

We Are *Tomodachi*

Japan and Russia Edition 2017



Feature: Eight-Point Cooperation Plan Bears Fruit



The Government of Japan

Moments of Prime Minister Abe and President Putin



Held a summit meeting with Russian Federation President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin in Prime Minister Abe's home constituency, Nagato, Yamaguchi Prefecture. There, he treated the Russian President as a guest at a traditional hot springs resort. (December 2016)

Attended the Japan-Russia Business Dialogue held in Tokyo. Prime Minister Abe spoke about the outcomes of the eight-point cooperation plan through which more than 60 projects have come to fruition, and called for cooperation for the stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. (December 2016)



Visited Moscow, Russia to attend a Japan-Russia Summit Meeting. Both leaders openly discussed a wide range of subjects including the issue of concluding a peace treaty and various international affairs. (April 2017)



Held a bilateral summit with President Putin, their 18th such meeting, on the occasion of the G20 Hamburg Summit. (July 2017)

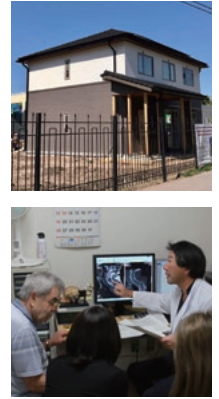
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Cover: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is joined by Former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori (left) and Olympic judo gold medalist Yasuhiro Yamashita (right) in welcoming H. E. Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, President of the Russian Federation, at Tokyo's world-renowned Kodokan Judo Institute following the two leaders' summit meeting at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (December 2016)

"We Are *Tomodachi*" is a magazine published with the aim of further deepening people's understanding of the initiatives of the Government of Japan and the charms of Japan. *Tomodachi* means "friend" in Japanese, and the magazine's title expresses that Japan is a friend of the countries of the world—one that will cooperate and grow together with them.

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Feature: Eight-Point Cooperation Plan Bears Fruit



INNOPROM, one of Russia's largest industrial trade fairs, was held in Ekaterinburg from July 10 to 13. The event was a major success, with over 600 companies from 20 different countries exhibiting. Japan served as the partner country for INNOPROM 2017, working together with Russia to bring the event to a new level. President Putin, expressed his gratitude for Japan's partner-country role at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Abe during his visit to Japan in December 2016. To meet the high expectations, Japanese government and business worked together for preparing for



Russia's largest industrial trade fair, focused on subjects such as machinery, parts, IT, energy and urban development, is held every year in July. The number of visitors reached 50,194 over four days (based on the organizer's reporting number of visitor badges issued).



President Putin toured the Japan Pavilion. Kawasaki Heavy Industries Chairman Shigeru Murayama explains his company's motorcycle technology and other subjects.



Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov visited the Japanese food promotion booth and tried sashimi.

Message from Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and Minister for Economic Cooperation with Russia

The eight-point cooperation plan, of which I am in charge, was first proposed by Prime Minister Abe to President Putin during the summit in Sochi in May 2016.

The plan includes cooperation on topics such as extending healthy life expectancies of Russian people by utilizing Japanese knowledge in pediatric and health promotion, preventive medicine and rehabilitation. It also includes cooperation to improve the quality of life in Russian cities by alleviating traffic and renovating deteriorating infrastructure.

In other respects as well, this plan includes exchanges between people and between regions, productivity improvement, cooperation between small businesses, and collaboration in cutting-edge technology, energy, and other fields by making use of Japanese and Russian strengths in each field, and the Japanese and Russian people will appreciate and benefit from the fruit of our cooperation.

We have seen some concrete results and progress thanks to the efforts of Japanese and Russian people concerned. Under the cooperation plan, 80 documents between the two governments' authorities or among businesses were signed during President Putin's visit to Japan in December 2016, along with another 28 during Prime Minister Abe's visit to Moscow in April 2017.

These memoranda have been steadily developing into actual contracts, such as investment in a major Russian pharmaceutical company by a Japanese corporation, financing of the Yamal LNG project, lifting an import ban on heat-treated meat, and reaching agreement in principle in negotiations for amendment of the Tax Convention.

Thus, economic relations between Japan and Russia are being profoundly strengthened by these developments taking place under the firm and like-minded trust between Prime Minister Abe and President Putin. As the minister in charge, I commit to devoting myself to the advancement of true partnership between our two nations, by continuing to create virtuous cycles in economy and politics through the realization of the cooperation plan.

