

III. Education for Everyone

Chinese society prior to the time of Confucius was one which combined the ruling and the educating, with officials serving also as teachers. Schooling resources were under the proprietorship of rulers and the rights of education lay in the hand of officials; only few of the aristocrats had the opportunity for advanced education—which was forsaken to civilians. But Confucius inaugurated the education for civilians, making “teaching without discrimination” his manifesto. Confucius tore down the old notion of aristocratic education (which of course suggests caste stratification) and became the pioneer of civilian education in the history of China. In his “lyceum” he accepted every student who devoted himself to learning. He is indeed the first educator in China. His idea of “teaching without discrimination” becomes the guiding rationale for free China’s “mandatory education” policy.

Since 1968 the Republic of China has extended the length of mandatory education to nine years so that every pupil may at the minimum receive education up to the junior high level. As a result, the index of the citizens’ intellectual level has raised tremendously. Colleges and universities graduate programs leading to master’s and doctoral degrees are offered to dedicated students, with equal opportunities for everyone. This is in accord with Confucius’ idea of “teaching without discrimination.”

All in all, the various achievements in the modernization of free China can be attributed to Confucian philosophy, whose essence is humanitarianism and underlines the marrow of Chinese culture. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the late President Chiang Kai-shek and President Chiang Ching-kuo now all esteem and promote our cultural heritage and elegant tradition. Anything contradicting our national inheritance—for instance, the provocation of hate, the annihilation of ethics, the impoverishment of the people and keeping the people in ignorance—is in violation of not only Confucian philosophy and Chinese cultural heritage but man’s civilization and current trends of the world. The modernization achieved by Free China is certainly a realization of our heritage, and above all, our leaders have adhered to this tradition, which has borne rich fruit.

Thank you for your attention.

The Influence of Confucianism on Oriental Society

Honorable Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to have the chance to pay a visit to your country and to meet you here. Now I would like to address the topic “The Influence of Confucianism on Oriental Society.” Any comments from you are very welcome.

Confucianism is the root of Chinese culture. For two thousand years, the ideas and behavior of the Chinese have been under the sway of Confucianism. As is known, Confucianism has been the mainstream of Oriental culture; Oriental societies, especially those of Japan, Korea, Okinawa and Vietnam, territories near China, have been largely influenced by Confucianism in both political measures and living style. The courses of Mandarin Chinese, Confucius’ philosophy and Confucianism are popularly offered in the universities of the above-mentioned territories; in these territories, people build Confucian temples, observe the Confucian memorial ceremony, and circulate widely the portraits of Confucius. All these facts bear witness to the influence of Confucianism. That Confucianism breaks down the barriers of time and space accounts for the fact that Confucianism not only characterizes Chinese culture but also symbolizes Oriental civilization. The Japanese scholar *Kozima Akiyoshilo*, inspired by the great influence of Confucianism, once said:

“Confucius is the greatest among the great men and the most sagacious among the sages. Born in the Orient, he is the common honor of the Orientals. If, instead of singing his praises, harm is done to his fame as a sage, not only the honor of China, but also that of the Orientals will be undermined.”

Now, for a further understanding, I will try to survey the influence of Confucianism in the following territories:

I. Japan

The *Analects*, which is the main literary recording of Confucius' teachings and also the main key to the understanding of Confucianism, had a circulation among the Japanese at the end of the 3rd century (285 A.D.). Up to the middle of the 6th century, Confucianism gradually became popular in the upper classes and courts of Japan. At the beginning of the 7th century, based on Confucianism, a constitution containing 17 articles was enacted in Japan and the Japanese historians consider this constitution the essential law of Japan in its ancient era. In other words, Confucianism is in fact the foundation on which the spirit of Japan rests. From the 7th century right through to the end of the 9th century, 13 groups of officers were sent from Japan to China to learn from Chinese culture in an efficient way. One of the groups contained as large a number as five hundred. In the middle of the 7th century, the famous movement of "Taika Reform" (大化革新) was inaugurated in Japan, and the overall imitation of the institutions of the T'ang Dynasty was obvious in this movement. It was from then on that there appeared in Japan the evidence of a unified nation. Beginning from the 8th century, the Japanese initiated the Confucian memorial ceremony, completely adopting the Chinese style. Thus, the classics of Confucianism became the sole textbooks of the Japanese, and Confucianism served as the golden criterion of everything ranging from national politics and education to the cultivation of personal virtues. Confucianism was then deeply rooted in Japan. After the 13th and 14th centuries, the Japanese began to show their respect to the Chinese Confucian scholars Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming; in the 17th century, the Japanese began to do honor to the Chinese scholar Chu Shun-shui. All these facts show respect for Confucianism on the part of the Japanese. Furthermore, sojourning in Japan for 23 years, Chu Shun-shui was honored as the national master whose instructions were carefully followed by the Japanese. As a result, elites presented themselves one after the other, creating a new epoch for the Japanese. In this sense, Chu Shun-shui can be styled as the father of modern Japan.

