

## **Military Japanese Studies in the Russian Far East in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the problems of the formation and development of military Japanese studies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its relevance is related to the fact that current problems of the Russian-Japanese relations are rooted in the political confrontation and numerous wars and armed conflicts between the two countries which erupted in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The military have joined Japanese studies since its establishment in Russian higher education. Officers of the units of the Russian army stationed in the Far East studied Japanese and Japan together with university students – in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the ratio of military and non-military students was almost 50:50. The first military specialists in Japanese studies either gave priority to research and education over military service, or successfully combined both.

Joint training of officers and university students had a great impact on all aspects of life and work of the Oriental Institute, while causing criticism from both senior faculty managers and the high-ranked Russian military. Despite great success in the officers' training at the Oriental Institute, the initial system of Japanese studies training was reformed, though its principles and traditions were preserved until the 1917 revolution. The article was written on the basis of archival and published documents of the Oriental Institute, with the use

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of academic works of the first Russian officers specializing in Japanese studies. The historical experience of the Japanese studies education and research is interesting and relevant for today's Russian-Japanese relations.

**Keywords:** Japanese studies, Amur Military District, Oriental Institute, officers specializing in Japanese studies.

Current Russian-Japanese relations are based on the historical experience, with the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century being the most significant period. The relations between the two countries were in many respects defined by the state of Japanese studies in Russia. The Russian-Japanese confrontation and preparation for the future war took rise after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895. In this situation, military researchers became more active while officers and even lower ranks turned to majoring in Japanese studies more and more frequently. The article is devoted to the very important, yet poorly studied page of the Japanese studies history in Russia – the formation and development of military Japanese studies. Military Japanese studies are understood as education in Japanese studies for the Russian army and familiarization of Russian officers, specialists in Japanese studies, with Japan and its culture. The territorial framework includes the Far East of Russia, united into the Amur Military District, as well as the Russian Kwantung Region.

### **First Steps of Military Japanese Studies**

Russian-Japanese relations soared to new heights, requiring a considerable number of experts on Japan, after the Amur region had become part of Russia in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were no educational standards of Japanese studies in the country, and the public justly pointed out a possible lack of experts with the knowledge of the Chinese and Japanese languages. Russian military researchers paid

heed to Japan, but their works were based on translations from Western languages. Several Russian military researchers visited Japan in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Lt. Colonel M. I. Venyukov conducted his research predominantly through French informers. Lt. Colonel A. M. Butakov, a clerk in the executive office of the Military Academic Board, wrote about the Japanese army [Butakov 1883].

The Japanese language was optionally taught in the Saint Petersburg University in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was definitely insufficient for training a significant number of Russian specialists in Japanese studies. This problem could not be solved either by the self-education of enthusiasts who mastered the Japanese language and culture at home and in other countries including Japan. New specialists in Japanese studies were to be stationed in military units of the Amur Military District due to the aggravation of international relations in the Far East and the imminence of a Russian-Japanese military conflict in the struggle for China. The starting point for the Russian-Japanese confrontation was Japan's victory over China in 1895. The capture by Russia of the southern part of Liaodong (Kwantung Region) in 1897-1898 and occupation of Manchuria in 1900 further worsened Russian-Japanese relations.

The need for military Japanese studies was reflected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century events when the General-Governor of the Amur Region supported the initiative of relying on Japanese studies enthusiasts. His order for the Amur Military District units of December 15, 1895 read: "The Acting Commander of the district units, finding it quite useful and desirable to spread the knowledge of the Chinese and Japanese languages among the military officers, has found it possible to use the funds... to provide bonuses for the profound learning of the above-mentioned Oriental languages".<sup>2</sup> It was planned to provide two bonuses, 500 rubles each, for the Chinese and Japanese languages. In September 1896, the Amur Military District Chief of Staff informed P. F. Unterberger, Military Commander of the Amur Region, that a commission headed

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<sup>2</sup> RSHA EF. F. 1. I. 1. C. 1499. S. 2

by the Vladivostok Chief of Staff would be set up in January 1897 for the purpose of examining officers who studied Chinese and Japanese and awarding them with bonuses”.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the competition failed to take place on the appointed dates as no one with a good command of Japanese had been found in Vladivostok. The competition was not rescinded; it was put off until the start of the navigation.

### **Setting up the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok and Military Japanese Studies**

The training of military specialists in Japanese studies in the Far East started only after the Oriental Institute had been set up in Vladivostok. The institute opened in 1899. The *Oriental Institute Provisions* read, specifically, as follows: “5. The institute curriculum is four years and, starting from the second training period, is divided into four departments: Sino-Japanese, Sino-Korean, Sino-Mongolian, and Sino-Manchurian. <...> 7. Special subjects of study at the institute are: 1) at the Sino-Japanese department – the Japanese language as well as survey of the political structure, business, and commerce of modern Japan <...> 8. Students study the relevant subjects and are sent to neighboring Oriental states to perfect the studied languages during their vacation as determined by the Conference of the Institute...” [Iz istorii vostokovedeniya ... 2000, pp. 8–9]. That is how a systematic training of specialists in Japanese studies began in Russia in 1899. As Japanese researcher Ikuta Michiko justly mentioned, “the Japanese language as a major subject appeared in Russia for the first time in Vladivostok” [Ikuta 2014, p. 72].

