Japanese Perspectives on "Asia":

Analyses of JGSS-2006

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JGSS−2006

This paper exploratively examines Japanese "perspectives on Asia". Theoretical implications of "perspectives on Asia" in Japan have been inconsistent. However, there has have been little few studies on ordinary Japanese people's "perspectives on Asia." Thus, the main purpose of this study is to analyze "perspectives on Asia" held by a general Japanese population based on JGSS-2006. The results show that mean score of favorable impression of North Korea is particularly low and it is followed by China. The standard deviations of favorable impression scores of China and South Korea are large, which represents that there are discrepancies in people's opinions. For other Asian countries, such as Taiwan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and India, more than 50% of respondents selected "0", suggesting that a majority of Japanese are unconcerned with these countries. In addition to analyses of cognitive structure, favorable impression scores of these Asian countries are strongly correlated with each other very strongly, whereas correlations between South Korea, China, and North Korea and the other Asian nations are relatively low.

Key Words: perspectives on Asia, favorable impression, cognitive structure

JGSS−2006

1. Introduction

As China exceeded the U.S. in the total amount of trading in 2007 (JETRO 2008), economic connections between Japan and Asian nations have steadily grown. Cultural connections between Japan and Asian nations have also intensified. Not only did subcultures from Asian countries become popular in Japan just like "*Han-ryu* (Korean boom)", but also Japanese pop culture, such as animations and video games, became prevalent in Asian countries. In relation to the emergence of such economic and cultural interactions among the East Asian countries, there have been increasing discussions regarding building of an "East Asian Community" composed of Japan, China, South Korea and ASEAN[1] nations (see Shindo 2007 for details). However, one of the most difficult issues is to build "a sense of community" among East Asian nations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004).

In fact, hostility and mistrust, rather than a sense of community, have stood out in recent East Asia. Anti-Japan movement in China and South Korea, and abduction and nuclear related issues of North Korea are examples of continual problems existing among the East Asian countries. Against these issues, these three countries are named "*Tokutei Asia*[2] (specific-Asia)" on the Internet bulletin board systems. Some people possess excessively negative images toward these three countries and often distinguish them from other Asian countries.

In this study, I will examine perspectives on Asia in Japan by analyzing a survey data. Specifically, I will delineate Japanese general views on Asia based on an item asking prepossession for each foreign country in the self-administered questionnaire in JGSS-2006. I will also investigate differences in perspectives on Asia among Japanese people.

2. Reviews of previous works

2.1 Intellectuals' "Perspectives on Asia"

In "*Datsu-A Ron* (advocacy of Leaving Asia)" published in 1885, Fukuzawa argued that Japan should "leave Asia" as Asian countries were stagnant and barbarous, compared to civilized western countries. Since the phrase "Leaving Asia" had a strong impact, it has been often picked up as a symbolic word of contempt for Asian nations. However, it has been believed that Fukuzawa wrote the article when he was deeply disappointed with a failure of Gapsin Coup by pro-modernization groups he supported. Also he was moaning about the situations of the Qing Dynasty (China) and the Yi Dynasty (Korea), such as the defeat of the Qing Dynasty in Sino-French War (Okamoto 1998, Suzuki 1997, etc.). Considering these backgrounds, his argument was not simply "contempt for Asian nations" nor "advocacy for Japanese invasion of Asian nations". In his article "*Datsu-A Ron*", Fukuzawa focused only on neighboring countries, the Qing Dynasty and the Yi Dynasty (Sakamoto 2001), and thus, it was not an argument including other Asian countries like India. Nevertheless, his ideas partially lead to "contempt (or ignorance) for (all) Asian nations" that was symbolized by a widely spread slogan "*Datsu-A Nyu-Ouo* (Leaving Asia, Entering West)".

