

CHAPTER II
ASIATIC DEVELOPMENT MODEL. SINO-JAPANESE
HERITAGE

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A. INTRODUCTION

Over two decades, the 21st century has been characterized, in many ways, by highlighting the encounter, shock, dialogue, etc., between two cultures-civilizations, which have struggled since the 19th century for the recognition of their transcendence within a new global order, after a historical distance, wrapped up by the difficulty of its geography, and Asia's geopolitical self-isolation, which already anticipated, in the face of a possible change, the disarray of the events in its millennial time.

The arrival of England to China in 1839 and of the United States to Japan in 1854, with a belligerent and threatening embassy, causes the first encounter of two millenary²⁰ civilizations that had been avoided for various reasons. However, since that moment, their coexistence occurs in an uninterrupted way, full of challenges and outstanding issues that are still waiting for a sustainable solution.

The East-West relationship is as old as man himself, but the intensity of the events since the Opium War between Great Britain and China, and shortly after, by the violent arrival of Commodore Perry to Japan, marked a before and after between the two civilizations, two regions that until that time marched through different geopolitical and geo-economic roads.

²⁰ For the practical purposes of this work, in East Asia is recognized the existence of the Chinese, Japanese and Muslim civilizations, in direct coexistence with the Russian and the Indian. Western civilization is understood to be the sum of the United States and the European Union.

In this regard, Japan and China are the crowning pieces of a civilizing process of global integration, which although always present, the circumstances and conditions that surround it show it to be the central geopolitical period of an unfinished dialogue, of a first clash of civilizations between East Asia and the Western nations, heirs of the First Industrial Revolution.

This becomes relevant in light of the growth of a global debate that is already talking of a political and economic move from the Atlantic to the Pacific, where the different sides begin to build a new story that tries to explain the reasons for, or impediments to, an *Asian inevitability*, where yesterday's defeat would result in a successful return, the degree and nature of which are not known for sure.

Within this long journey that already spans for more than a century and a half, Japan appears as a country of the East Asia region that has played a relevant role from the very beginning of this encounter because it was the first link between the two universes.

Japan, in the framework of its circumstance, experiences the challenge of being the first East Asian country to face the experience of the Western clash. It is also Japan's responsibility to succeed in turning this challenge into the opportunity to become, first, an industrial nation, then, a world power and, in general, a successful economy that, under different forms and conditions, has maintained itself as the third largest economy in the world from the late 19th century to date.

However, the nature of its economic and political response in both the 19th and 20th centuries remains so applicable today that the majority of the Asian countries, with their own conditions and times, have been reproducing it with such success that, today, it is giving rise to what is recognized as the second encounter or clash of civilizations. In this framework, China, as Japan did at the time, again calls for the configuration of a new global order with Asian characteristics.

The dimension of the questions that are asked today with regard to this proposal forces us to seek within their first explanations about the origin of an Asian model of development, of a Developer State, which has been in place with great success since the 19th century to this day. In this regard, the events in Japan in its experiences with the West, notwithstanding the time elapsed and the literature generated on the subject, are represented as a question of prior declaration, both by the national achievements obtained, and by the effects inherited by its region.

Japan is part of an Eastern civilization that, with its governance during the first clash of civilizations of the 19th century, generated an economic and political strategy with its own characteristics, which has been successfully reproduced by most of the East Asian nations, especially by the People's Republic of China.

The following sections will seek to address the nature of this participation and its relevance as an approach to explain this second *clash* of civilizations of the 21st century.

B. JAPAN AND THE *CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS* OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Much is said of China. Of the Chinese miracle, of its possible hegemony during the 21st century. Along with this, East Asia's economic and political rise since the second half of the 20th century is also added, at the same time that the decline of a good part of the European economies and the problems of the United States is observed.

There is a discussion of changing times and eras and the move of the global center from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Of a new re-configuration of the established order and the sunset of a Brettonian time that no longer fulfills its role of reasonably ordering the world flow.

Many reasons are discussed so that this might happen. However, at this stage of the *Asian inevitability* and even the *Chinese inevitability*, what stands out is that it is by no means a new process.

Rather, it goes back to the time when the first clash of civilizations takes place—in the opposite direction of Huntington’s approach—where the great civilizing force of the West from the 15th to the 20th century clashes against the weakened civilizations of Asia (with China and Japan as of the 19th century), and they stage the first military, economic, political and cultural encounter, whose consequences in time have not ended, given the depth and validity of their cultures.²¹

Japan, as one of the leading civilizations of East Asia, played a central role in the history of this encounter in the 19th century. Certainly, it was not the first Asian civilization to resent the arrival of the pre-industrial-Renaissance outbreak that began to take global positions in Asia from the late 15th century. However, the way it faces the arrival of hegemonies, the way it manages the challenge, the speed of its political reordering, its eastern *assimilation* of the Western culture, and above all, its way of constructing an economic-political model of development with Asian characteristics, are part of a reality that is still explaining, in great

²¹ The world was radically transformed in the 19th century by the titanic new powers triggered by the Industrial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution. Modern transport and communication technologies, such as the steamship, railway, and telegraph (the first telegraph link between China and Europe was established in 1871), connected the planet like never before. New military technologies, including steam war battleships and machine guns, gave industrialized countries unprecedented military superiority over non-industrialized nations. Power and wealth also turned these industrialized countries into very attractive models, although there was a noticeable period of delay before many peoples, outside the core of early industrialization, perceived the seemingly irresistible character of the modernization, and many of them never welcomed it. “From 1860 to 1914, the steel network [the railways] spread all over the world, and so did the political, financial and engineering techniques that were developed together with it”; however “Among non-Western peoples only the Japanese showed real enthusiasm for the railways”, and, even in Japan, the first 29-kilometer stretch of railway track was not installed until 1872. In China, the first short railway line was built by a British company in 1876, but was later acquired by the Chinese government to be dismantled the following year (Holcombe, 2016, p. 253).

measure, the change that is experienced in this first half of the 21st century.

In the vast civilizing geography of Asia, as already noted, its central-eastern part stands out for housing five of its greatest exponents which are the Chinese, Indian, Russian, Muslim, and Japanese civilizations, of which the latter stands out for having started the path of regional vindication in the second part of the 19th century, after most of them, at different times and in different ways, were co-opted by the Western hegemonic cycle starting in the middle of the second millennium of our era.

East Asian civilizations, especially China, India, and Japan, lived the privilege of the distance that kept them away from an extremely belligerent climate that characterized the evolution of early Western and Asia Minor societies for many centuries. The distance, geography, natural barriers, and the lack of technology caused the encounters of East Asia with the West to be exceptional, and while they were assumed in their respective antipodes, their communication and contact only began to multiply in an obvious way until the technology and European will broke into the seas and the unknown territories of their time.²²

The first generation of the pre-industrial innovation, especially maritime transport and new war technology, cause distances to shrink and barriers to fall, and that step by step and one by one these Asian civilizations were gradually yielding to Western war superiority. First India, with the arrival of the Portuguese in the current Kerala (1498) and shortly afterwards with the English through the British East India Company, which for about 350 years would dominate the country under different political and economic figures.

