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**FACTORS FORMING THE IMAGE
OF JAPAN IN THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA**

Today, the Central Asian states are becoming a strategically important region attracting the attention of the world's major states, depending on their geopolitical and geo-economic characteristics. It is well known that Japan, along with other major powers in the world, shows great interest in this region. In the 21st century, despite the economic internal crisis, Japan is the center of international forces and the world economy, which is a leader in many industries and trade, science and technology. We see that relations between Japan and the countries of Central Asia are developing dynamically. Japan has a high reputation among the countries of Central Asia. It has a positive image as a peace-loving and friendly country that is trying to provide genuine assistance to developing countries. Today Japan is one of the key donors in the Central Asian region. This article examines the image of Japan in the countries of Central Asia and the key factors that influence the formation of the image of the state in this region. Among them, Assistance in ODA and using of soft power are the main prerequisites.

Key words: Central Asia, Japan, politics, image, soft power.

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**Жапонияның Орталық Азия елдеріндегі
имиджінің қалыптасу алғышарттары**

Бүгінгі таңда Орта Азия мемлекеттері өздерінің геосаяси және геоэкономикалық ерекшеліктеріне қарай әлемнің ірі мемлекеттерінің назарын аударған стратегиялық маңызды аймаққа айналғаны баршаға мәлім. Әлемнің басқа да алпауыт мемлекеттерімен қатар Жапония да сыртқы саясатында осы аймаққа белгілі деңгейде қызығушылық танытып отырғаны белгілі. ХХІ ғ. басындағы экономикалық дағдарыстарға қарамастан, өнеркәсіп пен сауда, ғылым және техника салаларының көбісінде көшбасшы болып табылатын Жапония халықаралық күштер және әлемдік экономиканың орталығы болып табылады. Қазіргі кезеңде Жапония мен Орталық Азия елдері қарым-қатынастарының белсенді түрде даму қарқынын алғанын байқай аламыз. Жапонияның Орталық Азия елдері арасындағы беделі өте жоғары. Бұл мемлекеттер ішінде Жапония мұқтаж елдерге шынайы көмек көрсетуге тырысатын, бейбітшіл және ынтымақшыл ел ретінде оң имиджге ие. Бүгінгі күні Жапония Орталық Азия аймағының негізгі донорларының бірі болып табылады. Бұл мақалада Орталық Азия мемлекеттеріндегі Жапония бейнесі және де мемлекет имиджінің қалыптасуына әсер еткен негізгі факторлар қарастырылады. Оның ішінде ДРК шеңберіндегі көмек және Жапонияның жұмсақ күші негізгі алғышарттар ретінде ерекше атап өтіледі.

Түйін сөздер: Орталық Азия, Жапония, имидж, саясат, жұмсақ күш.

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Факторы формирования имиджа Японии в странах Центральной Азии

Сегодня государства Центральной Азии становятся стратегически важным регионом, привлекающим внимание крупных мировых государств в зависимости от их геополитических и геоэкономических особенностей. Хорошо известно, что Япония, наряду с другими крупными державами в мире, проявляет большой интерес к этому региону. В XXI веке, несмотря на экономический внутренний кризис, Япония является центром международных сил и мировой экономики, которая является лидером во многих отраслях промышленности и торговли, науки и техники. Мы видим, что отношения Японии и стран Центральной Азии динамично развиваются. Япония имеет высокую репутацию в странах Центральной Азии. Она имеет позитивный образ как миролюбивая и дружелюбная страна, которая пытается оказать подлинную помощь развивающимся странам. Сегодня Япония является одним из ключевых доноров в регионе Центральной Азии. В этой статье рассматривается образ Японии в странах Центральной Азии и ключевые факторы, влияющие на формирование имиджа государства в этом регионе. Среди них помощь в рамках ОПР и использование мягкой силы являются основными предпосылками.

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, Япония, политика, имидж, мягкая сила.

Introduction

The modern world is determined by a number of trends, including globalization, regional integration. Over the past two decades, interest in technology to create a positive image of the state in the international arena has significantly grown. There are several reasons for this trend. First, the «reputational capital» of the state becomes the main feature on the international arena. The international community's confidence in the state determines the amount of foreign investments, the attractiveness of the territory for tourists, the consideration of the interests of the state in solving world problems. Secondly, there are more and more researchers in this field. Consequently, the study degree of the issue is growing, and with it the number of technologies for the formation and correction of the image of the state that are being used is too growing. Thirdly, image-makers and political technologists are trying to find the most effective and easily implemented ways of forming the image.

