

Historical and Trans-cultural Meaning: The Study of Translations in Taiwan during the Japanese Colonial Period

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[Abstract]

There were many translators in colonial Taiwan. It is true that the translators, including those who engaged in document translations and oral translations, were ‘bridges which connected different languages (Xu 2006)’ in the colony.

As long as the languages of the colonizers and the colonized were totally different or different enough not to be understandable to each other, translations were necessary. It is not appropriate, however, to assume that the translators could guarantee stable and clear communications between the colonizers and colonized all the time.

Translation is not ‘an isolated activity carried out independently of the power struggles within and among societies (Delisle & Woodsworth 2012).’ Translators can never escape from the historical and cultural contexts in which they live and work.

The description of translators and their works must not fall into politically-neutral narratives. To simply describe their works as something indispensable for the colonial power, however, does not guarantee a sufficient treatment for us to fully understand their roles. What this paper would like to gaze into is the translators themselves, that is, the subjectivity of the translators.

Two main topics shall be discussed in the paper to illustrate the historical and trans-cultural implications of the translators; multi-layeredness of the linguistic situation in colonial Taiwan and the trans-border characteristics of the translators. This paper mainly deals with the period from the commencement of the rule to around the middle of the 1900s; what I call ‘the systemization of the translators’ seems to have been completed about ten years after the islands came under Japanese rule.

Preface

Min Nan is a dialect in Southern Fujian. It is also called ‘Taiwanese’ as Han people in Taiwan speak it. For Guangqian who is a Hakka, Min Nan is his second mother tongue. He can use the language without any difficulty.

“What is your name?” Thompson asked.

“Niu (梁),” Guangqian replied using the Min Nan pronunciation of his surname.

He pronounces his name Liong in Hakka when he refers to himself. He wrote down the Hakka pronunciation in roman letters on his passport, too. In Taiwan, however, it is often the case that people call his name using the Min Nan pronunciation. Whether called in Hakka or Min Nan, it is exactly his name.

“Niu, it is your family name, isn’t it?”

“Yes sir.”

Thompson dropped his eyes on the document. Guangqian’s name should be recorded as Liong, not as Niu, the same as on his passport, if his name is really on it.¹

This is a quotation from a novel written by a Japanese author, Sasaki Jō. Niu, Liong or Liang Guangqian in Mandarin, the main character of this story, is a Taiwanese in British-ruled Singapore which is about to fall into Japanese hands. Soon after Japan began its Malayan Campaign in December, 1941, he is interrogated by UK Lieutenant Thompson in the residence of a Japanese trading merchant for whom he works as an employee. Liang was born and grew up in Taiwan under Japanese rule before going to Tokyo, the capital of the Japanese empire, when he was fifteen for further study at a commercial school. After graduating from it, he returned to Taiwan and worked for several years in Taipei, followed by accepting the merchant’s offer – the merchant is the father of Liang’s close friend in Tokyo – to work in Singapore. He can speak his ‘first’ mother tongue Hakka, ‘second’ mother tongue Min Nan/Taiwanese and Japanese without any problem and also has conversation with Thompson in English. His trans-lingual practice enables him successfully to cross the borders beyond Taiwan or even beyond the Japanese empire on the one hand, while the author also tries to depict the conflict over his ethnic and/or national identity in Singapore, renamed as Shōnantō 昭南島, under Japanese occupation.

Whether called as Niu, Liong, or possibly Ryō in Japanese reading, or whether it is consistent with the one written down on his passport or not, Liang believes that each of those are equally his own name. The polyglot body is intentionally shown to us readers by the author through an interrogation by the UK lieutenant.

If we essentially embrace the idea that one people has one language, then one

¹ Sasaki (2001=2008)

should have a ‘correct’ name in her/his own mother tongue. On the contrary, accepting several names equally in different languages as her/his own means that she/he would have already been prepared to be exposed to linguistic plurality. The image of Liang no doubt reflects the transcultural nature of Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period, and before and after it, too. Translators from Japan who took steps on the newly colonized islands faced the plurality from the beginning, and, therefore, the languages mediating between the colonizers and the colonized were not limited to a language of the former or a language of the latter.

