

Japan's "Kind Diplomacy": Conceptualizing Japanese Foreign Cultural Policies

GADJEVA, Nadejda

Abstract

This study explores specific characteristics of Japan's soft power and cultural policy approaches, based on which Japanese public diplomacy can be globally distinguished. From the perspective of Japan's cultural promotion strategies, cultural aspects and desired image projected abroad, it suggests a new conceptualization of Japanese public diplomacy – "kind diplomacy".

The study compares Japan's soft approach with other countries' policies, including Russia and China and their so called "sharp power". It introduces particular features of Japanese public diplomacy, based on which it could be defined as "kind diplomacy". The study discusses the propaganda-oriented Japanese cultural promotion, carried out by the end of World War II, and continues with a focus on the transformed postwar approach for communicating the desired profile of Japan worldwide. It explores the evolution of diverse kind diplomacy-oriented policies and initiatives throughout the years until present, new cultural policy goals, and the promoted specific cultural aspects and elements abroad. In addition, the paper examines the role and contributions of particular Japanese institutions including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Foundation, as well as the city of Kyoto as essential kind diplomacy actors. The study also highlights the future challenges of Japanese kind diplomacy and provides certain suggestions for further strengthening its efficiency.

Keywords: Japan's kind diplomacy, foreign cultural policies, public diplomacy, Japanese soft power

1. Introduction

Japan's culture has been globally admired around the world. It has been carrying out diverse public diplomacy initiatives for projecting the desired image overseas and enhancing its presence. These activities have also been much fruitful in comparison with other Asian and various countries worldwide. According to the Soft Power 30 index of 2019, the world's

most comprehensive comparative assessment of global soft power, Japan is placed in the eight position and is Asia's highest-ranking country (Portland, n.d.). Another example, indicating Japan's productive cultural policies for constructing a favorable image, is a global poll ranking countries by their positive influence around the world, carried out by the BBC World Service from 2005 to 2014, and again in 2017. As Watanabe (2018) highlights, "in a poll that took place from November 2006 to January 2007, and which covered the opinions of people from twenty-seven nations regarding thirteen specific nations (seventeen in 2010), Japan tied with Canada for the top spot with a 54% score". In the following years, Japan continued to achieve positive results – "fifth place in 2008, second in 2009, third in 2010 (57%), fifth in 2014 (49%) and again third in 2017 (56%)" (Watanabe, 2018).

Much contributory to this positive tendency of Japan's high cultural presence and appreciation worldwide, has been its unique public diplomacy approach, defined in this study as "kind diplomacy". Implemented mainly after the end of World War II, this approach illustrates Japanese cultural promotion policies, cultural characteristics and desired profile presented abroad. It focuses on the introduction of specific Japanese values and virtues as well as other particular cultural elements, reflecting the country's warm and friendly nature. Through the conduct of diverse kind diplomacy initiatives, Japan has been working to project a profile of a kind, harmonious, friendly, and peace-loving country, to foster mutual understanding, and achieve the government's diplomatic goals.

This study analyzes specific features of Japan's soft power and policy approaches, based on which Japanese public diplomacy can be globally distinguished. By focusing on Japan's cultural promotion strategies, cultural aspects and desired image presented abroad, it suggests a new conceptualization of Japanese public diplomacy – "kind diplomacy".

Including the introduction, this qualitative study consists of four sections. Following a brief outline of the concept of public diplomacy in section two, section three concentrates on Japan's public diplomacy and its conceptualization as "kind diplomacy". First, it compares Japan's soft approach with other countries' policies, particularly with Russia and China and their so called "sharp power". Second, it introduces specific aspects and features characteristic of Japanese public diplomacy, based on which it could be defined as "kind diplomacy". The chapter proceeds with a discussion on the propaganda-oriented Japanese cultural promotion, carried out by the end of World War II, before transitioning to the kind diplomacy policy. In the next subsections the study analyzes Japan's transformed postwar public diplomacy approach for communicating the desired image worldwide. It explores the conducted diverse kind diplomacy-oriented strategies and initiatives, new cultural policy goals, and the promoted specific cultural aspect and elements abroad. The study also discusses the evolution of Japan's kind diplomacy policies and activities in various directions throughout the years until present. In addition, it examines the role and contributions of particular Japanese institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Foundation, as well as the city of Kyoto as essential kind diplomacy actors. The study concludes with an emphasis on the future challenges for Japanese kind diplomacy. It provides certain suggestions for further strengthening its efficiency, beneficial to the maintenance of Japan's cultural presence overseas in a long-term perspective.

2. Defining Public Diplomacy

The notion of "public diplomacy" has been gaining much popularity among international society. An essential instrument for exercising soft power, it has been closely related to power – "the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye, 2004, p.2). The behavior of others could be affected either by the use of force, threats, and payment found in the "hard power", or by attraction typical to the "soft power".

Coined for the first time by the Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye, the concept of "soft power" is described as "the ability to affect others through co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (Nye, 2011, p.21). With the practice of soft power, a country could accomplish its objectives "because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it" (Nye, 2004, p.5). Soft power also characterizes the connection between a country's foreign cultural activities and diplomacy. It has been regarded as the use of culture as a form of diplomatic policy, also associated with the concepts of public diplomacy or cultural diplomacy.

There has been no unified definition of the term public diplomacy, which causes discussions on the topic among scholars and practitioners. For instance, it has been used as "an umbrella term for all of the various activities of governmental and non-governmental actors which contribute to the creation of a positive image of a certain state" (Pajtinka, 2019, p.23). As Bátorá (2005, p.4) emphasizes, public diplomacy consists of "all activities by state and non-state actors that contribute to the maintenance and promotion of a country's soft power".

The concept of public diplomacy was first coined in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, stating:

Public diplomacy... deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.

(Cull, 2009a, p.19)

Following Gullion's definition, the idea of public diplomacy could be understood as a supplement to classical diplomacy, or, in other words, that it represents "a specific dimension or form of diplomacy that aims to fulfil the goals of foreign policy by influencing public opinion abroad and not through direct diplomatic negotiations with official representatives of foreign countries, as it is in the case of the 'traditional' government-to-government diplomacy" (Pajtinka, 2019, p.23). Similarly, Tuch (1990, p.3) defines it as "a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals...as well as its national goals and current policies". Paul Sharp also describes public diplomacy as "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being repre-

sented” (Melissen, 2005, p.8).

Another interpretation of the concept is given by the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, focusing particularly on the actors involved and their role for developing fruitful international relations. The USC Center on Public Diplomacy (n.d.) defines public diplomacy as “the public, interactive dimension of diplomacy which is not only global in nature, but also involves a multitude of actors and networks” and it is “a key mechanism through which nations foster mutual trust and productive relationships and has become crucial to building a secure global environment”.

