

The 6th Japan-South Korea Joint Public Opinion Poll (2018)

**Analysis Report on Comparative Data
June, 2018**



The Genron NPO



East Asia Institute

In Cooperation with:

Japan : Public Opinion Research Institute Corporation

South Korea: Hankook Research Co.Ltd

<Survey Overview>

From May 19 to June 2018, The Genron NPO and East Asia Institute (EAI) conducted joint public opinion polls in Japan and South Korea. The purpose of this annual survey is to grasp the state of mutual understanding and perception of each other between the Japanese and South Korean public and to monitor the changes over time, in order to contribute to reducing various misunderstandings among the two countries, and to promote greater mutual understanding between them. The result of this survey will be presented and utilized in birateral track II dialogue 'Japan-Korea Future Dialogue' on June 22, 2018.

The opinion poll in Japan was conducted between May 19 and June, targeting men and women across the country over the age of 18. Questionnaires were delivered to participants and self-administered, resulting in a collection of 1,000 valid samples. The final academic qualifications of the respondents were as follows: elementary/middle school graduates: 9.0%, high school graduates: 44.2%, junior college/technical college graduates: 20.3%, four-year university graduates: 22.6% and graduate school graduates: 1.5%. Age distribution of the respondents were as follows: under 20: 2.4%, between 20 and 29: 12.0%, between 30 and 39: 14.7%, between 40 and 49, 17.4%, between 50 and 59, 14.6%, and 60 and above: 38.9%.

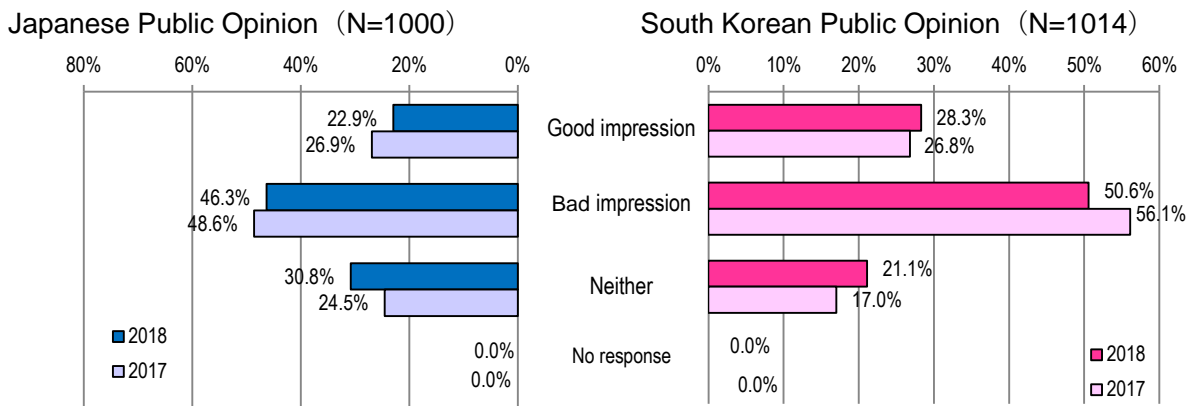
The opinion poll in South Korea was conducted between May 21st and 31st by face-to-face interview method, targeting men and women aged 19 and over. 49.7% of the respondents were men and 50.3% of them were women. The number of total valid responses was 1,014. The final academic qualifications of respondents were as follows: middle school graduates or below: 13.4%, high school graduates: 41.2%, junior college graduates and above: 45.4%. Age distribution of the respondents were as follows; between 19 and 29: 17.6%, between 30 and 39: 16.9%, between 40 and 49, 20.3%, between 50 and 59, 19.9%, and 60 and above: 25.3%.

1. Impressions of One Another's Countries

1-1. Impressions of Japanese and South Koreans on One Another's Countries

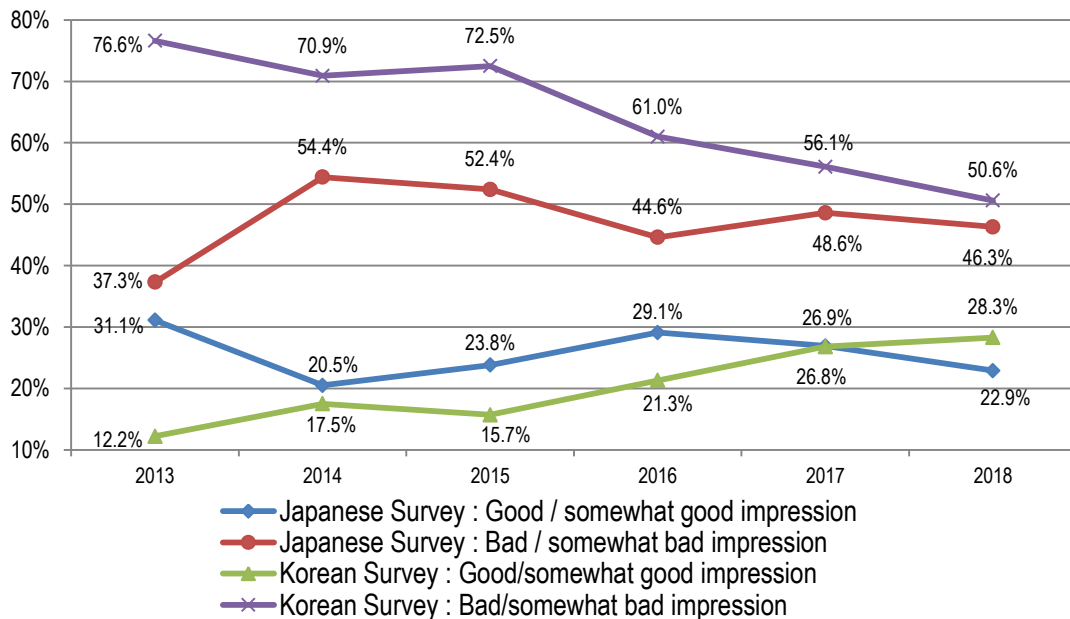
While impressions of South Korea among the Japanese still show no firm improvement, impressions of Japan among South Koreans showed improvement following last year's trend.

[Graph 1: Your impression of the other country]



※Good impression includes [good] and [somewhat good], bad impression includes [bad] and [somewhat bad]

[Graph 2: Your impression of the other country (Change over 6 years)]

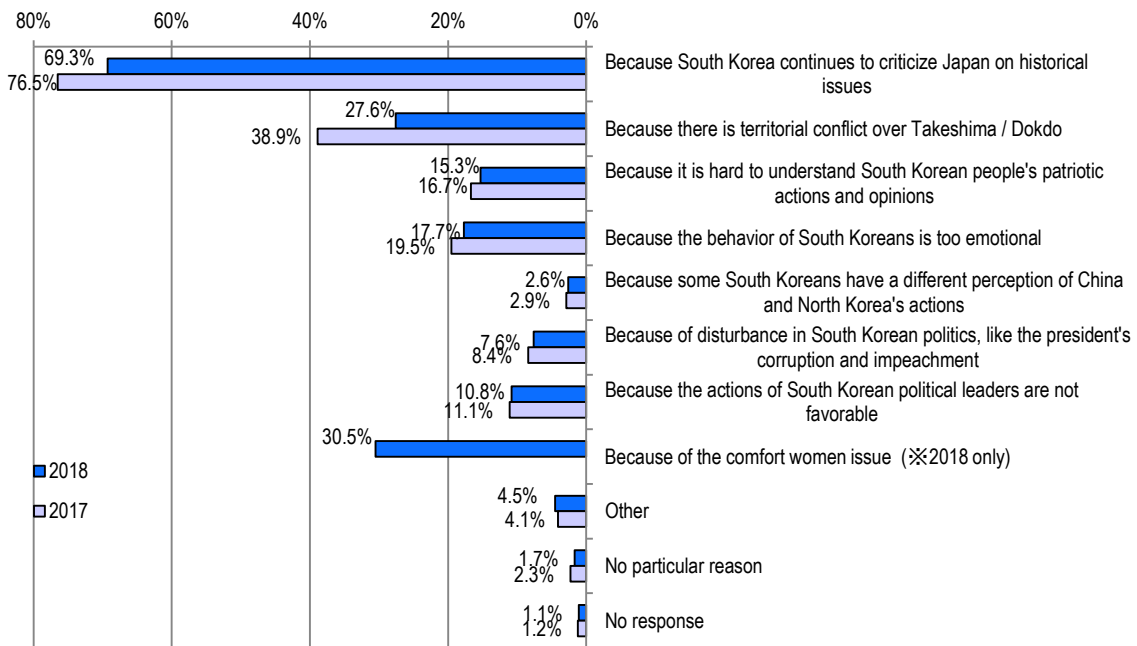


1-2. Reasons Behind Each Other's Impressions

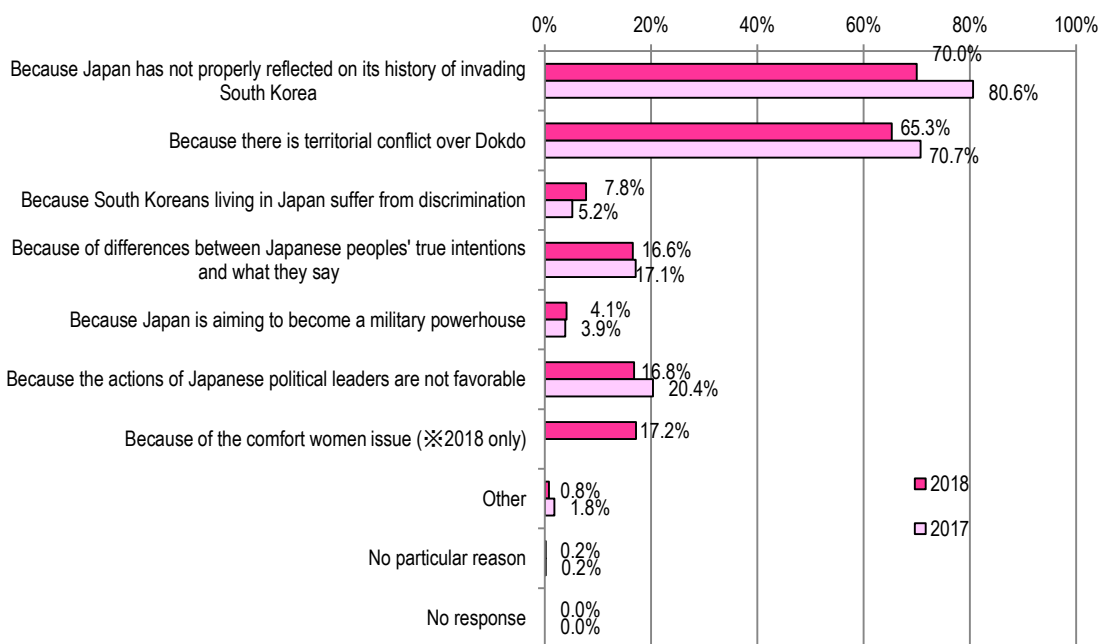
While concerns with “historical issues” and “territorial conflict” have decreased, they still remain the greatest factors influencing the negative impressions both countries hold of one another. In terms of good impressions, most Japanese mention South Korean modern culture, while most Koreans mention Japanese character.

[Graph 3: Reason for having a bad impression]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=463)

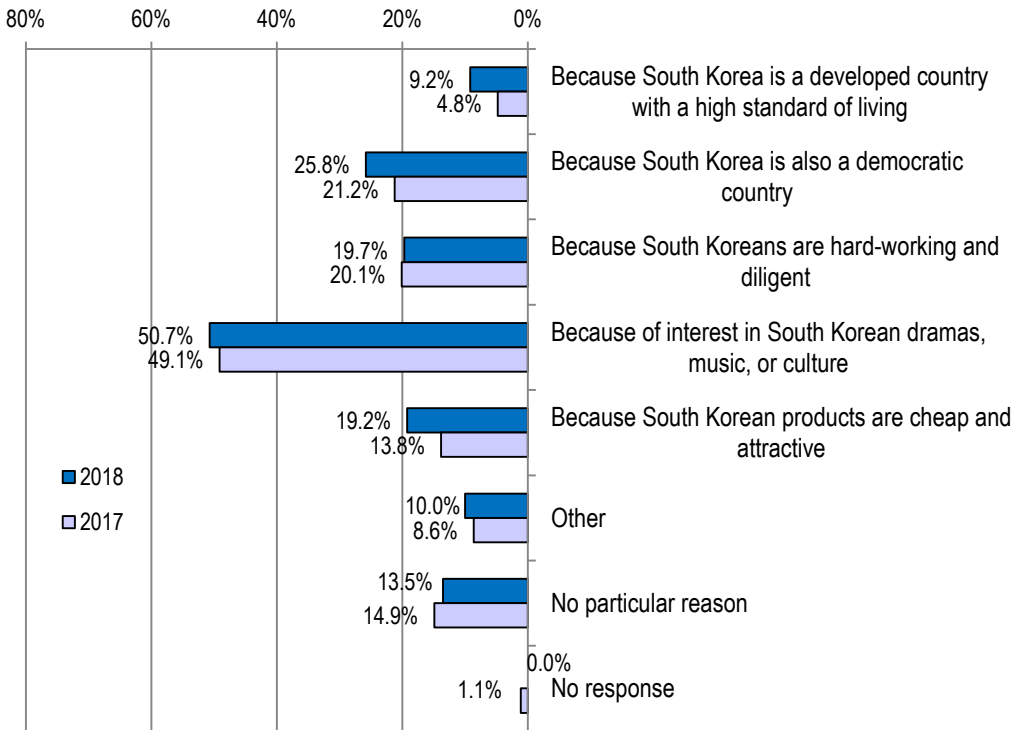


South Korean Public Opinion (N=513)

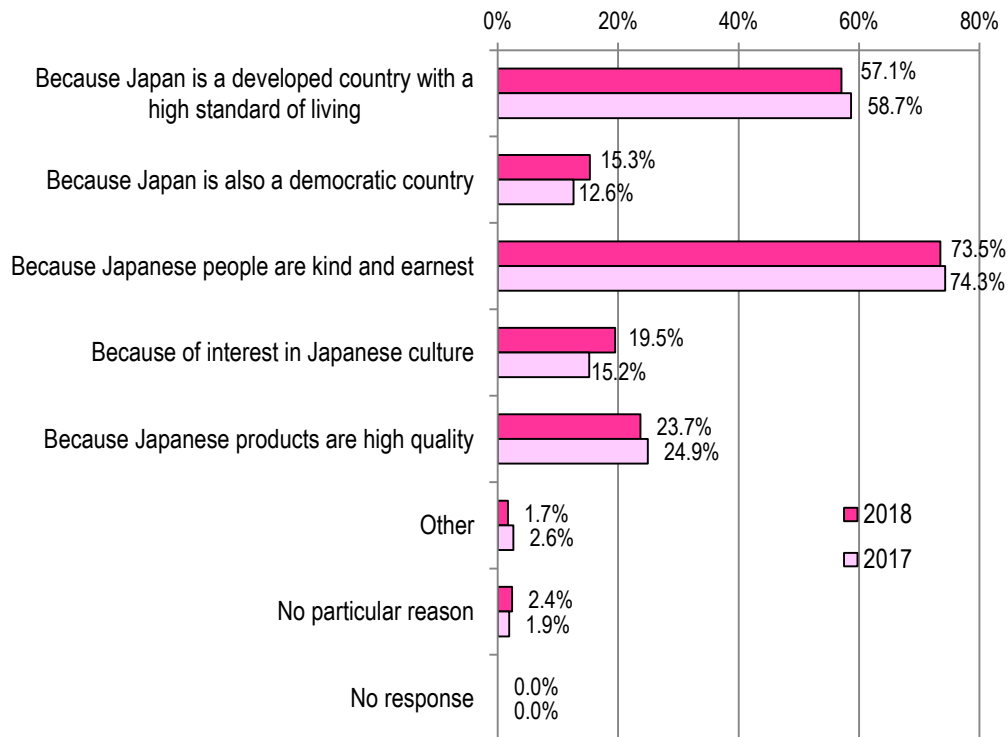


[Graph 4: Reason for having a good impression]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=229)



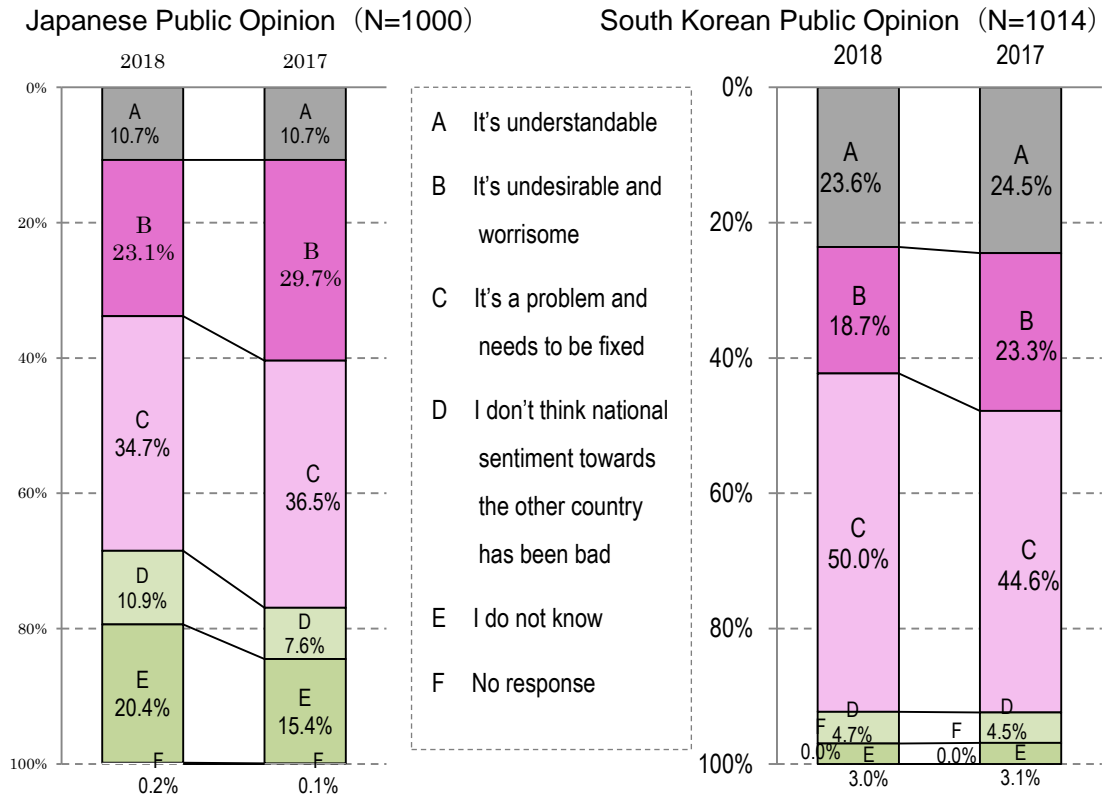
South Korean Public Opinion (N=287)



1-3. Recognition of Current National Sentiments Towards One Another

Approximately 60% of Japanese and 70% of South Koreans consider current national sentiments to be “undesirable” or “problematic.” However, there is a decrease from last year in Japanese opinion that thinks it is “undesirable”.

