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Works in Dialectology by Reverend Willem A. Grootaers

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Introduction

A high level of the Dutch dialectology has been often pointed out at the international dialectology conferences. Such assessment has been already established in early twentieth century. In Japan, we were lucky as the Dutch dialectology were directly imported via Reverend Grootaers shortly after the Second World War. This short report is intended to introduce the Dutch dialects researches through findings from my recent visit to the birthplace of Reverend Grootaers.

Why I visited the birthplace

Three articles happened to be published about Reverend Grootaers (Willem A. Grootaers, 1911-1999) in commemoration of the one-hundredth year since his birth: Sawaki (2011, Japanese), Inoue (2011, English) and Auwera (2011, Dutch). The latter two are available in the internet. Grootaers (1999) also includes the biography of Reverend Grootaers. Many scholars directly received lectures from Reverend Grootaers. Particularly at Tokyo Metropolitan University and Sophia University, he nurtured prominent researchers. I heard that he was able to resume contact with his Chinese students after the Reform and Liberation Policy was implemented in China.

In this report, I provide the new findings from my visit to the birthplace of Reverend Grootaers during August 7-9, 2014 (After returning to Japan, I found from the photo of the tombstone taken by Naoya Tsuzome that August 9 was the fifteenth anniversary of Reverend Grootaers' death in 1999). People to appear below are listed in the linguistic family tree on page 24 of "*Soredemo Yappari Nihonjin Ni Naritai (Nevertheless I Want to Become a Japanese)*" (Grootaers, 1999). Signs/numbers in the book are added as reference. They are: Professor Ludovic Grootaers, the father of Reverend Grootaers; Reverend Willem A. Grootaers himself; his younger brother Professor Jan Grootaers (F, born in 1921); and his nephew Mr. Thomas Grootaers (No. 25).

My relationship with them started after I received an email from another family member (No. 22, resident in the U.S.) inquiring about the grave. I planned to visit Leuven in Belgium again, taking an opportunity to attend METHODS XV, an international dialectology conference held in the Netherlands. At the international

symposium in 2002, I met with the staff of Leuven University, but I was only able to obtain the superficial information. This time, I was able to meet with Mr. Thomas Grootaers who lives in Leuven and obtain the valuable information from him. Mr. Thomas Grootaers kindly spent his time during much of my three-day stay in Leuven and gave me the various information, including scanned copies of old photos. He has inherited the same superior language ability with Reverend Grootaers (and his father Prof. Ludovic Grootaers). He also shared a sense of humor with Reverend Grootaers, as I enjoyed conversation with him.

Birthplace of Reverend Willem A. Grootaers

Reverend Grootaers' birthplace is located at 162 Naamsesteeweg (Heverlee village) in the south of Leuven. It is a three-story building along the street which extends from the old city walls to the south (Photo 1). Its neighbor on the right is a pharmacy which looks renovated. A building on the left is marked "1901". After Prof. Ludovic Grootaers (1885-1956) died, the house was sold by his children, and had been used as a Chinese restaurant which was later closed. Now, no one lives in the house, and it is not clear who owns it. As there are Chinese plates in the show window and a neon sign name board remains, I may think that the restaurant is still open when I come the other day. According to Thomas Grootaers the white wall and red pillars were painted later in the Chinese style. The house faces a wide street which connects Leuven with Namur, starting from the old Namur Gate to the south. Old buildings are kept in the surrounding area and all use the ground floor (zero floor in European terms) as shops. I worried that the street had been busy and noisy. I heard that there was a large backyard, but I was not able to see it. (I heard that Prof. Ludovic Grootaers owned another oceanfront house which was used by his children as a vacation house.)

Reverend Grootaers was born in this house and spent his youth. I heard from Prof. Shibata that Reverend Grootaers told that books of Prof. Ludovic Grootaers had even occupied the kitchen, and therefore, Japanese houses were not only houses that were tightⁱ. I also heard that Reverend Grootaers helped his father to develop the linguistic map in this house and went to the university to take lessons. I wanted to see inside, but could not do so, as the house was vacant and owned by someone else.

