

Speech on Japan's Soft Power and
Japan-Scottish Relations

by H.E. Keiichi Hayashi,

Ambassador of Japan to the Court of St James's,
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Creative Industries in Japan and Scotland"

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This is my second visit to Edinburgh since my appointment as Ambassador of Japan to the UK, but this is the first time for me to deliver a speech in Edinburgh as Ambassador. I would like to thank the University of Edinburgh and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation for this opportunity today.

When I was asked to give these remarks to open a symposium on soft power at the University of Edinburgh, it instantly reminded me of a TV programme entitled “Ivanhoe”, which used to be broadcast around 1960, when even I was, well, very young. Of course, the story was originally written by none other than Sir Walter Scott, who graduated from this great University.

I recently found out that the title role was played by Roger Moore, the future ‘007’ who, I am happy to note, is now a real knight. I cannot recall any of the specific episodes, but the title song still rings in my ears, and the valour and pomp of the handsome knights fighting for justice and helping beautiful ladies certainly helped to build in my mind a very positive view of the English knighthood or medieval chivalry. This may well have subconsciously affected my career for, as you can see, I have ended up as the Ambassador to the UK!

Although the concept of soft power seems to be relatively new, its application is certainly not. The UK has always been considered rich in soft power, as was convincingly reaffirmed by the highly successful London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The US, meanwhile, with all the glamour of Hollywood movies and its Coca-Cola civilization, is said to have started emphasising soft power only in recent years as it has increasingly

experienced the limitations of naked military power.

On the other hand, soft power has always been significant for post-war Japan, which has given up military hard power as a way of pursuing state policy.

Entrepreneurship, or the enterprising spirit which found its expression during the industrialisation process, can be seen as a form of soft power wielded by the UK, and especially Scotland.

In relation to Japan, we are, of course, all conscious of the historic role played by Lord Bruce's family in bringing UK-Japan interchange to the modern context. But, for instance, Thomas Glover, a merchant who went from Scotland to Japan in the 19th century, must have applied a kind of Scottish soft power towards Japan. Scottish folk songs came to be sung and loved everywhere, but the best known factor, and what forms an unbreakable bond with Japan, must be Scotch whisky. It is a type of *hard* liquor, but it has become the ultimate and most potent example of soft power!

I would like to introduce one event that can work as soft power for Scotland and Japan in both directions. Next year, 2013, will mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival in the UK of the so-called "Choshu Five". They were a group of five young Japanese men who came from the Choshu clan of Western Japan, currently Yamaguchi Prefecture, to study in the UK to contribute to Japan's modernization.

Notable members of the Choshu Five included the men who were to become our first Prime Minister, Hirobumi

Ito, and our first Foreign Minister, Kaoru Inoue. Jardine Matheson and Co, established by Scottish doctor William Jardine and Edinburgh University graduate James Matheson, played an important role in bringing them to the UK.

Their passage from Japan was facilitated by William Keswick, who was a nephew of William Jardine and had opened the Yokohama branch of the company, while James Matheson's nephew Hugh supported them during their stay in the UK.

One of those young men, Yozo Yamao, after his studies at UCL, London, came to Glasgow to learn shipbuilding. He worked for Napier's shipyard. On returning to Japan, he joined the Meiji Government and applied his knowledge from the UK in his job by establishing the Ministry of Engineering in the Government as well as creating the Faculty of Engineering in what is now Tokyo University. He has since come to be known as "the Father of Japanese Engineering". In this vein, it can be said that the UK including Scotland was the grandfather of Japanese engineering! Since I am from Yamaguchi Prefecture, this story resonates with me and I look forward to celebrating the anniversary next year.

Now, what can we do to enhance Japanese soft power? One can point to various manifestations of it. Our philosophy on global issues such as climate change, development assistance and the ageing society is one. Another obvious example is science and technology. It is a fact that 20% of global research and development expenditure comes from Japan, which accounts for only 2% of the world's population.

Meanwhile, Japan has a strong track record in medical research. On Monday, Professor Shinya Yamanaka from Kyoto University won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine alongside Professor John Gurdon from Cambridge University. In 2006 Professor Yamanaka discovered how to create iPS cells, or induced pluripotent stem cells, which would revolutionise so-called regenerative medicine in that they would make it possible to repair or reproduce human organs from the mere tissue of the person concerned. His achievement makes him the 19th Japanese citizen to win the Nobel Prize.

A third area of soft power must be cuisine: Tokyo has the more Michelin Stars than any other world city, including Paris.

And last but not least, I should mention pop culture. Interest in the pop culture of Japan can lead to interest in, for example, studying Japanese history. When interviewing young British people applying to teach in Japan, we find their initial interest in Japan to be centred on Manga. “Hyper-Japan”, a pop culture-oriented event in London, started back in autumn 2010 and has become very popular. The latest one, in February, saw 35,000 visitors.

The Japanese Government therefore supports promoting Japanese pop culture. One good example is the “International Manga Award”, which the Japanese Government has held each year since 2007. Moreover, during the same period our Embassy in London has held the “Manga-Jiman” competition for aspiring Manga

writers from across the UK.

However, despite these increasingly conscious efforts by the Government, as Harvard Professor Joseph Nye has argued, the best communicators of soft power do not come from the government but from non-governmental sectors and civil society. This is a fascinating subject, and I very much look forward to hearing what the specialists have to say on it today.

Thank you very much.