Keywords: Soviet-Japanese cultural exchanges, Soviet film, representation

Abstract:

The majority of Soviet-Japanese co-productions date back to the second half of the 1970s, and although in time their release did not coincide with the time period of the political detente of the early 1970s, the very fact of their existence should be closely linked to detente. The last Soviet-Japanese co-production feature film was released in 1989, again at a period of easing global tensions. Although films are never just illustrations of political slogans, political rapprochement made possible their realization and stipulated the overall tone of mutual benevolence permeating all Soviet-Japanese co-productions. In Part 2 of this article, I put under scrutiny the changes in the representation of Soviet-Japanese encounters, which can be seen in four co-productions: “Moscow, my Love” (1975), “The Melody of the White Night” (1976), “The Way to Medals” (1979) and “A Step” (1989). I argue that the four films under survey, seen together, provide a certain historical mapping of Russian-Japanese mutual perceptions, symbolically represented by culturally and politically sanctioned narratives and visual images.
single out the images of international (and interracial) romance and the image of adultery for the movies of the middle 1970s and the image of competition (in sports or business) for the later films.

**True Love or Adultery:**

*“Moscow, my Love” (1975) and “The Melody of the White Night” (1976)*

The second half of the 1970s, when several co-production feature films were released one after another, was the most fruitful period in Japanese-Soviet cine-contacts. “Moscow, my Love” (1975), “The Melody of the White Night” (1976), “Dersu Uzala” (1976) and “The Way to Medals” (1979) were filmed at that time. In fact, it was against the most unfavorable political background, when no official visits were being made to either country by their top leaders. It is amazing that during the period called by one established expert “the lowest ebb in bilateral relations between these neighboring countries”¹, Soviet-Japanese encounters were represented on screen as the passionate romance of a Russian man and Japanese woman.

The first Soviet-Japanese co-production “The Little Fugitive” (1966) was discussed in Part 1 of this article.² In Part 2 I am going to show how the co-productions reflected changes in mutual Russo-Japanese perceptions that occurred in the 1970s, and what kind of imagery was used for the screen representation of Soviet-Japanese encounters from 1975 to 1989.

The Archives of the State Committee for Cinematography contain a file with documents concerning several Soviet-Japanese co-production projects discussed immediately after the release of “The Little Fugitive”³. The liveliest period in the exchange of creative ideas seems to be 1967-69. Some projects conceived at that time were never filmed; for example, the dynamic story of an airplane crash over the Sea of Japan and the subsequent adventures of three typhoon researchers (one from Japan, one from the USSR and one from France). Some other projects were revitalized after perestroika; for example, the story of Daikokuya Kodayu, the 18th century
merchant, whose ship and crew was brought by a storm to the shores of Kamchatka. Daikokuya Kodayu crossed Siberia, and the Russian empress Ekaterina II herself granted him an audience and financed the special expedition that permitted him to leave for Japan. The archive documents show that the Soviet side was not enthusiastic about the idea of filming the story in 1969 proposing instead, a film project about Soviet fishermen helping shipwrecked Japanese fishermen, and the movie about Daikokuya Kodayu was shot only in 1993.

The initial idea for the second Soviet-Japanese movie, “Moscow, My Love” (in Japanese “Mosukuwa waga ai”, in Russian “Moskwa lyubov moya”) was also expressed for the first time in 1969, but the film did not appear until 1975. Producer Otsuka Kano, who proposed in 1969 a libretto about a Japanese ballerina coming to Moscow to study ballet and dying from A-bomb-caused hereditary leukemia, combined the theme of Russian-Japanese collaboration in the sphere of fine arts already probated in 1966 in the co-production “The Little Fugitive” and the politically evocative theme of the second generation Hiroshima hibakusha.

Otsuka Kano was close to the Socialist party of Japan. The Japanese Socialist party was at the time establishing a kind of special relations, including mutual visits and consultations, with the Communist party of the USSR, whereas the traditional ties between the communist parties of both countries became looser because of their different attitudes toward the politics of Maoist China.

Producer Otsuka Kano’s interest in Soviet-Japanese cultural exchange was not only professional, but also personal, as his own son Otsuka Hiroshi was applying at that time to become a student of Moscow Institute of Cinematography, which fact is a good illustration of the close intertwining of real and on-screen cultural contacts between the two countries.

