

'frankness') rather than *Freudigkeit* 'joyousness'. But twice in Hebrews he says *Vertrauen* 'trust', and further, he translates the word again with *frei* 'bold'—*frei offenbar* 'straightforward', *frei heraus* 'plainly', *frei öffentlich* 'outspoken, openly'. And in Ephesians 6:19 there is *mit freudigem Auftun meines Mundes* 'the joyous opening of my mouth'. Who would want to blame Luther for such variations? All one can do is to try to emulate his exhaustive use of the riches of our language.

Revision work is always incomplete or piecemeal, not only because it is done by man, but because, with the living flow of the language, after a few decades a new examination of a text will be necessary. However, if the newly established text helps some people to find their way to the Word of God, the work will not have been in vain.

And now one can only say, "Take and read!"

Notes on the Chinese Version of the Bible

Tun-Jou Ku

As a result of studies based upon recent discoveries of ancient manuscripts of the Bible, numerous mistakes have been detected in its Chinese version. The present analysis will, however, not touch these textual inaccuracies, but will rather be limited to mistakes or weaknesses in the form of language used in the translation.

I was never so shocked as when, about twenty years ago, I came across one sentence in the Kuoyü Bible, a version which is still considered to be the best in Chinese, and one for which deep gratitude still is owed. A close translation of the Chinese sentence would be, 'What you *have done*, do quickly' (John 13:27). Of course, the correct translation should be: 'What you *are going to do*, do quickly'. Then I was led by curiosity to jump to another page, where my eye caught another ambiguous line, '... worship the first beast which was dead, wounded and healed' (Rev. 13:12). How could "deadly wound was healed" be translated as 'dead, wounded and healed'? I closed the Bible with a sigh of distress.

Now, as I am working on an important project for a new Chinese Bible concordance and have thus an opportunity to read the Bible carefully, I find many more such mistakes, so many that I feel I must do something about it. Here is an analysis of these mistakes and weaknesses in the Chinese Bible from the viewpoint of the form of language and obvious inaccuracy in rendering.

Such mistakes as we have found may be divided into three groups: (1) mistakes in translation, (2) weaknesses in style, and (3) errors in the choice of words.

Mistakes in Translation

Conspicuous among the first group of mistakes are those consisting of omissions or improper choice of words or characters. For example,

when translating the sentence "... you seek to destroy a city which is a mother in Israel..." (2 Sam. 20:19), the phrase 'a big city of Israel' is used instead of the phrase "a city which is a mother in Israel." The word "big" does not represent fully the meaning of 'mother'. In 1 Kings 7:48, "all the vessels that were in the house of the Lord" is completely omitted. These instances of "free" translation and abridged translation are numerous in the Chinese version of the Bible.

There is another type of loose translation in the Chinese Bible, namely, the substitution of general terms for proper names or specific terms. For example, in 1 Kings 10:11, the word 'ship' is used instead of "navy" as in the King James Version or "fleet" as in the Revised Standard Version. And in 1 Kings 10:15, the phrase "all the kings of Arabia" is translated as 'all the kings of the miscellaneous tribes'.

Another type of poor translation consists in the alteration of the meaning of an original term. While the English Bible says, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread... of the Lord in an unworthy manner" (1 Cor. 11:27), the Chinese Bible says, 'Whoever, therefore, eats the bread... of the Lord *without reason*'. The two phrases are not interchangeable.

The Chinese Bible also suffered from the tendency of literal translation in a number of passages. Here are a few examples: In Lev. 26:16, "I will appoint over you sudden terror," the word "appoint" was translated as *ming ding*, which is a term coined by the Bible translators and appears at least twenty-seven times in the Bible. But the Chinese people, including Chinese Christians, have never accepted this strange expression. *Yen djung* is another unusual expression which is supposed to mean 'approve,' as in 1 Thessalonians 2:4, "but just as we have been *approved* by God." I have never seen or heard of such an expression in our written or spoken Chinese. We properly use *djwen hsu* or *hsu ko* for 'approve'.

When the Bible translators rendered the phrase "before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified" (Gal. 3:1), they put the short phrase "publicly portrayed" into Chinese as *hwoh hwa*, which was a novel expression and died stillborn in the Chinese version. *Hwei djwan* is another queer expression which is supposed to mean 'convert, turn' as in Isaiah 6:10, which says in part, "... lest they... turn, and be healed." Every time the Chinese reader comes across this passage he cannot help making an embarrassing pause at this word *hwei djwan*. There are at least twenty-two other instances of the same expression in the Chinese Bible. But this word of great theological significance can easily be put into a popular Chinese phrase *hwei* ('return') *sin* ('heart') *djwan* ('return') *i* ('mind'), which means exactly 'a return of mind.' The phrase *Hwei sin djwan i* is good Chinese and is used by both the educated and the illiterates in written and spoken language. Why should we put away this appropriate phrase and take the trouble to coin such a new and queer expression as *hwei djwan*? Furthermore, it is not an accepted abbreviated form. If it should be used as such, we can only say that it has "lost its savor."

