

NEWSLETTER

No. 16

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A priori one would think that the 29th meeting of an organization does not call for special celebration or, indeed, for any special mention. Yet probably few would disagree with the view that when, for the first time in its existence, the PIAC meets in the Soviet Union - and more specifically in one of its Turkic republics - the occasion is one of sufficient importance to warrant some remarks. At the PIAC we have always celebrated the occasion when we could meet in a country we had not previously visited. The Soviet Union is the fourteenth country to extend hospitality to our meetings and we accepted the gracious invitation with particular pleasure. In many ways the Soviet Union is a "senior partner" in Altaic studies; the number of Soviet specialists working in this field far exceeds that of Altaists active anywhere else. Within the U.S.S.R. Altaic studies are a national branch of knowledge, a major sector of oriental studies, not a marginal discipline labored by a few dedicated scholars who more often than not periodically have to justify their own existence and that of the field.

It is clear that in linguistics, ethnography and archeology Soviet scholars have a situational advantage no other country can match, their access to primary material is unparalleled. The sheer quantity of relevant Soviet publications is for all of us working elsewhere a cause of wonder - and of headache, since much of it is not easily accessible. Of course Soviet scholars are not newcomers to the PIAC; some of them have attended several of our previous meetings and we have always paid special attention to what they had to say. Three Soviet scholars have been honored by the Indiana University Prize for Altaic Studies awarded by the PIAC: I. Cincius (1972), A.N. Kononov (1976), and N.A. Baskakov (1980).

It is a PIAC tradition - dictated by common sense - that the details of the local organization rests with the hosts. This year, for practical reasons and principally because of the slowness of mail between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the second circular was not sent out from the central office but from the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow. This course of action had to be adopted also on account of the necessity for many of us to obtain a Soviet visa.

We regret that for reasons totally beyond the control of our Soviet friends the 29th PIAC will be an expensive affair, in the price-range of our meeting held in Chicago. They and I must hope that, nevertheless, many of the regular PIAC members will be able to make it to Tashkent. There can be no doubt that the occasion will be one of great importance for Altaic studies. We thank our Soviet colleagues, and particularly those in Uzbekistan, who labor on our behalf.

Denis Sinor
Secretary General

IN MEMORIAM

KARL JAHN, 1906-1985

Few people have been linked so intimately with the PIAC as Karl Jahn. He was there in Munich, in 1957, when our Conference was born; three times he was our President (in Oosterbeek, Holland in 1964, in Vienna in 1972, and again in 1980), and in 1975 he was honored with the Indiana University Prize for Altaic Studies, the so-called PIAC gold-medal. He came to most of our meetings, took an active part in them, enjoyed their friendly atmosphere, and, as can be seen from the foregoing, was repeatedly ready to shoulder the burden incumbent upon the host of the Conference. He liked to be a guest, but he also liked to be a gracious host. This was all the more remarkable because, let us face it, Karl was anything but a good organizer, and if the meetings he presided over turned out to be successful, this was due to his ability to recruit very capable, generous young people to do the work for him. He was also able to cajole the appropriate authorities, including the Mayor of Vienna, to work for our PIAC.

Curiously enough, Karl Jahn was anything but a conventional "Altaist"; although he knew Turkish, his basic languages were Persian and Arabic and his education was that of a Near Eastern specialist. But he became inordinately fond of Central Asian history, and through his work on Rashid al-Din (which spanned his whole life), and the creation and editing for thirty years of the Central Asiatic Journal, he has brought an important contribution to its study.

I first met him in 1954 in Cambridge at the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists; then we met again in Munich in 1957 where the PIAC was founded; but I really got to know and like him the following year at our first meeting in Mainz. One evening the small band of those who gathered at the friendly Akademie der Wissenschaften had dinner on a terrace overlooking the Rhine. The wine was good and in ample supply, the conversation appropriately animated, and, when the time came to drive home, some of us, including Karl Jahn, piled into a Volkswagen bus. He then began to tell jokes -- an exercise I do not always relish -- but his stories were irresistible, they came, one after the other in a seemingly unending stream, most of them told with a strong Viennese accent, and we nearly burst with laughter. We only stopped when, with a mighty jerk, the bus came to a sudden halt, perhaps barely one meter away from a stone wall. Our driver, I cannot remember who he was, was himself so busily laughing that

he drove the bus into a narrow cul-de-sac whence he could extricate himself only by backing out through the narrow passage which he did not remember ever having entered.