According to the Slovak scholar Erik Pajtinka, from a theoretical perspective, in practice public diplomacy could also be identified through specific characteristic features. The first is the initial purpose or motive of conducting public diplomacy, which is the achievement of particular foreign-policy goal. The second is its target group – the foreign public. The third characteristic feature of public diplomacy is the method of operation, which is “influencing the opinion of the public through targeted communication” (Pajtinka, 2019, p.26). The last feature pointed out by Pajtinka (2019, p.26) includes the means of realization – “to a great extent based on using the tools of mass communication”.

Despite the existence of various interpretations of the concept of public diplomacy by practitioners, scholars, research institutes, or governments, providing broad perspectives and analysis on the topic, the lack of a single definition can cause certain misunderstandings of the idea. For instance, it could be considered as a synonym for propaganda. However, the two notions are considerably different and should not be equated. As Melissen (2005, p.22) highlights, “public diplomacy is similar to propaganda in that it tries to persuade people what to think, but it is fundamentally different from it in the sense that public diplomacy also listens to what people have to say”. Public diplomacy includes “persuasion by means of dialogue that is based on a liberal notion of communication with foreign publics” (Melissen, 2005, p.22). While propaganda is “based rather on one-way communication of information and gives the public abroad a relatively narrow space for interpretation of the message” (Pajtinka, 2019, p.30). McCellan (2004) also emphasizes that in the case of propaganda “a particular message is ‘infected’ into the target country over and over”, while typical to public diplomacy is “the active, planned use of cultural, educational and informational programming to effect a desired result that is directly related to a government’s foreign policy objectives”.

To understand the notion of public diplomacy to a greater extent, it is essential to mention its specific subsets through which it has been implemented – cultural diplomacy, listening, advocacy, international broadcasting, and exchanges (Cull, 2009b, p.10). Here, as elements of soft power the concepts of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy might look very similar. However, they have considerable differences and it is important to be distinguished. While a unified interpretation of cultural diplomacy does not exist, according to the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (n.d.) it “may best be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation, promote national interests and beyond; Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society”. Crucial differences between the two concepts are their

primary purposes and scope of activities. In comparison with cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy includes a wider range of activities – “primarily those government media and public relations activities aimed at a foreign public in order to explain a course of action, or present a case” (Mark, 2009, p.15). In addition, as Ogoura (2009, p.45) highlights, another dissimilarity between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy is that “the former is always closely associated with a well-defined political objective and aimed at certain pre-determined targets while the latter is not necessarily linked to a specific political objective”.

3. Japan's “Kind Diplomacy”: Conceptualizing Japanese Foreign Cultural Policies

3.1 A New Approach to Japanese Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

Countries around the world have developed specific soft power or public diplomacy policies to strengthen their cultural presence abroad, create an enabling environment for government policies, and build long-term relationships with other states. Such examples are China and Russia, labeled with the use of so called “sharp power”. The two countries have been spending billions of dollars to impact public opinion worldwide through a variety of initiatives including educational programs, cultural and information activities, people-to-people exchanges, and others. However, some of the public diplomacy influence strategies applied by China and Russia are perceived neither as “hard” or coercive, nor as “soft”. As Walker and Ludwig (2017, p.6) highlight, “the attempt by Beijing and Moscow to wield influence through initiatives in the spheres of media, culture, think tanks, and academia is neither a ‘charm offensive’ nor an effort to ‘win hearts and minds’, the common frame of reference for ‘soft power’ efforts”, and thus demonstrating policies of distraction and manipulation, rather than attraction or persuasion. Despite the existence of certain differences in the form and the tone of their public diplomacy approaches, “both stem from an ideological model that privileges state power over individual liberty and is fundamentally hostile to free expression, open debate, and independent thought” (Walker & Ludwig, 2017, p.7). Through a variety of cultural initiatives, such authoritarian countries have been working to apply their principles and ideals worldwide, in order to accomplish particular goals and secure their interests. For instance, China has “cultivated economic leverage as tool for getting others to play by its rules”, seeking to “reduce, neutralize, or preempt any challenges to the regime’s presentation of itself” (Walker, 2019). At the same time, its “state-funded research centers, media outlets, people-to-people exchange programs, and network of Confucius Institutes often mimic civil society initiatives that in democracies function independently of government” (Walker, 2019). In addition, other countries have no idea of the logic that forms the basis of China’s foreign policy, as well as about the way it controls its own media, society and political discourse.

The term “sharp power” was coined by the International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy in 2017. It is defined as an authoritarian “soft power” that “pierces, penetrates, or perforates the political and information environments in the targeted countries” (Walker & Ludwig, 2017, p.6). Sharp power is used by authoritarian states to achieve certain goals in an “unattractive” and “coercive” way, atypical of soft

power. As Walker and Ludwig (2017, p.13) point out, the idea of “sharp power’ captures the malign and aggressive nature of the authoritarian projects, which bear little resemblance to the benign attraction of soft power”. Shao (2019, p.131) also describes the concept as a “regime’s ability to influence perceptions of audiences in a target country in order to change their minds and behavior, undermine the political system and thus shape favorable consensus, by manipulative use of information”. Through the use of sharp power, “the generally unattractive values of authoritarian systems – which encourage a monopoly on power, top-down control, censorship, and coerced or purchased loyalty – are projected out-ward, and those affected are not so much audiences as victims” (Walker & Ludwig, 2017, p.13).

In comparison with China, Russia and other countries around the world, Japan totally differs in its cultural promotion strategies for projecting a positive image and building international partnerships. It has developed very specific soft power features and policy approaches, based on which Japanese public diplomacy can be globally distinguished. From the perspective of its strategies, cultural aspects and desired image presented abroad, Japan’s public diplomacy could be named as “kind power” or “kind diplomacy”. This concept illustrates Japan’s cultural policy, especially since the end of World War II, focusing on the promotion of characteristic Japanese values and virtues, such as the notions of *wa* (harmony), *omotenashi* (hospitality), *omoiyari* (consideration), and other aspects like Japanese philosophies towards life and nature, the attention to detail, high mutual respect, aesthetic sense, and traditions. In other words, Japan’s “kind diplomacy” could be defined as the conduct of soft public diplomacy strategies and initiatives, emphasizing particularly its warm, hospitable, and friendly nature as well as specific cultural values – tranquility, harmony, thoughtfulness, and consideration, with the aim of projecting an image of a kind and peaceful country that combines tradition with modernity and achieving government’s diplomatic goals.

Before proceeding with the discussion in the study, it is essential to give a basic introduction of the abovementioned concepts characterizing Japanese kind diplomacy.

When exploring the notion of *wa* (harmony), a precise definition is difficult to be discovered. Based on Japan’s history and traditions, the idea of harmony is “the balance of all things in and around us, both literal and implied”, “informs all aspects of Japanese law and customs”, and stays “at the heart of Japanese culture” (Culturally Ours, 2018). As the Japan Foundation (n.d.a) emphasizes, “one characteristic of Japan is the traditional spirit of *Wa* or harmony, a capacity for blending opposing entities, whether values, people, or positions, and taking them to a higher level”.

