

## THE ENCOUNTER OF EAST ASIA WITH WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE 19TH CENTURY: TRANSLATION AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

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### **Abstract**

This study examines how three East Asian countries - Korea, China, and Japan overcome and translated heterogeneities into a means of communication with Western civilization. Simultaneously, discussions on ways of translation were also examined to compare the stances of each country that accepted Western civilization. The governments of the 3 East Asian countries have commonly encouraged the translation works along with openness to Western civilization in the 19th century. Translation has usually been exploited as a means to rule colonized countries. However, the three countries have spontaneously encouraged translation, suggestive of the need to find alternate approaches to conventional ways in the study of translations in the post-colonial era. In the past, the three countries shared common Chinese characters that facilitated mutual communication. However, their point of view on communication with foreign countries differed. Japan has initiated the translation of the works of Western civilization since 16th century, thus gaining experience in the importance of mutual communication with foreign civilizations. Accordingly, the level of translation and the resultant culture have evolved more than in other countries. China likewise has a long history of translation, but most works of translation were conducted by people of Western origin. In Korea, despite the significant career in the operation of national translational-training school, the public recognition of translation and translators has been relatively negative. This poor acceptance of translation and translators might be the consequence of different results from communication mediated through Korean translation in the 19th century.

**Keywords:** *19th century, East Asia, Translation, communication, conflict.*

## PERTEMUAN ASIA TIMUR DENGAN TAMADUN BARAT PADA ABAD KE-19: TERJEMAHAN SEBAGAI SARANA KOMUNIKASI

### **Abstrak**

Kajian ini meneliti bagaimana tiga negara Asia Timur, iaitu China, Korea dan Jepun mengatasi permasalahan perbezaan budaya dan menerima hakikat tersebut dari segi penterjemahan dalam usaha berkomunikasi dengan tamadun Barat. Perbincangan mengenai cara-cara terjemahan juga dilakukan pada masa yang sama untuk membandingkan penerimaan setiap negara terhadap tamadun Barat. Kerajaan ketiga-tiga negara di Asia Timur ini pada abad ke-19 lazimnya menggalakkan kerja-kerja terjemahan seiring dengan pembukaan pintunya kepada tamadun Barat. Namun, pada zaman itu, terjemahan biasanya dieksploitasi sebagai satu cara untuk

memerintah negara-negara yang dijajah. Sebaliknya, kini ketiga-tiga negara di Asia Timur secara spontan menggalakkan terjemahan dan keadaan ini menyarankan supaya kita mencari pendekatan yang berbeza daripada cara konvensional bagi menyelidik hasil terjemahan pasca penjajahan. Bagi kes Jepun yang telah pun memulakan terjemahan daripada karya-karya tamadun Barat sejak abad ke-16, mereka telah merasai kepentingan saling berkomunikasi dengan tamadun asing. Oleh sebab itu, tahap terjemahan dan budaya yang terhasil daripadanya lebih berkembang berbanding dengan negara-negara lain. China juga mempunyai sejarah terjemahan yang panjang tetapi kebanyakan karya-karya terjemahan ini dijalankan oleh orang Barat. Di Korea, di sebalik kedudukannya sebagai kerjaya yang penting hasil pengendalian sekolah latihan penterjemahan kebangsaan, pengiktirafan awam terhadap penterjemahan dan penterjemah secara relatifnya masih negatif. Pengiktirafan yang lemah kepada penterjemahan dan penterjemah mungkin berpunca daripada akibat komunikasi melalui terjemahan Korea pada abad ke-19 yang membawa kepada pelbagai hasil yang berbeza.

**Kata kunci:** *Abad ke-19, Asia Timur, terjemahan, komunikasi, konflik.*

## INTRODUCTION

The level of intercultural interchange can be identified from measures of the degree of development of mutual communication between cultures through translations. This point of view is a reflection of active translation activities preceding the maturity of cultural interchanges between different cultures. Translation can not only help mutual communication on equal terms between the heterogeneous cultures but can also be actively exploited by both sides that have inequalities viewed from certain standpoints. The works of translation conducted in the era of strong intercultural collision between countries were exploited as a means to rationalize the invasion or the rule of minor powers colonized by great powers. Examples can be found among countries in Africa and South America that were under colonial rule by European countries, or the relationship between the first immigrants to America and native aborigines (Niranjana, 1992; Robinson, 1997; Spivak, 2000). On the other hand, there are cases of minor powers who exploited translation actively for respective survival. These include the three countries in East Asia, i.e., Korea, China, and Japan who were forced to open their doors and were driven

unavoidably by the forces of Western countries in the 19th century. As such, translation could become a very useful tool for both parties in search of trying to maintain respective hegemonies.