Weaknesses in Style

The style of the Chinese version of the Bible is poor for three main reasons. In the first place, the literary (or *wen li*) and the popular (or colloquial) elements are put together in an unharmonious way. The following are a few typical examples:

1. Nahum 1:9, "What do you plot against the Lord?" In the Chinese version, the literary rendering of *sheh ho mou* 'what do you plot' in a colloquial interrogative sentence is not smooth at all.

2. Malachi 3:10, "... *pour down* for you an overflowing *blessing*." Here the Bible translators tried to use a literary expression *ching fuh* for 'pour down ... blessing', which is not literary at all. Rather, it is very foreign, something which a person well-versed in Chinese will not use. Furthermore, *ching* 'pour down' in this style does not go well with any part of the sentence.

3. Proverbs 28:21, "To show partiality *is not good*." In the Chinese version, the word *nai wei* is in literary or *wen li* language, and the phrase *puh hao* 'not good' is strictly colloquial. To say *nai wei puh hao* as a continuous, single expression sounds extremely funny to Chinese-speaking people.

In the second place, the style of the Chinese version of the Bible is poor because many words are used in an awkward manner. The following are typical expressions:

1. Genesis 9:12, "... the covenant which I make between you and me... for all future generations." The Chinese translation uses *yung yoh*. The use of the word *yung* for 'perpetual generations' in this case is abrupt and awkward.

2. 1 Corinthians 7:6, "But I speak of this by way of concession, and not of command." While the word *djwen* 'permission' is used properly in the first half of the sentence, the word *ming* 'command' certainly does not fit in the last part of the sentence. While we do say correctly in Chinese *djwen ni mendi* 'by way of permission', there has never been such an expression as *ming ni men di* 'by way of commandment'.

3. 1 Samuel 9:17, "... He it is who shall rule over my people." Here the Chinese translation for "my people," *o di min*, sounds rather queer because the use of the single character *min* 'people' right after the double character *o di* 'my' is not a common Chinese usage. We may say *o di ren* (also meaning 'my people'), but not *o di min*. If we prefer to use the character *ren ming*, we should say *o di ren ming*.

4. Job 28:14, "The deep says, It is not in me." The phrase "not in me" was translated into Chinese as *buh djai o djung*. While *buh djai* 'not' is all right in Chinese, *o djung* 'in me' is not at all natural. It is simply not good Chinese.

5. Isaiah 16:14, "... Those who survive shall be very small and feeble." The Chinese translation for the last part of this sentence is *shen shao wu gi* (*shen shao* for 'very few' and *wu gi* for 'not many'). The phrase as a whole is redundant and, to the Chinese, quite childish.

John 13:27 你所作的快作罷
Rev. 13:12 拜那死傷醫好的頭一個獸

Mistakes in Translation

Lev. 26:16 我必命定驚惶
1 Thess. 2:4 但上帝既然驗中了我們
Gal. 3:1 耶穌基督釘十字架, 已經活畫在你們眼前

Isaiah 6:10 恐怕...回轉過來, 便得醫治

Weaknesses in Style

Nahum 1:9 設何謀攻擊耶和華呢
Malachi 3:10 傾福與你們
Proverbs 28:21 看人的情面, 乃為不好
Gen. 9:12 我與你們...所立的永約
1 Corinth. 7:6 我說這話, 原是准你們的, 不是命你們的
1 Sam. 9:17 他必治理我的民
Job 28:14 滄海說, 不在我中
Isaiah 16:14 餘剩的人, 甚少無幾

Errors in the Choice of Words

相交 v. 團契 貴胄 v. 貴族
大痲瘋 v. 痲瘋 人民 v. 國民
題醒 v. 提醒 題到 v. 提到
極力 v. 竭力

Examples not Mentioned in the Article

Job 36:18 也不可因贖價大就偏行
Psalms 74:2 就是你所贖作雜業支派的
Isaiah 41:4 誰行作成就這事
55:11 在我發他去成就的事上

