

## AN ORTHODOX ICON BY YAMASHITA RIN—THE JAPANESE PAINTER OF THE MEIJI PERIOD

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This article focuses on the life and creative work of Yamashita Rin (1857-1839) —the first Japanese icon— painter. The figure of Yamashita Rin is unique but at the same time typical for the Meiji period the time of impetuous spread of western culture. She first studied western painting under Antonio Fonfanesi (1818-82) but later, after being baptised (1878) by the Russian priest Nickolai, she was sent to a nunnery in Petersburg, Russia (1880), to study traditional Orthodox icon painting. In addition to studies in the nunnery studio, Rin visited the Imperial Hermitage Museum, where she made several copies from West-European paintings. Her work in the Hermitage was successful, but she experienced several difficulties in the course of her studies in the nunnery. She became ill, and as a result, left Petersburg at the beginning of March 1883 and returned to Japan.

In Tokyo she settled in the Orthodox Mission on the Surugadai hill, where by March 1891 a new Cathedral (Nickorai-do) had been built. Soon after, in connection with the expected visit to Japan of Nickolai—the Heir of the Russian throne, Archbishop Nickolai commissioned Rin to paint an icon of the “Resurrection” for the Russian Heir —the single work of Rin which exists in Russia (now in the collection of the Hermitage Museum).

This icon occupies a special place in Rin’s oeuvre. On the one hand it presents the pure Russian style of icon painting which she had been taught at the nunnery. This may be due to the fact that up to the death of Archbishop Nickolai she lived by his side, receiving his advice which influenced her creative work. On the other hand “Resurrection” is exceptional in that it possesses some special Japanese characteristics, mostly due to its mounting in a typically Japanese frame—the work of Takai Yasuji a prominent lacqueier of the day.

Yamashita Rin lived a long life painting many icons. More then 100 of her works are known today.

*Keywords:* YAMASHITA RIN, JAPANESE ORTHODOX ICON PAINTER, “RESURRECTION” ICON—PRESENT TO NICKOLAI II.

One of the main themes of modern Japan studies in Russia is Russo-Japanese cultural contacts. This theme is studied mainly as a philological or a purely historical problem. Much more rarely is it analyzed in terms of comparative religion or the history of art. Meanwhile this aspect seems to be of great importance.

In the Japanese collection of the State Hermitage Museum there is one work which reflects the direct and mutual artistic contacts between Japan and Russia and at the same time the history of the Russian Orthodox Mission in Japan. It is the Orthodox icon “Resurrection”.

The icon is painted on a wooden plate covered with canvas in an oil painting technique. On the right side of it are placed the figures of Christ and two angels.

Below—an inscription in Japanese “Harisutosu fukkatsu”—“The Resurrection of Christ” and in Russian script—“Jesus Christ”. On the reverse side—the depiction of an Orthodox temple and a rather long text in both Russian and Japanese: “To His Imperial Highness the Heir of the Russian Imperial Throne, Great Prince Nickolai Alexandrovich, the Most Respectful Offering from the Japanese Orthodox Church as a sign of the most diligent pray for His health and welfare. May 6, 1891, Tokyo”.

We know the author of the icon. She is Yamashita Rin (1857-1939)—a unique personality and at the same time—typical of Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century: the time of the impetuous spread of Western culture, science, and mode of life. And certainly—of *yoga*—the Western style painting. One of Japan’s early representatives was Yamashita Rin. However, she did not start with *yoga* from the very beginning. At fifteen, she went to Tokyo and studied successfully in the ateliers of three painters of the national style.<sup>1</sup>

On the sixth day after her arrival in Tokyo, Rin entered the atelier of Yosai Chikanobu (1838-1912)—the pupil of Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900) who worked in the style of the late Utagawa school. Rin did not stay here too long and soon turned to the workshop of Kunichika himself—the pupil of Kunisada and one of the most prominent representatives of *ukiyo*e in the late period.

From the very beginning the art of Kunichika—a first rate painter—fascinated Rin. But disappointment soon formed. As a beginner rather than studying the art of drawing Rin was engaged in little more than house work. Neither was she satisfied with her following teacher Tsukioka Rangetsu, the painter of Maruyama school, about whom practically nothing is known. At that time he earned his livelihood by painting fans.

Furthermore she was not satisfied with the general situation of the traditional arts which appeared to be in a critical condition. For this period the traditional culture was being moved aside by the powerful influx of European culture. The slogan of the day was “civilization and enlightenment”, understood in those days as the modernization and westernization of all aspects of life. Practically all painters of the national style found themselves out of business.<sup>2</sup> Rin entered one of the *yoga* private studios.