There were many translators, officially or privately employed, in colonial Taiwan. As for the former, it would never have been possible for the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office 台灣總督府 to establish its colonial governance without them. It is true that the translators, including those who engaged in document translations and oral translations, were ‘bridges which connected different languages’ in the colony as Xu Xue-ji said.

Interestingly, however, little academic research has put them on the center stage in their papers before Xu overviewed official and private translators throughout the whole period. Their sphere of activities was wide enough to embrace Taiwan, China including Manchuria, and South East Asia.² Her paper was followed by other scholars who have scrutinized them from different points of view in the fields of Taiwan history and Translation history. Okamoto Makiko’s deep analysis of translators in the bureaucracy system and their intellectual circles and Yang Cheng-shu’s focus on one leading translator for the court of Taiwan Governor-General’s Office are among them.³

As long as the languages of the colonizers and the colonized were totally different or different enough not to be understandable to each other, translations were necessary. Translators were necessary for the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office until the end of Japanese rule, albeit the necessity diminished as the number of people with Japanese fluency was increasing. It is not appropriate, however, to assume that the translators could guarantee stable and clear communications between the colonizers and colonized all the time.

Unstable and unclear communication does not only mean miscommunication caused by poor performance of the translators, but, more importantly in this paper, indicates the politically sensitive relationships. Translation is not “an isolated activity

² Xu (2006).

³ Okamoto (2008, 2013, 2013). Yang (2014). In addition, it is worth introducing Li Xing-chen’s study on the establishment of police management in the beginning of the rule, which needed a number of officers with suitable proficiency to work on translations (Li 2009). Ishimaru Masakuni discusses the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office’s system of allowance used to encourage police officers in aboriginal areas to learn the languages of Taiwan aborigines (Ishimaru 2011).

carried out independently of the power struggles within and among societies.”⁴ Translators can never escape from the historical and cultural contexts in which they live and work. Those who engaged in translation in Taiwan during the Japanese period and their duty were definitely influenced by the political and ideological factors in the colonial sphere. It is fair to doubt, as Theo Hermans said, whether translators can be neutral,⁵ especially when we discuss them in the colonial context. Berrin Aksoy rightly argued that a context in which translation is taken place and a history from which a text emerges have to be fully taken into consideration when speaking of translation⁶.

The description of translators and their works must not fall into politically-neutral narratives. To simply describe their works as something indispensable for the colonial power, however, does not guarantee a sufficient treatment for us to fully understand their roles. What this paper would like to gaze into is the translators themselves, that is, the subjectivity of the translators.

Two main topics shall be discussed in the following sections to illustrate the historical and trans-cultural implications of the translators; multi-layeredness of the linguistic situation in colonial Taiwan and the trans-border characteristics of the translators. This paper mainly deals with the period from the commencement of the rule to around the middle of the 1900s; what I call ‘the systemization of the translators’ seems to have been completed about ten years after the islands came under Japanese rule.

Multi-layeredness of the Linguistic Situation in Japan Ruled Taiwan

Setting up regional offices 弁務署 would be quite beneficial for local communities. Messages from the upper level would be relatively easily delivered to residents by doing so. Once a problem has arisen, it would be ideal that a chief of the office with Taiwanese proficiency grasps the condition of the people. Otherwise, being fluent in Mandarin would be good, too. If not, then it is also not bad to be at good at Literary Chinese that one can communicate with the residents in writing.⁷

If we could assume a model where the colonizers, who speak ‘one’ language, encounter the colonized, who also speak ‘one language,’ and they would be able to meet linguistically after the one have learned the language of the other, like the case

⁴ Delisle & Woodsworth (2012).

⁵ Hermans (2011).

⁶ Aksoy (2001).

