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With compliment to
Japan Foundation and
The International Chodiev Foundation.


The Russian Japanology Review contains several recent academic publications by Russia scholars in the sphere of Japanese studies. Russian editions of these works have been published in 2017 in Yezhегодник Японии (Yearbook Japan) and e-journal ‘Японские исследования’ (Japanese Studies in Russia) mainly (some articles were published in other scientific journals of Russia). Yearbook Japan and Japanese studies in Russia are the organs of the Association of Japanologists.

The purpose of this project is broader international promotion of the results of Japanese studies in Russia and the introduction of the academic activities of Russian Japanologists. Yearbook Japan was founded in 1972. At present it is the core Russian academic periodical in the sphere of Japanese Studies. Traditionally it rubricates articles in four large sections – politics, economics and society, history, and culture. The quarterly e-journal ‘Japanese studies in Russia’ founded in 2016 propagates the results of academic studies in every research area of Japanology. Both editions are published under the auspice of Association of Japanologists in cooperation with Institute of Oriental Studies of Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and Institute of Far Eastern Studies of RAS.

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Dear friends,

I am honored to present the first volume of ‘Russian Japanology Review’, which is a new English digest of academic works by Russian scholars specializing in different spheres of Japanese studies – history, diplomacy, domestic politics, economics and culture. The papers of the volume have already been published in Russian in different specialized editions, mostly under auspice of Russian Association of Japanologists – the quarterly journal *Yaponskiye Issledovaniya* (Japanese Studies in Russia) and *Yezhegodnik Yaponiya* (Yearbook Japan).

The aim of this project is to broaden the readership of Russian academic work in the sphere of Japanese Studies. I strongly hope that the edition will attract attention of different categories of readers, including specialists, students, practitioners and educated laymen. I would be happy to receive all possible forms of feedback that would enable us to improve the edition, which we intend to publish on a regular base.

Two works are dedicated to Japanese diplomacy. Maria Malashevskaya dwells upon the evolution of Japanese-Mongolian relations in the context of Japan’s Eurasian diplomacy adopted in 1997 by the Hashimoto cabinet. Dmitry Streltsov analyzes the recent development in Russo-Japanese relations. He emphasizes the differences in strategic thinking of both countries towards economic cooperation, which has become one of the major obstacles in its further development.

Two articles address the problems of Japanese diplomatic history. Vasily Shchepkin and Kirill Kartashov focus their attention on the ritual features as the foundation for receiving Adam Laxman’s expedition, the first Russian mission to Japan. An attempt to cover the biography of Sato Naotake, the last ambassador of militarist Japan in the Soviet Union and a prominent Japanese diplomat, is made in the paper by Olga Dobrinskaya.

Another historical paper written by Aleksander Mescheryakov presents the biography by Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), an outstanding Japanese ethnologist who gained official recognition and nationwide fame in the post-war period.
The problems of modern Japanese economy and society are addressed in the papers of Irina Lebedeva and Irina Timonina. The first author examines the influence of education democratization, the ideology of lifetime employment, government policies of supporting weak sectors on the formation of the Japan’s middleclass. The second work analyzes mechanisms of government support for creative industries which pursue the goal of boosting the domestic demand, expanding the country’s capacity for exports, and creation of jobs.

Three works deal with Japanese culture. Elena Dyakonova’s essay considers the creative activities by Iio Sogi, the best known renga master of Japan. Ekaterina Simonova-Gudzenko’s article focuses on the role and place of toponyms in the medieval Japanese political culture. The third author, Maria Toropygina, analyzes in her article the problem of selection and organization of material of two medieval poetic collections, Shinsanjurokkasen and Koyasan Kongozanmai-in tanzaku, created in the middle of the 13th and the middle of the 14th centuries.

Please, enjoy the reading. I look forward for your critical analysis and suggestions that would help us to bring you more updates on the progress of this edition in its next volumes.

Dmitry Streltsov,
Chairman of the Russian Association of Japanologists
Sato Naotake: The way of a diplomat

Olga Alekseevna DOBRINSKAYA

The article covers the biography of Sato Naotake, a prominent Japanese diplomat and statesman. He is mostly known in Russia as the last ambassador of militarist Japan in the Soviet Union. However, his career was much more comprehensive and noteworthy. Sato Naotake had become witness to the most dramatic period in the history of Japan, being a participant in many world events that had an effect on shaping Japan’s development up to 1945.

**Keywords**: Sato Naotake, diplomacy, Japan, Russia, USSR, League of Nations, Second World War.

The fate of Sato Naotake was inextricably linked to Russia and the Soviet Union. Naotake started his career as a young attaché in St. Petersburg, and completed his diplomatic mission as the ambassador to Moscow by receiving the Soviet declaration of war. Russia mostly knows Sato as the last ambassador of militarist Japan to the Soviet Union, but his diplomatic and political activity was way broader and much more multifaceted, and we would like to speak about it in this article.

**Childhood and youth: from Tanaka to Sato**

The history of the family to which Tanaka (Sato) was born in 1882 goes back to the Tsugaru samurai clan from the Aomori prefecture. According to the family chronicle, during the Tensho period (1573–1586) the clan’s progenitor, Tarogoro Tanaka, gave his life to save his master, Tsugaru Tameno-bu. The master showed his gratitude by awarding the “Souemon” (guard of the right gate) title to Tanaka, and his family remained Tsugaru’s vassals one generation after another until the Meiji Restoration.

Naotake’s father, Konroku Tanaka, received samurai and Western education (Rangaku), and learned Russian from an Orthodox priest, Father Nikolai, in Hakodate (presumably, it was Nikolai Kasatkin). Konroku Tanaka also wanted to study in Russia, but the Boshin Civil War changed his plans. After the war, Tanaka Sr. joined the police, and held high-ranking positions in various prefectures.

In 1903, Naotake Tanaka was adopted by the family of Yoshimaro Sato, an old friend of the Tanaka family. There was no male heir in the Sato family, and Naotake Tanaka changed his name on the orders from his biological father, and married Yoshimaro Sato’s daughter, Fumi, in January 1906.

Yoshimaro Sato was working for the Foreign Ministry his entire life, and held high-ranking positions, including the one of Ambassador to the United States. It was he who advised Naotake to take the diplomatic service exam.
The young man was not very enthusiastic about working for the ministry: in fact, he wanted to be a businessman, and was admitted to the Tokyo Higher School of Commerce (currently Hitotsubashi University). Nevertheless, he listened to the father’s opinion, and passed the diplomatic and consular service exam. It was a process of strict selection: the tests were difficult, and only a few vacancies were available; the Foreign Ministry annually hired up to 7 new employees before WWI. Sato was hired by the Foreign Ministry almost simultaneously with Yosuke Matsuoka, Koki Hirota, and Shigeru Yoshida.

**First tour: from St. Petersburg to Harbin, getting to know Russia**

The newly established Japanese mission to Russia was the first assignment of the young diplomat. Sato arrived in St. Petersburg in March 1906, and spent eight and a half years in that city. Sato was an assistant to the Charge D’Affaires Ad Interim and, later on, Japanese Ambassador to Russia, Ichiro Motono.

Judging by memoirs of his compatriots, Sato was a favorite pupil of Motono, and accompanied him everywhere [Hasegawa 2005, p. 25]. Personal traits and education of Motono, an apt and cosmopolitan diplomat with good manners, who was trained in France and married a French woman, enabled his successful integration into the life of Russia’s high society and successful establishment of diplomatic contacts. Sato recalled his work with Motono as precious professional and human experience.

While in St. Petersburg, Sato took private lessons of Russian and French, the second language of the country spoken by the then high society; and had a fluent knowledge of both. His later life was linked to Russia and France, and he acquired a reputation of Francophile.

Sato was promoted to the rank of the Embassy’s second secretary in Russia before he was assigned to a consular position in Harbin in September 1914. He became the Consul General in June 1917. The Japanese population of Harbin amounted to 3,000 to 4,000 then, the atmosphere was harmonious, and all was quiet for Sato until the Revolution. His knowledge of the Russian language proved handy, considering that about 40% of the Harbin population was Russian. The city was the administrative center of the Chinese Eastern Railway. It was founded by Russians in 1898 and deemed to be Russia’s protectorate despite formally belonging to China. According to Sato, a majority of the city’s residents were Chinese, but Russians were in military and administrative control, and the Russian influence in Harbin was as big as it was in any authentically Russian city [Sato 1963, p. 116].

A drastic change in the Harbin situation occurred after the 1917 Revolution, as the Bolsheviks were expanding their influence towards the Urals. The Japanese feared that the Revolution could spread into the Far East and
worried about the future of their sizeable investment in tsarist government bonds and trade with tsarist Russia.

Sato was one of those calling for Japan’s soonest invasion of the Far East. Due to his profound concern, he sent a telegram to Envoy G. Hayashi to Beijing on December 6, 1917, to say that it might be necessary to deploy Japanese troops to Manchuria. Sato kept insisting on the intervention, and sent telegrams to his former superior, Foreign Minister Motono, asking for Japanese troops’ assistance to the Chinese army fighting Bolsheviks. Sato feared that Germany would seize the chance, take over Siberian natural resources, and keep Japan away from those. He said Japan should initiate the intervention to maintain the balance of forces in Asia [Lensen 1970, p. 50]. By the time the Japanese government decided to send troops, Sato believed that the armed intervention would be too late and useless [Sato 1963, p. 129].

At the same time, Sato was looking for a candidate capable of organizing the anti-revolutionary people’s movement. He met with General V. Domanevsky in early February 1918, and, later on, negotiated with Ataman G. Semyonov, who asked for military assistance. The Japanese believed that Semyonov could turn the Transbaikal region into a strategic base and a barrier against Bolshevism. Sato urged the central authorities to give rapid assistance to Semyonov [Lensen 1970, p. 52]. He was also probing the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Chinese Eastern Railway administrator, Gen. D. Khorvat, and offered weapons and 15,000 to 17,000 troops for assisting in the establishment of the new government. Yet Khorvat declined the offer.

In November 1918, after A. Kolchak became the Supreme Ruler of the Russian State, Sato was assigned to Omsk and spent almost four months there. The diplomat recalled that Kolchak mostly relied on the assistance of the United Kingdom, the United States, and France, and said he had an impression that Kolchak was not very interested in receiving aid from Japan [Sato 1963, p. 130]. Upon his return to Harbin, Sato sent a telegram to Foreign Minister K. Uchida proposing an active policy for Siberia, which would be advantageous for Russia and the allies. He proposed that the use of military force be avoided as much as possible and called for focusing on economic measures towards reconstructing Russia. The consul general believed that the allies should pull out troops from West Siberia and resolve problems at negotiations. Sato insisted on supporting Russia’s unity and opposed territorial ambitions of some of his fellow countrymen [Gubler 1975, p. 59].

Soon enough Sato came to believe that Japan should renounce the policy of force in relation to Russia. His belief strengthened later on, and he became known as an advocate of internationalism and open economic cooperation.

**Years in Europe**

A significant part of Sato’s biography was linked to his work in Europe. After the mission to Harbin, he was appointed first secretary in Bern, and
moved to Paris in April 1921 to become the right-hand man of Ambassador K. Ishii. Before France, Ishii had been the ambassador to the United States and the foreign minister, and his assignment to Paris demonstrated the importance ascribed by the Japanese government to the country. Future Prime Minister H. Ashida, future Foreign Minister and Ambassador to China M. Tani, and future Ambassador to Paris M. Kato were amongst young diplomats working together with Sato in Paris.

Japan, a winner of WWI, took an active part in the formation of a new system of international relations. The Land of the Rising Sun joined the League of Nations in 1919. It partook at least in ten international conferences held from 1920 till 1923.

Sato’s activity at international conferences played an essential role in his career. The work in Europe not only introduced him to many people but also earned him the reputation of a top-notch specialist in multilateral diplomacy or even “the greatest Japanese expert on conferences,” according the contemporaries’ memoirs. As early as in the beginning of the 1920s, Sato was linked to key international events held in Genoa, Lausanne, and The Hague.

Sato recalled it was when he became imbued with the liking for the young Soviet state. The Japanese diplomat was very impressed by Chicherin’s speech at the Genoa Conference, his eloquence and fluent knowledge of foreign languages. Japan recognized the Soviet Union several years after the conference, but Sato started advocating the soonest establishment of relations with Moscow much earlier [Sato 1963, p. 162].

Sato was appointed counsel to Warsaw in late August 1923. Poland acquired independence shortly before that, it had friendly relations with Japan, there were no difficult problems to resolve, and the tour of Sato was pleasant and quiet. The attitude of Tokyo towards its northern neighbor started changing by that time, and Japan and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations in January 1925. Sato was recalled from Poland and ordered to open the new embassy in Moscow. He came to Moscow in March 1925 and spent four months dealing with organizational issues, including the search for a proper building to accommodate the embassy. The first Japanese embassy to the Soviet Union moved into a house at 43, Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street. Presumably, the house was once occupied by Gen. A. Suvorov.

Diplomatic service in Europe made Sato a witness to and participant in major events in Japan’s foreign political life. It is not surprising that in early 1926 he was offered to head the Japanese mission to the League of Nations. Sato declined the offer at first as he was more enthusiastic about going to some “uncivilized” place. He was long dreaming of working in South America, which was seen as an honorary exile in the Foreign Ministry’s ranking. The diplomat was finally persuaded by his father into accepting the assignment.

Sato was Japan’s ambassador to the League of Nations from January 1927 till December 1930. He took part in keynote multilateral events, among
them the Geneva Naval Conference, the London Naval Disarmament Conference, etc. He kept participating in the activity of the League of Nations after he was appointed ambassador to Belgium in December 1930.

Meanwhile, Tokyo’s reckless military plans were gaining pace, and the advancement of Japanese forces in China triggered an international response. Over and over again, Sato had to tell the League of Nations that Japan was trying to restore order in China, but he could feel the increasing international isolation of the country and was practically the only one opposed to foreign diplomats. The intervention in Manchuria and the establishment of Manchukuo in March 1932 severed relations between Japan and the League of Nations. In 1933, Sato and S. Nagaoka were members of the Matsuoka delegation to meetings of the League of Nations, which discussed the report of the Litton commission.

The report called the establishment of Manchukuo a breach of the Nine-Power Treaty. Following the instructions from Tokyo, Matsuoka declared Japan’s withdrawal from the organization. Sato, Nagaoka, and Matsuoka saw the impossibility to defend their stance on Manchukuo and the withdrawal from the League of Nations as a diplomatic failure, while military members of the delegation felt triumphant [Nish 1993, p. 220]. Most Japanese supported the developments in Manchuria and the adamant diplomatic course of Tokyo, the press hailed successes of Japanese diplomats, and Matsuoka was welcomed to the home country as a hero. Sato did not question the lawfulness of Japanese interests in Manchukuo but regretted Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations, as it increased the country’s international isolation and had implications for the future of the organization itself [Sato 1963, p. 286].

Sato continued his diplomatic service in France, after he was appointed ambassador to Paris in 1933. While in France, Sato received his nephew, Kunio Maekawa, a future acclaimed architect, and helped arrange his internship with legendary Le Corbusier. Sato, who fluently spoke French, showed interest in art and culture, and actively participated in social events, was well liked and respected by his European colleagues.

Over the years of work in Europe, Sato visited practically every important location and participated in crucial diplomatic events of the time. Despite prospects of his career, he was hoping to resign after the end of the French tour in January 1937 and dedicate himself to academic activity. The events in the Far East convinced him that the use of force against China was a mistake. He eventually realized that international cooperation and negotiations with other countries would better suit Japan’s interests than the attempts to ensure the achievement of its interests by military methods.

**Foreign minister**

Sato returned from Paris at a time of another government reshuffle in Tokyo. The political crisis of January 1937 led to the resignation of the Hirota
Cabinet, known for its irreconcilable attitude to China and anti-communism. Gen. S. Hayashi was vested with the power to form the next cabinet. Sato, fresh from his French tour, appeared to be a good candidate for foreign minister. The diplomat did not believe the news of his promotion at first; he thought that 31 years spent in foreign tours prevented him from being fully aware of intricacies of the domestic political situation. He accepted the post on condition that he would be allowed to promote his political views. Sato’s main idea was that Japan should act from the position of pacifism and international cooperation, try to resolve the conflict with China through equal negotiations, maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and improve relations with the United Kingdom [Kurihara 1981, p. 4].

The appointment of Sato, who had the reputation of a liberal, was if not a turn, then at least a certain deviation from the former foreign political course. The main task of the new minister was to cushion negative implications of the Anti-Comintern Pact for Japan; he tried not to accentuate or even belittle the significance of that document. The very first speeches of Sato reeked of friendliness towards the United States and the United Kingdom, and even the Soviet Union whenever that was possible [Molodyakov 2006, p. 194].

Sato disapproved of the Anti-Comintern Pact in parliament and said that Germany gained more from that document than Japan. Berlin was worried by Sato’s speech, which described the Pact as ‘unavoidable evil’ and said it was adopted for technical considerations at best and had the police nature due to the existence of Comintern. Sato told the German ambassador that “the Anti-Comintern Pact deteriorated Russian-Japanese relations and made the conclusion of a fishing agreement impossible” [Latyshev I. A. (ed.) 1987, p. 143].

Sato believed that the principal area of Japan’s foreign policy should be the participation in an open international economic system, which will help the country industrialize and develop exports. This made him different from those who advocated self-sufficiency in foreign policy and the course towards military expansion [Irie 2013, p. 37].

The progressive outlook of Sato was welcomed by the Anglo-Saxon world, which even called it the New Deal of Japanese diplomacy. The UK and the United States hailed Sato’s diplomacy but China was not that enthusiastic. The Nanking government was not exactly happy with the new moderate policy of Tokyo.

The response from the Kremlin, which appreciated the conciliatory nature of the new minister’s initiatives but did not conceal its disappointment, was rather reserved. Sato believed that the existence of Comintern was an impediment to an improvement of Japanese-Russian relations but thought that Japan, as a neighbor, should do its best to resolve problems in relations with the Soviet Union. Moscow said the relations would not improve until Japan renounced the Anti-Comintern Pact.
The home country’s reaction to the diplomacy of Sato was mixed. Many saw his speeches as criticism of the previous course, and he continued to be attacked for the statements he made at parliament hearings for a long time. Some feared that conciliatory diplomacy would result in misunderstanding of Japan’s policy for China, especially Manchukuo, while Sato called for stop trying to separate northern provinces from China, supported China’s territorial integrity but did not doubt the lawful existence of Manchukuo. Still, some politicians viewed his remarks as a threat to the status quo in Manchuria.

The rapid fall of the Hayashi government in May 1937 prevented Sato from fully implementing his foreign political program, and his undertakings were soon curtailed. The right-wingers and the military prevailed in politics; they accused Sato of being weak and undecided, and called his outlook excessively liberal.

After he left the foreign minister’s position, Sato remained a diplomatic advisor and provided consultations to Foreign Minister S. Togo, amongst others. He was still sent on high-profile and delicate diplomatic missions. One of those missions was the trip to Italy and Germany in summer 1940 in the context of Japan’s initiative to resume negotiations on enhancing the Anti-Comintern Pact disrupted in August 1939. Special Representative Sato visited Rome and Berlin to clarify the state of European affairs, and to probe intentions of the leaders of fascist states. The negotiations held by Sato were part of diplomatic efforts, which resulted in the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940 and formalized the military union of the three countries.

**Ambassador to the USSR**

The demand for Sato’s diplomatic talent resumed with the beginning of WWII. Japan, Germany, and Italy declared war on the United States, and the Soviet Union joined the Declaration by United Nations signed by the United States and the UK in January 1942. The sides actually found themselves on the opposite sides of the barricades, but the Neutrality Pact concluded on April 13, 1941, stayed in place.

In the beginning of war, Japan focused on the “southern sector” and applied a wait-and-see approach to the hostilities against the Soviet Union. Japan kept preparing to fight the Soviet Union but delayed the engagement, being cautious after Germany’s defeat on the Soviet front in the winter of 1941–1942.

It was decided at the coordination meeting of the General Staff and the government in January 1942 to maintain a normal relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union, and to prevent the Soviet Union, for one part, and the UK and the U.S., for the other part, from strengthening their ties [Hasegawa 2005, p. 19]. Sato was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union in March 1942 for accomplishing this mission; he replaced Gen. Yo. Tatekawa.
who was known for pro-German views and predicting the approaching victory of Germany over the Soviet Union. The appointment of Sato, an experienced career diplomat advocating preservation of the Pact, showed that the moderate attitude to the Soviet Union prevailed. It was a compromise between those who had no faith in Germany’s victory and wanted to broker peace between Moscow and Berlin, so that Germany could focus on war against the Anglo-American bloc, and the military counting on the victory of Hitler, which would enable Japan to take over eastern parts of the Soviet Union.

Sato believed that Japan should exercise extreme caution and advised against attacking the Soviet Union, or doing anything that could endanger relations with Moscow. Sato invited his old friend, G. Morishima, to be the embassy’s counselor. Morishima, a long-standing opponent of the rapprochement between Japan and Germany, had to resign from Matsuoka’s Foreign Ministry because of his views. The diplomats were instructed to ensure the Soviet Union’s commitment to the Neutrality Pact and to limit their activity to the daily routine [Cherevko, Kirichenko 2006, p. 144].

The possibility of the Axis powers’ winning over the Soviet Union by brokering peace between Moscow and Germany was discussed at the coordination meeting between the General Staff and the government in November 1941 [Cherevko, Kirichenko 2006, p. 140]. The decision was revised in March, following German victories, but Foreign Minister Togo continued to insist on the need for brokering Soviet-German peace. In the summer of 1942, Togo instructed Sato, who was evacuated to Kuibyshev together with the entire diplomatic corps, to visit Moscow from time to time, use the new fishing convention and other issues as an occasion to speak about peace, and lay groundwork for immediately starting mediating efforts should relevant orders be received. Sato said he was convinced of the possibility to maintain neutral relations between Japan and the Soviet Union but did not see a possibility of brokering peace between the Soviet Union and Germany. Togo said he managed to persuade Sato by emphasizing that Japan should do everything to restore peace between Germany and Russia [Togo 1996, p. 295–396].

In July 1942, Japan declined Germany’s request for joint operations against the Soviet Union, and the General Staff agreed to a policy less dependent on Germany, and allowed Togo initiate peace efforts. Togo stepped down in September 1942 in protest against the establishment of the Ministry of Greater East Asia, and the peacekeeping efforts were paused.

Germany’s defeat at Stalingrad crushed hopes for seizing a chance and attacking the Soviet Union. By the end of 1942, Japan faced problems on the Pacific Theater of WWII, which started with the defeat in the Battle of Midway in June 1942.

Being concerned over the exacerbating situation, Sato sent Morishima to Tokyo in December 1942 to inform the government about the emergency and the need for improving relations with the Soviet Union. Sato’s message
delivered by Morishima said that the deteriorating military situation and Germany’s defeat in the Battle of Stalingrad negated the perspective of Germany’s total victory on the Soviet front. The Soviet counter-offensive would intensify and push the German forces outside the Soviet territory. Japan should strengthen its position on the Pacific to speak the language of force with the United States and the UK. Sato believed that the first step towards peace should be an improvement of relations with the Soviet Union. The telegrams sent by Sato to Foreign Minister Tani in the later period indicated that Japan should give back the oil and coal concessions in Northern Sakhalin as a gesture of goodwill and a compromise that would improve Soviet-Japanese relations [Lensen 1970, p. 251]. Tani took an interest in Sato’s proposals but they were not developed any further because of the replacement of the foreign minister in April 1943, and Morishima’s mission resulted in failure.

Sato’s proposals were reconsidered after the progress of war forced Japan to take additional steps towards the rapprochement with the Soviet Union. At a meeting held on June 19, 1943, the government and the empire’s General Staff adopted a document “On the Policy for the Soviet Union.” Instead of Japan brokering peace between the Soviet Union and Germany, the document envisaged stabilization of bilateral relations and “peace in the north” by resolving protracted problems, such as oil and coal concessions in Northern Sakhalin and fishing issues [Hasegawa 2005, p. 20].

The promise of returning Japan’s concessions in Northern Sakhalin to the Soviet Union was made in Matsuoka’s secret message attached to the Neutrality Pact, but due to the outbreak of war the promise had to be shelved, and the Soviet Union was not insistent, fearing that Japan might attack it [Slavinsky 1995, p. 171]. After the correlation of forces changed in June 1943, the Soviet Union raised the question of concessions again, and exhibited a firmer stance. Japan had to yield and acknowledge that the Soviet demands were founded: the disregard of Matsuoka’s promise to shut down the concessions could have been viewed as a breach of the Neutrality Pact and prompted the Soviet Union to assist the U.S. and the UK. The negotiations conducted by Sato on behalf of Japan lasted for about eight months and ended on March 30, 1944, with the signing of a protocol, which liquidated the coal and oil concessions. Given the international situation, above all the situation on WWII fronts unfavorable for countries of the Axis, Privy Council chair Ishii hailed the signing of the protocol as a remarkable success of Japanese diplomacy and praised Sato in the presence of the emperor [Cherevko, Kirichenko 2006, p. 157].

The Japanese deemed the move successful for the following reasons. First of all, the agreement was conditioned on the simultaneous signing of a document, which extended the Soviet-Japanese convention of 1928 for five years; the convention gave Japan the right to catch fish and crab duty-free in some areas of the Soviet territorial waters. Besides, the agreement was con-
cluded in furtherance of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact of 1941, i.e. indirectly reiterated the Soviet obligation not to declare war on Japan together with its allies [Cherevko, Kirichenko 2006, p. 157].

Alongside negotiations on giving back the concessions, Foreign Minister M. Shigemitsu made a number of attempts to encourage a separate peace agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany, and proposed to send a high-ranking special mission to Moscow for that purpose. Tokyo put forward the initiative in September 1943. The Japanese administration expected a truce on the Soviet-German front to facilitate the strategic position of Germany. Secondly, the Soviet government’s consent would imply a breach of commitments to the allies and could have resulted in a breakup of the anti-Hitler coalition. In both cases, Japan hoped to protect itself from the Soviet Union’s engagement in the war in the Pacific [Zhukov (ed.) 1998, p. 461]. This is the cause of the continuous and unambiguous hints and remarks of Japan indicating the wish to strengthen the relations of neutrality and transform the Neutrality Pact into a non-aggression pact [Slavinskit 1995, p. 182]. The Soviet government rejected Shigemitsu’s initiatives in 1943, since it was not interested in holding negotiations with Berlin.

In April 1944, Sato conveyed the minister’s wish for sending a special mission to the Soviet Union to discuss ways of improving bilateral relations, including the conclusion of a trade agreement and resolution of border issues. Sato was against the mission, and did not share the opinion of those who deemed the existence of the Neutrality Pact insufficient and aspired for a treaty, which would give more security and other advantages to Japan [Lensen 1970, p. 253]. Just like Sato predicted, V. Molotov did not accept Japan’s offer because the mission would have aroused suspicion of the allies. Shigemitsu made another attempt in early September 1944; this time he planned to send to Moscow former Prime Minister K. Hirota, who had been the ambassador to the Soviet Union in the 1930s and was believed to be one of the best experts on Russia.

Molotov turned down the new proposal, considering that the arrival of this mission in Moscow would have been viewed in the country and abroad as another proposal of peace between the Soviet Union and Germany, which Japan already put forward in 1943. Sato was persuading Molotov at a meeting that the mission aimed at strengthening and furthering bilateral relations, but felt pessimistic about the idea and believed it was a sign of the Japanese government’s confusion.

The foreign political and military position of Japan started deteriorating in early 1945, and the Americans landed on the Japanese territory for the first time; it became obvious that Germany would suffer a defeat within several months. The Japanese establishment started looking for ways towards peace compromise. The probing started in the beginning of 1945 in three areas: there were attempts at concluding a separate peace agreement with Chiang Kai-shek’s China, starting peace talks with the United States and the United
As early as in February-March 1945, the Japanese kept indicating their wish for Moscow's mediation at private meetings. They were still hopeful of the Soviet Union's assistance after the Soviet Union renounced the Neutrality Pact in April 1945. Japan hoped that the Pact would stay in effect for another year, after the Soviet Union assured them the relationship would not change. On May 14, 1945, the Supreme War Council instructed the Foreign Ministry to take a number of diplomatic steps for the purpose of 1) preventing the Soviet Union from joining the war on Japan; 2) achieving a favorable attitude of the Soviet Union to Japan; 3) making peace with the UK and the U.S. with the Soviet mediation [Slavinsky 1995, p. 281].

The government was counting on the negotiations conducted by Hirota, who was tasked with probing the stance of Soviet Ambassador Ya. Malik on the possibility of brokering. At the negotiations that started on June 3, 1945, Japan proposed that a bilateral agreement on the joint maintenance of peace in East Asia and non-aggression be signed. Meanwhile, Sato was becoming more and more aware of where Japan was headed and was surprised at the naivety of Hirota and Togo who were discussing the future of Manchuria at the negotiations with Malik while Japan was on the brink of a catastrophe. The diplomat believed that urgent measures were necessary, but the government spent a month playing "childish games" [Lensen 1970, p. 269]. From a conversation with Molotov that followed, Sato realized that the people's commissar had little interest in the negotiations between Hirota and Malik, and the whole negotiating process was about probing each other's position.

All this time the ambassador kept warning the authorities about the danger of incorrectly assessing the situation. On June 8, Sato said in his letter to Morishima in Tokyo, "The Soviet Union may suddenly renounce its neutrality at an appropriate moment, and the Red Army may attack the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. Resistance might have been possible earlier, but it is unrealistic now. Airstrikes on Japan will intensify if the Soviet Union joins the war and gives the UK and the U.S. access to its airbases in Siberia." [Lensen 1970, p. 268].

Meetings between Hirota and Malik had no political consequences, and Japan focused the effort on Moscow in June 1945; it was seeking consent of J. Stalin and Molotov to the visit of a high mission led by the emperor's special representative, Prince F. Konoe, to Moscow shortly before their departure for the Potsdam Conference.

Sato believed it would be impossible to persuade the Soviet Union into taking Japan's side while Japan was not demonstrating the determination to stop the war. "In these days, with the enemy air raids accelerated and intensified, is there any meaning in showing that our country has reserve strength for a war of resistance, or in sacrificing the lives of hundreds of thousands of
On July 13, Sato followed instructions from Tokyo and informed Molotov of the emperor’s intention to stop the war and send Konoe to Moscow. The ambassador wrote home that Japan had no choice but an unconditional surrender or something like that [Toland, 1970, p. 758]. The peace proposal should approve most of the enemy’s conditions with the exception of the protection of the fundamental character of Japanese form of government [Peace feelers…, No 1427]. The ambassador warned that the Russians would not consider the Japanese proposal should it consist of phrases beautiful but somewhat remote from the facts and empty in content [Peace feelers…, No 1382]. Just like Sato feared, S. Lozovsky said on July 18 that the peace initiative was not concrete, and the purpose of Konoe’s mission was unclear.

On July 20, Sato sent a long telegram to Tokyo and fearlessly expressed an opinion on Japan’s future, which strongly disagreed with the government’s position. “Since there is no longer any real chance of success, I believe that it is the duty of the statesmen to save the nation by coming quickly to a decision to lay down our arms. […] it is inevitable that the people will have to endure the heavy pressure of the enemy for a long period of time, but the nation will live on, and we may be able to recover our former prosperity again after several decades.” [Peace feelers…, No 1427].

Tokyo kept categorically rejecting the unconditional capitulation and was indignant at the telegrams from Moscow. The opinion that the efforts are futile, Japan will share the fate of Germany unless it surrenders, the Soviet Union will attack Manchuria after August 1, and Japan should get ready for the unconditional capitulation did not increase Sato’s popularity with the Foreign Ministry and the government [Brooks 1968, p. 16]. The ambassador was accused of being unreliable and compromising, and demands were made that Togo replace him. Yet Togo had trust in Sato and could not replace him while the search for ways out of the war was still in progress.

Sato met with Lozovsky again on July 25, and conveyed Togo’s message that the visit of Konoe aimed at explaining specifics of the Japanese intention to stop the war and establish post-war cooperation between Japan and the Soviet Union. The Potsdam Declaration of the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, which called for the immediate and unconditional capitulation of Japan, was published the day after.

The declaration caused a big confusion in Japan. The foreign minister proposed that they study the declaration, instead of turning it down. The military commanders believed it would be premature to speak of the capitulation as long as Japanese forces were occupying vast territories outside Japan. While waiting for the Soviet Union’s response, Prime Minister K. Suzuki issued a statement which said that Tokyo would ignore the ultimatum given in the Potsdam Declaration.
New attempts at inquiring of Lozovsky about the attitude to Konoe’s visit resulted in failure. Sato believed that Stalin did not see any need for reaching an agreement with Japan. The ambassador wrote to Tokyo that the attempts at arranging the Japanese mission would be futile if Stalin were unable to shake the will of the United States and the UK, which insisted on the unconditional surrender on terms required by the Potsdam Declaration [Peace feelers..., No 1480]. The diplomat was trying hard to explain to the administration that the Soviet Union would gain nothing from assisting Japan, but Tokyo clung to the idea that the Soviet Union would come to its rescue.

Sato learned that Molotov returned from Berlin on August 6, and immediately requested a meeting but was received only on August 8. The people’s commissar told him that the Soviet Union had joined the Potsdam Declaration and would declare a war on Japan on August 9. Sato was prepared for the worst, but kept thinking until the very last moment that Moscow would agree to broker peace. The news that the Soviet Union was joining the war on Japan was a shock.

After the war

Sato came back to the Embassy and told his subordinates that all of them had become internees. Their freedom and communication with the outside world were limited, but the terms of stay of the Japanese in the Soviet Union were rather mild: there was neither violence nor hate towards them [Lensen 1970, p. 297].

Sato was allowed to go back to his residence, and diplomats and journalists staying at the Metropol Hotel moved to the Embassy. All they could read at the Embassy was Soviet newspapers, Izvestia and Pravda, so neither Sato nor the rest could grasp the horrid consequences of the atomic bombings. The former ambassador was depressed by the news of Japan’s capitulation and occupation. He recalled that he felt like he was pierced by the sword and bled out [Sato 1963, p. 501].

The need for taking care of his subordinates was distracting Sato from painful thoughts. He was allowed to send one telegram per month to inform Tokyo about health of the employees. The Embassy’s life was strictly regulated, because none of them knew when they might return to Japan. Duties were divided between Embassy inhabitants who took turns to do shopping, clean up, and cook. Sato was working, too. He helped sweep and clean the grand hall of his residence, which became the dining room. Seeking to keep his people busy, Sato organized billiards tournaments, poetic contests, and debates on global problems. They even published newspapers: Hati Hati Shimbun (The Newspaper of August 8; August 8 is the date when the Soviet Union declared war on Japan), and Fukko Shimbun (Revival). The literary magazine Boruga (Volga) was published once a month, and nearly every issue published haiku by Sato.
The Japanese were informed on April 8, 1946, that they would be repatriated. The Embassy and the residence were seized, but the employees were allowed to take their personal belongings. Sato arrived in Tokyo on May 30. The former ambassador delivered a report on his mission to the Soviet Union to the emperor. He was surprised when the emperor summoned him again several days later. The content of their meeting remained secret, but the ambassador recalled that Hirohito felt lonely, since many members of his entourage either died or were imprisoned in Sugamo.

Sato’s diplomatic career was over, but he never stopped participating in the political life. Many high-ranking officials were barred from politics, and he became one of the few senior veterans of the Foreign Ministry cleared of war crimes by the Allied Power’s General Headquarters. The knowledge of foreign languages and traditions of Western countries was good for his further career. Such senior diplomats as S. Yoshida, K. Shidehara, M. Shigemitsu, and H. Ashida were promoted to high positions in post-war Japan. Soon enough, Yoshida offered Sato to take charge of the Foreign Service Training Institute established for coaching the next generation of diplomats for the times when Japan regains independence and restores its relations with the world. He also accepted a seat on the Privy Council.

The Japanese authorities were reconfigured in the process of democratic reforms. Sato decided to participate in the first post-war parliamentary election and ran for the House of Councilors from his native prefecture of Aomori. Later on, Sato chaired a small independent association, Ryokufukai (Green Wind Society). The association rapidly grew over the first years of its existence (it had 97 members in 1950) and became influential in the House of Councilors, yet the influence reduced after the unification of conservative forces in 1955.

Sato chaired the Foreign Affairs Commission of the parliament’s upper house. After the death of his old friend, former diplomat Ts. Matsudaira, Sato was elected President of the House of Councilors. He was reelected three times and spent 18 years working in the House of Councilors.

After the war, Sato proved himself in another field of activity related to his former work at the League of Nations. Over the years, he stayed in touch with a group of former Geneva coworkers, and was offered to head the United Nations Association of Japan after they joined the association on December 17, 1947. He chaired the Association from 1947 to 1970.

Sato remained a public figure despite his advanced age. His contribution to the cause of international peace was rewarded in October 1970 when he received the Kajima Peace Award. An issue of the magazine Kokusai Jihyo (International Affairs) released next month was dedicated to the activity of this diplomat and politician.

Sato died of a heart failure at the age of 89 on December 18, 1971. A representative of the Imperial Court extended condolences to the family, which was another proof of the authority and respect enjoyed by Sato in his country.
Sato bore witness and took direct part in one of the most dramatic periods in the history of Japan. He was part of the state machinery, which led Japan to collapse, but tried to promote liberal values even under those circumstances. No matter what position Sato held, he was never afraid to defend his point of view, and proclaimed the aspiration for peace and mutually advantageous cooperation the primary national interest of his country.

The diplomatic talent of Sato helped stably maintain a good relationship between Tokyo and Moscow in the midst of war. Complicated bilateral issues were tackled. Soviet People’s Commissar Molotov lauded Sato’s work. According to Molotov, the two countries established normal relations when Sato was the ambassador in Moscow, although there were plenty of misunderstandings before [Slavinsky 1995, p. 247].

However, the circumstances of that time narrowed space for diplomatic maneuver, and, in the end, other strategic considerations determined the outcome of the war. Being the ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sato soberly assessed the situation and did his best to avoid heavier casualties. Perhaps, the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could have been avoided, and hundreds of thousands of lives would have been saved if his voice had been heard.

References


Russian edition of the article:

DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2017-00019
Nature and/or poetry? Based on “A Poem of One Hundred Links Composed by Three Poets at Minase” (Minase Sangin Hyakuin, 1488)

Elena Mikhailovna DYAKONOVA

Iio Sogi is the best known renga master of Japan. He was of low origin (which is said by every encyclopedia and biographic essay); his family was in the service of the Sasaki clan. Some sources say the poet’s father was a Sarugaku Noh teacher, while others call him a Gigaku master; and his mother was born to an insignificant samurai clan, Ito. The image of Sogi – an old man, a traveler with a beard wearing old clothes and living in a shack – looks hagiographic and conventional Zen, rather than something real.

