

Official Overseas Visit Report

Faculty Dispatched: Megumi Sakamoto (Atsuko Yokota)

Destination: Moscow (Russia)

Dates of Travel: November 19-24, 2009

Explanation of Purpose of Expenditures: Sakamoto, "Japanese Language Education Research, the Formation of a Global Perspective."

(Yokota, Educational Group: "Constructing Japanese language Standards at a Global Level.")

Travel Schedule:

November 19 (Thurs.) Departed on JL441 Narita → Moscow

November 20 (Fri.) Visited Moscow State University

November 23 (Mon.) Visited Russian State University for the Humanities

Departed on JL443 Moscow → Narita

November 24 (Tues.) Arrived back in Japan

Institute of Asian and African Studies

Moscow State University

Professor Bykova

Explanation based on Oral Interviews

- The Institute of Asian and African Studies offers Japanese, along with Arabic, Indic languages, Persian, Chinese, Turkish, Korean and Mongolian, to name a few. As each of the language departments is divided up into areas that can be broadly divided into language and culture or economics and social studies, the Department of Japanese Philology offers a major where students study language, culture, literature and history and another where students focus on economics and social studies.
- There are twenty faculty members in the Japanese Philology Department (Four men and sixteen women). Two Japanese native speakers are part of that group (One person was sent through a Japan Foundation program). Of the Russian faculty members, half are under 40. The majority of them have Ph.D.s in the field. Many members of the faculty are well-versed in tea ceremony and calligraphy. In addition to Japanese language, they teach Japanese linguistics, lexicology, the history of the Japanese language, grammar theory, dialects, writing styles, etc. They teach literary vocabulary and cursive characters, but they do not offer *kanbun*, the study of Chinese classics.
- First year students take general education courses, second year students begin to take

introductory Japanese and seminars that are specific to their majors. Third year students study lexicology and other courses related to their major. It used to be possible to complete a Ph.D. program in five years, but currently they have migrated to the 4-year undergraduate, 2-year Master's, 3-year Ph.D. program system. The two third year students from the university who are currently studying as exchange students at Togaidai are in the first class under this new system.

- Students in the university program have the following number of Japanese language class contact hours per week:
 - 1st Year Students: 16 hours
 - 2nd Year Students: 14 hours
 - 3rd Year Students 12 hours
 - 4th Year Students 10 hours
- Since students have different majors, it is not possible to offer all of the courses at a certain level at the same time, so there are small language classes offered at different times of the day.
- There are about ten destination universities for study abroad in Japan including: Tokai, Chiba, Waseda, Hosei, Rikkyo, Togaidai, and so forth. Students in Japan-related fields who are interested in studying abroad must take the university's own examination first, as part of the selection process. There are currently 18 students from the university studying at colleges all over Japan.
- Along with improving their Japanese, exchange students are expected to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture through their interactions with Japanese students and other Japanese people.
- After ILCAA students graduate, they work for corporations, government organizations or continue on to become research fellows in graduate programs.
- They aim to nurture specialists; however, since not everyone is going to become a researcher, they attach importance to the Japanese used in business practices, as well as cultural education.
- There are 5-10 other instructors teaching history and other subjects.

Class Observation

- 3rd Year Japanese Reading Comprehension Class

There were two female students and one male in this small class. The instructor was a woman. As the textbook was made in Russia, the reading topics had a particular emphasis on culture and history. For example, included were excerpts from the non-fiction novel *saka-no-ue-no kumo* (Cloud over the Hill) written by Ryotaro Shiba, as well as writings about the Russo-Japanese War. At the time we observed the class, the topic they were reading about was "The Culture of Wood in Japan." Everyone had come to class having read the essay in

the textbook and they asked questions about what they hadn't understood and they responded to the instructor's questions about the contents of the essay. The class was conducted entirely in Japanese.

- 3rd Year Literary Language Class

There were three female students in this small class. The instructor was a woman. A vocabulary list was distributed and the teacher explained the way to read the words and the meaning in Russian while the students jotted it down in their notebooks. The time for the observation was quite limited, so we didn't get a chance to watch the students read sentences.

Observations

- At the undergraduate level, the policy is to place greater emphasis on high quality general education over Japanese language or specialty education on Japan.
- When visitors like us come from Japan, they have students guide them around the campus in order to give them a good opportunity to use the Japanese they've learned. The two young women (3rd year students) who showed us around were able to speak Japanese with a fluency that was hard to believe considering they'd only studied Japanese for two years and had learned it outside of Japan.

Institute of Oriental and Classical Studies

Russian State University for the Humanities

Prof. Ilia S. Smirnov, (Department Chair)

Prof. Alexander Mesheryakov, Japanese History

Explanation based on Oral Interviews

- In the Oriental Studies (Japanese, Chinese, etc.) departments of the Institute of Oriental and Classical Studies they teach language, history, social studies and culture, but their Classical Studies are devoted to Greek and Romance Languages, and their history, social studies and culture. There are about 100 faculty members and approximately 200 students.
- It has only been five years since they instituted the Japanese Philology Department, so current 5th year students are the first generation. Presently, there is a 5th year student who is in the middle of an exchange and studying at Togaidai named Elena. There are three more 5th year students at Chibadai. The exam given to select exchange students doesn't just test their Japanese ability, but also places importance on their overall academic abilities.
- Students are only recruited for overseas study once every three years, so in addition to the 5th year students, there are only 2nd year students studying abroad at the moment.

- These 5th year students are part of the older 5-year Ph.D. system, so after these students graduate, the new four-year undergraduate program will be in place.
- They started with 20 students in the Japanese Philology Department, but half of them quit in the middle and transferred to other disciplines. Students with good grades are not required to pay tuition. Students whose grades are not up to the standard do have to pay. Many of the students that can't keep up with the lessons end up dropping them.
- Under the old system, students wrote one thesis at the end of their 2nd year and then they are required to write a graduation thesis at the end of their 5th year.
- When students are enrolled in exchange programs, the university doesn't accept credit from foreign institutions, so they study abroad for no credit. And, in order for them to earn enough credit to graduate, their graduation is then delayed. There is also no guidance available when writing their graduation thesis if they are studying abroad, so they must write it by themselves.
- Among students studying Japanese language there are those who are in the Japanese Philology Department and those who are in the Political Science Department. The instructors are different for these two groups of students.
- Since Togaidai has agreements with all departments at Russian State University for the Humanities, there will be exchange students sent from the Institute of Oriental and Classical Studies once every three years.
- At Moscow State University's Asia and Africa Institute, they read from the newspaper and use practical language, but the main focus at this institution is on using language to study history and literature. Students go on to get jobs at other universities, in corporations and at governmental institutions, to name a few.
- The faculty of the Japanese Philology Department, place an importance on Classical Japanese, literary language, Chinese Classics and Chinese language, in addition to the focus on Japanese language. For example, a 2nd year-student will spend 14 hours (7 *koma*—class sessions) studying Modern Japanese, have Chinese for four hours per week and attend four hours of Classical Japanese (ancient Japanese) classes, as well.

Observations

The two professors that acted as our guides graduated from M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University. They are trying to make a Japanese department that is different than what they experienced at Moscow State University. They are modeling their program after Saint Petersburg State University; so, rather than produce Japanese language specialists, they are looking to train Japanologists. For that reason, even when it comes to exchanges to Japan, rather than Japanese, they are hoping that students will take undergraduate courses and gain a deeper understanding of Japanese history and culture. They seemed happy that Togaidai doesn't just offer Japanese

language classes, but also has classes on Japan-related topics, as there are other exchange universities in Japan that don't offer these other courses.