I wanted to put a copper plate at the frontⁱⁱ with an inscription saying "Ludovic Grootaers and his family lived here", but the house was owned by someone else. I even wanted to buy out the house and make it a small museum. When I said so, Mr. Thomas Grootaers said, "Why not buying it out and living here." When I thought for a moment and said solemnly, "I will buy it by part of my property", then he burst out laughing. It

seemed that few hours had been enough for him to recognize that I did not have so much money. I had no idea about the price at that time, but I later checked the ad of the real estate company and estimated the price to be around 60 million Japanese yen. It seemed not particularly expensive, compared with other houses for sale.

Ludovic Grootaers, Professor at Leuven University (1885-1956)

I reconfirmed during this trip that Ludovic Grootaers was a great master, and can be said to be a "father", of the Belgian dialectology. He established the Dialect Research Center as a professor at Leuven University and nurtured many scholars, many of which would have become prominent researchers of the Dutch dialectology. A tradition of the dialect research was succeeded by the next generation including Sever Pop, who started an international dialect conference, but have not persisted. The Center was later closed due to an organizational change in the university. In the linguistics field, Prof. Dirk Geeraerts, Prof. Grondelaers (he has now moved to another university) and Dr. Benedikt Szmrecsanyi are playing an active role. According to Dr. Jan Grootaers, a younger brother, the entire 4th floor of the current Linguistic Center used to be the Dialect Research Center, but now it is consisted of classrooms and the office. When I visited the office and asked staff there if they remember that the Dialect Research Center was there about a hundred years ago, they said of "course not" in smile. It seemed that they had never heard of the existence of such facility.

Prof. Jan Grootaers (1921-)

Prof. Jan Grootaers, a younger brother of Reverend Grootaers is doing well. He is the father of Mr. Thomas Grootaers, who proposed to introduce him to me. We visited Jan Grootaers in his house in a suburb of Brussels. At age 92, he lives alone and continues research, writing and publication (Photo 2). He is a theologian and philologist, and is said to have played a dual role as a Professor at the Leuven University and the Head of the Library of the Belgian Parliament. The fact that in 2011 a Library room was dedicated to his work at the Faculty of Theology indicates his great works. He said that every time when a child moved out of the house for marriage or other reason, the room became a book storeroom and now all rooms were full of books.

He also said that there was a railway track in front of the birthplace in Heverlee in the past, and prior to that was a horse car trail. However, he said that Prof. Ludovic Grootaers had walked to the university.

He talked about a story at the time of the conferment ceremony for Willem A. Grootaers in Japan. He came to Japan and escorted his older brother as a Catholic

priest to the Imperial Palace, but was not allowed to attend the ceremony. He stayed in the bus during the ceremony. Mr. Thomas Grootaers said, "Willem said that in his letters a spouse was allowed to attend the ceremony." Then Mr. Jan Grootaers said, "I should have prepared a wig." It seemed that Reverend Willem A. Grootaers shared a sense of humor with most of the family members. His nephew, Thomas Grootaers also loved joking.

Mr. Jan Grootaers kindly gave me an unobtainable book, as he had two. The book titled "*Album L. Grootaers*" is a commemorative collection of works when Prof. Ludovic Grootaers was sixty five years old, discussing the relationship between the dialectology and neighboring academia. Authors include those whose articles I read during my school days. I felt keenly how I have been influenced by the Dutch dialectology through Reverend Grootaers and Prof. Shibata. In the forewords of the book a biography of Prof. Ludovic Grootaers is stated, where a name of Willem A. Grootaers appears as a professor at Peking University in 1950. Reverend Grootaers must have been expected a lot in Belgium as well. When the book was published, Reverend Grootaers had left China after the foundation of the People's Republic of China. He was offered a position as a professor at Leuven University. However, Reverend Grootaers did not accept the offer and came to Japan. I heard that he had considered it his obligation to cast seeds of research in Asia.

