

A Psychological Inquiry into the Confucian Origins of East Asian Collectivism*

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Compared with individualistic culture of Western countries (e.g. America, Canada, Australia, Britain, France, Germany, and Netherlands etc.), East Asian countries (e.g. Korean, Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore etc.) have the collectivistic culture. People in these two cultures have different psychological and behavioral tendencies. In individualistic culture, they place high values on the independence and autonomy, frank expression of private feelings and needs, and stable consistency between personal dispositions and behaviors. On the other hand, in collectivistic culture they strive to achieve interdependence and harmony with others, to control the private feelings and needs, and to change themselves in accordance with their situations and relations with others. On the background of these differences, there lie different views of human being in general and self-construal. That is, those living in the individualistic culture have individual-centered view of human being and independent (and separate) self-construal; in contrast with this, those in collectivistic culture have relation-centered view of human being and interdependent (and holistic) self-construal. In this paper, the author tried to explicate the origins of these cultural differences in the traditional system of thought in the Western and East Asian societies, and their theories of ideal person derived from these systems. From these review, it was found that the origin of Western individualism lies in the ideocentric liberalism, and that of East Asian collectivism lies in the strong tradition of Confucianism.

Keywords: Individualism-Collectivism, View of Human Being (Individual-centered vs. Relation-centered), Self Construal (Independent vs. Interdependent), Liberalism-Confucianism

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It is well known that East Asian countries, such as Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, are characterized by a strong collectivistic culture, which is in contrast with the individualistic cultures of Western societies such as those of North America, Australia, and Northwestern Europe (Hofstede 1980, 1991). Compared to Westerners, East Asians tend to identify themselves in relation to others, prioritize collective goals over individual goals, find the driving force of social action in social rules, duties, and responsibilities, and try to maintain harmonious relationships with the group even when it is not favorable to the individual (Triandis 1995). Thus, East Asian countries show more interest and place great values on collectivistic behavior, which includes prioritizing group members over the individual, developing and maintaining harmonious relationships with group members, and adhering to social rules and responsibilities.

The single largest commonality among East Asian countries, where collectivistic culture prevails, is their Confucian background. China is the birth place of Confucianism, and from the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.) on, all Chinese dynasties turned to Confucianism for their political ideology, with the result that Confucianism permeated the society and influenced the psychological and behavioral tendencies of the Chinese (Kong, B. 1994: 17). Beginning from the 11th century, Korea has adopted Confucianism in a large scale and has been referred to as “the most Confucian country among all the East Asian countries since the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910)”. Korea is more “Confucian than Taiwan and China, let alone Hong Kong and Japan” (Ko, B. 1996: 280). Relatively, Confucianism is not deeply rooted in Japan; but in the Edo period (1603-1867) of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Confucianism became widespread as an “ideology to justify class distinctions for feudality and to create loyalty towards the upper class” (Cho, K. 2000: 219). Since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Confucianism “played a role to provide the whole society with the justification to guarantee loyalty towards the Emperor of Japan” and has been the dominant ideology until now (Cho, K. 2000: 219).

Confucianism was the ruling ideology of the state throughout almost the entire history of China and most of the early modern history of Korea and Japan. After the Opium War (1840-1842), there arose strong agitation against

Confucianism in the aftermath of the Western imperialist penetration of Asia. Before long, however, such Confucian reform movements as the “Eastern Ways, Western Machines” movement of the late nineteenth century and the Modern Neo-Confucianism of the twentieth century became powerful. Confucianism is still “the mainstay of cultural tradition and remains as the backbone of the mindset/psyche of East Asians” (Lee, K. 1998: 63) and contributes to creating “the Confucian habits of the heart” (Tu, W. 1996: 343).¹

¹ The reason why Confucian traditions manifested in East Asia lies in the environmental conditions of Ancient China. China was the source of East Asian cultural development. Nisbett (2003) suggested that the reason why Westerners (individualists) and East Asians (collectivists) differ in general psychological content and process lies in their differences in environmental conditions and philosophical social structure. According to him, Ancient Greece was surrounded by high mountains, and on the narrow seashore, the polis (city-state) developed. Migration and commerce among cities flourished, and confrontation and debate in the market and policy meetings were very important parts of life. However, in Ancient China, a centralized and hierarchical society developed on the broad and fertile prairie. The Ancient Chinese settled down in one region over a couple of generations and focused on agriculture. Therefore, pursuing collaboration and harmony with neighbors were very important parts of life.

Therefore, Ancient Greeks discriminated between me vs. not me, human vs. nature, and one object vs. another object and categorized them. Ancient Greeks abstracted their own consistent and invariable essence and tried to find their controlling principles. As a result, the independent subject, which was separated from context, became the focus of attention. Ancient Greeks tried to be aware of stable and invariable features of these separated subjects. Categorization, conflict resolution based on logical regulation, and analytical thinking were developed. On the contrary, the Ancient Chinese viewed the individual subject as not having any meaning and saw everything as existing in context. They tried to understand related roles and obligations in a constantly changing context and achieve harmony and order in collective life. Therefore, the whole field where they were located rather than separated and isolated subjects became the focus of attention. They tried to understand dynamically changing variability in the universal context and develop unity. Similarity of relationships, awareness of the Middle Way, conflict resolution through dialectics, and holistic thinking developed.

Westerners were influenced by Ancient Greek philosophy. They viewed society as consisting of separated and independent individuals as ultimate units, regarding society as only a congregate of individuals. Therefore, they showed strong tendency of

For example, although only 0.5% of Koreans reported Confucianism as their religion, Koreans demonstrate Confucian behaviors, attitudes, and habits in terms of basic actions and daily practices. Therefore, it has been suggested that 91.7 % of Koreans are “Confucians based on their beliefs and behaviors” (Ko, B. 1996: 294). In contemporary times, “many Koreans are Confucian in practice” (Youn, Y., Park, M., and Hur, N. 1985: 370). According to a group of researchers centered on M. H. Bond, East Asian college students from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea retain strong values reflecting “Confucian Dynamics” in comparison to Western college students from the United States, Britain, Canada, Germany, and Sweden (Chinese Culture Connection 1987). This suggests that Confucian practices are part of the general lifestyle of Chinese and Japanese, as in Korea.²

individualism that emphasized the individual rather than the group. Understanding society could be achieved by understanding individuals as units to construct society. They viewed stable and invariable unique inner traits that individuals accomplished (personality, ability, preference, attitude, need, emotion, will, and so on) as the impetus for individual actions and society’s operation. This individualistic view of human beings made Westerners perceive themselves as having an independent and autonomous existence separated from others. To the contrary, East Asians had been influenced by Ancient Chinese philosophy for a long time. They viewed society as consisting of relationships among people or groups, such as families, that form the prototype for relationships. They thought that a society was an organism in itself. They demonstrated a collectivistic tendency to emphasize the group where they are situated rather than the individual. Therefore, they demonstrated a relation-centered view of human beings in which each role, responsibility, and group regulation in the relationship is the impetus for individual actions and society’s operation. They perceived themselves as related to others in a network of general relationships.

Finally, Western individualism set priority on the individual as a unit rather than the group and society to which the individual belongs. This individualism flourishes in the ‘liberal’ ideology that views individuals as being equal, independent, and autonomous and emphasizes on the individual’s freedom, rights, and reason. The theoretical origin of modern individualism is liberalism. To the contrary, East Asian collectivism set priority on the group (family, friends, church, alumni, teams of the company, and so on) rather than the individual as a unit. Collectivists emphasized relationships among people. Their theoretical origin can be found in the Confucian system, in which compassion and interest in related others, social responsibility, and morality are important.

² Keel, H. 1998: 3; Lee, K. 1998: 64-93; Tu, W. 1985, 1996: East Asians’ traditions include

In this context, people from contemporary East Asian countries, such as Korea, China, and Japan demonstrate collectivistic psychological and behavioral tendencies which can be assumed to be a result of their common cultural background, the Confucianism. Many studies have been conducted in order to examine this assumption. However, previous research on the influences of Confucian culture on East Asian societies, in general, focused on the negative behavioral characteristics of contemporary East Asians, particularly Koreans. It attributed the following characteristics of Koreans to

a variety of systems, such as Daoism and Buddhism, in addition to Confucianism. Therefore, the theoretical origin of East Asians' collectivism is not found only in Confucianism. Although there are many differences among these theoretical systems, they have more similarities with one another than they do to Western philosophical and religious systems. "All three orientations share concerns about harmony, holism, and the mutual influence of everything on almost everything else" (Nisbett 2003: 17). That is, Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism perceive everything holistically rather than individually because all things in the universe relate to each other and exchange influence. These traditions view maintaining harmony in the network as the ultimate purpose of existence. East Asians' traditional theories view everything, including human beings, as having a constantly changing, flexible existence in relationships: Everything reveals their real nature in the process of change. In this way, East Asians' traditional theories, such as Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, had something in common; pursuing harmony in comprehensive interdependent relationships and focusing on dynamic variability.

Daoism emphasized connectedness and harmony between human beings and nature and their dynamic exchange of influences. This system views worldly human beings as belonging to nature. This system focused on nature rather than human beings (Morohashi, T. 1982/2001; Chen, G. 1994/1996; Nisbett 2003). Buddhism seeks the reason of human beings' sorrow in the human existence and spatial-temporal connection. Their theory of awareness or self-cultivation viewed phenomena as neither fixed nor invariable; truth is constantly changing and circulating (Yun, H. 1999; Morohashi, T. 1982/2001). That is, Buddhism emphasizes that human beings need to escape from the ties of this world and their dynamic relationships. Buddhism showed a tendency to ignore reality. To the contrary, Confucianism emphasizes interdependent connectedness and dynamics among human beings and promotes harmony in relationships among human beings. That is, Confucianism focuses on human relationships in groups and on the actual world of living (Morohashi, T. 1982/2001; Cho, G. 2003a; Chen, G. 1994/1996). In this context, among East Asian traditional theories, Confucianism is the closest system to the features of collectivism, which has been shown in modern psychology.

the influence of Confucianism: the loss of autonomy and individual freedom, patriarchal familism, class consciousness, customs that place the government over the people, respect for authority, emphasis on face, past-oriented thinking (Yoon, T. 1969, 1970), trying to read others' minds, dependency, emphasis on moral justification, suppression of emotion and desire, lack of reasoning ability and creativity (Cha, J. 1994), toadyism, factionalism, looking down on technology, and aspiration after fame (Hyon, S. 1949).

While it is problematic to have focused on the negative aspects of East Asians and especially Koreans, a more serious problem was that the previous research neglected to discuss the specific connection between aspects of Confucianism and present behavioral traits or characteristics. There are several reasons why the previous research struggled with such problems. First, the researchers had no consistent framework for analysis of the effects of Confucian culture on the people of East Asia and simply tried to match quotations from the Confucian classics to specific behavioral characteristics. Second, analysis was conducted based on groundless everyday prejudice without collecting empirical data on characteristics of contemporary East Asians' psychological and behavioral tendencies. And third, the discussion was not based on thorough investigations of Confucianism as a system of thought regarding human nature and behavior, but was carried out on the level of common sense reasoning.

Therefore, this paper attempts to demonstrate that Confucianism provides the background for East Asian collectivism by using empirical data on behavioral characteristics and by using the theoretical framework for understanding human nature found in the Confucian classics.³ This paper makes use of concepts from contemporary cross-cultural psychology to survey and compare psychological and behavioral tendencies between East

³ The Confucianism comprehends the system in the pre-Qin period, that in the Han-Tang period, Neo-Confucianism in the Song period, that in the Qing period, and contemporary Modern Neo-Confucianism. Among these, the pre-Qin system, opened by Confucius and succeeded by Mencius and Xunzi, is the originator. In this paper, the author explored the Confucian theories of cognition, emotion, and motivation based on classics of pre-Qin Confucians such as Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi; and Neo-Confucians' new annotations and interpretations about pre-Qin classics, especially those of Zhu Xi of China and T'oegye and Yulgok of Korea.

Asians and Westerners along with views on human beings derived from the Confucian classics as a basic frame of analysis. This paper will seek to uncover if there is logical consistency between the empirical data on East Asians' cognition, emotion, and motivation provided by cross-cultural psychology and the theory on the nature of the mind-and-heart (*simsöng*) extracted from Confucian classics.

I. BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR AN OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

An urgent task in psychological research on culture is the categorization of various cultures through the use of a small number of comparable types. That is because these become fundamental references to infer the relationship among culture, human psychology, and human behavior through cultural comparison. Therefore, a number of systems have been suggested as the criteria for comparing cultural differences. And the most prominent is the dimension of individualism-collectivism proposed by Hofstede's comprehensive cross-cultural research (1980) with sixty-six countries (fifty-three cultural groups).

Since then, cross-cultural psychologists expected that the dimension of individualism and collectivism would be the most salient criteria for revealing cultural differences. The reason why cross-cultural psychologists paid more attention to this dimension was as follows (Kagitcibasi 1997): Most of all, this classification system is the most important dimension on which differences prevail among diverse cultures; that is "this is the major dimension creating differences in social actions among a variety of cultures all over the world" (Triandis 1988: 60). Therefore, it was expected that this classification system would be the general principle to explain cultural differences (Greenfield 2000: 231; Kagitcibasi and Berry 1989: 515-520). Then, through this dimension was posited a close relationship between individualism and economic development (Hofstede 1980: 165-169; Hofstede 1991/1995: 116-119) that triggered the cross-cultural researchers' long-standing interest to explain social phenomena (i.e., economic development) according to psychological tendencies (i.e., need for achievement, modernization, individualistic traits).

