Amenomori Hōshū's Chosŏn Language School in Tsushima

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ABSTRACT

During the Tokugawa era (1603-1867), Japan maintained trade and diplomatic relations only with a few partners - Chosŏn Korea, the semi-dependant kingdom of Ryukyu, the Dutch East India Company, and Chinese merchants from East and South East Asia. In the case of Chosŏn and Japan, the domain of Tsushima played a vital role to interconnect both countries. Due to its unfavorable topography, Tsushima could not produce rice in sufficient amounts and had to rely on trade with Chosŏn. On the other hand these economic problems brought an intimate knowledge on Chosŏn, enabling Tsushima to contribute to improve relations between Japan and Chosŏn. Sufficient means of communication were essential in this respect. However, in the early 1700’s, the number of Chosŏn language speakers in Tsushima started to decline. After, the Sō clan monopolized trade with Chosŏn in the late 1600’s, the opportunities to go to Waegwan were restricted to the Tsushima officials and the privileged merchants called, Rokujuniin. Gradually, there was less chance for Tsushima people to have contact with native Chosŏn people and learn the language. In order to reverse this trend, Amenomori Hoshu, a Confucian scholar, introduced two language programs for gifted young people and established an educational institution for Chosŏn language in 1727. In this article, Hoshū’s two plans and their contents are closely examined.

Keywords: Chosŏn, Tsushima, Amenomori Hoshu Chosŏn language, tsujii, Rokujuniin, intercultural relations, Japanese-Korean intercourse

Introduction

Japan during the Tokugawa era (1603-1867) is known for her status of semi-seclusion. The country severed almost all diplomatic ties abroad, with exception of Chosŏn Korea, Ryukyu and the Dutch East India Company, that was considered to represent the Netherlands. There were no official relations with China, but Chinese’s ships were permitted to the port of Nagasaki. Diplomatic relations to Chosŏn were reconfirmed through Korean envoys (Chosŏn Tongsinsa (K), Chosen tsushinshi (J), 朝鮮通信使) to the court at Edo (江戸) whenever a new Shogun came to power. Tsushima (對馬) played a vital role in these interactions between both countries.

The islands of the domain Tsushima are located between the harbour Pusan at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula and Fukuoka in the northern parts of the Japanese island Kyushu. The distance between Fukuoka and...
Tsushima is 147 km whereas the distance between Pusan and Tsushima is 45 km.² Through its history, Tsushima was deeply engaged in the intercourse with Chosŏn. This was not only the result of its geographical proximity. Due to its mountainous topography the domain could not produce rice in sufficient amounts, and was forced to rely on the trade with Chosŏn to sustain its population. In Pusan the Japanese merchants and emissaries were confined to the trading post Waegwan (Wakan (J), 倭館), the Japanese residence, but regular and intense contacts gave Tsushima an important role in the intercourse between the two countries. In order to maintain its close relationship with Chosŏn, repeated efforts on various levels were necessary, including the field of language education.³

It was in the early 18th century that the number of Chosŏn language speakers in Tsushima started to decline due to the Sŏ clan’s monopolization of Tsushima’s trade with Chosŏn which happened in the late 17th century. After the Yanagawa Incident (Yanagawa ikken (J), 柳川一件),⁴ the Sŏ clan controlled the trade by giving the limited number of trade shares to the Tsushima officials and the privileged merchants called, Rokujunin. As a result, there was lesser chance for Tsushima people to visit Waegwan. Thus, gradually the Chosŏn language became forgotten in Tsushima.

Amenomori Hŏshū (雨森芳洲; 1668-1755), a Confucian scholar lived in Tsushima, made two attempts to reverse this trend. His first attempt was to send ten young talents to the Japanese trading post in Pusan, where they had to learn Chosŏn language. And his second attempt was to establish an institution in Tsushima specialized in Chosŏn language education.

Previous research on Hŏshū’s school conducted by scholars such as Tashiro Kazui, Yonetani Hitoshi, Matsubara Takatoshi, Cho Chin-k’yŏng, Ch’ŏng Hye-jin focused on the curriculum of the school and the contents of its educational program. Many of these authors consider the school as a facility to produce interpreters. However, out of thirty-nine students, who graduated from this school between 1727 and 1730, only seven became the member of official interpreters (tsuji-chu, 通語中). It can be shown that Hŏshū also pursued the

† Author’s Acknowledgement
I express my personal appreciation of the valuable assistance given by Professor Nakano Hitoshi at Kyushu University and Professor Michel Wolfgang, Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Language and Cultures at Kyushu University. I would also like to show my gratitude to Franklin Rausch for his advice and support.

¹ There was no diplomatic relations with China, only trade with Chinese merchants from all over Asia. Korea was the only country with fully fledged diplomatic relations to Japan and official embassies whenever a new shogun came to power.
² Toby 1991: 3-12.
⁴ Yi 2005: 14-16.
⁶ See page 5 of this article.
education of young talented people for other functions in Tsushima-Chosŏn intercourse. In this study, Hŏshū’s two plans and the contents of these programs and importance of these attempts are closely examined.

Amenomori Hŏshū
Amenomori Hŏshū was a Confucian scholar who worked for Tsushima-han (對馬藩). Some scholars believe that he was born in Amemori village (南森村) in Ōmi-no-kuni (近江國; present Shiga prefecture), but this has never been verified sufficiently. Hŏshū excelled from his early childhood on, beginning to study Chinese poetry and classical literature at the age of five. His father, who was a physician, encouraged him to take up medicine. However, Hŏshū turned to Confucianism instead, which was one of the ideological pillars of the Tokugawa regime, and became a pupil of a Confucian scholar, Kinoshita Junan (木下順庵; 1621-98) at the age of eighteen. In 1693, when Hŏshū was twenty-six years of age, he was hired by the Tsushima-han. His first duty was to compose letters addressed to the Chosŏn officers. Gradually he became more involved in diplomatic matters concerning Chosŏn. In 1703 and 1705 he went to the Waegwan in Pusan to master the language. Later he even compiled numerous books on Chosŏn language and Tsushima’s relations with Chosŏn. “Koryinteisei (交際地勢)” (1728) was one of his books. It dealt with customs and culture of Chosŏn. It became one of the “must-read” books for Tsushima officers who were engaged in Tsushima-Chosŏn intercourse.

