

The Socio-cultural Modernization of East Asia

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Cultural and Linguistic Modernization of East Asia

China (中国) Japan (日本) Korea (韩国)

- China: *Zhongguo* (中国) and *Zhonghua* (中华), *Han* (漢/汉) and *Tang* (唐) / Sino
- Japan: Nihon, Nippon, Yamato (大和) / Jipangu
- Korea: Hanguk, Joseon (朝鲜) / Goryeo (高丽)

Geography of East Asia



China

- Land: 3.705 million square miles (9.5 million square km) < US (3.797m m²)
- From Shanghai to Kashgar: 2,600 miles (4184km)
- Russian border to Hainan: 2,500 miles (4023km)
- China encompasses the Historical Boundary of kingdoms and empires
- Modern China: Northeast, North, Upper Yangzi, Middle Yangzi, Lower Yangzi, Southeast Coast, Lingnan, Yun Gui
- Provinces (省) are the highest-level administrative divisions. There are 34 such divisions, classified as 23 provinces, 4 municipalities, 5 autonomous regions (Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet and Xinjiang) and 2 Special Administrative Regions (HK and Macao).

Chinese Geography

- Physiographic Macro regions – Nine regions centred on river valleys and hills or mountains; each has regional core and peripheries (Skinner 2007)
- Geographical and Cultural Division: North and South
- With the exception of the northeast (Dongbei 东北), the macro-regions lie in three tiers; the Yellow River (Huanghe 黄河) Valley, the Yangzi River (Changjiang 长江) Valley in the centre, and the West River (Xijiang 西江) system
- All of these river follow the continent's downward tilt from Tibet to the sea

Korea: Geography

Korean Peninsula



Korean Geography

- The Korean Peninsula; dense and mountainous; Mt. Baekdu (Changbai 长白) in the north and 120 miles from Japan
- The size of Utah, 84,565 square miles. The DMZ division allocated more territory to the North (47,541 square miles) than to the South (38,024 square miles); 3,500 islands; only 15% arable land
- Mineral resources are concentrated in the north
- Goryeo kingdom (917-1392) was succeeded by Joseon dynasty.
- Topography delineates regional identities: mountainous division and **relatively immobile population** correspond to food cultures and local religious customs

Korean Geography

- Hamgyong: relatively isolated northeast; strong dialect
- Pyungan: close to the main routes to China; the local population is more cosmopolitan and commercial
- Gyeonggi: Seoul and standard language; Joseon dynasty elites and sources of wealth
- Jeolla: Rice production, high rates of tenancy
- Gyeongsang: human and economic resources
- Respect for land and farming, thus maritime transportation and trade relatively not developed (Confucian influence)

Japanese Geography



Japan: Geography

- Mountainous, short and fast rivers flowing down from central volcanic mountains
- Made up of four main islands; 150,000 square miles (388,500 square km) the size of Montana; less than 13% of total land is lowland; two thirds of total land is mountains
- The four main islands of Kyushu, Honshu, Shikoku and Hokkaido; Hokkaido (ex **Ezo**) joined in the late nineteenth century;

Japan: Geography

- The **Kansai Region**: home to ancient and medieval cities in the vicinity of current **Osaka and Kyoto**, and was the cradle of Japanese civilization; known as Yamato, supported the development of culture, religious belief and wealth
- The **Kanto Region**: current **Tokyo** area of east central Japan; the Tokugawa rulers developed Edo out of a small fishing village; after 1868, **Edo was named Tokyo**
- The population grew to 30 million by the early 1800s. In the early modern period, new agricultural techniques overcame the limits of geography

East Asian Culture

- In the seventeenth century, East Asia was at least as safe and comfortable as in Europe; technology advanced
- Often **Chinese inventions** transformed Europe: the gunpowder, the printing technology, the compass; ceramics and silks
- **Chinese, Korean and Japanese are mutually incomprehensible**; but share the written Chinese letters
- Korean and Japanese belong to the same language group