In December 1876 she changed it for the Kōbu bijutsu gakkō (The Art School of the Technological College), the first state high school of Fine Arts created after the models of the Art Academies of Western Europe, in which the western specialists worked: first of all—Antonio Fontanesi (1818-82)—the professor of the Academy of Art in Turino, a painter of the Barbison school. For the first time women were accepted for education in a state high school: 6 out of 60 female applicants were accepted as students, among them—Yamashita Rin. One year later the first examinations were held. According to the general list Rin came tenth. In the girl’s class she was first. But conditions in the school deteriorated, and in 1880 Rin decided to abandon it.<sup>3</sup>

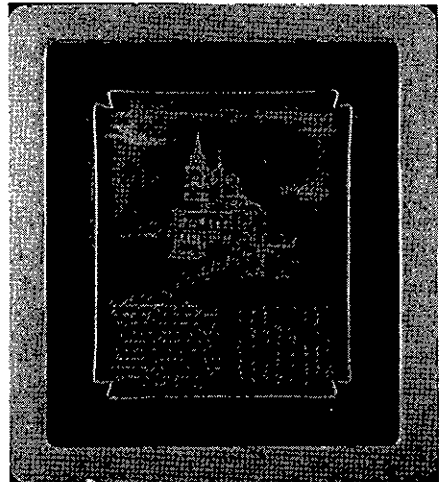
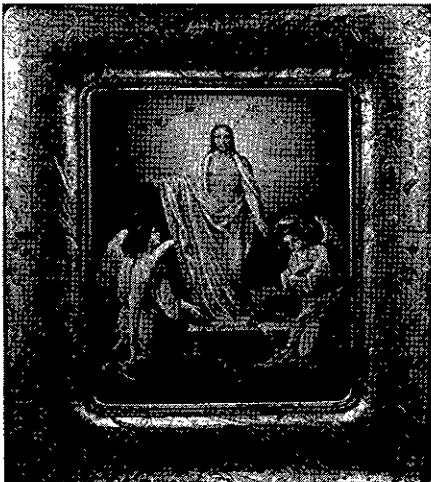
At approximately the same time a young girl called Yamamuro Masako, a school-fellow of Rin and an Orthodox Christian since 1875, introduced her to Nickolai, a Russian priest, who had come to Tokyo at the beginning of the 1870s and had opened

a Clergy School attached to the Orthodox Mission in Tokyo, Surugadai, Kanda. In 1878 Rin was baptized.<sup>4</sup> The meeting with Nickolai decided her fate. And not only hers. It may be said that in the history of Russo-Japanese contacts in the second half of the nineteenth century the central figure was this Nickolai of Japan, one of the last saints of the Orthodox Church.

After graduation from the theological seminary in Smolensk Joann Dmitrievich Kasatkin (1856-1912) studied in the Theological Academy of Sankt-Petersburg, and in 1860 accepted an offer as the priest attached to the recently established Russian Consulate in Hakodate. For this it was necessary to become a monk which took place on June 30, 1860. As a monk he was called Nickolai.

On June, 14 1861, the 25 year old hieromonk Nickolai reached Hakodate. At that time a public sermon on Christianity was impossible, and so at first he dedicated himself to the study of Japan, its language, customs, beliefs and literature.<sup>5</sup> But already by this time his first follower—Sawabe Takuma (1833-1913)—had appeared. He was of samurai stock, and the priest of the main Shinto shrine in Hakodate. Their first meeting was of a dramatic character : Sawabe, who shared the anti-western ideas of this period, came to Nickolai in order to kill him. But in fact this visit had quite another result. In a short time (by the fourth month of 1867) Sawabe was converted and received the Christian name of Paul. It was a beginning, and gradually the number of Orthodox converts increased.<sup>6</sup>

After the Meiji restoration of 1868 it became clear that the abolition of the anti-Christian laws was inevitable. Nickolai decided to solicit the Holy Synod concerning the establishment of a Russian Orthodox Mission and at the end of 1868 he left for St. Petersburg. On January 14, 1871, the Mission was established and Nickolai, now with the status of archimandrite, was appointed as its leader. At the beginning of the 1872, simultaneously with the establishment of the Russian Embassy in Tokyo, he also moved to the capital and acquired a plot of land in the Kanda-quarter.<sup>7</sup> Twenty years later there was built the “Nikorai-dō”—the temple of the



Yamashita Rin (1857-1939) Resurrection 1890-91 oil, canvas State Hermitage Museum

Resurrection of Our Lord, with which the whole life of Yamashita Rin is connected.

In August 1879 for the second and the last time Nickolai visited Russia in order to be appointed as a bishop. He also intended to get permission for the construction of a cathedral in Tokyo.<sup>8</sup> But in St. Petersburg he had another affair to deal with. Thus, he visited the Novodevichii nunnery and its icon-painting studio, where a lot of icons for the Japanese Orthodox temples had already been painted in accordance with his orders. Also he discussed with the nunnery's authorities the possibility of the probation of one Japanese woman as an icon-painter in the studio of the Novodevichii nunnery. The young Japanese church greatly needed its own icon-painters as it was very expensive and inconvenient to order icons from Russia. An agreement was reached, and a 5-year period training was fixed.<sup>9</sup>

In December 1880 Nickolai returned to Tokyo. First he intended to send to Russia Yamamuro Masako, who studied under Fontanesi at the expense of Russian Mission. But two month previously she had married and her candidature was dropped. Nickolai now chose Yamashita Rin—his disciple and a painter of great talent: Rin was the first in the women's class of Kōbu bijutsu gakkō. Only about a month remained for preparations. The date of the departure was fixed on December 12, 1880.

