

SUMMARY

In Grodno province, at a distance of five kilometres to the North from Ostrovets, there is a large village Mali. At the entrance to this village you can see an alley of old trees, that once led to the estate bearing the same name. Here Joseph Goshkevich (1814–1875), Belarus-born scholar, diplomat and traveller, the first Russian Consul in Japan spent the last years of his life. Here he wrote his works on Japanese philology. Here he died and was buried in Ostrovets. His memory is being held in the places where his spirit lives on. There is a small museum dedicated to him in the palace of culture of the village of Mali. The bust was erected to Joseph Goshkevich and the International Fund named after him was established in Ostrovets.

In May, 1995, the international readings in regional studies, dedicated to the memory of Joseph Goshkevich took place in Ostrovets. Besides Belarusian scholars, the scholars from Japan, Russia and Poland participated in them. They narrated about our fellow country-man's course of life, his diplomatic and scientific life, his associates and pupils.

A great attention the participants paid to the historical past of Ostrovets land where the influences of Belarusian, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian cultures mixed. Interesting monuments of architecture tower here, as well as many outstanding figures of literature and art were born on this land. The experts in regional studies and the guests' reports, issued in the collection of articles are dedicated to them.

The concluding part consists of Japanese authors' articles about Belarus and these of Belarusian authors about Japan. This is, virtually, the first attempt of mutual acquaintance of the two remote peoples, with Russia often being an intermediary.