⁷ “Regional Offices being set up” (弁署要着), *Taiwan Shinpō* 台湾新報. 7 July 1897.

of Korea under Japanese rule,⁸ the description of the role of translators in the colonial context might not be so complex as in the case in colonial Taiwan. In the islands, there were several languages used in translation and even an ‘outside language’ was a useful for translation works soon after the colonization, albeit these other kinds of translations were substituted for by using the local languages as time passed by.

It seems that today’s Taiwan, more or less, confirms the general understanding that Taiwan is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society which consists of several ethnicities and several shared languages. It did not take much time before the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office or many Japanese more than one hundred years ago also found different languages among the people in Taiwan. The colonial government, therefore, had to secure translators of various languages as early as possible after the commencement of its rule.

Translators could be recruited both from among the Japanese and Taiwanese. It is interesting to see that the language to learn was no other than Japanese for a Taiwanese if he wanted to be a translator, while there were several languages studied by Japanese translators. Although the majority of Japanese personnel were dominated by those having Taiwanese (Holo) proficiency, there were also indeed translators who could speak other Taiwanese languages: Hakka and the languages of Taiwan aborigines. The colonizers, who had a strong imagination that they shared one language among themselves, had to learn multiple languages to build bridges between them and the colonized in every corner of the new territory. Repeated descriptions of linguistic plurality in Taiwan by Japanese must be a reflection of their interest in and curiosity about a quite diversified society in which the colonized lived, yet they would never doubt that they were those who came to the islands from a mono-lingual society. This is also their trans-cultural experience, in addition to their language study,⁹ which shall be discussed on another occasion.

The Taiwan Governor-General’s Office employed a relatively small number of full-time translators throughout the period. Most of the translators, who were police officers or lower class officials for example, worked part-time along with their original duty. The government started to give special allowance to them in 1898, and the payment was not limited to the translators of Taiwanese; it was also paid to translators of Hakka and Aboriginal languages, but not to translators of Mandarin Chinese which will be discussed later.

As André Lefevere pointed out, translation works are inevitably controlled by the interests of their ‘patrons.’ Although he discusses the translation of literature, which is

⁸ Along with so many studies on teaching Japanese to Koreans in the period, there are also some who paid attention to the policy of the Korean Governor-General’s Office to encourage its Japanese officials to learn Korean. See Yamada (2004).

⁹ I owe this point to Prof. Xu Pei-xian 許佩賢, National Taiwan Normal University.

a form of ‘rewriting’ in his word, it is still possible to invoke his concept to the case in Japan-ruled Taiwan.

Acceptance of patronage implies that writers and rewriters work within the parameters set by their patrons and that they should be willing and able to legitimize both the status and the power of those patrons as attested most forcibly, for instance, by the African praise song, a collection of honorific epithets commemorating and celebrating the patron’s great and noble deeds, or by the panegyric in the Islamic system, which served mainly the same purpose, or by the many odes written to Comrade J. Stalin, or maybe, somewhat less forcibly so, by Pindar’s great odes.¹⁰

The patron, the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office, introduced an act to ensure the number of translators. What is significant here is that the colonial government now stipulated the translation works which needed to be patronized and encouraged officers to acquire skills in accordance with the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office’s requirements.¹¹

The colonizers and the colonized had few opportunities to acquire the other’s languages – as far as oral languages were concerned – before 1895 when Japanese rule began. The Japanese Army and Taiwan Governor-General’s Office, therefore, had difficulties to watch over Taiwanese society and effectively communicate with them. It is worth noting that under those circumstances in which almost none of the Japanese could speak the languages of Taiwan and almost none of the Taiwanese could speak Japanese, yet both desperately needing translation between them, other linguistic alternatives, Mandarin Chinese and Literary Chinese, were available.

There were already Mandarin Chinese speakers on both the Japanese and Taiwanese sides when they met on the islands. In Meiji Japan, a certain amount of people studied Mandarin and Korean for practical purposes;¹² while in Taiwan, although most of the bureaucrats of the Qing Dynasty with Mandarin proficiency had already left the islands, there was a small number of people who could speak the language.

