

Bakumatsu Japan Through Russian Eyes : the letters of Voin Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov, Part II , 1854—1857

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This second article describes the second phase of Russo-Japanese negotiations (as delineated by Lensen) from January to February, 1854 and the beginning of formal relations between Russia and Japan and informal, friendly encounters between individual Russians and Japanese in October and November, 1856.

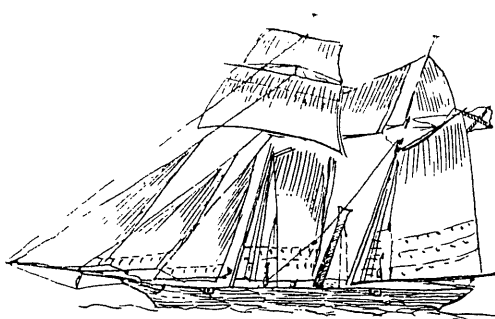
Upon the return of the Russian naval expedition headed by Vice-Admiral E. V. Putiatin to Nagasaki on December 23, 1853, (January 3, 1854) the frigate *Pallada* was again anchored in the second roadstead. Voin Andreevich was ordered by Putiatin to anchor the schooner *Vostok* in the inner bay. This anchorage was more interesting to him because it was closer to shore and narrower, like a river. It was at the midpoint of the 4 mile bay, some 2 miles from the Dutch factory on *Dezhima* and the city of Nagasaki, which could both be easily seen through a telescope.

The Russians had arrived just before dawn and so were met by the Nagasaki officials somewhat after their arrival. They were told that the plenipotentiaries had still not arrived from Edo, but that they were near Nagasaki and would arrive in about five days. Voin Andreevich thought that they were, in fact, already in Nagasaki, but that “Japanese pride did not allow them to admit that Japanese magnates await a Russian admiral.”

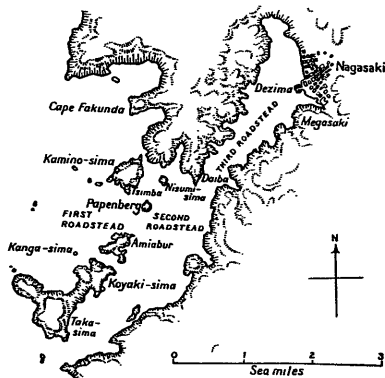
The plenipotentiaries and other officials from Edo actually arrived on December 27. A day or two later some Japanese officials came to the frigate to inform Putiatin of their arrival. The Russian admiral declared his desire to conclude their first ceremonial meeting as soon as possible. The next day the sec-



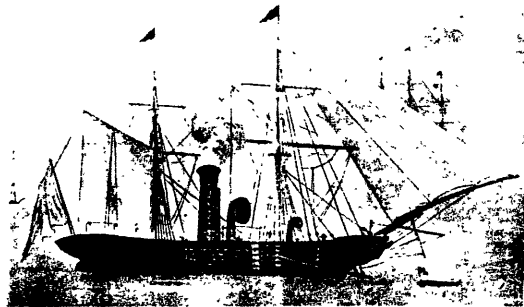
Voin Andreevich
Rimsky-Korsakov



The schooner “Vostok”. Drawing by V. A. R-K.



Map of Nagasaki bay at the time of the Putiatin expedition. (From Goncharov, "Pallada", Ed. Wilson)



The schooner "Vostok". (From bakumatsu gaikokukankeimonjo, No. 4)

retary of the plenipotentiaries came to the frigate to negotiate the conditions of this ceremonial and, in consequence, it was decided that the meeting would take place on shore in a specially designated building. It was further determined that the admiral would ride ashore with an honor guard and be accompanied by all the other officers. There would be no Japanese convoy. At the dock the Russians would be met by one of the younger plenipotentiaries and be conducted to the house where he would greet them at the entrance. They would then go inside and be met by the other, senior plenipotentiaries in an audience hall while still standing. Voin Andreevich (V. A.) then continues :

It is necessary to spell out all these details with the Japanese, because they, with their arrogant and haughty manner, make use of every blunder... to show their greatness and to humiliate the foreigner.

On December 31, 1853 (Jan. 12, 1854) the first ceremonial meeting between Putiatin and the other Russian officers and the four plenipotentiaries took place. V. A. describes how it began :

Around 11 o'clock in the morning a multitude of boats bedecked with flags approached the frigate. About a hundred Japanese, in various states of ceremonial or holiday undress, climbed out of the boats.

To his eyes, their 'dress' seemed like a state of undress. Nevertheless, he then goes on to describe how they were dressed. The only difference from everyday dress that he found was the formal uniform worn over it, which was the same gray muslin for all. The hairstyle was also the same, with the head uncovered. He did not find the Japanese costume comfortable or elegant, but he praised their choice of materials. None of the Japanese stood out in his eyes from brightness or gaiety of color. But he also did not notice two Japanese with the same identical dress. This variety of shades gave a group of Japanese a pleasant coloration

in his eyes. In contrast to Russian clothes, he thought theirs were uncomfortable, but also roomy. They didn't make one feel as if one was in a clothespress. Compared to the Russians' uniforms with tails and gold braid he could not say the Japanese dressed sumptuously. However, he could not but admit that they had "exemplary taste in the art of dressing simply."

