

**DISCUSSION PAPER**

by

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on

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**EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIAN COUNTRIES  
ISSUES AND COPING STRATEGIES**

The Thirteenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences  
Washington, D.C. September 2-5, 1984

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## I. Introduction:

In providing a proper assessment of the development of education in a given nation or area; its issues and coping strategies, it is important to first of all examine to some extent its social, cultural, and economic systems as well as land-area, population density and natural resources development among others from a historic viewpoint, to arrive at a proper framework needed for understanding and solving many of the problems these same nations face today. This paper will firstly provide a sketch of the historical background of the Korean nation in those areas, and no doubt some of the nations represented in this international conference will see some similarities to, as well as differences from, their own in the historical aspects.

Secondly, the paper will deal with Korea's evolving from a feudal state educational system, some of the issues incurred on the way, its merger into the educational arena of the sciences and technology of the West, its present-day status and some of the measures taken in coping with problems arising.

## II. A Historical Review:

The Korean peninsula, elongated and irregular in shape, stretches out over an area of some 220,839 square kilometers, and the backbone of the land is formed by watersheds which run north to south near the eastern coast. And though its nine major rivers provide an adequate supply of water for the historically agricultural nation, its land area suitable for cultivation has been somewhat short of that needed to sustain a traditionally large family size population due to the many ribbed, uncultivable mountain ranges, leaving mainly the western river areas available for supplying the nationwide needs of the populace. The peninsula is also short of mineral wealth, and while not seriously affecting the earlier populace with a history of some five thousand years, it is today one of the hindering factors to Korea's economic development, thus making the Republic of Korea one of the major importers of raw materials for manufacturing and re-export or domestic use.

In spite of those hindering factors, Korea evolved from the earlier tribal states down through the neolithic age, the bronze age, and as craftsmanship and trade emerged between tribes, so did the consolidation of tribes to follow become kingdoms and ensuing dynasties, lasting from around B.C. 37, until the entry of the modern era of democratic institutions and introduction to the West in the late nineteenth century. Until that time, Korea had been tagged with the sobriquet "Hermit Kingdom," fully satisfied with her own cultural system, clinging closely to neo-Confucian ethics in conjunction with Buddhist morality as the core of Korean life, and even though the science of mathematics, geometry, architecture, etc., was well in evidence for over a thousand years, the educational system of the Yi, or Chosun Dynasty period (1392-1910) dealt mainly with the development of the social person through placing emphasis on literature, penmanship, and the arts, to include neo-Confucian derived forms of etiquette and personal decorum, which was primarily reserved for the privileged class males, who in order to gain as high in status as possible were provided tutorial type classes in special academies in preparation for the State Examination for Civil Service, which when passed successfully, ensured an opportunity to proceed upward in status without hinderence. In the meantime, those of the general populace, including females, were left to skill-practice only, and whose learning mainly dealt with parental or official obedience and loyalty.

This was indeed a society in which "following the advice and ways of one's elders or superiors" was one of the highest virtues of the young in accordance with Confucian ethics, and with such a social system, Korea found herself unprepared when the early twentieth century saw her confronted with the necessity of defending herself against foreign encroachment as well as in opening her doors to the outside world in the forms of commerce and trade and security alliances, and an eventual adoption of the well-developed technical and scientific education of the West.

The first of those alliances of course, were with the United States (1882), the United Kingdom (1883), and Germany (1884), which steadily expanded in various areas as time passed, and other nations, now covering much of the free world, have been drawn into areas of close relationships as the Republic took form after World War II.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Korea had indeed established through these earlier relations, a solid foundation from which she could proceed successfully in her development. However, the matter of reorganizing and reconstruction of her social and economical system was a great task at hand, and perhaps primarily as a result of the nation's ability to evolve from her traditional system soon enough, and over-reliance on her allies for support, she was unable to fend for herself and suffered the unfortunate loss of her sovereignty to a foreign power from 1910 until the end of World War II, presenting a gross hinderance to her further development in either direction, traditional or western-influenced. Then, at the regaining of her sovereignty at the end of World War II, the nation was again confronted with difficulties in every sector as her people groped for national recovery with the new-found freedom. But the firm will and their age-old reverence for education, loyalty and perserverence engrained in the national character, led the New Republic towards it re-growth and functional ability.

