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Some Problems Of Translating Mormon Thought Into Chinese

ROBERT J. MORRIS*

It was Gordon B. Hinckley who once told a group of missionaries in Taiwan never to forget their Chinese, for the Church would need at least twenty mission presidents when it finally spreads across the China mainland. Hopefully, the future will see the Gospel going to all of China, after its period of tutelage in Taiwan and Hong Kong. It is essential that we lay a good foundation now,¹ and one of the most significant challenges of that future is the translation of Mormon thought into Chinese.

Since one of the greatest missionary tools anywhere is the Book of Mormon, I would like to examine some of the translation problems in relation to it and suggest some possible solutions. A thought on the importance of religious writing from an early Christian writer on China, the Reverend John Darrock, seems pertinent to us even now:

Christianity has from its inception owed its progress to the pen. . . . All the great religious systems of China have been built on the foundation of the literature which they created . . . Confucianism and literature have been synonymous terms in China for twenty centuries, but since Christian literature has become generally known, a new sun has arisen on the horizon of the literati.²

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¹*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 4, Number 1, Spring 1969, pp. 41-50.

²The Reverend John Darrock, in Gilbert McIntosh, *Records: China Centenary Missionary Conference*, Shanghai, 1907, Methodist Publishing House, in the section "Christian Literature."

The ideas and opinions that follow are my own, and they are more or less a thought workbook, a casebook of questions that have served as catalysts to my own thinking. They are offered here with the hope that they may give rise to new ideas and further areas of study.³

Translating any thought expressed in one language into another language is not a mechanical process. If it is to be of any real value, translation is rather a thoughtful understanding of the initial expression and a very careful attempt to express that thought in the target language. This concept points out four significant thoughts encountered in translating the Book of Mormon into Chinese:

1. The first edition of any scripture sets the basic tone which readers come to expect and associate with that scripture, and this makes subsequent major changes difficult.
2. The doctrine that "There is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ . . . whereby man can be saved" must be clearly understood.
3. The translated Book of Mormon warnings against civil war pertain to all mankind.
4. The two concepts of "taking away" and "apostasy and divine authority" are essential to the Chinese Saints' understanding and acceptance of the translated Book of Mormon.

To begin with, we need an overview of the translating work. We take a keynote thought from another early Christian writer:

The truth is that very few men are really qualified for this work,—in scholarship, thorough knowledge of the Chinese language, ability to work with others, and freedom from theological hobbies.⁴

Confucius spoke of doing some things as being "like negotiating a deep abyss, or like treading on thin ice."⁵ And certainly anyone who consents to translate an important book into his language, especially if that book is a scripture, is walking on a thin shell of ice above a lake of criticism. Everybody has his own ideas about the translation, but one thing is sure: nobody agrees with the translator!

³See my short story, "A Novitiate For Hu Chan," in *Wye Magazine*, Fall 1968, pp. 4-8, published at Brigham Young University. The youth in Taiwan and Hong Kong are typical only in being untypical. Hybridism is the norm these days. Church membership likewise intensifies this in relation to Chinese culture.

⁴The Reverend A. P. Parker, D. D., Shanghai *China Centenary Missionary Conference* (*op. cit.*), discussing committee translation of scripture.

⁵*The Canon of Filial Piety.*

Scriptural criticism in Taiwan begins with the Bible. Christians say its language is "too high." The Old and New Testaments in general are "very faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts. The New Testament part [uses the] Westcott and Hort [texts]."⁶ The wording is quasi-classical, being specifically a mixture of modern and coined terms couched in classical forms. And that is confusing to some. One father told me in Taipei: "You want something to give your son when he's ordained a deacon for commemoration, and boys and classics don't mix."⁷

In this context the Reverend Parker, writing in 1907, listed three pitfalls which Bible translators encountered, and perhaps we can apply these to the Mormon translator as well today:

1. Literalism, foreignizing and obscuring by adhering too closely to the original text
2. Confucianizing, using classical words and clauses
3. Interpretation, putting explanation in the text instead of exact rendering.⁸

And it is in discussing these points too that most criticism of the Chinese Book of Mormon comes in. "It reads like a thesis," said one American (a former missionary) working on his Chinese Literature Ph.D. at the University of Taiwan. "It is dry, dull, uninteresting. It does not give you a little thrill when you come to passages that move you in English. Not only is it important to know that the Lord said something, but that He said it well." To many people, the Lord's command of Chinese in the Bible and Book of Mormon has been less than adequate.