On the contrary, Tenshin Okakura advocated, "Asia is one" by including India and other Asian countries, as well as China and Korea (Okakura 1903), around the same time when ""*Datsu-A Ron*" was argued. Tenshin stated from artistic and aesthetic point of view that there are some commonalities in "Asia" derived from Chinese civilization and Indian civilization, and Japan who assimilated them. His statement aimed against Western imperialism. Thus, it is ironic that Tenshin was treated as the founder of later "Pan-Asianism" and his phrase was misappropriated to the slogan of "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" which was the Japanese version of imperialism. In contrast to Tenshin's assertion, "Pan-Asianism" during the WW2 was developed with a strong notion of Japan's superiority over other Asian countries. Similar to Tenshin's contention, however, "Asia" at

that time was probably extensive and it should encompass India and Islamic nations. That can be found that Shumei Ookawa, a representative theorist of Pan-Asianism during the WW2, supported R. B. Bose, an activist for Indian independence, and his pioneering study on Islam (e.g., translation of the Qur'an).

After the dream of "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" collapsed due to the loss of the War, Japan seemed to return to the "*Datsu-A Nyu-Ouo* (Leaving Asia and Entering West)", especially by being subordinate to the U.S. It is not too exaggerated to say that Japanese "forgot" Asia during the Cold War when Japan took a strategy as "diplomatic subservience to the U.S.". As one of the consequences, Keitaro Hasegawa, an economist, published "*Sayonara Asia* (Good-bye Asia)" and claimed an escape out of Asia from an economic point of view during the Japanese bubble economy. This can be counted as a sort of the "Leaving Asia" advocacy.

On the other hand, Yoshimi Takeuchi (1963) published "*Nihon no Asia Shugi* (Japanese Pan-Asianism)", and proposed the necessity of new solidarity with Asian countries based on regret over prewar Pan-Asianism. However, the idea of "solidarity with Asian nations", a sort of Pan-Asianism he advocated, changed its shape and downgraded its original implications. Propagated descriptions of Japan at the Summit conferences, such as "Japan as a representative of Asia" and "Japan as a spokesperson of Asia" (Toh 2003), and an assertion of "Leaving West, Entering Asia", which was developed with Asian nations' economic growth, those are examples of distorted Takeuchi's ideas. In fact, general images of Asia have been changed from negative such as "stagnant", "poverty" and "autocracy", to positive such as "developed", "prosperity" and "democracy" as the structure of the Cold War collapsed and Asian countries have developed economically (Matsumoto 2000).

As stated above, many theorists and intellectuals have discussed meanings of "Asia". Among various discussions on the matter, the following two subjects have been most controversial: what "Asia" symbolizes and which nations are encompassed in "Asia". In this article, my main focus is to compare those intellectuals' perspectives on "Asia" with ordinary peoples' perspectives on "Asia" by analyzing the social survey data and to examine the differences.

2.2 Public Images of Asia: Previous Experimental Studies

The history of studies about favorable impressions of foreign countries and foreign people is relatively long. For example, Kusunoki (1941) conducted a study by asking students prior to the World War II. The results showed that German and Italian were rated high in popularity because of the Triple Alliance. Japanese colonized countries, such as Manchurian, Korean, and Mongolian was followed. Reflecting historical circumstances, the results also showed that American and British were rated low in popularity. However in 1949, after the War, a similar study (Kusunoki 1949) revealed that Korean was the last place in popularity. Whereas Americans, who was the eighth place in the previous study, were the second. In general, Western countries got higher ranks than the results of his previous study, while Asian countries' ranking declined.

This trend of "high in West and low in East" in favorable impressions, which appeared during the postwar era, has been continuously replicated (Wagatsuma and Yoneyama 1967; Hori 1977; Tanabe 2004, 2008). The results from annual "Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy" (Naikakufu 2006) also revealed similar patterns.

Since the postwar era, most studies reported that the trend of favorable impressions of foreign countries have been "high in West and low in East". Kozakai (1996) concluded that the Japanese recognize various nationalities in the world based on "(simple) economic developmental stage theory",

assuming Western countries as the top of the hierarchy by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data.

