

21st Century COE Program
Slavic Eurasian Studies

No. 3

A 4,000 Kilometer
Journey Along the
Sino-Russian Border

IWASHITA Akihiro



SLAVIC RESEARCH CENTER, HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

SAPPORO 2004

"If the Sino-Soviet border dispute was widely trumpeted, the Sino-Russian border demarcation process until now has been largely concealed. Iwashita's detective work along the border at last reveals its complex nature, showing how and when disputed land was assigned. He scrutinizes this difficult process, and, in the process, sheds new light on how an important obstacle to relations in the 1990s was overcome."

Gilbert Rozman, Princeton University

"Iwashita's marvelous book is a first-hand account of how the Sino-Russian territorial problems were produced, negotiated, and successfully resolved. Since issues concerning the border reflect Sino-Russian relations, a study of the border should have been a top priority in China, but few were up to the challenge. Iwashita's book undoubtedly constitutes a valuable contribution to our studies on Sino-Russian relations."

Xing Guangcheng, Institute of Russia, East Europe and Central Asia

"Iwashita's book is a seminal work that will help us to better understand the past and to avoid misjudgments in the future. It is an intellectual tour de force and the fruit of enormous effort and self-sacrifice. A must for every student of Asia!"

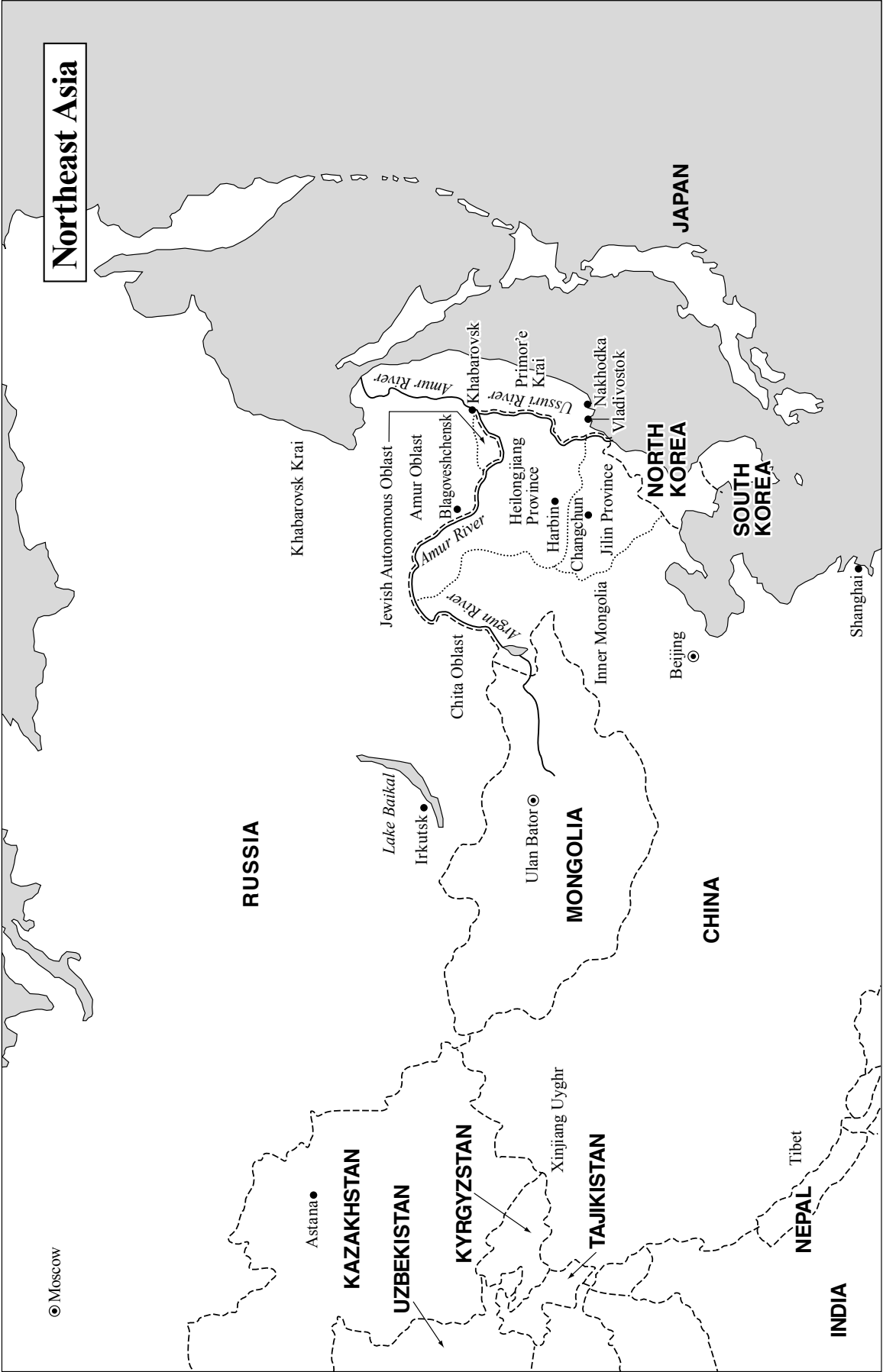
Evgenii Bazhanov, Diplomatic Academy

This book paints a comprehensive picture of Sino-Russian negotiations over the 4,300 kilometer eastern border, including territorial and migration problems, particularly in the ten years following the Cold War. It examines not only Moscow-Beijing diplomatic formations on "strategic partnership" but also details Russian Far East and Trans-Baikal - Chinese Northeast (Dongbei) regional relations that made an impact on Sino-Russian relations as a whole. Factually, considerable attention has been paid to the Sino-Russian relations, but little is known about the Sino-Russian border demarcation process and the border itself. This book tells the full story of the Sino-Russian border zone: the myth of Damanskii Island, the truth of "Chinese expansion" on Bol'shoi Ussuriiskii Island, the troubles of the Sino-Russian-Korean triangular border point, and the unknown "island exchanges" on the rivers for "successfully" resolving the territorial problems in the late 1990s. Without knowledge of the challenges and realities on the Sino-Russian border zone, talking about the future relationship between Russia and China would be impossible.