Reverend Grootaers' activities in Japan are detailed in papers such as Sawaki (2011), Grootaers et al (1994). In my personal experience, I have never heard Reverend Grootaers saying, "I declined a good post and came to Japan." Partly because of that, Reverend Grootaers' greatness may not be fully appreciated. Luckily, his works on the Japanese dialectology were published. His works on the Chinese dialectology and folklore were also published.

Learning that Prof. Jan Grootaers had materials relating to Reverend Grootaers in six boxes, Mr. Thomas Grootaers checked the contents. Unpublished articles or drafts were not found. They were mostly personal letters and offprints of the publication. I took a boxful of them, such as copies and offprints of articles which were considered better used in Japan than left in Belgium. Among them scrap books contained news articles which introduced books and media interviews of Reverend Grootaers. They reveal activities of Reverend Grootaers in those days which are difficult to be traced back now.

Materials kept by Mr. Thomas Grootaers

I also visited Mr. Thomas Grootaers. His house is located in the residential area in a

suburb of Leuven. I heard that he bought the oldest farm house (hundreds-year-old) and renovated it. White bricks reminded me of "The Little Street" painted by Johannes Vermeer. An ink impression of the Chinese epigraph ("Ryu-Oh-Doh" = dragon king shrine) (Photo 3) and an ash tray for cigars used by Reverend Grootaers were decorated. He said that in his memory he saw a pile of many ink impressions. They may be valuable materials, as many cultural assets were destroyed during the Great Cultural Revolution. However, their whereabouts now were unknown.

I saw a scarecrow portrayed on a tray on the table. The design was quite similar to an artwork used as one of research items in the field survey of the Linguistic Atlas of Japan. Mr. Thomas Grootaers was not sure, but I determined it as a personal memento of Reverend Grootaers.

I heard that a certificate of honorary doctorate from Leuven University have also been stored. I have believed Reverend Grootaers' story when he was awarded PhD that a certificate was made of a parchment, but Mr. Thomas Grootaers said that he was joking and it was just a paper.

"Linguistic Atlas of Northern and Southern Netherlands" (1953) by Prof. Ludovic Grootaers was also kept (Photo 4). It is a dialect atlas across the Netherlands and Belgium. A piece of paper was inserted in the first page, on which a presentation theme was written in Japanese with a felt pen. I guessed that Reverend Grootaers introduced the book in Japan shortly after it was published. As it was not necessarily written in a good hand but readable, I determined that it was not written by Reverend Grootaers himself. It can't be said that Reverend Grootaers wrote in good hand. I heard that Takeshi Shibata, Munemasa Tokugawa and Yoshio Mase who participated in the joint surveys of the "Linguistic Atlas of Itoigawa" could not sometimes read the pronunciation symbols. It is said that even Reverend Grootaers could not sometime read them.

I brought three dialect maps of "snail" from the Linguistic Atlas of Japan stored in National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics. They were gladly accepted. There was a similarity in how to use symbols, indicating that Japanese linguistic geography has succeeded the tradition of the Dutch linguistic geography.

Personality of Mr. Thomas Grootaers

Mr. Thomas Grootaers manages a computer software company. According to him, he is specialized in translation between different computer programs (protocols), and when he looks at a program he is able to speculate what it is for. He is engaged in development of the most recent area in the city adjacent to Brussels where EU's major

institutions are located. He modestly said, "I am not in line with the academic family as Willem was." I am sure that he has inherited language ability, as he speaks Dutch, French, English, as well as German, Spanish and a little Arabic. If the computer languages are added, as he captures the future linguistic situation, he may have the best language ability among the family. It can be said that he actually keeps the tradition from his grandfather, Ludovic Grootaers, as he was educated at Leuven University and has lived in Leuven thereafter.