Consequently, the question raised is on what attribute of translation enables this kind of exploitation. After all, the translation itself is required to be based on recognition of the differences between the two cultures. The need of translation reflects the heterogeneity between two cultures with inherent intercultural collision. Simultaneously, translation also expresses the desire to communicate continuously with others. In this paper, the process of communication of three East Asian countries that encountered heterogeneous Western civilization in the 19th century is examined on the standpoint of translation.

### **TRANSLATION AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION**

Translation is typically defined as the transference of text written in language A to corresponding text written in language B. However, what is actually transferred in the work of translation would be the messages and information contained in the original text. Translation is therefore a communicative activity that involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries (Bassnett, 2011). When translation is defined as such a behavior of communication, the purpose of translation would then become finding a correspondence between ST (Source Text) and TT (Target Text). In addition, to realize perfect communication, cultural factors enabling contextual comprehension, as well as linguistic understanding should be taken into account, since a term representing a certain idea in one language could be mistranslated into a completely different idea corresponding to a different cultural context. The fundamental difficulties in translation behaviors come from differences in linguistic and cultural background i.e., heterogeneity. Heterogeneity could disturb mutual communication or in some cases, block the communication.

This is called ‘untranslatability’. Thus far, many theorists have made tremendous efforts to address the issue of untranslatability; among them, Ricœur (2004) argued that the untranslatability should be admitted. He recommends that the gap between congruence and equivalence should be accepted by recognizing the absolute linguistic loss and further commented that the moment of admitting the incongruent equivalence leads to work satisfaction among translators.

In addition, he states that the essence of translation comprises an incessant intercourse between foreign and native languages via recognition of irreducibility of the translation between irreconcilable native and foreign ideas; thus, the desire for translating a work should involve the admission of such irreducibility and thereby be spontaneously compensated. Ricœur postulated that the reciprocal loss and gain of ideas or concepts through translation could enhance the role of translation as a means of communication<sup>1</sup> under conflicting situations. Ricœur presented the translation model to solve special issues resided in the European Community. The reason behind the presentation of translation model was twofold. Firstly, it was because the translation model could demand an institutional education of two subject languages mutually situated in subordinate positions to secure and maintain the audience of two languages. In this way, the survival of languages in minorities could be ensured and thereby the minorities can also be remaining as equal communities (in the EU). Secondly, it was because the translation model could “... lead us to dilate the spirit of translation as a relationship between each culture.”

The process of translation as an intercultural communication between two heterogeneous cultures can be described as follows:

