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Karine Marandjan

**A New Acquisition of the Japanese Manuscript
and Wood-block Printed Books Collection
of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS**

Abstract: The article deals with a new acquisition of the Japanese collection of the IOM. The newly acquired manuscript is titled *Roshia koku hyōmin goran mondō* (“Questions and Answers about Russia of the Castaways”). It has 28 folios, 2 illustrations, the last two folios contain an extract from the “Illustrated Japanese-Chinese Encyclopedia of Three Elements” and a world map from the same encyclopedia. Analysis of the manuscript enabled us to conclude that it is a copy of a transcript of the interrogation of the famous Daikokyua Kōdayū (1751–1828) and Isokichi after their return to Japan from Russia. As the manuscript has no colophon, neither the date when the transcript was copied, nor the place or the name of the copyist is known. Though the copy of the transcript is not a rarity, this manuscript will be a valuable addition to the group of manuscripts relating to early contacts between Russia and Japan.

Key words: manuscript, castaways, interrogation transcript, Daikokuya Kōdayū

In 2009 IOM RAS acquired a new Japanese manuscript that became part of the Japanese collection kept at the IOM Department of Manuscripts and Documents.

The manuscript’s cover page bears the title *Roshia koku hyōmin goran mondō* 魯西亜国漂民御覧問答 that can be rendered as “Questions and Answers about Russia of the Castaways”. The other title, which directly precedes the text, reads *Hyōmin goran no shidai to mondō* 漂民御覧乃次第東問答 “Circumstances of the Shogunal Audience of the Castaways, Questions and Answers”.

The manuscript has been given the inventory number B-275, it has 28 folios (24×15 cm), it is written in Japanese using cursive script and *hentaigana*. It has three illustrations, two of which are placed before the text. The illustration on the first page portrays two men in European costumes and with a European hairstyle, the next double-page spread is a sketch map of the place where the castaways were interrogated in the presence of the shogun and his

officials. One more picture—a map—is part of a totally different text reproduced on the two last pages of the manuscript.

There is no introduction, no colophon, so there is no data about the author or copyist, about the time when the manuscript copy or its original were made.

There are remains of a sheet of white paper glued to the cover page, which probably provided the title or some data concerning the manuscript. The paper is so worn-out that the inscription has become unreadable.

The title of the manuscript clearly testifies that it is one more source related to the early Russo-Japanese contacts. This topic has been well studied by both Japanese and Russian researchers and the majority of the extant sources covering Russo-Japanese relations are widely known.

However, the most authoritative database, the *Nihon Kotenseki Sōgō Mokuroku* 日本古典籍総合目録 the “Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books”¹ does not list the manuscript under any similar title, although it does contain the manuscript *Hyōmin goran mondōki* 漂民御覽問答記 compiled by Katsuragawa Hoshu (1751–1809), a physician and scholar of *rangaku* (Western studies). A search of the Internet for this manuscript gave a quick result—we found the opening page illustration of a manuscript entitled *Fukiage hisho hyōmin goran no ki* 吹上秘書漂民御覽の記 “Secret Notes about the Shogunal Audience of the Castaways in Fukiage” on the site of Hokkaido University.² It depicted the same persons we saw in our manuscript picture with the sole difference that this picture included the names of its subjects. They were Kōdayū 幸太夫 and Isokichi 磯吉. Although the illustrations from our manuscript and the Hokkaido University one are not absolutely identical and have minor differences, there is no doubt that these are portraits of the same persons. (Pl. 1)

This assertion is also supported by the fact that a similar illustration can be found in the book *Oroshiyakoku suimudan* 魯齊亜国睡夢談 “Dreams about Russia” that has been translated with a commentary by Vladimir Konstantinov.³ This monograph—a facsimile of the original text and its Russian translation—tells the story of sailors from the *Sinsho-maru* shipwrecked in late 18th century Russia, of their adventures and their return to Japan, of their interrogation in the presence of the shogun, and so on. On the 74th page there is a black-and-white illustration depicting two seamen, Kōdayū and Isokichi.

¹ <http://www.nijl.ac.jp/> (25.05.2014).

² http://www.lib.hokudai.ac.jp/collection/hoppo/h_20.html (15.01.2009).

