

International Lecture of the Eurasia Foundation, Fall Semester 2022

Series Lectures (14): “Asian Community: The Construction and Transformation of East Asiaology”

Topic: The Necessity and Significance of Forming New Community

For the 14th Eurasia Foundation International Lecture 2022 of Chinese Culture University, we invited Mr. Chung Joonkon, the chief researcher of the Eurasia Foundation, to give a keynote speech on the theme of “The Necessity and Significance of Forming New Community.” Professor Chung said that the purpose of the Eurasia Foundation’s activities is to eliminate world disputes, expand mutual relations through education, and achieve world peace.

No individual can leave the community and the social order must continue to be maintained; therefore, we must be imaginative as facing the unknown future and must understand the past and present of the community. Like everyone in the world, we all feel panic, pain and anxiety about the Covid-19 outbreak. Likewise, the Russo-Ukraine War is a global problem. In Japan, not only did the state provide aid to Ukraine, but agencies, private companies and citizens all over the country are also feeling the grief that Ukraine is facing. Coupled with the use of information technology, sharing information has become a fast way for the whole world to have the same information in an instant. This represents the first time that mankind has been able to share information in a global scale, that means, we are moving towards the direction of sharing new values.

Therefore, try to think about human activities from two perspectives of “possession” and “relationship.” “Possession” refers to human beings’ activities to satisfy the demands or desires, as well as to develop technology or civilization. Natural science work together with enterprises or countries and consequently brought more human activities. However, human beings cannot survive with “possession” alone. “Relationship” means that human beings are individuals living in a community, and there must be order and balance in the community. If “possession” and “relationship” cannot be balanced, it will bring misfortune to human beings, and even lead to the dissolution of the community. In the world, there is a tendency that “possession” is valued higher than “relationship.”

How to keep “possession” and “relationship” in balance? Since no one can stop the development of “possession,” we must be devoted to the improvement of “relationship.” Due to the limited ability of individuals, the improvement of “relationship” must seek the

help of family members or other people, and must also have imagination. This is the community of imagination.

At this stage, we will encounter two barriers: human beings' inner closed views, and institutional barriers. The inner closed views by individuals are made up of prejudices, preconceptions, ego formation, etc., and values will change as they grow up. An institution that focuses on the community must have certain rules in order to maintain the community, and it must also be adjusted appropriately.

In order to solve this problem, there must be three viewpoints: time, space and *Jinkan* (人間, the world). The world here should be read as "Jinkan," which refers to a group of people who share time and space.

Time is not an instant, but a continuation of infinite connections; space is not a geographical field or place, but moves freely in a shared culture with wide variety; and the world is not "Ningen (にんげん, human world)." Ningen is a wrong translation of "human being," when translator in Modern Era misunderstood its meaning and translated it as "individual." The original meaning of the word "human being" is social community and thus, it should be read as "Jinkan" to conform to the original meaning.

Here I want to brought up a problem that the cause of the most deaths in the world are not caused by terrorist attacks, wars or crimes, but suicide. Experts say that the number of people who want to commit suicide is two to three times more than the actual number of suicides. That is to say, if more than 800,000 people commit suicide every year, more than 2.4 million people in the world want to commit suicide. This is the limit of the current national community, and most people in it choose to give up their lives. A country should be a place where citizens can live in peace, but for some people, it seems to have become a community where people can't breathe.

Why did it become like this? That's because the community has not changed. Sustaining an organization requires change. After the establishment of the modern national state, the sovereign state rejected diversity and accepted new things in order to maintain the integrity of state. If there is no change, people lost hope for the future. Nonetheless, it will be difficult to keep maintaining the old state system. The guidance for change is the three directional viewpoints mentioned above, a country must be transformed into a country of a group of people who share time and space. Only in this

way can we have a common vision and pursue common values. We must look at the world from a broader perspective.

According to the research results of Yale University's history studies, the country with the greatest hegemony in the past was not a country with a vast territory or a large number of citizens, but a country with an inclusive spirit of tolerance, caring for the world, and a country with diversity. A country that falls into self-centrism is doomed to perish. A community that becomes a new leader country must have diversity and tolerance, as well as a broad perspective to face things.

At the end of the speech, Professor Chung mentioned that people living in the 21st century can learn to have diverse perspectives to form a community through the process of training and practice. In order for the community to become a country that is comfortable and easy to live in, it should not be locked to a certain area, so that integration cannot be achieved. For a community to be open, diversity and inclusion are necessary. We should "graduate" from the aforementioned inner closed views and institutional barriers and then we can build a peaceful society. We should get new values, so that a peaceful community can be formed. By this way, human beings can "graduate" from the aforementioned barriers, break away from the thinking of existing values, and move towards a brand new future.

(Web link: <https://eurasia.pccu.edu.tw/index.php>)

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