

Why do Students from China Come to Study in Russia

The Chinese government encourages young people to study abroad, considering training of students into highly qualified specialists as one of the strategic priorities in the modernization of the country. Today, about 20,000 Chinese students are studying in Russia. In view of the intensive bilateral economic cooperation, which demands well-trained specialists, and the fact that the governments of both countries intend to develop close partnership in the future, China is going to use the services of Russian universities more. In the nearest future China is planning to increase the number of their students studying in Russia up to 35-40 thousand annually.



Of 5, 000 foreign students studying in Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University today, almost one third are the students from China. Vice-Rector for International Relations of SPbPU D.G. Arseniev notes that Chinese students work very hard, continuing, so to say, the traditions established by their grandparents, who were the students and post-graduate students of Leningrad Polytechnic Institute named after M.I. Kalinin (that's how the University was called then) in the 1950s. "We understand that today's Chinese students will become our partners in business, science and politics in the future, and then their decisions will affect the

vector of the cooperation between our countries. Therefore, it's very important to ensure that more Chinese young people come to study in our University, that they get a high quality education and become our friends," says Dmitry Germanovich.

Why do they come to get a higher education in our country? Firstly, our education traditionally has a large scientific and educational potential and a high level of some technologies that China would like to adopt. Secondly, it is the financial component - for training in Russia today is cheaper than in the West. Thirdly, it is simply the interest in Russia itself, a country with a rich culture whose history is intertwined with the history of China. But what was the crucial factor for each of them to decide where to study, and how they feel as students of the leading technical university in Russia? The current students of the Polytechnic University answered these questions themselves.

Shen Tsian, a 3rd-year student of the Institute of Industrial Management, Economics and Trade of SPbPU:



- My hometown is Hunchun which is not far from Vladivostok. From the Jurchen language (one of the many Chinese dialects - Ed. Note) the name of the city means "borderland". There always have been a lot of Russians in our city: someone was coming on tours, others – to work. I often heard Russian speech on the streets, and at some moment I realized that I wanted to understand it. In China, I managed to enter the Department of the Russian Language, but I understood that the only place where you can learn Russian is Russia. St. Petersburg Polytechnic University actively develops an interesting field of studying - "Economics and Management in Power Engineering" – that's why I decided to enter this department.

Now I live in a dormitory of the Polytechnic University and I can say that it's great! First of all, it's a good chance to meet people from different cultures, though sometimes there can be very strange cultural differences. For example, my African friends eat with their hands, so I also tried it, but it's so inconvenient... As for the Russian dishes, most of all I love mashed potatoes and solyanka, a thick soup of meat and vegetables. I like white nights in St. Petersburg, this time of the year my friends and I very often go for long walks around the city.

After getting Bachelor's degree, I would like to continue my education in the Polytechnic University, then to work in Russia for several years and after that to return to China.

Tien Vo, a 1st-year student of the Institute of Computer Science and Technology of SPbPU:



- I started to learn the Russian language when I was still in China at the age of 12. This decision was made together with my parents, because the relationships between Russia and China only get stronger with time, and the knowledge of the Russian language will help me to find a good job in the future. But if I was getting a higher education in China, I could study either Russian or only computer science, both of which are very interesting for me. In the Polytechnic University I have a chance to learn everything at the same time. And in general, I've chosen St. Petersburg because it is very beautiful: in my free time I love walking around the city and taking pictures.

I study at the Institute of Computer Science and Technology, because I've always been fond of programming. But now this subject is the most difficult: may be because I'm a girl, and, as it is believed, the girls are not very good at logical thinking, though my favorite subject is Mathematics. In general, there are some differences between the Chinese and Russian education systems but not very big. We have similar subjects, such as Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry. But in China, for example, we rarely do laboratory works because we have too many people, there is just no possibility.

For six years of having been studying the Russian language, I've become inspired by Russian culture, so I can say I got used to many of your traditions. The latest thing that really surprised me was Maslenitsa celebration (Pancake Week) with mass festivities, especially when people were climbing a high oily pole – they were doing it so skillfully! My favorite dish is Olivier salad and, though I can't make it, my boyfriend is great at making this salad, he is an American. My plans for the future are to receive a diploma here, and then to continue my studies either in Russia, China or the United States. And, of course, to find a good job.

