth of new knowledge. The relative lengths of socialization, as information increases, must increasingly push the purist culture to a relatively smaller corner.

Are these processes leading to an inevitable domination of a unipolar world? Would cultural and political liberation struggles not only become unfashionable, but also ultimately impossible? The answer to this has to be approached indirectly.

The present hegemonic structures are very different from the earlier global ones. Thus the case of Christianization after the mercantile explorations of the Latin Americas was a crude, one way imposition. A single religion dominated. In the cultural colonization of the industrial era, of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the imposition was a larger package of culture, less virulent than the religious fanaticism of the sixteenth century, but still beholden generally to one mother country, say Britain or France.

The contents of the present global information network is partially the local parochialism of the dominant countries writ large which had emerged from the internal cultural dynamics of these countries. Yet, in the present juncture, however, there is no single dominant locus. The US for the present still predominates, and a group of industrialized countries such as the OECD collectively has a greater influence. Yet, the globalization process is trading currencies, ownership, and also partially identities across the entire global system. Multinationals increasingly indulge in cross marriages, still arranged among the dominant group, but no longer within one territory. No single player dominates absolutely in that sense, like a Sun King. The whole is increasingly becoming greater than any single constituent, as current difficulties of central banks to control their currencies illustrate. And even the poorest country, although drawn into an unequal relationship has its weak voice registered in the commercial "consensus" of the globe girdling electronic babble. This includes the possibility -- as countries become more porous to financial transactions, and shares are increasingly traded across all national boundaries -- of some elements of the remotest country owning some part of the global economic girdle. Further, the globalizing technological package has elements that specifically target local subcultures. Niche production and niche marketing in the post-Fordist phase fits into this pattern. So does the tendency towards narrow casting (as opposed to broadcasting) targeted at narrow subcultures in mass media that many new communication technologies would soon deliver.

And in this transactional world of globalizing information, there have been cases of cultural elements (because of particular play of social forces) of even the weakest emerging as a dominant force. One such example, which could be a paradigm for the future of such processes outside the dominant European culture, has been the growth of jazz and related music of the ex-slaves of America, to become a dominant musical form in many parts of the world. This is due to a variety of social and cultural factors including powerful commercial forces that identified important market opportunities.

The drama on the Asian stage

If the above are the broader general dynamics of local and global culture in the coming decades, how would they manifest themselves concretely on the Asian stage. The socio-economic and stratification systems and hence the cultural lineages are rapidly changing in the region. How would Asian subcultures respond to the contemporary currents? Would the present localization processes occurring in the South Asian regions, or the more

globalizing patterns occurring in, say parts of East Asia, predominate in the future? And if so, in which direction and under which time scale?

In the following attempts at answers to these questions, I will be making broad intuitive generalizations on the region, based on available evidence. These are meant to be seen as broad brush, sensitizing pointers.

Let me first begin with East Asia.

At the time of its forced opening to the West by Perry's Black Ships Japan had to deal directly with the West, an issue that she had avoided for a few centuries as she shunned European powers in the time of isolation. During the Meiji Restoration that followed, she decided on an avid process of Westernization. Although this Westernization was seen to be selective as under the slogan "*Wakon Yosai*" (Japanese spirit Western Civilization)³⁵, it actually was a much larger transformation where a variety of Western cultural aspects were absorbed as universal, civilized, and modern. These included forms of dress, music, all the Western fine arts, and the entire school syllabi (except Japanese language and history), including philosophy. An area that did not get Westernised was the structure of group social relations derived from the Confucian past. Today Japan is culturally very much a Western nation, except her language and social relations. If a Japanese speaks of philosophy, it is only Western philosophy. So is the case with most of her music, both classical and popular.

In China too, the major thrust of the Communist revolution was a rejection of not only the social relations of her past, but also many segments of her past culture. The Cultural Revolution was an extreme case, but even after a stop to its excesses, several parts of the earlier cultural heritage have been excised. Although traditional music, language and literature survive, large chunks of the cultural past have been wiped out. And, those who write knowingly of China's past cultural and philosophical systems are perhaps more outside the mainland. The cultural continuity with its past which exists in the West, in spite of major transformations, is therefore far less in the case of China.