One reason is transliteration. Chinese proper names have usually three—at the most four—characters. My own name, even though a double surname, still has only three characters: *Ssu T'u I*. But a quick glance at the names in the Book of Mormon and Bible will show that they do not follow Chinese style, and this is a rub to a lot of people. A few names will illustrate: *Li Hai* (Lehi), *Ni Fei* (Nephi), *Yeh Su Chi Tu* (Jesus Christ), *Shih Mi Yüeh Se* (Joseph Smith).

⁶From an aerogram to me from the Bible Societies in Taiwan, P.O. Box 3401, Taipei, April 24, 1968, by the secretary, Mr. Lai P'ing Tung. See their book, *A Chinese Christian History*, (*Chung Kuo Chi Tu Chiao Shih*), published in Taipei.

⁷See my article in *Voice of the Saints*, Volume 8, Number 2, May 1966, Hong Kong, pp. 37-38, for a discussion of the youth in the Church in Taiwan.

⁸See William J. Boone, D.D., *Defense of an Essay*, (Canton: the Chinese Repository, 1850), 170 pp. This is a rebuttal to James Legge on the Term Problem: how to translate *God* into Chinese.

This general question was treated by Yu Kuang Chu, Chairman of the Program of Asian Studies at Skidmore College, New York, when he said:

This pictorial quality of Chinese characters led Fenollosa, writing at the turn of the century, to assert that it added greatly to the visual imagery of Chinese poetry. It was alleged that when a Chinese reader saw the character for "moon," he got not only the idea of moon but actually saw a crescent moon. This view has been discredited now, for it is simply not true. Most of the pictorial characters have changed their forms so drastically that they no longer are pictures. The Chinese reader simply takes each character as a conventionalized symbol of an idea. However, it remains true that the Chinese treat the written character as an artistic design.⁹

With this in mind then, many of us suggest that transliteration of names be done by using, not "any characters at random," but more selectively to connote ideas. Lehi and Nephi should have the same family surname when their names are broken down into syllabic characters. Words with "good" connotations should be used for the "good guys," and vice versa.

A more subtle problem is that of *timbre*. Every writer knows what timbre is, but he can't articulate it for others or effectively teach it.¹⁰ It is the feel, and the feeling, one gets overall when reading or writing a creative piece of work. It is the spirit of the writing, the essence. It is what tingles your spine when you read Doctrine and Covenants 121, or what sobers you in Ecclesiastes, or rings with the clarity of a tuning-fork in John. It is the poetry of prose. But "Poetry is what is lost in translation" said Robert Frost. So how does the translator give a tingle to the Chinese at the same place and for the same reason as the English? Can he indeed? He must try. He is translating a culture, a faith, a background, and an ideology, besides his text. He must be intimate with them all.¹¹

⁹From an article, "Interplay Between Language and Thought in Chinese," originally in *Topic: A Journal of the Liberal Arts*, at Washington and Jefferson College. The book cited is Ernest Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character As a Medium for Poetry*, Ezra Pound, Ed., (City Lights Books, San Francisco, 1968), pp. 40-45. I disagree with Yu Kuang Chu that what Fenollosa says is wrong or discredited. It is not.

¹⁰Pearl S. Buck, *A Bridge for Passing*, (Cardinal, New York, 1963), pb., 184 pp. A lucid insight into how a writer's mind works when writing.

¹¹Marcellus S. Snow, "Translating Mormon Thought," in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 2, Number 2, Summer, 1967, pp. 49-62. See also Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, chapter two dealing with that elusive thing called "style."