[Graph 5: What do you think about current state of public sentiment for other country?]

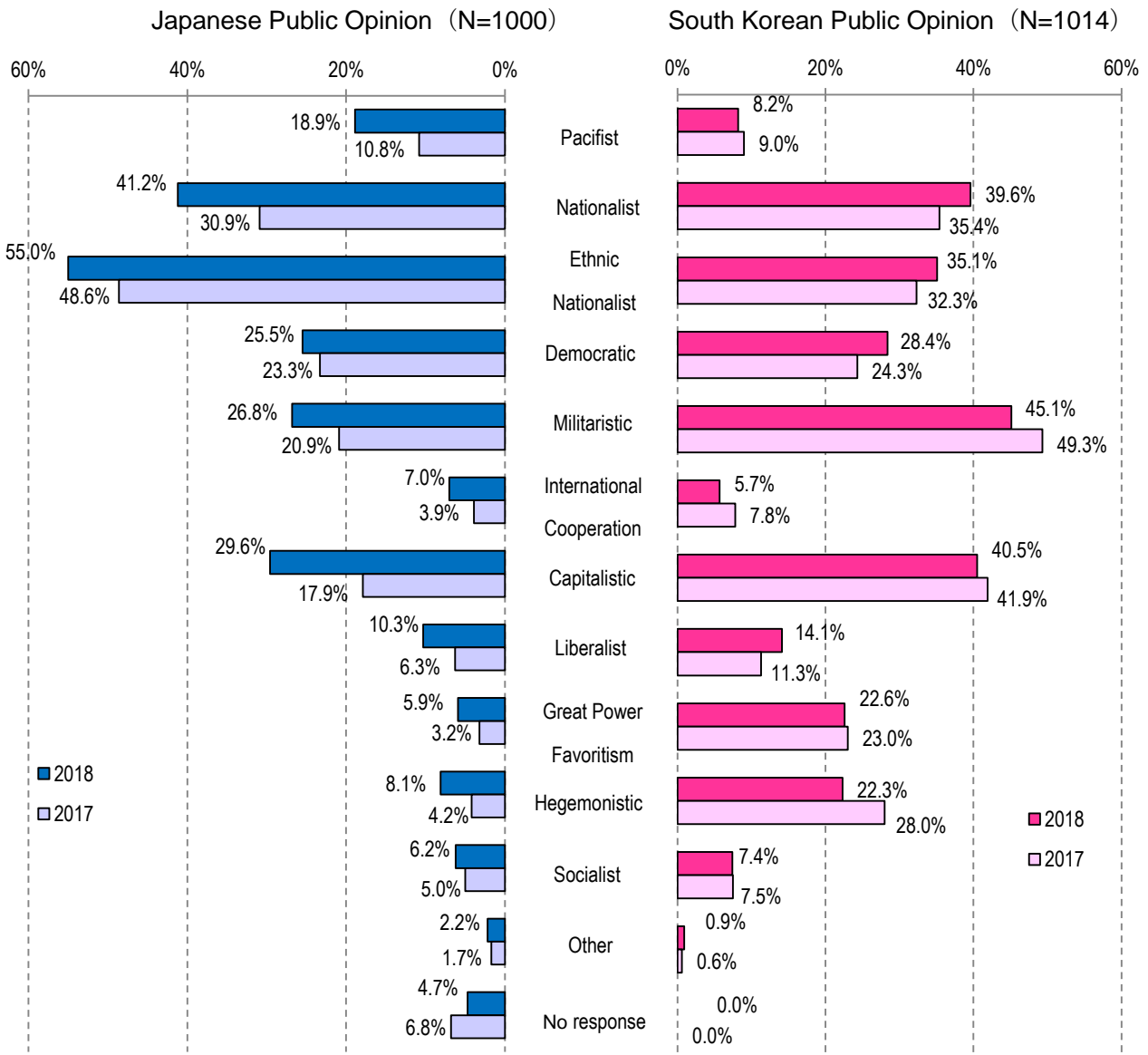


2. Basic Understanding of One Another's Countries

2-1. Understanding of the Social/Political Systems

Over half of the Japanese view South Korea as a currently “ethnic nationalistic” country while around 40% of the South Koreans view Japan as a currently “militaristic” and “nationalistic” country. Only 20% of both nationals see the other country as “democratic.”

[Graph 6: What do you think of the socio-political regime of the other country?]



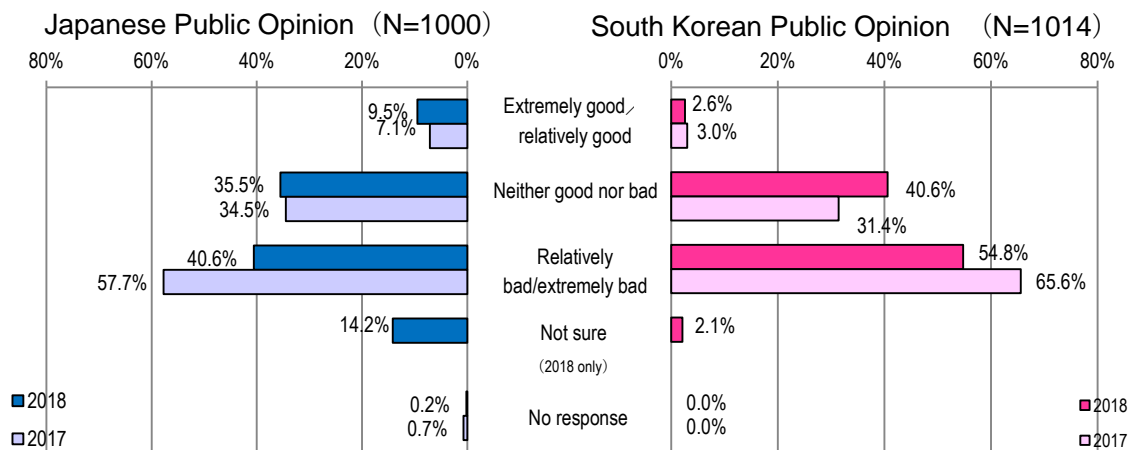
3. Perceptions of Present and Future Bilateral Relations

3-1. How Present and Future Japan-South Korea Relations are Viewed

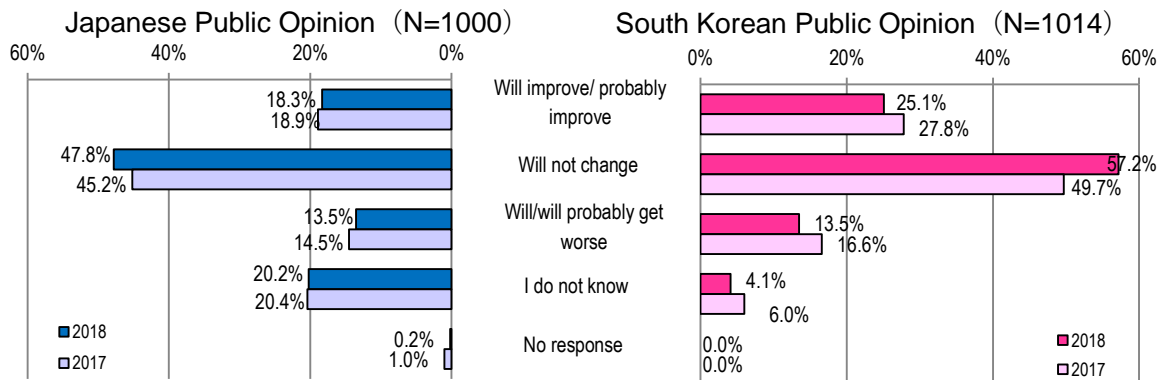
Only 40% of Japanese and about 50% of South Koreans perceive present Japan-South Korea relations as “bad,” showing great improvement from last year and yielding the lowest threshold since this survey began. However, this did not translate into improvements in the perception of relations as “good,” as nationals of both countries who answered positively remain below 10%.

Concerning future Japan-South Korea relations, half of both Japanese and South Koreans believe that relations “will not change”, a result consistent with past opinions.

[Graph 7: What do you think of current Japan-Korea relations?]



[Graph 8: Future of Japan-Korea relations]

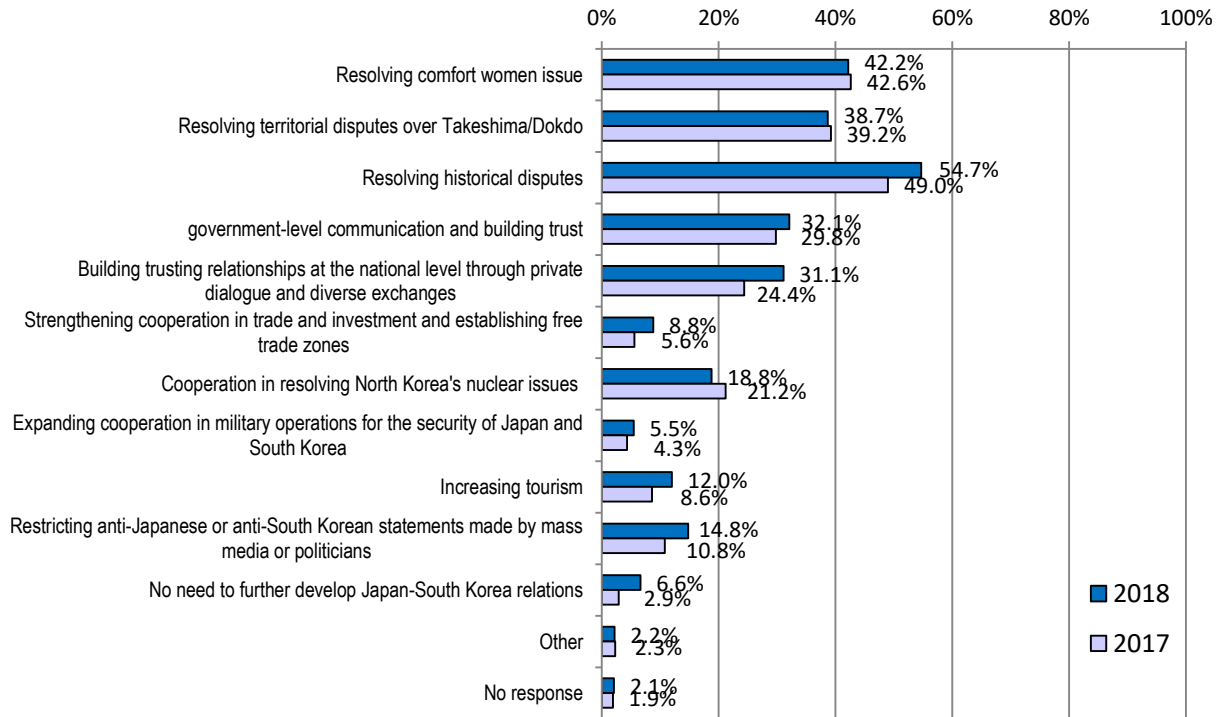


3-2. What Should be Done to Improve Japan-South Korea Relations?

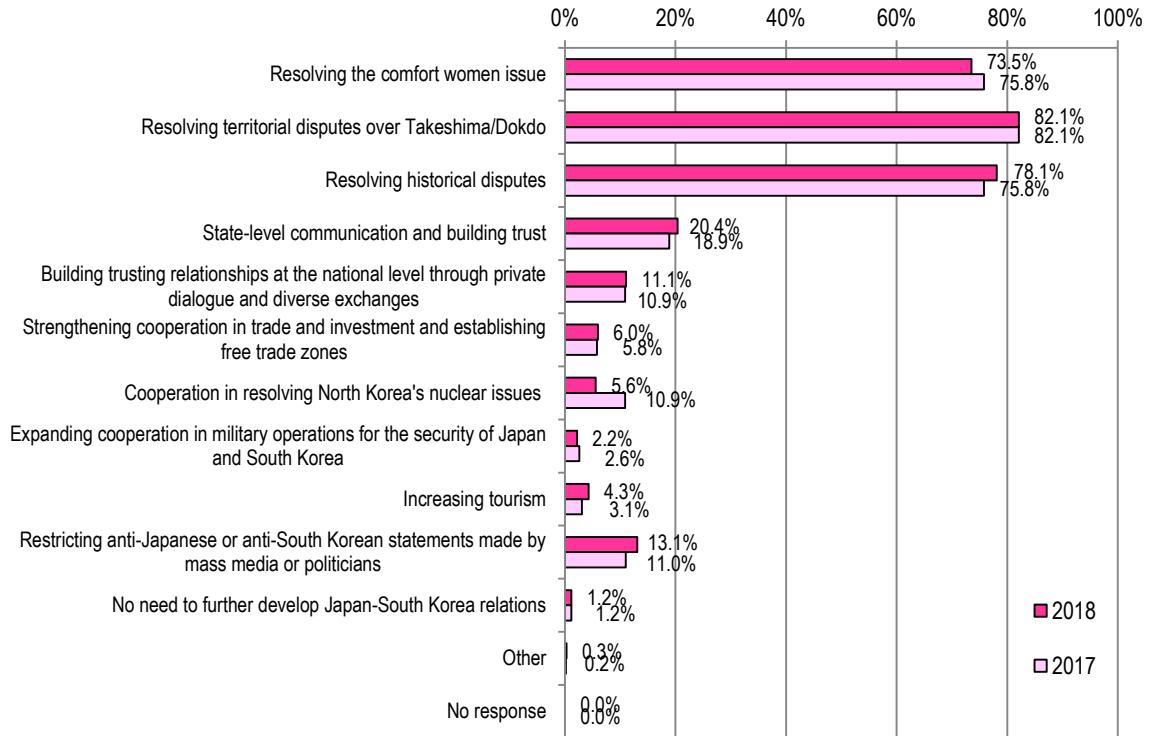
While South Koreans consider “comfort women” “territorial disputes” and “historical disputes” to be significant in improving Japan-South Korea relations, the Japanese also view “government-level communication and building trust” as well as “national level communication and building trust” to be important, indicating a variation in issues that the Japanese feel should be addressed. Less than 10% of South Koreans believe “cooperation in resolving North Korea’s nuclear issues” will contribute to improving Japan-South Korea relations.

