

The Daily Life of a Foreign Expert

Housing

Let's go back to 1991. At the Foreign Language Institute No. 2, as it was then called, I had a furnished apartment in the foreign professors' building on campus. I especially appreciated the large front and back balconies that allowed me to grow tomatoes, basil, garlic, and even green beans in pots. I was fond of my apartment, which was very comfortable during summer, but winter seemed so long, because we had heat from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m., since we were supposed to be in class then, and in the evening, until 10:00, when it was time to go to bed. In the afternoon, if we stayed home to prepare lessons or mark the students' work, we had to tolerate the biting cold that found its way through our woollens, scarves, and gloves (even inside, yes!), because there was no other way to heat the place. It was the same for hot water: two hours in the morning and three hours at night. The classrooms were not heated, either. We had to keep our coats, boots, and gloves on while teaching. It was still tolerable for the teachers, who could stand and move around, but the students, who were seated