

# **On the Japanese Civilization**

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The civilizations of the human race connect to each other, and has formed a network. In particular, the global network was built by Islam, Mongolia and European powers. After an era, these networks synthesized the network of every place which had been formed before, and has achieved the globalization of civilization. The Japanese civilization has been always transformed by inflow of the products and the information which was brought from the sea traditionally. By this fact, the Japanese civilization undergoes influence of other civilizations of the world deeply. The Japanese civilization has been linked with the civilizations of the world by connecting with the civilization network.

## **INTRODUCTION-THE CIVILIZATION NETWORK**

Civilizations created by human beings have been connected to each other through space and time and have formed networks. Such networks have existed both on land and on sea, and they have also been linked and have contributed to the development of civilizations. Major land and ocean networks in the Eurasia peninsula include the Steppes route and the Oasis route, as well as the East Asian ocean area, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The latter three networks together can be called the Southern ocean route network.

These land and ocean networks in Eurasia were gradually connected, and, at the same time, regions such as Japan, Korea, China, Southeast Asia, India, Western Asia and Europe were also linked. In particular, the global network established in the calendar era by Muslim, Mongolian and European countries unified all of the regional networks that had been formed and prompted the globalization of civilizations. It connected civilizations, promoted cultural exchanges and transactions, and enabled the civilizations to transform. Oasis towns and harbor cities were born at the junctions of these networks as hub points, and they eventually developed themselves into independent countries. The inhabitants in these countries, such as the nomads in the steppes, the merchants in oases and the maritime people in the Southern ocean, played

an important role.

Since ancient times, Japan has experienced many cultural transformations caused by materials and information from abroad. Japan has developed its own civilization by piling up and layering the elements of civilizations in Eurasia that deeply influenced the country. Japan was connected to the Steppes route, the Oasis route and the Southern ocean route network by the sea, which was a transportation route. This means that Japan was closely linked not only to China and Korea but also to the civilizations in India, Persia, the Orient, the Mediterranean and Europe. Therefore, Japan was working with civilizations in Eurasia on that civilization network.

If this is true, the Pacific Ocean network should also be counted as another contributor to the development of Japanese civilization. It is possible that the heritages of the civilization formed in the New World reached Japan, brought by the North Equatorial Current and the Black Stream, and that also materials of Japan were taken from civilization to civilization to the New World by the North Pacific Current. In the early modern and modern times, this pacific network became very active and played a significant role in opening up and developing modern history.

## **THE STEPPES NETWORK AND THE JAPANESE CIVILIZATION**

The nomads in Eurasia transported various goods such as bronze and iron ware, horses, and silk, taking them east and west on the Steppes network. A civilization transforms with the flow of new materials, and these commodities surely caused the cultural swing between the east and the west of Eurasia.

In Southwest Asia, bronze processing technology is said to have been discovered in the late half of 5000 BC. The Aryan nomads who lived on the coast of the Black Sea adopted the technology and spread it as far to the northern part of the Caspian Sea, South Siberia and the Steppes in the Central Asia. Particularly, the Scythia—the nomads who were active in the South Russian steppes around 1000 BC—were one of the earliest who established the bronze culture, which is characterized by the symbols of animals on tools. The eastern end of this Scythian influence was the Ordos bronze culture created by the Huns. Under the influence of the Chinese Han culture since the Warring States period of China, the Huns produced the so called Hu-Han style tools. The Liaoning bronze culture that occurred in the northern part of China also produced the Hu-Han style tools. This style eventually arrived to the Korean peninsula and had a significant effect on the development of the Yayoi culture in Japan.

The technology of refining and forging iron is said to have been established in

Anatolia when it had Assyrian colonies from around 1930 BC to 1750 BC and then is said to have been improved by the Old and the New Kingdom of the Hittites. After the fall of Hittites' New Kingdom around 1200 BC, their iron craft spread across Eurasia, affecting many regional civilizations. For example, iron craft was introduced to China, the eastern part of Eurasia, during the Spring and Autumn period in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. It improved agriculture and manufacturing and also enlarged the scale of warfare, which introduced the Warring States period. In the late Warring States period, Chinese iron craft spread northward and came to Korea, and it was eventually brought to Japan, causing huge cultural changes. After the arrival of iron craft, many small kingdoms were born, marking the starting point of Japan's urban culture.