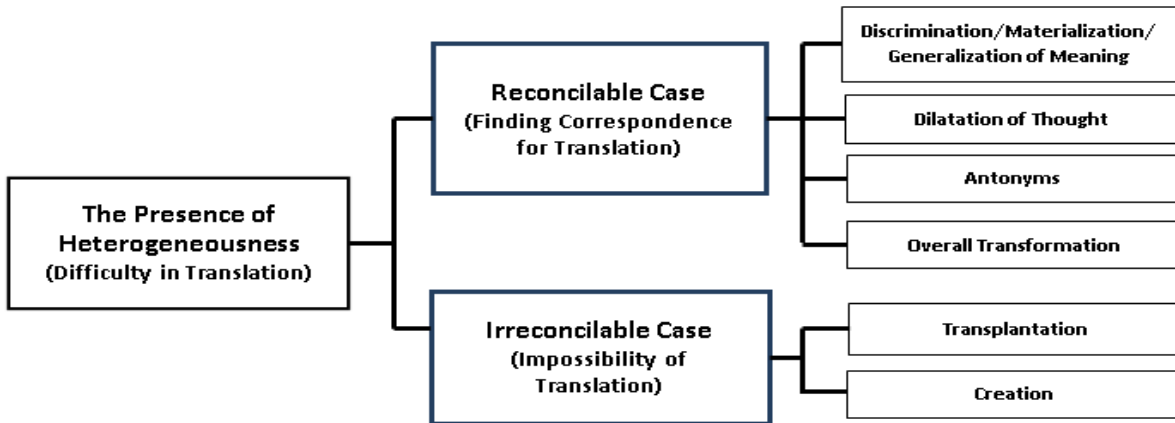


Figure 1. Communication Process of Translation toward Reconciliation

The question remains on the modality that translators would use for such heterogeneity in cultures. The heterogeneity given to translators comes from the lack of equivalent correspondence between ideas. In such cases, translators would examine expressions in the culture of TT that could compatibly compensate the nonequivalent correspondence i.e., they would attempt to find the reconcilability in translation. In this process, translators would exploit diverse strategies. According to Retsker (Komissarov, 2002) the Russian philologist, the 7 ways to substitute the original terms for respective translations are discrimination of meaning, materialization of meaning, generalization of meaning, dilation of thought, (use of) antonyms, overall transformation, and compensation for loss. The substitution of certain original words by using the above listed ways can solve problems in mutual communication despite some degree of loss in original meaning(s). However, it would be problematic if the case is irresolvable by these ways and remains untranslatable. In such cases, translators would employ the following 2 ways.

Firstly, accepting the original term as is i.e., the form and meaning of the original term are completely transplanted; and secondly, creating a new translation.

During the period of modernization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cultural heterogeneity between Western civilization and the three East Asian countries of Korea, China, and Japan was as significantly conspicuous as the respective different languages. Though the willingness of each country to communicate with Western countries was not through spontaneous decision making processes, but instead, the three countries decided to abandon the old policies of seclusion. Thereafter, the three countries adopted translation as a means of useful communication with Western countries. Korea, China, and Japan also made serious attempts to find ways to accept or cope with the heterogeneities in Western culture in the courses of translations. Vestiges of such efforts are archived in the records of fierce discussions on the issues of translation. Thus, it is important to examine the background behind the decisions of these countries to communicate with Western countries through translation and the meanings of translation as they were understood.

### **Three Countries of Korea, China, and Japan and Translation in the 19th Century**

The 19th century holds significant meaning in the history of the three East Asian countries. Particularly, because during this period, the three countries shared common experiences of resistive turmoil that defined the intercultural collisions against Western civilization, which was subsequently, accepted by each country rapidly. This era corresponds to each time the three countries had an open door policy to Western civilization. Before to this period, China was regarded as a center of the world and the contemporary Chinese culture and civilization were

unilaterally transferred to Korea and Japan. Since the Chinese characters were historically shared by the three countries, culture and civilization transferred from China were mostly recorded in Chinese and the needs for translation were insignificant. The three countries were also equipped with existing governmental agencies dedicated to the education or to works of professional translation of the works of major countries established the ongoing interchanging relationship.

This facilitated communication between the classes of intellectuals in the respective countries. The intellectuals in Korea and Japan of prior ages also communicated with each other through Chinese (Michihiro, 1999). However, the situation changed greatly during the 19th century. Western countries who were commonly in search of new markets in Asia initiated negotiations with Korea, China, and Japan for the purpose of commerce. At first, the three countries disregarded such requests, but eventually agreed. Weakness in physical power of these countries may be attributable to their acquiescence; however, their judgment was prompted by the realization of the absolute power of Western countries built on the excellence of Western civilization. Evolutionary phases of the communication of the three countries with Western civilization can be summarized as the sequence of the unfolding philosophies of: Conservation of Traditional Principles; The limited acceptance of Western Science & Technology into Existing Traditional Systems; and Appreciation of Civilization with Enlightenment. The philosophy of the 'Conservation of Traditional Principles' represented by the term, 'Dongdoseogi' actually denotes 'Spirit of the East & Materials of the West'. It was raised by Korea and corresponded to thoughts represented by respective terms of 'Jungcheseoyong (Chinese Identity & Utilization of Western Science & Technology)' in China and 'Hwahonyangjae (Traditional Japanese Spirit & Western Technology)' in Japan. Eventually, translation was commonly adopted by Korea, China, and Japan as a means of communication with Western countries in acceptance of Western

civilization. Concomitant with the changes in respective stances of each country toward Western civilization, in progress translation by missionaries or intellectuals developed into the new stage of full-scale works supported by each government.

On the other hand, despite the shared background of national open door policies, results from the decision that consequently supported the full-scale works of translation show different aspects. The reason behind these consequences could be attributed to the difference in translation experiences and stances toward the translation. Park (2002) emphasized that the national culture of translation determines the level of knowledge and culture and thus, could be employed as a measure of national power. In actuality, the difference in the culture of translation among the three countries also brought about significant differences in the speed of acceptance of other cultures and its consequences.

