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**The role of “affective attachment” of President of Russian Federation to Japanese culture and its influence on Russian foreign policy (2000-2019)**

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In 2016, President Putin admitted that judo contributed greatly to his self-development [9]. Four years earlier, public resonance was caused by his suggestion to reach “acceptable compromise” or “hikiwake” ([U+5F15] [U+304D] [U+5206] [U+3051]) in relation to Russian-Japanese territorial dispute [10]. In this case, could we talk about special interest of the President to Japan and its influence on Russian foreign policy?

The most part of the articles devoted to Russian-Japanese interaction is concentrated on its “material” side. They cover energy relations [8], economic cooperation [4], as well as reflect changes in bilateral ties after 2014 [3] and their strategic significance [5]. Meanwhile, Russian President admits that he is interested in Japanese culture. Putin mentioned that judo taught him to “respect a partner” [1]. Then, he has friends in Japan, including ex-Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori. However, the political consequences of these ties are described fragmentally (e.g. Strel'tsov 2014 [2]). There is no systematic research on Putin's interest to Japan and its influence on his personality and decision-making. This research tries to fulfill this lacuna.

The theoretical framework of this paper is the concepts of “affective attachment” [6] and “the code” [7]. We expect that V. Putin has “affective attachment” to Japan, and this feeling could influence President's policy towards this country. This phenomenon is described through 1) habits connected with Japan 2) Japan-related ideas Putin expresses publicly 3) emotions President describes during interviews and public speeches.

The research question of the work sounds like: what is “affective attachment” of President of Russia to Japanese culture and which role did it play in Russian foreign policy in relation to Japan from 2000 until 2019? The tasks of the work include description of current state of Russian-Japanese relations, biographical analysis looking for the episodes of Putin's engagements with Japanese people, and discourse analysis of his speeches containing his attitude to Japanese state, society, and culture.

As for results, we have identified 4 habits of President related to Japan - judo training, visiting judo tournaments, visits to Japan and negotiations with Japanese in Russia. Judo gave Putin a friend - a Japanese athlete Y. Yamashita. Russian leader has also welcomed Japanese delegations in Russia, and the most frequent guests are Y. Mori and S. Abe.

Putin has presented several ideas related to Japan. Some of them are based on the philosophy of judo, including respect for partners and elders, the priority of evolution over revolution, courage, and nobility. In the opinion of President, “judo spirit” is the best foundation for international communication. As for Putin's position towards the Kurils, they are under Russian sovereignty, but Russian side is interested in compromise with Japan. In his opinion, states need to expand cooperation to increase the level of trust. Putin's speeches and interviews also contain emotional statements about Japan. They reflect warm attitude to Japanese people and culture, but also contain criticism of Japan's position on disputed territories.

Regarding the impact on Russian policy towards Japan, we suppose that the factor of “attachment” is significant, but not the main one. Interest to Japan may stimulate Russian President to increase cooperation in the limited number of spheres, such as energy and culture. Indeed, Putin supported Abe’s initiatives to implement the eight-point plan and hold a cross-cultural festival in 2018-2019. However, the interest to Japan does not influence issues related to Russian territory, civilians, and security. While making decision on the disputed territory and the peace treaty, President focuses on Russian national interests.

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