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Focus

Farms and biodiversity: an example from Gansu

Marking the start of a research-related excursion, we departed from the provincial capital of Lanzhou, in Gansu, China, and commenced to drive 300 kilometers south. After passing a 3,000-meter mountain pass, we came upon a deep canyon area. As we proceeded east along Baishuijiang, known for its brown, turbid water, the view finally opened up, and we reached a small town along the basin, Hengdan. The surrounding ridges are cultivated as far as the eye can see, with terraced fields continuing from the base of the mountains all the way to the peaks, giving the appearance of contour lines.

The members of our research group included researchers from Kyoto University, Tohoku University, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The purpose of our visit was primarily to conduct a distribution survey of insects and land mollusks. According to information we had obtained, this region is home to land snails and carabid beetles, insects that feed on the former.

We stopped the car and began our work. The region is mostly farmland, with vegetable fields for green onions and corn, as well as orchards. It was relatively humid as it was June, the rainy season. Apart from the trees in the orchards, the only trees are those surrounding the roads, fields, and houses; this environment is by no means a forested area. In Japan, it would be extremely rare to come across insects and land snails in such an area, where fields extend as far as the eye can see. At most, one might encounter an occasional cabbage butterfly fluttering by, and finally, after turning over rocks along the roadside or flipping over pieces of wood, one might see a few Asian tramp and orchid snails. Such areas are hardly the environment that could host an abundant and diverse array of terrestrial animals.

Feeling we may have been misinformed, we began to feel disappointment. However, upon casually looking at the crops growing in the fields, we were taken by sur-

prise. At the roots and leaves of the green onions were clusters of large white-and-brown land snails about the size of 500 JPY coins. Small land snails blanketed the branches of the trees, giving a scale-like appearance. Indeed, any given cluster of green onions hosted over 10 species. Moreover, all species and subspecies in this region are endemic.

Within an area of 500 square meters at most, we actually found 34 species of land snails. Nowhere in Japan can one find such an array of land snail types within an area of similar size. For example, even in the old-growth forest of the Botanical Garden of Tohoku University, only 14 species can be found among all areas combined.

A number of carabid beetles were caught in the traps that were set. In particular, four large types that feed solely on land snails were caught. The catch included the gem-like, shiny rainbow or golden green colored *Coptolabus formosus* and the large-headed *Acathaicus alexandrae*. The species are closely related to Japan's *Damaster blaptoides*, but both are endemic species of Gansu Province. This region is home to snake and bird species that feed primarily on land snails. Evidently, an ecosystem has developed where many resources are dependent on land snails. In turn, the land snails depend on the crops grown in the fields. Although the original environment and vegetation of this location are unknown, at the least, it seems that an artificial environment, with its fields and orchards, is currently contributing to the maintenance of an astonishingly high species diversity of land snails as well as the animals that feed on them.

That night, we had the opportunity to talk with people from the local Agricultural Administration Office on the problems they face related to land snails eating the crops. When asked whether



pest control was being conducted, they responded that pigs and chickens are released to feed on the snails; they apparently do not use pesticides, such as attractants. No wonder they are unable to control the pests. In fact, animal droppings, which provide nutrients, actually contribute to the perfect conditions for land snails to thrive. Although there are differences between land and freshwater farming, this situation is actually similar to that in rice fields in Japan that employ pesticide-free, organic agriculture. Large outbreaks of freshwater shellfish, such as ramshorn snails, are observed in biodiversity that is dependent on the lifestyle of humans. In

other words, this scenario is common in rice fields where pesticides are not used. Also common are the large numbers of water bugs that prey on the snails. However, pesticides are not used in the case of Hengdan, not for environmental reasons but simply because there is no custom of doing so. They are merely adhering to old farming practices. Land snails are troublesome pests for farmers, or livestock feed at best. Looking at China's present state, it is likely that large amounts of strong pesticides will eventually be employed. This example of China exhibits the fragility of biodiversity dependent on the lifestyle of humans. **(Satoshi Chiba)**

Recent Events

Is the PM2.5 problem a chance of dentente in Northeast Asia? – Current status and issues of transboundary air pollution in Northeast Asia-