Also, this dimension was similar to other dimensions with which social scientists had been familiar, such as Toennies' (1887-1957) *Gesellschaft-Gemeinschaft*. This classification of culture featured simplicity and inclusivity, so it corresponded with the "principle of economy" which was required in scientific theory, and thus appealed to researchers' interest since the 1980s. With this background, the individualism-collectivism model "organized cultural differences into overarching patterns, which facilitated comparative research and launched a rapidly expanding body of cultural and cross-cultural research in the ensuing 20 years" (Oyserman, Coon, and Kimmelmeier 2002: 3). Since 1980 a massive amount of work has been carried out with the Individualism-Collectivism model, "so much so that the 1980s may be called the decade of I/C in cross-cultural psychology" (Kagitcibasi 1994: 52), and "judging from the research activity in Individualism/Collectivism up to now, we can expect this field to be active in the near future also" (Kagitcibasi 1997: 39).

According to Hofstede's findings (1991/1996: 87; Table 3-1), East Asian countries, such as Taiwan (score 17), South Korea (18), Singapore (20), Hong Kong (25), and Japan (46), were skewed towards collectivism.⁴ Western countries from North America and Northwestern Europe, such as the United States (91), Australia (90), Britain (89), Canada (80), Netherlands (80), Italy (76), Belgium (75), Denmark (71), and France (71), demonstrated extreme individualism. Looking at these findings, East Asian countries, such as Korea, Japan, and China (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore), belong to a typical collectivist culture, and it is assumed that psychological and behavioral tendencies of East Asians should reveal features of collectivism. Therefore, cross-cultural researchers considered the United States, Canada,

⁴ In this analysis, the range of distribution for individualism-collectivism scores was from 0 to 100 points. A higher score means stronger individualism, and a lower score means stronger collectivism. The mean estimated theoretically is 50 points. Scores under 50 indicate a collectivistic culture, and scores over 50 indicate an individualistic culture. Although these data did not include China, China has the strongest tendency toward collectivism in the East Asian region, according to Triandis (1995: 90-91). In Hofstede's data, countries related to China such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore demonstrated strong collectivism. This result suggests that China is a very strong collectivistic society.

and Australia as representative cultures of individualism and China, Japan, and Korea⁵ as representative of collectivistic cultures and made comparisons between the characteristics of their psychological and behavioral tendencies (Kagitcibasi 1997; Oyserman et al. 2002; Triandis 1995).

In collectivist cultures, the primary group, such as a family, is the basic constructing unit of a society, and serves as the prototype for all social relationships. People in collectivistic cultures regard human beings and the self as being in a relationship and think that the meaning of life cannot be found away from relationships or the group. Therefore, the “relation-oriented view of human beings” and “interdependent self-construal” emerged as the dominant view of human beings and self-construal. On the contrary, in individualistic cultures, the basic unit of society is the individual who is independent and self-sufficient. People from individualistic cultures define human beings and the self as distinct individuals and the individual thinks himself/herself to be independent from others. They assume that one can find the meaning of life by expressing oneself and actualizing one’s uniqueness. Therefore, the “individual-centered view of human beings” and “independent self-construal” emerged as the dominant view of human beings and self-construal.

These differences in the dominant views of human beings and self-construal between collectivist and individualistic cultures create fundamental

⁵ Even though three countries—Korea, China, and Japan—are categorized as one group of collectivist countries, their common classification does not mean that they do not have any differences among them. They have “collectivism” and “Confucian dynamics” in common. However, they demonstrate huge differences in the dimension of “masculinity-femininity” and “uncertainty avoidance” (Hofstede 1980, 1991/1995). These three countries also showed differences in the process of Confucian foundation. For example, in China (after Emperor Mu in the Han period) and Korea (after King Kwangchong in Koryō), the Civil Examination System administered and Confucians became governors for national operation. Japan does not have this history. Even though the three countries had the same background of Confucianism, the developmental process differed. However, according to cross-cultural research in the modern history of the three countries, they have a common history of Confucianism; and thus demonstrate very strong features of collectivism compared to Western individualistic society. Refer to the author’s article (Cho, G. 2007: chapter 6) on this issue and cultural differences among groups in the same country (i.e., among generations, levels of education etc.).

differences in three aspects: origin of impetus for action, mode to express oneself, and changeability/stability of personhood in varying contexts or time series. Thus, different views of human beings and self-construal can be explained as differences in these three aspects,⁶ which reflect three central types of awareness regarding the mode of existence of human beings.

The origin of impetus for action refers to the issues of sociality, such as how to relate to others and what kind of uniqueness to retain. Therefore, the origin of impetus for action makes differences of attention, whether actors focus on self-sufficient individuals (individualism) or on contexts and social relationships (collectivism).

The mode to express oneself, or whether to disclose or conceal oneself, refers to issues regarding the activity of self-manipulation. Therefore, they try to control the environment to fit it to the self and in this process manifest oneself actively (individualism) or control the self in accordance with the environment and relationships with others and in this process hide one's true self (collectivism).

The spatial-temporal changeability/stability refers to issues of consistency in one's existence. Through this aspect one can divide people by those who identify their individual existence as stable, consistent, and substantial (individualism) or by those who identify their individual existence as a process of change according to their embedded situations and relationships (collectivism).

These three aspects of human behavior and psyche, sociality of human existence (origin of impetus for actions), activity (mode to express one's self), and changeability/stability (possibility of change in time and space), have been the essential issues of a number of philosophical and psychological explorations to deal with human issues in the history of human intelligence.

1. Location of Impetus for Action

This aspect is concerned with whether the impetus for social action comes

⁶ The author proved that most of the differences found in the cross-cultural studies between collectivism-individualism cultures can be arranged and understood on the basis of these three aspects (Cho, G. 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007).

from relationship features, such as roles, obligations, rules, expectations, and norms, or from unique individual traits, such as personality, capability, values, desires, and emotions. This reveals differences in the conceptions about “to where one’s attention is paid”: either interdependence and relationship characteristics, or independence and individuality characteristics.

This aspect shows the duality of human existence as a social being and as an individual. It reveals differences in attention—whether to focus on social features (collectivism) or individual features (individualism). As a matter of fact, to which features human beings pay more attention has been a central issue in cross-cultural studies (Allport 1968; Dulmen 1997/2005; Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, and Nisbett 1998; Greenfield 2000; Kagitcibasi 1997; Kim 1995; Laurent 1993/2001; Lukes 1973; Nisbett 2003; Triandis 1995). Whether they emphasize sociality or individuality represents fundamental differences in social structures and systems (Nisbett 2003: 29-39; Ross and Nisbett 1991: 177-200). In reality, this aspect corresponds to the fundamental differences between collectivism and individualism.

In collectivistic culture, where the relation-oriented view of human beings dominates, people recognize human beings in the context of interpersonal relationships and place the impetus for actions on the obligations, roles, and concern for others which are implied in such a relationship. Therefore, people attend primarily on one’s relationships with others and on contexts of their relationships. As a result, others, instead of oneself, stand out as the main focus of attention. And the pursuit of harmony in these interpersonal relationships becomes the purpose of any social action (Emphasis on Interdependence and Harmony).

On the contrary, in individualistic cultures, where individual-oriented views of human beings dominate, the impetus for social action stems from psychological traits, such as personality, ability, motivations, emotions, attitudes, and values, which independent and self-sufficient individuals have. In these cultures, individuals and their intrinsic traits are the focus of attention. Therefore, the purpose of any social action would be to expand an individual’s autonomy and uniqueness (Emphasis on Independence and Autonomy).

2. Style of Self-expression

This aspect shows differences in the conception about whether human activity should be immersed inwardly or diffused outwardly. This is rooted in the different perspectives on the object of control. If one thinks that context and relationships with others are the center of the world, one's own self would stand out as the target to be controlled, and the most of one's activities are going to orient to one's inner world. Therefore, in this case, when there is a discrepancy between the needs and goals of oneself and those of others, people tend to suppress their own needs and change themselves to harmonize with the needs of the context and others. On the contrary, if one thinks that his/her own self is at the center of the world, the context and other persons outside of the self will be the orientation of activity. Therefore, when there is a discrepancy between the needs and goals of oneself and those of others, people are likely to find the context and the other outside of the self as the object to control. That is, they tend to change the outer world to fit them in the needs of one's own self (Markus and Kitayama 1991a: 228-229).

This aspect reveals differences in awareness about the orientation of human activity. Jung (1923/1971) proposed "introversion" and "extraversion" as the two fundamental personality types which represent the general attitudes on life and human activities. "Extraversion refers to an attitude on life that is directed to the outer world, whereas introversion refers to an attitude on life that focuses on the inner world (one's own thought, emotion, experiences, etc.)" (Min, K. 2002: 68). That is, "extravert is directed toward the outside world while the introvert directs his attention inward" (McAdams 2001: 309). His theory of two types of personality orientation affected a number of personality psychologists, such as Eysenck and Rotter and the "Big Five Model" (Hong, S. 2004: 190-192; Hall and Lindzey 1978/1987: 154-159; McAdams 2001: 368-371), and has been accepted as the most fundamental way to analyze personality and modes of adaptation to the world.⁷

⁷ Hall and Lindzey (1978) stated that "the originality and audacity of Jung's thinking have few parallels in recent scientific theories, and no other person aside from Freud has opened more conceptual windows into what Jung would choose to call 'the soul of

In collectivistic cultures, where relation-centered view of human beings prevails, it is expected that people control their desires or goals as much as possible, suppress oneself, yield to, and cooperate with others, because the pursuit of individual desires and goals tend to interfere with harmony and provoke conflicts in social relationships. In addition, in this culture, suppressing and hiding the self in the group would be regarded as the way to maintaining harmony within the group (Emphasis on Self-restraint).

On the contrary, in individualistic cultures, where individual-centered view of human beings is dominant, the pursuit of one's own desire is considered as a natural human right and it is taken for granted that people control the environment and others in order to pursue their own interests, needs, and goals. Therefore, active self-assertiveness to reveal one's own uniqueness and self-expression to reveal one's needs, goals, and emotions are emphasized even though they impair the harmony of the group (Emphasis on Self-assertion).

3. Variability/Stability

The aspect of variability/stability reveals differences in the conceptions of human changeability or fixedness; whether the individual, as an actor in a society, is open to change or has fixed invariableness in terms of time (series of past, present, and future) and space (a variety of relationships and contexts). That is whether individuals are "in the process of becoming" in response to changing circumstances in life, or are "fixed and stable entities" that are irresponsive to changing circumstances.

The variability debate over whether human beings can or cannot change has deep roots so that any theory of personality can be correlated to this aspect. The questions that arise here are: Is the individual's personality structure able to change substantially as time goes on? Furthermore, is change indispensable in the development of a personality structure? Or

man" (149), and appraised Jung's theoretical system on extraversion-introversion very highly. It is true that "the influence of Jung's theory is significantly powerful in most of the scientific sphere such as humanities and social sciences" (Hong, S. 2004: 192). The favorable evaluation of Jung's achievement reveals that the dimension of autonomy and action orientation is one of the core aspects to understand human beings.

is the apparent change that we observe in others only just the pretense of change in overt behavior without changing innermost structure of one's personality? Most of personality theorists demonstrate differences in regards to this problem of personality stability (Hjelle and Ziegler 1981/1983: 35). For example, Erickson's theory is based on the assumption that human beings are constantly changing, whereas Freud's theory is based on the assumption that the personality, which was developed during infancy, is not going to change basically in the course of life.⁸

In collectivistic cultures, where the relation-centered view of human beings prevails, the stability of a society depends upon the stability of relationships which are constituents of the society. People in this cultures assume that stability will be realized when they adjust their own actions flexibly in accordance with changing roles in a variety of contexts and relationships. Therefore, flexible variation in dispositions (personality, ability, and so on) in accordance with context is appreciated and emphasized. In collectivistic cultures, an individual's personality and ability are considered to change as time and contexts are varying, so the present individual is always in the process of changing. Therefore, every person should ascertain and improve one's weaknesses and shortcomings, and this is the chief way of improving oneself (Emphasis on Variability/Flexibility and Improvement of Shortcomings).

On the contrary, in individualistic cultures, the stability of a society is grounded on the stability of individuals as the constituent elements of the society. People in this culture assume that because each individual has consistent and enduring stable characteristics from birth, they do not change as context and relationships are varying, and regard variability as serious threats to their existence. Therefore, rather than acknowledging their own weaknesses and improving them, they try to find out and expand their own original strengths, and accept this as the chief way of self-improvement

⁸ According to Hjelle and Ziegler (1981/1983), Freud (35-36, 83), Adler (130-131) and Murray (211) exhibited a strong position of invariability, whereas Erikson (35, 170-171), Skinner (257), Bandura (302-303), Kelly (394-395), Maslow (431-432), and Rogers (475-476) asserted strong position of variability. Allport (351-352) suggested a mediating position in this continuum. The author proposed some hints to consider in comparing Western and East Asian cultures in this aspect (Cho, G. 2003: 479-480).

(Emphasis on Stability and Expansion of Strengths).

4. Comparison of Framework for an Overview of Cultural Differences

The differences in the emphasis of these three aspects, which are derived from differences in the modes of understanding human beings, form the cultural imperatives which each society pursues. In collectivistic cultures, which regard social relationships as the ultimate constituent of a society, the pursuit of connectedness and harmony, self-restraint, flexible variation with time and context, and improvement of one's own weaknesses would become the cultural imperatives. On the contrary, to pursue independence and autonomy, self-assertion, stability, and expansion of one's own strengths would operate as the cultural imperatives in individualistic cultures, which assume an individual as the basic constituent of a society. According to the viewpoint of social constructionism, these cultural imperatives are molded into general human psychological tendencies, such as cognition, motivation, and emotion (Gergen and Davis 1985; Markus and Kitayama 1991a, 1991b, 1994a, 1994b; Nisbett 2003; Sedikides and Brewer 2001).