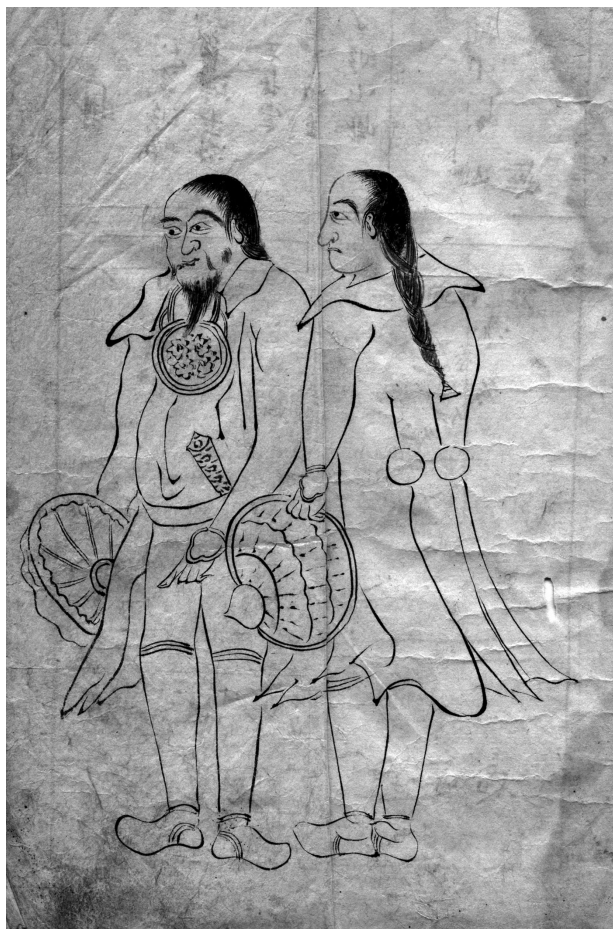
³ KONSTANTINOV 1961.



Pl. 1

Illustration from the Hokkaido University manuscript

It is interesting that the three illustrations—from the IOM manuscript, from the Hokkaido University manuscript and from the “Dreams about Russia”—are not completely identical. First, the pictures in the IOM manuscript and in the “Dreams about Russia” are black-and-white, while the Hokkaido University picture is in colour. The composition of the pictures from the “Dreams about Russia” and Hokkaido University is the same but closer examination shows that the portrait of Kōdayū differs slightly not only in facial features but also in some details of costume. The IOM manuscript illustration differs from the other two:



Pl. 2

Illustration from the IOM RAS manuscript

a) Isokichi is depicted half-turned (in other illustrations we cannot see his face).

b) Kōdayū is holding a hat in his right hand; his left hand is free. Under his belt we can see something like a staff. In the other pictures he has a staff in his right hand and a hat in his left.

c) Kōdayū has a small beard, barely indicated in the illustration from the “Dreams about Russia” and not shown at all in the Hokkaido University picture.

d) The shape of the hat held by Kōdayū differs from that depicted in the other two pictures. (Pl. 2)

The list of differences can be continued but it seems that the facts mentioned above are enough to suggest with a strong probability that the picture in the “Dreams about Russia” was copied from the Hokkaido University picture (or some third prototype common to both manuscripts and unknown to us), while the picture in our manuscript copy can be regarded as a variation on the theme. It is probable that its author had seen the original but did not have it in front of him while copying the manuscript. Maybe, though, he relied on a verbal description of the sailors from the manuscript text.

Let’s turn to the detailed description of the seamen during their interrogation in front of the shogun from the “Dreams about Russia”.

“In the first third of Dragon hour Kōdayū and Isokichi were summoned. Kōdayū was 42 years old. His hair was divided in three locks, braided together and falling down tied with black silk. Under his arm he held a black felt hat that he pressed to his side. A little golden object that resembled a small mirror hung from his neck. His outer wear was made of rose silver Mongolian brocade with red round stone fasteners and narrow sleeves. The trousers were of the same cloth. Under the outer garment were clothes of dark-blue brocade. Over white knitted stockings he wore black boots of Persian leather. He leaned on a staff of Indian cane.

“Isokichi was 28 years old. His hairstyle was the same, from his neck hung a little object similar to Kōdayū’s but made of silver. He held his hat under his arm. His outer wear was of dark-blue cloth with silver buttons, under it he wore clothes of red broadcloth with black dressing. His trousers were of motley velvet—black and yellow. On his legs he wore boots over white stockings. The boots were not the same as Kōdayū’s—their upper part was trimmed with brownish-yellow leather, but the cut was the same. In appearance they did not look like Japanese”.⁴

On the one hand, the verbal description does not indicate in which hand Kōdayū held the hat, so if we suppose that the author of the illustration relied upon the text, he had to decide that for himself. On the other hand, he ignores the clear indication that both sailors kept their hats under their arms and depicts them holding the hats. This hardly fits with our idea that the copyist relied mainly on the text, but followed a pictorial representation that he had seen before. However, the golden medal that he depicts is far larger than the one in the other illustration and was undoubtedly the creation of his personal imagination.

