

Modern Russian-Chinese Humanitarian Projects: Evaluation and Prospects for Development

Alfiya Rafisovna Alikberova and Ramil Mirgasimovich Valeyev
Institute of International Relations, Kazan (Privolzhsky) Federal University,
History and Oriental Studies, Kremlevskaya St. 18, 420008 Kazan, Russia

Abstract: Within the frameworks of the study such large-scale joint cultural projects as: Days of the Chinese Culture in Russia and Days of Russia China, cultural projects within the frameworks of SCO, days of the Russian culture in China and days of the Chinese culture in Russia, the year of the Russian language in China and the year of the Chinese language in Russia, etc. are evaluated. Besides, the study provides the researcher's assessment of opening and operation of the Russian centers of the 'Russian World' Foundation on the territory of the people's Republic of China and the chain of the Confucius Institutes in the Russian Federation. The presented research features not only theoretical but the applied nature as well. On the basis of the numerous regulatory documents, the socio-political and economic situations in the world as well as already existing experience in implementation of the joint large-scale projects the Russian-Chinese cultural-educational events were analyzed in this study. There were also identified the material shortcomings and weak points; the practical recommendations as to elimination thereof were provided. Besides, the resulting positive aspects were presented; the further key points of development in this direction were specified.

Key words: Russian-Chinese relations, regional policy, humanitarian projects, legal and regulatory framework of the Russian-Chinese relations, cultural contacts, Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of culture

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the presented study was the comprehensive analysis of the stages, trends and main results of development of the cultural and educational relations between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in 1990-2000's.

The inter-governmental agreement concerning cultural cooperation d/d 18.12.1992 (Collection of the Russian-Chinese agreements, 1999), inter-governmental Plans of the cultural cooperation as well as the programs of cooperation between the Ministries of Culture of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China have become the principle contractual basis for development of the interstate cultural relations (Official web-site of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2014).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the 1990-2000's, there were formed the interstate, regional and standard industry level of the cultural cooperation between the two countries. The inter-state

level was closely connected with the main trends, issues of international relations and activation of the political and trade and economic relations between Russia and China.

Regional contacts between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China were developed at the level of administrative-territorial units of the two countries. In the middle of the 90's of the 20th century, over fifty districts and cities of Russia were involved in the co-operation with China at the regional level. The main events of inter-regional relations between Russia and China were developed along the extended Russian-Chinese border and took the form of the near-border interaction. The important result of bilateral relations at this level was appearance of the twin towns and districts within the frameworks of which the cultural and sport exchange took place.

The scientific novelty of the study consists in the following: for the first time there was performed the comprehensive analysis of the Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of culture and education starting from 1992 including the system and integrated analysis of the stages, trends and peculiar features of

cultural and educational relations between Russia and China; the integrated analysis of the development of the Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of culture and education was performed on the basis of the international regulatory framework; the main humanitarian projects of Russia and China were covered; the scope and dynamics of the Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of culture and education were evaluated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although, upon the breakup of the USSR for a number of reasons, primarily of political nature, the cultural cooperation between Russia and China was weakened significantly, already by the second middle of the 1990's, it started to get gradually enhanced. During this years, the implementation of the specific projects of bilateral cooperation started these were the annual festivals of cultures and close corporation in the sphere of sports, tourism, theatre and musical arts.

The Days of Chinese Culture in Russia (1997) and the Days of Russia in China (1998): the first large-scale joint project was the Days of the Chinese culture in Russia in the 1997-1998's.

On June 27, 1997 in Beijing there was signed the plan of cultural cooperation between the governments of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of Russia for the years 1997-1998 that provided for exchanges in the sphere of science and education, cinematography, mass media, book publishing industry, sports, youth, tourist exchanges. The organizational-technical issues and conditions of holding the Days of Culture will be additionally agreed by the parties (Anonymous, 1997).

Under the patronage of the ministries of culture of both countries in October 1997, there was organized a number of events in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladimir, Suzdal, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk and Khabarovsk and in April 1998 in Beijing and Shanghai. These large-scale projects were unprecedented for the 40 years of existence of diplomatic relations between Russia and China and became a bright event in the cultural life of both countries (Anonymous, 2010).

In the leading Chinese Newspaper 'The People's Daily' after performance of the events the paragraph was published 'The Chinese-Russian relations are smoothly and consistently developed' in which the following estimate was provided: "Successful conduct of the Days of Culture gave a new impulse to development of the entire set of the Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of culture".