In this paper, the author will review research findings about distinctive differences in cognition, emotion, and motivation between people from collectivistic cultures and from individualistic cultures, using above-mentioned framework. As elucidated above, the three aspects of the framework correspond to the essential conceptions about human existence; what is the chief constituent of a society (sociality/individuality), whether to hide the self or express it (activity), and whether the self is changeable or fixed (variability). Therefore, the above-mentioned framework, with which the author is going to review and explain psychological and behavioral differences between collectivism and individualism, has very wide range of application and logical coherence. Table 1 provides a summary of the frameworks for an overview of cultural differences.

Table 1. Cultural differences in emphasis on the three aspects

Aspects	Collectivism (Relation-oriented view of human beings)	Individualism (Individual-oriented view of human beings)
Impetus and goals for social action (focus of attention)	Emphasis on connectedness and harmony	Emphasis on autonomy and uniqueness
Mode of self-expression (object to control)	Emphasis on self-restraint	Emphasis on self-assertion
Variability/Stability of Personhood (strategy for self-development)	Emphasis on flexibility and weakness improvement	Emphasis on stability and expansion of strengths

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTALITY AND BEHAVIOR IN COLLECTIVISTIC AND INDIVIDUALISTIC CULTURES

As discussed earlier, collectivism and individualism are the most important systems producing differences in social action among a variety of cultures all over the world. Since the 1980s, this system was held to be a universal principle that can explain cultural differences and thus stimulated most of the cross-cultural researches. These cross-cultural studies compared and analyzed differences in a number of aspects of mentality and behavior such as cognition, emotion, and motivation in college students and adults between two cultural groups: Korea, China, and Japan (collectivistic culture) and the United States, Canada and Australia (individualistic culture). In this paper, the findings of these researches will be summarized based on the differences on emphasis according to the three aspects described in Table 1.⁹

⁹ Refer to the author's articles for details of the differences in three-aspect emphasis between two cultures in the area of cognition, emotion, and motivation (Cho, G. 2003: chapters 3, 4 and 5; 2007: chapters 3, 4 and 5).

1. Focus of Attention: Emphasis on Connectedness/Harmony vs. Autonomy/Uniqueness

The aspect of the impetus for action refers to whether impetus for social actions are triggered by the relationship traits, such as responsibility, obligation, expectation, and regulation, or by the individually unique psychological traits, such as personality, ability, value, desire, and emotion. This reveals differences in perceptions of the focus of attention: on relationship and interdependence or on individuality and independence.

In collectivistic cultures, where relation-centered view of human beings dominate, human beings are defined in their relationship with others, thus responsibility/obligation in these relationship and concern for/compassion to related-others would operate as the impetus for social action. In these cultures, people should focus their attention more on the relationship characteristics than on their individuality. Therefore, the purpose of social action becomes the pursuit of harmony in these relationships. On the contrary, in individualistic cultures, where individual-oriented view of human beings dominates, the impetus for social action comes from one's psychological traits. Therefore, autonomy and uniqueness of an individual is emphasized as the fundamental purpose of social actions.

1) Interpersonal Assessment

Due to these differences in focus, the two cultures emphasize different contents in socialization and thus appreciate different features in interpersonal assessment. In collectivistic cultures, the focus of socialization is imposed on learning "Who am I?" (understanding one's position in the group) and on pursuing similarity with other group members. The establishment of harmonious relationships with group members becomes the main way of positive self-assessment. Therefore, they appreciate highly and try to develop relationship features (kindness, compassion, gentleness, humbleness, generosity, and so on) which would bring about harmony in social relations.

On the contrary, people in individualistic cultures place emphasis on learning "What can I do?" (understanding one's capabilities) and pursue one's uniqueness in the process of socialization. Improvements in individual traits

(ability, achievement, etc.) would be the basis for self-assessment. Therefore, they make an effort to identify and enhance unique strengths of their own, and value highly the traits related to expressing their strengths actively and positively (extroversion, self-assertiveness, leadership, volubility, etc.) (Bond and Hwang 1986; Fiske et al. 1998; Heine and Lehmann 1997; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit 1997; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, and Roman 1995; Triandis 1995).

2) *Attribution*

In collectivistic cultures, people perceive their relationships as based on external situational factors rather than individual personality traits. Because they regard social pressure and responsibility in the relationship as impetus for action, they display a situationalist bias (searching the reason for actions in contextual factors rather than personal traits) in their attribution.

In contrast, people in individualistic cultures perceive themselves as an independent entity with psychological stability. Therefore, people consider these independent individual traits as impetus for action and display a dispositionalist bias (finding the reasons for actions primarily in personal traits rather than situational factors) in their attribution (Fiske et al. 1998; Markus and Kitayama 1991a; Morris and Peng 1994; Nisbett 2003; Nisbett, Peng, Choi and Norenzayan 2001).

3) *Emotion*

Collectivists are sensitive to emotions that contribute to maintaining compassionate and harmonious relationships and appreciate these emotions highly. Therefore, in collectivistic cultures, the integrating emotions, such as sympathy, empathy, and shame, which take others as the primary locus of reference, are encouraged in socialization process, and thus collectivists experience these emotions more in the course of everyday life.

By contrast, individualists tend to be sensitive to those emotions which contribute to maintaining and enhancing individual autonomy and uniqueness, and value them highly. Therefore, in individualistic cultures, the differentiating emotions, such as pride, happiness, or anger, which regard an individual's inner states as the primary locus of reference and which can promote separation and independence among individuals, are encouraged in

the process of socialization, and thus individualists experience these emotions more in everyday life (Markus and Kitayama 1991a, 1994b; Matsumoto 1989).

4) Motivation

In collectivistic cultures, communion motives are appreciated because these motives “produce behavior that brings the individual closer to other people and fosters a sense of community between the person and his or her social environment” (Geen 1995: 249). This communion motives prioritize the concern for others and the group over the individual, and are oriented toward belonging to the group. The motives of belongingness, respect, imitation, closeness, and social forgiveness are included in this category, and are appeared more frequently in the collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures.

On the contrary, in individualistic cultures, agency motives are emphasized. These motives “are associated with behavior that tends to separate the individual from the immediate community and to emphasize individual gains that are either independent of or at the expense of other persons in the social environment” (Geen 1995: 249). This agency motives prioritize the individual over others or the group, and promote and enhance individualists’ sense of individual independence from others. They include the motives of autonomy, independence, success, dominance, and self-demonstration and so on, and are experienced more in individualistic cultures (Geen 1995; Markus and Kitayama 1991a; Wiggins 1992).

2. Object to Control: Emphasis on Self-restraint vs. Self-assertion

Differences in the styles of self-expression reveal differences in awareness about whether human activity should be submerged inwardly or diffused outwardly. This aspect reflects differences in perspectives regarding what is considered to be the object to control. If one assumes that surrounding context and relationships with others are at the center of all happenings, and that one’s activities should direct toward oneself, then he/she would find the object to control in his/her own self. But if the self is located at the center of all things, and one’s activities direct toward the surrounding context and others, then he/she finds the object to control in the context or others besides

oneself.

In this background, it is presumed that in collectivistic cultures, where the relation-centered view of human beings prevail and the pursuits of personal needs or goals are assumed to disrupt harmony and to create conflicts in social relationships, people are encouraged to control their desires or goals as much as possible, to suppress the self, to yield to others, and to cooperate with them. To the contrary, in individualistic cultures, where the individual-centered view of human beings are dominant and individuals' pursuit of their personal goals and desires are taken for granted because it is one of their natural rights, it is encouraged for their members to control the environment and others and to express oneself freely and actively in the course of pursuing their personal interests, needs, and goals.

1) Interpersonal assessment

Differences in the modes of self-expression bring forth the differences in the style of resolving interpersonal conflicts. People in collectivistic cultures like to resolve conflicts through making concession and mediation, and prefer to avoid conflicts rather than to face them, whereas people in individualistic cultures like to resolve conflicts by facing them through competition and confrontation (Nisbett 2003; Peng and Nisbett 1999; Triandis 1989).

Differences in conflict resolution style have a connection with differences in features that are valued in each culture. That is, in collectivistic cultures, making concession, cooperation, modesty, and introversion are valued as contributing to harmonious relationships, whereas in individualistic cultures, activeness, frankness, competition, and extraversion to express personal uniqueness and achievement are valued (Barnlund 1975).

2) Attribution

Collectivists are more likely to show a modesty bias in the process of attributing achievement; they attribute their own success to external factors such as luck or others' help, whereas attributing failure to internal factors such as deficiency of ability or effort.

To the contrary, individualists tend to display an ego-enhancing bias; they attribute their success to internal factors such as superior capability, and attribute failure to external factors such as bad luck (Davis and Stephan 1980;

Fiske et al. 1998; Heine and Lehman 1977; Markus and Kitayama 1991a).

3) *Emotion*

The display rules for showing one's emotional state regulate and control emotional expression in a social context (Ekman 1982). In collectivistic cultures, the expression of other-focused emotions such as sympathy and empathy is recommended, but expression of ego-centered emotions such as pride and anger is inhibited.

In contrast, in individualistic cultures, because emotional expression is assumed to reflect frankness and sincerity, people are advised to express freely any affects. In these cultures, inhibition of emotional expression is seen as provoking psychological maladjustment, so to express freely even the negative affect such as anger is assumed to bring about positive results in regulating relations among humans (Markus and Kitayama 1991a, 1994b; Matsumoto 1989, 2000).

4) *Motivation*

In collectivistic cultures, people experience personal competency through sensitivity toward others, adjustment to the needs of the context, and self-inhibition and regulation. In these cultures, the meaning of control becomes inhibiting inner traits such as personal needs, goals, and feelings in order to develop the sense of interdependence and connectedness. Therefore, self-inhibition and the maintenance of harmonious interpersonal relationships are the sources of self-respect, and the motives to control inner desires are strongly encouraged.

To the contrary, in individualistic cultures, because people experience personal competency through expressing inner needs, feelings, and capabilities freely and overcoming social pressure actively, control means changing the social context and external restraints in order to achieve personal goals. Therefore, in these cultures, uniqueness, superiority, effective self-expression, and freedom from external restraints are the sources of self-respect, and motives to control the external environment are promoted (Markus and Kitayama 1991a; Rothbaum, Weisz, and Synder 1982; Weisz, Rothbaum, and Blackburn 1984).

3. Variability in Mindset and Action: Emphasis on Flexible Change vs. Stability

The aspect of variability in human mindset (e.g., personality, ability, etc.) and behavior represents differences in awareness of whether the individual as a living organism in society is open or closed in regard to time (time sequence such as past, present, future) and space (a variety of contexts and relationships).

In collectivistic cultures with relation-centered view of human beings, they assume that stability of a society is based on the stability of relationships of which the society is constructed, and that social stability will be achieved when an individual regulates and vary his/her behavior according to the variation of contexts and relationships, so flexible variations in accordance with the changing contexts are highly emphasized. However, in individualistic cultures with an individual-centered view of human beings, people assume that individual stability is the basis of the stability of a society and that each individual has stable and consistent characteristics from birth. Therefore, in these cultures, variability with the changing contexts and inconsistency in the modes of adaptation are regarded as serious threats to the individual, so stability and consistency in the process of living are strongly appreciated.

1) *Interpersonal assessment*

Collectivists strongly believe in variability, that is, they believe that personality can change according to time and context, so individual behavior is induced by interactions with context rather than stable inner characteristics (Norenzayan, Choi, and Nisbett 2002). It was found that collectivists demonstrate the “Barnum effect” (the phenomena that people think they have both positive traits such as politeness and negative traits such as rudeness as well) more often than individualists do (Choi, I. and Choi, Y. 2002), and they (Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese) indicate that the rate of negative traits and positive traits that they have is the same or the percentage of negative traits is higher than their positive ones (Bond and Cheung 1983; Stigler, Smith, and Mao 1985). This means that negative traits are tolerated as likely as positive ones in collectivistic cultures.

On the contrary, individualists (Americans) identify themselves with only positive traits; that is, they evaluate that their positive traits outnumber their negative ones by four or five times (Stigler et al. 1985).

2) *Attribution*

In collectivistic cultures, as people emphasize variability—that is, they change their behaviors in accordance with variations in context—the effort to change to fit one's context is more valued than relatively stable and fixed capabilities; thus, people tend to attribute performance to effort rather than ability.

In contrast, because individualists regard stable and consistent traits as the impetus for actions, fixed and stable capability is valued more than context-variable effort, and people are more likely to attribute performance to ability (Mizokawa and Ryckman 1990; Stevenson and Stigler 1992).

3) *Emotion*

In collectivistic cultures, the cultural imperative is the establishment of connectedness, so people focus on compassion and harmony maintenance and make efforts toward self-inhibition, exploring one's weaknesses, and improving them. Therefore, they are more sensitive to their own negative traits and negative feelings than their positive traits and positive feelings, and are more accepting of negative feelings. That is, collectivists frequently experience negative feelings such as shame, sadness, pity, and regret, and they tend to consider those feelings desirable.

In contrast, in individualistic cultures, people are more sensitive to positive feelings, such as pride, happiness, joy, and pleasure, and they tend to experience positive feelings more frequently. In these cultures, only positive feelings are considered to be desirable, and the extent of tolerance of negative feelings is very limited (Cha, K. 1995; Diener, Suh, Smith, and Shao 1995; Kitayama and Markus 1991a, 1994b; Suh and Diener 1995).

4) *Motivation*

As people in collectivist cultures acknowledge and focus on variability in psychological and behavioral tendencies, discrepancy between individual inner traits and overt behaviors or between actions in various social settings are not regarded as troubles, thus people in these cultures do not tend to

pursue consistency.

In contrast, since people in individualistic cultures see individual behavior as the representation of stable inner traits, discrepancy between inner traits and behaviors or between actions in social contexts are expected to induce serious confusion in individual identity, and the motives to achieve consistency become stronger in these cultures (Fiske et al. 1998; Heine and Lehman 1997; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Nisbett et al. 2001).