[Graph 9: What should be done to develop Japan-South Korea relations?]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)

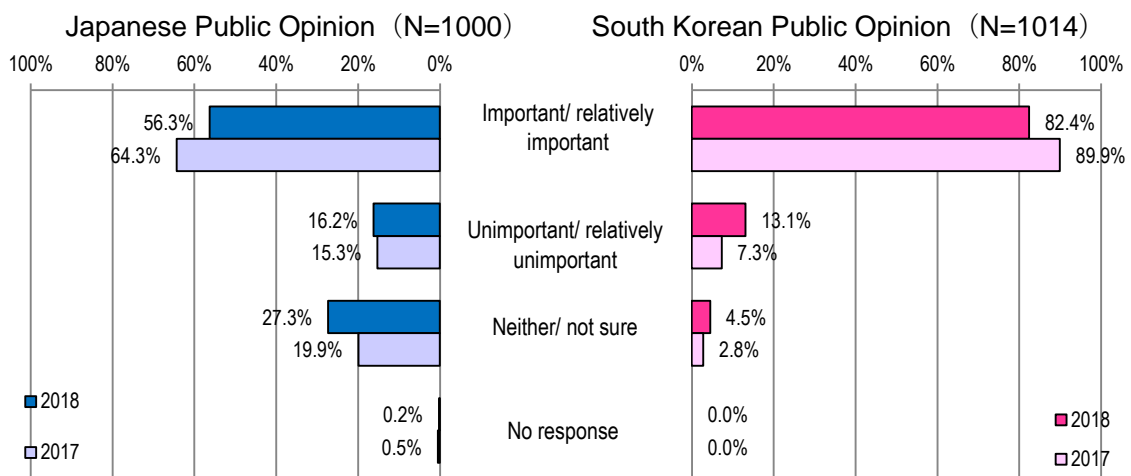


3-3. How Both Nationals View the Significance of Bilateral Relations

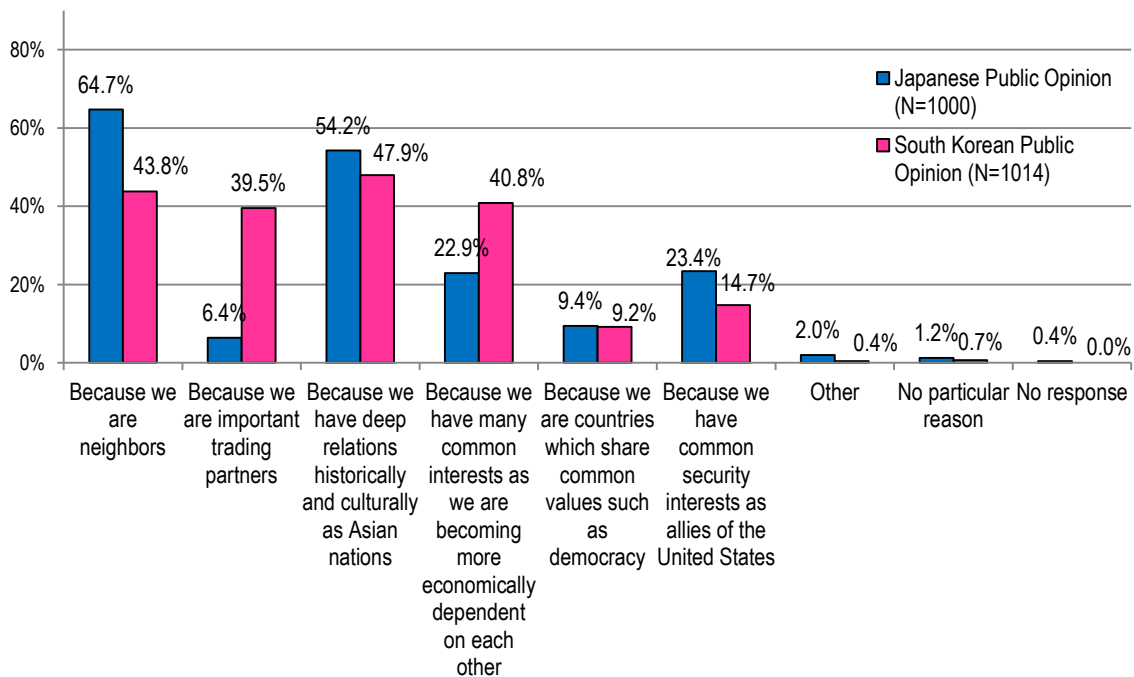
Although close to 60% of Japanese and over 80% of South Koreans consider Japan-South Korea relations to be “important,” this shows a decrease from last year, especially in Japanese opinion as it falls to the lowest it has been in the past six years.

Regarding the reason for believing relations to be important, the Japanese draw from a common awareness of the other being a “neighboring country” and “Asian country,” while many South Koreans also emphasize trade and economics.

[Graph 10: Is the Japan-Korea relationship important now?]



[Graph 11: Why is the Japan-Korea relationship important?]



3-4. Importance and Sense of Affinity as Compared to China

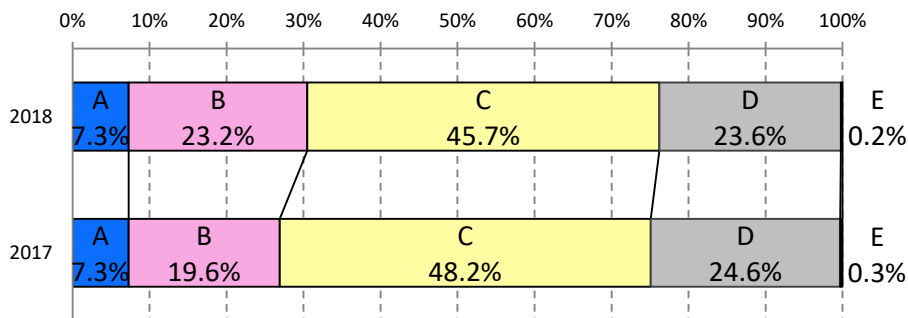
Concerning Japan-South Korea relations and relations with China, approximately 40% of Japanese and nearly 50% of South Koreans feel that “both are equally important.” However, 38.2% of South Koreans consider relations with China to be more important, nearly double the 23.2% of Japanese with the same opinion.

Regarding the sense of affinity toward bilateral relations as compared to China, the percentage of Japanese who “feel more affinity towards South Korea” is around 20%, decreasing for the third year in row. The percentage of South Koreans who “feel more affinity towards Japan” is also 20% but lower than those who “feel more affinity towards China.”

In the comparison of the sense of affinity towards the United States and China, about 60% of both South Koreans and Japanese felt “more affinity towards the United States.”

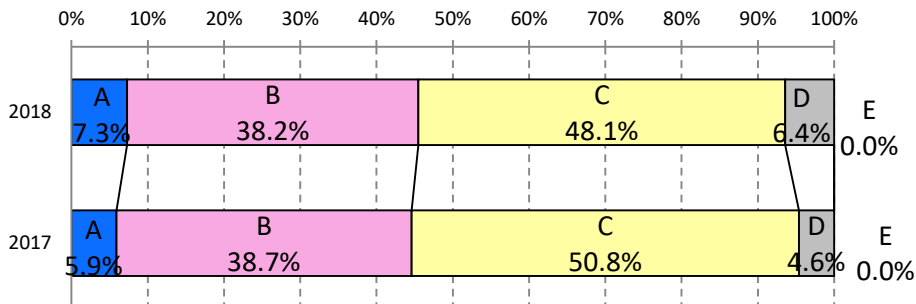
[Graph 12: Importance of relations between Japan, China and Korea]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



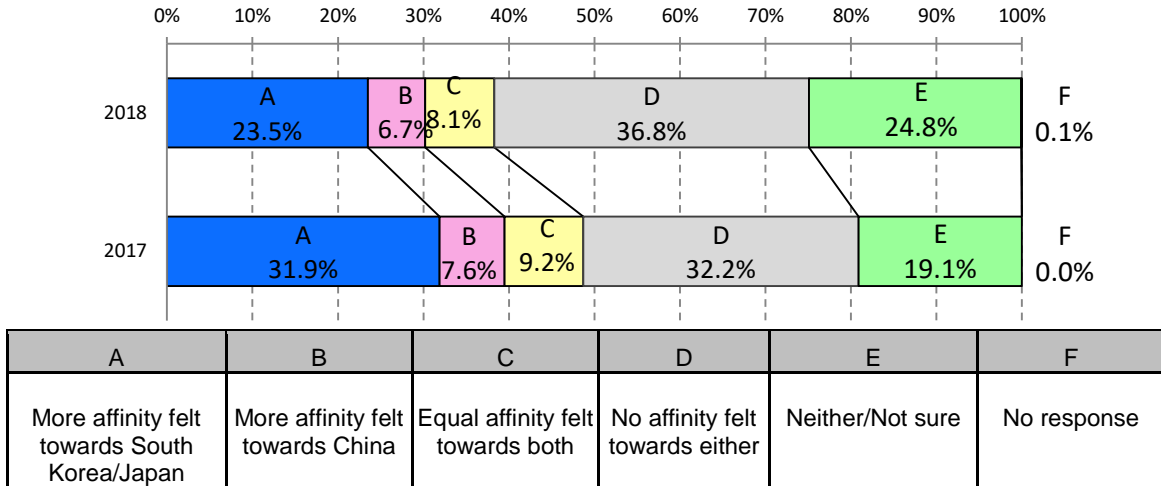
A	B	C	D	E
relations with South Korea/Japan are more important	relations with China are more important	Equally important	Neither/Not sure	No response

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)

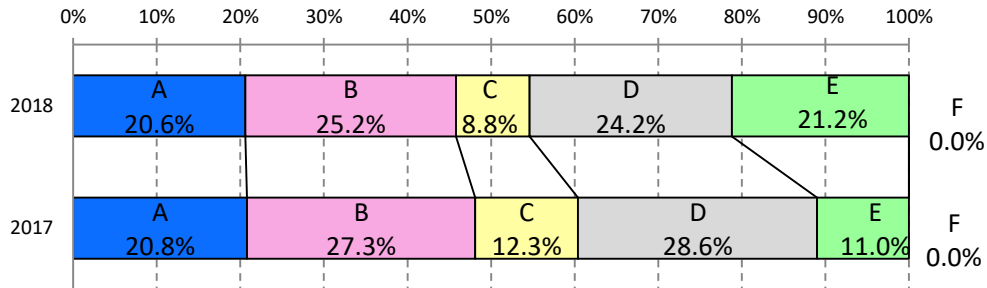


[Graph 13: Affinity to the other country and China]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



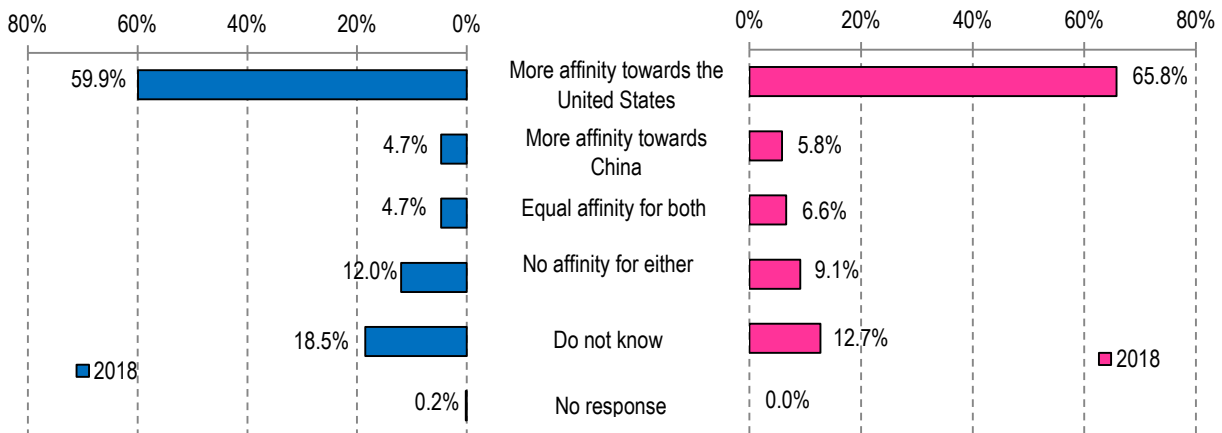
South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



[Graph 14: Affinity to the United States and China]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

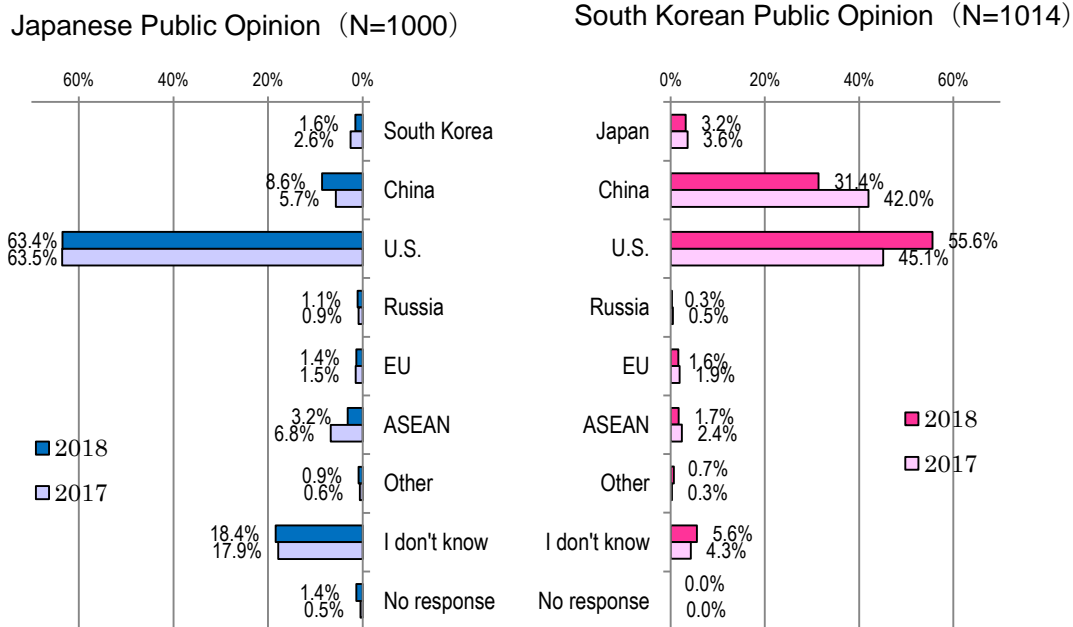
South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



3-5. Countries Important to the Future of Japan/South Korea

Both the Japanese and South Koreans feel that the “United States” is the most important country in terms of their nation’s future. While the Japanese stand out with over 60% of the people choosing the United States, South Koreans who chose the United States also surpassed 50%. South Koreans who feel “China” is important continued to compose 30%, but decreased 11% from last year. Only a negligible amount of people chose “Japan” and “South Korea.”

[Graph 15: Countries I think are important in considering my country’s future]

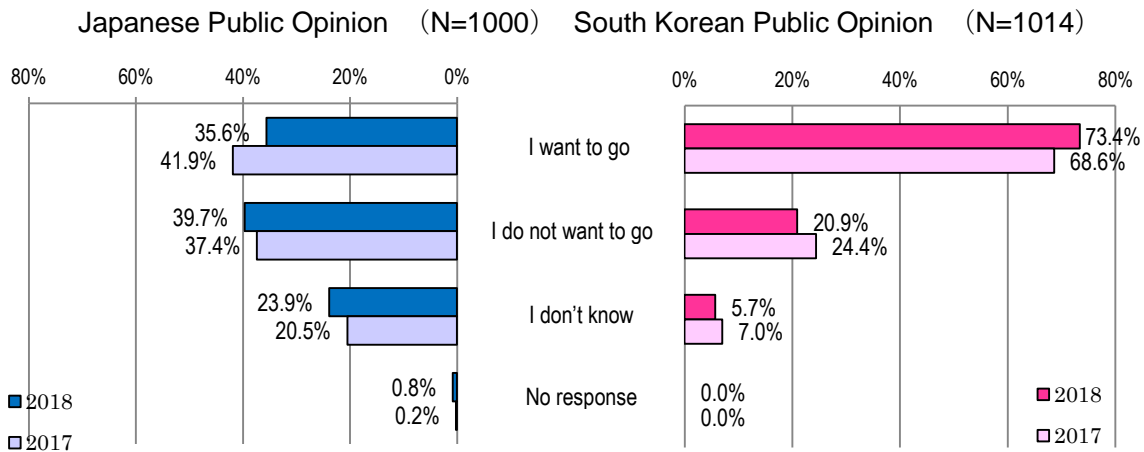


4. People-to-people Exchanges

4-1. Interest in Visiting One Another's Countries

The percentage of Japanese who “want to go” to South Korea is in a declining trend at 30% and, for the first time since the survey began, fell below those who “do not want to go.” In contrast, over 70% of South Koreans wish to visit Japan, continuing to increase every year for the past 4 years.

[Graph 16: Do you want to go to the other country?]



5. Views on the North-South Korean Unified Teams in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics

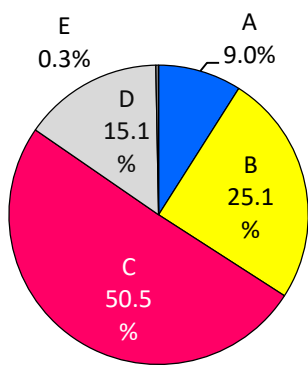
5-1. Views on the North and South Korean Unified Olympic Team

Half of the Japanese considered the formation of the North and South Korean Unified Teams at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics to be “a political exploitation” of the Olympics. Over 40% of South Koreans “thought it was a remarkable move,” but more than half were “not able to cheer for the unified team without some bitterness” or felt it was “political exploitation.”