The Japanese who came to the frigate were officials from the Nagasaki governor's staff or from the plenipotentiaries' suite. They came to announce to the admiral that the latter were ready to receive him in the audience hall. The Russians got into their cutters and to the strains of music from the band in the special lead cutter all the Russian boats moved away from the frigate. As it was necessary to demonstrate to the Japanese the importance of the admiral's person, as soon as his boat was lowered all four Russian ships raised colored flags, and all the sailors on board saluted and shouted "Hurrah" !

In half an hour the Russians arrived at the pier near the Dutch factory. There they were met by the most junior of the plenipotentiaries, Koga Kinichiro.¹ He conducted them to a small square, while the Russian band played music befitting the occasion. All the buildings along the Russians' path and those surrounding the square remained a mystery to the Russians : they were hidden behind huge white paper curtains with blue borders hung carefully all around. A row of soldiers stood at some distance along the curtains, and behind the curtains milled a crowd of ordinary citizens lured by curiosity and eager for a glimpse of the strange-looking and strangely-dressed 'red-headed' foreigners. Because of the curtains, the Russians could not see them, but V. A. knew of their presence from certain telltale signs : here and there a movement of the curtain, tips of fingers protruding through the seams, or a dark eye attentively following after the procession. But there was no sound coming from them, not even an audible whisper, which testified in his mind to the strictness of the police. Passing through the square and into another short street, they entered into the building which contained the audience hall. V. A. tried to describe this nearly indescribable building to his parents :

How to describe this structure to you, resembling a European one only by the shape of its roof, except by reference to the proverb : ' One cannot build a house without four corners.' From the outside it is not quite a shed, and from inside not a hallway or a room. Nothing is like the interior of our houses—no furniture, except soft excellently made straw mats on the floor, like wall-to-wall soft, thick carpet, or like a mattress which

¹ Koga Kinichiro (1816–1884), Confucian official of the Shogunate, also a student of and authority on Western learning. He kept a diary which gives a Japanese view of the Russians.

one hates to walk on with his boots. We knew that the Japanese always take off their shoes and walk on the mats in their stocking feet, and for that reason we had brought a supply of canvas slippers to wear over our boots.²

Voin Andreevich then goes on to describe the rest of the house--the walls, and windows, the relative scarcity of nails, the absence of any odors, and "air like a fresh autumn morning." He thought that "this house, like all the houses in Nagasaki, was built against the summer sun and heat."

V. A. believed that the Japanese were extremely conservative and rigid followers of past precedents. He noted how the building designated as the first meeting place with the plenipotentiaries had been used in that capacity almost fifty years before :

As an example of how stubbornly the Japanese stick to the past and how even in the smallest details they try to remain true to past precedents--this audience hall is the very same one in which the embassy of Rezanov was received in 1804.³

However, one may wonder whether this was the result of a strict following of precedent per se or the result of that building (the west magistrate's office, or seiyakusho) still being the best suited to such a meeting, for whatever reasons, in the judgement of the Japanese authorities. It was also the same building where Putiatin and the other Russian officers, except V. A., had ceremonially presented the letter from the Russian government to the Nagasaki governor the previous September.

The fact that Rezanov had been received there and the knowledge of his failure to achieve any of his aims, must have weighed on the Russians' minds to an extent and made them more determined to succeed, and more protective of their own dignity. Their main aim was the same as Rezanov's had been : to open Japanese ports to Russian ships. But, in addition, they wanted to determine the northern border between the two countries.

When the plenipotentiaries met the Russians in the audience hall they stood side by side facing them and the entrance. First, both sides exchanged greetings while standing. Then all sat down, the plenipotentiaries and the governor's secretaries sitting on a raised platform that was equal in height to the Russians'

² Goncharov describes in Frigate Pallada how his slippers kept coming off, and how he finally put them under his hat!

³ Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, (d. 1807), head of the Russian-American company and special ambassador of the Russian government, conducted negotiations with the Japanese government representatives in Nagasaki from October 1804 to April 1805.

chairs, which they had brought with them from their ships. V. A. stated that this equality in height was “because Japanese etiquette above all demands that interlocutors of equal rank have their heads at the same level.”

It follows from this demand that interlocutors of different rank must have their heads at different levels. The decidedly lower rank of the interpreters was shown by their behavior during this meeting, and all subsequent meetings. V. A. observed how :

The Japanese interpreters listened to the plenipotentiaries on their knees, with their foreheads touching the floor, and did not get off their knees, but only raised their heads, when they conveyed their words to the Russian interpreter Posyet.

V. A. thought that the plenipotentiaries were such “ august personages,” whose every word was of such import, that the interpreters had to abase themselves continually before them.

V. A. describes the plenipotentiaries’ dress as “ silken gowns resembling those of Catholic priests in their cut, but without gold or silver decorations,” This may have made their dress more, not less, appealing in his eyes.

The two most senior plenipotentiaries, Tsutui⁴ and Kawaji⁵ stood up. The Russians especially liked the former. V. A. described him and Kawaji in some detail and commented on their character, as he perceived it :

[Tsutui] was about 70 years old, [75] and very much like those old gentlemen, left over from the past century, who were raised in that school of amiable, invariable politeness. Kawaji was a man about 50, [53] in appearance more severe than Tsutui, but in him, just as in Tsutui, was a noticeable, indescribable air of distinction, which without doubt constitutes the aristocratic features of all humanity, and not just of one nation.

