

## Lecture 1: Monday 10 March

### The Latin of East Asia?

When Samuel Sandars originally made his benefaction which led to the foundation of the Sandars Readerships in Bibliography in 1895, he specified the broad range of subjects which the lectures were to concern themselves with, but he said nothing about any geographical limitations, presumably not from inadvertence but from genuine catholicity of taste. Of course, at the time of his death in 1894, the oldest printed book in the University Library was of European origin. This was not the Gutenberg Bible, for the Library's copy was not acquired until 1933; nevertheless, the Library's fifteenth-century European imprints were at the time unchallenged in terms of antiquity.

The first East Asian book to find a home in the University Library was a Chinese medical treatise, *Zhu Danxi's central methods* [*Danxi xinfa* 丹溪心法], which was printed in 1600.<sup>1</sup> This was presented by the Duchess of Buckingham in 1632; it carries a pencil inscription reading, 'Found in the Library April 1919' and evidently lay uncatalogued from 1632 to 1919, a delay of exactly 287 years, which makes any minor cataloguing backlogs of today seem rather insignificant. This medical treatise was followed by an early seventeenth-century edition of *The mirror of the East* [*Azuma kagami* 吾妻鑑], a history of thirteenth-century Japan; this came to Cambridge in 1715 when Bishop John Moore's library was presented to the University by King George I, but it had earlier belonged to a clergyman who spent his life in rural England; how he acquired it in 1626, soon after it was published in Japan, remains a mystery.<sup>2</sup> In any case, neither he nor the Duke of Buckingham could read these exotic books, which was certainly a good reason for giving them to somebody else.

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<sup>1</sup> University Library [hereafter UL] Sel.3.273. It consists only of volumes 22 and 23 of the supplement. This book came from the estate of Thomas van Erpe (Erpensius), who was professor of oriental languages at Leiden University when he died of the plague in 1624, and was bought by George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, who was elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge in 1626 and was murdered in 1628. See J. C. T. Oates, *Cambridge University Library: a history. From the beginnings to the Copyright Act of Queen Anne* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 162-4, 223.

<sup>2</sup> UL FJ.274.17; Nozomu Hayashi and Peter Kornicki, *Early Japanese books in Cambridge University Library: a catalogue of the Aston, Satow and von Siebold collections* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 1-2 and no. 1173.

In 1886, when the total number of Japanese books in the Library was still just one, a large collection of Chinese and Manchu books was donated by Sir Thomas Wade, a diplomat and sinologist. None of these books yet challenged the Library's oldest European imprints, but in 1911 the Library bought from William George Aston, a long-serving diplomat in Japan and Korea and a pioneering scholar of Japanese and Korean literature, a large collection of books which included a handful printed well before Gutenberg's press began operating in the middle of the fifteenth century: one of them, a Chinese translation of the *Mahā prajñā pāramitā sūtra*, was printed in China in the twelfth century [*Da banruo boluo miduo jing* 大般若波羅密多經] while the other was a Buddhist doctrinal work printed in Japan in 1288 [*Shakumakaen ronsan gensho* 釋摩訶衍論贊玄疏].<sup>3</sup> Since 1911, then, the oldest printed books in the Library by a margin of several hundred years have had their origins in East Asia. Over the succeeding hundred years to the present day, acquisitions of early Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Manchu and even Mongolian books have vastly enriched the East Asian collections; they include a translation by Faxian 法顯 of the *Buddhabhāshita-mahāyāna-dhyāna-saṅgāna-mandala-sarvadur-bhāva-prasādhaka-sūtra* [*Fo shuo da cheng guan xiang man-na-luo jing zhu e ju jing* 佛說大乘觀想曼拏羅淨諸惡趣經] which was printed at Fuzhou in China in 1107 and is now the oldest printed book the Library possesses.<sup>4</sup> It is fair to say, therefore, that the Library has ample in the way of early manuscripts and printed books from East Asia to sustain an East Asian approach to bibliography and the history of the book, one that would have been beyond Samuel Sandar's ken, though his generosity allows us to pursue it today.

I have prepared these lectures on the assumption that few members of the audience will know Chinese. Far from being a disadvantage, that is actually a good thing, for it is in fact sheer ignorance of Chinese that places us in the right frame of mind to appreciate the kind of problems that peoples in East Asia had in ancient times when they encountered the overwhelming textual might of China.

The theme of the first two of these lectures is the life of Chinese texts outside China, a subject that has until very recently been of little interest in China itself, even though it was those same Chinese texts that created a world of shared knowledge and practice throughout East Asia. It is a subject that poses many difficult questions. How did Chinese texts manage to dominate for so long in lands where Chinese was not spoken at all, how were they received

<sup>3</sup> UL FG.711.49 and FG.710.135; Hayashi and Kornicki, nos 2358 and 2365.

<sup>4</sup> UL FH.20.61; it consists of vol. 2 only.

and read there, what occasioned the dramatic loss of esteem they faced in the early twentieth century? And what parallels are there with the rise and fall of Latin in Europe and Sanskrit in South and Southeast Asia?

Before turning to these interesting and important questions, some of which I confess I am not even going to attempt to answer, I need, for the benefit of those who know little of East Asia, to make a few preliminary remarks. These will concern the limits of East Asia, languages and scripts, the nature of the Chinese texts that circulated throughout East Asia and finally book production in East Asia.

Firstly, when I speak of East Asia I am referring to those parts of Asia in which the dominant form of writing, and for centuries the *only* form of writing, was Chinese characters; in other words those societies which first acquired the art of writing from China and which adopted the corpus of Chinese classical texts as the foundation of their systems of intellectual formation. Needless to say, these societies had no conception of Asia and did not consider themselves to be ‘east’ of anywhere, but rather to be around the periphery of China, which was for most of them symbolically as well as geographically the centre of the known world. In the context of the eighth century, therefore, I am talking of the kingdom of Silla which occupied the Korean peninsula, of Parhae to the north of it, and of China, Japan and Annam, which occupied the northern part of what is now Vietnam; if we leap ahead to the nineteenth century then I am talking of China itself, of unified Korea, of Japan, of the Ryūkyū kingdom (which is now called Okinawa and is part of Japan), of a much enlarged Vietnam, and of Manchuria, the north-eastern part of China. For the sake of convenience I shall from now on simply refer to China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam using their present-day names, but it is important to remember that they were far from static entities over these many centuries – polities came, went and were replaced by others, and boundaries, such as they were, were of course in a constant state of flux.

The second issue is scripts and languages. Although these societies on the periphery of China all adopted or used the Chinese script, for they had not evolved scripts of their own, it was a script that was singularly ill-suited to the vernacular languages, which were of course not linguistically related to Chinese at all. Japanese and Korean, for example are both highly inflected languages and writing them in Chinese characters alone proved extraordinarily cumbersome. The pressure to transform the spoken vernaculars into writing proved irresistible in all East Asian societies, perhaps because the example of

Chinese demonstrated the greater authority and permanence of writing.<sup>5</sup> Thus a few centuries after Chinese writing had been absorbed in Japan and Korea, attempts were made to extend the practice of writing to the vernaculars using the only form of writing known to them, Chinese characters. This involved using Chinese characters in unsystematic and clumsy ways to represent the sounds of Japanese or Korean, rather like rebus writing. These tiresome ways of writing the vernaculars gave way to vernacular scripts in due course, but only after some centuries had passed: in Japan the kana syllabary was developed from abbreviated forms of Chinese characters by the ninth century, in Vietnam Nôm characters were invented on the model of Chinese characters in the tenth century, in Korea the hangŭl alphabet was invented in the mid fifteenth century, and for writing Manchu the Mongolian alphabet was borrowed in the early seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> The details need not concern us here, but what is important is that although it then became possible to write the Japanese, Korean or Vietnamese vernaculars, Chinese had become so deeply embedded in the political, educational and literary cultures of these societies that book production was dominated by Chinese texts. By this I mean not only texts originally imported from China but also the many texts written in literary Chinese by Koreans, Japanese and Vietnamese in their own countries.

It is for this reason that the literary patrimony of these various societies can be said to be marked by diglossia in writing, perhaps more properly to be termed digraphia. I am referring here to the coexistence within a given society of two written languages enjoying different levels of prestige, in the case of East Asia this means literary Chinese and the various vernaculars.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Jack Goody, *The logic of writing and the organization of society* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Sheldon Pollock, *The language of the gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture, and power in premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> See Aldo Tollini *La scrittura del Giappone antico* (Venice: Cafoscarina, 2005); Chris Seeley, *A history of writing in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 1991); David Barnett Lurie, 'The origins of writing in Japan: from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE', unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2001; Young-Key Kim-Renaud, ed., *The Korean alphabet: its history and structure* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1997); C. Michele Thompson, 'Scripts, signs, and swords: the Viêt peoples and the origins of Nôm', *Sino-Platonic papers* 101 (2000); André Fabre, 'Trois écritures à base de caractères chinois: le idu (Corée), les kana (Japon) et le chu nôm (Viet Nam)', *Asiatische Studien* 34.2 (1980), pp. 206-225.

<sup>7</sup> On this subject see Charles A. Ferguson, 'Diglossia', *Word* 15 (1959), pp. 325-40, and María Angeles Gallego, 'The languages of medieval Iberia and their religious dimension', *Medieval Encounters* 9 (2003), pp. 107-139.

On the one hand, there was a substantial body of poetry and prose writings written in literary Chinese by Koreans, Japanese and Vietnamese. Some of these consisted of commentaries on imported Buddhist or Confucian texts, but there were also diaries, historical works, original philosophical contributions and a host of other works. I said that these were written in literary Chinese, and some of them were indeed written in good Chinese that could and did pass muster in China. Many, however, were written in a form of Chinese that could not necessarily be readily understood elsewhere; in Japan, in particular, forms of writing developed which looked like Chinese and in parts were comprehensible as Chinese but which also contained elements that were influenced by Japanese syntax, by Japanese word-order and by the Japanese requirement for honorific language.<sup>8</sup> Such forms of writing might have puzzled Chinese or Korean readers, if they came across samples of it, but the educated elite in Japan understood perfectly well what was going on linguistically. At least in principle, then, it was literary Chinese that remained the language of government, scholarship and education throughout East Asia.

On the other hand, in addition to all these texts written in literary Chinese or pseudo-Chinese, there was a growing body of texts written in the vernacular. In the case of Korean, this consisted mostly of translations of Chinese texts and of Korean poetry. In the case of Japanese, however, there is a very substantial body of poetry and prose produced from the ninth century onwards, including of course the *Tale of Genji*; to this was added in the second millennium a large quantity of historical and literary writings in all fields. Mention of the *Tale of Genji*, written of course by a woman, reminds us that at times the divide between high-prestige Chinese and low-prestige vernaculars was marked by gender: although there have always been some women in Japan, Korea and Vietnam who were sinologically literate, they were few in number and their writings consisted mostly of Chinese poetry; their contributions to intellectual discourse in literary Chinese were all but non-existent, to say nothing of their absence from the offices that generated

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<sup>8</sup> Minegishi Akira, *Hentai kanbun* (Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1986); in English J. N. Rabinovitch, 'An introduction to *hentai kanbun* (variant Chinese)', *Journal of Chinese linguistics* 24 (1996), pp. 98-126. The eighth-century Korean monk Hye-Ch'o 慧超, who lived many years in China and even travelled to India, does not seem to have written particularly good Chinese in spite of his years of residence there: Han-Sung Yang, Yün-hua Jan, Shōtarō Iida, and Laurence W. Preston, eds, *The Hye-Ch'o diary: memoir of the pilgrimage to the five regions of India* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press/Seoul, Po Chin Chai, 1984), p. 20.

government documents. Nevertheless, women readers of Chinese there certainly were.<sup>9</sup>

Thirdly, what exactly are the Chinese books that I am talking about? In the first place there is the vast body of Buddhist texts which had been translated from Sanskrit and other languages into Chinese, mostly between the third and seventh centuries, and were then transmitted throughout East Asia. As a result, for those who lived in Vietnam, Korea and Japan, Buddhism was to all intents and purposes a Chinese religion, and written Chinese has largely remained the language of Buddhism to this day. Monastic libraries even in eighth-century Japan and Korea often contained thousands of Chinese Buddhist texts and were thus rather better endowed textually than medieval European monastic libraries.<sup>10</sup>

It is worth pausing to take note of the Chinese complexion of Buddhism in East Asia. Since Buddhism was for centuries a Chinese religion for Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese Buddhists, it necessarily required mastery of difficult Chinese texts to approach. There can be little doubt that this was because Buddhism was first transplanted into those societies in the form of Chinese texts before they had evolved any script of their own. The contrast with what happened in Tibet is instructive. The Tibetan script was developed on the basis of the Indian Brahmi script in the seventh century, well before scripts had evolved in Japan, Korea or Vietnam, so Tibetan Buddhism developed on the basis of translations made directly from Sanskrit originals and only later on the basis of translations from Chinese Chan (Zen) texts into Tibetan. For lack of a script, by contrast, Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese Buddhists had no choice but to base their faith and their scholarship upon Chinese translations, and Chinese as the language of Buddhism was too deeply embedded to be supplanted by translations when the vernacular scripts were invented centuries later. And this in spite of the relaxed approach

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<sup>9</sup> On Korean women as readers and writers of Chinese, see Ch'oe Yŏnmi, 'Chosŏn sidae yŏsŏng p'yŏnjŏja, ch'ulp'an hyŏmnyŏkja, tokja ūi yŏkhal e kwanhan yŏngu', *Sŏjihak yŏngu* 23 (2002), pp. 113-47. On Japan see Martha C. Tocco, 'Norms and texts for women's education in Tokugawa Japan', in Dorothy Ko, Jahyun Kim Haboush and Joan R. Piggott, eds, *Women and Confucian cultures in premodern China, Korea, and Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 193-218; and on a seventeenth-century woman with a knowledge of Chinese, Chikaishi Yasuaki 近石泰秋, 'Inoue Tsū-jo shōden narabi ni nenpu', 井上通女小伝並に年譜, in *Inoue Tsū-jo zenshū shūteiban* 井上通女全集修訂版. (Marugame: Kagawa Kenritsu Marugame Kōtō Gakkō Dōsōkai, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> See Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 364-70.

inherent in Buddhism towards vernacular translation, particularly when compared with the resistance to translation in Catholic Europe.

Just as important as the Buddhist canon of texts were secular books. In pride of place were the Chinese classics, especially the so-called *Four Books* [*Si Shu* 四書] and *Five Classics* [*Wu jing* 五經], that constituted the core educational texts, and the later commentarial tradition which presented a reformulation of Confucianism, so-called Neo-Confucianism. This classical tradition of Confucian texts dominated secular book production outside China, and the only other categories of book that were imported and then widely reproduced in the rest of East Asia were the Chinese dynastic histories, which were valued as a source of precedents for dealing with political problems, the poetry of the Tang dynasty, which served as a model for verse composition, and didactic books for women. Much later, in the Ming and Qing dynasties, Chinese vernacular fiction such as the *Water margin* [*Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳; also known as *All men are brothers* and *Outlaws of the marsh*] and the *Story of the Stone* [*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢; also known as the *Dream of the Red Chamber*] was added to the repertoire of imported texts.

Fourthly, there is the question of book production. There are several technologies to bear in mind here. The first is that of woodblock printing, which is essentially a mechanism for reproducing a handwritten text, like lithography, especially as used in the Islamic world. There can be no doubt that woodblock printing was practised in China in the seventh century, and it is merely an accident of history that the oldest examples found so far date from eighth-century Korea and Japan.<sup>11</sup> The University Library is lucky enough to have four of these texts, which were printed in Japan in the late eighth century and are therefore, by a margin of many hundreds of years, the oldest printed artefacts in the library; I say artefacts not books, for they are but slips of paper.<sup>12</sup>

Typography, the use of movable type, was also invented in China in the form of clay type in the eleventh century, but it was put to little use and no samples survive.<sup>13</sup> Wooden type, however, proved more practical and was

<sup>11</sup> On evidence for printing in China in the seventh century, see T. H. Barrett, *The woman who discovered printing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); on the Korean text printed before 751, see Ch'ŏn Hyebyŏng, *Naryŏ inswaesul ŭi yŏngu* (Seoul: Kyŏng'in Munhwasa, 1982), pp. 19-31; on the Japanese printing in 764-70, see Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 115-7.

<sup>12</sup> UL FG.870.1-4; Hayashi & Kornicki, nos 2360-2363.

<sup>13</sup> Tsien Tsuen-Hsuei, *Paper and printing*, Part 1 of vol. 5, *Chemistry and chemical technology*, in Joseph Needham's *Science and civilisation in China* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 201-203.

used in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. The oldest examples come from the Tangut kingdom of Western Xia; Paul Pelliot discovered some wooden Tangut type in 1909, but more recently an act of vandalism on a brick pagoda has revealed much more, including a book which must date from before the demise of the Tangut kingdom in the twelfth-century.<sup>14</sup> The use of metal type was pioneered in Korea in the thirteenth century, and it was widely used for the production of government editions of Chinese canonical texts, but it is unclear why the use of metal type did not spread to other East Asian societies.<sup>15</sup> Typography was introduced comparatively late to Japan, in the late sixteenth century, both in the form of metal type and typography equipment looted from Korea by Hideyoshi's troops and in the form of a European printing press brought to Japan from Macao by Jesuit missionaries. From the late 1590s onwards, some Japanese printers made use of metal and then wooden type, but, for reasons to be discussed in the second lecture, typography failed to take root in Japan and had fallen out of use by 1650.<sup>16</sup> There is also evidence of typography in Vietnam in the eighteenth century, but so far little is known about the extent of its use there.<sup>17</sup> In Japan and Vietnam, then, as well as China itself, woodblocks remained the principle method of printing up to the nineteenth century, and even in Korea woodblock printing ran in parallel with typography.

Finally, just as the work of David McKitterick and others has shown that the development of printing in Europe by no means spelled an end to the production of manuscript books, we must remember that this holds true for East Asia, too.<sup>18</sup> For reasons of economy, in order to make copies of rare texts, in order to evade censorship, or in order to control who had access to valuable

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<sup>14</sup> Jean-Pierre Drège, 'Le livre imprimé sino-tangut', *Journal asiatique* 294 (2006), pp. 343-371. For the recent discoveries, see Ningxia Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, ed., *Baisigou Xixia fangta* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2005); on p. 460 it is claimed that, 'Xixia played an indelible role in the spreading of movable-type printing from China to the West', but this remains to be demonstrated.

<sup>15</sup> Son Po-gi, *Hanguk ūi kohwalja/Early Korean typography* (Seoul: Hanguk Tosŏgwanhak Yŏnguhoe, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 125-136.

<sup>17</sup> On Vietnamese typography the only source is Yamamoto Tatsurō, 'Development of movable type printing in Vietnam under the Lê dynasty: a study of the comparative history between Japan and Vietnam', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 57 (1999), pp. 1-11.

<sup>18</sup> David McKitterick, *Print, manuscript and the search for order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Harold Love, *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).



knowledge, manuscripts continued to be produced, sold and consumed throughout East Asia until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

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That concludes the introductory remarks I wanted to make. Now to turn to the story of how Chinese books gave way to vernacular books throughout East Asia, a process that lasted more than a thousand years. The narrative that I shall unfold over these three lectures is one that has many parallels to the declining hold of Latin on intellectual discourse in Europe and the rise of vernacular literary traditions, but there were two crucial differences that must be acknowledged at the outset.

The first divergence is, paradoxically, that Latin was a spoken as well as a written language while Chinese was only a written language. Chinese was of course a *spoken* language, or rather languages, in China, but it was decidedly *not* a spoken language in the rest of East Asia, where it thrived almost entirely in the form of literary Chinese and nothing more. This undoubtedly is to be attributed to the huge phonological differences between Chinese and the vernaculars spoken in Korea, Japan and Vietnam which made spoken Chinese well nigh impossible to master without access to native speakers. Some attempts were made in Korea and Japan to master spoken Chinese, it is true, but these were extremely limited in extent.<sup>20</sup>

In Japan, Korea, the Ryūkyūs and Vietnam, Chinese texts were read and studied by all literate males and a much smaller proportion of women, scholars wrote to each other in Chinese and they composed their contributions to learning exclusively in Chinese, but they did not as a rule know the Chinese pronunciation of the characters they were using nor could they even begin to speak Chinese. They could not, therefore, use it for oral communication either

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<sup>19</sup> On manuscripts in China, Korea and Japan, see, respectively, Joseph P. McDermott, *A social history of the Chinese book: books and literati culture in late imperial China* (Hong Kong University Press, 2006), pp. 73-6 and *passim*; Boudewijn Walraven, 'Reader's etiquette, and other aspects of book culture in Chosŏn Korea', in W. L. Idema, ed, *Books in numbers* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007), pp. 237-265; and P. F. Kornicki, 'Manuscript, not print: scribal culture in the Edo period', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 32 (2006), pp. 23-52.