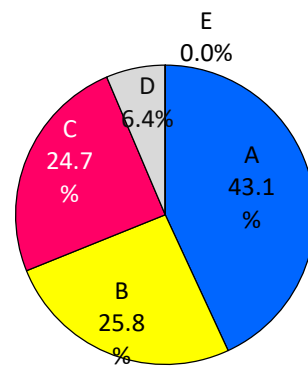
[Graph 17: View on the North and South Korean Unified Teams for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



A	I thought it was a remarkable move
B	I thought it was good in general, but I was not able to cheer for the unified team without some bitterness
C	I thought this was too much of a political exploitation of the sporting event
D	Don't know
E	No response



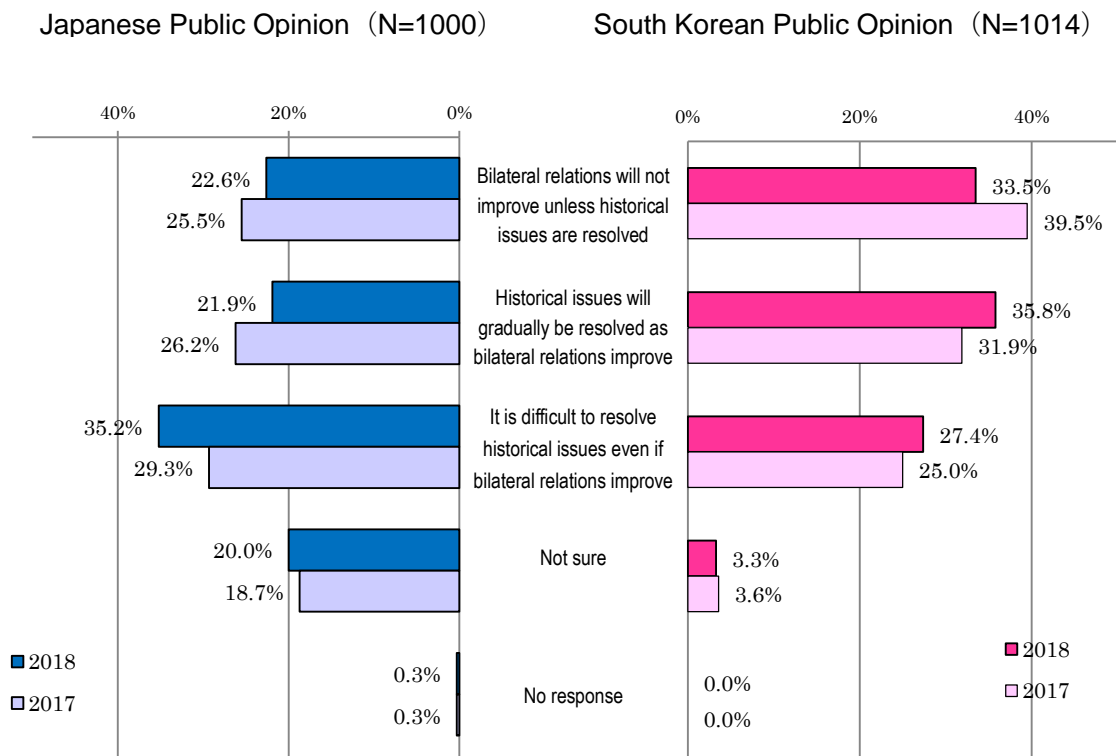
6. Perceptions of Historical Issues

6-1. Views on Historical Issues in Japan and South Korea

Among the Japanese, those who view the resolution of historical issues as difficult are increasing. In comparison, South Koreans who hold the optimistic view that “historical issues will gradually be resolved as bilateral relations improve” have increased along with a decrease in those who believe that “bilateral relations will not improve unless historical issues are resolved.”

In terms of historical issues that should be resolved, opinions are consistent with previous years. Many Japanese mention South Korea’s “Anti-Japan education” and “Anti-Japan acts” while many South Koreans mention the “comfort women issue,” “Japanese history textbooks”, and the “Japanese perception of the war”.

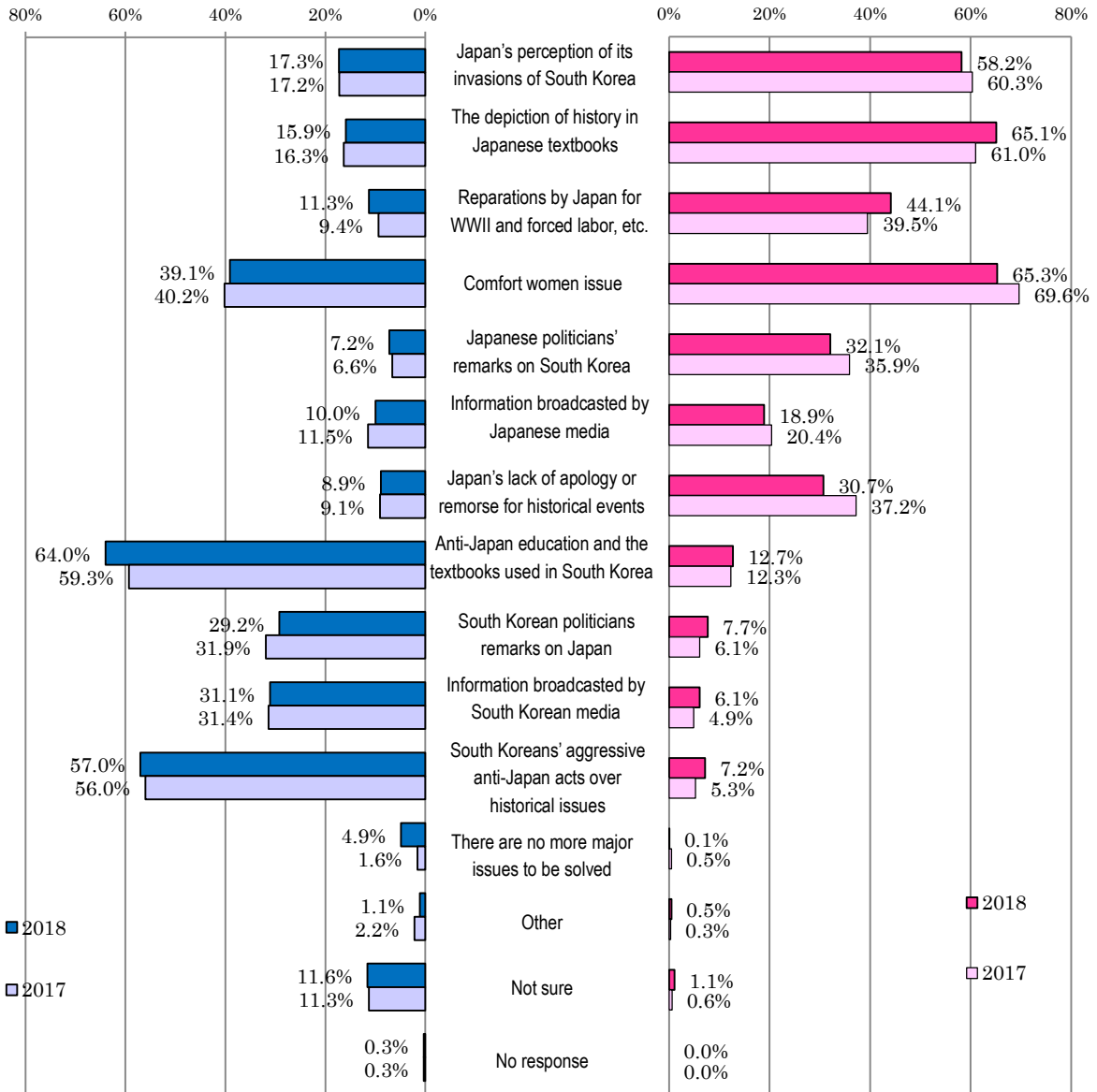
[Graph 18: Japan-South Korean relations and historical issues]



[Graph 19: Japan-Korea historical issues that need to be solved]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)

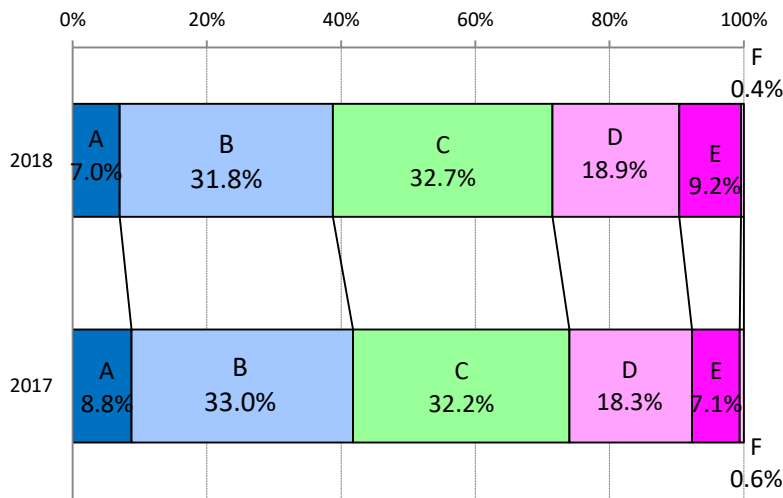


6-2. Views on the Comfort Women Agreement

Regarding the 2015 agreement between Japan and South Korea on the comfort women issue, approximately 40% of Japanese “approve” of the agreement, just slightly below last year’s result. For South Koreans, the percentage of those who “disapprove” exceeds 40% but decreased by 10% from last year.

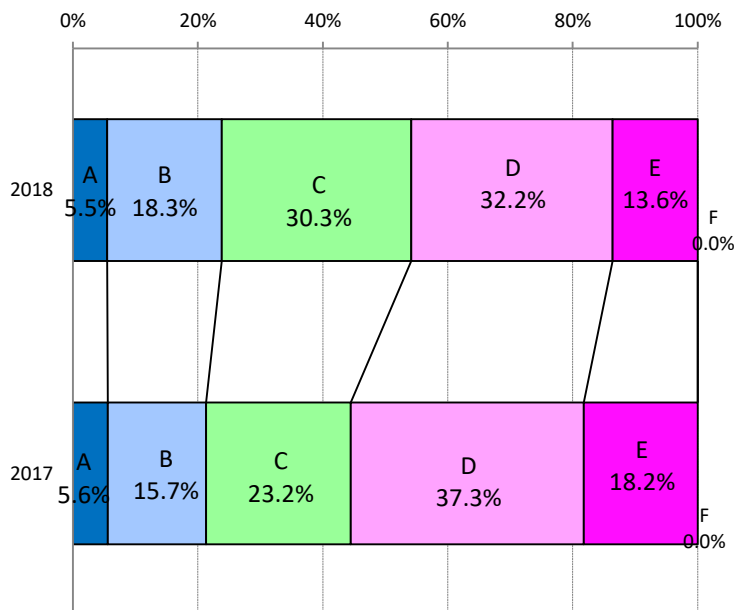
[Graph 20: Do you approve of the comfort women agreement?]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



A	B	C	D	E	F
Strongly approve	Approve to a certain degree	Neither approve nor disapprove	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	No response

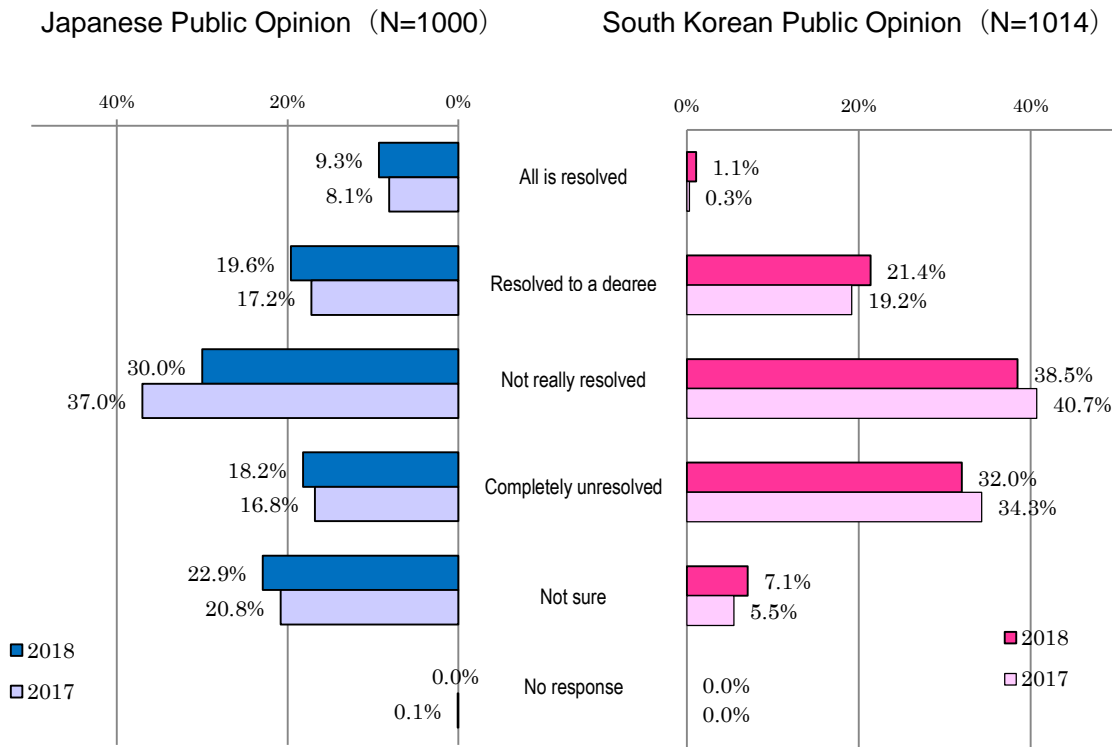
South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



6-3. Has the Comfort Women Issue Been Resolved?

50% of Japanese and 70% of South Koreans feel that the comfort women issue has “not been resolved” by the agreement reached between the two countries. However, both show a slight decrease from last year.

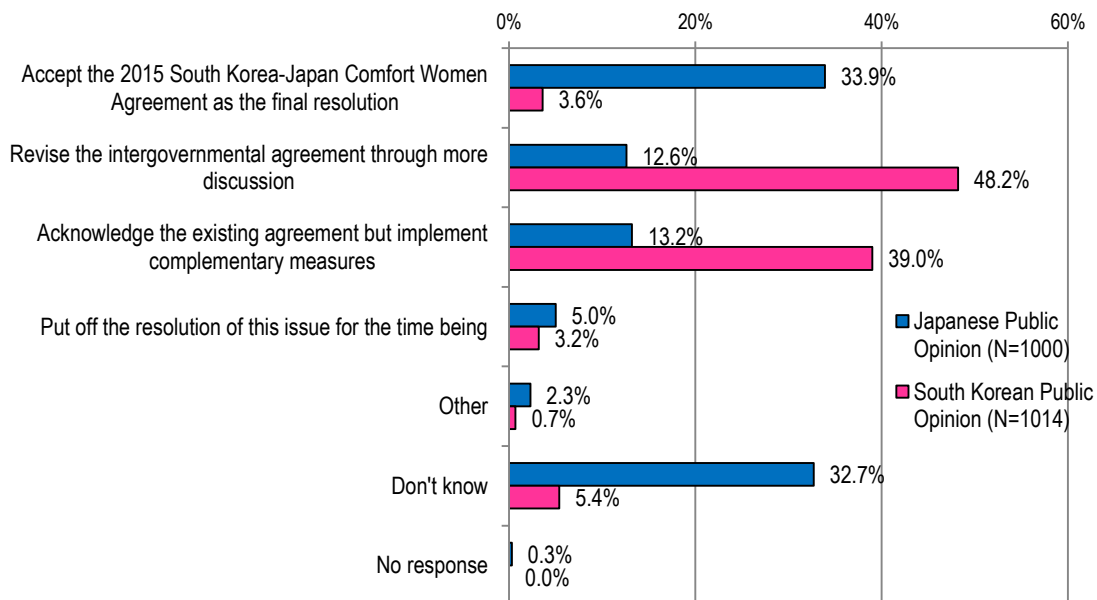
[Graph 21: Was the comfort women issue resolved?]



6-4. Solutions to the Comfort Women Issue

While 30% of Japanese believe the comfort women issue should be solved by South Korea accepting the 2015 agreement as the final resolution, there is also 25.8% that believe some kind of additional measure is necessary. On the other hand, half of South Koreans responded that “more discussion” to revise the agreement was necessary, and 40% responded that they acknowledge the agreement but implementing “complementary measures” would resolve the issue. In total, the view that taking new measures is necessary composes 90% of South Korean opinion.

[Graph 22: What do you think is necessary to further resolve the comfort women issue between Japan and South Korea?]



