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The Journal of Northeast Asian History
Volume 12 Number 1 (Summer 2015), 7-43

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In the summer of 1866, Mori Arinori, the future first Minister of Education in Japan and founder of the Japanese education system, wrote travel notes known as *Diary of a Sea Voyage to Russia* during his brief visit to Saint Petersburg. The entries in this diary offer detailed information about the Russian Empire, its domestic and foreign policies, and features of its social consciousness. Apart from *Diary of a Sea Voyage to Russia*, Mori's letter to his elder brother Yokoyama Yasutake, which had been sent from London to Yokohama just before his trip to Saint Petersburg, is another written source that allows us to understand Mori's ideas of the mid-nineteenth century Russian Empire. A comparative analysis of these two sources reveals insight into whether the image of Russia that Mori held prior to his visit to Saint Petersburg had changed afterwards.

Keywords: Edo bakufu students in Russia, Bakumatsu, image of Russia in Japan, Laurence Oliphant, Mori Arinori, Russian-Japanese relations in the mid-nineteenth century, Satsuma students in Britain

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The contemporary ideas about Russia and Russians in Japan were formed neither in the current period nor during the last century. Rather, understanding began to develop much earlier as to what the huge area north of the Japanese archipelago as well as the people living there represented. Some limited information about Russia can be found from Japanese sources dating back as far as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and sometimes even earlier. Nevertheless, it was only in the mid-nineteenth century, after Japan's policy of isolation ended in 1854 during the Bakumatsu period (1853-1869), when Japanese came to realize the need for replenishment, expansion, and further analysis of the limited, fragmented, and possibly incorrect information they had so far acquired concerning Russia.

Information about the Russian Empire had been reaching Japan via various routes. Some came through members of Russian Embassies, who were sent regularly to Japan in an effort to conclude trade and international agreements. Western oral and written sources, primarily written in Dutch or English, conveyed information, as well. The flow of information about the outside world, including Russia, expanded greatly

after Japan's policy of isolation was terminated. Yet, it had not been only foreigners who brought to Japan knowledge about life in faraway European countries. During the Bakumatsu period, a number of Japanese had already visited western and eastern European countries for training purposes or as part of diplomatic missions. Some of them had kept notes during their travel or had sent letters from abroad to their relatives and friends. Very few of those sources are available today. The most interesting among the extant documents are those authored by people who occupied important posts in the new government and public authorities during the period that followed the Meiji Restoration in 1868, thanks to the knowledge and intelligence they had been equipped with at the time.

In 1862, the Edo bakufu sent its first mission to Europe. Mission Takenouchi, named after the head of the mission Takenouchi Yasunori, visited several European countries in addition to Russia. Also among the mission's members was Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of the main leaders of the enlightenment movement during the Meiji era. Fukuzawa wrote about this trip in his biography, although his description of Japan's northern neighbor is not sufficient enough to perform an in-depth analysis. Much more detailed information about Russia, its domestic and foreign policies, as well as features of its social consciousness is available in diaries of other public and state figures from the Meiji era, such as Mori Arinori, who, like Fukuzawa, had an opportunity to visit Russia during the Bakumatsu period.

During his brief visit to Saint Petersburg in the summer of 1866, Mori, the future first Minister of Education in Japan and founder of the Japanese education system, wrote a detailed diary now known as *Korō kikō*, meaning "Diary of a Sea Voyage to Russia." At that time, Mori was only nineteen years old, and among fifteen students sent from Japan's Satsuma domain to be trained in the United Kingdom. Breaking the ban on leaving the country, Satsuma samurai were sent according to an order by the head of their domain Shimazu Tadayoshi to the University of

London, which was one of the best educational institutions in England.¹ To avoid punishment, they had to assume fake names. Mori, for example, went by the name Sawai Tetsuma while studying in England.² These Satsuma students were to study technical sciences and disciplines in London, which could benefit them in strengthening the defense of their domain.

Japanese historians who study the life and work of Mori emphasize the fact that technical sciences, which had been the main objective of Mori's training program, were quite easy for him to study.³ However, judging from the letter he sent to his brother, the humanities, especially studies in law and study of the history of Europe and the United States also interested him, perhaps even more than physics, mathematics, or chemistry. After a year of intensive study, which undoubtedly enriched his knowledge and skills, Mori realized that an understanding of only applied disciplines, the importance of which he definitely did not deny, would not give him an opportunity to grasp a full picture of the state and the social systems of European countries. Guided by the desire to witness life in European countries beyond the British capital, he and his classmate Matsumura Junzō, the future vice-admiral of the Japanese fleet, decided to take a short trip to Russia during their summer vacation in August 1866.

There were several reasons for choosing Saint Petersburg as their

¹ Japan's shogunate weakened the ban on leaving the country in the spring of 1866, when it decided to send bakufu students abroad for training. According to a law as of May 21, 1866 (the second year of Keio), the Japanese central government was to allow travel to other countries after obtaining permission from the corresponding domain. It is doubtful that Satsuma domain, which stood in opposition to the central government, was able to obtain such permission for its samurai. However, by the time this order was issued, students from Satsuma were already in the United Kingdom.

² Andrew Cobbing, *The Satsuma Students in Britain: Japan's Early Search for the "Essence of the West"* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Japan Library, 2000), 34.

³ Ivan Parker Hall, *Mori Arinori* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 76; Sotogawa Tsuguo, "Wakaki Mori Arinori no Roshia-kan o megutte" [Concerning the Views of Mori Arinori on Russia], *Surabu kenkyū* 32 (1985): 80.

destination. First, they had to cross the sea to reach the Russian Empire's capital, which would give them a chance while traveling to learn some basic seamanship skills under the guidance of English seamen well-known for their mastery.⁴ Second, Matsumura and Mori wanted to meet Japanese students who had been studying in Saint Petersburg by order of the Shogunate. At the time, going abroad during summer holidays for the purpose of gaining further knowledge was considered, particularly among English students, a good indicator in gauging a student's voice and zeal.⁵

Mori's diary *Korō kikō*, which he wrote throughout the trip, was first discovered and published in 1942 by the Japanese historian Ōkubo Toshiaki in the journal *Tōa Ronsō*, which translates as a "Studies on East Asia." Later, along with other texts of Mori, this diary was also included in a publication of his collected works.⁶ While commenting on *Korō kikō*, Ōkubo emphasized that due to Mori's outstanding insight and mental abilities developed at a very early stage in Russian-Japanese relations, the future creator of Japan's educational system was also able to consider and evaluate the threat Russia's foreign policies in the Far East could potentially impose upon Japan.

Korō kikō is not the only written source available for analysis in order to understand Mori's ideas of the Russian Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. It is possible to gain insight into his opinion about Russia in a letter to his elder brother Yokoyama Yasutake (1843-1870), which had been sent from London to Yokohama in the summer of 1866, just before the trip to Saint Petersburg. A comparative analysis of these two documents provides glimpses of Mori's perception of Russia before and after his visit to Saint Petersburg, and more importantly whether the

⁴ Mori and Matsumura travelled to Russia by the English sailing vessel *George and Emily*, on which they were enrolled as deckhands during the trip.

