

An International Symposium at the International Center for Chinese Studies (ICCS) of
Aichi University in December 2008

Title: Development and the Creation of a Harmonious Society in China

Goals of this Symposium

The Development and Creation of a Harmonious Society

The purpose of development policy in China is made clear in the West China Project covering 12 regions which started in 1999 during the Jiang Zemin era. The project aimed at the following: 1) the correction of the wide disparities in development between the West and the East; 2) the social and political stabilization of minority peoples, 3) environmental protection; and 4) the alleviation of the impact on agriculture and farmers resulting from WTO accession. For the purpose of attaining the above aims, the following activities were implemented : the construction of roads, railways and domestic airports in the West; the promotion of urbanization; infrastructure construction such as building gas pipelines from the West to the East, and power lines for sending electricity from the West to the East and pipes for taking water from the South to the North; environmental protection measures such as the return of land to forest, the restoration of grasslands, and irrigation and drainage; other industrial structural adjustments; and the development of scientific technology and education. This shows how the Chinese government intends to tackle social issues through infrastructure development.

This development model applies to economic development of all regions in China. In recent years, in addition to the nation building strategy by development, the new philosophy of a harmonious society has emerged. The construction of a harmonious society under socialism was stated by the Central Communist Party' at the sixth Plenum of the 16th CCPCC in October, 2006. The construction of a harmonious society is a central political theme of the Hu Jintao regime.

It was pointed out that China was already harmonious overall, but that there still remained conflicts and problems affecting this harmony significantly, imbalances of social and economic development between the countryside and the towns and among regions, expansion of population and environment problems, and also political corruption. It was asserted that the harmony of Society was an essential part of Chinese socialism and is important as a means to strengthen the nation, to unite the various peoples and to guarantee the happiness of all. They made 2020 the target year

and have enumerated the following principles: 1) the priority placed on peoples' welfare; 2) maintenance of scientific development; 3) maintenance of the open door policy; 4) maintenance of democracy; 5) development of stable reform; and 6) social construction under the guidance of the Communist Party. In the background behind a construction of the harmonious society, it can be pointed out that there is the construction of a human-centered society. Also there is the international standardization of Chinese society and the intensification of international competitiveness, and the end of the nation-building strategy by ideological initiative.

Methodological Perspective of this Symposium

We suggest a multi-dimensional method to consider development and the creation of a harmonious society. The multi-dimensional method is designed to grasp the correlation between a typical development such as that of the West China Project and the creation of a harmonious society, and to be aware of the unity of the two and also separateness (or conflicts) between the two, to analyze them comprehensively as a research theme, and to comprehend their peculiarity (China only) and universality (other developing countries).

Development cannot be discussed without an evaluation of the Chinese growth model with its integration of market and government. When we consider the harmonious society, we must consider both domestic harmony and international harmony. We want to make comparative studies between the Chinese model and the development and social stabilization model of the newly industrializing countries (NIEs).

In the above discussions, 'Cobehaviorism' which is the new methodology of modern Chinese studies will be further considered and applied. We would welcome free exchanges of opinion on these subjects. For example, we can list other methods such as development economics, development politics, development environment and development anthropology which are all related to the sessions of this symposium (economics, politics, environment and culture).

Considering that the main focus of development has been put on economic development, economics will be discussed first in the symposium, followed by environment, politics and culture. We would like to develop academic discussions about the possibility of realizing a harmonious society, and the problems to be encountered while doing this throughout the symposium.

Objective of the Symposium

Based on the above methodological perspectives, we would like to share the following ideas throughout the symposium. We want to consider the peculiarity and universality of development, the position, background, effects and conflicts within the harmonious society in China, the possibility of realizing a harmonious society and the international consequences. The key words are development and human beings. Is harmony possible or not in the framework of contemporary China? And if possible, how? Discussions should be centered around these questions.

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