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Japanese Historiography on 18th-Century Russian History in 2000–2020¹

This paper attempts to present Japanese historiography on 18th-century Russian history after 2000, limiting itself only to books and articles published in Japan or in Japanese. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the establishment of the Japanese Society for Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies in 2003 symbolises, the number of specialists in the study of 18th-century Russia has gradually increased in Japan, which has led to the diversification of research topics. For example, the active and positive role of Russian rulers and the nobility towards the political and cultural development of the 18th-century Russian state is reevaluated, and several researchers engage in concretely clarifying both the official and private lives of noble servants (including Muslims and Westerners), often paying attention to the local areas. As for regions located relatively near Japan, such as Siberia, the Far East, and Alaska, international relations and expeditions on location have been even more energetically studied than before. Additionally, traditional themes, i. e., the Cossacks, the nomads in the southern regions, and the Old Believers, also continue to attract interest in Japan.

Keywords: 18th-century Russia, Japan, historiography, Imperial government, nobility, international relations, expeditions, local society

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Prehistory

For Japanese people, Russia has been ‘the (territorially) nearest, but (diplomatically) furthest neighbour’. As the Russian state broadened its territory into Siberia and the Far East during the second half of the 16th century, Russia and Japan gradually got closer to each other, and as a result, Japanese castaways were sometimes rescued and given protection by frontier natives and officials in Russia, particularly after the 18th century. Although some information on the Russian rulers and people became known in Japan through the castaways who returned, territorial proximity awakened wariness towards Russia in Japanese society. Such Russophobia has been maintained and often strengthened by conflicts concerning national interests in East Asia since the second half of the 19th century, by military clashes such as the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–05, the Siberian Intervention in 1918–22, the Battles of Khalkhin Gol in 1939, and the Soviet-Japanese War in 1945, the detention of many Japanese soldiers and civilians mainly in Siberia and the Far East soon after the Second World War, and confrontation under the Cold War regime.

Therefore, on the one hand, in the second half of the 20th century, popular interest in the Russian state and society, particularly in the pre-revolutionary periods, was not so strong, except for concerns about the Soviet socialist system and civilization. But on the other, following pioneers such as Yoji Tanaka, Shigeto Toriyama, and Shigeo Abe, Tsuneyuki Dohi published a monograph on 18th-century Russian rural society in the 1980s, and Koichi Toyokawa and Hitoshi Nakamura researched the history of popular rebellions, paying attention to their nomadic combatant-participants (Kalmyks and Bashkirs) and the popular adoration for the tsars.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 dramatically changed the perspective of Japan. The Russian state, stripped of its socialist surface, attracted growing and broader interest among the younger Japanese demographic, whose images of Russia were largely improved by perestroika. Furthermore, it became easy for Japanese researchers and students to stay longer in Russia and to collect materials from the Russian libraries and archives. Consequently, these days, postgraduate students using archival sources in Russia are not so rare. Partly because of the gradual increase of researchers in Japan, in 2003, the Japanese Society for Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies was established by specialists in history, literature, and linguistics. Since then, they have been holding a conference and publishing a newspaper annually.

In the following sections, I would like to introduce some research fields in which relatively prominent results can be observed for the last twenty years, limiting myself only to books and articles published in Japan or the Japanese language because, to our regret, the research results presented outside Japan are only a few (which may be one of the serious weak points of Japanese researchers). Additionally, papers later recorded in monographs are excluded from the bibliographical list attached to each section. It should also be noted that not all the literature shown on the lists is mentioned in the text.

Imperial government and nobility

The aforementioned change in the 1990s extended research topics in Japan. One of them can be called the most positive contributor towards the Russian state becoming a great power in the international arena—the tsarist government, and the noble elite in the 18th century, including the period from the death of Peter I (1725) to the enthronement of Catherine II (1762). Firstly, the realities of the state services of the nobility, and their mentality in developing their loyalty towards the Imperial government has been studied. For example, after analysing the petitions kept in the Russian State Archive of Old Documents (RGADA), Yoshihide Tanaka suggested that each of the elites under the reigns of Peter I and Catherine I, unlike the noble servants (particularly of middle and low ranks) in the 17th century acting collectively as a noble estate, tried to strengthen personal ties with the rulers to create a solid cohesion between the Russian emperors and the nobility. According to Tanaka, noblemen’s affiliation to elite units such as the Guard Regiments and the Cavalry Guards also contributed to their efforts to improve cohesion with the monarchs. Relevantly, interest in Japan increased about the early modern Russian military forces, their real conditions, and their relations with the general public.

