



## **SCHOLAR'S JUBILEE**

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### **THE PATRIARCH OF THE RUSSIAN ORIENTAL STUDIES The 90th birthyear of D.V. Deopik**



On November 9, 2022 Dega Vital'evich Deopik celebrated his 90th birthyear. His name is known to students, graduates, teachers and researchers of numerous institutes and universities, as well as to scholars studying ancient and medieval Asia, history and archeology.

In 1956 Dega Deopik graduated from the Historical faculty of MGU. In 1961 he defended his candidate dissertation with the theme “Early Vietnamese States” (supervisor A.A. Guber). For his dissertation he not only worked out French and Vietnamese literature, but also translated such Chinese sources as several chapters of “Records of the Grand Historian” by Sima Qian (c. 145 – c. 86 BC) and the Spring and Autumn Period: Hegemony of Wu (506 – 496 BC) and Hegemony of Yue (496 – 465 BC).

Many years of his life D.V. Deopik devoted to his first love, i.e., to Vietnam. At the time when Vietnamese studies in the USSR were just beginning, when there were no specialists, some sources had not been published yet, other were hard to be got, he taught courses in all the disciplines concerning Vietnam, except the language, including geography, economics and contemporary

history. D.V. Deopik had never borrowed ideas and information from his European or Vietnamese colleagues. Originally, he concentrated on Vietnam's ancient history; that information could be taken from easily accessible Chinese chronicles. Therefore, he had to learn the Chinese language. The list of his publications on Vietnam strikes with the broadest scope of their author's knowledge and interests. There is the analysis of the works by Chinese authors of the Southern Song period (1127 – 1279) concerning Vietnam (jointly with M.Yu. Ulyanov), political history of the Tran dynasty (jointly with A.B. Polyakov), comparative description of Singapore and Vietnamese Ha Tien, peasants' revolts of the 16th century, an analysis of the origin of Confucian exams' laureates, and even medieval splint and woodcarving. This broad subject matter is due to the access of new sources and new publications, which received an adequate response. If the scholar could not do anything himself, he generously gave those themes to his students and supervised their research-works. Among his pupils there are such famous researchers as O.V. Novakova, G.M. Maslov, A.B. Polyakov, A.L. Fedorin, P.V. Pozner, P.Yu. Tsvetov, A.V. Nikitin, K.Yu. Leonov, V.I. Antoshchenko, as well as Vietnamese researchers, who defended their candidate and doctor dissertations in Moscow, and later became the cream of Vietnam's community of historians (Vu Minh Giang, Nguyen Hai Ke, Nguyen Dang Na, etc.). At the final stage of the "Vietnamese" period of his studies D.V. Deopik was busy summarizing the experience and knowledges accumulated by him and his pupils. He created a conceptual course of history of traditional Vietnam, as well as a part on political history in collective monograph "The New History of Vietnam". In 1996 D. Deopik got the doctor degree (History) for the first volume of "History of Vietnam" in two volumes, covering the period from ancient times to the end of the 18th century.

D.V. Deopik stood at the sources of important initiatives. In the 1990s he was the initiator of creating the Center for Vietnam Studies at the Institute of Asian and African Countries at MGU. It was one of the biggest Centers for Oriental Studies in Moscow. This center served for carrying out research, translation and publishing projects. It allowed to get an invaluable experience of academic community organizing, as well as of translating and analyzing historical sources. One of such projects has already been completed by A.L. Fedorin. This is the first European translation of the Vietnamese main annals "Dai Viet su ky toan thu" (Complete Annals of Dai Viet), supplemented with translations of Chinese sources and provided with extensive historical and regional commentaries.

Another service rendered to the Russian Oriental and particularly Vietnam studies by the Hero of the day was the foundation of the Institute of Practical Oriental Studies (1994), the first and only non-governmental educational institution in Russia, which trained students in the specialty of "History of Vietnam". For more than twenty years main works of Russian Vietnamists were issued under the auspices and grants of the Institute. All those years D.V. Deopik was the permanent supervisor of the Institute. In 2002 the Institute published the book "D.V. Deopik. Vietnam: History, Tradition, Modernity", a collection of the scholar's articles, published in various editions and scientific journals at different times.

D.V. Deopik's academic interests went far beyond Vietnam. He studied ancient history of India, history of medieval Korea, Japan etc. But in his life-long work he paid the greatest attention to the countries of South-East Asia. He taught lecture courses on ancient and medieval history virtually of all the SEA countries, guided students' works, supervised post-graduates. This allowed him to make courses and educate several generations of specialists, who left a noticeable trace in the study of the SEA countries. He is the author and a co-author of a number of manuals, such as: "History of Vietnam" (vol. 1), parts in "History of Kampuchea", "History of Indonesia", "Archeology of Foreign Asia", "History of Ancient East". Those who study South-East Asia cannot help studying the South

of East Asia, in antiquity being the northern part of “proto-SEA” region. It is the region of historical ancestral homes of nearly all the SEA peoples; here their ancient states emerged; now related ethnic groups live here. Therefore, the students and teachers of the Chair of history of the countries of the Far East and South-East Asia at the Institute of Asian and African Countries of MGU headed by Professor Deopik in 1990 – 2007, were to learn the Old Chinese language and Old Chinese sources. Under D.V. Deopik’s supervision an academic school for study of epigraphic and annalistic funds of the region was formed, first of all of Vietnam. D.V. Deopik has been closely linked with his colleagues and cooperated with them. He is a research adviser of numerous articles and monographs.

The most important part of D.V. Deopik’s academic work is connected with the development and adaptation of different methods of historical research, first and foremost quantitative ones. In 2011 the most significant works in this field were issued in a separate collection.

In 2000 D.V. Deopik was one of the founders of the historical faculty of Saint Tikhon’s Orthodox University of Humanities, where he teaches the courses of history of world’s civilizations, history of Asian and African countries and biblical archeology. For this university he has written a number of original manuals on archeology of ancient Western Asia and on history of Ancient East. These works reflect the author’s great scientific erudition.

D.V. Deopik’s life has been connected with teaching and with students. He does not spare his time for them. His main approach to the work with the students is to attract them to research from the very beginning of their studies. D.V. Deopik offered wonderful perspective themes to his most famous pupils, when they were still students. For many of them, the communication with this handsome man with original thinking and brilliant humor determined their further carrier.

Dega Deopik’s pupils call him the Teacher, who has changed their idea of science. For them he is the embodiment of the current history, a true history which determines people’s lives. His teaching, his readiness always to support and lead the pupil is the example of a special service to people and science.

The editorial board of the journal “Vietnamese Studies” congratulates Dega Vital’evich on his birthday and wishes him many happy returns of the day!