

“Traditional Knowledge” and “Chinese Traditional Medicine” concerning ABS :Political Mistraslation by Chinese Government and Japanese Government

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Abstract : The Chinese official translation "Chinese traditional medicine" often contains the medical knowledge of ethnic minorities. The Japanese translation of the word traditional knowledge by the Japanese government is different from what Yanagita Kunio called densho, lacking an important connotation of it. We must consider the standard of a concept of traditional knowledge for coexistence.

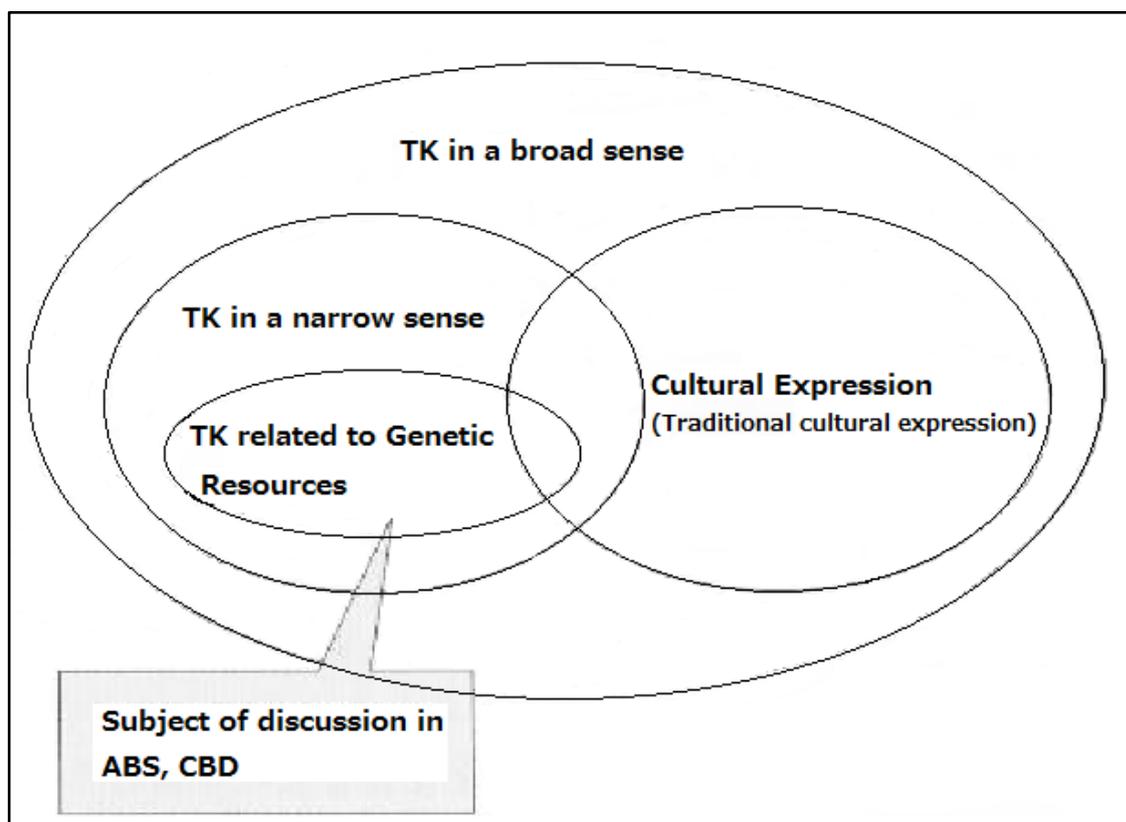
Key words : ABS, CBD, Traditional Knowledge, Chinese Traditional Medicine, Folkore

I Introduction “Traditional knowledge” and “Folklore” in Nagoya Protocol

Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing (ABS) became fully applicable on 12 October 2015. Chinese Government (P.R.C.) agreed with Nagoya Protcol last year. Japanese Government is discussing civil law now. This ABS is for the rights of Access and use of genetic resources and related traditional knowledge of “indigeneous people” or “local community”.

