

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dimitar Vesselinov Dimitrov, PhD,
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology,

of

the research works submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position “Professor” for the needs of the Department of Japanese Studies (Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”) in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Japanese literature and culture), as announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 21 of 17.03.2020, with single candidate Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenova Petkova, ScD

By order No. RD 38-150 of 23.03.2020 of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” I have been appointed an internal member of the Scientific Committee charged with conducting the procedure for holding the competition for the academic position “Professor” for the needs of the Department of Japanese Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology (FCMP) at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Japanese literature and culture), and with a decision of 20.07.2020 of the members of the Scientific Committee I have been appointed to draw up a peer review for this procedure.

The decision to hold the competition was published in the State Gazette, issue No. 21 of 17.03.2020. The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of Japanese Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty “Japanese

literature and culture". Documents for participation in the competition have been submitted by the only candidate Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenova Petkova, ScD, a long-time lecturer at the same department. No violations of the selection procedure have been found and she has been admitted to enter the competition.

Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenova Petkova, ScD, was born on 05 March 1975 in Sofia. In 1999 she graduated in Japanese Studies specialising in "Literary Studies" at Sofia University. She started working as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Languages and Cultures of East Asia (2003-2007). In 2004 she successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Male Characters in the Japanese Fairy Tale: Classification and Analysis" [Мъжките образи в японската вълшебна приказка: класификация и анализ] (under the scientific guidance of Prof. Dr. Eduard Klopfenstein and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ingrid Tomkowiak) at the University of Zurich (Switzerland). In 2007 she won a competition for an assistant in the same department. In 2012 she was elected Associate Professor in the scientific field 2.1. Philology (Japanese literature and culture) in the Department of Languages and Cultures of East Asia based on a habilitation thesis entitled "The House of Wonders: Symbolism of Traditional Architecture and Interiors in Japanese Fairy Tales" („Домът на чудесата – Символика на традиционната архитектура и интериор в японските вълшебни приказки“) (Petkova, 2011). Both the dissertation and the habilitation work contain scientific and applied scientific findings which meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the respective Internal Regulations of Sofia University.

Ms. Gergana Petkova has been in charge of the "Japanese Studies" specialty at the Department of Languages and Cultures of East Asia since 2010, and in 2018 she was elected head of the newly established Department of Japanese Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University. An analysis of her

professional biography clearly shows that during the last decade she has focused her efforts exclusively on the development of Japanese studies at the University and on optimising the department's visibility and recognisability on a national and an international level. Her main task is fostering a good team spirit among the members of the department, which ensures the sustainability of this development. Assoc. Prof. Gergana Petkova, ScD, has organised a number of public events (exhibitions and open door days: at the National Museum of Ethnography in 2014, at the National Museum of History in 2017, at Sofia University in 2018, 2019 and 2020), has stimulated the Internet presence of Japanese studies (webpages, social networks), organises meetings with employers and sponsors and expands relations with municipalities and organisations (Lyulin, NAMRB, etc.). In their projects they engage students and teachers in an active dialogue for improving the quality of education, and the results of the conducted surveys and scientific researche have been published in Bulgaria and abroad. At the same time she has managed 4 national and 5 international projects and has organised 3 conferences with international participation. She runs the Master's programme "Japanese Language and Culture" and the post-graduate course "Japanese Language and Culture". She is a member of the Faculty Council of the FCMP (2019–), of the European Association of Japanese Studies (2009–), of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (2014–), of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (2015–) and of the Japan Anthropology Workshop – JAWS (2018–).

Assoc. Prof. Petkova has been invited to participate in international research groups and networks: Doctoral studies workshop at the European Association of Japanese Studies (Ireland, 2019); Timescapes working group (University of Cambridge, 2015); working meeting of the specialists in Japanese studies from Central and Eastern Europe (Budapest, 2019); working group on the promotion and free access to Japanese studies resources (Tokyo, 2016); Dreams and Representations working group (Kyoto, 2015); international working group

Japanese Narrative under the guidance of Prof. E. Klopfenstein (2020). One important aspect of the work of Assoc. Prof. Gergana Petkova is the desire to create conditions for students to practice the Japanese language and culture in schools and kindergartens, the publication of completed student translations (literary translations of “Ise Monogatari” and “Essays in Idleness”), organising public events to promote the country of Japan in Bulgaria and interactive exhibitions (at the National Museum of Ethnography and National Museum of History).

