Foundations and Futures: East Asian Intellectual, Political and Linguistic Landscapes

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Introduction to the Translated Texts

The present volume has evolved as an effort to translate a collection of articles originally published in Slovenian in 2019 under the title *Procesi in odnosi v Vzhodni Aziji – zbornik EARL* [Processes and Relations in East Asia – the *EARL* Collected Papers]. These articles, initially part of a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the University of Ljubljana, aimed to acquaint the Slovenian public with the intricacies of the field of Asian studies and to create an interdisciplinary volume within our academic space, where such work had been lacking until then. Covering a range of topics from ideational commonalities, cultural heritage, language, and scripts to internal challenges and international relations, the *EARL* (East Asia Resource Library) Collected Papers reflected the collaborative research efforts of two central institutions at the University of Ljubljana: the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The present volume is a translation of a selection of those articles that appeared in the above-mentioned book, namely those that were written by the members of the Department of Asian Studies of the Faculty of Arts. The reasoning behind the translation is simply that despite the subsequent global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting geopolitical landscapes, the relevance of the work endures and the texts thus still merit a translation into English, making them accessible to a broader, international audience. In this way we would like to offer a snapshot of the work being done at the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Ljubljana, and showcase its quality and diversity.

Almost thirty years ago, under the guidance of the Faculty of Arts, the leading humanities institution in Slovenia, a group of scholars, dedicated to Japanese Studies and Sinology, established the Department of Asian Studies. This department later expanded its focus to include Korean Studies, a testament to the dedicated work of linguistic and cultural experts. The complexities of East Asia have become a focal point on the global stage for the past three decades, marked by an intense redistribution of power. As the Asia-Pacific region gains prominence, reshaping the balance of economic and political power, these changes pose challenges related to material and ideological paradigms.

We believe the work being done at the Department is more important now than it has ever been, as the East Asian societies have become architects of progress in the 21st century, with a significant impact on global economic and political dynamics. Understanding these transformations requires comprehensive perspectives that consider individual cultural and social backgrounds, beyond economic and ecological aspects, to include the political and social dimensions of ideologies and culturally conditioned values. These values form the epistemological foundations of enduring institutions in these societies. A deeper global understanding of the East Asian region is therefore of utmost importance.

The translated texts cover three thematic areas: philosophy and intellectual history, politics and economy, and language and writing.

The first section, on philosophy and intellectual history, examines the different aspects of East Asian thought and ideological traditions that form the common ideological heritage of the region. While I – Marko Ogrizek – present its traditional interactions throughout the East Asian region, Téa Sernelj offers a critical analysis and interpretation of the central document of the renewal of traditional values, the so-called “Confucian Manifesto”, which in the middle of the 20th century encapsulated the East Asian revival of Confucianism and its concomitant culture, and Jana S. Rošker provides a contrastive analysis of the Confucian revival in Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China.

The next section, on politics and economy, contains three articles, each describing a particular problem or challenge facing the political region of East Asia and the different countries in the region. Nataša Visočnik’s contribution presents the issue of population ageing and related immigration to Japan. Helena Motoh focuses on contemporary ideological trends in China through an analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative, while Saša Istenič Kotar presents a topic that is – if not directly, at least indirectly – greatly relevant to our engagement with East Asia, as it focuses on the most important security-political strategies of the East Asian regions.

In the final section, on language and writing, Kristina Hmeljak Sangawa, Andrej Bekeš and Mateja Petrovčič focus on the peculiarities of East Asian languages and scripts. While Hmeljak Sangawa's paper deals with the macrostructure of pre-modern Japanese dictionaries through the lens of the relationship between Chinese originals and Japanese modifications, Bekeš's paper focuses on a broader perspective of script transformations in the countries of the Sinographic cosmopolis. The last paper in this series, by Mateja Petrovčič, is devoted to the highly topical issue of the contemporary digitization of Chinese scripts and other complex scripts in Asia in general.

The compilation of these translated texts not only marks a significant milestone in the advancement of Asian studies in Slovenia, but also serves as a bridge connecting Slovenian academia with the broader international scholarly community. This endeavour, stemming from the collaborative efforts of the members of the Department of Asian Studies, exemplifies its commitment to fostering global academic discourse and understanding. The translation of these texts into English is not merely a linguistic exercise, as it represents a commitment to sharing knowledge and insights about East Asia with a wider audience, thereby enriching the global conversation on this dynamically evolving region.

As this volume reaches readers across the world, it stands as a testament to the enduring relevance and growing importance of East Asian studies. The diverse range of topics covered in this collection – from philosophical discourses to economic challenges, and from linguistic intricacies to the digitization of scripts – offers readers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of East Asia. This understanding is crucial in an increasingly interconnected world where the cultural, political, and economic landscapes of East Asia have significant global implications. As such, this volume not only contributes to academic scholarship but also to a deeper, more informed dialogue among cultures and nations, fostering mutual respect and understanding in our global community.

Marko Ogrizek, editor and translator

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PHILOSOPHY AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

Marko OGRIZEK

The Philosophical Foundations of Confucianism as the Common Ideational Heritage of East Asia

Abstract

Confucianism is among the elements that not only connect, but in a way, help define the East-Asian cultural sphere. Nevertheless, when approaching the study of Confucianism as such it soon shows itself to be an extremely rich and diverse, and, consequently, a hard to grasp notion that carries many tensions within itself. Confucianism can be seen in the following ways: as a tradition that for two and a half millennia has connected different philosophical schools; as the starting point of the civil religion and the political doctrine of Confucianism; as a transmitter of a specific, cultural heritage-based system of values – a system that managed to establish itself within the narrower cultural context of China, but also in the wider environment. This article tries to present one of the approaches to the study of Confucianism through the use of comparative philosophy. It tries to present the philosophical foundations of Confucianism and to show an outline of a unified Confucian ethical teaching, and then to contrast certain main elements of the Confucian tradition in China and Japan and thus the tense relationship between the universal and particular, which the tradition develops. Through such a presentation, both the strengths and weaknesses of seeing Confucianism as a unified philosophical tradition can be evaluated.

Keywords: East Asia, comparative philosophy, Confucian ethics, Confucianisms, *Dao*

Povzetek – Filozofski temelji konfucijanstva kot skupne idejne dediščine Vzhodne Azije

Konfucijanstvo spada med elemente, ki ne le povezujejo, temveč tudi pomagajo definirati vzhodnoazijsko kulturno sfero. Vendar pa se ob pristopanju k študiju konfucijanstva kot takega kaj hitro pokaže, da gre za izredno bogat in raznolik, zato pa težko zajemljiv pojem, ki v sebi nosi tudi številne napetosti: konfucijanstvo kot tradicija, ki že dve tisočletji in pol povezuje različne filozofske šole; kot izhodišče civilne religije ter politične doktrine konfucianizma; kot prenašalec specifičnega, na kulturni dediščini temelječega vrednostnega sistema – ki se mu uspe v različnih oblikah uveljaviti tako v ožjem kulturnem okolju Kitajske kot tudi širše. Pričujoči članek skuša predstaviti enega od pristopov k študiju konfucijanstva – in sicer s pomočjo metode primerjalne filozofije. Najprej skuša predstaviti filozofske temelje konfucijanstva ter očrtati podobo enovitega konfucijanskega etičnega nauka, nato pa s kontrastiranjem poglavitnih elementov konfucijanske tradicije na Kitajskem in Japonskem pokazati na odnos med univerzalnim in partikularnim, ki ga razvija tradicija. Tako se v članku pokažejo prednosti in pasti obravnave konfucijanstva kot opisane enotne filozofske tradicije.

Ključne besede: Vzhodna Azija, primerjalna filozofija, konfucijanska etika, konfucijanstva, *dao*

1 Introduction

The Confucian intellectual tradition is one of the elements that not only link but also help define the East-Asian cultural sphere. At the same time, the term itself represents a challenge on multiple levels.

The present article aims to examine the question of whether the discourse that begins with the canonical Confucian works and progresses through a rich commentarial tradition – exploring the notions that help to define within its framework its examinations of a life worth living, and doing so across different geographical, temporal, and disciplinary contexts – can, within the framework of the study of Confucianism (or, rather, Confucianisms), be seen as part of a united, developing, and still living dialogue on Confucian ethics. Or whether, due to the extreme diversity that has been presented by the tradition, spanning a good two and a half millennia, it is perhaps impossible to claim any real sort of philosophical continuity.

The main part of the article seeks to show how, in its original form, Confucian thought managed its discourses on the notions of the ethical, political, and cultural, and how flexible some of its conceptual frameworks could be. It then aims to briefly demonstrate, using the example of Japan – one of the countries that historically adopted Confucianism, and the one among them most geographically distant from China itself – how, despite its culturally specific origins and culturally specific frameworks and demands, in many ways this philosophy still managed to preserve its conceptual core during its heyday in the archipelago, while at the same time embracing the features of its new cultural environment.

Lastly, the article seeks to problematize the notion of Confucianism in the context of comparative philosophy – while at the same time showing why this academic discipline has an indispensable place in the study of the Confucian tradition of ideas. It concludes by arguing that Confucianism, as an open, inclusive and still evolving discourse – precisely due to its complexity and multi-faceted nature – still offers, even in an age of global discourses, a rich source of philosophical insight, which is simultaneously deeply embedded in the historical reality of specific East-Asian communities, yet able to time and again open up the never-ending dialogues on both the universality and particularities of the shared human experience.

2 Overview of tradition

Confucianism was a term first used by Western missionaries. It is therefore a concept that originates outside the tradition itself. It is, however, not without a definite counterpart in the East Asian world.

In the West the tradition was named after Confucius – the oldest of the great Chinese thinkers – using a somewhat awkward Latinized form of the name and honorary title of Master Kong from the State of Lu (Kong Fuzi 孔夫子, 551–479 BCE). In the Chinese language, we distinguish the teaching from the social and political systems connected to it by using different terms with different semantic connotations, such as *ruxue* 儒学, *rujia* 儒家, *rujiao* 儒教, or even *kongjiao* 孔教. In English, however, the term "Confucianism" is used to refer to both the original philosophical discourse developed by Confucius and his successors and the normative ethical system that arose within the framework of the first Confucian reform during the Han 漢 dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE). The latter represented the foundation of the state ideologies and political systems of various East-Asian countries for many centuries to come.

There is no doubt that Confucius was a real historical figure, but one that in the texts relating his thought also plays the special role of the wise man, who in time was raised to the status of a sage. To understand Confucianism and why Confucius' name is so revered, we need to first take a closer look at how the tradition was established, maintained and developed in the first place.

For a long time the canonical Confucian texts encompassed the Five Chinese Classics: *Shu jing* 書經 (*Book of Documents*), *Shi jing* 詩經 (*Classic of Poet-*

ry), *Yi jing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*], *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) in *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*). According to tradition, these works were edited by Confucius himself. It is clear from the titles of these works that the Five Classics contain a wide range of subject matter, ranging from historical descriptions of the works of the sage kings to poetry, from instructions on proper rites to a system for divination. To varying extents, the texts also served as starting points for different schools of thought in Chinese philosophy.

The main emphases in the Classics differ substantially from the main emphases in the Four Books, which make up the later Confucian canon and which include the *Analects.* The *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*) consists of a collection of short discussions between Confucius, his disciples, and others – it is not a systematized philosophical work. Also written in dialogue form is the second of the Four Books, the *Mengzi* 孟子, named after Mencius (Mengzi 孟子372–289 BCE), one of Confucius' most influential successors. However the text that bears Mencius' name developed in a time that was quite different to the one in which Confucius taught and is as a result more systemic and polemic. The final two of the Four Books – the *Daxue* 大學 (*Great Learning*) and *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*Doctrine of the Mean*) – are actually chapters from the *Book of Rites*.

Confucianism in China underwent its first major reform during the Han dynasty. The ruling dynasty adopted doctrinal elements of the Confucian tradition into official ideologies, but suppressed its openness and breadth. In this way it created the aforementioned normative ethical system that we call either institutional or (later) religious Confucianism. In doing so it turned Confucius into an almost religious figure and a symbol of the sage, which, judging by the thoughts that have been passed down to us as his own, he would probably not approve of. For a time the Han dynasty thus also caused the suppression of an open Confucian philosophical discourse, while the Confucian tradition was largely preserved through a centralized education system and the civil service exams.

The thinker with whom Confucianism reached its next peak lived almost a millennium later. This was Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), seen as the last in a long line of teachers, who during the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279) sought to respond to the challenges posed to Confucianism by Daoism and Buddhism by breathing new life into Confucian philosophical discourses. Zhu Xi synthesized the teachings of his predecessors and offered a comprehensive and well-ordered philosophical system. In addition, he reformed the formal Confucian education in China and transformed the Confucian canon.[1] His School of Humanness and Structure (*xinglixue* 性理学)[2] marked the evolution of Confucian thought towards a profound and comprehensive metaphysical system that combined elements of the Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions. Zhu Xi's teachings later spread and had a significant influence on the development of Confucian thought the surrounding countries, including Korea and Japan. It became the basis of new institutional forms of Confucianism and a constant intellectual challenge to Confucian thinkers of later eras.[3]

Finally, in all the countries where it had gained influence Confucianism had to face the challenges of modernization. In China (and further afield in Taiwan), a new form of Confucian discourse, *xin rujia* 新儒家, translated into English as Modern Confucianism, was thus born in response to the historical May 4th movement, while the general awareness of the Confucian tradition in Korea and Japan slowly faded away with the upheavals of the 20th century.

3 Confucianism as philosophy

In both its philosophical and institutional forms Confucianism was historically the starting point and basis for many practices, and is therefore more complex concept than it may at first appear. Kiri Paramore's book on Japanese Confucianism highlights the breadth and complexity of historical examples of Confucian practice:

> The 'practice' of Confucianism […] depended on historical context. It could be a mix of various elements that we today might describe using adjectives including religious, political, literary, artistic, educational, scientific, medical, and many others. So Confucianism is/was a religion in some manifestations, a political science in others, a literary practice or medical tradition in others. Most often it was a constellation of several of those and more. The nature of that constellation differed depending on the particular historic moment and society within which Confucianism manifested. (Paramore 2016)

Paramore describes the various expressions of Confucian practice, offering a starting point for an important question: how is it possible to extract from such diversity something that would represent a common conceptual essence, and is such a project even worthwhile?

1 Zhu Xi was the thinker who redirected the emphasis from the *Five Classics* to the *Four Books*.

2 The Western academic sphere calls this current "Neo-Confucianism".

3 The most famous among these is probably Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1427–1529) with his own School of the Heart-mind (*xinxue* 心学).

Approaching the different forms of Confucianism cannot be simple and requires multidisciplinarity from the outset – which also raises the question of appropriate research methods. If approaches to the Confucian tradition are diverse, it can be said that they often target a diverse set of aspects. At the same time, any categorial dissection can be seen as arbitrary. Such tensions can hardly be resolved once and for all. The philosophical study of Confucianism could also be accused of a lack of sensitivity to the incredible range of different expressions offered by the tradition.

It is here, however, that the difference described above seems to come into play to a greater extent. The philosophical and institutional forms of Confucianism are inextricably linked, but there is also a certain tension between them which manifests itself differently depending on the cultural, historical and social context. The real difference between the aforementioned forms of Confucianism, if not merely historical, is perhaps to be found precisely in their form and purpose: the discursive openness of the one and the doctrinal closedness of the other. In this sense Confucianism is a dynamic and open concept that can be the basis for the relationship between the various historical expressions of the tradition.

As Huang Chun-chieh points out:

> Furthermore, since East Asian Confucianisms exist in the midst of, and not over and above, the cultural exchanges and interactions among the countries of East Asia, it cannot be regarded as a single, fixed, and unchanging intellectual form that originated and was rigidly defined over 2,600 years ago on the Shandong Peninsula in China. Rather, we must appreciate that it has under-gone a continuous and ongoing process of development for over two thousand years across East Asia. Not only have East Asian Confucianisms progressed over time; they have adapted to suit each different locale they have encountered so that the manifestations of Confucian tradition in each locale seamlessly reflect the special features of that place while still instilling the central core values of Confucianism. (Huang 2018, 76, 77)

Huang seems to believe that we cannot speak of Confucianism in singular form – there are several Confucianisms, perhaps as many as there are localities in which the tradition has taken root. At the same time, however, he believes that fundamental Confucian values can survive the process of cultural and temporal re-contextualization.

Thus it seems that such values are still worth studying in all the different contexts, while at the same time it is a reminder that the capacity to take on new qualities in new cultural settings may already be embedded in the Confucian philosophical tradition, and therefore should be taken into account from the outset. In such processes – through the open dialogue of different Confucian communities – Confucian concepts gain complexity and Confucianism, as a discourse that is not bound to gods and metaphysical assumptions, but is essentially concerned with a human life worth living, is not only able to survive, but also, in accounting for historical particularities, be enriched.

4 The philosophical foundations of Confucianism

Of course, the philosophical approach to the study of Confucianism should not be attempted naively, either. The tradition has certain characteristics that have a fundamental influence on its development and are of key importance to its understanding.

In their approach to Confucian ethics, Rosemont and Ames thus first point to linguistic differences: not only do Confucian concepts derive from a different cultural-linguistic background and are part of different "semantic cluster", but also the classical Chinese language behaves differently from the European languages (Ames & Rosemont 2016, 17-21), from which the conceptual systems that dominate global philosophical discourses today derive. To approach Confucian ethics is, first and foremost, to approach the language in which it was born and developed: and one of the efforts of a philosophical approach to Confucian concepts is to try to understand the underlying assumptions on which they are based, to understand their frame of reference.

It is precisely due to the above-mentioned characteristic of Confucian thought, i.e. that it can adapt to the different cultural environments in which it was developed, that Confucian concepts have an incredible breadth. The translations of terms are therefore unavoidably approximations that might differ from the original on such a fundamental level that by translating them we might lose their breadth and depth or we might burden them with semantic connotations that are completely alien to them. Rosemont and Ames argue that Confucian ethics, while containing elements we might initially recognize,[4] cannot be simply viewed as a parallel version of one of the classical branches of ethics developed in Western philosophy.[5] Instead, it is a *sui generis* ethical system with no direct counterpart in the West.

4 Confucianism, for example, possesses its own version of the "golden rule" as well as the concept of "universal virtues", but builds both on basic suppositions that are quite different.

5 Deontological, utilitarian and virtue ethics.

Confucianism is one of the oldest philosophical traditions and one that has been able to open a dialogue on human life in different cultural, historical and disciplinary contexts for two and a half millennia. That this is the case is perhaps due to one of the fundamental works of the Confucian tradition – the *Analects* of Confucius – and, alongside them, to the image of the sage Kong that they present. For in the *Analects*, although the dialogues and sayings presented in the text paint a picture of a complex ethical system, nowhere does Confucius give a systematic philosophical doctrine, but rather exhorts his disciples to make their own ethical endeavours.

Over the centuries and millennia Confucian philosophy mostly developed in the form of extensive commentaries and interpretations of the canonical works, or even as commentaries to commentaries, while it still managed to allow for original insights, defined by time and place. While Confucius stated "I am a transmitter, I create nothing new", from the very beginning his philosophical journey set out on a radical re-interpretative course that this way of thinking is bound to even to this day.

Here it thus seems worth giving an overview of the foundations of the teaching that the tradition has developed – through reading canonical texts and commentating on them. Of course, all the presented Confucian concepts were examined throughout the centuries and many interpretations were added, but for the purposes of the present article it is enough to limit ourselves to the basics, as presented in the *Analects* (and somewhat in the *Mencius*).

The next passage might serve as a good introduction to Confucian concepts, as it presents three key terms of Confucian ethics:

> The Master said, "Wealth and honours are what people desire. If they cannot be obtained without deviating from the proper way [*Dao* 道], then they should not be held. Poverty and meanness are what men dislike. If they cannot be avoided in the proper way, then they should not be avoided. How could an exemplary person [*junzi* 君子], who abandons humaneness [*ren* 仁], fulfil the requirements of that name? The superior person does not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to humaneness. In moments of haste, they cleave to it. In seasons of danger, they cleave to it."[6]

6 子曰：「富與貴是人之所欲也，不以其道得之，不處也；貧與賤是人之所惡也，不以其道得之，不去也。君子去仁，惡乎成名？君子無終食之間違仁，造次必於是，顛沛必於是。」(*Lunyu*, 4.5). In my translations I draw heavily on the one by James Legge (CTP), as well as that by Rosemont and Ames (1998), though I edit both when necessary to preserve my own translation of terms.

At first glance this passage offers a fairly simple contemplation on what people want and what they do not want, but at the same time it also presents in a single place three key concepts of Confucian ethics: the Way (*Dao* 道), exemplary person (*junzi* 君子) and humaneness (*ren* 仁).

Dao 道[7] appears in the *Analects* over 80 times and is the central philosophical notion of Confucianism, but also of other classical Chinese intellectual traditions. The character is constructed of a component, meaning "to walk" or "pass over", and one that shows a "head" (a stylized image of hair and an eye). In the *Book of Documents* the character is used for the first time in the sense of digging canals and "directing" a river, so that it does not overflow its banks. Many semantic connotations that this term later acquired are already present in this image. These are for example: to lead through, way/Way, road, method, art, teaching, explain, say and doctrine.

This concept is also developed in other Chinese philosophical traditions, so we must define the Confucian way in contrast to those others.

> The Master said, "Shen, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity." The disciple Zeng replied, "Yes." The Master went out, and the other disciples asked, saying, "What do his words mean?" Zeng said, "The doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature [*zhong* 忠] and the benevolent exercise of them to others [*shu* 恕], this and nothing more."[8]

The *Dao* is therefore the Way that possesses an all-pervading unity: it is the way shared by people. In this sense the Way is the common experience of the people, the common way of existing together, and at the same time the ordering principle of such existence. Since the common experience of the people is open-ended and complex, the notion of the *Dao* is also open-ended and complex; and the same goes for the notion of virtues (*de* 德) that preserve the *Dao.* In the Confucian philosophy this concept stands at the border between ethics, social and political philosophy – borders that are often blurred.[9]

7 In certain of my explications of Confucian notions, I lean on the lexicon of concepts that Rosemont and Ames offer in the Introduction to their own philosophical translation of the *Analects* (Rosemont & Ames 1998).

8 子曰：「參乎！吾道一以貫之。」曾子曰：「唯。」子出。門人問曰：「何謂也？」曾子曰：「夫子之道，忠恕而已矣。」(*Lunyu*, 4.15).

9 Also blurred are the borders between other categories that have been developed within the framework of European traditions and which ought not to be forced upon Confucianism – i.e. the borders between the natural and social, individual and community, and so on.

In the above passage two more concepts are presented. *Zhong* 忠 is made up of component denoting the "middle" and "heart" (or heart-mind). It is a Confucian value that is often translated as "loyalty" or in the sense of "doing one's utmost for others". Here also we can observe the limits of translating the original Chinese terms. In his article "Zhong in the Analects with Insights into Loyalty", Winnie Sung shows how the meanings of the terms "loyalty" and *zhong* are different (Sung 2018). While loyalty denotes a special relationship but not necessarily also a commitment to ethical principles, *zhong* is always tied to the notion of the Way.

The other notion presented is *shu* 恕, which can be translated as "reciprocity" but is perhaps better described as "being able to step into the shoes of others". As such it is also presented in the following passage, defining the Confucian golden rule:

> Zi Gong asked, saying "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not reciprocity [*shu* 恕] such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."[10]

The *Dao* thus possesses an all-pervading unity, while at the same time it is supported by the concepts meaning "to do one's utmost for others" and "not doing others harm". The Way is therefore not something hidden or hard to understand, but it does demand a clear effort from people. The Confucian *Dao* is not only the Way that is given and simply needs to be followed. The *Dao* is a concept that also helps transmit what came before – it transmits the whole of human experience – and yet is in every moment present and alive.

The *Dao* includes the different aspects of human life, it is the Way and the space, where people meet and coexist. Of course as such it is not only a descriptive term – like many other concepts in Confucianism and Chinese philosophy in general, the *Dao* possesses an ethical dimension and demands a certain commitment. Thus it also possesses its highest meaning: the harmonic co-existence is the highest expression of humanity. Every person is fundamentally embedded within this order – and is also responsible to it.

The following passage also speaks to this:

> The Master said, "A person can enlarge the Way; the Way does not enlarge the person."[11]

10 子貢問曰：「有一言而可以終身行之者乎？」子曰：「其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。」(*Lunyu*, 15.24).

11 子曰：「人能弘道，非道弘人。」(*Lunyu*, 15.29).

A person is inextricably embedded within the transmission, interpretation and shaping of the Way – the Way is not something above and beyond. Confucius also discussed such concepts as Heaven (*tian* 天) and its mandate (*tianming* 天命), which to people represent the unreachable regulator and regulating principle. He also spoke of spirits and ghosts and practiced the prescribed worship, but in his key teachings he kept turning back to the ethical life of the people and kept an agnostic stance towards the otherworldly.[12]

The Way demands that people wisely receive what has been transmitted, to actively co-shape the common experience – through actions and words – to pass this experience on, as they themselves received it, and thus to enrich the lives of their successors. It is in this same light that we should understand the Confucian project at the centre of the Confucian re-interpretative efforts, as one more among the basic projects of Confucian philosophy. This is the principle of the "correct names" (*zhengming* 正名).

On this topic Confucius says:

> "If names are not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language are not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music will not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore a superior person considers it necessary that the names they use may be spoken appropriately and also that what they speak may be carried out appropriately. What the superior person requires is just that in their words there may be nothing incorrect."[13]

The principle of "correct names" undoubtedly greatly influenced the subsequent development of the Confucian philosophical project – since it clearly delineated the need for the Confucian superior person to always think in the direction of the practical: to always dedicate themselves the to a life-directed ethics – and at the same time it also means that the Confucian project is always a political one. The way in which Confucians approach the explication and definition of notions cannot remain an abstract effort, whose sole pur-

12 For his views on ghosts and spirits, see e.g. *Lunyu*, 6.22, 7.21, 11.12.

13 名不正，則言不順；言不順，則事不成；事不成，則禮樂不興；禮樂不興，則刑罰不中；刑罰不中，則民無所措手足。故君子名之必可言也，言之必可行也。君子於其言，無所苟而已矣 (*Lunyu*, 13.3).

pose is to reach the highest truths – the names refer directly to social roles and practices. As such, they essentially – in their very "correctness" – act as a kind of ethical compass and a call to practice that should be in accordance with the Way.

However, precisely due to its nature for Confucius the *Dao*, as that which the people follow, also cannot be the basis of rigid Legalist principles. If anything, Confucius actually rejects the idea of guiding the people with the power of laws.

> The Master said, "If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue [*de* 德], and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of ritual propriety [*li* 禮], they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good."[14]

The discourse on correct names is therefore not a rigid, Legalist discourse, but a vital and living philosophical discussion and a call to virtue. In connection with the *Dao* Confucius talks of the notion of virtues (*de* 德), which in the Confucian tradition is the object of many discussions – both about their number as well as their ontological status. In any case, it is worth mentioning here a remark made by Ames and Rosemont – i.e. that the Confucian virtues (or excellences) cannot be understood as psychologized, as if they are conditioned by reason or as belonging to the individual. They have to be understood relationally (Ames & Rosemont 2016, 112).

In this sense, the concept of authority is in Confucianism also linked to the relations that are cultivated by virtuous rulers, not the absolute position of a ruler.

> The Master said, "He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it."[15]

The Way connects the people, and though it differentiates between the positions that the people occupy in the given moment, in all their roles and in every moment it demands from people a virtuous and active (co)operation. The Confucian principle of the King's way (*wangdao* 王道) also functions on the basis of this same demand. The ruler is someone, who must rule through virtue, not through tyrannical laws. Mencius even says that the people, when

14 子曰：「道之以政，齊之以刑，民免而無恥；道之以德，齊之以禮，有恥且格。」(*Lunyu*, 2.3).

15 子曰：「為政以德，譬如北辰，居其所而眾星共之。」(*Lunyu*, 2.1).

they are led by bad rulers, can depose said rulers.[16] In its political ideas the Confucian tradition thus stringently opposes the rulers' autocratic character that as a historical reality sadly again and again took hold under the influence of the more institutionalized Confucian ideology.

The exemplary person is a notion that originally meant a prince or the son of a noble family. However, in the Confucian context this nobility becomes metaphorical and came to denote a person who achieved a certain level of self-cultivation. In line with the presentation of virtue set out above, the exemplary person is not someone who merely bathes in virtue, but rather someone who builds nobility on the basis of the relational excellences discussed earlier: a person who actively actualizes themselves through perfected relationships that they nurture as a member of the wider community.

With regard to the exemplary person the *Analects* also say the following:

> The Master said, "The mind of the exemplary person is conversant with appropriateness [*yi* 義]; the mind of the mean person is conversant with gain [*li* 利]."[17]

The exemplary person therefore takes what is appropriate (or "appropriateness") for their guiding principle and does not try to achieve personal gain at the expense of others. Furthermore, these concepts – both "appropriateness" and "personal gain" – are again a pair that deeply marks East Asian ethical traditions.[18]

Appropriateness (often translated as rightness) is a notion that once more demonstrates the nature of the Confucian ethical trends. The character – *yi* 義 – is made up of representations of a "sheep" and a "weapon" – and in this sense its meaning is probably derived from the proper way of conducting a sacrificial offering. This points to, among other things, the fact that Confucian ethics is not an ethics that is derived from abstract ideals of good and evil in relation to any sort of absolute – it is rather pragmatic and deeply aesthetically minded. With Confucian appropriateness it is therefore more about what is "appropriate" and what is "right" in the given situation – for a person to be able to recognize this "right", they have to always develop their virtuous relations.

16 See e.g. Mengzi 2.15.

17 子曰：「君子喻於義，小人喻於利。」(*Lunyu*, 4.16).

18 Mencius even discusses this at the very beginning of the work that bears his name (see *Mengzi,* 1.1).

> The Master said, "The exemplary person seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of people, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities. The mean person does the opposite of this."[19]

The exemplary person is therefore the opposite of the mean person. It is someone who cultivates humaneness, wisdom and courage (*Lunyu*, 14.28). It is someone who puts effort into being humble, respectful, kind and just (*Lunyu*, 5.16). It is someone who follows virtue – and such a person is also liberated from the numerous anxieties of life. The idea that virtue brings quality into a person's life is present in the different parts of the *Analects.* An exemplary person raises themselves up, but also raises up those around them. The Confucian tradition does not ascribe value to a person simply rising above others – a person has to do what in the given situation is in accordance with virtue, for themselves and others.

Through this, the basic human relations are also posited. Mencius described them in line with the following virtues:

> [B]etween father and son, there should be affection [*qin* 親]; between sovereign and minister, righteousness [*yi* 義]; between husband and wife, difference [*bie* 別]; between old and young, a proper order [*xu* 序]; and between friends, fidelity [*xin* 信].[20]

What is "appropriate" or "right" is always actualized within interpersonal relations and social roles. Rosemont and Ames thus claim that the Confucian ethical system can be understood as a sort of "role ethics".[21]

Appropriateness and the exemplary person are further connected by two important notions that represent the basis of learning and cultivation:

> The Master said, "The exemplary person, learns broadly [*xue* 學] of culture [*wen* 文], and keeping themselves under the restraint of the rules of ritual propriety [*li* 禮], may thus likewise not overstep what is right."[22]

Learning (or education) is something pleasant and a goal in itself – it is not meant to be something a person celebrates themselves for (*Lunyu* 1.1) – and it also brings a person to virtue. In this sense, when it comes to learning Confucius does not recognize any differences when it comes to social class (*Lunyu* 15.39). The concept of the cultural, which is also contained in the no-

19 子曰：「君子成人之美，不成人之惡。小人反是。」(*Lunyu*, 12.16).

20 父子有親，君臣有義，夫婦有別，長幼有序，朋友有信. (*Mengzi,* 5.4).

21 For the different aspects of the argument that supports this thesis, see e.g. Rosemont & Ames (2016).

22 子曰：「君子博學於文，約之以禮，亦可以弗畔矣夫！」(*Lunyu*, 6.27).

tions of rites and music, is again one of the foundations of ethical education – a person cannot step out of these contexts, since they mark every aspect of their life.

Confucius' own teachings are in the *Analects* described as follows:

> There were four things which the Master taught: culture [*wen* 文], proper action [*xing* 行], doing to one's utmost [*zhong* 忠], and keeping one's word [*xin* 信].[23]

The Master thought aspects of culture and ethics, but also taught that a person must always do for others to their utmost and to keep their word. The language of Confucius' discussions is again deceptively simple – the Way is not really hidden. But if Confucius in his teachings did not like to give lengthy definitions of the presented concepts, he nevertheless called upon his disciples to put in their own effort and to cultivate a practical understanding and real capabilities.

The main virtue, presented in the *Analects* but nowhere within it actually concretely defined, is the fundamental virtue of humaneness (*ren* 仁). Humaneness is the key notion of virtue in Confucian ethics and its character is made up of the component representing a "person" and the one representing the "number two". Humaneness is a complex and multifaceted concept, which combines the different ideas of the virtue of human affection and love, benevolence and open-heartedness, but also consummate action and even proper rule. Humaneness in a way represents the complex effort of harmonic coexistence – a project that all people take part in.

Nevertheless, the following is written in the *Analects*:

> The Master said, "I have not seen a person who loved humaneness, or one who hated what was not humane. They, who loved humaneness, would esteem nothing above it. They, who hated what is not humane, would practice humaneness in such a way that they would not allow anything that is not humane to approach their person. Is anyone able for one day to apply their strength to humaneness? I have not seen the case in which their strength would be insufficient. Should there possibly be any such case, I have not seen it."[24]

23 子以四教：文，行，忠，信。(*Lunyu*, 7.25).

24 子曰：「我未見好仁者，惡不仁者。好仁者，無以尚之；惡不仁者，其為仁矣，不使不仁者加乎其身。有能一日用其力於仁矣乎？我未見力不足者。蓋有之矣，我未之見也。」(*Lunyu*, 4.6).

Humaneness is thus a notion Confucius advocated to his disciples again and again, but at the same time a virtue that demands inexhaustible effort. It is not an abstract concept of virtue, but a call to the fundamental effort of a person living among people – such an effort is never truly exhausted, but is at the same time the only real way for a person to actualize themselves as a person.

Humaneness is also in the end seen as a practical virtue and is closely tied to other key values of the Confucian tradition. In one passage Master You (not Confucius this time) says:

> The superior person bends their attention to the roots. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety [*xiao* 孝] and fraternal submission [*ti* 悌]! – are they not the roots of all humane actions?[25]

Filial piety is another of the key practical values of the Confucian tradition and is often seen as the basis of humaneness. It plays an important role both in the *Analects*[26] as well as *Mencius*, while it also possesses its own dedicated classic, the *Xiaojing*孝經 (*Classic of Filial Piety*). Rosemont and Ames point to the key role of family in the understanding Confucian ethics. In their translation of the *Classic of Filial Piety* they discuss the meaning that the metaphor of the family brings to Confucian ethics. They believe that it is precisely in this place that Confucian ethics again fundamentally diverges from the ethical systems developed in Europe: while all traditional European ethical systems took as their starting ground the individual, in Confucian ethics the relations that are first and foremost represented by the family, are even more fundamental (Rosemont & Ames 2009, 1–6).

Humaneness is thus the effort of harmonic coexistence that begins with the family and is as such the central effort of the Confucian project. But if this notion is in the *Analects* still used as a general and all-encompassing virtue, then in the *Mencius* humaneness is already much more systematically defined – i.e. as one of the four universal virtues on the basis of which Mencius builds his famous theory of "humanness as good" (*xingshan* 性善).

As written in the *Mencius*:

> Mencius said, "From the feelings proper to it, it is constituted for the practice of what is good. This is what I mean in saying that humanness [*xing* 性] is good. If people do what is not good, the blame cannot be

25 君子務本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其為仁之本與！(*Lunyu*, 1.2).

26 See also *Lunyu,* 1.11, 2.5; *Mengzi,* 8.58 etc.

> imputed to their inborn powers. All people possess in their heart [*xin* 心] the feeling of commiseration; all people possess the feeling of shame and dislike; and that of reverence and respect; and that of approving and disapproving. The feeling of commiseration implies the principle of humaneness; that of shame and dislike, the principle of appropriateness; that of reverence and respect, the principle of ritual propriety; and that of approving and disapproving, the principle of wisdom. Humaneness, appropriateness, ritual propriety, and wisdom are not infused into us from without. We are certainly furnished with them. And a different view is simply owing to want of reflection. Hence it is said, 'Seek and you will find them. Neglect and you will lose them.' People differ from one another in regard to them – some as much again as others, some five times as much, and some to an incalculable amount – it is because they cannot carry out fully their inborn powers."[27]

The Mencian theory of humanness as good received many critiques (e.g. from Xunzi 荀子 (313–238 BCE), yet still exerted an extraordinary influence upon the development of Confucian thought. It represents the systematization of the ideas of Confucian virtues and one of the key ideas of the Confucian tradition. The cited passage furthermore describes the two key concepts that within the Confucian tradition are inextricably linked – "humanness" (*xing* 性) and the "heart" or "heart-mind" (*xin* 心).

The character for humanness (*xing* 性) is made up of a component representing the "heart" and one representing "a growing plant". Mencius claims that in their humanness all people are endowed with the four sprouts (*siduan* 四端) of universal virtues – these are humaneness, appropriateness, ritual propriety and wisdom – all based on the inner situational feeling and awareness of the human heart;[28] humanness is what defines a person as human, and also possesses a certain normative character, and is a notion that again demands effort.

The character for "heart" (*xin* 心) is a pictogram depicting the shape of the veins in the heart and at first represented the organ itself. This notion then went through an important evolution and is now commonly translated with

27 孟子曰：「乃若其情，則可以為善矣，乃所謂善也。若夫為不善，非才之罪也。惻隱之心，人皆有之；羞惡之心，人皆有之；恭敬之心，人皆有之；是非之心，人皆有之。惻隱之心，仁也；羞惡之心，義也；恭敬之心，禮也；是非之心，智也。仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也，弗思耳矣。故曰：『求則得之，舍則失之。』或相倍蓰而無算者，不能盡其才者也。(*Mengzi*, 11.6).

28 As an example, Mencius points to the feeling of discomfort that supposedly all people feel when faced with the image of a child about to fall into a well (*Mengzi,* 3.6).

the much more culturally specific term, i.e. the "heart-mind". Within this concept is contained the intertwined nature of feelings, desires, thought, will and intuition, which are here not differentiated in the same way as in the European philosophical tradition, while at the same time the "heart-mind" is in its basic make-up bound in relation with the universal virtues.

Finally, it seems this is also a good place to discuss the Confucian notion of good (*shan* 善). Ames and Rosemont again note that in the Confucian tradition the notion of "good" was originally never used in an abstract sense. *Shan* is always good in the sense of "good for something" or "good for someone" (Ames & Rosemont 1998). It is a principle that is again and again derived from the practical situations of life and is not bound to anything absolute. When speaking of good within the frame of Confucian thought, it is therefore important to always understand "good" in the above-presented context – in the context of a teaching that is built on the effort towards a life in which people perfect themselves as part of a harmonic community: first within the family, then within the wider society. And finally, this also expresses itself culturally-historically.

5 Questioning the boundaries of the philosophical approach

Once the foundations of the Confucian ethical system as presented in the canonical texts are laid out, we nevertheless have to call attention to certain specific features that such an approach brings with it. The study of canonical texts is philosophically interesting. In this way Confucianism as a commentarial and interpretative tradition represents an open and evolving dialogue about humanity and its life; and yet, as already emphasized, it is also a dialogue which is about 2,600 years old and which proceeded throughout different contexts. That is why we should also show on the level of its philosophical features how terms that might at first glance be the same can lead to different systems of thought. At the same time it is important to also note other factors that have had an influence on the development of Confucianism in different areas.

> Among the virtues that are advocated by Confucianism, viewed from the value orientation of social life, we can say that Chinese Confucianism emphasizes consummate persons/conduct (*ren* 仁), while it is appropriateness (or *yi* 义) that is emphasized in Korean Confucianism and doing one's utmost or showing loyalty (*zhong* 忠) in Japanese Confucianism. Or, taking a closer look, we can say that Chinese Confucianism emphasiz-

> es putting oneself in the other's place (*ren* and *shu* 恕), while it is appropriateness and temperance (*jie* 节) in Korean Confucianism and loyalty (*zhong* 忠) and bravery (*yong* 勇) in Japanese Confucianism. These differences in emphasis in the different countries are not only axiological but also cultural. (Chen 2018, 102–103)

Chen Lai emphasizes the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the study of Confucianism, yet does not deny the privileged status of philosophy, as the one able to approach the Confucian dialogue on ethics in a special way. However, it also seems that with the study of Confucianism intellectual history and comparative philosophy, between which there often exists a certain tension, should not stand in each other's way – they should work hand in hand.

For a more detailed overview of certain particularities of the transmission of the teaching from one cultural environment into another, it is perhaps useful to take a closer look at the example of Japan, which is among the Confucian countries geographically the most removed from China and her traditions. At the same time, the time window of the development of Confucianism is much narrower in Japan than with the above-described history of Chinese Confucianism. Confucianism did not achieve the peak of its growth in Japan until the 17th and 18th centuries, when it blossomed during the Edo 江戸 period (1600–1867).

This era truly begins in the year 1603, when Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616) united Japan and established his Shogunate. This also caused a need for a new civil ideology that could help preserve stability and peace in the newly arisen state. The one ideology that in this period gained a leading position is Confucianism, inspired by the Chinese thinkers of the Song 宋 (960–1867) and Ming 明 (1368–1644) dynasties. This represented a new wave of Confucianism in Japan, brought over from Korea by the returning conquerors and in many ways befitting the new political reality in Japan. Such Confucianism then colours the different aspects of daily life and brings about different movements – while through the process of naturalization it itself also becomes imbued with elements of Japanese society and culture.[29]

This new movement in Japan also had its special features. If in China the teaching was preserved through the aid of a centralized educational system, then the Confucians in Japan were mostly private teachers (de Bary 2005, 69), and their thought also aimed to adapt to the social realities that marked the Edo period Japan. It is therefore not odd that within a soci-

29 For a more detailed description of the process of naturalization of Confucianism in Japan, see Nakai (1980).

ety that glorified loyalty to one's master and courage on the battlefield, this would also be reflected in the Confucian ideas that the Japanese were adapting – in which "loyalty" and "courage" moved to the top of the value hierarchy. It is also not odd that in a strictly hierarchical society with its own autochthonous religion there arose special interests that were specific to Japanese Confucianism:

> More immediately, however, it was expressed in a typical Confucian concern for the study of human history as revealing the constant laws of human behaviour and political morality. As applied to Japan, this study took forms that had no precedent in China's experience. For instance, it focused on the question of legitimate shogunal and imperial rule and on the unbroken succession of the reigning house which later fed into the imperial restoration movement. This, in turn, abetted the rise of a new nativism: the National Learning movement, which contributed to the study of Japanese literature and the revival of Shinto. In time, both these trends fused into an intense nationalism, which consciously rejected Chinese influences while incorporating essential elements from the great residue of Confucian intellectual and moral cultivation. (de Bary 2005, 5)

As a tradition that offers a wide and well-made conceptual apparatus, Confucianism was flexible enough in Japan to become the basis for distinctly Japanese studies. The diversity of its expressions – religious, literary, political-scientific, even medicinal – is, as mentioned already, no less vibrant in Japan: to the degree that it would be difficult to reduce it to its philosophical foundations. Yet at the same time it is also impossible to separate it entirely from its philosophical roots. It is therefore possible to also demonstrate a critical development that Confucianism went through in this new environment in the field of philosophy as well.

Many Japanese Confucians were critical of Zhu Xi's system of thought. Among them were, for example, the influential teachers Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705) and Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728). The first advocated for the ethics of the everyday and the secular, and the abandonment of any practices of self-cultivation that did not accord with the everyday life of the people (many of which, according to him, were planted within Zhu Xi's system by Buddhism), while the other used his stringent analysis of the classical Confucian notions to develop a teaching that can be considered a proper political science.

