

## **Moderator's introduction to the workshop**

This year, Russia held its presidential election and Vladimir Putin was re-elected. The World Cup was held in Russia, presenting the world 64 football feasts. Russia and the US confronted each other and mutually expelled 60 diplomats. The tension between Russia and the West continued to escalate, with Russia and the US engaging in a power game in the Middle East. The ruble exchange rate faced tremendous tests. Yet another dispute emerged between Russia and Ukraine.

Be it at home or abroad, what difficulties, opportunities and challenges will Russia face in the future? What are the connections between these challenges and Russian history and culture? In response to the above questions, the Institute of Area Studies, Peking University (PKUIAS), held the 13th Broadyard Workshop on October 12, 2018, to discuss the “Historical and Cultural Genes of Contemporary Russia.”

More than ten famous domestic experts and scholars from the fields of history, politics, economics, philosophy and literature delivered keynote speeches on the following topics:

- “The Eurasian Partnership: Russia’s Response to the Current Situation”
- “Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union”
- “Russian Studies from the Perspective of China”
- “Contemporary Inheritance of Russian Strategic Culture and Diplomatic Style”
- “Two Implications of Contemporary Russian ‘Nationalist’ Discourse”

- “Two Gifts of Russia: Communication and Plasticity”
- “A Comparative Study of the Relations between the Local and Central Government of China and the former Soviet Union (Russia)”
- “Path Dependence of the Russian Government and Business Relations: An Analysis Based on Power-Property Rights”
- “From Cultural History to Culturology: Hot Issues and Problems of the Academic Transformation of Contemporary Russia”
- “Russian Cultural Genes Implied in Ancient Russian Academic Literature”

The goal of the workshop is to observe Russia from a multifaceted and comprehensive perspective, to analyze the image and status of Russia in the contemporary world, and to understand the development of and changes in contemporary Russia.

History is reflected in our present moment. Every step of Russia’s development and change today is closely related to its history and culture. Russia has the world’s largest territory and most valuable natural resource reserves. It is also a country that experienced the trauma of totalitarianism and changed its social conditions. The spirit and values of the Eastern Orthodox Church have become part of Russia’s national character, a way of thinking, and an attitude toward life that have been embraced by the nation. The persistence of Eurasianism in Russia is essentially a geographical conception of Russian identity, expressing a vague desire of Russian intellectuals to restore

Russia's former imperial identity. The image of the double-headed eagle not only reflects its vast territory and expansive desire, but also represents Russia's extreme contradictions and the elusiveness of its character and behaviors. One cannot help but thinking of Fyodor Tyutchev's words:

*You cannot grasp Russia with your mind  
Or judge her by any common measure,  
Russia is one of a special kind –  
You can only believe in her.*

Only by understanding Russia's history and culture, its character and mentality, and its thoughts and logic, can we truly understand contemporary Russia.

With profound academic skills and insights, the experts and scholars at this workshop have penetrated the genes of Russian history and culture. They will present us a multifaceted Russia, sharing their wisdom and interacting with the young people present. We have every reason to believe that this will promote the comprehensive development of China's Russian studies scholarship in the near future.

Ning Qi

December 8, 2018

**The 13th Broadyard Workshop**  
**Historical and Cultural Genes of Contemporary Russia**  
**October 19, 2018**

The 13th Broadyard Workshop (博雅工作坊) was hosted by Ning Qi, executive deputy director of the Institute of Area Studies, Peking University (PKUIAS) and dean of the School of Foreign Languages of PKU. Prof. Qian Chengdan, director of PKUIAS, welcomed the participants in his speech. He said that area studies is a very urgent and necessary research field in China, and its importance has become increasingly prominent. However, its pace of research is unable to keep up with China's rising international status and its economic, social and cultural development. PKU established the institute in April, hoping to integrate the research forces scattered in various departments and disciplines to improve the quality and quantity of research in area studies. At present, the institute undertakes four tasks: talent training, academic research, think tank analysis and international communication. In terms of academic research, Broadyard Workshops are held on a regular basis, inviting experts and scholars from various disciplines at home and abroad to discuss current issues. The theme of this workshop is the "Historical and Cultural Genes of Contemporary Russia." Prof. Qian said that this is a very compelling topic, and experts and scholars were expected to have in-depth discussions to acquire a deeper understanding of Russia's past, present and future.

In Prof. Ning Qi's speech, she said that the Broadyard Workshop on Russia is held in the hope of observing Russia

from different perspectives and on various levels. The goal is to not only analyze Russia's image in contemporary international politics, but also interpret the development and changes in contemporary Russia, relating this to its historical trajectory through the lens of its history and culture. All of the participants are experts in Russian studies. Prof. Ning Qi expressed hopes that the experts could with their wisdom plant the seeds for the growth of the field of Russian studies in China.

Prof. Li Yongquan at the University of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, gave the first presentation, on the topic "The Eurasian Partnership: Russia's Response to the Current Situation."

Li Yongquan said that the world is now in a period of great change, and globalization is facing unprecedented obstacles. The US was originally the initiator and the biggest beneficiary of globalization, but has now become the face of deglobalization. How should we look at this turnaround? Trump recently provoked trade friction with China, imposed sanctions on Russia, and threatened trade wars with many countries around the world, under the slogan "America first." This practice tore away the camouflage of democracy and freedom that the US has advocated globally for years — removing a disguise that almost the whole world, especially young people, believed in. The US does not oppose globalization, but demands that the rules of globalization be suitable for itself. The US believes that the conditions under the current rules of globalization can no longer satisfy its appetite, leading to the situation today. All countries, especially emerging economies, have put forward plans to respond, and that is the situation from which several policies and

organizations to be introduced today come from. These include the Belt and Road initiative (BRI), the Eurasian Economic Union, the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the Eurasian Economic Partnership.