Japan was closely connected to the Steppes route particularly during the Yayoi and the Kofun period and became heavily affected by the nomads' culture. The introduction of new technology is always followed by huge cultural changes. The effects of the bronze and iron culture spread by Scythia and the Huns expanded across the sea even to Japan. If Scythian culture, which is characterized by the use of bronze and iron, originated in Southwest Asia, then ancient Japanese culture, too, has its origin in the western part of Eurasia. Both the Scythians and the Huns were a nomadic people, so the nomads' culture deserves recognition as a great "medium of civilizations".

Furthermore, the nomads in Eurasia, by spreading the skill of horse riding along the Steppes route, contributed to opening up a new era in human history. The origin of the horse riding culture in China during the Warring States period and the Han dynasty as well as in Korea and in Japan was the nomads who lived in the northern steppes. The horse riding skills of the nomads had a significant impact on cultural change in Eurasia and in human history. It significantly improved transportation in quantity, speed and distance, and, in addition, it improved mobility in warfare and promoted more trade, war and organization.

Actually, in Japan's Kofun (grave mound) period during the 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> century, there can be found traces of the nomad's culture in the Steppes. The arrival of horse riding culture contributed to the creation a new civilization by means of expanding commercial activity, improving transportation and telecommunication networks, and prompting a technological revolution. Japanese civilization has always been transformed with the arrival of new materials from abroad. For this transformation, the influence of the nomads who linked the east and the west of Eurasia cannot be ignored.

## **THE OASIS ROUTE NETWORK AND THE JAPANESE CIVILIZATION**

Since ancient times, Japanese civilization has been affected by various civilizations flooding in from the Eurasian continent. The influence from civilizations that originated in the Oasis route clearly exists in Japan today.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the western part of Eurasia saw the creation of such empires as the Byzantine, the Sassanian and Caliphates, and the eastern part saw the creation of those such as the Wei, the Jin, the Southern and the Northern Dynasties, the Sui and the Tang. These civilizations had relationships through the Oasis route. During this period, many foreign western cultures, such as Mahayana (larger vehicle) Buddhism in the north-western part of India and Central Asia, the western Asian culture of the Sassanian Empire and Caliphates, and the Byzantine culture, were introduced to China. Japan in the Asuka, the Hakuho and the Tempyo era was also directly affected by China during this time or indirectly through Korea. The Oasis route played an important role in the development of Japanese civilization from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

The most important element that Japan received through the Oasis route was Buddhism. After being born in India, Buddhism adopted Persian and Greek culture in northern India and in Central Asia and Mahayana Buddhism was created, which spread to China and Korea and eventually to Japan. Although religion is invisible, it has a huge impact on creating and developing a civilization, which is visible. Also in the forming of Japanese civilization, the influence from Mahayana cannot be replaced by any other element. With the arrival of Buddhism, Japan took a big leap in civilizing the country.

Although Japan's official adaptation of Buddhism is thought to have occurred in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, it must have been brought well before that by immigrants from Korea. In any case, during the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, the grand design of Japan as a Buddhist country was spread, and consequently many temples were founded in Asuka and Nara. Buddhism spread throughout Japan and enabled it to form a new civilization.

Japanese civilization contains various influences from other foreign civilizations such as China, India, Persia, the Orient, the Mediterranean and others. Japan contains within it elements of civilizations from all over the world, and most of them came through the Oasis route. Any civilization produces and develops a new culture by adopting and combining materials from outside. Japan, too, formed its own civilization by adopting great amounts of the cultures from Eurasia and preserving and digesting the heritages. This is the very reason why transportation routes are so important in forming a civilization. To understand civilizations vertically, it is essential to have a horizontal view, that is, a view of a civilization's relations with other cultures.

## **THE SOUTHERN OCEAN ROUTE NETWORK AND THE JAPANESE CIVILIZATION**

It is known that foreign cultures flowed into Japan not only from the north but also from the south during the Jomon and the Yayoi period and that they settled deep in the base of the country. Japan has many cultural similarities with the areas in the middle and the lower part of the Yangtze River and southern China. The culture formed in these wetlands was inseparable from activities related to “water” and “boats”, and this watery culture was continuously introduced to Japan since the Jomon period. Dry and wet rice farming was also part of it. There is no doubt that the relationship between Japan and China over the East China Sea was active since ancient times and contributed to create a new cultural form in Japan.