One of the ways used in these circumstances was then called relay translations 複通訳/副通訳 – what a Japanese said was translated into Mandarin first by a Japanese translator with Mandarin proficiency, then next into a Taiwanese language by a

¹⁰ Lefevere (1992).

¹¹ The Taiwan Governor-General’s Office still needed someone capable of working on translations of Mandarin, oral and written, as full-time translators. See Tomita (2012).

¹² Rokkaku (1989). He said western languages such as English, French or German were learned mainly for intellectual purposes while Mandarin and Korean for practical purposes.

Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese translator who transmitted it to a Taiwanese counterpart, or vice versa.¹³

Although there were a few Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese because the islands had been a part of the Qing Empire until 1895, Mandarin was an ‘outside language’ which was used by high ranking officials of the Qing, and most of the Taiwanese could not comprehend it. Although it is beyond my ability to discuss the Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese in this paper, I shall discuss who the Mandarin-speaking Japanese were.

Many of them were Mandarin translators in the Japanese army who took part in Sino-Japanese War in Northern China and Korea before landing in Taiwan.¹⁴ It seems that the proficiency varied among them. Many of them were just recruited after the war broke out and not trained as translators in the army in advance.

It is not clear to what extent the Japanese army or the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office knew about the linguistic situation in Taiwan before their arriving.¹⁵ They might have brought the Mandarin translators assuming that the language was widely used and they would be useful in communicating between the Japanese and Taiwanese. Or it may be the case that they just had no choice but to take them to the newly obtained colony fully expecting them to study the languages of Taiwan on site as soon as possible. Anyway, it is true that those who the colonizers brought into the new territories as translators were those who acquired a language which was widely learned in Japan but unfamiliar to most of Taiwanese. It is worth remembering here that a certain number of Koreans with Japanese proficiency and Japanese with Korean proficiency had already existed before Japanese rule in the Korean peninsula started, and they did not need at all to rely on a language like Mandarin in Taiwan which only a few people on both sides could use.

Because Mandarin was an ‘outside language’ for Taiwan at the end of 19th century, it is quite interesting to gaze into those translators’ careers before they stepped onto the islands.

One article titled “Mandarin translators living in Taiwan” appeared in the largest newspaper then issued in Taiwan on July 7, 1900. This was during the Boxer

¹³ Police Bureau, Taiwan Governor-General’s Office (1934). Relay translations had been traditionally delivered to foreign missions in historical China as a symbol of the government prestige and cultural dominance. It seems not the case that the Mandarin relay translations in Taiwan did have this kind of connotation. See Hung (2005).

¹⁴ Some were recruited in Japan a few months after the commencement of the rule. For example, we can find an a help-wanted advertisement for Mandarin translators by the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office and articles reporting the Taiwan Military Police Corp would employ Mandarin translators. The latter say the successful applicants would be expected to have enough fluency of the language and be good at writing announcements and orders to Taiwanese. See “Advertisement”(廣告), *Yomiuri Shinbun* 読売新聞. 10 August 1895, 12 September 1895, 27 September 1895.

¹⁵ The first Taiwan Governor-General, Kabayama Sukenori 樺山資紀 was appointed in May 10, 1895. The office formally commenced its administration in Taipei in June 17, 1895.

Rebellion in Northern China and just one week before the Eight-Nation Alliance (Japan was one of them) occupied Tianjin. This article, one of many reporting on the movement, told the readers that it was recently rumored the Japanese army had started to look for Mandarin translators because it might need such personnel in the near future. The article also quoted someone's analysis on the background of Mandarin translators, categorizing them into the following five groups;

- 1: Graduates from Department of Mandarin, Tokyo School of Foreign Languages 東京外国語学校.
- 2: Those who studied the language under the hereditary translators in Nagasaki.¹⁶
- 3: Graduates from the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research 日清貿易研究所 established by Arao Sei 荒尾精.¹⁷
- 4: Those who were intensively trained in 1895 in Kumamoto.
- 5: Those who had been in China for years and studied the language on site for commercial and some other purposes.

