

# East Asian Studies in Russia<sup>1</sup>

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## Historical background

Russia has an extremely rich and diverse background in East Asian Studies. After briefly introducing its historical roots, we will turn our attention to major organisations, including journals. Afterwards, we will discuss strengths and weaknesses as perceived by us.

The beginnings of East Asian Studies in Russia are closely related to the first contacts of Russians with the countries of East Asia and the advance of the Russians into Siberia, which started under the reign of Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible, 1530-1584). The development of oriental studies in Russia benefited from the educational reforms under the reign of Peter the Great (1672-1725), who considered it necessary to study oriental languages. The conclusion of the Nerchinsk treaty with China in 1689 and the development of the Kamchatka peninsula by Russia were another demonstration of her political and trade interests in the Far East. So, it was not purely by chance that the Russian government decided to stimulate the study of East Asian languages.

Thus, language schools, teaching East Asian languages in Russia, existed as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with publications on East Asia, such as *A Description of Japan* in 1734, based on translations of S. Korovin-Sinbirenin and I. Gorlitsky, or *A History of the Japanese State from Reliable Sources* by I. Reichel, a professor of Moscow University, in 1773. The year 1803 saw the establishment of an Academy of Sciences. Among its first members was G. Bayer who wrote one of the first European grammar books of the Chinese language.

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This report is to a large part based on interviews conducted in September 2001, and we would like to thank all those participating. Moreover, we gratefully acknowledge the kind organisational support by Dr. Irina P. Lebedeva and Dr. Elena L. Leontieva and would like to thank Dagmar Lee for helping with the English. Finally, we should stress that neither our interview partners nor the organizations we belong to are responsible for our interpretations; should there be any mistakes in this report, they are our responsibility.

The first Centre for East Asian Studies in Russia was the Asiatic Museum founded in St. Petersburg, the Russian capital at the time, in November 1818. The Museum with its library and its collection of rare oriental objects was active in research and in coordinating activities in East Asian Studies. In 1827, the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages was founded in Moscow, which engaged in the teaching of oriental languages. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, regular training of specialists in oriental studies was conducted at Kasan, Moscow and Kharkov Universities as well as at the Richelieu Lycee in Odessa and the Faculty of Oriental Languages of St. Petersburg University, where teaching activities were eventually concentrated after the Chairs of Oriental Studies in Kasan, Kharkov and Odessa were closed down in 1855. Japanese language teaching at St. Petersburg University started in 1870.

In 1899, an Oriental Institute was opened in Vladivostok which aimed at the practical teaching of oriental studies, while the other institutions in Russia at that time concentrated on classical oriental studies, i.e. on the study of old and ancient documents. The defeat in the Russian-Japanese war (1904-05) also led to an increase in studies of foreign policy, history, and the political geography of Japan. Internationally, Russian oriental studies were well recognized. Thus, for example, the third oriental congress took place in St. Petersburg in 1876 (after previous congresses in Paris and in London). Among others, N.I. Konrad, an outstanding specialist on Japanese language and literature, was teaching in St. Petersburg at the time.

In 1921, i.e. in Soviet times, on the basis of the Lazarev Institute in Moscow, the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies was founded, which, like its predecessor, engaged in the teaching of oriental languages. In 1929, a "Group of Oriental Studies", comprising all members of the Academy of Sciences active in oriental studies, was formed. In 1930, on this basis and as a successor to the Asiatic Museum, the Collegium of Orientalists, the Institute for the Study of Buddhist Culture and the Turcological Cabinet, an Institute of Oriental Studies was established in St. Petersburg within the framework of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. This symbolised a radical change in the organisation of East Asian Studies within the Academy of Sciences: scholars who had worked on their own or in small groups found themselves united into one large institution. The direction of research was now planned in accordance with the interests of the government. As a result, new topics of research were introduced, such as the modern history and economy of the countries of the East as well as national movements for independence in Asia and Africa. In this way, more emphasis was put on social science research on East Asia, while at the same time the strengths in classical East Asian studies were retained.

