

Slavic-Eurasian Research Center

News

Annual Newsletter of the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University

Greeting from the New Director

Written by Director, Norihiro Naganawa



The war in Ukraine makes decolonization a buzz word in our field. Scholars are trying to correct Russia-centric visions that have existed both implicitly and explicitly by consciously looking for and listening to non-Russian voices and shifting their research sites from Russia to post-Soviet countries, Central Europe, Finland,

Turkey, etc. The SRC also opened a research unit for Ukraine and its surrounding areas in November 2023. At the same time, we should not dismiss the fact that this war also reveals burgeoning non-Western (Global South) nations' very cynical postures toward the shrinking West's unanimous support of Ukraine. The recent war between Hamas and Israel in Gaza has once again painfully ascertained the West's support of inequality in human lives, which undermines the morality of its liberalism itself. Against this backdrop, is it high time to think of more comprehensive decolonization? Area studies has to tackle specific challenges. If big theories and

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conversations are also bounded and limited by the specific time and space of Europe, as Dipesh Chakrabarty argues in his *Provincializing Europe*, how can Slavic and Eurasian studies shape and complicate our understanding of the past and present of the world? Is it enough to provide case studies and counterevidence for Western-centric paradigms? From April 2022, with direct financial reinforcement from the Ministry of Education and Science, the SRC has been undertaking a five-year project exploring survival strategies in a changing world order with a view toward redefining its missions. We are trying to use our expertise on past tectonic changes in the Eurasian continent to conceptualize and explain to a broader public the global crisis we are now confronting.

<https://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/srcw/en/about/>

The Japanese humanities faces its own challenge of decolonization. We are forced to integrate into the English-centric world of scholarship, with our performance increasingly measured by English publications. Unfortunately, we must admit that very few Japanese scholars of Slavic Eurasia are eager to make their works known in English. Will we remain happy with translating works in English and other languages into Japanese, criticizing these foreign works without addressing their authors directly in languages accessible to them, consuming them domestically, and forging our own authority in the field? Will Japanese scholars be ready and willing to engage in shaping the world academia? Scholarship of colonialism has suggested that the apparently omnipotent imperial rule did not deprive the subjugated of their subjectivity, but on the contrary develop their agency using the very infrastructure of the rule. The SRC has been an unusual hub in the circulation of Slavic and Eurasian expertise, whose functions were enhanced by my predecessor, Motoki Nomachi, who opened to international competition some calls for applications that had formerly been limited to the Japanese. I hope that, assembling people of different genders, generations, nationalities, and disciplines, the SRC will create a curiosity-driven community moving toward a comprehensive decolonization.

Symposium Report -1

The Crucible of a New World? Russia's Borderlands at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century

Written by Yoko Aoshima



The regular Slavic-Eurasian Research Center Summer International Symposium was held on July 18–19. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has forced us to drastically rethink our previously Russocentric view of Northern Eurasian history. The Slavic-Eurasian Research Center has long taken pride in its emphasis on research on border regions rather than on Great Powers, and has tried to be one of the leaders in the international advancement of such research. In that sense, changes in the international situation did not necessitate a major shift in the Center's research policies. Rather, the Center was aware that now was the time to apply its accumulated experience and exert international leadership. Therefore, we planned this summer symposium in the hope of overcoming the conventional studies of Russia's Empires that mainly focuses on the relationship between the center and the periphery, and to consider a new history of the Eurasian continent, the new dawn of the 20th century, starting from the border regions and connecting them, from Central and Eastern Europe to the Far East.

In fact, leading mid-career and young researchers from around the world enthusiastically responded to this proposal, with 12 from overseas (two participating online) and seven from Japan (including two international researchers) pledging their participation. Over the course of two days, 19 reports were presented in six panels on themes including "Tradition and Modernization," "Nationality Issues in the New Context," "Globalization: Society, Economy, Infrastructure," "Protest, Conflict, Violence," "From Russia's Borderlands to the World," and "New Political Projects." A book talk by one of the participants, Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, was held on the 17th, the day before the event. After the symposium, the guests went for an excursion to Otaru on the 19th to familiarize with the history of Hokkaido, including a visit to the Otaru General Museum led by Dr. Yoshihiro Sugawara (Tokyo University of Science), a specialist in the regional history of northern Japan. Although this year's event was held only face-to-face, a total of 126 people



(including 46 non-Japanese) attended the two-day event. Many graduate students visited the venue and actively participated in the discussion, asking questions during the debate.

Participants in the hall were so passionate that there was not enough time for discussion on any of the panels, and the exchange of ideas continued outside the venue. In planning this event, we decided to limit the period to the last decade of the Tsarist Era in order to enhance the expertise of analysis. On the other hand, in terms of regions, we covered a wide range of border areas, including Finland, Poland, the Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus, the Volga region, Central Asia, and the Far East, and examined various aspects from a wide variety of approaches. Tribal societies, religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, language, parliaments, markets and the global economy, shipping, entrepreneurs, philanthropy, socialist movements, anarchism, terrorism, the Jewish question, the Cossacks, genocide, immigration, deportations, the Great War, imperial rivalries... these are just a few of the numerous topics covered. Discussions were held across the region in line with these topics, sharing the results of archival research.