Secondly, several researchers have focused on state ceremonies and symbols representing the Russian rulers which could function as an important means of raising the emperors’ authority, and thus promoting state integration. Y. Tanaka pointed out the course of separation between secular factors and religious ones in the Russian state ceremonies in the final period of Peter I’s reign, and Tokuaki Bannai found anti-Catholic aspects in the buffoonery of a marriage ceremony held in the notorious “Ice Palace” on the orders of Anna Ioannovna. As for the reign of Catherine II, inspired by Andrei Zorin, Yusuke Toriyama extracted the Greek plot in both the carrousel held by Catherine in 1766, and the ode of Vasilii Petrov (1736–96) praising her and this ritual, and suggested these were early signs of her famous “Greek Project”.

Regarding the social rise of female aristocrats as one of the results of the Petrine reforms, the books and articles of Misa Nakagami and Keiko Kawashima were published with a focus on Ekaterina Dashkova (1743–1810), who served as president of the Russian Academy of Sciences during the reign of Catherine II.

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TSUNEYUKI DOHI, *Russia – The Earth of the Romanov Dynasty* [in Japanese], (Tokyo: Kodan-Sha, 2007).

TSUNEYUKI DOHI, *Imperial Russia: 200 years of Lights and Shades* [in Japanese], (Tokyo: Kawade-Shobo-Shinsha, 2009).

TSUNEYUKI DOHI, “Border Security, War and Immigration: Army and Society in Early Modern Russia [in Japanese],” in *Army* ed. SHUHEI SAKAGUCHI and HIROTO MARUHATA, (Kyoto: Minerva-Shobo, 2009), 107–143.

TSUNEYUKI DOHI, *Peter the Great: A Tsar Possessed by Western Europe* [in Japanese], (Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha, 2013).

TSUNEYUKI DOHI, “The Case of Tsarevich Alexis: Its Historiographic Study [in Japanese],” *The Review of Liberal Arts, Otaru University of Commerce* 135, (2018): 111–132.

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KEIKO KAWASHIMA, “Ekaterina Dashkova: Director of St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences [in Japanese],” *The Journal of the Japanese Society for the History of Chemistry* 39, no. 3 (2012): 133–149.

MISA NAKAGAMI, “Dashkova and the ‘Dictionary of the Russian Academy’ [in Japanese],” *Slavic Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies* 5, (2005): 64–78.

MISA NAKAGAMI, *First Woman Director of the Academy of Sciences in the Russian History: Princess Dashkova* [in Japanese], (Tokyo: Toyo-Shoten, 2006).

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2007): 36–58.

YURI SUZUKI, “The Present Situation of Research on the Court Coups d’ État in 18th-Century Russia: Mainly on the 1730 Case [in Japanese],” *Ochanomizu Historical Review* 57, (2014): 121–149.

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YOSHIHIDE TANAKA, “Royal Power and Ceremonies in Russia at the Beginning of the 18th Century: The Monographs of R. S. Wortman and E. A. Zitser [in Japanese],” *Studies in Western History, Waseda University* 27, (2005): 107–121.

YOSHIHIDE TANAKA, *Catherine II and Her Era* [in Japanese], (Tokyo: Toyo-Shoten, 2009).

YOSHIHIDE TANAKA, “The Army and the Russian Nobility in the First Half of the 18th Century: The Formation and the Activities of the Cavalry Guards in the 1720s [in Japanese],” *Annals of the Japanese Association for Russian and East European Studies* 38, (2009): 72–88.

