

Protocol of the Sixth “Summit” of Slavist Associations in East Asia

Date and Time: August 8, 2013, 6-8 pm.

Place: Osaka University of Economics and Law, Yao Campus

Working languages: Russian and English

This meeting was chaired by Professor Mitsuyoshi Numano of University of Tokyo, who is the Chairperson of the Japanese Council for Russian and East European Studies (JCREES)

This protocol is based on the stenographic records made by Go Koshino, Associate Professor of Hokkaido University, and Atsushi Ogushi, Associate Professor of Keio University

Representatives

From Japan:

Mitsuyoshi Numano, Chairperson of the JCREES, Professor of University of Tokyo

Kimitaka Matsuzato, Vice-president of the International Council for Russian and East European Studies (ICCEES), Professor of Hokkaido University

Nobuo Shimotomai, Chairperson of the Organizing Committee of the Ninth World Congress of the ICCEES in 2015, Professor of Hosei University

Wakio Fujimoto, Chairperson of the Organizing Committee of the Fifth East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies in 2013, President of Osaka University of Economics and Law

Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, General Secretary of the Organizing Committee of the Fifth East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies, Associate Professor of Osaka University

From China:

Li Jingjie, President of the Chinese Association for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (CAREECAS), Professor of the Institute of Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Yang Cheng, Associate Professor of East China Normal University

From Mongolia:

Dulbaa Altai, representative of the Mongolian Association for Central and Eastern European Studies (MACEES), Senior Researcher of the Institute of International Studies, Mongolian Academy of Sciences

From Kazakhstan (observer):

Svetlana Koval'skaya, Professor of Lev Gumilev Eurasian University, Astana

From the ICCEES:

Graeme Gill, President of the ICCEES, Professor of University of Sydney, Australia

Irina Sandomirskaja, Vice-president of the ICCEES, Professor of Södertörn University, Sweden

1. Report on Attendance

Matsuzato reported that the summit was held with the participation of representatives from three ICCEES member countries: Japan, China, and Mongolia. Representatives of the Korean Association of Slavic Studies (KASS) were not able to come to Osaka. The KASS reelects its leadership every year. It seems that there was some miscommunication between the previous and present leaderships of the KASS. It is regrettable that we do not have representatives from Korea, which is the most plausible host country of the Sixth East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies in 2014. Without them, we cannot decide the next conference venue and, accordingly, are not able to announce it by the end of the Osaka Conference. We will continue to discuss this matter after the Osaka Conference by e-mail.¹

2. Organizational Problems of the Fifth East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies in Osaka

All the summit participants expressed their deep gratitude to the organizers of the Osaka Conference to be started the next day for their devotion and generosity.

Professor Yokota-Murakami, General Secretary of the Organizing Committee of the Osaka Conference, reported that so far more than 150 participants have registered to participate. This conference will be the largest in the history of East Asian conferences on Slavic Eurasian studies, which started in 2009.²

Yokota-Murakami continued to explain technical problems during the preparation of the conference.

(1) When the Organizing Committee publicized the Call for Proposals in October 2012, the committee did not include questions concerning name order (which is his/her surname, which is his/her given name) and gender. This caused difficulties when we prepared visa documents.

¹ In September 2013, the KASS decided to invite the Sixth East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies to Korea to be held in June 2014.

² According to a preliminary calculation, there were 49 paper presenters from Japan (by workplace, not citizenship), 15 from China, 8 each from Korea and Russia, 5 each from the UK, Kazakhstan, and Finland, 3 each from the USA and Sweden, 1 each from Mongolia, Canada, the Czech Rep., France, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Australia, Taiwan, and Kyrgyzstan.

(2) It was convenient for the participants that we proposed they use the Pay-Pal system to transfer registration and other fees. Yet sometimes we could not identify the money sender when the documents were written in Korean or Chinese.

Professor Matsuzato added that the most important lesson for the future East Asian conferences was that, this time, the Organizing Committee published the Call for Proposals in time, in October 2012, ten months before the event. This is one of the reasons that we were fortunate enough to receive a larger number of proposals than the past conferences. In regard to the first three regional conferences (Sapporo, Seoul, and Beijing), the host countries were obliged to cover the hotel expenses of the participants from two guest countries (for Japan, Korea and China and for Korea, Japan and China). This was part of the agreement reached at the First Summit of Slavistic Associations in East Asia, held at Seoul National University in February 2008. Because of this heavy burden, the organizers were not able to have a financial perspective for a long time after inviting this event to their own country, and therefore the Call for Proposals was published only three or four months before these conferences. In 2012, India did not bear the obligation of helping foreign participants financially, but the host organization, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, needed to wait for the ministry's clearance for hosting the conference. The Call for Proposals was published in April 2012.

