Xue-guanhua 學官話:
A Ryūkyūan Source of Language Education

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By

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PREFACE

PATRICK HEINRICH

With the advent of modernity, the nexus between language and society changed in quite dramatic ways. Within the nation-state, monolingualism came to be seen as the ideal for fostering unity and for ensuring successful communication between all nationals, while foreign language learning was encouraged in order to establish and maintain contact with other nationals. Most crucially however, this arrangement affected everyone. After all, modernity is all about creating a sense of horizontal camaraderie, and of drawing a border between oneself and all those who are not part of a national community. Language plays a prominent role in such processes of collective identity formation. The evolving modernist order which links state, nation and language is thus an artefact, and this can easily be recognized when moving back in time.

Dániel Kádár's translation of the *Xue-guanhua* ('Learning Mandarin Chinese') illustrates this very well, for we encounter elites of feudal societies in this book who have ideas about 'us' and 'the other' which differ from those we usually entertain. While Ryūkyūans in China might indeed have been dominated by their teachers and acquaintances during their studies in China, Ryūkyūan students in China would play a seminal role in the domination of commoners after their return. The translation is thus of much interest for students of history of thought as well as of historical sociolinguistics and pragmatics. It gives detailed testimony to the contact between China and the Ryūkyūs, the institutions which mediated such contact, and hint at the individual efforts such contact required. The dialogues which make up the book, genuine speech acts as it were, are situated in and around the city of Fuzhou, the centre of Ryukyuan–Chinese contact and exchange at the time. It is worthy of note to recall here that only two such centres existed then, one in Fuzhou and the other one in Satsuma (present-day Kagoshima). When the *Xue-guanhua* was used, the Ryūkyū Kingdom was under dual subordination to Satsuma and China.

True, Ryukyuan–Chinese contact situations, as they emerge in the book, are shaped by an imbalanced power relationship, but all the while

Ryūkyūans emerge as the local authorities over the Ryūkyū Islands, and not simply as subjects to Chinese authority. This is partly due to the fact that the Sino-centric world view did not simply distinguish between 'China' and 'foreign countries'. Rather, it saw the world as a sphere of increasing foreignness – and barbarianism – the further one moved away from China and its cultural center. The Ryūkyūs were thus beyond doubt foreign, but nonetheless rather closely integrated in the orbit of Chinese cultural influence. In the textbook, this view serves as the ground on which interpersonal relations between Ryūkyūans and Chinese are footed. Ryūkyūan students at Chinese language academies in Fuzhou, the main setting of the interactions of the *Xue-guanhua*, resided there in order to study a culture and language assessed to be superior to that of the Ryūkyūs. We know quite well how Chinese knowledge would pave the way for the students' further careers in Ryūkyūan officialdom and intellectual life after their return. Note here that their return to Okinawa Island is the final topic of the book.

Despite being from a pre-modern and non-Western tradition, and despite being sometimes uneven in content, succession of topics, and levels of difficulty, the *Xue-guanhua* is recognizably a foreign language textbook. It introduces, in addition to skills in the language system, communicative rules and conversational routines embedded in social context. It accommodates the learner to manners, values, and ways of interaction in the daily life envisaged for Ryūkyūan students in Fuzhou, and it seeks to empower the learner through transmitting knowledge on matters as various as, for instance, Chinese folk beliefs, or on communicative skills required to engage in matters of diplomacy, trade, or scholarship. The hidden curriculum of the book also includes cultural stereotypes and asymmetrical relationship between first and second-language speakers. All in all, the textbook thus provides for much familiar ground to all those analyzing foreign language textbooks.

The manifold and multi-facetted aspects mentioned above make Dániel Kádár's translation of *Xue-guanhua* a fascinating book. I read it with great interest and benefit (and all those who interrupted my reading also showed much interest in it!) The present book serves as a sourcebook of Chinese historical pragmatics, for language use before modernization, a guide on Chinese etiquette, morale and mores, a testimony to international contact in pre-modernity, and, due to English translation, as an excellent Chinese as a foreign language textbook for speakers of English. More than anything else, however, the Ryūkyūan–Chinese relationship comes alive in this book. That being said, I must confess to envying Dániel Kádár for the

excellent philological work he has done with this translation and publication. May it be read with more magnanimity by everyone else.

