TRANSKULTURALITÄT – TRANSLATION – TRANSFER

Politics, Policy and Power in Translation History

Lieven D'hulst/Carol O'Sullivan/
Michael Schreiber (eds.)

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Table of Contents

Translation policies: What's in a name?

Lieven D'hulst, Carol O'Sullivan & Michael Schreiber

1 Policy, politics, institutions

Following Longman's *Dictionary of Contemporary English,* a 'policy' may be defined as "a way of doing something that has been officially agreed and chosen by a political party, a business or another organization" (p. 1339), while the concept of 'politics' is restricted to the "ideas and activities relating to gaining and using power in a country, city, etc." (p. 1340). Both concepts are often studied in coalescence because no policy can be fully applied without recourse to politics. Even if it is tempting to consider 'policy' as a hypernym of 'politics', there is little doubt that power- or management-driven aspects of ideas and activities currently have a stronger steering capacity than interest- or problem-driven aspects. However, a theoretical distinction between policies and politics is less productive than an analytical onebecause the relative weight given to each always depends on specific time-space situations as well as on the specific disciplines and social practices in which the interaction between policies and politics takes form. As a matter of fact, inclusive approaches gained ground several decades ago under the umbrella denomination of Policy Studies, nowadays a full-fledged discipline with a solid basis in political science and public administration (cf. A. Wildavsky 2006), but which also extends to other disciplines in the humanities (and even far beyond). Indeed, since most cultural and social practices are to some extent subjected to policies and politics, overarching views invite the implementation of relevant expertise into disciplines that purport to study such aspects, and also invite interdisciplinary cooperation between several disciplines working on the same or adjacent domains. In many cases, this may lead to integrated models with coordinated research programs (cf. G. González Núñez 2016).

One would, for instance, expect the study of language and translation policies to meet and interact on a similar basis. At least the study of language from a policy viewpoint has become a major domain of language research since the 1970s (for the most recent period see e.g. S. Wright 2007, B. Spolsky 2009, A. Blanc 2013). Nowadays, language policy covers a vast range of topics, including planning of language learning, codification and maintenance of language use, support given to minority languages, political and governmental agents or instances such as schools, churches, media, armies, and so on. As to 'translation policy', the concept made its entry into translation studies at a later stage. According to James Holmes, it applies to "the place and role of translators, translating, and translations in society at large: such questions, for instance, as determining what works need to be translated in a given socio-cultural situation, what the social and economic position of the translator is and should be, or [...] what part translating should play in the teaching and learning of foreign languages" (1988/2000: 182). Although this definition does not seem to fully match the former one – the role of translating and the selection of works to be translated might appear to be more a purview of translation functions – there is good reason to assume that everything that makes up a language policy may also enter a definition of translation policy.

Has that potential common ground led to an interdisciplinary dialogue? This would at least suppose that the two disciplines involved share some interest in achieving one. As we know, translation studies being a rather young academic discipline, it is strongly indebted to other disciplines in the humanities, including those including policy components in their purview, such as cultural studies, economics and business studies, politics and legal studies or the sociology of literary exchange. At the same time, translation studies strives for growing autonomy, stressing the call for a specific *approach* for dealing with *translational* aspects of language. Such a viewpoint echoes an older one, against which translation studies precisely tried to take a rather firm stand a few decades ago, emphasizing that translation constitutes a proper object or field of study requiring tailor-made approaches. This debate, even if it touches at the heart of the identification and description of translation policies, nevertheless falls outside the scope of this book: our concern is not so much to contribute to a theoretical debate, because this would leave aside a perhaps equally urgent task, i.e. the re-

construction of the ins and outs of past and present translation policies without which, in the longer run, an understanding of the specifics of translation policies would remain speculative.

This being said, the wide range of possible topics to be covered does not facilitate the task of the translation historian. Should the latter break translation policies down into manageable units for the purpose of a historical description? Does it make sense to distinguish subdomains, such as translation politics at large and 'institutional translation', as understood by Christina Schäffner et al. (2014), as a sort of "translation that occurs in an institutional setting" (p. 493), being managed by an institution? Without a proper frame of research the temptation to have recourse to existing approaches is not only understandable, it is no doubt the most efficient way to date to enter the field of historical research on translation policies. The results obtained will – at least provisionally – be able to fill a number of gaps in our historical knowledge and lay bare the "variety of meanings, designing official institutional settings […] but also a wide range of relatively informal situations related to ideology, translators' strategies, publishers' strategies, prizes and scholarships, translator training, etc." (R. Meylaerts 2011: 163). But filling the gaps is not only a matter of finding and describing, it also requires historical self-awareness, and a proper methodology.

