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CURRENT STUDIES ON JAPANESE CULTURE, LITERATURE AND HISTORY IN LENINGRAD

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I would like to examine the current trends in Japanese studies in Leningrad, mainly in the Institute of Oriental Studies, Leningrad Branch, with which I have been associated for more than 15 years. Leningrad (formerly St. Petersburg) is the oldest center of Japanese studies in the Soviet Union. It was here that the school of Japanese language was organized, in 1736, and the teachers then were Japanese natives who had been shipwrecked near Kamchatka. Thus, the history of Japanese language courses in Leningrad (Petersburg) University dates back to the 1870's.

The Academic Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad was organized in 1930 in connection with the Asiatic Museum, famous all over the world for its collection of manuscripts and old-printed books. The Japanese collection there numbers 4,000 volumes. A collection of the same size can also be found in the library of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University. This is the Arisugawa's Fund—donated by Prince Arisugawa to the Russian tsar, Alexander .

The existence of a large collection of Japanese manuscripts and old-printed books framed the main direction of research in Leningrad—the study of old texts and the history of culture. As for contemporary problems such as economy and politics, these are studied mainly in Moscow. However, one can not understand the tendencies and characteristics of contemporary and future developments of Oriental countries without a precise knowledge of their traditions and the influence these have had on the present situation in the East. This is true in regard

to all Oriental countries, Japan included. So the great role of traditions in the life, culture and politics of the contemporary East has determined the path of studies carried out in the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad, as well as the place the Institute occupies in world Japanese studies.

At present there are 11 specialists in Japanese studies in the Institute, and I would like to give a more detailed account of their work. In the 50's and 60's their main efforts were concentrated on the description of the collection of Japanese manuscripts and old-printed books and the cataloguing of this collection. The catalogue was printed in the 60's and 70's in six volumes. Since that time, studies of the history of culture have gradually developed.

The subject of the genesis of Japanese culture and state have attracted the attention of Professor M. Vorobjov, a well-known authority on the subject. His books *Ancient Japan* (1958) and *Japan, 200-600* (1980) are widely read among the specialists in our country. He is now studying the legislative system of the *ritsuryo* state in comparison with the legislative systems of China, Vietnam, Korea and other countries.

Since last year Y. Mikhailova has started studies on the history and ideology of the imperial institution in Japan from ancient times to the *Meiji Ishin* (Meiji Restoration) dealing not only with early forms of Japanese state but also with Shinto myths and rituals too. Her article "*Daijosai*—Great New Food Festival (On the Character of Imperial Power in Japan)" was published in *Narodi Asii i Afriki* (1989), the main journal in the U.S.S.R. to deal with oriental matters.

Another theme of importance is the subject of similarities and differences between Japanese culture and the culture of East Asian and Pacific regions, as well as the comparison of Japanese and European cultures, including our Russian culture. In other words, the typology of Japanese culture. In order to gain a wider picture, it is necessary to study the core elements of cultures of Far Eastern countries. This problem attracts

the attention of all Leningradian Japanologists—historians, linguists, researchers of literature, who study from antiquity to modern times. And not only Japanologists, but the researchers of China and Korea are also concerned with this subject. I would like to stress the fact that in recent times the tendency to study all the countries of the Far East in total, i.e. to find out the common laws of the development of the countries of the region, has become a major theme for the Japanese studies department in Leningrad.

Studies of the medieval history of Japan are not yet well developed. There is only one specialist in our Institute, V. Klimov, who is concerned with studies on the people's movements in the Kamakura and Ashikaga periods. His studies are highly appreciated for his ability to examine people's movements not only from the point of view of class struggle but also in a broad cultural context. Klimov's monography, which is soon to be finished, will make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the medieval history of Japan.

The object of the studies conducted by Professor Z. Hanin, another historian at our Institute, is the problem of *burakumin*. He has already published three monographies on the theme: *The Social Groups of Japanese Pariah* (1973), *Pariahs in Japanese Society* (1980), *Burakumin—the Discriminated Minority in Japan* (1989).

