

Chinese students showing strong interest in Russia as bilateral ties grow

MOSCOW, June 30, 2015 (TASS) -- Russia excels as a location for foreigners to learn the language, and Chinese students are seizing the chance to learn Russian in a country cementing growing ties with their own motherland.

Reflecting burgeoning new importance for the Russia-China relationship, specialists in different spheres, speaking both languages and understanding the cultures of the two lands, are in increasing demand.

The Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in Moscow is one of the leading state higher educational institutions annually teaching students from nearly 150 countries. It is reporting rising numbers of undergraduates from China.

"More than 460 students are studying at the university, specializing in various disciplines at various faculties," said Xu Yitong, president of the learning institution's Chinese students' community.

"The community seeks to familiarize students from other countries with China's culture,

traditions and customs," she said, noting that each year on September 1 — traditional Day One of the Russian academic year — the community organizes presentations, workshops and concerts for fellow students and professors to learn more about aspects of Chinese culture.

"Most Chinese students study at the Philological Faculty or the Faculty of Economics," Xu said, adding that most graduates continued working in those fields into the future.

Speaking of career options for Chinese graduates, she said "Relations between China and Russia are getting better and better. Opportunities and prospects are growing as well."

While some young people move back home after graduation, others prefer to stay in Russia.

One student, Xue Jing, studying linguistics, said that most of her course mates planned to return to China and find jobs as translators or interpreters, or use their language skills and cultural knowledge to work as travel guides. A range of job opportunities was opening up for those looking to develop a career in business, she noted.

Valeria Antonova, press secretary at the university, noted a significant increase in the number of Chinese students applying for a master's degree in various fields.

"Three years ago, I had about 12 students from China in my group. This year, there are 27 of them," said Antonova, teaching Russian as a foreign language at the Philological Faculty. She said most students who already held a bachelor's degree had usually learnt Russian while studying at Chinese universities.

"They come to Russia and enrol for a master's degree program, very well prepared and with clear goals in mind," she said. "Many of them go back to China and work in politics, economics and culture. Many remain in the [language-teaching] profession and teach Russian in their homeland," she said, adding that Chinese students' interest in learning the Russian language was growing every year.

The Association of International Students of Russia says China takes second place behind Kazakhstan in the number of foreign students studying in Russia.

Adu Yao Nacaise, president of the association, recalled that the Russian government was planning to raise its quota for foreign students who can be admitted for tuition-free education to the nation's universities to 20,000 places, starting from next year. At present, the number of state-funded places allocated for foreign students stands at 15,000.

"Education is just the kind of bridge necessary to strengthen friendship between nations," said Nacaise, addressing a meeting at the university timed for the launch of a photographic exhibition charting Soviet Union and China wartime resistance to Imperial Japan, an ally to Nazi Germany during World War Two.

The exhibition's opening ceremony, which brought together senior officials from China's State Council Information Office and other organizations alongside university representatives and students, also featured the signing of a memorandum to set up a Chinese library at the university.

This will offer new opportunities for students and professors to learn about Chinese literature and culture, and provide a platform for the two countries' scientists to exchange views. **(END)**