The Oriental Institute, opened in 1899, became the first and only educational establishment in Russia training specialists in military Japanese studies. A note to one of the points in the *Oriental Institute Provisions* said: “Appointed by the Amur District General-Governor,

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<sup>3</sup> RSHA EF . F. 1. I. 1. C. 1499. S. 1.

four officers are enrolled as attendees of the institute each year. They study the disciplines indicated by the General-Governor and are subjected to relevant tests along with the students of the institute. The officers stationed within the institute walls are to obey all administrative instructions” [Iz istorii vostokovedeniya ... 2000, p. 12].

The year of 1899 saw the first future specialists in Japanese studies enrolling to the Oriental Institute; among them was the first student who later became an outstanding specialist in Japanese studies and a diplomat – Reserve Warrant Officer Pavel Yurievich (Georgievich) Vaskevich, as well as L. A. Bogoslovsky and A. S. Kobelev. The first attendee officer going to be a specialist in Japanese studies enrolled a year later. In 1900, Staff Captain Alexander Bursky, a future expert in Japanese studies, was among those five “from the Amur District assigned to attend lectures” at the Oriental Institute [Iz istorii vostokovedeniya ... 2000, p. 35].

In the summer of 1901, the Headquarters of the Kwantung Region dispatched ten officers to the Oriental Institute, three of which later started learning Japanese. In August 1901, the order to the Amur Military District units assigned Vasily Melentievich Mendrin, a Junior Cossack Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chita Regiment of the Trans-Baikal Cossack Army, to the Oriental Institute.<sup>4</sup> Having received the order, he left Southern Manchuria for Vladivostok as per travel order issued by the Military Department of the Kwantung Region Headquarters. In the same year, A. P. Boloban and Junior Cossack Captain M. M. Rumyantsev were assigned to the Oriental Institute. Andrey Pavlovich Boloban, born in 1878, came from the Cossacks and received secondary education in the non-classical school.<sup>5</sup> Mikhail Mikhailovich Rumyantsev, a Junior Cossack Captain of the Verkhneudinsk Regiment of the Trans-Baikal Cossack Army and a nobleman by birth, had received military education in the 1<sup>st</sup> Pavlovsk Military School.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Amur Territory State Archive (ATSA). F.P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 49.

<sup>5</sup> ATSA. F.-P-115. I. 1. C. 5. S. 37.

<sup>6</sup> ATSA.F.P-115. I. 1. C. 5. S. 69

On December 6, 1902, the War Ministry issued the following order: “Due to the need for studying the Far East it has been decreed by the imperially consolidated provisions of the Military Council to have educated officers with the knowledge of local languages in the Amur Military District and Kwantung Region units, ...”.<sup>7</sup> The document containing 13 paragraphs read that the number of attendee officers was increased to ten. They were admitted without entrance exams and studied for four years, though they were not exempt from the end-of-year examinations. Two officers from the Kwantung region and Amur Military district were dispatched to the Institute; the candidates from other districts were selected by the Commander of the Amur Military District after exams in English and French. The military agency allotted 60 rubles to each officer for lectures, 120 rubles for learning aids, 200 rubles for scientific expeditions, and 100 rubles a month as an allowance during an officer’s stay abroad [Datsyshen 2000, p. 77].

In 1903, the Kwantung Region Army Commander decreed to enroll the 28-year-old Junior Captain of the East-Siberian Rifle Regiment Vasily Vasilyevich Blonsky as an attendee of the Oriental Institute.<sup>8</sup> In the same year, Ilya Efimovich Ivanov, a Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment, was accepted as an attendee of the Sino-Japanese department [Buyakov 1999, pp. 97–116]. The enrollment continued after the war with Japan had started. For example, on July 24, 1904, Nikolai Vladimirovich Osipov, a graduate of the Moscow Military School and Junior Captain of the 121<sup>st</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment, enrolled as an attendee of the Oriental Institute; later, on July 25, 1904, the Amur Military District Governor General decreed to enroll Alexander Ioannikievich Kravtsov, Captain of the 11<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment, as an attendee of the Oriental Institute.<sup>9</sup> On September 14, 1904, Stepan Fyodorovich Ryabchich, a graduate of the Kiev Infantry Military School and a Captain of the 34<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment, enrolled as an attendee of the

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<sup>7</sup> Novy Kray. 24.01.1903.

<sup>8</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 5. S. 38.

<sup>9</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 2. C. 13. S. 50.

Oriental Institute<sup>10</sup>; on May 21, 1905, Junior Captain of the 9<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Regiment Nikolai Nikolayevich Stromilov, a graduate of the Pavlovsk Military School, was enrolled as well.

Attendee officers as well as students had to overcome great difficulties in mastering Japanese studies. For example, Junior Captain A. A. Bursky failed to “pass the statutory tests” for the third year and had to repeat the course. Nevertheless, he became a specialist in Japanese studies as well as a translator and intelligence officer. His younger classmates went further and became famous in the academic world. Officers V. M. Mendrin, A. P. Boloban, and M. M. Rumyantsev who enrolled in the Oriental Institute in 1901 took their rightful place in the history of Japanese studies in Russia.