⁵ Hall, *Mori Arinori*, 76.

⁶ Mori Arinori, *Mori Arinori zenshū* [Collected Works of Mori Arinori], ed. Ōkubo Toshiaki (Tokyo: Senbundō shoten, 1972).

visit had changed it or not.⁷ How, then, did Mori describe the Russian Empire in his letter and diary?

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Prior to visiting Russia, Mori had been unable to form an objective opinion about Russia's internal and external policies based on information from primary sources because he had no knowledge of the Russian language. However, he had reached an adequate level of proficiency in the English language after one year of study in London, and was able to read and digest the news and analytical articles published by the English press. Analysis of Mori's letter and his diary reveals that he had been seriously concerned about Russia's foreign policies and the developments surrounding Russian-Japanese relations. In the letter to his brother on June 3, 1866, while commenting on Russia's desire to build friendly relations with Japan and to assist Japan should any confrontation occur with Great Britain, France, or the United States, Mori stressed that behind the Russian statements about friendship and support hid the desire to solve their own problems in the Far East. Mori also told his brother in detail through this letter about a failed attempt by Russia to strengthen its status as a sea power from joining Constantinople, which Mori pointed out as the main target of the Crimean War of 1853-1856.

Russia's access to the Mediterranean Sea, which could have been obtained through war, went against the interests of other European

⁷ Some researchers have mistaken Mori's impressions about Russia in his letters to his brother before visiting Saint Petersburg to have been his own impressions formed during his visit to the Russian capital. See Inoue Takutoshi, "Japanese Students in England and the Meiji Government's Foreign Employees (Oyatoi) : The People Who Supported Modernisation in the Bakumatsu-Early Meiji Period," Discussion Paper Series 40 (School of Economics, Kwansei Gakuin University, 2008): 2. Other inaccuracies can be found in, for example, *Mori Arinori* by Ivan Hall (1973), where *Korō kikō* is mistakenly dated to 1865, although Mori's trip to Russia was actually made one year later, in 1866. See Hall, *Mori Arinori*, 90, 91, 94.

countries, primarily those of Great Britain. According to Mori, this was what caused the creation of an anti-Russian coalition, which included Great Britain and France in addition to Turkey. Russia's subsequent defeat not only deprived Russia of an opportunity to approach the Mediterranean, it also halted the entry of Russian military vessels into the warm waters of the Black Sea.⁸ Moreover, the peace agreement Russia signed in Paris in 1856 limited opportunities for its naval strengthening in the Baltic. Having lost a chance to continue its naval development in Europe, emphasized Mori, Russians drew their attention to the East.

If we now decide to become friends with Russia in the near future, it will undoubtedly unveil that Great Britain, France and the United States are willing to absorb us and thus Russia will offer to join efforts in order to avoid this from happening. Once we swallow the bait, it will request our permission to build ports at strategic points [on our coast], and permission for its military vessels and possibly troops to enter these ports. I think it is unnecessary to explain that if we agree, we will become swallowed up, this time by Russia.⁹

In an attempt to support his own statements, Mori described the landing of the Russian corvette *Posadnik* on the Japanese island of Tsushima in 1861.¹⁰ Commenting on Russian actions, Mori wrote: “Now they are

⁸ Under the Treaty of Paris signed in 1856, Russia was required to return to the Ottoman Empire everything that had been captured in Southern Bessarabia, at the mouth of the Danube River and the Caucasus. It was also forbidden for the Russian Empire to have a military fleet in the Black Sea that had been proclaimed as neutral waters, and Russia was to cease all military construction in the Baltic Sea.

⁹ Mori, *Mori Arinori zenshū*, 52.

¹⁰ *Roshia no sendan Tsushima senryō jiken*, translated as the “Russian Fleet Tsushima Occupation Incident” and commonly referred to as the Tsushima Incident, was an international incident in 1861 that caused the deterioration of relations between the Russian Empire and Japan. The incident was prompted by some Russian officials, including the emperor Alexander II, who greatly desired to establish a strategically important fort in the completely ice-free Tsushima

looking for any other port ... under the skin of a gentle lamb there is a wolf's heart...."¹¹ Interestingly, Mori's letter to his brother pointed out that Russia's attempt to take over Tsushima was prevented by the joint efforts of England and France, as was the case in the Crimean War, although in reality, the French did not take part in the settlement of the Tsushima incident.

Laurence Oliphant: A Friend, Mentor, and Russophobe

In his biography of Mori Arinori, Ivan Hall mentions that while Mori and other Satsuma students were studying in London, they were specially placed under the protection and patronage of Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888), the former first secretary of the British legation in Edo.¹² It was Oliphant who in 1861, under the order of Minister Plenipotentiary of Great Britain in Japan Rutherford Alcock, located where the corvette *Posadnik* had been moored in Tsushima and who was directly involved in the negotiations to extradite Russian Navy sailors from the Japanese island. Oliphant is also known to have been the one who in 1866 organized Satsuma students to study at the University College London,

Strait. Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich, and Rear Admiral I.F. Likhachev, commander of the Russian squadron in the Pacific, were ardent supporters of the idea. In early 1861, Likhachev sent the corvette *Posadnik* to the shores of Tsushima with Lieutenant-Commander N.A. Birilev, who tried to negotiate with the local officials the possibility of renting the land near Cape Imosaki. Without permission from the Japanese central government, the crew began constructing a naval station. The Japanese government immediately entered into negotiations with I.A. Goshkevich, the Russian consul in Hakodate who had been fulfilling the actual function of ambassador. The English also grew concerned and sent their military vessels, demanding together with Goshkevich that the mission be discontinued. Likhachev immediately agreed to meet the desires of the English, Japanese, and Russian diplomats and substituted *Posadnik* with *Oprichnik*, a smaller ship. It was only after the arrival of Admiral Likhachev in Hakodate when Likhachev realized the full extent of the political scandal and ordered the liquidation of the station.

¹¹ Kimura Tadashi, *Mori sensei den: Denki* [Mori Sensei: A Biography] (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1987), 17-18.

¹² Hall, *Mori Arinori*, 86-87.

part of the University of London, while he was a member of the British Parliament. It is possible that Mori was describing the Tsushima incident in the letter to his brother as it had been described by Oliphant. As for the role the French played in this incident, it is not clear whether Oliphant himself mentioned it in order to show that Russian naval empowerment in the Pacific Ocean went against not only British interests, but the collective interests of Europe, or whether Mori himself had mistakenly decided that the French and the English were collaborating in the Japanese case in the same way they had during the Crimean war. Oliphant's active participation in the London life of these Japanese students was also recalled by Matsumura Junzō, a close friend of Mori with whom he made the trip to Russia in the summer of 1866. In his memoirs, Matsumura described Oliphant as "a person who provided assistance and support in everything," and "a person who was a source of our knowledge about the UK and other countries."¹³ Matsumura also pointed out that very often in conversations with the Japanese Oliphant had been sharp while speaking about Russia, and at the same time highly appreciative of the United States.

