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TRANSLATION AS CULTURE TRANSPLANT:
A CASE STUDY OF MORRISON'S BIBLE TRANSLATION
AND TAIPING HEAVENLY KINGDOM

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Ph.D

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2015

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Translation as Culture Transplant:
A Case Study of Morrison's Bible Translation
and Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

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A thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

March 2014

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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Abstract

This research investigates the relationship between the translation of the Bible and the rise of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Robert Morrison translated the Bible into Chinese in 1823. But it soon inspired Chinese readers to give rise to a severe insurrection called the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement (1851-1864). The peace-and-love-preaching religion from another culture turned out to be a bloody sword in the host culture. This study will argue that it is an illustration of cultural transplant, in which both the translated cultural elements and the host culture change themselves because of the foreign encounter.

This research traces the history of biblical translation in China and the events that led Hong Xiuquan to interpret it as the prophecy of his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The research investigates five texts, namely Morrison's translation, Liang Fa's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, Gützlaff's translation, and the two versions of the Taiping Bible. Liang's book includes part of Morrison's translation, and it inspired Hong to create a unique faith. Hong later read Gützlaff's translation of the whole Bible, and established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. He altered and annotated Gützlaff's translation, and published two Taiping versions of the Bible.

This research first studies the relationship between Morrison's translation and Liang Fa's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, and discovers that Liang excerpts Morrison's translation and blends among his own essays explaining Christian doctrines. However, the excerpted translations are altered by Liang, and both the translation and Liang's essays are misleading. The research then discusses the influence of Liang's book on Hong's faith. At last, Gützlaff's translation and the two versions of the Taiping Bible are compared. It reveals that Hong altered and annotated the translation mainly for the purpose of conforming the Christian doctrines to his own interpretation. In other words, he reshaped the Bible to meet his political and religious needs.

After analysis of the texts, the research discusses the case in terms of culture, society, and the concept of translation. By referring to relevance theory, the research tries to explain how Christian doctrines are misinterpreted in a series of translation. A few Christian terms are selected and analyzed how they are associated with other political and religious concepts inherent in Chinese culture. The new association brings forth new interpretation of Christian terms in the context of Chinese culture. In terms of translation and society, this research regards Chinese society and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom respectively as two social systems, and studies the function of translation in their formation and evolution. Lastly, this study compares the case of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the development of Christianity and the Bible, and argues that translation is the manifestation of the power of interpretation. An “original” text is often not so much a stable text as an ideological construct. A translation can become the original when it is widely accepted in a community. In fact, all texts are concealed forms of translation.

It is hoped that this research sheds light on the study of the history of biblical translation in China and widens the scope of translation studies.

Publications arising from the thesis

“一场由翻译触发的社会运动: 从马礼逊的圣经翻译到太平天国” (Robert Morrison’s Chinese Rendition of the Bible and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: How Translation Set off a Nineteenth-century Social Movement in China). 中国翻译 (*Chinese Translators Journal*), 2013 (3).

Acknowledgements

I would like to give my sincere gratitude to my chief supervisor, Prof. Chu Chi Yu. He is brilliant, critical, meticulous, and humorous. His sharp point of view always guides me to new inspiration in my academic research.

I am also grateful to my co-supervisor Dr. Li Dechao. His suggestion and encouragement have been very important to my study.

I am particularly grateful to my PhD external examiners: Prof. Chang Nam-fung and Prof. Seán Golden. Their comments and advice have been greatly appreciated.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the staff at PolyU library for providing me with such a cozy writing environment.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues and friends at PolyU. We have shared a lot of precious memories. I have had a wonderful time here.

I am full of gratitude to my family. Without them I would not have been able to complete my thesis so smoothly.

Finally, special thanks should be given to my girlfriend Annlee Li for her support and encouragement throughout my study.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Preliminaries

This research investigates the relationship between translation of the Bible in China and the development of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (太平天国), which is also known as the Taiping Rebellion. The first translation of the entire Bible was accomplished by Robert Morrison in 1823. He was the first Protestant missionary to China. His translation was considered the cornerstone of biblical translation in China. However, it was closely related to a violent uprising. The doctrines in the Bible was interpreted as the remedy for the society by a few Chinese readers. In 1846, they established a religious society called the God-worshipping Society (拜上帝会). But soon it evolved into an insurrection. In 1851, the members of the society established a kingdom within China called the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The kingdom lasted 11 years until it was eradicated by the Qing government in 1864, but not before it had severely damaged the dynasty.

This research argues that the rise of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is an illustration of translation impact on the target society. When a foreign text is translated into a new culture, it introduces foreign cultural elements into the target society. The foreign elements trigger changes in the new context. It is similar to the case of transplanting a foreign organ, in which both the body and the to-be-transplanted organ need to be changed because of the new environment. In translation, both the target culture and the translated text are changed when they encounter each other. The agents participating in such changes include not only translators but also target readers. Translators determine the words to be used, but readers determine what the words mean. There is no guarantee that target readers will interpret the translation as the original readers do, because both the language and the cultural context are changed.

Scholars in translation and cultural studies have pointed out the dynamic relationship between translation and social movements. Briefly speaking, the more unstable the

status of a nation, the more active translation activities will become (e.g. Robinson, 1997, Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002, etc.). The reason is two-fold: on one hand, translation is vital in introducing new, even subversive ideas to the target society; on the other, when the nation is in danger, people tend to look outside for inspiration and solutions, and translation becomes an ideal medium. As a result, translation can be both the consequence and the cause of social changes.

Because of linguistic, cultural, and ideological differences, translation often deviates from the original text, and brings different images to the target society. Translators and interpreters alter the text, and new meaning is constructed in the new social context by the new audience. This research will illustrate such a case in point. The early Chinese translation of the Bible was ambiguous and misleading, and the subsequent Chinese commentary further distorted the meaning. The commentary triggered the birth of a new (but ephemeral) religion in China, which was neither the same as Christianity nor any other Chinese religions. It was first based on the interpretation of the commentary then on the translation of the Bible, and the leader even used his own understanding as the yardstick when reading and altering the translation of the Bible. In the end, a series of translations and interpretations transformed the Bible into a catalyst of a transformative social movement in China.

1.2 From Morrison's Translation to the Taiping

Heavenly Kingdom

The participants involved in the Bible translation activities and the development of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom include Protestant missionaries and Chinese readers. They are Robert Morrison, Liang Fa (梁发), Hong Xiuquan, and Karl Gützlaff.

Morrison came to China in 1807, and started translating the Bible immediately. He finished the New Testament in 1810. Then he worked on the Old Testament with the help of William Milne, another Protestant missionary who had arrived in China a few years later than Morrison. The whole translation was completed in 1820 and published

in 1823. Morrison's translation was seen as a huge achievement by the Protestant churches. But the translation was far from success in the Chinese society because it was poorly accepted, and there were only a few readers. The poor reception was caused by two factors. Firstly, the Chinese government had forbidden the distribution of Christian works. Secondly, Morrison's translated the Bible in an obscure style, neither in classical nor in vernacular Chinese. Medhurst (1836) points out that both Western missionaries and Chinese readers found it hard to understand (pp. 4-7).

Among the few Chinese assistants who were willing to help Morrison, one man contributed to the spread of Morrison's translation in China. His name is Liang Fa (hereinafter Liang). He was drawn to Christian doctrines, and was converted to Christianity in 1816. Liang (1985) felt that the language in Morrison's translation was too difficult and obscure, and he decided to write several articles in Chinese to explain the doctrines in a more idiomatic style (pp. 362-363). The articles were later edited and published by him as a book entitled *Good Words to Admonish the Age* (劝世良言) in 1832. The book includes both his articles and excerpts from Morrison's translation of the Bible. Liang distributed his book in Guangdong province of China, especially to students about to take the imperial exams. It is this book that inspired Hong Xiuquan to convert to Christianity.

Hong Xiuquan (hereinafter Hong) was a student in Guangdong, China. He was resolved to pass the imperial exams and become a government official, which had been the common goal of young Confucius scholars. However, he tried several times and always failed. He obtained Liang's book on his way home from one of his attempts at the imperial exams. According to Hamberg (1854), he only had a "superficial glance" at the contents and put it aside (p. 9). However, the book caught his attention after he had failed at another attempt in the imperial exams. At that time, he was devastated and fell sick for several weeks. According to Hamberg's report, after he recovered from the sickness, Hong claimed that he had a vision in his dream, in which he was raised to heaven and met an old man and a middle-aged man. They appointed him to the job of slaying demons, and helped him defeat the demons in heaven (Hamberg, 1854, pp. 9-12). Later, he read Liang's book again and felt that the contents coincided with his vision, because the book described a superior emperor and his son who saved the world,

and they were similar to the old man and the middle-aged man whom he had seen in the vision. He then believed that the book was sent from heaven. He baptized himself and started preaching what he had interpreted from his vision and the book. His preaching attracted much attention among the people of Guangxi Province. In 1846, the believers established a religious society called the “God-worshipping Society” (拜上帝会), and regarded Hong as its leader. In 1847, Hong was invited by the American Baptist Issachar Jacox Roberts to Guangzhou. He was based at Roberts’ church for three months and acquired a copy of the Bible. This sojourn in the church did not turn him into a genuine Christian. Instead, soon after he had left the church, he returned to Guangxi, the base of his society, and announced that his mission was to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, and that he would lead the people to kill the devil, namely the Qing government ruled by the Manchus. In 1851, he established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (太平天国), and called himself the heavenly king (天王). In 1853, he started printing the Bible immediately after establishing the kingdom’s capital in Nanjing.

The Bible that Hong printed in his kingdom was not the translation by Morrison. Instead, it was a new translation by Karl Gützlaff. Although Hong had read excerpts of Morrison’s translation in Liang’s book which inspired him, the whole Bible that he read and later printed was Gützlaff’s translation. In other words, Hong read two translations of the Bible. As mentioned earlier, Morrison’s translation was not well accepted in China. A few years after its publication, four missionaries decided to revise Morrison’s translation. They were Walter Henry Medhurst, Karl Gützlaff, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, and Joshua Morrison (son of Robert Morrison). The revision later became a new translation. According to Medhurst (1836), the missionaries thought that Morrison’s translation was not intelligible to the Chinese because the language was not idiomatic and naturally enough, and they decided to produce a “new and idiomatic version” that would “give the Chinese reader the same idea of the sense of the passage, which a Jew or a Greek would have had on reading it in his own tongue” (p. 7). The new version was in fact mainly translated by Medhurst and Gützlaff, with the former in charge of the New Testament while the latter was in charge of the Old Testament. The other two missionaries were responsible for proofreading (Zetzsche, 1999, pp. 62-69). But just before the completion of the new version in 1836, three of the four missionaries

resigned from the translation group (Medhurst participated instead in the Delegate's version, which later gave rise to the dispute on the terminology of "God", see 5.1) and left Gützlaff to revise it into a final version, and he made "substantial changes" (Zetzsche, 1999, p. 69). He published about 16 editions of the translation between the years 1836 and 1855. Indeed, the new version was much more widespread than Morrison's version, and it was the most influential translation in China for 10 to 12 years after its publication (Zetzsche, 1999, p. 66). The language reads more idiomatically than the previous version because of the translation strategy put in place in the beginning. According to Medhurst (1836), the translators paid special attention to the linguistic features of phrases, monosyllables, particles, titles, rhythms, addresses, the arrangement of sentences, and the coherence between sentences and paragraphs (pp. 8-9). In addition, Gützlaff was especially "free from those attachments to foreign phrases" (Medhurst, 1836, p. 6). In other words, the new translation was more oriented towards the target readers and the target language, making it a more domestic translation than Morrison's. However, in subsequent chapters, we will discover out that this idiomatic translation also caused misunderstandings that led Hong to interpret the biblical doctrines differently from what had been intended by the biblical translators.

1.3 The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Bible

Hong claimed that his kingdom was the kingdom of heaven that was established by God, Jesus, and himself. He identified himself as the second son of God, the younger brother of Jesus, and the leader of the kingdom of heaven on earth. He assured his followers that anyone who believed in God would enjoy happiness and prosperity in his kingdom, and his/her soul would be brought to heaven after death. He emphasized that China had originally been the kingdom of God, and only God was the emperor. Therefore any individuals or governments against his kingdom were demons, especially the Qing government. Hong's texts and thinking attracted a large following, and his kingdom occupied various provinces in the southern and eastern part of China for 11 years. However, it was eradicated in 1864 by the government with the help of Western military forces.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom paid special emphasis on religious doctrines and rituals. Hong kept stressing the holiness of his regime, and he promoted religious activities throughout the kingdom. These activities appeared to be similar to Christian ones, such as worshipping of God, being against idols, adhering to the Ten Commandments, Bible reading, and so on. In order to disseminate his doctrines, Hong started printing a large number of publications immediately after the establishment of its capital in 1853. The kingdom forbade all Chinese classics by condemning them as evil books, and allowed only Taiping publications, which included the Bible, the teaching of its doctrines, the chronicles of the kingdom, and records of Hong's acts. But the Bible was considered the most superior book of these publications. In fact, according to Edkins (1860), it had always been regarded the holiest book of the kingdom (p. 243).

However, the Taiping Bible was not completely the same as Gützlaff's translation. The kingdom printed two editions, and one in 1853 and the other in 1860. The first edition, only included the first six books of the Old Testament and one chapter of the New Testament. In the second edition, it also included the first six books of the Old Testament, but the entire New Testament. In addition, there was obvious censorship in the second edition.

The printing of the second Taiping edition and the censorship of certain verses were mainly prompted by challenges from Western missionaries. A group of missionaries arrived in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in 1854 (the second year of the first edition of the Taiping Bible), and they challenged the Taiping doctrines by citing certain biblical verses. This shocked the Taiping officials, and they decided to stop printing the Bible immediately. Hong not only refused to accept the missionaries' version of Christian doctrines, he altered and annotated the Bible in response, claiming that his understanding was the correct one.

The difference between Christian doctrines and Taiping doctrines can be generalized from the conflict between the missionaries and the Taipings. They exchanged letters three times. At first, the missionaries asked seven questions about Taiping doctrines. The Taiping replied to the questions and asked fifty questions about the doctrines. The missionaries answered all the questions, which more or less denied all of the fundamental doctrines of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The correspondence is cited

in the appendix of Gregory (1969). Based on the correspondence between the missionaries and Hong, this research discovers seven differences in doctrines:

1. *Image of God*: Christians believe that God is a spiritual deity without form or image. The Taipings believed that God has an image, and that he is an old man with golden hair, high hat, and black gown.
2. *Family of God*: Christians do not have any record on God's heavenly family. The Taipings believe that God has a wife, who is the heavenly mother. In addition, Jesus also has a wife and offspring. They live like a royal family.
3. *Identity of Hong*: Christians believe that Jesus is the only son of God, and do not acknowledge that Hong is God's son. The Taipings believe that God has two sons. One is Jesus and the other is Hong.
4. *Kingdom of God/heaven*: Christians believe that the kingdom of God does not exist in this world, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is not the kingdom of God, and its army is not God's army. The Taipings believe that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is the kingdom of God, and its army is a heavenly army sent by God.
5. *Identity of Yang Xiuqing (杨秀清)*¹: Christians believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, and they believe that the Holy Spirit is spirit, and another godhead of God. The Taipings do not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. They believe Yang is the "holy divine wind" (圣神风, translation of "the Holy Spirit" by Morrison).
6. *Identity of Jesus*: Christians believe that Jesus is God. The Taipings believe that Jesus is completely separated from God, and the former is merely the son of God, hence he is not God.
7. *Demons*: Christians do not consider pagans as demons, and they do not believe that the Manchus are demons. The Taipings believed that the Manchus and their government (Qing government) are demons to be destroyed.

