

## **The Description of the Ainu and the Japanese by Gavriil Davydov (1807)<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract.** In 1802, upon the orders of the Russian-American Company, Ensign Davydov and Lieutenant Khvostov were sent to deliver food supplies to the Russian colonies in America. In 1804, the Company repeatedly ordered these two officers to make the voyage to America. Before their departure, they met Rezanov, who arrived to Kamchatka after his unsuccessful mission to Japan, where he was supposed to establish trade relations. Due to this failure and the attempt to save Russian colonies and expand the territory of the Russian Empire, Rezanov decided to start trading with the local inhabitants of the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin. This study will examine the information about the Japanese, their settlements in the Kuril Islands, and the local inhabitants of the Kuril Islands – the Ainu. This research is based on the unique historical document *The Journal of the Voyage of an American Company Tender Avos' in 1807, under the Command of Ensign Davydov*, which gives a detailed description of the Japanese, the Ainu, their settlements and compares them to the Russian ones.

**Keywords:** Khvostov, Davydov, Sakhalin expedition, Russo-Japanese relations, Ainu, Japanese, Kuril Islands.

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*The Journal of the Voyage of an American Company Tender Avos' in 1807, under the Command of Ensign Davydov*<sup>2</sup> contains unique information about the lifestyle of the Ainu and the Japanese, as well as their settlements in the Kuril Islands in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, to be able to fully understand the information this journal contains, the instructions from Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov (1764-1807) to Nikolai Aleksandrovich Khvosotov (1776-1809) and the ones from Khvostov to Gavriil Ivanovich Davydov (1784?-1809) should be carefully analyzed. This is necessary to understand the motives of Ensign Davydov's actions. The analysis of the archive documents revealed interesting information, according to which it became clear that, from July 1806, the moment the Expedition to Sakhalin and Kuril Islands was planned, till April 1807, when two ships *Yunona* and *Avos'* departed for their second expedition, Davydov received four instructions.

The first instruction G. I. Davydov received from lieutenant Khvostov on July 25, 1806 before their departure from the port of Novoarkhangelsk. It prescribed the inspection of the 16<sup>th</sup> Kuril island and "to be as kind as possible to the Ainu".<sup>3</sup> The instructions concerning the Japanese were very vague and it was only mentioned that if "our forces would be more than enough, [we should] perform the act you know about, according to the plan of his EXCELLENCY. I will provide you with further instructions soon".<sup>4</sup>

"On this day I received an order from his EXCELLENCY Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, that Tender *Avos'* under your command is assigned to the secret Expedition to carry out Country's matter under the authority of HIS Excellency. However, as the administration of the maritime part is entrusted to me, I will briefly explain to you my thoughts [...]. Direct your

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<sup>2</sup> Otdel Rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29.

<sup>3</sup> RGAVMF F.166 Op.1 L. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

course towards the 16<sup>th</sup> Kuril Island, then, from there, to carry out the plan of the Expedition, you should depart to the Aniwa bay of the Sakhalin Island and then from there to the port of Okhotsk [...]. Try to be as kind as possible to the Sakhalins, for which purpose I am sending you small errands as gifts [for them]. After three or four days, if we still haven't arrived but your forces are more than enough, you should perform the act you know about according to his EXCELLENCY's plan."<sup>5</sup>

Later, on August 8, 1806, Rezanov composes the secret instruction about the voyage to the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin and sends it to lieutenant Khvostov. "I will describe in detail in a separate paragraph how to treat the Japanese and the Kurils"<sup>6</sup>, notes Rezanov.

The instruction is divided into two parts: the first one, which consists of four paragraphs, raises the exploratory side of the question such as: "the review of the 18<sup>th</sup> Kuril Island Urup"<sup>7</sup>, "the 16<sup>th</sup> Kuril Island", and Sakhalin. N. P. Rezanov emphasizes that the purpose of these actions is to achieve "a profitable trade with Japan"<sup>8</sup>. It should be noted that he identifies Sakhalin as an "important subject of the plan".<sup>9</sup> He finds it so "important" that dedicates nine out of eleven guidelines of his instruction to this island!

Let us observe the part of the instruction which relates directly to the Ainu and the Japanese.

