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Fumio Kishida's First Year in PM Office: Is Abenomics to End or Stay?

V. G. Shvydko

Abstract

The article addresses the experience of Fumio Kishida's first year as Prime Minister of the Japanese government with respect to its economic policy vision and implementation. This policy is analyzed by comparing it to the policy pursued over the past ten years by PM Kishida's predecessors in the office, on the one hand, and to the commitments he announced during the 2021 election campaign, on the other hand. The paper notes that, in its basic moments, the economic policy of the cabinet of the new leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party continues the course previously maintained by the team of then-PM Abe Shinzō, known as *Abenomics*. This is manifested in the specific use of basic instruments of macroeconomic policy, primarily in the monetary and tax areas, as well as in setting priorities for the policy to stimulate consumption and economic activity. Continuity of the course can be particularly illustrated by the soft monetary policy; a positive view of the depreciation of the Japanese national currency; the moderately expansionary fiscal policy relying on domestic borrowing; preference given to interests of the national corporate sector. Legacy inherited from the previous administrations also includes government measures to revitalize deferred private demand, promoting investment in R&D, venture, and innovative enterprises with a particular focus on regional economies. Kishida's particular emphasis on invigorating redistributive mechanisms and increasing the share of wages in the total national income has not yet resulted in specific decisions and actions by the government. Kishida's commitment to expand the number of beneficiaries

of the capitalist market system as part of his idea of “new capitalism” is yet to be carried out.

In recent months, the attention of the government and its economic team has largely been focused on overcoming the consequences of the disruption of transnational production, trade and logistics chains caused by the coronavirus pandemic and rising geopolitical tensions. In addressing this issue, the government prioritizes subsidizing businesses and households to partially offset energy and food price hikes, securing diversification or localization of critical links of trade and production chains, as well as the exclusion from them of politically undesirable or unstable locations. At this stage, however, the actions of the government are limited to setting relevant goals and plans to provide finance for programs with effectiveness yet to be proven.

Keywords: Japan, economic policy, social and economic reforms, “new capitalism”, transnational business chains, Abenomics.

The one-year stint as Japan’s Prime Minister of Kishida Fumio, the new leader of the Liberal-Democratic party (LDP) – the main political party of the country expressing sentiments and political perceptions of the bulk of the Japanese establishment – raised the issue of how the change of leadership would impact the government’s economic policy, which, for ten prior years, had, one way or another, reflected the approaches embodied by Abe Shinzō, an outstanding representative of Japanese conservatives. Despite controversial assessments made about the results achieved through these approaches, which were somewhat artificially integrated by the officially used term *Abenomics* (*abenomikkusu*), in the popular view, Japan’s economic reality of the second half of the 2010s was in many respects characterized by this very expression (“*the era of Abenomics*”) [Hoshi, Lipsy 2021].

As Japan’s top political figure changed, there inevitably appears an element of uncertainty: to what extent will the new Prime Minister’s views and preferences affect the economic administration’s arrangements and priorities and can any changes thereof be expected

in the near future and in the medium term. This article attempts to facilitate the fact-based search for answers to all these questions, if not to provide an exact answer.

Ideological and Political Positioning in the Starting Period

Evidently, the new leader of Japan's conservatives has personal and intellectual ambitions inducing him to try on the role of, if not a radical reformer, but, in any case, a proponent of new ideas and approaches. It was especially important for him given the mixed, and sometimes openly negative assessment by the party of the country's economy at the time of the LDP presidential election in the fall of 2021 [Sato 2022, p. 72]. As a candidate for this very significant position in Japan's political world, Kishida expressed an intention to promote drastic changes in various fields of the country's economic development through his future policies. He particularly identified the following goals:

- 1) introducing stronger redistribution of income through increased taxation of the wealthy, a wider system of social benefits, and aid to the most needy, as well as expanding free access to some government services, primarily educational;
- 2) achieving greater "inclusiveness" of the economy through participation in labor and financial markets of the categories of the population that have not been previously involved therein;
- 3) focusing on the social impact of the technological policy, which should not so much (and not only) raise productivity, but rather increase the comfort and well-being of an ordinary individual ("the people").

In addition, the future prime minister often used the expression "new capitalism", its major feature being, as he would say, reducing Japanese businesses' focus on short-term profits and their reorientation towards long-term tasks of "harmonious development" set by society as a whole.

Although Kishida's statements are quite vague and do not imply sharp, let alone radical, interference in economic relations, the new leader's

initial agenda, judging from its major emphasis (closing economic gaps in society, enhancing the government's redistribution function, etc.) may be characterized as left-wing, according to contemporary European standards. This is particularly so considering the essentially socialist contents of his "new capitalism" slogan, implying the superiority of welfare tasks for businesses, compared to maximization of profits and growth of market capitalization. The same characteristic can be derived from the radicalism of the environmental agenda expressed in his public statements, specifically his promise to make Japan a leader of building a new low-carbon and environmentally neutral economy.

This approach might seem unnatural for a representative of Japan's conservative ruling elite, were it not for their growing disposition towards populist phraseology, which has become a permanent image element of political mainstream in recent decades. A certain set of such statements is virtually indispensable for any Japanese politician aspiring to be a visionary and a national leader, regardless of their ideological background. This was actively used by Abe, Kishida's virtual predecessor as the leader of Japanese conservatives (if we disregard Suga's one-year stint in this post), who was vigorously creating the public image of a strong leader, self-assured and confident in his view of the future. Even more populist rhetoric was applied by his team, which initiated development and publication of various policy documents ("strategies") stating the government's vision of pending changes in the economy and society. This vision always included a utopian description of future technologies and a promise to quickly remove all material limitations for life comfort, which would allegedly result from the benefits of the new "industrial revolution" and technological progress.¹ Thus, the new LDP leader

¹ The second half of the 2010s saw this semi-utopian idea of the future assuming the form of the *Society 5.0* concept – the post-information society of the socio-economic harmony based on the achievements of the Fourth industrial revolution and widespread introduction of technologies using artificial intelligence and cutting-edge communication technologies.

did not break the established tradition; he only modified the accents and verbal clichés, preserving his party's commitment to promises of general welfare and social harmony.²

Yet, along with the above-described general principles, Kishida's pre-election speeches contained more specific pledges reflecting his leftist reformist rhetoric. He particularly suggested raising capital gains tax on the property of relatively well-off sections of the population, increasing taxation of dividends paid by companies, and making big business raise labor remuneration pursuant to government recommendations. Kishida also proposed some measures to shift the motivation of corporate sector from focus on the pursuit of short-term profits to achievement of long-term goals. One of his suggestions was to abandon the practice of quarterly statements focused on cash returns and limit corporate buyback. Yet, the lack of particulars implied that those were not serious proposals from relevant working groups in the party apparatus, but rather merely manifesto "gimmicks" suggested to the candidate for party leadership by his staff.

Year 1: Adaptation of New Approaches to Habitual Practice

The time since Kishida's election as the leader of the party and Prime Minister has shown that some specific pledges associated with the slogan of "new capitalism" have turned out to be substantially corrected, while the implementation of others has been postponed until much later.

² The relevant provisions and pledges are contained in LDP official materials, including those published recently (See, specifically: Ketsudan to jikkō. Mirai wo mamoru. Nihon wo mamoru. Jimintō Reiwa 4 nen Seisaku Panfuretto [Decision and Implementation. Protecting Future. Protecting Japan. LDP Policy 2022] http://jimin.jp-east-2.storage.api.nifcloud.com/pdf/pamphlet/202206_pamphlet.pdf

For example, the government led by the new Prime Minister did not propose immediate introduction of any important tax innovations which would be aimed at increasing income redistribution. Meanwhile, the projects of tax revisions to this end which had been discussed before were essentially postponed and partially corrected. Speaking in the London City in May 2022 and, later, before investors at the New York Stock Exchange, Kishida shared his plans for tax incentives for private financial investments, while in November of the same year he presented a government-approved plan of extending relevant tax exemptions.³ These measures are clearly in dissonance with his initial idea of higher taxation of incomes from financial assets as a way of redistributing income and wealth. This discrepancy did not go unnoticed.⁴

As for incentives for a accelerated pay rise, business did not experience any special pressure in this respect either. In any case, no public complaints can be found, and statistics show rather a stagnation of employees' incomes. The rise of basic wages and salaries through traditional spring negotiations on the re-conclusion of collective employment agreements in large corporations amounted to some 1.86 percent in 2022 – less than in the prior years.⁵ The annual increase of statutory minimum wage recommended by the Ministry of Health, Labour

³ Reference was specifically made to extending the program of tax-exempt investment accounts for private entities, known as NISA. See: Transcript: Japan PM Kishida's speech in London. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Transcript-Japan-PM-Kishida-s-speech-in-London>

⁴ Kishida's asset income plan marks departure from focus on wealth redistribution. *The Japan Times*. 30.11.2022. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/11/30/business/kishida-double-asset-income/> See also: Nagata, K. What's behind Kishida's plan to spur household investment. *The Japan Times*. 11.05.2022 <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/05/11/business/economy-business/behind-kishida-plan-investment/>.

⁵ How 'transitory' is Japanese inflation? *Nikkei Asia Market Spotlight*. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Market-Spotlight/How-transitory-is-Japanese-inflation>

and Welfare (specific figures are determined by prefecture authorities) amounted to the same 3 percent in 2021 and 2022 as in the 2015–2019 fiscal years⁶. In addition, in his statements at public press conferences, the Labour minister recommended matching planned increases with the possibilities companies have, without placing unjustifiably high demands on corporations.⁷

The same is true for regulatory innovations: Kishida's first cabinet's performance failed to show any plans for drastic changes in the regulatory system aimed at stronger control or re-distribution effect.

At the same time, the slogan of “new capitalism” did not disappear from the new leader's rhetoric even after it became clear that he had no plans for revolutionary changes in the economic and social policies. His speeches aimed at wide audiences, including international ones, still contain references to this concept as well as deliberations about the necessity of stronger re-distribution of income through fiscal tools, politically motivated involvement of underused human resources into the economy, stronger social and environmental responsibilities of businesses, etc.⁸ Moreover, one can see hints at Kishida's ambitions and readiness to try on the role of a reformer, creator of a new strategy of responding to historical challenges the country faces and, as he puts it, “huge transformation of the liberal democratic society”. For example, when formulating major tasks for his cabinet, F. Kishida goes beyond

⁶ As Japan looks to raise minimum wage, firms say they'll struggle to pay it. *The Japan Times*. 01.07.2022. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/07/01/business/minimum-wage-hikes-companies-pressure>

⁷ See, for example, the texts of the minister's speeches at press conferences placed on the Ministry's official site. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/kaiken/daijin/0000194708_00459.html

⁸ See, for example: F. Kishida's address to the participants of the World Economic Forum in Davos <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/japan-new-form-of-capitalism-revive-economy/> and his speech before investment bankers in the London City in May 2022 (Transcript: Japan PM Kishida's speech in London), and others.

promises to change the regulatory system, taxation, and administration of budgetary expenditures, referring to the ambitious aim of building a society of “total participation,” where “the effort and contribution of everyone will be adequately assessed and rewarded”.

However, the new leader’s rhetoric is formulated on a rather high level of abstraction and does not transform into well-developed and meaningful official documents. As to the practical policies of the government and economic authorities (that also include central bank, as well as public and semi-public corporations functioning to support the economy), a great degree of continuity may be observed instead of the pledged turn to “new capitalism.”

Economic Policy: General Picture and Continuity as the Basic Premise

This mostly refers to ***monetary policy***. Being a major element of economic policies, monetary policy has remained intact throughout the last decade, and the change of the prime minister did not alter it at all. The priority of the official line in this field, as it was before, is to ensure cheap loans through the targeted influence on the amount of liquidity (money supply) in the economy and interest rates on money markets.

The soft (or, rather, ultrasoft) monetary policy, characterized by keeping interest rates at the extremely low levels, has been more or less intact for the entire last decade. This line was clearly indicated by Kuroda Haruhiko, the Governor of the Bank of Japan, right after his appointment to the post in 2013 and was followed by him and his institution throughout the subsequent years. They made use of all mechanisms available to monetary authorities for this purpose: operations with government bonds in the open market; interest rates for accounts in the central bank held by commercial banks for reserves and other funds; and public statements by the Bank’s management meant to influence expectations of market participants (verbal interventions). A concerted and integrated effort was made to use these

instruments for keeping the borrowing costs in national currency at the lowest possible level and, therefore, exerting downward pressure on the yen exchange rate in the foreign exchange market.

The opportunity for such use was ensured, on the one hand, by the support of Abe Shinzō, who was the one to initiate this course in order to stimulate economic growth and minimize costs caused by the increasing huge national debt and the need to service it. On the other hand, it carried forward due to extremely low inflation and, in some years, even deflation in Japan's economy for this entire period, when the index of consumer prices showed low positive (below 2 percent in annual terms) or negative values.

Even the dauntingly sharp drop of the yen exchange rate in 2022, caused by the key rates of the central bank being kept at the near-zero level⁹ against the background of raising thereof by the US and Eurozone financial authorities, did not compel the Bank of Japan to correct its policies. Even as business elite opinions divided over this persistence of monetary authorities, the Bank of Japan management found the exchange rate decrease an insufficient argument for changing key rates. Also insufficient was an argument of consumer and wholesale prices hikes in 2022: an increase of consumer inflation rates up to 2–3 percent (in annual terms) is considered by the Bank of Japan to be caused by non-monetary factors, primarily the rise of prices of raw materials in global markets and the disruption of logistic and production chains as a result of growing geopolitical tension.¹⁰ In addition, given Japan's situation, this inflation is, as many experts believe, mitigated

⁹ In Japan, these are interest rates on the non-compulsory part of commercial banks' deposits with the central bank, that have a decisive impact on short-term money market rates, and the targeted level of yield of long-term government bonds traded on the secondary market maintained by the Bank of Japan. The head of the Bank of Japan had repeatedly, throughout the entire 2022, confirmed the intent to keep these indicators at the level of minus 0.1 and zero percent respectively (for ten-year bonds).

¹⁰ Many reputable economists point to the larger role of non-monetary factors in the current global inflation rise, for example: [Rogoff 2022].

by the highly elastic demand of households, that respond to the price rise by reduced consumption.¹¹ Consequently, the Bank of Japan sees raising interest rates in these conditions as, at very least, useless from the viewpoint of preventing higher inflation, which, incidentally, was, in 2022, much lower than in the USA or the Eurozone.

There is still evident, ***as a whole, a positive attitude towards the weakening yen***, typical of the former prime minister's economic ideologists, especially at the first stage of formulating the principles of Abenomics. Although Kuroda Haruhiko, as well as the Ministry of Finance officials made public statements about possible negative consequences of such rapid depreciation of national currency, as it was in the summer and fall of 2022 (mostly having a negative influence on business environment predictability),¹² it did not arouse any special concern.

Official statements predominantly argued that sudden movements of the exchange rate and the speed of events might serve as a reason for anxiety, while the process of national currency depreciation per se, especially in the light of trade balance deficit due to the rising cost of imported primary goods, was regarded more as a positive than a negative phenomenon from the viewpoint of economic growth prospects. And although the government, as represented by the Finance Minister Suzuki Shun'ichi, promised to "take appropriate measures" in the event of further uncontrolled movement of the yen rate,¹³ the central bank

¹¹ How 'transitory' is Japanese inflation?

¹² See, for example, his statements on this issue at the meeting of the Budget Committee the House of Councillors on October 19, 2022 (Nichigin Kuroda sōsai: En'yasu "Kyūsoku katsu Ippouteki waga kuni keizai ni mainasu" [BOJ Governor Kuroda: Yen Depreciation "Rapid and One-sided. Negative to Our Economy"]. *NHK – kabuka kawase*. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20221019/k10013863601000.html>

¹³ Yen weakness to ¥141 zone against U.S. dollar in new 24-year low. *The Japan Times*. 06.09.2022. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/09/06/business/economy-business/yen-dollar-141-level/>

made no attempt to correct it by raising rates on the internal money market. Moreover, Kuroda Haruhiko himself repeatedly emphasized in public that he did not consider the difference in interest rates the only reason for the decreasing yen exchange rate. As for attempts to make interventions in the currency exchange market,¹⁴ they reflected rather the intention to soften short-term surges (or, using the official language, “remove excessive volatility”) than expectation of changes in the mid-term trend.

Another important issue for the continuity of the new prime minister's economic policy is his de facto **acceptance of the chronic deficit of the government budget** and, accordingly, further accumulation of the national debt. While at the very beginning of the “Abe era”, i.e., in 2013–2014, the government set the mid-term objective of balancing current government expenditure and revenues with the aim of attaining non-deficit ‘primary budget’ (i.e., the balance of budget revenues and expenditure without the cost of servicing national debt), this task was very soon put off, and later it was dropped completely from among the government's priorities. Apart from growing welfare spending, which was to a great extent associated with the unstoppable increase of the share of elderly groups in the structure of the population, attempts to stimulate economic growth with the help of budgetary expenditure inevitably resulted in the huge budget deficit covered by the issue of new government securities to be accumulated by the Bank of Japan.

As the new prime minister came to power, this situation remained unchanged. The focus is still not on the “improvement” of government finances, but rather on supporting of economic activity by budgetary mechanisms – “stimulus packages” of government aid to businesses.

¹⁴ These interventions were specifically reported in late September 2022. The Finance Ministry later stated that it had allocated over JPY 2.8Ts (USD 19.8 B) for September interventions See: Japan spent ¥2.84 trillion in September intervention to prop up yen. *The Japan Times*. 30.09.2022 <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/09/30/business/financial-markets/japan-forex-intervention-total/>

Virtually all measures to support the economy which were discussed in 2022 were at least accompanied by pledges to channel additional funds from the budgets of the current and following periods into the economy, and often they merely consisted of nothing but such pledges. The consequences of the growth of government expenditure on programs to support various segments of production and consumption are still regarded as a secondary issue, while further accumulation of the national debt is seen as acceptable.

An extra impetus to the public debt increase was also given by the intent to raise military expenditure significantly, including an additional issue of state bonds designated specifically to ensure defense budget funding; this idea was finally developed during 2022.¹⁵ Although relevant commissions at the party level plan to discuss possibilities of raising direct taxes on corporate and individual income, it is reported there is no consolidated opinion on this issue so far, and prompt changes are not to be expected here.

The third important issue of continuity in the economic course of the new prime minister's cabinets is the priority of **interests of business community** in making major decisions in the fiscal sphere. When defining support measures, the taxes on big business are still considered rather an object of possible tax cuts than a source of additional revenues for stimulating expenses. Despite the spirit of left-wing concepts, which see big transnational companies more as a threat than a locomotive for development, the major points of stimulus packages adopted already during the new prime minister's

¹⁵ The issues of these bonds are different from standard ones, as the sources for repaying them are recorded in advance: these can be, for example, revenues from raised excise taxes for tobacco goods and/or cancellation of some benefits in corporate income taxation. The particulars of such emissions and mechanisms of redemption are yet to be defined. See: Japan floats issuance of government bonds and higher taxes to cover defense costs. *The Japan Times*, 30.09.2022 <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/09/17/national/politics-diplomacy/japanese-defense-budget-bonds-taxes/>.

term (in November 2021, April and October 2022¹⁶) and amounting to JPY 55.7T, 6.2T, and 39T¹⁷, respectively, testified rather to the intention to support private business as a whole than an attempt to strengthen regulation of big business in the interests of the government and society.

The first of these packages was quite comprehensive and set the task of recovering and boosting economic activity after the shock period brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. The second one was to help neutralize the consequences of the rapid rise of energy prices, mostly of oil, and other key goods. Both contained obligations to support small and middle businesses that suffered from the reduced demand during

¹⁶ The texts of the relevant documents approved by the decision of the government on 19.11.2021, 26.04.2022, and 28.10.2022 are published on the site of the Prime Minister's Office. See:

Korona kokufuku shinjidai kaitaku no tame no keizai taisaku (Reiwa 3 nen 11 gatsu 19 nichi) [Economic Policy Measures to Overcome Corona and Open New Era (19 November 2021)]. <https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai1/keizaitaisaku/keizaitaisaku.html> Koronaka ni okeru "Genyu kakaku butka kōtō nado sōgō kinkyū taisaku" (Reiwa 4 nen 4 gatsu 26 nichi) [Comprehensive Set of Emergent Policy Measures Related to Oil and Overall Price Hikes against Coronavirus Background (26 April, 2022)]. <https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai1/keizaitaisaku/keizaitaisaku.html>

Butkadaka kokufuku keizai saisei jitsugen no tame no sōgō keizai taisaku (Reiwa 4 nen 10 gatsu 28 nichi) [Comprehensive Set of Policy Measures to Overcome Price Hikes and Rebuild Economy (28 October 2022)]. <https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai1/keizaitaisaku/keizaitaisaku.html>

¹⁷ It should be stated that part of the measures included in the "package" cost is already a component of previously adopted budgetary plans. Thus, the October package requires additional funding, which amounts to JPY 29.1T (Iwamoto, K., Take, S. Japan unveils \$200bn package to combat highest inflation in decades. *Nikkei Asia*. 28.10.2022 <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Inflation/Japan-unveils-200bn-package-to-combat-highest-inflation-in-decade>

the Coronavirus pandemic in the form of subsidized (unsecured and interest-free) loans and guarantees from state financial institutions as well as subsidies used to partially compensate for the lost income, or, as it was provided for by the second package of measures, increased fuel costs. The largest part of the aid programs was limited both in time (several months, as a rule) and in the amount of aid available to the affected enterprises.

The third package, adopted in October 2022, is the most comprehensive one and provides for the allocation of significant funds to compensate for the growing costs of electric energy and fuel supplied to households and particular categories of enterprises; organizational, informational, and infrastructural assistance to businesses that actively use local resources; support of companies making investments in human, intellectual, and innovative assets, including startups; assistance to companies developing and using digital and “green” technologies.

