

## Foreword

The essays in this volume originated as presentations at a symposium in Moscow that celebrated the 300-year history of intellectual contact between Japan and Russia. The International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken), an institute dedicated to the advancement of interdisciplinary and international scholarship on Japanese culture and society, collaborated with the Institute of Oriental Cultures, Russian State University for the Humanities, and the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, to co-organize this event. The organizers benefited also from the cooperation of the Russian Association of Japanologists.

In sessions between 31 October and 2 November 2007, participants from various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences discussed aspects of Japanese culture and Russian-Japanese relations. After opening greetings by Dmitry P. Bak, Vice-Rector for Scientific Research of the Russian State University for the Humanities, Katakura Motoko, Director-General of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, and Leonid Geveling, Vice-Rector of the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, thirty-two scholars delivered presentations at this symposium. Subject matter included literature, history, religious belief, material cultural objects, cultural practices, and the interpretation and reception of ideas, as well as the record of official and unofficial exchange between Russians and Japanese. Two languages, Japanese and English (not Russian, to the surprise of the organizers on the Japan side) were designated as “official” languages of the conference.

Many people put in long hours behind the scenes to ensure that this event was a success. They deserve thanks and praise, and should not go unmentioned here. At the Russian State University for the Humanities, Alexander Mesheryakov and Evgenia Saharova managed the myriad details of bringing participants from Japan and several other cities in Russia, arranging for their housing, moving them from place to place, feeding them, and seeing that the equipment and copies they needed for their presentations were ready on time. They recruited a band of undergraduate and graduate students who cheerfully assisted in many different ways, not the least of which was by bringing delicious homemade delicacies for participants to enjoy during coffee breaks. Ekaterina Simonova-Gudzenko took care of the preparations for the day the symposium convened at the Institute of Asian and African Studies. From Nichibunken, Yamamoto Ayako and Iguchi Kawori were the ones who bore the heaviest burden of pre-conference arrangements and on-site management of the symposium itself, and they performed superbly. Okuno Yukiko, Kinoshita Atsushi, and Baba Takeshi helped greatly and with good grace, especially once we were in Russia. Timothy Kern and I were involved in the planning from the earliest stages.

The co-organizers wish to acknowledge also the contributions to the symposium of Nichibunken faculty members Imatani Akira, Komatsu Kazuhiko, Liu Jianhui, and Yamada Shōji. Professors Komatsu and Liu presented papers and took an active part in discussions, but for various reasons decided not to submit versions of their pre-

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sentations (delivered in Japanese) for inclusion in this volume. Professor Komatsu's Moscow talk had the title "Yonshu no *Hyakki yagyō emaki*" 四種の『百鬼夜行絵巻』をめぐって (On Four Types of Picture Scrolls of the Demons' Night Parade). He later expanded it into an illustrated book, *Hyakki yagyō emaki no nazo* 百鬼夜行絵巻の謎 (Enigmas of the Picture Scroll of the Demons' Night Parade, published by Shūeisha, 2008). Professor Liu's topic was "Kyū Manshū ni okeru Roshia bungaku ni tsuite" 旧満州におけるロシア文学について (Russian Literature in the Former Manchuria). Professor Kern also delivered a presentation in Japanese, on the theme "Nihon kindai ni okeru kirisutokyō no juyō: senkyōshi 'bungaku' kara no jirei" 日本近代におけるキリスト教の受容—宣教師『文学』からの事例 (Modern Christianity in Japan: Examples from Missionary Literature), but has chosen not to print a revised version of it in these pages. Professor Imatani served as chairperson and discussant for one of our sessions at the Russian State University for the Humanities, and Professor Yamada, as chairperson and discussant for a session at Moscow State University.

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