The Japanese film industry had been in a very difficult situation since the end of the 1960s, and several months after the project planning had been
started, Nikkatsu Company, which had been intending to co-produce “Moscow, My Love” with the M. Gorky Film Studio, cancelled it because of financial difficulties (August, 1969).6

The negotiations about co-producing “Moscow, My Love” were renewed only in January 1973. This time Otsuka Kano secured the support of the Toho Company, and the partner from the Soviet side was changed to the country’s biggest film studio - “Mosfilm”. According to the contract, 70% of the expenses were to be born by the Soviet side.

There is no doubt that so-called international cultural exchanges, of which cooperation in filmmaking is a part, have always been very sensitive to political and diplomatic relations. The visit of Foreign Minister A. Gromyko to Japan in January 1972 initiated the “smile diplomacy” period between Japan and the USSR, and the prospects of the Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei’s visit to Moscow in the fall of 1973 made the atmosphere surrounding the Japanese-Soviet co-productions especially welcoming and warm.

These aspirations for diplomatic rapprochement were symbolically mirrored in a scenario, completed by May 1973 with the cooperative efforts of Soviet and Japanese script-writers (Kashikura Tashiyuki, Edward Radzinsky, Aleksandre Mitta). Their scenario was significantly different from the initial libretto of Otsuka Kano, proposed in 1969, and the differences seem to be telltale. In the libretto of 1969 the Japanese ballerina Yuriko came to Moscow and found herself enveloped in the loving care of her father’s friend, a former Japanese POW, who had never returned to Japan and who was working as a translator in one of the Moscow publishing houses. Her Moscow friends all had professional or personal ties with Japan (studying Japanese language, etc.), and the object of her love was Tetsuya, a Japanese postgraduate student whom she met in Moscow. Torn between her passion for ballet and her love for Tetsuya, Yuriko finally chooses the ballet. Having realized that she was fatally ill with leukemia, Yuriko makes
a direct appeal to the audience of the Bolshoi Theatre: “Let us struggle for peace together!” In the finale, the sight of Yuriko`s gravestone with the inscription “Here lies a girl born in Hiroshima” was to accentuate the universal character of the Hiroshima tragedy and the Japanese-Soviet solidarity in antiwar policy.

In the scenario written in 1973 a young and talented ballerina, Yuriko, comes to Moscow to study ballet at the famous Bolshoi Theater. Yuriko is happy in Moscow, rehearsing the central part in the classical ballet “Giselle” (it was already clear that the role of Yuriko would be given to Kurihara Komaki, who had been seriously studying ballet with Russian teachers until she chose the dramatic theatre). Yuriko is befriended by Russian dancers and artists, and falls in love with one of them, the young and handsome sculptor Volodya. Quite suddenly Yuriko comes down with leukemia, because her mother was a “hibakusha”. Yuriko`s only relative, her uncle Nogava, the Moscow representative at a Japanese trading company, is very supportive and kind, but the indispensable measures are taken by Soviet doctors, who give Yuriko not only professional help, but sincere sympathy. During the period of a short remission in the girl’s illness, the young journalist Tetsuya who loves Yuriko comes to Moscow from Japan to see her. When Tetsuya learns about Volodya, he takes Yuriko to a sea resort, where Volodya is decorating a new modern town with his sculptures, so that Yuriko can meet with her beloved and tell him about her fate. Meeting with Volodya is so painful for Yuriko, that she tries to drown herself in the sea without telling Volodya about her illness. But none other than Tetsuya asks Volodya to save Yuriko, and Volodya brings her out of the sea. On the shore they make love for the first time, and the next day Yuriko returns to Moscow. In spite of the joint efforts of the Soviet and the Japanese doctors, every day her condition changes for the worse. We do not witness her death, but rather Tetsuya walking along the streets of Hiroshima tells us about it and adds: “I think she was happy.” The last scene is very
optimistic as we see little girls of different nations and ethnicities taking their first ballet steps.