YOSHIHIDE TANAKA, “From War Regime to Peaceful Regime: Real Conditions of Reformation of the 18th-century Russian Army Explored from the Petitions and the Administrative Documents [in Japanese],” in *Russian History Read from the New Historical Sources* ed. TAKESHI NAKASHIMA, (Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha, 2013), 12–31.

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YUSUKE TORIYAMA, “The ‘Splendid Carousel’ of Catherine II and the Ode of Petrov: Two Attempts in 1766 at Visualization of the Image of Modern Russia [in Japanese],” *Slavic Studies* 54, (2007): 33–63.

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Influences from the surrounding areas

Several Japanese researchers have paid attention to the problem of the influx of foreign people and culture into 18th-century Russian society, looking upon it as an important factor in the development of Russia politically and culturally. Although generally western impacts tend to be emphasised, Mami Hamamoto, utilising archival materials mainly of the *posol'skii prikaz*, discovered the career patterns and activities of Muslim state servants in the 17th and 18th centuries.

On western emigrants, considering close relations with European features in the 17th and 18th centuries (for example, a rash of wars, confessionalisation, Humanism and the Enlightenment), on the one hand, Y. Tanaka has studied non-Russian officials and their influence (i. e., H. J. F. Osterman (1687–1747), Anton De Vieira (1682–1745), former Swedish war prisoners and so on), but on the other hand, Nobuya Hashimoto and T. Dohi have showed the active and progressive role played by western (above all, German) intellectuals in the development of Russian academism.

Moreover, Kenta Hayashi recently analysed the operation of printing technology and newspaper media learned in Western Europe, focusing on the specific functions of the initial editors of Peter I's newspaper, *Vedomosti*, pointing out the government's leading role in publishing in the early 18th century. With regards to the publication of books and reading culture similarly influenced by Western Europe, there are studies by Yukio Iwata on the book collections of the Russian monarchs and the elite, as well as M. Nakagami's research into the reading life of aristocratic women and publishing activities for them.

Additionally, the growth of the Russian theatre culture in the 18th century, owing mainly to the court and wealthy noble landowners, have been studied by Yoriko Morimoto and comparisons have been drawn between European original scores and those performed in Russia.

By contrast, as an example of the Russian aristocracy who went abroad and experienced the Grand Tour in Western Europe in the late 18th century, as well as the elite from the other states, Utako Onodera introduced the journey of Pavel Stroganov (1772–1812), and M. Nakagami

depicted the case of Dashkova.

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Noble Culture [in Japanese], (Tokyo: Shindokusho-Sha, 2001).

International and commercial relations

Probably due to territorial proximity to Japan, the process of Russian eastward expansion has been eagerly studied in Japan for a long time. Particularly on the Kyakhta Treaty between China (Qing) and Russia signed in 1728, Koichi Shibuya, relying on archival materials held in the Archive of Foreign Policies of the Russian Empire (AVPRI), assumed that there were certain discrepancies in the recognition of some provisions of the Kyakhta Treaty between the Chinese and the Russian governments. Five versions were drafted in different languages, and each government depended on separate versions. Furthermore, later conflicts and negotiations between the two empires led to the conclusion of the Addendum to the Treaty of Kyakhta (1768). Akira Yanagisawa published several articles on this. In the Russo-Chinese commercial system constructed by this Kyakhta Treaty, Takako Morinaga's monograph, which clarified mutual relations between the merchant families in Irkutsk, stressed these tradesmen's active role. Although it was not realised under the Kyakhta Treaty, Tomomi Nakamura considered the fact that the Russian side intended to expand its commercial activities in Cantonese and Nanjing, pointing out the impact of the reports of some Westerners who accompanied the Izmailov mission as a source for Russian foreign policy decisions.

Recently in Japan the study of Central Eurasian history has been active. Jin Noda's monograph, which centres on the Kazakh Khanate located halfway between Russia and the Qing Empire, examined the relationship between these two empires in the 18th and 19th centuries and can be positioned as one of the remarkable results of such research trends.

Moreover, about the extension of Russia to the Far East and Alaska, Emiko Okano depicted the activities of Russian fur traders which consequently led to the establishment of the 'Russian-American Company', and their contacts with natives in Alaska and British expeditions arriving at the North Pacific Ocean. Subsequently, T. Morinaga also published a book and a booklet about the efforts of these fur traders, including the Irkutsk merchants.