²² The scope and quality of the information on different parts of Asia depended heavily on Europeans. In the 18th century, unlike the second half of the 19th century, many Asian governments were still able to regulate the entry and movements of foreigners. Reports of travelers from all provinces of the country (China) were only available around 1900. No other Asian state practiced a foreign policy as uncompromising as Japan, Korea, and China (Osterhammel, 2018, p. 113 and 117).

After multiple attempts during the Opium War in 1839, the English superiority defeats China without bending it, and forces it to open itself up to English trade and interests, and along with them to those of the major European countries. Japan, which had also enjoyed the privilege of a policy of isolation or *Sakoku*, as a means of regional, and certainly global, defense, receives 13 years after the *defeat* of China, the arrival of the North-American fleet, which tells it that its period of isolation had ended and that together with its regional neighbors, as of that moment, it was already part of a global chess game that since then has staged different realignments. That the world, as Thomas Friedman says, had become flat and more complex.

India lives its circumstance until its independence in 1947. China faces its own circumstance through a rocky internal and external, path that partially recover it until 1949. Japan, unlike its regional neighbors, through pragmatic and efficient diplomacy and a successful understanding of the historical moment that it was living, achieves the incredible leap with a successful transformation, which, still today, continues to be a topic of debate about the type of attributes and degree of their participation in order to achieve this. There is no doubt that with the success of its incorporation into the Western society of its time, Japan built a multi-dimensional political, economic, and cultural bridge between two regions of the world whose dialogue is far from concluded.

This first *encounter*, *shock* as Huntington suggests, or *fusion* as Mahbubani tries to soften, which happens frontally between the West and the East from the 15th to the 19th century, to the detriment of the Asian nations, has not ended. In an era of the Pacific that is gradually settling in exchange for the decline of an era of the Atlantic, puts back on the table the theme of a second confrontation of two regions-civilizations that are bound to find the formula for a sustainable and harmonious global coexistence within the framework of their differences.

C. JAPAN AND THE ASIAN MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

The Political Construction

The incorporation of China and Japan into this first clash of civilizations causes countless effects for two civilizing universes that had dialogued little and shared little. First, the strength of its waves generates, among other effects, the interruption of the civilizing inertia of a region more than two millennia old, while opening up for the first time the possibility of a full coexistence between two worlds with different visions.

This encounter leaves in the immediacy of its first contact a relevant balance of winners and losers, as well as an easy reading of superior and inferior civilizations that is produced with the smoke of the gunpowder from the cannons that did not allow anyone to see, at the time, beyond the economic results of a military superiority.

Japan's clash with the West is exemplified by the arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's fleet, which in 1854 forced it to sign a treaty (Kanagawa) by which it pledged to break its isolation by opening the ports of Nagasaki, Shimoda, and Hakodate; followed by another treaty in 1858, which included an extraterritoriality clause, which meant the end of an ancient era of internal cultivation, sullen to all kinds of foreign relations.

Japan like China, as of these first international agreements, lives what was called in East Asia, "the century of treaties", which were the key that opened the door so that later both China and Japan would have to sign similar treaties with other countries like Russia, Holland, England, France, etc. The Sakoku era had ended for Japan, as well as the Middle Kingdom for China and its traditional isolation.

In this first clash of civilizations, the Asian powers had to conform and yield in multiple ways to Western hegemony, due, among other reasons, to the exhaustion of their civilizing cycles that because their backwardness, in the face of the Atlantic in-

dustrialization, easily exposed them to the dominance of the maritime powers of the second half of the millennium.

China was managing with great difficulty the decline of a dynasty (Qing), which would eventually end in 1911. Japan, with severe upheavals, also witnessed the end not only of a phase of its Early Modern State in the auspices of the Tokugawa Shogunate, but also lived the aftermath of a political order regulated primarily by the power of the sword and the Shugun in turn, as well as by an imperial presence of a symbolic nature.

In January, 1869, fourteen years after Japan signed its first act of opening with the exterior, this situation radically changes before the declaration of the Dynasty Meiji to begin a new phase of government based on the restoration of the monarchy, as a first step to reorder the inertia of the past and importantly, to deal with threats from abroad.

The process was not smooth or fast. It was not was not an easy task to reorient a political, economic, and military reality that had prevailed for at least the last 400 years. However, Japan operated in an agile and efficient manner and went from living a feudal fragmentation internally and being a mostly tributary nation of China externally, to invading the Asian giant for the first time in 1894, 26 years after its restoration, and becoming the dominant nation of East Asia upon defeating Russia also in 1905.

For two millennia, Japan has been practicing an intelligent strategy of internal development, while at the same time it has practiced a strategy of learning coexistence and balance with the most powerful economy of its time, which had inaugurated its modern state in 221 BC. In this way, for Japan, learning and pragmatism become instruments of survival that as of the 6th century give it the guidelines of a path with its own characteristics. However, it was always under the presence of an exuberant civilization that enriches their cultural heritage and limits it in its internal and regional development.²³

²³ Few peoples have created such an unmistakable lifestyle. And yet, many of the Japanese institutions are of foreign origin. The morality and political

From the 6th to the 19th century, Japan traverses a long road on which it builds its own civilization; exploring different forms of political organization. In this period, it passes through an Ancient State where its first States and a Unified Central State (3rd century-12th century) appear; a Medieval State where the Shogunates rival the central power and the figure of the Emperor (13th-16th century); an Early Modern State, in which the Tokugawa Shogunate generates greater order and stability (17th-19th century) until the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

In 1221 with the Kamakura Shogunate, in 1392 with the Shogunate Muromachi, and in 1680 mainly with the Tokugawa, Japan administered an era of medieval political power and an Early Modern State through the main figure of a Shogun, which in appearance ruled together with the figure of an Emperor, in addition to multiple feudal lords and a large cabinet and administrative apparatus. However,

In fact with only a few short-lived exceptions, since the end of the 19th century at least, the Japanese Emperor did not rule, but merely reigned. When the Shogun Tokugawa assumed political control in the 17th century, they struggled to maintain the idea that they were ruling on behalf of the Emperor, stating that they were simply attending worldly matters that were not worthy of Your August Majesty (Heisig, Kasulis, Maraldo, Bouso, 2016).