III. CONFUCIANISM AND FEATURES OF COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURE

Confucianism, which has been the basis of East Asian's life since ancient times, starts with propositions about innate characteristics of a person (Theory of Human Nature), then induces from this propositions the ideal states a person can achieve (Theory of the Superior Man), the way to accomplish this ideal (Theory of Self-cultivation) and the lifestyles of the ideal person (Theory of Moral Practice) (Cho, G. 1998, 199b, 2003, 2006, 2007). Among these four systems, the basis of Confucianism is the theory of human nature (Kim, C. 1982: 170, 172-175; Fung, Y. 1948/1977: 105-107; Needham 1969/1986: 21-29). According to the Confucian understanding of human nature, all human beings are endowed with the Four Beginnings (benevolence [humanity, humaneness], righteousness, propriety, and wisdom) which form the basis of the sociality and morality of human existence. All of the other systems of Confucianism (the Superior Man, moral practice, and self-cultivation) are based on this understanding of human nature as a social and moral being, and we can trace the intellectual foundation of East Asian collectivism on this background.

The core of Confucianism can be summarized as the "expansion of human existence." Confucians scrutinize the possibility of existence-expansion through perspectives on the innateness of morality, sociality, and plasticity (human nature), establish an ideal model of existence-expansion (Superior Man), and suggest a method to expand one's existence (self-cultivation and moral practice).

The most basic way to expand human existence put forth by Confucianism

is to have concern for others, to have compassion for them, and to assist them, as well as the self, in achieving the status of Superior Man, thereby to unite oneself with others in the Way that human beings should pursue in the course of everyday life.

Confucianism regards interest in and compassion for others as the basic impetus of human life. East Asians have lived with Confucianism as a basic way of life for a long time. Therefore, Confucianism was the theoretical background that led collectivism to flourish in East Asian society. In this context, it is evident that above-mentioned three aspects of emphasis in modern collectivistic cultures (connectedness and harmony, self-restraint, and variability and self-improvement) have a close logical relationship with understandings of human beings and their psychology in Confucianism.

1. Confucian View of Human Beings and Its Collectivistic Features

The basis for Confucians' emphasis on the expansion of human existence lies in the fundamental framework by which they understand human beings. The basic perspective for understanding human beings permeates the Confucian classics, especially those from pre-Qin Confucianism, and can be summarized in three different ways.¹⁰ Confucians assert that human beings are identified as having infinite potential and plasticity, existing and living in social relations, and pursuing morality subjectively. That is, humans are social beings who should accept and perform social responsibility given to them in the interpersonal relations and are dynamic moral subjects with the potential to overcome their personal/biological limitations, and thereby to expand their existence.

The following three statements in Xue Er (Book 1), chapter 1¹¹ of the *Analects* written by Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, reveal that Confucians identified human beings from these three perspectives.

¹⁰ Refer to the author's article for details (Cho, G. 2006: 297-320; 2007: chapter 2).

¹¹ This refers to Chapter 1, Xue Er (Book 1) in the *Analects* based on Zhu Xi's *The Collected Annotations of the Analects*. From now on, citation of the *Analects* will follow this example.

Confucius said: “To learn and to realize what one has learned all the time, isn’t that a pleasure? A still greater pleasure rests in friends coming from far, doesn’t it? Is he not a Superior Man who feels no discomposure at others’ failure to appreciate him?”

The first statement indicates that human beings possess infinite possibilities (a person can become a Superior Man through learning); the second shows that humans are social beings (a person is supposed to get along with others in relationships); and the third reveals that human beings are dynamic moral subjects (the self, as a moral being, is the subject for everything in life, and each individual needs to find behavioral impetus in the morality one has from birth and take full responsibility by oneself).

1) Person as a Social Being and Focus of Attention

(1) Social Being

In the *Analects* Confucius asserted that humanity (benevolence) is the core of his thought, and the compassion for and concern about others form the core of humanity. Confucius said: “Humanity (benevolence) is establishing others first if you want to establish yourself, and letting other achieve first if you want to achieve” (*Analects*, Yong Ye, 28); “Humanity (benevolence) is not allowing others to do what I do not want to do” (Yan Yuan, 2; Wei Ling Gong, 23); and “Humanity (benevolence) means loving others (Yan Yuan, 22).” This reveals that Confucius defined human beings’ sociality (compassion for and concern about others) as the core of human existence.

The fact that Confucius emphasized the features of humans as social beings most of all can be found in his proposition of Rectification of Names. He said that conducting completely one’s own responsibility in society is the core of maintaining social order and harmony. That is, Confucius stated: “The king needs to take the responsibility of the king, the minister needs to take the responsibility of the minister, the parent needs to take the parent’s responsibility, and the child needs to take the child’s responsibility” (Yan Yuan, 11). This proposition is the fundamental basis of both political and social affairs to create order and harmony in society, as seen in Confucius’ statement that if he took responsibility for political affairs, he would first rectify names (work to let each individual fully meet his or her own

responsibility) (Zi Lu, 3).

Confucius' opinion was followed Mencius and Xunzi in the pre-Qin period. Mencius said that human beings possess inherently the basis of morality, which is known from the fact that everyone loves his/her parents and respects his/her elder siblings without learning (*Mencius*, Jin Xin I, 15).¹² Mencius asserted that "The core of humanity (benevolence) is living with one's parents, the core of righteousness is following elder siblings, the core of wisdom is learning and maintaining these two, and the core of propriety is regulating these two and decorating them beautifully" (Li Lou I, 27). From this assertion, we can understand that Mencius sought for the core of moral principles—humanity (benevolence), righteousness, propriety, and wisdom—in the emotions sprung up in social relationships (feelings of love for one's family and respect for the old).

In this way, Mencius found the purpose of human existence in social relationships. He proposed that features of human existence manifest in interpersonal relationships such as parent-child, king-minister, husband-wife, old-young, and friend-friend, and the purpose of individual existence cannot be found without and outside these interpersonal relations. According to him, there are five responsibilities that human beings need to meet in each of the five relations above, respectively: affection, righteousness, separation of functions, order, and trust, through which harmony can be brought to these relations. The statement that "If human beings live freely without learning, they are going to be animals, so the Sage was concerned and had people learn to observe human responsibilities" (Teng Wen Gong I, 4) demonstrates Mencius' opinion.

Xunzi also focused on sociality and identified social relationships as the basis of human existence. He argued that interdependence and connectedness is the very core features of human existence, and thus human beings do not live independently and separately from each other. Xunzi proposed: "The relation of king-minister, parent-child, elder-younger siblings, and husband-wife is the first and the last, the last and the first, has the same principle as Heaven, continues to exist forever in all ages, and is called 'the great

¹² This refers to Chapter 15, Jin Xin I in *Mencius* based on Zhu Xi's *The Collected Annotations of Mencius*. From now on, citation of *Mencius* will follow this example.

basis” (*Xunzi*, Wang Zhi, 19-20).¹³ This statement points out that social relationships, such as parent-child, king-minister, old-young, husband-wife and friend-friend, are the ultimate unit to construct a society.

As confirmed evidently up to now, Confucians seek fundamental features of human existence in their sociality. That is, Confucianism is the system to identify features of human existence in the various interpersonal relations, and, to summarize in a word, it has the perspective to view person as a social being. Because the feature of sociality is the core of Confucian view of human beings, all the other important thoughts of Confucianism, such as the innateness of Four Moral Principles (benevolence [humanity, humaneness], righteousness, propriety, and wisdom), are derived from this perspective of human sociality.

(2) Emphasis on Others and Relationships

The Confucian proposition to understand person as a social being derives from the conception of social relationships as the ultimate constituent of a society. Confucians argue that the purpose of social actions is to pursue order and harmony in interpersonal relationships, and this order and harmony can be achieved by performing his/her original responsibilities inherent in each of the relationships. Therefore, in Confucianism, the impetus for social action can be found in performing responsibility and obligation in relationships with others, and thus interconnectedness and harmony among people and concerns about others are emphasized. This position is consistent with the characteristics of collectivistic cultures, which focus on connectedness and harmony among people, contrary to individualistic cultures, which focus on autonomy and independence, as summarized in the first row of Table 1 (focus of attention).

2) *Person as a Moral Being and the Object to Control*

(1) Moral being

The second feature of the Confucian understanding of human beings is emphasis on the activeness and subjectivity of human beings as moral

¹³ This refers to pages 19-20, Wangshi in *Xunzi* based on Wang Shunhyum's *The Collected Annotations of Xunzi*. From now on, citation of *Xunzi* will follow this example.

subjects. Confucians seek the basis of morality in ordinary men's subjective perception of the innateness of their sociality and in their search for their own moral responsibility in social relations. Confucius said: "Practicing humanity (benevolence) depends on the self, not others" (*Analects*, Yan Yuan, 1). That is, the Superior Man is well aware that he himself is a moral subject, so "Contrary to ordinary people who lay their responsibilities on others, the Superior Man takes his own responsibility" (Wei Ling Gong, 20). Therefore, the "Superior Man feels no discomposure at others' failure to appreciate him" (Xue Er, 1), because the Superior Man searches the cause (the reason why others do not appreciate his true superiority or nobleness) in his own incapability or deficiency (Li Ren, 14).

Mencius found the basis of human activeness and identity in the fact that human beings innately possess the beginnings of morality: humanity (benevolence), righteousness, propriety, and wisdom (*Mencius*, Gong Sun Chou I, 6). Mencius said that human beings need to be aware that they themselves are moral subjects and expand this awareness in order to maintain the good moral beginnings that they originally possess (Gong Sun Chou I, 6). In order to perceive and expand themselves as moral subjects, "Human beings need to find all responsibilities in themselves" (Li Lou I, 4). That is, because "Everyman has all the principles of things" (Jin Xin I, 4), every person is a subject of all things, and all things are from him/her, thus he/she, as an autonomous subject, need to find all the responsibilities in himself/herself.

Xunzi also identified humans as active and autonomous beings in moral point of view. According to him, human beings grant order to Nature, govern all things by their own active and autonomous effort (*Xunzi*, Tianlun, 21-23), and take part in the harmony of all things (Theory of Ritual, 24-25). "The Way is neither from Heaven nor from Earth. The Way is what humans should conduct and the Superior Man is to follow" (Ruxiao, 9-10). This opinion reveals the position of understanding humans as the entities who identify the self as active and autonomous moral being.

Such human activeness and subjectivity is based on awareness of human sociality and morality. The self possesses all the basis of morality innately, should maintain and nurture them, and should practice them in daily life; this is the basic Confucian position regarding the attitude toward an active

and autonomous life. Therefore, the position to understand human beings as active moral subjects originate from the perspective on humans as social beings.

(2) Emphasis on Self-control

The position of Confucians to understand human beings as active subjects is derived from their awareness that human beings innately possess the basis of morality. This position tends to attribute the causes of any social actions to one's innate moralities, and to emphasize exploring this inner world as the originator of one's social actions. That is, every person is the source of active and autonomous actions, and so the person takes responsibility for all the results of one's actions automatically. Therefore, Confucians assume that the very target to control is oneself as the originator of one's actions, and self-restraint is recommended rather than self-assertion in situations of conflict. As depicted in the aspect of the object to control (mode of expressing the self) in the second row of Table 1, this is the same as the position of collectivistic cultures in emphasizing self-restraint, unlike the individualistic cultures' focus on self-assertion.

3) *Person as a Plastic (Variable) Being and Action Variability*

(1) Plastic (Variable) Being

From pre-Qin period on, Confucianism emphasizes the importance of learning and teaching. Confucians define human beings not as a congregate of fixed and self-sufficient attributes but as a plastic and variable being who are in the process of becoming through learning. Confucius called himself "the person who loves to learn" (*Analects*, Gong Ye Chang, 27) and "the person who does not neglect teaching" (Shu Er, 33). This shows how much Confucius emphasized the values of learning and teaching in human life. Confucius and his disciples tried to improve themselves through learning, teaching, reflecting on what they had learned, and practicing them in daily life; and thought this is the very core in the process of self-cultivation (Xue Er, 4; Shu Er, 2, 3). Confucius believed that teaching enables anyone to be nice. He did not discriminate against people (Wei Ling Gong, 38) and taught anyone who came to see him politely (Shu Er, 7).

Although Confucius called himself the person who loves to learn (Gong Ye

Chang, 27), he said that Yen Hui was the only one of his disciples who loves to learn. He said: “One of the conditions to love learning is not repeating a fault like Yen Hui” (Yong Ye, 2) and “It is a fault that one does not correct one’s faults” (Wei Ling Gong, 29). And he also stated: “Do not mind correcting a fault” (Xue Er, 8; Zi Lu, 24). According to him, the attitude to try to achieve self-improvement by reflecting on the self and correcting one’s faults is the criteria to evaluate the value of a person. This shows evidently Confucius’ understanding of human beings as an entity with infinite possibility and plasticity.

Confucius’ position emphasizing the core value of learning and teaching in the process of self-improvement was followed by Mencius and Xunzi. According to Mencius, because any one possesses from birth the Intuitive Knowledge that he/she has all the beginnings of morality and the Intuitive Ability to practice them in daily life, he/she should reflect on his/her shortcomings and improve them until reaching to an ideal state people can achieve (*Mencius*, Jin Xin I, 15). He argued: “If human beings realize and expand their own innate good beginnings, anyone can become a Sage” (Gao Zi II, 2)

Xunzi also identified humans as beings with infinite possibilities as Confucius did. This can be reasoned easily from his conceptions of human nature and self-cultivation. According to him, human beings possess innate abilities to perceive their original morality and to practice them in daily living (*Xunzi*, Zhengming, 3), and thus, they can reach to the state of a Superior Man, an ideal state of a person, through learning and practicing Propriety, the supreme regulative system of the Way, with these innate capabilities (Rongru, 31-32; Xing’e, 2-3, 13-14). This reveals well Xunzi’s proposition that human beings are not defined as having fixed and complete attributes, but as having infinite capabilities and possibility to become.