Attendee officers did not only study on the institute premises: they were sent to China and Japan on study trips. M. M. Rumyantsev happened to go to Japan as early as after the end of the first year. The letter written by E. G. Spalvin, an Oriental Institute Professor, on August 5, 1902, and addressed to the A. P. Izvolsky, Head of the Russian Diplomatic Mission in Tokyo, said: “... Junior Officer Mikhail Rumyantsev, assigned to the Institute by the Kwantung Region Headquarters and transferred to the second academic year, although he has not yet studied the Japanese language, is in Nagasaki and its vicinities as it is understood” [Iz istorii vostokovedeniya ... 2000, p. 208]. E. G. Spalvin wrote in August 1902: “The War Ministry sent Junior Captain Alexander Bursky from the Amur Military District, an attendee of the III year of the Sino-Japanese department, to attend lectures in Tokyo” [Iz istorii vostokovedeniya ... 2000, p. 208]. The document of the Oriental Institute Conference said: “It appears that Mr. Mendrin and Mr. Boloban, attached to the Oriental Institute in 1901 as full-time attendee officers, were moved to senior years of the institute after passing transition exams following their enrollment into the Sino-Japanese department in the second year of study; they annually made summer trips – arranged by the Institute – to the Far

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<sup>10</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 2. C. 13. S. 67.

Eastern countries: in 1902 they were sent to China, and in 1903 – to Japan”.<sup>11</sup>

During their practical work, the attendee officers not only improved their spoken language skills, they did scholarly translations as well. The documents of the Oriental Institute ascertain: “The following works were presented as a result of these trips: Mr. Mendrin presented his translation of Japanese fairy-tales of the animal epos from the collection *Nihon mukashi banashi* and translation of V. G. Aston’s English-language work *The History of Japanese Literature* /fully published in the XI and XII volumes of the *Oriental Institute News* and issued as a separate book/, he also worked upon the monumental research of Japanese colloquial language grammar. Mr. Boloban proved himself to be a good translator through his vast translations from the English and Japanese languages; among other things, he presented the following works: *An Outline of Chinese Philosophy*, *Diary of the Trip to Japan in 1903*, *A Short Review of Japanese Schools*, *Hanashika – Japanese popular story tellers*, and *A Japanese Military Officer’s Opinion of the Russian Military Discipline* /published in No. 637 of *Razvedchik* on September 22, 1903/ and translation of an English-language work about Japan...”<sup>12</sup> Professor Spalvin referred to Mendrin as the “most gifted and superb of all my students” in his foreword to one of Mendrin’s papers.<sup>13</sup>

A. P. Boloban, another specialist in Japanese studies, wrote about his practical training: “In 1902 (May-August), I was dispatched on a study trip to China; I came back in September and presented my work *Chinese Philosophy*. In 1902-1903, I was in my second year. I spent the summer months of 1903 on a study trip to Japan (Tokyo, Osaka); I returned from Japan in September and presented my work: *Education in Japan*, *A Diary of a Trip to Japan*, *Discipline in the Russian Army*, translation from Japanese (military journal *Gunjikai*) and *Unknown Japan*”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 25.

<sup>12</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 25–25.

<sup>13</sup> ATSA F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 38.

<sup>14</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 49.

Works produced by the officers who were experts in Japanese studies were published not only by the Oriental Institute publishing house, but also in the *Razvedchik* magazine. For example, in 1903, this magazine published A. P. Boloban's above-mentioned article *Discipline in the Russian Army*. It was a translation of the article written by Major Tanaka Giichi, who was attached to the Russian army for eighteen months [Boloban 1903, pp. 815–817]. The *Razvedchik* also published a review of V. M. Mendrin's work – the essay *Japanese Folk Fairy-Tales* [Yaponskiye narodnyye skazki... 1903, p. 273].

The officers' achievements in learning the Japanese language are testified by the excerpt from the letter written by the Oriental Institute Director to the Vladivostok Fortress Head of Staff: "As for the translator, the Oriental Institute recommends Captain Mendrin as the most knowledgeable in the Japanese written language of business acts".<sup>15</sup> The first experience of the officers' training at the Oriental Institute proved to be successful and War Ministry Order No.441 on Attendee Officers at the Oriental Institute announced: "Ten officers of all types of arms are allowed (2 officers from the Kwantung Army and 8 officers – from the armies of other districts) to attend lectures on the Chinese, Japanese... languages in the Vladivostok Oriental Institute" [Iz istorii vostokovedeniya ... 2000, p. 42].

### **Specialists in Japanese Studies during the Russo-Japanese War**

The Russo-Japanese War interrupted successful learning and academic work of officers specializing in Japanese studies. On January 31, 1904, the attendees of the Oriental Institute were dispatched to their units. It should be noted that not only attendees, but students of the Oriental Institute as well were dispatched to the active army. In particular, student Anatoly Nikolayevich Zankovsky was attached to the

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<sup>15</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 11.

Vladivostok cruiser squadron as a Japanese-language interpreter; he participated in all the squadron operations on cruiser *Rossiya*. In all, 11 Japanese-language interpreters were engaged at the front, eight of which were dispatched by the Oriental Institute [Ikuta 2014, p. 53].

Attendees Blonsky, Mendrin, Nikolaev, and Sptysin were sent under the Mukden Military Commissar's command by the order of the Far East Governor. On this occasion, a liturgy was performed at the Oriental Institute Church on February 1, 1904. Junior Captain A. A. Bursky, an attendee of the first admission, was attached to the reconnaissance department of the Manchurian Army Field Headquarters since March 22, 1904.

Cossack Captain V. M. Mendrin served first in the Mukden, and, later, in the Girin Military Commissariats. According to his report, his service and activities during the war looked as follows: "... I translated the regulations of the field service... conducted reconnaissance of the armies led by Chinese Generals Yuan Shikai and Ma ... conducted reconnaissance of the enemy personally and through spies ... conducted reconnaissance of enemy forces by surveys, reading of documents, and through spies... I translated 1/3 of the captured files of the Japanese Reserve Rifle Regiment under Sendenpu ... conducted reconnaissance in the cavalry vanguard".<sup>16</sup> V. M. Mendrin also noted that, during the war, he "had compiled an essay on the appearance and development of Chinese security units in the Mukden province since the time Russians entered the Mukden province and left it – the entire essay is based on official documents"; it seems to have been lost by the Commissariat during the retreat from Mukden".<sup>17</sup> Captain V. V. Blonsky was "one of the organizers in preparing the army logistics of reconnaissance and work with agents behind the enemy lines" [Podalko 1999, p. 80].

