

Foreword

The collection of papers compiled in this volume was presented at a symposium held by the Slavic Research Centre (SRC) of Hokkaido University, in Sapporo, Japan, on 14–16 December 2005, under the title ‘Regions in Central and Eastern Europe: Past and Present’. This symposium was mainly sponsored by a grant from the Japan Foundation (Japan-Europe Support Programme for Conferences and Symposia),¹ and the 21st Century COE Programme ‘Making a discipline of Slavic Eurasian Studies: Meso-areas and Globalization’, as well as cosponsored by the EU Institute of Japan (EUIJ).

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Geography*, ‘region’ is ‘any tract of the earth’s surface with either natural or man-made characteristics which mark it off as being different from the areas around it’ (Mayhew 2004: 419). By this definition, the territorial state is also a region. However, the concept of region is especially useful for us to examine various areas which are a part of a state’s territory as well as a bunch of neighbouring states. A set of local administrative units neighbouring across state borders can be regarded as a region such as the Euroregions. By looking at the world through ‘the prism of region’², viewers become relatively free from the constraints of state boundaries and gain a more flexible perspective of the world.

¹ This symposium was the third part of a conference series, named ‘Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)–Japan Forum for the 21st Century’ aiming to promote academic exchange between CEE and Japan, especially in the Social Sciences by sponsorship from the Japan Foundation. On the history of this conference series, see Hayashi (2004: v).

² See Matsuzato (2000).

Europe is the region which has long been in the process of dynamic integration. We may divide it into several sub-regions although how to divide it is a matter of argument. The Authors in this volume discuss the regions of Central and Eastern Europe. There is no consensus about how to demarcate 'Central and Eastern Europe' and whether it is a region as a whole, or not. However, here we define it as the area lying approximately between Germany and Russia and extending from the Baltic Sea area to the Balkans. This area includes almost the whole of 'Eastern Europe', the area which comprises the formerly socialist countries located west of the Soviet Union during the Cold War period, but it is not the same. This volume contains the chapters discussing northern Europe including the Nordic countries, the areas of the former Soviet Union (the Baltic countries and Kaliningrad) and Greece. This geographical setting is convenient when we discuss the area located between Germany and Russia, putting both its past and present into perspective. The Cold War divided the Baltic Sea region and the Balkan region into the West, East and neutral, but the countries of each region share common history and now most of them, excluding some of the former Yugoslav countries, are member states of the European Union.

When regionalists claim a peculiarity of their region, they characterise it by a primordial narrative. For them, needless to say, it is a matter of their identification with 'their soil'. However, the geographical identification of people alters along with the changes of circumstances. Furthermore, we may suppose that ideas of the regions are 'imagined' or 'created' with various intentions. In Europe, especially in Central and Eastern Europe in the post-communist era, various ideas of small- and large-scale regions above and below the state level compete with each other to realise varied expectations.

Pursuing the project for creating a new region is very political and strategic conduct. The first part of this volume, 'Regions in the Strategy for War and Peace', deals with the strategic character of the region-making. Chapter 1 of this part by Tadayuki Hayashi presents narratives given by T.G. Masaryk during World War I, showing that his concept of 'the zone of small nations', which was almost the same area as Central and Eastern Europe of this volume, was made strategically step by step according to the changes of the circumstances surrounding his struggle for the independence of Czechoslovakia. Chapter 2 by Pertti Joenniemi indicates the outline of the development of the regional

cooperation projects in northern Europe comprising the Nordic countries and Baltic countries in the 1990s, and shows that the dual enlargements of the EU and NATO as well as the ‘war on terrorism’ made the conditions unfavourable to the regional cooperation in northern Europe.

The second part, ‘Regions and States between the West and East’, is composed of four chapters, dealing with various space consciousness of being between the West and East in the past and present of Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter 3 by Eiki Berg, ‘Where East Meets the West? Baltic States in Search of New Identity’, focuses on the regional identities of the Baltic states, people and ethnic minorities in the multiple contexts of culture, economics and politics and describes how their identities vary in the post-communist era. Sonoko Shima, in Chapter 4, ‘Dimensions and Geopolitical Diversity of “the Baltic”: Then and Now’, traces how the notion of ‘the Baltic’ was formed and changed in the process of history, particularly in the context of international politics. Chapter 5, ‘Kaliningrad: Changing Perceptions’, by Alexander Sergunin presents the case of the regional identity of Kaliningrad, which had been a part of Central Europe before World War II but now is a territorial part of Russia. Jiří Vykoukal, in his Chapter 6, ‘Territorial Contexts of the Polish Reflection of Russia’, deals with the Polish perception of ‘Rus’ and ‘Russia’ in their space consciousness of ‘Europe’, the ‘East’ and the ‘Orient’, comparing Polish-Russian relations with Polish-German ones. In Chapter 7, ‘Is There Such a Thing as Central (Eastern) European Literature? An Attempt to Reconsider “Central European” Consciousness on the Basis of Contemporary Literature’, Mitsuyoshi Numano examines the Central (Eastern) European literature, focusing on its space consciousness of being between the West and Russia.

