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Western Democracy in East Asia

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I.

As peace reigned supreme again in the world with the end of the first World War that was piously hoped "to make the world safe for democracy", Europe was a witness to a wave of democracy which produced the Weimar Constitution and a number of popular governments on the European continent. The weary but proud heirs to Athenian democracy, the Magna Charta, the Glorious Revolution, the French Revolution, and the American Revolution, appeared confident that the whole Western world would eventually become democratic.

As the "democratic coalition" of world powers, including the Soviet Union that then claimed to practice "real democracy", crushed the Nazis, Fascists, and Shintoists, and as the mushroom-shaped clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki signaled the dawn of a new era, the confidence in the ultimate triumph of democracy was again voiced. This time, the voices were heard not only from the Western world but also from the East; and not only from old nations but from newly emerging nations as well. The UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Philosophical Analysis of Fundamental Concepts reported: "probably for the first time in history", democracy was claimed as "the proper ideal description of all systems of political and social organizations".¹

The countries in East Asia or the Far East: Viz., China, Japan, and Korea, were no exceptions. In fact, in the constellation of post-war political phenomena, the unprecedented popularity of Western democracy in East Asia was one of the most note-worthy developments. The political system that has been the product of a long historical evolution in the Western world was now eagerly embraced by the countries of East Asia.

This universal popularity of the term "democracy", however, brought to light, among other things, a basic ambiguity of the term and probably reflected the differences of meanings attached to it.² As a preliminary clearing of the ground, therefore, it may be helpful to note the common or lexicographic meaning of "democracy" which it had since the days of Athenian greatness: "government or rule by the people".

John Stuart Mill wrote that the meaning of a democratic system was "that the whole people, or some num-

erous portion of them, exercise through deputies periodically elected by themselves the ultimate controlling power, which in every constitution must reside somewhere . . .".³

Without involved historical or semantic discussions, a working definition of democracy may be adopted here as follows: A democratic political system is one in which public policies are made, on a majority basis, by representatives subject to effective popular control at periodic elections which are conducted on the principle of political equality and under conditions of political freedom.⁴

A democratic system is, therefore, contrasted with other forms of political associations in which the control and direction of the society are habitually determined by a relatively small group in accordance with appropriate understandings and procedures providing for aristocratic, autocratic, oligarchic, or other forms of minority control and direction.⁵

In particular, democracy as developed in the Western world should be distinguished from the so-called "real" or "people's" democracies—the terms often used by the Communists to describe their own political systems. The Communists assert that political democracies of the older traditional type are a delusion, snare, and wilfully fraudulent pretence.⁶

The term "Western democracy" is used here to connote the meaning of democracy as traditionally accepted in the Western world. Clearly, one cannot, without qualifications, equate the Western world with democracy as discussed here. Nevertheless, the more notable of the Western nations have had political traditions, assumptions, ideas, and systems, out of which the term democracy has acquired concrete meanings. Britain, the United States, and Canada, for instance, do substantially believe in the principles of constitutionalism, equality of men,

³ John Stuart Mill. 1958. *Considerations on Representative Government*. New York, Liberal Arts Press, p. 68.

⁴ Norman L. Stamps. 1957. *Why Democracies Fail: A Critical Evaluation of the Causes for Modern Dictatorship*. Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, p. 72. Rousseau pointed out that "if we take the term in its strictest sense, there never has been a real democracy, and there never will be", Jean Jacques Rousseau. 1952. *The Social Contract*. New York, E. P. Dutton. P. 55.

⁵ Charles E. Merriam. 1941. *What Is Democracy?* Chicago, University of Chicago Press. p. 6.

⁶ In Lenin's words: "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and oppress the people through Parliament — this is the real essence of bourgeois Parliamentaryism." V. I. Lenin. 1932. *State and Revolution*, New York, International Publisher. p. 186.

¹ Richard McKeon (ed.). 1951. *Democracy in a World of Tensions: A Symposium Prepared by UNESCO*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. 527.

² This ambiguity was to be manifested when the term "democracy" was preceded by an adjective, e.g., "real", "people's", "total", "guided", "basic"—in order to connote, somehow, political systems existing in the Soviet Union, satellite countries of the Soviet Union, Guinea, Indonesia and Nepal, and Pakistan, respectively.

political freedom and toleration, popular control of policy makers, majority rule, and maintain the traditional culture and civil liberties. For these reasons, it may be justifiable to claim that democracy as we know it, is Western democracy.