During World War II (1941-1945) the Institute for Oriental Studies was dissolved and a part of its researchers evacuated to Moscow. After a temporary downturn in East Asian Studies caused by the war, the Institute of Oriental Studies served as a base for creating the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) in 1944, a leading centre for the education of experts in East Asian Studies. In 1950, the Institute of Oriental Studies moved its head office to Moscow. The collection of oriental manuscripts remained in St. Petersburg and was transformed into a branch of the Institute. In 1954, the Moscow Institute for Oriental Studies (the one engaged

in teaching) was closed and, in 1956, the Institute of Asian and African Studies (IAAS) at Moscow State University was founded.

After World War II, and especially since 1956, an even stronger shift to research on the (contemporary) socioeconomic and political development of East Asian countries emerged. In 1957, an Institute of Chinese Studies was established within the framework of the Academy of Sciences, but it was dissolved again in 1958. It was succeeded by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies in 1966, with a focus on social science research on China. A strong group of researchers in East Asian economic studies had always been working at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Academy of Sciences (IMEMO) since it was founded in 1956. In 1985, a new director, Evgeni Primakov (later to become Prime Minister), took charge of the Institute, bringing with him a group of researchers from the Institute of Oriental Studies. At that time a Centre for Asian-Pacific Research was established. Research on East Asia had been conducted at different departments of IMEMO before though, such as at the Centre for Western Europe and Japan and the Department of Developing Countries.

The 1990s brought severe economic problems for Russia resulting in strongly reduced spending on science. Therefore, the number of researchers at the huge Academy Institutes — the maximum number of researchers at the Institute for World Economy and International Relations, for instance, amounted to more than 1,000 in the late 1980s — declined substantially. The 1990s also saw the emergence of new institutions whose work was mainly in teaching. Moreover, due to rising transportation costs and the generally bad financial situation, scholarly exchange between Vladivostok and other centres of East Asian Studies in the Far East as well as the centres in the European part of Russia severely decreased. However, cooperation between these institutions and institutions in nearby countries of East Asia has since increased.

### **Institutions in East Asian Studies**

As stated in the introduction, Institutions in East Asian Studies in Russia have traditionally been divided into two groups: institutes within the framework of the Russian Academy of Sciences (in Soviet times Academy of Sciences of the USSR), engaged in research and in the teaching at Ph.D. level or above, and universities, engaged in teaching, while doing relatively little research.

The most important institutions in East Asian Studies in Russia within the framework of the Russian Academy of Sciences are

- the Institute of Oriental Studies, which, according to its homepage, employs about 600 researchers in oriental studies (this figure includes also researchers outside East Asian Studies),
- the Institute of Far Eastern Studies (200 researchers in East Asian Studies) which is mainly engaged in research on Chinese Studies, and
- the Institute of World Economy and International Relations which has a small but renowned group of researchers in East Asian Studies.

Between these institutions there seems to be a kind of division of labour. While the Institute of Oriental Studies works mainly on problems of the economy, on politics, history and culture, it focuses less on current issues, which are covered by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies, paying close attention to political affairs. The Centre of Asian-Pacific Research of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations concentrates on research on the economic situation and on international relations of East Asian countries.

There are other academy institutes doing noteworthy work in various sections of East Asian Studies. Among them, for example, the Institute on the USA and Canada has a research focus on the relations of East Asian countries with North America, and the Institute of Peoples and Ethnography of the Far East on migration and exchange with nearby East Asia. The data part of this report contains some more detailed information on these and other academy institutes.

According to our understanding, the major university-level institutions in East Asian studies are:

- the Institute of Asian and African Studies (IAAS) of Moscow State University,
- the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University),
- the Oriental Institute of St. Petersburg University, and
- the Oriental Institute of Far Eastern State University in Vladivostok.