East Asia also went through major changes in the economic underpinnings of her past traditions, through land reforms in China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. These speeded up the transformation of their economies and also their cultural underpinnings by changing the scaffolding down.

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The cultural changes envisaged by their modernizing elites, the effects of authoritarian regimes (as say in the suppression of Tibet), combined with their Confucian ethos, has seen the muting of fissiparous tendencies³⁶. Thus, China has many subethnic groups and many local traditions. But major conflicts have emerged between them.³⁷

The South Asian region had a much greater preoccupation with its past in the transformation to the modern world. This may have been also due to the fact that she was more directly under colonialism than East Asia.

The debates in the nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries in South Asia associated with such figures as Ram Mohun Roy, Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Gandhi, and Anagarika Dharmapala, addressed the problems of the present with a constant consideration of the past heritage. Continuity with the past traditions was always considered important, including its intellectual heritage which was taken as serious, and as part of the universal heritage of human kind.

This response of South Asians was a contrast to the well known colonial views of McCauley who said that "a single shelf of a good European history was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia"³⁸. He urged training a class of South Asians "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect"³⁹ who would be the guides to the region's future. This, it should be noted, is also nearer to the Japanese Meiji project of "Civilization and Enlightenment" (*Bummei Kaika*)⁴⁰, where Mc Cauley type changes were done by the Japanese themselves, than to the project preferred by South Asian reformers. The flavour of the latter is illustrated by the use of philosophical traditions drawn from the *Upanishads* or the teachings of Buddha in the South Asian search for its future.⁴¹

This concern with the past culture, combined with the lack of changes in agrarian production relations as happened in China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan, has seen the survival of many earlier South Asian production relations as well as their associated cultural elements. The jostling cultural lineages in South Asia remain to an extent uninterrupted as do the legitimacy of their contents.

The result in South Asia is "still" a strong local flavour in dress, music, and philosophy. In South Asia, its classical music is much more prevalent than the European variety, as is its popular music, which has a very local flavour. Philosophical issues chartered millennia earlier are taught and researched in many universities. The past cultural heritage is living and finds a vibrant place in intellectual and cultural life.

The contrast to attitudes to the past between South and East Asia is best exemplified in heightened form in the Chinese and Japanese responses to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore when he visited these countries as Asia's first Nobel Prize winner. After initial enthusiasm, he was later denounced as "an emissary of a failed civilization" when he began to preach on "Asian spirituality" to be contrasted with the Western modernism⁴².

The other side of this South Asian enthusiasm for the past, combined with the lack of changes in agrarian relations (part of the scaffolding for transmission of the earlier culture) are the current fissiparous tendencies and narrower nationalisms which find expression in ethnic conflicts. These are occurring in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

A midway situation probably exists in South East Asia and parts of "Indo-China". But elements of the fissiparous tendencies have been 'contained'.⁴³

These intuitive snapshots of Culture in the Asian region are a rough approximation of the present. For the future, one has to chart the cultural dynamics of the localization and globalization tendencies in economic, social and cultural processes.

Economic Effects

The Asian region has, over the last few decades, become the major centre of economic growth in the world. The economies of South and East Asia had a growth rate 7.0% of their G.D.P. for the decade 1981-1990⁴⁴ which was double the rate of the world average of 3.2%⁴⁵. The comparative figure for the developed countries (which included Japan) was 3.00%⁴⁶.

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The major growth in this region has been in the East Asian region, but other regions too are showing high growth rates by historical standards. Thus, the South Asian region grew at 5.3%.⁴⁷ for the decade. During the period 1965-1990, her manufacturing capacity alone grew at 6-7% a year.⁴⁸ This should be compared with growth rate for the first industrial nation Britain, in the 19th century when it dominated the world growth rate of 2-3%.⁴⁹

The entire Asian region is also today rapidly integrating itself with the world economy, knocking down tariff barriers and generally adopting policies that agree with IMF and World Bank requirements. These structural changes are aimed at 'freeing' the economy to market forces. Steps in the same direction include the opening of stock exchanges in almost all the countries in the region, that did not have them which are also being opened to global trading. Further, governments in the region are avidly wooing foreign investors with varying packages of incentives. The economies in the region are being rapidly integrated with the rest of the world system.