II.

With the exception of what may be called the First Cause or the First Mover, any thing or system needs certain conditions for existence and successful operation. A democratic system is no exception. It is even more so in the case of democracy, since it is by no means the simplest and easiest of political systems.

However, it is obviously impossible to make up a complete "count-down" list of conditions for democracy and state with certainty that some of these conditions are absolutely necessary as well as sufficient. It may, moreover, be argued that some factors, which are normally taken as preconditions, are actually the effects of a democratic system.

Bearing these points in mind, it is proposed here to discuss what appear to be the most pertinent conditions for the successful operation of Western democracy. These factors or "elements"⁷ may be broadly divided into the following three groups: (1) political culture, (2) economic factor, and (3) geopolitical factor.

Political Culture: The term "political culture" connotes cultural elements which are closely related to the operation of a political system—in this case, Western democracy. Political culture may be said to derive from a number of "assumptions",⁸ as follows: (1) the dignity and value of men and women simply as human beings; (2) the confidence in the gradual development of the possibilities latent in human personality, as distinguished from the doctrine of fixed caste, class, and slave systems; (3) the gains of civilizations and peoples viewed as essentially mass gains, rather than the effort of the elite; (4) confidence in the value of the consent of the governed expressed in institutional forms and practices, as the basis of order, liberty, and justice; (5) the value of decisions arrived at by rational processes, by common counsel, with the implication, normally, of tolerance and freedom of discussion rather than violence and brutality.

Political culture that can sustain democracy is also based on certain "attitudes," which may include: love for and belief in freedom; participation in community life; integrity of discussion; freely assumed obligation of economic groups to serve society; leadership and office-holding regarded as public trust; passions to be channeled to constructive ends; and friendliness and cooperation among nations.⁹

⁷ Rupert Emerson names the following elements: "A reasonably high level of literacy, the general spread of education, a degree of prosperity reaching above basic subsistence, a homogeneous and integrated society, and maintenance of peace for a substantial period, and a strong and stable middle class." Rupert Emerson, *The Erosion of Democracy*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, XX,1, November, 1961:2.

⁸ Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹ Ernest S. Griffith, John Plamenatz, and Roland J. Pennock.

Furthermore, many writers believe that these attitudes are best based upon the fundamental elements of religion in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Whether or not these attitudes must be founded on religion, specifically the Judaeo-Christian tradition, will perhaps never be fully resolved to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. However, there seems to be little doubt that the culture that nurtured these attitudes has been developed by "the heirs of Greece, Rome, Christianity."¹⁰ For instance, the notion of equality of men and women before the law would be rather empty without the belief in the basic equality before God. The human dignity and value have little meaning when the idea lacks religious foundation.

It may be argued that some of these attitudes can be nurtured through widespread and sustained programs of liberal education. Regardless of one's religious conviction, education certainly is a common denominator of those attitudes most essential to a flourishing democracy.

A recent survey indicates a general pattern that in most of the democratic European and English-speaking nations, most of the people are literate in contrast to the high rate of illiteracy in most of the dictatorial nations.¹¹ Many go as far as saying that education is an indispensable prerequisite for a political culture capable of sustaining Western democracy, despite some striking exceptions to this generalization. In any case, illiteracy and the age-old assumption as to the right of an elite to rule seem to be inseparable companions.

Economic Factor: The second important factor of the success of democracy is a certain measure of economic well-being. Generally speaking, this means that the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances of that it will sustain democracy. From Aristotle down to the present, men have argued that only in a fairly wealthy society, in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty and a stable middle class existed, could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics and could develop the self-restraint necessary to avoid succumbing to the appeals of irresponsible demagogues. This is even more true in our age of "revolution of rising expectations" which has already brought many political extremists to power.¹²

In any case, there is little doubt that when the majority are unable to share in the benefit of communal life, when the struggle for existence is too great, when all of a man's energy is used up in eking out a bare subsistence and remaining alive, it becomes impossible to operate a democratic system. This is why in modern times there has been a close association between democracy and industrial development.

In terms of economic development, it is significant that

Cultural Prerequisites to a Successfully Functioning Democracy: A Symposium, *American Political Science Review*, L, 1, March, 1956:103.

¹⁰ Emerson, *loc. cit.*

¹¹ Seymour M. Lipset. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, LIII, 1, March, 1959:75.