There have been relatively a large number of studies regarding favorable impressions or images of South Korea, China, and North Korea, each of which has a strong relationship with Japan. For instance, the degree of favorable impressions of China declined due to the Tiananmen Square Incident (Manabe 1993), the degree of favorable impressions of China has also been reported to be on decrease since 2000's (Ito & Zhu 2008).   Kono (2008) argued that one of the reasons for the decline is the frequency of mass media contacts.   For impressions of South Korea, there is a study (Tei 1995) that elaborately described Japanese views on South Korea in postwar era.   Recent study have indicated that impressions of South Korea became more favorable because of the World Cup Soccer jointly hosted by Japan and Korea and Korean culture boom in Japan (Terasima 2007).   In contrast, the news on North Korean abduction issues has been largely reported (Lee 2007), and most reports (e.g., nuclear development issues) about North Korea are negative.   Perhaps because of such negative reports, the results from various public surveys indicated that North Korea is an unusually "disliked country" in Japan (Asahi Newspaper April 27th 2005).

These studies discussed public images of "the world" (not necessarily Asian countries) or favorable impressions and images of individual Asian countries.   However, there have been few studies that analyzed differences and variations in Japanese perspectives on Asian countries.   Thus, this study will strive to illustrated perspectives on Asia held by a general Japanese population, rather than by scholars, using JGSS data.

3. Data and Analysis
3.1 Data

Data used in the following analyses is an item asking "prepossession for each foreign country[3]" in the self-administered questionnaire "Form A" of JGSS-2006. The total sample size is 2,124 with the response rate of 59.8%. The question is as follows:

How do you feel about the following countries and regions?   For each country and region, please choose one of the numbers. If you don't have any specific feeling to a country or region, choose "0".

First, this question assesses prepossession by asking *Inshou* (impression) in Japanese questionnaire, and it does not directly ask "likes" or "dislikes".   That is different form the wording used in JGSS-1999 first pilot and Tanabe (2008), "How much favorable impression do you have on the following countries?"   Therefore, caution must be exercised when the results from these previous studies are compared with the current ones.

Second, the question is rated on a 7-point scale (+3 … +2 … +1 … 0 … -1 … -2 … -3), and a note "more favorable" is written above +3, and "less favorable" is written above -3.   For "0", however, an annotation, "If you don't have any specific feeling to a country or region, choose '0'." is given.   Therefore, it is possible that people chose "0" because of "no impression   no idea", rather than because of "neither like nor dislike".

3.2 Analysis 1
3.2.1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Distributions of Prepossession for Each Country

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions of prepossession for each foreign country.

Table 1 Means, Standard deviations, Frequency Distributions of each foreign country

	S. Korea	N. Korea	China	Mongolia	Taiwan	Philippines	Thai	Indonesia	India	Russia	U.S.A.
Mean	0.14	−2.31	−0.39	0.30	0.43	0.03	0.25	0.20	0.21	−0.33	0.67
S.D.	1.41	1.20	1.45	1.05	1.10	1.06	1.02	0.96	1.01	1.18	1.33
−3	6.5	68.9	11.6	2.8	2.5	3.6	2.4	2.5	2.6	7.6	3.0
−2	5.1	8.1	10.1	1.5	1.3	3.9	1.9	1.6	2.0	7.3	2.4
−1	10.6	4.4	15.6	2.6	3.1	9.0	4.9	4.0	4.7	14.7	5.8
−(Sum)	22.3	81.4	37.2	6.9	6.8	16.5	9.2	8.2	9.2	29.6	11.2
0	42.3	15.2	38.1	62.4	55.7	59.5	61.7	66.1	63.5	53.0	37.4
+(Sum)	32.7	0.9	21.8	27.6	34.5	21.2	26.2	22.8	24.3	14.5	48.8
1	16.2	0.4	13.3	15.9	17.9	13.7	15.3	13.8	14.7	9.7	21.0
2	11.8	0.2	6.2	7.9	12.5	5.6	8.2	6.8	6.9	3.7	19.6
3	4.7	0.3	2.4	3.8	4.1	1.8	2.7	2.2	2.7	1.0	8.1
D.K.&N.A.	2.7	2.5	2.8	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.6

First, the percentages of no answer were relatively low and approximately 3% for all countries. However, over 60% answered "0" for Indonesia (66.1%), India (63.5%), Mongolia (62.4%), and Thailand (61.7%), and about 60% answered "0" for Philippines (59.5%), and more than half people answered "0" for Taiwan (55.7%) and Russia (53.0%). That is, the majority of people "neither like nor dislike" these countries, or "have no impression" on these countries. In addition, the standard deviations for Indonesia, India, Mongolia, Thailand, and Philippines were 1.0 or thereabout and small. Thus, perceptions about these countries are relatively homogeneous among Japanese people.