Between their teachings we can again see the breadth of particular concepts that the tradition possesses even within its unified frame of reference. Jinsai and Sorai both discuss "humaneness". But while Jinsai sees it as affection and love, Sorai sees it as the key virtue that allows rulers to pacify "all under Heaven". Both discuss "appropriateness". But while for Jinsai the latter forms a complementary pair with humaneness as the basis of the "Way of Humanity" (*rendao* 人道), for Sorai it is simply the basis of the prescribed rites. Both discuss the theory of "humanness as good". But while for Jinsai this represents the fundamental potential of people to act in line with their virtues and cultivate the self through everyday ethical practice, for Sorai it is a moot discussion, started by Mencius because he liked to argue. The conclusions reached by Jinsai and Sorai are very different, but they both belong to the Japanese Confucian philosophical tradition.[30]

Japanese thinkers also developed the notions they adapted from the Chinese philosophical traditions and leaned on the works of their predecessors – they were also themselves involved in the tradition that stretched from China, through Korea to Japan. If it is therefore possible to say that while the mere knowledge of canonical texts does not offer a sufficiently deep understanding of the wide Confucian tradition, the project of Confucian ethics and philosophical discourse still seems like a project that cannot be neglected. The proper philosophical approach thus describes both the development of thought in the particular countries as well as Confucian ethics as a connected whole.

Confucianism as such offers a rich ethical teaching that is turned towards the concrete, but also possesses the power to preserve a living dialogue about the universal. Each new story in which this dialogue is played out between the different cultural contexts and within them enriches this dynamic and vital process. The study of the different Confucianisms thus also operates in the context of the study of cultural factors – a context that seems of key importance to Confucianism, even in its philosophical foundations – as well as in the context of the philosophical study of Confucian ethics as such.

Both approaches again go hand in hand.

30 I further discuss the differences between Jinsai and Sorai in my article Ogrizek (2016).

6 Conclusion

If Confucianism in China, Japan, Vietnam and Korea is also bound to the study of the cultural, historical and local contexts, it still seems that the study of Confucian philosophy, especially in the context of today's comparative-philosophical studies, does not lose its power and can, by drawing from the deep well of Confucian tradition, contribute to philosophical discussions in a time when the renewed global ethical discourse seems of key importance. At the same time even the discourse now being held about Confucianism on a global level can again be seen as a new and exciting form of Confucianism.

If the different expressions of Confucianism together make up a tradition that is rich and complex, but also able to open up the dialogue about the values that, on the basis of their understanding of their cultural heritage, were advocated for by Confucius and his successors – those values that for two millennia and a half contributed to the development of intellectual traditions in East Asia – then the study of Confucianism in all forms, including the comparative-philosophical one, is an important project.

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Téa SERNELJ

Confucian Renovation and the Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture

Abstract

The present chapter presents, analyses and critically evaluates the *Manifesto* of the second generation of Modern Confucianism. This document was published in Hong Kong in 1958 and clearly and precisely defines the contents and goals of Modern Confucianism as the new philosophical current that emerged as a response to the socio-political situation in which China found itself in the first half of the 20th century. The main goal of this long essay was to present to the world public, and in particular to Western sinologists, the true value of traditional Chinese thought and culture, in order to reflect and possibly eliminate the orientalist and essentialist prejudices based on misunderstandings, and above all the prevailing false interpretations of the paradigmatic foundations of the Chinese conceptual traditions that have dominated over the last few centuries. The disclosure of these prejudices in the *Manifesto* is based on a more objective evaluation and re-examination of the central ideational concepts of Chinese culture, in particular the Confucian philosophy of ethics, which, according to the authors, could represent a platform for building a new ethics on a global level. The document is still an important source of information of the ideational foundations and goals of the Confucian renovation, which represents the central neo-conservative movement of today's China and Taiwan, and partly also Korea and Vietnam. Therefore, understanding of the *Manifesto* can help us better comprehend the ideas and ideologies of modern East Asian societies.

Keywords: Modern Confucianism, A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture, Modernization, Democracy, *xinxing zhi xue*

Povzetek - Konfucijanska prenova in Manifest za ponovno ovrednotenje kitajske kulture kot svetovne dediščine

Pričujoče poglavje predstavi, analizira in kritično ovrednoti temeljni manifest druge generacije modernega konfucijanstva. Ta dokument, ki je bil objavljen leta 1958 v Hongkongu, jasno in natančno opredeljuje vsebine in cilje modernega konfucijanstva kot nove filozofske struje, ki je vzniknila kot odgovor na družbenopolitično situacijo, v kateri se je znašla Kitajska v prvi polovici 20. stoletja. Osrednji cilj tega dolgega eseja je bil svetovni javnosti, predvsem pa zahodnim sinološkim krogom, predstaviti resnično obličje tradicionalne kitajske miselnosti in kulture, in preko njega odpraviti orientalistične in esencialistične predsodke, ki so temeljili na nerazumevanju, predvsem pa na prevladujočih napačnih interpretacijah paradigmatičnih temeljev kitajske idejne tradicije, ki so prevladale v zadnjih stoletjih. Razkrivanje teh predsodkov v *Manifestu* temelji na bolj objektivnem vrednotenju in vnovičnem preučevanju osrednjih idejnih konceptov kitajske kulture, predvsem konfucijanske filozofije etike, ki bi po mnenju avtorjev lahko predstavljala platformo za izgradnjo nove etike na globalni ravni. Dokument je še danes pomemben vir informacij o idejnih temeljih in ciljih konfucijanske prenove, ki predstavlja osrednjo neokonservativno gibanje sodobne L.R. Kitajske in Tajvana, delno pa tudi Koreje in Vietnama. Zato nam lahko poznavanje njegove vsebine pomaga bolje razumeti tudi ideje in ideologije sodobnih vzhodnoazijskih družb.

Ključne besede: moderno konfucijanstvo, druga generacija, Manifest za ponovno ovrednotenje kitajske kulture kot svetovne dediščine, modernizacija, demokracija, *xinxing zhi xue*

1 The Philosophical Current of Modern Confucianism

The *Xinrujia* or *Xin ruxue* Modern Confucianism[1] began to emerge as a new philosophical current in China at the beginning of the 20th century and was then built up after 1958, when the representatives of the

1 In English (and other Western languages) the term is usually translated literally, as New Confucianism. However, since the Chinese terms *li xue*, *dao xue* ali *xinxing xue,* which denote the Confucian discourses of the Song and Ming dynasties, are in the West usually translated as "Neo-Confucianism", the two currents are often confused in Western sources, since Neo-Confucianism means the same as New Confucianism. For this reason, we prefer to use the descriptive translation "Modern Confucianism" to translate the name of this movement, which is also appropriate because this school of thought was very much concerned with issues of Chinese modernization. In this context, we should also mention the fact that, in addition to *Xin ruxue*, this school of thought is sometimes also referred to by terms such as *Dangdai xin ruxue* (Contemporary New Confucianism) or *Xiandai xin ruxue* (Modern New Confucianism).

second generation of Modern Confucians living and working in Taiwan and Hong Kong published *A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture* [Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan 为中国文化敬告世界人士宣言] (also translated as the *Declaration on Behalf of Chinese Culture Respectfully Announced to the People of the World*, and hereafter referred to as the *Manifesto*). This document clearly and precisely defines the substance and objectives of Modern Confucianism as a new philosophical current that emerged in response to the socio-political situation in which China found itself in the first half of the 20th century.

China's complex situation at the end of the 19th century gave birth to new ideational and cultural trends to aid it in meeting the challenges of modernization, which was taking hold there with the encroachment of Western imperialist forces. Though during this period Confucianism[2] was singled out as the main culprit for China's backwardness, it was precisely in original Confucianism that Modern Confucian philosophers saw the greatest potential for the establishment of a moral and ethical system of a democratic Chinese society – one that would be capable of filling the gap created by the loss of values and the spiritual void resulting from the modernization of contemporary societies built on capitalist foundations. Modern Confucian philosophy is therefore not merely an attempt to establish new ideational trends that would enable China to make the most efficient and successful transition to a globalized modern society, but also a project that carries the potential to establish a new ethics on a global scale. The philosophical system of Modern Confucianism covers the fields of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, ethics, morality, philosophical anthropology and aesthetics.

In the process of modernizing Chinese society and culture, most Modern Confucians engaged with the differences between Western and Chinese philosophy. They were looking for a suitable framework to identify the different characteristics of the two systems of thought as a basis for interpreting the differences between Western and Chinese culture. Once they had become familiar with the central schools of thought in Western philosophy they sought to interpret Chinese philosophy and tradition on the basis of their own understanding of the former. Fundamental to this process was the re-evaluation and reinterpretation of Chinese ideological tradition and culture. Twentieth-century Chinese philosophy thus began with the discovery of Western philosophy and the reflection on its own ideological and cultural tra-

2 Both Confucianism as state doctrine or national ideology (*rujiao* 儒教), as well as Confucianism as philosophical teaching or philosophical theory (*ruxue* 儒學 or *rujia* 儒家) (Rošker 2013, 43).

dition. In doing so it naturally sought ways of reforming Chinese culture in a way that would meet the demands of modernization, while at the same time rationally justifying and reconstructing traditional views on the central concepts of Chinese philosophy, such as Heaven or Nature or the Cosmos (*tian*), the Way (*dao*), humanness (*xing*) and humaneness (*ren*), morality and ethics (*de*), the individual, society. In general, Modern Confucians have followed the premise that questions of the inner reality of the Cosmos, the substance of being, and the Absolute are the issues that determine the meaning of human life (Rošker 2013, 53). As such these questions are essential both for the establishment of a new, modern society, as well as for the preservation of an integrated and non-alienated cultural identity of the Chinese people.

The Modern Confucian school of thought emerged out of an attempt to establish a synthesis of Western and traditional Chinese thought, an attempt defined by the crisis of both discourses (*ibid*., 75). It absorbed certain elements of Western philosophy, while also seeking a starting point for their critical reflection. It thus sought a new interpretation of Chinese philosophy based on methods that integrate modern and Western positions (Cheng 2002, 375). The ideals of Modern Confucians were thus not limited to the pursuit of a revitalization and rehabilitation of their ideational tradition. From this perspective, it was clear that they could only begin the intellectual process of modernizing Confucianism on the basis of its synthesis with ideas imported from Euro-American philosophy, since the latter constituted the cultural background from which modernization actually developed.

The philosophical movement of modern Confucianism can be divided into three generations. Most of the authors of the *Manifesto*, as already mentioned, belonged to the so-called second generation, which was active from the founding of the People's Republic of China, i.e. from 1949 until 1995. Its representatives were Fang Dongmei (1899-1977), Tang Junyi (1909-1978), Xu Fuguan (1903-1982) and Mou Zongsan (1909-1995).

2 Fundamental characteristics and philosophical content

Members of the second generation left their homeland after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Xu Fuguan and Mou Zongsan fled to Taiwan to escape Mao Zedong's regime and its strict control over intellectuals, Tang Junyi withdrew to Hong Kong, and Fang Dongmei retreated to India and later to the United States. On the first day of 1958, however, the conceptual guidelines for the re-valuation of Chinese culture and its traditional concepts, using theoretical methods adopted from Western philosophy, were formally published in the form of the famous *Manifesto*, which is still referred to by Chinese theorists as the *Magna Carta* of Modern Confucian philosophy. The content and significance of this *Manifesto* will be discussed in detail below, but here we should first briefly outline the general features of the second generation's philosophical system and highlight the fundamental problems it dealt with.

Within second-generation Modern Confucianism there further existed two ideational currents, the moral-metaphysical and the practical-cultural. The first current focused on the ontological and cosmological aspects of Chinese philosophy. Methodologically, its representatives started from moral and ethical experiences and then extended these to a metaphysical understanding of reality based on the paradigm of the unity of essence (*ti*) and function (*yong*) (Cheng 2002, 380). The second current, on the other hand, started from the study of values in the Chinese tradition, whose main aim was to show how Chinese culture should be studied and developed in order to realize a more meaningful human existence and to create a culturally richer world.

The basic features that, according to Cheng Chung-Ying (2002, 396-400), are common to all generations of Modern Confucianism (and contemporary Chinese philosophy in general), but which have emerged most clearly in the second generation, are systematically summarized by Cheng in the following points:

The first feature is the dominant role of the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*), from which they draw the onto-cosmological unity of essence and function (*ti* 體 and *yong* 用), of reality and its processes, and the fundamental character of all that exists. This philosophy has continuously been a source for understanding reality from the time of Confucius, Daoism, Neo-Daoism, Chinese Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism and Modern Confucianism, all the way to the present day (*ibid*.). Its main function can be seen in the establishment of the foundations of Chinese ontology and cosmology, from which all other schools of philosophy have drawn. The metaphysical outlook found in the *Book of Changes* has been a major influence on 20th century Chinese philosophy in all its elements, and in particular on the establishment of moral metaphysics as the fundamental feature of Modern Confucianism. Here, questions of ethics and morality are inseparable from the consideration of human character and reality. This inseparability is reflected in the traditional priority given to ethics in Chinese philosophy.

Another characteristic that Cheng points out is the focus of Modern Confucians on the human being. If change is the basis of reality then, in their view, there is no need to concern oneself with a transcendent god. In this context, however, human-centredness does not mean anthropocentrism, but rather a tendency towards holism and the organic interconnectedness of people and nature, which is already reflected in the traditional Chinese concept of the unity of humanity and Nature, or the Cosmos (*tian ren he yi*).

The third feature, according to Cheng, is the application of science and scientific methodology to Chinese philosophy. From the first beginnings of modernization, all modern Chinese philosophers accepted the validity of science and scientific methodology. However, in the holistic paradigm of contemporary Chinese philosophy the importance of human values prevails. This then primarily becomes a question of how to transform scientific knowledge into worldly wisdom.

The fourth feature is a discussion of political philosophy in terms of the fundamental concepts of political power, the common good and equality. Modern Confucianism, in its holistic and organic view of reality, places democracy within a Confucian framework.

The above features are, of course, only a superficial and rough outline of the content of Modern Confucian philosophy. Each individual representative has made his own theoretical contributions to it, which need to be known for a comprehensive understanding of this philosophical current. In what follows, we will present the core of the second generation's *Manifesto*, which, although not an academic text, raises questions in an essayistic manner and offers certain answers to the prevailing problems facing Chinese thought and culture in the middle of the last century.

3 Summary of the main ideas and thematic orientations

The *Manifesto* was published in Chinese and English on January 1, 1958 in the Hong Kong journal *Democratic Tribune* (*Minzhu pinglun*), and shortly afterwards in the Taiwanese journal *National Renaissance* (*Zaisheng*), almost a decade after the second generation of Modern Confucians had emigrated from mainland China. The central aim of this long essay was to present the true face of traditional Chinese thought and culture to the global public (mainly Western, but also contemporary Chinese academia) in order to draw attention to the essentialist prejudices based on the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the fundamental paradigms of Chinese ideational traditions. These prejudices, which over the course of the West's encounter with China have become entrenched in Western sinological circles in particular, are, according to the authors, the product of Eurocentric and orientalist discourses. In the *Manifesto*, the authors therefore also put forward their own critique of the West in order to call for reflection on, and to shed light on, the reasons for its sense of superiority over other cultures, and to draw attention to the need for intercultural dialogue in order to establish a new world ethic that would integrate the ideological traditions of the West and the East.

The *Manifesto* examines the cultural, political and ideational features of traditional and contemporary China and places them into a contrastive and critical dialogue with Western thought. In the *Manifesto*, however, the solution to the above-mentioned prejudices against the Chinese ideational tradition and culture is based on a more objective evaluation and re-examination of its central concepts.

The twelve chapters focus on discussions on the fundamental misunderstandings of Chinese culture in both the past and present, on explaining the key characteristics of Chinese ideational tradition, and its future prospects. This rethinking of their own culture is, among other things, a product of the loneliness and suffering that the authors have experienced as a result of their migration from their homeland. They were convinced that the problems facing Chinese culture in the mid-20th century had a global dimension, since China had made a significant contribution to the development of the world as a whole. In addition, the authors point to the fact that China is home to a quarter of the world's population. The direction and manner in which it would develop was thus not just a matter for China alone, but a problem for the world as a whole.

The central idea of the *Manifesto* was based on two visions: the first aimed at making the Western and Chinese academic audiences recognize the value of traditional Chinese culture, while the second aimed at creating a conceptual platform for the reconstruction of Chinese culture based on Confucian philosophy. In this way, the authors highlighted and defended the fundamental position of Modern Confucianism, namely that Confucianism is not a relic of a bygone feudal social order, as it has been accused of by contemporary Chinese academia, and is essentially compatible with both modern science and democracy. What is more, in their view the Confucian moral concept of humaneness and Confucian ethics in general can cure the overly rationalistically and mechanistically oriented Western world.

Although the *Manifesto*'s fundamental objective of recognizing the meaning and value of Confucianism as a system of ideas capable of forming an ethical basis within the discourse of China's modernization, on which China could offer solutions to spiritual emptiness and alienation as a product of the capitalist economic-political order on a global level, was not achieved at the time, it is in recent times once again becoming a subject of discussion and debate (see Makeham, Cheng, Fan, and Rošker).

The main themes of the *Manifesto*, which are spread over twelve chapters, can be narrowed down into three main strands. The first deals with the prejudiced view that the Chinese ideational tradition lacks a religious or transcendent dimension, attempting to establish or illustrate the said dimension through a detailed outline of Confucian moral metaphysics. The second set of problems concerns the socio-political question, in particular the question of modernization and democracy, and the critique of the communist ideology that has prevailed in mainland China. In this strand, it is argued that China certainly lacks a modern democratic system and the scientific and technological achievements of the West, but that the view that Chinese culture is devoid of democratic foundations and tendencies, as well as being negative towards science and technology, is both problematic and false. The third strand is a critical evaluation of the West or Western culture, which the authors believe is based on a sense of superiority, exclusion of other cultural traditions and an emptiness of values. Through this argument the authors also want to draw the attention of Euro-Americans to the necessity of intercultural dialogue. This, they argue, is necessary in order to establish a new ethic at global level, which is essential for the further development of humanity as a whole, since it cannot be based on exclusion, still less on a value system that originates in the so-called developed capitalist Western world. Below, we will present the three strands of the problem in more detail, but let us begin by looking at the content of the *Manifesto*'s introduction.

3.1 Introduction

The authors point out at the very beginning of the *Manifesto* that the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Chinese culture began with the Jesuits in the 16th century, who were in fact the first to introduce classical Chinese works to the Western world. The greatest inconsistency was in their interpretation of the philosophical structure of the Neo-Confucianism of the

Song (960-1127) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties,[3] which equated the central ideas at the forefront of philosophical debate at the time with Western rationalism, atheistic naturalism and even materialism[4]. The Jesuits, in the authors' view, were responsible for the general misunderstanding of the Chinese thought system because, in their mission to spread the Christian faith, they adapted Chinese classics and central concepts in a way that suited their ideology. In doing so, of course, they nullified not only the actual significance of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties, but also the contributions of Daoism and Buddhism (Chang et al. 2018, 8).

Nevertheless, the authors acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Western sinologists in the field of archaeological excavations and the collection of ancient Chinese sculptures and works of art, as well as the analysis of inscriptions on bones and bronze vessels, which have been linked to the study of Chinese language and writing. On the other hand, however, they point out that the primary purpose of excavating and analysing these sources, which were of course also primary sources for research in the field of Chinese culture and civilization studies, was not directly related to the study of China as a living nation and culture in its present, changing and evolving state, as they themselves would have wished it to be (*ibid*., 12).

They point out that most Western scholars have been mainly concerned only with the study of Chinese antiquity, not with current Chinese realities, which has resulted in a misrepresentation of Chinese culture. The project of reviving Chinese culture must therefore be based on a reinterpretation of the fundamental concepts of Chinese philosophy, since only in this way will a proper understanding of Chinese culture and its reality be possible (*ibid*.).

3.2 Traditional Chinese culture and the problem of its pragmatism and atheism: the transcendent moral subject vs. the transcendence of religion

The authors point out that the misunderstanding of Chinese culture that prevails both in the West and in contemporary China is based on ignorance of

3 Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties is the second Confucian reform and considered to be a qualitative leap forward in the Confucian tradition. The first reform, which happened during the Han (second century BCE – second century CE) dynasty, integrated into the Confucian teachings elements of Legalism and became an autocratic state doctrine. Neo-Confucianism on the other hand integrated Daoist and Buddhist concepts, and through metaphysics developed a rationalist philosophy of ethics.

4 For more on this, see the next subchapter.

its specificity and origins. China is a single cultural system with a single origin and continuity. This unity and continuity relate above all to the Confucian tradition of ideas. In this respect, the Chinese world of ideas is said to be quite different from the Western, i.e. European, world of ideas, which is made up of different cultures and origins; Western science and philosophy have their origins in ancient Greece, the legal system with the Romans, and religion in the Hebrew culture. While the West is supposed to see the division between abstract speculation and ethical practice, between religious piety and socio-political action, as something to be taken for granted, Chinese culture understands all these levels as a continuum (*ibid*., 13). Because of these differences, the West fails to recognize the religious sense of transcendence that is present in the everyday practice of ethics in China (*ibid*.).

Writing in 1958, the authors point out (*ibid*.) that in the previous hundred years Western merchants and missionaries, who forced their way into China with battleships and compelled the country to trade with them, had become a symbol of the West's cultural invasion. For this reason, the leaders of the May Fourth Movement[5] were indifferent to Western religion, but at the same time they also neglected the religious elements in Chinese culture. They were enthusiastic about science and democracy, while in the field of philosophy they believed in pragmatism, utilitarianism, materialism and naturalism. Their interpretation of Chinese culture thus completely excluded the element of religiosity, and they also labelled the traditional principles of morality, as expressed through social rituals and customs, as harmful and decadent. Chinese ethical-moral principles were regarded by them as mere formalities within human and social behaviour, without any spiritual value (*ibid*., 5). And the Communist ideology's attitude towards tradition dealt an even more serious blow to Chinese culture, as it demonstrated a complete lack of insight into the transcendent dimension of human existence that underlies Chinese ethical-moral principles. The authors of the *Manifesto* point out (*ibid*., 7) that while there has never been a religious system in China of the kind found in the West, this does not mean that there was no religious spirit or transcendent dimension, or that there were only ethical and moral principles that de-

5 The May 4th Movement (*Wu si yundong*), represents an ideological and political turning point in modern Chinese history and is often equated by contemporary theorists with the beginning of the Chinese Enlightenment. It began in 1919 with student protests against the unfair decisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty, and soon exploded into a massive pan-Chinese movement of so-called "new intellectuals", who campaigned for democracy, the right to self-determination, freedom of speech, gender equality, the right to free marriage, etc. The so-called New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong*), however, combined both patriotic nationalist elements and elements of harsh criticism or outright denial of Chinese tradition, especially its Confucian state doctrine (Rošker 2013, 16).

termine interpersonal relations and behaviour in a pragmatic way in order to maintain political and social order. The prejudice that religiosity does not exist in China is thus, in their view, untrue, since such religiosity is certainly to be found in the idea of the unity of Heaven and humanity, where moral practice is also imbued with a belief in the *Dao* (*ibid*.). However, based on this misunderstanding Western and Chinese sinologists have largely proceeded on the false assumption that these principles are supposed to regulate only the external forms of human existence, entirely devoid of the transcendent elements that would also affect people's spiritual lives (*ibid*., 20).

Crucial to overcoming this prejudice is the understanding of traditional Chinese humanism, in which there exists the central Chinese concept of the unity of humanity and Heaven i.e. Nature (*tian ren he yi*).

> We can also interpret this concept to mean that people and Nature are not separate entities [*tian ren bu er*] since they are of the same substance [*tian ren tong ti*] and stand in harmony. The word Heaven can express different meanings – it is for example the heaven we see. However, in ancient China Heaven clearly referred to a higher transcendent force. Confucius, Mencius, Laozi and Zhuangzi all ascribed transcendent meaning to the concept of Heaven. (*Ibid*.)

They also point out (*ibid*., 21) that this kind of belief in the divine nature of Heaven or Nature is manifested within the Chinese tradition through a combination of worship of Heaven, Earth, rulers, ancestors and teachers. In ancient China, the associated rituals and worship of Heaven could only be performed by the emperor, who thus integrated politics and religion into one system. This inseparability of political and religious elements, together with the traditional emphasis on the inner, i.e. moral, perfecting of the individual at the expense of the development and cultivation of external, i.e. social and political factors, has led to a system that has often tended towards despotism, which has certainly hampered the development of modern democracy.[6]

6 In this regard, the views of the individual representatives of the second generation were different. Unlike Fang Dongmei and Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan believed that traditional Chinese culture had actually neglected the development of the individual's political consciousness (*wai wang*) because it was too focused on the cultivation of the inner moral self (*neisheng*). This concept is one of the key ideas in the political philosophy of Modern Confucianism. Here, the "inner sage" is a symbol of the transcendent, and the "outer ruler" is a symbol of the empirical subject; however, both of them together refer to the unification of personal morality with a broader social ethic and, at the same time, with a successful life in society (Rosker 2013, 54). Traditional Confucians have taken the external ruler from the Daoist work Zhuangzi, in which it is defined as the one who, together with the inner sage, constitutes the ideal of a person, and is a metaphor for the comprehensive realization of a person as an

The practical side of Chinese humanism is manifested in the theory of reasonable rightness (*yi li zhi xue*), which is about discerning right from wrong, together with the moral reason that shapes or regulates human intentions and behaviour. This process is, of course, not limited to relations between people with the sole purpose of maintaining political and social order. Its real aim is the perfecting of the human moral person, which arises from the observation of rightness in the sense of rational action, and does not look towards personal profits or losses, benefits (*ibid*., 22). This goal was emphasized by the Confucian School, which stressed the importance of moral integrity for the attainment of rightness (moral perfection) on the basis of one's own personal responsibility.

> How to achieve this, if there is no faith in absolute rightness? This faith can be interpreted as an act of placating one's conscience, without having to necessarily give into god's orders. Where conscience finds peace, there exists the rightness (and morality) of the Cosmos. The *Dao*, in which conscience finds consolation, is on the one hand built into the human mind, while on the other it transcends the narrow limitations of a person's concrete life. (*Ibid*.)

In this context, members of the second generation have questioned whether belief in the *Dao* is not exactly the same as religious belief in a supernatural order. The remarkable longevity and vitality of the Chinese tradition, they argued, is conditioned by its constant demand to reconcile social life with the cultivation of transcendent consciousness. This view is contrary to the hypothesis that Chinese culture only developed the principles of external forms of interpersonal relations at the expense of neglecting transcendent aspects, i.e. the prejudice of the purely pragmatic nature of traditional ethics, which is supposed to be devoid of any transcendent elements. Modern Confucians firmly rejected this thesis, stressing that such transcendence is an inherent and important part of the Chinese tradition of ideas. According to the authors of the *Manifesto*, the reason for the fact that Western sinologists mostly do not perceive it at all is that such transcendent feelings are not directed

individual who nurtures their intimate spiritual inner side and at the same time remains active in society. In Confucian discourse, however, this concept became the ideal of moral rule. The first generation of Modern Confucians embraced this ideal, but also stressed the importance of scientific knowledge. The second generation, however, had already noticed that the ideal of moral rule was not realisable in the society of the time, and so they incorporated into it Western science and democracy. The third generation, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the content of modernization should not be sought only in science and democracy, but that it is even more important to find a reasonable adaptation to the developments and achievements of modern capitalism (*ibid*.).

towards any external God, but remain part of the individual's interiority and are realized through cultivation of themselves.

In this they focus on the discussion of the so-called Chinese rationalism of the Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism, also known as the doctrine of the heart-mind and humanness (*xinxin zhi xue*) (*ibid*., 8-11), a discourse that addresses the reasons for the existence of a moral imperative between Heaven (Nature) and humanity, but at the same time a doctrine that they believe has been largely neglected or misunderstood by Western sinologists. The authors are of the opinion that this doctrine constitutes the core of Chinese culture, as it also contains the fundamental concept of the unity of humanity and Heaven. The relationship between the heart-mind[7] and humanness is at the very core of Confucian thought as well as of pre-Qin Daoism. The Jesuits equated the concept of the heart-mind and humanness (*xinxin*g) with the rational soul[8] in Western philosophy, but the authors point out that the doctrine of the heart-mind and humanness, which was passed on from Confucius and Mencius to the Neo-Confucianism of to the Song and Ming dynasties, can also be interpreted as a doctrine of transcendent mind in the sense of morality, with metaphysical implications similar to those established in the West by Immanuel Kant. It forms the basis for moral practices in the daily lives of individuals and communities. In this context, all moral practice derives from the inner, self-directed effort of one's moral mind and moral reason. When one fully develops one's so-called transcendent mind, one can eventually approach Heavenly virtue, Heavenly reason and cosmic consciousness, and thus attain the unity of virtue between man and the cosmos that is the essence of traditional Chinese rationalism. Such an idea of transcendent consciousness is the source of all valuation in Chinese culture, through which one becomes aware of

7 These are the cognitive forms of the subject's interiority, which combine both rational and sensual elements.

8 In the authors' view, by translating humanness in a dichotomy with the supernatural, the Jesuits completely distorted its meaning and also lost its transcendent dimension, which is intrinsically present (*ibid*.) The doctrine of the heart-mind and of humanness directs human activity, which manifests itself outwardly, towards the attainment of inner, i.e., transcendent, dimensions. A person thus carries within them a line of communication in the systematic transmission of social, ethical and ritual activities which, through inner transformation or cultivation and in conjunction with the religious spirit and metaphysical perception, they bind into a unity. Since, in the authors' view, this kind of rationalism is the essence of Chinese culture, they appeal to the need to dispel the prejudice that the essence of Chinese culture is limited to adapting and regulating interpersonal relations at the expense of inner or metaphysical transcendent feelings, such as those provided by religion in the West.

the value of one's own life and the Cosmos and their interconnectedness. This awareness gives one contentment and peace of mind, and thus also enables a state of acceptance of the present. Thus in the Chinese tradition acceptance of the present and reconciliation with its conditions are not necessarily linked to a constant striving for progress and profit, as in the West (*ibid*.).

Very important here is the concept or wisdom of non-attachment (*fangxia zhi zhihui*), (*ibid*. 23), which occupies a very important place in Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and Indian theology. Since Western culture is mostly equipped with an analytical rational cognitive apparatus, and more or less works from the particular to the universal, it lacks the flexibility which would allow it to follow the winding path of the specific and the concrete in its mutability. Unlike the above-mentioned static approach, the wisdom of non-attachment, which the authors of the *Manifesto* call "circular and wondrous" and which can already be found in the *Book of Changes* (*yuan er shen de zhihui*) (*ibid*.) is dynamic.

In the Western philosophy of ethics the question of morality often refers to rules of conduct and the social value of moral rules in relation to religious worship (ibid., 14), and few thinkers have stressed that the practice of morality must transform human behaviour and virtue. The original Confucianism, however, emphasized this very dimension. All Chinese virtues, in the Confucian conception, have their origin in the highest cosmic reason, which is inherently present in the human heart-mind. Therefore, the prejudice that Chinese culture is merely oriented towards the pragmatic regulation of interpersonal relations and social order, in which there is no transcendent dimension, has, in the view of the authors of the *Manifesto*, no real basis and is grossly unfair to the actual content of Confucian theories of the moral subject and of Chinese culture as a whole.

3.3 Views on democracy, communism, modernization and scientific development

Under this heading the authors point out that despite the rich ethico-moral dimension of the Chinese tradition, Chinese culture lacks science and democracy and therefore needs to evolve as an empirical and political subject (*ibid*., 15).

Here they also present their views on China's political position in the 1950s, raising the question of whether the Chinese people actually want democracy, since the Communist regime, i.e. Marxist Leninism, which the authors perceive as anti-democratic (*ibid*., 7), had prevailed, despite the fact that democratic thought and the tendency towards scientific progress had been prevalent in the early period of the Chinese republic. In this context they list a series of reasons why in their opinion the Red Army's dictatorship will not exist for long as the leading principle within the cultural and political institutions of mainland China (*ibid*., 19). In the Communist ideology they see a discourse that is opposed to human beings and as such *a priori* violates the rights of individuals. In their opinion Communism is dogmatic and represents an obstacle to the free evolution of humanity.[9]

They further emphasize that a certain segment of the Chinese population only accepted Communism due to its fight against the aggression of Western capitalism and imperialism. In its dynamic power Communism had managed to meet the Chinese social and political demands of the given moment, but Marxism is only a temporary tool to meet the positive demands and goals of the Chinese people, which are first and foremost anti-imperialistic (*ibid*.).

In the opinion of Modern Confucians the seeds of democracy did exist in the traditional Chinese culture (*ibid*., 16). Daoist and Confucian political thought says that the ruler can never abuse their power and must act in accordance with non-action, i.e. virtuously. Even before the Zhou dynasty (11th – 2nd century BCE) there was the belief that the empire does not belong to a single individual, but to the people as a whole: "The state was not the property of one man alone, but of all the people [*tianxia wei gong*]" (*ibid*., 17). These principles were passed down from Confucius and Mencius and we can see them as laying the foundations for Chinese democracy. The authors believe that in China the formation of a democratic system should proceed from traditional Confucian political philosophy, but the latter must first be developed and perfected. On a political level the people were theoretically able to demand the right to co-determine the rule of the state, while in practice this was not realizable, since there was no legal system that defended the rights of the people and weighed and judged the deeds of the rulers. Besides, the institutionalized Confucianism that prevailed in Chinese history drew its principles from Legalism, which is *a priori* anti-democratic. The contradiction between the moral spirit of Chinese culture and monarchic absolutism can in the authors' opinion be resolved through the establishment of democratic constitutionality.

9 For more on the Modern Confucian criticism of Communism, see Sernelj 2019.

In the opinion of Modern Confucians China was not able to modernize and industrialize because it did not develop a system of democracy, science and technology (*ibid*., 15). Despite this, they do not agree with the prevailing opinion that in the Chinese culture there was no internal trend towards the development of a democratic system. They also do not accept the thesis that Chinese culture was opposed to science and that it radically dismissed technical knowledge. They emphasize that ancient China paid much attention to the development of practical knowledge and skills. The Confucian School did not only stress the need for establishing virtue, but also the use of tools and technology for the betterment of life (*ibid*.), which is why in ancient China astronomy, mathematics and medicine had already blossomed. Moreover, all the way up to the 18^{th} century China was far ahead of the West with regard to handicrafts and techniques to cultivate the land. Despite this, the representatives of the second generation still believe that Chinese culture lacked science of the Western type, since its own science had only focused on everyday use and short-term benefits. For the future development of the Chinese culture a theory of science and a new academic system with continuous study and spread of scientific knowledge must thus be established (*ibid*.).

Dealing with the question of modernization, the second generation of Modern Confucians built upon the supposition that Chinese culture carried inside it the potential for modernization, despite the fact that modernization was, due to a series of external and internal factors, in the concrete case of China, “imported” from the West. That is why the problems that China was facing due to modernization were different to those that the modern Western societies had. While the latter are defined by excessive individualism, rationalism and social alienation, the greatest problem in China is the weak development of technology, law and democratic social structures (ibid., 27). In the opinion of the second generation representatives China should therefore in many ways learn from the West. However, on the other hand the Confucian tradition can also offer the West much precious knowledge that could aid it in alleviating – if not eliminating – many of the serious problems that arise in its societies.

The question of the presence or absence of transcendence in traditional Chinese philosophy and ethics is thus to them extremely important, simply due to the fact that classical Western theories of modernization have always claimed that Chinese culture (like all other “non-Western” cultures) would never be able to modernize by itself, since the internalized concept of transcendence and the creative tension between the human and Divine is one of the central suppositions of modernization, and the Chinese ideational tradition never developed that sort of transcendent tension (Rošker 2013, 189). It was therefore extremely important to the Modern Confucians of the second generation to thoroughly demonstrate that in its ideational tradition Chinese culture also contained key elements that could potentially allow for a kind of modernization that would be based on and built upon its own ideational foundations.

3.4 The criticism of Western culture and a call to change

As pointed out above, a large part of the *Manifesto* is also dedicated to the analysis of Western culture and the question of why from the beginning of the 19th century onwards Western culture was so dominant across the modern world and why the whole world was seeking to adopt Western religion, science, philosophy, literature, law and technology. The authors wonder whether Western culture is truly able to lead human civilization as a whole. They wonder whether the "East", learning from the "West", might not also teach something in return (*ibid*., 20).

The authors certainly acknowledge that through the use of the theory of scientific progress for the reconstruction of the natural world and reformation of the social, political and economic fields, Western culture has achieved extraordinary feats. In its progress of the last one or two hundred years it surpassed all traditional cultures in the world and left them behind. This cultural progress of the West has universal and eternal value, which other nations, if they want to compete with it, must respect, emulate and study. On the other hand, in the process of achieving this progress, Western culture provoked different conflicts and severe problems, such as wars (political and religious), antagonism between workers and employers (i.e. capitalists in the Industrial Revolution), colonialism (as accompanied by the imperialist oppression of different peoples), Communism (which they claim to have sneaked in under the guise of economic equality but in fact brought with it the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union that is the mortal enemy of Western democracy), and the development of nuclear weapons, able to destroy the whole of humanity (*ibid*., 21). In the opinion of the authors, the West has managed to solve most of these problems, but they still believe that the problems themselves come from the shortcomings of Western culture, which today still exist and it is for precisely this reason that there is a need for a re-evaluation of Western culture as such. The authors thus list various different weaknesses of the Western culture.

In their opinion Westerners lack the respect for and compassionate understanding of other cultures. That is why they overlook the latter's authentic demands for their own development. We must not forget here the orientalist approach that Westerners have been using in the study of other cultures. Orientalisms, Euro-centrisms, cultural provincialism, modern colonialism and false universalism are all living mechanisms through which the West "justifies" its own feelings of superiority over others.

Such attitudes are in their opinion the product of Greek culture and its analytical-scientific methods, the Hebrew tradition and modern technological spirit.

> If we understand the background against which the West's feelings of superiority are built, then we must also understand and forgive the Westerners. However, if this culture wishes to exist in the future and together with other cultures ensure global peace, then it also has much to learn from other cultures. (*Ibid*., 22)

This applies first and foremost to Western intellectuals and academics, who ought to perform their tasks of building explanatory models with a greater degree of accountability and openness towards non-European cultures.

Among the most important values of the Confucian tradition, which could certainly benefit Western culture, are satisfaction without a ceaseless desire for profits, compassion, kindness and gentleness. The West must learn that interpersonal relations need to be based on equality, but also humaneness (*ibid*., 24). In other words, the brotherhood that the West emphasizes needs to be transformed into one that values and practices humaneness and compassion.

> God, who is the origin of powerful love, should not be seen merely as the one that surpasses the human spirit and who is the object of human prayer, but also the one with whom humanity is in unity with. (*Ibid*.)

From Confucian culture the West can also learn the importance of respecting tradition, familial ties, international solidarity and ethical values.

The main problem of Western culture and ethics is therefore that it sees society and human history merely as an object for rational and objective inquiry and does not manage to also dedicate its attention to the importance of a meaningful human existence.

4 Analysis and critical appraisal of the Manifesto

As we have seen above, the meaning of the revitalization of Chinese culture that the second generation strived for and whose guidelines are clearly stated in the *Manifesto* is on the one hand directed towards the rehabilitation of

Confucianism, while on the other becomes an appeal for the establishment of world ethics that would include Confucian theories of moral subject.

Despite its undoubtedly great importance for the preservation of Chinese cultural heritage, the Modern Confucian *Manifesto* also includes a few problematic points that we are going to shed light on below.

The essay is based on the supposition that culture is the product of a people's spiritual lives. In the West the authors limit this spirituality to religion, while spirituality in China is supposedly based on the philosophical traditions of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. This view is problematic even just from the fact that Christian theology, especially medieval scholastics, mostly drew from Plato and Aristotle's philosophy. Moreover, European humanism is based on ethical and moral values that are just as universal as the Confucian values are claimed to be here. The authors see the reason for the spiritual emptiness of the Western culture in the ceaseless pursuit for progress as based on religious foundations, especially the emptiness of religious rituals and the inherent separation of humanity from its Creator. This criticism is of course mostly valid, but the authors of the *Manifesto* also fall into an essentialist generalization, since "Western values" certainly cannot be limited to those values that are propagated by the Judeo-Christian religion. This is also connected to the next inconsistency in the text: its authors speak of the West in the sense of a cultural construct, derived from numerous traditions, but they do not take into account the specifics of the individual cultural areas that in most cases influence the different value systems arising within the different cultures. It therefore seems that the critics of the West are here mostly referring to America, since they emphasize pragmatism and utilitarianism, ideational trends that mainly evolved there and not within the European tradition.

However, the criticism of the West found in the *Manifesto* is in most of its arguments otherwise justified and valid. The authors rightly point out its Euro-centric feeling of supremacy and superiority over other cultures, the provincialism of their own culture, which misjudges the ideational systems of other cultures based on its own conceptual frameworks, imperialist and colonialist interests, which can be seen in the oppression and degradation of other peoples. The suggestion that they offer Western academics to reflect on – about the further development of the world – also seems sound and suitable: the West must learn from the East (of course this mostly means China) if it wishes to preserve and develop its own culture. Here they emphasize the feeling of compassion and non-attachment, which in their opinion Western culture is lacking. However, in this segment they are in my opinion being essentialist, since first and foremost there is (again) a lack of criticism towards capitalism as the economic and political system, and the coinciding ideology in which such feelings of course *a priori* do not have much value.

Their criticisms and predictions as to the fate of the Chinese Communist regime are also mostly visionary, but their thesis that the system could not survive either in China or anywhere else in the world due to the fact that it acts against the basic humanist principles, is in my opinion again very generalizing and naïve, since the fall of regimes in all the so-called "real socialism" states was predominantly followed by the rise and aggressive dominance of capitalism, as well as unbridled lust for power and privilege of the inner Communist elites (higher officials and other leaders).

A number of Western and Chinese sinologists criticize the *Manifesto* for numerous other shortcomings. The post-colonial critic Arif Dirlik warns that with the Modern Confucian revival of the Chinese ideational tradition and its values there is also the danger of its links to Chinese nationalism. On the other hand, Heiner Roetz warns of the questionability of the Modern Confucian thesis on the religious dimensions of original Confucianism, which in his view is neither sound or needed, since it is precisely the non-religious reading of the ancient texts – through a suitable interpretation and adaptation – that would allow for a more objective conceptualization of a modernity that is not limited to instrumental rationalization while on the other hand also does not negate the social progress that is the necessary consequence of the Enlightenment (Rošker 2013, 57).

Theoreticians from mainland China also accuse the Modern Confucians of an idealistic view of Confucianism as the ideational foundation upon which it is actually possible to carry out the modernization of Chinese society. If Confucianism as an obsolete ideology of the feudal tradition was not able to carry this out in the past, then in their opinion it is incapable of doing so in the present or future (*ibid*.).

Meanwhile, Modern Daoists in general accuse Modern Confucians of an excessive and rigid formalization that stifles critical dialogue and the development of critical thought. For example, the most well-known Taiwanese Modern Daoist, Chen Guying, reproaches them for being too obsessed with morality and ethics. Here he otherwise agrees with the supposition that the modern, market-directed society needs to be furnished with ethical meaning. However he also emphasizes that this meaning cannot be achieved by excluding other intellectual traditions and ascribing exclusive value and meaning to the Confucian School. Such positions are in his view an expression of intolerance and absolutism. Despite the fact that Modern Confucians in principle advocate for dialogical openness, Chen believes that they themselves are not really capable of it, since they do not follow the traditional Chinese concept of the "free dialogue of a hundred schools" (*baijia zhenming*), which is a true dialogue and the precondition of any real philosophy. Chen thinks that their support for a synthesis of the Chinese ideational tradition and Western science and democracy is therefore hollow (Rošker 2013, 58). Regarding the question of adapting the ideational tradition of the Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism, he further reproaches them for lacking innovation, since in his view they did not manage to really upgrade it.