The importance of the Oriental Institute's students and attendees for the Russian Army during the Russo-Japanese War was appreciated by V. A. Oranovsky, Major General of the General Staff: "Strictly speaking,

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<sup>16</sup> ATSA. F. P-115 .I. 1. C. 692. S. 49-49r.

<sup>17</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 48 r.

the attendees of the latter – officers and students – were the only reliable and intelligent translators” [Podalko 1999, p. 79]. V. M. Mendrin received four combat orders and several other awards for his personal participation in battles, reconnaissance and partisan raids in the Manchurian territory. In August 1905, he was dispatched to the Vladivostok fortress under its Commander’s command “due to the siege imminence”. Lieutenant of the 29<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment A. P. Boloban was awarded four combat orders for his participation in the military operations in Manchuria. Attendee I. E. Ivanov, company commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment, was awarded six orders.

### **Military Japanese Studies after the Russo-Japanese War**

In early 1906, Cossack Captain V. M. Mendrin and Lieutenant A. P. Boloban were excluded from the Oriental Institute and sent to their military units. The teaching staff of the Oriental Institute did not agree with the loss of promising specialists in Japanese studies. The documents stated: “When discussing the order in question, the Conference of the Institute held it as its duty to ascertain that with the expulsion of Mr. Mendrin and Mr. Boloban from the Institute... the Oriental Institute lost two most successful of its alumni who, not only through their diligence, capabilities, and hard work testified to the excellent mastering of academic disciplines, but who, due to the knowledge acquired at the Institute, proved to be quite efficient during the military operations. These circumstances inspired the Conference with full confidence that these attendees of the Institute, who are to complete the full institute course shortly, could become part of a very small number of educated Russian orientalist”.<sup>18</sup> The Oriental Institute Director’s petition of April 21, 1906, to the Force Commander in the Far East said: “Confirming its regret in respect of Mr. Mendrin and Mr. Boloban being detached

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<sup>18</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 25.

from the Institute, the Conference decided: to petition for retaining these students in the institute in view of the upcoming completion of the full institute curriculum”.<sup>19</sup>

After the Russo-Japanese War ended, the officers who had been attendees of the Oriental Institute began to transfer to the army reserve and join the Oriental Institute as students. A. P. Boloban became a reservist in 1906 and was enrolled as a student of the Sino-Japanese department of the Oriental Institute.<sup>20</sup> V. M. Mendrin wanted to join the reserve as well; in October 1906, he petitioned: “Retiring from the military service, I ask for your permission to be enrolled as a student of the Oriental Institute and be allowed to hold graduation exams with my course mates”.<sup>21</sup> His first attempt to leave the military service for Japanese studies failed and he graduated the institute when he was still in the military. In the summer of 1907, V. M. Mendrin petitioned “to be left... in the Institute to prepare for teaching Japanese literature; I ask you to petition about transferring me from the military to the civil service...”.<sup>22</sup> The young officer, an expert in Japanese studies, wrote that if it were impossible to be transferred from the military to the civil service, he was ready to retire. In 1908, young Lieutenant Colonel V. M. Mendrin finally managed to be dismissed from service “for family reasons”.

In February 1907, V. M. Mendrin and A. P. Boloban passed graduation exams successfully. Captain Mendrin was the only graduate of the course who was awarded a gold medal. As to M. M. Rummyantsev, he did not become an expert in Japanese studies. As the *Excerpt from the Minutes of the Oriental Institute Conference Meeting* stated, he “completed a full course of subjects in the Institute being exempt from... studying a special language”,<sup>23</sup> while his diploma was in Sinology. V. M. Mendrin was recognized as the most successful and promising

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<sup>19</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 52

<sup>20</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 5. S. 37.

<sup>21</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 2.

<sup>22</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 692. S. 14.

<sup>23</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 5. S. 69.

of the 1907 graduates. The *Report on the Oriental Institute Status and Performance in 1908* said: “V. M. Mendrin, who graduated the Institute with honors, remained at the Institute, with the agreement of the Public Education Minister communicated by the Amur District School Inspector as of January 4, 1908, to get prepared for the rank of Professor at the Japanese Literature Department for two years, since January 1, 1908; dispatched to Japan...” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 10]. The two-year trip proved to be insufficient, and V. M. Mendrin turned to the Oriental Institute superintendents with a request to prolong the period of preparation for Professor’s rank. Professor E. G. Spalvin confirmed the progress of V. M. Mendrin’s studies in Japan and petitioned for the trip prolongation until January 1, 1911. [Vostochniy Institut 1909c, p. 90].

In 1908, three students and five officers graduated from the Sino-Japanese department of the Oriental Institute: Captain of the 11<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment A. I. Kravtsov, Junior Captain of the 11<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment N. V. Osipov, Captain of the 34<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment S. F. Ryabchich, Staff Captain of the 9<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment N. N. Stromilov, and Staff Captain of the 11<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment V. V. Blonsky.

