IS JAPAN A CIVILIZATION *SUI GENERIS*?

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Abstract: The question to be considered is a twofold one: can we speak of Japan as a civilization among others, and if so, must we allow for specific features that set it apart from more typical cases? A brief survey of alternative approaches to civilizational theory serves to clarify the conceptual background to both issues. The starting point most suitable to present purposes can be found in the writings of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss: they refer to civilizations as families of societies, but Mauss also hints at the possibility of societies "singularizing themselves" within a broader civilizational field, and thus developing into autonomous variants of a shared civilizational pattern. This model seems applicable to the relationship between China and Japan. A Chinese civilizational framework prevailed throughout the East Asian region, but the Japanese version of it was distinctive enough to be regarded as a civilization *sui generis*. Cultural and political models of order were central to the Chinese traditions that spread to the rest of the region; they underwent a more significant adaptive change in Japan than elsewhere. On the Japanese side, the seventh-century transformation – which involved a mutual adjustment of imported models and indigenous traditions – gave rise to a framework within which further variations on Chinese themes could take place. This historical experience left a legacy that was to prove crucial to the accelerated modern transformation after 1968.[1]

The reference to a civilization *sui generis* should be taken as a twofold claim: it suggests a civilization in its own right and on a par with others, but also a case that constitutes a civilization of a particular kind and in an atypical sense. The concept of civilization would, in other words, not be applicable without more or less significant twists to its mainstream meaning. If we accept this qualifying clause, the title question can – as I will argue – be answered with a cautious and conditional yes. There are valid reasons to interpret the Japanese experience in terms of civilizational theory, but the analytical framework will have to be adapted to the specific case. The civilizational identity that can be attributed to Japan is best understood as a self-singularizing pattern, constructed in relation and in contrast to preexisting paradigms; it took shape in and through historical processes and remained open to further historical shifts; and its formative role must be analyzed in the context of a complex interaction between in-

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ternal and external factors, rather than in the metahistorical perspective too often associated with civilizational theory. But before developing these points in more concrete terms, we should take a closer look at the conceptual background, so as to distinguish the present approach to civilizational theory from other uses of the same language.

Basic Concepts and Contested Perspectives

The long and complex history of the notion of civilization (largely shared with the idea of culture) has given rise to multiple meanings, and debates about civilizational theory are often marred by a confused picture of this background. In the present context, suffice it to say that we will take our bearings from questions and controversies within the sociological tradition: here the concept of civilization emerges as a complement and corrective to a dominant image of society. This critical thrust – an effort to open up perspectives blocked by restrictive models – is evident in the Durkheimian contributions to civilizational theory, as well as in later attempts to turn this neglected aspect of the Durkheimian legacy against the structural-functionalist line of development.[2] In brief, the concept of civilization serves to highlight large-scale units and long-term processes that cannot be adequately accounted for within the self-limiting conceptual framework of conventional sociology. The concept of society, based on an idealized vision of normative integration and later translated into more abstract systemic models, tends to align the analytical perspective with inbuilt but illusory claims to closure (more precisely, as critics have argued, those of the nation-state). It is also conducive to another reductionist move: the bias in favour of social and / or systemic integration facilitated the "retreat of sociology into the present" (Norbert Elias). The one-sided emphasis on a self-contained identity made the historical dimension of the social world seem less important.

By contrast, the concept of civilization – as defined and introduced by Durkheim and Mauss – is explicitly related to historical units made up of a plurality of societies. To speak of a civilization is to speak of a civilizational zone or area, and the unity of the latter is cultural rather than political. (Not that political unification of civilizational complexes is impossible, but it is obviously regarded as the exception rather than the rule.) But civilizations also have a longer historical life span than the societies that

[2] Cf. Durkheim and Mauss 1971, as well as the discussion in Arnason 1988. For a condensed but very informative history of the concepts of culture and civilization, cf. Fisch 1997.

they encompass, and there is a close connection between the spatial and temporal aspects of this expanded field of sociological inquiry. The distinctive features and developmental potentials of large-scale units are revealed in long-term processes; conversely, the dynamics of the latter can only be understood in relation to a correspondingly broad context. On this view, analysis of "determinate social organisms" (Durkheim and Mauss use this term to describe societal units in contrast to civilizational complexes) is doubly insufficient: it lacks the geocultural and macrohistorical horizons that are essential to the understanding of social life.

If we follow Mauss's most detailed outline of civilizational theory, four main themes may be distinguished (Mauss 1968). First, analysis of civilizations must begin with the elements of which they are composed; they are, as Mauss puts it, "capable of travelling" across societal boundaries, and cultural patterns are the most obvious cases in point, although models of economic and political organization can also be included. Second, civilizational forms – the unifying principles of civilizational complexes – are based on distinctive combinations of such elements. Third, in concrete historical terms, civilizational forms give shape to separate areas or regions. Finally, the interactions and interconnections of societies within a civilizational area vary – at least in part – with the civilizational form; for Mauss, a civilization is a "family of societies," but it may be added that its form determines the specific content of the familial relationship.

This concept of civilization is obviously tailored to the cultural traditions that shape the history of whole geographical regions, such as the Islamic, Indian, or Chinese worlds. Before going further, we should note the obvious problems in applying it to Japan. To speak of a separate civilization would, in this case, run counter to the main criteria invoked by Mauss: a Japanese civilization, defined apart from – and in contrast to – the China-centred East Asian complex, has to be constructed without reference to a regional mobility of sociocultural patterns. The fact that the Japanese tradition has shown a markedly limited "ability to travel" makes the argument all the more counterintuitive. As I will try to show, it can nevertheless be sustained; at this point, suffice it to say that the question of Japan's civilizational identity cannot be settled without close analysis of the structural and self-interpretive relationship to the regional context. Other problems emerge when we consider the historical dimension. If Japanese history is in some ways unusually self-contained, that has more to do with political continuity (a long-term process of state formation, undisturbed by external forces) than with the cultural context; the latter is characterized by markedly varying levels of openness to external models, and at two crucial junctures (in relation to China and the West), heightened receptiv-

ity led to exceptionally radical realignments of the sociocultural order. An underlying cultural continuity – one of the defining features of civilization in the Maussian sense – is thus anything but self-evident, and the case for an enduring civilizational identity or framework cannot be made without an account of the much more visible ruptures. At first sight, then, Mauss's reflections seem more likely to raise doubts about the idea of a distinctively Japanese civilization than to aid in theorizing it. It should nevertheless be noted that Mauss adumbrates a line of argument that may lead to other conclusions: he speaks of societies "singularizing themselves" in relation to other parts of the same civilizational area. If we regard self-singularization within a civilizational context as an aspect (more or less pronounced) of the self-constitution of society, it seems legitimate to ask whether it can go far enough to generate a variant or alternative version of the shared pattern. Mauss does not raise this question, but it is not out of tune with his approach, and it has – as we shall see – a particular bearing on the case to be discussed below.