Renga (linked-verse poetry) is a chain of tercets and distiches (17 syllables and 14 syllables), which is sometimes very long, up to a hundred, a thousand, or even 10,000 stanzas built on the same metric principle, in which a stanza comprising a group of five syllables and a group of seven syllables (5-7-5 and 7-7) in a line, is the prosodic unit. All those tercets and distiches, which are often composed by different authors in a roll call, are connected by the same subject (dai), but do not share the narrative. Every tercet and distich is an independent work on the subject of love, separation, and loneliness embedded in a landscape and can be easily removed from the poem without damaging its general context, although it is related to the adjoining stanzas.

Keywords: renga, poetry, Sogi, Minase Sangin Hyakuin, Emperer Go-Toha

On the 22nd day of the 1st moon cycle of the 2nd year of the Chokyo era (1488), three famed poets – renga master Sogi (1421–1502) and his pupils, Shohaku (1443–1527) and Socho (1448–1532), – gathered by the Go-Toba Goiedo pavilion, the Minase Jingu Shinto sanctuary in Minase between Kyo-to and Osaka, to compose a poem of one hundred links commemorating the 250th death anniversary of Emperor Go-Toha. The emperor frequently visited his Minase mansion. A sacred scroll depicting Go-Toha is now stored at the Go-Toha Goiedo Pavilion.

Iio Sogi is the best known renga master of Japan. He was of low origin (which is said by every encyclopedia and biographic essay); his family was in the service of the Sasaki clan. Some sources say the poet’s father was a Sarugaku Noh1 teacher, while others call him a Gigaku2 master; and his mother was born to an insignificant samurai clan, Ito. Yet in the zenith of his glory Sogi was received by aristocrats and even by the shogun. He was very young

1 Sarugaku Noh – (monkey games), performances by vagabond companies, forerunners of the Noh Theater staging short didactic plays involving dance, magic tricks, and acrobatics.
2 Gigaku – theatrical performances originating in China or Central Asia, part of Buddhist ritual, masked drama dance.
when he became a monk at the Sho Kokuzi temple of the Zen Buddhist sect of Rinzai in northeastern Kyoto – a center of literary creation and Buddhist thought. The Zen sect of Rinzai nurtured numerous literary and philosophical schools of that period, including Five Mountains literature (gozan bungaku), Sung philosophy, and linked-verse poetry (renga). Unlike other renga masters, Shinkei or Gojo, Sogi never climbed to the top of the Buddhist hierarchy and had no clerical rank. Japanese researcher Konishi described him as kojikisho (rankles mendicant), a monk of the mendicant order without ranks and distinctions [Konishi 1991, p. 30–31].

He became a renga master (rengashi) at the age of 30, composing poems of a hundred links together with students and other renga wise men (Sogi named Seven Renga Wise Men’, the best poets of the genre, same as Ki no Tsurayuki named Six Geniuses of Japanese Poetry Rokkasen). He studied the Tale of Genji (Genji Monogatari, 10th century), the commentary on the Tale, and legends based on that text under the supervision of Shidara, a modest vassal of the shogun, and learned how to compose waka from Masachika no Asukai (died in 1490), a heir to the aristocratic renga school Dojo of Nijo Yoshimoto. The classic education played an important role in forming his style: reserved, simply, shadowy, and “converged on the antiquity.”

Since his young years, Sogi was known as a mendicant poet who travelled across Japan with a staff. Sogi visited places connected to poets, wrote theoretical works on renga, studied the yugen (hidden beauty) category, gave lectures on the renga genre, waka anthologies, monogatari tales, and nikki diaries, and wrote travel notes.

The image of Sogi – an old man, a traveler with a beard wearing old clothes and living in a shack – looks hagiographic and conventional Zen, rather than something real. The path of Sogi was earlier chosen by famous travelers Saigyo, Shinkei, and, later on, Basho, as well as plenty of others, less remarkable. In the last year of his life, Sogi was sick but still traveled

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3 Sozei (Takayama), Tuan (?–1448 r.), Noa (1397–1468), Gejo (1405–1469), Senjun (1411–1476), Shinkei (1406–1475) and Soi (Katamori, 1418–1485). Notably, the tradition to group writers came from China. “Importantly, the inclusion in a collection is not just membership in a certain prestigious club, but the designation to a literary community dating back to times immemorial. In China, a person acquired a social status only as part of the family (which is directly linked to the cult of ancestors, a fundamental idea of Chinese conscience); a man of letters could also establish oneself only in the context of predecessors, contemporaries, and descendants. It is not accidental that a handful of Chinese poets are mentioned on their own. As a rule, critics group even the greatest literary men into pairs, Li – Du (Li Bo and Du Fu), trios, the three Xie (three Xie poets of the 5th century: Xie Lin Yun, Xie Hui Lian and Xie Tiao), the uncountable “four talented,” “five remarkable,” “seven late” and “seven early,” “eight famous”, and “ten friends” practically overwhelm literature of any epoch. Those pairs, trios, and others were united into larger groups by different parameters, such as place of birth or residence, and time intervals ranging from one imperial epoch to longer periods, such as early Han to the golden age of Tang, up to the dynasty (the dynasty community manifested itself practically on every level) [Smirnov 2000, p. 267].
through highlands along the entire eastern coast of Japan via Edo, Shinaga-
wa, Kamakura, and Odawara. The death of Sogi was also hagiographic: he
died at the age of 82 in the mountainous area of Hakone famous for its beau-
ty, and pupils carried him in a palanquin over the Suruga mountain pass to a
creek flowing near the gate of the village sanctuary Jorinji. Before he died,
Sogi asked the pupils to position him in a way he could admire Mount Fuji.
Here is the tercet he composed after moving into a lone hut standing on a
mountain slope:

世にふるもさらに時雨の宿りかな

Oldness has come.

I spend my night alone

Under drizzling rain

Sogi (New Mount Tsukuba collection, Shinsen Tsukuba shu, 3801)

Origin of renga

The origin of renga is important to us, considering that this genre incor-
porates many features of classic waka (tanka)\(^4\), the forerunner of renga, such
as images, techniques, the range of subjects, and associations.

Renga derived from tanka’s division into two parts: 5-7-5 and 7-7. It is
not exactly clear why the verse was divided into two parts. Some say that
first poems of the haikai renga genre were humorous, and a joke told in a
poem had to be brief. Another likely explanation is the caesural break after
the first two lines of the pentastich. The caesural break evolved into a pause,
and the second part of the verse ceased to exist.

Hokku (introductory) is a bridge between ancient waka poetry, i.e. tanka
pentastich, and three-line haiku, which are the two most common genres in
Japanese poetry. The original haiku, called haikai in the early days, were al-
ways humorous: they were sort of topical semi-folklore limericks. Their na-
ture changed completely in the later period.

The first mention of haikai (humorous poetry) as a genre can be found in
the classic poetry anthology, “Old and New Songs of Japan” (Kokinshu,
905) in the section Haikai Uta (Humorous Songs), but it was just the outset
of the haiku genre as we know it. Another acclaimed anthology, “Mount
Tsukuba Collection” (Tsukubashu, 1356), included the so-called haikai-no
renge, long lines of verse on a given subject by one or several authors, in
which the first three lines were most valued. The renga (kusari renga) lines
were mentioned for the first time in the Ima Kagami work (Today’s Mirror,
dating back to the late Heian epoch), a historical monument presenting the
fictionalized history of Japan. The first anthology of haikai-no renga proper,
“Insane Collection of Mount Tsukubā” (Chikuba kyoginshu) was prepared in

\(^4\) Waka (Japanese song) is a general notion, which mostly includes tanka (short song) and, in the
ancient period, nagauta (long song), sedoka sextain, and some other exotic genres.
The greatest poets of the new genre were Moritake Arakida (1473–1549) and Sokan Yamazaki (1464–1552). The best renga anthology is “New Mount Tsukuba Collection” (Shinsen Tsukubashu, 1494) prepared by poet Sogi under the emperor’s rescript. Sogi was 73 years old at that time.

It was fashionable to improvise a three-line hokku verse at meetings of rangashi poets, where renga poems were composed. Hokku (also known as hakku) is the first three lines of the long links of renga, sort of amoebic form composed by two poets or more, a poetic roll call of three and two lines on a given subject.

In fact, renga is a 31-syllable tanka pentastich divided into two parts (before and after the caesural break), a question and an answer, a start and a continuation, in which the verse is not so much about the text as the subtle but still noticeable connection between the separate parts, kamino ku (the upper stanza, which has 5-7-5 syllables in the line) and shimono ku (the lower stanza, which has 7-7 syllables in the line), or maeku and tsureku, which is called kokoro (soul, heart) in Japanese.

Renga (linked-verse poetry) is a chain of tercets and distiches (17 syllables and 14 syllables), which is sometimes very long, up to a hundred, a thousand, or even 10,000 stanzas built on the same metric principle, in which a stanza comprising a group of five syllables and a group of seven syllables (5-7-5 and 7-7) in a line, is the prosodic unit. All those tercets and distiches, which are often composed by different authors in a roll call, are connected by the same subject (dai), but do not share the narrative. Every tercet and distich is an independent work on the subject of love, separation, and loneliness embedded in a landscape and can be easily removed from the poem without damaging its general context, although it is related to the adjoining stanzas. There are similar poetic forms in the Orient, such as the Malay poetic form of Pantun. Still, every verse is connected to the lines before and after it: this is a chain of questions and answers, or, to be more exact, starts and continuations, in which every next tercet or distich adds value by a change of the subject and an unexpected interpretation of a word. The meaning of the previous couplet is connected only to the next one, and together they create a new unity and acquire meanings which none of them has on its own.

Classic anthologies, which are the source of renga associations, recorded a certain state of literature, suggested ideal models, chose texts from the great variety of poems, and established them as the most representative of their epoch. Those poems were not always the best; the anthology was based on the complex principles of a dialogue, and poetic “heights” showed off against the backdrop of “gorges”, the reflection of the Sky and the Earth. Sometimes, low-tier poems set off real masterpieces. The procedure of poems’ selection by the poetic community was also a method of literary critique: verses which were not included in the anthology for some reason were

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5 Renga consisting of 1,000 or 10,000 stanzas are called anthologies of one-hundred-line renga.
doomed to oblivion. The anthology of classic waka is not a mere sum of elements but a roll call between texts, which became a new unity.

It is important to understand that the roll call, renga’s “dialogue between poets,” is rooted in classic anthologies.

Renga lines were improvised at poetic meetings, where two poets or more chose a canonic subject and composed tercets and distiches by turn. The relatively vast renga and the preserved tanka poetic form and many of its features make it possible to see the set of associations inherent in this genre unfolding throughout comparatively large material.

This poetic dialogue of roll-call songs (mondo) originated from the “Myriads of Leaves Collection” anthology (Manyoshu, 8th century) and the old waka of “The Records of Ancient Matters” (Kojiki, 8th century) written by two authors. As time passed, renga tercets acquired a meaning of their own and developed into a new poetic genre, which the renga genre eventually disappeared from the stage and lost its independent significance. The renga genre actually ceased to exist in the 16th–17th centuries6.

Kokoro (heart, soul, essence) and kotoba (words)

Sogi wrote that renga originated from uta (Japanese song); he was very attentive to words but still believed that the connection between words was even more important and described it with the term kokoro (heart or soul). Sogi viewed kokoro as an amalgam of words and an art of handling words. The art of renga mastered poetic vocabulary: simple, uncomplicated, unsophisticated, and non-individualized words were preferred. Besides, the poet was mindful of the previous verse and responded to it in an unusual way, while the earlier verses in the renga line were sort of “forgotten.”

The improvisation could go very far, onto other subjects or areas, and it was never known how the renga line might end. Whenever fall was chosen as the renga subject, poets were prohibited from wandering off to a different season, but when renga had a different subject, for instance dzo (miscellaneous) or jukai (memories), it was possible to mention various seasons in adjoining stanzas. It was even possible to mention fall and spring in the same tercet (for example, Minase Sangin). Some researchers compared renga to koanami, Zen Buddhist absurdist dialogues, because there was often no logical connection between questions and answers, starts and continuations.

“Renga’s inclination to replace the identical with a series of oppositions was similar to Zen koans.” [Goreglyad 1997, p. 343].

A huge importance was ascribed to “here and now”, the instant spontaneous coupling of stanzas, similar to a key Buddhist category of sokkon (at this moment). The improvised nature of renga also emphasized sokkon.

Before it left the stage, the renga genre flourished in the Muromachi epoch (1336–1568). Such remarkable poets of the previous epochs as Fujiwara no

6 The renga vogue is currently coming back.
Teika and Fujiwara no Tameie, and Emperor Go-Toba obviously had an interest in the renga genre, but saw it as a game, an amusement. Poetic competitions held under plum trees, for instance at Kyoto Buddhist temples, became popular in the 13th century (they were called poems composed under flowers). Those were not just poetic battles, but also sorts of “calming the flowers” rituals at the Bishamonodo and Hosshoji temples. Those temples had famous weeping plum trees (shidare zakura), where renga competitions attracting huge audiences were held. Those competitions were poetic festivals and “calming the flowers” rituals which helped prevent diseases characteristic of the plum tree blossoming period in spring [Konishi 1991, p. 426].

Appearance of renga theory. Main treatises

The attitude to the renga genre changed in the 14th century. A number of theoretical treatises were written, among them Tsukuba Mondo (Dialogues on Mount Tsukuba, 1372) by a major court poet, Yoshimoto Nijo (1320–1388), the regent and chancellor of the Northern Court at the beginning of the reign of the Ashikaga shogunate. He was an author of the first imperial renga anthology Tsukubashu (Mount Tsukuba Collection, 1357). Nijo and his teacher, Gusai (aka Kyusai) (1283 – 1376), were the first to lay down renga rules, Renga Shinshiki (Renga Composing Rules, 1372), rooted in an earlier treatise by Fujiwara no Tameie, Kenji-no shikimoku (Rules of Sword and Jasper, circa 1275). It took Nijo and Gusai over 25 years to develop the renga rules, which appeared to be extremely complex: the poet was bound by a set of regulations and restrictions, a kind of numerological matrix, which built the frame of every renga. It was not possible to exceed these canonic boundaries; quite the opposite, the restrictions enabled the renga genre to exist. The instant and spontaneous nature of renga seems to contravene the rigid and irrevocable composing rules.

There was also a thesaurus of possible renga subjects (dai). Konishi mentioned some of them: yabun (evening), hikarimono (luminaries), sanrui (mountains), tori (birds), furimono (snow, rain), suihen (river bank), tabi (travel), isho (clothes) and many others.

Nijo and Gusai determined connections between poetic vocabulary and images of nature, which already existed in the national poetic tradition but were put into a new setting. In order to describe the withering of the fall season, the poet needed to create a string of poetic images: from a withering leaf, cold dew, the dark skies, and the white land to the moaning of a cicada. Those images were created throughout centuries for waka poetry; now they were applied to the broader space of renga, which made a cross-game possible. The one-hundred-line form (hyakuin)\(^7\) became renga’s classic.

\(^7\) There are much more common renga of 1,000 or even 10,000 stanzas, they are called anthologies of one-hundred-line renga (hyakuin), which are divided into 50 choka (long stanzas of 5–7–5
Those images (nests of meanings) were supposed to be embedded in pro-
tensive images of nature. There was some experience of creating vast images
of the kind in the Japanese tradition: the first anthology of Japanese poetry
released in the 8th century, Manyoshu (“Myriads of Leaves Collection”) fea-
tured the nagauta form (long song), which, however, rapidly left the stage. It
was recalled from time to time, and nagauta was copied in the 18th and 20th
centuries, but Japanese literature had no other long genres. True, there were
doku renga (linked verses of one poet) in the genre, but most poems were
composed by two, three, or more authors. I wish I could say that every poet
added something individual to the renga lines, but that did not happen: the
principle of those poets was anti-innovation (as Confucius once said, a
transmitter, and not a maker). They realized that nothing vanishes in culture
and literature, the range of subjects is canonized, images are mastered to per-
fected, and the language is simple but intricate.

Every renga has a long history: many generations of classic poets (mostly,
waika nurtured it with their creative work. Sogi deemed Kokinshu (Col-
lection of Old and New Songs of Japan, 10th century), Shinkokinshu (New
Collection of Old and New Songs of Japan, 12th century), Genji Monogatari
(Tale of Genji, 10th century), Ise Monogatari, Yamato Monogatari, and
poems by Kakinomoto no Hiromato, Yamabe no Akahito, and many others
to be ideal works and sources of images. Lots of contemporaries described
Sogi’s comprehensive knowledge of the classic tradition as practically unat-
tainable. U.S. researcher of Sogi’s work, Steven D. Carter, noted that linked
verses and classic education in the spirit of imperial anthologies and mono-
gatari were combined only after Sogi’s appearance in literature and were in-
spired by his example (Carter 1981, p. 40).

Japanese commentators of renga based their work on known waka from
imperial anthologies and monogatari tales; they found the same images, mo-
tives, and keywords in renga. Actually, both old and new academic comment-
taries make references to classic texts of the eras of Heian (9th–12th centu-
ries) and Kamakura (12th–14th centuries). There is practically no difference
between comments of various authors on the famed beginning of Minase
Sangin: Sogi’s tercet and Shohaku’s distich.

moras per line and tanku (short stanzas of 7-7 moras per line). In all, there were 17 and 14 syllables.
Together they were called renku, linked verse. Some renga were relatively short: 24, 36, or 50 stan-
zas. Poems were based on the classic pentastich consisting of tercets and distiches: the upper renku,
kamino ku or maeku, and the lower renku, shimonoku, tsureku. Some renga were inversed: a maeku
tercet followed a tsureku distich. Some renga had fewer stanzas: 50-stanza goju-in, 44-stanza yoyo-
shi, and 36-stanza kasen.

We should say that contemporaries had same enormous respect for the knowledge of poet and
hakku theoretician, Masaoka Shiki, the last haiku genius (out of four: Basho, Buson, Issa, Shiki).
Renga masters and examples of ancient and early medieval poetry traditions

Commentators (for instance, Minato Keiji, Kijiro Kaneko, and Tetsuo Ichiji) agree there is an allusion to tanka in the Songs of Spring, scroll 1, by Emperor Go-Toba, a remarkable poet and patron of arts. Notably, the Minase Sangin renga is dedicated to the 250th death anniversary of Go-Toba.

The initial tercet by Sogi (hakku) is an allusion to the verse by Emperor Go-Toba included in the 13th century in the Shinkokinwakashu anthology’s The Songs of Spring section:

雪ながら山もとかすむ夕かな
Snow keeps falling,
But foothills are already
Enveloped in haze. It’s nightfall.

Sogi writes about the change of season: it is still snowing on top of the hill, but the foothills are enveloped in haze. Kasumu (enveloped in haze) means spring.

見渡せば山もと霞む水無瀬川夕べは秋となおみひけむ
Wrapped in haze,
Minase River
Flows by the mountain...
It was so wrong of me to think
That fall is the only time when
Dusk is beautiful

Go-Toba

Poet Shohaku responded to Sogi’s tercet with a distich:

行く水とほく梅にほふ里
Water flowing to a far distance
The village full of plum blossom aroma

Signs of the season, snow and a plum tree, run against one another in these two couplets: they mean early spring, end of winter, “white on white.” The subjects here are furimono (snow), ki (trees), suihen (river bank), and kyosho (village).

It is consonant with the poem written 700 years earlier, in the 8th century, by celebrated Tabito Otomo, whose works were included in the first Japanese poetic anthology, Manyoshu (“Myriads of Leaves Collection”).

わが園に梅の花散るひさかたの天より雪の流れ来るかも
Do I see white blossoms
Of a fragrant plum tree in my garden?
Or is it snow falling on the ground
From the eternal sky?

Otomo Tabito

This tanka has a canonic motive: the poet cannot tell white blossoms from snowflakes. The same motive manifests itself in the first Manyoshu anthology (8th century).

The commentator said that the word sato (village) was linked to the foothills, which led to a phrase of “a village at the foothills.”

Commentators also mentioned a tanka from the Kokinshu anthology’s The Songs of Love section. An unknown author mentioned a waterless river, Minasegawa:

水無瀬川ありてゆく水なくばこそつひにわが身をたえぬと思はめ

They call it
Minase, a waterless river,
But water is flowing!
Ah, I would have left the mortal world
If I had stopped hoping …

Unknown author

川かぜに一むら柳春みえて

Wind coming from the river
Swaying riverside willows
It looks like spring is here

Socho

The third poem by Socho is about willows (yanagi), which is related to a plum tree (ume), and both words belong to the subject of ki (trees). Yukumizu (running water) is related to the word kawa (river) from the previous stanza. Leaves of the young willow are so transparent that they can be seen only when the willow sways in the wind. The willow is a word for the early spring season, when trees are covering with fresh leaves. The wind coming from the river sways branches of the willow, which reflects the movement of water in the previous stanza. The willow and plum trees belong to the category of ki (trees).

You can see that the couplets are connected by subjects and motives: sui-hen (river bank), kyosho (village), and ki (trees) (in this case, a plum tree and willows). There also several thousand words of the season, kigo: shimo (frost), mushi (cicadas), wakana (young grass), kasumi (haze), kiri (fog), tsuki (moon), and kusakare (dry grass).

舟さすおとはしろき明がた

The sound of water splashing under the boat’s pole
Is loud and clear at dawn

Sogi
Water connects the second and fourth distiches. There was silence in the previous stanzas, which is characteristic of the renga poetry, and here is the splash of water, especially loud at dawn (people say every sound is more loud at dawn), which is a canonic sound of the genre.

月は猶霧わたる夜にのこらん

*Did the moon
Darken last night
In an envelope of fog?*

Shohaku

This is about the change of season – the moon signifies early fall, when moonlit nights are the brightest. It also mentioned fog, kiri, which is a sign of fall, in contrast to haze (kasumi). The stanza describes late fall, as the moon is enveloped in fog.

霜おく野はら秋はくれけり

*Wasteland and fields are
covered with frost. It is late fall.*

Socho

The word frost is related to the words fog and moon from the tercet above, which consistently develops the subject of the fall.

なく虫の心ともなく草かれて

*Neglecting complains of
Cicadas,
Grass has withered*

Sogi

The frost from the preceding distich us related to the word kusakari (withered grass); naku mushi, moaning cicadas, is also from the subject of fall. The commentator quoted waka, an invariant of this tercet from the 14th imperial anthology Gyokuyoshu (Collection of Jeweled Leaves, 1314) by Fujiwara no Yoriuji:

詠めわび月の誘ふに任すればいづくにとまる心ともなし

*Can’t stop looking
At the sad moon
As if I am its captive:
It knows no peace,
Keeps wandering around the sky.*

Fujiwara Yoriuji

The commentary means there is an echo of waka poetry of the previous epochs in renga. Poets and the audience of the poetic competition are per-
fectly aware of the genre’s context – they instantly recognize classic waka poetry.

First of all, the commentators know that the second stanza is related to the first one by the words yuki (snow) and ume (plum), which pictures the very beginning of spring: the snow is still melting, but plum trees are already in bloom. Secondly, the word yamamoto (foothills) is associated with the word sato (village), which suggests “a village at the foothills.” This connects the initial tercet and distich of the renga. Then authors mention water, the river, wind, the pole boat, the splash of water, and the motives of fall – frost, the moon, and fog – come next.

Everything – snow, the plum tree, the village at the foothills, even the venue of renga masters (renju)’s meeting, the waterless Minase River, – reflects the classic tradition, which renga inherits from the famed anthologies of the past, where those images were created and cast on poems of later days, without any damage to the beauty and sense.

Several generations of poets gave a sense and beauty to snow, the plum tree, the cherry tree, the willow, flowing water, dry grass, etc. Poetry is moving far from its outset, but meanings and images do not deplete: there may be new turns but no new colors: colors and impressions are still the same. Their goal is to evoke the same associations as the combination of snow and the plum tree evoked in the 8th century – frosty weather, fragility, and white on white. Hence, Japanese comments – the primary method of literary criticism in the Far East – projects the analyzed text on the known images.

Earl Miner, a U.S. expert in Japanese studies, described such comments as editorial allusions, hinting that renga associations are connected to classic waka and monogatari tales [Miner 1979, p. 217].

The vocabulary used by Sogi and his pupils is similar to the vocabulary of Heian classics, so he can be considered a conservative in this respect. Sogi was very meticulous about the vocabulary: he carefully chose words on the principles of overcoming external complexity, concreteness, and factuality, and avoiding uniqueness. He was looking for universal and unsophisticated words devoid of poetic devices and did his best to bring specifics to the level of universal phenomena.

Comments are a special type of the creative activity of Japanese philologists that came into existence in the early days of literature and were important for building the genre’s context. Renga commentaries are canonical, and old and new commentators follow the same pattern: they start with transposing a tercet or a distich in a lengthy prosaic form, and indicate keywords of the stanza and their connection to keywords of the previous and subsequent stanzas. After that, they mention words, which may be used in the renga once, twice or more times, and give their ordinal number.
Renga’s structure

Ikkumono (or ichizaikku)– are words, which are so important and fundamental to the tradition that they could be used just once in a one-hundred-line renga (shika – deer, saru – monkey, wakana – new grass, tsutsuji – azalea, mukashi – buddy, yuugure – evening, nightfall). Words, which can be mentioned twice, in a one-hundred-line renga, ichizanikumono, are also clearly indicated (yadori – night lodging, inochi – life, tamano-o – jasper string, and kari – wild goose). The rest of the commentary gives examples of tanka from the classic anthologies of the 8th–12th centuries, monogatari, and nikki, which served as an invariant to a particular renga or were a source of inspiration for rengashi. For instance, the famous beginning of the Minase Sangin renga (these stanzas are called hakku, the introductory stanza)\(^9\), has two waka poems, Manyoshu and Kokinshu, as its underlying theme.

Poetry is moving farther from its outset, Kokinshu, Genji monogatari, Minase Sangin were written almost 500 years ago, and the first Japanese anthology, Manyoshu, is 700 years old, yet it becomes more valuable and rich in content as time passes. The repetition of the same images of nature in various combinations and connections will never be boring; it opens new depths and endlessly projects new texts on the known images. Japanese poetry experts immediately see those connections, while others use commentaries, which mostly give examples of old poems in comparison to the new verse and indicate bonds between old ideal poems and new works. Notably, the sources of inspiration and new poems belong to different genres, classic waka and renga, which brings us to a conclusion that the later genre was using the range of artistic devices and samples of the classic genre.

Commentators define as key characteristic features of Sogi’s creative work the grandeur, seriousness (literally, the presence of heart, ushin)\(^10\) and hidden beauty, yugen. Compared to earlier renga schools, Kyogoku – Reijei, he favored a greater degree of independence of every stanza, either tercets or distiches, in the renga line. For instance, renga poetry specialist Yasuda Eta believes that Sogi required of his pupils more independence for every stanza. The independence of stanzas did not transform the long renga into a collection of poems. Those were strictly regulated abstracts integrated into a

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\(^9\) Shoomote – the first eight stanzas written on the front of the folded paper morinokogami, which was blue and purple with a cloud design. Each of the four renga sheets was folded in half and had two sides, the front and the back. Renga stanzas were written on both sides and were called differently: front stanzas (omote-no ku) and back stanzas (ura-no ku). The first eight stanzas were written on the front, and the next 14 on the back (shoura), then there were 14 stanzas written on each side of the next two sheets, and the last sheet mirrored the first one: it had 14 stanzas on the front, and eight on the back, which was called nagori-no ori (the last fold).

\(^10\) In contrast to ushin renga, there was mushin renga (heartless), which was an extremely popular humorous genre.
framework of complex relations and consistent with a particular numerological matrix.

A remarkable researcher, J. Rowley, said about the composition of a Chinese painting that it was built on the principle of added parts, i.e. it continued in time, while its unity was achieved by means of breaks, intervals, and harmonious repetition of devices [Rowley 1989, p. 45]. The renga structure is based on that same principle: new stanzas are added, there are intervals, repetitions, and interchanging images. One cannot appreciate renga without studying its complex language, allusions to former classic images, and associations between images within the text.

Nature and/or poetry

If we take a closer look at the meaning of nature for a renga poet, we will have to admit that poetry of the previous epochs was a key and practically only source of inspiration. Nature was too “factual,” and “concrete.” The classic waka poetry was the mirror, which every classic genre (renga, haiku) poet of later epochs was looking into. The landscape was not concrete not because of the limited space of the line but because the underlying meaning was more significant than words.

It was not accidental that Sogi mentioned kokoro (the soul, the heart) as a category with a much bigger significance than kotoba (words). This phenomenon was studied in detail by the best haiku poet of the 20th century, remarkable poetry theoretician, Shiki Masaoka, who build a theory of shasei (a lifelike description) and sei (description of an idea, rather than a landscape) [Shiki Masaoka 1928, p. 14].

Western literature usually describes the renga poetry as “landscape lyricism.” True, it speaks of nature and the cycle of seasons (most stanzas are seasonal) but a closer look at renga stanzas shows that their world consists of repeating, standard images. The bricks they are made of are diverse but never change. Three hundred or five hundred years more will pass, but frost will always be combined with fog, and the plum tree with snow, willows will turn green in the haze enveloping the river, and the Manyoshu waka speaking of the waterless river or the heron in withered reeds will make you feel sad.

Japanese commentators do not use the “landscape lyricism” definition. The renga landscape is not about nature; it brings to mind poems of the predecessors, instead of beautiful places. Bright leaves of maples, dew on the grass, mat-grass, and cicada’s moaning, all those things evoke your senses not because the world of nature is wonderful and appeals to humane feelings but also because it was written about by recent and long gone predecessors. “Everything was supposed to be described with the words somebody else said earlier, and themes, which served as markers of potential plots, were designated,” a sinologist wrote about classic Chinese poetry [Smirnov 2000, p. 265].
For instance, the idea that a human life lasts no longer than morning dew was suggested in China in the Han epoch (3rd century BC – 3rd century AD) in the Yuefu folk song. The image became one of the principal symbols of the brief life, mujo, in the 8th-century Japan. The same comparison is often made in poems composed in the 21st century. Nothing in the tradition can wear out, and patina only adds charm to words. Words included by authoritative compliers of classic anthologies (traditionally, their role has always been more important than that of poets) have more meaning than any innovations. The landscape is what a layman easily sees, while Japanese commentaries amassed over centenaries of philological work show us depths of poetry and the basis on which renga poets rely in their work. The constant reference to earlier poets and the knowledge of the key to the tradition are crucial.

The text of the one-hundred-line renga Minase Sangin is very simple and its form is deliberately modest or even unremarkable, the vocabulary and grammar are uncomplicated, the renga is easy to understand, and there are no complex parts. Sogi believed that renga poetry should be shadowy, calm, modest, and ineffective. There are details, renga gives a detailed description (or rather names, because there is no space for describing) a village, a mount, a river, and a crane amidst dry reed, but they have no relation to the factuality.

A renga landscape is never a real landscape, neither Chinese nor Japanese poets or artists have ever painted from life. Mendicant poets have never transformed the nature they saw into poetry, the process was more complex, it is described by the term of Chinese artists, xiewu (depicting an idea, not real life). Chinese and Japanese art does not reproduce real images. Chinese artists do not seek consistency of their works with the prototypes; they seek commitment to the real truth of life, deeper sources of human experience; they are more interested in how something is depicted than in the depicted object per se; their primary focus is not the way creative inspiration is conveyed, but the one who has the inspiration, recollects every moment of one’s existence, remains invariable in every metamorphose of the world, and represents the sacred eternal succession of the spirit (chi shen). [Rowley, 1989, p. 122]. The parallel between renga and traditional art is obvious; the lyrical character and the poem’s author fit the ancient ideal. China called him “a lone, free man” (yu jeng yi she), and in Japan hermits and mendicant poets had an extremely high and unquestionable authority. All the three poets who authored Minase Sangin belonged to this special group of people blessed by the rich tradition.

The knowledge and understanding of the classic tradition was put ahead of everything in composing ushin (spiritualized) renga. The poet did not look at the landscape before his eyes; he saw a landscape of canonical poetry un-
since the ancient times, in which every image and relation already exist, and somebody else’s words are dearer than one’s own.

References


Russian edition of the article:

Japan: Society of middle class

Irina Pavlovna LEBEDEVA

Despite the economic difficulties of the last two and a half decades, Japan remains to be one of the richest countries in the world. In addition, it is also one of the most prosperous countries – both in terms of distribution of the results of economic growth among the population, as well as by a number of characteristics of the standard of living. The article examines the influence of education democratization, the ideology of lifetime employment, government policies of equalizing revenues and support weak sectors and others on the formation of the middle class. The basic indicators of standard of living of the Japanese are given.

Keywords: middle class, standard of living, social stratification, education, lifetime employment, housing, family and family relationships, work.

Japan belongs to the group of countries with the highest living standards. In 2015 the country’s gross national income per capita stood at $38,800 (at the exchange rate). Among G7 countries Japan surpassed Italy ($32,800), but markedly lagged behind the United States ($56,000) and was outmatched by Canada ($47,300), Germany ($45,800), the United Kingdom ($43,700), and France ($40,700) by that parameter.

The ranking looks different from the angle of the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), which demonstrates the correlation between currencies in terms of domestic prices on main goods and services, or actually the purchasing power of the national currency. From the PPP’s point of view, in 2015 by the gross national income per capita ($42,300) Japan was inferior only to the United States ($57,500) and Germany ($49,100); it was an equal of Canada ($42,600), and did better than France ($41,700), the United Kingdom ($41,200), and Italy ($37,000) [World Development Indicators. Size…]. Obviously, the different results reflect the influence of deflation, which has been on in the Japanese economy since the late 1990s and has reduced prices on goods and services.

Judging by Table 1, Japan’s PPP-based GNI per capita increased 2.2 times over the 1990–2015 period. The indicators are relative (given that the dollar’s purchasing power has decreased over the years), but they still prove that the living standards in Japan improved, instead of deteriorating, over the 25 years, which are traditionally described as “lost,” and Japan remains one of the world’s richest countries.

Importantly, Japan is also one of the most successful countries in terms of distribution of the economic growth results between citizens.
Table 1.
Dynamics of Japan’s gross national income
(based on exchange rate and PPP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNI (based on exchange rate, $ bln)</td>
<td>3405.2</td>
<td>4595.2</td>
<td>5562.9</td>
<td>4931.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita (based on exchange rate, $ thousand)</td>
<td>27.560</td>
<td>36.230</td>
<td>43.440</td>
<td>38.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI (based on PPP, $ bln)</td>
<td>2390.8</td>
<td>3447.3</td>
<td>4597.8</td>
<td>5371.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita (based on PPP, $ thousand)</td>
<td>19.350</td>
<td>27.180</td>
<td>35.900</td>
<td>42.310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [World Development Indicators. Country…].

A proof of this is the opinion polls held by the Prime Minister’s Office since the late 1960s: for almost five decades about 90% of the Japanese have been describing themselves as the middle class [Kokumin seikatsu…, p. 15].

**Main factors smoothing over social gaps**

Democratization of the education system, which provided an equal start for the absolute majority of citizens, was a primary cause of Japan’s transformation into “middle-class society.” The Japanese are one of the best educated nations in the world (at least, by formal parameters). As early as in 1990, the share of general-education school graduates who continued their education in high school reached 95%, while 24% of boys and 37% of girls went to universities. The indicators kept rising in the consequent years, and reached 98.5%, 52.1%, and 56.9%, respectively, by 2015 [Nihon tokei…, tables 23–25]. It is characteristic of Japan that an absolute majority of university students graduate and receive higher-education certificates.

The situation on the labor market has changed a lot under the impact of the severe and protracted economic depression, which started in Japan in the early 1990s, and good education is no longer a guarantee of stable employment [Lebedeva 2016 ], but education remains prestigious in the eyes of the Japanese public. This is proven by the aforesaid indicators.

Prof. M. Yano describes Japanese students as follows. First of all, they believe they should go to university right after they graduate from high school, i.e. at the age of 18 (80% of Japanese new students are of this age, and most of the rest are 19-year-olds who failed to pass admission tests as soon as they finished high school). There is no such rigid condition in Western countries, and students’ age ranges a great deal.

Secondly, students expect their parents to bear the financial burden of education (which often includes the rent, and daily expenses, in addition to tuition). As known, parents in Western countries usually support their children until the age of 18, while higher education is mostly paid for by students, in-
excluding by means of special loans. Parents in Japan deem the support to their children until the age of 22, i.e. until after graduation from university, to be almost a sacred duty. Interestingly, material support to children until after they graduate from university is implied by the payroll system in effect in Japanese companies. As known, the system is based on age: the salary increases with the employee’s age and labor record. The pay is the highest at the age of 50–55, when parents sponsor higher education of their children.

Thirdly, completing education is a priority. As we have mentioned before, an absolute majority of university students graduate and receive higher-education diploma. The percentage of graduates roughly stands at 70% in European university, and exceeds 90% in Japan [Yano 2013, p. 70–71].

We should add that the liberal attitude of the teaching staff to the assessment of students’ knowledge and class attendance rates contribute to that too. Japanese professors are perfectly aware that companies will evaluate first of all personal qualities of graduates, and only after that – their academic performance, since the lifetime employment system implies the development of required skills by corporate training system. As to class attendance rates, it was a standard practice that starting the second semester of the third year, 18 months before graduation, Japanese students start the job-hunting process (shushoku katsudo), which takes a lot of time and effort and often lasts for months. To get a good job is the primary objective of higher education, so the absence from classes caused by shushoku katsudo does not cause any trouble for the student.

A number of important modifications were made as the job-hunting process became more time-consuming in recent years and the damage done by that practice to the teaching process became too obvious. The Japan Federation of Economic Organizations (Nippon Keidanren), which unites the biggest companies and banks, reviewed the Charter of Corporate Recruitment and Employment Ethics in 2013 and approved new recruitment rules (the previous rules were endorsed in the 1960s). Since 2016, March 1 has been the day when companies begin hiring graduates (the very end of the third year), while the real recruitment process (interviews, and so on) starts no earlier than on August 1 (during the break in the middle of the fourth year). The recruitment process, which earlier took six months, has been cut to two months and is required to end by October 1 [Labor Situation… 2015, p. 82].

The recommendation that recruitment practice be adjusted to facilitate life of Japanese students and improve the youth employment rate has also been given to businessmen by the Advisory Board of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Sports. Business has been advised to view all young people as “clean sheets” for three years after their graduation and apply the same recruitment standards as they do to new graduates.

Alongside democratization of the education system, horizontal barriers were “erased” and social stratification of Japanese society was smoothed over
by the “lifetime employment” – labor management system, put into place in postwar Japan. Without going into details, we should say that one of its elements is the same approach to managing blue- and white-collar personnel. Japanese corporate management emphasizes the high status of rank-and-file employees and its closeness to them. There are no special canteens for managers in Japanese companies, offices of managers do not differ from other office rooms, their corporate wear is simple and modest. There are no special parking lots for supervisors, and all employees have the same parking terms.

In contrast to Western companies, which usually resolve work problems by summoning employees to the manager’s office, Japanese managers follow the gembashyugi principle (going to the place where the work is doing). Should any problems occur, employees are not summoned to the office of their superiors, but managers and specialists come to workshops to underscore respect for workers and their opinions.

