Chapter 5
Russia's Eastbound Advance
—Russian Method of Piling up Fait Accompli through Violence and Smooth Talk—

The Farther Away the Border, The Better

It was in 1853, the same year when Commodore Perry's fleet reached Uraga, that Russian admiral Yevfimy Putyatin arrived in Nagasaki. And it was in 1858 and 1860 that Russia annexed the Amur River basin from which it had once withdrawn following the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689.

Seen from a long-term historical perspective, these moves by Russia were part of the Western powers' eastbound advancement since the Age of Discovery that had finally reached the eastern edge of the Eurasian continent in the mid-nineteenth century. And Russia, which had advanced eastward on the Eurasian continent, encountered the United States, which had reached the Pacific coast, the western end of the New World, in Japan located in the farthest east of Asia.

The Russian eastbound advance, however, had a different historical background from advances by other European powers. Its original objective was liberation from the yoke of Tartar, which Russia had accomplished in 1552 when it conquered the Khanate of Kazan and reached the shore of the Volga River. Ferdinand Magellan had already landed on the Philippine archipelago thirty years earlier (1521), while Portuguese matchlock guns had reached Japan's Tanegashima island (種子島) ten years earlier (1543). In other words, Russia was by far a latecomer to the region.

For the next half-century, Russians continued to fight Tatars to further the eastbound movement. They conquered western Siberia, reaching the Yenisei river in 1618. After the Tatars ceased to resist, the Russians sped up their eastward advancement, as if marching in a no man's land, seeking after the products of the Siberian woods, particularly furs that fetched a high price. Russian exploration parties reached Yakutsk in 1632, and in 1649 they reached Anadyr, the northeastern tip of Siberia, across the Bering Sea from the American continent. Around the time Japan closed its doors to the outside world in 1639, there already had been remarkable geopolitical

changes in the outside world.

Russia's expansion was originally a defensive move to ensure its survival. In a situation in which the Russians were dwelling in a vast steppe region with no natural obstacles with constant threat from the pillaging Tatars,it was vital for the Russians to establish a border as far away as possible. Furthermore, the farther away the border, the better it was for them to defend their newly acquired territory. Thus the dynamics to eternally expand its territory had set in for Russia for the sake of self-defense.

Czar Nikolai I once declared, "In the land where the Russian flag is once raised, it should never come down." In 1858, seven years before the north bank of the Amur River became Russian territory, Russian officer Newelskoi went up the river and landed on its north bank, raising the Russian flag and named the river Nikolayevsk, after the czar. Because this act was a violation of the Treaty of Nerchinsk, the Russian government was compelled to court-martial Newelskoi in order to prevent a confrontation with Qing— a situation in which Russia could ill afford given the mounting tension in its European front. The czar made the above declaration when he intervened in the court-martial to grant amnesty to Newelskoi. The czar's declaration is a well-known statement that, at that time, caused quite a stir in Europe.

While this statement clearly reflected the imperialistic climate of the time in Europe, at its background was Russia's traditional zeal to expand its territory as much as possible whenever it could.

Two Sides of Russian Statements

One of the problems I encountered in analyzing Russia's policies for this chapter was the frequent discrepancy between its official statements and its actual conduct. Reading the Russian government's statements in chronological order, one gets the impression that Russia never had any intention of invading neighboring territories. On many occasions, however, Russia ended up expanding its territory. Certainly, there was a rivalry between the moderates and the hardliners within the Russian government, and a few of the government's decisions could actually be explained as the result of the influence of the hardliners, due to situational developments or

sheer coincidence. Looking at the entire flow of events, however, it is undeniable that Russia continuously invaded foreign territories, although it had also employed peaceful expansion where possible.