There are places where the Oriental translator will be tempted to read more into a text than is actually there, because it is more familiar to him than, say, to Joseph Smith. He will come to the funeral wailers in 3 Nephi 8:23 or the bed mats in Mark 2:9-11, and will recognize something Oriental there, and so emphasize it. His reading about the Mormon family will have a familiar spirit to him from the dust of millenia of Chinese family-ism. So his job is one of balancer, standing between several cultures and many counselors.¹²

The Chinese Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price have not yet been printed, although they have been translated. The Book of Mormon was first issued in Hong Kong in January 1966, and each succeeding edition has seen many corrections in wording and concept, "clarifying the wordings in some instances," as translator Hu Wei I told me in an interview.¹³ He calls them purely *translation* changes, not *doctrine* changes.

Originally he expected much feedback from readers of the first editions to help him in correcting errors. But Chinese restraint interfered in this desire, and the readers remained silent. So what changes have come about have resulted from missionary comments and general grape-vine gleanings. The Chinese Bible has been of little help in this endeavor (as the King James was to Joseph Smith) because it is too often a bad translation.¹⁴

Impinging upon the methods of translation are several current eddies of thought in Chinese literary circles about the writing system itself. It began really with the *Pai Hua* Movement and its major proponent Hu Shih six decades ago, which was to write in the vernacular instead of stilted classical usages.¹⁵ Many scholars in Taiwan and Hong Kong now want to drop the whole system of characters and adopt a phonetic system such as Korea's and Japan's. They have been suppressed by the Taiwan government's "Restore Chinese Culture" line,

¹²Parker, *op. cit.*: "Each might borrow from the other and we might hope for a version as the result which would hit the golden mean."

¹³In *Voice of the Saints*, Volume 8, Number 3, July, 1966, pp. 35-38. This article is the only extant history of the translation of the Chinese Book of Mormon, other than cursory notes in the mission histories.

¹⁴Romans 1:16 is a good example. The Chinese version leaves out the word "Christ" in the first clause entirely.

¹⁵See Hu Shih, *Hu Shih Hsüan Chi*, (Selected Writings of Hu Shih), (World Book Company, Taipei), 55, 163 pp. See also Yale University's study texts of the new simplified characters for their Far Eastern Publications Division. The *People's Daily* newspaper in Peking uses this method.

however. The Chinese Communists have made an attempt to simplify the written characters, and in Taiwan a system of phonetic symbols for sounding out characters has been used, but these have proved limited.

The whole problem is enough to make one wish with Bodhidharma¹⁶ that a man's religion was "not in relying on words or letters." It was the Chinese poet Tu Fu who explained that he wrote so that the least of peasant women could understand him.¹⁷ Translated scripture also needs to speak to all levels.

The relation between Church and language in China is as close as that of the people and the earth. Language is a cult, worshipped for its own intrinsic value and place in society. It lives with the people and determines much of life like lands and crops. It would be, by inference, one of Paul Tillich's "ultimate issues and values" from which and with which religion for them deals, and the two must coexist.¹⁸

A few valuable though scarce helps on grammar and clarity have come from Book of Mormon readers in Sinim: Perhaps marginal or center-page notes could be used here as in the Bible to show where the translation has been bent a little to make it mean all it should, and to explain linguistically controversial parts. For example, no one we know of can yet translate "And it came to pass." The expletive throws everybody. Perhaps a paragraph in the table of contents could explain it at length, and then an asterisk replace it wherever it occurs thereafter.

Some trials could be made to see if the entire book translates back into English as it should. For example, the translation of "baptism," which is the term *hsi li*, has been in use since the first translations of the Bible, and we have adopted it, but it is most definitely wrong. Literally it means "the washing rite," and of course this gives no distinction from other scriptural ordinances which are called "washings and anointings."

¹⁶See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, (Harper, New York, 1916), pp. 253-258.

¹⁷See Robert Payne, editor, *The White Pony, An Anthology of Chinese Poetry*, (Mentor, New York, 1947), pp. 182-186; also Cyril Birch, editor, *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, (Grove, New York, 1967), pp. 235-241.

