

Russian Images of Today in Japan: Toward the Future Cooperation

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Both Japan and Russia have maintained a long diplomatic relation since 1855 when both concluded the Shimoda treaty. However, they could not construct a good relationship; they rather went to widening unconfidence. Now we need to construct a stop-gap policy which is reducing unconfidence toward the future cooperation. In order to construct such a policy, we must understand what kind of Russian images the young Japanese of today have in Japan. The survey shows that they do not like Russia, they do not like to go to Russian country, and nevertheless they surprisingly know President Yeltsin very well as their perception. As a result of Russian images of today's young generation in Japan, Russia is the smallest share in young Japanese mind. Let us consider how to change to the largest one in their mind. The way of how to do so is to change from stopping the stale talks we did before to widening regional cooperations we can do now. This way is a very slow one, but good one for both countries according to the survey.

Keywords: Russia, Japan, image, unconfidence, future cooperation

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Introduction:

In this paper, the present author will examine both what happened one hundred years ago and what happens today between Japan and Russia, and inform the Russian public of what kind of Russian images the young Japanese of today in Japan have internalized according to "Public Opinion Survey" for 500 young Japanese conducted in Fukuoka city, Kyushu island. The survey shows that they do not like to go to Russian country to visit, and nevertheless they surprisingly know President Yeltsin very well as their perception. The perception gap between both is big; it is not easy for both to reduce the gap. I suggest the best way to do so is that both organizes the strongest soccer team, and then either Japan or Russian team wins in the World Cup or both of them play there. In fact, both of Japanese and Russian countries now stand at the very important period before both are scheduled to contact a peace treaty towards the year of 2000. In order to do so, both governments have recently made their efforts to exchange officials to officials, and to set up a stable diplomatic channels. Dr. Alexander N. Panov, Russian Ambassador to Japan, made his speech on July 7 1998 at Fukuoka city that both Japan and Russia begin to conclude a peace treaty towards the year of 2000, and they have constructed a good relation we never saw ever before except territorial dispute.

Japan and Russia Relationship: 100 years ago and Today

After 1855 when Japan and Russian concluded the Shimoda treaty, both countries could not construct a good relation. Rather both were not good; both went to widening unconfidence. In 1904 Japan and Russia went into the war as a negative side. However, there was a good tone that after the Simoda treaty Russian people began to visit Japan as a positive side. As a historical fact, a few Russian Peoples from Vladivostok came and settled in Hokkaido, Northern island of Japan. But, it was too hard for them to live there, so they moved not all but some to Oregon State in the USA. Also Russian scientist and adventurers visited some parts of Hokkaido to investigate there geographically about 100 years ago. Historically important things were that the first Russian counsel opened at Hakodate in the middle of 19 century, about 143 years ago when it was almost the same year the USA contacted with Japan, and when it was a little earlier than British people started to visit Japan to contact with it. Human contacts by each people and government in Japan and Russia started earlier than by each in Japan and the UK. But business contact was very slow or none in both Japan and Russia, in contrast of Japan an British or Japan and the USA business ties. The same tendency has still continued for about 100 years

between Japan and Russia.

Today it seems that Russian government may change its diplomatic policy from centering on Europe and North America to focusing on Asia-Pacific regions. Or it might be unable to ignore the Russian far east area to develop economically. Today it is clear that Japan needs to import more natural resources: natural gas, oil, timber, and fish. Such resources exist a lot in the Russian far east. Both Japan and Russia today may recognize that each needs one and another to develop each economy. If there is not a great stumbling block just like a territory problem between them, it is clear that both countries, information, and so on. Throughout extension of all exchange, it is time that we must break through cotinuing stalemate for a long time. In the mean time, will young Japanese and next generation be able to change unchanged tendency for a long time between Japan and Russia? As a result of our survey, we can not change widely but step by step. Or it may be impossible for young Japanese to change their relationship. The young Japanese is not interested in Russia so much. Let us see what kind of Russian images they have according our public opinion survey.

Russian Images of Today's Young Japanese

Public Opinion Survey for 500 young Japanese in Fukuoka, Kyushu island where is far away from the Russian Far East in Japan conducted in June 1998. The Survey items consist of five questions:

The first question is "What countries do you like among many?." Their answers to it are: 7.9% for the USA, 7.5% for Japan, 7.0% for the UK, 6.8% for Italy, 6.6% for France, 6.2% for Australia, 3.9% for Switzerland, 3.1% for Germany, 2.9% for Canada, 2.4% for China, 14.4% for others, 0.2% for Russia in the ranking order. Only three persons answer to like Russia among 500.

