

A pure friendship

Mexico and Japan, Japan and Mexico: It all begins with a shipwreck. Rodrigo de Vivero, outgoing governor of the Philippines, was on his return to Mexico when in Japanese waters a storm struck the galleon he was traveling in, the *San Francisco*. Survivors could reach the shore on 30 September 1609 in Iwawada (Onjuku), on the east coast of Honshu, the Japanese main island, not far from the Edo castle, where the immense Tokyo would eventually raise. Don Rodrigo was received by the shogun, Hidetada Takugawa, and his father, Ieyasu Takugawa —founder of the third and last shogunate of Japan, which would rule the country until the last third of the nineteenth century— and that was the first official contact between the two countries. A year later, in October 1610, the Mexicans arrived in Acapulco aboard the *San Buenaventura*, accompanied by a delegation of 25 Japanese traders, three of whom remained in Mexico, according to testimonies of the period.

Time goes by. There is reference of a new maritime event in mid-nineteenth century, when a Japanese commercial ship was adrift and then rescued by Mexicans, and in 1888, already in full of Meiji era and full Porfiriato, a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation was signed, finally formalizing the friendship relations between the two nations. Nearly a decade later, in 1897, and by invitation of President Porfirio Díaz, thirty Japanese farmers settled in Escuintla, Chiapas, in an attempt to start the cultivation of coffee. This group, known as the settlers Enomoto, is considered the first type of immigrants. Those who later joined that agricultural enterprise are considered immigrants of the second type, and known as immigrants of the third type are the more than 10 000 Japanese citizens

who migrated to Mexico between 1900 and 1910 to join the construction of railways, mining, agricultural work and commerce. From then until today, the flow of Japanese people to Mexico has been steady, fixing his residence in the north, in the center or the south, temporarily or permanently, and participating in all walks of life.

Where are all these Japanese, from those who arrived aboard the *San Buenaventura* and decided to stay, until Miho and Taro who work their wonders in a workshop in Tacubaya, through the Enomoto settlers and immigrants from fifth or sixth type and their children, and the children of their children, and the children of their children's children, Japanese-Mexican of second generation or third or fourth?

Here they are, around us, inside of us, fibers of the social fabric, with their particular genetics and its high civilizing sense, in our thoughts and in our hearts, Japan and Mexico, Mexico and Japan, nations strikingly in brotherhood, a pure friendship between two counties who find such a peculiar and pronounced affinity within their vast differences, an unusual neighborhood mediated by an ocean and sealed with a shipwreck.

Mauricio Ortiz