

Preface

This volume aims to contribute to the studies of regional questions in Slavic Eurasian areas in both theoretical and empirical aspects, following the previous books in the series of Slavic Eurasian Studies (SES), especially volume seven, edited by MATSUZATO Kimitaka, *Emerging Meso-Areas in the Former Socialist Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised?*, Sapporo, 2005.

The Slavic Research Center (SRC) at Hokkaido University has been conducting major research projects on the regional dynamism of the areas since the mid 1990s, and has published not only analytical works, but also primary materials such as the *Regiony Rossii* series.

The SES includes the products of the latest research projects, the 21st century COE program, launched in 2003, focusing continuously on the regions of the areas, through introducing new ideas for approaching the changing aspects of the regions under the influences of the neighboring worlds; *Meso-Mega Areas*. An initial essay was presented, formulating the idea, by IEDA Osamu, 'Regional Identities and Meso-mega Area Dynamics in Slavic Eurasia: Focused on Eastern Europe', in volume seven of the series.

In direct connection to the essay, the first part of the book begins with the following chapters: Alexei D. VOSKRESSENSKI's paper suggests a place for the concept of meso-mega areas within a wider and comprehensive perspective in the theoretical cognition of the regions in the area studies. Nigel SWAIN expands the applicability of the idea to the local/rural transformations in Romania and Bulgaria. IEDA Osamu tries to apply the meso-mega area concept in a historical setting, specifically in the context of the modern history of Hungary. The paper by Ildar GABDRAFIKOV and Henry E. HALE analyses the patronal presidential system in the Russian method of democratisation. These make up the introductory part of the book, 'Range and Possibility of Meso-mega Area Approaches'.

The second part, 'Regional Integration in Central-Eastern Europe and Romania' addresses ethno-national questions in the 'Romanian regions' between nations, states and citizenship in the area. Constantin IORDACHI

examines the Romanians, the central nation in this issue, and their views, Zoltán KÁNTOR its western neighbors, the Hungarians, and Steven D. ROPER its eastern neighbors, the Moldovans.

The third part, 'The Caucasus, Inner Asia and the Outside World', covers a long period of time, and examines the complicated and sometimes contradictory effects of interaction between regions. Paul WERTH sheds lights on the transborder character of imperial Russia's religious policy, examining relations among the government, the Armenian Church, and Armenians abroad. MAEDA Hirotake's analysis goes back to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, measuring the effect of the forced migrations of Caucasians on regional reorganisation and integration of Safavid Iran. Victor A. SHNIRELMAN describes how social memory of the Chechens and Ingush has resisted to, and at the same time, been preconditioned by the Soviet and post-Soviet environment. ARAI Yukiyasu shows how policies integrate and divide languages, using the example of Mongolic peoples (Buryats, Kalmyks and Mongols) who adopted different alphabets. Finally, SUDA Masaru argues that post-Soviet Uzbekistan uses such seemingly Western or universal concepts as 'civil society' and 'democracy' in localised meanings, convenient for authoritarian leaders.

The majority of the papers were originally prepared for the international symposium held at SRC on 8–10 December 2004 under the same title as that of this book, and the others were collected because of their common research interests, though they were given at other conferences: Nigel SWAIN at the ICCEES's (International Council for Central and East European Studies) world congress in Berlin in 2005, and SUDA Masaru and ARAI Yukiyasu at the international workshop by Young Scholars in SRC in December 2004.

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The editors