Finally, one more element of continuity can be seen in the commitment **to encourage financial investments of economic entities**, including Japan’s households, which are prone to saving; this propensity increases as the share of older age groups goes up in the structure of the population. Since 2014, several schemes have been used to channel these funds into the stock market using the system of individual savings and investment accounts (Nippon Individual Savings Account, NISA); these allow tax exemptions for individual incomes received from investment in financial market instruments (not exceeding certain amounts).¹⁸ Kishida Fumio repeatedly expressed intent to make this system permanent, as only 10 percent of consolidated personal savings, amounting to over 2 quadrillion JPY, are invested in traded financial assets. The government plan presented in November 2022 stipulates, along with making the program permanent, raising time and amount thresholds for the benefits applied. Although the prime minister himself links this to his concept of “new capitalism”, with its

¹⁸ These schemes are described in detail on the Financial Service Office site: <https://www.fsa.go.jp/policy/nisa2/about/index.html>

large stratum of middle-class asset owners, this is in fact contributing to the development of stock markets, predominantly in the interests of its operators and major actors, who had also enjoyed substantial attention of relevant committees and councils under the leadership of the ruling coalition before. No doubt, big corporations that are large-scale bonds and stock emitters will benefit from this as well. These corporations already managed to increase their capitalization dramatically in the previous decades, as well as improve environment for raising funds thanks to, in no small part, the soft policy of the Bank of Japan.

Thus, despite the expectations of some experts that Kishida Fumio would gradually dismount the system of monetary and budgetary stimulus for business, which was the basis of Abenomics, there have been no signs of movement in this direction so far. On the contrary, the predominant features of Kishida's first year in power, if judged by practical policies rather than slogans, are obvious continuity and caution, as well as the wish to complete those sets of measures that were planned and launched into the bureaucratic machine in the prior years.

In this connection, an interesting question is how the Cabinet, primarily its relevant part, sees the economy of Japan and opportunities of affecting it proactively for the next few years.

Economic Mid-Term Tasks: Government's Vision

A review of official releases that appeared after the change of the ruling party's leader allows us to conclude that the state of the economy and expected behavior thereof correspond, as a whole, to the estimates made in the early and mid-2021. A major factor determining the change in the situation is regarded to be the impact of the coronavirus infection outburst and new waves of the disease, that are no longer accompanied by lockdowns but, nevertheless, impact consumption and production chains. The negative consequence is a significant reduction in consumption and private investments; the disruption of economic activity in 2020–2021, negative changes in consumer prices, and extra strain on public finances.

All of this, according to government economists, requires pursuing an active policy of activating deferred private demand, extra government expenditure on supporting economic activity, as well as moral support to individuals and businesses that look for ways to “coexist with Covid.” A major driver and basic condition of “sustainable growth” must be the recovery of private demand on the part of consumers and investors. As for the intensified redistribution of incomes within the “new capitalism” paradigm, it is regarded more as an opportunity created by sustainable growth than as its driving force or cause.¹⁹ Granted, the economic growth and distribution of its results are considered as two complementary and mutually stimulating elements: “new growth is possible only as a result of [correct] distribution of the prior growth benefits.”²⁰

The instruments for the recovery of private demand, as in the years of Abenomics, are invariably reduced deflation and “stimulating” budget appropriations. Among the latter, the especially conspicuous ones are expenses on the implementation of programmes promoting procurement of high-tech goods and services within the framework of concepts of “scientific and technological power,” “economic security,” and wide dissemination of digital platforms in accordance

¹⁹ The document postulating major provisions of the economic policy for the 2022 fiscal year formulates this thesis as follows: “The government commits itself to shape the strong basis for the economy and recovery of national finances. It is on this basis that Kishida’s cabinet will try implementing the new form of capitalism built on the concept of “mutually beneficial influence of economic growth and distribution of its fruits” and development of the “new post-covid society” (Reiwa 4 nendo no keizai mitōshi to keizai seisaku unei no kihonteki taido [FY2022 Prospects for the Economy and Basic Stance on Management of Economic Policy]. <https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai1/mitoshi/2021/ro31223mitoshi.pdf>

²⁰ Reiwa 4 nendo no keizai mitōshi to keizai seisaku un’ei no kihonteki taido [FY2022 Prospects for the Economy and Basic Stance on Management of Economic Policy]. <https://www5.cao.go.jp/keizai1/mitoshi/2021/ro31223mitoshi.pdf>

with recommendations of the special government commission on digitalization.²¹

As for the supply side, the focus is mainly on two ideas:

- 1) measures to increase the supply of labor resources for the economy, in quantitative and qualitative terms, and
- 2) support of production and innovation activity in areas of (according to government economists) critical importance.

These areas are production of semiconductor components and electric power accumulators, as well as development and introduction of artificial intelligence technologies. It is suggested to apply direct subsidies and public-private partnership mechanisms in these areas. Concerning the issue of supplying more labor resources, the focus is predominantly made on more flexible employment schemes, including remote work, freelance institutionalization, and improvement of workforce professional mobility. This mobility is to be achieved through government funding of professional retraining programs for facilitation of inter-company and inter-industry migration.

As for measures to improve redistribution relations, the following priority areas are usually indicated: the above-mentioned pressure encouraging higher wages in the private sector and a corresponding increase of wages in the public sector; accelerated increase of labor remuneration for welfare workers and nursing staff; increase of welfare benefits for families including people in need of care, etc. In fact, the focus is on measures that are to result in, aside from solving some social imbalances and tensions, the stimulation of consumption and greater activity of economically disadvantaged groups of the population.

In addition, the authorities postulate mid-term and long-term approaches to the solution of complex tasks in the sphere of resource supply, infrastructure, economic safety, reduction of pressure on the

²¹ Instituted by the prime minister's decree in October 2021 as a special temporary administrative consultative body (dijitaru rinji gyosei chosakai: <https://digital-gov.note.jp/n/ne2e6281812b8>)

environment, and other fields, where budgetary funding for relevant programs (“packages of measures”) is planned for several years ahead.

Recent Changes and Potential Evolution of Economic Policy

By the end of 2022, great changes had taken place in the general conditions of Japan’s economy’, primarily in external factors that influence it.

Firstly, it was a rapid rise of prices of energy resources in the first half of the year and general destabilization of many private commodity and food markets, triggered by the severe crisis in the relations between Russia and the collective West. Rising negative expectations about future developments made this destabilization acute, while its influence on Japan’s economy, initially quite insignificant, gradually started to be perceived as a long-term factor. This raised considerably, in the eyes of the political and business elites, the importance of the national energy policy in all its aspects – from stability of energy import sources to the role of nuclear energy in the future structure of Japan’s energy balance. The discussion of these issues and relevant decision making – from restarting the previously stopped nuclear reactors to preserving Japanese companies’ involvement in the Sakhalin-2 project – became a major component of the Japanese government’s political agenda.

Secondly, it had become evident that the US and EU economies, which represent a critically important component of the external environment for Japan’s economy, turned out to be affected by an outburst of inflation, reaching the levels that are a threat to welfare and growth. Inevitable anti-inflation measures in these countries, mainly focusing on tougher monetary policy, placed the Japanese authorities in a difficult position. On the one hand, aligning with the anti-inflation trends threatens to secure stagnation patterns, which government

economic authorities had been fighting in the recent years without a convincing victory. On the other hand, adherence to the benchmarks defined by Abe's first cabinet back in 2013–2014 begins to engender risks and problems that are more and more threatening in the new global environment. It is expected that 2023 will see a rapid rise in energy tariffs for businesses and individuals, even if no new destabilization of global energy markets and logistic chains takes place. A major drop of the yen exchange rate, associated, in this or that respect, as it has been mentioned above, with soft monetary policy, will inevitably result in higher prices for raw materials and other production costs in the domestic market, which producers will increasingly be passing on to consumers. There are evidently no guarantees that it will not reduce the demand once again, which the Bank of Japan is trying to support through its policies.

Meanwhile, anti-inflation measures taken by the current US administration include not only customer protection initiatives, but also subsidies and cheap loans to producers in a number of areas – alternative power engineering, production of innovative motor fuels, electric cars and others, as provided for by the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed in August 2022. These measures, creating additional competitive advantages for American producers in some promising fields, arouse concern not only among European corporations, but also among Japanese companies actively working in these areas.

Thirdly, all the above is associated with the concerns about a large-global recession, which may be brought about by the ongoing destabilization of production and logistical chains, as geopolitical risks are simultaneously increasing in several regions of the world. Although these concerns are formulated with a great degree of caution in official publications and cabinet members' statements, Kishida Fumio referred to those as major risks for the country's economy in his keynote speech at the opening of the Japanese Diet session in October 2022. If this scenario comes true, the consequences for Japan's economy will obviously be quite serious, given the high degree of its internationalization and dependence on foreign markets.

Under such circumstances, the focal points in the government's economic policy were somewhat rearranged. Although the hierarchy of priorities is tentative, one cannot but notice the evident increase of the role of **income policies**, specifically, measures of ensuring the rise of individual incomes as the main driving force of the desired economic recovery. In addition to the traditional narrative of salary increases, the above-mentioned keynote speech in October formulated the task of ensuring the “structural raise of labor remuneration” (*kōzōtekina chin'age*) through improving labor qualification. To accomplish this task, the government developed programs to finance labor retraining, for which 1 trillion yen were to be allocated in the next five years. The prime minister expressed hope that the self-sustained process of interdependent rise in the cost of labor and its quality would be launched through “investment in people.”

A more important move, in this respect, is the announced intent to promote the evolution of the labor remuneration system in the private sector towards its orientation on the content and quality of duties performed as opposed to the length of service in the company. In theory, this is to promote employees' interest in additional training as well as improving the quality and value of their work. However, this statement had been mentioned in earlier official programs, and it remains unclear how seriously the government will try to impose the desired changes on private business.

A relatively new point is a pledge to oppose big companies' attempts to sabotage the revision of contract prices for products made by small and middle suppliers of services and components in accordance with actual cost growth. The government sees the pressure exerted by big business on dependent subcontractors and partners to shift part of the general cost growth as a serious obstacle for an adequate increase in incomes in the sector of small and middle-sized enterprises.

The rationale of the focus on raising incomes also encompasses the prime minister's commitment to “protect” the weakest segments of business and households from the negative effect of growing energy

costs by subsidizing schemes for these costs developed by the Cabinet and announced as “resolute” and “unprecedented.”

Another important issue associated with the impact made by changes in the economic conditions in 2022 is ***a new perception of encouraging “investment for growth”*** as one of the priority areas in the government's economic strategy. Given that all earlier formulated provisions on the encouragement of investment for innovations and promotion of economic “transformations” (“digital transformation”, “green transformation”) remain in the list of investment priorities, a greater role is now given to stable energy supply (including new nuclear energy technologies, which were not mentioned before) and economic security at the national and functional levels. Economic security presumes a higher priority of developments and investments aimed at reducing dependence on the import of essential production components, primarily semiconductors. In addition, cyber safety, sensitive data use, safeguarding of intellectual property and rights of its holders have come to the fore. As for the instruments of investment incentives capable of solving those tasks, they are the same: tax exemptions, eased regulation and special regimes, grants for research and startups, as well as government procurement of innovative services.

Finally, the last new aspect that can be mentioned in this connection is a ***removal of the national finance “recovery” from the official economic agenda***. Instead, the prime minister's public statements, in which he describes major aspects of the future economic policy, emphasize intensification of public investment (*kan-no tōshi*) aimed at facilitating private investment. Sources of funding for the expected increase of government expenditure are presented as a subject for future consideration allowing for various scenarios, including more debt financing. As the Bank of Japan is the main financial institution accumulating government debt, the commitment to reduce the overall public debt is, apparently, not regarded as urgent for the foreseeable future.

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Sociological Aspects of the Tokyo Olympics

A. V. Belov

Abstract

The Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo in July–September 2021 took place in a challenging social environment that seriously affected the public perception of the events. When preparing for the Olympics from 2013–2019, the Japanese people actively supported the Games, which was confirmed by the results of numerous sociological studies. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began, followed by several waves of infection spread. The competition was postponed for a year. Vaccination in Japan was delayed compared with most of the G7 countries. Against this background, in the summer of 2021, the most dangerous Delta strain of coronavirus began to spread in the country, bringing a rise in mortality rates and overcrowding in hospitals in large cities. In this difficult epidemiological and social situation, surveys recorded a negative attitude towards the Olympics.

However, during the competition, the majority opinion once again turned positive, mainly due to the athletic successes of the Japanese team and effective anti-virus control measures. The absence of spectators in the venues, most probably, did not affect the sporting achievements significantly. At least, the Japanese Olympic team won a record number of medals. Infection prevention measures proved effective in limiting the transmission of the virus among the athletes and the Japanese service personnel. The economic and symbolic achievements of the Games did not meet expectations, as, during the Olympics, it was not possible to properly address its significance as the end point of the low-growth “lost decades”, evidence of economic recovery after the triple disaster of 2011, and as a tool to increase Japan’s tourist attractiveness.

Therefore, during the pandemic, major sports events should be held primarily to train top-class athletes and to increase populace satisfaction with the success of the national team rather than to obtain direct economic benefits or improve the host country's image.

Keywords: public perception of the Olympic Games, social aspects of sports, Japan, Olympic Games, COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

The Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, which took place 23 July – 8 August and 24 August – 5 September 2021, were the largest international sports event held during the COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus control measures forced the organizers to postpone the Games for a year, hold the major event without spectators, and also seriously limit the number of participants by reducing the lists of official guests and technical staff. These features largely affected the forms of sports competitions and the results that the host country received. This article attempts to summarize relevant sources and analyze some sociological aspects of the Olympic Games (the Paralympics should be an object of special research), focusing on the dynamics of public opinion and the factors that determined it.

The theoretical basis of this work is the concepts of the mechanisms of forming public perception of the Olympic Games [Hiller, Wanner 2018], social aspects of holding major sports events [Dongfeng 2016], principles of organizing epidemiological protection of the Olympians from COVID-19 [Pigozzi, Wolfarth, Cintron, et al. 2021], quantitative assessments of the intangible results of the Olympic Games [Dolan 2019], etc. The information base includes materials from the IOC and the Japanese organizers of the Olympics, scientific articles from the Web of Science, Econlit and EBSCO databases, as well as publications from Japanese and international media. The research method is a comparative analysis of the texts of publications aimed at identifying

the impact of individual phenomena on the dynamics of public perception of the Olympic Games.

The first part of the work following this introduction analyzes public opinion issues and the dynamics of Japanese residents' attitude towards the Olympics. The second part deals with the sports and sociological results of the Games, comparing them with the previous competitions. The third part provides an analysis of the measures to combat the COVID-19 spread among the athletes and discusses criteria for evaluating their effectiveness. The final part of the article touches upon the symbolic significance of the Games for completing the "lost decades", recovery after the tsunami, the earthquake, and the nuclear accident of 2011, and for increasing the tourist attractiveness of the country. On this basis, the author summarizes the motives for holding major sporting events in the pandemic era.

Dynamics of Public Opinion in Japan Regarding the Olympics

Public opinion has recently begun to be systematically taken into account in the context of the Olympic movement. This is probably due to the spread of critical ideas about the nature of modern Olympics, which are allegedly far removed from the desires of the broad masses of the people, with elite athletes participating in competitions and a narrow circle of local leaders organizing the games under the patronage of the elite Olympic Committee [Lensky 2008]. As a response to such criticism, there appeared a noticeable increase in the use of local referenda in nominating candidate cities for the Olympic Games in the early 2010s. This makes it obvious that, in democratic countries, the factor of public opinion plays an increasing role in making decisions about hosting Olympic Games [Hiller, Wanner 2018].

It should be noted that surveying the people's will may result in highly unexpected consequences. This was graphically demonstrated by the events of 2013–2014 around the competition for the right to host the

2022 Winter Games. During the competitive selection, Munich, Davos, Krakow, and Oslo successively withdrew their applications due to the opposition of the people, and only Beijing and Almaty remained among the applicants, as they did not hold popular votes. The choice of the venue for the next Olympic Games gives a start to a long period of preparation. It lasts 7–8 years and is associated with significant expenditure of effort and resources on design and construction of large facilities, which means that it brings along a number of related inconveniences and potentially conflicting organizational and political decisions. It is not surprising that modern Olympic Games are often accompanied by the appearance of local opposition, which asserts itself at all stages of the Games' preparation and hosting [Hiller, Wanner 2018].

The existence of different, often diametrically opposed points of view on the importance of the Olympics and other major sporting events emphasizes the need to coordinate interests and study public opinion. Unfortunately, research in this area is based on disparate methods, and the conclusions are fragmentary. Nevertheless, even a simple enumeration of some of the results of the previous studies may be of interest for comparison with the processes taking place in Japan.

In particular, among the reasons for the approval of the competition by local residents, there are numerous diverse points, varying from the long-term positive impact on infrastructure development to the expansion of tourism and improvement of the environment [Rocha, Barbanti, Chelladurai 2017]. At the same time, the decision to support the Olympics is more influenced by social expectations (a sense of national unity, the possibility of increasing national prestige, the development of sports culture, etc.) than the possibility of obtaining economic benefits (additional tax revenues, transparent income distribution, long-term economic incentives) [Streicher, Schmidt, Schreye, Torgler 2017].

As a rule, the perception of events changes over time, with the positive side strengthening and the negative one weakening [Ribeiro, Correia, Biscaia 2020]. Consequently, focusing on the positive results of sports events may have a stronger public response than minimizing possible negative consequences [Muller 2012]. Positive perception is enhanced

if residents are involved in the preparation and holding of events, and do not simply buy tickets and attend as spectators [Hiller, Wanner 2018]. The attitude to competitions depends even on the geography of residence: respondents from areas with a large concentration of sports facilities suffer more from transport and other restrictions and are more critical about competitions [Weimar, Rocha 2019].

Turning to the analysis of public opinion regarding Tokyo 2020, we note that there was no referendum on the nomination of the city as a candidate for hosting the Olympic Games. But surveys of the Japanese people by arbitrary methods in May 2012 – October 2013 were carried out in parallel by the international and national Olympic Committees, as well as by a number of popular Japanese newspapers. The most representative survey of 400 residents in October 2012 showed an approval of the Olympics by 67 percent of the respondents, with 13 percent against and 21 percent undecided. In 2013, public support gradually increased, and the share of those in favor of holding the games in some cases reached 83 percent. In September 2013, Tokyo was officially declared the city of the 2020 Olympics.

During the preparation period, the number of public opinion polls was drastically reduced. A pleasant surprise was a survey by a private institute, MRI (Mitsubishi Research Institute), on Olympic legacy, which was conducted in six rounds according to a single methodology among 3500 people in 2013–2019. According to the MRI data, the average share of respondents who mentioned interest in hosting the Games was 56 percent, with two peaks in the dynamics of this indicator: 65.9 percent in 2013 and 64.2 percent in 2018. In 2019, 45 percent of the respondents had an idea about the “Olympic legacy”, but in 2015–2016, this term was known only to 20–21 percent. A steep rise to 45–48 percent occurred in 2017, and after that the results remained largely stable. On average, 33 percent of the respondents expressed hope for changes in Japanese society under the influence of the Olympics, although in the first year of the survey this rose to 51 percent. The main areas of the desired changes were related, in descending order, to the concepts of “society of safety and calm”,

“revitalization of the regions”, “effective use of Olympic facilities”, “health”, and “economic growth”. This sequence did not change significantly over the years of the surveys.

The most detailed description of public opinion regarding the Tokyo Olympics was to be a study by the public Japanese broadcasting Corporation NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai). The surveys were conducted in five rounds in 2015–2019 by the method of mailing questionnaires; out of the 3,500 reached, about 2,500 people (approximately 67 percent) sent answers. The questionnaires included 48 substantive questions to clarify the degree of approval of the Olympics, the level of interest, expectations from hosting the Games, anxiety factors, attitude to changes in the city during the preparation period, ideas about the future use of Olympic facilities, and specific aspects of media coverage of the Games.

The results showed that, in 2015–2019, the share of those approving of hosting the Games was almost stable and remained at the level of 80 percent for the Olympic and 60 percent for the Paralympic Games. The list of expectations from upcoming events did not change either (“contribution to economic development”, “revitalization of regions”, “expansion of international exchanges”, etc.). The same applies to the list of concerns (“terrorism”, “complication of the transport situation”, “deterioration of public safety” in Tokyo). The greatest changes occurred in the assessment of the city’s readiness to host the competition: 80 percent of those worried were replaced by 70 percent of the respondents confident in good preparation. At the same time, the share of those who feared the consequences of receiving a large number of foreign tourists increased from 30 to 45 percent, but the percentage of those concerned about large expenses dropped from 77 to 43 percent.

A positive attitude towards the Olympics was also expressed by 85 percent of the respondents during a one-time survey of the Japanese government in December 2019. Similar results (73 percent support) were obtained in January 2020 by NHK analysts, who included a question about interest in the Games in a monthly telephone survey on trust in the government. Despite the difference in methods and

difficulties in comparing the results, based on the data provided, it is possible to confidently declare that the overwhelming majority of the Japanese population during the preparation period from 2013 to early 2020 supported the Olympic Games. However, the coronavirus pandemic and related events dramatically changed the situation.

In March 2020, the Tokyo Olympics were postponed for a year. The previous public opinion studies were no longer relevant, and the above-mentioned periodic reviews by MRI and NHK were discontinued. In the analysis of residents' attitude to the postponed games, there emerged a gap of about 9 months. The Olympics issue was raised again only in October 2020 as part of the above-mentioned monthly NHK survey on trust in the government. Then, 40 percent of the respondents agreed that the Games should be held, 23 percent opposed the idea, and 25 percent supported a new postponement.

Between December 2020 and September 2021, questions about attitudes to the Olympics in various formulations regularly appeared in NHK surveys. In December 2020 and January 2021, 27 and 16 percent of respondents were in favor of holding the Games, while 32 and 38 percent opposed the idea. In February, March, April, and May 2021, the level of support was 52, 58, 61, and 44 percent, while 38, 33, 32, and 49 percent of respondents were against, respectively. Consequently, the share of those opposing the Olympics exceeded the percentage of those approving of the Games in December – January and May 2021. It should be noted that it was during these months that Japan experienced periodic spikes in the number of people infected with coronavirus.

In order to combat the spread of the infection in March, it was announced that foreign tourists would not be allowed into the country, and in July a decision was made to hold the main Olympic events without spectators. In such a situation in June – July 2021, 25 and 31 percent of the respondents positively perceived the organizers' explanations about the fact and form of holding the Olympics, while 65 percent and 69 percent expressed a negative attitude. In July, 38 percent supported anti-infection measures, while 57 percent were opposed to them. These data allow us to conclude that shortly before the Games,

the majority of the respondents opposed their holding, but since the decision had been made and was already being implemented, their protest was expressed by a negative attitude towards the organizers and the anti-infection measures taken. Apparently, the sponsor companies were also skeptical, although no corporate surveys were conducted on the eve of the Olympics. However, it is known that the heads of the largest companies such as Toyota, Panasonic, Fujitsu, NTT, Asahi, and Sumitomo Chemicals refused to participate in the opening ceremony of the Games. During the competitions, advertisements by these companies did not appear in the media. A negative attitude towards the Olympics was formed in a number of countries. According to an international Internet survey by Ipsos in July 2021, on average, 43 percent of 19,510 residents of 28 states agreed with holding the Games during the pandemic, while the remaining 57 percent gave negative answers. Supporters of the Olympics were in the majority in only 7 countries, whereas negative opinions prevailed in 21 countries. The lowest level of support was observed in Korea (14 percent), Japan (27 percent), and Argentina (31 percent). Residents of Turkey (71 percent), Saudi Arabia (66 percent), and Russia (61 percent) voted most actively for holding the Games.