Hŏshū’s Attempts to Propagate Chosŏn Language in the Domain of Tsushima
The trade between Tsushima and Chosŏn was prosperous during the late 17th century. However, it started to decline in the 18th century, which affected the interest in Chosŏn language studies considerably. Amenomori Hŏshū reveals his concern as follows:

‘Recently, the trade between [Tsushima and] Chosŏn has declined. The number of children of Rokujūjinin who go to Chosŏn to conduct trade and to learn Chosŏn

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10 Nagatomi 1999: 34.
12 Nagatomi 1999: 146-156.
13 Japanese silver was considered as the most valuable trading item to Chosŏn. However, in the 18th century, there was a shortage of silver for exportation and it caused the decline of trade between Chosŏn and Tsushima. See Tashiro 1981, Chapter X.
14 The words, Rokujūjinin chiyalushi (六十八婦子) or Rokujūjinin kodomo (六十八子供) were used in the primary source. However, these terms include sons (長男, 次男, 三男), younger brothers (弟), successors (後), and step sons (養子) of Rokujūjinin. Here after, the word “child” or “children” will be used to indicate the word, “kodomo.”
language has been declined. Since there is still [a few number of people who have studied Chosôn language], the situation is not too serious. [These people can participate in hosting] the Chosôn tsushinshi. However, [if the number of people who learn Chosôn language continue to decline], it will become a critical problem in the next generation.  

In 1720, about half year after the 9th Chosôn Envoy visited Japan, Hoshū suggested to send ten students, who were already competent in Chosôn language, to Ch'oryang Waegwan (草梁倭館; in Tongnae, Pusan) for further improvement of their language proficiency. Waegwan, the Japan House, was about twenty-five times larger than the Dutch trading post Dejima (出島) in Nagasaki. During the following years, a considerable number of Japanese pursued their studies here. The contents of this program reflected Hoshū’s own previous experience. His ideas are clearly stated in the “Appointment register for disciples in Korean Studies” (“Kan’gaku seiin ninyōchō” (韓學生員任用帳)). The selected students, called seiin (生員), were between thirteen and fifteen years old. After their application was accepted, the students were obliged to attend a trial class in Tsushima for thirty to forty days. Hereupon they had to take an examination and ten students with the highest scores were selected.

Boys between the age of thirteen and fifteen will be sent to Chosôn to learn [Chosôn] language. They will learn until they reach the age of twenty-three. [Among them] the ones who were competent in speaking Chosôn language will be appointed as keihotaiji. [However,] the ones who do not wish to become an interpreter, who are not good at learning Chosôn language, who are not competent in [learning Chosôn language] or yet useful for scholarship, they would be appointed to a different position.

[Tsushima-han] is facing financial difficulties; therefore, [Tsushima-han] may not give a high salary. However, [Tsushima-han] will give enough salary for one to maintain his living while continue studying [Chosôn language]. If there is anyone who is a son of the member of Rokujūin, and wish to join this program, his parent should send a notification to apply [for the program].

Month    Day

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15 進年ハ朝鮮諸校外々と同へ候二付、町六拾人之嫡子常運之為ニ朝鮮へ牒越居候而朝鮮詞を申観へ候儀、以前之類ニ無之候故、只今示は以前より朝鮮詞を申観へ居候者有之而、信使来御之節之書詞備用送支無之候得共、其子之代ニ成り朝鮮ハ朝鮮詞を申観者少キ・二面候、 宗家文書 “委細御制書卒案” 夏馬御族朝鮮資料館所蔵 See Tashiro 2007: 158-9.

16 Tashiro 2007: 159.

17 According to Chang, Ch’oryang Waegwan was 100,000 p’yǒng (坪) and Dejima was 4000 p’yǒng. See Chang 2004: 49.

18 Tashiro 2007: 159.


As written above, twenty or thirty people who are competent and willing to be part of this program will spend thirty to forty days to [learn Chosŏn language]. They will learn one or two phrases, read twenty to thirty words, and learn forty to fifty vocabularies. Through the daily lesson, we will give [them] tasks to distinguish who has potentials or not. Among them, ten most competend students will be selected. In fact, it is difficult to distinguish whether a person has a good personality or not. However, I think we will be able to distinguish who is bright and who is not.