<sup>20</sup> On spoken Chinese in Korea see Ki-joong Song, *The study of foreign languages in the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910)* (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing Company, 2001) and Svetlana Rimsky-Korsakoff Dyer, *Pak the interpreter: an annotated translation and literary-cultural evaluation of the Piao Tongshi of 1677* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, Australian National University, 2006); on Chinese-speaking in Tokugawa Japan, see Olof G. Lidin, *The life of Ogyū Sorai, a Tokugawa Confucian philosopher* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1973), pp. 120-124, and Shu Zenan, 'Fukami Gentai ni tsuite', *Chiba Shōdai kiyō* 41.4 (2004), pp. 69-92.

with each other or with people from other societies that were similarly reliant upon Chinese as a written language. When Japanese met Koreans, Vietnamese, Manchus or Chinese, therefore, they could without difficulty communicate silently with brush and paper, but they could not communicate orally, unlike Europeans, who could indeed converse in Latin if they were educated. Take as a late illustration of this the case of Phan Bội Châu 潘佩珠 (1867-1940), the Vietnamese nationalist hero. In the early years of the twentieth century, when he was engaged in his anti-colonial struggle against the French and was trying to raise money in Canton, or to find supporters in Japan, he had always to put his requests in written Chinese, for he could not speak Chinese and knew not a word of Japanese. It is a mark of the prestige that literary Chinese retained, even for a nationalist in the early twentieth century, that his revolutionary pamphlet 'The history of the loss of Vietnam' was written in Chinese, and it was again to Chinese that he turned when he wrote his autobiography in 1928.<sup>21</sup>

The second divergence from the case of Latin is that Chinese after all belonged to China: it was not, and never could be, a politically or diplomatically neutral language like Latin in the context of early-modern Europe. Vietnamese, Koreans and Japanese were constantly, and sometimes painfully, aware of the fact that the writing system, the language of discourse and the texts they read were all inextricably bound up with a very powerful state located uncomfortably nearby. This awareness in time gave birth to an acute sense of cultural difference and ultimately to one of self-awareness. It is partly as a consequence of this that the scholarly community in East Asia is no longer able to engage in debate through the medium of written Chinese any more than we are able to debate in Latin.

How and when Japanese or Koreans first encountered the Chinese script and Chinese texts we cannot know, but it must have been in the first half of the first millennium. The texts, we can hazard a guess, must either have been Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras or texts associated with the Confucian tradition. As we shall see in a moment, there is some evidence that Chinese texts were used in diplomatic exchanges and that possession of them conferred political benefits, irrespective of whether the recipients could read them or not. Diplomatic gifts apart, however, the principal mechanism whereby Chinese texts were transmitted was in the hands of visitors to China from Korea, Japan and Vietnam when they returned home. Some of these visitors

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<sup>21</sup> Vinh Sinh and Nicholas Wickenden, eds, *Overtaken chariot: the autobiography of Phan-Bội-Châu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

were members of tribute missions to the Chinese court, while others sojourned in China for many years in pursuit of Buddhist understanding or of the underpinnings of Chinese statecraft; doubtless they were among the few who could not only read Chinese but also speak it. But opportunities for travel to China, let alone other neighbouring countries, were notoriously few and far between for Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese, so for most of them it was at home that they acquired the only form of writing known to them and at home that they encountered Chinese texts. Thus one of the key problems in all these societies was actually acquiring Chinese texts in the first place.

This itself is worth emphasizing. There is no sign that successive Chinese dynasties at any time ever sought to foist their Buddhist or their classic texts on their ignorant neighbours, and even when commercial publishing came into its own in the Ming dynasty in the sixteenth century, there was no Chinese equivalent of Oxford University Press setting up branches in Seoul, Hanoi and Edo (now Tokyo) to take canny commercial advantage of the continuing thirst for Chinese books. If you wanted new Chinese books, for the most part there was little alternative but to go and get them.

There can be no doubt that Chinese books were wanted badly, desperately even. They were wanted for the academies of higher sinological learning – perhaps we should properly call them universities – which were set up in Korea in the seventh and in Japan in the eighth centuries.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, an official examination system along Chinese lines functioned in Korea and Vietnam as the sole route of entry to government office and this in turn necessitated a constant supply of books for hard-pressed examinees. Urban conflagrations, floods and other disasters were frequent, and led to the destruction of a many a library.<sup>23</sup> War was of course ruinous for books, too: the Ming invasion of Vietnam, the Japanese invasion of Korea in the 1590s and the Manchu invasions of Korea in 1626 and 1637 all did incalculable damage to the stock of books. And the same was true of the destruction of Kyoto by warring factions in the fifteenth century. As governments and scholars began to rebuild their libraries after these disasters, it was often to China that they turned for replacements, particularly if they could no longer locate copies of essential texts at home.

The story of the movement of Chinese books all over Asia is a long and deeply illuminating one, but it is also one that, until the last couple of years,

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the early Heian court* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), p. 71ff.

<sup>23</sup> In Japan, for example, the great Kyoto fire of 1177, the deliberate destruction in 1180 of many famous temples and the Ōnin war of 1467-77 all took a severe toll of books: Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 370-3.

appears to have been of no interest whatsoever to Chinese historians and bibliographers.<sup>24</sup> And for reasons perhaps of nationalism, bibliographers elsewhere have for the most part been far more intent on vernacular books than on local editions of Chinese texts. And yet it is precisely these local editions that today can show us which Chinese texts were valued and which were not – for tastes outside China did not necessarily correspond to tastes within China – and can show us how they were pre-digested and presented to non-Chinese audiences.

The primary task was always the acquisition of Chinese books, and that was a task fraught with danger and difficulty, given the huge distances and treacherous seas that had to be traversed in the quest for books. Sometimes they were acquired by diplomatic missions visiting China, for books often functioned as tools of diplomacy. It was, for example, in the context of Japan's relations with Paekche, one of the states on the Korean peninsula, that the first books to reach Japan are said to have been transmitted in the fifth century.<sup>25</sup> During the Tang dynasty the appetite for books shown by Japanese missions to the Tang court in the eighth century was such as to merit mention in the Tang dynastic history, and there was already talk in China of keeping certain types of book out of the hands of foreigners, especially dynastic histories and books on the art of war.<sup>26</sup>

During the eleventh century, when the Liao dynasty held sway over northern China, Buddhist texts were brought as gifts by diplomatic missions from as far away as Korea and the Xia state in western China. In the Liao records these are described as 'tribute', in other words offerings by a subordinate state, but some of them were evidently valued highly enough to be reprinted by the Liao government. In return the government presented these missions with copies of the Liao edition of the Buddhist canon, of which, it appears sadly, not a single leaf remains.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, as late as the nineteenth

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<sup>24</sup> The launch in 2005 of the annual journal *Yuwai hanji yanjiu jikan* 域外漢籍研究集刊 (Beijing: Chunghua Shuju) marks new interest in this subject. Western sinologists have recently become interested in this topic, too: see Talbott Huey, 'Chinese books as cultural exports from Han to Ming: a bibliographic essay', *Studies on Asia*, Series III, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2006), pp. 85-101; also, Emanuel Pastreich, 'The reception of Chinese literature in Korea', 'The reception of Chinese literature in Japan', and 'The reception of Chinese literature in Vietnam', in Victor H. Mair, ed., *The Columbia history of Chinese literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 1067-78, 1079-95, & 1096-1104.

<sup>25</sup> See Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 278-9.

<sup>26</sup> Wang Zhen-ping, 'Manuscript copies of Chinese books in ancient Japan', *The Gest Library Journal* 4.2 (1991), pp. 45-6.

<sup>27</sup> Nogami Shunjō, *Ryōkin no bukkyō* (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1953), pp. 24-28.

Although it is true that not a leaf remains, a printed copy was pasted onto stone tablets and

century, the acquisition of Chinese books was considered in Vietnam to be one of the most desirable by-products of the diplomatic relationship with China. Consequently, it made good sense to despatch the most accomplished scholars on missions to Beijing, not just to demonstrate the attainments of Vietnamese scholars but also, and more importantly, so as to be able to acquire the best books available in the Chinese capital.<sup>28</sup>

It was probably the Koreans, though, who were the best organized when it came to exploiting diplomatic relationships for the purpose of acquiring books. Indeed, it has been said that the real reason the Korean government was so assiduous in sending missions to China on every conceivable occasion – felicitations on accession to the throne, marriages and births, and condolences on deaths in the imperial family – was the thirst for books.<sup>29</sup> This did not go unnoticed in China and in the late seventeenth century the Qing government placed a ban on the acquisition of certain categories of books and maps by barbarians, a category that naturally included both Koreans and Japanese; on several occasions Korean diplomats were caught trying to smuggle contraband books out of China. Some Korean diplomatic missions even had on their staff an official whose sole function was to petition the Chinese emperor for the gift of specific books in return for the loyal tribute offered by his Korean subjects.<sup>30</sup> The members of the missions also did some book-buying on their own account while in Beijing, and they were such good customers that Chinese bookshops put up the prices of the kinds of books popular with Korean customers, and were not averse to faking books to sell to gullible Koreans.<sup>31</sup> What the Korean visitors were after was the best editions of the Chinese classics and the Chinese dynastic histories, though the latter they were supposed to be banned from purchasing. But that was not all that they sought, for they also managed to acquire some works on Christianity written by the Jesuits in Beijing, which led to the emergence of a Catholic

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carved out and these stone tablets remain to this day; rubbings taken from them, which preserve the original form of the Liao canon, are reproduced in facsimile in *Fangshan shijing*, vol. 1- (Beijing: Zhongguo Fojiao Tushu Wenwu Guan, 1986- ).

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Barton Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese model: a comparative study of Vietnamese and Chinese government in the first half of the nineteenth century* (Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 114-5.

<sup>29</sup> Kang Hyeyŏng, 'Chosŏn hugi taejung sŏjŏk suip chŏngch'aek yŏngu', *Tosŏgwanhak nonjip* 11 (1984), pp. 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 9.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

minority in Korea, and some Ming vernacular fiction, which in Korea as in Japan and Vietnam inspired vernacular translations and reworkings.<sup>32</sup>

Japanese diplomatic missions to Korea were equally assiduous in the quest for books, especially for the vast Korean edition of the Buddhist canon, which was carved on more than 80,000 woodblocks in the mid-thirteenth century. The Korean government was not fooled by the diplomatic pretexts for these missions, for in Korean sources the Japanese were referred to as ‘sutra-seeking missions’; there were more than eighty in all and they made rather a nuisance of themselves. One of them even had the audacity in 1423 to request not merely a complete copy of the text but even the printing blocks themselves; naturally the ambassadors were sent away with a flea in their ear and returned to Japan with empty hands.<sup>33</sup>

Diplomatic missions alone, however, were inadequate for maintaining a sufficient supply of books. Monks travelling to China for instruction and study constantly made good use of the opportunity to acquire books, either by copying them themselves or by purchase. We are fortunate that several catalogues compiled by Japanese monks in the eighth century are extant, giving us priceless information on the precise books they brought back from China. We also have a catalogue compiled in Japan in the late ninth century, which identifies the very large quantity of Chinese texts that were known in Japan by that time.<sup>34</sup> Alas, we do not have similar sources to tell us about the Chinese books that were reaching Korea or Vietnam then or later.

In the seventeenth century Chinese shipping merchants realised that there was profit to be had from this thirst for books. They began to include them in their cargoes on their own account, not at the behest of Chinese publishers for they had realised that there was a good market for such wares, particularly in Japan and Vietnam.<sup>35</sup> Again, we are fortunate that detailed records survive of the titles imported into Japan year by year, but in this case we have censorship to thank. Early in the seventeenth century some books on Christianity written in Chinese by the Jesuits in Beijing ran foul of the Japanese prohibition on Christianity; as a result, strict censorship controls were imposed on all Chinese book imports, and the censors, with bureaucratic punctiliousness that later scholars can only be thankful for, kept meticulous records to protect their backs. So, we can learn what new books were reaching Japan, in what

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 293-5.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 285, 416-26.

<sup>35</sup> Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese model*, p. 123.

quantities and when.<sup>36</sup> This was now the only way Japanese could get Chinese books, for they were forbidden to travel to China from the early seventeenth century onwards, and so were in a worse position than Koreans and Vietnamese, who could travel to Beijing and select the books they wanted. Nevertheless, it was through this means that vernacular Ming fiction began to reach Japan, and, in the 1850s, some worrying accounts of the Opium Wars and the threat to East Asia posed by the imperialist powers reached Japan in this way, too.<sup>37</sup>

The movement of Chinese books throughout East Asia has recently been dubbed the Book Road by Wang Yong, on the analogy of course of the Silk Road.<sup>38</sup> The analogy is apt up to a point, for just as it was thanks to the Silk Road that the material culture of central Asia and even Persia reached Japan in the eighth century and is preserved to this day in the Shōsōin in Nara, so it was thanks to the Book Road that Chinese manuscripts and, later on, printed books reached Japan, Korea and Vietnam. The analogy fails, however, when we consider that most of the traffic on the Book Road was moving in one direction and was in one language alone.

If we were to try and draw a map of the movement of books and texts in East Asia, it would look something like a centrifugal pattern in which books travelled from China to neighbouring polities. This is not to say that books did not travel between those neighbours or that some books did not travel in the reverse direction, from Japan or Korea to China, for of course they did. Needless to say, books travelling in the reverse direction had to be books written in literary Chinese, for there was no audience whatsoever in China for books written in the Korean, Vietnamese or Japanese vernaculars.

Given the quantities of books being written and printed in Chinese in Japan, Korea and Vietnam, it might be supposed that there must have been a common audience, even if not a ready market, for Chinese texts throughout East Asia. Let us consider two examples. In the first (fig. 1), we see an edition of *The School Sayings of Confucius* [*Kongzi jiyu*, 孔子家語], a collection of episodes put together well after the time in which Confucius is supposed to have lived. The large characters constitute the text while the smaller characters squeezed into narrow columns are a commentary written by a Chinese scholar

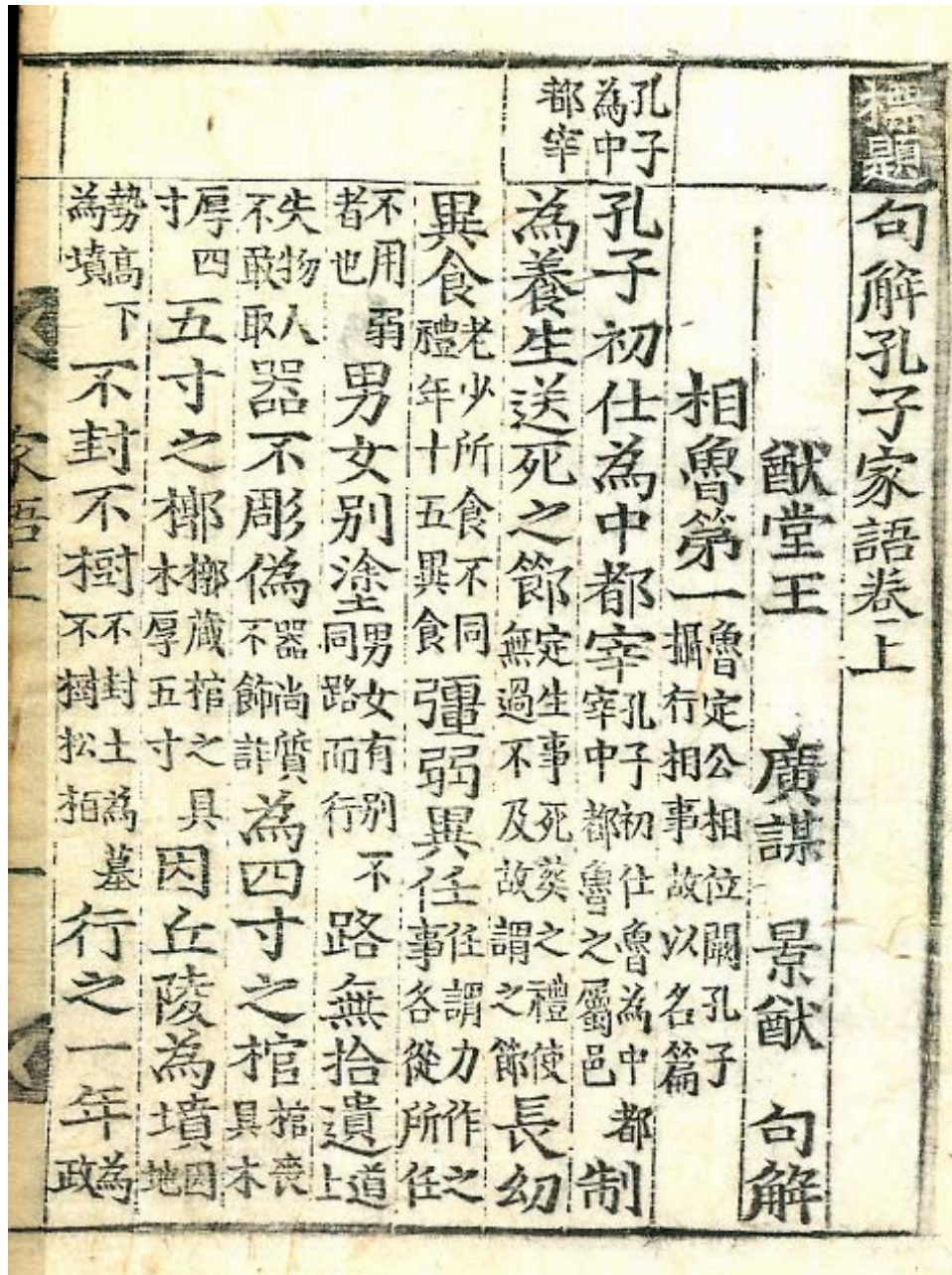
<sup>36</sup> Ōba Osamu, (*Edo jidai ni okeru*) *Chūgoku bunka juyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1984); Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 296-299.

<sup>37</sup> R. H. van Gulik, 'Kakkaron, a Japanese echo of the Opium War', *Monumenta Serica* 4 (1939-40), pp. 478-545; Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Shisō kadai to shite no Ajia* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), pp. 214-5.

<sup>38</sup> Ō Yū [Wang Yong], *Shomotsu no chūnichi kōryūshi* (Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Kōbō, 2005).



Fig. 1. *The school sayings of Confucius* printed in Korea in 1810 (author's collection).





in the fourteenth century. This edition, therefore, could have been printed anywhere in East Asia, for it consists of nothing but a transmitted Chinese text and its commentary; in fact, it actually reproduces many of the accidentals of Chinese editions – the solid line framing the text, the lines ruled between each column of text and the decorative features at the edge of the page. In this form, then, this copy could have been printed in China, Japan, Korea or Vietnam; in fact a 1533 Ming edition and a 1599 Japanese edition are extant, and there must have been earlier editions that are no longer extant; this particular example, however, was printed in Korea in 1810.

The second example (fig. 2) is an anthology of poetry from the Tang dynasty. The title page of this edition identifies on the right the author of the explanatory material in Chinese and on the left the publisher, whose location is not specified; the text itself carries the same accidentals noted before and this, too, could have been printed anywhere in East Asia; in fact, it is a nineteenth-century edition from Vietnam.