⁴ KONSTANTINOV 1961, 53.

Most likely, the illustration resulted from both a cursory acquaintance with the original picture from the manuscript used as a prototype for copying and the textual description of the sailors plus his own artistic imagination. Probably, the combination of all these factors can explain the differences that exist between our portraits of Kōdayū and Isokichi and their images in the other two sources.

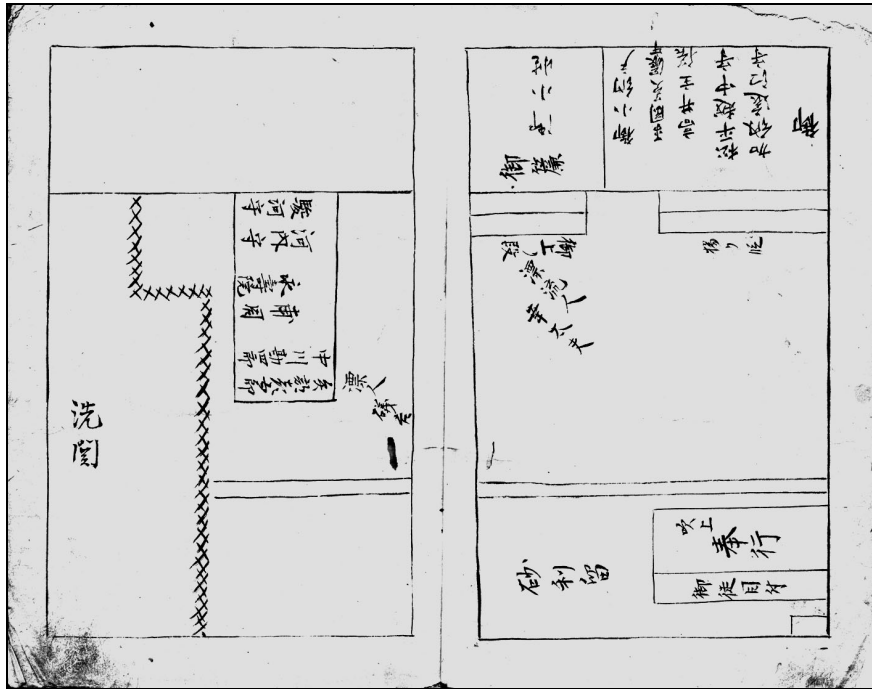
Besides the portrait of the seamen, on the next double-page spread we have the sketch map where a special note indicates “the castaways Kōdayū and Isokichi”. A similar sketch appears in the “Dreams about Russia”. It is a plan of the place where the castaways’ interrogation occurred—Fukiage o-monomi, i.e., a place in the shogunal garden in Edo. This was a long covered veranda from which the shogun could enjoy the view of his garden. The sketch indicates the place where the shogun sat, the position of his officials and the spot where the interrogated sailors were, separated from the shogun by a bamboo curtain. (Pl. 3)

Even the two illustrations are enough to show that the newly acquired manuscript is dedicated to the adventures of the famous captain Daikokuya Kōdayū and the seaman Isokichi who accompanied him on his return to Japan.⁵

At the beginning of 1783 his ship, the *Shinsho-maru*, left Shirokko harbor in the Ise province with a cargo of rice, was caught in a storm and, after drifting for six months, cast up on the Aleutian island of Amchitka. After four years, with the help of Russian merchants, the surviving sailors got to Kamchatka, then to Okhotsk, Yakutsk and Irkutsk. There they spent three years. Through the intervention of the naturalist Erik (Kirill) Laxman (1737–1796), Kōdayū travelled to St. Petersburg where he was granted an audience with Catherine the Great who gave permission for him and two other seamen to return to Japan. In 1792 they returned to their homeland with an expedition commanded by the naturalist’s son, Lieutenant Adam Laxman, sailing from Okhotsk on board the *Yekaterina* brigantine. On their return home, the sailors were interrogated in the presence of the shogun and were detained in Edo, not being allowed back to their native places. In fact, Kōdayū spent 35 long years under house arrest.

