
News of the Profession

Saint Petersburg Conference, September 2001

On September 3-6, 2001, scholars from around the world attended a three day conference organized by Vsevolod Bagno at the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinsky Dom) in St. Petersburg on the topic *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky? Philosophic and Aesthetic Quests through the Cultures of the Orient and the Occident*. In attendance were representatives from Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Korea and Great Britain, as well as a dominant domestic contingent from Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The attendees participated in a series of workshops, under titles ranging from *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as symbols of national culture* to *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in a mutually clarifying perspective*. At the round-table discussion on the topic *Russia's image in the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky*, two papers were presented. Vladimir Tunimanov, president of the Russian Dostoevsky Society, spoke on the legacies of the two Russian literary giants among revolutionaries in Europe. World-renowned scholar Vittorio Strada, discussed the importance of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky for philosophers of the early twentieth century.

All the discussions emphasized the dialectic nature of the interrelations within different genres of literatures in each nation, and in the consciousness of the various nations themselves. Especially interesting in this regard was a paper presented by Alexander Lyvovsky, an independent scholar from St. Petersburg, on the religious complications of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as seen by the Swedes. The conference also explored how great social and historical events, namely wars and revolutions, contributed to the attitudes in various countries toward the two authors.

Jean Young Kim traced the evolution of Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's popularity in Korea and the contrasting phases of their appeal, as

determined by the quality of the translations and by the varying states of consciousness of that colonized nation. There were also four papers by Japanese scholars on similar themes: N. Asaoka spoke on Tolstoy in the Tokyo Drama Theatre, Takashi Kimura on fables in the artistic world of both writers, and Koiti Itokava and T. Kinoshita on the social aspects of their influence in Japan. Other topics included the impact of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky on the literatures of Latin America, by Vsevolod Bagno; the dispute about the two writers in French literature, by Anna Vladimirova; and the same dispute in Spain, by Konstantin Korkonosenko. Elvira Osipova discussed the evolution in the reception of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky among American writers in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

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Adapted by Julie Novak

The Japan Tolstoy Association

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Tolstoy's popularity was at its height, many of his works found their way into Japanese culture. This led eventually to the founding of Japan's first Tolstoy fellowship association, under the leadership of Kyuichiro Hara. Hara was also responsible for translating a full range of Tolstoy's works into Japanese. This association was crippled by the economic depression during WWII, however, and consequently Japan went decades without a major society dedicated to the study of Tolstoy.

In December 1996, under the stewardship of Kyuichiro Hara's son, the new Japan Tolstoy Association (JTA) was born. In the two years prior to its establishment, Japanese scholars of Russian

literature made numerous failed attempts to develop a Tolstoy association of their own. JTA grew out of a meeting between Kusuo Hitomi, then president of the Showa Women's University, and two researchers: Takuya Hara, President of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and Waseda University Professor Emeritus Takashi Fujinuma.

The Showa Women's University was founded in 1920 by Hitomi's father, Enkichi, who was profoundly inspired by Tolstoy's belief in education as the first and foremost tool of individual character building. This university is also known for its pioneering achievements in higher education for women in Japan. Through the years, the JTA has received unwavering support from The Showa Women's University, which currently houses and supports it.

Throughout his career, Kusuo Hitomi has influenced educational policy and teachers throughout Japan. In 1988, Hitomi created a program for Tolstoy education in the Boston Showa Institute in Massachusetts, and thereby paved the way for disseminating the philosophy of Tolstoy throughout the world. Hitomi has also devoted his time and energy to turning Tolstoy's ideas into action within his University.

Hitomi's encounter with Hara and Fujinuma coincided with the fall of Communism in the former Soviet Union. The demise of the Soviet Union became the vehicle through which Tolstoyan schools could be established in parts of Russia. On December 15, 1996, the three men joined hands in an inaugural ceremony for the JTA. At this time, the JTA appointed Hitomi as president, Hara as vice president, and Fujinuma as director; thirteen others were appointed as directors. The JTA was warmly received; it garnered the support of 150 members from Hokkaido to Kyushu. By occupation, about 80 percent of the members, which has remained almost unchanged to this day, are scholars of Tolstoy and Russian literature and the rest are scholars from other disciplines. This type of association, combining literature with education, is unparalleled in Japan.