The idea of *wa* (harmony) is thought to have been first described in Japan around 600AD. As Pye (1996, p.1) points out, “the concept of *wa* or harmony was given prominence in the first item of his famous seventeen-articled ‘constitution’”. According to Prince Shotoku’s Seventeen Article Constitution from 604,

Harmony [Wa] should be valued and quarrels should be avoided. Everyone has his biases, and few men are far-sighted. Therefore, some disobey their lords and fathers and keep up feuds with their neighbors. But when the superiors are in harmony with each other and the inferiors are friendly, then affairs are discussed quietly and the right view of matters prevails.

(Aston, 1896; Berberich et al., 2020)

From a historical perspective, Japan's ethical concept of *wa* is thought to have derived from the "Confucian ideal of harmony when many elements of Chinese culture were introduced to Japan in the fifth century CE" and following "contact with Shinto and other Japanese cultural elements, such as a special focus on politeness, it gained its distinct Japanese style" (Berberich et al., 2020). It is understood as people working "politely and keeping a good relationship in a group, with full appreciation of the uniqueness of all members to reach the goal: goodness, peace and growth of all members involved" (Konishi et al., 2009).

The notion of *wa* has been playing a great role in the Japanese society and culture. The initiated in May 1, 2019 new Imperial era Reiwa, is a case in point. Here, the character for *wa*, interpreted as "harmony" or "peace" in English, could be regarded as an illustration of Japan's message to the world. As Berberich et al. (2020) highlight, the chosen name of the era "summarizes the vision of the country for the next decades and further emphasizes the extraordinary importance that the value of *wa* holds in Japan's culture".

Another specific feature embodied in Japan's kind diplomacy is the concept of *omotenashi* (hospitality). The notion is thought to have been introduced by Sen no Rikyū, the grandfather of Japanese tea ceremony. As Nakano (2008, p.33) emphasizes, "as early as during Kamakura era in the 12th-14th centuries, the ceremonial presentation of tea (originally only Buddhist priests) gradually opened up through the centuries to outsiders, establishing the 'rules' of engagement between host and honored guest or weary traveler" and, in the following years, between the mid-1400s and the end of the 1500s, the art developed to the familiar and valued at present "ritual of minimalism" and "sublime interaction". Japan's sense of *omotenashi* (hospitality) was "thus born out of accommodating and entertaining an honored guest", differently to the Western idea of *hospitality* "related to caring or nursing one's health" (Nakano, 2008, p.33). The principle of *omotenashi* has three elements inspired by the Japanese Tea Ceremony – *shitsurai*, *furumai*, and *shikake*. As Al-alsheikh (2014, pp.27-28) explains, *shitsurai* is "the physical environment where the service will be delivered", *furumai* means "the preparation part of the serving and the host willingness to take responsibility by seeing the needs of the guests", and *shikake* is "the process of the guest been participating and enjoying the process of the delivered service".

In the years, the concept of *omotenashi* has become an essential practice for welcoming guests and presenting Japanese culture to both domestic and foreign audiences. It embodies the spirit of warmheartedness and kindness of Japanese society. As Belal et al. (2013, p.29) emphasize, the idea of *omotenashi* in Japan "has very big significance that is to fulfill the guest's requirements by presenting super services from the core of the heart without expectation of any return, and the ability to actualize that idea into action". Similarly, Al-alsheikh (2014, p.28) points out that "according to *omotenashi* one has to put his heart into delivering the most excellent service and create the unique hospitality". It should also be highlighted that Japanese *omotenashi* or hospitality is not visible as "service" and therefore it is considered intangible. While in the West "service" is often conducted with the idea that the customer might pay for a product or some extra service, in Japan *omotenashi* is implemented with no expectation of something in return, as well as does not intentionally emphasize the

hospitality, thus remaining invisible to the customer. In addition, this distinct spirit of Japanese hospitality is quite different from the Western perception of the notion also in the way that it “suggests a deeper part of the recognition of a human being” (Belal et al., 2013, p.29).

Another crucial concept characteristic of Japanese communication and kind behavior is *omoiyari*. According to Hara (2006, p.24), “when Japanese people feel another’s kindness toward them and see someone’s warm-hearted feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, they appreciate that person’s *omoiyari*”. The notion has been much valued among Japanese society. For instance, the “word *omoiyari* is often seen on signs bearing a school motto and at police stations” (Hara, 2006). Despite the fact that the *omoiyari*-based communication is present in various countries worldwide, Japan is considered to appreciate the idea the most (Amanuma, 2004; Hara, 2006).

There is no unified single definition of the concept of *omoiyari*. *Omoi* in *omoiyari* means “thought”, “feelings”, “heart” or “caring for others”, while *yari* is “sending something to others”. Following this, *omoiyari* could be literally translated as “sending one’s heart or caring feelings to others”. As the cultural anthropologist Lebra (1976, p.38) points out, *omoiyari* is “the ability and willingness to feel what others are feeling, to vicariously experience the pleasure or pain that they are undergoing, and to help them satisfy their wishes... without being told verbally”. In addition, the idea is considered as an instrument of Japan’s harmonious communication and peaceful coexistence with the society. According to Lebra (1976), *omoiyari* is silent communication:

Inward communication of unity and solidarity stems from the notion that in perfect intimacy, Ego does not have to express himself verbally or in conspicuous action because what is going inside of him should be immediately detected by Alter. The Japanese glorify silent communication, *isshin denshin* (“heart-to-heart communication”), and mutual “vibrations,” implying the possibility of semitelepathic communication. Words are paltry against the significance of reading subtle signs and signals and the intuitive grasp of each other’s feelings. The ultimate form of such communication is *ittaikan* (“feeling of oneness”), a sense of fusion between Ego and Alter.

(Lebra, 1976, p.115)

It is essential to distinguish *omoiyari* from empathy and sympathy. The basic difference is that the former includes intuitive understanding and behavior, which is not characteristic of the latter two concepts (Shinmura, 1991; Travis, 1998; Uchida & Kitayama, 2001). In addition, as Hara (2006, p.27) emphasizes, consideration towards “others is not always, received, and *omoiyari* does not expect any reward”. In case a reward is expected, “it is not *omoiyari* but business-like helping behavior” (Hara, 2006, p.27).

Based on these aspects and other cultural elements, Japan has been conducting a variety of kind diplomacy initiatives abroad, representing its harmonious nature, kindness, and friendliness. These elements have been crucial in the projection of Japan’s image as a peace-loving and friendly country that combines tradition with modernity.

3.2 Japan’s Past Approaches: Public Diplomacy until World War II

It should be emphasized that Japan’s approach of kind diplomacy did not exist in the past.

