

24. 国によって異なる笑顔の意味(1)：構造理解

Here's something that has always puzzled me, growing up in the US as a child of Russian parents.

Whenever I or my friends were having our photos taken, we were told to say "cheese" and smile.

But if my parents also happened to be in the photo, they were stone-faced.

So were my Russian relatives, in their vacation photos. My parents' high-school graduation pictures show them with their young classmates looking absolutely depressed.

This does not mean they are all unhappy! Quite the opposite.

It's just that grinning without cause is not a skill Russians possess or even want.

There's even a Russian saying that translates as "laughing for no reason is a sign of stupidity."

Russians' fondness for the gentle frown seems very unusual to some foreigners.

And the cultural difference goes both ways.

Russians who move to America often remark on the new experience of being smiled at by strangers.