Tokyo, March 2011

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INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The Sino-Japonic work the reader has in hand, *Xue-guanhua/Gaku-kanwa* 學官話 ('Learning Mandarin Chinese'), is a unique source from many perspectives. This textbook, a collection of 93 imaginary interactions of various lengths, was compiled for students from the Ryūkyū Kingdom (Liuqiu-wangguo/Ryūkyū ōkoku 琉球王國).

The Ryūkyū Kingdom (1428–1879) was a vassal state of the Chinese empire from 1372 when its Chūzan 中山 Kingdom, which united the Kingdom a half century later, established tributary ties with China.[1] During the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing Dynasties (1644–1911), political ties between the Ryūkyūs and China were strong: the Okinawans dispatched various tributary (*jingong* 進貢) envoys, and in 1472 the so-called Ryūkyū Hall (Liuqiu-guan 琉球館), an official centre for Okinawan residents in China, was established in Fujian Province (see more in Li, 2002). The city of Fuzhou (福州) had gradually become a 'hub', as we would call it nowadays, for Okinawan residents due to its easily accessible harbour as well as its proximity to the Ryūkyūs.

In 1609, the Ryūkyū Kingdom was subdued by the Tokugawa Shogunate, the so-called Bakufu 幕府 of Japan. Nevertheless, the Kingdom remained largely autonomous, partly because it played an important mediatory role in trading between China and Japan, who did not have direct commercial relations. As Smits (1999) argues,

> Owing in large part to major events outside of Ryukyu, most important the Manchu conquest of China … a complex web of trade and diplomacy connected Beijing, Fuzhou, Ryukyu, Satsuma, and the bakufu … (p. 13)

1. Since it is beyond the scope of this introduction to overview Okinawan history, readers with further interest in this topic are advised to consult the voluminous research on this topic such as Kerr (2000).

The Ryūkyūan–Chinese interaction brought along an increasing cultural exchange: as well as taking over Chinese state institutions, the Ryūkyūans adopted Classical Chinese literacy. As a concomitant of this cultural borrowing, many Ryūkyūans decided to send their children to undertake their studies in the academies (*shuyuan* 書院) of Fujian in the proximity of the Ryūkyū Hall. Studying under the guidance of a Chinese master meant wealth and prestige upon return, and so it may not be surprising that Ryūkyūan envoys to China were followed by a stream of students. Since Ryūkyūan is a Japonic language, students had to learn Chinese as a foreign language.

2. Xue-guanhua

In order to meet the needs of Okinawan students, several textbooks of Chinese were compiled, among which perhaps the most renowned and influential is *Xue-guanhua*.

We know little about the date of appearance of this text. Ritsuko Setoguchi 瀬戸口律子, a sinologist who translated the source into Japanese, claimed it to be the newest amongst the Ryūkyūan Chinese textbooks, which include *Baixing-guanhua* 百姓官話 ('Ordinary People's Mandarin Chinese') and *Guanhua wenda bianyu* 官話問答便語 ('Mandarin Expressions in a Dialogic Form') along with *Xue-guanhua*. On the basis of in-text evidence such as reference to the source *Guwen-juesi* 古文覺斯, published in 1672, in Text no. 52, as well as philological evidence such as the state of the manuscript (cf. Setoguchi, 2003), it can be claimed that *Xue-guanhua* was compiled sometime in the period spanning the 18th century to the early 19th century.

Along with its uncertain date of publication, little knowledge is available about the person or persons who compiled *Xue-guanhua*. It is possible that the source was compiled by several authors, or a Chinese author who was familiar with the Ryūkyūan community in Fuzhou and their cultural habits. The facts that

1. the work reflects colonisation ideologies (see 2.3); and
2. it is rich in Minnan 閩南 Dialectal elements, that is, elements from the dialect spoken in the Fujian area (see more in Norman, 1988) where most of the Ryūkyūans resided

suggest that at least one of the compilers was Chinese. On the other hand, familiarity with some Ryūkyūan expressions, as well as the large number of characters with Japanese orthography (see section 4) in the text, indicates that one of the authors was Okinawan, even though the orthographic feature may be due to the fact that the extant manuscript of *Xue-guanhua* was copied in Okinawa.

