

**The Plausible Asian Schools of International Relations:  
Hypothesizing Non/interventionism**

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Abstract

Asian intellectuals do not celebrate the coming end of history through the triumphant establishment of a sovereign nation state in their communities. Rather, they invariably treat nation states as civilizational agents adapting to pressures and changes. The following discussion will survey samples of societal norms in the literature that are explicitly as well as implicitly plausible candidates for a different IR perspective embedded in civilizational politics. The paper searches for those narrative candidates for indigenous Asian Schools of IR, including both the contentious Chinese and Japanese alternatives and the non-resistant Indian, Australian, Korean and Taiwanese alternatives to show the role of civilization in the conceptualization of plausible Asian Schools of IR and how they allude to a universal IR. Then the paper picks up the case of China to illustrate how epistemologically indigenous schools of IR in Asia are nevertheless not “international,” and hypothesizes accordingly why the Chinese school of IR is arguably uninterested in intervention in view of wrongdoing.

Keywords: intervention, English School, China rising, civilizational politics, international relations theory, indigenous international relations

## The Plausible Asian Schools of International Relations: Hypothesizing Non/interventionism

### Introduction

Political leaders as well as intellectuals in Asia (geographically speaking) sometimes have different understandings of nation, state, and sovereignty that ontologically compose mainstream international relations theory. The intellectual incapacity to address these understandings becomes frustrating in the age of globalization in which different communities or personalities should have their own representation. Lacking such representation implies non-existence. Recently, there are attempts at forming new representations by devising alternative discourses. In these attempts, however, states in Asia appear to be agents of civilization. After all, it is civilizational identities that make Asia different. By contrast, Western civilizations are conceived of as products of sovereignty—the state monopolizes violence to enable the rise of civil society within sovereign territory. Notions of state as agent of civilization rather than its mother could feel exotic and foreign. Ironically, historically, becoming just another typical nation state in international politics has dominated Asian politics. As a result, the emerging quest for alternative discourse that exposes the civilizational nature of Asian states defeats the purpose of asserting equal existence through alternative representation.

Civilizational politics refers to conscious treatment of imagined similarities and differences between geographical or communal patterns of life style, social interaction and meaning given to them, but only self-perceived agents of civilization could develop sensibilities toward their own civilizations. One context in which this civilizational consciousness sticks out is interventionism call for by the concerns over global governance. Intervention targeting the sovereign state creates one of the conditions that such sensibilities are aroused. This paper reflects upon this epistemological irony in Asia in general and in China in particular and uses intervention as a point to demonstrate the irony. The paper further argues that, on one hand, states as civilizational agents would treat intervention as offense to civilizational dignity and yet, on other hand, non-intervention that leaves domestic violence alone defies the rationale of sovereignty. Accordingly, the quest for alternative may defeat the purpose of pursuing equality and dignity.

The rise of China witnesses a few theoretical perspectives that explain what it means to international society. The social constructivist approach describes a relative sanguine picture to the extent that China is a capable learner (Johnston 2009; Carlson 2005) while the psychological perspectives cast some doubt due to the internal need of the Chinese society to resist externally imposed norms. (Gries 2010; Callahan 2009). With the global influence of China growing, Chinese scholars join the quest for a proper place for China in international society. Such a society, imbedded in certain norms, requires maintenance of order however minimal. (J. Williams 2005) Intervention is therefore an unambiguous sign of responsible great nation-states acting on behalf of international society. (Linklater 2001) Since the English School is the primary inquirer of the evolution of international society/order, it becomes a natural point of beginning for China to tackle its role in international society. (Zhang 2003)

How China would join the international society can accordingly be indicated by its intervention behavior—to intervene on behalf of the English School norm, to intervene on behalf of a contending set of norms from Chinese understanding, or to resist intervention and reinterpret the meaning of international society.

Intervention is historically a way to claim where the boundary lies between one's domain and the other's. (Weber 1995) The concept of intervention implicitly acknowledges that sovereignty is at best limited to those areas where it is correctly practiced and when it is not, intervention is called for. Because intervention is a power move, the intervener must also be a major power. In actuality, therefore, the major power has also the power of interpretation to decide the norm and, ultimately, the boundary of sovereignty. In brief, intervention has two pre-requisites—an intervener must be both conscious of norms and have sufficient power. Those who fail these conditions could only be targets, by-standers, or secondary helpers of intervention, instead of being interveners by themselves. Contemporary Asian nations in general meet neither condition because, in modern times, they have either been losers of war or colonies of external interveners/invaders. It would take an Asian nation to rise into a major power in order to break the bottleneck. Note, though, Japan once acted as an intervener but eventually failed in its quest for world status before World War II. (Dower 1986) The lesson for any future rising power in Asia could be to avoid becoming an intervener. To avoid, however, takes one to practice logic that is unfamiliar to contemporary international relations. In light that indigenous international relations theorization is increasingly faddish in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia, the purpose of the following discussion is exactly to review a few candidates for such logic that can be plausibly derived from various indigenous theories and practices in different Asian communities.