But civilizational perspectives on the Japanese phenomenon must be grounded in contemporary theory. Although the program outlined by Durkheim and Mauss has proved conducive to progress in different directions, connections with later authors are not always easy to trace, and another important source must be given its due. In brief, it seems to me that the most representative recent versions of civilizational theory are based on Durkheimian foundations inasmuch as they seek (in selective ways) to broaden the spatial and temporal horizons of sociological analysis, but that the specific contents of their claims to that effect are better understood as partial (albeit innovative) reinterpretations of the Weberian legacy. From this point of view, we can more easily distinguish two very different types of civilizational theory and assess the prospects of synthesizing their insights. We will then be in a better position to approach the Japanese case without one-sided preconceptions.

Among the classics of the sociological tradition, Max Weber's work stands out as the most ambitious and seminal contribution to the comparative study of civilizations, but his concrete analyses of civilizational complexes and their trajectories were not accompanied by any sustained reflection on the conceptual status and criteria of the civilizational units in question. In that respect, his ideas are less relevant to later debates than those of Durkheim and Mauss. His comparative studies focussed on rationalizing processes and the more or less significant sociocultural breakthroughs resulting from them; although the widely varying contexts and directions of rationalization are underlined, the cultural background is never thematized in a systematic and balanced fashion, and this has often led critical readers to interpolate universal criteria of rationality. As a re-

sult, the multicivilizational perspective is overshadowed by an explicitly or implicitly evolutionistic model.

One of the two main contemporary types of civilizational theory may be seen as a response to this streamlining of the Weberian project. Its foremost representative is Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, whose work is probably the single most decisive post-Weberian contribution to the comparative study of civilizations. Eisenstadt moves beyond Weber's analysis of diverse religious cultures to develop a more systematic account of the comprehensive cultural frameworks that set civilizational complexes apart from each other. In contrast to functionalist conceptions of culture as a programming and controlling instance, Eisenstadt stresses both its order-maintaining and order-transforming effects; but to underline its ultimate constitutive role, he uses terms like "cultural cosmologies," "basic ontological conceptions," "cultural visions of the world," and other similarly accentuated ones. Some of his formulations might seem reminiscent of the cultural determinism that he criticizes on other levels. His theoretical project has, however, proved capable of generating extensive comparative research into the cultural traditions of major civilizations, the interplay of traditions and transformations in premodern history, and the impact of civilizational legacies on modernizing processes. Moreover, Eisenstadt has tried to locate Japan within his comparative framework and developed a very distinctive interpretation of Japanese uniqueness; his views on this subject will be discussed in due course.

The other version of civilizational theory is also grounded in a critical appropriation of Weberian ideas; in this case, the neglected theme brought to the fore is the long-term transformative and rationalizing dynamic of power structures. Long-term rationalizing processes thus become much less dependent on preexisting patterns of rationality than they were in Weber's view, and correspondingly more intertwined with the metamorphoses of power. Norbert Elias's analysis of the civilizing process – and of state formation as its central component – is the pioneering and paradigmatic example of this approach. Here the concept of civilization serves to highlight the historical depth of the processes in question as well as their all-round impact on the human condition. In contrast to Eisenstadt, comparative perspectives are much less evident, and Elias's attempts to anchor his historical sociology in an evolutionary framework did nothing to strengthen them. But as some of his less dogmatic followers have shown, the interpretive history of Western Europe from early medieval to early modern times – that is the concrete content of *The Civilizing Process* – can be taken as a starting point for the study of contrasts and parallels with the trajectories of other civilizations.

Eisenstadt's conception of civilizational pluralism centres on cultural patterns, more precisely on cultural constructions of world order, and he is more interested in large-scale civilizational frameworks than in long-term civilizing processes.[3] But a culturalist orientation does not *ipso facto* lead to narrowly culturalist explanations: Eisenstadt is careful to emphasize that cultural models only become effective in conjunction with the strategies of social actors who serve to control resources and implement institutional rules. The interconnections of culture and power are thus in principle acknowledged as a key theme of civilizational theory. We can, however, safely say that the distinctive features and directions that emerge at this level have so far figured less prominently in Eisenstadt's typology of civilizations than the cultural foundations as such, and we may surmise that the imbalance is due to choices built into Eisenstadt's very conception of culture; the strong emphasis on models (and the countermodels of protest) tends to devalue the more complex, ambiguous and mutable aspects of the cultural context. This suggested line of criticism will be reinforced by specific lessons from the Japanese experience. For the time being, let us note that Eisenstadt develops Weberian and Durkheimian themes well beyond the limits of classical thought, but in a fashion better suited to the reconstruction of overarching cultural traditions than to the analysis of historical transformations.

Conversely, Elias combined an innovative conceptualization of power with a concrete account of its long-term historical dynamics, and did so in a way that provokes further questions about the role of cultural factors, although his own work shows a marked inclination to minimize and marginalize them. The result was a distinctive paradigm of civilizational theory, less comprehensive and less diversified than Eisenstadt's, but complementary to it in certain respects, and more productively attuned to some aspects of the classical legacy. To sum up, we can therefore describe postclassical trends in the sociological discourse on civilization as separate but synthesizable moves towards a theory that could confront the tasks outlined by Durkheim and Mauss; if we want to envisage an effective fusion of the two paradigms in the field (or a critical combination of their insights), the question of adequate ways to theorize culture and power, as well as their interrelations, is obviously of prime importance.

[3] Eisenstadt has not published a systematic exposition of his civilizational theory; his ideas on the subject have mostly been developed in conjunction with more specific themes, such as the comparative study of axial civilizations. Brief but representative accounts can be found in the introductions to Eisenstadt 1986 and 1992.