Here, V. A. was showing his own aristocratic roots and upbringing and his belief that certain of its features were shared by aristocrats of whatever nationality. In this belief, he was surely not mistaken. It is interesting also, however,

⁴ Tsutui Masanori (1778–1859), a specialist in foreign affairs, chief inspector, and close adviser to Abe Masahiro. He and Kawaji had both been involved in the deliberations within the bakufu government in the wake of the first visit of Commodore Perry to Uraga in July, 1853.

⁵ Kawaji, Toshiakira (1801–1868) a finance official in the bakufu government. Also a close advisor to Abe Masahiro, and an advocate of a peaceful approach to the Perry and Putiatin expeditions. During the negotiations with the Russians he kept a detailed diary. Eventually published in 1913, it gives a Japanese view of the Russians and the negotiations. Loyal to the bakufu, he committed suicide after its fall in 1868.

that he thought that the other plenipotentiaries and the other officials from Edo, and the two Nagasaki governors had very ordinary features. Either they were not as aristocratic as Tsutui and Kawaji, or they lacked their special 'air of distinction'.

V. A. relates how greetings were pronounced by all four plenipotentiaries separately and were addressed firstly to the admiral [Putiatin], and then to the commander of the frigate [Unkovsky], to the secretaries [Posyet, Goncharov] and finally, to all other officers [incl. V. A.] and "consisted of the usual phrases, said very simply, "without any Oriental pomposity."

The admiral answered each one in turn in the same tone for himself and for the other Russian officers and secretaries. This took half an hour due to the time required for interpretation.

Then the 'fifth' plenipotentiary, according to V. A., acting as master of ceremonies, came out to the center and proposed that Putiatin rest. Then all the Russians went into an adjoining room and sat down on their chairs. The same Japanese M. C. occupied the admiral, while the 'other' plenipotentiaries either stayed in the audience hall or went into another room.

Then a small wooden box with candies, sweet pies, and "tea without sugar" was placed on the floor before each Russian officer. Then they were served the candies, but V. A. does not mention by whom. It should be remembered that it would have been difficult for the Russians to serve themselves, sitting on their chairs, except by bending over and extending their arms down to the boxes on the floor. Before 15 minutes had passed, the M. C., Nakamura⁶, was called away by the plenipotentiaries, and returning from them, proposed that the admiral dine. The latter agreed with the condition that the plenipotentiaries would also dine with the Russians. Nakamura answered that the two most senior plenipotentiaries, Tsutui and Kawaji, would dine with the admiral. He added that they would also like to invite all the other Russian officers to dine with them, but due to the small size of the room, could invite only the commander of the frigate, Unkovsky, and the two secretaries, Posyet and Goncharov. And so it was decided. The admiral and the three others went back into the audience hall, and all the other Russian officers remained in the two preceding rooms together with the 'baniosi' and other assorted Japanese officials who during the greeting ceremony had sat on their heels along the walls of the audience hall and the other rooms in "magnificent order and mute, inviolable immobility." This latter evidence of order and discipline must have impressed such a devoted naval officer as Voin

⁶ Nakamura, Tameya (d. 1865), served as a secretary to the plenipotentiaries. He later became one of the governors of Shimoda, and served in that capacity during V. A.'s visit there.

Andreevich.

Immediately a number of small wooden tables were brought into the room where V. A. and the other Russian officers sat in their chairs. One was set in front of each officer. On top of each table were three black, lacquered trays with legs. On each tray were four lacquered wooden bowls covered with identically lacquered lids. Then between the tables were placed miniature wooden tables, and on top of them tiny porcelain dishes with slices of salted muskmelon and radish, “which serve among the Japanese as salt.” Next came, instead of bread, a bowl of steaming rice, and in place of a knife and fork, a pair of chopsticks. Nothing was fried. Everything was either boiled or raw, and mostly served cold. Besides the above observations, what particularly struck Voin Andreevich about Japanese cuisine was its complete absence of oils and fat and “doubtful seasonings”, the “tidy way it was served” and the “neat, stylish manner” in which it was arranged on the plate, which made it “impossible to refuse.” V. A. especially liked the white, semi-transparent raw fish, served with marinated cabbage, which he could not identify.

Voin Andreevich ate all that was placed before him, as many others did, “because the food was really not bad, and the portions were Japanese,” that is, small. Whether it was because they were naturally moderate in their eating habits or not, in any case the portions were “not large enough for northern European stomachs” he concluded. Only at the end of the meal were the Russians served a whole, boiled fish, a kind of bonito. “But no one eats this,” he commented. According to Japanese custom it was sent to the Russians’ ships, together with the leftovers from the other dishes. Instead of cold water, they were served hot water, and, finally, the meal ended with warmed sake, which V. A. thought had a somewhat unpleasant bitter taste. (If it was made from millet, and not rice, as he says, then it should not be surprising!) After all the food was taken away, a lacquered tray with some tobacco rolled in a paper and a Japanese pipe, brand-new and untouched were brought in. Whoever wanted to smoke, smoked.

During the meal the Japanese officials had not sat down with the Russians, but walked around their tables, and ‘waited’ on them, inviting them to taste this or that, and asking them if they wanted more tea, or more of something else. They showed the Russians how to use the chopsticks to pick up the small pieces of food. V. A. thought that such behavior was really clever on their part. It must have made the Russians feel like honored guests.