Professor E. G. Spalvin’s report about V. V. Blonsky’s work said: “Staff Captain Blonsky, a 4<sup>th</sup> year attendee of the Sino-Japanese department, presented a full translation of memoirs by Japanese Lieutenant Sakurai about the Port Arthur battle named *Nikudan*, literally: *Flesh Cannon Balls*. These memoirs, which have been republished in Japan 48 times,... provide quite a real picture of the Port Arthur fighting...The members of the Conference have already familiarized themselves with Staff Captain Blonsky’s translation through the printed impressions in the *Far Eastern Military News*. Staff Captain Blonsky managed not only to relay the general flavor of the memoirs – he also kept as close to the text as possible. The translator worthily comes out victor in the battle with difficult Japanese constructions and word formations, always feeling the meaning and relaying it in good Russian... The presented translation is, we may say, the first significant translation from Japanese into Russian done by a very competent person and done successfully in many respects.

Given all the above-said and believing that by his translation Staff Captain Blonsky made a significant contribution into Russian translations of Oriental literature and gave the Russian public a very interesting material to form opinions about the Japanese people...” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 156].

The Russo-Japanese war gave rise to a contradictory situation. Attendee officers showed a high level of competence and proved to be indispensable for the Russian Army in the Far East. However, many officers were so deeply plunged into learning that they wanted to devote their life to Japanese studies and commit themselves to science and education rather than to the military service. The problem could be solved through an increase in the number of attendee officers. The annual admission of officers to the Oriental Institute was increased to 20 people. Thus, eventually, the Oriental Institute admitted over a hundred officers for the first ten years of its history; most of them studied the Japanese language. In addition, immediately after the Russo-Japanese war, interpreter schools were opened for officers and soldiers right in military units.

Schools of the Japanese and Chinese languages for officers and lower ranks were opened after the war in some units garrisoned in the Amur Military District. It should be noted that some experience in setting up Chinese language schools for lower ranks had already been gained by that time. A. N. Zankovsky, a student of the Oriental Institute, was among the Japanese language teachers. This specialist in Japanese studies, who had combat experience in the war with Japan, taught Japanese language to officers and lower ranks of the 11<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment training team in 1906-1908. The training team of this regiment was stationed in the Vladivostok fortress, and forty lower ranks from this regiment were admitted into the Japanese language group; they took their exams in May.

The letter of the “Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 11<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle... Regiment supervising the training team” of August 14, 1908 said that the former Commander of the regiment “Colonel Yablochkin, having realized – through his combat experience – the

powerful advantage of the enemy's language command not only for the unit, but also for particular riflemen, decided to introduce Japanese and Chinese language learning to the regiment training team, with the right provided to officers willing to learn one of the said languages to attend the department of the training team where the language chosen is taught. The objective was to teach each lower rank to ask questions related to the movement, military operations, composition of forces, war outfit, ammunition, names of different allowance and subsistence stores, cost, weight, measures, etc., essential in the warfare".<sup>24</sup>

The Oriental Institute remained a major center for the training of military orientalists after the Russo-Japanese War. In 1907, Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov was admitted to the second year: he had undergone the first year in 1903/1904. Staff Captain Ekgardt, an attendee of the Sino-Japanese department, was transferred to the third year of study. Future specialists in Japanese studies – Staff Captain Pozdeev, Captain Lisynov, Lieutenant Tshepushelov, Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, Second Lieutenant Spandeg and Lieutenant Baron Rozen – were enrolled into the Oriental Institute as assigned and supernumerary attendees in 1907. The *Report of the Oriental Institute Status and Performance in 1908* said that there were 89 attendee officers in all four years of study, 34 – in the second year, and 20 officers each in the first and third years each. It should be noted that there were more attendee officers in the Oriental Institute than students at that time. Seventeen more “outside attendees”, some of which were also officers, must be added to this number [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 10]. The report further stated: “79 officers out of 83 are full-time attendees by the appointment of the Amur Governor General, while four officers – supernumerary attendees – are from the Independent Corps of the Zaamursky Military District Border Guards” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 14].

Each course of the Oriental Institute had two groups and one of them consisted of officers. Specialization was determined in the second year of study. For example, in 1908, the following officers

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<sup>24</sup> ATSA. F. P-115. I. 1. C. 378. S. 47

were enrolled in the second year of the Sino-Japanese department: Captain Lisynov, Staff Captain Pozdeev, Lieutenant Baron Rozen, Second Lieutenant Spandeg, Lieutenant Tshenushelov; Junior Cossack Captain Zakharevsky, Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, Commander of a hundred soldiers (*sotnik*) Lion, Staff Captain Sipailo-Rudnitsky, Captain Speshnev, Staff Captain Shalfeev and Staff Cavalry Captain Lozdovsky became third-year attendees. [Vostochniy Institut 1909b, pp. 85–86]. The documents of the Oriental Institute prove the fact that officers studied better than ordinary students did – six students were expelled in one academic year, and only two officers. [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, c. 12]. The *Report of the Oriental Institute Status and Performance in 1908* said: “The promotion and final exams showed the following results: a) 37 of 78 students were promoted to the next year...10 completed the course...b) 65 attendee officers of 88 were promoted to the following years of study... 15 completed the course... [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 14]. Professor E. G. Spalvin conducted specialized classes for officers where they studied the Japanese army. Much attention was paid to the history of Japan during these classes.