There are records about Japanese people in the Yayoi period who sent tribute to China during the Early Han to the Later Han period. During this period, many harbor cities (including Nakoku) were born in Northern Kyushu, and they traded actively with some regions in Korea such as Lelang Commandery, learning the new culture of China. The fact that Himiko, the queen of Kanokuni, sent tribute to the Northern Wei and obtained the title of Shingi-Wao (Queen of Wa Friendly to Wei) shows the active interaction between ancient Japan and Northern China over the Eastern China Sea.

Even in the Kofun period, the five kings of Wa continued to send tribute to the Southern Dynasty. Many records say that Chinese engineers with new technology came to Japan from “Go” and that Japanese also visited “Go” in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Here, “Go” is thought to represent the Southern Dynasty in southern China. During the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century, new technologies such as iron refining, land engineering, clay vessel making, weaving and ship building, were introduced to Japan and had an enormous impact on the local culture. Obviously the trans-East China Sea trading played a major role in this.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism reached the Japanese archipelago mainly through Paekche in the Korean peninsula. The religion was widely accepted; however, because of the deep influence that the Southern Dynasty had on Paekche Buddhism, we should not ignore the connection between early Buddhism in Japan and Buddhism in Southern China. Ancient Japanese civilization was formed with materials from the Korean peninsula and the Chinese continent that came through the East China Sea.

Also from the 7<sup>th</sup> century through to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the interaction between Japan and China around the East China Sea was very active. Students and monks who joined official missions to Sui and Tang studied the new culture of China energetically, and, upon their return, they spread the newly acquired knowledge in Japan. In the

cosmopolitan atmosphere of China, they tried to absorb almost everything, including the political system, education, philosophy, religion, art and so on. The Nara and the Heian culture were particularly characterized by the Tang culture introduced by these missions.

The most important things brought by the missions were the teachings of Mahayana Buddhist schools. The story of the Buddhist monks Kukai and Saicho, who visited Tang as missionaries and brought back Shingon Buddhism and Tendai Buddhism, is well known. The Esoteric Buddhism preached in Japan by Kukai has its origin in the Tang dynasty, where the Indian monks Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra brought it. After being first founded in South India, it crossed the Bay of Bengal, leaving its footprint in Borobudur, crossed the South China Sea to Changan, and moved on further across the East China Sea to Korea and Japan. It then completed its movement in Japan. Containing a universal element, the civilization network itself depicts the Esoteric Mandala in a way.

Although there are many routes to reach the Sui and the Tang, most of the Japanese missions took the southern route that leads directly to the south of the Yangtze River. Human activity has a significant effect on cultural formation. Students and Buddhist monks of the missions, foreign envoys, traders and immigrants brought new things to Japan across the East China Sea which came to form Japanese culture.

After the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, interactions between Japan and China across the East China Sea became even more active. Especially after the foundation of the Song dynasty, its commodity-based economic system spread to Korea and Japan, and it brought trading in the East China Sea network to an all-time high. The fact that Song style ceramics were widely used in Korea, Japan, the Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan corroborates this. It is known that Taira no Kiyomori eagerly promoted trading with the Song at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (the end of the Heian period). The business relationship between Japan and the Song, especially with the Southern Song dynasty, continued also in Kamakura period.

The ocean trading network in East Asia was also closely linked to the Indian Ocean via the South China Sea. Because of this, Japan had already been known as a producer of gold and ebony wood by Islamic countries. Ceramic products that were made in West Asia and re-exported to East Asia have been discovered in Japan. This implies a strong connection between the East China Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The growth of maritime trading in East Asia enabled commerce and cities in Japan to develop. The advancement of the warrior class and the feudal system would not have occurred without the wealth generated by the trading in the East China Sea with the