As part of the regular lecture program of the Association for Northeast Asian Studies, two guest speakers presented at the Tohoku University Tokyo Office on May 30, 2014. The first speaker, Dr. Nagashima Tatsuya, is a Senior Researcher for the Regional Atmospheric Modeling Section at the National Institute for Environmental Studies Center for Regional Environmental Research whose current research focuses on the replication and prediction of the spatial distribution of air pollutants in Asia, employing a numerical model called the atmospheric transport model. In his lecture “The Current State and Future of Air Pollution in Japan: How Serious is Cross-Border Air Pollution?”, he presented a long-range atmospheric transport model for PM2.5 (particulate matter with a diameter less than 2.5 μm) and photochemical oxidants [chemical species: ozone], with respect to the problematic trend of failing to meet environmental standards of them in Japan. Based on his numerical calculations, he discussed the extent of pollution contributed by other countries—concentrations of PM2.5 and

ground level ozone—and demonstrated that about both PM2.5 and ground level ozone, cross-border pollution could not be ignored in Japan.

The second speaker, Professor Asuka Jusen at Tohoku University's



Center for Northeast Asian Studies, is currently conducting research on energy and environmental issues, including air pollution problems, global warming issues, and energy mix issues, from a political-economic perspective, and has expertise in both Japanese and Chinese environmental policies. His speech “The Science and Politics behind Cross-Border Air Pollution: Will the PM2.5 Issue Help Ease Tensions between Japan and China?” provided an analysis of the PM2.5 issue in Northeast Asia from the perspective of political economy. He explained that the formation and development of an international framework to address the PM2.5 issue in Northeast Asia could aid in easing tensions between Japan and China. However, as there are many necessary conditions to construct this framework, the road to its establishment is steep. He indicated the importance of starting down the road of cooperation, by making the efforts to meet these necessary conditions, while at the same time finding methods that would benefit both Japan and China.

(Tetsuaki Okamoto)



Recent Events

The International Symposium “Eurasian Nomadic Pastoralism: History, Culture, Environment”

The international symposium “Eurasian Nomadic Pastoralism: History, Culture, Environment” was held in the Conference Room of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences (MAS) in the Mongolian city of Ulaanbaatar on Friday, September 5, 2014. As part of the inter-university academic exchange agreement between Tohoku University and MAS in August 2000, the Center for Northeast Asian Studies (CNEAS) has held an international symposium nearly every two years. In 2003, CNEAS held the symposium in conjunction with MAS's Institute of History; in 2005, it was held jointly with MAS's Institute of International Affairs; and in 2007,

it was again held with the Institute of History. Subsequently, in 2009 and 2012, the Inner Mongolia Normal University, China, co-sponsored in hosting the international symposia. For the first time this year, organizations representing four countries—Japan, Mongolia, China, and Russia—co-hosted the symposium. These organizations included CNEAS, the Institute of History at MAS, China's Tourism College of Inner Mongolia Normal University, and Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North, Russian Academy of Sciences (Sakha Republic, Russian Federation).

Ten researchers from Mongolia, six from China, five from Russia (the Sakha Republic), and six from Japan participated in this symposium, which was divided into eight sessions—two sessions each for history, economics, culture, and environment—where reporting and discussions were carried out. In attendance were the MAS President Dr. B. Enkhtuvshin and Vice President Dr. T. Dorj, respectively. From China, Professor Hao Zhicheng, dean of the Tourism College of Inner Mongolia Normal University, with which our center has an existing inter-departmental academic exchange agreement, and assistant dean Professor Yang Bayar delivered speeches. From Russia's Sakha Republic, Dr. Andorian Borisov of the Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North gave a presentation. From CNEAS, Director Oka Hiroki and Assistant Director Takakura Hiroki presided lectures. According to Dr. Borisov, this event was the first time for research-

ers from Sakha to conduct academic exchange with researchers from Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. The next day, the researchers from the four countries set off on an excursion planned by MAS to Manjusri Monastery, which is located in the center of the province, and later had a pleasant talk over a dinner of mutton.

