

歐華叢書

Eastwards

Western Views on
East Asian Culture

Frank Kraushaar (Ed.)

euro-sinica



PETER LANG

Eastwards is a collection of essays each of whom focuses on a special aspect or on an episode within the cross-cultural narrative that imposes on our minds the terms “West” and “East”. The volume assembles seventeen essays by eighteen authors divided into three chapters. Being the outcome of the first international conference for East Asian studies that was held in the Baltic states in 2008 at the University of Latvia in Riga, the volume contains not only contributions by scholars from Vilnius, Tallinn and Riga but also rather rare topics like critiques of translation from Japanese and Classical Chinese into Latvian. The book contains also an essay on the life and personality of an almost neglected Baltic “pioneer” in Manchuria.

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Eastwards

euro-sinica

Herausgegeben von Adrian Hsia

in Zusammenarbeit mit Heinrich Detering (Göttingen), Muriel Detrie (Paris), Irene Eber (Jerusalem), David Goodman (Sydney), Naoji Kimura (Tokio) und Katharina Mommsen (Stanford).

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Riga, February 2010

Frank Kraushaar

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Introduction

The essays edited for this volume come from a conference held at the University of Latvia in Riga in late October 2008. Its title, “East Asian Culture in Western Perceptions from the 18th to the 21st Century”, suggests an interdependence limited by the subjective nature of human perception. In other words, it comprises all incoherencies ingrained with the process of perceiving and discerning cultural “otherness”. Beyond the surface of this concept, it might be assumed that the implied otherness is East Asia and the locus of perception the West. However, each of the essays published here proves that this relation is all but diametrical. In general, these essays equally involve reflections on cultural issues in, or related to, East Asia and the critique of Western approaches, which encourage the authors to develop their own approaches. Some emphasise that perception, even if bound to a Western language, is shared not only by Westerners. Some deal with concrete experiences, individual or collective narratives of voyages that can hardly be grasped in a global context of cultural geography, but rather call for new, albeit often futile, conceptions of a space beyond a centric model which always reveals a rather static conception of what is close to the subject (“west”-“here”) and what should be conceived of as distant (“east”-“there”). This motivated me to modify the title of this book from “Western perceptions” to “Western views”, from a way of understanding based on a strict subject-object dualism to a much more deliberate act of interpreting the world by making explicit one’s view on it – by generating one’s *weltanschauung* in an evolving move from time to time and from place to place. The interpretive act, once fully released, stimulates the search for a complex self by learning how to conceive of objective differences as a part of self-understanding.

Departing from this perspective, the reader will easily understand how much Mark Gamsa's work on Roger Baron Budberg, a personality rarely mentioned among early Far Eastern writers at the beginning of the past century, is almost integral to the intention of this book. Gamsa's text has been presented separately from the three chapters that form the main part of the volume, not only because it stands alone as a biographical study, but also because it introduces a unique theme that connects the Baltic countries with East Asia. His study deals with the life of a Baltic physician, whose personality was deeply and firmly enrooted in the fading world of the old German-Baltic aristocracy, but who was almost suddenly and at an advanced age captured by the experience of Manchuria. During the last decades of his life in Harbin, the physician became a writer. Retaining the biographical context, Gamsa focuses on these literary works that aim to bridge the wide gap between the European traditions which Budberg highly valued, and the Chinese culture, of which he became a living part, and which he idealised. In appropriating Chinese traditional culture to an extent that it becomes an inner stronghold against what is observed as degeneration in the West, his intellectual attitude goes along with those of more famous contemporaries like Richard Wilhelm or Victor Segalen. However, much as academic scholars tend to smile at such an attitude, it was nevertheless the outcome of a process that has since developed East Asian studies as a whole. Departing from the historical cultural east-west-dualism, the point of view becomes increasingly fixed to an "in-between", to a hardly definable intellectual position that is, perhaps, the one most close to the truth.

