Central Eurasian Studies Conference Highlights Fortieth Anniversary of the Mongolia Society

For three days beginning on March 31, an Indiana University Bloomington student organization, the Association of Central Eurasian Students (ACES), held its eighth annual Central Eurasian Studies Conference, in conjunction with the Mongolia Society, and sponsored by the Department of Central Eurasian Studies (CEUS) and the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (IAUNRC). About 120 participants from the United States and abroad attended the interdisciplinary conference, featuring a plenary session, 10 panel sessions, and 50 presentations.

Three panels were devoted exclusively to the fortieth anniversary meeting of the Mongolia Society. The society, a unique private, nonprofit, nonpolitical organization that promotes the study of Mongolian history, language, and culture, has been housed on the IUB campus since the mid-1960s. The conference was dedicated the memory of its founder, IUB professor of Mongolian studies John Gombojab Hangin. Honored guests at the joint conference were His Excellency Choinhor, Mongolia’s Ambassador to the United States, and Mongolian Ambassador to the United Nations Enhksaikhan. The government of Mongolia sent its top five Mongolian scholars to the meeting: Sh. Bira of the International Association for Mongol Studies; and B. Enkhtuvshin, Lh. Kumelbaatar, O. Sukhbaatar, and D. Tserensodnom, all from the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. Members of the Mongolia Societies of Denmark, Germany, and Canada also participated in the conference.

There were two special art exhibitions on Mongolia as well as a film festival. The photography exhibit by Gary Tepfer, who specializes in landscapes, ancient rock carvings, and peoples of the Mongolian Altai Mountains, was held at IUB’s School of Fine Arts Gallery. The paintings by Chaolum Baatar from Inner Mongolia, displayed for one month at the Indiana Memorial Union Gallery, has been described by a reviewer as conveying “an awesome coldness...a solemn air and tranquil posture of the characters [which] create a crude and vigorous force.”

The featured speaker at the joint conference was Peter B. Golden of Rutgers University, who presented the Inaugural Central Eurasian Studies Lecture, “Ethnicity and State Formation in Pre-Cinggisid Turkic Eurasia.” Other conference panels, featuring CEUS faculty, students, alumni, and visiting scholars were as follows: the Central and Inner Asian History I panel chaired by Ruth Meserve with a paper by Elliot Sperling; the Central and Inner Asian history II panel chaired by emeritus professor Yuri Bregel, featuring papers by Paul

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School of Education’s Overseas Teaching Project Receives Best Practice Award

At the fifty-third annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) held in March, one of Indiana University’s global education programs, Cultural Immersion Projects in the School of Education, was chosen for the Best Practice Award for Global and International Teacher Education. As a special set of programs within the Office of Teacher Education, Cultural Immersion Projects offer prospective elementary and secondary school teachers the opportunity to do their practical student teaching abroad in one of nine different locations: in the English-speaking countries Australia, England, India, Republic of Ireland, Kenya, New Zealand, Scotland, and Wales, as well as in designated English-speaking schools in Taiwan. After completing 10-week teaching assignments in Indiana, they spend an additional 8 weeks of immersion in the host country, living with host families and becoming involved in community activities. Placement is done collaboratively with the Foundation for International Education.

Director of Cultural Immersion Projects Laura Stachowski reports that the overseas teaching project has provided “more than 1,300 pre-service educators with professional experience in foreign schools while broadening their perspectives on other ways of thinking, doing, and living.” As one participant wrote, “I only hope that more people will have the opportunity to experience a different culture as I have, and in that experience, reap all the benefits I have.” The AACTE award cited the project as illustrative of “Indiana University’s commitment to addressing global and international issues in education.”

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Losensky, Ron Sela, and Donald Dines; the Central Asian State and Society in Transition panel chaired by William Fierman with papers by Aleksey Kolpakov and Altyndai Yespembetova; the Society and Culture panel chaired by Nazif Shahbrani, with papers by Nodira Azimova and Kursat Cagiltay; the Economy and Business panel chaired by Martin Spechler (IUPUI), with papers by Gulnara Moldasheva and Alidjan Nazarov; the Philology and Linguistics panel chaired by Uli Schamiloglu with papers by György Kara, John Erickson, Erbolat Sharipkan and Dandii-Yadam Tserenpil, and the Comparative Studies of Cultural Traditions, chaired by Linda Dégh with papers by Brian Baumann, Daniel Prior, and Peter Marsh.

Funding for the joint conference was provided by IU’s CEUS, IAUN-RC, the Mongolia Society, Committee to Assist Student Initiatives, Russian and East European Institute, and the Office of International Programs. Other sponsors were Nomadic Expeditions, the Sigma Chi Scholars Program, and Mongol Global Tour Company. For further information on the conference, contact Susie Drost, manager and treasurer of the Mongolia Society; 322 Goodbody Hall; IUB; telephone: (812) 855-4078; fax: (812) 855-7500; e-mail to: monsoc@indiana.edu.

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For more information: www.indiana.edu/~mongsoc