As one possible approach to objectively reviewing the discrepancy between Russia's words and its actions, let me quote the portion on Russia's scheme in Central Asia from Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy*:

> The same pattern was repeated again and again. Each year, Russian troops would penetrate deeper into the heart of Central Asia. Great Britain would ask for an explanation and receive all kinds of assurances that the Tsar did not intend to annex one square meter of land. At first, such soothing words were able to put matters to rest. But, inevitably, another Russian advance would reopen the issue. For instance, after the Russian army occupied Samarkand (in present-day Uzbekistan) in May 1868, Gorchakov told the British Ambassador, Sir Andrew Buchanan, "that the Russian Government not only did not wish, but that they deeply regretted, the occupation of that city, and he was assured that it would not be permanently retained." Samarkand, of course, remained under Russian sovereignty until the collapse of the Soviet Union more than a century later.
>
> In 1872, the same charade was repeated a few hundred miles to the southeast with respect to the principality of Khiva on the border of present-day Afghanistan. Count Shuvalov, the Tsar's aide-de-camp, was sent to London to reassure the British that Russia had no intention of annexing additional territory in Central Asia:
>
>> Not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it, and directions given that conditions imposed should be such as could not in any way lead to a prolonged occupation of Khiva.
>
> These assurances had hardly been uttered when word arrived that Russian General Kaufmann had crushed Khiva and imposed a treaty, which was the dramatic opposite of Shuvalov's assertions.

> In 1875, these methods were applied to Kokand, another principality on the border of Afghanistan. On this occasion, Chancellor Gorchakov felt some need to justify the gap between Russia's assurances and its actions. Ingeniously, he devised an unprecedented distinction between unilateral assurances (which, according to his definition, had no binding force) and formal, bilateral engagements. "The Cabinet in London," he wrote in a note, "appears to derive, from the fact of our having on several occasions spontaneously and amicably communicated to them our views with respect to Central Asia, and particularly our firm resolve not to pursue a policy of conquest or annexation, a conviction that we have contracted definite engagements toward them in regard to this matter." In other words, Russia would insist on a free hand in Central Asia, would set its own limits, and not be bound even by its own assurances.[1]

This is indeed an amazing note. While admitting that he had spontaneously and amicably communicated to the British government on Russia's firm resolve not to pursue a policy of conquest or annexation with respect to Central Asia on several occasions, Gorchakov claimed that the British government appeared to believe in what he had told them even though no commitment had been made in the official document. If this sort of sophistry should be accepted, there would be no more trust in words that are so fundamental to human society.

With respect to its commitment to withdraw its troops from Manchuria in 1902, Russia dared to continue the occupation while violating the formal treaty with Qing. In this case, it did not seem to matter for Russians whether the pledge had been made by a verbal commitment or a formal treaty.

Now that we have a clearer picture of Russian's behavioral pattern, all we need to do to review Russia's policies and activities in the Far East is to accurately trace what actually happened. Russia might have acted upon unintended consequences of rivalry with neighboring countries or of political domination by the hawks over the doves within Russia. As far as the analysis of Russia's Far Eastern policies in those days is concerned, I daresay textual verification of these "historical facts" would be just a waste of time.

---

[1] Henry A. Kissinger, *Diplomacy.* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), pp. 151-152.

Russia's Approach to Japan's Northern Frontier

As mentioned, Russia's explorers had already reached the deep eastern portion of Siberia by the mid-seventeenth century. It took them almost the entire eighteenth century to further advance and conquer the Kamchatka Peninsula. Natives on the peninsula were fierce and cunning, quickly mastering fire arms to stubbornly resist the invaders. This was why it took Russia a half-century just to set their hand to the management of the Kamchatka Peninsula, even though its whereabouts had long been known. It was Atlak, the cavalier leader of the Cossacks, who relentlessly pillaged the local people and accomplished the task of conquering the peninsula. Atlak succeeded in invading deep into the peninsula in 1689. Natives continued their resistance, however, oftentimes sinking the entire peninsula into a state of anarchy. It thus took another one hundred years before Russian rule was firmly established there.

The first half of those one hundred years coincided with the reign of Peter the Great (1689–1725). Management of the North Pacific was the grand enterprise that Peter I the Great had envisioned late in his life after accomplishing the unification of Russia. Although the czar himself passed away soon after he signed the imperial order for exploration of the North Pacific, his carefully planned enterprise was passed on to his successors after his death. It was through this endeavor that Vitus Bering discovered the Bering Sea and the American continent and that Martin Spanberg was ordered to explore the Japanese archipelago. Peter I the Great was also interested in the Kuril Islands (千島列島), to which an exploration party was dispatched.

