

## Research Incentive Fund Report 2020

WOOKJIN CHEUN

Librarian for Slavic and East European Studies

Herman B Wells Library

Indiana University, Bloomington

---

I am pleased to report that my research project supported by the InULA Research Incentive Fund (application deadline 10/15/2020) is on track and progressing as planned at the time of my fund application. I have purchased 10 Russian-language books from Kazakhstan that are deemed to be foundational for my project but have been very difficult to acquire or borrow from other libraries). I received these books in January from a bookstore in Almaty, the capital city of Kazakhstan, and used the InULA fund at the amount of \$250 to pay for them (Please find attached a proforma invoice issued by the bookstore on November 14, 2020). Also, my application for a one-semester sabbatical leave this fall (August 23-December 17, 2021) has been approved by the university, during which I intend to produce a journal article draft tentatively titled “Kim Eng Tkhek’s new novel *The Kims: Resettlement* and its long shadow over the master narrative of the Korean diaspora of the former Soviet Union.”

Four of the aforementioned ten books are by Kim Eng Tkhek (1946- ), a famed Russian-speaking Uzbek writer of the Korean descent. Two of these four books are historical novels telling the stories of *Kore saram* (the widely used endonym of the Koreans of the former Soviet Union) from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the other two collections of autobiographical essays and personal reminiscences. Combined, these constitute a valuable source of information about the history of *Kore saram*. For my project, however, I view them as “raw archival materials” for analyzing the author’s highly subjectified representation of the deportation of *Kore saram* in 1937 from the Soviet Far East to Central Asia, particularly his characterization of the manner in which the deportees perceived and received their own deportation at the time as one of “matter-of-factness” (обыденность in Russian). Such representation is not by any means in the mainstream but, quite curiously, has not triggered much controversy since it was publicized in 2017. My research will address this puzzling absence of response as well.

At the current stage of research, I continue analyzing the individual essays included in the two collections and the 89 untitled chapters of his two novels in terms of their genres, subjects, intended audience, and temporal and spatial structures until the spreadsheet created for collecting them in one place is fully populated, hopefully before the beginning of my leave in the fall.