Let's take a look at some of the discussions: The "colonial empire in Russia," "the problem of nationality as provoked by settler colonialism and the competition between nationalities crossing borders," "the panic caused by increasing human mobility and information diffusion, and the resulting ethnicized violence," "sources of distrust and fear from the Russian imperial government towards its own subjects," "the perceived need of the imperial bureaucrats to reform, its attempts and failures," "the possibility of forming imperial citizens," "letters, vernacular, religion, and nationalism," "the cross-reference of policies and practices from East to West (for example, was the Il'minskii system implemented in the West?)," "transformation and revival of traditional society in the new context," "differences between regionalism and nationalism," and, as methodologies for historical science, "unintended

consequences and contingent factors (including what, then, are ‘intended consequences?’),” “combining case studies and global contexts,” “interpreting materials from the imperial period, and reinterpreting and reusing monographs and documents from the Soviet period,” and more.... Each paper was professional and deliberately written, and the discussants further analyzed them in detail while placing them in a broader context, leading to discussion on the floor. Diverse perspectives and approaches were shared, which will lead to the future development of historical science.

Borderlands are areas of non-uniformity where diverse peoples reside, and frontiers or testing grounds for new politics and economics. They are a world where traditional society maintains its vitality and responds uniquely to modernization, but also a space of fluidity and variability; a place of Great Power competition and of friction, conflict, and violence among diverse peoples. These were not merely regions that were intimidated by the policies of strong imperial powers. They were not easily subjected to control, but rather showed unique movements, transcending boundaries, and emitting high energy in their own right, with the potential to change the world. That is, they formed a fascinating “crucible of the New World.” In that sense, one could rather say that the core of the Empire was always more afraid of the border regions.

Various participants commented that “without exaggeration, this symposium was the most intense, stimulating of intellectual curiosity, and enriching conference I have attended in recent years.” This may be a bit boastful to write in our own newsletter, but we were truly impressed by the superb work of the SRC staff. Our newest additions, Jasmina Gavrankapetanović, Yukiko Matsumoto, and Viktoria Antonenko, helped us in every way with their great efforts and responsiveness. Kentaro Fujimoto, who is now quite experienced, and Ayaka Matsumoto, a new arrival, also provided strong support on site. In addition, we would like to thank Kenta Hayashi, Hiroaki Misu, Ryo Takahashi, Atsune Nagase, Ruslan Shakhmatov, and other staff members at the venue; Tomomi Murakami, Yoichi Isahaya, and Chieko Hirota for their support from the sidelines; Daigo Yamamoto for equipment support; Nozomi Kameda for administrative support; Sayaka Tamiya of URA; and many others who always responded quickly and flexibly. Many guests commented that the organization of the symposium was “spectacular,” with everything running smoothly. We can proudly say that the symposium was a great success.



Symposium Report -2 Borders, Boundaries and War across Eurasia: Cycles of Violence and Resilience

Written by Akihiro Iwashita, David Wolff

The Winter International Symposium was held on December 7–8, 2023. This year’s theme was “Borders, Boundaries and War across Eurasia: Cycles of Violence and Resilience.” The Center is engaged in a research project on the central themes of “Culture Clash and Wellbeing,” especially “Border Crossing and Gender,” as one of the four project centers (the others being Tohoku University, the National Museum of Ethnology, and Kobe University). These are all part of the “East Eurasian Studies Project” (hereinafter “EES”), under the Project for the Promotion of Global Area Studies network-based research project sponsored by the National Institutes for the Humanities. This international symposium is positioned as an event to be held by the four EES centers on a rotating basis and was organized together with the Grant in Aid for Scientific Research (A) “Multi-Archival Analysis of Critical Junctures in Post-war Northeast Asia.” The symposium was held in a hybrid format, combining face-to-face and online sessions, and was attended by 13 participants (including 3 online participants) from 12 countries, including Ukraine, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Finland, Mongolia, and Australia, as well as participants from Japan.

EES was in charge of the content of the first day, with 10 reports, including the keynote address. Panel 1 discussed the war in Ukraine from the perspective of Russia’s neighbors, Japan, Finland, and Mongolia, and together with the keynote address that followed, presented Border Studies research findings. Panel 2, on the theme of “War and Feminists,” depicted women’s struggles in the Ukrainian war. Panel 3 analyzed trends in civil resistance movements and queer sexuality under the Putin regime. Day 2 featured six reports on the Cold War in Northeast Asia. Panel 4 discussed Japan’s role in postwar Northeast Asian history, and Panel 5 discussed Cold War relationships in the region, covering Taiwan, Mongolia, and Korea. Although the contents of the first and second days seem to have little connection, the people involved in the first day listened attentively to the discussion, finding that the nature of the postwar international political order is at the root of what is currently happening in Ukraine and Palestine, and that there is much to be learned from the examples of postwar Northeast Asian history. The excursion included a visit to the Hokkaido Museum, where we were impressed by the enthusiastic questions from our foreign guests about the Ainu restoration movement and the women’s movement in Japan. EES domestic participants also expressed their desire to plan another research project based on the speakers at this symposium, making it a meaningful event that will lead to further expansion of research cooperation.

