

# **The Grand Scribe's Records**

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*The Hereditary Houses of Pre-Han China, Part I*

by Ssu-ma Ch'ien

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**THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO**

Rudolf Vsevolodovich Vyatkin

and

Judith Brockway Nienhauser

both for contributions to our translation work

## Biographical Sketches of *Shih chi* Commentators

### Rudolf Vyatkin<sup>1</sup>

by

Juri L. Kroll

Rudolf Vsevolodovich Vyatkin (March 6, 1910–September 10, 1995; Chinese name Yüeh T'e-chin 越特金) was born in Switzerland into a family of political emigrants from tsarist Russia. On his father's side he was a scion of a hereditary Cossack clan whose members were attached to the squadrons of the Siberian Cossack Host. The Vyatkins lived in the *stanitsa* (a large Cossack village) Ozerki near Semipalatinsk and had annually to attend a public gathering of cavalymen, though as a matter of fact they were ordinary farmers. He supposed himself to be a descendant of some peasants from Vyatka who moved to Siberia in the sixteenth century at the time of Yermak Tymofeyevich (hence the surname Vyatkin). His grandfather on his mother's side was Vasily Akkerman, the head of a poor Jewish family residing in the railway station of Usol'ye in Irkutskaya Province, who engaged in handicrafts and petty trade.

His father Vsevolod graduated in 1905 from the Aleksander the Third Mechanical and Technical School in Omsk and longed to continue his education, while his mother Raisa worked as a seamstress in Tomsk. Soon Vsevolod joined the revolutionary movement. After having served two jail sentences (in all twenty-one months) he found himself unable to avoid police supervision and decided to emigrate. Sometime between 1905 and 1907 he and Raisa met at one of the assemblies of young people in Tomsk. They got married there in the summer of 1909. The money he inherited allowed them to reach St. Petersburg by train, smugglers helped them to cross the Russian border in Finland. Finally they arrived in Basel. When the young couple had a son the following year, he was given the German name Rudolf. The boy grew up in a bilingual atmosphere. His world was limited by the walls of their apartment, by the yard where he played with his local pals, by walks with the adults along the banks of the Rhine, and by rare family picnics in the mountains. In 1916 he entered the preparatory form of a German primary school.

<sup>1</sup>I would like to thank Dr. A.R. Vyatkin for the materials he has put at my disposal and his useful consultations, as well as Professor B.G. Doronin and Professor G.Ya. Smolin of St. Petersburg State University for their bibliographical help.

[Editor's Note: This is an edited version of a slightly longer note given me by Professor Juri Kroll a few years ago. My apologies to Professor Kroll for the delay in publishing it.]

His father worked as a technician in the Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie in Basel. He was also elected a chairman of the Russian emigré mutual-aid society under the auspices of the local Red Cross organization. When the Vyatkins first arrived, the members of the Russian colony had helped them to settle in. Vsevolod knew many of them, and they used to visit his house. The boy must have understood little of their heated political discussions, but he remembered well how they sang the Russian folksongs. Once Rudolf was brought by his parents to a session of the Sixth Congress of the Socialist International (1912) that took place in a big church. Although he retained but vague memories; later he used to joke it was then that he first joined in politics.

Vsevolod Vyatkin returned to Russia in spring, 1917, in the first group of repatriants from Switzerland, but his family was only allowed to leave in late summer. They went via France, England, and the Scandinavian countries. They spent nearly three weeks of July in London going sight-seeing in the daytime and hiding in the basement of their house every night to find shelter from the bombs dropped by the Zeppelins. Rudolf's first encounter with a real war was soon followed by the second one—the ship transporting Russian passengers over the North Sea barely escaped a torpedo launched from a German submarine.

Raisa and her son finally reached Petrograd only a month after the October Revolution. Mother and son received only daily starvation rations of one hundred grams of bread each. In December Raisa decided to move to the Urals where she had two sisters. After an arduous journey by rail midst cars filled with armed deserters, Raisa and Rudolf reached Ekaterinburg and were given shelter by her sisters.

In the meantime Vsevolod arrived in Omsk where he took part in deposing the government of the Cossack Host and arresting its members. However, in June 1918 he himself was arrested as a member of the regional Soviet and confined. Raisa and her son moved to Omsk. There she bore a daughter. Rudolf acted both as a godfather and a nurse of the newborn girl. In June 1919 Vsevolod managed to escape. In order not to suffer from the consequences of his escape, Raisa with the children returned to Ekaterinburg. Soon after the Red Army entered that city Vsevolod joined them and became a Soviet industrial manager.

In 1920 Rudolf went to the third form of a neighboring school. But next year rather unexpectedly his father decided to return to his native *stanitsa*. It was a unique opportunity for the eleven-year-old boy to get acquainted with the life and the work of a farmer. In the next few years he alternated working with his relatives in the fields and gardens with attending school. For two winters Rudolf went to a school in Semipalatinsk, staying in the family of a local teacher of mathematics. At that time his mother lived in Ozerki while his father worked as a technician elsewhere. Of the major political events of the time he remembered the execution of the royal family of Romanovs (which he approved as a protective measure of the revolutionary authorities) and the death of Lenin (that impressed him by the general grief of the people). His religious aunt tried to turn him into a member of the Orthodox Church, but in vain; he remained an atheist for life.

In 1925 the family moved to Omsk. The following year the young man graduated from a nine-year secondary school. At that time Vsevolod was a director of the Omsk Agricultural Industry trust, but his income was modest. Following his father's advice, Rudolf studies at the same school that his father had graduated from 21 years earlier; it now bore the name of the Industrial Technical College. Later Rudolf realized his choice was a mistake since he had taste for literature, poetry and music and not for technology. The price he paid for it amounted to eight years of his life: four of them were spent on his college studies, two on his work in a plant and another two on his service in the army in the capacity of a technician and a mechanic. Still he found much in these years that later

interested him, including the factory work and comradeship with workers, experiences that would otherwise remain unknown to him. Studies were followed with various kinds of practical training, often outside Omsk. He worked as a metal worker, a turner, a founder, a roller, a mate of the machinist of a blast-engine, a fireman and once participated in the replacement of a burst pipe of a boiler in the Omsk electric power station. In 1930 he graduated from his college as a mechanic and a heating engineer. His diploma was signed by his father who (after the liquidation of the Omsk Agricultural Industry) had been appointed the director of the Industrial Technical College, giving rise to much kidding from Rudolf's fellow students.

In 1930 he bid farewell to his parents and the city of Omsk and went to take part in the building of a plant for producing combines (later it was known as that of Agricultural Machinery Construction of Siberia) situated on the bank of the river Ob near the railway station Krivoshechokovo just opposite Novosibirsk. Rudolf lived in a hostel. He found himself in the milieu of qualified and experienced metal workers, tool-makers and turners. He joined a group of workers, technicians and engineers formed to study English in order to be dispatched in the future to the U.S. for training in producing combines, but nothing came of it because of the lack of money. From the city hostel Rudolf moved to a barrack for workers. Finally he and his neighbor received a common room for two, and later each of them found himself an owner of a small separate room—the first one in his life!