(Hiroki Oka)



Recent Events

Workshop. Teaching Japanese Culture II: The Dialogue of Japanologists of Russia and Japan

Tohoku University and the Department of Humanities of Novosibirsk State University, Russian Federation, with which Tohoku University has an existing inter-university academic exchange agreement, are in the middle of conducting Japanese language and cultural education. While the Center for Northeast Asian Studies (CNEAS) has conducted exchange activities, such as holding Japan Asia Lectures for students learning Japanese since 2008, the university—in conjunction with the Office of Japan–Russia Relations, Tohoku University; Graduate School of Arts and Letters; and the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies—held the workshop “Teaching Japanese Culture: From the Front Lines of Japanese Education in Russia and Japan” in September 2013. For the second year, a research exchange workshop was held on the theme of historical and cultural studies of Japan on November 29, 2014 in the multi-purpose room of the Tohoku University Main Library. The following five talks were given during the workshop: “Russian–Japanese Cultural Communication in Siberia - Research and Teaching in the Field of Archeology, Ethnology, and Political Science” by Professor Elena Voytishek, department chair of the Oriental Studies Department at Novosibirsk State University; “Influence of Gender Stereotypes on the Specifics of Japanese Culture” by Professor Elena Simonova; “The Rite of Passage and Infantilization of Modern Society: Japan and Russia” by Associate Professor Evgeniya Frolova; “Modern Experimental Archeology and Perspective Ways of Development in Ethnology” by Professor Pavel Volkov, who specializes in archeology; and “Modern Russian Diaspora in Japan” or “Problems of the Russian–Japanese relations” by Professor Petr Podalko, a graduate of Novosibirsk State University (Aoyama Gakuin University, Russian Diaspora Studies).

The following four talks were given by individuals from Tohoku University: “The Current State of Japanese Art History Research in Japan” by Professor Nagaoka Ryusaku of the Graduate School



of Arts and Letters, Art History; “The Outlook of Contemporary Japanese Archeology: Methodological Features and Social Backdrop” by Professor Akoshima Kaoru of the Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Archeology; “The Current State of Manga Research in Japan” by Associate Professor Kubo Shun-ichi of the Graduate School of Information Sciences, Media and Semiotics; “Investigation of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Japanese Studies Following the Great East Japan Earthquake” by Professor Takakura Hiroki of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Social Anthropology and Mr. Oikawa Takashi of CNEAS Educational Research Support, Cultural Anthropology. Additionally, Professor Chiba Masaki of Shoikei Gakuin University, History of Japan, and Professor Sato Sekiko of the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Japanese Literature, offered their comments. (Hiroki Oka)

Recent Events

Unit for the applied Humanities on the Local Culture Heritage struck by Disaster Tohoku/Christchurch: Reflections on the Socio-cultural Impacts of the Quakes

The Unit for the Applied Humanities on the Local Cultural Heritage Struck by Disaster held the workshop “Tohoku/Christchurch: Reflections on the Socio-cultural Impacts of the Quakes” in October 30–31, 2014 at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch,

New Zealand. The workshop was organized by CNEAS professor Takakura Hiroki and University of Canterbury Professor (former CNEAS visiting professor) Susan Bouterey. Four speakers from Japan, including Professor Kimura Toshiaki (Graduate School of

Arts and Letters) concurrently belonging to CNEAS, and eight from New Zealand, presented. Moreover, 13 local participants were in attendance. Over the two-day event, the similarities and differences between the social and cultural impacts observed in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake and earthquake in New Zealand, as well as the role of researchers in the humanities and social sciences, were fervently discussed. The original intention of the workshop was to enable the sharing of research results and interaction among Japanese researchers and students living outside of Japan regarding experiences from the Great East Japan Earthquake. However, during the course of preparation, it was decided to include reports regarding experiences of the New Zealand earthquake in the discussion. During the conference, Japanese researchers presented their results and methodologies, as well as a comparative study with the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. In addition to discussing the reception of the news regarding the Great East Japan Earthquake in New Zealand, the New Zea-

land side discussed the February 2011 Canterbury earthquake, as well as humanities researchers' practical efforts in response to it. Through the discussions, the participants identified areas for research carried out with the expertise of humanities researchers from the affected areas. They likewise acknowledged the need to search for, develop, and implement appropriate novel research methods. In addition, the significance of the disasters was discussed with respect to Japanese Studies. Finally, the importance of comparisons in disaster research was pointed out. Researchers from the devastated areas have a tendency to focus on their own affected areas, but by comparing the circumstances and collaborating with those from other affected areas, the participants could identify breakthroughs leading to numerous research practices. It was also suggested when presenting results that collaboration with researchers from the arts is an effective approach. **(Hiroki Takakura)**

