

Conditions for the Export of Japanese Silkworm Eggs
—The Situation in The Sericulture Regions of France—

YUASA Takashi

From the 1860's to the 1870's, large quantities of Japanese silkworm eggs were exported to principal silk raising countries in Europe. This paper intends to review the circumstances in these countries that allowed this export, taking in case France.

During the first half of the 19th century, the French silk fabric industry developed and this was accompanied by the French sericulture industry. It underwent, however, unprecedented disaster from the mid-1850's onward: negligence of safety rules in the silkworm culture caused a wide spreading of pebrine. French sericulturists' silkworm eggs were at the point of extinction and they had to seek supply abroad. Because they still kept their silkworm raising method traditional and neglected environmental care, however, imported silkworm eggs took the disease one cargo after another. In the 1860s, they began to import Japanese silkworm eggs.

Most silk raising farmers in France still adhered to this highly profitable industry. In Lyon, however, the silk manufacturers had begun to seek the supply of their raw material, silk yarn, in foreign markets. The biological properties of Japanese eggs at that time made it difficult to raise them in Europe, and scientists were studying mainly the raising of wild silkworms.

In these circumstances, the introduction of Japanese silkworms was not made with a long range forecast, but only as a temporizing measure for a short period.