

## Comments

### **KIM, Sung Kyung**

Professor, University of North Korean Studies / Kyungnam University

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be a part of the conference. I understand that it has been already a couple of years that Kyungnam, Soka and Chinese Culture University cooperate with one another by discussing the various issues of contemporary society. As we all know, this year and its predominant phenomenon would be Covid 19 pandemic. Given the current situation of the pandemic in worldwide, it is very interesting to get to know about how to handle the pandemic in Japan. It seems that Japan has its own way to deal with Covid 19, especially successfully controlling mortality. Japanese government attempts to get going economy through a soft lock down, without the use of coercion. It is in particular impressive that Japanese people tend to cooperate with the government's guidance by changing their behavior.

I think it is also true that South Korea is known to be one of the successful models to combat the Cove 19 pandemic. Similar to Japan, South Korea did not implement lockdown so far and even proceeded the general election, nationwide university entrance exam, and everyday business as usual. Several measures contributed to South Korea's success, but three measures would be critical in the country's ability to battle against the pandemic. These are 3- T (Test, Track, and Treat). South Korean government began testing for covid 19 at massive scale over 440000 people which essentially covered all those with symptoms. And People who test positive are quarantined in Covid 19 special units and treated.

More importantly, South Korea has implemented tracing system for individuals diagnosed with the disease who may have come in contact with the infected individuals. It is known as the Covid-19 Smart management System(SMS). South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(KCDC) runs the contact tracing system that uses data from 28 organizations such as National Police Agency, The Credit Finance Association, three telecommunication companies, and 22 credit card companies to trace the movement of individuals with Covid-19.

Here is the competing argument arises in terms of individual's private information. Many argue against this tracing system as a kind of 'Big Brother'. On the other hands, in pandemic situation, the use of private information should be open to some extent for public purpose. Whichever argument you go, it is probably fair to say that South Korea's model against the covid 19 strongly rely on the system in which the government can access personal information if there are public issues such as infected disease pandemic and so on. Here I have to mention that this system has been prepared after the 2015 Mers outbreak when the government learned that tracing

the movement of infected individuals and people who came in contact with them is crucial. As a safety measure, only epidemic investigators at KCDC can access the location information and once the Covid 19 outbreak is over, the personal information used for the contact tracing will be purged.

Now let me move to the social impact of the pandemic. I would like to spell out the five key features of the condition. First of all, the pandemic will question the current forms of globalization especially GVC and global governing system. It might be a bit strong argument, but I think 20<sup>th</sup> century model of global governance and neo-liberal economy has to go through reform to some extent. The second would be the emergence of mega- nation state. This is the point why the controlling system of South Korea needs to be critically evaluated. The third point is the importance of public services especially public health. Many countries which went through the privatization of public health system did not respond the pandemic effectively at all. So it is now the time to bring the public health for the people. The fourth feature would be the emergence of the importance of environmental issue. Final feature would be the dramatic changes of everyday lives of people. People do not have face-to-face interaction much in these days, and technology will change our way of living, thinking and doing. In sum, it might be a bit radical to say, but the world will be completely different after the Covid 19 pandemic.

Then, the remaining question would whether we are well prepared for this change. Are we ready to move to the different world? How do we foresee the future? Can we sustain our ways of living?

### **PANG, Chien-kuo**

Professor, Chinese Culture University

I am very happy and honored to serve as discussant for the first session of the Forum and give comments on Keynote Speaker Professor Mine's thought-provoking speech and Professor Tamai's wonderful paper.

Firstly, let me talk about my comments on the keynote speech delivered by Professor Mine. Professor Mine's speech is full of humanistic care and philosophical wisdom. He points out an important trend in the development of the world's population, that is, The Rise of Afrasia. In addition to population growth in African and Asia, it also includes the expansion of cross-border migration between the two continents. At the same time, he questioned the multiculturalism led by the West and called for exploring the possibility of creating a kind of multiculturalism without seeking integration and making the members of international society can coexist like an archipelago where you wander around the world like you travel around your country and find your new home somewhere.

I fully agree with Professor Mine's point of view, especially what he mentioned in the

conclusion, that is, when the Western experiment with multiculturalism may have gone awry, we may try the experiment of tolerance and coexistence in the non-Western world with as much practical and intellectual curiosity as we turn to the attempts in the West. We are entering an era that Asians and Africans are becoming the majority of the world's population and cross-border migration throughout Afrasia becoming significant. We need to turn the encounter of various cultures into a peaceful coexistence rather than a conflict one. It is time to learn from the wisdom of Afrasian coexistence rather than look to the outside world for a “one-size-fit-all” model.

While agreeing with the view of Professor Mine, as a discussant, allow me to provide some personal comprehension and suggestion. My comprehension and suggestion are that in terms of creating a kind of multiculturalism without seeking integration, I believe that Chinese Confucianism could be a source of inspiration. For example, the teaching of “do unto others, do not impose on others”(己所不欲, 勿施於人). This famous quote of Confucius expresses the basic view of Confucianism about the way of individuals, groups, and countries to get along with others. In contrast to Western civilization which emphasizes universal values and likes to force others to accept the same belief without respecting to the differences of cultural background, time and space, as well as the degree of development, Confucian's attitude towards people and life are relatively gentle and humble, that is, harmony but different(和而不同). The Confucian way of dealing with the differences between cultures or civilizations will reduce the likelihood of clash with each other.

Secondly, let me talk about Professor Tamai's paper. Professor Tamai briefly illustrates the COVID-19 epidemic in Japan and the various measures taken by the Japanese government to respond to the epidemic. He echoes Professor Mine's appeal which advocates cultivating a democratic culture on a global scale that celebrates diversity and enjoys conflicts and intersections of different opinions and highlights the idea that society should enable everyone to live with dignity.

Similarly, I totally agree with Professor Tamai's argument, especially what he emphasizes at the end of his conclusion, that is, we should recall the utility of global governance to overcome the dilemma of interstate relations and creative collaboration at multidimensional level for a resilient world. This advice reminds me of Confucian doctrine of “carrying out kingly way and implementing policy of benevolence”(行王道, 施仁政). Mencius, an important figure in Confucianism second only to Confucius, believes that a ruler who can carry out kingly way and implement policy of benevolence will be able to overcome all challenges and win supports everywhere. We hope that all countries in the world, especially those powerful countries, can establish a cooperative mechanism for global governance based on this principle to fight against Coronavirus disease. A good example is China's leader Xi Jinping declares that the COVID-19 vaccine developed by China will be contributed to the world as public good, especially for those poorer developing countries. You can see that such actions have actually started. For example, Indonesia has already received 1.2 million vaccines given by China.

Finally, let me go to the conclusion of my comment. In my superficial understanding, whether it is Chinese Confucianism or the purpose of the Soka Gakkai, it is consistent with the philosophy of sustainable development goals and is committed to creating a society where no one is left behind. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging, I believe this forum can make some contributions to these goals. Let us work together towards a better cooperation between Japan, Korea and Taiwan!

Thank you very much for listening.

As Francis Fukuyama said in *Foreign Affairs* (issue of July/August 2020), an important factor explaining the different performance of different countries in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic is the firm action taken by the state and the cooperation by the people. Therefore, in addition to international cooperation, we also need to encourage the governments of various countries to take firm and effective actions and the full cooperation of the people. This is another thing worthy of our efforts. Again, let us work together to move towards a better situation whether in Japan, Korea or Taiwan.