All these institutions provide their students with a strong command of the language of the country they study. Nevertheless, there are differences in that, for example, language education at IAAS enjoys a particularly good reputation, while MGIMO offers a wide range of well-grounded disciplinary subjects, such as economics, which can be combined with the study of an East Asian language. Along with MGIMO, the Oriental Institute of Far Eastern State University has a social science orientation, while the Oriental Institute of St. Petersburg University is classically oriented.

In addition to the established centres, a number of universities not engaged in the teaching of East Asian Studies or languages before has entered this area during the last decade, among them the Russian State University of Humanities and Moscow State Linguistic University, and also universities in Nizhny Novgorod, Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Chita and Blagoveshchensk.

While traditionally the study at Russian universities has, after passing the entrance examination, been free of charge for students (they even receive small scholarships), there is a tendency now for universities to accept a number of students by charging tuition fees. Along with these, private universities have been established, where tuition fees are compulsory, such as the Institute of Practical Oriental Studies (established by IAAS), Oriental Collegium in St. Petersburg and Oriental University (established by IOS), the last being an example of an institution of the Academy of Sciences to enter undergraduate teaching. One of the reasons for the creation of these private institutions has been the desire to give the teaching staff a chance to earn extra money in addition to their small salaries at their home institution. Another

reason is that there is substantial demand for education in East Asian Studies beyond the regular capacities of the established institutions.

Major libraries in Moscow collecting literature on East Asian Studies are the Russian State Library, the Library of Foreign Literature, the libraries of the Institute of Asian and African Studies, the Institute for Oriental Studies, the Institute for Far Eastern Studies (particularly for Chinese Studies), Moscow State Institute for International Relations, the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (particularly for economic studies of East Asia), and the Institute for Scientific Information on Social Sciences.

Below, we give some more detailed information on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean studies respectively. We provide names of scholars for easier reference. This is not meant as an evaluation of their work; particularly, it is not meant as a critical judgement, if, for one reason or another, a scholar working in that institution is not mentioned here.

### **Institutions in Chinese Studies**

The major centres of Chinese Studies are located in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Ulan-Ude, and Novosibirsk. The Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Department of China, headed by Prof. Dr. Alexei A. Bokshchanin, specialises in the old and ancient history of China and for the past 32 years has held annual conferences on "State and Society in China", with the subsequent publication of the conference volumes. The St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies is also historically oriented and concentrates on the translation of ancient texts, such as the scriptures from Dunhuang, the manuscripts of which are in the archives in St. Petersburg.

The somewhat younger Institute of Far Eastern Studies was created in Soviet times as an institute for comprehensive research on China. It concentrates on the contemporary problems of China after 1949 and it has served the needs of the government for information about China, major topics being the political system of People's Republic of China and the personnel policy of the Chinese Communist Party. For the past 22 years it has held annual conferences on "China and the World", with the subsequent publication of the conference volumes. With a staff of about 400 researchers it was the largest research centre on China in the Soviet Union and even though the number of researchers has declined since, it still remains the largest research centre on China in Russia. Consequently, the Russian Association of Chinese Studies is administered from within the Institute of Far Eastern Studies and headed by the director of the institute, Prof. Dr. Mikhail L. Titarenko.

Apart from these institutes, substantial social science research on China is done at the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (mainly Prof. Dr. Gelbras and Dr. Salitsky, both in economics), the Institute for Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University (mainly Dr. Ganshin and Prof. Dr. Gelbras, but also Prof. Dr. Meliantsev in economics and Prof. Dr. Meliksetov in political science), Moscow State Institute of International Relations (Ms. Efremova, Prof. Dr. Korsun, Prof. Dr. Meliksetov and Prof. Dr. Voskressenski in political science as well as Prof.

Dr. Gureeva in Law), in Vladivostok and at a few other institutions. The Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East concentrates on problems of Manchuria, while in Novosibirsk archaeological research is carried out on the Northern part of China.

### Institutions in Japanese Studies<sup>2</sup>

The major centres of Japanese Studies are located in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, Kasan, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, and Ulan-Ude. At the level of the Russian Academy of Sciences there are three major institutes that engage in Japanese Studies: the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations and the Institute of Far Eastern Studies.