From this moment information about Rin's life becomes more certain: the day before departure Rin began to write the diary, where she punctually marked everything of significance.

After a three-week journey, on March 10, Rin arrived in St. Petersburg.

Her impressions of the capital were, and must be, different from those of the ordinary tourists—to the same degree the life in the monastery also differed from the life outside. It may be said that during her stay in St. Petersburg she did not so much live in the city, as from time to time went for an excursion to it or paid a visit to somebody. There are no direct complaints on this matter in her diaries, but certainly, it limited her freedom of movement. However her first week in St. Petersburg was an exception.

At first she settled into a hotel while her fellow traveller Jacob Tihai (1840-87), who from 1874 had taught the art of church singing in the Ecclesiastical College attached to the Russian Orthodox Mission in Tokyo, arranged her stay in the nunnery. During this period she freely walked around the city visiting numerous churches and monasteries and first of all, as recorded in her diary (13/03/1881), the Isaak Cathedral. The name of the hotel is not mentioned, but judging from the references in the diary, it was probably situated somewhere near Mikchailovskaya square, not far from the present Russian Museum. Because of its location Rin nearly became a witness to a very important event in Russian history: the assassination of the Emperor Alexander II by terrorists.

A description of this event can be found in a letter, which Rin sent to her relatives a little bit later, on March 26, which is after she entered the nunnery. Rin described the events of that day. On March 13, on her return from the Isaak Cathedral she encountered a large regiment which was acting as the military escort. While pondering on its meaning at the very moment she reached her hotel she heard something that

at that time seemed her to be the sound of the firing of some huge gun. Then somebody explained to her that the Tsar Alexander had been murdered. It was not long after she visited the scene,<sup>10</sup> where later the Resurrection Cathedral, known as The Temple of Christ on the Blood was erected (finished in 1907; 1887-1907). On March 17 Rin settled in Novodevichii nunnery<sup>11</sup> in the Zabalkansky avenue (now: Moscovskiy av., 100).

At its present site, the nunnery had been erected in the middle of the nineteenth century as a project of N.Efimov. The main cathedral was finished in 1861. It was decorated with icons, painted by the nuns themselves: the icon-painting studio had been established at the same time as the nunnery. The education in the atelier was undertaken not only by senior nuns but also with the assistance of professional painters from the Academy of Fine Arts. This practice continued without a break up to the mid 1870s.<sup>12</sup> During this period nun-painters mastered various new techniques, for instance chiseling over the background of golden leaf—which was very fashionable at that time. As samples they used the works by V. M. Peshehonov, who is known in particular for his icons painted for the Japanese Orthodox temples. Thus, he executed the icons for the iconostasis of the main cathedral in Tokyo.

The finances of the nunnery's studio steadily improved and soon it became possible for it to fulfill orders of a charitable nature. Among them were the icons for the Japanese temples. Thus, in 1878, 29 icons for three iconostasis were painted to fulfill the order from Nickolai. In 1879 one more iconostasis of 21 icons was produced which was probably for the church of the Russian Diplomatic Mission in Tokyo. In 1880 the studio and its first headmaster, Pheophania, accepted an even more prestigious order—the iconostasis of 31 icons for the temple of the Orthodox Mission in Tokyo.

In 1875 Nickolai opened the missionary school and orthodox school for women on Surugadai Hill. He erected a two-storied building (which exists even today in a rebuilt form), on the first floor of which he established the private home of the temple of the Cross (Jujika seido). The iconostasis for the temple were ready by 1881. Its icons were painted in the Novodevichii nunnery from the end of the 1879, and piece by piece were sent to Japan. At the same time Nickolai reached an agreement with nunnery authorities concerning the probation of the Japanese women icon-painter.<sup>13</sup>

The icon painted for the temple of the Mission was sent to Tokyo in 1874. It was the "Agony in the Garden", which was painted by a man called Malyshev, probably the painter A. I. Malyshev—the teacher in the nunnery studio during 1869-74—a graduate of the Sankt-Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts, who participated in academic exhibitions, and painted numerous pictures on religious subjects.<sup>14</sup>

The fate of this icon in Japan is of certain interest: its composition is based on a popular canvas, by F. A. Bruny, called the "Agony in the Garden" (c. 1836). The painting was repeatedly copied. Moreover, together with the other academic works it became part of the repertory of Russian icon-painting, a fact that was typical for the artistic situation of that time. Thus, its composition was used by V. M. Peshehonov for his own icon, which was made for the iconostasis of the Tokyo Cathedral. Later Yamashita Rin copied it several times.