Karl and I recalled the incident when we last met, in 1981 at the PIAC's 24th meeting in Jerusalem. He could still tell jokes but, clearly, much of the fire had gone. He enjoyed his stay in Jerusalem, though, for political reasons which I could never quite understand, he had vowed not to come. He vaguely resented the fact that colleagues from Socialist countries would probably not be able to come. At an earlier PIAC he had vowed to abstain because he did expect colleagues from Socialist countries to come.... Political consistency was not his forte. He really belonged to the traditional, pre-1918 Kulturkreis Mitteleuropa, and the ideologies that appeared since then had no appeal for him. To the best of my knowledge, he has never visited the USA, though of course I invited him to come. The American way of life, as he knew it from the distance, did not appeal to him. I am reasonably certain that had he known it from close quarters -- he still would not have liked it.

Born in Brno (which Jahn always called Brünn) in Moravia on March 26, 1906, Karl Jahn was a product of that (we only now appreciate how happy) conglomerate called Austria-Hungary. He attended both the German and the Czech universities of Prague but -- taking full advantage of the facilities offered by the German-speaking universities -- he studied also in Leipzig, Berlin, and Vienna. From 1948 to his early retirement in 1969 he taught at the universities of Leiden and Utrecht where he formed a remarkable group of young people -- some of them genuine "Altaists". Even by orientalist standards he was remarkably multilingual; besides Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, he spoke Czech, Dutch, French, Italian, and Russian fluently. In our conversations he and I of course always spoke German, though in our correspondence he used German and I English. He was a good, reliable letter-writer, until the last years when health reasons prevented him from writing.

From 1969 to 1983 Jahn lived in his beloved Vienna. He lived there in modest circumstances but, as far as I know, contented. No doubt, he had his personal problems and in April 1977, referring to his decision not to attend the PIAC in Leiden he confessed: "Nun mein Interesse [in der PIAC] besteht unverändert - natürlich - aber ich bin schon etwas des Treibens müde, es ist alles schon so weit und der Veränderungen mehr als genug!"

Karl Jahn was not what one could call a hard worker. I do not know how much time he spent preparing for his teaching, nor do I know how good his lectures at the university were. It must remain the task of his pupils to comment on this aspect of his activity. His public

lectures were carefully prepared, enjoyable presentations. His style in German was Austrian and many aspects of his life and work cannot be understood without considering his deep attachment to Vienna and to the culture which, in Karl's somewhat idealized picture, this city represented. But, perhaps most of all, he enjoyed the Gemütlichkeit Vienna could offer. On a few occasions when I could meet him there, he guided me to some small Heuriger where he would drink in moderation but with great gusto the local wine, while deploring my abstemiousness on which, for over a quarter of a century, he never failed to comment. He liked feminine company, so we were, seldom alone, but he somehow always spoke as if we were and I listened to him with delight. Every so often in the course of the evening he would remark "Du hast's ja leicht, Du bist jung", a statement of only relative accuracy, justified on the grounds that in the course of our friendship I have obstinately remained ten years his junior.

His chapter on Timur, prepared for the Cambridge History of Inner Asia of which I am the editor and which is now with the printers, may be the last of his publications. I know not what other finished manuscripts he may have left behind. But these reminiscences about Karl Jahn were not meant to serve as an obituary in the strict sense of the word, they were rather a one-sided conversation about a departed friend, a true, generous supporter of the PIAC. May he rest in peace!

[I am very much indebted to Professor Ilse Laude-Cirtautas for graciously sending me the manuscript of an obituary to appear in the Central Asiatic Journal. It provided me with some data to which I had no other access.]

Denis Sinor

IN MEMORIAM

MA YONG (1934-1985)

Professor Ma, who, among many other posts, held also those of Head of the Division of the History of Ancient Relations between China and Other Countries in the Institute of History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Society for Central Asian Studies, was known to only few of the PIAC's members. He attended only one of our meetings - Walberberg, 1984 - but, in this way, he became the first scholar from the People's Republic of China ever to join our group.