The Sino-Japanese department of the Oriental Institute was far from being the most numerous but it drew special attention. The *Report of the Oriental Institute Status and Performance in 1908* said: “A special interest for learning shown by the Institute attendees – as a natural consequence of the Russo-Japanese war – resulted in strengthening the teaching staff of the Sino-Japanese department by one more qualified lector of the Japanese language; this circumstance enables to ensure correct and successful system of practical classes at this department. In the spring semester of the accounting year, by Professor E. G. Spalvin’s instruction and under his close guidance, part of the practical training was devoted to lecturers’ regular readings and talks in Japanese...” [Vostochniy Institut 1909b, p. 19]. Everyone studied only Chinese in the first year, while, in later years, Japanese learning students had four hours of practice in Chinese and Japanese, as well as two hours of English each week in addition to lectures.

It took some time to resume regular study trips to Japan. For example, the minutes of the Oriental Institute Conference of October 24, 1907, said: “it has been decided, considering the exceptionally unfavorable conditions Lieutenant May experienced in Japan this summer, which deprived him of an opportunity to improve his knowledge in the Japanese language and to be moved to the fourth year, to approve his appeal to undergo the third-year curriculum again [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 26]. The next year, the situation with study trips to Japan completely normalized.

The tradition of presenting academic translations by specialists in Japanese studies after their study trips was preserved in the first post-war years. After the 1908 summer practical training, the officers presented the following works: “Captain Aivaz-Oglu. – a) a translation of the Japanese comedy by Mr. Ozaki Tokutaro... *Koi-No-Yamai (Love Sickness)*, b) translation of the Japanese work by Takeda Oto and Kimura Shoshu *Shonen Gadan. Nihon Bushoden (Illustrated Stories for the Youth – Biographies of Japanese Warriors)*”... Staff Captain Ivanov – Translation of the Japanese military gymnastics statutes with the attached list of words used in the statutes. Staff Captain Leontiev. – Translation of Japanese philosophical studies by Mr. Uchimura Kanzo: *Yorozu Tengen (A Bit of Everything)* ... Lieutenant May – a) translation from Japanese of the *Project for Improvement of the Infantry Manual (Hohei Soten Kaisei ban)* with the attached collection of military terms and commands used in this Manual and b) translation from Japanese of the *Field Research of the Amur Coast and Kamchatka by Vice-Consul Suzuki: Report*... Lieutenant Spiridovich. – Translation from Japanese of the first nine chapters of Mr. Tsuboi Zenshiro’s opus *Tsuzoku Meiji Rekishi (The Popular History of the Meiji Era)*... [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, pp. 30–31]. The second year attendee officers presented the following papers: Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov. Translation of two Japanese stories: a) *Murotodzak (Muroto’s Thought)*, works by Kawaguchi Mokusuke, and b) *Yamagoshi (Mountain Passage)*, works by Kawai Kotori ... Sotnik Lion. – Translation of the Japanese story *Botchan (Little Boy)*, works by Natsume Soseki... Captain Speshnev. – a) Translation

from Japanese of the 1<sup>st</sup> book (*On the War Emergence*) from *Shonen Nichirono Senshi (The History of the Russo-Japanese War for the Youth*, works by Iwaya Sazanami, and b) *Bushido in the Past and Present* (a compilation article)” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 33].

The Oriental Institute Conference awarded the scholarly papers by Stepan Georgievich Leontiev, Staff Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Eastern-Siberian Mountain Artillery Division, a gold medal, Vladimir Nikolayevich Aivaz-Oglu, Captain of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Vladivostok Fortress Artillery Regiment, received a silver medal, while the works by Lev Iosifovich Leon and Lieutenant of the 3<sup>rd</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment Oskar-Valentin Frantsievich May were marked with an honorary mention [Vostochniy Institut 1909b, pp. 91–92]. The works by Ivan Vasilyevich Ivanov, Staff Captain of the 10<sup>th</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Regiment, Sergei Vasilyevich Spiridovich, Lieutenant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> East-Siberian Rifle Artillery Brigade, and Captain Nikolai Alexeevich Speshnev were recognized as satisfactory; it is only the paper by Lieutenant Colonel Ilya Efimovich Ivanov that was returned to the author for improvement. In 1909, I. E. Ivanov published a small book *During the Study Trip to Japan in 1908*, and later, his book *In Japanese Private Spaces and Public Places (From the Traveler’s Notebook)* came out in Moscow in 1911.

In the summer of 1909, attendee officers Captain Lisynkov, Lieutenant Rozen, Junior Cossack Captain Zakharevsky, Staff Captain Shalfeev, Staff Cavalry Captain Lozdovsky, Staff Cavalry Captain Shidlovsky-Khilkevich, and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov were dispatched to Tokyo. Several other officers – Pozdeev, Spandeg, Tshepushelov, Lion, Sikaylo-Rudnitsky, and Speshnev – were sent on a study trip to other Japanese cities.

Despite the achievements made by the Oriental Institute’s attendee officers in studying Japan and learning the Japanese language, the end of the Russo-Japanese War raised an issue of reforming the education in Japanese studies for military men. The first to accentuate the problem were the Oriental Institute’s professors, and that was reflected in the minutes of the Oriental Institute Conference of September 6, 1907. The *Institute Director’s presentation to the Amur Governor General of July 25* and the *Governor General’s subsequent proposal of July 8* said: “a) the evident

necessity of reconsidering the current provisions of the Oriental Institute raises a very important and urgent issue – final regulation of the officer course at the Oriental Institute” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 5]. The Oriental Institute professors believed that a large share of the “military element in the Institute showed with ample evidence the unfeasibility of co-educating students and officers; the reason, in their opinion was, “worldview discrepancy or even opposition, difference of age and level of maturity” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 6]. Most probably, the Oriental Institute Conference made this decision due to conflicts between students and officers. An attendee officer ripped off a revolutionary leaflet, and students decided to close the Institute [Datsyshen 2000, p. 80].

