

Educational Resources and Developments

Teaching Central Asian History in Japan: Some Practice and Experience

Komatsu Hisao, Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, The University of Tokyo, Japan, komatsu@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp

This essay will provide an overview of my approach to teaching Central Asian history to undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Tokyo. Most of the students are studying in the Department of Oriental History, Faculty of Letters, and in the program on West Asian History and Civilization, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology.

My two-semester lecture course for undergraduates offers an overview of Central Asian history focusing principally on the period from the mid-sixteenth century (beginning with the Russian conquest of the Kazan Khanate) to the beginning of the twentieth century.¹ Important topics include the Tatar diasporas and their later resurrection in the economic and cultural spheres, Russian migration into Central Asia, the resurgence of Islam under Tsarist rule in Turkistan as seen in the Andijan Uprising of 1898, and Jadid reformist movements. The final segment of the course examines trends in the modern history of Central Asia since the latter half of the 1980s and sometimes includes lectures on the legacy of Soviet civilization in contemporary Central Asia. These topics seem to interest not only students in the Department of Oriental History, but also those in other programs who wish a comparative perspective. The lecture course introduces students to possible topics for their future research and provides essential historical background for understanding modern Central Asia. For example, the ideas and activities of the famous Tatar Pan-Islamist Abdurreshid Ibrahim (1857-1944), who stayed many years in Tokyo, can be exciting for students who are majoring in the modern history of Japan.

The teaching of general courses on the history of Central Asia in Japan is supported by a number of recent texts and reference books in Japanese:

Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, ed.

1988-89 *Nihonniokeru Chūōajia kankei kenkyū bunken mokuroku, 1879-1987 nen 3 gatsu, Sakuin/Seigo* [Bibliography of Central Asian Studies in Japan, 1879-March 1987 and Index and Errata]. Tokyo: The Center for East Asian Cultural Studies.

Egami, Namio, ed.

1987 *Chūōajia shi (Sekai kakkoku shi 16)* [A History of Central Asia (*History of World Countries*, vol. 16)]. Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha.

Komatsu, Hisao, ed.

2000 *Chūōyūrasia shi (Shinban sekai kakkoku shi 4)* [A History of Central Eurasia (*History of World Countries, New Edition* vol. 4)]. Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha.

Mano, Eiji

1977 *Chūōajiano rekishi* [A History of Central Asia]. Tokyo: Kodansha.

Mano, Eiji, ed.

1999 *Chūōajia shi (Ajiano rekishito bunka 8)* [A History of Central Asia (*History and Culture of Asia*, vol. 8)]. Tokyo: Dohosha-Kadokawa Shoten.

Umesao, Tadao, ed.

1995 *Sekai minzoku mondai jiten* [Encyclopedia of Nations and Ethnic Relations]. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Uyama, Tomohiko

2000 *Chūōajiano rekishito genzai* [Past and Present of Central Asia]. Tokyo: Toyo Shoten.

¹ The syllabus may be found at: http://cesww.fas.harvard.edu/syll/Komatsu_Hisao_2002_A_Modern_History_of_Central_Asia.pdf

The second type of undergraduate seminar involves reading important articles or books

regarding Central Asian history, published in Japanese as well as English, over a range of topics that will broaden the students' perspectives. Every week one student reports on a work selected by him/her or sometimes by me, which then serves as the focus for class discussion. One of the most stimulating works discussed in this seminar has been R. D. McChesney's *Central Asia: Foundations of Change* (1996). The goal of the seminar is to learn methodologies used in Central Asian studies, recent research trends, and how to prepare a thesis, as well as how to make a presentation. Students who are preparing their graduation theses under my guidance are required to make interim reports in this seminar; these reports by the more advanced students contribute to the instruction of those just beginning in the field.

In my graduate seminar most of the students are interested in the modern history of Central Asia from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, as well as in the modern history of the Ottoman Empire. The students read a wide range of material, including in alternate weeks Turkic-language sources. Last year, for example, we read selections from a mid-nineteenth century Khivan chronicle, Kazakh newspaper articles from *Qazaq*, and the treatise of Ismail Bey Gasprali (1851-1914) on the Muslim Congress project. By itself this seminar is not sufficient to train the students in reading original sources; however voluntary seminars organized by students belonging to several colleges are very effective in deepening the training. In addition to reading original sources in my seminar we discuss recent works dedicated to the modern history of Central Eurasia. I believe that it is very important, especially for graduate students, to situate their own work in the best current historiography and to elaborate an effective methodology through critical evaluation of essential works published in Japan as well as abroad. During the past year, for example, we discussed recent works by Kemper (2002),

Dudoignon (2001), and Khalid (1999). Finally, every candidate for the M.A. degree is required to make a rather detailed presentation regarding his/her future M.A. thesis in my seminar, which thus provides an opportunity to refine the conception and methodology.

In recent years most of the candidates for the Ph.D. study abroad, some of them in Central Asian countries, in order to use archival and manuscript resources. Since research conditions for modern Central Eurasian studies have improved substantially in the last two decades, we expect to see the publication of many monographs by this new generation of specialists in the near future.