After the Games, the situation changed, primarily in Japan. The NHK survey of August 10, 2021 recorded a positive assessment of the event in 62 percent of the responses, and a negative one in 34 percent. The change in public opinion after the Games was also recorded by other polls. According to the *Yomiuri Shimbun* dated August 9, 2021, 64 percent of the respondents positively assessed the Games, while 28 percent responded negatively. On August 7–8, TBS/JNN reported 61 percent positive assessments of the Games. In the survey by JIJI.com on August 13, positive and negative assessments accounted for 38.0 and 35.5 percent respectively. The results of a survey in the corporate sector on August 19 also showed that the vast majority supported the holding of the Olympics post-factum.

Apparently, these data quite reliably confirm the fact of a positive assessment of the Olympic Games after their completion by the residents of Japan and the sponsoring companies. It turns out that

the negative attitude to the upcoming events prevailing in July changed to the opposite in less than a month. As noted above, similar metamorphoses had already been observed at the previous Olympics. However, the Tokyo 2020 events were held in the unique conditions of the pandemic. An analysis of relevant publications in the Japanese media allows us to conclude that the change in public opinion could have been brought about by the success of Japanese athletes and effective anti-virus measures. Let us try to understand the mechanism of influence of these factors on the perception of the Olympics.

Sporting and Sociological Results of the Tokyo 2020 (2021) Olympics

The sporting results of the Games merit the highest assessment [Belov 2021b]. This is evidenced by the large number of participants from many countries, the wide list of sports represented, impressive results and numerous world and Olympic records. Competitions were held in 33 sports, with 339 events held and about 5000 medals awarded. Taking part in the competitions were 205 teams of national Olympic Committees, as well as the IOC Olympic team consisting of refugees and apatrides, a total of 11,483 athletes. 49 percent of the participants in the Games were women, which made Tokyo 2020 the most gender-balanced Olympics. The Games brought about 17 world records and 24 Olympic ones. Georgian weightlifter Lasha Talakhadze set three world records, US swimmer Caeleb Dressel won five gold medals, and Australian swimmer Emma McKeon received seven medals of various denominations. The expansion of the range of Olympic sports made it possible to attract new athletes to the competition, among whom both very young and more experienced participants were able to prove themselves. As a result, the Tokyo 2020 Games became more inclusive in terms of the age of the athletes. The youngest gold medalist at the Games was the 13-year-old Japanese skateboarder Momiji Nishiya, and the oldest was the 52-year-old rider Jessica von Bredow-Werndl from Germany. The silver medal in skateboarding was awarded to

the 12-year-old athlete Kokona Hiraki from Japan, the 62-year-old rider Andrew Hoy from Australia received the same medal in dressage.

An interesting sociological feature of Tokyo 2020 was an expanded diversity of participants and their forms of behavior. Among the female weightlifters, there was for the first time ever a transgender athlete who had undergone a sex change. During the Games, the issues of sexual orientation of athletes were widely discussed from the standpoint of correctness and tolerance. For the first time, political gestures on the part of participants became possible during competitions and awarding ceremonies. Accordingly, signs of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and protests against violations of the rights of the Muslim population in China attracted a lot of attention. Diversity, equality, and inclusion of a wide range of participants, regardless of peculiarities of their social behavior, can be considered an important trend that significantly intensified during the Olympics.

The vast majority of Tokyo 2020 competitions were held without spectators in the stands. However, the impact of the absence of fans on sports results is difficult to determine, since previous studies contain contradictory conclusions about their correlation. In particular, the majority of basketball players from US college teams noted that the presence of spectators improved their commitment, and this happened regardless of the audience's attitude – positive or negative in relation to a particular team [Blum, Davis 2002]. A statistical study of the results of football matches during the European Championship 2020 did not reveal a significant impact of empty stands [Wunderlich, Weigelt, Rein, Memmert 2021]. But for biathlonists, a very complex reaction was characteristic, depending on gender and the nature of tasks performed, namely, in the presence of spectators, men ran better (a task related to physical fitness), but shot worse (a task requiring concentration), but women showed exactly the opposite results [Heinrich, Müller, Stoll, Cañal-Bruland 2021]. As a result, in the complete absence of special studies on the impact of empty stands on the sporting achievements of Tokyo 2020, perhaps only one thing can be said: it is currently impossible to establish the exact influence of these factors.

Japanese athletes won 58 medals, including 27 gold, 14 silver, and 17 bronze ones. In terms of performance, the last Olympics were the most productive for the Japanese team in the entire history of their participation in the Olympic movement. In total, during the twenty-two Summer Olympic Games since 1912, Japan has won 439 awards, including 41 medals (12 gold ones) at the competitions in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

There is nothing unexpected in the record-breaking results of the Tokyo 2020 games. Scientific research shows that the number of Olympic medals received by a particular national team statistically depends on the population of the country and the size of per capita income [Hon-Kwong, Wing 2008]. Both factors speak in favor of Japan. In addition, the host country of the Olympics, as a rule, presents a larger number of athletes; they do not need acclimatization after a long journey; they are more familiar with local conditions and sports facilities; and, they are more actively supported by fans. As a result, the members of the host country's national team always win more medals than when performing away from home [Hosein, Khadan, Paul 2013]. Finally, the host country may propose a number of new sports for inclusion in the Olympic programme. This is how softball, karate, skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing, which are extremely popular in Japan, appeared in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic schedule. In four of the five mentioned sports, the Japanese athletes proved to be the best in the world. As a result, the Japanese Olympians in Tokyo 2020 took third place in the "gold" rankings, fifth place in the overall medal rankings, and received a lot of enthusiastic appraisals.

Antivirus Protection at Tokyo 2020 Competitions

Holding the Olympic Games in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the organizers to take strict precautionary measures, such as restricting the entry of tourists and coaches from abroad, holding competitions without spectators in Tokyo and adjacent prefectures,

as well as isolating the athletes in the “bubbles” of safety. The small number of registered disease cases among persons associated with the Olympics (about 400 for the entire period July 23 – August 8, and mainly among the Japanese service personnel), as well as no cases of transmission of the virus from athletes to each other and Japanese volunteers confirmed the effectiveness of these restrictions. The measures taken in Tokyo were developed while taking into account the experience of the USA gained in 2020–2021 during international golf and tennis competitions. They differed significantly from the methods of European countries that also held major sporting events. For example, the European Football Championship ended on July 11, 2021. More than 60,000 people gathered at the final match at Wembley Stadium in London, cheering for their favorite teams without any signs of restraining emotions or observing social distances. And as early as on July 23, the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games was held in Tokyo, where the situation looked completely different: no tourists, empty stands, and preliminary quarantine for the athletes. The differences become clear when one considers that, at that time in Japan, there was a surge of morbidity with the Delta strain of coronavirus, and the percentage of vaccinated residents was about twice as low as in the UK. In addition, since the beginning of the pandemic, the most important element of Japan’s anti-virus policy had been the actual closure of borders to reduce infection through international exchange channels [Belov 2021a; Belov, Tikhotskaya 2020]. It is not surprising that the same measures were extended to the period of the Olympic Games.

First of all, entry into the country was allowed only for athletes, a minimum number of coaches, massage therapists and technical workers, journalists, officials and members of the IOC. Out of 180,000 prospective guests, only about 70,000 people showed up in Tokyo. Foreign tourists numbered 51.2 thousand instead of the anticipated one million. The task of preventing carriers of new strains of the virus from entering the country was largely solved with the help of entry restrictions.

The main measure of anti-virus protection was making “bubbles” of safety around athletes, i.e., their actual isolation from contact with members of other teams and with the local population. At the airport of arrival, athletes were separated; after passing the tests, the groups were sent in separate buses to the places of two-week quarantine and then moved to the Olympic village. During the quarantine period, the athletes could stay either in a hotel or in a training room. Walks and contacts with local residents were completely excluded. Only translators and service personnel communicated with the athletes. These people lived at home, i.e., they went beyond the “bubbles,” but they were tested for coronavirus every day and had to inform doctors about any changes in their state of health. Similarly strict measures were taken both in the Olympic village and during the competitions. Testing for coronavirus was carried out daily. Athletes were required to arrive in Japan in compliance with all anti-infection requirements at least five days before the competitions and leave the country within 48 hours after their completion.

As mentioned above, from the medical point of view, the listed measures proved to be effective and successful. However, minimal human contacts, apparently, had certain social consequences. At least, US gymnast Simone Biles, who stopped performing because of her poor psychological condition, told correspondents that she lacked communication with her friends and fans under strict restrictions during competitions in Tokyo. Real-life communication largely determines the morale of many athletes, which must be taken into account when preparing and conducting any competitions during a pandemic. Apparently, this thesis was confirmed during the Winter Olympics in Beijing in 2022, where even stricter preventive measures were taken, based on the Chinese policy of zero tolerance for the spread of the coronavirus.

Conclusion

Among the motives for holding the 2020 Tokyo Games, in addition to those listed above, there were also economic and “symbolic” aspects. Expectations of economic results were associated with obtaining long-term effects from investments and one-time incomes from the sale of rights to broadcast events, tickets to competitions, related goods, etc. The investment programs of preparation for the Olympics were reduced by cutting down the associated investment in infrastructure development. At the same time, the postponement of the games, anti-infective measures, and unforeseen expenses led to an increase in costs. Among the estimates of the total cost of the Olympics circulating in the press, the sum of \$15.4 billion is most often mentioned. The amount of income received is still unknown, which means that it is impossible to sum up the overall economic balance. Nevertheless, taking into account the experience of the previous games, we can confidently say that the economic benefits of holding the Tokyo 2020 are small at best. However, according to the *Mainichi* newspaper, the possible losses are also insignificant, especially in comparison with Japan’s GDP that exceeds five trillion dollars.

It is no less difficult to sum up the “symbolic” results of the Olympics. During the contest for the right to host the Games and during their preparation, the organizers believed that the upcoming events would put an end to the long period of low growth rates (“lost decades”), enhance Japan’s tourist attractiveness and, most importantly, demonstrate the country’s success in restoring the territories affected by the earthquake, tsunami, and the nuclear accident of 2011. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic led to an economic decline, the de facto closure of borders for tourists and the cancellation of most public events in Fukushima Prefecture and the surrounding areas. And yet, if we ignore the “symbolic” moments listed above, the overall assessment of the Olympics proved to be high, which was confirmed in the speeches by the IOC President and representatives of China, which hosted the Olympic Games in the winter of 2022.

This allows us to draw an important conclusion about the motivation to hold major sporting events in the context of the pandemic and related restrictions. The Tokyo 2020 experience shows that economic benefits and symbolic effects are hardly achievable in the emerging environment of the “new normality”. But the development of mass sports through training top-class athletes, the satisfaction of a country’s residents from the success of their national team and the prevention of infection among athletes look quite realistic and can be a key argument in favor of hosting future games.

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Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan

I. V. Avdiushenkova

Abstract

This article examines the transformation of ancestor worship in the context of socio-political and religious conditions and identifies the characteristics of worship in contemporary Japanese society and the changes in the form of practices and functions of this worship occurring today.

Ancestor worship is not a phenomenon unique to traditional societies: in the 21st century Japan, ancestor worship rituals are practiced by a large part of the population. After World War II, Japanese veneration practices underwent significant changes. The post-war modernization and urbanization of Japanese society played a major role in these changes, leading to the breakdown of the traditional family system. The concept of ancestor itself changes: the concept of ancestor tends to expand and begins to extend bilaterally (to both the husband and wife lines). There has been a transition from the “obligatory” concept of an ancestor, which includes all deceased ancestors in the direct line of succession regardless of personal preferences, to an “optional” one, which limits the concept of “ancestor” to close relatives whose memories are dear to the descendant. With the change in the concept of the ancestor, the functions of ancestor veneration also undergo a transformation: the former functions of veneration rituals contributed to the stability of the *ie* system, while the new ones consist in relieving psychological tensions between the living and the dead and bringing comfort to particular people. There has been a “privatization” of ancestor veneration, i.e., a growing dominance of personal functions in veneration. Diversification of family types, especially pronounced in the first decades of the 21st century, is also reflected in the rites of ancestor

eneration: alternatives to traditional funerals and new forms of burial and storage of remains are appearing.

The article concludes that, despite changes in the functions and forms of ancestor worship, the place given to the dead in their lives by the living remains invariably important. And the individualization of veneration practices and the undying belief of a large part of the Japanese population in the power of ancestor spirits indicate that the ancestor cult in contemporary Japan is apparently at the next stage of its unfolding, but by no means of extinction.

Keywords: contemporary Japan, Japanese society, ancestor worship, ancestor veneration, funerals, commemoration, death studies.

Introduction

Ancestor worship is a unique cultural phenomenon commonly found not only in traditional societies. We may see that contemporary people of different social tiers, levels of education, and income practice rites and ceremonies associated with ancestor worship. This testifies to the deep foothold of existential and religious need in such practices. This phenomenon of spiritual life in Japan has a complex structure: practices and beliefs connected with the relationship between the dead and the living had existed there before the arrival of Buddhism and, after some transformations, continue to retain their importance.

At present, we have an opportunity of observing modifications of Japanese ancestor veneration brought about by social changes in Japan. The new society allows us to individualize to the maximum our relations with dead relatives and adapt them to our needs. Looking into ancestor veneration rituals as a method of organizing social existence and one of the conditions for public being, we come to the understanding of human social nature. Hence arouses the need for a complex study of ancestor veneration in Japan's contemporary society, identification of its essence and forms of manifestation.

Ancestor Worship as a Phenomenon

Ancestor worship can be found far and wide where primitive or traditional culture and beliefs have survived in this or that form. The ritual practice most evidently associated with this worship is observed among traditional communities in Asia, Africa, North and South America, Oceania and Australia. According to the interpretation provided in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Religion, ancestor worship refers to rites and beliefs directed at dead relatives of those who practice these customs [Hardacre 2005, p. 320]. Ancestor worship in the narrow sense of the word refers to specific actions performed during rites related to propitiation of the dead and/or ministration to their needs.

It should be specially noted that the group of “passed” or “dead” is much wider than the group of “ancestors.” Although the division between the two is not always very strict, ancestor worship rites do not usually imply ceremonies for the dead who are not relatives; neither do they include beliefs in the dead per se, without any indication of relationship.

Ancestor worship is closely connected with cosmology and mentality of the practicing community. It also plays a defining role in continuity and inheritance principles within this community. It is important to say that ancestor worship is not regarded as religion as such. It is often practiced along with other religious rites, often being just an element of the religious system. As a rule, there is no formal doctrine or religious concept in ancestor worship; the texts used in some practices are just liturgical guidelines. Priests not related to the relevant group do not usually participate in rites, with rare exception. Attempts to involve outside persons in the worship are not observed either, as practices are limited to an ethnic group [Hardacre 2005, p. 321–322].

There are various opinions among researchers on the expediency of using various terms to refer to ancestor worship practices. This paper will apply the word combination “ancestor worship” as the established English term for the phenomenon as a whole, and “ancestor veneration” as the one specific to Japan.

Choon Sup Bae, an anthropologist from South Korea, who explored ancestor worship in countries of Asia and Africa, provides the following short definition of the “ancestor”: this is “a dead person who has influence on their living descendants”. A more detailed definition is as follows: “these are transcendent creatures that represent religious, ethical, and institutional values of their community. Their whereabouts and influence are within (and this may vary) the physical and spiritual worlds” [Choon Sup Bae 2007, p. 23].

As has been already mentioned, the words “ancestor” and “dead” cannot be considered synonyms. In order to be regarded as an ancestor, the dead is to have some features and status in the relationship system. These features vary depending on the culture in which worship is practiced. Thus, in Japan, the spirit of a dead person is to go through several particular stages to be considered an ancestor. Some peoples have the opposite rule: a long while after death (about 4–5 generations) the spirits of the dead become “nameless” and lose the ancestor status.

It seems impossible to give a straight answer as to when and how ancestor veneration emerged in Japan. A number of scientists insist that the Japanese borrowed ancestor worship from China; others are sure it is based on original beliefs, and, consequently, rituals of veneration had been practiced long before Buddhism and Confucianism reached the archipelago. At any rate, we can say with some degree of certainty only that there must have existed in the protohistoric period in Japan a whole number of beliefs and practices associated with relations between the living and the dead.

Japanese society of the early historical period apparently consisted of multiple consanguine units called *uji* (氏), in which protective deities *uji-gami* (氏神) were worshipped. It would appear that each *uji* in early Japan had their own ancestor worship and relevant myth; it is only with the appearance of the Yamato imperial family hegemony that these odd worships merged into a single system. As a result of the imperial family *uji* rise, its family deity Amaterasu became the main deity of the entire pantheon.

Some epigraphic monuments of the Kofun period also testify to developed ancestor worship. For example, one of them is a sword from Inariyama (late 5th or the first half of the 6th century) that has listed on it eight generations of ancestors of a certain Wowake-no Omi, who served as the head of swordsmen [Meshcheryakov & Grachev 2010, p. 25].

Whatever was the early form of Japanese ancestor veneration, it is clear that Buddhism, which started its spread in Japan in the 6th century, had a tremendous influence on it. By the time the Japanese adopted Buddhism, the religion had already incorporated the Confucian principle of filial piety and rituals associated with ancestor worship. The family altar *butsudan* was also introduced under the Buddhist influence in 685. Emperor Temmu issued a decree ordering “Buddhist temples shall be built in every house and every province, Buddhist images and sutras shall be placed therein and Buddha shall be worshipped and offerings shall be made” [Nihon Shoki 1997, Vol. 2, p. 257].

The *Nihon Shoki* provides many other records testifying to the importance of conducting rituals related to the dead. For example, back in 606, Empress Suiko decreed to observe ceremonies of the holiday devoted to commemoration of the departed in all Japanese temples. “That year all the Buddhist temples arranged for the first time prayer meetings with gustation of fasting food on the 8th day of the fourth lunar month and the 15th day of the seventh lunar month” [Nihon Shoki, Vol. 2, p. 98] – this is the first evidence of the *Bon* ritual. The concept of the holiday is based on the *Urabon-kyō sutra* that was first mentioned in 659, during the rule of Empress Saimei: “The 15th day [7th lunar month]. Officials received an order for the *Urabon-kyō sutra* to be read in all Buddhist temples of the capital to give thanks to seven generations of ancestors” [Nihon Shoki, Vol. 2, p. 183].

Buddhism and ancestor veneration were inseparable for a millennium. The situation began to change when every family in Japan of the Tokugawa Shogunate period had to establish formal ties with a particular Buddhist temple. The decisive role of political forces in the development of ancestor veneration was played in that period by introduction of *terauke seido* (寺請制度), from *terauke*, the temple

certificate to be received by each Japanese; it proved that they belonged to the sect the teaching of which was allowed. The policy of isolation and persecution of Christians in the first half of the 17th century set off changes in ancestor veneration. To make sure that no Japanese was converted to Christianity, the government demanded that each household should be assigned to a particular Buddhist temple as its parishioners. Tokugawa's early religious registers state that not all family members were to belong to one temple or even one and the same Buddhist sect. It was only later that the entire family as a unit began to serve as a temple parishioner. Tokugawa's administrative restraints created a bond between a family (household) and a temple, cancelling the earlier connection between a temple and an individual.

Prior to the introduction of *terauke seido*, ancestor veneration rituals were conducted by the family itself, without participation of Buddhist priests. Now neither burials nor memorial services could be held without Buddhist priests. The government also entrusted them with a controlling function: now Buddhist priests had to oversee the ardor with which ordinary people carried out not only burial services, but also the *Bon* festival, as well as the spring and autumn equinox ceremonies. Parishioners began to perceive the temple as the place where ancestors were venerated, and the priest of the local temple as the main conductor of ancestor veneration ceremonies. These ceremonies served as virtually the only source of Buddhist clergy's income and the situation has not changed much since that time. Ancestor veneration in the Meiji era was closely connected with the political ideology of the time, primarily with the *kokutai* concept (国体). The ideological basis of the concept was a family system with the central idea of obedience to parents and filial piety. The sense of duty to one's family and ancestors was extended to the national scale. Filial piety and loyalty to the Emperor merged into an inseparable whole. From 1903, the Meiji Ministry of Education fully undertook compilation, publication, and dissemination of textbooks for primary schools. The slogan "Venerate your Ancestors!" (祖先を尊べ, *sosen wo tattobe*) was introduced into public education, while special sections devoted to this subject appeared in school textbooks on ethics

[Morioka 1990, p. 63]. American anthropologist Robert Smith, the author of the fundamental work *Ancestor Veneration in Contemporary Japan* (1974), cites an excerpt from a history textbook used until 1920, where the essence of relations between the Emperor and his subjects was explained to schoolchildren: “Amaterasu-Ōmikami is the ancestor not only of the Emperor’s family but also of all the Japanese. If we begin to clarify our genealogy, the largest share [of us] will appear to be Imperial Family descendants. <...> Our relations with the Imperial Family are based on the debt repayment in the form of gratitude to our ancestors [Smith 1974, p. 31–32].

The Meiji government that adopted Shinto as a national religion made attempts to replace Buddhist burials and cremation by a Shinto ceremony during the period of suppression of Buddhism. Nevertheless, Shinto burials did not gain credence among the people: most Japanese of that time continued holding funerals and burying their relatives in line with Buddhist traditions [Shimada 2022, p. 81–84].

In 1898, the Meiji Civil Code took effect. The government tried to stipulate relations within the family law so that they would best reflect patriarchal relations in the State per se, this “macro family” with the Emperor-“father” at the head. The basis for the family law was the family concept named *ie seido* (家制度). The power of the family head together with the family belongings is inherited by the eldest son (Article 970). The Code also provides for the family head inheriting the records about the family origin and family members’ burial sites (Article 987) [The Civil Code of Japan 1898, p. 262]. A family, as per Civil Code, was conceived as an integral whole, a minimal social cell, and its members were to sacrifice their personal wishes and accept all decisions of the family head.