It may be noted that several universities and other institutions sorely needed for national reconstruction were founded shortly after the liberation in spite of the many hindering factors, for every sector of life; social, legal, educational, economical, military, agriculture, etc., had to be re-established both compatible to the Korean character, their own peculiar needs, and the new era of modernization for interchange with world nations. But no more had the nation begun to tackle the tasks at hand, than the north Korean communist armies of the regime that had arisen in the north, made a sudden full-scale invasion of the South on May 25, 1950, lasting until July 27, 1953, forcing the Republic's institutions of

government as well as education to uproot and move one or more times in order to continue functioning.

The Republic of Korea fared well however in restoring its institutions after the war, but again had to concentrate its main attention on immediate nation-building needs versus capital gain through reentering the scene of world trade and commerce. And here we find ourselves at the very threshold of our so-called "thrust forward" into the modern age.

### III. The New Era of Korean Education:

By the end of the Korean war, excluding the communist regime in the north, The Republic had been well introduced to the Western civilization, and as her interchanges continued to grow and expand, so did her institutions of higher education. And to meet the demand for more schools from elementary thru middle and high school and university level, the government began pouring its finances and support into the establishment of and improvement of facilities affording a mandatory elementary school education for the masses, national universities and institutes of technology. However, due to the rising numbers of youths eligible for university level education, these institutions were far short of meeting the needs, and it was then that private educational foundations were formed among a number of financially able Korean people and institutions of industry and prosperous business enterprises, and private schools from middle school through university level began to develop across the country, with the majority centered in Seoul city or nearby areas.

Due to the nation's heavy financial burden of national reconstruction and development however, these private institutions have had to rely solely upon their own financial resources to realize their objectives of providing and updating the education as well as maintaining, and further developing and expanding their physical plants to meet the ever-growing needs of the times as the nation continues to expand its technology and industry in its bid towards further involvement in world commerce, trade and diplomacy among other sectors. There have, of course been hardships and sacrifices, however, Korea's education is still rising in quality as well as quantity to this day.

Perhaps the key to this success can be found 1) in Korea's historic reverence for higher education, in which it has always been the ultimate aim of every Korean family since ages ago, 2) the determination of the people, and 3) the recognition of the needs of the nation, coupled with the increasing ability to finance a higher education as a result of increased production and trade made possible by the employment of highly skilled men and women produced by those institutions. This state of development has not, however been accomplished without hindering factors; some already solved, and others coming to the fore:

#### IV. Some Hindering Factors and Coping Strategies:

First, as has been the case of most developing nations, was the problem of initiating a comprehensive foreign language program, which involved sponsoring of educators abroad for such studies, the procurement of adequate text materials, translations, and establishing proper curriculums. This has been accomplished with remarkable success, and as mass communications became widespread, special linguistic classes have been provided by both radio and television, as has a special educational program on UHF television for the masses. Thus, Korean students are able to advance their studies by the use of not only Korean, but also in the major languages of the world, to include works written in the Chinese language as a result of Korea's historic use of the Chinese letters, which are still being taught and in daily use in part in newspapers, magazines, and other printed matter.

One of the major problems of the Republic of Korea has been the question of how to solve the problem of supply versus demand in the middle to high-level sectors of business and industry; the supply becoming increasingly greater than the demand resulting in highly competitive employment opportunities and an undesirable rate of educated, yet unemployed. It is only natural that students wish to pursue their studies in the more sophisticated and higher promising fields for a more secure livelihood, but yet, to permit such a trend from getting out of hand, and thus decreasing the work-labor

force, would prove to be detrimental to national economic and production goals, and therefore, after initiating a periodic survey of the needs in the various economic sectors, the Ministry of Education, through careful analysis, established a student quota system for the various colleges and departments to provide a more balanced output of able graduates, thus decreasing the flooding of the job market and unemployment rate. In addition, to ensure a more desirable student-teacher ratio, as well as quality education, the Ministry established an overall requirement for the employment of professors and teachers in accordance with student populations.