As this brief description may suggest, there are many uncertainties about this source. Nevertheless it is an important and unique piece, as already claimed in the opening of the present introduction.[2] This is for various reasons:

1. Most importantly, *Xue-guanhua* has representative value, in the sense that as the most influential piece (Setoguchi, 2003) of Ryūkyūan textbook literature it represents a unique tradition in language education. This tradition is regretfully neglected in sinological research (but see Setoguchi, 1993), in spite of the fact that its analysis can provide a noteworthy addition to existing research on grammars and textbooks written for missionaries who worked in China (see Klöter, 2011), as well as other historical sources such as the 19th century Japanese textbook *Guanhua zhinan* 官話指南 ('A Compass to Mandarin Chinese'). In other words, *Xue-guanhua* provides a noteworthy example for the historical education of Chinese as a foreign language, which is different from its Western counterpart in many respects, even though analysis of this question is beyond the scope of the present introduction.
2. Secondly, one merit of *Xue-guanhua* (and other Ryūkyūan sources) is that it records many features of historical Chinese *communication*. As noted in Pan and Kádár (2011: 28–9) regarding *Xue-guanhua*, it is a conversation (question–answer, in Chinese, *wenda* 問答) based textbook, which teaches oral communication in a situational manner; for example, how to behave when invited to a Chinese family and talking with neighbours. Consequently, it represents Chinese language use in various interactional situations and speech acts. Furthermore, since it was written for foreign students it represents Chinese communication in a somewhat standardised form, that is, is a way in which one is *expected* to behave. In this sense it demonstrates the *norms* of communi-

2. It is necessary to note that the features discussed here represent the translator's interest in linguistics (pragmatics) and Sino-Japanese intercultural studies, and in this sense it is biased to some extent. Scholars with interest in japanology and other areas may find this source interesting for other reasons.

cation in a considerably more reliable way than many 'native' sources such as novels.

3. Thirdly, *Xue-guanhua* is a noteworthy source of Southern Mandarin, that is, standard Chinese coloured with Southern dialectal elements, in particular, Minnan lexicon and grammatical forms.[3] In other words, the text uses Southern Mandarin expressions such as *zaoqi* 早起 ('morning') instead of Northern ones such as *zaoshang* 早上, and also it applies a range of Southern grammatical forms such as *X-dejin* 得緊 ('greatly/truly X'). Therefore, *Xue-guanhua* provides insight into premodern language use in South China.

4. Finally, in terms of modern postcolonial theory (e.g. Spivak, 1988) and the Foucaultdian (1970) definition of 'discourse', *Xue-guanhua* represents colonialist discourse. As a vassal state of China, Ryūkyū was regarded as the empire's 'territory' or 'colony' to some extent, and it was in the Chinese interest to reinforce this claim, considering the fact that the 'ownership' of the island country was a debated issue between China and Japan. A natural way to reinforce this notion, in a similar way to the reinforcement of colonial ideologies in other places and in other times, was the (re-)education of locals. Accordingly, to Okinawans studying in China the Ryūkyūs were represented as China's political and cultural subordinate. For example, in many of the texts which represent interactions between a Chinese and a Ryūkyūan, the latter occurs as the junior party, or the one who needs advice/help in a certain matter (except a few texts that instruct language use in particular cases such as Text no. 92, in which a Ryūkyūan scolds a Chinese youngster). Also, in a couple of noteworthy texts, such as no. 35 and 36 which represent interaction between Chinese and Ryūkyūan high officials, the former appear as the *de facto* powerful party who can even afford to use an asymmetrical—from the powerful to the powerless—speech style towards the other. In a nutshell, *Xue-guanhua* is an interesting example of colonization discourse in the East Asian region.