There are also two historians of Tokugawa Japan in Leningrad University. L. Zenina is a specialist in historiography, while the doctoral thesis of A. Filippov (1989) is devoted to the discussion of socio-economic problems of Tokugawa Japan and is based on the *Tokugawa Seiken Hyakka-jo* and *Osadamegaki Hyakka-jo*.

Research in Japanese literature is traditionally considered to be one of the main concerns of Japanese studies in Leningrad. The analysis of works of various writers and publicists is combined with the studies of literary trends and genres and translations of Japanese literature into Russian. Thus, Professor V. Goreglyad, chief of the Japanese Department

of the Institute of Oriental Studies, is well known as a translator and researcher of classical Japanese literature. He has published translations of *Tsurezuregusa* (1970), *Kankai Ibun* (1961), authored *Nikki and Zuihitsu in Japanese Literature, 900-1200* (1975), *Ki-no Tsurayuki* (1983) and others.

The main object of the studies of G. Ivanova is Meiji and Taisho literature. She has published two books about Kotoku Shusui: *Kotoku—Revolutionary and Publicist* (1959), *The Case of Insulting the Throne* (1972) and one about Mori Ogai (1982). At present she is showing an interest in Japanese-Russian cultural contacts from the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Her new book will be devoted to the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Japan, with Nikolai Kasatkin at the head, and the activities of the Russian language teachers in the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Y. Sviridov has, for more than fifteen years, conducted studies on the world of *setsuwabungaku* and recently has translated novels by Matsumoto Seicho, which will be published in the near future.

A. Kabanov has devoted his attention to *gozan bungaku*, concentrating on its cultural, ideological and aesthetic aspects.

Separate research on the works of various Japanese writers and genres, carried out by different scholars individually, laid the foundation for the joint work *History of Japanese Literature*, in two volumes, which has been written by Leningrad and Moscow scholars together and is to be published soon.

There are five specialists of Japanese literature in Leningrad University who combine their own research with reading theoretical courses in literature and the practical teaching of Japanese language. Among the subjects of their studies, those that deserve a mention are: *yomihon* of the Tokugawa period (I. Melnikova), Taoka Reiun and publicists of the Meiji period (Professor D. Bugaeva), Futabatei Shimei and Russian literature in Japan (T. Zoktoeva), *shizenshugi* and Tayama Katai (N.

Smirnova), post-war Japanese literature (G. Maksimova). The number of students who enter the Japanese Department every year varies from five to ten, including those who come from other Eastern European countries.

The characteristic feature of recent Japanese Studies is the growing interest in Japanese religions and intellectual history. Apart from his book on *nikki* and *zuihitsu*, Professor Goreglyad has also written articles on Buddhism such as "Buddhism and Japanese Culture, 700-1100" published in *Buddhism, State and Society in the Countries of Central and East Asia in the Middle Ages* (1982).

A. Kabanov contributed a stream of articles and minor translations on Kamakura Buddhism to learned journals and he wrote texts for a number of encyclopedic editions. Among them, the following should be mentioned "The Formation of *gozan* (five monasteries system) and the bureaucratization of Zen-Buddhism" in *Buddhism and State in the Far East* (1988). A young scholar from the Museum of History of Religion and Atheism, N. Borshzevsky, prepared his doctoral thesis on Tenrikyo (1989).

The intellectual history of Tokugawa and Meiji Japan has attracted the attention of several scholars. In 1986, K. Mapandjan wrote his doctoral thesis on Ogyu Sorai's Confucian essays *Bendo* and *Bemmei*. She is now studying the school of Yamazaki Ansai and Yoshikawa Shinto. The final subject of her research is focussed on understanding Shinto-Confucian mutual influence in Japan. Also in this field, Mikhailova published in 1989, a book about Motoori Norinaga that was the result of her 10 years of research on the school of National Learning.

It was in the thirties that academician N. Konrad initiated studies on the intellectual history of Meiji Japan. In the seventies his cause was continued by V. Kobets and Y. Mikhailova. They dedicated their energy in their doctoral theses to Fukuzawa Yukichi, the most outstanding representative of Japanese Enlightenment, and to the ideology of

Jiyu Minken Undo. This year Mikhailova summarized all previous studies on the theme in *The Social Thought of Japan, 1860-1880*. Among other summarizing works we can find *Some Aspects of the History of Social Thought in Japan, 1600-1800* (1990), which is the result of joint efforts by the Japanologists of the Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies.