It seems that the majority of Koreans will not settle willingly for less than university education, in total disregard of ability or other difficulties that may lie ahead, which was settled in part by initiating and carrying out a mandatory national examination for college entrance qualification, to be followed by that of the various universities and colleges for actual admission, the latter selecting from the top level examinees in accordance with established quotas. This system, of course, had its drawbacks. Institutes and private tutoring began to flourish with varying capabilities and outcome in which students, primarily of middle school and high school level, attended daily and many times until late at night in their determination and their parent's determination to be able to pass the rigid examinations, and consequently, presented an added financial burden on parents as well as again exceeding the quotas of the universities who had to turn them away to await another year for reconsideration. This led to a move by the government to change the contents of the national examination to cover primarily the areas the student should be more familiar with, the abolishing of private institutes and tutoring out of class, and giving institutions the prerogative as to method of evaluation for acceptance. At the same time, abolishing the strict entrance quota in accordance with physical and educational capabilities of the universities and colleges, the Ministry of Education established a quota for retention and graduation, which is in the present stage of being moved from Ministry set

quotas into the hands and discretion of the university and college authorities themselves, who will decide by academic achievement levels, student attendance, conduct, etc., who is to receive a degree and who are to be dismissed, thus moving closer and closer to complete autonomy in the realm of higher education.

Another problem area has been the massive student-age migration from rural villages and towns to the large urban areas, and to the capitol city of Seoul in particular, for education as well as more promising employment, therefore leaving the lions share of the nation's agriculture and small and medium village or town-supporting business and industry in the hands of the very young and the aged. To help stem this trend, the government has encouraged urban universities and colleges to establish branch colleges and or institutes in the rural districts across the Republic, thus absorbing a growing number of those students who would otherwise out of necessity move to the large cities for both education and employment. The nation's industries and other enterprises are also undergoing the same type of branching outwards into those rural centers, the results of which will no doubt be seen in the not to far future.

Another move in the right direction, education authorities are now concentrating on the "equalization of educational standards" of both public and private schools at all levels across the country, where there has been a tendency to vary due to low density school-age populations, variance in financial distribution due to size, etc., and the trend where educators themselves for the most part have tried to remain in the more convenient urban areas for various reasons, to include the education of their own offspring. Thus, it is recognized that some format be worked out that will not be detrimental to the interests of both educators and students of those areas.



Of course, like any other nation sharing similar historical circumstances as the Republic of Korea, there had been earlier the problem of securing of badly needed text materials. The Republic of Korea, in the unfavorable condition that she was immediately following the Korean War, had to mainly rely upon aid in that area from abroad and their educational related foundations for the most part. However, as more and more Korean intellectuals were produced both in-country and abroad, so did the number of educational publications begin to expand in the forms of translations and analysis, and as the economy became more developed more and more advanced text materials were accrued from those advanced countries until today most libraries across the nation are well-stocked yet still adding to their stacks with less financial burden due to "fairly well catching up with the needs," so to speak. And as a result, according to Publication Annual '84, there was a slump in publishing during the year 1983, during which time of the over one hundred million books published, only 3,123 books per title out of 33,321 titles were published by book publishers in Korea. Of those, 21.9% concern literature, 19.6% juvenile literature, 11.5% social sciences subjects, 9.2% study guides, 7.8% technological science, 7.2% religious materials, and 1.6% pure science.