## **COMMUNICATIONS MEDIATED THROUGH TRANSLATION IN EAST ASIA**

### ***Translation Culture in Japan***

Among the three East Asian countries mentioned above, Japan was front runner with respect to translation. Kim Dong-gi summarized the three reasons that explained how Western civilization was adopted by Japanese society through translation. Firstly, the shared Chinese characters in expressions of Japanese; secondly, the Japanese diction in the reading of long established Chinese characters; and finally, the foundation of translation of Western languages into Japanese that had also been consolidated through the “Rangaku (the learning of Dutch)”. Before the Meiji Restoration that initiated the way to full-scale Japanese modernization in the mid-19th century, Japan had ongoing interchanges with Western Catholic countries including Portugal through which they had received contemporary medicine and guns etc. (Gonoi, 2003; Nishiyama, 1983)



and in the age of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603~1867), Japan also maintained commercial and academic interchanges with Netherlands. Despite the limited area permitted for habitation by Westerners in the contemporary Nagasaki port, the interchange directed and initiated by the Japanese government became of great significance in the context of subsequent direct interchanges with Western countries. Efforts of Japanese government to facilitate interchanges with Western countries bloomed due to the establishment of professional translation agency. In 1811, Japanese government founded the Banshowagegoyo, the institute charged with the translation and study of Dutch books and the investigation and translation of diplomatic documents. This was the beginning of official translation of Western languages in Japan. Starting with the 'Encyclopedia of the Ministry of Education', several translations were made that led the large scale national policy projects. The relationship of Japan solely with Netherlands was followed by the second stage on the visit of Matthew C. Perry in 1853, a Commodore of the United States Navy. In response to the expansion of Japans' sole international interchange with Netherlands to include other major Western countries including France, England, as well as the United States, the Banshowagegoyo later changed its name to Banshoshirabesho in 1856.

The Banshoshirabesho, which was originally founded to establish marine defense strategies against threats of invasions of Western countries upon Asia, became the National Institute of Foreign Languages intended to import science & technology through translations of Western books and cultivate technicians (Jansen, 1957; Miyakawa & Arakawa, 2000). It changed its name to Kaiseijo and was expanded and furnished with additional functions of studying general foreign affairs as well as topics of Western science and technologies. In the Banshoshirabesho, books associated with strategy and measures to enrich and strengthen a

country such as fiber industry, military, and chemistry were mainly translated as well as books of agriculture, law, history, and philosophy etc.

In particular, the translations of Western philosophy definitively influenced the Japanese way of thinking that had long been under the traditional Confucianism that also prevailed in the three East Asian countries. Translators were required to convey abstract ideas of Western philosophy into Japanese, and thereby, terms of major philosophical concepts were translated and established. Terms, like the translations of the original major Western philosophical terms such as ‘consciousness’, ‘universe’, ‘energy’, ‘induction & deduction’, ‘concept’, ‘value’, ‘metaphysics’, and ‘citizen’ etc. were established in the 19th century.

### *Discussions on Translation in Japan*

Issues associated with the translation of concepts or meanings of Western thinking, which were non-existent in the Japanese native language was the utmost concern of contemporary scholars as well as educators or statesmen. Kiyono Tsutomu (1853~1904) who published the introduction to the ‘Critique of Pure Reason’ authored by Immanuel Kant insisted, “... current way of translation of Western books needs serious considerations therefore because it would be greatly influential on the future of Japanese.” Thus, he suggested the ways of translation to adopt terms of original Japanese corresponding to each term of Western language in preference to other terms; or as a next best alternative, to take colloquial terms whose contextual usage would be compatible with the original source terms or otherwise, as a final alternative, to take the original terms (Kim, 2000).