Second, means of prepossession were compared. The mean score of favorable prepossession for North Korea was remarkably low (-2.31). Considering the nuclear development scandal and abduction issues, the result was fairly conceivable. Nevertheless, it was quite peculiar that over two thirds selected "-3", representing the least favorable. It is important to note that North Korea's score, which is almost an "outlier", may have affected prepossessions for other countries. Because many people have an extreme feeling about North Korea, it might have had carryover effects on their judgments on their feelings for other countries. In other words, scores for the following countries listed after North Korea (especially for China because it was right after North Korea) might have been higher than it should be because people might have thought, "It is better than North Korea".

Even if there were the carryover effects, the mean score for China was negative (-0.39), indicating that prepossession for China is unfavorable in Japan. The mean score for Russia was also negative (-0.33), indicating that Russia is relatively disliked by Japanese people. However, more than 50% of the answers for Russia were "0", and the standard deviation was 1.18 and was not very large. On the other hand, less than 40% of the answers for China were "0", and the standard deviation was 1.45 and large. Thus, we can roughly divide Japanese people into two groups: "People who like China" and "people who dislike China".

The U.S. was rated the most favorable by Japanese people. Possibly because over one-third selected "0", the mean score was not so large (+0.67). Given the relatively large standard deviation (1.33), people have strong likes and dislikes for the U.S., which is equivalent to China. Similarly, the standard deviation for South Korea was also large (1.41), indicating that the Japanese people have diverse opinions about South Korea, just like about China and the U.S.

3.2.2 "0" = "no impression + neither like nor dislike" "unconcerned + no idea"

I examined the tendencies of "0" as an answer, which was the most frequently selected answer for most countries. As mentioned above, the answer "0" confounds "no impression" with "neither like nor dislike". Given the results that people who have lower education and are elderly people tended to

answer "no idea" (Tanabe 2004), I analyzed relations between the answer "0" for each country and age group and educational background[4]. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Ratio of "0" by age group and educational background (%)

	S. Korea	N. Korea	China	Mongolia	Taiwan	Philippines	Thai	Indonesia	India	Russia	U.S.A.
20−29	34.3	8.1	36.4	65.7	60.0	58.1	61.0	65.7	60.5	56.2	31.9
30−39	36.9	8.2	32.5	64.5	56.9	59.6	60.1	64.8	66.1	58.9	39.0
40−49	37.1	10.0	38.1	60.8	56.3	58.4	60.3	63.4	59.4	48.2	36.1
50−59	44.1	13.3	36.9	66.1	53.8	58.9	64.1	69.0	64.4	51.8	37.0
60−69	50.3	21.9	45.3	63.8	59.7	63.2	66.3	71.1	69.3	57.3	38.4
70−	53.1	28.6	45.0	65.2	59.4	67.9	67.7	72.8	69.9	55.1	45.2
Elementary	55.8	26.6	49.2	66.3	63.9	67.5	70.6	73.3	72.2	60.0	51.1
Secondary	43.5	15.2	38.9	65.0	59.2	61.7	65.3	69.1	66.4	54.5	36.5
Post−secondav	41.6	14.7	39.8	66.4	56.8	63.3	65.2	67.7	66.5	60.9	39.3
Higher	33.3	7.0	30.5	59.7	47.6	53.3	52.2	61.5	56.5	46.0	31.0
Total	43.3	15.5	39.1	64.3	57.2	61.2	63.4	68.1	65.4	54.5	38.3

Regarding age effects, individuals who are over sixty were more likely to answer "0". For academic backgrounds, individuals with low educational background were more likely to answer "0". Table 3 shows percentages of people who answered "0" for all countries, for all countries except North Korea, and for six Asian countries (Mongolia, Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia, and India) by age group and educational level.