From: “Kan’gaku seisin ninyōkō”\textsuperscript{21}

It is important to note that the students were required to be sons of members of a group called “Sixty Persons” (Rokuujin, 六十八). This was a group of merchants who enjoyed the privilege to conduct trade with Chosŏn. Its origin goes back to medieval period. Due to the Shōni clan’s loss of its territories, the Sō clan (宗氏) returned to Tsushima giving up its territories in Chikuzen (筑前) and Hizen (肥前). Having no land left that could be distributed, the Sō clan granted the status of privileged merchant to sixty of its vassals. They enjoyed the “right of owning a boat” (fune-no-baiiken, 船の売買権) as well as the “right of maritime trade” (kaijō-kōchiken, 海上交易権). Later, they also engaged in administrative affairs within their villages. Sometimes, they even sent annual envos (saikensen, 歳遣船) to Pusan.\textsuperscript{22}

During the Edo period, two events changed the fate of the Rokuujin. The first was the establishment of the “New Sixty Persons” (Shin-Rokuujin, 新六十八) by lord Sō Yoshitoshi (宗氏義俊; 1568-1615) in the early 17th century. After the Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s (豊臣秀吉; 1536-1598) second invasion of Chosŏn, Tsushima faced the difficult task to reconnect with Chosŏn and establish new trade relations. Since the group of “Sixty Persons” had shrunk considerably, Yoshitoshi decide a rearrangement. His “New Sixty Persons” included thirty previous members and new members.\textsuperscript{23}

A second change occurred in 1635, after the so-called Yanagawa Incident,\textsuperscript{24} that ended with the eviction of the Yanagawa clan (柳川氏) from Tushima and enabled the Tsushima-clan to attain complete control over the official “trade boat”

\textsuperscript{21} 覚十三歳以上五百歳各之者数人捕送築城、朝鮮へ被指度、朝鮮商務之築古被飛付、二派三藩相務候上ニ爾、御用ニ可相立者ニ候ハ、其内ト以段々築古通事ニ候付、其身退望望不申候か、又司ハ不勧観ニ被指許、司ホノ又方者指御ニ立候程ノ者ニ候ハ、別御御取立可候成との御事ニ候、御使行等之義、御時分候ニ候ヘハ、優分或事ハ決而有之間候ヘトも、大藤築古相務り候程ニ可被付候問、六十人ニ申、左相望立有候者ニ候ハ、候々理話出築古ニ被申付、一々書付可被指出候上、月 日三通被付候而、二十人ニ申ニテモ、相詰者ニ有候ハ、学力有之者ニ被飛付、三十四日（日）越之間、朝鮮御用一部或ハ二二、読書ニト三十字、或ハ四五十字等経文、毎日教候而、生質之得方、不得方を試ミ、十人之数出築古被飛付可然候、尤大者之善善、右之分ニテ大藤相望可有候之候、即時鍾下八八大奨分レ甲事ニ奉候処、（補学生員仮任用帳）

\textsuperscript{22} Nagasaki-ken-shi hensan innai ed. 1963-1986: 838.
\textsuperscript{23} Tashiro 2007: 155.
\textsuperscript{24} This incident occurred in 1635. After Hideyoshi’s invasion, Chosŏn did not accept any letter from Japan unless it came from the “king” of Japan. As the Tokugawa refused any reference to the shogun as “king” (お, 王), Tsushima-clan started to forge letters, in order to restart diplomatic relations with Chosŏn. These forgeries continued for a several decades. However, the Yanagawa clan, a vassal who played an important role in these efforts, disclosed the forgeries, trying to become a vassal to the Tokugawas. But after an official trial by the Bakufu, the Yanagawa clan was banished from Tsushima and the Sō clan monopolized the diplomatic relations with Chosŏn. See Lewis 2003: Chapter II and 97.
(shisen, 使船) and gradually monopolize the trade with Chosŏn. Those members of the “Sixty Persons,” which previously engaged in trade, faced increasing difficulties. Another group appeared called “Sixty Person’s Status” (Rokujinin-kaku, 六十人格). It was made up by people who gained the approval of the Tsushima clan and enjoyed the same status as members of the “Sixty Persons.”

In order to become Rokujinin-kaku, one of the most important qualifications was Chosŏn language skill. These merchants were usually born as a son of merchant and succeed to their parent’s work. They usually learn Chosŏn language from their parents and by accompanying them to Waegwan, where they learned living conversation of Chosŏn language.

Learning Chosŏn language in Waegwan
In the document “Kan’gaku seiin ninyōchō (韓學生員任用帳),” Hoshū suggested to select ten students and send them to Chosŏn to teach them Chosŏn language. His plans and the contents of the program are written in details.

(1) Curriculum
Students who were sent to Ch’oryang Waegwan commuted to Sakanoshita (坂の下) and Tokoji (東向寺) to learn Chosŏn language. Sakanoshita was located at the entrance of Waegwan. It was a place where yôkwan (譯官) or Chosŏn interpreters, worked. Tokoji was located inside the Waegwan. It was a place where rinbanso (輪番僧) resided. Students learned Chosŏn language by reading books until they reached the age of twenty-three. Among them, the competent ones were hired as a keiko-tsuiji (稽古通習) or as a trainee interpreter.

From the machibugyo (町奉行) to the Students:
The students are learning Chosŏn language, so [they should] commute to Sakanoshita every day, and should read starting from “Rui-gyo (類合)” to “Jujachishiryaku (十八史略)” and learn from a Chosŏn person. From the early stage of learning Chosŏn language I recommend [the students] to do the followings[:]

receive lessons from shinan-yaku (教訓官) and do not become indolent. Do not limit to Chosŏn language, [but, learn it as a field of study] and be able to contribute to [Tsushima-han]. You should keep these in your mind. The details are written on a separate letter.

From: “Kan’gaku seiin ninyōchō”

25 Tashiro Kazui argues that the nature of the Rokujin group and the number of its members also changed due to the Rokujin-kaku. See Tashiro 2007: 135-6. However, the question whether the Rokujin and Rokujin-kaku are identical still requires further studies.
26 Ch’ong 2005a: 93.
29 町奉行ヨリ生員中（ケヨミ）彼等承職書付之趣見 其方達之義。彼等五名氏及仮書付之時。每日坂ノ下関観、類合より始末。十八史略之讀書朝 朝鮮書学朝鮮人字母之書之在身、先教訓官（シテ）ノ下於ハ初之 Veteran’s book for the students. The following was written for the students: The students are learning Chosŏn language, so [they should] commute to Sakanoshita every day, and should read starting from “Rui-gyo (類合)” to “Jujachishiryaku (十八史略)” and learn from a Chosŏn person. From the early stage of learning Chosŏn language I recommend [the students] to do the followings[:]

receive lessons from shinan-yaku (教訓官) and do not become indolent. Do not limit to Chosŏn language, [but, learn it as a field of study] and be able to contribute to [Tsushima-han]. You should keep these in your mind. The details are written on a separate letter.