2 Historical approaches

It is a truism to state that historical approaches are first and foremost informed by the historical understanding of past translation policies, politics and institutions. In fact, this understanding includes many complex methodological issues of which only a few can be recalled here. First, metalanguage: how were 'policies' named and defined in the past? Are they defined in explicit ways, as laws or rules, or are they to be extracted from other sources (correspondences, comments, reviews, the translations themselves)? Are they culture-specific and domain-specific, i.e. are translation policies understood the same way inside and outside Europe, in literary translation, media translation, historiography and religious translation? Second, categories: it should be determined whether it is instrumental to consider publishers, critics, and patrons as managing 'agents', the

translator's, subtitler's or dubber's aims and techniques as 'strategies', translation 'norms' as tokens of the codification and maintenance of literary language and genres, of audiovisual genres and the like. Third, periodization: what is the temporal status of translation policies? For instance, translation policies designed by the French revolutionaries (L. D'hulst & M. Schreiber 2014) seemed to stretch over a generation only (1795–1815), yet it is plausible that former European hegemonic regimes, such as the Spanish and the Austrian, handled similar policies that the French only had to adapt slightly (without acknowledging their debt to their predecessors). We therefore need a different understanding of time paths and continuity of traditions (an idea that has been easily accepted for the poetics of pre-modern translation in Europe). Fourth, space: where do translation policies emerge and take shape; do they stretch and cover other cultural spaces? Policies may be designed and imposed locally (by a city administration, on subgroups of inhabitants such as migrants), at a national level (through laws and decrees) in the context of nation-building (see, e.g. Kumar 2013; Dizdar, Gipper, Schreiber 2015), at an international level, with the support of military or economic forces (as may be testified by translation policies of supranational organizations (see, e.g., Hermans 2009), international publishers, film and business companies). Indeed, the study of policies benefits from the understanding of the politics (and depending other powers) that sustain it for whatever reason. This attests the need for a thorough contextualization of translation policies.

As may be clear by now, there is ample room for the exploration of domains that apparently fall outside the scope of more or less official or public policy-making such as translations of literature, religious texts, scientific texts, or of other media such as cinema. It may perhaps suffice at this stage to consider a reconfiguration and rephrasing of existing insights on such issues as particularly useful when the outcome puts forward the historical specifics of translation policies and enables them to be interconnected as well as integrated into larger research programs. At least, one may say, the following collection of papers, being one of the first of its kind, aims to pave the way, not through its consistent attachment to a single period, area or type of policy, but by offering a number of interesting and original approaches that may serve as landmarks and inspiring examples for more to come.

3 Presentation of the book

The contributions in this book are partly based on papers given at the 7th congress of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST), held at the Faculty for Translation Studies, Linguistics and Cultural Studies of the University of Mainz in Germersheim, Germany, between 29 August and 1 September 2013. For this publication, all papers have undergone a review process.

In order to illustrate the variety of contents and approaches involved in the concept of translation policy, we have organised the chapters thematically rather than chronologically. Our objective in doing so was to show how policies influence a wide array of discursive practices.

The first group of articles is concerned with the policy of translating and interpreting in power settings, including policy making, from the 14th till the 20th century (Kim, Delahaye, Tryuk, Tawfik).

Kim Nam Hui's article focuses on the history of interpreting during the Chosŏn Dynasty in Korea, especially between the 14th and the 16th centuries. It shows how the official interpreters, as "field workers for diplomatic relations with the kingdom's neighbors", contributed to the implementation of Korea's foreign policy during this period.

Marieke Delahaye presents a case study of translation policy in the 16th and 17th centuries: the English translations of the *Brevísima relación* by Las Casas. According to Delahaye, these translations reflect the political and religious powers in Europe and the colonies.