Obviously, all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity were radically changed by the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The conflict between the Taipings and Western

¹ Yang Xiuqing is the the second in command of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

missionaries represents the collision between Christian doctrines and Taiping doctrines, hence the representation of the meaning mutation caused by translation. The source of Hong's doctrines came from Christianity. He read Morrison's translation from Liang's book and Gützlaff's complete translation of the Bible, and he believed that his understanding of Christian doctrines was more appropriate than that given by the Western missionaries. As a result, Hong's role turned from a reader into an active agent participating in the formation of the translation. The study would reveal the reason and the effect of the changes revealed in translation.

1.4 Research Questions and Methodology

This research intends to answer two questions: 1. How did Bible translation influence the formation and development of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom? 2. What alterations and annotations did Hong make in the two versions of the Taiping Bible?

The research will trace the history of Bible translation and its interpretations by Chinese readers in the early nineteenth century, and study how the biblical terms and verses were translated and interpreted in the new context. Then, the research will analyze the Western missionaries' Bible translations and the Taiping Bible, pin down the differences, and discuss the possible causes and consequences of Hong's alterations and annotations.

The research will also refer to various documents on the Western missionaries involved in Bible translation, and publications of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, so as to investigate the motivations, ideological and cultural factors that influence the differences.

Five texts are selected as the main subjects for analysis. They are listed as follows:

1. Robert Morrison's translation of the Bible;
2. Liang Fa's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*;
3. Karl Gützlaff's new translation of the Bible;

4. Hong Xiuquan's first version of the Taiping Bible;

5. Hong Xiuquan's authorized version of the Taiping Bible.

The research collected Morrison's translation of the Bible (published in 1823), and two versions of Gützlaff's translation of the New Testament (published in 1836 and 1836) from the library of The University of Hong Kong. The 1840 version of Gützlaff's translation of the entire Bible was collected from the website called *Faith, Hope, Love*.² In other words, in addition to Morrison's translation of the entire Bible, the research found three versions of Gützlaff's translation of the New Testament, and one version of his translation of the Old Testament. Differences were found among the three versions of Gützlaff's translation of the New Testament. Certain verses are different. By comparing the three Gützlaff's translation of the New Testament with the Taiping versions, it was discovered that the 1840 version was the most probable one that the Taiping adopted for publication in 1853. However, occasionally, certain biblical verses in the Taiping version are different from the 1840 version while the same as the 1836 or the 1839 version. The research will mention the latter two versions whenever such cases of discrepancy occur.

The Taiping published the first version of their Bible in 1853 and an authorized version in 1860. The original copy of the first version was collected from the National Library of Australia. This research also refers to another copy of the same version included in *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Publications* (太平天国印书) printed by the Jiangsu People's Publishing House in 1979. The authorized Taiping version was the edition published by Guangxi Normal University Press in 2004. However, some books that were printed by the Taipings are missing in the available copies. Deuteronomy and Joshua are missing in the first Taiping version, whereas John's Gospel cannot be found in the authorized Taiping version.

This research will first compare the excerpted verses of Morrison's translation from Liang's book with the original translation by Morrison, so as to find out the difference between the two versions. Then, the research will compare Gützlaff's translation and the

² The website of *Faith, Hope, Love* is <http://www.fhl.net/main/>.

two versions of the Taiping Bible, pin down the differences, and categorize all the differences according to the relevant theological or cultural issues.

It is tricky to identify the original text of the missionaries' translations. In fact, there are many original texts, because the Protestant missionary translators referred to a large number of texts including Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions of the Bible as well as dictionaries and commentaries. However, as Morrison pointed out in his report to the London Missionary Society in 1819 on the translation of the Bible, he "made no departure, in any remarkable degree, from the sense of the English version" (cited in Morrison, 1839, p. 10). Considering the time when the Morrison translated the Bible, we can infer that the English version that he referred to was the King James Version (hereafter the KJV). Gützlaff's new translation was made on the basis of Morrison's translation. Hence the KJV could be seen as one of the major source texts for the translations. Moreover, This research mainly focuses on the translations changed by Chinese readers, who did so according to their understanding on the translations per se. Therefore, the KJV is used to serve as the source text for determining the meaning of the biblical verses. But when necessary, it will also refer to other resources (the Bible in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Bible dictionaries) to confirm the meaning of a particular verse or concept.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Although the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom has been researched by many scholars for decades, there are few in-depth studies on the textual features of the Taiping Bible.

The most famous study on the Taiping religion is done by Eugene Boardman. Boardman (1952) investigates the Taiping interpretations on concepts such as God, the Ten Commandments, and the person of Jesus, and compares them with Christian doctrines. He refers to a large number of nineteenth-century Western documents on the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, providing a more objective perspective on the formation and influence of the Taiping religion. However, when investigating the Taiping doctrines, Boardman does not provide enough textual evidence. He mostly summarizes the doctrines in his own words, and compares them with Christian doctrines. He provides only two textual analyses in the entire book. The first time is when he discusses the Ten Commandments. He lists the verses in Morrison's translation, Gützlaff's translations, the Taiping version of the Bible, as well as the explanation of the Ten Commandments in the Taiping publication *The Book of Heavenly Principles* (天条书) (pp. 62-65). The second instance is when he discusses Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, but he does not provide the biblical versions in the Taiping Bible. Instead, he only provides the missionaries' translations and the quoted verses found in Taiping publications such as *The Book of Heavenly Principles* (pp. 74-55). In fact, Hong altered and annotated the verses in Matthew's Gospel in the Taiping Bible, so it is critical to list the altered version there. Despite the fact that Boardman also mentions the annotations in the authorized Taiping Bible (p. 79), he does not do any further textual analysis on it. The reason might be that his main purpose is to discuss the Christian doctrines reflected in the Taiping's original publications, such as *The Book of Heavenly Principles* (天条书), *The Original Path Teaching of Awakening the Age* (原道醒世训), and *The Original Path Teaching of Realizing the Age* (原道觉世训). Nevertheless, he only touches upon the early publications while ignoring the later ones. In fact, the doctrines and ideology in later publications are very different from the early ones, because they further marginalize Confucius thoughts and incorporate more Christian doctrines, such as the

revised version of *The Book of Heavenly Principles* (天条书), and *The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* (太平天日).

Jen (1958) conducted a more comprehensive research on the Taiping religion and its versions of the Bible. He provides a detailed account of the historical events of Morrison's translation, Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, Gützlaff's translation, and Hong's encounter with the Christian texts. He also generalizes the religious doctrines from Liang's book and the Taiping publications, such as God, Jesus, the Trinity, sins, the Ten Commandments, and salvation. In addition, he also discusses Confucian and Taoist thoughts reflected in the Taiping religion. Jen referred to a large number of Taiping publications, more than the ones that Boardman has referred to, and it makes his argument more convincing. However, his research still focuses on an account of historical events, and the discussion of the Taiping's original publications (1808-1810). When comparing Christian and Taiping doctrines, he does not provide enough textual evidence to support his argument, not to mention the comparison of the biblical verses.

Reilly (2004) compares the doctrines between Christianity and Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and points out that Taiping doctrines are not essentially different from modern evangelical Christianity. He argues that Hong's ideal of establishing a kingdom of heaven on earth is similar to Christian Millennialism. Reilly's main problem is that he does not compare the Taiping Bible with Gützlaff's translation. Instead, he merely summarizes four types of changes in the Taiping Bible: (1) correcting typographical mistakes, (2) replacing taboo characters, (3) altering the contents according to the theology and moral standard of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and (4) correcting titles and addresses (p. 75). The third type should be the most important, not only to the alteration of the Bible itself, but also to the theme of Reilly's entire book. But he does not discuss it in detail. In addition, the brief examples he gives only cover the ethical issues related to Hong's changes to the Old Testament. He does not mention that there are more changes in the New Testament that are more relevant to the "Taiping theology" (Reilly, 2004, p. 75).

The most in-depth and detailed research on the religion of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is Xia (2006). He traces the origin of the Taiping religion, and discusses the

initiation, spread, development and failure of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. He refers to a lot of nineteenth century Western reports and correspondence, and provides extensive observations from the Western world. In terms of the characteristics of the Taiping religion, Xia analyzes the Taiping religion on three aspects, namely God, devil, and heaven and hell; he also discusses Hong Xiuquan's alterations and annotations in Gützlaff's version. Xia's most important observation is the finding of the publications that are considered the "Authentic Testament" (真约) of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (pp. 157-166). The books included in the "Authentic Testament" were considered the most important political and religious publications in the kingdom in addition to the Bible. They illustrate the Taiping ideology. They are the primary documents that this research refer to when discussing the Taiping publications. However, the major problem of Xia is that he does not refer to Morrison's or Gützlaff's translations of the Bible. When analyzing verses in the Taiping Bible he only compares them with the modern translation of the Bible (namely Chinese Union Version) (p. 143). Such comparison cannot reveal Hong's changes in the biblical verses. In addition, his classification of Hong's alteration of the Bible is almost the same as Reilly's (2004). Except for the taboo characters, the two classifications are: first, conforming the biblical stories to the Taiping's Ten Commandments, and second, conforming the biblical plot to the Taiping laws. Such a classification is too broad for detailed analysis, and Xia also fails to provide enough textual evidence in his discussion.

The most detailed textual comparison on the Taiping Bible is Wu & Luo (1987). The authors compare the two versions of the Taiping Bible, and point out the possible typographical errors in the modern printed editions of Hong's annotations. However, they merely list the discrepancies between the two Taiping versions, without comparing them with Gützlaff's translation. Hence we are not able to know their differences from the original translation. In addition, they do not provide any explanation or discussion on the discrepancies.

Many other scholars who investigate the Taiping religion and ideology ignore the biblical text as well. For example, Shih (1967) discusses the Taiping ideology from the perspectives of religion, politics, and culture. However, when discussing the influence of Christianity, he only looks into Hong's annotation in the authorized Taiping Bible,

without analyzing his alterations in the biblical text (pp. 147-166). Lu's (1985) research focuses on the individual personality of Hong. With the help of a psychoanalytical framework, he studied the influence of Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age* and Hong's vision on his mentality. Then, Lu points out Christian factors that are mostly attractive to Hong, namely monotheism, religious exclusiveness, anti-idolatry, equality, and resentment against wealth (pp. 108-109). But he does not mention Hong's alteration of the Bible, which should be the most important and tangible evidence of Christian influence. Wang (1985) conducts a detailed research on the religious concepts in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, such as heaven, God, paradise, hell, and the devil. But he mainly compares them with Chinese culture, without much reference to the Christian doctrines, not to mention analysis of the biblical texts.

In terms of Liang's book that inspires Hong, Pan (2007) provides valuable research results and resources for future research. He compares Liang's book and Morrison's version, and pins down the excerpted biblical chapters and verses in Liang's book. In addition, he calculates the frequencies of the different titles for God and Jesus in Liang's book. However, the focus is mainly on the formation of Liang's book, whilst his research on the influence of Hong is relatively too brief. For example, when he discusses Hong's acceptance of the book, he merely provides two examples, God and the devil, without too much mention of how the two concepts are interpreted in the Taiping publications. In addition, he fails to point out that Liang altered Morrison's translation when excerpting them. Nonetheless, Pan provides a meticulous research on Liang's book and presents historical resources that are critical for future research, especially the online source for the photocopies of Basset Manuscript (forerunner of Morrison's translation) and Gützlaff's translation.

In terms of academic journal articles, most of the studies on the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom have been carried out in Chinese. But they mostly discuss the Taiping's original publications, while only a few analyze the biblical text of the Taiping Bible. One possible explanation is that the original copies of the texts are difficult to find, such as Morrison's translation, Gützlaff's translation, Liang's book, and the authorized Taiping version. Noticeably, Lee (2009) went to the British Library and Cambridge University Library, and read the only original version of the authorized Taiping Bible. He gives a review of Hong's encounter with the Bible, as well as his alterations and annotation of

the Bible. Although Lee does not analyze the biblical verses, his questions posed at the end of the article are thought-provoking: “when the Bible leaves its original Christian community and arrives in a foreign culture, when it faces the Chinese texts, classics and religions bred by the mother culture, who has the right to set the rule for the interpretation of the Bible?... Could the Bible only be interpreted as a Christian classic, instead of other genres such as a literary text” (p. 11)?

In fact, when Hong read the translation of the Bible, no one set the rule for interpretation. So Hong interpreted it according to his knowledge structure. In addition, he had constructed his belief based on a second-handed text (Liang’s book) before he encountered Christianity and the Bible. Under such circumstance, the translated Bible lost its textual support from the original cultural background in which it had been widely accepted. New meaning was constructed based on Hong’s background of Chinese culture and his prior understanding of Liang’s book. He even altered and annotated the Bible to reshape it into a prophecy for his insurrection. The meaning of the Bible was therefore inevitably further twisted, making the translation serve a new function in the Chinese society.

Regarding the function of translation, the title of Álvarez and Vidal’s book, *Translation, Power, Subversion* (1996), indicates the roles that translation can play in a target culture. The agents who are involved in translation have the power of interpretation, therefore translation becomes the realization of power. Translation could shape (or even forge) an image of an original culture, introduces new ideas, and participates in the change of the target culture. It could propel subversion. For example, translation gave impetus for the Reformation via the translation of the Bible (Bassnett, 1996, p. 13). Another example is the redefinition of the concept of “democracy”. British intellectuals in the nineteenth century modified the meaning of the concept when they translated it from a Greek text (Lianeri, 2002, p. 1-22). On the other hand, translation could become a controlling power. When the power of translation is held by colonists, meaning is twisted and filtered. The power of the colonists are maintained while the rights of the local inhabitants are deprived of (Fenton & Moon, 2002, p. 25-44).

In fact, we can find more than one aspect of the power of translation in the the case of Bible translation in China and the rise of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. On the one

hand, the subversive power of translation is realized in Morrison's translation, Liang's interpretation, Gützlaff's new translation, in that they brought foreign ideas from the West and inspired Hong to establish his ideal by overthrowing the government. On the other hand, translation is also a means of control: Hong controlled the power of interpretation of the Bible, and he altered and annotated the text to make it fall in line with his political and religious agenda.