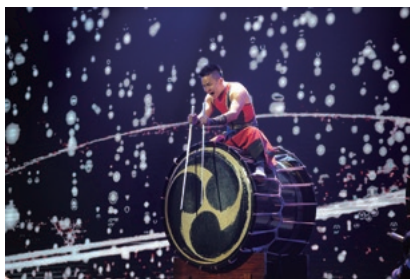


Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and Minister for Economic Cooperation with Russia

the exhibition. About 170 Japanese businesses and organizations participated in the “Japan Pavilion,” the second largest number of participants following the host country's. In addition, the Japan-Russia Industrial Forum was held under the theme of “Japanese-Russian Cooperation for Industrial Optimization,” in which leaders of Japanese and Russian industries emphasized the importance of collaboration. Many Japanese and Russian industry executives also joined panels on topics such as small businesses and productivity growth, where they enjoyed a lively exchange of opinions and ideas.



Leaders of Japanese and Russian industries discussed the present state and future development of economic cooperation between the two countries at the Japan-Russia Industrial Forum.



A performance of traditional Japanese *taiko* drums added excitement to the ceremony.



Various panels were held. One of them explored possibilities for cooperation between Japanese and Russian small businesses.

Feature: Eight-Point Cooperation Plan Bears Fruit



Heavy traffic in the city center is one of the pressing issues that need to be resolved in Vladivostok.

Photo: Lonely Planet Images/Getty Images

Envisioning a New Future for Russian Cities

One of the items in the eight-point cooperation plan is “developing comfortable and clean cities easy to reside and live in.” Japan, having Tokyo and many other metropolitan cities, has faced a diverse array of issues related to urban development. Russia, similarly, has been facing these issues as well. By utilizing its experience and expertise, Japan hopes to help tackle these issues Russia faces today. Under the auspices of both governments, some of the cooperation has already kicked off—a strategic urban development plan is being developed in Vladivostok, and a pilot project is underway in Voronezh.

Vladivostok: Creating Urban Development Strategies Aiming to Cultivate New Industries

Vladivostok is a major metropolitan city, home to the Far Eastern Federal University with over 40,000 students. Recently, the city has been suffering from a decline in population, particularly the young generation. Although the city has a sizable influx of students, it has not been able to retain them post-graduation. The city must offer places to work in order to stop the outflux, thus it is critical to bring in new industries. Japan’s Nikken Sekkei Ltd. is leading the creation of a strategic urban development plan that



Ryuichi Kizumi, of Nikken Sekkei Ltd. Project Development Department (right) and Nikken Sekkei Research Institute Principal Consultant Shigehisa Matsumura, Ph.D. (left).



New Urban Structure in Vladivostok

Concept diagram of new urban structure proposed by Nikken Sekkei Ltd. to Russia’s Agency for Housing Mortgage Lending (AHML) to cultivate new industries. The layout features the dispersed cores.

aims to establish new industries and bolster the city's economic development.

“Research and tourism are the core elements of our plan for bringing in new industries. One of the plans is to create a synergistic effect between the various research institutes at the Far Eastern Federal University and venture businesses. This will lead the business to expand into the existing urban districts, encourage investment from around the world and create new industries and employment opportunities,” explains Nikken Sekkei's Ryuichi Kizumi. As part of the plans to renovate central urban districts and to boost tourism, the cross point of Vladivostok's railway station and the harbor will be redeveloped. Nikken Sekkei's expertise from development of numerous station plazas and bay areas will come into full use.

Another crucial element for efficient revitalization of Vladivostok is the dissolution of traffic jams in the core of the city. For example, Tokyo has over 13 million people yet relatively few traffic jams, thanks to its well-developed urban sub-centers and transportation infrastructure. Nikken Sekkei plans to put their know-how gained in Tokyo to use in Vladivostok, breaking up the single concentration of features into three areas connected by a circular highway (consisting of the existing core around Vladivostok station, a newly

developed area for city and state administrations, and Far Eastern Federal University).

As consultations with Russia continue, a new map for Vladivostok is taking form.

Voronezh: Housing Construction for Convenient and Healthy Living

Meanwhile, a Japanese “smart wellness house” is being built in Voronezh under the supervision of Nice Corporation. Many of the houses built during the Soviet Union era are aging and in need of reconstruction, especially improvements in the insulation. “Smart wellness houses” are houses that have a high degree of insulation and a small range of interior temperatures, making them not only comfortable, but also contributing to the health of occupants by helping to maintain stable blood pressure.

“I believe that once the Russian people get to know the great benefits of the superb technology installed in these wooden houses, such as the efficiency-based energy savings and the contribution to health, the Russian housing situation will change drastically,” opines project manager Kiyotoshi Katsumata.

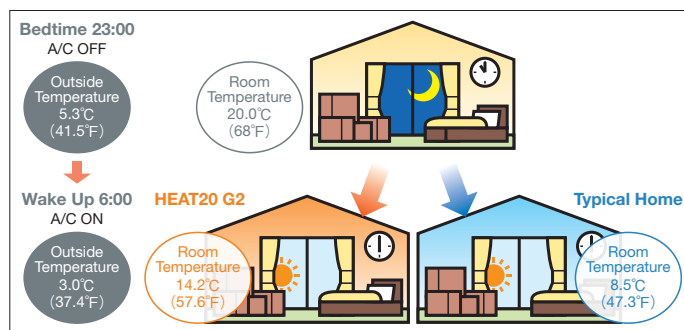
With its expertise in housing construction, Japan will continue to contribute to developing a better and more convenient lifestyle in Russia.