Departing Kamchatka in 1793, Spanberg sailed southeastward toward Japan and cast anchor off the Oshika Peninsula (牡鹿半島) in northeast Japan and in the Bōsō Peninsula (房総半島) near Edo. His travel documents match the record on the Japanese side: Spanberg never took provocative actions and presented vodka in exchange for drinking water and perishables wherever he visited. Needless to say, the purpose of his visit was to gather information and, ultimately, contribute to the expansion of Russian territory. In his trip report, he stated that Russia could annex the northern part of the

Kuril Islands as its territory if the Russian fleet could act in concentration without being dispersed.

Whenever Russia decided to expand its territory, it made thorough preparations. These preparations began with an exhaustive study of the situation of the target land. For this purpose Russia trained explorers to be proficient in the language of the target land. The Japanese language school that Peter I the Great founded in 1705 was, undoubtedly, the first of Japan studies in the world.

This school searched for Japanese sailors who were cast ashore on the Kamchatka Peninsula and compelled them to become Japanese instructors. Its first instructor was Denbei (cast ashore in 1696) from Osaka, succeeded by Sanima (cast ashore in 1710), and Gonza and Sōza (cast ashore in 1729).

By the time Perry and Putyatin arrived in Japan in succession, therefore, Russia had far exceeded any other country in terms of knowledge about Japan. This tradition still lingers in the excellence of the Japanese studies in today's Saint Petersburg.

Subsequently, throughout the eighteenth century, Russia continued to explore the Kuril Islands. Some exploration parties occasionally spent winters on Urup Island, but they failed to settle on the island because they were rejected by hostile natives.

The Japanese side, for its part, was concerned about frequent appearances of Russians in the northern frontier even though it had absolutely no idea of the grand scheme of Peter I the Great. In 1784, Kudō Heisuke, a physician affiliated with the Sendai-*han*, compiled a two-volume *Akaezo Fūsetsu-ko*, an account of Russians' advance to Japan's northern frontier supplemented with what he had learned from those who had studied Western sciences. Kudō submitted his work to a cabinet member of the shogunate that same year.

In 1785, the Tokugawa government dispatched an expedition party to explore the northern frontier (Ezochi or 蝦夷地), including the Kuril and Sakhalin islands. Although a variety of new discoveries were made on these islands by this expedition, the shogunate's scheme to put Ezochi under its control was derailed with the fall of Tanuma Okitsugu (田沼意次), *rōjū* (senior counselor) of the Tokugawa government.

The principle reason behind the shogunate's decision to give up on placing

Ezochi under its management was the poor prospects for valuable local products or any benefit from trade. Russia, in contrast, regarded the furs from sea animals in the north Pacific as a vital source of income from their furs and further advanced its control of the Aleutian Islands. In 1799, Russia founded the Russian American Company, a state-sponsored trading company modeled after Britain's East India Company, and granted full authority to establish colonies on the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Alaskan seashore across the Bering Sea. The company also received partial military and judiciary authority.

Because the ultimate concern for the Russian American Company was to secure the sea route to Qing, which was a major market for furs, and to obtain a supply source for the resource-scant north Pacific region, it was imperative for the company to approach Japan.

Drastic Change from Amity to Armed Assault

In 1803, Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, advisor to the czar and the de facto owner of the Russian American Company, was appointed by Czar Alexander I as visiting ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Japan. Rezanov headed for Japan armed with the czar's personal letter and bountiful offerings half a century ahead of Commodore Perry's arrival in Uraga. Even though Rezanov was only on an unofficial mission of the Russian American Company, this expensive trip was fully funded by the imperial coffers, and Rezanov's ships were allowed to hoist the flag of the Russian navy. The czar himself visited Rezanov's fleet at the port, which stirred people's interest in joining the mission so much that officials were compelled to decline their offers. Volunteers included a number of scholars and physicians, including German naturalists Wilhelm Gottlief Tilesius von Tilenau and Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff, as well as Johann Caspar Horner, a Swiss physicist and astronomer.