The BRI is a cooperation proposal based on new ideas, new principles and new methods that China put forward to the international community in its new period of reform and opening-up. The BRI advocates pragmatic cooperation and new international relations based on the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration. The Eurasian Economic Union is a concrete result of the Russia-led process for integrating the territory of the former Soviet Union, as part of the geopolitical conflict between the US and Russia. The Greater Eurasian Partnership is an important aspect of the eastward diplomatic policy put forward by Russia at the end of 2015. The Greater Eurasian Partnership aims to resist an offensive by the US and the West and realize the dream of making the country strong. The Eurasian Economic Partnership is the point of cooperation for the development of the BRI and the Greater Eurasian Partnership. The “Belt and Road” travels through the Eurasian Economic Union. China must properly manage its relationship with the Eurasian Economic Union to facilitate the construction of the BRI.

The Eurasian Economic Union is an important achievement of regional integration of the Commonwealth of Independent States, with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine at the core. In *The Grand Chessboard*, Zbigniew Brzezinski pointed out that without Ukraine, any integration would be achieved only in Asia rather than Europe. For this reason, the competition between

Russia and the US in the region is very fierce and will continue. In terms of combining the BRI with the Eurasian Economic Union, some people think that the “Belt and Road” is an initiative, while the Eurasian Economic Union is an entity, so speaking of a fusion is logically flawed. In addition, the Eurasian Economic Union is a multinational economy, and Russia has signed important agreements with China without consulting with other member countries. This shows Russia’s absolute dominance in the process of regional integration. In May this year, China and Russia signed an economic and trade cooperation agreement on “One Belt and One Union” cooperation. Although the agreement has no actual binding force, it is of great significance. First, it bases China’s economic and trade cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union on the rules of the World Trade Organization. Second, it is an institutional arrangement, which establishes a good paradigm for China’s cooperation with Eurasian Economic Union countries as well as the promotion of the construction of the Belt and Road. Third, it took into account the overall situation of China and the Eurasian Economic Union, and also took into consideration specific features of the cooperation between the two sides.

The Greater Eurasian Partnership was proposed by Vladimir Putin at the end of 2015 to reduce pressure on Russia in the face of Western sanctions and pressure. Russia’s main think tank points out that the goal of the Greater Eurasian Partnership is to make Russia a powerful country in Eurasia, especially in Northern Eurasia, and ultimately become a world power. This was not an official government statement.

The Greater Eurasian Partnership has four purposes: to

revive the country, to promote domestic development, to develop the Russian Far East, and to respond to the BRI. The Greater Eurasian Partnership covers fields including politics, economics, trade, security, transportation infrastructure, energy and agriculture. It is both virtual and real, both contemporary and future-oriented.

In June 2016, after the proposal of the Greater Eurasian Partnership, China and Russia signed a joint statement proposing to jointly build a comprehensive Eurasian partnership. The statement refers to the Greater Eurasian Partnership proposed by Russia, involving both political and economic aspects. Matching Russia's support for the BRI, China supports the Greater Eurasian Partnership, and suggests that both sides should focus on strengthening pragmatic cooperation in the field of economic and trade cooperation. The suggestion received recognition from decision makers on both sides. In a number of China-Russia cooperation documents signed since then, the expression of cooperation in this field has changed from a "Eurasian comprehensive partnership" to a "Eurasian Economic Partnership." Therefore, the Eurasian Economic Partnership is the vehicle of cooperation for the BRI and the Greater Eurasian Partnership.

According to Russia's thinking, the Eurasian Economic Partnership needs to absorb members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Eurasian Economic Union and even the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, but to what extent this can really happen is in question. In fact, there are problems concerning the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Partnership. First, the Greater Eurasian Partnership is dominated



by Russia and could fall apart. Once there is a major turn in Russia-US-EU relations, the Greater Eurasian Partnership will change accordingly, and the direction and speed of development of Eurasian economic partnership will become uncertain. Second, as one of the initiators of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the Eurasian Economic Union, Russia has great limitations in its economic and trade structure as well as its foreign economic relations, thus the development of the Eurasian Economic Partnership will not be smooth. Third, the Eurasian Economic Commission currently has limited power. It is the decision-making body of the Eurasian Economic Union and undertakes the responsibilities of external negotiations, but only for trade rather than investment negotiations. Therefore, the Eurasian Economic Union will face great problems if it cooperates with China or any other regions. Fourth, practical cooperation within the framework of the SCO still lacks a sound mechanism or even consensus, so there are still some problems with the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Partnership.

Feng Yujun, a professor at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University, gave a speech entitled “Contemporary Inheritance of Russian Strategic Culture and Diplomatic Style.”

Feng Yujun said that Russia is a very familiar topic to China and its influence on China is very important and historic to a large extent. However, influenced by many factors, China’s understanding of Russia is superficial. China still has misunderstandings, misinterpretations or an inadequate understanding of Russia’s history, culture and diplomatic strategy. For example, many people regard Russians as a

“pugnacious nation,” but in fact it is not historically good at warfare. Russia paid a heavy price from the first to the second Patriotic War, and was defeated by an alliance of Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire in the Crimean War. In 1904, the entire Baltic fleet was destroyed by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War. However, Russia is a very strategic nation, especially in the field of foreign affairs, where it can be said that no other country can compare with Russia.

In Feng’s view, the following points need to be understood about Russia’s strategic thinking. First, continuous aggression and expansion have enlarged Russian territory, resulting in a new sense of insecurity which leads to further aggression and expansion, and this cycle has remained unchanged. Second, Russia is caught between two cultures and cannot be simply categorized as either Eastern or Western. This leads to two key points in its strategic thinking. One is to avoid fighting on two fronts, and the other is to try to profit from both sides. Third, as an empire, Russia historically used very different aggression and expansion methods compared to traditional colonial empires such as Britain and France. Britain and France established indirect rule, while Russia carried out continental-wide aggression and expansion, seizing other countries’ territory by piecemeal encroachment or wholesale annexation. This was genuine colonization. Wherever the Russian Cossack army went, colonization followed. Fourth, Russians are very strategic. There is an old Russian saying: if you tear off a Russian’s face, you will see a Tatar. This reflects the fact that the Russians have absorbed a considerable amount of positive and negative elements from both Eastern and Western cultures.