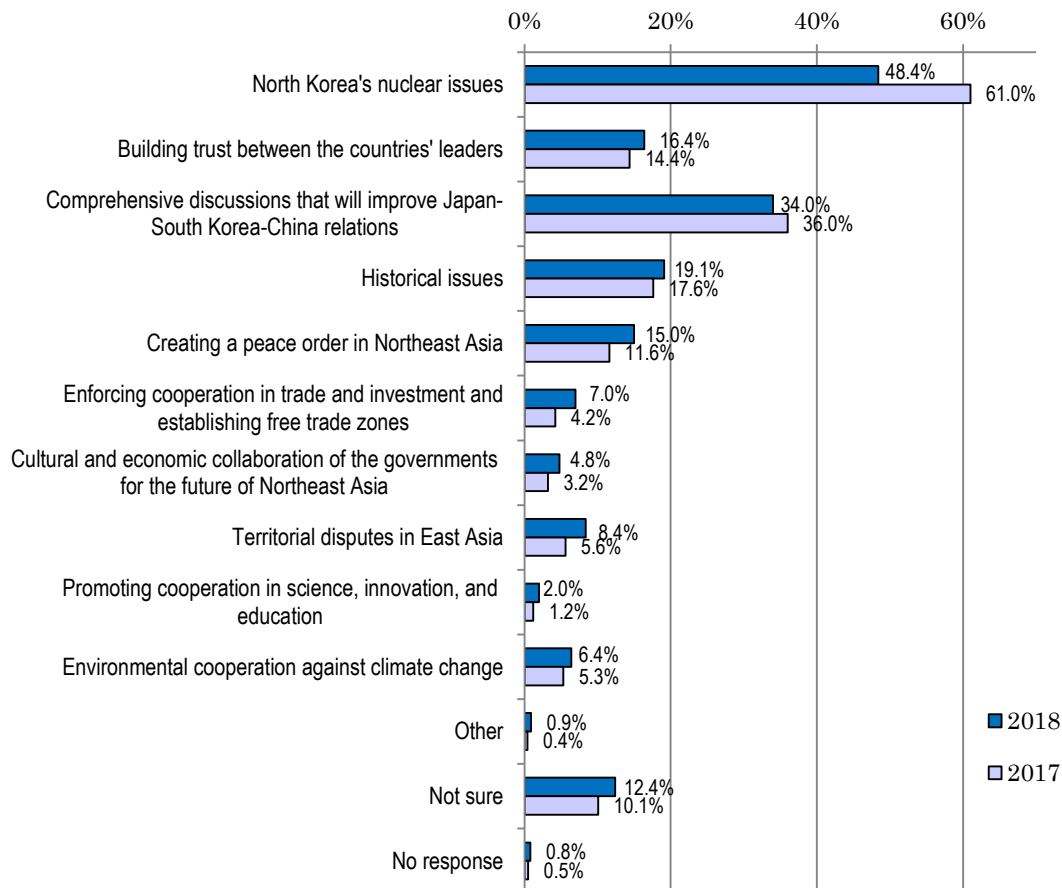
7. Diplomatic Relations

7-1. The Agenda to be Discussed at the Japan-South Korea-China Trilateral Summit

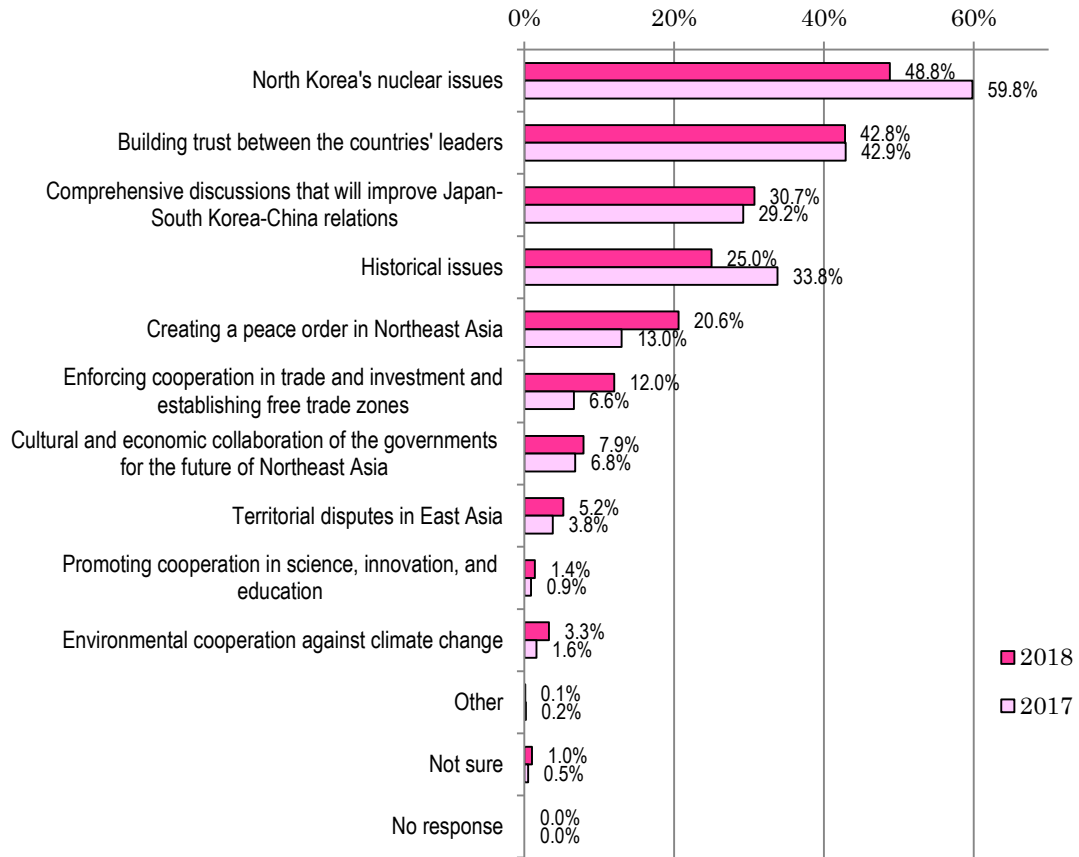
In regards to the agenda of another Japan-South Korea-China trilateral summit like the one that took place in 2018, half of both Japanese and South Korean believe that “North Korea’s nuclear issues” should be discussed. However, both decreased 10% compared to results from last year. 30% of Japanese opinion is constituted by “Comprehensive discussions that will improve Japan-China-South Korea relations” while “building trust between the countries’ leaders” composes 40% of South Korean opinion.

[Graph 23: Issues to discuss at the Japan-China-South Korea Summit]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



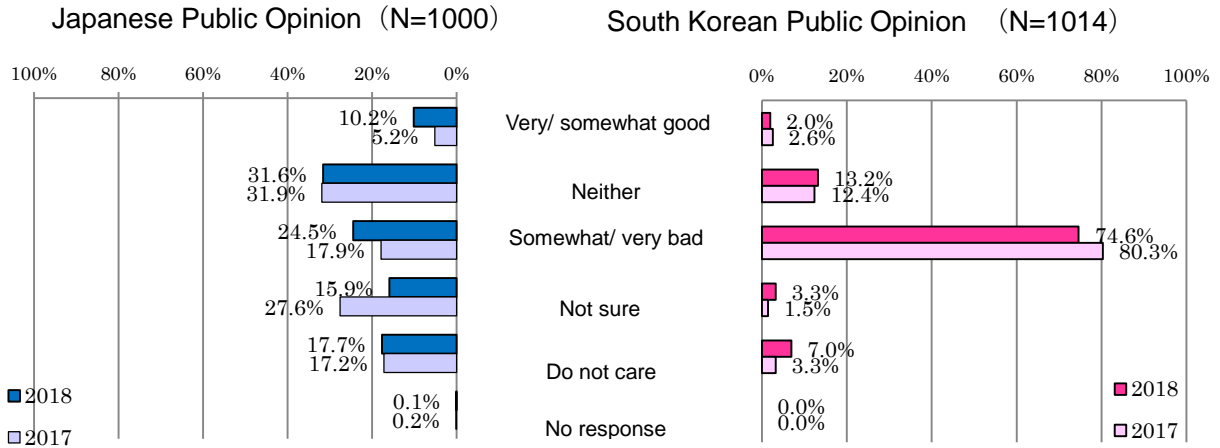
South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



7-2. Impressions of One Another's Leaders

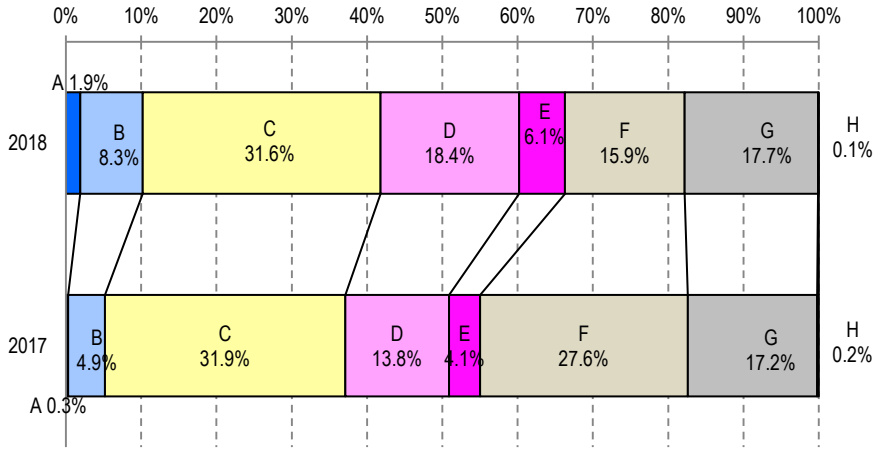
Most Japanese still do not have any fixed impression of President Moon Jae-in, as 31.6% responded with “neither” in regards to their opinion of him. South Koreans with a “bad impression” of Prime Minister Abe have decreased from last year but still exceeds 70%.

[Graph 24: What is your impression of the other country's leader?]



[Graph 24.1: What is your impression of South Korean President Moon Jae-in?]

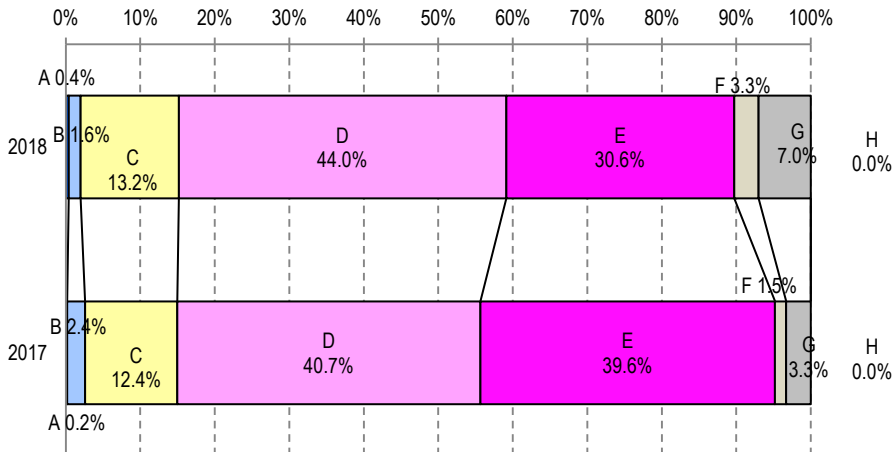
Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Very good	Somewhat good	Neither	Somewhat bad	Very bad	Not sure	Do not care	No response

[Graph 24.2: What is your impression of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe?]

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



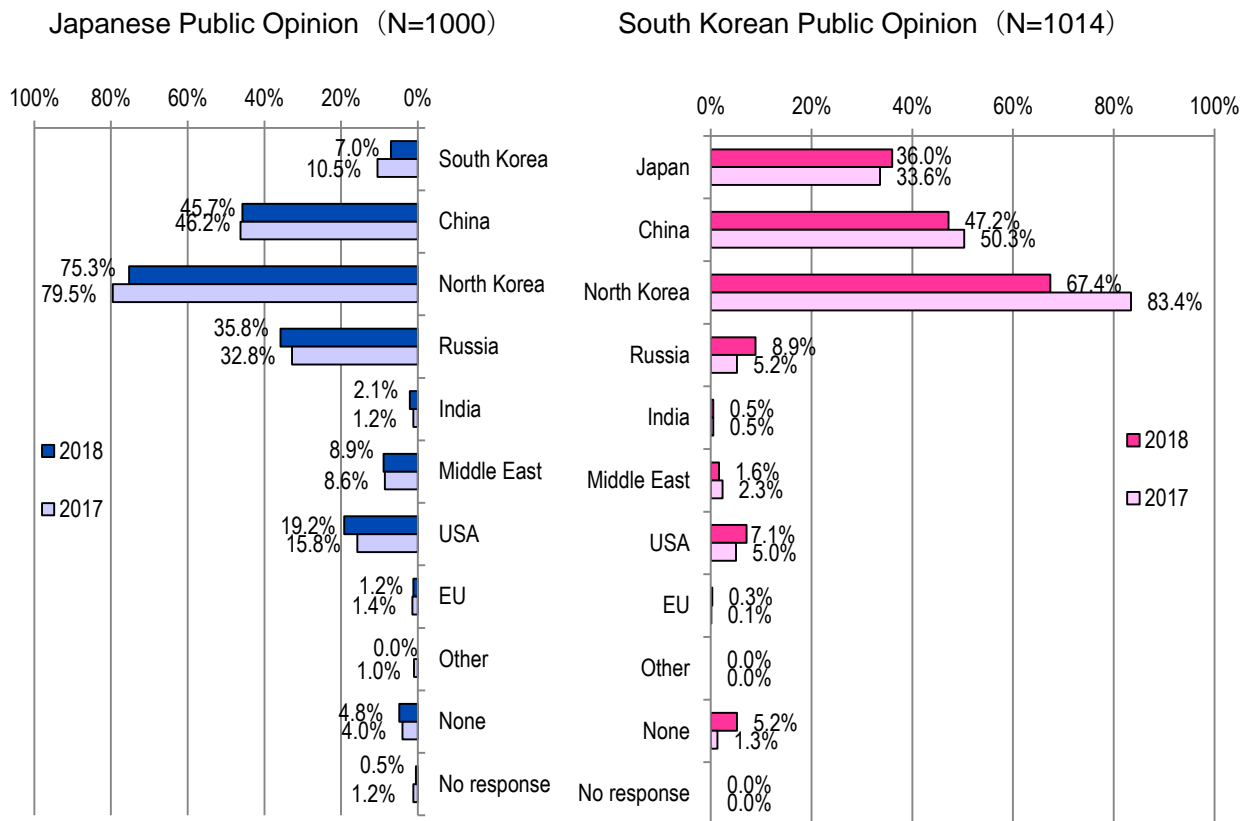
8. Military and Security Issues in East Asia

8-1. Views on Military Threats and Possible Military Conflict

Approximately 70% of both Japanese and South Koreans feel that “North Korea” poses a military threat, but in South Korea, where a North-South summit was held concerning nuclear issues and the future of the Korean peninsula, that number fell 16% from last year. There continue to be around 30% of South Koreans who view “Japan” as a military threat.

In terms of the possibility of military conflict between Japan and South Korea, close to 60% of the Japanese believe that conflict “will not occur.” Among South Koreans, combining the percentage of those who responded “within a few years” and “eventually,” 30% still believe that military conflict “will occur.”

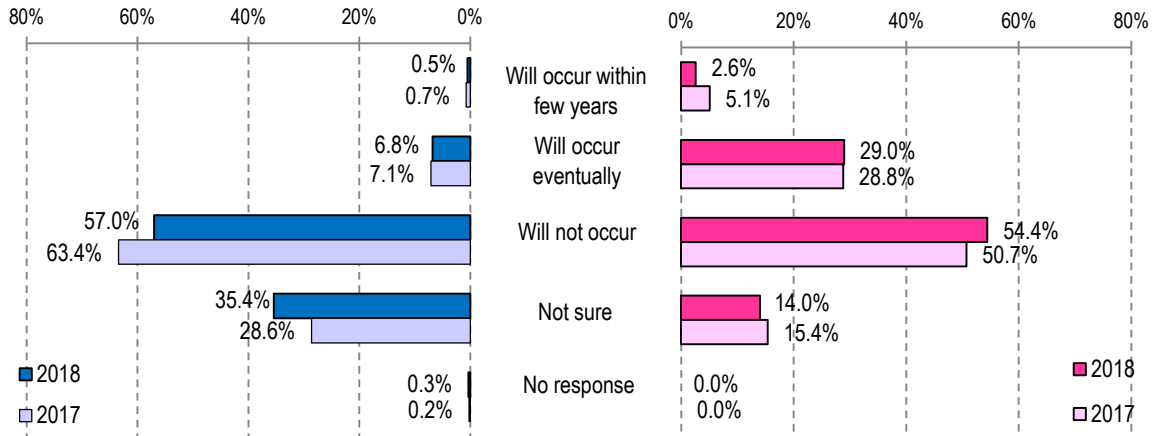
[Graph 25: Countries you view as a military threat]



[Graph 26: Will a military conflict occur between Japan and South Korea?]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



8-2. Views on Japan-South Korea-United States Military Cooperation

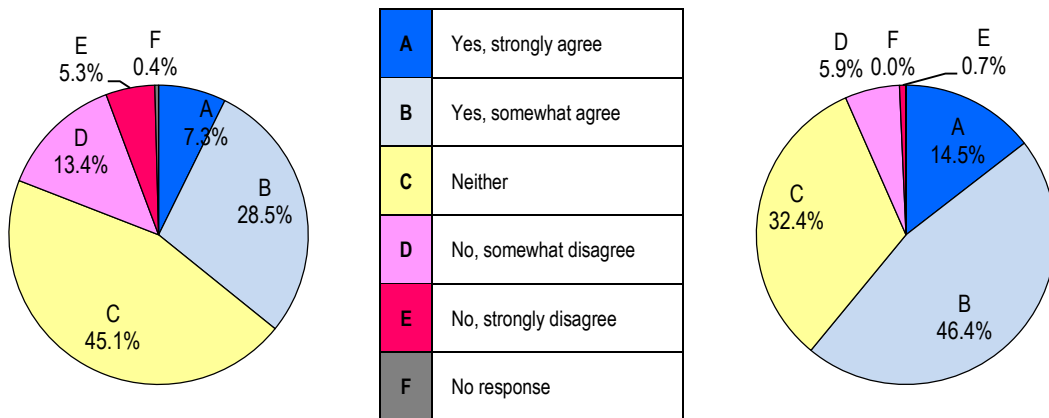
While under 40% of Japanese agree that Japan-South Korea-United States military cooperation should be strengthened, over 40% hesitate to decide and responded “Neither.” In contrast, 60% of South Koreans agree.

Regarding the reason for agreeing, 60% of Japanese and 80% of South Koreans believe that “it is essential to the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula.” While some differences in opinion remain, “to limit the rise of China” also constitutes about 40% of opinion in both countries.

[Graph 27: Should Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. strengthen military cooperation?]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



9. North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Development

9-1. North Korea’s Development of Nuclear Weapons

At both the North-South Summit and the U.S.-North Korea Summit, the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through diplomatic processes was agreed upon as the goal, but only 1% of Japanese hold the view that “denuclearization will happen as per the agreement.” Close to 60% of Japanese opinion is composed of the pessimistic views that they “can’t determine just based on the agreement” and that “in the end, the agreement will not be held to.”

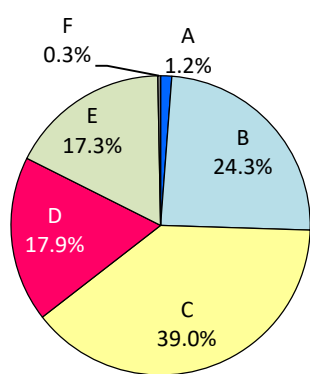
In contrast, close to 60% of South Koreans view the path toward denuclearization optimistically, responding that “denuclearization will happen” and “efforts will begin to be made toward denuclearization, but the final resolution will take time.”