Survival Strategy Project Report -1

Buryatia: Bridging Siberia, Russia, and Eurasia

Written by Norihiro Naganawa



On October 7 and 8, the Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia, New York University and the Platform for Explorations in Survival Strategies of the SRC co-organized an international workshop on the Mongolian world with Buryatia at its center. This was a follow-up to the meeting that organizer Tatiana Linkhoeva had hosted exactly one year before at the Jordan Center. This time, the event was made possible by the SRC agreeing to co-sponsor the event so that Russian and Asian researchers could participate without worrying about time differences. We held an open call for papers from March 8 to May 15, 2024, selected 13 presenters out of more than 30 applicants, and established five panels on different topics. This workshop was initially envisioned as an informal meeting where presenters would read each other's papers in advance and totally devote themselves to discussion. But given that it would be better to make the discussion public online, it took place both at the main conference room of the SRC and on Zoom, with each presenter and discussant having 10 minutes and the entire remaining hour devoted to discussion. As expected, nearly 100 people participated, including both on-site and online participants.

The author, who tends to take a Muslim-centric view of Central Eurasian history, was concerned that the workshop's discussions would be so esoteric and idiosyncratic that they would distance other experts. Such concerns vanished as soon as the presenters and discussants began their remarks. Panel 1, which focused on intermarriage and trade among Mongolian peoples on the Russo-Chinese border, raised the question of what each imperial power controlled and did not control. The fact that the effects of imperial power seem to recede into the background when we delve into the indigenous voices seems to give us an important perspective on what an empire was for the people. Panel 2 addresses the reach and limits of Russia's colonial control from the perspective of the creation of discourses on cannibalism and the reorganization of social hierarchies brought about by conversions. As these two issues have been explored by scholars of

the Volga-Ural region, the discussions of this panel were very enlightening. In addition, it seemed that the ritual murder allegedly committed by a Jew in Kiev in 1911 and the subsequent “Beilis trial” could also be located in the common ground of the cannibalism discourse. Panel 3 illuminated the role of the Buryats in building a Buddhist world linking Russia and Tibet. This reminded the author of the position of the Tatars, who linked Russia with the Islamic world in the late imperial period. Bearing in mind the argument that Islamic beliefs, which were diverse in various parts of the world, became Mecca-centric as the pilgrimage to Mecca thrived thanks to the development of transportation systems, I began to imagine that Buddhism may have similarly been transformed into a Lhasa-centric religion. Panel 4, when combined with Panel 3, vividly conveyed how the Buryat people, separated by borders, adapted to the technology of each era and defended and developed their own spiritual culture against oppressive state power. In addition, the way shamanism took shape interacting with Buddhism and Orthodoxy and acquired its own contours within Soviet scientific atheism seemed to lead to the larger question of what secularization means. Panel 5 discussed nationalism, sovereignty, and state building in Outer Mongolia, Buryatia, and Inner Mongolia. The dynamics emerged of a cross-border movement spanning three regions during the turbulent early twentieth century, learning from the outside world as the intellectuals debated religion, sovereignty, independence, and citizenship. Yet these Mongolian peoples were ultimately trapped within the borders of the Soviet Union, Mongolia, and China. In her conversation with the author, Linkhoeva raised the issue that the “continuum of crisis” (Peter Holquist) in the region may have begun with the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, not the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. In short, the “Buryatia” set by this workshop is both particular and universal.

The Mongolian peoples have been struggling hard to survive between the great powers to this day. The Buryats are one of the ethnic groups that have made the largest sacrifices in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and the people of Inner Mongolia are suffering from China’s coercive policies. During Putin’s visit in early September 2024, the Mongolian government failed to arrest him, contrary to the judgment of the International Criminal Court, giving rise to international condemnation. But it also shows the country’s predicament of having to navigate between Russia and China, and the anguish that Western help can no longer be trusted. Lessons from the past and present of the Mongolian world seem relevant for all who are considering how to survive amid the ongoing global crisis where the long-standing international order is collapsing. This workshop was truly a microcosm of the survival strategy research being promoted by the SRC. Linkhoeva and other participants also discussed how to make the meeting sustainable. As far as the author sees, rather than enclosing experts in the form of an academic society, a format allowing a variety of outside experts to participate in discussions could generate a broad synergistic effect across adjacent fields.