Oliphant was in fact a highly versatile and extraordinary person as a traveler, writer, and diplomat. By the age of twenty-four, the son of the famous Scottish traveler Sir Anthony Oliphant had already published two books based on his own travel notes. One of them was devoted to his trip to Russia, published in 1853 under the title *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea in the Autumn of 1852, with a Voyage down the Volga, and a Tour through the Country of the Don Cossacks*.¹⁴ The trip was rather adventurous for two young men from rich and influential families to

¹³ Kōshaku Shimazu-ke henshūjo, *Sappan kaigunshi* [Naval History of Satsuma Domain], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Hara shobō, 1968), 905-907.

¹⁴ Laurence Oliphant, *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea in the Autumn of 1852, with a Voyage down the Volga, and a Tour through the Country of the Don Cossacks* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1853).

decide to go through lands that had not been part of usual tourist routes. Oliphant had not received formal education as a child and therefore personally considered such trips to be part of a “unique self-study system.” His impressions about Russia and Russian people could hardly be called positive, although judging by the route they chose, it is obvious they were looking for an adventure rather than comfort. After this trip, Oliphant became completely convinced that Britain had overestimated Russia as a rival and as a threat to its security and prosperity. In his letter from Russia, Oliphant wrote: “I don’t think we have anything to fear from Russia: its gigantic proportions render it so unwieldy, and the people are so barbarous, that we shall always have the same advantages which our enlightenment gives us over the Eastern nations. I look upon it as little better than China: the only difference is that usually barbarous nations hold civilized nations in respect, which, to judge from the way they bully you in the custom-house, Russia does not.”¹⁵ It is possible that this first impression was what formed his final opinion about the Russian Empire.

Laurence Oliphant visited the land of the rising sun twice. The first time he was there as a personal secretary of the British diplomat Lord Elgin when his mission came to Japan for the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858. Through this visit, Oliphant had been fortunate to see Japan in its pristine beauty, yet to be touched by Western influence. Obviously, he became captivated and fascinated by the country. Oliphant’s description of this journey in *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s Mission to China and Japan in the years 1857, ’58, ’59* is still one of the most enthralling and detailed portrayals of Japan in the Bakumatsu period among those written by foreigners.¹⁶ Once back in England, Oliphant applied several times for an appointment

¹⁵ Margaret Oliphant, *Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, His Wife*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1891), 86.

¹⁶ Laurence Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s mission to China and Japan in the years 1857, ’58, ’59* (London, 1859).

to Edo. His request was satisfied in 1861 and he was able to return to Japan as a secretary of the British Legation. Unfortunately, his second visit was not pleasant as the country was filled with anti-foreign spirit. A week after he took his post in Edo, there was an attack on the legation's building. Oliphant was injured and forced to leave Japan.¹⁷ Despite the serious injury, the Englishman kept his admiration and affection for the land of the rising sun. This was demonstrated by the fact that it had been he who, on a completely voluntary basis, had helped Japanese students settle in London. Meanwhile, personal fear and physical suffering he experienced within the walls of the British legation on July 5, 1861, could have actually escalated his hostile attitude toward Russia, as British diplomats had become deeply convinced that the attack on the mission had been provoked by the actions of Russian Navy sailors in Tsushima.¹⁸

Russia: Illusion and “Reality”

In order to convince his brother of the importance for Japan to be careful when dealing with Russia, Mori Arinori's letter of June 3, 1866, tried to destroy the “mythological” image of Russia as a “strong and fair power” that existed among the Japanese at the time. Mori's opinion was that this

¹⁷ As a result of wounds received in an attack by a rōnin of Mito domain, Oliphant's left hand was badly damaged and lost its mobility.

¹⁸ Kenneth Bourne, Donald Cameron Watt, and Ian Nish, eds., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part 1—From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First World War*, vol. 1 of *Japan and North-East Asia, 1860-1878*, Series E, Asia, 1860-1914 (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1989), 31. In his dispatch dated August 2, 1861, R. Alcock wrote to the British Foreign Minister Lord J. Russell: “This attempt to massacre a whole Legation was confidently affirmed by the popular voice, to have been the act and deed of the Prince of Tsushima, in revenge for the violence and defeat he had suffered in his territories from the Russians. It was said the assailants were either his own followers, under the guise of “loonins” (a general term for lawless brigands), or men of this class set on by his emissaries, who had followed me from Nagasaki for the purpose; the Prince having heard that a Chief of the barbarians was there, and about to proceed overland to Yeddo. His nationality does not seem to have been considered worthy of a moment's inquiry; it was enough that he belonged to the European race.”

image had been based on the belief that Russia carried out honest and noble policy objectives toward other states. This view of Russia as a *gikoku*, a country of justice, appeared when the Russian delegation headed by Admiral Putiatin came to the open port of Nagasaki for the conclusion of trade agreements and patiently waited for the Japanese side to respond. This sharply contrasted with how the Americans behaved as they went into Edo Bay in violation of Japanese law and forced Japan to sign the “Treaty of Peace and Amity” in 1854 by threatening to bomb the Japanese capital.

Mori attempted to show through his letter that the idea of fairness in Russia’s foreign policy differed from the actual state of affairs by naming several of Russia’s actions overseas, which he considered to most clearly show the true face of Russians. First, Mori pointed out the suppression of the Polish uprising in 1863-1864, although it sounds in his letter as if he had been referring to Russia’s rule of Poland. This could not have been the case because Poland had already become partitioned and ruled by Russia earlier in the late eighteenth century, whereas Mori’s letter dates to 1866, meaning he had most likely been talking about 1865.¹⁹ Second, Mori mentions “Russia’s capture of the half of the territory of Switzerland,” which never actually happened in Russian history. Japanese historians suppose that Mori must have made a mistake in naming Switzerland when he actually meant Finland.²⁰ Besides these, the list of Russia’s unfair actions toward foreign countries also included an “unsuccessful attempt to engage in the colonization of India.” The letter does not explain what specific Russian actions Mori considered as an attempt to occupy the territories of the Indian subcontinent. It is possible that he had been relating to the 1801 Decree by Russian Emperor Paul I under which 20,000 Don Cossacks were sent to India to take over the

¹⁹ The Third Partition Treaty divided the territory of the Polish state between Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1795.

²⁰ Sotogawa, “Wakaki Mori Arinori no Roshia-kan o megutte,” 80.

British domain there. In collaboration with Napoleon III, Paul I had in fact planned to exclude the British from India. However, those plans were never executed as the Decree was cancelled just after the assassination of Paul I in 1801 by his son Alexander I. The last on the list of Russia's illegal actions toward other countries included the aforementioned 1861 mission of the Russian Navy sailors on Tsushima Island. The actions and plans of the Russian government taken into account by Mori, of course only those that actually did happen, could certainly be characterized as unfair acts toward people of other nations. Even so, such acts were firmly implanted in ideas of foreign political doctrine among all major European powers at that time.