This was an indication of the zeal and eagerness to explore the unknown since the Age of Discovery.

When the mission arrived in Nagasaki in southern Japan in 1804, Rezanov reported to the magistrate of Nagasaki that Russians had escorted Japanese seamen who had been shipwrecked and that they wished to establish

friendly relations with Japan. But this mission proved to be futile. Members of the mission were prohibited from landing. After being confined to uncomfortable days on board a ship for six long months, mission members were told that Japan would, after all, uphold its policy of seclusion and they were ordered to return to Russia. Thus the mission left Japan empty-handed.

While, admittedly, there was nothing else Japan could do at that time, objectively speaking, it was a regrettable outcome for Rezanov. Shiba Kōkan (司馬江漢), master of Western learning and Western painting of the time, denounced the shogunate's handling of the mission as "rude and arrogant" and lamented, saying:

> Rezanov was an envoy of the king of Russia. Is the king of Russia any different from the king of our country? Courtesy is the first lesson to be learned in human society. Failing to show courtesy to Rezanov, he and his fellow Russians must now regard us as vulgar as a beast. How deplorable it is.

Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that Rezanov must have completely lost face to the czar.

When Rezanov returned to Kamchatka in 1805, he proposed to the czar that, this time, Russia coerce Japan into opening trade with Russia by intimidating it with force. Rezanov instructed his subordinates to prepare for such action even though he knew the czar would never give his permission. While documents do not reveal why Rezanov had to be so pessimistic about the czar's response to his request, it was only natural that the czar could not pay any attention to the Far East because Russia was in the midst of a war with Napoleon's France on the eve of the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805.

Lieutenant N. A. Khvostov, who had been ordered to attack Japan by Rezanov, went ahead with the assault on Japan while Rezanov himself remained undecided. In September 1806, Khvostov's party landed on Sakhalin Island from Aniva Bay and raided the outpost of the Matsumae-*han*. The party abducted keepers, who were watching the facility during the fishing off-season, looted food and furniture, and burned down all the buildings after announcing that Sakhalin Island was a territory of the Russian czar. Then in 1807, Khvostov landed on Iturup Island and there

repeated the assault as he had done the previous year. In subsequent years, Khvostov raided Sakhalin Island again and assaulted Japanese vessels off Hokkaido Island one after another, looting their cargoes.

Despite these attacks, the Tokugawa shogunate's policy of seclusion was upheld until Commodore Perry's gunboat diplomacy. Perry led his fleet deep into the Bay of Edo instead of to the northern frontier as Russia had done. It was, therefore, the Anglo-American world that seized the initiative in opening Japan's door to the outside world.

Russia's Eastbound Advance in Full Scale

One noteworthy event that took place during this Russian offensive was the demarcation of the Russian-Japanese border. Since the series of raids by Khvostov, Russo-Japanese relations had deteriorated. Japan became wary of Russia's conduct. Thus, when the vessel commanded by Russian Navy Commander Vasily Golovnin visited Kunashir Island in 1811, he was taken prisoner by the Japanese. During his interrogation, Golovnin insisted that the Russian government had had nothing to do with Khvostov's conduct. This made the Japanese side decide to condition Golovnin's release on an official announcement by the Russian government about Khvostov's rash acts. In response, the Russian government sent Petr Ivanovich Rikord, Governor of Kamchatka, to Hakodate to hand deliver the official document proclaiming that Khvostov had not acted on the Russian government's order and that Golovnin should be sent back to Russia.

Because of these incidents, cabinet members of the shogunate recognized the need to establish the border with Russia. The two governments agreed that the land south of Eterup Island was Japanese territory, the land north of Shimoshiri was Russian territory, and the zone at Urap and the surrounding islands would be considered neutral territory. There was no reference to Sakhalin Island. In his masterpiece *Kindai Nippon Gaikoku Kankeishi* (History of Modern Japan's Foreign Relations), the Taishō-Shōwa historian Tabohashi Kiyoshi (田歩橋潔) attributes the lack of reference to Sakhalin to the Japanese assumption in those days that the island was naturally a Japanese territory because a small Japanese colony had been established, while no Russian colony had ever existed there. Already well

aware of the importance of Sakhalin Island, the Russians decided to remain silent and took advantage of this oversight. Bringing up the topic of Sakhalin Island probably simply did not occur to the Japanese side.

