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Korean Ideas and Values

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This article contrasted the differences of society and people's common ideas and values between west and east. Of course, this kind of contrast is based on the two special representatives: Korea and America. Korea is on behalf of the traditional eastern countries and America represents the western countries. Due to the develop history and the background is so different that lead the ideas and values of society and people to the different consequences and it affects the development of the country and the society and people's activity and morality. The following is the summary of the article and we have enough reason to expect that after reading the article, we can almost paint a picture of the social ideas and values both west and east.

Introduction

At the beginning, the author points out the problem what the article want to research: IN WHAT RESPECT IS THE KOREAN WAY OF THINKING DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF AMERICANS? WHY DO THE KOREANS BEHAVE SO DIFFFERENTLY IN MANY WAYS FROM THE AMERICANS? If you want to get the answers of these questions, you must expire the ideas and values, it affected the way people behave in everyday life.

Due to the history reason, the traditional Korean rulers accepted the Confucianism and it is inevitably that the sprit of Confucianism encompassed everybody and everyday life. Now we refereed it to the Neo-Confucianism. Most Koreans are perhaps not even aware that many of their fundamental ideas and values are drove from Confucian teachings.

Family and Social Relationship

The common western view of the dignity of man is drawn from the traditions. Man is human in that he is able to think and make decisions; therefore his freedom is to be respected. This is one of the foundations of western individualism. The Confucianism view is quite different. It is derived from one of the most valued of the Confucian classics, the Mencius which gives the earliest full formulation of the Five Relations: father and son, husband and wife, ruler and the minister, elder and the younger, and friends. These are the basic principles

and the basic standard of New-Confucianism. According to the points, the people are not themselves, he or she must live with the community and have good relation with others. Everyone should learn how to respect the father, ruler and elder and how to face your friends faithful. The difference exists between America and Korea. The American take account of the individualism and the Korean weigh the persons' relation heavier than individualism. Accompany the development of the Korean modern history, more and more new conception including the individualism are accepted by the society and there produces some worry about the moral lack.

Decorum

Decorum is the traditional Korean fondness for yeui, the rules of proper and polite behavior. Nowadays, there is much less strictness, but nonetheless a marked formality and sensitivity to what is appropriate in given circumstance and social situation still is characteristic of Korean society. In Korean the many interactions of daily life are graced by the presence of little rituals which express something and made them pleasant by small indications of good will, respect, or friendship. By contrast, American informality may well be crude and frustrating to one who is accustomed to having these means of expression at his disposal.

Age

It is one of the contents of the basic five relations. In Confucian society age was one of the primary yardsticks of hierarchy, the indication is the elder should always have precedence over the younger. Even though in the present Korean society, the point is still clearly and obviously. While this situation can certainly be frustrating for the up-and coming young, there are some advantages in maintaining this hierarchy of age. American has the negative view of the age. Ability is the most important and nobody can possess the special right despite of your age.

Filial Piety

This part directly refer to the family and three of the five relationships--father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger are involved. The traditionally the family stood at the center of everything. Modern society is modifying the place and nature of the family in Korea. An understanding of the family offers the key to that core of Korean values which is in direct opposition to Western individualism, and the key to that understanding is filial piety, the virtue almost prized by Confucians. One's whole existence as a human being is fundamentally a continuation or extension of the existence of one's parents, just as they are continuing the existence of their parents before them.

Family

The family is essentially a single life-force, passed on from generation to generation to generation. It encompasses not only the living but also the ancestors who have gone before and the generations yet to come in a single unity. The traditional obedience to parents even after adulthood, and the subordination of personal interests to those of the family which is an essential part of filial piety, may strike those more familiar with typical Western values as an intolerable suppression of the individual. In the Confucian framework, life is not only personal but also something possessed and lived in relation with others, Western individualistic values and life-style affect on the modern Korea, and there is frequently a tension in young persons as they feel the pull of filial duty in one direction and the desire for a more unfettered management of their lives in another. It is doubtful that when the final compromise takes form it will bear much resemblance to Western individualism.