Importantly, the salary gap between managers and rank-and-file employees of Japanese companies is insignificant, compared to Western firms. An average salary of Japanese workers is quite comparable with the salary of their U.S. colleagues, but remuneration of Japanese managers is way smaller than that in the U.S. For instance, top managers of the Japanese firms earn 5 times less than their U.S. colleagues, on the average [Haghirian (ed.) 2016, p. 68].

Finally, corporate trade unions in big Japanese companies unite blue- and white-collar workers, underlining the absence of rigid social barriers between these two categories of employees.

The lifetime employment system was implemented to its fullest in big private companies and state-run institutions, but its influence stretched far beyond. Not just middle but also small companies tried to follow the lifetime employment system’s principles to raise their appeal to employees. Moreover, as the lifetime employment system was based on fundamental elements of national culture and psychology, it was close and understandable to the masses and laid a basis for the lifestyle and values of several post-war generations of the Japanese.

The government’s income leveling policy

While democratization of the education system and the widely-spread lifetime employment ideology helped remove horizontal barriers and smooth over social stratification, the government sought to support the formation of “middle-class society” by regulating income with a variety of economic policy tools.

The Gini coefficient gives a rather objective idea of how big the differentiation between various social groups by income is. It demonstrates how much the actual distribution of incomes deviates from the theoretical absolutely fair distribution (the higher the coefficient is, the bigger the stratification). See table 2 for the state of affairs in Japan.
Table 2. Gini coefficient dynamics

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By initial income</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.376</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.435</td>
<td>0.454</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By disposal income</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>0.323</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.316</td>
<td>0.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coefficient reduction by income re-distribution, % including:</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By social insurance system, %</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By tax system, %</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [Tokei de miru... 2008, p. 63; Labor Situation..., p. 189]

The data shows that despite an obvious trend of increasing stratification by the initial income (before paying taxes and social security contributions), the post-redistribution stratification was much smaller and remained practically unchanged for a long period of time. This proves that post-war Japan not only made huge headway in its economic development, but also created a system, under which fruits of its economic successes were shared among all citizens and all social strata.

This is largely an achievement of the purposeful policy of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, whose initial program documents declared “the building of a welfare state” as its goal. The goal was achieved with a broad range of economic policy tools, from the taxation system to various sorts of economic practice regulations.

As to taxation, the national income is redistributed in favor of less prosperous strata in Japan with a progressive individual income tax scale and rather high rates of the inheritance tax. Rates of the individual income tax ranged from 10% for people with the smallest income to 37% for the wealthiest people before further differentiation from 5% to 40% in 2007.

There is a system of discount and tax deductions for dependents, persons with disabilities, etc. The inheritance tax rate depends on the type and size of inheritance, and the recipients of largest inheritances (the lower limit is set for every type of inheritance) pay up to 50% of the value of the inherited assets to the government [Comprehensive Handbook... 2006, p. 27, 135].

In other words, inheritance tax rates in Japan are so high that third-generation heirs lose means of existence if they do nothing but spend their inheritance.

Judging by table 2, the social security system is the primary tool of redistribution of incomes. It currently includes three major elements: pensions, health insurance, and benefits for certain categories of citizens (elderly people,
persons with disabilities, single mothers, poor families with young children, etc.) Social security expenses amounted to 31% of the country’s national income in 2015, compared to 12.1% in 1980. In absolute terms, social security expenses grew from 24.8 trillion yens in 1980 to 116.8 trillion yens (about $1.1 trillion) in 2015, or 4.7 times. Expenses per capita have grown in practically the same proportion, from 212,000 yens in 1980 to 910,000 yen (approximately $ 9,000) in 2015 [Nihon tokei…, p. 663; Annual Health… 2015, p. 21]. Japan is one of the most developed countries by this indicator.

As to pensions, the pension system is comprehensive in Japan, in contrast to other developed countries (for instance, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden), where only certain categories (mostly hired and self-employed people) are entitled to pensions. Back in 1961, the country passed a law on universal health and pension insurance, which ensured pension entitlements of citizens, who did not fall under the existent pension plans – kosei nenkin, welfare pensions (of private company employees), and kyosai kumiai, pensions of mutual aid associations (of public sector employees, and teachers of private and public schools).

Such categories as self-employed people, fishermen, farmers, unemployed people, students, and others have a special insurance system, the national pension (kokumin nenkin). In 1986, kokumin nenkin was supplemented with basic pension, kisho nenkin. Since then, all citizens older than 20 (including people insured by other pension systems) have been required to pay monthly contributions to the kokumin nenkin system (the contribution is the same for everyone), and the government guaranteed the entitlement of every citizen older than 65 to the basic pension [Lebedeva 2016 a].

The following facts prove that the national pension system helps redistribute incomes. Since 2009, the government has been subsidizing with central budget funds half of the expenditures on paying kisho nenkin (basic pension), the principal source of income in the old age for the poor (while the koshei nenkin and kyosai kumiai pensions are fully covered by contributions of the insured persons). The law fully or partially exempts certain categories of citizens from paying contributions (although they are still entitled to the pension).

The number of citizens belonging to these categories is rather large: almost 17% of all kokumin nenkin pension plan participants had those rights in 2012 [Social Security… 2014, p. 18].

The redistribution function of the health insurance pension is even bigger. Japan endorsed universal health insurance in 1961. There were two insurance plans: one provided at the place of employment or in accordance with one’s profession, and the other – at the place of residence via municipalities. The first plan included every hired employee and his or her family members.

The staff of private companies with more than five employees was insured by the Society Managed Health Insurance, while employees of small compa-
nies and temporary employees were insured by the state-run Japan Health Insurance Association. Public and municipal employees, teachers of private schools, and the teaching staff of private universities were insured by relevant mutual aid associations. The rest – farmers, self-employed, fishermen, foresters, unemployed, pensioners, and others – were covered by the other plan. All of them were included in the National Health Insurance system and were supposed to initiate their membership at the place of residence via municipalities [Annual Health… 2013/2014, p. 27]. The following mechanisms were applied to redistribute the burden and support the disadvantaged strata.

1. The income and financial position of insured persons determined the size of their contribution. Thus, in the case of corporate or professional insurance the rates range from 3% to 12%, depending on the income. Contributions to the National Health Insurance system consist of two parts: the fixed part, equal for all households, and the part, calculated by municipalities depending on the income, assets, and family composition, which makes it different from one household to another.

2. Funds are redistributed between various insurance systems because of the great difference of the contribution-to-indemnity ratio. The plans offering corporate or professional insurance are the most prosperous, because they apply to young and middle-aged people with relatively small medical needs. The National Health Insurance system is less fortunate: it covers many elderly people who need medical attendance more frequently, in addition to a rather high percentage (about 10%) of people with low incomes, including those fully or partially exempted from contributions. This is why the Elderly Health care Law was adopted in 1983 to cover those expenditures not only from the budget of the National Health Insurance system (engaging elderly citizens), but from the budgets of other, more prosperous systems too.

3. Solidarity support to disadvantaged strata. The amount of healthcare indemnities is equal for all health insurance systems (70%), but there are still some exceptions. Those exceptions apply to people older than 75 who pay 10% of the cost of medical services, and the poor enjoying various kinds of benefits. The most illustrative example of this principle is the funding of services of long-term care for the elderly. The Law on Insurance of Long-Term Care for the Elderly was adopted in 1997, and the system was implemented in 2000. Long-term care for the elderly is financed from several sources: 25% come from the central government, prefectures and municipalities contribute 12.5% each, 10% are paid by patients, and 40% are funded by contributions of citizens older than 40. The employed pay the rate of about 1.5% of their salary and bonuses, and contributions of pensioners are deducted from their pensions by the local authorities [Social Security… 2014, p. 25].

Alongside taxation and social security, an important role in leveling incomes has been played by the government policy of support of particular industries and economic sectors.
The best example is the support of agriculture. Referring our readers to works by S.B. Markaryan [Markaryan 2010, as well as other works by this author], we should say the following. The system of guaranteed purchasing prices (calculated for a long time as the costs borne by the least efficient producers), the policy protecting the domestic market from external competitors, and a number of other measures not just preserved domestic agriculture, but also increased incomes of Japanese farmers and finally leveled urban and village living standards.

Support for small business was a special focus of the government’s economic policy. It covered practically every essential element of small companies’ activities. The government helped them rationalize production, start a business, implement new equipment and technologies, expand exports and imports, arrange personnel training, etc. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the policy allowed thousands of small and medium enterprises, whose existence would have otherwise ended amid tight competition, to stay in business and receive their share of fruit of the national economic development.

A significant part of administrative and legal rules, which Japan applied on a much bigger scope than the West as a form of state regulation, kept the market in check and protected the weak from destructive market forces. Here are a few examples. Before the financial Big Bang reform in 1998, the country was regulating the size of stock transaction commission. The idea was to prevent a decrease of the fee, which would have been unavoidable on a free market, and to ensure the survival of small and medium broker companies, which received 50–60% of their income as commission [Yaponiya 90-kh... 1998, p. 53–54].

Seeking to protect small and medium retailers, the Law on Large Department Stores and Supermarkets created so many impediments to the opening of a large store (the requirement of multiple permissions, approvals, etc.), that only a handful achieved the goal [Yaponiya: perevorachivaya… 1998, p. 74-75].

There was an interesting practice in the restaurant business, too. Business hours of big restaurants were administratively limited in the evening (for instance, they were compelled to close at 10 p.m. or 11 p.m.), and clients wishing to continue partying were “re-routed” to other establishments (cafes, bars, karaoke clubs, etc.). The purpose was to enable owners of those establishments use the result of the increased living standards (which, inter alia, manifest themselves with increased spending outside of home) and get their share of the “pie.”

Clearly, the regulation of economic life, and support for and protection of certain industries and sectors reduced the overall economic efficiency, and increased production costs and prices. But in general this policy did not suppress incentives for business, and its social goals were close and clear to an absolute majority of the egalitarian-minded Japanese.
By the end of the 1980s, Japan ranked second amongst the world’s economic powers, joined the club of countries with the highest living standards, and created what a European expert in Japan called “a model of equality regarding outcome as well as chances.” [Chiavacci 2008, p. 13].

Yet the deep and protracted depression, which hit the Japanese economy in the early 1990s, unfavorable demographic changes, and the increased diversification of lifestyles and values of the Japanese, brought about significant changes in Japanese society. The social landscape, which used to be rather flat, entered a stage of rapid transformations, and the pace of social stratification by income and every other “lifestyle” parameter sped up. The main division line was drawn between hired employees: those with status of regular (permanent) employee and temporarily employed people. The number of temporarily employed people increased from 8.8 million to 19.8 million between 1990 and 2015, and their share in the total labor force grew from 20.2% to 37.4% [Labor Situation… 2015/2016, p. 44].

The composition of this category has also changed. In the past, it mostly comprised high school and university students, and housewives, who did not see their employment as the principal type of activity or the principal source of income. Now a substantial part of such people are youngsters, who failed to find permanent jobs, women seeking full-time jobs after their children have grown up, people dismissed because of old age or corporate reorganization, etc. Most of these people view their temporary jobs as the principal type of activity and the principal source of income. The increasing scope of temporary employment is a characteristic of many developed economies. Yet it has special significance for Japan: there is a big gap between permanent and temporary employees not just in terms of salary, career, and social guarantees, but also in terms of the social status, which is of paramount importance to the Japanese.

Judging by the Gini coefficient (table 1), social stratification enhanced a lot in the 1990s – 2000s in terms of the initial income (before the payment of taxes and social security contributions). But the government’s redistribution function has been enhanced too and practically negated the stratification effect. As to the stratification by status, the polls conducted by the Prime Minister’s Office show that the population has not noticed the change: more than 90% of the Japanese still describe themselves as the middle class.

In other words, Japan remains “middle-class society” and provides an absolute majority of its citizens with rather high living standards and an opportunity to enjoy every fruit of civilization. What is the meaning of living standards for modern Japan and what is going on in main spheres of the Japanese life?

Main living standard indicators

Of course, we should start with living conditions, as the home is a fundamental value of the human life. For a long period of time, Japan was far
behind Western countries in terms of quantity and quality of homes, mostly because of significant imbalances in population allocation during the rapid economic growth in the late 1950s – early 1970s. Japan managed to catch up by the late 1980s, at least in terms of quantity, and came close to the West European standards of the home size and the share of families living in houses of their own. An average home is now 93 square meters in size, with an average number of 4.56 rooms. About 62% of Japanese families live in private homes, which are 121 square meters large on the average and have 5.68 rooms. Importantly, the country is constantly renovating homes, about half of which were built after 1990.

The following indicators demonstrate the quality of homes: only 3.7 million of 52.1 million homes, or 7%, fail to meet housing standards, while an absolute majority of homes not just meet those standards but also exceed them. [Nihon tokei… 2017, tables 21–4, 21-5, 21-8]

Of course, a fairly large number of the Japanese are still living in homes which cannot be called comfortable. Most of them are residents of megalopolises whose homes (including private houses) are located near industrial enterprises, highways, and railroad lines, which naturally deteriorate the environment. Nonetheless, the targeted policy of the central and local authorities, such as strict environmental regulations, reconfiguration and renovation of transport and industrial infrastructure, and development of satellite towns and comfortable urban neighborhoods, is steadily resolving this problem. I should say that the natural politeness and tact of the Japanese spare residents of apartment buildings such problem, typical for Russia and many other countries, as noisy neighbors. This fact, and the cleanliness of staircases, elevators, and lobbies maintained by joint efforts should also be taken into account in the assessment of living conditions of today’s Japanese.

By the way, despite the common opinion that homes cost a fortune in Japan, the actual rent and utility charges are not so large and do not constitute the main expense of Japanese families. In 2015, an average Japanese family (3.17 family members with a monthly income of 543,000 yens) spent about 42,000 yens or 14% of total consumer expenses (roughly 300,000 yens per month) on the rent and public utilities. What is more, the loan-to-deposit ratio of the average Japanese also looks quite favorable, which disproves the opinion of a heavy financial burden of the mortgage loan. An average the deposit – to-loan ratio stands at 79:21 for men (8.7 million yens vs. 2.3 million yens), and 95:5 for women (13.1 million yens vs. 0.7 million yens). The Japanese are one of the richest people in the world: their financial and material assets average at 35.9 million yens per family ($ 326,000 at the current exchange rate) [Nihon tokei… 2017, tables 22-7, 22-13].

On the whole, the amount and structure of consumer expenses of Japanese households are quite comparable with those in other highly developed countries. Without going into details, we should mention such characteristic
feature of this group of countries as insignificant spending on food. The average Japanese family buys food with 22–23% of its consumer expenditures, which corresponds to the West European indicators, but practically twice exceeds the U.S. indicators.

In the past, specialists describing living standards in a particular country always mentioned such indicators as the availability of various electronic devices and household electronics. Now this may still be topical for the third world only. Speaking of Japan, it ranked one of the world’s first in terms of households’ provision with such goods as early as in the 1980s, and the subsequent period saw the replacement of old models with newer ones, which would be more sophisticated and efficient. Most of those products are currently made abroad, primarily by Asian branches of Japanese companies, so their prices are quite affordable even for the poor.

To our opinion, cars and golf equipment deserve a mention as a demonstration of the material wealth of today’s Japanese.

There are 1.4 cars per family in Japan on the average, which corresponds to the indicators of the best developed European countries. We should note that practically all vehicles meant for the domestic market are customized and strictly comply with the client’s wishes for the car exterior and equipment. The high technical level and the perfect organization of the production process make sure that no more than two weeks pass from the moment a car order is placed to the moment the car is supplied to the buyer. The fleet of cars in Japan has a high degree of environmental friendliness. Approximately half of all new cars sold on the domestic market in recent years are “eco-friendly” vehicles powered by hybrid engines and running on bio-fuel, electric vehicles, and cars with clean diesel and gas engines. Regular gasoline-engine vehicles made in Japan meet the world’s highest eco-friendliness standards, not to mention their technical characteristics, and impeccable design.

As to the share of families which buy golf equipment, we have decided to use this somewhat specific indicator for the following reasons. First of all, golf is one of the most expensive sports (from the angle of equipment costs and club membership fees). Just 15–20 years ago, the game was affordable only to elites and manifested the high social status. Quite often, golf club membership cards were bought by companies for top managers to demonstrate the financial wellbeing and raising their prestige in the eyes of partners, and the games were a form of business contacts. We see the fact that practically half of families have golf equipment nowadays (452 in 1,000 families of two people more) [Nihon tokei… 2017, tables 22–11], as an illustrative example of high living standards in Japan and the actual existence of “middle-class society” in that country.

Japanese society can be considered one of the world’s most prosperous by some other parameters, too. For instance, family ties are more stable in Japan than in many Western countries. The number of registered marriages
in Japan is 5.3 per 1,000 people, which is quite comparable with the indicators of other developed countries (5.5 in the United States, 4.5 in the UK, 4.7 in Germany, and 5.0 in Scandinavia), but the percentage of divorces is smaller. There are 1.8 divorces per 1,000 people in Japan, compared to 2.9 in the United States, 2.1 in the UK, 2.2 in Germany, and 2.4 in Scandinavia [Nihon tokei… 2017, table 30–3].

As known, the traditional Japanese family, where the husband works, and the wife looks after children and does the housekeeping, has been criticized as an obstacle to raising the social status of the Japanese women and increasing their involvement in the country’s economic life. Yet things have been changing, and an increasing number of women married to well-paid men are looking for a job. In 2016 some 56.1% (46.8% in 2002) of women married to men, who make over 10 million yens per year ($88,000), and 64.7% (55.0% in 2002) of women married to men with the yearly income from 5 million to 10 million yens ($44,000 to 88,000), were employed. Almost 55% of women said they wished to keep working after their children were born [Japan Today. 29 September 2017].

We should add though that most of married Japanese women have temporary jobs. Over 60% of women aged from 25 to 29 (an average marriage age is around 30) have permanent jobs; the indicator is 55% for the category aged from 30 to 34, 49% amongst 35–39-year-olds, and 40–42% in the group aged from 40 to 59 [Annual Report on the Labour… 2015]. This means that many Japanese women leave their permanent jobs after their first child is born, and do not return to their former positions even after their children grow up. Without analyzing various aspects of the employment of Japanese women, we should say that this situation is favorable for raising children. Japanese children (and not just the youngest ones) can constantly communicate with their mothers, which is extremely important for their psychical and physical development.

Of course, whenever we speak of Japanese families, we have to notice the steady decline in the percentage of married young people, the increased marriage age, the higher age of giving birth to the first child, and the reduced fertility coefficient. Some 24% of Japanese women aged from 25 to 29 were not married in 1980, and the share of unmarried women stood at 9.1% in the group of 30–34-year-olds, and 5.5% of the 35–39-year-olds. The situation changed drastically: in 2015 the share of unmarried women reached 61.3% in the age group of 25–29, 34.6% in the age group of 30–34, and 23.9% in the age group of 35–39. The age of Japanese women getting married for the first time has also markedly grown, from 25.2 years in 1980 to 29.4 years in 2015, and the average age of giving birth to the first child is up, from 26.4 to 30.7 years. The dynamics is even more pronounced amongst men: in 1980, there were 55% of unmarried man in the age group of 25–29, 21% in the age group of 30–34, and 9% in the age group of 35–39. The indicators reached
72.7%, 47.1% and 35%, respectively, in 2015. As to the fertility indicator, it was only 1.45 in 2015 and ranked one of the lowest in the group of highly developed countries [Shyoshi ka shyakai…, p. 3, 10, 12, 20].

Speaking of problems in families and family relations, we should say that for the time being their socio-economic consequences have not damaged the generally favorable state of affairs, but serious problems may occur in the future.

Japan looks quite well from such an important angle as labor and employment. We should start with saying that practically all Japanese citizens who wish to work have a job. The country has always had one of the lowest unemployment rates amongst developed countries: the unemployment rates in Japan grew to levels, which were characteristic of developed countries in the periods of economic growth, when Japan was going periods of economic distress. As of August 2017, the country had 2.8% unemployment.

It does not have the problem of high unemployment rates amongst the young, which is painful for and typical of many Western countries. The rates amounted to 4.7% in the age group of 15–24, and 4.1% in the age group of 25–34 in summer 2017 [Monthly Results… 2018]. The Minimum Wage Law adopted in 1959 guarantees a decent salary for young people starting their career (about 200,000 yens a month for university graduates, and over 175,000 yens for vocational school graduates) [Nihon tokei…, tables 19–10].

Importantly, despite the variety of ongoing changes on the labor market, an absolute majority of men (85-90%), the principal breadwinners of Japanese families, still have permanent jobs until they reach the corporate age limit of 60. No doubt, the guarantee of employment comes with a price. Long working hours, short vacations, and extra hours are the Japanese reality, just like suicides triggered by emotional overload and karoshi (premature death caused by overwork). Nonetheless, the guarantee of long-term employment in the country with high living standards is a clearly unique phenomenon in modern capitalism, which favorably distinguishes Japan from other highly developed countries.

We can also mention low crime rates, good transport service, favorable environmental conditions (ensured by combined efforts of the government, citizens, and businessmen), clean Japanese cities, high levels of sanitary conditions and hygiene, impeccable service, politeness and well-wishing attitude of the Japanese towards one another, etc.

It is true that Japan, just like any other country, has many problems we are unable to mention in the article limited in space. Obviously, some categories of citizens find themselves in situations outside the stable and comfortable life (as of August 2016, about 23% of the Japanese were not quite happy, and 6% were completely unhappy with their life [Kokumin seikatsu… 2016, p. 2]).

Still, for an absolute majority of the Japanese population, Japan is a beautiful, prosperous, and safe country. This state of affairs is a crucial factor of
socio-political stability of Japanese society, and a token of its sustainable
development.

References


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Russian edition of the article:
DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2017-00027

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Mongolia in Japan’s Eurasian policy (1997 – 2017)

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The paper proposed deals with the history of Japanese-Mongolian relations over the period between 1997 and 2017 in the context of Eurasian diplomacy adopted by the Hashimoto cabinet in 1997. The paper on the evolution of the twenty-year bilateral political, economic and security cooperation, aligned with Eurasian policy and developed from “soft power” to “smart power”, focuses on the analysis of the Hashimoto Ryutaro, Koizumi Junichiro and Abe Shinzo administrations approaches.

Keywords: Japanese-Mongolian relations, Abe Shinzo, Eurasian Diplomacy, North-East Asia, DPRK, “smart power”

Acknowledgments

The author is extremely grateful to Dr. Robert Eldridge for his critical comments on the earlier versions of this article which helped to improve it. The author also would like to express her deep gratitude to Prof. Yamada Mitsuru for revising this work and invaluable assistance in finding relevant materials.

Introduction

The Mongolian direction ought to be assessed as a representative, though very specific line in the Japanese foreign strategy from the late 20th century up to nowadays. The main objective of this research is to examine the evolution of the Japanese policy towards Mongolia in the context of Japan's Eurasian policy, introduced by Hashimoto Ryutaro in 1997 and developed in various ways by prime ministers Koizumi Junichiro (“Central Asia Plus Japan”) and Abe Shinzo (“Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” and new Eurasian Policy).

A hypothesis, advanced in the paper, is that Japan started to use not only economic diplomacy, “aid diplomacy” and “soft power” methods in Mongolia, but also implemented a specific Japanese version of “smart power” of this policy in the 2010’s. “Smart power” is a term offered by US scholars J.S. Nye and R.L. Armitage in “CSIS Commission on smart power” report: “Smart power is neither hard nor soft – it is the skillful combination of both” [Armitage, Nye, 2007 p. 7]. “Smart power” strategy investigated for the US foreign policy lies in investing alliances and multilateralism, supporting global development and establishment of global health network, using worldwide public diplomacy through personal contacts and education, advancing economic integration and innovations globally. Applying of hard or forced power seems to be appropriate in critical situations, such as anti-terrorist companies or peacekeeping operations. Therefore, a macro-level analysis of socio-economic, political and military cooperation between Japan
and Mongolia is used as a basic method of the research, along with comparative analysis of the Japanese strategy for Mongolia and other Eurasian states.

The Mongolian direction of Japan’s Eurasian strategy may be considered from various theoretical perspectives. It is critical for this analysis to consider the attitude of Japanese intellectuals towards Eurasia. In the mid 1990’s – mid 2000’s specialists of the Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University (now – Slavic-Eurasian Research Center) formulated the term of “Big Eurasia” which means the megaregion from Japan, Korea and China in the East, India in the South, the Middle East and even Eastern Europe in the West and Russia in the North [Yurajia chiiki taikoku…]. The core region of Eurasia was marked as Russia and Central Asian independent states. Mongolia had been traditionally classified as a North East Asian country sandwiched between Russian Siberia and the Far East and China, but from the mid 1990’s the Mongolian geographic position and identity were reviewed and since then it has been included in this discourse as one of the Central Asian countries [Soni 2014, p. 39]. This fact allowed to form a new line for the Japanese strategy towards Eurasia in which Mongolia became a continental bridge in attempts to introduce a new proactive policy in the megaregion of Eurasia. Mongolia is extremely rich in mineral resources (uranium, coal, metals) and agriculture products, which is the reason for Japan to become nationally interested in developing economic relations with it.

Great powers are assessed in Mongolia from various theoretical perspectives, including the geopolitical theory of “New Great Game” in Central Asia, with Mongolia among “key players” together with Russia, China, the US, while Japan, Turkey, South Korea are “minor players” [Her 1997, p. 62–71; Mikhalyov 2012, p. 120]. At the same time, it was prime minister Koizumi Junichiro who spoke out against “New Great Game” in Central Asia in 2006 [Len, Uyama, Hirose (ed.) 2008, p. 42–43], which demonstrates that the idea itself of competing “great powers” threatens the Japanese political elites. The interstate hierarchy in Asia (East, North-East) and Eurasia is also estimated, and numerous western and Asian international relations experts treat the regional order in Asia within the framework of the US-led regional hierarchy: “US military supremacy is the indispensable guarantor of regional ‘stability’” [Jerdan 2017, p. 495]. The hegemonic power of US in this hierarchy, security alliances created in the Asia Pacific region and in inner Asia, where the Japan-US Alliance is a durable one, is the foundation for stability, and this fact is proved by multilateral economic and security relationships of the region’s states with the US, as well as by security triangular ties: Japan-ROK-US, Japan-India-US and in the 2010’s Japan-Mongolia-US.

**Historical Background of Japan-Mongolia Dialogue**

Japan-Mongolia relations are characterized by a long-term direct interaction, dating back to Japan’s invasion of East Asia in the early 20th century,
conflicts with the USSR on the territory of Mongolia in 1938 – 1939 (the Battle of Lake Khasan and the Battles of Khalkhin Gol). After World War II, in Japan’s policy towards Mongolia started a new stage. It began to focus on economic interactions from the 1970’s, although negotiations on official and nonofficial levels had been conducted since the 1950’s. The diplomatic relations between Japan and Mongolia were reestablished in 1972 in parallel with the opening of the Japan-China relations [Bazarov2009, p. 157]. The strategy of Japan of that time put the main stress on economic issues, framed by the Japanese economic diplomacy flourishing from the 1960’s to the 1970’s.

Bilateral dialogue rose up to a new level from the early 1990’s according to the weakening of the USSR’s influence on Mongolia. The official ties and bilateral high-level visits intensified after 1989, when the first visit of minister of foreign affairs Uno Sosuke was paid to Mongolia [Nalin 2006, p. 37]. During the 1990’s high executives from Mongolia and Japan paid about ten mutual visits, showing deep interest of both sides in developing their engagements [Nalin 2006 p. 37–41]. From the Mongolian side, that activity was brought about by the desire of the Mongolian democratic government to find new partners among developed western nations or the so called “third neighbor” policy aimed to rebalance its geopolitical position between China and Russia. This period of the Japanese policy in Mongolia can be considered from three standpoints:

1. Japan’s intention to play a greater role in global and Asian regional affairs, due to the inner demand for active foreign policy;
2. The high level of “soft power” implementation made by Japan for its foreign strategy, focusing on the “aid diplomacy”;
3. The way to construct Asian identity for the Japanese, who considered themselves as having obtained a western identity or special Japanese identity outside Asia after World War II.

In this context, the Mongolian nation and language were found to have ancient ties with the Japanese islands [Mongoru joho kurozu appu…2013]. That fact distinguished Mongolians from other Asian and Eurasian nations in the eyes of Japan.

Since the beginning of the 1990’s Japan received unpredictable freedom from the US, caused by the end of the Cold War, which happened simultaneously with the forming of a new agenda for the Japanese foreign policy aimed to find its new role in the international affairs in this new and uncertain world order. Posing itself as a peace-loving nation, after 1992 the Japanese Self Defense Forces (JSDF) started to participate in peacekeeping operations together with the United Nations troops [Ishizuka 2013]. These actions seem to have laid the groundwork for Japan to use its military potential in the world politics, but they also opened heated debates among pacifists and non-pacifist in the country, and provoked an inner claim to make Japan a
“normal state”, formulated by the politician Ozawa Ichiro. The Japanese diplomat Kawashima Yutaka emphasized that versus narratives are inherent for the Japanese policy: peace-loving vs importance of the security and being a “normal state”, values-oriented approach vs results-oriented approach, catching up with the west versus maintaining an Asian identity [Kawashima 2003, p. 10–14]

These narratives exerted a decisive influence on the strategy in Eurasian direction. Reevaluation of Asia and Eurasia and the role of Japan among the Asian nations community, and, finally, a strong intention to return to Asia (Datsu-A Nyu-O, Ki-A Ri-O) from the end of the 1990’s [Chugrov 2007, p. 100–101], made Eurasia a training field for the Japanese strategic actions and, furthermore, military activation. The US political scientist K. J. Cooney noted: “A major problem for a more independent Japan is that it has no friends in the region, only rivals” [Cooney 2007 p. 58].

Thus, the process of finding Eurasian friends had an objective of strengthening the international position and role of Japan in the world. The definite advantage of Eurasian countries, in comparison to East Asian nations, was that they did not have a negative experience and image of Japan in what concerns historical memory issues. Japan had no contacts with Central Asian nations up to the early 1990’s. However, at first Mongolia stayed on a distinct position, having economic relations with Japan since the 1970’s. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 1990’s all Central Asian, South Caucasian nations and Mongolia with them remained in a state of economic and political crisis and looked forward to the western nations financial aid. At that time “aid diplomacy” was the basis for the Japanese policy towards the region. At the same time, in 1993 – 1996 inner political and economic challenges in Japan did not allow it to provide an active foreign policy towards Eurasian states. Meanwhile, Mongolia was involved in economic integration projects, requested by Japan, for example, the “Tumen River” project or the “Sea of Japan special economic zone” integration project.

**Mongolia in Japanese Eurasian initiatives**

**Phase 1: Hashimoto Ryutaro approach**

The first Japanese-Eurasian initiative was investigated by the Hashimoto Ryutaro cabinet in 1996 – 1997, aiming to form the sole principles of the policy towards a number of Eurasian states, to align its strategy for Russia, China, Central Asian states, South Caucasus and even Mongolia and Korea. The so-called “Eurasian diplomacy viewed from the Pacific” or Eurasian Diplomacy (taiheiyo: kara mita yu:rajia gaiko:) was announced on July 24, 1997, at the assembly of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives [Address by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto…1997]. At the same time, a “multilevel-approach” (jyu:zo:teki apuro:chi) was articulated for the policy
towards Russia, which was raise interaction with Russia to a new level of more effective dialogues, demonstrating results-oriented approach of the Japanese government. The “Silk Road” was chosen to be a backbone of Eurasian Diplomacy. Although the TRACECA initiative was the first Eurasian integration strategy, involving new independent states of Central Asia and South Caucuses after the USSR collapse, articulated by new independent governments of the above-mentioned states, the Japanese “Silk Road” concept became the first initiative of an Asian nation to form a big integration project on open spaces of the megaregion of Eurasia, aiming to maintain open regionalism there.

From 1997 to 2001 and even up to 2004, the engagement of Japan in Eurasian policy was based on “aid diplomacy”, which was defined by the Japanese researchers Kato Hiroshi and Fujiwara Kiichi as a very important mechanism of Japan’s policymaking for developing countries. Kato Hiroshi underlined that development of infrastructure and assistance in upgrading the human potential were to be proposed as a basic activity towards developing nations [Japan’s Development Assistance…2016]. It is possible to see that Eurasian diplomacy from 1997 to the first years of the Koizumi reign was focused exactly on the “aid diplomacy” and “soft power” towards Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the post-soviet Central Asia [Country Assistance Evaluation… 2005].

For Mongolia, grant aid in the years 2000–2006 amounted to 29,441 billion yen (total sum of grant aid to 2007 amounted to 83,160 billion yen), technical cooperation over the same period – to 2,349 billion yen, loan aid in 1991–2005 – to 39,107 billion yen [Japan’s Assistance to Mongolia…]. The diplomacy for Mongolia evolved according to the same principles, as it was done for Central Asian states, despite the fact that it was built on the basis of bilateral engagement.

The Hashimoto Ryutaro and, later, Obuchi Keizo cabinets showed great interest to Mongolia, when prime-minister M. Enkhsaihan visited Tokyo in February 1997, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Mongolia diplomatic relations [Visit to Japan by Mr M. Enkhsaihan… 1997]. Next year, in 1998, during the visit of the Mongolian president N. Bagbandi to Japan, the “Japan-Mongolia Joint Statement for Friendship and Cooperation” was signed, highlighting the pillars of bilateral relations [Nihon to mongoru koku… 2003].

The Statement was prompted by the spirit of comprehensive partnership (so:go:tekipa:tona-shippu), negotiated by the two governments in the two previous years. The main directions of this comprehensive partnership were noted as:

1. Extension of political and security dialogue;
2. Economic cooperation;
3. Intensification of people-to-people exchange and cultural ties;
4. Regional and global partnership [Nihon to mongoru koku… 2003].
These pillars evidently lie within the “soft power” paradigm. The above-mentioned points of the Japanese-Mongolian joint statement have particular similarity with the positions of the “Moscow Declaration on Building a Creative Partnership between Japan and the Russian Federation” signed in 1998. Thus, it is possible to suggest that Eurasian Diplomacy towards Russia and Mongolia was based on the common principles, dictating to keep those diplomacy directions within the single Eurasian strategy, provided by the Hashimoto-Obuchi cabinets. Meanwhile, the “aid diplomacy” mechanisms for their part demonstrated deep similarities with the policy towards Central Asian states and Mongolia.

**Phase 2: Koizumi Junichiro approach**

Koizumi Junichiro came to power in April 2001, and September of the same year was marked by the terrorist attacks against the US, which occurred in New York, and resulted in the US anti-terrorist campaign in the Middle East and Central Asia. Japan together with most of European and Asian nations supported the American anti-terrorist campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, and, quite logically, this involvement considerably contributed to the development of the JSDF and security system. Since the late 1990’s the Japan-US Security Alliance underwent reconsideration and was reevaluated, in 2000 “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership” or Armitage – Nye Report was published, and finally Koizumi Junichiro underlined that the alliance with US is to be considered as a foundation for the Japanese security policy [Remarks by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi... 2001; Nihon to mongoru koku... 2003].

In this context, Japan-Eurasian engagement was affected by considerable changes, based on the anti-terrorist actions. In addition, the Japanese government set a goal of more active involvement in foreign policy by using the military forces, adopting anti-terrorist legislative package and Humanitarian Relief and Iraqi Reconstruction Special Measures Law [Nelidov 2009, p. 81]. Therefore, a new phase of the US-Japan security cooperation was launched. Moreover, since the beginning of 21st century, a tendency for Japan and NATO to have closer contacts has been noticed, which became even stronger under the Koizumi and Abe administrations in the 2000’s – 2010’s [Dobrinskaya 2014]. The rapprochement with NATO was also demonstrated by the Mongolian government in the 2000’s, that started a special Japan-Mongolia military cooperation, in agreement with the engagements with NATO.

Furthermore, the US operation in Afghanistan is suggested to be unprecedented in Eurasia in what concerns its scale, considerably affecting stability in Central Asia and giving rise to reviewing Russian and Chinese Eurasia projects. The role of Mongolia was also reconsidered. In 1999 – 2000 the Mongolian government legislated participation in peacekeeping cooperation,
and Mongolia since that time has started to send its military personnel to participate in peacekeeping operations within the UN military forces [Mongolia and the United Nations].

Mongolia participated in 12 of 13 events during 2000–2003 in Africa and Asia, including multinational peacekeeping field exercise in Kazakhstan in 2000 [Byambasuren 2005]. Those actions could be considered as a new path of Japan-Mongolia interaction in Eurasia in the peacekeeping aspect, particularly taking into account that Mongolian and Japanese soldiers were send both to Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000’s.

For instance, trying to extend its participation in the global anti-terrorist campaign, the Mongolian government allowed the US military forces to conduct multinational peacekeeping military exercises on its territory, while recognizing its involvement in the US-led regional hierarchy in Asia. These military exercises received a catchy title – “Khaan Quest” and have been held every year since 2003, organized by the Mongolian Armed Forces General Staff in conjunction with the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) [Byambasuren 2005]. Japan welcomed these developments and participated in “Khaan Quest” at first as an observer.

The beginning of the 2000’s was also the time of escalation of tensions connected with North Korean nuclear problem. Japan suffered from the PDRK actions and missiles tests more than any other country. The Japanese government attempted to cooperate with the regional powers – China and Russia – aiming to exert pressure upon the North Korean government, however, the attempts still did not succeed. Mongolia proclaimed itself a nuclear weapon free zone region and started to reconsider whether or not to be a partner of Japan against North Korea [Enkhsaikhan 2017, p. 88-89]. In December 2003, Japan-Mongolia Summit Meeting was held when the president of Mongolia N. Bagabandi paid a visit to Tokyo to have a meeting with prime minister Koizumi Junichiro [Japan-Mongolia Summit Meeting, 2003]. The focus of the talks was on North Korea nuclear issue as well as on protecting peace and stability, coordinating activity against PDRK. The main directions of bilateral collaboration, including economic ties, people-to-people relations, education exchange and anti-terrorist and anti-nuclear weapon pointes were enshrined in the Joint Statement [Nihon to mongoru koku…2003].

A noticeable trend of the Koizumi rule is the revision of the position of Japan in Asia (and, wider, Eurasia) as not a Western, but Asian nation, sharing common history and cultural features with other Asian nations and seeking for Asian identity. That motivated Japan to review its role in the ASEAN cooperation, to strengthen its intention to collaborate with APEC, to expand its ties with China and South Korea and to find friendly governments among new independent players in Eurasia. The cooperation in Eurasia with Central Asian and South Caucasian states demonstrated growth and mutual interest. In 2004 the Minister of Foreign Affairs Kawaguchi Yuriko had a round trip
to Central Asia during which she initiated a new format of regional cooperation with these states, calling for “Central Asia Plus Japan” Dialogue (CAJ dialogue). The Japanese scholar Yuasa Takeshi noted that “Concepts of Eurasian diplomacy and the CAJ dialogue are rare examples for understanding geopolitics that have long been forgotten in Japanese diplomacy” [Yuasa 2008].