There is not the slightest sign, however, that such local editions of Chinese texts circulated anywhere outside the societies in which they were produced. In this sense, the function of such books is quite unlike, say, a sixteenth-century edition of Virgil or Ovid, which might travel far from its country of origin.<sup>39</sup>

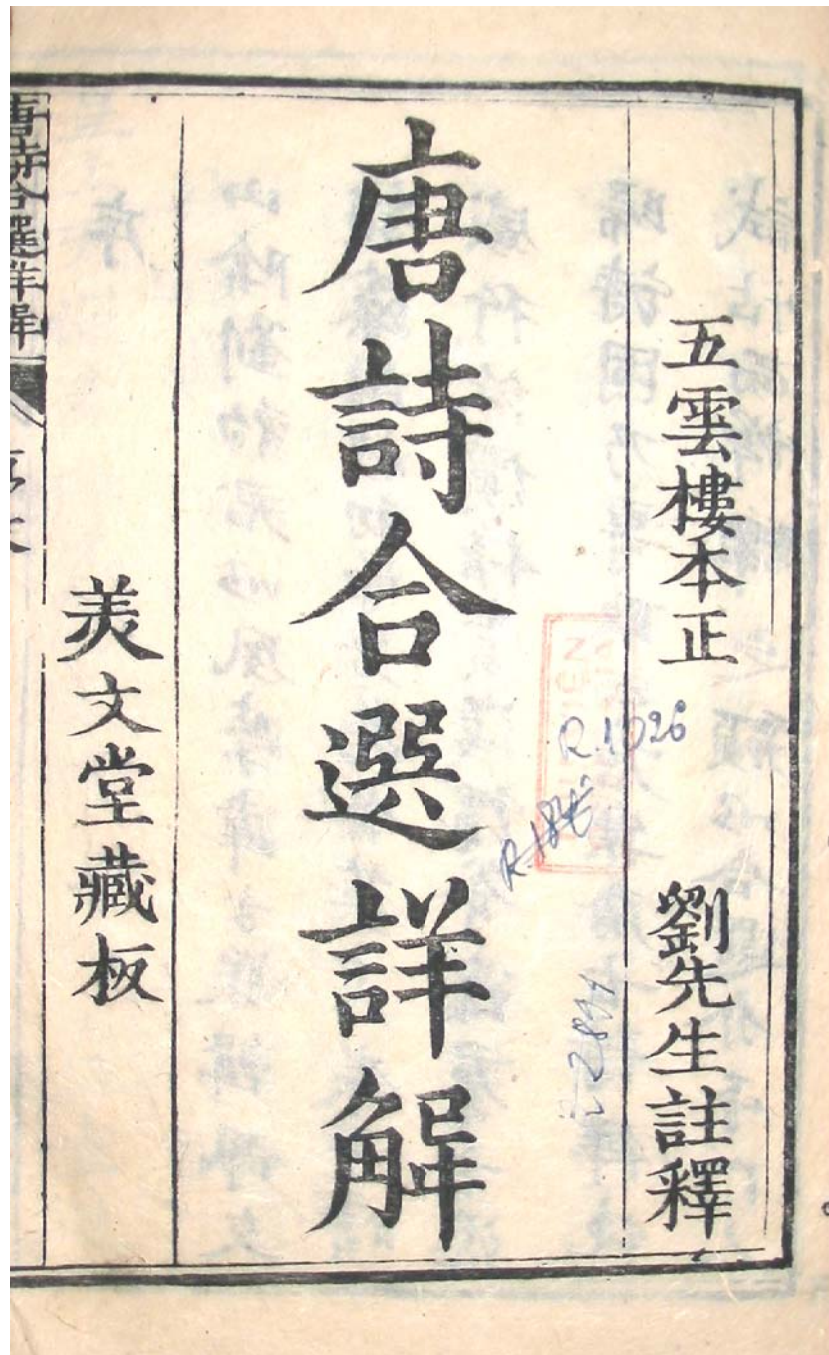
A similar point can be made about the Chinese writings of learned Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese. While Italian neo-Latin poetry was being reprinted in Spain even before the end of the fifteenth century and the Latin writings of an Erasmus or Thomas More circulated throughout Europe, the same was not true of even the best writings in Chinese produced in Japan, Korea or Vietnam.<sup>40</sup> There is plenty of evidence to show that ambitious Japanese and Korean scholars sent some of their writings to China, but what is striking, however, is how very few of these texts made any impact in China whatsoever. Let us consider a few examples.

Some time in the seventh century a Japanese monk prepared a rather good commentary, naturally in Chinese, on the sutra known in English as the *Lion's Roar of Queen Srimala* [*Śrīmālā sūtra*]; the commentary bears the title *Shōmangyō gisho* 勝鬘經義疏. In 615 this commentary was taken to the Korean kingdom of Koguryō by a Korean monk resident in Japan called Hyeja

<sup>39</sup> On this and in general on the relationship between Latin and the vernaculars, see Peter Burke, *Languages and communities in early modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), chapters 2-3.

<sup>40</sup> Alejandro Coroleu, 'Introduction', in Barry Taylor and Alejandro Coroleu, eds, *Latin and vernacular in renaissance Spain* (Manchester Spanish and Portuguese Studies, 1999), pp. 4-5.

Fig. 2. *Annotated anthology of Tang poetry* in a nineteenth-century Vietnamese edition (National Library of Vietnam, Hanoi).



惠慈 (?-622), who may well have been the author of the commentary, although it is usually loyally attributed by Japanese scholars to the Japanese Prince Shōtoku; in 767 some Japanese monks on their way to China for study took another copy with them; in time a Chinese monk produced a secondary commentary on this work and when the Japanese monk Ennin visited China in the middle of the ninth century he came across this secondary commentary and brought a copy back to Japan.<sup>41</sup> This is the only recorded instance before modern times of a Chinese scholar writing a commentary on a work emanating from Japan, though for Japanese scholars writing commentaries on works imported from China was all in a day's work.

Many other works were exported to China, by Japanese or Koreans hoping to make a signal contribution to sinological scholarship, but most disappeared without trace. Just two exceptions can be mentioned; one was the *Vajrasamādhi sūtra* [金剛三昧經], one of the oldest works of Chan/Zen Buddhism, which was in fact written in the seventh century in Korea and thence transmitted to China, Japan and Tibet.<sup>42</sup> The other is a study of the book of *Mencius* by Yamanoi Konron 山井崑崙 (1690-1728) completed in 1726 [*Shichikei Mōshi kōbun hoi* 七經孟子考文補遺]; Japanese printed copies reached China and were greeted with surprised praise by Chinese scholars, but, again, this is the only known example of Japanese sinological scholarship gaining a favourable reception in China.<sup>43</sup> Although these two texts undeniably made an impact in China, it is arguable that the most significant exports to China from Japan and Korea were not texts written by Japanese or Korean scholars at all so much as Chinese texts which had been lost in China but had been preserved elsewhere; on several occasions Chinese scholars actively sought out such lost texts from Japan and Korea and arranged for copies to be made and sent back to China.<sup>44</sup>

The impression that these few instances convey, then, is one of literary and intellectual self-sufficiency in China vis-à-vis its East Asian neighbours: what need was there, after all, of the lucubrations of Japanese, Korean or

<sup>41</sup> Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 306-7.

<sup>42</sup> Robert E. Buswell, *The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea: The 'Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra', a Buddhist Apocryphon* (Princeton University Press, 1989)

<sup>43</sup> Ōba Osamu and Wang Yong, *Tenseki* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1996), pp. 292-300; Roy Andrew Miller, 'Some Japanese influences on Chinese classical scholarship of the Ch'ing period', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 72 (1952), pp. 56-67.

<sup>44</sup> Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 310-311; Chih-weh Chan, 'The Korean impact on T'ien-t'ai Buddhism in China: a historical analysis', in Robert E. Buswell, ed., *Currents and countercurrents: Korean influences on the East Asian Buddhist traditions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), p. 227.

Vietnamese scholars – well-meaning, no doubt, but not quite up to scratch? This impression is only reinforced when we recall, as Peter Burke has recently reminded us, that in Europe some books were translated from the various vernaculars into Latin as late as the eighteenth century for ease of circulation abroad, and that works such as Thomas More's *Utopia* were published in various European countries both in the original Latin and in vernacular translation.<sup>45</sup> I know of not a single example of a vernacular work in Japanese, Vietnamese or Korean being translated into Chinese for circulation abroad; vernacular works were instead hermetically confined to the societies that produced them.

The one significant exception to what I have said about the literary and intellectual self-sufficiency of China is that those who travelled to China and stayed there could make an intellectual impact. The most important such cases are perhaps the Korean monks Musang 無相 (680?-756?) and Wōnch'ūk 圓測 (613-696). Musang was recognised as the 3<sup>rd</sup> patriarch of Chan/Zen Buddhism in Sichuan and his name features in Tibetan records as one of the transmitters of Chan Buddhism to Tibet; Wōnch'ūk, for his part, enjoyed the patronage of Empress Wu and his commentary on the *Sa dhinirmocana sūtra* was translated into Tibetan where it was known as the 'great Chinese commentary'.<sup>46</sup> But both of them crossed over to China in the seventh century and, significant though their contributions undoubtedly were, they had no later successors. What these two cases clearly show is that writing brilliant exegetical works in impeccable literary Chinese was not enough, so long as you did not leave your desk in Japan or Korea. The transmission of ideas in East Asian Buddhist practice was after all not purely textual, for face-to-face instruction remained an important element. It is therefore not at all surprising that Musang and Wōnch'ūk were able to exercise such influence in China while other learned Japanese and Korean monks, who spent little time in China or never visited it at all, remained known only in their own countries.

The converse of Chinese self-sufficiency in texts and books was the state of textual dependency on China found in East Asian societies until the late

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<sup>45</sup> Peter Burke, 'Cultures of translation in early modern Europe', in Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia, eds, *Cultural translation in early modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.7-38.

<sup>46</sup> On Musang and Wōnch'ūk see Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism: conversion, contestation, and memory* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 69-84; Bernard Faure, 'Ch'an master Musang: a Korean monk in East Asian context', and Cho Eunsu, 'Wōnch'ūk's place in the East Asian Buddhist tradition', Robert E. Buswell, ed., *Currents and countercurrents: Korean influences on the East Asian Buddhist traditions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), pp. 153-72 & 173-216.

nineteenth century. In Japan, Korea and Vietnam official publications overwhelmingly consisted of local editions of Chinese classical or Buddhist texts; commercial publishing came into its own in Japan in the seventeenth century, well before Korea and Vietnam, but even then it was texts in Chinese, suitably adapted for the convenience of Japanese readers as we will see in the next lecture, that dominated production. The ultimate example of dependence upon China was the government library in Edo, which only collected imported Chinese imprints and disdained all books printed in Japan, even sinological texts. The contrast here with China is stark: up to the seventh century, Buddhist books in Sanskrit had been imported into China and translated, and later, in the fifteenth century great interest was taken in Tibetan Buddhism, but no interest was shown in books written even in literary Chinese by learned Japanese, Vietnamese or Koreans, let alone books actually written in the Japanese, Vietnamese or Korean vernaculars.<sup>47</sup>

Thus large quantities of Chinese texts were being imported from China or other neighbouring countries into Japan, Korea and Vietnam, or being copied or reprinted there, and equally large numbers of Chinese texts were being written by Koreans, Japanese and Vietnamese, but how were they read? How was the necessary knowledge of literary Chinese, not an easy language at the best of times, acquired outside China? Were there textbooks like those that taught the elements of Latin to pupils all over Europe? No, we would look in vain for anything like that. So, the obvious question is this: in societies in which education was based upon familiarity with the core Confucian texts and in which governments frequently sought to inculcate the civic and moral virtues they found desirable in those texts, how could those same, difficult texts be made accessible not just to a handful of scholars but to a larger segment of the population? And how could readers be guided towards the approved interpretation of those texts? In the second lecture, therefore, I shall explore the attempts that were made to render difficult Chinese texts more accessible even before vernacular scripts had come into their own. The solution was to domesticate them, to find some way of making Chinese conform to the very different grammatical norms of Japanese and Korean and so to make them easier to handle.

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<sup>47</sup> On the Tibetan *kanjur* (ie canon) printed in China in 1410, see Helmut Eimer, 'The Tibetan Kanjur printed in China,' *Zentralasiatische Studien* 36 (2007), pp. 35-60.



## Lecture 2: Tuesday 11 March

### Bluffing your way in Chinese

As I mentioned in the previous lecture, Chinese texts enjoyed enormous esteem outside China and they were widely held to embody religious, ethical and political lessons that were well worth disseminating. Reading them, however, required learning literary Chinese, and that was a daunting prospect at the best of times and definitely not likely to help them achieve anything like wide diffusion. This was a formidable difficulty and it was met by devising strategies for translation, adaptation and simplification using the vernacular languages of Japan, Korea and Vietnam. This made it possible for Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese to gain access to Chinese texts, and even to read them, without actually having to learn literary Chinese. This is what I mean by ‘bluffing your way in Chinese’.

Yesterday I focused on the transmission of Chinese books to other East Asian societies; now it is time to draw a little closer to what Samuel Sandars meant by bibliography, that is, to consider the material forms that Chinese texts took and how non-Chinese readers set about tackling them. This is what I shall be focusing upon in this lecture, but towards the end I shall also address the need to unpick the loose and unsatisfactory term ‘Chinese texts’, which I have been using indiscriminately so far. This is because the selections of Chinese texts to be studied and disseminated differed across East Asian space and time, and the meanings made of them were neither stable in any one society nor were they consistent between different societies.

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Chinese manuscripts originally came without word spacing and without punctuation or any other divisions whatsoever, just like the manuscripts which transmitted the Greek and Latin texts of antiquity up to the late middle ages. Word spacing is to this day still alien to written Chinese, and to written Japanese for that matter, partly because it is far from easy to decide what constitutes a word in Chinese, but more importantly because to some extent the characters themselves mark the morphemic boundaries in written Chinese and thus fulfil the function achieved by gaps between words in European languages. Punctuation, however, is a different matter altogether, and many a faulty interpretation has depended upon misplaced punctuation, in Chinese just as in English; indeed there are not a few passages in Chinese classical

texts where disputed punctuation gives rise to disputed interpretations. It is no surprise, then, to discover from the oldest surviving manuscripts that there was not only a felt need for punctuation but, more importantly, that adding punctuation was a crucial stage in the process of reading. Before you could begin to construe and to read a text in Chinese, you had to be able to punctuate it. The history of punctuation is not the most thrilling of subjects; nevertheless, the ability to read an unpunctuated text in literary Chinese was one that was limited to a tiny scholarly elite in East Asia for most of the last thousand years, so we do need to take some account of the difference that punctuation made.<sup>48</sup>

By far the largest corpus of early Chinese manuscripts available to us today is the huge cache found by Sir Aurel Stein and others at Dunhuang in far western China in the early years of the twentieth century. Some of these finds are fragmentary and consist of continuous text without punctuation. Many of the Dunhuang manuscripts, however, show clear signs of attempts to tame the raw Chinese, to make it more easily comprehensible, by adding punctuation.

There were fundamentally two ways of adding some basic punctuation and other aids to the reader; one, the more obvious, was to use a brush and to write the desired additions onto the surface of the manuscript, using black, white or red ink; the other way is more mysterious and we will come to that in a moment. In some manuscripts we find that not only have spaces been inserted between sections of the manuscript to aid readers, but also that these breaks have been marked out by brush in red ink. This is punctuation at its most basic.

The obvious question with many surviving manuscripts – and this applies equally to printed texts with punctuation added by hand – is precisely when the punctuation was added. In the case of many Dunhuang manuscripts, we do not know exactly when it was added, though it cannot have been after the eleventh century, when it is thought that somebody sealed up the caves in which the Dunhuang manuscripts were kept. That, of course, is not a very satisfactory means of dating; it just gives us a *terminus ante quem*.

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<sup>48</sup> On punctuation in Chinese texts, see Jean-Pierre Drège, ‘la lecture et l’écriture en Chine et la xylographie’, *Études chinoises* 10 (1991), pp. 88-90; Christoph Harbsmeier, *Language and logic*, Part 1 of volume 7 of Joseph Needham, *Science and civilization in China* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 175-180; Wolfgang Behr & Bernhard Führer, ‘Einführende Notizen zum Lesen in China mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit’, in Bernhard Führer, ed., *Aspekte des Lesens in China in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Bochum: project verlag, 2005), pp. 33-42.



On the other hand, if we now turn to an example of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra* [維摩經義記] found at Dunhuang, we have a much better idea, for it conveniently carries two colophons explaining the circumstances of its production.<sup>49</sup> According to the first colophon, the manuscript was copied in the year 539 and then checked; according to the second colophon, 23 years later, in the year 562, a monk used this manuscript for lecturing purposes and added punctuation with a red brush. The significance of this second colophon is the delay of twenty-three years, for it is evident that punctuation was at this stage extraneous to the text and that adding it was a private act for the lecturer's own convenience; that is why copies of Buddhist sutras which were copied in a uniform format and were intended for monastic library use do not as a rule carry punctuation, while private copies, or students' copies, or copies that were liberated from libraries, very often do contain punctuation, and it is generally written in a different colour from the black ink of the text so that the original state of the unpunctuated text is preserved.<sup>50</sup> Colophons like these seem to have been written with the future scholar in mind, and they are far from unusual; from this particular example we can see that already by the sixth century private readers were accustomed to adding punctuation to texts.

What exactly do I mean by 'punctuation'? The earliest forms to appear divided the raw Chinese text into sections, into sentences and into internal divisions within sentences. Punctuation of this sort can be found not only in Chinese texts produced in China, but also in copies made in Japan and Korea; in all likelihood the same was true of copies made in Vietnam, but invasions, wars and the climate have left us with not a single Vietnamese manuscript that can be safely dated to any time before the sixteenth century. Still, there can be little doubt that basic punctuation techniques were transmitted from China to all parts of East Asia where Chinese texts were read.

This sort of punctuation is not the end of the story, however; other marks were used, for example to identify proper names, to indicate the tones with which the characters were to be pronounced and to distinguish between two different senses of one and the same character. In other words, punctuation was being used increasingly to tie down the interpretation of the text. Given that printed texts seldom carried punctuation, and when they did it was rudimentary, the need to punctuate also applied to printed books, obviously.

<sup>49</sup> Ishizuka Harumichi, 'Rōran Tonkō no katenbon', *Bokubi* 201 (1970), pp. 2-38, and 'Tonkō no katenbon', in *Tonkō kanbun bunken*, Kōza Tonkō vol. 5 (Taitō Shuppansha, 1992), pp. 239-40. The item is Or.8210/S. 2732 in the British Library; images have not yet been loaded onto the website of the International Dunhuang Project: <http://idp.bl.uk/idp.a4d>.

<sup>50</sup> Ishizuka, 'Tonkō no katenbon', p. 241.

For this reason many an old printed book is found to contain various types of punctuation and annotation laboriously provided by an early reader.<sup>51</sup>

What we have been looking at so far is the use of the writing brush to punctuate an existing manuscript or a printed text in Chinese and this method was widespread in Japan and Korea, but, as I have already mentioned, it was not the only method available. The other method, the mysterious one, has only come to light in the last fifty years, and the reason for that is that it took considerable imagination to realise that various small indentations in the paper of early manuscripts were not accidental but rather were marks made deliberately with the sharpened end of a writing brush or with some other sharp implement. Since this technique was first brought to light in Japan in 1961, I shall use the Japanese name for it, *kakuhitsu* 角筆, for it was not until the year 2000 that the first examples of this practice were identified in Korea, where it is called *kakp'il*. It is a technique that is similar to the 'dry-point gloss' as used in European medieval manuscripts. The following Korean example (fig. 3), taken from a facsimile of a printed copy of the Flower Garland sutra [*Avata saka sūtra*; (K) *Hwayōmgyōng* 華嚴經] belonging to the first Korean printing of the Buddhist canon in the eleventh century illustrates the practice of *kakuhitsu/kakp'il*. To the naked or at least untrained eye, this text appears to have no punctuation or annotations whatsoever. A closer look, however, reveals that there are in fact a large number of indentations which have been deliberately made in the surface of the paper, and these are in the facsimile conveniently highlighted in yellow for ease of identification.

Indentations like this have also been found in Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang which date back to the fifth century. There is no way of knowing if those indentations were made soon after the manuscripts were copied in the fifth century or much later. However, in the British Museum there is a copy of the *Lotus sūtra* [妙法蓮華經觀世音菩薩普門品第二十五] dated 948 from Dunhuang and according to the colophon this was punctuated and edited by the copyist in the same year in order to read it aloud; where he – for the copyist was a monk – found a dubious or a mistaken character, he crossed it out with the sharp end of his brush, thus leaving it visible, and wrote at the side in ink what in his view was the correct reading.<sup>52</sup> So the use of indentations for editing purposes in China goes back at least that far, the year 948.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>52</sup> Kobayashi Yoshinori, 'Tonkō no kakuhitsu bunken – Daiei toshokanzō Kannongyō (S.5556) no katen', *Kuntengo to kanten shiryō* 96 (1995), pp. 3-4. This item is Or.8210/S.5556 in the British Library.

Fig. 3. Flower Garland Sutra [*Hwayŏmgyŏng* 華嚴經], 卷 36  
printed in Korea *ca* 1100. Taken from I Sŭngjae *et al.*, eds, *Kukbo ibaeksaho  
chubon Hwayŏmgyŏng kwŏn samsimnyuk* (P'aju: T'aehaksa, 2006), p. 79.