IWASHITA Akihiro is Professor of Russian foreign policy and Sino-Russian relations at the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University. He is the author and editor of many books, including *A Study on the Paradigm of Soviet Foreign Policy: Socialism, Sovereignty and International Law* (1999).



Northeast Asia



A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border

This book paints a comprehensive picture of Sino-Russian negotiations over the 4,300 kilometer eastern border, including territorial and migration problems, particularly in the ten years following the Cold War. It examines not only Moscow-Beijing diplomatic formations on "strategic partnership" but also details Russian Far East and Trans-Baikal - Chinese Northeast (Dongbei) regional relations that made an impact on Sino-Russian relations as a whole. Factually, considerable attention has been paid to the Sino-Russian relations, but little is known about the Sino-Russian border demarcation process and the border itself. This book tells the full story of the Sino-Russian border zone: the myth of Damanskii Island, the truth of "Chinese expansion" on Bol'shoi Ussuriiskii Island, the troubles of the Sino-Russian-Korean triangular border point, and the unknown "island exchanges" on the rivers for "successfully" resolving the territorial problems in the late 1990s. Without knowledge of the challenges and realities on the Sino-Russian border zone, talking about the future relationship between Russia and China would be impossible.

IWASHITA Akihiro is Professor of Russian foreign policy and Sino-Russian relations at the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University. He is the author and editor of many books, including *A Study on the Paradigm of Soviet Foreign Policy: Socialism, Sovereignty and International Law* (1999).

21st Century COE Program
Slavic Eurasian Studies

No.3

**A 4,000 Kilometer
Journey Along the
Sino-Russian Border**

IWASHITA Akihiro

SLAVIC RESEARCH CENTER, HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

SAPPORO 2004

First Published in 2004
Copyright 2004 by the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido
University

Kita-9, Nishi-7, Kita-ku, Sapporo 060-0809, Japan

Tel. +81-11-706-2388 Fax. +81-11-706-4952

<http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/>

E-mail: src@slav.hokudai.ac.jp

Author

IWASHITA Akihiro

A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border

A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border
/ by IWASHITA Akihiro

Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University,
2004 (Slavic Eurasian Studies ; no. 3)

xiv, 210 p.; 21cm

ISBN 4-938637-32-4

I. Iwashita, Akihiro, 1962-

1. China -- Foreign relations -- Russia
2. Russia -- Foreign relations -- China
3. China -- Boundaries -- Russia
4. Russia -- Boundaries -- China

Printed in Japan

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgements	ix
------------------------------------	----

Introduction

Two Views on Sino-Russian Relations	2
The Border Area as a Critical Factor	3
How This Story Is Told	6

Chapter 1: Border Demarcation Negotiated: 1991-1997

1 Booming Border	10
2 The 1991 Agreement on the Sino-Russian Eastern Border	14
3 A Territorial Campaign	18
4 A Last-minute Compromise	23

Chapter 2: The Chinese Dream for the Tumen River

1 Chinese Watching the Sea of Japan	34
2 Russian Response	40
3 The Khasan Problem	44
4 After the Dispute	51

Chapter 3: Ussuri and the Bear

1 The Damanskii Syndrome	58
2 The Disputed Islands and the Ussuri River Myth	62
3 The Thorn of the Amur-Ussuri Delta	69
4 A Bridge on the Border	79

Chapter 4: Amur Domino

- 1 The Jewish Autonomous Oblast 92
- 2 Amur Oblast100
- 3 The Mystery of the Amur Islands 103
- 4 A Two-Thousand Kilometer Belt on the Amur River 111

Chapter 5: The Two-Headed "Black Dragon"

- 1 The Transformation of Heilongjiang126
- 2 Suifenhe's Story132
- 3 Challenges Facing Heihe141
- 4 The Sorrow of the Amur149

Chapter 6: Border Zone "Zero"

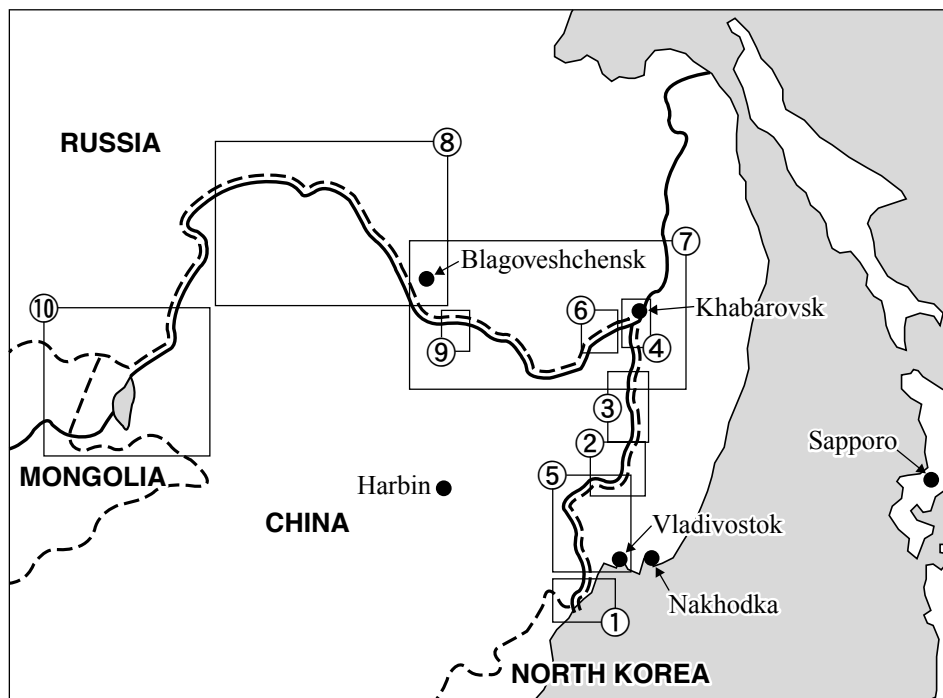
- 1 The First Pillar of the Sino-Russian Eastern Border156
- 2 The Origin of the Argun River161
- 3 The Menkeseli Model164
- 4 The Bridge to Eurasia168

Conclusion: Beyond the Border Issue

- 1 Shanghai Rhapsody178
- 2 A Safety Net183
- 3 Verbal Politics187
- 4 The Neverending Story?194