Between 1870 and 1880 the nunnery, from time to time, fulfilled orders from the Japanese Orthodox Church. In total from 1878 to 1884, it sent to Japan 140 icons for 7 iconostasis, not to mention separate icons, priests' robes and other church paraphernalia.<sup>15</sup>

But the most important "Japanese order" for the nunnery itself was the iconostasis for Tokyo Missionary church. After 1874 there was no academic teacher in the studio: only the senior nun-painters taught the juniors. This provided a good average standard for the studio's production, but no more. The Nickolai order of 1879 was considered by Pheophania (the studio's headmaster) as very important and so he invited the rector of the Academy of Fine Arts, F. I. Iordan, for consultation. Iordan patronized the nunnery's studio up to his death in 1883.

At this very moment Rin arrived at the Novodevichii nunnery, and on 18/03 she began her studies.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a rather complicated period for Russian icon-painting. On the one hand the creation of icons ceased to be an individual process. As a rule icons were the results of the cooperation of several men, organized in a workshop. It took place first of all in the old large centers of icon-painting, such as Mstera, Holui, Palech and Tver. The most prominent local icon-painters such as A. S. Chiricov or V. S. Gurianov came to work in the capitals—in St. Petersburg or Moscow—and organized their own workshops. Others were invited. For instance Makar Samsonovich Peshehonov, who was born in Tver and was the son of Samson Peshehonov another prominent icon-painter, had been called to St. Petersburg by the Emperor and was promoted to the position of the court icon-painter. He had his own workshop located in the Nevsky avenue. He and his heir—Vasily Makarovich-painted icons for the iconostasis of Nikorai-dō. Their icons were distributed among various temples.<sup>16</sup>

The icons from such workshops preserved the old tradition of Russian icon-painting. On the other hand from the second half of the sventeenth century, not only Russian secular art but Orthodox icon-painting as well were influenced by the west-European artistic tradition. In particular this meant the penetration of the new illusory-realistic elements of the Western baroque painting into the established structure of the icon, which was marked by a high degree of the sacral-symbolical conventionality. This was light-and-shadow modeling and linear perspective: primarily the general interpretation of the sacral space of the icon in terms approximate to those of this earthly world. In the middle of the nineteenth century this "westernizing" tendency had firm roots and did not arouse suspicion, except with the possible exception the adepts of the so-called "old faith". The icons of this new style were painted in traditional materials—tempera on wooden plate; and in a "Western technique"—oil on canvas.

During the 1870s and 1880s both tendencies coexisted without any obvious contradiction. Both may be called traditional, both, though by different means, embodied one and the same iconographical program.

Together with the use of iconographical samples, which embodied in various manners the repetition of old Traditional models, there existed another kind of

artistic practice. The foundation for the icons can be found in the so-called historical (historical-religious) paintings of the academic secular masters. Especially popular were the copies and quotations from the wall-paintings and icons of the famous temples of the Russian Empire which were practiced on a large scale. For instance the wall-paintings from Isaak Cathedral in St. Petersburg or Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev. The compositions of these temples, created by the most prominent Russian masters of the nineteenth century, were widely used in prints and soon became a new kind of iconographical model.

Rin had the opportunity to study all of these variants of Russian icon-painting in the studio of the Novodevichii nunnery.

First of all she was to master the iconography of the Orthodox icon-painting and its specific methods. The basis of training was copying, but it did contain certain elements of an academic course. Nuns painted icons of various types: on wooden plates and canvas, and in tempera and oil. Generally speaking this icon-painting could be called traditional, so long as one does not mean the traditional manner of painting but the observance of a strict iconographical scheme.

Rin's attitude towards the nunnery's program was negative. On December 22, 1881 she wrote in her diary:

Listened to various talks about painting [in the studio—M. Uspensky] : it follows that they don't approve the Italian painting but like Greek pictures [traditional icons—M. Uspensky]—the depiction of monsters (obake-e) ; This makes me so sad!<sup>17</sup>

This attitude of Rin can be easily understood. As with many other Japanese who had converted to Christianity during the first years of Meiji, Rin was influenced not only by considerations of confession but also by the aspiration towards the new Western culture, while at the same time making no differentiation between its various manifestations. As previously stated the decision to send her to Russia came as quite a surprise to Rin. Certainly as she was Christian—from 1878—she had an idea of Orthodox icon-painting. Moreover, she also had to know the works of Pheophania—her future teacher in the Novodevichii nunnery. Nevertheless, for Rin (and not only for her) Christianity was in general something identical with Western culture, that is why in consenting to go to Russia, she was influenced not so much by pious thoughts as by the desire to see a real European country and to become acquainted with its art and culture: the Western art about which her teacher Fontanesi had spoken of so highly but which she could see only in reproductions.

At first the meaning of "Greek painting" was not understood by Rin. One fortunate consideration should also be taken in account. Rin's negative reference concerning the nunnery's tastes dates from the period after she had already visited the Hermitage Museum for making copies of the west-European paintings. The idea to make copies in the Hermitage was probably to the recommendation of F. I. Iordan. On the first occasion, as an ordinary visitor, Rin went to the Hermitage in June of 1881. She was accompanied by Father Anatoly, the assistant of Nikolai Kasatkin, a close acquaintance of Rin who had returned to Russia with her. Permission to make copies in the museum halls was received at the end of the summer in the same year.