If, as V. A. claims, many of the Russians ate everything placed before them, that must have included the raw fish. Since they were not given any knives or forks, they must have used the chopsticks to do so, admittedly with a little help from their Japanese hosts. Thus, such common Japanese stereotypes about foreigners who ‘don’t like raw fish’ or ‘can’t use chopsticks’ did not seem to apply

to the Russians in bakumatsu Nagasaki.

Soon after finishing their meal, the Russians stood up and walked through the other rooms, looking at them closely. Admiral Putiatin and the others soon came out of the room where they had dined with Tsutui and Kawaji. V. A. asked Goncharov what had happened at their table, and the latter replied that "both Japanese had shown what you would expect from their appearance : kindness, worldly tact and conversational skill." And so it seemed to V. A. himself when he had breakfast with them on another occasion in the admiral's cabin.

And so ended the first meeting with the Japanese officials from Edo. The Russians left the audience hall with the same ceremony as they had entered it, and got into their launches and returned to the frigate at 6 o'clock in the evening in time to celebrate the New Year. By the Russian calendar, it was December 31, 1853, and given the cordial reception and show of hospitality on the part of the Japanese, the Russians might well have thought that their mission would meet with success in the new year.

On January 4 the plenipotentiaries came to the frigate with all their retinue at the invitation of Putiatin. They were treated to lunch, but all ate little. In compensation, they drank quite a lot, especially the sweetest wines. They had sent presents to the admiral beforehand--lacquered boxes, tables and trays with instructions. But in V. A.'s mind the most valuable present of all was that from Kawaji--a superb sword of Japanese Damascus steel. On the blade was a stamp that signified, as explained by the Japanese interpreters, that the sword had been used to kill three men at one sweep. V. A. mentioned that the Japanese sometimes used such occasions as the executions of criminals to test the best and most famous blades.

The next day the plenipotentiaries were sent presents from the admiral, consisting of table clocks, mirrors and similar objects of European and Russian manufacture, which came from the stocks of the Russian Foreign Ministry in St. Petersburg. After sending the presents to the plenipotentiaries, the Russians again went ashore in full dress uniform and with the same ceremony as before to receive their presents from the Shogun and a letter from the Supreme Council to Count Nesselrode, the Foreign Minister in the Russian Tsarist government.

Voin Andreevich was extremely impressed by the "elegant simplicity and taste and highly-finished quality" of a small box made of some sort of wood that was as "white as snow, acacia, it seems and polished smoother than steel, but not covered with lacquer, and without any decoration save for a thin silver trimming." This box was actually the fourth in a series of progressively smaller boxes fitting inside each other. He wrote to his parents that he "had never seen anything more perfect". He wrote that in it was carefully placed another, light, tiny box covered with green damask which contained the precious letter.

Putiatin had a brief meeting with the plenipotentiaries in which he thanked them for the presents from the shogun, which had included, according to V. A., 300 bags of rice, 50 pieces of white and red silk cloth, 50 bales of silk thread, several live pigs, and a porcelain tea set for all the officers. Then they had to agree about the format and order for their talks. After that, they were once again treated to a meal, which was the same as before, and served in the same way. The only difference, according to V. A. were the stewed sea snails, which he found rather tasty. He did not find, however, any “stimulating effect whatsoever, in contrast to the belief in their alleged properties on the part of the Japanese.. ”

These were the only two formal meetings with the Japanese that V. A. took part in. He must have had other more informal meetings with them on board the “Pallada” or the “Vostok.”

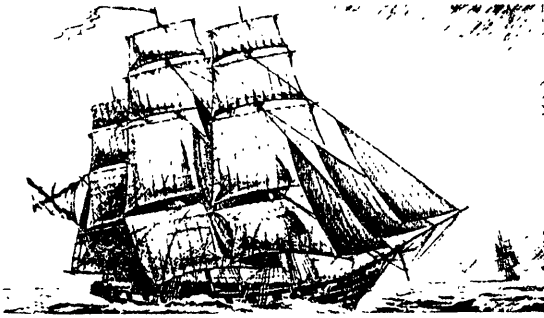
Then began the negotiations which continued for a little more than two weeks. Putiatin went ashore every day with Posyet, Goncharov, Goshkevich, the Chinese interpreter, and Peshchurov⁷ and without ceremony. Neither Voin Andreevich, nor any other of the Russian officers took part in these talks.

On January 21, before the talks had ended, Voin Andreevich was ordered by Putiatin to take the “Vostok” to Shanghai, a mere 500 miles away from Nagasaki across the East China Sea, for news of Europe and the possible outbreak of the Crimean War. Putiatin had heard about the break in relations between Russia and England and France, and justifiably expected that war might have started while he was in Nagasaki.

Not having received any definite news of the outbreak of war, V. A. went to Naha, on Okinawa and then to Manila. From there, he took the Vostok to Port Hamilton in the Bonin islands for repairs. There he rendezvoused with Putiatin on the Pallada, and the other two Russian ships and together they returned to Nagasaki on April 8.

On April 13 Voin Andreevich was once again sent to Shanghai by Putiatin for news of the outbreak of war. Surveying the Goto islands en route, he arrived at the mouth of the Yangtze river on April 28 and fearing to encounter British or French warships in Shanghai, stayed there. He went secretly into Shanghai harbor on board a Chinese ship to receive mail and diplomatic papers from the American consul there, and to ask about the latest turns in Russian–Anglo–French relations. When he heard that the Crimean war had begun, he quickly returned to the Vostok and sailed north toward Imperial Harbor in Russian Siberia. On the way there he met the Pallada on the open sea, and told Putiatin the news of war, and gave him the orders from the Russian government to proceed to De Kastrî bay. They continued together to the Tatar Straits and the harbor, arriving there

⁷ Goncharov describes these negotiations in detail.