Different from the conversion to a religion, the practice of Confucianism is seen in daily life. Hence a natural effect resulted from the contact with Confucianism. Owing to the long influence of Confucianism in Japan, it has become an inseparable part of Japanese culture, being its "flesh and blood." This is the reason why the Japanese scholar Kinomiya Yashuhiko (木宮泰彦) said, "China is the mother of Japanese culture," and another Japanese scholar Ogata Taketora (緒方

竹虎) said, "Confucianism is the rudder of Japanese history. Follow it and you will prosper; defy it and you will perish." From this we can see what an immense influence Confucianism has exerted on the Japanese.

II. Korea

Geographically close to China, Korea is deeply immersed in Confucianism. The sole source of Korean culture was China, and Korea also served as the bridge to introduce Chinese culture to Japan. From the very beginning, Korea had imported Chinese classics, adopted Chinese characters and imitated Chinese institutions. Of the Oriental countries, Korea is supposed to be the most deeply influenced by Chinese culture.

The contact between Korea and China began early in the year 1000 B.C. when King Wu of the Chou Dynasty ruled China. In the year 108 B.C. Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty conquered Northern Korea and made it a part of China for four hundred years. At the end of the 4th century, schools were established in Korea. This marked a new epoch in the development of Confucianism in Korea. At the beginning of the 6th century, Yüan Kuang (圓光), a Buddhist monk intensely educated in Confucianism, returned to Korea from China. With Confucianism in mind, he initiated "The Spirit of Flower Youths" (花郎魂) which characterized the spirit of Korea. At the beginning of the 8th century, Korean students studying in China returned to Korea with portraits of Confucius and his disciples. This marked the beginning of the Confucian memorial ceremony. From the beginning of the 10th century to the end of 14th century, Korea witnessed a period in which learning from China and imitating China were put into practice more vigorously. The civil service examination system of old China was instituted, the Chinese system of official uniforms was adopted, and schools were set up everywhere. Not only were Chinese cultural objects and social institutions imitated, but also Confucianism was treated as the norm of the citizens in daily life. From the end of the 14th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Confucian temples and schools of Chinese style were built throughout Korea, and the citizens were educated in Confucianism. As a result, great scholars came to the fore one after the other. Two eminent Confucian scholars, Li Hung (李滉) and Li Erh (李珣), distinguished themselves in the 16th century; they are scholars who studied and exalted Chu Hsi's philosophy which is now held in high esteem in Korea.

The influence of Confucianism on Korean society can be seen from the high esteem paid to the Confucian memorial ceremony in Korea. The ceremony is held twice every year in spring and autumn, sponsored by Sung Kyun Kwan University (成均館大學), the oldest university in Korea, and with the National Korean Music Yuan (韓國國樂院) responsible for the music.

In short, owing to the geographical closeness to China, the early communication between Korea and China, and the frequency of contact between the two nations, the rulers of Korea in all periods set much value on Confucianism. The influence of Confucianism on Korean society is really far-reaching.

III. Okinawa

Okinawa lies in the eastern sea of China and is closely related to China. At the end of the 14th century (1372) when the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty Chu reigned in China, Okinawa became officially a part of China and remained so for five hundred years. Citizens with 36 surnames emigrated to Okinawa from China and their descendants are now living in Naha (那霸).

At the end of the 17th century (1672), a Confucian temple of Chinese style was erected in Okinawa. The Confucian memorial ceremony was held twice every year, presided over by the King of Okinawa himself. People of Okinawa hold Confucius in deep respect. The above-mentioned Confucian temple was destroyed by the American bombers on 10th October, 1944, but thirty years later, in 1974, it was rebuilt, costing four million U.S. dollars. On 25th January, 1975, I was invited to preside over its inauguration.

IV. Vietnam

The relations between China and Vietnam began early in the Ch'in Dynasty of China. In the Han Dynasty, Vietnam was a state of China, and was completely under the sway of Confucianism. At the end of the 12th century, Vietnam became an independent country, but still presented tributes to China. At the beginning of the 15th century, Vietnam again became a province of China. The close relation between Vietnam and China, seen from these facts, throws light on the general influence of Confucianism on Vietnam. Even during the last dynasty (1802-1883) of Vietnam, for example, Confucianism was held in high

esteem; Confucius was honored as "the greatest sage and teacher," and the Confucian memorial ceremony was preserved. In 1955, after Vietnam gained its independence, Confucianism was revived, and the birthday of Confucius was made a national holiday. All these facts show that Confucius is highly respected by the Vietnamese.

Besides, in Singapore, a place densely populated with Chinese, the influence of traditional Chinese culture naturally plays an important role. Recently, Premier Li of Singapore spared no effort in promoting Confucianism, maintaining the view that only when the citizens are educated in Confucianism can they enjoy a stable society and a prosperous country. This is evidence that Confucianism has the merit of being practical.

In a nutshell, the influence of Confucianism on the Oriental nations is immeasurable. In today's world, the Oriental people with their frugality and honesty have created some economic miracles and won praise from people all over the world. This is the effect of putting Confucianism into practice.

Thank you.