1. To enter Aniwa bay [...]
2. The Japanese who will be on board of your ships should be strictly watched, but do not upset them [...] all of them should be delivered to Novo-Arkhangelsk.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> RGAVMF. F. 212., Op. 11. D. 2944. L. 38-41. Certified copy.

<sup>7</sup> RGAVMF. F. 212., Op. 11. D. 2944. L. 38-41.

<sup>8</sup> RGAVMF. F. 212., Op. 11. D. 2944. L. 38-41. Certified copy.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

3. If your forces allow you to disembark, try to be kind to the Sakhalins, explain them that they belong to such a monarch under whose protection they can feel safe [...], exchange goods with them, to be able to learn about their trade.

4. Concerning the Sakhalins and the Japanese, wherever you meet them try to be kind to the first ones and make harm to the last ones by destroying their ships, but try to retain civilized attitude everywhere. [...]

5. Try to learn from the Japanese exactly on which Kuril Islands they have their settlements, what animals they get, what goods they exchange them for, where they trade for fur, what kind of animals and in what quantity they sell, the number of their ships in different seasons and the route of their voyages, the location of their settlements in the Kuril Islands and good bays. To make the process of obtaining the information easier I enclose the vocabulary of Japanese language and the small one of the Sakhalin language. I assign you to multiply the last one with a new number of words, properly record their pronunciation and deliver them back.<sup>10</sup>

On the same day, August 8, 1806, Davydov receives the second instruction from Lieutenant Khvostov, in which it was prescribed to review the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> Kuril Islands, “bury the bottle with the note that would say the year, the name of the ship, and the name of the captain”<sup>11</sup> and head towards the southern point of the Sakhalin. Davydov was supposed to give gifts to the Sakhalins and try to exchange goods with local inhabitants. As for the Japanese, the instruction basically said “not to get involved in any kind of action with them”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> RGAVMF F. 166 Op. 1 D. 4671 L. 18-18 ob.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

«If you do not see my ship before the mentioned date, head to the place where the Japanese trading post is located but do not interact with the Japanese before the 27<sup>th</sup> day of this month, however, if by any chance I am not able to unite with you by this date, then commensurate with the forces of your ship that is entrusted to you, and start to carry out the instruction of HIS EXCELLENCY, in case of which, for these four-days time, I am sending you some goods to give as gifts and try to do the trade exchange with the Sakhalins». <sup>13</sup>

The difference in speed of the ship *Yunona* under the command of Khvostov with Rezanov onboard and *Avos'* under the command of Davydov was so big that Rezanov who “had to be in St-Petersburg”, <sup>14</sup> was forced to agree for the ships “to part their ways”. *Yunona* and *Avos'* separated their routes near the Aleutian Islands. Davydov, following Rezanov’s instructions, which he received from Khvostov, took his course towards the Kuril Islands, while Khvostov with Rezanov headed towards Okhotsk.

However, on September 15, 1806, upon their arrival to the port of Okhotsk, Rezanov received news from St-Petersburg that made him completely change his plan of the expedition and inconsistently cancel everything that had been planned before. “The foremast fracture, the headwinds that were following us through the whole journey, and late autumn is forcing you to head to America” <sup>15</sup>, writes Rezanov. He orders Khvostov to immediately depart for America and cancels all his previous instructions, while asking him “if the time allows you to enter the Aniwa bay and give gifts to the Sakhalins”. <sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that, although Rezanov makes a drastic change in his plan, he

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> RGAVMF F. 166 Op. 1 D. 4671. L. 13.

<sup>15</sup> RGAVMF F. 212 Op. 11 ed.hr. 2944. L. 42. Certified copy.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

still mentions the inhabitants of the Sakhalin, making it clear that they were supposed to play a key role in the establishment of the necessary trade. The first time Davydov saw this instruction was only before departure for the second expedition to Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in 1807.

His next, third, instruction Ensign Davydov received from Lieutenant Khvostov on April 6, 1807, six months after both officers met in the port of Petropavlovsk, where on November 8, 1806 Khvostov arrived after his first expedition to Sakhalin. In this document, Lieutenant Khvostov describes the results of the expedition and explains the future course of action.