The corvet "Olivutsa", one of the four ships of the Russian naval expedition to Japan, on which V. A. returned from the Amur river to Kronstadt port.

Voin Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov (1822–71)



on May 22.

Although Putiatin and most of the officers and men from the "Pallada" would soon return to Japan on board the newly-arrived frigate "Diana", Voin Andreevich spent the next two years and five months in Russian settlements in eastern Siberia along the Tatar Straits and the Sea of Okhotsk, in the Amur Basin and on Sahalin and Kamchatka. He demonstrated the navigability of the Amur River for ships by taking the "Vostok" upriver as far as the area of present-day Khabarovsk.

Thus, Voin Andreevich did not participate in the third and most exciting, if not tragic, phase of the Putiatin expedition to Japan. His letters contain no direct description of it. He only mentions that he first learned of the loss of the "Diana" in May, 1855, five months after the disastrous earthquake in Simoda, when an American merchant vessel carrying 150 officers and men from that ship joined up with his ship near Nevelskoi strait.

In June 1856, V.A. was ordered to take command of the corvet "Olivutsa," which was a larger but also much older warship than the "Vostok." Unlike the latter, it had no steam engine, only sails. Putiatin had left for Japan on October 3, 1854 on the Diana. Exactly two years later, on October 3 (15), 1856 Voin Andreevich left Imperial Harbor in command of the Olivutsa, with his old friend and companion from the Putiatin expedition to Japan, Kapitan-leutenant K. N. Posyet on board. Posyet had been with Putiatin on board the Diana in Shimoda at the time of the earthquake, and afterwards, had helped him to negotiate and conclude the first Russo-Japanese treaty in Feb. 1855. Now, Posyet had been named the head of a new expedition which was bearing the ratifications of that treaty, and had been charged to present as gifts the ship "Heda" and 52 cannons from the "Diana" to the Japanese. Like Putiatin aboard the "Diana", their

destination was not Nagasaki, but the newly opened ports of Hakodate and Shimoda.

Voin Andreevich and Posyet together with the other officers and men arrived in Hakodate on October 15 (27) after a slow, stormy crossing of the Sea of Japan against consistent, contrary winds. V. A. thought that it was an “insignificant town”, but also one “becoming known as one of the three ports opened to foreigners, and of particular interest to Russians in that it was the place of captivity of Capt. Golovnin in 1812.”⁸

Nevertheless, ‘insignificant’ or not, Hakodate was now an officially opened port, and one where Russians had the right to land and to walk around within a certain distance of the town center. Voin Andreevich comments thusly :

Now as a result of the treaty concluded by Putiatin, we are visiting Japan in altogether different circumstances, that is, we can go ashore whenever we wish, stroll around everywhere, buy anything we like, in short, we can get acquainted with the Japanese.

This is exactly what he and the other Russians had wanted to do in Nagasaki three years before, but were never allowed to do. Naturally, V. A. made use of this new, unaccustomed freedom without delay. He walked around the town, went into shops, visited one of the temples-- “all in the space of a two-hour visit.” But he was not overly in a hurry. “We have a long acquaintanceship with the Japanese ahead of us” he concluded.

He postponed writing a complete description of the Japanese there for his parents because “the Japanese, as far as I have noticed, are everywhere identical, both in Hakodate and in Nagasaki, that is, at two opposite ends of the country ; so, undoubtedly, they are the same in the center as well.”

One wonders how he could be so confident in such an appraisal. He does not state in what way they are ‘identical,’ whether in physical appearance alone, or also clothing, food, customs, social relations, etc. It is hard to imagine that they could be identical in all those respects, especially when it comes to clothing, food and other basic aspects of life in two such very different climates.

V. A. describes Hakodate in terms of its physical geography-- “a sheltered bay and superb harbor, picturesquely situated on a slope at the foot of a high mountain with the most classical profile” To anyone who has visited the modern city this part of the description still rings true. The mountain is a high table-like one that can be seen from a considerable distance away.

⁸ Vasili Mihailovich Golovnin was in command of the Russian sloop “Diana” surveying the Kuril islands in 1811. He and several other officers and men from that ship were taken prisoner on Kunashiri. They spent most of their 2-year captivity in Matsumae, and Hakodate.

However, despite the changed circumstances brought about by the treaty between Japan and Russia, V. A. saw how some Japanese officials tried to turn the clock back and revert to the old way of dealing with foreigners, other than the Dutch. As an example of this, he related how some Japanese government officials had come out to their ship as soon as they had arrived to demand that the Russians not go ashore without permission, and anchor only at known anchorages. Of course, the Russians categorically refused to comply with their requests. Then the Japanese officials hastened to announce that they had been authorized to allow them to go ashore. V. A. thought that their behavior was very childish and commented: "What children! And even stupid children!" But were they really? Or was it because they were clever adults, protecting themselves against further changes in policy by a divided Japanese government?