[picture removed for copyright reasons]

There is much work still to be done on the Dunhuang manuscripts and doubtless some other examples will come to light which we can confidently give an earlier date to. For the time being, however, although hard evidence is wanting, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this practice of punctuating and making corrections by means of indented marks was first developed in China and later transmitted from China to Korea and Japan.

What we see in the Korean examples, however, is a quantity of indentations that far exceeds anything that can be found in any of the Dunhuang manuscripts. Indentations in the Dunhuang manuscripts were either being used for editorial purposes or were fulfilling the same role as punctuation marks conventionally inserted with brush and ink. So what could the huge number of indentations we see here possibly signify, and why were they used to such a great extent in manuscripts and printed books outside China?

When I was talking about punctuation a few minutes ago I was not really talking about ‘bluffing your way through Chinese,’ as the title of this lecture has it, so much as about breaking the text down into its constituent parts and providing useful aids to comprehension. Now, however, we need to take account of the phenomenon known in Japanese as *kundoku* 訓読, that is, the habit of trying to read Chinese as if it were your own language, and that is the point of all these indentations.

It has become abundantly clear that, at least by the eighth century, it was a common practice in Korea and Japan to read Chinese as if it were your own language, and it was certainly also practised by speakers of Uyghur and Vietnamese as well.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps the easiest way of explaining *kundoku* is to compare it to the representation of a bit of arithmetical notation such as  $2 + 2 = 4$  in Arabic numerals; this can be read in any language following the normal syntactic rules that apply in that language: in writing it means the same to speakers of any language, but when spoken out loud it only makes sense to those who speak the same language. In a similar, but not quite identical, manner, readers in Japan and Korea devised ways of reading a Chinese text in a manner that conformed to the syntax of the Japanese or the Korean language; thus, like a piece of arithmetical notation, the text meant the same to any reader but was articulated in quite different ways according to the language spoken by the reader. This process started even before the development of the Japanese and Korean scripts, so we can definitely say that

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<sup>53</sup> Kamigaito Masahiro, ‘Bunken kenkyū to gengogaku – Uigurugo ni okeru kanjion no saikō to kanbun kundoku no kanōsei’, *Gengo kenkyū* 124 (2003), pp. 1-36; Nguyen Thi Oanh, ‘Nihon kara mita Betonamu kanbun kundoku’, unpublished paper delivered at the Book Roads conference in Hangzhou, September 2006.

it is decidedly not a product of the emergence of those scripts. In other words, the drive to vernacularize Chinese texts came first, and it anticipated, and possibly even stimulated, the emergence of vernacular scripts.

Consider, for example, the case of a Chinese commentary on the Flower Garland sutra [(J) *Kegon kanjōki* 華嚴刊定記].<sup>54</sup> Sometime in the middle of the eighth century, a copy of this commentary was made at the Tōdaiji temple in Nara; several detailed colophons tell us that in 783 and 788 this Japanese copy was checked against a copy imported from Korea and then against a copy imported from Tang China, and a little later more editorial work was done on the manuscript. Each stage of this editorial work was carried out in ink of a different colour, showing extraordinarily kind attention to the needs of future scholars. When the whole process had been completed, by the year 806 at the latest, the manuscript had been doubly authenticated by comparing it with imported copies from both Korea and China; it contained not only the kind of punctuation marks in common use in Tang China but in addition it contained Chinese numerals to indicate the order in which the Chinese characters were to be read in accordance with Japanese syntax. From this the conclusion is inescapable: the readers of this text in late eighth-century Japan were bluffing their way in Chinese, not so much reading the Chinese text as generating a Japanese text from it; that is, they were retaining the Chinese vocabulary but rearranging it in Japanese order and adding Japanese grammatical elements and inflections so that it made sense as Japanese.

This late eighth-century manuscript is the oldest Japanese witness to this practice so far identified, and it is important to remember that this is not a scriptural text but a commentary: while Buddhist sutras might be, and for centuries were, intoned straight from the Chinese text, albeit in Japanese or Korean pronunciation, this particular text is a commentary, and the glosses are there in order to facilitate an entirely different kind of reading operation, one in which comprehension is the goal by means of on-the-spot creation of a Japanese version.

Another example of the same practice comes from a twelfth-century Japanese manuscript in a private collection (fig. 4). The illustration shows the end of the manuscript with the two colophons, one in black and one in red; these attest to the act of copying the manuscript and then of editing it. The significant point here, however, is the quantity of dots in red ink scattered on and around the characters at the end of the text on the right hand side, an arrangement that might recall all those indentations seen around the characters in the Korean printed text.

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<sup>54</sup> O Minyǒng and Kim Sǒngju, 'Daitōkyū Kinen Bunko zō *Kegon kanjōki* ni tsuite', *Kuntengo to kanten shiryō* 119 (2007), pp. 100-32.

Fig. 4. *Bianzheng lun* 辨正論, copied by a monk of the Hōryūji temple in Nara in 1123. Taken from the frontispiece of Tsukishima Hiroshi, *Heian jidai kantenbon ronkō* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1996).

[picture removed for copyright reasons]

Both the Japanese and the Korean languages rely upon particles following nouns to indicate syntactic relations and upon verbal inflections to indicate tense, aspect and negativity. How were these essential features to be indicated in a Chinese text if you wanted to read it in your own language at a time when there was no script available to write Japanese or Korean? The answer was a set of indentations, or alternatively marks made with a brush, all carefully placed to discriminate between different syntactical relations.

Let us consider one example of how this worked in Japan (fig. 5).<sup>55</sup> Here can be seen various types of brushstroke; the various positions of each type of brushstroke are arranged in a square, with one or more in the middle; these show the positions of brushstrokes added by a reader on or around a given Chinese character. These marks are known in Japanese as *okototen* and the small letters beside them tell us what inflections or particles they represented. If we take just the set of brush marks in the top right, and show how they are used with an individual character, the complexity of this scheme will be all too apparent (fig. 6). The kana syllabic signs beside the dots, helpfully added in the most authoritative study of *okototen* to date, indicate their functions; thus the simple dot placed immediately above the character represents the accusative particle and makes the character the object of some verb; in the same way, the dots in the other positions place the character in one or another of several possible syntactic relationships it can enjoy with other words in a sentence; the dashes and various other brushstrokes in fig. 5 increased the range of syntactical information that could be conveyed in this way. Complex though this scheme is, what I have shown here is merely the scheme of marks used in the great Tōdaiji temple in Nara; at other temples of learning, different sets of marks were in use, for each major temple had its own set of texts and ways of reading them, and it has taken decades of painstaking research to work out what all the marks mean in a text like this.<sup>56</sup>

It has been a much-debated question for some years whether this way of reading Chinese, *kundoku*, was an independent development in Japan or whether it was transmitted from Korea. Unlike Japan, Korea is not blessed with an abundance of very early manuscripts, for invasions and wars have taken their toll; consequently, Japanese evidence of *kundoku* reading is older than anything that survives in Korea; that is an inescapable fact.

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<sup>55</sup> Tollini furnishes the best account in a Western language, esp. pp. 181ff.

<sup>56</sup> Tsukishima provides an exhaustive treatment.

Fig. 5. *Okototen* used in the Tōdaiji temple in Nara: taken from Tsukishima Hiroshi, *Heian jidai kumentenbon ronkō – okototenzu kanajitai hyō* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1986), p. 90.

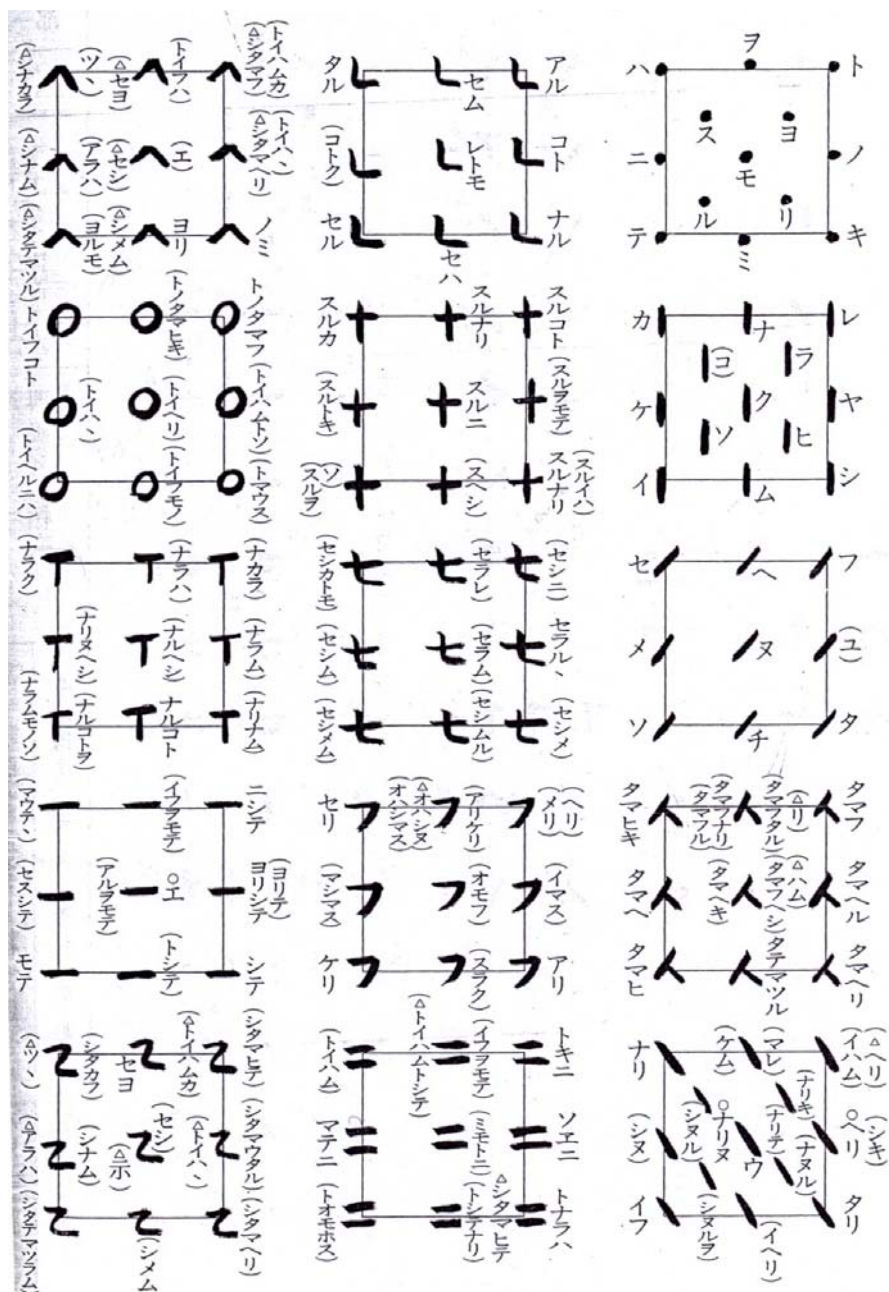
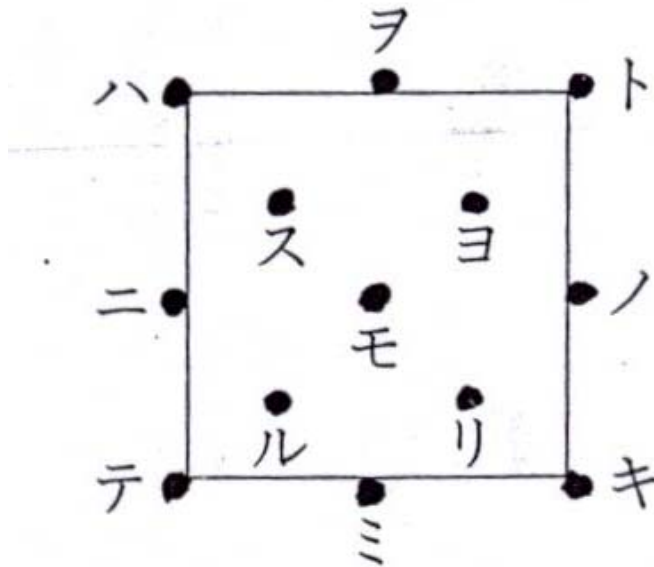




Fig. 6. The dots from the top right square of Fig. 5 superimposed on the Chinese character for ‘writing’. Based on Tsukishima Hiroshi, *Heian jidai kuntebon ronkō – okototenzu kanajitai hyō*, p. 90.



Nevertheless, for two good reasons, the probability is that the practice was not independently developed in Japan. The first reason is the close similarity in techniques between the eighth-century Japanese examples and the later Korean ones, with the assumption being that the technique is more likely to have been transmitted from Korea to Japan, rather than the other way round, for that was the usual direction of flow for manuscripts and other cultural goods. As for the second reason, the fact is that the earliest Japanese manuscripts revealing the *kundoku* technique are all connected with the Flower Garland sect (Kegonshū 華嚴宗) of Buddhism, and the teachings of this sect were transmitted to Japan in the year 740 by a Japanese monk who had spent some years studying in Korea. When coupled with documentary evidence that Korean monks were generating Korean texts from Chinese

sutras by the eighth century, this has been enough to convince Japanese scholars that *kundoku* reading was indeed introduced to Japan from Korea.<sup>57</sup>

Convenient though the *kundoku* method certainly was, there can be no doubt that having to read texts by relying on indentations or small brushmarks left a lot to be desired. In other words, there was a much more that could be done to assist readers wrestling with Chinese texts. In particular, the development of the kana syllabic script in Japan in the ninth century made it possible to adopt more transparent methods and to reduce still further the difficulty of reading Chinese. At first, and for many centuries, this was done by hand, either in manuscripts or in printed books. For example, a text printed in Japan as late as 1595 carried no aids to reading whatsoever; a reader therefore went through it adding a lot of syntactical elaboration in kana by hand, thus transforming it into a text that made sense as Japanese (fig. 7).

Some at least of these aids to the reader could of course easily be printed, and in Japan they frequently were, but only from the seventeenth century onwards. This can be illustrated with a glance at the 1634 Japanese edition of the Zen classic, the *Platform Sutra of the sixth patriarch* [(J) *Rokuso dankyō* 六祖段經] (fig. 8). As you can see, the printed text has been assiduously punctuated in red and annotated in black in 1645 by a scholar-monk who conveniently dated his handwritten annotations to the text. It is important, however, to notice the extent of the apparatus already present in the text before he got to work on it, and we can see this more easily in the attached enlargement of the top four characters of the seventh line. The various marks visible in the enlargement, the numerals on the left and the Japanese inflections and particles on the right, were all part of the printed text; they provided the clues to enable Japanese readers to place the characters in the Japanese order, and to construe this Chinese text as if it were Japanese. Even this was not enough to enable the learned monk in the seventeenth century to read it with ease: with red ink he ruled red lines through the proper names and he added much more besides in black ink.

Glosses of this sort were common in all Chinese texts printed in Japan after 1620 or so, and it will be obvious that the presentation of texts in this way not only made Chinese texts more accessible but also militated strongly in favour of the use of woodblock printing. Chinese texts were being printed in Japan with a bewildering encrustation of tiny numerals, added particles and pronunciation glosses. This was easy enough to achieve in print using wood blocks, but fiendishly difficult to do with movable type, and this is the

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<sup>57</sup> Kobayashi Yoshinori, 'Kankoku ni okeru kakuhitsu bunken no hakken to sono igi – Nihon kokunten to no kankei', *Chōsen gakuho* 182 (2002), pp. 53-57.

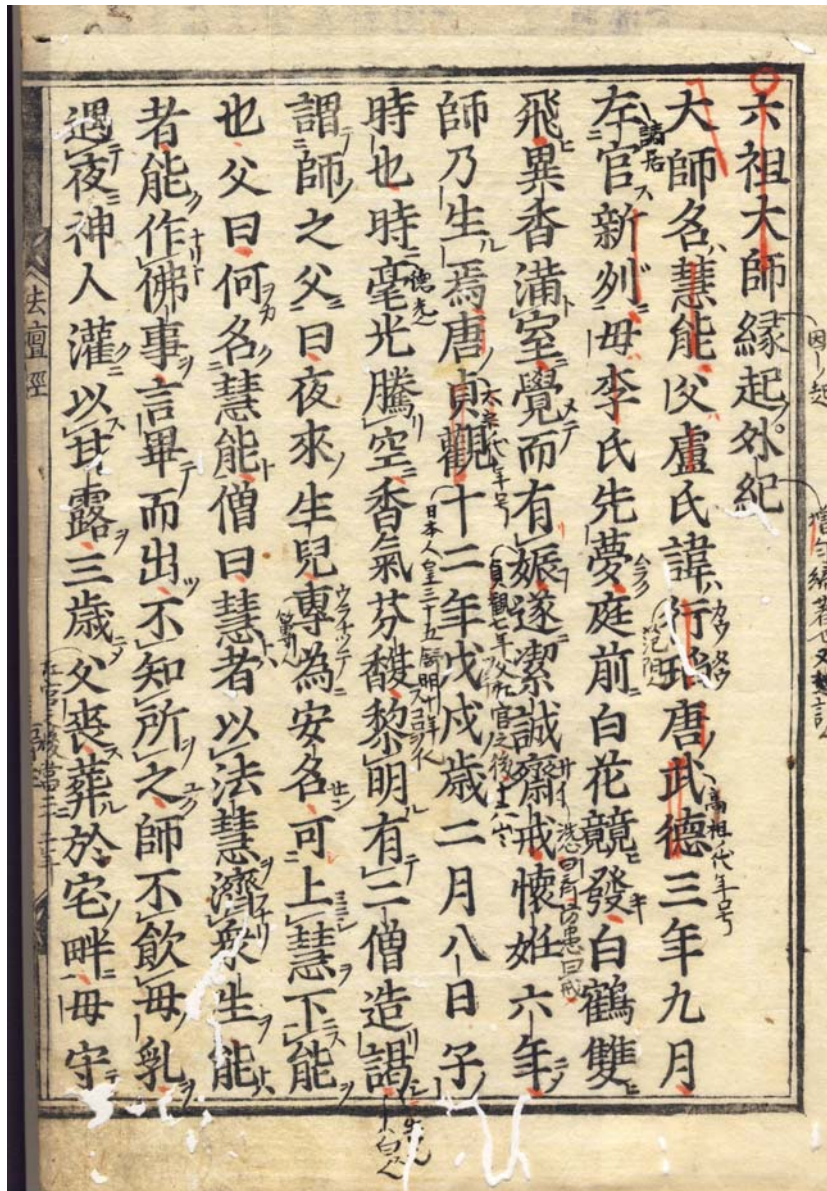
Fig. 7. A Tang-dynasty study of the Lotus sutra printed in Kyoto in 1595 (University Library).<sup>58</sup> Only the Chinese text is printed; all the other marks are handwritten additions to facilitate reading.

法華私記緣起  
 沙門 灌頂 述  
 大法東漸僧史所載誰有幾人不曾聽講自  
 解佛乘者乎縱令發悟復能入定得陀羅尼  
 者不縱具定慧復帝京弘二法不縱令盛  
 席謝遣徒衆隱居山谷不縱避世守玄被徵  
 為二國師不縱帝者所尊太極殿對御講仁  
 王般若不縱正殿宣揚為主上三禮不縱令  
 萬乘屈膝百高座百官稱美讚歎彈指宣殿  
 不縱道俗顛顛玄悟法華圓意不縱得經意

<sup>58</sup> UL: FG.710.106; Hayashi and Kornicki, no. 2372.



Fig. 8. Platform sutra of the sixth patriarch, 1634 Japanese edition with handwritten additions dated 1645 (author's collection), with enlargement of the first four characters of the seventh line to show printed glosses.



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principal factor, it seems to me, that explains why typography was abandoned in Japan in the seventeenth century after just fifty years of use. For a commercial publisher seeking to make texts accessible, all the glosses were essential and yet they added enormously to the effort and the expense of preparing a typographic edition. This, then, is surely why woodblock printing became once again the dominant form of printing in Japan right up to the 1880s.

Let us turn now to Korea and consider how access to Chinese texts was facilitated there, for it is quite a different story. As in Japan, for a long time indentations or brush-marks were used, but these were insufficient to help readers construe the text, and by the ninth century abbreviated characters were being used to amplify the syntactic relationships. These glosses, denoted *kugyŏl* 口訣 and *t'o* 吐 in Korean, were used to generate a Korean text from the Chinese by indicating grammatical particles and inflections.<sup>59</sup> This is a similar procedure to that adopted in Japan, so rather than discussing this in detail I shall instead consider late developments in Korea, which have no parallel in Japan.