Investments in the individual economies, are either from within a given country, within the region (as when Japanese, Koreans or Taiwanese invest in South East Asia) and from outside the region, as from Europe and America. There is as yet little investment from other parts of Asia in South Asia, except in Sri Lanka, although South Asian governments are now avidly wooing foreign investments as has occurred under the new Indian foreign investment strategy. So, economies at the level of district, national, Asian and extra regional level are rapidly changing. Associated with this economic activity, there are also facets of culture which result in cross-border cultural traffic.

East Asia, and to a lesser extent South East Asia, are thus being rapidly drawn into this accompanying cultural traffic. This process, combined with the relative lack of these sub regions' connectedness of these countries with their past cultures, implies that their past local cultures would not have a *strong continuity* with the new cultures now being constructed in their countries (except for social relations, including family ties).

Within South Asia, the present tendencies of militant local exclusivity would in certain cases, probably stretch on to the immediate future. But these local identities for which militant struggles are now being carried out, were partly created in earlier centuries within a cultural discourse *with* those

immediate neighbours or with those groups in their midst, who have now been declared their adversaries in the struggles. This was the case in Punjab, Kashmir and the Tamil regions of Sri Lanka.

The South Asian states have clamped down very heavily on separatist movements as in Kashmir, Punjab, Assam or the predominantly Tamil region of Sri Lanka. And conversely, there have been, to varying degrees, exercises in ethnic cleansing by the respective separatist groups themselves. Yet, it seems unlikely that the present separatist cries would lead to independent states, simply because the geopolitics of the region would not allow it.

Further, the parallel that is often drawn with the Soviet Union, which unravelled with the dissolution of the Leninist state, is not valid for South Asia, because the social and cultural factors that, operate are, qualitatively different.

In the USSR, the breakdown into ethnic factions was the result of the breakdown of the earlier rigid social system and the operation of a unique set of factors. The Soviet system functioned in a manner very different from that of India. Administrative organs under the aegis of an all powerful politbureau operated in the field of economic allocation and in many social decisions. Often the decisions were unresponsive to everyday popular pressures and the Soviet leadership had potentially much arbitrary power. The highly centralized economic and political system which the Leninist State engendered had also its direct counterpart in the mass-culture and communication sphere. The mass media were conceived by Lenin as "a collective propagandist, agitator and organizer"; Stalin called it the "driving belt" between the Party and the population. These vertical transmission belts of a centralist state were supplemented by thousands of wall newspapers and mimeographed material as well as the institution of *agit prop* (agitation-propaganda).⁵⁰ These vertical and centralized cultural links were emphasized in contrast to the more horizontal, porous linkages across cultural groups that mark non-Leninist States. The Leninist State, in fact, froze earlier cultural systems without allowing adequate cross linkages to enable them to develop organically.

The breakdown of the Leninist State has led to these earlier vertically driven administrative systems and cultural transmission belts to unravel. The capitalist links of integrating market signals, organic cross-border cultural links and the new telecommunication technologies, had not yet set in. And

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so, only the integrating factors of ethnicity and religion were left as the common bonds.

The situation in South Asia is very different. There has been no attempt to administratively organize everything and there is no administrative and propagandist use of culture in the Leninist sense. The South Asian system is kept together by many cross linkages of a non administrative kind. The rapid cultural unravelling of the Soviet variety, therefore, appears unlikely.

In the unlikely event of separatism, what would be its outcome in the cultural sphere, specially if it would be combined with ethnically cleansed populations? There would probably be a decade or two of strong cultural assertion. But at the same time, cultural elements drawn from outside the national boundaries would necessarily creep in, as perhaps has already occurred, to some extent, in Iran. This creeping-in would be governed by the general processes described earlier.

It should also be noted that in the Asian region as a whole, unlike in previous centuries when Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism Islam and Taoism criss-crossed the region, porosity to cross regional cultural influences as between West, South, South East and East Asia. Cross-cultural influences would exist, as for example in the adoption of a Japanese electronic device. But that cultural artefact, would have had very little to do with the past cultural lineage of Japan, except for certain attitudes to work and organization, on which its manufacture depended.