Although there is little information on formal international relations between Japan and Russia in the 18th century, since Japan had closed its territory at that time, there are several results by Michiko Ikuta about Daikokuya-Kodayu, a famous migrating citizen who drifted to Kamchatka in the second half of the 18th century. After moving to St. Petersburg, he asked Catherine II

directly to permit him to return home. Additionally, based on the archival historical materials, K. Toyokawa analysed the Russian Senate's response to Soza and Gonza, who were also washed ashore in Kamchatka in 1729, pointing out that their presence may have aroused interest in Japan in Anna Ioannovna's government. The Center for Northeast Asian Studies at Tohoku University published a collection of five volumes of historical materials on Russo-Japanese relations in the 18th and 19th centuries, translated into Japanese.

With regard to foreign and trade policies for the west and the south, Gennyu Takeda explained in his articles that through the 18th century, the central arena of Russian foreign commerce gradually transited from the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, where the Netherlands and Britain mainly traded, to the Black Sea via the Ottoman Empire, where the Russian Government began to plan grain trades with France. Takeda also analysed the process of building diplomatic relations between Russia and European countries closely related to this transition. As for Russia's relations with the Ottoman Empire, Hiroki Odaka's monograph focused on changes in the ways of diplomatic negotiations and diplomatic etiquette mainly on the Ottoman side in the second half of the 18th century. Furthermore, by paying attention to the border zone, i. e., Wallachia and Moldavia, a book by Akitsu Mayuzumi examined the three-way relationship among Western Europe, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and the first half of the 19th century.

SUSANNE ENDO-KOLLER, "The Russian Government's Dispatch of Expeditions to the North Pacific Region during the Second Half of the 18th Century [in Japanese]," *Bulletin of the Institute for Excellence in Higher Education Tohoku University* 5, (2019): 41–56.

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Local society

T. Dohi, who has been also actively presenting his research results after 2000, points out the importance of local history research to a profound understanding of Russian history based on the diversity of the Russian Empire. Likewise, K. Toyokawa's southern frontier studies continue to develop, and two monographs have been published. In these books, Toyokawa, utilising archival materials not only from Moscow and St. Petersburg, but also from other regions, detailed the southern expedition of Ivan Kirilov (1695–1737) in the 1730s, the process of construction of the Orenburg Fortress, and the conflicts with local indigenous peoples as a part of his main topics. With Russia's foray into its surrounding areas, Toyokawa paid attention to the arrest and interrogation (1732–36) of a Simbirsk citizen, Iakov Iarov, who was accused of indulging in magic. He tried to see these two seemingly irrelevant events in the context of the 18th-century European Enlightenment (reaching Russia) and as a largely comprehensive attempt of the Russian central government to struggle against unexploredness. Additionally, Toyokawa's analysis is advanced about the activities of the Cossacks, non-Russians, and the Old Believers in the 18th century, particularly at the Pugachev Rebellion.

In the public sectors Y. Tanaka researched the previous history of local government officials (governors, vice-governors and *voevodas*) appointed in the first half of the 18th century, their places of work, their incumbencies, their personnel processes, and their concrete activities there.

At least in the first half of the century, as far as can be judged from the patterns of human appointments, the Imperial government seems to have had only a minor concern about each local governor's existing ties with his place of work. It is highly likely that the relationship between provincial administrators, who were assigned to the sites only for a very short period, and regional residents was not good. However, information is limited and further individual case studies will be required.

Studies on noblemen and their families living in rural areas increased. One of these is U. Onodera's research on the family education of nobility. Analysing the actual situation of examinations conducted to assess foreign teachers' qualifications since 1757 while also pointing out the qualitative problems of these teachers, Onodera suggested that a certain interest in education might have been stimulated among aristocratic families through such a testing system. Additionally, starting with the research of Tomoko Bannai, the actual condition of daily life in the lordly residences (*usad'ba*) of the local nobility is also being elucidated.

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