



Dear friends,

Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe and President Vladimir Putin made a decision to declare 2018 the Cross Year of Japan and Russia — in order to encourage exchanges between the two countries in all domains. The Cross Year embraces a wide range of activities not only in art and culture but also in business, science, education, youth, sports, and regional exchanges. I consider this a fantastic opportunity to fulfill the potential of developing bilateral relations between our countries. Over 400 events have been already scheduled as part of the Year of Japan.

The mottos of the Cross Year are “There is Japan that you do not know” and “There is Russia that you do not know.” Japan–Russia relations have a long history, and yet we do not know a lot of things about each other. The two leaders have expressed their wish to promote and deepen mutual understanding between our peoples.

The photographic exhibition “Japan–Russia Relations. History in Photographs” is organized by the Consulate General of Japan as one of the events of the Year of Japan in Russia.

Since Japan first met Russia in the Far East, many various events have happened. At the same time, the history of Japan–Russia relations rarely gets a chance to be comprehensively presented to the broadest audience in illustrations and photographs.

Photographs provide faithful and vivid evidence of the past events. Due to them, one can learn of the numerous events that took place between our countries and of the great number of people who contributed to the relations between the two close neighbors, Japan and Russia. By organizing this exhibition, we tried our best to cover as many subjects as possible within limited exhibition space, remaining objective and neutral in how we view them. We asked prominent Japanese and Russian scholars to write captions and brief articles for the exhibition.

We hope that this exhibition will encourage Russian citizens to discover “unknown Japan and Russia” and take interest in the history of relations between the two countries.

In conclusion, I would like to note that illustrations and photographs for this exhibition were provided, on Japan’s part, by Kyodo News, Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, Japan Camera Industry Institute (JCII), Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; and on Russia’s part, by TASS News Agency, Sputnik International News Agency and Radio, and Central Naval Museum of the Ministry of Defense of Russia in Saint Petersburg. The captions and comments were written and edited by S. Hatano, Emeritus Professor, University of Tsukuba, N. Shimotomai, Professor, Hosei University, Professor T. Hoya, Director, Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, and A. N. Meshcheryakov, Professor, Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies, Higher School of Economics. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to this project.

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Toyohisa Kozuki

Japan’s Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Russia