The third part, ‘Regional Concepts and Locus of Nation’ deals with national spaces in Central and East European history. Needless to say, the nation-state is an essential element of the European international relations, even though Europe is in the dynamic integration process as well as ‘Europe of the regions’ being advocated as a model for the future. Here, four papers trace the historical process of the nation building, considering regional and national space consciousness, in Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter 8, ‘The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a Political Space: Its Unity and Complexity’, by Satoshi Koyama examines how the territorial complex with a great diversity was integrated into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*) in the early modern era. Tatsuya

Nakazawa, in his Chapter 9, ‘Slovak Nation as a Corporate Body: The Process of the Conceptual Transformation of a “Nation without History” into a Constitutional Subject during the Revolutions of 1848/49’, describes the conceptual transformation of the Slovaks into a modern nation through the investigations of Ludovít Štúr’s political thought in 1848/49. Chapter 10, ‘The “Change in the Spirit of the Times” and the Decline of the Old World: A Czech Perspective’, by Daniel Vojtěch analyzes the radical change of time- and spatial consciousness in Central Europe of the years around 1910, through examining modern Czech literature. Chapter 11, ‘Historical Time and National Space in Modern Greece’ by Antonis Liakos describes how the spatial consciousness of the modern Greek nation was built tracing the Greek historiography and claims that ‘national histories are conceptualised in the context of competing narratives and cultural exchanges’.

Part 4, ‘Regional Identities in Central and Eastern Europe’, deals with the various problems surrounding the identities of the large- and small-scale regions in Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter 12, ‘Historical Consciousness and Civil Ethics: Debating the “Painful Past” and Reviving “Central Europe” among Dissident Circles in the 1990s’, by Taku Shinohara analyses the discourses of Central European, especially Czech, dissidents of the 1980s on the discontinuity of history, focusing on the problems of the deportation of the German population from the territories of Czechoslovakia, after World War II. Jacek Purchla, in his Chapter 13, ‘Małopolska or Galicia: Cracow’s Dilemmas in Central Europe’, focuses on Cracow, one of the regional metropolitan cities of Central Europe and describes how its function has changed according to the change of the region centring on it. In Chapter 14, ‘Imagining Their Lands as Ours: Place Name Changes on Ex-German Territories in Poland after World War II’, Jun Yoshioka examines the Polonisation process of ex-German territories in post-war Poland. Keiko Mitani, in her Chapter 15, ‘*Balkan* as a Sign: Usage of the word *Balkan* in Language and Discourse of the ex-Yugoslav People’, analyses the feature of the word *Balkan* in ex-Yugoslav countries by linguistic methods and concludes that language and verbal performance change along with the changes in the real world. In the last, but not least, Chapter, ‘Politics and Society in the Modern Era in the Balkans: Global and Regional Context’, Dzemal Sokolovic describes the modern and contemporary history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in multiply considering relations with the Balkans, Europe and the US.

I apologize to the authors who sent their revised version of papers just after the conference for the delay in publication of this volume, which is mainly due to my failure to organise efficiently the editorial works. Here I have to express my heartfelt gratitude to the research fellows of the SRC, especially Shinji Fujimori and Hiroshi Fukuda, for their devoted assistance in organising the symposium and editing this volume. I would also like to thank Mitsue Hosono and Daisuke Yokokawa, the editorial assistants of the COE Staff Room of the SRC, for their excellent editing work.

Editor
Tadayuki Hayashi

References

Hayashi, Tadayuki (2004), 'Foreword', in Tadayuki Hayashi (ed.), *Democracy and Market Economics in Central and Eastern Europe* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre).

Matsuzato, Kimitaka (2000) (ed.), *Regions: A Prism to View the Slavic-Eurasian World. Towards a Discipline of 'Regionology'* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre).

Mayhew, Suzan (2004), *Oxford Dictionary of Geography*, 3rd edn. (New York: Oxford University Press).