Yet the main argument of the Oriental Institute’s professors was different. The document said: “The most important, however, is that the objectives of Oriental education for students and officers – from the government’s point of view – seem to be quite different, which makes it necessary to develop different curricula for the two categories” [Vostochniy Institut 1909a, p. 6].

For the purpose of changing the existing system of training for military specialists in Japanese studies, the Oriental Institute leadership suggested “setting up special courses for officers at the Oriental Institute, limiting the officers’ time of study in the institute by three years, and the curriculum – by learning written and oral Oriental languages, English, geography and ethnography, history and culture of Far Eastern countries. The courses are to be divided into departments according to the language studied: Chinese... Japanese, and Japanese-Korean. Purely military sciences may be added to the above subjects of study” [Vostochniy Institut 1909 a, p. 7].

The need to reform the training of military specialists in Japanese studies was enhanced by the fact that the army still lacked experts. The article *New Procedures for Officers Learning Oriental Languages* published in the *Razvedchik* magazine in 1910 [A. D. 1910, pp. 230–231] mentioned the lack of educational establishments: “The recent war with Japan showed, quite apparently, the need to have among the troops officers with the knowledge of Oriental languages to serve as interpreters.

At the present time, the War Ministry has the following institutions for training these officers: 1) The course of Oriental languages instituted for officers at the 1<sup>st</sup> Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2) Oriental Institute in Vladivostok where officers are allowed to attend lectures... 3) Preparatory School of Oriental Languages in Tashkent. In addition, there are two military scholars in the Urga School of Translators and Interpreters, and one scholar – in a similar school in Kuldzha” [A. D. 1910, p. 230].

The commission set up at the General Headquarters in late 1908 “concluded that the poor situation with Oriental languages learning should be explained mainly by the lack of a defined system and clear goal...” [A. D. 1910, p. 231]. The problem might have arisen because many officers did not want to remain military interpreters or intelligence officers – they devoted their lives to studying Japanese history and literature. The revolutionary events in Russia, directly touching upon the life of the Oriental Institute, played their role as well.

The commission set up at the General Headquarters decided: “to suspend the further admission of officers into the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok and admission to the Course of Oriental Languages pending the implementation of the planned measure...” [A. D. 1910, p. 231]. The material on this issue published in the *Razvedchik* magazine said: “The commission agreed unanimously that for the army... it is necessary to have two categories of officers knowing these languages: the 1<sup>st</sup> category should include field “officers-interpreters” having a good command of the language and satisfying the army needs in reconnaissance, communication with local inhabitants, etc. The second category should include a particular contingent of officers who do not only know the language but who also thoroughly studied particular areas of the Far and Near East – geography, history, religion, laws, customs, partially literature, etc.” [A. D. 1910, p. 230].

The *Razvedchik* reported: “In keeping with the reasons defined by the commission it compiled a draft procedure on officers’ learning oriental languages... I. The basic principle shall be, first, that the main factor of officers’ training in learning languages shall be their personal

independent action... II. Officers wishing to study oriental languages shall undergo a preliminary 6-8 month course of a special preparatory school instituted at the District Headquarters. III. Upon graduation from the school officers are dispatched abroad for 2 years..." [A. D. 1910, p. 230]. The reformers suggested opening four preparatory schools, one of which – at the Amur Military District Headquarters, where it was planned to admit annually “5 officers after they have passed the instituted exam” [A. D. 1910, p. 231].

The year of 1910 saw the adoption of the *Provisions for Officers Learning Oriental Languages*. Pursuant to it the District Preparatory School of Translators at the Oriental Institute was set up. The annual student admission rate was 12 officers. The last admission was made in 1913; the world war that had broken out not only halted the process of admitting students to the preparatory school but also made the attendees interrupt their learning. Less than 20 people graduated from the preparatory school at the Oriental Institute.

The educational reforms in military Japanese studies complicated education for officers but did not make it inaccessible. The path to Japanese studies covered by Vasily Nikolayevich Krylov may serve as an example. In 1909, V. N. Krylov, Lieutenant of the 8<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the Zamuursky District Border Guards, passed exams for the elementary knowledge of the Japanese language and was enrolled into the second year of the Oriental Institute, Sino-Japanese department, as an extranumerary attendee. He completed a shortened program and graduated from the institute in 1912, without a certificate; but later, in 1913, he graduated from the District Preparatory School of Translators at the Oriental Institute. A. E. Kulanov states: “As Krylov, who had already become a Staff Cavalry Captain back in 1910, did not receive a diploma, the Preparatory School Certificate served as a document of his professional education” [Kulanov 2014, p. 196].

## **The Fate and Fortunes of Specialists in Japanese Studies upon Oriental Institute Graduation**

The fate and fortunes of officer specialist in Japanese studies were different. M. G. Popov, a participant of the Russo-Japanese War, was enrolled as a full-time attendee of the Oriental Institute in 1906 but soon was expelled for underachievement. In 1909, he enrolled again but as an extern attendee at his own expense; in 1912, he graduated from the Sino-Japanese department as a first class graduate and was promoted to the rank of Staff Captain [Buyakov 2014, pp. 134–148]. L. I. Lion, a Cossack Captain of the Amur Cossacks Regiment, graduated from the Sino-Japanese department of the Oriental Institute and was shortly sent under the control of the Russian military agent in Japan; in 1914, he got ill and soon died [Buyakov 1999, p. 101]. In 1912, Lieutenant S. V. Medzevich enrolled in the Japanese department of the District Preparatory school affiliated with the Oriental Institute. After the World War I began, he was dispatched to his unit and was killed in battle in 1915.