These introductory remarks should help to avoid any misunderstanding of our claims on behalf of civilizational theory. But the sketch of sociological alternatives may also indicate the main source of such misconceptions. The contested character and marginal status of the sociological paradigm of civilization made it easier to develop an extradisciplinary version of comparative analysis that has had a much greater impact on public perceptions of the field. Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee are the best known representatives of that tradition; critics have tended to reject their work – as well as that of some less influential authors – as a fanciful and retrograde variant of the philosophy of history.[4] For present purposes, the insights or suggestions that might – contrary to blanket dismissals – still be found in works of this origin are less relevant than a pervasive bias that sets them apart from the sociological perspective to be explored here. It is not the idea of civilizational pluralism as such that is at issue, but rather the overtotalized conception grafted onto it: civilizational traditions and complexes tend to appear as closed worlds governed by their own unitary and comprehensive logic. Spengler's interpretation of cultures as monads is the most extreme case (it is immaterial to our concerns that he preferred to speak of cultures rather than civilizations and reserved the latter term for phases of decline), but the more nuanced models constructed by Toynbee and others are still strongly slanted in the same direction.

The overtotalized image of civilization – more precisely, of civilizations in the plural – lends itself easily to ideological uses. In more or less close conjunction with a similarly accentuated concept of culture, it has often functioned as an ingredient of or substitute for nationalist discourse. The indigenization of Western notions of culture and civilization in Japan provides a particularly instructive example, and by the same token a clear indication of the pitfalls that a more critical civilizational theory must avoid.[5] But before confronting this all-too-familiar ideological tradition on its own ground, we must underline some further general points in contrast to its theoretical premises. One of the most obvious weaknesses of the over-totalized conception is its tendency to ignore or minimize "intercivilizational encounters" (this term was coined by Benjamin Nelson with explicit reference to the sociological classics), i.e., the transformative impact

[4] It should be noted that some significant attempts have been made to reconnect the problematic of this tradition to sociological inquiry. In this context, the work of Jaroslav Krejčí deserves more attention than it has so far received; cf. especially 1987a and 1987b.

[5] On the Japanese appropriation and ideological use of Western concepts of culture, cf. Morris-Suzuki 1995.

of separate civilizational complexes on each other; interaction between such complexes is not *ipso facto* conducive to internal transformation, but developments of that kind have often been of major historical importance, and Japan is surely a prime case in point. A sociological theory of civilization, based on the abovementioned sources, can easily accommodate this question as a significant but variable part of its problematic. Similarly, it can allow for varying levels of internal coherence and homogeneity: civilizations can be more or less marked by a differentiation of central and peripheral traditions, and more or less open to the polarization of orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

The Chinese Background

Those who reject the idea of a separate Japanese civilization, without contesting the general premises of civilizational analysis, tend to treat Japan as a part of the Sinic or Far Eastern civilizational area. (This was, for example, Toynbee's original position.) Conversely, any defence of Japanese originality against such claims must be based on evidence of deviation or primordial independence from the Chinese pattern. For the argument to be developed here, the question of the Chinese model and its impact is of particular importance: as I will try to show, a constitutive relationship to Chinese sources and criteria of civilizational identity was characteristic of the Japanese tradition from the outset of its recorded history, but the distinctive way of accepting and adapting a pregiven external paradigm sets the Japanese case apart from less autonomous variants of the Chinese pattern and lays the foundations for a line of development that can be seen as a civilizational constellation *sui generis* (in the double sense outlined above). This thesis represents, in a sense, a middle position between the idea of a unitary Sinic civilization and that of a self-contained Japanese core. We can describe Japanese civilization as derivative in the sense that it took shape within the orbit of an enduring centre and on the basis of a dominant regional model, but not in the sense of a mere imitation or diffusion of invariant patterns (and to call it a satellite civilization, as Toynbee did in the revised version of his typology, seems incompatible with the level of autonomy evident in its history). Further elaboration of this point must begin with a closer look at some key characteristics of the Chinese tradition; their implications and interconnections will help to understand the ascendancy as well as the adaptability of a cultural model in a regional context.

Other reasons of a more general kind speak for focussing on the Chinese background. It can be argued that this case provides a privileged starting

point for civilizational theory: it exemplifies a continuity of cultural orientations and corresponding political formations that fits the framework envisaged by Durkheim and Mauss even better than other historical complexes of a comparable type (such as Islamic Hindu or Western civilization). Civilizational foundations ensured the unity of the Chinese world throughout a phase of exceptionally intensive interstate competition (the "warring states" from the eighth to the third century before Christ) as well as the unusual solidity of imperial structures after unification and in spite of successive major changes to the structures of Chinese society. The course of China's transformation into a modern nation-state shows how different the traditional form of unity was from the integrative mechanisms theorized (and transfigured) by mainstream sociology; the description of twentieth-century China as "a civilization trying to squeeze itself into the format of a modern state" (Pye 1992: IX) may be misleading in that it minimizes the genuine (albeit inconclusive) changes that have taken place, but it does highlight a very important aspect of the problematic. As for the regional dimension, the civilizational resources of the Chinese centre enabled it to exercise more or less effective control far beyond the limits of conquest; cultural hegemony served to legitimize the "tributary system" as a distinctive mode of interstate relations. In this way, subordination to Chinese cultural standards was combined with an elusive but not irrelevant recognition of political sovereignty; and even where the latter aspect of the model was rejected in principle (as in Japan), Chinese guidelines for state building could still be used by indigenous elites. In short, the Chinese case convincingly meets the two conditions specified by Durkheim and Mauss: unity across political boundaries and continuity across historical passages.

If we consider the specific cultural premises of this historical record, they seem – as Benjamin Schwartz has argued – to centre on a particularly comprehensive, emphatic and resilient conception of order.[6] More precisely, the general notion of a primacy of order in both the cosmic and the human spheres culminates in "the idea of a universal, all-embracing sociopolitical order centering on the concept of a cosmically based universal kingship" (Schwartz 1985b: 412). This central imaginary signification of order (to use the term introduced by Castoriadis) is open to divergent interpretations and adaptable to changing historical contexts. As Schwartz stresses, the mainstream of traditional Chinese thought is a shared problematic rather than a binding orthodoxy; different schools of thought develop distinctive variations on the theme of order, but the underlying com-

[6] Cf. especially Schwartz 1985a and 1985b. For a critical discussion of Schwartz's views, as well as other approaches to the problem, cf. Nathan 1993.

mon ground is strong enough to allow for combinations and cross-fertilizations on a much larger scale than in more polarized traditions. At the same time, the understanding of order and the cosmological grounding of social order are sufficiently flexible to accommodate protest within tradition. Finally, the traditional (and tradition building) conception of order proved capable of reelaboration at a higher level of reflexivity, in response to the impact of a more other-worldly religious culture (Buddhism) and by means of extensive borrowing from this rival source, but without problematizing its own fundamental continuity; this was the main achievement of the Neo-Confucian turn.