Habakkuk 1:3 你為何使我看見罪孽
Zephaniah 3:15 那些屬你, 為無大會煩愁

Mt. 6:30 你們這小信的人哪
14:8 女兒被母親所使
17:8 他們舉目不見一人, 只見耶穌在那裏

19:9 凡休妻另娶的, 若不是為淫亂的緣故, 就是犯姦淫了

22:15 就着耶穌的話陷害他

Col. 2:18 不可讓這等人不持定元首
Hebrews 11:35 有婦人得自己的死人復活
Rev. 14:13 他們息了自己的勞苦, 作工的果效也隨着他們

Errors in the Choice of Words

The extensive changes occurring in the Chinese language since the New Thought Movement, the Literary Revolution, the Nationalist Revolution, and the Communist occupation of the mainland of China have made the language of the Chinese Bible outdated to a great extent. For example, the important word "fellowship," which appears four times in the first chapter in the First Letter of John and at least seventeen times in the whole Bible, was translated as *siang giao*, which conveys the idea of 'mutual relations' but does not have the precise meaning of fellowship. There is now a new term, *twan chi*, which has a fuller meaning for "fellowship." This term was first coined by Dr. T. T. Lew, Dean of the School of Theology of Yenching University, and has been gradually adopted by the different Christian bodies and lay institutions. At present it is even used by the Communists for secular purposes.

A modern and popular translation for "noble-man" is *gwei dzuh*. But *gwei djou*, on the other hand, is still used in the Bible, as in the case of Luke 19:12. We also cannot find in the Chinese concordance the word "leprosy" under *ma feng* 'leprosy', but under the word *da* 'great', because leprosy was translated *da ma feng* 'great leprosy'. But *ma feng* is used as a conventional and scientific term.

As to political terms, an important case may be cited here. When the Communists came into power, they divided the people in the country into two classes, *ren min* and *gwoh min*. Formerly, the two terms were practically interchangeable, with, however, the latter having more political significance, more or less like the word *citizen* in English. The Communists reversed the connotations of the two terms and made it clear that the *ren min* are citizens, or the people who have political rights, and that the *gwoh min* are merely subjects, who not only do not enjoy political rights but may also include reactionaries. Of course, the Kouyü Bible still uses *gwoh min* to denote citizens or Christians. This usage occurs at least seventy-three times in the Bible. Are we going to continue to call the Chinese Christians on the mainland *gwoh min*? This is what the Communists would be only too glad to do—quoting the Bible as justification. The potential consequences of this are grave.

The verbal mistakes in the Chinese Bible are by no means infrequent. An important group among them are the so-called "white characters," or corrupted words, which include wrong spelling and wrong usage. These mistakes are especially offensive to Chinese because such words are considered to be the marks under passing grade. They argue: "If one cannot write characters correctly, what else more can we expect of him!" But the Chinese Bible has plenty of these "white characters." For example, the *ti* of *ti sing* that is 'put them in mind', as in Titus 3:1, and the *ti* of *ti dao* that is 'making mention of you', as in Ephesians 1:16, should be a *ti* with a "hand" radical. But the Chinese Bible has used another *ti* with a "page" radical, a form which has appeared at least sixty-three times. One more illustration of the sort is the word meaning "endeavored" as in 1 Thessalonians 2:17, "we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face." This

should be translated as *gih lih* with the character *gih* with a "stand" radical. But the Bible uses a *gih* with a "wood" radical. This is again a perverted word or "white character." This mistake has appeared in the Bible at least eleven times. In short, there are at least forty different "white characters" in the Kuoyü Bible, each multiplying itself from ten to sixty or more times. Certainly, there are too many errors in the pages of Holy Writ.

So much for the "white characters." Now as to the characters used for proper or special names. We find such words as Jesus, Christ, Satan, Jehovah, Messiah, and Chemosh (Judges 11:24) printed consistently without the vertical lines beside such names. These vertical lines are equivalent to the capital letters in English. Besides the omission of the marks of proper or special names, there are, of course, omissions of punctuation, such as the omission of the comma (after the word "arise," Is. 60:1); wrong indications of number of verse (Gen. 21:22 instead of Gen. 21:20); and reversed characters, such as *liang lo to dz* 'two burden mules' in 2 Kings 5:17. The last instance is amusing, as some people have taken it to be a special kind of mule.

These translation problems in the present Chinese Version are by no means exhaustive. They do, however, represent some of the basic difficulties, matters which must be dealt with, and if possible without delay, if the Scriptures are to speak effectively to the Chinese-speaking community.

Language Learning off the Compound

Large missionary compounds are questionable at best from a linguistic and anthropological standpoint because they present a very serious obstacle to the learning which the missionary must do all of his life in order to communicate effectively. However, for initial missionary language learning they are deadly. They foster a "missionary dialect," which the local people attached to the compound will learn much faster than the isolated missionary can learn true native speech. They give the learner little chance to *listen* (that most basic of language skills), to *hear* language as it is used, and to make it a part of himself. They give no opportunity to see the use of language in relation to native life—the only place where it really has any relevance.

Any mission which takes its language learning seriously should give its language students an opportunity for several months in a native village, away from English-speaking people (except possibly other language-learners and the linguist guiding their study). An investment of a few hundred dollars in a very modest home among the people away from the compound (far enough away so that it is something of an effort to come to the compound) will pay important dividends in the language skills of successive inhabitants.