It is pertinent to note that similar to many other historical sources *Xue-guanhua* is far from being 'perfect' (in fact, one could argue that this is a

3. Amongst other works, an excellent description of Southern Mandarin can be found in Kluber (1985).

'beauty' of historical texts). It seems to be reasonable thus to list its problematic features, or 'handicaps', along with its values:

1. The 93 sections of the work are of inconsistent quality. Whilst in general, like in many contemporary textbooks, the text becomes gradually more difficult, this trend is not strictly adhered to and there are simpler texts inserted in later parts of the book. This is not a surprising fact if we consider that *Xue-guanhua* is historical educational material. More importantly, when studying this text the reader should be aware that it was written for Ryūkyūans, to whom studying Chinese must have been far less of a challenge than to contemporary Western students, considering the important role of Chinese literacy in the Ryūkyūs (Røkkum, 2006), as well as the impact of Chinese on Okinawan language(s). It thus remains a question as to whether the lack of systematically applied gradual difficulty is a real 'shortcoming' of this text: since its goal is to educate readers—prospective residents in Fuzhou—in various matters of Chinese social life, rather than teaching them from the beginner's level, the concept of ordering the 93 texts seems to be primarily thematic.
2. There are many recurrent topics in the volume, such as the life of Ryūkyūan students in China. This can be well understood because as principle topics of importance have to be repeated in the course of education. Yet, some topics are discussed in a manner which may seem somewhat repetitive to the contemporary reader.
3. The layout of the text follows the traditional Chinese question–answer format. The interactional roles are often denoted by annotations such as *shuo* 說 ('X says') and *wen* 問 ('X asks') before the utterances. However, this convention is not followed clearly and systematically, which makes the understanding of texts somewhat difficult in certain cases. Also, in certain texts some utterances are annotated whilst others are not.
4. Finally, the original manuscript is not in great condition, with certain characters are missing from the text. While this is certainly a disadvantage, fortunately, it does not cause serious difficulties in the interpretation of the text.

3. Rationale

The present translation is based on Setoguchi's edition of *Xue-guanhua*, *Gaku-kanwa zenyaku: Ryūkyūkanwa kahon kenkyū* 学官話全訳―琉球官話課本研究 ('The Complete Translation of Xue-guanhua—A Research on Ryūkyūan Textbooks'), published in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, by Gajumaru (榕樹) Press. This is a rare edition—actually, the only modern edition—of the work, which I found in a field trip to Okinawa and other parts of Japan in the quest to obtain *Xue-guanhua* and other related materials. Setoguchi's book includes a short introduction, a reprint of the manuscript, as well as a simplified Chinese 'transcript' of the text and its Japanese and modern Chinese translations.

There are different rationales behind translating *Xue-guanhua* into English. Most importantly, I believe that it is an important sourcework, which should be made accessible to professional readership, including sinologists, linguists and experts of language education. Since *Xue-guanhua* has not been published in the Chinese-speaking world or in the West, and it is available—through Setoguchi's (2003) volume—for the Japanese public only, it seems reasonable to prepare a Sino-English edition of the work. Apart from professional readers, the present source may be of relevance to a wider circle of students involved in Chinese studies. While the language of *Xue-guanhua* may be tricky even to advanced students of Chinese, after rereading the texts several times, relying on the English translation, students may find many useful expressions in the source and also it may help them to improve their skill in dealing with contemporary Southern Mandarin texts, for example, various works published in Taiwan. In other words, *Xue-guanhua* continues to be a useful textbook, which should be published for—if nothing else—its educational value.

Apart from sharing *Xue-guanhua* with a professional audience, another reason for preparing the present translation is related to textual quality. Whilst Setoguchi's edition and translation of the source is arguably an excellent and groundbreaking one, the present volume hopes to contribute to her work by addressing some of its shortcomings. Most importantly, even though Setoguchi's translation provides explanations of some of the Southern Mandarin lexicon, it leaves many Southern expressions unexplored, and also fails to address the question as to whether certain historical forms are still used in contemporary Chinese dialects. In order to address this shortcoming, the present work provides a more comprehensive

list of Southern Mandarin expressions and also discusses their contemporary Minnan and Cantonese pronunciations where available.