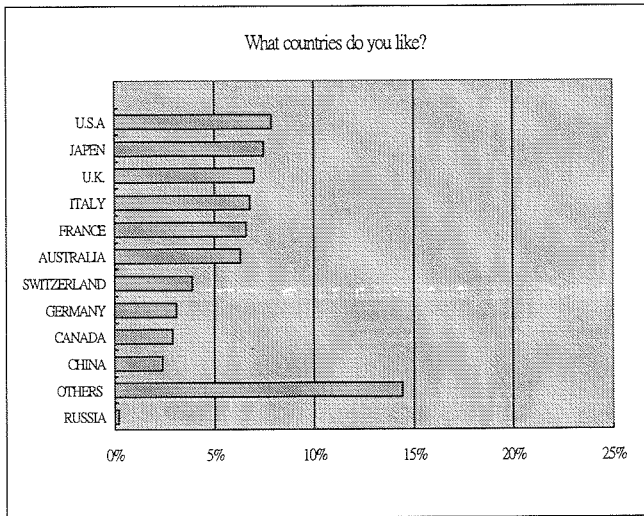


Figure1 What countries do you like?

The second one is “What country do you want to go if you choose one among many?” Their answers to it are: 18.5% for the USA, 15.3% for France, 11.2% for Italy, 9.5% for the UK, 9.1% for Australia, 5.8% for Switzerland, 4.5% for China, 2.9% for India, 2.5% for Canada, 2.1% for Spain and Germany, 16.5% for others, and 0.4% for Russia in the ranking order. Only one person answer to want to go to Russia among 500 persons.

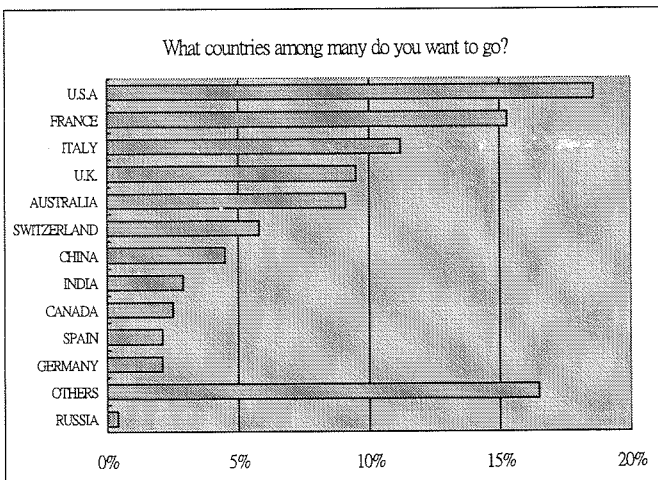


Figure2 What countries among many do you want to go?

The third one is “Do you like Russia?.” The answer “Yes” is 9.9%, “No” 29.5%, and “DON’T KNOW” 60.5% respectively.

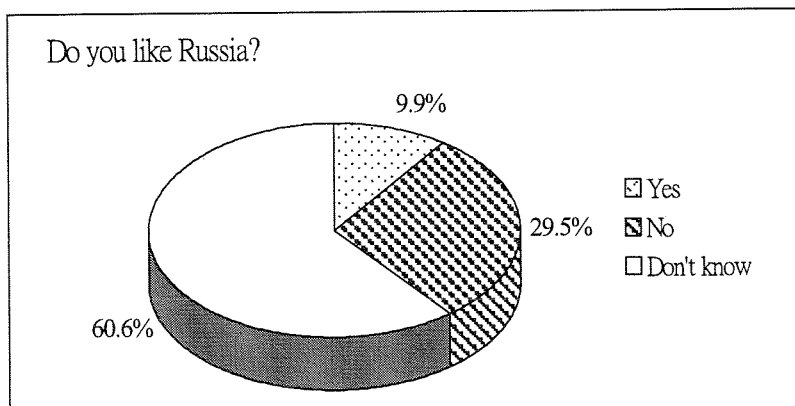


Figure 3 Do you like Russia?

The fourth one is “What cities do you know in the Russian country?.” Among 500, 51.2% is for Moscow, 9.4% for Vladivostok, 8.4% for Chernovtsy, 6.1% for Leningrad(They do not know of having changed to St. Petersburg), 3.7% for Khabarovsk, 2.9 for Kiev and Irkutsk, 15.3% for others(all most indicating not cities but areas) in the ranking order.