After the invention of the hangŭl alphabetic script in 1443, it became possible to provide even more help to Korean readers of Chinese texts. It would be a mistake, however, to equate the invention of hangŭl with a new commitment to the vernacular. After all, the afterword of the 1446 edition of *Correct sounds to instruct the people* [*Hunmin chŏngŭm* 訓民正音], the famous book that publicised the new script, made it clear that one of the advantages of hangŭl was that it would help people to understand Chinese texts:

Although our country's rituals, music, and literature are comparable to those of China, our speech and language are not the same as China's.

Those who studied books in Chinese were concerned about the difficulty of understanding their meaning and purport.<sup>60</sup>

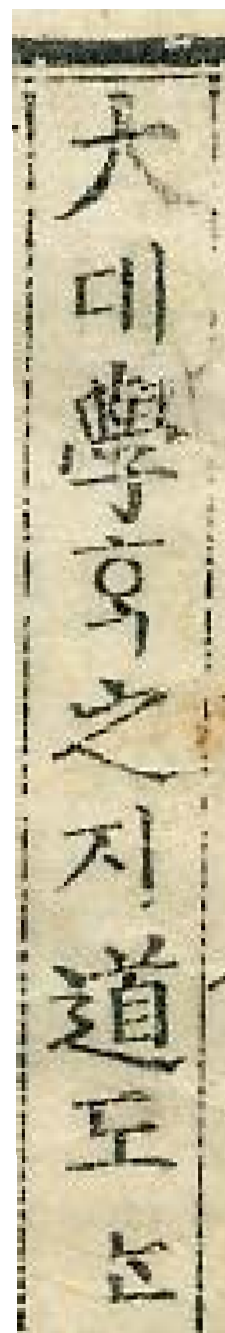
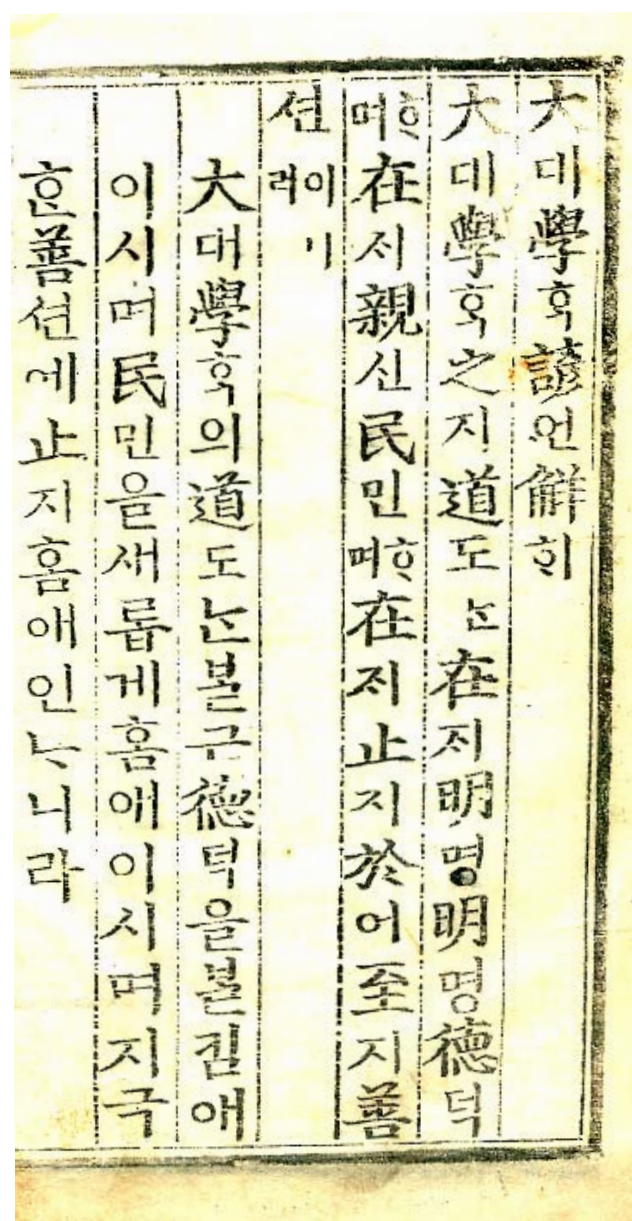
In fact, for several centuries to follow, by far the most common use of hangŭl in print was in what are called *ŏnhaebon* 諺解本, which are books containing Chinese texts with Korean explanatory material.<sup>61</sup> These are, in other words,

<sup>59</sup> For an explanation in English, see Peter H. Lee, ed., *A history of Korean literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 88-90; Yu T'ag'il, *Hanguk munhŏnhak yŏngu* (Seoul: Asia Munhwasa, 1989), p. 51ff.

<sup>60</sup> Peter H. Lee, ed, *Sourcebook of Korean civilization*, volume 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 517.

<sup>61</sup> The only thorough study of *ŏnhaebon* as a phenomenon is Hong Yunp'yo, *Kŭndae kugŏ yŏngu*, vol. 1 (Seoul: T'aehansa, 1994), pp. 113-127.

Fig. 9. Eighteenth-century edition of the *Great learning* (author's collection) with an enlargement of the first part of the first line of text to show Korean glosses following each character and, at the bottom, a Korean grammatical particle.



hybrid books, consisting on the one hand of a Chinese text transmitted from China, and on the other hand of Korean explanatory material.

The form that *ŏnhaebon* typically took is shown in fig. 9. This shows the opening page of an eighteenth-century edition of the *Great Learning*, one of the canonical *Four Books*. First of all, the reader is given the original Chinese text on the right, but, as you see, it is a very complex *mis-en-page* that we have in front of us, for each character comes with its conventional Korean pronunciation below it in hangŭl, and in addition Korean grammatical particles and other forms are inserted to help the reader generate a Korean version of the Chinese text. Then, on the left, the reader is offered a translation of the Chinese text into Korean; the translation, as you see, retains some items of Chinese vocabulary, each again with their conventional Korean pronunciations shown, but it is indubitably in the Korean language rather than in Chinese.

The earliest books of this kind were produced in the second half of the fifteenth century, thus not long after the invention of hangŭl. At this early stage they consisted not of Confucian texts but mostly of Buddhist texts and of the writings of Chinese poets of the Tang dynasty. In 1461 a government agency was set up precisely in order to print Buddhist texts, and two years later it produced a hybrid text of the Lotus Sutra; this was one of the most popular sutras in Korea and at least 120 different editions were printed between 1399 and 1876, but the significance of the hybrid editions, of course, is that they gave access to the text to those whose knowledge of Buddhist Chinese was not perfect. Given the importance that the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics* had in education and intellectual life in Korea, it will come as something of a surprise to learn that these were *not* among the first texts to be produced in handy hybrid editions; quite to the contrary. This very fact alerts us to a crucial dimension of these editions: by translating a Chinese text into Korean, the translator had to decide upon one interpretation of the text rather than another. This caused few problems in the case of most Chinese texts, but in Korea it created huge difficulties in the case of canonical works like the *Four Books*. Why should that have been so?

The edition of the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics* that was widely used in Korea, from the foundation of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1392 onwards, was a Ming edition that was reprinted in Korea in 1427.<sup>62</sup> But in this edition the texts were in raw Chinese, naturally with Chinese commentary supplied but without any reading aids whatsoever; they were therefore of no conceivable use to the

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<sup>62</sup> Kim Hangsu, ‘Simnyuk segi kyŏngsŏ ŏnhae ŭi sasangjŏk koch’al’, *Kyujanggak* 10 (1987), p. 19.



poor student. Successive kings recognised this and ordered that hybrid editions with Korean translations be prepared, but years, decades passed and surprisingly little progress was made. One of the reasons was that some scholars were very uneasy about the idea of establishing a set of official translations for the Chinese classics and printing them, for that would fix the interpretation of those texts for good and leave scholars little room for discussing difficult passages and coming up with alternative interpretations. Thus when the first draft of a version of part of the *Five Classics* was prepared, a dispute broke out between those who favoured the interpretations of the leading Chinese Neo-Confucianist, Zhu Xi, and those who favoured other interpretations; this was no storm in a teacup, for one of the participants argued that the dissenters on the other side should be executed. Intellectual dissent was in fact a dangerous business during the Chosŏn dynasty, so it was only after many years of factional disputation and organizational difficulty that in 1585 a government office was finally created to put an end to the delays and produce hybrid editions of the core texts.<sup>63</sup>

The first result of their labours was in fact an edition of the *Lesser Learning*, a work produced in the Song dynasty as an introduction to the ethics and principals of Confucianism. Mastery of this work was considered in Korea essential before more serious scholarly work was undertaken; and candidates for the civil service examinations had to demonstrate that they had already passed an examination on their knowledge of this work before they were allowed to proceed to the higher exams.<sup>64</sup> This hybrid edition, therefore, was prepared with the needs of serious students in mind. In other words, this was not an edition for the benefit of those who could not read Chinese; rather it was an aid to study, a version of the text with appropriate glosses and an accurate translation that was intended to lead the student towards a full understanding of the syntax and the meaning of the Chinese text. There was a translation provided all right, but it was subordinate to the main purpose, which was to instruct the student how to read the Chinese aloud in such a way that it made some sort of sense in Korean.

Eventually, in 1588 this office produced a complete hybrid edition of the *Four Books*, all based on the interpretations of Zhu Xi, and these became the standard editions; they were reprinted frequently, which is an eloquent

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*. Martina Deuchler, 'Despoilers of the Way, insulters of the Sages: controversies over the Classics in seventeenth-century Korea', in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds, *Culture and the state in late Chosŏn Korea* (Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 91-133.

<sup>64</sup> Kim Hangsu, pp. 18-19.



testimony to the need for them. But it also indicates the closing down of room for different interpretations and the imposition of officially sanctioned modes of interpretation of these texts. Producing these hybrid editions had clearly been a struggle. However, once the ideological or factional line of interpretation had been laid down, a flood of hybrid editions appeared, and emphasis gradually moved from the Chinese originals to the Korean translations, as we shall see in the third lecture.

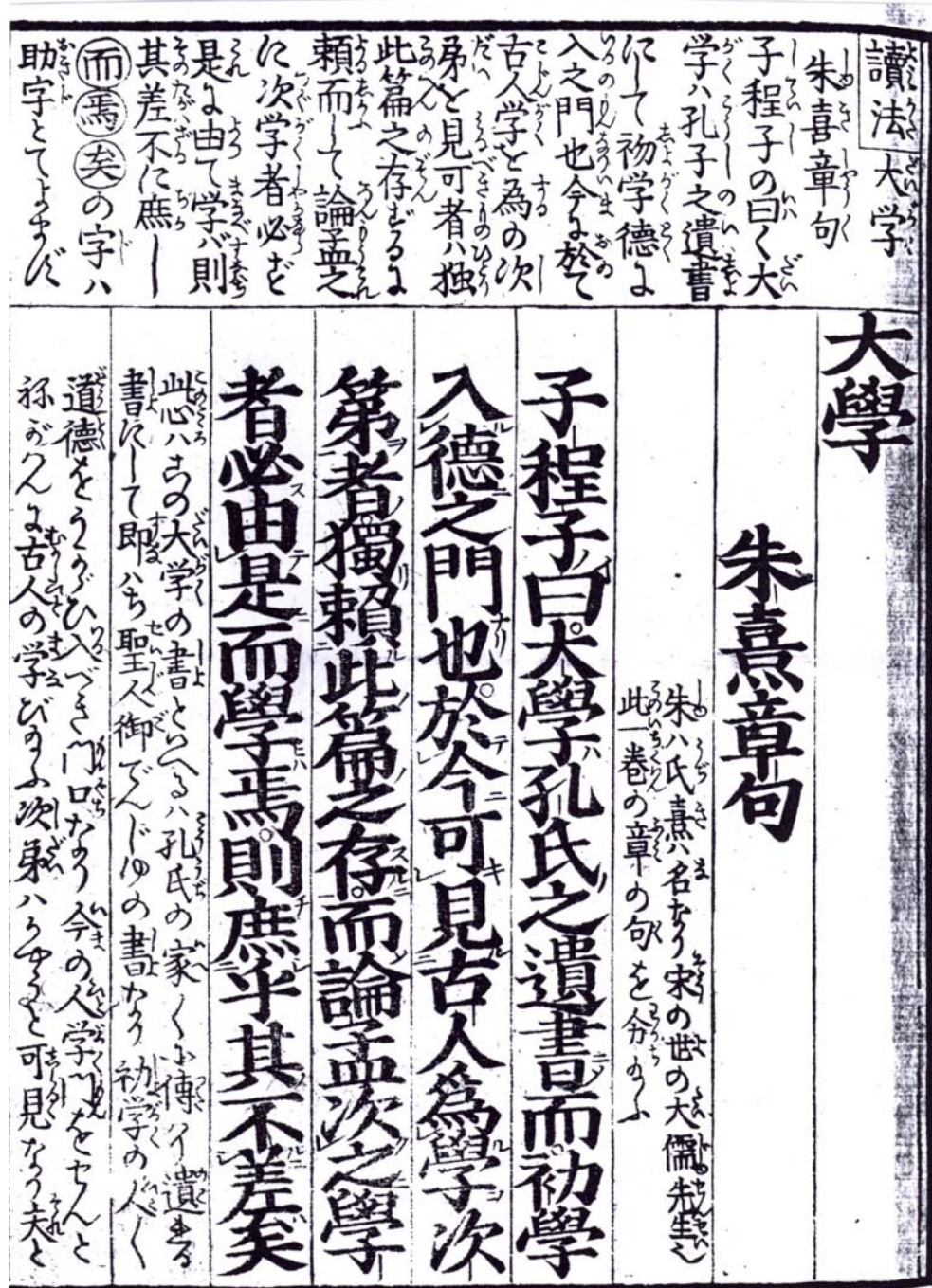
By contrast with what happened in Korea, this particular leap from original to translation was never made in Japan, at least when it came to Chinese Confucian texts. Instead, there was a different development in Japan, the mass-marketing of Confucian texts. From the 1780s onwards, a series of editions in an unusual format was published, beginning in 1786 with the *Four Books*; the series went by the name of ‘Classics without a teacher’ [*Keiten yoshi* 經典餘師] and it was created by Tani Hyakunen 溪百年. There was a lot that was new about these editions, to start off with the size: instead of the larger sizes associated with scholarly books, these were smaller and invited comparison instead with works of popular fiction (fig. 10). This series was immensely successful: the edition of the *Four Books*, for example, was printed so many times that the woodblocks had worn out in eight years and a new set of blocks had to be prepared in 1794. This was followed by a third set of blocks in 1824, a fourth in 1842, a fifth in 1852 and even a sixth in 1871.<sup>65</sup> Since each new set of blocks required a renewed capital investment in the wood and the labour of carving, there is strong evidence here of substantial returns and a large market. It is very much a moot point how many copies could be printed from a set of blocks before they became illegible, but we are safe in assuming at least eight thousand copies, so we have evidence here of at least 50,000 copies coming onto the market.<sup>66</sup>

What exactly did readers get out of these books? According to the prefaces, they were aimed at rural readers who had to make do without a teacher to instruct them how to read Chinese texts. So readers were provided with a text containing continuous glosses in Japanese, as you can see, so that he or she could articulate the entire text in Japanese either aloud, as was often done in schools, or in silence. In addition to the continual glosses, the texts also claimed to offer a translation; but what this translation turns out to be is instead a commentary and a paraphrase rather than the sort of translation we

<sup>65</sup> Suzuki Toshiyuki, *Edo no dokushonetsu – jigaku suru dokusha to shoseki ryūtsū* (Heibonsha, 2007), p. 157ff.

<sup>66</sup> On the number of copies that could be printed from woodblocks, see McDermott, pp. 20-21.

Fig. 10. The opening of the third *Keiten yoshi* edition (1824) of the *Great learning* from the University Library.<sup>67</sup>



<sup>67</sup> UL FB.734.2; Hayashi and Kornicki, no. 2423.

find in the Korean hybrid books. The enormous popularity of these books testifies not so much simply to a desire for access to the contents, but rather access to the language, the procedures and the learning associated with sinology, with the forms of knowledge and the cultural capital that had in the seventeenth century been restricted to samurai and were now becoming accessible to a much larger public through cheap editions like this. Village headmen, for example, had urgent need of this knowledge, for they had to correspond with their samurai masters in a bastardized form of Chinese and they needed to know the language of Confucian benevolence when they had to plead for reduced taxes when the village's harvest had failed, for example.<sup>68</sup> The popularity of these books, then, reveals the mass appeal that classic Chinese texts could enjoy even in the nineteenth century.

It is clear from these books that in Japan the definitions of what constitute desirable knowledge were clearly still heavily biased towards sinology, but it was now becoming accessible through books that bypassed the longstanding expectation that knowledge is transmitted by teachers belonging to one particular school of thought. This is do-it-yourself sinology with a vengeance, and its appeal is evident not only from the multiple editions but also from the numerous copy-cat versions that also appeared.<sup>69</sup> The ends served by these editions would not in fact have been served by translations. In fact, it was only in the late nineteenth century that Japanese translations appeared, in other words once sinology was being replaced in the school curricula by English and was beginning to lose its social cachet.

There were indeed translations of other Chinese texts into Japanese, including novels and medical works, but not of the canonical works of Confucianism that remained the basis of the education system; with these you had to struggle to learn the rules for decoding Chinese, but that was of practical value to the poor village headman, to say nothing of the prestige attached to sinological knowledge.

I have spent some time showing how Japanese and Korean readers became accustomed to reading Chinese texts without necessarily having a good understanding of the Chinese language. There can be no doubt that Vietnamese were doing the same, but the evidence is only now coming to light and much further work is needed. The reading marks that Japanese and Koreans put in their manuscripts, and likewise the reading marks which came to be included in printed editions, show us that it was customary in Japan and

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Rubinger, *Popular literacy in early modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), *passim*.

<sup>69</sup> Suzuki, chapter 4.

Korea to rearrange the order of the Chinese characters mentally or aloud and to force them into the straitjacket of their own languages, something that was just not possible in the case of Latin. It is important now to recognise that there were in fact other ways of approaching Chinese texts.

Take, for example, the Jurchens of north-east China: they spoke an agglutinative language and therefore faced similar problems dealing with Chinese writing to those faced by Japanese and Koreans. In the early twelfth century they overran most of northern China and established there the Jin dynasty; they devised a script for their language, adopted the Chinese practice of graded examinations for public office and in 1173 established an Academy to encourage learning. More significantly, in 1164 they had established a bureau for the translation of the Chinese classics; so by 1189 there was already a sizable body of Chinese texts translated into the Jurchen language, including historical works and a guide to administrative practice as well as most of the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*. What is much more significant is that it was these translations that students needed to know in order to pass the exams, not the Chinese originals.<sup>70</sup> By contrast, Korean and Vietnamese candidates for public service had to struggle with the Chinese texts and to write their answers in literary Chinese, even if they were mentally converting it into their own languages all the time. Japanese, too, were expected to struggle with the originals, naturally recasting the text as Japanese; they, however, had no exams to face in order to gain office, for in Japan paternal rank outclassed academic performance when it came to getting a job.