The Institute of World Economy and International Relations has a group of researchers on the Japanese economy around Prof. Dr. Ya A. Pevzner, Prof. Dr. V.B. Ramzes and Dr. E.L. Leontieva. Professor Pevzner, who is well above eighty years of age, is the teacher of a whole school of specialists on the Japanese economy. His numerous works include *The Government in the Economy* (1976, in Russian).

The Centre for Japanese Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies is headed by Prof. Dr. Elgena V. Molodyakova, a political scientist, and consists of two groups of researchers, one working in politics and economics (Dr. Denisov, Dr. Markaryan, Dr. Matrusova, Dr. Lebedeva, Prof. Dr. Timonina, Dr. Yeryomin), and the other working in history and culture. At the Department of History and Culture of Ancient Orient there is a well-known group of researchers in Japanese ancient history around Professor Alexander Nikolaevich Meshcheryakov. In 1999, a two-volume (664 and 704 pages) history of Japan was published. A project on Shinto is under way. Much of Japanese literature, such as Kojiki, Manyoshu, Genji Monogatari, etc., has been translated into Russian.

The Japan Centre at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies headed by Dr. Victor N. Pavlyatenko is the youngest of its kind under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences. Its main tasks cover research on foreign policy (especially Russian-Japanese, Japanese-American and Japanese-Chinese and Japanese-ASEAN relations) and domestic policy (mainly the role of political parties and trade unions), the importance of the latter having somewhat declined, however, during the past years due to the shrinking number of researchers. Problems regarding the military potential of Japan have over a long period been a major topic of research (especially of Dr. Bunin). On the other hand, research is carried out on topics that are new to the centre, such as enterprise legislation, and cultural and ecological issues.

In the early 1990s the three institutes formed the Centre for Contemporary Japanese Studies, which is financially supported by the Japan Foundation. Under this umbrella each institute has, since 1995, published one book a year on current socio-economic and political problems of Japan. Recent titles include (all titles are in Russian with some of them containing an English summary):

<sup>2</sup> A helpful overview on Japanese studies in Russia was published in June 2002 (Diakonova et al. 2002).

*Edited by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations:*

- V.B. Ramzes (ed.) (2000): *Japan: a collection of random essays (zuihitsu)*  
 V.B. Ramzes (ed.) (1999): *Japan: with what into the third millennium*  
 V.B. Ramzes (ed.) (1998): *Japan: turning the page*  
 V.B. Ramzes (ed.) (1998): *Japan: reaching out for new frontiers and beyond*  
 V.B. Ramzes (ed.) (1995): *Japan: half a century of renovation*

*Edited by the Institute of Oriental Studies:*

- A.E. Joukov, A.I. Kravtsevich (eds.) (2000): *Japan 2000: Conservatism and Traditionalism*  
 A.I. Kravtsevich, I.P. Lebedeva (eds.) (1999): *Japan: Myths and Realities*  
 A.I. Kravtsevich, I.P. Lebedeva (eds.) (1998): *Japan in the '90s: System Crisis or Contemporary Malfunctions?*  
 A.I. Kravtsevich (ed.) (1998): *Postwar Government Policy: Changes and Responses*

*Edited by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies:*

- V.N. Pavliatko (ed.) (2000): *Japan in the Contemporary World: Factors of Stable Development and Security*  
 V. N. Bunin (ed.) (1996): *Japan and Problems of Security in the Asia-Pacific Region*  
 D.V. Petrov (ed.) (1995): *Evolution of the Political System of Japan*  
 D.V. Petrov (ed.) (1995): *The Japanese Experience in Solving Socioeconomic Problems*  
 D.V. Pospelov (ed.) (1994): *Japan and the World Community: Socio-psychological Aspects of Internationalisation*

The office of the Centre and its library are located at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations. Under Professor Vadim Borisovich Ramzes, who handles all the major part of the editorial work himself, the Journal *Znakomtes' Yaponiya (Meet Japan)* is published. Moreover, the Centre conducts an annual contest of papers among students of Moscow universities; the three best papers are published and their authors receive a prize money of 200 US\$. The Centre also invites students to use the library for consultations, advice, etc.