A serious challenge for the Osaka Conference was that the Kazakhstani and Mongolian Ministries of Education decided not to compensate the travel expenses of university teachers to participate in international academic events held in July-August of the year. As a result of this unwise decision, Mongolian and Kazakhstani colleagues were forced to travel on their own budget to participate in this Osaka Conference. This is why several Kazakhstani colleagues canceled coming to Osaka and only one among the five Mongolian colleagues who registered for the conference was actually able to come. We are concerned that this policy will damage the future participation of Mongolian and Kazakhstani colleagues in international events, including the Makuhari World Congress in 2015.

Professor Li Jingjie (CAREECAS) gave the critical remark that the hotels recommended by the Organizing Committee are scattered around Osaka and the participants are requested to come to the conference venue by themselves. Participants of international conferences expect to have contact with foreign colleagues not only at the conference venue, but also in hotels and social places. It would have been better if the Organizing Committee had selected a single hotel for all the participants and organized bus transportation between it and the conference venue. The Organizing Committee apologized for the inconvenience and explained that Yao City does not have rich hotel facilities, so they did not have any alternative but to recommend several hotels located in the central part of Osaka. Hotels should have been differentiated according to price to match the varying

preferences and possibilities of the participants.

3. Accession of the MACEES to the East Asian Slavicist Community

Dr. D. Altai (MACEES) described the process of establishing the MACEES, which had obtained ICCEES membership two days before this summit. In November 2012, Vice-President of the ICCEES, Professor Matsuzato, visited Ulaanbaatar to participate in an international conference. Using this opportunity, on November 4, 2012, under the aegis of the Institute of International Studies of the Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences, Mongolian Slavicists organized a meeting to discuss with the Vice-President the issues of Mongolian Slavicists' participation in the coming Makuhari World Congress and the creation of a national association of Slavicists to be admitted to the ICCEES.³ Eighteen Slavic Eurasian specialists representing leading universities and research institutes in Mongolia participated in the meeting and unanimously decided to create a national association of Slavicists in Mongolia. The meeting appointed members of the working group to draft the association's statute. The working group finished this work by December 2012 and in the same month the Mongolian government registered this association as an NGO, under the name of the Mongolian Association of Central and Eastern European Studies. In January 2013, the MACEES applied for ICCEES membership and this request was approved by the ICCEES International Council two days ago (August 6, 2013).

Dr. Altai continued: "The MACEES is newly born, but is developing its activities vigorously. In this May, the MACEES published its first international bilingual (English and Russian) journal, *Tsentrāl'naia i Vostochnaia Evropa*, and is working to make this journal biannual. We are preparing the first annual conference of the MACEES to be held at the end of this year. Many Mongolian colleagues hope to participate in the Makuhari World Congress in 2015."

4. The Sixth East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies in 2014

The summit reached a consensus:

(1) Considering that the Mongolian and Kazakhstani governments decided not to finance the travel expenses of university scholars to participate in foreign academic events held during July and

³ See Protocol: Meeting of Slavicists/Eurasia Specialists of Mongolia with ICCEES Vice-President K. Matsuzato (http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/iccees2015/text/Protocol_Ulaanbaatar2.pdf). This meeting was arranged by Professor Tatsuo Nakami of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, a leading specialist in Mongolian history in Japan.

August, and also that September is an inconvenient month for Korean colleagues, the next East Asian conference should be held in early October 2014.

(2) According to the rotation principle, if the KASS declares its readiness to host the next East Asian conference, the KASS has the priority. The CAREECAS representatives expressed their readiness to invite the next conference to Shanghai or Harbin, if the KASS declines to host the East Asian conference of 2014. Dr. Altai (MACEES) echoed the Chinese representatives by saying that the MACEES would also consider the possibility of inviting the conference to Ulaanbaatar in 2014.

