Cheremisinova/ Tcheremissinof in Japan

Reordered notes as abstracted by Minako Sakakura, June 2022, from Soichi Masubuchi, ‘Kotaro Takamura and E. Tcheremissinof: The Iconology of Jinzo Naruse’: published in two parts in *Bulletin of Japan Women’s University, Faculty of Letters*, no. 33 (1983), pp. 77–101 and no. 34 (1984), pp, 109–25 but esp. 114–19.

Abbreviated below where necessary as ‘SM 1983’ and ‘SM 1984’

**1906–16** (Count) Ichiro Motono, 1862–1918, serves as Japanese Ambassador in St Petersburg, where he becomes a close friend of ET’s father. ET meets him by 1913 on her return there from Germany and forms a friendly relationship. She later models a statuette of him in Western hunting dress in bronzed plaster. In 1984 (acc. SM 1984) this was in possession of Moriyuki Motono – grandson if Ichiro – and himself then Japanese ambassador to France. It was then measured as 44 cm high, but with the rifle that Ichiro is shown carrying broken in two places and the rim of the hat damaged from many family moves.

**1913** Statue of Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia modelled at half size in space provided by Motono in his St Petersburg residence – as was his statuette – because ET’s recent return there from Germany (and late entry to the monument competition) did not give her time to find an atelier. Three photos of this half-size maquette survive (see [Projects of the monument to Empress Maria Feodorovna | | Reader Institute of St. Petersburg (institutspb.ru)](https://institutspb.ru/articles/proekty-pamyatnika-imperatrice-marii-fedorovne). This Russian source states that ET completed the life-size model by **May 1914** (but is apparently mistaken in saying the three images in the State Russian Museum [Hermitage?] are of it: they look half-size). Still working in Motono’s house ET also did a bust of him (unlocated) and of other Japanese in St Petersburg, including…

**1915 …** the *shakuhachi* (Japanese flute) virtuoso Rinzo Nakao, known professionally as Tozan Nakao (1876–1956). A photo in the Tozan Nakao Foundation in Kyoto, taken by Motono on **15 October**, shows him sitting with his flute as ET models in the foreground. She finished the prototype in one month though it is another version that is now with the Foundation.

**1915**  Death of ET’s father as reported by Motono in *Yomiuri* newspaper interview of 11 October 1917.

**Late 1916** ET follows Motono to Tokyo, following his appointment as Japanese Foreign Minister in **November**. Her visit is also sponsored by Seiki Kuroda, Japanese MP and himself a notable painter. Stays at the old Imperial Hotel and initially uses service space provided there as a temporary studio. Frank Lloyd Wright, who built the new Imperial Hotel, 1917–23, also had working studio space in an annexe he had previously added to the old one, to give it extra space and counted ‘Princess Tscheremissinoff’ among the ‘talented’ and ‘charming Russians’ he met in Tokyo (see *An Autobiography* [1943] p. 182). This is almost certainly ET.

**1917** **6 January**: ET is guest of Count Seiichiro Terashima at the Hamacho-Tokiwaya restaurant: others present are Seiki Kuroda, Ichiro Motono and his wife, and Seiichiro Nakajo (a Cambridge-University trained architect). Source: Kuroda’s published diary.

**27 January**: ET dines at Motono’s house (Russian dishes) where other guests include the Belgian-trained sculptor Kozaburo Takeishi (1877–1963) with whom she forms an ongoing friendship, frequently visiting his studio in Komagome, Tokyo. A photograph of them in his garden there includes another apparently younger European woman of similar appearance (see Yoshiro Sasaki, *Takeishi Kozaburo Note* [Kitanihon Bijyutsu, 1985], pp. 153–54). This may be her niece Ekatarina (b. 1900), daughter of her brother Vladimir. Ekatarina was a linguist who spent much time in the East and ended a visit to Japan in mid-1919 when she departed for Australia: see [Trewhella in Europe | Penwith Genealogy (proboards.com)](https://azazella.proboards.com/thread/123/trewhella-europe?page=15).

**June:** Seiki Kuroda’s diary confirms an elder sister of ET is with her in Japan though for how long is unknown or whether it was Maria Petroff (b. 1865) or Anna Kugelgen (b. 1872) – both long married. By then ET is renting a studio at Uchisaiwai-Cho 1-4 in Tokyo.

**16 October**: opening (for 36 days) of 11th Bunten (Ministry of Education Art Exhibition) in Ueno, Tokyo: its 3rd category was sculptures and 50 out of 214 works submitted were accepted. ET successfully submitted a ‘bronze’ of her statuette of Motono in hunting dress. (No such bronze is known so the idea it was cast may be misleading or at least a misunderstanding: it may have been the bronzed plaster still with Motono’s grandson in 1984 or another copy of that.) Selectors, chaired by Ogai Mori, were Koun Takemura, Taketarou Shinkai, Fumio Asakura. The show had 242,000 visitors. ET the only foreigner selected for exhibition (Source: SM 1983, p.86)

**1918 17 September:** death of ET’s prime Japanese supporter, Ichiro Motono, aged 56.

**14 October**: opening (for 38 days) of 12th Bunten (Ministry of Education Art Exhibition) in Ueno, Tokyo: selectors were as before and 48 out of 212 works were chosen, with ET again the only foreigner. She submitted a bronze of Hachirojiro Mitsui (head of the Mitsui Corporation), now unlocated. About 258,000 visitors attended the exhibition.