Nevertheless, according to Mori, the Japanese belief that Russia was a strong state able to compete with any other Western power had been yet another mistake. In the June letter to his brother, Mori wrote: "Many people, speaking of Russia, call it a strong country, but could it be compared in strength with Britain, France or the United States? Russians initially had a huge territory, occupying one third of the world. But the [territory's] climate is too cold for foreigners. Russians are proud of their strength and look down on other countries, but the past events have demonstrated that in reality it [Russia] is merely an infinitely cold rather than an infinitely strong country."²¹ Mori deliberated on what may be considered as major Russian achievements and went on in the letter to further explain that even the greatest Russian victories, such as that over Napoleon's army, had been won by the unbearably cold Russian winter and the lack of provisions rather than as a result of the strength and fighting capacity of the Russian troops. So, the verdict of an eighteen year-old Japanese traveler such as Mori at the time he wrote this letter was that only a "country man," apparently referring to a dark and ignorant person, would consider Russia to be a strong power. It should once again

²¹ Mori, *Mori Arinori zenshū*, 52-53.

be noted that Mori wrote this letter prior to visiting Russia, meaning it was not based on his own personal impressions, but on information that had been circulating in Britain. Still, this basic view of Russia as a power, inferior in its development in comparison to advanced Western countries, would have undoubtedly influenced Mori's perception of the Russian Empire as he attempted to establish a personal acquaintance with it.

Russians as Inept Businessmen

Mori and Matsumura left London on August 1, 1866, and returned on September 10 of the same year. Most of their trip, however, was spent on the road. The Japanese students spent only ten days in Saint Petersburg, from August 24 until September 2. Mori began his records about Russia with a description of Kronstadt, its location, history, and the defensibility of its port. While covering Kronstadt, a main harbor of the Russian Empire, Mori addressed the foreign trade issues of the Russian state and their specifics. In order to support his critical conclusions about the Russian Empire, Mori presented some statistical data that had been designed to expose the imperfections of Russian trade skills.

Two thousand commercial vessels arrive in Kronstadt harbor, out of which 1,000 of them are English.... From Britain they import mainly coal.²² Russia exports to Britain animal fat, hemp [for the manufacture of sails and marine gear of the British Navy], animal skins and wood. The principal part of the Russian export consists of animal fat and grain. According to statistics, in 1864 Russia imported goods in total amount of 1,300,000,000 pounds, which in our money is 3,000,900,000 *ryō*.²³ In the same year, Russia exported goods in amount of only 7,000,000

²² The time period for this count on the number of vessels was not specified in the letter.

²³ *Ryō* was a unit of weight which became the basis of Japan's monetary system in the Edo period. One *ryō* was equivalent to fifteen grams of gold.

[pounds], calculated in our money as 2,100,000,000 *ryō*. It is obvious that Russia is very inefficient in its trade.²⁴

Mori thought the reasons for such a foreign trade imbalance lay with Russia's so-called "peripheral position" in the world trade market, in which Russia had been selling cheap resources to countries more industrialized than itself and buying products manufactured out of such resources at prices that were threefold higher.²⁵

How accurate were these conclusions? Even British statistical data did not manage to fully reflect the situation Russian trade was in. According to the 1868 edition of *The Statesman's Year-Book*, an annual British statistical publication, total imports by Russia in 1864 amounted to 154,697,989 rubles, or 24,493,849 pounds. The same source indicates that in the same year Russia exported goods worth a total of 154,473,154 rubles, or 24,450,250 pounds.²⁶ In other words, the horrific foreign trade imbalance described by Mori did not actually exist at that time. Moreover, according to *The Statesman's Year-Book*, the volume of Russian exports to the United Kingdom in 1864 was eight times as great as what Russia imported from the United Kingdom. This trend continued between 1862 and 1868.²⁷

Perhaps the idea of the domination of British imports in Russia's trade balance was conceived from the huge number of British trade vessels Mori had observed in Kronstadt. Mori could have assumed that the English vessels he saw had been exclusively transporting goods

²⁴ Mori Arinori, "Korō kikō," [Diary of a Sea Voyage to Russia] in *Mori Arinori zenshū* [Collected Works of Mori Arinori], ed. Ōkubo Toshiaki, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Senbundō shoten, 1972), 17.

²⁵ Mori uses the term *inakajin*, meaning person from the village, which is usually in contrast with *tokajin*, meaning city dweller.

²⁶ *The Statesman's Year-Book, a Statistical, Mercantile, and Historical Account of the States and Sovereigns of the Civilised World: A Manual for Politicians and Merchants for the Year 1868* (London: Macmillan, 1868), 416-417.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 417.

Year	Imports from Russia to the United Kingdom (in pounds)	Exports of Home Produce from the United Kingdom to Russia (in pounds)
1862	15,101,059	2,070,918
1863	13,419,263	2,695,276
1864	14,711,202	2,854,898
1865	17,383,697	2,923,006
1866	19,636,129	3,093,231

Source: *The Statesman's Year-Book, a Statistical, Mercantile, and Historical Account of the States and Sovereigns of the Civilised World: A Manual for Politicians and Merchants for the Year 1868* (London: Macmillan, 1868), 417.

Russia imported from the United Kingdom. He probably had not been aware that, at that time, a significant proportion of the trade of Russian products was being organized with the help of British and German trade houses that earned significant profit from this undertaking, and that such traded goods were being transported by British marine companies. Still, it may be difficult to argue with what Mori pointed out as the “peripheral” character of the Russian foreign trade, as agricultural products and raw materials actually did occupy a majority of Russian exports in the mid-nineteenth century, while Russia mainly imported industrial products such as cotton, wool and silk fabrics, machinery, tools, iron, tin, and the like.

A State Bearing Danger

Mori’s diary clearly exhibits that his opinion of Russia did not change after his visit. New details were added to his idea of Russia as a country with broad expansionist ambitions, as was presented in the letter to his brother on June 3, 1866. Emphasizing such Russian characteristics in his diary, he wrote, “With its vast territory, Russia seeks to expand even more, and in all four directions.”²⁸ Describing the four directions of Russian expansion hints that being Japanese, Mori naturally cared most of all about Russia’s plans of a possible territorial expansion into the Far East.

²⁸ Mori, *Mori Arinori zenshū*, 52-53.

