

## **Introduction: Diverse Voices in Translation Studies in East Asia**

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A characteristic of translation studies is its integrative view of translators, readers, publishers and other players, together with their motivations and expectations, through the consideration of social, cultural, historical and political factors. This indicates the importance of local context in translation studies research. Although the discipline largely developed in North America and Europe, there is also a growing interest in translation in other parts of the world. However, it often appears that this interest in ‘non-Western’ translation studies is not matched by sufficient research work to explore regional particularities and diversity. To address this bias, it is useful to begin the discussion by asking what ‘translation studies’ constitutes in each region and culture. We believe that this question can be meaningfully addressed only after having established a shared platform showcasing the diversity of backgrounds and approaches to translation. This volume is intended to contribute to the development of such a platform for the discussion of translation in East Asia by presenting research in translation with its distinctive regional voices, while also maintaining a dialogue with ‘Western’ translation studies.

East Asia has a rich tradition of translation. As Peter Kornicki explains in this volume, knowledge transfer and cultural exchange were historically active in East Asia, originating from the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. Translation in China’s neighbouring countries centred around the Chinese source texts, including Buddhist

scriptures transmitted to China from India and Chinese Classics. This played a significant role in shaping the languages and cultures of Korea and Japan. At the turn of the twentieth century, China, Korea and Japan came under Western influence as the colonial powers imposed their presence in Asia. The paradigm of translation activities shifted, with a heightened focus on European and North American source texts. Although the three countries had their own experiences of modernization, these were also inter-related on different levels. In more recent years, the circulation of knowledge and innovative ideas in different modes has advanced and diversified, extending to areas such as fashion, popular culture and the entertainment industry. Translation practices in East Asia have flourished against such a background. They appear in various forms and styles, depending on the translational requirements for each situation. By examining the characteristics and features of translation through time and space, one can explore the dynamics of translation practised in East Asia. The contributors to this volume bring together different expertise and perspectives in translation studies, such as translational activities with a political slant, literary translation, the professional translation industry and transcreation.

This volume makes these diverse voices available in the English language, our current *lingua franca*. Research on translation in East Asia is often reported in local languages, and is therefore not readily accessible to the international readership. Such language barriers must not be ignored, but they are too often glossed over. Because regional primary sources will never be fully accessible to interested international research communities whose research areas lie outside that particular region (those primary sources warrant life-long study of and immersion in the source culture), case-study type material with a focus on translation is possibly the next best option for international researchers to access these sources. There is merit in conducting such studies without

unduly confounding the presentation of the sources to be used in developing theoretical concepts that may be specific to translation in each region. One might wonder whether enough works of this kind are available — for historic and contemporary primary sources from East Asia, this is certainly not the case. Many important primary resources remain unexplored in regional archives even within the local research communities, and documentation of such sources in English is rare. Yet, this is so vital for the discussion of area-based translation and translation studies, considering social, historical and political differences between regions, as well as differences in belief, religion, social conventions and so on. Without understanding these contexts and local translation practices, how do we discuss translation theory relevant to each region?

By presenting these primary sources together with their cultural and historic contexts in English, this volume can contribute to the discussion of translation studies in East Asia among the community of international researchers. It is designed to provide audiences who are interested in translation in East Asia with access to the rich and distinctive cultures of the region. It emphasizes aspects of translation and translation studies where the particularities of East Asia and its regions are especially pronounced. This includes research methods. East Asian cultures generally put stronger emphasis on tradition and practice rather than theoretical constructs. The writing style of research in translation in East Asia therefore tends to be descriptive and nuanced. Such ‘descriptive’ research can offer the advantage of making it accessible and interesting for non-expert audiences as well.

The shared platform that we aim to contribute to can further explore theoretical approaches in translation studies. Translation practices in East Asia developed in cultural backgrounds that differ from those in Western contexts. How the translators, readers,

publishers and other players operate, as well as their motivations and expectations, are all subject to local factors. The concept of translation, the role translation plays in society, and the status of translators are often different from those in Western contexts. Research in East Asia can therefore offer distinctive and different perspectives from those in Western-oriented translation studies and can also explore whether translation theories of Western origin are relevant when discussing translation in China, Korea and Japan. This would contribute to more inclusive discussions in the field of translation studies overall.

#### *Background of the book*

This volume is derived from the first East Asian Translation Studies (EATS) conference held in 2014. Nana Sato-Rossberg and Gloria Lee jointly started to plan the conference on East Asian Translation Studies in 2011. It took three years to get off the ground, but finally the EATS conference premiered in 2014 in the UK, followed by the second EATS conference in Tokyo in 2016. Five out of the eight contributors to this book were presenters at the first EATS conference. Sato-Rossberg and Lee encountered a challenge at this conference which is often unavoidable at international conferences but will require careful consideration in the longer term. Scholars who research translation in East Asian languages often do not give oral presentations or publish their work in English. However, due to the lack of a common language in this region, the conference's official language had to be English. This is not ideal, because participation in the conference is inevitably limited to those who speak English. As a result, many participants were working on only one East Asian region or on translation between one East Asian language and a Western language, usually English. When compiling this volume, this limitation was addressed by

including one chapter that examines TV-drama subtitling from Korean into Japanese. This chapter was originally written in Japanese and has been translated into English. It seems vitally important to promote the translation of research materials in order to increase the volume and diversity of translation research — after all, we are working in the field of translation studies. All other papers in this volume were written by the authors in English.

