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Title of Session: East Asian Community: Histories, Realities, and Visions

Name of Session Convener(s): Seung Kuk Kim

University/Organization incl. City: Pusan National University, Pusan, Korea

Chair: Seung Kuk Kim

University/Organization incl. City: Pusan National University, Pusan, Korea

I) Title of Selected Paper: East Asianism as a Historical-Normative Condition for East Asian Community

Name/s of Author/s: Seung Kuk Kim; Kyo Sung Song; Ji Young Lee

University/Organization incl. City: Pusan National University, Pusan, Korea

Abstract: Is there an East Asian Community in East Asia? Yes and No. East Asia is certainly not a politico-militarily integrated area. Despite the differences and conflicts in East Asia, it is not impossible to discover a strong line of economic and cultural cohesion. The formation of an East Asian Community has a long way to go. Without developing the idea of East Asian Community, however, there would be little hope for substantially reducing the risky conditions of human lives in East Asia. In this light, the idea of East Asian Community is a self-fulfilling prophecy from which we can mobilize our sociological imaginations to build a new world. East Asian community is conceived here as a normative and real historical concept.

Interestingly enough, the recent rise of East Asia has coincided with the historical waves of network society based on information technology revolutions. It is no coincidence to discover a strong elective affinity between the presumed culture of network society and the historical traditions of strong human networking in East Asia such as Guang-si in China, Yun-Jul in Korea and Ie in Japan. While network society still remains a material, technological infrastructure without corresponding qualities of superstructure, it has contained great potentialities for changing our world and creating a new society, since networking has become a dynamic, self-expanding form of organization of human activity.

This study relies on two theoretical heritages. The first one comes from the famous Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis. We bring Weber's thesis back to historically legitimize and empirically substantiate the formation of East Asian Community as an incarnation of "the spirit of East Asianism", which is assumed to be a postmodern ethic necessary for constructing East Asian Community whose material base is constituted by network society. The second tradition is derived from the structuralism of Levi-Strauss whose

binary code of human cognition composes a juxtaposition of postmodern East Asianism to Western modernism.

Five elements are identified as the most salient features of East Asianism. They are

1. post-domination or non-violence/pacifism
2. post-materialism or spiritualism
3. post-expansionism or minimalism
4. post-competition or co-operationism
5. post-secularism or mysticism.

They play the role of ideological anti-theses against the Western value orientations such as statist domination, capitalist materialism, universalist expansionism, monopolist competition and rationalist secularism. Major forms of 21st century social movements such as ecology, minority, locality, counter-cultures, alternative globalization, peace and anti-nuclear/nuke encourage and reinforce the growth of those East Asian value orientations. An East Asian community as a global civil society is now but very slowly shaping its future image of alternative society in the interaction between the material-technological base constructed by network society and the uniquely East Asian value orientations of post-modern reflections and meditations.

II) Title of Selected Paper: Transnational Discourse and the Formation of a Public Sphere in East Asia: The Case of the "Comfort Women" Movement

Name/s of Author/s: Sang-Hui Nam

University/Organization incl. City: University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

Abstract: This presentation explores to what extent the regional advocacy network of the "comfort women" movement has contributed to the establishment of a sustainable civic network in East Asia. Over the recent two decades, "comfort women" movement groups and activists have been struggling for the moral and financial compensation of an estimated number of 200,000 victims of the Japanese system of military sexual slavery in East Asia. From the beginning, the movement displayed various strengths and weaknesses with regard to the formation of a transnational civic network: On the one hand, the "comfort women" movement succeeded in mobilizing involved individuals and interested civic groups in many East Asian countries. On the other hand, the scope of clients, strategies and goals was very limited. For this reason, the "comfort women" movement often focused on filing lawsuits in Japanese courts.

However, as the past events date back more than 50 years, court decisions are overdue and often turn out to be almost impossible. These circumstances gave rise to speculations that the movement will disappear when all surviving former "comfort women" have passed away. In contrast to this prediction, this presentation explores the expansion and transformation of "comfort women" movement groups in East Asia in terms of agendas and networks. Based on information from public statements in connection with civic groups who have participated in the Asian Solidarity Conferences of the "comfort women" movement since 1992, this presentation examines how regional "comfort women" campaigns are embedded in and connected to domestic activities and networks. Based on the results of this analysis, it will be discussed whether the regional civic network of "comfort women" movement in East Asia will be sustainable.

III) Title of Selected Paper: The Institutionalization of Social Work Profession in China

Name/s of Author/s: Wai-keung Chung

University/Organization incl. City: School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University, Singapore

Abstract: In Communist China before the 1980s, social problems that are typical in most capitalist societies were not supposed to exist. Officially, unemployment or poverty was never an issue because everyone was supposed to have a position in the planned economy. Teenagers, who had learned to be socialists, were not supposed to have behavioral problems. Under the sun of communism, people should be emotionally healthy and no one would commit suicide. All this began to slowly change with China's economic reforms in 1979. In the last few years, social problems of the capitalist kind have become increasingly obvious and increasingly difficult to ignore, thus eventually triggering the central government to look for solutions. When the social work degree program was reintroduced in Chinese universities after 1988, the development of it as a profession was never significant, and it was not being considered as a tool to tackle the social problems created by the social and economic changes. Dramatic change occurred only after 2006, when the Chinese government announced a series of national policy initiatives to assess and professionalize social work practices. The changes signaled the first step of the institutionalization of social work in China, and the eventual recognition of social work practice as a possible solution for social problems.