In working out a more productive higher educational system in Korea, among several changes and experiments was the initiation of a "Pilot School" project selecting several universities as model cases from which to work, beginning in 1974, during which time of the most significant items was the reduction of the number of total points for graduation which were reduced from 160 to 140, allowing more research time in the major areas, and along with that a system where hard-working students could achieve enough points for graduation in less than four years according to their rate of achievement. After screening the results, those found to be favorable were applied to other universities and colleges, and as a result has had a very favorable effect on the Republic's higher education system.

Finally, though there are perhaps other areas for discussion, is the situation of Korea's education of the mentally and physically impaired children. The first recorded school of special education in Korea was one established by the late American missionary Rossetta Sherwood Hall in Pyongyang in 1898, and though there is no way of knowing the present situation in communist north Korea, the Republic of Korea now has a total of 78 schools of special education, fully professionally staffed with graduates of special education departments of six universities who are turning out an annual average of specialized teachers adequate for the continuation of education at these institutions as well as allowing enough surplus for future planning. These schools, 2 governmental, 57 private, and 19 by public organizations, are all recipients of government subsidies, and have been of notable success in helping place a great number of these pupils into self-sustaining sectors of the economy and professions, while preparing others to become more able to take care of their basic needs, thus lessening to a great degree their total dependency on families and the society as a whole. In addition, more and more physically impaired youths are being accepted into public schools up through graduate school level as more special learning and teaching materials and means, to include building structures (special ramps, elevators, etc.) are being provided by those gaining institutions.

In concluding this portion on the Republic of Korea, though so many favorable comments have been made concerning the Korean success story, which are indeed appreciated, I would just like to comment that these successes have not been an act of providence nor the efforts of any one person or group of persons or agencies, but the combined efforts of the Korean people as a whole. This unified effort, again I might say, can most assuredly be traced to the ethnic culture and mores of the extended family system which carries over to include neighborhood, the workplace, and the society as a united whole. This is well reflected in the Korean use of the word

The matter of illiteracy in the Republic of Korea has always been of deep concern, and among the many measures taken, and which have shown a remarkable success-rate, has been a wide distribution of text materials, local libraries and institutes as well as nurseries for the pre-school age during peak farming months, academies for the elderly, and as a part of the Saemaul (New Community Movement) other subjects including farming know-how, and others related to the livelihood of the particular area are provided. In addition, to insure that those students showing both promise and interest, regardless of financial ability can have equal opportunity for educational advance, a large variety of scholarships of varying amounts are being made available at governmental level which includes sponsoring a number of scholars and students abroad each year for research, university foundation scholarships, professors and teachers sponsored scholarship funds, alumni sponsored scholarships, scholarships provided by employers for the offspring of their employees, and a long list of other sponsoring organizations as well as individuals. And as a result of this combined effort, the problem of lack of education is moving remarkably towards extinction. Another asset to the nation in its move forward in education has been the initiation of exchange programs involving professors and promising students with universities and colleges of foreign countries. So far, the writer's own university, Dankook University in Seoul, has an active exchange program with nine foreign universities, and at present has a few students from the African continent on campus in their own particular areas of interest. This trend can also be seen in most universities and colleges in Korea as Korea's institutions have advanced to the level of being able to share as well as receive. Also, there is a growing number of international educational conferences and seminars on Korean campuses in addition to the many conferences in the private or industrial sector, all adding up to mutual progress in education, technological, diplomatic and social advance.

"woo-ri," or "our," in referring to persons, or places as "our friend," "our town," "our school," etc., instead of the individualistic "I" or "my." As such, the successes or failures of one or one unit becomes those of the whole. In the family financial sector, it has been one of mutual aid, such as can be seen in our historical system of "Gye," meaning mutual assistance savings fund in general translation, in which family groups pooled their money, with each participant collecting the whole amount according to his or her turn until all investors had collected, thus enabling them to each have his or her turn at purchasing more land, increasing farm-output, or other that would be otherwise impossible. Though this system of "gye" is nowadays very limited, the idea of mutual sharing still remains and is one of the great contributing factors to Korea's rise from the ashes of war to the state of development she enjoys today.