“It was ordered to destroy the settlements [of the Japanese] ... on Sakhalin and squeeze them out of everywhere we meet [...] Exterminate their trade posts on Sakhalin [...] if the Russians do not free the completely suppressed islanders from the Japanese yoke, the Ainu will become their victims. They were telling me this with tears in their eyes, even the Japanese who were there confirmed their words. Second campaign to Sakhalin will bring us benefit; we will get a rich reward and will free the islanders from the Japanese tyranny. It is our duty to accept the island of Sakhalin under the patronage of the Russian Monarch. [...]

We will exterminate the rest of the establishments in Aniwa and of course will capture a few ships that come to Sakhalin in the beginning of May. This way we will keep the Japanese from revenge to the islanders, assure this Power that the Russians do not want to see their colonies stretching down North and that we are always capable to harm them.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> RGAVMF F. 166 Op. 1 Delo 4671 L. 23.

Therefore, Ensign Davydov had to accomplish several tasks, among which he had to take revenge on the Japanese and protect the local inhabitants, the Ainu. It should be noted that the style of writing of the instruction dated back to 1806 is completely different from the one that was written a year later, in 1807. Before his first voyage to Sakhalin in 1806, Khvostov prescribes Davydov to avoid any kind of action against the Japanese, while in the 1807 instruction he orders to destroy trade posts and exterminate the rest of the Japanese settlements. The Japanese are called tyrants, from the yoke of which the Ainu had to be protected and set free.

The fourth instruction with the detailed description of the plan of the second expedition to Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands was received by Ensign Davydov from Lieutenant Khvostov on April 30, 1807. Here is the main part, where Khvostov orders Davydov to treat the Japanese “as enemies”,<sup>18</sup> while the local inhabitants should be recognized as “Russian nationals”.

«Head towards the Sakhalin Island to the Krilion Point, after observing it go down to the Aniwa Bay. Stay there for a day, try to be kind with local inhabitants and out of curiosity learn their way of goods exchange, for which I am sending you several cameos, sewn shirts, scissors, cloth and other trifles; also five silver medals on the Vladimir ribbon, which I am asking you to give to the elders of the sixteenth and eighteenth islands and Sakhalin, together with the medal you should give them a paper that would declare their citizenship of the Russian Empire ... with the name of the captain and the ship on it.<sup>19</sup> After one day, if am not able to unite with you at the Aniwa [Bay], but your forces will be enough and you will see that the storehouses are full of goods,

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<sup>18</sup> RGAVMF F. 166 Op. 1 Delo 4671 L. 24.

<sup>19</sup> RGAVMF F. 166 Op. 1 Delo 4671 L. 210b.

then with the help of God start everything that is prescribed in the instruction from His excellency. If the storehouses are empty, cargo is still onboard of vessels, and your forces do not allow you to start the prescribed actions, then quietly wait for me, especially if you see two or more ships. In this case do not anchor, try tacking at the entrance of the bay, if by any chance you meet the Japanese or they attack you keep human attitude while treating them as enemies”.<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted that ensign Davydov had his doubts concerning the legitimacy of these actions. This can be seen from the report that Davydov sent to the naval minister of the Russian Empire Pavel Vasilievich Chichagov (1767-1849) on April 29, 1807 – before his departure from Petropavlovsk. Davydov calls this expedition a questionable undertaking and notes that he is afraid to make the situation “worse than it is by joining this undertaking as well as refusing to act on it which would mean the demonstration of disobedience”, so he decides to “throw himself at the mercy of a chance”.<sup>21</sup> While being in deep doubt, Davydov departs for the second expedition and from April 15 starts writing his *Journal*, where he records all detailed information about the Japanese and the local inhabitants – the Ainu.

Ensign Davydov’s *Journal* covers the events that took place from the April 15 till June 1, 1807. Detailed description of the second expedition starts on April 15, 1807, with Davydov’s words saying “finally an almost uneventful winter in Kamchatka has come to an end, on the 15<sup>th</sup> the ship was ready to depart, but the ice was covering more than a half of the Aniwa Bay”,<sup>22</sup> which did not allow the ships to leave the bay and start executing the plan of the second expedition. However, the description of the voyage itself starts on May 4, 1807, when *Yunona* and *Avos*, after

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<sup>20</sup> RGAVMF F. 166 Op. 1 D. 4671. L. 24.