It was the Japanese explorer Mamiya Rinzō（間宮林蔵）who had discovered that Sakhalin was an island unconnected to the Asian continent. Thus, it was indisputable even in those days that Sakhalin was a Japanese territory on all accounts, including its discovery, exploration, and settlement. Nevertheless, the fact that there was no reference to this island in the bilateral agreement left room for Russia to take advantage in later days. For the subsequent half-century until the Meiji Restoration, Russia launched a full-scale attempt to advance to the Far East via the Amur River.

Since the Treaty of Nerchinsk, the territories north of the Amur River and east of the mouth of the Argun River had belonged to Qing. Because the great river of Amur, which runs through eastern Siberia from west to east, was the perfect route for Russia to reach the Pacific, its basin was an object of avid desire for Russia. Under the administration of Governor General Nikolai Muravyov-Amursky of Irkutsk and Yeniseysk, Lieutenant Colonel Gennadi Iwanowitch Newelskoi half arbitrarily explored the Pacific coast of eastern Siberia and founded Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, the first Russian settlement in the region, in 1874. Realizing the strategic importance of Sakhalin Island at the mouth of the Amur River during this expedition, Newelskoi proposed to the czar that Russia should occupy the island. This proposal received imperial sanction.

When the Crimean War erupted in 1852, Muravyov-Amursky openly sent troops and immigrants to the northern bank of the Amur River, making the area a de facto Russian territory. Muravyov-Amursky claimed that the action was necessary to defend the Far East from British and French attack. Although Russia subsequently negotiated with Qing on cession of this area to Russia "in order to defend the mouth of the Amur River from the invasion by third countries," Qing did not concur. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the Nian Rebellion and the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858, however, Russia expanded its occupied territory in one stretch all the way to Primorsky Krai.

In the course of his forays, Muravyov-Amursky discovered what came to be called the Peter the Great Gulf. There he constructed a town by the name of Vladivostok, which means to "possess the East." One reason for taking

such a long time to receive imperial sanction for Muravyov-Amursky's scheme was Russian prime minister cum foreign minister Karl Robert von Nesselrode's emphasis on the control of the Near East, including the Dardanelles, as the central policy for Russia. Nesselrode's ambition was crippled, however, by the eruption of the Crimean War (1853–56). After constructing Vladivostok, Muravyov-Amursky proudly gave names to points inside the Peter the Great Gulf such as Bosporus in the East and Golden Horn in the East. This must have been the expression of his pride and fervor at having realized the Russian dream of advancing to the open sea in the east that had failed in the west.

Thus, around the time of the Meiji Restoration, Russia had already been well prepared to make further advance to the Far East.

Commodore Perry's Fleet and Russian Vessels

The U.S. government's plan to dispatch Commodore Perry's fleet to Uraga in 1853 had been openly announced one year earlier. Although Rezanov's attempt to establish trade relations with Japan half a century earlier was a complete failure, the Russian government hoped that it could be successful this time, working with the United States. Thus, the Russian government immediately appointed Count Yevfimy Putyatin, vice admiral and chamberlain to Czar Nikolai I, to commanding admiral of the East Asian fleet cum visiting ambassador to Japan, hoping he would be a good match for Perry.

Believing that a Russian-American joint expedition could double the pressure on Japan, Russia proposed a concerted operation with the American fleets. The United States rejected the Russian proposal out of allegiance to its traditional policy that it could not take an offensive act vis-à-vis a third country in cooperation with European powers. Instead, the United States simply instructed Commodore Perry to maintain friendly relations with the Russian fleet.