In spite of this, from the suspension of the imperial figure as the center of power for almost a thousand years, Japan did not hesitate in the 19th century to return its central power to the Emperor in order to bring the various domestic actors together

philosophy of Confucius, the mystique of Chuang-tsé, the etiquette and calligraphy, the poetry of Po Chü-i and the *Book of Filial Piety*, the architecture, the sculpture and painting of the Tang and the Sung modeled the Japanese for centuries. Thanks to this Chinese influence, Japan was also aware of the speculations of Nagarjuna and other great metaphysicists of the Mahayana Buddhism and the meditation techniques of Hindus (Peace, Octavio en Asia, 2014, p. 59).

around its nuclear and sacred image, both to orchestrate its defense and to initiate its response to an unknown order.

Was Japan a successful Asian civilization in coexistence with a Western order? Did it flee to the West? Did it become an industrial Capitalist State, or did it remain as a totalitarian Asian State (Meiji Absolutism)? Or did it inaugurate a pragmatic-eclectic model, between the assimilation and implementation of the best of two realities and two models of State?

The truth is that Japan, in the face of Western arrival, manages to transform a long period of Shogunates plagued by feudal lords (Daimyō) and hundreds of thousands of Samurai, through the restoration of the figure of the Emperor (Tennō). With the arrival of the Emperor Meiji Tennō (Mutsuhito) (1867-1912) and a new organization of political power, Japan responds to the Western presence that ultimately, rather than an intrusion in its internal feudal life, serves as a catapult to ascend to geoeconomic and geopolitical places that it had not had before.

It took China more than 100 years (1840-1949) to reach a principle of political stability against the West, and more than 130 years (1840-1978) to reach a principle of economic recovery. India, from the year 1600, the date that grants permission to the British East India Company for the exercise of exclusive trade, passing through its various expressions of control and dominance until its independence in 1947, took almost three and a half centuries to free itself from Western dominance. Japan, as was already indicated, took less than 20 years for its institutional redesign (1854-1868).

The liberal *modus* demanded from Japan by the West, as a requirement to resume broader and fairer trade negotiations, was the story of a first encounter of two cultures in which one of them, in the exercise of its hegemony, demanded from the latter the total assimilation of a legal, economic, and commercial language that was oblivious to its custom and its idiosyncrasy.

To solve these challenges Japan decides to build a Western integration bridge with Asian features. Under this concern, it

sent several missions to the various European countries in order to learn about the other, to know the other. To know their cultures and learn the secrets of an industrial revolution that was defining the success and backwardness of the regions. Japan goes to France and Germany to learn the legal-political models, to the United States and England the industrial, to Germany and the United States the military, etc., in an accelerated pragmatism to master the secrets of the dominant nations. However, in this vibrant phase of change, in this first dialogue between Asia and the West, what Japan does not do is to forget the assets of an ethnicity and a culture of power that was different from the Western one.

Political Change and Ethnicity

What happens in this first Huntingtonian clash is the approximation of two civilizations with different cosmogonies, which are brought together and confronted by the global flattening, where the *assimilation* of Japan into the Western order is the narrative of an encounter of two cultures that debate day-to-day the degree of their assimilation in a dimension that we know today is not only economic, or political, but also civilizing. It is the *experiment* of a dialogue formed between a millennial and complex Asian country, which as pointed out by Prince Shōtoku since the 7th century, like a large tree, had Shinto roots, a Confucian trunk, and Buddhist fruits.

Therefore, although the Meiji Dynasty promulgated a proto-constitution in 1868 with 5 clauses and approved a first constitution in 1889 to accelerate its dialogue with the West, it never forgot that its Confucian and Shinto roots were speaking of a strong national government, able to control its society, its feudal lords, and negotiate with strength overseas. Although it required a *modern* State, it should not lose the ancestral attributes of an absolute control that clearly recognized the most complete reverence and loyalty to the Emperor (Heisig *et al.*, 2016, p. 1042).

In this regard, Tanaka says, “...the constitution could well be the test of a progressive advance, but in reality, with it, the aristocracy had not only defeated liberalism, but also ignored the true principle of the representative institutions”. He added that,

The powers of the emperor were defined by law in the constitution, and as it had been promulgated by the emperor himself, only he had the ability to initiate amendments and changes; moreover, the constitution itself was above criticism, because no one was allowed to criticize the emperor; his word was sacred and inviolable (Tanaka, 2011, pp. 202, 207).

With the legal, political, and economic assimilation of Japan to the liberal model of the time, a first encounter is produced between two cosmogonies that have different visions of the world and of life, and therefore, the way to live and to resolve it. A dilemma that, as Mishra points out, is far from being resolved in the face of West’s obsession, since then, with imposing on the world, in this case East Asia, the *religion* of the *Western Model* (Mishra, 2017, p. 37).

This first phase of Japan’s Westernization, worth noting, does not happen as a voluntary act of change by copying the other. It is first and foremost a necessity of survival in the face of external threat. Moreover, its emergence is backed by the convenience of escaping from an exhausted endogenous cycle and a regional tributary dependency. It is produced with haste and under the terms of an external contract of adhesion, which leaves no space to negotiate its clauses. For this reason, from the outset, the Asian part resorts, in turn, to the *assimilation* as a strategy of simulation, such that while it tries to adhere to the Western clauses, in the background it operates the Asian *adaptation* that best suits it, either in political form or in economic strategy.

Thus, for example, in the Five Principles of the Emperor Meiji (1868), in addition to issuing a reassuring message of inclusion and participation to the newly dissolved internal political actors (feudal lords and samurai), it also defines the strengthening

of the imperial government. Similarly, in the 1889 constitution, after sending various learning missions to the West and designing a legal system similar to its Western counterparts, as already indicated, Emperor Mutsuhito in Article 4 places himself as the, “Head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution”. To leave no doubt to the above, Article 5 clarifies that, “The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet”. And if there were any doubts about its omnipresent power, in Article 6, it is bluntly established that, “The Emperor gives sanction to laws, and orders them to be promulgated and executed” [The Constitution of the Empire of Japan (1889), Harvard University].

In this first clash, Japan takes the Asian leadership of vindication under a bounded integration strategy, forced by the weight of an Atlantic hegemony that left little room for negotiation. However, with special sensitivity, it gives the impression of leaving Asia and *fleeing* to the West with a diplomatic handling that satisfies the industrial nations, which place it as an example of success for all of Asia. China, in this first clash becomes outdated, first, because the multinational Western invasions within its territory followed one after another throughout the 19th century and into the mid-20th century, in the face of the refusal of China to give up its status as the center of the world. Also, because its large internal differences, unlike Japan, could not be resolved quickly or pragmatically. The leafy tree of the Chinese civilization required more decades to renew its foliage, although it never ceased to observe and closely follow everything that Japan did in its rapprochement with the West, which to date it has been using to its advantage since its first opening in 1978.