¹⁸Louis Midgley, "Religion and Ultimate Concern," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 1, Number 2, pp. 55-71, discussing Tillich's famous dictum that "whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him." This is a key concept for a translator, who must remember which gods he is translating.

I would suggest a term such as *chin hsi*, "immersion washing," for example.

In addition to the problem of MIStranslation there is the subtler problem of PARTIAL translation.¹⁹ For example, we take the passage "For man is spirit."²⁰ That is true—as far as it goes. But it is only a partial idea that needs the rest of the idea to make it comprehensible in context. According to Nephi and Hugh Nibley, the most fatal defect that can occur in the transmission of scripture is *deletion*, not so much actual false doctrine. What is there remains basically true as far as it goes, but it suffers from default. Little is altered; some is just left out. If the basic set of ideas and sentences is there totally, then internal problems of translation are minor flaws in the body politic. It can still function. But when problems of both kinds occur simultaneously, there is bound to be trouble.²¹ So the translator wanders from one hesitation to another.

Perhaps 1970 Mormonism is no more Jewish (Jesus) than Chinese Buddhism is Indian (Gautama), but it is the role of the Book of Mormon to delineate what areas of the former can and cannot be adapted indigenously.²² Therefore, some have argued that the translation must not make major changes once the first edition is out.

In 1966 I asked Marion D. Hanks why the Church had been in the Chinese Mission for a decade without a Book of Mormon. In substance he said we had not had anyone in the Church of sufficient spiritual expertise to translate it well enough. We could have hired it done, but it would have lacked the spirit that only a faithful member-translator can give it.

So I began to envision the translator as something more than the "arm of flesh," and to realize how much depended on his English, his Chinese, his method, his linguistics, and his personal spirituality.

¹⁹See 1 Nephi 13; also Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, (Deseret, Salt Lake City, 1967), 451 pp. Specifically page 169.

²⁰Doctrine and Covenants 93:33.

²¹Nibley, *op. cit.*, p. 31; also Doctrine and Covenants 91; also Jessie G. Lutz, editor, *Christian Missions in China—Evangelists of What?*, (Heath, Boston, 1966), 108 pp; also G.W. Sheppard, "The Problem of Translating 'God' Into Chinese," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 6, Number 1, January, 1955, pp. 23-30; also T.H. Darlow, and H.F. Moule, M.A., *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of the Holy Scriptures*, Volume 2, pp. 181-254, (Kraus, New York, 1963).

²²See my short story, "A Patronym For Hu Chan," in *The Improvement Era*, Volume 72, Number 9, September 1969, pp. 28-30.

Another problem of the Chinese translator is word-borrowing. Since the prophets overlap and quote each other themselves, it is reasoned legitimate for a translator to borrow phrases from Confucius and Mencius if such borrowing contributes to the translation's "likening of all scriptures unto ourselves."²³ Often a Book of Mormon writer will add the phrase "which by interpretation is . . ." to explain a word he knows we will not understand, as in the case of "deseret."²⁴ This may suggest a way to get around the transliteration problem already discussed; it may work as well as interpolating notes into the body of the work. This would be at least one step in making accuracy a little less subjective.

But a Chinese reader is in trouble with the Book of Mormon even before he opens the cover because of the name of the book. All other churches in China use one of their central concepts as their popular appellation: TAOism, which means WAYism; FOism, or BUDDHAism. But *Mo Men*—the transliteration of "Mormon"—means literally "Rub Door." That is not even a cogent concept. At least to Joseph Smith "Mormon" meant "a good man"—the English word "mor(e)" combined with the Egyptian word "Mon" or "good." Even to his enemies it meant "the guys that believe in that gold bible." But to the Chinese it means nothing. Does this make a difference? Sometimes enemies of the Church substitute another *Mo* for ours, and that one means "devil"! Speaking English, I am happy when someone calls me a Mormon. He is calling me a good man. Not so in China.²⁵

I would suggest in this case that the concept *Mormon* doesn't have to *sound* like "Mormon." The Navajo people use the word "Gaamalii" to mean Mormon. We could go and do like-

²³1 Nephi 19:23.

