

4-5 pm, September 4, 2012: MAKAIAS, Kolkata

Meeting Notes of the Fifth “Summit” of Slavistic Association Leaders of East Asia

Report by Hiroshi Fukuda (Japan)

This “summit” was held during the Fourth East Asian Conference on Slavic and Eurasian Studies hosted by MAKAIAS on 4-5 September 2012.

Participants:

From India:

1. Hari Vasudevan, Professor, Department of History, University of Calcutta
Specialist in Russian Studies and Former Director (2007-2011), MAKAIAS
2. Dr. Sreeradha Dutta, Director, MAKAIAS
3. Suchandana Chatterjee, Fellow, MAKAIAS
4. Anita Sengupta, Fellow, MAKAIAS
5. Professor Mahavir Singh, Dean (Academics), Gautam Buddha University, Noida, UP
6. Professor R.G. Gidadhubli, Former Director, Centre for Central Eurasian Studies,
University of Mumbai
7. Professor Ajay Patnaik, Chair, Centre for Central Asian Studies, School of International
Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
8. Professor Rashmi Doraiswamy, Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi.

From Japan: Kimitaka Matsuzato, Hokkaido University, JCREES representative

Takayuki Yokota Murakami, Osaka University

Hiroshi Fukuda, Hokkaido University

From China:

Yang Cheng, East China Normal University, CAREECAS representative

In this meeting the following four items were discussed.

1. Osaka was proposed as the venue for the Fifth East Asian Conference in August 2013

The first Conference was held in Sapporo (2009), the second was in Seoul (2010), the third was in Beijing (2011), and the fourth was in Kolkata. On a rotating basis the next conference should be in

Japan. Considering that the next ICCEES World Congress will be held in Makuhari (near Tokyo) and the first East Asian Conference was held in Sapporo, Osaka would be a suitable place for the fifth Conference.

Professor of Osaka University, Takayuki Yokota-Murakami, reported that the Slavists in the Kansai Area of Japan are ready to take charge of the next conference. Yokota-Murakami proposed Osaka University of Law and Economics is the most plausible conference venue, since its Rector, Professor Wakio Fujimoto is a famous specialist of Russian history. Yokota-Murakami underscored that Osaka is famous for gourmet food and that the Organizing Committee will invite the participants to one-day tour to Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan located near Osaka, after the conference. The participants confirmed Yokota-Murakami's report and decided to ask the KASS's will, since KASS could not send a representative to the "summit" this time. If the KASS agrees, Osaka will be confirmed as the venue of the 5th East Asian Conference for Slavic Eurasian Studies.

The participants of the meeting paid serious attention to the fact that September is a very inconvenient month for Korean scholars since a new semester starts and decided that the next conference should be held in somewhere in August 2013. Some participants proposed to hold the conference at the end of August, as was the case with the Beijing Conference of 2011, while Indian participants suggested holding it in early August, since the next meeting of the ICCEES Council will be held in Makuhari at the beginning of August. There are famous Slavic Eurasian specialists among ICCEES Council members. They may send proposals to the Osaka conference and, after Makuhari, visit Osaka to give their papers.

2. Discussions about an Indian Association of Eurasian Studies

The suggestion of establishing an Indian national association won general assent, however, it is still necessary to discuss about the form of the association among the Indian scholars. We see two types of national organization among ICCEES member countries: one is individual membership association, while the other is a confederation of Slavist institutes (China's CAREECAS belongs to this type). If India chooses the first option, it is necessary to establish a national association first before opting for ICCEES membership. This means it would have to get itself registered as a body with a working address etc, etc. This process could be time-consuming. The confederation model would be comparatively easier. The details of this were discussed as follows:

Indian scholars present for the summit meeting discussed the prospects of an Indian association for more active commitment to the ICCEES. Two basic suggestions came from the Indian scholars

about combining two working models for forming an Indian association of Eurasian studies—(a) national association of individuals and (b) a federation of institutional representatives who would be selected as association representatives. It is desirable that research scholars are involved in the working group of the association. The proposal for circulating a PROFORMA/QUESTIONNAIRE among area studies centres, research institutes and research scholars in Eurasian Studies/Central Asian Studies/Russian Studies for joining the association and taking an active part in the running of the association was discussed openly.