The first sitting took place on August 25. These visits continued until the November 4, 1881.<sup>18</sup>

In her diary, in a very laconical form but in precise terms and without omissions, Rin describes her work in the Hermitage gallery. From August 25 she visited it everyday except Sundays, holidays and days off. She went there almost everytime accompanied by the nun who supervised her activity and behaviour, and Anna, a nun from the Novodevichii nunnery who was also studying painting. Usually she took the nunnery's carriage, but occasionally she took a cab and paid for it herself. For her that was a very serious item of expense.

During a period of about five months in the Hermitage Rin managed to copy three paintings: "Apostle", "Virgin with Christ and Johann", and "The Carrying of the Cross".

The first piece she finished in 15 days, the second in 10 days, and for the third one she needed one month.

In all probability the first copy was the most difficult one for Rin. During this work Rin for the first and only time made use of the help of special painters, who inspected the work of those who made copies in the museum. It took place on August 26 during her second visit to the Hermitage. That day she worked on the head of the "Apostle", applying paint to the face and garments of the figure. In her diary she wrote: "Today I met difficulties. The face was completely repainted by the teacher. Moreover one young woman helped me greatly."<sup>19</sup> [probably young painter, who was also making copies in the museum. M. Uspensky] Later Rin on the advice she received from Iordan, who supervised her work in the Hermitage on September 3, 1881,<sup>20</sup> and who probably made several remarks, for once again certain "difficulties" are mentioned in the diary. These difficulties were overcome: twice more (on September 29, and October 6) Iordan visited Rin in the museum but the diary does not mention any criticism of her work<sup>21</sup>.

The first copy was finished by September 14, 1881. The original of this copy is known. It is the picture of, supposedly by Guido Reni (1579-1642) or by some other master of that time, "Saint Jeronim"—from the Hermitage collection.

Once more Rin applied herself to the creative work of Guido Reni: in her archive there is a copy from Reni's "The repentance of Saint Peter", which had been preserved in Hermitage since 1772.

In the strict sense this drawing can not be called a copy. Rather it is a study for an icon based on the composition of Guido Reni. Most probably it was made after Rin's return to Japan. The practice of painting icons according to the composition of Russian and West-European icons or paintings had been brought to Japan, and was a common practice for Yamashita Rin after her return to Japan.

The third copy "The Carrying of the Cross" was finished by December 2, 1881. At this very day Apollonia, the deputy of Mother Superior of the nunnery, forbade her further visits to the Hermitage, obliging her to begin the icon of Saint Nickolai and to finish it by the name day of Evstolia—the Mother Superior. From this time on Rin never worked in the Hermitage.

The reasons of such a decision are not clear. Sometimes there can be read



suggestions of ill-will on the part of the nunnery's authorities towards Rin. There are certain grounds to support this. In Rin's diary constant remarks can be found regarding her collisions and altercations with "baba Paraskeva", the aged nun who was appointed for her escort and supervision. The dissatisfaction of Paraskeva was brought to Evstolia's and Apollonia's notice. On October 27, Apollonia went to the Hermitage to control Rin's actions. Earlier, on October 1, she received a warning from Father Anatoly.<sup>22</sup> The dissatisfaction towards Rin's behaviour ripened inside the nunnery.

It appears that there is nothing blameworthy in her visits to the Hermitage. But the purpose of sending Rin to Russia should be taken into consideration. The 1880s the flourishing of Orthodox propagation in Japan. Temples were erected throughout Japan, and large numbers of icons were needed for them. It was impossible to only rely upon donations from Russia, similar to those of the Novodevichii nunnery. However, to buy the icons in Russia was too expensive for the Mission. According to the project of Nickolai Kasatkin, Rin was to become a professional icon-painter, able not only to create first-rate icons but also to teach others. To fulfill this task Rin had to cope with the icon-painting of the studio's program.

This program was rather liberal. In particular, it included a course in the making of copies. But still the main subject was the mastering of the methods of icon-painting.

Rin's activities disturbed the proportions: all the time she devoted to painting in the "Western style". This painting also was christian but was from a different confession. From the point of view of the nunnery officials it was of extreme importance. One can hardly imagine the hostility towards Rin: the nunnery simply followed the instructions which it had received from Nickolai Kasatkin and Innozentiy, the bishop of Moscow, who had also taken part in the arranging of Rin's studies.

Further Rin never visited Hermitage at least to make copies. However, this does not mean that she never left the nunnery. She had numerous friends and acquaintances with whom she visited the environs of St. Petersburg. She even had private orders for portraits etc.<sup>23</sup> Short accounts of such events can be found in her diary.

Unfortunately the part of her diary which related, to the last year of her stay in Russia does not exist. Records break off on April 5, 1882. In her autobiography Rin also does not mention the period from 5/04 up to 7/03 about which almost nothing is known.