The Chinese conception of order, encapsulated in the notion of the Way, is – as Schwartz puts it – holistic and immanentistic. At the same time, it is characterized by ambiguities and elasticities that will be easier to understand if we consider the historical background. Although the present author cannot claim any independent expertise in this field, it seems clear that some theoretical lessons can be drawn from available work on Chinese intellectual and political history. We can, in particular, distinguish the case for shared and enduring cultural orientations from the more discredited notions of an invariant cultural essence or an unchanging social order. The underlying problematic of order is inherently ambiguous and conducive to tensions between different intellectual choices and traditions. Universalism and culturalism – the claim to represent an inclusive sociocosmic paradigm and the emphasis on particular virtues derived from a privileged place within that framework – were complementary aspects of the Chinese tradition, rather than clear-cut opposites, and changing circumstances could strengthen one orientation at the expense of the other. Culturalist attitudes came to the fore when the Chinese empire had to retreat to a less dominant position within the region (from the tenth century onwards) and when it found itself on the defensive against the expanding West. This constellation differed from Islamic and Christian universalism as well as from the polarization of Hindu culturalism and Buddhist universalism within the Indian tradition. Similarly, the controversy about the religious core of the Chinese tradition in general and Confucianism in particular reflects an inbuilt ambiguity of the beliefs in question: for observers from other religious cultures, the sacred dimension of the Way was less obvious because of an early shift from theocentric to cosmocentric visions, and the most sociocentric version of the latter could be mistaken for a purely secular mode of thought. Those who took this view tended to neglect the Daoist tradition, more explicitly religious but less central to the dominant Chinese self-image than the Confucian one, and more widely recognized as a formative cultural force than it was in earlier stages of Chinese studies. The question of Chinese religiosity (within the "great tradi-

tion," not to be confused with the problematic of popular religion) must thus be linked to a historical analysis of implicit meanings shared by interconnected traditions and adaptable to changing priorities. Finally, the particularly emphatic and resilient notion of sacred kingship – inseparable from the imaginary of the Way – is both complemented and counterbalanced by another model of human harmony with cosmic order: the sage. A synthesis of these two ideals of human perfection was not inconceivable, but it was projected into a mythical past; the distance maintained in historical times was one of the factors militating against the fusion of moral and cognitive authority in one centre. (Critical observers have suggested that the Chinese version of the "cult of personality" under Mao Zedong had something to do with a reactivated mythical model of the emperor as sage.)

The Chinese tradition is, in short, characterized by basic and recurrent ambiguities within a distinctive and durable framework. But we can also distinguish successive phases of elaboration and identify some major landmarks. Interpretations of the most archaic formative phase (the Late Bronze Age culture of the Shang dynasty in the second half of the second millennium before Christ) have highlighted two aspects that played a decisive role in the whole subsequent development of the tradition. On the one hand, a close connection between sacred kingship and imaginary kinship prefigures the later association of imperial authority with a family-centred image of society; on the other hand, the Shang monarchy had already secured the primacy of royal over priestly authority and confined the religious elite to the subordinate role of specialists in divination, but the growth and rationalization of this activity – with its emphasis on reading and interpreting natural signs – was conducive to a gradual transformation of the worldview towards a more suprapersonal conception of an integrated sociocosmic order. The Zhou state, which replaced the Shang dynasty at the end of the second millennium, inherited these cultural orientations and imposed further rationalizing shifts on the social as well as the cosmic side. (The notion of a Mandate of Heaven may date from this phase.) The Zhou legacy was, in turn, assumed and reinterpreted by the various schools of thought that responded to the experience of political fragmentation and interstate competition from the seventh to the third century B.C. Two striking features set this period of intellectual ferment and innovation apart from the otherwise comparable transformations that took place within other major civilizations during the same centuries: a particularly strong emphasis on a paradigm of order identified with a known historical period (not just with a mythical past) and a particularly close and positive relationship to the political order perceived as a normative framework of social life. It is not the case, as some interpretations have

suggested, that classical Chinese thought is uniformly state centred, but the dominant currents do affirm the primacy of political order, and the apparent deviations from that line are sometimes linked to the mainstream in less obvious ways.[7] The imperial unification of China and the construction of a correspondingly ambitious model of sociocosmic order led to a reconfiguration of the intellectual field, but the model favoured by the new imperial centre was an eclectic combination of classical currents, with a strong emphasis on Confucian ideas (albeit more so on the level of official form than with regard to underlying content). There is no need to discuss later developments at length; two landmarks should, however, be noted because of their particular importance for Japanese responses to the Chinese model. When the Chinese empire was rebuilt by the Sui and Tang dynasties (in the late sixth and early seventh century) after a prolonged phase of fragmentation, the ideological framework imposed by the new imperial centre differed from traditional precedents in significant ways. Confucian teachings remained important, but at the same time, acceptance and protection of Buddhism served to legitimize the empire in more universalist terms, and Daoism became more closely associated with the reigning dynasty than at any earlier or later stage. The three traditions seem to have been combined in relation to three aspects of the imperial domain: if Buddhism symbolized the hegemonic reach of the reborn and now more ambitious empire, Confucianism represented its Chinese sources, whereas Daoist religious institutions functioned more effectively on a local or regional level. But the obverse of this pluralism was a more prominent ideological role of the imperial centre and court as such: it claimed support from and authority over all three traditions, but was not identifiable with any one of them. The most cosmopolitan and pluralistic period in Chinese imperial history was thus also characterized by a higher visibility of the imperial centre as the ultimate embodiment and guarantee of sociocosmic order. A later retreat from hegemonic ambitions coupled with more intensive internal development under the Song dynasty (from the late tenth century onwards) led to ideological readjustment. A reconstructed version of Confucian thought made a stronger claim to encompass the whole of the Chinese tradition and represent Chinese civilization to the outside world.

[7] Cf. the discussion in Schwartz 1985b, and the rejoinder by Metzger 1986.