In this *flee* to the West,²⁴ Japan, as a millennial country, as a member of a region rich in civilizing development, resorts to

²⁴ Among the most popular and fervent pro-Westerners of the time was Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), who came to comment in 1885 that Japan should “leave Asia” culturally and distance itself from its more backward neighbors. “It

its ancestral culture, its beliefs, its ways of ordering power, the State, and society, to build a new profile. This story of myth, legend, and reality that the Meiji reformers reconstructed, notes Martínez Legorreta, achieved the loyalty of the masses to the imperial institution and his person. “In that historical moment”, he added, “They gave Japan a unity that perhaps it would not have reached otherwise, and at the same time a sense of oneness that would serve it not only to counter foreign ideologies, but, years later, and under new circumstances, to promote and carry out their own national, hegemonic and expansionist project in East Asia” [Legorreta Omar, in Tanaka (comp.), 2011, p. 208]. The same author adds that in modern history, no other nation has changed so drastically its society, customs, economic practices, and political structure to create a modern state like Japan; although he adds that this occurred without losing, in the process, its cultural identity [Legorreta, Omar in Tanaka (comp.), 2011, 186].

Other authors such as Hajime Tanabe, with different nuances but agreeing with this cultural assimilation, explain that the Japan of the Meiji era was an ancient mixture of Buddhism and Confucianism, in coexistence and assimilation with the technical and scientific culture of the West (Heisig *et al.*, 2016, p. 1049). Heisig, Maraldo and others also comment that what is present in Japan in the first half of the 20th century is more like a kaleidoscope of Eastern and Western sources, *stumbling around* and reflecting one way or another on the issues that have marked, for centuries, the search for wisdom (Heisig *et al.*, 2016, p. 823).

In their diversity, the different opinions tell us about an encounter-shock-assimilation of civilizations, of an unexhausted process where, despite the large change that Japan lives in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century, the identity of a

is better that we leave the ranks of the Asian nations and try our luck with the civilized nations of the West”, wrote Fukuzawa. H.M.Hopper, *Fukuzawa Yūkichi :From Samurai to Capitalist*, Pearson Longman, New York, 2005, pp. 121 and 122, en (Holcombe, 2016, p. 291).

millennial civilization, of an Asian region rich in cultural content, appears constantly in a dialogue with the developed civilizations of the moment. Now we clearly see that this dialog has been extended until our days. We also observe the presence of two visions that to date continue to *stumble around*, in a rearrangement that does not seem to conclude and that, on the contrary, in the first half of the 21st century seems more alive than ever in the face of the rise of China and its *Asian characteristics* in the global scene.

Japan in its contact-clash-fusion with the West does not present itself alone. All the cultural production that the East Asian region had generated the two or three millennia before this first encounter go together with it. In particular, all the influence of the powerful Chinese culture is added to its interlocution, from which Japan, together with Korea and the other countries of the area, have always benefited.²⁵

Since the year 404, for example, (the tradition points out 284), through Korea it receives the political and social ideas of a Confucianism that gradually joins the scaffolding of a Japanese ethnicity in construction that would eventually become the *trunk* of the tree. In this regard, Smith comments that the first evidence on the use and adoption of Confucian practices on ethics and political principles is when Prince Shōtoku (572-621) promulgated the famous constitution of the “Seventeen Articles” in 604, in which Confucianism played a central role in the vertical organization of the power and duties of the people with the sovereign. This tendency to adopt the Confucian line for its organization characterized the Japanese attitude since the earliest times (Smith, 1959, p. 6).

²⁵ These paradoxes suggest that China was also diverse in the old days, as the remaining heavily populated nations still are. China only differs in that it was unified much earlier. Its “*Sinicisation*” meant the drastic homogenization of an immense region in an ancient melting pot of peoples, the Chinese population of the tropical Southeast Asia, and a massive influence in Japan, Korea, and possibly even India. Thus, the history of China is the key to the entire story of East Asia (Diamond, 2010, p. 371).

Confucian thought has been part of the political and social reality of the Land of the Rising Sun throughout its history. From its *founding* document, the Constitution of Shōtoku already accepted in its second article the forms of vertical power of Confucian nature and morality as a fundamental element of the State. That the superiors act and that the inferiors obey, that the rite, justice, trust, harmony be respected. That evil and injustice be punished, are criteria of a central document in the history of Japan marked by Confucian influences. At the time of the Shogunates, especially in the Tokugawa era, Confucianism under the main reinterpretation of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, lives a period of special recognition in the social and political life of the country helping to guide the family order, the government, and even the military classes (Samurai). At this political phase, in China, children were asked to respect their parents; servants to respect their teachers; wives to respect their husbands; that brothers and sisters live in harmony; that the young man respects the eldest; that people behave righteously. An entire Confucian philosophical tradition can be traced throughout the construction of the Japanese story. Some of the relevant Japanese thinkers of the Tokugawa²⁶ era are Fujiwara Seika, Nakae Tōju, Yamasaki Ansai, Asami Keisai, Ogyū Sorai, and Sontoku.

²⁶ The debate on Confucianism is two and a half millennia old. With the news and concerns of each moment, its existence, its nature, its content, its scope, etc. are debated. In the 21st century, Confucianism does not lose its validity, and its reality, its flaws and attributes remain part of a discussion between the West and East Asia, between the different countries of East Asia and even within China itself. In the case of Japan, as was already noted, Confucianism was introduced to the country from the early centuries of the new era, “Along with the insertion of the written Chinese language”. “Over time, the Confucian notions had a decisive influence on a significant part of the Japanese culture, including the imperial names, titles of power, and the first attempt to articulate a constitutional structure for the political order”. With the expansion of neo-Confucianism, especially from the systematization of Zhu Xi (1130-1200), Confucianism experienced a second boom in the Japanese country in the face of the subordination of Buddhism during the Song Dynasty. At the same time, the Tokugawa rule from 1600 allowed the development of a cultural basis for the