The state of affairs changed only after World War II. The new Civil Code of 1947 no longer considered a family as a social unit but focused on a particular individual. Abolition of the family system brought about changes in practicing ancestor veneration rituals.

Ancestor Concept in the *Ie* Traditional Family System

Lyudmila M. Yermakova, one of the leading Russian researchers of Japanese antiquity, notes that the notion of an ancestor per se as well as the forms of veneration thereof prove to be dependent “on the relation of local cults and Buddhist beliefs at the given time and in the given place, as well as on the system of kinship accepted “here and now,” on the family structure and many other things” [Ermakova 2002, p. 44]. We will consider ancestor veneration in the context of the *ie* traditional family system.

There is no complete equivalent in the Russian language to the term *ie* (家); it is usually translated as home or family. Japanese sociologist Morioka characterizes *ie* as a social institute not interrupted in the male line over many generations [Morioka 1984, p. 202]. Continuity is to be regarded as one of the main qualities of *ie*. It should also be stated that *ie* includes all family members: the ancestors who have already passed away but have not yet been forgotten and even descendants not yet born. Middle and younger sons who mature and start families leave the *ie* system and become heads of family offshoots (分家, *bunke*).

As to who could be regarded as an ancestor in traditional Japan, the *Minzokugaku Jiten folklore dictionary* (民俗学辞典) says that the notion of an ancestor (先祖, *senzo*) in the *ie* context denotes one particular spirit or a group of spirits of the dead connected with descendants through the direct line of descent; this notion is based on the ties between parents and children, which, in their turn, proceed from the shared bloodline or adoption [Tokumaru 2014, p. 508].

Thus, the traditional patriarchal family system (家父長制, *kafuchōsei*), where the eldest son enjoys inheritance privileges (the majorat), considers the spirits of the deceased family heads in each generation and their spouses as ancestors. This notion is perceived wider in nuclear families and extends bilaterally to the husband's and wife's line. Drawing a line between an ancestor and simply a deceased

person, Morioka notes that “every ancestor is dead, but not every dead person is an ancestor” [Morioka 1990, p. 67]. An ancestor’s descendants hold services (供養, *kuyō*) to commemorate him. A dead person becomes an ancestor through these services. Therefore, if a dead person has no descendants, he is unable to become an ancestor [Morioka 1990, p. 67].

A dead person who is unable to become an ancestor in the absence of descendants who will hold relevant posthumous rites becomes a *muenbotoke* 無縁仏 (from 無縁, *muen* – “a dead person having no relatives, abandoned”). According to Japanese folk beliefs, *muenbotoke* is a cause for troubles, hardships, and diseases. In case of a relative’s death, his family members try to make sure all posthumous rites and burial services are conducted as they fear the above-mentioned misfortunes. Morioka tells a story of a *muenbotoke* mass emergence in the Sengoku period, when many people died in battles and in other violent ways. Many of them had no relatives who could conduct a relevant burial service, which gave rise to a countless number of *muenbotoke* [Morioka 1990, p. 67]. The fear of *muenbotoke* comes from the belief in *mitama* or *goryō* 御霊, where epidemics and natural disasters are an evil sent by the souls of enemies or people who died a “bad death”; it is necessary to relieve these souls in order to avoid troubles. It is necessary to hold a funeral service for them to relieve and calm down the *goryō*.

There are many discrepancies between Japanese ancestor worship researchers as to what rites precisely belong to this category. For example, the *Minzokugaku Jiten* enumerates the following rites (according to [Tokumaru 2014, p. 509]):

- burial of a particular dead family member;
- commemoration services for a particular dead family member;
- purification of ritual death uncleanness and other purification ceremonies;
- memorial services for spirits of the dead (死者供養, *shisha kuyō*);
- rites with the purpose of helping the spirit of the dead to merge with the host of ancestor spirits;

- annual festivities of ancestor veneration, such as *Bon* and *Higan*;
- veneration of family deities as ancestors;
- veneration of home deities (屋敷神, *yashikigami*), forest deities (森神, *morigami*), etc. (It is still disputable whether home, forest, and family deities could be referred to as spirits of ancestors);
- veneration of a particular ancestor out of fear for their (the ancestor's) rage in order to appease and pacify them.

Morioka also refuses to include memorial services (供養, *kuyō*) for a particular dead person into the set of these ceremonies [Morioka 1990, p. 66]. L. M. Ermakova writes the following to this effect: “In fact, various cultural phenomena can be attributed to ancestor worship or its traces – from the burial service to, in the extreme case, performance of testamentary prescriptions, or even cultural continuity” [Ermakova 2002, p. 43].

This article will consider the following rites:

- 1) memorial services for a particular dead person;
- 2) daily rites for a group of ancestors;
- 3) annual festivities for veneration of [all] ancestors.

A dead person does not obtain the status of an ancestor right after their death; this process consists of three stages: from the spirit of a dead person (死霊, *shirei*) to what is called the spirit of an ancestor (祖霊, *sorei*). Robert Smith describes these stages in the following way:

1. The first 49 days after a person died are regarded as the period of uncertainty for the dead person. During these days, *ihai*, a memorial plaque with their name is placed separately in the front part of the *butsudan*.

2. On the 49th day, the plaque is moved inside the *butsudan* to other *ihai*. As soon as this happens, the soul is believed to have passed on to the next stage and may be regarded as *niisenzo* (新先祖), i.e., a new ancestor. The spirit can remain at this stage for many years (most frequently for 33 or 50) until it reaches the final stage.

3. On the 33th or 50th anniversary of death (弔い上げ, *tomuraiage*) the spirit loses its individuality and joins the super-individual, total

group of ancestors from prior generations. The spirit becomes a full-fledged *sorei* (ancestor's spirit) and does not undergo any changes afterwards. The individual plaque at this stage is removed from the altar and placed inside the *butsudan*, adding to the plaques symbolizing the nameless group of family ancestors from different generations [Smith 1974, p. 40–41].

The rites focused on the group of dead ancestors differ from memorial services for a particular dead person (法事, *hōji*), as the rites are usually held daily and ancestors are not regarded as separate persons. Daily rites are considered to be internal family ceremonies, and a Buddhist monk's presence is not required. These rituals as well as presentations of offerings placed on the *butsudan* are usually conducted in the morning and evening time, but some families hold them only once a day. Rituals are normally held before the family sit down at the table. They light incenses and put offerings such as rice, tea, and water onto the *butsudan*. These daily rituals include prayers, talks to ancestors, reports made to them on the family's current affairs. The most widespread form of participation in the ritual is a short formal bow with hands folded in front. Any member of the family can use *butsudan* for addressing ancestors at any time of the day.

The major calendar holidays closely associated with ancestor worship in Japan are *O-bon*, New Year, and *Higan*, which is held twice a year on the spring and autumn equinox days.

O-Bon (お盆). Bon in contemporary Japan is one of the most important Buddhist holidays. In most regions, it is held on August 13–15, i.e., in the middle of the 7th month of the lunar calendar. Researchers of Japanese religions often point out the dual character of the holiday. It may be explained by the imposition of Buddhist traditions on some archaic rites that were conducted on the islands in pre-Buddhist Japan and apparently were aimed at ritual communication with ancestors. The Buddhist aspect of this holiday includes several ideologemes, including the legend of how Buddha's disciple Mokuren saved his mother from hell with the help of offerings.

Bon has not lost its importance in contemporary Japan: even now it is a major holiday associated with ancestor veneration. L. M. Ermakova calls it the central rite not only in the sphere of ancestor worship, but, probably, one of the central culture-shaping rites in contemporary Japan [Ermakova 2002, p. 48]. Ancestors return to the house of their descendants from the other world for the time of the holiday. It is believed that they simply stay among their family members at this time as it was when they were alive. These days provide family members with an opportunity of feeling the spiritual bond with their ancestors and between themselves.

New Year (お正月, *oshōgatsu*). The New Year in contemporary Japan is not perceived as a holiday associated with ancestor veneration. Nevertheless, some researchers believe that the New Year and summer festival of ancestor spirits (on which *Bon* was superimposed later) were closely connected in pre-Buddhist Japan. Yanagita Kunio, the founder of Japanese ethnography, was the first to express this idea. He asserted that these holidays, being exactly six months apart from each other, represented one cycle, and both were devoted to meeting ancestor spirits returning to the world of the living [Smith 1974, p. 18–19].

Higan (彼岸). *Higan* rites, performed throughout the week including the days of spring equinox (春分の日, *shumbun-no hi*) and autumn equinox (秋分の日, *shūbun-no hi*), are fully concentrated on ancestor veneration. The name *Higan*, meaning “the other shore,” refers to Buddhist perceptions that our world and the next one are divided by a river filled with suffering and illusions, and only the one who can overcome those may reach the other bank. It is customary during *Higan* in contemporary Japan to put graves in order, decorate them with flowers, leave edible offerings, light incenses, and read sutras.

The *ie* system, like other social institutes, gradually changed over the century following the Meiji restoration. The reforms implemented after World War II and in many respects initiated by the Occupation authorities are most remarkable: the *ie* system underwent greater

changes in the first postwar decade than in the entire preceding century. The family system's changes brought about a shift in ancestor veneration practices.

The new Constitution of Japan came into effect in 1947. Its Article 14 stipulated equality of all people before the law, forbidding any "political, social and economic" discrimination "regardless of race, confession, gender, social status and origin". The cornerstone of the revised Civil Code, based on the 1947 Constitution, is an individual, not *ie*. Permission of the family head is no longer required for marriage (see Article 731 of the Civil Code). Assets earned during marriage belong to each of the partners and not solely to the husband (Article 762, Section 1); the husband no longer disposes of the wife's property. The notion of the *ie* family head stipulated by law no longer exists. The family assets are no longer inherited by the eldest son exclusively: all children of the family have equal right to them (Article 900, Paragraph 4).

The postwar Constitution and alterations in the Civil Code, along with modernization and urbanization of Japan's society, played their role in the dissolution of the traditional Japanese family. In the early 1960s, the share of those who advocated the equal division of parental assets amounted already to 50 percent, and only an insignificant minority continued insisting on the necessity of bequeathing the entire property to the future *ie* family head. Over 50 percent of the respondents do not consider it necessary to adopt a child in case the family does not have their own children to continue the line. The idea of *ie* mandatory continuity is becoming less and less popular [Morioka 1984, p. 204].

Nuclear families gained popularity in Japan after the war. A nuclear family consists of spouses and children or only spouses, with relations between spouses rather than between parents and children coming to the forefront. As we see, this type of family is opposed to the traditional Japanese extended family *ie*, where the most important element was continuity of generations. Morioka states that, in postwar Japan, even families consisting of several generations of spouses (for example, three generations living together) look more like two nuclear families

living under the same roof, and each of them has their own household [Morioka 1984, p. 205].

Drastic changes in the *ie* system, that can be called virtually a disintegration of the traditional family, eventually depleted ancestor veneration as well. Nevertheless, public opinion surveys conducted in the 1960s and 1980s showed that decline of involvement in ancestor veneration rites was much less than expected by researchers who studied this problem: from 77 in 1953 to 72 percent in 1978 [Morioka 1984, p. 205]. It was probably due to changes in the concept of the word “ancestor,” as a new understanding of who could be regarded an ancestor, free from the *ie* system pressure, emerged in the first postwar decades.

As mentioned above, the traditional patriarchal family considers dead family heads in each generation and their spouses ancestors. We will see further that in nuclear families, which came to domineer in postwar Japan, the notion of an ancestor strives for extension and spreads bilaterally: for the husband’s line as well as for the wife’s one.

In the 1970s and 1980s, S. Yonemura and R. J. Smith conducted large-scale field studies of ancestor veneration. The data obtained by Yonemura in the Okayama prefecture in 1974–1975 prove that over 70 percent of the respondents hold on to the traditional interpretation of the notion of an “ancestor”: they see them as a family founder, the one who headed the family from the time of its foundation, the ancestor of the main family branch. Nevertheless, for the remaining 30 percent, ancestors are either all dead people belonging to the family, or all dead family members whose memory was preserved with the help of *butsudan*, or dead parents, etc. Blood affinity for these 30 percent of the respondents was more important than the linear principle of inheritance [Morioka 1984, p. 205].

In 1963, R. Smith studied *ihai*, memorial plaques with the names of the deceased, in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, as well as in rural families from Iwate, Mie, and Kagawa. According to his research, 93 percent of *ihai* contained names of ancestors from the main family line (on the husband’s side), while plaques with names of ancestors outside the

main family line, including those on the wife's side, amounted to some 6 percent of the total number. As the share of plaques not related to the main family line in cities was higher than in rural areas, Smith concluded that plaques with dead relatives outside the main family line represent a recent tendency – they maintain ancestor worship focusing on the contemporary family rather than *ie* [Smith 1974, p. 152–186].

Morioka explains these changes by transition from the “mandatory” concept of an ancestor, including all the dead in the direct line of inheritance regardless of personal preferences, to the “optional” one, i.e., limiting the notion of an “ancestor” to close relatives the memory of whom is dear to the descendant [Morioka 1984, p. 206].

Ancestor veneration functions undergo significant adjustments along with the changes in the ancestor concept. Initially, ancestor worship functions were social: social status legitimation (ceremonial attention to ancestors proves that the current family head inherited their social status after their ancestors legally), or increased motivation towards providing for future generations. Prior functions of ancestor veneration rituals promoted *ie* stability, while new functions imply removing psychological tension in relations between the living and the dead through positive remembrances and providing consolation to particular people.

As we remember, ancestor veneration ceremonies within the house are usually conducted before the Buddhist altar. Morioka gives the following statistics: according to comparative studies conducted in three regions in 1956–1966, the share of families that still had a *butsudan* was 92 percent in agricultural communities of the Yamaguchi prefecture, 69 percent in the Tokyo business quarters, and 43 percent in the Tokyo areas inhabited by “white collars.” Regardless of where the family resided, nearly 100 percent of extended families still had a *butsudan*. As for nuclear families in rural areas, 80 percent of them had a *butsudan*, while this figure did not exceed 31 percent in the districts where “white collars” resided. Morioka made repeated studies (only in Tokyo this time) in 1967, which showed that nearly 100 percent of

extended families had a *butsudan* installed in the house. As for the houses inhabited by nuclear families, a *butsudan* could be found twice as rare there [Morioka 1984, p. 207]. The lowest number of *butsudan* was recorded in salaried employees' nuclear families. As the number of such families evidently grew in postwar Japan, the total share of families with *butsudan* decreased. By 1981, according to a survey made by the *Asahi* newspaper, only 63 percent of the families had a *butsudan* installed in their house [Morioka 1984, p. 208].

In 1964–1965, another comparative survey was conducted: pupils in the senior grades of elementary school were asked questions as to whether older members of their families held ancestor veneration ceremonies. The results were as follows: only 26 percent of nuclear families practiced ancestor veneration rituals, while 48 percent of all those surveyed had a *butsudan* at home; as for extended families, 66 percent practiced those rituals and 97 percent had a *butsudan*. According to the data obtained, nearly 30 percent of families having a *butsudan* do not practice ancestor veneration rituals, thus, in fact, neglecting their *butsudans* [Morioka 1984, p. 209]. Nevertheless, Morioka warns that no hasty conclusions should be made: it is quite likely that the level of practicing is approximately the same as before, but practices have changed [Morioka 1984, p. 209]. Although the number of families carrying out traditional rites of veneration (*Bon* and *Higan*, daily ceremonies for a group of ancestors; memorial services for a particular dead person) went down in the postwar decades, this does not mean that other practices – less formal but based on personal affection – are not used instead.

Smith confirms this guess: “As the influence of institutionalized Buddhism weakened, families could no longer be so much concerned [about the form of veneration rituals] as they had been before when veneration was formally mandatory. Now families can practice veneration the way they consider proper, in the most effective and suitable form” [Smith 1974, p. 113]. Thus, “privatization,” using the term suggested by Morioka, takes place, which is nothing other than growing dominance of personal functions in veneration.

Ancestor Veneration in Our Days

As it has been mentioned above, the second half of the 20th century in Japan saw transition from the traditional patrilineal family system to a nuclear one, i.e., a family of spouses with unmarried children or of spouses alone. Until recently, such families were the majority in Japan. But in 2010, Japanese sociologists announced that, for the first time in the history of the country, the most common type of families became families consisting of only one person (単独世帯, *tandoku setai*).¹ The next population census confirmed the trend towards diversification of family types. Today, four main types can be identified:

- families consisting of one person – 34.6 percent of the total number of families;
- families consisting of spouses (of the same generation) with children (i.e. nuclear families) – 26.9 percent;
- families consisting only of spouses (of the same generation) – 20.1 percent;
- families consisting of a single parent and a child/children – 8.9 percent.²

The number of families consisting of one person (they include widowers as well as divorcees and single people who have never been married) has grown by 7 percent since 2000, and the number of nuclear families has decreased by 5 percent for the same period. Inoue Haruyo, a Japanese sociologist who specializes in death sociology, notes that all these changes have led to the situation when nuclear families have been gradually losing the function of a unit of the collective in recent decades: the focus is gradually shifting from

¹ Heisei 22 nen kokusei chōsa. Jinkōtō kihon shūkei kekka. Kekkai-no gaiyō [2010 Population Census. Main Summary Results by Population. Summary of Results]. Sōmushō. P. 30.

² Heisei 27 nen kokusei chōsa. Jinnkōtō kihon shūkei kekka. Kekkai-no gaiyō [2015 Population Census. Main Summary Results by Population. Summary of Results]. Sōmushō. P. 37.

the family to an individual [Inoue 2013, p. 123]. This transition could not but find reflection in the rituals associated with ancestor veneration.

In recent decades, more and more city funerals are held according to a “shortened” scheme: traditional funeral rites are ignored, with only cremation remaining mandatory. Inoue calls such funerals “direct” (直葬, *chokusō*) [Inoue 2013, p. 124]. There are many interpretations of a “direct funeral”: it can be a funeral to which only the closest relatives and friends of the deceased are invited (even a Buddhist priest may not be present). Others liken direct funerals to “family funerals” (密葬 *missō*, lit. “secret funerals”), that are not even officially announced.

Let us compare traditional and contemporary funerals, using the table below for clarity:

	Traditional ceremony	Contemporary ceremony
Present	Family and relatives: acquaintances from community and company	Family, close relatives
Ritual unit	Family members	The deceased
Ceremony	Buddhist	Ceremony in a free form; traditional rituals are reduced

Previously, when the collective evidently domineered over the personal, the presence of local community members, managers of the company where the deceased had worked, and numerous relatives was compulsory at the funeral. Now the Japanese more and more frequently refuse to invite to the funeral those who did not know the deceased well and, therefore, are unable to feel the loss in full. Many contemporary funerals are attended only by people close to the deceased because it was the latter’s wish. Time has come when people can not only live, but also die “the way they wish.”

With the most widespread family type being a family consisting of a single person, it becomes evident that the traditional form of burial –

placing ashes into a family grave – with its principle of inheritance does not conform to the contemporary Japanese' requirements, and many of these graves may be abandoned in the next few decades and dismantled afterwards due to the absence of heirs of the deceased.

As early as in the 1990s, Japan's funeral industry saw emergence of some new burial forms aimed at replacing traditional graves or, at least, equalling those as one of the available ways of burial. The most popular among them are scattering of ashes (散骨, *sankotsu*), quite widespread in other countries as well, and the phenomenon of *temoto kuyō* (手元供養, lit. "memorial at hand, at home"). At the same time, what is called natural trends or eco-burials give rise to, along with scattering of ashes, burials under trees (樹木葬, *jumokusō*). Below is a more detailed description of the latter two types.

Temoto kuyō. This is a form of burial when a part of the deceased's ashes is separated and kept by relatives in the house as if "always nearby, at hand" – hence the name of the practice. Standard burial urns that were placed into traditional family graves were first used for keeping the remains of the dead at home; by the late 1990s, those had been replaced by special urns. Currently, there exist various forms of keeping remains – from placing them into nice ceramic vessels to inlaying pendants and bracelets with precious stones made from the ashes.

Burial under trees (樹木葬, *jumokusō*). The main feature of burial under trees is the absence of a tombstone: a tree is used as a marker instead; it is planted over the remains of a dead person placed into the earth. Another important element of this type of burial is lack of the need for an heir or descendant: unlike a family grave, *jumokusō* burials do not require regular care, and the "subscription fee" for a place in such a cemetery is independently paid in the vast majority of cases by the Japanese, who are used to starting preparations for their own death in advance, during their lifetime. It should also be noted that burial under trees is much cheaper than arrangement of the traditional family grave, and a certain share of the Japanese undoubtedly chooses

this way as the most affordable. Definitely, the number of cemeteries, fully or partially designated for burials under trees, is still very small: various researchers provide figures from 100 to 200 in 2016. Yet, thanks to their affordability and other advantages, *jumokusō* procedures, along with other new burial methods, have already proven to be a real alternative to family graves in Japan [Avdiushenkova 2018, p. 403–404].

As has been mentioned above, urbanization and the young generation's movement to cities increased the number of families without *butsudan* Buddhist altars at home. Most families had such altars in the past and placed *ihai* memorial plaques on them. Those plaques could symbolize one particular dead family member, as well as a married couple, or an entire generation of the deceased. Some families kept *ihai* despite the absence of *butsudan*. That happened because of the special attitude to plaques: it was believed that they were repositories of the dead's spirit. In contemporary Japan, as Japanese religious studies scholar Suzuki Iwayumi asserts, *ihai* functions are taken over by the deceased's photos [Suzuki 2013, p. 141].

Photos displayed in postwar Japanese houses were limited to portraits of the deceased, while contemporary photos show the dead and the living who may be family members or friends. People tend to display only photos of those who are especially dear to them. Thus, displayed photos serve as an evidence of strong relationship within the family, with relatives, and close friends. Changes in the arrangement of photos go hand in hand with changes in the space in which they are placed. Photos are moved from the walls next to *butsudan* to the habitual home space.

Suzuki notes that, apart from photos of those whom we can recognize as ancestors, the Japanese often display photos of other dead relatives, such as aunts, uncles, grandaunts, and granduncles. As to the places where photos of the dead are placed, nearly 24 percent of the total number of photos were outside the “Buddhist space” – in a cupboard, a wall closet, or a bookshelf – or they were just hung on the walls. Suzuki believes that the living use these “non-Buddhist”

spaces to place photos of the dead they were close with emotionally and not just related to [Suzuki 2013, p. 146–149].

