



**The Asia Pacific: Why Now?
—The Meaning of the Asia
Pacific Age—**

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The main points of my speech.

1. The Asia Pacific Age could signal the dawn of an "Asia Pacific Civilization". Therefore, the Asia Pacific does not only refer to a geographical region – it also refers to a historical concept and a concept of civilization.

2. The new discipline of Asia Pacific studies must be a future-oriented discipline .

In addition, it is necessary for us to develop this discipline in a purpose-driven manner. To accomplish this, a new kind of Asia Pacific Studies must serve as the strategic and policy studies required to build the Asia Pacific Civilization.

1. The 21st Century is the "Asia Pacific Era"



I would like to emphasize once again that the 21st century is the Asia Pacific Age.

However, the outlook for the Asia Pacific Age was not so clear in the late 1990s when we were preparing to open APU.

Professor Krugman's Prediction:

In 1994, renowned American economist and MIT Professor Paul Krugman published an article entitled "The Myth of Asia's Miracle" in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.-Dec.1994) in which he argued that the growth of the Asian economy would not last long as it was an illusory growth unaccompanied by increased productivity.

However, economic growth throughout the Asian region has been remarkable since the beginning of the 21st century.



2. The Meaning of the Asia Pacific Age: The Coming of the Asia Pacific Civilization

The Asia Pacific Age would not simply mean that the economic development of this region would increase its presence in the world, but that a greater historical significance would be at work.

The logic follows that the Asia Pacific Region possesses the latent potential for a major stage in the history of human civilization, an Asia Pacific Civilization.



We can trace human civilization back to the four major civilizations that all sprung up between 4000 and 5500 years ago on the Eurasian continent: Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley and China.

When we look at the big picture, human civilization since then, seems to have taken two directions from these major origins.



The First was the gradual westward expansion from the centers of civilization in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

After the birth of these ancient civilizations on the Eurasian continent, the centers of power gradually shifted to the areas around the Mediterranean Sea, and eventually gave rise to the Greek, Roman and Arabian civilizations.



Later, the centers of power shifted further West to Europe and the Atlantic Ocean, where modern civilization first flourished from the 15th century onwards.

Not long after that, the American continent gave rise to a Euro-American civilization.

This modern civilization created by Europe and the United States continues to lead our global civilization to this day.



The Second directional shift was eastward from the cradles of civilization in India and China.

Rather than shifting centers of power, the ancient civilizations in these areas maintained their momentum and influenced the surrounding areas.

They expanded into every corner of Asia and developed a diverse array of civilizations. It is a well known fact that Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Southeast Asia and Southwest Asia developed their own unique civilizations.