However, in the 18th century, and especially in the 19th century, the need to have a strong nationalism in the face of furious

golden century of the Confucian philosophy in Japan. “During this period, the Confucian philosophers were often backed by members of the Samurai elite or were already part of the warrior class. However, even during this era of hereditary divisions among the samurai, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants...the Confucian philosophers were addressing the world from an inclusive perspective, which *a priori* intended not to omit or marginalize, but rather to understand holistically”. The clear influence of Confucianism in Japan, despite the exile attempted by the Meiji era, is reflected in the first construction of the word “philosophy” that arises in this period, formed with a neologism that included “subtle distinctions” derived from the ancient and modern Confucianism. “However, much more influential than the fact that the new word «Tetsugaku» catapulted Confucianism to the forefront of Japanese philosophy, was the impressive work produced by the first Japanese man to obtain an academic position in the area of philosophy in the Imperial University of Tokyo, Inoue Tetsujiro (1855-1944)”. Inoue identified within the traditional Japanese philosophy various schools of the early Japanese Confucianism. In his monumental trilogy, Inoue reveals that long before Western philosophy had reached Japan, Confucian thinkers of the Tokugawa era (1600-1868) produced a copious volume of philosophical literature. “The research of Inoue persuaded many Japanese and Western scholars that Confucianism had been an element of vital importance within the Japanese tradition” (Heisig, Kasulis *et al.*, pp. 315-317). However, Confucianism and its influence in Japan are still under debate with the categories and the changes inherent to the 21st century. Novel authors such as Kang Xiaoguang, Jiang Qing, or Kiri Paramore, structure new confrontations and realities in the face of the “Leninism of the Chinese Communist Party”, in their comparison with China; such as *laissez faire*, neo-liberal *laissez passer*, or conservative cultural nationalism, among others. New Confucian movements in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, etc., are part of an endless debate. In the case of Japan, since the Meiji era and the second part of the 20th century, the subject has tried to be relegated to the construction of a unique cultural history, becoming, even, in a generalized way, part of a taboo in the intellectual and political environments. However, scholars such as Abe Yoshio, Watanabe Hiroshi, Kojima Yasunori, etc., are part of a new wave of specialists on the study of Confucianism in Japan and the rest of Asia. Although together with them, scholars such as Yonaha Jun (The Meaning of Japan), a brilliant and respected scholar in Japan today, irreverently and eruditely reconstruct the historical passage of Confucianism in Japan as part of a Huntingtonian clash of civilizations between the Chinese civilization and Japanese civilization, within the hypothetical framework of the Westphalia agreements. Maruyama Masao, for his part, as of 1945 inspired the “Maruyama rule”, which consists of tal-

external threats, together with the decline of the figure of the shogunate, gives rise to a time called “National Studies”. During this

king about Confucianism by avoiding mentioning its name. Today, as Paramore points out, the taboo of speaking about the shared cultural forms in East Asia, has transitioned to limit the topic. This stems from the challenges that both countries face in the 21st century (Paramore, 2016, pp. 173-182). The intention of this work is far from pretending to abound on an issue of regional idiosyncrasies and rivalries. Rather, it seeks to find keys that allow one to establish the constants of the construction of power, from a Western perspective, of a region rich in civilization production, whose strategies have led to common policies of an economic nature that have catapulted them to be the nations with the greatest development and social improvement of a global society that does not present the same results. In this regard, as was already stressed, the political and economic lines of Japan in the 19th and 20th centuries are otherwise suggestive in understanding the strategies followed by most countries in the area in the 20th and 21st centuries. Even the post-war economic policy of Japan is presented as an extension of what has been attempted as of 1868. Certainly, the military and hegemonic imposition of the United States as of 1945 changes, in a forced way, the analysis, although in the economic field, the power of the Japanese Developer State was never defeated and, on the contrary, it perfected its participation to achieve its second economic miracle. It is also clear that in the first half of the 21st century, in the face of the economic development that was achieved (\$40,000 per capita, 2018) and after a century and a half of coexisting closely with the West, the topic of Japan cannot be dealt with under the same line of analysis. However, it is sufficient to be in Japan and to see the permanent commitment between politics and economics, to feel its neo-nationalism, the validity of the Asian values, etc., to establish that a Shinto, Confucian, and Buddhist ontology coexists predominantly over a Western culture. The issue of the “Eurasian” fusion of Japan and Hong Kong, for example, is a pending subject at this time of change of eras. Meanwhile, the debate on Confucianism will remain open in East Asia to establish whether it has been a xenophobic nationalism; whether it has covered up a radical conservatism; whether it has adopted the nationalist fascisms; whether it has been an obstacle to the promotion of diversity, critical thinking, critical activism, etc.; or whether it has been a key part of a socio-political model that has helped sustain both the force of the East Asian civilization for two millennia, as well as its global economic hegemony for 90% of that period. Until these *Asian enigmas* are sufficiently solved, Confucius continues to teach that, “In the nature of heaven and earth, man is the most worthy of all creatures; of the conduct of human beings, none is so large (morally) as filial piety”. That filial piety includes five basic relationships of a familial, social, and political nature: father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, sovereign and subject, friend and friend, which

period Japan practices the reconstruction of its own story through the veneration of the past, which lead it to declare Shintoism as the national ideology of the State within the inauguration of the Meiji *restoration* in 1890, to which could be added that in 1940 the Prime Minister Fumimaro also recognizes it as the only *religion* in the country.

However, despite this important fact of Japanese identity, in the midst of the Meiji era, the Education Minister Fukuoka Takachika cannot help but to declare, despite the new Shintoism ideology, that, “In matters of discipline we must promote the only moral thought of this empire, which refers to following the doctrines of Confucianism” (Smith, 1959, p. 47). Without disregarding the Shintoism importance to the political and social life of Japan, as Smith acknowledges, from their birth Shintoism nationalism and Confucianism communicate and consult each other on a permanent basis, based on a Confucian ethic of values and on a political and social order of a vertical nature at all levels. From a Confucian principle of filial piety as a starting point for organizing the State and the highest loyalty and devotion to the Emperor, as the established central power (Smith, 1959, p. 237).

The Confucian vision of the construction of power that both China and Japan share under their own circumstances stems from the idea, as was already stated, of a strong, powerful, unrestricted State, operating under a verticalism of power based on the principle of filial piety.²⁷ Most of the ancient states of East

are still a fundamental part of the Asian society and State. Regarding the aforementioned, Flora Botton tells us that in recent studies in China (we would add Japan and other East Asian nations), emerge, “Important the survival of Confucian attitudes, which emphasize the duty to parents, harmony, and the common good that make the family look like an emotional and material support center in times of crisis” —and that— “Despite divergent views, there is a consensus among scholars that the ties among family members remain alive and strong” (Botton Beja, 2019, p. 367).

²⁷ Now the leaders of the Japanese court were consciously trying to build a powerful centralized state, something similar to the model used by China during the Sui and Tang dynasties. The Japanese monks who had been sent to

Asia converge in various forms, but with the same essence, under this central idea. Thus, what faces, what *clashes* against the Western political order at that first encounter of the 19th century, is not just the idiosyncrasies of a nation that debated its political and economic strengths and weaknesses in the industrial with the power of the moment, but that, in general, was the sum of the civilizing heritage of an entire region that at this initial stage had to rearrange its reality in order to preserve its interests and its future, but that did not give up its ethnicity, its culture, nor did it renounce, since then, the importance of its role in the new global era. As the journalist Tokutomi Shoho stated in 1905 when the Japanese fleet defeated the Russian naval force in the Tsushima Strait, “We have destroyed the myth of inferiority of the non-white races. With our power we are forcing our acceptance as a member of the great world powers” (Mishra, 2012, p. 3).