In 1931 Rudolf was appointed an assistant of the person in charge of the industrial training side of the Factory Workshop School; in a year's time the first group of young workers has graduated from it. Because of his active Komsomol work (e.g., he was the first organizer and leader of an amateur group of singers and dancers that was a success) he was elected a member of the VLKSM Committee of his plant and afterwards a member of the VLKSM Bureau of the City Committee of Novosibirsk. The latter election was absolutely unexpected and caused him pain: to his mind, it was a shame for one directly engaged in production to become an *apparatchik* (a member of party or governmental machine). For two months he did not react to phone calls from Novosibirsk. Then he was presented with an ultimatum to take up the position in the City Committee, in the City VLKSM Committee of Novosibirsk he was entrusted with the Division of Science and Culture. The new work had no attraction for him. Shortly thereafter, at the age of twenty-two, he went to the city military commissar of Novosibirsk and told him of his desire to serve in the Army. On September 9 Rudolf received a call-up notice and joined the colors.

The recruits were sent to Khabarovsk by train, where their commanders were mainly village lads who had served since the revolution. Rudolf's platoon commander was typical and often made fun of these university graduates. This situation in addition to the extreme cold made the early demobilization of Rudolf's unit in February 1933 a pleasant surprise (he remained in the reserves). But on his way home he was infected with typhus and became delirious. In Omsk his parents met him, but after he took his seat at the table laid in his honor he fainted. For a month he lay in a hospital bed regaining consciousness only to see the one body after another carried out of the ward. For another two months he suffered from various complications from the disease which had infected millions in an epidemic.

After his long stay in hospitals and clinics he gradually returned to normal life and even passed some time in the country. He had no desire to resume his work as a mechanic or a heating engineer and jumped at an offer to become a contributor to the regional newspaper, *The Way of the Worker*, in charge of the feuilleton. He was thrilled with the life of the editorial office. He visited institutions of culture, education, medicine, met

interesting and highly educated persons, absorbed the world they belonged to. Though he was not experienced in the humanities, he managed to cope with his duties.

In the fall he was unexpectedly called up again in order to finish his period of military service. His pleas that he had served his time and that he had just recovered from a serious illness fell on deaf ears. The recruits were sent to Vladivostok, whence they were transported by sea to Russian Island which blocked access to the Golden Horn Bay at Vladivostok. Here Rudolf Vyatkin served from December 1933, to November 1935, in charge of the instruments, electric motors, and boring machines used in constructing underground defenses. The soldiers' rations were meagre and almost all of the battalion suffered from scurvy. An old friend who was also serving in Vladivostok provided him with fresh vegetables, primarily garlic, and Vyatkin gradually recovered. The construction of batteries and related sites on the island was nearing completion on a summer day of 1935 when they were inspected by the famous Marshal Blyukher. Rudolf was next assigned to a vessel cruising the coastline near Vladivostok to help the capital establish discipline. The crew of the ship was civilian, the sailors called themselves "free Cossacks" signifying that they were their own masters. But gradually he managed to find a common language with them and the crew began to perform satisfactorily.

At the age of twenty-five, his military service nearing an end, Rudolf Vyatkin pondered how he might continue his education. Hoping to study in a humanities program (which was not available in Omsk), he decided to apply to the university in Vladivostok after he was mustered out of the army. By chance his ship had mechanical problems and was forced into dry-dock for a fortnight. Vyatkin decided to waste no time. He rushed to the State Far Eastern University at Vladivostok and discovered that the entrance examinations had already begun. He immediately returned to his base to gather up his textbooks as well as his school certificates and was allowed to take the examinations. It took him three days to pass them. There were three faculties at the University then: physics, chemistry and oriental studies. Vyatkin chose the latter because it was the only one related to the humanities. When questioned why he chose oriental studies, he could only recall that his idea of the Orient was rather vague at the time, limited by two visits to the Semenovskiy Bazaar in Vladivostok where the Chinese and Koreans traded in greens, fish and other wares. After a little over a year, Vyatkin was able to be released from the army, pack his things and move from Russian Island to a student hostel in Vladivostok.

Initially he was one of a group of twenty-two students of Chinese, gradually because of arrests, deportations, disappointment in the profession, and illness, his fellow students became fewer and fewer. His stipend was modest, and sometimes he worked additionally together with other students unloading wagons on the docks. He took an active part in social life and was soon elected a member of the VLKSM Committee of the University, later he became the secretary of its entire Komsomol organization. His election to the Committee provided him with an opportunity to meet Lyudmila Andreyevna Barabash, a beautiful Ukrainian girl who was studying in the Faculty of Chemistry and was also a member of the Committee. They fell in love at first sight, were married on November 6, 1936, and celebrated nearly sixty years together before Rudolf's death in 1995. In 1937 their daughter Rufina was born.

Vyatkin was behind the rest of the group because of his military service, but quickly caught up. Of his lecturers he was especially influenced by Konstantin A. Kharisky, the author of the popular book *China from Antiquity to the Present Day* (1927). Kharisky taught history and economic geography and was a brilliant lecturer. He was also very kind to students, especially to Vyatkin. Their contacts probably have given the first impulse to Vyatkin's future studies in history. The Chair of Chinese was Professor Appolinary V.

Rudakov who taught *wen yen*. When Vyatkin and others were in their third year they attended classes in Rudakov's apartment situated near the University since the old scholar suffered from gout and could not walk well. Beginning shortly after Rudolf's matriculation, however, Stalin's terror mowed down a large part of the faculty. Kharisky was executed by a firing squad. Many others were killed or sent to the GULAG. They were replaced by new lecturers, such as the historian of China Larisa V. Simonovskaya and a historian of Chinese literature Lyubov' D. Pozdnyeva (Vyatkin was on good terms with both in Vladivostok and later in Moscow respecting them as his mentors). Party meetings were held almost daily in order to exclude the "enemies of the people" from the party and to expose their contacts. Vyatkin had repeatedly to explain why he was born in Switzerland and was in the habit of taking walks with Kharisky. His father was excluded from the party because he had been a Socialist Revolutionary for several years in the days of his youth and only became a Social Democrat and a communist in 1917. Rudolf was expelled from the ranks of VLKSM. His father moved to a small town of Ostashkov on the bank of the Seliger Lake, where he became a teacher in a technical college where he lived out the rest of his life.