In particular, the contemporary debates on topics of translation were led by the academic institute Meiro-kusha. Among people who participated in these debates, Nishi Amane (1829~1879), Mori Arinori(1847~1889), and Fukuzawa Yukichi(1835~1901) were all famous

contemporary intellectuals. Mori-Arinori insisted on translating the original Western terms by taking the original meanings into translation. For example, the term ‘semi (seminar)’, which was newly coined by Mori Arinori in a way followed the German standard, is still used in Japanese language (Choi, 2005). On the contrary, Nishi Amane interpreted Western notions of freedom or rights etc. through the mediation of corresponding ideas of natural laws or providential ways in the Confucianism i.e., the of neo-Confucianism of Zhu xi. This was an eclectic trial to match Western thoughts with traditional Eastern thoughts of utilitarianism. Fukuzawa Yukichi was interested in the process adjusting representations of Western terms into representations to be described in Chinese characters employed in Japanese. In this way, original Japanese terms were modified with slight deviations from original usages to represent the abstract meanings of Western terms. Choi (2005) took the approach that exploited existing terms instead of the coining of new terms, as an effort intended to preserve the traditional Eastern thoughts of which terms of expressions or descriptions were used to represent the translations of the terms of Western thoughts on democracy. Thereafter, Nishida Kitaro (1870~1945) attempted integration of traditional Japanese terms into translation while studying the philosophy of Kant and Hegel. Nishida Kitaro recognized the concept of reason as the ‘Dori (way of nature)’ and also interpreted the knowledge on nature proposed by Kant as the mental principle expressed in the Eastern thoughts and emphasized that the realization of such mental principle through moral disciplines accomplishes the unification of personality.

The discussions on the translation of original Western terms that had no easy to find corresponding Japanese terms, yielded 2 approaches to translation. The first suggested by Kiyono Tsutomu and Mori Arinori, was the way employing the original terms as they were; and the second, was the way of finding expressions reflecting traditional Japanese points of views.

The first approach was used in the context of transplanting an undistorted notion of original idea. However, this approach made the portion of words of foreign origin become popular current Japanese terms and consequently resulted in the specialization of terms used for verbal communication. The second approach to translation would be an eclectic stance to harmonize the thoughts of modernism with Japanese traditionalism. Examples resulting from this approach are the original Western terms like nature, democracy, and metaphysics, which were translated into terms of *Jayeon* (the translation represents the concept of traditional philosophy of naturalness of Laozi and Zhuangzi in East Asia), *Minbonjueui* (the translation represents the doctrine of governance on behalf of the people instead of the original meaning of democratic community), and *Seongrihak* (the translation denotes one branch of original Confucianism (the Neo-Confucianism)). Due to the approach to each translation, the translated terms could potentially distort notions of the original words, for e.g., the original terms of bourgeois and proletariat are translated into *Shinsa* (gentlemen) and *Pyeongmin* (commoners), respectively.

However, despite the incompleteness of the translation of Western thoughts into Japanese, the Japanese approaches to translation are significant in that the approaches were based on serious considerations that consequently brought about minimized conflicts in the inherited value system among the three countries.

### *Translation Culture in China*

The introduction of heterogeneous culture into China can be divided into 3 phases (Wang & Shouyi, 1999). They are the ages of Han and Tang dynasties in China when the Buddhism was transferred from India; the 16th century when the Roman Catholicism was transferred by Western missionaries; and the 19th century when modern Western civilization was accepted. In

the course of accepting heterogeneous cultures, the translation works were commonly employed as a means of communication connecting 2 civilizations. However, translation works in the 19th century show different features from the previous 2 phases. Levenson (2005) described the difference, "... contrary to the previous contacts between premodern China and Europe that mutually increased respective cultural vocabularies and propagated respective knowledge, the knowledge of Western civilization in the 19th and 20th centuries caused the collapse of China and eventually changed the cultural language of China". The full-scale import of Western culture into China began in the times of the Opium Wars. Yang (2004) divided this period into 3 stages defined as follows. The first stage is the period of the initiation of missionary activities in the coastal area of the province of Guangzhou with the opening of 5 ports after the defeat in the Opium Wars (1843-1860) of Qing dynasty. In the *Haegukdoji* (the Encyclopedia of the Geography of Maritime World), the integrated compilation of the Chinese translations of Western civilization conducted by missionaries and translators of Lin Zexu (1785~1850) include several Chinese terms newly translated by the missionaries.

The second stage spanned the period from 1860 to 1900, when the activities of missionaries became accelerated on the termination of the second Opium War from which the Qing dynasty began to translate the works of Western science directly. The third stage corresponds to the period from 1900 ~ 1911 during which the Chinese intellectuals went to Japan and encountered the Japanese translation works for the first time and subsequently started to translate the Japanese works of the translations of Western civilization into Chinese. Among these 3 stages, the third stage is of special significance. China was regarded as a leader of Asian culture until the 19th century. All the scholarly thoughts or institutional systems originated from China had trickled down to other Asian countries. Contrary to the translation of the works of

Western civilization in Japan since the 15th century, China began to translate the works of Western civilization in the second stage during the early 19th century. But for all this initiation, the majority of the translation works were conducted by the missionaries detached from Western countries. John Fryer (1839-1928) was the representative foreign translator at the time.