Feng Yujun pointed out that Marx and Engels had a very good understanding of Russia's foreign affairs. Their *Revelations of the Diplomatic History of the 18th Century* and *Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom* help future generations to understand Russia's foreign policy behavior and psychological state. Engels once said that foreign policy was undoubtedly one of the areas of expertise of the Tsarist government. Russian diplomats made Russia's borders expand outward like tidal waves, and their role exceeded that of Russian troops. Over the past one thousand years, Russia has formed a profound diplomatic tradition. The tradition is strong enough to overcome the capriciousness of the Tsar when needed, and to pursue established goals with steel-like firmness, being neither intoxicated by victory, nor discouraged by failure, turning the Russian Empire into a powerful force.

Feng Yujun summarized several features of Russia's diplomacy. Firstly, Russia has a clear understanding of the essence of diplomacy: diplomacy is to safeguard and expand national interests. Diplomacy is not only seeking mutual benefits at the negotiating table and stern remarks from the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, but also schemes, conflict and competition behind the scenes. It is precisely out of this understanding that Putin once said that he does not want diplomats to send him telegrams every day analyzing the international situation. Instead, their job is to build connections and pull strings in order to expand Russia's interests and improve Russia's image.

Second, Russia's diplomacy has along strategic view. It not only considers gains and losses at the moment, but also pays

attention to overall planning and strategy. For example, in the 40 years after the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian strategy in all of East Asia was to avenge the war. During that period, Russia resorted to many diplomatic devices, and finally achieved its goal by taking advantage of the victory of World War II to reclaim lost territory. Russia has won control of great interests in East Asia at minimum costs. It diverted the spearhead of Japanese aggression to China, the South Pacific and even the US.

Third, the fundamental core of Russia's diplomacy is pragmatism. As long as Russia can safeguard and enlarge national interests, it will quickly turn the ship of state's bow and change its previous diplomatic position. At the beginning of the 19th century, Russia faced the choice of forming a strategic alliance with Britain or France. Although Russia had led the War of the Third and the Fourth Coalition before, after the defeat of the Battle of Friedland in 1807, it quickly adjusted its diplomatic policy and signed the Treaties of Tilsit with France, thus realizing a fundamental shift from opposing France to allying with France. Before World War II, the Soviet Union made a difficult choice between German fascism and Britain, France and the US. Considering the changes of the overall situation, the Soviet Union eventually signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact with Germany, which not only carved up Poland, but also safeguarded Russia's own security and achieved the greatest benefits for Russia. However, later changes forced Russia to make strategic adjustments once again.

Fourth, the significant core of Russian diplomacy is Messianism, the idea of salvation. Russia often obtains moral

force in some region or even the world and wins support by raising the banner of religion or ideology. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, and it was under the banner of protecting Slavic brothers and Eastern Orthodox Christians that Russians played power games with Britain and France in the Balkans, and finally fired the first shot in Sarajevo. Facing extreme difficulties after the October Revolution, Russians established the Communist International under the banner of communism and promoted revolution around the world, which quickly reversed its disadvantageous position and therefore maintained the security of the Soviet regime. With the severe circumstances in Russia today, Putin appreciates Trump, Le Pen, Orban and others on the right wing, who represent another wave of support for Russia. Russian diplomacy has always interfered in the domestic affairs of other countries and safeguarded its own interests by cultivating pro-Russian forces in other countries. Right or wrong, this kind of ideological appeal has enormous influence.

Fifth, Russian diplomacy is flexible. After ending the Crimean War in 1856, Russians turned eastward and took advantage of the difficulties faced by China. They signed the Aihui Treaty and the Beijing Treaty with China and acquired more than 1 million square kilometers of land. After the Ukraine crisis in 2014, Russia sent troops to Syria under extremely difficult circumstances and achieved unexpected results within three years. In addition, Russians have never trusted other countries. Alexander III of Russia once said, "Russia has only two friends, namely the Russian army and fleet." This innate sense of insecurity and mistrust of others also means that Russia

has never been a reliable ally.

Sixth, Russian diplomats are good at using conflicts come out ahead. They transfer conflicts outside their borders and forcing other countries to get involved in order to maintain Russia's own security and obtain leverage and advantages. Russia is especially good at gaining advantages by mediating. Engels once said, "Russian diplomacy involves always trying to avoid war. Russians see the war as the last resort, and only with an absolute advantage to win will they wage war. Russian diplomats are good at taking advantage of other powers' conflicts, instigating these great powers to quarrel with each other and reaping the benefits of their hostile relations." China has been exploited and invaded by Western powers since modern times, a situation was taken advantage of by Russia. Russia participated in China's foreign affairs as a mediator of conflicts and gained significant benefits.

Seventh, Russia's power lies in its weakness, not in its strength. Russian diplomacy cannot sustain success, but can turn the tables and win a victory by surprise. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire were all disintegrating, but soon Russians restored and even expanded their global strategic vision with the platform of the Communist International in the name of communism.

Eighth, Russia's highly integrated diplomatic decision-making mechanism results in the high efficiency of its diplomatic actions. Russian diplomacy has never been a single bureau's work, but a comprehensive blend of diplomacy, intelligence, military force, propaganda and interpersonal relations. In addition, Russia is good at diplomacy and has the

resources to recruit people. Russia even uses foreigners to make historic contributions to Russia and the Soviet Union. Although the new Russia has been independent for just 28 years, its inherited diplomatic tradition over the last thousand years -- especially from Tsarist Russia -- continuously has a profound impact on Russia's diplomatic thinking and behavior. China needs to deeply understand this when dealing with Russia.

Prof. Xu Fenglin from PKU's Department of Philosophy gave a presentation on the theme "Two Implications of Contemporary Russian 'Nationalist' Discourse." He covered five topics: the historical role of Russian nationalism, three forms of contemporary nationalism, the discussion of nationalism by Russian academia, and the difference between Russian ethnic nationalism and state nationalism.