The radical change in the scenario introduced by the theme of international and interracial romance was not approved unanimously. Oleg Teneishvily, the director of “Sovexportfilm”, the Soviet organization involved in the distribution of Soviet films abroad and the purchase of foreign films for demonstration in the USSR and the regulation of international activities of Soviet filmmakers, sent to Director of “Mosfilm” Studio Nikolay Sizov a letter concerning the first variant of “Moscow, my love” scenario. Here is my translation of some quotations from the letter, which is preserved in the production files of “Mosfilm” Studio:

“The romance between the Japanese girl Yuriko and the young Soviet physician Victor (In the first version of the scenario Yuriko’s beloved was a doctor, not a sculptor. - I.M.) seems extremely improbable. It brings false collisions into the scenario. Far more convincing could be the further development of the already mapped out relationship of Yuriko with the student-composer Tetsuya, who had come from Japan.

Somehow strange is the scenario representation of Yuriko’s uncle, who presumably had left Japan 25 years before and since then had been living continuously in Moscow, working in one of the Soviet Publishing Houses. The version in which Mr. Nogava acts as the representative of one of the Japanese trading companies in Moscow will be much more interesting.

The finale of the movie should be constructed not around Yuriko’s death, but rather around her leaving for Japan with her Japanese friend. The spectators should only surmise about her further destiny.”
All the recommendations of this letter, except the one concerning international romance, were adopted. The scenario became less tragic and antiwar, and more melodramatic and commercial.

The film is far from being concerned with the problem of the A-bomb, Japanese-Soviet solidarity in the struggle for peace or any other political or social problem. We should rather count the movie “Moscow, My Love” among the long list of melodramas about interracial romance that have been released in Europe and the United States since the early days of movie making.

The film director, Aleksandre Mitta, in a private interview (19.12.2001) told me that when it was proposed by the “Mosfilm” Studio authorities that a co-production film with Japan be made, he knew from the very beginning that it should be a melodrama. Indian or Mexican melodramas were very popular among the mass spectators in the Soviet Union, but Soviet filmmakers were restricted from the genre by the ideological authorities. A co-production melodrama with the promise of good box-office returns was a compromise between ideology and economical interests for the Soviet cinema authorities and it was an experiment in mass-culture product for Soviet filmmakers.

As the Soviet director of co-production “Moscow, My Love” was very much oriented to the tastes of the average spectator (not so different in Japan and the USSR), he managed to shoot a commercially successful feature8, embodying cliched images of Soviet-Japanese mutual perceptions. Japan is represented by Tokyo highways and many-storied concrete buildings, by children in colorful kimono on the day of the Shichi-go-san Festival, by cheerful young people in Shibuya and, as a contrast, by the A-bomb- damaged dome in the center of Hiroshima. Moscow is shown as a realm of ballet, with the famous Bolshoi theatre in the center of it. We can also see the May Day demonstration, the interiors of the sculptor’s studio and the hospital, but no private dwellings of Soviet people.
Although the Japanese side expressed a wish to show the everyday life of the Japanese heroine in Moscow, as well as the lives of ordinary Soviet people (it was even mentioned that the main hero Volodya should not be a sculptor, because it makes him different from average Soviet youth), in fact this wish was ignored. To elevate and romanticize the love of Yuriko and Volodya the authors of the movie even cut out a whole sequence of previously filmed scenes depicting Volodya's relationship with his Russian partner Irina, and their parting because of Volodya’s love for Yuriko.

The co-production movie with its multifaceted functions also needs critical interpretations, which were not voiced at the time when the movie was shot and shown to the public. So, we may assume that minimizing the realia of Moscow life in the 70s was not only efficient in elevating pure love, but was also concordant with the tendency to show on screen only the successes and achievements of the socialist system. Moreover if we imagine how disturbing it was for the Soviet ideological censors of the time to see a hero in love with a non-Soviet girl (international marriages had tacit disapproval), we can better understand why the Soviet sculptor Volodya is so passive and dependent. In fact, it was the Japanese character Tetsuya who pushed Yuriko into Volodya’s embrace.

Japan, symbolically represented in the movie by the Japanese cinema star Kurihara Komaki, and Russia, represented by the blue-eyed Oleg Vidov, love each other but their romance is tragic. The obstacle in the way to their happiness is the tragic legacy of the World War: the consequences of the American dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Thus the third party, that is, the USA, is invisibly present in this model, but is never named. We cannot be quite sure, that the 29.2 million spectators in the Soviet Union who watched the movie, and those who watched it in Japan, perceived the propaganda message. The message of the mainstream melodrama genre is much more powerful, being familiar to moviegoers all over the world.