Survival Strategy Project Report -2

Plenary Meeting of the Platform for Explorations in Survival Strategies “Thinking about Decolonization”

Written by Norihiro Naganawa

In the wake of the war in Ukraine, our challenge is how to overcome the Russocentric views tacitly assumed by Slavic-Eurasian studies. The war has also revealed that European and American condemnation and sanctions against Russia have not spread very far beyond the West, with the non-Western colored peoples' cynicism against the West's favoritism toward the White. The war between Hamas and Israel that began October 2023 once again confirms the West's double standards and bias. Given these considerations, it is not enough to simply decolonize Russia. Rather, it is necessary to decolonize the broader Western-centered worldview itself in a more comprehensive manner. For this purpose, we enlisted the help of experts of East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East who have been thinking about decolonization and the legacy of empire for a long time. We then turned to our Slavic and Eurasian field to see what new horizons might open up by learning from the interdisciplinary knowledge and discussions that have accumulated in the abovementioned area studies. We arranged this workshop in a combination of face-to-face and Zoom modes, with 27 participants on-site and 49 online.

What is clear from this discussion is that the decolonization of Slavic-Eurasian studies is also not at all predictable or open to optimism. When one empire passes, another will rise restructuring the world



order. Even in nation-states which arise after the empire, elites and governance systems carry on the legacy and memory of the empire. There are human ties and logistical connections with the former metropole that are essential for these newborn states to survive. Nation-states' attitudes toward domestic minorities are not so different from those of modern empires. Although the focus of this workshop was on the analysis of decolonization as a historical phenomenon, it seemed that this could lead to a questioning of the *raison d'être* of area studies itself. Will area studies only provide various episodes of exceptions and counterexamples to dismantle large Western-centric theories and narratives? Can studies of regions weave alternative theories and narratives? We became convinced that these questions would become increasingly important in the future.



Ukraine Research Unit Report Russia's War against Ukraine and the Crisis in Eurasia: Challenges for the Humanities

Written by Yoko Aoshima

We announced in the previous issue of the Center News that the Research Unit for Ukraine and Neighboring Areas (commonly known as the Ukraine Research Unit) was established as of November 14, 2023. Following the Unit's inauguration, we held a kick-off gathering for it on February 8, 2024. In the first half of the symposium, we asked Dr. Mykola Yuri Riabchuk, who was staying at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center under the Foreign Visitors Fellowship Program (FVFP), and Dr. Hiroaki Kuromiya, who was invited for this symposium, to give a lecture. In the second half, in order to consider Russia's invasion against Ukraine within the framework of "humanitarian crisis in Eurasia", we invited Dr. Alexander Iskandaryan, Director of the Caucasus Institute, from Yerevan, Armenia, and Dr. Aiko Nishikida of Keio University, Japan, to join the discussion.

Two years have passed since the full-scale invasion by Russia in February 2022, and the war of aggression continues. The impact of the Russian's war has drastically changed how academic research subjects are perceived, approaches to research, and frameworks of understanding. In particular, we are prompted to reflect on the Russia-(Russian language-)centric view of the diverse ethnic groups living on the Eurasian continent as seen from the center of Russia, in places such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. The two talks were truly a reminder of how we have neglected the existence of Ukraine and the subjectivity of the people living there.

Dr. Riabchuk uses the term "imperial knowledge" for the narrative system that glorifies the "unique" historical roles of empires and de-emphasizes or effaces the cultures of subordinates. He also argues that many "realists" in the West also share this imperialist worldview ("imperial affinity"). Dr. Kuromiya also criticizes that many researchers have taken for granted the Russian historical narrative that Russia and Ukraine share roots and culture.

Dr. Kuromiya also quoted Nikolai Trubetzkoi, who contrasted Russia and Ukraine within the framework of "Eurasian civilization" and "European/Western civilization" (according to Trubetzkoi, Ukraine is characterized by "state minimalism close to Cossack anarchy," while Russia is characterized by "state maximalism" aiming for "all-Russian state building" (note: a state that would integrate Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus). He argued that while Ukraine is a part of Europe, although it has become marginalized,

it does not suffer from identity crises, while Russia does, having basically had to “Western-Europeanize” itself.

The discussion continued with a heated debate with the floor on matters such as: how the complex relationship between empires and the peoples within them, which has been revealed by the recent “imperial turn” in historiography, can be redefined; the question of cultural continuity (Dr. Iskandaryan asked about the cultural boundaries between the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Kuban Cossacks); the problems of viewing “Europe” and “Eurasia” as value conflicts with geographical contrasts, especially the conflicts they can cause in border regions; and how new situations can be reflected in academics and education. While there is a need to further consider how to rethink the geographical space in which Russia has historically held power (including what “Russia” is in the first place) in each field, it was felt clear that the presence of various peoples and border regions and their independent identities can no longer be neglected.

After the panel, I had a short chat with Dr. Kuromiya. When I said that Ukrainians now don’t like to think of themselves as being included in “Eurasia,” he replied, “That’s right, Eurasia is just a rephrasing of ‘former Soviet bloc’, which means the sphere of influence of the current Russian Federation. That’s why I opposed the name change to ASEES (Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies).” (Note: the name was changed in 2010 from the former American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS)). But, he continued, “The ‘Eurasia’ in Slavic-Eurasian Research Center is fine because, in fact, it covers India and the Middle East. I don’t see any problem with that.” Our research subjects certainly extend beyond the former Soviet bloc. If that has spared us the Russocentrism that “Eurasia” has, it may be said to have shown foresight.