Historically, Russian nationalism is a social phenomenon and complex issue deeply involved in Russian history, culture, politics, diplomacy and other fields, and has become a focus of attention on many occasions in Russian history. The outstanding manifestations are as follows. First, the Messianism during the Grand Duchy of Moscow period in the 16th century, including the idea that Moscow was the "Third Rome" — giving a historical mission to the Russian nation from the perspective of an Eastern Orthodox theological view of history. The second manifestation is concerned with Slavism in the 19th century, and the issue of the superiority of Slavic culture and the values of all mankind, as well as the relationship between Russia and the West. The third manifestation took place at the beginning of the 20th century, and involved discussions of nationalism that appeared in some newspapers and publications at that time. The

focus of those discussions was on the relationship between national emotion, patriotic emotion, and universal moral obligations and norms. The debate focused on whether national emotion prevailed over universal moral norms or obeyed such norms. The fourth manifestation was a discussion in the field of Russian philosophy and politics in the first half of the 20th century.

The contemporary wave of nationalism has once again become an important phenomenon in the Russian state and society, which can be roughly summed up in three manifestations. First, nationalism as a political movement has become the dominant idea or ideology of some Russian political parties. At present, many political parties in Russia, whether left-wing, right-wing or ultra-nationalist, have this tendency. Second, nationalism as a social ideological trend has become the focus of public opinion and other aspects of attention. Third, nationalism has become a theoretical issue in academic discussion. These three manifestations are not isolated but closely interconnected. The political movement needs a certain basis in public opinion and academic theory, while national political appeal also motivates social concern and academic discussion. Nationalism has attracted the attention of contemporary Russia for the following reasons. First, Russia in the post-Soviet period aspires to a national ideology that is conducive to national unity and political cohesiveness. Second, Russia, as a multi-ethnic country, faces complex problems of ethnic relations and state relations both at home and in the surrounding Commonwealth of Independent States. These problems are related to nationalism. Third, Russia needs to



establish its own image and position amid contemporary globalization and multicultural exchanges. This also involves issues of nationalism.

Regarding the nationalism represented by these three cases and in academic discussions, Xu believes that a correct understanding of the following two meanings contained in this word would facilitate Chinese scholars to observe and study the phenomenon of Russian nationalism.

The first meaning can be understood as ethnic nationalism, which is related to the etymology of the word *nation*. The meaning of *nation* has changed over the course of modern Western politics and history. Initially it referred to a race and ethnic group, so the original meaning of *nationalism* refers to the nationalism in the sense of race and ethnicity, that is, nationalism in the usual sense. Later, Western countries established nation-states through modernization, and the word *nation* was used, which then had the meaning of the state. In the Western modern context, nationalism has a new meaning, that is, state (as opposed to ethnic) nationalism, or simply nationalism. Nationalism in the traditional ethnic sense is rarely used in Western languages, but is replaced by *ethnicism* or simply *ethnic nationalism*. It has a counterpart word in Russian literature, but that word's meaning is not nationalism or ethnicism, but polytheism. Therefore, *nationalism* does not have the same meaning in Russian and West European languages. This means that because there is no distinction between ethnic nationalism and state nationalism in the Russian context, *nationalism* often still refers to the meaning of ethnic nationalism in the traditional sense in public discourse. Therefore, in many cases, *nationalism*

is regarded as a negative and narrow discourse, and is put on a par with the concepts of chauvinism, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and so on, which results in emotionally loaded discussions by some scholars and the general public on issues related to Russian ethnicity, race, and nationalism.

The second meaning is state nationalism with more modern implications. In this sense, *nationalism* is related to the nation-state and state-building. This nationalism is related to modernity or modernization, and nationalism has thus become a matter of national ideology in the modernization of Russia. Russian scholars have different views on the issue of nationalism in this sense. One view holds that state nationalism should be the ideological basis for the consolidation and reconstruction of national unity in contemporary Russia. Scholars with this view use the concept of challenge and response in the survival and development of civilizations from Arnold Toynbee, and believe that externally, state nationalism seems to be a challenge to other countries because of its negative meaning, and easily causes controversy. Domestically, however, state nationalism is not a challenge but a response, because in post-Soviet Russia, despite the preservation of territorial integrity in form, the integrity of society is disappearing and a trend toward social disintegration is rising. The idea of state nationalism is therefore a response to social disintegration, which can provide a solid basis for social unity. This offers what advocates see as the only opportunity to rebuild the social cohesion of Russia. In this sense, state nationalism is not a meaningless slogan, but a well-planned long-term project with two key aspects. The first is establishing state nationalism

in the culture. The second is establishing state nationalism in the political sphere, with the goal of representing the interests of the people in a manner acceptable to them.

Scholars who hold the opposite view believe that it is useless and harmful to resort to the idea of state nationalism under modern conditions. They believe if nationalism becomes a matter of doctrine, it will not promote unity, but rather promote the conditions for the further disintegration of Russia. These scholars believe that a permanent empire based on nationalist ideology does not exist. To them, nationalism is only a religious concept or an idea based on a mission of spreading civilization, in an attempt to give real political meaning to nationalist buzzwords. The result of such an ideology is not the establishment of a cohesive Russian nation-state, but the division of the existing Russia. The modern relevance of state nationalism should lie in the idea of democratization of the political process. The healthy way to deal with the ethnic issues of Russia should be the realization of the legal order within the framework of the existing Russian Constitution. This includes the democratization of the political process and the standardization of federal relations, as well as the realization of civil liberties proclaimed in the Constitution, and the guarantee of the conditions necessary for the people to fulfill their obligations. But in fact, as a kind of guiding principle, the realization of modern Russian state nationalism has led to the strengthening of the existing power system, as it moves toward depoliticization and anti-democratization. National mobilization becomes a tool for saying “yes” to the established regime system. When dealing with the privileged political system,

nationalists do not act as protectors of national democratic ideas, but as catalysts for the transition of national systems to autocratic systems.