The greatest achievement of the JTA thus far has been the publication of *Tolstoy's Azbuka* in

Japanese. The Russian original, prepared by Vitalii Remizov, is a modernization of Tolstoy's original text to make it suitable for use in Russian elementary schools. Dr. Remizov, now the Director of the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow, is an advocate and founder of Tolstoy schools in Russia. Masahiko Yasima, a lecturer at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, translated the *Azbuka* into Japanese and modified it for use in Japan. The publication was independently funded by Kusuo Hitomi and was distributed free of charge to all of the 25,000 primary and public schools in Japan. In appreciation of his efforts, letters of gratitude piled up on Mr. Hitomi's desk from children and teachers alike.

Another important activity of the JTA has been its financial contribution to the Russian publisher IMLI [The Institute of World Literature] to help compile and print all of Tolstoy's great works. Once completed, the new Tolstoy series will comprise 120 volumes, including three which are already in print. The decision to fund this project was made by Mr. Hitomi, who was sympathetic to the difficulties of publishing in Russia right now, and wanted to see the classic 90-volume Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's writings updated to include unpublished materials and new scholarly discoveries.

In the five years since its reestablishment, the JTA has been successful in organizing many events. These include: organized rallies on a semi-annual basis; a general meeting held every March and December; and a seminar, "Let's talk about Tolstoy," which was held in July 2000. On each occasion, one or more scholars of Tolstoy were invited from Russia to participate. As well, members of the JTA gave lectures on their own research.

In November 2000, with the death of its president, Kusuo Hitomi, the JTA underwent internal restructuring. Out of this came the appointment of Mr. Hara as the new president. The next general meeting, scheduled for December 16, 2001, will mark the beginning of a new journey for the JTA. For the future the JTA is planning a tentative series of workshops, with published reports on the topics addressed. With the recent terror attacks on

the United States in mind, now is the time for all societies to become familiar with the teachings of Tolstoy. The JTA will try to keep the torch lit by Tolstoy burning, both in Japan and in the whole global community.

Listed below are Tolstoy scholars who are members of the JTA and the titles of lectures they have given in Japan.

Japanese

Takuya Hara, Former President, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, *Tolstoy's Vision of Education*.

Takashi Fujinuma, Emeritus Professor, Waseda University, Professor of Soka University, *Problems in Contemporary research on Tolstoy*.

Masahiko Yasima, Teacher, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, *Children as the Foundation of Morality: The World of The Azbuka*.

Brijit Koyama, Professor, Musashi University, *The Tolstoy Association in France*.

Koichi Noumi, *Time in War and Peace*.

Gunji Abe, Professor, Tsukuba University, *Tolstoyans in Japan*.

Yoko Sakagami, Graduate student, The University of Tokyo, *Russia Today*.

Takeshi Sakon, Professor, Osaka City University, *The Dukhobors of Tolstoy in Canada*.

Kazuhiko Houkyou, Professor, Osaka University of Foreign Studies, *Tolstoy in Japan*.

Tomiko Yanagi, Professor of Waseda University, *The Definition and Genealogy of a Fool in The story of Ivan the Fool*.

Russian

Vitaly Remizov, PhD, Professor of Tula National University of Education, Director of the Leo Tolstoy State Museum, *Why now? Tolstoy's Method of Education*.

Vladimir Tolstoy, Director of the State Memorial and Natural Reserve Leo Tolstoy Museum Estate in Iasnaia Poliana

Lidiia Opulskaya,, PhD, Corresponding Member, Russian Academy of Sciences, Head of Department "Russian Classical Literature," Institute of World Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences, *A Lesson from Tolstoy for the 21st Century*.

Lidiia Lyubimova, Former Director, The Leo Tolstoy State Museum, *The Activity and History of the Tolstoy State Museum*.

Natalia Kudryavaya, PhD, Professor, Moscow National Institute of Medicine and Stomatology, Head of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, *The Global Mind at the Juncture of Two Centuries as Seen throughout the Moral Education of Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy*.

Nadeida Shaidenko, President, Tula National University of Education, *Tolstoy at the Juncture of Two Centuries: From the World of Violence to the World of Sympathy*.

Boris Grosbein, President, the 96th Tolstoy School in Novokuznetsk City, *The Embodiment of the Philosophy of L. N. Tolstoy in Kuznetsk, Central Siberia, 1930-1950*.

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