<sup>21</sup> RGAVMF F. 212 Op. 11 D. 2944. L. 34-35. Original.

<sup>22</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV.430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 2.

a few unsuccessful attempts, had finally succeeded in getting out of the still frozen bay.

The first meeting of Davydov and the Japanese took place two weeks later, on May 19, 1807. It is quite interesting that Davydov, who was ordered to “exterminate settlements” of the Japanese and “treat them as enemies”, notes that he was generously received by the Japanese, which threw him off his original plan and stopped him from “unfriendly” behaviour.

“Around 9 o'clock I went ashore, where I was greeted by two Japanese with their traditional manner by falling down on their knees and asking to enter their house. There they treated me with rice (sorochinskoe millet) and boiled borsch, excellent smoked fish, beans marinated together with millet, malt and salt (this dish is quite salty but the Japanese assured that it is excellent when properly cooked and served with fresh fish), after that they gave me Tabaco. Such reception (which was, of course, as anyone can guess, done mainly out of fear), if being honest, made me refuse any hateful act.”<sup>23</sup>

In spite of that, Davydov could not avoid a caustic remark regarding the attitude of the Japanese towards the Ainu. On the pages of his “Journal”, he leaves a remark saying that “this settlement was mainly established to salt fish, and all the job was done by the Kuril people, while a small number of the Japanese were supervising them”.<sup>24</sup> The very first meeting of Ensign Davydov with local inhabitants, whom he calls “Kurilians”, took place here as well.

“An unusually big number of Kurilians were shaved in a Japanese manner and, when I told them that this

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<sup>23</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 5 ob.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

custom was not nice, the Kurilians told me that “it was very bad indeed, but the Japanese are forcing them to do it”. I told them that the Iturup Island belongs not to Japan but only to the local inhabitants and that they should expel the Japanese from here. Even if the Russians live here, they will not demand anything from you as the Japanese do nowadays. As a proof, I gave them gifts.”<sup>25</sup>

Thus, Davydov follows Rezanov’s instruction from August 8, 1806, in one of the paragraphs of which it was instructed to assure the Ainu “that they belong to such a Monarch under whose protection they should always be safe”.

It should be noted that the main distinguishing feature of *Ensign Davydov’s Journal* is that it contains a large number of descriptions of everyday life, characteristic features and customs of both the Japanese and the Ainu. This kind of information is practically never mentioned on the pages of the studies researching the events of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the emergence of the Russian-Japanese relations took place, immediately followed by first conflicts between the two countries, which were fighting for their own hegemony in Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. While describing the Japanese settlement, Davydov notes that he was amazed by the absolute cleanliness of dwellings, warehouses for storing timber and food supplies, as well as the whole territory of the settlement.

“This settlement was mainly established to salt the fish, all the job was carried out by the Kuril people, while a small number of the Japanese were supervising them. Two storehouses were made of grass and poles, they were stuffed with salted and dried fish and fish oil in barrels and sealed tubs; there were two more but they were closed and I didn’t want to check what was inside.

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<sup>25</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 5 ob.

There were around 15 Kuril Yurts near the settlement, but there were almost no people, which made me think that everybody was working somewhere at another place. There was quite a big river with a fine bridge over it. There were lots of harvested wood, well-cleaned wooden boards, which I think was not made only by the Japanese living here. – Their house is quite simple but the cleanliness is extraordinary, instead of glass there was paper that looked like it was soaked with oil, floor was covered with quite clean sacking mats, and there was a kitchen in the middle.”<sup>26</sup>

Despite the comments that Davydov made about the Kurils and the Japanese, saying that only the former were working while the latter were simply watching and supervising them, the overall tone of the description remains positive, even somewhat laudatory. On the May 24, 1807 Davydov reached the next settlement that was located at Shana Bay on Iturup Island. This one impressed him with its cleanliness and the way it was suited for comfortable living even more than the previous one.