With few exceptions of certain initiatives (indicated in the following subchapter), from the 1860s by the end of World War II, Japanese public diplomacy had a totally different direction and nature. After World War I, it was applied mostly as an instrument for overseas expansion in Asia. The government considered cultural policy as a “means to achieve better control of the empire and advance the assimilation of the colonies with Japan” (Otmazgin, 2012, p.46). These government’s goals and policy directions led to the implementation of a wartime-natured national propaganda rather than a soft and kind-oriented public diplomacy. As Otmazgin (2012, p.42) points out, “Japan’s colonial and wartime intrusions into Asia included the introduction and sometimes imposition of culture at the expense of local and Western cultures”. For example, in Taiwan (1895–1945) and Korea (1910–1945) as well as during its conquest into Manchuria and China, Japan conducted cultural promotion initiatives with the aim to dissolve anti-Japanese sentiments and win the hearts and minds of local elites sympathetic to Japan. At the same time, its objective was also to facilitate the colonies’ assimilation with Japan (Caprio, 2009, pp.81-110; Fujii, 2006, pp.70-74; Otmazgin, 2012, p.43). Examples of Japanese public diplomacy initiatives included allowing Korean and Taiwanese students to study in universities in Japan as well as to legalize their marriages with Japanese nationals. In addition, the introduction of Japanese language was regarded as an essential mechanism for fostering the integration of colonies.

In 1920, the Department of Information was established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), initiating various cultural exchange programs with China. The programs’ objective was to diffuse the increasing anti-Japanese sentiments among young Chinese intellectuals (Ogawa, 2009, p.273). In addition, in 1923, the China Cultural Affairs Bureau within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was created. In the 1920s and the 1930s, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry’s Cultural Affairs Division and the Bureau for Cultural Affairs (*Bunka Jigyobu*), it assisted a variety of Sino-Japanese associations and programs for student exchange (Otmazgin, 2012, p.44). As Goodman (1991, pp.4-5) emphasizes, about 6,000 students from China and Manchuria were enabled to study Japan, with the purpose of nurturing the local elite’s sympathies to Japan. Other cultural initiatives in China also consisted of the provision of Japanese patronage for Chinese students as well as sponsorship for Japanese culture-related events.

In parallel with these activities, Japanese cultural promotion was exercised by particular individuals, who believed that “it was a way to ‘save’ China from the West’s exploitative control” (Otmazgin, 2012, p.44). The Japanese sinologist Aizan Yamaji, focused on the introduction of Japanese experience of advancement, is a case in point. However, as Otmazgin (2012, p.44) highlights, the efforts of such individuals were “cynically co-opted by the government and turned into instruments of the Japanese imperialism in China”.

In Southeast Asia, the character of Japanese cultural policy was again a propaganda-oriented, implemented with the aim to reinforce control and attract local supporters. As Otmazgin (2012, pp.44-45) indicates, “part of the propaganda campaign included the recruitment, mobilization, and utilization of thousands of Japanese *bunkajin* (‘men of culture’), who were organized into specific “propaganda units’ (*senden butai* or *sendenhan*) with the mission of using the latest media technology (printed media and radio broadcasts) to solicit the support of local elites”.

By the end of World War II, Japan's cultural policy also consisted of particular propaganda initiatives, conducted against foreign influences. According to Otmazgin (2012, p.45), during the war Japan and China "carried out full-fledged propaganda wars against each other, trying to show that they can save Asia from the danger of American/Japanese imperialism". For instance, Japan prohibited all English newspapers and movies as well as launched a campaign focused on the harmful effects of the Coca-Cola drink. It also did not allow the teaching of English language in Indonesia, Burma, Malaya, and Singapore.

3.3 Japan's Kind Diplomacy after World War II

There have been a variety of cultural promotion policies and initiatives of Japan in the past (both unconsciously and consciously) as well as at present (consciously, purposefully) for projecting the desired image abroad, which could lead to this conceptualization of Japanese public diplomacy as "kind diplomacy". Although this approach was formulated mainly after World War II, examples of Japan's public diplomacy for presenting an image of itself as a friendly and kind country could be traced ever since the 1860s. This was also the period when, according to Ogawa (2009, p.272), Japan conducted some of its first public diplomacy activities as part of its modernization. The creation of the Rokumeikan in 1883 in Tokyo is a case in point. Similarly to its participation in World Expositions and other public relations activities during the Russo-Japanese War at the time, Japan's primary objective was the revision of the "unequal treaties"¹⁾, signed with the United States and European great powers, and therefore, it was focused on promoting itself "both at home and overseas not as a colony of the great powers, but as a modernized nation with a proper culture" (Watanabe, 2018). Through various policies including the introduction of Western legal systems and cultures, Japan's objective was also to become recognized as a "civilized" nation by the West. However, with the establishment of Rokumeikan, Japan was not only demonstrating its modernization, but it also unconsciously initiated a new trend, which further developed in the future. Through the welcoming of foreign guests and holding Westernized balls at the Rokumeikan, it projected an image of itself as *omotenashi* (hospitable), and friendly country, "worthy of forming an equal relationship with the United States and the European great powers" (Watanabe, 2018).

After World War II, Japan's kind diplomacy turned into a new dimension. In the 1950s and the early 1960s, it was conducted with the aim of altering "the prewar image of Japan as a militaristic country into a new image of Japan as a peace-loving democracy" (Ogoura, 2009, p.46). As Kaneko (2007, p.187) highlights, Japanese government began a novel strategy, focused on the projection of a harmonious and cultural profile of the country. Its cultural policies went hand in hand with Article 9 of Japan's Constitution from 1947, declaring:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes (Article 9, The Constitution of Japan).

(Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 1947)

At the time, the development of a new identity as a kind, friendly and peaceful country became a priority for Japan. For instance, the peaceful nature of the country was presented through pamphlets and brochures featuring cultural elements like cherry blossoms and

Mount-Fuji. In addition, tea ceremony and other traditional practices, reflecting Japanese values like respect, modesty, tranquility, and serenity, were implemented as key instruments of kind diplomacy. For example, the tea school Urasenke's *iemoto*²⁾ made various contributions as a Japanese cultural emissary abroad. In 1950, Hōunsai went on a four-month "tea ceremony mission" in the United States, with the purpose of presenting Japanese culture and transforming the American's perceptions of Japanese people (Surak, 2011, p.203). By 1960, he succeeded in opening tea chapters in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Mexico as well. He also gave "tea lectures and demonstrations in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines; organized a tea demonstration at the Brussels World Fair; donated a tea room to the Boston Art Museum; hosted tea for the Shah of Iran's visit to Japan; and represented Japan at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the hundredth anniversary celebration of US-Japan Friendship in Washington DC" (Surak, 2011, p.203). This tendency of carrying out kind diplomacy through initiatives related to the tea ceremony practice continued further in the following years.

After Japan restored its sovereignty in 1952, its cultural promotion initiatives were mainly conducted in Europe and North America through the means of intellectual and cultural exchange as well as cultural cooperation, interaction and dialogue. These "soft" terms were seen as "neutralized, friendly way to actively disseminate Japanese culture abroad as it implied that there was a multidirectionality of cultural flows where Japan was also at the receiving end" (Otmazgin, 2012, p.47).