However, we can imagine that at that time her life and studies were in a certain way connected with the Academy of Fine Arts. She visited it for the first time on June 18, 1881. In her diary she wrote:

Saturday the 18th. Today the weather is fine. In the morning at 9 o'clock we visited the place which resembled the museum and soon it was 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Really wonderful works of art are kept here.

Near the side of this inscription she later added.

"In 9 months at last I go out and this place is the Academy of Fine Arts (e-no daigaku)".

She continued "Teacher Feodor showed me [the museum]. Then we went to the house of the teacher. At 2 o'clock returned home."<sup>24</sup>

"The teacher Feodor" is undoubtedly Feodor Ivanovich Iordan, the curator of the icon-painting studio of Novodevichii nunnery. They met for the first time on 6/04 in the studio, which Jordan used to visit approximately once a month.

Iordan immediately recognized the artistic talent of Rin. About this she wrote: "Was painting all day long. The teacher came, he was very satisfied". It was Iordan, who proposed that she should study in the Academy. Father Anatoly in a letter, which was published in *Seiko shimpo* on 1/08/1881 wrote:

Irina Yamashita, who belongs to the Orthodox church, now is in the nunnery and through her successes and the model morals makes happy all its inhabitants. When Iordan, the professor of Academy of Fine Arts, who visits the nunnery from time to time, notices the talent of Irina, he was admired.

Moreover, he stated that: "It is necessary to finish quickly the lessons on icon-painting in the nunnery and to begin studies in Academy of Fine Arts."<sup>25</sup>

The petition concerning her entrance into the Academy had already been sent to the official body. The reply was received on 6/01/1882. The diary reports: "Today came the permission of the government. And I felt so sad."

The causes for such melancholy probably existed. More than a month had passed since she had been forbidden to make copies in the Hermitage. Only rarely did she have a chance to get out of the nunnery: her records are rather monotonous and mention only the work concerning this or that icon. There were no hopes that the nunnery's authorities would counterdemand the interdiction. The day next (7/01/82) she wrote: "Tonight I rewrote the paper from the government and put it aside."

The next 3 months in the life of Yamashita Rin are not so rich with events. She felt ill. The last record is dated April 5, 1882. Up to Rin's departure from St. Petersburg we have no documents concerning her life. We can only suppose that she could use the permission to visit the Academy of Fine Arts. Certainly it is a mere supposition but there are few doubts about this matter. In her drawings and sketches one can find not only the influence of but even direct "quotations" from the compositions of the Russian academicians of the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

The affairs of Rin became worse and worse, frequently she complained of her health and in spring 1883 the decision to send her back to Japan was taken.

She had fallen ill, and at the beginning of March, 1883, earlier than it had been intended she left St. Petersburg. In Tokyo she settled in the Orthodox Mission on the Surugadai Hill, where during the next year the new Resurrection Cathedral was begun.

The cathedral was built according to the project of the St. Petersburg architect M. A. Schurupov (1815-1900) and on March 7, 1891 the cathedral was sanctified. Soon after the visit to Japan of the Heir of Russian Throne, the Great Duke Nickolai (future Nickolai II), was expected. In connection with this event Nickolai Kasatkin commissioned Rin to paint two icons: "The Resurrection" for the Russian Heir; and the "Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple" for the Prince of Greece, George, who

accompanied him on his "Journey to the East".

About a month before the arrival of Russian Heir the icons were ready. Of a comparatively small size, the Hermitage icon was put into a frame made of wood, which for some time had been used in the pagoda of the famous buddhist monastery Shiba Zōjōji in Minato-ku, Tokyo. This monastery was a popular place in the Japanese capital. In the nineteenth century it was the main center of buddhist learning. The frame was painted in golden lacquer and signed with the name Takai Yasuji, the famous master of the second half of the nineteenth century, who had won a prize in Kangyo naikoku hakurankai (National Industrial Fair) of 1890.<sup>27</sup>

The composition of the icon it was not invented by Yamashita Rin. It was a copy from a Russian original, the design of V. S. Kryukov who was not very prominent painter,<sup>28</sup> who had graduated from the St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts in 1869. The drawing was made in 1876 and was printed in St. Petersburg in the workshop of M. P. Sydorsky in 1889. The print was brought to Japan next year, in all probability by Father Sergii Stragorodsky, then a young hieromonk, who later became a patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. He had left for Japan from Odessa in August 1890.<sup>29</sup>

In Rin's creative works the icon "The Resurrection" occupies a special place. It is both typical and unusual at the same time.

During the whole period of her creative work the artistic style of Rin's icon-painting did not undergo change. All her icons are painted in the manner that she had been taught in the Novodevichii nunnery, a style which was typical of Russian Orthodox icon-painting in the second half of the nineteenth century.

This does not mean that Rin's manner remained invariable. It was constantly improved, but the initial principles remained intact.