Dun Hunpan, a 3rd-year student of the Institute of Industrial Management, Economics and Trade of SPbPU:



- I've dreamed to study in Russia for a long time, so when I graduated from the Institute of the Russian Language in China, where I received a higher professional education in "International Trade", I decided to study at the Polytechnic University. By the way, it is very popular in China. My relatives also helped me to make up my mind. For example, my uncle is a businessman, his company has good relations with Russian companies. I worked and practiced in his company, and I really liked it, and I realized it was just for me. And moreover, there are many beautiful girls in Russia, so it is also a weighty argument to study here (laughs).

The dormitory in the Polytechnic University is very comfortable, the rooms are much more spacious than in China. Here we meet the students from around the world, and it's a great chance to learn the history and culture of other countries. For example, I have many friends from Africa, my roommate is Vietnamese, and my best friend is from Turkmenistan. We often cook national dishes for each other, but what I like most is Russian doughnuts.

In Russia there are a lot of amazing customs, which I don't understand. For example, if you forgot something and returned home, you should look in the mirror. Or when a black cat ran across your road, you have to spit three times over your left shoulder.

After graduation, I'm planning to stay in Russia or in one of the CIS countries and develop Russian-Chinese business. And as for Chinese students I strongly advise them to come to Russia not only to receive good education, but also to learn Russian culture and to socialize with Russian people - it's really great fun!

U Tszyalyan studies at the preparatory department of the Institute of International Educational Programs of SPbPU:



- I made up my mind to study in Russia after I had read Russian literature. I read "Anna Karenina" and "War and Peace" by Leo Tolstoy, Pushkin's poems, prose of Dostoyevsky and Gorky. These books inspired me to study the Russian language and culture of your country. I've been learning Russian only for five months and the most difficult part for me so far is grammar. The studies take a lot of time, so at the weekend, mostly only Sundays, I love to play the flute, and walk around the beautiful city of St. Petersburg. Of all the Russian dishes I really like pancakes with chicken and mushrooms, I don't know how to cook them, but I love eating them (Laughs)!

In the Polytechnic University I met and made friends with many Russian students and I also realized that we are very different. For example, if in China several people have lunch in a café, as a rule, one person pays for everyone, and in Russia everybody pays for themselves. There are many differences, but it is so much fun!

Tan Sui Wei, a 2nd-year post-graduate student of the Institute of Industrial Management, Economics and Trade of SPbPU:



- I got my Master's degree in Beijing, and my scientific supervisor highly recommended to continue training in my major (it's oil and gas industry) in St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. Now I'm studying at the Department of Economics and Management in Power Engineering and at the same time continuing to learn the Russian language in the Institute of International Educational Programs, as I want to get a certificate of the second level. In general, I've been in Russia for 2.5 years, I started learning Russian at Moscow State University. My parents, especially the father, who dearly loves Russia, supported my desire to study here. He said: "As long as you're young, it's high time to get to know the world!"

In St. Petersburg I was most of all impressed by the celebration of school graduates "Scarlet Sails". The majestic Neva river, the old ship with scarlet sails, beautiful music and fireworks – it's a truly unforgettable experience! After graduating from the Polytechnic University I may continue to study in the USA. But, to tell the truth, I'd like to go back to my university in China, and become a professor there.

Yui Chenlun, a 1st-year post-graduate student of the Institute of Industrial Management, Economics and Trade of SPbPU:



- In the Polytechnic University I've been studying for many years, I got my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in this university. Then I decided to continue my post-graduate studies here as well. I like to study in Russia: the exams here are mostly oral, unlike the Chinese education system. And one more convenient thing, in my opinion, is that in Russia the highest score is 5, while in China it's 100.

As for my decision to study in Russia, it was my Russian friend, whom I met in China, who recommended me to study in here. I was choosing between the universities of St. Petersburg and Moscow, but St. Petersburg conquered me with its beauty. I even worked as a city guide – I was telling the Chinese tourists about the North Palmyra. My favorite place in the city is the Colonnade of St. Isaac's Cathedral, which opens the best view of the historic center of the city.

In my free time I like to visit various museums: the Russian Museum, the Zoological Museum, the Kunstkamera Museum, the Museum of Transport, and of course, the Hermitage. However, having been here for so many years, I haven't visited all the rooms of the Hermitage. But I studied the history of Russia very well: my favorite period is the period of the Russian Empire. I can tell a lot about the life of Russian emperors from Peter I to Nicholas II.

My favorite Russian dishes are sausage and solyanka. What surprises me here? Well, perhaps, very little already (Laughs). Maybe, the fact that on the escalator everyone is supposed to stand on the right - in China you can stand wherever you like, and also in Russia you're not supposed to speak loudly in public places.

After graduation, if I don't find the job I like here, I'll go back to China and find the job connected with Russia there.

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