In the first chapter on translation and interpretation, all the essays focus on literary classics and on the problem of translating and transmitting the spirit of their respective languages, mostly in a contemporary or, as in the case of Tatiana Pang's essay, an already historical cultural context. These are the literary and poetic styles of Chinese and Japanese traditions. The very issue of Pang's essay, which describes the function of the Manchu language in transmitting

Chinese official culture to Europe makes evident that a dual concept of otherness as a theoretical assumption to approach East Asian culture from a Western perspective in general must not be accepted. Otherness is always *mediated*; it is the result of an unavoidable process of change within our perception of the world. Only for the sake of useful simplification can we reduce the participants involved in this process to the rather static number “two” or to the dual pair “East-West”.

Approaching from a different angle, the first part of this chapter, by Roger T. Ames’ and Henry Rosemont’s “On Translation & Interpretation”, takes the reader into the wide gaps a contemporary translator of Confucian classics can not overcome by attempting to replace lexicographically one (or more) Chinese *zi* by a supposedly corresponding western term. In a critical reflection on translation strategies, the authors argue for philosophical interpretation as a method to detect and to reflect on the translation “concept clusters” that constitute the “intellectual landscape” appropriate to the Chinese text. The text also includes a discussion of positions opposing the authors’ theoretical and methodological approach, first of all Zhang Longxi’s disapproval of cultural and linguistic differences as pre-conditional to the philosophical discourse between Confucian and Western philosophy. Zhang’s hypothesis of “different peoples and nations as equal in their ability to think, to express, to communicate and to create values” becomes the point of departure for a criticism of the “essentialist” and “relativist” views that can be found even among distinguished academic advocates of the East-West cultural dialogue. The backbone of the authors’ argument is that cultural otherness must not be reduced to what is made evident by the philosophical narrative intuitively appreciated by the speakers/translators/readers of the target language. Instead of striving for a false equivalence in terms of values and moral intent, the interpreters and translators should dedicate themselves to achieve “rich aesthetic harmony” in a “proper balance” that emerges from exploring cultural differences and using one’s imagination (as a translator) to make it

evident. In following this argument, translation and interpretation can be conceived of as disciplines that sustain an intellectual process of shifting views.

The three remaining essays of the first chapter introduce a view on the special field of translation from literary Chinese and Japanese into Latvian, a language of the Baltic family – which still includes Lithuanian and Old-Prussian, and is reflected in a comparatively short history of literary life. Frank Kraushaar outlines an interlingual and cross-cultural space rich in dissonances. Neither the imaginistic vocabulary nor the social stratification of rhetoric coincide in this cross-cultural space, and even less do the functions of poetry within the respective historical contexts bring classical Chinese and Latvian close to each other. However, each translation ventures to overcome inequalities between languages, and Ieva Haas, in an exercise of translator self-criticism, displays a scale of problems and creative opportunities found in work-in-progress of poetic translation from Tang-poetry into contemporary literary Latvian.

While these two texts contain critical discussions that emerge from a work, still in progress, Ayumi Kurosawa's essay is a lucid critique of recently accomplished haiku-translation into Latvian. The author pays special attention to the well known works of Guna Eglīte (1943–2008), who died a few weeks after the conference in which the paper was presented. Kurosawa's essay confronts the Japanese tradition of thorough literary critique with Eglīte's efforts to address the Latvian audience. By evoking an anticipated spiritual-sensual "voidness" rather than provoking the reader by confronting him with the individual micro-narrative traditionally correlated to a haiku, Eglīte has chosen to circumvent the challenge haiku-poetry presents to readers not yet familiar with its function of transforming concrete experiences into a timeless image. The discussion results in a well-founded critique of the translator and of his audience, who "have found in haiku what they wanted to find". This essay, however, gives a striking example of what the culture of translation and of reading

can owe to a careful and precise analysis and interpretation: it can be extended beyond its own limits.