Table 3 Ratio of answer "0" for all countries, all except North Korea, and for six Asian nations by age group and educational background

	All 0	0(except N.K.)	0 for 6 nations
Elementary	22.6	32.6	51.5
Secondary	10.5	17.6	39.3
Post−secondav	9.5	15.6	36.7
Higher	4.3	10.2	26.8
Total	11.1	18.4	38.5
N	224	370	780

	All 0	0(except N.K.)	0 for 6 nations
20−29	5.3	12.9	36.7
30−39	6.0	12.8	33.7
40−49	7.2	15.4	34.3
50−59	9.8	16.3	36.0
60−69	16.4	23.8	42.5
70−	20.8	28.2	48.4
Total	11.3	18.6	38.7
N	229	376	789

It is clear that the tendency of answer "0" is related to academic background and age. Whereas more than 20 percent of individuals who only have primary education answered "0" for all countries, only 4.3% of individuals who completed higher education answered "0". Such patterns were confirmed from 3-way cross-tabulation (due to limitations of space, I don't show the table). The results showed that both academic background and age cohort affected the probability to select "0". Some interaction effects were partially found, such that the percentage of the answer "0" was low among elder people who completed higher education.

In summary, the answer "0" in this data probably contains "no idea", as well as "unconcerned" that include having no impression and neither like nor dislike.

3.3 Analysis 2: The Relations between Prepossession for Asian Countries and Attributes

The relations between prepossession for Asian countries and basic attributions, such as age, sex, and academic background were examined and shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Mean Scores and correlation ratio by gender, age group and educational level

	S. Korea	N. Korea	China	Mongolia	Taiwan	Philippines	Thai	Indonesia	India	Russia	U.S.A.
Men	0.04	−2.31	−0.43	0.39	0.56	0.17	0.36	0.27	0.26	−0.40	0.72
Women	0.23	−2.32	−0.35	0.22	0.32	−0.11	0.14	0.13	0.16	−0.26	0.62
η^2	.004	.000	.001	.006	.011	.018	.012	.006	.003	.003	.002
20−29	0.22	−2.51	−0.41	0.42	0.51	0.04	0.37	0.29	0.34	−0.11	0.66
30−39	0.23	−2.49	−0.60	0.36	0.46	−0.05	0.29	0.28	0.31	−0.18	0.58
40−49	0.37	−2.48	−0.27	0.46	0.49	0.12	0.34	0.27	0.32	−0.26	0.69
50−59	0.11	−2.37	−0.49	0.27	0.47	0.06	0.20	0.16	0.15	−0.39	0.71
60−69	0.08	−2.16	−0.27	0.24	0.43	0.05	0.29	0.22	0.20	−0.38	0.77
70−	−0.13	−1.97	−0.26	0.13	0.28	−0.03	0.08	−0.01	0.01	−0.54	0.58
η^2	.012	.028	.008	.011	.005	.003	.009	.011	.013	.014	.003
Elementary	−0.11	−2.02	−0.34	0.08	0.21	−0.07	0.02	−0.03	−0.04	−0.49	0.45
Secondary	0.17	−2.33	−0.39	0.31	0.39	0.01	0.23	0.20	0.22	−0.29	0.73
Vocational	0.30	−2.37	−0.29	0.36	0.56	0.03	0.30	0.29	0.27	−0.19	0.78
Higher	0.15	−2.50	−0.48	0.44	0.66	0.14	0.45	0.32	0.36	−0.37	0.63
η^2	.007	.016	.002	.012	.019	.004	.018	.014	.016	.006	.007

Because the sample size was large, mean differences by sex, age cohort, and academic background were statistically significant for most countries. However, the highest correlation ratio for sex was Philippines' .018, for academic background was Taiwan's .019, and for age cohort was North Korea's .028. Thus all of their correlations were weak. Considering effects of small variances due to high percentages of the answer "0", cases with the answer "0" were excluded and reanalyzed associations. Even so, the magnitude of each correlation was not strong, although the correlation ratios became larger than before, such that the highest correlation ratio for sex was Philippines' .044, for academic background was Indonesia's .037, and for age cohort was Russia's .033.