Four Japanese contractors (white helmets) have been dispatched along with the necessary construction materials. A total of eight Japanese and Russian contractors worked on the construction during the short span of three months from laying the foundation to finishing the outer walls. The team worked closely together, and the Russian team members have learned very quickly about the Japanese styles of housing construction.



Project manager Kiyotoshi Katsumata. “With our unique construction method that includes driving pins into pre-cast materials, we are able to provide a more efficient construction process—a much easier and faster process,” Katsumata explains.



HEAT20 G2 Grade

Insulation performance of “HEAT20 G2 Grade” used in the latest smart wellness house in Japan. You can turn off the heat at night and go to sleep, keeping room temperature decrease at a minimum until you wake up in the morning.



A presentation about Japanese-style rehabilitation. Scheduled to open in the near future, the rehabilitation center will be staffed by about five Russian individuals who will be guided by an expert physical therapist assigned from Japan.

Supporting Russian Quality of Life with Japanese Health Care

In 1990, a three-year-old boy on Sakhalin Island received burns to 90% of his body. In response to a request from those on the island, the Japanese government promptly decided to accept the child for treatment without a visa. The child was urgently transported to Sapporo Medical University Hospital where he underwent a skin grafting surgical operation that saved his life.

Dr. Hajime Kamada, chairperson of the Board of Directors for Hokuto Social Medical Corporation which manages Hokuto Hospital in the city of Obihiro in Hokkaido, recalls: “Because the treatment was done at my alma mater, it made me start to feel that I have a close connection with Russia.”

Hokuto Hospital focuses its effort on preventive health care through detecting illnesses at an early stage and preventing the onset of symptoms. In May 2013, Hokuto Hospital established the Hokuto Diagnostic Imaging Center in Vladivostok, Russia’s Far Eastern neighbor to Hokkaido. The center was established to

internationally promote health and longevity throughout society, in line with the Japanese government’s efforts to promote overseas expansion of Japanese medical care. According to Dr. Kamada, “Preventive medical care, such as undergoing examinations and treatment before the appearance of symptoms, was not practiced very widely in the region. By examining the brain, heart, and other areas with magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography and ultrasonography, early detection and treatment of serious illnesses become possible.” Japanese engineers and Russian physicians are permanently stationed at the diagnostic imaging center. In addition, the image data is forwarded to Hokuto Hospital in Japan, allowing doctors from both Japan and Russia to double check the data. Dr. Kamada further explains, “Russian patients also undergo surgery at Hokuto Hospital. Since the progress after surgery can be observed at the diagnostic imaging center, the patients only require a short-term stay in Japan.”

Dr. Kamada also adds, “Our medical activities in Russia, together with our contact with patients and medical staff members, have led to us discovering a need for rehabilitation medical treatment.”

Hokuto Hospital has long been involved in rehabilitation medical treatment. Based on a concept of reconstructing the neural circuit to treat physical function disorders brought about by nerve abnormalities such as a cerebrovascular disease, the hospital combines various techniques to create individual programs for each patient. To bring this method to Russia and contribute to the health of local residents, Dr. Kamada decided to open a rehabilitation center in Vladivostok. The construction of this center is part of the eight-point cooperation plan, and during President Putin’s visit to the Japan-Russia Business Dialogue held in 2016, it was agreed that the enterprise would be carried out as a joint project with the government of the Primorsky Krai province where it is to be located. With the support of the Japanese and Russian governments, construction of the facility is currently in progress. Construction will be



Dr. Hajime Kamada

Born in 1950, and raised in Horokanai-cho in Uryu-gun, Hokkaido. Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Hokuto Social Medical Corporation. Graduated from Sapporo Medical University, after which he pursued a career as a physician. Since founding Hokuto Hospital in 1993, he has played a key role in the hospital’s growth as the region’s leading general hospital.

completed in October 2017 and the center is scheduled to open in early 2018.

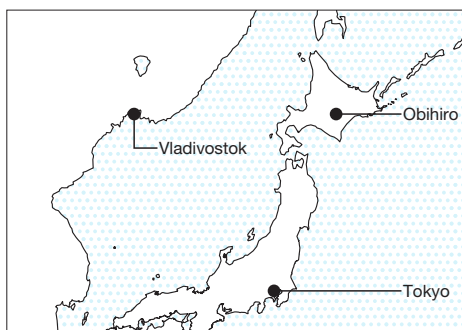
Dr. Kamada states, “Through our series of projects together, I feel that the Russian people trust Japan deeply, and we respond with sincerity. For the future, I hope to continue to contribute through medical care towards improving the Russian people’s quality of life.”