In terms of power over translation, Lefevere (1992) divides it into two types, one is poetic and the other is ideological. They are the two motivations that lead a translator or a patron to manipulate a text. But researchers in translation studies mostly focus on how translators or a patronage manipulate translation, while ignoring the role that readers play in this process. Indeed, after the translator's manipulation, the text might be further manipulated by the readers. As the translation leaves the translator and is absorbed into the target culture, the meaning has the potential to be redefined by the readers.

Hung (2005) points out that the historical research on translation should focus more on the impact of the target culture on translation, because the function of a translation is mainly dependent on how the target culture understands and receives the foreign text (p. viii). In this research, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom could be seen as a realization of the understanding and reception of foreign translation. Hong's interpretation, alterations, and annotations of the Bible can provide us vivid examples of how a translation mutates when it is placed in a culturally heterogeneous culture.

When classifying the alterations by Hong in the Taiping Bible, this research refers to the categorization in systematic theology. Jacob (1958) and Jen (1990) provide comprehensive framework for studying the doctrines according to different themes and topics. For example, the categories of the doctrines, such as God, the kingdom of heaven, and the Trinity, are adopted in the research. However, other categories, such as the Church and baptism, are found not suitable for the current case, because Hong's alterations and annotations did not touch upon such doctrines. The research categorizes other alterations and annotations according to the themes that they relate to, such as taboo characters, the interpretation of the character “神” (god), and self identification.

Chapter 3 Hong Xiuquan's Early

Interpretation of the Bible

Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age* is the first book on Christianity that read by Hong Xiuquan. Hong was originally a student who believed in the teachings of Confucius, but after reading the book he turned to worship God, and later founded the God-worshipping Society. Therefore the book plays an important role in shaping Hong's new beliefs. A critical link between the book and Hong's ideal is his vision: Hong claimed that he had been brought to heaven and had seen God and Jesus. The vision occurred while he was in a coma in 1837, resulting from his shock of failing the imperial exams. After waking up out of his coma, Hong read Liang's book, and discovered many coincidences, which convinced him that the book had foretold his destiny. According to Hamberg's oral account of Hong Rengan (Hong Xiuquan's cousin who had witnessed Hong's early activities), Hong Xiuquan believed that Liang's book was a gift from God (Hamberg, 1854, p. 22). The official Taiping publication “太平天日” (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*), which details Hong's establishment of the kingdom, also emphasizes the significant role of the book as coming from the mouth of God:

尔下去凡间，还有几年不醒，但不醒亦不怕，后有一部书畀尔，对明此情，既对明此情，尔即照这一部书行，则无差矣 [After you return to the mortal world, there will be a few years of unconsciousness. But fear not of it. There will be a book for you, attesting what you have experienced. Once you have confirmed that, you may act according to the book. And there shall be no mistake]. (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, 1957, p. 642)

Therefore, Liang's book laid the foundation for Hong's early understanding of Christian doctrine. Analysis of the book can help us understand the connection between biblical translation and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement. Specifically, the research

intends to find out how Liang (as a Chinese reader) interprets the Bible, his deviation from the orthodox interpretations, and the impact of his book on Hong's understanding of Christian doctrines.

Liang's book was published in 1832. It is an elaboration of several basic Christian doctrines. The book is divided into nine volumes, consisting of 71 chapters. 31 of them are excerpts from Morrison's translation, while the other 40 are articles written by Liang. From the traditional point of view on translation, Liang's selection of excerpts and interpretation of Morrison's translation cannot be seen as translation. However, they can be seen as the first case of "creative interference" after the import of the biblical translation. "Creative interference", according to Sherry Simon, is any "writing that is inspired by the encounter with other tongues, including the effects of creative interference" (Simon, 2006, p. 17). She uses this "expanded definition" to refer to new texts that are created because of the encounter and fusion of cultures, which includes not only translation, but also other categories of symbolic representations, such as fiction, painting, and architecture. In other words, the definition emphasizes the effect of translation, i.e., a chain of texts that translation initiates. Liang's book clearly falls into this category, as it is a creative interference after "encountering" Morrison's translation. In addition, within Lefevere's model (1992), Liang's book can be seen as a form of rewriting, in which Liang manipulated the translation and created a distinctive image of Christianity for Hong Xiuquan. Although scholars such as Teng (1985), Yang (2004), and Liang (2007), have conducted extensive research on Liang's book, none of them have explored Liang's alteration of the excerpts from Morrison's translation. It is unconfirmed whether Morrison's translation has been modified when it appears in Liang's book. In addition, the selection of the biblical chapters also reveals Liang's interpretation of Christian doctrines, but previous studies have not investigate it either. Therefore, this research will not only study how Liang explained the Christian doctrines, but also his selection and alteration of Morrison's translation. This research intends to analyze Liang's book and find out what part in the book has the most significant impact on Hong Xiuquan and his later interpretation of the Bible: whether it is Morrison's translation, Liang's interpretation, or both.

This chapter aims at studying Liang's book and its connection between biblical translation and Hong Xiuquan's interpretation. It is divided into four parts: The first

part discusses Liang's selection and alteration of Morrison's translation; the second part analyzes Liang's interpretation of Christian doctrines in his articles; the third part touches upon Hong's interpretation after reading Liang's book; and the fourth part investigates Hong's further interpretation after he acquired Gützlaff's translation of the Bible.

3.1 Liang Fa's Alteration of Morrison's Translation

As mentioned before, previous scholars did not pay much attention to Liang's excerpts of Morrison's translation. They tend to presume that the excerpts are direct quotations from Morrison. In fact, all chapters that were excerpted by Liang had been edited to some extent. By studying Liang's selection of chapters as well as his alterations, we can infer the motivation for his choices and alterations, and ascertain the influence of these selected and altered texts had on the formation of Hong's faith.

Morrison's translation of the Bible is quite obscure, even to contemporary Chinese readers in the nineteenth century. Morrison himself also admitted that the translation needed improvement (Morrison, 1839, p. 10). This also becomes the fundamental reason for Liang to edit the excerpts. He was aware that he had been reading a translation, and he pointed out that the language of Morrison's translation was too obscure to be accepted by the Chinese people, and it needed to be revised (Medhurst, 1836, pp. 4-5).

Although Liang did not know English (which can be seen from his wrong alterations of Morrison's translation, examples can be proved in 3.1.3) and had no knowledge of translation studies, he did pay attention to the potential readership of the translation. He realized that, in order to attract readers, the language needed to be more idiomatic (Medhurst, 1836, p. 5). Liang tried to improve Morrison's translation in his book. But it also inevitably changes the meaning of the translation. In addition, only part of Morrison's translation of the Bible was selected. The selection both reveals Liang's preference and brings a different impression of the biblical text to the readers. Hence

this chapter will investigate the change of Morrison's translation in Liang's book on two aspects: first, Liang's alteration of Morrison's translation; and second, Liang's selection of biblical chapters.

3.1.1 Alteration of Terms

The most prominent difference between Morrison's translation and Liang's excerpt is the terms. Liang alters some of the most important terms in Christian doctrine. For example, the translation of "God" and "Christ". Morrison translates God as "神" (god), and "Lord" into "神主" (god lord, or divine lord), whereas Liang uses "神天上帝" (divine heavenly superior emperor), "神爷火华" (god Ye Huo Hua), "神天" (divine heaven), "神父" (divine father), etc. According to Lu (1985), Liang uses 17 different titles to refer to God. The most frequently used one is "神天上帝" (divine heavenly superior emperor) (379 times), the second is "神" (god) (245 times), the third is "神爷火华" (god Ye Huo Hua) (111 times), and the rest titles include terms such as "神天" (divine heaven), and "神父" (divine father) (p. 162). Obviously, Liang prefers "神天上帝" (divine heavenly superior emperor) to "神" (god), contrary to Morrison's consistent use of "神" (but occasionally he adopts transliteration, see examples below). This is unusual. Since Liang was Morrison's and Milne's assistant, he should have used "神" more frequently in his book. Both "上帝" and "神" are translations of God, but missionaries and biblical translators had disputes on which one should be the legitimate translation for God. It aroused many debates in the history of biblical translation in Chinese in the nineteenth century (the problem has not been solved to this day). However, Reilly (2004) points out that Morrison changed his mind and turned to support the translation of "上帝" in 1847 (p. 192). There is no evidence that Morrison had any influence on Liang's preference for a term with "上帝", namely "神天上帝" (divine heavenly superior emperor). But what is evident is that, while the translation "神" (god) is commonly seen in Morrison's translation, "神天上帝" (divine heavenly superior emperor) is more frequently used in Liang's book.

Regarding “神天上帝” (divine heavenly superior emperor) and “神爷火华” (god Ye Huo Hua), Liang explains them as follows:

天地之内，独有一位造化天地万物之主系神，俗称神天上帝，惟启示真经本字音义，称之爷火华三个字，斯乃真神。而普世万国之人，皆当尊崇敬之奉之，其余所有甚么神佛菩萨之像，悉不应该敬拜的 [Among heaven and earth, there is a lord who created heaven and earth and everything, and he is called the god, commonly known as the divine heavenly superior emperor. According to the original word and sound and meaning of the real scripture, he is called Ye Huo Hua, and it is the real god. People of all nations, should respect and worship him, whereas the idols of other gods, buddhas, and bodhisattvas should not be worshiped]. (Liang, 1985, p. 402)

Liang’s preference for “神天上帝” (divine heavenly superior emperor) is closely related to his understanding of the concept. In his perspective, God is the lord of the world, and “帝” (emperor) implies the exclusiveness and supremeness of God, and such senses are missing in “神”. In addition, Liang often analogizes God with mortal emperors and kings. For example, when emphasizing that the gospels should be spread to all nations, Liang points out that the gospel is like the holy creed issued by the Chinese emperor. He further explains that everyone follows the holy creed of the emperor, therefore the gospel as the holy creed from the divine heavenly superior emperor should be treated with even greater care and reverence, because the divine heavenly superior emperor is the “king of ten thousand kings, lord of ten thousand nations” (万王之王，万国之主), and his holy creed should be followed by everyone, and any violation is a crime (Liang, 1985, pp. 260-264, 357-367).

Liang’s analogy has a profound impact on Hong’s interpretation of the concept. Hong discovered a relationship between the term and Confucian doctrine as well as politics. In one of his early articles (*The Original Path Teaching of Realizing the Age*), he argues that the superior emperor was recorded in the Chinese classics, because the term exists

in the “four books and five classics” (四书五经), which were considered the holiest Confucian books in China.³ Hong claims that:

历考中国史册，自盘古至三代，君民一体，皆敬拜皇上帝也 [According to the historical records of China, from time of Pan Gu to the three dynasties,⁴ all people from the king to the ordinary people had worshipped the imperial superior emperor]. (Hong, 1979, p. 20)

Then, he emphasizes that no man is allowed to call himself an emperor because the term is referred exclusively to the superior emperor:

实情谕尔等，尔凡人何能识得帝乎？皇上帝乃是帝，虽世间之主称王足矣。岂容一毫僭越于期间哉 [Be learnt the truth. How could you mortal people recognize the emperor? The imperial superior emperor is the emperor. The kings of the mortal world can only call themselves kings. There is no way for transgression of the titles]. (Hong, 1979, p. 22)

Although Hong did not claim that the Qing government was the devil in his early articles, his rebellious mindset and resentment of Chinese emperors is reflected in his interpretation of the title of God, which originates from Liang’s book.

The other term for God that Liang frequently uses is “爷火华” (Ye Huo Hua, literally means “lord fire glory”), which is obviously the transliteration of “Jehovah”. This is probably Liang’s revision as well. Morrison does not use the term in his translation, though different transliterations could occasionally be seen. For example, Morrison uses the term “耶何瓦” (Ye He Wa) in Genesis 4:15, and annotates that “耶何瓦即是神自然者之意，无由他物生出，无始无终生生世世只自然者，主乃主神当作耶何瓦三字而用” (Ye He Wa means that the god is the eternal being, who is not born from other

³ This approach to find evidence of God in the Chinese classics was also taken by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), one of the most famous Jesuits in China in the Ming dynasty. It aroused a lot of debate between Jesuit missionaries and Chinese intellectuals (Gernet, 1990).

⁴ Pan Gu (盘古) is the god who created the world in Chinese mythology. He is not considered the highest god in China, but rather a god that denotes the earliest of time of Chinese history. The three dynasties (三代) refer to the Xia (夏), Shang (商), and Zhou (周) dynasties. They were considered the period of the highest political and moral standards in Confucianism.

beings, with no birth and no death, lives for ages after ages, and exists as he is. the lord is the only god is the meaning of Ye He Wa). Whereas in Exodus 6:3, he translates God as “神主者” (god the lord), and annotates that as“本言音啣啊瓦” (the original terms is pronounced as Ji Ah Wa), which is obviously another transliteration of Jehovah. Liang does not adopt either of Morrison's transliterations, and uses his own version instead.

Liang's alteration of the transliteration might be due to the connotation of the particular characters used. In contrast to the meaningless onomatopoeic characters that Morrison uses in transliterating “Jehovah”, all the three characters that Liang uses conveys a sense of veneration. Similarly, Liang also revises the transliteration of “Christ”. The term is transliterated as “基利士督” (Ji Li Shi Du) by Morrison, in which “利” (money, profit, occupy) and “士” (politician, pawn, etc.) imply negative senses. On the contrary, Liang changes it into “基理师督” (Ji Li Shi Du), which has the same pronunciation but the two characters convey positive senses: 理 (administer, manage, reason) and 师 (teacher, master, scholar).

Liang's transliteration of Jehovah is barely seen in Hong's articles and other Taiping publications. But it also reflects the impact of Liang's book on Hong, because the characters in Liang's transliteration later became the taboo characters in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom that were exclusively used to referred to God, and were not allowed to use in ordinary communication. The words containing any of the three characters were replaced. It was a traditional way of showing respect to the person concerned, especially to an emperor.

3.1.2 Grammatical Alteration

In addition to changing the terms, Liang makes certain grammatical adjustments of Morrison's translation in his book, such as syntactical structure, wording, and so on. The alterations make the verses sound more idiomatic and intelligible. For example, Liang alters the syntactical structure of particular verses:

Example 3.1-1:

KJV: And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. (Isaiah 45:12)

Morrison: 且适七日之后，有以洪水在地上，于挪亚在世之六百年二月十七日，即日大深者之各源被打开，并天之窗门被开 [And after seven days, there was flood upon the earth. When Noah was in the world for six hundred years, two months and seventeen days, on that day the great deep being of every source was opened, and the window gate of heaven was opened].