Meanwhile, Japan's economic growth led to some anti-Japanese sentiments worldwide. As Ogawa (2009, p.275) emphasizes, "suffering from a series of Japan-U.S. frictions over trade imbalances and the Nixon Shocks, the Japanese diplomatic community began to recognize combating misunderstanding about Japanese culture and behavior as an urgent diplomatic agenda". In response to these issues, in 1972 the Japan Foundation, a prominent organization for cultural promotion, was created. Its purpose was the strengthening of Japanese relations with the United States and the conduct of cultural exchanges between the two countries (Kokusaikōryūkin 30-nen hensan-shitsu, 2006, pp.20-21). Operating under the supervision of the Cultural Division of MOFA, its goals were also to enhance Japan's relations with Southeast Asia through a variety of cultural initiatives, and thus to combat the anti-Japanese sentiments on the continent. Ever since its development, the Japan Foundation has been a crucial instrument of Japan's kind diplomacy. In cooperation with Japanese and foreign public and private actors, it has been implementing people-to-people exchanges and cultural activities, demonstrating the kind nature and hospitality of Japanese society as well as Japan's philosophies and traditions. Examples of its first initiatives in the 1970s include "exchange among prominent academic and cultural leaders, promotion of Japanese language education and Japanese studies overseas, concerts, exhibitions, Japanese film and television showings, and publications" (Ogawa, 2009, p.275).

The next stage of Japan's kind diplomacy came in the 1980s to the early 1990s, when "harmony with the international community was a keyword of Japanese diplomacy" as the "enormous trade imbalance with Japan caused friction not only in the economic field but also in social and cultural areas" (Ogawa, 2009, p.276). In response, in 1989 the Japanese Trust Fund for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage was created within

UNESCO, with the aim to demonstrate an image of a kind country, willing to contribute to the world.

In the late 1980s, to further strengthen its image of a responsible international partner and increase its contributions, Japanese public diplomacy was regarded as “one of the ‘three pillars’ of Japan’s foreign policy – the first being the country’s contributions to peacekeeping operations or similar activities and the second being its official development assistance or economic aid policies” (Ogoura, 2009, p.48). In line with this, the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) was established in 1991. Its mission was to nurture collaboration between Japan and the United States, with the “goal of fulfilling shared global responsibilities and contributing to improvements in the world’s welfare, and to enhance dialogue and interchange between Japanese and U.S. citizens” (Ogawa, 2009, p.277).

In the 1990s, Japan’s “soft” public diplomacy approach, projecting an image of a kind and friendly country, was maintained with the conduct of new cultural exchange initiatives in Asia. Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama’s Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative in 1995 is a case in point. The initiative’s objective was to overcome “unsettled disputes on Japanese colonization and military occupations from 1910 to 1945” (Ogawa, 2009, p.278). It consisted of the promotion of “support for historical research in modern-era relations between Japan and its neighboring Asian countries and rapid expansion of exchange with those countries” (Ogawa, 2009, p.278).

In 1998, the implemented by Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi kind diplomacy continued to put emphasis on Japan’s hospitable and friendly spirit. Such example is the co-hosting of the FIFA World Cup with the Republic of Korea (ROK)’s President Kim Dae Jung in 2002. The year was designated as the Year of Japan-ROK National Exchange and included the nurturing of exchange in areas like culture, tourism, sports and regional exchange. Following this soft approach, the perceptions of Japan “dramatically improved” and the Japan-ROK relations became “relatively stable, based upon a huge number of people-to-people exchanges in spite of a series of later diplomatic turbulence” (Ogawa, 2009, p.278).

In the 1990s, Japanese kind diplomacy was also applied in response to the rise of “nationalism” in China and South Korea, which was “sometimes directed at Japan because of these countries’ wartime or colonial experiences with Japan” (Ogoura, 2009, p.51). In South Korea, with the aim of projecting Japan’s friendly image and a sense of belonging to a same community with Korean citizens, some voluntary organizations cooperated with the government and the Japan Foundation on the conduct of *Matsuri* (festival), thus providing Korean and Japanese people with a shared experience. In addition, in China a Heart-to-Heart network, consisting of small information centers, was established by the Japan Foundation. The network’s function was the promotion of Japanese modern culture to young Chinese.

In 2001, as a result of Japan’s Central Government Reform, the promotion of cultural exchange was divided between MOFA, the Japan Foundation and the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Following this, in 2003, the Japan Foundation became an independent administrative institution, functioning no more as a special legal entity supervised by MOFA. In addition, in 2004 the MOFA’s Public Diplomacy Department was established in parallel with the Council on the Promotion of Cultural Diplomacy. At the time, Japan began to put a greater

emphasis on its soft public diplomacy approach. For instance, in 2003 the growing significance of Japanese culture as "soft power" in diplomacy was highlighted by the Japan Foundation's annual report (The Japan Foundation, 2003a). The report also pointed out the prospects of Japanese culture to project a sympathetic national image, which goes in line with its diplomatic goals. In parallel with this, the Council on the Promotion of Cultural Diplomacy introduced certain recommendations for Japan's future cultural promotion strategies, stating that "Japan should try to actively cultivate a 'Japanese animation generation' across the globe, seizing interest in the Japanese language and pop culture as an opportunity to encourage further interest in other aspects of diverse Japanese culture" (Ogawa, 2009, pp.278-279). Consequently, new directions for implementation of Japanese kind diplomacy were stimulated. The "Cool Japan" strategy initiative, launched in 2014 by the Japanese government, is a case in point.

In 2002, following the rising popularity of Japanese culture worldwide, Douglas McGray emphasized the growing global cultural influence of Japan and its prospects of becoming a cultural superpower (McGray, 2002, p.44). McGray coined the term "Gross national Cool" pointing out that Japan "has become one of a handful of perfect globalization nations (along with the United States)" and its great cultural presence "has created a mighty engine of national cool" (McGray, 2002, p.53). As a result, the Cool Japan Strategy, conducted by the Cabinet Office together with various public and private actors, was created to promote a rich palette of Japanese cultural aspects "from subcultural products, such as manga and Japanimation, to traditional cultural heritage" (Cool Japan Movement Promotion Council, 2014, p.2). The strategy's initial objective – to win "the sympathy of other countries toward Japan" was later transformed into "Japan as a country that provides creative solutions to the world's challenges" due to misunderstandings of the "Cool Japan" notion within the communities in each cultural genre (Cool Japan Movement Promotion Council, 2014, pp.2-5).

The presentation of Japanese culture through the Cool Japan Strategy serves as another example of Japanese kind diplomacy for promoting the country's friendly and kind nature. This policy has been much supported by Japan's domestic audience. As Otmazgin (2012, p.51) points out, "intellectual and popular discourse in Japan is generally supportive of the idea that the export of culture can play a diplomatic role in healing the wounds inflicted by Japan's imperialistic past by presenting a friendlier image of the country abroad". In addition, there has been a mutual consensus among Japanese political elite on the significance of Japanese cultural promotion. According to Iwabuchi (2002, p.201), liberals consider the export of modern culture as means of projecting Japan's "friendlier" side, while conservatives believe that the achievements abroad could be seen as a source of national pride.