In chapter two – “Critique and Fine Arts” – the stage is reopened with completely new requisites by Adrian Hsia’s discussion of the literarisation of Mao Zedong’s wife, Jiang Qing (1914–1991). Hsia focuses on the last novel of the French author Lucien Bodard, *Le Chien de Mao* (*Mao’s Dog*). Other literary works on Jiang Qing, both biographical and fictional, are briefly introduced to foreshadow the perspective chosen by Bodard. The latter, who was born in China, as the son of a French consul, spent years as a journalist in Indochina and Hong Kong, seeking in fiction a truth he could not find in the facts. Hsia’s interpretation of his novel unveils a triangle of power and passion between Mao, Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng, the security specialist and one of Mao’s most trusted comrades-in-arms reinvented by the narrative as Jiang Qing’s mentor and lover. Hsia analyses the original structure of the narrative as well as its presumable inspiration by an older French novel, *Le Jardin des supplices* (Mirbeau, 1899). His thorough reading delivers a strong argument to assume that the literary sophistication of Bodard’s novel conceals a French (or western) view of East Asia that is deeply rooted in French literary traditions and, in the form of a well-written novel, reveals not a historical truth, but one of poetic sense; a deeply revealing view on life as a desert of lust and power through a Western perspective on the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” and its self-pronounced heroes.

Katarzyna Sonnenberg explores the various schools of interpretation that arose in the United States and Europe, from the literary works of the Meiji woman-writer Higuchi Ichiyō (1872–1896). In the course of her investigation, frequent references to the tradition of literary criticism in Japan prevent false conclusions about the Western approaches as unique due to their geo-cultural derivations. Despite its relatively short history, the reception of Ichiyō as a modern Japanese classic in the West flourished remarkably since

the 1980's. When we consider the constantly popular "biographical readings" that seem to rely on the interpretative methods employed by Japanese scholars, social criticism was first to break a path into the variety of theoretically motivated readings which, thus, appear as the mainspring of Western critique: feminism, psychological interpretation of character, the focus on theorems of intertextuality, ecocriticism and "genetic criticism", a designation suggested by the author herself. However, Sonnenberg makes evident first, that persuasive interpretation usually operates in its own context based on more than a single theory and, second, that the readings offered by various Western scholars polarise either by analysing Ichiyō and her works as subjected to social coercion or as the dispersion of the latter by virtue of an exquisite literary mind. Again, the reader sees the notion of a "Western perception" shrinking and losing its apparent distinctiveness.

This appearance perhaps becomes most obvious in Lucie Bernier's essay on the ambiguity of otherness in cultural transformations, a comparison of the works of four female authors writing in French and about Vietnam where they were born and (partly) grew up, and from where they departed to become residents of France and "francophone". The essay is a critical analysis of these works and their literary styles which have little in common except the French language, and that the subjects relate to a Vietnamese environment. The detective-novels of the Tran-Nhut sisters are placed in the historical milieu of pre-modern Vietnam and are partly inspired by the Chinese traditions of the *gong-an*-genre and fox-novels, partly by Van Gulik's ingenious adaptations. In this analysis, the novels of Anna Moï, which evolve on the historical background of the French and American wars in Vietnam, seem to be subordinated to their author's polemic against the discriminative function of "francophony" as a language community that still preserves a clear distinction between "legal members" – French citizens – and "others". On the contrary for Kim Lefèvre, France is nothing but the French language itself. Her autobiographically coloured novels of a daughter of a

Vietnamese woman and a French colonialist, whom she never met, involve the reader in the experiences of a racial “bastard” who, after all, is rejected by his native country – Vietnam – and finds acceptance in the “country of the invaders” – France. Finally, Marguerite Duras’ realistic and autobiographical novel “Un barrière contre le Pacifique” that depicts the life of an impoverished French mother and her half-orphaned daughter in a Vietnamese milieu and almost detached from the world of the privileged “white” colonialists. Bernier presents to the reader how the triangle constellation of Vietnamese, Chinese and French cultural discourses which is evident in francophone literature on Vietnamese subjects provides a discursive space which is open more to changing views of otherness in imagination and memory than to the differentiation of the “other” as non-identity.