In Saint Petersburg, Mori and Matsumura communicated a good deal with the Japanese students in Russia by order of the Edo bakufu, the central government of Japan. Mori learned from one of the students, Ichikawa Bunkichi, about the Russian government's plans to construct a railway to facilitate travel throughout the country. Ichikawa had heard this news from (Kumezo) Tachibana Kōsai, a Japanese man who had arrived in Russia in 1853 on board the Russian vessel *Pallada*.²⁹ At that time, Tachibana was greatly supported by Iosif Antonovich Goshkevich, a Russian consul in Japan. As a gesture of gratitude, Tachibana took the name of Iosif Goshkevich as his patronymic when he converted to Orthodoxy. In Saint Petersburg, he was called Vladimir Iosifovich Yamatof. Having left Japan in violation of the shogunal ban on leaving the country and unable to return to his homeland, Tachibana continued living and working in Russia until 1874. He taught Japanese at Saint Petersburg University, and also served as an interpreter in the Asian Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1866 and 1867, Tachibana communicated frequently with bakufu students, introducing them to the peculiarities of Russian culture and traditions, and Ichikawa shared with them the official news, judging by Mori's accounts. In the late 1860s, the possibility of connecting all Russian territories, even the most distant ones, via railway "arteries" was widely discussed among

²⁹ Kumezo Tachibana Kosai (1821-1885) was a Japanese samurai, translator, and teacher of the Japanese language. In 1853, sailors of the Russian training ship *Pallada* took a young Tachibana Kumedzo out of the water as he was swimming toward the ship. He asked for asylum, for in Japan, he could face the death penalty for speaking with Russian people. The Russian sailors took him with them. Tachibana was very educated and skilled in oriental medicine, thus he became the ship doctor's assistant. Because no one was able to understand him at first, he began to learn Russian. Once he arrived in Saint Petersburg, he converted to Orthodoxy and took the name Vladimir I. after Goshkevich Joseph Antonovich, his Russian language teacher, and the surname of Yamatof from "Yamato," an ancient name of Japan. He later married a Russian woman. For several years, he worked in the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a translator and taught the Japanese language at Saint Petersburg University. He returned to his homeland in 1874. During Mori and Matsumura's visit to Russia, he showed them the winter palace Peterhof and organized a visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

government officials. This was the information Tachibana Kōsai passed on to the Japanese. After talking with Ichikawa Bunkichi, Mori wrote the following in his diary: “Using the current road going across northern Asia, you can travel from [the European part of] Russia to the Amur within two months. Now Russians are planning to build a railway starting from the middle of this track, which will cut the journey time from Hokkaido to Saint Petersburg down to fourteen days. We need to fear seriously Russian claims on world domination!”³⁰

Staying in Russia and communicating with the Japanese students in Saint Petersburg changed a few of Mori Arinori’s preconceived notions about Russia as a “weak” country. At least in *Korō kikō*, he wrote that in addition to the severe Russian winter, which had even stopped Napoleon’s troops, the country had a fairly large army and spent much of its budget on strengthening the State’s military capability. As an example, he gave statistics for 1864. The total military spending for that year was 300,157,500 pounds, of which 480,000 pounds was spent on the Russian Army and 200,700,000 pounds on the Russian Navy. This, Mori emphasized, ranked third in Europe after the English and the French. Judging by the fact that the statistics were presented in British pounds, they must have been taken from British sources similar to the data on Russian trade, consequently rendering their reliability as questionable. According to the *Annals of Statistics of the Russian Empire* released by the Central Statistical Committee of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1866, the Russian government spent more on the Army than on the Navy, and the amounts of money also differed compared to British sources.³¹ The figures Mori cited makes it seem as if Russia had been

³⁰ Mori, “Korō kikō,” 24.

³¹ Tsentralnii statisticheskii komitet ministerstva vnutrennikh del [Central Statistical Committee of the Russian Ministry of Interior Affairs], *Statisticheskii Vremennik Rossiiskoy Imperii* [Statistical Annals of the Russian Empire] (Saint Petersburg, 1866). According to the statistical book *Statisticheskii Vremennik Rossiiskoy Imperii* from 1866, the War Department received a budget of 116,529,363 rubles and 22 kopecks, and the Marine Ministry 21,636,417 rubles and 9 kopeks.

expanding and strengthening its Navy, and although this was not true, it still intensified concerns about Russia's plans to strengthen its position in the Pacific region through military means. Mori continued to believe that despite its vast territory and political ambition, the Russian Empire was peripheral as a territory as well as in terms of cultural development, and wrote in his diary: "The people here mostly look rustic... The same can be said about the local soldiers who cannot be compared in any way with the British."³²

About Russian Mentality

In his diary, Mori writes that Russia's development lag in comparison with the West is not only due to the lack of commercial skills necessary for successful state development, but also due to the Russian mentality greatly influenced by the Russian state's religious isolation. Mori, who had just turned nineteen years of age, seemed to have little interest in Western religion and the fundamentals of Christianity. His letter and diary shows he was more interested in Europe's social and political achievements rather than the individual features of belief in different European countries. Yet, after visiting Saint Isaac's Cathedral and having been impressed by its grandeur and decorations, Mori wrote the following: "Here people profess a particular religion. ... It came from Greece, but, except for some details, it reminds me of the Roman Catholics. ... There are many religious countries in the world, but Russia is one of the most devout. It is impossible to count the number of churches and temples in Russia. When people pass by a church, they remove their headdress and start to bow. Sometimes they kneel and touch

Assuming that the exchange rate between the British pound and Russian ruble in 1866 was 6.25 rubles per pound, these amounts should constitute 18,654,778 pounds and 3,461,826 pounds, respectively. Thus, the total government expenditure was 404,068,004 rubles.

³² Mori, "Korō kikō," 24-25.

the ground with their heads and sometimes they bow while standing.”³³

What he saw in churches and on the streets of Saint Petersburg, however, only strengthened Mori’s opinion that had been formed earlier while reading English newspapers about a certain kind of backwardness of the Russian mentality, limited by the framework of the Orthodoxy. This can be confirmed through Mori’s letter to his brother on June 3, 1866, in which he criticizes the faith of the Russian people in the sacred nature of royal power, their conviction that the Russian Tsar was anointed by God, giving him the right to determine the fate of Russia and its people. Mori wrote, “All the governance in Russia is subject not to the will of the people, but to the will of the monarch. If a monarch is enlightened, there is prosperity in the country. If the monarch is not intelligent enough, then there is a crisis.”³⁴ The tone of the letter leaves no doubt about Mori’s opinion that the supreme sovereignty of the crown was a sign of the backwardness of the Russian state. Mori ends his conclusion on the subject with these words: “What nonsense to give an Emperor the status of God.” It is doubtful that the eighteen-year-old Mori, coming from a country with a millennial history of a cult of deifying its imperial power, arrived at such a conclusion on his own.³⁵ However, such characteristics

³³ Ibid., 25-26.

³⁴ Mori, *Mori Arinori zenshū*, 52-53.