The 50th anniversary from the date of formation of the people's Republic of China and from the date of

establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR (RF) and the People's Republic of China (1999). In 1999, the governments of both countries celebrated the 50th anniversary from the date of formation of the people's Republic of China and from the date of establishment of diplomatic relations. The joint gala-concert 'Bravo, China!' took place at the National Kremlin Palace. The record of this concert was translated on the Central TV of the people's Republic of China.

The cultural projects within the frameworks of SCO (since 2002): the international organizations play the key role in activation of efforts of the world community aimed at pursuing the coordinated cultural policy and increase in its efficiency. According to the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO, Anonymous, 2006) adopted in June 2002, one of the priority trends of development of relationships between the participating countries is cooperation in the humanitarian sphere.

The President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao in his public speaking "Strengthening of neighborliness, mutual trust and confidence, promoting to the peaceful development" at the VII meeting of the council of the heads of states SCO-members reported that the Chinese government decided to 'create the grant programs meant for the study in China of citizens of the SCO-states, there was suggested the idea of organization of the youth camps in the participating states for the active promotion to the study of languages on a mutual basis. The Chinese party expresses readiness to provide the other countries with teachers and text books in Chinese and hopes to get support of other participating countries in teaching and investigation of the Russian, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Tadjik and Uzbek languages in China" (Anonymous, 2004).

In April 2002, the delegation of the ministry of Culture of Russia headed by M.E. Shvydlyk took participation in the meeting of the ministers of culture of the SCO states. As the result of the meeting, the ministers of culture of the 6 countries Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan signed the "Joint statement of the ministers of culture of the SCO states" (Marcel, 2007) aimed at activating the multi and bilateral contacts in the sphere of culture. The joint statement was taken as the legal framework for further strengthening of cultural relations between Russia and other participating countries. In May 2002, in Moscow at the multilateral meeting of experts of the SCO-members there was, in particular, achieved the agreement concerning regular performance in the SCO-countries of the festivals of culture and other large-scale events representing the distinctive features of the relevant nations.

Besides, on October 14, 2004, the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin and the President of the people's Republic of China Hu Jintao signed in Beijing the 'The plan of actions aimed at implementation of the provision of the agreement concerning neighborliness, mutual trust and confidence and cooperation' providing for 'development of cooperation in the field of culture within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization'.

The agreement concerning cooperation in sphere of culture signed at the summit held in Bishkek activated the interaction between the workers of culture and increased the number of cultural events. As the result of active cultural, the term 'Shanghai's spirit' appeared in the international political vocabulary.

The increasing role of humanitarian cooperation within the SCO format is confirmed by the high estimate by the heads of the SCO-states. Thus, in particular, at the 12th SCO-summit in Beijing Hu Jintao mentioned the events within the frameworks of the 'Year of neighborliness' and interest of the countries in the 'strengthening of humanitarian cooperation within the frameworks of organization and enhancement of non-official contacts and channels of exchanges between the participating countries'.

The Days of the Russian Culture in China (2003) and the Days of the Chinese Culture in Russia (2004). In May 2002, in Moscow the second meeting of the Sub-committee for cooperation in the sphere of education, culture, health care and sports was held. As the result of the meeting, the protocol was signed that provided for conduct of the Days of the Russian Culture in China in 2003 and the Days of the Chinese Culture in Russia in 2004.

On December 16, 2002, the meeting of the first deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation A.A. Golytva with the Minister of Culture of the people's Republic of China (Sun Jiacheng) and negotiations with the deputy Minister of Culture of the people's Republic of China Man Syaosy were held. The state of cooperation in the sphere of culture was discussed in details at the meeting. Both parties noted that due to the joint efforts the Russian-Chinese relations are being successfully developed. According to the Embassy of Russia in Beijing in 2002, about 65 Russian performance ensembles with the total amount of 1800 persons visited China, 4 large exhibitions were held in a few Chinese towns.

The program of exchanges signed by the Ministry of Culture of Russia and China for the years 2003-2005, sets the cultural relations and contacts of both countries for the nearest future including those in the multilateral format (Shanghai Cooperation Organization). The Program describes exchanges in nearly all spheres relating to

culture. The key event of this program were the Days of the Russian Culture in China in 2003 and the Days of the Chinese Culture in Russia in 2004.