This soft public diplomacy policy presenting Japan as a "cool" country has been particularly focused on Asian countries and has proven itself as highly contributory to the projection of Japan's positive image and the transformation of the anti-Japanese sentiments in the region. As Otmazgin (2012, p.51) highlights, the "acceptance of Japan's popular culture in Asia is especially surprising given Japan's imperialistic past" and even though Asian people "may still remember Japan's past wrongdoings and might still be critical of the Japanese government's treatment of its wartime history, they continue to buy animation, comics, and

J-pop albums in the tens of millions and routinely watch Japanese-made television programs and movies”.

It should be emphasized that this kind diplomacy approach manifested through the Cool Japan initiative, did not initiated purposefully as a government strategy, but instead, occurred as a reaction to the growing popularity of Japanese culture worldwide. Nevertheless, the Japanese government has been “increasingly aware of the possibilities present in promoting its culture and has gradually changed its attitude toward the constructive role that culture can play for Japan” (Otmazgin, 2012, p.53). With the support of various domestic cultural promotion actors, it has been exploring innovative activities for introducing Japanese culture and enhancing Japan’s positive image around the world, especially in Asia. At the same time, the success of the Cool Japan policy abroad has been nurturing the development of new and creative kind diplomacy initiatives for further strengthening Japan’s cultural presence abroad.

3.4 Japan’s Kind Diplomacy at Present

a. Communicating Japanese Culture through Websites and Social Media

During Prime Minister Shinzō Abe’s second term (2012-2020), the government has begun to put a greater emphasis on the introduction of Japan’s kind and friendly image through public diplomacy. Diverse cultural promotion initiatives started to be implemented especially via websites and social media. Such example is the “JapanGov” portal site, reflecting various Japanese government activities. To convey the desired profile of Japan, the website publishes magazines, books and publications including “*We are Tomodachi*”, “*KIZUNA*”, “*JapanGov News*”, and the “*Japan Library*” platform. For instance, the “*KIZUNA*” official magazine introduces a broad range of topics concerning Japan in the fields of policy and diplomacy, sustainability, science and technology, resilience, regional strength, health and welfare, life and culture, as well as portraits of Japan. It should be emphasized that the magazine’s title – “*KIZUNA*”, meaning “the enduring bonds between people – close relationships forged through mutual trust and support”, also goes hand in hand with Japan’s kind diplomacy message (JapanGov, n.d.a). Initially, the term *kizuna* described the rope, used for tying domestic animals like horses and dogs. However, the concept has evolved in the years and now is applied in a broader sense of human connections. Through this magazine title, Japanese government sends a message that “the *kizuna* cultivated among the countries of the world has the power to deepen cooperation for a better future” (JapanGov, n.d.a). Highlighting Japan’s friendliness, contributions and reliability as an international partner, the magazine aims to “provide opportunities for Japan and the rest of the world to connect and build strong *kizuna*” (JapanGov, n.d.a).

The “*We are Tomodachi*” magazine also plays an essential role in portraying the kind and friendly nature of Japan. It presents articles on Japanese culture, particular regions, major events in the country, the contributions and initiatives of certain Japanese individuals around the world, active foreigners in Japan, and other features. It also shares Japan’s innovative ideas for adapting to the New Normal and overcoming difficulties amid the COVID-19 crisis. Issued in English, French and Spanish languages, the magazine tries to “strike a balance between ‘what the government wants to convey’ and ‘fun read’” as well as

to be perceived as "easy to understand and easy to use for explanation" (Yamamura et al., 2017, p.15). "*We are Tomodachi*" is available in E-Book, PDF and Kindle formats. It was also distributed on a hard copy to media and foreign government and organizations members during Prime Minister Abe's visits abroad.

The "*Japan Library*" platform of "JapanGov" portal site contributes to the projection of the positive image of Japan by sharing a rich collection of remarkable Japanese works translated into foreign languages. The books cover aspects of Japan's culture as well as its politics, foreign policy, social studies, philosophy, and science and technology. For example, the titles include "*Advances in Cancer Immunotherapy*" by Honjo Tasuku, "*Japanese Art in Perspective*" and "*The Japanese Sense of Beauty*" by Takashina Shūji, "*The Remarkable History of Japan-US Relations*" by Kosaka Masataka, "*Friendship across the Seas*" by Agawa Naoyuki", and others. The "*Japan Library*"'s goal has been to "inspire and spark new intellectual dialogues that transcend nations and societies" (JapanGov, n.d.b).

Besides the Japanese government's "JapanGov" portal site, there has been a rich palette of websites promoting Japan's cultural aspects at present, launched by MOFA and other public and private actors. Such examples include the "*Japan Up Close*" platform, managed by MOFA in collaboration with individuals and organizations, the Cabinet Public Relations Office's "*Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet*" website, the MOFA's "*Web Japan*" website, introducing Japanese culture, history, nature, society, and tourism, the MOFA's "*Discuss Japan – Japan Foreign Policy Forum*", offering publications by Japanese experts in the spheres of politics, culture, economics, science and technology, as well as many other websites communicating the charms of Japanese regions, nature, and cultural heritages.

Social media has been another essential instrument for Japanese kind diplomacy since Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's second term. Such examples are the launched in 2011 Prime Minister's Office of Japan (PMO) English-language Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as the created in 2014 JapanGov Facebook page. In addition, in 2013, a PMO YouTube account was also established to "broadcast Prime Minister Abe's speeches globally" and to "inform the world about Japan's charm and international contributions" (Yamamura et al., 2017, p.12). With the growing popularity of social media in the era of globalization, Japan has been able to project its desired image through a broad range of cultural aspects – from cultural heritage to specific values, thus contributing to the increase of its kind and soft power worldwide.

b. Main Japanese Kind Diplomacy Actors at Present

At present, there are two major actors of Japanese public diplomacy – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) and the Japan Foundation. Both autonomously and in cooperation with other public and private actors, the two institutions have been implementing a rich variety of cultural initiatives abroad, presenting Japan as a kind, hospitable, and friendly country.

MOFA's Public Diplomacy Department actively introduces information on Japan and its foreign policy, as well as engages with activities promoting Japanese culture, language education, inbound tourism, and people-to-people exchange. Its projects' goals include "creating positive images of Japan abroad, boosting the overall Japanese brand, and encouraging

a deeper understanding of Japan, as well as fostering the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan and increasing the number of foreign visitors to Japan” (MOFA, 2020, p.302). The “Cultural Projects of Diplomatic Missions Overseas”, held by diplomatic missions abroad, is a case in point. The initiative presents specific features embodied in Japan’s kind diplomacy – harmony and serenity. These elements are communicated through initiatives featuring traditional arts like tea ceremony and flower arrangement, as well as aspects of contemporary culture such as anime and manga. Similarly, under the “Japan Brand Program”, MOFA sends overseas experts in diverse spheres, to “share Japan’s outstanding cultural assets, which represent a culmination of Japan’s experience and wisdom, as well as to establish a national brand and give Japan a stronger presence in the world” (MOFA, 2020, pp.302-303). Other kind diplomacy initiatives of MOFA’s diplomatic missions include workshops on origami, Japanese music performances, film screenings, martial arts demonstrations, Japanese speech contests, traditional craft exhibitions, as well as activities introducing Japanese life style, food culture, and pop culture.