I myself am of the opinion that in this regard Chen Guying's criticism is not valid, since the synthesis of Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese Buddhism, as well as the analysis and comparison of Chinese and Western ideational concepts that shed light on certain completely new aspects of both ideational systems, was precisely what Modern Confucians built their philosophical system on. Here we should especially mention Mou Zongsan's comparison of the moral self to Kant's moral imperative, as well as Xu Fuguan's comparative analysis of Zhuangzi's onto-aesthetics to Western phenomenology, and his thesis on why in China monotheistic religion did not evolve, which also demonstrates certain inconsistencies in Jaspers' theory of the Axial Age.[10]

5 Conclusion

The central idea of the *Manifesto* was based on two visions: the first strived for Western sinologists and the Chinese academic public to recognize the value of traditional Chinese culture, while the second was directed towards building the ideational platform for the revitalization and reconstruction of the Chinese ideational tradition. In this regard the authors took the position that Confucianism is not a relic of the so-called feudal social order and is compatible with modern science and democracy. Moreover, the Confucian concept of humaneness can in their opinion even cure the overly rationalistically and mechanistically oriented and alienated Western world. That is why one of the goals of the *Manifesto* was to use the critique of Western culture and the West as a political construct to present their guidelines for a more just and balanced development of the world as a whole, one that would be based on intercultural connectedness and cooperation on the global level. The authors note that the West lacks the ethical values on which such a construction of the world would be possible. They therefore suggest that the

10 See Rošker (2013) and Sernelj (2013).

West should adopt the Confucian ethico-moral system, which is based on the sort of integrity of the individual that that allows for their internal development and realization in a spiritual, social, and even political sense. In this regard the *Manifesto* represents the promotion of Confucian ethics. Taking into account the socio-political situation that China was facing at the time of its writing, the document can also be seen as a defence of Confucianism as an integral part of traditional Chinese culture that is of the highest value to China's progress in the direction of democracy, which the Chinese intellectuals had been working towards since the May Fourth Movement. On the other hand the authors of the *Manifesto* tried, through the discussion on the Neo-Confucian teaching of the heart-mind and humanness (*xinxing zhi xue*), to eliminate the misguided view that Confucian philosophy and Chinese culture in general are only oriented towards pragmatic solving of interpersonal relations and establishing a harmonic social order that contains no transcendent dimension. In this regard the essay represents an important contribution to the understanding of Confucian moral philosophy. Since Confucianism represents an important part of the common cultural heritage of East-Asian countries, it can give us a better insight into contemporary cultures in this important region of the world.

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Jana S. ROŠKER

The Significance of Chinese Intellectual History for a Better Understanding of Contemporary Chinese Society: The Ideological Construction of "Harmony" and Its Interpretations in Mainland China and Taiwan

Abstract

Through the lens of the contemporary ideologization of the classical philosophic term harmony (*he* 和), the present article deals with the question of the relation between the Chinese tradition on the one side, and contemporary Chinese society on the other. First, it introduces the contemporary interpretation of the notion of harmony and reveals the reasons for its integration into the current revitalization of Confucianism. Through the analysis of classical Confucian texts, it then shows that the current interpretation is not founded upon the proto-democratic elements of original Confucianism, but rather upon the autocratic and state-generating line of Confucianism that was developed by Xunzi, who represents a bridge between Confucianism and Legalism. Through the analysis and interpretation of the classical notion of harmony it then indicates that the interpretations generated by the crucial representatives of the Taiwanese Modern Confucians are – in contrast to those developed on the mainland – following the much more egalitarian and democratic lines of classical Confucian philosophy that were elaborated by Mencius. In the conclusion, the author reveals the significance of such differentiations in the context of evaluating the political and social systems of contemporary China. This significance is not merely limited to the recognition of autocratic elements within contemporary Chinese ideology, but also manifests itself in new possibilities of revitalization and upgrading of such elements of the Chinese ideational tradition, that can help us to generate a new, specifically Chinese model of democracy.

Keywords: harmony, Confucianism, Confucian state doctrine, Confucian philosophy, intellectual history, ideology

Povzetek - Pomen poznavanja kitajske idejne zgodovine za razumevanje sodobne kitajske družbe: primer idejnega konstrukta »harmonije« in njegove interpretacije na kitajski celini ter na Tajvanu

Članek obravnava vprašanje razmerja med kitajsko tradicijo in sodobno kitajsko družbo na primeru sodobne ideologizacije klasičnega filozofskega termina harmonije (*he* 和). Najprej prikaže sodobno interpretacijo pojma harmonije in izpostavi razloge za njegovo umestitev v sodobno revitalizacijo konfucianizma. Potem skozi analizo klasičnih konfucijanskih besedil prikaže, da gre pri sodobni interpretaciji koncepta harmonije v LR Kitajski za interpretacijo, ki ne sloni na proto-demokratičnih elementih izvornega konfucijanstva, temveč sledi avtokratski in državotvorni liniji konfucianizma, ki se je razvila na osnovi idej Xunzija, kateri v resnici predstavlja most med egalitarnostjo izvornega konfucijanstva in despotskimi izhodišči legalizma. S pomočjo analize interpretacij klasičnega pojma harmonije nato prikaže, da sledijo interpretacije tajvanskega modernega konfucijanstva – v nasprotju z izhodišči konfucijanskega preporoda, kakršen se je razvil na celini – egalitarnejšim in bolj demokratičnim smernicam klasičnega konfucijanstva, ki sledi liniji Mengzijeve filozofije.

V zaključku izpostavi pomen prepoznavanja tovrstnih razlikovanj v kontekstu vrednotenja političnih in družbenih sistemov sodobne Kitajske. Ta se ne kaže zgolj v prepoznavanju avtokratskih elementov znotraj sodobne kitajske ideologije, temveč tudi v tem, da nam nudi tudi možnosti revitalizacije in nadgradnje tistih elementov kitajske tradicije, ki lahko pripomorejo k izdelavi specifično kitajskega modela demokracije.

Ključne besede: harmonija, konfucijanstvo, konfucianizem, idejna zgodovina, ideologija

Introduction

The main purpose of the present article is to shed light on the need to preserve and develop classical studies in the context of contemporary East Asian studies. Even if, in modern, application-oriented programs, detailed historical or even classical philological studies are considered outdated, useless, or even reactionary, in the article I will clearly show that this view is too superficial and one-dimensional. It is precisely these kinds of studies that can offer us a more differentiated and correct insight into contemporary East Asian politics, as they take into account the ideological background that defines this modern politics and its ideological connotations.

In this I will focus on the case of present-day China.[1] In the past twenty years we have been noticing across Europe (and partly also the USA) a tendency towards the elimination of classical sinology from university curriculums. This scientific field, which in addition to the study of contemporary Chinese language and society also includes an examination of the classical Chinese ideational tradition and the study of classical Chinese, is increasingly being replaced by the science of so-called "Chinese studies", the subject of which is limited to the contemporary Chinese language and the specific features of modern Chinese society and culture.

The present article is built upon the supposition that to acquire an in-depth understanding of the circumstances of the present-day People's Republic of China, it is absolutely necessarily to have a good grasp of its ideational tradition and history. I will support this supposition with a multi-layered contrast analysis of the classical and contemporary interpretations of the philosophical concept of harmony (*he* 和), which belongs to the central elements of the modern ideology being propagated in the People's Republic of China (PRC, hereafter) in the context of the revival of Confucianism.

The argumentation that will lead us to the verification of the hypothesis will be established on three different levels:

1. On the level of ideologizing by looking at the concept of harmony in the modern PRC,
2. On the level of interpretations by considering the representatives of Taiwanese Modern Confucianism,
3. On the level of presentation by exploring classical interpretations of the concept of harmony.

1 Similar research could also be carried out in Japan, Korea and any other area of classical Sinitic culture, where Confucian ideational heritage is dominant. However, since I myself am a sinologist, and also due to the space limitations of this journal, I will focus exclusively on the already mentioned two areas of this cultural sphere, i.e. Taiwan and mainland China.

Through this kind of three-part analysis I will demonstrate that there is an essential difference between the Taiwanese and mainland interpretations of the concept of harmony and that the consequences of this difference can be observed in the different conceptualizations of Chinese modernization and the Chinese socio-political system. Based on the results of this analysis it will become clear that knowledge of the Chinese ideational tradition is a necessary prerequisite for a comprehensive understanding of the complex social reality of modern China.

1 Harmony as an ideological construct of the Chinese government

The idea of a "harmonious society" represents one of the central elements of the P.R. China's current ideology. Although the concept of harmony, which serves as the basis of this idea, is often explicitly characterized as derived from Confucian thought, discourses of Modern Confucianism in the PRC only came to the fore again in the last two decades of the last century. Before that, both the character of Confucius and the Confucian tradition as a whole were the subject of numerous government criticisms. Confucius and his teaching were seen as a reactionary and "feudal" ideology, which only protected the interests of the ruling, exploitative classes in China's history. Moreover, Confucius was also (in the unbroken tradition of the May Fourth cultural upheavals and in light of the Marxist theories of modernization) seen as a symbol of that conservative tradition that held back China's modernization and is therefore "to blame" for the country's backwardness.

However, just under two decades later, this criticism turned – for many experts completely unexpectedly – into its opposite. As Helena Motoh points out, one of the first signs of this change appeared in the speech made in 1989 by Gu Mu, one of Chinese modernization's intellectual fathers, at the celebration of the 2,540th anniversary of Confucius' birth (Motoh 2009, 91). In it, he emphasized the importance of a "correct" (or rather, *corrected*) attitude towards traditional national culture and promoted the revival of the positive elements of Confucian thought within the framework of their synthetization with Western ideas. He also argued that the Chinese tradition should within this synthesis be given precedence over the Western one (*ibid*.).

This is, of course, no accident, as the concept of a "harmonious society", whose ideational core was supposedly already present in the original Confucian thought, is among the central elements of the PRC's contemporary ideological apparatus. In 2005, President Hu Jintao publicly announced the introduction of the “harmonious society” policy, which was to symbolically mark modern China’s new developmental guidelines. The tendency to harmonize society was at least in part the result of the first negative consequences of the rapid economic liberalization introduced in the 1980s by Deng Xiaoping. Hu inherited from his predecessors an increasingly stratified society. The crisis of the neoliberal measures could mainly be seen in the growing regional differences, fragile and unreliable system of the country’s social services, mass unemployment and structural poverty, and in the growing ecological problems facing the nation.

Even today, the concept of a harmonious society represents one of the more important principles of the Chinese government, and is often highlighted in the keynote speeches made by President Xi Jinping (see Xiang Bo 2018). It was even used in the new Chinese legal reform, and the connection between harmony and law is also often pointed out in Chinese academic articles that deal with the implications of a planned harmonious society:

> The foundation of a modern harmonious society is the rule of law, which contains laws, common sense, fairness and justice. What a harmonious society advocates is stability and peace, integrity, friendship and love, and coordinated development. What it pursues is the integration of humanity and nature, as well as healthy and sustainable development. Therefore, a harmonious modern society must first be a society ruled by law. (Zhou 2010, 285)[2]

As pointed out by Leila Choukrone and Antoine Garapon, it is precisely in the debates taking place around the issue of this connection that it becomes most obvious that in this context the concept of harmony serves primarily as an instrument for the disciplining of citizens (Choukrone & Garapon 2007, 36). In his comments on these new political guidelines, published in the English edition of the official *People’s Daily* newspaper on September 29, 2007, shortly after President Hu’s announcement of his pursuit of a harmonious society, Xiao Zhuoji, a professor at the Peking University and a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, wrote, among other things: “In addition, we will eliminate the various social ills that represent the poisonous tumor of a harmonious society, and which therefore need to be removed” (Xiao 2007, 4).

2 现代和谐社会的基础是法治，其内涵包括法律、民智、公平、正义。和谐社会所倡导的是人类生活的安定有序、诚信友爱、协调发展，所追求的是人与自然互相融合，健康持续的发展。因此，一个和谐的现代社会必定首先是一个法治社会.

Even in academic articles, we often come across paragraphs that, in the context of a harmonious society, emphasize the importance of discipline and self-restraint and the "correct" attitude towards superiors and the community. As Li Ning points out, such elements can only be achieved on the basis of a "harmonious state of mind":

> The so-called harmonious state of mind means that social members can correctly face social reality, can treat themselves, their fellow human beings and society in the correct way. The state of mind that such people possess is optimistic, active and self-initiative and peaceful. (Li 2010, 9)[3]

Leila Choukrone and Antoine Garapon (2007, 36) pointed out that the idea of harmony serves as ideological support for the sort of model of legislation that is used as a tool of disciplining and moralizing with the goal of maintaining the ruling regime. That is why harmony (as a supposedly essential part of the Confucian teaching) also serves as a symbol of the sort of Confucius who represented and spread "correct" morality, which is supposed to be manifested in the subordination of the individual to "higher" social goals and in unconditional obedience to superiors.

2 Taiwanese theorists and the concept of harmonious alignment

The concept of harmony is not only important in mainland China, but also in Taiwan and other regions of East Asia, which have a common, originally Sinitic tradition of philosophical and institutionalized Confucianism. It is also particularly important in the context of the so-called Modern Confucianism, which represents (as we will see in the next chapter) the third reform of Confucian doctrine and is based on the teachings of the Neo-Confucian philosophy of the Song dynasty.

Let us briefly look at the meaning and interpretation of the concept of harmony in the context of the second generation of Modern Confucianism, whose main representatives are Mou Zongsan, Xu Fuguan, Tang Junyi and Fang Dongmei. Among them all but Tang Junyi, who spent most of his life in Hong Kong, emigrated from mainland China to Taiwan after 1949.

In a theoretical sense, Mou Zongsan is considered the most important representative of this generation. At least on an explicit level, Mou does not deal

3 所谓和谐心态,就是指社会成员能够正确面对社会现实,能够正确对待自己、他人和社会,具有乐观向上、积极进取、豁达平和的心理状态.

much with the question of harmony. Some allusions to harmonious life in society can be found in his work *On Summum Bonum* (*Yuan shan lun* 圓善論), in which he tries to explain the method of harmonizing (or aligning) happiness and goodness. In this work, he briefly addresses the question of the interpretation of the original Confucian term "harmony of balance" (*zhong he* 中和). This, first and foremost, it is not just a matter of the social connotation of harmony, as the new ideologues of the PRC have in mind, but rather of their ideological foundations, which are based on the perfection of the individual (and at the same time absolutely integral) moral self.

Mou himself, as well as most other Modern Confucians in Taiwan, was interested in harmony mainly in the sense of balance or equilibrium, which can refer both to the individual self as well as to the structure of society. Such a concept of harmony, harmoniousness, or harmonization comes from one of the oldest Confucian classics, namely *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong* 中庸), which is a text rich in symbolic meaning and contains numerous instructions for improving and nurturing one's personality. It is also often described as an "immovable axis" (Pound 1969, 21).[4] In his philosophy, Mou started from this kind of concept of harmonious balance, which is dynamic and based on constant balancing between different elements of the whole. This harmony can never be achieved in a way that lasts forever, but instead changes in accordance with the changes in the universe (as well as society and the individual) (Mou 1985, 306).

> The balance that appears in the term harmony of balance outwardly acts as the path of the mean, while on a higher level it connects people's innate qualities with their life. (Xu Fuguan 2005, 127)[5]

The harmony of balance is therefore the intimate basis of the individual, which enables them to live harmoniously with their fellow human beings. In the context of the Modern Confucian view of the world and man, it is precisely the moral self that represents the basis of every individual and at

4 The mean (*zhong*) here mainly means balance without leaning to any one side. The second part of this compound (*yong*) means the common, something that is well-known and familiar and does not change, which does not mean that it is static, but that it is continuous. I myself have decided to translate it in the sense of "a thing's own path". According to one of the first translators of this text into English, James Legge, the purpose or goal of this mean is to maintain a harmonious balance that keeps the mind in a state of constant focus. A person who acts according to these principles should never stray from their path, which means that they would always know how to act in accordance with their individual position within the natural and social world. These principles should apply to every individual and teach them to live in accordance with the natural order (cf.: *Li ji* 2012, *Zhong yong* 2012).

5 中和之中, 外發而為中庸, 上則通與性與命.

the same time the core of social and even cosmic rationality. This, of course, presupposes the complementarity of the relationship between the individual and their (natural and social) environment. In other words: this means that social harmony is necessarily connected with the individual's harmonious inner world.

Because in the Modern-Confucian worldview the Cosmos, or everything that exists, is imbued with the value of good, which means that both the apparent forms of reality, as well as its substantial core, reflected in the idea of "things in themselves" or *noumenon*, are axiological concepts, the harmony of human existence is most closely related to moral assumptions. For Xu Fuguan, these values of the good are closely related to the aesthetics of feeling beauty, which is one of the fundamental functions or effects of harmony. This is precisely why, according to Xu, music was so important within the original Confucianism. A deep experience of musical harmony is at the same time the possibility of projecting this harmony into the realm of social reality:

> Balance (*zhong*) and harmony were the central aesthetic criteria of music in Confucianism. Behind balance and harmony is hidden the meaning of good, and this is what can move the human heart and arouse goodness in it. (Xu 2001, 14)[6]

In the field of concrete social policy, Xu Fuguan advocates one that would enable the fulfilment of "rational harmony" on the basis of reasonable competition. Coexistence, which is not only a matter for the individual, should be conditioned by the independence of every one of them, and the collective rights of the community should be based on individual rights (Ni 2002, 296-297). But Xu believes that when the people reach a certain level of maturity, and when all the material conditions for this are met, the system of rights will become less important or even unnecessary. For him, this is a similar situation to the one found within families: even if in their relationships members of the same family all claim their individual rights, this is quite unnecessary or even pointless. And yet, in a period when this level of maturity has not yet been reached, new Confucianism must provide society with enough space for a less ideal arrangement. That is why the well-known modern Taiwanese philosopher Liu Shu-hsien taught that at any given moment we must negate tradition precisely in order to be able to re-establish its deepest ideals (*ibid*., 298).

In any case, and like most other Taiwanese Modern Confucians, Xu Fuguan openly advocates for the kind of harmony of human communities, which is

6 中與和是孔門對樂所要求的美的標準. 在中與和後面, 便有善的意味, 便足以感動人之善心.

based on the uniqueness and inimitability of each individual. He often justifies this with quotes from Confucius:

> In the chapter Twenty Years of Duke Zhao of Zuo's Commentaries to the Spring-Autumn Annals, Yanzi says, "Harmony is like a brodet." Brodet contains a wide variety of flavors that combine into a delicious whole. Therefore, the meaning of "harmony" lies in the fact that it consists of the most diverse combinations of individual peculiarities. None of these individual peculiarities in it lose their uniqueness, but can be harmoniously combined with each other. (Xu 2005, 127)[7]

According to Xu, in this respect, the Chinese tradition is much more advanced than the "Western" one, as it provides people with ethics, aesthetics and axiology that is not limited to rational constructs (*ibid*., 130).

We find a similar (but even more biased) position regarding the differences between the two "cultures" in the works of Fang Dongmei, whose philosophy is in its very essence focused on the examination of the "typically Chinese" concept of "creative harmony". While he sees Western philosophy as caught in a web of constant contradictions, from which it tries to escape again and again through nihilism (Li 2002, 265), his own tradition of ideas is for him incomparably more sophisticated. The reason for this superiority supposedly lies precisely in its consideration of harmony and harmoniousness:

> In contrast, Chinese philosophy maintains a balance between *qing* and *li*[8]. Through cultivation, Chinese philosophy aims at a grand harmony in life; it is like a symphony, with all notes contributing to its harmonious unity (Fang 1980, 93).

This "harmonious whole" derives from his central concept of "comprehensive harmony" based on the notion of the universe as a balanced and harmonious system. Since he sees this type of paradigm as the basis of Chinese philosophy, for Fang the Chinese ideal of life is necessarily harmonious, and in this there is no room for conflict, nor for selfishness. However, this harmony is not limited to the universe, but also represents a criterion for the formation of behavioural patterns and political ideals (Fang 1980b, 93).

In general, in his idealism, Fang Dongmei did not engage too often with issues of concrete social reality. The concept of harmony at the forefront of his idealistic theory is mainly limited to the harmony of the unity of humanity

7 左轉昭公二十年晏子謂 »和如羹焉«, 羹是由各種不同的味, 調和在一起, 而得到統一之味的. 所一»和« 是各種有個性的東西, 各不失其個性, 卻能彼此得到諧和統一之義.

8 Emotion and reason.

and nature. As we saw earlier, however, the other representatives of the second generation of Modern Confucianism treated the issue of social harmony somewhat more concretely and in more detail.

The philosopher Tang Junyi never lived in Taiwan for a long period of time, but migrated to Hong Kong after the founding of the PRC. Nevertheless, he was an active member of the Modern Confucian intellectual movement and wrote his theories in close collaboration with his Taiwanese colleagues. As such, we will also briefly present his vision of harmony and harmoniousness here.

The sort of morality that Tang recommends to the individual to ensure social harmony does not depend so much on the uniqueness of their individual existence, as advocated by Xu Fuguan, nor on the autonomous freedom of the moral self and its infinite mind, which is the focus of Mou Zongsan's attention. Tang's idea of morality is much more directly based on the individual's sense of innate responsibility, which, similar to the Neo-Confucian concept of "innate knowledge" (*liang zhi* 良知), ought to serve as a signpost that helps guide the individual through the impenetrable jungle of the ethical dilemmas and doubts facing them in their concrete life. As the following quote shows, the individual will be able to contribute to the higher goal of social harmony only on the basis of obeying this inner signpost of responsibility:

> You don't have to ask what you should do, because you yourself know best what needs to be done. Sometimes, however, it can happen that you feel several possibilities for what you should do, and perhaps you feel that there is a contradiction between them. You may not immediately know which of them to choose, or how to combine them all to reach a higher level of harmony... However, you still have to solve all this for yourself, because only you can really know what you should do and why you should do it. (Tang Junyi 1985, 53–54)[9]

This responsibility does not actually mean that the interests of society should come before the interests of the individual. A morally aware individual will in any case make decisions based on their responsibility, regardless of whether it is in their own interests or those of the wider social community.

9 你不必問什麼是你該作的, 因為你自己知道你自己所該作. 但是你自己可以同時感到機種該作, 你感到他們間的矛盾, 你一時會不知道如何選擇其一, 或統一之於一種更高的和諧... 這些仍只有你自己去解決, 因為只有你自己, 才真知道你感該作時所據以為該作之理由.

> A person is not a thing; a person is a purpose in themself. This means that the individual is not a tool of society, nor a tool of the state. And the people of this age are also not tools of the people of a future age... But if we say that a person is not a tool of society, it does not mean that we are outside of society, and individuals also do not need to regard society and the state as tools to achieve their own goals... But the human mind and what is inherent in it is reciprocity and love. If a person strives to actually and fully experience their innate mind, they will never be able to feel separated from society... I believe that only through educating people to fully develop this innate moral nature will we be able to reconcile the conflict between the individual and society. Only in this way will we be able to transcend the binary category of individual and community and reach a place where the existence of society will be to the benefit of the individual and vice versa. (Tang Junyi 2000, 61-62)[10]

This does not mean obedience to an external authority. According to his own words, in this regard Tang remains faithful to the fundamental principles of Chinese ethics, an important characteristic of which lies in the conscious effort to overcome the divide between the self and others, precisely on the basis of the harmonious functioning of interpersonal relationships (Sin 2002, 320).

However, since the ethical self, or the morally aware mind of the individual, also has a significant influence on the concrete features of the culture in which they were born and in which they live, according to Tang we can from this kind of dominant attitude of the individual's mind also draw conclusions about the orientation of their culture. For him, one of the central differences between Chinese and Western culture is that the former emphasizes ethics and art, while the latter emphasizes religion and science. According to Tang Junyi, this difference is conditioned by the fact that the spirit of harmony prevails in Chinese culture, while the spirit of distinction prevails in Western culture (*ibid*.).

10 人不是物, 人本身為一目的. 人本身為一目的涵義, 亦包括個人不是社會之一工具, 國家之一工具, 此時代之人不是下不是下一時代人之工具... 我們說每一人不是社會之一工具, 不是說每一人可以自外與社會, 個人亦不須視社會國家為達其個人目的之工具…而人的心性即是仁, 既是愛. 人真求自盡其性的心, 絕不會自外於社會…我們人為只有以教化充兩發展人之此種道德的天性, 可以協調所為個人與社會的衝突, 超出個人與社會之對立的範疇, 使社會的存在支持個人之存在, 個人的精神也支持社會之存在.

3 The basis for understanding the traditional concept of harmony (he 和): the three reforms and the distinction between philosophical and institutionalized Confucianism

In both types of modern interpretations of the classical Chinese concept of harmony, i.e. those that have emerged in recent decades in Taiwan, as well as those that dominate in the PRC, it is often emphasized that harmony is a traditional Confucian concept. In this way, the ideology of harmony is placed within the framework of the ideologies of the so-called Confucian revival. However, we could already see from the example of these interpretations that the idea of Confucian revival is quite different on one side of the Taiwan Strait and the other.

This difference is not only manifested in the fact that the Confucian revival in Taiwan developed continuously since the formation of the current of Modern Confucianism, which, as we will see below, was established around the start of the 20th century. As is generally known, this continuity was on the mainland interrupted for a good three decades (from the 1950s until the mid-1980s), during which time philosophers on the mainland could only deal with politically "relevant" topics, such as the Sinicization of Marxist and Leninist theories. However, as we could see in the previous two chapters, the difference between the two discourses goes much further or deeper, i.e. to the very core of substantive evaluations and interpretations of the concept of harmony, in which both see one of the central features of the Chinese mentality.

Unlike Taiwan's modern Confucianism, the Confucianism within the revival, as it developed on the mainland, and which we will define more precisely below, is presented as a one-dimensional, monolithic discourse without substantive and ideological distinctions, which are necessary for its correct – that is, more comprehensive and coherent – understanding.

Discourses originating from the oldest, i.e. original Confucianism, in their further development actually split into several currents, which are not only different, but partially even diametrically opposed to one another. These currents are believed to have formed in the history of Chinese thought within the framework of developments whose guidelines were defined by the three reforms of the original Confucianism.

The latter was a school of ideas that was extremely advanced for the time in which it was created (i.e. 6th century BCE), as it contained many proto-democratic, egalitarian and humanist elements.[11] The founder of the school was Confucius (551–479 BCE), and his two most famous successors were Mencius (372–289) and Xunzi (310–235). While the former further developed the humanistic, ethical and egalitarian elements of Confucianism, the latter built on the hierarchical and rational elements of the same doctrine. The central difference between the two was in their conception of human nature: while Mencius began with the assumption of its goodness and of the innate humanity of every human being, Xunzi believed that people are by nature evil and egoistic, and therefore need to be controlled by strict laws and penalties.

The blossoming of original Confucianism can be traced all the way back to the end of the Zhou dynasty and the beginning of the first united, all-Chinese empire under the auspices of the Qin dynasty (221-207 BC). During this period, Confucianism (as well as all other philosophical schools of the ancient period) was banned. Only after the fall of the Qin and the beginning of the Han dynasty (202 BC-220 BC) was this school of philosophy rehabilitated. This happened in the framework of the so-called first reform of this doctrine, in which Confucianism as state doctrine emerged from Confucianism as school of thought.[12]

This new Confucianism was essentially a synthesis of Confucianism and Legalism.[13] The Han dynasty continued to unite most of the Chinese territory under its rule, and thus needed a centralist government and "strong-arm" ideologies to control such a large empire. For this purpose, it would have been most appropriate if it had simply adopted the despotic philosophy of

11 Here I am not using the concept of democracy in the prevailing sense, which is mainly understood as the liberal multi-party system of various forms of parliamentary political decision-making, and which is based on individual rights and normative laws, but rather in a much broader sense. Starting from the original meaning of the word, democracy is here meant as a social system based on a complementary and equal relationship between society and the autonomous individual. For a more detailed description of proto-democratic elements within Confucianism, see Sigurđsson (2015, 13-21, 50-60), Lee (2010, 45–62), Makeham (2015, 13–26), and Rošker (2015, 63–65). The theoretical basis of such seeds of democracy mainly concerns concepts such as "*Min ben* 民本 (People as the Basis)", "*Tianming* 天命 (Mandate of Heaven)" and "*Neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王 (Inner Sage and Outer Ruler)".

12 Chinese distinguishes between the terms *Rujia* 儒家 and *Rujiao* 儒教. The first refers to the school of Confucian thought, ethics and philosophy, while the second refers to the Confucian state doctrine or the normative ethical system that prevailed in China from the Han dynasty until the end of the Qing dynasty. In English one and the same term – Confucianism – is used for both Chinese terms, but we can try to at least descriptively preserve the differentiation.

13 Legalism (*Fa jia* 法家) was a Machiavellian and autocratic discourse based on preserving and protecting the interests of an absolute ruler. As the central (and only allowed) ideology, it dominated the sixteen years of the despotic Qin dynasty.

Legalism, but this was not possible, since adopting the state doctrine of the losing dynasty was not appropriate within the framework of the ancient Chinese worldview. That is why the court ideologist of the Han dynasty, Dong Zhongshu, chose Confucianism as the new state doctrine, which he interpreted through the lens of the teachings of Confucius' successor, Xunzi. The latter developed a theory that was already very close to Legalism, so it is not surprising that he was also the teacher of some of the most prominent Legalist personalities, namely Han Feizi and Li Si,[14] and even in China he is usually perceived as the bridge between Confucianism and Legalism (see Li Zehou 1980, 81).

Within the framework of this first reform, in which the Confucian state doctrine was created, a system of official examinations was also introduced, in which in order to obtain an official position (and thus political power) it was necessary to pass an exam testing one's knowledge of the Confucian classics. In this way, Confucianism gained an institutional basis. Due to the strictly formal nature of these exams, which was associated with an uncritical approach to the material and rote learning, over the centuries intellectuals became more and more alienated from it, as it did not offer them any intellectual inspiration or motivation. To obtain the latter, they increasingly turned to Daoist and Buddhist philosophies. Since this threatened Confucianism as a state doctrine, a third reform took place under the so-called Neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty. Within its framework many Daoist and Buddhist elements were incorporated into Confucian philosophy. Of key importance here is also the fact that the philosophers in this reform interpreted the original Confucianism through Mencius, i.e. the successor of Confucius who developed and upgraded the humanistic, proto-democratic and proto-republican elements of Confucian doctrine.

The third reform of Confucianism occurred at the turn of the 20th century, when Chinese intellectuals began to confront Western thought. At that time the stream of Modern Confucianism arose, which strove to find a synthesis of Chinese tradition with Western ideas that could form the basis for a specific Chinese modernization. This current – in terms of the interpretation of the Chinese tradition – represented the successor to the Neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty, which means that it took its starting positions from Mencius' philosophy, and not from Xunzi's.

14 Han Feizi was one of the central theorists of Legalist doctrine, and Li Si was the prime minister of the legalistic state of Qin.

In the second half of the 20th century, when the Chinese ideational tradition was out of favour in the PRC and its philosophers could at most deal with the Sinicization of Marxism and Leninism, the starting positions of this trend were developed further mainly by Taiwanese (and partly also Hong Kong) philosophers, who were the representatives of the aforementioned second generation of Modern Confucianism.

4 The roots of the modern concept of harmony: Confucianism as school of thought or Confucianism as state doctrine?

As noted above, contemporary Chinese ideologues (and politicians) emphasize the close connection between Confucius and the concept of harmony. It is often noted that harmony is one of the fundamental concepts of Confucian philosophy (cf. e.g. Xiang 2008, 3; Bai 2011, 50). However, research into the works attributed to Confucius[15] showed that the concept of harmony (*he* 和) appears in them only five times (see Confucius s. d.: Xue er 12; Shu er: 32; Zi Lu: 23, Ji shi: 1; Zi Zhang: 25). Since harmony is said to be a Confucian concept, we also took a closer look at the works of his two most influential successors and found that the concept of harmony appears only twice in the work of Mencius (see Mengzi ed.: Gongsun Chou II: 10; Wan Zhang II : 10), while Xunzi mentions and explains it very often in his eponymous work, namely 76 times (see Xunzi s. d.). All of the above points to the fact that the concept of harmony within the original Confucianism is more a Legalist than Confucian concept. Even if Confucius and Mencius also use it a few times, their interpretation of it differs significantly from that of Xunzi, who, as pointed out above, was a supporter of "strong-arm" ideas. Let us take a look at some typical quotes in which these three ancient philosophers mention harmony.

In his *Analects* (*Lunyu*), Confucius explicitly emphasized the difference between sameness (and thus uniformity (*tong* 同)) on the one hand, and harmony or harmonization (*he* 和) on the other, opposing the first concept and defending the second: "The noble person seeks harmony not sameness; the petty person seeks sameness not harmony." (Confucius s.d., Zi lu, 23).[16]

15 These are *The Analects* (*Lunyu* 论语) and *Spring-Autumn Annals* (*Chun qiu lu* 春秋錄). Only the first work deals with the subject of Confucius' philosophy, while the second work deals with historical reports on the economy of the State of Lu.

16 君子和而不同，小人同而不和.

The idea that diversity is a prerequisite for harmony (Motoh 2009, 99) is also found in Confucius' classic *Spring-Autumn Annals* (*Chun qiu lu* 春秋露). In this context, Confucius explicitly advocates an understanding of harmony that is based on the autonomy and critical spirit of the individual:

> If the ruler says he supports something, everyone will likewise support it; and if the ruler says he is against something, everyone will likewise be against it. It is like pouring water into water. Who would care for it? It is like playing all the music with just one instrument. Who could listen to it? (Confucius s.d., Shao gong ershi nian, 1)[17]

Mencius also has a similar opinion of harmony. He sees it as one of the fundamental values of humanity and humanism:

> The opportunities offered us by Heaven are not of equal importance to the advantages offered us by Earth. And these are again of less importance than interpersonal harmonies. (Mengzi s.d., Gongsun Chou III, 10)[18]

This point of view is illustrated in a concrete way by Mencius in the following example, in which he analyses the reasons for the collapse of a city:

> Its walls were not too low, and the defensive moat around it was not too shallow. Its army was not too weak and there was no shortage of food supplies. From this we can see that harmony between people is of much greater importance than the physical conditions (lit.: the advantages offered us by Earth. (Mengzi s.d., Gongsun Chou III, 10)[19]

Unlike the two philosophers above, the proto-legalist Xunzi perceived harmony primarily as unity, serving the powerful state with an invincible army. Such a concept is, of course, based on the functioning of a centralized state and is also in clear contrast to Confucius' aforementioned advocacy of diversity. Xunzi writes:

> It is appropriate, then, that we create harmony through division. [Such] harmony makes unity possible, and unity makes superiority possible. With superiority, we can reach the extreme borders [of countries] and defeat our opponents. (Xunzi s.d., Wang zhi, 19)[20]

17 君所謂可，據亦曰可，君所謂否，據亦曰否，若以水濟水，誰能食之，若琴瑟之專壹，誰能聽之.

18 天時不如地利，地利不如人和.

19 城非不高也，池非不深也，兵革非不堅利也，米粟非不多也；委而去之，是地利不如人和也.

20 故義以分則和，和則一，一則多力，多力則彊，彊則勝物.

In addition, Xunzi already explicitly connects the creation of harmony with the concept of punishment, the importance of which he often emphasizes in his works: “By introducing punishment, the government will be balanced and the people will live in harmony” (Xunzi s.d., Wang zhi, 26).

Connotations of discipline, such as we witness in the perception and spread of a “harmonious society” in the modern PRC, are therefore quite directly related to Xunzi’s interpretations of the concept. In this sense, they are indeed Confucian, but in their basic orientation they are based on the development of the original Confucian teaching that served as the basis for the integration of despotic elements into the new state doctrine formed during the Han dynasty.

So have the “softer” connotations of harmony, as expressed in the works of Confucius and Mencius, completely sunk into oblivion? In the context of the present article, it is certainly interesting to see whether (and to what extent) the modern concept of a “harmonious society”, which represents an important element of current ideology and is often characterized as a legacy of the Confucian tradition, connects with the views of Modern Confucianism, which represents the central current of modern Taiwanese theories.

Taiwanese and Hong Kong Modern Confucians mainly derived their ideas from Neo-Confucian philosophy, the basis of which was not Xunzi’s but Mencius’ interpretation of the original teaching. Therefore, Xunzi was often seen as a heretic and was not considered among the philosophers of “true” Confucianism.

5 Epilogue

If we try to draw a parallel between the modern ideology of the PRC on the one hand, which praises the ideal of a harmonious society, and the discussions about harmony that arose from under the pens of Taiwanese (and partly Hong Kong) philosophers on the other, we cannot ignore some essential distinctions that largely demarcate both discourses, even if they both refer to Confucianism as the central source of the kind of social harmony under discussion.

Surely the biggest difference between them is that the former advocate the ideal of harmony based on the tradition of the legalistically oriented Xunzi. The ideology of the new neoliberal-national superpower is therefore based on far more authoritarian and citizen-obedience-based assumptions than those that define the philosophical and ideological foundations of Taiwan’s Modern Confucianism. The representatives of the latter mostly follow the softer and more humanistic line of Confucius and Mencius' discourse, which does not push the individual into the background, but put them in the foreground of their interests.[21] In other words, we could say that mainland philosophers advocate harmony based on Confucianism as a doctrine, while Taiwanese philosophers are mainly adherents of Confucianism as a school of thought.

Certainly the discourse of Confucius and Mencius provides an incomparably better basis for the development of a "democratic" society of autonomous individuals than Xunzi's strong-arm philosophy. Therefore, it is probably no coincidence that mainland ideologues are more and more directly striving for a modernized (and currently also digitalized) use of those proto-legalistic elements of their own tradition that enable the government elite to have better and more complete control over the society and individuals. On the other hand, contemporary Modern Confucians in Taiwan and Hong Kong also continue and develop the theoretical guidelines of the revival of Confucius' and Mencius' theories. Therefore, within the framework of such discourses, they are researching and updating a range of traditional proto-democratic concepts, which could, in a form adapted to contemporary conditions, provide a good basis for the development of a specifically Chinese type of modernization and democracy.[22] This represents an attempt to create and develop a system that is not based on the profit-oriented, liberal model of over-emphasized individualism; rather it is comparable to modern communitarian systems.[23]

In my eyes, the ability to make such distinctions is crucial for interpreting modern China and its attitude towards its own tradition, and thus also for reliable predictions of the future development trends of its politics. This ability, however, can only be acquired through insight into the multifaceted develop-

21 As pointed out above, Taiwanese Modern Confucians mainly follow the criteria of autonomous ethics and the unity of reason and emotions; therefore, they consider only Confucius, Mencius and the authors or commentators of the classical works *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong* 中庸) and *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing* 易經) to be part of the "legitimate" line of Confucianism from the Zhou period. In contrast, Xunzi supposedly belongs to a fringe (that is, not entirely "legitimate") line, as he is considered to represent the so-called "ethics of heteronomy" (Lee 2001, 73).

22 As pointed out above, the central proto-democratic concepts of original Confucianism, which most often form the subject of Modern Confucian elaborations, are the concepts of "*min ben* 民本 (People as the Basis)", "*tianming* 天命 (Mandate of Heaven)" and "*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王 (Inner Sage and Outer Ruler)".

23 But since the concept of a modern Confucian harmonious society is still quite underdeveloped and remains only at the theoretical level, the first, "disciplinary" discourse, behind which stands a well-equipped, partly intimidating and also highly effective propaganda apparatus, may still have better chances of imminent realization. Therefore, the question of what kind of harmony actually awaits the Chinese people in the near future remains, of course, still open.

ments that took shape within the Chinese history of ideas. This is all the more true for cases such as these, among which the modern interpretation of the concept of harmony also belongs, since its creators keep resolutely referring to the traditional roots of this concept. The possibility of understanding such "roots" and gaining insight into the complex ideological developments of the Chinese tradition is again conditioned by the ability to read and understand primary sources written in classical Chinese.

Without such tools, future generations of experts in the field of Chinese studies might still be well-versed in their "profession", being specialized in Chinese language and culture, but they will only be able to offer society repetitions and translations of dominant ideologies. And I am not sure that I want to become the sort of teacher who only imparts to her students the ability to produce such "expertises". Therefore, I believe that teaching classical Chinese is an extremely important tool for gaining more adequate knowledge, understanding and interpretation of modern Chinese society.

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POLITICS AND ECONOMY

Helena MOTOH

Political Cosmology of the One Belt One Road Policy – the Conceptual Structure of the New Chinese Strategic Initiative

Abstract

In its very name, the large-scale strategic platform of the People's Republic of China uses a reference to the ancient Silk Road, i.e. to the connection that was established between the European and Asian sides of the same great landmass, and to the fruitful exchange of goods, cultures and ideas that it resulted in. This is not the only explicit reference to traditional ideas in this project, since the protagonists of the programme often refer to specificities of traditional Chinese thought to explain the ideological background of the One Belt One Road policy, whether this might be a relational concept, win-win strategic thinking or the *tian xia* worldview. The paper analyses the cosmological, ontological and other philosophical paradigms apparent in the context of this strategic initiative in order to be able to determine the characteristics of the conceptual structure of this new Chinese political cosmology.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, *yi lu yi dai*, China, political theory, cosmology

Povzetek - Politična kozmologija pasu in ceste – konceptualna struktura nove kitajske strateške pobude

Nova velikopotezna strateška platforma Ljudske republike Kitajske se že s svojim imenom sklicuje na svilno pot, na povezavo, ki se je v antiki vzpostavila med evropsko in azijsko stranjo celine, pri tem pa obuja asociacije na plodno izmenjavo dobrin, kultur in idej, ki jih je ta povezava prinesla. To pa ni edina eksplicitna referenca na tradicijo, saj se pri pojasnjevanju, kaj pravzaprav je idejno ozadje pasu in ceste, protagonisti kitajske zunanje in gospodarske politike pogosto zatekajo k elementom tradicionalne kitajske misli – k relacijski misli, domnevno kitajski strategiji »win-win« ali k svetovnemu nazoru »vsega pod nebom« (*tian xia*). Članek analizira kozmološke, ontološke in druge filozofske paradigme, ki se pojavljajo v kontekstu te nove strateške pobude, da bi lahko s pomočjo te analize opredelil konceptualno strukturo nove kitajske politične kozmologije.

Ključne besede: Pobuda pas in cesta, *yi dai yi lu*, Kitajska, politična teorija, kozmologija

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物.

The Way gives birth to one, one gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, three gives birth to the ten thousand things.