"Unhae"

"Unhae" in English means "gracious favor" which plays a role in Korean society somewhat parallel to that of rights and duties in the more egalitarian societies of the west. In America, people think it is natural that they will be respected and the others have the duty to respect others. But in Korea, Unhae, favors graciously given and willingly returned, provides in such a context a much smoother, more harmonious and more appropriate way of handling affairs. Unhae reveals that the concept implies a twofold obligation: those in superior positions should grant assistance, unhae to those who depend upon them and need their help; the recipients of gratitude which can be repaid whenever a fitting occasion arises. We find the notion of unhae rooted in the same sort of awareness that stands at the source of filial piety, and filial service to parents is in fact often described as the response owed to their unhae. In this part, comparing the "independence", the author described the Korean independence as "interdependence".

Personalism

In many sorts of dealings Americans tend to emphasize the objective elements. In the mind of Americans, devoted to the fact that all such matters involve persons. In contrast to the Korean, Korean approach to things typically puts great weight on personal factors. Nunch'i "reading the eyes" is a highly developed and valued skill in Korean society. In handling conflicts between objective and interpersonal values, Americans would probably say that ability counts

most but connection help; the Korean approach is more likely to be that connections weigh heavily but ability is also necessary.

Education

Education must be numbered among the highest Korean values, and kick the emphasis on values associated with interpersonal relationship, this is deeply rooted in Korea's past. This view is inherited from the Yi-dynasty and thus entered the modern world with a firm conviction that education was the key to success in life. But on the other hand, the prestige of learning is founded upon more than the desire for success, in Confucian society learning stood above all, for moral excellence. In another word, moral superiority of the learned man which was the basis of achievement to positions of responsibility and power. Now the contemporary Korean government lack some kind of security, such as the government cannot easily permit unrestrained criticism from society, as this result, the relationships between government and the world of higher education has become a very difficult one.

Male and Female

Most views about male and female in the modern society are from the traditional Confucian, as what is well known "um-yang"(Chinese yin-yang). Talking about the distinguish of male and female roles, the Western concept of nature, notwithstanding the term "Mother Nature" is essentially sexual. In contrast to this, the traditional East Asian view of the universe divides the operation of the fundamental forces of nature into two complementary and opposite forces, um and yang. In the traditional Confucian view , the leading, active role of the male and quiet, conforming role of the female are this thought to be unshakably fixed in the nature of things. These years, although the western ideas have weakened this tradition content, it still creates a very uncomfortable situation for a woman to be in a position of authority over men in Korea.

The ideal of distinction between the sexes went beyond the mere differentiation of roles, however, and has left its mark on all forms of social interaction. Males did their socializing with males and woman interacted mainly with other women.

Nobody cannot admit that Korea is in some sense a man's world in which a women accustomed to American society might feel somewhat uncomfortable. It is well known that there are women's liberation movement, but Korea is far from this situation for some reasons . Labor-saving devices are not nearly so common in the home and thus for the vast majority homemaking is still so common in the home , and thus for the vast majority homemaking is still a full-time job.

As it is founded that both the view of the universe and traditional Confucian ideals, has the positive effect of clearly defining values for a woman's role even while it makes it very difficult for women to enter into and compete in the man's world. But when we observe the problem from another aspect, it will not be difficult for the ordinary Korean woman to find fulfillment in such a role of her needs for dignity, value and accomplishment.

Conclusion

The author study the Korean ideas and values from 9 different respects. The author want to contrast the distinguish between America and Korea in order to explore the inter-relationship and find the practical value. The law is based on the objective social reality and the present social consciousness relevant with the family, the friend, the male and female and etc. Analyzing these relationships have the following value.

1. Support the references to the lawmaker which the law is needed by the social and which kind of legal system can be energetic.
2. Through the perspective, help the people to realize the present society deeply and help the people to know which should be got rid.
3. Korean ideas and values are almost inherited from the history, today some of them are still existed, it can prove there is necessary and reality, to some extent, it combines the society consciousness foundation. The author research and evaluate it, it is valuable to the society to take advantage of it and get some convenience from it.