Apart from this Centre there is the Russian Association of Japanologists, which has about 150 members. Its head office is located at the Japan Centre of the Institute of Oriental Studies and is under the direction of Dr. Irina Lebedeva. The association, which is financially supported by the Japan Foundation, is in charge of editing a yearbook on Japan. With financial support from the Japanese trading house "Iskra", it has issued a series on lessons to be drawn from the Japanese experience with regard to Russian reforms. Similar to the Centre for Japanese Studies, it also conducts a contest of papers among students, but on a nationwide level and with substantially more prizes (seven prizes for undergraduate students, four for Ph.D. students, and three for young scholars) and higher prize money (500 US\$, 600 US\$ and 700 US\$ respectively). Within this contest each year 50-60 papers are submitted and some of the papers (three in 2001) are included in the yearbook. The association organises conferences, an example being the conference on "The Japanese phenomenon: views from Europe" in 2001, which, with some eighty participants, was the first major conference to be held since the end of the Soviet Union, bringing together most of the researchers on Japanese studies from Moscow and, partly, St. Petersburg.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the association supports elderly specialists in Japanese Studies financially.

<sup>3</sup> The proceedings have been published in the meantime (Diakonova et. al. 2001).

As in Chinese studies, the major centres in social science research on Japan at university level are the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (Prof. Dr. Nozdreva and Prof. Dr. Alekseev in economics as well as Prof. Dr. Molodyakova in political science), Moscow State University (Prof. Dr. Tikhotskaya and Prof. Dr. Timonina, both in economics) and the Oriental Institute of Far Eastern State University. The Faculty of Oriental Studies at St. Petersburg University is oriented towards classical studies of Japan.

### **Institutions in Korean Studies**

The major centres of Korean Studies in Russia are Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vladivostok. After the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea, in 1992, and with the support from the Korea Foundation, an International Centre for Korean Studies was established at the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University. Headed by Prof. Dr. Mikhail Nikolaevich Park, it comprises mainly specialists on Korean history, doing, for example, a translation of *Samguk sagi*. Also, the establishment of the Higher College of Korean Studies at Far Eastern University was supported by the Korea Foundation.

The Department of Korea of the Institute of Oriental Studies, which is headed by Dr. Yuri V. Vanin, also mainly concentrates on Korean history, but some of its members do research on the country's literature, language, culture, and international relations. Among its major publications is a two-volume history of Korea published in 1974. The Department of Written Monuments of the Peoples of the Orient has two researchers on Korean classical literature.

Modern problems are studied at the Centre for Korean Studies at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies, headed by Dr. Vadim P. Tkachenko. The reason why Korean studies came to be studied at the institute was because Korea had for a long period of its history been under Chinese suzerainty and, more important, because of a rivalry between the USSR and China over their respective influence on North Korea. Therefore, for a long time there had been one person working on Korea. In 1992-93, a Centre for Japanese and Korean Studies was founded and somewhat later a separate Centre for Korean Studies was set up, which nowadays consists of five researchers. Some of them have been working in Pyongyang for many years. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea, more research has been done on South Korea, the major areas of research being politics, economics, sociology as well as ethnographic-cultural characteristics of the Koreans and their influence on politics.

A social science approach in studies on Korea is also pursued by the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (Dr. Semyonova, Dr. Tolaraya and Prof. Dr. Torkunov, mainly covering economics, history, and political science), the Institute for World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Prof. Dr. Fedorovsky, covering economics) and the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University (Prof. Dr. Andrianov and Dr. Suslina, both covering economics).



At the Faculty of Oriental Studies of St. Petersburg University there are mainly Korean studies of the classical type. Also, there are three researchers in Korean studies at the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of Peoples of the Far East, who mainly work on problems of migration and on Russian-South and North Korean relations.