This variation in perception on denuclearization, and on that of the solution to the nuclear development problem itself, is striking. While over 60% of Japanese feel that “resolution would be difficult,” consistent with last year, the view that it would be “difficult” composed only 23.2% of South Korean opinion, decreasing from last year’s 71.3% by 48%. Adding together responses of “this year” to “in 10 years,” over 60% of South Koreans anticipate the North Korean nuclear issue “will be solved” within the next 10 years.

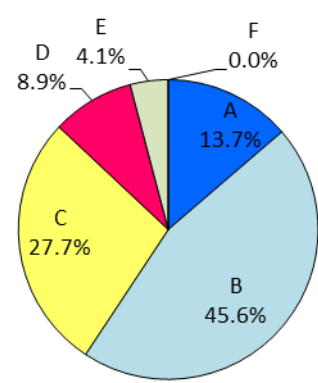
[Graph 28: Will denuclearization occur on the Korean Peninsula?]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

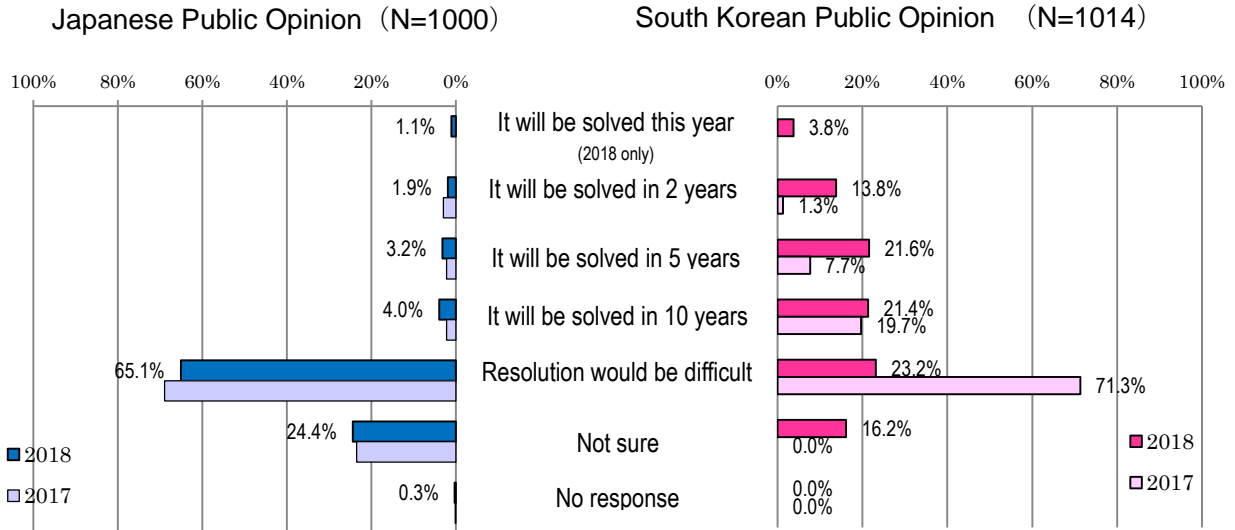
South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



- A Denuclearization will happen as per the agreement
- B Efforts will begin to be made toward denuclearization, but the final resolution will take time
- C Can't determine just based on the agreement
- D In the end, the agreement will not be held to
- E Do not know
- F No response



[Graph 29: Will the North Korean nuclear issue be resolved?]

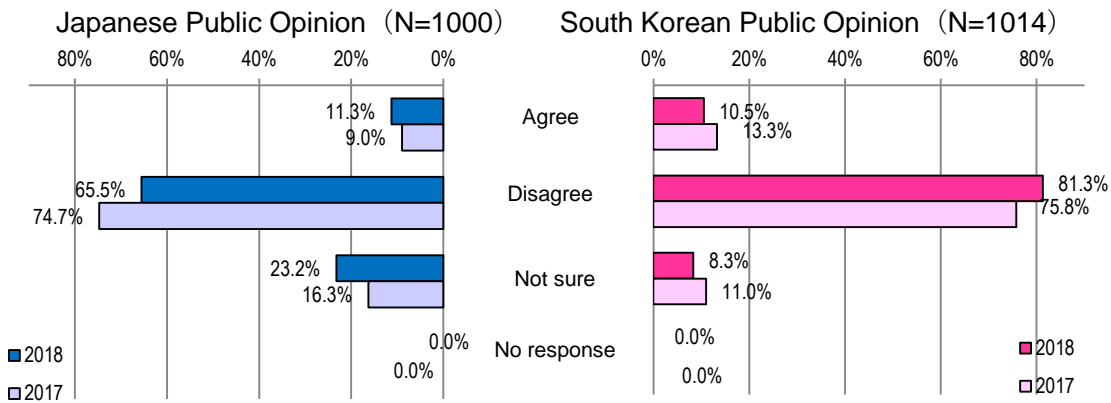


9-2. Possession of Nuclear Weapons – Agree or Disagree?

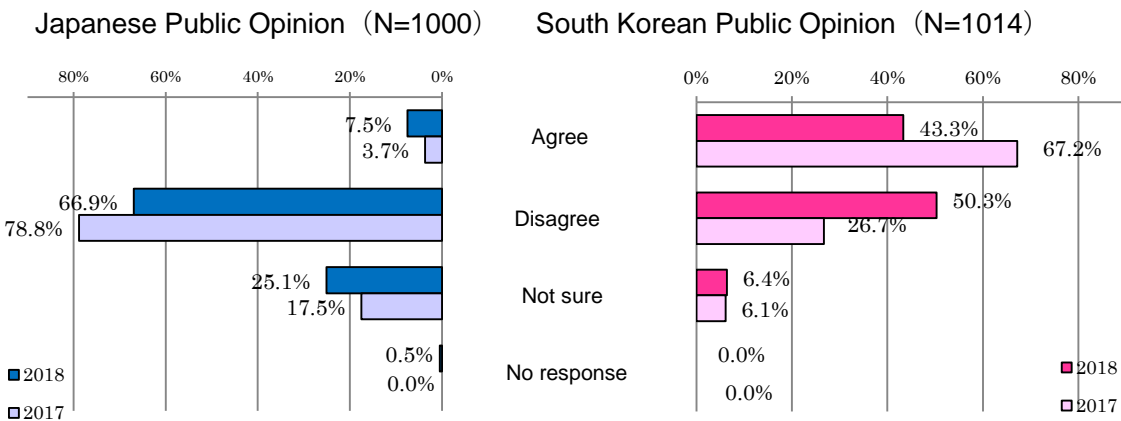
In the case that North Korea does not give up its nuclear program, we asked about the possibility of Japan and South Korea acquiring nuclear weapons. Regarding the prospect of Japan acquiring nuclear weapons, over 60% of Japanese “disagree,” which decreased 9% from last year. 80% of South Koreans “disagree.”

Within South Korea over the past year, opinions on nuclearization became slightly more rigid. Regarding the possibility of their own country acquiring nuclear weapons, more than 40% of South Koreans still “agree,” but compared to last year the number decreased by over 20%. In terms of South Korean nuclearization, over 60% of Japanese “disagree,” but there is a decrease from the previous year.

[Graph 30: Should Japan acquire nuclear weapons?]



[Graph 31: Should South Korea acquire nuclear weapons?]



10. The Future of the Korean Peninsula

10-1. About the Korean Peninsula 10 Years From Now

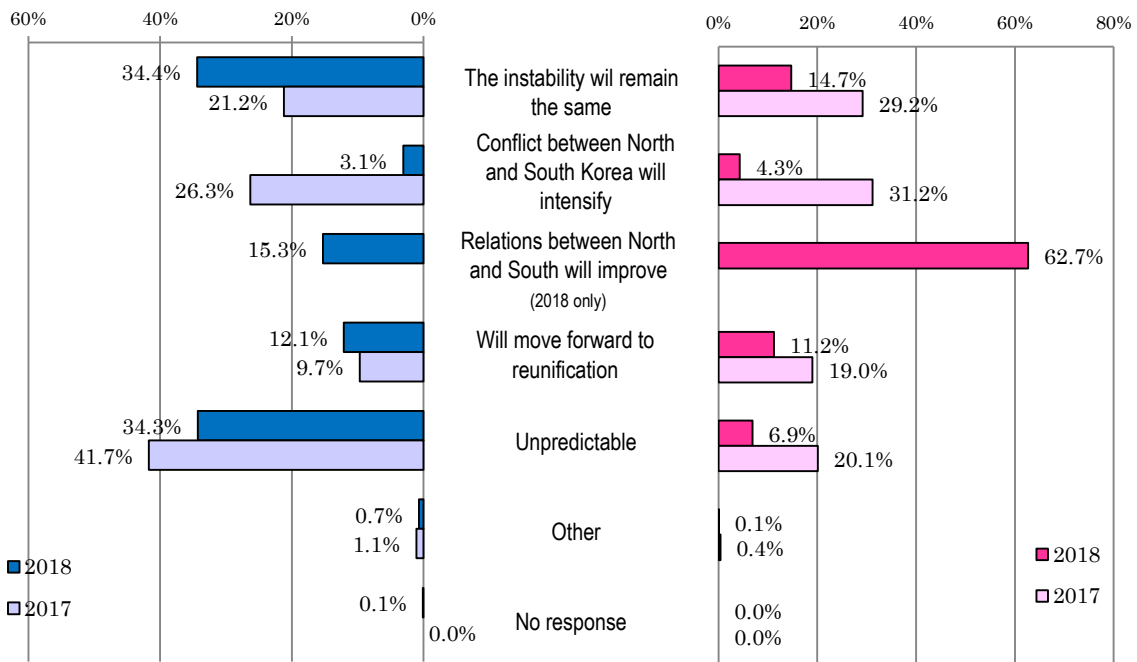
Regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula 10 years from now, close to 40% of the Japanese at the time of the survey believe the “statue quo will continue” or “conflict between North and South Korea will intensify,” while 30% responded that it is “unpredictable.” In stark contrast to those opinions, more than 60% of South Koreans believe “relations will improve,” and 10% responded that the North and South “will move forward to reunification.”

In terms of the relationship between North and South Korea in the future, many of the Japanese respond that they cannot understand the quick pace of movement on the Korean Peninsula, with close to 30% of opinion being composed of “Do not know” and 20% composed of “Coexist in the same way as they presently are.” In South Korea, “Complete unification as a single nation” constitutes 30% of public opinion, which, when added with “two separate states under a sovereign federal government,” indicates that half of South Koreans assume a future united relationship will exist. “Exist as separate nation-states but create a North-South union similar to the EU” also makes up more than 20% of South Korean opinion.

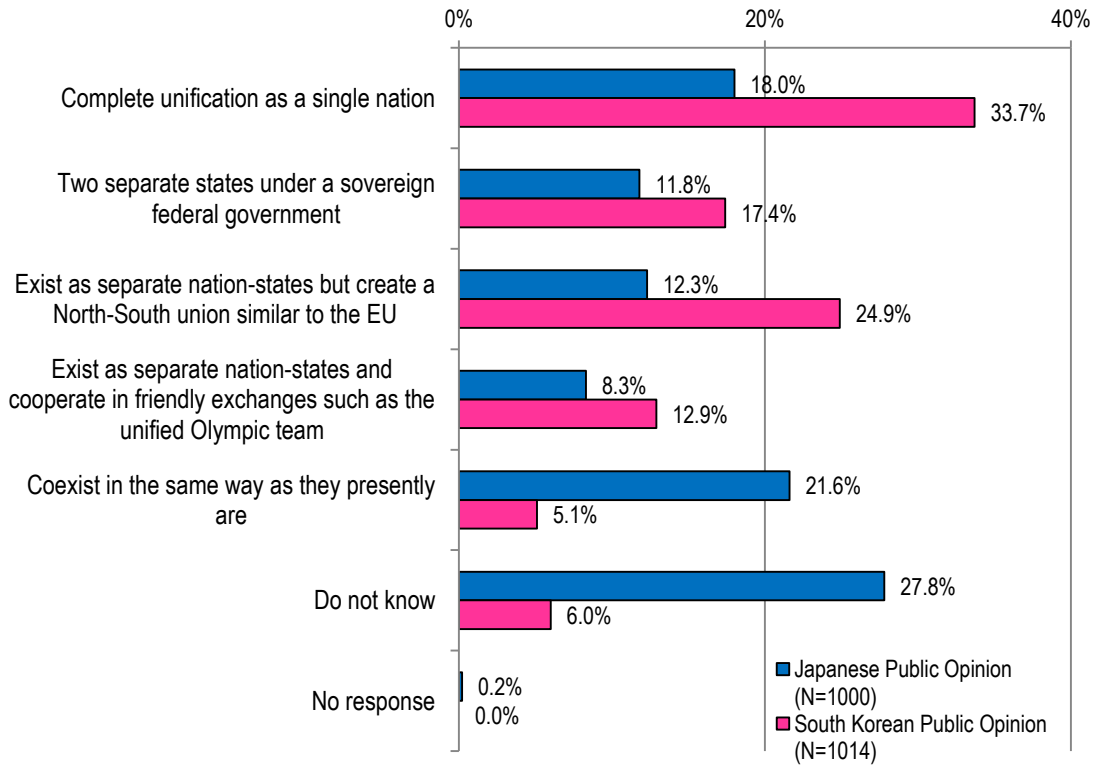
【Graph 32: The Korean Peninsula 10 Years From Now】

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



【Graph 33: Ideal Future Relationship between North and South Korea】

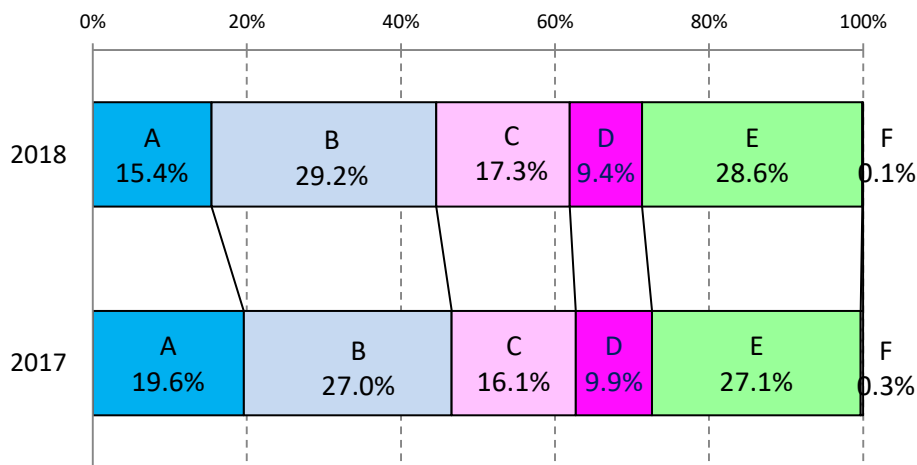


10-2. U.S. Military Presence in South Korea After Reunification

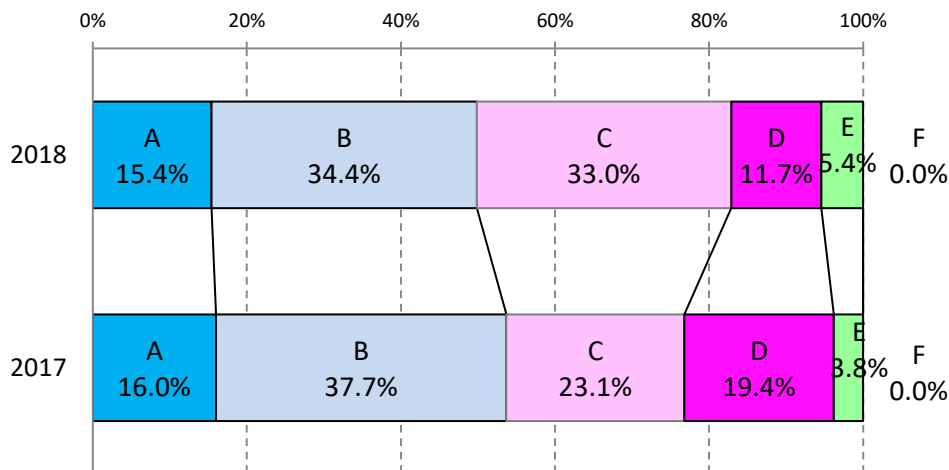
Close to half of the South Koreans and more than 40% of the Japanese feel that U.S. military presence is “necessary” even if North and South Korea were to be peacefully reunited. However, South Koreans who feel it is “unnecessary” also exceed 40% and show a division of opinion.