The Economic Change and the Ethnicity

The Asian State —the Chinese state as the founder of the model but in this case the Japanese State as a tributary country— in its political and economic sense are born together,

China to study, along with the first diplomatic missions, began to return home in the 630s, bringing with them direct knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the Tang dynasty. Around Prince Naka no Ōe (who later ruled as Emperor Tenji, r. 662-671), a coalition was formed with some of the teachers who had studied in China and they were led by a man named Nakatomi Kamatari (614-669). According to tradition, Nakatomi Kamatari carefully assessed the skills of all the royal princes and determined that Naka no Ōe was the most suitable person to carry out his long-cherished project of establishing a centralized government (Holcombe, 2016, p. 155).

The efforts to strengthen the Japanese State at this time of crisis included the accelerated adoption of Chinese-like imperial institutions, which, then, were simply the most impressive administrative model ever, and which is likely to have been introduced mostly indirectly at this time through the Silla mediation, in Korea, rather than directly through the Tang dynasty of China. H. Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolic in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2009, p. 51 in (Holcombe, 2016, pp. 156 and 157).

learn together, live together, and are consubstantial in their origin. Similarly, their essential economic powers are born in the same birth in the form of primary modalities that have changed little, because they are part of the construction of a power that was thought of as a responsible parent for meeting the material and economic needs of its people; of a people educated not to have, but to be, in the frugality of their Confucian moralism. Of a unipersonal imperial father (State), which is not accustomed to sharing its power or its responsibility because it has never done so. Because it has never been subject to limitations (checks and balances), that has always been accustomed to acting in an authoritarian manner, under the *moral* and *virtuous responsibility* of its origin, subject to the result of the satisfaction of its governed (sons). To organize itself vertically as a father to his family, with one voice and command from top to bottom, where the boundless loyalty of each of the family members to its ruler (State) prevails, in a vertical relationship without real democratic glimpses, because they have never been part of its state cosmogony. Of a State that to guarantee its good results is surrounded by a civil organization of millennial career, meritocratic, a government of the *best*; dynamic, updated, disciplined and pragmatic, like a bureaucratic army that for millennia first administered the land, the last century the industry and now the intelligence services.²⁸

In the economic field, Japan, like the East Asia region as a whole, recognized from the outset that the main difference with the West was the degree of industrial development among them. That the power of the military powers emanated from an industrial revolution that they had not attended and, that now, the way to attain, and then compete, with these nations was to generate an accelerated industrial development of their own. In an era

²⁸ According to Chinese ethics, the social unit is the family, constituted of the system of hierarchical obedience, and the peasant enjoys the same importance as the emperor, that paternal autocrat whose virtues have placed him at the head of the great communist brotherhood of mutual duties, by his own choice and agreement. (Okakura, 2018, p. 60).

where market liberalism was imposed militarily throughout Asia, the articulation of the political response, and over it the economic strategy of Japan, in the 19th century is what can be defined as the most relevant antecedent of the now successful Asian development model or “Developer State” as Chalmers Johnson called it in the 20th century.

During the eighties of the last century, under the new train of Japan’s economic successes and in the face of the observation of the attributes of an Asian model with its own characteristics, Johnson sensitively stated that, “The Developer State exists and is in the process of changing the balance of world power, whether the Anglo-American academic and journalistic establishment recognizes it or not”, (Woo-Cumings, 1999, p. 33). In this regard, on the proposed characteristics, Francks added, “In the World of East Asia that (Chalmers) Johnson describes, the ruling elites and strategic economic ministries deploy the entire arsenal that is at their disposal as standards, regulations, subsidies, trade protection, restrictions on foreign investment, to guide their domestic companies in the direction of development that they deem necessary” (Franks, 2015, p. 17).

This commitment of the Asian State to its economy and its results, both in China and Japan, Korea, etc., has always been practiced and goes far beyond choosing winners (Picking Winners) or managing market failures (market failures). The idea of an interventionist state *responsible* for the fate of its subjects was born with Confucius and his followers and was implemented under different circumstances over two millennia. The creation of the first modern State since the 3rd century B.C. on the part of China and its tributary influence within its entire zone of influence is what determines the political and economic nature of the Asian State that always had a commitment to its economy and the people it governs. The correct interpretation that Johnson offers for the Japan of the 20th century finds its origin in the millennial ethnicity of a region that, through this interpretation, has been able to hold economic leadership during 90% of the modern time of humanity.

Japan, in the face of its economic challenge, built a political response with a *Western form* but with an Asian nature, where the power of the emperor and his restoration team had no limits on the management of the state apparatus from 1868 to 1926 with the Mutsuhito and Yoshihito emperors; and even, albeit under a different scheme, during the Taisho *democracy* and the War Regime (1931-1945). As of 1945 it repeats the economic strategy under the American *circumstance*.

The result of this, in political matters, was a Japanese parliamentarianism with Asian characteristics or a *Meiji Absolutism* with *Western peculiarities*, from which a Japanese economic-industrial model was born that at the time became the Asian model of development, which, from the 19th century to the 21st century, has been repeated under its own conditions by Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, etc., and especially the People's Republic of China.

In economic matters, the Meiji Dynasty built an entire structure that has been catalogued by some specialists as *Sui generis* (Flath, 2014). The Japanese capitalism —Martínez Legorreta emphasizes— was not developed as a state capitalism nor as the result of private enterprise, but as a mixture of both [Legorreta Omar, in Tanaka (comp.), 2013, p. 208]. In the seventies of the 20th century, during the opening of China, Deng Xiaoping would translate the above by stating that, “There are currently two models of productive development. To the extent that each of them serves our purposes, we will make use of it. If Socialism is useful to us, the measures will be Socialist; if Capitalism is useful to us, the measures will be Capitalist”. “There are no fundamental contradictions —Deng summarized pragmatically— between the socialist system and the market economy” (Oropeza, 2008, p. 450). Neither were there between the liberal capitalism of the Meiji era and the new Japanese *Developer State*.

The *economic pragmatism* in the West was inaugurated by Japan along with its entry into the liberal order of its time in an effort to integrate itself into the winner's circle, but without ignoring its

Asian DNA, more as a consubstantial part of it than as a deliberate strategy of the moment. In this way, the Meiji administration builds a political-legal power by way of the Western forms, but centralist in its implementation.

Economically, this same power, now reflected in the image of a *Modern Developer State*, leads the industrialization of the country starting with the new infrastructure, banking, telegraph, railways, monetary system, etc. At the same time, it immediately assumes the same role that it has always played, of being a protectionist State, injecting capital into the private sector, creating companies, promoting public and private enterprises, supplying with advantage the delivery of inputs, raw materials, and generally distributing all kinds of stimulus, subsidies, or protection that would contribute to the formation of an industrial economy that could compete and win with Western companies.