From: “Kan’gaku seiin ninyōchō”

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An additional letter from the machibugyŏ

- [The students] should work as a Chŏsen-onomote until they reach the age of twenty-three. If a student who seemed excellent in [language/job], he would be employed as a trainee interpreter. [However,] if a student does not wish to become an interpreter, or does not seem to be qualified [to become a trainee interpreter], he will be excused. People who are competent not only in speaking the language but also in scholarship will be appointed to a different position.


Read these books in this order.

- For studying, Toshichu (年中) will grant paper 2 soku, pencil 10, ink 10 cho to the students.

- Students should study "Ruigô" and "Jūhachisiryaku" thoroughly.

- Food will be provided by mikanjime-yahu (監督官). Besides that, 10 monme will be given in the end of every month.

- Cloth 2 set, hat 2 set will be provided.

- Oil 2 sho will be given monthly.

From: "Kan'gaku seinin ninyokoh" ①

Until the students complete the program, they were fully supported by the Tsushima-han. In short, in order to learn Chosŏn language, students were supposed to follow the process shown below:

1. apply for the program → 2. learn Chosŏn language for thirty to forty days → 3. selected ten students are sent to Ch'oryang Waegwan in Chosŏn → 4. students commute to Sakanoshita and Tokoji to study → 5. students learn Chosŏn language until they reach the age of twenty-three → 6. competent students are hired as a trainee interpreter.

In the documents, there were about ten books introduced by Hŏshô. These books were used for three different purposes: to practice pronunciation, to improve vocabularies and expression, and to learn the classical Chinese literature.

① "別紙之書付"

一、二滝三歳監朝鮮表二而相務、弥御用二相立可申者八、段々撰古通詞之被仰付、其身通詞望不申候か、又ハ不動峨ニ候ハハ、可被差許候、尤生賢貴用ニ候而、朝鮮言葉ハ申ニ及鮮、學問著述監御
二、在職程ニ有之候ハハ、処度御取立可被成候間、可を得其意事、
一、毎日東向き通候而、小学・四書・古文・三体詩之諸書、次第を迫而相務候事、
二、稽古用として、中東紙志東・筆十本・墨百枚、年中銘々成被下候事、
一、総合一部・十人史略一部完、銘々御調被成下候事、
一、食物箱監督官（ミカノメヤク）ヨリ書付除様ニ被仰付、外ニ毎月十枚宛、月切被成下候事、
一、送物、木線義物式・甚子式宛、銘々成被下候事、
一、池式升宛、毎月被成下候事、已上（‘韓學生員任用帳’）
At first, the students learned how to pronounce Chosŏn words. After learning the pronunciation, they learned vocabularies and improved expressions by reading novels. It is important to note that the students also were required to study classical Chinese literatures. Classical Chinese literatures were highly valued in Chosŏn as well as in Japanese society. The Chosŏn language school's aim was to produce the intellects, who were also excellent in Chosŏn language.

(2) Textbooks
There were ten books that were used as textbooks. Among these ten, I would like to introduce three books to have a glance of their lessons.

1) Kŏrin-suchi
This was a textbook for conversation in Chosŏn language. There are few possibilities regarding the origin of this book. One possibility is that it was compiled by Amenomori Hōshū, the other possibility is that it was originally compiled by a tsuji (Japanese Korean interpreter) and later edited by Amenomori Hōshū. Or it was compiled in Naeshirogawa (常備川; present Kagoshima prefecture). This book had been used as a textbook for those who studied Chosŏn language from the Edo to Meiji period. In 1881, it was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan.33 This book is divided into four volumes. There are fifty-nine pages in Volume I, fifty-seven pages in Volume II, sixty-one pages in Volume III, and fifty-five pages in Volume IV. A copy of this book can be found at the following institutions:

31 This table is based on Chŏng’s untitled table. See Chŏng 2006b: 46.
32 Naeshirogawa is a place where the Chosŏn captives were forced to resettle during Hideyoshi’s invasion of the Korean peninsula. These captives were ceramists and eventually became permanent residents. They did not assimilate for a long period of time, trying to preserve their culture and customs throughout generations. Naeshirogawa later became a place where people learned Chosŏn language. Some interpreters came from Naeshirogawa, and various Chosŏn language textbooks were compiled here. See Chŏng 1987: 225-6.
This book contains vocabularies with examples, which are divided into sixty-nine categories. In each section, there are words written either in Hangeul or in Chinese character with the respective Katakana written beside it. “Korinsuchi” continued to be used as a textbook for Chosŏn language even during the Meiji period.

2) Butsumeisatsu (物名冊)
The original copy of this book is located in the Tsushima Sŏ Family Collection. This is also a vocabulary book. There is a list of Chosŏn vocabularies written in Katakana. On each word, there is a Japanese translation written beside it. There are about fourteen vocabularies and one or two phrases on each page. In total, there are about four-hundred-thirty vocabularies and thirty phrases.  