In terms of knowledge about Japan, Russia was far more advanced than the United States. In contrast to Perry, who, out of his militaristic temperament, refused the participation in the expedition of civilian experts because he thought they might weaken onboard discipline, Putyatin welcomed the

participation of Russian scholars on Oriental studies. These Russian scholars were among the best scholars on Oriental studies in the world at that time. The expedition even included the then minor finance ministry official Ivan Goncharov, who was a writer well-known for numerous works, including the widely successful novel *Oblomov*. He had been recommended by the education ministry.

The Russian fleet that arrived in Japan a month later than the American fleet dropped its anchors in Nagasaki instead of Edo Bay in order to emphasize its intention to comply with Japanese law. In any event, Russia was not yet a powerful naval power at that time and could not dispatch warships that were comparable to the American fleet, making it impossible for Russia to conduct gunboat diplomacy even if it had wished to do so.

Every ship in the Russian fleet hung a white flag from its mast with the words "*Oroshia no Fune*" (a Russian ship) written in big letters in Japanese. After the fleet arrived in Nagasaki port, it deliberately took an attitude **in** contrast to that of Perry who tried to intimidate the Japanese. The magistrate of Nagasaki had to admit that, "[Russians remain] extremely calm and modest on board, . . . making no action against our law."

Based on the record of his subordinates' conversations with the Russian visitors, the magistrate compiled a proposal on how to deal with Russia, which reads:

> Recently, the American fleet has made an uninvited call on Uraga and demonstrated its willingness to resort to war, if necessary. Contingent upon our response to its demands, the American fleet seems ready to invade our country. This may be a sign that the United State has conspired to colonize Japan. It appears that the mission of the current fleet from Russia is to shield Japan from the American troops if they started to attack Japan, purely for the benefit of Japan, and to conclude an eternal relationship of trust with Japan. If we give Russians the wrong response, however, they could become a formidable foe. Rich in gold, silver, and copper, the only thing Russia wants from us is grain. As long as we allow Russians to trade with us and sell them grain only in years of good harvest, we can maintain peaceful relations with this country for eternity.

While there is no knowing how much of the above observation was the result of Russian propaganda, the naiveté of the Nagasaki magistrate is simply appalling.

When Russia occupied the north bank of the Amur River, it did so under the pretext of defending against the invasions by third countries (i.e., Britain and France). When it sought for the concession of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria in later years, Russia also used the pretext of defense against Japan's invasion. This was tantamount to saying, "I will grab this because someone else would grab it otherwise." At the time of Putyatin's mission, too, Russians gave the reason for its presence as defending Japan from a U.S. invasion. But it should be recalled that Russia had proposed a joint operation with the United States for this expedition, which the latter had turned down. Furthermore, to begin with, Russia's naval power at that time was by far no match for the U.S. navy.

Firm Intention to Occupy Sakhalin Island

It is very difficult to find a rational connection between Russia's ad hoc rhetoric and behavior and its true intention, as I mentioned earlier when I quoted Kissinger's *Diplomacy*.

Meanwhile, the proposal submitted by the magistrate of Nagasaki had a profound impact on the shogunate cabinet to the extent that a scheme to "rely on Russia to block the United States" temporarily got the support of a dominant majority within the cabinet. In the end, though, because of consistent opposition from Tokugawa Nariaki, lord of the Mito-*han,* the cabinet did not endorse the scheme.

Tokugawa Nariaki argued that, judging from Russia's advance to Sakhalin Island, Japan should not be deceived by Russia's ostensible goodwill toward Japan. This judgment might have saved Japan from a crisis. It is not hard to imagine that Russia could have demanded not only the Sakhalin and Kuril islands but possibly also some ports on Hokkaido in compensation, claiming that it had repulsed a U.S. invasion.

In assessing the true intention of Russia, at least during the age of imperialism, simple and straightforward fundamentalists, such as Tokugawa Nariaki in 1853 and Komura on the eve of the Russo-Japanese

War, were proven to be correct. Those who had made more complicated calculations missed the mark. After all, one could predict Russian conduct more accurately by focusing on its overall national interest and not on its complicated rhetoric and behavior, which only confused the issue.