### **Asian Strategies for Indigenous Schools of IR**

In fact, the quest for a place for one's own nation does not belong exclusively to a rising power. Asian intellectuals aspire for indigenous schools of IR that reflect their historical experiences and implicate upon plausible international norms for a much wider audience. (Acharya and Buzan 2007) However, the recent call for indigenous schools of IR (international relations) in Asian communities may backfire. There are two reasons for this. One is about the epistemological limitation. The quest for an indigenous school of IR in East Asian communities has its origin in the English School, which conceives of international relations as “society” in opposition to “system” in the American IR literature. (Little 2000) For other indigenous schools of IR, the task is to demonstrate that there are different kinds of societal norms other than English anarchy or natural law such as, for example, Chinese all under-heaven, Japanese Asianism, Indian non-alignment, British/Australian Commonwealth, Korean civilizational in-betweenness, or Taiwanese non-sovereign agency, etc. However different these societal norms may appear, they reinforce the English School ontology that international relations are not scientific systems or context-free patterns independent from their spatio-temporal settings and hence epistemologically European in origin.

The other problem is that the kinds of norms presently available to support indigenous schools of Asian IR are predominantly about civilizational politics. Statist establishments in Asia are civilizational agents accordingly. In contrast, for European

IR, modern nation states congeal and grow civilizations from within. (Elias, Mennell and Goudsblom 1998) If Asian civilizational exchanges do not proceed within an “inter-national” context, then civilizational politics is not about IR theorization. Rather, suspiciously, they surrender statist rationality to pre-IR sub-consciousness that is amorphous and brutal at best (Harrison and Huntington 2000; Pye 1990).

Indigenous schools of IR practically have two sources. The English School is the external force behind the promotion of Asian IRs. Indeed, societal norms different from those European notions of natural law that inform foreign policy behavior could enrich the English School epistemology. The other force, which is internal, is the national aspiration for representation in the age of global politics. This has been present since the age of imperialism, reinforced in the post-Cold War world by the postmodern call for multiculturalism. A competitive mood is sometime registered in the second force. (Liang 2000; Kōsaka 1942 ; Kōyama 1943) For example, both the advocacy of world history standpoint in pre-WWII Japan and the promotion of IR theory with Chinese characteristics at the present time are intended as alternatives to the “Western” IRs that are marked by balance of power, supra-national institutionalism, political geography and the like to reproduce the mutually exclusive relations among nation states.

No such competitive mood existed in early years’ quest for modern epistemology, especially during the initial transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century pre-modern regime to the modern sovereign state. In fact, while the competitive mood exists in an effort to resist the intrusion of the West, the effort was basically one of self-transformation that mimicked the Western model of nation state. (Calichman 2008, Hay 1970) One could even trace consistent efforts amidst earlier thinkers who painstakingly connected Western theory to historical practices in Asia in order to convince the indigenous audience that transformation was actually a self-recollection of one’s own past. (Wong 2010) The rationale was, after all, to beat the West through contemporary Western means. Regardless of the damage on its culture, Asia would join the West to finalize the conquest and the demise of Asia. If, on the contrary, nascent aspiration for Asian IRs to authenticate Asia’s differences repeats the English School cliché of societal norms, albeit not about anarchical natural law, or appeals to amorphous pre-modern hiatus of rationality, it would be little more than a testimony to Asia’s perpetual backwardness, hence a defeat of the purpose of becoming modern.

In brief, methodologically, Asia could achieve equality in status through the formation of Asian Schools of IR in the following three ways, but, epistemologically, each could backfire. First, Asia has subscribed to the same IR principles for a much longer time since, for example, the Chinese Zhou dynasty, known as the Spring-Autumn and the Warring periods in row. (Hui 2005, Ng-Quinn 1978) However, this would mean that Asian history is cyclical/repetitive rather than linear/progressive. Secondly, Asia subscribes to a completely different ontological order that is strange to Western history, Confucianism and Buddhism being two conspicuous candidates. (Kang forthcoming; Tan and Uberoi 2009) However, this would mean the exclusion of Asia from modernist teleology. Thirdly, in between the first two, Asian states learn to be the modern nation state abiding by the IR theory but read much deeper and richer meanings in accordance to their own culture. (Agathangelou and Ling 2009; Shih 2003) However, this would mean Asia’s perpetual alterity.

All three strategies see no end of history through the triumphant establishment of a sovereign nation state in Asian communities. Rather, they invariably treat nation states as civilizational agents adapting to pressures and changes. The following discussion will survey samples of societal norms in the literature that are extant explicitly as well as implicitly plausible candidates for a different IR perspective. The paper searches for those narrative candidates for indigenous Asian Schools of IR, including both the contentious Chinese and Japanese alternatives and the non-resistant Indian, Australian, Korean and Taiwanese alternatives to show the role of civilization in the conceptualization of Asian Schools of IR and how they allude to a universal IR. Then it picks up the case of China to illustrate how epistemologically indigenous schools of IR in Asia are nevertheless not “international,” and hypothesize accordingly why the Chinese school of IR is arguably uninterested in intervention in view of wrongdoing.

### **Contentious Japanese and Chinese Schools of IR**

#### Retrieving Civilizations as a Plausible Japanese School of IR

A plausible proposition for the Japanese School of IR could be derived from the Kyoto School of Philosophy, whose “world history standpoint” was once an ideological support for the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere (GEACS). The Japanese military regime installed in Manchuria the “Princely Way and Happy Land” in 1931 as an initiative to be emulated elsewhere in the GEACS. Practically, Japan invaded Asian neighbors under the banner of cleansing the white race from Asia. (D. Williams 2005) What Asia was to become, however, was not just Asian’s Asia, but a universal Asia that could, abiding by *Nihon Shoki*’s utopia, “roof all eight corners of the world” (*Hakkō ichiu*). In short, according to the world history standpoint, Europe was partial since Europeans only understood Europe while the Oriental China was also backwardly partial for ignorance about European modernity. The GEACS that produced both the West and the East should be where the world is to be seen in its entirety.