Until recently, Japan had a completely unrepresentable image and the economic growth of this country went hand in hand with improving the image in the eyes of the world community. In other words, the economy and image are two sides of the same coin, mutually complementary. So we can say that without a positive image of Japan, there would not be a successfully developing economy, just as the opposite is true too.

For the countries of Central Asia, in particular for Kazakhstan, which has set itself the ambitious task of becoming one of the 30 most competitive states and successfully working on the economic component of this project, the task still remains to create a positive image conducive to the country's advancement. This task is constantly posed to the social scientists of the Republic of Kazakhstan, but the solution of this problem can not be considered satisfactory, and therefore it remains relevant to study the experience of the most advanced countries, such as Japan.

In addition, it is necessary to know how the inhabitants of Central Asia represent the image of this country, since the further development of relations between us largely depends on it.

The policy of Japan in Central Asia has attracted the interest of some researchers in recent years. In Japan, you can always find information about Japan's Central Asia policy, its goals, strategic plans, and motivations in the press, foreign policy collections.

The following are some of the following initiatives, which was officially published as political principles that open the essence of Japan's policy in the Central Asian region. During the period from 1991 to 2007, Japan has taken the following initiatives:

1993 – The initiative to include Central Asian states to the Organization of International Development and Cooperation – the regional states can

get financial and etc. assistance, in particular, by the «Official Development Assistance» program (ODA);

1997 – Eurasian diplomacy aims to intensify economic and political cooperation between Japan, Russia and Central Asia. The three main principles: mutual benefit, confidence and long-term prospects;

1998 – The Silk Road Diplomacy Program is aimed at supporting democratic transformation, economic reform, transformation of transport infrastructure and natural resources exploration;

2004 – The «Central Asia Plus Japan» initiative is a regular meeting at the level of heads of ministries and agencies aimed at cooperation and regional cooperation;

2006 – «Transformation of Central Asia into a Corridor of Peace and Stability» – Looking at the long-term vision of the CA region, looking for partnerships based on common universal values (Masahiko, Komura. 2007:88)

Indeed, these initiatives have great importance to the region's countries and now it is about \$ 2 billion. Taking into account the assistance provided by the US dollar in the ODA, it has substantially helped for Central Asia's development (Vaga kuni-no seify kayhatsu endzjyo, 2008).

In general, the vision of Japan's Central Asia policy consists of the following aspects: Japan's interest in exploring and possibly developing natural resources in the region, ensuring their safe access to the international markets and assisting democratization and economic development of the region's suburbs. For a long time, officials in Japan have stated these goals as the basis of the policy in the region.

From the moment the Soviet Union collapsed, new independent states in Central Asia have pursued an independent policy on the world stage. After gaining independence, the former Soviet republics were the main focus of the world community. The geopolitical space of the Central Asian region has become a competitive arena for the leading global powers. Today, we can say with certainty that this process is shaped by real players who have identified their interests, goals and objectives. Japan also did not want to abstain from this tendency. It should be noted that in the early years of independence, Japan's policy towards Central Asia was not active. However, in recent years, Japan's interest in the Central Asian region has increased in terms of political and economic reasons.

After the end of the Cold War, the policy in the Central Asian region was a completely new direction in Japan's foreign policy. Nevertheless,

Japan's policy in Central Asia can be seen as the most important component of global vision. The reason is that, in addition to the economic and strategic interest in the region, it is directly related to the qualitative change of its role and degree in international relations.

The ways of political and economic development of Japan are reflected as an alternative way of development for Kazakhstan. The present state of the proposed country is the occurrence of its historical stages. The Japanese government implements effective foreign policy, that is one of the main manifestations of the state's development. A significant part of the state's foreign policy is cultural politics, its image in the outside world. The image of the country in the world over the various periods of time plays an important role in shaping mass minds, as well as in determining the internal and external state of the country.