**1919 26 February:** ET meets Jinzo Naruse (1858–1919) in the morning, a week before his death on 4 March: Kotaro Takamura meets him p.m. ET completes relief plaque portrait of Naruse in three months: Takamura takes 14 years to complete a final bust, making and destroying models annually: his is now in the Naruse Memorial Building of the Japanese Women’s University [JWU] (日本女子大学) that Naruse had founded. Other Naruse busts were made by various Japanese sculptors, including Kozaburo Takeishi.

ET’s relief portrait was duplicated in three types (bronze and two different sizes of plaster) and distributed to graduates of JMU and other staff/ personnel according to *Kateishuho* magazine (家庭週). It is difficult to confirm both the quantities and types made: only one bronze and two plasters are now at JWU (日本女子大学).  SM tried to find out how many staff, students or graduates had bought them but without success, found no-one in possession of one and wide lack of knowledge that they existed. (Source: SM 1983, pp. 77–80). In 1984 he noted that the two plaster copies at the JWU are numbered N15 and N23 and that the bronze version there is neither signed nor dated. By then he had also discovered a third plaster version in possession of Mrs Kiwa Nagata, a 1919 graduate of the JWU, in this case signed ‘E. Tcheremissinoff Tokyo 1919 N59’ showing at least that number were made. In 1983 (p.89) he also noted the existence at JWU of a plaster bust of Naruse by an unknown artist, but in his view by ET. In 1984 he reports that it had by then been cast in bronze by Shiro Takahara to mark the 80th anniversary of the University and was placed in a ‘memorial room’ in the Naruse Memorial Building in October that year.

**1920 May:** ET sculptures exhibited at theMitsukoshi department store in Tokyo with watercolours of Japan and Korea by Elizabeth Keith and prints by Charles William Bartlett.

**October(?)** ET shows a bust titled ‘Elizabeth (Florentine style)’ –probably a self-portrait – at the second Teiten exhibition, Tokyo (successor to the previous Bunten shows). [SM 1984, but no further details given].

**1922 January:** ET shares an exhibition with a Czech painter apparently called ‘Suk’ (?) [スック] at Shiraki-ya in  Nihonbashi, Tokyo.  She exhibited: (1) ‘Three mysterious birds’, (2) ‘Darkrose dance’ (bronze), (3) ‘A Lady from the age of Louis XVI’, (4) ‘A Lady from the age of Louis-Philippe’. (Source: SM 1984, but no vol/page details).

No later Japan dates.

**Contemporary Japanese press articles about ET cited in SM 1983**

**On pp. 86–7**

Hakutei Ishii wrote a serialized column in a magazine called *Chuo Bijyutsu*.  According to one in vol. 3, no. 4, he met ET and Ichiro Motono at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, on 28 February 1917. He also visited her there on 13 March and subsequently wrote an article ‘Russian Female Sculptor visiting Japan’ in the magazine, including a portrait that he drew of her.

*Summary of this by Minako Sakakura*: ‘When I visited Ms. Tcheremissinoff at the Imperial Hotel, this female sculptor transformed the second floor of a waiting room for an entertainment/event hall as a temporary atelier and she was about to take a pause from working on a statue of a woman wearing cloth holding a mirror with a Japanese female model.  At the corner of the room there was a small statue of Viscount Motono holding a rifle with hunting outfit.

She stayed in Vienna for 8 to 10 years, and she started with studying artcraft then changed to sculpture.  She studied with [Arthur] Strasser [in Vienna]. After that she went to Paris for two years and Germany for one year.  In Paris she visited Rodin and asked him to seek his opinions of her work. She went back to Russia four years ago [1913] and she applied to enter the competition for the Empress Maria Memorial statue just before the deadline. But as she had just arrived in Petrograd [St Petersburg] she didn’t have time to look for an atelier.  She used Viscount Motono’s house to work on her sculpture and her work was selected. In this article there is a photo of a half-size Empress statue.  Also she entered the Saint Olga memorial statue competition and her work was selected.

Also in the autumn of 1916 she submitted a bust of Viscount Motono to an exhibition in St Petersburg. At the same time Motono was appointed Foreign Minister of Japan and she decided to go to Japan as well.’

[Ichiro Motono was born in 1862.  After working as a diplomat in Belgium, France, and Russia, in 1906 or 1908 (dates differ) he was appointed as Ambassador to Russia and Japanese Foreign Minister from November 1916.]

**On p. 88**

When ET’s statuette of Motono in hunting dress was selected for the Bunten exhibition in Tokyo early in October 1917 the *Yomiuri* newspaper (11 October 1917) published an interview with him. *Summary of this by Minako Sakakura:*

‘Tcheremissinoff’s father was a civil servant/official [in fact a lawyer and Imperial counsellor to Tsar Nicholas II] and president of the railway association, but he passed away two years ago [i.e. in 1915]. During my stay in Russia her father was my close friend.  About six or seven years ago, when there was a competition for the Emperess Maria’s bronze statue, she came back to Russia. She didn’t have her atelier so I let her use my atelier.  I was the model of the statue[tte] she submitted at the Ministry of Culture art exhibition now.  It was made when I was in Russia in a hunting outfit.  When she is at work, she is very enthusiastic and she finishes very fast.    She made other statues of other Japanese as a model, [i.e. in Russia, including] Tozan Nakao who is a shakuhachi [Japanese flute] virtuoso in Osaka. It also received a very good reputation.’

Motono did not mention his own bust by her in this piece but the 1984 article by Masabuchi Soichi includes the photo of ET working on the Tozan Nakao bust in Motono’s St Petersburg house that he found in the Tozan Nakao Foundation, Kyoto.

Motono was clearly prime supporter of ET in Japan but unfortunately died on 17 September 1918 at the age of 56.

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