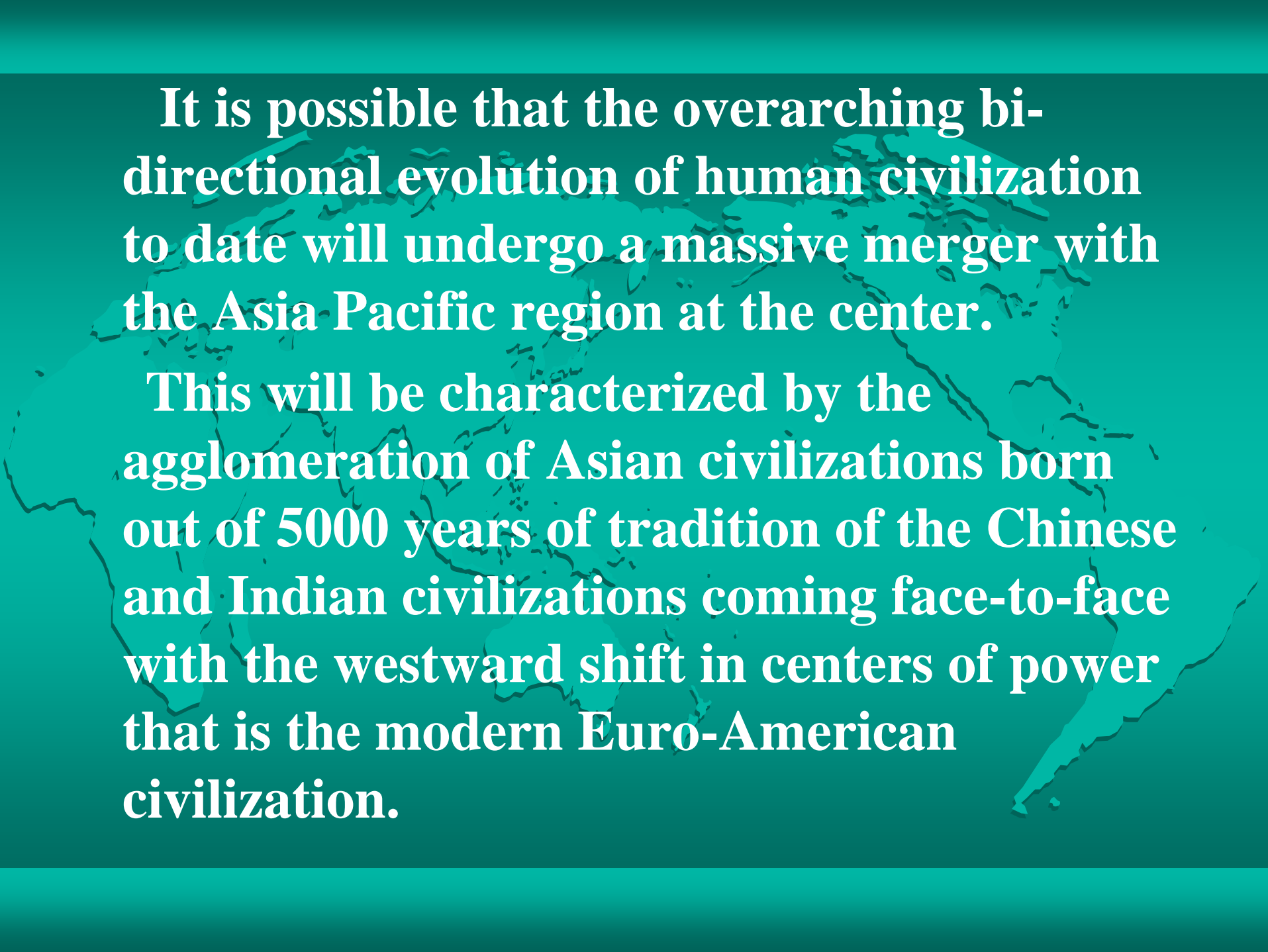
The new movements we are starting to see today are based on this long pattern of evolving human civilizations.

With its rapid economic rise starting in the 1980s, the Asia Pacific region has come to be noticed on the global stage.



On the other hand, the modern Euro-American civilization has been in a major transition phase since the end of the 20th century.

Amid this backdrop, the possibility for a new direction in human civilization with the Asia Pacific region as the main stage is starting to reveal itself.