The interrogation was attended by the court physician and scholar of Rangaku Katsuragawa Hoshū who recorded the proceedings. His interrogation transcript is known under the title *Hyōmin goran-no ki* 漂民御覽之記 the “Records about Shogunal Audience of the Castaways”. Besides this there are several other sources, among which the most important are:

⁵ There was one more sailor, Koichi, who died from a disease.



Pl. 3

1) *Oroshiyakoku suimudan* 魯齊亞国睡夢談 the “Dreams about Russia”—the manuscript is kept at the National Library in Moscow. Besides the interrogation record, it contains a detailed account of the castaways’ adventures in Russia, their return to the homeland, all they saw and experienced in the foreign country.

2) *Oroshiyakoku hyominki* 魯西亜国漂民記 the “Records about Castaways who Drifted to Russia”—this manuscript, housed at the IOM RAS, contains an explanation of the circumstances under which Japanese seamen found themselves in Russia. It contains their account of their life in Kamchatka, Irkutsk, Okhotsk and St. Petersburg. Their story was taken from the interrogation transcript. The manuscript is dated 1841, but the introduction states that it was copied from a text of 1800. It has not yet been fully translated into Russian.

Besides these sources, there are many different versions that present in various forms the interrogation record and the explanation of the circumstances under which they drifted beyond Japanese territory. Among others we found in the Union Catalogue a manuscript called *Seishū shiroko/hyōmin*

goran mondōki 勢州白子/漂民御覽問答記 the “Record of Questions and Answers of Castaways during the Shogunal Audience”, the title of which is closest to the IOM manuscript. It is also dedicated to the adventures of Dai-kokuya Kōdayū and differs from other sources only in the text version.

A comparison of the IOM manuscript with the one from the Union Catalogue just mentioned showed that the *Roshiakoku hyōmin goran mondō* reproduces part of the *Oroshiakoku hyominki*, to be more precise, that section of the manuscript which contains the interrogation transcript, prefacing it with a short explanatory introduction. The transcript includes 27 questions and answers about the seamen’s adventures and facts they witnessed or learnt abroad. It is worth mentioning that the interrogation record manuscript in our Institute’s Japanese Collection does not include pictures, making any comparison of the seamen’s images impossible.

At the same time, comparison of the IOM manuscript copy with the facsimile of the “Dreams about Russia” revealed that our text is identical to the 4th and 5th chapters of the “Dreams about Russia”, which are considered to be “one of the most precise copies of the record of Kōdayū and Isokichi’s interrogation produced by Katsuragawa Hoshū and well known under the name *Hyōmin goran no ki*”.⁶

Besides, it is important to note that the first Russian translation of the interrogation record appeared at the beginning of the 20th century and was published in the 2nd volume of the “*Materialy po istorii severnoj Iaponii i eio otnoshenij k materiku Azii i Rossii*” (“Materials Related to the History of Northern Japan and Its Relation to Asia and Russia”) by Dmitry Pozdnev in 1909 in Yokohama. The brilliant Russian translation was entitled the “*Zapiska ob audientsii poterpevshikh krushenie iapontsev u sioguna Ienari*” (“Records about the Audience Granted by Shogun Ienari to Castaways”).⁷

Thus there is no doubt that the manuscript newly acquired by IOM RAS is one more copy of the record of the Japanese sailors’ interrogation.

The absence of a colophon prevents our copy from being dated. The Union catalogue shows that a great many similar manuscript copies exist under slightly different titles.

As has already been mentioned, the last two folios of the IOM manuscript contain an extract from a totally different text and a map, so there was a slight hope that the identification of this text might help to establish at least

⁶ KONSTANTINOV 1961, 28.

⁷ POZDNEEV 1909, 76–88.

an approximate date for our copy. Both the extract and the map were titled—the text was called *Wakan sansai zue* 倭漢三才圖會 the “Illustrated Japanese-Chinese Encyclopedia of Three Elements” while the map had a heading *Sankai yochi zenzu* 山海輿地全圖 the “World Map of Lands and Seas”.