In the literature on the creative work of Yamashita Rin attempts are sometimes made to find some specifically Japanese traits. However, I believe the very premise of this question to be incorrect. It appears that Rin never intended to create some national variant of the Orthodox icon-painting, but wanted to incarnate adequately its sacral meaning. As we have already seen originally icon-painting produced for her a repulsive impression. Her future activities compel us to suppose that after returning to Japan she revised her attitude. Rin devoted the remainder of her life exclusively to the creation of icons. Probably the decisive role in this change was played by her spiritual father—archbishop Nickolai. He could not admonish her in the technique of painting but he could explain to her its inner meaning, while at the same time strengthening Rin in her faith. The result was her choice of her own way in art and in life.

While in St. Petersburg, probably due to the very atmosphere of the monastic life, Rin had already intended to take monastic vows. This we know from a letter from archbishop Nickolai to Rin, dated January 27, 1882. In the postscript he wrote :

From your last letter one can see that you want to become a novice and to put on the kamilavka (the headgear of the priest). It's for not me to judge about your garments, but as for taking vows—it is too early for you—this may be done later, if your desire is not over.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps, after her return to Japan, while her desire was not diminished there was no opportunity to carry it out: monasticism did not take root in Japan. Nevertheless, her life indicates that monastic ideals were not alien to her. Rin lived the life of a recluse, rarely going out of doors, with all her time dedicated to the painting of icons and to the teaching of the Russian language. Furthermore she never married. Up to the death of archbishop Nickolai, she lived by his side and listened to his advice, the influence of which can be found in her creative work.

Partly due to this Rin never deviated from the manner of Russian icon-painting of the second half of the nineteenth century.

However, at least one of her icons may be considered an exception. That is "The Resurrection", in which an attempt was made to bring Japanese characteristics into the design. This attempt was part of the special program, certainly formulated by Nickolai himself. The icon was destined for the Russian Crown Prince as a birthday present from the Japanese Orthodox church. "The Japanese peculiarity" of it does not effect the artistic manner, only its mounting. It is achieved through its framing, which had been done by the famous *makie-shi* Takai Yasuji. The technique of the relief *makie* and the type of floral design are purely Japanese. At the same time, the frame cannot be considered as something alien to the icon itself and to its traditional structure. It is not accidental. The design of the frame stands very close to the golden chased backgrounds, which were one of the most characteristic traits of Russian icon-painting in the second half of the nineteenth century. Rin knew this method very well: it was used in the icon-studio of Novodevichii nunnery. Moreover its inventor was Makar Pechehonov, and his son Vassily, prepared icons for the iconostasis of Nikorai-do.

It may be considered that it was Rin, who prompted the choice of such design of the frame of this icon—the special gift to the Russian Crown Prince.

Afterwards, the composition of this icon was repeated by Rin at least seven times, for several Orthodox temples of Japan.

This icon was to be presented to the Heir Nickolai on May 20 in Tokyo, but the attempt upon Nickolai's life in Otsu derailed these plans as he returned to Russia without visiting the capital. The icon was presented in Kōbe, on board the Russian warship "Pamyat Azova", on the morning of May 19. The Japanese press took note of this event, and the magazine [Uranishiki, No. 2, 1892] relates the details of its further fate: "The icon 'Resurrection', after the return of the Crown Prince to Russia, is placed in His Palace and is worshiped reverently."<sup>31</sup> It indicates the location of the icon before the revolution of 1917, as being the Anitchkov Palace, where Nickolai lived before his coronation.

Yamashita Rin lived a long life, and painted a lot of icons for several Orthodox temples in Japan. More than 100 of her works are known today. Among them—"Resurrection"—one of the best and most typical of her creative works, and also for Japanese Orthodox icon-painting in general.