The mid-1930s was marked by deportation of two ethnic groups from the Soviet Far East, first the Chinese, then the Koreans. There were many thousands of industrious Chinese in Vladivostok, especially those from Shantung, who ran laundries, stores and barber shops. The militia (i.e., the police) began to arrest them in the streets, which led to a mass exodus from the city. They left mostly by boats. A year later came the turn of the Koreans to be deported to Central Asia. There was a number of them in the city and neighboring region and they were the main producers of vegetables for the city-dwellers. Their deportation was motivated by the idea that potentially they were agents of the Japanese imperialism and therefore should be removed from the zone of future battles with Japan. Brigades of mobilized party members (Vyatkin among them) went all round blocks of Vladivostok buildings inhabited by the Koreans, registering their families and warning them about the forthcoming deportation. According to Vyatkin, the Provincial party Committee arranged for the Korean's to receive some compensation for their houses, cattle, and gardens. Nevertheless, Vyatkin saw these deportations as injustices and he believed that the loss of both Chinese and Koreans impoverished the Soviet Far East.

In his fourth year (1938) of studies of Chinese, Vyatkin found that he was the only one left in his original class of twenty-two students of Chinese. Realizing that teachers might not be provided for a single student, he exerted himself to catch up with the fifth (and final) year students. He was successful, but contracted a mild form of tuberculosis which was only cured due to the efforts of his wife and opportunity provided by a medical leave to visit a sanatorium.

Both Rudolf Vyatkin and Lyudmila Barabash graduated from the University in 1939, he with distinction.

After having been a candidate-member of the Communist Party for nine years he finally became a member. To use his own words, "The dream of my life came true—I became a communist enjoying full rights." He was appointed Instructor of Chinese at the Courses for Military Interpreters attached to the Headquarters of the Pacific Navy. In the same year he was promoted to the post of the Senior Instructor, then to that of the Head of the Chinese Department. He and his family moved into a room in the classroom building. When the war with Germany broke out, Vyatkin believed, as the Soviet government claimed, that the enemy will be defeated in a few months' time, but his wife remained more skeptical. In July 1941, he was mobilized and became a naval officer, although he continued in the same position as Instructor of Chinese. That fall the families of all the

officers (including that of Vyatkin) were evacuated to Siberia in view of the threat of Japanese aggression against the Soviet Far East. For Lyudmila Barabash and her daughter it turned out to be a stay in Novosibirsk where her husband's friend, the First Secretary of the City Committee, gave them shelter in his flat. She soon went to work as a chemist. His mother fled from the Nazi advance and eventually joined her son in Vladivostok.

Rudolf Vyatkin went on teaching Chinese in Vladivostok as the Head of the Department till fall 1943, when for reasons unknown an order abolishing the Courses for Military Interpreters attached to the Headquarters of the Pacific Navy was issued. Vyatkin and his colleagues were transferred to the Red Army Military Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow. He and his family first found shelter with a niece of Raisa Vyatkin, then were offered a kind of old peasant house opposite the Riga Railway Station. It was a primitive lodging, but still, as Vyatkin remarked later, a roof above their heads that made the beginning of their life in Moscow easier (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, pp. 143-222).

Vyatkin taught Chinese at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages where he soon became the Chair of Chinese and advanced in rank to that of Senior Lecturer (1951). At the same time he gave a course of lectures on ancient history of China at the Moscow Institute for Oriental Studies (1950-1954) and also taught at the Moscow University. Many well known sinologists, including specialists in Chinese literature such as L.E. Cherkassky, I. S. Lisevich and M.E. Schneyder, and historians of China such as M.S. Kapitsa and L.S. Perelomov, studied under him (see *ibid.*, pp. 19, 36-38, 58; Miliband, p. 260; Kuczera, p. 175). During this period he participated in the writing of three textbooks for students of Chinese.

He began his scholarly publications in China in 1947. His poem *The World of Shiraz* written when he was thirty-five shows he was already deeply in love with the past and its wisdom at that age (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, pp. 225-6). However, his original interest as a researcher was focused on the modern period. In the second half of the 1940s he became an external post-graduate student. His dissertation defended at the Pacific Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (Moscow) in 1949 treats Anglo-Chinese relations during the period of 1921-1931. He published a number of articles on the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 British imperialism both in the USSR and the PRC (1949, 1952, 1953, 1956). He was also a member of the group of sinologists engaged in making an annotated Russian translation of Mao Tse-tung's selected works in 4 vols. (Moscow, 1951-1953). Articles marking its appearance in print in 1953 and dealing with problems of translating Chinese vocabulary into Russian (1955) appeared shortly thereafter. But gradually he became more and more interested in the Chinese past as well as Chinese traditional historiography. He contributed twenty-six entries on the history and historiography of China to the second edition of the *Grand Soviet Encyclopaedia* (vol. 5-49, Moscow, 1950-1957) including those on historiography as a whole, *Tso chuan*, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Ch'ien Han shu*, *Hou Han shu*, *T'ung tien*. Ssu-ma Kuang and *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* and wrote the section "Historiography of China" for the book *Kitay* [China] (Moscow, 1954) later published in German (Berlin, 1957).

Academician S.L. Tikhvinsky is of the opinion Vyatkin's earliest acquaintance with historiography of ancient China led him to the idea that it was necessary to introduce *Shih chi* to the scientific community of the USSR (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, p. 48). I believe Vyatkin conceived the idea of making his translation about the middle of the 1950s, probably after having written articles on Chinese historiography mentioned above. I vaguely remember meeting him at the time in Leningrad and showing him a copy of my translation of the beginning of *Shih chi* ch. 48 in connection with his plans. Dr. Timoteus Pokora recollected, "The idea of a full translation of the *Shih-chi* into Russian was made