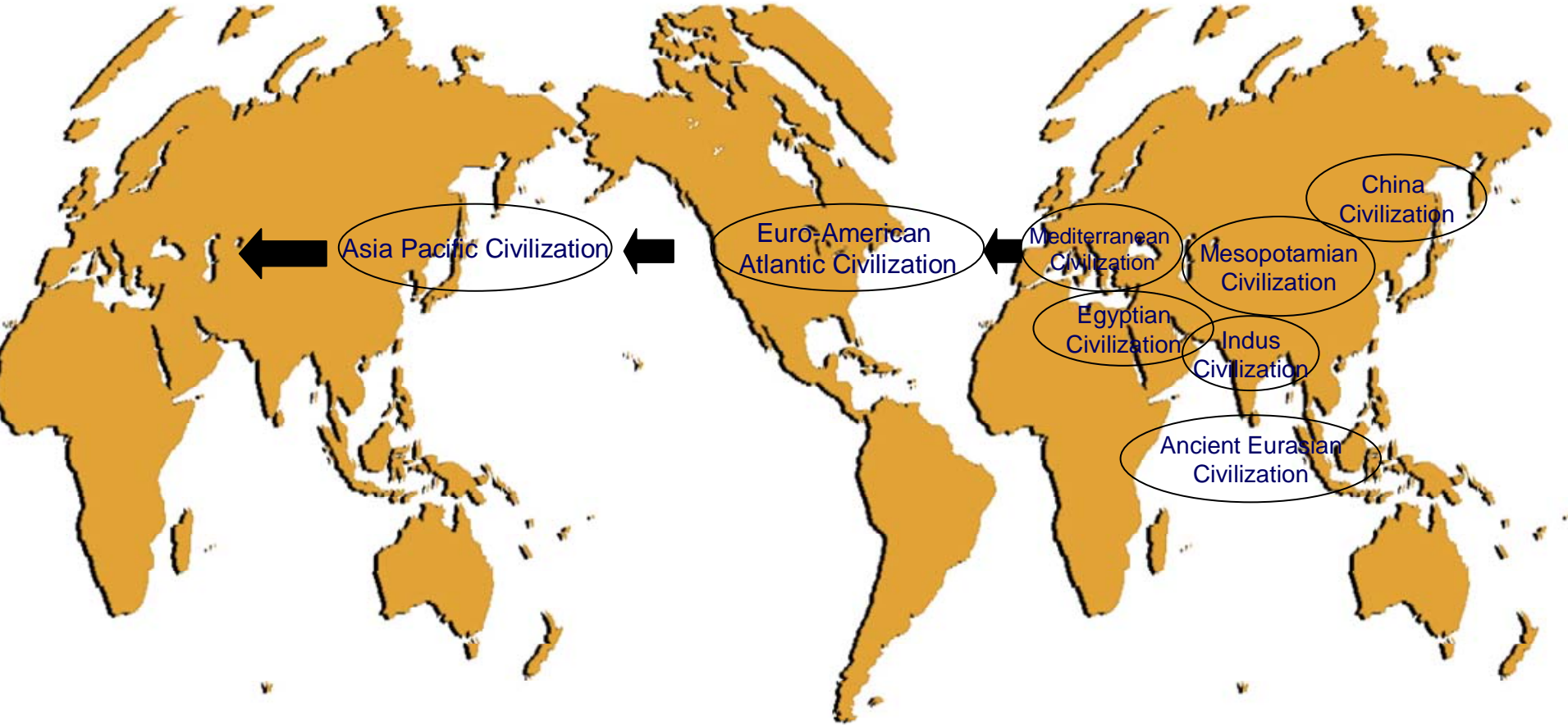
It is possible that the overarching bi-directional evolution of human civilization to date will undergo a massive merger with the Asia Pacific region at the center.

This will be characterized by the agglomeration of Asian civilizations born out of 5000 years of tradition of the Chinese and Indian civilizations coming face-to-face with the westward shift in centers of power that is the modern Euro-American civilization.

In this way, the notion of “the 21st century as the Asia Pacific Age” and its underpinnings lie with the development of this Asia Pacific Civilization.



Transition of the Leading Regions of Civilization



Two ideas emerge from this understanding.

The First is that the Asia Pacific is more than a regional concept: it is a representation of a new evolutionary path for a civilization.

The Second idea that emerges is that in order to actively build this Asia Pacific Civilization, a new kind of Asia Pacific Studies that aims to create a new dimension of the discipline must contain the future-oriented elements of strategy studies and policy studies.

3. Issues surrounding the Asia Pacific Civilization and Asia Pacific Studies

What kind of issues will the Asia Pacific Civilization and Asia Pacific Studies have to deal with?

First, the value of the Asia Pacific Civilization ultimately depends on how it contributes to the wide range of issues that humankind currently faces.



The two biggest issues are probably the following:

The First is being able to conserve the global environment while building systems for sustainable social development.

The biggest issue that humankind faces in the 21st century is conserving the global environment, which includes resolving the problems of global warming and air, water and soil pollution..



The Second issue the Asia Pacific Civilization faces is creating a global social order without hegemony in order to realize worldwide peace.

4. The research Tasks of the new Asia Pacific Studies

The First task of the new Asia Pacific studies relates to substantive studies of the Asia Pacific region, focusing on its characteristics, history and mechanisms of its development.



The Second research task focuses on strategies and policies for sustainable development of the region in the 21st century.

These will provide an opportunity to examine requirements for realizing the 'Asia Pacific Civilization'.



The primary challenge is to tackle environmental problems.

Furthermore, it is essential to establish systems that allow sustainable economic growth and development and ensure peace order, and security in the Asia Pacific region.



**Thank you very much
for your attention.**