References198

Index206



- ① Tumen River Basin (pp.38-39)
- ② Sungacha River • Lake Khanka (p.61)
- ③ Ussuri River Basin (p.66)
- ④ Khabarovsk and the Amur-Ussuri Delta (p.70)
- ⑤ Suifenhe • Dongning (p.81)
- ⑥ Jewish Autonomous Oblast and the Amur River Basin (p.94)
- ⑦ Middle Basin of the Amur River (pp.98-99)
- ⑧ Upper Basin of the Amur River (p.104)
- ⑨ Ganchazi • Poiarkovo (p.108)
- ⑩ Upper Basin of the Argun River (pp.158-159)

Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is the English version of Churo Kokkyo 4,000 Kiro [*The Sino-Russian Border: 4,000 Kilometers*], Tokyo, Kadokawa Shoten, 2003. It is the result of a decade of research on the Sino-Russian border and, particularly, territorial issues. The English translation of this book is my attempt to encourage more dialogue concerning the realities of the Sino-Russian border.

Since my first presentation in Vladivostok in June 1999, I have presented some portions of my research at international conferences in Khabarovsk, Seattle, Washington D.C., Harbin and other cities. It generated an active discussion because so little information is available about the border, even to the Chinese and Russians. As discussed in some detail in this book, information and sources concerning the border issue have been manipulated or concealed from the public for a long time. Even specialists, keenly interested in this area of research, have had trouble finding facts about the border.

A symbolic case, examined in Chapter 3, concerns Damanskii/Zhenbao Island on the Ussuri River: which country has been in de facto control of the island since the military clash in 1969, Russia or China? At that time, most reports suggested that Russia had defeated China outright during the island battle, and therefore, it was naturally assumed, except by several Russian intellectuals, that Russia had kept the island under its own control even after the battle. Yet, China has made similar assertions. Though unconfirmed, China seems to have retained control over the island.

The fact that China controlled Damanskii/Zhenbao Island in the 1990s is known. This shift from Russian to Chinese control remains murky. Some Russian specialists criticized Mikhail Gorbachev for handing the island over to China while others sidestepped the question altogether. Despite indications that Russia transferred the island back to China, I asked many specialists if this had indeed happened, but no one was able (or willing) to confirm its transfer.

When I traveled to the Chinese bank of the Ussuri River, I successfully landed on the island and was allowed access to the relevant local records at Fuyuan, Raohe and Hulin (see References).

These detailed the names, accurate locations, the size of each island on the border river, the islands under dispute, and chronologies of these conflicts. The tone of these records was dispassionate, not propagandistic. These records clearly specify which islands are under de facto Chinese control. Further, they show that some islands claimed by Russia are actually under Chinese control. My analysis of the border issue went forward, thanks to the Chinese records and a Russian map, but doubts remained concerning the Chinese materials. The records emphasized China's continuous hold of Damanskii/Zhenbao Island from the military clash in 1969 onward. Though having little reason to be suspicious of China's explanation, I, naturally and unconsciously, sided with Russian "intelligence."

My own doubts concerning the validity of the information coming out of China ended following my own field research on the Russian border of the Ussuri River in September 2000. A foreign scholar often faces many difficulties because of Russia's tight border controls. After interviewing some locals and reviewing the available material, it soon became obvious that Russians had not set foot on Damanskii/Zhenbao Island since 1970. Though I considered myself "neutral," I found that my work had inadvertently aided Soviet propaganda.

It may be true, from a more objective view, that some explanations of the Sino-Russian disputes over the islands and Chinese justification for their claims should be considered "subjective." Except for these "explanatory" parts, the local records, however, have credibility: the process of controls on the islands and details of the conflicts over the islands. Some of them could be reconfirmed by local sources on the Russian border. On a 2002 field trip along the Chinese side of a 2,000 kilometer section of the Amur River border, I successfully collected all the local records of the Chinese administrative bodies in the border area. With them, I was able to write Chapters 3 and 4, which cover disputes and their resolution concerning islands in the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. I also conducted field research on the Russian side of the border as much as possible in order to enhance the persuasiveness of my analysis (see Interviews).