³⁵ The statements of British journalists regarding Russian Orthodoxy, and parallels that somehow arose when comparing the Russian and the Japanese emperors and their sacred right to control people, brought Mori to the conclusion that the merger of religion and state, Orthodoxy in Russia’s case and Shinto in Japan’s case, could not provide a solid basis for the construction of a modern, progressive, and perfect state with a Western viewpoint. In subsequent years, Mori in a number of speeches attempted to prove that the state in which they honor and respect the views of liberal and democratic freedoms must be based on laws that are clearly defined and prepared in accordance with international law and the constitution, rather than the faith of the Japanese people in the divinity of the emperor. His beliefs played a fatal role in his life. Mori’s sacrilegious behavior, in Shinto terms, of apparently trying to push with his cane a sacred curtain at the main shrine of the imperial family’s Ise Shrine (J. Ise Jingū) (1887), seems to have cost him his life. On the same day the Emperor of Japan signed the first constitution in the country’s history, Mori was killed by a Japanese religious fanatic.

of the Russian state power structure were portrayed in mid-nineteenth century British newspapers. Almost every article about the Russian Orthodox Church began with the postulate that the church in the Russian Empire is an integral part of the government. Therefore, criticism of the state system automatically extended to the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁶

At the time of the Crimean War, *The New Monthly Magazine* criticized all aspects of the Russian Orthodoxy, and stated as its conclusion: “Such is the religion, or rather the superstition of the people whose tyrannical leaders have the boldness to challenge European civilization and liberty, and to speak of their holy mission.”³⁷ English Russophobia in the mid-nineteenth century came from the conflict of foreign interests as well as from ideological concepts. From the British perspective, the Russian Empire’s political, social, and religious institutions formed over many centuries hindered development in all sectors of Russian society based upon individualism, self-reliance, and hard work, the three qualities most admired in England in the nineteenth century. For example, *The British Quarterly Review* published the following in 1859: “Like the mammoth found ... encased in ice ... the Russian people have been preserved entirely in their pristine condition.”³⁸ Such a comparison coming from an Englishman of the Victorian era could hardly be called a compliment. Thus, a comparative analysis of Mori’s statements about Russia in a letter to his brother on June 3, 1866, and his diary written during his visit to Saint Petersburg reveals that information found in British newspapers and gathered from his English friends and acquaintances, rather than personal experience, had influenced Mori’s opinion about the Russian Empire as a state less developed than advanced Western countries and therefore a poor example for Japan to follow

³⁶ William Henry Thorn, “Russia and the British Periodical Press, 1856-1903: A Study of Attitudes toward Russian Internal Affairs” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester, 1968).

³⁷ “The Russian Clergy,” *The New Monthly Magazine* 106, 1856, 353-355.

³⁸ “Serf Emancipation in Russia,” *The British Quarterly Review* 29, 1859, 155.

during its modernization.

“And do not step on the teacher’s shadow....”

Had it occurred to Mori that the portrayal of Russia drawn by its political and ideological opponents and rivals would have been biased and subjective? Mori’s contemporaries, including those outside Japan, who had a chance to personally converse with him, emphasized his high intelligence, excellent command of English, and ability to think analytically. The famous English traveler, writer, and naturalist Isabella Bird wrote after meeting Mori in 1878: “Mr. Mori is one of the most progressive of Japanese politicians, and, under an Oriental despotism, is an ‘advanced Liberal.’ ... He speaks English tolerably well, and, unlike most of his countrymen....”³⁹ Of course, Mori was still young in 1866, and not well aware of international relations between European powers. However, he had been aware of the nature of Russian-British relations and the United Kingdom’s desire to limit Russia’s power in the Far East. Why, then, was the British opinion so decisive in forming Mori’s views of the Russian Empire?

The answer to this question seems to lie in the peculiarities of the Japanese mentality, the Japanese way of grasping truths that developed over the centuries. In this Japanese way of acquiring new skills and ideas in different fields of knowledge, the teacher would perform a central role as an interpreter, a mentor, and a source and authority of higher knowledge. Among the many examples is the Japanese Buddhist monk Saicho (767-822), who was active during the Nara period (710-794). Credited with founding the Tendai Buddhist sect in Japan, Saicho wrote the following explanation about his desire to study Buddhism in China: “I

³⁹ Isabella L. Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An Account of Travels in the Interior Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkō and Isé* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1881), 207.

have long regretted the absence of a commentary which would explain the profound import of the Lotus Sutra. By good fortune I have procured a copy of the excellent discourse of the T'ien-t'ai sect. I have studied it a number of years, but errors and omissions in the text make it impossible to grasp the fine points. If I do not receive instruction from a master, then even if I were to get [the meaning], I should be unable to believe in it."⁴⁰ It is possible that during the formation of Mori's views on Russia, Great Britain had become a teacher of sorts to him. It was not important for him to understand what Russia really was in its essence. Rather of higher importance was the Englishmen's point of view on Russia's economic, military potential, as well as its domestic and foreign policy. Mori had created his idea of Russia according to the rules of Chinese art, where students were to learn to draw mountains by copying the works of great masters rather than nature. Notions of Russia in the United Kingdom had become for Mori a master and trusted authority.

Why the United Kingdom? There are numerous explanations for this. First of all, the British influence can be explained by the fact that at the time Mori authored the letter and diary, he had been studying in the United Kingdom, which made information in English the most accessible. This, however, was not the only reason. Mori was a native of the Satsuma domain. The authority of the United States as the country that discovered Japan was not obvious to residents of the principality of Satsuma. Their acquaintance with the military power of the West occurred in August 1863, when the ships of the squadron of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain virtually destroyed with artillery fire an important port of Kagoshima, the capital of Satsuma. Demonstrating its naval forces, England managed to gain in Japan the status of a landmark and a teacher. That status was maintained throughout the subsequent years of the

⁴⁰ Nakamura Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1971), 450.

Bakumatsu period, and during the Meiji era, when representatives of the Satsuma domain, who were among the main advocates for restoring the ruling imperial power in Japan, occupied important positions in the new government. During the Meiji period, the United Kingdom's image as a reliable mentor and teacher of Japan became further established. The results of the Crimean War (1853-1856), in which Russia lost to an alliance of Great Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia, was yet another reason for the Japanese to trust the United Kingdom.

Respecting the status and authority of a teacher, especially a foreign teacher, was something the Japanese came to adopt earlier through China, which went on to become firmly established in traditional Japanese ways of learning. An old Japanese proverb says that the student "should go seven steps behind the teacher, and not step on his shadow." Apparently, Mori also seems to have taken up this saying's principle in solving the puzzle of "Russian reality." Mori was unable to find all the pieces, so the ones that he did manage to find were sometimes warped by the "English point of view." That is perhaps why he failed to detect a more complete and realistic portrayal of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, a trip to Saint Petersburg proved to be fruitful, for it brought about some unexpected outcomes.

Unexpected Outcomes from the Trip to Russia

Observing life in the Russian capital and talking to Japanese students studying in Saint Petersburg gave food for thought to the inquisitive, searching mind of the young Mori Arinori. The thoughts on problems he witnessed for himself and heard about first hand from stories told by bakufu students became seeds which Mori later on cultivated into complete ideas and theories.