“Japanese dwellings were located not in separate houses but [in buildings that] looked more like outbuildings, which were separated from each other by sliding boards that were so firmly set that, at first sight, it seemed that you reached the last wall, but if you move it aside you could see a space divided into several quite clean rooms with grass mats on the floor. Each outbuilding had its own kitchen, where the water was delivered through pipes, the access to water one could get simply by turning the taps that were made in the walls. Basically, everything possible was made for

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<sup>26</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 5 ob.-6.

an easy living, and was extremely clean. A part of the building was surrounded by a high earthen wall in a shape of the fortress, on each side of the river, people walked in and out of the gates dug up to half of its height from the bottom. The gates were locked with thick wooden doors with specially dug up side gate next to them.<sup>27</sup>

The mountain above the houses was so steep that it was impossible to climb, so the Japanese dug wide zigzag roads through it and made it easy to climb; you could see hard work and fondness for cleanliness that were so typical for the Japanese. All walkways were lined and made of sand or small stones. There were two gardens. The earthen berm was evenly covered with sod, riverbank was decorated and together with the arched bridge opened a very picturesque view.”<sup>28</sup>

Ensign Davydov is comparing Russian settlements, that were far from being clean and tidy, with Japanese ones and notes that the Japanese “choose the best possible location, build proper dwellings, and they are living an abundant lifestyle, if not one better than back home. – You can hardly compare our settlements in America with theirs.”<sup>29</sup> He also correctly points out that the Japanese settlements resembled more “a prosperous colony than a poor fishing establishment”.<sup>30</sup>

It should be noted that this was the settlement where an armed conflict took place between the Japanese and the Russians and this note was made after the former were forced to retreat. Describing the Japanese settlement, Davydov could not help but comment on the defensive structures. “These fortresses could protect them only from the Kurils, as

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<sup>27</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 14.

<sup>28</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 14 ob.

<sup>29</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 23 ob.

<sup>30</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 11.

a single gun set up on top of a mountain above the houses could easily chase all people out of it,” writes Davydov and immediately notes that “the Japanese forgot that disposition is not enough, you should be able to defend”.<sup>31</sup> Davydov attributes this peculiarity of the Japanese military state to the fact that Japan was not involved in war for many years, and, as a result, the entire population of this empire have not participated in any battle and have never heard a single gunshot.

«What kind of defence tactics can you expect from the people who have almost never heard a gunshot. It is a well-known fact that nobody, but soldiers can have guns in Japan, even though they are mostly used as a decoration, as almost none of them can actually use it. At least that is what we have been told by the Japanese that were onboard of our ships. They were trembling every time they heard a cannon shot that we sometimes used for signals, however, after a while they seemed not to be bothered by it at all». <sup>32</sup>

Arms that are described by Davydov – armour, spears, cannons – did not find positive feedback on the pages of the *Journal*. Guns deserved some honourable words, but, as the author of the *Journal* notices, the Japanese did not know how to use them. According to Davydov, some of the weapons were in such a poor state that could only be used only for torture.

Armours and lobster-tailed pot helmets of the Japanese were made of steel, were quite thin, varnished and very clean; they made spears and bayonet slip away, but bullet can go through them from quite a far away distance. Rifles with fuses are nicely and beautifully made, reach far away aims, but the Japanese cannot use

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<sup>31</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19 ob.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

them. It is said that, in Japan, there are only cannons that were left behind by the Portuguese, but, as we found two of them on the Iturup, they cannot be in the middle of the Empire. Balls for large cannons are made of lead, coated with clay and covered with paper, for the small ones, as I mentioned before, balls are made of lead with clay inside of them. The large cannon looked like a Licorne. – Japanese spears are set on long flexible poles, covered with black varnish, with gold plated handles. – Moreover, there are a few types of weapons that are not known to the Europeans and that could only be used for torturing people.<sup>33</sup>

The description of imperfect and outdated military weapons that the Japanese used often goes hand in hand with the description of their character in his journal. He mentions the courage “of this terrible, according to some description, People”<sup>34</sup> and their indifference to their own lives, which, in his opinion, “constitutes the main feature of their character”.<sup>35</sup> It is interesting how Davydov describes the Japanese coastguard on the pages of his *Journal*.

The sea bank near the settlement and its side facing it were also covered with separate and sewed together white and blue pieces of clothes that were hanging on the rope. We found two unspecified types of weapon behind them which were used to fire at my ship... there was an unfinished barrel of Saga (Japanese drink) next to these weapons, which they were surely enough sipping on to get some courage.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 13 ob.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 11.