The analysis also pointed out that many of these Mandarin translators now resided in Taiwan as a result of the Sino-Japanese War and the consequent colonization of the islands. Among them, the numbers of the first, third and fifth categories were relatively big; “about fifteen,” “about twenty five,” and “no less than fifteen,” respectively. And the first and the third were dominated by higher and lower officials in the Taiwan Governor-General's Office respectively, while many of the fifth were in private sectors.¹⁸

There is no way to judge the accuracy of this observation. My research on the group of translators established around 1896 shows,¹⁹ however, that it indeed consisted of some graduates from Tokyo School of Foreign Languages and the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research mentioned above. And not a small number of them had experiences staying in China for some period of time. For instance, some threw themselves into business, others collected intelligence for the Japanese military by taking advantage of their knowledge and language proficiency, before coming down to Taiwan.²⁰

¹⁶ As for the several families of translators of Chinese languages in Nagasaki in Edo period, see Wakaki (1997) and Xu (2011). They were called as Nagasaki Tōtsūji 長崎唐通事.

¹⁷ Arao was a famous Pan-Asianist at the time. He died in 1896 when he visited Taiwan. See Saaler and Szpilman (2011).

¹⁸ “Mandarin translators living in Taiwan” (本島在住の官話通訳), *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* 台湾日日新報. 7 July 1900.

¹⁹ This group was named as ‘Gakuyūkai’ (学友会), whose members had “been in China for a long period of time and busied themselves with national affairs,” according to the following report; “Gakuyūkai” *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. 2 May 1897.

²⁰ Tomita (2013).

Although they started their new careers in Taiwan, the islands must not have been a goal of which they had dreamed. They had walked around and thought of East Asia in the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century,²¹ probably motivated by so-called Pan-Asianism which insisted on cooperation among Japan, China and Korea to resist European and US expansionism. It is likely that Taiwan was a periphery of the Qing Empire from their perspective and the new territory was observed and analyzed based on the knowledge they had accumulated throughout their previous experiences as ‘Qing experts’ 清国通.

Here I have no intention to enter into such arguments as whether Taiwan’s Han people had already become indigenous enough to be regarded as a different ethnicity from Mainland Han people when Taiwan was ceded to Japan. What I want to discuss is the fact that under those circumstances very few on the Japanese side had enough fluency in the languages of Taiwan, but there were those who had already learned an ‘outside language’ and had experienced or studied the society where the language, Mandarin, was used.

As mentioned above, the role of Mandarin translators diminished as time passed by.²² The effectiveness of another language as a communication tool between the colonizers and the colonized, however, continued to exist throughout the period, although its role changed significantly. It is Literary Chinese or Kanbun 漢文 in Japanese reading. To call the written form as a ‘language’ might be considered as inappropriate, but it was definitely the case that it effectively functioned between the colonizers and colonized as a tool for mutual comprehension, or for more aesthetic purposes like when enjoying the composing and singing of poems together even without sharing a common oral language.

Successfully communicating in Literary Chinese does not necessarily mean that they wrote ‘correctly’ on every occasion. If you stick to the traditional standard of Literary Chinese, it would be the case that a more loose or ‘incorrect’ style was often used, especially in practical situations. In any case, however, this kind of communication would never have been realized unless East Asia, including Taiwan, the Chinese continent and the Japanese archipelago, traditionally did not share the common written language and scholarly fruits accumulated by the language. The language did not correspond so much to oral languages spoken in each part of the region, so people had to intentionally learn it.²³ It might not be accurate to regard it as

²¹ Kuroki (2005).

²² The court of the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office possibly still needed Mandarin translators by the middle of the 1900s. It seems that their necessity in other areas was extinguished much earlier. See Ōga (1929).