public already during the Ostasien-Tagung at Leipzig in the fall of 1955" (Pokora, p. 392). In 1956 Vyatkin resigned from the army, left the Institute of Foreign Languages and entered that of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in the capacity of a Junior Researcher. According to his colleague Dr. G.D. Sukharchuk, he "almost immediately defined the kind of pursuit he had chosen as the *Shih chi* (*Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, p. 43). Soon the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Academy of Sciences was founded, and he became first (1956) the Acting Head and then (1957) the Head of its Section for Publication of the Chinese Monuments of Culture and Social and Political Literature. This same year he attended the Tenth Conference of Junior Sinologists in Marburg, Germany, reading there a paper in German on the role of Ssu-ma Ch'ien in the development of the historical science. He also recounted the plans of the Institute of Chinese Studies to begin the work of translating *Shih chi* into Russian (see *ibid.*, p. 50 and n. 1). Two cotranslators and coauthors were engaged in it at the beginning, Vyatkin and Vsevolod Sergeyevich Taskin, a well-known expert in Chinese. It seems their work practically began some time during the period from the fall 1957 to the second half of 1959. The latter date is that of Vyatkin's visit to China where he (to use his own words) "had not only the luck of making Ku Chieh-kang's acquaintance, but also that of profiting by his consultations. I even happened to have visited him in the family circle. At that time I brought to Peking a draft version of the Russian translation of *pen chi* chapters of the *Shih chi* (made together with V.S. Taskin) that were later published in the first volume of the *Istoricheskiye zapiski* (Historical Records) of Ssu-ma Ch'ien. The leadership of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of China asked Ku Chieh-kang and Professor Wang Po-hsiang to discuss the questions concerning ancient history of China that arose with me at the time of translating. Ku Chieh-kang turned out to be a most charming person and, being an excellent expert in the history of his native land, proved to be of great help to me. Beginning with this meeting good relations were established between us which continued also in the following years" (Vyatkin., p. 156). It follows that the joint work of Vyatkin and Taskin on an annotated translation of the "Basic Annals" of the *Shih chi* began in 1957(?)–1958 and that in the first half of 1959 a draft translation at least of probably chapters 1-4 already existed. The Chinese colleagues provided them also with a copy of the recently published Chung-hua edition of the *Shih chi* (Peking, 1959) punctuated by a group of scholars headed by Ku Chieh-kang. This allowed Vyatkin and Taskin to base their translation of the *pen chi* on two editions of the *Shih chi*, one reproducing a Southern Sung block-print copy of the XIIIth century (Commercial Press, 1936) and another printed in 1959 by the Chung-hua publishers (see Syma Tsyan', vol. 1, p. 66, n. 1 and p. 439). Evidently the same is true of the other sections of the *Shih chi* translated by Vyatkin alone (cf. Syma Tsyan', vol. 4, p. 12; vol. 5, pp. 13-14 and 363).

Their work also received a blessing of an eminent expert in Japan and China. In a letter of summer 1960 Vyatkin informed Academician N.I. Konrad about his plans to translate the *Shih chi* and asked for his advice. Konrad approved Vyatkin's idea "to devote himself to Ssu-ma Ch'ien" and urged him to say something new about Ssu-ma Ch'ien's general concept of history. He emphasized the unique character of the *Shih chi* and the necessity of seeing it with fresh eyes of a scientist unbiased by tradition (see Konrad, p. 5; *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, pp. 50-1).

Vyatkin's and Taskin's work on an annotated translation of the *pen chi* began at the Institute of Chinese Studies, but was completed at that of Oriental Studies. Vyatkin was transferred to it on May 1, 1961. It took the coauthors many years to publish their vols. 1 (1972) and 2 (1975). After the completion of the draft they continued polishing both the translation and the commentary. In China they profited by consultations not only of Ku

Chieh-kang and Wang Po-hsiang, but also by with Chao Yu-wen and Kao Chih-hsin. In the USSR they profited by critical remarks of their colleagues of the Chinese Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow and of the Chinese Cabinet of the Leningrad Branch of the same Institute, especially those of professors V.S.Kolokolov and I.M. Oshanin (see. Syma Tsyun', vol. 1, p. 74, n. 13).

For the commentary on chapters 1-4 (vol. 1) and 5-12 (vol. 2) the coauthors made ample use of scholarly works in Chinese, Japanese, Western languages and Russian: it goes without saying the achievements of the twentieth-century scholars of China, Japan and Europe were inaccessible to Chavannes (who generally speaking did not pay due attention to Japanese sinology). Vyatkin's and Taskin's extensive commentary is most informative, touching on subjects beginning with that of archaeology and ending with that of historical geography, discussing problems of philology and textualism, mythology, history, philosophy, etc., summing up the views of modern scholars on one or another particular problem or presenting its critical examination by the coauthors themselves. Vol. 1 opens with a long introductory study, "Ssu-ma Ch'ien and His 'Historical records'" by M.V. Kryukov (pp. 12-65) and an even longer study of more special nature "'Basic Annals' as a Historical Source" (pp. 66-129) by Vyatkin. The latter analyzed the *pen chi* as a historical source in detail, examined the place of these chapters in the *Shih chi*, discussed their earlier translations and interpretation as well as the problems concerning their authorship and authenticity, and characterized each of the twelve "Basic Annals" (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 437-9; vol. 2, pp. 577-9). Both volumes have useful supplements, such as bibliographies (the main one in vol. 1, a supplementary one in vol. 2, both preceded by lists of abbreviations), indices of titles of the original Chinese sources, personal, place and ethnic names, various Chinese terms as well as summaries in English. In addition, vol. 1 is supplemented with a Russian translation of *San huang pen chi* by Ssu-ma Cheng (seventh century) modeled after Chavannes, with tables of names of Yin rulers and those of titles and names of Chou rulers. Volume 2 is supplemented with tables of rulers of the house of Ch'in and those of the first Han rulers.

Derk Bodde favorably reviewed volume 1 (Bodde, 1975, p. 118). Five years later Pokora reviewed both volumes published by Vyatkin and Taskin, concluding that the volumes "have to be used by every interested sinologist with a knowledge of Russian since they represent a real contribution to the present-day state of the *Shih-chi* studies, the bibliography is 'excellent' and Vyatkin's study of the *pen chi* is 'valuable.'" To his mind, "the translation and especially the annotation of the Russian translation helps to understand much better the important work *Shih-chi* while opening some new problems of interpretation too. The two volumes. . . are by no means a kind of copy of the magnificent French translation. We may appreciate them already now as a contribution to the study of Chinese history and historiography and. . . only hope that the project of a full translation of the *Shih-chi* into Russian will be realized" (see Pokora, pp. 393, 395-6).

Vyatkin's interests grew more and more varied while the split between his interest for Chinese traditional historiography and the *Shih chi* project, on the one hand, and that for modern history, historical science, etc., on the other, was still perceptible. This is reflected in his writings which range from studies of the last colonies in Asia, Macao and Hong Kong (in Russian, 1958, and in English, 1959), to Sun Yat-sen (1966). Some creative impulses proceeded from his journeys abroad. He not only participated in the international conferences held there, such as those of sinologists in Marburg (1957), Padua, (1958), and Leeds, (1965), as well as the XVth International Congress for Historical Sciences in Bucharest, 1980, but also published articles on most of them (in 1957, 1958, 1981). He wrote on Sinology and its main centers (1969), taking a special interest in the foreign

centers as well as in the contacts between Soviet and foreign scholars, beginning with those of China (1957). After having visited it in 1959-1960 he described its most important scientific institutions and periodicals dealing with history (1965). His trip to China yielded positive results besides those mentioned above. It allowed him to form a personal impressions of its local museums and historical places and collect materials for a small, but very interesting book *Chinese Museums and Objects of Note* (Moscow, 1962). After his visit to the U.S. he published a survey of the Oriental Studies there (1971), as well as a paper (1973) and a book (1974) on Sinology in the USA (the latter two works in coauthorship with B.N. Zanev).