## II. Some Problems of Education in Asia

This portion of the paper will be a discussion on some of the problem areas in Asia's education, coping with these problems, and a review of cultural interchange patterns between East and West, followed by a final conclusion.

### I. Problem Areas

It can be said that learning is the very foundation of human dignity, well-being, and the formation of democratic ideals in an otherwise world of chaos and confusion bred from the seeds of ignorance, and as such it bears the most precious and important meaning in our human society. For through proper education there comes forth limitless potentiality and hope for the future.

It is beyond argument that in this light we should provide a right kind of education based upon an assessment of the needs, aptitude and characteristic of the individual. What we need to consider by broadening our own visions and perspectives, is the methodological problem of how to infuse

the generative processes of our educational systems with the existential characteristics of the persons to be educated. For example, the question must be raised as to whether the educational system originating from and nurtured in the Western social environment can be suitably adopted by Asian societies as a prototype of the best education method. Another question is to ask ourselves if we should adopt an alien educational system without first of all conducting due experiments of the system using a small sampling of our own students.

Regardless of the differences in educational systems of the various societies, we cannot cast any doubts about the essentials that they are aiming for, but we do have to closely examine the contents and methods being applied in those countries before considering them for either adoption in whole or in part. The reason for this of course is that the ways that educational content are defined and applied in one country may cause a fluctuation in value judgement in another, and depending on education methods there could arise changes in behavioral ethics. For even though our educational programs may be carried out with the aims of preparing our youths for a constructive and successful life, coexisting in harmony with their fellowmen, if its contents and methods become oriented towards special ideological purposes, it may tend to provide a means for accomplishing those special purposes only, rather than bring about universal benefits and the well-being of the people in general.

One example is the education practised in communist countries, which is geared towards tapping human resources for ideological purposes. Furthermore, we have to consider that traditional ethical values and environments are well rooted in the respective societies of both the East and West, and those ethics can only have their true meaning when they comply with the historical needs and imperatives which are already defined as the virtues of a given society.

However, when the contents and methods of education proper for one given society are transplanted into another society whose traditional values and views conflict with those of the former, they are apt to become problematic. Therefore, ways of solving these differences and discrepancies will be a task for immediate attention.

It is evident that Asian educational methods may be somewhat unacceptable if applied direct as they are in the West, and likewise, Western educational methods in their entirety may not fit the Oriental milieu. The ensuing portion of this paper will focus on such a problem.

### III. Considerations

In which direction are we headed today? Our modern world society may now be considered as one in which technical and industrial civilization has reached its all-time high level of advancement, but where there is no guarantee for certainty for the future. For entering the age of the computer of which we boast about their efficiency, human beings are now now turning their attention to outer space. Meanwhile, there arise circumstances which bear the characteristics of international conflict on the one hand, and threats of nuclear wars which could be started by a simple mishap of pressing a missile button, by design or by accident, in the state of extreme strain, on the other.

Continuously increasing such unfavorable circumstances as these may function as unpredictable variables against the future progress and development of human societies and human beings in general. Yet, the progress and development in science and technology that one country enjoys, tend to become a yardstick to measure the strength, power and authority of that particular country over others. Therefore, too many countries seem to be competing with each other to ride on the currents of the times, placing emphasis on science education in order to gain supremacy in the world arena.

Such a strong current seems to carry with it a lot of weight and power, and likewise, educational trends tilted extremely towards science may bring about multiplying effects on social vicissitudes and may surpass the regulatory limits of a given society, leaving frightful side-effects and burdens to its posterity.

This is a phenomenon of public nuisance that threatens human living and existence. However, we cannot, nevertheless, neglect and turn our faces from science education for the sole reason that it may result in a public threat due to nuclear weapons systems, but we do have to explore scientific methods for eliminating or displacing our anxiety and the threatening factors.

If the world had turned its attention to and broadened its human visions, giving equal weight to ethical and moral education, gaining a balance between science and ethics, today we would not be wandering aimlessly in such a frightful environment brought about by the present science oriented civilization.