We can see that the above two different views are based on different political positions. From the perspective of different leading ideas of different political parties, there is conservative state nationalism, liberal state nationalism, and socialist state nationalism. In short, the discussion of nationalism in contemporary Russia is very broad, and the terms should be distinguished when doing relevant research.

Prof. Zhang Guoyou from the Guanghua School of Management at PKU gave a presentation entitled “Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union,” which detailed the development of Russia’s regional strategy from an economic perspective.

Zhang Guoyou stated that Russia has an empire’s tradition and genes, and it needs group partners. This need evolves from its history as the Russian Empire before 1917, the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and now the Eurasian Economic Union.

Although Russia was initially in a bad economic situation, it has developed rapidly since 2010 and performed relatively well among the BRICs. Russia was sanctioned by the US due to the Ukraine crisis, but has shown signs of recovery over the past two years. Russia’s overall economic development is good.

Putin wants regional integration on the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and keeps Russia’s foothold [on regional control] through the structure of the group. Economically, Russia first established a customs union, expecting member states to offer preferential tariff treatment.

Then Russia developed the Eurasian Economic Community to expand the economic interests of member states. In 2011, after the new customs union treaty was signed, a series of measures on tariff preferences began to be implemented. The concept of a unified economic space emerged on this basis. In 2014, Putin proposed developing closer economic relations by establishing the Eurasian Economic Union. This was realized in early 2015. Some analysts say that Putin's "five-step" strategy has reached the fourth step, and that the future is establishing an EU-like regional integration organization.

So far the Eurasian Economic Union covers an area with a population of 180 million and a GDP of \$4.5 trillion. Putin once suggested that the Eurasian Economic Union was not only important to Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, but to all countries related to the former Soviet Union. If conditions permit, the Eurasian Economic Union will become the Eurasian Union, unifying the markets, tariffs, central bank and defense and monetary policy of the members. Putin places great importance on the Eurasian Economic Union, believing that it is a powerful supranational alliance that can become a pole in the multi-polar world. The Eurasian Economic Union has five member states. Russia is the most powerful, followed by Kazakhstan and Belarus. Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are the weakest. Members cannot complement each other's weakness well, and most of the trade exchanges among members are in the fields of mineral products, machinery manufacturing, food and agricultural products, metals and metal products. The Eurasian Economic Union maintains good relations with the world's major economies such as the US, China, and the European

Union.

Since the establishment of Eurasian Economic Union, some voices in the US and EU have assessed that Russia's aim is to bring the Soviet Union back. Others assert that the Eurasian Economic Union deviates from its original idea. Initially, these countries only wanted to strengthen economic exchanges for mutual benefit. Russia, however, now wants to develop it politically and diplomatically toward economic integration, and to become an organization like EU with greater power to control discourse. This faces some problems. The first is the significant difficulties with the participation of Ukraine. Second, Russia must contribute more resources and funds to other member states who hope to benefit from the union, otherwise the lack of support may undermine the Eurasian Economic Union's ability to mobilize members. Third, the leaders of Belarus and Kazakhstan are relatively old, and whether their successors will support Eurasian Economic Union is uncertain once leadership changes. Additionally, external forces including the US, EU and some Asian countries are highly cautious about the integration strategy of Eurasian Economic Union.

In terms of cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union, China currently works on this through the BRI. But like building transnational railways, if the gauge standards of different countries cannot be unified, the railway will not be connected. The Russian ambassador to China has made a very detailed study on the question of how to link the two sides, and put forward several suggestions, including strengthening coordination in financial investment, transportation and economic cooperation zones and in strategic fields particularly.

Specifically, he suggests founding a China-Russia investment fund, strengthening cooperation on oil and gas, strengthening regional cooperation between the two countries, and so on.

Zhang Guoyou said that the connection between the BRI and the Eurasian Economic Union is a manifestation of the long-term competition and cooperation among China, the US and Russia. It is precisely because of the different cultural genes of these three countries and their different dominant ideologies, rules, customs and traditions that the competition and cooperation among them will continue in the future. As things stand, China should cooperate with Russia over the next ten to twenty years in order to help the two countries continue their development.

Zhang Shuhua, director of the Institute of Information Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, gave the morning's final presentation, entitled "Russian Studies from the Perspective of China."

Zhang Shuhua believes that the study of Russia is very important to China. Internationally, Russia is a superpower that inherits the legacy of the USSR, and plays an important role in today's world, daring to challenge US hegemony. Its diplomatic strength and experience cannot be underestimated. China and Russia are each others' most important strategic partners. The experience of Russia, including the experience of the Soviet Union in the international communist movement, scientific socialism, and socialist construction, is very important to China. In addition, the positive and negative experiences and lessons of Russia over the past 30 years are also worth learning from. They are of great significance for China as it takes the road of reform

and opening-up. These experiences and lessons will also build China's confidence in the socialist path, theories, system and culture.

Zhang Shuhua asserted that the Western judgment of the historical end of Russia over the past 30 years is wrong. Western countries have adopted disparaging and hostile attitudes toward Russia over the years, triggering a strong backlash from the Russia under Putin's leadership and breaking the hope for a Western model of "unifying the world" in the fields of politics, economy and culture. It also provoked self-reflection in the Western political and academic community. There are many reasons why Western countries despise and are hostile toward Russia, including their prejudice against the Communist Party, socialism and Marxism, their adherence to the a Cold War mentality, and the influence of cultural genes such as the deep-seated tendency to be Western-centric.

Zhang Shuhua stated that the rise and fall of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, represented by the Soviet Communist Party, is a mirror for China's development. Important reasons for the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party include the fierce ideological struggle [with the West], the regime's total negation of history, its pursuit of historical nihilism, and the Party's absence of leadership in the army. Eventually the Soviet Communist Party dismantled itself and the Soviet Union fell apart. In the early 1990s, under the backdrop of the disintegration of the country and the change of its regime and system, a radical change driven by the Western world and marked by privatization, liberalization and Westernization



quickly swept across Russia. This is considered to be the largest ownership revolution in the history of the world.