Much later, again in north-east China, the rise of the Manchus led to a similar compromise with the demands made by Chinese texts (fig. 11). By the 1630s memorials were being submitted to the throne calling for the translation of Confucian texts into Manchu, and in 1677 a translation of the *Four Books* was published in bilingual format.<sup>71</sup> The University Library possesses a good collection of these bilingual editions; they mostly came from the library of Sir Thomas Wade, the British diplomat and sinologist who donated his substantial collection of Chinese books to the University Library in 1886 and was elected the first professor of Chinese in the University just two years later.<sup>72</sup>

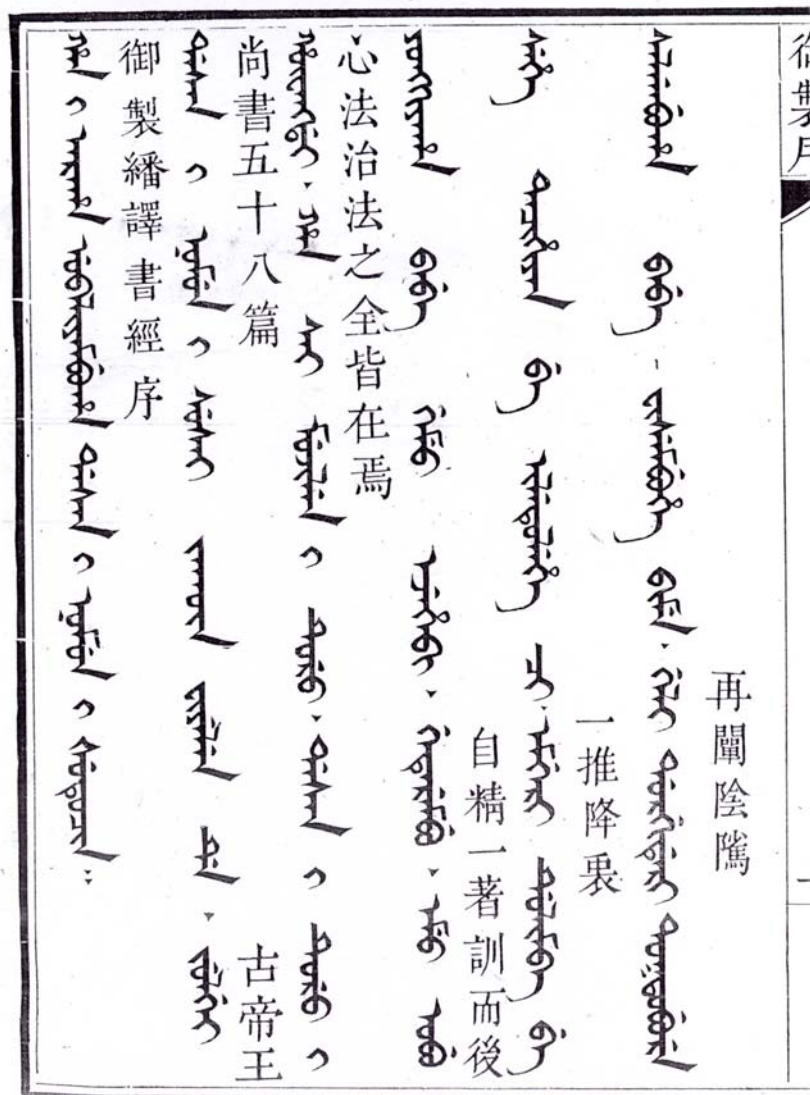
These Manchu editions deserve our attention for several reasons. Firstly, the sentence-by-sentence presentation in the bilingual versions may suggest that the Manchu translation is intended to facilitate understanding of the Chinese,

<sup>70</sup> Tao, Jing-shen, *The Jurchen in twelfth-century China: a study of sinicization* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976).

<sup>71</sup> Stephen Durrant, 'Sino-Manchu translations at the Mukden court', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99 (1979), pp. 653-661.

<sup>72</sup> See Charles Aylmer's online catalogue: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/mulu/fcman.html>.

Fig. 11. Manchu bilingual edition of the *Book of Documents* (1760) from the University Library.<sup>73</sup>



<sup>73</sup> UL FC.99.66.

but there was no method of generating a Manchu text from the Chinese, as Japanese and Korean students were doing, nor were there any glosses to help the student along. To make sense of the Chinese text, therefore, you have to be able to read literary Chinese: there was no short-cut; if you could not cope with the Chinese, then there was only the translation to rely upon.

Secondly, the Manchu translations are just that – even the key ethical terms of the Confucian texts are translated into Manchu instead of retaining the Chinese terms; when Chinese texts were read or even translated in Japan, Vietnam and Korea, by contrast, the key Chinese terms remained in Chinese. Thirdly, and most importantly, the eighteenth-century Manchu editions carry prefaces and these claim that the Manchu translations represent an interpretive act which supersedes the Chinese exegetical tradition; in other words, they are now claiming interpretive authority for the translations.<sup>74</sup>

The argument here could be reinforced by looking at translation practices in Western Xia, Mongolia and Tibet, but I do not need to belabour the point any further. In all these societies access to key Chinese texts was had either through monolingual translations or through bilingual editions. In Japan, Korea and Vietnam, by contrast, you had to engage with the Chinese to some extent at least. In Japan and Korea most readers were bluffing their way through, reading the Chinese in such a way that it resembled their own language. If you did not know Chinese but nevertheless wanted to familiarise yourself with the *Great Learning*, for example, you would not have been able to find a monolingual translation in either Japanese or Korean: if you were Korean, you would have to settle for a bilingual edition, and even these sometimes omitted the translation part when the Chinese was considered easy; if you were Japanese you had no translations available and the common practice was to follow all the glosses so as to reconstruct the Chinese as a Japanese text.

\* \* \*

Before drawing this lecture to a close, I must return to the point I made at the outset. I have been using the term ‘Chinese texts’ with reckless abandon up to now, and it is at last time to admit that speaking of Chinese texts as if they were some kind of monolithic entity obscures an important point, for these texts took on a range of meanings at different times and in different societies, to say nothing of different individuals. The most obvious illustration of this at a basic level is the unequal weight given to Buddhist and Confucian texts:

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<sup>74</sup> Laura E. Hess, ‘The Manchu exegesis of the *Lúnyǔ*’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 (1993), pp. 404-416; Durrant, p. 657ff.



T Tibetans were uninterested in the Confucian texts and selected only certain Buddhist texts for translation into Tibetan. In Japan, Korea and Vietnam, on the other hand, for long periods both the Buddhist and Confucian textual traditions existed side by side; the Confucian texts were essential for education, and in Korea and Vietnam they were essential for examination purposes, hence the large number of publications catering to the examinee market – potted guides to Confucian texts, model answers, and so on. Buddhist texts fared differently: in Japan they were produced by temples, but in the seventeenth century commercial publishers began to exploit this market, for demand remained buoyant enough right up to the end of the nineteenth century. In Korea, too, Buddhist texts had formed a large part of textual production but that changed after the vigorous rejection of Buddhism in the fifteenth century following centuries of enthusiastic acceptance; the confucianization of Korea that took place in the fifteenth century took ancient China, or rather an imagined version of ancient China, as its model and imposed Chinese patrilineal family, kinship, inheritance and other practices upon a Korea that had developed quite different customs.<sup>75</sup> In the new dispensation, there was very little room for Buddhism. Buddhists attempted to carve out a space for themselves by adapting to the new realities; they even went so far as to endorse a fabricated sutra on the debt children owed their parents, a message designed to mirror the Confucian emphasis on filial piety; but all this was to little avail, and Buddhism was seen as antithetical to the new society.

And if we delve a little deeper, we discover, for example, that Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the shogunate that ruled Japan from 1603 to 1868, took a very independent approach to textual orthodoxy.<sup>76</sup> He endorsed only some of the *Four Books*, took much interest in Buddhist texts and even went so far as to place some Japanese works on a par with Chinese texts. Probing still further, we need to ask what difference it made for a Japanese, Vietnamese or Korean reader of Chinese texts that some of the key terms had become part of their vocabulary, with their own nuances and undertones. What difference did the act of deconstructing Chinese as Japanese or Korean make as you followed the reading marks to create the expected Japanese or Korean version? Asking the questions is easy; we have hardly made a start at finding the answers.

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<sup>75</sup> Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian transformation of Korea: a study of society and ideology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), *passim*.

<sup>76</sup> Kornicki, 'Tokugawa Ieyasu and his books', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18 (2008), pp. 71-82.

Nevertheless, I hope that I have shown how valuable a comparative approach to East Asia can be in drawing attention to the particularities and differences that need explanation, particularly in the cases of Japan and Korea. In the final lecture on Thursday I shall talk about the rise of vernacular texts, which came very early in Japan and rather later in Korea and Vietnam, and the rising challenges to the dominance of literary Chinese in societies that had depended upon it for nearly two millennia. At the end I shall speak of the ultimate death of literary Chinese as the language of scholarly communication and education in East Asia, overtaken as it was by new national and cultural identities that left no room for allegiance to alien texts, even if some of their messages had an abiding appeal.



### Lecture 3: Thursday 13 March

#### “Little Chinese, less Manchu”

First of all I should apologise to Ben Jonson, who of course really accused Shakespeare of having ‘Small Latin and less Greek’. For the sake of clarity I adopted the common misquotation and adapted it to my own ends. Thus the title serves to encapsulate the growing extent to which Japanese, Vietnamese and Koreans became locked into their vernaculars and conversely lost their commitment to literary Chinese, to say nothing of the language of the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty.

In the previous two lectures I have discussed the dissemination of Chinese texts of all kinds and the various strategies that were adopted to read them. I concluded the last lecture by reminding myself that Chinese texts meant very different things to different societies and at different times. In this lecture I am going to look at the shifting allegiances of readers as more and more of them abandoned Chinese texts for vernacular texts. If Chinese as a language of learning is today dead in Japan, Korea and Vietnam, as indeed it is, we have to admit that it died an operatic death – long, tortuous and with improbable last-minute rallies.

\* \* \*

What actually are ‘vernacular texts’? I have been using the term ‘vernacular’ so far to refer to various locally spoken, and later written, languages, like Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese, in contrast to literary Chinese, the written language that enjoyed high prestige and that spread throughout East Asia in the form of texts. It goes without saying that Chinese had its vernacular forms, too, the equivalents of what is commonly called Vulgar Latin in Europe, forms of the language that were used for oral communication but were increasingly finding their way into texts and ultimately into print. Some of the earliest examples we have go back to the seventh century and are found in Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras made by non-Chinese translators, who were woefully ignorant of the registers of written Chinese.<sup>77</sup> Later of course we have the vernacular fiction of the Ming and Qing dynasties, which demonstrated a growing valorization of alternative forms of written Chinese,

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<sup>77</sup> On this subject, and the connection between Buddhism and the rise of the vernaculars, see Victor H. Mair, ‘Buddhism and the rise of the written vernacular in East Asia: the making of national languages’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 53 (1994), pp. 707-751.

and these fictional works were in turn transmitted to Vietnam, Korea and Japan and inspired translations, adaptations and rewritings. It is true that regional forms of Chinese, such as Shanghainese, have never been committed to writing and remain as spoken but not written vernaculars, but that kind of passivity in the face of literary Chinese was alien to Japan, Vietnam and Korea, where the vernaculars were not only used to read Chinese but were also committed to writing.

This phenomenon of vernacularization deserves far closer attention than it has hitherto received in East Asia. It is clear that it involves new forms of cultural communication, but in the European and South Asian contexts it has also been associated with many other social and cultural transformations, such as democratization, linguistic authenticity and national self-identity.<sup>78</sup> The vernacularization process in East Asia does indeed lend itself to evaluation in these terms, but not without difficulties; for example, the surge in vernacular literature in eleventh-century Japan was restricted to court circles and had nothing whatsoever to do with the vernacular as the subaltern product of an underclass.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, it is a very long drawn out process in East Asia, much more so than in Europe, and that suggests some different perspectives, which I shall turn to at the end. Finally, although it has been claimed that vernacularization only came in East Asia in the late nineteenth century, that can only seem convincing if we forget that in speech there was never any alternative to the vernacular: Latin may have been spoken in Spain and England and Sanskrit in South Asia, but in Korea the only spoken language was Korean, and the same was true, *mutatis mutandis*, in Japan and Vietnam.

When we turn to consider the emergence of vernacular texts in the earliest recorded forms of the Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese languages, we are talking about the creation of written texts in a context where the only form of writing known was that of Chinese. If oral literary forms existed before that breakthrough into writing, as we must suppose they did, then for lack of scripts and even ignorance of the very concept of writing, they could only continue to be transmitted orally and hence lacked the literariness and the authority of writing. What effect, then, did the subsequent encounter with Chinese writing have? Of course, this was an encounter between a purely written Chinese and a purely spoken vernacular, and what catches our attention is the desperation with which attempts were made to commit

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<sup>78</sup> See Sheldon Pollock, 'India in the vernacular millennium: literary culture and polity, 1000-1500', *Daedalus* 127.3 (1998), pp. 41-74; Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, *The vulgar tongue: medieval and postmedieval vernacularity* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2003).

<sup>79</sup> Somerset and Watson, pp. ix-xiii.

vernacular texts to writing using Chinese characters for their phonetic value, largely ignoring the meaning of the characters.<sup>80</sup> This strategy suggests an abiding commitment to the vernaculars in spite of the prestige of Chinese writing. In a sense, these attempts to inscribe local texts were an abuse of Chinese writing for the sake of embodying the vernacular in script; they gave the vernacular tongues something of the status of Chinese. This seems clearly to be the case with the early eighth-century Japanese chronicle, the *Record of ancient matters* [*Kojiki* 古事記]: the preface explicitly connects the desire to make good the inaccuracy of earlier records with the fact that they were written in Chinese. The same argument can be made with respect to early poetic forms in Korean and Vietnamese, which may use Chinese imagery but which defiantly stick to vernacular poetic forms: the vernaculars are far from overwhelmed by the prestige of Chinese.

These ways of using the Chinese script were cumbersome in the extreme, but at least they had the merit of preserving early texts that would otherwise surely have been lost. For many centuries thereafter, vernacular texts were locked in a struggle with an alien script that posed enormous difficulties of transcription and with an alien literary tradition that enjoyed social prestige and dominated intellectual formation. This was true of East Asia not only in the age of manuscripts but also after the advent of print: for many centuries, print in Korea, Japan and Vietnam offered fixation and dissemination only to Chinese texts, including both imported texts and locally created ones; vernacular texts were simply not printed and circulated only in the form of manuscripts.

The development of the vernacular scripts – Japanese kana in the ninth century, Vietnamese Nôm in the tenth and Korean hangŭl in the fifteenth – finally made it possible to write in the vernaculars. That does not mean to say, however, that they were able to break into the world of print. In Japan, for example, although a large number of texts was printed between the eighth century and 1600 they were with only two exceptions Chinese texts – Buddhist texts for the most part, with a scattering of Confucian and medical works later. Some of them were actually the work of Japanese authors writing in Chinese, but not one work of the rich tradition of classical Japanese literature made it into print before 1600. The *Tale of Genji*, the *Tales of Ise*, the plays of the Noh theatre, and everything else was transmitted in only manuscript until the first printed editions appeared in the early seventeenth century. Why should there have been such a long delay? No satisfactory

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<sup>80</sup> The breakthrough to writing is called ‘literization’ by Pollock, who draws attention to its importance: *The language of the gods*, p. 4.

explanation has yet been put forward; indeed, few even seem aware that there is a problem here or consider that an explanation is needed. Technologically there was no problem, for woodblock printing could cope with any script, to say nothing of illustrations. It is true that most printing in Japan before 1600 was carried out by temples, but that was not true of all printing. For example, the sword-smith Izumi-no-kami Kanesada published a copy of the *Kannongyō* 觀音經 (a section of the *Lotus Sutra*) in 1504, and in the province of Suō a number of secular books were printed by vassals of the Ōuchi daimyo in the closing years of the fifteenth century, including *Shūbun inryaku* 聚分韻略, a dictionary for the composition of Chinese poetry compiled by Kokan Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278-1346); this was a secular work of Japanese authorship that was often printed before the Edo period.<sup>81</sup> If some individuals did sponsor printing operations like these, then they could just as well have printed the *Tale of Genji*, for example, but they did not. Why not? We urgently need an answer to this question. Instead of being printed, vernacular texts, both literary and non-literary, were locked into a world of scribal transmission and oral exegesis, with the inevitable result that many works were lost and are now known only by their titles. In Korea and Vietnam, too, while the state was devoting some efforts to printing Chinese texts, vernacular texts were far more likely to be circulating in scribal copies alone.

What valorized the vernacular in Korea was not only the association of King Sejong with the invention of the hangŭl script but also the use of it as a tool for facilitating access to Chinese texts, a function it fulfilled well in the form of hybrid texts. There was, however, another concern of the state in Korea and that was to inculcate Confucian virtues far and wide, and this enhanced the need for translations. Even peasants could no longer get away with merely knowing how to till the land; they needed to appreciate the moral underpinnings of society, too – or so their betters considered. Thus in time the hybrid texts began to assume a new role, and one that was sanctioned by being printed by government agencies quite explicitly for ‘common people’ to read.<sup>82</sup> These books were, in other words, intended to be an act of Confucian indoctrination, and this fits well with our understanding of the social policies of the Chosŏn state.

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<sup>81</sup> For a description of the *Kannongyō* printed by Kanesada and the Suō edition of *Shūbun inryaku* see Kenneth B. Gardner, *Descriptive Catalogue of Japanese Books in the British Library printed before 1700* (London: The British Library, 1993), pp. 143-4, 287-8.

<sup>82</sup> Ok Yŏngjŏng, ‘Sipch’il segi kanhaeng sasō ōnhae e taehan chonghapjŏk yŏngu’, *Sŏjihak yŏngu* 32 (2005), p. 368.

An excellent example of this is *An illustrated account of the three human relationships* [*Samgang haengsildo* 三綱行実図]. This is a Korean work which focuses on the three central human relationships in the Confucian view of society, and it is largely based on Chinese moral literature. The three relationships in question are those between ruler and subject, father and son, and husband and wife, and they were seen as pivotal to a well-ordered society.<sup>83</sup> Although the original was written in Chinese by a Korean author, translated editions were far more common. The 1579 edition is shown here (fig. 12); the translation is entirely in hangŭl without any Chinese characters at all, thus making itself accessible to those with minimum literacy. On the other side of the page there was indeed the Chinese text, but readers encountered the hangŭl first, not the Chinese, and the illustrations came with the hangŭl translation.

As early as 1481 the Korean state ordered *An illustrated account of the three human relationships* to be printed and distributed far and wide so that village women would be able to read it and learn appropriate behaviour from it.<sup>84</sup> This was a worthy ambition in a confucianising state - but just how many literate women were there in rural Korea in the fifteenth century? Not very many, perhaps. Nevertheless, it is clear that the desire to confucianise Korean society was targeted at women, too.<sup>85</sup> An early example is *Moral lessons for the home* [*Naehun* 内訓], which was written in 1475; it was published in typographic editions in 1573, 1611 and 1736 and in woodblock editions in 1656 and 1869.<sup>86</sup> It consists of a set of extracts from Chinese didactic works for women, and it took the format of a hybrid book: the Chinese text, complete with glosses, was followed by a Korean translation, so ignorance of Chinese was no longer any excuse for being ignorant of proper womanly behaviour. By the eighteenth century, women's reading had become a contested issue in Korea: male scholars were not happy that women were reading novels and argued that they ought instead to be reading Chinese moral literature to learn the true way, like the classic four Chinese didactic books for women.<sup>87</sup> The *Four Books for Women* were in fact translated into Korean on the orders of King Yŏngjo and printed in 1736 in a movable-type edition [*Yŏsasŏ ōnhae* 女

<sup>83</sup> Shibu Shōhei, 'Sensoji kaiyaku no *Sankō kōjitsu* ni tsuite – shu ni Jinshin no ranzen kohon ni tsuite', *Chōsen gakuho* 145 (1992), pp. 85-132.

<sup>84</sup> Ch'oe, p. 137.

<sup>85</sup> Deuchler, pp. 257ff.

<sup>86</sup> Ch'oe, p. 127.

<sup>87</sup> Ch'oe, p. 137.

Fig. 12. The 1579 edition of *Samgang haengsildo*, taken from Shibu, 'Sensoji kaiyaku no *Sankō kōjitsu* ni tsuite – shu ni Jinshin no ranzen kohon ni tsuite'.