Having arrived in Saint Petersburg, Mori and Matsumura stayed in the Hotel de France, one of the capital's best hotels and not far from the Winter Palace. High-ranking members of the Iwakura mission stayed at

the same hotel during a visit to Russia in 1873, thus it was quite an expensive choice for students, which gives reason to assume that in addition to the money from Satsuma domain, the two students also received financial support from other sources, possibly British. In fact, Mori mentions in his diary that a prominent English entrepreneur called Morgan took care of them in Saint Petersburg. They were invited to a dinner party at Morgan's country residence. Morgan also accompanied them during a visit to the British Ambassador in Russia Sir Andrew Buchanan, to whom the Japanese students were recommended by letters from Laurence Oliphant. Mori often gratefully mentions Morgan's name in his notes, stressing that he surrounded them with care and attention that made their stay in Saint Petersburg extremely comfortable.

In contrast, the Japanese students sent by order of the bakufu were living in the Russian capital under deplorable conditions, according to Mori. The idea of sending several Japanese students to Russia to learn the Russian language and other sciences originated from Iosif Goshkevich, the Russian consul in Hakodate. He actively promoted this idea, especially after it became known that the bakufu had decided to dispatch a few young samurai to the United Kingdom to study exact sciences and naval matters. Obviously, Goshkevich was motivated by the desire to preserve a balance of foreign influence upon the Japanese government and prevent an unchallenged British domination. Unfortunately, the desire to win the sympathy from the Japanese and to acquaint them with Russia was not backed up by concrete actions. The six samurai Ozawa Seijirō, Yamanouchi Sakuzaemon, Ogata Jōjiro, Ōtsuki Hikogoro, Ichikawa Bunkichi, and Tanaka Jiro selected to receive five years of training in Russia did not end up being provided with the necessary support and interest once they arrived in Saint Petersburg.⁴¹ Ahead of the trip to Saint

⁴¹ Miyanaga Takashi, *Bakumatsu o Roshiya ryūgakusei* [Japanese Students in Russia during the Bakumatsu Period] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1991).

Petersburg, Mori had been worried about meeting with the Japanese who were officially sent there by the central government because he had violated the ban on leaving Japan by going to London to study. His fears turned out to have been groundless when the bakufu students welcomed them warmly, glad to meet their compatriots. Their stories about the Russian climate's harshness, the difficulties of learning the Russian language, and domestic problems the Japanese faced in Russia convinced Mori that he had been lucky enough to be sent to the United Kingdom.

About Russian language

Among the bakufu students, Mori became close with Yamanouchi Sakuzaemon. The latter told him that one of the most serious issues for the Japanese in Saint Petersburg was to study the Russian language, which proved to be extremely difficult. Progress in learning was slow, mainly because the students lived together in one apartment rented for them by Iosif Goshkevich with money he procured from the Japanese government. Inevitably, they were speaking in their native language at home. Despite all their requests for separate apartments in order to enter a new environment for language learning, Goshkevich kept them all together. As a result, they could hardly express themselves in Russian after spending nearly a year in Russia. According to Mori, bakufu students regretted coming to Russia. Yamanouchi was sure that they would not learn anything useful over the years spent in Russia, and would only be able to master the Russian language at best, though the language did not have a notable international status and was used only within the Russian Empire's territory.

It is quite possible that while discussing with bakufu students in Saint Petersburg in the summer of 1866 about the impracticality of studying extremely difficult languages limited to local use, Mori came up with the idea of officially adopting a simpler and internationally more widespread language in Japan, such as English, to help his country in the

process of integrating with Western civilization. Seven years later in 1873, being in the state diplomatic service and working in the United States as Japan's Plenipotentiary Envoy, Mori decided to publicly express this radical idea, professing that the Japanese language was not used as a means of communication in any other country in the world except for Japan. The future, he thought, would inevitably be superseded by English. He outlined this idea in the preface to the publication *Education in Japan*, a collection of letters addressed to Mori Arinori by various public figures and politicians in the United States, covering issues and problems with Japanese education and exploring ways to solve them to move forward.⁴² Mori also once commented that the Japanese language was originally primitive, and would have remained so had it not been influenced by the Chinese language and literature. He wrote,

Without the aid of the Chinese, our language has never been taught or used for any purpose of communication. This shows its poverty. The march of modern civilization has already begun its advance across Japan and has touched the heart of the nation; English suppresses the use of both Japanese and Chinese. The commercial power of the English-speaking race, which now rules the world, drives our people into some knowledge of their commercial ways and habits. The absolute necessity of mastering the English language is thus forced upon us. It is requisite of the maintenance of our independence in the community of nations. Under the circumstances, our meager language, which can never be of any use outside of our islands, is doomed to yield to the domination of the English tongue, especially when the power of steam and electricity shall pervade the land.⁴³

⁴² Mori Arinori, *Education in Japan: A Series of Letters Addressed by Prominent Americans to Mori Arinori* (New York: D. Appleton, 1873), I-lvii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, lvi.

In other words, Mori believed that because of its underdevelopment, the Japanese language had been bound to require the assistance of other languages. In due time, the Chinese language entered the scene as a kind of linguistic donor to help revive the Japanese language. Linguistic borrowing from China was accompanied by an incorporation of Chinese notions of culture, religion, science, ideology, philosophy, and many other aspects. As a result, the integration of Chinese with the national language became a strong incentive for the development of Japan. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, China became less appealing to Japan as an example to follow. China's economic dependence on the United Kingdom as a result of the 1840-1842 and 1856-1860 Opium Wars had demonstrated the backwardness of the Celestial Empire, and its inability to protect its own economic and political interests. In the eyes of the Japanese, the United Kingdom and the United States began to epitomize modern progress after proving their superiority over China and Japan. Since the official language in these countries was English, there was nothing surprising in the fact that Mori drew an analogy with Japan's borrowing from China and arrived at the conclusion that adopting the English language as Japan's state language would naturally lead to the country's entrance into the world of Western civilization.⁴⁴ The premium the English language could offer as a language of international communication was obvious from Mori's point of view. The fact that Russia did not use this language much compared to its popularity among the Germans and French was, in his opinion, further proof of the Russian Empire's backwardness.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ As the minister of education, Mori took the initiative of introducing the study of English to the higher elementary course, and greatly encouraged it in middle schools. Kanda Naibu, who accompanied Mori to America as his youngest student in 1870 and who later became a professor of English at the Tokyo University of Commerce, remembered Mori as "a champion of the cause of Anglo-Saxon civilization in Japan." Kanda Naibu, *Memorials of Kanda Naibu* (Tokyo: Toko shoin, 1927), 8.

⁴⁵ Mori, "Korō kikō," 24-25.