The Russian delegation at the Days of Culture was headed by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation M.E. Shvydkoy. During his visit to China he held negotiations with the member of the State Council of the people's Republic of China Chen Zhili, the Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China Sun Jiacheng, the deputy Minister of Culture Man Syaosy.

The Days of the Russian culture in China became the most important cultural-political event within the Russian-Chinese cultural cooperation in 2003 during which about 40 bands from Russia toured over China. In Beijing and other largest cities of the People's Republic of China 7 large-scale art exhibitions took place the maximum public response was drawn by the exhibition of the graduates of the I. Repin St. Petersburg State Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture at which over 500 works of the Russian and Chinese artists were presented.

The 60th Anniversary of the Great Patriotic War Victory and the 60th Anniversary of Victory in the war against the Japanese invaders (2005): Special attention was paid to the preparation and performance in 2005 in Russia and China of the cultural events dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War Victory against fascism and the 60th Anniversary of Victory in the war against the Japanese invaders. Many topical issues of the Russian-Chinese cultural cooperation were considered, the trends of its development were discussed.

The Year of China in Russia (2006) and the Year of Russia in China (2007). In April 2005, the delegation of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation was forwarded to China for participation in the talks on the matters of preparation of cultural events within the frameworks of organization of the year of Russia in China in 2006. In the course of the talks the agreement was achieved that the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China will be the main organizers of cultural events dedicated to the Year of Russia in China in 2006 and the Russian-Chinese Sub-Committee for cooperation in the sphere of culture of the Russian-Chinese committee for cooperation in the sphere of education, culture, health care and sports will become the coordinating authority by preparation and performance of cultural events dedicated to the year of Russia in China in 2006.

On October 28-29, 2005 in Beijing in the course of the fifth meeting of the sub-committee for cooperation in the sphere of culture of the

Russian-Chinese Inter-Governmental Committee, there was signed the agreement between the Federal agency for Culture and Cinematography and the Ministry of Culture of the people's Republic of China concerning organization and performance months within the frameworks of the year of Russia in China of the Russian Culture Festival in which the main parameters of the festival were specified.

During the visit of the Russian delegation to China the negotiations with the Minister of Culture of China Sun Jiachzen, the deputy Minister of Culture Man Syaosy, the deputy minister of the state administration in the matters of radio broadcasting, cinematography and television were held. As the result of the meeting the agreement was achieved but the Chinese party would defray the expenses of lodging the participants of the Russian Culture Festival in China the Russian party would defray the expenses related to international transfer of the participants of the Russian Culture Festival and payment of remuneration.

The President of Russia V.V. Putin officially signed the decree no. 277 rp d/d June 24, 2005 concerning holding in 2006, the year of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China as well as concerning holding in 2007, the year of the People's Republic of China in the Russian Federation. The importance of the event is emphasized by the fact of the personal participation in the ceremony of opening of the 'Year of Russia in China' of the President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao and the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin.

Therefore, the beginning of the 21st century was dedicated to strengthening of the Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of culture and preparation of the most ambitious joint project in the humanitarian sphere-organization of the Year of the Russian Federation in China and the year of China in Russia in the 2006- 2007's.

Continuous exchanges of visits of the heads of the states, the mechanism of regular meetings between the parliaments and political parties, signing of a number of treaties and agreements within the frameworks of holding the 'national years' significantly promoted to deepening and transition to the whole new level of political and humanitarian cooperation between our countries.

It shall be noted that based on the results of the poll published by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center in the eyes of Russians (in 2007) China was the friendliest country and the sympathy of the citizens of China to Russia was increased 20% (Lukin, 2008) due to the huge popularity of cultural events performed within the frameworks of the 'national years'.

In general as was mentioned by the extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador of the Russian Federation in China S.S. at the press conference on October 29, 2007 over 500 large-scale events were carried out during the years 2006-2007. In the diplomat's opinion, the most important result was 'filling of the gaps in knowledge about each other and rupture of established stereotypes', 'the image of the country-partner gained more positive and specifics and became more trustworthy' (Grishin and Zaynullin, 2010).

The Chinese press wrote that 'mutual holding of the national years has deepened the mutual understanding and friendship between the nations, strengthened the political mutual trust and confidence between the countries, promoted to pragmatic cooperation in the political, scientific-engineering and humanitarian areas'.