He has a great gift. He brings back each memory with what year it was, sometimes with date. He immediately recalls birthdays of uncles and aunts (it may not be a surprise, and not recalling them like me may be an exception). Some of his (i.e. Reverend Grootaers') family members have much more superior language ability. He told me various episodes. One of his aunts has an ability to quickly pick up and speak foreign languages. One of his nephews moved to Africa with his parents when he was four years old, and started speaking kiShona in few months and played a role as an interpreter for his parents. Some day at a restaurant the boy said that a waiter had an accent. When the parents asked the waiter about it, he proved to be from Malawi. It was a story that even young boy had such an ability.

Mr. Thomas Grootaers said, "I saw "Emperor's Medal" on a coffin in snapshots taken at the funeral of Willem. I would like to know its whereabouts." I got a mission to search it. I wonder if Catholic religious order, Scheut Missions-CICM (Junshin-kai in Japanese, headquarters at Honcho 68, Himeji) has something. I have confirmed that the grave is in "Junshin Home" at Nibuno in Himeji city, which can be broadly seen by Google maps. I consider visiting the grave at some occasion as a former student. It seemed that Reverend Grootaers' family wanted to visit the grave but they were too busy.

Episodes of Reverend Willem A. Grootaers

Reverend Grootaers was sometimes seen by his family from a different aspect. Reverend Grootaers went cycling every summer and sent a letter with photos to brothers at home. As those photos were always taken with women, the family speculated that he wanted to brag about how popular he was among women. He felt a calling at twelve years of age and decided to become a priest. He remained single, but he continued to be popular among women.

I also heard an episode at Matsubara Catholic Church at Meidai-mae in Tokyo where he ended his life. In his late days he was told by a doctor to stop drinking his favorite whiskey. Even so, he did not stop drinking whiskey, and was reproached by a fellow priest for it. After thinking hard, he asked a woman working in the kitchen to secretly

buy whiskey and keep a bottle. After drinking whiskey in his room, he returned an empty bottle to the woman. As empty bottles piled up in the kitchen, it was an open secret that Reverend Grootaers had whiskey.

Here is another episode. When Thomas Grootaers visited Japan, Reverend Grootaers took him to the China Town in Yokohama. On a train back late at night, a drunken man stood in front of them, hanging on a strap and hobbling with something wrapped in paper in his hand. Thomas Grootaers felt sorry and gave up his seat to him. The drunken man thanked him, handed over the wrap, and fell asleep. After arriving at the station, they opened the wrap and found Chinese buns. They ate buns in the following morning, guessing what they were for. That man probably bought his wife buns to make up for being late. As he did not bring them, he should have had a hard time. They ate buns, while imagining the situation.

Reverend Grootaers wrote about his first love in his book "*Soredemo Yappari Nihonjin Ni Naritai (Nevertheless, I want to become a Japanese)*". It was new to Thomas Grootaers. He said regretfully, "If her first name is written, I can find out more details." He also said, "He must have many first loves."

Rediscovery of materials related to the Dutch dialectology

To understand the position of Ludovic and Willem Grootaers in the Dutch dialectology, I interviewed Dr. Ton Goeman, whom I have met at METHODS international conference. Then I heard about the rediscovery of the dialects survey materials which had been considered lost.

Ludovic Grootaers established the Dutch research center and produced a collection of linguistic maps. His successor, Prof. L. Goeman conducted the survey of dialect in the Leuven area as well. The booklet which had been considered lost during the war had been actually kept by another person, who recently contributed it to the city archives. This original material contained the survey items regarding the subjective boundaries of dialects. Articles written in Dutch were translated into English by Dr. Ton Goeman and compiled into a book by Preston.

It seems that there are no undiscovered, unpublished materials relating to Reverend Grootaers. "Emperor's Medal" and many book collections must be kept somewhere in Japan.