It should be noted that in Russia there live about one hundred and fifty thousand native Koreans. Having a basic knowledge of the Korean language, some of them have become researchers in Korean Studies. Not surprisingly, the history of Koreans in Russia and in Central Asia is also a special research topic of Korean studies in Russia.

There are annual conferences in Korean studies, which are said to be attended by a high percentage of researchers working in the field. Those working on the middle ages try to relate their topics to modern Korea by looking at the issues with regard to their influence on the present. In 2001, a two-volume conference booklet (179 and 163 pages) was published in Russian under the title *Koreiskii poluostrov (Korean Peninsula)* by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies.

Last, but not least, we would like to mention that the Institute of Oriental Studies is preparing a book about Korean Studies in Russia, covering the fields of history, economy and culture.

## Russian Journals in East Asian Studies

*The major scientific journals in East Asian Studies in Russia are:*

*Problemy Dalnego Vostoka* (issued six times a year by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies, concentrating mainly on Chinese Studies), an abridged English translation is available under the name *Far Eastern Studies*

*Vostok — Orient* (issued by the Russian Academy of Sciences)

*Znakomtes' Japoniya — Meet Japan* (issued four times a year by the Centre for Japanese Studies with financial support from the Japan Foundation, on a regular basis it covers problems of Japanese economy, politics, history, sociology, culture and literature)

*Ezhegodnik Japoniya — Yearbook Japan* (issued by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies, the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations and the Russian Union of Japanologists, on a regular basis it covers politics, economics and management, society and culture, and history)

*Yaponskii opyt dlja rossiiskikh reform — Japanese Experience for Russian Reforms* (issued by the Russian Union of Japanologists with financial support from the Japanese trading house "Iskra")

*Asia i Afrika segodnja — Asia and Africa today* (issued by the Institute of Oriental Studies, it covers the whole Asian and African region)

*Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya (MEiMO) — World Economy and International Relations* (issued by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, it covers economics and politics worldwide, among others, in East Asia)

Apart from these journals, there is a journal designed for the general public called *Yaponiya Segodnya — Japan Today*. More important than the Journal itself may be its homepage <http://www.japantoday.ru>, which collects current information about Japan in the Russian language. Among others, articles of the Journal *Zakomtes' Japoniya — Meet Japan* have been included therein. Also, the Russian Union of Japanologists plans to issue a new online journal in English which is to be called the *Russian Journal of Japanese Studies*.

## **Strengths and Problems of East Asian Studies in Russia**

Summing up, there is a broad expertise on East Asian Studies in Russia, even after the shake-up of the 1990s. In 2000, about ten universities in Moscow were teaching East Asian Languages. Students can exchange views with Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans friends, and, as long as they can afford it, can go to China, Japan, or South Korea.

In Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok and elsewhere a couple of new institutions in East Asian Studies have been founded since 1990. In some cases, their level of excellence may not yet have reached that of the established institutions, but they help to meet a growing demand for young professionals with a knowledge of East Asian languages, who especially in the Far Eastern part of Russia are important trading partners.

Financial problems of the Russian government have led to difficulties for scientific institutions, and not only for those in East Asian studies. This has resulted in young university graduates and also some of the established researchers preferring to move abroad or to jobs in industry and commerce. This was most apparent during the years 1992 to 1998, which saw the emergence of only relatively few Ph.D. candidates, but a rapidly rising average age of researchers in East Asian studies instead. The number of Ph.D. students is recovering nowadays, mainly because the demand of the labour market for specialists, which was tremendous after 1992, has somewhat eased off, and because major companies are starting to look for employees with a high level of education.

Another problem is that publishers (as in Western countries) prefer to publish textbooks of general interest rather than specialised scientific books.

Thanks to a very intensive language education, the research and teaching staff usually possess a very good command of East Asian languages. Most publications are in Russian. Only little is published in English, and even less in other Western languages. It is not uncommon to publish in the language of the country one is studying, though.

