

## BERICHTE UND KRITIK

### BETWEEN CONFUCIANISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

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### INDIVIDUALS AND KINGS

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#### I. Introduction

Many words are not needed to demonstrate that human rights constitute one of the biggest “inventions”<sup>1</sup> created by the Western civilization and it is not necessary to extend oneself to prove that this “invention” has been considered traditionally incompatible with the fundamental values of other cultures; particularly, with the Islamic and Asiatic ones.<sup>2</sup> An incompatibility, however, which, at the beginning of this century, in the middle of the globalization, does not seem to be so extreme, as can be seen in the revolutions which are causing the collapse of some dictatorships in the north of Africa.

Of course, it is not the first “democratic awakening”, so to speak, which we have witnessed recently because these events can be considered the fourth wave of democratization which the world has passed through starting in the middle of the seventies in the past century. Following waves which began with the first one in the south of Europe, then in Latin America and after in Central and Eastern Europe ending with the wave which currently breaks through the south of the Mediterranean.

We say it could be considered the fourth democratic wave, but we are not speaking clearly, because rather than a wave we should consider it a “tsunami”. In fact, it has not only extended itself through the south of the Mediterranean, rather it threatens to spread beyond the Red Sea, the Indian and even the Pacific Ocean ... reaching the new super economical power which emerged at the beginning of the century: China.

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the Spanish title of *L. Hunt's*, *Inventing Human Rights. A History: “La invención de los derechos humanos”*, Barcelona 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Vid., for example the remarks of *A. Sen*, *Derechos Humanos y valores asiáticos*, in: *Anales de la Cátedra Francisco Suárez* 35 (2001), pp. 129–147.