From the Problem of Abandoned Children to the Structure of Japanese Education

In the summer of 1866, Mori was only nineteen years old. Despite his personal desire to focus on the specifics of the Russian state structure, his attention was inevitably drawn toward other matters that had been troubling his young mind. In his records of his trip to Russia, he devoted an entire page to the topic of infidelity and one of its consequences—the problem concerning abandoned children. This issue came up during a conversation with Yamanouchi Sakuzaemon. While discussing the nature of Russians, Yamanouchi mentioned that their most negative features surfaced in two cases: hereditary disputes and marital infidelities. From the topic of infidelity, the two moved on to the subject of survival in Russian orphanages. Mori tried to give his own assessment of this social phenomenon in his diary. He agreed that establishing state orphanages gave abandoned children a chance to survive. However, on the other hand, he was convinced that the existence of such a system would further corrupt society because the state was in fact providing its citizens with a legal opportunity to absolve themselves from the responsibility of child rearing.⁴⁶ In 1866, Mori was unable to determine whether state care for abandoned children had more advantages or disadvantages.⁴⁷

The Russian state system of orphanages was also mentioned in the chronicles of the Iwakura Embassy. The Iwakura Mission secretary Kume Kunitake refrained from analyzing the moral and ethical reasons for its existence and approached the issue in a pragmatic way. His conclusion after visiting an orphanage in Saint Petersburg was that the existence of children's homes was helping to solve a demographic problem in Russia.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 26-27.

⁴⁷ Mori tried to reason as a representative of the Japanese culture, where very often parents killed their children and then committed suicide if they were not able to feed the children. In Japan, it was considered more humane to kill a child rather than leave him/her alone to survive.

Giving a detailed description of its organization in his chronicles, Kume correctly notes that such public institutions not only accepted illegitimate children, but also children whose parents were under financial distress and could not afford to feed them.

In recent years, the average number of children left here [in shelters] is about 7,000 children a year. 18% of that number are killed in shelters, the other 18% die in families [that take children in and educate them] thus only 64% of those who were left in infancy at the orphanages reach their maturity age. They say that the annual expenses of the state for their life in orphanages and after [from payments made to the families that took children in for their education] are about one million rubles per year.⁴⁸

As may be seen from above, Kume approached this issue economically as a public service, without involving unnecessary emotions. It took Mori several years to catch up to the same approach on the issue. In 1874, Mori began to publish a series of articles in the journal *Meiroku zasshi* under the title “Saishōron” designed to convey his own views on matters of family life, marriage, and the status of women within families and society.⁴⁹ Some Japanese scholars and biographers who have traced Mori’s life believe that the trip to Russia and the talks about abandoned children left under the care of the state became the starting point of Mori’s thoughts on relationships in Japanese families and the upbringing of healthy, intelligent, and happy children. In “Saishōron,” Mori criticized polygamy in Japan, which had not been uncommon during the Edo

⁴⁸ Kume Kunitake, *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871-1873: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary’s Journey of Observation through the United States of America and Europe*, ed. Graham Healey and Chushichi Tsuzuki, trans. Peter Komicki, vol. 4, *Continental Europe*, 2 (Chiba, Japan: Japan Documents, 2002), 84.

⁴⁹ Mori Arinori, “Saishōron” [About Wives and Mistresses], Pts. 1-4. *Meiroku zasshi* 8 (May 31, 1874); 11 (June 28, 1874); 15 (August 7, 1874); 20 (November 29, 1874).

period. He approached the matter of individual sexual morality as a social problem, assured that voluntary renunciation of chaotic sexual encounters was an indicator of a society's attained level of civilization and development. In the same paper, Mori called for women to be introduced to compulsory education, through which they could cultivate qualities necessary to become a good wife and mother. In order to protect the rights and status of women as wives and mothers, he proposed the use of *kon'in keiyaku*, or marriage contracts. He even decided to set a personal example by signing a marriage contract with his first wife Hirose Tsune to prove the necessity of such contracts. In other words, according to Mori, only a healthy monogamous marriage could become a stable basis for the Japanese nation's reproduction. Marriage in which the husband took care of the family's financial health and the educated wife devoted most of her time as a homemaker, raising children to become future productive members of Japanese society.⁵⁰ This kind of family model started to be employed in Meiji Japan and still remains dominant in today's Japanese society.

Concluding Remarks

Russia had not been considered as a model for Japan's transformation into a modern state during the extensive reforms that occurred in the Meiji period. Yet, analysis of Mori Arinori's *Korō kikō* reveals that Russia still managed to play a role in the process of creating a new state system in Japan, even as an anti-archetype. Becoming acquainted with problems Russia encountered while attempting to follow Western Europe as an example for some reforms allowed the Japanese an opportunity to recognize and assess in advance the difficulties and pitfalls along the path

⁵⁰ Mori stressed the need for women's education, as he believed that a child's degree of development directly depends on the level of education of his/her mother.

of mimicking Western civilization. Proof of this would be an opinion paper written about reforms, which was based on the results of *Kaigai ryūgakusei seimei chōsa* [Survey of the Names of Japanese Students Overseas] released on July 3, 1870. Published ahead of the enactment of *Kaigai ryūgakusei kisoku* [Rules on Studying Overseas], by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as of February 11, 1871, the paper recommended the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Prussia as the only countries to which Japanese students should be sent to study. As for Russia, according to Meiji governmental instructions, only students who wished to “observe the process of national building” were allowed to go there for studies.⁵¹

To summarize this analysis of the only remaining written evidence allowing us to understand the views on Russia Mori held as a representative of progressive-minded Japanese intellectuals from the Bakumatsu period, the following conclusions may be derived. In 1866, Japan’s future Minister of Education and father of its educational system formed his views of the Russian Empire based on English sources. He was therefore heavily influenced by a Russophobic mood that prevailed among the United Kingdom’s public in the mid-nineteenth century as the political interests and ideologies of the two countries collided. British statements about Russia as a country lagging behind the advanced West, but having high expansionist ambitions, were considered by the Japanese as the “Master’s interpretation” of the situation, one that seemed to matter more than the actual situation itself. While there is little doubt that Mori as a young man was highly intelligent and inquisitive, some of the conclusions he drew with regard to Russia were not necessarily correct and appear to have been strongly influenced by common British notions prevalent at the time. Hence, in terms of acquiring new knowledge and

⁵¹ For more details see Watanabe Minoru, *Kindai Nihon kaigai ryūgakuseishi* [A History of Overseas Students in Modern Japan], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977), 213-220.

understanding about Russia, Mori did not benefit much from the trip to Saint Petersburg.

Still, the trip to Russia caused this young Japanese man to think about some important and urgent problems which had previously been hardly obvious to him. Over the following years, the ideas inspired from the summer of 1866 in Saint Petersburg developed into complete theories and programs. Some of them, such as the idea of replacing the Japanese language with English, were too radical and failed to garner broad support. Others related to marriage and family received understanding and support by both the government and the public of Japan. Thus, even in spite of some misguided interpretations about Russia, it is clear that the trip to Saint Petersburg greatly impressed Mori and set the foundation for policies, theories, and ideas he would later attempt to implement in the Japanese society.

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