Over the past number of years, the privatization movement has fundamentally changed the social landscape of Russia, disintegrated the economic base of the original system, changed the social class structure, given birth to the formation of private capital, especially large holdings of capital, and led to the participation of oligarchs and consortia in politics. Russian privatization has the following characteristics. It was more politically motivated than economically motivated. Its legal preparation was grossly inadequate. It pursued speed and scale, namely a large-scale, offensive and lightning privatization. Unlike other countries, Russia privatized the good or even best parts of its State-owned assets. Transactions based on power and money [as opposed to the law or fairness] were prominent across society, with serious social consequences.

What direction will Russia take in the future? Zhang Shuhua considered this issue in a discussion about where the world is heading. At present, the development of the world is facing a lot of uncertainty. Most people believe that the US led by Trump has brought trouble and problems to the world. But some American scholars believe that compared with Trump, the decline in global power and the long-term failure of democracy in the US, as well as the rapid rise of China and the revival of Russia, are the important factors threatening the global order. Since last year, the Western political community has increasingly questioned the democratic system in the US. Some public opinion polls assert that the youth in the West have lost faith in Western democracy. Political theorist Francis Fukuyama

has pointed out that it is the fall of the US political system itself that poses a threat to the status of the US in the world. Zhang Shuhua said that the political decline of the US and the West is the origin of chaos in today's world.

In an afternoon presentation, Prof. Zhang Baichun from the School of Philosophy of Beijing Normal University expounded on the subject of the "Two Gifts of Russia: Communication and Plasticity." He explained the concrete meaning of communication and plasticity, the background of the two concepts, as well as some ideas about Chinese and Russian culture.

Zhang Baichun said from the introduction of the Orthodox Church in 988 AD to the 19th century, there were few achievements in Russian culture. However, during the hundred years after the 19th century, Russian cultural achievements accumulated quickly, driven by its two gifts of communication and plasticity. In the view of Russian scholars, these two concepts comprise the unique philosophical system of Russia.

Communication is an ordinary exchange between people, but the communication of Russians is different. They pursue interactions and communication concerning the spirit and mind, which in turn helps shape people. Throughout the 19th century, the level and quality of communication among Russian intellectuals reached soaring heights. For example, Pushkin published poems in various salons in Moscow, inspired by his communication with other poets.

Plasticity is the ability of Russians to shape their own culture. Dostoevsky once said at a conference commemorating Pushkin, "Pushkin imitated Byron when he was young. He

became inspired in the process of imitation rather than mechanically copying, and this shaped Pushkin.”The emergence of Russian national culture is a process of being shaped. When Russia entered the 19th century, Western culture had already matured. Though in the face of a mature culture, the Russians did not mechanically imitate it. Instead, they shaped themselves by using this mature culture. This is the success of Russian culture. It is important for China to understand this.

In terms of Sino-Russian cultural exchange, Zhang Baichun believes that although the Soviet Union eventually collapsed, Russian culture was never forgotten. Russia is at the border of Europe and Asia, and its culture is a bridge between the East and the West, particularly its philosophy. The development of Russian philosophy is based on a response to Western philosophy. Understanding this is of great value to philosophy studies in China.

Prof. Guan Haiting from the School of Government of PKU gave a presentation on the topic “A Comparative Study of the Relations between the Local and Central Government of China and the former Soviet Union (Russia).”

Guan stated that the Soviet Union was a highly centralized state, and its long-term ideological rigidity led to the formation of a privileged strata, which accumulated bureaucratic, enterprise, and local privileges. This rigid system of privilege hindered reform, and was the most important reason for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Today’s reform of central-local relations in Russia takes place against a background of this high rigidity, social unrest and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. During Yeltsin’s

period, he encouraged the independence of some large autonomous republics. For example, he told the Tatars in Kazan to take as much sovereignty as they could. But in fact the merits of what Yeltsin had done for central-local relations outweigh the short-comings. He mainly accomplished three things, all of which were fairly successful. First, the vast majority of republics signed the Treaty of the Russian Federation, which is the basis for the existence of Russia today. Second, he led the adoption of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the importance of which has become increasingly apparent with the development of the country. Third, the central-local relations were formalized. In 1995, the budget law was adopted, stipulating that the central budget accounts for 54%, while the local budget accounts for 46%.

Putin launched a series of measures during his term, such as the establishment of federal districts, the revision of the principles for forming the parliament's upper house, and the revision of the law on political parties. Among all these measures taken by Putin, the biggest change was to alter the method of selecting local leaders from direct elections, with candidates nominated by the president and elected by local councils. By Medvedev's time, the system of direct election of local leaders had been restored, but the nomination was determined by the president in consultation with political parties. The biggest change since 2012 has been that local leaders can be elected by general election or by the Parliament, but the president still retains the power to nominate. In general, the reform of Russia's central-local relations has been positive, and a new central-local balance has been formed, with greater

local authority. This has effectively promoted economic development.

Guan pointed out several points of interest in a comparison between China and Russia of central-local relations.

The first is a comparison of the general principles of reform. Russia offers a number of lessons. The central-local relationship involves the basic political system of a country, and in Russia, the initial speed of the reform was fast and volatile. In fact, a gradual reform would have been the right choice.

The second is a comparison of the central-local political relations in China and Russia. At present, Russia is basically on the right track after making adjustments. In terms of the election of local leaders, the nomination should be approved by the president and agreed to by the parliament, and both sides share this power.

The third is the comparison between China and Russia of the central-local power relationship itself. The Russian government has three levels: federal central, federal subject and federal local. These levels are relatively standardized across the country. Each level has budgetary power and the power to legislate taxes. Tax revenue is divided into three levels: federal tax, federal subject tax and local tax. China has a five-level administrative system, a four-level financial system, a one-level tax system, and the power to legislate tax is entirely held by the central government.