The Japanese and Soviet cinema traditions both had elaborated a national
variety of melodrama, and the film became a kind of hybrid. For the Japanese spectators, it might be perceived in the context of melodramas about the “A-bomb Maiden” (the young female victim afflicted with bomb-related illnesses). For the Soviet audience the film could be viewed as a one more touching story of a foreigner escaping from social or racial oppression of his own society and discovering new meaning in life and a new family in the paradise of socialism. For example, the scene of the May Day demonstration in “Moscow, My Love”, when Yuriko is marching in a row with the participants and suddenly feels herself relieved from her loneliness and distress, and which precedes her fateful encounter with Volodya, clearly alludes to the famous Soviet movie “The Circus” (1936) about an American actress and her black child, who found happiness in Moscow.

The representation of Soviet-Japanese encounters on screen provoked the intertwining of the two national traditions in one film, but it is quite natural to surmise that each national audience perceived the film differently, identifying it with the habitual genre conventions.

Although the title “Moscow, My Love” alludes to the renowned French new-wave feature “Hiroshima Mon Amour” by Alain Resnais, as I tried to show above, stylistically there is nothing in common between the two films. However, the next Soviet-Japanese co-production, which was undertaken immediately after “Moscow, My Love”, again starring Kurihara Komaki, is consciously modeled after “Hiroshima Mon Amour”.

The script of “The Melody of the White Night” (in Japanese “Byakuya no shirabe”, in Russian “Melodiya beloi nochi”) was written by the young Soviet film director Sergei Soloviev and Kashikura Tashiyuki, who took part in the script-writing for “Moscow, My Love”. S. Soloviev also directed the film, although he had an assistant co-director from the Japanese side (K.Nishimura). Kurihara Komaki and Yuri Solomin, who had just recently starred in Kurosawa Akira’s “Dersu Uzala”, played the leading parts. The
project was realized by “Mosfilm” Studio and Toho Company on the same conditions as “Moscow, My Love” (70% of the expenses borne by the Soviet partner, and 30% by the Japanese partner).

In the movie “Melody of the White Night” (1976) a Japanese pianist Yuko arrives in Leningrad and gets acquainted with the Russian composer Ilia and the people close to him. Ilia is an orphan having lost all his relatives during the siege of Leningrad at the time of the World War II and who, along with some other children from the orphanage, was adopted by their music teacher. We know about Ilia’s deceased wife, who was in poor health since childhood as a result of the wartime Leningrad famine of 1941-43, and who died giving birth to their son Alesha, now ten. Ilia and Yuko fall in love with each other; they are happy together and Alesha longs for the maternal love of Yuko. But the union of the two has no future because Yuko is married, and for her, who is an orphan like Ilia, her husband is more than spouse. The two meet afterwards again in Kyoto. By this time Yuko’s husband has died, but her feelings of obligation and guilt become an insurmountable psychological obstacle to their love.

Photo 1. Moscow, My Love. (Reproduction of the still from the film, the courtesy of «Mosfilm» Studio Archives).
There are significant differences between the two films, depicting Russian-Japanese romance. The representation of the Soviet Union and Japan, Moscow and Tokyo in “Moscow, my Love” stresses the similarities in the dynamic urban environment and optimism of the young generation of both countries. This can be perceived as a metaphor for overcoming the cold-war schemes of the world divided into two polar systems. No hint is even dropped about the possible psychological problems with mutual understanding that two persons, as Yuriko and Volodya, coming from such different background as Japan and the Soviet Union might face.

Yuriko’s passion is classical ballet, which is a non-Japanese art. We never see her in the privacy of her Japanese home. Her only relative, uncle Nogava, also lives in Moscow. Yuriko’s intimacy with Russian culture is even symbolized by the white shirt with folklore embroidery, in which she is attired on the day she makes love with Volodya. (Photo 1).