Japan, as a country that refused to use military force to resolve international disputes, and also rarely resorted to economic methods of coercion (sanctions), relies on soft power. The potential of its soft power includes traditional and modern culture, the model of doing business, innovations and other aspects. Traditionally, the region to which the main resources of soft power are directed, is East Asia. At the same time, in Central Asia, soft power is an integral part of Japan's overall foreign policy strategy. What are the features of Japan's foreign policy in Central Asia? Firstly, this is a relatively short history of the development of diplomatic ties. Relations with the young Central Asian republics were established in the early 1990s. For quite a short time, Japan set a goal to gain a foothold in the region, and achieved certain results in this. Secondly, Japan initially stressed the common Asian identity with these countries. Cultural and racial similarity and, as a result, special emotional intimacy became an integral part of official rhetoric. Third, unlike East Asia, in this region, Japan's reputation is not overshadowed by the experience of military aggression. Moreover, some scholars even talk about «warm memories of the countries of the region associated with Japan's victory over Russia in 1905». Central Asian residents remember ten thousands of Japanese prisoners of war in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan after the Second World War. Until now, buildings that were built by their hands have been preserved, for example, the Central Telegraph and the Ministry of Culture in Tashkent, the Academy of Sciences in Almaty, Farhad Hydropower Station in Tajikistan.

Methods: The principles of analytical-social,

historical-cultural and comparative research methods are used in this research. Also, esoteric-exoteric methods in imageography are used.

Main part

Central Asia is a region with many opportunities and difficulties. Large resources of natural resources, significant demographic potential, transit opportunities in the Eurasian center are accompanied by the weakness of political institutions, high level of conflicts, poorly diversified and highly risky economies, as well as external and internal security issues. The first one is the proximity to sources of instability in Afghanistan and the Middle East in the conditions of extremely low level of protection of the borders, and the second – the issues of socio-economic stability, ethnic conflicts, and the threat of religious extremism. These opportunities make the region attractive to external players looking for additional opportunities for the development of their own economies.

During the war, Japan did not fight against the Soviet Union, but it was Germany's ally and at the same time its image was approved as an image of the enemy. After the surrender of Germany, the USSR declared war against Japan. Soviet soldiers captured many Japanese soldiers and officers during military operations. Many of them were captured in Kazakhstan. They were used as workers in the construction of various facilities in the Kazakh Soviet Union capital, Alma-Ata. Many Kazakhs saw Japanese for the first time. These meetings had a profound impact on the Japanese image changing. Instead of bloody opponents, Alma-Ata saw people who look like Kazakhs. In addition, they were very hardworking and enthusiastic. There are still few buildings built by Japanese prisoners of war in Almaty. All these buildings are considered to be very strong. They have always said that these buildings were built by Japanese as their best offer. The bombing of two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, caused an outcry in the Soviet Union. Soviet agitation during the Cold War used the fact of bombing the US as an aggressive state, so Japan entered the image of the victim. Since then, the image of Japan has changed. Becoming an open country of USSR has also influenced to it. Some Japanese movies were featured in theaters. Some categories of people (only a small fraction of them) had the opportunity to go to capitalist countries, including Japan. In the «Stagnation» years (1970) Japanese products began to enter the USSR. Young people tried to wear Japanese

jackets and buy Japanese radio equipment. Japanese technology is considered as very reliable and authoritative. Especially the Japanese watch is considered significant. In Kazakhstan, as in the whole USSR, Japan is presented as a country with advanced technology and high technology (Lozhkina. 2009:15).

After the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of an independent Kazakhstan, the formation of foreign policy has begun. Japan was one of the countries that has established full diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan. So far, the positive image of this country has been formed in our country. It was presented as a state with advanced technology, high standards of living, and well-developed science. It's not surprisingly that many people who want to join Japan's culture and science have emerged in Kazakhstan. Japanese departments have been opened in many universities, private and national, including in the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The Embassy of Japan has done much to promote the culture of its country. Regular concerts, film festivals and exhibitions. Thus, the exhibition of Japanese dolls, which was held in the Central State Museum of Kazakhstan in June 2011, attracted the attention of Almaty residents. The curator of the exhibition Asel Bilaibayeva noted the interest of Kazakh people in the exhibition (Mobile, 2011). Great achievements of Japan in various fields of production, science and culture push Kazakhstan to make contact with that country. It should be explained by the special knowledge of nonstrategic theory among Kazakh intellectuals. This theory was developed by the talented Soviet linguist V.M. Ilich-Svietich. According to this theory, in the ancient times, Eurasia was a nonstrategic mother tongue and subsequently divided into Turkic languages (including Kazakh) and Japanese (Illich-Swittick, 2009). Despite the fact that this event was several thousand years ago, many Kazakh intellectuals have developed their views on the roots of the two nations. This hypothesis will promote further strengthening of friendly relations between Japan and Kazakhstan.

The image of Japan during the twentieth century developed in Kazakhstan in that way. Initially, under the influence of Soviet propaganda, it was a negative (enemy of the enemy). In the second half of the 20th century, this image received a positive mark.