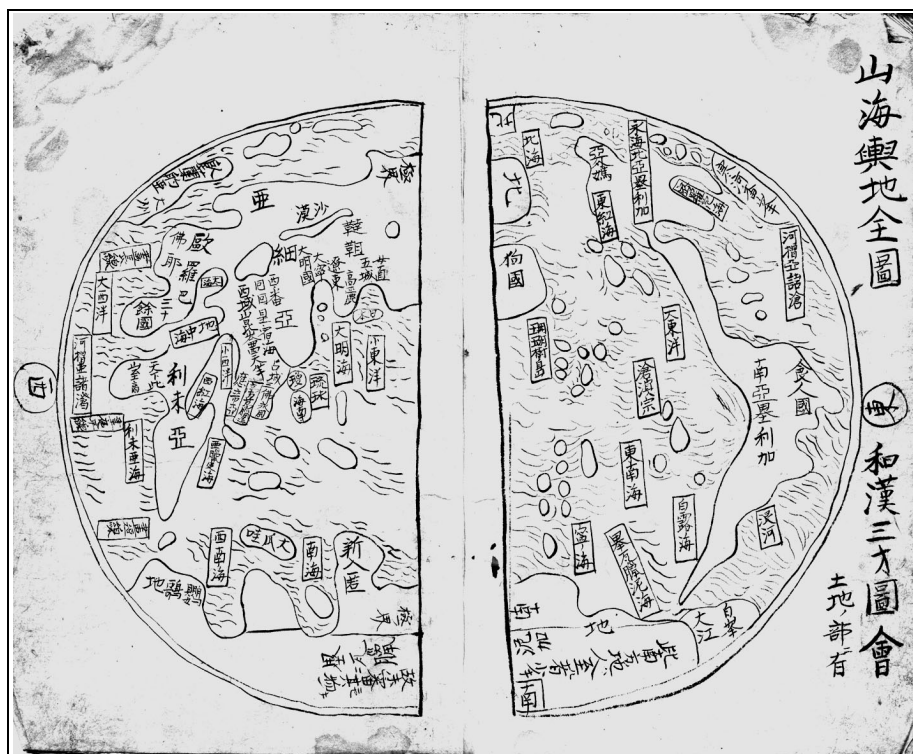
The *Wakan sansai zue* is a 105-volume encyclopedia compiled by the Osaka physician Terajima Ryoan (?) in 1712. The information in the encyclopedia was split into three sections: “Heaven”, “Earth” and “Man”, which explains its title. This enormous opus that summed up the scientific knowledge of its age was considered very authoritative and enjoyed great popularity in Japan. It was reproduced repeatedly in the Tokugawa (1603–1867) and Meiji (1867–1912) periods. A wood-block printed copy of the encyclopedia is kept in the Manuscript Collection of the IOM, RAS.

The Japanese version of the encyclopedia was modeled on the Chinese encyclopedia the *Sancai tuihui* 三才圖會 “An Illustrated Compendium of the Three Powers” by Wang Qi 王圻 (1529–1612) printed in 1609.

The map on the last page of our manuscript reproduces the world map from the Chinese encyclopedia *Sancai tuihui* that also was adopted by the Japanese encyclopedia. Under the map we find the title of the work it was borrowed from—the *Wakan sansai zue*, section “Earth”. (Pl. 4)

There can be hardly any doubt that the small extract from the encyclopedia together with a map were added to the manuscript quite intentionally. It is scarcely credible that they were random choices to fill in a free space at the end of the manuscript. Most likely the copyist intended these insertions as illustrative material and supplementary data to the record of the seamen’s interrogation, i.e., reference information. However, although the Japanese encyclopedia contains data on various races and nations inhabiting the earth, including mythical people that possessed wings or had no belly, this variety of peoples and nations includes no mention of such a country as Russia or the Russian people. Certainly, the world map does not have any country named Russia.

Unfortunately, the extract from the encyclopedia related to the various countries of the world is unlikely to be of any help in fixing the date of the manuscript copy. As stated above, the Japanese encyclopedia went through numerous editions right up to the 20th century. One might be tempted to assume that the inclusion of such a map points to the manuscript copy being made in the first half of the 19th century, when European maps were not widely known. However, this hypothesis also seems less than solid as the copyist could simply have made a precise copy of his original without any consideration for the reliability or accuracy of the world map.



Pl. 4

Despite the fact that the transcript of the castaways' interrogation exists in many versions and copies, all of them well studied and translated many times into Russian, the newly acquired manuscript at the IOM is a worthy addition to the range of sources relating to early Russian-Japanese contacts held in the Japanese Collection of manuscripts and wood-block printed books of the IOM, RAS.

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