Japan was able to lead in the formation of a universal GEACS allegedly because Japanese people were the only children of Goddess Amaterasu in the world that, unbounded by the limitation of one’s place, could know both sides. Manchukuo was the quintessential site of such imagined infinity because it was the origin of the two major civilizations—Christianity and Confucianism. Japan’s defeat during the Second World War did not affect the continued enthusiasm toward Asianism, which is philosophically embedded in the Kyoto School philosophy. The defeat has only led to various reformulations of Asianism to defend it from pre-war fiasco or a resurgence of imperialism. (Saaler and Koschmann 2007; Yamamoto 1999)

The founder of the Kyoto School, Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945), painstakingly replied to the Hegelian challenge that almost all modern Japanese thinkers had to face, namely, Hegel’s appropriation of Asia to the land of Oriental despotism. In fact, they included Shiratori Kurakichi (1865-1942) of the rival Tokyo School, also a strong believer of Goddess Amaterasu. Shiratori was ironically the best in retrieving civilizations to its Mongolian-Manchurian origin. (Tanaka 1993) Impressively, the attempt to retrieve a common origin of all major civilizations was shared by the scientific Tokyo School and the philosophical Kyoto School.

As Japan faced the identity puzzle of whether or not Japan should be a Western or an Eastern nation, four options were available. Some thinkers said either yes or no to both identities, in addition to others who chose to join one side in opposition to the other. (Huang and Shih 2009) Many of them had changed their positions during the long range of their lives, indicating that re-positioning had been widespread and conscious. The bottom line was to answer the Hegelian challenge by whichever way appeared to work at a given moment to a given thinker. Kitaro was able to group them all (before as well as after him) together in his philosophy of place (Ong 2004), which he girded by an ontological thrust called nothingness.

Presumably in the place of nothingness Japan was able to avoid choosing sides. Unlike Hegelian historiography embedded in the dialectical teleology toward an ultimate unity, the teaching on nothingness appealed to the psychological exercise of withdrawal from situations/places and therefore avoided a choice between the seemingly contradicting East and West. (Nakamura 1992) It was from the place of nothingness that Japan was able to enter all seemingly differing civilizations and become truly universal. (Heisig 2001, Fujita 2005) The world history standpoint was a standpoint of nothingness as well as a religious Shinto way to make both Christianity and Confucianism appear secular since both had been grown civilizations in specific places. Nothingness had to be their common origin to be retrieved by the children of God. Practicing withdrawal to nothingness enables free re-entry anywhere and therefore overcomes the arbitrary modernist historiography or stagnant Confucian harmony.

The ability to retrieve the common origin of all civilizations is the root of subsequent versions of Asianism after WWII. Late Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910-1977), for example, proposed to treat Asia as a method of continuous self-denial, through which Japan would not be carried away by any specific civilizational position, be it European, Sinologist, or even Greater East Asian. (Takeuchi and Calichman 2005) Contemporary Mizoguchi Yuzo (1989) similarly promotes China as a method, by which Japan learns how to study a different nation without taking any specific (i.e. Japanese, European or America) standpoint. Only by seeing China from China's own historical subjectivity could Japan truly belong to the world, which is outside of any national condition in general and Japan's own in particular. Contemporary Koyasu Nobukuni (2008) reinforces this position by treating East Asia as a constant process of becoming, but never a normative destiny to be reached or a physical land to be taken.

Despite the fact that the world history standpoint once supported ruthless killings during the war, it continues to inspire generations of Japanese thinkers on Asianism (Goto-Jones 2005). They have endeavored to purge the history of Manchukuo from future Asianism in their narratives, which, once done, should be a sharp contrast to the idea of contemporary IR. The latter conceives of international relations as between nation states so that ontologically, nation states come before international relations and "international relations" is a threat to nation states. The world history standpoint finds contradiction between nation states in such ontology at best secular and situational. Withdrawal into nothingness enables one to find the deeper self where the world begins. In other words, nation states are later derivatives of the foundation, retrieval of which makes the side choosing between nation states a mundane and ephemeral issue. Last but not the least, the hidden world history standpoint

undergirding contemporary Asianism has attracted a good number of disciples throughout other East Asian communities. (Paik 2010; Chen 2004; Sun 2003)

Contemporary Japanese IR scholars such as Akira Iriye and Hirano Kenichiro, (Yasushi 1990) both students of John King Fairbank (1907-1991) but neither disciples of the Kyoto School, similarly conceptualize international relations as inter-cultural relations each in their respective careers in the States and Japan. For them, the task of IR theorization is no longer about defending nations states against the threatening IR but to personalize (as Iriye has done) (1997) or localize (as Hirano has done) (Mori and Hirano 2007) it so that one is able to appreciate where others come from. Needless to say, neither would praise the Kyoto School's service to the GEACS. They nevertheless seem likewise comfortable only with a mode of nation state that traffics amicably among civilizations (Shimizu 2008).