Nevertheless, the Japanese officials invited the Russians to visit the Hakodate governor in two days, which they did. Then the governor visited the Russians on board their ship, where Posyet treated him to lunch. V. A. did not miss the significance of this latter visit:

This event, while meaning nothing in the eyes of Europeans, in Japan bears witness to a new order, or at the very least, that a new order is at hand.

All the time that they were in Nagasaki two years before, Putiatin could not persuade the Nagasaki governor to visit him aboard the frigate. Although the Japanese plenipotentiaries visited him there, the governor of an imperial Japanese city seemed like such an important personage to the Russians that he could not move himself to meet a foreign ambassador.

In contrast to this experience, V. A. was impressed by the relative informality and friendliness of the Hakodate governor:

Now the Hakodate governor, holding the same rank as the one in Nagasaki, comes to a Russian corvet without ceremony and upon a simple invitation--not even to him personally but sent through his subordinates.

Having finished his meal aboard the Russian ship, the governor accepted presents from Posyet, which came from the Russian Foreign Ministry. Posyet then declared his intention to visit the governor, and the latter agreed without any objections. So the next day, V. A., Posyet, and several other officers visited the governor, who received them ceremonially, that is, in the presence of his subordinate officials, but without the former Japanese 'arrogance', that is, standing, not sitting. Then all sat down and the governor didn't worry whether his head was higher or lower than the Russians. This was evidence of "real progress" in V. A.'s mind, toward normal, civilized relations.

The interpreters also "did not wallow in the dirt in front of us, "as they did two years before in Nagasaki, but "simply sat on the floor, Japanese style."

All these differences in the substance and style of interaction between the Russians and the Japanese demonstrate that their relations had entered a new, fourth phase, that was well on the way to normal, friendly, diplomatic relations.

To V. A., the only thing similar to Nagasaki was the food : raw and boiled fish, both “delicious,” with various vegetables, garnished, with soy sauce or sake, but without any butter or fat. He liked the food, especially the soups, one of fish, with crabs, and the other chicken. He again praised Japanese culinary skill : “The skill in preparation [of Japanese cooks] would be the envy of the best European chef.”

He and Posyet were both given two lacquer trays, and a dozen lacquer cups in return for the presents from the Russian Foreign Ministry. But as these were from the Russian government, V. A. felt obliged to give some presents of his own, which he did. He gave his own silver cigarette case to the governor.

Voin Andreevich lamented that the exchange of gifts for the Russians was “very unfavorable” and for him especially so :

In various movements back and forth in the Amur basin I got rid of all but the most essential and dearest possessions and now I am obliged to give them to the governor in exchange for inexpensive trays and boxes.

He worried that if such an exchange were to take place in Shimoda as well, their next destination in Japan, he would be forced to give them his most cherished rifle and watch, for except for crockery and clothing, he had nothing else !

On October 19 (31) the Russians pulled anchor and left Hakodate. At first they were blessed with a favorable north wind and covered the first half of the journey to Shimoda down the Pacific coast of Japan in two days. But the second half was marked by strong contrary winds and high waves and so it took more than 6 days to cover the last 300 miles. It was the worst weather of the entire expedition. As such, Shimoda, even though a “wretched, narrow and unprotected port” was greeted by the Russians as the ‘Promised Land’ and a welcome refuge. For the ocean along the eastern shores of Japan had “so shook and tossed them around that it could not by any means be called Pacific.”

Thus, the Russians arrived in Shimoda on board the *Olivutsa* fully relieved that the long, stormy, unpleasant passage was over. They announced to the Japanese officials who quickly came on board that they wished to see the governor, and they were surprised to receive an invitation that very night. Such unusual celerity on the part of Japanese officialdom led them to hope that the business of ratification of the treaty would also be swiftly completed. But they were misled. After three more weeks of waiting the Russians received word that the ratification documents were only just leaving Edo. That was on November 18.

The meeting with the two governors in Shimoda proceeded in the same fashion as the meeting with the Hakodate governor, except that it was official. They

were also served a meal, the best of all the meals that V. A. had been served in Japan, he thought. In his opinion, after Japan has been sufficiently "written up in Europe, the Japanese chef will be recognized and praised on the same footing as French chefs have been." Speaking from his own experience, he commented : "Raw fish, prepared and served in Japanese style, is a real invitation to gluttony." (Speaking from my own experience, I can confirm that he is surely not alone in this opinion !)

On the official, diplomatic level of relations, Posyet told the governors that the purpose of his visit was to exchange ratification documents and gave his letter of accreditation from Count Nesselrode to the Japanese Supreme Council. The governors replied that they would send the letter to Edo without delay. About two days later, the two governors and their suite, and ten other officials made an official visit to the Russian corvet. Posyet treated them to lunch, during which "all the Japanese drank a lot and became very merry." They shouted "hurrah" with the Russians during the toasts, and in general did not display that "strained decorum" that had been the hallmark of Japanese officialdom in past years, including only two years before in Nagasaki !

One of the major reasons for the change in Japanese behavior may have been due to the presence of other foreigners in Shimoda : the Americans. The Russians were also meeting with them that first week, and throughout their stay.

Townsend Harris, the first American consul to Japan, and Henry Heusken, his young, Dutch-speaking secretary, had arrived in Shimoda on August 21, 1856. The American warship that had brought them there soon steamed away, leaving them to face the Japanese resistance to the idea of a resident consul and a trade treaty, and the profound isolation of Shimoda by themselves. The *Olivutsa* and the *Heda* were the first foreign ships to visit Shimoda in almost a month. So they were very happy to see them.

