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THE MANUSCRIPT OF *KANKAI IBUN* IN THE COLLECTION OF THE ST. PETERSBURG BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

On the 26th of October 1804 the sloop *Nadezhda* commanded by I. F. Krusenstern entered the Nagasaki bay. The embassy of N. P. Rezanov to Japan was on board. There were two pretexts for sending a Russian embassy to the Tokugawa Japan which avoided external contacts: a letter from the Japanese authorities given in 1793 to Adam Laxman with a permission to send a Russian ship to Nagasaki to negotiate about the opening of trade relations between the two countries [1], and the coming back to their native land of four Japanese sailors from among those who had been carried to Russia by the ocean streams in 1794.

The desire of Russian merchants to establish trade connections with Japan was characterised by the minister of commerce Count N. P. Rumyantsev in his report to Alexander I in the following words: "The very nature, by placing Russia contiguous to Japan and bringing the two empires together by seas, gives us an advantage and convenience in trade before all other commercial powers, towards which, it appears, our merchant class is waiting only for the approval of the government" [2].

The four Japanese sailors taken by the *Nadezhda* to Nagasaki came from the crew of the *Wakamiya maru*. They spent in Russia nearly ten years. Their ship departed from the port of Isinomaki on the Pacific shore of the Honshū Island (the Miyagi prefecture) at the end of 1793 with a cargo of timber, rice and other goods belonging to the Sendai family. The cargo was intended for Edo, the shogun capital of Japan. The crew of the ship numbered 16 people, including Captain Heibei. When the ship entered the open sea, it was overtaken by a typhoon, lost its rudder and a mast. Its hulk was damaged and it went out of control. Drawn by winds and sea currents the ship drifted for about six months and by the summer of the next year was washed ashore at one of the Andreyan Islands in the north-eastern part of the Aleutian Archipelago. During the ten months spent by the sailors among the Aleuts they lost Captain Heibei, became familiar with the natives and established contacts with the agents of the Russian-American Company on the Aleutian Islands.

On a ship which belonged to the Company the Japanese travelled to Okhotsk, whence from, in three groups, they were taken first to Yakutsk and then to Irkutsk. There

they stayed during eight long years. Two more Japanese sailors died in the course of these wanderings, four of them became Orthodox Christians. Starting from 1754, in Irkutsk by the Navigation School there was a School of Japanese language transferred there from St. Petersburg. Several Japanese, who were carried by storms towards the Russian shores some years before, were living there.

In 1803 the Japanese were summoned from Irkutsk to St. Petersburg, where Emperor Alexander I gave them an audience. After that four of the Japanese sailors, whose health were good and who did not convert to Christianity, received a permission to return to their native land on a Russian ship. Their names were Tsudayu, Gihei, Saheida and Tajūrō. The fifth was Zenroku, whose command of Russian was better than that of his companions, and who was taken on board as an interpreter (he was baptised as Peter Kiselev and had no intention to come back to Japan) [3].

The 450-ton sloop *Nadezhda* commanded by Captain-Lieutenant I. F. Krusenstern started its 16-month voyage from the port of Kronstadt in the morning of July 26, 1803. Its course was through Copenhagen, Plymouth, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Santa Catharina (Brazil), around the Cape of Horn, by the Marquesas and the Hawaiian Islands to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski and Nagasaki. That was the second time the Japanese travelled around the world [4].

At the beginning of 1805 the Japanese sailors were taken to their native land and handed to the authorities of Nagasaki. Nine months later they were brought to Edo. All that time they were kept under guard in a special lodging near the sea. On the 20th day of the 12th moon of year 2 of the Bunka era (January 8, 1806) the sailors were received by head of the Sendai clan Date Chikamune who was only ten years old [5]. Two months later the clan authorities ordered two of their vassals to interrogate the travellers in all detail and to make a record of what they could tell about life abroad, about Russia and about their voyage on a Russian ship. These talks (interrogations) continued for forty days.

The principle work — the method of questioning, subjects, checking of the evidence provided by the sailors (mainly by Chinese and Dutch books and by consulting