The activity of the Koizumi administration towards Mongolia was aligned with the policy towards Central Asian states, but the parallel with the Russian policy was gradually weakening. Immediately after the round trip to Central Asian states in August, on September 2, 2004, Kawaguchi Yuriko paid a visit to Mongolia [Visit by Minister for Foreign… 2004]. The official goal to intensify the interaction was announced as assistance in developing a more democratic market economy in Mongolia, but as a matter of fact the Japanese government tried to strengthen its geopolitical positions in the megaregion of Eurasia, trying to balance itself with the regional superpowers – the rising economic leader China and the energy giant Russia.

Finally, prime minister Koizumi Junichiro payed a visit to Mongolia in the mentioned year of 2006, along with his visit to Central Asia. Prime ministers Koizumi Junichiro and M. Enkhbold emphasized that Japan and Mongolia were interested in constructing close relations, in balance Russia’s and China’s power in the region. The Japanese side was extremely eager to collaborate with Mongolia as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization – the first new Eurasian alliance project in the 2000’s – and as a partner in negotiations on North Korea nuclear threat [Outline of Prime Minister… 2006].

M. Enkhbold invited the Emperor, the Empress and the Crown Prince of Japan to visit Mongolia in 2007 to take part in the 35th anniversary of establishing Japan-Mongolia diplomatic relations, and the visit of the Crown Prince with purpose to foster friendly relations was paid in July 2007. Using the “Emperor diplomacy”¹ might be considered as evidence of a particular role of Mongolia for the Japanese Eurasian policy. Of note is that the Mongolian direction during the Koizumi acquired a truly strategic importance, compared to other directions of Eurasian Diplomacy. It brought about a possibility to sustain friendly relations with new independent states of Eurasia, as well as an opportunity to balance in Eurasia with the super-powers – Russia and China – mostly using “soft power” approach.

From the economic perspective, the period between 2004 and 2007 is marked by a steady growth in Japan-Mongolia dialogue.

¹ “Emperor diplomacy” means the considerable visits of the Emperor of Japan family to countries, elected to be very important for the Japanese foreign policy.
Japan export to Mongolia | Japan import from Mongolia | Trade balance
--- | --- | ---
2004 | 73 723 000 $ | 8 176 000 $ | 65 547 000 $
2005 | 73 746 000 $ | 6 529 000 $ | 67 217 000 $
2006 | 106 178 000 $ | 8 411 000 $ | 97 766 000 $
2007 | 153 647 000 $ | 16 243 000 $ | 137 404 000 $

The table uses the JETRO statistics [Japan’s International Trade in Goods…]

As the table shows, 2004 – 2005 years were not characterized by considerable trade growth, but to 2007 both exports and imports of Japan to Mongolia doubled, which went in parallel with the rise of political engagements. Not only Japanese financial aid, but trade and mutual projects in heavy industry, mining in Mongolia, business connections and even tourism rose in the 2000’s, and this intensive cooperation continued to grow in 2010, under Abe Shinzo rule and his political line.

**Phase 3: Abe Shinzo approach**

From the middle of the 2000’s Mongolia has become a very important logistics and energy grid for China and Russia, especially taking into account the fact that from the beginning of the 2000’s Russia advanced several energy projects with the objective to supply Asian states with oil and natural gas. The Ulan-Bator railroad is one of the alternative transport routes for China to deliver oil, gas and goods from Russia to China and back. By the 2010’s China replaced Japan as a main consumer of Russian oil and natural gas, and that was documented in the “Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2030” [Soni 2014, p. 37].

Understanding the rising rivalry in megaregion Eurasia\(^2\) motivated the first cabinet of Abe Shinzo to investigate a course capable of easing these tensions. Therefore, the concept of the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” (AFP, jiyu: to hanei no ko) was declared by the Minister of foreign affairs Aso Taro in 2006 [Jiyu to hanei no ko wo tsukuru… 2006]. The concept was proclaimed as values-oriented strategy (for freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, and market economy) towards the megaregion of Eurasia, stretching from not only outer edge of Eurasia, but also through from Northeast Asia to Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkey, Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states [Jiyu to hanei no ko wo tsukuru… 2006].

In its scope, the concept can be compared with the Konoe Fumimaro concept of “The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, and as it will be shown

\(^2\) Inner political instability in Central Asian states, Afghanistan terrorist problem, Pakistan instability, numerous border tensions in whole Eurasia, wars in the Middle East, rise of nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula, tensions between Russia and Georgia.
below, in its economic and even military aspects were also implemented while the concept was realized under the Abe Shinzo administrations.

According to the AFP, Japan-US strategic alliance is viewed as a basis for the Japanese foreign strategy and its security hierarchy, but Mongolia and South Korea together with Australia and New Zealand should be partners of Japan for stability, common interests and values in Eurasia [Aso gaimudajin enzetsu… 2007]. The adoption of Japan-Mongolia Action plan for 10 years, signed by prime minister Abe Shinzo and president N. Enkhbayar on February 26, 2007, was to become a bilateral foundation for this concept to be adopted [Kongo 10 nenkan no nihon… 2007]. The Action Plan gave green light for the development of strategic partnership between Japan and Mongolia as one of the basic grids for the Eurasian policy of Japan. The inner political situation in Japan – LDP opposition in 2009 – 2012 – alongside with the 2009 financial crisis slowed the process of strengthening Japan-Mongolia strategic partnership. Nevertheless, the bilateral Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed in November 2010 [Senryaku patonashippu kotiku… 2010], demonstrating mutual interest to advance further engagement and to coordinate Eurasian developments and to apply AFP ideals, shared even by oppositional Democratic party governments.

After LDP returned to power in 2012, the Abe cabinet intended to accumulate its foreign initiatives and formulated a well-shaped foreign policy doctrine and then first National Security Strategy (2013), based on the improvement of Japan-US security alliance, security and military alliances with Australia, India, the Philippines, Malaysia and even Mongolia [Dobrinskaya 2015, p. 241–248; Japan’s Security and Defense Policy… 2015; Policy Speech by Prime Minister… 2013].

It was the time of rising of Eurasian initiatives of “great powers”. According to the US “New Silk Road project” (2011), Japan’s involvements in Eurasian integration and security interactions had to be extended in the southern direction (Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), but the Russian Eurasian Economic Community (2000 – 2014) and its “turn to the East”, as well as Chinese “One belt, One road” (2013) compelled Japan to provide active and results-oriented policy in Eurasia, so that not to lose its leadership in the megaregion. In the 2010’s JSDF participated in several military maneuvers in the Indian Ocean, in the Pacific Ocean, and on the lands of India and Mongolia, which after becoming the training field for a new Japan, rejected the pacifist doctrine. That confirms that Japan, in spite of having a pacifist constitution, in reality began to use “smart power” methods in “Big Eurasia”, training in South Eurasia and Mongolia, participating in multilateral peacekeeping exercises there (“Khaan Quest”, “Cobra Gold” in Thailand, military rapprochement with Australia, Philippines, Vietnam, India).

Abe Shinzo’s visit to Mongolia in March 2013 was seven years after high-level visit of prime minister Koizumi Junichiro. The Japanese leader
proclaimed three guiding values-oriented principles for Japan-Mongolia partnership: freedom and democracy, peace and mutual help [Remarks by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe… 2013]. The Japanese side suggested a results-oriented energy initiative, deepening cooperation in energy supplies from Mongolia [Graivoronskiy 2014, p. 182]. Owing to this visit, the strategic partnership was enlarged, and these actions can be estimated as an attempt of the Japanese government not to lose its position in Eurasia with of Russia and China’s expansion to the megaregion in the background.

In March 2015, a large-scale “Agreement between Japan and Mongolia for an Economic Partnership” was signed laying a foundation for the enlargement of bilateral economic ties. In October 22 – 27, 2015 Abe Shinzo took the so-called historical tour of Mongolia and five Central Asian states. The Japanese prime minister together with representative delegation of Japanese politicians, universities representatives, businessmen visited Mongolia and five former Soviet Central Asian republics and signed a big set of treaties for economic partnership, people-to-people exchange, widening of cultural and educational ties, strengthening intergovernmental cooperation [Nichi-Mongoru… 2015; Shusho chuouajia rekiho… 2015; Sanchoen no keizai… 2015].

A considerable contribution for Japan-Mongolia business interactions was made by JETRO. Under this organization assistance, in 2014 the Japan-Mongolia Business Networking was held which gathered 300 companies from both countries, then in 2016 “The Mongolia Trade and Investment Forum” was organized in Japan [Japan-Mongolia Business Networking 2014; The Mongolia Trade… 2016]. In 2005 – 2016, Japanese-Mongolian trade rose by 2.5 times in the period from 2005 to 2008, in 2009 it sank to the 2007 level, then went up again in 2011 – 2014, when the Japanese export grew by 3 times. In 2015 – 2016 export and import to Japan plunged again [Japan’s International Trade in Goods]. The essential feature of mutual trade is that exports from Japan to Mongolia are much greater than imports, surpassing them by 10 times.

Abe Shinzo’s visit to Mongolia and Central Asia showed that Japan’s policy was restricted by the unified policy-making in Eurasia and had to go along the common strategic line, therefore it was based on common principles and was shaped similarly shape. However, engagement with Mongolia demonstrates a deeper security and military involvement, which is evident in the fact that the Mongol Army accepted the Japanese assistance (in infrastructure reconstruction, educational programs for Mongolian officers, common military exercises), which was realized immediately after the adoption of the first National Security Strategy allowing such kind of activities [Heisei nijyushichinendo mongoru …].

During the high-level talks in October 2015, Mongolia and Japan leaders agreed to advance policy, supported the proactive contribution to peace policy.
Abe Shinzo stated: “Japan will contribute even more proactively to the peace and stability of the international community in the future, and explained that the Legislation for Peace and Security forms the core for putting the policy of Proactive Contribution to Peace into practice” [Prime Minister Abe Visits Mongolia… 2015]. He also noted that defense cooperation between Japan and Mongolia was increasing, and a JSDF unit was dispatched to a multilateral military exercise (“Khaan Quest”) in June for the first time. Prime minister Abe explained that in the field of capacity-building support, the JSDF was earnestly carrying out training in roadbuilding in Mongolia, and he expressed hope to further advance this cooperation and exchange. Additionally, the prime minister expressed his delight that a triangular Japan–U.S.–Mongolia dialogue was possible to be held for the first time in September, and stated that he hoped the strategic dialogue between the three countries would continue.

Therefore, the US seems to be the most influential global participant, while Japan is a technological and developing military regional leader, with Mongolia as a subordinate state and a good training field in the core of Eurasia, allowing to provide control over China, Russia and officially proclaimed North Korea. From the point of view of security, this triangular partnership might be considered as the greatest Japanese contribution to peace and stability in northern Eurasia and as a means to prevent possible risks for the Japanese islands from the North Korean side, but at the same time as a path to maintain the lasting US-led hierarchy in the region.

Japan-Mongolia strategic partnership has been enhanced according to a new mid-term Action plan for the next five years, which was signed on March 29, 2017, and which puts economy and security together with military collaboration as the pillars for the future strategic partnership [Mongoruni boeichu zaikan… 2017]. Signing the document marked the 45th anniversary of the Japanese-Mongolian diplomatic relations. In March 2017, the countries came to an agreement to establish a special office of defense ministry in Mongolia to prevent any threats to security from North Korea, and even China and Russia [Asia’s Dream… 2017]. Consequently, the basis of the Abe administration’s policy towards Mongolia lies in combination of intergovernmental, economic and military cooperation, or in applying a Japanese version of “smart power”, carrying out one of its basic ideas which consists in forming alliances with subordinate states.

**Conclusion**

The Japan’s Mongolian diplomacy had a considerable evolution over the last 20 years, and the Eurasian context exerted a great impact on its developments. At the first phase, Eurasian diplomacy towards Russia, Central Asian states and Mongolia developed on the basis of equality principles and
laid foundation for intensive economic ties and people-to-people exchange. Under the Koizumi administration, it transformed and took the form of political and strategic cooperation in the megaregion of Eurasia, while financial aid and “soft power” methods preserved its leading role in policy-making for Central Asia and Mongolia, but it distinguished from the strategy for Russia. The US-Japan alliance principles have begun to extend over to Asia and Eurasia, constructing strong regional hierarchy. At the same time, with the rise of Eurasian projects among Eurasian great powers and according to the revision of Japan’s priorities in Eurasia on the basis of the AFP concept, the Japanese government under the Abe administration raised interaction with Mongolia to a level of strategic partnership. As it has been considered, the attitude of Japan to Mongolia is characterized by very specific features, compared to the dialogue with the other Central Asian states, however, Abe’s visit to Central Asia in 2015 was scheduled for the same period with his visit to Mongolia, thus demonstrating that the same principles were used in both directions. The military exchange and triangular strategic ties distinguish it from other Central Asian states, while aligning its Mongolian diplomacy with the diplomacy in the southern direction – towards India, the Philippines, Vietnam, and even Australia and New Zealand, fits into the US-led hierarchy of regional strategic ties, which is confirmed by the Abe’s speech at the International Conference on The Future of Asia on 5 June 2017.

Although the political line of Japan towards Central Asian states is characterized by using mostly “soft power” methods, Tokyo’s policy towards Mongolia has gone further, having started to implement “smart power” tactics, using a combination of military approaches in achieving political goals with establishing strategic regional alliances and economic cooperation for sustained growth and stability. Nevertheless, applying “smart power” mechanisms is very likely to develop in the future, even despite the power shift in Japan after a probable resignation of the Abe administration.

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Russian edition of the article:
DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2017-00021
Ethnologist Yanagita Kunio: Long road to recognition

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The glory won by Yanagita (Matsuoka) Kunio (1875–1962) is rarely attained by “real” humanitarian scholars, especially as he was dealing with such a narrow field of knowledge as ethnology. Yanagita was unknown to the general public before the war, but gained official recognition and nationwide fame in the post-war period. The reason for the wide recognition was that he studied and created reality. The reality was the people of Japan, mostly Okinawa residents.

Keywords: Japan, Yanagita Kunio, ethnology, mono-ethnicity, jomin, Okinawa.

Matsuoka Kunio was the sixth son in a family with many children. He was born in 1875 in the village of Tsujikawa located in today’s prefecture of Hyogo. Kunio’s father, Matsuoka Misao, was a low-rank samurai, an expert in Chinese literature, and a doctor. The family ran into financial problems after the father was diagnosed with a mental condition and could not be a doctor any longer. So the elder son, Kanae, started medical practice in the Ibaraki prefecture, and invited Kunio to stay with him. Kunio was 13 at that time. There is a rather big difference between the lifestyles of Hyogo and Ibaraki, which might have evoked the future scholar’s interest in ethnology.

Kunio had to move again to attend high school – he went to Tokyo and stayed with another brother, Michiyasu, an ophthalmologist. By then, Michiyasu was adopted by the Inoue family and changed his last name. Inoue Michiyasu (1866–1941), already quite a celebrated poet, introduced Kunio to the writers’ community. He got acquainted with remarkable Mori Ogai, made friends with Tayama Katai and Shimazaki Toson, and personally knew Kunikida Doppo and Tokutomi Roka. Their influence inspired Kunio’s interest in writing poetry (shintaishi), which was published in the magazine World of Literature (Bungakukai) and poetry collections. His poems were full of the epoch’s clichés: he was dissatisfied with “this world”, longed for mythic otherness, and hailed platonic love, which implied inevitable non-meetings, tears, and loneliness. Kunio’s parents died in 1896 when he was still in high school. The loss changed his life priorities. He did not part with his writer friends, but stopped writing poetry. The student in the Wives novel by Tayama Katai, the character based on Kunio as his prototype, said, “I am tired of poetry… My poetry is amateur. My eyes are now wide open. What’s the point in writing love poems? If you have time, you should better read a page on agrarian issues.”

1 Seeking to avoid confusion, we always call Yanagita Kunio an ethnologist, although he is sometimes called a folklorist and ethnographer. To learn more about this largely scholastic argument, see: [Bronson 2008].
Indeed, Kunio developed a keen interest in the agrarian policy after he was admitted to the Tokyo Imperial University’s Faculty of Law. He was wondering why Japanese farmers were so poor, and what needed to be done to improve their life. In other words, he stopped glorifying his personal world and chose to take care of the world of others, primarily people in the countryside – the primary source of material and spiritual life of the city.

Kunio refused to include poems in collections of his works, and described them as empty and useless. He never stopped being poetic though. Far from all his academic works meet the positivist criteria, his style is intricate, and his definitions are quite vague, which gives room for interpretation. In short, his scientific idea travels through space and time much faster than that of a “real” scientist.

Having graduated from the university in 1900, Kunio started his career with the Legal Affairs Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. The establishment of industrial cooperative societies was the task of the day. Kunio traveled a lot around the country to give lectures at metropolitan universities and in provinces. He traveled all over Japan, from Sakhalin to Kyushu. The voyages forged his knack for communicating with various sorts of people, which was extremely important for an ethnologist, especially a Japanese ethnologist dealing with introverts who were not eager to interact with strangers.

Back then regions of Japan greatly differed from one another, which caught the eye of the official who was clearly demonstrating the makings of a scholar. The observations he made in that period provided field material for Kunio’s inference. He published his poetry under the name of Matsuoka, and travel notes and articles as Yanagita. In 1901, Kunio was adopted by the old prosperous family of Yanagita. The family had no sons, and legislation of that period required that only a son inherit the family’s fortune. Kunio moved to the Yanagita house, and married Taka, the daughter of Naohira serving in the Supreme Court, in 1904. It seems Naohira pulled some strings to ensure a fast career of his son-in-law. Michiyasu Inoue hardly stayed aside either. Being a protégé of Yamagata Aritomo, he was employed by the Imperial Household’s poetics division in 1907, taught poetry to members of the Imperial Family, studied the poetic legacy of Emperor Meiji and classic literature, and became a member of the parliament’s upper house in 1938.

It must have been by recommendation of his brother that Kunio Yanagita received a concurrent position in the Ministry of the Imperial Household in 1908 and was tasked with putting government archives in order. Yanagita headed the secretariat of the parliament’s upper house in 1914. The position gave Yanagita access to top-ranking officials, many of whom he knew personally. He participated in preparations for the burial of Emperor Meiji (1912) and the inauguration of Taisho. The positions he occupied were largely technical and did not involve broad executive powers, but he was well aware of the sentiment of the bureaucratic community.
Even though he was a public servant, Yanagita longed for writing, and far from all his creations were work-related. Yanagita’s prose covered different subjects: cooperative societies, travel notes, local customs, people’s beliefs, archaeology, historical geography, and essays urging young people to follow the example of Russian and North European students and learn about rural life.

Yanagita’s works dedicated to the rural community revealed that his vision of the situation contravened the strategic course of the government. The government saw the countryside as a source for industrialization, exports, and expansion, above all. The government encouraged exports of capital (primarily to Korea and Manchuria), and Yanagita disagreed and called for spending money on an improvement of the domestic situation in Japan. The international ambitions of the country, which proudly called itself the Great Japanese Empire, were at variance with Yanagita’s aspiration for improving the life of people of the empire. The primary objective of measures proposed by Yanagita was the transformation of tenants (about two-thirds of Japanese farmers) into their own masters, which implied the eventual disappearance of the landlord class.

Yanagita had an opinion on the country’s agricultural policy but too little leverage to influence it. He was a cog in the huge government machinery based on the principles of strict hierarchy. Yet scientific work gave him a much broader opportunity of being independent.

It was clear from the very beginning of Yanagita’s ethnological activity that he prioritized the gathering of original folklore material. The first book by Yanagita directly related to ethnology was released in 1909. It was titled Nochi no Karikoroba no Ki (Continuation of Hunters’ Tales) and contained stories told by the elder of the Shiiba village in the Miyazaki prefecture on the Kyushu Island. The book was not for sale and had a circulation of only 50 copies meant for friends and acquaintances. The next book titled Tono Monogatari (Tales from Tono) was published in 1910. The book included 119 legends told by a young writer from the Tono village in the Iwate prefecture, Sasaki Kizen (1886–1933). The book was a fruit of creative cooperation between the two young men who believed that folklore should be integrated into intellectual life of the city. The book, which was named Yanagita’s trademark and a model of literary style after the war, had an initial circulation of 350 copies and received practically no feedback. In fact, the book provoked mixed feelings. Tayama Katai ambiguously described Tono Monogatari’s ‘magnificent savagery’, and Yanagita clearly realized that his work “was at odds with the tide of time” [Oto 1990, p. 102].

Yanagita exhibited independent thinking and unwillingness to live by mainstream ideas. His writer friends were interested in Western literary trends and novelties and did not find the “vulgar” folklore attractive. Yanagita was not mature enough to write down the speech of his informers the way
it was (a standard practice for folklorists), but preferred to transform the stories told by Sasaki Kizen into the written literary language (bungo). This is why Yanagita was named the author of Tono Monogatari.

Numerous ‘societies’ and in-house seminars which lacked any institutionalized status were an intellectual manifestation of the then Japan, in addition to books and lectures. One of those organizations was the Local History Society (Kyodokai) founded by an influential official and publicist, Nitobe Inazo (1862–1933). To a large extent, the society was a response to the policy of the government, which energetically resumed reorganization of the impoverished countryside after the war against Russia. The government sought to increase agricultural produce, rid of regional diversity, and unify and homogenize rural life for the purpose of better governability of the nation.

The Local History Society held meetings at Nitobe’s home from 1910 till 1917. This “Village Society” was not an assembly of ethnologists, and reports delivered at its meetings addressed various aspects of rural life. The seminar gathered together people who felt nostalgic for the old Japan mercilessly destroyed by “modernization”. It was attended by officials (back then uniform thinking did not reach the stage that would keep them away from ‘dissidentish’ gatherings), geographers, agrarian scholars, and even Makiguchi Tsunesaburo (1871–1944), who in 1930 founded the neoreligious organization Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (the forerunner of Soka Gakkai, a major neoreligious organization of contemporary Japan). Another permanent participant of those seminars was N. A. Nevsky (1892–1937), the gatherer of unique folklore material (especially about Okinawa) [Gromkovskaya, Kychanov 1978; Ikuta 2003; Baksheyev, Shchepkin (ed.) 2013]. Remarkably, the seminar failed to attract popular writers who were seeking inspiration in European capitals, rather than in the Japanese countryside. The time of writers praising village life had yet to come.

Ethnology was not an institutionalized discipline in the then Japan, and customs of “average” Japanese looked much more interesting to foreigners than to the people of Japan. Interestingly, the 1,000-volume encyclopedia Koji Ruien comprising historical information about various aspects of Japan’s life from written sources (dating from the ancient times till the middle of the 19th century) did not have an ethnology section. The encyclopedia was published under the aegis of the Meiji government and reflected the viewpoint that the life of the country and its upper classes should be the subject of history. Since day one, the Meiji government was fighting ‘prejudices’, ‘backward’ customs, and rites, i. e. the actual focal points of ethnology.

We should say that the life of average people got some attention as time passed. Yanagi Muneyoshi (Yanagi Soetsu, 1889–1961), the founder of the influential movement Mingei Undo (widely recognized after the war) that sought to study, popularize, and support handicraft, started his activity in the 1910s. [Gerasimova 2016].
The late 19th – early 20th centuries saw high social mobility: lots of villagers received access to education and career opportunities. People born in villages or small towns who did not come from samurai or aristocratic families became the backbone of the elder generation of Japanese ethnologists. For instance, Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953), another famous Japanese ethnologist usually put on a par with Yanagita, was born in a village. Those people were carriers of the tradition they were trying to preserve.

In 1913, Yanagita became a co-editor of the magazine *Local History Studies* (*Kyodo Kenkyu*, published until 1917), an organ of the Village Society. His partner was Takagi Toshio (1876–1922), who rapidly quit his position in the magazine because working together with intolerant Yanagita burdened him. Since then, the magazine was published by Yanagita alone, which suited his independent nature. Yanagita admitted later that the breaking off with Takagi was his fault. [Oto 1990, p. 18].

The magazine publishing process was described by N. I. Konrad: “Ten to twelve authors contributed their articles to every issue of the small magazine. We were amazed at the large number of ethnographers cooperating with it. Once Nakayama [ethnographer Nakayama Taro] got tired of listening to us, and said, “See, these six authors are Yanagita Kunio, and these five are me.” [Gromkovskaya, Kychanov 1978, p. 48]. The remark might seem too radical, but the then Japan did not have many people capable of filling the ethnographic (ethnological) lacuna. Most of them were “village correspondents” sending their notes on local customs to the magazine, which had about 600 readers.

The magazine publishing required the search for authors. It was when Yanagita got acquainted with Orikuchi Shinobu and started active correspondence with acclaimed biologist Minakata Kumagusu (1867–1941) who was interested in ethnology. Yanagita was a charming man who inspired interest in biology in many people, including young banker Shibusawa Keizo (1896–1963), a man who came from a big business family, engaged in ethnographic studies, and sponsored ethnographic projects in his spare time. He opened a small private museum in 1925 to exhibit folk culture artifacts.

Yanagita’s magazine published articles on agrarian relations and folklore. He was also interested in ethno-genesis. Consistent with contemporary ideas, he acknowledged that “our insular empire” was first populated by aborigines. The newcomers (the Japanese) had a higher level of culture (based on growing rice), they defeated the aborigines, and forced them to move to the mountains. The highlanders became a separate ethnos. Some of them were assimilated, and some remained as they were. Yanagita based his conclusions on evil spirits from the mountains mentioned in folklore tales he was collecting and studying. While describing and researching (mostly imagining) the life of Japanese highlanders, Yanagita compared himself to Rome’s Tacitus who gave a description of barbarian Germans. No doubt, the statement manifested the scope of his ambition.
Yanagita also indicated in his works that the tiny Shinto shrines scattered around the country where locals worshiped ancestral deities were the foundation of the Japanese lifestyle. They were actually the deity’s descendants (children – *ujiko*). Village rituals changed a great deal under the influence of Buddhism and *shugendo*, the ancient belief in the tutelary deity – the patron of a family and a region, which survived until modern days. This belief is the force that bonds all Japanese together. It requires connection to the land, which only owners of this land can have. Thus, the demand that tenantry be renounced and land be given to those who cultivate it acquired socio-ethnic (elimination of poverty) and highly symbolic grounds: he saw the diverse Shinto cults as a factor bonding the nation.

The government also deemed Shinto to be a unifying factor, but advocated ‘state’ Shinto, its own creation. This cult centered on the emperor, who was also the supreme priest. For convenience purposes, the government merged sanctuaries and reduced their number. Sanctuaries were ranked by their importance and supervised by the Interior Ministry. Principal sanctuaries were given the state status and received funding from the budget. Yanagita described that situation as ‘unnatural’ and said it breached the centuries-old order. In turn, the authorities viewed state-owned sanctuaries as key links of the magic chain, which would protect great Japan and assist in its imperial undertakings.

Yanagita was not quite right about the centuries-old order: the 20th-century Japanese state was not the first one trying to take control of Shinto: the ancient centralized state acted in precisely the same manner [Meshcheryakov 2014]. Anyway, the “bona fide” Shinto was the subject matter of the dispute. Yanagita was an insistent, stubborn, and optimistic person and believed time would come and the ideas of people advocating state Shinto “will dissipate like clouds and vanish like smoke.” [Kawada 1997, p. 30].

An altercation with the chairman of the parliament’s upper house, Togawaga Iesato (1863–1940), led to Yanagita’s resignation from his position in parliament in 1919. He became a correspondent of the major newspaper *Asahi* and was tasked with sending reports from the ground and sharing travel impressions. The trip to Okinawa was special. From the economist’s point of view, it was a backward and depressive region, but the ethnographer saw it as a treasure trove of old customs and beliefs. Yanagita thought that the Okinawa population was kin to the Japanese but his idea was not popular: Okinawa became a part of Japan shortly before that, and many “authentic” Japanese called Okinawa residents “strangers.”

The patronage of Nitobe Inazo enabled Yanagita to go to Geneva in 1921 for working in the League of Nation’s commission on mandated territories. Germany lost lands overseas as a result of WWI, and the Marshall Islands, the Marianas and the Caroline Islands became Japan’s mandated territories. Yanagita used the occasion to attend lectures at the Geneva University, travel around Europe, and study works by leading European ethnologists and
anthropologists. These studies strengthened his determination to dedicate the rest of his life to science.

The life in Europe put a strong imprint on Kunio Yanagita. He clearly realized that he did not belong to the Western World, and suffered from the poor knowledge of colloquial language, uneasiness, loneliness, and racial abjection. The League of Nations’ working languages were English, French, and Spanish, and Yanagita thought it was total injustice. After Yanagita got acquainted with an Esperantist at the Translation Bureau, he spoke with Nitobe Inazo, and they drafted a resolution establishing Esperanto as a working language of the League of Nations. Ten countries supported the proposal, but it was voted down by France. A resolution, which called for studying Esperanto in public schools all over the world, was adopted later. The decision had no practical results for anyone but Yanagita, who became a board member of the Japanese Esperanto Society in 1926.

The atmosphere of daily European life looked aggressive to Yanagita. In Geneva, he felt like a tiny islander surrounded by huge and arrogant people of the mainland. The issues addressed by the commission gave rise to sad thoughts about the fate of any islands. Looking back at the horrid flu (Spanish flu) epidemics of 1919, he insisted that While Europeans are staring at natives portrayed by Gauguin’s canvasses, Samoa and Tahiti islanders are literally dying out. The Europeans live on a continent and view any islanders as provincials. They “observe” them but do not sympathize with them. The Japanese are no exception. The diplomats working at the League of Nations seemed cultured but their soft touch disappeared as soon as serious questions were on the table: the Japanese delegation’s proposal to add a racial equality provision to the Charter of the League of Nations was voted down.

Having learned about the catastrophic earthquake which hit Tokyo and Yokohama on September 1, 1923, Yanagita returned home and started writing analytical articles for Asahi dedicated to social and, partially, political problems. The articles criticized the fascist regime of Mussolini, called for appointing civilians as the Japanese army and navy ministers, and condemned the ban on the Workers' and Peasants' Party. [Yanagita Kunio Zenshu, 1990. Vol 1, pp. 103, 120–122; Vol. 2, pp. 325–327]. His ideas contravened the increasingly militarist sentiment of the establishment. He also gave lectures on folklore and village history at Keio and Waseda universities.

In 1925, Yanagita and ethnologist Oka Masao (1898–1982), who is believed by many to be the founding father of the “real” ethnology (“academic” ethnology the way it is understood by the West) [Ishikawa, Kreiner (ed.) 2017], started to publish the magazine Ethnology (Minzoku), the first specialized magazine dedicated to this field of knowledge. Cooperation between the two scientists did not last – Yanagita quarreled with Oka, and the magazine publishing stopped in 1929. They quarreled because Oka wanted to publish a theoretical magazine containing translated works of foreign scientists, while
Yanagita preferred an exclusively Japanese ‘informative’ outlet and argued that the publishing of original materials should be the primary task. He had his reasons: material was required for starting a discourse, and the material had yet to be collected. It was an important task which needed to be tackled without delay. Japan took the path of modernization later than Western countries, it still had some folklore life left, but its days were numbered.

Yanagita was aware of works of the world’s leading ethnologists. Those scholars were mostly dealing with material collected in regions, which looked “exotic” to them and were still at the “primitive” stage of development. Yanagita was using exclusively Japanese material. He put emphasis on the importance of field work throughout his entire life, described his studies as “science of collection,” and contemptuously referred to the studies of his opponents as “science of reading.” [Oto 1990, p. 61]. Seeking to clearly define the area of his scientific and emotional interests, Yanagita called his studies “mono-ethnic ethnology” (ikkoku minzokugaku) addressed to the Japanese only. Ethnology is a “national science,” Japanese realities should be described in the Japanese language, and their description in a foreign (English) language would look like the British Museum’s exposition dedicated to the Ainu. [Maeda 2013, p. 152].

In 1928, Yanagita published a major book titled Seinen to Gakumon (The Young and Science). This book is an attempt to understand the place of traditional culture amid the increasing spread of modernization (Westernization) in Japan. No doubt, the implementation of Western institutions and technologies increased competitive edge of Japan on the global arena, but it was also an extremely painful and contradictory process accompanied by the merciless destruction of the natural and social habitat. Yanagita noted that Western ethnology was a byproduct of colonialism and missionary work, because of which Western ethnologists were incapable of understanding Japanese realities. This can be done only by the Japanese, who should show correct ways and approaches to Western specialists. This is their historical mission. [Yanagita Kunio Zenshu, 1990. Vol. 27, pp. 345–346]. Notably, the book was addressed to the young. Yanagita was in his late 60s and believed that life experience enabled him to think categories of the future. He wanted not just to teach but also to lecture. Not just young Japanese but also mature Europeans.

Yanagita resigned as a member of the Asahi staff in 1930, and stopped cooperating with the newspaper the year after. A probable reason for his decision was the course taken by the newspaper, which backed Japan’s expansionist aspirations rejected by Yanagita. He always wanted the government to focus on domestic, rather than foreign problems. He also chose the future of the Japanese over the future of the country.

In 1929, old acquaintances of Yanagita (Orikuchi Shinobu, Oka Masao, Kindaichi Kyosuke (1882–1971), and some others) established the society
Minzoku Gakkai and the magazine Minzokugaku, but Yanagita refused to participate. He realized his academic interest and leadership ambition at home. Kunio left the ancestral home of the Yanagita family and built himself a residence customized for the needs of desk work and seminars in a Tokyo suburb. The home of British ethnologist Frazer was the prototype of his spacious house. It was more convenient to study ethnology in a house built in the European style. In contrast to the years of public service, Yanagita entered the new period of his life wearing mostly Japanese clothes. Ethnology was a new discipline, and the house had a wonderful library, including foreign books which one could not find even in the library of the Tokyo University.

The Yanagita residence started hosting weekly “Thursday meetings” in September 1933. At first, those meetings were not customary scientific seminars where participants would deliver reports by turn. In fact, those were solo speeches of Yanagita: he gave lectures taken down in shorthand by a listener (the lectures were printed later). The audience consisted of young scientists and persons showing interest in the subject who chose the academic occupation at some point in the future. The seminars had some female participants, which was quite unusual for Japanese science of those days. Even former Marxists, whom the totalitarian machinery forced to publicly renounce their convictions, were not barred from visiting Yanagita’s home.

All guests were younger than their host. As it frequently happens to charismatic persons, Yanagita was getting along with the young better than with people of his same age with a formed outlook. Yet it was not just about the nature of Yanagita, but also about the form of relationships in the Japanese academic community: it was divided into factions led by a sole person, who had an unlimited authority in the eyes of his pupils and wards. Those relations strongly resembled medieval guilds, and Yanagita deemed himself to be a man of the old world. The co-existence of two equal authorities in such institutions was absolutely impossible. Relations between institutions often left much to be desired because of such structure of intellectual space.

Today it may seem that Yanagita Kunio and Yanagi Muneyoshi were doing the same thing – they studied “folk culture” and integrated it into urban life. Still they were convinced they took different roads. Yanagita and Yanagi discussed the subject of their studies in public just once and were clearly displeased with one another. This is proven by the minutes of their conservation published by the magazine Ethnology Monthly (Gekkan Mingei) in March 1940. Yanagita said he was studying people’s life, and Yanagi said he focused on the way people’s life should be. Despite his charisma, Yanagita was an observer, and Yanagi acted like a priest. [Maeda 2013, pp. 120–133].

People who quarreled with Yanagita often called his style of communication dictatorial and criticized him for treating numerous village correspondents supplying material as “anonymous soldiers” (the description given by Oka Masao), while “general” Kunio Yanagita got the fame. To some extent,
this critique demonstrates the nature of Yanagita; it also reveals contradictions characteristic of the field method, in which many people collect primary data but do not analyze it. The same problem occurs in archeology, which causes endless debates on who was the first to find an artifact.\(^2\)

Yanagita was extremely productive: he published three books per year on the average. There were also lectures given by Yanagita everywhere to the general public and the university community. Truth be told, his energetic activity affected quality of his texts. They are full of repetitions and unfinished thoughts and statements. Yanagita was right when he described himself as the last man who received traditional education: there is a touch of essayism to his style, which is lacking integrity and modern subject-matter. The way some of his texts were created added confusion – those were Yanagita’s lectures taken down in shorthand by his pupils. Perhaps, Yanagita was aware of that, as at the end of his life he turned down the flattering offer to publish his collected works in full. He honestly admitted that his view on particular subjects changed several times during his life, which might mislead an unprepared reader. [Oto 1990 p. 183].

Yanagita’s “Thursday meetings” were highly significant for the establishment and institutionalization of Japanese ethnology and personnel training. A large-scale survey was conducted in 53 mountain villages in the period between 1934 and 1937. The work was done mostly by participants in the Thursday seminars, but the government provided the funding (the Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkokai fund was established in 1932) and Yanagita had to rename his seminar “The Research Institute for Studying Life of the Native Land”.

“Civilization” was spreading more slowly in the mountains than on the plains, which made the highlands a perfect source of ethnological information. The government was the driver of modernization crushing the traditional lifestyle, yet sponsored the recording of its remnants. Actually, the funding of destruction was way larger than the allocations for studying the disappearing reality. Importantly, traditional written Japanese culture mostly reflected realities of the land cultivating community; highlanders were deemed “backward” and despised. This is why the public appearance of highlanders had a high social significance. The same happened to fishermen studied after the survey of highland villages was finalized.

At the beginning of his study of highland villages, Yanagita was hoping to discover ancient culture to prove his old theory designating the population of remote mountainous regions as a different people. He did not manage to prove that. Demonstrating the truly Japanese politeness towards his teacher, Oto Hirohiko (1902–1990) wrote, “Regretfully, our study of highland villages failed to provide the teacher with important information [to prove that

\(^2\) After giving a lecture in Kyoto in 2000, the author was asked why nobody knew about the worker who made the wonderful discovery, and the supervisor of excavations was in the news.
Yanagita’s theory was correct. Crucial differences between highland and farming villages were not proven either.” [Oto 1990, pp. 66–67]. Whether he liked it or not, Yanagita focused on the idea of Japanese mono-ethnicity. Yanagita turned 60 in 1935. For people living in the Far East, this is a pivotal date, which means that the person has completed the 60-year cycle. Yanagita widely celebrated his jubilee: lectures on ethnology and speeches by representatives of almost every prefecture lasted for a whole week. The event was so successful that its participants decided to establish a nationwide folklore society. The organization had 120 members and monthly published an eight-page bulletin with a circulation of 300 copies. The bulletin did not contain academic articles per se; it mostly presented brief primary materials collected by members of the Folklore Society. Sharp-tongued Oka Masao did not fail to note that the bulletin reminded him of a tailless dragonfly [Tsurumi 2004, p. 40]. We still have to admit that Folklore Society members did a lot to collect their material. They also gathered and classified regional vocabulary describing marriage, burial rites, etc. People clustering around Yanagita were not theoreticians, but rather down-to-earth ethnologists and local history experts. There was a great deal of scientific work, but what else can we say about the public acknowledgement of Yanagita personally and the discipline called ethnology?