A very good command of Chinese as well as three European languages, especially English, facilitated his personal contacts. He met a lot of foreign colleagues both in Moscow (at the XXVth International Congress of Orientalists, 1960, the VIIth International Congress for Anthropological and Ethnographical Studies, 1964, etc.) and abroad, and corresponded with many of them. For instance, with Derk Bodde (whose book *Chinese Thought, Society and Science* [Honolulu, 1991], he reviewed in 1992), H.G. Creel, J.K. Fairbank, Herbert Franke, O. Lattimore, Michael Loewe, William H. Nienhauser, Jr., Timoteus Pokora, D. C. Twitchett *et. al.* He wrote on a few foreign scholars, some of whom he knew personally—on Édouard Chavannes (1976), Ku Chieh-kang (1964, 1993), Jaroslav Prusek (in coauthorship with Augustin Palat, 1966). He published a number of reviews and bibliographical notes. Among other non-Russian periodicals, he often contributed to the *Revue Bibliographique de Sinologie* (see vols. II-IV, and XI: 1959, 1962, 1964, and 1965).

It was natural for him to be interested in the future of and important events in Soviet sinology. In 1958 at the First All-Union Conference of the Orientalists in Tashkent he produced a paper evaluating the present state and tasks of the Soviet sinology; he also wrote a review of the "Bio-bibliographical Survey of Sinology." In 1959 he published an article on the Soviet works dealing with Chinese culture. In 1967 his brief survey of the Soviet sinology (in English) appeared in print in the series *Fifty Years of Soviet Oriental Studies*. Two articles by him mark birth anniversaries of his University teachers Simonovskaya (1962) and Rudakov (1971). Another two are of value for the history of Russian sinology: "From the Letters of Academician N.I. Konrad" (1993) and "My Meetings and Correspondence with V.S.Kolokolov" (1997).

However, Chinese historiography remained his chief concern. The state of modern Chinese historiography became an object of his special attention. He published (in coauthorship with Tikhvinsky) an article on some problems of historical science in the PRC (1963, in Russian; 1964, in German and English); he also discussed the state and tendencies of Chinese historiographic development (1967) and wrote a survey "Historical Science in the PRC" for a book with the same title (Moscow, 1971). In 1979 he published an article on the treatment of some problems of the world history and that of the peoples of Asia by modern Chinese historiography (in a collection criticizing Maoist falsifications of history). Another article of his that appeared in 1979 bears the title "Historical Science of the PRC at the Present Stage." In 1981 the book *Historical Science in the PRC* was published (the second, revised and supplemented edition of the book that first appeared in print in 1971). Based on an extensive bibliography of works (more than 215 of them in Chinese and European languages) this study has not lost its importance and continues to be a reference book for Chinese historiography (*Yueh T'e-chin lich-chuan*, pp. 47-8). Vyatkin also prefaced the Russian translation of Fan Wen-lan's *Ancient History of China* (1958) and (coauthored with L.P. Delyusin) wrote the Preface and the section on "The Study of Ancient History of China" for the book *Social Sciences in the PRC* (1986).

Vyatkin's range of interests in traditional Chinese historiography widened eventually embracing both its earliest period as well as that of the first (and in some cases also of the second) millennium A.D. Liu Chih-chi and the initial stage of historical criticism in China as well as his letter of resignation were discussed in four subsequent works by Vyatkin published in 1967, 1970 (a paper in English produced at the XXVIIIth Congress of Orientalists in Canberra) and 1973. He also wrote on Liu Hsieh's views on history (1974) and on Wang Ch'ung and Chinese historiography (1980). Five of his articles, "Some Problems of the Development of Chinese Historiography" (1971), "On the Traditions in Chinese Historiography" (1972), "A Critical Trend in Medieval Chinese Historiography" (1976), "On the Initial Stage of Development of Chinese Historiography" (1979), and "The Role of Traditions in Chinese Historiography" (the latter in English in the *Oriental Studies in USSR*, Moscow, 1985, v. 10), present generalizations he was thinking over. However, it was the *Shih chi*, its translation into Russian and its study that constituted the core of his scholarly interest.

Gradually the attitude of the cotranslators to their *Shih chi* translation project began to differ. Taskin got more and more involved in his separate project of making annotated translations from the Chinese sources relevant for the history of non-Chinese peoples beginning with the Hsiung-nu (see Taskin, 1968; Taskin, 1973) and finally left the *Shih chi* project (though his book of 1968 contains full annotated translations of the *Shih chi*, ch. 109-111, as well as partial annotated translations of the *Shih chi*, ch. 81, 93, 99, and 112). Vyatkin had to continue his project alone. The "Chronological Tables" (*piao*) was the first section of the *Shih chi* (ch. 13-22) he worked on without a cotranslator. The work was probably begun (or even completed?) before the publication of the *Istoricheskiye zapiski*, vol. 2, since the appearance of vol. 3 in print was originally scheduled for the fall of 1974 (see Pokora, pp. 392-3). While strictly speaking his predecessors translated the tables but partially, at best retelling their main contents (as Chavannes did having reduced them to 200 pages of the French text), Vyatkin made the first full annotated translation of the *piao* into a European language. He prefaced these translations with a study treating the precursors of the *piao*, the function of the *piao* in the *Shih chi*, the attitude to them of the Chinese tradition, examining Ssu-ma Ch'ien's concept of historical time and his chronographic principles as reflected in these tables. He also explored their structure and the problems of authenticity of these texts, discussed their commentaries and sources, ending with a discussion of the historical material included in each table (pp. 8-34, cf. pp. 940-3). Volume 3 is supplemented with a bibliography of works in Chinese, Japanese, Western languages and Russian, indices of personal, place and ethnic names, cited titles of the Chinese primary sources, various Chinese terms, official titles and a summary in English.

Reviewing Vyatkin's volume three in 1985, Bodde singled out the main point: "Chavannes translated only Ssu-ma Ch'ien's introductions to these tables, whereas for the tables themselves he merely prepared chronological summaries rather than year-by-year translations. Watson... translated only the introductions of chapters 16-20... Vyatkin, on the other hand, has translated *all* of the text of chapters 13-22, thus providing the first such complete translation in any Western language" (Bodde, 1985, p. 131).

To translate the "treatises" (*shu*) is probably more difficult than to translate other sections of the *Shih chi*, since it requires knowledge in varied fields, especially ancient music and its theory, the calendar, astronomy and astrology, hydrology, and economics. Vyatkin overcame these difficulties like Chavannes before him and in 1986 made the treasures of the *shu* accessible to the Russian reader. Vyatkin also offered an extensive study dealing with the term *shu*, previous translations of the treatises, commentaries on

and interpretations of the treatises, discussing problems of authenticity of the first three *shu* and a fragment of the fourth one, and describing the contents of the section in detail (pp. 9-58, cf. pp. 452-3). The study is provided with a special bibliography of fifty-five items. Like its predecessors, vol. 4 is supplemented with a list of abbreviations and a bibliography of works in Chinese, Japanese, Western languages and Russian, indices of titles of the cited Chinese original sources, of personal, place and ethnic names as well as a summary in English. In addition, it is provided with three annotated indices, that of various Chinese terms, of musical terms and astronomical terms, as well as names of stars and constellations accompanied by their European analogues.