The Year of the Russian Language in China (2009) and the Year of the Chinese Language in Russia (2010). In 2008, there was achieved the agreement as to conversion to the regular basis of the most significant and successful events in the economic, scientific-engineering, cultural and sports areas. The parties placed special emphasis on the youth contacts. Holding of the year of the Russian language in China was scheduled for 2009 and that of the Chinese Language in Russia for 2010. The Russian Organizing Committee for holding of the year of the Russian language in China headed by the deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation A.D. Zhukov was formed (Decree 'Concerning holding of the year of the Russian language in the People's Republic of China and the Year of the Chinese language in the Russian Federation' no. 788-rp d/d December 18, 2008).

Within the frameworks of the year of the Russian language in China over 260 large-scale events were carried out in 14 provinces, 4 autonomous districts, 4 cities of central subordination and 26 other towns of the people's Republic of China. These events features various nature and provided for, in particular, themed and research and practice conferences, workshops, students' and pupils' festivals. competitions and Olympiads in the Russian language and culture, exhibition of Russian textbooks and guidance for Chinese Russianists and citizens willing to study Russian, calling of the forum of presidents of universities of both countries, additional allocation in honor of the Year of the Russian language in China of the state grants for students studying the Russian and Chinese languages and cultures, organization of correspondence of thousands of pupils from 200 educational institutions of Russia and China through internet establishing direct cooperation with the

higher and secondary schools of Russia and China. These events promoted to significant upsurge in interest of Chinese pupils in the study of the Russian language and enabled it to general Chinese public to get acquainted with Russia and its culture.

The year 2010 became the year of the Chinese language in Russia. It shall be noted that around it should be noted that the Chinese is being currently taught at 100 Russian universities, at 40 of them it is studied as the first Foreign language and the number of students and post-graduates mastering, it exceeded 10 thousand persons. Besides, 18 Confucius Institutes, two Confucius classes and the Confucius radio-class operate in a number of large cities and regions of Russia.

Already in May 2010 the first large-scale events the photo show 'China as viewed by me' and the contest 'Russia as viewed by Chinese journalists' started. In Moscow the guest performance of the Chinese artistic ensemble took place the repertoire of which included Pekinese opera, Chinese dances, songs and Chinese circus. Within the framework of the year 87 ambitious events were held including the research and practice, tutorial conferences, workshops, contests in the knowledge of the Chinese, contests of compositions in the history and culture of China among the Russian students and pupils, competitions in wushu (martial arts), Taijiquan, competitions among the Russian teachers of the Chinese. During holding of the Year of the Chinese language in Russia many of its citizens got acquainted with the unique culture of the neighboring country, its attractiveness. They showed increased interest in the Eastern state with the ancient civilization, enthusiasm in studying its language. Holding of the Years of national languages is important for promotion of the Russian and Chinese cultures, deepening of the mutual understanding and traditional friendship between the nations of the two countries, comprehensive cooperation between both countries.

The Russian Centre and Confucius Institute. One of the most successful international projects in the humanitarian sphere is opening of the Russian centers on the territory of China and Confucius Institutes in Russia that promote their own culture and language abroad. By the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation no. 796 d/d June 21, 2007, there was established the 'Russian World' foundation the organization implementing the project meant for creation of the network of the Russian centers the activity of which is aimed at preservation and popularization of the Russian language and Russian literature.

In 2009, the foundation opened the first three Russian Centers in China: on the basis of the Dalian University of Foreign languages (Port-Arthur branch), at the Czilinsky university (Changchun) and at the Peking University

(Bedia, Beijing), in 2010 another two centers at the Shanghai and Macao universities. Besides, it is planned to open the cabinets of the Russian World (by analogy with the Confucius class) (Anonymous, 2010). However, this is not a new project of this kind after signing of the agreement concerning neighborliness, mutual trust and confidence and cooperation on the 16th of June, 2001 in China the three centers for the study of the Russian language were opened: on the basis of the Peking University of Foreign Languages (the first in China and the 20th in the world), the Shanghai University of Foreign Languages and the Heilongjiang University (Harbin).