Many specialists in Japanese studies went to serve in Manchuria; they continued their scholarly work there, but specialized in studying this region with Chinese becoming their major working language. For example, A. P. Boloban worked at the Chinese Eastern Railway after graduation from the Oriental Institute. In 1908, he initiated founding the Association of Russian Orientalists; later he was a founder of the Russian-Japanese Society in Harbin. Yet he gave up Japanese studies and took to researching Manchuria, publishing several major research papers on the subject.

There were more famous public figures and politicians than specialists in Japanese studies among the District Preparatory School graduates. Well remembered is the outstanding but short life of Alexey Nikolayevich Lutskoy, the first Chairman of the Irkutsk Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, who was killed in 1920 in Vladivostok. Nevertheless, there were famous specialists in Japanese studies among the District School students, such as Staff Captain K. A. Kharnsky. His first paper on Japanese studies, the

article *Agriculture in Japan*, was published in the *Bulletin of Finances, Industry, and Commerce* in 1906. In the 1920s, after a long interval, K. A. Kharnsky returned to Japanese studies.

As for military specialists in Japanese studies who made the greatest achievements, the one worthy of mention is, first and foremost, V. M. Mendrin. He was admitted as a full-time lecturer of the Oriental Institute and was preparing to become department head; he wrote and published a textbook of the Japanese language. The years of 1910-1916 were very fruitful in his academic career. Throughout 1910-1914, his multi-volume textbook *Sorobun. Analysis of the Japanese Epistolary Style* was being published. V. M. Mendrin translated and issued six out of 22 volumes of the *National History of Japan (Nihon Gaishi)* by Confucian scholar Rai San'yō (1780-1832). He wrote a foreword and supplied the text with vast historical and linguistic comments. His last major paper was published on the eve of the 1917 revolution [Mendrin 1916].

The revolution made it difficult for V. M. Mendrin to continue his fruitful work. In 1918, he was elected Principal of the Higher Political School that had split off from his alma mater, the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok. Cossack Captain V. M. Mendrin, who had been summoned from reserve during World War I, was offered to occupy the post of Ataman of the Ussuriysk Cossacks Army, but he chose to serve in the sphere of education. V. M. Mendrin died in 1920 and was buried in Vladivostok. All his manuscripts and archives were lost.

A great contribution to Japanese studies in Russia was made by V. N. Krylov, a military specialist in Japanese studies. In the first few years after receiving education in Japanese studies, he published a series of very significant papers. The year of 1914 saw the publication in Harbin of his four works, all being of the “military academic character”: *Japanese Cavalry Issues. Directory for Modern Organization of Cavalry in Japan with General Data of Japanese Army Attached* (Harbin, 1914), *Map of Korea with Japanese Proper Names* (Harbin, 1914), *Dictionary of Japanese Geographical Names in Korea, of the Current Chosen General- Governorship. With a Map Edited by Major*

*General of the General Staff Volodchenko* (Harbin, 1914), *Summary of the Japanese Army. Geographical and Statistical Data on Japan Attached. Edited by Major General of the General Staff Volodchenko* (1914) [Kulanov 2014, p. 196]. In 1918, Cavalry Captain Krylov published his book *Japanese Army Issues in Alphabetical Order. Handbook of the Modern Structure of the Japanese Armed Forces*. The list of sources in different languages underlying this research occupied half of the page in the text. As to the texts in Japanese, the author wrote: “The following Japanese works have served as aides: the book *Ground Army (Rikugun)* by Major General Kameoka, *New Textbook for Infantry Soldiers* (Shin-hohei-suchi) compiled by Captain Okazaki, and *General Review of the Army (Guntai-taikan)* – a book compiled by Colonel Goshi, and, finally, Japanese military statutes and instructions for training troops, as well as Japanese periodicals. General statistical data related to Japan are taken from the 32<sup>nd</sup> *Statistical Yearbook of the Japanese Empire Compiled by the Statistical Bureau Affiliated with the Cabinet of Ministers (Nihon-teikoku Dai San Jū Ni Tō Keinenkan)* and *Yearbook of the Kokumin-Simbun Newspaper (Kokumin-nenkan)*. Issued in Taisei 7<sup>th</sup> year (1917)” [Krylov 1918, p. IV]. During the Civil War, Lieutenant Captain V. N. Krylov, who had served in the White Army in the Trans-Baikal Region, continued his fruitful Japanese studies, taught the Japanese language, issued dictionaries and translations, and, after the Bolsheviks’ victory, he remained in emigration in Manchuria where he was involved in active scholarly research.

The revolution and the Civil War struck a serious blow to the Japanese studies in Russia. Most of the specialists in Japanese studies remained to live and work in Japan and Manchuria. Officers K. A. Kharnsky, N. A. Speshnev, and other specialists in Japanese studies, who sided with the Bolsheviks, were engaged in information and propaganda work for several years. In the 1920-30s, the graduates of the Oriental Institute who remained in the Soviet Union, including some military specialists in Japanese studies, created new Soviet university-based Japanese studies in the Far East. Yet the political repressions in the 1930s did away with not only military, but with the entire Russian Far Eastern Japanese

studies. The specialists in Japanese studies who worked in Vladivostok as well as the émigrés who returned from Manchuria, such as V. N. Krylov, were physically exterminated. Their unpublished papers and archives were lost, while most works by military specialists in Japanese studies were forgotten nearly until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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