In order to examine each association as continuous variables, age groups were recoded to real numbers and educational levels were recoded to schooling years. As stated above, because the answer "0" might have included multiple meanings, analyses with and without "0" were performed. In general, elder individuals had negative prepossession toward each country and individuals with longer education had positive prepossession toward each country. But again, the magnitude of these correlations was not strong.

Taken together, differences in prepossessions for foreign countries between sex, age cohort, and academic background were small. Some findings were that males were more likely than females to hold favorable prepossession for Philippines and some other countries. Elder generations were more likely than younger generations to hold unfavorable prepossession for Mongolia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Indonesia. Similarly, individuals with lower educational background were more likely to hold unfavorable prepossession for those countries. In cases of countries with which Japan have relatively weak connections, individuals with lower educational background tended to answer "0" and that made the mean scores low. Even after cases with the answer "0" were excluded, individuals who have only primary education and who are over seventy years old were less likely to have favorable prepossession. On the other hand, individuals who attained higher education were more likely to have favorable prepossession for each country. These results can be explained as "mere exposure effect" (Zajonc 1968). Mere exposure effect presumes that individuals tend to have positive impression by being exposed to some stimuli and information of the object.

In the case of this study, individuals with higher education may have more chance to get

information about foreign countries.   As a result of the mere exposure effect, those individuals may have more favorable prepossession for foreign countries.

Nonetheless, the mere exposure effect did not exert on individuals' prepossession for China and South Korea.   Particularly for China, individuals with higher education had rather lower scores of prepossession, which is the opposite from prediction.   In a study (Hagiwara 2006) that gathered the contents of TV night news about foreign countries from November 2003 to August 2004, which is close to the data collection period of this study, the author found that there were more "reports implying the deteriorating relationship between Japan and China", such as the anti-Japan movement at the Asia Cup Soccer (Hagiwara 2006:51).   In this case, in contrast to the mere exposure effect, more exposure to the TV news may have led individuals with higher education to hold unfavorable impression against China because the contents of the TV news were negative[5].

3.4 Analysis 3: Structural Analysis of Prepossession for Asian Countries

In the previous section, one-dimensional order was examined by comparing mean scores.   To analyze structural characteristics of associations between variables, a correlation matrix of prepossession for each Asian country was examined in Table 5.

Table 5 Correlation matrix of favorable prepossession

	S. Korea	N. Korea	China	Mongolia	Taiwan	Philippines	Thai	Indonesia	India	Russia
N. Korea	0.102									
China	0.606	0.243								
Mongolia	0.372	−0.002	0.356							
Taiwan	0.385	−0.035	0.349	0.633						
Philippines	0.331	0.092	0.320	0.514	0.588					
Thai	0.328	0.007	0.303	0.577	0.658	0.724				
Indonesia	0.329	0.020	0.306	0.584	0.616	0.658	0.804			
India	0.301	0.005	0.319	0.573	0.567	0.603	0.699	0.761		
Russia	0.393	0.217	0.442	0.319	0.273	0.338	0.331	0.400	0.416	
U.S.A.	0.326	−0.119	0.264	0.311	0.374	0.308	0.329	0.326	0.365	0.307

In general, intercorrelations were strong.   Particularly, the coefficients of correlations among Mongolia, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and India were over 0.5, and the highest one was 0.8.   The correlation between China and South Korea was 0.606 and relatively high.   Meanwhile, the correlations between China and Taiwan and between China and Mongolia were not so high (0.349 and 0.356, respectively), although these countries seem culturally close.   Rather, China had a higher correlation with Russia (0.442) possibly because the images that they were communist regimes are still lingering on.   When cases with the answer "0" were excluded (table not shown), coefficients of correlation became stronger.   Especially among six Asian countries were at least 0.681 between Mongolia and Philippines, and at most 0.909 between Thailand and Indonesia.