Of course, Yanagita was not an irreconcilable dissident: he had warm feelings for the Imperial Family and did not call for toppling the regime, but Japan was a totalitarian country, and the ethnological discourse of Yanagita was absolutely anti-totalitarian. His focal point was “the people,” and he assessed the current situation from the angle of interests of “average persons,” primarily villagers. The official definition was Japanese subjects was “the emperor’s people” (komin) or “faithful people” (shinmin). For his part, Yanagita called the Japanese jomin, the term he coined for everyone who cherished traditions (both villagers and townies). The emperor, who officiated at ancient Shinto rituals, played exactly the same role. This put the people on a par with the emperor [Tsurumi 2004, p. 67]. The idea contravened the official policy. In 1936, Japan was shaken by the high-profile case of Minobe Tatsukichi (1873–1948), a lawyer who invented the “organ theory” (kikansetsu). The theory declared the emperor the supreme “organ” of the Japanese state, an organism. He was supreme but still an organ with vast powers limited by the law. Minobe put the state above the emperor. His theory was formally recognized for a long time. Yet hysteria and a discussion launched in 1934 resulted in Minobe’s “voluntary” resignation from the parliament and a ban on his works, because the emperor was not supposed to fall under any category. Historian Tsuda Sokichi (1873–1961) was banished from the university and briefly put in prison in 1940 for

3 Re description of Japanese militarism, see: [Meshcheryakov 2009].
his “erroneous” research of ancient sources and the history of the Imperial Family. In turn, Yanagita was attacked by adherents of the empire during the war, but spared real persecution. The main reason was that he never occupied any official positions and was too insignificant.

The subject of Yanagita’s studies compelled him to underline local specifics of beliefs, customs, and dialects, while official ideology put emphasis on the cultural and political homogeneity of the Japanese. Besides, Yanagita was rather critical of the existent land system and official Shinto. His remarks were absolutely impermissible sometimes. For instance, he said in a public lecture in 1935 that the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 did not show love for villagers. Yet the Rescript, which proclaimed loyalty to the emperor as the main virtue of all Japanese, was a key text of Japanese totalitarianism studied by schoolchildren by heart.

Yanagita’s failure to blend into the official discourse was demonstrated by his attitude to history, a science solidly built into the totalitarian system. Yanagita acknowledged the importance of history by words, yet his deeds exhibit the undying inner need for swimming upstream. He agreed that studied objects were prone to temporal change, but was not satisfied with the universal principle of studying the object from the past to the present. Yanagita preferred moving from “the top to the bottom,” rather than the other way: he wanted to understand the present before looking into the past. The present was the focus of his ethnology. Yanagita borrowed the “reverse approach” from Yoshida Togo (1864–1918), a man of many talents interested in history, historical geography, and theater [Oto 1990, p. 15]. The “reserve approach” Yoshida used to write the history of Japan was not very popular, but Yanagita could not care less.

Yanagita criticized the official science of history from systemic positions. He claimed that historians based their research exclusively on written sources and were unable in principle to reflect the actual situation, considering that written documents refer to a violation of the norm, instead of the norm itself. This is not just about events happening in the country as a whole. The same approach is manifested by documents stored in village archives. In 1935 Yanagita wrote, “Most of those documents register natural calamities and plead for cutting taxes and giving financial support; there are also documents pertaining to legal disputes inside the village or between villages. In short, the documents reflect unusual events.” This creates an impression that the history of the Tokugawa epoch was a series of revolts and natural calamities, which was not true.” [Maeda 2013, pp. 57–58].

Justly indicating the limited nature of historical sources, Yanagita preferred not think about limits of ethnological material. As known, a major

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4 In an interview given in 1950 he explained the 1935 criticism of the Rescript on Education: There is love for the home country, but there is no love for the home village, prefecture, and region. [Tsurumi 2004, p. 4].
Yanagita believed that the best evidence of the past was not annual records of deviations from the norm, but descriptions of the regular routine given, amongst others, by Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), a leading member of the “native studies” (kokugaku) movement. A key goal of Motoori’s life was to fight any Chinese manifestations, which made him highly suspicious of the chronological (annual) presentation of material customary for Japan as a harmful Chinese invention. In the opinion of Yanagita, the real science about the past is a “new kokugaku” based on ethnology, i.e. studies of the past to the fullest extent. His ethnology covers not so much rare “historical” events as daily realities, which were overlooked (or insufficiently indicated) by written sources but revealed the “soul” of people. The “time” encapsulated in this soul is not linear but cyclic, and historic events disrupt and hinder this cycle. A person is actually an exception from the general rule and the order. This is why Yanagita’s encyclopedic work of 1931 titled Meiji-Taisho shisesohen (The History of Meiji and Taisho Epochs. Appearances) observes the recent evolution, which is sometimes very fast, in various aspects of the daily life; the evolution does not involve or need concrete people to happen. The preface says, “This book is the result of my long-standing dissatisfaction with the biographic principle of the narration of history, so I intentionally avoid giving a single anthroponym. This book is not about emotions of its characters.” [Yanagita Kunio Zenshu, 1990. Vol. 26, pp. 12–13].

For the purpose of understanding Yanagita’s intentions better, you should remember that the work was written in the epoch of strengthening global totalitarianism seeking to create a cult of heroes in every regional inference. The government builds a pantheon of politicians (the emperor in the case of Japan), the military, and civilians: poets, writers, artists, scientists, etc. Pre-war/war culture was overexcited: poets and writers generated metaphors and hyperbolas for mobilizing people’s spirit and distracting from the reality which resulted in erosion of people’s mental resilience. It was the only way to gain the universal approval of the government, which declared an all-out war on China in 1937 and the U.S. and the UK in 1941 to free Asia from colonialism. There was no agitation characteristic of that period in Yanagita’s discourse. He focused on specifics, openly declared that existent books gave too much attention to “impressions” and “feelings”, and advocated a more detached approach, which would make contemporary books “classic literature” in the eyes of next generations. [Tsurumi 2008, pp. 96-99].

The aforesaid features of Yanagita’s discourse explain why he was denied any tangible official support before the war. He won the 1940 award of the newspaper Asahi for making a contribution to culture (it was the first award bestowed on an ethnologist), yet the award was private and came from the newspaper with which Yanagita was cooperating for a long time. The government bestowed the Order of Culture (founded in 1937) on other
people, such as Sasaki Nobutsuna (1872–1963), a literary critic and researcher of Manyoshu (the poetry anthology designated to express Japanese masculinity) in 1937, historian and policy expert Tokutomi Soho (1863–1957) (in 1943), and passionate publicist and opponent of the West Miyake Setsurei (1860–1945) (in 1943). The government established the Institute of Ethnography in 1943, but there was no place for Yanagita there. Of course, his age was advanced, but that was not the sole reason. The Institute of Ethnography was a branch of the colonial empire studying population of Japanese colonies. Back then, official ideology designated Japan as a multinational country, and Yanagita was opposed to colonial expansion, studied customs of the Japanese, and kept saying that Japan was a mono-ethnic nation. Yanagita’s Folklore Society suspended its activity in 1943, when the Institute of Ethnography was established, until the end of war. They stopped publishing the bulletin the year after. No doubt, the severe wartime conditions were a factor, but it is a fact that the government chose to spend “ethnography money” on another project. The Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Taisei Yokusankai), a “non-governmental” organization sponsored by and utterly loyal to the authorities, refused to fund preparations for Yanagita’s 70th birthday, and the organizers had to seek private assistance. Yanagita’s conduct was also illuminative: due to his wish, the organizers excluded from the jubilee collection of works the articles by people who were either older than Yanagita or were not his pupils. [Tsurumi 2004, pp. 86–91]. Under any circumstances ethnologist Yanagita continued to demonstrate the extremes of his human nature.

Yanagita sometimes made ‘patriotic’ statements during the war; he was also a presidium member of the Society of Patriotic Writers, but all of his remarks were moderate and free from frenzy shown by many of his compatriots. He refused to include poetry written in his teen years in the collected works, but had no scientific works or essays to be renounced for ideological reasons.

U.S. forces occupied Japan after the war. The sociopolitical atmosphere completely changed: it was time of people who never hailed the totalitarian regime or benefited from its favors. Yanagita was in his seventies when he received true recognition, both from the authorities and the general public. In July 1946, he was appointed a counselor of the Privy Council, which, amongst other issues, discussed the new Japanese constitution (the Privy Council was disbanded in May 1947). In July 1947, Yanagita became a member of the Academy of Arts, and joined the Academy of Sciences in December 1948. He was elected a member of the board of the state Institute of the Japanese Language in 1949. Besides, he wrote new textbooks for the new Japan. Yanagita was decorated with the Order of Culture in November 1951. He was the first and only ethnologist to receive this award, and the Order of the Rising Sun (1962). Yanagita’s popularity clearly exceeded the
scientific community, and his travel notes and essays were declared a model of literary style and included in modern literary anthologies.

The recognition of Yanagita derived not only from his personality but also from the subject of his experiences and studies. They focused on “people” consistent with trends of the epoch, in which ideas of democracy and “people” as historical subjectivity were widely spread. The new Japanese constitution written at U.S. experts’ dictation proclaimed people as the sovereign. Yanagita’s idea of people was close to Marxist-minded figures, who appealed to the masses and had rather strong positions; under those circumstances a great deal of thinkers and politicians were currying favor with them. The opinion that a group of militarists “deceived” people became common. Only a handful dared to think that people shared the responsibility of politicians. Yanagita did not succumb to time-serving political considerations and did not flatter people. He had the right to do so, because he loved people. He deemed ethnological studies to be a high mission and took a deeper look into the matter. In 1948 he called for using ethnology to understand why the Japanese fell for militarist ideas and believed their “leaders.” He thought that the clarification of those reasons would be a road to happiness and help fix the shortcomings of the Japanese people. [Yanagita Kunio Zenshu, 1990. Vol. 26, p. 582].

The opinion that people shared the responsibility did not win many supporters. Yet everyone liked Yanagita’s idea of Japanese mono-ethnicity, which became a key element of the state ideology. The last work of Yanagita, Kaizo-no michi (The Sea Way) (1961), touched upon another sensitive subject. Yanagita believed that ancestors of the Japanese who knew how to grow rice (Yanagita believed that rice was practically a hereditary feature of the Japanese) came to the archipelago from the south, and their ancient culture was best preserved in Okinawa. The idea was little related to historical data but responded to the public sentiment: Okinawa was governed by the United States, but Yanagita’s idea created an impression that the Ryukyu Archipelago was originally populated by the Japanese.

There is no documentary evidence of Yanagita’s “southern theory,” and it was definitively established in the end of his life that the old Japanese came to the land of Japan from the side of the Korean Peninsula. They were bearers of the culture yayoi (III century BC – III century AD), grew rice, and produced metal and a special type of ceramics. Archaeologists confirmed that the culture yayoi did not reach Okinawa, which made it impossible to say that rice cultivation migrated to the Japanese archipelago from there. Hence, professional scientists did not see Okinawa residents as prehistoric Japanese. Yanagita’s theory was based on his poetic imagination, rather than scientific data, which was actually why it impressed the Japanese so much. The effect was produced by ideas and artistry. The future literature Nobel Prize winner (1994), Oe Kenzaburo, wrote an afterword for the Kaizo-no michi in 1978. He praised Yanagita’s literary style and bold “imagination.” The remark of a
scientist could look skeptical, but a writer made it praiseful. Oe believed that the talented poetic discourse broadened the boundaries of Yanagita’s ego, which traveled in time, penetrated ancient conscience, went beyond the Japanese archipelago, and made the Japanese and Okinawa a single whole, turning Yanagita into a great elder, a teller of epic stories. The influence of this discourse is so big that academic mistakes of Yanagita look insignificant: the goal he achieved was way more important, as his artistic imagination generated artistic imagination of other people [Yanagita 2011, pp. 362–364].

Long ago, when Yanagita was carried away by his “highland theory,” he used to complain about a lack of understanding on the part of his writer friends. Now a remarkable writer admired his talent.

There is a real historical fact behind the sublime or even slightly pompous language of Oe Kenzaburo: Yanagita contributed to the Japanese feeling of kinship with the people in Okinawa. This sentiment gave rise to a strong anti-American movement, which demanded that Okinawa be returned, and achieved that goal: Okinawa returned to the Japanese jurisdiction in 1972. It was a landmark event in the history of the leftist movement, which rapidly declined after it lost the Okinawa “resource”. Actually, the “success” of the leftist movement was a relative thing: the U.S. military bases which loyally served America during the “valiant” Vietnam War were still in place, and the attempt of Prime Minister Hatoayama Yukio at moving (not closing) the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in 2009 resulted in an epic failure and resignation. The cabinet was less than one year old by then, which made it one of the shortest government tenures in the Japanese history.

Japan had a real Yanagita boom in the 1970s. He was glorifying unnamed persons his entire life and became a real people’s hero. Lots of works and reference books described him as the founder of Japanese ethnology and a remarkable thinker. His works are studied at school history lessons, abstracts from his essays and travel notes are published in literature textbooks, and the Tono area is seen as “the birthplace” of all Japanese.

The Yanagita boom was related not only to his name. It would be right to say that the name of Yanagita became popular because the country was going through an ethnological boom. Many intellectuals were disappointed at socialist ideals and readily hailed the classless forms of people’s objectification practiced by Japanese ethnologists. But there were still more important factors. The primary source of the ethnological boom was the nostalgia for the good old Japan, whose habitat was mercilessly destroyed by modernization. It offered nice new refrigerators, television sets, and cars in exchange for ruins. The Japanese were unable to refuse the highly tempting offer but were still suffering from nostalgia. And ethnologists offered psychological assistance and “pills” – academic works which dulled the pain of the loss. The Japanese lifestyle was lapsing, the rural population was rapidly declin-
ing, the Japanese essence was losing its material form and developing into a theoretical category, but this illusory structure was solid.

The ethnological boom was integrated into a broader cultural and ideological trend called Nihonjinron. It primary task was the self-description of the Japanese fearing to lose their identity under the pressure of Western values and ideas. People who called themselves ethnologists were helpful in this area, as well. The public pathos of their research and deliberations aimed to prove their own existence.

Japan raised a huge number of ethnologists. An overwhelming majority of them follow Yanagita’s example and make Japanese ethnology their profession. Their books are published in Japanese, and their core audience is Japanese, rather than the community, which proudly calls itself international because it speaks English. From time to time, this community bears a childish grudge against Japanese ethnologies for writing in an obscure language. Here is a particularly defiant passage:

“We believe that Japanese folklorists have a lot to say but the problem is they are unable to convey their relevance to broader audiences. There are a number of interconnected factors, the most obvious of which is the language barrier. Being highly efficient in their native tongue, Japanese folklorists are unwilling to publish their research in English, not to mention other languages. Like it or not, English has become the language of international science. We admit this is not fair and regret that only a few Western scientists speak Japanese and other languages of Asia, but the present-day reality is such that this abnormal situation can hardly be fixed in the near future” [Schnell, Hashimoto 2012, p. 106].

This passage brings to mind the idealist project of Yanagita and Nitobe Inazo, who suggested that Esperanto become a working language of the League of Nations. The regrets of “international” scientists prove their idealistic wish to make Japanese ethnology an “objective” science. Yanagita insisted that an ethnologist should love and sympathize with the object of one’s studies, while in this case “objectivity” is synonimic with “indifference”. Like it or not, Japanese ethnology as a sociocultural and ideological institute does not want to join the international community; it is a part of the powerful discourse aiming at self-description and self-construction of the ethnos, and the capricious demand to speak English sounds like the reproof of a Japanese writer who keeps writing in his native tongue. I do not rule out that Japanese ethnologists (folklorists and ethnographers) take the accusations of their “Japanese” essence as a compliment. A Japanese ethnologist should be treated as ethnic Japanese above all. Exceptions only confirm this rule.

I personally understand the criticism of many Japanese ethnologists for being “obsessed” with Japan, which creates an illusion of uniqueness and special nature of Japan and its people. Yet I very much doubt that, no matter what Schnell & Hiroyuki might say, this seclusion and even “narrow-minded-
ness” will be highly unfortunate and result in their “marginalization”. Such threats are unlikely to scare Japanese ethnologists, who cannot be marginalized from their own population of over 120 million people. Just 17 universities of North America teach ethnology, and an ethnology thesis can be defended in only 11 of them. Meanwhile, Japanese universities have 57 post-graduate ethnology programs, and a huge number of local history and ethnology museums operate across the country. The Japanese ethnologic society, Minzokugaku Gakkai, has about 2,300 members. There are dozens of other institutionalized and amateur organization. The question is who is marginalized.

An academic mind seeks to get to the truth and dismiss social myths. However, any academic argument about “imaginary communities” and “invented traditions” is nothing compared to faith in genuine traditions and the primordial existence of the nation. Knowledge cannot defeat faith because it speaks to it in an unclear and unconvincing language. I believe that the belief (conviction) is a necessary element of psychological comfort. Faith gives an integral idea of the world, which science is unable to provide. Faith knows answers to all questions, and all science can do is promise it might answer some of the questions in the future. Is it bad? The belief in one’s uniqueness and chosenness was the source of Japan’s expansionism and aggression, which resulted in a crushing defeat in WWII. Some of modern critics reproach Japan for the idea of Japanese monoethnicity, which they see as a part of that aggressive system. The idea was pushed for most consistently, aggressively and without proof by Osamu Murai [Murai 2004]. Yet they forget that those ideas had little significance before and during the war. The popularity of Yanagita reached its peak after the war, and post-war Japan is clearly a model of non-aggressive sentiment both in domestic relations and foreign policy. Can other countries boast that?

References


The role of place names in the political culture of medieval Japan

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The article focuses on the role and place of toponyms in the medieval Japanese political culture. The toponym can be considered as a hyperlink, “clicking” which reveals an endless chain of general cultural, historical, and literary images, events, and phenomena. Place name study requires a multidisciplinary approach. The insularity of the Japanese territory, terrain features, prevalence and sustainability of animistic beliefs contributed to the fact that the exact localization of an event or phenomenon took on special significance. A detailed address of an event or phenomenon most often consists of toponyms relating to a province, county, village or some particular place, which almost always makes it possible to find the specified object on a geographical map. Moreover, once introduced into the context of culture, geographical locations become places of worship, sources of inspiration for many generations and are rarely subject to change. Toponyms are an integral part of the names of deities, emperors and their family members. Place names were also important in determining and fixing the boundaries of the state. Probably, for the first time in the Japanese literary tradition the geographical area of the entire archipelago, except for the remote north-eastern part, was referred to in the oldest existing anthology of the Japanese poetry “Manyoshu” (dated by the second half of the VIII century). This article presents a detailed analysis of the provenance and use of toponyms making up the cultural and historical image of the country, its name (Yamato – Nihon), and the name of the archipelago’s highest mountain (Fuji). Also, as an example, we examine the toponym for a barrier (Shirakawa), the site which is currently little known, though once it used to be an important element of the medieval state political and administrative structure.

The toponym as a type of proper names is inherently conservative, which allows it to be the custodian of historical information, to be an indicator of time in the written culture, that is, using the term coined by M.M. Bakhtin, to shape a chronotope of culture. The geographical certainty characteristic of the insular mentality and the correlation thereof with the imperial myth that has been one of the Japanese political culture’s foundations right down to the twentieth century, have become the grounds for the increased attention to the cultural tradition toponymy.

Keywords: place name, toponym, Yamato, Nihon, Fuji, kami, islands.

Most cultures have their own list of basic toponyms. As a rule, it includes the names of the country, capitals and significant geographical features – mountains, rivers, lakes, etc. It seems that defining place names for the Russian culture are Rus – Russia – the USSR; Moscow, Saint Petersburg; the Volga, the Baikal; Siberia. In modern language, a toponym can be considered as a hyperlink, clicking which reveals an endless chain of general cultural, historical, and literary images, events and phenomena.
The Japanese culture is no exception, although it has a number of peculiar features. The insularity of the Japanese territory on which it was formed and developed must have manifested itself in a careful “study of the space”, when under the conditions of the limited area of the firm ground the precise localization of the event or phenomenon took on special significance. This territory’s terrain, its length from the north-east to the south-west and relatively small width, mountain ranges, coastal valleys enhanced this feature. Anthropogenic activities (irrigated rice-growing, fishing in coastal waters), having predetermined a “high degree of the settled way of life”, manifested it still more [Meshcheryakov 2000, p. 291]. Telling a myth, a fairy tale, a poem or a real story, a Japanese will always accurately indicate the locus in quo. The detailed address of an event or phenomenon most often includes the toponyms of a province, county, village or some particular place. This was also strengthened by animistic beliefs widespread throughout the archipelago. The location can almost always be found on a geographical map. Moreover, once introduced into the context of culture, geographical landmarks became places of worship, and sources of inspiration for many generations.

Before creating a state mythological pantheon (and after, to some extent), each geographically isolated area had its own deities – kami – of natural phenomena and objects, economic activities, “responsible” for farming, fishing, overall “tranquillity of nature”, so necessary in the land of typhoons, earthquakes and other frequent natural disasters.

The names of most Japanese deities, kami, are composite, incorporating the toponym of the place where the deity dwelt, and over which its power spread. The imperial myth, the story of the divine origin and the right of the Imperial family to supremacy became the core idea of the Japanese statehood for many centuries. The ancestry of the imperial family deriving from the supreme deity of the mythological pantheon guaranteed its right to supreme power. The mythological pantheon was to include the most influential deities, placing them according to a strict hierarchy, as reflected in the earliest written sources “Kojiki” (“Records of Ancient Matters”, 712), and “Nihon Shoki” (“The Chronicles of Japan”, 720). The list included just over 250 kami.

The lists of the theonyms, including geographical names, are structurally different in “Kojiki” and “Nihon Shoki”. While “Kojiki” is dominated by “proper” names of the gods, in which the toponym is a composite element [Hayamika-no takesahaya-jinumi-no kami; Ame-no hibaraoshinadomi-no kami, etc.], “Nihon Shoki” is abundant in “descriptive names” [The evil god of Strait Kibi-no ana1, the god of the Awaji Island 2 etc.]. This might be due

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1 In the text of the source: “Kibi-ni itarite ana-no umi-o wataru. Sono tokoro-ni araburu kami ari.” [They reached Kibi, they crossed the sea of Ana. There was a bad deity there.]. [Nihon Shoki 1965, p. 300].

2 In the text of the source: Shima no kami [Deity of the island]. It is preceded by a story about the way the emperor hunted on the Island of Awaji. [Nihon Shoki 1965. p. 446].

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to the difference in both the tasks and the structure of the written sources. In “Kojiki”, a sacred, magical text, it was important to convey all possible magical formulas to the initiates, and the names of the gods were almost the most important ones. In “Nihon Shoki”, the state chronicle, the history of the state unfolded most extensively in quasi-historical and historical time and space. The multivariance of one story (from 1 to 11 versions), characteristic of “Nihon Shoki”, demonstrates the existence of many ancestral chronicles which the compilers had at their disposal. Ancestral versions, as a rule, included local deities that happened to be secondary in national mythology. The toponyms in their names expanded the space of the state, demonstrating the degree of land development.

The theonyms of those deities that play an important role in the plot of the “imperial myth” coincide in “Kojiki” and “Nihon Shoki”. First, there are the deities of the sea, born during the rite of purification of Izanagi-no kami after his return from the Land of Darkness (Yomi no kuni), Suminoe-no oomukami. Suminoe is the name of the area in the Settsu Province, on the coast of the Setonaikai, the Inland Sea of Japan. Then, there are the names of the deities born at the time of the dispute between Amaterasu and Susanoo. The story of the marriage – dispute of the two main deities of the mythological cycle is considered by experts to be the unification of two different culture complexes of Izumo and Ise, with Izumo prevailing, probably being stronger, and perhaps even more ancient. The names of the characters in the myth about Susanoo’s descent to earth after the expulsion from the Plain of High Heaven to the Izumo region (the western coast of the Island of Honshu, modern Shimane Prefecture) include the toponyms of the Izumo land: Susa in the name of Susanoo, Kumano – Kumano-kusubi, Inada – Kamu-inada-hime, Suga – Suga-no-yatsu-mimi. The theonym of the mediator between the celestial and earthly deities Saruta-hiko has the component of Saruta, the toponym of the land of Ise. He met the grandson of the goddess Amaterasu, the progenitor of the Japanese sovereigns, during his descent from Heaven to Earth.

In “Kogo Shui” (807), the records of the Shinto priest clan of Imube, toponyms also occur in the theonyms of participants in the imperial myth (Susanoo-no kami, Sarutahiko-ookami, Suminoe-no oomukami, Watatsumi-no kami).

Correlating the legendary genealogy of the ruling dynasty and toponyms of specific geographical features, with which one or another kami was associated, made it possible to reconstruct the space of the state, to outline its boundaries. The toponyms, the components of the names of deities that make up the list of the mythological pantheon, cover, in fact, the territory of Central and Western Japan.

The goddess-creator Izanami went from the land of darkness, where she descended after the birth of the god of fire, to Kumano in the land of Ki [Nihongi 1972, p. 21]. The god-creator Izanagi, having performed the purifica-
tion right after returning from the Yomi-no kuni, having spawned a multitude of gods of nature, landscape and main characters of the subsequent cycle of myths – the gods of the sun, moon, wind, disappeared in Awaji [Nihongi 1972, p. 34], and then made his way to Taga in the land of Omi [Kojiki 1981, p. 51]. The dispute for supremacy between Amaterasu and Susanoo ends with the placement of three goddesses, born out of the sword, in the area of Munakata at Tsukushi [Kojiki 1981, p. 58; Nihongi 1972, p. 37] and the expulsion of the god himself from the Plain of High Heaven to the Earth, to Izumo [Nihongi 1972, p. 52]. After the Supreme Goddess’s decision to restore order to earth, the story’s action is practically entirely transferred to the territory of the Japanese Islands, with the progress of the gods and legendary emperors from the south-west to the central part, and further to the north-east. The sacred Shrine of Ise, which is most important for the ruling family, is introduced at the stage of preparing the descent of the Heavenly Grandson to earth. The significance of this area is evidenced by the mythical marriage of the heavenly goddess Ame-no uzume, the companion of Ninigi, and the earthly god Sarutahiko, the deity of the strong local sun-cult [Nihongi 1972, p. 76–77; Kojiki 1981, p. 113–114]. A prominent Japanese scholar of mythology, Matsumae Takeshi, believes that before Amaterasu was revered as a goddess and ancestor of the sovereign clan in Ise, there used to be a sanctuary of the deities of the Sun. Sarutahiko was one of them [Matsumae 1978, p. 4–5]. The toponym of Yamato, the center of the Japanese statehood, appears relatively late, with the mention of the first legendary emperor, Jimmu. The development of the land can be traced through the places where imperial palaces were located, for example, Kashiwara (in Asuka) – with Emperor Jimmu, Muro – with Koan; or as the place of origin of the wives of the legendary sovereigns Suizei, Anrei, Kosho – with Kasuga, Kamo, Yamato.

The Japanese posthumous names of emperors appear to deserve close attention. Let’s consider Rikkokushi 3 (Six National Histories), including the chronicles of 58 names of sovereigns – from the legendary Jimmu (660–558 BC in traditional chronology) to the historical Emperor Koko (884–887). The authors, the nature of the narrative, the volume of the six works are different. The first begins with a mythological part, then proceeds with the chronicles of legendary, semi-legendary and historical emperors. The next five are the chronicles of the reign of one or more sovereigns, for example, “Shoku Nihongi”

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describes nine of them, while “Nihon Montoku Tenno Jitsuroku” covers one reign. Along with synchronizing the events and time of their fixing they become filled with details of various elements of state, ritual, economic aspects of life, domestic and foreign policy. The nature of the narrative of the mythological story in the first part of “Nihon Shoki”, bonding with the Chinese prototype historiography, gradually acquires a chronicle-like clarity, some dryness of narration. The same tendency is illustrated by the posthumous names of the emperors. Starting from the 46th, according to the official imperial genealogy, Empress Koken (749–758), the detailed posthumous Japanese names are transformed and by the 50th Emperor Kammu (781–806) disappeared entirely, leaving only the posthumous reign ones [Grachev, Simonova-Gudzenko 2002, p. 148–165].

Let us consider the names of 50 legendary, semi-legendary and historical rulers, recorded in the first national histories “Nihon Shoki” and “Shoku Nihongi.” The list of posthumous Japanese names of emperors from the point of toponyms contained therein can be conditionally divided into four groups:

I. The toponym of Yamato is a component of the names of the first 9 legendary emperors, from Jimmu4 to Kaika, except for the name of the 5th sovereign, Kosho; as well as of the names of the historical sovereign Seinei (480–484) and Empresses Genmei (707–715) and Gensho (715–724).

II. Toponyms are not included in the names of 10 semi-legendary emperors, from Sujin (97–30) to Hanzei (406–410), yet they contain the names of plants or animals.

III. The toponyms of the land of Yamato, falling under the comparatively exact localization, are integral components in the names of 15 sovereigns, from Ingyo (412–453) to Jomei (629–641). These are the toponyms of Asazuma, Anaho, Hatsuse, Magari, Tachibana, Hinokuma, as well as the toponym of the land Omi Okinaga. In the same group, three names are distinguished by the hiro-kuni element – standing for the “broad country”, and the name of the 22nd sovereign Seinei, as noted above, contains the toponym of Yamato.

IV. A special group consists of names with components ame – Heaven and kuni – earth. The names of Emperors Kinmei (539–571) and Shomu (724–749) contain both elements. The first seems to mark the beginning of a new stage in the imperial genealogy and history of the state, while the second ends the tradition of including the Japanese emperors’ composite posthumous names in the chronicles. The names of 6 sovereigns, from Kogyoku (642–645) to Tenmu (673–686), as well as Monmu (697–707) and Shomu (724–747) begin with the ame component – “Heaven”. This component is included in the name of Empress Genmei, but is not the first. The names Kogyoku (642–645), Kotoku (645–654) and Saimei (655–661) correlate ame with hi – “Sun”.

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4 This paper refers to the emperors by their posthumous reign names, as is generally used in the Japanese national historiography. The years of their reign are indicated in brackets by the traditional chronology.
The component of Yamato, the name of the state, is included in the names of the first 9 legendary and semi-legendary sovereigns – the founders of the Japanese state. The names of sovereigns from the 35th to the 40th contain the notion of “Heaven”, the names of the 43rd and 44th – the Yamato component, and the names of the 29th and 45th – both “Heaven” and “Earth” elements. It is important to note the custom of tabooing names, as well as the fact that posthumous reign names demonstrate “changes” of dynasties [Grachev, Simonova-Gudzenko 2002, p. 148–165]. In addition, a number of laws (dated 647, 701) prohibited giving names repeating the names of gods and emperors, and in 774 the prohibition was extended for 30 generations. The change of components in the names of emperors demonstrates not only the processes of extending the borders and exploring the state territory, but also the expansion of ideas about its role and place, the prevalence of the Chinese cultural tradition in the governance of the state.

The names of empresses include place names of predominantly the land of Yamato, while the names of other wives and children of emperors appear not to be subject to such heavy regulations. The toponyms that make up their names are more diverse; they include the names of the lands on the coast of the Inland Sea (Setonaikai) – Kibi, as well as Izumo, Tajima, Iga, the Island of Awaji, the Peninsula of Kii.

Assimilation of the Chinese cultural tradition is also seen in changing the principle of recording toponyms. Transferring place names from the oral form to written, and development of character script required regulation on the part of the state. The decree by Empress Genmei (707-715) dated 713 on compiling historical and geographical descriptions of the lands known as Fudoki emphasized the need to record geographical names with “good” characters. It reads: “The 6th year of Wado, the 5th moon, day two. It is ordered to write down, on choosing good characters, all the counties and villages in all the provinces of Kinai and seven districts. And it is also ordered to make a careful record of which is available in the counties regarding silver, copper, dyes, herbs, trees, birds, animals, fish, and insects, and record the data on the quality of the soil, origin of the names of mountains, rivers, valleys and fields, commit to paper the ancient legends and divine stories told by the old folk. The above information shall be submitted to the higher authorities”. Thus, as far back as in 713 the state was concerned that the recording of toponyms is done with characters with positive connotations.

The place name study was also important when fixing the boundaries and area of the state lands. Conceivably, it was for the first time in the Japanese written tradition that the geographical area of the whole archipelago, except for the remote north-eastern part, was referred to in the first poetic anthology “Manyoshu” (“Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves”, the second half of the VIII century). It, along with the first historical chronicles Rikkokushi (Six

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National Histories), is the most important written source for the ancient and early medieval history and culture of the Japanese people. The geography in the poems of the anthology covers almost the entire territory of the archipelago: from the north of the Island of Kyushu to the north-east of the Island of Honshu. Its compilers included works of both known and anonymous authors from distant parts of the country, apparently seeking to cover the archipelago as widely as possible, presenting it as the space of a single cultural state. Poems of the central district of Kinai prevail in the collection, as, for example, in book XI, poems of Yamato do. However, book III includes a poem, dedicated to Mount Fuji in the eastern province of Suruga; books IV and V contain poems-messages from Tsukushi on the Island of Kyushu; book VII – poems of the province of Settsu and the area of Yoshino; while book XIV is entirely devoted to the poems of the eastern provinces; books XV-XVI include poems from the north-western provinces of Echizen, Etchu, and Noto. The end of the VIII century is the time when Japan maintained its independence from the Tang Empire, which probably required demonstrating the spread of “high culture” over the largest possible area of the archipelago, and the ability to write poetry was one of its aspects [Grachev 2009, p. 174, 184].

While in the poetic anthology the state borders are vast, while the land exploration is as yet fragmentary, by the X century the knowledge about the state territory is deepening. The verbal geographical map of the Japanese archipelago indicating the governors of the regions, who were their actual rulers and priests of the local kami, is presented in the text of “Kuni-no miyatsuko hongi”, the 10th book of “Sendai Kuji Hongi” [Simonova-Gudzenko 2005, p. 207–218]. Determining the state external borders was undoubtedly significant as well, but must have receded into the background both due to the specific geographical position of Japan, and in connection with “isolation of the country from the outside world”, characteristic of the period when “Kuni-no miyatsuko hongi” was compiled.

Elaboration of the state space concept was one of the characteristic features for the special period of development the Japanese culture experienced in the IX c. – first half of the X century. Completing the stage of coming to grips with the mainland cultural information required self-identification. However, all noble families, especially those who had become irrelevant, considered it important not only to establish their position in the hierarchy of nobility and influence, but also to justify their ancestral, since the time of the gods, rights to land ownership. Given the nature of beliefs (the abundance of local deities), compiling a list of kuni-no miyatsuko (governors of the regions) with genealogies also allowed to “fit” the local deities into a single mythological pantheon. Including local deities in the genealogical tree of the state pantheon was an indisputable proof of the antiquity and nobility as to the origin of a provincial clan, thus ensuring their primordial right to own
Moreover, one of the most important functions of kuni-no miyatsuko was veneration of local deities. The list of kami, to which provincial nobility families trace their origin, illustrates the complex process of creating a nation-wide hierarchy of noble lineages. It is important to note that the text was already being compiled under the conditions of a functioning imperial myth. The list includes two astral deities, Takami-musubi and Kami-musubi, occupying the upper level in the state mythological pantheon. They are venerated as ancestors by five ruling clans in the archipelago’s south-west regions: Takami-musubi in Awaji and Kii, Kami-musubi in Awa, Usa, and Tsushima. Though large part of provincial noble families derived their origin from the celestial kami, those kami came from the lowest level of the mythological pantheon and had no direct ties with the imperial genealogy. These are the deities accompanying the grandson of Amaterasu-omikami, the ancestor of the Japanese ruling family, during his descent from the Plain of High Heaven to the Japanese Islands. Local deities, even when they are named, are listed as descendants to the deities of the state mythological pantheon. It would be logical to assume that the authors of the “Kuni-no miyatsuko hongi” considered it important to emphasize the local noble families descending from the deities of the state pantheon.

By the X century, the state borders embraced the territory of the islands of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Honshu, except for the north-eastern part and a group of minor islands. The documentary evidence of these representations, in addition to the already mentioned list of deities, can be the lists of counties and provinces included in “Engishiki” [Engishiki 1999]. Although such a vision of the state space can be considered somewhat idealized, since the real central government was rather weak, the desire to show as much territory as possible is extremely important. In addition, the knowledge, or at least the availability of information about the deities and sanctuaries of all 68 provinces and 590 counties known at the time is essential. Toponyms play an important role in the territorial principle of ranking.

It is known that at the initial stage of its history Buddhism in Japan “was more of a policy than a religion” [Konrad 1980, p. 30]. Once in Japan, it did not just take on the sacred layout of the space that had already existed on the islands, by placing temple structures in ancient sacred places, it used and preserved the toponyms in the names of its temples, for example, Asuka-dera, Ikaruga-dera, Hagiwara-dera, etc. It may have contributed to the popularity of the temple structures of the new, introduced religion. The written record of the Buddhist traditions (Setsuwa) that used to exist in the oral form required spatio-temporal clarity, which strengthened the credibility of the presented

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6 Engishiki (“Procedures of the Engi Era”), 967. A collection of internal regulations for officials of all departments, includes lists of state departments, provinces and counties, collected taxes, protocols of court ceremonies, and annual festive occasions.
events. Each legend begins with the indication of the “address”: the name of the province-county-village or capital, indicating a particular district or palace. Many patriarchs of Buddhism in such a way retain their connection with certain geographical landmarks in the historical and cultural tradition.

The same direction is taken by the development of all-Japanese syncretic cults formed in the XII–XIV centuries. The “history” of the origin and development of the cult correlated with a specific geography, and toponymy is included in the names of the temples. A perfect example of this phenomenon is one of the major and most popular cult devoted to the Hachiman deity. Originally he used to be the ancestral deity of several clans of the province of Buzen (modern Ōita Prefecture) on the Island of Kyushu. In 752, in the area of Usa there appeared the first shrine, known as Usa-Hachimangu. Then the participation by the representatives of the families from the province of Buzen, engaged in metalworking when casting the statue of Great Buddha for the Todaiji temple in Nara, transformed the insignificant ancestral deity into the guardian of Buddhism. Since Buddhism in Japan at an early stage acts as the guardian of the young Japanese state, Hachiman acquires a new additional function. In the vicinity of the Heian capital, another temple complex is established, named after the Iwashimizu toponym Iwashimizu Hachimangu (859). The functions of the deity expand, or rather become more detailed, when it becomes the Minamoto clan guardian. The third major sanctuary appears in Kamakura and is given the name Tsurugaoka Hachimangu (1180) after the place name of the hill on which it is located. It was founded by the first shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199). The formation of history and creating a network of main shrines of other major cults, such as Tenmangū, Inari, Sengen, etc. went down a similar path.

Let us try and trace the existence of the state name, the Yamato toponym. In written sources it appears relatively late. In Chinese chronicles, the people who inhabited the Japanese archipelago were called “Wa” (倭). The Japanese Islands residents began to use this Chinese character to designate their own country, at least, in the literary tradition. However, they read it “Yamato”, probably initially having related it to a specific territory. As noted above, geographical certainty is one of the characteristic features of the Japanese historical and cultural tradition. The modern dictionary of ancient toponyms says that originally this name belonged to a small territory within the confines of the Yamanobe Road, in the district of Shiki-no kami of the Yamato province (modern Nara Prefecture).