As a matter of fact, even while Putyatin remained in Nagasaki waiting for the shogunate's response, Muravyov-Amursky ordered the establishment of a Russian colony on the shore of Aniva Bay. He also issued orders that the Japanese dwellers along the bay be brought under the protection of the Russian government. On September 20, 1853, Lieutenant Colonel Newelskoi landed on the shore of Aniva Bay, took over the Japanese outpost, and built batteries and a Russian lookout. Hearing this, Putyatin himself sailed to Aniva Bay in April 1854 and ordered the withdrawal of Russian troops from the colony. Putyatin feared any friction with Japan while he was in the midst of negotiating with its leaders.

Negotiation for a Russo-Japanese friendship treaty (the Treaty of Shimoda) began in Shimonoseki in November 1854. Putyatin first proposed a border settlement between the two countries and insisted that anywhere north of Itrup Island and Aniva Bay, both of which were Japanese territory, should be Russian territory. In response, the Japanese side demanded the entire Sakhalin Island up to the mouth of the Amur River as its territory, and would not give in. In the end, it was agreed that the border would be drawn between the islands of Itrup and Urup in the Kuril Islands and that dominium of Sakhalin Island would be left undecided.

This was another occasion in which Japan showed overoptimistic judgment. It would be only natural for a powerful country to have its own way sooner or later if the border demarcation was left undecided. For example, even though the Treaty of Aigun (瑷琿条約) of 1858 stipulated that Primorsky Krai did not belong to either Russia or Qing, the latter was momentarily deprived of the territory by Russia within two years. Because Putyatin's proposal admitted that Aniva Bay would belong to Japan, perhaps the Japanese government should have persisted in insisting on a border demarcation at 45 degrees north latitude, which Kawaji Toshiakira (川路聖謨), Japanese signee of the Treaty of Shimoda, had initially strongly advocated.

The new Japanese government after the Meiji Restoration belatedly proposed the demarcation on 45 degrees north latitude in 1870, but Russia

demanded the entire Sakhalin Island and refused to divide the island. Harry Parkes, British consul-general in Japan at that time, pointed out that it was already too late to do anything about Sakhalin Island and, instead, warned Japan about the danger of Russia's southbound advance reaching Hokkaido.

Meanwhile, on Sakhalin Island itself, the harassment of the Japanese dwellers by Russian immigrants under the protection of the Russian troops became increasingly unruly. The Russians assaulted and raped the Japanese, confiscated their land to construct permanent facilities, and even obstructed efforts by the Japanese to fight a fire at Japanese facilities (the fire was suspected to have been started by Russians) by throwing fire pumps into the fire.

Although some hardliners in Japan insisted on sending troops to Sakhalin, the argument to prioritize domestic preparedness while maintaining moderate diplomacy had become predominant within the Japanese government since the settlement of the Satsuma Rebellion. Thus, the Treaty of Saint Petersburg was signed between Russia and Japan in 1875, stipulating that Japan give up claims to Sakhalin Island in exchange for undisputed sovereignty of all the Kuril islands.

The conclusion of this treaty was perhaps inevitable given Russia's firm intention to occupy Sakhalin Island, the circumstances that had been generated on the island, and the domestic situation in Japan. It is actually more noteworthy that Russia made a concession to give the Japanese the right to possess the eighteen Kuril islands up to the Kamchatka peninsula. Russia's concession on islands the Japanese had never occupied signifies that even Russia had to acknowledge the validity of Japan's historical claim on Sakhalin Island.

Watching for an Opportunity to Occupy Tsushima Island

Another noteworthy development around this time was Russia's territorial interest in Tsushima Island in the middle of Korea Strait. In February 1861, the Russian consul in Japan informed the Japanese government that the British navy had been secretly surveying seashores of Tsushima Island and warned that British ambition was unpredictable. Here again, obviously, Russia was playing the same old game—that is, to propose that Russia should put Tsushima under its protection in order to protect it from British

territorial ambition. Around the same time, a Russian naval vessel dropped anchor off Tsushima Island and its crew members landed on the island under the pretext of repairing the ship's hull. They constructed barracks on the island and ended up living there. The Russian side demanded cession of a property on which to construct a fortress.