Song and the Southern Song. The Kamakura Shogunate, the first military government of Japan, created a feudal society. They were strongly associated with the ocean trading in the East China Sea, and, supported by this economic advantage, they succeeded in overturning the imperial system. After the latter half of Kamakura period, trading markets started to grow, and many communities such as port towns were born. It is important to note that merchants and warriors who traded in the East Asian network and obtained access to new the technologies of China drove Japan into new era.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Europe saw an active afflux of Arabic culture, the development of commerce, the growth of cities and the formation of the feudal system. These events made Western civilization self-sufficient. In a similar vein, likewise in the medieval time of Japan, such events as the influence of Chinese culture, the flourishing of commerce, the growth cities, and the newly formed feudal society enabled Japan to be self-sufficient. But this parallel phenomenon did not occur independently from the cultural movements of Eurasia. It should not be overlooked that behind this there was an active ocean trading route that linked the East China Sea, the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The Islamic civilization also played an important role here. Neither Western civilization nor Japanese civilization developed independently, cut away from Eurasia; rather, they worked closely with Muslims, who worked as a medium between them.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Mongolian Empire unified the Steppes and the Oasis route and advanced to China to establish the Yuan dynasty. They proceeded to the ocean route in the East and South China Sea, forming a vast trading network that covered the whole of Eurasia. Commerce and trading became even more active and many port cities were born in the East Asian ocean area. As the Yuan spread its domain to Southeast Asia, allowing people to flow in from the region, trade in the South China Sea grew even more with vigorous interactions. The official Japanese trading ship, known as Tenryuji-bune, shows that transactions between Japan and the Yuan were also actively held in the East China Sea. In this time, Japanese and Chinese monks visited each other. They developed new cultural practices such as the Tea Ceremony or Noh, which had significant cultural effects in medieval Japan.

From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, foreign ships looking for business opportunities came from Java and Sumatra to the Ryukyu Islands, Korea and the shores of Japan. In this period, the East China Sea and the South China Sea had already developed a close network as a trading zone. Anything that crosses the border of countries and nationalities serves as a medium for cultural transformation.

It may also be true that the active trading between Japan and the Ming Dynasty in the

East China Sea had great cultural impacts on Japan during the Muromachi era. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, who wanted Chinese goods and established a licensed trade-relationship, sent embassies to the Ming dynasty in 1401 and made a tributary relationship with China.

These Chinese commodities were brought not only through the official route between Japan and China but also by private traders, and, as a result, it promoted the development of commerce and fostered many commercial cities. The development of commerce and money capitalism can be seen in the Edo period, but it actually started during the Muromachi period in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The fact should be noted that it was actually realized through trading with the Chinese continent via the trans-East China Sea. In Medieval Japan, commerce and cities never developed by themselves.

Harbor cities such as Sakai or Hakata developed just like Venice or Genoa in Europe. This is no coincident: They were linked to the East Asian Sea area, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean and worked together. As in Europe in the Renaissance era, with the development of early capitalism, Japan in the Muromachi period saw the revival of classic culture. This should not be seen as just a coincidental phenomenon but the result of cooperate development.

During this period, Zen Buddhism had a large impact on Japan. The Tea Ceremony, Flower Arrangement, Noh performance, Dry Garden, ink painting, and a new style of architecture were among some of the aspects of Japan's unique culture that flourished during the Muromachi period and that contained a heavy influence from Zen philosophy, introduced to Japan from the Song, the Yuen and the Ming dynasty around the Kamakura and the Muromachi period. Most of Japanese culture was formed with materials introduced from abroad. The self-reformation of culture occurs mostly through an interaction with other civilizations.

## **ENCOUNTER WITH WESTERN CIVILIZATION**

The East Asian Sea area after the 16<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by the presence of European countries such as Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and England. The West, which had been competing with each other since medieval times, extended the dynamism to the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean and the East China Sea. However, this expansion may have been driven by the Asian countries. Also since Medieval times, the Western countries have developed commerce, stimulated by the commercial revolution in Asia. Moreover, the desire the Europeans had for Asia was stimulated by the vast traffic circulation both on land and sea created by Mongolia.



Commercial activities had been already developed among the Asian countries in the East Asian Sea area and the Indian Ocean. In the East Asian Sea area, there was a closely connected trading network that included Southeast Asia, China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Ryukyu Islands and Tsushima. Western countries first entered this area as a new comer.