Also of interest is that some 40 percent of photos of the dead placed outside the “Buddhist space” receive offerings similar to those performed on the *butsudan*. The main difference between the “Buddhist” and “non-Buddhist” space is the assortment of offered foods: it is much wider in the “non-Buddhist” space, often including the dead’s favorite dishes [Suzuki 2013, p. 150].

With regard to “communication” with the dead, over 60 percent of Suzuki’s respondents regularly spoke to them in their everyday life regardless of where the photo was located. Most of the appeals were similar to usual communication that occurs between living people, such as information about events taking place in life, greetings and goodbyes, requests for advice. These actions show the attitude of the living to the dead: they communicate with them in the same way as if the deceased continued to live next to them. About one fourth of the appeals are prayers or requests, for example, about protecting the family from troubles and diseases; descendants also often ask for help with passing exams. We see that this type of appeals is equivalent to resorts to protecting deities, while photos as well as *ihai* appear as an object of the protecting deity’s residence (依代, *yorishiro*).

The Japanese actually believe in the magic power of ancestor spirits, which is confirmed by relatively recent public surveys conducted across the country. For example, according to the data of a survey conducted in 2008 by the research bureau of NHK, the largest public-state television and radio broadcasting company in Japan, 47 percent of the respondents, replying to the question “Do you believe in the power of ancestor spirits?”, answered “Yes, I do” or “I rather do” [Nishi 2009, p. 71]. It is surprising that, among those who gave a positive answer to this question, the majority are young and middle-aged people: for example, 71 percent of women in the age of 30–39 believe in the power of ancestor spirits. Judging by this data, anthropologists should not worry that ancestor veneration practices are at the stage of extinction in contemporary Japan.

Conclusion

This article has examined the transformation of ancestor worship in the context of socio-political and religious conditions, described the main rituals of worship in traditional Japan, as well as identified peculiarities of worship in contemporary Japanese society and changes in the form of practices and functions of this worship occurring today.

Ancestor worship can be found everywhere and, as we have already mentioned, not only in traditional societies: thus, the rites associated with ancestor veneration are practiced by the bulk of the population in the 21st century Japan. The key conditions for considering a dead relative an ancestor are as follows: a deceased person who had a significant status when alive and has descendants remembering and venerating them through particular rituals.

As for Japanese ancestor worship specifically, we can say with a certain degree of certainty that there was a whole number of beliefs and practices associated with relationships between the living and the dead back in prehistoric Japan. Buddhism, that began to spread in Japan in the 6th century, exerted great influence on the early form of Japanese ancestor veneration. A thousand years later, during the Tokugawa period, the decisive role in the development of ancestor veneration was played by the introduction of the *terauke seido* system, where each household was forcibly assigned to a particular Buddhist temple as parishioners. No ancestor veneration ceremonies could then do without a Buddhist priest's participation. The Meiji era brought about other important changes in ancestor veneration, when the worship of ancestors virtually merged with that of the Emperor, while the traditional patriarchal family concept *ie*, underlying the Meiji family law, raised the importance of ancestor veneration to the national level. The Tokugawa and Meiji periods finalized the traditional forms of ancestor veneration and formulated the concept of an ancestor: the *ie* patriarchal family system, where the eldest son enjoys inheritance privileges and the spirits of the dead family heads in each generation and their spouses are regarded as ancestors.

Japanese veneration practices underwent great changes after World War II. This was brought about by postwar modernization and urbanization of Japanese society; those were followed by disintegration of the traditional family system. The concept of an ancestor changed as well: the ancestor concept strives for extension and begins to spread bilaterally (both to the husband's and the wife's lines). The "mandatory" concept of an ancestor, including all dead ancestors in the direct line of inheritance regardless of personal preferences, evolves into the "optional" one, i.e., one limiting the concept of an "ancestor" to close relatives whose memories are dear to descendants. Changes in the concept of an ancestor bring about transformations of veneration ritual functions: the prior functions of veneration rituals promoted *ie* stability, while new ones imply removal of psychological tension in relations between the living and the dead through pleasant memories and consolation provided to particular people. Ancestor veneration rituals in contemporary Japan also change significantly: those dictated by Buddhist dogmas give way to less formal ones, based on personal affection. "Privatization" of ancestor veneration is under way, i.e., personal functions in veneration are increasingly dominant. The diversification of family types, especially conspicuous in the first decades of the 21st century, has also found its reflection in ancestor veneration rituals: new alternatives to traditional funerals emerged, as well as new forms of burial and storage of remains, the most outstanding examples being burials under trees (*jumokusō*) and *temoto kuyō*.

The above discussed allows us to conclude that, despite changes in the ancestor veneration functions as well as the transformation of burial and commemoration forms, the place allotted to the dead by the living in their lives is still very important. The individualization of veneration practices and the enduring belief of virtually a half of the Japanese in the power of spirits of the dead testify that ancestor worship in contemporary Japan is likely to be at the next stage of its development rather than extinction.

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Nature of Mastery in Martial Arts and the Method of Obtaining It in Issai Chozan's Treatise *Tengu Geijutsu Ron*

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Abstract

The article considers the nature of mastery in martial arts (*bugei*) and the method to obtain it according to the treatise by Issai Chozan (1659–1741), *Tengu Geijutsu Ron* (*Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]*, 1729). This text is a unique phenomenon in the martial arts literature of the Edo period. A work written with a mass readership in mind, it was received by martial artists as an epiphany and remains a part of the canon of the Japanese *bugei* until now. The topic of mind and methods of controlling its state occupies the central place in the treatise. The sections focusing on this topic contain a comprehensive analysis of the empirical, “incorrect” state of mind (*shin*), which is juxtaposed with the state of “true mind” (*shintai*).

According to one version, these sections were actually written not by Issai Chozan, but by one of the greatest Japanese Confucian scholars of the 17th century, a representative of the Japanese Wang Yangming school, Kumazawa Banzan (1619–1691), which, probably, explains the depth in which the topic of mind is covered. The *Tengu Geijutsu Ron* persuasively shows that mastery in martial arts is the result of achieving the state of “true mind” (*shintai*), bringing in the right state the pneuma-*ki*, mastering the technique of battle, training the body, grasping the “nature” (*sei*) of the weapon used and obtaining the ability to “follow” this nature. Issai Chozan notes that, in the system “mind – pneuma – body,” mind occupies the top, commanding place, directing the *ki*, which, in turn, directs the body, but the process of achieving mastery is based on using feedback in this system.

Keywords: Japanese martial arts, *budo*, *bugei*, Confucianism, Issai Chozan, Niwa Tadaaki, Kumazawa Banzan, *Tengu Geijutsu Ron*, *Geijutsu Taii*.

In the second half of the 17th century, there was an active discussion among martial artists focusing on the essence and content of *bugei* – martial arts, on the effective methods and approaches to educating a warrior, on the very nature and essence of mastery. Masters offered their answers to these questions, which, as a rule, remained confined to the narrow circle of their followers. Against this background, in the first third of the 17th century, an author writing under the penname of Issai Chozan-shi 佚斎樗山子, published two works of great interest focusing on the said topic, one after another. The first one was titled the *Miraculous Art of the Cat* (*Neko-no Myojutsu* 猫之妙術), and it was published in 1727. The second one was the *Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]* (*Tengu Geijutsu Ron* 天狗藝術論), and it was released in 1729. I spoke about the former in my article [Gorbylev 2021]. Here, I will focus on the second work by Issai Chozan-shi.

Issai Chozan and His Work ***Discourse of Tengu on the Art of the Sword***

Referring the reader to the article on the treatise *Miraculous Art of the Cat* for more detail, here, I will provide only the briefest information about the author of the *Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]*.

His real name was Niwa Jūrōzaemon Tadaaki 丹羽十郎左衛門忠明 (1659–1741). He was a samurai in the domain of Sekiyado (Shimōsa Province, currently Chiba Prefecture), not far from the shogunate capital of Edo. He served Lord Kuze Yamato-no kami Shigeyuki and occupied an officer post of a “banner commander” *hata-bugyō* with a handsome salary of 300 *koku*.¹

¹ *Koku* – ca. 150 kg of rice, a standard measure of income in medieval Japan.

Issai Chozan received a good education. He studied military sciences, Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism, but he was particularly interested in the Taoist texts *Lao Tzu* and *Chuang Tzu*, as well as Zen Buddhism. After his retirement, he was spending time conversing with men of culture from Edo and writing. He authored several educational works focusing on martial arts and rules of life for the samurai. His writing is characterized by frequent use of dialogues and parables to explain the contents, lightness of style, and humor. Scholars name him the founder of a specific literary genre, *dangibon* 談義本, which can be translated as “humorous instructions in the form of a conversation” [Nakano 1967].

The treatise *Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]* (see the text in [Issai 1995]) occupies a special place among the works of Issai Chozan.

The *Discourse* was printed with woodblock in the 14th year of Kyōhō. Despite the fact that the work was aimed at wide readership, Issai Chozan-shi touched upon issues so important for martial artists and gave such thought-out and detailed answers to them that his work was received exceptionally well by *bugei* masters. According to Japanese scholar Ooboki Teruo, the *Tengu Geijutsu Ron* was reprinted a countless number of times until the woodblocks of the first edition were completely worn out [Ooboki 1981, p. 55]. After that, to meet the unending demand, the *Discourse* was re-published in the 6th year of Kansei (1794) as *Buyō Geijutsu Ron* (武用藝術論, *Theory of Arts Used by Warriors*). It became popular once again in the early 20th century, when, in the time of booming popularity of martial arts in Japan, old works about them began to be re-published. In 1915, the treatise *Tengu Geijutsu Ron* was included in the collection of classical texts *Bujutsu Sōsho* (*Library of Martial Arts*), which was later reprinted several times and remains one of the most important collections of texts on *bujutsu* until present time.

Since the time of the first edition, the treatise was widely studied and commented upon, and new works on the theory of *bugei* were published under its influence. For example, under the impression from *Tengu*

Geijutsu Ron, a *kenjutsu* (art of swordsmanship) master of the Mugen-ryū school Otsuka Mambei Yoshioki wrote a book titled *Theory of the Art of the Sword* (*Kenjutsu Ron*) in 1743. And only four years later, the next work inspired by Issai Chozan-shi was published – a treatise *Basics of the Art [of the Sword]* (*Geijutsu Futaba-no Hajime*, 1747), authored by Kokenken Ensui. The treatise by Issai Chozan-shi is widely studied and commented upon in our days in well, and not only in Japan, but also far beyond its borders (see the references list after this article).

The *Discourse* includes a preface, written by Kanda Hakuryūshi, four scrolls of the main text, and the author's afterword.

In the beginning of the first scroll, Issai Chozan employs a characteristic literary device. He describes a fencer, who, mimicking the famous Minamoto-no Yoshitsune (1159–1189), who allegedly learned the secrets of the art of the sword from the mountain-dwelling *tengu* demons, retreats to the mountains. There, he exhausts himself with training, and after that falls either asleep or into meditation, witnessing, whether in reality or in dreams, a battle between the *tengu* and subsequently their discussion on the nature of mastery in *kenjutsu*.

The first three scrolls of the *Discourse* analyze the phenomenon of mastery, while in the fourth one the author recommends to include the *shūki-no jutsu* 収気の術, the “technique of gathering pneuma-ki” with breathing exercises, in the practice of martial arts. According to Yuasa Akira, a prominent expert in the field of Tokugawa-era martial arts, in the early 18th century, this was a novelty in the theory and practice of *bugei* [Yuasa 2003, pp. 146–149].

Tengu Geijutsu Ron and Geijutsu Taii: Who Is the Real Author of the Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]?

A crucial factor of attractiveness of the *Discourse* for the disciples of martial arts was a comprehensive coverage of the topic of mastery and the method of achieving it from the point of view of

the Confucian doctrine about the two foundations of the Universe: the principle-*ri*² and the pneuma-*ki*³ 理気論. To explain it, the author portrays a discussion, a dispute even, in which the mastery in *kenjutsu* is considered from various sides and in various aspects. For this reason, the *Discourse* is particularly interesting, as it provides a solid description of the way the Japanese of the late 17th – early 18th centuries understood mental processes and the connection of the mind and the body.

The first scroll is started with the introduction, titled “*Taii*” (大意), which can be translated as the “True Meaning [of the Book].” It clearly states that the main topic of Issai Chozan-shi’s book is the achievement of the right state of mind (*shin* 心), because this is the necessary basis of mastery in *kenjutsu* and every other business. Issai Chozan-shi calls this state *shintai* (心体) – the “true (essential) mind.” The author claims that, upon gaining it, a person “will be able to correctly follow

² *Ri* (*li* in Chinese) – “principle/law,” one of the basic categories of the classical Chinese philosophy, the ordering, structuring element, the attribute, the essential quality inherent in a particular object and everything in existence. In the teaching of Zhu Xi, the fundamental substantial element, comprising the nature of things and defining their structure. The sum of the endless multitude of “principles” of particular objects forms the “Great Ultimate,” *taiji* (*taikyoku* in Japanese), which shapes the formless pneuma-*qi* (*ki* in Japanese), causing the process of cosmogenesis and the formation of the world.

³ *Ki* (*qi* in Chinese) – “pneuma,” “vital force,” “energy,” etc. – one of the fundamental and most characteristic categories of Far Eastern philosophy and culture. In the cosmological sense, it is the universal substance of the Universe. In the organismic one, it is the “life force,” filling human body and connected to blood circulation, able to reduce itself to the condition of “seed,” “seed soul” (*jing* in Chinese). In the psychological sense, *ki* is the manifestation of the psychical center of *xin* (“mind,” “heart”), directed by will (*zhi* in Chinese) and directing the feelings (*qing* in Chinese).

the Heavenly principles contained in his own inherent nature⁴ (*jisei-no tensoku* 自性の天則) and even become “the helper of the Great Way” [Issai 1995, p. 286].

The topic of “mind” and controlling its state occupies the central place in the first three scrolls of *Tengu Geijutsu Ron*. The pages dealing with it reveal close textual semblance to another book with a similar title, *Geijutsu Taii* (藝術大意, *True Meaning of the Art [of the Sword]*), which is attributed to one of the greatest Japanese Confucians of the 17th century, a prominent representative of the Japanese Wang Yangming school Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619–1691).

The identity of entire passages in the *Tengu Geijutsu Ron* and in the *Geijutsu Taii*, which had allegedly been created several decades earlier, leads one to believe that Issai Chozan-shi merely reproduced the work by Kumazawa Banzan, to whose fundamental knowledge and literary skill the treatise *Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]* largely owes its fame. However, not everything is as simple as it seems here. In fact, Kumazawa Banzan’s authorship of *Geijutsu Taii* is questionable. And if this text was not written by Kumazawa, it can be a forgery, which was, vice versa, produced on the basis of the book by Issai Chozan-shi. The scholars who do not consider the famous Confucian to be the author of the *True Meaning of the Art [of the Sword]* point out that the original manuscript of this work was never found, that there are no mentions of the work in Kumazawa’s documents, and that the text was published in 1936 for the first time, while its first traces only date back to no earlier than 1910.⁵ For these reasons, the text of *Geijutsu Taii*

⁴ *Sei* (*xing* in Chinese), “individual nature” – natural qualities of every particular “thing.” “Heavenly” (*ten* in Japanese, *tian* in Chinese) in the Far Eastern philosophical tradition is synonymous to “natural.”

⁵ According to some data, in 1910, the manuscript of *Geijutsu Taii* from the collection of a prominent educator and law expert Hosokawa Junjirō was demonstrated at an exhibit dedicated to the 220th anniversary of Banzan’s passing, held in the city of Koga. However, whether it was the original manuscript or some other copy which was demonstrated there, is currently impossible to determine.

was not included in the *Six-Volume Full Collection of Works by Banzan* [Ooboki 1981, p. 55].

Other researchers, with experts in the history of Japanese *bugei* most prominent among them,⁶ believe that *Geijutsu Taii* is an exceptionally valuable work by Kumazawa, which played, among other things, due to its retelling by Issai Chozan-shi, an important role in the development of the theory of martial arts.

The arguments of the proponents of this point of view were summarized by Ooboki Teruo. He notes that, in the afterword to the 1936 edition of *Geijutsu Taii*, its author, Kakuta Kanjirō, unequivocally states that this text belongs to Kumazawa and elaborates upon the origins of the copy used in preparing the publication. Kakuta writes that a certain Oohashi San'emon from Nishikinomiya, Shimotsuke Province, owned the original manuscript of *Geijutsu Taii*. Katō Shōzaburō from Shōnai made a copy of it. After that, in the 10th year of Tempō (1839), Ishikawa Shizuka made a copy of the manuscript owned by Katō. Then, in the “10th year of Ansei” (even though the last year of the Ansei era was year 7, or 1860), Nakayama Shūmei rewrote the text of *Geijutsu Taii* from the copy of Ishikawa. Finally, in the 1st year of Bunkyū (1861), Sakai Ryō copied it from Nakayama's manuscript [Ibid.]. According to Ooboki, such a detailed genealogy of the text's transmission makes Kakuta's claim that the *True Meaning of the Art [of the Sword]* is indeed a work by Kumazawa Banzan believable. However, Ooboki himself only managed to find a mention of only one of the above-mentioned owners of the copies – Oohashi San'emon, who had allegedly been the owner of the original manuscript by Kumazawa Banzan. His name is mentioned in *Kakugeki Shugyō Roku* 攪撃修行録, a work by a master of the *kenjutsu* school Ryūgō-ryū Nakayama Ikunoshin, dated 4th – 6th years of Kaei (1851–1853). However, there is no specific information about the said Oohashi in this text [Ibid.].

⁶ In particular, this position was held by Yamada Jirokichi, one of the most prominent authorities in the field of history of *kenjutsu*, author and editor of the *Collection of Works on Kendō* [Kendō sōsho 1936].

To justify the very possibility of the author of the *Discourse of Tengu on the Art [of the Sword]* gaining access to the alleged work by Kumazawa, Ooboki states where Kumazawa and Issai's ways may have crossed. He notes that, in 1676, Banzan spent seven days in the "minor" estate (*shimoyashiki*) of Kuze Hiroyuki (1609–1679), father of Kuze Shigeyuki (1659–1720), whom Issai Chozan-shi served. At the time, Banzan was about 57 years old, while Chozan was about 18. That is, they could have met, and the young samurai of the Kuze house could have listened to lectures of the prominent Confucian scholar [Ooboki 1981, p. 55].

Further on, Ooboki reminds that Kumazawa spent the last four years of his life under house arrest in the Koga Castle in Shimōsa province. Despite his captivity, Banzan was apparently teaching even in this harsh period of his life. According to Ooboki's opinion, among his followers could very well be Chozan himself, who was serving in the domain of Sekiyado, which was located not very far from the Koga Castle in the same province of Shimōsa. Ooboki believes that it was hardly possible that Issai Chozan-shi, with his interest in Confucianism, could fail to use this chance to learn from Kumazawa. Concluding his analysis, Ooboki seconds the opinion of another scholar of the history of Japanese *bugei*, Okada Kazuo, who, in a 1980 work of his, expressed the opinion that *Geijutsu Taii* was a "work by Banzan, written in the period of his arrest in Koga" [Ibid.].

There is an important question: could Kumazawa Banzan write a work dedicated to the art of the sword in principle? Did he practice *kenjutsu*?

Yes, Banzan did practice swordsmanship. Moreover, born to a samurai family, since his childhood years, he dreamt about the career of a great warrior and dedicated great effort to studying the art of the sword [Okada 1976, p. 78]. Therefore, he could in fact be the author of *Geijutsu Taii*, which elegantly combined the Confucian view of personal development with the theory and practice of swordsmanship.

As far as we can say, since Ooboki Teruo's 1981 publication, the discussion about the authorship of *Geijutsu Taii* and, ultimately, about the authorship of a significant portion of the text of *Tengu Geijutsu Ron*

hardly proceeded. The original manuscript of *Geijutsu Taii* was never found, and the authorship of Kumazawa Banzan is usually mentioned with a question mark attached [Yuasa 2003, p. 145].

Mind: Empirical, Wrong (*Shin*), and True (*Shintai*)

Issai Chozan juxtaposes the wrong mind, typical for an ordinary person, which he refers to using the character 心 (*shin/kokoro*), with the correct, “true state,” which is defined by the character combination 心体 *shintai*.

It is the state of “true mind” which is the foundation of mastery in the art of the sword: “Even though the art of the sword is a technique of battle, its ultimate principle (極則) is nothing other but the natural ‘miraculous application of the true mind’ (*shintai shizen-no myōyō* 心体自然の妙用)” [Issai 1995, p. 287]. In a different place, he says: “The art of the sword consists in the spontaneous, natural use of the ‘true mind’ 心体自然の応用” [Ibid., p. 288].

The essential characteristics of the “true mind” are tranquility, stillness, “emptiness,” that is, freedom from “things,” thoughts, ideas, selfish desires. In this state of mind, a person can naturally follow his “nature” and completely spontaneously and correctly react to all changes in the environment, effectively using their entire body. Issai Chozan writes: “When mind remains still, then the pneuma-*ki* does not move; when mind remains at rest and is devoid of all things, then *ki* remains soft and follows it, while techniques are applied naturally and according to necessity” [Ibid., p. 287]. In a different section: “Human mind does not contain evil initially. When a person is following his human “nature” (*sei* 性) and does not permit the feelings (*jō* 情) and desires (*yoku* 欲) to entice him, his “spirit” experiences no difficulty, and a person, upon encountering things, keeps the ability to respond to the developments completely freely and to act according to the situation” [Ibid., p. 290].

However, the mind of an ordinary person is not in the state of “true mind,” and it is characterized by constant change. Issai Chozan writes about this in the first lines of his work: “A human is a creature that is always in movement (動物). When a person does not move towards the good, hi necessarily moves towards the evil. If hi does not produce a thought in one place, then he necessarily produces a different thought in a different place. And the reason for this all is a person’s state of mind (*shin*), which is constantly changing” [Ibid., p. 286].