As for the methodical approach of the scholarly work, it is, of course, difficult to generalize with so many different subdivisions and personalities involved. Our impression is that research is rarely based on explicit references to theories or on rigorous attempts to deal with hypotheses. This may have to do with the fact that currently much of the research capacity is used in teaching and to provide information to the general public and the government. On the positive side, there is a strong and diverse tradition of learning on the Far East, a high level of abilities in East Asian languages, rich empirical scholarship based on sincere, careful analysis and Russia's position as a major country at the crossroads of East and West.

Low salaries have led to a situation of researchers and teaching staff having to work at several institutions at the same time. The serious financial situation and market forces have resulted in new topics of research, such as astrology in China or enterprise legislation in Japan.

Generally speaking, there are three major sources of financial means for research: the government budget, sponsors, and work on demand, especially for the government. As far as East Asian Studies in Russia are concerned, there are only few sponsoring enterprises. Therefore, research strongly depends on grants and on the government. In Soviet times, there was a 50% addition to the salary for the knowledge of an East Asian language, a system which does not exist any more. As for compensation, the Institutes of the Academy of Sciences improve the salaries somewhat out of extra funds available to them. In the early 1990s, there were serious disputes as to how to precede with the property and real estate of the Academy institutes. Under Prime Minister Evgeni Primakov, it was decided by law that the Academy of Sciences was to keep its property. Thus, the institutes of the Academy were able to rent parts of their property and to use the income to improve the salaries of their researchers. There are still disputes with local authorities on the amount of taxation, but there seems to be a general understanding that if taxation becomes too high, this would seriously undermine science and thus the future of the Russian Federation.

Universities have improved their income through the introduction of some sort of fee-paying system and through the establishment of purely private institutions in their periphery, where students are only accepted on the basis of substantial tuition fees.

International contacts with East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea) are intensifying not only in the Russian Far East, but also in the other parts of Russia. Agreements with East Asian universities on the exchange of students have been concluded. Participation in conferences and research stays of Russians in East Asia and of East Asians in Russia has come to be regarded as something quite normal. The increasing reintegration of Russian research on East Asia into the world-wide scholarly community is also documented by the fact that the conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies in 2002 took place in Moscow and that the World Oriental Congress in 2004 will take place there.

Through access to the internet, Russian students and more senior scholars can access topical news, participate in internet conferences etc. Principally, there seems to be access to the internet at all the institutions. Given very small budgets, the problems lie more in the access to printed material in languages other than Russian. Substantial help is provided by East Asian countries or firms. Thus, for example, China supports the Institute of Far Eastern Studies with literature. The news agency Xinhua is providing them with free access to their databases. The Japan Foundation has been playing a very important role in sustaining the quality and the breadth of Japanese studies in Russia in the very difficult period since the 1990s. Support from Japan also comes from private foundations and enterprises. Korean Studies have in recent years been supported by the Korea Foundation. Our interview partners showed sincere gratitude for the support these foundations had given. So far, no intervention in content seems to have occurred.

## Conclusions

East Asian studies in Russia has traditionally been concentrated on classical, philological studies, but even after the melt-down of personnel in the 1990s, there is also a considerable social science capacity on the East Asian regions, going well beyond the academic infrastructure of most other European countries. The level of language teaching is another focus of the Russian academic community. Most of this capacity is currently used to train young professionals for business. Salary conditions in the scholarly world are totally uncompetitive, so there is a serious threat to academic succession. While English has become the *lingua franca* of the scholarly society world-wide, Russian scholarship has predictably not fully entered this circle yet. Often it seems easier for Russian scholars to converse and write in their chosen regional language than in English or in any other Western language.

The major problems of East Asian studies in Russia are finance and the situation of accession and junior scholarship. Research is rarely based on explicit references to theories or on rigorous attempts to deal with theoretically meaningful hypotheses. Of course, this is not only an issue in Russia, but also a methodological problem of East Asian studies in general. On the positive side, there is a strong and diverse tradition of learning on the so-called Far East, a high level of language teaching, rich empirical scholarship based on sincere, careful analysis and Russia's position as a major country at the crossroads of East and West, which in future should regain its importance also in scholarship.

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