Based on the analysis of this book, some readers might get the following impression: "sweet for China but bitter for Russia." It is difficult for them simply to ignore the bitterness for Russia of being

finally obliged to hand several hundred islands over to China. The facts show that the Sino-Russian border disputes were not stacked in Russia's favor at the beginning of the negotiations. If a researcher keeps faith in the truth, s/he should endure its bitterness regardless of nationality. If this book gives the impression of being "pro-Chinese," it may be a good idea to keep in mind the history of Russian "Imperialism" and imperialistic policies toward Northeast Asia.

During the Vladivostok Conference of 2000, when I gave a presentation on Sino-Russian relations, a veteran Russian scholar criticized me for being too "pro-Chinese." His criticism focused on my "Russian wording" of the territorial issue. Apparently, he felt that my explanation was limited because, in his opinion, it focused too heavily on China's claim that the Primor'e belonged to China in the nineteenth century. However, he misunderstood my explanation of the Chinese opinion as my own, and mentioned nothing about the facts and contents of my presentation, in which I introduced Sino-Russian border disputes and negotiations. Most of the Russian participants properly understood my position, regardless of the loud critics. At the Harbin Conference of 2002, Russian participants from the Far East cautiously listened to and appeared to be impressed by my analysis of the Ussuri disputes that are included in Chapter 3.

Since the publication of the original book in Japanese in March 2003, I have made tours overseas in 2003 to Beijing (April), Shanghai (October), Hawaii (December), and in 2004 to Islamabad (January), Ulan Bator (March), New Delhi (March), Seoul (April) and Moscow (May) to present my work on Sino-Russian border relations and its connection to Northeast and Central Asia.

In order to make the realities surrounding the Sino-Russian border known all over the world, I proceeded to work on a non-Japanese version of the book just after its publication in Japanese. As well as an English version, I also plan to publish Chinese and Russian versions to give back to the peoples concerned what I borrowed from them during my field research. The aims of this book are basically given in the Introduction and Conclusion. As the contents of this book are filled with detailed data and episodes, some readers may find it a bit challenging. That is why I recommend a careful reading of the book's Introduction and Conclusion to gain a

better understanding of the book's aims. Doing this should make the journey over the Sino-Russian 4,000 kilometer border more enjoyable. Previously unpublished photographs of the region should also help the reader get more deeply involved during her/his journey.

I have been collecting material on the Sino-Russian border for more than a decade. I began working on a small project on Sino-Russian relations in 1992 when I was an assistant professor in Kyushu University. I continued my work while teaching as an associate professor at the Faculty of International Studies, Yamaguchi Prefectural University, from 1994 to 2001. I also greatly benefited from my positions as a member of a research committee on Russian analysis for the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), and as a co-researcher at the Slavic Research Center (SRC), Hokkaido University. This book is based on the considerable amounts of material and insights gained from this period. Yumiko Shiraike, an assistant at the JIIA, and Yuzuru Tonai, chief librarian at the SRC, were especially helpful.

However, the book's strength is that it consists of local information and unpublished materials, which are only accessible by going to the source directly. Without the help of my Chinese and Russian colleagues, I would have been unable to analyze Sino-Russian border relations adequately. I especially express my gratitude to the following local but excellent experts in China and Russia: Bu Ping, Liu Jialei, Da Zhigang, Yin Jianping, Li Chuanxun, Zhao Lizhi, Su Fenglin (Harbin), Haribala (Manzhouli) and Viktor Larin, Boris Afonin, Vladimir Kozhevnikov (Vladivostok), Pavel Minakir, and Elena Devaeva (Khabarovsk). I am also grateful to the local administrations and travel agencies in Chita Oblast, Amur Oblast, and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast.

The information I gathered locally was reconfirmed by central experts. Evgenii Bazhanov, Aleksei Voskressenskii, Aleksandr Lukin (Moscow) and Xing Guangcheng, Ni Xiaoquan, Xia Yishan (Beijing), and Zhao Huasheng (Shanghai) fully understood my work and gave warm but academic comments on my works. This advice from first class specialists help put my analysis of the border in a broader context of Sino-Russian "strategic" relations. Special thanks to Ol'ga Vasil'eva of the Moscow State Institute of International

Relations (University), a friend of eleven years, who arranged meetings with important specialists. Special thanks should be added to the anonymous experts at the Russian and Chinese Foreign Ministry. Without their critical comments, the completion of this book would not have been possible.