The main factors of change of the empirical state of mind, according to the text, are the feelings and desires inherent in a person, which can “entice” the mind and take it out of balance, as a result of which it ceases to follow the human “nature.” Feelings and desires make the mind turn towards “things,” because of which it ceases to “freely respond to what is happening and act according to situation,” which can have catastrophic consequences, especially in battle:

When the mind is occupied by some “things,” then the movement of *ki* becomes difficult, and arms and legs are unable to do their work. When mind focuses on techniques, then the movement of *ki* stops and it loses its wholeness and softness. When mind is used in this way and urged, then the results of its work⁷ turn out petty.⁸ When mind gives birth to an idea⁹ (*i* 意) and enlivens it, it acts like wind blowing up the fire which immediately devours firewood without leaving any trace of it. When *ki* moves ahead, it vaporizes, and when it is being locked, *ki* freezes. When you defend and wait, trying to react to your opponent’s actions, you are staring at the opponent (*miawase* 見合わせ), restrain yourself, and cannot make a single step forward. In this situation,

⁷ Lit. “traces.”

⁸ Lit “empty” – *kyo* in Japanese; *xu* in Chinese.

⁹ “Idea” (*i* in Japanese; *yi* in Chinese) – from the point of view of Far Eastern organismic theory, one of the manifestations, together with will (*zhi* in Chinese, *shi* in Japanese) of the spiritual substance *shen* (*shin* in Japanese), which regulates the psychic activity of a person. Mind-*shin* produces and “idea”-*i*, which brings the pneuma-*ki* into motion.

despite your intentions, you become a toy in the hands of your opponent [Ibid., p. 287].

From this follows the requirement to reduce the right state of mind or, as the author puts it, to “embrace the ‘true mind.’” To solve this problem, one uses *shinjutsu* (心術), the “art of mind,” which can be interpreted as the “art of managing the state of mind.” Issai Chozan claims that “only the one who is serious about striving to grasp the *shinjutsu* and studies it thoroughly can grasp the ‘true mind’ and will become able to correctly follow the Heavenly principles contained in their own inherent nature (*jisei-no tensoku* 自性の天則)” [Issai 1995, p. 286].

So, what does the art of *shinjutsu* consist in? Issai Chozan does not write about this directly. However, from the logic of his narration, it follows that the art of sword fencing *kenjutsu* can also serve as *shinjutsu*.

The Importance of Mastering the Technique of Swordsmanship

In swordsmanship, the rectification of mind begins with learning the technique. Even though the “ultimate principle” of the art of the sword is “nothing other but the natural ‘miraculous application of the true mind,’” writes Issai Chozan, “it is extremely difficult for a beginner to understand this. Therefore, the ancients only taught to follow the “nature of forms” and to master various movements... striving for their execution to be light and effortless. They instructed to strengthen muscle and bones, teach the arms and legs to work correctly, and in “application” to act according to the changing situation” [Ibid., p. 287].

As one can see from this quotation, the technique are rational ways of using one’s body and weapon, which has certain characteristics. “A sword is a thing meant to cut with it. A spear is a thing meant to thrust with it. It is impossible to use them to perform any other actions,” [Ibid.] writes Issai Chozan, reminding that a particular thing is the realization of the principle, *ri*, in matter, *ki*, by means of giving the matter a certain “form” (*katashi* 形): to give a slicing blow, there

is a technique of slicing blow, and for thrusting there is a technique of thrusting. The one who does not know the right “application” of the technique will not be able to use “things” according to their [nature]. And even if such person is strong in spirit, if the “form” [used by him] is contrary [to the principle], then he will strike where there is no target and, going against the “principle” of technique, he will be unable to reach what must be reached.” [Ibid., p. 288].

Issai Chozan attaches exceptional importance to *pneuma-ki*, which he defines as “what embeds mind in itself and uses ‘forms’” [Ibid., p. 287]. In his description, *ki* is akin to water. In its normal, right state, *ki* is a powerful water stream, with its fundamental characteristics being agility, oneness, softness, energy, hardiness. “It is required from the *ki*,” writes Issai Chozan, “that it is energetic and constantly on the move, never stopping, so that it is strong and unbending (剛健にして屈せざる) [Ibid.].

The state of *ki* directly depends on the state of mind:

“As soon as a thought (*nen* 念) is born in the mind, *ki* immediately obtains a “form,” and the opponent strikes where this “form” is located. When there are no “things” in the mind, *ki* is soft and calm. When *ki* is soft and calm, it is moving, it flows without a definite “form,” and then, without resorting to solidity, it naturally becomes solid. Mind is like a clear mirror or still water, [where everything is reflected without distortion]. But as soon as an idea (*i* 意) or a thought (*nen* 念) crosses the mind, then mental clarity (*reimyō*) is constricted, and the person loses his freedom of action” [Ibid., p. 288].

The loss of freedom of action is, among other things, the loss of control of the body. If the mind commands the *ki* in a wrong way, then the latter can “evaporate,” “freeze,” or “stagnate,” that is, lose its agility. According to Issai Chozan, it also needs “tempering” and “training.”

The above-said constitutes the following pattern: the mind directs *ki*, while *ki* directs the body. This can lead to a mistaken conclusion that the method of teaching *kenjutsu* must proceed from mastering the ability to control one’s state of mind. But Issai Chozan warns against this mistake:

“When one says that, if nothing brings mind into motion, then *ki* is also motionless, and the technique spontaneously follows

[the opponent's actions], then one merely interprets this issue from the point of view of the essence of the "principle" (*ritai-no honzen*) and points to the goal, [to which one should aspire]. This does not mean that perfecting the technique is a waste [of energy and time]. It is just that, when one explains the "principles," one moves from top to down, and when one masters the art in practice (*shugyō*), then, vice versa, one moves from down to top, and this is the normal order of things (*mono-no jō*)... When, upon meeting the opponent, you forget about life and death, about the opponent and yourself, if nothing forces your thought (*nen*) to move, if you do not intend (*i*) anything, if you keep the state of "no mind" (*mushin*) and trust your natural intuition (*shizen-no kan*), then you keep the freedom "of changes and transformations" and are able to perceive [the opponent's actions] and to freely use [your technique according to situation]... This is the supreme principle of the art of the sword. However, this is not the Way by which one must immediately climb [to the summit] without making necessary preparations beforehand.¹⁰ For the one who has not his technique, not tempered his *ki* (*renki* in Japanese; *lianqi* in Chinese), not mastered his mind (*shushin*; *xiuxin* in Chinese), not shown diligence, and not applied great effort will not climb to this summit" [Ibid., pp. 289–290].

What are the "necessary preparations" for returning the so needed state of "true mind"? According to Issai Chozan, they consist in mastering the technique, which, naturally, requires one to focus the mind on the technique.

"When one focuses the mind in the technique, *ki* immediately stops and loses its wholeness and softness. Such a state can be characterized as this: chasing the secondary and forgetting the primary. This is wrong. But it is also wrong to say that one cannot entirely dedicate oneself to perfecting the technique. The technique is the "application" (用) of the art of the sword. If one throws away this "application," then how can the "principle" [of the art of the sword], constituting its "essence" (体) be manifested?

¹⁰ Lit. "without building scaffolding."

It is through mastering the “application” that one grasps the “essence.” And, upon grasping the “essence,” one gains absolute freedom in “application.” The “essence” and “application” have one source, and there is not a slightest separation between them. Even though the “principle” can be grasped instantaneously, in one moment, the technique requires long training and ripening; if the technique has not ripened, then *ki* will freeze, and in [the changes of] the “form” there will be no freedom. The technique is born from the “principle.” That is, what does not have form is the lord of the “formed.” Therefore, with the use of *ki*, one masters the technique, with the use of mind, one masters *ki*, and this is the natural order of things. However [in practice everything goes in the opposite order]: when the technique ripens, then control of *ki* is achieved, and “spirit” achieves the state of calmness...

When a swordsman masters the art of the sword, when it enters his mind deeply, when he trains his technique, when he frees himself from doubt and fear, then his *ki* is energetic and agile, his “spirit” will remain at rest, and he will obtain absolute, unbound freedom in his ability to react to the “changes and transformations” (*henka ōyō muge jizai*)” [Issai 1995, pp. 291–292].

Why is technique so important? It “includes the supreme ‘principle’ (至理) and corresponds to the ‘nature of the vessel,’” answers Issai Chozan and proceeds:

“As one masters the technique, *ki* becomes more uniform and plastic (氣融和し), and the “principle” included in the technique manifests by itself. When the “principle” enters the mind and the doubt disappears, technique becomes harmonious with the “principle” (*jiri itchi*), *ki* concentrates (氣取り), the “spirit” (*shin* in Japanese; *shen* in Chinese) calms (神定りて), and nothing prevents one from reacting [to the changing situation] and applying the technique (*ōyō mugai* 応用無碍)...

Therefore, the mastery of the art requires training. While the technique is unripe, there is no harmony in *ki*. While there is no harmony in *ki*, “forms” do not follow it. And while mind and “forms” are separated, it is impossible to reach freedom” [Ibid., p. 287].

The mastery of technique is necessary for practical activity. Here, Issai Chozan attacks the view, which was common in his times, that the right state of mind is sufficient for effective activity:

“Even if some Zen monk reaches enlightenment of the mind, will we give him the reins of power, will we appoint him commander in the assault against the enemy? Will he be able to achieve success? Even though the mind of such monk is free from worldly dust, worldly worries, and vain thoughts, the monk does not possess the technique, and therefore he cannot be used [to solve such tasks]” [Ibid., pp. 288–289].

Using the example of archery, Issai shows that mastery is an integral product of achieving the state of “true mind,” bringing *ki* in the right state, and mastering the technique, for the purpose of which the archer must train his body, grasp the “principle,” the “nature” of their weapon, and learn to “follow” it:

“Everybody knows how to draw the bowstring and launch the arrow, but if the archer does not follow the principles [of these actions] and does not master their technique, then he will draw the bow incorrectly, he will have a hard time hitting the target, and, upon hitting it, will have a hard time piercing it. To hit the target, the archer must necessarily have the right intention (志 *shi*; *zhi* in Chinese), right form, his *ki* must fill the entire body and be active, his actions must not go against the “nature” (*sei*) of the bow, he must become one with his bow, and his spirit (*seishin*) must as if fill the entire space between heaven and earth (*tenchi*). If, in this state, the archer draws his bow as far as it will go, then his “spirit” (*shin* 神) will be calm, “thought” (*nen*) will be still, he will be in the state of “no mind” (*mushin*), and the shot will occur naturally. And after the shot the archer will once again become himself, just as he was before the shot. Upon hitting the target with the arrow, he must slowly and calmly lower the bow. Such is the teaching (*narai*) of the Way of the bow (*kyūdō*, *yumi-no michi*). If you follow this teaching, you will be able to send your arrow far and pierce a strong target with it.

Even though the bow and the arrows are made from wood and bamboo, when my “spirit” (*seishin*) becomes one with the bow and the

arrow, my “spirit” enters the bow, and then the “miraculous appearance”¹¹ that I described above becomes possible...

If the “intention” is wrong on the inside, and the body is not upright on the outside, then the muscle and bones are not strong enough, *ki* does not fill the entire body, and therefore an archer, upon drawing a strong bow, is unable to keep the bowstring drawn. If the archer’s “spirit” is not calm, if his *ki* is not active, if he uses his personal considerations and does not follow the “Path” of archery, if he pushes the bow and draws the bowstring with brute force, then he will go against the “nature” of the bow; he and his bow will be in discord and will act separately from one another. Rather than entering his bow, his “spirit” will prevent the bow from revealing its strength, will take away its power, and so their bow will be unable to send an arrow far and pierce a strong target” [Ibid., p. 289].

Conclusion

Therefore, Issai Chozan showed that, first, mastery of martial arts is the result of achieving the state of “true mind” (*shintai*), bringing pneuma-*ki* into the right state, mastering the technique, training the body, grasping the “nature” (*sei*) of the weapon used and being able to “follow” this nature.

Second, the mind occupies the commanding position in the system “mind – *ki* – body”. The mind directs the *ki*, which, in turn, directs the body.

Third, according to Issai Chozan, the process of achieving mastery is based on using feedback in the system “mind – *ki* – body” and requires one, first of all, to master the technique, i.e., the body, due to which *ki* obtains the right qualities, after which the mind comes into the state of “true mind.”

¹¹ *Myō* (*miao* in Chinese) – the miraculous external manifestation of spirit *shin*.

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A Brief List of Japanese Writings About the Ainu Lands and Russia Until 1799

V. Yu. Klimov

Abstract

In 1799, the Russian-American Company (RAC) was founded in Saint Petersburg for the development by Russian merchants and hunters of the Northern Pacific lands. In the same year, Japan's government made a strategic decision to include the *eastern Ainu lands* (*higashi ezochi*), and subsequently the *western and northern Ainu lands* (*nishi ezochi, kita ezochi*), into its direct control and to start their economic development. By this year, the Japanese had collected enough information about the Ainu and their lands, about the advance of Russians along the Kuril Islands in the southern direction, about the history of Russia, its emperors, and the Russian language. This article describes Japanese authors and their writings on the mentioned topics, which could not but influence the political decision-making of Japan's military government (*bakufu*).

Keywords: Russian-American Company, Ainu lands, Matsumae domain, Nishikawa Joken, Habuto Masayasu, Kudō Heisuke, Mogami Tokunai, Hayashi Shihei, Daikokuya Kōdayū.

The year of 1799 can be considered a milestone in relations between Russia and Japan in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In Russia, the Russian-American Company (RAC) was established this year at the initiative of Irkutsk merchants. On July 8, 1799, Emperor Paul I (1754–1801, reign 1796–1801) signed a decree to the Senate on the foundation

of the company and the privileges granted to it. The main board of the company was located in Saint Petersburg (decree of October 19, 1800), two offices – in Irkutsk and Yakutsk, trading posts – in Okhotsk, Petropavlovsk, and some other places. In 1806, the flag of the RAC was imperially approved: it contained white, blue, and red stripes with a double-headed black eagle and an inscription in the upper left corner “Ros. Am. Kom” [Aleksiev 1982, p. 112–116]. In the same 1799, the Japanese government came to the decision that it was necessary to move on to accelerated economic development of the “lands inhabited by barbarians,” in other words, the Ainu. The military government (*bakufu*), being concerned about the advance of the Russians along the Kuril Islands to the south, came to the conclusion that the local authorities, the clan of Matsumae (松前藩), were not able to resist Russian merchants and pioneers who actively developed these lands and drew local people into their sphere of influence.

One of those who set out this problem most prominently was Habuto Masayasu (羽太正養, 1752–1814), the head of *bakufu* colonial administration in the Ainu lands, i.e., Hokkaido, southern Kuril Islands, and the southern part of Sakhalin. In his essay *Records on the Luminous Rule [of the Barbarian Lands] by the Virtuous Sovereign* (*Kyūmei kōki* 休明光記, hereinafter *Records*) he described quite precisely the state of affairs in the territory given under the control of the Matsumae clan and set clearly the tasks:

The ruthless politics of the Matsumae clan had been going on for a long time. Lately Russians defiantly do good deeds and philanthropy, attracting the natives to their side, without resorting to military force. And although the order has recently been given to take all measures to strengthen the guard and to prevent the penetration of the Russians, but since the numerous islands are surrounded on all sides by the sea, it is impossible to build unassailable fortresses everywhere. We just need to show concern for the natives and bring them the virtue of the rule by the Japanese state. Having won the favor of the Ainu, we can achieve more and cut off the penetration of the Russians, as well as their trade routes, and, above all, we should prevent the supply of food [Habuto 1978, p. 37–38; Klimov 2021, p. 219–220].

The author of the *Records* needed information to come to such conclusions, and he did draw it from the written sources available by that time. In his essay, a considerable number of them is cited in a hidden form without indicating the authors and titles. It seems that Habuto was well acquainted with them. They were related to the development of the northern lands and relations with the Russians, who were trying to establish trade in this region. After being appointed to the high post of governor in the *eastern barbarian lands* (*higashi ezochi* 東蝦夷地), his duties included collecting all available information about the Ainu and Russians. So, we will try to briefly list in chronological order the main works written by Japanese intellectuals before the appointment of Habuto Masayasu to the high post in 1799, without claiming that it is complete.

The first mention of Russia at the end of the 17th century can be found in the work *Study of Trade Relations Between China and the Barbarians* (*Kai tsūshōkō* 華夷通商考, 1695) by astronomer Nishikawa Joken (西川女見, 1648–1724) [Shchepkin 2015, p. 298]. The information reported by the astronomer was far from reality. In the second half of the 18th century, with the active advancement of the Japanese in the northern direction, writings containing much more reliable information began to appear.

In 1781, Kudō Heisuke (工藤平助, 1734–1801) wrote a two-volume treatise *Akazeo fūsetsukō* 赤蝦夷風説考. A. V. Klimov translates the title as *Reflections on Rumors About Red Ezo* (closer, as it seems to us, to Japanese) [Klimov 2010, p. 110], while in a more detached academic translation it sounds like *Study of Information About the Red Barbarians* [Shchepkin 2015, p. 298]. Initially, the treatise was called *Study of Information About the Country of Kamchatka* (*Kamasasukakoku fūsetsukō* 加模西葛杜加国風説考) [Ibid.]. There is also another date of its completion, 1783 [Nihon rekishi daijiten 1979, p. 38], since the common preface for two volumes was completed that year. During the same time, Kudō completed the first volume, while the second one was written in 1781. In 1784, the author of the treatise reported its main essence to the head of the financial department (*kanjō bugyō* 勘定奉行) Matsumoto Hidemochi (松本秀持, 1730–1797) and thus drew the

attention of the military government to the state of affairs in the Ainu lands, formally under the control of the Matsumae clan.

The Ainu began to call the Russians *fureshisamu* フレシサム (Japanese transcription of the Ainu word), or *red neighbors*. V. V. Shchepkin, referring to the *Ainu-Russian Dictionary* by M. M. Dobrotvorsky, cites the phrase *fureshisam* in Russian transcription *fure shisham* [Shchepkin 2015, p. 301]. This is where the term *red barbarians* came from. Kudō in his essay refers this name to the inhabitants of Kamchatka, which was under the control of Russia.

In the first volume, Kudō expresses the opinion that trade with Russia will make it possible to develop quickly and efficiently the northern islands inhabited by the Ainu. Kudō reported that there was intense illegal trade between the Russians and the Japanese and that the military government should put it under its control and benefit from it. In the second volume, Kudō gives an overview of the history and geography of Russia, its advance to the east, and writes about its interest in the Ainu as well, warning the authorities of the potential danger from its advance southward through the Kuril Islands. Apparently, he drew information from Dutch translators during his stay in Nagasaki and from vassals of the Matsumae clan.

V. V. Shchepkin supposes that his work “became the first detailed description of Russia in Japan, compiled on the basis of European books and oral evidence of the Japanese from the Matsumae domain” [Ibid., p. 300]. After completing the treatise, Kudō introduced it to the powerful senior counselor (*rōjū* 老中) Tanuma Okitsugu (田沼意次, 1719–1788). After reading the treatise, he ordered to dispatch an expedition to the *lands of the barbarians* at the end of 1784: ten people to the *eastern lands of the barbarians* and six people to the *western lands of the barbarians*. The expedition took place in 1785–1786, but because of the Kansei reforms (1787–1793) the counselor was removed from power and his orders were canceled. Matsudaira Sadanobu (松平定信 1759–1829), who succeeded Tanuma as a senior counselor, had no plans to develop the *lands of the barbarians* soon, so the expeditions were canceled on November 18, 1786 [Shchepkin 2014, p. 383].

In 1786, Mogami Tokunai (最上徳内, 1755–1836), together with other members of the expedition who found themselves out of work after the resignation of Tanuma Okitsugu, wrote a work entitled *Collected in Ezo* (*Ezo shūi* 蝦夷拾遺) (title is given according to: V. V. Shchepkin [Shchepkin 2017, p. 372]). In 1790, he also completed his own *Notes About Ezo* (*Ezo sōshi* 蝦夷草紙) (the title was initially translated by V. V. Shchepkin as *Notes About Ezo* [Ibid.], but later he began to call them *Ainu Notebooks* [Shchepkin 2021, p. 318]). Mogami, by order of the military government, visited the Ainu lands in 1785, 1786, and 1789. He recorded everything he had seen and heard in the two above-mentioned works, which contain valuable information about the Matsumae clan, Russians (*akahito* 赤人), Ainu, and the Ulchi people (*santan* 山旦). *Ezo sōshi* has another title, *Description of the Land and Customs of the Matsumae Domain* (*Matsumae fudoki* 松前風土記).

L. N. Kutakov (1919–2000) marks Mogami Tokunai [Kutakov 1988, p. 20–21] and notes that, during his visit to Iturup, Mogami met with three Russians. One of them, whose name was “Semyon Dorofeevich Ishuyo (Ituyosov), made a great impression on Mogami with his knowledge of the geography of the Kuriles and Kamchatka” [Ibid., p. 46]. K. E. Cherevko (1933–2020) suggested that Semyon Dorofeevich had the surname Izvozov (33 years old), and the other two were Ivan Sosnovsky (29 years old) and Nikita (28 years old) [Cherevko 1999, p. 108]. V. V. Shchepkin, referring to the inscriptions made in 1786 on wooden crosses from Iturup Island, suggests that the surname of the eldest Russian was not Izvozov, but Zuev [Shchepkin 2017, p. 158].

L. N. Kutakov translates the title of the work *Ezo sōshi* as *Draft Essay About Ezo* [Kutakov 1988, p. 47], referring to the work by D. M. Pozdneev *Materials on the History of Northern Japan* without specifying the volume: “Pozdneev, 1909, p. 178”. The fact is that this voluminous work, completed during Pozdneev’s record short stay in Japan (and demonstrating his unrealistically high level of the Old Japanese language and kambun), consists of two volumes with the second one divided into three parts. And indeed, in the first volume (just on the page 176, not 178), D. M. Pozdneev calls *Ezo sōshi* – *Draft Essays About Ezo*, but in

the second volume, in the third part, he gives a different, more accurate title *Various News About Ezo* [Pozdneev 1909, p. 59], much closer to the original. Apparently, giving his work to the press, D. M. Pozdneev did not make the final edit.

Hayashi Shihei (林子平, 1738–1793), an intellectual considered by some Japanese scholars to be a political thinker (*keiseika* 経世家), was born in Edo in 1738 as the second son of Okamura Gengobee (岡村源五兵衛), a *bakufu* retainer. After his father had lost his job due to a bloody incident and become a *rōnin*, Shihei and his older brother were taken in by the Hayashi family. His surname Okamura was changed to Hayashi. The elder brother entered the service for the Sendai domain, after which Shihei also moved there in 1757. For some time, he lived in the house of Kudō Heisuke, a physician of the Sendai domain. In 1764, having learned about the arrival of the Korean embassy in Edo, Shihei went to the shōgun's capital. After that he wrote a treatise called *Empty Conversations From Sendai* (*Sendai Kanwa* 仙台閑話).