The Japanese Trajectory as a Civilizational Constellation

The above bird's-eye view of Chinese history is a necessary background to further discussion: as I will argue, inventive transformations of Chinese patterns are crucial to Japan's civilizational identity. This is a very striking – perhaps the most clear-cut – case of civilizational differentiation through singularization within a shared field. As we have seen, Mauss hinted at this theoretical possibility but did not deal with any specific examples. It is, however, not being suggested that the question raised at the beginning can be answered in unqualified positive terms. Rather than describing Japan as a civilization *sui generis*, we might say that a distinctive – but neither self-explanatory nor all-embracing – civilizational pattern was involved in the making of the Japanese tradition and the dynamic of Japanese history, and that its relative weight varied in the course of time. If we trace the beginnings of this pattern back to a formative encounter with Chinese civilization at the moment of imperial reunification in the sixth and seventh centuries, we must by the same token attribute a crucial role to the very small minority of rulers, priests, and scholars who engineered the transfer of cultural models. There is indeed no denying the formative and durable impact of strategic choices made in the course of the transformation of the Yamato state into imperial Japan. But the frameworks put in place by a state building elite had a logic of their own and proved capable of developments that took them far beyond the original setting. It is this interplay of elite construction and institutional dynamics that will be central to the following discussion.

To clarify the civilizational dimensions of the patterns and processes in question, we should first focus on the long-term twist given to the relationship between Japan and China from the seventh century onwards. The interpretive and practical appropriation of the Chinese model was accompanied by an inventive definition of Japanese identity. The framework put in place during the seventh-century transformation – centred on cultural definitions of order, authority, and power – proved both adaptable and resilient enough to shape the relationship between change and continuity in the later course of Japanese history. Finally, the set of orientations that grew out of the encounter with China could be adapted to a new global constellation that called for a relocation of models to follow and a redefinition of the relationship to them. In all these respects and at all stages of the Japanese historical experience, the imperial institution was of crucial importance. Its role is so central to the Japanese historical experience that it might be described as a metainstitution, or perhaps more precisely as a civilizational nucleus.

The seventh-century transformation of Japanese society, state, and culture was not only guided by Chinese institutional models, but also by the vision of sociocosmic order that served to systematize and legitimize them.[8] Several aspects of this cultural transfer should be noted. First and foremost, it did not – as in many other cases of integration into the Chinese civilizational sphere – result in unconditional acceptance of Chinese cultural hegemony. The emerging Japanese state rejected not only Chinese claims to symbolic sovereignty, but also the concomitant image of the Chinese empire as the sole embodiment of superior order. Imperial Japan construed itself alongside China and through autonomous use of Chinese inputs to restructure indigenous tradition into an ostensibly pristine paradigm of order. As in China, sacred kingship was central to the vision of sociocosmic integration; there were, however, two significant changes to the original model. On the one hand, the Japanese imperial institution claimed authority over a particular collectivity and territory, which it at the same time demarcated from the multiethnic domain of Chinese imperial power. This was not simply a shift from universalism to particularism: on the Chinese side, changing combinations of universalistic attitudes with more identity-conscious ones were – as we have seen – characteristic of successive historical periods, and on the Japanese side, the notion of an exclusive link to sacred sources could in principle – although this possibility remained latent for a long time – serve to transfigure particularism into more world-embracing projects. In short, the Japanization of the Chinese model changed the balance between opposite aspects, but left some scope for variation. On the other hand, the Japanese imperial institution claimed divine descent where the Chinese one invoked the Mandate of Heaven, and sociocosmic integration was thus redefined in terms of natural continuity rather than metamoral principles. In contrast to the Chinese pattern, the cosmic source and the social recipient of legitimacy were too closely linked for any tension between them to be possible. But precisely this direct divinization of hereditary rulers could – in the course of further changes – be used to rationalize and justify a new division of power. The imperial institution came to represent incontestable sacred authority, as distinct and separate from effective control. Restorationist ideologies could then – when circumstances permitted – appeal to the former against the latter and thus reintroduce a certain degree of tension between the principles and practices of domination. In view of these nuances, we can agree with Eisenstadt's analysis of the Japanizing process as a de-transcendentalizing and de-universalizing turn, but it must be stressed that this

[8] For a pioneering analysis of the beginnings of imperial Japan from this point of view (as an adaptation of Chinese notions of order), see Beonio-Brocchieri 1965.

change was carried out in such a way that it did not exclude a certain reactivation of trends pointing beyond the given context of social life, even if they had to be articulated within a more limited framework.

Early imperial Japan was thus more than another local variant of the Chinese (or Sinic) civilizational pattern. But it was not only the maintenance of distinctive identity and of claims to equal (if not eminent) rank that set it apart. The "Japanese synthesis of China" (Pollack 1986), not to be confused with a mere borrowing of Chinese models, grew out of the same encounter as the imperial self-definition. The Chinese model was internalized and institutionalized as a paradigm of cultural perfection, although it was never allowed to absorb or undermine the distinctive identity that had been established at the same time. This constitutive presence of China within the Japanese cultural world is best understood as an interplay of imagination and reality. On the one hand, the image of China was identified with the really existing Chinese empire, and thus with the institutions and traditions of an exceptionally massive and durable power structure. On the other hand, the model – albeit reinforced by the power and prestige of the regional superstate – remained open to selective and autonomous reception. The seventh-century transformation coincided with the most markedly pluralistic phase of the Chinese tradition (as noted above, the Tang empire combined Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist inputs in a more systematic fashion and on more overtly equal terms than any earlier or later dynasty), but in the Japanese context, the Buddhist component was from the outset more central than in China and became even more dominant during the Nara and Heian epochs. The renewed flowering of Japanese Buddhism during the Kamakura period drew on Chinese sources, but the trends that had now been marginalized on the mainland had a much more formative impact on Japanese religious culture. And as historians of Tokugawa thought have now shown, the early modern Confucian turn was no mere alignment with a preexisting orthodoxy: both institutional limits and interpretive innovations set the Japanese versions of Neo-Confucianism apart from the Chinese ones.

