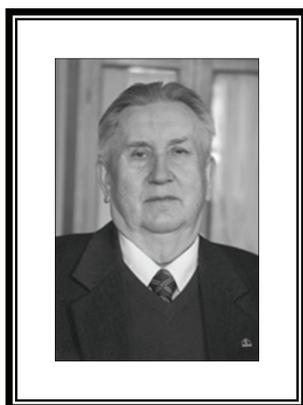

YEVGENY IVANOVICH KYCHANOV (1932—2013)



May 24, 2013 saw the passing of the remarkable sinologist and expert on the Tangut people, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor Yevgeny Ivanovich Kychanov.

A native of a small Udmurt town Sarapula, Yevgeny Ivanovich graduated from the Oriental Department of Leningrad University with flying colours and in 1995 entered the graduate school of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in the field of Tangutology. In many ways it defined his further scientific fate and range of research interests. In 1960 Yevgeny Ivanovich defended his PhD thesis titled “The Xia Xia State (982—1227)”, which was virtually the first work in the world sinology specifically devoted to the history of the state of the Tangut people, fully utilizing Chinese sources, and for the first time touching on many issues that had to do with the Xia Xia state. The talented researcher was taken on the staff of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies in 1958, where he had been working over the course of his entire life.

He gave himself over to the study of the wealthy Tangut collections of the Institute — manuscripts and xylographs from Kharo-Khoto. It resulted in the catalogue known under the title of “Tangut Manuscripts and Xylographs” (1963), where over one half of the annotated descriptions belong to Ye. I. Kychanov. Another work of Yevgeny Ivanovich — “Nothing but the writings speak” — saw the light of day in 1965. It was a series of popular science essays, which revealed the author not only as an outstanding expert on the Tangut culture, but also as a man, who had a good command of literary turn of phrase. Later Ye. I. Kychanov passed on from describing Tangut monuments to studying them, which resulted in the publication of the translation and research of such texts, titled “Recollected Precious Pair Sayings” (1974), “A Sea of Meanings Established by Saints” (1997), “A Record by the Altar of the Reconciliation of Confucius” (2000).

Yevgeny Ivanovich was the head of the Tangut group specifically formed in the Institute, and began acting as a deputy manager of the Institute in matters of science. He held that office until 1997, and all those years were spent in intensive scientific studies: Yevgeny Ivanovich was very consistent at publishing his research in the field of Tangut texts, introducing them into the active scientific circulation and enriching the number of identified Tanguts signs and being actively engaged in deciphering those. One of the most significant scientific works of Kychanov came out in 1968 — “A Historical Sketch of the Tangut State”, which he defended as his DPhil in 1970. It, too, was rather innovative: for the first time in world science the history of the Tangut people was comprehensively set forth, from the moment of their conception as a people and to the fall of Xia Xia. Next substantial contribution of Yevgeny Ivanovich was the result of his twenty-year study of the important Tangut monument “Altered and Newly Approved Legislation of the Motto of the Reign of Heavenly Prosperity (1149—1168)”. He published it in four volumes in 1987—1989, and it was awarded the S. F. Oldenburg Award of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1997. The same year saw the release of “The Catalogue of Tangut Buddhist Monuments of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences” in Japan, which gave a powerful incentive to the world Tangutology. And, last but not least, there was the publication of “Tangut-Russian-English-Chinese Dictionary” in 2006, which was prepared by Kychanov. Although Tangutology always was the main tendency in the scientific effort of Yevgeny Ivanovich, the range of his interests was much broader, which is testified to by a number of publications, which were significant for Russian and world science and innovative in many respects. Among such were “The Life of Temujin, Who Thought of Conquering the World” (1973), “The Narrative of Oirat Galdan Boshugtu Khan” (1980), “The Fundamentals of Medieval Chinese Law (the 7th—13th centuries)” (1986), “Abahai” (1986), “Nomadic States from the Hun to the Manchurian” (1997), “Rulers of Asia” (2004), etc. On top of that, over the course of his entire life, Yevgeny Ivanovich combined his broad and versatile scientific effort with large-scale scientific and organizational endeavours — he was in charge of the Department of the Far East and later the Department of Historiography and Source Study of China and Central Asia, he served in the capacity of the director of St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (1997—2003), served as a member