²³ Komori (2007). Saitō (2005).

one language because localized readings of the language had appeared in each corner of the region. Nevertheless, those with reading and writing proficiency of Literary Chinese, regardless of their mother tongue or acquired language(s), could basically share the writing system and an aesthetic standard in common.

It is true that the Taiwan Governor-General's Office tried to bring Taiwan out from the 'Cosmo of the Chinese Empire,' and make the Japanese rule of Taiwan rise to the surface on the circle of Chinese civilization.²⁴ Literary Chinese, a compulsory language for intellectuals in the Cosmo, however, was useful for Japanese who held the skill when they were communicating with Taiwanese literates.²⁵

Literary Chinese would never guarantee supremacy of the colonizers because the language, unlike Japanese, could not be owned solely by them. Moreover, since the language was regarded as originating from the culture of the colonized, use of the language tended to upset or disrupt the colonial power relations; for example, the colonized might have laughed at 'clumsy' sentences or poems composed by the colonizers. It might be the case that the Japanese were forced to admit their intellectual 'inferiority' in spite of the fact that they were the colonizers at least politically. Use of the languages of Taiwan by Japanese, on the other hand, had little possibility to produce that kind of ironic situation because the languages were learned only for practical purposes and not accompanied by the high esteem as was Literary Chinese.

Before ending this chapter, let me discuss something that happened at the latter half of the period, around 1930.

Because of this initiative held by the colonized and trans-cultural and trans-border nature of Literary Chinese, it had a unique development in Taiwan. By absorbing various elements from the languages of Taiwan, vernacular Chinese, Japanese and so forth, into their own writing system, Taiwanese society gave birth to and raised up a new written style. It is, what Chen Peifeng called, Colonial Literary Chinese 殖民地漢文, which differed both from the written vernacular Chinese and traditional standard. The newly developing creolized style, which might have become 'Literary Taiwanese' one day, though it did not, had been expanding its community of reading and writing in Taiwan. It was difficult even for Chinese literates and Japanese with the proficiency to join the community because the style was so unique that they often could not understand what the Taiwanese wrote. That means that the former

²⁴ Komagome (1996).

²⁵ The 'literacy' of Literary Chinese, for "Taiwanese literates" or for "Japanese who held the skill" must have been varied. Communications in the language which is discussed in this paper, therefore, include a wide variety of practice settings from relatively simple messaging on memorandum up to literary exchanges in poems between Taiwanese and Japanese. For the latter, see Yang (2000).

community of Taiwanese literates, some Japanese and possibly some who came to the islands under Japanese rule from China which shared the traditional Literary Chinese nearly collapsed. We can find some voices in the Taiwan Governor-General's Office concerned about the number and ability of personnel who were responsible for censoring the publications in Taiwan.²⁶

Trans-Border Characteristics of the Translators

Jean Delisle and Judith Woodsworth, quoted above, also pointed out as follows;

Most translators work well, and safely, within the perimeters drawn for them by the political powers of their time. The relatively rare translators who break with the norms of their society do so because they are able to make use of delegated power, because they are able to exploit their insertion between contradictory forces and because their multiple forms of employment sometimes allow them more social authority than is usual. But the history of translation is also populated with its martyrs, those who contravene the rules or overstep the bounds that have been defined for them by the powers that be, and who consequently suffer banishment, punishment and even death.²⁷

Staying and working within those perimeters would guarantee safety not only for translators themselves but also for their patrons. Translators, however, are often tempted to cross the border between 'us' and 'them' because they have the means to do so, that is proficiency in their language(s) and the knowledge of their culture(s). It might be an exciting and pleasant journey for the translators but would not be welcomed by the patrons. More accurately, they could feel threatened when they found the possibility that the translators could destabilize political relations. In colonial Taiwan, especially at the beginning of its rule, the Taiwan Governor-General's Office or Japanese on the islands, also could not escape from feeling an uncertain fear toward their translators; "Are they faithful translators for us?," "Do they secretly communicate with Taiwanese society?"