“The Melody of the White Night” stresses the difference between Leningrad and Kyoto, the old capitals of the two countries. The ethnocultural difference is accentuated and aesthetisized, but while the Japanese heroine smoothly enters the frames of beautifully taken Leningrad scenes, the Russian hero seems completely out of place in the narrow streets of the old Kyoto. Leningrad is represented by the sphere of refined arts - the Hermitage museum, the architecture of St. Petersburg, an artist’s studio, and a country house full of antiques. The city is shown mostly at night, when it is empty as if uninhabited, and we can see Yuko only in the company of Ilia and his relatives. The whole adoptive family of Ilia is willing to embrace Yuko, which on the verbal level might symbolize the same willingness of the figurative family of Soviet people, but in the visual imagery no such implication is made. All the members of Ilia’s family can rather be perceived as the remnants of “old Russia” with its traditional refined culture. In fact, what we do not see in the film is “the Soviet Realm” sleeping during the white night.
On the other hand, the Japanese location of the movie is densely populated and the heroine is shown as a part of her community. “The Melody of the White Night” is a movie demonstrating various realities of Japanese society, which has entered by then the stage of rapid economic growth while yet retains its traditional culture. We see the Shinkansen, highways, children drinking Coka-Cola, and small shops selling traditional homemade sweets. However the Russian hero Ilia in his formal jacket with a big canvas (a portrait of Yuko) in his hands is a stranger in the old district of Kyoto, where people know each other and leave their homes scantily clad, as if the territory adjoining to one’s home is private. Adolescent schoolgirls look at Ilia from the open window and laugh. Ilia in Kyoto is no long a romantic hero, and he will never become part of Yuko’s life in Japan (Photo 2).

Whereas the movies of the 1960s carried the message that Russian-

Photo 2. The Melody of the White Night. (Reproduction of the still from the production files of the film, the courtesy of «Mosfilm» Studio Archives
Japanese encounters could be harmonious, partnership between Japan and Russia was possible and fruitful, and however limited it was on the level of individuals and in the sphere of arts, in the 1970s even this narrow partnership was perceived as tragically doomed to failure in spite of the mutual attraction. The love story of Ilia and Yuko had no happy end.

**Rivals in Sports, Rivals in Business**

“The Way to Medals” (in Russian “Put k Medalyam”, in Japanese “Yomigaere Majo”, which can be literally translated as “Witches, Revive!”) is a feature film about the players on the Japanese and Soviet national women’s volleyball teams. The movie was made in connection with the preparatory events for the Moscow Olympic Games of 1980. The Moscow Olympics were boycotted by many countries, including Japan, because of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. It is very difficult now to get the exact data about the number of spectators who saw the film, released in Japan in April 1980 and in the USSR only one month before the opening of the Olympics (the road show began on June 23, 1980). As the Japanese volleyball team did not come to Moscow it is very likely that the movie was not distributed widely, which diminished its influence on public opinion.

However, even in this movie of minor importance, some obvious tendencies telling us about the fundamental changes in the screen representation of Russian-Japanese encounters are noteworthy. First of all, competition in sports implies rather rivalry than cooperation. The very method of film shooting shows that Soviet-Japanese cooperation in film making by 1979 had been reduced to a minimum and substituted by the editing of two independently shot movies as one oeuvre.

In the movie “The Way to Medals” we see two parallel stories of young volleyball players, Tanya and Megumi. The story of Tanya was filmed by the Soviet film director Nikita Orlov (“Mosfilm” Studio) and the story of Megumi was shot at the Toei Studio by Sato Junya (who in 1993 also
directed the co-production “Dreams about Russia”). While Sato Junya shot his film in a semi-documentary manner of sports reportage, Nikita Orlov followed the conventions of feature film (unfortunately, a feature of poor artistic quality). No doubt that the scenario of Matsuda Hiroo, Y. Lakerbai and A. Stepanov also contained the contrast of the bold, realistic depiction of Megumi`s career as a volleyball player with the rather confusing, pseudo-psychological drama of Tanya`s relations with her male friend, her coach, her husband and her team.

Tanya is depicted as the daughter of a well to do Moscow family, whose parents work somewhere abroad, presumably as high ranking Soviet officials, and whose grandmother is a well educated woman, who prefers to speak to Tanya in English “to practice”. For Tanya volleyball is just one of many ways to express herself. The Japanese heroine Megumi is the daughter of a Japanese peasant somewhere in Hiroshima prefecture. Her father had already died and her mother dyes from leukemia (sic!) at the beginning of the film. So, there is no better way for Megumi than to give all her energy and will to sports.

The coaching of the Japanese volleyball team is very tough and ruthless;
the players are doomed to exhausting training, unquestioning obedience to the coach and senior players, and the total subordination of personal demands to the demands of the team.