It is not that Asia slowed down: The East Asian countries led by China maintained superiority over the West until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The West dominated Asia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century after the development of the Industrial Revolution. After that, the West linked the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean and the East Asian Sea area and created a global network. The completion of the global network gave the West superiority over Asia.

Although the globalization of the network was started by Portugal and Spain, who first proceeded to the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the East Asian sea area, after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Netherlands and England joined respectively and replaced Portugal and Spain as the leaders of global trade. The Netherlands established its base in Batavia in Java and, fighting for supremacy in trading against England, made a huge fortune from merchandises such as raw silk, silk and ceramics from China, Korea and Japan. On the other hand, England sought for trading opportunities in India and concentrated its management there at first. They arrived to the East Asian sea area in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and, after the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, held supremacy in transit trading between the East Asian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The benefits from this trading was to lead England to the Industrial Revolution.

The encounter with the West in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century pushed Japan into the early modern era. Portuguese traders who appeared in the South China Sea in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century eventually advanced to the East Asian Sea and made large profits especially with the Ming dynasty, the Southeast Asian countries and Japan. This brought the so-called Namban culture to Japan. Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who managed to end the war period, were also keen on having relationships with foreign countries in the East and the South China Sea and promoted trading with Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and England. Moreover, Japanese traders with a license for international trading given by Hideyoshi or Ieyasu eagerly sailed to the East and the South China Sea and traded with the Southeast Asian countries and established many colonies. The Japanese also had many opportunities to make contact with Western traders in Southeast Asia to obtain various commodities, and they used as payment great amounts of silver and copper produced in Japan. In this way, through commercial activities, early modern Western culture was brought to Japan.

Among the facets of Western culture brought to Japan, Christianity had a large impact on the country. However, what the missionaries brought was not merely Christianity: The technological and scientific knowledge that they used as tools for missionary work had a much larger impact on Japan's culture than we imagine today. The Japanese were extremely curious about this Western knowledge and technologies that were totally new to them. They were practically interested in everything, including geometry, astronomy, geography, medical science, alchemy, ship-building, and sailing techniques.

The world maps brought by missionaries as well as the Japanese boys sent to Europe on missions contributed to changing the Japanese world view. The Japanese learned that the countries they knew to exist, such as Japan, China and India, were only a part of the Eurasia continent, and they felt their conventional notion about the world collapse in an instant. The arrival of the world map had as big an impact as the notion of the spherical earth. During this period, Japan, both economically and politically, left the sphere of Chinese domination based on Sino-centrism. This was another effect of Western influence.

It is well known that some Portuguese who drifted to Japan on a Chinese junk boat in 1543 brought a harquebus, and the Japanese people soon started to copy it by themselves. The knowledge of the harquebus as well as how to make it spread quickly throughout the country in the war period. After the arrival of firearms, the design of the warrior's fortress was changed greatly with newly adopted inner sections, moats, stone walls and turrets, and the battle tactics were also changed. This is a perfect example of how a new culture affects a whole civilization. The cultural shock wave from the West had a great impact on Japan.

A civilization is transformed by encounters with other civilizations. The Namban era (from the Age of Civil Wars era to the Azuchi-Momoyama era) was the first time that Japanese civilization met Western civilization. During this period, the modern culture of the West flowed into Japan for the first time, and the Japanese people's notions about the world saw revolutionarily changes. A civilization transforms radically with the influx of a foreign culture, but the modern Western culture of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century was, unlike the previous ones, a completely new thing that came from Western civilization in the Western end of Eurasia. In this respect, it had the same impact on Japan as the massive flood of American and European culture during Bakumatsu period, that is, the end of the Edo period. Therefore, the Westernization of Japan started in the Namban period, not in the Bakumatsu. From the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, Japan entered under the influence of the West. But it is also important to note that this culture came through the filter of the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean,

the Indian Ocean and the East Asian Sea area.

Even after Japan become secluded in 1639, modern academic knowledge continued to be brought to Japan—mostly to the Dutch trading house in Dejima, Nagasaki—and was spread by interpreters. In 1720, Shogun Yoshimune removed the ban on importing Western publications except those related to Christianity, and the Japanese came to learn all fields of Western science through the Dutch language. Afterwards, Western learning flourished. The passion toward learning Western science spread among the bureaucracy of the Shogunate, Daimyos, low ranking Samurais, Ronins and townsmen, and it had a huge impact on the Japanese with respect to their development of the notion of the world. The fact that Western learning contributed to developing a rationalistic thought in the pre-modern Edo period should not be ignored.