According to Masini (1993) he collaborated with several Chinese people in his works of translation and published 77 books; thereby he was also entrusted by several governmental institutions to translate and publish an additional 38 books. However, these works were compared with works directly translated by native people and the importance of direct communication with foreign cultures without the screening by people from heterogeneous culture was raised. Liang Qichao (1873~1929) who published the book entitled ‘The Law of Translation’ insisted on cultivating Chinese people in exclusive works of translation (Son, 2007). However, China had imported several Japanese translations of Western civilization after the end of Sino-Japanese War. The works of Japanese–Chinese translation began along with this import of translated books. Thereby, the Japanology appeared along with the beginning of Japanese-Chinese translation. Kang Yuwei (1858~1927) who was the liberal statesman of China, insisted on the translation of Japanese books as follows (Zhang, 2010):

*“... since Chinese characters are occupying approx. 80% of words in Japanese sentences, the translation of Japanese books would require less works of translation in rather a short period of time. Therefore, establishing the professional translation bureau in the government to conduct exclusive translation works by employing talented people together with scholars to select appropriate Japanese books especially associated with politics could be an effective way to complete the translation of essential Japanese works.”*

Besides Liang Qichao, Zhang Zhidong (1837~1909) who was the bureaucrat at the end of Qing dynasty also insisted that the translation of Japanese works would be an effective and prompt approach to learning Western thoughts with less effort. During the period from year 1896 to 1911, 104 Japanese books were translated into Chinese (Zhang, 2010) and thereafter, it exceeded the number of Western books directly translated into Chinese by westerners and consequently brought about the eventual majority of Japanese books among entire books translated into Chinese.

### *Discussions on Translation in China*

Along with the increase in the number of translated books published in the 19th century, the series of debates on ways of translation followed with the recognition of the significance of translation. The issues of conveying unprecedented new concepts into native language were brought to light, wherein ways of translation like Xin (faithfulness), Da (readability), Ya (refinement) were discussed. However, the way of translation that was taken with utmost contemporary importance was related with the issue of fluency. According to Lee (2002), the way of Da for translation refers to the active approach to conveying the complete meaning of original text by employing ways that even disregard the sequence of phrases in sentences or use inversions or supplements. Yan Fu (1854~1921) who authored the book of translation of 'Evolution and Ethics (T. Huxley) that is regarded as one of the most excellent translation also advocated the Da as the principle of his translation. He visualized that an active translation would be unavoidable to convey meanings of Western texts typically written in compound sentences to Chinese texts usually written in simple sentences. Yan Fu took the complete

substantiality, fluency, and beauty as his principles of translation, among which, fluency was considered the most important because he was of the opinion that translation lacking fluency would be worthless (Fan, 1999). This standpoint implies that a translation would enable the transference of overall context of original text despite certain omission or loss of information contained therein. In other words, it would be a doctrine of free translation. He attempted to find Chinese terms corresponding to unique expressions in foreign texts. The extreme case of such approach to translation can be found from translations of Lin Shu (1852-1924) who translated more than 100 books despite his unfamiliarity with foreign languages. Such a ‘Chinese-centric’ approach was employed as a principal way of translation until Liu Shin insisted that the complete substantiality of original text should be embodied in translations.

On the other hand, works materialized through free translation could vary depending on translators. In other words, the interpretation of original text by each translator would be involved in each translation. Yan Fu who is renowned for his translation of T. Huxley’s’ book, was also famous for his arbitrary interpretation of original text. Yan Fu actively expressed his idea into translations. He also made comments on foreign expressions not found in Chinese texts and translated such expressions based on finding corresponding Chinese descriptions. Works translated by Yan Fu have been criticized by translators including Liu Shin for lack of completeness of original text and distorted original meanings.