The Soviet volleyball team is represented as a group of accomplices, where the leader is brought forward first of all by her personal qualities. The women players have enough time for romance and marriage, some of them have children, and their interests are not limited to volleyball. The coach of the Soviet team is constantly searching for new approaches and techniques to cultivate winners.

The two main heroines of the movie meet twice in Japan, and their private encounters have the potential to become the climactic point of the story, but in fact the meeting of Tanya and Megumi is so brief, that we hardly know how they really feel about each other. (Photo 3). We see them enjoying meals at a Japanese restaurant, quite naturally we see them playing volleyball, and as the most emotional expression of mutual attitudes we see them crying together with compassion for each other’s hardships.

This rather naive, idealized, unrealistic picture of the Soviet volleyball team was exactly what the Soviet authorities wanted to see. In the summary of the film, signed by the “Mosfilm” Studio heads, it was formulated as follows: “The scenes of training of the Japanese sportswomen are impressively taken and mounted. Rigid drill and a barrack-like atmosphere characteristic of a Japanese school supply an expressive background, which emphasizes the creative, initiative, friendly and humanistic atmosphere of Soviet Sports.”

Fostered by the propaganda and constructed on screen, the idealized image of the Soviet sportsmen was very far from reality, but it might have seemed inspiring and attractive. Or was it incomprehensible and exotic for the Japanese spectators? I have found only one review of the film in “Kinema Jumpo”, and it appears to welcome the very idea of the co-production feature developing two independent narratives, each one around
the Japanese or the Soviet heroine respectively. "The Way to Medals" was the last project among several attempts at mutual representation in Soviet-Japanese co-productions of the 70s. The next one did not appear until the beginning of perestroika in the USSR. It was shot in 1989, when the Soviet troops returned from Afghanistan and Soviet cinema, stimulated by glasnost policy, was passionately exploring new themes that had been claimed to be taboo before.

The film director Alexandre Mitta, whose "Moscow, My Love" was the most commercially successful Soviet-Japanese co-production of the 70s, initiated a new co-production with Japan. Kurihara Komaki was also enthusiastic about the idea, and with her help it became possible to recruit the Japanese veteran scriptwriter Iwama Yoshiki. From the Soviet side the project was backed up by Vladimir Tsvetov, the journalist who spent many years in Japan, and by the scriptwriter Victor Merezko. The scenario was titled at first "The Live Vaccine", and then "A Step" (in Russian "Shag"), but for the Japanese audience the movie was presented under the title "Mirai-e no Dengon" (The Message to the Future).

The independent company "Shigoto", whose roots were in the broadcasting division of the famous theatre house "Haiyuza", where Kurihara Komaki had been starring since her theatrical debut, undertook the production of the movie from the Japanese side, while the Soviet partner was "Mosfilm" Studio.

There is no doubt that both the Japanese and the Soviet participants in the project were eager to begin a new stage in Soviet-Japanese joint film making, and they were moved by a sincere will to improve mutual understanding between the two countries. However, in the private interviews given to the author of this article in 2001, both A. Mitta and V. Merezko were reluctant to speak about their movie "A Step", and one of them even claimed it to be the worst film he ever made, although his recollections of Japan and the Japanese staff were very warm.
Along with certain personal reasons I can explain such an attitude with reference to the short time distance dividing us from 1989, which has not yet become the historical past. Generally speaking, the feeling of disillusionment concerning Russian-Japanese rapprochement has been characteristic since the beginning of the 90s, and not only of the participants of the co-production project “A Step”. It is well known that just at the time when the movie “A Step” was being undertaken at the end of the 80s, there were many expectations and illusions on both sides in connection with the projected visit of M. Gorbachev to Japan. However, it turned out that both sides did not know each other well enough. It seems to be equally true regarding the highest political spheres and the participants in the widening cultural and humanitarian exchanges between the two countries.