Recent Events

The Visit to Asia Center of Seoul National University

On April 28-30, 2015, Director Oka Hiroki of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies visited the Asia Center of Seoul National University in South Korea, where he gave a lecture. His visit was made possible by the invitation of Professor Kang Myung-Koo, director of the Asia Center of Seoul National University, who visited CNEAS in January of the same year. The Asia Center is an organization with the mission of carrying out regional studies, and also runs a Northeast Asian Studies department. Professor Kang, Dr. Kim Jong-Cheol, and Dr. Kim Yoo-Mi, who all visited CNEAS in January, as well as Professor Kim In-Geol, director of the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University, and RA Tamura Shinji of the same institute, attended the dinner on April 28, which became a venue for a lively discussion on Northeast Asian studies over Korean cuisine. The next day, the lecture, held in the Asia Center's International Conference Room, began at 4:00 PM, with Professor Jung Keun-Sik of the Asia Center serving as the moderator; Associate Professor Koo Bum-Jin of the Seoul National University and Professor Nam Ki-Jeong, who was once a colleague of the Tohoku University Research Center for Advanced Studies of Law and Policy, participated as discussion participants. The lecture "The Problems of Northeast Asia as a His-

torical Concept of the Region: Its Cross-Boundary Nature" focused on the historical developmental process of Northeast Asia with consideration for the difficulty in setting



the same as a historical regional concept. The discussion recognized the following divisions established during the Meiji period: "History of the Occident," "History of the Orient," and "History of Japan." The speakers both commented on the understanding of Northeast Asia in South Korea and such circumstances as South Korea's regional recognition against the backdrop of the geopolitical circumstances during the Cold War. In particular, they debated whether it is possible to include Russia and Mongolia in the Northeast Asia grouping. **(Hiroki Oka)**

Recent Events

Disaster Mitigation by Radar Technologies and Collaboration with Local Governments



The Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai was held on March 14-18, 2015, the main venue being the Sendai International Center.

The conference was organized by the UN to discuss international strategies for disaster prevention. A public forum was held, running simultaneously with the international conference intended to spread public awareness of disaster prevention and mitigation, as well as restoration efforts performed by government agencies, local governments, NPOs, NGOs, universities, local groups, and other various domestic and international entities. The Sato Laboratory of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies (CNEAS) proposed to the UN to host the conference "United Nations World Conference Disaster Prevention Public Forum: Disaster Mitigation by

Radar Technologies and Collaboration with Local Governments.” The proposal was officially accepted, and 35 participants, including municipal and police officials, gathered at the conference room in the Sendai Civic Auditorium on March 15, 2015. **(Motoyuki Sato)**

In addition, CNEAS’s Professor Takakura Hiroki, who serves as the representative of the Unit for the Applied Humanities on the Local Cultural Heritage Struck by Disaster, exhibited a poster. The unit’s poster was on display in Lecture Room A102 of Tohoku University Kawauchi Campus, which served as the venue of the entire conference. In addition to providing an overview of the research on intangible folk cultural heritage, and incorporating the latest research results developed based on the former, the poster brought attention to the project’s social significance, particularly in relation to disseminating information to government officials, busi-

nesses, and the general public. In light of the visitors anticipated from both within and outside of Japan, Japanese and English versions of the poster were made, and to facilitate understanding of the exhibit, a display was set up to run a slide show on the afflicted areas and of intangible folk cultural property. **(Takashi Oikawa)**



Awards

Assistant Professor Dr. Kazunori Takahashi received the Young Researcher Award of the Miyagi Foundation for Promotion of Industrial Science

Assistant Professor Dr. Kazunori Takahashi of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies was awarded the 2014 Young Researcher Award by the Miyagi Foundation for Promotion of Industrial Science. He was recognized for his research “Soil Characterization for Humanitarian Landmine Clearance with Ground-Penetrating Radar.”

