

**OUR PEOPLE IN THE ORIENT. TRAVELLERS FROM  
SLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH LANDS IN ASIA AND  
AFRICA (19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY – 1<sup>st</sup> HALF OF THE 20<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY).**

Editor Martin Slobodník. Bratislava, 2009. ISBN: 978-80-223-2643-8  
(summary note).

In commemoration of Martin Slobodník's work, we offer you here a summary of the anthology which he edited, and in which we can read references to many Slovakia-related texts on ethnic groups from eastern Asia and Africa, as well as an extract from his wide-ranging bibliography.

In the introduction to the anthology, the editor presents the authors' articles and their most important works. The anthology contains 18 papers from a conference attended in 2007 in Bratislava by religion academics, Orientalists, Sinologists, Egyptologists, Koreanists, Japanologists and historians. They examine the writings of travellers from the Czech and Slovak lands to the Near East, Africa and eastern Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The editor in the introductory study "**Travellers, travel logs and Orients**" explains what is hidden behind the concept of travellers. He mentions that their testimonies were also present at the birth of Czech and Slovak Oriental studies. He states "the objective of the anthology is to help map out contacts between Slovakia and the Czech Republic and the countries of Asia and Africa ... the studies in the anthology do not tell only of the past of these contacts, but are also relevant today for the much-needed dialogue between cultures and religions."

"**The Secret of the Lednice Minaret**" is a study by Sabina Dvořáková, which not only does give information on a traveller, but on the Turkish tower, which the Liechtenstein family had built according to the aesthetic ideas of the period in the grounds of Lednice castle. The creator of the design of the minaret was the architect Josef Hardtmuth.

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Lucie Storchová is the author of the study **“Between Orientalism and Oriental Studies. Discourses on Otherness in the book of memoirs by Felix Tauer ‘In Istanbul Fifty Years Ago’”**, in which she writes about the memoirs of this important Czech orientalist, who was also the translator of **“One Thousand and One Nights”**, from his study visit to Istanbul.

**“Slovaks on the Nile”** by Jozef Hudec mentions our compatriots who visited Egypt at various periods, for example the artist K. L. Libay, the craftsman D. Šustek, the entrepreneur J. Kožuch, the missionary J. Roháček and members of the Zichy and Andrassy families.

Two studies present the traveller and secondary school teacher Josef Kořenský, a friend of Vojtech Náprstek. One is by Adéla Jůnová Macková and Hana Navrátilová, **“Nineteenth Century Czech Travellers in the Orient – Egypt through the Eyes of Josef Kořenský**, the second by Vladimír Liščák **“The Image of China in the Works of Josef Kořenský”**. The latter, during his journey around the world, visited Egypt twice, collecting items of natural history, ethnographic items and artworks. He published dozens of academic works and works of popular science based on his journeys to Asia.

In her study **“Two Papers on the Exploraton of Africa from the Period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: László Magyar and Ludwig von Höhnel”**, Viera Pawliková-Vilhanová **examines** the exploratory journeys of the above travellers, who came from the lands of the Habsburg monarchy.

A study by Filip Suchomel is devoted to the Czech sailor Count Erwin Dubský, **“Erwin Dubský and his journey around the world on the ship Erzherzog Friedrich from 1874 to 1876.”** The latter went on a journey around the world, describing his experiences of Japan and collecting many artefacts which he stored in 60 chests, the majority of which, however, have not been preserved.

**“ ‘Everything is Original Here, Everything is Chinese’ - The Travelogue of Count József Zichy from China (1876)”**, is the title of an article by Martin Slobodník which focuses on an analysis of the description of József Zichy’s travelogue from his journeys around Japan and China. Zichy was an important Hungarian aristocrat and politician. He and his brother August travelled to eastern Asia up to the island of Java, visiting Thailand and even travelling through the Gobi Desert. They also went to the USA and Canada. They were not pioneers; before them, in the nineteenth century, for example Erwin Dubský and Ignaz Schäffer had an audience with the Japanese emperor Meiji. At the end of the nineteenth century, the frigates Novara and Aurora attempted expeditions to eastern Asia, with a mandate from the Austro-Hungarian government to open diplomatic relations.

In the first part of the study, he deals with well-known travellers who were in Asia before the Zichys. He mentions Alexander Freiher von Hübner, who visited China on his journey around the world, János Xantus who bought works of art in eastern

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Asia which are now in the collections of the National Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest, as well as Filip Coburg, the last owner of the castle in Svätý Anton, who with his brother August and the Czech botanist and traveller Jindřich Vávro also visited Singapore, Japan, China and India. He also studies the research team on board the Austrian steamer *Polluce*. He also noted the journeys of the Hungarian count Jenő Zichy, Jenő Cholnoky, Ferenc Hopp and others.

**“Aurora. *Ostasiatische expedition 1886–1888. The Diary of Václav Stejskal*”** is presented by the author Marcela Suchomelová. The former was a sailor on the ship *Aurora* that sailed to the Far East and Southeast Asia. The author states that he organised an exhibition in Rychnov nad Kněžnou with the artefacts collected on his journeys, and left behind him a villa in Hostomnice which he donated to the National Museum in Prague. Helena Heroldová also devotes an article to Stejskal, **“‘The lucky garment’ of Václav Stejskal”**. It was the clothing of a Chinese official, which the traveller brought back and described in his notes. “Stejskal bought the garment on Christmas Eve of 1887 in Canton for 12 dollars.” (p. 256). Today it is part of the collections of the Náprstek Museum.

**A Sea like a Mirror – to China with an Austro-Hungarian cruiser** – on the sailor Jan Šmejkal, whose 62-page notebook on his journey to China and Japan on the steamer *Panther* is the basis of Lucia Olivová’s study. Like others before him, he admired the cleanliness and tidiness of the Japanese and the dirtiness and messiness found among the Chinese.

**“Buryat Buddhist Temples of the First Quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Visual History”** is a study devoted to photographs of Buryat Buddhist temples taken by Czechoslovak legionnaires, and which are owned by the Centre for Military Archives of the Czech Republic in Prague. The author of the study is Luboš Bělka.

The problems of Czechoslovak volunteers in Vladivostok are dealt with in the study by Martin Hošek **“International Aspects of the Passage of Czechoslovak Legionnaires along the East China Railway in 1918.”**

In her study **“Early Czech-Korean Relations (1918–1920)”**, Zdenka Klösllová focuses her attention on the first relations between Koreans and the Czechoslovak legions, in particular Radola Gajda, who probably provided weapons to Korean independence fighters in 1920.

**“Czech Doctors in Revolutionary China – a Forgotten Chapter in Mutual Relations”**. Lubica Obuchová writes about the war surgeons Kisch and Kriegel who fought alongside other foreigners in Spain, and as such are mentioned in Chinese documents as Spanish doctors.

**“The Japanese Collection of Joe Hlouchy (1881–1957) in the Náprstek Museum** – the study by Alice Kraemerová describes the collection of the writer and collector Josef Hloucha, which, according to the author, makes up more than one third of the whole collection of Japanese art in the Náprstek Museum.

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The last article, “**Australia at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the eyes of the Czech travellers Jiří V. Daneš and Karel Domin**” focuses on two Czech travellers, Jiří Viktor Daneš and Karel Domin, who journeyed around Australia from 1909 to 1910, describing their travels to readers in the travelogues “*Dvojím rájem*” [Double Paradise] and “*Tři léta při Tichém oceáně*” [Three Years by the Pacific]. The author is Martina Bucková.