East Asia: Culture

- Written language: Chinese – **pictographs, ideographs** (山, 好)
- Japanese written language: during **the Heian period** (794-1185), the hybrid system of retaining Chinese characters (*Kanji*) for nouns, the stems of verbs, and adjectives with Japanese *kana* (美しい、食べる)
- Korean written language **Hangul was created in 1443**, and is now the official script of both South Korea and North Korea. In South Korea, Hangul (한글) is occasionally augmented by Chinese characters called *Hanja* (한자): Members of elites, who prided themselves on their command of Chinese language and literature and writing poetry in Chinese (cf. **vernacular**)

East Asia: Culture

- **Confucianism**: the texts and ideas promoted by Confucius (孔子 circa 549-449 BC); peace and harmony prevail by following the words of sages – the Way (道)
- **By 1600**, the teachings of Confucius had been evolved to what is known as **Neo-Confucianism** (**Wang Yangming** 王陽明)
- The Analects (论语 논어) was accepted as the authentic words and conversations of Confucius; it formed one of the four books selected by Zhu Xi (1130-1200)

East Asia: Culture

- Confucianism: **Mencius** (孟子 맹자 387-303BC) advocated benevolence, without which the ruler would risk of losing “**the Mandate of Heaven**”
- In the common view, such loss of divine sanction would be preceded by **earthquakes, floods and droughts, which may lead to revolts**
- If these warnings are ignored, then the mandate will be lost
- In Japan and Korea, The **Four Books and Five Classics** were equally revered and taught at private schools (四書五經: 論語 大学 中庸 孟子 / 易經 書經 詩經 礼記 春秋)

East Asia: Culture

- **Confucian Patriarchy**; the norm and applied to inheritance practice
- In Japan: a single heir inherited by far the largest portion of an estate (one of the cause for emigration; **Japanese Nikkei people, diaspora**)
- In China: after providing for dowries for unwed daughters, it was divided equally among all surviving sons
- In Korea: used to practice based on a **primogenital** principle
- These Confucianism-based inheritance practices not only affected the quality of life of those concerned but had a major impact on the size and economic viability of land holdings and on the degree of social mobility; later, **Confucian values and Western systems** were in conflict during the modernisation of Asia