Apart from this point, I found Setoguchi's translation slightly 'rigid' in certain places, in the sense that she translates the text into Japanese and modern Chinese without putting the text into context. In order to address this shortcoming, in the English translation I tried to provide a literary translation, which is as precise as possible while it 'smuggles' a plenty of explanations in the translation, at the cost of adding brief sections to the text.

4. The translation

Before ending this introduction, some features of the present translation should be introduced.

Firstly, in order to aid the reader's comprehension of the text, every conversation is preceded with a brief (somewhat tentative) introductory text, which introduces the situation in which the conversation takes place and also discusses some socio-cultural information relating to the interaction.

Secondly, on the level of layout, the present work follows Setoguchi's edition, that is, it breaks up the original text into distinct sections. Setoguchi includes the reprint edition of the work, as well as its simplified edition. The latter is needed because the design of the original manuscript is rather confusing to the average reader: most of the 93 sections are not divided into paragraphs, that is, often only a blank space equalling one or two characters denotes the beginning of a new text. The present edition follows the layout of Setoguchi's edition, and the only difference between these two publications is in terms of style: in this volume the Chinese characters are rendered in traditional (*fanti* 繁體) format. The Chinese script in this volume is standardised, which is necessary because the original manuscript is written by using 'popular' Japonic *suzi* 俗字 characters.

On the level of terminology, the present text uses both 'Ryūkyū' and 'Okinawa' in reference to the Okinawan islands. These terms are problematic in the sense that using them systematically (that is, using only one of them) would potentially express an ideological stance: 'Ryūkyū' is the Chinese designation and 'Okinawa' is the Japanese name for the island kingdom. In order to avoid getting involved in terminological debates, this translation uses both 'Ryūkyū' and 'Okinawa'.

Since the present text is an 'intercultural' one, special attention has been devoted to terms which have both Chinese and Japonic pronunciation.

As a rule the Chinese pronunciation is given in the translation of these terms, since *Xue-guanhua* is a textbook of Chinese. However, an exception is the case of terms which have different meanings in the Chinese and the Okinawan contexts, such as *xiucai/shūsai* 秀才 (the former in Chinese is a rank whilst the latter Okinawan term is simply a deferential form of address). Such expressions are transliterated 'contextually', that is, they are transliterated in accordance with their contextual interpretation.

Finally, it is pertinent to note that this translation devotes particular attention to deferential terms: in the footnotes, honorific terms of address and other expressions are listed in a systematic way. This is because *Xue-guanhua* is particularly interesting for the historical pragmatician due to the fact that it records the use of honorific expressions (see more on this topic in Pan and Kádár, 2011). Furthermore, for student readers honorific expressions that are rarely used in contemporary Chinese communication can be difficult to understand, and so the large number of footnotes devoted to the deferential lexicon is meant to aid those who take up this volume with the goal of learning, rather than using it as a research source. In order to briefly describe the Chinese system of honorifics, and the related technical vocabulary it is necessary to note here that in the centre of honorific communication is the phenomenon that is described as 'self-denigration' and 'other-elevation'. An example of the former is the form of self-reference *wansheng* 晚生 (lit. 'this late born person', i.e. 'this person who was born later and so is lower ranking than you') and for the latter is the term of address *lao-xiansheng* 老先生 (lit. 'old first-born', trans. 'venerable gentleman'). Furthermore, a distinction should be made between 'direct' and 'indirect' elevating/denigrating forms of address/reference: the former, exemplified by the aforementioned two expressions, directly refer to the author and the recipient, while the latter ones indirectly refer to a person or an object in the author's and the recipient's groups. For example, *biguo* 敝國 (lit. 'humble country') indirectly denigrates the speaker's country and *guigeng* 貴庚('your precious age') elevates the other's age. Besides '(in)directness', another common technical expression is '(quasi-) familial form of address'. This refers to recipient-elevating and self-denigrating terms of address that semantically express a familial relationship between the recipient and the author and hence express emotional closeness. For example, *laoxiong* 老兄 (lit. 'older elder brother') is used towards non-family members, in order to deferentially 'invite' them into the speaker's family (i.e. internal group). Besides forms of address, another important type of honorifics is the category of 'self-denigrating and recipient-elevating verbal forms'; such expressions are