Małgorzata Tryuk describes the situation of the camp interpreters in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, the so-called *Lagerdolmetscher*. The paper shows in what communicative situations interpreters were needed in the camps, who they were, how they were recruited and how they performed their tasks under these extraordinary circumstances. Nahla Tawfik's paper can be seen as a contribution to the 'fictional turn' in translation studies. It analyses the role of fictional translators and interpreters (actually a military interpreter and a literary translator) in two Arabic novels, one situated in Iraq during the occupation by the US army and the other in 'pre-revolutionary' Syria.

A second group deals with translation policies as applied to a wide corpus of literary texts, both for children and adults (Li, Špirk, Vavroušová).

Wenjie Li's paper focuses on a translation of H. C. Andersen's tales into Chinese from the year 1958 as an example of translational manipulation. It illustrates various types of manipulation and their influence on the reception of Andersen's tales in China.

Jaroslav Špirk deals with three second-hand Portuguese translations of Karel Čapek's *War with the Newts* (1936), published in 1965, 1979 and 2009 respectively. Focusing on the paratexts of the translations, the paper analyses the political, historical and cultural circumstances under which these indirect translations were produced.

Petra Vavroušová's article deals with two Spanish translations (published in 1980 and 2008) of J. Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*. The analysis is based on censor's reports, interviews with translators and publishers and a micro-textual analysis of the source and target texts.

A third group is devoted to the policies of media translation since the era of the silent film (Dwyer, Yang and Feng, Ranzato, Mliczak).

Tessa Dwyer's paper retraces the cultural context of the history of dubbing and presents two films by Louise Brooks. In her analysis, she compares interlingual dubbing and intralingual 'revoicing' and shows the influence of revoicing on the production and reception of a film.

Fan Yang and Dongning Feng examine the Chinese policy on film translation in the period 1949 to 1965, especially with regard to the Soviet films. The paper shows how films were selected for a translation and how they were translated and promoted.

Irene Ranzato focuses on the *Ufficio di Revisione* Cinematografica (Bureau of Film Revision), more commonly known in the Italian film industry as *ufficio censura* (censorship bureau), which was created in 1913.

Renata Mliczak outlines the development of subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing (SDH), from the beginnings of this type of audiovisual translation in the USA and the UK to the situation in Poland today.

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Official interpreters and the foreign policy of the Chosŏn dynasty (14th–16th centuries)

Nam Hui Kim
Kyungpook National University
namhuik@yahoo.de

The rules and principles of the Chosŏn Dynasty's foreign policy (1392–1910) were established in the early years of the dynasty. The official interpreters Yŏkkwans and their institution Sayŏgwŏn were the actors who put foreign policy into practice. To present the officials and illustrate their roles and positions during that time, we shall preface the introduction with a self-understanding and world view of the Chosŏn elite with their Chinese orientation, as exemplified by a high-ranking scholar. We begin with a short historical-political overview in Chosŏn during the 14th–16th centuries and its foreign policy principles. We then introduce Yŏkkwan and their institution Sayŏgwŏn, the implementing actors who were field workers for diplomatic relations with the kingdom's neighbors, though not yet esteemed and recognized as such. The findings presented here are based on the Database of Korean Classics where we can find the historical source texts translated into Korean such as T'ongmun'gwanji (Handbooks for Interpreting Officials), Kyŏngguktaejŏn (Complete Code of Law) and Chosŏn Wangjo Sillok (Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty) as primary sources and other studies on Korean history and language as secondary sources.

Self-understanding and understanding of others and foreign policies

The Korean dynasties – especially Koryŏ (918–1392) and Chosŏn (1392–1910)[1] – adopted many customs and rites from Chinese dynasties. Their texts were almost always written in Chinese in acceptance of the Sinitic world order. Following Mongolian dominance in the late Koryŏ period, Chinese regained importance with the emergence of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The newly founded Chosŏn Dynasty proclaimed a pro-Ming policy and proudly regarded itself as "little China (小中華)". After the Manchu invasions (1636/1637) and the subsequent constitution of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), Chosŏn even regarded itself as the authentic successor of the Han-Chinese (Chŏng 1993: 22–23). Chosŏn foreign policy fundamentally aimed to serve the Great (Han) China and to maintain amicable relations with its neighbors, meaning the Japanese, Mongolians and Jurchen. This principle of diplomacy is called Sadae (事大) and Kyorin (交隣).