To foster mutual friendship with people from various countries and their better understanding of Japan, MOFA has been carrying out a variety of activities promoting Japan studies. Such examples include “provision of information on studying in Japan through Japan’s diplomatic missions overseas; building alumni networks of the foreign nationals who have studied in Japan; cooperation with the JET Programme which invites young people from abroad to the local governments in Japan, exchange programs for youth and adults from Asia, North America and Europe; sending visiting professors to universities and research institutions overseas; and grant program for research activities” (MOFA, 2017). In parallel with this, to promote people-to-people exchange, MOFA also conducts various initiatives in the sphere of education and sport. Through its projects, it invites nationals from abroad, who have considerable influence on forming public opinion and the policymaking process, as well as those likely to play a leading role in diverse spheres.

The second major Japanese kind diplomacy actor is the Japan Foundation. From its establishment in 1972 until 2003, the Japan Foundation functioned as a special legal entity supervised by MOFA. In 2003, it became an independent administrative institution, recognized as “Japan’s only institution dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international cultural exchange programs throughout the world” (The Japan Foundation, n.d.b). Through its activities, the Japan Foundation’s goals are to

deepen understanding of Japan in foreign countries, promote mutual international understanding, contribute to the world in culture and other fields, create good international environment and contribute to the maintenance and development of harmonious foreign relations of Japan (Article 3, The Japan Foundation Independent Administrative Institution Law).

(The Japan Foundation, 2003b)

To plan and carry out its projects worldwide, the Foundation has established a broad global network of 25 overseas offices in 24 countries. In addition, it has headquarters in Tokyo, together with a Kyoto Office and two Japanese-language institutes located in the Kansai region and Urawa city.

Through a rich palette of initiatives in three categories – art and cultural exchange (fine

arts, performing arts, literature, films, food, and fashion), Japanese-language education overseas, and Japanese studies and intellectual exchange, the Japan Foundation plays a crucial role in the projection of the desired image of Japan. Its activities communicate various Japanese values and cultural elements like harmony, hospitality and kindness, characteristic of Japan's kind diplomacy. The Japan Foundation Asia Center's "WA Project: Toward Interactive Asia through Fusion and Harmony" is a case in point. Announced by Prime Minister Abe in 2013, the project offers assistance for Japanese-language education, as well as for interactive arts and cultural exchange projects. Another example is the conduct of demonstrations, seminars and workshops of Japanese tea ceremony, flower arrangement and other traditional practices abroad, reflecting Japanese values like respect, serenity and the concepts of *wa* (harmony) and *omotenashi* (hospitality).

Apart from MOFA and the Japan Foundation, there have been various other Japanese public and private actors contributing to the conduct of Japanese kind diplomacy at present. Such include the Cabinet Office and its Cool Japan Strategy, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), the Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and other organizations and NGOs. As Mori (2006, p.48) emphasizes, "there is no expert who really understands and grasps the big picture of Japan's overall public diplomacy efforts". This is to a great extent due to the lack of integration between the separate public and private actors. As Otmazgin (2012, p.52) points out, like in "other fields when different governmental ministries and agencies are involved, there is routine competition over resources, overlapping responsibilities, lack of coordination, and struggle over prestige". Despite this issue, all these institutions have been implementing a variety of kind diplomacy initiatives, highly significant for the better understanding of Japan abroad, the construct of friendly and prosperous international relations and the projection and maintenance of Japanese positive image.

c. Kind Diplomacy on Domestic Level: the City of Kyoto

Besides the main and other public and private actors emphasized earlier, another noticeable example of Japanese kind diplomacy has been the city of Kyoto. A former capital of Japan for over a thousand years, Kyoto has been a vital cultural center of the country, combining aspects of both Japanese historical and contemporary cultural aspects. Considered as a city of "international tourism, of arts and cultures, of history, of environmentally advanced, of international academia and international business center", Kyoto introduces Japanese culture to both domestic and foreign audience (City of Kyoto, 2014, p.3). Its kind diplomacy policy is centered on the concept of hospitality as a "city of 'Omotenashi'", that "fascinates the world" (City of Kyoto, 2014, p.3). In line with this, in 2008, the city launched the "Kyoto City Internationalization Promotion Plan" focused on presenting Kyoto's charms through "warm *omotenashi* or hospitality" (City of Kyoto, 2014, p.3). The plan's objectives include "creating a society where citizens can lead a rich and comfortable life and visitors can feel satisfaction", "developing Kyoto as a 'Global City'", and "contributing to the realization of a peaceful and sustainable world" (City of Kyoto, 2014, p.3).

According to the "Kyoto City Internationalization Promotion Plan", the city puts a lot of

effort to improve its appearance as a city of international tourism and hospitality, a city of rich history, culture and arts, a leading eco-friendly city, an international business center, and an international academic city. It implements various cultural promotion initiatives in order to communicate the spirit of *omotenashi*. For instance, Kyoto City works to increase the knowledge of its elementary and junior high school students about the idea of *omotenashi* (hospitality) by designating such students as Junior Visit Kyoto Ambassadors. Other examples of its activities include the Visit Kyoto Ambassador Project, promotion of Kyoto's culture via its citizens, and dissemination and collection of information about Kyoto in cooperation with MOFA, the Japan Foundation and other public organizations, as well as through domestic and international mass media, Japanese companies abroad, and international students previously studied or currently studying in Kyoto. In addition, Kyoto City carries out exchange programs linked to friendship cities (sister cities and partner cities), encourages international exchange and cooperation as a historical and environmentally advanced city, as well as academic exchange with colleges, universities and other institutions abroad.

Through its initiatives conducted both autonomously and in collaboration with domestic and international public institutions, as well as together with citizens and private groups, the city of Kyoto has been an essential Japanese kind diplomacy actor. It not only works to project the desired image of Japan by communicating its warmheartedness, hospitality and friendliness, but also contributes to the world peace and harmony, mutual understanding, and prosperous international relations, fosters international cooperation and exchange on environmental issues, and shares with the world Kyoto's specific measures, particularly those related to disaster prevention.

4. Concluding Remarks and Future Challenges

As was indicated previously, with a focus on particular Japanese values and virtues such as the notions of *wa* (harmony), *omotenashi* (hospitality), *omoiyari* (consideration), and other specific cultural elements, Japan has been carrying out a soft public diplomacy approach, characterized in this study as "kind diplomacy". This approach was seen in its cultural promotion strategies, cultural aspects and desired image presented abroad. In contrast with various countries like China and Russia, whose cultural policies are labeled to represent the notion of "sharp power", Japan has been particularly centered on the attraction of soft power. Through the implementation of kind diplomacy strategies and initiatives, Japan's goals have been to project its positive profile, foster mutual understanding and achieve government's diplomatic goals.