四書諺解]. There can be no doubt that some women did indeed read these books, although we don't know how obediently they read them; but equally, the anxious complaints of male scholars show that some women were in fact reading entertaining novels in the vernacular script rather than what the men thought they ought to be reading. This, of course, is a phenomenon by no means unique to Korea when books become more easily available; in sixteenth-century England Thomas Salter deplored the 'filthie love' and 'abominable fornications' to be found in Greek and Latin literature, and in seventeenth-century Japan, the *Tale of Genji* provoked similar anxieties, naturally only when found in the hands of women; what women should have been reading, of course, was morally improving literature.<sup>88</sup>

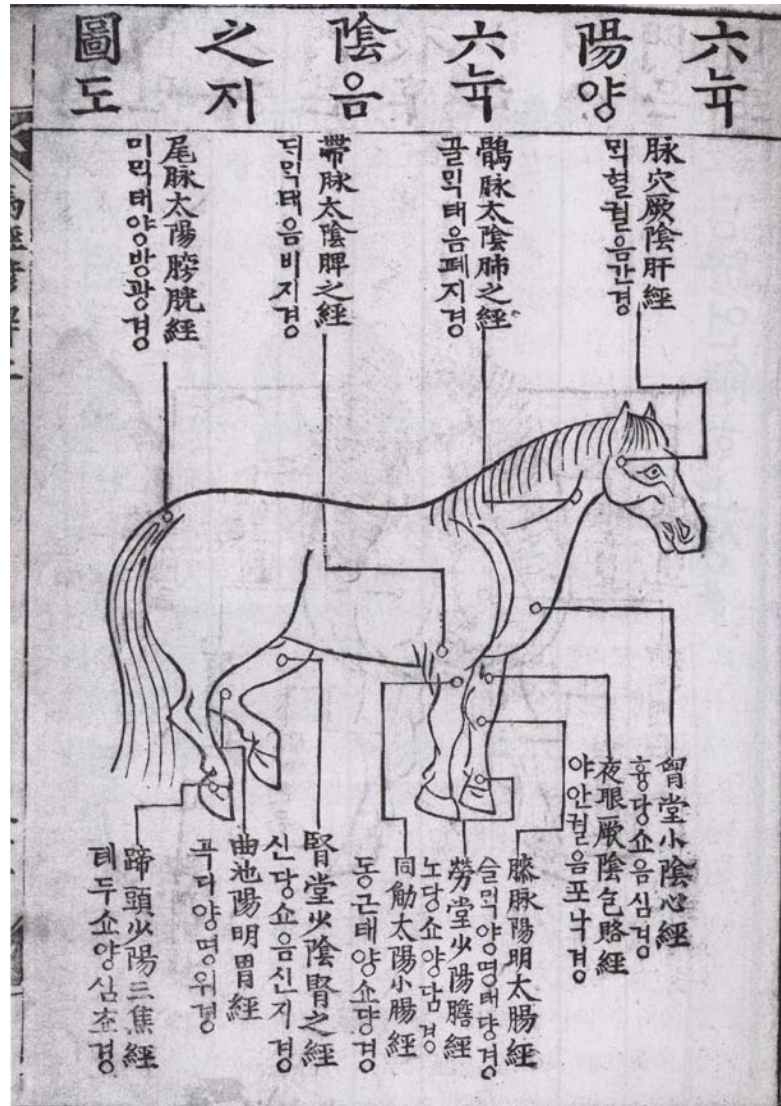
In these Korean texts for women, the point was of course indoctrination rather than providing training in how to read literary Chinese. In addition to these texts for women, there are other hybrid editions we can point to where sinological training is not at issue and where it is possible to imagine a readership of people who did not have a good grasp of Chinese. One of them is a Korean work on firearms [*Hwap'osik ōnhae* 火砲式諺解]; the first edition was published in 1635 it was reprinted in 1685. In this unusual case there was no Chinese original imported from China; the text was instead written in this hybrid form by a Korean author, and the only reason for that was to make the content accessible to those who were unable to read Chinese easily; a scholar communicating with other scholars wrote in Chinese, naturally. Another example is a work on veterinary science devoted to horses (fig. 13). This is a typographic edition with woodblock illustrations, and, although it carries no date, it is thought to have been printed in the early seventeenth century. This, too, is not so much a Chinese work as a set of extracts from Chinese veterinary works on horses put together by a Korean compiler: access is the point, not sinology.

All of these books, as I am sure will already have been noticed, retain a Chinese textual presence. That the authority of a text in Chinese remained strong is surely clear from that book on firearms or from the books for women: it did not matter if readers could not cope with the Chinese, but its authorising presence as the language of scholarship was still indispensable.

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<sup>88</sup> Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, silent and obedient: English books for women 1475-1640* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1982), pp. 71-75; Kornicki, 'Unsuitable books for women? *Genji monogatari* and *Ise monogatari* in late seventeenth-century Japan', *Monumenta Nipponica* 60 (2005), pp. 147-193.

Fig. 13. Hybrid edition of the *Classic on horses* (*Magyŏng ŏnhae* 馬經諺解). Taken from Yun Hyŏngdu, *Yetch'aek ũi hangŭl p'anbon* (Kyŏngido P'aju: Bŏmusa, 2003), p. 153.





This was true even of Korean vernacular fiction circulating in manuscript, albeit in a slightly different way. This sort of literature began to appear in the seventeenth century, and it represents a substantial step in the direction of vernacularisation, even though it was most probably stimulated by Chinese vernacular fiction, which was much appreciated by the Korean intelligentsia.<sup>89</sup> The most famous Korean example was the *Dream of Nine Clouds*, an idealistic novel tellingly set not in Korea but in China; like other works of its time and later, this survives in two versions, Chinese and Korean. The earliest printed edition appeared in 1725, but that consisted of the Chinese text alone, and it appears that the extant Korean versions derive from that, rather than the other way around. In the case of some of these novels it has proved impossible to decide whether the Chinese version or the Korean version came first, but what is of particular interest here is the very fact that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many of these works were circulating – some in print, many in manuscript – in parallel versions evidently aimed at and appreciated by quite different readerships.<sup>90</sup> Needless to say, the Chinese versions, whether they were the originals or translations from Korean originals, were not produced for export purposes, but rather for domestic consumption by a sinologically literate readership. There is nothing to parallel this in Vietnam or Japan, where some literary and other works were written in Chinese and others were written in the vernaculars; rarely if ever did they exist in parallel editions, either under the same covers as in the hybrid books or in separate versions as in the case of the Korean fiction. Perhaps this is a result of the fact that a vernacular script emerged in Korea much later than in Japan or Vietnam, leaving Chinese in an almost unassailable position.

The only purely vernacular texts being produced in seventeenth-century Korea were private memoirs by women at court and collections of Korean verse, but these were mostly circulating in manuscript. Consequently, it is only in the early nineteenth century that we finally encounter vernacular texts appearing without the supporting prop of Chinese or even the existence of parallel Chinese versions, and it is no coincidence that these are among the first commercially-printed books in Korea. The only such work in the University Library is *The story of Cho Ung* (fig. 14). This tells the story of a man who, with the aid of magic, overthrows a usurper and loyally restores the emperor to the throne – an uplifting story, but the emperor in question is the

<sup>89</sup> Ch'oe, pp. 142-3, argues that the pressure for vernacularization came from women and lower-class readers who could read only hangŭl.

<sup>90</sup> Lee, *A history of Korean literature*, p. 277ff; Michael Kim, 'Literary production, circulating libraries, and private publishing in Chosŏn Korea', *Journal of Korean Studies* 9 (2004), pp. 1-31.

Fig. 14. *The story of Cho Ung* from the University Library.<sup>91</sup>

도웅전단  
 뒤홍을 황태즉위니 십삼년의 리국공신도정인진통갈역  
 후더니 죽은후가 명열모를 세우시고 스스로 천제할사원  
 내도정심사의니 남이 황성을 침범하니 만되 각살기를  
 도방하니 엇지 방극지 아니하니 오도정이 홀로 그 소식을 들은  
 그를 외쳐 경희를 불러 밋도성의 곡성이 진동하니 지리공이  
 이가를 호위하여 도방하여 천관의 이르러 어가를 안고  
 스방의적셔를 전하여 큰소리를 초모하니 스스로 봉이 되어  
 적을 조별하여 만지그공을 못내일거르시더리공이 만지를  
 의서황성의드리오니 만되도정의통정를 만복하니 리생이  
 도정으로 금조광복되니 외외승상을 봉하니 그브인왕으로  
 명명명바인을 봉하니 그위엄이 도야의 진동하니 리세월이  
 어루를 여러히 되니 조정의정사들은 허의간신드 병이 전커  
 하여도정을 조로 참조하니 승상이 허를 변치 못할줄 알으니  
 스도안으로 버리고 죽으니 슬프다스 람이어질위로 악인하니

<sup>91</sup> UL FE.264.9.

Chinese emperor, for the hero and all the characters are Chinese and the story is set in China.<sup>92</sup> Vernacular novels like this, some of them derived from the *p'ansori* tradition of sung oral narratives, were in the nineteenth century being commercially published; so it is not surprising that they cannot compete with the large and imposing typographic editions of Chinese texts or of hybrid texts produced by government institutions, especially when it comes to quality of paper or attractive presentation of the text; what is more, these commercial editions take little or no advantage of the possibility afforded by woodblock printing of including illustrations. Nevertheless, These texts appeared without any Chinese characters at all, so they represent the final stage in the long process of vernacularization, around four hundred years after the invention of the hangŭl script first made it possible to write Korean.

In some respects the case of Vietnam is similar to that of Korea, but the poor survival rate of early printed books and manuscripts obscures the picture; the only large collections are in Hanoi and Paris, and the University Library has only a Vietnamese primer for children published in the nineteenth century, which was picked up Sir George Scott, a colonial administrator in Burma.<sup>93</sup> The surviving corpus in Hanoi strongly suggests that vernacular books in the Nôm script tended to circulate in the form of manuscripts, while Chinese books, including not only Confucian and Buddhist texts but also the writings of Vietnamese intellectuals, law codes and other official writings were commonly printed at least from the seventeenth century onwards.<sup>94</sup> There is, however, a surviving edict from 1718 which required that all books printed in the Nôm script, that is in the Vietnamese vernacular, be handed in to the authorities to be destroyed; this is clear evidence not only that vernacular books were being printed by this time, whatever the reason for the ban.<sup>95</sup> None of these books, sadly, seem to have survived, but there can be no doubt about vernacular printing by this time, for a mathematical manual in rhyming prose printed in 1713 survives in Hanoi. During the Tây Sơn rebellion at the end of

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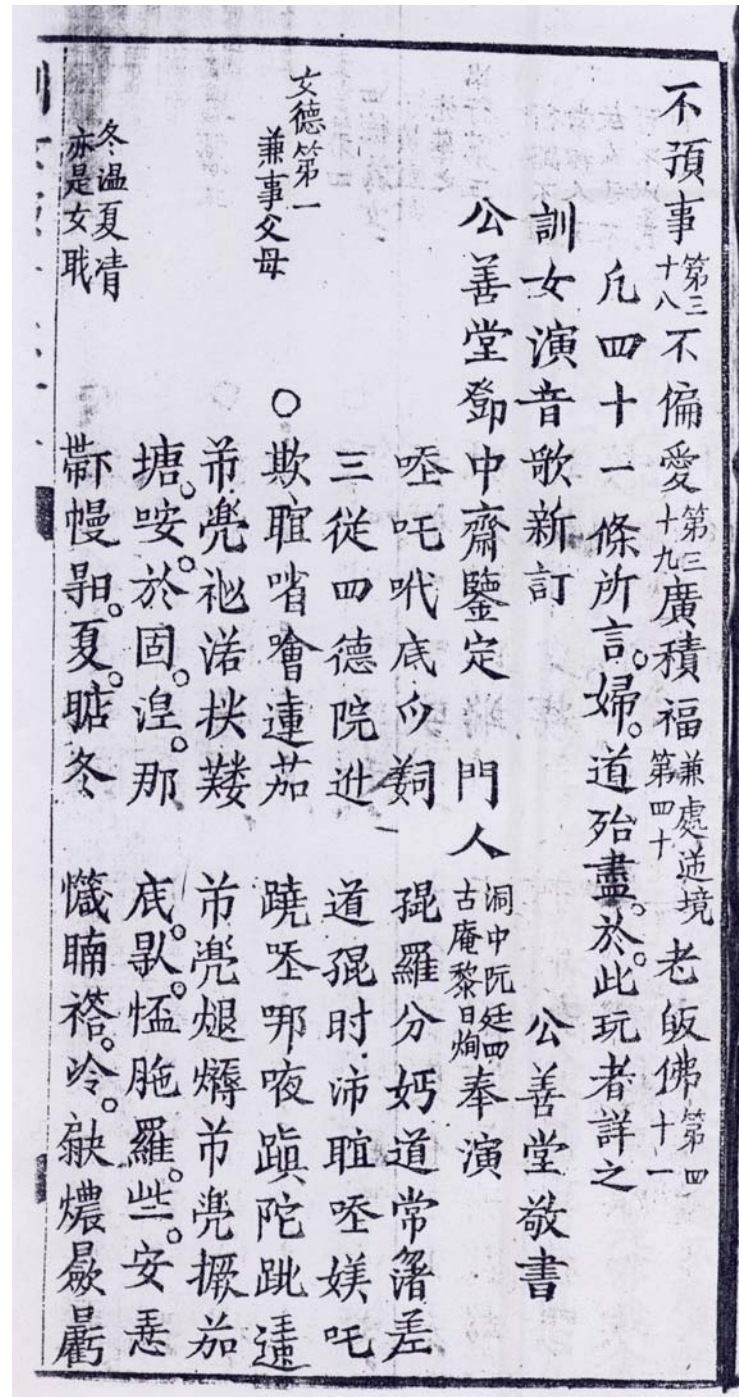
<sup>92</sup> W. E. Skillend, *Kodae sosŭl: a survey of Korean traditional style popular novels* (London: SOAS, 1968), no. 423.

<sup>93</sup> Illustrated in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, *A companion to the history of the book* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 123.

<sup>94</sup> Trần Nghĩa and François Gros, eds, *Di sản Hán Nôm Việt Nam*, 3 vols (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1993).

<sup>95</sup> Pasquel-Rageau, Christiane, 'L'imprimerie au Vietnam: de l'impression xylographique traditionnelle à la révolution de quốc ngữ (XIIIe – XIXe siècle)', in Jean-Pierre Drège, Mitchiko Ishigami-Iagolnitzer and Monique Cohen, eds, *Le livre et l'imprimerie en extrême orient et en Asie du Sud* (Bordeaux: Société Bibliophiles de Guyenne, 1986), p. 259.

Fig. 15. Composite book of texts for women: Han Nôm Institute, Hanoi, AC.552.



the eighteenth century, the short-lived new emperor ordered that translated versions of the Confucian classics be published and of publications of this sort we can find many examples, such as the 1815 edition of the *Book of Changes*. An edition of the *Four Books* with interlinear vernacular commentary was reissued in 1839 with a preface which drew explicit attention to the difference between the Vietnamese and Chinese languages and the difficulty this posed for Vietnamese students, hence the commentary [(V) *Tứ thư ước giải* 四書約解].<sup>96</sup> A further example is a medley of texts addressed to women published in 1842 (fig. 15). Most of the left-hand part is in the vernacular in the form of rhyming couplets offering moral instruction for women. But in this case, and in the case of most other vernacular imprints, the point of reference is a Chinese text, so what we find are commentaries, translations, adaptations, bilingual encyclopedias and the like. If we are looking for vernacular works on herbal medicine, for example, or genealogies, or collections of Vietnamese poetry, or even the Vietnamese national epic, the *Tale of Kieu*, then we will find them almost always in the form of manuscripts, at least until the second half of the nineteenth century, when, as in Korea, commercial publishers finally emerged and began catering to the vernacular market. It should be mentioned here that, although written in Vietnamese, the *Tale of Kieu* is based upon a Chinese original and is replete with references to Chinese texts.<sup>97</sup> By the late nineteenth century, however, Vietnam had come under French colonial rule and the roman script was being used more and more to write the vernacular; the first Vietnamese newspaper appeared in 1865 in roman script. From this time on the vernacular was represented by two scripts, the roman alphabet and the Chinese-derived Nôm, and the growing desire for cultural independence from China and political independence from France made neither an entirely happy choice.

In Japan, by contrast with Korea and Vietnam, the early development of the kana script in the ninth century had dramatic results. Although countless works were lost over many centuries of scribal transmission, those that survived to the seventeenth century were then fixed in print by a commercial publishing industry of enormous energy. So in Japan commercial publishing developed some two centuries before Korea or Vietnam, and this is almost certainly to be attributed to the levels of urbanization, communications and money-based trade already found in Japan in the early seventeenth century. Is this, then, the century in which vernacular texts began to supplant Chinese

<sup>96</sup> Han Nôm Institute, Hanoi: AB270.

<sup>97</sup> Nguyễn Du, *The tale of Kieu*, translated by Huynh Sanh Thông (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. xx-xxii.



texts? Many histories of Japanese literature would have you believe so, but only by a sleight of hand, that is, by ruling large swathes of book production out of consideration. The booksellers' catalogue of 1670, for example, shows us that the mainstay of the publishing industry was not new works of popular fiction but the solid core of heavy-weight Chinese texts: Buddhist sutras in their Chinese translations, including eight different editions of the *Lotus sutra* alone, numerous Buddhist doctrinal works, Tang poetry, the dynastic histories, and the *Four Books* in twenty different editions (big ones, small ones, ones with reading marks, ones without, and so on); more than half the books in the catalogue are Chinese texts originally imported from China.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, some of the vernacular texts listed turn out to be translations.

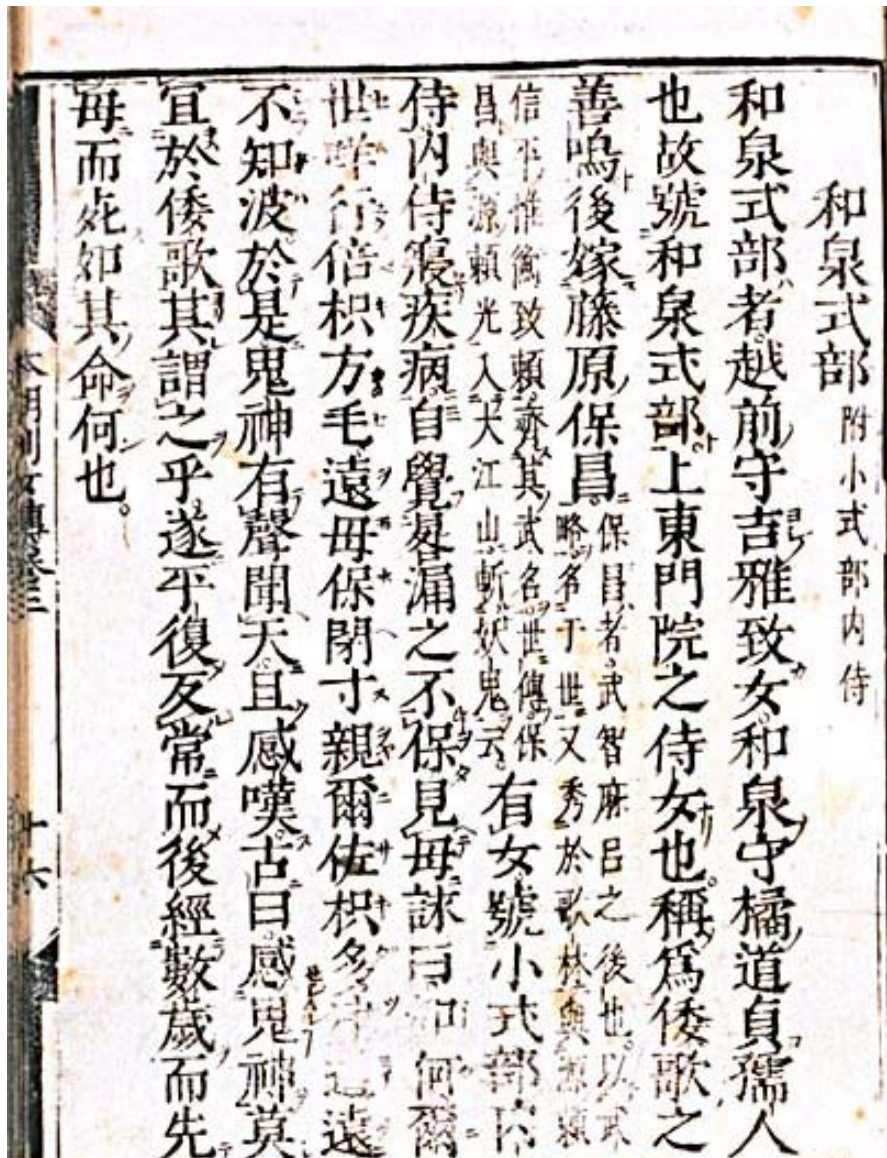
One example of these translations is furnished by the classic Chinese text for women, *Biographies of [exemplary] women* [*Lienü zhuan* 列女傳], which dates from the first century BCE. This was a text that Japanese men were very keen for women to read instead of unsuitable literature such as the *Tale of Genji*. To meet the perceived need, a Japanese edition of *Biographies of women* was published in 1653, naturally complete with the glosses needed for bluffing your way through the Chinese. To read it, though, you needed a good sinological education; there were of course some women who could read Chinese but they were few in number. Consequently, just two years later, in 1655, a translation into Japanese was published retaining the original illustrations. But if the point was to tell *Japanese* women how to behave, just how useful was a book likely to prove if it contained nothing but stories about *Chinese* women with illustrations to match? Consequently, in 1668 *Biographies of women of our land* [*Honchō retsujoden* 本朝列女伝] was published, giving the lives of exemplary Japanese women with appropriately Japanese illustrations (fig. 16). However, as is clear from the biography of Izumi Shikibu shown here, the text was in fact in Chinese, not in Japanese. In the event, several more years had to pass before the *Biographies of women* was completely naturalised in a collection of biographies of Japanese women which showed Japanese settings in the illustrations and was actually written in Japanese, *Women's mirror of our land* [*Honchō jōkan* 本朝女鑑], published in 1661.<sup>99</sup>

There were other translations from Chinese texts, of course, amongst them a number of medical books; Ming novels were adapted and rewritten with Japanese heroes and illustrations and it is fair to say that China remained at

<sup>98</sup> Shidō Bunko, ed., (*Edo jidai*) *Shorin shuppan shōjaku mokuroku shūsei*, 4 vols (Tokyo: Shidō Bunko, 1962-4), vol. 1.