34 This table is based on Yi’s article. See Yi 2004: 183-184.
35 This table is based on Yi’s article. See Yi 2004: 183-184.
The contents are divided into twenty-one categories and the order is similar to that of "Korinsuchi." Some scholars believe that this book was compiled by tsuji as a study guide for "Korinsuchi" to focus more on the important vocabularies.38

3) Sook-hyang Chon (淑香傳)
Sook-hyang chon (The Story of Sook-hyang) is a Chosön romance novel. This novel was written by an anonymous author. Since Amenomori Hoshū used this book in the early 18th century, this novel must have been written prior to this period.39 Novels were generally popular among the people who were learning Chosön language. They did not only read them but also transcribed the entire books to become familiar with the vocabularies and expressions. Sook-hyang chon was one of the popular novels among the Chosön language learners.40

This novel tells the story of Sook-hyang whose father saved a turtle and the turtle return the father's kindness. According to Cho and Matsubara, this story involves the fatalism and other aspects that show Chosön people's thoughts and emotions.41 There were few reasons why this novel was chosen as a textbook to learn Chosön language: 1. There were few scenes involving formal occasions such as a scene taken place at a government office. It allowed the readers to observe Chosön people's manners and customs at a formal occasion; 2. There were many dialogues among people from various age groups, which enabled the readers to learned the subtle changes in expressions depending on the characters' age; 3. Similar problems repeated in the story, which allowed the readers to review the vocabularies and expressions throughout the book.42

Sook-hyang chon was favored by many Japanese people who were learning Chosön language. Through this novel, they were able to learn about expressions, custom, and culture of Chosön.

Ten selected students were sent to Waegwan to study Chosön language. During their studying period, they were fully supported by the Tushima-han. The aim of this program was to train young bright boys to obtain sufficient level of language proficiency as well as the knowledge on Chosön culture and customs. It can be considered as Tsushima's effort to maintain the close relationships with Chosön.

Chosön Language School
Having succeeded in sending young students to Pusan in order to learn Chosön language, Hoshū proposed to establish an institution specialized in Chosön

38 Chong 1996: 735.
41 Chong 2004: 105.
language education. This plan was accepted by the Tsushima-han and a “Chosŏn language school” (Chosengo keiko sho, 詞橋語稽古所) was established in 1727.

To examine the background, process and curriculum of this school, a primary source, the “Record to Train Student to Learn [Chosŏn] language” (Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku, 詞稽古之者仕立記録), was used. This document was compiled by Amenomori Hoshū (a.k.a. Amenomori Togoro, 雨森東五郎) in 1736. This document is divided into four sections: (1) the importance of establishing this institution and importance of teaching Chosŏn language to people; (2) detailed plans to establish the institution; (3) a list of the names of the first class and their results; (4) aftermath of the graduation of the first class.

**The Purpose of this Institution**

As mentioned above, the number of Chosŏn language speakers in Tsushima started to decline in the early 18th century. To stop this trend, Hoshū proposed a plan to establish an educational institute specialized in teaching Chosŏn language in Tsushima.

Before this school was established, there was no other institution where people could learn Chosŏn language in Tsushima. Interpreters were often sons of Rokujûnin merchants who learned the language from their parents or acquaintances. After acquiring a basic knowledge, they received a “practice permit” (keiko-satsu, 稽古実) to temporarily reside in Waegwan while studying Chosŏn language.

There were interpreters worked between Chosŏn and Japan. The Chosŏn Interpreters were called yŏdgwan. They were officers who passed the government examination. On the other hand, the Japanese interpreters were usually people (most of them were merchants) from Tsushima. They were called tsuji.

The official interpreters, who were appointed by the Tsushima-han, were called tsuji. A group of these appointed interpreters was called tsuji-chū (通詞中). There were four ranks, the lowest one being “The Eight Interpreters” (hachinin-tsuji, 八人通詞). Sometimes they were called “The Five Interpreters” (gonin-tsuji, 五人通詞) depending on the demand of interpreters in Tsushima and Pusan. Then, there were “Trainee Interpreters” (keiko-tsuji, 稽古通詞), “Regular Interpreters” (hon-tsuji, or tsuji, 本通詞), and at the top of the hierarchy the “Great Interpreters” (ō-tsuji, 大通詞). According to Kang (1993), there were fourteen or seventeen people in tsuji-chū.45

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43 Primary sources show no specific name for this institution. Tashiro Kazui uses the term Chosengo tsuji yoseisho (朝鮮語通詞養成所) which means “Institution to train Chosŏn language interpreters,” Yonetani Hitoshi does not refer to this institution with a particular term. Matsubara Takatoshi, Ch'ŏng Gwang and Ch'ŏng Seung-hye speak of Han'ŏ sa (K), Kan goshii (J) (稽古所). Given the fact that only 17% of the graduates of this school became official interpreters, and the word Chosŏn (K) / chosengo (J) (朝鮮語) or Chosŏnas (K), choen kotoši (J) (稽古詞) is more commonly used in the primary sources, the term Chosŏn kyo gosho (K) / Chosengo keikoshō (J) (稽古詞稽古所) seems to be more appropriate. However, for reasons of practicability, this study uses the name “Chosŏn language school.”


45 Kang 1993: 52.
Beside these official interpreters, there were other temporary interpreters (also called *tsujii*). The duty of the official and temporary interpreters can be divided into three types: 1. work related to the Chosŏn Envoy; 2. work related to returning castaways; and 3. work related to trade in Waegwan.

There is no accurate number of the temporary interpreters in Tsushima during the Edo period. But, there was a significant decrease between the late 1600s and the early 1700s. In 1682, shortly after the ascension of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi the 8th Chosŏn envoy came to Japan using about eighty *tsujii*.47 However, when the 9th Chosŏn Envoy arrived in Japan in 1719, there were about fifty *tsujii*.48 Within less than forty years, the number of *tsujii* decreased by 37.5%.

