

Maria V. Toropygina. *Descriptive Catalogue of Japanese Books in St. Petersburg University. A Catalogue of the Arisugawa Collection.* Tokyo: Benseisha, 1998, 112 pp.

The collection of wood-block prints and manuscripts held in the library of St. Petersburg University, which were catalogued by Maria Toropygina, a Japanese studies librarian at the Library of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, is of great historical and cultural value. It was the Japanese prince Arisugawa (1835—1895) who ordered to send a collection of Japanese wood-block prints and manuscripts to St. Petersburg University. Prince Arisugawa was an outstanding personality in the history of the nineteenth-century Japan. He was among those who joined the anti-Shogunate movement to restore the Emperor's power. In 1870, after the Shogunate was abolished he was appointed Minister of Military Affairs and afterwards played an active role in public affairs. In 1882, Prince Arisugawa visited the United States and Europe. The Prince's visit to Russia took place in September. Here, in Russia, he had an audience at the Russian Tsar Alexander III (r. 1881—1894). It is after this visit to St. Petersburg that Prince Arisugawa made his generous donation to St. Petersburg University.

The collection of Japanese wood-block prints and manuscripts donated was meant to introduce Japanese culture to the students of the Japanese language courses at the University. The composition of the collection represented

many branches of Japanese culture; among the books were vocabularies and explanatory dictionaries, textbooks, works of literature with necessary commentaries, works on philology and geography, all dated mainly to the eighteenth century. Among these was a famous hundred-volume *Dainihon shi* ("History of the Great Japan") by Tokugawa Mitukuni.

The significance of the collection rests on at least two factors. First, an analysis of the collection provides an opportunity to determine the "cultural foreign policy" of Japan's ruling elite, that is, to reveal the fashion in which Japan wished to appear to the world at the end of the nineteenth century. It is immediately obvious, for example, that one of the major components of Japanese culture, that is, Buddhism, is not in effect represented in the collection. Secondly, the collection is valuable for the rarities it contains. This primarily concerns manuscripts. Of special importance among them is the manuscript of *Owari meisho wakashu*, a collection of poems connected with the province of Owari. Suffice it to say that only a single manuscript of this collection has been discovered in Japan.

A catalogue to a comparable collection at the Catholic University of Leuven, given as a gift by the Emperor Showa during his time as heir to the throne, appeared as early as 1926. The catalogue to the Arisugawa collection is drawn up in conformity with modern standards of cataloguing, since the science of description of Japanese manuscripts has progressed greatly in recent decades. Previously, there existed only a list of books, drawn up by Andō Kensuke¹ and

¹ Andō Kensuke (1854—1924) — a Japanese governmental official, who in 1876 joined the diplomatic staff and was sent to Russia. In 1881—1884, he taught the Japanese language at St. Petersburg University. It was he who let Prince Arisugawa know about the Japanese courses at the University.