However, a view may also be based on this very assumption – otherness as non-identity and the latter as a source of creative inspiration. Jekatarina Stepanova chose as her subject, the adaptation of Chinese garden-landscapes by European inventors of landscape parks. She leads us back to the historical beginnings of East-Asian-Western intellectual exchanges that owe a lot to the fruits of misunderstanding. Stepanova carefully draws parallels and lines of distinction between the esthetical principals in traditional Chinese gardening and the exoticist wave which brought to the estates of 18th century England the taste of another civilisation, more “human” and closer to “nature” than the arrogance of a sophisticated rationality expressed in the symmetric garden-architecture of Versailles. The reader observes how comparatively recent concepts like “nature” and “(individual) freedom” function as philosophical guidelines to an esthetic reorientation that motivated the creation of English landscape-parks. It becomes almost obvious that the Chinese counterparts to these notions – the *shan-shui* (mountains-waters: often translated as “landscape” or “nature”) and *you* (wandering, roaming: including a sense of inner freedom) – scarcely interact with the historical dynamism characteristic of intellectual developments in 18th and 19th century

central Europe. The inspiration the creators of European landscape-parks owed to the Chinese traditional literati-garden remains on a pre-exotistic stage on which “otherness” and “non-identity” are not even recognised as qualities in cultural relations. The Chinese non-identity – represented by the traditional art of gardening – is immediately transformed into creative progress. Its otherness is integral even before being predetermined as an object of reflection upon culture.

In a synoptic study of excerpts from the letters of Van Gogh and from a novel of the Japanese writer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Tatsuo Takahashi examines how the affection of the minds of the artists by an unfamiliar style, not yet experienced in its historical environment, leads to a fresh and vivid experience of the natural environment, which, thus, becomes expressed in an ingenious original style. Departing from the angle of eco-criticism, this study once again touches on the critical relation between individual human nature and its environmental frame and counterpart – a perspective that seems almost overall representative of the dual function often linking Western and East Asian cultures. Takahashi points out that the environmental aspect in the works of both authors is a constitutive factor for the development of their respective artistic subjectivities. In each of the two cases examined, the intuitive esthetic experience of otherness becomes evident only when the sudden, deep impact of a foreign art-style establishes an intimacy with the perception of the author and, thus, distracts him from the historical context of his indigenous culture. The underlying intention is to give an example of the importance of the environmental aspect in opening a creative space for the realisation of an original art-style attempting to reintegrate culture and individuality.

In the last essay in the section on “Critique and Fine Arts” Jekaterina Koort reflects upon European and American views on the Chinese art of landscape painting. The subject shares several common aspects with those of the previous two articles in this chapter, including

art as a texture of environments, structural parallels in Western and Eastern perceptions that are as evident and approvable as they seem to be incidental, and the obviousness of categorical abysses that remain separating forces within historical contexts. However, by referring to François Jullien's theory on the dialectic cohesion of esthetic concepts in European and Chinese tradition, Koort pays attention to a major problem of current cultural discourse between East and West. It would fit into the form of the following question: Do all these clashes in perception – the transfers and transformations of terms and concepts, the incoherencies between languages and art forms that work through comparatively few common linguistic features and on an even less persuasive basis of parallels in the historical development of logic, rhetorical figures and esthetics – open a philosophical discussion that would later claim universal acceptance, because it was substantial and truthful enough to provide what is needed? – Koort's answer to this question reflects the general state of the discussion. Not many scholars advocate the “engaged” study of East Asian culture and traditions as Ames and Rosemont or Jullien do, equally erudite and applicable, in the sense of immediately integrating sinological scholarship into the broader discourse of an international discipline or literary genre.

Sher-shiueh Li extends the central chapter “Critique and Fine arts” with a study of the resonance Mei Lan-fang's New York stage performances in 1930 called forth in the reviews of the American theatre critic Stark Young. Li's paper may be read as a study *in nuce* of what probably was the highest wave of enthusiasm for Chinese arts in the West during the 20th century and until the present day. Taking Young as an individual critic and reconsidering his personal motivation that may have guided him a long way into his emphatic lore of the artist Mei Lan-fang in particular and of the Peking-opera as an art form in general, Li also explores the impact Mei Lan-fang caused on the New York cultural elite as an exotic master. Mei's sojourn in New York is seen in the context of the artists personal career as well as on the background of previous successful performances of

Far-Eastern art forms in the effervescent cultural life of the twenties and thirties.