The translation of the "Hereditary Houses" (*Shih chia*) was published by Vyatkin in two volumes, the fifth (1987) and the sixth (1992). Volume 5 contains chapters 31-40 while volume 6 chapters 41-60 of the *Shih chi*. It seems proper to recall that Chavannes translated but twenty chapters of this section, while Watson translated nine out of the remaining ten chapters, with but very scanty notes. Vyatkin on the other hand made the first full annotated translation of the entire *Shih chia* section into a European language. The translation of these first ten chapters is preceded by a study discussing the title *Shih chia*, the differing views of Chao I and Chin Te-chien on the question of what kind of *shih chia* are referred to in the chapters 35-37 of the *Shih chi* (to Vyatkin's mind, the chronicles of the *shih chia* type constituted one of the sources for the "Hereditary Houses") and the reasons for which the section was created by Ssu-ma Ch'ien. It also treats the problem of breadth and freedom of his approach to the selection of those whom he included into the *Shih chia* as well as the critical attitude of representatives of the Chinese tradition (Liu Chih-chi, Ssu-ma Cheng, Wang An-shih, Chao Yi *et al.*). It also touches on the subject of sequence of individual chapters as well as on that of division of the *Shih chia* into two groups of the pre-Han and the Han ones and on the problem of authenticity of its materials (according to Vyatkin, with the exception of the entire text of ch. 60 and some phrases in other chapters they are quite authentic). Finally, it deals with translations of and interpretation in the *Shih chia* chapters, with the place of the section within the structure of the *Shih chi* and its importance as a historical source (pp. 7-24; notes on pp. 363-4). Vol. 6 has a Preface containing appraisals of the contents of the translated chapters or groups of chapters, especially the most interesting ones. We find here thoughtful observations of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's historiography and ideas made by Vyatkin (pp. 8-14 and [notes] 482-483). Both volumes are supplemented with lists of abbreviations and bibliographies of works in Chinese, Japanese, Western languages and Russian, indices of cited titles of the Chinese original sources, personal names (or names and titles in case of vol. 6), place and ethnic names, Chinese terms and notions and summaries in English. In addition, vol. 5 has tables of names of the rulers pertaining to the first ten hereditary houses (31-40), while vol. 6 has those of rulers pertaining to 5 of them (ch. 41-45) and is provided with three maps.

In a joint review of volumes 4 and 5, Bodde described Vyatkin's project as "probably the largest ongoing translation today from Chinese into a Western language." Comparing it to those of Chavannes and Watson, Bodde concluded that "the 52 chapters covered by Chavannes amount to 57% of the total [annotated *Shih chi*] text [judging by the continuously paginated 1955 Peking reprint of the Takigawa's edition]; the 65 chapters of Watson amount only to 36%; and the 40 chapters of Vyatkin amount to 48%. In other respects, too, Vyatkin is closer to Chavannes than to Watson. The translations of both men are technical and fairly literal, whereas Watson thinks of the *Shih chi* in literary as well as historical terms... In short, Chavannes and Vyatkin intend their work primarily for specialists, whereas Watson, to a much greater extent, aims at the general reader as well." I



agree with his contrasting of translations intended primarily for specialists with those aimed to a much greater extent at the general reader. I term the former those "specialized for scientific purposes" and the latter "artistic (or literary) translations." The former aim at giving scientific information about the original text by means both of the translation (which has to be merely intelligible at that) and its scientific commentary. The latter aim at conveying artistic merits of a literary work; here a scientific commentary is of no use (since aesthetic value of a piece of literature depends on direct emotional effect), form and style being the main concerns of the translator. To my mind, Academician V.M. Alexeyev's and Dr. Watson's translations from the *Shih chi* are literary discoveries of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's work for Russian and English general readers respectively, but their scientific use by scholars is limited (see Kroll, pp. 118-24; Krol', 1983, pp. 58-67). Bodde is perfectly right ranking both Chavannes and Vyatkin as scholars translating primarily for scholars. Probably for that reason in spite of Vyatkin's taste for literature (he wrote poetry and proved to be a good memoirist), Alexeyev's artistic experiments in translating the *Shih chi* remained alien to him.

In December 1992 Vyatkin's work on volume 7 (containing the translation of chapters 61-85 of the *Shih chi*) on the whole was completed; the following year it was handed over to the «Oriental Literature» Publishing House and its publication was scheduled for 1994, but its editing was delayed. When it had almost been finished, Vyatkin died. On the same day the typescript of volume 7 reached the printing-house.

It so happened that the death of the scholar did not doom his translation to remain incomplete. Beginning with vol. 6 one can find traces of participation of Vyatkin's son Anatoly Rudolfovich in the work of his father, who thanked him for rendering "great help at the final stage of editing the volume" (vol. 6, p. 14). The part A. R. Vyatkin took in the work on vol. 7 is even more important: his father thanked him here for "having edited all the sections of the volume and having become my coauthor in writing the introductory article and the commentary" (vol. 7, p. 28). When the father died, the son dared to accept the inheritance. In his own words, "The first versions of the translations of chapters 86-110 (volume VIII) and chapters 111-122 (the first half of volume IX) were left on my father's desk. I do hope that together with a well-known sinologist specializing in linguistics, Dr. of Philological Sciences A.M. Karapet'yants, who is the editor-in-chief of volume VII, we shall succeed in making the dream of my father come true, i.e., bring the publication of the *Shih chi* to completion, and that Russian will become the first European language in which a full translation of the work of Ssu-ma Ch'ien will find its readers" (Syma T'syan', vol. 7, p. 28).

In 1996 Vyatkin's vol. 7 containing first twenty-five chapters of the *Lieh chuan* section posthumously appeared in print. His name stands on the title-page as that of the translator, author of the Preface and coauthor of the commentary, another coauthor being A.R. Vyatkin. The name of M.M. Karapet'yants as that of the editor-in-chief stands on the back of the title-page. The translations and commentary are preceded by a study discussing the term *lieh chuan* (which is translated "biographies"), the types of *lieh chuan*, their form and contents, the ideas expressed in them by the historian, his didacticism, as well as the fate of the genre of Chinese biography created by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (see vol. 7, pp. 9-28; notes, pp. 460-462). It should be added that six years earlier, in 1990, R.V. Vyatkin published a paper titled "Historical Biography. The Problem of Genesis of the Genre." The volume is supplemented with a list of abbreviations, a bibliography of works in Chinese, Japanese, Western languages and Russian (334 items), indices of cited titles of the Chinese original sources, of personal names and titles, of place and ethnic names, of Chinese terms and notions as well as a summary in English and three maps.