It has been said by mentors of earlier ages that by bringing Oriental philosophy and Western science together in harmonious ways, we may be able to form a new and universal beauty of cultural balance. Science is to be used to confirm physical truths and laws by exploring the realms of providence residing in nature, whereas ethics are to help put in practice right ethical principles in order to realize the beauty of order in human living itself.

From these two complementary aspects of science and ethics, we may bring into focus an important awareness of the problem. That is, the fruits of science can be used by anyone; well wishers and ill wishers alike, depending on the intended purpose. However, the direction of moral cultivation inherently focuses solely on the pursuit of truth and virtue.

Science, when used by men of virtue, may eventually eliminate various kinds of anxieties, pains and threats that we human beings universally feel. However, when it is misused

as weapons of destruction, it has the potential of bringing about the end of human existence.

It is from this problem that the agony of Asians originates. Most Asian nations left far behind in scientific culture and burdened with an ever increasing overpopulation, had to take up as their first priority the problem of freeing themselves from common poverty. In order to solve this problem, they relied on scientific methods of food production, but at the same time while in the process of doing so, they had to experience an ever-widening gap between their own levels of education and industry and those of the world powers; some of which tried to exercise certain control over those nations, mostly their former colonial countries.

Industries under the colonial administrations, if any, were mainly structured toward augmenting production and procurement of war materials during World War II, and education was carried out with the specific aims of weakening the self-identity of the ruled by various means, such as enforcing the adoption of the language of the ruler and suppressing the development of the culture of the oppressed nation. Peoples of the colonized nations, after the end of World War II, however, had no sooner begun to enjoy their new freedom from colonial bondage than they were placed in confusion and impasse as the international social order then changed for the state of armed conflict and confrontation to ideological struggles.

The agony of their fate then, was multiplied because of such ideological confusion, which carried along with it inevitable poverty accompanied by political confusion and social unrest. The solutions to these problems of poverty were applied in a shortsighted, yet immediate method in the form of foreign assistance, either by grants or on credit, and in the meantime, political problems were handled by a small group of elites, who tried to imitate the political institutions of the big powers. Therefore, depriving the nations of their vitality and energy in presenting



practical and workable directives and visions needed for political development and curing the social problems in an environment where political confusion and economic poverty were increasingly deepening. Because of this, the people had to suffer from wide-spread social unrest due to the collapse of independent and traditional values brought about by the indiscreet introduction of an entirely alien culture, further deviding the people through ideological conflict or discrimination based on political views, social status, differences in ethnic origins, or nepotism by regional, school, or blood relations. These factors eventually encroached upon and shook off the basic security and infrastructure of the people's daily lives. In such a confused state, even education policies lost their tenors of course, and these nations had to grope for an appropriate direction in vain, and as such, felt no other alternative than to adopt the foreign educational systems and methods as they were.

Education under colonial rule may be termed as a form enforced education for purposes suitable for the benefits of the ruler, while education following the termination of World War II became geared toward patterning after that of an assistance providing country, and therefore, educational leaders and politicians were less interested in studies related to their own indigenous and domestic related fields, such as language, history, and others. Especially in the countries belonging to the Chinese characters using group, whose indigenous writing system was mixed with that of Chinese characters, the massive inflow of Western culture saw a relative weakening in the use of Chinese characters in daily use, and an inflow of Western word usage. Here, we see another problem; that is, in this cultural area, most of the classics as well as official publications, etc., were written in Chinese Characters.

Another reason for the alienation of Chinese characters lay within the people themselves, for in many cases, the Chinese characters are less apt to clearly express as well as their native letters, what the writer intends to convey. Besides, borrowed alphabetical systems or Chinese characters are difficult to learn and use by the masses.