Its relationship with the private sector, regardless of its size, is one of submission and dependence, at the same time that it is an opportunity to manage politically a displaced samurai class, which in the new economic and political order finds a place at the head of the new companies of the State. This characteristic of Japan is the one that explains, to a large extent, the birth of the *zaibatus*²⁹ or large economic conglomerates of the country, to whom, for strategic and political reasons, the empire provides with unbridled support in strategic sectors, creating world champions in heavy industry, capital goods, automotive, etc. Companies and families such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Kawasaki, etc., are still examples of this 19th century policy. This state-private sector relationship, by nature of its origin, generates a differentiated development engine that is not easy to understand in other regions of the world, but which always involve, in synthesis, the commitment on the part of the State to their economic develop-

²⁹ In Korea, this figure will lead to the creation of industrial chaebols after the end of the 1950 war, and China will overflow with large state enterprises or SOES, as well as with the creation of special economic zones.

ment and especially with their results. This economic strategy in its modern version that starts in Japan during the *restoration* continues today with the modulations of the case. “Even though the process of industrialization was accomplished, and led Japan to a new stage of development” [Legorreta Omar, in Tanaka (comp.), 2011, p. 229].

There has always been an attempt to differentiate the Asian circumstances. In some cases there is talk of the “Japanese administrative guidance” [Woo-Cumings in Aoki (comp), 2000, p. 434]; in others of the “Samurai Spirit” (Francks, 2015), etc., which tells us that since its incorporation Japanese-Asian differences already demanded a distinction within the Western economic-political analysis. One can add to this the sense of respect and loyalty of the Japanese workers, employees, and officials, which impacted and continues to shock the West and which, now, could be generalized towards most East Asian countries that are more inspired by nationalism, loyalty, and merit than by profits. Francks substantiates the above,

On the success achieved in the new —Japanese— companies firstly, a patriotic commitment and social responsibility, must be highlighted, rather than a private accumulation of wealth. An unknown phenomenon —in the West— but faithful to a Confucian tradition and a society still in touch with its feudal past” (Francks, 2015, p. 57).

The contribution that Japan makes to the East Asian region is a phenomenon of the greatest relevance, the consequences of which continue to spread to such an extent that they are now identified as one of the main causes for the change of the economic center from the Atlantic to Pacific. However, the interpretation of the economic success of the Japanese assimilation with the West in both the 19th and 20th centuries remains a controversial topic that is discussed periodically but is not still resolved.

The predominant Western current (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, 1991, etc.) continues to explain the Meiji’s

economic success and its replica as of the second half of the 20th century, as a result of the *adoption* of the open and free economy model, adding in the political aspect its adoption of the Rule of Law and the democratic model, that is, the *Western Model*.

Another important current assumes Japanese success starting with the adoption of the Western lessons by theorists such as Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Bismarck, etc., or economic specialists such as Lutz, Smith, etc., which *motivated* it to adopt an industrial developmentalist model and then behave like a market economy. Stiglitz and Wolfson, meanwhile, highlight in the first place some of the contributions of the, “Miracle of East Asia”, among others: the achievement of a better functioning of the society; the flexibility of public policies; the relationship between the State and the markets; the accumulation of physical and human capital; modifications to the allocation of resources; official support to investment, etc. But not entirely convinced of their own conclusions, they comment,

Perhaps the true miracle of East Asia has been political rather than economic. Why —he wonders without answering— did governments undertake these policies? Why didn't politicians or public servants misrepresent them for personal gain? —adding— Also on this point the East Asian experience has many lessons to share, in particular with regard to the use of incentives and the design of the public sector aimed at finding efficiency and reducing the possibility of corruption (Stiglitz, Wolfson, 1997, p. 347).

Another current known as “Comparative Institutional Analysis” (World Bank, 1993) is presented as an alternative that breaks with the economic reductionism about the origin or degree of participation of the Market-State equation. This position shows progress by including the study of the scientific behavior of both theories, but by noting that “...the economic growth of East Asia is not culturally determined, but emerged from a particular regional context of late development, a particular place called Northeast Asia at a particular time called the Cold War” [Woo-

Cummings in Aoki (comp), 2000, p. 434]. First, like the rest of the theories, they ignore the region as the cradle of the oldest current civilizations on the planet; and second, they ignore China's continual influence as the cultural-civilizing center of a powerful and complex tributary zone, in the face of the seduction of an economic positivism that refuses to analyze the ontological influence of a millennially valid region, where the differences between State and Market were debated philosophically more than 2000 years ago and that also decided its Moral and Vertical State without limitations centuries ago.³⁰

Japan barges into the global scene, and with its *Asian characteristics* manages to become an empire and a developed nation from 1870 to 1949. From 1950 to 1990, Japan repeated the experience, and adjusting what was adjustable, positioned itself again as the second economic power until the end of the 20th century. Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, etc. follow the Asian model of development shown by Japan and in a fortunate mix of Market-State (Asian Developmentalist State) achieve economic success. Starting in 1978, a bankrupted China, emulating the winning regional experience, with Chinese characteristics and 900 million human beings, positioned itself as the second largest economy in the world as of 2010.

The Asian model of development exists and the Western categories fail to decipher it completely.

First, for the West, it will be important to accept that there is a culture that is different from its own with valid historical di-

³⁰ Asia is unique. The Himalayan mountain range separates, just to highlight them, two great civilizations: on the one hand, the Chinese of Confucian communitarianism, and on the other, the Indian of Vedic individualism. However, even the snowy barriers cannot stop this great expansion of love for the definitive and the universal that constitute the common legacy and thought of the peoples of Asia, that have enabled the gestation of all the great religions of the world and, that also differentiate them from the maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to concentrate on the particular and the pursuit of the meaning of life, and not on its purpose (Okakura, 2018, p. 39).

mensions. That East Asia gives another interpretation and outcome to Western categories under debate: Market-State. That the dimension of the 2200-year-old Asian Modern State is an entity full of content, much of which with an ontology far from the Western idea. That Japan is an individual culture but at the same time is a tributary culture, just like Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, etc., and therefore, it is not enough to start the analysis of categories to decipher the Japanese model, or the Asian model of development, during the middle of the 20th century or during the restoration of the Meiji Dynasty, nor as of the Constitution of Shōtoku of the 7th century. It is necessary to refer to the debates from the 5th to the 1st century B.C. by the State and its functionaries, which occurred in China; to the ideas and writings of Confucius, Mencio, Lao Tse, Zhu Xi, etc., in order to understand the Asian verticalism and its forms for building power and its perpetually direct participation in economic development. To the Confucian filial piety and its ancestral culture of respect to power and social values; to its way of creating aristocratic bureaucracies for 2000 years and to its attachment to a society oriented to the Rule of Morality and not to the Rule of Law.