<sup>99</sup> UL FJ. 770.15; Hayashi and Kornicki, no. 610.

Fig. 16. *Biographies of women of our land* [*Honchō retsujoden* 本朝列女伝] from the Nara Women's University web archive of Edo-period books for women.<sup>100</sup>



<sup>100</sup> <http://www.lib.nara-wu.ac.jp/nwugdb/edo-j/html/j016/> (accessed 20 March 2008).

least a point of reference up to the nineteenth century. At the same time, however, a huge range of vernacular texts were generated in Japan from the late seventeenth century onwards, far more than in Korea or Vietnam. Doubtless this is partly attributable to the early commercialization of publishing, but irrespective of the causes it is during these centuries that the foundations of a vernacular culture were laid, and the focus is increasingly upon Japan as setting for literature or as the source of knowledge.<sup>101</sup>

Let us consider a few examples from the collection in the University Library. They all demonstrate the matter-of-fact way in which commercial publishers in Japan relied upon illustrations to enhance the attractions of the printed book; this was much less common in Korea and Vietnam, where commercial publishing developed later and was far less significant than state publishing. The first example is taken from *Great mirror of all the forms of love* (1684) [*Shoen ōkagami* 諸艶大鏡] one of the novels of Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642-1693). His works are grounded in the gritty realities of the Osaka that he lived in at the end of the seventeenth century and mostly feature commoner heroes. The scene shown (fig. 17) is a game of blindman's buff in a brothel, an illustration taken from his *Great mirror of all the forms of love*. This book has been badly mistreated, here just with some playful textual additions to the picture, but elsewhere with some very lewd additions to the illustrations. This copy in fact formerly belonged to a succession of circulating libraries, whose readers were notorious for graffiti and for wetting their fingers to turn the pages, so leaving dirty smudges at the bottom of the pages. This example thus draws our attention to two phenomena. One is the appearance of circulating libraries in seventeenth-century Japan, a new development in the commerce of the book.<sup>102</sup> The other is the familiarization of the printed book by the end of the seventeenth century, which had the result that books were no longer prized and treasured but treated like other commercial goods, and often mistreated.

The second example of a vernacular text is a farming manual [*Nōgyō zensho* 農業全書], also first published at the end of the seventeenth century (fig. 18). Books of this sort, along with botanical studies and books on herbal medicine, indubitably owed something to the many Chinese texts in this field which had been transmitted to Japan by the early seventeenth century. All the same, climatic and soil conditions in Japan were quite different from those common in most parts of China and books of this sort therefore had to be

<sup>101</sup> On this subject see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in print: information and nation in the early modern period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>102</sup> On Japanese circulating libraries, see Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, pp. 391-7.



Fig. 17. Saikaku's *Great mirror of all the forms of love* (1684) [*Shoen ōkagami* 諸艶大鏡] from the University Library.<sup>103</sup>



<sup>103</sup> UL FJ.754.3; Hayashi and Kornicki, no. 626.

<sup>104</sup> UL FJ.231.5-7; Hayashi and Kornicki, no. 2066.

based upon empirical work conducted in Japan rather than on imported knowledge. And the third example is the series of illustrated guides to the famous places of Japan [*meisho zue* 名所図會], which were published at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.<sup>105</sup> The information provided in these texts is not at all practical but instead highlights associations with Japanese history and literature.

In all the three works I have mentioned, the setting of the text and of the illustrations is uncompromisingly and necessarily Japan. Further, in the guide book and the agricultural manual we witness the generation of new forms of knowledge, but there is actually more to be said about this topic. Japan under the Tokugawa shoguns, from the early seventeenth century to the mid nineteenth, has often been described as feudal and brutal, initially by Europeans and Americans who visited it in the 1850s and 1860s. It may well seem paradoxical, then, that, intellectually speaking, the Japanese state during those centuries was remarkably tolerant of dissent; not political dissent, of course, but intellectual dissent. This stands in particularly vivid contrast with Korea, where even taking issue with the official interpretive line on the *Four Books* could be dangerous and taking public issue with Confucianism itself was unthinkable. This tolerance, if we can call it that, may have had something to do with the lack in Japan of an examination system, which served elsewhere as a powerful mechanism for enforcing orthodoxy. After all, in Japan status was ascriptive, that is inherited, rather than acquired by dint of one's examination efforts. Consequently, the ideological basis of the Tokugawa regime was not tied to an exam syllabus and approved interpretations; rather, it was more eclectic, and was not ashamed either of Buddhism or of the Japanese cults now known as Shinto.<sup>106</sup>

We can see evidence of this tolerance for dissent in two distinct intellectual developments which both generated a mass of vernacular texts, all published quite openly. One of these is known as Rangaku or Dutch studies, and it owed its development to the presence of a Dutch outpost in Nagasaki throughout all

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<sup>105</sup> Y. Konta, 'Die publikationsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Meisho-zue', in S. Kohsaka & J. Laube, eds, *Informationssystem und kulturelles Leben in den Städten der Edo-Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), pp. 3-14; Yōzaburō Shirahata, 'The printing of illustrated travelogues in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Japan', in S. Formanek & S. Linhart, eds, *Written texts - visual texts: woodblock printed media in early modern Japan* (Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005), pp. 199-213.

<sup>106</sup> Hermann Ooms, *Tokugawa ideology: early constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton University Press, 1985).

the centuries when Japan is commonly supposed to have been cut off from the West. This modest presence on Japanese soil was sufficient not only for Japanese books to make their way to Europe but also for European scientific and particularly medical books to make their way to Japan. One of the most important results of this flow of knowledge was the publication of the *New book of anatomy* [*Kaitai shinsho* 解体新書], a Japanese translation of *Ontleedkundige Tafelen*, a Dutch set of anatomical tables which was in fact a Dutch translation of Kulmus' *Anatomische Tabellen*. The Japanese translators laboured long and hard without the benefit of dictionaries but the fruit of their efforts was safely published in 1774, even though it posed a major challenge to the theoretical basis of Chinese medicine, which dominated medical knowledge in Japan at the time. That was the opinion of the directors of the government medical academy, for they remained committed to the Chinese medical tradition, would have nothing to do with so-called Dutch medicine and tried unsuccessfully to get it banned.<sup>107</sup>

The other intellectual development worth mentioning is Kokugaku 国学, or 'national studies'.<sup>108</sup> The 'national' here of course meant Japan and the focus was uncompromisingly, and sometimes aggressively, upon early Japanese literature, precisely because it was assumed that the earliest writings showed Japan in a golden age before it had been contaminated by books and ideas from China. The focus on Japanese texts was thus a political choice, one that proclaimed Japanese texts to be as worthy of study as those of China, and in many National Learning texts disdain for China is overt, to the extent that China is rarely referred to by name; rather, it is 'the country over there'. The difficulty that this locution was trying to deal with was the fact that the words for China commonly used in Japan all referred to China's centrality and that was a premise that National Learning followers were no longer willing to subscribe to. If they needed to refer to it by name, then they used the word *Shina*, a word that ultimately derived from the name of the Qin dynasty like the name we use for China and gradually came to be seen as disparaging.<sup>109</sup> This disengagement with China extended to the appearance of the printed book, both in terms of the style of calligraphy chosen and in terms of the layout. Chinese characters themselves were also an issue: Kamo Mabuchi considered that the use of them was an impediment to meaning and

<sup>107</sup> Grant K. Goodman, *Japan: the Dutch experience* (Athlone Press, London, 1986); Kornicki, *The book in Japan*, p. 342.

<sup>108</sup> On the Kokugaku movement, see for example Harry Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen* (Chicago University Press, 1988).

<sup>109</sup> Joshua A. Fogel, *The cultural dimensions of Sino-Japanese relations: essays on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 66-76.



understanding.<sup>110</sup> The National Learning scholars could not do away with Chinese characters completely, but they did reduce their density.

These two forms of intellectual dissent from sinology were entirely independent of each other but together they demonstrate the growing power of alternative forms of knowledge in Japan. In the educational institutions that spread their teachings and the publications that gave them public expression in the vernacular we see these new forms of knowledge carving out a space for themselves in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Japan well before the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the development of a nationalist ideology.

As we cast our gaze over East Asia, we can now see that just as the strategies for dealing with the complexities of Chinese texts were varied, so too were the paths of vernacularization and the changing definitions of what constituted knowledge. We have seen this in the development of Dutch Studies and National Studies in Japan, but there were alternatives to sinological knowledge even in Korea, where ideological control was tight. One of these was Catholicism, which was vigorously persecuted but nevertheless propagated both by means of Chinese texts written by the Jesuits in Beijing but also in the form of vernacular translations of those same texts into hangŭl.<sup>111</sup> Another alternative was Sirhak or Practical Learning; some of the exponents of Korean Practical Learning in the eighteenth century limited themselves to technical matters, such irrigation and silk-worm cultivation, but even then they advocated that books be gathered from all over the world to advance knowledge in Korea – ‘all over the world’ was code, of course, for anywhere but China, and so scandalously implied that there was such a thing as knowledge that did not come from China.<sup>112</sup> Later writers exposed the shortcomings of the Neo-Confucian state and proposed extensive social reforms, but this was a dangerous business in Korea; the most productive thinker to toy with such ideas had ample time to work out the details of his proposals during an eighteen-year period of exile on a remote island.<sup>113</sup> However, although Practical Learning undoubtedly offered a new definition of knowledge, it was nevertheless mostly expressed in Chinese, not the

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<sup>110</sup> On Mabuchi's views of Chinese, see Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, pp. 50-56, and Harootunian, 'The function of China in Tokugawa thought', in Akira Iriye, ed., *The Chinese and the Japanese: essays in political and cultural interactions* (Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 9-36

<sup>111</sup> Kang, p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> Lee, *Sourcebook of Korean civilization*, vol. 2, pp. 86-94.

<sup>113</sup> Mark Setton, *Chŏng Yagyong: Korea's challenge to orthodox neo-Confucianism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), chapter 2.

vernacular, a reflection of the greater hold that Chinese had in societies that were committed to an examination system based on Chinese texts.

I have attempted to draw your attention to some of the significant issues raised by the emergence of vernacular texts and the rise of vernacular publishing. These Korean Practical Learning books remind us, however, that texts in Chinese continued to be produced in Japan, Korea and Vietnam right up to the late nineteenth century; and, as I mentioned in the previous lecture, some Japanese editions of Chinese texts enjoyed extraordinary mass appeal at the same time as new forms of knowledge were being generated in Japan.

In the seventeenth century, however, there had been an important shift in the significance of Chinese texts emanating from China itself, and it came as a result of the overthrow of the Ming by the Manchus and their creation of a new dynasty, the Qing, which lasted from 1644 to 1911. Although the new rulers of China spoke Manchu not Chinese, it was only in Korea that any efforts were made to learn Manchu, and that was largely because the Manchus had invaded Korea twice and there was a perceived need to get on better terms with them.<sup>114</sup> As a result the Korean state published a number of bilingual Korean-Manchu texts, but neither in Japan nor in Vietnam was the slightest interest shown in the language of the new rulers of China.

The triumph of the Manchus in fact had the result of changing both the perceptions of China and the perceptions of Chinese texts in many parts of East Asia. Now that China itself was in the hands of the barbarians, as the Koreans at least clearly perceived it, China's claim to be civilised was at least questionable, and the way was open for Koreans and others to claim ownership of the canonical Chinese texts and their interpretation.<sup>115</sup> In both Korea and Vietnam sinologists became more confident and began to see themselves as the true guardians of Confucianism.<sup>116</sup> In Japan, too, thinkers such as Ogyū Sorai applied themselves critically and with philological acuity to ancient Chinese texts such as the *Four Books* and generated their

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<sup>114</sup> Song Ki-joong, *The study of foreign languages in the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910)* (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing Company, 2001).

<sup>115</sup> Kang, p. 11; JaHyun Kim Haboush, 'Constructing the center: the ritual controversy and the search for a new identity in seventeenth-century Korea', in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds, *Culture and the state in late Chosŏn Korea* (Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 69-70.

<sup>116</sup> In 1734 the government in Vietnam banned the importation of Confucian texts from China and distributed instead its own editions: Philippe Langlet, ed., *L'ancienne historiographie d'état au Vietnam* (Paris: EFEO, 1985), vol. 2, Text et commentaire du *Miroir Complet de l'histoire Viêt* établi par ordre imperial (1856-1884), chapitres 36 & 37 (1722-1735), pp. 106-7.

independent interpretations.<sup>117</sup> The age of deferral to interpretations emanating from China was definitely coming to an end in East Asia. And when we recall that in the late nineteenth century Japanese thinkers were redefining or coining new Chinese words to express concepts such as ‘liberty’, ‘insurance’ and ‘political party’, words which were later adopted into Chinese and are standard today in China, we can perceive something akin to a feeling of ownership over the script. Perhaps that is taking it too far, but certainly written Chinese had become much more like Latin at this point, common property so to speak, to the extent that a newspaper in literary Chinese was published in Japan so as to appeal to the whole of East Asia.<sup>118</sup>

Some of the differences between Japan on the one hand and Korea and Vietnam on the other derive from the simple fact that Korea and Vietnam were politically dependent upon China and maintained a diplomatic relationship with China that was predicated upon their own putative inferiority. Japan, on the other hand, maintained diplomatic relations only with states that would accept Japan’s terms, hence with the Ryūkyū kingdom, Korea and the Dutch.

Is this the point at which we can speak of a connection between vernacularization and nationalism in East Asia? We are all very uneasy these days about using a word like ‘nationalism’ to refer to premodern societies, especially outside Europe. Sheldon Pollock recently addressed this uneasiness in his massive study of the relationship between Sanskrit and vernacular cultures in South Asia: he considered and then rejected ‘protonationalism’ as an alternative, for it of course begs more questions than it answers, and he opted for ‘vernacular polities’ as a term to express the social and political changes arising with vernacularization.<sup>119</sup> Would this option do for Japan, Korea or Vietnam as readers turned increasingly to vernacular texts? I think not, for it is indisputable that their polities were by no means exclusively vernacular. What marks these three societies is that, to whatever extent nationalist discourses were becoming common and the vernaculars were

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<sup>117</sup> See, for example, James McMullen, ‘Reinterpreting the Analects: history and utility in the thought of Ogyū Sorai’, in James C. Baxter and Joshua A. Fogel, eds, *Writing histories in Japan: texts and their transformations from ancient times through the Meiji era* (Kyoto; International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2007), pp. 127-174.

<sup>118</sup> This was *Tōyō shinbō* 東洋新報, which was founded in 1876 by Okamoto Kansuke 岡本監輔: see Douglas Howland, ‘“On the benefits of foreign relations with China”: a new development in Fukuzawa Yukichi’s theory of civilization’, in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *Late Qing China and Meiji Japan: political and cultural aspects* (Norwalk, CT : EastBridge, 2004), pp. 21-22.

<sup>119</sup> Pollock, *The language of the gods*, p. 28 and *passim*.

coming to dominate writing as well as speech, the polities were resolutely attached to values derived from the Confucian canon and the language of high office was something that still looked very much like Chinese.

At the same time, however, the China of political discourse in East Asia was a China that Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese had to some extent appropriated to themselves for their own uses.<sup>120</sup> In other words, even the nationalism that we can detect in East Asia at least in the nineteenth century was not incompatible with a lasting commitment to the values and language of the canonical Chinese texts. Those who were at the first lecture will remember my reference to the Vietnamese nationalist hero Phan Bội Châu, who could not help himself from writing in Chinese; and in the second lecture I drew attention to the value of sinology even for village heads in Japan. A late example can be taken from Japan again. When the Education Act was passed in 1872, creating the conditions for a national system of compulsory education for boys and girls alike, it was a system based on Japanese literacy, and there was no room in it for the *Four Books*, in other words for what had been seen for more than a thousand years as the bedrock of a good education. But an increasingly nationalistic education system could not so easily do away with belief in the value of sinological literacy. A large number of private schools were therefore established in the 1870s and 1880s to cater to the still buoyant demand for a sinological education; for the most part they were aimed at schoolchildren who had completed the six compulsory years of primary education and in some localities they offered the only possibility of secondary education. How did this sinological education differ from what had been on offer before? Only in that increasing numbers of girls were taking up the opportunity to study the *Four Books* and in that some of them were run by sinologically-educated women.<sup>121</sup> So, on the eve of the Sino-Japanese war, which would result in 1895 in Japanese victory and change the balance of power in East Asia, Chinese learning was still not dead in Japan. Indeed, although Chinese learning no longer forms a significant part of the educational curriculum, it remains true to this day that Japanese scholarship on Chinese literature and history is enormously influential and significant.

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<sup>120</sup> Terms that were used in China to refer only to the Chinese emperor and court were thus appropriated in Vietnam to denote their Vietnamese equivalents: Liam C. Kelley, *Beyond the bronze pillars: envoy poetry and the Sino-Vietnamese relationship* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), p. 78.

<sup>121</sup> Margaret Mehl, *Private academies of Chinese learning in Meiji Japan : the decline and transformation of the kangaku juku* (Copenhagen : Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 82-9.



Seven years ago Sheldon Pollock caused a something of a controversy with an article provocatively titled ‘the death of Sanskrit’.<sup>122</sup> The obituary was perhaps a touch premature, for there are indeed still people who speak Sanskrit in India, admittedly in special circumstances only. We, on the other hand, are on much safer ground if we suggest that by the early twentieth century literary Chinese was effectively ‘dead’ as the international language of learning and communication in East Asia. After all, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese scholars and intellectuals, sinologists of course included, now write in their vernaculars not in literary Chinese, and works of sinological scholarship are translated from one vernacular to another. If East Asian diplomats were still required to engage in an exchange of elegant Chinese poetry while handing over their credentials, even the renowned capabilities of the Japanese diplomatic corps would be sorely tested, I fear. Of course, Chinese has left its traces in the vernacular languages, just as Latin has in European languages, especially in Cambridge with our Latin graces, our *ad hoc* committees and our *ad hominem* appointments.<sup>123</sup> Chinese vocabulary and terminology infiltrated Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese alike from the earliest days and is still extensively used, but it is invisible in Vietnam, where Ho Chi Minh made the roman script the medium of instruction and Chinese characters are no longer learnt; it is all but invisible in Korea, where newspapers and books are almost entirely in hangŭl; ironically enough, it is only in Japanese that Chinese vocabulary is still recognizable as such, for Chinese characters still constitute an indispensable part of the Japanese written language.

For nearly two millennia the East Asian societies outside China were engaged with literary Chinese and with the corpus of Chinese texts and even created some of their own, but that age is now over. Present generations approach those texts through translations, if at all. What accelerated this process was the Manchu takeover of China and the resulting enhancement of cultural self-awareness in Japan, Korea and Vietnam, a self-awareness that developed into something we can more comfortably call nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century, when Vietnam was engaged in a colonial

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<sup>122</sup> Sheldon Pollock, ‘The death of Sanskrit’, *Comparative studies in society and history* 43 (2001), pp. 392-426; Sudipta Kaviraj, ‘The sudden death of Sanskrit knowledge’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 33 (2005), pp. 119-142, addresses Pollock’s essay with a discussion of the decline in Sanskrit-based knowledge systems.

<sup>123</sup> For a study of the survival of Latin in speech in Italy, see Gian Luigi Beccaria, *Sicut erat. Il latino di chi non lo sa: Bibbia e liturgia nell’italiano e nei dialetti* (Milan: Garzanti, 1999).

struggle, Korea was finding its very survival threatened and Japan was beginning its career as a colonial power.

Given the scale of the subject I have tried to tackle this week, thirty lectures would have been more appropriate than three. But I have tried your patience long enough. There are some bottles at the back of the room to quench your thirst, so, thanking you all for your kind and patient attention, I finish not in literary Chinese but in Latin: *nunc est bibendum*.

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