I first met Professor Ma in Paris where he was Chinese delegate to the editorial board of the History of the Civilizations of Central Asia prepared under the aegis of UNESCO. He took this task very seriously indeed, and it took some persuading to convince him that no one on the Committee, the USSR included, had any desire to diminish the part Chinese scholars should play in the project. At subsequent meetings he showed himself a perceptive colleague, an excellent team-worker. By chance, I met him also in September 1983 at the International Conference of Karakorum Culture held in Gilgit where he courageously tried to overcome his grave physical handicap. His frail body was no match for his consuming intellectual ambition, his burning desire to catch up with the time lost because of his country's previous troubles. It was his aim to combine the results of Chinese and Western scholarship and apply them to the elucidation of China's early relations with Inner Asia. Most of his published work, including the book The Historical Cultural Relics in Xin Jiang (in Chinese, 1975), reflected this preoccupation. He also realized that if one wished to secure administrative support for scholarly projects, the best way to achieve this was to take the administration into one's own hand.

His interests were vast, his knowledge, even of western culture, most impressive. At a concert in Walberberg I discovered that he had a good knowledge and keen appreciation of western classical music. He told me that with a visit to Beethoven's house in Bonn an old dream of his had been fulfilled.

It had been my hope that Professor Ma's energy would lead to increased Chinese participation in the PIAC. It was not to be. He passed away after a long illness at the early age of only 51. It is meet and just that his memory be honored by the PIAC.

Denis Sinor

28TH MEETING OF THE PIAC

The 28th annual meeting of the PIAC was held under the presidency of Professor Andreas Csillaghy in Venice, Italy, from the 8th to the 14th July, 1985, in the magnificent setting of the Centro Linguistico Interfacoltà, Università di Venezia. This was the second PIAC meeting held on Italian soil (the first meeting took place in Ravello in 1966) and this marvellous city, home of Marco Polo and of the Codex Cumanicus, with its many contacts with the Altaic world (after all, so the story goes, the city owes its very existence to Attila) provided a marvellous background to the scholarly activities of our group. In recent years, thanks to the efforts of Professor Giovanni Stary, Manchu studies have also greatly developed at the University.

Of course it would be vain to pretend that the attractions of the city left the participants unmoved, but the generous siesta time gave ample opportunity for sightseeing. The reception given by the Mayor and a superlative dinner at "Cipriani's" in Torcello stand out among the social events. Many a participant could not resist the temptation of being photographed in Torcello sitting on the stone throne which, it is said, had been used by Attila himself.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRIZE FOR ALTAIC STUDIES (1985)

On the occasion of the PIAC's 28th meeting, in July 1985, the Indiana University Prize for Altaic Studies, commonly known as the PIAC MEDAL, was awarded to Professor Aulis J. Joki from Finland.

The scholar whom we so honored had been president of our 19th meeting (Helsinki 1976) and, although most of his work has been in the Uralic field, his contribution to Altaic studies is also most significant. Of particular importance is his massive study on Die Lehnwörter des Sajansamojedischen (1952), the bulk of which deals with the Altaic elements of that language, and - in a very different field - his fascinating article "Auf den Spuren der steinzeitlichen Cerviden" (1973). He also published a richly commented Finnish translation of Marco Polo's travels. Some years ago Professor Joki, now retired, had to face serious health problems. To the benefit of all, he fully recovered and it is the PIAC's heartfelt wish that for many years to come he may continue in good health and cheerfully his scholarly activities.

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CSOMA DE KÖRÖS SYMPOSIUM

A Csoma de Körös Symposium will be held in Balatonfüred (Hungary) from the 13th to the 19th of September, 1987. As on previous occasions, the Symposium will deal with subjects of Csoma de Körös' scholarly interests: Inner Asian and Tibetan studies - language, history, culture, religion.

Balatonfüred is a lovely place near lake Balaton, and the Organizing Committee will try to keep the participation-fee (to include accommodation and meals) under US \$250.

For further information write: Csoma de Körös Symposium, Budapest VI, Izabella u.46, Hungary, H-1064.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONGOLIA SOCIETY

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Mongolia Society will be celebrated on November 8, 1986 in The Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York.

The morning program will be devoted to the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Society's foundation. There will be a guest speaker from the Mongolian People's Republic as well as a session in which scholarly papers will be read. In the afternoon, there will be a lecture, and presentation of Mongolian films. Mongolian tea and snacks will also be served. A reception will close the day of celebration.

Over the quarter of a century of its existence the Mongolia Society - under the dynamic and devoted leadership of Professor John Gombojab Hangin - has greatly contributed to a better understanding, particularly in the U.S.A., of the Mongolian past and present. The Society's international membership has benefitted from its many scholarly publications, including the periodical Mongolian Studies, and Occasional Papers, the Special Papers, all published under the aegis of the Society. The last-mentioned of these series (so far nine issues published) is devoted to the publication of Mongolian texts.