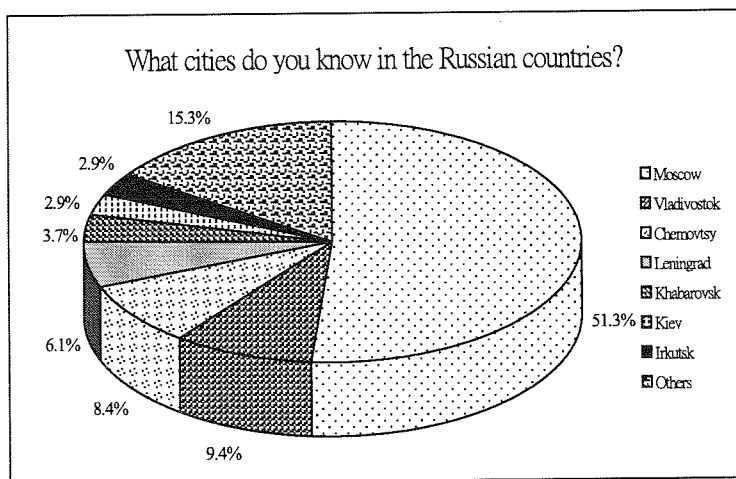


Figure 4 What cities do you know in the Russian countries?

The last one is “Who is the Russian President?.” 81.9% of 500 answer Mr. Yeltsin exactly. In this time, we do not ask 500 young Japanese of “who Rus-

sian Primer Minister is, “ because it is a very short time after changing it in the Russian country. “ Don’t know” is 13.7%. “ Gorbachov” 1.2%. “Others” are 3.1% which indicates other country’s officials.

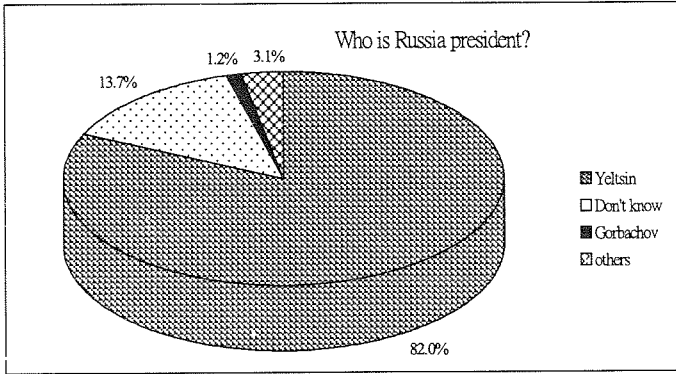


Figure 5 Who is Russian president?

Needs for widening Regional Cooperation

For Russia, Japan is a small trade partner not only share 3% of all Russian trading; For Japan, that is the same thing. However, it is obvious that regional cooperation have recently widened to reduce a perception gap. To do so, let us note what kind of regional cooperation there are between Japan and Russia:

- a) As an economic cooperation, two joint projects calling Sakhalin Energy Project have started at Sakhalin to develop natural gas and oil. The project of Sakhalin 1 will invested US\$ 15.000 millions, and the gas and oil will produce from the year of 2001; the project of Sakhalin 2 is a smaller than the first one. It will produce the gas and oil from 2003 or 2004. It takes note that Primer Minister Kiriyenko was Minister of Energy when the projects started.
- b) As military cooperation, Japanese and Russian military concerned people have started exchange program since 1997. This is a new historical memory. The program will contribute to deeply understand that we do not have any threat between them.
- c) As an economic and tourist cooperation, Otaru city, Hokkaido welcomes more tourists from Russia. Because Russian tourists have contributed to Otaru economy. But they are recently reducing to half of 900 tourists per year. The reason is that Russian passenger steamers have omitted an international code of passenger capacity and illegally carried over passengers. International Authorities ordered to reduce some 100 passengers to 36 one because

Russian steamers are not appropriate in quality and facilities for carrying passengers. Otaru economy is shrinking in correspondence to a decline of Russian tourists in Otaru city.

