

# Theoretical Aspects of the Study of Relations Between Uzbekistan and Japan

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**Abstract:** This article critically examines the theoretical foundations and practical dimensions of diplomatic relations between Japan and Uzbekistan, focusing on their historical, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Emphasizing the importance of trust and shared interests, both nations prioritize strengthening collaboration. Uzbekistan emerges as a significant ally of Japan in Central Asia, evidenced by key diplomatic visits, educational initiatives, and high-level exchanges. The sustained efforts in this regard underscore a commitment to strategic cooperation. Future prospects include enhancing interregional connections, facilitating labour migration, improving education and healthcare, and fostering cultural exchanges. Leveraging investments and drawing from the expertise of professionals will bolster Uzbekistan's economic prowess and workforce productivity. This comprehensive analysis highlights the potential for fostering enduring friendship and strategic partnership between Japan and Uzbekistan, shaping a promising future characterised by mutual benefit and cooperation.


## 1 INTRODUCTION

The diplomatic relationship between Uzbekistan and Japan holds substantial diplomatic and strategic importance within the realm of international relations. This article aims to dissect the nuanced dynamics characterising their engagement by undertaking a theoretical analysis of the factors shaping their bilateral ties. The focus is on examining the historical context, current diplomatic landscape, key areas of collaboration, and recommendations for enhancing mutual relations. Japan's prominent global position in terms of economic prowess and technological advancement presents valuable lessons for Uzbekistan, with which it maintains strong collaborative ties. The establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations in 1992, subsequent high-level visits, and the solidification of a strategic partnership in 2002-mark significant milestones in their relationship. Notable exchanges, including President Sh. M. Mirziyoyev's official visit to Japan in 2019, underscore the enduring commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, employing document analysis and a critical review of scholarly literature, to investigate the diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Japan. Utilizing primary sources, official documents, academic publications, and reports from international organizations, the research gathers relevant data (Len C., Uyama T., & Hirose T. (Eds), 2008). Employing methods such as comparative analysis, historical review, and content analysis, it aims to comprehend the multifaceted aspects of their relationship data (Len C., Uyama T., & Hirose T. (Eds), 2008).

The literature review delves into existing research on diplomatic ties between the two nations, referencing works by scholars such as Murashkin N., Takeshi Y., and Iwashita A. Notably, the collective monograph "Japan's Silk Road Diplomacy: Paving the Road Ahead" by Len, Uyama, and Hirose stands out for its exploration of various dimensions of the

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relationship between Central Asia and data (Len C., Uyama T., & Hirose T. (Eds), 2008). Additionally, studies by Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, M Shamilov, Z.G. Kasimova, B.B. Jahongirov, B.S. Suyunova, and Mirzokhid Rakhimov contribute valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of Uzbekistan-Japan relations (Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, M Shamilov et al., 2020). These studies examine historical occurrences, cross-cultural interactions, and business alliances, shedding light on the evolving nature of diplomatic ties between the two nations (Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, M Shamilov et al., 2020)

The diplomatic relationship between Uzbekistan and Japan holds significant strategic importance within international relations. While Japan is globally renowned for its economic prowess and technological advancement, Uzbekistan boasts a rich cultural heritage and strategic geopolitical position. Since establishing formal diplomatic ties in 1992, the partnership between the two nations has steadily expanded, driven by mutual interests in education, economic development, political reforms, and energy resources [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso]. Noteworthy high-level visits and initiatives such as the "Silk Road Diplomacy" approach underscore Japan's commitment to strengthening its engagement with Central Asia (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). Despite encountering challenges, the cooperative relations between Uzbekistan and Japan continue to flourish, encompassing political, economic, cultural, and educational domains [Azizov S]. Initiatives such as the establishment of parliamentary friendship leagues and interregional representative offices further promote bilateral cooperation and people-to-people exchanges [Current archive of the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendship with Foreign Countries under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan Political cooperation]. Through collaborative efforts in various sectors and the establishment of direct flights, the relationship between Uzbekistan and Japan has evolved into a multifaceted partnership, poised for further growth and development in the years to come [Uzbekistan-Japan: Towards a new strategic partnership (book-album)].

Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, and M Shamilov conducted research on the theme "Public diplomacy of Japan in Central Asia: the examples of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan." The research investigates the evolving dynamics of foreign policy relations between Japan and Central Asia, with a particular focus on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, M Shamilov,

2020). It explores areas of mutual cooperation and the implementation of public diplomacy practices in these two nations. Employing qualitative research methods, such as document analysis and interviews, the study seeks insights into how Japan identifies itself with the Central Asian region and its countries, as well as how public diplomacy serves as a tool of social influence in this context, in line with a constructivist perspective on international relations (Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, M Shamilov et al., 2020). The analysis reveals Japan's keen interest in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan across various domains, including education, economic development, political reforms, and energy resources (Aleksandra Palkova, Karlis Bukovskis, M Shamilov et al., 2020)

Uzbek researchers have also conducted several studies on the relations between Japan and Uzbekistan. Z.G. Kasimova's scientific article "New Trends in the Development of Cooperation Relations between Uzbekistan and Japan" shows the development processes and new trends of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Japan (Kasimova Zilola Gulomidin kizi). The results of the visits made by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Japan and the results of the armistice between the two countries are discussed. The author believes that relations between Uzbekistan and Japan have a bright future (Kasimova Zilola Gulomidin kizi). B.B. Jahongirov's article "Uzbekistan's scientific-technical relations with Japan" briefly examines the issue of Uzbekistan's scientific-technical relations with Japan (Burkhan Boronovich Jahongirov, 2021). In the article, the scientific and technical assistance of the two countries to each other, relations between the two countries, scientists, historians, and tourists in the years before independence were researched and conclusions were given. The author believes that Japan and Uzbekistan are compatible with each other in terms of scientific and technical cooperation, and this is proven by history (Burkhan Boronovich Jahongirov, 2021). B.S. Suyunova wrote a scientific article entitled "Features of the Development and Formation of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Japan" (Suyunova Barno Safarali). It talks about the work done with the help of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Japan, opened organizations, and projects, in addition, it analyses the work done in education, migration, health care, cultural exchange, and other areas (Suyunova Barno Safarali). The author believes that it is necessary to further strengthen the relations between Japan and Uzbekistan (Suyunova Barno Safarali). Mirzokhid Rakhimov conducted theoretical research on the relations between Japan and Central

Asia in his article on the theme "Central Asia and Japan: Bilateral and Multilateral Relations" [Mirzokhid Rakhimov]. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Central Asian nations and Japan established diplomatic ties, leading to a growing partnership evident in increased official interactions (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). In 1997, Japan introduced the "Silk Road Diplomacy" approach as part of its engagement with Central Asia (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014).. As the 21st century unfolded, new players such as India, Korea, and Japan became more active in Central Asia, receiving a warm reception in the region (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). Japan, recognizing Central Asia's rising strategic significance in global security, aimed to enhance its role in Eurasia as an Asian nation (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014)..

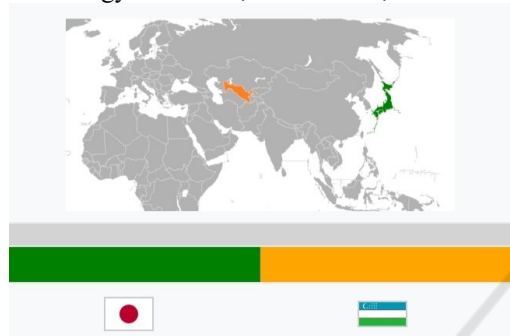
Over the past two decades, the partnership between Central Asian countries and Japan has steadily expanded. Japan has been a significant contributor to Central Asia's structural reforms, with investments in the region's economy and transportation networks reaching billions (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). Key areas of interest for Japan in its engagement with Central Asia include collaborations in education, economic development, political reforms, and energy resources (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). Japan's initiation of the "Central Asia plus Japan" dialogue reflects its commitment to multilateral diplomacy within the region (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). Despite encountering some challenges in their relationship, Central Asia and Japan hold promising prospects for future bilateral and multilateral cooperation (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014). Similar to Korea, India, and other nations, Japan enjoys a highly positive reputation in Central Asia, which serves as an additional factor strengthening partnerships between Central and East Asia and fostering interregional ties across the expansive Asian continent and beyond (Mirzokhid Rakhimov, 2014).