However, Wright (2000) appraises his translation of the ‘Evolution and Ethics’ of T. Huxley as follows, “... his works encompassed a much wider range of modern European thought...”. He shows how Yan Fu’s attitudes towards lexical ambiguity, scientific terminology and the creation of neologisms colored his work. His success as a translator is considered to stem



from his ability to illuminate the spirit of the source-texts in light of the Chinese tradition (Amelung & Kurtz & Lackner, 2001). The acceptance of Western civilization in the 19th century actually facilitated the works of translation in China. Thereby, discussions on how to translate foreign languages surfaced; however, for translations in 19th century China, the prominent feature in the contemporary approach to translation is characterized by the free translation based on Chinese interpretation of original texts.

### *Translation Culture in Korea*

Discussions on issues of translation in Korea date back to the era of the 3 kingdoms (BC 18~AD 600). According to the Shindangseo (New History of the Tang), approximately 8,000 students from Korea went to the Tang dynasty (Lee, 2000), besides others. According to Han (1997), a number of Buddhist monks from Korea went to China and further to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures and translated 1,360 books of Buddhist scriptures among the entire 5,000 books or more. The Goryeo dynasty in Korea (918~1392) was under the influence of the Mongolia since the dynasty was ruled by the Yuan dynasty. In 1276, the Tongmungwan (the national institute for training professional translators) was established. The dynasty of Joseon that succeeded the previous Goryeo dynasty emphasized the importance of the education of translation. Thus, since the early age of the dynasty, the curriculum of translation was included in the state examination prepared for the selection of officials; and in the second year (1392) under the reign of King Taejo, the founder of the Sayeokwon dynasty dedicated to the cultivation of professional translators was also established. Since then, the Sayeokwon lasted for approximately 500 years. However, the culture of translation did not flourish sufficiently despite the long history of interest in the importance of translation. The poor development of translation culture in Korea

can be attributed to the following reasons. First, despite the recognition of the importance of translation, few people were actually interested in the translation except for officials who were in charge of foreign affairs. And secondly, people were unaware of the importance of communicating with civilizations other than China. Thus, cases of translation are rare except for some novels translated into traditional Korean targeted toward women of the 2 upper classes in the contemporary society. In addition, translators were included in the middle class of contemporary society for which the opportunities of class migration were restricted (Paik, 2000).

Therefore, interests in the position of professional translators were quite insignificant in society. Records of communications with other cultures through works of translation prior to the 19th century are also rare with full-scale discussions on issues or importance of translation only appearing in the early 20th century. Due to insignificant and insufficient preparations for communication with other civilization except China, Korea was left with no other way but to import translations from China and Japan. There were trials to translate foreign texts into Korean; however, due to the insufficiency of professional and talented translators, there were very few works of translation and most of such translation was actually the retranslation of original texts already translated into Chinese or Japanese. Consequently, the communication with Western civilization was restricted to indirect communication mediated through Chinese or by Japanese translations.

### *Discussions on Translation in Korea*

In this context, the following warning by the contemporary intellectual comes with meaningful significance (Joo, 1926).

*“If we are to say the civilization of Joseon, then we should not take the mimeograph of the other civilization. Criticisms of Western people on the Japanese civilization come from the fact that Japanese had copied and simply accepted the Western civilization. Therefore, if we are unable to create the civilization of our own personality and are trying to simply translate what had already been translated into Japanese then the works of translation would be at best remaining as a retranslation.”*

As mentioned before, the discussions on issues of translation in Korea were facilitated by discussions on issues of literature in the mid-20th century. Western literature was introduced into Korea through works translated into Chinese or Japanese since the end of the 19th century. Actual works of Western literature translated into Korean only emerged since the 1920s. However, these works were almost retranslations of the Japanese translations of original texts. In the 1930s, the direct translations of original texts into Korean began with professional translators who majored in each language of Western countries. Heterogeneity in culture disrupts intercultural communication. While overcoming these heterogeneities, people participating in mutual communication could reach a more advanced mutual understanding. In Korea, people were deprived of the opportunities of direct communication with heterogeneous civilizations, hence, its own ways of communication with other civilization were not sufficiently cultivated. This issue differs from those of translation.