Prof. Motoyuki Sato received the Frank Frischknecht Leadership Award

Professor Motoyuki Sato of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies was awarded the 2014 Frank Frischknecht Leadership Award

at the Society of Exploration (SEG) Annual meeting, held in Denver, Colorado, USA, on October 28, 2014. The award is presented jointly by the Environmental and Engineering Geophysical Society and the Near-Surface Geophysics Division of SEG in recognition of individuals who have exhibited extraordinary, long-term leadership in the field of near-surface geophysics.



New Staffs and Visiting Scholars

Assistant Professor Shiho MAEDA

2014.7.1-present

Russian literature and culture in 20th century



Research Fellow Yasushi IITSUKA

2014.5.1-present

Development of non-destructive inspection methods for constructions by electromagnetic waves



Assistant Professor Sumiaki MACHI

2014.9.1-present

Petrology



Research Fellow Hai SECHENGOA

2014.11.1-present

Mongolian language



Government-industry-academia
collaborative researcher

Kazutaka KIMURA

2014.9.1-present

Evolutionary ecology, Conservation ecology



Assistant Professor

Yuichiro FUJIOKA

2015.4.1-present

Geography, livelihood research



Visiting Scholars

Magaly KOCH

Research Associate Professor, Center for Remote Sensing, Boston University (America)

2014.9.1-2015.7.17

Hydraulics and Geography



Visiting Scholars

**Elena Nikolaevna
CHERNOLUTSKAYA**

Professor, Institute of history, archaeology and ethnography of the peoples of the far-east, far-eastern branch, Russian Academy of Sciences (Russia)

2014.9.1-2014.11.30

The Formation of Migrations and the development of labor procurement in the Soviet Far East



Visiting Scholars

Badma ODSAR

Professor, Inner Mongolia University (China)

2014.10.1-2015.1.31

Socio-linguistics, Mongolian Grammar, Education of Mongolian Language



Visiting Scholars

Viktor KONDRASHIN

Professor, Penza Pedagogical State University (Russia)

2015.1.27-2015.4.19

Russian History



Visiting Scholars

Gail Andrea FONDAHL

Professor, Northern British Columbia University (Canada)

2015.4.6-2015.6.30

Geography



Publications

The language of the following books is basically in Japanese except showing the other language.

■ Northeast Asian Monograph Serie

This commercially published series presents scholarly monographs in Northeast Asian regional studies aimed at specialists, general readers and university students.

7. Anthropology of Exhibition: Dialogues between Japan and other cultures. Takakura Hiroki ed. Kyoto: showado. January 2015.

8. Circulation of human waste manure in the early modern Japan: the farm villages and city of the Osaka area. Kenichiro Aratake. Osaka: Seibundo. January 2015.



■ Northeast Asian Books

Northeast Asian Books are being published as a trial to introduce fundamental knowledge about nature, history, culture, and society in Northeast Asia to general readers. They are the result of natural, social science, and humanities research on the environmental and societal problems.

4. Cross-cultural journey through foods and rituals: Siberia and Americas from the indigenous perspectives. Takakura Hiroki and Yamaguchi Mikako eds. Sendai: Tohoku University press. October 2014.

■ Northeast Asian Studies

Northeast Asian Studies is a periodical academic journal for the purpose of contributing to the development of area studies and its related fields in Northeast Asia.

18. Northeast Asian Studies. February 2014.

■ CNEAS Monograph Series

Research results of CNEAS joint research projects and individual projects, irregular publication (in-house publications).

53. The Bosin War for the Iwadeyama Date Family— Deciphering the Historical document “Hoshukujaku Goyodome” owned by the Agatsuma Family—. Tomoda Masahiro, Kikuchi



Yuko and Takahashi Sakari. 2014.