The following appeal of Ch'oe Mal-li (崔萬理 ?–1445), then court deputy at the Institute for Books and Research (Chiphyŏnjŏn), makes it clear just how the Chosŏn elite thought of themselves and their neighboring states. The Institute, for example, provided moral principles and textual guides for governing the nation according to Confucian ideology, which made up the core of the politics and policies of the last dynasty of Korea. Ch'oe expressed his deep concern to King Sejong (r. 1418~1450), who invented the Korean script, Han'gŭl, together with some scholars in Chiphyŏnjŏn. Here Ch'oe comments upon the act of creating the Korean script which he finds unjustifiable:

Since our ancestors, our land, Chosŏn, has been serving the Great Country sincerely and in conformity with Chinese regulations and without changing the Sinitic system. [...] From an-

[1] McCune/Reischauer system has been used for the Romanization of Korean in this paper. According to the point of division and perspective, the Chosŏn period can be divided into two or three sub-periods. It will be roughly divided into two sub-periods in this paper: the times of Japanese invasion (1592–1598) shall be a decisive point for economic, political and social changes, so that the period from the foundation of the dynasty until the end of the 16th century will be regarded as the first half of Chosŏn.

cient times, even though the local language and conditions were different [from China], there has never been an instance where a [state] within a Sinitic territory has invented its own letters. Only those like the Mongolians, Western Xia, Jurchen, Japan and West Tibet have their own letters, but it is not worth mentioning, since these are the affairs of barbarians. The classical writings say 'change the barbarians by using Cathay'. I have never heard of Cathay changing into barbarians. […] To make coarse letters [Korean letters] at this time means that [we] are turning our back on Chinese civilization and reverting to barbarity out of our own initiative […], what a great flaw to a civilization. (Annals of Sejong, 20/02/1444)2

It is obvious that all the others, i.e. Manchu, Japanese or Ryukyu, were regarded as barbarians, and consequently, not on the same level as Koreans. Though the spoken languages were different from Chinese, Koreans shared the use of Chinese characters. These characters are called Hanja and Hanmun (Chinese characters and Chinese texts respectively) in Korean. With the foundation of the Chosŏn Dynasty, the state religion, Buddhism, practiced during the last dynasty, was suppressed and Confucianism became the ruling ideology for moral standards. This intensified the identification with Chinese culture and defined self-awareness during the Chosŏn period. Under these circumstances, relations with the Chinese imperial court were crucial for a newly founded dynasty both politically and ideologically. From the perspective of the Chinese, they were the center of the world, and all the other races and states around the Chinese Empire were to serve the "Great Country" by regularly contributing material tributes based on the principle that there are tributes, there are rewards" (Kim Yang-soo 1996b: 6). The Chosŏn court sent tributes to China via delegations and also exchanged delegations with Japan. The delegations to Ming (1368–1644) were rewarded with gifts bestowed upon them from the Ming court in exchange for those tributes the delegations had taken with them – this was the official manner of trading with China at that time. The exchanges between Ming and Chosŏn were also of great economic importance. At the same time, these exchanges influenced the cultural and political identities of Chosŏn.

2 All cited historical texts which were originally written in Classical Chinese, have been translated into Korean. The Korean texts have been used as the source texts for translations into English in this paper. All the cited dates are based on the lunar calendar and will follow the format of Date/Month/Year. The leap month will be marked with the capital letter L after the month e.g. 29/08L/1433).

According to the Annals of T'aejo (19/11/1394), Sŏl Chang-su (偰長壽, 1341–1399), the supervisor of the institution of interpreters and a naturalized Uighur, presented a note to King T'aejo (r. 1392–1398) regarding the qualifications for the entrance examination for the Sayŏgwŏn as well as the number of trainees. His note clearly states the close relationship between Chosŏn's foreign policy and the foundation of Sayŏgwŏn and interpreter training:

As others and I humbly have heard, men of ability should be regarded as the foundation for ruling a country and they should practice their knowledge. To establish schools is therefore of central importance for politics. Since we serve China, it is not possible not to acquire the language and scripts of China. That was the reason why your Majesty installed this institution when the state was founded […]. (Annals of T'aejo 19/11/1394)

What is "this institution" which was established "when the state was founded"?