(*Dao de jing*, 42).[1]

The bold strides with which more than half a decade ago the new Chinese model of the "Belt and Road" stepped onto the global political scene could give us the wrong impression that it is a unified, consistent and clearly structured strategic plan, through which – according to the different interpretations – China is trying, within the wider area of Europe, Asia and Africa, to achieve either global domination or global cohabitation and welfare. The basic premises of this initiative, as well as how it has in time evolved and changed, speak to the opposite. Numerous studies deal with the extreme complexity and heterogeneity of the phenomena linked to the "Belt and Road" initiative, and their authors mostly approach the topic through the optics of the economic-financial or international-political importance of the initiative, emphasizing, for example, the analyses of potentially beneficial or harmful effects on individual states and regions, predicting the possible transformative influences on the international relations currently established in the world and the Euro-Atlantic integrations and so on. However, often overlooked are the conceptual frame of the "Belt and Road" and the new political cosmology on which it is based. Even in those studies that do deal with this topic, the approach is usually based on scepticism and presents

1 The original quote from Laozi's work *Daode jing* is referenced from the online database ctext.org, translation: H.M.

the cosmological-historical references as a cunning propagandist tool of the Chinese political leadership. Some authors (e.g. Nayyar 2017) decisively declare such historical references to the Silk Road to be a hollow promotional slogan, used to conceal Chinese plans of a completely different sort. Instead of reviving the historical Silk Road, the new initiative is rather a model that is more similar to the European imperialism of earlier centuries. On the other hand, certain interpretations (e.g. Sárvári 2017) express doubt about whether the declarative equality and principle of mutual benefit that the Belt and Road Initiative emphasizes are anything more than a rhetorical plaster on the wound of the asymmetrical relations of power between China and other potential partner states along the new Silk Road. For the present article I will in my analysis step beyond the propagandist functions of the Belt and Road Initiative rhetoric and, by analysing the ideological repertoire it uses to represent itself, try to outline the political-cosmological model on which it is based. To shine a light on the political cosmology of the Belt and Road, I will analyse a selection of the central concepts and references pertaining to it, and I will illuminate the problems that these ideological apparatuses aim to answer – as well as those that are actually caused by them. The central text that I will turn to in my analysis is that of the Initiative's programme, its action plan, published in March 2015 by the National Development and Reform Commission (发展改革委) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, titled *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road* (推动共建丝绸之路经济带和21世纪海上丝绸之路的愿景与行动) (cf. *Qian nian* … 2017).[2]

1 One and many

The use of the numeral "one" (一) that is a key part of the syntagm of "(One) Belt and (One) Road" is an important Chinese classical rhetorical figure. The one-ness symbolized by the numeral can be found in the works of different schools and is one of the key organizational principles within early Chinese thought. In the chapter titled "Li ren" of Confucius' *Analects* the master says to his disciple Shen: "All my teachings can be threaded by a single thread" (吾道一以贯之)[3] and this phrase was later used by the master's successors

2 All the citations from the action plan's text are referenced from *Qian nian zhi yue: "Yidaiyilu" liantong Zhongguo yu shijie* [年之约："一带一路"连通中国与世界], Beijing Books, 2017. The online version is accessible at https://books.google.si/ (accessed 10. 2. 2019) and is not paginated.

3 All the citations from Confucius' *Analects* are referenced from the online database ctext.org, translation: H.M.

to assert a line of orthodoxy within the Confucian tradition. In Daoism "One", which we can capitalize in this case, often stands as a synonym for the *dao*, the one-ness of all the world's changes, from which all manifoldness arises and to which all manifoldness returns:

> 其分也，成也；其成也，毁也。凡物无成与毁，复通为一。
>
> (*Zhuangzi*, "Qi wu lun", 6).[4]
>
> Through separation there arises the existence of things; with existence there arises their end. Beyond existence and the end, all things return to the one.

Within the framework of the classical Chinese cosmology, the choice of the term "(One) Belt and (One) Road" certainly makes sense, since it emphasizes the unity of the apparent manifoldness and the complexity of the connections that the strategy anticipates. However, the one is actually "one *and* one", i.e. from the very beginning it is a duality, which is without a doubt also in the spirit of Lao Zi's above cited expression. Even the syntagm of "(One) Road and (One) Belt" (一带一路) itself does not try to conceal this duality. In its longer form the original Chinese name of the Initiative for an "Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road" references two segments of this strategy, the one on land and the one at sea. Their scope is outlined in the third part of the action plan:

> 丝绸之路经济带重点畅通中国经中亚、俄罗斯至欧洲（波罗的海）；中国经中亚、西亚至波斯湾、地中海；中国至东南亚、南亚、印度洋。21世纪海上丝绸之路重点方向是从中国沿海港口过南海到印度洋，延伸至欧洲；从中国沿海港口过南海到南太平洋。
>
> The Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic); linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to go from China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in one route, and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific in the other.[5]

4 The original quote from the *Zhuangzi* is referenced from the online database ctext.org, translation: H.M.

5 The English translation is from the http://www.china.org.cn version of the text (accessed: 12. 01. 2023).

The system of connections that the two-part structure sets out is anything but simple, since its branches spread across three continents and across many seas and oceans. The sea and land segments supplement each other and are joined together, especially at those final destination points, where the land routes flow into the most important ports at the end of the maritime Silk Road. Where then is it possible to find this unity that the syntagm of "(One) Belt and (One) Road" asserts? Despite the extremely large number of connections and crossroads the structure of this action plan is drawn from a single starting point, i.e. China; China is the starting point of both the land "belt" and the maritime "road", which then branch away and intertwine across three continents and numerous seas. The fear that China's new strategic plan also contains such imbalances of power in its intentions, with China on one side of the equation and the different states and regions on the other, brought about one of the most interesting complications that marked the initial period of the "Belt and Road" strategy's implementation. The first official translation of the name *yi dai yi lu* followed the original literally, and the initiative was therefore called "One Belt One Road" or – abbreviated – "OBOR". Despite the fact that from the very beginning the alternative version of the translation was also used in certain places, i.e. the "Belt and Road" (or BRI, i.e. Belt and Road Initiative), it prevailed in the official documents only three years later, on the basis of the idea that the translation might suggest a wrong interpretation of the strategic programme (Shepard 2017). As pointed out by Bērziņa-Čerenkova, the specialists in the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (中央编译局) and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (中国社会科学院) decided on the alternative translation of "Belt and Road" predominantly due to the fact that it does not contain the problematic numeral one (Bērziņa-Čerenkova 2016), which could have led to misunderstandings in two ways. First, it could be understood as if only one belt and one road are planned, by which the strategic framework of the action plan might be seen as simply a selection of possible alternatives. Those countries that would see themselves as potential partners on one of these routes or directions could come to understand their cooperation as a competition with other alternative versions of the Belt and Road. Whether such perceptions and the related fears can be put to rest simply by changing the name or whether they are caused by more complex structural elements, both in the international relations of these states as well as in their relations with China, is a question that begs for a closer analysis. On the other hand, Bērziņa-Čerenkova notes, referencing the numeral one could also be problematic due to the fact that it invokes a centralist, monopolist vision of the world and the strategic plans, where in other states China might be perceived as the new hegemon and central player, and as the state that aims to lead the game on this new Silk Road. The present political leadership in Beijing wants to avoid this image of China at any cost, be it pertaining to the dilemma of whether China is already the biggest economy in the world or the question of whether China is already a global super-power.

In parallel with the term *yi dai yi lu* and its longer version, "Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road", there also appear in the texts, beginning with the action plan itself, more direct references to the historical Silk Road that the new initiative is supposed to be reviving. Even the introductory speech of the action plan starts in this tone:

> 2000多年前，亚欧大陆上勤劳勇敢的人民，探索出多条连接亚欧非几大文明的贸易和人文交流通路，后人将其统称为"丝绸之路"。

> More than two millennia ago the diligent and courageous people of Eurasia explored and opened up several routes of trade and cultural exchanges that linked the major civilizations of Asia, Europe and Africa, collectively called the Silk Road by later generations.

It is perfectly clear that the historic "Silk Road" that the initiative references was no more united than the complex system of connections and crossroads on which the Belt and Road Initiative is based on. Even in the time under discussion, i.e. the period of the Han dynasty on the Chinese side and the Roman Empire on the European side, both of the old continents were linked by a system of paths, roads, bridges, rest stops, oases, trading centres, geographical corridors, mountain passes and so on. This system provided between Chang'an and Rome, and not only them, a network through which people exchanged products, goods, materials, technology, inventions, religions, philosophies and much more. Regardless of whether the Silk Road of antiquity was mostly powered by the existence of two relatively politically stable and economically powerful empires at both of its ends, it was far from centralized or organized in the way that the Belt and Road Initiative aims to be. If we read the programme of the initiative without a cynical distance, we could even come away with the impression that this decentralization is precisely the ideal it strives for. The idea is expressed in the programme text using the term "the Silk Road Spirit" (丝绸之路精神):

> 千百年来，"和平合作、开放包容、互学互鉴、互利共赢"的丝绸之路精神薪火相传，推进了人类文明进步，是促进沿线各国繁荣发展的重要纽带，是东西方交流合作的象征，是世界各国共有的历史文化遗产。

> For thousands of years, the Silk Road Spirit – "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit" – has been passed from generation to generation, promoted the progress of human civilization, and contributed greatly to the prosperity and development of the countries along the Silk Road. Symbolizing communication and cooperation between the East and the West, the Silk Road Spirit is a historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world.

This is the heritage that the new strategic programme invokes and which it locates within the issues of the present-day world, by interpreting it as a model of cooperation and peaceful cohabitation:

> 进入21世纪，在以和平、发展、合作、共赢为主题的新时代，面对复苏乏力的全球经济形势，纷繁复杂的国际和地区局面，传承和弘扬丝绸之路精神更显重要和珍贵。

> In the 21st century, a new era marked by the theme of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, it is all the more important for us to carry on the Silk Road Spirit in the face of the weak recovery of the global economy, and complex international and regional situations.

2 All under Heaven

The vision that the "Silk Road Spirit" symbolizes is one of a decentralized and multi-polar world. It is also precisely China's new international policy strategy of the last decade. Contemporary China does not interpret the build-up of its political and economic power in relation to other world powers as an attempt to supplant America as the first among the super-powers, but rather to place its own vision of the global power relations onto the world stage. As Jenny Clegg (2009, cf. Murray and Brown 2012) notes, it is a vision of the multi-polarization (多极化) of the world. The Belt and Road Initiative is supposed to aid in the building of this global order in key ways:

> 共建"一带一路"顺应世界多极化、经济全球化、文化多样化、社会信息化的潮流，秉持开放的区域合作精神，致力于维护全球自由贸易体系和开放型世界经济。

> The initiative to jointly build the Belt and Road, embracing the trend towards a multipolar world, economic globalization, cultural diversity and greater IT application, is designed to uphold the global free trade regime and the open world economy in the spirit of open regional cooperation.

The unity that the slogan “Belt and Road” is aiming at can also be read in the light of this strategic decision, which on the level of realpolitik is becoming more and more topical as it pertains to changes in US policy, which is increasingly leaning towards protectionism. As pointed out by Astrid H.M. Nordin (2016, 46), it is possible in contemporary Chinese political theory – and subsequently also in political practice – to recognize this movement towards a new model of globalization. As important theoretical proponents of this idea she primarily recognizes Yu Xiaofeng and Wang Jiangli, who as their central concept offer an explication of the notion of global integration (全球一体化), which Nordin herself interprets as a holistic model of globalization. It is interesting that in this model there is a meeting of the present-day information society and a classical philosophic reference. The social supposition of the political model of holistically understood globalization is an understanding of the political space as already restructured by the realities of information technology. As the author sums up from Ni and Qian (*ibid.*), the political space becomes a “net space” (网络空间). The desubstanialization of space into a net-like, relationally defined reality simultaneously means a reorganization of the political space into a net-like and at the same time holistically understood multi-polar structure. Within this theory of the new globalization this modern-information-technology-conditioned ontology of political space is joined by a classical reference that is here reflected and reinterpreted anew. The vision of this net-like multi-polarity, taking the place of a hierarchically and centrally organized community of more or less self-sufficient national states, where one or two among them take primacy due to their military or economic power, is in this context expressed by the term “all under Heaven”, *tian xia* (天下).

In the classical sources the term “all under Heaven” most commonly denotes “the kingdom” or “the known world”, and due to the isolation and the subsequent focus on one’s own state it often also meant “the whole world”. This classical usage of course did not predict any sort of decentralized net structure, more than what was already implied by the late Zhou dynasty period with its political particularization. The revival of this term as a symbol for the unique nature of Chinese political ontology has in the last decade given new meaning to a completely ordinary and generally used term from the classical (and of course later) texts. In the last two decades, Nordin recognizes two new re-interpretations of the term *tian xia* in Chinese political theory (*ibid.*, 47). In a narrower sense the authors understand it as a description of a harmonic space in between the national or already existing political units, as a sort of meta-structure that is supposed to provide the globalized world with unity and harmonic stability. Other authors refer to *tian xia* as the key concept that supposedly demonstrates the essential differences between the Chinese political imagination and the Euro-American one. In this wider sense *tian xia* is seen as the name of the holistic transnational global community. Such an inclusive and all-encompassing notion necessarily includes all the realities of the world and there is nothing that is outside of *tian xia* (天下无外, Zhou and Jiao, as cited in Nordin, 2016, 48). On the basis of this vision of *tian xia*, which necessarily includes opposites and differences, in short, the diversity of the world, Fang Xiaojiao links the idea of *tianxianism* (天下主义) with the theory of harmony, and the latter represents the way the all-encompassing *tian xia* works to harmonize all the opposites in their differences. This sort of ontological insight without a doubt draws from the Daoist concept of the Way (*dao*). The key author, whose understanding of *tian xia* was essential to the formation of the present-day Chinese political cosmology (Nordin, 2016, 48–49), which is itself the basis for the Belt and Road programme, is Zhao Tingyang. In the programme part of *The System of Tian Xia* (天下体系, Zhao 2005) he establishes a vision of the Chinese understanding of the world as a global holistic reality and places it opposite the supposedly Euro-American or "Western" vision of the world as a cluster of national states.

3 Harmonization of manifoldness

The above-mentioned theory of the new (or old) model of alternative globalization can help us understand how the programme of the Belt and Road, which was outlined by Xi Jinping during his term in office, attaches itself content-wise to the heritage of its predecessors, i.e. the idea of harmonic society. In the action plan, it is precisely the question of how to solve and coordinate between the different interests of the cooperating agents of this mammoth project that is given the most attention. During the terms of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao (Motoh 2012) the idea of harmonization was mostly imagined as the answer to the internal problems facing China, which were brought about by the extremely rapid economic growth of the previous two decades – for example social stratification, corruption and environmental crises. These were the problems that were to be solved through the effort to build a harmonic society (和谐社会), which was introduced by Hu and Wen almost as a slogan for their political terms. However, in the context of China's rise in the international political space, this vision of a harmonic society grows from a vision of solving societal problems into an almost ontological principle of the characteristically "Chinese" solving of opposites. Sixty years after Mao Zedong's famous essay on the *Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* (关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题, 1957), which predicted a strict handling of the enemies of the people and a democratic solving of oppositions among those, who would manage to avoid this label, Xi Jinping's vision of dealing with opposition reaches towards a completely different historical reference. Hu Jintao's doctrine of harmonic society was itself already based upon the differentiation of the two different sorts of unity that can be achieved. The classical reference for this understanding is Confucius' *Analects* (Zi lu, 23):

> 君子和而不同，小人同而不和。
>
> The noble person seeks harmony not sameness; the petty person seeks sameness not harmony.

Oneness, sameness, uniformity – *tong* is the state before things begin to separate; it is the oneness based on no differences manifesting yet. In contrast, harmony is a concept that in the ontological chronology is placed at the "end" of this process; it represents the unity that is formed through coordination and therefore harmonization of already existing and formed differences.

In Confucius' case the master is expressing his preference for coordination between opinions in contrast with an unreflected and undifferentiating acquiescence. Meanwhile, the present-day revival of the notion of harmonization addresses the unavoidable problem of how to coordinate between these different interests, opinions, visions and strategies of the different states and regions along the branches of the projected Belt and Road. This theoretical framework is most explicitly presented in the third part of the action plan, titled "Principles" (共建原则). It is arranged into five paragraphs. In the first paragraph it sums up the way in which the plan is based on one of the basic principles of Chinese foreign policy, i.e. "the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" (Motoh 2015), which are: respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state (尊重各国主权和领土完整), mutual non-aggression (互不侵犯), mutual non-interference in internal affairs (互不干涉内政), peaceful coexistence (和平共处), and equality and mutual benefit (平等互利). It then sums up the basic functioning principles which within the framework of the initiative all relations ought to be based on.

The first of these principles is the "openness for cooperation" (开放合作). It is clear that with its name and routes the initiative largely follows or models itself on the historical Silk Road; however an important part of the action plan's rhetoric is precisely the openness of the projected programme, which on the one hand prevents competition among the individual regions and cities (e.g. ports) taking part in the initiative, while on the other also provides a space of flexibility, where China's plans can be adapted to the changing economic and political conditions in China and the international space. Openness for cooperation also means a step towards the meta-national or trans-national character of the Belt and Road:

> (…) 各国和国际、地区组织均可参与，让共建成果惠及更广泛的区域。
>
> (…) is open to all countries, and international and regional organizations for engagement, so that the results of the concerted efforts will benefit wider areas.

The next principle directly pertains to the organizing of relations among the numerous factors and agents of the project. The basic principle of these relations is "harmoniousness and inclusivity" (和谐包容). Largely in the spirit of the Five Principles, this principle also demands tolerance towards the differences between "civilizations":

> 倡导文明宽容，尊重各国发展道路和模式的选择，加强不同文明之间的对话，求同存异 (…)
>
> [This principle] advocates tolerance among civilizations, respects the paths and modes of development chosen by different countries, and supports dialogues among different civilizations on the principles of seeking common ground while shelving differences (…)

At this juncture, the vision is still quite unclear; however, its intention is much clearer. In the almost Huntingtonesque rhetoric about the differences between civilizations, we can recognize an echo of certain authors of the theory of harmony, especially Zhang Liwen. On the basis of Huntington's vision of a world of several different civilizations, Zhang establishes his theory of the harmonizational nature of the East Asian civilization, which is supposed to set opposite the clash of civilizations that Huntington writes about (2005), a vision of the world where civilizational differences are coordinated in the process of harmonization.

The next principle is of a more pragmatic nature, but for obvious reasons it is a necessary ingredient of any Belt and Road programme *credo*. The principle of being bound to the "market operation" (市场运作) emphasizes the fact that activities pertaining to the Belt and Road will follow market laws and international standards.

The last of the listed principles goes back to the repertoire of contemporary Chinese political thought, as it expresses an obligation to the "win-win" (互利共赢) principle, i.e. principle of mutual benefit:

> 兼顾各方利益和关切，寻求利益契合点和合作最大公约数，体现各方智慧和创意，各施所长，各尽所能，把各方优势和潜力充分发挥出来。
>
> It accommodates the interests and concerns of all parties involved, and seeks a conjunction of interests and the "biggest common denominator" for cooperation so as to give full play to the wisdom and creativity, strengths and potentials of all parties.

The question which the action plan gives no direct answer to, but which inevitably raises the issue of cooperation and harmonization, is which political subjects are the bearers of this initiative. In the above cited passage we can see that the plan is supposed to include the various countries along the routes, regional and international organizations, as well as looser entities, such as "people" and "civilizations". Within this scope we can recognize the application of the transnational idea of *tian xia*, but it is not made clear from anything that is written in the text how this also applies to China, which always takes part in the initiative as an integral whole. To make a long story short, we find no regionalization or particularization in the action plan.

4 Cosmology and practice?

The action plan, based on the structural foundations of the new Chinese political cosmology, of course predicts a bright future for the partners in the initiative. The closing paragraph, in which there appears in an interesting way a double meaning of the term road/path (*lu*), does not leave much doubt about this:

> "一带一路"是一条互尊互信之路，一条合作共赢之路，一条文明互鉴之路。只要沿线各国和衷共济、相向而行，就一定能够谱写建设丝绸之路经济带和21世纪海上丝绸之路的新篇章，让沿线各国人民共享"一带一路"共建成果。
>
> The Belt and Road cooperation features mutual respect and trust, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and mutual learning between civilizations. As long as all countries along the Belt and Road make concerted efforts to pursue our common goal, there will be bright prospects for the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, and the people of countries along the Belt and Road can all benefit from this initiative.

The bloated rhetoric of the official programme texts of course plays its part and has its purpose. Only by placing the Belt and Road Initiative within the conceptual framework of the new political cosmology and theoretical models of alternative globalization can we understand which of these high-flying words might signify an important paradigmatic shift. As mentioned already, it all pertains to the question of how many of these bold ideas fit within the real relations of power in the places and regions where systemic efforts towards establishing the Belt and Road are already under way. Moreover, analysis does not allow us to truly establish whether the cosmological or philosophical structures only play the part of a sophisticated propagandist tool. The dilemma of whether the Belt and Road rhetoric is simply a mask for the realpolitik plans for domination over the three continents of the Old World and the connections between them is not as easily put to rest as many critics of the Chinese globalization, especially North American authors, might believe. The solution to this problem would first demand an answer to the unanswerable question of what is the causal connection between the economic-political reality and the ideological structure? And for contemporary Chinese history it is often possible to show that the ideational structure influences the reality of the economic-political relations at least as much as the other way around, while the border between them is often impossible to define.

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Nataša VISOČNIK GERŽELJ

Immigration in Japan: The Labour Shortage and Changes in Japanese Society

Abstract

Japan is one of the countries where the population is aging rapidly, and forecasts for the future show a similar trend. Consequently, the population is shrinking, while the labour shortage is increasing, which brings many problems with it. Despite the fact that Japan has been facing a labour shortage for several decades it has not yet been able to tackle this issue, with both politicians and society at large avoiding an open dialogue on solutions. Due to the lack of manpower in the last few decades, and consequently increasing pressure on the labour market, in 2018 the Japanese government was forced to tackle the problem by loosening its strict immigration policies. In this article we examine the migration process in Japan, the related policies and causes, and the attempts to integrate foreigners in Japanese society.

Keywords: immigration, foreign workforce, xenophobia, homogeneity, multiculturalism

Povzetek - Priseljevanje na Japonskem: pomanjkanje delovne sile in družbene spremembe

Japonska je ena izmed držav, kjer se prebivalstvo stara najhitreje, napovedi za prihodnost pa kažejo podoben trend. Posledično se število prebivalstva zmanjšuje, hkrati pa narašča pomanjkanje delovne sile, kar prinaša številne probleme. Kljub temu, da se Japonska s pomanjkanjem delovne sile srečuje že nekaj desetletij, te težave še vedno rešuje precej neuspešno, tako politika kot družba se odprtemu dialogu o rešitvah izogibata v velikem loku. Zaradi nekajdesetletnega pomanjkanja delovne sile, številnih neuspešnih poskusov reševanja te problematike ter posledično vedno večjega pritiska delovnega trga se je bila japonska vlada leta 2018 prisiljena spopasti s težavo in zrahljati nepropustno priseljensko politiko. V prispevku tako spoznamo proces migracij na Japonskem, priseljensko politiko in vzroke zanjo ter poskuse vključevanja tujcev v japonsko družbo.

Ključne besede: priseljevanje, tuja delovna sila, ksenofobija, homogenost, multikulturnost

1 Japan in the process of globalization

In the context of globalization, migration has recently become a very popular research area among academics. World leaders are discussing the integration of markets and the growing interdependence of countries, while easy international travel and communication have contributed to the "globalization" of everyday life. Migration, which includes emigration and immigration, plays a major role in the process of globalization in all areas of society. Immigration, in particular, is often the central topic of intense domestic political debates, while the personal decision to migrate is one that can dramatically alter the lives of those involved. Human migration is more than the sum of many individual decisions to migrate, and migration flows are a manifestation of the economic, social and political realities of globalization.

Migrants often face resentment and being unwelcome in their new environment. Citizens of the destination country often fear changes to their way of life and a draining of state resources for the sake of immigrant newcomers. Issues of language, ethnicity, nationality and culture are often raised as "proof" that newcomers will not integrate. The presence of "foreigners" in schools, hospitals and on the streets causes fears of social conflicts and violence, xenophobia (or fear of foreigners, see Krivic 2004) triggers negative reactions towards foreigners (anti-immigration sentiments), and the "us versus them" dichotomy appears. At the same time, creating fears about "others" is a very effective and dangerous method of political mobilization, which many politicians have used and are continuing to use.

Since the turn of the millennium, and due to an ever-increasing number of immigrants, aging population, lack of labour force and the need to import it from abroad, Japan has also faced similar feelings, which are even stronger in view of the fact that ideas about the homogeneity of the Japanese nation have prevailed for centuries. Japan, long considered to be a homogenous country inhabited by Japanese people with Japanese culture and speaking the Japanese language, has faced increasing pressures, both external and internal, to reject this idea of homogeneity in the last two or three decades. Ideas about multiculturalism and coexistence with other cultures are coming thus to the fore, and this is reflected in the wide range of activities that the Japanese government is implementing with the aim of integrating such diversity into society (see Visočnik 2016).

The paper thus presents an analysis of immigration and immigration policy in Japan, examines the causes and consequences of this policy, and analyses the social changes that promote migration and those changes that are a result of migration. Methodologically, it relies on historical research on Japanese attitudes towards foreigners, reviews sociological and anthropological literature on immigration processes, and analyses political views on the issue of loosening the country's strict immigration policy, focusing on its current state.

2 Ideas about the homogeneity of the Japanese nation and "fear of foreigners"

As a country with a long history of "ethnic citizenship" (Brody 2002), Japan poses major barriers to foreigners immigrating there for various reasons. The idea that only Japanese people live in Japan, making it a homogenous nation, has long been present both among the Japanese themselves and among Japanese and foreign researchers. The seeds of nationalistic ideas in Japan can be found in the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), when scholars of the nativist Kokugaku (National Learning) school, by examining historical and mythological records, concluded that Japan was a special state headed by an emperor whose ancestors were among the deities who were extremely fond of the country, with an emphasis on the pure (that is, non-Chinese) Japanese essence. During this period, scholars of the Kokugaku school of learning such as Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane shifted the study of then-dominant Chinese, Confucian, and Buddhist texts to the study of early Japanese classics such as the *Kojiki* (712 CE) and the *Nihon Shoki* (720 CE), where there were myths about the uniqueness of the people living on the islands, about their homogeneity, and above all about an unbroken imperial line that descended directly from a deity. In earlier periods these ideas had already been defended by other thinkers in their historical chronicles, but they only crystallized into nationalist ideas in the Tokugawa period (see also Oguma 2002).

At the same time as the idea of a unified and united Japan, there began to appear the idea of a hierarchical "fatherly state" based on the family (*ie*), where the emperor is the father and rules over his subjects, the children – the so-called *iemoto* system. Many also argue that more than anything else the closure of the country to foreign influences for more than 200 years contributed to the formation of specific practices and attitudes that led the Japanese to reject and separate themselves from things they recognized as "foreign" or "external" (Nakano 1995, 64–65; see also Brody 2002). Ideas that spread during the Tokugawa period, based on the myths that Japan was unique and homogeneous, were thus in later periods responsible for the birth of a strong cultural nationalism and national identity – "one language, one race" (Brody 2002, 2) – such as, for example, the idea that Japan is a homogeneous "natural community" (as distinct from Western "nations formed through treaties") (McCormack 1996, 1–2) that developed on the basis of natural, geographical features. This was also confirmed by many foreign authors, including Edwin O. Reischauer (in Lie 2001, 1), who presented Japan "as one of the most uniform and culturally homogeneous countries in the world". On the other hand, during the time of the opening up of the country, concessions under Western pressure and modernization (Meiji period, 1868-1912), and especially during the period of imperialism (1868-1945), some leading minds and politicians also used the idea of a "multinational state and nation" to justify colonization, although attitudes towards foreigners were diverse and ambiguous. The Asian neighbours the Japanese colonized were considered stupid and limited because their countries were underdeveloped and backward compared to Japan. Although several scholars such as Arai Hakuseki and Tō Teikan[1] tried to highlight certain common elements, especially with Korea, in order to justify its annexation, they still saw the assimilation of Koreans and modernization of the country as the main goal of the imperial project (Oguma 2002, 65). This led to the first major wave of immigration, in truth forced, of foreign workers to Japan, with some remaining in the country even after

1 *Nissen dosoron* – 日鮮同祖論, 일선동조론 (*ilsandong churon*) – the idea that Japanese and Koreans have common ancestors, and that even a branch of the imperial family came from Korea, a claim that was mainly opposed by nativists. Motoori Norinaga dismissed Tō's hypothesis as "the words of a fool" (Oguma 2002, 65).

the end of the Second World War when they had the opportunity to return to their homeland.

Meanwhile, foreigners from the West were more respected because they were more modernized and stronger with regard to the military, economy, science and technology. Although Western societies also developed ideas about democracy and human rights, Japan completely ignored these concepts during the period of imperialism, despite the fact that various movements for the rights of underprivileged groups also appeared there. Later, as the relationship between the Western imperial powers and Japan deteriorated, so did the attitude towards people from America and Great Britain, who began to pose a threat to Japan's ethnic and cultural homogeneity (Nakano 1995, 66). After the war, the idea of homogeneity gained momentum again, although its proponents skilfully avoided any criticism until the turn of the new millennium (Amino 1995; Hankins 2012). Oguma (2002) even says that although the idea of homogeneity has a long history, the real institutionalization of Japanese ethnic homogeneity began after the Second World War, when the Japanese began to rebuild their country and nation after the defeat. After the occupation, the changing political and economic circumstances formed the basis for the emergence of "national identity" (*minzoku ishiki*), where "ethnic homogeneity"[2] (*tan'itsu minzoku*) became the main goal of both the political left and the right (see also Hankins 2012, 2).

It was only in the 1990s, during the economic slowdown, that the Japanese started talking about internationalization and integration into the global economy. However, while they accepted the outside world, they forgot those foreigners already living in Japan, among them Koreans and Chinese as the largest minorities, as well as the Ainu and Okinawans, who were annexed during the formation of the new Japanese state. When South Korea became one of the newly industrialized countries, resident Koreans (*zainichi Koreans*) also became proud of their ethnicity. They began to protest against the way the Japanese government treated them (more in Visočnik 2016). This included registration of foreigners and even fingerprinting. In 1984, the South Korean president visited Japan and also met the emperor; at that time, the protests against the Japanese government became more intense, with the Koreans mainly demanding more appropriate treatment, even though

2 The heavy emphasis on blood and inheritance as the main characteristics of the Japanese nation has made it almost impossible for foreigners to become Japanese (Nagano 1995, 66; see also Brody 2002).

Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro[3] emphasized in his speech at that time that there were no minorities in Japan. These protests were joined by other ethnic groups in Japan, especially the Ainu, who faced similar problems.

As a result of such policies, many Japanese during these periods were unaware in their daily lives that there were nations living among them who differed from them in terms of culture, language, or religion. Amino (1990, 23–27) says that this homogeneity was a side of the country's closed character, preventing the Japanese from becoming aware of the issue of the rights of other ethnic groups and ignoring minority groups. The insensitivity towards other ethnic groups can be seen in the attitude towards foreigners and the institutions that deal with them, because the ideas of homogeneity and the closed character of the country put pressure on groups such as the Ainu, Koreans and Okinawans. The consequence of the conventional understanding of Japanese culture since the Second World War is the emergence of the "discourse on Japaneseness (*nihonjinron*)".[4] *Nihonjinron* thus emphasizes and defends the uniqueness of Japanese culture and people. The discourse with many populist works covers a wide spectrum: the biological image of the Japanese, prehistoric cultural development, national language, literary and aesthetic qualities, interpersonal relations, social organization, philosophy and even the personal character of the Japanese. In some formulations, these features are interconnected; the concepts of the Japanese state, Japanese people and Japanese culture are said to coincide isomorphically (Befu 2009, 26). *Nihonjinron* thus ignores the ethnic, cultural and social heterogeneity of Japan, denies contacts with other countries and external influence on the development of Japanese culture, and defends Japanese essentialism.

3 Yasuhiro Nakasone was the Prime Minister of Japan from 1982 to 1987. He had a very nationalistic approach and encouraged ethnic pride among the Japanese. He was a follower of the "theory of the Japanese" (*nihonjinron*), which claims that the Japanese are a special nation. Influenced by the nationalist philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji, he spoke of the "monsoon culture" of the Japanese and the resulting Japanese compassion that needed to be spread abroad. He visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which, in addition to those who fell during the Second World War, is also dedicated to those responsible for crimes before and during it, which makes visits by politicians to the shrine a stumbling block in relations with China and Korea (Visočnik 2014).

4 Burgess (2010) defines *nihonjinron* in a broader sense as a debate about national identity, the seeds of which can already be found in the Tokugawa period, but especially after the Meiji period, during the formation of the nation state. In a narrower sense, however, it is a post-war construct that fosters the need for the Japanese to express their identity and feelings of pride, since the loss of the empire and the occupation were a bitter experience for them. In the years 1948–1978, as many as 700 books were written in the fields of sociology, linguistics, psychology, biology, chemistry and physics, which focused on Japanese national and cultural identity.

In recent decades, due to the lack of labour in the primary (agriculture, fishing, forestry) and secondary (industry, mining, construction) sectors, which in Japan belong to the "3-K" jobs or *kitsui, kiken* and *kitanai,* which means hard, dangerous and dirty, there has been an increasing number of foreign workers (both legal and illegal). But the Japanese government recognizes only the rational-economic aspect and does not pay much attention to other human factors, such as coexistence. Many laws revoked the right for such immigrants to reside or work for a longer period of time, and as early as 1990 the Immigrants and Refugees Act was passed, which rejects unskilled workers who have not arranged visas. This act was then directed against an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 illegal workers by 1993 (Nakano 1995, 68; also Kingston 2013, 137). Nevertheless, the Japanese government has also begun to consider measures to attract foreign workers to Japan, as the low birth rate and aging population require changes in migration policy. The government has thus begun to deal with migration issues in Japan, although after his re-election in 2018 Prime Minister Shinzo Abe confirmed that he would maintain an extremely strict policy with regard to selecting foreign workers. This statement drew a lot of criticism, from concerns about the economy due to an aging population to humanitarian calls for the relaxation of the country's asylum policy (Rochel 2018, 164).

3 Immigration studies and Japanese immigration policy

International migration encompasses various forms of movement of people, both legal and illegal, with hidden and contract workers, "guest worker" programmes, and migrant networks that connect people across borders. Migration studies thus deal with diverse topics such as ways of leaving the country, reception in a new country and integration into society, which is related to different people in diverse political, economic, social and cultural contexts. Migration is not only a demographic movement of people, but also enables the transfer of ideologies, identities, political and cultural practices, and economic resources. Migration thus affects the people who stay behind, those who travel, and those who live in the country people are immigrating to (Gold and Nawyn 2013, 1). A large number of migrants are so-called "economic migrants" or "labour migrants". This phenomenon is often described as a new pattern brought about by the emergence of multinational and transnational corporations, rapid global communication and cheaper international travel, but in truth has a long and varied history. It is often perceived as something useful, but also as a threat to the economy and autonomy of the nation-state (Brody 2002, 30).

In the context of international migration research, the causes and consequences of such migration have long been of interest to many social scientists, historians, lawyers, political activists and social reformers. This is precisely why there are many definitions, theories, methods and publications that deal with this phenomenon with the help of various approaches, the most common of which are economic, environmental and psychological. The economic approach focuses on labour migration while forgetting other types of migration, such as refugees, it also distinguishes between internal and external migration, and emphasizes the determinants of migration rather than its consequences (Gold and Nawyn 2013, 3, 9). The main area of interest of the psychological approach is research on groups and individuals and their acculturation into the new society. The environmental approach deals with climate, environment and environmental change, including natural disasters, which often cause migration (*ibid.*, 10). Reubens (1981, 754) explained migration with the so-called AOM model (*aspiration/opportunities/mobility*), which attributes three main factors to migration: a) increase in economic and social expectations; b) better opportunities in a foreign country compared to the home country, and c) the ability to overcome physical, financial and social barriers to mobility.

In the early 1980s, despite the great desire to improve their lives, not many people from Asia were looking for a better life in Japan as they were well aware of the poor employment conditions and recognized the rigid barriers such as the ocean, Japanese language and society. Most of the studies on foreign workers and their lives in Japan were thus made in the 1990s (Weiner 1996; Shimada 1994), when Japan reopened to the world and when more and more foreigners began to appear in search of work, a higher income and a better life. Abe, Kaneko and Fujiwara (1995) examined the legal system in the 1990s and analysed the situation of foreign workers and practitioners. They predicted that the existence of illegal workers would cause serious problems such as social unrest, racial and class discrimination, injustice, inequality and distrust among people. They went so far as to express concern and even negative opinions about foreign immigration to Japan. They claimed that the presence of foreign workers would be an obstacle to structural changes in industry, as a result of which even the situation in their home countries would not improve. Therefore, unskilled foreign workers must first of all get a good education in order to be able to work in Japan. Nakamura (2010, 67) dealt with similar questions, highlighting three key points: 1) whether the immigration of foreign labour will mean a decrease in the wages of domestic workers; 2) whether the presence of foreign workers will affect the support of local workers; 3) whether the arrival of foreign workers will affect technological changes in companies. These issues are among the main reasons why Japan avoids accepting unskilled foreign workers.

Rochel (2018) also undertook a study on immigration policy, focusing on one of the key facts on restrictive immigration policy, i.e. the security issue in connection with the increased number of foreigners in Japan, with an emphasis on the ethical dimension (see also Chiavacci 2014, 115). In doing so, he highlighted security issues in several areas, including the preservation of public order (the distinction between individual threats – terrorism – and threats associated with a large number of migrants). The next area is the preservation of culture, where Rochel's main focus was on maintaining cultural stability against rapid cultural change. The author continued by examining the preservation of trust in the smooth operation of institutions and protection against rapid change. The last topic of his research was the preservation of the welfare state and welfare itself, where with a large influx of immigrants questions may arise as to what and who to prioritize in the areas of employment and social support (Rochel 2018, 165).

Some authors have also focused on the qualifications of foreign workers. Reubens (1981, 749) pointed out that in the 1980s Japan somehow avoided importing unskilled foreign labour by encouraging domestic workers to take up such work themselves, namely through the occupational structure and social value system. Because of this, the country did not become dependent on foreign unskilled workers, unlike some other industrialized nations. In doing so, Japan thus avoided many social conflicts arising from competition in the labour market, cultural diversity and, for some, illegal status. The sea as a natural barrier, strict border control, language and culture barriers, and xenophobia among the Japanese further contribute to this (*ibid*., 750), but much has changed in the past thirty years in this area as well. The reasons can be found in the increasingly higher education of young people who enter the labour market and do not want to work as cleaners and garbage collectors, security guards and workers in the manufacturing industry. The number of working people has also decreased, which is why the need to import unskilled foreign labour has increased.

The most prolific migration researcher in Japan is Gabriele Vogt, who researches many aspects of this issue. She has asked the question of whether immigration is even a solution to the problem of population decline, and whether Japan should also open itself up to unskilled workers (2007). She and Ruth Achenbach are also concerned with different types of migration and the changes that have taken place in Japan as it changed from a "country of emigration" to a "country of immigration" (Vogt and Achenbach 2012; see also Milly 2014, 2). In an independent paper she presented various policy schemes of the Japanese government that have failed one after the other, and thus demonstrated the gap between the official policy and its actual results (Vogt 2013 and 2014). Her latest monograph was about the history of foreign female health workers in Japan, starting from the problem of population aging and increased care for the elderly provided by foreign health workers (Vogt 2018).

4 Foreigners and foreign workers in Japan

The number of foreigners in Japan was some 2,664,000 at the end of 2013, which was 1.6% of the total population and 1.6% more than the year before, or twice as many as 10 before this. This is still much less compared to Great Britain (5.8%), Germany (8.2%) and Spain (10.3%) at the same time, as quoted by Kingston (2013, 137). The largest group is the Chinese (649,100, as much as 31% of all foreigners), followed by Koreans, who were the largest group of foreigners for many years, but in recent years their numbers have been falling (the lowest figure is 519,700, or 25% of foreigners in 2013).[5] They are followed by Filipinos (209,200), Brazilians (181,300)[6] and Vietnamese (72,300). The number of foreign students who came to study in Japan has also increased by 3% (OECD 2015). It is interesting to note that in 2005 only 17.6% of foreigners were workers who immigrated with the intention of getting a job, whereas in 2006, 46.39% of foreigners aged over 15 and able to work were actually working (Vogt 2007, 12).

In 2013, 8,600 foreigners were naturalized, half of whom were of Korean descent, and one-third of whom had Chinese nationality. In 2013, 3,300 applications for asylum were submitted,[7] which is 720 more than the previous year. The applicants were from Turkey, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan (OECD 2015, 218). In 2015, the Japanese government received a record 7,586 applications for refugee status, but approved only 27

5 Bell (2016) explains the decrease in the number of resident Koreans by their assimilation into Japanese society, marriages with the Japanese and returning to Korea.

6 The number of Brazilians also decreased, so they were overtaken by Filipinos (Vogt 2014).

7 Japan has a reluctance to grant asylum to refugees, even though it has somewhat relaxed its policy towards them. As such, in 2007 it granted asylum to only 41 people (OECD 2015, 258).

(Al Jazeera 2016). Criticized by the international community, the government replied that it would accept 150 refugees from Syria as foreign students in the next five years (Mie 2016). Japan accepted its first refugees from Vietnam (*nanmin*) in 1975, at a time when it had not yet adopted the relevant laws[8] or issued residence permits, so it did not know what to do with them. For this group it created the Ajia Fukushi Kyōiku Zaidan Foundation (Foundation for the Welfare and Education of Asian People), which operated under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and established resettlement centres in the Kansai and Kantō regions where the refugees were educated so that they could integrate and adapt to the new social environment, i.e. "to Japanese society". They were taught the basics of the Japanese language, but only for three months, which is not enough even for everyday communication. Due to poor integration, they could only perform manual and unskilled jobs, although some of them had a higher education in their homeland (Nakano 1995, 61). With the arrival of the refugees, the term "*newcomers*" appeared, since until then the Koreans, who came to the country between 1910 and 1945, dominated as foreigners, so they were called "*oldcomers*".

There are some important factors regarding the integration of foreigners, and these are the changing and flexible labour market, the acquisition of citizenship, naturalization into society and the changeability of society. The willingness of immigration policy to change is also important, because often the policy's attitude towards new arrivals contributes to the creation of a dichotomy between "insiders" and "outsiders", where immigrants are left outside everything – outside the law, outside culture, outside society. This dichotomy, reflected in immigration policy, is only one manifestation of the themes that frequently appear in discussions of Japanese culture, society, and politics: Japan is a country with firmly entrenched ideas about its distinctiveness, homogeneity, and harmony (Brody 2002, 2).

Despite everything, in 2006, due to the increased number of foreigners and demographic conditions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications published a report on the promotion of "multicultural coexistence" (*tabunka kyōsei*) in local communities. This also caused changes at the local level, as local authorities, in order to deal with the issue of foreigners, started with the so-called "plans for multicultural coexistence". In this, they were ahead of the central government, which did not have a consistent national approach (Aiden 2011, 213).

8 Japan signed the United Nations Refugee Convention in 1981 (Nakano 1995, 61).

The opening up of Japan can be observed since the 1980s, when two phenomena appeared at the same time: internationalization and the purification of the Japanese identity. Internationalization (*kokusaika*)[9] has now been Japan's national goal for several decades. Capital, goods and technology flowed across the border, while essays and books on the subject proliferated. Due to contacts with the outside world, the task of analysing and presenting "Japaneseness" remained complex and sensitive. McCormack (1996, 2) argued that the stronger the belief in Japanese otherness, the deeper the concern about the consequences of internationalization with regard to economic status. The desire to refine and clarify identity is a local manifestation of the global phenomenon of identity politics. *Kokusaika*[10] also means a physical and psychological opening up. It appeared immediately after the opening up of Japan to the world after 1868 and aimed to modernize the country. Burgess (2012) points out that the term *kokusaika* is usually translated as internationalization, but it is problematic because it simultaneously promotes the idea of a mono-ethnic nation (*tan'itsu minzoku kokka*) through the control and ownership of the Other.

Debates on internationalization also brought about the concept of "different cultures" (*ibunka*), namely with the aim of labelling the cultures of others (*aite no bunka*). In recent years, the discourse on *kokusaika* began to recede under an avalanche of criticism, while the word *ibunka* has not undergone a wider critical analysis and is still present in popular and official writings. For

9 *Kokusaika* or internationalization means connecting and cooperating with the outside world, while internationalism is a political direction that strives for cooperation between nations and states based on the recognition of independence and equality (McCormack 1996, 3).

10 Japan joined the Western countries with regard to its military and international power towards the end of the First World War. After the end of the Second World War, it was the most competitive in the years until 1979, as it wanted to catch up with the world in other areas, and the term kokusaika then most often appeared in international trade and in the context of the economic development of Japanese society. It became firmly established during the time of the aforementioned Prime Minister Nakasone, when a lot of effort was put into the idea of Japan becoming an "international country". According to Ivy (in Burgess 2012), the word *kokusaika* is supposed to express the other side of the feeling of Japanese national pride, if not exactly nationalism, so it tried to Japanize everything that is foreign to Japan and spread its influence around the world. As such, this term also contained ideas that were strongly opposed to each other: assimilation, suppression and celebration of diversity. However, in the case of the "international" communities, it was mainly about "integrating into" and "adapting" to Japanese culture. However, the frequent use of the word "international" – such as "international family" or "international children" – actually caused cultural differences to disappear and become homogenized, and foreign things became exotic and were shown at "international festivals" where the Japanese were able to enjoy internationality or difference (Burgess 2012).

example, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science emphasizes the need to maintain an "international feeling" (*kokukaisei*) through experience (*taiken*) and understanding (*rikai*) of different cultures (*ibunka*) (Burgess 2012).