The Hokuto Diagnostic Imaging Center in Vladivostok. In just five months after its opening, the center had over 1,600 patients. This center is Japan and Russia’s first jointly managed medical institution.



Hokuto Hospital receives patients from Russia. Diagnostic imaging allows for an even more accurate analysis of a patient’s condition.



Vladivostok and the city of Obihiro where Hokuto Hospital is located are at nearly the same latitude, and the distance between them is almost the same as that between Tokyo and Obihiro.



Hokuto and Russia’s Far Eastern Federal University have entered a cooperation agreement for scientific study and research in the medical field. The medical interchange between the two institutions has been highly active, with activities and events that include an international conference featuring lectures and research presentations on medical care topics.

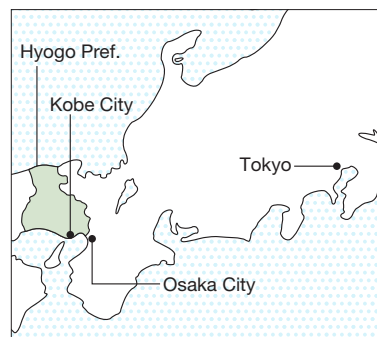


Kobe Gakuin University conducts a unique form of exchange based on subcultures. Lively events for exchange between Japanese and Russian students were held in Moscow in 2015, and in Kobe in 2016.

Encouraging Exchange between Young People for a Better Future

The current generation of university students will build the future, and student exchange between Japan and Russia is increasing. During bilateral talks with President Putin on the occasion of Prime Minister Abe's visit to Moscow in 2013, the two heads of state discussed improving exchange between young people from their countries and vowed to further expand opportunities for such exchange. Exchange between Japanese and Russian students has increased in response, with Japan currently hosting 684 students from Russia (as of May 1, 2016) and having sent 573 to Russia in 2015. The number of exchange agreements between universities in both countries has already reached 381 (as of 2014).

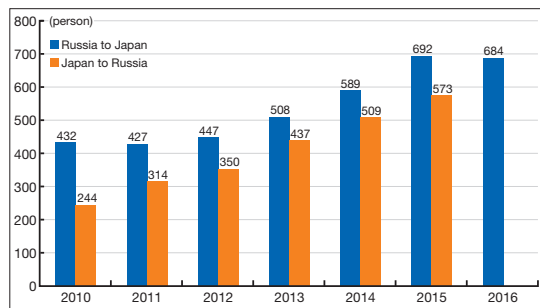
At their meeting in Nagato City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, in December 2016, the two nations' leaders also agreed upon further expanding exchange between universities, among youths, and in sports, along with stimulating regional exchange and using such cooperation to continue to improve relations between Japan and Russia. Prime Minister Abe used the opportunity to propose a "radical expansion of interpersonal exchange" as part of



the eight-point cooperation plan. An exchange project planned for September between the cities of Kobe and Yekaterinburg is part of this effort.

Kobe is an international harbor city located in the Kansai region. Mayor Kizo Hisamoto explains with regard to the current project, "The port town of Kobe has been open to the rest of the world for a long time, actively strengthening international exchange, including exchange of an economic nature. As part of the government's plan to bolster interpersonal exchange between Japan

Changes in the number of exchange students between Russia and Japan



Numbers of exchange students to Japan include those registered at institutions for Japanese language education.

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)

*The number of Japanese exchange students to Russia in 2016 is yet to be totaled.



Four college students involved in the exchange project between Kobe and Yekaterinburg. From left to right: Sakina Naoshima, Yoshizumi Teranishi, Kurumi Sakamoto, and Takuya Ueda. Sakamoto, who will play the traditional Japanese *shamisen*, says that it is his first visit to Russia and that he is looking forward to learning more about the country.



Kobe mayor Kizo Hisamoto states that “Through this exchange, I expect that we can further develop the relations that Kobe and Japan as a whole have with Russia.”

and Russia, the city has contacted three universities particularly interested in deepening exchange with Russia, and this September we will visit Yekaterinburg with students and university officials, and discuss student exchanges, universities’ intake of foreign students, and cooperation between our universities.” The participating Japanese universities all have connections to Russia, like Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, which has had a department dedicated to Russian language research since its founding and two years ago signed an exchange agreement with Yekaterinburg’s Ural Federal University. Kobe University, too, has partnerships with three Russian universities and one academy. Students at Kobe Gakuin University on the other hand organized cultural exchange events with Russian students both last year and the year before, which were big successes.