Liang: 适过七日之后，于挪亚在世六百年二月十七日，果有洪水而来地上，即日大深渊之各源被打开并天之水门亦被开 [And after seven days, when Noah was in the world for six hundred years, two months and seventeen days, there really came flood to the earth. On that day the great abyss of every source was opened and the water gate of heaven was also opened]. (Liang, 1985, p. 218)

In the original translation, Morrison follows the syntactical structure of the English text, whereas Liang alters the structure to make it more readable. In addition, Morrison's translation “有以洪水在地上” (“there was flood upon the earth”) does not read grammatically in Chinese, because “以” (in/by/in accordance with) is unnecessarily placed in the clause. Liang revises it into “果有洪水而来地上” (there really came flood to the earth). Liang also revises two terms with more commonly used words: he replaces “大深者” (the great being) with “大深渊” (the great abyss), and “天之窗门” (the window gate of heaven) with “天之水门” (the water gate of heaven).

Another example of syntactical alteration can be found in Liang's excerpt from Isaiah 58:6:

Example 3.1-2

KJV: Is not this the fast that I have chosen?... (Isaiah 58:6)

Morrison: 乃此岂非我所选之斋……也。 [Is not this the fast that I have chosen...]

Liang: 神爷火华所选之斋戒乃此…… [The god Ye Huo Hua's chosen fast is this...] (Liang, 1985, p. 282)

Morrison again tries to mimic the structure of the original rhetorical question by starting with a rhetorical question device “岂非”, but he ends with a declarative sentence device “也”, making the whole sentence ungrammatical. Liang changes it into a declarative one.

As for the wording, Liang's most common alteration is the replacement of “耶稣” (Ye Su, transliteration of Jesus) with “救主” (savior lord) or “救世主” (savior lord of the world), and “耶稣基督” (Ye Su Ji Du, translation of Jesus Christ) with “救世主耶稣” (savior lord Ye Su). In general, Liang replaces all the transliterations of “耶稣” (Ye Su) excepted for Ephesians 6, probably because of carelessness. The reason behind the replacement (“耶稣” (Jesus) with 救主 (savior lord)) is probably an attempt to emphasize the role of Jesus as the “savior lord”, because the original transliteration makes no sense in Chinese. Pertinent this alteration, Liang also pays particular attention to the meaning of the character “主” (lord), which is part of the term 救主 (savior lord, literally “saving lord”). In Morrison's translation, “主” either means God or Jesus. But Liang tends to use it only to refer to Jesus. For example:

Example 3.1-3

KJV: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16).

Morrison: 盖孰识主之见，以诲之乎，吾辈乃得见基督之见也 [Because who knows the perspective of the lord, that he instructs him? But we have seen the perspective of Ji Du].

Liang: 盖孰识神之见，以诲之乎，吾辈乃得见救主之见也 [Because who knows the perspective of the god, that he instructs him? But we have seen the perspective of the savior lord]. (Liang ,1985, pp. 373-374)

Liang replaces “主” (lord) with “神” (god), whilst “基督” (Ji Du, transliteration of Christ) with “救主” (savior lord), so as to prevent the reader from interpreting “the lord” (God) as the “savior lord” (Jesus). Such a replacement, however, causes the distinction between God and Jesus, giving readers an impression that the “savior lord” is not the “god”. In other words, it implies that Jesus is not God. It is one of the main problems in interpreting Christian doctrines in Liang’s book; that is, Liang does not elaborate the doctrine of the Trinity. As will be seen in later discussion, after reading Liang’s book, Hong does not understand the doctrine correctly either.

Another example of Liang's alteration of the wording is the nouns referring to the addressee. As Liang’s target reader is Chinese people, and the purpose of communication is to “admonish the age”, he changes the addressee to include all the people in some chapters of Morrison's translation. For example, in the excerpts from the New Testament:

Romans 12: 诸兄弟 (brothers) is replaced with 世界上之各处众人 (people in every corner of the world), and 至爱辈 (dear beloved) with 世上众人 (people of the world);

James 5:9, 10, and 19: 弟兄们 (brothers) is replaced with 世上众人 or 世众人 (people of the world);

James 5:7: 弟兄们 (brothers) is replaced with 凡事神之众人 (all the people who serve the god).

In addition, in Acts 14:22, Liang explains that the address of 汝信辈 (thou believers) and 汝等 (thou) mean “宇宙内凡敬信救世主福音真经圣道之人” (all the people in the universe who believe in the gospel from the savior lord of true classics and holy doctrines) (Liang, 1985, p. 327). Liang’s alteration makes the original addressee in the

Pauline Epistles such as “brothers” (which is usually understood as members of the church) expanded to all the people of the world.

Similarly, Liang also changes the addressee in Old Testament. For example, in Isaiah 1:7, the original verse describes God’s condemnation of Israel: “以色列” (Yi Se Er), whereas Liang changes it into “以色列及世人” (Yi Se Er and people of the world). In addition, he changes the content to make God’s punishment an event that is to come to the addressee.

Example 3.1-4:

KJV: Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. (Isaiah 1:7)

Morrison: 尔国已荒野，尔城已被火烧，尔地方则在尔眼前远人吞之 [Your country has been barren. Your cities have been burned with fire. Your land is before your eyes and aliens usurp it].

Liang: 尔国将被荒野，城将被火烧，尔地方则在眼前远人吞之 [Your country will be barren. Your cities will be burned with fire. Your land is before eyes and aliens usurp it]. (Liang 1985:48)

After Liang’s alteration, God’s punishment on Israel becomes a warning to the “people of the world”, which was not the case in the original text. The warning conveys a harsh tone by implying that any violation against God will lead to destruction. It is favored by Hong, because he adopts the same tone in his early articles.

3.1.3 Alteration due to Misunderstanding

There is no evidence that Liang knew any other languages except for Chinese. This can be seen in Liang’s misunderstanding of Morrison’s translation. Due to the obscure style in Morrison’s translation and lack of biblical context, some of Liang’s alterations are clearly a result of misunderstanding. There are 13 cases of wrong alterations. Here is one example:

Example 3.1-5:

KJV: (14) Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.(15) Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour (Isiah 45:14-15).

Morrison: (14) 神主如此云，以至比多之财，与古是之货物，且撒便之人，身体长者，皆将归尔，及属汝也，伊将随尔后，且被锁链经过走也，伊将归下尔前，且谦然求尔也。(15) 独在尔才係神也，除尔外并无神也。以色列之神，赎救者欤，固然尔为自隐已议者之神也 [(14) The lord god says as follows. The possession of Yi Zhi Bi Duo, merchandise of Gu Shi, and the people of Sa Bian, who has mature bodies, shall come to you, and belong to you. They will follow you behind. They shall be locked by chains and pass to walk. They shall come and fall before you, and humbly beg you. (15) Only you are the god. There is no god except for you. Yi Se Er's god, O the one who saves. You are the god that hides yourself that has been discussed].

Liang: 神爷火华如此云，以至比多之财，与古是之货物，且撒便之人，身体高长者，皆将归神及属神也。其将随神之后，且谦然求于神也，独在于神，才係神也，除神外，并无神也。万国之神，赎救者欤，固然神自隐为已议者之神也 [The god Ye Huo Hua says as follows. The possession of Yi Zhi Bi Duo, and merchandise of Gu Shi, and the people of Sa Bian, who has mature bodies, shall come to god and belong to god. They shall follow god behind. And humbly beg the god. Only the god is god. Except for the god, there is no god. The god of ten thousand countries, O the one who saves. The god who hides himself is the god that has been discussed]. (Liang, 1985, p.172)

The second person pronoun is ambiguous in the original verses. The 14th verse is God's address to Cyrus, promising him wealth. So the pronoun "thee" refers to Cyrus. Whereas the 15th verse is praising God, so the pronoun "thou" refers to God instead.

Morrison tries to conform to the original structure and wording, therefore the pronouns are as ambiguous as the original. A reader without sufficient biblical knowledge is inclined to understand all the pronouns as God, which is the case in Liang. He replaces all the pronouns with 神 (god). This is obviously an improper interpretation. As a result, God's promise to Cyrus becomes a statement that all wealth belongs to God, and it distorts the meaning of the original verse.

3.1.4 Misleading Narrative

Although the biblical chapters seem scattered without any particular chronological order in Liang's book, with verses and chapters from the New Testament and the Old Testament mixed together, we can infer from his selection that it is a result of deliberation. Liang tries to convey the themes that he considers important, such as sin, God's punishment, redemption, and so on. The excerpted translations supplement the themes of his self-penned articles. However, such an arrangement also affects Chinese readers' interpretation of the doctrines that Liang intends to introduce.

Take the first volume of Liang's book as an example. It contains four chapters, with two articles by Liang and two chapters from Morrison's translation, respectively Isaiah 1 and Matthew 5-7. In the two articles by Liang, he points out that ordinary people have been lured by the devil, and they still resort to the superficial and vain thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in Chinese culture. Then, he quotes Isaiah 1 to stress God's fury upon the sinfulness of the "people of the world". As mentioned before, Liang uses "people of the world" instead of "Israel", and it conveys a sense that God's punishment will come to all people who disobey him. Right after that, Liang offers a new concept called "heavenly kingdom" (天国) by citing Matthew 5-7, and points out that "天国属伊等" (the heavenly kingdom belongs to you all). With such a narrative, Liang creates a sense of urgency, and it seems that God's fury is targeted toward contemporary Chinese society, whereas the only way out is a so called "heavenly kingdom", a kingdom that belongs to everyone. On the contrary, Liang does not bother to explain what "heavenly kingdom" means here (though he explains it in later volumes), or who is going to establish and rule the kingdom. It leaves a large

interpretive gap for the reader to fill, and Hong's early interpretation on the ideal world is related to Liang's heavenly kingdom, but at the same time quite radical:

乱极则治，暗极则光，天之道也……惟愿天下凡间我们兄弟姊妹，跳出邪魔之鬼门，循行上帝之真道……行见天下一家，共享太平 [At the extreme end of chaos is order. At the extreme end of darkness is light. This is the doctrine of heaven... I wish our brothers and sisters in this world, jump out of the evil gate of the wicked devils, and follow the true teaching of the superior emperor. ... then we shall see one family under heaven, sharing the Taiping (great peace)].

Later, when Hong established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, his ideal evolved into a more concrete form: the Chinese society had become rotten, and the only way to correct and save it was to establish a heavenly kingdom on the earth.

In addition, the biblical chapters selected in Liang's book also have an impact on the doctrines, especially the interpretation of the relationship between God and Jesus. As mentioned before, Liang keeps emphasizing God the Father, while ignoring the importance and identity of Jesus. Overall, he excerpts 31 chapters from the Bible, 11 of which are from the Old Testament, while the other 20 from the New Testament. It might appear that more frequent excerption from the New Testament should have made the role of Jesus more prominent. However, out of the 20 chapters, only 6 of them narrate the deeds of Jesus, while the other 14 mainly touch upon basic doctrines, such as forgiveness, love, the prohibition against idols, and so on. In other words, the role of Jesus is not emphasized even in the chapters from the New Testament. In addition, Liang often comments at the end of the New Testament chapters that, only by following the doctrines could the person be forgiven by the "superior emperor", and awarded eternal bliss in heaven. In other words, he keeps emphasizing the "superior emperor" (the Father) instead of Jesus in his excerption from the New Testament. On the other hand, all the chapters from the Old Testament emphasize the acts of the "superior emperor". As a result, most of the biblical chapters in Liang's book centralizes the power of God the Father, while marginalizing the status of Jesus. With such narration and comments, it is almost impossible for Chinese readers to correctly understand the relationship between God and Jesus. These chapters can only give them

the impression that the “superior emperor” (God) is the only divine being, whilst “Ye Su” (Jesus) is merely a subordinate.

In addition, Liang’s selection of chapters also reveals his biased interpretation of God. 6 out of the 11 chapters from the Old Testament describe God as a harsh and angry god, who often punishes human beings for their wrongdoings. Liang also warns in his own articles that, if people do not worship the “superior emperor”, they would suffer catastrophe, and be cast into hell. The impression of a violent angry “superior emperor” is inherited by Hong and his kingdom. In Hong’s opinion, God is depicted as a furious emperor.

Although Liang points out that people should worship God and be content with their life, some verses in Morrison’s translation are ambiguous, and has the potential to radical misinterpretations. It is estimated that at least 5 chapters of the translation could lead to serious misunderstanding, and they are closely related to Hong’s political agenda. For example, Liang cites Isaiah 45:12 in his third volume to explain the almighty of God:

Example 3.1-6:

KJV: I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. (Isaiah 45:12)

Morrison: 我原造此地，并在地上之人，我造化他，又我手张开其诸天，并与天之诸军，我皆然给之以命也。 [I originally made this earth, and the men on the earth. I made them, and my hand stretched out the heavens, and the armies of heaven. I give them all to command].

Liang: 我原造斯地，并地上之人，皆我造化也，我又以手张开其诸天，并天之诸军，我皆然给与之以命也。 [I originally made the earth, and the men on the earth. They are all my creation. And I, with my hands, stretched out the heavens, and the armies of heaven. I give them all to command]. (Liang, 1985, p. 171)

The verse originally means that God creates and controls everything. The biggest problem is the term “诸军” (armies), the translation of “host”. Indeed, the word “host” is frequently used in the Old Testament as a military term (e.g. Genesis 21:22, Judges 4:2, 1 Samuel 12:9). But when it has to do with God’s creation in heaven, it refers to the stars, as can be seen from Genesis 2:1: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them”. According to Newell, the heavenly bodies (the Sun, the Moon, and stars) were considered arranged correspondingly with the earthly armies. Thus the military term was preserved in the verse (Newell, n.d.). But it by no means refers to a real organization of armies in heaven. However, the translation “天之诸军” could easily arouse Chinese readers’ interpretation of real armies, for it reminds them of the Chinese image of “天兵天将” (heavenly armies and heavenly generals) in Chinese myth, which is an image of heavenly military forces that are widely known in the culture. After reading Liang’s book, Hong started mentioning heavenly armies. For example, he claimed that in the dream, he had commanded an army of angels to fight against demons. After he woke up and read Liang’s book, he claimed that the book proved what he had seen. Later, in his article “原道觉世训” (*The Original Path of Teaching of Realizing the Age*), Hong stressed that the “superior emperor” had “设有其神使千千万万在天上，任其差遣” (thousands of heavenly officers up in heaven at his command) (Hong, 1979, p. 19). In an oral account of his conversation with Xiao Chaogui (萧朝贵) in 1848, Hong recalled the army of angels he had fought with in his dream as the “天兵天将” (heavenly armies and heavenly generals) (*Heavenly Brother’s Holy Edicts*, 2004, pp. 247-248). In the authorized version of the Taiping Bible, Hong annotated in Revelation that (天将天兵...降世诛妖) “the heavenly generals and heavenly armies... slaughtered the devils on the earth” (Hong, 2004, p. 354). In addition, According to Hamberg’s oral account of Hong Rengan (洪仁玕, Hong Xiuquan’s cousin), Hong Xiuquan did not correctly grasp the meaning of some of the sentences in Liang’s book, especially the pronouns such as “我” (I, me) and 汝 (you) in the biblical chapters. If the messages resonated with him, Hong would interpret the pronouns as referring to himself (Hamberg, 1852, pp. 22-23). Based on Hong’s interpretation of heavenly armies, which appeared soon after he had read Liang’s book, we can infer that it originated from the confusing translation of the “host” in Liang’s book mentioned above.