¹² Eugene Staley. 1961. *The Future of Underdeveloped Countries: Political Implications of Economic Development*, New York, Praeger. p. 20.

roughly two-thirds of the world's population live in what may be called underdeveloped countries, where per capita annual income is less than \$150. When the countries of the world are grouped on the basis of economic development, in this case mainly on per capita annual income, into "highly developed", "intermediate", and "underdeveloped" groups, there appears an unmistakable general pattern indicating that democracy can be sustained mostly in the "highly developed" and "intermediate" groups.

Geopolitical Factor: It is often said that geography is the canvas on which history is painted, or that when an understanding of geographic environment is missing many political questions appear to be only disconnected segments of confusing human behavior.¹³

Generally speaking, countries which are large and endowed with a large population and rich natural resources, and which are located in geographical position which are normally immune from repeated invasions by neighboring powers or from other political disturbances mainly attributable to the geographical location, may be said to enjoy favorable geopolitical conditions. For our purpose here, we are mostly interested in the latter aspect, namely that of location and the political significance of it.

The significance of the geopolitical factor becomes particularly evident when its impact on democratic system is considered. This is so, because the complex system of a democratic government is essentially designed to function under normal, peaceful conditions and is often unequal to the exigencies of great national crises.

In times of crises, the deliberative and time-consuming democratic institutions and processes must be altered, at least temporarily, to whatever degree necessary to overcome the perils. This alteration invariably involves government of a more centralized character. The Second World War was a recent proof that crisis government means strong, centralized, and often arbitrary government, and that in the eternal dispute between government and liberty, crisis means more government and less liberty. In this sense, "democracy is a child of peace and cannot live apart from its mother".¹⁴ "War is a contradiction of all what democracy implies. War is not and cannot be democratic".¹⁵

Rapid technological developments and the emergence of a system of world-wide bi-polar balance of power tend to lessen the effect of the geopolitical factor. However, they do not eliminate the general effects of this factor, nor can these relatively recent developments rapidly erase the deeply imprinted effects of the geopolitical

conditions on the cultural and economic aspects of a national life.¹⁶

III.

As the Allied Powers which included the Nationalist Republic of China finally subdued militarist Japan, East Asia stood at the threshold of a new era of uncertainty. The Tenno-centered Shintoist nation of Japan was given the soul-shattering baptism of blood and was subject to a foreign military occupation for the first time in its entire national history of some 2,600 years. The Confucian Republic of China, that waged an eight-year war against the Japanese Imperial Army, now had to brace itself for a decisive confrontation with the Communists who were stronger now than ever before, as a consequence of the Sino-Japanese War. Korea was freed from the 36-year long colonial rule by the Japanese, but the peninsula was divided into two zones of occupation under the Soviet troops in the north of the 38th parallel and the American army in the south.

Until the end of the Second World War, these nations generally remained "Eastern" in their predominantly Buddhist-Confucian-Shintoist beliefs, their culture, social pattern, economy, and political processes. They remained so, despite the phenomenal introduction of Western technology and some institutions into Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1867, and some measures of modernization in China after the fall of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1912, and in Korea after the demise of the Yi Dynasty in 1910.

At the dawn of the new era in East Asia, the entire past of Asia suddenly appeared outdated, barren, and unworthy of revival. Furthermore, these East Asian nations, which had never been subject to physical control by Western nations, were now under the direct control of Western powers. The Chinese Nationalist government depended on the American military and economic assistance for its very survival in the mainland. All of the Japanese islands were now under the Allied—in fact, American—occupation, and so was Korea under American and Russian occupations.

It is far from surprising, therefore, that the new political elites of these East Asian nations would turn to Western—or, American—democracy, as the most promising wave of the future, which has obviously provided the driving force to the most powerful and prosperous Western nations before whom the strongest Asian countries now lay prostrate. At the same time, it seems that the Allied occupation authorities now suddenly felt the messianic zeal to liberate the Asiatic masses from the feudalistic and oppressive heritages of the Orient. It was undoubtedly easiest for the American authorities to produce the ditto copies of the American system and wave them before the eyes of the Asians as the new guiding principles.

In China, amidst a civil war with the Communists that now surpassed in extent and intensity all previous

¹³ For discussions of geopolitical approach see, among others: Hans Weigert (ed.). 1957. *Principles of Political Geography*. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Chap. I. U.S. Air Force, Reserve Officers' Training Corps. 1959. *Military Aspects of World Political Geography*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., Air University, pp. 3-14.