54. A Descriptive Catalogue of Kaminoyama-han Meishinkan Bunko in Kaminoyama City Library. Isobe Akira. 2014.

55. A Study of Chu-xue zhi-nan(初學指南) – Colloquial Mongolian of the 18th Century – . Kuribayashi Hitoshi & Sechenbat. 2015.

■ CNEAS Reports

A series for such purposes as timely reports from symposiums, cataloguing references, and promotion of exchange with national and international researcher communities since 2010 (in house publications).

13. Dayqing Dynasty and Mongolians. Sampildondov Chuluun, Huricha and Oka Hiroki. 2014.

14. Meng-Han Zidian, Mongolian-Chinese Dictionary of 1928. Kuribayashi Hitoshi. 2014.

15. Looking back the historical documents of the Yamada family in Edo period. Takahashi Yoichi, Sato Daisuke and Kozeki Yuichiro. 2014.

16. From behind the Veil—A Cultural Anthropological Analysis of the North Korean Populace. Lee In-ja, Segawa Masahisa, Ito Abito and An Jong-su. 2015.

17. A Study of the Mongolian Documents Involved in Manwen yuan-dang, Written in the Early 17th Century. Kuribayashi Hitoshi and Hailan. 2015.



■ Researcher's Initiative Publication

1. A Study of the Culture of Court Theatre during the Qing Dynasty. Isobe Akira. Tokyo: Bensei. February 2014.

2. Reconstruction plan “Yukemuri (Hot spring)”, the conquest of famine in Edo period. Takahashi Yoichi. Sendai: Banzanbo. July 2014.

3. Experience of socialist society: narratives of Mongolian women. Trumunkh Odontuya. Sendai: Tohoku University Press. August 2014.

4. Arctic Pastoralist Sakha: Ethnography of Evolution and Micro-adaptation in Siberia. Hiroki Takakura. Balwyn North Victoria: Trans Pacific Press. January 2015.

5. The Frontiers of Japanese History 1- Reconsideration of time and space in history. Kenichiro Aratake, Mitsutoshi Ohta, Mitsuo Kinoshita eds. Tokyo: Hosei University Press. January 2015.

6. The Frontiers of Japanese History 2-Reconsideration of the society in the Japanese Archipelago. Kenichiro Aratake, Mitsutoshi Ohta, Mitsuo Kinoshita eds. Tokyo: Hosei University Press. February 2015.

7. Siberia: Arctic hydro-environment and societies facing Global warming, Hiyama Tetsuya and Fujiwara Junko eds. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press. March 2015.



Letters

Emeritus Professor Jin Xu
Jilin University (China)

My Experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake

I have twice served as a visiting professor at Tohoku University. In particular, I will never forget experiencing the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, when I along with the people of Sendai endured the hardships caused by the earthquake. As a geophysicist from China, the experience of this earthquake, in a sense, would go on to become a vivid memory.

On the day of the earthquake, I was attending a seminar with the people from Sato Laboratory in the research building of the Tohoku University Engineering Department. It was then that the Great East Japan Earthquake struck. I had experienced earthquakes many times before in Sendai, but this was the first time the ground shook as violently as it did for an extended period of time, and upon hearing the eerie rumbling sound of the earth, I was overcome with the fear that the end of the world had arrived. The university immediately took earthquake countermeasures with people in charge standing at the entrances of each research building. Seeing the safety measures carried out by the people entering and exiting, I was in awe of how quickly Japan's system for safety measures could be employed. I too put on the safety equipment as well and entered the laboratory for visiting researchers, only to find the bookshelves and computers fallen down and the room in a state of disorder. I cannot imagine what would have happened had I been inside the room during the earthquake.

From March 11, we were left without power, water, and gas in

Sendai because of the earthquake, leaving me unable to cook in my dormitory. In need of food and water and also curious about the situation in the town after the disaster, despite some concerns, I decided to walk through the pitch-dark streets of Sendai towards the city. What I saw firsthand in the streets astonished me. Although there were no working traffic lights or police officers standing at the intersections, cars passed through smoothly by yielding to one another. People were standing in a long line in front of the supermarket awaiting their turn to buy set amounts of bread and water. People also waited in long, orderly lines at payphones to inform their relatives of their safety. I queued in the long line as well to call my younger son in Osaka and let him know that I was safe. To my surprise, the phone calls were free of charge. The next day, when I called my eldest son in the U.S., I found that international calls were also free. Apparently, the use of payphones in Sendai was free of charge until mid-April. Even such, people only used them for short amounts of times when absolutely necessary.