Tashiro points out financial problems as one of the reasons for this phenomenon. Interpreters working in Waegwan did not have enough income.49 In order to compensate their low income, they were allowed to conduct trade (*Gomenbutsu-bōeki*, 閘免物貿易) at the Waegwan’s Open Market (*kaesi* (K); *kaishi* (J), ₳è).50 The items and amounts of commodities they could trade were limited. One of the popular items was coptis root (*Coptidis rhizoma*, 黄連). This root was used for medicine and was sold at a high price in Chosŏn. A *tsujii* who worked in Waegwan was allowed to sell 15 *kin* (斤) per year, whereas *hon-tsujii* and *ō-tsujii* could sell twice that amount. In 1670’s, one *kin* of coptis root was sold at silver 43 *monme*. However, during the 1730’s the price of coptis root decreased to one tenth of its price fifty-year ago.51 This decline contributed to the decrease in the number of interpreters in Tsushima.

In “Record to Train Student to Learn [Chosŏn] language” (*Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku*, 詞樣古之者仕立記録)52 Hoshû reveals his concern over the situation where they were losing young people who are capable of speaking Chosŏn.

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46 This table is based on Kang’s article. See 1993: 52.

47 After Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s invasion of Chosŏn, the Tokugawa Bakufu tried to reestablish diplomatic relations by inviting envoys whenever a new shogun was proclaimed. The first embassy took place in 1607, followed by others in 1617, 1624, 1636, 1643, 1653, 1682, 1711, 1719, 1748, 1764, and 1811. Each envoy was accompanied by about four to five hundred officials and servants. These were the only fully fledged diplomatic events for most parts of the Edo period.


language. And if this situation continued, it would cause a great impact on Tsushima where its income was heavily relied on the trade with Choson.

The duty of Choson interpreters is to play an important role as officials in maintaining harmonious relationship with Choson. However, I think that the current officials are aging and soon [the short in number of people who can speak Choson] would become a critical issue. This is not the only reason, but there is also a second reason. The time to hire young officials is approaching. Recently the situation had become worse, and the number of chōnin (residence, 町人), who wish to become [an officer such as] Umanori (馬乗り) has decreased. It seems that there is no one who learns Choson language enthusiastically. Also, there is no chōnin (residence, 町人) who are engaged in trade. This is a serious matter. Therefore, by all means, I hope that there will be chōnin in Izuhara striving to learn Choson language. Therefore, if one announces the following message to the people in the town, there would be numerous people wanting and hoping to learn [Choson language]. And then, among the chōnin in the town, select one person who is expert in Choson language and appoint him as a master and order him to teach [Choson language] for full three years in Tsushima. Among the students, employ several people, who seems to be excellent [in Choson language], as trainee.

From: "Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku"

As shown in this document, Hoshū was quite concerned over the decreasing number of the interpreters. He did not only encourage the children of Rokujūnin to learn the language but also encouraged commoners (chōnin).

Furthermore, Hoshū as well as the Tsushima clan did not only want to train interpreters but also educate future officials, as a letter shows, that was sent from the "municipal administrator" (machibugyō, 阜奉行) to officers in Izuhara (敖原) where the school was established:

According to the note mentioned above, there are students withdrew from the program due to their parents’ concern over their children’s future. They assume that their children can only become an interpreter in the future if they have the Choson language skill. [The language skill is not only required for becoming an] interpreter. [It is also required to become a] betsudaikan, or machidaikan. One should not be appointed unless he is competent in Choson language. I am hoping that the parents of these children would acknowledge that there are various jobs available for their children as long as they have the language skill. After completing the three years of trial, [they will be] employed as a trainee interpreter. It should be informed

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53 朝鮮通訳詞之儀八御障蔽之御役ニ付たる切要之役人ニ候務し、唯今にハ功者之者共皆々老人ニ候成、遠からぬ内ニ必全と御用相支へ可申等ニ相見へ候、是にてニ而も無御座、近年時勢 いよろしけらず、馬乗りニ候成り候町人年々減し候得ヘ、自分より朝鮮言葉稽古仕候もの無之、重而御交 易之力ニ彼已仕町人も有之間疏略に相見へ、足亦大切ニ御事ニ存候故、何とぞ府内ニ候有候町人 とも朝鮮言葉ノ候務候に有之度事ニ存候、就夫之ニ候仕候通り町中ニ御用接成候ハ、稽古為 仕候と相顧候もの数多可有御座候と存候、左候ハ、町人之内朝鮮言葉講成もの、一人顧臣ニ御立接 成、丸三年御国ニ前稽古敷仰付、其内にて靜而得力ニ候と相見へ候ものを共三人、四十五人稽古通語 ニ彼接付御事侯、（名略）（"詞稽古之者仕立記録"）
beforehand that any student, who is not being selected, will have to discontinue with their studies.

From: “Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku”

This text also reveals the importance of Choson language knowledge as a precondition to become a domain officer.

To avoid causing any inconvenience, the “municipal administrator” suggests that the language course could be rescheduled if it overlaps with other schools’ schedules:

*There will be parents who are concerned about their children losing time to attend a cram school. However, our school will be designed not to create conflicts with the children’s cram school. Our school will be scheduled avoiding the time conflict with the cram school that it would be convenient for students to attend both schools. If there are other concerns involving time, we are willing to reschedule it to 2pm.*

July Machibugyo
To Toshigyoji
From: “Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku”

According to these letters, it is clear that Hoshu and the Tsushima clan were putting much effort to gather as many students as possible and secure an effective education.

The Establishment of the Choson Language School

The Choson Language School founded by the Tsushima-han was established on September 1, 1727. Prior to the opening, Amenomori Hoshu and Tsushima officers engaged in ensuring the proper location and employment of teachers.