Their initial favorable impression of the Russians was to be confirmed and strengthened throughout the Russians' five-week stay in Shimoda. From the very beginning the Americans and Russians helped and cooperated with each other, and a pattern of frequent visits, mutual assistance and consultation, and exchange of favors and gifts was maintained throughout.

On the Russo-Japanese diplomatic side, after a week had passed the Russians received news that the ratifications were being prepared. Posyet asked for another meeting during which he told the Japanese that he was also empowered to present to the Japanese government, as gifts from the Tsar, in recognition of the assistance and hospitality offered to the crew of the ill-fated *Diana*, the 52 cannon from that ship, which were unloaded and stored in Shimoda after the earthquake and tidal wave. He thereby requested that the Shimoda governors provide all necessary assistance to remove the cannon from the storage shed,

where they were hidden from the English and French, and to clean and restore them to a presentable condition. The governors agreed, and on the very next day, hundreds of Japanese were sent to help Voin Andreevich and the crew of the *Olivutsa* to remove the cannon from the shed and to place them at the site chosen for their presentation.⁹

Voin Andreevich also gave his critical, uncensored view of the frequent meetings with Japanese officials in Shimoda to agree upon the details of the ceremony of ratification :

I am completely fed up with such audiences, very frequently repeated for every trifle. Nothing sets so heavy on mind and body as this trifling talk without any interesting results, [and] even more boring as conducted with the help of the Dutch interpreters. Although I understand most due to its similarity to English, I also miss a lot. Still, I must sit in the same cabin, as there is nowhere else to go, and it would be bad form to occupy myself otherwise. So I often sit here unwillingly and yawn.

A more candid account of one Russian's experience of the often long and tedious negotiations with Japanese officials in the bakumatsu period I have not read. It sounds as though Voin Andreevich was anxious to leave Japan. He was probably suffering from 'homesickness' after five years away from his friends and family in Russia, which made the tedious negotiations so much harder to bear. Fortunately for him, it was Posyet who had to bear the burden of carrying on the negotiations.

V. A. writes that "on November 25 (December 7) the ratification ceremony was held, and at the moment when the documents changed hands, there sounded a 21-gun salute from the cannons of the *Olivutsa*, and the Russian and Japanese flags were raised." (Harris mentions two gun salutes and three flags, including the American !)

According to V. A., the Japanese had shamed the Russians in Nagasaki, before the completion of the treaty, during their first visit, by enclosing the letter to Nesselrode from the Supreme Council in 5 boxes, whose simplicity in design and perfection in workmanship had so impressed him. As a result, the Russian Foreign Ministry, embarrassed at having written its letter to the Supreme Council on plain paper, placed inside an ordinary European envelope, decided to clothe the ratification as magnificently as possible. And so they did : parchment leaves in rich velvet binding with gold and decorated with eagles, and em-

⁹ Harris reported that the Russians were helping the Japanese to get all the fittings for mounting the guns from the *Diana*, which were lost when she sank. If so, it was not only a case of the Japanese helping the Russians.

blems and placed inside a brocaded box (1) inside another rose or sandalwood box (2) of "doubtful taste," inside a green lacquer box (3). It was a "nice little coffin" which two junior officers carried with difficulty. V. A. commented :

It was good that the Japanese did not see our 'funeral' or else [it] might have made a different impression on them than the one we wanted to create.

In contrast, the Japanese ratifications were enclosed in two simple folders, also inside boxes, but only two, and not five, as before, and also very simple ones, of white wood, unlacquered but planed so smoothly, "as only the Japanese can do."

Voin Andreevich saw in this contrast a definite reproach to the Russians for their awkward attempt to imitate Oriental opulence and wrote to his parents :

It is hard to convey to you in words how elegant and stylish this simplicity was in contrast to our absurd magnificence, and what was even worse for us, how much subtle tact we perceived in this mute answer, because Posyet had been incautious enough to show the two outer boxes to the Japanese officials and interpreters beforehand. So, without a doubt, the Supreme Council, with knowledge of what it was doing, prepared the ratifications in such a way that one can almost surely suspect in it a [gentle rebuke] of the following kind : "So, what are you fellows trying to do, become Asians ?"

The governors of Shimoda accepted the ratifications from Posyet, as authorized by the Supreme Council, on Nov. 25, 1856. It was to them that Posyet transferred the cannon of the sunken frigate *Diana*, which had been placed in two rows, covered with wax and draped with Russian and Japanese flags, and before which also stood an honor guard. (Harris reported that there were two honor guards, Russian and Japanese.)

When the ceremony was over, the Japanese treated the Russians to a rich repast, served "emblematically, that is, on a huge tray in the center of which rose a cedar tree, the symbol of durability and longevity, and surrounded by roots, all inventions of Japanese cuisine." V. A. pronounced it "not inferior to any European cuisine in its ingenuity and intricacy."

After that, already toward evening the governors and all senior officials at the invitation of Posyet came to the corvet and were treated to a rather ordinary meal despite the pretensions of the Russian cook. But it was "enough for the Japanese," V. A. thought, "as champagne was the main thing for them, which they are very fond of, and which they lack."

And so ended this new Russian expedition to Japan, which was, in a sense, the final act of the Putiatin diplomatic mission, begun in Nagasaki in August, 1853. Now the first Russo-Japanese treaty was fully ratified, and the relations between Russians and Japanese could be at once more formal and informal.