Besides this institutional format, it would be desirable for individual experts in Russian and Eurasian Studies to be members of the association.

The need for circulating ICCEES material among the participating institutions was also discussed.

A 5-year membership for the Indian association was proposed.

Certain issues regarding an Indian association were clarified—(a) the association is a prerequisite for membership in the ICCEES Executive Council (b) participation in ICCEES Congresses (held once in every five years)/regional conferences (held every year) can be based on individual choice.

Indian participants requested to have a short text explaining “merits of being a member of ICCEES” to popularize the idea of accession among Indian Slavicists (this request was addressed to Graeme Gill, ICCEES President) and also application form of accession and technical advice (this request was addressed to ICCEES General Secretary, Heike Dörrenbächer).

To join the ICCEES, an application should preferably be submitted by India before the next meeting of ICCEES Council, which will be held in Makuhari at the beginning of August 2013.

It was informed that as membership fee of ICCEES, each national association has to pay \$US 1 per scholar per year. With its 1000 members, JCREES pays 1000 USD per year, while with its 500 members, CAREECAS pays 500 USD each year as ICCEES membership fee.

3. A large turnout from India to the next ICCEES World Congress in Makuhari (Japan) will be highly welcomed.

Only three Indian scholars attended the ICCEES World Congress in Stockholm in 2010. In that respect, a large turnout from India to Makuhari in 2015 would be highly welcomed. Also, panel

proposal rather than individual proposal would be encouraged for the convenience of organizing a large-scale congress.

To showcase India's support of ICCEES agenda, it was proposed that greetings for Makuhari Congress 2015 should be sent by a renowned Russian expert in India. [Professor Matsuzato has proposed the name of Professor Hari Vasudevan, Professor of History, University of Calcutta and former Director, MAKAIAS and has requested him to send his greetings to ICCEES Council as early as possible].

Regarding costs, round-trip airfare from India to Tokyo is approximately 500 EUR, and conference registration fee will be around 300 EUR. In the past, scholars from ex-communist countries enjoyed discount in regard to registration fee. Indian participants requested the Makuhari Organizing Committee to grant Indian scholars the same privilege, since as per GOI Finance Ministry's norms, only air travel costs and daily allowance (DA) are permissible, but not registration fee. Therefore, 300 Euro as registration fee might be a serious difficulty for Indian scholars who would wish to participate in Makuhari Congress. This matter could hopefully be addressed by the ICCEES Executive Council.

4. The biggest difficulty for the Conference in Kolkata was visa issues.

Five scholars sent individual proposals from China for the Fourth East Asian Conference on Slavic and Eurasian Studies that was hosted by MAKAIAS on 4-5 September 2012 in Kolkata, but only one scholar (Professor Yang Cheng) could participate, and that too having undergone a rigid process of MHA, MEA individual clearance. Both Japanese, Chinese participants and the Indian organizers of the Kolkata Conference admitted that the biggest difficulty was visa issue that was necessarily dependent on the clearance of the Ministries concerned. It takes about 6 weeks for the Chinese to obtain a conference visa in India. In the case of Japanese, it takes about 3 weeks.

The other difficulty is framing panels. In this conference, organizers received only three panel proposals—first one on regional conflicts in the Russian Federation and the Caucasus proposed by SRC, Hokkaido University; second one on historiography in Central Asia proposed by Cambridge University; and the third one on Indo-Russian bilateral relations in Russian archives proposed by Kolkata's study team who visited the Russian archives immediately after Soviet disintegration. To chalk out a conference programme spread over two days with evenly distributed panels running in parallel sessions was a serious difficulty. Additionally, individual proposals were unexpectedly cancelled. It would have been much easier for the organizers if the applicants could have had

submitted panel proposals rather than individual ones.