

Asian Community: Macrohistorical View and Focus on Culture—The Case of Two
11th and 12th Century International Treaties

Translated by Wenting Yang

We invite Han Kuei-Hua, the Chair of Department of History from our university to be our lecturer for the sixth lecture. The theme is “Asian Community: Macrohistorical View and Focus on Culture—The Case of Two 11th and 12th Century International Treaties.” The summary of Chair Han’s lecture is as below:

In 21st century, because of close trade ties, the development of technology, and the use of internet, borders of countries cannot restrict countries any more. Thus, the trend is to cross border and to establish regional organization, multi-lateral alliance, and seek for sustainable development. Now we can observe the integration of Western Europe (European Union), integration cooperation of North American, cooperation organization in Latin American and Africa region. Asia also follows this trend and there are common economic organization in Southeastern Asia, East Asia, and South Asia. In 2009, there are proposals of “East Asian Community” and “Asian Community.” The content is to integrate China, Japan, Korea with ten countries of ASEAN and plus India, Australia, and New Zealand. Asian Community will be an economic and cultural community based on regional alliance. However, there are so many countries, nations, and cultures in this region. How can these countries find common ground, settle difference, and pursue sustainable development of the community? This becomes a task and problems faced every community and needed to be solved.

From the macrohistorical view, Asian community has a great goal and lofty ideal. If it can be realized, it will be the happiness for this region and human. As a community, except of the form of economic negotiation and cooperation, focusing and refining the internal culture is more important. Regional community can intensify and maintain longer time only through the common culture meaning and common core value.

In this lecture, I will take “The Chanyuan Treaty” and “The Treaty of Shaoxing” signed between Song Kingdom and enemy countries Liao Kingdom and Jin Kingdom from the north in the 10th and 12th century as example. I will analyze the development of bilateral relations and situations, i.e. from war to peace, before and after the signature of the treaties. I will also analyze the reasons and impacts of these treaties for maintaining long-term peace. It is a good example that based on the form and conditions of “courtesy, integrity, peace, prosperity,” it is possible to realize a beautiful vision.

At last, let us has a look at Asian Community with a macro view. It is important to believe that multi-culture and multi-belief are not obstacle but assisting force. Through focusing, precipitating, and refining the essence of culture and carrying forward the virtue of human nature, the stability and prosperity and even universal harmony is expectable.

Chair Han's profession is history of Song dynasty and economic history. Thus, she offered incisive insight and unique analysis on two "peace treaties" signed in the 10th and 12th century. The impression of Song Dynasty is that it is a militarily weak but culturally rich dynasty in history. In the era that a country was surrounded by strong and aggressive enemies, it is reasonable for a countries to choose diplomatic measures, such as signing a non-aggression treaty with strong countries, for its own survival. These treaties turned war to peace and created a win-win situation for both sides. Maybe it had been considered at that time as unequal treaty that humiliate the nation and forfeit its sovereignty. However, after we look at them with macrohistorical view, these treaties brought hundreds years of peace and allowed citizens free from the suffering of war. "The Chanyuan Treaty" and "The Treaty of Shaoxing" signed between Song Kingdom and enemy countries Liao Kingdom and Jin Kingdom from the north in the 10th and 12th century were very good example.

"The Chanyuan Treaty" and "The Treaty of Shaoxing" received very mixed judgements whether at that time or later generation. In general, people have positive view toward "The Chanyuan Treaty." After the signature of "The Chanyuan Treaty," the peace was maintain between Song and Liao Kingdom for nearly 120 years. At that period of time, both sides have many cultural and economic exchanges. Accordingly, both sides were able to reach the economic and cultural peak. Nevertheless, because of the rise of Jin Kingdom and Jin's uniting Northern Song and destroying Liao, ultimately Song was inevitably destroyed by Jin. In other word, Jin united secondary enemy (Song) to destroy main enemy (Liao) and then destroyed secondary enemy. The famous "Jingkang Incident" occurred at this time. After the demise of Northern Song, the Prince of Kang Zhao Gou, later Emperor Gaozong of Song, reestablished the Song dynasty in Ying-Tien fu (Shangchiu, Henan province) and changed the regnal year to Chienyen. In order to destroy Emperor Gaozong, Jin people invaded south again. Emperor Gaozong fled to South of the Yangtze River and then fled to the Sea. At last, the war finally ended because Jin people are not good at battle fought on the sea. Both sides signed "The Treaty of Shaoxing." Though there are two versions of "The Treaty of Shaoxing," the contents were both Southern Song agreed to reduce into a vassal state of the Jin Kingdom and this move seemed like the demise of Song dynasty. Although the revision of treaty stated that "it changed the relationship from the monarch and subject to Uncle and nephew. Emperor of Song called Emperor of Jin uncle. Documents between two countries changed from piao (表, letter from subjects to Emperor) Chao (詔, order from Emperor to subjects) to letter of credence" In nowadays' word, the relations between Song and Jin changed from vassal state and suzerain state to equal relations of two countries. Although "the Treaty of Shaoxing" was unequal treaty, both sides gain peace and promote economic and cultural exchanges. At last, because of the rise of Mongolia, Song (Southern Song) repeated the same mistake that uniting with Mongolia to destroy Jin and then destroyed by Mongolia.

The similarity of these two peace treaties is to gain peaceful coexistence and develop bilateral economic and cultural exchanges. Particular the cultural exchanges facilitated the integration of different cultures (Nomadic culture and Chungyuan Han Culture) and promoted acculturation. In short, the sinicization of northern people and foreignization of Han people. As mentioned above, Song was militarily weak but culturally strong country. Song dynasty had many achievements in literature and art in Chinese history. Thus, whether Liao or Jin promoted sinicization. "Many Jin Emperors accepted education of Han culture and they adopt sinicization policy as they became Emperors. Especially Jin, although Jin Kingdom was confronted by Southern Song, Jin

never call itself as North dynasty. It is because the Emperors and subjects of Jin Kingdom considered themselves are the 'orthodox' of China. The thoughts of 'being the orthodox of Tienhsia' is the core element of regime transition in Han traditions. We may say Jin people is 'the student has become the master' and Jin people in turn treated Song dynasty as vassal state. (excerpted from Chair Han's powerpoint)." From this, we can see that Jin people's sinicization not simply copied costume and exterior appearance of Han people but also internalized Chinese thoughts. Here we can see the impacts of cultural exchanges.

As Chair Han mentioned in the conclusion that "under the basis of treaty, both sides are able to maintain foreign policy, economic, cultural, custom exchanges," and "in spite of mixed judgements regarding whether it is equal or unequal for both sides, these treaties did achieve long-term social stability and regional peace. For this meaning, it gains positive judgement from people at that time and later generations." Compare to war, people hunger for peace. Peaceful environment alone can promote economic and cultural exchanges and developments, while on the basis of economic and cultural exchanges and development, peace are able to sustain.

The effect of history is to 'know the present by the past experience.' How can we pursue world peace in current world situation? 'Macrohistorical view and focus on culture' is an critical measure to adopt and needed to be deliberated." As we are pursuing Asian Community, how to create common sense is very important task. In the last two lectures, we understand the importance of crossing the "language barriers." After Chair Han's lecture, we learned that if we want to cross the "culture barriers" we need to create a culture connotation recognized by everyone through cultural exchanges and integration. On this basis, it is important to identify each other and diminish the internal 'barriers' between each other. We learnt a lot from this lecture. (Written by: Chen Shun-Yi)