In other words, if the KASS declines to host the next conference, the 2014 conference will be held in Shanghai, Harbin, or Ulaanbaatar. Dr. Yang Cheng (CAREECAS) argued that the East Asian Slavicist community should not skip the 2014 conference under any circumstances, because “we will not hold the East Asian conference in 2015 because of the ICCEES World Congress in Makuhari, so if we skip next year’s conference, there will be a two-year pause, unaffordable for the present situation of Slavic Eurasian studies in East Asia.”

(3) The summit participants remarked that they would not be able to wait too long for the KASS’s decision, because the Call for Proposals should be published as early as possible to make the next conference successful. The summit asked the KASS to reach a decision about whether it will invite the East Asian conference of 2014 to Korea by October 2013.⁴

5. Preparation for the Makuhari World Congress in 2015 in East Asia

Professor Shimotomai, Chairperson of the Organizing Committee of the World Congress, reported that “having only two years before the congress, our preparation process has reached a new stage. The Organizing Committee has been enlarged to be composed of 25 members. The opening ceremony is very important for attracting foreign scholars and marking the significance of this world congress. The Organizing Committee decided to focus on the topic ‘Rising China and the Slavic Eurasian World’ and invite former prime-minister-class politicians as speakers of this ceremony.” Professor Shimotomai said that a former prime minister of Korea had agreed to come. He was negotiating with former prime-minister-class politicians of China and Russia. He joked by remarking on the challenge of determining whom to invite from Japan because Japan has too many former prime ministers.

Professor Shimotomai disclosed ideas on evening events during the convention, one of which was

⁴ As mentioned, in September 2013, the KASS invited the Sixth East Asian Conference to Korea. The conference will be held in June 2014.

energy cooperation between Asian countries such as Japan, China, Korea, Russia, and Mongolia. This issue has become quite an important issue after the Fukushima accident in 2011.

Professor Matsuzato noted that Japanese PCOs (professional conference organizers) have rich experience in organizing international conferences in the natural and medical sciences and engineering, but not those in the social sciences and humanities. So they face some problems when they design a convenient and nice-looking online proposal system for international humanities conferences. For example, the criteria for strict reviewing of proposals seem hardly necessary for social sciences and humanities conferences. Professor Irina Sandomirskaja, Vice-President of the ICCEES, stated that although the review process is important for attaining the necessary academic level of papers, proposals can be reviewed much more easily by printing out their hardcopies and having the reviewers read them than doing the same online. Sandomirskaja added that it is important to demonstrate access to Makuhari and the facilities in this district for wider participation.

6. The ICCEES and the Slavicist Community of East Asia

Professor Koval'skaya (Kazakhstan) described the ongoing process of the creation of a Kazakhstani association of Slavicists and Eurasia specialists. At this moment, she enjoys support mainly from historians because of her specialty. There are approximately 30 people earnestly interested in the project. These core people have good relations with scholars in other disciplines: philology, literature, religious studies, political science, region studies, and sociology. Koval'skaya thinks that they should attract economists to the Kazakhstani association in the coming months. Geographically, colleagues in Astana have contacted influential scholars working in other cities such as Almaty, Aktobe, and Karaganda to create the association.

Professor Matsuzato commented that Kazakhstani colleagues are going to organize their association based on individual membership. Previously, an individual membership organization was the only form of national association that the ICCEES recognized as legitimate. To make China and former socialist countries' accession to the ICCEES easier, the ICCEES changed its statute and began to recognize another form of national association, that is, a confederation of research institutes. This amendment has helped China and Mongolia, but does not seem to be working positively for Ukraine and India, or countries characterized by harsh competition between cities and institutes. Possibly, it is time to revisit the classic, individual membership form of national association.

Professor Matsuzato passed to the summit participants the KASS's proposal to draft a brief statute of the East Asian community of Slavicist associations. Such a statute is especially useful for Korean

colleagues because, as mentioned, they reelect their leadership yearly. Supporting the KASS's proposal, Dr. Yang Cheng (CAREECAS) remarked that a "yearly summit and conference have already become our tradition. Our regional cooperation is stepping into a new stage. As well as a statute, we should perhaps rethink the rotation principle of hosting East Asian conferences." Yang Cheng gave the critical remark that he sees too many almost pure-blood (domestic) panels in the program of the Osaka Conference. It is necessary to deepen our international cooperation to make panel proposals for the Makuhari World Congress really international.