A similar term, which is slightly more common and appeared in the late 1990s, is *tabunka* or "many cultures/multicultural". In the past, during the period of economic internationalization, it was sometimes used to describe the relations between Japan and other (mainly Asian) countries, while in recent years, due to the more intensive immigration, it is increasingly used to describe different cultures in Japan. Here, Burgess (2012) points out that *tabunka shugi* (multiculturalism) is used in the sense of celebrating diversity "only within limited prescribed conditions". This Japanese style of multiculturalism is the successor to the term *kokusaika*, an ideological tool for maintaining a homogenous discourse on national identity. The present idea of multiculturalism is limited to "cultural exchange"[11] and "international exchange".

In the same context as the previous terms, the concept of *kyōsei* is also often used, supposedly to express coexistence.[12] In the early 1990s *kyōsei* became a key term in discussions about the improvement of economic relations between Asian countries and it refers to "Japanese" and "foreigners" living harmoniously together in Japan. This term also often appears in government campaigns to influence foreign residents to integrate into society. Today, the term is also used by residents and volunteer groups. The goal of various workshops and seminars around the country is a smooth transition to a *tabunka kyōsei shakai* (a multicultural society of coexistence). Although the term envisages equal partners, in practice it means a hierarchical relationship between superior Japanese and subordinate foreigners, whereby the former consolidate their difference, separateness and power. *Kyōsei* thus also creates boundaries that reinforce the non-membership of foreigners in Japanese society, as they remain without access to resources and power (Burgess 2008, 2012).

One of the reasons why debates about Japan's "multiculturalism", and with it words such as *kokusaika, ibunka, kyōsei* and *tabunka*, have come to the fore in Japanese society is the fact that the idea of a homogeneous Japa-

11 It is very popular to name associations, cultural centres, organizations and events using the term *kokusai kōryū*, which means international exchange. Foreigners, including foreign students, are often invited to these exchanges.

12 Literally, the term means "to live together in a certain place".

nese identity has become threatened due to the greater influx of people and pressure from minorities. This also started discussions and research on minorities, which meant a critique of the "discourse about the Japanese" (*nihonjinron*) (Amino 1990; Befu 2009; Burgess 2008, 2012; Weiner 2009; etc.) and many discussions about Japanese uniqueness. Thus, Weiner (2009) in his book disputed the "dominant paradigm" of homogeneity by emphasizing the diversity that exists in Japanese society. He was supported by Lie (2001) in his book on multi-ethnic Japan, Denoon et al. in their compendium (see McCormack 1996) and Maher and Macdonald (1995) in a compendium on diversity in Japanese culture and language. All these books were created with the aim of emphasizing the diversity that has always been present in Japan, but also always denied. Sugimoto (2009, 3) presents the paradigm shift in academia, "a transformation from the monocultural framework to the multicultural framework that analyses Japanese society from multiethnic and multiclass perspectives" and "highlights the ways in which Japanese culture is diversified and stratified along class, regional, generational and gender lines, among others (Sugimoto 2009, 3). In doing so, Burgess (2008) questions what role the term "multiculturalism" plays in the "new" Japan, as it is not about diversity per se, but rather about which group is labelled as "different" relative to the majority population. Joseph Hankins (2012, 1) added the idea that multiculturalism also means an economic and social threat, seeing it not only as a simple reflection of demographic facts, but especially as a historically derived way of accepting and acting on diversity. Multiculturalism thus establishes the criteria and values by which social inclusion or exclusion is determined, which is also conditioned by the individual's desire to transform their way of life according to the requirements of multiculturalism in an individual society.

The first wave of "newcomers" began in the 1970s, and the sociologist Komai Hiroshi (2001, 16-17) divided them into four groups: migrant women from the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand, employed mainly in the entertainment industry (*kogyo*), the aforementioned Indochinese refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, second and third generation Japanese descendants who remained in China after the Second World War, and businessmen from Europe and North America.

Due to the lack of labour force, foreign workers (*gaikokujin rōdōsha*) from the Philippines, Vietnam and India, followed by those from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Iran (after the global oil crisis) began to arrive in the country from the mid-1980s on. They were willing to do dirty (*kitanai*), dangerous (*kiken*) and hard (*kitsui*) jobs (3-K), and so these jobs were soon given another designation of 3-Ks, which stood for *kyūryō ga yasui* (poorly paid), *kyūka ga sukunai* (little rest) and *kakkō ga warui* (bad image) (Vogt 2014, 569). Soon after, still during the 1980s, there were many discussions about whether to invite foreign workers to Japan, as there was a clear need for a new workforce, which was being lost due to a rapidly aging population. One of the largest groups of foreign workers are the *Nikkei*, who were brought into the country up until the great economic crisis, and although many of them returned after this period, many of them also remained in Japan, albeit without a visa. Although the Japanese government does not officially allow the entry of foreign workers, it does allow their employment, precisely because of the large number of workers who have remained even after their visas have expired. The only ones formally allowed to stay are the *Nikkei* – people of Japanese descent who were born abroad – while foreign students can work part-time, and some foreign workers are permitted to work with internship visas, whereby Japan allows foreign workers to come, but more through the "back or side" rather than the "front" door (Kajita 1998, 121). In the early 1990s, there was also a group of 33,000 Iranian workers in Japan, mainly employed in the construction industry, until they were suddenly sent home in 1992 when the government decided to cancel their visas. A similar fate befell foreign workers who helped build infrastructure for the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics (see Kingston 2013, 137). In recent years, the demand for foreign workers has decreased slightly, but their inflow has not decreased significantly. In 2008, Japan even had to revise its Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act of 2004, as it was found that as many as 150,000 migrants remained in the country with expired visas (Kingston 2013, 137).

Kajita (1998, 121) roughly divides foreigners in Japan into three groups. The first group are those foreigners who have lived in Japan for three or four generations, such as the Koreans. The second group is the *Nikkei*, who were officially allowed to work in Japan by a change in Japan's emigration law. The third group consists of newcomers from Asia who are not officially allowed to work and are living in Japan illegally. Each group has specific characteristics, and there are also differences between individuals within groups. All these differences have caused various social tensions. In addition to the above, there is another group of foreigners, mainly Europeans and Americans, who live and work in Japan. They usually live in Japan temporarily and have no intention of settling down, although there are exceptions.

In order to enhance integration, many support centres for foreigners coming to Japan began to appear in the 1990s. The Centre for Multicultural Society in Kyoto is a non-profit organization (NPO) that has been operating since

1998 with the "purpose of realizing a multicultural society where people can live together". The centre works in multiple languages (English, Portuguese, Chinese and Korean) and implements many projects for both Japanese and non-Japanese residents to overcome inequalities related to nationality, cultural background, identities and languages, to value diversity and ensure basic human rights. In this way, foreign residents can be better connected with the Japanese in order to create a multicultural society together.

The main goal of these centres is to offer medical support, and above all to learn the Japanese language. Foreigners in Japan learn "*nihongo*", while the Japanese themselves speak "*kokugo*", which means that there exist two different concepts of the Japanese language. *Kokugo* is connected to the Japanese concept of nationalism and is understood as the national language for Japanese people. *Nihongo* is the Japanese language for foreigners, but Japanese people believe that foreigners can never truly master it (Qi 2008; see also Lee 1996). The language is thus the basis for learning about the Japanese culture and norms, which all foreign students at Japanese universities study in the introductory courses of "Japanese language and culture".

In addition, Japan also differentiates its problems with foreigners according to the length of their stay in the country. Foreigners who have already settled in Japan and have the status of *zainichi* and those who have arrived anew (*newcomers*) are quite different from each other, not only in their knowledge of Japanese, but also in the field of employment and in their way of life, which is why political measures must be adjusted according to each foreign community. Today, the largest group of foreigners is the Chinese, who have been immigrating to Japan for the past decade as newcomers. They have thus come to outnumber the Koreans who immigrated to Japan as oldcomers between 1910 and 1945, and later as newcomers from the 1960s onwards. Until 2011, the *Nikkei* were in third place, and since 2012 it has been the Filipinos (Vogt 2014, 360). The first three communities of foreigners are briefly presented below.

4.1 Koreans

Today, Koreans are the second largest "foreign" community with permanent residence in Japan. They were the first group of workers to immigrate *en masse* to Japan to work in factories and mines and to do other hard work. Even today, despite the similarity in appearance and considerable acculturation and integration into Japanese society, fourth and fifth generation Koreans still experience discrimination at the level of both the state and society, although their organizations have been quite successful in their struggles for rights (see Inadsugi 2002). Most of them have Korean citizenship,[13] since Japan only recognizes *jus sanguinis* (right by blood) and not *jus soli* (right by place of birth), which means that at least one of the parents must have Japanese citizenship. Some individuals can fully integrate into society and become "naturalized". This process has in fact become much simpler for Koreans in recent years, but it is still a very complex and bureaucratic procedure, which can also include changing a Korean name to a Japanese one. Additionally, Japan does not recognize dual citizenship, so those seeking naturalization must renounce their Korean citizenship (see Brown 2015). In Japan, resident Koreans have the status of "special permanent resident (*tokubetsu eijūsha*)", which gives them access to the Japanese social welfare system and pension and health insurance. However, as foreigners they do not have the right to vote, and there are certain pension and social security provisions that do not apply to them. In addition, they cannot be employed in some public services (Visočnik 2016).

In research on the Korean minority, we can roughly highlight three periods,[14] when the most changes took place in the Korean community in terms of social and legal status: 1. from the end of the Second World War to 1965, when Japan and South Korea signed an agreement on the normalization of relations; 2. from 1965 to 1991, when Korean immigrants were granted "special permanent residence" (*tokubetsu eijū*) status, which unified the conditions of residence for all ex-colonized groups living in Japan and their descendants; 3. from 1991 to the present day – this is the period of increased naturalization, there are more movements for local elections, and the number of marriages between Japanese and Koreans and the number of children of mixed parents have increased. Hester (2008, 140) calls the first period "repartitism", when most Koreans returned to Korea, the second period is the time of "stabilization" of living conditions, and the third is the time of "domestication approach" (*denizenship*),[15] which in modern Japan is most prevalent among young Koreans.

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13 Koreans were granted Japanese citizenship when they arrived in Japan, but in 1952 the Japanese government forcibly took it away from them, even though this was against international law. So they were forced to regain Korean citizenship, which changed again after the political division of the Koreas, when they had to decide which Korea they belonged to. This was an ideologically supported decision, as most Koreans came from the South of Korea, but quite a few also decided to choose North Korean citizenship.

14 For a more detailed review of the situation of Koreans in Japan, see Fukuoka (2000), Ryang (2005), Visočnik (2013), Weiner (2009) and other others.

15 With permanent residence, but without citizenship.

4.2 The Chinese

In the mid-1980s, a large number of Chinese immigrated to Japan, and in recent years they have become the largest foreign group in the country. Many Chinese acquire Japanese citizenship, and marriages with the Japanese are also the most numerous compared to with other groups of foreigners. Compared to the *Nikkei*, the Chinese have greater language skills and fewer problems integrating into Japanese society and the workplace. Nevertheless, like other foreigners they face discrimination. Most of them start working in Japanese companies, but soon leave and try their luck on their own, because the working conditions in Japanese companies are restrictive. Women face extra restrictions due to their gender and therefore choose other jobs that do not hinder them in their careers. According to Kingston (2013, 144), Chinese immigrants are aware that they cannot fully assimilate into Japanese society, but they also do not want to. Instead, they seek profitable niches as transnational entrepreneurs by exploiting China's economic progress, namely as intermediaries between the two countries.

Many Chinese students are enrolled in Japanese universities, thus ensuring a strong inflow of educated labour (*white-collar*), as they are often employed in Japanese companies after completing their studies. As a result, the xenophobic attitude towards foreigners should slowly begin to loosen, at least in political circles and among employers, if not in the wider masses. Prejudice against the Chinese is still widespread in Japan, and the government is especially concerned about their criminal activity (Kingston 2013, 45). They face discrimination especially when looking for an apartment, and they are often stopped by the police for identification. They are often exploited in workplaces, and many of them are included in only three- to five-year programs,[16] after which they rarely get regular employment. Those who have been employed for five years can apply for "permanent residence", and most have visas of various categories (Vogt 2014, 571).

16 Ever since 1999, the Ministry of Justice has been issuing permits for the implementation of the internship program in small companies with 20 employees. Since then, the number of foreign workers has grown exponentially. In 2009, their number increased further with changes to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, which allowed companies to hire workers for an additional year after completing a two-year internship. Unfortunately, violations of labour and human rights often occurred in this system, and there was also non-compliance with the statutory minimum wage. Despite everything, these programmes were very attractive for young Chinese men and women (Vogt 2014, 572).

4.3 Nikkei

The *Nikkei*, or *Nikkeijin*, are Japanese emigrants displaced around the world, but most often this term is used for newcomers from Brazil, and some from Peru, who came to Japan to perform mainly unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the 1980s. These workers got permanent residence a few decades later, but they still face the problem of integration into society, mainly due to their lack of language skills and a different, non-Japanese culture. In 2009, around 370,000 of them were employed, mostly in factories or workshops, often automotive. In 2008-2009, many workers lost their jobs due to the economic crisis. At a time when they were losing their jobs, and in some cases their homes, the Japanese government introduced a controversial initiative to give each Japanese-born worker from Brazil ¥300,000 for a plane ticket and another ¥200,000 for their dependents if they returned home. This would, of course, be a one-way ticket with no possibility of return.[17] Due to mass opposition and condemnation of this proposal, the government tried to soften it by allowing them to return after three years, but they would have to reapply for a long-term visa that allows them to work indefinitely (Brody 2002, 30; Kingston 2013, 141).

It is interesting to observe the attitude of the government and politicians who made this possible, as they were convinced that the arrival of these Brazilians in Japan would not require any measures to integrate them, since they were "Japanese". Such thinking was soon proven wrong. Indeed, many ethnographic studies (see Tsuda 2003) shed light on discrimination in everyday life. They show disputes with the Japanese community over littering, young people walking outside in the evening and parking all over the place, as happened in the prefectures of Aichi, Shizuoka, Mie and Gunma, which had the largest Brazilian communities. Although most of these immigrants had a permit for "long-term residence", "permanent residence" or a "child or spouse" visa, they soon became undesirable in society.

5 Laws and regulations

After examining the three groups of foreigners, it is clear that immigration took place under different circumstances, accompanied by different measures and legal regulations. Since 1990, the number of registered foreign workers in Japan has increased significantly, which can also be attributed to

17 Kingston (2013, 141) noted that Spain came up with a similar initiative, which sent foreign workers home, but they were allowed to return at any time or at least after three years.

the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (*shutsunyukoku kanri oyobi nanmin ninteiho*). This law is based on the original Migration Control Ordinance (*shutsunyukoku kanri rei*) of 1951, which came into force in 1981. Its main purpose was to regulate the entry and residence of foreign nationals in Japan. It defines 27 visa categories, but only four allow unconditional work, five do not allow work, and one visa allows work only for specialist interns. Seventeen visa categories allow work for certain professions, such as managers or professors for a certain period of time, ranging from three to five years (Vogt 2014, 569).

As mentioned above, the Japanese government has recently started to give in to internal and external pressures and to loosen its strict immigration policy. In 2018, it presented a plan to attract more manual workers to the country. As the population ages the third strongest economy in the world is increasingly facing a labour shortage. New workers are most eagerly sought in agriculture, construction, shipbuilding and nursing. Under the proposed new legislation, foreigners with relevant skills will be offered a work visa for a period of five years. Those with more competencies and a certain level of knowledge of Japanese will be able to bring family members with them and obtain a permanent residence permit (A.P.J. 2018).

The government forwarded the proposal to parliament, which adopted a draft of the new law in November 2018, with the aim that the new legislation would enter into force in April 2019. As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe emphasized, the goal of the measure is not to drastically change Japan's immigration policy, so mass immigration is not expected. Despite this, the draft has already faced many criticisms from politicians, while business owners claim that it is absolutely necessary. Critics of the proposal warn of the danger of increasing the crime rate in the country and the negative impact on wages, while the opposition accuses the government of unnecessary haste without first taking care to legislate the rights of foreign workers (Obe 2019).

The Minister of Justice Yamashita Takashi said the government would not set a cap on immigration, and Japanese media reported that half a million manual workers could eventually enter the country, a 40% increase. Japan has been gradually opening the doors to its labour market in recent years, but until now it has mostly welcomed highly skilled individuals and professionals from certain fields, and this shows Japan's caution in immigration law (Dasgupta 2019). The exception were immigrants from South America with Japanese roots. After many warnings from companies in recent years that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find staff, the government has apparently decided to ease the pressure and relax the rules.

The new draft law proposes the creation of two new visa categories for foreigners, suitable for working in those industrial sectors where there is the greatest labour shortage. It is not known what these sectors are, but there are said to be more than a dozen of them, ranging from agriculture and construction to hotel and nursing jobs. Foreigners applying for the first visa category will need to have certain work experience in their field and demonstrate the ability to learn the Japanese language. They will be able to get a job for a maximum of five years, but family members will not be allowed to come with them. Those more qualified, who will fall into the second visa category, will be able to stay in the country with family members, and after a certain period they will be able to apply for permanent residence (A.P.J. 2018).

6 Conclusions

By examining the various historical and social backgrounds that are the cause of the current state of ethnic relations in modern Japan, we can see that it is difficult for Japanese people to change their attitudes and social structures in order to establish a kinder and more just society for themselves and foreigners. Of course, there is no recipe for how to solve these problems, but according to the latest data and newspaper reports, things are changing. Although the Japanese have long looked through their country's half-open (or half-closed) doors with doubt, social and economic conditions are forcing them to slowly open those doors.

Even today, Japan is not as ethnically diverse as, for example, the United States of America, and despite changes in immigration policy, it persists in denying its growing multi-ethnicity. The idea of mono-ethnicity and a homogeneous nation continues to dominate the collective consciousness, although the number of international marriages and children from ethnically mixed families and the influx of foreigners into the country are also increasing. Thus Japan, which has long been considered to be a homogenous country inhabited by Japanese people with Japanese culture and speaking the Japanese language, has faced increasing pressure over the past two or three decades to reject this idea. Ideas about multiculturalism and coexistence with other cultures are coming to the fore, which is reflected in the wide range of activities that the Japanese government and also non-governmental organizations now carry out mostly with the aim of integrating such diversity into society. The focus is primarily on learning the Japanese language, which should enable foreigners to integrate into society more easily. They can also take part in various events and groups, where Japanese volunteers enthusiastically present their country and culture to them.

However, we can quickly find that while learning the Japanese language and culture together with the presentation of Japanese culture and norms can help people to integrate into society more easily, it also serve rather to Japanize foreigners. As such, in the Japanese political context "multiculturalism" – as used by Japanese institutions – rather conceptualizes the idea of "anti-multiculturalism" (Burgess 2008). When following the literal meaning of the words there is a danger of being misled, because we can quickly find that multiculturalism and multicultural education simultaneously cause inclusion and exclusion, especially when it comes to the education of immigrant children. This type of multiculturalism is not intended for cultural minorities, but primarily for the social and cultural majority. In the context of Japanese politics, the main approach is to overcome cultural friction, and for the Japanese to spread their culture around the world, rather than to better understand foreign cultures. The idea of multiculturalism as present in Japan today is limited to "cultural exchange" and "international exchange". It is especially interesting that the application of the idea of multiculturalism to Japanese society only works for newcomers, while it does not apply to the same extent for already existing minorities. Therefore, a great deal of scepticism and critical attitude is required when exploring contemporary ideas about "multicultural" Japan.

Immigration is a very sensitive topic that divides the Japanese, who keep avoiding agreements on this topic. Various questions arise: which workers should be allowed to enter, only the skilled or also the unskilled, what their number should be and where should they come from, how long should they stay and under what conditions (Kingston 2012, 138). This discourse is often influenced by notions that foreigners are often responsible for criminal acts, although this has not been proven statistically, and their offenses are most commonly due to visa-related offenses rather than anything more serious.

Advocates of opening the doors point to a shrinking population, imminent and looming labour shortages, and the need for more taxpayers to sustain the nation's health and pension systems. Opponents, however, insist that the current level of homogeneity should be maintained and warn of the pitfalls of accepting more foreign residents as there is a concern that until Japan legislates the protection of the human rights of foreign workers, it should not accept them either. This situation is expected to be regulated to a large extent with the adoption of a new law in April 2019, and only time will tell whether for foreign workers the situation will improve[18].

These situations show that not only public opinion but also a government continues to be negative. Like in other countries, immigration has not elicited positive responses from Japan's politicians, bureaucrats, media, employers, police, or the general populace, and significant changes in attitude are unlikely. A remarkable level of cognitive dissonance has led to inaction, as denial is the easiest route.

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18 The crisis caused by Covid-19 in 2019 and 2020 delayed the execution of the law, as the borders were closed. On April 3rd, 2020, the Japanese government banned the entry of all foreigners into Japan, including re-entry for foreign workers and long-term foreign residents who had been living in Japan for many years. All countries tried to prevent the spread of the pandemic by restricting the movement of people. However, Japan was the only one among the G7 and OECD countries that prohibited not only short-term visitors, like tourists and people on short-term business trips, but also the re-entry of foreign middle- and long-term residents. These restrictions affected those who work in Japan, such as businesspeople, university professors, researchers in institutes, students, interns, spouses of Japanese citizens, and residents with permanent residence status. Exceptions were made only for so-called 'special permanent residents' or Zainichi Koreans and Chinese, who could re-enter the country under the condition that they be tested and, if positive, either quarantine for two weeks or go to a hospital in Japan. The consequences varied according to each person's situation, but in many cases, they placed people in unbearable circumstances.

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Saša ISTENIČ KOTAR

East Asia: Key Security and Political Challenges[1]

Abstract

East Asia, part of the world's largest and most populous continent, is taking on an increasingly important role in global political, economic and security matters. While regional economic integration has flourished over the past two decades, cooperation in the security domain remains very modest, which is – considering the regional flashpoints, such as the Taiwan Strait, North Korea, the East and the South China Sea – a matter of great concern. Even though China's rise has accelerated the processes of regionalism and the formation of new integrations, East Asian countries remain increasingly anxious about Chinese strategic intentions and ambitions. The article argues that the absence of trust in the face of increasing military spending, is creating a security dilemma, which is very difficult to resolve due to the region's geostrategic importance. Without a US presence, the region would be unstable, and likewise, the strained relations between the US and China endanger regional stability, too. While the Chinese government opposes the US's presence in the region and makes no secret of its ambitions to create a new multilateral security architecture, more and more countries seem to side with the American definition of China as a revisionist power, challenging the existing world order.

Keywords: East Asia, security cooperation, USA, PR China, South China Sea, Taiwan, world order

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1 The article partially summarizes and connects to the research published in Razprave FF (Istenič 2016).

Povzetek - Vzhodna Azija: ključni varnostno-politični izzivi

Vzhodna Azija leži na največji in najbolj obljudeni celini sveta, ki prevzema vse pomembnejšo vlogo v globalnih političnih, gospodarskih in varnostnih zadevah. Medtem ko je gospodarsko povezovanje v regiji v zadnjih dveh desetletjih na vrhuncu, sodelovanje na varnostnem področju še vedno močno zaostaja, kar je ob perečih regionalnih kriznih žariščih, kot so Tajvanska ožina, Severna Koreja ter Vzhodno- in Južnokitajsko morje, nadvse zaskrbljujoče. Čeravno je kitajski vzpon pospešil procese regionalizma in oblikovanje novih integracij, se med vzhodnoazijskimi državami povečuje nelagodje glede kitajskih strateških namer in ambicij. Prispevek temelji na tezi, da odsotnost zaupanja ob čedalje večji vojaški potrošnji posledično ustvarja varnostno dilemo, ta pa je zaradi geostrateškega pomena, ki ga imajo vsa omenjena območja, težko rešljiva. Brez prisotnosti ZDA v regiji ni stabilnosti, prav tako pa je ta ogrožena zaradi napetih odnosov med ZDA in Ljudsko republiko Kitajsko. Medtem ko kitajska vlada vse glasneje nasprotuje ameriški navzočnosti v regiji in ne skriva svojih ambicij po vzpostavitvi nove multilateralne varnostne strukture, ZDA dobivajo vse več somišljenikov v svoji opredelitvi Ljudske republike Kitajske kot revizionistične sile, ki ogroža obstoječi svetovni red.

Ključne besede: Vzhodna Azija, varnostno sodelovanje, ZDA, Ljudska republika Kitajska, Južnokitajsko morje, Tajvan, svetovni red

1 Introduction

East Asia is actually a rather enigmatic term. Although the name has been in use among academics and government institutions for several decades, international bodies still do not agree on a common definition of the region and its members. This is because regions are primarily political formations, ideological and social constructs shaped by political-economic and social processes. As a result, there are quite different ideas about the delimitation of the Asian region. In a broader geographical sense, East Asia can be defined as a region consisting of two sub-regional entities: Southeast Asia, which includes Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and East Timor (Timor-Leste), and Northeast Asia, which includes Japan, South Korea, the People's Republic of China (including the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao), Mongolia, North Korea and Taiwan. In most cases, the term East Asia refers only to the area of the Korean Peninsula (South and North Korea), the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Japan.

Regardless of whether we view the region in the broader geographical or narrower cultural-political sense, East Asia is undoubtedly the largest and most populous continent in the world and plays an increasingly important role in global political, economic and security affairs. Over the past two decades, the countries of East Asia have grown noticeably closer together, especially in the formation of a common regional identity and the search for unique regional values, such as Confucianism, which, given the extraordinary diversity of the region, justifies its regional cohesion more than anything else (Rošker 2016). The diverse physical landscape undoubtedly had a strong influence on the uneven development of the region and the different levels of development and living standards of its countries. The idea of uniformity is also complicated by vastly different religious traditions, ethnic and linguistic groups and the contrasting economic and political systems. Nevertheless, the diversity of the region has never diminished the importance of its role in the world. In fact, for most of recorded human history, Asian civilisations have been among the world's most advanced and sophisticated in the fields of science and technology, trade, agriculture, and infrastructure, whereas Europe was still rather backward before the 16th century. Historical sources attest that up until the end of the 18th century, East Asia was more productive and had much more power and influence on the global economy than the West (Frank 1998, 174). However, isolationism and numerous wars abruptly reversed this trend.

Only in recent decades has relative peace enabled stable development of the region. In addition, it fostered the development of various integrative economic, political and social processes – i.e. processes of regionalism.[2] These processes defined the regional borders more precisely and strengthened the sense of togetherness and belonging to the East Asian region. A particularly intensive development also took place in the area of economic integration. This was triggered, ironically, mainly by the Asian financial crisis of 1997/98, which highlighted the close connection of regional economies and thus also their vulnerability. As a result, the countries realised that it would be much easier and more effective to defend their interests if they worked together and acted in a more institutionalised form. Thus, the East Asian region was gradually swept by a wave of regionalisation processes, which, due to the complexity and interconnectedness, acquired a picturesque metaphor with the phrase "the noodle bowl" (Baldwin 2006).

Although economic integration in the region has reached its peak in the last two decades, cooperation in the security field is still severely limited, which is extremely worrying given the regional crisis hotspots such as the Taiwan Strait, North Korea and the East and South China Seas. Moreover, there is

2 Regionalism can be defined as 'structures, processes and agreements that are working towards greater coherence within a specific international region in terms of economic, political, security, socio-cultural and other kinds of linkages' (Dent 2008, 7).

no institution in the region (such as NATO) whose members would maintain and develop their own defence forces and provide the basis for collective security. The region's security structure is mainly based on individual bilateral security agreements, in which the USA also plays a key role (*ibid*.).

2 Review of Security Cooperation

The trouble spots mentioned are only a small part of the security challenges in East Asia. The region is also heavily burdened by many non-traditional security problems, such as cross-border crime, terrorism, piracy, pandemics, natural disasters, and so on. A broad spectrum of security challenges has stimulated the formation of a rather complex network of overlapping bilateral and multilateral security agreements, which, however, compared to similar alliances formed in Europe, are still relatively weakly institutionalized and are more or less limited to addressing non-traditional threats to regional security. The backbone of the security structure in the region are the bilateral security alliances between the US and its most important East Asian allies: Japan (1951), South Korea (1953), Thailand (1954), and the Philippines (1951). Security cooperation between the US and Singapore and between the US and Taiwan is also very strong. In the latter case, *Taiwan Relations Act* of 1979 plays a key role guaranteeing the island a regular supply of defense weapons to protect it from a possible Chinese attack. This so-called "hub and spoke" system, in which the US is the hub and its allies are the individual spokes, has only grown stronger in recent years, in parallel with China's economic and military rise in the region.

Although many regional agreements were concluded in the 1950s and 1960s to increase the security and stability of the East Asian region, most of them did not last. The *South East Asia Treaty Organisation* (SEATO), a defence alliance founded in 1954, was seen as a kind of Asian NATO, but dissolved completely by 1977. Despite the common desire to prevent the spread of communism, the member states had completely different ideas about the "common enemy". The rapid disintegration of the *Association of Southeast Asia* (ASA) and the *Asian-Pacific Council* (ASPAC), which were founded in the early 1960s, was followed by the successful establishment of the key *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN)[3] in 1967. ASEAN is the only institutionalised organisation in the Asian region to have survived the Cold War and, to-

3 The current members of ASEAN are Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

gether with the *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation* (APEC),[4] is now, the most important political and economic alliance in the Asian region. Although ASEAN initially pursued security policy objectives aimed at curbing the growing power of communism in the region, the economic interests of the member states soon prevailed (*ibid*.). This was confirmed in 2015 with the establishment of the *ASEAN Economic Community* (AEC), which was modelled on the European Union (EU) to create a comprehensive free trade area in the region. In 2017, ASEAN was already the sixth largest economy in the world and is expected to reach fourth place by 2030 (*Singapore Business Review* 2018).

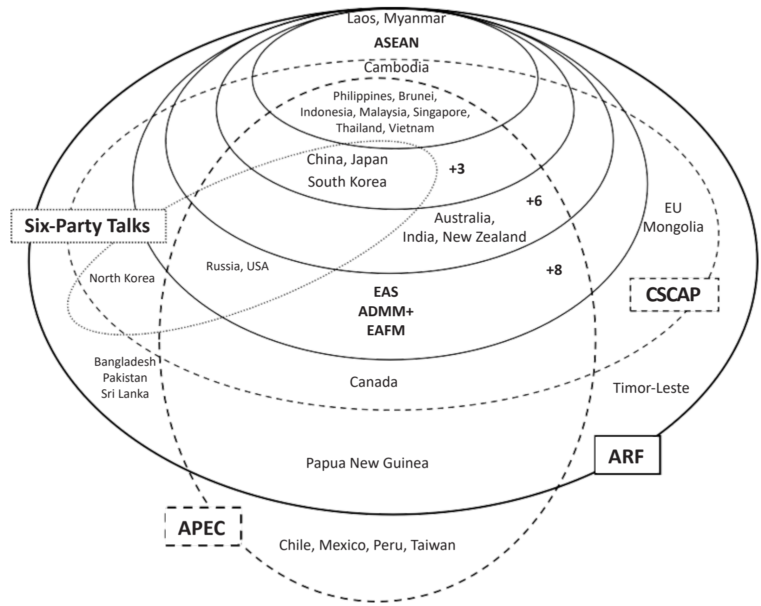
In line with this extremely rapid economic growth, ASEAN is increasingly looking for member states to take a more proactive approach to resolving pressing security issues in the region. However, despite these aspirations, the association remains only a forum for regional dialogue. As a result, ASEAN is not comparable to an institution like the EU that can concretely solve pressing problems in the region. The informal nature of decision-making, the principle of non-interference and discretion have led to a code of conduct, nicknamed the "ASEAN way". The code allows members to engage in a kind of political dialogue behind the scenes and prevents the public media from finding about it, since media exposure often means a loss of face for state leaders, which is particularly sensitive in Asian cultures. This informal nature often leads to many non-binding compromises or "empty" words uttered by member states (*ibid*.). For example, while the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meetings (ADMM and ADMM+)[5] and the ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum)[6] represent a very important security dialogue, they do not provide fundamental collective security and remain at the level of mere "dialogue" (*ibid*.). This is most evident in the region when it comes to disputed territories such as the South China Sea. Making a joint declaration that would suit everyone is a major problem for state leaders, with the People's Republic of China being the "elephant in the room" (*The Straits Times* 2015, *Lendon and Murray* 2018).

4 APEC was founded in 1989 and has 21 members: Australia, Brunei, Chile, Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Canada, People's Republic of China, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam and the US.

5 The ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) began in 2006. It is the highest defense mechanism within ASEAN and, in addition to the ASEAN members, includes the US, PRC, Russia, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. In 2010, with the ADMM+ mechanism, the programme set additional goals in the areas of maritime security, counter-terrorism, response to natural disasters, peacekeeping operations and military medicine (ADMM, 2015).

6 The ASEAN Regional Forum, ARF, was established in 1994 and is considered the first formal multilateral forum for consultations on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region (ARF, 2015).

In 2016 for example, the Philippine government turned to the International Court of Justice in The Hague for help in resolving territorial disputes in the South China Sea, rather than ASEAN. Similarly, issues related to Taiwan cannot be included in any core ASEAN security dialogue due to opposition from the Chinese government.



Graph 1: Intertwining of regional formations in East Asia (source: the author).

Although the East Asian countries see China's rise primarily as an economic opportunity and are endeavoring to forge closer ties with the People's Republic of China, they are also deeply concerned about the country's strategic intentions and ambitions. The fact is that the tactics chosen by the government in Beijing to deal with territorial disputes allow the use of military force, whether in the South China Sea or the Taiwan Strait. And the lack of mutual trust in the face of rising military spending understandably creates a security dilemma[7] that makes the US presence in the region all the more desirable. Although economic integration and the resulting interdependence of countries is a relatively effective mechanism for building trust and avoiding

7 The so-called "*security dilemma*" in international relations stems from the notion that the competition for security between countries leads to a situation where the efforts of one country to achieve its absolute security trigger a feeling of absolute threat in other countries. As a result of connecting the security of the state with the accumulation of power and armament, a vicious circle is created (Hertz 1950).

conflict, it cannot act as a sufficiently powerful “weapon” to guarantee the security of countries.

3 The Role of the People’s Republic of China

The economic rise of China has predictably further accelerated the processes of regionalism and the creation of new economic integrations in East Asia. All countries in the region want to participate in the opportunities offered by the gigantic Chinese market. The People’s Republic of China is thus already the largest economic partner of most East Asian countries and the ASEAN community as a whole (*CGTN* 2018). Economic factors are the key driver of regionalism processes, which is reflected in new initiatives in the area of comprehensive free trade agreements such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)[8] and the Regional Economic Partnership (RCEP).[9] Most attention is focused on the initiatives of the People’s Republic of China, as they could change the balance of the global economy and greatly increase China’s influence. Two of its initiatives take centre stage: the multi-billion-dollar New Silk Road, or the Belt and Road project,[10] which aims to improve connectivity between Asia and Europe, and the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), which could become a serious competitor to the US-led World Bank.

These large-scale projects have understandably caused considerable unease among the existing global superpowers, particularly the US. The administration led by President Donald Trump has created an explicit narrative of the People’s Republic of China as a major strategic rival and revisionist power[11] that threatens American interests. By expanding its state-led model of capitalism, Beijing is allegedly destroying the geopolitical order created after the

8 This is a mega-regional free trade agreement aimed at increasing trade and investment, which the US promoted in 2005, although it later withdrew from negotiations in 2017. At present, 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region are negotiating a renewed partnership.

9 A free trade agreement between ASEAN members and six partners with whom ASEAN already has a free trade agreement: Australia, India, Japan, the PRC, New Zealand and South Korea. Negotiations began in November 2012 at the initiative of the PRC.

10 China’s ambitious global initiative “(One) Belt and (One) Road” (一帶一路 *yi dai yi lu*, Belt and Road Initiative – BRI), which Xi Jinping first presented to the public in 2013, includes land and sea connectivity with a strategy of developing large-scale infrastructure projects and new transport connections. It represents a key component of China’s economy, diplomacy and military strategy and systematically strengthens China’s influence in the world.

11 The term “revisionist” here denotes a power that seeks to replace the existing power relations.

Cold War and attempting to create a world that would be completely incompatible with US values and interests. Thus, the People's Republic of China is clearly defined as one of the greatest threats and enemies of the United States in the US National Security Strategy (NSS) report published at the end of 2017, which was also confirmed by all the measures proposed by the Pentagon (The White House 2017 and the US Department of Defense 2018b).

In turn, the Chinese government is increasingly rejecting the American presence in Asia and makes no secret of its ambitions to establish itself as a regional and global superpower and build a new multilateral security structure, as the latest report of the Party Congress shows (Xi 2017). For the party regime in Beijing, the weakening of US security ties in the region is of crucial importance. The regime's ideal Sinocentric regional order would subordinate America's democratic allies to the PRC and significantly limit US trade, physical and perhaps even virtual access to the world's most dynamic region, while consolidating a group of countries that would consistently support Beijing leadership's policies. Many analysts compare China's approach to the strategy pursued by the US after the Second World War. Back then, America took a leading role in steering the world's capitalist economy and successfully won over the world's most developed countries to its side (Overholt 2015, 2). It seems that a new structure is emerging that is quite similar to the American system of hub and spokes, except that the ties that the PRC is forging with its Asian partners are mainly based on economic cooperation and non-traditional security issues (Lee 2015).

Due to the lack of trust, China's major investments in the New Silk Road quickly became the subject of heated debate among governments on all continents of the world. Not only do many nations fear that these investments could have a major impact on their critical infrastructures and potentially threaten national security, but they are also concerned about indirect effects. Attractive Chinese investment acts as an invisible force behind the scenes, guiding each country's stance on issues of critical importance to Beijing, such as disputed territories or human rights. In 2016, for example, Hungary and Greece prevented a unanimous EU agreement on China's disputes in the South China Sea, and in 2017 Greece even blocked the EU's condemnation of human rights violations in China (*MERICS Report* 2018, 16). The desire for capital is increasingly leading to ruthless self-censorship by Chinese partners, be it in the economic, political or academic sphere. Many economists, politicians and academics are increasingly critical of China's rhetoric, even though it overlaps with the national interests of their own countries. Due to shrinking financial resources, many global media outlets are embracing Chinese propaganda with open arms as it brings them guaranteed profits (*MERICS Report* 2018, 20-27). Similarly, many publishers are reluctant to print books that are too critical of the Chinese authorities because they do not want their books to be excluded from the huge and profitable Chinese market.[12] Chinese takeovers of companies in strategic industries and the strengthening of Chinese influence have significantly increased the concerns of governments in many countries. The US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the EU have already prepared special mechanisms to control "foreign" investments (Edwards 2018).

It is clear that the PRC has become more self-confident and determined because it wants to gain a greater voice, more power and influence in the global world. It wants to be at the forefront and be a responsible and respected member of the international community, with very ambitious long-term geopolitical plans, and its rise is already gradually contributing to the reshaping of the international order. It is visibly assuming an increasingly influential role in global governance – at the G20 summit, in the multilateral development banks and in the associations mentioned above. The question that remains unanswered, however, is what kind of world order the Chinese government actually wants. There is no doubt that regional dominance would provide China with a secure base from which it could extend its power to the Western hemisphere. The government in Beijing has long been dissatisfied with the existing status quo in East Asia, particularly in the maritime area to the east and south of its coast. Its main goal is to gain supremacy over all waters, territories and resources in the South China Sea and over a large part of the East China Sea. It also wants to take control of Taiwan, which Beijing sees as a dangerous example of a successfully established democracy in an ethnic Chinese society and thus as a significant ideological threat. Numerous current analyses confirm that the South China Sea and Taiwan are among the most important potential trouble spots where an armed conflict could break out at any moment (Zheng 2018).

4 China's desire for domination over the South China Sea

The South China Sea stretches from Singapore to the Strait of Malacca in the south-west and the Taiwan Strait in the north-east. It is surrounded by the PRC, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. It is

12 Even the world's two largest academic publishing houses bowed before Chinese pressure, censoring more than 1,000 articles on their online portals (Hernández 2017).

one of the most important trade routes in the world, with more than 70% of the world's total shipping traffic passing through its international waters. It has excellent geological conditions necessary for the formation of hydrocarbons, especially oil and natural gas (EIA 2013). This area therefore plays an important strategic and political role in the Asia-Pacific region, and territorial claims and disputes over jurisdiction over maritime areas lead to constant conflict. The greatest tension in the area are caused by the PRC, which is attempting to appropriate up to 90% of the waters and encroach on other countries' special economic zones by building facilities and artificial islands.[13] It is also rapidly expanding its navy and extending its military arsenal in the vicinity of the disputed islands.

In July 2016, the government in Beijing coolly rejected the decision of the Hague Arbitration Court, which stated that there was no evidence that China had ever exercised exclusive control over the waters and resources of the South China Sea (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC 2016). The arbitration tribunal thus ruled that the country has no legal basis to claim historical rights to the islands in the sea. The PRC bases its sovereignty over almost the entire surface of the South China Sea on the concept of its historical right, which it imposes rather dominantly on all its neighbours with whom it has a territorial dispute. By secretly occupying the sea, which it regards as "its lake", it has effectively already created a new status quo. With the extensive militarisation of the area, the South China Sea has effectively become a dangerous area, despite the 2017 Code of Conduct between the PRC and ASEAN states. The government in Beijing does not accept or recognise the ruling of the international court and continues to build facilities on the disputed islands and deploy anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missiles without interruption, significantly increasing the possibility of conflict (Davis 2018). Former US Secretary of Defence James Mattis was very clear when he stated that the "Ming Dynasty appears to be their model, albeit in a more muscular manner" (US Department of Defense 2018c). During the Ming dynasty, i.e. between the 14th and 17th centuries, China conditioned the entry of smaller neighbours into its market with demands for territorial and economic concessions. To counter the spread of Chinese influence in the South China Sea, the US is rapidly expanding its strategy for a free and open Indo-Pacific region, working with Japan, India, Australia and other like-minded countries (AFP 2018).

13 The US Department of Defense has stated that by June 2015, China had already reclaimed more than 2,900 acres (1,174 hectares) of South China Sea territory by putting sand on the slopes of the Spratly Islands (*Nansha qundao* 南沙群島). For more detailed information, see US Department of Defense (2015, 16).

The South China Sea has thus become the theatre where the struggle between the two superpowers, China and the US, is most evident. While Beijing publicly asserts that Washington cannot interfere with its plans, the US assures the countries in the region that it is still an important player (Ghosh 2018). For Taiwan, US support is certainly vital, as without it Taiwan would most likely have lost its current autonomy, while for the US, with its geostrategic location, Taiwan is also a key player in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Like the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait is an extremely important international waterway that is deeply embedded in global trade flows.