Reverend Willem A. Grootaers as "guest" to Japanese dialectology

Several leaders have contributed to the great development of Japanese dialects research after the war. While the analogy of family is used for them (Inoue 2011),

Reverend Grootaers can be positioned as a "guest" to the family. Japanese dialectologists have been already active in sending messages to overseas since 1950s, encouraged by Reverend Grootaers. Japanese researchers were able to obtain the most updated information from overseas and send the domestic information without much economic expense. What was different from the Dutch people staying in Dejima Island of Nagasaki before modernization was that Reverend Grootaers was also engaged in missionary works. Early success in the perceptual dialectology field in Japan along with the Netherlands and a focus on age differences in the linguistic geography are really credited to Reverend Grootaers. The former bore fruits of international researches such as Preston & Long (2002). The latter has developed into "glottogram" which was used for the survey at the Hayakawa Valley in the Itoigawa area, and been expanding across the country.

In the city of Leuven, there were the open-air exhibition and the museum exhibition in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of great fire of Leuven attacked by the German army during the First World War in 1914. It occurred when Reverend Grootaers was three years old. I wondered if his house outside of the old city walls suffered damage. It seemed that Reverend Grootaers did not like Germany so much. I heard that as the destroyed library of Leuven University was one of the oldest in Europe, its reconstruction was supported by donations from around the world. Nine years later in 1923, the library of the University of Tokyo was destroyed by the Great Kanto Earthquake. In the current General Library of the University of Tokyo, books donated from overseas at that time are placed with a stamp indicating such history. Some books I read during school days had such indication. World is narrow. You can find connections in various forms. People exchange human kindness through disaster and recovery, donation and gratitude. There are personal interactions, accesses and feelings behind the academic research.

Next international dialectology conference, METHODS XVI will be held in Tokyo in 2017. I hope to obtain new information by then.

Acknowledgment

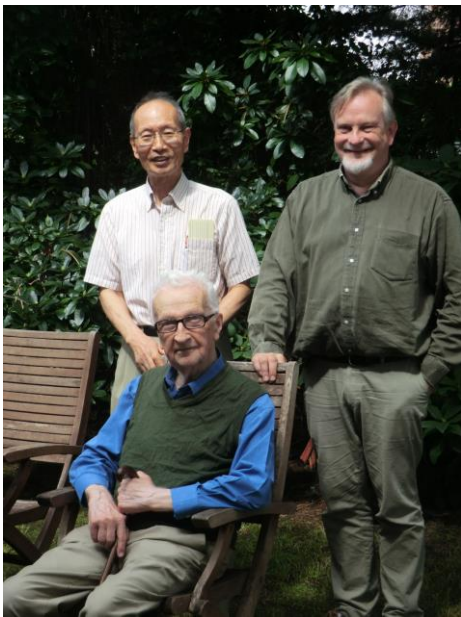
I express special thanks to Mr. Thomas Grootaers and Dr. Jan Grootaers, Ton Goeman who are referenced in this article, as well as contribution by Mr. Naoya Tsuzome. This English translation was provided by goodwill of Mr Andrés Saldaña who is also a cousin of Reverend Grootaers. This translation was further checked by Mr Thomas Grootaers. The original Japanese version will appear in the special issue of "Hokkaido Hogen Kenkyuukai" (Hokkaido Circle of Dialectology) in 2014.

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(Photo 1) Birthplace of Reverend Willem A. Grootaers



(Photo 2) from the left: Inoue, Prof. Jan Grootaers, Mr. Thomas Grootaers



(Photo 3) Ink impression of the Chinese epigraph (“Ryu-Oh-Doh”)



(Photo 4) Ludovic Grootaers, Dutch Linguistic Atlas

ⁱ However Reverend Grootaers perhaps did not say that the house is three storied (or said that it had the “second floor”).

ⁱⁱ Several days later I found a copper plate in Leiden showing a photo of Japanese emperor and empress talking with residents of the house. If there is owner’s permission there seems to be no problem,