¹⁴ William E. Rappard. 1938. *The Crisis of Democracy*, Chicago University of Chicago Press. p. 265.

¹⁵ Wiley Rutledge. "A Symposium on Constitutional Rights in Wartime," *Iowa Law Review*, XXIX, 3, March, 1944:379.

¹⁶ For a discussion of political developments in "hydraulic societies" see: Karl Wittfogel. 1957. *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

wars fought in China, the National Constituent Assembly of 1,744 members representing different geographical areas and divergent political groups was convened on November 15, 1946 to adopt a new and more "democratic" constitution of December 25, 1946.¹⁷ The Bill of Rights of the constitution adopted at the very height of the bloodiest civil war contained provisions for the guaranty of all personal liberties and rights, including habeas corpus.

In Japan, after the Japanese government failed to produce a constitutional draft acceptable to General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, the Government Section of the SCAP suddenly took the matter of drafting a "democratic" constitution for Japan into its own hands. A combined crew of army and navy officers and civilians of varied backgrounds was given the responsibility of drafting what was technically to be only a revision of the existing Meiji Constitution. But the final product was a completely new one. Working with great speed, the Government Section—a peculiar "constitutional convention" indeed—finished its draft in the space of a few weeks. On March 6, 1946, the Japanese Government released the document as its own draft—not as a draft of the SCAP—along with both an imperial rescript proclaiming it to be a revision of the Meiji Constitution and a message from General MacArthur giving it his blessing.¹⁸

The so-called "MacArthur Constitution" proclaimed, among other things, the sovereignty of the people and contained the most democratic guarantees of fundamental human rights, which were in some cases a virtual carbon copy of the American Bill of Rights.

In American occupied South Korea, the first modern constitution was adopted by the National Assembly on July 12, 1948 "to establish a democratic system of government". The rights of the Korean people were spelled out in a detailed manner and they included equality before the law, "personal liberty", freedom of domicile, freedom from trespass and unlawful search, "the freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association", "freedom of learning and the right to practice the sciences and arts", "the right of property", "equal opportunity of education", "the equality of men and women", and the rights to elect public officials and the right to hold public offices. Article 27 also stated: "Public officials shall be the trustees of the sovereign people and shall at all times be responsible to the people". Indeed, little fault could be found with the democratic nature of these democratic guarantees of rights.

Within three years after the end of the Pacific War, therefore, all three East Asian countries—with the exception of North Korea, of course—had almost fault-

¹⁷ Ch'ien Tuan-sheng. 1950. *The Government and Politics of China*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press. pp. 320-9. For the full text of the constitution see: Paul M. A. Linebarger, Djang Chu, and Ardath W. Burks. 1954. *Far Eastern Governments and Politics: China and Japan*. New York, Van Nostrand.

¹⁸ John M. Maki. 1962. *Government and Politics of Japan: The Road to Democracy*, New York, pp. 78-79, Praeger. The constitution was promulgated on May 3, 1947. For the full text of the document, see: *Ibid*, pp. 245-58.

less democratic documents as their fundamental laws. To some superficial observers, the final triumph of Western democracy in East Asia was now complete. After all, China had now discarded the age-old "oriental despotism" in favor of a representative government; Japan purged its militarist leaders and cleansed itself of the myth of the divine emperors; and South Korea suddenly became a "shining showcase of Western democracy" in East Asia.

IV.

However, slightly more than a year after the constitutional government was organized in China in April, 1948, on the basis of the constitution of 1947, the government was driven out of the Chinese mainland.

It is true, of course, that the so-called "Free China" still survives on Formosa. However, by merely calling it "free", Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek cannot create on Taiwan—a gigantic armed camp—the political culture conducive to democracy. There are indications that economic conditions on Formosa are improving. However, the goal of economic self-sufficiency has yet to be achieved on this island that supports a large standing army. The geopolitical factor of Formosa, which is separated from the Communist mainland by about 100 miles of sea—not to mention the offshore islands which may be subject to instant bombardment from the mainland—is most unfavorable to democracy.