### Representing Civilization as a Plausible Chinese School of IR

The Chinese school of IR shares its motivation with the Japanese School's in its hope to counter the Western worldview. (Tang and Ji 2008) This is probable with the rich philosophical resources in China's cultural reservoir. One noticeable trend in recent years is to resort to the traditional all-under-heaven worldview for alternative wisdom that could make international relations of a different kind by recalling something from the past, reforming them in the future or simply reinterpreting them for the present. (Liu 2010; Patrick 2008) The noticeable difference with plausible Japanese theory in China is always hopeful to have a "Chinese" value, granted that this value has mix sources, instead of explaining why one can shift freely among different value systems as with the Kyoto School.

In the process of becoming a sovereign nation state, and doing so under external pressure, Chinese thinkers would have to undergo some sort of Westernization. First of all, China is now a territorial concept, with previous non-Han aliens turned into "minority citizens," anti-Manchurian racism into multi-ethnic Republic, idle peasants into political participants, reluctance to use force into necessity for the sake of national defense, cycles of an agricultural calendar into irrevocable linearity, ethics of self-rectification and disciplining into pursuit of power and national interests, harmony into anarchy, and so on. (O'Brien 1996; Shih 1999; Shih 2007a; Adelman and Shih 1993) However, all these changes took place to meet the drive for equality and dignity in international relations. Changes are therefore instrumental, and not yet spiritual.

The questions for anyone who think and act on behalf of the Chinese nation state to answer are twofold--how to cope with or even overtake the Western powers, and what to do with the Chinese culture in order to do that? These early questions have persisted throughout the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a time when China is widely considered a rising superpower which should get ready for theorizing its own way. (Qin 2006; Guo 2005) However, some China-centric sub-consciousness had nevertheless lingered on before the recent self-perceived rise to the extent that pro-Soviet or pro-Third World strategies suggested that China did not belong to the West while occasional siding with non-Western forces had always been lukewarm. Nevertheless, lack of confidence toward China's own cultural past has disallowed the discourse of China-centrism from emerging until the very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

(Deng 2008)

The unsuccessful quest for well-defined foreign relationships characterizes the cycles of China's self-understanding. In the beginning of the People's Republic of China in 1949, for example, the choice of allies was between the Eastern former USSR and the Western USA. The decision to lean to the Eastern side simultaneously determined the domestic development model to be a command economy. (Solinger 1984; Van Ness 1983) This approach bounced into a radical campaign in the late 1950s along with the emerging split with the Soviets. The internal Cultural Revolution led to the external Three Worlds theory in the 1970s where neither the East nor the West appeared attractive. The aftermath of the Cultural Revolution similarly witnessed the conscious move toward equidistance diplomacy where China officially regained a place in the middle.

Having been a subordinate, an ally, a revolutionary and an independent, what China should stand for in the eyes of the Chinese leaders has always been a function of what the world should conceptually be. (Shih 1993) Chinese foreign policy accordingly is sensitive to the designation of relationships, the choice of roles and their associated norms. This explains why the distinction between nations and their people or between nations and their policy behavior is carefully maintained. Allegedly China only opposes imperialist or hegemonic behavior, not the imperialist or hegemonic state, nor its people. The relationship between people and the relationship between nation states belong to two different spheres. While the former is in the familiar all-under-heaven arena, the unfamiliar latter needs deliberate conceptualization.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, China was only ready to follow whatever the West could teach, including how to be a normal nation state. Joining international relations respectfully required China to learn from IR theories. Chiang Ting-fu was perhaps the first to write a Chinese diplomatic history from a professional academic point of view. (Lee 1988) Half a century later, Chinese IR scholars are generally literate about realism, liberalism and constructivism. Amidst the atmosphere of learning from the West, here came the 1990 joint sanctions on the infamous suppression of the previous year. To respond, Liang Shoude (1995) proposes the principle of "natural sovereignty" (mimicking "natural rights"). He later led younger generations to search for IR theory with Chinese characteristics. Zhang Ruizhong (1999, 2004) and Yan Xuetong (2003) respectively accuse the US of failing realism due to its reluctance to realistically recognize China's rise. Liberalistic and constructivist arguments are similarly present in abundance to prescribe for solutions to Sino-US relations.

At the time China joined the World Trade Organization, the internal debate over development strategy between the left and the right extended to the debate between the realist and the liberal IR. (Shih 2005) Ironically, the left also enlists Chinese traditional culture to support their critique of the Neoliberal IR clothed in institutionalist rhetoric. (Pan and Ma 2010) Note that traditional culture has always been a sign of rightism. Their joining forces here testify to a common quest for China-centrism to which both Chinese cultural and leftist resistance to Western, capitalist worldview are functional. In short, the image of China's rise must at the same time come with a Chinese worldview that places China at the center in order to feel real.