[Graph 34: Necessity of US Military for reunification of Korea]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



A	B	C	D	E	F
Necessary	Relatively necessary	Relatively unnecessary	Unnecessary	Not sure	No response

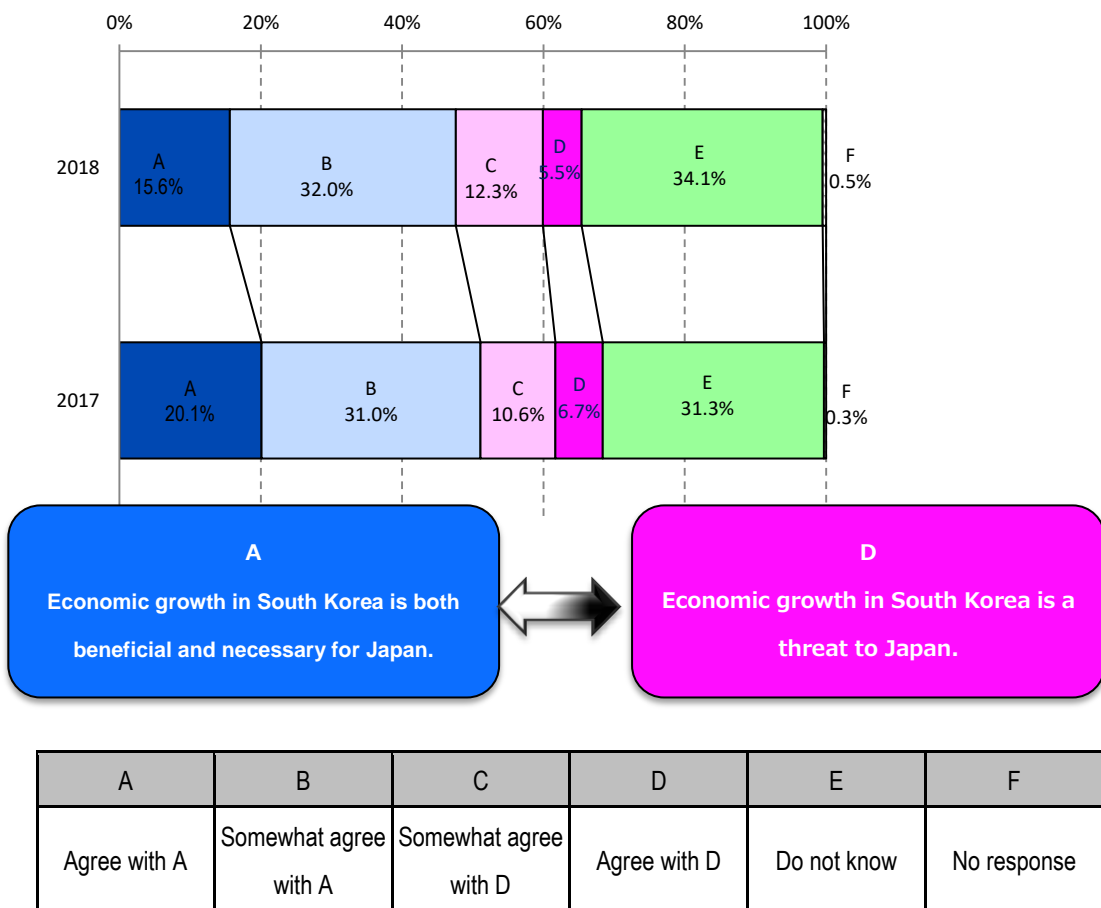
11. Economic Relations

11-1. Economic Relations Between Japan and South Korea

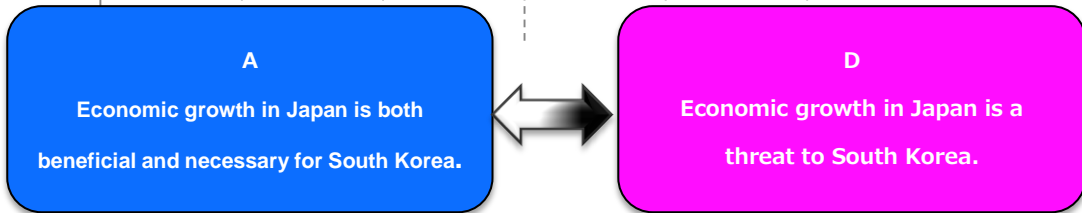
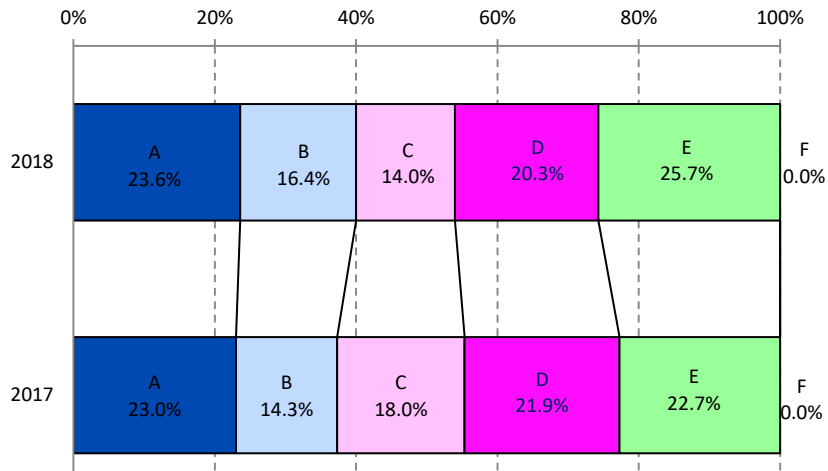
In terms of the economic relationship between Japan and South Korea, close to half of the Japanese view South Korea’s economic development to be “beneficial” to Japan, but there was a decrease from the previous year. On the other hand, while South Korean opinion had been divided up until this point, those who feel Japan’s economic development is “beneficial” increased and now compose more than 40%.

[Graph 35: Japan-South Korean Economic Relations]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



A	B	C	D	E	F
Agree with A	Somewhat agree with A	Somewhat agree with D	Agree with D	Do not know	No response

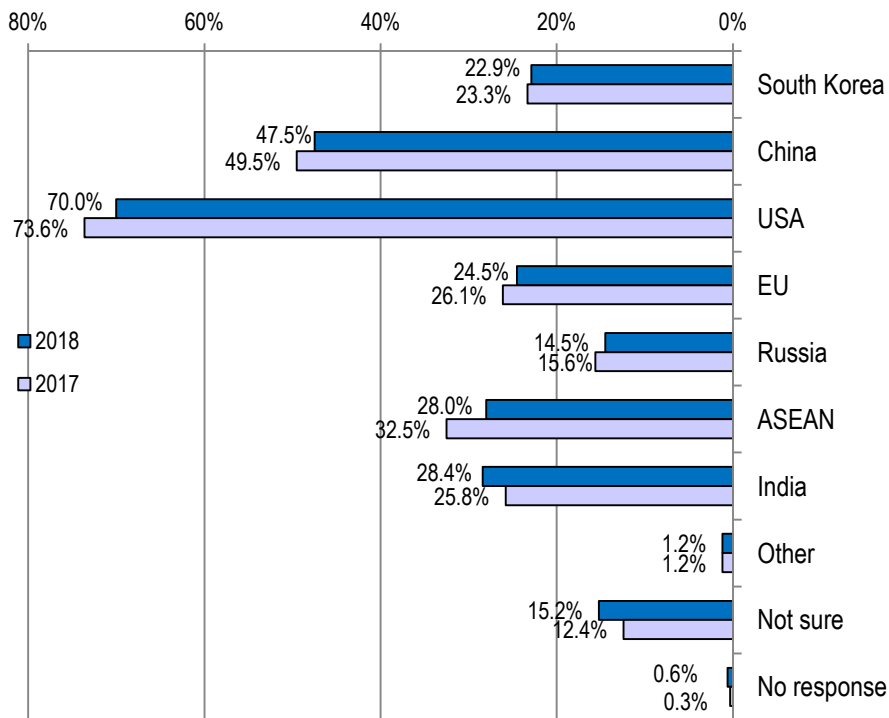
11-2. Countries and Regions of Significance in Terms of Economic Relations

70% of the Japanese responded that “the United States” is the most “economically important country” to their nation. “China” followed, selected by close to half of Japanese respondents. Other countries and regions selected by 20-30% of respondents included “India,” “ASEAN,” “EU,” and “South Korea.”

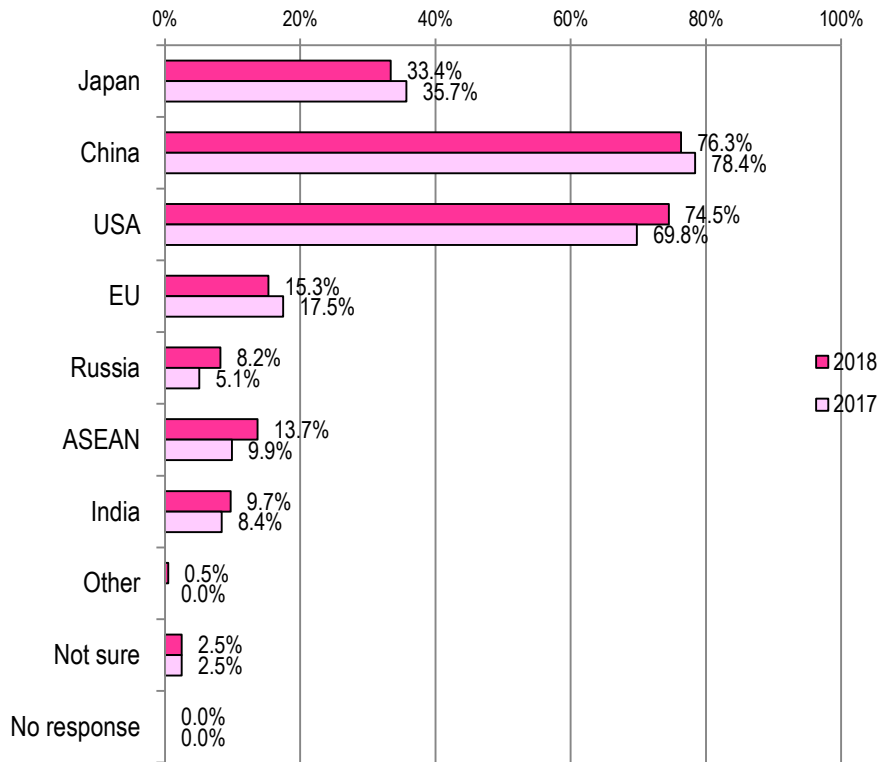
On the other hand, almost 80% of South Koreans believe that “China” is the most important, while “the United States” came close behind and constituted more than 70% of responses. “Japan” followed at over 30%, and South Korean responses centered on these three countries.

[Graph 36: Economically important countries and regions]

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)



South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



12. Japanese, Chinese, South Korean and American Influence in Asia Over the Next Decade

12-1. Japanese, Chinese and South Korean Influence in Asia Over the Next Decade

In terms of changes in Japanese, Chinese and South Korean influence in Asia over the next decade, most of both Japanese and South Koreans believe there will be “no change” in Japanese influence. However, both countries show an increase in people who predict that Japanese influence will decline.

Regarding South Korean influence, the view that there will be “no change” constituted the majority of responses, at 40% for the Japanese and 60% for the South Koreans.

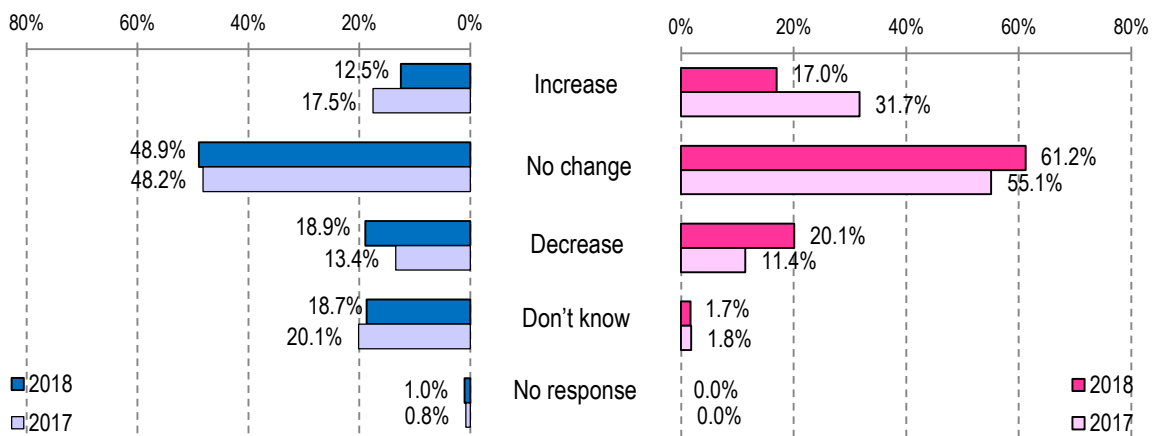
As for Chinese influence, most people in both countries believe it will “increase,” but South Koreans who responded as such decreased from the previous year.

While those who foresee “no change” in the influence of the United States compose the majority in both countries, around 30% of Japanese and South Koreans believe it will “increase.”

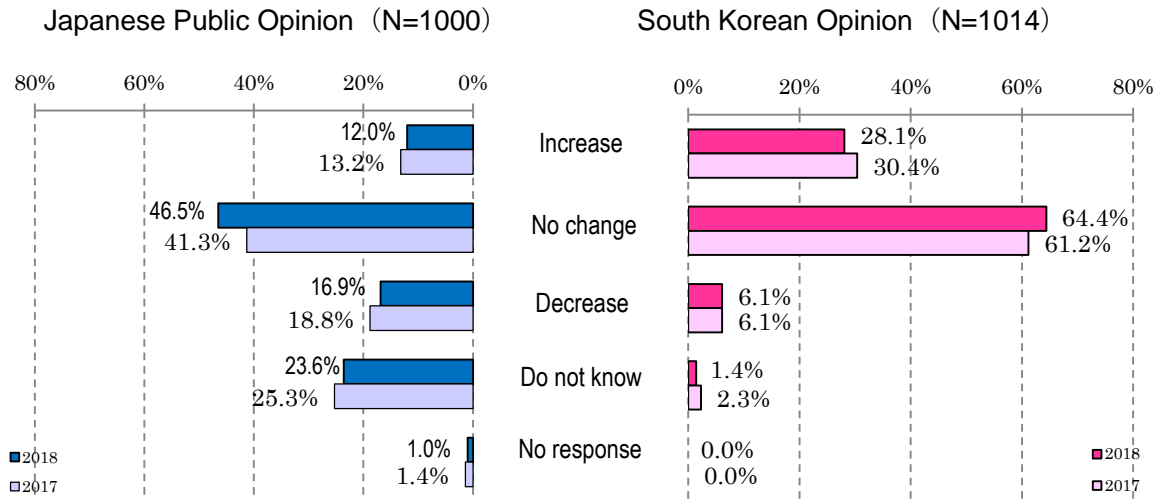
【Graph 37: How will Japanese influence in Asia change over the next decade?】

Japanese Public Opinion (N=1000)

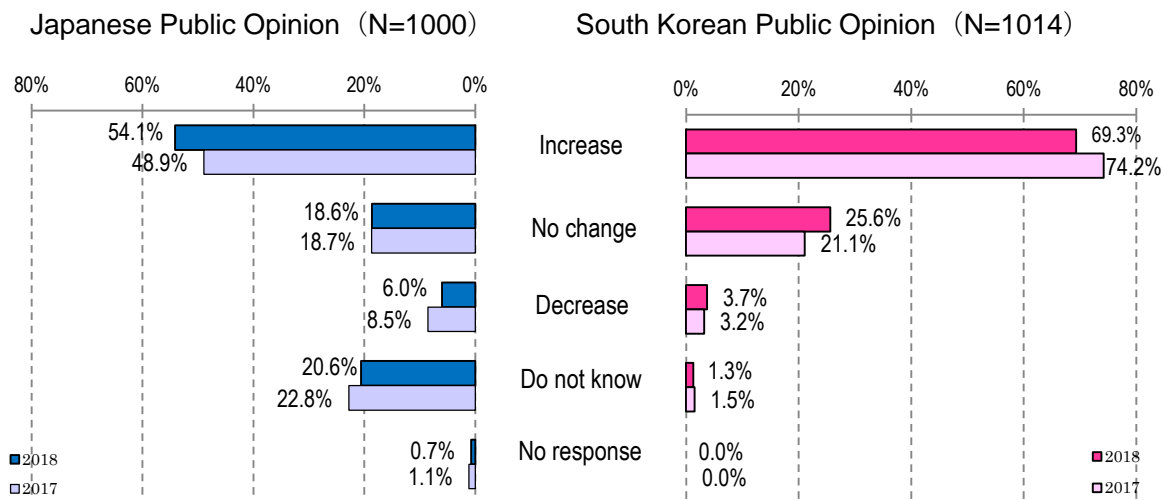
South Korean Public Opinion (N=1014)



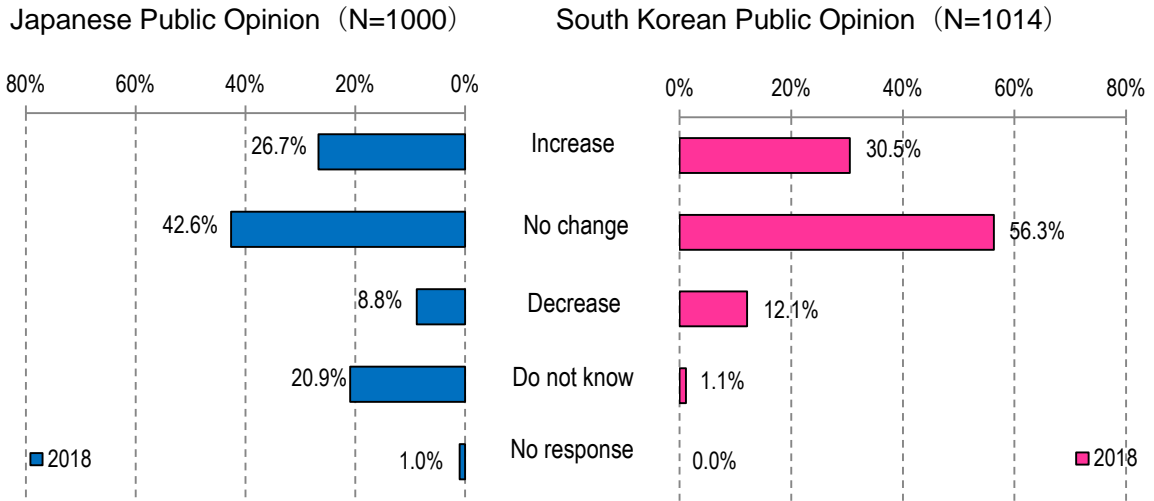
【Graph 38: How will South Korean influence in Asia change over the next decade?】