The fourth is the comparison of the central-local transfer payment system between China and Russia. On this point, this system is very similar between China and Russia. However, Russia is doing a relatively better job in narrowing the gap.

The fifth is the comparison of the administrative power and expenditure scope between the Chinese and Russian governments. In Russia, there are 16 kinds of supportive federal taxes for backward areas, 7 kinds of federal subject taxes and 5 kinds of local taxes. Restrictions on backward areas that receive transfer payments are very clear, imposing strict control standards which protect people's livelihood.

China's transfer payment system is divided half-and-half on average. However, in developed areas, local fiscal revenue accounts for 70% of the whole expenditure, and state transfer payment accounts for 30%. In backward areas, local fiscal revenue accounts for 40% of the whole expenditure, and state transfer payments account for 60%. China and Russia are roughly the same regarding the proportion of expenditure, but Russia is more standardized in its use of funds.

Guan pointed out that there are several aspects of the reform of Russia's central-local relations that can be used for reference by China.

The first is to change from being policy-oriented to law-oriented and policy-supplemented. At present, China's central-local relations mainly rely on policies, and the relevant basic laws are not sound. Russia's central-local relations are mainly based on the provisions in its Constitution.

In addition, there are fewer affairs co-managed by the central and the local governments in Russia, while this is more common in China.

In jointly managed affairs, Russia favors "parallel" or hierarchical management, and has less "series" management (intervention at different stages). In China, many affairs are

managed in “parallel” and “series.” China should gradually change from “series” to “parallel” management.

The second is to build a sound system by which the central government serves the local government, taking the equalized transfer payment system as the basis of the relationship. Russia has standardized its use of transfer funds. They are divided into three types: backward areas aid funds, infrastructure construction funds, and funds helping a region to balance its budget. At present, the results of this system are good. In China, the central government’s service to the local government is not very standardized. In this regard, China can learn from the relevant experience of Russia.

The third is to establish a unified system of expenditures and responsibility based on the principle of the unity of power and responsibility. In today’s China, the rigid expenditures by central and local governments account for 15% and 85% respectively, and local administrations have too much power. But many of the local powers are not matched by financial support, leading to the problem of local debt. To solve this problem, we can learn from the experience of Russia to establish an institutional framework with responsibility as the core, properly adjust the ratio of central and local tax divisions, and improve the medium-term budget system.

Prof. Yang Cheng from the School of International Relations and Public Affairs at Shanghai International Studies University gave a speech entitled “Path Dependence of the Russian Government and Business Relations: An Analysis Based on Power-Property Rights.”

Yang suggested that many people consider Russia as

unknowable, but if we make the period of investigation long enough and have enough historical details, the “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma,” using Churchill’s phrase, can be unfolded.

Regarding property rights, Russia had no property rights throughout its history. As early as the time of the KievanRus’, people mainly made profits by trading with the Byzantium empire. The Grand Duke established a company which invited a group of aristocrats and businessmen to be the stakeholders, who received dividends collectively. At that time, the profit model worked by earning profit through negotiations, so they were not linked with the land. The concept of property rights did not exist naturally. After the decline of KievanRus’ and the rise of the northeast territories, a relatively comprehensive system of power succession was gradually established, developing into succession by the eldest son. Unlike the KievanRus’ reliance on trade, the northeast territories were confronted with an increasingly narrow opportunity for trade, so they had to rely on the land. The combination of land and the succession system resulted in a consciousness of territory, but such awareness was still on the level of collective public goods. During the period of Ivan III, when Mongolia invaded Russia, the aristocrats of the Grand Duchy of Moscow began to collect taxes for the Mongolian aristocrats, and the taxation system gradually improved. With the course of history, power has overridden property rights, which means that when one owns power, then he or she owns property rights.

The relationship between power and property was the same in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union



collapsed, despite the possibility of new changes in the chaotic 1990s, Russia returned to its traditional path after Putin took power. Although Europe and the US later recognized the status of Russia's market economy, this recognition was granted out of political concern. It did not mean that the Russian economic system conformed to the norms of a market economy. In contrast, China is far more conscious of its market economy than Russia. The different ways of thinking about a market economy are one of the reasons why the economic cooperation between China and Russia is not satisfactory. This also leads to power interfering and exerting influence when Russia conducts economic cooperation.

Yang believes that Putin was correct to set things right but if Russia cannot carry forward some of the basic values of the market economy, encourage the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Russia, and create a better business environment, relying solely on the mobilization model of the past will not bring the stable and sustained economic growth environment that entrepreneurs want. To some extent, the relationship of politics and business in Russia means that it may not be able to deal effectively with the current economic challenges, so the outlook for Russia is somewhat pessimistic.

Prof. Zhang Jianhua with the School of History of Beijing Normal University, gave a presentation titled "From Cultural History to Culturology: Hot Issues and Problems of the Academic Transformation of Contemporary Russia."

According to Zhang Jianhua, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced an academic transformation from a focus on Marxist historiography and philosophy to new

disciplines. Some new phenomena, including a historical crisis, philosophical impotence and literary depravity appeared in Russia after the Marxist guiding ideology was abandoned. In the process of transformation, there are two most obvious highlights in the scope of historiography.

The first is cultural history. The history departments in various universities have set up teaching and research departments for Russian cultural history in succession, and research outcomes, academic works, pamphlets and textbooks related to cultural history have endlessly emerged.

Representative of these is *The Social History of Imperial Russia* published by the academician Boris Nikolaevich Mironov, with the subtitle “The Formation of Personality, Democratic Family, Civil Society and a State of Law.” The use of these words to describe tsarist Russia does not seem to be coordinated. The book uses the research methods of cultural history and sociology to reorganize Russian history from the 18th to the 20th century, showing that Russia is a civil society with humanity and personality, and a country ruled by law.

The second is culturology. Various universities and research institutes have established culturology research institutions, and begun to publish cultural journals. In 1995, for the first time, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation established the criteria for obtaining a bachelor degree in culturology after five years of study in university and set up the degree of Кандидатнаук (vice-doctorate), followed by an establishment of a doctor’s degree in culturology in 2000.