Japan had already started to absorb the knowledge of pre-modern Western science in the Namban period, which spans from the end of the Age of Civil Wars to the Azuchi-Momoyama period. This process never stopped throughout the Edo period. From Bakumatsu to the Meiji Restoration, a great many scientific technologies were imported from the West, enabling Japan to modernize quickly. What made this possible, however, was the effort that had been made from the Namban period to the Edo period. Japan's Westernization began not in Bakumatsu, but in the Namban era, and it had been going on during the Edo period.

So the question is did the seclusion policy in the Edo period really exist? The foreign policies made by the Tokugawa Shogunate one after another during a period of 39 years since 1633 included the prohibition of Christianity, going abroad and, for those who were already outside the country, returning to Japan. The policies also included limiting foreigners to trade only in Nagasaki and Hirado and banning Portuguese. In short, this seclusion policy consisted of three element: controlling religion, immigration and trade. The intended effect of the policy was only to keep people, material, money and information under the state's control, but Japan was not actually cut out from foreign influence. In reality, trading with the Dutch, China and Korea continued even after the policy came into effect. In fact, the amount of trade grew rapidly.

The Dutch in particular, whose trading house in Hirado was moved to Dejima in Nagasaki, monopolized the commodities imported to Japan and made a huge profit. Japan paid for those goods with domestically produced gold, silver and copper. The Dutch had the market all to itself, and, backed by their financial advantage, they dominated East Asian Sea trading. This huge amount of gold, silver and copper from Japan affected the market in Europe. It was not given that Japan would create its modern society.

The knowledge and information of modern Europe brought by Dutch traders played a large role in the maturation of civilization in Japan during the Edo period. Knowledge and information can only change a civilization; it is essential to adopt a foreign culture to modernize a country, and the Edo period needed this. Japan handled well the rapid social changes in the political system, social system and industrial structure during the Bakumatsu era and the Meiji period because of the effort for modernization that had been made during the Edo period. For the transformation from Edo to Meiji, Japan had only to rearrange the social structure that had already been very well fermented. So, the Edo period and Meiji period are almost consecutive.

But this consecutive development did not happen spontaneously: It was not a natural phenomenon that happened in isolation from other countries under the seclusion policy. Behind the modernization of the Edo period, there were efforts to adopt the scientific knowledge of the West. In this respect, Japan was consistently being Westernized after the State of Wars period through to the Edo period, and therefore it could easily realize Westernization in the Meiji period. Just as the modernization in Meiji was the result of Western influence, modernization in the Edo period was also the result of Western influence. In the Edo period Japan had already been Westernized. The Westernization of Japan did not begin in Bakumatsu, but in the State of Wars period, and it continued even in the Edo period when the country was closed.

At the end of the State of Wars period in the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the wave of Westernization was hitting Japan. The encounter with the West in the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the turning point of Japanese civilization. Also in later times, the development of Japanese civilization was still linked to that of the West. Indeed, the record of transition of society from the War period, the Azuchi-Momoyama era, and the early Edo period to the seclusion era simply reflect the change of the political map in the West from Spain and Portugal to the Netherlands and England. That is why even after seclusion, Japan was still under the influence of the global network of the world economy, which was established by the Dutch and the British. For this reason, in the early modern period, Europe and Japan were moving parallel. The parallel relationship between Japan and Europe was not a coincident of countries with no interaction: Secluded Japan was still under influence from the West and continuously transformed itself.

Also, Japan in the Edo period not only accepted information and knowledge, but it also brought many materials to the West in return and had a significant effect on European culture. A captain of the Dutch trading house, Isaac Titsingh, and a Dutch doctor, Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold, reported to Europe about Japan. The

encounter of civilizations has mutual effects.