I am especially grateful to Seth Cervantes of Tomakomai Komazawa University for taking up the challenge of painstakingly reading through my manuscript and editing my English into a readable form. I would like also to thank Gilbert Rozman of Princeton University, and Sarah Paine of the U.S. Naval War College, who spent a lot of their valuable time vetting my draft, making valuable suggestions. A dialogue with Mikhail Alexseev of San Diego State University also inspired my work. Without his "fascinating" research on Chinese migration, my book would have been incomplete. Amy Wilson of Yamaguchi Prefectural University has my deepest thanks for her help with my English publications.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues at the Slavic Research Center. Since October, 2001, when I was invited to the SRC, they have been both encouraging and critical of my work. This publication proceeded from a SRC five-year project of "Making a Discipline of Slavic Eurasian Studies." This book is also a result of a SRC project on "Russo-Chinese Cooperation and Its Implications for Eurasian Security in the Post-Cold War Period (Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science: 2003-2006)." Finally, I would like to thank Mika Osuga, Mark Hudson, Kaoru Ito and the staff of the project Working Room for assisting with editorial work.

July 14, 2004.
Akihiro Iwashita

Introduction



Heihe and Blagoveshchensk (opposite bank) (Feb., 1994)

Two Views on Sino-Russian Relations

Russia and China are two great powers with a common border of more than 4,000 kilometers at the northeast edge of Eurasia. Sino-Russian relations have experienced different facets of historic events since the seventeenth century. The major events occurred after the late nineteenth century, when Northern Amur and Eastern Ussuri were "handed" to Tsarist Russia on the basis of the Aigun (1858) and Beijing (1860) Treaties. The Chinese were obliged to endure several setbacks: Northeast China was occupied by Tsarist Russia, and then by Japan. Even after its "liberation," China had to construct a newly independent state under the aegis of Soviet Russia during the period of the Chinese Civil War and Korean War. China was recognized as a "younger brother of socialism" and given inferior status vis-à-vis Russia. It is well known that Russia and China had military conflicts, both claiming the correctness of their own versions of "socialism" in the late 1960s. The famous Damanskii bloodshed in March 1969 attracted wide public attention and suggested that the Sino-Russian conflict was not only ideological but deeply rooted in history and geopolitics. Before Mikhail Gorbachev visited Beijing in May 1989, relations between Russia and China had been frozen for two decades. At last, Russia and China reconciled and recognized each other as socialist states on equal terms.

Russia and China faced a new challenge, however. Russia gave up its socialist regime while China accelerated its attempts at creating a market economy, while officially clinging to its "socialist regime." Sino-Russian relations have been involved in the billowy waves of the post-Cold War since 1992. Many specialists have paid particular attention to the nature of the Sino-Russian relationship from the perspective of power-politics. The Sino-Russian "strategic partnership," sometimes described as a tool to foster the concept of a "multi-polar world," is explained to offset perceived U.S. global domination. Some observers are very anxious to see an "anti-American" orientation in the Sino-Russian "partnership" to form a quasi-military union that could counter U.S. "dominance."¹ Summing up these "realist"

1 For example, see, Menges 2001; Gill 2001. We also know many criticisms of this misleading "anti-American" explanation for the Sino-Russian "partner-

views: the Sino-Russian "strategic partnership," formed in 1996 in response to NATO's eastward expansion and a "redefinition" of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, was developed through Sino-Russian "joint action" in opposition to NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia in 1999 and the Missile Defense (NMD/TMD) plans proposed by the U.S. in 2000. Naturally, this "partnership" is being strengthened against the U.S. by the Sino-Russian Friendship Treaty and by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization created in 2001.