References

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2001 "Status, strategies and discourses of a Muslim 'clergy' under a Christian law: Polemics about the collection of the zakât in late Imperial Russia," In: *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)*, S. A. Dudoignon and Komatsu H., eds., pp. 43-73. London-New York-Bahrain: Kegan Paul.
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2002 "Khāliidiyya networks in Daghestan and the question of jihād," *Die Welt des Islams*, 42/1 (2002), pp. 41-71.
- Khalid, Adeeb
1999 "The emergence of a modern Central Asian historical consciousness," In: *Historiography of Imperial Russia: The Profession and Writing of History in a Multinational State*, T. Sanders, ed., pp. 433-452. Armonk, N.Y.-London: M. E. Sharpe.
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1996 *Central Asia: Foundations of Change* Princeton: The Darwin Press.

Uzbek Language Instruction: A New Textbook

Andras Bodrogligeti, *Modern Literary Uzbek: A Manual for Intensive Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Courses*. München: Lincom Europa, 2002. 718 pp., 2 vols. ISBN: 3895866954 (paper), \$66.00.

Reviewed by: William Dirks, Independent Scholar, San Antonio, Tex., USA, anazahqaan@yahoo.com

Modern Literary Uzbek offers a compact, thorough presentation of modern literary Uzbek in two

volumes comprising a total of 30 units. Part I begins with a short introduction to the Uzbek language

followed by a presentation of the Cyrillic alphabet and an extensive presentation of the phonetics of modern Uzbek, including a section on stress. Units 1-21 make up the remainder of Part I. Part II contains units 22-30, ending with a bibliography, index of topics covered, and an index of Uzbek morphemes.

Each of the 30 units begins with a short proverb, followed by a box listing the main topics of the unit, and an Uzbek passage with translation. The actual learning material begins with a list of 60-90 vocabulary words, followed by a list of 10-20 phrases and idioms, which is in turn followed by a list of five or so proverbs. All of this material is provided with glosses in English, and interspersed with (more) proverbs. Often the author inserts additional lists of cultural relevance, such as "The Mandatory Elements of Prayer" or "Things to See in Bukhara."

Following this lexical material comes a section on grammar describing verb conjugations, noun declensions, particles, and the like, using illustrative examples and charts. The grammar sections also present grammatical structures pertaining to various notions such as necessity, possibility, time, etc. The grammar section is followed by a short reading section with a glossary of new words that occur in the reading. After the reading, each chapter has three sections for language practice: 15 Uzbek sentences to "Copy and Translate," 10 English sentences to "Translate into Uzbek", and a "Directed Composition" where the learner is supposed to write a paragraph using very detailed prompts in English along with a list of words that are required for this task. Each unit finishes with a section labeled "Conversation," consisting of a list of phrases related to a function such as cursing, asking questions, etc.

I found this work helpful as a reference grammar, especially since it is so well indexed and full of illustrative examples. Its size (15 by 21 cm) is also a plus, considering how much material it contains. However, as a textbook it fails on several counts. I would like to go into greater detail of its shortcomings, as these are typical of most textbooks published for learning Central Asian languages.

Modern Literary Uzbek's primary failing is that it lacks objectives and an effective methodological basis. The author does not provide any guidance as to how the text is to be used other than to say it was "prepared for classroom use." Users are not told what the learning objectives or

anticipated proficiency levels of the lessons are, nor even which lessons pertain to the three learning levels mentioned in the title. The organization of the chapters indicates that the grammar/translation method is to be followed: decontextualized vocabulary, then grammar, followed by texts to translate. The publication of a textbook based on the deductive grammar/translation method in 2002 is surprising since this method has been widely criticized in the language teaching field and alternatives have been around for decades.

On a similar note, I found the organization of the content counterintuitive as well. Seldom-used, exclusively literary, and even some truly Chaghatay forms are often presented before or to the exclusion of more commonly used structures. For example, *-yotirman*, used only in literary Uzbek, is presented before the much more widely used *-yapman* form. Similarly, Unit 25 presents the verbal form *-g'umdir*, rarely seen in modern Uzbek, whereas idiomatic uses of compound verbs such as *-ib ketdi*, one of the biggest challenges for learners, are given only brief coverage, and that mostly in the form of lists. It is even more perplexing that, despite being organized entirely around grammatical structure, the text nowhere spells out the most critical structure necessary for the learner, that of the syntax of a basic sentence, nor does it take the student beyond the individual sentence level of grammar. Conjunctions are not presented until Units 24 and 25.

I also think the manual would be difficult for a student to use. First of all, not all of the 60-90 words at the head of each unit necessarily appear in the following grammar and translation sections. As with many other textbooks of this genre, the combination of new grammar and new vocabulary must render the grammar explanations and reading texts largely incomprehensible to a learner. Bodrogligeti's translation exercises (for which no key is provided) become increasingly difficult as one progresses through the units, and would be a challenge for most instructors. Students would also be confused or misled by the many errors in spelling and translation for both vocabulary and grammatical forms. For example, the abovementioned present progressive *yozayotirman* and *yozyapman* conjugations are translated as "I write" instead of "I am writing." Similarly, *latta* is translated as "sponge," not "rag."