For her active work in the field of Bulgarian Japanese studies, in 2019 Assoc. Prof. Gergana Petkova received the “Japanese Ambassador’s Award for contribution to the teaching and research of Japanese language and culture”.

Assoc. Prof. Gergana Petkova, ScD, is the author of more than 50 scientific publications, among which 3 monographs, 2 chapters in monographs, 6 treatises, 33 articles, 1 textbook, 1 student book, 3 translations, etc. Her research interests lie in the field of Japanese studies. She has published research papers in Japan, Switzerland, Hungary and Russia.

She is the scientific supervisor of two PhD students who have successfully defended their theses: Evelina Hein with a dissertation entitled “The cult of Mount Taishan in the folklore-religious tradition of China (with emphasis on the image of the female deity of the mountain)” („Култът към планината Тайшан във фолклорно-религиозната традиция на Китай (с акцент върху образа на женското божество на планината)“, 2018) and Dijana Nikodinovska with a dissertation entitled “Good and Bad as harmful categories in proverbs” („Доброто и Лошото како вредносни категории во пословиците“, as co-supervisor, 2015). In the “Japanese Studies” specialty she reads a number of lecture courses and seminars.

Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenoova Petkova, ScD, participates in the announced competition for Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Japanese literature and culture) with a total of 27 publications as follows: one monograph, two chapters in monographs, four treatises, 19 articles and one student book.

The monograph “Conscious Education: Examples from Bulgarian Japanese Studies” („Съзнателно образование: примери от българската японистика“) has been submitted as a habilitation paper. The research was carried out as part of the project “Identifying the challenges before foreign language learning and building a strategy for the development of university Japanese studies” and was published as a work of 156 pages. The work was published in 2020 and consists of two parts (pp. 9–113), a conclusion (pp. 114–116), bibliography and references (pp. 117–125) and appendices (pp. 126–155).

The first chapter discusses the nature of “conscious education”, focusing on Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the relationship between Charles Darwin and the development of Japanese studies, the Japanese model of quality management, as well as the educational guidelines of Eastern philosophy, presented under the non-traditional title “Blooming flowers and conscious education” („Разцъфването на цветята и съзнателното образование“).

The second chapter is devoted to conscious education in action. It includes five examples of Japanese ethnography (‘Architecture’ chapter), Old Japanese (‘Auxiliary Verbs to Express Time and Completeness’), Japanese language and culture (‘Japanese Tales’), literature and creativity (elements from Old Japanese language and classical Japanese literature), conscious education in action (following the example of Sinemorets summer camp).

The monograph “Conscious Education: Examples from Bulgarian Japanese Studies” is relevant to our times and provides a summary picture of both the application and the prospects for the development of conscious education in the context of Bulgarian academic Japanese studies. The factual aspects of the application of conscious education at the different stages of the academic educational process, combined with extracurricular activities, are correctly outlined. The chosen topic is not traditional, and the author has achieved the goals set in the statement of facts.

The monograph indicates that Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenova Petkova, ScD, possesses theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific field 2.1. Philology (Japanese literature and culture) in which the competition for “Professor” has been announced.

The analysis of the materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenova Petkova, ScD, for participation in the competition (two chapters in monographs, four treatises, articles and a student book) shows the breadth and diversity of her interests in the field of Japanese studies in Bulgaria and in particular in the study of classical literary texts, the motifs of time, night and dreams in Japanese folklore, the problems of literary translation from Japanese into Bulgarian, etc. The submitted treatises and articles testify to the commitment of Ms. Petkova in the field of contemporary Bulgarian Japanese studies and stand out with the adequately selected evidence.

On the basis of the analysis of the research and teaching work of Assoc. Prof. Petkova, I give my positive assessment and propose to the honourable members of the Scientific Committee to vote in favour of electing Assoc. Prof. Gergana Rumenova Petkova, ScD, as “Professor” in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty “Japanese literature and culture”.

04.09.2020

Reviewer:

Prof. Dimitar Vesselinov, PhD