## Notes

- 1 Oda Hideo. *Yamashita Rin. Shinkō to seizōga ni sasageta shōgai*. (Yamashita Rin. A Life dedicated to religion and icon-painting). Tsuchiura, 1990, p. 7-8.
- 2 Asano Nagatake, Kobayashi Yukio, Hosokawa Moritatsu. *Genshoku Meiji hyakunen bijutsukan* (The Museum of the 100 years of Meiji art). Tokyo, 1967, p. 418.
- 3 Oka Isaburō. "Yamashita Rin no e ni tsuite" (About the painting of Yamashita Rin). In: Oka Isaburō, Kojima Ume etc., "*Yamashita Rin—reimeiki—no seizōgaka*" ("Yamashita Rin—the icon-painter of the new epoch"). Tokyo, 1977, p. 78-79.
- 4 Kawamata Kazuhide. "*Warera shōgai—no ketsui. Dai-shukyo Nickolai to Yamashita Rin*. (The decision for the whole life. Archbishop Nickolai and Yamashita Rin). Tokyo, 1981, p. 82-83.
- 5 Posdneev D. *Archbishop Nickolai of Japan. Reminiscences and characteristic*. St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 5-8 (in Russian).
- 6 Sergii (archimandrite). *The Far East*. (letters of the Japanese missionary). Arsamas, 1897, p. 101-103 (in Russian).
- 7 Suzuki Michitaka. Yamashita Rin kenkyu IV. (Investigation on Yamashita Rin) In: *Okayama daigaku geijutsugaku kenkyu*, 1990, p. 81.
- 8 Antonii (archbishop of Minsk and White Russia). "Saint Archbishop of Japan Nickolai". In: *Theological transactions* vol. 14, Moscow, 1975, p. 38-39 (in Russian).
- 9 Suzuki Michitaka. "Yamashita Rin kenkyu III". In: *Okayama daigakubu kiyo*. No. 12, 1988, p. 33.
- 10 Oda Hideo. *Yamashita Rin*. Tokyo, 1982, p. 70.
- 11 Oda Hideo. *Yamashita Rin*. Tokyo, 1982, p. 71.
- 12 Snessoreva S. *The Resurrection 1st class Nunnery. St. Petersburg*, 1887, part III, p. 142 (in Russian).
- 13 Suzuki Michitaka. "Yamashita Rin kenkyu III". p. 36-37.
- 14 Bulgakov F. I. *Our painters. Sankt-Petersburg*, 1890, Vol. II, p. 48 (in Russian).
- 15 Snessoreva S. Op. cit., p. 174.
- 16 Nekrasov V. I., "The icon-painters of Tver 18th-19th centuries" In: *Russian province*" N2, 1993, p. 62-63 (in Russian)
- 17 Oka Isaburō. Op. cit., p. 79.
- 18 Rin's diary is referred according to its publication in the monograph of Oda Hideo. *Yamashita Rin*. Tokyo, 1982 (Oda I).
- 19 Oda Hideo. *Yamashita Rin*, Tokyo, 1982, p. 115.
- 20 Oda Hideo. *Yamashita Rin*. Tsuchiura, 1990 (Oda II), p. 33.
- 21 Oda I. p. 122 and 124.
- 22 Oda II, p. 34.
- 23 Oda I. p. 140-155.
- 24 Op. cit., p. 104.
- 25 Suzuki Michitaka., Sadamura Tadashi. *Ikon. Bizantin sekaikara, Roshia, Nihon e*. Tokyo, Mainichishinbunsha, 1993, p. 95.
- 26 Op. cit., p. 94.
- 27 Kawamata Kazuhide. Op. cit., p. 150.
- 28 Bulgakov F. I. Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 224.
- 29 Sergii. Op. cit., p. 1.
- 30 Ivanova G. D. "Archbishop Nickolai and his disciples". In: *From the history of social thoughts in Japan* Moscow, Nauka, 1990, p. 200 (in Russian).
- 31 Otani Tamiko, Kōda Hatsue. "Yamashita Rin no seizōga o otte" (Following the icons of Yamashita Rin). In: Oka Isaburō, Op. cit., p. 189.

## 山下リン筆「復活」という正教のイコンについて

ミハイル・ウスペンスキー

要旨：この論文では、日本において初めてイコンを書いた画家山下リン（1857—1939）の人生と創造について述べた。

山下リンは、西洋文化の急激な普及時期—明治時代の代表的な人物でありながらユニークな特徴を持っていたのである。

まず山下リンはアントニオ・ホンタネジ（1818—82）のもとで西洋の絵画を学んだが、しばらくしてニコライというロシア神父によって洗礼を受け、キリスト正教イコンの描き方を学ぶためにペテルブルグの修道院に送られた。

修道院の工房において勉強するとともに山下リンは皇帝のエルミタージュ美術館をたずねることがあって西洋画の3枚のコピーを作った。エルミタージュ美術館でコピーを作ることに成果を収めたが、修道院で勉強することの困難にぶつかるとともに病気になる1883年3月に日本に帰った。

帰国後山下リンは東京駿河台の正教会ミッションに住んだが、1893年3月にこの場所には新しいキリスト復活の寺院（ニコライ堂）が建てられた。

やがて、ニコライ皇太子（後のロシア皇帝）の日本訪問の機会にニコライ神父が皇太子のために「復活」というイコンを描くことを山下リンに依頼した。今では、ロシアにある唯一の山下リンの作品でエルミタージュ美術館に保管されている。

このイコンは山下リンの活動の中で特別な位置を占めている。これは代表的なものであるが、同時に貴重な作品である。山下リンは生涯にわたって、純ロシアイコン絵画のスタイルを守っていた。このスタイルこそペテルブルグの修道院で学んだもので、ニコライ神父のそばに住んで彼の勧めに従ったからかもしれない。

しかし、「復活」というイコンは唯一の例外として評価されている。これは、高井安治という当時の有名な蒔絵師の枠が作られたからだ。この枠はイコンのデザインに特別な日本のニアンスを与えた。

山下リンは長い生涯をつうじていろいろなイコンを作った。「復活」というイコンはその一つだ。山下リンの活動と日本正教会のイコン絵画はこのイコンが代表している。また、もっとも重要な資料として見逃してはならない作品である。