As expressed evidently in the above statements, Confucians identify the value of human beings in their future states of becoming, rather than in their past achievements, fixed attributes they have got. This position to understand humans in their future becoming, together with the view of humans as social and moral beings, comprises the whole system of Confucian’s perspectives on human beings.

(2) Emphasis on Self-improvement

The position to understand humans as a plastic and variable being with possibility of future becoming originates from the perspective that human beings possess the capacity for moral awareness and practice. This is the basis of belief in the ability to change, which means that human beings are able to perceive and perform constantly changing roles and responsibilities in the network of varying social relations. In addition, this is the basis for the belief in the capability to change through which human beings accomplish self-improvement by finding out and correcting their shortcomings and faults. Therefore, the emphasis on human beings' possibility to change and efforts to accomplish self-improvement come from the position to understand humans as beings to have this possibility to change. This position is consistent with that of collectivistic cultures, which highlight the capability to meet the needs of situational change, contrary to individualistic cultures, which emphasizes consistent psychological and behavioral stability in the aspect of variability dimension, as depicted at the third row of Table 1.

2. Confucian Understandings of Psychology and Their Collectivistic Features

The author proposed the framework for comparison the differences between collectivistic and individualistic cultures in three aspects (focus of attention, object to control, and variability) in Table 1, and reviewed the differences between these two cultures with this framework and found the differences in psychological and behavioral tendencies, such as interpersonal assessment, attribution, emotion, and motivation between these two cultures, are consistent with the anticipations of the framework. Then in above section, the author made it clear that the emphasis on connectedness and harmony, self-restraint, and variability and self-improvement observed in collectivistic cultures are exactly congruent with the Confucian view of human beings, which identify humans as social beings, active moral subjects, and beings with possibility, respectively. From these results, the conjecture that Confucian system has acted as the leading guard to flourish collectivistic culture in East Asian society gets full support. Now, the author will search for the theories of cognition (interpersonal assessment and attribution), emotion,

and motivation derived from the Confucian classics, and explore if the features appeared in these Confucian theories have logical congruence with characteristics found in collectivistic cultures, so as to ascertain, once more, on a firm theoretical and empirical ground that Confucianism has been the intellectual background of East Asian collectivism.

1) Confucian Theory of Social Cognition and Its Collectivistic Characteristics

Contrary to the traditions of Western philosophy since ancient Greece, which have understood the structure of human psychology based on three constituent system of cognition, emotion, and motivation with special emphasis on rationality (cognition), Confucians understand the structure of human psychology based on four constituent system of morality, cognition, emotion, and motivation, and they assert that morality must integrate and control the other structural elements of psychology. The Superior Man is the person who achieves the state in which morality integrates and controls all the rest constituents of his/her mindset. As the Superior Man is the ideal human type put forth by Confucians, he/she would become the standard against which Confucians evaluate the value of a person and the level he/she arrived. Therefore, on what criteria the Superior Man assesses persons and from which elements he searches for the causes of his actions become the prototypic model of Confucian theory of social cognition (interpersonal assessment and attribution). In this context, we can extract social cognition theory originating from Confucianism from the character and attributional style of the Superior Man.¹⁴

In the *Analects*, Confucius suggested three types of the Superior Man: one who improves the self and achieves the perfection of character by self-cultivation through reverential carefulness; one who promotes harmony with others based on the perfection of character; and one who succors all the people based on the perfection of character (Xian Wen, 45). In the *Mencius*, Mencius suggested three types of the Sage: one who achieves the perfection of character and maintains one's purity; one who promotes harmony in social relationships; and one who takes on and fulfills social responsibility (Wan Zhang II, 1). In the *Xunzi*, Xunzi seeks features of the Superior Man and

¹⁴ Refer to the author's article for details (Cho, G. 2003: chapter 6; 2007: chapter 3).

the Sage in four aspects: self-cultivation, problem-centered attitude in work situation, interpersonal harmony, and the acceptance of social responsibility (Jundao, 6-7). In the *Great Learning*, three rules—residing in the state of ultimate good, loving the people and caring for them, and illustrating one’s innate virtue to enable all people to realize that they are their own moral subjects—were put forth as the ultimate goal of great learning.

Improving the self and achieving perfection of character through cultivating oneself (Confucius); maintaining the purity of one’s character (Mencius); cultivating oneself and having problem-centered attitudes in working situations (Xunzi); and residing in the state of ultimate good (the *Great Learning*): All of these refer to personal features of the ideal persons (the Superior Man and the Sage) in terms of their personal becoming as moral subjects. Promoting harmony with others in interpersonal relations (Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi); and loving the people and caring for them (the *Great Learning*): These are features of the ideal persons in terms of their social relationships with others as social beings. Succoring all the people who live together in this world (Confucius); accepting and fulfilling social responsibilities (Mencius and Xunzi); and teaching and illustrating people to realize that they are their own moral subjects (the *Great Learning*): These demonstrate features of the ideal persons in terms of their performing social responsibilities they have got in the course of living together in this social world. Therefore, Confucianism describes the ideal image of human beings in three aspects: self-completion via self-cultivation, promotion of peace and amity in interpersonal relationships, and acceptance and fulfillment of social responsibilities.

(1) Acceptance of Social Responsibilities and Emphasis on Connectedness/ Harmony

The Superior Man who achieves perfection of character through self-cultivation does not develop harmony only with people around him, such as family, relatives, or friends. He thinks that the purpose of humans’ existence as social beings is in the acceptance and fulfillment of social responsibilities. And he tries to teach all people in the world the Way of humanity (benevolence) and righteousness and leads them to follow this Way. Thus, he assumes that succoring all the people is responsibilities assigned by Heaven, and that

he should accept and try to fulfill them willingly. Confucius expressed this feature of the Superior Man as follows: The Superior Man who achieves moral self-improvement through self-cultivation does not stop at self-cultivation and caring for others. He is interested in the whole society, leads people to the state of moral awareness, and makes them feel more comfortable (*Analects*, Xian Wen, 45; Gong Ye Chang, 15; Yan Yuan 1, 16; Wei Ling Gong, 17; Zi Chang, 3). That is, the Superior Man is aware that the self relates to all other people, maintains a harmonious life with them, and takes responsibilities to succor them all.

Mencius said that “the Superior Man takes upon himself the heavy charge of the whole world” (*Mencius*, Wan Zhang I, 7; Wang Zhang II, 1). He tries to take upon himself the heavy responsibilities of saving a chaotic society and protecting people around him, and to meet these responsibilities with determination (Gong Sun Chou I, 2; Gong Sun Chou II, 2; Wan Zhang I, 6, 7; Wan Zhang II, 1; Gao Zi II, 6; Jin Xin I, 31; Jin Xin II, 38). Xunzi said that the Superior Man respects older people and deals with younger people with propriety; does not try to compete with others; performs their own social responsibilities; assists others in meeting their responsibilities; and therefore develops connectedness and harmony among people (*Xunzi*, Jundao, 6-7). In the *Great Learning*, these features of the Superior Man enable all the people to live in harmonious and peaceful World through enabling them to realize that they themselves are moral subjects.

Overall, the Superior Man achieves moral perfection of character; leads people around him to feel comfortable; develops connectedness with all the people of the world; takes responsibilities to lead and succor them; and meets these responsibilities in everyday life. He lives with strong connections with others, focuses on developing harmony in the course of life, and takes social responsibilities.

As evidently shown up to now, the core feature of the character of the Superior Man is the acceptance of social responsibilities. This feature originates from the understanding of human existence as “social beings”; the Superior Man understands human beings in their “connection” with others and accomplishes “harmony” with them. The Superior Man considers relationship with others as representing the meaning of human existence and highlights sociality in the course of life. Therefore, Confucians assert that people always

need to achieve and maintain harmonious connections with others, and to take upon themselves social responsibilities. In this context, it is clear that “taking and completing social responsibilities in everyday life” produces “connectedness” and “harmony” in social relations, which collectivists in East Asia emphasize in the aspect of the focus of attention as depicted in Table 1. Here we can confirm a basis of the argument that the background of East Asian collectivism lies in the Confucian system.

(2) Promotion of Peace/Amity in Interpersonal Relationships and Emphasis on Self-restraint

Confucius said that the Superior Man can promote harmony with others after cultivating himself with reverential carefulness (*Analects*, Xian Wen, 45); and highlighted the attitude of the Superior Man to live with others harmoniously in his daily life (Wei Zheng, 14; Yan Yuan, 5; Zi Lu, 23; Wei Ling Gong, 21; Yang Huo 4, 24). According to Confucius, the Superior Man with moral self-cultivation is involved not only in self-improvement, but also in leading people around him to a state of moral awareness by building harmonious and comfortable relationships with them.

Mencius identified these features as those of the Sage who promotes harmony in interpersonal relations (*Mencius*, Wang Zhang II, 1). Mencius suggested that such an ideal person like Hui of Liu-Hsia (the prototypic Sage of harmony) can embrace all people, because he makes peaceful relations with any other persons and receives them with attitudes of amity and harmony (Gong Sun Chou I, 2; Wang Zhang II, 1; Gaozi II, 6; Jinxin I, 22; Jinxin II, 15). Xunzi addressed that the Superior Man embraces all the people in interpersonal relationships, guides them with righteousness so that they do not feel confused, and attains harmony among them (*Xunzi*, Chendao, 6-7). In the *Great Learning*, these features of the Superior Man are the second purpose of great learning, which was termed loving the people, i.e. after achieving moral perfection, sharing it with people so as to attain harmonious relationships. Therefore, in Confucian classics, following Confucius’ idea that the Superior Man promotes with and gives rest to all the people after attaining self-cultivation, developing harmony in interpersonal relationships was set forth as one of the features of the ideal person.

The reason why the Superior Man can develop harmony in interpersonal

relationships is that he is interested in others in making relationships with them, considers others first, embraces a wide range of people, and inhibits his own self. Confucius addressed: “Humanity (benevolence) means loving others” (*Analects*, Yan Yuan, 22); “Humanity is not doing unto others that which I would not want to be done to myself” (Yan Yuan, 2; Wei Ling Gong, 23); and “Humanity is establishing others first if you want to establish yourself, and letting others achieve first if you want to achieve” (Yong Ye, 28). In these statements, Confucius asserted that considering others first and inhibiting the self are shortcuts to develop harmony with others.

Mencius assumed that having the attitude of concern for and compassion on others makes it possible for a person “to influence others through self-inhibition” (*Mencius*, Liang Hui Wang I, 7), and “to be with others whether they were happy or not” (Liang Hui Wang II, 4). Xunzi suggested that to have concern for and compassion on others leads “to embrace others generously.” According to Xunzi, embracing others generously is one of the features of the Superior Man. The Superior Man inhibits the self and embraces all the people, including who are lazy, foolish, uneducated, and impure (*Xunzi*, Feixiang, 17), as the Superior Man “understands others from his own standards” (Feixiang, 13). In the *Great Learning*, “understanding others on the basis of the self” (the *Great Learning*, 10) was identified as the core of developing harmony in interpersonal relationships. The Superior Man embraces all the people with the attitude of putting themselves in the position of others, shows interest in others, considers others first, inhibits the self, and finally develops harmonious interpersonal relationships.

The argument to posit harmonious interpersonal relationships as the second feature of the Superior Man is derived from the Confucians’ conception of human beings as active moral subjects. Because the Superior Man realizes fully that others also possess the same morality, needs, preferences, and emotions as his, it is possible for him to inhibit his own self and to consider others first in interpersonal relationships. In this context, it is evident that building and maintaining harmonious relationships with others would produce “the attitudes of self-restraint,” which East Asian collectivists stress in the aspect of the object to control as depicted in Table 1. Here we can validate another basis of the argument that the background of East Asian collectivism lies in the Confucian system.

(3) Encouragement of Self-cultivation and Emphasis on Flexibility/Self-improvement

Confucius stated that “The Superior Man is a person who cultivates himself in reverential carefulness” (*Analects*, Xian Wen, 45), so the most important feature of the Superior Man is to be aware of the fact that he himself is the subject of morality and to practice these innate moralities in daily life through self-cultivation. Because the Superior Man achieves self-cultivation through practicing humanity (benevolence) and righteousness in daily life, he/she does not mind correcting himself/herself when he/she has a fault (Xue Er, 8). He tries to imitate a good person when he encounters one, and he reflects upon and improves himself when he encounters a person who is not good (Li Ren, 17). The Superior Man is able to correct his faults and improve himself because he seeks all responsibilities in himself as a moral subject. As the Superior Man always improves himself and seeks all responsibilities in himself, he is emotionally stable (Yan Yuan, 4), and is able to inhibit his selfish desires (Xue Er, 14). Therefore, Confucius viewed the variability and self-improvement of human beings as the essential feature of self-cultivation.

Confucius identified “to achieve moral self-perfection through self-cultivation” as the first feature of the Superior Man. Mencius viewed this state as that of the “Sage who secures the self purely and achieves self-perfection” (*Mencius*, Wan Zhang II, 1), and referred to Po Yi as its prototype. Mencius suggested that Po Yi was the Superior Man who continued to conduct the Way innocently in his whole life through self-cultivation (Gong Sun Chou I, 2, 9; Li Lou I, 13; Wan Zhang II, 1; Gaozi II, 6; Jin Xin I, 22; Jin Xin II, 15); maintained humanity (benevolence) and followed righteousness (Jin Xin I, 15); and accomplished self-perfection. Xunzi sought the features of the Superior Man who achieved self-perfection in the aspects of “self-cultivation” and “problem-centeredness in work situations” (*Xunzi*, Jundao, 6-7). According to Xunzi, this feature of the Superior Man is achieved through moral self-perfection through self-improvement, which are consistent with Confucius’ and Mencius’ positions. In the *Great Learning*, “residing in the state of ultimate good”, as one of the three rules to practice the Way, refers to the state of moral self-perfection through self-improvement and self-cultivation. In this context, to achieve moral self-perfection through self-cultivation is one of the basic features of the Superior Man derived from all of

the Confucian classics.