A plausible Chinese IR that has universal implications cannot emerge from the confrontational assumption of China being unique. It nevertheless points to the sensitivity to the previously unavailing social relationship rather than national interests as the guiding principle. Attempts at reinterpreting Chinese foreign policy from traditional cultural point of view systematically have appeared since the 1990s. Shih (1990) sees Chinese foreign policy and war behaviors merely fulfilling a cultural drama. Both Alastair Iain Johnston (2008) and Allen Carlson (2005) agree that China could be a sociable state, attending to the socialization process and implying that Chinese social IR is not China-unique. Zhao Tingyang boldly constructs a universal philosophy based upon the all-under-heaven worldview that treats nation states as people and their behavior as role playing. (Zhang 2010)

In the all-under-heaven worldview, one cares primarily about the image of one's nation state in the eyes of other nation states, not the identity of one's nation state that enables one to construct the difference of other nation states in one's own eyes. In other words, how to be looked at from outside receives more attention than how to look out from within. China represents a relationship-oriented civilization in opposition to an interest/power-oriented civilization. Chinese centrism is more about how to role-play instead of how to expand and dominate. And, how to role-play demands a consensual relationship. Although the confrontational mood may continue in China's attempt at cultural renaissance, it is China's graceful role-playing for the world to emulate that demonstrates the possibility of Chinese school of IR.

### **Non-resistant Possibilities: India, Australia, Korea, the ASEAN, and Taiwan**

#### Transcending Civilizations as a Plausible Indian School of IR

India is a multi-cultural state. India's becoming a representative of Hinduism and a nation state is in itself a colonial device. (Zaehner 1962: 1-13) Seeking independence from the United Kingdom by India was simultaneously a process of nation-building and one of state-building. To transcend different religions, languages and cultures is the function of Hinduism and the Indian national state. (Nandy 1983) In light of this need for transcendence over differences, the ontological mutual exclusion of one nation state against another is therefore opposite to India's ontology of becoming a nation state. In short, the co-existence of multiple religions, languages and ethnicities allude to anything but anarchy. Note that English, which was imposed by the British colonial force was not resented, but adopted, in the process of nation and state building.

The spirit of transcendence that informs the plausible Indian School of IR refers specifically to the ability to transcend binary thinking embedded in the self-Other relationship in current IR literature. (Behra 2007) In fact, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) who inspired followers all over the world specifically treated each individual as the meeting place of civilizations where spiritual transcendence should take place. (Hwang 2010; Yin 2003) In short, transcendence does not take the transformation of existing civilizations as its mission. He abhorred the violence associated with the modern nationalist movement. For Tagore, differences among groups always exist and yet transcendence is always possible through a higher or more abstract level of inner communication. (Tagore 1961: 61-63) In addition, he

cherished India's unique historical experience as an exporter of Buddhism to China and Japan, placing India in the place of civilizational origin.

Tagore's preaching was different from Nishida's, though, to the extent that the former requires mediation to achieve transcendence while the latter appeared to rely on discursive reinterpretation. Mahandas Gandhi (1869-1948) also desired transcendence over civilizational divisions. Nevertheless, Gandhi, who answered the call of Indian nationalism, stressed group togetherness more than individual transcendence. (Gupta 2004) For Gandhi, there were immediate politics to be taken care of and enemies had to be faced. The subsequent nation building compelled Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), who inherited wisdom from both Tagore and Gandhi, to shift between civilizational and nationalist inspirations.

The Indian School of IR is plausible between two seemingly contradictory tendencies: a long-term, historical view that sees mutual exchanges and learning among civilizations natural and beneficial so that short-run nationalism at the expense of individual free will does not matter ultimately; (Nandy 1994) and a short-term calculative mode of thinking that is associated with India's immediate place in international relations which is inferior. The short-run opportunism, usually understood in terms of national interests, or occasional suspicion that others, especially China, look down upon India could still prevail in any specific context. It is this kind of IR that makes the desire for transcendence inexpressible in the current IR literature.

The mix of long-term, macro-level transcendence and the short-term, micro-level maneuvering contributed to IR theorization in a unique way. The non-alignment movement is one such benchmark of Indian School IR. (Pande 1988) Nehru's non-alignment was unlike Mao Zedong's Three Worlds theory which aimed at overthrowing the imperialist rule by superpowers. The non-alignment call has no such ambition. Instead, it sought to create new space where superpower confrontation could be neutralized. Nehru unfortunately allowed suspicion to grow over Tibet and the Sino-Indian border dispute without any desire or even expectation that confrontation would escalate into a border clash. India was not prepared for its defeat since it was never prepared for war with China in Nehru's much deeper assumption about civilizational amicability. (Deshingkar 1998)

### Deconstructing Civilizations as a Plausible Australian School of IR

Australia began as a settler's colony which took criminals from Great Britain. Two concerns dominated Australian IR at its origin. The first concern was about its relationship with Great Britain, particularly about the extent to which Australia should identify with the Commonwealth. (Cotton 2009) There was a racist element, in addition, to prevent Chinese, Japanese and other Asians from invading Australian society. (Fitzgerald 2007) During the Second World War, departure from the British national interest concerns finalized Australia's independent identity. Much later, another decision to enhance Australia's global composition was made and subsequent immigration policy witnessed reversion to an open door policy. (Moran 2004) Australia has since welcomed Asians to join in its national development.

From being a member of the British Commonwealth, Australia has turned itself

into a different commonwealth. Not only do Asian immigrants compose a significant portion of the new labor force in Australia, the academic community similarly recruits Asian scholars along with European scholars. It is not exaggerating to say that the Australian intellectual establishment resembles in itself a kind of Commonwealth. Despite the fact that realism and rationalism continue to preoccupy IR scholars' attention in Australia, a plausible Australian School of IR has also emerged. Recognizing local differences and reading agency into local communities are important features in contemporary Australian scholarship. Nation states that are composed of contemporary international relations are themselves made up by sub-national groups, the participation of each of them in world politics is worth independent attention.