If this be the case, would we be left with essentially a Eurocentric core culture in the world, equivalent to the Westernization of Japan?

I have described earlier how the various cultural lineages jostle with each other dynamically. It is these lineages that provide the underpinnings and the historical fault lines for the fissiparous tendencies; the globalizing tendencies existing as a potential hegemonic umbrella-like blanket across all these lineages. How the final outcome of the tensions of localization and globalization will realize itself depends on contingent economic, social and cultural factors including the views held on the relationships between local and Western culture within influential sectors of the country.

In the "long run", with the exponential growth of scientific knowledge and with many persons being increasingly drawn into more science and technology based modes of production and economic activity, the globalization

tendency would be expected to predominate. Further, the growth of scientific knowledge spawns a multiplicity of new subcultures in the form of an explosion of disciplines and sub disciplines. But this observation has to be seen in a more nuanced light.

There would still be strong pockets of local elements in the local lineages. The sources feeding them would come from within the lineage, from its immediate subregion and from the globalization package. But global cultural processes would be the dominant source of new cultural elements, specially those relating to science and technology. Yet the constituents of this global culture, specially relating to science and technology although based on the European foundations of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries are today being relocated in many Asian countries. This global culture carries with it the historical stamp of Europe. Its audience, however, is global.

To what extent can this science and technology culture be influenced by local cultures? European science, although it broke away from some elements of Europe's past culture in the early centuries of the Scientific Revolution, has always had a continuity with the European culture in general, which stretches back to Greek times. The European Renaissance which was the precursor to the Scientific Revolution, was partly a search for new sustenance from Europe's past. The "renaissances" that have appeared in the East during the last century or so have been of a different character, in that they had more to draw sustenance from present Europe than from Asia's own past⁵¹. The challenge from Europe was immediate and the easiest and quickest response was acquiring Western knowhow. Searches in the past, except to a limited extent in South Asia, were not, therefore, on the immediate agenda.

Does, then, globalization inevitably mean the excision of contributions from past non-European knowledge lineages into the global one, specifically to the future Asian one?

There are several examples of cultural elements drawn from non-European sources which have fed the global system and become legitimized. These included in art, for example, the influence of the Japanese wood cut on Impressionism, the influence of West African masks and Oceanic art on Braque and Picasso, the influence of Japanese architecture on modern architecture.⁵² South Asian influences on the non-fine arts included surgery during the 18th Century,⁵³ linguistics,⁵⁴ and philosophy and psychology in the 19th and 20th Centuries.⁵⁵ One could also usefully recall here Dale's

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observation of the South Asian influences on the Americans -- William James, Charles A Moore, Santayana, Emerson, and Irving Babbitt -- which had helped enlarge the debates in America, on epistemology, psychology and the self.⁵⁶

Could these examples be a pointer to future Asian intrusions into global culture in a systematic manner? Let me point out the possibilities by taking examples of the knowledge elements that are held by presumably the simplest of societies say, hunter-gatherers and then move on to more formal, 'civilizational' stores of knowledge.

There is a large area of direct practical knowledge like those of plants and animal products in the large number of "little traditions" in small groups across the world. Plants that are unknown in developed countries have many uses which have been identified over the centuries by farmers, pastoralists and traditional healers across the globe in their ethno-biology. Thus it has been said of even the simplest of such groups, "if all their knowledge about their land and its resources were recorded and published, it would make up a library of thousands of volumes".⁵⁷ Scattered around Asia are, in these small traditions, sets of veritable walking encyclopedias.

Already some of this knowledge on plants is being used in biotechnology -- a frontline field where access to a variety of useful genes is vital. The ethno knowledge held by local groups is gathered by among others, multinational corporations; the plants and their properties identified, and later the particular gene responsible for a desired property isolated to be incorporated into a new genetically engineered plant.⁵⁸ The knowledge that is in the bioengineered plant, therefore, comes from two sources: the original knowledge of the farmer that had over the centuries identified and shaped the plant's useful properties and the multinational corporation that isolated and incorporated the gene. Often the relationship of the two knowledge carriers has been unequal and predatory and subject to major debates recently⁵⁹. Yet, it is an example where the globalizing culture can be encroached upon by the knowledge of the simplest of social groups.