The third and last chapter continues with the focus on society, addressed by Till Weingärtner's "Reflections on Japanese Smiles, Laughter and Humour" – a direct critique of previous attempts to identify "Japaneseness" by focusing analytically or in a narrative context on a cultural peculiarity, even if the latter has been emphasised more than just once as a unique cultural phenomenon. With the point of departure from a recent article on the subject in a German newspaper, that reinforces the well-established global concern with Japanese laughter shared by many Japanese, Weingärtner opens the core of the discussion by reconsidering Oda Shōkichi's rather popular concept of "laughter places" (*Warai no ba*). The literary sources of inspiration are then traced back to the narrative contexts in the works of Lafcadio Hearn and Nitobe Inazō. In both of these works Weingärtner finds evidence of a Western view that lies at the core of a modern Japanese tradition of cultural self-identification which is as willingly supported by a broad stream of Western critics as it is disputed by distinguished Japanese voices.

Agita Baltgalve, in her article on "Tibetan scriptures in Western digital media", draws attention to a cultural space on the Western margin of East Asia. As the medium of culture that owes its originality to the transfer and blending of dominant influences from both, India and China, Tibetan scripture itself by now has become an object of cultural transfer in the virtual space of the internet and other digital media. Baltgalve takes the reader into an explicit description of the traditional processes of book-making and book rituals that used to belong to the culture of Tibetan religious scriptures, bestowing them with an aura of spirituality that rejects any attempt to integrate them into a wider context and, thereby, to relativise them. Contrasting this historical view with the sudden changes effected by digitalisation of holy texts, blatant questions arise concerning the changes in the meanings of these texts and the preservation of their "soul".

Reading this article that forswears any explicit theoretical approach to its subject, some readers might intuitively think of Walter Benjamin's groundbreaking essay "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit"¹ (1935). However, in the new and seemingly unlimited reproduceability of sacred texts, Baltgalve sees an analogy to the Buddhist belief rather than evidence of Benjamin's rather rationalist thesis that art from the 20th century and into the future – including the art of making and living texts – would remain based on the practise of politics only.

Shifting the focus from society and the observation of certain issues in social contexts, Loreta Poškaite deals with contradicting and contrasting conceptualisations of the "body" in the West and in Chinese tradition, especially, with the philosophical implications resulting from application of the presumably Western "mind-body-dualism" to the study of the body in traditional China. As broadly known, this subject has been discussed widely among sinologists for the past two decades. The striking inequities in fundamental conceptions of what body means and what mind means, and how both relate to each other, provokes far-reaching reconsideration of critical terms traditionally employed by Western scholars in analysing and interpreting Chinese texts and works of art. Poškaite discusses a wide range of recent new approaches to this problem (Jean Levi, Kristofer Schipper, Livia Kohn, Mark Elvin, Chun-chieh Huang, Roger Ames, M.E. Lewis and others) and, following Michel Feher, proposes three angles from where the mind-body problem could be approached more adequately, "the vertical axis", "the transversal" view and "the distinction between organ and function". Dealing with the body as a special object in the comparative analysis of cultural contexts, Poškaite clearly demonstrates – and argues for – the invention of a terminology exposed to the incoherencies of Western and Chinese notions. This finds a parallel in Henry Rosemont's and

1 English: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction".

Roger T. Ames' discussion of problems in translating and interpreting Chinese classics as sources for contemporary philosophers.

While Poškaite ends her reflections with the remark that interpreting the body beyond the context of traditional China under modern and contemporary aspects would make things even more complicated, Vytis Silius chose exactly this direction. In his discussion of the usage of the Western term "humanism" by mainland Chinese and Taiwanese philosophers', as a denotation for what they advocate as a renewed version of Confucianism adequate to the needs of contemporary human societies – namely "Confucian humanism" – Silius clearly expresses and maintains a skeptical distance from the subjects of his study: Wing-tsit Chan, Cheng Chung-ying, and Tu Wei-ming. The author argues that in their works, the employment of the term "humanism" is not based on a methodological approach to this core notion of Western cultural history to analyse its true relevance for a possible reinterpretation of Confucian ethics, but rather works as a device to express in Western terms what the West would need from East Asian traditional thought. Within the general theme of this book, Silius' essay sheds light on the general conceptual problem of "centrisms" in cross-cultural discourses, not less relevant in the East than in the West. However, understanding this already implies an awareness of the even more important fact that these discourses are self-developing diverse outlooks on so far unknown cultural relatedness that leave their imprint on an emerging global intellectual culture whose still vague outlines seem unique in history.