On the other hand, we see opposing views. An extreme view is characterized as having an overly pessimistic impression of Sino-Russian relations: the Sino-Russian "strategic partnership" is dangerous to Russia's interests. According to this perspective, China will be the No.1 threat to Russia. Some Russian scholars and specialists have shared this view and are afraid of Chinese "colonization" or acquisition of the Russian Far East in the not so distant future. They consider the Chinese threat as the most important factor for Russia's security, and argue that Russia should unite with the West against Chinese aggression. Some of them seem inclined to look at Japan as the best partner in Northeast Asia.²

"Cautious" specialists, who distance themselves from this overly pessimistic extremism, keep a close eye on Russia's deep-rooted distrust of China and the bilateral problems indigenous to the Sino-Russian "partnership." These specialists conclude that Russia and China would never develop a quasi-military "partnership." They emphasize the fact that both Russia and China want only to develop their state power and need international peace and stability, particularly in their surroundings, namely their border areas. I belong to the third school of thought.

The Border Area as a Critical Factor

The third position would be more widespread if not pressed by the two extremes. What is the most challenging factor in Sino-Russian

ship," but most of them are incomplete: they hardly follow the concrete contents of the most difficult issues between Russia and China, i.e. border negotiations. One of the few attempts to focus on the Russo-Chinese border problems was made by me. See, Iwashita 2000: 92-96; Iwashita 2001: 1-10.

2 Concerning details on the "hardliners" toward China, see, Lukin 2003: 219-250.

relations? What caused the unimaginable distrust between Russia and China during their shared history? Why did Russia and China declare a "strategic partnership" in 1996? If we consider these questions, we cannot overcome the previous two schools. This is because the first or optimist school is based on an underestimation of indigenous bilateral problems between Russia and China, and the second or pessimist school on an overestimation.

I believe that we can find clues to resolve the indigenous problems plaguing Sino-Russian relations in the more than 4,000 kilometer border. A source of Chinese distrust of Russia is the treaties of the late nineteenth century that were thought to be "unequal." The Chinese remember and, even now, note that over one and a half million square kilometers of territory was occupied by Tsarist Russia.

Major cities in the Russian Far East, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk have their own individual Chinese names: Haishenwei, Boli and Hailanpao. For example, Khabarovsk is the city named for Erofei Khabarov, a Russian hero who explored the Amur River and created a base of Russian settlers in the Russian Far East in the seventeenth century. For local residents during the Qing Dynasty, he was viewed as a notorious and brutal conqueror. Naturally, the Chinese see him as a Russian "invader." For another example, the name of Vladivostok, meaning, "commanding the East," is also disputable. Nobody disputes the fact that the Far East is a newly "discovered area" by Russia. The official history of Russia in the Far East begins only in the nineteenth century, when Russian immigrants settled there and built and developed their cities dramatically. In short, Russians in general feel that the Far East once did not belong to them. Their insistence that the Far East did not belong to China either justifies their acquisition of it only in a passive way.³

The border area seems to define a basic alignment of Sino-Russian relations. The end of the Cold War brought chaos to China and Russia: transformation of their regimes, relocation of their military, reviews of their ideology and history, radical changes in their

3 Concerning original sovereignty over the Amur and Ussuri River basins, Russian anthropologists of the nineteenth century indicate Manchu sovereignty. It is significant that Russian sources confirm Chinese sovereignty over key parts of the Amur River system (see Paine 1996: 38).

economies and environments, disorder in the political system and so on. During the post-Cold War period, the Sino-Russian border affected the central and local governments, enterprises and individuals in both countries. Particularly in the early 1990s, when Russia was devastated economically, politically and socially, and China was in the midst (albeit not in a totally civilized manner) of economic development, the border area faced some serious challenges.

The issue of the Sino-Russian border area mainly consists of two elements, migration and territorial problems. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the escalation of Chinese "reform and openness" in 1992, Chinese migration was suddenly placed at the top of Russia's political agenda. The migration problem was closely linked to territorial demarcation proceeding in the early 1990s. Sino-phobia linked to a "territorial loss" had seriously spread among Russian nationals. Since then, alarm over Chinese expansion toward Russian territory has dealt a considerable blow to the Russian psyche. It continues to play a significant role in Sino-Russian relations despite the fact that demarcation work was completed in 1997 and Chinese migrants in Russia are better controlled than before.