Just like the global constitution of Australian society that directs one's attention to the subjectivity and agency of its constituting parts, be they aboriginals, immigrants or diasporas, Australian IR could attend to the constituting parts of other nation states. (Wang 1981; Dening 2004, Barne 2005) One can use the Commonwealth or the Continental consciousness as a metaphor for the Australian school of IR. A continent is presumably composed of many different kinds of topography, such as deserts, mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers, woods, plateaus, prairies, etc. Together though, they belong to a same continent. Members of the Commonwealth share little cultural, geographical or ethnic similarities but nonetheless identify with a common head. By treating other nation states each as a commonwealth, Australian IR could pay particular attention to the survival, welfare, ecology, and adaptation at levels much lower than nation state and yet acknowledge their belonging to the nation state. This is particularly clear in China studies (Hendrichske 1999; Edwards and Roces 2004; He 2005; Hillman 2005; Goodman 2007; Mackerras 2009)

One on hand, this commonwealth approach deconstructs nation states into various local and group agencies. On the other hand, this approach is sheer recognition of their individualized subjectivities instead of any additional motive to either collect and then re-arrange these constituting parts into a Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere in the case of pre-war Japan or reduce them to sheer confirming cases of some universal social science law as in the case of America. In short, sub-national groups are both international actors and integral parts of a nation. Some kind of liberal interventionism could emerge. Moreover, Australian IR could benefit from comparative scholarship especially through Southeast Asian studies or Chinese studies. (Tseng 2010; Chen and Wu 2010) These are sites where diasporic communities as well as ethnic components of society comprise agencies that have universal implications to both global civil transactions and regional international relations at all levels.

### Bridging Civilizations as a Plausible Korean School of IR

Korea is a nation state that seats many civilizational divides—between socialism and capitalism, China and Japan, East and West, China and the States, etc. (M. Kim & Hodges 2006) Korea has a rich religious reservoir including traditional Buddhism and imported Christianity. The latter is more popular in Korea than in any other Asian state. Korean society is extremely alerted to the development in the States. Korea relies on the stationing of the American troops to defend Korea from a potential attack by North Korea. Korean academics consistently rely on the American schools for

higher education as well as for importation of theories.

The unification issue is high on Korea's agenda. As Korea seats all kinds of civilization division and North Korea appears mystifying to the international relations theorists, sovereign unification is not allowed by superpowers. (S. Kim 2003, 2007) In addition, any unification scheme outside of the realist range would immediately allude to civilizational division that would ruin the status quo of sovereign order desired by the hegemonic States. To assert its status and reflect upon the exclusive reliance on the States for both political and intellectual support is not just a Korean phenomenon. This provides a base for universal theoretical implication. In fact, nascent calls for Korean School of IR attract much attention indeed. (Choi 2007, Chun 2007, Min 2007, Kook and Young 2009) This attempt at the Korean IR should explore possibilities outside of American theories, move away from the footprint of the English School in order to make special contribution to IR theorization, and cope with the unique security challenge that involves complicated civilizational politics.

The plausible Korean School of IR could begin with the unification issue. To creatively devise a non-sovereign unification program could avoid the dissolution of either Korean nation state. Unification otherwise would be a threat to all major powers. More importantly, bridging civilizations through the Korean national question would make a unique contribution. Korea has a rich reservoir of historical contacts with major powers, including China, Japan and the contemporary US. For IR theorists, (Ku 1998; Cha 1999; Kang 2007) Korea could fare best by being either a balancer or a medium among a limited number of national actors, hence minilateralism. Korea would be reduced to China's protectorate and in fact a subordinate in the tribute system without such minilateral platforms. Alternatively, successful minilateralism could become a model to resolve confrontation of various sorts, (Nam 2005) which Korea has experienced through its position on those civilizational divides.

Since current IR theories as well as their East Asian derivatives all seem to concentrate on theorizing major powers' policy behavior, Korean IR could in a way break up the hierarchy of big and small powers. Korean IR could focus on the civilizational implications of the Korean unification issue and therefore bypass its seemingly middle power status. Recent research has turned to the historical possibility, though, that Korea and China could be actually equal in the tribute system. In front of civilizational divides and the attempt at bridging civilizations, nation states are not differentiated by their power status any more. The Korean national question answers directly to the Asian puzzle of whether or not nation states are civilizational instruments or ontology of IR as social science theorists believe.

#### Appropriating Civilizations as a Plausible Taiwanese School of IR

There have been different political regimes that took turns to rule Taiwan over a long range of 300 years, including European, Manchurian and Japanese forces. The island was returned to China after Japan's defeat in 1945 but became the base of Chinese Nationalists fleeing from their defeat in the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Taiwan was particularly torn between Japan and China during Japanese colonial rule and afterwards. (Wu 1995) Pro-independence forces rely heavily on the support from Japan and the States. Its political leaders carefully watch regional powers in order to position Taiwan. On one hand, the island government struggles to secure its place by

trying to be a strategic ally of any potential enemy of China. On the other hand, the social, economic relationship with the Chinese mainland is closer than any other nation states. Taiwan's contribution to IR theorization could emerge in this irony.