Frank Kraushaar
Riga, February 2010

MARK GAMSA
(Tel Aviv University)

China as Seen and Imagined by Roger Baron Budberg, a Baltic Physician in Manchuria¹

I should like this book chapter to preserve something of the immediacy of the spoken form, in which it was presented in October 2008, and as the venue of its presentation was far from incidental I would like to start with the Latvian connection. Two days before delivering my talk on Roger Budberg at the University of Latvia, I drove (accompanied by my Riga colleague Kaspars Eihmanis, to whom my thanks are due) south from the capital in the direction of Bauska, and then further on to the southeastern edge of the country. There, in the small village of Budberga on the river Memele, near the border with Lithuania, I wanted to see whatever could still be seen of the manor house of Barons Budberg-Bönninghausen. We found only the sunken stones of the foundations, and, in the decrepit cemetery, the gravestone of Roger Budberg's father, Alexander, the last member of the family to be buried there in 1906; we also heard some remarkable stories from local inhabitants and it was an inspiring trip. The subject of my later presentation at the Riga conference, now the subject of this chapter as well as the central figure in the book I am writing on Russian-Chinese relations in Manchuria, the physician and self-taught sinologist Baron Roger Budberg was born on this estate on 9 (by the Gregorian calendar, 21) January 1867.

He was the fourth of eight children, and the early years of his life followed a predestined route. Being born to a family of the Baltic

1 Research leading to this article was supported by The Israel Science Foundation (grant no. 341/06).

German nobility carried many advantages: while one could aspire to become a diplomat, a minister or a general at the service of the Russian tsars, distinctions that not a few Budbergs had achieved, one could also cultivate one's own garden, perhaps write some poetry, and live out one's days on the estate, and there were many Budbergs who did that, too. Other life choices were less common, and less well regarded, than the above.

Roger Budberg went to gymnasium in Goldingen (now Kuldiga, in Western Latvia), and, graduating in December 1887, continued directly to the Law Faculty of Dorpat University, today's Tartu University in Estonia. This famous institution, dating back to the Swedes in the seventeenth century and re-established under Russian rule in the very beginning of the nineteenth, attracted students not only from the entire Baltic region but also from well beyond its borders. It would play a key role in Budberg's life. The correspondence in his student files, preserved in the Estonian Historical Archives in Tartu, includes a letter in which he said that his initial decision to study law



1) Roger Budberg, photographed in Iur'ev (German spelling Jurjew; former German name until 1893: Dorpat), now Tartu.

had been made in deference to the wishes of his parents (his father had studied chemistry at the same university).² Transferring, after two years, to the Medical Faculty, therefore may have been the young Baron Budberg's first act of rebellion. Many were to follow.

In the course of his medical studies, he went out to the villages to treat patients in the cholera epidemics of 1892 and 1893. In retrospect, these experiences prepared him for the still deadlier epidemics of pneumonic plague in Manchuria, in which he would become involved as both medical doctor and chronicler. Graduating as a physician in 1895, and specializing in gynaecology and midwifery, Budberg began working at the Women's Clinic of Dorpat University (although Dorpat is still the name by which the university is historically best known, and the one we shall go on using here, in 1893 both town and university had been given the Russian name, Iur'ev). On 11 May 1902 (by the Julian calendar, hereafter abbreviated as OS, "old style") he defended in Dorpat his doctoral dissertation. All seemed to be set for a successful medical career in a well-familiar Baltic environment. However, on 8 February 1904 (26 January OS), Admiral Togo unexpectedly attacked the Russian fleet in Port Arthur. Two days later, war was declared. Within three weeks, Budberg was appointed to take charge of the floating hospitals of the Russian army on the rivers Amur and Sungari (by their Chinese names, Heilongjiang and Songhuajiang).³

There is no record of any previous interest in China on Budberg's part before the war had brought him there. His fascination with the country, the Chinese language and customs, must have developed on the spot, and very quickly. A description of him in Manchuria in summer 1904 draws the portrait of a person "having deep respect for the teaching of Confucius and for all things Chinese, and speaking