Another example is the translation of Romans 13:1-2 cited in the fifth volume of Liang's book. It also has the potential of misunderstanding:

Example 3.1-7

KJV: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (Romans 13:1-2).

Morrison: 各灵皆宜伏上权，盖权无非由神。且所有权者，皆神命之。是以抗权者，抗神之例。且伊抗者，自取罪罚 [Every soul should be subject unto the high power. For the power comes from nowhere but the god. And anyone with the power is appointed by the god. Therefore any resistance against the power is against the ordinance of the god. And the one who resists, receives to himself punishment].

Liang: 各有灵志者皆宜伏上权，盖权无非由神。且所有权者，皆神命之。是以抗权者，抗神之例。且伊抗者，自取罪罚 [Every person with soul and ambition should be subject to the high power. For the power comes from nowhere but the god. And anyone with the power is appointed by the god. Therefore any resistance against the power is against the ordinance of the god. And the one who resists, receives to himself punishment]. (Liang, 1985, p. 269)

Liang only adds “志” (ambition) after “灵” (soul), and it does not significantly distort the original translation. The problem lies in Morrison's translation of “上权” (higher powers). The phrase “higher powers” in the original text refers to human rulers, and it reveals Paul's political attitude. That is, there should be no (physical) resistance against the Roman empire. So Paul is advising believers to be subject to the empire's governance. The verse also echoes one of the themes of Liang's book, that people should lead a contented and peaceful life. However, without any commentary or effective revision, the verse could cause a serious misunderstanding as well. The reason is that it is difficult for a Chinese reader to read the term “上权” (higher power) without associating it with “上帝” (superior emperor). Although the back translations of the

terms are different. The two Chinese terms share the same character “上”, which means “higher” or “superior”. So a Chinese reader could easily interpret the term as a simplified version of “上帝之权” (the power of the superior emperor). Then the whole translation would convey a message that, God gives his higher power to someone who has soul and ambition, and all people should obey this person. As mentioned before, Hong tended to interpret any verses that were in accordance with his own views. He believed that he had been given the power to slaughter the devil in heaven (Hamberg, 1836), so if “上权” is understood as God’s power, the translation seems to reassure to him that he has the privilege of being appointed by the superior emperor. Moreover, the excerpted chapter following this example is Genesis 19, which depicts God’s destruction of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In such a textual context, the narrative about “上权” would seem to warn readers that they should obey the higher power of the superior emperor and the person he appoints, whom, in Hong’s mind, refers to himself. When and after establishing the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, he kept pointing out that his power had been appointed by the superior emperor (e.g. Hong, 1957, pp. 631-650).

In addition to believing that his power came from God, Hong also claimed that the Qing government as the devil, and it has close relationship to Liang's excerpt of the following verses:

Example 3.1-8

KJV: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:10-13)

Morrison: 若余列弟兄，汝当因主且厥德之力，坚毅，执着神之全军器，以能立住敌魔鬼之诡计，盖吾侪战斗非与血肉，乃与群宗，与群能，与此世黑

暗之长也，与空中恶风，是故汝当持神之全武器，以能敌于恶日，而保全立止 [My brothers, you should rely on the lord and the power of his might. Persist. Hold the whole amour of the god, so that you could stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not fighting against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the wicked wind in the air. Therefore you should hold the whole weapon of the god, so that you may be able to fight in the evil day, and stand with all].

Liang: 若余列兄弟，汝等当因救主且厥德之力，坚毅，执着神之全军器，以能立住敌魔鬼之诡计。盖吾侪战斗，非与血肉，乃与群宗，群能，与此世黑暗之长也，与空中恶风。是故汝等当持神之全武器，以能敌于恶日，而保全立止 [My brothers, you should rely on the savior lord and the power of his might. Persist. Hold the whole amour of the god, so that you could stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not fighting against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the wicked wind in the air. Therefore you should hold the whole weapon of the god, so that you may be able to fight in the evil day, and stand with all]. (Liang, 1985, p. 467)

Liang only alters two words, replacing “弟兄” with “兄弟” (which are synonyms), and “主” (lord) with “救主” (savior lord) (as mentioned before, Liang tries to refer “主” exclusively to “救主” (savior lord, i.e. Jesus)). This example is not so much an illustration of a confusing translation but one of ambiguous biblical verses. The original theme of the verses is similar to the previous example. Paul tries to convince believers not to fight against the Roman empire, but against the devil. In other words, the enemies are not human, but spiritual beings. Liang holds a similar perspective. He keeps proposing that people should stay virtuous, stop worshipping idols, and devote themselves to the superior emperor, no matter they are rich or poor. The problem is the ambiguity of the translations “群宗” (principalities), “群能” (powers), and “此世黑暗之长” (rulers of the darkness of this world). Both the original text and the translation are equivocal in what they refer to, and it leaves the readers to decipher them by themselves. Liang’s attack on Chinese traditional thoughts (i.e. Confucianism,

Buddhism and Taoism) in his first volume becomes a clue for a reader like Hong to fill in the interpretation gap. As a result, the verse could lead to two distinctive interpretations. One is the original thought prevalent in the Pauline Epistles, i.e. believers should fight against spiritual devils instead of the earthly monarchy. This is the message that Liang intended to convey as well. On the contrary, it could also be interpreted that the monarchy is the earthly form of the spiritual devils. After all, the phrase “此世黑暗之长” (the rulers of the darkness of this world) seems to imply a connection between the devil and worldly rulers.⁵ This is the view held by Hong and his kingdom. Hong’s actions illustrate the second misinterpretation: in 1843, immediately after reading Liang’s book, Hong enthusiastically destroyed all idols he came across near his hometown. In 1845, before reading the entire Bible (he did that in 1847), Hong started to preach that Chinese rulers who had claimed themselves to be emperors or worshipped wicked gods are all devils (Hong, 1979, pp. 20-22). Finally, after reading the Bible and establishing his kingdom, Hong developed his interpretation into one with political and violent overtones: the Qing government is the devil. The Taiping publications kept emphasizing that the Qing government and the Manchus were not human beings, but devils (e.g. *Essays on Condemning the Evil Cave for Sinful Cities* published in 1853, cited in *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Publications*, 1979).

Apart from the above mentioned four examples, there are two other translations that are misleading, and related to Hong’s political agenda.

Example 3.1-9:

KJV: Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19).

Morrison: 故不论何人犯其律诫之至小，或教他人犯之者，则于天之王必被称至小也。惟不论何人守其律诫而教人者，其则称大于天之王也 [So whoever violates even the least commandment, or teaches others to violate it,

⁵ It needs to be pointed out that the second view resonates with the theme in Revelation as well, which was particularly favored by Hong.

shall be called the least in/before the kingship/king of heaven. But whoever follows and teaches others, shall be called great in/before the kingship/king of heaven].

Liang: 故不论何人犯其律诫之至小，或教他人犯之者，则于天之王必被称至小也。惟不论何人守其律诫而教人者，其则称大于天之王也 [So whoever violates even the least commandment, or teaches others to violate it, shall be called the least in/before the kingship/king of heaven. But whoever follows and teaches others, shall be called great in/before the kingship/king of heaven]. (Liang, 1985, p. 53)

The problem here is the phrase “天之王” (king/kingship of heaven). which is the translation of “kingdom of God”. As the term means the sovereignty of God, we could ascertain that Morrison uses “王” (king) as a term to convey the kingship or the sovereignty, instead of the title of a king. However, it is almost impossible for a Chinese reader to interpret “王” as an abstract concept for “kingship”. Instead, it is quite easy for them to understand it as a king in heaven, especially when there was a god called “天王” (heavenly king) in Chinese myth. The whole verse could then be understood as that anyone who follows the commandments and teaches other people could be called a great heavenly king in the kingdom of heaven. This is reminiscent of Hong’s acts after establishing his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. He called himself the “heavenly king”, and appeared as the authority of God’s teachings.

The translation of Jeremiah 23 is also misleading and closely related to the development of Hong’s faith:

Example 3.1-10:

KJV: The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:28)

Morrison: 达未来者见梦，则可宜梦示，且有了我言之人，则可诚然而讲我言也。其糠与其麦何相比得乎？是乃神主所言也 [Those who see the future

have the dream, could tell what the dream shows. And the person who has my word, could faithfully speak my word. How could the chaff compared to the wheat? This is the words of the god Ye Huo Hua].

Liang: 达未来者见梦，则可宜梦示，且有了我言之人，则可诚然而讲我之言也。其糠与其麦何相比得乎？是乃神爷火华之言也 [Those who see the future have the dream, could tell what the dream shows. And the person who has my word, could faithfully speak my word. How could the chaff compared to the wheat? This is the words of the god Ye Huo Hua]. (Liang, 1985, p. 398)

The verse stresses that people should only believe the vision of genuine prophets, not false ones. But the translation seems to assure the reader of the genuineness of any dreams or visions. As mentioned before, Hong had a peculiar vision before his intensive reading of Liang's book in 1837. After the vision and the encounter with Liang's book, he firmly believed that Liang's book proves the authenticity of his vision. He asserted that the book was a book granted from heaven, and the superior emperor had spoken to him. He kept mentioning his dream in most of the Taiping publications and in his annotation of the Bible. The vision was regarded as the evidence and foundation of his belief. Although Hong did not elaborate which part of Liang's book had influenced him the most, considering that the important role of the vision in Hong's beliefs, we can infer that the verse on visions would be quite attractive to him, but could also be easily misunderstood by him.

In summary, Liang's selection and arrangement of Morrison's translation reveals his purpose and emphasis on the message that he intends to convey. Combined with the themes in his articles, Liang tries to use Morrison's translation to preach a peaceful faith: the "superior emperor" is almighty; all the people should worship him, and believe in the savior lord "Ye Su"; people should lead a peaceful and contented life, so that they could be granted eternal bliss in heaven; if not, they would be cast into hell and suffer. Liang alters the wording and grammar of Morrison's translation with the aim of making it more readable to Chinese readers. However, some of the alterations, especially his change of the title of God, and the distinction between God (the superior emperor) and Jesus (Ye Su), influenced Hong's interpretation of the doctrines. In addition, the ambiguity of certain verses in Morrison's translation also caused Hong to

misinterpret the biblical texts. Hong's reaction and activities after reading Liang's book reveals that, rather than pursuing a peaceful and content life proposed by Liang, Hong fused his new interpretation with his ideal and developed a mutated form of Christian doctrines.

3.2 Liang Fa's Interpretation of the Christian

Doctrines

The previous section focuses on Liang's excerption and alteration of Morrison's translation, as well as its impact on Hong. This section will mainly discuss Liang's own interpretation of Christian doctrines and its relationship with Hong's faith. The second chapter mentioned the major difference of doctrines between the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Christianity. The Taiping's doctrines, such as the denial of Jesus as God, the appointment of the title of Holy Ghost (holy wind) to Yang Xiuqing, and the ideal of establishing the kingdom of heaven on the earth, could be traced back to Liang's book.

Liang (1985) explains the relationship between the Bible and his own book that the Bible is the "genuine scriptures and gospels", which was translated by "Western scholars" that were commanded by the divine heavenly superior emperor. He also asserts that the Chinese translation of the Bible conveys the essential meaning of the Scriptures, and that the message in the translation can save the Chinese people from evil rituals such as worshipping the Buddha and other wrong gods. In addition, he claims that it can retrieve them from the swamp of sins, and offer them the path to redemption and eternal life. On the other hand, his book, according to Liang, "excerpt a few chapters from the authentic scriptures [Morrison's translation], which touch upon the essential teachings of the life and the soul. The meaning is profound, but the wordings are easy to grasp...The book is divided into brief and portable volumes, so that readers could easily understand the contents" (pp. 362-363).

Regarding the so-called "essential teachings of the life and the soul", Liang does not introduce Christian doctrines systematically or chronologically. Neither does he elaborate the historical background of the Bible. Since the main theme of his book is to admonish Chinese society, he picks out verses and chapters that can support the theme.

He first condemns the phenomena of moral corruption, such as the worship of idols, exploitation, and selfishness. Then he offers the solutions of Christianity, which can be generalized as following four doctrines:

1. Worship no idols;
2. Worship the divine heavenly superior emperor;
3. Belief in the savior Ye Su's redemption for all human beings;
4. Belief that the redemption can save the soul after death, and take it to heaven, while disbelief would cast the soul into hell.

Among the four points, the first one (worshipping no idols) is the closest to Christian doctrine. It was also embraced by Hong. However, the remaining three doctrines deviate from Christianity to some extent. They are related to two Christian doctrines, i.e., the Trinity and the kingdom of heaven. The doctrines improperly represented in Liang's book have a profound influence on Hong's understanding of his identity and ideals. This section will focus on Liang's deviation from the two Christian doctrines, and discuss the impact on Hong.

3.2.1. The Trinity

The previous section points out that Liang tries to distinguish God and Jesus by modifying the character “主” (lord). He does not give a clear and detailed explanation on the doctrine of the Trinity in his book. The Trinity refers to the Father, Jesus the Son, and Holy Spirit as the three persons of God, and they all share equal status. Some scholars comment that Liang's book illustrates the doctrine of the Trinity (e.g. Lu, 1985, Liang, 2007). Liang (2007) even comments that Liang “kept a felicitous balance between one essence and three godheads, and avoided Tritheism” (p. 352). Such a comment is far from true. What Liang's book reveals is neither the Trinity nor Tritheism, but purely monotheism. It separates Jesus and the Holy Spirit from God. Although Liang keeps mentioning the contribution of the savior lord “Ye Su” (Jesus),

who atoned for all human beings, and although he mentions the “holy divine wind” (Holy Ghost) several times, the narrative and the titles for Jesus and the Holy Ghost are very misleading.