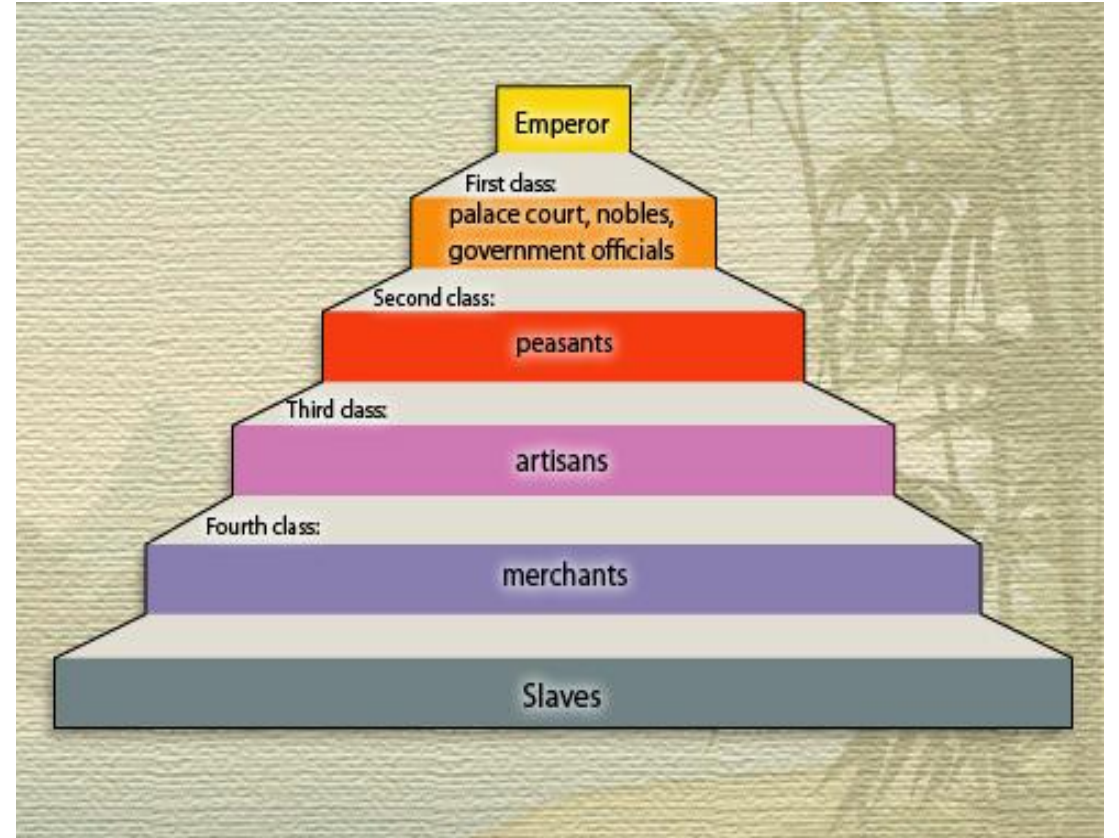
About Confucianism

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUhGRh4vdb8>
- 5:30 (quick version)

Central Themes of Confucian Society

- Family and State: The Importance of **Hierarchy and Paternalism** for **Social Order**
- Government and society in China were traditionally grounded in the **Confucian philosophy**
- Confucianism held that the correct ordering of **relationships within the family** was key to the ordering of society in general
- Emphasis was on **hierarchical relationships and the paternal line**, with the eldest male holding supreme **authority and responsibility** for the family unit.
- The state claimed to be **modeled on the family**, with the **emperor** serving as the **father of subjects** (Individual vs. Collective)

Class Hierarchy in China



Central Themes of China

- **Moral Role of the Government**
- The dominant strain of Confucian thought stressed **self-cultivation, education, and the practice of ritual.**
- One of the government's main functions in the Confucian state is to **educate and transform the people**, by moral example of the emperor and his officials (division between guan and min – officers and subjects)
- The belief that the state is the moral guardian of the people and that **men are perfectible** is reflected in a number of institutions, historically in the merit bureaucracy, or civil service, in which all officials are supposed-to be selected for their **moral qualities** (i.e., Mao Zedong's style of Communist party leadership, the treatment of deviance, and the revolutionary role assigned to the peasantry in China)

Central Themes of Japan

- **Japan**
- **Cultural Borrowing: Japanization of Foreign Ways (和)**
- All societies borrow from others, but the Japanese are distinguished by the degree to which they have engaged in **deliberate and selective borrowing**
- By adaptation, or Japanization, of foreign ways.
- Japanese Language, Culture, Modernization, etc.

Cultural Borrowing: Japanization

Kanji

智志

Hiragana

さとし

Katakana

サトシ

Comparative Analysis of Collectivism

Characteristic Behaviors

-Collectivism (Group Harmony)-

China

- ◆ “We” (group-orientated)
- ◆ Consensus
- ◆ Individualism (selfish)

Japan

- ◆ “We” (group)-orientated)
- ◆ Return of favor is almost subconscious

Korea

- ◆ A group-centered society, “we”
- ◆ Consensus is very important to promoting and maintaining harmony
- ◆ Individualism often viewed as selfishness

Comparative Analysis of Collectivism

- Ching (Küing and Ching 1989) emphasizes that Confucius' central doctrine is always concerned with human relationships, asserting that it is associated with loyalty (*zhong*) to oneself and reciprocity (*shu*), or respect and concern for others; the latter referring more to social behavior, and the former to the person's inner orientation.
- Ching (*ibid.*) emphasizes that benevolence (*jen*) is also translated variously as goodness, benevolence, humanity and human-heartedness. The person with *jen* loves all and everyone.
- With regard to the collective and the individual, the central ideology of inclusion was for the collective purpose and unity of the nation, thus **individual rights were to be sacrificed for the nation** (Son 2017)

Central Themes of Korea

- **Korea**
- Korea's **position as a peninsula** on the eastern edge of Northeast Asia has determined much of its social, political, and cultural history.
- Civilization on the Korean peninsula has developed in **close interaction with neighboring China** and other cultures on the Northeast Asian mainland, and with **Japan**.
- Topography and climate have also been important influences on Korea's historical development. The Korean peninsula is very mountainous, especially in the north. **Less than 20 percent of the land is suitable for cultivation.**

Confucian influence in Korea (禮)



Central Themes of Korea

- Until the fourteenth century Korea also had a powerful **hereditary aristocracy**
- Unlike the warrior class in Japan, the military in Korea lost its elevated social status after the fourteenth century (**Mun vs. Mu 文武, Scholar vs. Soldier**)
- There are few ethnic minorities in Korea (Race discourse on **Consanguinity**)
- The Korean language is part of the Uralic family of languages, along with Japanese and Mongolian
- It is quite different from the Chinese language, which is a member of the Sinitic family of languages (but borrowed Chinese characters)
- The political, linguistic, and ethnic unity of the Korean peninsula over a long period of time has created a strong sense of **national identity and distinctiveness** among the Korean people.