Hence, it cannot be ignored that some goods made in Japan were brought abroad on the Dutch trading boats that came to Nagasaki. For example, since the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Dutch traders brought huge amount of Japanese ceramics to Europe. Consequently, Japanese culture widely came to be known as Japonism, and it became popular for nobles to decorate their houses and properties with Japanese ceramics. Many copy products were made as well. In the Netherlands and England, people studied these ceramics and eventually came to produce their own products. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Japanese ceramics were excavated in many places, such as in Southeast Asia, Fustat in Egypt and at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. During the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the trading route that connects the East China Sea, the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean was prosperous enough to be called the Way of Ceramic. It is almost common knowledge that Impressionist painters in Europe were deeply inspired by Japan's Ukiyoe. Indeed, Japan in the Edo period transmitted so much information to the world. The fact that Japan transformed Europe also supports the theory that the seclusion policy did not exist.

Japanese civilization has been transforming itself since ancient times with materials and information brought from across the sea. Japan was immeasurably influenced by the Western culture brought via the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and the East China Sea in forming its early modern culture. A civilization develops itself with the afflux of outside material and information.

The transformation of a civilization occurs with transactions. In this case, the South Indian civilization and the Southeast Asian civilization bridged the civilizations of China and Japan in the Eastern part of Eurasia and those in West Asia and Europe in the Western part of Eurasia. South Asia and South East Asia helped materials both from the West and the East of Eurasia to pass through its ocean trading route, and it enabled civilizations to transform in West Asia and Europe and also in China and Japan.

In the history of Japanese civilization, the materials brought by Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and England during the State of Wars period and the Edo period through the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, South China Sea and the East China Sea contributed to establishing the early modern period.

## **THE PACIFIC OCEAN CIVILIZATION AND THE JAPANESE CIVILIZATION**

The Spanish performed an active role in the Pacific Ocean network in the early modern period. They conquered the New World and then searched for a pass to the

Pacific Ocean to finally establish a West bound route to reach the Spice Island from the Atlantic Ocean. They fought over the Islands against the Portuguese, who had arrived there through the East bound route. The Spanish ended up making a trading base in Manila in the Philippines. Then, after discovering the Great circle route that was enabled by using the Black Stream and the North Pacific current, they established a regular route that linked Manila and Acapulco in Mexico and that was used to trade with China and Japan.

Silver is important evidence of the worldwide commercial activity carried out by the Spanish and Portuguese, which spread globally at this time. Huge amounts of silver were produced by slaves at mines in the Spanish colonies in the New World, and it was brought to Europe and Asia. The amount was so great that it caused inflation in Europe. It then flowed into India and Southeast Asia in exchange for commodities such as spices. In addition, in Japan at the Western end of Eurasia, some silver mines were opened up in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and a huge amount of silver was produced and exported. Because the amount of silver produced in Japan was so great, it became an element that affected the European economy.

The main outcome from the Age of Discovery in Spain and Portugal was the realization of a global network through ocean routes. In particular, the route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean found by the Spanish brought the American continent into world history and unified Eurasia and the Americas as one commercial zone. After this, Portugal's activity in the Indian Ocean and Asia was added, making the commercial area a global network. The global network made by Spain and Portugal can be defined as an extended version of the network made by Mongolia and the Islamic empire; however, the European version is characterized by its domination of ocean routes. The method of ocean domination was succeeded later by the Netherlands and England, and it made the starting point of modern European civilization based on the sea.

By the creation of this maritime global network, regions on earth became more connected and interlocked than they used to be, and also, in the New Continent and Asian countries, commerce through ocean trading developed. Furthermore, through this commercial activity, new technologies and knowledge about the world spread: The early modern world, in terms of worldviews, was born. It was a time when the price of the silver produced in the New World and Japan and the spices from India and Southeast Asia had a direct effect on the European market and when the conflicts among European countries in the West quickly spread over the world.

The first global network dominated by the West in the early modern period was

created by two powers: the Spanish, who got hold of the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and the Portuguese, who took control of the trading route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Sea. Early modern Japan was closer to Portugal, who came from the Indian Ocean, than Spain, who came from the Pacific Ocean. Still, Japan had a connection with the Spanish municipal government in Manila and in Mexico. During the Edo period, even under the seclusion policy, Japanese ceramics were exported by traders of the Ryukyu Islands and the Dutch to Manila, crossing the Pacific Ocean to Mexico. This is why Japanese ceramic products produced in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century were excavated in Mexico. During the secluded period, Pacific trading was still active.