First I would like to introduce a "dialogue conversation" between Taiwanese and Japanese that appeared in a newspaper in 1896.

A: I have heard that the Taihoku Prefecture recently decided to recruit Taiwanese lower-ranking police officers. That has good sides and bad sides.

B: Why is that?

²⁶ Chen (2012). Tomita (2012).

²⁷ Delisle and Woodsworth (2012).

A: They would be helpful searching for thieves. But they could commit bad things if we don't supervise them well.²⁸

As this shows, Taihoku Prefecture 台北県 decided to hire Taiwanese police officers 警吏 in September 1896. It is no doubt that they often played the role of translators between Japanese police officers and Taiwanese society, although they were only required to have sufficient proficiency to read orders issued by the colonial government, quite likely in Literary Chinese, and enough literacy to communicate in writing, but not required to have Japanese proficiency.²⁹ While person A said the police could rely on the Taiwanese officers for their daily duty, he also talked about the acts of the officers which could not be supervised.

Second is the Taiwan Governor-General's order to chiefs of the courts and prosecutors in 1898 which called their attentions to 'problems' caused by Taiwanese 'relay translators.'

The Civil Governor of the Taiwan Governor-General's Office has already stipulated that the highest level of cautiousness should be taken when recruiting relay translators and when supervising them to try to prevent evil from happening. Recently, however, not a small number of local residents have anonymously claimed that some of the relay translators have committed bad behavior like leaking official secrets, receiving bribes and so forth.³⁰

Although "bad behaviors" became a headache for the government, it was almost impossible to fully supervise and control their work. Taiwanese translators, after all, originated from the colonized society. Employing them was always accompanied by a certain amount of risk for the rulers.

If the Taiwanese translators were not trustworthy enough, could Japanese translators solve the problem? Actually, it was not automatically the case. Someone from 'our side' (the Japanese side) also might not necessarily be faithfully working faithfully for their patrons.³¹

The group of translators established around 1896, as mentioned above, mainly consisted of those who had experiences staying in China or studying Mandarin. Those who joined this group sometimes actively expressed their views or dissatisfaction toward the policy makers of the Taiwan Governor-General's Office, of whom many

²⁸ "Japanese-Taiwanese Conversation (6)" (日台会話(六)), *Taiwan Shinpō*. 27 September 1896. In the article, person A is marked as "○," and person B as "△" at the beginning of each line.

²⁹ Police Bureau, Taiwan Governor-General's Office (1933).

³⁰ "1898 The Archives of the Taiwan Governor-General's Office 台湾総督府公文類纂, Permanent preservation 4." No.242-25.

³¹ Takeda (2008).

had different intellectual backgrounds from those translators. One record in Gotō Shinpei Documents 後藤新平文書 shows that Gotō, who had served as the Civil Governor 民政長官 of the office from 1898 to 1906 and even Kodama Gentarō 児玉源太郎, the Taiwan Governor-General from 1898 to 1906 were cautious about their behaviors.³² The images of Taiwan embraced by the ‘Qing expert’ translators and high ranking officials of the colonial government were not the same.

The differences sometimes caused conflicts between them, and finally in 1899, the *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō* 台湾日日新報, the mouthpiece of the colonial government, heavily attacked the translators in its editorial. It insisted that they were no more than language mediators and should be only like telephones or signal flags. And it also criticized them for neglecting their duty as translators and often trying to incite troubles between the government and the people or among them.³³ The paper and the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office were quite likely behind the attack and succeeded in weakening their power.³⁴ The translators were systematized into the mechanism provided by the government, and their voices were never directed against their patron again.