At a time when the leaders of perestroika used Japan’s postwar development as a possible model for the modernization of the USSR, the filmmakers turned to an event of 1959, when the cheap and effective Soviet poliomyelitis vaccine helped to stop an epidemic of infantile paralysis in Japan and saved millions of lives. Instead of the image of Japan as an economical superpower, the image of Japan in trouble was presented. This image was understandable to the Soviet people in the midst of economical turmoil of the 1980s. It elicited sympathy and somehow cured the feelings of national humiliation, intimate to the majority of Soviet people at the time, as they found themselves destitute and helpless in the new situation of changing to a market economy. That is why, I think, the Moscow of the late 1950s is shown in the movie with nostalgia for government buildings splendidly decorated with marble and bronze (for example, the Ministry of Foreign Trade) and for the “luxurious” life of the Moscow elite, with their country houses, fur coats and other symbols of Soviet prosperity. The little Japanese boy who comes to Moscow with his mother to get vaccinated is heartily welcomed and entertained (presumably in a kindergarten), and we see happy and healthy Soviet children celebrating the New Year festival.
In the beginning of the 1990s when the movie was shown in both countries, the situation was quite the reverse. Thousands of children in the USSR, who were seriously affected by the illnesses related to the accident at the Chernobyl Atomic Power Plant (1986), received necessary medication owing to the voluntary donations of the Japanese people. Kurihara Komaki initiated a campaign of collecting money for the Soviet child victims of Chernobyl, and the showing of the movie “A Step” in Japan was closely connected to these philanthropic activities\textsuperscript{14}.

It is very likely that a movie about Soviet vaccine imported for Japanese children at the beginning of the 1960s provoked the feelings of compassion and moral obligation in the Japanese audiences of the 1990s. However, film’s narrative and visual accents rather stress the enduring, irreconcilable interests of the business circles in Japan and the USSR, and the crucial

Photo 4. A Step. (Reproduction of the still from the film, the courtesy of «Mosfilm» Studio Archives).
significance of economic interests (which was especially topical for the Soviet viewers). Meticulously demonstrating big and small obstacles (including transportation and packaging problems) on the way to a very routine deal, the authors of the film for the first time uncovered on screen the deep cultural and social incomprehension between the USSR and Japan as trade partners. Fortunately, in the film the goodwill of the heroes helped to overcome the difficulties.

The Japanese heroine of the film (Kurihara Komaki) is a housewife, struggling for the import of the Soviet vaccine because she lost one of her two children to the epidemics. She goes to Moscow to test the Soviet Vaccine on her other son and then organizes a pharmaceutical company of her own to import Soviet medicine.

On the Soviet side the main hero is a researcher specializing in new vaccines, whose unselfishness and self-sacrifice force the officials of the Foreign Trade Ministry to break some outdated regulations and sell the vaccine to Japan to save the Japanese children.

Although there is a kind of attraction between the Soviet researcher and the Japanese housewife, no romance is shown. The Soviet-Japanese cooperation is thus motivated by purely humanitarian impulses, and seems viable only as a constant struggle of enthusiasts from both sides with an unfavorable situation in the market and numerous prohibitive regulations.

Such a non-optimistic vision of the movie, though projected on the past, reflected also the anticipation of difficulties in the future. Partnership in the economic sphere appeared comparable to rivalry in sports, and it allowed no place for romance between Russia and Japan.

In fact, “A Step” was the last feature film produced with shared Soviet and Japanese capital investment and joint decision making of the Soviet and Japanese creative teams made under the supervision of the Soviet Communist Party ideological authorities. Since 1989, several movies have been shot by Japanese directors on Russian location ("Under the Aurora"
1990; “Dreams about Russia”, 1993) or by a Soviet director of high artistic reputation on Japanese location (the semi-documentaries of A. Sokurov, shot in 1995-1999), but those features were no longer co-productions in the meaning I have attached to the term in this article. The cooperation of the Japanese and Russian filmmakers gradually took the same shape as any other case of international filmmaking cooperation.

Conclusions

The Soviet-Japanese co-production films are not so numerous, but they provide us with rare material for better understanding the strategies of media representations, acceptable to both sides at a given moment. Such moments usually coincided with political rapprochement between the two countries, but the impact of the movies on mass consciousness was not just momentary.

The Soviet-Japanese co-productions tended to be genre movies, but they combined the different traces characteristic of the national film traditions of both countries. The image of the foreign partner in co-productions is never overtly negative, so they present a rather idealistic vision of the Soviet-Japanese encounters. This was essential for the movies which aimed at making “the other” acceptable and loveable, as the movies projected on the screen a collective dream about a desired partnership between the two countries.

In the 1960s, when the image of the Soviet-Japanese partnership was constructed from the zero level and aimed at overshadowing the images of mutual hostility and hatred, children were represented as mediators connecting the two countries. The notion of the childlike innocence was helpful in attempting to abolish all painful remembrances of the past.