Tsushima-han had given the permission to use a hall of a temple in Izuhara as a classroom. Tsushima-han was responsible to administrate the school, including the expenses with teachers’ salary, replacement of tatami (twenty-one times per year), and management of other services. Nii Bunkichi was appointed as a teacher and Tsuwazaki Tokuemon served as his assistant. Both teacher and his assistant gave daily lessons and scheduled a monthly examination after discussing it with other official interpreters, the o-tsujii and hon-tsujii. The results of these examinations were reported to Hoshu for validation.

Prior to the opening of the school, the people in charge made an announcement to the residents of Izuhara to gather the applicants:

54 (“省略）右書付之内、御断申候も給差免といたし候へ、此度之御試しひとへに通詞御仕立之御 注意計と存候へ、子母を通詞にいたし候事相願不申候も共へ、稽古為仕可申と八五間就候候故通詞而已二而無之、重更別交代又は町代官三教召仕候等も朝鮮言葉不遲退二候而八御用二相立不申候へ、右之通之被仰付候との事続々合言候、子母授る者之分八稽古為仕候様二有之度存候而之事二御座候御事、(省略)”（词稽古之者仕立記録”）

55 “今手書御奉じ若者每日就候へかよへせ候付、朝鮮言葉稽古場二出候者我農か者倭候と存候事も可之有之後、朝鮮言葉稽古場之方ハ毎日暫時之事るべく候間、手習ニかよ及び候支ニ者催成間敷候、夫ともに稽古敷候も侯へ、追之者朝鮮言葉稽古之方ハハツニ被仰けまも可有之候、此段明可被申言候以上、
七月 町奉行年行事様中（“词稽古之者仕立記録”）
Announcement [to residents in Izuhara]
For training the students to become Choson language interpreters, the Tsushima-han is giving an order to the teachers.
For the trial, the selected Rokujunin merchants’ children, will be learning Choson language for three years [in Tsushima]. Among them, students who are unsuccessful [in their studies], ill or who has other problems will be withdrawn [from the program]. We shall select the students who seem competent [in their studies] and send them to Choson as a trainee interpreter. If you have children between the ages of 12 to 15, and want your children to join this program, you may apply by giving your children’s name and year of birth within next month.

Month Day Machibugyō
From: "Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku" 56

However, admission was only granted to children of Rokujunin group members. According to the announcement, applicants must be between the ages of twelve to fifteen. They were requested to learn Choson language in Tsushima for three years, before some of the excellent students would be sent to Waegwan to work as trainee interpreters. The application was closed in the following month. The total number of students admitted to the program was thirty-four. Later in the same year, five children including Sago Kamensuke (Age 14) and Tomotani Shinjuro (Age 13) joined the program. 57 However, Kawauchi Shoshich’s son, Kawauchi Fujiyoshi (Age 13), also applied for the program but was rejected, because Kawauchi Shôshichi was not a member of the Rokujunin.

Shôshichi  the First born
13-year old  Kawauchi Fujiyoshi
This person applied for the program. Because this program is for the children of Rokujunin that, it would be difficult to allow him to join this course.
Please inform this result to the person mentioned above. Also inform this to machibugyō, Hirata Gengōjirō and Amenomori Tōgorō.
From: "Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku" 58

56 町中へ御請成らられ候教 耳則通御詔書にて成られ候に付き、上より、其の頃これを仰げ付けられる、六十人子共の内、先試のために、御国にて丸三年籍古致させ、其の内、不勝能に候か、或は病身、又は、外の変えこれ有り御断り申し上げ候もののは差し発され、よいは御用に相立ち申すべきと相見える、其の身も願い候もは御断かなれ候て、籍古通じ仰せ付けられ羽族へ差し渡さるべくとの事に候間、十二三より十四五までの子供願いに存じ候もの、其の名、ならびに年付いた来月何日までの内、町奉行方へ申し出ずべく候、
以上
月 日 町奉行’（‘詞籍古之者仕立記録’)’
57 Other three students were Hashibe Genshichi (Age 9), Kuritani Fujinotō (Age 9), and Kaneko Sen’gorō (Age 10).
58 町中へ御請成らられ候教

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Among the thirty-nine students, there were two at the age of nine, three at the age of ten, three were at eleven, seven were at twelve, ten were at the age of thirteen, seven at the age of fourteen, five at the age of fifteen, one student was at sixteen and another seventeen years old. Nineteen of them were the eldest sons (or successors), fifteen were second sons, one of them was a third-born son, three were described as “brother” and one of them was a stepson. It can be said that Chosŏn language was important for families to succeed in their business.

(1) Curriculum
According to Chŏng Seung-hye’s research on the Chosŏn Language School, the daily timetable was as follows:

![Table 5] Daily Schedule of the Chosŏn Language School\(^{59}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Contents of the Class</th>
<th>Time (converted from the Japanese time system)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 am ~ 10 am</td>
<td>Preview</td>
<td>Review and conversation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 am ~ 11 am</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Reading and composition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 am ~ 12 pm</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 pm ~ 3 pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>30 minutes of break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Lesson</td>
<td>Learn the new lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before lunch break, there were three classes for reviewing, reading and composition, and practice conversation. After lunch, students spent two-and-half hours to learn new lessons. Chŏng also gives detailed information on the syllabus.

![Table 6] The Syllabus\(^{60}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Methods and Contents of the Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>(1). Preparation for communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. to learn the correct grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. to learn the correct pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. to memorize basic level of vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. to repeat important expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. to practice Chosŏn letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{59}\) This table is based on Chŏng’s untitled table. See Chŏng 2006b: 45.