In the following roundtable, we discussed what humanities scholars can do to understand the Ukrainian issue in a more global context, as well as taking the two crises occurring in Eurasia—Nagorno-Karabakh and Palestine—together as a “humanitarian crisis in Eurasia.” While warning that information manipulation and propaganda can cause errors in decision-making, Dr. Kuromiya emphasized that researchers have a responsibility to tell the truth, although there is no particular need for them to be engaged in society. Explaining the history of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Dr. Iskandaryan said that the view created by the West in the 18th century of nation-building as the construction of ethnic domains leads to terrible outcomes, namely the cleansing of the “alien” population, and called for a new way of thinking in the 21st century. Finally, Dr. Nishikida talked about the inhumane events taking place in Palestine, presenting abundant data, while emphasizing the importance of the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and the role of researchers in the public arena, including the dissemination of “undistorted” information in the media and collaboration with NGOs. The discussion covered a variety of angles, including the issue of the diversity of “truths,” the impact of the war in Ukraine and the differences in how it is perceived, and the issue of dialogue between scholars with different views. When asked if he thought these three events shared a common context, Dr. Iskandaryan said that this all sprang from the dismantling of the Yalta system. This recalled to mind

the discussions that took place in relation to decolonization at the Plenary Meeting of the Platform for Explorations in Survival Strategies the previous day, including: the problem of regional destabilization that arises after the failed withdrawal of empire, as mentioned by Dr. Chiharu Takenaka; the question of how we can support the independent actions of the former colonies, as mentioned by Professor Keiko Sakai; and the question of how we should focus on minorities that leak out from nations newly born from former colonies, as pointed out by Dr. Kazue Hosoda. We must consider the future of Eurasia, including the various problems that will arise once the “empire” has receded, as well as the departure of the borderlands from that “empire.”

Prior to the symposium, an informal meeting with Dr. Kuromiya was held on February 6. Dr. Kuromiya received his M.A. from the University of Tokyo, then moved to the U.S. and received his Ph.D. from Princeton University, where he published his first monograph in 1988. That first book was research within a so-called “revisionist” framework, but in “Freedom and Terror in the Donbass,” published 10 years later in 1998, he took a very different approach, adopting a unique regional history that deconstructed the Moscow-centric historical view. We asked him for his reasons. He answered that his documentary search in the Ukrainian archives had a significant impact on that change. He said, “I was taught by Ukraine.” His research has since expanded in many directions, but the common thread that runs through it is his painstaking critique of the materials. During the roundtable discussion, the participants spoke from their diverse experiences: that “Moscow” is selective in putting out (or not putting out) materials; that, therefore, just because you cannot see materials in Russia does not mean that you are doing decisive damage (conversely, just because you see materials in Moscow does not mean that you are doing fair academic research); that typed materials are only reports written for superiors, so reading those alone does not bring you closer to the “truth” (even hand-written notes must be read properly); and that when conducting interviews, you must fully understand the implications of the words that were spoken. It prompted us to think deeply again about the need to develop the ability to see through the lies and back-story of materials, and to reconstruct the context in which the materials were constructed, from the side of the materials and based on those materials. Finally, in response to the question, “Do you have a broad framework for your research?,” Dr. Kuromiya made a lasting impression on me by replying that he did not have such a framework in particular, but that even though so many people died during the Stalin era, there are many things that are not well understood, and that is why we must study the subject. Another theme running through Dr. Kuromiya is the way he listens to the voices of the voiceless. His earnestness in squarely facing the materials in the archives and trying to reach the inner lives of the victims who did not leave any written materials was deeply impressive as an example of the sincerity of historical research in a time of humanitarian crisis.

Event Report -1

Arctic Research Workshop “Changing Russian Arctic: The Case of Sakha”

Written by Shinichiro Tabata

The Center’s Arctic Challenge for Sustainability II (ArCS II) Human Society Research Program held an international workshop titled “Changing Russian Arctic: The Case of Sakha” on January 16 at the Center. In this seminar, we invited two researchers from Yakutsk and one from Paris (who is originally from Yakutsk), as well as a researcher from the Institute of Geography, RAS in Moscow who is staying at Doshisha University, and a graduate student from the North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk who is studying at Tohoku University. Nadezhda Krasilnikova from Yakutsk had been staying at the Center since last November, so these six Russian researchers presented their reports to this workshop. A researcher from Moscow also presented a report on the Sakha population. On the Japanese side, Tabata reported on changes in the economic structure of Sakha, and Hattori reported on the impact of economic sanctions on the Sakha diamond industry. Thus, all eight reports concerned the Sakha economy.

The reason for holding a workshop specifically about Sakha is related to the fact that we have been working closely with Sakha researchers in our projects, in areas such as data sharing and joint analysis. It is also related to the fact that we are in the process of compiling the results of the ArCS II research into



a book entitled *Changes in the Russian Arctic Economy: A Case Study of the Sakha Republic* in Japanese. When ArCS II began in FY2020, we had planned to focus on Sakha and Yamal, but in the end there was more emphasis on Sakha. This is due to the fact that, under the unexpected circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we could not proceed with the kind of research we were trying to conduct without the close research collaboration of local researchers. Furthermore, oil and gas production in Sakha has been increasing rapidly in recent years, and our theme of studying the impact of resource development on the local economy has the advantage of being able to analyze the impact of such development concurrently. During the workshop, intense discussions ensued, including questions about the economic situations of specific municipalities in Sakha.