5 China's desire for domination over Taiwan

While China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea are worrisome, Beijing's continued provocations towards Taiwan are far more ominous. It is quite clear that the Communist Party's goal is not the preservation of the current situation, but the forced unification of Taiwan with the PRC, even at the risk of bloody war. For Beijing, maintaining Taiwan's status as a *de facto* independent and consolidated democratic state is one of the biggest obstacles to the realisation of China's long-term strategic plans. Therefore, the government in Beijing has made it clear on several occasions that it is prepared to jeopardise stability in the Taiwan Strait. Beijing's threats have been a constant since 1949. Not only does the Chinese military have around 1,500 warheads and more than 1,000 advanced aircraft aimed at Taiwan, but the possible use of military force against Taiwan has even been legalised.[14] The year 2049, when the People's Republic of China will celebrate its centenary, is increasingly being cited as the date for unification. The statements of the Chinese leadership are becoming increasingly relentless. In October 2017, President Xi Jinping threatened in a speech at the Central Party Congress: "We will never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, at any time or in any form, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China" (*Xinhua* 2017b). At the beginning of his second presidential term in March 2018, he was even a shade harsher in his address: "It is never allowed and it is absolutely impossible to separate any inch of our great country's

14 Article 8 of the Anti-Secession Law states: "In the event that the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the state shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

territory from China. Any actions and tricks to split China are certain to meet with the people's condemnation and the punishment by history." He also warned that the PRC is ready for a "bloody battle" to regain its rightful place in the world (*Xinhua* 2018). In January 2019, however, Xi gave his most incisive speech yet, saying that the unification of Taiwan with China was imminent and that it must be carried out by the current generation of Chinese leaders. He warned again that Beijing is also ready for military intervention, if necessary. He warned the international community that his country would not tolerate "external interference", which was undoubtedly aimed primarily at the US (*Xinhua* 2019).

It is quite obvious that this extremely strong nationalist charge will not allow the Chinese regime, elite or people to agree to Taiwan's sovereignty in the near future. Moreover, the leadership in Beijing is well aware that unification with the developed island would bring it rich economic and military assets and strategically strengthen China's power. All this explains Beijing's unwavering desire to curb Taiwan's current *de facto* independence. The continued rise of China will certainly have a very large and mainly negative impact on Taiwan. Over the past decade, the balance of military power in the Taiwan Strait has shifted significantly in favour of the PRC (US Department of Defense 2018a). The rapid modernisation of China's military has fundamentally changed Taiwan's security options. Moreover, a costly and exhausting war with China's powerful military in the remote Taiwan Strait is most likely not in the interests of the US, Taiwan's most important security ally. This is confirmed by past heated debates about whether it would not be much more beneficial for the US to stop supporting the island (Bernkopf Tucker & Glaser 2011). However, Washington's current security policy guidelines show that the vast majority of American analysts agree that Taiwan remains an important component of US security strategy. Many analysts also believe that the Chinese army is not yet capable of mountinga fully successful amphibious assault on Taiwan or countering a serious blockade (Beckley 2017). And even if Washington is unwilling to intervene directly in such a war, it has the power to thwart the Chinese military's plans. The US undoubtedly has a very strong motivation to strengthen Taiwan's role in its anti-China coalition. They do not want China to occupy an island that plays such an important strategic role in the Pacific, i.e. in the area where the most important air and sea routes run.

Together with the US, Taiwan will therefore try above all to dissuade Beijing from assuming that the Chinese army could conquer Taiwan without a bloody battle, enormous costs and major complications. It will certainly do everything in its power to maintain the current political status quo. The fact is that even in the event of a successful Chinese military intervention, there would be prolonged uprising by the Taiwanese people, which would be very exhausting. Therefore an attack on Taiwan is not a rational option in Beijing's eyes for the time being. Undoubtedly, a victory without war, with a gradual and peaceful annexation, would be most desirable for Beijing. So far, however, all of China's multi-year strategies based on political, economic and psychological pressure have not yet led to the desired results. Although Beijing is increasingly clipping Taiwan's wings on the international stage and trying to marginalise the island by imposing the mould of one China, the people of Taiwan are also increasingly telling the world that they do not want to be part of today's authoritarian PRC.[15] As a result, the gap between the left and right sides of the strait is widening, and any possibility of peaceful unification is becoming increasingly remote.

6 Conclusion

The paper outlines various security policy challenges facing the East Asian region. Among them, Taiwan and the South China Sea stand out in terms of their complexity and their potential (destructive) impact on the region, as the focus there is on the battle for the balance of power between two superpowers – the US and the PRC – that are at a very dangerous crossroads. Both are convinced that each wants to harm the other, and so both are endeavouring to overtake the other in achieving their own national strategic goals. China's economic and political rise has significantly energised the Chinese government's expansionist ambitions, the establishment of regional dominance and the assertion of national interests on a global scale. As a result, China has come into conflict with the existing world order, with the established system of rules and values, which it sees as an obstacle on the way to achieving its goals. Despite the Chinese leadership's constant assurances that "the People's Republic of China has promised the world that it will not seek hegemony or engage in expansionist endeavours, its moves often raise legitimate concerns (*Xinhua* 2017a). These are greatest in territorially disputed areas, where China's quest for dominance is more than evident. This is also a major challenge for the US, as military dominance over the Western Pacific is one of its fundamental national interests. As a result, China has been publicly labelled a "revisionist power" that uses technology, propaganda and coercion to reshape the world against American interests and values (US Department

15 Only 3% of the Taiwanese people want immediate unification with China (Election Study Center 2018).

of Defense 2018b). Due to the escalation of geopolitical competition with the US, the PRC is trying to secure the strongest possible friendships within the international community, and its most important tool for strengthening relations is undoubtedly economic diplomacy.

Observers can only hope that Washington and Beijing do not get caught up in a vicious circle that would spiral out of control. Although most East Asian countries do not want to publicly declare their allegiance to one side or the other, in the event of a direct strategic conflict between the US and China, the US side would probably receive more support (Pei 2018). The fact is, however,that if China's economic growth remains relatively high and the country has no serious domestic political problems, a completely new security scheme will emerge on the regional geopolitical stage. In the world at large, too, completely different ideas of authoritarianism and a development model without political reform could emerge. We can only guess what would follow, but the direction the current leadership in Beijing is taking is worrying.

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LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Kristina HMELJAK SANGAWA

Macrostructure of Pre-modern Japanese Dictionaries: Chinese Models and Japanese Innovations

Abstract

Japanese lexicography, being based on a writing system that was derived in Japan from the Chinese writing system, is rooted in the Chinese lexicographical tradition, but developed its own systems to organise lexicographical information. The first dictionaries created in Japan listed Chinese characters according to their form and radicals, recording only Chinese language information, while later dictionaries also included Japanese glosses. The development of the two syllabaries, *hiragana* and *katakana*, facilitated the creation of dictionaries with phonetically ordered lists of words. This paper presents the development of different lexicographical systems and their backgrounds.

Keywords: Japanese lexicography, dictionary macrostructure, writing system, semasiological macrostructure, onomasiological macrostructure

Izvleček - Makrostruktura predmodernih japonskih slovarjev: kitajski vzori in japonske inovacije

Japonsko slovaropisje tako kot japonska pisava izhaja iz kitajske tradicije, a je skozi stoletja razvilo izvirne sisteme organizacije informacij. Prvi slovarji so na Japonskem nastali po kitajskem vzoru, njihova makrostruktura je bila organizirana glede na grafično obliko pismenk, razporejenih po pomenskih ključih, mikrostruktura gesel pa je bila po kitajskem vzoru enojezična. Ob teh so kmalu nastali tudi dvojezični kitajsko-japonski slovarji s semantično pogojeno strukturo. Z razvojem fonetičnih zlogovnic hiragane in katakane se je nato pojavil še tip slovarja, ki japonske besede razvršča fonetično. V prispevku opisujemo ozadje in razvoj različnih sistemov organizacije informacij.

Ključne besede: japonsko slovaropisje, slovarska makrostruktura, sistem pisave, semaziološka razporeditev, onomaziološka razporeditev

1 Introduction

Dictionaries are cultural products that reflect the achievements and values of the cultural and social environments in which they were created. Dictionaries of past eras provide insight not only into the vocabulary of a particular era, but also into the social dimension of language use in that era. As tools that serve language users in different communicative situations, dictionaries reveal linguistic stratification, the broader positioning of language and the linguistic community in relation to other languages, and the wider values associated with language. This is also true for Japanese dictionaries: in the development of Japanese lexicography, from manuals for writing and reading characters in the Nara period, when the use of writing in Japan was just beginning to spread among a very small circle of monks and nobility, through the more convenient dictionaries with phonetic arrangements of native words in the Muromachi period,[1] to the blossoming of bilingual lexicography in support of an ambitious plan to adopt the technological achievements of the West in the Meiji period, and to today's diversified and flexible supply of lexical information through all the channels made possible by information and communication technologies, we can trace the changes in communication patterns, the social value of the different linguistic variants and the distribution of knowledge in society.

The sections that follow first introduce the writing system that was developed in Japan on the basis of the Chinese script, and which has shaped the development of Japanese lexicography. The types of dictionaries that evolved in Japan after the adoption of the script are then presented, with particular emphasis on the lexicographical structures and procedures adopted in Japan from the Chinese tradition, and on the original contribution of Japanese lexicographers to the development of lexicography for speakers of Japanese.

1 In this article, I use the standard Hepburn romanization system to transcribe Japanese words. A more detailed description of the system and its use in Slovenian texts is given in Mlakar and Ilc (2009).

2 The Japanese writing system

The overall development of Japanese lexicography is strongly conditioned by the Japanese writing system and its evolution (Seeley 1991/2000, Hirakawa et al. 2006). Writing – both the concept of writing itself and the actual system of Chinese characters – was introduced to Japan through Korean intermediaries, probably in the 5th century. Just as in medieval Europe only Latin was used for writing for a long time – both in areas where various Romance languages had already developed from Latin, but also in Germanic, Slavic and other areas where Latin was never the primary spoken language at all – so in Japan only Classical Chinese was initially used for writing.[2]

The difficulties in adopting Chinese characters for writing the as yet unwritten Japanese language were twofold: on the one hand, the objective technical difficulty of adapting a writing system that had been developed for and was optimally adapted to a typologically completely different language, and, on the other hand, the socio-cultural reluctance to use the vernacular instead of the more prestigious Chinese in situations of great symbolic significance, when writing was actually used, i.e. for administrative, religious, or scientific-philological purposes.

The objective technical difficulty in using Chinese characters to write Japanese stems from the fact that Chinese characters were developed to write an isolating tonal language with a predominantly monosyllabic monomorphemic vocabulary, whereas Japanese is an agglutinating language with a predominantly polysyllabic and polymorphemic vocabulary that also includes inflected word types. If the Chinese writing system adopted in Japan had been a system for transcribing the sound units of the language (according to what Haas (1983) refers to as the *cenemic* principle, in Hjelmslev's terms),[3] it would probably have been much more easily adapted for transcribing Jap-

2 Lurie (2011, 418) writes in more detail on the parallels between the role of Latin in Europe and the Chinese script in East Asia.

3 Hjelmslev (1938/1971, 161) uses the term *plérématique* (from Greek πλήρης (*pléres*) meaning "full") to refer to the content level of language, and *cénématique* (from Greek κενός (kenós) meaning "empty") to refer to the expressive level of language. Haas (1976, 153) applies the terms to the categorization of writing systems: according to Haas, the pleremic principle of writing is the principle in which each element of the writing system records one semantic unit of language (a word or morpheme), while the cenemic principle is the principle in which each element of the writing system records a sound unit of language (a phoneme or syllable). A more detailed explanation is also given by Coulmas (1989, 49), and in Slovene by Bekeš (1999, 221), while a more detailed typology of writing systems is presented by Daniels (2001).

anese, since Chinese has a more complex and diversified phonetic system with 400 distinct syllables (or 1,300 distinct syllables if tones are included), whereas the Japanese phonetic system has a four times smaller set of syllables, which would require a smaller number of characters than for the transcription of Chinese (Taylor and Taylor 2014, 259). However, since in the Chinese writing system (following the *pleremic* principle) each character records a single word or morpheme, transferring this system to another language requires a more complex adaptation.

When writing lexical words, it is plausibly intuitive to transfer the use of a character used for a word with a certain meaning in the original language to the transcription (and consequently the reading) of a word with the same or a similar meaning in another language, the transfer being a kind of translation. If, for example, in Chinese a word meaning "mountain" is written with the character 山, the same character can be used to write the Japanese word /yama/, which also means "mountain". However, it is more difficult to find a solution for writing proper names or function words that do not exist in the original language for which the script was developed and for which therefore there is no character.

In addition to such linguistic and technical difficulties, the use of Japanese for writing in all the situations in which writing was actually used, i.e. for state-administrative, religious or scientific tasks, was also hampered by social and value-driven reservations. The use of elite classical Chinese as an official and scientific language was the most socially acceptable and coherent choice at a time when, in Japan, the Yamato government was rapidly adopting not only the Chinese script but also the Chinese system of state administration as well as Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian doctrines. In the mid-6th century, a sutra transcription office (shakyōsho 写経所) was set up, which accelerated the spread of Buddhism, with originally Indian sutras being adopted in Chinese translation. As part of the Taika 大化 reform in the mid-7th century, which aimed to organise a Chinese-style centralised state, a Chinese-style code of laws was drawn up and a school for civil servants, the Daigakuryō 大学寮, was established, where education was based on the classic Confucian works. In such a context, Chinese characters were initially used to write official texts in classical Chinese rather than directly in Japanese.

Despite these obstacles, from the 7th century onwards a writing system gradually developed in Japan which also made it possible to write literary texts (poetry, later also diaries and other prose). In this system, Chinese characters were used to write Japanese according to three different principles.

One of the principles, as mentioned above, is *logographic*: a Chinese character originally used to write a Chinese word with a certain meaning was used to write a Japanese word with the same or a similar meaning, as in the example above of the character 山, which was created to write the Chinese word /srɛn/ (now /shān/) meaning “mountain”, and in Japan came to be used to write the Japanese word /yama/, which also means “mountain”. This principle is called in Japanese the *kun* principle or *kun’yomi*, which literally means “interpretive reading” or “explanatory reading”, since reading the Chinese character using the corresponding Japanese word was a matter of translating or “interpreting” the character for Japanese speakers (Lurie 2011, 175-177, 389).

The second principle applied in Japan when using Chinese characters does not actually adapt the Chinese script to the Japanese language, but rather adapts the Japanese language to the Chinese script by introducing Chinese words, together with the characters used to write them in Chinese, into the Japanese vocabulary, while phonetically adapting them to the Japanese phonetic system. This principle, which in Japanese is called the *on* principle or *on’yomi* (literally meaning “reading the sound” in the sense of the original pronunciation of a Chinese word), has profoundly influenced the development of Japanese vocabulary, almost half of which is still made up of originally Chinese words (Satō 1981; Okimori et al. 2006, 71).

The third principle, called the *Man’yōgana* principle after the *Man’yōshū* collection of poems, is the *phonographic* principle, which is the same as the principle that led to the development of cenemic scripts from Egyptian hieroglyphs (Coulmas 1989). Chinese characters, originally created and used to write particular words, were used to write syllables or words that were pronounced the same but had a different meaning. This principle was most often applied to the pronunciation of the Chinese word that a particular character originally represented, so that, for example, the character 安, which originally represented the Chinese word /an/ (“peace”), was used to represent the syllable /a/ in any context, in words or syllables with unrelated meanings. This principle could also be applied to *kun’yomi*, i.e. the Japanese translation of the Chinese word represented by a certain character. For example, the character 女, which originally represented the Chinese word for “woman” and which was translated into Japanese as /me/ (which also means “woman”), was used to write the syllable /me/ in words with other meanings, i.e. irrespective of the meaning of the word for which the character was created in the first place. Two syllabic scripts, *hiragana* and *katakana*, evolved from the characters used according to this principle, through gradual standardization and simplification. Each grapheme in these syllabaries represents one syllable, and these are nowadays used alongside Chinese characters to write function words and morphemes. However, the development and standardization of such a system was not simple and required much experimentation and innovation, which is also evident in the development of Japanese lexicography.[4]

3 A typology of Japanese dictionaries

While in Western lexicography (Shcherba 1941/1995; Hartmann 2006 et al.), the classification of dictionaries according to their macrostructure follows the established dyadic division into onomasiological dictionaries, in which entries are arranged according to the written form of the words (mono- and bilingual or multilingual dictionaries in alphabetical order), and semasiological dictionaries, in which entries are arranged according to semantic criteria (dictionaries of synonyms, thesauri, taxonomies, ontologies, etc.), three main categories are commonly used in Japanese lexicography, as described below.

The greater complexity in the organization of information in Japanese dictionaries compared to dictionaries of alphabetic languages stems from the difference between cenemic and pleremic writing systems (Haas 1976; 1983; Coulmas 1989; Bekeš 1999). While in cenemic writing systems, such as the Latin alphabet, *hiragana* and *katakana*, each grapheme represents one sound unit of the language (phonemes in the Latin alphabet, *syllapbles* in *hiragana* and *katakana*), in pleremic writing systems, such as the Chinese script, individual characters represent semantic units of the language (words or morphemes), which, in addition to their meaning, also have an acoustic form, so that the graphic characters are directly linked to the vocabulary, i.e. the lexical system, and through this also to the vocal realizations of words, and thus to the phonetic system. At the same time, the graphic characters (also because of their number) are structured and interconnected in form, thus forming a graphic system which is the third network (besides the semantic and the phonetic ones) on the basis of which dictionary information can be arranged.

In the case of cenemic scripts such as the Latin alphabet and *hiragana*, the total number of characters is known and small enough for users to memorise the standard order, which can be used to arrange (collate) words in dictionaries. In the Latin alphabet this is the alphabetical order (a, b, c, etc.),

4 For a more detailed description of the adoption of the Chinese script, see the chapter "Where Have the Chinese Characters Gone? Modernization of Writing Systems in the Periphery of the Sinographic Cosmopolis" (Bekeš 2024) in this volume.

in Greek α, β, γ, δ, ε, etc. These are traditionally established, arbitrary orders without linguistic or other known motivation (Daniels 2001, 71–72). There are too many Chinese characters, however, for users to be able to learn them all by heart and at the same time remember an arbitrarily agreed order of arrangement. Today, the usual criteria for ordering (and looking up) Chinese characters in dictionaries according to their form are the *number of strokes* of which the character is composed and the *semantic radicals*.

The number of strokes is the number of individual lines or dots that make up a character. For example, the character 三 is made up of three lines or "strokes", the character 木 is made up of four, the character 立 is made up of five, etc.

Semantic radicals are graphic units that – in complex, compound characters – indicate the semantic field of the character and of the word it represents. Most characters are made up of smaller graphic units that can indicate either a field of meaning or a pronunciation. The graphic units that indicate the primary field of meaning of a character are called semantic radicals and are also used as stand-alone characters. For example, the semantic radical 木 can be a stand-alone character that represents the word *mù* in Chinese and either the Chinese loanword *moku* or the native word *ki* in Japanese, both of which mean "tree" or "wood", or it can be part of more complex, compound characters. Most compound characters fall into two categories: semantic and phono-semantic compounds. Semantic compounds contain elements other than the semantic radical to indicate additional meaning; for example, the character 林, which is made up of two characters for the word "tree", represents the word "forest" (Chinese *lín*, Japanese *hayashi* or *rin*). Phono-semantic compounds (which include most of the characters in use today) consist of a semantic radical, indicating the field of meaning, and a phonetic radical or phonetic component,[5] indicating the pronunciation. For example, the character 松, which represents the word "pine" (Chinese *sōng*, Japanese in Chinese loanwords *shō*, native Japanese *matsu*), consists of a semantic radical 木, which indicates the semantic field of "wood", and a phonetic radical or phonetic component 公, which indicates a similar pronunciation in other compound characters (e.g. 訟 "to sue", Chinese *sòng*, Japanese in Chinese loanwords *shō*, and native Japanese *arasou*, *uttaeru*).

The number of semantic radicals is sufficiently small for a standard order to be memorised. This order (like the alphabetical order for Latin letters) is used

5 The term *fonetik* is also used in Slovene (Saje 1998); a more accurate term would be *fonofor* (Eng. phonophoric), i.e. a phonetic carrier, as suggested by Boltz (1989, A-9 and 1994).

to arrange the characters containing these radicals in dictionaries and similar lists. The first work to categorise characters according to their structure and semantic radicals is 說文解字 (Chinese: *Shuōwén jiězì*, Japanese: *Setsumon kaiji*) from 100 CE, which lists 540 radicals and arranges them semantically (Yong and Peng 2008; 98-103). To facilitate memorization of these radicals, poems were also composed that contained radicals in meaningful verse in a standard order (Wan and Liu 2019). Later, the list of radicals was pruned and their order standardised. Today, a list of 214 radicals is used in standard dictionaries, arranged graphically in ascending order according to the number of strokes they contain; characters containing the same radical are arranged in ascending order according to the number of strokes of which they themselves are composed, and those with the same radical and the same number of strokes are additionally arranged by the shape of the first stroke (horizontal, vertical, oblique, etc.). This list of radicals and the consistent arrangement in ascending order by the number of strokes was introduced in 1615 CE. In 1616, the dictionary 字彙 (Chinese: *Zìhuì*, Japanese: *Jii*) was first used by Mei Yingzuo (梅膺祚, Japanese: Bai Yōso), a philologist of the Ming dynasty (Yong and Peng 2008, 286-287). The dictionary 康熙字典 (Chinese *Kāngxī Zìdiǎn*, Japanese *Kōki jiten*), commissioned by Emperor Kāngxī and published in 1716, is also arranged according to this system (Yong and Peng 2008, 291-293). This dictionary has served as the model for most character dictionaries up to the present day, and even in the Unicode[6] system the radicals and characters are arranged according to the same system.

In order to organise and search for information about linguistic units in dictionaries of languages written in Latin scripts, we can therefore start either a) from the semantic network of vocabulary, as realised in semasiological dictionaries (thesauri, ontologies, etc.), or b) from the phonetic system, as realised in onomasiological dictionaries (with alphabetically arranged entries). However, in dictionaries of languages written using a pleremic writing system, such as Chinese and Japanese, information about the language can be organised (and consequently searched) a) according to semantic criteria, as in European thesauri, b) according to the phonetic forms of the words (if there is a sufficiently standardised collation standard, i.e., a standard order according to which sounds are arranged) or c) by the graphic form of the characters and their elements, for which there may also be a collation standard by which they can be arranged and searched, such as the combined system of radicals and the number and shape of strokes described above.

6 See also Petrovčič (2024) in this volume.

Users who are looking for information on how to read an unfamiliar character and what it means, can only use dictionaries in which the words (characters) are classified according to graphic criteria, based on the form, basic elements and number of strokes of each character. If the users do not know how to read a character they encounter in a text, and do not know what it means, they cannot look it up in a list of pronunciations or meanings. Such dictionaries are therefore useful while reading. Conversely, users seeking information on the standard written form of a particular word, typically in a written text, can use dictionaries in which the entries (characters) are arranged according to the collation standard for the phonetic transcription of the word or (less efficiently for searching) according to the semantic categories in thesauri and similar types of dictionaries.

In the Japanese lexicographical tradition (Ueda and Hashimoto 1916/1968; Yoshida 1971; Kindaichi 1996, 16 etc.), following the example of Chinese dictionary terminology, dictionaries are divided into three main categories, reflecting the type of dictionary macrostructure or the way in which information is organised and, consequently, the possible ways in which this information can be looked up. These are:

1) dictionaries for searching according to character form 字形引辞書 *jikeibiki jisho*,
2) dictionaries for searching according to the meaning of characters 分類体辞書 *bunruitai jisho* and
3) dictionaries for searching according to pronunciation 音引辞書 *onbiki jisho*.

Dictionaries for searching according to character form 字形引辞書 *jikeibiki jisho* correspond to the Chinese category 字書 (Chinese: *zìshū* or Japanese: *jisho*), such as 説文解字 (Chinese: *Shuōwén jiĕzì* or Japanese: *Setsumon kaiji*, created in 100 CE), and the Japanese dictionaries *Tenrei banshō meigi* 篆隷万象名義 (c. 830-835), *Shinsen jikyō* 新撰字鏡 (c. 898-901), and *Ruiju myōgishō* 類聚名義抄 (c. 1100). There is no direct parallel to this category in Western lexicography.

Dictionaries for searching according to the meaning of characters 分類体辞書 *bunruitai jisho* correspond to the Chinese category 義書 (Chinese *yìshū* or Japanese *gisho*), such as the Chinese dictionaries 爾雅 (Chinese *Ĕryă* or Japanese *Jiga*, 3rd century BCE, the oldest Chinese dictionary), 釋名 or 釈名 (Chinese *Shiming* or Japanese *Shakumyō*, c. 200), and the Japanese dictionary *Wamyō ruijushō* 和名類聚抄 (c. 931-938). These correspond to semasiological dictionaries (such as thesauri, etc.) in Western lexicography.

Finally, dictionaries for searching according to pronunciation 音引辞書 *on-biki jisho* correspond to the Chinese category 韻書 (Chinese *yīnláng,* Japanese *insho*). This is where Okimori et al. (2008, 9-11) place, for example, the Chinese dictionaries 切韻 (Chinese *Qièyùn,* Japanese *Setsuin*, c. 601) and 韻海鏡源 (Chinese *Yunhai jingyuan,* Japanese *Inkai kyōgen*, c. 780), and the Japanese dictionaries *Tōgū setsuin* 東宮切韻 (9th century, not preserved) and *Dōmō shōin* 童蒙頌韻 (1109). This is the closest category yet to the category of onomasiological dictionaries as we know it in Western lexicography.

In addition to these, there are two other categories in Chinese and Japanese metalexicography, which include reference works that are not dictionaries in the strict sense. The first is 類書 (Chinese *leishu* or Japanese *ruisho*), which comprises a series of encyclopaedic-anthological works in which quotations from other works are systematically collected and arranged according to semantic categories. The second category is 音義 (Chinese *yīnyì* or Japanese *ongi*), which includes collections of glosses to particular sutras or other classical works; these are thus not dictionaries of general vocabulary, but rather annotations or glossaries to individual specific writings (Okimori et al. 2008, 10). The earliest example of a glossary with *kundoku* annotations, dating from the late 7th century, falls into this category (Lurie 2011, 185-187).

4 Historical development of Japanese dictionaries

The historical development of Japanese lexicography has been strongly influenced by Chinese lexicography and philology from the very beginning, as all other spheres of cultural development in early medieval Japan, but through innovations lexicography was gradually brought closer to Japanese readers and writers with a less thorough knowledge of the Chinese language, script and philology.

4.1 Emulating Chinese models

The oldest Japanese dictionary mentioned in historical sources is the *Niina* 新字, which is known only from the twenty-ninth volume of the *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀 chronicle, where it is stated that it was compiled in 682 by Sakaibe no Murajiiwatsumi 境部連石積 who described Chinese characters in forty-four volumes (*kan* 巻). The dictionary itself has not survived, but a few fragments of 7th-century glossaries have survived, suggesting that the first lexicographical works were already being compiled in Japan in the second half of the 7th century (Okimori et al. 2008, 9).

The following two dictionaries have also not survived; these are the *Yōshi kangoshō* 楊氏漢語抄 *"Yang's Glossary of Chinese Words*" and the *Benshoku ryūjō* 弁色立成. Their existence is assumed only on the basis of quotations taken from these works and included in the 10th-century dictionary *Wamyō ruijushō* 和名類聚抄 (or also 倭名類聚聚抄), but it is clear from these quotations that lexicography was already being developed in Japan in the 7th century (Yamada 1995).

The earliest surviving Japanese dictionary for searching according to character form, i.e. of the 字書 *jisho* category, is the *Tenrei banshō meigi* 篆隸万象名義 (*Record of the Names of All Things in Tensho and Reisho Notations*), compiled by the monk Kūkai, probably between 830 and 835 (Li, Shin, Okada 2016). What is interesting here is that the dictionary is considered to be the oldest Japanese dictionary, as it was edited in Japan by a Japanese author, but it does not contain any Japanese characters at all, but rather Chinese characters with Chinese pronunciation notation and explanations of meaning only in Chinese. It contains one thousand characters, each presented in two calligraphic styles: *tensho* 篆書 (a seal script that was standardised for the needs of official scribes in the early 8th century BCE) and *reisho* 隷書 (a clerical script for general use that became standardised for the needs of official scribes in the Han dynasty in the last two centuries BCE). Each character is accompanied by an explanation of its meaning in Chinese and a record of the reading of each individual character according to the 反切 system, *fǎnqiè* in Chinese and *hansetsu* in Japanese (Ikeda 1994). This is a system in which two (or more) characters are used to record the pronunciation of a single character, with the first (音字 Ch. *yīnzì* or Jpn. *onji*, or also 父字 Chinese *fùzì* or Japanese *fuji*) used to indicate the initial sound of the syllable that the described character represents, while the second (韻字 Chinese *yùnzì* or Japanese *onji*, or also 母字 Chinese *mǔzì* or Japanese *boji*) – and the rest of the characters if there are more than one – is used to represent the rest of the syllable, i.e. the vowel nucleus and – if present – the final consonant (Hayashi 1989; Nito 2012; Sasaki 2005).

The monk Kūkai probably compiled the dictionary on the basis of Chinese dictionaries he had learned about while studying in China, since it follows both the arrangement of the entries and the structure of the content of each entry in the dictionary 玉篇 (Chinese *Yùpiān*, Japanese *Gyokuhen* or *Gokuhen*) compiled by Gu Yewang 顧野王 (Japanese: Ko Yaō) in the 6th century, and likewise contains characters arranged according to the graphic principle of semantic radicals, with a description of the pronunciation according to the *fǎnqiè* system and an explanation of the meaning.

Almost at the same time, in 831, the Confucian philologist Shigeno no Sadanushi 滋野貞主, at the Emperor's command, compiled another comprehensive dictionary in a thousand scrolls, the *Hifuryaku* 秘府略 (*Treasury of Definitions*), which survives only in part. It contains information from hundreds of Chinese sources, arranged according to semantic criteria.

In addition to dictionaries in the strict sense, it is also worth mentioning glossaries of the *ongi* 音義 type, which collected glosses and commentaries on particular sutras or other classical works. Since they are limited to one specific work, they are not general dictionaries in the strict sense, but they are the earliest examples of lexicographical works from which modern and later dictionary editors drew. *Ongi* glossaries appeared in the 8th century; the earliest of those produced in Japan is the *Shin'yaku kegonkyō ongi shiki* 新訳華厳経音義私記 from the late 8th century, which lists the characters, compound words and harder-to-understand terms in the Avataṃsaka sutra, or *Kegonkyō* 華厳経 in Japanese, in the order in which they appear in the sutra. It lists meaning and pronunciation glosses in classical Chinese for most terms, but it also includes some 160 explanations in Japanese, written according to the *man'yōgana* principle, partly with the same choice of characters as used in the *Man'yōshū* collection (Okimori et al. 2008, 26-27). The work is therefore not only an important testimony to the development of philology at the time, but also a primary source for research on the development of the Japanese phonetic system.

4.2 Innovations in Japanese lexicography

4.2.1. Japanese translations

The first innovation that Japanese lexicography brought to dictionaries, which were originally based on Chinese models, was the addition of Japanese explanations or translations to individual entries. Yamada (1943, 77) describes this as a "natural" development (*shizen no sei* 自然の勢) going from the first annotated transcriptions, which explained the pronunciation or meaning of the more difficult passages and which appeared as soon as writing was adopted, through the first *ongi* 音義 glossaries, i.e. lists of comments and explanations to individual texts, to the final stage, dictionaries of Classical Chinese with Japanese explanations. Bailey points out that while Yamada provides a reasonable account of the conceptual evolution of Japanese lexicography, this study overlooks the interactions and overlapping developments of all these sources, since commentaries were in fact used not

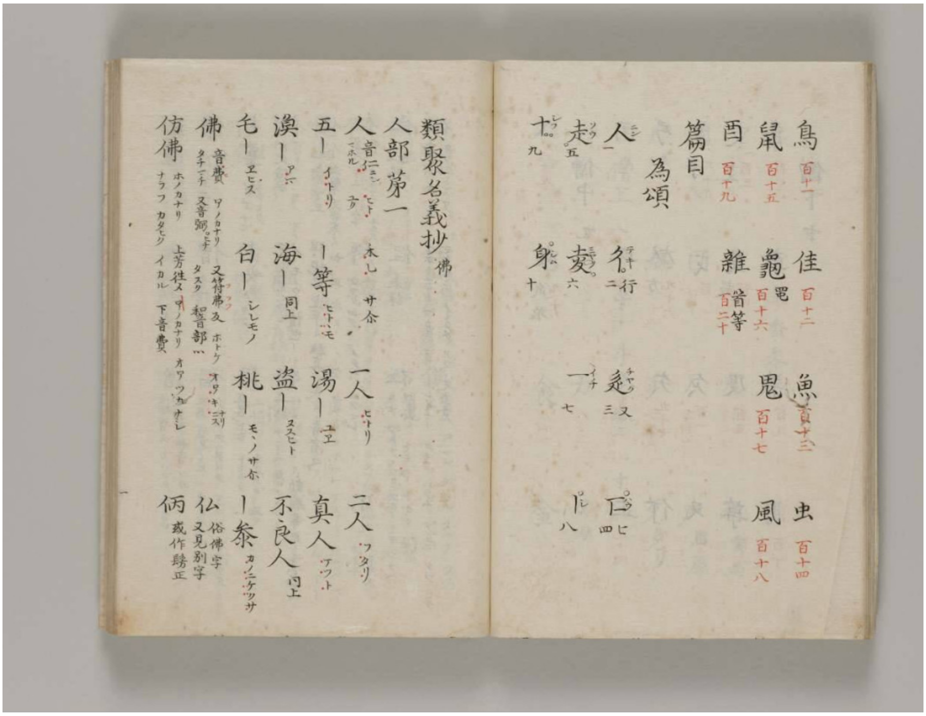

Figure 1: The *Ruiju myōgishō* dictionary (transcript held by the National Institute of Japanese Literature 国文学研究資料館) (https://kotenseki.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/200017313/viewer/22).

only in the texts but also in most of the dictionaries, while at the same time the dictionaries later served as the basis for, and the tools used in, the compilation of new *ongi* glossaries (Bailey 1960, 8).

The oldest dictionary to include Japanese glosses to Chinese characters is the *Shinsenjikyō* 新撰字鏡 (*Mirror of Characters, New Selection*), compiled between 898 and 901 by the Buddhist monk Shōjū 昌住 as a tool for reading difficult characters. It contains approximately 21,300 Chinese characters, which are arranged graphically, based on semantic radicals, and thus belongs to the category of *jisho* 字書. It uses only 160 radicals and is therefore a simplification compared to the above-mentioned Chinese dictionary 玉篇 *Yùpiān / Gyokuhen*, which uses 542 radicals. While the primary organizing principle is graphic, characters within each graphic category are classified partly into semantic fields, and partly by pronunciation, according to the four tones order (Sakakura 1950; Fukuda 1971/72). Each entry includes the character's pronunciation in Chinese as well as its pronunciation (or translation) in Japanese, which is written according to the *man'yōgana* system, i.e. exclusively in Chinese characters.

This work was later the basis for the dictionary *Ruiju myōgishō* 類聚名義抄 (*An Annotated Classification of Pronunciations and Meanings*), which was compiled in the 11th century (Kaneko 1996, 269) and later revised several times. The *Ruiju myōgishō* dictionary contains 32,000 characters or character compounds, which are arranged according to their graphic form by semantic radicals, but the number of these radicals – when compared with the *Shinsenjikyō* dictionary – is here further reduced to 120. Each entry contains, alongside the main character or character compound, a Chinese pronunciation (*on'yomi*) according to the *fǎnqiè* system and a Japanese pronunciation, i.e. translation into Japanese (*kun'yomi*), written partly in *man'yōgana* and partly in *katakana*, as illustrated in Figure 1. The Japanese pronunciations also have tone markings, marking the accent in Japanese, making the dictionary a valuable resource for research into the evolution of the Japanese sound system in the Heian period (Yamada 2003). The dictionary also contains quotations from classical Chinese literature, and was meant both as an aid to reading and to writing.

The second oldest dictionary containing Japanese translations is the *Wamyō ruijushō* 和名類聚抄 (or also 倭名類聚鈔 or 倭名類聚抄 or abbreviated Wamyōshō 和名抄 or 倭名鈔 or 倭名抄), compiled in 931–938 by Minamoto no Shitagō 源順 at the behest of Princess Kinshi or Isoko 勤子, fourth daughter of Emperor Daigo 醍醐 (Yamaguchi et al. 1996, 81). Several transcriptions survive, the shortest comprising 10 volumes and the longest 20. The dictionary collects mostly nouns, which are arranged semantically along the lines of the Chinese dictionary 爾雅 (Chinese *Ěryǎ*, Japanese *Jiga*, 3rd century BCE), with Japanese equivalents (translations, explanations, or commentaries) added to each headword in *man'yōgana* notation, perhaps because the dictionary was intended for a woman (Konno 2014b, 94).

Figure 2 shows how the translations (the native Japanese equivalents of the Chinese headwords) are written half the size of the *man'yôgana* characters. For example, under the headword 星 ("star"), the author first quotes from the dictionary 説文解字 (Chinese *Shuōwén jiězì*, Japanese *Setsumon kaiji*; this is the part in large characters beginning with 説文云, literally "*Shuōwén* states ... "); the entry ends with the word 和名 (*wamyō*, "Japanese name") in smaller characters, followed by the spelling of the native Japanese word *ho-*

shi (meaning "star") in Chinese characters according to the *man'yôgana* system, i.e. 保之 (*hoshi*). Sometimes the mark 和名 (*wamyō*, "Japanese name") is omitted, as in the following entry for 明星, where the entry ends in 阿加保之, i.e. the phonetic spelling of the word *akahoshi* according to the *man'yôgana* system. Figure 2 shows a transcription of the dictionary with readings in *katakana* to the right of most headwords and *kunten* markings added to the explanations.

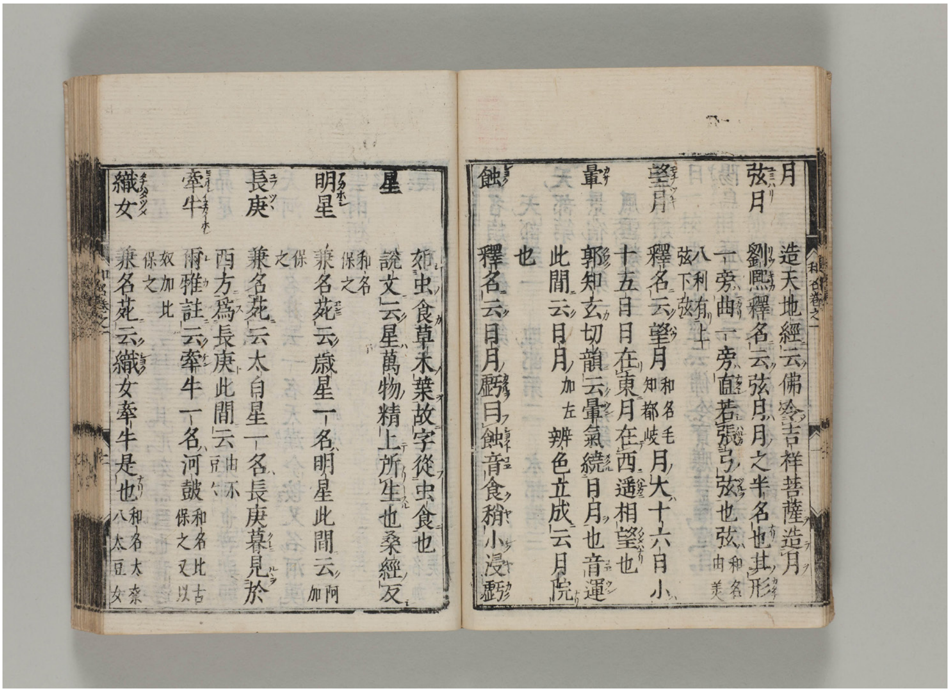
月
造天地經云佛令吉祥菩薩造月
弦月 劉熙釋名云弦月之半名也其形
一旁曲一旁直若張弓弦也弦 和名由美
八利 有上弦下弦
望月 釋名云望月大十六日小
十五日日在東月在西遙相望也 和名毛知都岐
暈 郭知玄切韻云暈氣繞日月也音運
此間云月加左 辨色立成云月院
也
蝕 釋名云日月虧曰蝕音食稍小侵虧
虫食草木葉故字從虫食也
星 說文云星萬物精上所生也桑經反
和名保之
明星 兼名苑云歲星一名明星此間云阿加
保之
長庚 兼名苑云太白星一名長庚暮見於
西方為長庚此間云由不豆々
牽牛 爾雅註云牽牛一名河鼓 和名比古保之又以
奴加比保之
織女 兼名苑云織女牽牛是也 和名太奈八太豆女

Figure 2: *Wamyō ruijushō* (from the Dataset of Pre-Modern Japanese Text of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, provided by the Center for Open Data in the Humanities) (http://codh.rois.ac.jp/iiif/iiif-curation-viewer/index.html?pages=200020691&pos=11, DOI:10.20730/200020691).

In the dictionaries containing Japanese translations and explanations of Chinese characters or words we can thus see the beginning of bilingual lexicography in Japan, which was indispensable for reading and writing in the diglossic environment of premodern Japan. From the introduction of Classical Chinese as the chosen prestige tool of written communication between the 6th and 8th centuries, to the deliberate unification of spoken and written language at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th, the Japanese diglossic linguistic space consisted of, on the one hand, a spoken language that changed over the centuries, and, on the other hand, a written language that did not take these changes into account. The written language was further subdivided into the native *wabun* style and the Chinese *kanbun* style (Frellesvig 2010). In the native *wabun* style, archaic forms were preserved over the centuries, despite changes in speech at the level of sound, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. The *kanbun* style, on the other hand, was actually a foreign language, originally Classical Chinese rather than Japanese, which became part of the linguistic repertoire of Japanese educated people over centuries of use (Clements 2015). This is probably also why, in the Japanese lexicographical tradition, dictionaries containing Chinese characters or words with Japanese equivalents or explanations do not belong to the same category as the bilingual dictionaries that began to emerge at the time of contact with European languages, even though they also juxtapose the vocabularies of two originally separate language systems (Tono 2016). However, since Classical Chinese (especially its vocabulary, and to a lesser extent its syntax) has been part of Japanese linguistic education throughout history, lexicographical works that offer Japanese explanations alongside Chinese characters are categorised separately in the Japanese tradition from bilingual dictionaries which juxtapose Japanese and foreign language in alphabetic script.

4.2.1. Distribution of entries according to Japanese pronunciation

The second major innovation in Japanese lexicography was the new ordering of entries according to their Japanese pronunciations. The first use of Japanese pronunciation as a criterion for the arrangement of dictionary entries can be traced back to the pedagogical-encyclopedic dictionary *Shōchūreki* 掌中歴 (Manual Calendar or Handbook), compiled in 1122 by Miyoshi Tameyasu 三善為康. The handbook is basically organised according to semantic criteria as an encyclopaedia of contemporary culture, the entries are grouped into semantic categories and the whole work falls under the category of *bunruitai jisho* 分類体辞書, but in the category *myōjishū* 名字集, which lists surnames, these are arranged in the order of the *Iroha* (Bailey 1960, 13). *Iroha* is a pangram, i.e. a poem containing all the syllables of the Japanese syllabary, and each only once. For this reason it came to be used as an ordering (“collation”) criterion for arranging Japanese words, similar to the way alphabetical order is used as a criterion for arranging words or character strings in the Latin script.

Table 1: The *Iroha uta* poem

Original *hiragana* with Romanization	Modern spelling and pronunciation	Translation into English
いろはにほへと i ro ha ni ho he to	色は匂へど Iro wa nioedo	Even the fragrant blossoms,
ちりぬるを chi ri nu ru wo	散りぬるを chirinuru o	Will scatter.
わかよたれそ wa ka yo ta re so	我が世誰ぞ Wagayo darezo	Who in this world
つねならむ tsu ne na ra mu	常ならん tsune naran	Will always be?
うゐのおくやま u wi no o ku ya ma	有為の奥山 Ui no okuyama	Mountains of impermanence
けふこえて ke fu ko e te	今日越えて kyō koete	Let us cross them today
あさきゆめみし a sa ki yu me mi shi	浅き夢見じ Asaki yume miji	Without shallow dreams
ゑひもせす we hi mo se su	酔ひもせず yoi mo sezu	And without delusions.