utilised in order to deferentially denigrate the actions of the author and elevate that of the recipient. An example of the former is *fengming* 奉命 (lit. 'deferentially receive orders', which deferentially refers to the speaker's receipt of the speech partner's request or order, and for the latter is *tuofu* 托福 (lit. 'bestowing fortune'), which describes the deferential claim that a fortunate matter has occurred because of the blessing that arouse from the speech-partner's superhuman power. Apart from elevating and denigrating forms, there are various deferential expressions in the text, which do not have elevating and denigrating meaning in a strict sense, even though they are often used in elevating and denigrating contexts. For example, *buyao-jianguai* 不要見怪 ('please do not take offence') is a typical example within this category, which is designated as 'formulaic deferential expressions'. In order to provide an overview of the honorific lexicon in *Xue-guanhua*, 'Appendix II (Honorific Expressions)' is attached to the manuscript.

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XUE-GUANHUA

學官話

List of Texts

1. MAKING A VISIT

This text advises the reader on what to say when making an official visit. The Ryūkyūan person visits the residence of a high-ranking official in order to discuss an official matter. However, the Chinese official is away on duty, and the Ryūkyūan visitor asks the house servant to inform his master of the visit.

尊駕到敝館貴幹。

答[1]：我到貴館。要見你們老爺。說一句話。不知你們老爺在家麼。

答：我們老爺。剛纔有公事出去了。不在家。

問：幾時纔得回来呢。

答：這個到也沒憑據。不知道什麼時候纔回來。

說：你們老爺不在家。我且回去。另日再來。停會你們老爺回來時節。有勞將我來的事情。替我講一聲。千萬千萬。

答：曉得曉得。

說：請了。

答：不送了。

What noble wind[2] brought you, sir[3], to our humble home[4]?

Response: I came to your noble dwelling[5] as I want to see your master[6] and speak a few words with him. I wonder whether your master is at home.

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1. In the manuscript annotating characters have smaller size than others, and this convention is followed in the Chinese script of the present volume.

2. *Guigan* 貴幹 (lit. 'noble deeds') is an indirect elevating form of address.

3. *Zunjia* 尊駕 ('sir', 'your esteemed presence') is a direct elevating form of address.

4. *Biguan* 敝館 (lit. 'humble home') is an indirect self-denigrating form of address.

Response: Our master has just left on a public errand, he is not at home.

Question: When is he expected to return?

Response: This cannot be answered with certainty. I do not know when he will return.

Statement: As your master is not here I shall now withdraw. I will return another day. When your master returns in due course[7], I beg you to do me the favour[8] of informing him that I was here. Pray do not forget this.[9]

Response: I understand, I understand.

Statement: Go with Godspeed.[10]

Response: Please do not trouble to show me out.[11]

2. TRAVEL

The present section illustrates the ways in which one is expected to converse informally, with friends. A Ryūkyūan person enquires about the whereabouts of a Chinese friend during the past days. When it is revealed that the Chinese visited a scenic spot with a couple of friends, without inviting the Ryūkyūan, the latter jokingly scolds him and enquires about the details of the journey.

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5. *Guiguan* 貴館 (lit. 'noble home') is an indirect elevating form of address.

6. *Laoye* 老爺 ('your honour') is a traditional form of address/reference for magistrates. In the Chinese language use of Ryūkyūans—at least according to the present text and some other Ryūkyūan textbooks—*laoye* seems to be a default form of address/reference to Chinese officials, irrespective of the given official's rank.

7. *Tinghui* 停會 ('wait a bit') is a variant of the modern Mandarin expression *denghuir* 等會兒.

8. *Youlao* 有勞 (lit. 'take the trouble of') is a conventional verbal form used in requests.

9. *Qianwan* 千萬 (lit. 'thousand and ten thousand', i.e. 'I would like to ask you thousand and ten thousand times not to forget') is a conventional form used in requests.

10. *Qingle* 請了 (lit. 'I asked you') is a formulaic closing expression.

11. *Busong* 不送 ('please do not bother to show me out') is a conventional closing expression.