²⁴Ether 2:3.

²⁵By extension, Nibley, *op. cit.*, pp. 128 *et. al.*, also pp. 151 and 164. See also James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, (Deseret, Salt Lake City), pp. 237 ff; also William Theodore deBary, editor, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, (Houghton, New York, 1932), 870 pp., editorial notes a good source; also Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man From the West*, (Dutton, New York, 1955), 300 pp.; also Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, (Harper, New York, 1955), pp. 227-8, 233; also Arthur F. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Thought*, (Chicago, 1953), pp. 10, 14-16, 232-303; also H. Grant Heaton, "Comments on Translation Work in Chinese," unpublished, January 31, 1963, pp. 9ff; also Tun-Jou Ku, "Notes on the Chinese Version of the Bible," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 8, Number 4, October 1957, pp. 160-165.

Some general ideas concerning this process in time are presented in the following:

A.H. Jowett Murray, "A Review of Lü Chen Chung's Revised Draft of the

wise. If a translator cannot be a master of Reformed Egyptian, perhaps all we can expect is that he be expert in the English idiom and the American culture which produced the Book of Mormon. Because when you buy a King James Bible you get two things—the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and an English literary masterpiece. Would it be wrong or unscriptural to expect a translation to *improve* on the poetry and wording of the original? Certainly in the case of the Book of Mormon it would not.

The Western reader has a plethora of materials related in context and background to the Book of Mormon—scrolls, exegeses, tradition—more than enough. The Oriental translator is left singularly alone to his imagination and own devices and second-hand gleanings from these Western materials which are themselves foreign to him.²⁶ So it was in the days of the first China missionaries centuries ago, like Matteo Ricci.

Biographers say that Matteo Ricci, the great Jesuit, ultimately was a sad man. It was he who did all the work, who suffered all the pain, who gave all of himself, and got nothing in return. China just didn't care.²⁷ For China already had a workable system of religious and quasi-religious forms and norms. And to make matters worse, Ricci faced what we have called the Rites Controversy.²⁸ This centered in the question of whether or not a Chinese Christian could burn incense, worship his ancestors, observe traditional holidays, and generally do the outward actions which made him religiously Chinese. Ricci said yes,²⁹ and went so far as to use firecrackers in Mass. The Pope said no, and by appealing to him, the Jesuits offended the Son of Heaven, the Emperor.

The Son of Heaven is dead, but the Rites Controversy still shuffles around the Chinese Church, made even more sensitive

New Translation of the New Testament in Chinese," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 4, Number 4, October 1953, pp. 165-167.

Robert Kramers, "On Lü Chen Chung's New Testament Translation," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 5, Number 4, October 1954, pp. 184-190.

Don Hicken, "The Church in Asia," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 1968, pp. 134-142.

Ralph Covell, "Bible Translation in the Asian Setting," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 15, 1964, pp. 132-142.

²⁶William Tyndale said "The Bible should speak the language of the people."

²⁷Cronin, *op. cit.*

²⁸Columba Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, (Kennedy, New York, 1956).

²⁹He based his decision on a section in the *Doctrine of the Mean* where King Wu and Duke Chou were said to have served the dead "as they would have served them had they been living, which is the summit of filial piety."

by the "Restore Chinese Culture" line where nothing worthwhile from the past may be sacrificed on the altar of modernity, nor compromised with the religion of foreign devils. Every missionary, "green bean or old head," gets the question sooner or later, and no paddy bottom was ever stickier.