Given the methodological and organizational shortcomings of this material combined with the number of spelling and translation errors, it is

difficult to see how *Modern Literary Uzbek* can be used as an effective language textbook. Many scholars may find the work handy as a reference grammar, and the manual would also serve well as a source for advanced-level translation practice.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain and the opening up of China, learners of Central Asian

languages have had the opportunity and desire to learn these languages for communicative purposes. It is time that the learning materials produced for this field go beyond descriptions of language structure and incorporate modern, more effective, and practical language teaching methodology.

A Story of European Hammers and Central Asian Boulders: How a Swiss Museum Exhibits "High Asia"

Reported by: **Philippe Forêt**, Swiss National Science Foundation, Institute of Cartography, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, Switzerland, pforet@bluewin.ch

A unique exhibition on the mountains and deserts of Central Asia is on display at the Geological Museum of Lausanne, Switzerland, until July 27, 2003: "High Asia as They Saw It: Explorers and Geologists, from 1820 to 1940" ("La Haute-Asie telle qu'ils l'ont vue. Explorateurs et géologues, de 1820 à 1940"). The venue is Espace Arlaud, a palace located at Place de la Riponne in downtown Lausanne, which is open from Wednesday to Sunday. Information on the schedule of guided tours and lectures may be found at <http://www-sst.unil.ch/musee> or by writing the Museum director, Prof. Aymon Baud, at aymon.baud@sst.unil.ch.

The aim of the exhibition is to present the history, techniques, methodology, and results of the surveying of "High Asia." European scholars and travelers explored the ill-defined areas of the Himalayan kingdoms, Tibet, Xinjiang and Western China beginning in the Victorian era and continuing until World War II. National prestige was one of several goals in the scientific conquest of the heart of Asia. The systematic collecting of rock samples and fossils in the Pamirs, Himalayas and Taklamakan helped to change dramatically the understanding of our planet's geology and paleontology, and the discovery of the Silk Road civilizations has made us all aware of the significance of transcontinental exchange in Eurasia. Although this was not its original intent, the exhibition complements the French National Museum of Natural History's "Himalaya-Tibet: Clash of Continents" which will last until August 4 in Paris (for information, visit the flashy website <http://www.mnhn.fr/expo/himalaya/>), and the German Alpine Association's recent "Fascination

Himalaya: Stories from Researchers, Alpinists and Adventurers," that just ended in Munich.

This challenging topic is approached through an emphasis on the human aspects of scholarship instead of a more abstract institutional history. In order to avoid personality cults and nationalistic glorification of science, the scientific results have been placed within the context of contemporary scholarship over a wide range of disciplines from archaeology to geology, as represented in the work of scholars from the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. The exhibition combines biographical descriptions with personal descriptions of fieldwork. Victor Jacquemont, the Schlagintweit brothers, Aurel Stein and Francis Younghusband may not need introductions. While the controversial Swedish geographer Sven Hedin is well known from his autobiography, the exhibit displays his meticulous maps and gorgeous drawings. The exhibit also includes less familiar figures such as the Swiss geologist Rudolf Wyss, the French diplomat Fernand Grenard, and the Italian medical doctor Filippo de Filippi.

The general mission of the Geological Museum of Lausanne is to disseminate information about scientific culture. The educational objective of "La Haute Asie telle qu'ils l'ont vue" is to make better known the nature of science during the age of European colonialism. The rich variety of documentation includes maps, watercolors, lavish publications, rock samples and art items, all of which provide an appreciation of the climate of intellectual collaboration and political rivalry Europe knew at the time. The products of the field work are

extremely varied: travel books and diaries, sketches and landscape paintings, and a large number of photographs. Two series of photographs taken by Walther Bosshard and Jules-Jacot Guillarmod are especially interesting for what they show about the daily life of caravans. The exhibition organizers have drawn upon the resources of the canton and university libraries of Lausanne, Geneva, and Neuchâtel. Contributions from institutions in Paris, Munich, and Stockholm include material objects and maps.

The emphasis of the exhibit is on the place of High Asia in the European history of science prior to World War II. The exhibit does not attempt a "post-colonial" reexamination of the eurocentric interpretation of Central Asia, even though such an emphasis is to be found in Indian, Turkish and

Chinese scholarship today. "La Haute Asie telle qu'ils l'ont vue" provides an appreciation of the physical dangers and intellectual challenges met during the exploration of High Asia. Scientists in all fields of the human and natural sciences risked their lives in order to increase our knowledge and understanding of Tibet and Central Asia's environment and cultures.

A well-illustrated exhibition book (in French) with some rare or previously unpublished pictures is available: A. Baud, Ph. Forêt and S. Gorshenina, *La Haute-Asie telle qu'ils l'ont vue. Explorateurs et scientifiques de 1820 à 1940*. Geneva: Editions Olizane, 2003. 144 pp., 17 color plates, 102 photographs. ISBN: 288086299X, € 29.00. The book can be ordered through <http://www.olizane.ch> or <http://www.amazon.fr>.