During the Cold War period, the concept of a bi-polar system that suited the containment purpose was the prevailing discourse in Taiwan. After the Cold War, the strategic triangle has been the dominant approach to studying interactions among Washington, Beijing and Taipei. Note that the triangle approach ostensibly gives Taiwan such an equal footing relative to the other two that Taiwan would never enjoy due to its exclusion from official international relations. (Wang 2005) Taiwan's mainstream IR always mimics the development of American IR. In the recent decade, constructivist arguments have emerged to explore the window of opportunity with China. However, behind these careful mimics is actually a cynical view of IR in the sense that IR theories are considered no more than an instrument to achieve Taiwan's equal representation. Calls for Chinese social science methodology have emerged in the 1980s, (Yang and Wen 1982) but never extended to international relations.

A plausible Taiwanese School of IR looms possible in this cynical view. Now that Taiwan has no representation in official international relations, politics of representation shifts to arenas that are composed of identities other than sovereign nation states. (Song 2003; Mo 2004; Teng 2003; Hwang 2005) Taiwan could be a legitimate and equal participant in these nontraditional arenas. How to deconstruct the legitimacy of sovereign state and develop subjectivity for Taiwan in a different arena could be an alternative IR theorization. (Huang 2010, Chen 2009, Lin 2009) For example, the nascent interest in Asianism could deconstruct the pressure for reunification with China to the extent that national unity has little meaning to Asianism. (Lee and Nakajima 2000; Ke 2008) Others resort to Taiwan's Confucian legacy which is much better preserved in comparison with China's. (Huang 2001; Yu 2009) Still others raise multiculturalism or electoral democracy in Taiwan to demonstrate that Taiwan leads China in its civilizational development stage. (Jiang 1998; Shih 2007b)

To appropriate theories of any kind in order to represent a Taiwan distinctively apart from China is the major motivation behind the Taiwanese School of IR. This is similar to the Japanese world history standpoint whereby all theoretical situations are at best a temporary site of communication. However, in the place of nothingness, one is supposedly free, universal, and full of agency in facilitating re-entry at will. Taiwan has no such power to determine where to enter next. The situation is always imposed upon Taiwan whose politics have no alternative other than adapting. The solution is to re-appropriate whatever theory is imposed upon Taiwan and make it functional to the equal representation of Taiwan in yet another creative way. (Chen, Hwang and Ling 2009)

#### Disassociating Civilizations as a Plausible ASEAN School of IR

During the pre-modern time, the Southeast Asian nations used to interact with the Chinese courts. Their modern history witnessed European colonialism, followed by Japanese occupation during the war. Throughout history, migrants arrived from neighboring areas, among whom the Chinese migrants are particularly noteworthy. This is because Southeast Asia has been where most China emigrants have chosen to go. Multiple religious traditions coexist in the region, some with focused residency,

such as the Catholic in the Philippines and Buddhism in Thailand and Myanmar. Others are transnational, such as Islam. As a result, the migrant and postcolonial nature of the Southeast nations breeds a style of politics unfamiliar to Europeans or North Americans. (Chong 2007) Disruptive ethnic politics broke out as early as during the early independent period when revolutionary politics in China stirred repercussions in Southeast Asia, begetting Anti-Chinese campaigns. Chinese studies have arisen to tackle the identity politics since then, to deconstruct Chinese identities and disassociate the Chinese with China. (Leo 2005, Wang 1993, 1959)

Chinese studies in Southeast Asia are not part of either international studies or China studies until Sinicization becomes a faddish topic during the recent rise of China. (Leo 2008: 1-16, Wang 2005), serving as a point of comparison with Islamization, Europeanization, or Americanization. (Katzenstein 2009, 2005). The new scholarly attention thus aroused is a misfortune to the Chinese studies, which consistently try to establish indigenous Chinese identification through various nuanced distinctions between different Chinese groups. (Leo 2007) For example, the notions of overseas Chinese, diasporic Chinese or guest Chinese (*huaqiao*) are disputed strongly in the literature on Southeast Asian Chinese due to their Sino-centric ontology as well as the political implications of them being aliens. Instead, it is nationality Chinese (*huazu*) or Chinese overseas (*huaren*) that confirms their indigeneity. (Lee 2009)

Noticeable endeavor by contemporary political practitioners to dissociate domestic civilizational complication in each Southeast Asian state from international relations echoes the attempt at desensitizing Chinese from China in the literature of Chinese studies. The principle of international relations is allegedly the ASEAN Way, (Acharya 2001) aimed at a mutually respectful mode of interaction where interventionism is not welcome. The ASEAN Way presumably does not try to strike any definite solution to a standing conflict. (Haccke 2005) Rather, it seeks to manage it in such a way that a conflict will not escalate. This requires that national leaders avoid using formal meetings where there would be written minutes, the division of majority and minority, and pressure for public diplomacy. Instead, the ASEAN Way highly regards informal meetings among leaders as individual persons. No intervention is possible in the capacity of the ASEAN. European countries and the US criticize the ASEAN way for being unable to create results. (Peterson 2006) For example, the refusal to resort to sanctions leaves Myanmar junta free hands in violating human rights. Others call them the land of illiberal democracy. (Linantud 2005, Bell 1996) However, through the ASEAN way, communication with Naypyidaw remains open and humanitarian aids can continue to flow. If, on the contrary, Myanmar were sanctioned, the ASEAN as an institution would become an intervening vehicle which no one would trust any more. (Katanyun 2006, Beeson 2003)

In brief, the ASEAN Way connotes to IR scholars a kind of indigenous centrism that sets aside abstract values or civilizational identities. The policy implication is to oppose any type of interventionism. Engagement is always more important than position taking or moral judgment. Only through engagement could there be an international environment that is encouraging to internal reform or reconciliation. Regional stability is accordingly best guaranteed by informal consulting and personalized trust.