In 2000, I took part in the International Conference of Hani-Akha Culture held in Sipsongpanna (Xishuangbanna), Yunnan Province, China. Two books about traditional medical herbs of Hani-Akha minority group in China were published in China. I examined these two books for 3 years comparing with Akha herbs in Thailand and at my own fieldwork in Laos and China [17]. The result is that these are fake books. These book are only tranlation of Han Chinese classic books, it is not Hani-Akha traditional knowledge[[13], [6],[11],[9]: 429-460]. Chinese government calls Chinese nation’s traditional knowledge including minorities “Chinese traditional medicine”.

Figure 1 Conceptual diagram on "Traditional Knowledge"



[[3]:196 tsl.by Inamura]

At the discussion of international organizations such as WIPO, in recent years the word "folklore" has a strong tendency to be changed to "cultural expression" [Figure 1].

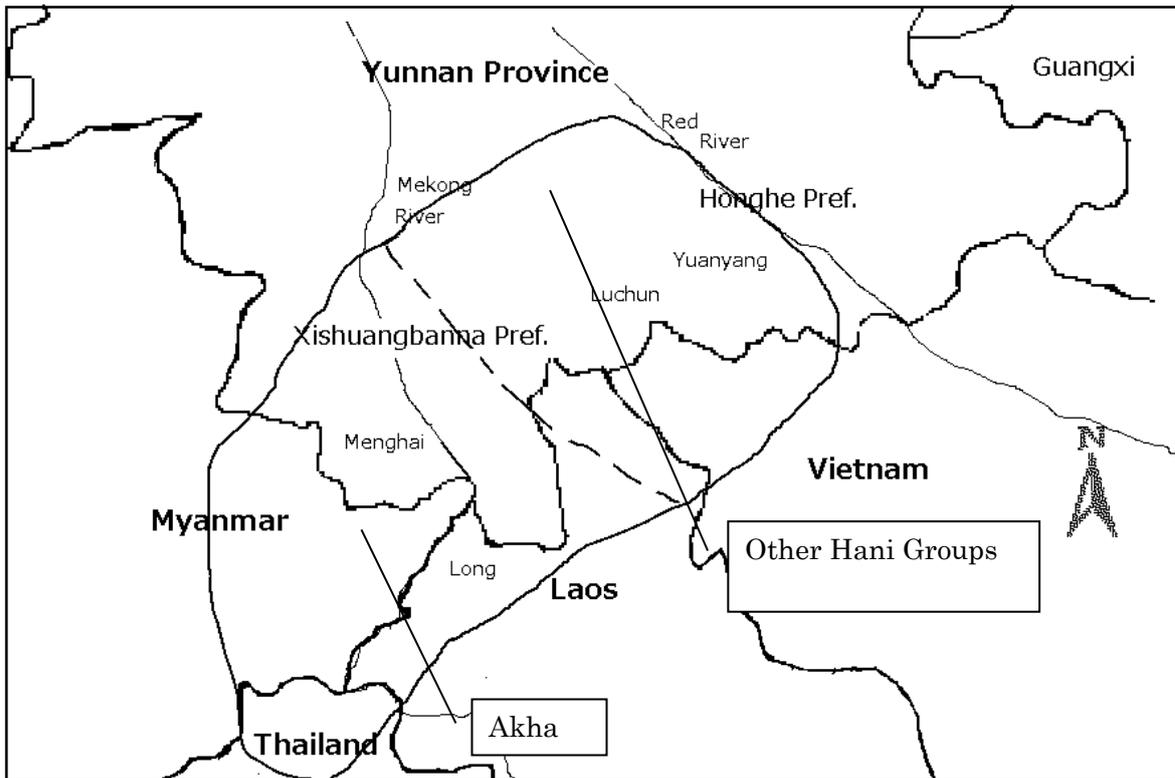
Although the international definition of "traditional knowledge" has not been agreed yet, the agreement is being formed for the definition of "cultural expression" [Tanoue personal communication 2017]. Any Japanese scholar wanting to know about my whole recent activities, please refer to ([14], [15]).