The basic precondition for self-improvement is to understand certainly that human beings, as moral subjects, are equipped with all the basis of morality innately (*Analects*, Yong Ye, 28; Yan Yuan, 1; *Mencius*, Li Lou II, 14; Gaozi II, 6; *Xunzi*, Tianlun, 28-29). Because the Superior Man understands very well that he is an innate moral subject, he has strong attitudes to seek all the responsibilities of his actions in himself (*Analects*, Xue Er 16, Yong Ye 14; Xian Wen 32; Wei Ling Gong 18, 20; *Mencius*, Li Lou I 4; Jin Xin I 4; *Xunzi*, Faxing 21-22). As the Superior Man has a strong tendency to attribute all the causes of his actions to himself, he is not hesitant in correcting their faults so as to achieve self-improvement (*Analects*, Xue Er, 8; Li Ren, 17; Zi Zhang, 21; *Mencius*, Gong Sun Chou I, 9; Gong Sun Chou II, 8; *Xunzi*, Quanaxue, 2).

As mentioned above, the Superior Man is the person who understands deeply that all the beginnings of morality are endowed within himself from birth, thus, on the basis of this firm understanding, his tendency to correct his own faults through seeking all the responsibilities in himself is derived. He discriminates correctly what he should do from what he should not do (*Analects*, Yan Yuan, 1; *Mencius*, Li Lou II, 8; Zin Xin I, 17, 44; *Xunzi*, Tianlun, 25). He also takes care of his business in daily life in accordance with moral values (*Xunzi*, Jiebi, 17). What he, as moral subject, needs to do is to inhibit and control his selfish biological desires and personal emotions, which are induced and fulfilled according to extraneous contextual elements, and accordingly he pursues exclusively keeping and increasing morally based other-oriented emotions and motives. In this way, the Superior Man tries to improve himself through self-control and self-constraint in order to achieve self-perfection.

Self-cultivation, one of the basic features of the Superior Man, mirrors the Confucian belief in the “infinite possibilities of change” of human beings. This self-cultivation is brought about through endless personal effort. In this context, it is evident that “self-perfection through self-cultivation,” a feature of the Superior Man, should induce “flexible change” and “self-improvement,” which East Asian collectivists focus on in the aspect of variability of human existence as depicted in Table 1. Here we can validate yet another basis of the argument that the background of East Asian collectivism lies in the Confucian system.

2) Confucian Theory of Emotion and Its Collectivistic Characteristics

Pre-Qin Confucians such as Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi viewed human emotions as having a negative influence on desirable adjustment and therefore needing to be regulated and controlled through vigorous self-cultivation. These emotions which need to be controlled are ego-focused ones provoked by extraneous conditions as the Seven Passions (joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and lust) (*Liji*, *Liyun*, 301).¹⁵ But emotions which are other-directed in their orientation and are helpful for moral cultivation like the Four Beginnings must be recommended rather than inhibited.

Mencius asserted that human beings have Four Beginnings, which constitute the essential goodness of humans, innately, and recommended expanding these virtues. This point plays a unique role in understanding emotions in pre-Qin Confucianism. The Four Beginnings are the followings: compassion to feel sorry for people in trouble; being shameful when self and others are not quite right; yielding to and respecting others; and discriminating between right and wrong. These Four Beginnings can be seen as social emotions (Chung, Y. 1970: 86-90; Hahn, D. 1994: 108-134, 221-222) which are aroused in association with the moral principles (norms) of human life, and will be the full-flourished virtues (humanity [benevolence], righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, respectively) through self-cultivation.

According to the theoretical system of pre-Qin Confucianism, the Four Beginnings are the most representatives of other-directed or normative emotions. These are autonomous and endogenous emotions which arise from either one's own moral cultivation or from interest in and concern about others' well-being. Because these emotions are provoked and satisfied in accordance with what people do in the course of self-cultivation, Confucians encourage and emphasize people to experience and expand these emotions. That is, to expand the innate other-directed or norm-based emotions, like the Four Beginnings, so as to make them full-flourish in daily life, is one of the basic features of Confucian theory of emotion, and, according to

¹⁵ This refers to page 301, *Liji jinzhū jīnyī* (Taipei: Shāngwùyīnshūguǎn) by Wang Mengou (1969). From now on, citation of *Liji* (*The Book of Ritual*) will follow this example.

Confucianism, this is a core way to cultivate one's self.

By contrast, the Seven Passions are assumed to be extraneous emotions which are provoked by outside conditions. These are ego-focused emotions which are induced by comparing extraneous conditions with one's own situations. For example, "joy" is induced when extraneous conditions are positive for the satisfaction of personal needs, while "anger" is induced when they are negative. Confucians asserted that the inducement and satisfaction of these emotions depends on extraneous conditions, so these emotions need to be controlled and vigorously regulated in daily life, because free expressions of these emotions are very likely to harm harmony in interpersonal relationships and to make persons lose their composure. Thus, to lay great emphasis upon the inhibition and regulation of ego-oriented emotions, like Seven Passions, is another feature of the Confucian theory of emotion.

As mentioned above, the core processes of Confucian self-cultivation lay in the emphasis on experiencing and expanding the Four Beginnings (other-directed or norm-based emotions) and on inhibiting and controlling the Seven Passions (ego-focused emotions). According to Confucianism, through regulation of these two types of emotions (expanding Four Beginnings and inhibiting Seven Passions), human beings can get away from personal limitations and are then free to achieve emotional sublimation and self-improvement, and eventually reach to the state of moral self-perfection. This emphasis on the sublimation of emotions through emotional regulation is one another features of Confucian theory of emotion.

In pre-Qin Confucianism, other-directed or norm-based emotions which are provoked in social situations need to be pursued and expanded, whereas ego-centered emotions which are induced in accordance with extraneous conditions and urge to fulfill individual selfish needs must be vigorously regulated and controlled; for Confucians, this double-edged standard is the kernel to deal with emotional problems. In this context, it is evident that the core of self-cultivation suggested by pre-Qin Confucianism is to expand the Four Beginnings and to inhibit the Seven Passions.

This position of pre-Qin Confucianism has continued as an essence of contemporary Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism, established as a metaphysical system in theoretical competition against Buddhism and Daoism, inherited this position. The Confucians of Chosŏn dynasty (1392~1910)

took over the Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi, but the Neo-Confucians of the Chosŏn dynasty was more strongly obsessed with this double-edged understanding of emotions than those of China.

Neo-Confucians in the Chosŏn dynasty systematized Confucian theory of emotion with full uniqueness through the Four-Seven Debate, a debate on the nature of and relations between Four Beginnings and Seven Emotions, which went on continuously for approximately three hundred years. This Four-Seven Debate was “the accomplishment of continuous exploration from the mid-16th century to the end of the Chosŏn dynasty” (Yoon, S. 1997: 6). This had been a representative question in the Neo-Confucianism of the Chosŏn dynasty because almost every Confucian at that time participated in this debate. In this context, the author will review questions to understand emotions in the Neo-Confucianism of the Chosŏn dynasty and verify clearly that East Asian collectivistic culture originates from Confucianism.¹⁶

(1) Encouragement of the Four Beginnings and Emphasis on Connectedness/ Harmony

The first goal of the Four-Seven Debate is to prove theoretically and realistically that peoples have good nature from birth, which can be developed and realized actually in their process of living. Confucians’ belief in the “goodness” of human nature comes from the fact that the Four Beginnings

¹⁶ The Four-Seven Debate of Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism tried to understand the framework of *igi-ron* (theory of principles [*I*] and materials [*Gi*] of human mind) by connecting the Four Beginnings and Seven Passions to the theory of good and evil. Some critics have contended that it is difficult to conduct psychological evidence-based research with this topic. Additionally, there are different opinions about whether discriminating what is right from what is wrong, one of the Four Beginnings, is regarded as an emotion or not. However, the Four Beginnings have been understood traditionally by comparing with the Seven Passions, which are emotions aroused in seven representative real-life situations. Therefore, it is evident that the Four Beginnings have been regarded as the core of other-directed and norm-based social emotions (Chung, Y. 1970; Han, D. 1994). Aside from the philosophical issues of *igi-ron*, the author identifies the Four-Seven Theory only as the basic reference of Confucian theory of emotion. The fundamental position of Four-Seven Theory in this paper is consistent with theory of emotion extracted from texts of pre-Qin Confucians. Refer to the author’s article for details (Cho, G. 2003: chapter 7; 2007: chapter 4).

are endowed to humans innately. On this foundation, Confucians try to seek the way to develop and realize one's natural goodness in the possibility of inhibiting one's self-centered selfishness represented in the Seven Passions. Viewing from this point, it is no exaggeration to say that the theoretical as well as realistic ground of the Four-Seven Debate lies in the strong attitudes of humanism and respects for the human development (Yoon, S. 1992: 8).

Confucians in the mid-Chosŏn dynasty including Yi Hwang (T'oegye) and Yi I (Yulgok) participated in the debate on the origins and the relationship between the Four Beginnings and the Seven Passions, expressing different opinions. However, they agreed on the point that the Four Beginnings are originally pure goodness itself. T'oegye argued: "The Four Beginnings are derived from the nature of human mind, such as humanity (benevolence), righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, whereas the Seven Passions are provoked by extraneous objects and conditions, that is, extraneous objects and conditions stimulate our senses and bring about the Seven Passions" (*T'oegye chŏnsŏ* 1, 406).¹⁷ Therefore, "the Four Beginnings are all goodness itself" (406, 412). In addition, Yulgok viewed "compassion for others in trouble" as the pure good in such emotions as joy, sorrow, love, and lust; "shame about doing wrong" as the pure good in anger and in hate; and "yielding to others" as the pure good in fear. "Discriminating between right and wrong" is also all pure good, as it involves knowing what is right and what is wrong with regard to the Seven Passions (*Yulgok chŏnsŏ*, 199).¹⁸ This position is consistent with T'oegye's opinion.

As the Four Beginnings are other-oriented ("compassion to feel sorry for others in trouble" and "yielding to and respecting others") or based on moral norms and principles ("being shameful about doing wrong" and "discriminating between right and wrong"), these emotions originate from the innate nature of human beings and are pure and good; thus these are encouraged strongly by Confucians. The other- and norm-oriented Four

¹⁷ This refers to page 406 in Book 1 of the *T'oegye chŏnsŏ*, which was published by Academy of East Asian Studies (1958), Sung Kyun Kwan University. From now on, citation of T'oegye will follow this example.

¹⁸ This refers to page 199 in *Yulgok chŏnsŏ*, which was published by Academy of East Asian Studies (1958), Sung Kyun Kwan University. From now on, citation of Yulgok will follow this example.

Beginnings are the most representative emotions directly derived from the position of understanding humans as “social beings.”

The position of understanding humans as social beings leads to the view that responsibilities and obligations laid in interpersonal situations are regarded as the impetus for social action, and the goal of any social actions is to attain order and harmony in social relationships. This is consistent with the position of collectivism that emphasizes connectedness and harmony with others. In Confucianism, the Superior Man, a model of ideal person, has described as having compassion upon and feeling concern about others and society. Therefore, his focus of attention is concentrated on others or society rather than on his own self. Consequently, he seeks standards of interpersonal assessment in whether peoples have compassion upon and concern about others or not. This tendency produces the attitude that stresses and promotes “other-directed emotions”, such as the “Four Beginnings” and “shame.”

The position of Confucianism to consider humans as social beings induces the features of collectivistic culture (impetus for social actions = responsibilities and obligations laid in the relational networks; goals of social actions = to attain connectedness and harmony; focus of attention = others and society) in the aspect of impetus and goals for actions (focus of attention) as depicted in Table 1. The fact that Confucian theory of emotion highlights “encouraging other- and norm-oriented emotions” indicates the fact that Confucianism is the background of the development of collectivistic culture in East Asian society, in where this theoretical system has dominated people’s daily life for a very long time.

(2) Inhibition of the Seven Passions and Emphasis on Self-restraint

Neo-Confucians of the Chosŏn dynasty all agreed that the Seven Passions are a mixture of good and evil and can easily slide towards evil. T’oegye posited: “Because the Seven Passions are provoked by the stimuli in extraneous conditions, they are indecisive to be good or bad” (*T’oegye chŏnsŏ* 1, 406); or “They are originally good, but easily become evil” (412). He asserted that if the arousal of the Seven Passions loses *li* (principle), they become evil; and this is one of the reasons why human beings become evil.

Yulgok asserted that the Four Beginnings are all pure good, but the Seven Passions are mixed with good and evil. He stated: “Whereas the Four

Beginnings represent only pure goodness, the Seven Passions represent both selfish mind and good mind” (*Yulgok chŏnsŏ*, 199). The Seven Passions which are mixtures of good and evil tend to flow toward evil, if peoples fail to differentiate between when they need to feel these emotions (joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and lust) and when they should not feel (199).

As the Seven Passions have the possibility to make people become evil, Neo-Confucians asserted that the Seven Passions needed to be suppressed. Why do these Seven Passions tend to become evil? It is because they are exogenous emotions which are provoked if extraneous conditions, including other persons, are favorable to meet one’s aspirations, expectations, or needs (in this case, one feels joy, love, or lust) or not (in this case, one feels anger, sorrow, fear, or hate); that is, because the Seven Passions are ego-centered and selfish in nature. In this regard, Neo-Confucians agreed that ego-centered selfish emotions like the Seven Passions hinder a person from or have negative influence on developing one’s natural goodness and improving oneself, so these harmful emotions need to be controlled and inhibited.

According to the Confucian thought, every person can control and inhibit the ego-centered Seven Passions, because he/she is fully aware of the meaning of human existence as moral subjects and is equipped with autonomous capacities to practice and expand his/her innate moral basis (the Four Beginnings) in daily life; that is, human beings as “autonomous moral subjects” can control and inhibit one’s selfishness emanating from ego-centered “Seven Passions.”