The seventh-century transformation was not simply an adaptive transfer of Chinese ideas and institutions to a Japanese setting. Rather, the constitution of Japan as a separate and self-defining geographical, ethnic, and cultural entity took place at the same time as – and in close connection with – the appropriation of the Chinese model. On the geopolitical level, this involved far-reaching changes to the regional power structures. From the early third to the late sixth century A.D., the fragmentation of China had been accompanied by the formation of a more peripheral state system that encompassed the Korean peninsula and parts of the Japanese archipelago. This constellation – more fluid and multicentral than at any other

time in East Asian history – gave way to the triangular pattern (China, Korea, and Japan) that has been characteristic of the region since then. But whereas China was reunited under imperial control and with more lasting results than before, the "pen-insular system" (as some historians have called it) was divided between two main centres, one of which abstained from further involvement in mainland affairs. The emerging Japanese state brought a large part of the archipelago under effective control and went on to annex more outlying territories, but did not – after 660 – aspire to any conquests beyond the islands.

The unification of the archipelago was achieved through cultural strategies as well as military and political ones, and it is – in retrospect – difficult to disentangle their respective roles. Recent historical research has highlighted the multicultural character of early Japan; traces of different traditions have been found in the official accounts of mythology and dynastic history, and studies of early Japanese religions have stressed the specific features of local religious cultures. But this growing evidence of underlying diversity makes the success of cultural integration and centralization all the more striking. The new state imposed its synthesis of adapted Chinese patterns and reconstructed Japanese ones, and this combination became a durable basis for further assimilation. The imperial institution – i.e., the whole complex of sacred kingship, dynastic continuity, court culture, and founding myths – was crucial to this process. Its role as an "exemplary centre," a supreme source of authority, prestige, and collective identity, is in some ways reminiscent of sacred kingship in other Asian traditions; but as Joan Piggott has shown, the model of rulership that emerged from the seventh-century transformation must be analyzed as a particularly elaborate fusion of the Chinese paradigm with the multiple forms of kingship that had come to the fore at various moments of Japanese prehistory. They included shamanistic as well as military role models, but also attempts to impose a monarchic superstructure on alliances of kinship groups: see Piggott 1997.

Although the imperial institution was, first and foremost, an integrative and legitimizing focus for aristocratic society, it was from the outset embedded in forms of social integration and collective identity that proved capable of extension beyond the original limits. A close connection between familial and political structures, backed up by the cult of ancestors and the ideology of sacred kingship, had been characteristic of Chinese civilization from a very early stage; the Japanese variant of this pattern – an imaginary fusion of kinship, kingship, and cosmogony – was based on a more direct application of the familial imaginary to social organization. In view of what we now know about the background to the seventh-century transformation, this should be seen as a systematic and inventive ar-

chaization of the Chinese model rather than a perpetuation of preexisting conditions. The result was, as Beonio-Brocchieri (1965: 47) argued, a far-reaching deviation from Chinese images of the people and the political community: "The people is not, as in China, one of the elements which contribute to the formation of the country on the level of nation and state (together with other components, such as the emperor, the territory, a specific ideology etc.); it is, rather, the whole collectivity of the Japanese as an essential and fundamental element of the nation." We might object to the somewhat anachronistic terms of this description: Beonio-Brocchieri's own analysis shows that the incorporation of the whole collectivity into the framework first devised to unify aristocratic society around a new centre was no simple matter. He argues that during the medieval period, the familial principle became a centrifugal factor and favoured the proliferation of subunits that later had to be reintegrated into a more complex pattern of unity. But it seems clear that the turn taken in the seventh-century was conducive to developments that gradually broadened the scope of integration and legitimation in kinship terms. The last stage on this road was the modern ideology of the family-state. In this altered version of the Chinese model, the relationship between community and ruler was – or could become – closer, but also more subaltern than in the original context; the "people" had no legitimizing role to play.

The civilizational framework that grew out of the seventh-century transformation was closely linked to geographical and geo-cultural images of Japan. As critical historians (especially Amino Yoshihiko) have recently emphasized, a strong and durable conception of Japanese identity – centred on imperial sovereignty and rice-growing peasant communities – took shape at this early stage and survived later changes to social conditions and power structures; its influence on Japanese historiography is most evident in a tendency to neglect groups and subcultures that do not fit into the scheme (especially those linked to seaborne trade and other maritime activities). But if we follow the interpretation proposed by Philippe Pelletier (1997), this set of constitutive images may be seen as one aspect of a more complex picture. The particularistic construction of Japan as a separate and self-contained collectivity is inseparable from the image of insular unity; but the idea of Japan as one island (*shima*) was superimposed on a multi-insular reality. This imaginary fusion ignored – or served to minimize – the plurality of the central islands and their traditions, the particular role of outlying islands in the history of Japanese relations with the continent, and the very close connection with the Korean peninsula. At the same time, however, the effort to appropriate the Chinese model without any cession of sovereignty led to the adoption of a more continental notion of territoriality. To put Japan on a par with its overwhelmingly

powerful and prestigious neighbour, the island polity was imagined as a country (*kuni*) with its own version of imperial rule and sacred order. The imperial institution and its mythology drew on both images and aspired to bridge the gap between them. But in the long run, the duality of *shima* and *kuni* became a problem as well as a resource for elaborations of Japanese identity.

As suggested above, civilizational patterns can be analyzed in connection with processes of state formation in general and empire building in particular. On the other hand, the civilizational aspects of such combinations develop – in varying ways and degrees – an autonomous dynamic beyond the reach of political centres. From this point of view, two lines of comparative analysis are particularly relevant to our concerns. Civilizational models, achievements, and visions can spread beyond the boundaries of the political units with which they are most closely associated; they can also remain in place and maintain cultural identities over time that help to contain or counterbalance centrifugal political dynamics. In both respects, China stands out as characterized by a particularly close link between civilizational and political structures. No comparably influential and durable civilization identified as strongly with a model of imperial rule as a mediating link between social and cosmic order. But some qualifications are worth noting. Although Chinese cultural patterns were inseparable from a political context, adaptation to power structures of a different kind could – as the Japanese and Korean trajectories show, albeit not in the same ways – give rise to new formations. And within the imperial domain, it seems clear that the persistence of a strong civilizational framework helped to defuse the subversive potential of a society that became increasingly complex and resistant to traditional methods of control. The civilizational commitment to an imperial vision made it easier to rebuild the real empire after a breakdown and shield it from confrontation with new social forces.