In 1997 I briefly reviewed Vyatkin's volume 7 comparing it with that published in 1994 by Tsai-fa Cheng, Zongli Lu, William H. Nienhauser, Jr., and Robert Reynolds under the title *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. VII, *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China* by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (ed. by William H. Nienhauser, Jr.). I found several points in common (both volumes share the same ordinal number, since both *Shih chi* translations are to be published in 9 vols., both are based on the Chung-hua ed. of 1959 but take into consideration other editions and scholarly works as well, both are provided with detailed commentaries and extensive bibliographies). The main difference seems to consist in the presence of an introductory study of the *Lieh chuan* section in the volume produced by Vyatkin and its absence in that produced by Nienhauser *et al.* Maybe there is a slight difference in the style of the translations. Vyatkin is somewhat more inclined to translate the meaning (and not the letter) of the text, on rare occasion he even resorts to retelling for the sake of readability. Nienhauser, too, confesses he and his cotranslators have "aimed at a translation that would be as readable as possible," but "attempted to render all words and nuances of the original text" (see *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. VII, p. ix). Both translations can hardly be described as flawless. My conclusion is as follows: "Inexactitudes and mistakes are inevitable in any great work. The translators of the *Shih chi* biographies did not manage to avoid them either. However, this in no way decreases my general appreciation both of the English and Russian translations. Doubtlessly they are fine samples of a scientific translation that is combined with a detailed commentary and presents the results of a lot of research work. Both volumes are weighty contributions to Russian and American science respectively, important landmarks in the history of cognition of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's work in the countries of European culture" (Krol', 1997, pp. 73-5).

In 1998 the book *Yueh T'e-chin lieh chuan. The Fate of the Orientalist R.V. Vyatkin* (in Russian) compiled by his son, A.R. Vyatkin, appeared. It contains not only valuable materials for Vyatkin's biography and lists of his main scientific works (148 items) and books edited (21 items), but also his own works, including fragments of his memoirs and some of his poems. I have amply used these materials in the present article. Apart from everything else the book contains his annotated translations of ch. 93-95 of the *Shih chi* borrowed from the still unpublished vol. 8.

In 2001 the «Oriental Literature» Publishing House in Moscow has begun to publish the second corrected and supplemented edition of the *Istoricheskiye zapiski*. The Publishing House announcement prefacing vol. 1 reads, "The penultimate VIIIth volume continuing the *Lieh chuan* section (chapters 86-110) is being prepared for publication. Thus the project of the outstanding Russian sinologist Rudolf Vsevolodovich Vyatkin, both grandiose in terms of volume and incredibly difficult to realize, is drawing to its completion. Unfortunately R.V. Vyatkin could not see his last volumes [in print], but thanks to the efforts of A.M. Karapet'yants and A.R. Vyatkin his work without doubt will be finished in the next few years. It means that a full translation of the most valuable monument of ancient Chinese historiography provided with a scientific commentary for the first time will be published in a European language. Thirty years have elapsed since the beginning of publication of the *Shih chi* in our series. According to the Chinese tradition, generations succeed one another once in thirty years. It is for the new generation of Orientalists that the Publishing House undertakes a republication of volumes that have appeared in print before, introducing some corrections and elaborations into their text" (Syma T'syan', vol. 1, second edition, p. 5).

The translation of the last seven chapters of the *Shih chi* constitute a problem that is to be solved by Karapet'yants. It should be added though that earlier Vyatkin translated two fragments of the *Shih chi*, ch. 130 and 124, as well as more than a half of the *Shih*

*chi*, ch. 129 (see *ibid.*, pp. 74 [and n. 2], 75 [and n. 1], and 79); he published his translation of the discussion of the essentials of the Six Schools of Thought in the anthology *Ancient Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1973) along with those of chapters from the *Li chi* and *Lü-shih ch'ün ch'iu*, as well as his translations of the introduction preceding the biographies of "wandering heroes (or knights)" and a considerable part of the text of the *lich chuan* of those who "multiply riches" in the anthology *Ancient Chinese Philosophy. The Han Period* (Moscow, 1990) along with his translations of *Shih chi* ch. 61 and 74 and of *Hun t'ien* and *Ling hsien* by Chang Heng.

R.V. Vyatkin left not only an annotated translation of a little more than ninety-five per cent of the *Shih chi* text (the number estimated according to the method used by Bodde on the base of the continuously paginated Peking reprint of the Takigawa's edition). He also left a study of the *Shih chi* sections mostly accessible in the already published volumes, in all 186 pages reflecting his research work. Once he ceded his right to write a detailed introductory article for vol. 1 to Dr. Kryukov in order to concentrate on the study of the *Shih chi* sections. To the best of my knowledge, at least one study of this kind is still unpublished. Judging by Vyatkin's letters to me of October 13 and December 18, 1993, he was writing an introductory article for vol. 8 at the time; in another letter of May 1994 he mentioned his intention to type out this article together with the rest of vol. 8 (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, p. 73). It seems likely that he completed this.

Vyatkin was also engaged in the study of both general and special problems connected with the *Shih chi*. He discussed the problems of interpolations in the text (1986) (by the way, they are translated in the *Istoricheskiye zapiski*), of the title (1987), of its artistic (or literary) aspects (1985); he also contributed an article on the *Shih chi* to the *Concise Encyclopaedia of Literature*, vol. 8 (1975). As Ssu-ma Ch'ien's biographer he described his memorial ensemble (his temple, his grave, the steles, the residence of the Ssu-ma clan, etc.) in the region of Han-ch'eng and conveyed information on his descendants (1994). It was typical of him to follow attentively the *Shih chi* studies by other scholars in China and Japan, in the West and in Russia. His having been exceptionally knowledgeable adds additional value to his commentaries. He has also enriched Russian sinology with a series of informative articles on the study of the *Shih chi* and Ssu-ma Ch'ien, his worldview and his historical method (1964, 1968, 1981, 1989, 1991).

R.V. Vyatkin was well informed about the professional activities of his foreign colleagues. He knew both how to learn from them and how to approach their works critically; he perfectly understood the meaning and the importance of his own work. In the end in the period of Perestroyka this work was appreciated by the Soviet oriental studies for its true value: the Presidium and the Department of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR conferred on him a degree of a Doctor of Historical Sciences *Honoris Causa*. On this occasion in 1987 Vyatkin produced an abstract of his views on the main object of his studies under the title "Chinese Historiography. The Ancient Chinese Historiographer Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-87 B.C.) and His General History of China-*Shih chi*." In 1989 he was appointed to a post of the Leading Researcher and soon transferred to that of the Consulting Leading Researcher. Less than two months before his death in 1995 he was also advanced in rank to that of Professor Specializing in General History.

Out of the four large scale attempts to translate the *Shih chi* into a European language only the last one was made by a group of scholars (Nienhauser and his cotranslators), while the preceding three were undertaken by individual scholars. One of the three (Watson) worked on an artistic (or literary) translation, the other two worked on those of specialized for scientific purposes. The first of them (Chavannes) was a pioneer, blazed a new trail having set up an eminent model of a scientific translation. The second one (Vyatkin)

undertook a translation of the same kind that remains unsurpassed in scope; he is called a "Russian Chavannes" by rights.