\(^{60}\) This table is based on Chŏng’s untitled table. See Chŏng 2006b: 45-46.
Amenomori Hōshū’s Chosŏn Language School in Tsushima

There is much emphasis on learning and improving communication skill. The ultimate goal of learning was to communicate well with Chosŏn officials when they were involved with trade or the Chosŏn Envoy. Therefore, there was an emphasis on teaching custom and culture of Chosŏn.

(2) Evaluation

The evaluation of students was made based on the result of monthly exams and daily attendance. In case of absence 10 points were deducted, except on the case of illness. If a student did not take the required examinations, 30 points were deducted. These points were deducted from the total points of the exam (exam results - absent days = final points). Students who achieved the high scores were granted rewards.

【Table 7】The Results of the Course\(^{62}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total Points from the Exam</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>Absence from the Exam</th>
<th>Final Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Hanada Jugoro</td>
<td>3510</td>
<td>23 days</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Abiru Sukeichi</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>34 days</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{62}\) This table is based on Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku.

\(^{61}\) Sato Rokunosuke was absent from the exam once, yet he got 60 points deducted. It might have been an error on calculation.
During the three-year long program Hanada Jugorō and Abiru Sukeichi received the highest points. But there were other successful students too:

**Table 8** Rewards in the Chosŏn Language School (Course I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Rewards</th>
<th>Honoured students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>3000 points above</td>
<td>Cotton 2 hiki (正), 100 ta (単), paper 2 soku (束), brush 5 hon (本)</td>
<td>Hanada Jugorō, Abiru Sukeichi, Haruta Jisuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>2000 points above</td>
<td>Cotton 2 hiki 100 ta, paper 1 soku, brush 3 hon</td>
<td>Ide Kinjuro, Hashibe Genkichi, Takata Ikunojō, Sago Rikichi, Satō Rokunosuke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63 This table is based on *Kotoba keiko no mono shitate kiroku*. 

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Nineteen students were rewarded; among which three students were rewarded for ranking the 1st place. Five students ranked the 2nd place. Three students were ranked the 3rd place, two students were placed the 4th, and six students placed the 5th. The school did not only praise the ones who achieved the best scores, but also encouraged the ones who put much effort in learning such as Kuritani Fujinojō. Kuritani joined the program late, but due to his hard work, he was rewarded by placing the 5th rank.

After the program, some students continued studying. Due to the limited numbers of sources, it is difficult to know in details, but Table 8 shows the aftermath of these students.

Out of thirty-nine students, who were enrolled to the Chosŏn Language School, three withdrew from the program and another two died from illness. Twenty students were enrolled to the second course. Out of thirty-nine, fourteen students received the permit to go to Waegwan. Seven students eventually became professional interpreters.

It is interesting to note that Hanada, who achieved the highest results in his examination, did not become an interpreter. Out of twenty people, who had received awards, only four became interpreters. Due to the lack of source material, it is difficult to know what other occupations were available to these talented young people. However, it can be assumed that there were other ways of making a living using one’s language skills. This underlines Tsushima’s interest toward Chosŏn and the importance of its relation with Chosŏn.
Conclusion
As one of Japan’s windows to the outside world, Tsushima played a vital role to connect Chosŏn and Japan. This study gives a detailed description of the Chosŏn language school in Tsushima and the syllabus of its educational program.

In the 1700s, a Confucian scholar, Amenomori Hoshū, was concerned over the decreasing the number of people who were capable of speaking the Chosŏn language. He made two attempts to stop this trend. First he selected ten students for an intensive training at the Ch’oryang Waegwan, the Tsushima trading post in the Korean harbor city Pusan. Hereupon he established an institution specialized in Chosŏn language education. His three-year long program was funded by the Tsushima clan. According to the existing primary sources, this school had a well organized program. Its aim was not only the provision of mere language skills but also the education of gifted young men who would be able to understand both countries’ culture and customs. As a result, out of thirty-nine students who had joined the program, only seven students became professional interpreters. Obviously there were other occupations where Chosŏn language skills could be used. This school was one of the important contributions of the Tsushima clan to creating better relations and mutual understanding between Chosŏn and Japan.

GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amenomori Hoshū</td>
<td>阿伊山送屋</td>
<td>阿伊山送屋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenomori Togoro</td>
<td>阿伊山送屋</td>
<td>阿伊山送屋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dejima</td>
<td>出島</td>
<td>出島</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edogawabashi</td>
<td>豊川</td>
<td>豊川</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fune-no-baika</td>
<td>船の売買権</td>
<td>船的貿易</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genroku</td>
<td>元禄時代</td>
<td>元禄時代</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosendaenboku</td>
<td>御免物貿易</td>
<td>御免物貿易</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hachinin-tsuiji</td>
<td>八人通詞</td>
<td>八人通詞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon-tsuji</td>
<td>本通詞</td>
<td>本通詞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyo</td>
<td>邑</td>
<td>邑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izuhara</td>
<td>色原</td>
<td>色原</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji-nan</td>
<td>次男</td>
<td>次男</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaesi</td>
<td>関市</td>
<td>関市</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaijyou-kukeiken</td>
<td>海上交易権</td>
<td>海上交易権</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan’galsimnayo</td>
<td>韓学者生用帳</td>
<td>韓学者生用帳</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan’gosatsu</td>
<td>韓語概要</td>
<td>韓語概要</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiko-satsu</td>
<td>稽古礼</td>
<td>稽古礼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keiko-tsuiji</td>
<td>稽古通詞</td>
<td>稽古通詞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin</td>
<td>斤</td>
<td>斤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komun</td>
<td>古文</td>
<td>古文</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotobaketsu</td>
<td>詞稽古之者仕立記録</td>
<td>詞稽古之者仕立記録</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyorinsuji</td>
<td>花廻須知</td>
<td>花廻須知</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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