In addition, many Uzbek scientists have theoretically studied the relationship between Japan and Uzbekistan, and this continues. After Japan recognized the independence of Uzbekistan on December 28, 1991, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries from January 26, 1992 (Joraev S., Akhmedov O., Rahimova M, 2008). In 1993, the embassy of Japan was established in Tashkent, and three years later the embassy of Uzbekistan was established in Tokyo as structures serving to ensure the development of relations [Joraev S., Akhmedov O., Rahimova M; p.244]. Also in Osaka since 2004 The Honorary Consulate of the

Republic of Uzbekistan has started to operate (Joraev S., Akhmedov O., Rahimova M, 2008). Magasaki Ukeru, the first ambassador to Uzbekistan of Japan, said that the USSR was disintegrating and new countries were emerging (Joraev S., Akhmedov O., Rahimova M, 2008). The first visit of Japan to Central Asia after its establishment was by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Finance of Japan, Chino Tadao, to Uzbekistan in February 1992 (Joraev S., Akhmedov O., Rahimova M, 2008). According to Japanese experts, the International Monetary Fund is in Uzbekistan after this analysis that Japan is facing difficulties in economic policy For the implementation of macroeconomic policy and development of other areas in Uzbekistan started to help [Takeshi Y.]. Since 1995, the Japanese government has been promoting education and health in our country to small-scale social projects covering conservation, agriculture and other fields has been implementing a non-profit aid program [Prospects of trade and economic cooperation]. The second visit of the First President of our country to Japan in July 2002 visit and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Uzbekistan in August 2006, the official visit organized by him were further developing the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Japan became important. Interactions are not only political but also economic, cultural, science-educational, covering investment aspects as well [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso]. Also, cooperative relations have been established between legislative bodies, which are developing rapidly [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso]. In particular, Japan "Democratic Party of Japan - Uzbekistan" and "Liberal-Democratic Party of Japan - Uzbekistan" friendship leagues were established [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso]. Also, the Parliament of Uzbekistan Interparliamentary "Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan - Parliament of Japan" in the Legislative Chamber group is operating [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso]. Interregional representative offices of JICA and JETRO in Tashkent during 1999-2001 and providing impartial technical assistance, representatives of both business and social circles projects on establishing relations between them and developing cooperation in the humanitarian sphere The Uzbekistan-Japan Center serving the implementation was opened [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso]. From April 2001 Starting with the establishment of direct flights between Uzbekistan and Japan, the rapprochement of our peoples and the growth of the exchange of tourists between our countries was one of the contributing factors [Speech by Mr. Taro Aso].

### 3 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The discussion highlights the need for both countries to further enhance their bilateral ties through increased cooperation in various domains. It is recommended that Uzbekistan and Japan focus on expanding trade agreements, promoting cultural exchange programs, and engaging in high-level diplomatic dialogues to strengthen their relationship. Both nations can benefit from mutual learning, collaboration, and shared initiatives in areas such as technology transfer, education, and tourism.



Picture 1. The relationship between Uzbekistan and Japan.

#### Academic Results and Contribution:

This study offers a comprehensive overview of the theoretical underpinnings of Uzbekistan-Japan relations, providing insights into historical context, current challenges, and potential areas for collaboration. The analysis presented in this article distinguished by its in-depth examination of cultural exchanges, economic partnerships, and political dialogues between Uzbekistan and Japan, presenting a nuanced understanding of the relationship that goes beyond surface-level analysis.

The investigation uncovers a convoluted network of historical occurrences and cross-cultural interactions that have shaped Uzbekistan-Japan relations. Their relationship has been greatly aided by economic cooperation, especially in the fields of commerce and investment.

Mutual understanding has also been greatly aided by people-to-people contacts, educational partnerships, and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Table 1: Important information on diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Japan (Source: The table was compiled based on the author's analysis using data from the site).