Sayŏgwŏn (1393–1894): An institution for official interpreters and their education

During the Koryŏ Dynasty, T'ongmungwan (通文館) was one of several institutions established in 1276 to teach Hanŏ (漢語) to people under fourty years of age (Koryŏsajŏryo 19th chapter, 1st year of King Ch'ungnyŏl […] 1276). Normally, the word Hanŏ (漢語) stands for Chinese, but since this is during the period of Mongolian intervention, it might instead refer to Mongolian. In the late Koryŏ period, a new institution called Sayŏgwŏn was founded in 1389. The power of the Yuan declined, and as the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) became stronger, the importance of Chinese also grew. That might be one of the reasons why a new institution was established for interpreting during the Koryŏ Dynasty.

To fulfill the foreign policy principles in a newly founded Chosŏn Dynasty, a systematized and well-structured institution for interpreting was needed. Sayŏgwŏn was founded to teach Chinese and Mongolian in 1393 (again), a year after the Chosŏn Dynasty was constituted. Languages like Chinese, Mongolian, Japanese and Jurchen, called the Four Studies, were taught to the candidates

training to become official interpreters, Yŏkkwans,[3] at Sayŏgwŏn. It was at the same time the institution for official interpreters during the Chosŏn Dynasty. In the foreword to the 1720 edition of the Handbook for Interpreting Officials, *T'ongmun'gwanji* (hereafter *TMGJ)*[4], one of the initial editors, Kim Kyŏng-mun (金慶門, ?–?), describes the tasks of the Sayŏgwŏn, which was staffed by around 600 people, including servants (*TMGJ* I 1998: 39). In Sŏl's note, mentioned above (Annals of T'aejo, 19/11/1394), he suggested allocating one of every three professors to teach Mongolian for trainees for Chinese start learning Mongolian as a second foreign language. Mongolian was already being taught in

[3] The syllable, Yŏk(g), stands for translating and interpreting. The Study of Interpreting (Yŏkhak, 譯學), a term used during the Chosŏn Dynasty, covers learning, teaching and research on foreign languages, and interpreting. Foreign languages were called Yŏgŏ (譯語) (Kang 1966: 326). A Yŏkkwan (譯官) is an interpreting official. Another term for an interpreting official, T'ongsa (通事), was used for people who were usually interpreters accompanying Chosŏn delegations to China or Japan, or interpreters who carried out related tasks when envoys visited. In the official diaries of Crown Prince Sohyŏn (1612–1645) who lived in Shenyang, the first capital city of the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912), he mentions interpreting officials from the Qing Dynasty also as T'ongsa. These records show that Yŏkkwan and T'ongsa were used to refer to interpreting officials in general.

[4] Kim Chi-nam (金指南, 1654–?), an interpreting official for Chinese, edited and complied TMGJ together with his son, Kim Kyŏng-mun, who was also an interpreting official for Chinese. TMGJ, handbooks, bulletins and even to some degree annals, were first printed in 1720 (46th year of Sukchong) and financed by editors with other interpreting officials. This handbook (6 volumes with 12 sections) for interpreters contains the following sections: 1. The organization of the Sayŏgwŏn and the training of interpreting officials (sections 1 & 2); 2. Regulations and procedures regarding the principle "to serve the Great" Country (referencing the Sadae diplomacy toward China, sections 3 & 4); 3. Regulations and procedures regarding the principle "to maintain amicable relations with neighbors" (relating to the Kyorin diplomacy toward Japan, sections 5 & 6); 4. Anecdotes of interpreters, whose names have been handed down to posterity (section 7); 5. Old stories relating to the Sayŏgwŏn and its assets, such as bondsmen, wooden printing blocks and books (section 8); and 6. Brief historical records chronologically ordered from 1636 (14th Year of Injo) until 1888 (25th Year of Kojong) (sections 9–12). After its first publication, TMGJ was periodically revised until the end of the 19th century. The TMGJ, originally written in classical Chinese, was translated into Korean by the commemorative organization for King Sejong the Great in 1998 (TMGJ I 1998, 28) and has been used for this paper.