Not long after this manual, at the beginning of the Kamakura period, the first work was produced in which all the dictionary entries were arranged in the order of the *Iroha* poem. This is the *Iroha jiruishō* 色葉字類抄 or 伊呂波字類抄 dictionary, compiled by Tachibana Tadakane 橘忠兼 between 1144 and 1145, and then continually updated over a period of almost 40 years. The first edition was probably in two volumes, the earliest surviving edition is in three volumes, and there is also an updated edition with a title that has the same pronunciation but a different spelling, i.e. 伊呂波字類抄, in ten volumes (Okimori et al. 2008, 42; Konno 2014b, 131). In this dictionary the words are arranged into 47 chapters according to their first syllable in the order of the *Iroha* poem, and within each sound-based chapter into a further 21 semantic categories (Bailey 1960, 18):

ten 天 (“heaven”),
chigi 地儀 (“geography”),
shokubutsu 植物 (“plants”),
dōbutsu 動物 (“animals”),
jinrin 人倫 (“human relations, morals”),
jintai 人体 (“human body”),

jinji 人事 ("human affairs"),

inshoku 飲食 ("food and drink"),

zōmotsu 雑物 ("miscellaneous goods"),

kōsai 光彩 ("colours"),

hōgaku 方角 ("directions"),

inzū 員数 ("numbers"),

jiji 辞字 ("words", containing characters that do not belong to other categories, are written with one character and are linked to the same *kun'yomi*, i.e. are pronounced or interpreted with the same Japanese word; they are arranged in order of ascending syllable count),

jūten or *chōten* or *chōden* 重点 ("repetition", these are words in which the same morpheme is repeated, which can express plurals, such as 年々 トシトシ *toshitoshi* "years"),

jōji 畳字 ("repeated characters", this category lists multi-morphemic Sino-Japanese words, such as 陰晴 インセイ *insei* "cloudy and clear ", etc.),

shosha 諸社 ("Shinto shrines"),

shoji 諸寺 ("Buddhist temples"),

kokugun 国郡 ("lands and localities"),

kanshoku 官職 ("official titles, functions"),

seishi 姓氏 ("clan names, patronymics"),

myōji 名字 ("family names").

The dictionary also contains everyday native words. Each word is listed in Chinese characters with its pronunciation in *katakana*, and some words have additional explanations in the Chinese *kanbun* style. These explanations are relatively few in number and are clearly intended as semantic indices of polysemous words rather than to provide a broader semantic explanation of all the Japanese words contained.

This suggests that the dictionary was probably organised in such a macrostructure in order to serve as an aid to writing texts and poems, rather than for reading older texts with archaic or lesser-known words, which is a feature of its predecessors.

The order of the *Iroha* poem was well known in the late Heian period. Organised in this way, the dictionary allowed users to quickly find the spelling of any common word for which they wanted to check the standard written form. Until then, dictionaries of the type 切韻 (Chinese: *Qièyùn* or Japanese:

Setsuin) were used to write or find the correct form of the desired word in the order of their pronunciation in Chinese (*on'yomi*), although this clearly required prior knowledge of the Chinese pronunciation of the desired character, or dictionaries of the *bunruitai* 分類体 type, in which words are arranged according to semantic categories, such as the Japanese *Wamyō ruijushō* 和名類聚抄, but where searches could be very time-consuming.

Rather than following the categories of the 10th century *Wamyō ruijushō* 和名類聚抄 dictionary, the list of categories in the *Iroha jiruishō* dictionary is more akin to the categorizations, based on Chinese models, that are found in the two dictionaries of Japanese words for writing Japanese-style poetry from the beginning of the 12th century, the *Kigoshō* 綺語抄 (*Handbook of Rare Words*), compiled by *Fujiwara no Nakazane* 藤原仲実, and the *Waka dōmōshō* 和歌童蒙抄 (*Introductory Guide to Writing Japanese Songs*), by Fujiwara no Norikane 藤原範兼 (Bailey 1960, 18-20). However, by introducing a basic arrangement according to the pronunciation of words in Japanese, *Iroha jiruishō* made it easier and faster to access information about word forms. The introduction of collation according to the established order of Japanese pronunciation was thus a distinctly practical move, bringing the dictionary to a wider audience of less skilled writers.

The *Iroha jiruishō* dictionary, the last great dictionary of the Heian period, thus introduced innovations that were highly practical, while still reflecting the influence of the classification systems found in Chinese literary anthologies. This can be attributed to the fact that its author, like most Heian-era lexicographers, was also a literary scholar.

The *Iroha jiruishō* had a profound influence on the later development of Japanese lexicography. The *Setsuyōshū* 節用集 (literally "A Collection That Requires Little Effort"), was compiled on the same principle.

In the following Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1336–1392) periods, the use of dictionaries, which until the Heian period had been mainly restricted to monks and literati among the nobility, also became widespread among soldiers, thanks in part to the pedagogical zeal of the Zen monks (Bailey 1960, 24). The dictionaries produced in the Muromachi period were mostly compiled by anonymous Zen monks for practical pedagogical reasons rather than for the purpose of philological analysis. This era also saw the emergence of publishing houses in towns outside the capital and the spread of movable-type printing, which was taken over from the Korean peninsula at the end of the 16th century, all of which led to a wider reach of dictionaries and their use outside the capital and beyond the elites.

The Muromachi period saw the emergence of practical dictionaries designed to aid reading and writing, combining the data and macrostructures of various previous types of dictionary. The dictionary from this period that underwent the most reprints and revisions was the *Setsuyōshū* (or *Secchōshū*) 節用集. It was created between 1444 and 1474 (Okimori et al. 2008, 52). Like the *Iroha jiruishō*, the *Setsuyōshū* is primarily organised according to the pronunciation of Japanese words, in the order of the *Iroha* poem, while within each section, words beginning with the same syllable from the *Iroha* series are further arranged into semantic categories ranging from *tenchi* 天地 "natural phenomena" to *genji* 言辞 "words" that do not belong to other categories. More than 50 versions of the original *Setsuyōshū* dictionary survive, and in the later Edo period the name *Setsuyōshū* became synonymous with the term "dictionary" in general, resulting in hundreds of different works with this name.

In the Edo period (1603–1867) dictionaries were no longer just tools for checking the correct form of words or the pronunciation of unfamiliar characters, but more broadly pedagogically oriented manuals with the characteristics of textbooks. The large-format editions of the *Setsuyōshū* 節用集, the most widely used dictionary in the Edo period, contained an increasing number of appendices and annexes. For example, the *Dai Nippon eitai setsuyou mujinzō* 大日本永代節用無尽蔵 dictionary, printed in 1750, contains no fewer than 170 appendices with lists of place names, plants, diseases, names of the months, maps, recipes, etc., partly before the main part (100 pages in size) containing dictionary entries, and partly after it (Yuasa 1995, 229-230).

5 Reflections of social change in the development of Japanese pre-modern lexicography

While in the Heian period the sphere of dictionary compilers more or less coincided with the limited circle of people who also used those same dictionaries (philologists and literati from the ranks of nobility, and monks), in the Kamakura period a dividing line was gradually drawn between compilers and users, i.e. between the few philologists who compiled the dictionaries and the ever-widening circle of literate people who used them (Akutsu 2005, 168).

From the Nara and Heian periods to the end of the Muromachi period, several shifts in the use of dictionaries can be observed.

While the first dictionaries were mainly tools for reading and understanding unfamiliar words, organised primarily either according to the form of the characters or according to semantic criteria into semantic fields, with the spread of literacy user-friendly dictionaries, organised phonetically and serving as writing aids, gradually developed and spread.

The first dictionaries were mainly intended for philological study and a relatively limited circle of people, while later dictionaries served the everyday needs of a growing number of readers and writers.

In the Edo period, the spread of literacy and education among the lower social classes and the development of commercially oriented publishing businesses led to the expansion of the use and production of dictionaries, which also became increasingly convenient and user-friendly. The first dictionaries for children were also produced at this time (Sekiba 1993).

The history and development of Japanese lexicography thus reflects changes in Japanese society related to language and literacy. These occurred from the Nara and Heian periods, when members of the priestly and noble castes had a virtual monopoly on knowledge and its dissemination in written form, to the relative democratization of knowledge in the Edo period, when the broader masses gradually gained access to writing and printed books.

It is therefore perhaps no coincidence that in parallel with the gradual shift away from elitism and a strictly hierarchically organised society towards a relatively more democratically organised one, there was also a shift away from the predominantly hierarchical macrostructures in dictionaries, organised by semantic categories, towards a more egalitarian arrangement of words according to a standardised order of pronunciation, which can be seen not only in Japan with the adoption of the pronunciation order in the *Iroha* poem (and later the more scientific *fifty sounds* order *gojūonjun* 五十音順), but also in the adoption of the alphabetical order in the arrangement of words in dictionaries in Europe during the late Middle Ages (Weijers 1989; Daly and Daly 1964). Such changes were only possible after the emergence and spread of a standardised word order (collation norms) and standardised orthography, and with the spread of universal literacy.

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Andrej BEKEŠ

Where Have the Chinese Characters Gone? Modernization of Writing Systems in the Periphery of the Sinographic Cosmopolis

Abstract

This chapter deals with the modernization of writing in Vietnam, in both Koreas and Japan, during the transition from a pre-modern state to a modern nation-state. In Vietnam and both Koreas, despite a strong attachment to the Chinese written tradition, they have decided to stop using the Chinese script. In Vietnam, they switched to the Latin alphabet, in both Koreas to the domestic *Hangul* alphabet, while in Japan, with the least intense contacts with Chinese culture, the Chinese characters were preserved. The reasons for this are modernization, nationalism, and traditionalism. In each of the countries their influence was different. Japan – the colonizer – could modernize at its own pace. In contrast, after their liberation, as the former colonies, Vietnam and both Koreas had to modernize quickly, and in this context the resulting nationalism contributed to the choice of the quickest solution, in each case an alphabetical script.

Keywords: writing reforms, Chinese characters, phonetic scripts, Vietnam, Korea, Japan

Povzetek - Kam so šle kitajske pismenke: modernizacija pisav na obrobju kitajskega kulturnega kroga

Ta prispevek obravnava modernizacijo pisav v Vietnamu, v obeh Korejah in na Japonskem ob prehodu iz predmoderne države v moderno nacionalno državo. V Vietnamu in obeh Korejah so se kljub tradicionalni močni navezanosti na kitajsko pismenost odločili, da zavržejo kitajsko pisavo. V Vietnamu so prešli na latinico, v obeh Korejah na domačo abecedo *Hangul*, Japonska, z najmanj intenzivnimi stiki s kitajsko kulturo, pa je kitajske pismenke ohranila. Razlogi za to so modernizacija, nacionalizem in tradicionalizem. V vsaki od omenjenih držav so ti razlogi delovali drugače. Japonska – kolonizator – se je modernizirala v lastnem tempu, Vietnam in obe Koreji pa so se kot bivše kolonije morali po osvoboditvi modernizirati hitro. V tem kontekstu nastali nacionalizem je pripomogel k izboru najhitrejše rešitve, alfabetne pisave.

Ključne besede: reforme pisave, kitajske pismenke, fonetske pisave, Vietnam, Koreja, Japonska

1 Introduction

The term "script" refers to the system of conventional graphic symbols that represent the linguistic units of a language. Writing was invented from scratch only a few times in the past: first in Mesopotamia and second, almost simultaneously, in Egypt, both at the end of the 4th millennium BCE, a little later, in the 3rd millennium BCE, in the Indus Valley civilization, and at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE in China. Almost at the same time as in China, writing developed completely independently in Central America. In all cases, logographic writing (roughly, the characters of a script record the individual words in a language) emerged first. All other writing systems are derivatives of, or inspired by, the originally invented systems (Coulmas 1989).

This gave rise to several cultural spheres based on the writing and cultural traditions of the various centres. The main drivers of this expansion were religion, culture in the broader sense of the word and political ambition. The oldest is the Mesopotamian cultural sphere centred in Sumer, based on cuneiform and Sumerian cultural tradition. Later, approximately contemporaneous with developments in East Asia, is the Indian cultural sphere, built on Hindu and Buddhist traditions and the Brahmi script. Closer to us is the Arabic cultural sphere, based on the Arabic script and the traditions of Islam, and the Cyrillic cultural sphere, which emerged around the same time, based on the Cyrillic alphabet and the Slavic version of the Orthodox tradition. In our immediate vicinity, we also find an example of a deliberate migration from one cultural sphere to another: Romania. This country was formerly part of the Cyrillic cultural sphere, but in the 19th century the domestic elite decided to switch to Latin and join a more "advanced", Latin cultural sphere based on Catholic and later Protestant traditions (Daniels and Bright eds. 1996; Coulmas 1989; Pană Dindelegan and Maiden eds. 2013).

In East Asia, the source or inspiration for other scripts was the Chinese logographic script (Chinese characters; Ch. *hanzi*, Kor. *hanja*, Jpn. *kanji* 漢字), which originated in the 2nd millennium BCE. Along with Chinese political and cultural influence, it spread from China to the countries on China's periphery. Adapting to the new local languages that had to be written down, new scripts began to develop alongside it from the middle of the first millennium onwards – in Korea, in addition to the syllabic and partly logographic script *idu* 이두, the alphabetic script *Hangul* 한글 was newly invented in the 15th century; in Japan, the *man'yogana* and, on its basis, the *hiragana* 平仮名 and *katakana* 片仮名; and in Vietnam, the logographic script *chữ nôm* 𡨸喃 (Coulmas 1989). Similarly to Vietnam, and around the same time, indigenous logographic scripts developed under the influence of the Chinese script in independent political entities such as Tangut (Xi Xia), Khitan (Liao) and Jin, and later Jurchen in the northern and northeastern peripheries of China, and the scripts of the Zhuang and Yi peoples, which were at times politically independent, in what is now southern China. Interestingly, the Zhuang and Yi scripts have survived and are still partly in use today. Diglossia appeared everywhere in the written language, where Classical Chinese was the prestigious language, while the vernacular language, written in the vernacular script, was considered less prestigious (Kychanov 1996; Kara 1996; Shi 1996; Holm 2014).

With the exception of Vietnam, Korea and Japan, all other groups have been absorbed into the growing Chinese Empire, where the Zhuang and Yi scripts are still in partial use, while outside China, Chinese characters are – paradoxically – used as part of the standard language only in Japan, in combination with the indigenous syllabic scripts of *hiragana* and *katakana*. Vietnam has switched to the Latinized *chữ quốc ngữ* script, and both North and South Korea use the native *Hangul* script (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; Taylor and Taylor 2014).

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the reasons why Japan, which among the three peripheral countries mentioned above was the least deeply rooted in the Sinographic cosmopolis, retained Chinese characters in the process of language standardization during the modernization period, while they were discarded in Vietnam and the two Koreas. Due to space constraints, I do not touch in this discussion on the script of the Ryukyu Kingdom (Okin. *Ruuchuu-kuku* 琉球國), which was annexed to Japan in 1879 as Okinawa Prefecture, the use of Chinese characters by the Uyghurs, and Chinese language policies in the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

2 Language and writing in Vietnam, Korea, and Japan in the first half of the 19th century

At the end of the pre-modern era, in the early 19th century, all three countries – Vietnam, Korea and Japan – were independent and deeply embedded in the Sinographic cosmopolis, while Vietnam and Korea were additionally also under strong Chinese political influence. The position of language and writing in all three countries was similar. As in medieval Europe, diglossia was prevalent. Classical Chinese, written in Chinese characters, played the role of the high language in administration, philosophy, religion and science. The vernacular language, less associated with the functions of political and religious authority, was therefore less prestigious than Classical Chinese, but was valued differently depending on the country and the place of the vernacular culture in it. Literature in the vernacular existed in all three countries. In Vietnam it was written in the vernacular script *chữ nôm* 㝵喃, in Korea from the 15th century onwards it was mostly written in the native alphabetic script *Hangul* 한글, while in Japan a mixed system of syllabic script (*katakana* 片仮名 or *hiragana* 平仮名) and Chinese characters, which were typically used to write a number of full-meaning words, was used to write literature in the vernacular language. The significant difference is that literature in the vernacular was valued less in Vietnam and Korea than in Japan, where especially the older native literature was valued as classical literature, and the language in which the works were written was valued accordingly. In Vietnam, readers of native literature were limited to an elite educated in Classical Chinese, who could also read the more complex native *chữ nôm* script. The common people often only knew domestic literary works, both prose and poetry, from public readings. In Korea, the situation changed radically after the invention of *Hangul*, but the elite, educated in classical Chinese culture, i.e. the *yangban* 양반, mostly looked down on literature in the vernacular and often opposed the widespread use of *Hangul*. Nevertheless, thanks in part to the efforts of the authorities, literacy in the vernacular began to spread among the people. Translations of Buddhist texts, narrative works and poetry appeared, often written by members of the common people. As the sources show, in pre-modern Japan, the common people were already quite literate, with a developed commercial publishing activity in large centres such as the capital

Edo and Osaka (see Coulmas 1989, 2000, 2003; Cumings 2005; King 2007; Lê and O'Harrow 2007; Gottlieb 2007; Taylor and Taylor 2014; Amino 1990; Yakuwa 2003; Kin 2010; Bekeš 1999). The ideas, presented in this section are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Valuation of vernacular scripts and literacy at the beginning of modernisation

	Vernacular scripts: valuation	Literacy
Vietnam	*chữ nôm*: complex system, unstable prestige – a means of writing vernacular literary works	relatively low
Korea	*Hangul*: simple, unstable prestige	relatively low
Japan	*hiragana, katakana*: simple, low prestige mixed style of *kana* and Chinese characters: complex system, high prestige in the literary circle	*hiragana, katakana*: relatively high (1877 census: 30-90%, depending on the region)

3 Language in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam in the 20th century

In the process of modernization that engulfed all three countries at the turn of the 19th century, their paths diverged. Japan retained its independence and became a colonial power, annexing the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1879, Taiwan in 1895 and Korea in 1910. Vietnam became a French colony and Korea was annexed by Japan (Cumings 2005; Coulmas 2000). These different fates had different effects on the process of modernization of languages.

3.1 Japan

As a sovereign country, Japan was able to develop education and language to meet the needs of its modernizing society. At the start of modernization, with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, it inherited a diglossia of written language: Classical Chinese and Classical Japanese, and a relatively small proportion of works written in the vernacular of the time. Faced with the challenges and examples from Europe and America, the intellectual elite first saw the need to modernize the language as soon as possible. A movement for the unity of written and spoken language (*genbun itchi* 言文一致) emerged. A new style of translation began to develop, based on the tradition of reading Classical Chinese texts in Japanese (the so-called *kanbun kundoku* 漢文訓読), but applied to modern European languages: Dutch, English, French, Russian and German, and relying more on the grammar of modern vernacular than on Classical Japanese. A by-product of this, on the other hand, was the large number of neologisms based on Chinese lexical elements, which were used to translate abstract concepts from European thought. A typical example is the neologism *kokug*o 国語, national language. The term was adopted in all countries of the Sinographic cosmopolis and, except for the People's Republic of China and North Korea, is still used today. The print media was also an important factor, owing its popularity to the publication of novelistic feuilletons taken from the professional narrative genre of *rakugo* 落語, as well as political speeches and pamphlets. Interestingly, the state was late in modernizing the language, and the beginning of a systematic approach to standardizing language and script, in short, the creation of a standardized national language (*kokugo* 国語) as a state policy, only dates back to the late 19th century in Japan, some 20 years after the Meiji Restoration (Komori 2000; Lee 1996; Gottlieb 1995).

In the reform and standardization of writing, despite some more radical proposals, a moderately conservative script reform took place in a culturally stable context in Japan, which, with certain limitations, preserved Chinese characters as an important part of the Japanese writing system. Through state efforts the standard language gained influence. Several factors influenced the standardization of writing, despite the opposition of traditionalists. The most important were:

I. Colonial policy, where Japanese was the language of administration, created the need for effective Japanese language education in the colonies (Taiwan, Korea, Manchukuo) and later in the territories occupied during the war in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
II. The emergence of the periodical press and its readership.
III. The needs of the army in the context of the war effort and military dominance in the colonies, which required precise transmission and reception of information and thus a standardized language with a writing system that was as uncomplicated as possible. Due to the 15 years of war waged by Japan, first on the Asian continent and finally in the Pacific, government reforms of language and writing were stalled and only implemented after the end of the Second World War, under the American occupation. The reform of writing, however, followed in essential respects the framework that had already been prepared by the Japanese Ministry of Education in the 1930s, when Japanese military aggression was confined to China. The form of Chinese characters was standardized and, in the case of the more complex characters, partially simplified, the limited number of Chinese

characters in standard use was defined, as well as standardized notation, i.e. which words, both Chinese foreign words and native words, were to be written using which character. The use of the two syllabic scripts, *hiragana,* and *katakana*, was also standardized. Before and after the Second World War there were also initiatives to switch to the Latin alphabet or to use both syllabic scripts exclusively (*Kanamojikai* 仮名文字会), but these were not considered by the reforms. The result of the reforms was that the so-called mixed style of writing using Chinese characters and both syllabic scripts (*kanji kana majiri* 漢字仮名交じり) were preserved in an otherwise rather refined form, which did not please neither the traditionalists, who considered the reforms too radical, nor the supporters of change, many of whom deplored the half-heartedness of the reforms (Tōdō 1969; Gottlieb 1995; Coulmas 2000, 2003; Bekeš 1998).

3.2 Korea

In traditional Korean society, until 1894, despite the opportunities offered by the invention of the *Hangul* (1446), the system of state examinations – with its social bias (only members of the upper class were allowed to sit for the exams) and focus on Classical Chinese literacy – severely inhibited the penetration of modern education. Literacy among the common people was very low, especially among women, who in traditional Confucian morality were considered to possess the virtue of ignorance. With the Gabo reforms (*Gabo gaehyeok* 갑오개혁), Korea tried to catch the modernization train. Classical Chinese was this replaced by Korean as the official language, written in a mixed style, with Chinese characters and *Hangul*. This mixed style script became the norm with the rapid development of the media. This script replaced the use of *idu*, the old indigenous Korean script based on Chinese characters. A movement also began to unify the written and spoken languages (King 2007).

At the same time, the unequal Treaty of Ganghwa Island 강화도 brought Korea under strong Japanese influence, triggering the Sino-Japanese War, from which Japan emerged victorious. Japanese influence then grew stronger and stronger. After the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War, which was also about dominance on the Korean peninsula, Korea first became a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and was finally formally annexed to the Japanese Empire in 1910. It was thus unable to modernize according to its own wishes and needs. Unlike Taiwan, which it received as war reparations in the Sino-Japanese War, Japan treated Korea not as a mere colony but as an extension of itself (Japan and Korea are one *naisen ittai* 内鮮一体) that had to be assimilated. Japanese also became the only national language (*kokugo* 国語) in Korea, and Japanese classes became compulsory. The number of hours of Korean classes in "national schools" (Jpn. *kokumin gakko* 国民学校, Kor. *Gugminhaggyo* 국민학교) steadily decreased, and from 1938 onwards Korean was no longer a compulsory subject. It was marginalized and eventually abolished in 1941. The number of schools offering classes at a level higher than the "national schools" was limited. In 1936, for example, only 25% of school-age children (40% of boys and only 10% of girls) actually attended classes. Japanese children in Korea, by contrast, all attended school. From the late 1930s, Koreans were forced to change their surnames and given names to Japanese ones (*sōshi kaimei* 創氏改名). In addition, the use of Korean in public was restricted. Paradoxically, after the rebellion against Japanese rule in 1919, the Korean-language press enjoyed considerable freedom. Outside the institutional framework, Korean nationalists – Christians – also worked to increase literacy in the vernacular among the common people. Tens of thousands of people became literate, but this was a drop in the ocean given the huge population. A severe consequence of this Japanese colonial policy was that the literacy rate in Korea in 1945 was only 22% (King 2007; Mitsui 2010; Coulmas 2000; Tani 2000; Taylor and Taylor 2014; Gottlieb 1995; Cumings 2005; Matles Savada and Shaw eds. 1992).

After the end of the Second World War, the Korean ordeal continued. Liberated by the Soviet Union, but in the emerging world of the Cold War and based on inter-war agreements with the Allies, the US was left to occupy the Korean peninsula south of the 38th parallel. A prerequisite for reconstruction in both parts of the divided Korea was the rapid promotion of literacy among the masses, who now had the opportunity for the first time to be systematically educated in their own language. To this end, it was necessary to standardize the Korean language and script, which Japanese rule had prevented. There was also the question of the use of Chinese characters, which, because of their large number and complexity, were an obstacle to the rapid promotion of literacy. An appropriate language policy had to be defined and implemented at the national level. After the end of the Soviet and American occupations in 1948, two states emerged on the Korean peninsula, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the north and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south (Cumings 2005; King 2007; Taylor and Taylor 2014).

The DPRK, still under Soviet occupation, radically reformed its language policy and immediately launched an intensive literacy program. By 1948 illiteracy had been largely eliminated. The literacy agenda was less radical in the Republic of Korea, and 10 years after the declaration of statehood and five years after the end of the Korean War, in 1958, around 8% of the population was still illiterate (King 2007).

The most contentious issue in language policy was the use of Chinese characters. In the DPRK, radical action was taken. The old elites mostly fled to the ROK, many members of the elites were imprisoned, and the state, under the leadership of Kim Il-sung and the Workers' Party (*Choseon rodongdang* 조선로동당), set about creating a "new" culture. Part of this was the "democratization" of writing. The use of Chinese characters was initially abolished, but was reintroduced in 1953, at the end of the Korean War, with a limit of 1,800 characters. The aim of the democratization of writing was to make the writing system as simple and usable as possible. Kim Il-sung himself had a big say in language policy. His version of the standard language, introduced in 1966, was in the DPRK called the "cultured language" (*munhwa-eo*문화어). From the point of view of the "cultured language," Chinese characters – and with them Chinese and other foreign words – were perceived as a threat to the mother tongue. As a result of this view of Chinese characters, vocabulary of Chinese origin and borrowings from other foreign languages, such terms began to be replaced by their vernacular equivalents. Some of the vocabulary of foreign origin has remained, and Chinese characters are still taught to a limited extent, although they are no longer in public use. This was the beginning of the divergence between the language in the DPRK and the ROK. Most of the reforms in the DPRK were top-down, but it is true that the opinion of the citizens was also taken into account (Cumings 2005; Song 2005; King 2007).

As mentioned above, the language policy in the ROK was more relaxed. The old elites retained their prestige, and the colonial administration from the time of the Japanese rule remained in place, including the police and the army, but of course without the Japanese personnel, who had retreated back to Japan. In the ROK, too, from 1945 onwards, there was an intensive standardization of the language, which, under Japanese influence, was called the national language (*gug-eo* 국어). In 1948, in order to combat illiteracy, the Ministry of Education proposed a change from mixed writing to the exclusive use of *Hangul*, but the proposal was rejected due to strong opposition from the conservative elites from the time of Japan's colonial rule, who were well versed in Chinese script. Attitudes towards the use of Chinese characters then fluctuated until the end of the 1970s, with sporadic discontinuations and reintroductions, as well as attempts to limit the number of characters in everyday use. The military regime of Park Chung-hee (박정희) masked its attachment to the class that collaborated with and profited from Japanese colonial rule with a strong nationalism, which included a campaign to "purify" (*eoneo sunhwa*언어순화) the native language. Its aim was to purge the standard language of foreign words borrowed from English and Japanese. After 1987, when democracy was restored, these campaigns slowly died out. The term itself took on a negative connotation, linked to the totalitarian military regimes that ruled Korea from the early 1960s until 1987. On the other hand, a mixed system of writing with Chinese characters and *Hangul* was retained. In 1974, Chinese characters were reintroduced in Korean language textbooks, with a limit of 1,800 "basic characters" in junior and senior high schools. However, the use of Chinese characters is still limited. They almost never appear in texts for general use, including the daily press; in rare cases, like in professional literature, they are used only as much as the comprehensibility of the text requires, due to the large number of homophones of Chinese origin (Coulmas 2000; Song 2005; Cumings 2005; King 2007).

As a consequence of the different social systems and, as another reflection of this, the different approaches to language policy, the distance between the standard languages of the two Koreas is becoming ever greater. There are differences in phonetics (a standard based on Pyongyang speech in the DPRK and Seoul speech in the ROK) and in lexis. There are also differences in the rules of spelling in *Hangul* (lit. the script of the Han state), which in the DPRK is locally referred to as *Choseon-geul* (조선글 lit. the script of the Choseon state). In this respect, Han 한 and Choseon 조선 are two different names for Korea from two different eras. Han is the name of the last state before it became a Japanese colony and is used in the ROK, while Choseon, the name of the state during the long rule of the Yi dynasty, is used in the DPRK. Despite the different social arrangements, the motivations for linguistic reforms in the two Koreas overlap to some extent: at their roots is the declared or actual anti-colonialism and related nationalism. As far as Chinese characters are concerned, the result is also similar in both Koreas: Chinese characters play a secondary role, their learning is limited, and they are no longer used in the mass media or at most in very limited cases (Coulmas 2000; Song 2005; King 2007; Hannas 1997).

3.3 Vietnam

Vietnam, too, was plunged into colonial dependence in the 19th century, before it could face the challenges of modernization. The French presence in Indochina began with aiding the Nguyen dynasty in unifying Vietnam at the end of the 18th century. The French Revolution put colonial efforts on hold for a while. In the second half of the 19th century the southern third of Vietnam, Cohinchina, became a French colony first, while the central part, Annam with the imperial capital Hue, and the northern part, Tonking with Hanoi, became French protectorates, a fact recognized in 1885 by China, which was then still under the rule of the Qing dynasty. The whole territory, together with Cambodia, was incorporated into French Indochina in 1887, to which France added Laos in 1889 (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; DeFrancis 1977).

The recording of Vietnamese in Latin script began in the early 17th century with the arrival of Jesuit missionaries, who needed a simple written form of the spoken language for their missionary work. The fruit of their efforts was *chữ quốc ngữ*, a transcription of Vietnamese which did not spread beyond the Catholic community of believers. Under French colonial rule, however, *chữ quốc ngữ* was introduced into the newly established colonial primary schools. The first primary schools to teach Vietnamese in Latin were established by the colonial authorities in 1864 in Cochinchina. On the other hand, the prestige of Classical Chinese was preserved among the traditional elite, as was the use of the indigenous *chữ nôm* writing system. The purpose of language instruction using the Latin script was similar to the instruction of Slovene and Croatian in the Illyrian provinces under Napoleon: as an intermediate phase in which the native population would become literate and then, at a higher level, switch to the language of the metropolis (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; DeFrancis 1977; Vodopivec 2006).

The French colonists and the army opposed the newly established education for the broader class of the local population by means of the *chữ quốc ngữ* script. This position was in line with the aspirations of the old elites from the north of Vietnam, from Annam and Tonking. However, unlike the old elites, the colonialists wanted education to be conducted in French. The old elites, in their anti-French patriotism, contradicted themselves by continuing to despise the indigenous *chữ nôm* while advocating the preservation of the indigenous version of Classical Chinese (Sinh Viet) as the prestigious language of education and administration. Notwithstanding the disagreement between these two groups the colonial authorities still needed a class of local officials, so they insisted on the above-mentioned policy of relying on *chữ quốc ngữ* in schools (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; DeFrancis 1977).

Paradoxically, as a means of colonial language policy *chữ quốc ngữ* also became a means of resistance against colonial rule in the early 20th century. In Hanoi in 1907, in an attempt to raise the educational level of the population, a group of patriots founded the Tonkin Free School (*Đông Kinh Nghĩa Thục* 東

京義塾),[1] which provided a modern education untainted by colonial perspectives to hundreds of students, the future elite of the anti-colonial struggle, at the primary and secondary school levels. Classical Chinese (in its Sino-Vietnamese variant) and French were also taught, but it is significant that most of the instruction was in Vietnamese, written in *chữ quốc ngữ*. Graduates of this school took their experience to the wider society, so much so that the colonial authorities closed the school after only a year. Later, French educational policy changed, as the colonial rulers strengthened the school institutions, where education was conducted in *chữ quốc ngữ*. On the other hand, in 1915-19, they pressured the puppet imperial court in Hue to abolish – after almost 1,000 years – the state examinations based on knowledge of the Classical Chinese canon. During the same period, *chữ quốc ngữ* also began to make its way into the periodical press, with the effect of encouraging national and linguistic consciousness and hindering the penetration of the French language. Literary works written in *chữ quốc ngữ* began to appear, with new readers who were educated in Vietnamese written in Latin. All of this contributed to *chữ quốc ngữ* no longer being perceived simply as a symbol of collaboration with colonial authorities (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; DeFrancis 1977).

The transition from the traditional state of things, with Classical Chinese ("Sino-Vietnamese") and Vietnamese written in the native *chữ nôm* script, to the use of *chữ quốc ngữ* took place, as we have already partly seen, in several phases. During the first phase, Classical Chinese ("Sino-Vietnamese") was seen as a symbol of resistance to French rule, and the use of *chữ quốc ngữ* as a symbol of collaboration. Later, when the patriots realized that modernization was not possible without a general increase in the level of education, a prerequisite for which was the elimination of illiteracy, the second phase began. *Quốc ngữ* was thus adopted as a means of raising literacy among the population. In this way, *chữ quốc ngữ* lost the stigma of collaboration, while the publication of literary works in *chữ quốc ngữ* also raised its prestige. By the third phase, however, *chữ quốc ngữ* was already in use more frequently than Classical Chinese (Sino-Vietnamese) and *chữ nôm*, and thus effectively became the script with which the vernacular language, Vietnamese, was – and still is – commonly written. After independence, it was only a step further to declare *chữ quốc ngữ* the standard script of the Vietnamese language (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; DeFrancis 1977).

The continued interference of outside forces in Vietnam has had tragic consequences for the country, and for Indochina as a whole. A state of war

1 Interestingly, the old name for Hanoi is Dong Kinh 東京, which has the same meaning and is written in Chinese characters in the same way as the name of the Japanese capital.

in Vietnam lasted practically from the Japanese invasion in 1941, through the return of the French after the end of the Second World War, the long and agonizing liberation war against French rule, the division into North and South Vietnam in 1954, and the American intervention, all the way up until reunification in 1975. After the victory of the Viet Minh liberation movement over the Japanese army in 1945, *chữ quốc ngữ* became a symbol of liberation. During the long war, first against France to liberate North Vietnam from the colonial yoke and second against the USA to unify North and South Vietnam, *chữ quốc ngữ* became a symbol of revolutionary progress in North Vietnam. *Chữ quốc ngữ* was also used in South Vietnam, where simultaneously Classical Chinese ("Sino-Vietnamese") and *chữ nôm* were still taught. The uncontested position of *chữ quốc ngữ* was finally stabilized only after the unification of Vietnam in 1975, when *chữ quốc ngữ* became the script used to record the standard Vietnamese language (Lê and O'Harrow 2007; DeFrancis 1977).

4 Discussion

In reviewing the paths taken by various scripts in the peripheral countries of the Sinographic cosmopolis, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan, two types of factors have crystallized that influenced the fate of Chinese characters as part of modern standardized indigenous writing systems, i.e. internal and external ones.

4.1 Internal factors

There are four internal factors:

I. **The prestige of the local written language and literature as compared to the prestigious local variant of Classical Chinese.**
In Japan, the vernacular has historically held a prestigious position among the elite as the language of literature, while Classical Chinese has been the language of state ideology, administration, education, religion (Buddhism) and philosophy. Gradually, a mixed script of the vernacular language developed, with syllabic script and logographically used Chinese characters. With the spread of syllabic script (*hiragana* and *katakana*) literacy, annotation of the "reading" of the Chinese characters in syllabic script (*furigana* 振り仮名) became established. With this, even more complex texts became accessible to a wider range of readers, who emerged in the Edo period. Even with the modernization

of the language, the widely used mixed script, i.e., Chinese characters in combination with syllabic script, was retained. In the mixed script, Chinese characters were used to write both Chinese foreign words (so-called *on'yomi* 音読み) and native Japanese words (so-called *kun'yomi* 訓読み). Chinese characters were so deeply rooted in the script of the vernacular and in the consciousness of a large part of the literate population that it was very difficult to abolish them altogether when reforms were made to the writing system. On the other hand, the fate of the vernacular scripts in Korea and Vietnam was much more unstable. The use of both *Hangul* in Korea and *chữ nôm* in Vietnam has been repeatedly restricted in the past, and despite the popularity of literary works written in the vernacular, the free development of the potential of both scripts has often been inhibited by the pressure of the establishment.

II. **The proportion of Chinese characters or indigenous logographic characters used in vernacular script.** The situation is similar in Korea and Japan. In Korea, if, in addition to *Hangul*, we take into account the mixed syllabic-logographic script *idu*, which until the end of the 19th century was used partly for administrative purposes, the proportion of Chinese characters in the Korean and Japanese scripts varies from medium to low. Vietnam's *chữ nôm*, on the other hand, is an entirely logographic script and so naturally the proportion of logographic characters is 100%.

III. **The quantity and accessibility of works in the vernacular language.** This factor is directly linked to the first one, i.e. prestige. The unstable position of vernacular scripts in Korea and Vietnam has also meant that literary production in vernacular has been far less widespread and accessible than in Japan, and also less so than texts in Classical Chinese.[2]

IV. **Literacy rate of the general population at the time of the script reforms.** By the beginning of the 20th century Japan had reached a relatively high level of literacy, at least in terms of syllabic scripts and basic Chinese characters. However, in Korea and Vietnam, literacy rates were very low at the beginning of the script reforms (22% in Korea, even lower in Vietnam), mainly due to colonial policies.

2 In Vietnam, after the temporary occupation during the Ming dynasty a Neo-Confucian fever led to the destruction of the printing plates of literary works written in *chữ nôm*. Therefore, only works in the vernacular language survived from the second half of the 15th century onwards (Lê and O'Harrow 2007).

4.2 External factors

The two external factors are linked to the socio-historical context of modernization:

I. **The most important factor is the degree of independence at the time of modernization.** Japan modernized as an independent country, according to its own needs, while Korea and Vietnam modernized under colonial rule.

II. Nationalism in language as part of the modernization process.
In Japan, even fervent nationalists recognized Chinese characters as part of their linguistic tradition. Modernization and thus standardization in the language was not directed against the use of Chinese characters, all that was needed was a rationalization of the already established mixed writing system: a limiting of the number of characters, a partial simplification of some characters and a standardization of their form, and a reform of the syllabic writing ortography. By contrast, in Vietnam – and in both Koreas after the Second World War – in the context of radically changed circumstances under colonial rule, Chinese characters were perceived as an obstacle to the modernization of the language, for two reasons. First, in the spirit of anti-colonial nationalism (the use of Chinese characters is also a product of thousands of years of Chinese cultural hegemony), and second, for reasons of expediency. In both Koreas, learning indigenously developed alphabetic script, *Hangul*, is much more effective and allows for a quicker eradication of illiteracy than learning a mixed system that includes the use of Chinese characters in addition to *Hangul*. The situation in Vietnam was similar. *Quốc ngữ*, initially promoted by the colonial authorities, gained enough ideological prestige in the historical processes of the first half of the 20th century to finally become a symbol of socialist revolutionary change and a "progressive" script. In both the Korean and Vietnamese cases, the relatively limited scope of the literary heritage written in the vernacular was also instrumental. With the transition to the new script, with the radically limited use of Chinese characters in both Koreas and their complete elimination in Vietnam, the break with tradition, especially of writing in the vernacular, was not as severe as it would have been in Japan had it taken a similar step.

5 Conclusion

It is well known that once a writing system is established it is very conservative, and changes only occur in times of great social upheaval (Coulmas 2000). Due to their colonial experiences, traditional societies in both Korea and Vietnam were much more profoundly affected by modernization processes than Japan. This is one of the reasons why deeply radical reforms of writing were possible there, while Japan, against the wishes of many, had to take a more moderate path. All this has less to do with the complexity of a particular script than the above illustration might suggest. Coulmas (2000), for example, argues that in Taiwan, despite not simplifying the characters and not reducing their number as much as in the People's Republic of China, the elimination of illiteracy has been faster and more successful. The reason for this success was a better organized education system. On the other hand, the prejudices of the usually more conservative advocates of the widespread use of Chinese characters are also misguided. There is a group of people in Japan who systematically use only phonetic syllabic writing. They are people who are blind but who, despite their disability, are able to reach the highest level of university studies and even become PhDs by using only phonetic writing for the blind. In ensuring functional literacy, the use of both Chinese characters and phonetic script, even in a language with such a modest phonetic repertoire as Japanese, turns out to be a less relevant factor than the organization of a modern school system. As Coulmas (2000) points out, each type of script has advantages and disadvantages.

The discussion presented above leaves out an important factor that could also have a strong influence on language policy. Japan and the two Koreas are extremely ethnically homogeneous countries, while Vietnam has around 14% minority populations, spread over dozens of ethnic groups. It is precisely this linguistic variety that allows Vietnamese to play a vital role as the national language throughout the territory of a united Vietnam.

As a result of modernization processes in language and writing, in all four countries the mother tongue has become consolidated as the central language in administration, education and literature. Given their colonial experience, this has not been the case in many other countries in the region. In this respect, as well as from the point of view of script, it would be interesting to compare the above findings with language policies and developments in other countries with both a centuries-long state tradition and experience of being colonized, such as Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma) and Indonesia in Southeast Asia.

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Conceptual Development of the Approaches to Writing Systems of the Five East Asian Regions from the Perspective of Information Technology

Abstract

This paper presents a search for solutions for how to define Asian writing systems in the context of information technology. While the extension of the 7-bit ASCII to the 8-bit ASCII covered most of the alphabetic writing systems, this was far from sufficient for non-alphabetic ones. A one-dimensional way of thinking led to solutions for less than 200 characters, and that was obviously not enough for writing systems of East Asian languages. A switch to two-dimensional thinking was thus necessary. The first promising solutions were presented by Japanese scholars, and the other East Asian regions adopted their ideas with minor changes. China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea then became the new research centres for this issue during the following decades. This two-dimensional thinking gave birth to several new character sets and encoding methods. In Taiwan, a third dimension was even added to the previous two, creating a very systematic, complex and flexible approach to the Chinese script. The advantages of this system were never fully expressed, however, because the newly emerged Unicode became the leading system. Unicode created a new concept of unifying characters, whereby the distinction of different varieties between the scripts of the five Asian regions became a secondary question. Although Unicode has almost completely replaced the regional legacy systems, they represent an important conceptual heritage. Moreover, their multi-dimensional way of thinking is a prerequisite for and the basis of Unicode.

Keywords: font, East Asian languages, Coded Character Sets, legacy encoding systems, Unicode

Povzetek - Idejni razvoj obravnavanja pisave v petih vzhodnoazijskih regijah z vidika informacijskih tehnologij

Prispevek predstavi razvoj iskanja rešitev, kako definirati pisave azijskih jezikov, da jih bo mogoče računalniško obdelovati. Razširitev 7-bitnega ASCII-ja na 8-bitno različico je pokrila večino črkovnih pisav, vendar to še zdaleč ni zadostovalo za nečrkovne pisave. Enodimenzionalno razmišljanje je ustvarilo možnosti za zgolj nekaj manj kot 200 znakov, za razmah rešitev za azijske pisave pa je bil potreben preskok na dvodimenzionalno razmišljanje. Revolucionarno odkritje Japoncev so prevzeli tudi Kitajska, Tajvan, Hongkong in Koreja, pri čemer so svoje kodirane nabore znakov umestili v identično strukturo in s tem ustvarili lokalne različice istega načina kodiranja. Kmalu zatem je dvodimenzionalno razmišljanje rodilo nove zapuščinske nabore znakov in pripadajoče načine kodiranja. Na Tajvanu so dvema dimenzijama dodali še tretjo, s čimer so ustvarili zelo sistematičen, kompleksen in hkrati fleksibilen pristop h kitajski pisavi. Njegova veličina pa ni nikoli prišla v celoti do izraza, saj ga je zasenčila pojavitev Unicoda, ki je ustvaril nov koncept poenotenih pismenk ter s tem podrl meje med pisavami azijskih regij. Čeprav je Unicode že skoraj v celoti izpodrinil regionalne zapuščinske sisteme, so ti pomembna idejna dediščina, saj je večdimenzionalni način razmišljanja tudi predpogoj in osnova Unicoda.