II Mistranslation: "Chinese traditional medicine"

"Hani-Akha" is the name given by a scholar, about 2.3 million, Tibetan-Burmese languages speaking people, about 1.7 million people in China, about 108,000 in Laos, including Hani and Akha, about 400,000 (Akha) in Myanmar, 24,000 (most of them Hani) in Vietnam, about 60,000 (Akha) in Thailand. Hani tribe and Akha tribe certainly share a long oral genealogy [5]. Hani-Akha people have never requested independence as a country, and have lived in the mountains to avoid conflict [10]. In China, this people including other various tribal groups and Akha, is referred to as "Hani (哈尼) ethnic group" or "Hani nationality" [Map 1]. Akha was

politically incorporated as a subgroup of the Hani ethnic group due to the establishment of "Hani Autonomous Region" of the official Hani ethnic group in December 1953 [7].

Map 1 Distribution of Hani and Akha



Whether or not their "ethno-medicine" can be considered legally in systematic ethno-medical science is controversial in China, there is a possibility that the Chinese government that participated in ABS could base this on. Similar cases can be seen in ethnic medical books of Wa and Lisu ethnic groups. It will claim the occupation of "traditional knowledge" was even more ethnic minorities to the nominal in the Xi Jinping regime that emphasizes "the Unity of a Chinese nation" .

However, in a truth sense, ethno-medical survey of Akha was conducted by Akha's NGO in Thailand, and should not distribute profits to China [[11], also see [1]].

Research results by Anderson in Thailand and Myanmar, Akha has a very unique traditional herbal knowledge among the six hilltribes in northern Thailand. Among 620 species of medicinal herbs recorded in the ethno-botanical study of Anderson, there are 248 species that Akha can use, 131 of which are used solely by Akha, 106 species were common knowledge between Akha and other hilltribes.

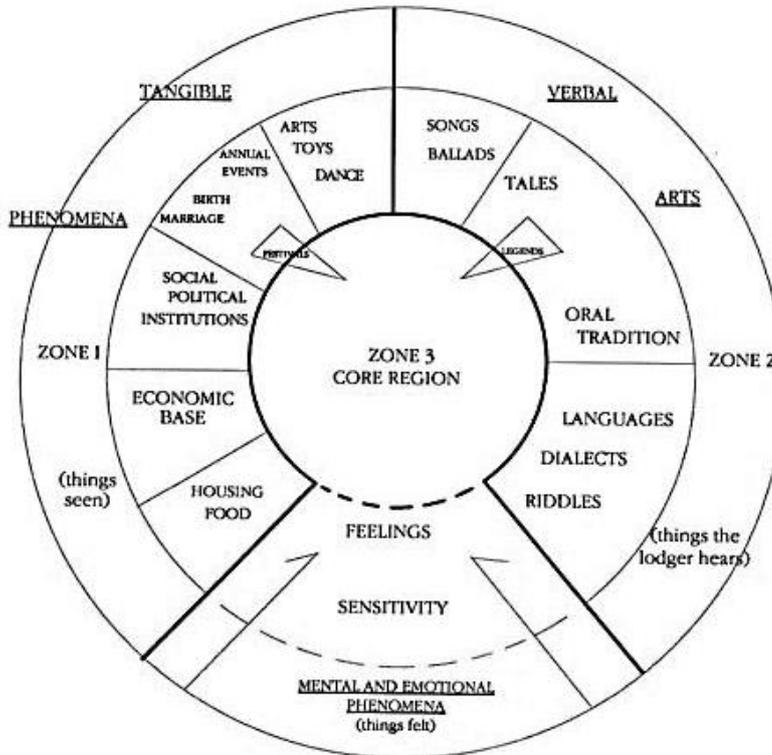
514 species described in two books published in China will be plant species data of "official Hani medicine" [[2], [4]]. There are only 82 species of medicinal herbs that you can admit that Anderson's description and medicinal effect are identical. About 60 kinds out of 82 kinds were considered to be the same as the description of "Han Chinese Classical medicine" [20]. Anderson's description and 514 kinds of data of "official Hani" are consistent with the scientific name of plants in 40 species. There is only one type that perfectly matches Anderson's description, including one that can be said to be nearly identical. None of them are coincident about usage. When you counted with symptoms, there are 31 symptoms of total symptoms that Anderson had medicinal effect in 82 species including subspecies/approximate species. Among them, symptoms not described in the second book are 302 symptoms, and 82.5% are not consistent with the rate. Symptoms of 40 kinds of symptoms completely matching the plant scientific name Among the 182 symptoms, symptoms not found in "official Hani" of China are symptoms of 153, 84.1% of which do not coincide.