Culturology is a relatively new major in Russia. Its research scope includes Russian civilization and world

civilization, gender and marriage, nationality and state, Russian-Western relations, mass culture, elite culture, ethnic conflict, nationalism, patriotism, socialism and universalism. The research scope of cultural history includes manners, history, customs, aristocratic life, duels, capital, marriage and provincial and urban life.

Zhang Jianhua said that whether from a philosophy, Russian studies, or historical point of view, the tool Russian scholars use in studying Russian history and culture is the lens of the history of civilization. In this way, scholars investigate issues including Russian culture and Russia's relations with the East and the West. One reason for this is that since Marxism was abandoned as an ideology, Russian academics need to find a new one. A second reason is that Russia has always been troubled by the question of whether it is an Eastern or a Western country, and whether to take the Eastern, Western or Slavic road. But the most important reason is to reposition a transformed Russia. In addition, Russia's diplomatic repositioning is also an important background reason for the current emphasis on studying Russian history and culture from the vantage point of the history of civilization.

At present, the Russian academic focus on cultural history and culturology is not a passing trend, and these two perspectives of research have been absorbed by many people. For example, Ali Kozayev, an academician of history at the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, replaced the traditional concept of Russia's idyllic traditional civilization with the idea of Russia as a technological civilization.

In addition, "Bakhtin fever" appeared after the collapse of

the Soviet Union, and Mikhail Bakhtin, as a linguist, is regarded as the representative of the new culture. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a turn to linguistic culturology in Western historical academia. At that time, the Soviet Union and the West were politically and militarily in the midst of the Cold War, with no academic exchange, but after that, the turn to a focus on language and culture became a common trend. The combination of these factors led to the two disciplines of cultural history and culturology having a huge presence and influence in Russia. It is worth noting that Russian functional linguistics is not as popular as cultural linguistics or communicative linguistics.

Prof. Zhao Guilian from PKU's School of Foreign Languages gave the last speech, which was titled "Russian Cultural Genes Implied in Ancient Russian Academic Literature."

Zhao asserted that, beside Marx and Engels, Bismarck also had had a particularly incisive understanding of Russia. When he was a diplomat in Petersburg, he went hunting once, accompanied by a Russian coachman. They could not find their way back in a blizzard. Bismarck, who had just arrived in Russia, did not speak Russian, and the coachman did not know a word of German. As Bismarck grew more helpless, the coachman kept saying, "Never mind. We'll get out of here." Eventually they escaped safely. Bismarck didn't remember anything but the Russian phrase for "never mind." Rozanov wrote an article in which he studied the cultural characteristics of Russia. He said, "Such a German should not leave any mark in the life of a Russian coachman, but the Russian coachman definitely impressed Bismarck. Bismarck later said never fight

the Russians, and never initiate a war with the Russians, because you could not defeat them.

Rozanov believed that the most significant characteristic of Russian culture is femininity. He used the metaphor of a family, where Russia is the bride and the foreign cultural element is the masculine husband. The more the wife submits, the more control she holds over her husband. It is not the wife's willfulness or arbitrariness that gives her control, but the complete dedication that she has no regrets about. Rozanov said that Russia has given up itself indefinitely, accepted foreign culture, and finally digested it into the vast sea of Russian culture.

Rozanov summed up the differences between Russian culture and Western culture. Russia was established based on the harmony between people, and people trust each other. In contrast, the West established a contract system and parliamentary system, which started from the conflict and struggle between different strata and classes. Russians use moral concepts when dealing with the outside world, while the West uses rationality and sense. Russians are more concerned with love, compassion, and sympathy in communication, while Westerners follow things like precepts, norms and regulations.

Zhao believes that Russia made remarkable achievements in the fields of culture, science, art and so on after the 19th century, which stem from its cultural genes since ancient times, and these genes are reflected in many classical literature texts. For example, in 1037, the supreme leader of the Russian religion, Hilarion Of Kiev, delivered a speech entitled the "Sermon on Law and Grace." Here, law is the spirit of the Old Testament Catholicism, and love is the spirit of the New

Testament. *Sermon on Law and Grace* reflects the opposition between Catholicism and the Orthodox Church, which is the opposition between Western and Eastern Christianity. Russia's supreme religious leader was the first to deliver such a speech, which also provided a basis for Russia's confrontation with the West. In addition, half of the text eulogizes the supreme secular leader, and this in one way reflects that the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome was not born in the late 15th century and the 16th century — it had been clearly presented in the *Sermon on Law and Grace*.

Another example is the admonition left by Vladimir Monomakh, the Grand Prince of Kiev in the 13th century. Monomakh spent his whole life in the military, but the text he left behind before he died told the children that it takes three things to defeat the enemy: repentance, tears, and kindness. Repentance and tears are given to ourselves, in order to keep a soft heart and to maintain the ability to cry. And kindness is given to others. These have become the elements that affect the background of Russian culture.

A third example is a story of an alcoholic in the 17th century. The drunkard in this story drinks excessively every day, but he praises God with every glass of wine, and also prays at length every night. Then an angel takes him to the gate of heaven, and he knocks on the door six times, with Peter, Paul, David, Solomon, Nikolai, and John coming out each time. They said that alcoholics cannot go to heaven, but the drunkard replied, "Each of you is flawed. Who is qualified to judge me? You're just judging me as an alcoholic on the surface side and saying that I can't go to heaven. But do you know that I praise

God with every drink and confess my sins every night? You know nothing about that but you do not let me go to heaven.” The story is short, but it reflects a simple value of the Russians — not judging others without knowing the facts.

At the end of the workshop, Prof. Ning Qi concluded by saying that through the day of presentations and discussions by the experts, we can better observe and understand Russia from diverse perspectives.

PKUIAS holds these workshops with the hope that top scholars in relevant fields can produce intelligent “collisions” which will enlighten young scholars. She delivered her hopes that the workshop will contribute to the field of Russian studies.