Currently, there are no significant controversies or fundamental issues between Japan and Central Asia. In general, nothing can hinder the active development of mutual cooperation. According to many researchers, Japan has a high reputation among Central Asian countries in comparison with other

countries. Japan has a positive image as a peaceful and friendly country that strives to provide real help to the developing countries. Nowadays, Japan is one of the key donors in the Central Asian region. Japan provides economic, technical and irrevocable assistance within the ODA, Official Development Assistance Program. The role of the ODA in Japan's foreign policy is very high, as it is one of the main mechanisms of influence in international relations (Usabaliev, 2008: 4).

Japan has been interested in Central Asia for a long time. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Japanese researchers began to participate in joint archaeological expeditions in the region, and the cultural and historical significance of Central Asia, which played a key role in entering Buddhism in Japan, was the basis of the initial initiatives in that region. According to one of the developers of Japanese diplomacy T. Hiroshi, Tokyo is a «micro-planetary nature» of the region and he said about its importance for humanity. After promoting Eurasian diplomacy, more and more attention was paid to historical and cultural ties with Japan, which led to the development of the Silk Road diplomacy in 1997 (Stuttan, 2008: 310-318).

Efforts to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of Central Asia, based on its importance for the development of world civilization, have become an important task for Japan as a state aspiring to play an important role in international cultural cooperation. In addition, some view the region as a moral obligation: Japan has greatly appreciated the Great Silk Road and understood that today it needs to reach a high level of development and prosperity and repay its debt to Central Asia. (Prime Minister R.Khasimoto at the meeting of the Economic Integrity Entrepreneurs). Thus, the historical and cultural community has become an element of soft power in relations with the countries of the region. Trusting in this community, Japan tries to develop the most attractive aspects of its image. It's one of the components to postpone the post-war model for a long time. Former Foreign Minister T. Also recalls his essence as «peace and happiness through economic prosperity and democracy». The Japanese version, which provides for a dominant role of the state in the economy, has attracted interest for the Central Asian states, choosing the path of economic development and having the tradition of a planned economy in the socialist sense. In turn, Tokyo has repeatedly highlighted the advantages of gradual transition to a market economy, comparing the «Japanese-East Asian model» to the Anglo-Saxon model. Experts

from Japan have been sent, courses on economics and business management have been organized to deliver the Japanese experience.

The theme of democracy has always been actively promoted by T. Also, who conducted «valuable diplomacy» on the agenda of relations between Japan and Central Asia, which, in particular, «the roots of freedom and prosperity» that includes Central Asia. He believed that Japan would play an important role in promoting democracy, peace and freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and the market economy. This may seem to be part of a Japanese soft power in the region, as the Japanese approach to democratic processes differs radically from Western countries. Japan is convinced that restoration of the economy will lead to improved democracy and human rights. This may seem to be part of a Japanese soft power in the region, as the Japanese approach to democratic processes differs radically from Western countries. Japan is convinced that restoration of the economy will lead to improved democracy and human rights. This methodology has been linked to the introduction of democracy in Japan during the post-war political system reform. Thus, by propagating the ideas of democracy in Central Asia, Japan acts as a carrier of western values with eastern characteristics, which is more attractive to local regimes than in Europe and the United States.

In addition to the model of economic development, Japan's attractiveness is a leader in innovative development. Japan and the region have repeatedly pointed out that Japanese technology and Central Asia's natural resources are complementary to each other. Leaders of the Central Asian countries are interested in Japanese innovation, and the population considers Japan as a responsible partner in terms of scientific cooperation (for example, 47% of respondents in Kazakhstan and 45% in Uzbekistan). In this regard, Japan is also a country that pays special attention to environmental issues. Tokyo actively participated in the Aral Sea rescue projects, as well as elimination of radioactive contamination in the Semipalatinsk region. International action in the field of climate change, green technologies, and waste production – all of which are based not only on Japanese experience but also on traditional Japanese concept (motteinai). Recently, it has focused on stimulating the use of energy-saving technologies and renewable energy sources that are of interest to Central Asian states (Stuttan NV 2008: 310-318)

Official development assistance is the one of the most successful and vivid examples of using soft power tools in Japan. At the beginning of the 1990s,

Japan said that as a country of Asia, it will provide substantial assistance to the former Soviet states of Asia. Japan has been the largest DRC donor in the region for a long time. It also expressed confidence that Tokyo would never seek to reach the natural resources of the region, and would first of all seek to establish long-term friendly relations with Central Asian countries. One of the areas of assistance is helping to solve human security issues. They include prevention of poverty, natural disaster prevention, health and public health, and so on. For example, Japan, based on the experience of the only country experiencing an atomic bomb, initiated a conference in Semipalatinsk and provided medical care to its inhabitants in 1999. Tokyo pays great attention to projects in the field of education, assistance to agriculture development and so on. Due to these efforts, Japan has been a reliable non-military security provider in Central Asia (Komissina, 1999:79).