## Hypothesizing Chinese and Asian Non/Interventionism

The emerging quest of Asian local schools of international relations coincides with the rise of interventionist discourse in the mainstream international relations. However, intervention that is becoming an important issue to cope with global governance does not seem to fare well in none of the plausible schools of international relations. It is probably worth a separate project to investigate if such simultaneity is an attempt at resistance or evasion, consciously as well as subconsciously. First of all, Chinese intervention in international society would have two forms. One is to win social recognition from international society that China is a responsible, normal state, so it will go along with any consensus achieved among the major powers in international society. This may include China's participation in UN peace-keeping in Haiti, East Timor and elsewhere, which China had consistently resisted for decades before realizing China's inevitable rise into global status toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In association with this form of intervention would be providing humanitarian aid during the aftermath of a natural disaster. China appears active in this particular regard.

The other form of intervention is to persuade a specific state away from a certain practice, which the major powers deem morally not right, so that the particular state in question could win recognition from international society as a responsible, normal state. This could be illustrated by China's engagement with Pyongyang, Naypyidaw, and Khartoum. The second form of intervention would be soft, intended as friendly advising and consciously exempted from sanction or even pressure. Both kinds of intervention show China's effort of conformity to international norms, whatever they mean and wherever they come from. However, conformity is aimed not at achieving norms for the sake of norm, but at maintaining social relationships with both major powers and the target state of intervention. Intervention is therefore a socializing vehicle.

China would be more comfortable without such exercises of simulation, though. In other words, China would rather do without the second form of intervention. Intervention is only necessary when disrespect toward social relationship takes place, rather than when specific norms are violated. Since Mao's time, it has been held by Chinese policymakers that norms must be internally appreciated, not externally imposed. (This position reminds China watchers of the Chinese Communist style of freedom—freedom in religion is constitutionally provided, but preaching religion is illegal; freedom in nominating candidates is legally provided, but campaigning is illegal.) It is, after all, all nation states' own obligation to follow the best model in the world, which China would be more than willing to pose for the world.

The essence of Chinese intervention is to reproduce the proper social relationship as China deems appropriate. This way, China's intervention is directly related toward itself, understood as self-strengthening, self-rectifying, self-restraining or self-disciplining, and indirectly related toward others. A rising China would intervene indirectly in the major powers' violations of social relationship through some kind of shaming tactics, probably by posing China as a much more liked alternative to those other powers, by unilaterally aborting earlier deals stricken for mutual benefits, by sacrificing China's own interest to show adherence to a principle or disgust toward

violators, and so on. A rising China would intervene in smaller powers' violations of social relationships by symbolically showing contempt (including punitive war) or by taking back some of the privileges granted earlier.

Finally, a few notes regarding Asian schools of intervention are worth attention. Japan's intervention was clearest as displayed in its invasion of its Asian neighbors. Intervention as re-entry into a specific place is philosophically unrestricted. However, it would not be intervention if Asia were tantamount to Japan's greater self, hence self-intervention. Intervention could be a meaningful concept for Japan only when Japan is ready to face "the West" with confidence and act as an equal sovereign state partner. Self-rectification instead of intervention would be the key to the Japanese understanding of intervention. In brief, the plausible Japanese school of IR would encourage intervention only in areas that belong to the greater Japanese self, hence non-intervention. After all, the Kyoto style of withdrawing from one and reentering into another is to learn from different civilizations for Japan's self-improvement. The epistemological differentiation of self-rectification and intervention could be the contribution of the Japanese school of IR.

For Korea, intervention could be meaningful even for a middle power if it could act as a member together with and on behalf of a larger group. The collective, minilateral intervention shifts attention away from its embarrassing position on the civilizational divide. Intervention would be a meaningful subject of study when it moves a country beyond a civilizational divide. Intervention could be a very attractive approach to Australia when it spots a sub-national group from suffering suppression of all kinds, be it ecological, economic, ethnic or political. Concerns over the welfare of sub-national groups have become the sign of globality to which the identity of any global nation should subscribe. Taiwan would seek those opportunities to intervene if they could insinuate that Taiwan is becoming a sovereign actor. Practically a country of low self-regard could have these opportunities only by assisting someone else important who is in dire need. For example, when the United States toppled Manuel Noriega in 1989, Washington needed someone to finance Panama and Taipei answered the call. Among all plausible Asian schools, the ASEAN Way comes closest to the Chinese principle of non-interventionism, but it comes out of the civilizational complication of each Southeast Asian nations. The ASEAN Way disassociates the domestic from the international so as to encourage internal reconciliation without pressure. Finally, the plausible Indian school of IR would appreciate a kind of intervention that suffers bifurcation between inspiration for power and recognition and reluctance embedded in the quest for transcendent peace. As a result, intervention would be studied less by the kind of issue or area than by its unavoidable inconsistency and inefficiency.



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