Of the more formal knowledge systems, many examples already exist in the medical field of items taken from the pharmacopoeia of Asia and used successfully. Attempts in medicine also include the fields of bio-feedback, and of the relationship between body and mind, which were given a fillip by proven Asian techniques. Stress reduction techniques have borrowed heavily from Eastern sources and include those using direct classical Asian meditation methods.

A major current formal attempt in using Asian concepts is one by a group of young Indian scientists and sponsored by India's major scientific bodies. Here, scientists trained formally in the Western tradition are attempting to mine its traditional knowledge for the Western scientific enterprise. This programme is making a wide ranging exploration in the fields of mathematics, logic, linguistics and cognitive sciences for possible areas of splicing-in.⁶⁰ As an example, members of the programme have pointed out that the Jain tradition had developed a system of transfinite mathematics separate from the West which could have modern uses. Another practical example of the use of South Asian models of mental processing is in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Indian researchers in collaboration with Americans have successfully used the approaches of the 5th CBC grammarian Panini to develop software for machine translation.⁶¹

Francisco Varela,⁶² a leading theoretical biologist and student of cognitive science and Artificial Intelligence, has used Buddhist insights in extending the limitations of neo-Darwinian adaptation in biological evolution and of the current paradigm in cognitive sciences. Having noted that in Buddhist discourse classical western dichotomies like subject and object, mind and body, vanishes, Varela has applied these discourses to several frontier problems not only in cognitive psychology and evolutionary theory but also in linguistics, neuro-science, Artificial Intelligence, and immunology.⁶³

Varela has stated that the infusion of Buddhist ideas into the sciences of the West would have as much an impact as did the Renaissance rediscovery of Greek thought.⁶⁴ How far this may be true is for the future to decide. But it is clear that one could opportunistically capture cultural and knowledge elements from the far-flung regions of Asia and incorporate them in the globalizing whole.

In trying to catch with the West, East Asians have given less thought to these aspects. South Asians have tried to use the past but have largely emphasised its presumed "spiritual" aspects. But it is in the more mundane, material aspects that Asian cultural elements could be fruitfully used. It is in identifying cultural elements from the Asian lineages and incorporating them into the larger globalizing whole that their preservation would lie. Much more so, than fundamentalist searches for doomed cultural purities. Could we, then, picture the cultural world of the future of Asia as it is dynamically changed by major transformations?

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Pointers to aspects of such a future Asian society, one can see in two national examples, India and the United States. Both have their problems and have had persistent inequalities. Yet, both have accommodated to varying degrees a very strong mix of subcultures. Although India has several insurgencies now, it should be remembered that her large cities have been bustling cosmopolitan mixtures. In the same locality, there have been overlapping universes of culture and of structures of meaning, drawn from language, caste, class and religion. They constitute a cultural babble of the means to cope with the world, a veritable 'speaking tree'.⁶⁵

The United States has had one of the world's worst examples of race relations, and was not a melting pot. Yet, it too possesses examples of the same jostling, viable multiple cultures. In many cities in the United States, such as New York, communities from different parts of the world, exist side by side. For example, in one segment of New York, -- Elmhurst -- over one hundred and thirty nationalities exist in an area half a mile square and live culturally overlapping and relatively accommodating lives⁶⁶. These overlaps in the case of a developed country like the US extend, beyond the ethnic group, to the profession, to electronic virtual communities. The selves here are multi dimensional and in that sense, are a potential precursor to the emergent global future.

But so is increasingly India. In addition to the cultural mosaic derived from earlier times, it is today crisscrossed by cultural domains of the new professions as well as of increasingly pockets of electronic virtual communities. Several years ago, India was one of the first countries to experiment with the uses of satellites for village education, and today in the form of software exports, she is a developing country pioneer in electronic telecommuting.

The dominant image of the future of culture in Asia would probably be of such jostling cultural lineages. At least that *should* be the desirable future.

As Asia is transformed under strong economic and technological forces, its cultures are being transmuted. Its past and future implode as localizing and globalizing tendencies interact. The ensuing cultural admixture would be a major pointer to the future culture of the world.

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