With strengthening the political power of Yamato, the toponym designates the village (go), the governor of the region (kuni-no miyatsuko), and with the state of Ritsuryo coming into its own, it designates the country as a whole as well [Kodai chimei daijiten 1999, p. 1478]. Thus, the researchers proceed from the assumption that the toponym of Yamato has existed in the central part of the Island of Honshu, in the territory of the modern Prefecture of Nara, since ancient times.
Given that the name “Yamato” was the name of an ethnic group (Jap. – \textit{minzoku}) which had come to the Island of Honshu from Kyushu, and, possibly, still earlier – from the mainland, the land in Central Japan could obtain the name from this ethnonym. To some extent this might be confirmed by the absence of the toponym in the names of deities of the mythological pantheon, and its first mention in the posthumous Japanese name of the legendary Emperor Jimmu, who is associated with the “Expedition Eastward” from Northern Kyushu to the central part of Honshu. The modern historiography interprets the “Campaign” or “Expedition” as the migration of large groups of the population.

The list of provinces and counties “Engishiki”, in the province of Chikugo (modern Fukuoka Prefecture) contains a district of Yamato [Engishiki 1999, p. 566], whose record literally means “the gate (gap) in the mountains”. The authors of the etymology dictionary embracing the ancient Japanese toponyms, referring to “Wamyosho” (the Encyclopedia of Japanese names, dated by the X century), note that the toponym was found in the provinces of Chikugo and Higo (modern Kumamoto Prefecture) in the names of counties and villages. Today it is still preserved in the name of a county of the Fukuoka Prefecture [Kodai chimei gogen jiten 1981, p. 321]. It is known that people take their familiar, favorite toponyms with them as they move, especially when it comes to significant migrations. However, one cannot ignore the homonymy of the Japanese language and rule out the probability that similarly sounding place names could arise in different parts of the archipelago, and were recorded in different ways, perhaps, due to the value they had or acquired by the time of being committed to writing. However, taking into account the increased attention of the islanders to the geographical certainty and toponymy, the location of the land called Yamato in the northern part of Kyushu Island, where, as the researchers believe, the “Jimmu’s Expedition Eastward” could begin, is suggestive.

On or after 702, the written tradition sees the appearance of the new ethnonym – Nihon \textit{日本} (the compound of the \textit{nichi} and \textit{hon} characters literary means “the origin of the Sun”), which, in the opinion of the researchers, is due to the fact that one of the meanings of the Chinese character “倭”, which designated Japan, had a pejorative meaning of “dwarf” [Meshcheryakov 2010a]. It is difficult to say whether the new name of the country functioned in the oral and written tradition or was perhaps developed for restricted application only in the foreign policy documents. The Semmyo sovereigns decrees (VII–VIII centuries) call the country Ooyashima-kuni, while the “deceased Emperor or the Empress”, who is to be followed by the one solemnly speaking the decrees, is named Yamato Neko no Sumeramikoto, “son or daughter of Yamato”.

The article in the “Encyclopaedia of National History” devoted to the concept of Nihon, says that the idea of a compact territory of the state was formed around the VII century and was called Ooyashima-kuni. This figura-
tive name reflected the idea of the many islands that make up the space of the state, but at the same time pointed to the very specific islands of Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, Awaji, Oki, Tsushima, Iki, and Sado. On the Island of Honshu, the borders of the state did not include its northeastern part, the provinces of Mutsu and Dewa. The development of these lands occurred during the Nara (710-794) – Kamakura (1185–1333) periods, and only by the XVI century, the Japanese advanced to the southern part of the island of Hokkaido [Kokushiki daijiten 1990, p.104]. The list of islands produced by the deities Izanagi and Izanami, named Ooyashima-kuni – “the country of eight great islands”, occurs in the mythological parts of the first written sources of “Kojiki” and “Nihon Shoki” [Simonova-Gudzenko 2005, pp. 179–185]. This image-bearing name of the country is used in geographical and political writings by such thinkers as Nishikawa Joken (1648–1724), Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843), Shiga Shigetaka (1863–1927), and Watsuji Tetsuro (1889–1960).

Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354), the author of the famous medieval historical work “Jinnoshotoki” (1343), explains all the names of the country existing in his time. The book begins with the words: “The Great Country of the Origin of the Sun (nihon) – the land of gods” (大日本者神国), and next to the nihon characters there is the phonetic reading of Yamato. Similar inscriptions are found in other works and on geographical maps. Thus, despite many descriptive, metaphorical names of the country, the toponym of Yamato seems to remain stable until the late Middle Ages.

The history of existence of the toponym Fuji is of interest as to the fact that after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 the mountain becomes a kind of state symbol. Dr. Alexander N. Meshcheryakov gave a detailed and interesting account of this event [Meshcheryakov 2010b]. I would not like to repeat it, all I want to draw the readers’ attention to two points.

The first, and the earliest, mention of the toponym Fuji in the state chronicle “Nihon Shoki” is associated with the mountain, located on the Island of Kyushu. Habitually, traditionally the place name refers to a mountain in the northeast of the archipelago in the province of Suruga (modern Shizuoka Prefecture). The chronicle of the legendary / semi-legendary Emperor Keiko (71–130) runs: “On the day of Hinoto-no tori, the sovereign reached the district of Yame, went over the Fuji mountain (藤山), overlooked Ava-no saki lying towards the south saying: “There are many mountain peaks towering here, and this view is beautiful. Is there a deity living on this mountain?” Then Saru-oomi, the Minuma-no agata lands controller, said: “There is a goddess here. Her name is Yametsu-hime. She usually abides on this mountain. Hence the name of this country, Yame-no kuni”. A commentary to the academic publication “Collection of Japanese Classical Literature” states that the mountain is likely to be located in the Fukuoka Prefecture, near the

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7 More research is needed to determine whether the Furigana (phonetic reading) was done by the author of the work or was added later by copyist.
town of Kurume, north of Yame County, on the way to Mii County (the former province of Chikugo) [Nihon Shoki 1965, p. 296–297]. What is curious is that in the same province there used to be the county of Yamato, mentioned above. The existence of toponyms in the north of Kyushu, homonymous to the major toponyms of the Japanese statehood, provides food for thought and further research.

The first and only mention of Mount Fuji in the province of Suruga is found in the state chronicle “Shoku Nihongi” dated 781, the first year of the Emperor Kanmu reign (781-806). It runs: “They report from the province of Suruga; “At the foot of Mount Fuji there fell ashes, and leaves in the trees withered”.

However, the poetic anthology, almost synchronous with the “Nihon Shoki” chronicle as to the time of their compilation, devoted 11 poems to Mount Fuji. They can be divided into two roughly equal groups: those praising the beauty of the mountain (by the famous poets) and those mentioning its formidable, dangerous character (mainly by unknown authors)\(^9\).

A. N. Meshcheryakov clearly brings out Mount Fuji as part of the Japanese Taoist spatial representations [Meshcheryakov 2010 b, p. 18–27], which to some extent explains the praising hymns by the authors – the greatest poets of “Manyoshu”, two literati, Yamabe no Akahto (?-736) and Takahashi no Mushimaro (?–730).\(^10\) However, this did not prevent the latter, when compiling Hitachi Fudoki, from including the legend of the region showing the negative image of Mount Fuji.

“Engishiki” in the County of Fuji noted three shrines – one large and two small. The big one is called Asama Sengen Jinja Shrine, and Fuji-Jinja Shrine refers to the small ones [Engishiki 1999, p. 229]. Researchers suggest that in ancient times the mountain could be called Asama-yama. “Asama” is a place name often used to denote volcanoes [Kodai chimei gogen jiten 1981, p. 12]. It is believed that the network of sengen jinja\(^11\) sanctuaries, in which the deity of Mount Fuji is worshiped, now comprises more than 1,300 shrines. In the sanctuary, which according to the legend was founded in 806 by Sakanoue no Tamuramaro\(^12\), the deity of Asama is worshiped. Today at the top of the mountain there is still an inner sanctuary where the spirit of the mountain resides [Meshcheryakov, A.N. (ed.) 2010, pp. 200–201]. Thus, the attempt to combine the two deities – the deity of the volcanic mountains and the local mountain kami – must have not been quite successful, and the deity

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10 From 713 to 725 Takahashi no Mushimaro worked in the Hitachi Province administration.
11 Sengen is the on-reading of the characters, with which the Asama is recorded.
12 Sakanoue no Tamuramaro (758–811). A military commander, known for his victories over the Emishi, was the first to receive the title of Sei-i Taishogun (“Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force Against the Barbarians”). He is believed to be the founder of the Kiyomizu-dera temple.
of Mount Fuji retained its independence, although somewhat truncated, but still expressed in preserving its own sanctuary.

The records of Mount Fuji contain references to the fact that the Heian period people ascended the mountain. It also says that over the crater of the volcano you can see dancing beautiful maidens in white robes [Miyako no Yoshiko 2009, p. 55–56]. Numerous written accounts of that time demonstrate an already stable literal and geographical image of this mountain [Ise monogatari 1965; The Tale of Bamboo-Cutter 1978]. In the Muromachi period (1392–1467), sporadic ascents of the mountain turn into pilgrimage, as evidenced by then created numerous Buddhist mandalas.

It becomes a sacred mountain of the state only in the Tokugawa period (1603–1867), when the capital, the actual center of the country, was transferred from Kyoto to Edo. The transfer of the centre of sacred geography from Western Japan to Eastern led to the need to “search for the sacred mountain, another control centre”. It was important to create, “design” the state sacred space in a new place; besides, this may also demonstrate the shogun’s drive to strengthen the sacred aspect of his own power, to match or at least approach the high imperial one. From this time on, the process of the mountain sacralisation acquires a core set of ideological issues. Restoration of the shrine, conducted in 1604 on the initiative and at the expense of the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), the ban on climbing the mountain seem to be related to the high sacral status of the mountain.

The other thing I wanted to note is as follows: in the folk culture from antiquity to the XIX century Mounts Fuji and Tsukuba existed, if you could say, in opposition to each other. The Tsukuba Mountain in the province of Hitachi (modern Prefecture of Ibaraki) had been considered sacred since time immemorial. The tradition must have begun with the famous legend of the two mountains, cited in Hitachi Fudoki. “The old folk say: in ancient times God Ancestor travelled around the mountains – the abode of gods. When he reached Mount Fuji in the province of Suruga, evening came, and he began to ask for an overnight stay. Then the god of Mount Fuji replied: “[Now] we're having the new harvest feast and we don’t want any strangers here. Today we cannot shelter you”. God Ancestor got frustrated and began to scold and curse: “I am your ancestor. Why do not you want to give me shelter? May the mountain where you live be deserted, may it snow in winter and summer, may it set in frost and may it always be cold, may no people rise here and no one bring you food”. Then, he climbed Mount Tsukuba and again asked for an overnight stay. The God of Mount Tsukuba replied: “Although today we are partaking of new corn, we cannot but honour your request”. He brought meals and respectfully dished them up to the God. God the Forefather rejoiced and sang: “My dear children! May your sanctuary be beautiful, and I desire that it be as eternal as Heaven and Earth, as the sun and the moon, that people get together, have fun, that food and drink may be plenty, that joy may not cease for centuries, and that day by day everything
may flourish. May you always have joy”. For this reason, it is always snowing on Mount Fuji and it is impossible to climb, yet, many people gather on Mount Tsukuba. They sing and dance, eat and drink, and it has been going on hitherto” [Fudoki 1973, pp. 39–41].

“Manyoshu” mentions the toponym of Tsukuba 23 times13, and the one of Fuji – 11 times. While the image of Fuji in the anthology is ambiguous, Tsukuba has always been represented only positively. This mountain hosted the spring and autumn kagai, harvest festivals associated with fertility, this is where lilies and tachibana blossomed; streams and springs murmured, its root saw ripe rice being harvested and silk being spun from the “spring mulberry silk filament”, etc. The image of the mountain, benevolent to man, was glorified by both famous poets (Takahashi no Mushimaro who poetized the rival-mountain – among them) and unknown ones. They emphasized its incomparable beauty, its twin peaks, as well as frequent ascents thereof. Among the poems dedicated to the mountain climbing, the work by Tajihi-no Mahito Kunihito stands out due to its pronounced political and magical traits: he performed the rite of kunimi – “contemplating the country” from high above. “This rite appears in the contexts as a kind of influencing an object with the aim of stabilizing and restraining it or even empowering it”, it was performed by both the founder of the ruling dynasty Ninigi-no-Mikoto, the grandson of the gods Amaterasu and Takamimusubi, and by the emperors, upon ascending the mountain or any higher ground [Norito. Semmyo 1991, p. 27]. However, it was not the sovereign, but Tajihi-no Mahito Kunihito14, who ascended the Tsukuba Mountain, demonstrating by his action that the eastern part of the island was either included in the space of the state of the VIII century, or was considered by its rulers as an independent territory.

In the XVIII century, as well as in the first half of the XIX century, both mountains, Fuji and Tsukuba, still retained high sacred status, which is to

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14 Manyoshu. Poem 382. The Tajihi-no Mahito clan, one of the oldest aristocratic families of the Kinai metropolitan area, was considered a branch of the ruling clan and came from Prince Kamitsu Uueha, the heir of Emperor Senka (535–539). The clan representatives not only occupied the highest state positions (daigungō, sangi), but also together with 4 other clans tried to prevent or at least slow down the rise of the Fujiwara family. This is well illustrated by the destiny of Kunihito. He was known to be the son of Tajihi no Mahito Hironari, the associate councilor (sangī) of the emperor, and up to 757 he successfully moved up through the ranks: in 736 he had the 5th rank of the junior grade and held the post of the principal assistant in Mimbusho, in the year of 757 he received the 4th rank of the junior grade. In the same year he was exiled to Izu for having taken part in the rebellion of Tachibana no Naramaro (?–757). Perhaps, it was then, during his stay in Izu, when he got to the neighboring province of Hitachi and climbed Mount Tsukuba. Considering that the “Manyoshu” compilers were representatives of the Ōtomo clan, the inclusion in the anthology of the poems by Tajihi no Mahito – the ally clan in confronting Fujiwara, praising the rite of kunimi beyond that, was intended to demonstrate not only the political strength of the opposition, but also, which is equally important, their “right” to the Eastern Lands.
some extent illustrated by the image of the two mountains in the engravings by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858). The quantitative calculation shows a gradual increase in the value of Mount Fuji compared to Tsukuba, 20 to 13 in the cycle “100 Views of Edo”\textsuperscript{15}. Only in the second half of the XIX century, since the Meiji period, Mount Fuji becomes the symbol of the “new” Japanese state, especially when the Emperor as the bearer of the highest sacred authority moves to Eastern Japan, to Edo. The high sacredness of the mountain was also facilitated by its aesthetic image.

The aesthetic aspect, which was contained in the list of toponymy of the Japanese culture, is vividly illustrated by the name of the barrier of Shirakawa. Though this geographical object is not included in the list of basic toponyms, yet, being an element of the political and administrative structure, it is of interest for analysis. In the early Middle Ages the Japanese state had two types of barriers, located in the mountains, in the passes and in strategically important locations on the roads [Kogo jiten 1986, p. 715]. When recorded, they differed in nomenclature words added to the toponym. In the case under consideration it is a road barrier. There are several versions as to the time of the first mention of the toponym in written sources. Authors of the “Encyclopaedia of National History” note that it might be one of the barriers set up in the V century in the east of the country, on the border with the hostile world of the Emishi. They confirm the dating by mentioning the toponym in “Kuni-no miyatsuko hongi” [Kokushi daigiten 1990, p. 730–731]. The dictionary of ancient place names says that the barrier was first mentioned in the “Ruiju sandaikyaku” (dated by the XI century) among the three on the eastern border of the state\textsuperscript{16}.

During the Heian period (794–1192), the toponym occurs in different regions not only in the name of the barrier, but also in those of the Mutsu province (modern Fukushima Prefecture), the large villages in the provinces of Mutsu (modern Miyagi Prefecture) and Hitachi (modern Prefecture of Ibaraki), land holdings (sho) in the provinces of Echigo (modern Niigata Prefecture), Hida (modern Gifu Prefecture), Kii (modern Wakayama Prefecture) [Kodai chimei daijiten 1999, p. 796–797].

The barrier of Shirakawa was located in the northeast of Honshu in the province of Hitachi (modern Fukushima Prefecture). The “Dictionary of Ancient Japanese Toponyms Etymologies” states: “Shira is the altered shiru – which stands for “juice, soup”, therefore it means a “swamp, bog”. The toponym may mean “the valley of the river flooded during high water” [Kodai chimei gogen jiten 1981, p. 166]. In the Middle Ages the barrier must

\textsuperscript{15} The attention of the author was for the first time drawn to this fact by S. Krikalova.

have served as a border crossing point between the “cultural” central region and the “uncultured lands” populated by the Emishi.  

Although not mentioned in the first poetic anthology “Manyoshu”, the barrier of Shirakawa was in the focus of poets attention for seven centuries, such great masters as Saigyo (1118–1190) and Basho (1644–1694) among them. In this article the literary studies of the “barrier of Shirakawa” subject matter in the Japanese poetry are not as important for us as the reasons why this geographical landmark has taken its place in the historical and cultural memory.

One of the first references to the barrier in the poem by Noin hoshi (988–?) was associated with sadness, dolor, caused by the distance from the capital, from its culture: “... I left the capital with the spring haze, but at the barrier of Shirakawa the autumn wind blows.” Saigyo wrote in the same key: “…The guardhouse // at famed Shirakawa gate // now ruined, lets the moon // filter in; its shaft is like // having another staying here!” Five centuries later, Basho writes about the outpost of Shirakawa in a completely different way, for him the sensations of a “cultural breakaway” are no longer a near concern of his, he just admiringly listens to the sound of the wind, emphasizing the aesthetic aspect: “From the East or West? // Among the first rice sprouts now // The sound of the wind”. 

Basho’s remark in the notes of a journey “Oku no Hosomichi” (The Narrow Road to the Deep North and The Narrow Road to the Interior) can serve as something of a confirmation of the inclusion of the “outpost of Shirakawa” in the national culture aesthetic series. He writes: “Day after day had passed in vague uneasiness; but now we approached the barrier at Shirakawa and, for the first time, I felt that our journey had truly begun. I could understand why the poet had felt at this spot that he wanted to send word to the people in the capital that he had crossed the Barrier. As one of the Three Barriers to the North, Shirakawa has always appealed to poets and writers. Yet even as I delighted in the green leaves of the trees, an autumn wind seemed to sound in my ears, and crimson leaves danced in my mind’s eye. The whiteness of deutzia, the white rambling roses, made us feel as if we were crossing the Barrier in snow. According to Kiyosuke, people of long ago straightened their hats as they crossed, and changed their clothes”. [Basho 2004, p. 322]. In the text, the author connects his reflections with a direct quote from the verses by poets glorifying the outpost at different seasons, shows the history of the national poetry, the process of revealing different meanings of the toponym (sacred-magical and aesthetic ones), and, of course, confirms the themes of the

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17 The Emishi – an ethnic group of people inhabited the north-eastern part of Honshu Island in ancient and medieval times.
19 Transl. by Tr. Chillcot.
calendar cycle, so very much favoured by the Japanese poetry since antiquity. Here are the words by Minamoto no Yorimasa (1104–1177): “... And here the maple trees grow crimson ... // Shirakawa outpost!”, then we read about the “autumn wind” in the poem by No-in hoshi; the winter onset from Sozu-insho: “…And everything is covered with snow ... // Shirakawa outpost!”; the composition by Fujiwara no Kiyosuke completes the seasonal cycle: “sprigs of deutzia // adorn our hat – formal dress // for the barrier” [Basho 2004, p. 322].

The toponym as a proper names type is inherently conservative, which allows it to be the custodian of historical information, to be an indicator of time in the written culture, which is to say, using the term by M. M. Bakhtin, to shape a chronotope of culture. The geographical certainty characteristic of the insular mentality and the correlation thereof with the imperial myth, being one of the foundations for the Japanese political culture right down to the XX century, have become the grounds for the stepped-up attention to the cultural tradition toponymy.

The peculiar feature of the Japanese toponymy, as well as of culture in general, is its pronounced aesthetic component. One of the Russian journalists quite remarkably described the said feature of the Japanese culture: “… the entire ideology of Japan, from official to the most delicate variants of philosophy was, first and foremost, aesthetics. In its highest manifestations, it was a gigantic extended metaphor, very beautiful, very romantic, and imbued with one of the most irresistible obsessions of art – the spirit of tragedy, that is, the spirit of beauty and the inevitability of death. A metaphor ... disappearing into the world of remote ancestors as to its last pedestal” [Agapov 1974, p. 269].

References


Russian edition of the article:
DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00013
Since 2014, the Kremlin treated Japan as a tool to undermine the unity of the "anti-Russian front" formed in the West. However, after 2016, this idea has lost relevance. A new understanding came that special relations with Japan front will not undermine the unity of the West, and Japan will not unilaterally withdraw from sanctions.

Despite all the statements about the "turn to the East", the foreign policy thinking of the Russian elite still focuses on Europe. Apparently, Moscow, as it was during the cold war, believes that world politics is committed in the Euro-Atlantic space, and the Asia-Pacific countries are perceived rather as a "strategic rear". In the eyes of Kremlin Japan is still considered an American satellite rather than an independent player.

In addition, Moscow somehow feels that even the withdrawal of Japan from sanctions would not lead to serious changes in the economic cooperation between the two countries. Japanese sanctions are rather symbolic, and the weakness of Japanese investment to Russia is related not to sanctions, but to systemic problems of the Russian economy.

In Japan, the prevailing position is that the economy should follow politics: economic projects in Russia, stimulated by the Japanese government, should contribute to the solution of political problems. Therefore, investments to Russia are not necessarily viewed from the point of view of their economic efficiency – rather, it is a form of "aid" designed to encourage Moscow’s compromise on the territorial dispute. Russia, however, believes that investment projects in Siberia and the Far East are commercially attractive for both sides and that it is Russia that is doing Japan a favor by allowing it to invest in profitable enterprises.

**Keywords**: Russian-Japanese relations, “new approach”, “Northern territories”, The Hague Tribunal, “the turn to the East”, joint economic activity.

Russian-Japanese relations are going through a complex transitional period: the interstate relations developed in the past three years against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis and the tectonic shifts in global politics will unavoidably be reviewed. Japan has been very active in the relations with Russia until lately, and its policy furthered the course set by the administration of Shinzo Abe who took the office in 2012.

**Abe administration’s policy as source of domestic political dividends**

Abe pursued a number of strategic objectives, such as improving the relations with Russia as part of normalizing relations with neighboring countries, which significantly exacerbated during the tenure of the Japanese Democratic Party; making as much headway as possible in solving the peace treaty problem (the euphemism for the territorial problem); preventing Moscow’s
excessive shift to Beijing and balancing mainland diplomacy; and laying a more meaningful and solid foundation for bilateral economic contacts as a way to foster Japan’s energy security.

The weakness of the Russian track of Japan’s diplomatic policy stems from the fact that relations with Russia do not have a solid organizational, political, and economic basis, and, therefore, tend to respond to political fluctuations. In this context, the Japanese leader traditionally prioritizes the domestic political agenda and seeks to demonstrate to the public his ability to defend national interests using a broad range of propaganda tools.

From this angle, the prime minister finds the problem of “the Northern territories” to be an ideal platform for gaining political dividends: should Moscow make any concessions, it would be his personal achievement, while deteriorated relations with Russia can be presented as a proof of his unwavering commitment to objectives. Hence, neither scenario is fraught with political risks, especially as big economic entities (corporations and business associations with significant leverages and political weight) do not have a keen interest in Russia.

Obviously, there is no perspective of solving the territorial dispute, but it would be a suicide for any Japanese leader to admit that he is unable to get back the islands and they will never be a part of Japan again. It is an unspoken rule to “struggle” and sporadically express one’s confidence in success, which will be achieved at some point, even if this will require hundreds of years. The struggle for getting back the “ancestral lands” seized as a result of the “Soviet aggression” is integrated into the post-war Japanese identity which, inter alia, includes the specific victimization complex, the idea of identifying itself a victim.

The question is which tactics to choose. For instance, in 2001 Junichiro Koizumi chose to be adamant in his demand to “return all the four islands.” Contrary to that, Shinzo Abe preferred applying a “flexible” policy since 2012. He formulated “a new approach” in Sochi in May 2016: to build mutual trust and develop bilateral cooperation before addressing the “peace treaty” problem on a new basis.

Both politicians were focused on the impression they would make on citizens of their country, the personal political gains they could have, and the way their ruling party could benefit from the strategy they offered. It was actually a win-win situation: in no small part, both Koizumi and Abe gained their popularity from their personal effort “to defend national interests” on the Russian diplomatic track. Both of them deemed a subjective assessment of the political benefit to be the main criteria of the correctness of the chosen course, while practical results played a lesser role.

It is the Japanese political tradition that the image of a politician and his perception by voters often prevail over his actual achievements. This is also true for Russia and, to various extents, for Western countries, but in Japan
the image-making is not merely a tool but the very essence of the political process.

The prime-ministership of Abe is a vivid example of this feature of Japanese politics. Despite his proposition of the constitutional revision (Abe initiated constitutional amendments which would legalize the Japanese armed forces) and his proactive course of military capability-building, which, according to opinion polls, causes a profound rift in the Japanese society, Abe retained an unprecedentedly high approval rating. The skilled use of slogans was a factor for that. The Japanese prime minister consistently put in circulation such slogans as *chihososei* (revitalization of the regions), *josei katsuyaku* (social activity of women), and *ichioku katsuyaku* (activity of a hundred million – the entire adult population of Japan), etc. The slogans were quite vague but gave rise to high public expectations and people’s confidence in the ruling party despite a lack of any tangible and meaningful results and unclear outcomes of its rule. The same can be said about “Abenomics,” a widely used propaganda meme of Abe’s tenure, which helped the LDP to win in the 2014 general election.

The slogan of “solving the problem of the peace treaty with Russia” was no different. It is hard to conclude whether ambitious Abe was sincere in his expectations to solve the dispute and to leave a track in Japanese and world history. The author of this paper believes that Abe hardly had any faith in Putin’s readiness to hand over the four South Kuril Islands to Japan. It is much more likely that Abe followed the rules of creating an image of the “correct” prime minister conducting his policy consistent with the public aspirations.

If this theory is true, the actual result, i.e. a real deal with Moscow, was not significant for Abe. It was much more important to create the constant semblance of “making progress” towards the peace treaty ensured by Abe’s personal efforts despite the unfavorable conditions for conducting diplomacy on the Russian track, both domestic (the anti-Russian public opinion) and foreign (Japan’s participation in the anti-Russian sanctions).

Abe kept trying to achieve his goal with numerous public pledges to solve the territorial problem with Russia until his resignation from the prime minister’s position. He emphasized that the only two people who could deal with the task were Abe himself and President Putin who recognized the principle of *hikiwake* (mutual compromise) as the basis of a settlement. “Vladimir, let you and me fulfill our duty together. Let us overcome all difficulties,” Abe told the Russian President at the Eastern Economic Forum [Sinzo Abe predlozhil… 2016].

Abe initiated a “new approach” to the relations with Russia in May 2016. The two sides agreed in December 2016 to conduct joint economic activity on the disputed territories. They also resumed contacts in the “two+two” format (meetings between the defense and foreign ministers) and the working dialogue on the peace treaty; the Japanese leader twice violated diplomatic etiquette and paid two visits in a row to the economic summit in Vladivos-
tok. A new life was breathed into visa-free exchanges: charter flights were arranged in summer 2017 for former residents of the islands and their families. A detached observer could evaluate these moves as a proof of “headway”, if not in settling the territorial problem, but at least in “establishing a dialogue” needed by Japan to regain its original lands. All that created Abe’s reputation of a leader promoting Japan’s reunion with its “northern territories.”

**Mutual loss of hopes and illusions**

It became apparent by the end of 2017 that the implementation of the “new approach” stopped bringing political dividends to Abe. Critique was offered in the assessment of Abe’s five-year tenure amid domestic political scandals involving the prime-minister. For instance, Abe was reminded that he failed to make any real progress in solving the problem of “Northern territories”: quite the opposite, his term of office witnessed a clear setback. The final documents of the Russian-Japanese summits held in 2016–2017 stated the need to solve the peace treaty problem but there was no provision regarding state borders. What is more, President Putin denied the existence of any territorial problem between the two countries. The sides were not even close to reiterating the earlier deals, such as the Irkutsk Statement of 2001, which pledged the commitment to the 1956 Declaration, and the bilateral documents of the 1990s, which Japan leaned on at its negotiations with Moscow.

As to the Kremlin’s vision of Japan, since 2014 Japan has been viewed as a tool for shattering the unity of the “anti-Russian front” of the West. Putin needed to demonstrate, first and foremost to his own citizens, that Russia was actually not in diplomatic isolation and that “my friend Shinzo,” with whom he was on the first-name relations with, was ready to discuss the most complex and delicate subjects of the modern world order. The discussions held on the summit level created an impression of Russia’s involvement in dealing with key global affairs.

It seems for the first two years of the Ukraine crisis Moscow was expecting that the diplomatic blockade of Russia would soon come to an end and that Japan, as well as some Western partners, such as Italy and France, would go back to doing business as usual with Moscow. The pro-Kremlin media outlets did not criticize Japan for its stance on the issue of Ukraine and Crimea, and usually argued that Tokyo’s stance resulted from the dependent position of Japan in the Security Treaty, which compelled it to obey by Washington’s commands. The Kremlin appreciated Abe’s readiness to visit Russia on various occasions, such as the opening of the Sochi Games, or the Eastern Economic Forum. Those visits looked quite pompous, since none of other G-7 leaders made an appearance at the opening of the Winter Games in Sochi in February 2014, and Xi Jinping chose not to visit Vladi-
vostok in September 2017, although China is a much more important partner to Russia than Japan.

Yet the idea of using Japan for destroying the Western unity stopped being topical after 2016. The Russian foreign political establishment finally came to a conclusion that Japan’s Frond would never shatter the Western alliance and that Japan would not unilaterally withdraw from the sanctions.

The demand for Japan’s services reduced amid the hopes Moscow was pinning on the “friendly” Trump administration. The amicable sentiment towards Japan somehow did not reappear after Trump signed a package of additional anti-Russian sanctions in August 2017.

There are several reasons for that. First of all, no matter what was said about “the turn to the East,” the foreign political thinking of the Russian establishment stayed centered on Europe. Just like in the Cold War epoch, Moscow seems to believe that the Euro-Atlantic space is the center of global affairs, and views the Asia-Pacific countries as “a strategic rear.” The rise of China has slightly undermined this belief, but the Kremlin is aware that Beijing would not endanger its interests in the West for the sake of a special relationship with Russia. From this angle, Moscow’s relations with Japan are bound to add balance to Russia’s diplomacy in Asia and hedge the risks related to an increased foreign political and economic orientation of Russia towards China. Speaking of the role played by Japan in the context of Russia-West relations, the Kremlin is still inclined to see it as a U.S. satellite, rather than an independent actor. Japan is mostly associated with exotic culture and cuisine, rather than with the political might, which Russia links to the military strength.

Another reason why Moscow’s interest in Japan has decreased is the plummet of Russian-Japanese economic relations after the beginning of the Ukraine crisis. The Kremlin now thinks that this area has a meager perspective. An overwhelming majority of projects initiated in Russia by the Japanese government found themselves dependent on budgetary or tax support of the government: Japanese businesses are cautious to do business in Russia on their risk. The situation exacerbated after 2014: the trade turn over dipped because of the ruble fall, and the fact that Japan joined the sanctions became an additional impediment to investments of private Japanese businesses which lost guarantees of the Japanese banks.

Moscow knows there will be no breakthrough in bilateral economic cooperation even if Japan drops out of the sanctions: in fact, the Japanese sanctions are largely symbolic, and the cause of insignificant Japanese investment in the Far East lies in the systemic problems of the Russian economy. Japan is therefore unable to replace China as an external source of development of Russia’s eastern regions, and China will remain a key economic partner of Russia in the foreseeable future. The Russian foreign policy concept released in October 2016 ranks Japan as the fourth priority partner in Asia, after China, India, and Mongolia.
The fact that the sides still have different visions on the main objective of their economic relations constitutes a major problem. Japan is prone to believe that the economy should follow politics: economic projects in Russia encouraged by the Japanese government should help to solve political tasks. So, investment in Russia is not necessarily eyed from the angle of economic feasibility, it is actually a kind of “assistance” aimed to encourage reciprocal commitments of Moscow and compromise in the territorial dispute. In turn, Russia thinks that investment projects in Siberia and the Far East are economically attractive to both sides and that Russia does Japan a favor by letting it to invest in lucrative enterprises.

The difference between the two approaches is well illustrated by the joint economic activity on the Kuril Islands. Japan is trying to establish its economic presence on the “Northern territories” in order to have additional grounds for territorial claims. Yet it is much more important for Moscow to attract foreign investments, not necessarily Japanese, in this depressive and remote region. Russia believes that joint economic activity on the islands should be regulated by Russian laws, and has no intention to keep in mind the fundamental position of Japan, as it is required by the final documents of Putin’s visit to Japan in December 2016. Japan is indignant not only at this fact but also at the lack of any preferences for Japanese investors, compared to investors from other countries, such as China or South Korea, in the Kuril rapid development territory established in Moscow in August 2016 for conducting the joint activity.

Another example is different ideas of investment cooperation priorities. Japan puts emphasis on projects, which could bolster its appeal in the eyes of ordinary Russians.

First of all, these are investments in social services making life better for Russians, who have never been spoilt by an excessive comfort, and significantly improving their habitat. A good example is the project improving the urban environment in Voronezh, where Japan’s “smart city” technologies have been tested. The technologies cover energy saving, motor traffic (the network of traffic lights), housing construction, and city utilities (a modern city sewage system), etc. Japan was also focused on socially significant projects – healthcare, agriculture, tourism, and so on – on the South Kuril Islands. In addition to a purely propaganda effect, such undertakings have a practical meaning: small-scale but socially important initiatives may turn out to be lucrative and acquire the desired financial sustainability.

For its part, Russia pins hopes on Japanese investments in infrastructural mega-projects. For instance, a 1-trillion-ruble project of building a bridge between Sakhalin and Hokkaido was presented at the Eastern Economic Forum. This bridge “will give an additional opportunity to use our infrastructure, and Japan will become a mainland country,” Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said [Batin Yu. 2017].
The grandiose plans, such as building a gas pipeline between Sakhalin and Japan, or an energy bridge between Sakhalin and Hokkaido demonstrate that today’s bureaucrats stick to the “Soviet-era” idea that the country can economically develop only at the expense of giant investments in infrastructure. The Japanese authorities base their decisions on government support to such projects on their economic feasibility and doubt there will be return on their investment despite Moscow’s estimates.

What’s next?

One should admit that the Japanese public still has illusions about Russia, largely under the influence of opinion leaders. It is commonly believed that President Putin should be extremely grateful to Abe for the “new approach” suggested by the Japanese leader and that he should accept the political decision on the islands suitting Japan after the March 2018 election. The only acceptable reason for a delay, in the eyes of many Japanese, is that on the verge of the elections Putin badly needed the image of “a patriot” and “a gatherer of Russian lands”.

Apparently, Russia is ready to negotiate the peace treaty as long as possible, until Japan loses patience. But the Japanese public is expecting next moves, concrete territorial concessions of Moscow. In other words, Abe has spent the potential of his “new approach” and does not seem to have other instruments for creating the feeling of “progress” made in solving the peace treaty’s problem.

The fact that Japan comes to realize the groundlessness of expectations from the agreement on a “special regime” of the joint economic activity adds to the problem: Russia will not succumb in this field. The only thing Japan hopes for is a breakthrough to be made at a personal meeting between Putin and Abe. As was already mentioned before, Tokyo is ready to wait until after Russia’s presidential election but if no real headway is made in solving territorial problem after March of next year, it is highly probable that Japan will be disappointed and indignant at the “treacherous Russians.”

Another factor hindering the development of bilateral relations is the state of affairs in the Russian economy, which is going through a long period of stagnation. The Japanese public’s “insight” on the real future of the territorial dispute will unavoidably give cause for criticizing Abe, which will cool off the government’s intentions as regards economic cooperation with Russia.

As of Russia, the ongoing Eurocentrism of the political administration and the persistent vision of Japan as a dependent actor and a U.S. satellite mean that the place of Japan in the Kremlin’s system of foreign political priorities remains invariable, and the image of Japan as “an unfriendly country” and a source of “groundless territorial claims” will strengthen.

The role of Japan can be reviewed only in two cases: if the economic situation in Russia deteriorates so much that Japanese loans will become a vital necessity (i.e. the situation of the 1990s when Russia was a client of the Japanese policy of “assistance to democracy”), or if good relations with Japan
become necessary amid a sudden exacerbation of security problems on the Russian Far Eastern borders. The first scenario looks highly unlikely (primarily because Russia has no foreign debt and retains rather large gold and foreign currency reserves), but the other scenario is slightly more topical and deserves special attention.

**Can security be a new foundation of Russian-Japanese relations?**

It looks like security will be the new foundation of Russian-Japanese relations in the near- and medium-term future. The reason is the North Korea and China factors presenting a serious challenge to Russia and Japan.

Neither Russia nor Japan want Pyongyang to carry on the development of its nuclear program and tensions to continue escalating on the Korean Peninsula. Yet they have totally different opinions on the nuclear problem. To Russia, the Pyongyang regime is more of a Cold War vestige and a Soviet-era reserve than a real security problem which requires the soonest resolution. Of course, the Kremlin is concerned that Kim Jong Un is so persistent about implementing the nuclear program, but this worry is incomparable with a feeling of the real crisis Japan had after Pyongyang tested a hydrogen bomb in September 2017. The anti-American Russian establishment is somewhat sympathetic with North Korea, which is capable of challenging America in the struggle for survival. Besides, Russia is inclined to believe that Pyongyang has not lost the self-preservation instinct and will not be the first to wage a war: if the regime is let alone, it will grow “civilized” on its own sooner or later, just like the aggressive rhetoric of Mao’s China, which threatened the world with a nuclear war in the Cultural Revolution period, is now gone.

Moscow realizes the risks deriving from uncontrollable developments and, probably, wants to keep the unpredictable and dangerous neighbor in check, but the perspective of appearance of a single Korean state under Seoul’s aegis also means the appearance of new U.S. bases on the Russian borders. Besides, Russia silently acknowledges North Korea as a zone of influence and responsibility of China, which fears North Korea’s collapse even more than Moscow. Therefore, Russia will be siding with China in the issue of North Korea and carry on a cautious course, alternative to the Western one. This means that Russia and Japan will be on opposite sides of the barricades for long.