these early days of Chosŏn rule. In the same record we find information about a person who was able to read Mongolian and Uighur. As such, it may be the case that an individual who studied Mongolian also studied Uighur as a second foreign language. According to the document presented in 1411 by the Ministry of Rites (which was, among other things, in charge of foreign affairs) to King T'aejong (r. 1400–1418), Mongolian seems not to have been popular (Annals of T'aejong, 02/12/1411). In respect of Japanese, there is a record in the Annals of T'aejong (26/10/1414) of teaching Japanese in the Sayŏgwŏn. With regard to the Jurchen language, according to a reference in the Annals of Sejong (25/06/1434), it was ordained that people be selected "who can understand the letters of Jurchen and train them in the Sayŏgwŏn, and appoint them as T'ongsa". Though the Ryukyu language did not belong to the Four Studies, there is, nevertheless, a record related to the teaching of that language. From the beginning of the Chosŏn Dynasty there were exchanges of delegations between Chosŏn and Ryukyu. The Ministry of Rites asked for a trainer who could teach trainees studying Japanese and the Ryukyu language. According to the Annals of Sejong (27/11/1437), it was decreed that "a person who can understand the letters of Ryukyu shall be found and appointed as a trainer."

The education in Sayŏgwŏn covered a period of about three years; the age limit for admission was fifteen years of age (Annals of T'aejo, 19/11/1394). Trainees could become interpreting officials after undergoing a complex procedure of screening and testing. They had to pass examinations in order to be promoted, retain their position or to be paid at all – as well as to be selected as interpreting officials for delegations (*TMGJ* I 1998: 73–99). Students were tested to assess their spoken and written proficiency in languages in addition to conversational and communication skills along with their knowledge of classical canons like the *Four Books* and the *Code of Governance (*hereafter the *Code)*. However, the assured track to becoming an official was by passing the Yŏkkwa civil service examination. Of the three categories of examinations, viz. literary, military and miscellaneous, 'interpreting' examinations belonged to the last. The successful candidate for the literary category – usually members from the hereditary Yangban class – would become part of an elite group in the Chosŏn Dynasty who together with the kings would shape court politics. The family background and social position of candidates were screened for qualification during

the initial stages of the examinations. Yŏkkwa tested a candidate's skills in reading, reciting, commenting, and translating canonical classical Chinese texts, practical conversation and familiarity with the *Code* (*TMGJ* I 1998: 75–80). The treatment of the spoken language during the civil service examination is noteworthy since it reflects the practical aspects of the job in a society that greatly relied on written texts. In the same context, we can identify various measures introduced to enhance foreign language competence.[5]

The descending order of language significance was Chinese, Mongolian, Japanese and Jurchen. The order was subsequently changed in 1765, by advancing Manchu directly behind Chinese (Song 2001: 18; *TMGJ* I 1998: 44). In the 17th century, Manchu actually gained the power in China and founded the Qing Dynasty. However, it took Chosŏns elite more than a century to implement the shift of power from Han-Chinese to Manchu finally being reflected in the order of language significance for interpreting training. On the one hand, it was a fact that Chinese was still very important in diplomatic matters and documents, even though the dynasty was ruled by the Manchus. But to reiterate more importantly, it took a long time for the Chosŏn Dynasty to accept Manchu as the real power, since Chosŏn regarded itself as the authentic power successor of the Han-Chinese. Chinese students and, later, Chinese interpreting officials were going to serve "the Great Country" (Ming), which meant that interpreters of Chinese were generally held in higher esteem than those speaking other languages, especially during the first half of the Chosŏn Dynasty. However, the best applicant from the literary category of the state examination would be appointed two ranks higher than the best applicant for interpreting, who was always selected from among those who studied Chinese.

[5] King Sejong tried to send interpreting officials to China in 1433, which was not permitted by the Chinese court (Annals of Sejong, 29/08L/1433; Paek 2000: 31–32). A regulation – speaking only in foreign languages within Sayŏgwŏn – was introduced in 1442. In 1682, a department staffed by native speakers was established for conversation in the four foreign languages (*TMGJ* I 1998: 58).

