

## Korean Studies

Sektionsleitung / Section Supervision: Eun-Jeung Lee

Raum / Room: Seoul (1.2002)

### Organised Panels

#### **Bilingual Korea? Modes of Interaction Between Vernacular and Classical Chinese Texts**

Panel convener: Vladimir Glomb

With the promulgation of the Korean script in 1443, one of its main purposes was the rendering of classical Chinese texts (*hanmun*) into more accessible and popular vernacular versions. Given the complex relation between Korean and Sino-Korean vocabulary, the social profiles of the readership, or the intertextual nature of these texts, the various vernacular versions of *hanmun* texts created in this process employed a broad field of overlapping textual strategies. These range from simple punctuation, transcriptions, or glosses to mix-script versions or full vernacular translations.

The panel explores dominant trends in vernacular texts coming from different levels and areas of Choson dynasty literary discourse. Through the analysis of materials from diverse areas including Buddhist scripture, Confucian classics, pedagogical texts, or military manuals, we will try to detect motifs behind the commissioning of such texts, the textual strategies employed, and, above all, the success or failure of their supposed goal to make *hanmun* texts more accessible to a less educated audience.

## Presentations

### **A Vernacular Canon? Korean Translations of Confucian Classics and Their Authority**

Vladimir Glomb (Freie Universität Berlin, Deutschland)

Confucian classics occupied a central place in the educational system of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), yet official editions of their vernacular versions appeared only relatively late at the end of the 16th century. This so-called Sasŏ ŏnhae (Vernacular Explanation of the Four Books) became a blueprint for later editions published by the Korean government since the beginning of the 17th century onwards. The present paper focuses on the authority and canonicity of vernacular translations of Confucian classics. While the original texts of Chinese classics were never altered and any new interpretation was closely scrutinized by both private and state guardians of the orthodoxy, the vernacular versions were functioning under a much more liberal regime. Based on a study of intertextual usage of the Four Books (Daxue, Lunyu, Mencius, Zhongyong) the present paper will strive to identify to which degree vernacular quotes from Confucian classics in various popular texts were following the official vernacular versions. This will enable us to not only better understand the hierarchy between classical Chinese and Korean vernacular texts, but will also provide us with a micro-perspective on the changes in interpretation of the Confucian doctrine during the vernacularisation process.

### Reading the Basics: Usage of the Elementary Learning and its Vernacular Versions

Martin Gehlmann (Freie Universität Berlin, Deutschland)

The Elementary Learning 小學 (chin. Xiaoxue, kor. Sohak) was originally edited and published in 1187 by Zhu Xi and his friend and associate Liu Qingzhi. Intended as a recreation of ancient childhood education, the book provided a step in the Confucian curriculum between basic language education and the advancement to instruction in the Four Books. After its introduction to Korea, the Elementary Learning quickly became one of the most important Confucian texts for the literati of the Chosŏn dynasty, sometimes viewed as the gateway to the classics.

Due to the importance of the text, it was quite natural that the Elementary Learning became one of the first texts of the Confucian curriculum to receive a vernacular translations. The Translated Elementary Learning 翻譯小學 (Pönyök sohak) was published in 1518 as a rather liberal translation that targeted a commoner audience. A second translation published in 1586, Vernacular Explanation of the Elementary Learning 小學諺解 (Sohak ōnhae), was oriented towards a more scholarly audience.

In spite of rich materials documenting the introduction of the Elementary Learning into the Korean Confucian curriculum as well as many studies describing the origin and features of its vernacular versions, there is a lack of understanding how and where vernacular versions were used, including who actually used them. The present paper will trace this question by looking at documents from the fundamental institutions of the Confucian educational system: local schools (hyanggyo) and Confucian academies (sŏwon).

### **Adaption and Vernacularization of Chosŏn Military Texts**

Felix Siegmund (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Germany)

Korean Military texts are a neglected topic which should receive more attention. These texts share characteristics of both practical texts, such as medical manuals and of more abstract texts, such as Confucian ethical treatises. Military texts of the Late Chosŏn period were written either in Chinese, in mixed script or in the Korean vernacular. Different scripts and languages were used by different authors and were aimed at different audiences. In some cases, multiple translations and adaptations for different purposes were made. In addition to vernacular versions, some military texts have partial translations and glossaries inserted into the text, that are likely intended as a help for on-the-spot translation.

A good example are the Korean translations and adaptations of the military texts of Ming general and military theorist Qi Jiguang. While the final product of this adaptation, the Pyŏnghak chinam is relatively well-known, it was preceded and accompanied by a number of less prominent texts, which offer alternative interpretations and adaptations for specialized local contexts. On the surface, military texts seem to be manuals of a purely pragmatic nature. But if we look into the relation of military texts with society, their different versions and their respective roles in literati culture, it seems that most military texts bear traces of a conscious concern with literary prestige.

### **Linguistic Strategies in Translating Chinese Classics in Early Modern Korea**

Thorsten Traulsen (Ruhr Universität Bochum, Germany)

The invention of the Korean *han' gŭl* script in 1443/44 gave rise to a series of bilingual editions of Chinese texts in various fields and applying a wide array of linguistic strategies. These encompass the use of grammatical glosses, indications of the Sino-Korean pronunciation of the Chinese text, semantic glosses of Chinese words, literal or free translations, and additional annotations. Although glosses and (partial) translations in Korean writing systems based on Chinese characters have been used before, the idea of a full vernacular translation - both in scope (full text) and linguistic output (fully grammatical sentences) - is new and contentious in that period.

This presentation examines how the different tools of vernacularization were applied by different agents in the 15. and 16. century and for what reasons and purposes. Starting from the first projects under King Sejong the Great (r. 1418-1450) and stretching to the very early 17. century and the completion of the translation of the Confucian Classics, i.e. the texts that underlie the Korean examination system, several strategies in text production are discussed and contextualized in their respective social and political context.