Ključne besede: pisava, vzhodnoazijski jeziki, kodirani nabori znakov, zapuščinski kodirni sistemi, Unicode

1 Scripts and writing systems

Much research has already been done on the concept of scripts, the development of different systems and their classifications. The first extensive studies include Taylor (1883), Diringer (1948), Moorhouse (1953), and Gelb (1969), among others, who contributed significantly to the understanding of this topic, but their views are somewhat outdated. More modern works include research such as Daniels and Bright (1996), Coulmas (2008), Gnanadesikan (2011), Borgwaldt and Joyce (2013), and Daniels (2017). In the Slovenian language, Bekeš (1999; 2019) and Hmeljak Sangawa (2019) focus on the classification of the Chinese and Japanese scripts. A comparison of the positions of individual studies would be too extensive at this point, so let us limit ourselves to the definitions of the Unicode Consortium, since the focus of this paper is on the treatment of scripts from the point of view of information technology.

In the context of information technology, the term writing system denotes two different concepts. On the one hand, it describes the general principle of how individual groups of scripts graphically represent the selected language. From this point of view, the Unicode Consortium follows a classification that divides scripts into three categories: alphabets, syllabaries and logosyllabaries.

Alphabets are writing systems where the basic elements are letters, which are used to write consonants and vowels. The alphabet we are most familiar with is the Latin alphabet, which with certain adaptations is used to write many languages. The degree of correspondence between sounds and letters is a separate issue that we do not consider here. A writing system that records only consonants is called an *abjad*, not an alphabet. To us the most familiar *abjad* is the Arabic writing system (The Unicode Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 256).[1]

Syllabary signs record syllables, which most often means a combination of consonant(s) and vowel(s). This also includes the Japanese *hiragana* and *katakana* syllabaries. In China, the syllabary of one of the Yi languages belongs to this group.[2] The Korean *Hangul* is neither an alphabet nor a syllabary, as its syllables are composed of letters called *jamo*, which are not independent units of the Korean script in themselves. Because of these characteristics, Unicode calls it a featural syllabary (The Unicode Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 257).

The Chinese writing system is logographic in nature, and Unicode uses the term logosyllabary. This term refers to writing systems where the smallest units represent words and/or word morphemes, which can also be used as rough recordings of the acoustic image. The basic unit of logosyllabaries has many names, for example, *ideograph*, *ideogram*, *logograph*, *logogram*

1 In addition to these, there are also abugids, in which consonants that imply one vowel are written with primary signs, while the rest of the vowels are written with secondary, added signs, which, together with signs for consonants, form groups that record syllables (Bright 2000; Daniels 2017; Share 2016). These include the scripts from the Indian subcontinent, such as Devanagari (Pandey and Jha 2019).

2 The Chinese government recognizes six languages of the Yi group. The languages are unrelated, but they used a common script for shamanic purposes. The traditional writing system was logographic, but the modern one is syllabic. The Yi syllabary has been the official script of Northern Yi since 1980.

and *sinogram*, and in layman's terms, even a *letter* or *sign*. By definition, logographs are units that represent a word or morpheme, while ideographs are units that represent ideas or concepts. The boundaries between morphemes, words and concepts are often blurred (The Unicode Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 258).

Chinese characters are primarily used to write the Chinese language, but other East Asian languages have also integrated them into their writing systems. Moreover some individual regions have created their own characters based on the Chinese ones, which are only used in that specific area. The umbrella term for the characters is *hanzi* in Chinese, *kanji* in Japanese, and *hanja* in Korean. Unicode, as we will see below, throws all the characters into one set and blurs regional boundaries. It calls this group of characters *Han* or CJK Unified Ideographs.[3]

On the other hand, the term *writing system* refers to a set of **scripts** that are used to write down a certain language.[4] From this point of view, the Japanese writing system uses four scripts, i.e. *Han*, *hiragana*, *katakana* and Latin[5] (The Unicode Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 256). In addition to these, technically speaking, the scripts *Bopomofo, Hangul, Yi, Nüshu*,[6] *Lisu*,[7] *Miao*[8] and *Tangut*[9] are in use today in East Asia (The Uni-

3 CJK stands for Chinese (C), Japanese (J) and Korean (K). An alternative term is CJKV, which adds Vietnamese (V).

4 The term *script* should not be equated with the term *character set*, as the latter denotes a set of characters that, in principle, differs from the characters of a specific writing system. If we limit ourselves to the example of the Latin alphabet, the ISO/IEC 8859-1 character set is suitable for writing English, German, Italian and many other languages that use the Latin alphabet, but not for Slovenian, because it does not contain sibilants. On the other hand, the ISO/IEC 8859-2 character set is suitable for writing Slovenian, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian and some other languages, including English.

5 On the Latinization of proper names in Slovenia, see Hmeljak Sangawa 2000.

6 The *Nüshu* script was used by women in the Hunan province of southeastern China. The characters of this script come from Chinese characters, but they often only represent the acoustic image of the syllables.

7 The *Lisu* script was created at the beginning of the 20th century for recording the *Lisu* language of the Yunnan province. It has been officially recognized by China since 1992. It consists of Latin letters, rotated Latin letters, and punctuation used to denote tones (The Unicode Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 692).

8 The *Miao* script was created in 1904 and is used for recording the language of the same name from the northeastern part of the Yunnan province.

9 The *Tangut* script records the Tangut language, which was in use from the 11th to the 16th century in what is now northeastern China. It was rediscovered at the end of the 19th century, and nowadays it is mainly the subject of academic research (The Unicode Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 693).

code Consortium, The Unicode Standard, Version 11.0.0 2018, 691). Visually speaking, what all these scripts have in common is that they look square. Each graphic unit therefore occupies a square of space.[10]

2 Uncoded and Coded Character Sets

We talk about Uncoded and Coded Character Sets mainly in connection with scripts, which consist of a large number of elements. These primarily include the writing systems of Asian languages with thousands of characters. But before we clarify what these terms refer to, we must mention two basic approaches to this mass of characters.

A review of historical lexicographic works shows that part of the material aims to cover as many characters as possible, while the other part strives to limit itself to the most important ones. Normative dictionaries belong to the first category, as they try to capture as many characters as possible from this mass and thus standardize the writing. However, they also try to limit and exclude alternative, unofficial records of the same character from the open set of characters, which is still increasing. In the second category are the various shorter lists of characters that attempt to extract the most important ones from the vast character set and create smaller, manageable subsets. Tens of thousands of characters are too many for everyday use, as some of them are quite outdated or rare (Zhao and Baldauf 2008, Yong and Peng 2008).

Chinese script reforms go back a long way, and the standardization of writing was one of the key tasks during the Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE), when a list of 3,500 characters was created to be used as an official standard. In this context the work *Cangjiepian* (倉頡篇) was also made, which represents an attempt to reform the Chinese script and establish orthographic standards for the then small seal script (Zhao and Baldauf 2008, 25). The next major work is the character dictionary[11] *Shuowen jiezi* (说文解字) from 100 CE, in which 9,353 characters are listed. It also defines the characters to be used for correct writing, while including their frequently used alternative forms.

10 Because of this characteristic, the character sets for Asian scripts also created a full-width Latin alphabet, where each letter typographically occupies the space of one square (Japanese: 全角ローム字 *zenkaku roomaji*; Chinese: 全角安全全像 *quanjiao zimu*). As an example, let's take the letter A in the Unicode framework, which successfully combines different character sets. The base capital letter A is located at code point <U+0041> and its full width equivalent (Ａ) is at code point <U+FF21>.

11 Present-day dictionaries are divided into character dictionaries and word dictionaries. In this paper we only discuss character dictionaries, so the term dictionary below refers to the latter.

Dictionaries have been added to throughout history and have thus included more and more characters, but in all cases these are still only subsets of all existing characters. The next dictionary whose influence is still visible today is the *Kangxi zidian* from 1716, which defined 47,035 characters.[12] As Zhao and Baldauf (2008, 16) write, the most comprehensive dictionary to date is the *Zhonghua zihai* (中华字海) from 1994, which includes 85,000 characters. However, the truth is that it too is not a complete set of all existing characters, no matter how extensive it is.

In order to improve literacy, in the 1950s the Chinese government defined a closed set of 7,000 characters, which we know as the *commonly used characters* (*Xiandai Hanyu tongyongzi biao* 现代汉语通用字表). Of these, 3,500 are further listed as *frequently used characters* (*Xiandai Hanyu changyongzi biao* 现交汉语常用字表), which is the number that a person with a high school education is expected to know. The list is further divided into 2,500 primary characters for the elementary school level and 1,000 secondary characters for the high school level. In addition, the Chinese government has published a list of simplified characters (*Jianhuazi zongbiao* 简化字总表), which includes 2,200 characters. These include characters that are graphically different from traditional characters, with the aim of reducing the number of strokes by more than half, with the idea that this should further contribute to greater literacy (Zhao and Baldauf 2008, 48).

In 1982–1984, Taiwan defined general-purpose characters in a broader scope. There are 4,808 frequently used characters (*Changyong guozi biaozhun ziti biao* 常用國字標準字體表), the secondary characters list includes 6,341 characters (*Ci changyong guozi biaozhun ziti biao* 次常用國字標準字體表), and the rare characters list includes 18,480 (*Hanyong ziti biao* 罕用字體表). In addition, a list of 18,609 versions of characters (*Yiti guozi zibiao* 異體國字字表) was also defined.

In Japan, the list of frequently used characters since the 2010 reform includes 2,136 characters (*Jōyō Kanji hyō* 常用漢字表[13]), of which 1,006 belong to the educational set (Kyōiku kanji 教育漢字), which further defines exactly in which primary school grade children should learn certain characters.[14]

12 Unicode is also based on it, but more on this below.

13 Retrieved from the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Jōyōkanji-hyō 常用漢字表 [List of Frequently Used Kanji Characters] 2010).

14 With the revision of the curricula, which will enter into force in 2020, 20 characters used to write the names of prefectures will be included in the set for primary school, so that it will then include 1,026 characters. The order of adoption will also be slightly changed (Monbukagakushō 2017).

The remaining 1,130 (1,110 from 2020 onwards) characters are among the frequently used ones, which exceed the primary school level. In addition, there is a list of 863 characters for personal names (*Jinmei-yō Kanji* 人名用漢字覧表).[15]

Both Korea and Vietnam adopted certain Chinese characters throughout history, but later developed their own scripts. Korea created the *Hangul* script and established a set of characters that students should learn during their school years. The educational set thus comprises 1,800 characters (*Hanmun Gyoyukyong Gicho Hanja* 한문교이용기초 한자/漢文教育用基礎漢字), of which 900 are to be learned at the secondary school level and 900 at the university level. The Supreme Court of Korea also established a list of 2,964 characters acceptable for use in personal names (*Inmyeong-yong Hanja* 인명용 한자/人名用漢字) (Lunde 2008, 84). However, knowledge of *hanja* characters is not essential for Korean speakers, as nowadays almost everything is written in *Hangul*.

All of the above-mentioned sets of characters are uncoded, i.e. subsets that were created outside the framework of information technology, regardless of whether they can be computerized. Knowledge of Uncoded Character Sets is important for understanding Coded Character Sets, as the former served as the basis for computer scientists to construct the latter.

The term Coded Character Set therefore indicates that it is a collection of characters intended for computer processing. Each character must have its own code point, i.e. a unique numerical value. This is crucial for understanding the issue of Asian language scripts. Namely, the design of computers is not language-independent, but is linked to English and the English writing system, which can be seen from the structure of the 8-bit byte, ASCII, keyboard design, and the like. As we will see below, this also reflects a one-dimensional way of thinking, which was not suitable for the writing systems of Asian languages.

3 One-dimensional approach

America, the cradle of computer development, set the standards for character encoding with ASCII (*American Standard Code for Information Interchange*). The original 7-bit ASCII with seven bits defined 2^7 or 128 code points. This was enough for 33 control characters, a space and 94 printable characters. With this amount of code points, it was possible to define the

15 Retrieved from the Ministry of Justice (Hōmushō 2017).

26 uppercase and 26 lowercase letters of the English alphabet, 10 digits and 32 other common characters, such as punctuation marks and mathematical operators. These are also the characters of a typical English keyboard.

This thinking is completely one-dimensional. With one bit we create two combinations (2^1), with two bits four combinations (2^2), with three bits eight combinations (2^3), and so on. Seven bits were sufficient for the English script, but not for the alphabets of other languages that use characters unknown to the English alphabet, for example *č*, *š, ž*, *Č*, *Š*, *Ž* for Slovenian, *ä*, *ö*, *ü*, *ß* for German, *é*, *è*, *ê*, *ë*, *æ*, *œ*, *ç*, etc. for French, etc.

The addition of an eighth bit allowed for an additional 128 code points, which was sufficient for most alphabet scripts. The letters of the English alphabet remained at the same code points, and the locally specific letters were at values from 161 to 255 (decimal notation). The only problem was that even the 94 new places were not enough for all the special letters of all the scripts. As part of the ISO/IEC 8859 standards, 15 parts or versions were thus created, which were used in different regions and covered the scripts of a certain group of languages.

Table 1: Comparison of code points 185, 232 and 248 in the five regional versions of the ISO/IEC 8859 standard.

ISO/IEC 8859	Name	suitable for the scripts of the following languages	185	232	248
ISO/IEC	Latin-1, Western European Latin-2, Central European Latin-3, South European Latin/Cyrillic Latin/Greek	English, German, Icelandic, Italian, Portuguese... Slovenian, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish... Turkish, Maltese, Esperanto Bulgarian, Macedonian, Russian, Belarusian... Modern Greek	^{1} š ı Й Ή	è č è ш θ	øřĝj ψ

In practice, this meant that Slovenian and Slovak users saw the word *češnja* (cherry) the same way, German or English users saw it as *èe*^{1}*nja*, in Bulgaria they saw the word *шeЙnja*, and in Greece it was printed out as *ϑeΉnja*. In simple text editors (for example Notepad++) we can switch between different encodings and observe the differences between character sets. We will notice that the English pangram *the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog* will be displayed correctly in all encodings. The Slovenian pangram *v kožuščku hudobnega fanta stopiclja mizar in kliče* will be distorted only where there are sibilants. For German we can use *Victor jagt zwölf Boxkämpfer quer über den großen Sylter Deich*. To display the Estonian script, *see väike mölder jõuab rongile hüpata* is suitable, and so on.[16]

The first attempt to adapt to Asian languages was the Asian versions of the ASCII set. The Chinese version was called GB-Roman, Taiwan's CNS-Roman, Japan's JIS-Roman, and Korea's KS-Roman. Like ASCII, these sets contain 94 printable characters. The only difference was in the value of the "$" and "\" signs (Lunde 2008, 91). These fixes are hardly worth mentioning because they only changed the glyph of one sign.

The next step was the 8-bit JIS X 0201 standard, which converted eighth-bit code points to half-width *katakana*. Within the scope of this standard the cherry (*češnja*) mentioned above would appear as ・eｹnja. There were enough code points for one syllabary, but there was already not enough space for the other, let alone to include kanji characters.

Using the linear approach, we therefore create 256 code points with eight bits, which is significantly too few for the scripts of Asian languages. Table 2 shows what the maximum values of strings of different lengths would be.

Thirteen-bit bytes would be needed to display 7,000 characters, the number of commonly used characters. Since the length of a byte, i.e. the smallest carrier of information, is a matter of agreement, Asian computers could – in theory – operate on the basis of longer bytes. The question would probably soon arise as to how long a byte should be in order to really have enough code points. If you wanted to display the contents of the 85,000-character *Zhonghua zihai* dictionary on a computer, you would need 17-bit bytes. This would be feasible, but on the other hand, the convention that one

16 For pangrams of other **alphabets** see, for example, http://clagnut.com/blog/2380/. Pangrams for **syllabaries** are a bit longer, but still manageable. For *Hangul*, we have an example of 밤새컴퓨터로요약을해치우면좋겠다 (*BamSae KumPyooTuhRo YoYakEul HaeChiWooMyun JotGetDa*). For *hiragana*, we can use とりなくこゑす ゆめさませ みよあけわたる ひんかしを そらいろはえて おきつへに ほふねむれゐぬ もやのうち (*torinakukowesu yumesamase miyoakewataru hinkashiwo sorairohaete okitsuheni hofunemurewinu moyanōchi*) (see https://camtsmith.com/articles/2016-11/pangrams) or the pangram presented in Hmeljak Sangawa (2019).
There are no pangrams for Chinese, but the idea of a pangram was already present in the 6th century, when the text *Qianziwen* (千字文) used 1,000 characters that were commonly used at the time, and children had to learn this work by heart. A similar text entitled *Sanzijing* (三字经) was created in the 13th century, and the text *Baijiaxing* (百家姓), in which 472 surnames are woven into verses, also dates to the Song dynasty (960-1279). All three works are collectively known as *San-bai-qian* (三百千) and were included in teaching materials until about 1930. The full texts are available at https://baike.baidu.com/item/三百千.

byte is a set of eight bits had already been established in 1964 (Internet History 1962 to 1992).

Table 2: Maximum value in binary and decimal notation according to the number of bits.

Number of bits	Total number of code points	Binary notation	Decimal notation
7	128	1111111	127
8	256	11111111	255
9	512	111111111	511
10	1,024	1111111111	1023
11	2,048	11111111111	2047
12	4,096	111111111111	4095
13	8,192	1111111111111	8191
14	16,384	11111111111111	16383
15	32,768	111111111111111	32767
16	65,536	1111111111111111	65535
17	131,072	11111111111111111	131071

At this point, it appeared that the scripts of Asian languages would not be computerizable. The Japanese came up with the first real solution in 1978 with the development of the ISO-2022 standard. Today, when Unicode 12.0[17] already defines more than 100,000 Chinese characters, the issue of Asian scripts is no longer as problematic, but who is to say that today's solutions would have come at all if there had not been for the switch from one-dimensional to two-dimensional thinking.

4 Two-dimensional approach

The basics of a two-dimensional way of thinking were unknowingly already present in the Chinese postal system. It is thus almost unbelievable that so much time passed before the first computer solution was found, since the seeds of that solution had already been sown.

Just as ASCII was sufficient for the exchange of English text in the context of information technology, Morse code was previously sufficient for the trans-

17 Translator's Note: When the original article was written, Unicode 12.0 had already been released on March 5, 2019. Unicode 13.0 was scheduled for release in 2020 and was officially launched on March 10, 2020.

mission of English text via telegraphy. And just as ASCII was inadequate for the needs of Asian scripts, Morse was inadequate for Asian languages. In principle, messages could be transmitted via acoustic image, but even this would bring many problems due to homophones, the lettering of the language, dialectal differences and the length of the texts. The solution to the unambiguous transmission of Chinese characters was published in 1881 when Zheng Guanying (鄭觀應) published the manual *Dianbao xinbian* (电报新编) (Mair 2015).

Each character had a four-digit code, from 0000 to 9999. On each page of the manual was a 10 x 10 table, meaning there were 100 characters on one page. The first two digits represented the page in the handbook, the third digit referred to the row mark in which the letter was, and the fourth digit referred to the column mark in which the letter was. For example, the characters *zhongwen* 中文 have the code 0022 2429, which means that the character *zhong* 中 is in the second column of the second row on page 00, and the character *wen* 文 is on page 24, in the second row, the ninth column.

The work of the telegraph operators was multi-staged. The postal clerk first converted the characters of the message into four-digit codes with the help of a telegraph manual, then converted them into Morse code and telegraphed the message to the postal clerk on the other side. The clerk then wrote down the accepted Morse codes as a continuous sequence of digits, divided them into four-digit sets, and finally, with the help of a telegraph manual, converted the four-digit codes back into characters. Figure 1 shows an example of a telegram:

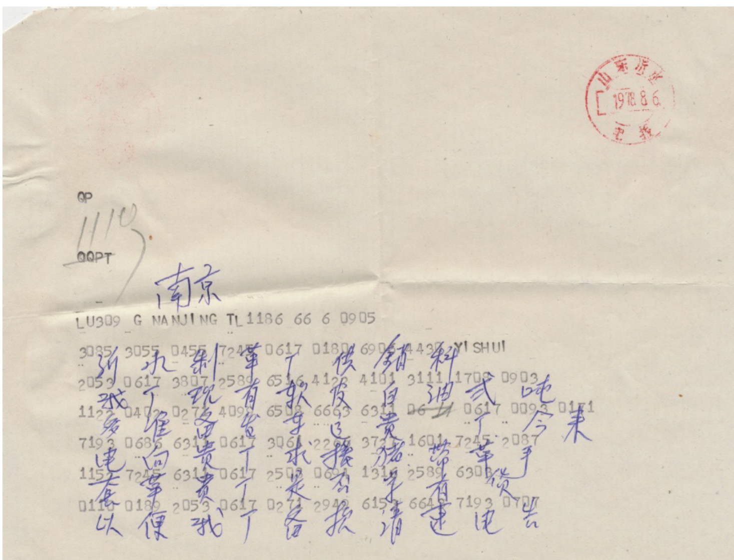

Figure 1: An example of a Chinese telegram (Mair 2015).

In 1885, Korea also adopted the telegraph system from China, including characters. Korean telegrams were written either in Chinese characters or in letters of the English alphabet, but not in *Hangul* (Tomokiyo 2014).

The 10,000 different telegraph codes are therefore not understood in a linear or one-dimensional way, as we would count from 0 to 9999, but in a flat or two-dimensional way. The characters were classified into 10 x 10 grids according to dictionary principles. Two hundred and fourteen radicals from the *Kangxi zidian* dictionary served as the basis for this. Radicals with fewer strokes were ranked before radicals with more strokes, and within each radical the characters were again classified according to the number and shape of strokes. Chinese telegraph code manuals are still in use today, and are available online, with some differences between the Chinese, Taiwanese and Hong Kong versions (*Biaozhun dianmaben* (*Zhongwen shangyong dianma*) [標準電碼本(中文商用電碼)] 2004- 2018).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, coding solutions were first found by the Japanese in 1978 with the development of the ISO-2022 standard. Different sets of characters were classified into a grid of 94 x 94 points, as this is the number of printable characters within ASCII. In this way, they created 8,836 code points. Figure 2 shows the area of the grid where the Coded Character Sets were placed. The axis labels use hexadecimal notation, which means that a decimal value of 128 is displayed here as 80 and a value of 255 as FF.

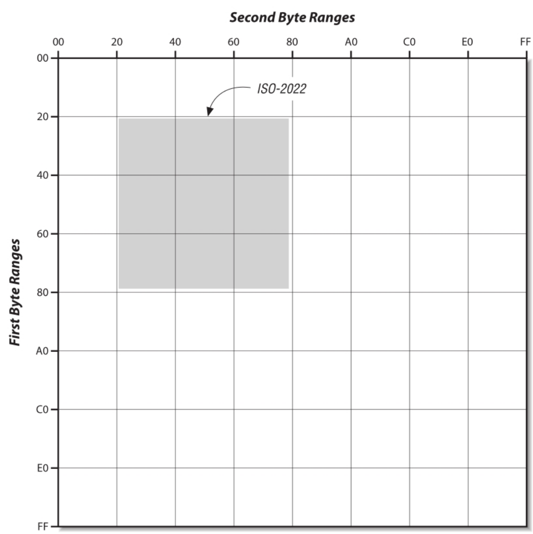

Figure 2: Area of code points in the ISO-2022 encoding (Lunde 2008, 231).

We can see from Figure 2 that all characters are in the rank of the first seven bits and that the eighth bit is unused. This means that this coding system was very convenient for exchanging information between computers. However, since the grid area overlapped with the letters of the English alphabet, there had to be a system for switching between single-byte and double-byte data processing. Modal encodings, including ISO-2022, solve this with escape sequences or other special characters that indicate switching between character sets or different versions of the same character set (Lunde 2008, 195). Since going into detail about this would be too complex and long-winded for the purpose of this paper, let me use a simpler comparison. Imagine that the strings of ones and zeros are the tracks, and the processor is the train that travels along them. The position of the switches (the selected escape sequence) directs it to the first track (single-byte read) or the second track (double-byte read). At the end of the section, there are switches (escape sequences) that redirect the train to a new direction. In this way, it was possible to create 128 + 8,836 code points with a 7-bit byte.[18]

In that many code points the Japanese version of ISO-2022-JP could accommodate several character sets: ASCII, JIS-Roman (or the Japanese version of ASCII), JIS X 0208 (with special characters, digits, Latin, *hiragana*, *katakana*, Greek alphabet, Cyrillic, table markings, etc.) and JIS X 0208-1983 (1983 expansion).

These solutions were then adopted in other regions of East Asia. In its ISO-2022-CN version, China of course kept ASCII, and placed GB 2312-80 character sets (GB-Roman or the Chinese version of ASCII, *hiragana*, *katakana*, Greek alphabet, Cyrillic, *pinyin*, *Bopomofo*, 6,763 Chinese characters, special characters, table markings, etc.) and the first two levels of the Taiwanese standard CNS 11643-1992 on the 94 x 94 grid. Levels 3 to 7 of this Taiwanese standard were added to the expanded version ISO-2022-CN-EXT (Lunde 2008, 229-230). The Koreans also produced their own version, ISO-2022-KR.

Once the first step into two-dimensional thinking was taken, it did not take long to switch to non-modal encoding, which uses numeric code point values to switch between single-, double-, or multi-byte processing. The EUC (*Extended Unix Code*) coding was created based on the ISO-2022 coding. Figure 3 shows the position of the double-byte grid in EUC encodings. This time each region also placed their own character sets in this area.

18 7-bit bytes were later used by UTF-7, which is no longer in use today.

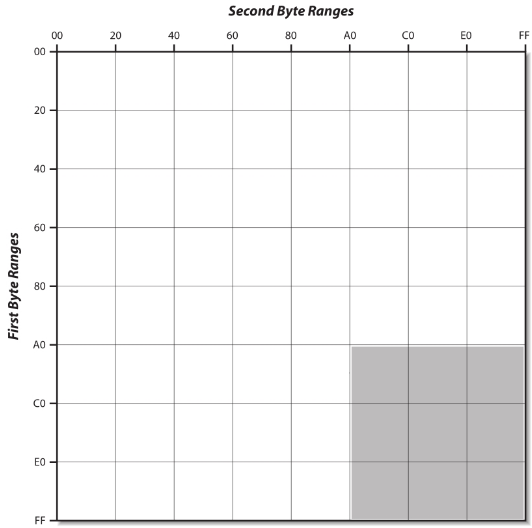

Figure 3: Two-byte area in EUC encoding (adapted from Lunde 2008, 246).

The Japanese extended the additional character sets to three bytes, which was already the beginning of a three-dimensional approach to coding. A single point of the first byte led to the third dimension or 3-byte reading, i.e. 0x8F. Figure 4 shows the Japanese version of EUC-JP.

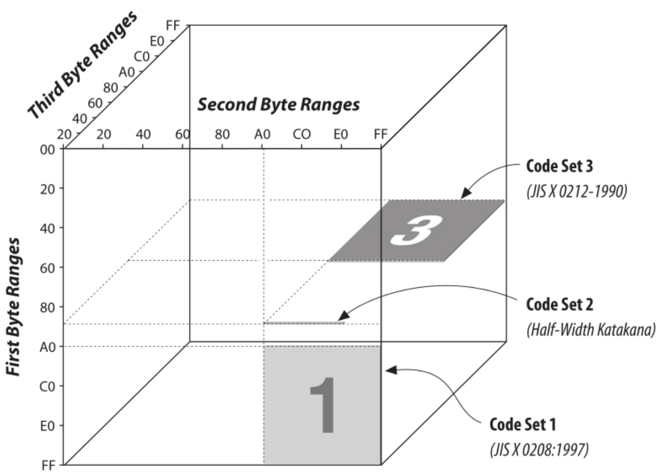

Figure 4: Two- and 3-byte area within the EUC-JP encoding (Lunde 2008, 250).

The Taiwanese placed multibyte characters in a similar area to the Japanese, except that the characters were four bytes. They created 80 levels, as roughly seen in Figure 5. The 4-byte character area is where the thin grey line is marked. An extension of this system was also used in Hong Kong, which more or less directly adopted the Taiwanese solutions. Indeed, both regions use traditional Chinese characters, with Hong Kong only having to add some locally specific ones. In contrast to Taiwan, which arranged the characters according to carefully considered principles, the letters in the expanded HKSCS (Hong Kong Supplementary Character Set) were added without a specific system.

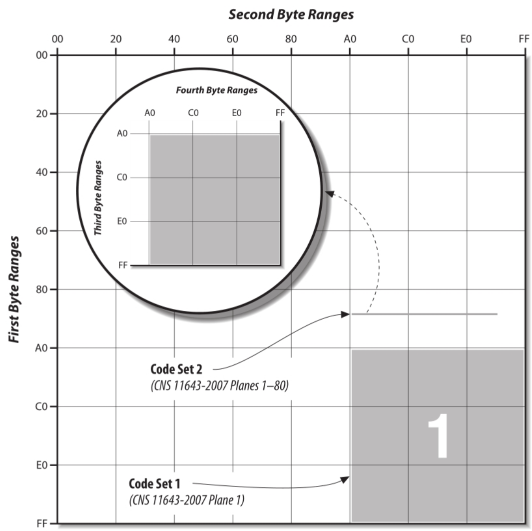

Figure 5: Two- and 4-byte area in EUC-TW encoding (Lunde 2008, 248).

In addition to the versions of the ISO-2022 and EUC systems that were used in several Asian regions, individual regions created their own, regionally conditioned coding systems, which did not result in radically different approaches. Take China for example. The GBK coding system was derived from the ISO-2022-CN. Figure 6 shows in which directions they expanded to obtain new code points.

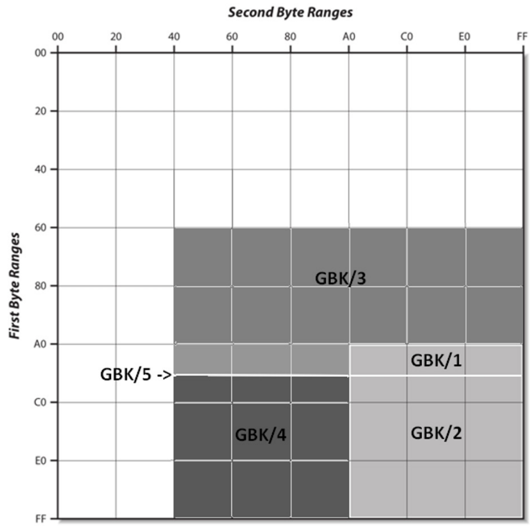

Figure 6: Area of code points in the GBK coding system.

Even the GB18030 standard, which all devices intended for the Chinese market must support since 2006, only added a new band of code points to the GBK coding system, as shown in Figure 7.

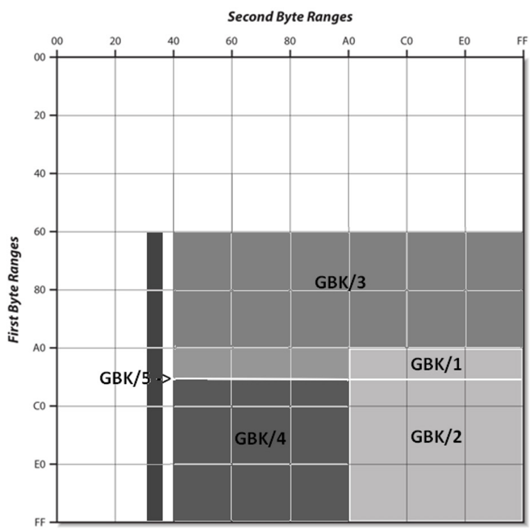

Figure 7: Area of code points in the GB18030 coding system.

5 Three-dimensional approach

The most complex approach to the structuring of information and the arrangement of characters is manifested in the CCCII character set (Chinese Character Code for Information Interchange 中文資訊交換碼). The first version dates back to 1980, with revisions in 1982 and 1987 (Lunde 2008, 122).

CCCII is based on the ISO 2022 coding and is divided into 16 layers. Each layer except the last is further divided into six planes, which makes a total of 94 planes. Combining this with the concept of a 94 x 94 grid results in a 94 x 94 x 94 cube as shown in Figure 8.

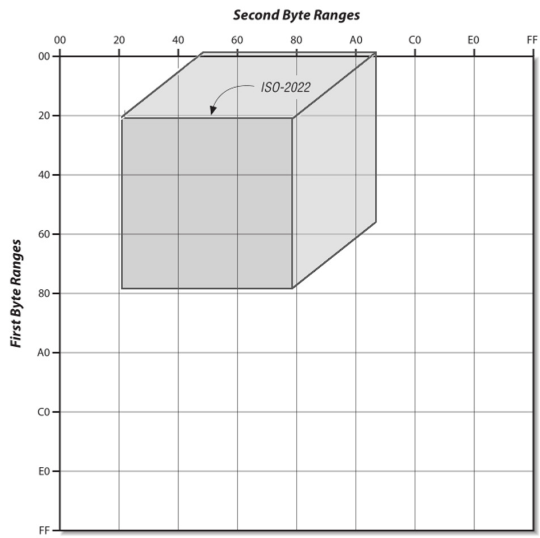

Figure 8: CCCII encoding structure.

Each layer is dedicated to a certain character type, as shown in Table 3. Table 4 then shows the structure of the first layer in more detail.

Table 3: Character categories by layers in CCCII coding (Lunde 2008, 122).

Layer	Plane	Character type
1	**1–6**	**Non-Chinese characters and traditional Chinese characters**
2	7–12	Simplified Chinese characters
3–12	13–72	Character versions from layer 1
13	73–78	*Hiragana*, *katakana* and Japanese *kanji* characters
14	79–84	*Jamo*, *Hangul* and Korean *hanja* characters
15	85–90	Reserved area
16	91–94	Other characters

Table 4: Structure of the first layer by levels in CCCII coding (adapted from Lunde 2008, 122).

Plane	Line (dec)	Number of characters	Character type
1	1		Reserved for control characters
1	2–3		
1	4–10	0	Unassigned
1	11	35	Chinese punctuation
1	12–14	214	214 *Kangxi* radicals
1	15	78	Numbers and *zhuyin* (*Bopomofo*)
1	16–67	4,808	Frequently used characters[19]
1–3	68_1–64_3	17,032	Secondary characters
3–6	65_3–5_6	20,583	Other characters
6	6–94	0	Unassigned

The 94 x 94 x 94 cube offers 830,584 code points, which is almost ten times as many as the most comprehensive Chinese dictionary. For this reason we can find that many code points are empty. The exceptional nature of this solution can be seen above all in the interrelationship of the layers and the resulting connection of the characters. As Figure 9 shows, versions of the same character have the same value of the first two bytes, but differ in the third byte.

19 See Chapter 2 *Uncoded and Coded Character Sets*, the paragraph on Taiwan.

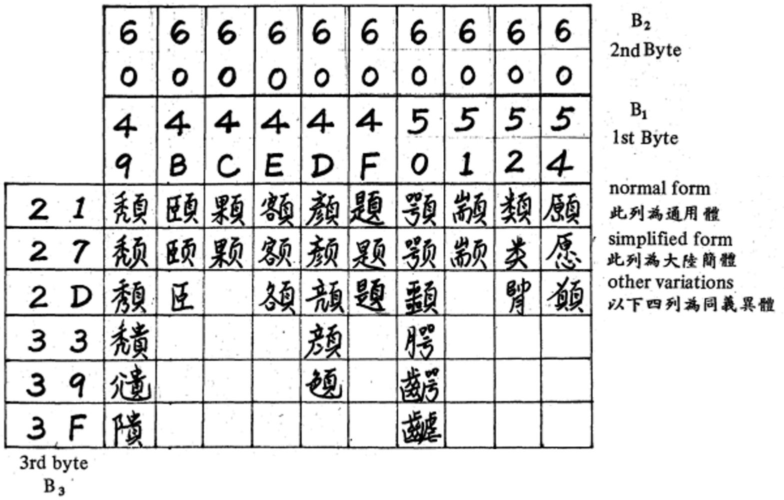

Figure 9: Code points of characters in the CCCII encoding (Hsieh et al. 1981, 135).

Because CCCII works within 7-bit bytes, it is suitable for library systems, and the Library of Congress of America has adapted it to the EACC (East Asia Coded Character) system. A list of code points for 13,478 characters is available on the Library of Congress website (Code Table East Asian Ideographs (*Han*) 2007). From the value of the code point, we can immediately tell whether a particular character is a primary Taiwanese character (x1xxxx), a simplified character (x7xxxx), or one of the variants of the character (NNxxxx). Let's look at the example in Table 5.

Table 5: Example of placement of official character and its variants in the EACC system.

Code point	Character	Use
213421	劍	The official traditional character in Taiwan
273421	剑	Simplified character
2D3421	劒	Unofficial version
333421	劔	Unofficial version
453421	劎	Unofficial version
4B3421	剣	The official Japanese character
513421	釰	Unofficial version

The CCCII was conceived very systematically and comprehensively, but it did not quite catch on. One reason may be that under the CCCII system each character is three bytes long, which is more wasteful than Taiwan's legacy Big5 system. In addition, the Taiwan government has set CNS 11643 as the official standard.

6 Unicode

Unicode took a new path in classifying scripts, throwing all characters into the same group. Regardless of whether a specific character is used in all writing systems that still use characters today (Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong), or whether it is limited only to a certain region, characters belong to the single category of *Han*, or the *Unified CJK Ideographs*, as was already mentioned in the first part of this paper. Regional differences between characters were thus blurred.

Unicode is also structured three-dimensionally, using almost all points of a 256 x 256 grid. Recall that the underlying legacy systems defined only part of the grid, usually in the area of printable characters.

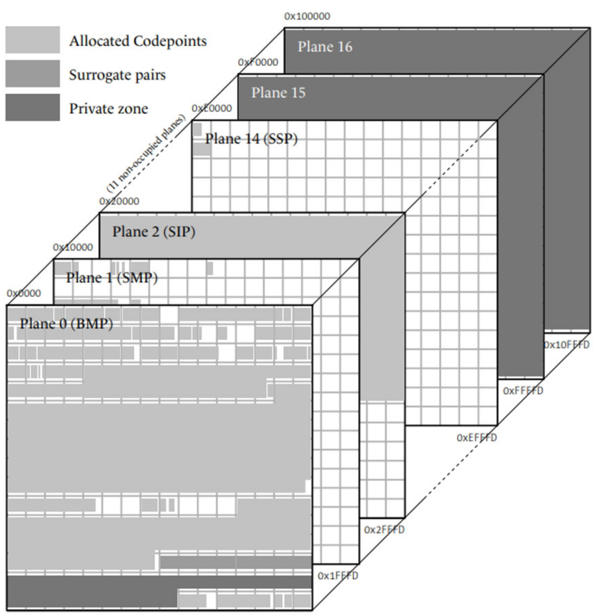

Figure 10: Basic structure of Unicode (Haralambous and Horne 2007, 69).

The primary grid is called the *Basic Multilingual Plane* (BMP, Plane 0), which with 65,536 code points is sufficient for most writing systems. The characters for writing Chinese, Japanese, and Korean range from 2E80 (additions to radicals) to 9FFF (characters), with the characters defined in the black-lined box in Figure 11.[20]

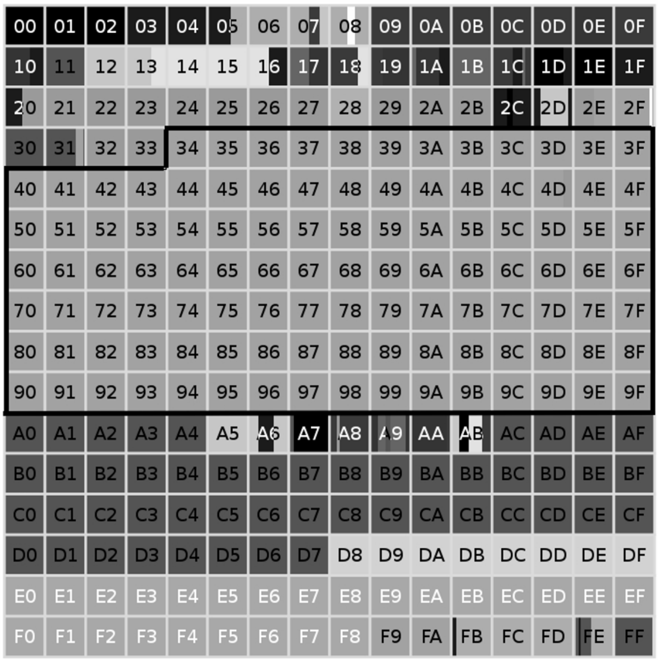

Figure 11: Position of Chinese characters on the basic multilingual plane.

In addition to the basic plane, there are 16 additional planes available, which serve as space for future expansions. The newly defined characters include not only script elements in the classical sense, but also emoticons.

If we limit ourselves to Japanese, Chinese and Korean scripts, we see that the penultimate version (Unicode 11.0.0) added three characters for chemical elements and two characters for Japanese proper names.[21]

20 Certain sets of characters, such as *Hangul* syllables as a whole, are defined in other sections (AC00-D7AF).

21 https://www.unicode.org/versions/Unicode11.0.0/ and https://www.unicode.org/charts/ PDF/U4E00.pdf.

Table 6: New characters in Unicode version 11.0.0.

Code point	Character	Description
U+9FEB	鿫	ào (eng. *oganesson*) the element in the periodic table with atomic number 118
U+9FEC	鿬	tián (eng. *tennessine*) the element in the periodic table with atomic number 117
U+9FED	鿭	nǐ (eng. *nihonium*) the element in the periodic table with atomic number 113. It is the first element of the periodic table that was discovered in Asia, more precisely, in Japan. Hence the name *nihonium*. Note: The character 鉨 with the traditional radical for metal has existed since version 1.1 (June 1993), but at code point U+9268.[22]
U+9FEE	鿮	Japanese proper name
U+9FEF	鿯	Japanese proper name[23]

In Unicode version 12.0.0, released on March 5, 2019, only marginal changes apply to Asian scripts, such as smaller *hiragana* and *katakana* characters for Old Japanese. A minor update – and with it version 12.1.0 – followed in May 2019, when the code point U+32FF was assigned the character ㋿, which with one letter indicates the new *Reiwa* 令和 period in the Japanese calendar. The *Heisei* period (January 8, 1989–April 30, 2019) is written with two letters 平成 or with a single ㍻ (U+337B) (The Unicode Consortium, Japanese Era 2018).

7 Brief concluding thoughts

The simultaneous use of different scripts is not as self-evident as we think today. It was only at the end of the 1980s that experts found a solution to assign uniform numerical values to thousands of characters, which made it possible, for example, to enter Chinese characters and Slovenian sibilants into the same text file. For this, it was necessary to get out of the one-dimen-

22 Compare https://www.compart.com/en/unicode/U+9268.

23 Compare https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2017/17396-n4831-japan-unc.pdf.

sional way of perceiving code points and start thinking in a different way. Although Unicode has now almost entirely supplanted regional legacy systems, the latter remain an important conceptual legacy. Even the conceptual similarities between Unicode and the presented legacy encoding systems are probably not purely coincidental.

The invention of a system that allows the creation of new code points was a prerequisite and the first step towards the successful expansion of information technology in East Asian languages. What followed were questions about how to enter, display, print or transfer these scripts between different platforms as efficiently and economically as possible. The characteristics of individual languages and their scripts bring problems that are unknown in languages with alphabetic scripts. This soon became apparent, for example, in the context of library databases. Even before the popularization of Unicode, the Code for Chinese Character Sets for Information Interchange (CCCII) was created precisely for the needs of libraries, which was adopted by the Library of Congress in 1989 as the American standard for CJK languages (abbreviation for Chinese-Japanese-Korean) (Kent 1993). Moreover, even without detailed knowledge of the issue, we encounter many problems if we use the Slovenian library information system COBISS, which is used by the library systems of Slovenia and some neighbouring countries. Problems arise not only in listing and entering works, but also in finding relevant hits. If nothing else, there remains room for improvement in this area.

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