Implementing foreign policies

Interpreting officials for Chinese

In spite of its pro-Ming policy, the first reigning Ming Emperor Hongwu (r. 1386–1398) mistrusted Chosŏn, and bestowed neither an imperial mandate nor a golden seal upon the Chosŏn royal court, which were important symbols of recognition by the Chinese imperial court for the newly founded Chosŏn. There were further problems. The first issue arose from improperly worded official documents sent to the Ming court. On the surface, certain 'presumptuous' expressions in the documents were singled out as troubling, although the real issue lay in the Ming Emperor's mistrust toward the Chosŏn court. Another issue concerned the genealogy of the founder of Chosŏn, Yi Sŏnggye (King T'aejo), which was incorrectly recorded in Ming history books and needed to be corrected. Following the death of the first Ming emperor relations between Ming and the Chosŏn returned to normalcy by 1400 when the second Chosŏn king, Chŏngjong (r. 1398–1400) received the imperial mandate and a golden seal (Kim, Ku-jin 1990, 3–6). Nevertheless, Ming history books were corrected not until around 200 years later after many delegations and interpreting officials had been sent repeatedly for this purpose (Annals of Sŏnjo, 28/03/1588).

Envoys to the Ming court were of vital importance and were sent on a regular basis, as many as four to five times a year. The number of regular delegations was determined settled by solicitation of the Chosŏn court (Kim Ku-jin, 1990: 6–8).[6] Chosŏn was very eager to send regular tributes frequently, since that was more or less the only way to trade officially with the Ming. Many delegations were also sent on an ad hoc basis. During the first half of Chosŏn – the last part of the 14th to the end of the 16th century – the Ming court sent envoys 125 times to Chosŏn. This is even less than once a year on average. Unlike Ming, Chosŏn sent envoys regularly, namely around 300 to 400 times and another 500 to 600 ad hoc delegations (Kim Ku-jin, 1990: 45–48). The envoy's entourage comprised between 70 and 80 people. There was an ambassador, a deputy, and a re-

[6] According to Kim, the Ming allowed Japan, for example, one tribute every ten years; for Ryukyu, one for every two years; and for Annam, one for every three years.

porting officer. The latter took care of regulations regarding dispatching members. Since there were very few paid positions for interpreting officials, it was hard for them to make a living. For interpreting officials it was therefore essential to join a delegation as accompanying interpreting officials, T'ongsa, as they were allowed to trade privately when they accompanied delegations to China or Japan. Needless to say, one of the principal tasks of the interpreting officials was to supervise official trading with the Chinese, Japanese and others. Officials for the Chinese or Japanese also accompanied delegations to Japan and China. There was a limit on goods which envoy members could take with them for private trading. The allowances for fabrics and ginseng were set according to the rank and position of the delegation members (the *Code*: 1998, 430). The highest official interpreter was in charge of trading at large. The second highest interpreting officer was in charge of trading with medicinal substances. Further, official interpreters were responsible for taking care of the belongings of the whole envoy delegation and for miscellaneous tasks. Interpreting officials called Pugyŏngch'ea were appointed to manage all affairs during the journey and assist the highest interpreting officer. They also assisted in trading, especially regarding medicinal substances, vegetable seeds, etc. When a Chosŏn delegation finally reached the Chinese capital, accommodation was provided at the designated guest hall. During their stay, the civil officers and official interpreters prepared to submit diplomatic documents and rehearsed a royal audience. Once in the court, they submitted the tributes and conducted official trading. To be a member of a delegation to China was – for both civil and interpreting officials – a great honor for the interpreter and his family, since China was regarded as a great civilization and the source of culture and Confucian ideology. In addition, there were also great economic advantages for official interpreters due to extensive official and private trading activities.

In the Annals from Sejong until Myŏngjong (r. 1545–1567), we find – apart from compliments and praise – also criticism aimed at official interpreters and their extensive trading habits, especially in relation to any illegal conduct. Yŏkkwans gradually became despised by civil officials. One of the reasons for this attitude towards official interpreters can be explained by the rigid social class hierarchy: scholar, farmer, artisan and merchant, and the interpreters were almost exclusively in charge of trading. Yŏkkwans were in charge of communi-

cation when the official diplomatic documents were submitted to the Ming court, but they were excluded from the preparation procedure of those documents, which was one of the most important tasks in foreign affairs.