Effective interventionist state? Bureaucratic capitalism? Meiji Absolutism? Autocratic paternalism? Centralized State? Developmentalist State? Market socialism? Democracy and the Rule of Law with Asian characteristics? An ever-moving formula of a prevailing ancestral State? There is the challenge.

D. FINAL REFLECTIONS

Currently, the West is still wondering what has happened with that stage undoubtedly dominated by it, where in the framework of a force without obstacles it discovered new continents, went around the world, inaugurated an Industrial Revolution, conquered the great empires of its time, and in the 20th century, in the context of a global conflict, established a new institutionality for a future that was thought to be endless. The end of history, it was said, in an

intimate conversation where everything *worked well*, where everything was under control and predicted a 21st century of Western hegemony.

All this perception changed, and in a labyrinth with many doubts and few answers, the West is watching with concern how a global transformation is progressing where it gradually loses its control and dominance and walks inexorably towards a *new normal*, not knowing what it is, but in which the progressive presence of an Asian actor of a thousand faces appears, that already participates directly in the issues of its future and its present.

The study of the Asian phenomenon in general, but of East Asia in particular, since its *modern revelation* by the Christian missionaries of the 16th and 17th³¹ centuries has suffered, in general terms, from the absence of an analysis that is on par with the depth and wealth of the different civilizations that inhabit it. Ignorance, contempt, oblivion, supremacy are some of the reasons that have prevented the West from having a clearer perception of its Asian counterparts.

Faced with the increasingly repeated question of whether this will be a Western or an Asian century, or a Eurasian century, the need to have a more credible narrative of its modern encounter becomes an urgent need if the West intends to safeguard the terms of its future and to contribute towards the construction of a new and more sustainable order.

The relevance of the civilizations of this Asian region impedes hasty conclusions. Obviating them is not an option if the aim is to build a solid account of their political categories and, consequently, of their economic and social derivations. Also, see-

³¹ The Jesuits continued to report from China in the 18th century. The position of the Fathers in the Court, among the learned bureaucrats, and their scientific caliber might have diminished since the previous century. Several descriptions of the country, based on extensive travel through some provinces, had previously been produced, in particular the books of Alvarez Semedo (1642) and Gabriel de Magalhães (1688). Nonetheless, it was not until the arrival of the first French Jesuits in Beijing in February 1688 that literature on China began to flood the European market (Osterhammel, 2018, p. 115).

ing them in the light of the results of their last lustrums or years, is presented as a trap that is particularly favorable to self-deception. Finally, to divide them, to explore them only in line with their individuality, is to forget the interrelationship of a region that during the last two millennia operated, beyond their own wills, as a cultural and civilizing basin of countless contagions.

Japan, in this sense, emerges as one of the relevant actors in East Asia that for more than two thousand years has contributed and participated in the region's civilizing production. Therefore, its role on the world economic stage in the 19th century cannot be seen only as a wise decision of the *restauration* of the time. From 1868 to 1945, the economic journey of Japan carries with it a series of its own regional attributes and shared attributes, which have operated successfully within a Western political and economic reality. From 1945 to 1990, it recovered the experience of the 19th century in the economic field, and despite its new political reality, from 1946 to 1975, it grows at an average annual rate of 9.3%, and from 1976 to 1995, at an annual average of 3.7%, succeeding in placing itself as the world's second economy.

It is true that in order to achieve this, Japan, technically, first resorts to Keynesianism for the recovery from defeat; to Minister Tanzan's Economic Stabilization Plan; to a rapid growth period from 1951 to 1960; to a plan to double national income from 1961 to 1970; to the Stable Growth Plan as of 1971, until the 1990s when the country enters into a stage of stagnation that it has not been able to overcome. Nevertheless, during the Japanese economic recovery of the second part of the 20th century, the presence of an Asian-style Developmentalist State again took hold.

Holcombe confirms the aforementioned by identifying Japan, as Johnson did, as the original East Asian Developmentalist State, which the Japanese themselves described in the 1970's as a *planning-oriented market economy*. Holcombe, like many others, resorts to native notions to explain it, indicating that the high savings rates with which much of the *Japanese miracle* was financed

were related to the *controversial* thesis of Confucian culture. And although he acknowledges that this is debatable, he accepts as a, “Fact that high savings rates have been a common feature in all modern East Asia”. And by way of synthesis, in the late eighties he recognized that “...Japan’s exceptional economic success was precisely due to its unique national character. Accepting the ethnic difference of the country, although ignoring, as it is repeated on many occasions, its millennial civilizing link with the rest of its region” (Holcombe, 2016, pp. 276 to 382).

The political and economic trajectory of Japan for more than a century and a half, despite the time elapsed, remains the philosopher’s stone, the case study of a political-economic encounter of which the West has not yet found the proper interpretation. Japan, together with China, in a broad sense, holds the answer for the best identification of the Asian Developmentalist State.

In spite of Japan’s Westernization in the 21st century, of its quasi-one-party parliamentary democracy with Asian characteristics; of its neo Shinto-nationalism in the political, and of its economic stagnation, although it is no longer the best example of the application of the Asian model, through the cracks of its new time loom the traditions of a Shinto, Confucian, and Buddhist society in all that is economic, political, and social.

The West, at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century and within the framework of a new Pacific era, has to decide whether the great economic, political, and social contrasts prevailing with East Asian countries are the result of a Jasperian equation of the axial era, or are simply the gap of two regions where the conquered party is beating the master.³²

³² China is the most fascinating land, a place to explore a rich and complicated civilization. However, I was attracted to the study of the Chinese language for another more speculative reason. Because Chinese is outside the large Indo-European language groups and uses another form of writing (ideographic, not phonetic), and because the Chinese civilization, which is one of the oldest (and it was recorded in early-stage texts), developed without any borrowing or influence from Western Europe for a long time, China presents a case study through

Finally, these two worlds in *coalition* will have to assume their responsibility to contribute, through their mutual acceptance and recognition, to make the 21st century a time for all.

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which Western thought can be contemplated from the outside and, in this way, take us out of our atavism. I'm not claiming that China is totally foreign, but at least it is different. At first, nothing seems to reconcile: outside of its element, the thinking process has difficulty orienting itself. However, that discomfort presents an opportunity; that disorientation can be beneficial. When I started studying Greek philosophy, I had a strange feeling because that way of thinking was familiar to me, I never expected to know it (assuming I was able to identify it). As different as Greek thought is, everything implicitly links Westerners to the risk of preventing us from seeing its originality, from the measurement of its inventiveness. To break the family ties, we will have to break up with the family. That is why it is necessary to take a step back. A theoretical estrangement is desirable, and this is exactly what China offers (Jullien, 2000, p. 9).

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