If they did not come to the new territory with the background of being a ‘Qing expert,’ they would not have been viewed as a ‘resistance group’ by the government. The various kinds of trans-cultural experiences of the members, for instances, traveling around East Asia, moving from the Chinese continent to Taiwan, from the sphere where they could act on their political motivation or commercial interests to where they were just translators who of necessity were under the supervision of colonial bureaucrats – encouraged them to take aggressive attitudes, but only to fail. It is interesting to find that many of the members afterwards left Taiwan to China for their new careers, especially when the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904 and when the Japanese army needed so many translators, many of them in Mandarin, in or around the battle fields in Northern China.³⁵

It is worth noting here one translator’s words before closing this chapter. His name is Ōya Hanichirō 大屋半一郎, a member of the group of translators. He died in October 1897 at the age of 34 when he was working for Taizhong district court. He had experience traveling around China. When he was in the Hankou 漢口 branch of

³² Matsumoto and Takino (1898).

³³ “Sin of Translators” (通訳の罪悪), *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. 18 May 1899.

³⁴ An article of the paper quoted the members of the group as voicing strong suspicions of the linkage between Kodama and Gotō’s views and the editorial.

³⁵ Translators employed then by the army also included those who could speak Russian, Korean, English, French or “Native languages of Sakhalin.” JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Record アジア歴史資料センター), Ref. C06040186300 (The National Institute for Defense Studies 防衛省防衛研究所).

the Rakuzendō Pharmacy 樂善堂,³⁶ he acted in concert with Arao Sei, quoted above, the founder of the Institute for Sino-Japanese Commercial Research. He also went to Korea in 1891, followed by going back to Tokyo where he opened a school teaching Mandarin. He accompanied the Japanese army as a translator during the Sino-Japanese War before coming down to Taiwan. A newspaper article reporting Ōya's death introduced his words which he often repeated.

Translators should not be satisfied only with oral and writing translations. Our superiors, however, do not understand it. They do not let us do what we want to do and are happy if we do not make mistakes.

In the view of the government, they were just as translators, not someone who was allowed to cross the border between the colonizers and the colonized. Sometimes they could cross over bridges and stay on the other side, or go back and forth over the bridges trying to mediate conflicts based on their own volition, not on the orders of the government. Such behavior, however, was thought by the Taiwan Governor-General's Office not only as an act of arrogation but also as a serious disturbance to its rule.

Conclusion

The translators with the background of being Qing experts did not get satisfaction only from the work their superiors requested. They tried to understand and analyze the Taiwanese society from their own perspective and went deeper into it. That resulted in widening the space which the Taiwan Governor-General's Office could not control and led to a greater sense of caution against the translators. The translators were not thought to be as bridges between the government and the Taiwanese society by the former any more.

Still, translators were indispensable to the government. 'The systemization of the translators' was desperately needed in this sense and it seemed to be proceeding around 1900.

It is curious to see the timeline around the introduction of the special allowance for the translators in April 1898. The appointments of Kadama and Gotō to the Taiwan Governor-General's Office were soon followed by the introduction.³⁷ Two months after the introduction, a short piece appeared in a readers' column of *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. It quoted a rumor that Gakuyūkai was trying to defy the new

³⁶ Rakuzendō Pharmacy, established by Kishida Ginkō 岸田吟行 in 1880 in Shanghai, was famous for being a place where Pan-Asianists gathered.

³⁷ The allowance itself had been planned even before their appointments.

administration led by Kadama and Gotō, but was soon refuted by the group.³⁸ And the editorial criticizing the ‘veteran’ translators was published about a year after the introduction. Although verification of a direct relation between the allowance system and the criticism cannot be confirmed, it is still possible to read a scenario wherein ‘the systemization of the translators,’ which enabled a ‘stable supply’ of translators afterwards, was the turning point in the relationship between the colonial government and the conventional translators, some of whom left Taiwan to China. The others were absorbed into the new system of the Taiwan Governor-General’s Office. The trans-cultural and trans-border characteristics of the translators who had put themselves into the multi-layered linguistic and cultural environment in East Asia lost its strength as an advantage for the translators in the colony.

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³⁸ A contribution to *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. 4 June 1898. “A Demand for Retraction” (取消申込), *Taiwan Nichinichi Shinpō*. 7 June 1898.

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