## CONCLUSION

Translation is a representative way of communication with heterogeneous culture. The issue of how to accept the heterogeneity of other cultures that typically disturbs inter-cultural communication is quite similar to that of conveying heterogeneous expressions into one's native culture that may lack heterogeneous expressions. In case of corresponding expressions in both cultures, the problems of inter-cultural communication are rare. However, the unique heterogeneity of one culture makes it difficult for translators to find corresponding expressions in their native cultures, thus leading to disrupted mutual communication in proportion to the degree of heterogeneity. Translators who encounter heterogeneous expressions in one culture tend to try to find similar ones, or use antonyms, to expand or reduce the extent of interpretation, or modify sentences to alleviate the heterogeneity for the communication. In this context, translation is analogous to the process of reaching the final goal of communication by resolving any disturbance induced by heterogeneity.

In the 19th century, three East Asian countries encountered the heterogeneous Western civilization. At first, the three countries declined communication with Western civilization. However, the Opium Wars brought about the realization that they were unable to oppose the Western civilization, and the countries finally decided to accept the Western civilization. The three countries consequently employed translation as a means of accepting Western civilization. In the postcolonial era, translation is typically exploited by great powers intending to transplant their native cultures into minor powers. On the contrary, the three East Asian countries exhibited somehow different aspects from the typical process of colonization. Thus, examination of the historical process of the evolution of translations in the three countries would be significant;

furthermore, the investigation into the mechanism of incorporation of the heterogeneity of Western civilization into each country would be as important. Above all, Japan has accumulated experiences in translation since the 15th century. Ways to secure appropriate translation of other cultures were actively discussed by the intellectuals. In addition, the resultant translations of the works of Western civilization into Japanese employed ways of complete transference of heterogeneous culture or of an eclectic integration of another culture into their native tradition. It was relatively easy for Japan to accept heterogeneous civilization via experiences obtained from the works of translation and these influences eventually integrated into Japanese culture with less resistance. Historically, Japan has been situated at the final place of cultural transference; however, owing to the experiences of translation, it has become the first modernized country among the three East Asian countries. Thus, the contemporary Japanese domination in East Asia can also be regarded as a consequence of its communication with Western civilization that has been realized ahead of the other countries.

Chinese culture was historically transferred to the other Asian countries until the 19th century. Thus, China was relatively reluctant and resistant to acceptance of other cultures. The culture of translation in China is based on the long history of translation; however, most works of translation in its long history were conducted by the Western people. At the close of the Opium Wars, China agreed to the necessity of acceptance of advanced Western civilization. After the Sino-Japanese War, China began to receive lots of Japanese translations of Western civilization. Japanese translations had a great impact on China. The long history of Chinese translations mostly by Westerners was subsequently replaced by the Japanese. China accepted the Japanese modernization and eventually surrendered its position as a leader of Asia to Japan.

Among the three East Asian countries, Korea is the last country to encounter with Western civilization in full-scale. Thereby, the acceptance of Western civilization was also realized most lately. Besides, since Korea has long employed Chinese characters as a way of communication, the opportunities to root the culture of translation were scarce. Despite the hundred years of history of the governmental institute to cultivate professional translators, the reason for the poor culture of translation can be attributed to the completely exclusive stance of Korea against all other cultures excepting China. Consequently, Korea had to accept Chinese or into Japanese translation of the works of Western civilization. Thus, the works of Western civilization directly translated or indirectly retranslated into Chinese or Japanese by either Chinese or Japanese translators further complicated the original heterogeneity of Western culture. Therefore, the heterogeneity mediated through such works of translations actually differs from the original heterogeneity of Western culture. It is rather a heterogeneity modified by the intervention of translation of China and Japan. Therefore, efforts to overcome such heterogeneities are possibly based on viewpoints of China or Japan.

The issue of overcoming heterogeneities of the other cultures through independent efforts, that is, the importance of our own works of translations, was realized by the government only lately. Thus, the lagging trials by the government to secure works of translations of Western civilization could not render effective outcomes. Full-scale discussions to explore ways of proper translation began to appear in the 20th century. The three East Asian countries commonly implemented the policies to promote active translations as a means of effective communication with Western civilization in the 19th century. Japan has emerged as the leading modernized country among the three East Asian countries due to its translation culture rooted in history. Contrarily, China and Korea, with poorer experiences of translation and communication with

Western culture, were affected by the works of Japanese translation of Western civilization that (might have) induced the change toward modernization. In particular, Korea encountered complex experience of acceptance of Western civilization via received works of translation or of retranslation made in China and in Japan that might have repeatedly distorted the original aspects of Western civilization. The disorders in contemporary politics are closely associated with such complicated experiences of the acceptance of Western civilization generated by confusing contemporary translations.

#### **BIODATA**

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