Take the relationship between Jesus and the Father for example. In the beginning of Liang’s book, what readers encounter is a rephrasing of Genesis 3, i.e., Adam and Eve’s seduction by the serpent. Liang stresses afterward that, because the “primitive man and woman” (元始男女) has violated the “heavenly great law” (天条大律), the god Ye Huo Hua (神爷火华) banished them from the “garden of euphoria” (极乐园). As a result, Liang continues, the man and the woman brought chaos to the world, and every person has evil inside them. In the second chapter, Liang criticizes the superficialness of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in Chinese history, and stresses that only the god Ye Huo Hua (神爷火华), is the one true god. Liang explains that he is also called the divine heavenly superior emperor (神天上帝), who is the great father of all human beings of the world. After this is an excerpt from Isaiah 1 (which, as mentioned before, had been altered by Liang): the superior emperor condemns the ignorance of “Yi Se Er and human beings” (以色列及世人, “Yi Se Er” is the transliteration of “Israel”), who violated the teaching of the superior emperor. The chapter warns that all men would be destroyed by the superior emperor unless they follow his teaching and do no harm. The warning is followed by a gospel from a “savior lord” (救主) (excerpt from Matthew 5-7), who proclaims that the poor, the humble, and the people who have pure hearts would be blessed. In addition, the savior lord tells them that “heavenly kingdom belong to you” (天国属伊等), and “you shall be called the offspring of the god” (伊等必将被称为神之子辈), because “heavenly father” (天父) shall bestow everything to them. It is not until the second volume that Liang explains that the so-called “savior lord” is the son of the “divine heavenly superior emperor”. He points out that human beings have sinned, and the divine heavenly superior emperor planned to destroy them. But since the superior emperor had “the grace for all living” (好生之德), he appointed his son Ye Su, to atone for all human beings. Therefore, Liang concludes, anyone who believes in the savior lord’s atonement, would be forgiven by the superior emperor, and be brought to heaven to experience eternal happiness.

With such kind of narrative, what readers encounter is a mighty god called the divine heavenly superior emperor. Then, they come across a man called Ye Su, who appears as a spokesman describing the wonder of the superior emperor's heavenly kingdom. In the remaining volumes, the Father is by no doubt the protagonist in Liang's narrative. Liang describes him as the only god who created everything, as the "divine father in heaven" (神父在天者), as the "king of ten thousand kings, the lord of ten thousand nations, [the ruler] of the universe" (万王之王、万国之主、宇宙之内[的主宰]), and he is "everywhere, knows everything, capable of everything, holds all happiness" (无所不在, 无所不知, 无所不能, 无福不备). Jesus, on the other hand, is described as the "savior lord" (救世主), who is "the son of the superior emperor", who was sentenced to death on a cross but resurrected because he had "the divinity of the god" (神之妙性). Jesus spread the gospels to the people, and was brought to heaven after forty days. At last, Liang emphasizes that, as long as the reader believes the savior lord Ye Su's credit for atonement, they could be forgiven by the superior emperor, and their soul would be brought to heaven after the death of the body. With such a narrative, it is impossible for the readers to to equate Jesus with God, whereas it is easy for them to distinguish between the two completely, that the "superior emperor" is the emperor, while "Ye Su" is someone else. In addition, since the Father is called the "emperor", it is easy for a Chinese reader to infer that the son of the "emperor" is a prince (Hong interpreted in this way). With such logic, there is no way that Jesus could be God.

There is only one instance in Liang's book that hints at the unification of the Father and Jesus. In the third volume of his book, Liang points out that Ye Su and the superior emperor are of "one nature and one body" (一性一体) (Liang, 1985, p. 140). However, a single hint in Liang's book would be far from enough for Chinese readers to take up such a new idea; after all, Chinese tradition distinguishes between fathers and sons, and Liang's narrative in the rest of the book suggests the strict distinction between Jesus as a person and the superior emperor as a god ("Ye Su" is described as a person killed on a cross, who later was resurrected and ascended into heaven; whereas the superior emperor is a god who is "everywhere, knows everything, and capable of everything" (Liang, 1985, p. 242). At most, a Chinese reader would understand the two according to China's traditional moral order, i.e., they would understand them with a

father-son or a emperor-official relationship. In fact, it is very probable that Liang did not understand the relationship between the Father and Jesus properly. After all, he never states in his book that Jesus is God. Hong obviously interpreted the relationship in the Chinese traditional way, therefore he kept emphasizing that Jesus was God's son, but Jesus himself was not God. It is one of the prominent points in his Taiping authorized version of the Bible.

In addition to the distinction between Jesus and God, Liang almost neglects the role of the Holy Ghost. The title was translated by Morrison as “圣神风” (holy divine wind), “神风” (divine wind), or “圣风” (holy wind), all of which can be seen in Liang’s book. The titles appear only ten times in the whole book. Here are three examples that serve to illustrate Liang’s interpretation of the concept:

1. Before transcending to heaven, the savior lord “Ye Su” claims that he would “圣神风赐赋各师徒，能明知神天上帝之旨意，深知旧经奥义，乃作救世新经之理” [bestow the teachers and disciples via the holy divine wind, so that they can comprehend the decree of the divine heavenly superior emperor, and understand that the profound meaning in the old scriptures are written to support the argumentation in the world-saving new scriptures]. (Liang, 1985, p. 144)
2. Liang points out that the people who believe in the savior lord Ye Su and follows the doctrine of the gospel of salvation, will be forgiven by the superior emperor, and “获圣神风之恩，暗助除去诸般不义之事” [be granted the grace of holy divine wind, which will help them rid of all kinds of unrighteousness]. (Liang, 1985, p. 234)
3. “除了这至尊独一真活神天上帝称父子圣风者之外，其余人类所立之神佛菩萨等，皆不是神，亦不该奉拜的” [Except for this superior only true living divine heavenly superior emperor, who is called the father son holy spirit, other gods, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, which are built by human beings, should not be worshipped]. (Liang, 1985, p. 345)

The significant feature of Morrison’s translations of “Holy Spirit” or “Holy Ghost” is that they all contain the character “风” (wind). This is not surprising, because originally,

the terms in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions have the connotation of “breath” or “wind” (Achtmeier, 1996, p. 432). When he was translating this term, Morrison referred to a seventeenth-century translation done by a Catholic missionary called Jean Basset. Basset’s version was translated from the Vulgate version, and the connotation of the term in Latin was retained in Basset’s translation, such as “神风” (divine wind) and “圣神风” (holy divine wind). Then, Morrison adopted Basset’s translation of the term, without realizing the potential problems.⁶ In Chinese, the compounds “圣神” or “神” could be easily understood as “圣神的风” (holy god’s wind) or “神的风” (god’s wind). In other words, the wind seems like an object that belongs to “圣神” (holy god) or “神” (god). In addition, the verbs further strengthen the potential misimpression. Liang keeps using verbs such as “赐赋” (bestow) and “获” (granted, receive), bringing an impression that the wind is a gift from the holy god or the superior emperor.

The only exception is the third example. This is the only case when Liang mentions the three godheads in a single sentence. But the expression is obscure, and he does not give any explanation. Given that the sentence appears in the seventh volume of the nine-volume book while the preceding volumes have kept emphasizing that “天父上帝” (heavenly father superior emperor) is the only true god, it would be very hard for a Chinese reader to understand the doctrine of the Trinity in a single sentence. Obviously, Hong did not understand it properly. After establishing the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Hong bestowed the title “圣神风” (holy divine wind) to Yang Xiuqing as a reward for his loyalty (*The Book of Edicts of the Heavenly Father during his Descent to Earth*, 2004, p. 28).

Therefore, Liang fails to explain the doctrine of the Trinity.⁷ This leaves a critical interpretative gap that Hong filled on his own: since Ye Su (Jesus) was the son of the superior emperor who was born into the world, he was not the superior emperor. Hong, a mortal like Ye Su, could also call himself the son of the superior emperor, and the younger brother of Ye Su. In addition, “圣神风” became a title in the Taiping Heavenly

⁶ Morrison also translated it into “圣神” in the Epistles. The translation was later adopted by Gützlaff in his new version.

⁷ Lu (1985) concludes that Liang admonishes the “people to believe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to be saved” (p. 111). Obviously this is not true.

Kingdom that could be freely granted to a favored subordinate. The original doctrines were dramatically distorted by Hong.

3.3.2 Kingdom of Heaven

The kingdom of heaven is also known as the kingdom of God. According to Leeb (2003), the concept of “heaven” in Hebrew culture was used to refer to God out of reverence. It does not mean the sky or heaven, nor does the “kingdom” in the term refer to any physical realm or a nation. In fact, the “kingdom of heaven”, refers to the sovereignty of God. In other words, it means the salvation by believing in God and accepting God’s authority. In addition, kingdom of heaven does not refer to a church, because it “is not an organization on the earth” (pp. 84-85). The Taipings, on the other hand, understood it completely differently, and the cause can be traced back to Morrison’s translation and Liang’s interpretation.

Nowadays the Chinese translation “天国” has become an established and well-known Christian term to refer to the kingdom of God. However, when it first appeared in Chinese in the nineteenth century, this strange term could probably lead readers to understand it as a material kingdom built in heaven, and relate it to the concept of “天宫” (heavenly palace) in Chinese myth, which refers to the dwelling place of the gods.

Liang’s book distorts the concept by blending it with the Chinese concept “天堂” (paradise, literally translated as “heavenly hall”). In Christianity, kingdom of heaven and paradise do not mean the same thing, but Liang uses the two concepts as synonyms. Before discussing the term “kingdom of heaven”, it is necessary to discuss Liang’s view of paradise and hell, and the concept of “天” in Chinese culture.

“天堂” (heavenly hall) and “地狱” (underground prison) are Morrison’s translations for “heaven” and “hell”. They are originally Buddhist terms for paradise and hell. Liang puts great emphasis on personal salvation, which is in line with Christian evangelism. But his description of the two concepts conflates Chinese elements. Liang keeps stressing that a man should do good works and be charitable, so that after the death the soul could be brought up to heaven and enjoy eternal bliss. In his mind, the main

content of the Bible is “人死后报应天堂地狱之赏罚” (the reward and punishment of heavenly hall and underground prison after men’s death). By “reward and punishment” he means that “善人死后其灵魂有天堂永福可享” (good man’s soul shall enjoy the eternal bliss of heavenly hall) and “恶人死后灵魂有地狱永祸可受” (evil man’s soul shall suffer eternal disaster of underground prison) (Liang, 1985, pp. 346-357). He describes “天堂” (heavenly hall) as follows: “圣洁安乐之所……夫如此清洁之堂，必要有如此圣洁之人，方能居住之” (a pure and peaceful place... such a clean hall, could only be dwelled by pure persons), and “无病无灾，时时极乐，世世无迁” (no disease and no disaster, always blissful, unchanged generations after generations), “夫天堂之福，永乐无穷，虽世上王侯之福，不能比之万分之一” (the happiness of the heavenly hall is eternal bliss; the fortune of the mortal kings and lords, could not be compared to one out of ten thousand of it). On the other hand, he describes “地狱” (underground prison) as an underground world with eternal suffering, in which case “死了之后，没财没势，无亲无友，孤魂只影，无倚无靠，欲想进天福，无神使导引，欲避永苦，众鬼使乱拘打进之” ([the man] after death, [has] no money and no power, no relatives and no friends, forlorn soul and lonely shadow, with no one to rely; [he] intends to enter heavenly happiness, but there is no divine messenger to guide him; [he] wants to void eternal suffering, the spectral messengers arrest and beat him into it) (Liang, 1985, pp. 346-357).

Liang’s conflation of Chinese elements is reflected in the use of culture-loaded expressions. They help readers achieve optimal relevance by relating to scenarios in Chinese myth that they are very familiar with. For example, “报应” (retribution), “赏罚” (reward and punishment), “阳间” (Yang realm, i.e. mortal world), and “阴间” (Yin realm, i.e., the netherworld). They are commonly used in Chinese religions. In addition, the image of an evil man’s death left with “孤魂只影” (forlorn soul with lonely shadow), followed by “众鬼使乱拘打进之” (the spectral messengers arrest and beat him into it), reminds the readers of the scenario of “阴曹地府” (netherworld court) in Chinese culture.

On the other hand, contrary to the vivid description of “地狱” (underground prison), Liang does not describe paradise in detail. Still, the term “天堂” (heavenly hall) alone can easily arouse readers’ optimal relevance to similar images of heaven in Chinese myth and popular religions (e.g. the heavenly court where the Jade Emperor dwells).

It needs to be pointed out that the character “天” (heaven) conveys a sense of divinity and holiness in Chinese discourse. In many cases, it refers to the mysterious deity that dominates the world; whereas in other cases, it refers to the dwelling place of gods. Usually, “天” stands for something that is holier and more powerful than “神” (god), for the latter could refer to any supernatural beings (e.g. god of wind), even a demon. Therefore, Chinese people favor “天” over “神” when referring to the dominate power, and this could be seen from Liang’s preference of “天国” to “神国”. As mentioned before, “天国” is the translation of “kingdom of heaven”, and “神国” or “神之国” is the translation of “kingdom of God”. “Kingdom of heaven” occurs 33 times in the KJV version of the Bible, and can only be found in Matthew’s Gospel; whereas “kingdom of God” occurs 71 times. Obviously the latter is more frequently used in the Bible. However, the former appears more often in Liang’s book. Liang excerpts Matthew 5-7, which is the longest biblical excerpt in his book. In these three chapters, “kingdom of heaven” occurs five times, “kingdom of God” occurs only once (in Matthew 6:33). Here Morrison translates “kingdom of God” as “神之国” (god’s kingdom), and translates “kingdom of heaven” as “天国” (heavenly kingdom) (once), “天之国” (heaven’s kingdom) (three times), or “天之王”⁸ (heaven’s kingship) (once). The contents could also be found in the Gospels of Luke and Mark, where the same concept is called “kingdom of God” (which Morrison translates it as “神国” or “神之国”). But Liang only selects Matthew’s Gospel, loaded with the term “天国”.

Liang’s elaboration of “天国” (heavenly kingdom) distorts the original meaning in Christianity and misleads Hong. Liang explains the term after excerpting Matthew 5-7

⁸ Morrison’s translation (天之王) is consistent with the generally held idea of the kingdom of heaven, which is the sovereignty of God. The character “王” could be understood as a verb, meaning the act of being a king. But it is very easy for a Chinese reader to understand it as a noun, making the expression “天之王” a title (king of heaven). Hong Xiuquan later claimed that he was the “heavenly king”. Hong might also have been affected by this translation, but there is no more evidence to prove that.

that “天国” (heavenly kingdom) is also called “神之国” (god’s kingdom) or “神天之国” (divine heaven’s kingdom). He explains that it has two meanings:

1. “天堂永乐之福，系善人肉身死后，其灵魂享受之真福也” [the eternal happiness of the bliss of the heavenly hall, which is happiness that the soul enjoys after the death of the flesh of the good men];
2. “地上凡敬信救世主耶稣众人，聚集拜神天上帝之公会也” [the public society in which the people, who believe the savior Ye Su, gather and worship divine heavenly superior emperor]. (Liang, 1985, p. 87)

The idea of eternal happiness in “天堂” (heavenly hall) is barely different from Chinese tradition, which tends to describe paradise as a concrete place up in the sky. Therefore, for the first explanation, it is easy for a Chinese reader to equate “天国” (heavenly kingdom) to “天堂” (heavenly hall), and interpret the former as a concrete kingdom, instead of a spiritual realm. Whereas in the second explanation, by reading that “天国” (heavenly kingdom) is a public society in the world, Chinese readers would easily infer that the kingdom could also exist on earth. With such an understanding, they might even find the verses in Matthew (excerpted by Liang in his first volume) quite inspiring: “心贫者为福矣，盖天国属伊等” (the people with unfortunate hearts have been happy, because the heavenly kingdom belongs to them) (Liang, 1985, p. 52).⁹ Hong was obviously inspired. There is a strong connection between the term and his faith. He named his kingdom the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and claimed that it was authorized by the superior emperor. In his annotation in the authorized Taiping Bible, he points out that the kingdom of heaven in heaven is “大天堂” (the big heavenly hall), while the kingdom of heaven on earth is “小天堂” (the small heavenly hall), and both are “天国” (heavenly kingdom) (Hong, 2004, p. 274). Obviously, there is a certain similarity between Hong’s interpretation and Liang’s explanation of the concept. Both of them

⁹ Jesus’ account of the kingdom of heaven is usually seen as a metaphor, which describes a world that people believe in God and full of love. A similar account could be found, for example, in Luke 17: 20-21: “And when he [Jesus] was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you”. Therefore Jesus was by no means referring to establishing a heavenly kingdom on the earth.

understand it as a realm in heaven as well as an organization on earth. Such view clearly runs counter to the interpretation of orthodox Christianity. As mentioned before, the visiting British missionaries directly denied the Taipings' view on the kingdom of heaven and told them that it did not belong to the physical world (cited in Gregory, 1969, p. 191).