An important symbolic image persistent in the co-production movies became the image of an orphan who might be adopted to a new family as a spiritual, rather than biological member. At the same time the orphan hero is
marginal to society, being free from some of its regulations. In fact, all the main Japanese heroes of the co-productions are missing their biological parents. The marginalization of hero-mediators was achieved also by their representation as people of artistic professions, living in the realm of pure art and somehow estranged from real life with all its problems. Depicting mediator heroes as victims of leukemia was also a kind of marginalization. In sum, the Soviet-Japanese encounters were perceived by both sides as rare, and viable only on the individual level; moreover, those individuals were represented as marginal to society.

In the movies of the 70s the adult heroes embody the Soviet-Japanese partnership, which is symbolically represented as romance. Such romances never end with marriage. The causes of the tragic impossibility of the reunion are projected to the past; war atrocities (the siege of Leningrad, atomic attack on Hiroshima) are pointed to as fatal events, depriving heroes of their happiness. Ethno-cultural differences also appear to be an obstacle for international marriage. The sociopolitical reasons for the international marriage problem are never expressed.

Since 1979 the movies have not represented the symbolic romance of Japan and the Soviet Union. If the movies of the 1960s and 1970s represented a partnership between Japan and Russia limited to the sphere of culture, later co-productions stressed the image of rivalry and competition, both in sports and in the economic sphere. In the last Soviet-Japanese co-production movie (“A Step”, 1989) only self-rejecting enthusiasts struggling against the authorities of their own country and acting at their own risk manage to overcome the unfavorable situation in Soviet-Japanese relations.

Notes

1 Kimura, Hiroshi. “Japan-Soviet Political Relations from 1976-1983”. In Japan and


3 See RGALI. 2944.13.1542.

4 The film “Dreams about Russia” (Oroshiakoku Suimutan) based on a free adaptation of the novel by Inoue Yasushi was shot in 1993 by the Japanese film director Sato Junya (co-production of Daiei Company and “Lenfilm” Studio in St. Petersburg).

5 See RGALI. 2944.13.1542. 98.

6 Ibid. 116. It is very probable that reasons apart from economic ones made realization of the project impossible in 1969, but I am not aware of any documents, which could prove it.


8 According to official data “Moscow, My Love” was seen in USSR by 29.2 Mln. spectators. See Kinovedcheskiye zapiski ёѣхѓцѡёѓѤ Чщѐѓљэѐѡёф (1991. No11. 11-15.

9 “Mosfilm” Studio Production Files. “Moskva Lyubov Moya”: Delo Filma аѓіяцф еѣхѓцѡёѓѤ Чщѐѓљэѐѡёф (Moscow, My Love: Production Files). V.1. 41.

10 See RGALI. 2944.4.2909. 24.


12 RGALI. 2944.4.5220. 24.
要約

representation of soviet-japanese encounters in co-production feature films part 2. from romance to competition
Ирина М. Мельникова

«Коммуникативная компетенция личности как основа эффективной социальной деятельности»

Первые шаги по учебно-воспитательной работе с детьми, как правило, осуществляются с помощью различных методик, которые помогают в формировании основных навыков и умений. Важно, чтобы дети чувствовали себя комфортно и свободно в общении, чтобы они могли свободно выражать свои мысли, чувства и эмоции. Для этого необходимо создать благоприятную атмосферу, где дети могут чувствовать себя свободными и непринужденно.

В рамках обучения детей коммуникативной компетенции особое значение имеет развитие навыков вежливого общения. Важно научить детей уважать мнения и чувства других, уметь слушать и слышать. Это поможет в будущем, когда они станут взрослыми, и им будет легче общаться с людьми из разных культур и социальных групп.

Для развития коммуникативной компетенции детей можно использовать различные методы, такие как ролевые игры, диалоги, чтение стихотворений и рассказов. Важно, чтобы дети имели возможность практиковаться в общении, чтобы они могли применять полученные навыки в реальной жизни.

В целом, работа над развитием коммуникативной компетенции детей является важной задачей, которая требует от педагогов тщательного планирования и продуманной организации работы. Необходимо учитывать индивидуальные особенности каждого ребенка, чтобы обеспечить его успешное развитие и формирование навыков эффективного общения.