Event Report -2

Joint Seminar with the University of Melbourne “Eurasian Migration: Past, Present and Future”

Written by Akihiro Iwashita

The Slavic-Eurasian Research Center held a joint seminar with the University of Melbourne titled “Eurasian Migration: Past, Present and Future” at Hokkaido University on Friday, January 12, 2024. The Joint Research Workshop Fund was established by Hokkaido University and the University of Melbourne to deepen international research collaboration by holding joint conferences. In doing so, it aims to explore new research themes and possibilities for interdisciplinary research, to promote joint supervision of doctoral students, and to support new research collaborations. This seminar was held as one of the workshops adopted by the Fund for 2023.

This joint seminar was also co-hosted as a research project on the central themes of “Culture Clash and Wellbeing,” especially “Border Crossing and Gender,” as one of the four centers (the others being Tohoku University, the National Museum of Ethnology, and Kobe University) of the “East Eurasian Studies Project” (hereinafter “EES”), under the Project for the Promotion of Global Area Studies network-based research project sponsored by the National Institutes for the Humanities.

Six participants from the University of Melbourne, including doctoral candidates, and seven from Hokkaido University (mainly members of the EES Hokkaido University Slavic-Eurasian Research Center)

engaged in lively discussions centered on migration in the past, present, and future. In light of the current world situation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the participants engaged in an enthusiastic exchange of views on a wide range of topics, including the reconstruction of historical research on the Russian Empire and the western border region of the Soviet Union, and the issue of migrant refugees in the post Cold War order. The workshop also discussed the formation of research teams for future joint research and the creation of a research development plan for the next fiscal year and beyond, making it a very significant workshop that will lead to further expansion of research collaboration.

Prior to the seminar, the University of Melbourne researchers visited the University Library and toured its large collections. They showed great interest in the library’s unique and extensive world-class collections, especially the Vernadsky Collection, the Boris Souvarine Collection, the Collection of Russian Emigre Fiction, and the Henryk Gierszynski Polish Collection. They even asked about future long-term resident research at the University. We would like to thank the library staff for their cooperation with the library tour.

Interview

In Step with SRC

with Jaroslaw Janczak

We interviewed Dr. Jaroslaw Janczak, who stayed at SRC in the ERASMS plus program in March 2024, by email. He also visited our center in 2017 as an FVEP faculty member, and continuously since.

Your affiliation is with the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland, and the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). On the other hand, as a visiting fellow, you have had a number of working experiences in leading research institutes outside of Europe, for instance in Canada and in Japan. What is the unique value of SRC for you, based on your international experience?

Indeed, my academic work allows me to be active internationally and experience various academic centers and collaborate with colleagues from various academic circles. Have said that, I need to admit that the SRC is exceptional and belongs to my favorite academic partner institutions. At least three reasons build that picture. First of all, they are excellent working conditions, including working space, access to library resources, but also possibility of self-isolation that helps a lot, especially when thinking about undisturbed reading and writing process. Second, it is truly international environment, enabling critical and constructive exchange of ideas. Many academic centers host guest scholars, but at the SRC there always is a big group of



them and they come from different global destinations. This, together with the local Japanese academics, creates an excellent environment for research, and more generally, academic and intellectual exchange. Finally, it is the atmosphere of openness of the professors from Hokkaido University. Between my both visits I was collaborating with many colleagues from the SRC, meeting them on international conferences, organizing joint panels, hosting them at my home universities, etc.

You were an FVEP faculty member in 2017 at SRC. What was your impression of SRC from your previous visit? Do you feel there have been any changes or updates?

In 2017 I spent three months at SRC. That time was very intensive and extremely productive in academic, cultural and personal terms. It has also contributed to development of further contacts, projects and joint work.

The 2024 visit was originally planned for the summer time in 2020, unfortunately, because of the COVID pandemic it had to be canceled. The SRC, as I experienced in March 2024, is still the same great place to work and research. However, changes are also visible. They seem to result from the recent developments, especially changing global order: Russian invasion against Ukraine, more assertive international policy of China and tensions that follow those processes. I noticed that intellectual and personal links to Europe, both Americas and some regions of Asia are stronger. At the same time previously visible connections to China and Russia are missing in the form I observed them seven years ago. And being less serious—this time I came in the winter time, and experienced the University and the city that totally differed from their summer versions. My impressions from the last visit can be followed in the YouTube video report: <https://youtu.be/m3j-x9KGGdA>.

I know your academic interests are mainly the themes of borders and border areas within the context of European integration processes. Do you feel differences in views or nuances about borders among Europe, North America, and Asia?