In Yekaterinburg, roundtables will be held between students from both countries and presentations regarding Kobe and other universities will be made by Japanese students. In addition, events introducing and displaying Japanese cultural forms such as flower arrangement, tea ceremony and *kyogen* (traditional Japanese comic theater) will be held, as well as exchange events using youth culture to bring students from both countries together. Takuya Ueda, one of the participating students, has studied abroad at Ural Federal University and will use his experience with cultural and linguistic barriers to facilitate exchange between the two student groups. “When I was staying over there, the locals were very welcoming. At the time, there were few Japanese in Yekaterinburg, but many Russians were interested in Japan. Unfortunately I’ll only be there for a short stay this time, but hopefully we will be able to leave behind some positive results,” says Ueda.

Mayor Hisamoto looks forward to the visit. “I would like to use this opportunity to strengthen academic and student exchange, as well as collaboration between our universities. As a representative of Kobe, a medical industry city and home to approximately 330 related businesses, I also hope to extend our cooperation to economic exchanges in the medical field and other areas.”

Other state-sponsored exchange programs which have already been implemented

From 2014		From 2017	
University	Program	University	Program
Hokkaido University	Fostering experts who can be a driving force in promoting a sustainable environment, culture and development of the Far East and the Arctic Circle	Chiba University	Fostering personnel who can cross domains to contribute to the future agriculture of the Russian Far East
Tohoku University	Fostering human resources capable of creating new value	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies	Fostering Japan and Russia business personnel to contribute to the rapid expansion of personnel exchange
University of Tsukuba	Fostering of multilingual personnel who can play an active role in industries for Russian speaking countries	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Fostering engineering personnel who can lead the health/medical and nuclear power/energy industries
The University of Tokyo	Student exchanges based on the collaboration of natural science and social infrastructure studies	Kanazawa University	Fostering future co-creation leaders
Niigata University	Construction of a global medical personnel training framework for contributing to the economic and industrial development of Japan and Russia	Nagasaki University/ Fukushima Medical University	Fostering leaders in the medical science field for disaster/ radiation exposure
		Tokai University	Fostering bridge personnel in the field of life care
		Kindai University	Fostering core personnel for manufacturing

Since 2014, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has been supporting an academic cooperation program for fostering the development of experts who are able to function as a bridge between countries, particularly for carrying out efforts such as university-industry research collaboration fixed on the future of Japan-Russia and Japan-India relations. For 2017, the Ministry will be expanding the program for structuring an education cooperation program focused on practical science. As a total of 12 consortiums pushed forward with exchanges, plans are in the works for the promotion of exchanges between Japanese and Russian universities based on the selected platform secretariat. This effort will be undertaken by Hokkaido University and Niigata University.



Yasuhiro Yamashita
Judoist and president of the All Japan Judo Federation. Senior executive board member of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC). Vice chancellor of Tokai University. Gold medal winner in the open-weight category of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, winner of three successive World Judo Championships, and nine-time consecutive winner of the All Japan Judo Championships. Presented with the People's Honor Award in 1984.

Series: Japanese Individuals Contributing Worldwide

Olympic Gold Medalist Promotes International Exchange through Judo

When naming the top judo masters, Yasuhiro Yamashita remains one of the names that come to mind even today. Since his retirement, he has been committing himself to activities aimed at promoting international exchange through judo as he trains younger judoists.

Yamashita recalls, “When I was a student of Tokai University, Dr. Shigeyoshi Matsumae, founder of the university and my teacher, was a constant advocate of international exchange and goodwill relations. Even in the midst of the Cold War in the 1970s, top athletes from all over the world, including what was the Soviet Union at the time, gathered at Tokai University where we trained together as one. Being in that environment, I was greatly influenced by the teachings of Matsumae

Sensei, and began to walk my path as a judoist.”

When Shigeyoshi Matsumae passed away in 1991, he left Yamashita with the following wish: “Be somebody that can contribute to world peace through sports.”

“I was only in my 30s at the time, so I felt this expectation for me was unreasonably high,” says Yamashita. “But as I carried those words of my mentor in my heart, I met more people who had the same goal, and the doors to international exchange opened one after another.”

Yamashita established the NPO “Solidarity of International Judo Education” in 2006 for the purpose of using judo as a means to deepen the understanding of other cultures and to create friendships that extend beyond borders. He would go anywhere in the world to

teach judo. In 2010, he went to a dojo in Jerusalem where he taught judo to the children of Israel and Palestine who trained together on the same mat. In turn, this led to activities which invited Israeli and Palestinian judo instructors to attend a coaching seminar in Japan, where they worked together with participants from all over the world.

Yamashita also has many opportunities to meet with important individuals from various nations. In particular, he has had numerous interactions with President Putin as a fellow judoist.

Yamashita remembers, “When President Putin visited Japan in September 2000, he took time from his busy schedule to visit the Kodokan Judo Institute. There, we offered the President the red-and-white obi (belt) of a sixth *dan* (rank). But he politely refused to put on the obi, explaining that ‘As a judoist, I understand the weight of a sixth-*dan* obi. When I return to my country, I would like to devote myself to my studies and become worthy of wearing this belt one day soon.’”