We can find numerous remarks about Japanese being very fond of sake in this *Journal*. Thus, describing the settlement in Shana, Davydov writes that they found a separate building which was fully used to produce this beverage. He also emphasizes that the main activity of the Japanese was supervising the Ainu, smoking tobacco, and drinking sake. “A huge warehouse was full of devices to produce sake, while a huge volume of this sake shows either a big number of inhabitants, or the depravity of the Japanese”<sup>37</sup>, concludes Davydov.

As a result of the analysis of the *Journal*, one very interesting and quite obvious fact became clear: the Japanese did not build any defensive structures because they did not have the need to protect their settlements – at least that is how it used to be before the arrival of Khvostov on *Yunona* and Davydov on *Avos*. That is the reason, as Davydov also noted, why all the weapons that he could find with Khvostov could only be used to scare the Ainu and keep them under their control. The coastal guard was also not capable of defending the territory from the enemy. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Japanese enjoyed their peaceful existence on the Kuril Islands, smoking tobacco, and drinking sake. Their only duty was to supervise the local inhabitants and send goods back to Japan. It should be noted that, despite Davydov’s criticism of the Japanese military organization and allegations of their cruel treatment of the Ainu, one can find unexpectedly flattering compliments on Japanese cuisine.

Ensign Davydov notes that “what they eat is completely different from the European [cuisine]”<sup>38</sup> and stresses that “the wheat that is cooked by the Japanese has a better look and taste, and can be served even to Europeans”<sup>39</sup>.

“As fish is the main reason for the creation and continuous growth of the Japanese settlements in the North, I should tell you how it is cooked. They use

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<sup>37</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 13 ob.

<sup>38</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

a lot of salt when they salt it, and not in barrels but in warehouses laying them in rows, after which they load it in the same order in ships. This fish is so salty that we could eat it only after soaking it in fresh water for several days, which made it not very convenient to eat onboard the ships. However, the Japanese like it salty, not only the fish, but most part of their food supplies are cooked with a huge amount of salt. Plums and other fruits, as well as radish and other food are extremely salted; sometimes it is pickled with salt and malt. All in all, their cuisine is absolutely different compared to the European one. On the other side, they eat wheat boiled in fresh water in a special way; our people were not able to reach the same level of such cooking. Wheat which is cooked by the Japanese has the best look and taste; even the Europeans can eat it.

The Japanese salt herrings in barrels only to eat them right there on the spot and do not transport it to Nippon; although herrings that are delivered there are already slightly salted, they are smoked afterwards and tied-up in bundles. Moreover, they dry big fish (like salmon), put them into the sacks which are left after the wheat and send it to Nippon, not for food but for fertilization of land to grow Sorochinskoe wheat. – There are plenty of fish supplies at Matsumae, locals send it to Nippon in exchange for necessary goods.”<sup>40</sup>.

Besides descriptions of the Japanese, one can find very interesting notes about everyday life and customs of the Ainu on the pages of Davydov’s *Journal*. For example, Davydov writes: “The Japanese call local inhabitants of Matsumae, Sakhalin, and Sothern Kuril – the Ainu, the same way they name themselves. I think that this word belongs to the

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<sup>40</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 18-19.

original language of this people, which is almost similar everywhere”.<sup>41</sup> What draws attention is the confidence of Davydov who writes that the Ainu language and its dialects are very similar. As a result of the analysis of the archival documents, it was possible to identify one very interesting and, up to now, little known fact: Davydov composed the Ainu language dictionary, where he indicated different dialects, and gave translation of these words into German and Russian languages. In this way, Davydov fulfilled yet another of Rezanov’s instruction from August 8, 1806, which prescribed to continue working on the “Sakhalin” language dictionary and “multiply it with a new number of words, properly recording their pronunciation”.<sup>42</sup>

It is very likely that Davydov was using exactly this dictionary to obtain necessary information about the Ainus’ lifestyle, the routes of their movement from one island to another and about their trade partners. “Ainu move from one island to another for trade, they travel from Matsumae to Urup to buy sea otters and eagle feathers. Beavers they sell to the Japanese, who send them to Nangasaki for trade exchange with the Chinese,”<sup>43</sup> notes Davydov. It is interesting how he is trying to get information about the locals’ lifestyle and origins, even about the way the Ainu hunt, for which they mainly used arrows.