The essay *Conversations about the Military Affairs of the Maritime State* (*Kaikoku Heidan* 海国兵談) in 16 volumes was printed from woodblocks in Edo in 1791. In 1792, the woodblocks were confiscated, and Hayashi was placed under house arrest in Sendai. It happened only a few weeks before the Russian mission headed by Adam Laxman (1766–1806?) arrived in Hokkaido. According to V. V. Shchepkin, Hayashi sought to convey to society and, above all, to the authorities, the following main idea: it is necessary to strengthen the country's defense against a potential external threat. Hayashi writes:

European countries and Russia see as their national policy the expansion of their own territories by capturing new lands, and their activity is only growing from year to year. There is no doubt that sooner or later our Japan will also become their target. They have such excellent navigational techniques that they are able to overcome any storm waves, as if it were an ordinary flat road. At the same time our country is surrounded on all four sides by the sea. After all, Nihombashi in Edo and the rivers of Russia and Holland are a single water flow, without any barriers. Therefore, if they want to sail here, they will sail when they please. And if we do not put our

hand in and do not organize defensive preparations, this can turn into a huge danger. It is necessary to reduce the ordinary expenses of the state, streamline military spendings and install artillery pieces in key places on the seacoast. Thus, within a few years, our coast will become impregnable and become our own Great Wall. After erecting such a Great Wall, even if the enemy sails to attack us, our troops will have time to prepare to repel the blow, and it will become easy to destroy enemy troops tired of long voyages. Thus, concerns about the defense of the country will largely subside. In addition, the northern and southern islands of our country are extremely important from a military point of view. If we realize and leave everything as it is, they will be captured by foreign states and become springboards for their aggressions. And it will be irreparable.

An Illustrated Review of the Three States (Sangoku tsūran zusetsu 三国通覧図説), where Hayashi expresses his concern about the defense capability of the northern and southern islands again, was written in 1786. Under “the three states” in the title he meant Korea, Ryukyu, and Ezo (Ainu lands). Hayashi pointed out that Russia, moving south from Kamchatka, could pose a real threat. In this regard, it is important for Japan to develop the islands inhabited by the Ainu and strengthen their defense capability. Hayashi criticized the policy of the Matsumae clan for being insolent to the Ainu.

After the Russian mission headed by Adam Laxman had visited Hokkaido in 1792–1793, the Japanese began to pay much more attention to Russia. In 1792, the return of Daikokuya Kōdayū (大黒屋光太夫, 1751–1828) from Russia, who arrived on a ship with Laxman’s mission, strengthened interest in Russia within Japanese society. Many books were published about the shipwrecked Japanese. Here are the most significant ones.

In 1792, two works were compiled:

1) *Records of What Was Heard About Russia (Rosia kibun 魯西亜記聞)* by Katō Kengo (加藤肩吾, 1762–1822), a physician of the Matsumae clan;

2) *Amazing Tales About the East (Tōhō chinwa 東方珍話)*, by Gotō Jūjirō (後藤十次郎, life dates unknown).

The following works were compiled in 1793:

1) *Hokusa ibun* (北槎異聞) by Sasamoto Ren/Chikudō (笹本廉/竹堂, 1743–1822);

2) *Records of the Supreme Audience [With the Shogun] of the Shipwrecked* (*Hyōmin goranki* 漂民御覽記) by Katsuragawa Hoshū (桂川甫周, 1751–1809);

3) *Brief News About Wanderings in Northern Waters* (*Hokusa ryakubun* 北槎略聞) by Yoshida Kōton (吉田篁墩, 1745–1798).

In 1794, the essay *Brief News About Wanderings in Northern Waters* (*Hokusa bunryaku* (or *monryaku*) 北槎聞略) was completed by Katsuragawa Hoshū (there is a Russian translation by V. M. Konstantinov: [Konstantinov 1978]). The last chapter of this work, entitled *Language*, is divided into the following sections: *Heavenly Phenomena; Geography; Time; Devils and Gods; People, Relations of People; Parts of the Human Body and Human Affairs; House, Buildings; Instruments, Utensils, Books, Paintings; Clothes; Food, Drinks; Herbs, Trees; Birds, Animals; Fish, Mollusks, Insects; Metals, Stones; Counting and Measures; Words and Expressions*. It is the first Japanese–Russian dictionary, consisting of 1261 entries [Ibid., p. 263–324]. The author of *Hokusa Bunryaku* objectively assessed its practical significance:

This chapter contains several hundred words that the shipwrecked have committed to memory. They are written in our letters and each word is given a translation that generally corresponds to the meaning. However, in Russian I hear only sounds, like the chirping of swallows or the murmur of water, the meaning is incomprehensible, like the lowing of cows or the voice of birds, and therefore I had to rely only on the memory and knowledge of the shipwrecked, and therefore inaccuracies are possible. The completeness of this dictionary should not be supposed. It was impossible to avoid mistakes in stress, in the difference between voiced and unvoiced sounds, but if we keep in mind that only an approximate rendering of words is given here, then this vocabulary may be suitable for giving a general idea of this unusual foreign language. That is why I have compiled a section on language, making it the last chapter in the book [Ibid., p. 263].

Ōhara Sakingo (大原左金吾, 1761?–1810), an intellectual and a writer, was born circa 1760 in the village of Ōhara, Iwai County, Mutsu Province (now Daitō City, Higashi Iwai County, Iwate Prefecture). He was invited to serve in the Matsumae clan. From 1795, Ōhara preached the need to master both civil and military knowledge (*bumbu* 文武), that is, the knowledge that was originally held by court aristocrats (*bun* 文) and representatives of military houses (*bu* 武). However, suspecting the eighth head of the clan, Matsumae Michihiro (松前道広, 1754–1832), of secret relations with the Russians, in 1796, Ōhara left Matsumae and wrote two treatises: *Unpretentious Conversations About the Northern Lands* (*Chihoku gūdan* 地北寓談), in which he expresses his opinion about the internal situation of the Matsumae clan, and *Warnings About the Danger Emanating From the Northern Lands* (*Hokuchi kigen* 北地危言), which refers to the topic of strengthening the defense of the northern territories. Both works were presented to the military government.

His suspicions about the relations of the Matsumae authorities with the Russians disagree with the facts, but the *bakufu* began to pay more attention to the naval defense of the islands inhabited by the Ainu. Along with other factors, of course, these two writings could induce the military government to decide in 1799 to take under direct control the *eastern Ainu lands* and then the rest of them. Ōhara spent his last years in Kyoto, writing his books; he died in 1810. In his work *Hokuchi kigen*, Ōhara says that a real threat to the security of Japan could arise if the “wild beasts – red barbarians” (*korō-no akaezo* 虎狼の赤夷, that is, Russians) unite their efforts with “changeable ezo” (that is, Ainu). The “red barbarians” (or “red Ainu”) have three advantages over the Japanese: they

- 1) easily tolerate cold;
- 2) eat meat, so they will not experience difficulties in obtaining food on the islands;
- 3) they can easily lure the Ainu to their side, who, seeing large ships, will easily go over to their side.

It should be noted that, at the same time, some works on the Russian language and the alphabet were written in Japan. In 1793, Tanabe Yasuzō (田辺安蔵, dates of life unknown) written a study entitled

Russian Language (*Roshiagorui* 魯西亜語類); in 1794, Morishima Chūryō (森島中良, 1756–1810) wrote the work *Outlandish Russian* (*Roshia kigo* 魯西亜奇語); in 1796, Minamoto Tamotsu (源有, dates of life unknown) compiled *Russian Writing System* (*Roshia Mojishū* 魯西亜文字集), in the same year, the book *Russian Dialect* (*Roshia Bengo* 魯西亜弁語) was prepared by another unknown author [Ikuta 2012, p. 99].

In addition, excerpts from Dutch works were translated into Japanese and information related to Russia was collected with the help of the Dutch. We can say that the discipline of “Russian studies” was born in the bosom of Dutch studies. Without pretending to complete the disclosure of this rather important topic, we will only mention such works as *Annals of Russia* (*Roshia hongī* 魯西亜本紀), *Summary of the Genealogy of the Russian Ruling House* (*Roshia taitō ryakki* 魯西亜大統略記), *Brief Annals of Russia* (*Roshia hongiryaku* 魯西亜本紀略), completed in 1793 by Maeno Ryōtaku (前野良沢, 1723–1803). Maeno used the work *Description of Russia* by the Dutch researcher Jan Reitz (1688–1772) [Shchepkin 2020, p. 379]. In 1795, Shizuki Tadao (志筑忠雄, 1760–1806) published the work *Supplement to the Records About Russia* (*Roshiashi Furoku* 魯西亜志付録) [Ikuta 2012, p. 99]. In 1793, Katsuragawa Hoshū compiled a *Description of Russia* (*Roshiashi* 魯西亜志) based on the Dutch translation of the *General Geography* by the German scientist Johann Hübner (1668–1731) [Shchepkin 2020, p. 379]. The full title of the textbook is *Kurtze Fragen aus der neuen und alten Geographie biss auf gegenwartige Zeit* (*Short Questions on Old and New Geography*, 1693).

The above list gives us a clear idea that Habuto Masayasu, with his high position in the bureaucratic hierarchy of the *bakufu*, had access to a considerable number of works related to the lands inhabited by the Ainu. Their authors were either doctors, specialists in “Dutch studies,” or officials who held low positions in the lower levels of government, while Habuto was a high-ranking dignitary, representing the military government in the Ainu lands. In other words, he was the local authority. Therefore, his work cannot but be of great interest to researchers.

Thus, even with an incomplete listing of the authors and titles of their works, we can conclude that the military government, having the information obtained from them, made quite a logical and strategic decision to gain a foothold in the lands of the Ainu and to begin active development of the new territories in order to prevent Russians from advancing there.

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New Aspects of “The Case of Richard Sorge”. A View From Modern Russia (2017–2022)

A. E. Kulanov, A. B. Sharova

Abstract

Due to the expiration of a number of previously classified materials related to the activities of the Soviet special services during the Second World War, and also due to the especially high public interest in the “case of Richard Sorge” in the last 5 years, a military historian and Doctor of Historical Sciences Mikhail A. Alekseyev introduced into scientific discourse a large number of previously unknown Russian-language documents on this case. These documents are of paramount interest to researchers. For example, it is the first publication of the materials that definitively answer the questions of whether Sorge was a double agent and of what the real reason for the failure of the network of Soviet military intelligence in Japan in 1941 was, as well as of many other pieces of important documentary evidence of the activities of the Soviet secret services in that country.

Soon after that, the authors of this article for the first time made a complete translation of the memoirs of Ishii Hanako, Sorge’s Japanese wife, which were analyzed in detail and commented on by the authors of the book *Another Sorge. The Story of Ishii Hanako*. The memoirs of Ishii Hanako give a chance to take a fresh look at Richard Sorge’s personality, his goals in studying Japan and his approaches to this issue, to form a more personal and, at the same time, objective picture of his character. Together with the case of the “Special Folder” of the Central Committee of the CPSU on perpetuating the memory of Richard Sorge, declassified in 2020, for the first time in history, these materials

allow us to fully evaluate Ishii Hanako's effort to preserve the memory of Sorge in Japan during the period from 1945 to 1964. By comparing the memoirs, the documents of the Soviet side, and by carrying out the research and analytical work, the authors have reached a new level of understanding of the "case of Richard Sorge."

In 2017–2022, a number of new materials devoted to the same case were published in Japan. They reveal the level of awareness of not only Japan's government and law enforcement agencies, but also of the emperor himself, as well as the division of powers of the special services in the liquidation of Sorge's intelligence network.

Key words: Richard Sorge, Ishii Hanako, Soviet intelligence in Japan.

Despite the fact that 79 years have passed since the execution on November 7, 1944 of the outstanding Soviet intelligence officer, journalist, and orientalist Richard Sorge, interest in his case continues to persist not only among numerous fans of spy sagas, but also among professional historians. Researchers do not confine themselves to rereading already known materials, but are trying to work in the field of what is called "sorgeology" – long-term research of the Sorge case with varying thoroughness, orientation, and activity, discovering more and more new materials, despite the difficulties of an objective nature. For example, in 2019, documents of the Japanese police were published with regard to the changes to the Law on Public Security that were made in May 1941 in anticipation of an imminent war and that are of undoubted interest in the light of our theme [Zoruge jiken shiryō shūsei 2019, p. 32–37]. No less important are the materials published at the same time about the report of the Minister of Justice Iwamura Michiyo on the Sorge case addressed to the Emperor of Japan on May 13, 1942, which clearly said that the German journalist Richard Sorge was a Soviet military intelligence officer and Ozaki Hotsumi was a long-time advisor to the Cabinet of Ministers of Japan. However, the statement made by the *Asahi* newspaper on May 16 of the same year spoke only

about the arrest of certain “Communist International spies,” and Ozaki was mentioned as an “employee of the South Manchurian Railway” [Shōwa Tennō jitsuroku 2019, p. 712]. These are very important and, apparently, not the only materials from the Japanese side that will help to better understand the case of the Soviet intelligence officer included in Japan in the list of the 100 people who influenced the history of that country in the 20th century.

Unfortunately, in late 2019, the leaders of the Japanese Society for the Study of the Ozaki-Sorge Case¹ informed its members that the Society terminated its work after about half a century of existence, releasing 50 written bulletins containing reports on the topic, and holding 10 symposia in different countries of the world. The reason for the self-liquidation was the age of the majority of the members and, primarily, the leadership, which, on average, was over 75 years. The decision coincided with the outbreak of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, and, until very recently, no changes were expected in this area. However, in late 2021, the former leaders of the Society sent a circular letter to all interested parties with a new notice: in 2022, it intends to return to research in “sorgeology” in full, including international symposia.

Unfortunately, one of the main problems of “sorgeology” in general and Japanese Sorge studies in particular is extremely poor communication with foreign colleagues, which is caused by the language barrier and by some other difficulties, including the narrow circle of “sorgeologists.” In this regard, for example, Japanese researchers learned about the book by the British journalist Owen Matthews *An Impeccable Spy* [Matthews 2019] immediately after its publication in the West in the English language, but most of the publications on the

¹ In Japanese discourse, the “Sorge case” is traditionally referred to as the “Ozaki-Sorge case.” The first place is given to the study of the fate and worldview of Richard Sorge’s closest assistant, Japanese journalist and political scientist Ozaki Hotsumi, which is unusual for the Russian reader, but logical for the Japanese who are primarily interested in studying the biography of their compatriot.

same topic, which are published in Russian with enviable constancy, remain unnoticed. As a result, an incorrect picture of the research on the Sorge case may arise: in Russia, practically nothing is known about the progress of Japanese colleagues in this area, while Japanese researchers, in turn, are only fragmentally acquainted with Russian works, and only materials published in English become common property.

Also, because of the above-mentioned narrowness of the circle of “sorgeologists” and the desire of some authors to broadcast their vision of the issue depending on the state of affairs, active myth-making in covering Sorge’s biography has been a serious problem for decades. For instance, an article entitled *Busts of Sorge Are Erected One After Another. Putin’s Administration Seeks to Restore the Honor of the Great Spy*,² published in Japan in March 2021 by a well-known Sovietologist Professor Nagoshi Kenrō of Takushoku University, seriously reported that there is a real Sorge boom in Russia today, and the Russian authorities allegedly use this as a propaganda tool in their confrontation with the opposition.

As the main argument for this conclusion, Professor Nagoshi used the abundance of busts of Sorge in Russia (the authors of this article have counted seven of them throughout the country, and at least two of them are in school territories) and naming after Sorge a recently opened station of the Moscow Central Railway Ring in 2016. Where there were not enough arguments to justify the conclusion, the Japanese author, whom a reader who is not deeply familiar with the theme can take for a serious researcher, easily invented them, attributing, in particular, to one of the authors of this article statements and quotations that do not belong to him. For instance, “Kulanov [in the book *Sorge. A Discordant Spy*] writes that Sorge ‘severely criticized the harmful and irresponsible management system in Soviet intelligence’” or “Aleksandr Kulanov ... said at a ‘round table’ on the Russian *Kultura*

² Nagoshi Kenrō. Zoruge no kyōzō o zokuzoku to konryū ano ōmono supai no meiyo kaifuku o isogu pūchin seiken no omowaku. 12.03.2021. *President online*. <https://president.jp/articles/-/44047?page=1>

TV channel last year: ‘In Russia... secret documents about Sorge are declassified one by one, and his popularity is growing rapidly.’” It would be enough to read the book referred to by Nagoshi [Kulanov 2018] and see again the program available on the Internet³ to find out that these words were invented by the Japanese author.

Such publications look especially regretful with regard to the fact that, in the last five years, a significant number of new materials have been published in Russia, including those that introduce many important, previously unknown documents into scientific discourse. A significant part of them were previously kept under secrecy labels of varying degrees. Now they are freely available, which refutes the thesis favored by many authors that too many documents are classified in the Sorge case, and this does not allow for an objective approach to their study. In reality, the problem is not the absence of documents, as enough of them have already been published to reconstruct the bigger part of Sorge’s life and the particularities of his work (as a journalist and as an intelligence officer), but the unwillingness to study these documents. It should be noted that the most significant contribution to the publication of previously unknown materials on the Sorge case in the last five years has been made by Professor Mikhail A. Alekseyev, Doctor of Historical Sciences and a historian of military intelligence.

Works by Mikhail A. Alekseyev

After the publication in 2010 of the book “*Yours Ramsay.*” *Richard Sorge and Soviet Military Intelligence in China. 1930-1933* [Alekseyev 2010], which revealed with unexpected completeness the hitherto unknown and unexplored pages of Sorge’s biography relating to his work in the Shanghai illegal residency of the 4th Directorate of the Red

³ Observer. Richard Sorge. A New Spy Mania. Broadcast of 11.11.2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2VaXBe1NFs>

Army Headquarters, M. A. Alekseyev published two more books that continued, developed, and deepened his previous research. In 2017, he published two volumes about the Japanese period of the spy's work: *"Loyal to You, Ramsay." Richard Sorge and Soviet Military Intelligence in Japan. 1933–1938* [Alekseyev 2017a] and *"Loyal to You, Ramsay." Richard Sorge and Soviet Military Intelligence in Japan. 1939–1941* [Alekseyev 2017b].

The first volume consists of 863 pages, including 670 references, several dozen biographical references to intelligence officers and Japanologists, the names and fates of many of whom were not previously known at all or known only in fragments. In fact, only the reference section opens a hitherto unknown page of Soviet military Japanese studies, and not only military ones. For example, the outstanding Japanese scholar V. M. Konstantinov, who worked in the post-war period at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, has so far been known primarily as a translator and researcher of materials devoted to Daikokuya Kōdayū's journey to Russia. Now we have information about his activities as a military intelligence officer and one of the curators of the Sorge group, which allows us to hope to more fully restore the biography of the remarkable orientalist in the future.

The second volume, covering the events of the last and most intense stage of the Ramsay-Inson residency in Tokyo in 1939–1941, comprises another 687 pages, including 925 links to documents, among which a significant amount is occupied by materials on repression in military intelligence agencies and in the Red Army as a whole, including multi-page interrogation protocols that give a fairly complete and clear picture of the difficult situation that prevailed then in the Soviet special services and specifically in the Japanese direction. In particular, these documents make it possible to clearly understand one of the most difficult and continuously discussed moments in Sorge's biography: the attitude of the Soviet military leadership towards him and his reports from Tokyo – from the direct curators in the Intelligence Department to the People's Commissar of Defense and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief I. V. Stalin.

The documents published by M. A. Alekseyev remove many previously controversial issues. For example, there is a widespread version that, by assigning a new codename to the Tokyo resident in May 1941 – “Inson” to replace “Ramsay,” under which Sorge had been working since 1930, Moscow sought to show a change in its attitude towards the agent and the information transmitted by him [Georgiyev 2000, p. 73]. However, the documents show that in April–June 1941, the 5th Directorate of the Red Army (as military intelligence was called at that time) carried out another large-scale organizational reform. In its course, almost all the working codenames of legal and illegal intelligence agents abroad were changed. All intelligence officers in Tokyo received new codenames beginning with “I”. For instance, the military attaché of the Soviet Union in Japan, who headed the legal residency of the 5th Directorate, Colonel I. V. Gushchenko, received the name “Ikar,” the radio operator of the illegal residency, Max Clausen, turned from “Fritz” into “Isop,” Sorge’s main Japanese source Ozaki Hotsumi was renamed from “Otto” to “Invest,” and Ramsay became “Inson” [Alekseyev 2017b, p. 387].

The extremely high saturation of documents in the entire three-volume work by M. A. Alekseyev makes this publication not only the most complete, but also the most important work about Sorge. Moreover, by documents we mean not only numerous telegrams and cipher messages from Moscow to Shanghai and Tokyo and back, some of which were published before, but also entire layers of materials previously unknown to researchers. For example, to a large extent, the books reveal the financial support of Sorge’s residencies in China and Japan. This is important not only in itself, but also allows us to trace the dynamics of the Centre’s attitude to “Ramsay,” because every fluctuation of this attitude – from distrust to favor and vice versa – was immediately reflected in monetary terms. When Sorge was believed, he and his residency received funding in the requested amounts (which happened extremely rarely); when not, the cash flow was immediately reduced, forcing the spies to literally seek means of subsistence. Considering that the three-volume book contains documents not

only from the time of Sorge's work for military intelligence, but also partially from the time of his service in the Comintern, including in the Department of International Relations (in fact, the world Communist intelligence), and there were exactly the same rules regarding financing, it becomes clear how difficult it was for our intelligence officers, when, for some reason, the Center did not believe them. This, in turn, led to poor-quality work of some resident agents who were ready to report any information, including what they simply invented, if only it suited Moscow.

One of the main advantages of M. A. Alekseyev's book is also the possibility to trace the peculiarities of the attitude towards Sorge and his work in Japan by the leadership of Soviet military intelligence caused by the Stalinist repressions of 1937–1941. M. A. Alekseyev cites not only materials from that period that allow us to observe the change in this attitude after each wave of arrests in intelligence services, but to correlate these events with much later (mid-1960s) testimony of those who survived the purges. This creates a much more objective view of the events that took place around the activities of the illegal Tokyo residency.