Sendai suffered serious damage from the earthquake and tsunami,



but I was deeply impressed by the sight of citizens taking care of the city in an orderly manner. One day, free “bento” were set out at a shop in town. As I received mine, I was greeted by the shopkeeper with an encouraging, “Let’s hang in there, grandpa!” I replied, “Yes, let’s overcome this together!” I could feel the area surrounding my eyes growing hot as I held back my tears. At that moment, I felt that even in the midst of a disaster, if citizens

persevere and cooperate with one another, the hardships of the earthquake are sure to be overcome, and the day shall come when the cherry blossoms bloom in full in the beautiful city of Sendai. Even today, I take a special interest in Sendai and Tohoku University. I sincerely wish for the prosperity and development of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies in Tohoku University.

Letters

Professor Otgon Borjigin
Northwest University for Nationalities (China)

The “Translation Series of Studies on Mongol Documents” project

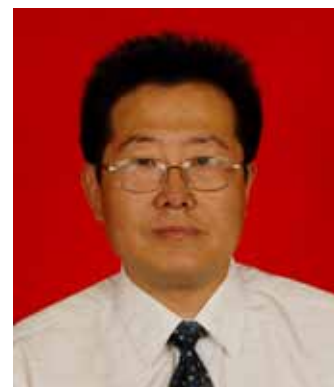
I had the honor of staying at the Center for Northeast Asian Studies of Tohoku University as a visiting professor from February to May of 2012, and carried out fruitful research on Philological Studies of Mongol Documents from Dunhuang in collaboration with Professor Hitoshi Kuribayashi. In this letter, I wish to express my deepest thanks to CNEAS and Professor H. Kuribayashi who helped me substantially and methodologically in the course of this study.

During my stay at CNEAS, I used the local libraries and had the chance to access the publications in the field of Mongol Studies, which are not easily accessible in my part of the world. Back in China, with an eye on early Mongol texts on paper, I have been awarded funding by the National Social Science Foundation of China for the research titled “An Integrated Approach to the Mongol Documents from Dunhuang, Turfan and Khara-khoto,” which is a continuation and an extension of my research at CNEAS.

In 2013, I was also awarded a scholarship under the State Scholarship Fund to study in the United States of America as a visiting scholar for a period of twelve months. I stayed at the Department of Central Eurasian Studies of Indiana University in Bloomington from July 2014 to July 2015 and, during this period, I worked on the translation of scholarly works on Mongolian monuments of the Turfan area as well as the translation of The Mongol and Manchu manuscripts and blockprints in the Library

of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences described by Professor György Kara.

In view of the relative inaccessibility of the works in the field of Mongol studies published outside the territory of the People’s Republic of China, we have recently initiated a project entitled “Translation Series of Studies on Mongol Documents,” which is sponsored by the Scientific Research Fund of Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou, China. We endeavor to translate and publish works on Mongolian monuments published in different languages around the world. The purpose of this project is to make these works accessible to more readers in China. We believe the series is being launched at a time when there are increasing opportunities in China for pursuing studies on documents related to the country’s history and culture. To achieve this purpose, we would like to continue our cooperation with scholars like Professor H. Kuribayashi at CNEAS and others who are recognized as leading authorities in Mongol studies.



Editorial

Editorial postscript:

We are sending you the 3rd volume of the CNEAS Bulletin. With this bulletin, we would like to inform you of CNEAS’ activities from 2014 to 2015. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of CNEAS in 2015 and held a ceremonial conference on December 5th and 6th. More than 300 people participated in the

conference. We thank you for supporting our research activities. We hope that our cooperation will lead to the growing the academic field of Northeast Asian Studies in the years leading up to the 30th anniversary.[contasia@cneas.tohoku.ac.jp]

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The bulletin promotes a continuing exchange of information with

former visiting scholars and others who related to the Northeast Asian Studies.

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