Then in November 2005, when President Putin visited Japan to attend a summit conference, Yamashita presented him with a gift of a work of calligraphy

handwritten by the founder of judo, Grand Master Jigoro Kano. The four Japanese kanji characters written on it mean “Grow and Prosper Together With Others,” which is the very essence of judo. According to Yamashita, “It was a treasured item of mine, but I gave it in hopes of fostering a spirit of cooperation between Japan and Russia. Upon receiving the item, President Putin said, ‘This is not something I can keep just for myself. It must be shared with everyone.’”

This autumn, the International Judo Federation will be holding its international exchange tournament, “The Kano Jigoro Cup,” in Vladivostok. The tournament commemorates the 100th year since a judo international exchange tournament was held there, and also coincides with the “Eastern Economic Forum” hosted by the Russian government.

Yamashita cheerfully adds, “Japan and its neighbor, Russia, should be able to take advantage of each other’s characteristics for mutual cooperation. I sincerely hope that the leaders of both nations will lead us into an even better relationship. If there is anything I can do through judo, I will spare no effort in contributing.”



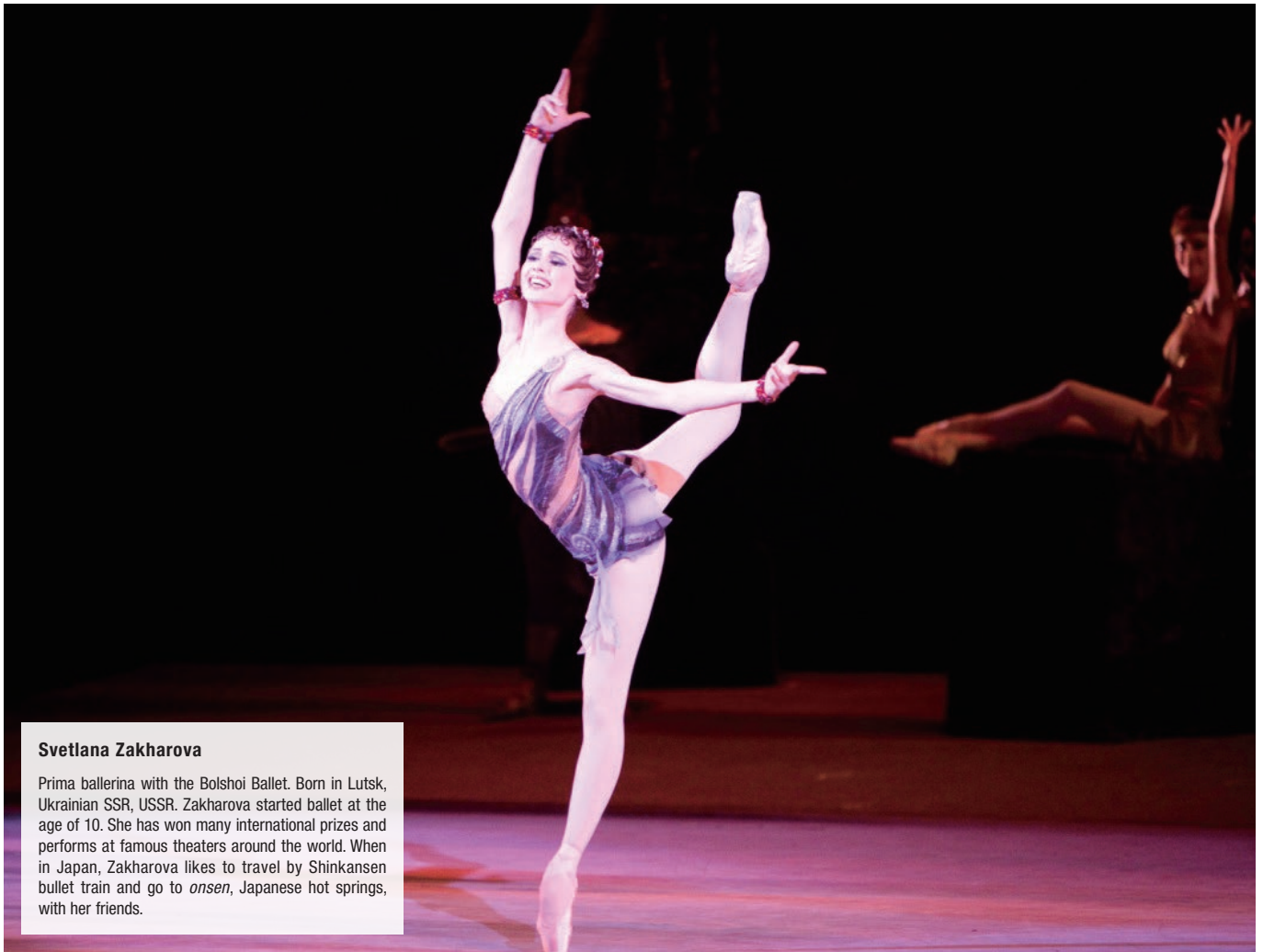
The work of calligraphy handwritten by Grand Master Jigoro Kano that was gifted to President Putin in 2005. The work is priceless in the eyes of judoists.