The position of considering human beings as autonomous moral subjects highlights the attribution of the causes of one’s social actions to his/her innate moralities. This position is consistent with a collectivistic culture’s stress on self-restraint in the mode of expressing the self. Viewing from this point, all the causes of one’s actions reside on the self as a moral subject; therefore, human beings should attribute responsibilities and reasons of their actions to themselves. And also, the responsibility to maintain order and harmony in society and interpersonal relationships depends on oneself. This is why the self rather than external contextual conditions are rising up as the target to control, and consequently, constant self-restraint is highlighted as the way of self-cultivation in Confucian thought. In this context, Confucians’ tendency to emphasize self-restraint and self-control is conspicuous in the aspect of

emotion. Since Confucians understand that the provoking and satisfying conditions of ego-centered emotions reside in the extraneous situation, they assert these feelings, such as the Seven Passions that hinder self-cultivation, should be vigorously inhibited and controlled.

From this position of Confucians to view human beings as autonomous moral subjects, arises the collectivistic features (mode of expressing self = self-restraint; object to control = self) in East Asian society, whose characteristics are consistent with those of the aspect of the mode of self-expression (the target to control) depicted in Table 1. In this context, we can induce another evidence proving the fact that in the theoretical background of East Asian collectivism lies the Confucianism, which conceives person as an autonomous moral being and emphasizes inhibiting self-centered feelings, especially the Seven Passions, in its theory of emotion.

(3) Sublimation of Emotions and Emphasis on Self-improvement

The core of Confucian theory of emotion is in the inhibition of ego-centered feelings such as the Seven Passions and in the encouragement of other-directed and norm-based emotions such as the Four Beginnings. Confucians assume that these control and regulation of emotions are the kernel of self-cultivation, through which one can improve oneself. The fundamental goal of Confucianism, especially Neo-Confucianism, is in learning the way to be a Superior Man through abandoning human greed (selfishness) and pursuing the principles of Heaven (morality). Neo-Confucians suggested *Kögyöng* (residing in reverential carefulness) as a basic way to abandon human greed and to pursue the principles of Heaven. This is “a mind control strategy to maintain the state of *Gyöng* (reverence)” (Hahn, D. 1994: 76). T’oegye and Yulgok viewed “*Gyöng* as the essence of both the beginning and the end of learning the way to be a Superior Man” (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 210; *Yulgok chönsö*, 431), because “*Gyöng* is the controller of the mind and the basis of all affairs” (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 203).

Neo-Confucians asserted that the way to control and to regulate human emotions can be achieved by “*Kögyöng*,” as “*Kögyöng*” embraces the whole process of achieving self-control of the mind. According to Confucian logic, this control and regulation of human emotions in the state of *Kögyöng* enables one to inhibit the Seven Passions which are “indecisive in choosing

good or evil” (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 406) and “likely to be evil” (412). In other words, *Kögyöng* enables the sublimation of emotions come true by inhibiting the Seven Passions and encouraging the Four Beginnings in daily life, and so leads people to the state of pure goodness. Chung, Yang Eun (1970, 86-90) asserted that the roles of the Four Beginnings as social emotions are most important in the course of emotional regulations; because, even though the Seven Passions are provoked, if the effect of the Four Beginnings is powerful enough, then the Seven Passions would be diminished automatically. In other words, he proposed that one should not respond to others’ physical existence (in this case, the Seven Passions are provoked), but should rather respond to others’ psychological aspects as social stimuli (in this case, the Four Beginnings are aroused). Anyway, Confucians emphasized the sublimation of emotions through arousing the Four Beginnings instead of provoking the Seven Passions in daily social relations; and, according to the Neo-Confucians, the only way to achieve the emotional sublimation is the method of *Kögyöng*.

Confucians, especially Neo-Confucians, highlighted the value of emotional sublimation, to make the other-directed and norm-based emotions are the controller of all the emotional responses by inhibiting the Seven Passions and encouraging the Four Beginnings, in the process of self-cultivation and self-improvement through *Kögyöng* practice (residing in reverential carefulness in everyday life). All Neo-Confucians participating in the Four-Seven Debate agreed on this position. Neo-Confucians’ assertion on the possibility “to sublimate emotions through *Kögyöng*” is derived directly from their perspectives on humans as “beings with infinite plasticity (variability) to become a Superior Man.”

The Confucian understanding of humans as having infinite possibilities is based on the perspective which emphasizes human capacity to perform their constantly varying roles and responsibilities in the networks of social relationships; and this belief in human changeability is represented as it is in the Confucian theory of emotion, which stresses emotional regulation in daily life. Viewing from this Confucian perspective, human beings are supposed to make every effort to improve themselves through self-reflection on their weaknesses and faults and correcting them in daily life; thus, self-cultivation and self-improvement are raised as important standards of interpersonal

assessment. In addition, Confucians highlight emotional sublimation (inhibiting ego-centered emotions such as the Seven Passions and trying to make other-directed and norm-based emotions such as the Four Beginnings be the dominant emotions) in the process of endless self-improvement, which are consistent with the characteristics found in East Asian collectivistic cultures.

The Confucian theory of emotion, which encourages to control and regulate emotions, has strong coherence with the features of collectivistic cultures in respect that this cultures accept and stress human changeability; in this respect, it is evident that these Confucian views bring about the features of collectivistic cultures (appreciating flexible change with varying contexts rather than stable consistency; encouraging to improve one's weaknesses rather than enhancing one's strengths as the chief way for self-advancement) in the aspect of human variability as depicted in Table 1. This is yet another point proving the proposition that Confucianism lies in the theoretical background of East Asian collectivism.

3) Confucian Theory of Motivation and Its Collectivistic Characteristics

The motivation theory of pre-Qin Confucians can be summarized in terms of the following three features: First, humans possess a number of motives, such as biological, sensual, selfish, and moral motives; and among them, only moral motives enable humans to control themselves, so they are the most essential for humans; Second, not only does the satisfaction of motives other than moral ones depend on extraneous conditions, but also pleasure from the satisfaction of these motives leads people to lose righteousness, so these motives must be controlled and inhibited; Third, moral motives not only are the most essential ones to enable human beings to control the self with, but also are located in the supreme position of the hierarchy of motives; thus, other subordinate motives should be governed by the moral motives; Being free from the constraints of these subordinate motives and making moral ones dominate one's life (sublimation of motivation) is the chief way to become an ideal human being.

Neo-Confucians inherited this theory of motivation from pre-Qin Confucians. However, Neo-Confucians laid more emphasis on the features

of evilness of biological and selfish motives, and they demonstrated a stricter proposition in focusing on absolute control of them with moral motives. The core of the theory of motivation suggested by Neo-Confucians, especially those in the Chosŏn dynasty, lies in the theory of the Human Mind (source of selfish desires) and the Moral Mind (source of moral motives). The essential points of this theory are as follows: Encouragement and development of the moral motives; Inhibition and control of the selfish desires; and Sublimation of motivation through *Kögyöng*.¹⁹

(1) Encouragement of the Moral Motives and Emphasis on Connectedness/
Harmony

The fundamental reasoning of the Neo-Confucian theory of the Human Mind and the Moral Mind is that the Human Mind is the basis of the selfish desires derived from biological features, while the Moral Mind is the innate human nature from which originating the moral motives. Every human being, no matter who he or she is, has these two kinds of motives. T'oebye addressed: "The Human Mind causes strivings for external objects to satisfy one's biological and selfish desires, whereas the Moral Mind causes strivings for innate righteousness and *li* (principle)" (*T'oebye chŏnsŏ* 1, 208). This statement points out clearly that biological and selfish desires are based on the Human Mind, and moral motives are based on the Moral Mind. Yulgok expressed the same proposition and "identified the need for pleasant sounds, colors, scents,

¹⁹ There are some controversies as to whether the theory of the Human Mind and Moral Mind is regarded as a theory of motivation or not. In particular, the Moral Mind is the basis for the Four Beginnings, and the Human Mind is the basis for the Seven Passions. Therefore, this theory can be considered as a theory of emotion. Neo-Confucians such as T'oebye and Yulgok agreed that the Human Mind is based on the biological and selfish needs, and so leads the behavior to let oneself ahead of others; while, the Moral Mind is oriented toward goodness, and so leads the action to practice moral motives with and for others. In this context, both the Human Mind and the Moral Mind have the features of originating and invoking human actions, which is the chief characteristics of the definition of motivation; therefore, the theory of the Human Mind and the Moral Mind can be considered as the fundamental axis of the Neo-Confucian's theory of motivation. Three fundamental positions of the theory of the Human Mind and the Moral Mind have the same logical construct as the theory of motivation derived from the classics of pre-Qin Confucians.

and flavors as the product of the Human Mind and the orientation toward humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom as the Moral Mind” (*Yulgok chönsö*, 453). He also stated the same idea in different ways: “The Moral Mind promotes allegiance to the king and filial piety to parents, whereas the Human Mind arouses desires for food to eat when hungry and wish for clothes to put on when cold” (757).

Of these two kinds of mind, “the Moral Mind represents the principle of Heaven, so it has only natural goodness and does not have evil. By contrast, the Human Mind has the principle of Heaven as well as human greed, so it has both good and evil” (*Yulgok chönsö*, 282). The Moral Mind is pure and good, because from which the Four Beginnings, the core evidence of human natural goodness, come forth (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 816, 849; *Yulgok chönsö*, 199, 283). Therefore, the moral motives originating from the Moral Mind, which is pure good human nature, is supposed to be the core of all human motives rather than biological and selfish desires derived from the Human Mind, which is a mixture of good and evil. This is the position of the Neo-Confucians of the Chosön dynasty, and is consistent with that of the pre-Qin Confucians.

According to the Neo-Confucian proposition, the Moral Mind is pure goodness itself by nature. T’oegye stated this point as follows: “The Moral Mind refers to the innate original human nature itself, and it is working as the basis of every human actions from beginning to the end and from birth till death; whereas the Four Beginnings refer to the clues from which is manifested the existence of the Moral Mind” (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 849). This statement points out clearly that the existence of the Moral Mind is known through other-directed and moral manifestations of the Four Beginnings. As suggested in the above section on emotions, The Four Beginnings are sources of other-directed and norm-based emotions; that is, the nature of the Four Beginnings reveals in their other-directedness. Therefore, the Moral Mind, from which The Four Beginnings come forth, gives rise to the moral emotions and motives which are directed toward others or norms in interpersonal relations. Yulgok expressed the position indirectly as follows: “The Moral Mind arouses such action-readiness as will to pledge allegiance to the king and will to devote filial piety to parents, which are basically moral in nature” (*Yulgok chönsö*, 757).

According to the theory of the Human Mind and the Moral Mind, moral motives are the most essential of all human motives, and the Moral Mind, as its root, should be encouraged and developed always in the process of everyday life. This proposition is derived from Confucians' efforts to identify humans as social beings. Moral motives lead people to other-directed actions, such as having compassion toward and concern about others as well as promoting their well-being. Therefore, when people maintain this motivational state in daily life, they perceive themselves as connected with and strive for promoting harmony with others. In this context, "encouraging moral motives and enhancing its root, the Moral Mind" is one of the basic features of the Confucian theory of motivation. And this feature enables East Asian collectivists to make every effort to promote "connectedness" with others and to maintain "harmony" in daily life. This position of encouraging other-directed moral motives in everyday human life, which is a basic feature of the Confucian theory of motivation, validates the reasoning that East Asian collectivism is based on the Confucian system

(2) Control of the Selfish Desires and Emphasis on Self-restraint

According to the theory of the Human Mind and the Moral Mind, the Human Mind is the basis of selfish desires originating from human biological features. T'oegyè addressed this point as follows: "The Human Mind elicits selfish desires" (*T'oegyè chönsö* 1, 897); "The Human Mind is the basis of selfish desires, and selfish desires are overflows of the Human Mind" (897); and "Since the Human Mind is the antithesis of the Moral Mind, it belongs to the selfish aspect of the body" (849). In these statements, T'oegyè clarified the proposition that the Human Mind is the basis of biological and selfish desires.

In this context, Neo-Confucians asserts that if people pursue the Human Mind which is the basis of biological and selfish desires, they tend to get in trouble; thus, it is encouraged for them to inhibit the Human Mind and to maintain the Moral Mind, from which emanating moral motives. Yulgok expressed this proposition as follows: "The temptation of the selfish desires leads human beings to become evil. If people indulge in seduction of selfish desires and are not aware of it, then they will not come back even after losing eventually all of the principles of Heaven (moral motives and basis of morality)" (*Yulgok chönsö*, 467); or "People are deprived of any will to do

good ... if they lose their innate genuine mind” (469).

For this reason, the Human mind needs to be controlled and the Moral Mind should be protected. T’oegye asserted: “Even though there are many ways to learn how to control the mind, only two things are most important: one is to inhibit selfish desires, and the other is to maintain the principle of Heaven. Inhibiting selfish desires belongs to learning in the aspect of the Human Mind, whereas maintaining the principle of Heaven belongs to learning with respect to the Moral Mind” (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 849). This is the fundamental point of the famous theory of inhibiting selfish desires and residing in the principle of Heaven (208). Yulgok also expressed the same opinion as follows: “People need to observe themselves solemnly, and whenever a thought occurs to them, they need to pay attention to where this thought comes from. If they perceive physical and selfish desires activate this thought, they need to win over and control it, so it will not grow. However, if they perceive the Moral Mind (humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom) activate this thought, they need to preserve and maintain it, so it will not leave” (*Yulgok chönsö*, 453). Yulgok also expressed this position elsewhere, saying: “Humans should not let the Human Mind grow wildly. They need to lay high emphasis on inhibiting and controlling selfish desires. They need to think highly of preserving the Moral Mind and to let it grow and expand” (758).