In China, which had taken "one child policy", the aging of the population could be predicted sufficiently around 2000. And at that time China began to investigate "Chinese materia medica resource survey" nationwide. In China today, huge money is moving in such "Chinese medicine", it is not a small problem. In today's international community, many countries debate over global standards, including countries such as Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, etc., which was strongly influenced by "Chinese classic medicine" before the Qing Empire. At the moment, "Han Chinese medicine" tends to be regarded as public domain, but handling "ethnic minority" is often ambiguous in official documents. The phrase "Chinese traditional medicine" is an ambiguous mistranslation, it is to be extremely careful.

III Mistranslation: Japanese "Tradition"

In 1934, Japanese famous scholar Kunio Yanagita translated "tradition" as *Densho* (伝承). Now Japanese government translates "traditional knowledge" as *Dento teki Chishiki* (伝統的知識). In these days *Densho* and *Dento* are different categories. Roughly speaking, *Densho* means "folklore". In the discussion of ABS, folklore is excluded from traditional knowledge. The Philippines has already implemented ABS civil law since 1995 and I would like to discuss this issue.

Figure 2 3 Zones in Yanagita Approach to Japanese Tradition



(Original title: "3 Zones in Yanagita Folklore Approach to the Essence of Japanese Culture"[19]:38)

Yanagita is generally called a folklorist in Japan, but I consider him as an anthropologist of Japanese commoner's culture [[12], [16]]. Returning to Yanagita's original argument, "*Densho*" was the whole figure 2, not only folklore (Zone 2). Translation of tradition as "*Dento*" can be said to be a mistranslation from our point of view [13]. For a long time, Japanese folklorists are trying to equate "les traditions populaires"(popular tradition) and folklore, *Densho* was dwarfed like the same as folklore. I criticized this point at the Japanese Folklore Society but folklorists did not accept my argument [8]. The folklorists tried to deny that the concept of folklore was obsolete in order to preserve their sinking academic position. We appealed to the Japanese government to add a cultural anthropologist, not a folklorist, to an advisory body on the definition of "traditional knowledge" [18].

"*Dento*" is a fixed and political concept. *Dento* is a high culture, it is an image that it is protected by government and municipalities and can not be changed. The word *Densho* evokes images that are dynamic and fragile but linked to past groups and generations. It is closer to the original sense of tradition. That is to hand over past knowledge and skills to future generations. We have studied this connection from generation to generation, and should continue to study as intellectual property.

IV Coexistence and prosperity of Asia

Trying to legally protect traditional knowledge of indigenous people is truly justice. It is extremely important for the peaceful coexistence and prosperity of Asia. Today's Chinese military expansionism and economic strategy have become a threat that has great influence on neighboring countries like the Philippines and Japan.

In Okinawa, we held a symposium on this subject with legal experts specializing in intellectual property law [18]. Okinawans/Ryukyuan are the areas of people receiving recommendations from the United Nations' committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that they should be "indigenous".

For example, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry showed the standard of 100 years for the designation of traditional crafts in Okinawa called "Haeburu Hanaori" (Haeburu textile) which was recently designated as "National Traditional Craft". The local people carefully investigated which women inherited from which woman and succeeded in designation.

Documents are important as evidence for such proof, but Hani-Akha has no such documents. Even so, if we do not take even document-centricism, we can find evidence of considerable accuracy by comparative studies of genealogies if their abundant oral tradition over 1000 years.[5]. This point is another viewpoint of "Oral tradition".

"Popular Tradition research" was started by Kunio Yanagita and cultural anthropology have left enormous data on such traditional knowledge. What we scientists can do for coexistence in Asia now is to define this concept well. It is very difficult to define the concept of tradition such as years, generations, reproducibility, name, scale etc. Globalization and nationalization are intermingled with a furious momentum, however it is the time when we have to discuss as scientists.

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