The above mentioned research of Leningradian Japanologists reflect the traditional areas of Japanese studies undertaken in the first half of the twentieth century. But we may say that they coincide, to a high degree, with the "new historical consciousness" that appeared after the introduction of perestroika. In other words, it can be said that the essence of perestroika has always been a characteristic of Japanese studies in Leningrad compared to other historical sciences in the U.S.S.R..

It is worth while mentioning here some conceptual aspects characteristic to the "new historical consciousness" in regard to Japanese studies. First of all, in their main methodological approach, specialists in Japanese studies in Leningrad always kept in mind the fact that the countries of the East, Japan included, possess particular characteristics of their own in their historical development. These very particularities do not always coincide with the Marxist scheme of five social and economical structures. Marx and Engels worked out their scheme on the basis of European materials, but afterwards it was applied to Oriental history without thorough theoretical comprehension. Consequently, there appeared a gap between the theory of five social and economical structures and the results of concrete research in Oriental history.

Nowadays other theories have also become attractive to Soviet scholars. For example, it is worth-while mentioning the so-called civilizational or regional theory. According to this theory, Japan, China, Southern Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and other countries of the region, form the Far Eastern-Confucian civilization, which along with the European one, possessed the potential for capitalistic development. Contact with European civilization awoke this potential, and the result in Japan was the synthesis

of civilizations which took on the most harmonic and successful forms. Such cultural research in the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad may help to pinpoint the particularities of the Far Eastern civilization, as a whole, as well as the particularities of each country within and to understand how these influenced development in Japan, China, Korea and other countries of the region.

Another important feature of the "new historical consciousness" is the total rejection of Eurocentrism. From the point of view of Eurocentrism, the laws of development of European countries were the only ones to be considered feasible. Thus, Meiji *Ishin* was viewed as an uncompleted bourgeois revolution; Japanese Enlightenment during the Meiji Era was looked on as a simple, mechanical diffusion of Western ideas and concepts; and the Movement for Freedom and People's Rights (*Jiyu Minken Undo*) was evaluated in accordance with the criteria of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Europe. In my last book, *The Social Thought of Japan, 1860-80*. I tried to reject all such approaches by concentrating mainly on the works of Japanese scholars.

In the years of perestroika, Soviet historians have recognized the necessity of religious studies. For a long time, the studies of religion in our country were simply ignored. This was backed by an assumption that religion belongs only to the past and that the present world is secularizing, hence, scholars must pay much more attention to the different forms of ideology that have appeared in recent times. This assumption turned out to be a false one: the role of religion as a cultural and political factor, especially in the East, has proven to be very important.

Leningradian Japanologists realized this long ago and their studies devoted to the examination of Buddhism and Shinto, mentioned above, is evidence of this. But the achievements in this field are not yet satisfactory. For instance, the time for writing a textbook on the history of Japanese religions for students has not yet come. Such things as Shinto rituals, folk beliefs and their role in the formation of Japanese

culture have not yet been studied to the full.

Lately, the methods of structural analysis of mythological texts has become widespread in our country. The tradition of this method goes back to the days of Petersburg University, but in the thirties and forties many scholars who were brought up in this tradition were repressed. In the sixties and seventies, methods of structural analysis of texts were revived in regards to Indo-European materials by such outstanding scholars such as Toporov, Ivanov and Lottman. In the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad the methods of structural analysis are widely used by the researchers of Korean myths, but none of the Japanologists have yet to attempt an application of these methods. It will be one of the tasks of future Japanese studies to apply the methods of structural analysis to Japanese mythological texts and rituals.

One more important feature of this "new historical consciousness" concerns the study of politics. Politics is to be studied not only from the point of view of class struggle and class interests but in close connection with culture and historical experience of former generations. Though the necessity of this approach was realized long ago, it hasn't yet found its way into concrete studies on political life, and on the essence and structure of state power of Japan.

Perestroika has opened up new possibilities for international contact. Now Soviet scholars can not only take an active part in all kinds of international conferences and symposiums, but we are also looking forward to future co-operation with foreign scholars in the field of joint research and publications.

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