Korea was also barren of all the requisite factors for democracy. The dynastic rule until 1910, and the three and a half decades of the Japanese militarist rule until 1945, denied the Koreans of any opportunity to develop a political culture and an economy in the direction and to the degree that could sustain democratic constitutionalism on the morrow of Korea's liberation. Furthermore, her geopolitical elements had condemned her to sustained crises most hostile to the normal democratic developments.¹⁹

As the Communist army launched a full scale aggression against South Korea in June, 1950, the "basin of freedom in Asia" now quickly adjusted itself to the crisis conditions. By the so-called "second political disturbances" of May-June, 1952, during which a bus-load of legislators were arrested by President Syngman Rhee's military police, even the democratic superstructure of the Republic of Korea had begun to lose meaning.²⁰

By 1954 the fundamental law of the Republic underwent second series of far-reaching amendments, which consolidated the one-man rule of President Rhee. Twelve years of autocratic rule by Rhee was abruptly terminated by the "Student Uprising" of April, 1960, only to be followed by the *coup d'etat* a year later that established the military rule in the country. Thus, in less than 13 years following the establishment of the South Korean Republic, it had suffered through three

¹⁹ John Kie-chiang Oh. 1962. *Western Democracy in a Newly Emerging Eastern State: The Case Study of Korea*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: Georgetown University, Government Department, pp. 416-28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 323-30.

years of war, the rise and fall of two republics—only to give rise to a military rule.²¹

It was only in Japan that a semblance of constitutionalism existed for a few decades at least, after the Meiji Restoration until the militarist take-over by the late 1920's. Following World War II, the defeated people of Japan was in a frame of mind that favored a political system that was non-militarist and non-dictatorial—probably as a reaction against the political practices under the militarists. At least in a negative sense, therefore, the political culture in Japan, including the high literacy rate, was conducive to democracy.

Thanks to the generous American economic assistance and also partly to the stimuli to the Japanese economy during the Korean War, the economic factor has

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 391–407.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

A Case Study in Practical Politics: The 1962 Contest in the 7th Congressional District of Minnesota

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The objective of this paper is to make available a personal account of my experiences in a political campaign. It is presented in the hope that it will be a useful addition to the materials available to students of the political process—or of the Great Game of Politics. Let me briefly state the facts of this case study.

I am professor of political science at Concordia College in Moorhead, but I have ventured outside the ivory towers to play a small role in party politics. In the course of this activity I became, in 1962, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party's candidate for Congress in Minnesota's 7th Congressional District. It took two district conventions to make me the party's endorsed candidate and a battle with two opponents in the primary campaign to make me the official nominee. I was defeated by the Republican incumbent in November by a vote of 70,546 to 65,161.

The 7th District: First of all a very general description and history of the 7th Congressional District will provide useful background for discussing the 1962 campaign. For some years before 1962, 15 of the 23 counties that make up the district were in the old 9th District. They form a territorial block in the northwestern corner of the state. Specifically, the counties of the old 9th were as follows: Becker, Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, and Wilkin. The redistricting that took place after the 1960

been quite favorable to a democratic development. Between 1955 and 1960, Japan definitely reached what the economists aptly term the age of high mass consumption. Moreover, the geopolitical factor since 1945 has not placed Japan on the direct line of fire in the cold or hot wars.

Therefore, only in Japan the democratic institutions of 1947 still remains intact, though with some significant modifications in its actual operation. However, it might be unrealistic to conclude now, with any degree of finality, that the Japanese people would never again desert the ranks of democratic states—as they once did only a few decades ago.

Finally, it is evident that the development pattern of democracy in the Western world has not been repeated in these countries, because the requisite factors for democracy have been largely lacking in East Asia.

census left all of these counties together and added eight more to the south and southeast—Cass, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Pope, Todd, Traverse, and Wadena. These counties came from the districts formerly served by Congressmen Fred Marshall and H. Carl Andersen—four counties from each district.

As for the political history of the old 9th District area, one can say that it tended, up to the 1940's—, to support the Farmer-Labor Party, at least in electing representatives to Congress. The last congressman it elected under that label was Harold Hagen. He switched parties, however, and was then elected several times as a Republican. He was defeated in 1954 by Mrs. Coya Knutson who was reelected in 1956. She was then defeated by a very narrow margin by the present Republican incumbent in 1958. Mrs. Knutson was again the DFL party's candidate in 1960 after she defeated the endorsed candidate in the primary. Her defeat in November was by a narrow margin though it was larger than in 1958. During the decade of the 1950's, the DFL candidates for the U. S. Senate, for governor, and for some other state-wide offices, carried the old 9th District by sizeable margins. The area was therefore generally looked upon as DFL territory. DFL territory or not, Mrs. Knutson was twice defeated by the present Republican incumbent and I was defeated by him in 1962, in an enlarged district. The 7th is still a close district, but the results of the last three elections sug-