- d) As an economic and culture cooperation, Wakkanai JC (Junior Commerce) will send an economic mission to Yujino-Sakhalinsk in Sept 3-4 1998 to open a market calling "Teppen Ichi" where it sells food, medicine, car parts, stationaries and others. The problem happens Russian custom office has regulated and prohibited some Japanese goods, which use only sampling presentation.
- e) As a human cooperation, Japanese engineer visit to Kunashiri island to construct hot spring pipe lines for housing. Republic of Korea has spread construction materials and Japan remitted money.
- f) As National and local cooperation, non-visa trip between Japan and Russia has already been initiated by local politicians between Hokkaido and Sakhalin, and citizen between Nemuro and Northern territories. The problem happened in citizen exchanges between Nemuro and Northern territories. Russian custom office refused at gate that a Japanese citizen carried on a vinyl house which users for planting vegetables in not only winter but all seasons at Russian family. I do not know why the office refused it. I hope to widen more and more non-visa trip between both countries.
- g) As a cultural cooperation, the Eermitage Museum in St. Petersburg has invited two Japanese sword grinders: Mrs. Kouichi Eto and Hiroaki Kurokawa in Fukuoka, whose experts are almost none in the present Japan. Why they have invited is that before Russian revolution, Nicholas II (Nikolai Aleksandrovich) visited Japan in 1891 and Meiji Emperor gave him a very beautiful sword made in Chikuzen (calling it Fukuoka now) as a present. He brought in into the old Russia, and were unhappily executed after the revolution. Only the sword was in the Museum, but rusted away. So, two Japanese sword grinders have been invited to remove rust and polish the sword. The old sword after polishing will inform the new Russian public story broadcasted all over Japan on July 13 through TBS networks.
- h) Mr. Muneo Suzuki, Japanese Governmental Official in order to hand over Primer Minister Hasimoto's gift set from Japan visited from Nemuro to Kunasiri and Etorofu islands as a non-visa status in June 23-26 1998. Mr. Hasimoto met President Yeltsin at Kawana, Kanagawa Prefecture in this spring, and promised with him to send a gift set of electric power by diesel engine, a lighter, a pier construction, and others to Russian people I the islands. Mr. Suzuki's visiting to the islands extended to develop a grass-root cooperation.
- i) Russian Primer Minister Kiriyenko stepped in Japan as his first visit on July 13 to discuss Russo-Japan economic cooperation and others. His visiting was a first historical memory that Russian Primer Minister has never visited

to Japan ever before. After Japan, he was in China.

- j) In order to develop Japan and Russia regional cooperation, it needs to open a new air route from Khabarovsk or others to Fukuoka by Aeroflot or others. Now Aeroflot has flights to Hakodate, Aomori, Niigata, Toyama, Osaka, and Tokyo.

Concluding Remarks: Beyond stale talks

Throughout their exchange programs, Japan and Russia will make progress for the future cooperation.

Firstly, Russia is now new Russia orienting to a market economy, where Russia will manufacture high qualified goods to compete with other countries. Thus it makes a lot of money and new technologies. So, economic development in Russia is badly needed. Japan can cooperate to construct such a new Russia.

Secondly, Russia has kept a lot of natural resources. If they can export to Japan and Korea fairly, Russia can catch a chance to develop economy. If so, many countries will invest into Russia, and establish many joint ventures. Of course Japan can.

Thirdly, Russia is changing Marxist ideology to more democratic ideas, which can share with Japan and other democracies. Now Japan and Russia swim in the same pool; they are not enemy.

Fourthly, Japanese people feel that Russia is neither dangerous nor exports threats to Japan. NASDA decides to purchase a set of Russian rockets. It is an evidence that Russian space technologies will develop Russian railway systems.

Fifthly, Russian classic art, music, dance, and novel are familiar to Japanese people. But modern or present Russian art, music, dance, and novel are not. Both Japan and Russia need to make efforts to exchange information on them. We can do.

Sixthly, as educators we need to make student or young generation exchange program between both. This program will play an important role to reduce perception gaps. If colleges and universities in the Russian Far East can accept Japanese exchange students, Japanese colleges and universities can do mutually in manner of "gives and takes." Russian Far East State University, Hakodate Campus starts to educate Japanese experts on Russian business. But its tuition fee is 2 million yen per year; it is too expensive in Japan. I do not know if such a way like the Hakodate Campus can success or not in Japan.

Seventhly, in order to understand each culture, Japanese and Russian young people must stay in each country. If Japanese young visit Russia, they never

satisfy Russian hotel accommodation of quality and high price. Russian side should consider to hotel quality and price. If not consider, Japanese young can not change their preference to go to Europe and North America as our research survey indicated.

Lastly, concerning to territorial problem, Japan expects that Russia will send a good news. If Russia can report a good news to Japan, Japanese mind will greatly change towards Russia. Such Russian answer may be difficult because Russian parliament never answer yes. It is a time that we must finish a stale talk constructing the future cooperation between Japan and Russia.(Itow)

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