The fact is that, in the late 1860s, Grand Duke Nikolaevich, admiral of the Russian navy, had issued an order to acquire Tsushima by lease and use it as the Russian navy's headquarters. The order was based on advice from outposts in the Far East. The naval vessel dropped anchor off Tsushima Island following Grand Duke Nikolaevich's order. Even when the shogunate ordered the withdrawal of crew members from the island, the captain of the vessel would not comply, insisting he and his men were there to discourage British and French territorial ambition and that they would not withdraw unless ordered to do so by their own superiors.

The shogunate negotiated with the Russian consul in Japan, but it did not make any progress. During this negotiation, Britain learned of this incident and dispatched a fleet to Tsushima. This action forced the Russian vessel to depart in July.

Although the Russian documents on this incident are scarce, one must conclude that the Russian intention was quite obvious. As soon as it obtained Primorsky Krai in 1860, Russia must have decided to possess Tsushima in recognition of the strategic value of the Korea Strait.

Katsu Kaishū left the following vivid description of the Russian vessel's conduct:

> When Japanese officials approached the Russian ship in a small boat, sailors got on three dinghies and surrounded them and seized their armor and spears. When the Japanese side approached the ship for negotiation, the Russians welcomed the Japanese officials on board and entertained them with lavish meals but never gave any definite answer to the Japanese inquiries. The Russians left only after they had made a full survey of the bay. But the Russian vessel returned to Tsushima, and its crew cut down trees on the island without permission from the Japanese authority. When the Japanese patrol boat approached the Russian vessel to negotiate, its sailors pumped

> sea water at the Japanese boat. The Russian ship that came to Tsushima most recently dropped anchor, claiming it needed repair. Crew members landed on the island and constructed what looked like barracks, and they did not appear to leave anytime soon. . . . At this moment, Tsushima was as good as a de facto island occupied by the Russians.

Given the situation, Katsu wrote that he had asked the British consul in Japan for help. That consul instructed the British consul in Beijing to dispatch the British fleet to Tsushima, which finally forced the Russian vessel to withdraw.

This incident was a typical example of the maneuvers Russia used to expand its territory under the pretext of protecting it from the invasion by other countries. Russia pursued the establishment of one fait accompli after another using both violence and smooth talk.

Devious but Good-Natured Bumpkin

This Russian behavior seems to be incongruent with the good-nature of individual Russians, and this puzzles me. Observing the behavior outlined above and many other utterances and behaviors of the Russians, you get an impression that all Russians are cruel, ruthless, and cunning, hiding poisonous fangs behind smiling faces. But when you actually get to know individual Russians, they do not necessarily fit this impression.

Let me quote here an observation that I once heard from Hōgen Shinsaku, who, in my judgment, was the person in the Japanese foreign ministry with the deepest wisdom about Russian affairs. Hōgen said: "Simply put, the Russian is a bumpkin. A country man is good-natured and devious. He is cunning and kind at the same time. I know how it is because I am a bumpkin myself."

For urban intelligentsia, it is a minimum requirement to be faithful in logic and word. A country man, in contrast, would not say unpleasant things to a person's face. He is inclined to say something that is pleasing to the listener's ears. Nevertheless, he is fully aware of what is and what is not beneficial to him, and he has no intention to compromise his gains. Needless to say, it never occurs to him that he may sometimes have to sacrifice his own

benefit for the sake of such an abstract concept as a gentleman's agreement. He will not hesitate to get hold of whatever that is available to him. Thus, he always says one thing and does the opposite. Gorchakov's words in the above Kissinger quote should be interpreted in this context.

After these incidents, Russo-Japanese relations went into a dead calm that lasted until the First Sino-Japanese War. It might be, however, more accurate to say that Russia, during this period, devoted itself to the construction and management of military bases in newly acquired colonies on the shores of the Amur River, Primorsky Krai, and Sakhalin Island. During this period, Russia also prepared infrastructures for an impending full-scale advance to the Far East: it constructed the Siberian Railway connecting mainland Russia and the Far East and built up two blue water fleets in Europe and the Far East.