The Japanese version of the relationship between state formation and civilization was strikingly different from the Chinese one. On the one hand, there was no civilizational expansion beyond the boundaries of the Japanese state: the cultural assimilation of the archipelago was, as we have seen, a long-term process, but it took place within the limits prefigured by the seventh-century withdrawal from continental affairs, and it accompanied the extension of political control by successive Japanese power centres. But on the other hand, basic cultural premises and core institutional components survived more radical structural changes and phases of more far-reaching fragmentation than in China. Since the imperial institution played a key role in maintaining this continuity, it may be described as a civilizational nucleus. Its relationship to the forces which exercised – or as-

pired to – effective power is not always easy to define, and the concepts of legitimacy must be used with care because of their Western connotations, but it seems safe to say that the imperial dynasty and its symbolism remained central to the frame of reference for any claim to superior prestige and authority.

If we confront this continuity of basic cultural orientations and their key institutional embodiment with the dynamics of Japanese history, the most salient point has to do with the long-term trajectory of the Japanese state. In contrast to China, the Japanese pattern of state formation is characterized by a clear divide between primary and secondary phases (see Arnason 1996). From the late twelfth century onwards, a new power centre created by a military elite (but capable of pursuing projects and strategies that transcended its original social basis) developed alongside the imperial court and underwent changes that culminated in the intricate power-sharing system of the Tokugawa period. The imperial institution was first confined to a subordinate political role and later deprived of all power, but continued to function as a part of the cultural foundations for the new power structure. This is not to deny that the military counterstate had a civilizational agenda of its own; it imposed new rules on various areas of social life. But the fact that it adapted to the civilizational legacy of the primary phase had far-reaching implications. Basic cultural premises were perpetuated across a major historical divide.

Changes to the structure and social identity of state power were not the only challenge to the imperial tradition. One of the most striking features of late medieval Japan – from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century – was a general strengthening of centrifugal social forces; village communities, Buddhist sects, and local warlords participated in a long, drawn-out power struggle that made this period very different from both earlier and later ones. But although this was also a time of noteworthy cultural innovations, none of the actors or organizations involved reached a point of explicit rupture with the imperial myth. The same pattern of flexible continuity is characteristic of the whole history of Japanese religions: major shifts could take place within the framework of the pluralistic religious culture that first took shape at the same time as the imperial state, but they did not affect the privileged role of the imperial institution. Both its particular relationship to a suitably reconstructed indigenous tradition and its ability to draw on other sources remained intact.

It is not being suggested that civilizational continuity is self-explanatory. The institutionalized meanings at the core of the Japanese tradition did not simply endure as underlying and determining premises of sociocultural life; rather, a more detailed analysis – which cannot be undertaken here – would have to deal with the historical actors, forces, and conditions

involved in the ongoing reproduction of constitutive patterns. Civilizational constants should, in other words, be seen as more or less formative aspects of historical constellations: in the Japanese case, the transformation of the imperial nucleus was linked to other long-term developments, and at certain historical turning points, more far-reaching changes seem to have been within the bounds of possibility (or at least perceived as such by some of the protagonists). Direct imperial rule was probably envisaged by at least some of those who engineered the most important seventh-century reforms, and although it soon proved incompatible with the realities of the power structure, the tension between ambitions and constraints could give rise to strategic as well as ideological visions of rectification. From this point of view, one of the most interesting episodes in the history of the imperial institution took place in the early fourteenth century: representatives of two rival branches of the imperial dynasty – one in theory and after abdication, the other in practice and as a reigning sovereign aspiring to rule – broke new ground and pursued projects that were ignored or misunderstood by later historiography.[9] The retired emperor Hanazono (1297–1348, reigned 1308–1318) embarked on an extensive reexamination of Chinese thought and history; if his thought had reached the level of fully fledged ideology, it would obviously have entailed a major reinterpretation of the imperial myths and a shift towards more Confucian ideas of rulership. At the same time, his successor Go-Daigo (1289–1339, reigned 1318–1339) was trying to establish a new kind of monarchy, ostensibly based on an emphatic reaffirmation of the founding myths but in fact guided by some knowledge of Chinese developments under the Song dynasty and responsive to changes in Japanese society.

The failure of Go-Daigo's project (the Kenmu restoration) put an end to imperial initiatives. But the victory of his adversaries did not settle the question of ultimate authority once and for all. It seems clear that the idea of deposing the imperial dynasty was considered when the Ashikaga shogunate was at the height of its power, and that Nobunaga's treatment of the imperial court prefigured a more radical break with tradition than the

[9] Here I draw on the work of Andrew Goble (1995 and 1996). Goble sums up Hanazono's reflections in the following terms (1995: 64–65): "In addressing the ideas of history and rulership in the *Admonitions,* Hanazono does not give dominant emphasis to Buddhism or Shinto; he evinces a quite different conception of history than that put forward by Jien and Chikafusa; he more or less rejects outright the tenet that somehow continuity through the Imperial institution is a notable and unique characteristic of Japan, and in addition he suggests that divine descent is a very poor ideology of political legitimation." But these potentially explosive ideas did not reach beyond a marginal section of court society.

policies eventually adopted by the Tokugawa regime. The symbiosis of the two centres – the products of primary and secondary state formation – was always problematic, the question of their relationship could be reopened as historical circumstances changed, and in the end, it became a symbolic focus for the transformative potential of the Japanese tradition.

So far, our line of argument has linked the civilizational question to Japan's unusually self-contained history. The geopolitical fact that there was no foreign conquest in recorded history prior to 1945 (and, except for an unsuccessful invasion of Korea at the end of the sixteenth century, no Japanese expansion on the continent from the mid-seventh to the late nineteenth century) has no direct bearing on the question. Isolation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the emergence of a distinctive civilization, but it may – in certain contexts – be conducive to civilizational formations of a specific kind. In the Japanese case, it would seem that the civilizational patterns discussed above transfigured a self-contained history into a more comprehensively self-contained order. The model represented by a more advanced civilization was incorporated in such a way that it became an integral part of the Japanese tradition and could be upgraded or devalued in response to internal developments; the continuity of cosmic and social order was defined in such a way that the particular identity of the Japanese collectivity became a privileged part of the whole; and the fundamentals of a cultural framework for political power were maintained throughout successive phases of social change.