In 2006, Yamashita visited Russia together with Kosei Inoue, a gold medalist of the Sydney Olympics. President Putin came out wearing his *judogi* (judo uniform) as well, and together they taught judo to the children of Russia.



As a senior executive board member of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), Yamashita is committed to making the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics “An event that will impress and give hope to today’s youth, while showing the world how the people of Japan live with a spirit of peace and harmony.”



Svetlana Zakharova

Prima ballerina with the Bolshoi Ballet. Born in Lutsk, Ukrainian SSR, USSR. Zakharova started ballet at the age of 10. She has won many international prizes and performs at famous theaters around the world. When in Japan, Zakharova likes to travel by Shinkansen bullet train and go to *onsen*, Japanese hot springs, with her friends.

Svetlana Zakharova in Spartacus. © Damir Yusupov.

Graceful Ballerina Bridges Japan and Russia

“Our countries, although very different, share a love for art.” Svetlana Zakharova, prima ballerina with the Bolshoi Ballet, remembers the enthusiastic audiences flocking to her first performance in Japan in 1996 as “one of the biggest discoveries of my life. I encountered Japan as a country advanced not only in technology, but also in artistic perception.” Now, when visiting Japan for her own work, Zakharova makes time to take in concerts and ballet performances by the world’s leading artists. “Japanese people love art; they understand art. Visiting Kyoto, this impressed me in a different way. Japan’s former capital preserves thousands of years of history and tradition. My country shares this deep appreciation for treasures and lore of

the past.” Zakharova also finds Russian and Japanese people’s quest for perfection a point in common. “Seeking to give our best performance, we never stop trying to improve ourselves.”

As Zakharova has worked regularly with a major theater, artists, and choreographers in Japan, keeping good relationships with them personally is important for her. In addition, she takes part in various activities to bring people in Japan and Russia closer through ballet. With the enthusiastic support of President Vladimir Putin, Russia has decided to implement “Russian Seasons” cultural events in countries around the world, Japan being selected as the first venue. The project offers more than 200 events introducing art



Zakharova and her husband Repin, a world-renowned violinist, paid Prime Minister Shinzo Abe a courtesy call after the opening of Russian Seasons. Prime Minister Abe told Zakharova that he was deeply moved by her performance.

and culture to people in Japan and leads to “Russia Year in Japan” and “Japan Year in Russia,” the two countries’ bilateral year of culture in 2018, featuring major culture, education, and sport events. Zakharova danced “Giselle” after the Russian Seasons opening ceremony in June 2017. “I was truly honored to perform for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Japanese people.”

Zakharova will perform in Japan again in September 2017 at the Trans-Siberian Art Festival, part of Russian Seasons. The festival, for which Zakharova’s husband, Vadim Repin, serves artistic director, was started in Novosibirsk, Russia four years ago. In the way that the Trans-Siberian Railway connects east and west, the festival seeks to become a bridge of friendship between people through art. “We started it in Russia

and didn’t expect to have it in other countries so soon, so I am very pleased.” Zakharova will perform “Amore,” a modern ballet program consisting of three vignettes in different styles. “I’m so thrilled that I will be able to hear from Japanese audiences how they feel, as they will see a new me in this program, one I’ve never performed in Japan,” Zakharova says.

For Zakharova, Japan is a totally different world. “I have a new impression every time I visit the country. This difference makes us more interested in each other, and as a result, we try to understand each other better. Russia and Japan have had strong ties in art for a long time. But now it’s officially recognized by the two countries that art and culture can bring people closer together. This has great significance, and I am very proud to be part of it.”



Zakharova and her husband Repin, greet the audience at the Trans-Siberian Art Festival. The festival started in Novosibirsk, Russia and now is held in Japan and other countries, as well as in Russia.

Helping Japan-Russia Relations Blossom

My uncle used to bring me candy from Japan. He was a sailor. Growing up in Vladivostok, I never imagined that one day I'd be able to read the words on those cute wrappers.

I didn't know many foreigners, even though ships from many countries visit Vladivostok's port. Their crews were just sailors in different uniforms to me. I was interested in art and economics, but my father suggested I study an Asian language, and I scored high enough on my exams to major in Japanese literature and language at Far Eastern Federal University. There, I became interested in intercultural relations and joined a group that supported foreign exchange students.

