

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL FOR YOUNG SINOLOGISTS AT PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY, OLOMOUC

International summer school “Contested geographies: old and new connections between the Middle Kingdom and its neighbours” was held at Palacký University in Olomouc from 6th to 11th June, 2016. The hosting Department of Asian Studies organized a one week course featuring prominent lecturers to make discourses about a large variety of topics all linked to China and its relations with other countries and different nations. There was a lot of ground to cover within the long historical period that was to be discussed – from medieval times, right through to the present situation. A number of scholars arrived to participate in this endeavor: Professor Victor H. Mair from University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Olaf Günther from University of Leipzig, Dr. Soledad Jiménez Tovar from Palacký University, Dr. Mária Strašáková from Prague Metropolitan University and Tibetan specialist from Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Germany, Fan Zhang. Lectures were thematically arranged over the course of the week so that students could listen to new material every day, but every topic would correlate with one another.

Representatives of different countries arrived to participate as students in the summer school – from Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Finland, Czech, Slovakia, China, Netherlands and Russia. Summer school united bachelors, masters and Ph.D degree students. It would be appropriate to mention that at the beginning of the summer school some of the students were uneasy towards the Russian participant. It could be felt during discussions related to the Soviet Union or contemporary Russian politics in the Middle East and their relations with China. However, after a few meetings everyone agreed that modern geopolitics and troubles should not interfere with the relationship between scientists of different countries. This understanding created a closer dynamic between participants from then on, which continued during and even after the duration of the summer school.

The author would like to imply that lectures which were given to the students were exceptionally informative and perceivable. Professor Victor Mair’s outstanding knowledge about almost any sinological topic left participants speechless. Every one of his lectures had a clear structure and he managed to follow the audience’s interest, diving into details where it was necessary and making explanations if the idea was hard to catch. Victor Mair talked about his view on the history of Chinese tea which is detailed in his book “The true history of tea”, as well as the problems of Putonghua during the computer revolution, of his work with Dunhuang manuscripts and on theories about *pinghua*. Besides official lectures, during leisure time, professor V. Mair continued to socialize with students and described contemporary tendencies in sinology, according to his observation – the transfer to online activities and blogging which has resulted in a wide increase of availability of books and manuscripts. He also advised to look into online resources such as ctext.org, odp.bl.uk and others. Besides sharing his own knowledge, the professor has also inquired about participants’ theses and research, giving his counsel and advice. The summer school hosts had also decided to organize a seminar on the last day, during which attendees were given the opportunity to share their work to all the lecturers.

Dr. Olaf Günther during his lecture talked about the geopolitical situation between China and Middle East countries such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and others. He presented a historical overview of the emergence and development of contacts between those countries, how they influenced each other and exchanged their culture. Apart from this, he shared his opinion about the contemporary “Silk Road” and gave comprehensive accounts for individual country activities, aimed at laying that trade route through their territory. Dr. Soledad Jiménez Tovar has studied Dungan people for a long period of time and shared her understanding of their culture with the audience. She also discussed their history, problems with their language and their current situation. Her lectures were full of compassion and deep knowledge, and as a result most of the audience was intrigued and long discussions would follow after every lecture.

Dr. Mária Strašáková's theme was about international relations between China and Vietnam, Philippines, India, Japan, and others. Besides enormous material on the history of their relations, Dr. Strašáková has presented a contemporary state of the South China Sea conflict. Her interest and detailed accounts arose a large interest from the participants, since she went into specifics of actions of all involved in the conflict and gave a comprehensive account of the problem – starting from small clashes of the fishing boats and fishing territories and down to the creation of artificial islands and outposts. The last lecturer Tibetan specialist from Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Fan Zhang provided materials about Tibetan culture by talking about how the Wutai Mountain was converted into a Tibetan Buddhist center, and an account of the contemporary situation with sacred Tibetan places. She also discussed the processes of cultural translation of Guandi and other beings into Tibetan Buddhism.

Although the international summer school in Olomouc at the Palacký University was scheduled to run for just one week, all participants did not want to part with the lecturers by the end of it. A lot of new knowledge and contacts were acquired during the program and the author wishes all forthcoming events of the Department of Asian Studies the same success!

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ЛЕТНЯЯ ШКОЛА МОЛОДЫХ КИТАЕВЕДОВ В УНИВЕРСИТЕТЕ им. Ф. ПАЛАЦКОГО, ОЛОМОУЦ

В статье дан краткий отчет по проведению Международной летней школы, проходившей 6–11 июня 2016 г. при кафедре Азиатских исследований университета им. Ф. Палацкого в г. Оломоуц (Чешская республика). Перед молодыми востоковедами выступили профессор университета Пенсильвании Виктор Генри Майер (Victor H. Mair), доктор Олаф Гюнтер (Olaf Günther) из Лейпцигского университета, доктор Соледад Хименез Товар (Soledad Jiménez Tovar) из университета им. Ф. Палацкого в Оломоуце, доктор Мария Страшаква (Mária Strašáková) из Пражского Столичного университета и исследователь Тибета из университета Макса Планка в Мюнхене госп. Фань Чжан (Fan Zhang). В качестве слушателей в работе школы приняли участие бакалавры, магистры и аспиранты из 12 стран. Представленные лекторами материалы в основном касались истории и современного состояния международных отношений Китая и его соседей, а также китайской национальной политики.

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