But the fourth and final issue raised above – the relevance of a civilizational approach to the understanding of Japanese patterns of modernity – takes us into a different field of inquiry. Now we are dealing with exceptionally rapid and radical transformations of Japanese society, accompanied by equally fundamental reorientations in the global arena; although the Japanese trajectory after 1868 may have been – for most of the time – more autonomous than other non-Western paths to advanced modernity, it was certainly not self-contained in the same sense as the earlier phases. This does not mean that no case can be made for civilizational perspectives, but they will have to be adapted to the new dimensions of historical change. Analysts of Japanese modernization have frequently noted both the importance and the adaptability of traditional factors within modern frameworks; for those who regard premodern Japan as a distinctive civilization, such connections are reason enough to claim at least a partial continuity. The problem is somewhat more complicated if Japan's civilizational identity is – as I have tried to show – inseparable from its relationship to China. On this view, we would have to establish a link between the traditional role of the Chinese model and the modern turn to the West; evidence

of civilizational continuity would, in other words, have to be found in ways of appropriating and adapting external paradigms. The parallel between learning from China and learning from the West is, of course, too obvious to have been overlooked. What remains to be seen is how far we can go beyond the loose analogy that is familiar to all students of the field. A few concluding remarks may serve to clarify some aspects of the question.

Both sides to the Japanese modernizing process – the Westernizing and the nationalist – have been of such dimensions that we can plausibly speak of civilizational dynamics. On the one hand, the architects and activists of the great transformation that began in 1868 were from the outset remarkably interested in all aspects of Western civilization – not for the purposes of unconditional imitation (the "Kemalist" current was always marginal), but from a position that could combine learning with the search for equivalents or counterweights to the unadaptable or unacceptable elements of the Western civilizational complex. A classic example of the effort to construct functional equivalents is Itō Hirobumi's defence of the imperial myth as the only conceivable Japanese counterpart to Western religion. On the other hand, the totalizing ambitions of Japanese nationalism and its exceptional capacity to absorb or defuse ideological alternatives are well known; its critics have accused it of making the nation the measure of all things. In a more value-neutral vein, the concept of the "civilizational nation" (see the introduction to Tönnesson and Antlöv 1996) has been coined to describe the particularly self-contained identity and historical continuity seen as characteristic of some Asian nations, notably India, China, and Japan. The term seems, however, in some ways more easily applicable to Japan than to the other cases – at least in the sense that it can more plausibly claim to have built a national identity of civilizational dimensions.

The two sides of Japanese modernity have interacted in complex and original ways: if it is possible to speak of Japanese reinventions of Western institutions (most notably those of capitalism), this is the result of strategic reasoning guided by a nationalist imagination. Moreover, the shifts of focus and direction on the Westernizing as well as the nationalist side are no less noteworthy than the overall strength of both currents. The Westernizing project that led directly and unquestioningly to expansion and empire building was very different from the course followed after the "embrace of defeat" (Dower 1999) in 1945. As for the mutations of nationalism, the most convincing analyses of postwar economic development have also thrown light on this question: the "strategic economy" that has been central to the Japanese economic system reflects a fundamental reorientation – but not a termination – of nationalist policies.

In short, the dual frame of reference that has been characteristic of Japanese modernity clearly lends itself to civilizational interpretations, even if this line of argument has yet to be developed in detail. And it is tempting to see the interplay of the two trends as a more dynamic, reflexive, and adaptable version of the long-standing pattern first developed in relation to China. This view will be easier to defend if we can point to specific developments and show that they paved the way or set the course for a transition from the traditional to the modern version. It seems to me that several interconnected trends of this nature were already at work during the Tokugawa period. As regards the relationship with China and the role of the Chinese model, the notion of a neo-Confucian orthodoxy dominating early Tokugawa thought has been subjected to effective criticism (Ooms 1985).There was undoubtedly a new upsurge of interest in Chinese (and more particularly Confucian) thought after the consolidation of the Tokugawa regime, but no wholesale alignment with a hegemonic Neo-Confucian mode of discourse. Rather, aspects of the mainland tradition were appropriated without their specific institutional basis and often combined with indigenous themes; most importantly, this new round of selective borrowing from Chinese culture took place at a time when practical contact with the mainland had been reduced to a minimum and no political relations were maintained. If it can be said that the Japanese engaged with the Chinese model as an internalized other and on their own terms, this was markedly more true of the Tokugawa period than of any other phase in Japanese history. In that sense, it can be argued that a relativization of the Chinese connection was in progress beneath the surface of an intensified Sinocentrism. And at the same time, a reappropriation of Japanese traditions and a redefinition of Japanese collective identity were preparing the ground for claims to equality or even superiority in relation to China. This current, central to the prehistory of Japanese nationalism and to the (at first symbolic) reaffirmation of the imperial institution, found its most articulate expression in the School of Native Learning (*kokugaku*), but it influenced – directly or indirectly – the whole spectrum of Tokugawa thought and culture.

In short, a multiple reinterpretation of the relationship with China was changing the Japanese self-image and creating preconditions for a more practical reorientation in the regional (and ultimately global) arena. A much less visible minority group, interested in the Western world for both intellectual and practical purposes, added to the transformative potential that remained latent until the mid-nineteenth century. Although Western learning (*rangaku*) was too marginal and suspect to become a fully legitimate part of Tokugawa culture, the need for more knowledge of the West was obvious enough to prompt a shift to more permissive official policy in

the early eighteenth century, and the results were significant enough to contribute a major cultural resource when conditions were ripe for a radical change. Cognitive foundations for the turn to the West were laid well before the political breakthrough.

Finally, the position of the Tokugawa regime – the last and by far the most elaborate version of the military state – within the ideological field was in some ways indicative of new developments. The political centre did not identify with an orthodoxy. A policy of qualified pluralism was proclaimed on various occasions; the Tokugawa rulers cultivated links with the established religious traditions, and at a later stage, they allowed a limited intellectual opening to the West. Their ideological strategy was more structured and balanced than those of earlier military regimes. On the other hand, the Tokugawa state could not claim (and did not have to assume) the specific cultural identity and centrality that remained a prerogative of the imperial institution. This constellation – a political centre capable of working with changing combinations of cultural orientations, without an exclusive commitment to any particular one – was already a significant step towards the civilizational shift discussed above.

As I have tried to show, there are valid reasons to speak about Japan as a distinctive civilization. But the pattern that sets it apart is neither self-contained nor unchanging. Japan's civilizational identity is inseparable from ways of relating to the outside world, first developed in the course of a formative encounter with China but much later transferred to a more global context, and it is best understood in connection with successive historical contexts, rather than as an invariant paradigm. This line of argument should, of course, be confronted with other approaches; but further discussion in that vein is beyond the scope of this paper.

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