In the Republic of Korea, the policy of the sole use of Hangul, the Korean writing system, has led to the lowering of the illiteracy rate in principle, but at the same time the policy has brought about the lowering of the level of comprehency of Sino-Korean classics written in Chinese characters, and due to this inability to read these works written some fifty or so years ago by the masses, there came about an acceleration in the introduction of Western culture by new generations of people, and especially by the elite group of scholars, who shied away from the classics because of being unable to digest them properly.

One problem tends to generate another in a chain reaction. Although it is often emphasized that some sort of measures should be adopted to bring indigenous and foreign cultures together in a harmonious way, it appears that the possibility is not in sight, and unfortunately, quite the contrary seems to be true. This seems to be true because traditional cultural aspects are reflected differently from those of foreign countries in their ways of thinking and behavioral patterns. So this large gap created by a two-tier cultural entity, creates a certain amount of agony as something very real and urgent to be solved.

In a certain sense, such an agony may be painful, but we have to live with it in the milieu of present Asian social systems, and until a solution arises we have to learn to persevere for the time being.

Certainly the Korean people have experienced deeply every aspect of the forementioned events and trials; through the occupation and its aftermath following World War II, and the Korean War, when the impact of Western culture and means of national restoration involved our country in an unprecedented era of change which has necessitated a constant vigilance of educators, statesmen and citizens alike towards maintaining a balance between our indigenous culture and foreign cultures and ways in which to preserve those qualities and traditional value system so necessary for us to remain a sovereign culture and preserve our national identity.

#### IV. Review of Cultural Interchange Patterns between East and West

We may propose a necessity of reviewing international culture interchange patterns with the following points in mind: First, it is necessary to examine them with the view of forming a future society with the idea of "cultural co-existence," and next to review is the formation of bases of common efforts for the "humanization of civilization."

What a cultural group should strive for in its efforts towards coexistence, is the creation of harmonious beauty between moral culture and scientific culture, resulting in the humanization of civilization as a protective measure against the threats of a material civilization tilted toward the destruction of human nature.

In order to solve these two massive problems in more meaningful ways, we should consolidate our bases of mutual cooperation, at least in the following few areas: Firstly, we must exert our utmost and sincere efforts in redeveloping methods of cultural interchange between the East and West with the realization that as it is not desirable for the Western societies to have a too strong propensity toward Oriental studies, so is it not desirable for Eastern societies to have too strong an inclination toward Western studies over their own.

In the Republic of Korea we can see to a great degree what has been called "imitations of the West" especially in our modes of dress, present-day architecture, industry, and educational system among others. However, blessed with an abundance of historical legacies, relics of past ages, there appears to remain so far an adequate margin between the two cultures in favor of the maintenance of national identity through the various means of keeping in the limelight the importance of and dignity only to be found in ones own culture. This does not mean however, that we can merely coast along unattentively, but continue to strive to retain that large portion of our cultural characteristics necessary for maintaining a harmonious balance with that coming in from the exterior.

Of course there may be some characteristics of one nations culture more excellent than anothers, but unless they blend or co-exist well with other cultural mores, we cannot disregard their potential effects nor neglect them.

Even a forest can boast its natural beauty at the turn of the season when its various herbs and plants grow harmoniously and co-exist with each other; much more the human society. But unless we change our ways of thinking that one culture is better than the other because of its influential social factors, and that as a result it should be used as a pattern for other parts of the world to follow, we may never be able to create cultural harmony in the future. In other words, the less options the people have in human culture, the less favorable will be their living conditions in the aspect of "harmonious beauty."

Secondly, it is also a fact that the Asian population exceeds more than half of the entire world populace, and therefore have the potentiality of preserving their cultural identity and resources in a more outstanding way; and these may remain as Asian characteristics forever.

It is needless to say that for whatever reasons, a one-directional approach to cultural international interchange in the past, present or future, tilted towards either Westernization or Orientalization, cannot be justified, and much less on "chance factors." However, we do have to pay more attention to ways of nurturing our own Asian characteristics if we are to realize future development in this area.

We do not want to live in a world of dissension and conflict, and therefore if we are to live in a harmonious, cooperative way, we have to strengthen the mutual understanding between the East and West with due respect for each others culture and education.