My presentation focuses on the social processes behind the current development in the institutionalization and professionalization of social work in China. I argue that the re-emergence of social work has been largely shaped by path dependency and the surrounding institutional settings. Tensions so far have been built between the existing but outdated social service system and the rising social work profession. Very much a Western practice based on a capitalistic value system, social work practice has also been facing the pressure of indigenization in this presumably communist country. The use of social work profession to deal with social issues in China will not be a smooth. The study of the re-emergence of social work in China will not just answer the question on how social problems in China will eventually be handled. It will also shed light on a few other related issues in China Studies such as the social changes triggered by the economic reform, changing state-society relationships, and the development of NGOs and civil society.

IV) Title of Selected Paper: "International Emigration and the Building of Harmonious Society in Rural China: A Fieldwork Report."

Name/s of Author/s: Chin Kong

University/Organization incl. City: The University of Hong Kong

Abstract: Growing international commerce, greater integration of world economy, and advances in communication technology and mass transportation have not only expanded global exchanges of goods and services, but also spurred the movement of labourers seeking economic development opportunities overseas. A large number of Chinese citizens have thus joined the transnational migration waves, either legally or illegally, since 1978, when China launched economic reform and opened its door to the outside world. It is interesting to note that most of these new migrants are from rural Fujian, Zhejiang and Northeast China provinces. With the outflow of majority local labourers, a huge amount of overseas remittance has been pouring into local rural society over the past three decades,

which in turn has facilitated a deep and obvious social and economic transformation in the migrant sending regions or Qiaoxiang. Aiming at reducing and curbing the population outflow wave, if not eliminate it completely, the Chinese government currently is appealing the new Chinese migrants to return to invest in their home villages or participate in the local economic development while launching a nationwide movement in the country entitled “Jianshe xin nongcun” or Building Up A New Rural Society, as part of the national harmonious society blueprint advocated and being promoted by the Beijing authorities. Based on the fieldwork research conducted in a number of mountain villages of northern Fujian, this paper provides an empirical study by examining the new emigration wave from rural China, how majority of local farmers have gone to work at workshops and factories in Hungary, Italy, Russia, Singapore, Bulgaria and South Africa, overseas remittance and its impact on the economic and social transformation of local society, the institutional efforts by the Chinese government to build up a harmonious society in rural China, and different factors at work behind, in the hope to observe the institutional reform at the rural societal level from a novel perspective.

V) Title of Selected Paper: The Dilemma of Immigration Policy: The Case of Care Immigrants in Japan

Name/s of Author/s: Hideki Tarumoto

University/Organization incl. City: Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan

Abstract: Under globalisation, every country in the world struggles to open or close its border in migration. With facing the dilemma, an East Asian country, Japan, has been relatively successful in closing its border in post-war era. Although Japan received the number of immigrants, they were relatively few and most of them were skilled immigrants. There are some reasons for Japanese success in closing its border. The main reason is the powerful ministry in charge, the Ministry of Justice, which retains the dogma of immigration policy that Japan must not introduce unskilled immigrants. I argue that the Ministry of Justice embodies “singular bureaucratic sovereignty”. However, the dilemma of immigration policy strongly attacks Japan recently. Japan finally began to introduce care workers, who are categorized into “unskilled workers” by the Ministry, from Indonesia and the Philippines. This introduction will lead to profound change not only in the public sphere but also in the private sphere such as family relations. Why did Japan launch the introducing programme of care workers? Did Japan throw away its dogma of ban against unskilled workers? Through the case of care immigrants to Japan and similar cases in other Asian countries, this paper discusses as to how the state can deal with the dilemma of immigration policy and whether an Asian solution exists or not.

V) Title of Selected Paper: East Asian Network of Female Migrants in Korea

Name/s of Author/s: Doo Joo Baek; Joung Hun Chun; Jeong Hwa An

University/Organization incl. City: Pusan National University, Pusan, Korea

Abstract: Given the increasing feminization of migrant labor, it is very important to pay sociological attention to their adaptive strategy of living in foreign country. This study aims to examine the social network organized by female immigrants in Korea in order to adapt themselves to Korean society. More specifically, they are divided into two groups, i.e., immigrant workers and marriage immigrants. Six dimensions of social network such

as openness, (functional) orientation, cohesion, centralization, East Asian linkage, and East Asian identity are analyzed to contrast the structural features of two groups.

Depth interviews with female immigrants are used to collect data. Fifteen marriage immigrants are selected from four East Asian countries (China, Vietnam, Philippine, and Mongol). Leaders of immigrant workers' social networks are interviewed.

Major findings are as follows. There is meaningful differences of network organization between two groups. While marriage immigrants' network shows more openness, less centralization, socio-cultural orientation, stable cohesion, broad linkage with other East Asian networks, and strong sense of East Asian identity, immigrant workers' network seems to be more or less exclusive, centralized, politico-economic, unstable, limited, and weak. All in all, our study may contribute to understanding the different views of East Asian community by female immigrants in Korea.