

Foreword

This booklet is a collection of the achievements of the international conference “Comparative Aspects of Culture and Religion: India, Russia, and China,” which was held in Bangalore on 15th and 16th of September, 2011. The conference was organized by the Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University (Japan) and the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society (India). This activity is a part of the research project “The Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces of Culture,” which is itself a part of the New Academic Knowledge Project on “Comparative Research on Major Regional Powers in Eurasia” financed by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

The Eurasian regional powers — Russia, China, and India — have social and spiritual cultures that cannot be explained solely by Western nation-state theory and democratic measures. Through the cooperation of Eurasian cultural researchers, this project will examine the ways in which these countries’ past identities, which are rooted in the idea of the spheres of civilization they led, have had an impact on their current state in the cultural environments of the modern world, as well as the major characteristics of the Eurasian world as a cultural sphere.

The main purpose of this conference is to study various problems concerning modern or contemporary cultural identity in three Eurasian countries. Special attention is paid to problems such as the role of religion in society, art and national identity, cultural perception or interaction among these countries, identity issues in popular culture, “Asian” aspects of universal problems (gender issues, the problem of intellectual property, etc.), and so forth.

For this purpose, sixteen specialists from different fields gathered together from five different parts of the world (India, England, Germany, USA, and Japan) and enjoyed a most stimulating and fruitful exchange of views on the history and present state of Eurasian culture. The articles contained in this booklet are a drastically revised version of the papers presented at the conference, and they reflect the results of the discussions.

We sincerely hope that this booklet will find intuitive and enthusiastic readers in various parts of the world and contribute to increasingly productive conversations on Eurasian culture.

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