Most of the well-balanced specialists notice that the issues of territory and migration are the decisive factors in Sino-Russian relations. Many excellent empirical analyses have already been published concerning problems arising from Chinese migration. In contrast, they did not conduct full-fledged research on the territorial problem, though they have repeated its importance for Sino-Russian relations. The cause of these difficulties on border research is obvious. The border negotiations and demarcation have occurred under conditions of tight information control by the two governments. Information that does reach us is limited; even now with demarcation work all but finished, the exception being a few disputed areas, we do not have much information: It is not easy to know what discussions occurred between Russia and China during the border negotiations and demarcation work, what arguments were adduced, and how they were finally resolved. We should also confirm our starting point: It has yet to be clarified which territories along the 4,300 kilometer border are under dispute and why. This book aims to cover the Sino-Russian border negotiation process and to assess the demarcation

process, by cautiously reconstructing thousands of pieces of published news fragments and unpublished facts gathered over a ten year period to create a more complete story of the 4,300 kilometer border.

How This Story Is Told

This book is mainly written in a narrative style. In addition, I insert some personal vignettes of the border area. Therefore, this book is also a record based on field research concerning the ten year transformation of the Sino-Russian border area as well as an academic study of the border issue.

Chapter 1 pays considerable attention to Russia's approach to the Sino-Russian demarcation work and disputes in the 1990s, particularly the resistance against the 1991 agreement on Russia's border regions mandating the return of some territories to China. Here the central role is given to Evgenii Nazdratenko, then-governor of Primor'e, famous for his anti-Chinese rhetoric and campaign not only within Russia but also worldwide. Chapter 1 serves as a guide for the following chapters and is written in a historical style. Chapter 1 is only a taste of what is to come for all the mysteries surrounding the border story, but the reader will later find limitations to this approach in proceeding chapters.

From Chapter 2, the story roughly divides into a "space" category: the river basins of the Tumen, Ussuri, Amur, and Argun Rivers. The narrative covers the eastern to the western edge of the 4,300 kilometer Sino-Russian border. These chapters are based on my fieldwork and locally published information, most of which was acquired only in the border area itself. The Russian border space consists of Primor'e Krai, Khabarovsk Krai, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Amur Oblast and Chita Oblast, and 3,500 kilometers of it consist of the Argun, Amur, Ussuri and other river borders. Amur Oblast shares the longest border with China, while Khabarovsk Krai shares the shortest and is only a junction point between the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. The Primor'e's border runs from the Sino-Russian-Korean triangular junction point and turns into a land border, finally reaching the Ussuri River through some short rivers and Lake Khanka. Chita's border starts near the origin of the Amur River

— the junction point between the Argun and the Shilka Rivers — to the Sino-Russian-Mongolian triangular border through the Argun River. The Chinese border space consists of Jilin Province, Heilongjiang Province and the Inner Mongol Autonomous Region. More than 70 percent of the Sino-Russian border — roughly 3,000 kilometers — belongs to Heilongjiang and its 2,000 kilometer border along the Amur River.

Chapter 2 covers Jilin and the Tumen River basin, closely related to Chapter 1's hot spot territory. Chapter 3 pays close attention to the Ussuri River area, including the Damanskii Incident and its aftermath. Chapter 4 refers to the Amur River disputes and Chapter 6 refers to the Argun River up to the Mongolian grassland border. Chapter 5 gives special consideration to two gateway cities — Suifenhe and Heihe — in Heilongjiang Province, facing all five local governments on the Russian side of the border.

* Concerning border-making between two countries, "demarcation" is basically distinct from "delimitation." The latter means a general situation and orientation of the border in an agreement, including a map on which a line is drawn, while the former suggests concrete works on the border site: setting border signs technically or making some protocols on the details (Mezhdunarodnoe pravo 1957: 191-192). However, if concrete works sometimes change the border de facto, it seems to be done beyond a "technical" decision. In Chinese, both "demarcation" and "delimitation" tend to be translated as "huajie," the same expression, which means drawing or marking a line on the border. In addition, the committee for "demarcation," set up in the 1991 agreement on the Sino-Russian (then USSR) eastern border, is translated as "kanjie," which means the investigation and survey of a boundary line. Strictly speaking, demarcation or delimitation is the result of "kanjie." But actually, even in official documents, "huajie" and "kanjie" are sometimes used confusedly. Therefore, I do not go into too much details over the differences and nuances suggested by various expressions on border-making. I have unified them with the term "demarcation."