As the Human Mind is the basis of selfish desires derived from human biological features, when external seductions satisfying these desires tempts, people are not able to come back and control evil even after they lose all their Moral Mind (*Yulgok chönsö*, 467), or are deprived of any will to do good for themselves and for others (469). This Neo-Confucian argument is consistent with that of the pre-Qin Confucians.

In this way, Confucians stress strongly to control and inhibit one’s biological and selfish desires. This position is consistent with the characteristics observed in East Asian collectivistic society, where self-constraint, especially in the situation of self-expression, is highly appreciated, as depicted in Table 1. According to the Neo-Confucians propositions, to inhibit and control selfish desires is a way to become an ideal person, which is the goal of human life; whether or not one can achieve this goal solely depends on oneself; that is, it is his/her responsibility because, as moral subjects, people are equipped with

the Moral Mind to do good things for oneself and for others; thus, one should make every effort to inhibit and control one's selfish desires. In this context, the inference that Confucian position stressing "inhibition and control of selfish desires" has brought about collectivistic characteristics in East Asian society have logical validity.

(3) Sublimation of Motivations and Emphasis on Self-improvement

Neo-Confucians asserted that in order to get freedom from the constraints of the Human Mind, the source of biological and selfish desires, human beings should not only suppress (*T'oegye chönsö* 1, 208, 849) or inhibit their selfish desires (*Yulgok chönsö*, 453, 758), but also control them through encouraging the Moral Mind; and thus let moral motives overwhelm selfish desires and superintend all their lives. T'oegye addressed this point as follows: "Since the Human Mind is the antithesis of the Moral Mind, it belongs to the selfish aspect of the body; So because the Human Mind is already inclined toward selfishness, it needs to listen to the commands from the Moral Mind and to become one with it" (*T'oegye chönsö* 1, 849). Yulgok expressed the same opinion more strongly, stating that: "A person who are going to control his/her mind should expand and fulfill the Moral Mind whenever he/she learns to know that a certain idea striking him/her at that moment is coming from the Moral Mind; However, if he/she perceives that this idea is flowing from the Human Mind, he/she should inspect it thoroughly and control it through the Moral Mind, and so let the Human Mind follow the command of the Moral Mind. Then the Human Mind will become one with the Moral Mind eventually" (*Yulgok chönsö*, 282-283). Furthermore, Yulgok argued that if the Moral Mind controls the Human Mind and they become one, "*li* (principle) and righteousness (a representative of moral motives) will be always preserved and accordingly human greed (biological and selfish desires) will fade away. Therefore, taking this attitude toward everything, whatever it is including other persons, there is nothing that will not fit the Golden Mean (the Way)" (453).

The Confucian proposition, that Moral Mind should control the Human Mind, and then, the Human Mind is able to become one with the Moral Mind, means the fact that the Human Mind and the Moral Mind are not

two separate ones. T'oege addressed this point as: "While the Human Mind causes strivings for external objects to satisfy one's biological and selfish desires, the Moral Mind causes pursuing for internal righteousness and principle; However this does not mean that there are two different minds, because these two are different only in their orientations, whether toward outside or toward inside of the self" (*T'oege chönsö* 1, 208). As the Human Mind and the Moral Mind differ in the level of goodness, whether a mixture of good and evil or pure goodness itself (*Yulgok chönsö*, 282), advancing from the state of the partially good Human Mind to the state of the wholly good Moral Mind (sublimation of motives) can be achieved.

Neo-Confucians suggested "residing in reverential carefulness" (*Kögyöng*) as a way to control the selfish desires, to maintain the principle of Heaven, and eventually to achieve the sublimation of motives. Zhu Xi, the originator of Neo-Confucianism in later Song period, also suggested "inspecting the mind thoroughly and maintaining it consistently" as the core of *Gyöng*, which can match with the state of *Kögyöng* (Yun, S. 1997: 267-271). In Neo-Confucian thought, *Kögyöng* is a concrete strategy to control the Human Mind and preserve the Moral Mind.

T'oege and Yulgok agreed: "*Gyöng* is that which superintends the mind and so is the basis of all things" (*T'oege chönsö* 1, 203, 208; *T'oege chönsö* 2, 796); therefore "*Gyöng* is the beginning and the end of 'the Study to be a Superior Man' (it refers to the whole system of Confucianism)" (*T'oege chönsö* 1, 210, 203; *Yulgok chönsö*, 431). As this *Kögyöng* becomes the basis of *Kungni* (exploration of principles in depth), which is another method in learning how to be a Superior Man (*T'oege chönsö* 1, 185-186; *Yulgok chönsö*, 431, 433-434), it can be advocated that learning how to be a Superior Man begins with *Kögyöng* and ends with it (*T'oege chönsö* 1, 203; *Yulgok chönsö*, 431).

T'oege and Yulgok traced the core of Confucian theory of self-cultivation to the function of *Kögyöng*. The state of *Gyöng* (residing in reverential carefulness) has both the cognitive and the motivational functions in the whole process of personal self-control. The cognitive function is to concentrate one's attention without distraction (Kim, S. 1989: 160-181); and the motivational function is to select the goal which matches well with the Way and to activate the appropriate behavior to achieve this goal in daily life

(Hahn, D. 1994, 91-96). If the function of *Kögyöng* is regarded as the core in the course of psychological self-control, it is easily understood that *Gyöng* controls biological and selfish desires (the Human Mind) and activates moral motives (the Moral Mind). Yulgok advocated this position as follows: “At the state of *Gyöng*, selfish desires do not grow up from within; and seduction of objects in the outer world cannot go into the mind at all; ... *Gyöng* is a weapon with which to fight against the temptation from one’s outside. When a person resides in reverential carefulness (*Kögyöng*), he/she understands the principle of Heaven well, and his/her selfish desires cannot come into his/her inner mind” (*Yulgok chönsö*, 476).

Because biological and selfish desires, which lead people to evil, can be controlled by *Gyöng*, “following goodness and discarding evil depends on maintaining the state of *Gyöng* and understanding principles of the Heaven correctly” (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 684). Yulgok expressed this point as: “Through this function to control selfish desires, *Gyöng* wins over all the evils” (*Yulgok chönsö*, 476). So, *Kögyöng* becomes the direct way toward the sublimation of motivation.

As stated explicitly in the above quotations, it is the fundamental proposition of Neo-Confucians in Chosön dynasty that human beings should and can control the basis of biological and selfish desires (the Human Mind) and expand the source of moral motives (the Moral Mind); then, their Human Mind would be one with the Moral Mind and the command of the Moral Mind prevail all their lives (*T’oegye chönsö* 1, 849; *Yulgok chönsö*, 192, 282-283); and thus, they can achieve the sublimation of motivation. According to them, this sublimation of motivation is the whole ground of self-cultivation and self-improvement. The position that “sublimation of motivation through the transformation of Human Mind into Moral Mind by means of *Kögyöng*” is derived from a perspective on humans as “beings with infinite possibility” to achieve ideal state of person by themselves through constant process of “self-improvement.” This advocacy verifies that Confucianism is the origin of East Asian collectivism, which stressing on the flexible change in accordance with varying contexts and on the incessant self-improvement, as depicted in Table 1.

IV. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF EAST ASIAN COLLECTIVISM: CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

The author examined the idea that collectivistic cultures in East Asian Confucian countries such as Korea, China, and Japan are derived from the theoretical background of Confucianism. Confucianism was respected as the supreme ideology of governing these countries for about 4 to 5 hundred years (in case of Japan), a thousand years (Korea) and two thousand years (China) until the modern era. Although the Confucianism of Japan was different from those of Korea or China, in that China and Korea had selected public officials through the state examinations in Confucian Classics, contrary to Japan, all of their governments encouraged Confucianism. In East Asian Confucian countries, Confucianism is not an already dead tradition of past; Even nowadays, Confucianism continues to be central to East Asians' thoughts, behaviors, and value systems. That is, "the Confucian habits of the heart" (Tu, W. 1996: 343) still control their lives today.

The theoretical basis of Confucianism is the position that humans are moral and social beings with flexible plasticity (theory of human nature). On this ground, Confucians established an ideal type of a person as the goal in human living (theory of Superior Man) and suggested the way how to achieve such a goal (theory of self-cultivation) and mode of the lifestyle of this ideal person in interpersonal relations (theory of moral practice). The essence of Confucianism is laid in the innate characteristics of human nature and the concept of the Superior Man. In a word, Confucianism is a theoretical system to pursue the "expansion of human existence" toward the Superior Man as an ideal model, which is set on the basis of the innate existential characteristics of human beings.

The theoretical reason why Confucians pursue the expansion of human existence is based on their framework for understanding human beings. The fundamental understanding of human beings in Confucian classics can be summarized as follows: They consider humans as social beings, autonomous moral subjects, and changeable beings with infinite possibilities. That is, Confucians perceive humans are such beings who should accept social and moral responsibilities, practice them in their relationships with others, and try to achieve the expansion of their existence through their autonomous moral

cultivation.

Confucians seek the fundamental features of human existence in one's interpersonal relationships; that is, their basic position to understand human beings is to search for fundamental features of human existence in their sociality. They assume that human morality is originated from human sociality; that is, people have moral concern about others, because they are social beings to live and have harmonious relationship with others.

Human being's variability and possibility, emphasized by Confucianism, are also grounded on human sociality and morality. That is, human beings are equipped with innate basis of morality. The Confucian attitude of autonomous and active life involves maintaining and nurturing this basis of morality and practicing them in daily life situations; and through which people improve themselves and achieve the goal to be a Superior Man. This position comes forth from a perspective on humans as social beings. In this context, it can be inferred that East Asians with Confucian traditions developed collectivistic characteristics on the ground of Confucians' great emphasis on human sociality.

As depicted in table 1 and found in the review of the comparative studies on the differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, in individualistic cultures people emphasize autonomy and independence, self-assertion, and stability in the aspects of impetus and goal for social actions (focus of attention), mode of expressing the self (object to control), and stability/variability of personhood (strategy for self-development), respectively. To the contrary, in collectivistic cultures people highlight connectedness and harmony, self-inhibition, and variability. These three aspects are associated with three positions to understand human beings in Confucianism.

The position of viewing humans as social beings holds social responsibility and obligation to be the impetus for social actions and seeks the goal of all social actions in pursuit of order and harmony in social relationships. This is consistent with the position of collectivistic cultures focusing on connectedness and harmony in the aspect of impetus for social actions. The Superior Man is interested in others and society and places priority on caring for others and society along with self-cultivation. Therefore, their attention focuses on others or society rather than the self, and consequently,

the criteria for interpersonal assessment are concentrated on having concern about and caring for others and society. This tendency creates the position of respecting and encouraging other-directed emotions whose basic references are on others and norms such as the Four Beginnings and shame. The tendency to care for society leads actions to respect and encourages moral motives toward others and society. Also, the satisfaction of these emotions and motives mostly rely on the level of moral self-cultivation. This position of viewing humans as social beings in Confucianism demonstrates features of collectivistic cultures (impetus for social actions = role, responsibility, and obligation in the networks of social relations; goal for social actions = connectedness and harmony; focus of attention = others and society) in the aspect of the focus of attention and the impetus and goals for actions. In this respect, it is evident that the Confucian system of understanding humans as social beings functions as the origin of developing collectivism in East Asian society.

The position of viewing human beings as moral subjects emphasizes that, since human beings are equipped with moral foundations, they need to attribute causes of social actions to the self and explore their inner world. This position is consistent with the characteristics found in collectivistic cultures, which stress on self-restraint in the aspect of the mode of expressing the self. Because people in collectivistic cultures assume that all things depend on the self as a moral subject, they attribute all the responsibilities to themselves. The responsibility to develop and maintain social order and harmony depends on the self; thus, they restrain the self and control their internal attributes rather than extraneous contextual conditions and others. The tendency to restrain the self and to highlight self-control stands out more prominently in the aspect of emotions and motives. They tend to vigorously inhibit and regulate ego-centered emotions such as the Seven Passions and biological and selfish desires; it is because they assume that strivings for these emotions and motives hinder their moral cultivation, since the conditions for induction and satisfaction of these ego-centered emotions and motives rely heavily on extraneous contexts. The Confucian position on human beings as moral subjects is consistent with the features of collectivistic cultures (mode to express self = self-restraint; target to control = self) in the aspect of object to control and the mode of expressing the self. In this context, it can be inferred

clearly that the Confucian system of understanding human beings as moral subjects originates collectivistic cultures in East Asian society.

Finally, the view of humans as changeable beings with infinite possibilities emphasizes the flexibility to meet constantly varying responsibilities in the networks of social roles. This is consistent with the characteristics of the collectivistic cultures, which focuses on variability in accordance with the context in the aspect of variability/stability of personhood. People in collectivistic cultures strive toward self-improvement, they try to reflect upon themselves all the time and to find out and correct their weaknesses and faults. The level of self-cultivation and self-improvement would be come out as the criteria for interpersonal assessment. In the process of constant self-improvement, they need to inhibit and control ego-centered emotions such as the Seven Passions and biological and selfish desires, and let other-directed and norm-based emotions and moral motives preside over all of the self-centered emotions and selfish desires. Therefore, they need to achieve self-development through self-improvement. The view of humans as changeable beings with infinite possibilities is consistent with the features of collectivistic cultures (variability/stability of personhood = variability; strategy for self-development = self-improvement). Viewing from this point, it is certain that the Confucian system to understand humans as changeable beings is also the theoretical origin for the development of collectivistic culture in East Asian society.

These three aspect of emphasis found in collectivistic cultures match very well with the three positions to understand human beings in Confucianism. In addition, it is shown that criteria for interpersonal assessment, mode of attribution, theories of emotion and motivation derived from Confucian thoughts are fully consistent with those from collectivistic cultures. These facts verify that Confucianism has functioned as the origin for the development of collectivism in the East Asian region.

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