Yes, I do. The SRC is in my opinion the best border studies center in the Eastern hemisphere. Together with the colleagues from there we get into fascinating academic dialogue. On the other hand, regional differences are visible. In Europe cross border cooperation and debordering processes stayed in the very center of the analytical focus. This have been painfully challenged by Putin's aggression against

Ukraine and translated into conflict studies perspective. In the North America migration and economic cooperation seem to dominate among border studies interests. In East Asia I see maritime borders as the most crucial ones, as well as the territorial disputes rooted in historical legacies but with highly sensitive current geopolitical consequences.

As a political scientist and an academic in border studies, it seems to be almost impossible to refer to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. What do you see in the future for research into Russia, and for collaborations with researchers in Russia?

Indeed, this is one of the key challenges the academia has been recently facing. Official contacts with Russian academic institutions have been suspended or canceled in most of the democratic states. This seems to be justified by moral and political reasons, especially taking into consideration openly supportive role of many Russian universities towards the Putin's regime and his war policy. On the other hand, there are many Russian colleagues that strongly oppose Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine (and other states that have been in different forms experiencing Russian expansionism in recent decades). Keeping communication channels with them open will be crucial, especially in the longer perspective, for creating new global order and academic dialog in the future.

We would appreciate it if you tell us your expectations for SRC in future. Also, could you suggest the expected role of regional

studies in Japan in developing other/whole regional studies?

Taking into consideration the changing global order I deeply believe that SRC's role in providing expertise about European and Eurasian developments will be only growing. The world has entered the period of instability and uncertainty. Research and knowledge can help us coping with them, and the SRC belongs to the network of the most important actors in producing understanding and offering solutions. In Europe and North America, Japanese regional studies have been carefully watched and compared to local approaches. In Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, they shall, and for sure will, serve as the local and tailor made pattern to follow.

Profile of Dr. Jaroslaw Janczak
<https://jaroslawjanczak.eu/>



Foreign Visitors Fellowship Program

The SRC invited the following scholars as Foreign Fellows for 2024–25

Name: **Renat Irikovich Bekkin**

Position; Affiliation: Independent Scholar

Research Topic at the SRC: When the History Matters Again for Crimean Tatars: Challenged Identities and the Search for the Lost Grounds in Crimea after 2014

Name: **Siarhei Bohdan**

Position; Affiliation: Research Associate, University of Regensburg

Research Topic at the SRC: *'Relations Without Obligations'*: Islamist Iran and the USSR/Russia

Name: **Roman Katsman**

Position; Affiliation: Professor, Department of Literature of the Jewish People, Bar-Ilan University

Research Topic at the SRC: Melodramatic modality in the Russian-language and Ukrainian-language literature of repatriation and migration in Israel

Name: **Vytautas Kuokštis**

Position; Affiliation: Associate Professor, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

Research Topic at the SRC: The Political Economy of the Lithuanian Growth Puzzle

Name: **Olena Nikolayenko**

Position; Affiliation: Professor, Department of Political Science, Fordham University

Research Topic at the SRC: Labor Mobilization in Contemporary Belarus

Name: **Vladimir Rouvinski**

Position; Affiliation: Professor, Universidad Icesi

Research Topic at the SRC: Back to the Future? The Symbolic Politics of Russia in Latin America

Our Faculty Members (FY2024)

Daisuke Adachi: Associate Professor, Modern Russian literature and culture; History of representation in 19th-century Russian literature

Yoko Aoshima: Associate Professor, European History; Central and East European Modern History; History of the Russian Empire

Michitaka Hattori: Professor, Economy and political processes of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus

Wolff David: Special Appointed Professor, Russian and Soviet history; Siberia and the Far East; Cold War; Northeast Asian region construction

Akihiro Iwashita: Professor, Border studies; Tourism; Foreign policy; Northeast Asia studies; Political geography

Tomohiko Uyama: Professor, Modern history and politics of Central Asia; Comparative imperial history; Comparative politics

Norihiro Naganawa: Professor, Modern history of Central Eurasia

Yoichi Isahaya: Special Associate Professor, Histories of Premodern Central Eurasia; Mongol Empire and Sciences

Manabu Sengoku: Professor, Comparative politics; Political economy; Welfare policies; East European politics

Motoki Nomachi: Professor, Slavic linguistics

Special Assistant Professors

Yukiko Matsumoto: Modern and Contemporary Russian History, Urban History, Gender History, German-Soviet War Studies

Library and Information Service Staff

Yuzuru Tonai: Associate Professor, Library and Information Science; Bibliographer; Russian History

Sayaka Tamiya: University Research Administrator, Publications

Ongoing Cooperative Research Projects

Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, excluding “Grants-in-Aid for JSPS Fellows” and “Grants-in-Aid for Publication of Scientific Research Results: Scientific Literature”

Scientific Research A

Headed by **Manabu Sengoku**: “Correlation between Changes in Political Parties and Changes in Social Policy” (2020–24).

Scientific Research B

Headed by **Daisuke Adachi**: “A Comprehensive Study on the Melodramatic Imagination in Russian and Former Soviet Culture” (2019–24).