Moscow and Tokyo can still exchange opinions. The feeling of a threat near their borders will bolster the foundation for further Russian-Japanese dialogue in the “two +two” format, i.e. the dialogue between the foreign and defense ministers. At the same time, one cannot expect profound coordination of efforts: Moscow will always be looking at Beijing in the issue of North Korea, and Tokyo will be orienting towards Washington. Russia will be calling for self-control on various international platforms, in contrast to Japan, which supports the strictest policy towards Pyongyang.
Another factor of development, or, to be more exact, a safety valve of Russian-Japanese relations will be the issue of China. Japan seriously fears Russian-Chinese cooperation in defense, especially military-technical contacts: if Russian technologies help the Chinese army make much headway, this will change the entire military-strategic balance of forces in the region, and not in Japan’s favor. Another concern of Tokyo is Moscow’s possible support of the Chinese territorial claims to its neighbors. Russia is formally staying neutral about those disputes, but some events give cause for such fears. These include the Naval Interaction 2016 exercises held by Russia and China in the South China Sea in September 2016; the servicemen not just had live gunfire exercises and rescue training, but also landed on and seized an island [Melikov 2016]. Some alarmist Japanese experts believe those exercises demonstrated Russia’s solidarity with China in the territorial issue [Koizumi 2016]. The support to China’s stance on the problem of the South China Sea openly expressed by Putin in July 2016 in connection with the ruling of the Hague Tribunal added fuel to the fire [Putin: Rossiya solidarna s KNR... 2016].

While trying to slow down the rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing, Japanese negotiators are trying to present China as a source of serious threats to Russia: a danger to military security of the Russian Far Eastern borders, a demographic threat, and a threat of economic take over. These attempts will hardly achieve the desired result: the Kremlin understands that the Japanese partners are intentionally exaggerating Russian-Chinese contradictions.

Different views on China largely derive from different ideas about this country from the angle of Russian and Japanese national security. Japan sees China as a real threat, which can become a military adversary at any moment (for instance, if their disputes escalate in the East China Sea). Yet China is a distant threat to Russia. Many experts believe that China will pose a threat to Russia in future [Inozemtsev 2017].

Clearly, China could rise so high in the future that gentlemanly conditions of the equal “strategic partners” may be revised by Beijing into something unfavorable for Russia, but the foreign political planning horizon is short, and the “Chinese challenge” looks hypothetical. The motivation of Russian and Japanese strategic goals differs drastically in the bilateral dialogue on China.

In the foreseeable future, the Kremlin deems China to be a much more important partner than Japan. In Moscow’s eyes, China sets a successful example of renouncing the Western democratic model and progressing along a different path; besides, China is a key economic partner of Russia, a market for Russian energy resources and military products, and a source of investments and technologies.

Given that Moscow wants to avoid an excessively tight hug by the Chinese dragon, the security dialogue with Japan gives Moscow more space for diplomatic maneuvering on the Asian track. No doubt, Japan is still an ally.
of the United States, but this union is a key element of the military-political balance in East Asia, which is curbing China’s ambitions and preventing its monopoly on establishing the regional order.

Anyway, Russia and Japan have a great deal to discuss in the field of regional and global security. These issues include the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery means, the establishment of efficient multilateral dialogue formats for discussion of military security issues and confidence-building measures in the field of defense. Both countries are interested in coordinating efforts on non-military aspects of security, including the fight against terrorism and cyber-crime, safe sea traffic, environmental protection, etc. There is also a vast unused potential in culture, education, and science.

Russia and Japan have their cross-years in 2018; there are be numerous events popularizing each other’s culture and improving the image of the partners. The fact that Abe’s administration stayed in office after the parliamentary election of October 2017 and the victory of Putin in March 2018 will preserve the political framework of bilateral relations built by efforts of the two state chiefs for the next few years.

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Creative economy as an economic resource: Japan’s practice

Irina L’vovna TIMONINA

The article is dedicated to the development of the creative sector of Japan’s economy. The author analyzes specific features and key areas of the sector’s growth, as well as mechanisms of government support for creative industries in furtherance of the Cool Japan strategy and the goal of boosting the domestic demand, expanding the country’s capacity for exports, and creation of jobs.

The article also analyzes main approaches of international organizations and experts to the creative economy’s phenomenon in the contemporary world, including terms, definitions, and classification of industries.

Keywords: creative economy, creative industries, Cool Japan, kansei, exports, structural policy.

Creative industries, or the creative sector are justly deemed to be one of the most dynamic parts of the global economy, as well as one of its drivers amid the otherwise slowing growth.

The term of “creative economy” was coined a relatively short time ago. It is believed that the term was used for the first time by authors of the magazine Business Week in 2000. The idea and the term were popularized by J. Howkins [Hawkins 2002]. Nowadays, creative economy issues are addressed by particular experts, and authoritative international 1, governmental, government-aligned, and non-governmental organizations in various countries. Creative economy issues are rather actively researched in the UK. The British Council has a special website devoted to the creative economy [Creative economy]. Yet there are still no uniform terms to describe this economic phenomenon and classify the participating industries; there is no uniform view on the creative sector’s ability to contribute to the economic growth either. International organizations are expecting a lot of creative industries in boosting small and medium businesses on emerging markets, reducing poverty, and combating economic backwardness in the context of the UN Millennium Goals. Governments and companies of many countries believe that creative industries give an opportunity to build and develop new markets, and bolster the potential for exports at a time when markets of traditional goods and services are stagnating.

One way or another, creative industries are developing, and all experts define the creative potential of a person as the principal resource.

1 First of all, UN agencies, such as the UNESCO, the UNDP (the author of the yearly Create Economy Report), the UNCTAD (the publisher of the Create Economy outlook and Country profiles: trends in International trade in Creative Industries, 2015, etc.) and the World Bank (Policy Forum on Innovation Policy and Creative Economy, 2016).
Given the lack of a uniform concept and a universally recognized classification of the creative sector by industry, we need to define the “creative sector” notion for the purposes of this article. We should say right away that the broader notion of the creative economy based on the obvious fact that any developed economy has to be creative and that any industry will be unable to progress without a creative and innovative element does not meet the article’s objective, since it blurs the boundaries of the subject of this research.

To be clear, the author differentiates between “creativity” as a feature of a particular economy, or economic system (just like we are casually using the “innovative economy” term), and particular industries with such features; this approach draws a line between the notions of “the creative economy,” for one part, and “creative industries,” “the creative sector,” and creative business, for the other part. Popular literature often uses those terms as synonyms.

Hence, the approach of UN agencies, basing their reports on the notion of creative sectors described as “the heart” of the creative economy, seems to work. Creative industries envisage cycles of creating (designing, inventing, or any other synonym for the verb ‘to create’), producing, and distributing goods and services in which the primary input is made by creativity and intellectual potential, and which generate revenue from selling intellectual property rights, and yield material products and services with a creative content, having an economic value and seen as a market object.

Creative industries emerge and grow at the intersection of art, culture, business, and technologies, and can be divided into the following groups (Chart No 1):

**Chart No1**

**UNCTAD classification of creative industries**

![UNCTAD classification of creative industries](source: [Creative Economy Report 2008, p. 14])
1. Cultural heritage industries;
2. Visual and performing arts;
3. Audio-visual industries;
4. Publishing and printed media;
5. New media;
6. Design;
7. Creative services. [Creative Economy Report 2008, p. 12, 13, 21]

The topicality of creative industries derives from their capacity for increasing business revenue in the field of exports, tourism, promotion of inclusive social development, and social diversification, and for developing technologies and perfecting human potential. International experts see innovative, interdisciplinary political efforts and interagency cooperation as the way to foster the creative sector [Creative Economy Report 2008].

Creative industries in Japan’s economic strategy

Japan considers the development of creative industries to be an essential part of the national economic strategy and the economic policy of the government. The government supports the advancement of such industries and areas of activity, mostly, within the framework of the Cool Japan initiative put forward in 2010 and implemented under the aegis of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). The initiative seeks two key goals: economic and political. The economic objective of Cool Japan is to transform creative industries (based on the cultural content) into an economic growth driver, given the economic stagnation in the Japan and a partial loss of the competitive edge of traditional export industries. The authors of the Japanese strategy expect the promotion of creative industries to expand domestic demand and the potential for exports, and create jobs.

The Cool Japan Strategy (published in July 2012) said pointblank that new business models [presented by creative industries] could become highly profitable in the future and possess a substantial industrial potential should the traditional Japanese content be “integrated” into consumer goods, distributors be engaged, and the potential of regions be realized [Cool Japan Strategy. July 2012, p. 5].

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2 It is called ‘a strategy’ and ‘a program’ in official documents

3 Japan sometimes uses the Cultural Content Industry term, which we see as highly appropriate. The term is used for instance in the name of the Japanese-Chinese-Korean forum [The Tenth Japan-China-Korea forum… 2017]

4 Interestingly, Japanese experts substantiate the CJ/CI strategy with the practices of the UK (Cool Britannia) and South Korea (Cool Korea Strategy), which endorsed programs fostering creative industries in 1997, and, which is even more interesting, the New Deal policy of F. Roosevelt (1929) incorporating federal culture projects. For instance, the federal music project was popularizing classic music with public concerts, composers’ communication with the audience, and music lessons for the poor. [Ross 2012, p. 269].
The Cool Japan Strategy based the development of creative industries on the New Collaboration idea of blending culture, production, the Internet, the real world, diverse industries and types of activity, and development of the domestic and foreign markets. The key significance attributed to this idea is definitely not accidental: the primary feature of creative industries is a combination of the idea and its commercialization; as we have said before, those industries are integrated by definition. The political or, to be more exact, foreign political goal is to strengthen the Japanese national brand and to promote it abroad\(^5\). We should say that the Cool Japan Strategy is also an integral part and a tool of “soft force” foreign political strategy.

The approach shapes up Japan’s idea of the creative industry phenomenon. Judging by the ministry’s official documents, the Cool Japan Strategy (in the edition of January 2012) defines the following industries and types of activity as creative: advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, visual arts, software, radio and television content, Japanese cuisine, tourism\(^6\), furniture, tablecloth, jewelry, and office stationary design and production, and the food industry [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p.7].

Japanese experts mention the following main characteristics of creative industries:

1. The demand prevails over the supply, as the product appeals directly to the consumer’s emotion;
2. This is a two-step business process involving “creation” and “distribution,” which means that creative industries need the maximum comfortable environment for creation;
3. The integrating nature of industries, the boundaries between industries and professions blur and actually have no significance, considering that the “creators” pool their efforts to implement a project [unless this creation process is individual];
4. Creative industries “make the pie bigger,” rather than “compete for grabbing their piece of the pie,” because a creative product starts a chain creating additional value and generating revenue industry [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p.7].

The Cool Japan Strategy (in the version of January 2012) prioritized as creative industries fashion, anime, cuisine, special regional products (for example, Kumano brushes made by a unique local technology), and tourism (such as tours to the Akihabara electronic heaven) industry [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p.7].

The list was slightly modified and made more specific in later versions of the Cool Japan Strategy (2012–2014), but, to our mind, the criteria for crea-

\(^5\) Cool Japan and Creative Industries (CJ/CI) occupy the same line on the list of economic policy fundamentals posted on the ministry’s website. The same approach is applied by the METI’s principal document on this matter, the Cool Japan Initiative, which is almost entirely dedicated to creative industries. [Cool Japan Initiative 2014; Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012].

\(^6\) The source notes that the list of aforesaid industries follows the UK classification.
tive industries remained unchanged. These are mostly industries and areas of activity creating the strictly national content irrespective of whether it is based on traditional cultural values or modern achievements.

Certainly, Japan has been developing other types of activity producing intellectual property (and/or intellectual property rights), or implementing intellectual property in a material or information product, which could also be called creative. However, this article concentrates on the areas prioritized by the Cool Japan / Creative Industries state strategy.

The CJ/CI policy is carried out by the Creative Industry Department, which operates as part of the Bureau of Commerce and Information Policy of the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and the Cool Japan Advisory Council established in 2011. [Cool Japan/Creative Industries Policy]

The Council has permanent members, and guests representing various creative areas. The Strategy’s edition of January 2012 determined the place of creative industries in the structure of the Japanese economy by the following parameters. The overall sales stood at 45.2 trillion yen in 2004 (or 7% of the total output of industries and services), which was comparable with the share of leading Japanese industries: car and electronic (8% and 6%, respectively), while the number of their employees was even larger. In 2004, creative industries employed 2.2 million people; the car industry had 947,000 employees, and the electronic equipment industry – 1.2 million [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p. 8].

Yet, in the opinion of government experts, the problem is that Japanese creative products, such as fashion and food, are rather popular with foreign countries but are not profitable enough [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p. 5]. A survey shows that Japanese companies ranked 1st to 3rd, 7th, and 10th amongst popular women’s fashion stores in China in 2009, but the exports-to-imports ratio of Japanese textiles was 1 to 50. The comparison of statistical data cited by the Strategy of January 2012 is not quite correct, because it covers the entire produce of relevant industries, including mass products, which Japanese companies have been manufacturing abroad for a long time. There is still some rational kernel in this comparison, given that other developed countries with the equally high cost of labor (which is practically the main reason why production facilities migrate to other countries), export much more textile products than Japan. It seems Japanese experts cite the information as proof of the need for monetizing achievements of Japanese fashion designers popular in foreign countries as export revenue. The situation with Japanese restaurants is approximately the same: their popularity in many countries does not help Japanese food exports much.

The Strategy gives Pokemon as a positive example of product promotion: the export of this product reached 3 trillion yen (a third of the domestic

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7 Includes industries and areas of activity consistent with the UK classification we have mentioned earlier.
sales) in 2009 [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p. 5]. By 2017 when the overall Pokemon market size of this franchise (games, animation, movies, and licenses) stood at $67 billion (35% on the domestic market, and 65% on the foreign market) [Business Summary. Pokémon in Figures.]

A central problem of creative industries’ growth is commercialization of intellectual product, above all, its promotion on foreign markets.

**Policy of Japanese creative product’s promotion abroad**

The Cool Japan Strategy designated the volume of exports as the principal quality indicator, which was only natural, considering the aforesaid arguments. There are plans to increase exports from 4.6 trillion yens to 9.3 trillion yens by 2020, including 2.1 trillion yens worth of fashion products, 6.8 trillion yens worth of food and beverages, and 0.4 trillion yens worth of media products. For comparison, the value of the global creative product market was forecasted to reach 900 trillion yens in 2020. [Cool Japan Strategy. January 2012, p. 6].

We will assess Japan’s ranking in the world creative product trade using the UNCTAD special survey.

**Table No 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japan’s trade in creative products and services $ bln</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Export</td>
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<td>Balance</td>
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<td>16.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
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<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services</strong></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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</table>

Based on: [Creative Economy Outlook … 2016, p. 80]

Despite the increased volume of creative product trade (the value of creative goods’ export grew by 50%), Japan still has a deficit of trade in goods and services. Exports of design, audio-visual, and new media products spiked in 2003–2012 (table No 2). Japan ranked seventh developed country amongst leading exporters of creative goods in 2012, with a 1.6% share of the market; it occupied the 12th position in the global rating. The United States, Hong Kong, and China were the main markets for Japanese creative products; Japan had a surplus of trade with the first two economies, and a rather serious deficit of trade with China [Creative Economy Outlook… 2016, p. 3–4, 81].

Japan is implementing numerous projects, given the interest of the government and companies in a substantial increase of Japanese creative product exports. These include Japanese fashion’s popularization by the commercial website Harajuku Street Style, the Cool Japan Fair in Mumbai, and Craft
Renaissance Project exhibitions in various countries. It is not possible to mention all of them, so we will just say that the work is constant and focused. This is not a series of one-off events, but an actual strategy implemented by the government and companies.

Table No 2.
Japan’s trade in creative goods and services by branch, bln yen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Games</th>
<th>Cosmetics</th>
<th>Fashion textile</th>
<th>Movies</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Licenses</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>293.0</td>
<td>129.2</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>131.7</td>
<td>875.2</td>
<td>1485.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>167.4</td>
<td>1851.6</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>700.7</td>
<td>2171.6</td>
<td>4987.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>290.9</td>
<td>-38.2</td>
<td>-1814.0</td>
<td>-36.2</td>
<td>-21.8</td>
<td>-14.4</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>-569.0</td>
<td>-1296.3</td>
<td>-3501.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [Cool Japan Initiative. July 2014, p. 8]
Note: Online sales volumes are not included in the games, movies, music, books, and magazines categories; music sales as of 2005, the rest as of 2011.

The purpose of exporting Japanese creative products is to increase tourist arrivals in Japan, boost domestic demand, and increase corporate revenue (Chart No 2).

The 2014 edition of the strategy gives some examples of the Cool Japan program’s efficiency in terms of exports. Hiroshima-based TSS Production started airing the Japan Motion program on the French cable network No Life (which has 6.5 million household subscribers) in 2009. Information about Hiroshima and Japan Expo disseminated in Paris had a tangible effect: more French tourists visited Hiroshima and the Expo, as exhibitions are a traditional annual cultural event of Paris summers. What is more, the first Hiroshima restaurant, okonomiyaki, opened in Paris, and the Miyajima Island and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum topped the list of tourist attractions in 2012 (surpassing such popular sites as the Kinkakuji Temple in Tokyo, Asakusa in Tokyo, and the Himeji Castle in Hyogo) [Cool Japan Initiative. July 2014, p. 12].

Actually, television is believed to be an essential tool for disseminating Japanese content in the world, especially in Asian countries. The NHK World international channel kicked off in 1995: its programs are now broadcast in 130 countries. Channel Japan provides information on Japan’s business, economy, and culture in Singapore, India, and Taiwan. The online portal, Daisuki.net, airing Japanese animation by request was launched in the United States in 2013 [Cool Japan Initiative. July 2014, p. 13].
Chart No 2
Revenue-creating chain based on Cool Japan Strategy and development of creative sectors

Source: [Cool Japan Strategy. September 2012, p. 7.]
As we have said before, the promotion of Japanese content abroad is being actively supported by the government. More than 1,500 projects have been funded by the state grant program supporting the development and dissemination of Japanese content abroad. The program has a total budget of $155 million.\(^8\)

The government pursues the same objective by supporting the world’s biggest content festival Co Festa held in Japan, and various festivals of the Creative Tokyo program, for instance, Harajuku Kawaii!!, Tokyo Midtown Design Touch, and others. Another way the Japanese government is fostering national content abroad is by inviting fashion media editors, bloggers and other fashion, design, film, and vogue media celebrities to various events.

The promotion of Japanese creative industries abroad involves regional small and medium companies, which is not surprising: micro and small companies are the backbone of the creative sector. Japanese real estate developers and retailers are recommended to assign special places (Japan Floor, Japan Street) to Japanese sellers of unique goods at their trade centers and branches in foreign countries in order to popularize and increase the sales of Japanese products.

We should say the following about the potential for expanding Japanese creative product exports and the impediments they may encounter. There is no doubt that Japan has a substantial potential for developing creative industries. What is more, Japanese design, architecture, music, and anime are very popular with the world. At the same time, the pronounced national specificity of the Japanese creative product may also be a limitation of its export opportunities. It is also important to note that not all manufacturers of creative products are large companies (such as Pokemon Company or Nintendo). In this market there are many small companies and individual entrepreneurs who do not have enough experience of promotion abroad.

**Funding creative industries**

Government experts see the funding as a key problem in the development of Japan’s creative industries. They say banks and investors do not give enough financial support to creative businesses for promoting their products abroad. This is happening because potential investors see the risks as excessive.

With this in mind, the Japanese government set up a special public-private fund, Cool Japan Fund, in November 2013, and proclaimed as its goal the promotion of exclusive Japanese goods and services abroad and commercialization of creative activities included in the Cool Japan Strategy. These include fashion, content, lifestyle (daily goods having some artistic

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\(^8\) As of February 2014. Unfortunately, the METI does not provide more recent data. Source: Cool Japan Initiative, 2014. P. 14.
value and associated with the Japanese lifestyle), goods made by use of traditional Japanese technologies (ceramics, lanterns, textiles), *omotenashi* (goods and services of the traditional Japanese hospitality style, such as *ryokan* hotels)\(^9\).

The Fund decides whether or not to invest in a project using the criteria laid down by the Japanese government. The criteria include:

1. Policy compliance: providing risk capital for promoting Japanese goods abroad;
2. Profitability and good-performance indicators: relevant management structure, return on capital, and a high probability of success;
3. Influence on other spheres: support to Japanese industries, interaction with other companies and sectors, the demonstration effect, and the opening of new markets [What is Cool Japan Fund ?].

Based on these criteria, the Fund finances three types of projects.

1. Platform projects: provision of reliable business platforms for continuous development of products and services supporting the existence of strong brands and preservation of market positions.
2. Projects supporting supply chains: optimization of supply chains eliminating distribution weaknesses of companies trying to operate outside Japan. This kind of improvement can create competitive edge by increasing efficiency of investment, heightening product quality, and assisting in products’ promotion abroad.
3. Regional projects supporting small business: support for joint expansion of regional companies, and small and medium businesses sharing supply chains in foreign countries; support for tour operators; promotion of inbound tourism together with regional tourism organizations. This initiative can stimulate the formation of a thriving community of regional producers, creative artists, designers and others [What is Cool Japan Fund ?].

The Fund’s budget is made of investments of industries and private companies accumulated on a special account. The Fund finances companies, sometimes in collaboration with private investors, and chooses projects for risk investment based on the aforesaid criteria (chart No 3).

The Fund’s investment terms are rather liberal or even “friendly” towards applicants. For instance, Fund specialists may assist in formulating the strategy and business plan of the applicant’s company, and help implement the project. There are no investment deadlines; the money is provided for the period until after “stabilization of the business,” which is extremely attractive to micro- and small companies struggling to commercialize their products [Characteristic of Cool Japan Fund].

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\(^9\) *Omotenashi* – the Japanese philosophy of hospitality and the practice of ‘wholehearted and extraordinary’ service. Omotenashi is based on Japanese national traditions. The word omotenashi is sometimes defined as ‘the heart of Japanese hospitality’ or translated as ‘detailed service’.
Actually, television is believed to be an essential tool for disseminating Japanese content in the world, especially in Asian countries. The NHK World international channel kicked off in 1995; its programs are now broadcast in 130 countries. Channel Japan provides information on Japan’s business, economy, and culture in Singapore, India, and Taiwan. The online portal, Daisuki.net, airing Japanese animation by request was launched in the United States in 2013 [Cool Japan Initiative. July 2014, p. 13].

The latest project chosen by the Fund (June 2017) is the support for the Japanese branch of the U.S. venture fund 500 Startups specializing in funding emerging firms (the so-called seed investment). The Fund’s experts believe this project can further Japanese venture companies, including creative ones, on foreign markets [Investment Projects. List of…].

Creative Tokyo

No doubt, the promotion of creative product exports is an important area of Japan’s creative industry development, but it is not the only one. Let us take a look at some other initiatives and projects.

A major undertaking, which should be called a movement, is Creative Tokyo, an umbrella to a variety of projects. The movement has 118 participants operating under the Moving towards Creative Tokyo-Transforming Tokyo into a Creative Hub slogan [The Creative Tokyo Proposal].

The list of participants is interesting, as it gives an idea of who is interested in promoting creative industries in the Japanese capital. Of course, they include the METI, and the Tourism Agency (a branch of the Ministry of Land,  

10 Headquartered in the U.S. Silicon Valley
Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism), which means the government plays a role in the project.

The list includes a number of local organizations, as well (for instance Tokyo Ginza Official)\(^\text{11}\), trade associations of acclaimed shopping areas (such as Roppongi Shopping Street Association [Roppongi Shopping Street…], the Akihabara Tourism Promotion Association, and Akihabara Electrical Town). Commercial companies are represented by major trade houses and retailers – Sogo & Seibu Co., Ltd., Tokyu Department Store, Parco Co., Family Mart Co., Ltd., Matsuya Co., Ltd., Marui Co., Ltd., Isetan Mitsukoshi Ltd., hotel business (Park Hotel Tokyo), and the JAL airline.

Organizations directly involved in creative activity can be divided into three groups:

2. Associations of creative companies: Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association; Japan Electronics Show Association; Japan Craft Design Association;
3. Education establishments teaching creative professions: Aoyama Gakuin University Graduate School of International Management (Aoyama Business School); Graduate School of System Design and Management (Keio University) [The Creative Tokyo Proposal].

An analysis of the list of Creative Tokyo participants brings us to the following conclusions. First of all, interested parties include organizations operating in various fields – from ministries to street associations, from giant companies to designer studios and event companies, which are not even small companies but micro-businesses.

Secondly, judging by the joint statement of participants, the initiative lays a real foundation for cooperation between small, big, creative and traditional business, the government, non-governmental organizations, and civil movements, which is envisaged by the Cool Japan Strategy. This statement can be called a manifesto of the development of creative business not just in Tokyo but also in Japan as a whole. Participants in the Creative Tokyo movement declare that at a time when Japan is building new society based on the synergy of industry, the economy and culture, they are giving comprehensive support for the growth and diversification of creative industries. They also hope to transform Tokyo into the most remarkable creative hub in Asia. They pledge to use the creative potential for heightening the country’s image. Relevant government agencies, local government, and heads of private companies will collaborate in the humanitarian and information exchange and further institutional reforms.

\(^{11}\) Autonomous entity formed by the district council and uniting civil and volunteer organizations, and district trade associations. See: [Tokyo Ginza Official].
In the opinion of movement participants, stronger cooperation between companies of various sectors will promote the emergence of enterprises related to Japanese culture and lifestyle [goods and services with a cultural and creative content], and thus encourage domestic consumption and exports.

There are plans to transform Tokyo into an international creative hub by attracting creative talents from all over the world, building an unlimited creative environment in which young talents “will develop and thrive.”

This approach, and cooperation with other Japanese and foreign creative cities (including by means of joint projects) will enable the movement participants to contribute to the development of the nation’s human potential.

So, we may presume that the Creative Tokyo movement can become sort of a pilot project developing creative business and potential of Japan as a whole; its success will have a strong demonstration effect, especially considering the opportunities given to Tokyo and the whole country by the Olympic Games 2020.

Tokyo Olympic Games 2020 and creative industries’ perspective

It is no secret that major international events, including sport competitions and Olympic Games, bring direct and indirect economic benefits to the host countries. The Tokyo Olympic Games 2020 can help international popularization of Japanese creative products, in addition to providing other economic advantages. The Japanese government has not overlooked this opportunity. The METI posted a special press release to define its attitude to the issue and announced the issue of a concept book. This document spells out vistas, which open up for creative industries in connection with the Olympic Games that are bound to increase the world’s interest in Japan. The ministry aspires for synergy in the promotion of the “unique Japanese spirit and values” in other countries, by ‘combining’ preparations for the Games and the continuation of the Cool Japan program.

The Japan Brand Working Group has been formed to foster this approach. The group has discussed the traditional Japanese spirit and values as the foundation of goods and services (the content, the lifestyle, Japanese cuisine, and services) to be produced within the framework of the Cool Japan initiative. The fruit of this discussion was presented in the concept book called Wonder Japan, which described traditional Japanese notions based on people-nature relations, and indicated some keywords regarding sentiment of the Japanese people, such as “deep thinking,” “learning,” “harmonizing,” and “spreading love and care.” Importantly, the book itself is a unique creative product combining the traditional and avant-garde styles.12

12 The METI will distribute the book via Japanese embassies abroad, governmental and government-aligned organizations, municipalities, private companies, and organization, i. e. all participants in projects preparing for the Olympic Games and the Cool Japan initiative. [METI Releases Concept Book. 2017.]
In fact, the book reflects the esthetic concept of the development of Japanese creative industries, at least, those based on traditional values. These values, however, are presented in the modern export “wrapping.”

**Creativity as business quality**

Indicating the range of creative industries applicably to Japan in the beginning of this article, we noted that attention would focus on industries which are using cultural content to make intellectual product. However, the Japanese government’s approach to creativity as an economic resource appeared to be broader than expected. The Fourth Industrial Revolution makes creativity a must for business at large, not just for industries formally belonging to this group; in fact, this is the condition necessary for preserving competitive edge of the whole Japanese economy and this industry, in particular.

This is directly stated by the Japanese METI, which set up a group in 2017 to research creativity in the period of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In the opinion of Japanese experts, modern production, including technologies, products, and services, are standardized. Meanwhile, the social structure becomes increasingly intricate. Under these circumstances, the success of any business, especially business oriented towards the consumer market, depends on how well companies can understand real needs of their clients and client groups and make original and creative products combining state-of-the-art technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution with the creative component [Open Debriefing Meeting… 2017].

It is worth noting that the idea of creating a non-material value (in case business makes material products) as an area for developing Japan’s processing industries had been proclaimed by the METI in 2007, as part of the so-called *kansei* value initiative. Its slogan is From Material Fulfillment to Emotional Fulfillment (drawing No1). The essence of the *kansei* concept is that goods (material product or service) should carry an imprint of something new, unusual, and individual, i.e. be a fruit of creative work of its author and actually contain elements of creativity.

Truth be told, the *kansei* concept used the word “cool” instead of “creativity.” Yet again, this is not about businesses which started as creative, such as design or movies, but those traditionally manufacturing mass products. Technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution give additional opportunities to add value to the product by means of a creative component: big data, the Internet of things, and 3D printers lay down a technological basis for appealing to feelings and emotions of individuals instead of groups, and for individualizing products.

So, we can say that Japan’s creative sector is actively developing, and favorable conditions for its growth largely depend on the interest of various subjects of the economic process. These are creators of intellectual products, who aspire for commercialization, companies operating in traditional industr-
tries and services, which seek to heighten their competitive edge and adding value to their products with a creative component embedded in mass products, and non-governmental and civil organizations wishing to participate in the formation of a creative environment. At the same time, creative industries are efficiently supported by the government, which sees them as economic growth drivers, a priority of the structural policy, and an element of the Cool Japan Strategy aimed at promoting the Japanese national brand abroad. The Japanese government is committed to its best traditions and provides organizational and financial support to creative business, by putting emphasis on cooperation between all entities interested in developing creative industries, and encouraging exports of their goods and services having a unique Japanese content.

**Drawing No 1**

Making goods, creating value

![Diagram](source: [Kansei initiative](#))

We may presume that the combined efforts of the government, business, and citizens will have a synergic effect and, together with unique cultural traditions and the most advanced technologies will help the Japanese economy acquire a new quality: to be not just innovative but also creative.
References


On Organization of Poetic Material in Medieval Japanese Collections  
(Shinsanjurokkasen and Koyasan Kongozanmai-in tanzaku)

Maria Vladimirovna TOROPYGINA

The purpose of this article is to analyze the selection and organization of poetic material of two medieval poetic collections, Shinsanjurokkasen and Koyasan Kongozanmai-in tanzaku, created respectively in the middle of the 13th and the middle of the 14th centuries, and to give information about the manuscripts of these collections stored at the Russian State Library in Moscow.

Keywords: Japan, medieval poetry, poetic anthology, waka, Kamakura period, Ashikaga shogunate, Buddhism, manuscript, poetic hierarchy, poetic tradition.

Waka and歌 is the Japanese medieval court poetry mostly represented by 31-syllable “short poems” (tanka 短歌). In the early 10th century this kind of poetry became state, imperial, and poetic anthologies were composed on the “imperial rescripts” (chokusenwakashu 勅選和歌集). Poets whose texts were included in imperial anthologies were deemed to be success. The peculiar “quantification” criterion for creative works of medieval poets (the number of poems by the author included in imperial anthologies) migrated from old texts to modern reference books. Imperial anthologies were being compiled until the middle of the 15th century. During the relatively calm Heian epoch of the 10th – 12th centuries seven anthologies (the most famous anthology Shinkokinshu 新古今集, included in the concept of first eight collections ha-chidaishu 八代集, still Heian in poetical features, was composed at the beginning of Kamakura era) were created, and during the epochs of the Kamakura and Ashikaga shogunates, thirteen anthologies (if to exclude Shinkokinshu) were compiled (jusandaishu 十三代集). On the one hand it indicates the unstable situation in the country, on the other hand, the prestige of compiling anthologies for the imperial power, being a kind of additional indicator of legitimacy.

Imperial anthologies had a rather strict system of material organization. They are organized by theme throughout the text and have dynamic sections (seasons of the year from the beginning of a season to its end, love from the emergence of this feeling to the parting). By the time the first imperial anthology, Kokinshu 古今集, was composed, there were other methods of material organization in Japanese poetry collections, as well. For instance, there

1 The Russian State Library’s collection of early Japanese publications is catalogued in: [Kornicki 1999; Kornicki 2004]. However, a small collection of manuscripts stored at the Russian State Library’s manuscript research department, was not included in those catalogues. For this collection, see [Toropygina 2015].

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were several poetic anthologies in the Chinese language before *Manyoshū* 万葉集 emerged. The first anthology in Chinese, *Kaiyōsu* 魚藻, composed in the 8th century, was based on the author principle and took into account the social status of authors (was consistent with the official hierarchy). In the first *waka* anthology *Manyoshū* and principles of material organization varied from one scroll to another [Meshcheryakov 2006].

It was intensive poetic life that made possible to start the compilation of imperial anthologies. There were poetic contests and meetings, from the most prestigious, hosted by the emperor, and the imperial family, to those held far from the central authorities: at homes of aristocrats, provincial officials, and members of military aristocracy, as well as at sanctuaries and temples. Poetic collections could comprise poems composed for a poetic competition or a poetic meeting, poets released collections of their own poems, pupils released collections of their teachers of poetry, and many people created collections of poems they deemed to be the best.

Whenever the release of an imperial anthology was announced, poets presented their works for consideration. 15th century work *Kensai Jodan* 兼載雑談 contains the following legend about poet Kamo no Chomei:

“When poems were being chosen for *Shinkokinshū*, various figures at the court presented personal collections of from five hundred to a thousand poems for consideration. Kamo no Chomei, however, presented only twelve poems, all of which were included in the anthology with no revisions, I was told” [Carter 2001, p. 311].

Given their significance, imperial anthologies were a special group of Japanese poetic anthologies, which is why researchers divide all *waka* collections of medieval Japan into “imperial,” i.e. official prepared on the request of an emperor or a former emperor, and the rest, i.e. unofficial, which did not require the imperial assent.

Unofficial poetic anthologies can be divided into personal (or family) collections (*shikashu* 私家集) and unofficial anthologies (regularly described as *shipenshu* 私撰集), including works by several poets [Harries 1980].

Official anthologies organized material by the principles laid down by the first imperial anthology, which did not change much over five centuries (although new sections appeared in imperial anthologies), meanwhile unofficial collections (although many of them had the structure similar to those of imperial anthologies) were highly diverse.

Both *Shinsanjurokkasen* and *Koyasan Kongozanmai-in tanzaku* are unofficial poetic anthologies, *shipenshu*.

The analysis of the *Shinsanjurokkasen* poetic collection was based on the manuscript stored at the Russian State Library’s manuscript research department (F-184 / IV, No 52).

The manuscript stored at the Russian State Library is an album of illustrations made on silk and poems written on paper. The silk and paper are glued to fan-fold bound cardboard sheets. The silk cover has decorative
metal angles. Poems are written in cursive on gold-flashed paper with a floral ornament. The artistic composition comprises a portrait of the author at the bottom of the page, and a landscape at the top of the page. There is also the artist’s stamp, Togen (Dogen 洞元). The album is torn in several places, and two portraits are lost. The paper with poems has a size of 21x31.3 cm, the size of illustrations is 21x34 cm, and the size of cardboard sheets is 26x39.8 cm. There are “left” and “right” characters above the poet’s name [Toropygina 2014].

The manuscript is missing the collection’s title, yet the poetic collection itself suggests that this album comprises the works of poets known as Shinsanjurokkasen, the new 36 geniuses of Japanese poetry⁵.

The collection has several titles in manuscripts and early editions, namely Shinsanjurokoninsenkasen 新三十六撰歌仙, Shinsanjurokoninkasen 新三十六人撰歌仙, Shinsanjurokuninsen utaawase 新三十六人撰歌合, and Shinsanjurokkasen 新三十六歌仙.

The collection is known from a number of manuscripts. It is not large, so it is sometimes included in the manuscript (publication) together with other materials. Several manuscripts are available on the Internet³.

It seems that the first edition of this collection was released in 1848. The book Kijo no takara 貴女のたから, published 1891, titles the collection as Shinsanjurokkasen [Shinsanjurokkasen 1891].

Several versions of this collection were published in the Nihon kagakutaikei series, including the same variant as the one to be contained in the Russian State Library’s album [Nihon Kagaku Taikei. Vol. 6. 1991, p. 241–242]. Illustrated albums of this collection comprise a separate group to which the album can be attributed. A special role in the tradition of depicting poetic geniuses (歌仙絵) was played by artist Kano Tan’yū (1602–1674) who illustrated several series of “poetic geniuses”; the portraits of poets painted by Kano Tan’yū set a model for artists of next generations [Matsushima 2003].

Several Shinsanjurokkasengacho albums by Kano Tan’yū are stored at the Tokyo State Museum. The museum also has an album by Kano Eino (1631–1697). The album stored at the Ferris University was created by Kano Masunobu (Kano Toun, 1625–1694); this is the only collection with an unusual order of poems [Shinsanjurokkasengacho 2000–2002]. All those albums have been posted on the Internet either fully or partially. All the albums are called

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⁵ There is a slightly different list of “new 36 geniuses of Japanese poetry,” which also includes works of poets of the 12th–13th centuries. It is known from the publication Gunsho Ruiju (maki159). The collection is called Shinsanjurokuninsen (Collection of new 36 poets) and consists of a preface and a collection of ten poems by each of 36 poets [Shinsanjurokoninkasen 1979].

³ While working on this collection, I have studied three manuscripts published on the Internet by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Kokubungakuenkyu shiryokan) and two manuscripts published by the Tokyo University.
Shinsanjurokkasengacho, so the album stored at the Russian State Library can also be called *Shinsanjurokkasengacho*, “Illustrated album of new 36 genuises of Japanese poetry.”

Traditionally, former Emperor Go-Toba is believed to be the creator of the collection of poems by new 36 genuises of Japanese poetry. There are manuscripts which call him the compiler. There is also another theory. *Meigetsuki* 明月記, the diary of Fujiwara no Sadaie (Teika) have the inscription dated for 1233, says that Fujiwara no Motoie composed the list of 36 poets and ordered their portraits to Fujiwara no Nobuzane. The list was supposed to be taken to the exiled Go-Toba. Nothing is known about the fate of this list, but researchers believe it could be the collection of new 36 genuises.

The collection presents poems by Go-Toba, Shikishi Naishinno, Tsuchimikado-in, Toshinari Kyō no Musume, Juntoku-in, Minamoto no Michiteru, Ninnaji no Miya (Dojo Shinno), Fujiwara no Tadayoshi, Kujo no Kanezane, Minamoto no Michichika, Fujiwara no Yoshitsune, Jien, Fujiwara no Kintsune, Minamoto no Michitomo, Fujiwara no Sanesada, Fujiwara no Kyōsuke, Fujiwara no Motoie, Gishunon-in no Tango, Fujiwara no Sadaie, Fujiwara no Ietaka, Fujiwara no Masatsune, Nijoin no Sanuki, Fujiwara no Tameie, Fujiwara no Takeru, Fujiwara no Ariie, Minamoto no Tomotika, Kuniakyo, Fujiwara no Hideyoshi, Inpumon-in no Tayu, Kojiju, Fujiwara no Nobuzane, Jakuren (Fujiwara no Sadanaga), Minamoto no Ienaga, Shun’e, Fujiwara no Toshinari (Shunzei), and Saigyo.