While in Shimoda, V. A. found time one day to travel about 10 versts along the road to Edo. He saw Japanese peasant life as he imagined it must be all over Japan, without the slightest trace of foreign presence, as it had existed for hundreds of years. He thought that it would not last long in that state. Considering how Japan was on the verge of being opened to foreign influence and trade, it was probably not too perspicacious an observation.

Before the Russians left Shimoda all had received presents from the Japanese government. V. A. got a nice wardrobe (chest) worth a 100 siver rubles. He made no mention of giving any presents in return, so perhaps he got to keep his rifle and watch.

Because they were leaving Japan later than expected and “from information received from the American consul in Shimoda,”¹⁰ V. A. learned that he wouldn’t be able to accomplish so quickly the necessary repairs and alterations to the corvet in Macao. In consequence, he began to doubt he would be able to return to Kronstadt via Cape Horn as he had originally intended. (In fact, he ended up returning by the same route as he had come four years before via the Cape of Good Hope.) Early on Sunday morning, December 14, the *Olivutsa* went out to sea, carrying with her Harris’ “adieu” and Heusken’s “most sincere regrets.”

Armed with letters of introduction from Harris, the Russians had a very successful visit in Macao. Voin Andreevich charmed, and was charmed by, the daughter of Harris’ business associate.

The Russians also spent time in Hong Kong and it was there that an incident occurred which had a lasting effect on Voin Andreevich’s life. While staying there, he and two other officers from the “*Olivutsa*”, as well as several other foreigners, were poisoned by a Chinese baker who had put arsenic into their bread. Fortunately, he had mixed in so much that they vomited before the bread could be digested. As a result, no one died, but they were sick for varying lengths of time. V. A. explained the incident as a result of the Chinese hatred for the English, who had forced the poison of opium on the Chinese. This hatred of the English was then extended to all Europeans, including the Russians.

After recovering sufficiently from the poisoning, Voin Andreevich continued his homeward journey via the Indian Ocean. There, bad luck again befell the men of the *Olivutsa* when an epidemic of dysentery claimed the lives of two sailors,

¹⁰ This is the only mention that V. A. makes in his letters, of Townsend Harris, and even then not by name. Such an omission is surprising considering the amount of time that both he and Posyet spent with Harris in Shimoda, and the extent of their mutual assistance in the very isolated conditions of life there.

despite V. A.'s best efforts to save them. Disease continued to haunt the ship's long return journey around the Cape of Good Hope and back to the Baltic sea. Finally, the "Olivutsa" arrived in Kronstadt on September 16, 1857, almost five years after Voin Andreevich had left that same port aboard the frigate "Pallada."

For the rest of his life, Voin Andreevich made no more voyages to the far east. He was made commander of a target practice ship that plied Baltic waters. He went to England and France to acquaint himself with their system of training for ship gunners. In 1860, he was made commander of Kronstadt port. In 1861 he became director of the naval cadet school in Petersburg that he had himself graduated from. In 1865, he was promoted to the rank of Kontr-admiral (Rear-admiral).

In October, 1871, Voin Andreevich, taking leave from his responsibilities as director, and taking his family with him, left for the balmy weather of Italy. He had been suffering for several years from heart disease, probably brought on by his being poisoned in Hong Kong and the long years of service on sailing ships and the steam schooner "Vostok." He hoped to find a cure in Italy but soon after arriving there, he died in Pisa on November, 4 1871 at the age of 49.

His younger brother Nikolai, who had been following a naval career at his brother's insistence, was sent to Italy to bring his brother's body, together with his family, back to Petersburg. He was buried in its Smolensk cemetery with military honors on Nov. 30, 1871.

Nikolai would himself marry in the following year and within two years give up his naval career to go on to become one of the most famous Russian composers of his generation and even today-Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov. In his autobiography, he mentioned the influence that Voin Andreevich had had on his own life: "aping my older brother... a naval lieutenant who used to send letters from abroad, I fell in love with the sea, without ever having seen it." After his brother's death he characterized him as a "splendid seaman," who was "impartial, straightforward," and had "integrity" and who "stood up for his own opinions." These were all skills and qualities that come through strongly in his letters to his parents and in his other writings.

Voin Andreevich's biographer D. B. Myertvago writing in the year 1872, called his life "a model of unswerving devotion to duty". This is an assessment that one feels the Japanese officials who had met him in Japan would have agreed with, and a 'model' that they also would have been most familiar with. If nothing else, Russians and Japanese had in common a sense of duty to serve and do their best for their respective countries.

It is interesting as a historical footnote to mention that the schooner "Vostok" whose first commander was Voin Andreevich, also 'died young', crashing

onto the reefs of the island of Stenin in the archipelago bearing his name, in the Bay of Peter the Great, now part of the Far Eastern National Maritime Reserve, where she still rests today. The “Vostok” was the first steamship in the Russian navy to ply far eastern waters, and the only steamship in the Putiatin expedition in which she played, together with her commander, Voin Andreevich, a significant role.

Voin Andreevich’s contributions to the exploration and settlement of the Russian Far East, and to a lesser extent his role in the Putiatin and Posyet expeditions to Japan, have been increasingly recognized in Russia. My hope is that these two articles will help to make both those contributions, but especially the latter, better known in Japan and in the English-speaking world.

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