Knowing that after the period of collaboration with Taskin, Vyatkin did the bulk of the work alone, allows us to peer into his personality. Of course, he was a man of talent possessing an exceptional capacity for work. But he also knew how to learn and to improve his talent, striving for self-perfection. He conceived the idea of translating the *Shih chi* at the age of about forty-five, i.e. that of maturity, when he was a fully formed teacher of Chinese and Chinese history who never before engaged in translating ancient texts or philological work. He was a self-made translator of the *Shih chi*, though perhaps in the beginning he owed some of his success to the help of his experienced and knowledgeable cotranslator. By hard work he transformed himself as a sinologist. He has grown into one of the leading Soviet and Russian translators of ancient Chinese texts and experts in ancient China. Mature persons seldom undergo transformations of this kind. He was a scholar of rare concentration, purposefulness and self-discipline; perhaps for that reason he managed to translate more of the *Shih chi* text than any other European sinologist. It is of importance that his attitude to his work was emotional, that he was truly in love with it. Gradually his ties with the *Shih chi* became indissoluble, he simply could not live without working on it. A portrait of Ssu-ma Ch'ien hung above the head of his bed. He is reported to have said to a guest pointing at it, "This is my icon" (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, p. 54).

From the time he first entered the Institute of Chinese Studies he belonged to the Institute administration. He began as the Head of a Section, then (1958) was appointed to a post of the Deputy Director of the Institute, later (1960) was transferred to a post of the Senior Researcher. In the Institute of Oriental Studies he was soon appointed to a post of the Acting Head of the Section of Ancient and Medieval History of China (1961) and the following year his tenure as the Head of the Section was confirmed. In 1964 he was appointed to a post of the Acting Head of the Chinese Department, while in 1966 his tenure of the post of the Head of a Department combined with that of the Head of a Section was confirmed. Finally in 1967 he was appointed to a post of the Head of a Section of the Chinese Department. His colleagues praise his abilities for organization, his sincerity and honesty, accuracy, decency, kindness and generosity as well as modesty. They describe him as a good and somewhat unusual administrator who, on the one hand, seemed to be tightly buttoned in a full-dress uniform and, on the other, was a true member of the Russian intelligentsia, possessing an emotional, lyric and gentle nature. He was strict, demanding from his subordinates conformity to discipline and regular visits to their desks or to the library, but gave all a free hand during their working hours. He was ready to admit his mistakes, susceptible both to persuasion and to criticism of his own works that as a rule were discussed by his colleagues before publication. He never looked down on his subordinates. He knew how to create in the Department an atmosphere favorable for discussion. To use the words of L.S. Vasil'yev, it was in the main center of Chinese studies in the USSR headed by Vyatkin that "the spirit of strict and free science was formed" (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, pp. 14-19, 23-29, 34).

However, in 1975 his administrative career came to an end. He was dismissed from the administrative post he occupied (which allegedly complied with his personal request) and transferred to that of a Senior Researcher. As I have heard, the real cause for this dismissal was an invitation sent to E. Pokora who soon after his return from the U.S. to Czechoslovakia found himself under pressure of party authorities. Vyatkin who respected Pokora as a scholar invited him to come to the USSR where he would still have been appreciated in order to work in the libraries; the invitation was private, but Vyatkin's

signature was preceded by his official title of the Head of an administrative unit. When Pokora took first steps necessary for visiting Moscow, the Czechoslovak party authorities forwarded Vyatkin's letter of invitation to their Soviet counterparts expressing their displeasure that a Soviet scholar would support a person they disapproved of. The case was discussed at a party meeting in the Chinese Department, but a directive demanding that "proper measures should be adopted" had been sent down from the Central Committee beforehand, which predetermined conclusions. Vyatkin was reprimanded for having lost political vigilance and finally had to resign. For the period from 1975 to 1984 the Chief Editorial Office for Oriental Literature of the «Nauka» ceased publication of his translation. For Vyatkin it was a time of stress. He was convinced his work was needed and spared no pains to re-persuade the publisher. Finally Vyatkin got his way, but he had to pay for this in declining health during the second half of the 1970s. From that time until the summer of 1994 he had four heart attacks and three strokes. Again and again he had to go to hospital, where doctors saved him from death, set him on his feet, and allowed him to return from the otherworld to his translation. It seemed as if he was living only for the sake of bringing his work to completion, just as Ssu-ma Ch'ien had in his day. He used to repeat with a smile the words *lao la pu chung yung la* (I have grown old, I am already good-for-nothing), but he went on working like a madman. According to recent information provided by his son, A.R. Vyatkin, Rudolf Vyatkin managed to translate the *Shih chi* through chapter 123. The translation of chapter 112 was begun in May or June of 1994, that of chapter 117 was finished late in December, while chapters 118-123 were translated by Vyatkin during the first eight months of 1995. His rate of translating and commenting was rapid indeed (cf. *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, p. 55). In his letter to me of October 1993 he confessed he was "driving away the temptation" even of writing Ssu-ma Ch'ien's biography, because he still had to translate nineteen *Shih chi* chapters "in order to fulfil my duties to my life and to my science." In his letter of May 1994, he exclaims, "I want to complete the *Shih chi*!"; in that of June he writes, "I dream of completing all the 130 chapters of the *Shih chi*—there are still 18 chapters left; as to their publishing, I'll entrust it to the descendants, since the process [i.e., what is happening to my health] is unpredictable at the moment," while in that of December he added, "But for all that I hope to hold volume VII in my hands while I am still alive" (see *Yüeh T'e-chin lieh-chuan*, pp. 79 and 74). His family rallied round him, everybody doing his best to help him. His wife Lyudmila Andreevna not only looked after her sick husband, but typed out all the draft versions of the translation and the commentaries as well; his daughter Rufina helped in working up indices and compiling a bibliography for vol. 7; his son Anatoly both took part in editing and commenting and represented his father's interests in his relations with the Publishing House (see *ibid.*, pp. 53, 72, 79; *Syma Tsyen*, vol. 6, p. 14; vol. 7, p. 28). All of them were imbued with his will to bring his work to an end.

R.V. Vyatkin was not only a prominent scholar, but also a manly person. He accomplished great deeds as a scientist utterly devoted to the cause of learning, his conduct prompts both admiration and deep respect. His *Shih chi* translation turned into a monument to him, erected thanks to his efforts during his lifetime. His colleagues from all over the world, from China, Europe and the United States, know him as the author of one of the most important projects to translate the *Shih chi* and honor him as a scholar. In Russia it is a project of extreme importance for the study of ancient China, probably the most important of all. I do hope his dream for a complete Russian translation will come true.

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