【Graph 39: How will Chinese influence in Asia change over the next decade?】



【Graph 40: How will the United States' influence in Asia change over the next decade?】

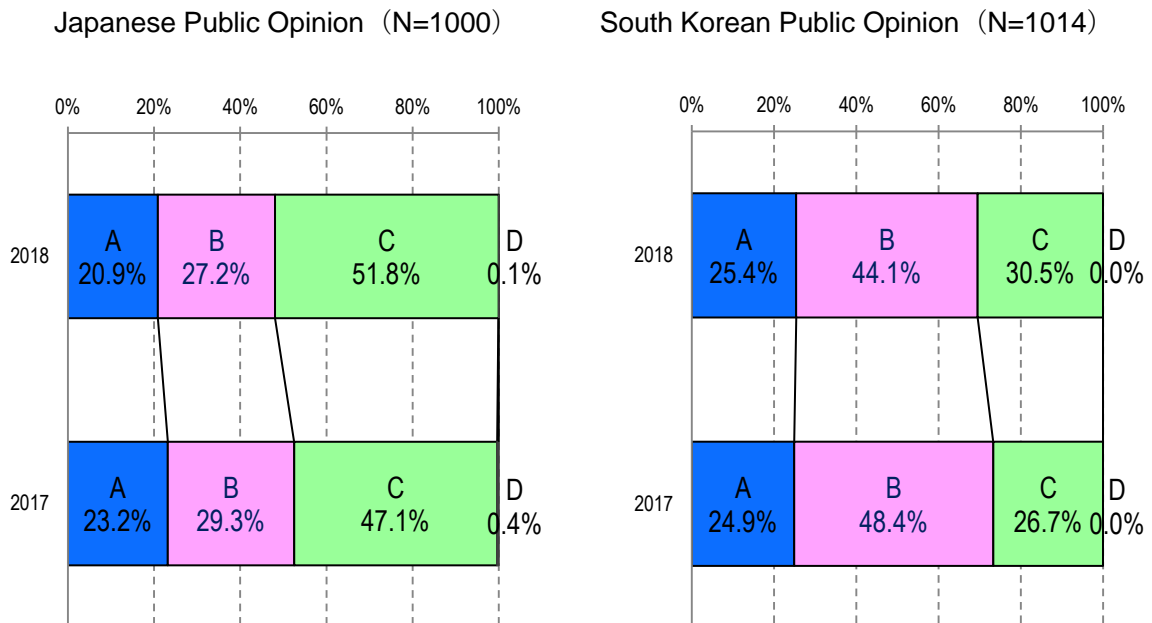


13. Media Coverage and Public Opinion on the Internet

13-1. Are Domestic Media Reports Objective and Fair?

In terms of the objectivity and fairness of domestic media in both Japan and South Korea, most Japanese respondents selected “Not sure/ no response,” while over 40% of the South Koreans feel that their media coverage is “not objective and fair.” This percentage, however, decreased from the previous year.

【Graph 41: Are domestic media reports about Japan-South Korea relations objective and fair?】

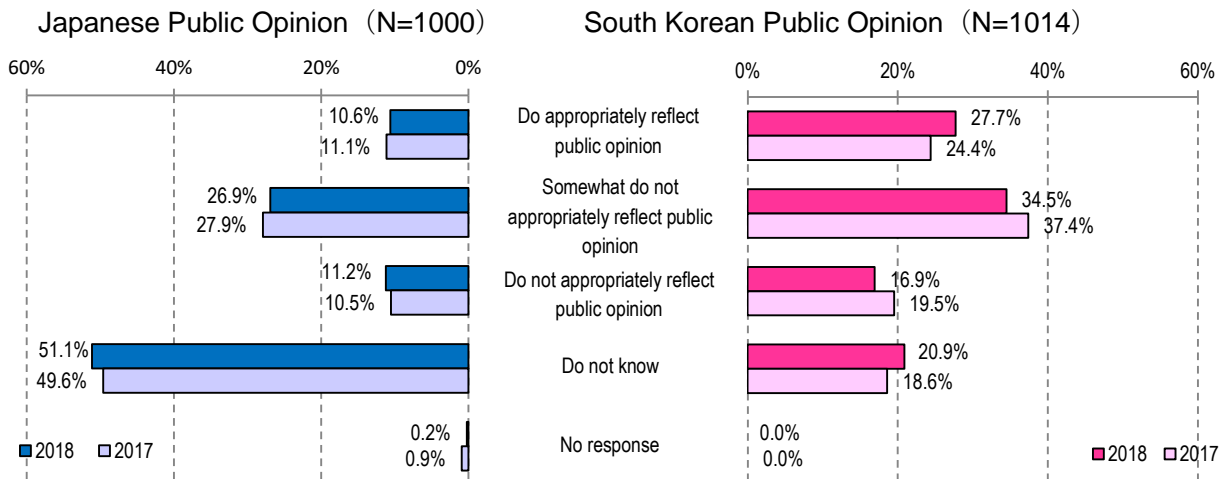


A	B	C	D
Yes	No	Not sure	No response

13-2. Does Public Opinion on the Internet Appropriately Reflect the People’s Views?

Close to 40% of the Japanese and 50% of the South Koreans feel that the views on the internet “do not appropriately reflect public opinion.” However, South Koreans who feel the internet does “appropriately reflect public opinion” compose close to 30%, more than twice the amount of the Japanese who responded the same way.

【Graph 42: Do opinions on the internet appropriately reflect the general public’s opinions?】



14. Background of Mutual Understanding

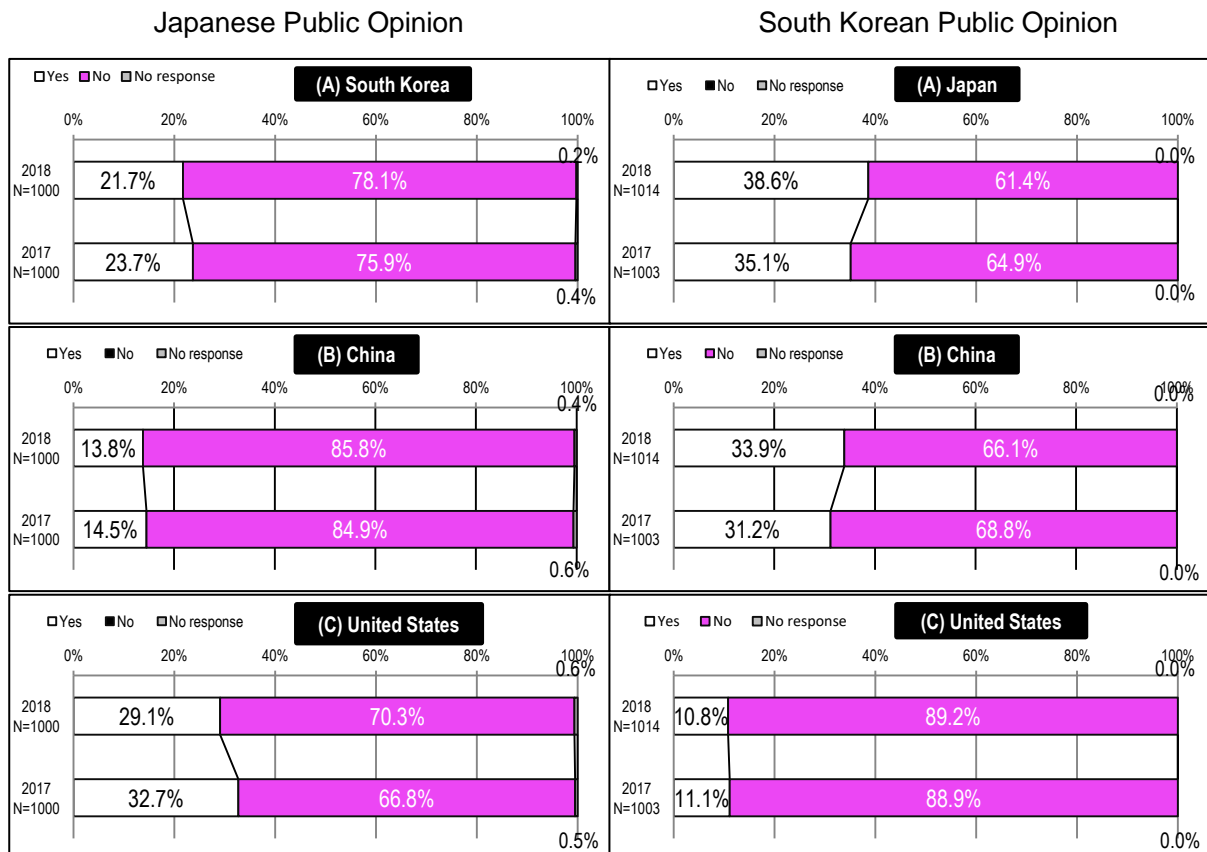
14-1. Degree of Direct Interaction Between Japanese and South Koreans

The percentage of Japanese who have traveled to South Korea remain consistent with previous years and reaches only 20%. On the other hand, the percentage of South Koreans who have traveled to Japan is close to 40%. The most common reason for the trips of both nationals is “tourism.”

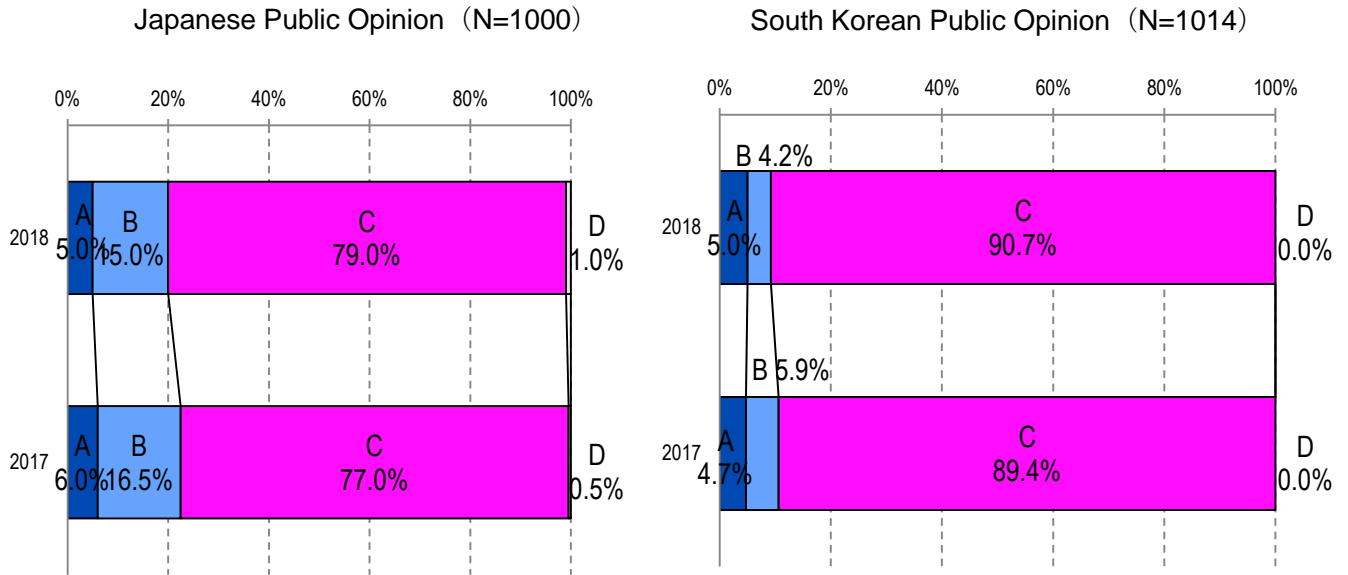
Regarding the period of time when they traveled to the other country, over 40% of Japanese responded “over 11 years ago,” and the percentage of trips taken decrease the closer it becomes to the present. However, South Koreans who responded “within the past 5 years” exceeded 70%. Although more South Koreans have traveled to “China,” more Japanese have traveled to “the United States.”

Additionally, close to 80% of the Japanese and 90% of the South Koreans responded that they have no acquaintances in the other country.

【Graph 43: Have you traveled to Japan, South Korea, China, and the U.S. before?】



【Graph 44: Do you have friends or acquaintances in the other country?】



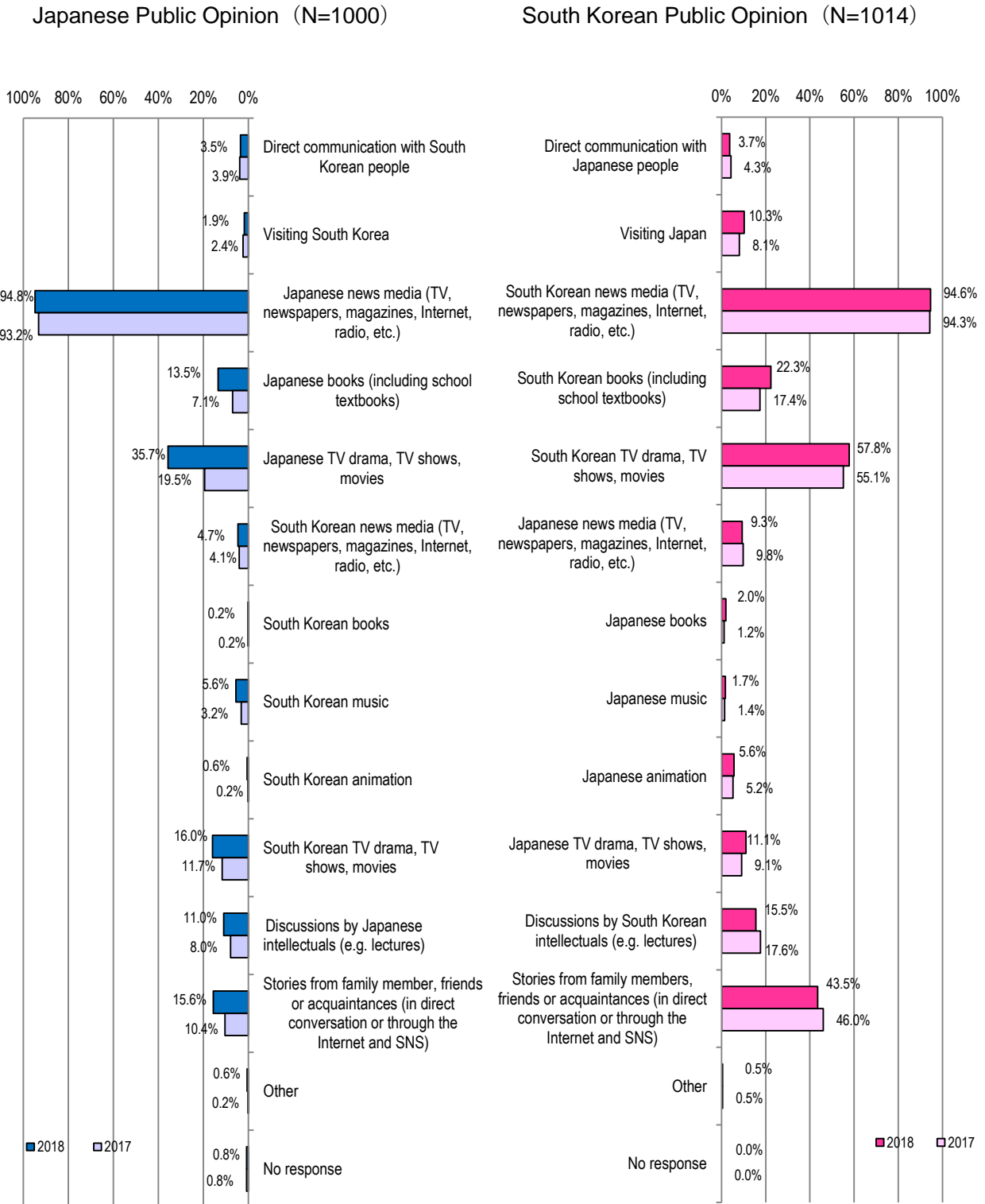
A	B	C	D
I have close friends or acquaintances	I have a few friends/acquaintances that I talk to occasionally	I have never known any Japanese/South Korean people	No response

14-2. Interest in and Source of Information on One Another's Countries

Over 90% of both Japanese and South Koreans acquire information about one another's countries through "domestic news media," along with close to 60% of South Koreans and 40% of Japanese acquiring information through their own country's "TV dramas." Less than 20% of Japanese receive information from "family members, friends, and acquaintances' experiences," compared to 40% of South Koreans.

Within those who responded "domestic news media," "television" is overwhelming as the mode of information acquisition, but around 30% of South Koreans and 20% of Japanese also use "news apps on mobile devices" and "news websites on the computer." Less than 10% of people in both countries responded "newspaper."

【Graph 45: Main source of information about the other country and Japan-South Korea bilateral relations】



< Please send all inquiries concerning this survey to the address below >

Authorized Non-profit Organization, The Genron NPO
HSB Teppozu 4F, 1-1-12 Minato, Chuo-ku, Tokyo Japan, 104-0043
Tel/Fax +813-6262-8772 / +813-6262-8773
info@genron-npo.net