The relationship between the Mongolia Society and the PIAC has always been marked by cordial collaboration. We have great pleasure in wishing the Mongolia Society, and its animator Professor Hangin, a happy celebration of the 25th anniversary and also, for the benefit of all Mongolists, many years of further successful activity.

THE MONGOLIA SOCIETY SPECIAL PAPERS

Issue Seven

Amur, A Brief History of Mongolia

Amur's Mongyol-un tobči teüke (Brief History of Mongolia) was the first in a projected five-volume, summary history of Mongolia running from the earliest times through the establishment of the People's Government. This ambitious project was timed to coincide with the 1934 celebrations marking the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the constitution of the Mongolian People's Republic.

Amur, Chairman of the Little Khural, was assigned the first three volumes which were to bring the story up to the 1911 Revolution. Of the three Amur volumes, only the first appeared, that extending through the reign of Chinggis.

The volume contains an introduction by Robert G. Service, the text itself, and numerous illustrations. 446 pp., \$30.00

Issue Twelve

John C. Street, On The 14th Century Punctuation
of Mongolian in the Yuan-Ch'ao Pi-Shih

"The text, which has come down to us under its Chinese title Yuan-ch'ao pi-shih ("A Secret History of the Mongols"), is possibly the oldest, and certainly the most important Mongolian document surviving from the so-called Middle Mongolian period (1200-1500 AD) ... This work has turned out to be a cornerstone of research into the structure, history, and pre-history of the Mongolian languages, for it accurately reflects the vocabulary and culture of the Mongolian steppes prior to the advent of Buddhism, and contains a nice mix of unselfconscious narrative prose, quoted discourse, and ancient poetry."

John C. Street

The chief purpose of Occasional Papers, Number 12, is to explain and exemplify the spacing contrasts used in Yuan-Ch'ao Pi-Shih (YCPS), particularly chapters one and two, demonstrating that they correspond to levels of punctuation.

Included in the discussion are the major editions of YCPS, characteristics of the Commercial Press edition, romanization, spacing in chapters three through twelve, etc. 103 pp., \$12.00

Orders should be sent to The Mongolia Society, 321 Goodbody Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 47405, U.S.A.

ON MEMBERSHIP AND CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

As repeatedly stated in this Newsletter and at our meetings, the PIAC has no paid-up membership and welcomes any bona-fide person who has a scholarly interest in Altaic studies and in the PIAC's activities. A proof of such an interest is attendance at our meetings and/or an occasional letter to the Secretariat. PERSONS WHO FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS DO NOT GIVE ANY SUCH SIGN OF INTEREST WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE MAILING LIST.

The Secretariat of the PIAC would also, once more, ask our genuine members to inform us of their change of addresses. Likewise, we would request every member not to ask us to send invitations to persons who may have only peripheral interest in our activities. There are colleagues who would send us a dozen or more names with the request that invitations be sent to them. In the past we have tried to satisfy such demands but experience has shown that most of those so invited never turn up at our meetings and, moreover, many of our circulars are returned to us marked "unknown". If any member feels that a colleague should be put on our mailing list, the proper procedure would be to ask the person in question to write to us personally.

The Proceedings of the 25th meeting, edited by GUNNAR JARRING and STAFFAN ROSEN were published under the title Altaistic studies. Papers presented at the 25th Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference at Uppsala June 7-11, 1982. The volume (ISBN 91-7402-147-8; ISSN 0348-1433) is No. 12 in the series Konferenser of the Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, published by Almqvist and Wiksell International, Stockholm 1984. The volume contains twenty articles - in English and German - and has 204 pages. It can be ordered from the Secretariat of the PIAC (101 Goodbody Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405) at the price of US \$12 post-paid.

The Newsletter of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference is published at irregular intervals. It is distributed free of charge to members of the PIAC and to others interested, but it is not for sale. The Editor requests and welcomes items of interest for publication. Those submitting material to be reproduced photostatically are urgently requested to provide a camera-ready copy suitable for reproduction ON THE SIZE OF PAPER used for this Newsletter. All correspondence should be addressed to Professor Denis Sinor, PIAC, Goodbody Hall 101, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405, U.S.A.