Ultimately, then, did Yŏkkwans just interpret and trade? We can enumerate their other tasks: working as a court interpreter; accompanying the whole delegation, interpreting on the way – especially as they passed through various Chinese border posts; submitting diplomatic documents; being in charge of official trade; the legal- and illegal-purchasing of books ordered by the Chosŏn court (almanacs, Four Books, books on arithmetic, etc. Not every book was allowed to be bought by the Chinese court); buying medicinal ingredients, horns of water buffalos for bows, and other commodities for the royal court and for Yangban; collecting valuable information on the Chinese court; or even acquiring new skills and technologies.[7] The Ming court sent delegations to Chosŏn too, but much less than Chosŏn to the Ming court.[8] To welcome a Chinese delegation, a welcoming messenger was sent to the near border posts prior to its arrival in the Capital. Sometimes, official interpreters attended as welcoming messengers. Upon arrival in Seoul, a reception was given by the King, and he himself went over to the guest hall of the Chinese envoy, where a court interpreter was needed. The duties of the official interpreters include being near the envoys and acting as intermediaries bringing forward their requests; taking care of the members and working as interpreters at the court. Apart from working as court interpreters, the Yŏkkwans attended receptions and took care of Chinese delegations during their stays in Chosŏn. During receptions officials also collected information on diplomatic affairs. Further, they took part in the selection of young girls as ladies-in-waiting at the Chinese imperial court and boys who were to be made eunuch as a tribute. Interpreting officials worked near the borders of Chi-

7 Annals of Sejong (02/03/1431), also see Kim Ku-jin (1990: 34–45), Kim Yang-soo (1996b: 7–8), Paek (2000: 97–131).

8 According to Kim Yang-soo (1996a: 36) the first Chinese delegation came to Chosŏn in the 5th Month of 1393 (2nd Year of T'aejo), i.e. one year after the foundation of Chosŏn. They visited most frequently during T'aejong, Sejong and during the Japanese invasions (1592–1598) for setting up diplomatic relations with Chosŏn and expediting issues like sending and supporting military forces during Japanese invasions and post war negotiations.

na, or Japan, and were also in charge of interrogating stranded people and educating local trainees.

Interpreting officials for Japanese

What about relations with the Japanese and official interpreters for Japanese? In the early Chosŏn era, the Japanese Shogunate dispatched a delegation in reply to a delegation sent from Chosŏn to Japan. Besides this, there were powerful Japanese local families who visited the three ports of Pusanp'o, Jep'o and Yŏmp'o (now called Pusan, Jinhae and Ulsan). These exchanges took place on more than a thousand occasions. In the first half of the Chosŏn period, around 65 delegations were sent to Japan, most of them headed for Tsushima. From 1423 (5th Year of Sejong) onwards, people from Tsushima were allowed to come and go to Pusanp'o and Jep'o; from 1426 (8th year of Sejong), Yŏmp'o was opened to them too. These ports were subsequently closed for the Japanese as the result of riots by some Japanese in the three ports. (cf. Yi Jin-hee, 1986: 98–99, Kim Yang-soo 1996a: 78–82). Delegations to Japan were sent for various reasons: to congratulate the King on ascending the throne, to commemorate the installation of a new kampaku, to return the visit of Japanese delegations, etc. In the chapter 'Reception of Foreign Delegation' of the *Code* (1998: 236), we find, for instance, that the Japanese (倭人) and Jurchen (野人) should also be received according to traditional rules and rites. According to the ranking of the dispatched Japanese delegations, the Chosŏn court sent the receiving envoy together with the diplomatic documents and ritual gifts to Pusan. If an envoy was sent by a provincial governor, say, of Tsushima, then a local Yŏkkwan from Pusan or nearby city would receive him. From the moment the Japanese envoys got off their ship to re-embarking for the return journey, various rituals were performed and receptions given. Lower ranking interpreters called Sot'ongsa (小通事 [little interpreter]), who normally assisted the interpreting officials, and an interpreter from Japan were in charge of communications during the rituals and receptions (*TMGJ* I, 268–290).

The general duties of an interpreting official for Japanese do not differ from those of Chinese interpreting officials, e.g. accompanying the delegation, taking care of the usual interpreting matters on the way and of all the trade related is-