3.3 Hong Xiuquan's Interpretation of Liang Fa's Book

After reading *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, Hong abandoned his goal of passing the imperial exam, and turned to worship God. But at this stage he had only read Liang's book, instead of the whole Bible.¹⁰ He learnt the doctrines all by himself, without any official or systematic guidance from any Christian. In other words, despite the fact that the source of his belief was the Bible, he formed his beliefs using Liang's book. As a result, he had to understand the doctrines based on his own interpretation, and the result is further distortion of the original teaching. Liang's book is the first instance of creative interference, and Hong's interpretation could be seen as the second interference. It is best reflected in his early articles and poems penned soon after reading Liang's book (between 1845 to 1846, before reading the Bible). These works reveal how Hong tried to connect his beliefs with society at large and construct meaning based on his own understanding. In addition, these poems can also help us understand how Hong further deviates from the teaching of the Bible on the basis of Liang's book, and to discover the reason behind his later alteration of the Bible.

Many of Hong's early works can no longer be found, the only ones extant are 原道救世歌 (*The Salvation Song of the Original Path*), 百正歌 (*Hundred Righteousness Songs*),

¹⁰ Reilly (2004) points out that, Gützlaff's Chinese Union could have contacted Hong. Therefore he might have read the Bible at a very early stage. Reilly's argument is that, first, the title of Hong's society, the God-worshipping Society, might be inspired from the Chinese Union, because the major sponsor of the Chinese Union, the Basel Mission, used the term "God worshippers" to refer to the believers who had not been baptized; second, some Christian expressions in Hong's early works could not be found in Liang's book, but in Gützlaff's version of the Bible (pp. 70-71). These however, could not prove that Hong had read the entire Bible. It is also likely that Hong only learnt certain Christian teachings or expressions from members of the Chinese Union. The main source of his knowledge would still have been Liang's book. The reason is that neither Hamberg's report on Hong Xiuquan nor the Taiping publications on Hong's early deeds mention that he read any Christian books other than Liang's book in the early days.

原道醒世训 (*The Original Path of Teaching of Awakening the Age*), and 原道觉世训 (*The Original Path Teaching of Realizing the Age*) (they are included in the official publication 太平诏书 (*The Taiping Imperial Edict*) in 1853). The contents of these works are summarized as follows.

In 原道救世歌 (*The Salvation Song of the Original Path*), Hong points out that the Chinese people had worshipped the superior emperor since the opening of heaven and earth by Pan Gu (盘古, the god who created the world in the Chinese myth). Hong condemns the idolatry later became popular in China, and accuses the people of six kinds of unrighteousness. In the end, he claims that he was brought to the heavenly hall and saw the superior emperor, and promised that men could only be saved by believing in the superior emperor.

百正歌 (*Hundred Righteousness Songs*) lists famous righteous people in Chinese history, and illustrates how their righteousness crushed evil, and the songs emphasizes that only righteous men could be brought to the heavenly hall.

原道醒世训 (*The Original Path of Teaching of Awakening the Age*) brings up the ideal of one home under heaven. Hong states that both China and “番国” (alien countries) are ruled by the superior emperor. He cites Confucius’ ideal of “大同” (the great unity, a Chinese traditional utopian vision), and argues that the Chinese people should worship the superior emperor, so that the age of great peace (“太平”, which were later taken as the title of his kingdom: “太平天国”, i.e. the heavenly kingdom of great peace) would arrive.

原道觉世训 (*The Original Path Teaching of Realizing the Age*) claims that all of men’s souls came from the superior emperor. It objects to any form of idol worship of wicked gods. By citing classic Chinese literature, Hong argues that the Chinese people had worshipped the superior emperor since the ancient age. Then he condemns all the Chinese emperors since 秦始皇 (Emperor Qin Shir, who was considered the first emperor of China), because they turned to worship wicked gods, violate the teaching of the superior emperor, and usurp the title of the superior emperor.

We could find a certain degree of similarity between Liang's book and the above-mentioned works by Hong, especially the criticism on Chinese society and the attempt to introduce a new belief as the solution. However, if we consider the doctrines specifically, we find a further deviation. The previous section summarized the themes of Liang's book, which are against idolatry, the worship of the superior emperor, belief in Ye Su's redemption, and salvation. Only the first doctrine is kept intact in Hong's works, who completely accepted it and believed that idolatry is temptation from the evils.¹¹ Hong's most obvious reaction after reading Liang's book was the destruction of idols. He destroyed any idols he could find. Later, the Taiping army kept the tradition, and destroyed any idols or religious buildings that they came across (except for Christian churches). On the other hand, the other three doctrines that Liang proposes are either diminished or deviated. Hong almost ignores the role of Ye Su in his works (he mentions the name only once in *原道觉世训* (*The Original Path of Teaching of Realizing the Age*)). Whereas the other two doctrines are interpreted differently. First, in terms of the interpretation of God, although Hong follows Liang's teaching that the superior emperor is the only ruler and god who created everything in the world, that he is the father of all mankind, and that worshipping the superior emperor is the only path to the heavenly hall, there is a critical distinction between their conception of God. Liang states that the superior emperor has no image nor body (Liang, 1985, pp. 133, 148, 431), whereas Hong implies that the superior emperor is visible and has a body. In addition, Hong adds that God is the emperor ruling the world, but his title is stolen by the Chinese emperors. Secondly, in terms of salvation, Liang stresses personal salvation, whilst Hong intends to extend the mission of salvation to the whole nation. In the discussion below, we will see the political motivation hidden behind Hong's interpretation of God and salvation.

An important factor that leads Hong to interpret God in a more radical way is the Confucianism inherent in Liang's book. These are easily spotted in Liang's book. The most obvious indication is a quote on the cover of the book: “子曰道不远人” (the master said that the path is not far from man). This quote comes from *中庸* (*The State of*

¹¹ Liang usually calls the devil the “serpent devil” because he mentioned the serpent who seduced Adam and Eve in the first volume of his book. Hong used Liang's title as well, but he also called the devil “阎罗妖” (Yama devil) or “老蛇” (old serpent), which were terms created by himself (Hong, 1979, p. 17).

Equilibrium and Harmony), a Confucian classic, which implies a closeness with Chinese tradition. In his book, although Liang criticizes the three mainstream thoughts in China, namely Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, he is more tolerant of Confucianism. While he assails Buddhism and Taoism and condemns them as evil and heretical teachings, Liang's attitude toward Confucianism is more gentle. His comment is that it (Confucianism) "also tends to be false" (亦有偏向虚妄), only because the scholars worshipped the idols of 文昌 (Wen Chang) and 魁星 (Kui Xing) (both of whom are gods in charge of examinations and fortune), which contradicts the Christian doctrine of not worshipping idols. On the other hand, Liang believes that Confucian thoughts are "slightly consistent with the holy principles in the genuine scriptures" (与真经圣理略相符合). The shortcoming, he argues, is that Confucianism only discusses moral principles, but fails touch upon the important issue of souls. Therefore, Liang comments, it misses the essence of wisdom because it ignores the importance of soul. Liang points out that, if a man has no soul, he would not understand Confucian moral principles (Liang, 1985, pp. 25-26, 147, 229). Such an argument seems to imply that, Confucianism coupled with a correct understanding of the soul would be the correct faith.

Liang also quotes Confucian expressions frequently in his book. For example, he points out that "亚丹" (Adam) and "依活" (Eve) before they were tempted by the serpent had been in a state of "人之初性本善" (a human being at birth is naturally good) (Liang, 1985, p. 179). He advises that the "君子" (superior man) who is "修身克己" (cultivating the personal character and self-discipline) does not violate the teaching of the superior emperor for the sake of earthly wealth (Liang, 1985, p. 208). He quotes from Confucian classic "论语" (*The Analects*) that "君子固穷，小人穷斯滥矣" (The superior man may endure poverty, but the mean man loses his disciplines when poverty comes), to advise readers to "存心为善义" (wholeheartedly be kind for righteousness), so that the souls can be blessed (Liang, 1985, p. 246). He explains that "为善为义为君子" (being a kind, just, and superior man) means "其虚灵不昧，良心恒存，五常恒守" (his spiritual soul does not deceive, his conscience prevails, and the five moral principals are constantly followed) (Liang, 1985, p. 379). He quotes from "诗经" (*The Book of Songs*) that "忧悄悄，愠于群小" (My heart is turbulent, I am hated by the

crowd of mean men) to illustrate that a pious man might be despised by other people, but he will be liked by the superior emperor (Liang, 1985, p. 382). When discussing the code of conduct for believers, he points out that they should “非仁爱之事不敢为，非合礼之义不敢行” (do nothing that are not of benevolence, perform nothing that are not of etiquette) (Liang, 1985, p. 429).

Such expressions have a strong Confucian flavor, hence the readers might find it suggests a close relationship between the doctrines Liang's book and the tenets of Confucianism. From the perspective of relevance theory, in the process of communication, the receivers understand and construct meaning via relevance, and a key factor is the state of the knowledge system that the receivers have (Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p. 88). For Hong Xiuquan, who was familiar with Confucianism, the best relevance that he could find when reading the book was on the basis of his knowledge of Confucianism. The Confucian expressions mentioned above could have served as the activators for the relevance.¹² As we could see in his early works, Confucian ideas are constantly referred to when Hong explains the concepts of the superior emperor and salvation, making his points more relevant to the Chinese society and political background.

When elaborating the concept of the superior emperor, Hong tried to find its relevance to Chinese tradition. His approach is similar to Matteo Ricci's. Ricci found it effective to attract Chinese intellectuals to Christianity by relating the doctrines with Chinese tradition that they were familiar with and venerated. Ricci tried to convince them that Chinese classics had recorded the worship of God. One of the most important arguments that he made is that “上帝” as a superior god was written in the Chinese classics. In other words, the intellectuals educated as Confucian scholars, tend to believe evidence that are related to their most cherished classics. Hong makes a similar argument. He connects the title “上帝” with existing Chinese concepts. In his early

¹² Liang attended private school for four years. That is why he was so familiar with these basic Confucian teachings. But obviously he was not so familiar with the literature as Hong was.

works, he called the superior emperor “皇天” (imperial heaven), “天帝” (heavenly monarch), “天” (heaven), and “皇上帝” (imperial heavenly emperor).¹³

Indeed, there are some similarities between the Chinese concept of a supreme divine being and the Christian concept of God. Wang (1985) points out that Hong’s interpretation of the Christian God is influenced by Confucianism and Mohism. Confucian classics mention a god who ruled the world; whereas the concept of “天” (heaven) in Mohism refers to a divine and personal being with a will, which partially coincides with the Christian concept of God (pp. 275-288). So Hong understood the Christian God on the basis of the Chinese concept of “天”, which seems to suggest that he believed that the superior emperor had no shape and no image.

However, Hong also paid particular attention to the character “帝” (emperor), and tried to imply that the superior emperor had an image like an emperor (This could be influenced by Liang’s metaphor of the gospels as deeds from an emperor). Such intention could be seen in his early works. For example, he claimed that he had seen the superior emperor in heaven (Hong, 1979, p. 13). Moreover, he explained the relationship between the superior emperor and men with the Confucian idea of the emperor and officials, emphasizing that only the superior emperor could be called “emperor”, and no other person had the right to this title. In the Chinese tradition, if an official usurps the position of the emperor, he would be considered morally corrupt and unacceptable. Hong held the same idea. In order to support his view, he pointed out that even Jesus, whom he considered the prince, merely called himself “主” (lord) (it is much less noble than 帝 in Chinese).

Therefore, although Hong’s understanding of “上帝” (superior emperor) incorporate philosophical concepts of “天” (heaven) in Chinese tradition, he also blends into Confucian thoughts on emperor. The latter reflects that he understood God as a god with a physical body. In addition, his interpretation is more politics oriented. He related the concept of superior emperor with the religious term “天” (heaven), and sanctified the

¹³ “皇上帝” is Gützlaff’s translation of God in the Old Testament, Hong might get to know the title from his contact with the Chinese Union (See Reilly 2004, 70).

title with the flavor of Chinese philosophy. Then he relate the concept to the emperor, implying a political prestige of the superior emperor. As a result, the interpretation makes his condemnation of Chinese society more grounded: worshipping the superior emperor is an ancient tradition, and any individual or government against the superior emperor would be violating Chinese moral principles.

In his later works, Hong's description of God's image became more and more detailed. He claimed that God was the old man that he had met in heaven in his vision. In addition, he claimed that there was a grand family in heaven: it was composed of the heavenly father (God), the heavenly brother (Jesus), heavenly mother, heavenly sister-in-law (Jesus' wife), children of Jesus, and the heaven was protected by heavenly soldiers and generals (Hong, 2004, p. 346). Through different stages of interpretation, Hong blended into more elements of the Chinese tradition of government and family, making the spiritual concepts from the Bible more relevant to Chinese readers. Such interpretations also became the basis for his religious and political agenda (such as the idea that God and Jesus came down to earth, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was the kingdom of heaven, and Hong was the second son of God). Therefore, although Hong's new interpretation originates from Liang, it is much more radical and political.

Another major difference between Hong's and Liang's interpretations is salvation. Liang's book is concerned with individual salvation. He keeps pointing out that as long as people piously worship the superior emperor, trust Jesus, and be kind, their soul would be brought to heaven after death, otherwise it would be cast down to hell (esp. in volume 1, 2, and 5 of the book). Reilly (2004) points out that Liang's idea of salvation is similar to Protestant Evangelism, which mainly concerns the individual instead of the whole society (p. 64). In other words, although Liang condemns Chinese society in the book, what he really cares about is how the individual could save his soul by believing in God.