In order to analyze how individuals classify Asian countries, hierarchical cluster analyses were performed based on similarities among prepossession for each country. The result is shown in Figure1.
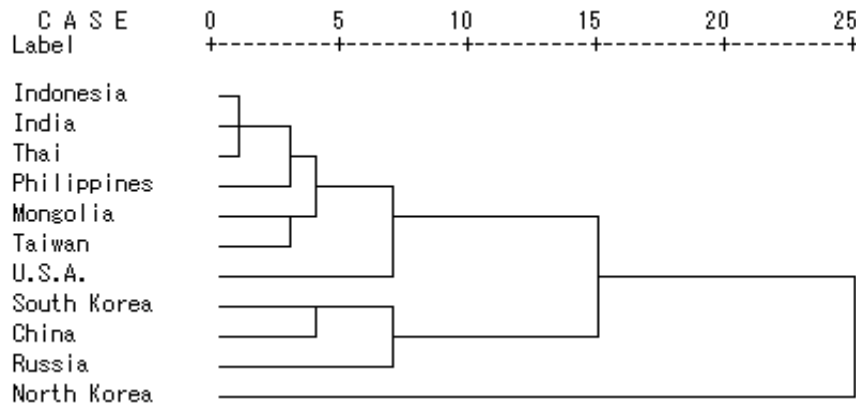
Figure 1 Result of hierarchical clustering
(Using Euclidean distance and Ward method)

Thailand, Indonesia, and India formed a cluster at the relatively early stage, and then Philippines, Mongolia, and Taiwan were clustered together with the group. However, South Korea and China joined the cluster later than the U.S., and North Korea was obviously an outlier. Thus, another hierarchical cluster analysis was performed without North Korea. The result is shown in Figure 2.
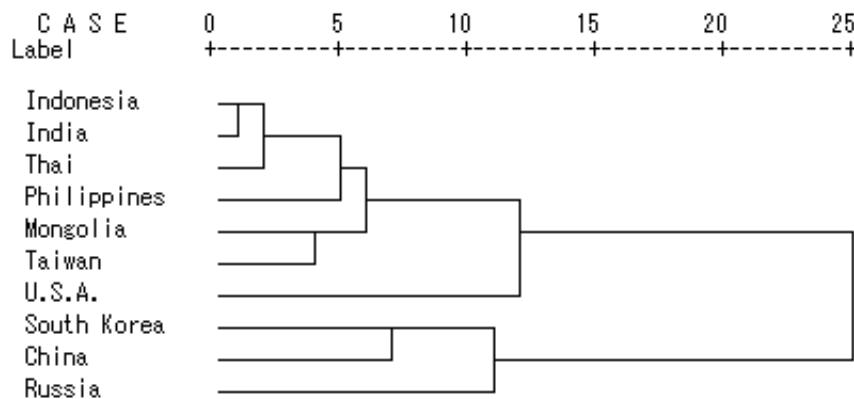

Figure 2 Result of hierarchical clustering (except North Korea)

General patterns did not change. Thailand, Indonesia, and India became a cluster first and Philippines, Mongolia, and Taiwan followed. South Korea and China joined the cluster later than U.S.A. Thus, China and South Korea are distinctive from other Asian nations in terms of prepossession.

It is important to note the results of Taiwan and Mongolia. From cultural point of view, Taiwan is close to China. Mongolia is also a neighboring country of China. However, the results from the cluster analyses revealed that these two countries are closer to other Asian countries than China, suggesting that the Japanese consider Taiwan and Mongolia as one of the countries in Asia or one of foreign countries due to little interest in these countries.   On the contrary, the Japanese place a special attention to China, South Korea, and also North Korea. Parallel to the term "*Tokutei Asia* (specific-Asia)" on the Internet bulletin board systems, the majority of Japanese may regard these three countries as different from other Asian countries.

The current results also illustrated that individuals do not consider cultural or geographical

proximity when they evaluate other countries. Tanabe (2008) suggested from structural analyses that the Japanese prepossession for foreign countries can be explained by whether "Western capitalist country or not" and by "(negative images of) media reports". Limited to Asian countries, the present study was consistent with this suggestion, given the present results that culture and geography did not affect the cognitive structure of prepossession.