The Western Influence on East Asia

- By the Age of Discovery, Europe had developed enough **geographical knowledge and technology** in shipbuilding
- By the 15th century, Europeans explored the African coast
- In 1492, Christopher Columbus reached the Americas
- Before 1500 European economies were largely **self-sufficient**
- Asia gave rise to a growing trade in **lucrative commodities** (a key development in world capitalist economy)
- Rivalry between reigning **European powers** saw the entry of the Dutch, British and French among others

Historical Events

- **1650s to the 1780s Age of Enlightenment**
- **1760 The Industrial Revolution**
- **1776 the American Revolution**
- **1789 the French Revolution**

External Forces to China's Modernisation

- **1792 British Macartney Mission to China**
- **1839 the First Opium War with Britain**

Commodore Matthew Perry and Japan

- Perry's appearance in Edo bay in July 1853, and his return the following year, followed by another excursion in 1854; the Japanese demonstrated Sumo wrestlers to intimidate the American envoy
- Americans brought some latest technology: a locomotive engine and a circle of track, and the *bakufu* commissioners were sitting on the train as it went around at the speed of 18 miles an hour
- Perry left a harsh message in 1853 demanding the signed letter until he comes back the following year, which caused panic in Edo
- To avoid war and to produce consensus, the *bakufu* requested that daimyo submit their advice on how to deal with the Americans

Commodore Matthew Perry (1794-1858)

From the Western perspective



From the Japanese perspective



Considerations of China's Modernization

- **Convergence of Chinese and Western history** / Change and Reform / Revolution / Nationalistic Racial Consciousness
- 1839-42 **The First Opium War as the point of departure** / China's seclusion / Western Imperialism and Colonialism
- The intrusion of the West as a catalyst of Modern China vs. the dominant ideology of Confucianism
- **The Qing autocracy** – no legal or loyal opposition was allowed / strong censorship imposed / Secret society and nationalistic-racial revolt and revolution
- Burdened by tradition and heritage yet ignorant of the nature of the Western world

Frameworks of China's Modernization

1. The role of **Western powers and cross-cultural contacts** in influencing the shape and trajectory of modern China
2. Necessary to move beyond the impact-response model to expand to an **interactive and autonomous Chinese efforts** to achieve modernisation

Life of Scholars and Civil Servants

- Since the Song Dynasty (960-1279), **civil examination** was implemented to select public officials
- Examinations were based on the **Confucian classics**, and passing it successfully **assures wealth, power and influence**
- Boys began preparing for the exam from about the **age of five**
- **Memorizing** Chinese letters about two hundred a day until they reach 431,286 words of the Seven Classics
- By the age of twenty, a prodigious student would sit for the **prefectural** level, then **provincial** level, if successful, moves onto **national level**.
- For those who failed to complete all three levels, **unofficial gentry class (tension between the mandarins and the literati's)**

Language and China's Modernization

- Socio-political role of language
- Structure and grammar of Western language
- Necessity of inclusive pedagogy and the clearly stipulated Chinese grammar
- Relation to Print media to form public opinion
- Unity of written and spoken Chinese language
- Linguistic barriers in uniting the people politically
- Uniting the Chinese by overcoming geographical distance (Overseas Chinese)
- Modern rationality and political power

Language and China's Modernization

- Daruvala (2000) holds that, since the late Qing dynasty, while the people had been the most important component of the nation, language, and more specifically, **the use of the vernacular**, was the instrument by which the people's commitment to the nation was to be mobilized.
- Fei (1992) argues language is **society's sifter** as it has dual functions in either helping or blocking communications, thus, those feelings and meanings that differ in size and shape cannot pass through the sifter.
- Duara (1995) highlights the openness or vulnerability of language as **susceptible to strategic appropriations** as he emphasizes that language can be mediated by social reality and political forces, but not infinitely manipulable.