“The Ainu use eagle feathers for arrows. On most of the Matsumae island (except Atkis) and in Aniwa Bay, there are not so many birds of such kind, they mainly can be found on nearby Kuril Islands, especially Kunashir Island. There are two kinds of eagles, although they look alike. One kind has 12 feathers in its tail, and the arrow that is made with this kind of

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<sup>41</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19-19 ob.

<sup>42</sup> RGAVMF. F. 212., Op. 11. D. 2944. L. 38-41. Certified copy.

<sup>43</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19-19 ob.

feathers flies straight even against the wind; the other kind has 14 feathers in its tail and is considered to be the worst [quality].”<sup>44</sup>

On the pages of his *Journal*, Davydov makes a note saying that the Ainu were mainly used by the Japanese to do fishing, and that they “find it more profitable to use locals for fishing and not for hunting purposes”.<sup>45</sup>

According to Davydov, local inhabitants, as well as the Japanese, were very fond of alcoholic drinks. “The Ainu love alcohol drinks, there were around 300 barrels [with alcohol] only in Aniwa Bay; each barrel contains from 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> up to 5 buckets; moreover, the Japanese produce it in big volumes right there on the spot,” notes Davydov. He also leaves a critical comment saying that the Japanese “consider themselves absolute sovereigns, for whom even the slightest work is shameful”, ruthlessly exploit poor Ainu, “smoke tobacco and drink Saga”.<sup>46</sup>

“Everywhere they established settlements for fishing, the Japanese use the Ainu for all kinds of work, keep them as slaves in the state of extreme fear; force them even to accept their customs, shave their heads in a Japanese manner, and so on. All the above being said, one can conclude that the Ainu can not be fond of the Japanese; but [they] can not dare to do anything but obey. The Japanese gather young Ainu from all of the villages to their settlements to make them do all kind of work and do fishing, for which, however, the Japanese pay them with goods according to the previously decided rate”.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19-19 ob.

<sup>45</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19 ob.

<sup>46</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 20 ob.

<sup>47</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q.IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 20.

Ensign Davydov strictly follows Rezanov's instructions according to which it was necessary to find out the information about "the kinds of animal fur they get, what they exchange them for, how they sell fur, in what quantity, and what kind of fur can be sold the most".<sup>48</sup>

«The bear fur is very good quality, the same is with otters; as for the sable furs I did not see any good ones. The Japanese say that the ones that are from the middle part of Sakhalin are the same quality as the ones from Kamchatka; the ones that I saw on Iturup were not worth buying [...].

The Ainu move from one island to another for trade, they travel from Matsumae to Urup to buy sea otters and eagle feathers. They sell beavers to the Japanese, who send them to Nangasaki for trade exchange with the Chinese. They do not use any kind of fur in Japan at all [...]. A small amount of sable, otter, and bear furs that the Japanese collect here is sent to Nangasaki».<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, Davydov could get precious information concerning the number of inhabitants and settlements on the Kuril Islands. For instance, he writes that "there is a small number of inhabitants on the northern Kuril Islands, while the number is larger on the southern islands; however, this number is still low compared to the vast territory they occupy."<sup>50</sup>

Ensign Davydov is not only delivering necessary information that he was ordered to collect, but he analyses it and makes conclusions. For example, he notes that "for trusted trade relations with Japan, we need a harbor that would be located in that area",<sup>51</sup> however, he could not help but admit the fact that he could not find a suitable one for

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<sup>48</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 19 ob.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 22 ob.

<sup>51</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L. 18.

these purposes. Davydov assumes that there should have been a certain necessity and obvious reason for “the Japanese to occupy this land”. Moreover, he makes a plan “to oppress this proud Empire”,<sup>52</sup> stressing the fact that “fisheries on these islands are very important to this Empire, and not having them would be strongly felt”.<sup>53</sup> These words are completely consistent with Rezanov’s instruction, according to which “the harm should be made not to the people but to the government”, while the expedition was supposed to open “new possibilities for our motherland”. That is the postulate that ensign Davydov follows through all his journey, describing everyday life, customs, settlements, and ways of trade of the Japanese and the Ainu on the pages of his journal.

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<sup>52</sup> Otdel rukopisei RNB. Q. IV. 430. Inv. 6017. № 29. L.16.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

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