As was demonstrated in this study, Japan's kind diplomacy did not always exist in the past. With a few exceptions listed earlier, by the end of World War II Japanese cultural promotion was mostly propaganda-oriented, instead of representing the nature of public diplomacy. It was conducted as an instrument for an overseas expansion in Asia. In line with this, propaganda-oriented cultural initiatives were held by Japan with the aim of advancing the assimilation of its colonies, winning the hearts and minds of local elites in China, Taiwan and Korea sympathetic to Japan, diffusing the increasing anti-Japanese

sentiments among young Chinese intellectuals, and reinforcing control and attracting local supporters in Southeast Asia. Propaganda was carried out against foreign influences as well.

This propaganda-oriented policy changed after the end of World War II and Japan's objectives gradually evolved in diverse dimensions. Various kind diplomacy strategies and initiatives began to be implemented with the purpose to transform the prewar perceptions of Japan as a militaristic country, combat misunderstandings about Japanese culture and anti-Japanese sentiments worldwide resulting from its economic growth, further strengthen Japan's international relations and profile of a responsible international partner willing to contribute to the world, as well as to project an image of a friendly, harmonious, kind, and peace-loving country.

At present, Japan continues to introduce its kind and friendly image through further expanding its public diplomacy initiatives in new directions. Such examples have been the portal sites and social media like the "JapanGov", launched by the government, as well as other websites related to Japanese cultural promotion, managed by public and private institutions. MOFA, the Japan Foundation, various other institutions, and the city of Kyoto have been also highly essential kind diplomacy actors, introducing Japanese culture both on domestic and international level. Through a full spectrum of activities, communicating Japanese hospitality, kindness, respect, harmony, consideration, and serenity, these actors have been working to foster mutual friendship, prosperous relations, and understanding between Japan and foreign countries, to further strengthen Japanese soft power and cultural presence abroad, to contribute to the world peace and harmony, as well as to project the desired image of Japan.

At the same time, there have been certain points and limitations that need to be addressed in order to improve the efficiency of Japan's kind diplomacy in the future. First, despite the variety of cultural promotion activities and strategies, embodying and highlighting the kind and soft nature of Japanese public diplomacy, this "kind diplomacy" policy has not been actualized by the government yet. Instead, more emphasis has been put on Japan's image as a cool country through the Cool Japan initiative. However, as Watanabe (2018) points out, "as time passes, foreign culture comes to seem ordinary and people tire of it" and "Cool Japan and the rest of the vogue for Japan will one day reach its sell-by date". Such example in the past is the idea of Japonisme, which "lost its spark not just because of Japan's international status, but because effort wasn't made to continue and develop it" (Watanabe, 2018). Therefore, to maintain and enrich its cultural presence abroad, Japan should reconsider the focus of its public diplomacy.

It would be vital for Japan to concentrate on the concept of kind diplomacy as a major public diplomacy policy in the future, highlighting the uniqueness of its soft power worldwide. Communicating specific values, characteristics, and features, where Japan has a relative advantage over other countries, this approach has much potential in nurturing the global interest towards the country in a long-term perspective.

Additionally, to further enhance the efficiency of its kind diplomacy policy, it would be essential for Japan to conduct research on the current perceptions of Japanese culture and promoted values abroad. It should also work on the establishment of a "story-telling that

explains how much important meaning cultural contents and activities have” and thus “building a basic foundation for them to be accepted” (Watanabe, 2018). At present, such example is the “Nihon Gatari-Sho” project of the Intellectual Property headquarters of the Cabinet Office. The initiative introduces a model exploring “Cool Japan” from the viewpoint of “Japan Concepts”, which “can be referred to when compiling stories and contexts that will benefit the attractive conveyance and deployments of products, services, tourist areas, local cultures and so on” (Cabinet Office, 2018). In parallel with the “Nihon Gatari-Sho” project, to increase the appreciation and understanding of Japan worldwide, Japan should expand its activities presenting the background and context of its values and cultural aspects in diverse fields. There should be more materials on these subjects in foreign languages as well.

Finally, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the vulnerability of the cultural sector and the face-to-face cultural experience mechanisms in Japan and worldwide. It has brought many challenges to Japanese cultural promotion both domestically and overseas. In addition, following the unpredictable direction of the pandemic and the suffering global economy, this situation might continue for a certain period or reoccur again in the future in cases of other pandemics or disasters. For the maintenance of Japan’s presence abroad, new approaches for Japanese public diplomacy would be crucial. This includes the establishment of novel and sustainable mechanisms, providing a remote access to Japanese culture via digital technologies. In particular, Japan should carry out initiatives offering an online experience in real time of diverse cultural spheres. These practices would broaden the opportunities and the scope of people exploring Japan worldwide. They would also introduce new intercultural communication methods between Japan and the world, beneficial to the mutual understanding and the projection of the desired image of the country as a kind, friendly and peaceful democracy with rich history and culture.

Notes

- 1) Defined as “a series of treaties and agreements in which China was forced to concede many of its territorial and sovereignty rights”, the unequal treaties were “negotiated during the 19th and early 20th century between China and foreign imperialist powers, especially Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Russia, and Japan” (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).
- 2) The founder or present headmaster of a certain school of traditional Japanese art.

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(GADJEVA, Nadejda, Starting Researcher, Ritsumeikan University)

「カインド・ディプロマシー」：日本の文化外交政策の概念化

この研究は、世界的に特異なパブリック・ディプロマシーを展開する日本のソフト・パワーと文化外交政策の特徴を明らかにすることを目的とする。特に本稿は、日本の文化促進政策や、日本文化に特有の要素、日本の海外でのイメージ戦略に焦点を当て分析することで、日本のパブリック・ディプロマシーを「カインド・ディプロマシー（思いやり外交）」として新しく概念化することを提案する。

まず、ロシアと中国の「シャープ・パワー」と呼ばれるソフト・パワー政策と日本のソフト・パワー政策を比較する。本稿では日本のパブリック・ディプロマシーの特徴を明らかにし、それらを「カインド・ディプロマシー」と定義する。また、第二次大戦の終結まで行われていたプロパガンダとしての日本の文化戦略から、戦後の新しい日本のイメージを世界に伝えるためのパブリック・ディプロマシー戦略への変遷を分析する。そして、今日までのカインド・ディプロマシーとしてのさまざまな政策や活動、新しい文化政策の目標、海外で促進されてきた日本文化の特徴や特有の要素について検討する。加えて、日本の重要なカインド・ディプロマシーの主体としての外務省や、国際交流基金、京都市といった特定の日本の機関の貢献についても検証する。最後に、日本のカインド・ディプロマシーの将来的な挑戦に着目し、より効果的な政策のための提案を行う。

(ガジェヴァ・ナデジュダ、立命館大学初任研究員)