The 'Russian World' Foundation provides grants for support and study of the Russian language all across the world. In the 2008-2009's, they were granted to a number of Chinese projects: "The program of the remote study of the Russian language as the Foreign one in China", the project 'Shanghai art shows', publishing of the Russian-Chinese Bilingual Journal. Moreover to the opening of the year of the Russian language the foundation prepared a present for the Chinese Russianists the 'Russian World' portal in the Chinese.

The Chinese party also made its contribution to the development of the Russian-Chinese relations in the sphere of education and culture. Within the frameworks of holding the national Years the Confucius Institutes were opened on the basis of a number of Russian universities (Confucius institute hereinafter IC).

The program of the IC creation started at the end of the year 2004 and gained its development in 2005 when it was forwarded to the countries of the Central Asia, former USSR and Eastern Europe. The first pilot project was implemented in Tashkent in June 2004 and finally the first IC was opened in Seoul (South Korea). As of the May 2013 such Institutes were already functioning at 17 higher educational institutions in different regions of Russia.

The Charter of the Confucius Institutes states that "the mission of the Confucius Institute is making the world acquainted with the Chinese language, development of friendly relations between China and other countries, promoting to development of the international cultural diversity, making the own contribution to creation of the harmonious world" (Confucius Institute is committed to meet the needs of countries in the world (regions) people learn the Chinese language, promote world countries (regions) people's understanding of Chinese language and culture to strengthen cooperation between China and the world of education and cultural exchanges, the development of friendly relations between China and foreign countries to promote World multicultural development, building a harmonious world) (Anonymous, 2008).

Initially it was planned to open only three IC on the territory of Russia; however, the applications of another two Russian universities are being considered concerning opening of IC in addition to the already existing 15 ICs and 2 Confucius classes. Along with that at the 8th meeting of the Russian-Chinese Sub-Committee for cooperation in the sphere of education (March 2008, People's Republic of China, Beijing) there was recorded the joint decision to be committed to the principle of equality by opening of the Confucius Institutes in the Russian Federation and the Centers of the Russian language in China which is not being currently fulfilled (5 centers in China and 17 IC in Russia). Besides, a few aspects requiring more detailed analysis were outlined in the operation of the centers.

Summary: Generally such projects are aimed at increasing the interest of citizens in the culture and history of our countries and extending the scope of the study of the Russian and Chinese languages and creation of such centers promotes to development of the cultural and educational relations between the People's Republic of China and Russian Federation not only at the governmental level but at the level of individual contacts as well.

CONCLUSION

Thus, starting from the second half of the 1990's, the implementation of the specific large-scale projects of the Russian-Chinese cooperation began: the annual festival of cultures, the years of the national languages, close cooperation in the sphere of sports, tourism, theatre and musical arts. All the events implemented within the frameworks of intergovernmental agreements had significant political and socio-cultural effect; the attitude of the nations to each other has changed; the flow of reliable information about the countries increased which exercised a favorable effect on the image of the states. Besides, the political and economic significance of these projects shall be emphasized. Upon holding of the year of Russia in China and the year of China in Russia the tourist

flow as well as the number of the Russians studying in China and the Chinese people getting education in Russian increased significantly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

- Anonymous, 1997. Web-site of official documents of the Russian Federation. www.lawmix.ru/abrolaw/10084.
- Anonymous, 2004. Official web-site of the President of Russia. <http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2004/10/78193.shtml>.
- Anonymous, 2006. The Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (St. Petersburg, June 7, 2002). Code of the Russian Federation, 43: Art. 4417.
- Anonymous, 2008. Confucius Institute. Charter of the IC. www.hanban.edu.cn/confuciousinstitutes/node_7537.htm.
- Anonymous, 2010. Official web-site of the Chinese Information Internet center. http://russian.china.org.cn/china/node_7101749.htm. The People's Daily.
- Grishin, Y.Y. and D.G. Zaynullin, 2010. Chinese Phenomenon. Kazan, pp: 112.
- Lukin, A., 2008. Director of the Center of the Study of the Eastern Europe and SCO by the MGIMO to the Daily Newspaper 'The People's Daily', 28.03.2008.
- Marcel, D.H., 2007. The Speech of the President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao at the Meeting of the Members of the Council of the SCO-States in Bishkek (The People's Daily, 2007. No. 3. Diplomatic Bulletin. http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/dip_vest.nsf/99b2ddc4f717c733c32567370042ee43/97fe4ab2384c5849c3256b7b004ec686!OpenDocument.