For secluded Japan, the unavoidable problem in Pacific trading was drifted sailors and their repatriation. There are many records from the 19<sup>th</sup> century of Japanese fishermen and merchants who drifted down to the Western coast of America or the Hawaiian Islands. Some drifted sailors were rescued by American boats, and, in particular, the youngest ones were treated kindly and taken back to America, where they were then given education and baptized in the country. Some of them, such as Nakahama Manjiro and Hamada Hikozo, came back to Japan at a later time and contributed greatly to the modernization of the country. At that time, the Northern Pacific Ocean was popular for sperm whale fishing, and fishing boats from countries such as the United States and England were working in the area. These fishing boats often came to Japan for reasons such as a lack of food, damage to their boat or a shipwreck, and they always had disputes with the authorities of secluded Japan. It was because of whale fishing that the U.S. saved some drifted fishermen and came to Japan, ostensibly in order to bring them back, but actually to negotiate with the government to open the country. So it is not completely wrong to say that sperm whale fishing and drifted fishermen opened Japan. The pressing force of modern civilization, born in the Western side of Eurasia, moved on to the New World and the Pacific Ocean and then to Japan, where it demanded the country open itself and inflicted Japan's modernization.

### **WHAT IS CIVILIZATION?**

A civilization forms itself by communicating with other civilizations. Communication comes first, then a civilization is formed. Therefore, civilizations link each other and form a network. Civilizations pass materials and information to each other through this network. Here, network means a net-like structure with many threads connected at many points with civilizations. Human civilizations also have a pluralistic structure, or a

network structure, with many connection centers. Traffic routes are, so to speak, an embodiment of the network structure of civilizations. Through traffic routes that spread on land and on sea like a net, people move, things are exchanged, information is transmitted, technologies are advanced and cultures are spread. As a result, civilizations improve. The activities of human beings in trading, religion and migration have a role in this process.

Civilization has to be understood as the network that links them together. In this sense, civilization is based on relationships. A civilization does not stand by itself but on its relationship with other civilizations. In the network's structure, each civilization is related to one another; therefore, all civilizations contain all other civilizations. One civilization consists of all other civilizations, and all other civilizations are contained in one civilization. All other civilizations can be found in each civilization, and each civilization can be found in all other civilizations.

Therefore, civilizations should be considered to form at the connections of cultural networks. Japanese civilization is also one which formed at the connection of the Steppes route, the Oasis route, the Southern ocean route and the Pacific Ocean and which spread both on land and sea. In fact, Japanese civilization links the routes on land and sea such as Eurasia, the East Asian Sea area, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Japan received cultures from all over the world through these routes. Japanese civilization contains the world culture.

At the point where civilizations form a network and become linked to each other, elements of one civilization enter into others, interfere and get absorbed. Fundamentally, a civilization is developed by many adopted elements from outside. The unique appearance of each civilization was made by combining the elements of other civilizations into different patterns. Civilizations are interlocking and interfere with each other. One civilization can stand as an individual civilization with elements of others.

All civilizations were made by mingling with others in order to be unique. There is no completely pure civilization. A civilization that formed all by itself does not exist. Any civilization learns and borrows new elements from others in establishing its form. In this sense Japanese civilization is an integration of foreign elements.

Japan is an island nation located at the Eastern end of Eurasia and the Western end of the Northern Pacific Ocean. From the view point of a cultural center in the continent, an island culture must appear as a mere barbarian culture or, at the best, a remote regional culture. But island cultures are never barbarian or remote: Islands have ports as junctions for ocean trading, and new cultures continuously flow in. Island cultures have independency and distinctiveness, but they are never isolated. On the contrary, islands



are widely connected to the world through the ocean trading network. Thus, the broad outside world is concentrated in an island. An island is, like a commercial port, an information center where new cultures come and go. Receiving and passing new cultures, an island is, so to speak, a superconductive zone. Japanese civilization, too, is one fostered in a superconductive zone. Having absorbed foreign cultures inexhaustibly and having used them to make an amalgam, it has produced a new culture and has influenced the world by transmitting it out. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Japan surely continues to transmit a new culture to the world.

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