More and more missionaries have come to realize that their one answer to this problem is the Book of Mormon—not its particular scriptures in chapter and verse, but its general timbre and spirit. Here is the tool that teaches a Chinese person the one supreme fact that he must know on an internal level if he is to understand the position of the Restoration: that which is good comes from Christ, and that which is bad comes from Satan, and nothing else really matters if uppermost in his heart is the knowledge that "there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ . . . whereby man can be saved," nor ancestors, nor Buddha, nor anyone else.³⁰

The Book of Mormon has had amazing acceptance among the Church and even the Chinese citizenry in general in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Everybody Chinese loves scriptures, and these people are eclectic—if one scripture is good more are better. They welcome the monolith of multilith and like it all down in print just for the record. If Brigham Young wanted to sing the Gospel into the Saints, the Chinese want to read it in. And in reading it, many of them hear its voice making statements salient enough and right enough about their aspects of Asian politics to warrant close attention.

Taking issue with Chiang Kai Shek that the Chinese civil war ended in 1949, and calling down the United Formosans for wishing to propagate a new one in 1970, we see some problems deriving from the Two China situation which affect the Church. All war is civil,³¹ since all people are children of God literally. And the problem for the Church is that many branches have leadership people from both sides—Taiwanese, Mainlander, from this province or that.

So in an essential work-a-day level, this Book of Mormon bridge has warnings against civil war which pertain to all mankind. Nothing occupies so much space in that volume as that subject, and nothing commands so much rapt attention in the Chinese Mission as we attempt to translate our Church

³⁰2 Nephi 25:20.

³¹See my short story to be published in the Spring, 1970 *Wye Magazine*. "A Place of Very Gentle Ghosts."

there. So the missionaries have used it to interpret the core meanings of Mormonism. It logically ought to have provided, too, and has to an extent, a real means for the foreign missionaries who carry it to interpret the Chinese linguistically, and gather from their comparisons of it with English some cogent ideas of how the Chinese think of the terms and ideas the missionaries toss around as clichés of faith.

It should have provided on both sides a lessening of rhetoric *about* the Gospel and a deepened knowledge *of* it.³² This is like Paul's meaning. When Paul had only the Old Testament and personal experience with which to preach, he went to all kinds of people foreign to himself and developed a philosophy like this:

. . . I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; . . . And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.³³

This is how Paul bridged the culture gap, he being a foreign missionary, and localized his presentation of the Gospel, to make it indigenous wherever he went.³⁴ But in the process of indigenization, the translating of scriptures poses a serious problem. The pervading thought among English-speaking Mormon scribes is that, since the Book of Mormon was spared the Greek or Roman philosophical corruption which came to

³²Ch'en Shih Hsiang, "Chinese Poetics and Zenism;" also R. P. Kramers, "On Being Polite in Chinese," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 14, Number 4, October 1963, pp. 165-173; also G. Henry Waterman, "Report on the Formosa Translators' Convention," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 8, 1957, pp. 32-34. I suggest that our Church translators participate in such conferences. We could derive much and contribute much. See also John Whitehorn, "Some Language Problems of Formosa," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 7, 1956, pp. 17-21.

³³I Corinthians 9:19-23.

³⁴Doctrine and Covenants 105:24; Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, (Hollym, Seoul, 1967), 174 pp; also In-hah Jung, editor, *The Feel of Korea*, (Hollym, Seoul, 1966), pp. 68-81, by Palmer on "Korean-American Relations, Problems in the Contemporary Dialogue." By studying the Church in countries other than China, we form a triangulation to understand our investigation of China better; Doctrine and Covenants 1:30; also J.L. Swellengrebel, "'Leprosy' and the Bible," *The Bible Translator*, Volume 11, Number 1, January 1960, pp. 69-80.

See my article in *Voice of the Saints*, (Hong Kong, December 1965), pp. 37-38; also V. R. Burkhardt, *Chinese Creeds and Customs*, (Book World, Taipei, 1958), 3 vols., each indexed; also E.T.C. Werner, *A Dictionary of Chinese Mythology*, (Fa Chu Fa Ti, Taipei, 53), 627 pp.