Language and China's Modernization

- In the West, language has been regarded as a core cultural element that shapes national identity.
- Saussure once said that language was a collective treasure shared by all members of a community (Bourdieu 1991).
- Bourdieu (1991) maintains that language can neither be analyzed nor understood in isolation from its **cultural context and the social conditions** of its production and reception.
- Habermas (1984) stresses that the ultimate purpose of language is to understand common meaning among the communicators in society.

Analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Discourse

- Sun initially remarked on the structure of Western language: “**The European (written) languages are phonology-based**, and its phonology is closely linked to spoken language; thus when the spoken language changes, these changes can be also reflected in the written language.”
- Sun also discovered the existence of **the system of grammar** in Western language and the difference in the structure of Western pedagogy from that of Chinese.
- He commented, “**European countries all pursue the learning of grammar**, which takes their own language as its research subject, and it is a compulsory subject that every student must take in their education”

Analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Discourse

- Sun's comparative analysis of the structural differences between Chinese language and Western language seems to have made him convinced that the **grammar served as the key to writing correctly.**
- He commented on the grammatical absence in Chinese language: In Chinese, there is no [structured stipulation of] grammar, and that is why those who learn how to write [in Chinese], are **not able to compose even a single word unless they recite articles by their predecessors and mimic their writing style;**
- Thus either they know all about writing, or **they know nothing even after 10 years of struggling with it.** It has nothing to do with [one's] effort."

Analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Discourse

- Sun further analyzed the style of Chinese writings, suggesting the lack of instructing grammatical logic in **Chinese pedagogy**
- “Besides, most scholars treat logic in the same way as Tao Yuanming (a great poet of the Jin dynasty), as **they do not seek a thorough understanding** during reading”
- “ The sense of logic is an innate capability of humankind; thus for scholars who can write articles that enjoy a long-lasting reputation, with eloquence and sophistication, logic is easily achieved; however, **when they are asked how to get to logic, they cannot answer**”

Analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Discourse

- Yet, Sun was aware of the limitations of translation as he advised to avoid too narrow an interpretation. He exclaims: “Of course, these are by no means the most exact translations!”
- Having recognized that a translated word could produce various meanings, Sun emphasized the differences in perspective within the expression
- Sun implied that **understanding language was most needed** when interpreting new concepts when they were derived from different cultures.
- Sun tried to connect the Western concept of logic to an existing Chinese word by **expanding the boundaries of the word's connotations.**

Analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Discourse

- Sun argued that Chinese language maintained its cultural connections to the surrounding Asian nations, serving as a medium of communication across Asia.
- “Beyond the boundaries of our country, [Chinese language] **influence extends over Japan, Korea and Indo-China, which consider themselves akin to the Chinese for their language.**”
- On the other hand, Sun regarded Chinese language as a cultural fortress that preserved Chinese history.
- While Sun considered land and the people as the two essential constituents of a nation, he argued that language was a common socio-cultural constituent that **bridged the people and the nation.**

Analysis of Sun Yat-sen's Discourse

- Sun's criticism was extended to the **underlying causes of the absence of China's unity and modernization.**
- Sun was arguing for the **necessity of more inclusive education from the linguistic perspective** in order to include the illiterate and the undereducated. Sun recognized that grammar would serve as a guideline for them to overcome exclusionary hindrances to gain logic:
- “Because of the **lack of grammar**, beginners cannot find an efficient way to proper writing. This is just like when there is **no bridge leading to the other side of a river**; you have to travel ten times or hundreds of times more distance as you detour in order to cross the river.”

Implications

- **Exclusionary aspects of Chinese language** resulted from the absence of a clearly stipulated grammar and the Chinese scholars' perfunctory pedagogy
- Linguistic unity would bridge the Chinese people to **political unity**
- National unity required **equal access to education**, which would serve as catalyst for modern rationality and political awareness
- Sun urged Chinese scholars to fulfil their responsibility in **educating students so that they gain logic** through learning language properly
- **Linguistic inclusion** corresponded to the collective power of the Chinese people as linguistic logic could provide a most powerful tool in attaining equal rights