Japan paid special attention to the development and modernization of extractive industries and transport communications in the region. Japan takes the lead in financing these industries in Central Asia. Since Japan's foreign policy does not have military elements due to constitutional restrictions after the Second World War, Japan has no choice besides economic integrating into global politics. The economic aid was of a «Japanese contribution» to the common cause of security in the region. It also plays an important role in the provision of humanitarian assistance, social assistance, and funding for poverty reduction programs in the region.

An important tool for soft power designing is cultural and public diplomacy. These two conclusions are closely interconnected in Japan, and they appear in the materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as public cultural diplomacy (*koha binka gayko*). Cultural diplomacy is crucial to understanding Japan's soft power policy. The main areas of cultural diplomacy are disseminating information about Japan, acquaintance with traditional and contemporary culture, popularization of Japanese language, organization of human exchanges, and cooperation with international organizations in the field of culture. Cultural diplomacy, of course, plays an important role in rapprochement of Japan and Central Asian countries, improving mutual understanding and emotional communication. It is a large part of traditional culture, active propagation of modern youth culture. The events in Japan for Central Asia include not only the capitals, but also the vast geography of countries. The Japanese

government pays special attention to youth and professional education programs (Dobrinskaya, 2015: 3)

The development of cultural relations between Japan and the countries of the region has been greatly contributed by committees and friendship and cooperation established on bilateral basis with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In particular, Japan-Kazakhstan Friendship League, friendship association between Japan and Kyrgyzstan, Association of Cultural and Economic Cooperation «Fukushima-Uzbekistan». Such societies include members of government, parliament, business, as well as major public figures from Central Asia and Japan. Within the framework of these organizations regular meetings are held for consultations on important areas of economic, political and cultural cooperation. Thanks to their help, seminars, conferences, round tables, as well as Japanese Culture Days and Days of Central Asia.

Another important element of Japan's foreign policy in Central Asia was the acquaintance of society with mass culture, language, traditions and history of Japan. The experience of opening cultural and language centers for students of the Central Asian republics, organization of language practice, and the establishment of cultural and economic cooperation has become widespread. The activity of Japan in this direction coincides with the purpose of demonstrating a positive image of the Japanese society outside the political leadership of the country. Mass science and cultural relations allow Japan to take advantage of civilization gained elsewhere, and to spread its achievements and values to the world community by showing the attractiveness of the development model.

Japan does not have a clear strategy for the Central Asian region, but only initiatives. In fact, these initiatives have a great importance for the region's countries and have contributed to the development of Central Asia, with the ODA, which is currently two billion dollars. Cooperation between Japan and each Central Asian country is based on bilateral relations. Improving and developing integration within the region, and the emergence of a mechanism to be implemented, create preconditions for deepening Japan in the Central Asian region. In our opinion, Japan's main focus in Central Asia is Kazakhstan. Studying the potential and opportunities of the Kazakh-Japanese relations, it should be noted that there are all the effective conditions for raising the priority areas of bilateral cooperation to a new level of partnership.

Conclusion

Over the years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, Japan has developed a gust of power in Central Asia. The popularity of Japanese culture and sport, the successful work of the Human Resource Development Centers, and active humanitarian contacts show the interest of the region's residents to the land of the rising sun. Japan's technologically advanced country, a leader in addressing global challenges, and a model of economic and democratic development appeals to the countries of Central Asia. Moreover, it is difficult to measure its effectiveness, based on the long-term

perspective and specificity of the soft power policy aimed at creating a favorable environment rather than achieving concrete results. Public opinion polls, the popularity of Japanese centers and cultural events do not give a clear picture, which allows us to talk about the influence of Japan in the region. In addition, soft power is most effective when it is backed up by other factors of mutual interest, for example, economic, and it should be considered in conjunction with other components of diplomacy. It can be assumed that the Japanese soft power in the region will face new challenges stemming from the active cultural diplomacy of China, as well as the growing presence of South Korea.

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