Directly related to this theme are two other issues that are constantly discussed in connection with the Sorge case:

1. Was Ramsay a double spy working not only for the USSR, but also for Germany?

2. Why did Sorge's residency fail, and who is to blame for this?

Answering the first question, the author presents many documents, the most important of which are two cipher messages sent to Sorge by Deputy Chief of Military Intelligence Artur Artuzov on July 25, 1936. Here are excerpts from them: "You and Gustav [intelligence officer Gunther Stein, who worked with Sorge at that time – A.K., A.S.] can supply all kinds of articles and forecasts regarding the situation in your area to both Kot and friends [the military attaché of the German Embassy in Japan, Colonel Eugen Ott and embassy staff – A.K., A.S.]. And the more conscientiously and carefully you do this, the more firmly you will connect with them. Only, do not duplicate the entire documents.

Or it may happen that Kot will share them with his friends, and then it will turn out that ‘a friendly calf sucks two mothers.’ It may entail unpleasant complications” [Alekseyev 2017a, p. 433]. And, on the same day, in another letter: “Remember that your most basic task continues to be the preservation and strengthening of the exceptional relationship you have created with Kot, the deepest growing into German circles, which, in the moments of the most difficult situation, will be your only sources of information of exceptional importance and at the same time provide the most reliable protection for you. This is the most important and crucial task you should always have in front of you” [Alekseyev 2017a, p. 435]. The entire paragraph in the letter was underlined by Artuzov himself.

Thus, the leadership of the Soviet military intelligence sagely insisted on the deep introduction of Sorge into the circles of the German embassy in Tokyo as a specialist on issues related to the politics, economics, and even (as we will see later) culture of Japan. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind not only Artuzov’s warning about the need to share information with the Germans very carefully, but also the understanding of the fact that Sorge could not give any interesting secret information about the Soviet Union to Berlin, even if he suddenly wanted to – he simply did not have such information. When Artuzov and his colleagues were arrested during the repressions, they were charged with unsubstantiated espionage (including in favor of Germany), and under torture they named among their “accomplices” almost all colleagues they knew, including the resident agent in Tokyo – “Ramsay.” This became the official reason for the accusation of Sorge of working for German intelligence, which, unfortunately, is played up by ignorant authors to this day.

As for the second question – about the reasons for the failure of Sorge’s residency in Tokyo and the identification of those responsible for this, M. A. Alekseyev also cites many previously unknown documents. They testify that the basis for taking Soviet intelligence officers under strict counterintelligence control by the Japanese special services was the fact that, in December 1939, Sorge and Clausen were brought into direct

communication with employees of the legal residency, i.e., the military attaché office of the USSR plenipotentiary mission in Japan. The military attaché office was initially under continuous surveillance by numerous Japanese special services: the Kempeitai military gendarmerie, the police, and the foreign department of the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs. Alekseyev cites in this connection the opinion of retired Lieutenant General of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation S. A. Kondrashov, who, in 1964, was one of the authors of a, at the time, secret document – the Conclusion on Archival Materials Regarding Richard Sorge: “The main reason for the failure of R. Sorge’s residency was the irresponsible and vicious system of the residency’s leadership on the part of the former command of the Red Army Intelligence Directorate, resulting from the unfounded assessment of Sorge as a Japanese-German spy and disinformant that developed during the personality cult” [Alekseyev 2017a, p. 594].

Thus, the works of M. A. Alekseev should be particularly noted, as they can be considered the basis for the development of “sorgeology” not only today, but also for many years to come, since they contain a huge array of information, including previously unknown data declassified specifically for these publications.

“Another Sorge” by Ishii Hanako and Materials of the Russian State Archive of Modern History (RGANI)

In 2020, the Russian Foreign Ministry officially announced the assignment of rights to Richard Sorge’s grave at Tokyo’s Tama Cemetery to the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Japan. Previously, these rights had belonged to the heiresses of the niece of Ishii Hanako, who was called “Sorge’s Japanese wife” in the Russian press. At the same time, her role in the biography of the famous intelligence officer was either ignored altogether, or, which is especially typical for Western authors, and, in recent years, for some Russian ones, she was charged

with actions that had no connection with reality, including relations with the Japanese police. The ambivalent situation regarding Ishii Hanako looked all the more strange because Sorge's burial in Tama was arranged solely on her initiative and by her personal efforts in 1949 (let us recall that in the USSR Sorge was recognized as a Soviet intelligence officer only in 1964), and the remains of Ishii herself, who died in July 2000, are buried in the same crypt. Thus, the Russian embassy received the rights not only to the burial of Richard Sorge, but also to her grave, and now it will officially take care of it. Would it have been possible if this Japanese woman had really been the culprit of the destruction of the Soviet residency? Of course, anything happens in history, but it seems that the work of M. A. Alekseyev mentioned above completely removes all charges from Ishii. Surprising, however, remains the silencing of her role in the "Sorge-Ozaki Case."

The current situation looks especially strange due to the fact that, starting from August 1964, Ishii gave dozens of interviews to Soviet and later Russian mass media, in which she spoke in great detail, with her characteristic directness and frankness, about Sorge, about herself, and about the events that brought them together. Until that time, in the period between 1949 and 1964, she was no less active in communicating with the Japanese press, and if there was interest in the theme, with media representatives from other countries as well. Moreover, Ishii Hanako wrote three small books of memoirs about the Sorge case and her own fate. They were eventually combined into a common publication called *Ningen Zoruge*, which can be translated as "Human Sorge." The last publication of the three-volume book took place in 2003 [Ishii 2003, p. 364], which was probably due to the release in Japan of a two-part feature film *Spy Sorge* directed by Shinoda Masahiro. However, Ishii's book has never been translated from Japanese into any other language, although attempts have been made to translate some of its small excerpts.

Ishii Hanako hoped during her lifetime that her memoirs would be translated into English, German and, necessarily, into Russian and considered the Russian translation as a tribute to Richard Sorge, who

was born in the Russian Empire and served the Soviet Union. This wish was never fulfilled during her lifetime, and then it turned out to be too late: the heiresses of Ishii Hanako did not give permission to publish the manuscript in full. Nevertheless, the authors of this article have recently made a complete translation of the book of Ishii Hanako and processed it. As a result, in 2021, the Moscow *Molodaya Gvardiya* publishing house, which has repeatedly published works by Russian authors about Sorge, including numerous publications of his biography in the series *The Life of Outstanding People*, released a new book called *Another Sorge. The Story of Ishii Hanako* [Delone, Kulanov 2021]. It highlights several blocks of questions.

The study of the memoirs of Ishii Hanako made it possible to better understand many aspects related not only to the purely personal attitude of a Japanese woman to her lover (which, of course, is of interest in itself), but also to restore the overall picture of the work and private life of an intelligence officer in Japan in 1936–1941. (Richard and Hanako met and parted forever on the same day – October 4, Sorge’s birthday, but with a difference of 5 years). The memoirs clarified some, including deeply personal, aspects of their relationship, which, for some unknown reason, are still hushed up by the authors of works about Sorge. For example, Ishii Hanako’s work as a hostess should be taken into account. Understanding the specifics of this Japanese profession explains a lot about this woman’s relationship with Sorge, but only at first glance it looks like a relationship between an ordinary hostess and an ordinary client. The importance of Ishii Hanako’s memoirs lies, among other things, in the opportunity to trace the dynamics of this relationship, which eventually turned from, so to speak, business, into a real romantic relationship, and then into sincere and pure love.

Hanako tells about the lifestyle of a man hidden from prying eyes, whom she sincerely took for a German journalist until the last moment. Some excerpts from this part of the book have been translated before – for example, a description of Sorge’s house or a typical routine of his working day [Georgiyev 2000, p. 111], but never in full. Separate attempts were made to reproduce in Russian the communication

of Richard and Hanako in Japanese.⁴ But the text of the translation was subjected to considerable literary editing, which created a completely wrong idea about Sorge's brilliant command of the Japanese language, and, therefore, about his working abilities as a journalist and intelligence officer.⁵ In reality, Sorge's Japanese was far from perfect. For example, for Sorge's elderly maid, the meaning of his dialogues with Hanako was often unclear.

Sorge's peculiar attitude to the Japanese language, which, perhaps, can be called careless (Hanako writes that, having reached a certain level, Richard completely lost interest in studying it), sharply contrasts with Sorge's interest in Japan in general. This included not only politics and economics, which was natural, given his occupation, but also the history and culture of the country.

It is widely known that, after his arrest, 800 to 1000 books about Japan were found in Sorge's house – mostly in European languages. Ishii Hanako recalled that she was really confused when Sorge asked her if she had read *Kojiki* (*Records of the Deeds of Antiquity*, a work of the 8th century) and began to praise the novel *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*, 11th century), about which the girl at that time had no idea [Ishii 2003, p. 26]. The situation was about the same with regard to Sorge's acquaintance with Japanese visual culture: "When Sorge had free time and he was at home, he read, looked at *ukiyo-e* collections, opened an encyclopedia on the history of Japanese culture and even studied *gagaku* music" [Ishii 2003, p. 74]. This may seem like a minor touch to the personality of an amateur Japanese scholar, but if you think about it, it is extremely important for understanding the peculiarities of Sorge's intelligence work. The fact is that, for most of the period of

⁴ Ovchinnikov, V. V. Chem Rikhard Zorge prityagival lyudei [How Richard Sorge Attracted People]. *Rossiyskaya gazeta*. 13.07.2007. <https://rg.ru/2007/07/13/zorge.html>.

⁵ Klimov, D. "Razvedchik Zorge" gonitsya za "matritsei" ["Spy Sorge" Chases the "Matrix"]. *BBC*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/russian/life/newsid_3007000/3007540.stm.

Ramsay's work in Tokyo (from 1933 to 1938), the German diplomatic mission in Japan was headed by Ambassador Herbert von Dirksen, an admirer and brilliant connoisseur of Japanese traditional art, who said that "the truly refined or, in other words, 'restrained' classical art of Japan had to be studied intensively, combining this passion with attachment to the country itself" [Dirksen 2001, p. 127].

In his home country, von Dirksen won the recognition of orientalists and was elected president of the German Society of East Asian Art, and Sorge was one of the few people who could talk with him about this art almost on equal terms, which allowed the Soviet intelligence officer to strengthen his position in the embassy, to follow the instructions of the Center. Ishii Hanako's memoirs were written without regard to the historical events and the situation of those years. For instance, Hanako's fleeting mention of Sorge's flight to Manchuria in May 1939 – just at the beginning of the Soviet-Japanese conflict on the Khalkhin-Gol River – and of the trinkets brought from there, coupled with a mention of his personal acquaintance with Chiang Kai-shek's wife, allows us to restore another little-known page of Sorge's work in China, and such examples are plentiful in the book. Especially interesting is the comparison of the dates in the memoirs with the known excerpts from the working correspondence of the Center and Ramsay. Reading, for example, in the memoirs about the only joint vacation, only a few days long, which Richard and Hanako spent together in the resort town of Atami in late 1936, we learn that their trip there on December 12 was sudden.

For Hanako, the reasons for the suddenness remained unknown, but proceeding from Sorge's correspondence with Moscow, we can assume with a high degree of probability that in this way he marked the end of an extremely important intelligence operation to inform Moscow about the steps taken by Japan and Germany to conclude the Anti-Comintern Pact signed on November 25. The head of military intelligence, Semyon Uritsky then recommended Sorge and Clausen to be awarded with orders (the country's leadership did not support this initiative), and Sorge arranged for himself a vacation, the only one in 6 years [Delone, Kulakov 2021, p. 75, 81–82].

Despite the fact that the execution of Sorge and Ozaki has been repeatedly described in various publications, Hanako's story about her meeting with an execution witness, the former prosecutor of the Tokyo City Court, Yuda Tamon, revealed the reason for choosing the day of Sorge's execution – November 7, 1944. There are many versions as to why that particular day was chosen, but here is what the participant of the events witnessed:

"November 7 is the day of the October Revolution, was it specially chosen?" I decided to clarify the information I had previously read in an interview with Yuda.

"It would be untrue to say that there was no intent in this. We thought that this day was really suitable to be the last in his life, so the choice of this date may have had the meaning of a kind of compassion for the Way of the Warrior. And, besides, the execution had to be carried out within five days, and since the 8th was the last, they decided to do it on the 7th. Moreover, the air raids had become very powerful by that time, and there was a fear that in case of a delay we would not be able to carry out the execution," accidentally blurting out the true state of affairs at that time, he added:

"The weather was fine that day, as it is today, and I remember there was an air raid that evening too" [Delone, Kulanov 2021, p. 336].

Yuda's important slip of the tongue regarding the need to carry out the execution within five days indicates that the final decision was made on November 2 or 3, 1944. This means the collapse of the popular version that as early as November 6, Japan tried to negotiate with the Soviet Union about the exchange of Sorge.⁶ The fate of the spy had already been decided by that time, and the Japanese were only waiting for a day without American bombing to hang Ozaki and Sorge as soon as possible.

Finally, in connection with fake reports spread on social networks that the ashes of the executed Sorge were found by American intelligence

⁶ Roshchupkin, V. Neizvestnyi Zorge – chast' III [Unknown Sorge – part III]. *Voенно-promyshlennyyi kurier*. <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/50562>

officers (!) and reburied at the Tama cemetery with military honors (!), the detailed story by Ishii Hanako, with the mention of the smallest details, about how she sought the right to find out where Sorge was buried after the execution seems to be extremely important. She writes in detail how persistently the Japanese authorities and the American occupation command prevented her from carrying out the exhumation, and how a lucky chance in the person of the Zōshigaya cemetery caretaker helped her find the grave of her lover at the last moment – if she had been a little late, his ashes would have been scattered to the wind. Sorge's remains, removed from a common grave on November 16, 1949 and transferred to a box "resembling a fruit box," were cremated by Ishii on the same day, but there was nowhere to rebury the ashes, and Hanako spent the first night in an embrace with the urn heated from the ashes that had just been burned. It took Ishii Hanako another year to earn money for a place for his grave by selling memories of Sorge to magazines, and only on November 8, 1950, he found eternal rest at the Tama cemetery.

The study of Ishii Hanako's memories allows us to reveal the personalities of many people whom she mentions only in passing in her book, sometimes without even guessing about their true role in this story. This is, for example, the situation with Kawai Teikichi, a former subagent of the residency who worked for Ozaki Hotsumi in Manchuria under the codename "Ronin." Kawai was arrested by the Japanese police back in the 1930s in China, but managed to divert the accusation away from Soviet intelligence, received a short sentence, and was imprisoned for the second time during the failure of the group in Japan. Despite the fact that he heroically withstood all these misadventures, after the war Kawai was recruited by American intelligence and, among other things, carried out surveillance of Ishii Hanako (which, of course, she had no idea about) because of her extensive connections in the Japanese left-wing movement and attempts to establish contact with the Soviet authorities. Ishii's repeated attempts to persuade Soviet representatives to pay attention to the "Sorge case," by that time widely known in Japan and throughout the world (Hanako recalls articles, books, and even a feature

film already made about Sorge by that time) remained unsuccessful for a long time. Only 20 years after the execution, due to the fact that a new film about Sorge was released, the USSR agreed to recognize Sorge as its spy, and Ishii Hanako was one of the first to learn about it. How and why this happened becomes clear from the recently declassified case from the “Special Folder” of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

RGANI Materials

The Russian State Archive of Modern History (RGANI) declassified File No. 34-A/2-b/7 of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR (GRU GSh of the USSR Armed Forces) – about R. Sorge, kept in what was called the *Special Folder of the Central Committee of the CPSU*.⁷ The file contains a significant array of documents on the history of the recognition of Richard Sorge’s feat in the USSR, starting with a note sent to the Central Committee by the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Pravda*, P. A. Satyukov, on October 1, 1964⁸ about his readiness to publish the essay *Comrade Richard Sorge*, prepared by the newspaper columnist V. V. Mayevsky. From the memoirs of Ishii Hanako, we also learn about her meeting with Mayevsky and their joint trip to the Tama cemetery, together with the correspondent of *Pravda* in Tokyo, V. V. Ovchinnikov. This was the first official visit to Sorge’s grave by Soviet citizens. It is unclear from the text of the note when exactly and who exactly had the idea of recognizing Sorge’s feat, but Satyukov mentions that “the factual side of this issue has been verified by KGB officers. Comrade Semichastny [at that time the Chairman of the KGB at the USSR Council of Ministers – A.K., A.S.] considers it expedient to publish the material, especially due to the fact that a French film about Sorge will be shown in Soviet cinemas in the near future.”

⁷ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47.

⁸ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 1.

It is also clear from the file that Satyukov's note was preceded by the collection of materials not only by the KGB: on September 12, 1964, the Department of Administrative Bodies and the International Department of the Central Committee supported the "proposal of the USSR Ministry of Defense."⁹ Apparently, we are talking about a reference from the Ministry of Defense (not declassified) and a letter from the former head of the Main Intelligence Directorate Marshal F. I. Golikov sent on September 10 to Secretary of the Central Committee L. I. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Committee of Party and State Control A. N. Shelepin, Chairman of the KGB V. E. Semichastny and head of the Main Intelligence Directorate P. I. Ivashutin.¹⁰ At the time, Golikov even put forward a proposal "to speed up the writing of a book for the mass reader about Soviet military intelligence," obviously using the Sorge case as a convenient reason and basis for the publication, as well as "to consider the proposal to transfer Richard Sorge's ashes to Moscow with proper honors and with the installation of a monument on his grave." Thus, the news that appeared in the Russian media in the winter of 2021–2022 about the possible transfer of Sorge's ashes from Japan to Russia and the comment of the Russian Foreign Ministry on this matter¹¹ are not a new idea.

As for the reference, it was signed by the Minister of Defense of the USSR Marshal R. Ya. Malinovsky and, in addition to a brief summary of Sorge's feat, contains two interesting points.¹² First, it is a documented

⁹ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 17.

¹⁰ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 3, 4.

¹¹ Speech and answers to questions by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at the "government hour" in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Moscow, January 26, 2022. https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1795942/

¹² RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 21-22.

definition of the reasons for the group's failure: "... mainly due to improperly organized connections with officers of the Soviet legal apparatus in Japan," which, however, may lead to a misconception that the initiative to establish such ties came from Sorge. The above-mentioned studies of M. A. Alekseyev refute this view. Second, among Malinovsky's proposals were the conferment of the title of Hero of the Soviet Union to Sorge, the construction of a monument to him in Moscow and the naming of one of the streets after him, as well as the provision of material assistance to the surviving relatives and friends of the spy.

Golikov's proposal that the grave be transferred was not accepted. The Central Committee focused on the problem of awarding Sorge and his close associates, which turned out to be not an easy task. Only the wording on conferring on Sorge the title of the Hero of the Soviet Union was revised three times. Below are the versions:

1. "...for exemplary performance of special tasks in the interests of protecting the Soviet state and the cause of socialism, for services in the fight against fascism and the threat of war and for the dedication, steadfastness, and courage shown in doing this" – September 1964¹³;

2. "...for heroism and courage shown in the interests of defending the Soviet state, the great cause of socialism and peace" – September 1964¹⁴;

3. "For active and successful intelligence activities on the eve and during the Great Patriotic War and the courage and heroism shown in doing this..." – September 1964¹⁵

¹³ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 16.

¹⁴ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 20, 24.

¹⁵ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 37.

4. “For outstanding services to the Motherland and courage and heroism shown in doing this...” – 5 November 1964¹⁶

Interestingly, Ishii Hanako, who did not know until the autumn of 1941 about the true purpose of Sorge’s stay in Japan, never – neither during the war nor later – correlated his activities with causing any harm to Japan. Having often talked with him about politics, she knew for sure that Sorge loved, knew, and understood Japan, sincerely admired its history and culture, realizing that the country was going through perhaps the most critical period in its existence. Ishii Hanako was sure that the main goal of Sorge’s whole life was to fight not against Japan, but for peace, and Tokyo became only a “battlefield” in this battle. Having learned after Sorge’s arrest that her lover was a Soviet intelligence officer, she defined for herself the meaning of his stay in Japan practically the same way as it was done almost a quarter of a century later in Moscow, in the second version of the wording of the award to Sorge: “defending the Soviet state, the great cause of socialism and peace.”

As a result, however, the last wording was adopted, and on January 14, 1965, a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU held a meeting, the protocol of which, marked “TOP SECRET. A SPECIAL FOLDER,” was partly filed in the cited case. It classified the decision to provide a one-time monetary assistance to the family of agent Sorge – to Serb Branko Vukelić in the amount of 10 thousand rubles, and to “Japanese citizen Ishii Hanako” – 5 thousand rubles. At that time, these were serious funds with which it was possible to buy, respectively, two or one *Volga* cars. The secret protocol of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU dated March 27, 1965 determined the secret method of transferring money for Ishii. The equivalent of 5 thousand rubles was 1,991,388 yen and, “for reasons of secrecy,” the sum was handed over to her through “representatives of the Soviet Committee of War Veterans and friends of Comrade Richard Sorge” as compensation

¹⁶ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 14, 15.

for organizing the burial of the remains of the spy and the installation of a monument on his grave in Tokyo.¹⁷

But the main thing, of course, was not the amount of aid and the ways of its transfer, but the fact that, in the winter of 1965, Ishii Hanako was actually recognized as a surviving member of Sorge's family. On April 7 of the same year, a decision was made to invite Ishii Hanako to the Soviet Union for treatment (she suffered from a chronic form of tuberculosis with numerous complications) at the expense of the USSR Ministry of Defense.¹⁸

Summarizing the above, we can say that the period of 2017–2022 was a time of new important discoveries in the Sorge case, at least from the Russian side. A huge amount of information based on materials from the archives of the Russian Defense Ministry and the Russian State Archive of Modern History has been declassified. This made it possible to eliminate many previously existing gaps in the Sorge case and to look at this case comprehensively and much more objectively and broadly. The analysis of the memories of Sorge by his “Japanese wife” Ishii Hanako served the same purpose. Her work, which initially seemed subjective and deeply personal, when projected onto the historical background and the new information received about the Sorge case, turned out to be extremely important for understanding the system of Sorge's work as an intelligence officer, the principles of his introduction to the German embassy and the depth of his study of Japan. Earlier, on the basis of official documents, memoirs of Sorge's colleagues, his own *Prison Notes* and other materials, we saw the result of the intelligence officer's work, whereas now we have an inside look at how he prepared for this activity and how he lived in Japan, and this is truly “Another Sorge.”

¹⁷ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 44.

¹⁸ RGANI. Archive fund 3. Inventory number 50. Archival unit 47. Document number 43.

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