Headed by **Akihiro Iwashita**: “Representations of “Territory” and Social Transformation in Northeast Asia” (2020–24).

Headed by **Yoko Aoshima**: “Melting Empire: Modernizing State and Destabilized Society in the Borderlands of Late Imperial Russia” (2021–24).

Headed by **Yoichi Isahaya**: “Interdisciplinary Approach to the “Crisis of the 14th Century”” (2021–24).

Headed by **Tomohiko Uyama**: “Contemporary History of Great Power Nationalism” (2023–26).

Headed by **Yuzuru Tonai**: “Siberian Intervention “On Site” and Diplomatic Visions of Japan and Russia” (2023–26).

Headed by **Motoki Nomachi**: “The (Pre-) History of the Macedonian Literary Language: An Interdisciplinary Approach” (2023–27).

Headed by **Norihiro Naganawa**: “Russia and the Middle East in the Long Twentieth Century: Views from Insurgents” (2024–27).

Scientific Research C

Headed by **Hiroshi Itani**: “The Russian/Soviet Expansion Policies in Northeast Asia: Japan-Russia Relations Over the Straits” (2023–25).

Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research

Headed by **Daisuke Adachi**: “Post-Socialist Melodramatic Culture” (2023–27).

Visiting Professors and Associate Professors from Abroad (FY2024)

Name: **Andreas Renner**

Position; Affiliation: Professor, The history department of Ludwig Maximilians University, Germany

Research Topic at the SRC: The Northeast Passage in Russo-Japanese Relations

Name: **Diana Kudaibergenova**

Position; Affiliation: Lecturer, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London

Research Topic at the SRC: Why, How and under What Circumstances Do Citizens of Authoritarian States Find Ways to Normalize Their Status Quo

Visitors from Abroad

H. E. Justine Hayhurst (Australian Ambassador to Japan) for exchange of views on bilateral communication (June 2024)

Olga Tsuneko Yokoyama (Research Professor, University of California Los Angeles) for a meeting on cooperation and support for SRC (August 2024)

Delegation of Suspilne Ukraine (Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine) for exchange of views of the current regional situation (October 2024)

Sergiy Korsunsky (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Japan) for exchange of views on bilateral communication (October 2024)

Areg Hovhannisian (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Japan) for exchange of views (October 2024)

Delegation of International Institute for Central Asia for exchange of views on bilateral academic communication (December 2024)

Guest Lecturers from Abroad (FY2024)

International Workshop with New York University, “Buryatia: Bridging Siberia, Russia, and Eurasia” **Natsagdorj Battsengel** (Mongolian Academy of Science): “Cross-border Marital Relations between the Mongolian Subjects of the Manchu and Russian Empires in the 18th Century”; **Ayur Zhanaev** (University of Cambridge (online)): “Transcultural Networks at the Twilight of Empires: The Case of Tsogto Badmazhapov (1879–1937) and the Alashaa Banner of Inner Mongolia”; **Chechesh Kudachinova** (Freie Universität Berlin (online)): “Colonialism and the Construction of Indigenous Cannibalism in Late Imperial Siberia”; **Nikolay Tsyrempilov** (Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan): “Christianization of the Buriats and the Dymbilov Affair, 1841–1848”; **Takehiko Inoue** (Osaka Kyoiku University, Japan) “Bridging Eurasian Buddhist Societies: Khambo-lama Choinzon-Dorzhi-Iroltuev’s Grand Tour at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”; **Irina Garri** (Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies SB RAS, Ulan-Ude, Russia) “Following the Journey of Gombozhab Tsybikov”; **Sayana Namsaraeva** (University of Cambridge) “Material Heritage to Share? Transborder Social Life of a Sandalwood Buddha through Time and Space across Asia”; **Baigal Khuasai** (Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations, Mongolia) “Narratives of Resilience: Transformation of *Üliger* in the Buryat-Mongolian Cultural Revitalization in Inner Asia”; **Galina Dondukova** (Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies SB RAS, Ulan-Ude, Russia) “*The Epic of King Gesar / Geser: The Buryat Versions in the Context of Global Studies of the Epic*”; **Justine Buck Quijada** (Wesleyan University, USA) “The Academic Study of Buryat Shamanism: Changing Roots of National Tradition in the Late Soviet Period”; **Griffin Creech** (University of Pennsylvania, USA (online)) “The Unmaking of Buryat Citizenship in Northern Mongolia, 1928–1930”; **Zumber Orluud** (Showa Women’s University, Japan) “Mongolian Terms for “Sovereignty”: Focusing on the Material from Mongolia and Buryatia in 1910–1920”; **Buren Borjigin** (Hokkaido University, Japan) “Mongolian Nationalism and Intellectuals in 1911: The Case of Almas Ochir and Haisan”(October 2024)

Publications (2023–24)

Софија Милорадовић, Мотоки Номаћи. Сећање на академика Милку Ивић: Делање и научно наслеђе, словенско-евроазијске студије, бр. 36 Београд, 2024.
Acta Slavica Iaponica vol. XLV, 2024, refereed journal in English and Russian.