Diplomatic relations		
1	Diplomatic Relations established:	in 26 January 1992.
2	Embassy of Japan opened in Tashkent	in January 1993.
3	Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan opened in Tokyo	in February 1996.
4	Number of Japanese Residents in Uzbekistan:	152 (as of Oct.2022)
5	Number of Uzbek Residents in Japan:	5,513 (as of Dec. 2022)
Trade with Japan (2022):		
6	Exports from Japan:	36.39 billion yen (machinery, motor vehicles, electrical machines, etc.)
7	Imports to Japan:	7.00 billion yen (machinery, fertilizers, fruits and vegetables, etc.)
Japan's Official Development Assistance:		
8	Loans:	501.011 billion yen (the total till FY2021)
9	Grants:	29.253 billion yen (the total till FY2021)

10	Technical Cooperation:	20.604billion yen (the total till FY2021)
Cultural Grant (cumulative total fiscal up to 2022):		
11	Cultural Grant Aid:	14 projects (831 million yen)
12	Grassroots Grant Aid:	9 projects (68 million yen)
13	Total:	899 million yen

Japan holds a pivotal role as a dependable partner for Uzbekistan, with historical ties dating back to the ancient Great Silk Road era. Trade, economic, and cultural connections have thrived between the two nations, exemplified by renowned cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, listed in the UNESCO World Heritage catalogue. Cultural and humanitarian exchanges with ancient Japanese hubs such as Nara and Kyoto further enriched these ties. Even Mahmud Kashgari, a distinguished scholar from nearly eight centuries ago, referenced Japan as "Jabarqa," providing an early glimpse into the relationship.

The interest from Japan in Central Asia began in the late 19th century, as demonstrated by the journey of Japanese diplomat Nishi Tokudziro across Uzbekistan in 1880. His interactions with key figures like Amir Muzaffar in Bukhara marked the initial official contacts between Japanese representatives and Muslim nations. Subsequent visits by Japanese researchers highlighted the profound interest of the Japanese populace in Uzbekistan. The extensive collection of Japanese publications in the Scientific Library of the National University of Uzbekistan attests to the scholarly exchange between the nations, while cooperation in sericulture and mulberry farming during the 1930s further solidified their ties.

Former President I.A. Karimov's visits to Japan in 1994, 2002, and 2011, followed by President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev's official visit in 2019, underscored the importance of bilateral relations. These visits led to intensified political dialogue and significant cooperation, as evidenced by key documents like the Joint Statements signed between the two nations. President Mirziyoyev's 2019 visit resulted in numerous agreements across various sectors, marking a critical milestone in advancing their collaboration. With over 160 agreements in place, a robust legal framework now supports Uzbek-Japanese relations.

The partnership between Uzbekistan and Japan has evolved into a strategic alliance over the past three decades, supported by 177 bilateral agreements. Trade and economic ties are progressing positively, with Japanese investments benefiting 46 enterprises

in Uzbekistan. Various institutions like embassies, cultural centres, JICA, and JETRO play pivotal roles in enhancing cooperation. Human connections, exemplified by figures like Ikuo Hirayama and Japanese archaeologists, further strengthen ties.

Uzbekistan and Japan enjoy a friendly relationship marked by cooperation in multiple areas, with a focus on economic growth initiatives. People-to-people contacts, educational initiatives, and cultural exchanges contribute to strengthening ties. However, political discussions remain crucial to align strategic objectives. Looking ahead, both nations have opportunities to expand cooperation in various areas, including fostering stronger political bonds, promoting cultural diplomacy, and enhancing commercial partnerships. By leveraging their unique advantages, Uzbekistan and Japan can build a more solid and diversified alliance in the future.

## 4 CONCLUSION

In light of the findings, it is evident that fostering multi-sectoral relations between Uzbekistan and Japan requires concerted efforts across various domains. Emphasizing cultural exchange programs, promoting business partnerships, and engaging in high-level diplomatic dialogues are paramount to strengthening bilateral ties. Moreover, suggestions such as expanding educational collaborations and trade agreements, alongside fostering mutual understanding platforms, hold promise in bridging cultural gaps and enhancing people-to-people interactions. Through these initiatives, both nations can progress towards a more cohesive and mutually beneficial relationship.

The theoretical analysis presented in this article underscores the significance of understanding historical contexts, economic partnerships, and cultural exchanges in shaping Uzbekistan-Japan relations. By acknowledging and analysing factual information and scholarly opinions, a balanced perspective is provided, offering insights into the complexities of the relationship. Moving forward,

prioritizing diversification of economic collaboration, enhanced cultural exchanges, and promotion of people-to-people diplomacy can pave the way for sustainable development and prosperity. Through collaborative efforts in science and technology, education, infrastructure development, and political dialogue, Uzbekistan and Japan can foster a new era of friendship and strategic partnership, advancing mutual prosperity and development.

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