2 Letter by Roger Budberg of 9 May 1894 in EHA, Fond 402, series 2, item 3277.

3 Letter of the Russian Red Cross to Rector of Iur'ev (Dorpat) University, of 21 February 1904 (OS). EHA/402/2/192.

their language". This memoirist, Budberg's relative Prince Paul Lieven (1875–1963), recalled in the 1950s how Budberg had convinced him to leave the wagon of the Red Cross for a day's stroll in Mukden and a night at a Chinese tavern; the next morning the Baron reported that he had slept perfectly well on the *kang* (the northern Chinese heated brick bed), while the Prince had not been able to close an eye.⁴

Another Baltic doctor, Bernhard Böttcher, who, like the railway engineer Lieven, arrived in Manchuria with the delegation of the Russian Red Cross equipped by Empress Maria Fedorovna (1867–1928, mother of the reigning Tsar Nicholas II), and who was to die there, wrote with reference to Budberg in 1904: "contrary to him, I am not at all delighted by this people, and have not seen a single one 'with beautiful eyes'. They are stupid, slow, deceitful, cowardly and dirty, and indeed very ugly".⁵ This may have been the more widespread view of the Chinese within the social and professional milieus, to which Roger Budberg belonged.

From the archives of Dorpat University we learn, however, that only two days before the attack on Port Arthur, on 24 January 1904 (OS), Budberg had applied to be appointed as second professor at the university's Faculty of Midwifery and Gynaecology. The rector in Dorpat turned down his application on two grounds: first because, to his mind, the Faculty did not require a second professor, and second because he objected to Budberg's argument on the need of physicians to know the "local languages" in order to communicate with their patients. We do not have the application letter itself, but

- 4 Pavel P. Lieven, "... I teni tekh, kogo uzh net" (And shadows of those, who are no longer with us), *Daugava* (Riga), part One, nos. 5–6 (1991), pp. 149–77; part Two, nos. 7–8 (1991), pp. 178–90. Here part One, p. 166. Despite the bad night and failure to handle the chopsticks at breakfast, Lieven regretted having missed the opportunity to visit the imperial tombs near Mukden.
- 5 Bernhard Böttcher [1870–1904], *Die Kolonie Ihrer Majestät: Briefe eines Arztes aus dem fernen Osten*. Riga: Verlag von Jonck & Poliewsky, 1904, p. 147.

it would appear that by “local languages” Budberg was referring to German and Estonian. The rejection of this line of reasoning (in an unsigned letter, most probably written by the University rector) deserves to be quoted: “The knowledge of Russian is being spread more and more among the local population, and undoubtedly the time is already not far ahead when all the population of the Baltic provinces will understand the national language”.⁶ Budberg would not mention this career setback in his memoirs, published in Harbin in 1925.⁷ It must have diminished his motivation to return to his home university, which had declared that it had no need for his services, and possibly to return home at all. As a practising doctor in China, his belief in the need of speaking the language of the patient would become a strong conviction, and his mastery of spoken Chinese – a source of pride.

He did accompany the medical mission in Manchuria on its return to St Petersburg in 1905, but this last stay in Russia was a brief one. Budberg lodged a complaint over what he claimed was criminal mismanagement of the mission’s funds. The complaint was badly taken, and he was dispatched back to the Far East as a military doctor with a Siberian regiment. Returning to Manchuria, he would never leave it again. By the next year, 1906, he moved to Harbin, where he was to stay for twenty more years, until the end of his life.

Harbin was then a young town, founded as recently as 1898 to serve as the administrative centre of the Chinese Eastern Railway – the CER, completed in 1903, passed through Manchuria connecting Vladivostok, the large naval port in the Russian Maritime province,

6 Hand-written letter in Russian, undated; addressed to the Supervisor of the Riga Educational Circuit in the Ministry of Education. This was a reply to a letter, addressed to the Rector of the Iur’ev Imperial University on 24 January 1904, in which the Supervisor of the Riga Educational Circuit had forwarded Roger Budberg’s application. EHA/402/2/192.

7 *Memuary Doktora-Meditsiny R. A. Barona Beningsgauzen-Budberg*. Harbin: Amerikanskaia tipografiia, 1925.