My first visit to Japan was in 2007 via ship. We docked in Fushiki, Toyama. I remember the strong smell of kelp, and being impressed by the Tateyama mountain range. Four years later, I returned to Toyama on a one-year university scholarship. Later I worked on the launch of a Japanese medical clinic in Vladivostok, the Hokuto Visual Diagnostic Center, doing correspondence, translating and interpreting. I wanted to go back to Japan, so when I received a letter of acceptance to be a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) for the JET Programme in Toyama, I felt it must have been my destiny.

I love Toyama because the mountains and the sea are so close together. Tateyama has beautiful views and isn't hard to climb. I go up every year. Toyama's deep bay means amazing seafood, and its pure mountain water ensures good rice and sake. I've also become close to a Japanese family. One New Year's Eve, we listened to Russian music, watched the Russian presidential address, and cleared snow in front of a local shrine for *hatsumode* (the first shrine visit of the year). It was a very cross-cultural experience!

I recently finished four years as a CIR. My work included translating, interpreting, planning events, and teaching Russian. The last few months were particularly busy. In July, Toyama and Primorsky Krai celebrated 25 years of friendship and exchange in fields like culture, economics, and sports. About 50 people from Toyama attended a commemorative event in Vladivostok, including politicians and business people. I handled everything from MC-ing the main reception to pitching Toyama's tourism potential. I've been running on adrenalin ever since.

The JET Programme has been great because I've never been bored and there's always something new to keep you motivated. You use your Japanese skills to do a wide range of things. Three years ago, I helped plant 150 cherry blossom trees from Toyama on the new grounds of my university in Vladivostok. We went back this year, to plant 180 more, and I was able to see the first batch in bloom. It was quite a quest—I can't count the number of calls I made to make sure



Tatiana Britcina

Born in Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai (Maritime Province), Russia. Graduated from Far Eastern Federal University. Spent a year at the University of Toyama on a prefectural scholarship before becoming a CIR at the Toyama Prefectural Office in 2013.



Climbing Oyama peak (3,003 m [9,852 ft]) of the Tateyama mountain range.

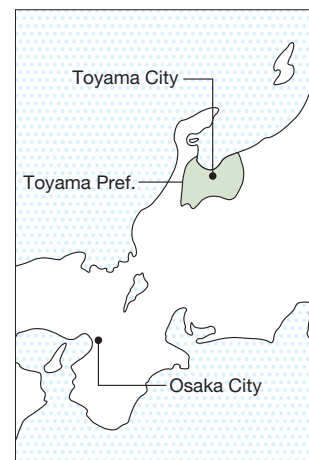


In Toga village with friends enjoying a play by the international theater group SCOT.

the trees were being properly watered. I worry about them in the strong, cold winds of Vladivostok, but I'm looking forward to picnicking under their blossoms in another ten years. I'm not sure what my future holds right now, but my time in Toyama has really energized me, and hope to use both my language skills and accumulated experience and knowledge to deepen Japan-Russia relations, wherever I end up.



At an event celebrating 25 years of friendship and cooperation between Toyama Prefecture and Russia, held in Vladivostok in July 2017.



With colleagues at the Toyama International Center.



At Far Eastern Federal University (my alma mater) planting cherry blossom trees, a gift from the Toyama-Vladivostok Friendship Association.

About the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grass-roots international exchange between Japan and other nations, and is now one of the world's largest international exchange programs. JET participants are placed in every region of Japan and work in one of three positions: assistant language teachers (ALTs), coordinators for international relations (CIRs), or sports exchange advisors (SEAs). In 2016, the JET Programme welcomed 4,952 participants, and currently there are approximately 62,000 alumni from 65 countries living in all parts of the world.



The JET Programme official website
<http://jetprogramme.org/en/>

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Deepening Friendship across the Four Northern Islands

Japan and Russia are making efforts to foster mutual understanding and trust through people-to-people exchange and seeking the possibility of joint economic activities in the Four Northern Islands, despite the difference of views with regard to those islands.



Former island residents met with current island residents and exchanged opinions regarding joint economic activities. (May 2017)



Former island residents met with current island residents and exchanged opinions regarding joint economic activities. (June 2017)



Former island residents visited the graves of their ancestors. (May 2017)



Young residents of the islands visited Sapporo and enjoyed an exchange with local college students. (July 2017)



Based on the agreements reached between Prime Minister Abe and President Putin in December of last year and April of this year, a 69-member research team which included government officials as well as specialists from the private sector visited the Four Northern Islands from June 27 to July 1. The purpose of the visit was to study the potential of joint economic activities in those islands, and the team visited sites related to project proposals both from Japan and Russia. As they traveled to each island, the team members met with the governor of the Sakhalin region, Oleg Kozhemyako, and enjoyed a warm reception from the island residents while visiting sites related to fisheries, sightseeing, infrastructure and energy, medical care, and daily living.





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