Education has the effect of helping us enlarge our capacity of thinking and to refine our ability to reason and bring ourselves out of the nutshell of egocentric preoccupation and prejudices and onward to objective perspectives. For this reason, channels of educational and cultural exchange should be a two-way traffic system.

Thirdly, educational culture should progress from the stage of interchange to the level of positive acceptance. We may say that industrial training projects can be meaningful because they explore the possibilities of marketing and its expansion, whereas educational and cultural exchange programs can be very significant in the propogation of ideology.

It often happens that flows of commodities are made possible through trade exchange, while that of ideology tends to take the form of one-way traffic. It normally doesn't take much time for a commodity to be copied or improved upon in quality or manufacturing methods to the point that it surpasses the original quality and re-exported to its original manufacturing place. However, it would be impossible to redevelop an ideology and return it to its originating source in a short period of time.

Realizing such an impossibility, it would be more desirable to elevate the level of educational culture from that of interchange to that of acceptance for mutual development of one's own culture with better perspectives.

We cannot argue, verify or illustrate simply by enumerating the number of academic degrees Asians have received from Western educational institutions, and vice versa, that such a phenomena is actually taking place. But so far, the number of Asians that have received academic degrees in the West as far greater than the number of degrees received by Westerners in the East. Besides, the studies pursued by Asians in the West have been primarily centered around the liberal arts and social sciences. This is a very important aspect to consider, for what this suggests is that the influence of such studies in these disciplines in the West may have already exerted some influence, especially on the spiritual aspects of culture in Asia.

Cultural interchange in this fashion would not be helpful to Westerners in approaching Eastern cultures, and at the same time, we may say that such a fashion cannot contribute as a function of bridging the gap in understanding Western cultures by Asians.

It may be said that the degrees of cultural acceptance will be accelerated on a mutually beneficial basis only if Asians explore into the milieu of Western cultures based on Asian views and vice versa. However, it cannot be denied that in the area of science, studies geared toward Western systems have brought about the upgrading of scientific standards in the Asian countries. But this is not the case in areas geared toward Asia-proper studies, or proper studies of the West, and as such, it is one of the important aspects to be reviewed; i.e., the mutually exclusive aspect of present cultural interchange between the East and West. This, I propose for close deliberation.

## V. Conclusion

The educational problems of Asians, whose population accounts for more than a half of that of the entire world, are not to be considered solely the agony of Asians alone. They are problems to be coped with and worked out through mutual concern and efforts of all civilizations. For whatever reasons one may find, one cannot be justified in expecting progress in the world without paying due consideration to these problems.

If my own country, the Republic of Korea, can be a model case in any of these problematic areas of other nations, then she has the moral and inescapable duty to share her success story with those nations. And if we come into conflict with the ideals of other cultures, we have the obligation to approach and work together towards a harmonious co-existence and better understanding, still in the spirit of exchanging ideas based upon their value towards mutual progress and world harmony.

I feel that the ideals and expectations for the human race are possible, and can be realized when rationality in co-existence with other cultures, and the humanization of civilization are put forward in clearer relief, for in a mechanism structured in the material civilization, threats of loss of humanity are increasing, and if philosophical thinking and cultural creativeness are to be judged by the quality of materials and materialism, the value systems of the world will become inefficient to sustain the human civilization in its wholesome and sound advance. There could be no greater tragedy than this.

In this conference we are together seeking ways to solve and strategies to cope with various issues in educational development, and if there are any best ways of eliminating any darker aspects that may appear in the future of our educational systems; our societies, they should be nurtured and developed by mutual cooperation among peoples as a way of strengthening, broadening, and promoting their brigher aspects.

When we work together wholeheartedly towards the renovation of the environment, for the promotion of education and culture of the international society with better views and perspectives, as we are certainly doing here today, in a wider radius of activities and with mutual assistance and cooperation, we may hope for a better and brighter future for our nations and our posterity.