### *Organization of the book*

The book consists of three sections, all of which feature translation and translation studies in East Asia. In the first section ‘Translation in Historical and Political Contexts’, the phenomena addressed by the authors are specific to the history and political developments of countries in East Asia. ‘The Origins and Development of Translation Traditions in Pre-Modern East Asia’ by **Peter Kornicki** offers a historical overview, focusing on translation activities in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam up until the end of the nineteenth century. This chapter operates as an introduction to this volume by providing the context in which later translation traditions developed as well as laying out regional particularities and interlinkages. It discusses the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese, followed by the examination of translation activities in the neighbouring countries, in which the source texts were almost exclusively in the Chinese language.

**Sharon Lai** examines multiple cases of pirated translation in ‘Erasing the Translators: A History of Pirated Translation in Taiwan, 1949–1987’, focusing on the historical background and the political factors which gave rise to this phenomenon. During this period, piracy supported the interests of Taiwan’s new political leaders.

However, after the identity of the translator and the temporal and spatial context were erased, translation was conceived as nothing more than a decontextualized output. Looking at translation as a political act, Lai brings our attention to the significance of tracking down the ‘true history’ of translation — that is, the ignorance of history must be redressed before the translators and their works can be properly examined.

**Nana Sato-Rossberg** investigates early developments in translation studies in Japan in ‘The Rise and Stumble of Japanese Translation Studies in the 1970s–80s’. Based on an analysis of the forgotten and recently rediscovered Japanese journal *Kikan hon'yaku* [*Quarterly Translation*] (1973–5), she describes the academic understanding of Japanese translation studies and its scope in this early phase, compares it with current positions, and explores why Japanese academia and translation practitioners became estranged in the 1980s, when translation studies in Japan faded into the background. Sato-Rossberg argues that, due to cultural differences, market powers similar to those which drove the rise of translation studies in Europe had entirely different implications in Japan. From her discussion, the contours of translation studies specific to Japan and wider East Asia become apparent.

The second section ‘Women Translators and Women in Translation’ highlights the roles and motivations of women translators. In her ‘Translation as Writing: Wakamatsu Shizuko’s Empathetic Translation as a Creative Literary Art’, **Akiko Uchiyama** features one of the earliest translators of Western literature in Japan, Wakamatsu Shizuko (1864–1896), who is known as the first translator of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886). Wakamatsu is described as an active agent of translation who consciously chose works to translate that she thought would convey her way of thinking. Her translation was motivated by her wish to contribute to women’s education and moral development in society. Uchiyama

argues that Wakamatsu's empathetic engagement with the original, based on her literary aspirations, enabled her to produce translations that attracted critical acclaim.

The other chapter in this section 'Translating/Transforming Women in North Korea: Traditions, Foreign Correspondences and the Creation of the Socialist Woman in the 1950s and 60s' offers a rare insight into a country that is often described as one of the most reclusive in the world. **Theresa Hyun** examines translations and original writings by and about women to investigate the role translations played during the formative phase of socialist North Korea. Hyun's research reveals how their translations contributed to the creation of the socialist woman ideal in the 1950s and 60s. She also discusses the influence of North Korean government policies on the woman ideal, which imposes on women double roles of the traditional wife and mother and the worker outside the home enlisted to build the socialist nation.

The third section 'New Media Translation' covers the rapidly developing area of new media translation. The authors analyse audio-visual material in their particular East Asian context or from their local perspectives. Addressing an exciting recent topic, **Thomas Kabara** writes about 'The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fan Subbing: Tradition and Innovation in Audiovisual Translation in Japan'. He compares amateur and professional subtitling cultures and practices in Japan, with a focus on differences in the concept of translation between these groups. While fansubbing in Japan is a niche phenomenon, professionals are more monopolistic and business oriented, giving rise to 'star' translators.

**Yeong-ae Yamashita** employs a gender-based analysis to investigate a number of characteristics that have become intrinsic to the process of subtitling Korean TV dramas

for a Japanese audience. Her essay highlights an interesting transformation of characterization when Korean drama narratives are translated into Japanese. Yamashita examines how the Japanese version obscures the complex patriarchal family structure in Korean society and to some extent distorts the image of characters in the drama.

The final chapter 'Transcreation in Video Game Localization in China: A Contemporary Functionalist Approach Applied to Digital Interactive Entertainment' is co-authored by **Xiaochun Zhang** and **Minako O'Hagan**. Because China has received only little attention in the area of video game localization research so far, the primary aim of this paper is to introduce aspects specific to the Chinese context. Zhang and O'Hagan then operationalize the concept of transcreation in the framework of the functionalist approach.