Most of these poets are presented in *Shinkokinshu*. Only six of the “new genuises” are not *Shinkokinshu* authors: Tsuchimikado-in, Juntoku-in, Dojo Shinno, Fujiwara no Tameie, Fujiwara no Takasuke, and Fujiwara no Motoie. Eighteen poems of *Shinsanjurokkasen* come from *Shinkokinshu*. Only one poem of the entire collection, by Fujiwara no Kanezane, comes from an imperial poetic anthology published before *Shinkokinshu* (from the seventh imperial anthology *Senzaishu* 千載集). The collection presents three emperors, and all poets come from the court, seven of them are women. The social composition of the *Shinsanjurokkasen* collection is completely in the vein of Heian court poetry.

The collection is organized in the following way: it consists of 36 poems, one by each of the best 36 poets (the “poetic geniuses” title indicates that they are the best), and poems marked as “left” and “right” are published by turn.

The tradition of selecting the best 36 poets begins with the anthology by Fujiwara no Kinto (966–1041). He selected 150 poems by 36 poets of various periods: there were ten poems by each of six authors, while each of the rest had three of their poems included. Those 36 poems were called “36 genuises of Japanese poetry” in the history of Japanese poetry. A collection of early manuscripts of this anthology is stored at the Kyoto temple of Nishi Honganji as a national treasure. The list of 36 genuises played a huge role not only in the history of Japanese poetry but also in the history of fine arts, because the portraits of those poets started a tradition of series of poets’ portraits. The
first known scroll depicting 36 poetic geniuses was created at the beginning of the Kamakura (just in time of “new geniuses”). This scroll is called the *Satake-bon sanjurokkasen emaki* 佐竹本三十六歌仙絵巻, after the family which owned the manuscript. Traditionally, Fujiwara no Nobuzane (1176–1265) is believed to be the painter of those portraits, while Kujo no Yoshitsune (1169–1206) is believed to be the calligrapher (both belong to “new geniuses”). The scroll was divided into parts in the early 20th century; its parts are currently owned by several museums and private collectors.

The scroll organized material in the following way: it gave brief information about the poet, one poem, and a portrait of the author. It is believed that the *Narikane-bon sanjurokkasen* 業兼本三十六歌仙絵 scroll, whose artist was Nobuzane and calligrapher Taira no Narikane, had the biggest influence on the tradition of poets’ portraits. Earlier scrolls, which go back to the 13th century, include *Agedatamisanjurokkasen* 上畳三十六歌仙, which depicts poets sitting on *tatami* mats. Lists of 36 poets were also made by Fujiwara no Mototoshi (1060–1142), Fujiwara no Norikane (1107–1165), Fujiwara no Toshinari (1114–1204) compiled the *Toshinari sanjurokunin utaawase* 俊成三十六人歌合 anthology. Thus, the tradition of selecting “36 poetic geniuses” established itself by the late 12th – early 13th century.

The best known collection, which presents one poem of each chosen poet, is *Hyakuninisshu* 百人一首 by Fujiwara no Teika, which appeared approximately at the same time as *Shinsanjurokkasen*.

The *Shinsanjurokkasen* collection was organized as a poetic contest, which is proven by the “left” and “right” marks. The practice of poetic contests, as we know it, originated in the second half of the 9th century. The first contests, especially those held at the court, were staged performances where composition of poems was just one of the elements, and not always the most important one. The notion of “poetic competition” included interior decorations and costumes.

Poetic contests changed a lot from one epoch to another due to various reasons, including those political and economic [Huey 1990]. The general trend was a decline in theatrics and a bigger significance of poems itself. There were lots of contests. Two early records of poetic competitions are *Jikkan-bon utaawase* 十巻本歌合 and *Nijikkan-bon* 二十巻本歌合, which contained 46 and 200 (53 of which did not survive) records of poetic competitions, respectively [Ito 1982, p. 203].

There were not so many universal rules for poetic contests. There were two teams called the left and the right. The contest was held in rounds (*ban*), and one song was recited in each round by the left (who were always the first to start the competition) and the right. Songs recited in one round had to

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4 For early poetic competitions and translations of several competitions, see [Dialogi 2002; Utaawase 1998].
have the same subject. The songs were compared, one of them was declared a winner, or both songs were recognized as equal.

The first structured poetic competitions appeared quite early. An early anthology of a structured poetic competition is Kasen utaawase 歌仙歌合 (The Competition of Poetic Genuises). It was compiled by Fujiwara no Kinto and modified by Prince Tomohira Shinno (964–1009). 130 songs by 30 poets were included in this collection.

It was important for a poetic contest that poems were created to prescribed themes. It was necessary to compare poems, so they had to have something in common.

The Shinsanjurokkasen collection does not have the indication of the comparison of poems (there was no indication that either poem won), and in some pairs poems were not quite close by their subject, yet the same subject prevailed in most pairs (for instance, the description of the same season). Given that only one poem of each poet was included in the collection, the only criterion for hierarchy here was to become participant of the first round. Quite natural that the participants of the first round were Go-Toba and Shiki-shi Naishinno.

Thus, the Shinsanjurokkasen collection was organized as a poetic contest, all poets came from the court, female poets participated, and the principle of “one poem per poet” was applied.

The Koyasan kongozanmai-in tanzaku collection which was composed about 100 years later had very different principles of structure.

The social stratification of waka poets greatly increased in the 13th – 14th centuries. The courtiers did not lose their place in the poetic circles, the waka poetry remained court poetry, but the military class confidently entered the poetic elite, and among the monastic poets there were especially many people from the military class.

The involvement of military men in the poetic life required new regulations. Poet Shotetsu (1381–1459) mentioned some of those.

“On formal public occasions, the lector withdraws as soon as all of the poems by the courties have been read aloud. Not until these poems are being read does the sovereign take his own poem slip from the folds of his robe and hand it to the regent or chancellor, upon which a new lector comes in. He reads the sovereign’s poem seven times. For those in the imperial entourage as well, poems by the regent and the highest court nobles are read three times. Poems by members of the shogun’s family have also been read three times in recent years” [Conversations with Shotetsu 1992, p. 104].

“Stacking the poems at a poetry gathering is a matter of the utmost importance. It is very difficult because they must be collected and stacked in sequence according to the participants’ court rank and family standing. The stacking procedure is easy at a gathering attended solely by court nobles because their official titles and court ranks are in an established order. The
procedure is difficult when the party consists of both court nobles and members of the military aristocracy” [Conversations with Shotetsu 1992, p. 122].

In the 13th century, the Mikohidari poetic family became divided into three schools. The poetic elite split simultaneously with the breakup of the imperial family. Thus, the Nijo school was associated with the imperial branch of Daikakuji, Kyogoku with the Jimyoin branch, and Reizei with the military aristocracy. The first shogun of the Ashikaga family, Ashikaga Takauji, started his poetic life with two poetic meetings, where poems were composed for sanctuaries: Sumiyoshi in 1336 (住吉社法楽和歌 Sumiyoshishahoraku waka) and Kasuga in 1339 (暦応二年春日奉納和歌 Ryakuoninen Kasuga-honowaka).

A manuscript consisting of two sutra abstracts and a poetic collection was presented to the Kongozanmai-in temple on Mount Koya in 1344. The original of this manuscript has survived. The manuscript was kept at the Kongozanmai-in temple until the Genroku era. In 1692 (Genroku 5), it was acquired by the fifth daimyo of the Maeda clan, Tsunanori (1643–1724). The text became part of the vast Sonkei collection, and remained there until now. The manuscript has the status of a national treasure, kokuho5.

The Hoshakukyo 宝積経 sutra (chapters Kashyapa and Ubari), was copied by the brothers Ashikaga Takauji and Ashikaga Tadayoshi, and Muso Soseki, a prominent representative of Zen Buddhism, close to Tadayoshi and, especially to Tadayoshi (it seems, Tadayoshi initiated the project). A poetic collection was the other part of the project.

Time passed, and the poetic collection began its independent existence. The poetic collection was published in the Zokugunshoruiju series (maki 403) and in Dainihonshiryo. Several manuscripts of this poetic collection have been published on the Internet6.

The collection has several titles: 高野山金剛三昧院短冊Koyasan kongozanmai-in tanzaku; 金剛三昧院百二十首 Kongozanmai-in hyakunijushu; 金剛三昧院奉納和歌 Kongozanmai-in hono waka; and 宝積経要品短冊和歌 Hoshakukyoyobontanzaku waka.

The manuscript stored at the manuscript research department of the Russian State Library as F–184 /II, K.4, No 1 is untitled. The text was written on a scroll (713.5 x 33.6 cm in size) and fan-folded as a book of 12.3 x 33.6 cm (58 pages). The text was written on one side of the sheet. The time of writing and the name of the copyist are not indicated. The poems are written in cursive, and the Chinese afterword in regular script. The cover is beige with an ornament of butterflies and plants. The interior part of the cover is light with an ornament of flowers of paulownia and chrysanthemum. The manuscript is in good condition. There is an inscription at the end of the book: 明治二十

5 See [Kokuho 2011].
6 Three manuscripts published in the database of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Kokubungakuenkenkushiryokan) were studied in the course of research of this collection.
The absence of library stamps shows that the manuscript comes from a private collection, and the date near the shop address suggests that it was bought in Tokyo after 1890; information on the time and circumstances of the acquisition of the manuscript by the library was not found.

All manuscripts and publications of the Koyasan kongozanmai-in tanzaku collection have an afterword by Ashikaga Tadayoshi dated as 8th day of the 10th moon of Koei 3 (1344), with the explanation why the sutra was copied and circumstances of its emergence and the structure of the poetic collection.

“Earlier last year, a man had a prophetic dream, which suggested that he should take the phrase 南無釈迦仏全身舎利 (na-mu-sa-ku-tsu-se-mu-shi-shi-mu-shi) (Oh, relics of Shakya Buddha! Na-mu-sa-ka-fu-tsu-se-mu-shi-mu-shi-mu), put every symbol first in the line, and compose poems. That has been done, and a scroll has been created. The principal text was written on the back side, so that everyone who composed those songs had a good karma. We humbly ask for the enlightenment coming from 31-syllable "flowery phrases," the fulfillment of aspirations of over 20 authors in two generations, and the rewarding of their descendants for good deeds of their ancestors in all the three realms of existence” [Kokuho 2011, p. 4].

The collection was structured in the following way: the phrase on which poems were based consists of 12 symbols. The phrase is repeated ten times. The “principal” collection comprises 120 poems (there is also an additional first poem, which is not included in the main structure). The collection presents poems by 27 poets (excluding the author of the additional poem). There are no consecutive poems of the same author (the author principle was not observed).

It seems the poems were composed at a poetic meeting. The method of composing poems in which poets are given different themes (in this case it is not a theme, but the first symbol) is called tsugiuta (続歌 継歌 次歌). Such poetic meetings were popular in the 14th century. Tsugiuta meetings were described, for example, in Shotetsu monogatari. The poems produced during tsugiuta composed a poetic cycle authored by several or many poets.

Unfortunately, there is no credible information regarding the time and venue of the poetic meeting. Toin (Nakazono) Kinkata (1291–1360) mentions the gift for the Kongozanmai-in temple in his diary Entairyaku, giving the same date that is given in Tadayoshi’s inscription (8th day of the 10th moon), so the information given by Kinkata seems to come from Tadayoshi’s text.

“The eighth day of the tenth moon. <…> Earlier Tadayoshi saw in a prophetic dream that he should collect songs by over 20 participants; the scroll was made, Hoshakukyoyobon was written on the back together with Takauji
and Soseki, and presented to the Koyasan Kongozanmai-in temple” [Dai Nihon Shiryo 1908, p.457].

The first commentary on the poetic collection is to be find in the Koya Shunju 高野春秋 (the full name Koya Shunjuhennenshuroku 高野春秋編年輯録) text by monk Kaiei (1642–1727), a collection of documents of Mount Koya temples and comments.

According to it, the poetic meeting was held at the Koyasan Kongozanmai-in temple on the 18th day of the 3rd moon. Yet a small foreword has obvious mistakes; it says, for instance, that the participants composed poems on the basis of a 14-syllable phrase (mu and ni symbols were added: na-mu-sa-ka-mu-ni-fu-tsu-se-mu-shi-mu-sa-ri) [Dai Nihon Shiryo 1908, p. 474]. This made Kikuchi Shin’ichi wonder whether that part of the text could be trusted [Kokuho 2011, p. 6].

The waka database of International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) stores poems composed at this poetic meeting in the “no date” section [Waka database].

Koya Shunju does not comment on the poems but gives information about participants, including the number of poems in the collection.

All manuscripts found on the Internet and in the manuscript at the Russian State Literature also contained a list of participants, indicating the number of poems included in the collection.

The number of poems indicated the significance of the participant in the collection. Another criterion for the assessment of poet’s contribution was the order of appearance in the collection.

The poetic collection includes (the names are given in the order of appearance, and the number of poems is given in brackets) works by Ashikaga Takauji (12), Ashikaga Tadayoshi (12), unnamed tanzaku (6), Ko no Shigemochi (3), Nijo Tameakira (6), Hosokawa Akiuji (3), Fujiwara Arinori (5), Nagai Hirohide (5), Kono Shigemochi (3), Gyochin (Nikaido Yukimoto) (5), Hosokawa Yoriharu (3), Reizei Tamehide (6), Nikaido Tsukiharu (5), Hosokawa Kuzuji (Tomouji) (5), Doe (5), Shibukawa Sadayori (3), Nikaido Narifujii (5), Keiun (5), Jitsusei (5), Renti (Utsunomiya Sadayasu) (3), Kenko (5), Tonna (5), Aihara Kiyotane (1), Akiyama Mitsumasa (1), Tiaki Takanori (2), Joben (2), and Minamoto no Sueyuki (1).

Definitely, the Ashikaga brothers, Takauji and Tadayoshi, were the two principal authors of the poetic collection. Both composed 12 poems, which constituted the na-mu-sa-ka-fu-tsu-se-mu-shi-mu-sa-ri phrase. The first poem was authored by Takauji, and the second by Tadayoshi. The equal participation of the shogun and his brother demonstrated the political situation in Japan in the period when brothers had comparable power.

Six poems were not signed; they were authored by the emperor. Poems of the incumbent and former emperors and other members of the imperial family could be indicated in poetic collections as gyosei 御製. This is how the poems...
were indicated in a number of manuscripts, including the manuscript stored at the Russian State Library.

It is believed that the anonymous *gyosei* could stand for the name of either Emperor Komyo or former Emperor Kogon. The *Koya Shunjū* commentator believes it was Emperor Komyo.

Yet the original text made researchers wonder whether the imperial poems were composed by one person or two, because the unsigned *tanzaku* were recorded in a slightly different manner. It is possible that both emperors contributed three poems each to the collection.

Two representatives of the leading poetic schools, direct descendants of Fujiwara no Toshinari and Teika – Nijo Tameaki and Reizei Tamehide – wrote six poems each.

The collection presented works by the entourage of Takauji and Tadayoshi. The social structure includes the emperor (or even emperors), the shogun, military men, monks (with origins in both aristocracy and the military class), and aristocrats. There are no women amongst the participants.

The participants included acknowledged poetic leaders, the so-called Four heavenly kings of Japanese poetry: Tonna, Joben, Kenko and Keiun. This poets did not play the primary role in the collection.

There were no prescribed themes for poems of the collection apart from the first syllables of poems, yet the general focus is religious.

No doubt, the collection was edited before being presented to the temple, and special first poem was added to the principal text. The first poem is dedicated to the coming of the future Buddha, Maitreya (Miroku).

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Yukusuemo we will meet
mekuriawamu to in the future
mukoyama on Mount Koya
sonoakatsuki wo wait for this dawn
tsuninikoso mate7 under the moon.
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The author of the first, so very significant poem is Kenshun (1299–1357).8

Kenshun was a monk of the Shingon school. He was privy to the Shingon sacred knowledge and a *gojiso* (護持僧 – an exorcist monk). Kenshun was a supporter of Takauji; he performed secret rituals of the Shingon school for emperors of the northern court and the shogun. His religious and political influence was enormous. No doubt, his poem was added to the collection to make the gift to the temple more valuable.

The Heian epoch is rightly called the zenith of *waka* poetry. The zenith of the court is also the zenith of the court poetry, and “the belonging to the

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7 行末もめくりあはむたかの山その暁を月にこそまて
8 For political situation of the moment and the role of Kenshun see [Conlan 2011].
court” is the key feature of waka poetry. Both collections include poems by emperors. Yet Shinsanjurokkasen was a collection with every characteristic of Heian poetry (first of all, the principle of choosing poets), while Kongozanmai-in tanzaku was an example of poetic activity of shoguns, sort of an attempt of the new authorities to resemble the imperial household.

Shinsanjurokkasen collection was based on the author's principle of anthology compilation: 36 best poets were chosen, all belonged to the same social group, and every poet contributed one poem, which led to the absence of visible hierarchy in the collection, except for the traditional choice of poets of the first pair. Quite the opposite, the Kongozanmai-in tanzaku collection had a hierarchy, what is more, the hierarchy created by the particular political moment, which is demonstrated by the number of poems of each participant included in the collection, and the addition of the first poem, which heightened the political weight of the poetic event.

The two collections manifest mixed trends in the waka poetry – the aspiration for traditionalism in the Shinsanjurokkasen collection and the unavoidable influence of social cataclysms in the Kongozanmai-in tanzaku collection.

References


The factual head of the Japanese government, Matsudaira Sadanobu, declared the ritual and the law as the foundation for receiving Adam Laxman’s expedition, the first Russian mission to Japan. The article attempts at understanding the meaning he ascribed to those notions through the lens of several sources related to Laxman’s expedition.

**Keywords**: Adam Laxman’s expedition, history of Russian-Japanese relations, foreign policy of the Tokugawa shogunate, diplomatic protocol, Matsudaira Sadanobu.

The Russian ship Ekaterina carrying Adam Laxman’s expedition dropped the anchor in the Nemuro Harbor off the northeastern extremity of the Hokkaido Island on October 9, 1792. The primary objectives of the expedition were to bring home Japanese castaways and to establish trade relations with Japan.

Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759–1829) hailed the decision to bring survivors of a Japanese ship’s wreck to their home country. “They (Russians) arrived today, and behaved properly. So, we should create no impediments and [act] consistent with the ritual and the law” [Yamashita Tsuneo (ed.) (2003a) p. 153], Sadanobu said in his “Guidelines for Interaction with the Russians”. He also said in his memoirs more than 20 years later, “They [the Russians] brought gifts and a letter from the government. Opinions differed, and the case did not look simple. The use of force seemed untimely. We decided to convey [our stance] to them on the basis of the ritual and the law” [Matsudaira 1969, p. 165]. This article studies the ritual and the law on which Matsudaira Sadanobu relied through the lens of several texts related to Laxman’s expedition.

The arrival of Laxman’s expedition caused active correspondence between officials in Nemuro, Matsumae, and Edo. The mission was not totally surprising to the Japanese administration. The Ainu spread the rumor that the Russians might pay a visit, and Tokunai Mogami, an explorer of northern territories, delivered the news to bakufu in 1791 [Mogami 1972, p. 453–454].

The first report on the arrival of the Russian ship in Nemuro was sent to bakufu in the tenth month of the fourth year of Kansei (November–December
The report was authored by Yunosuke Matsumae, the elder son of daimyo Michihiro Matsumae. The report told the story of Daikokuya Kodayu and his companions. It also said that the Japanese were questioned by an official of the Matsumae clan upon their arrival [Pozdneyev 1909, Vol. 2, Part 2, p. 49–50].

The next report by Yunosuke Matsumae said that the expedition members wished to bring the Japanese sailors, letters, and gifts to Edo, but were stopped in Nemuro for the time being. “They said they would be waiting for a response until the fourth or fifth moon of next year, and will go to Edo should the response not be given. They will be waiting here until instructions are received” [Pozdneyev 1909, Vol. 2, Part 2, p. 50]. Yunosuke Matsumae sent officials to Nemuro and told them to resolve the matter peacefully if possible.

The bakufu seated in Edo sent the following answer to the report by Yunosuke Matsumae: “Bring here the Japanese castaways. Keep the Russians in Nemuro, give them rice and sake, be polite, and treat them kindly and attentively. As to receiving the Japanese castaways, I [Matsudaira Sadanobu] am sending officials, Rokuemon Ishikawa and Daigaku Murakami” [Pozdneyev 1909, Vol. 2, Part 2, p. 51]. According to Yoshimitsu Koriyama, a historian of Russian-Japanese relations, the very fact that negotiations with Laxman were conducted by officials designated by bakufu, rather than representatives of the Matsumae principality, should be seen as the expedition’s success [Koriyama 1980, p. 131; Cherevko 2010, p. 208–209].

Negotiations between Laxman and bakufu officials were due to take place in Matsumae. The Russian delegation sailed to Hakodate in order to be escorted to Matsumae by land from there.

The local daikan met the expedition in Hakodate, and ordered to tow the Ekaterina to the harbor. Laxman and his companions accompanied by daikan and six officials came to the home of a local merchant. The Russians cleaned themselves up, had a seafood meal, and were ceremoniously escorted back to the ship [Laxman 1961, p. 135–136]. The Russians were offered luxury smoking appliances, silver for Laxman and lacquered for other mission members, at another dinner [Laxman 1961, p. 137].

The Russians arrived at the negotiations venue in the company of 16 officials from Edo and Matsumae; their full escort consisted of 450 people. Laxman, navigator V. F. Lovtsov, and volunteer A. I. Koch, a son of the Okhotsk commandant, travelled by norimono, a kind of palanquin. Translator E. I. Tugolukov, geodesic sergeant I. F. Trapeznikov, merchants V. N. Babikov and I. G. Polnomoshnyi, and five more Russians were riding horses, each in the company of two junior officials. There was also a saddled horse in case Laxman wished to ride [Laxman 1961, p. 137]. The travelers made several stops, during which the Russians were given a ceremonial welcome and invited to spend the night at local homes. In Hakodate, Matsumae, and every village
where the mission stopped, its residence carried the "Russian house" sign [Fainberg 1960, p. 61; Preobrazhensky 1990, p. 307].

For the purpose of the expedition’s convenience, the Japanese decorated the lodging in the European style. Laxman lauded “chairs made especially for us” [Laxman 1961, p. 128] at one of his meetings with Japanese officials. The house accommodating the Russian guests in Matsumae “had tables, benches, beds, and no floor mats”. As to the ritual of negotiations, the Japanese told the Russians they should take off their shoes and either sit on their knees or “lie on the side” [Laxman, 1961, p. 139] during the meeting. Laxman strongly rejected those rules, and insisted that each side should keep to one’s traditions [Laxman 1961, p. 139].

Japanese researcher Michiko Ikuta explored how much Laxman’s demand was met. According to her, the Japanese did not push for following their ritual and even tried to act in accordance with Russian traditions. Describing the first day of those negotiations, the researcher said that some Japanese officials sat on folding chairs, instead of tatami. The “oversight inspectors” ometsuke rose to greet Laxman on the second day of negotiations and approached the Russian ambassador to thank him for the gifts given on behalf of I. A. Pil’2 (the distance between the negotiating parties was about 8.5 meters at the first meeting), which was another sign of acceptance of European traditions. In the opinion of Michiko Ikuta, Japan was demonstrating unwillingness to trade with Russia orally and in writing despite the fact that certain messages were favorable for the Russians. Meanwhile, the language of ritual was remarkably cordial [Laxman 1961, pp. 140, 143; Ikuta 2006, pp. 68–69, 77–78].

Laxman said he appreciated that his companions and he “were received in the best possible manner and given full support” [Laxman 1961, p. 143] in Nemuro, Hakodate, and Matsumae. This comment is a rather precise description of the way the Japanese treated the Russian mission.

Still some suspicion about the mission remained.

For instance, Edo officials Yasuzo Tanabe and Denjiro Takusagawa and their companion, doctor Gen’yan Imai, said they were very worried when they traveled to Nemuro, while Kumazo Suzuki, another official who visited the mission in Nemuro, told E. I. Tugolukov that he was “desperate” when he was preparing for his voyage, and “his farewell party and himself were in tears” [Laxman 1961, p. 124]. The fears rooted in stories told by the Dutch, who said that Russia was cruel towards foreigners. After they made sure that the expedition was well-disposed, Yasuzo Tanabe and Denjiro Takusagawa sent a letter to Edo and expressed hope it would change the government’s prejudiced attitude towards the Russians [Laxman 1961, p. 124].

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2 Pil’, Ivan Alferyevich (approx. 1730–1801), Russian statesman, governor general of the Irkunsk and Kolyvan’ vicegerency (1788–1794), on whose behalf Laxman’s expedition was officially operating.
Another noteworthy episode happened when the mission was sailing from Nemuro to Hakodate. It was initially agreed that the Russians would sail to the Edomo harbor on the southeastern coast of Hokkaido, instead of Hakodate. Perhaps, the Japanese feared the Russians might breach the agreement, so they asked some of the Ekaterina crew members to board the Japanese ship. Laxman was insulted and said the Japanese did not need to fear and “could take the amanat”3 from the Ainu, but not from “educated officers of the Russian empire fulfilling their mission” [Laxman 1961, p. 134]. The agreement resulted in a failure: the fog prevented the expedition from landing in Edomo, and after the fog was gone the cross-wind made the return to Edomo impossible [Laxman 1961, p. 136].

The Ekaterina fired a gun to notify the Japanese about her departure from Hakodate. An official from Matsumae caught up with the Russian ship and expressed the authorities’ dissatisfaction with the gunfire. Explanations were given, but a few days later, Laxman noticed two Japanese ships monitoring the Ekaterina’s voyage [Laxman 1961, p. 146].

The Russian mission was given a kind and ceremonious welcome, but some caution was exercised. Judging by Laxman’s journal, a number of restrictions and bans were imposed on the mission members.

First and foremost, the Russians were strictly prohibited from meeting with local residents. According to Laxman, the Ekaterina was surrounded by numerous boats upon its arrival in Hakodate. The curious Japanese approached the Russian ship and asked for permission to board, yet designated officials pushed them away using iron sticks, threw logs at them, and “beat those people without mercy just to keep them off” [Laxman 1961, p. 135]. It was said in the end of the journal that “for the purposes of surveillance and prevention of any disturbance city residents could cause [to mission members]”, a Japanese ship was anchored near the coast from the day the expedition arrived in Hakodate till the day it went home [Laxman 1961, p. 146].

While describing their arrival in Matsumae, Laxman said homes “had their doors open and were packed with spectators of both genders” [Laxman 1961, p. 139], which showed how much interest common Japanese had in the mission. A cloth hanged on the fence around the mission’s residence was aimed to prevent any communication between the Russians and the local population, and 60 guards were standing at the house gate [Laxman 1961, p. 139].

Expedition members were not permitted to freely move around Hakodate. All Laxman was permitted to see was the northern coast near the Hameda village, currently a district of Hakodate, in the company of an official. The Russians were not allowed even to wash their clothes on the shore [Laxman 1961, p. 136].

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3 Amanat – something given for safe keeping. In this case: a hostage held to ensure the fulfillment of an agreement.
Obviously, attempts to demonstrate goods brought by Russian merchants, let alone to start bargaining, resulted in failure. The officials said that trade required a special permission of bakufu, and added that any mistake in the fulfillment of obligations could cost a life [Laxman 1961, p. 144].

Given the Ainu uprising on the Kunashir Island in 1789, the administration of the Matsumae principality feared that the Russians might get close with the Ainu. The Japanese officials stayed in Nemuro for winter in order to prevent attempts at such communication, although they usually spent the winter in the principality’s capital, Matsumae [Laxman 1961, p. 119]. The supervision over contacts between the Russians and the Ainu was a task of Kumazo Suzuki and Doctor Kengo Kato, who arrived from Matsumae in December 1792 [Laxman 1961, p. 121–122].

For its part, bakufu tried to take control over communication between the Russians and the Matsumae principality burdened by the watchful eye of the central government [Fainberg 1960, p. 56]. Laxman noticed that Matsumae officials stopped visiting the Russians after the arrival of officials from Edo, as they feared accusations of illegal contacts with the foreigners [Laxman, 1961 p. 123]. When the head of the Russian mission said he wished to have a face-to-face with the Matsumae prince to personally thank him for hospitality and give him gifts, ometsuke said the prince was just following orders from bakufu and the visit was not necessary. It was allowed, though, to hand over presents via an official. According to the journal, gifts for the Matsumae prince were selected with special care to make the due impression on the head of the territory bordering Russia [Laxman 1961, p. 143–144].

Summing up intermediate results, we should say that on the orders from Matsudaira Sadanobu the Japanese were very polite and courteous with the Russians since the day the expedition arrived and till the day it left home, which might be the result of his focus on the ritual. At the same time, certain actions of the Japanese demonstrated their caution and suspicion. For instance, contacts between the Russians and local residents were firmly stopped, and communication with Ainu and officials of the Matsumae principality was restricted.

We should now proceed to the second element of the rules laid down for negotiations with the Russians, the law. The law mentioned by Matsudaira Sadanobu often implies the country-closing edicts [Pozdneyev 1909, Vol. 2, Part 3, pp. 114, 123; Kutakov 1988, p. 74], which said that foreign vessels could visit Nagasaki only. As early as in 1635 all Chinese merchant vessels were ordered to arrive in that port, and in 1641, two years after the ban on visits by Portuguese vessels, the trading station of the Dutch East India Company was moved to Nagasaki. It was the city visited in the 17th century by ships from Southeast Asia, Portugal, and England, which offered trade resumption.

However, there was no special law or any other document restricting communication with foreigners to the port of Nagasaki until the late 18th
Thus, the image of Nagasaki as the only place permitted to be visited by foreign vessels was rather a custom, perceived as a law. This is proven by the fact that during negotiations with the Russians in 1778–1779 officials of the Matsumae principality responded to the proposal of starting trade by saying that “if they wanted to trade, there is a place, Nagasaki, of this same country, where people come from all over the world for trading, and this is where they should go to trade” [Polonsky 1871, p. 461]. Perhaps, Matsudaira Sadanobu, who learned about the precedent from reports of the expedition to the land of the Ainu in 1785–1786, believed the Russians could be convinced to do so.

Documents presented to the Russian side after negotiations in Matsumae included the permission of a visit of one Russian ship to Nagasaki, and the “formal warning”, which was called in Russian “The List Signed by His Majesty of Tenzin-Kubo in Regard to Foreign Ships’ Visits to the State of Japan”4. Given that the Russian translation of this text differed greatly from the original, and the archaic language was difficult for modern readers to understand, let us offer a new translation.

“From olden times, [Japan] has had a national law requiring that vessels of foreign countries, which have no diplomatic relations [with Japan], arriving in Japan be either seized or forced to leave; the law is still in effect. It is not allowed to disembark in any other harbor but Nagasaki even if the vessels bring home our castaways. Should a vessel of another country drift to our shore, we decided way back that even if the vessel belonged to a country, which has diplomatic relations [with Japan], [those castaways] should be returned to their country from the Nagasaki harbor by Dutch ships. Whenever those castaways break our law, they should be held [in Japan] and not allowed to go home. Also, since the day of the country’s establishment, whenever [vessels] from countries having no diplomatic relations [with Japan] drift to our shore, such ships are destroyed, and such castaways stay [in Japan forever] and are not allowed to go home. However, considering your effort to bring our castaways from afar and realizing that [you] have been unaware of laws of our country, you are allowed to return home as you are, but you should not visit these lands [the so-called Ainu land, and the Matsumae principality] ever again.

You have brought a letter from your government but your country has no diplomatic relations [with ours] and we do not know the title of your ruler, have no knowledge of your oral and written language, and are unaware of the difference between your nobility and low-born, which makes the choice

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of a correct ritual difficult. What is deemed to be respectful in our country, your country may see as rude, there is no way we can know this, so we cannot allow an exchange of letters between governments. This time we cannot refuse to [accept] our castaways, but we cannot allow diplomatic relations with these lands [Matsumae] either.

Neither can we allow your visit to Edo. This is because since the old days, we have never allowed even those countries, which have diplomatic or trade relations with us, to visit [arrive to] without permission other places than the designated ones. Should you choose to disobey, you will be treated harshly everywhere, and, given that [your] language is not understood in all harbors of our country, you are risking an even bigger harm. You kept telling us that the ruler of your country has ordered you to sail directly from the Ainu lands to Edo; if we are not mistaken, you will disobey the order of your ruler by doing so. The reason is the law [which requires] that whenever a foreign vessel arrives, it should be treated harshly along the entire coast: the vessel should be either detained or put under fire; you will put yourself in the harm’s way if you seek friendly communication. You will violate the order of your own ruler by doing so. If you refuse to accept every rule we have just explained to you, we will arrest all of you and act in accordance with the law of our country. There will be nothing we could do even if you regret your behavior.

Representatives of the Edo government have come to your place [of stay] to explain the laws of our country, do justice to the trouble you took to deliver our castaways from afar, and make sure that people of your country understand what we have just said. It looks like you [who have delivered our castaways] have orders to hand them over to Edo government members, but there is no reason why you cannot do that here [in Matsumae]. You can say you will refuse to hand over the castaways you have brought here if you are not allowed [to sail] to the place you want because of the law of our country. We will not take those castaways by force, but this does not mean that we have no compassion with the people of our country. However, this is not a reason to breach the national law. You are free to do whatever you want, having understood all of the above. If we decide to bring here the other two castaways you did not transport this time because of their sickness, you should not do so in the same manner. You should understand we will not accept them anywhere but in Nagasaki. Even if you bring them to the Nagasaki harbor, you cannot sail within the range of visibility of our country, but you should travel in the high sea instead. As we have told you, all harbors have received the order, and you should not take this lightly or act dangerously. Even if you arrive in the Nagasaki harbor, you will be unable to enter [the harbor] unless each of your ships has a written permission. What is more, you should go to Nagasaki and follow the instructions of local authorities if you aspire for something else, although it would be difficult to establish without proper grounds diplomatic and trade relations with countries other
than the ones designated earlier. [Now] you should clearly understand what we have told you in detail, and leave immediately”. Translated from the text: [Yamashita Tsuneo (ed.) 2003b, p. 361–365].

The document shows that the legislation repeatedly cited by the authors has two main provisions: the seizure or forcible expulsion of ships of foreign countries, which have no diplomatic or trade relations with Japan, and the ban on visits of foreign ships to any ports but Nagasaki. We have mentioned before that the second provision was actually a custom related to the edicts of the 1630s, which shaped up the foreign political system of Tokugawa’s Japan. The first requirement was legalized one year before the arrival of Laxman’s expedition. The regulations regarding foreign ships were released in 1791, following the appearance of the British ship Argonaut near the southwestern coast of Honshu. The document runs as follows:

“A foreign ship has been recently seen at the sea near the provinces of Chikuzen, Nagato, and Iwami. For more than eight days the ship was seen far from the shore and approached the coastline. [...] First, the ship gear should be seized, the vessel should be escorted to Nagasaki, and further instructions should be requested. From now on, whenever a foreign ship is detected, we should put personnel on standby and after [the ship] makes the first appearance, we should not use force right away, but send a written inquiry or an investigator to look into the case’s circumstances. If [the foreign ship] resists our actions, the ship and its crew should be destroyed, or we can embark the ship, engage in a fight, and axe the crew. Arrest is also possible. You can use guns if necessary. But if they reply to the written inquiry, or no impediments are created to the work of our investigator, we should stay calm, even if we have to tie up the foreign ship by deception, seize ship gear, escort the crew to the shore, guard the crew members, prevent the ship from leaving, and request the government for further instructions as soon as possible. In case of any resistance, the crew should be arrested and put in prison. It is unknown what religion the crew of a foreign ship may have, so no one but the guards should be allowed even to look at them. These instructions should be followed if no more than one or two foreign ships show up. If there is a flotilla of several ships, or if there are few ships but they present a danger from the very beginning, you should act consistent with the circumstances. If such incident happens, you should inform the neighboring lands as soon as possible, mobilize people, gather ships, and sail off.” Translated from the text [Yokoyama 2013, p. 8–9].

As we can see from a comparison of these two documents, Matsudaira Sadanobu might have feared a conflict with such a powerful state as Russia and objected to applying those regulations to the mission. It was decided to provide the Russians with everything they might need and give them the status of guests, but to keep the Russian ship from visiting the unprotected Edo harbor [Cherevko 2010, p. 211]. Analyzing the actions of the Japanese cen-
tral government after the Russian ship’s departure from the Japanese waters, we can see that the most important result of the Russian mission’s visit was the realization that the capital, Edo, and the adjoining waters were unprotected. Matsudaira Sadanobu personally inspected provinces adjoining the Edo Bay. We should also say that the central government’s document was rather cunning: the regulations put into place only one year ago was presented as a national law in effect from long ago.

The Formal Warning was the first document of its kind, which attempted at explaining principles of the foreign policy of the Tokugawa clan’s central government. In contrast to the Explanatory Note received by N.P. Rezanov in 1805, where fundamentals of the foreign policy were presented in a more detailed and uncompromising manner, the Formal Warning was situational: the Japanese authorities declared that they were following the national law in effect for a long time but were flexible. It would difficult to establish diplomatic and trade relations without proper grounds, but it was still possible, and Laxman received permission for the arrival of one Russian ship in Nagasaki.

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APPENDIX A

The bibliographic list of publications in Yearbook Japan for 2016–2017


APPENDIX B

The bibliographic list of publications in Japanese studies in Russia for 2016–2017


Belov A. V. Prospects for Japan-Russia cooperation in the energy field // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 1, pp. 32–46. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00005


Kartashov K. M. «The Journal of the Russian Expedition to Japan with the Attachment of the Correspondence between the Head of the Expedition and the Coastal Authorities concerning the Permission to Enter Japanese Ports and Disembark the Crew» as a Primary Source on Adam Laxman’s Expedition (1792–1793) // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2017, 4, pp. 50–61. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2017-00028


Kim E. U. Roman N. Kim – a prominent Soviet East Asian studies researcher and writer. Scientific conference dedicated to the scholar’s work for the IFES RAS // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 2, pp. 82–92. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00017


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Kireeva A. A., Nelidov V. V. The VIII Annual Conference “Russian-Japanese relations and prospects for their development” // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 1, pp. 82–87. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00009


Lousianin S. G. Welcoming Address to Readers from IFES RAS Director S.G. Lousianin // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 1, p. 4. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00001


Pavlenko S. S. The formation of Japanese consular law system as a part of international law at the end of XIXth and the beginning XXth centuries // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 3, pp. 4–12. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00018


Simonova-Gudzenko E. K. The Role of Place Names in Political Culture of Medieval Japan // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 2, pp. 26–42. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00013


Streltsov D. V. Welcoming Address to Readers from Chief Editor D. V. Streltsov // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 1, p. 5. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00002


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Trubnikova N. N. Jikkinshō: to the Concept of urami [bitterness] // Japanese Studies in Russia, 2016, 2, pp. 57–70. DOI: 10.24411/2500-2872-2016-00015