4. Conclusions and Discussion

A summary of Japanese perspectives on Asia from the present study is the following four points. 1 North Korea is a particularly disliked nation. 2 Many respondents recognize Philippines, Mongolia, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, and India as similar countries, and moreover, most Japanese are unconcerned with these countries. Such patterns can be seen especially among individuals who are old and who have low educational background. On the contrary, individuals with high educational background tend to hold favorable prepossession for these countries possibly because of "mere exposure effect". 3 There are no consistent Japanese perspectives on China and Korea. Respondents can be divided into a group who like these two countries and a group who dislike them, perhaps because a flood of information about China and South Korea diminishes the mere exposure effect. 4 The structural characteristics of prepossession scores are very similar among six Asian countries: Taiwan, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, and India. On the contrary, the correlations between the six Asian countries and South Korea, China, and North Korea are relatively weak. Especially the results of low correlations between China and Taiwan and between China and Mongolia imply that individuals do not take cultural and geographical proximity into account when they evaluate foreign countries.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the "East Asian Community" has been discussed actively. Even in the existing case, the European Union (EU) has multiple obstacles. For example, there is an issue about the definition of "Europe", and the propriety of Turkey's affiliation with EU has been disputed. Thus, it is not hard to imagine that the definition of "Asia" would be an issue when the "East Asian Community" is considered. The results of the present analyses revealed that the majority of the Japanese do not distinguish Asian countries, except for China, South Korea, and North Korea. Like Tenshin's assertion, in that sense, "Asia is one". However, it is "one" because individuals were unconcerned with Asian countries, and the Japanese lack a sense of community with them.

In addition, considering the prepossession against China and Korea, it does not seem that the Japanese are ready to form a "community" with them. In China's case, the mean score was negative. While almost 40% of individuals held unfavorable prepossession against China, only 20% held favorable prepossession for them. A variety of public opinion surveys and anti-Japan demo denote that many Chinese people also have negative prepossession against "Japan". In South Korea's case, although there were more individuals who held favorable than unfavorable prepossession, more than 20% were unfavorable. But, public opinion surveys in South Korea indicated that the many South Korean regard Japan very unfavorably. China and South Korea are the closest neighboring countries to Japan, and we have had quite a few exchanges. At this moment, however, public opinions do not allow to form "a friendly community" with them.

Recently, the importance of influencing competitors' public opinions and world opinions (i.e., public diplomacy) in international politics and diplomacy has been stressed. In our Internet and information age during which information in the world is instantly shared, world opinions have a large impact on diplomatic policies, and sometimes public opinions can be a sole determinant of a policy (Inoue 2008). That is, the present day is the time in which perspectives on other countries strongly

affect diplomatic policies in each country.　More than ever, therefore, Japanese "perspectives on foreign countries" is going to be an important topic to study.　"Perspectives on Asia", the focus of this study, will be an important foundation of knowledge, particularly when today's hot topic "East Asian Community" is discussed.

[Acknowledgement]

[Footnotes]

(1) ASEAN stands for Association of South-East Asian Nations.　Originally, it was an association for regional cooperation formed by anti-communism countries.　The current members consist of 10 nations: Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam, Burma (Myanmar), Laos, and Cambodia.

(2) China, South Korea and North Korea, which stand out in news reports especially about anti-Japan movement, have been recognized as peculiar nations and called "*Tokutei* (specific)".　However, beliefs that other Asian nations are "non-anti Japan" or "pro-Japan" may be a result of biased news reports. For detailed information, see Nagai (1998) and Toh (2003).

(3) It is a controversial issue whether to regard Taiwan as a "country" because of their political relations with China.　However, as you can see from the results of present analyses, the Japanese recognize "China" and "Taiwan" as "different" countries. In that sense, rather than using "region", which applies only to Taiwan, "country" was consistently used in this paper.

(4) Regarding educational background, ordinary elementary school in the old system (including national elementary school), higher elementary school in the old system, and junior high school in the new system were classified as "elementary"; junior high school/girls' high school in the old system, normal school in the old system, high school in the new system were classified as "secondary"; higher school, vocational school, or higher normal school in the old system, high school or two-year college in the new system were classified as "post-secondary"; and university or graduate school in both old and new system were classified as "higher".

(5) Mere exposure effect would be active only when an individual is exposed to "neutral information".　Thus, an individual's prepossession would not be improved when he or she is exposed to a large amount of negative information.

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