The Canon of Filial Piety (Hsiao Ching) speaks of *shen ming*, which almost every commentary gives as "spiritual intelligences." I am inclined to agree.

the Bible, it is a pure book. However, when we translate this "pure" book into Chinese, we must inculcate into it Taoist and Buddhist thoughts (to name two of many) because of the words we are forced to use; and so now we have two books of impure scripture instead of one. For example, the word currently being used for "exaltation," *ch'ao sheng*, is an old Buddhist term. The first verse of John, "In the beginning was the Word," uses *tao* for "Word," the very name of Taoism. This translation is eminently right, but it still produces confusion.

Indeed, for Mormon readers, how Jesus speaks to His prophets in 3 Nephi is how Jesus speaks. But what conditions his language? And the language of the writer recording his language? And the language of the translator? Does the Lord come out talking like a Phi Beta Kappa or a Steelworker? That is the decision—and ultimately the responsibility—of the translator, made for him by his culture. He interpolates mood into his work constantly, being human.

As the Book of Mormon comes to grips with Chinese by means of our own study and dialogue between the two, we hope it will help to cut away a lot of theological fat and rhetoric and get down to laws irrevocably decreed: the meat of the Gospel.³⁵ It asks only one question and gives only one answer: What *will* we do to be saved? And to be saved, the understanding of two elements is essential, without which there is no use having the Church in China. The concepts of "taking away" and "apostasy and divine authority" are basic elements in translated LDS scripture. In order to accept that "none other name" given in the Book of Mormon as the source of personal salvation, the Chinese must accept and understand the concepts of apostasy and restored authority. This is essential for lending credence to the counsel, principles, and fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as contained within the pages of the Book of Mormon.

First, the doctrine of authority must come through, not in just the limited sense of the ecclesiastical authority or Priesthood, but on a universal level, as the divine, eternal authority with which God commands all of his organized elements,

³⁵Doctrine and Covenants 130:20; Helaman 5:51 *et. al.*; Nibley, *Cumorah*, p. 127; Reischauer and Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, pp. 31 ff., 91, 77: The weight of tradition is as heavy as this famous book is expensive; also David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals*, p. 442, on iconoclasm; also J. Hudson Taylor, *A Retrospect*, (Moody, Chicago), pb., 159 pp.

asking subjection and obedience by love, as in the Doctrine and Covenants (see Section 84). Secondly, the doctrine of apostasy, or taking away, if you will, is not just the Great Christian Apostasy, but is all deviation in all history, not from "orthodoxy" alone, but from simplicity, science, art, prayer, democracy, freedom and truth.³⁶

In almost all other aspects save these two, it is not wrong to say that all the churches, Christian and non-Christian, are alike—they all *teach* men to do good (though not all command enough faith to get men to be doers, as Joseph Smith pointed out in his sixth lecture on faith). For that reason, for the Chinese there is no virtue in a foreign religion: Buddhism has just as good ethics as Mormonism, plus it has all the accompanying hocus-pocus that is really more "Chinesey." But it does not have these two concepts which render Mormonism unique, and the Book of Mormon is essential to their elucidation. Because we are not in China to create a Mormon community—just to establish the Church of Jesus Christ.

Times and seasons have changed in China, and almost any preconception about China is wrong somewhere. There are levels of China a foreigner can never understand. But if I may suggest for contemplation one thought supreme in this writing it is this: to be sure, the Kingdom of God is in *you*, and the still small voice is still a linguistic thing, but it is only a whisper, as given in love or sorrow, and the fact that this Lord, who is not in the whirlwind or the earthquake either, is neither wholly in the bound book, covers a multitude of sins.³⁷

Really, the *translating* of Mormon thought into Chinese, is, in kind, not so much King James' version. It is more like Enoch's.

³⁶3 Nephi 16:10; also Hugh Nibley, "The Idea of the Temple in History," a Brigham Young University extension publication, a discussion of the "prestige of the center" and other Temple meanings.

³⁷Spencer J. Palmer, "Mormonism—A Message For All Nations," an extension publication, June, 1965; also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, Volume 4, pp. 201-207; also Gordon B. Hinckley, *Improvement Era*, Volume 67, Number 3, March 1964, pp. 166-193; Luke 17:21; also Fred Takasaki, "The Idea of the Center," printed at Brigham Young University Art Department, 1969.