The only exception is an article in volume seven of Liang's book (see Liang, 1985, pp. 357-368). The style of the article is quite unique in his book. The article reads like a warning, whereas the tone in other articles are more moderate.¹⁴ The main difference is

¹⁴ The discussion here concerns Liang's self penned articles. His excerpts from the Old Testament contain more warnings. See 3.1.2.

that Liang usually would only admonish readers to follow the teaching of the gospels and believe in the superior emperor, while this article warns readers that catastrophes would come if readers do not pay attention to the teachings. It is this article that has the closest connection with Hong's works. There are three prominent similarities. First, the article strongly warns readers of the danger of not believing in the superior emperor. Hong's works maintained the same tone, and he wrote that “顺天者存逆天亡” (the ones that follow the heaven stay and the ones that rebel become extinct) (Hong, 1979, p. 14). Second, it is the first and only time that Liang mentions the Ten Commandments, and Hong's early works contain a revised version of them (Hong, 1979, p. 19). The Ten Commandments was Hong's most fundamental doctrine, and he could have been inspired by the article concerned. Third, it is the only occasion in Liang's book that envisions an ideal society that worship the superior emperor. He writes:

倘若全国之人，遵信而行者，贫者守分而心常安，富者慕善义，心亦常乐，上不违逆神天上帝之旨，下不干犯王章法度，不独贪慕世乐之欢，不空费光阴之宝，君政臣忠，父慈子孝，官清民乐，永享太平之福，将见夜不闭户，道不拾遗的清平好世界矣 [If the people of the whole nation follows the doctrines, if the poor behave themselves and are satisfied, and the rich are kind and happy, if they do not violate either the edict from the divine heavenly superior emperor or the laws of the government, if they do not cling to the earthly joy and waste their precious time in vain, if the rulers are responsible and the officials are loyal, the fathers gentle and the sons obedient, the government honest and the people joyful, enjoying the happiness of the Taiping (great peace), there would be a peaceful and good world where no one needs to shut the doors at night, and no one loses their belongs on the road]. (Liang, 1985, p. 365-366)

The ideal society that Liang depicts is very close to Confucius' thoughts on a society of “大同” (great unity). In one of his early articles, Hong quotes Confucius' words on “大同”:

是故孔丘曰，大道之行也，天下为公，选贤与能，讲信修睦。故人不独亲其亲，不独子其子，使老有所终，壮有所用，幼有所长，鳏寡孤独废疾者皆有

所养。男有分，女有归。货恶其弃于地也，不必藏于己；力恶其不出于身也，不必为己。是故奸邪谋闭而不兴，盗窃乱贼而不作，故外户而不闭，是谓大同 [Therefore Confucius said: “When the Grand course was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky; they chose men of talents, virtue, and ability; their words were sincere, and what they cultivated was harmony. Thus men did not love their parents only, nor treat as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up to the young. They showed kindness and compassion to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they were all sufficiently maintained. Males had their proper work, and females had their homes. They accumulated articles of value, disliking that they should be thrown away upon the ground, but not wishing to keep them for their own gratification. They laboured with their strength, disliking that it should not be exerted, but not exerting it only with a view to their own advantage. In this way selfish schemings were repressed and found no development. Robbers, filchers, and rebellious traitors did not show themselves, and hence the outer doors remained open, and were not shut. This was the period of what we call the Grand Union] (Hong, 1979, p. 16) (English translation by James Legge (1976)).

Then, Hong immediately associates “大同” with worshipping the superior emperor:

惟愿天下凡间我们兄弟姐妹，跳出邪魔之鬼门，循行上帝之真道，时凛天威，力遵天诫，相与淑身淑世，相与正己正人，相与作中流之砥柱，相与挽已倒之狂澜。行见天下一家，共享太平 [I wish our brothers and sisters in this world, jump out of the evil gate of the wicked devils, and follow the true teaching of the superior emperor. Always stay humble before the heavenly might, strive to follow the heavenly doctrines...then we shall see one family under heaven, sharing the Taiping (great peace)] (Hong, 1979, p. 16).

Obviously, Hong’s vision of the ideal society is a combination of God-worshipping and Confucian ideal of the Great Union. It becomes the embryo of his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The idea very probably is inspired with Liang’s article on an ideal society.

More importantly, the term “太平” (Taiping, i.e. great peace) appears in Liang’s article, which also reflects a strong connection between the article and Hong’s ideal. The term constitutes the title of Hong’s kingdom. It appears only two times in Liang’s book., and both of them are related to Hong’s political agenda. One is found in the article concerned, and it depicts the ultimate status of the ideal society. The second time is in a paraphrase of Luke 2:14 (an angel’s praise on Jesus’ birth) in the third volume of Liang’s book. Hong later annotated in Gützlaff’s version on the same verse (which also contains the term 太平) that it symbolized the arrival of his kingdom.

Another idea that is closely related to salvation is social equality. The idea could be inferred from the Bible, especially from the doctrines in the New Testament (e.g. Matthew 5-7). Liang’s book also implies it to a certain extent (e.g., Liang, 1985, p. 151), but it does not encourage any political reform. In fact, what it proposes is that people should be contented with their life, because they are regarded the same in front of the divine father in heaven (Liang, 1985, p. 151), and that regardless of whether they are rich or poor, all people are created by the superior emperor, the only difference is that they are judged to be either good and evil after their death (Liang, 1985, p. 386-394). Liang also mentions the criticisms from Confucian scholars who regarded worshipping the superior emperor as nonsense. They suggested that, according to the tradition, the worship of heaven had been a privilege for the emperor and high officials, while it had been a taboo for the ordinary people to do so.¹⁵ They also pointed out that only the souls of the emperors and great ministers could rise up to heaven and rule the people, while the souls of ordinary people would vanish. Liang did not disagree with the Confucian scholars’ view directly. On the contrary, he only comments that the teachings of the superior emperor is genuine, but that everyone has the personal freedom to decide whether to follow it or not (Liang, 1985, pp. 349-357). Obviously, his comment has no political implications at all. He does not object to the Confucian scholars’ view on privilege and hierarchy, and he does not propose a complete social reform. What he keeps reminding in the book is that people should stay grateful and be satisfied in the mortal world, because what it really matters is the world after their death.

¹⁵ It also reflects Liang attempts to imply that the worship of heaven in China is the same as the worship of God.

On the other hand, Hong interprets a political implication from Liang's narrative on salvation. First, he points out that both the emperor and the ordinary people could worship heaven, and all souls will go either to heaven or hell, regardless of whether they were rich or poor. Then, he questions the Chinese emperors' exclusive privilege to worship:

开辟真神惟上帝，无分贵贱拜宜虔……天人一气理无二，何得君王私自专
[The world was created by the genuine god superior emperor. No distinction between rich or poor we should all worship him...Heaven and men are of the same essence and there is not a second truth. Why do the kings have the exclusive privilege of being able to worship?]. (Hong, 1979, p. 10)

It resonates with Liang's response to Confucian scholars, but Hong's tone is sterner against the traditional view. Hong condemns kings' for their wicked deeds of violating the teaching of the superior emperor and worshipping evil idols. He points out that the superior emperor is "the most mighty and the most manifested genuine god, and the heavenly father of all beings under heaven" (至灵至显之真神，天下凡间大共之天父) (Hong, 1979, p. 20). Therefore, Hong promises, the people who worship the superior emperor will be blessed:

生前皇上帝看顾，死后魂升天堂，永远在天上享福，何等快活威风 [When alive they could be looked after by the superior emperor. after death their souls will be brought to heaven, forever in heaven and enjoy happiness, how joyful and prestigious it would be]. (Hong, 1979, p. 22)

To summarize, Hong infers political equality from Christian doctrine of salvation. Together with his understanding of God, he attacks Chinese monarchs for their hubris: the Chinese emperors were so arrogant that they called themselves "emperors" and worshipped wicked idols. In addition, they deprived ordinary people of the right to worship heaven and stopped them from worshipping the heavenly father who had created them all. Therefore, in Hong's perspective, Chinese emperors were both morally disloyal and disobedient (Hong, 1985, pp. 16-22). By proposing his ideas on the grounds of Chinese tradition, Hong's early works become an appeal to return to Chinese

tradition, rather than conversing to a foreign religion. He adds a sense of mission for himself, and expands the worship of God and salvation mission to the whole of society.

3.4 Hong Xiuquan's Interpretation of the Bible

The previous section illustrated that Hong further deviated from what Liang had changed from the Christian doctrines, and established a faith of his own. However, despite his aggressive and ambitious claims, Hong did not form the idea of overthrowing the government immediately after he had read Liang's book. His main target at first was Chinese tradition. He destroyed idols and openly attacked Chinese traditional thoughts. He encouraged people to believe in the superior emperor, stay decent and honest. He even strongly opposed hatred among people. It is his later encounter with the translation of the Bible that led him to oppose the Qing government and take more violent and bloody actions. The question is, why did the experience of reading the Bible push Hong further towards insurrection?

After reading Gützlaff's version, Hong increased his knowledge of Christian doctrine. The most notable change is the emphasis on the Ten Commandments, which he called it the "Ten Heavenly Rules" (十款天条). He elaborated it in a book called "天条书" (*The Book of the Heavenly Laws*). Later, after the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Ten Commandments became the highest legal standards in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Most of the religious publications in the kingdom stressed the importance of the Ten Commandments, such as 天条书 (*The Book of Heavenly Principles*) in 1847; 天兄圣旨 (*Heavenly Brother's Holy Edicts*) between 1842 and 1852; 三字经 (*Three-Character Scripture*) in 1853; 天父诗 (Poems of the Heavenly Father) in 1857; and 太平天日 (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*) in 1862. Violation of the Ten Commandments was considered a capital felony, and was usually punished with an extreme penalty such as beheading. The seventh commandment was considered of particular importance, which was phrased as "不好奸邪淫乱" (do not commit evil adultery) in the kingdom (*The Book of Heavenly Principles*, 1979, p. 32). Hong even altered particular contents in the authorized version of the Taiping Bible to make the narrative tally with his interpretation of the seventh commandment. This will be

discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. Except for the Ten Commandments, other biblical allusions, such as the great flood, the Exodus, and the crucifixion of Jesus could also be found in Hong's works written after reading the entire translated Bible.

However, the Bible did not convert Hong into a devout Christian. Instead, the reading experience prompted his further interpretation, which became the foundation of the ideology of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Hong's new interpretation can be summarized as follows:

1. the Manchus and the Qing government are demons;
2. The kingdom of heaven in the Bible is the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom;
3. Hong is the second son of God, the younger brother of Jesus, and the commander of the kingdom of heaven on the earth, namely the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

Hong regarded the Manchus and their Qing government as demons, and he holds the power and the mission to destroy them. The idea is closely related to his reading of the Bible. Hong's establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and ideal of a perfect world can be seen as a mimic of the biblical narrative. For example, Hong particularly preferred the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) and Revelation. The Torah depicts how the Israelites were led by God to eradicate alien peoples, live in the promised land, and establish a kingdom of their own. Revelation draws a picture of God's destruction of mortal emperors and the victory over the devil. It also describes the devil as a dragon, which is the most important symbol of the monarch in China.¹⁶ Hong's preference for Torah and Revelation could be inferred from the fact that Torah constituted the major part of the first Taiping Bible, and that the annotations in Revelation in the authorized Taiping Bible are the most detailed and political oriented. The contents can easily be associated with Hong's vision (he fought against devils in heaven) and his ideal (replace the corrupted world with a kingdom of heaven on the earth).

¹⁶ According to one of the Taiping official publications, Hong had a discussion with Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui about the legitimate use of the symbol of dragon. This indicates that the symbol was an important factor for consideration in his mind (See *The Book of Edicts of the Heavenly Father during his Descent to Earth*, 2004, p. 26).

The frequent reference of “天国” (kingdom of heaven) is another evidence of the influence of the Bible on Hong’s ideology. In his early writings after reading Liang’s book, Hong did not discuss this concept at length. But after reading the Bible, the term was everywhere. He claimed that he would establish the kingdom of heaven with the help of God and Jesus, and he even entitled his kingdom “天国”. One important reason is that many biblical verses regarding kingdom of heaven could enrich Hong’s ideal of an ideal world. As mentioned previously, Liang defined “天国” (kingdom of heaven), but he did not describe it in great detail. But the Bible provides more vivid description of it, especially the book of Revelation, because it (esp. Revelation 21) portrays the arrival of a new city to the world that replaces the old one (i.e. the New Jerusalem). Hong believed that it was strong evidence for him to establish the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (Hong, 2004, pp. 258-239). We will see in later discussion that a large part of Hong’s annotations emphasizes that the Bible has foretold the arrival of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

As for Hong’s claim that he was the second son of God, younger brother of Jesus, and the heavenly king, it also appeared after he had read the Bible. Hong did not overly emphasize his own identity in the early days of his movement. But he indeed implied his kinship to God and Jesus in his talks between 1845 to 1846 (before reading the Bible), calling God “天父” (heavenly father) and Jesus “天兄” (heavenly brother) (Hamberg, 1854, p. 30). The later emphasis on his identity might be only a result of his political agenda.¹⁷ But still we cannot ignore the Bible as his source of possible inspiration. Although the Bible mentions nothing about a second son of God, the religious zeal of Hong might have led him to latch onto any word that implies his destiny. This zeal can be seen from the very beginning when Hong read Liang’s book. Hong often interpreted the second pronouns “汝” or “尔” (thou or you) as referring to himself. In addition, he believed that the character “全” (whole, all, altogether) in the book was referring to his own name. For example, he interpreted the phrase “全然公义”

¹⁷ In 1848, during Hong’s temporary leave from the God-worshipping Society, a faction had arose in the society. Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui seized power by claiming that they are respectively the embodiments of God and Jesus. When Hong had returned, Hong started claiming that he was the second son of God, the younger brother of Jesus, and the heavenly king. Hence Hong’s emphasis on his identity might be a result of internal conflict, because emphasizing his own divinity, might combine the power from Yang and Xiao.

(“Quan Ran Gong Yi”, meaning altogether righteous) as “Quan (Hong Xiuquan) is righteous, more to be desired than gold” (Hamberg, 1854, pp. 22-23). Therefore it is not uncommon that he would take pains to find any clue in the Bible that implies his destiny. The verses that he related to himself are the ones on Melchizedek and the newborn baby in Revelation 12. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

Although Hong acquired more Christian knowledge after reading the Bible in translation, his interpretation of its doctrines diverts further away from Christianity, and he became more aggressive and ambitious. He interpreted the doctrines in the light of the contemporary social environment. First of all, his personal experience and the turbulence of contemporary society prompted him to adopt a more radical perspective when understanding Christian doctrine. When Hong read Liang’s book, he had been recovering from a breakdown because of his continuous failure in the imperial exams, and he was extremely disappointed with society and longed to change it. His early works, as discussed previously, reflect his ambition and are of a more radical tone than that of Liang’s book.¹⁸ Secondly, Liang’s book was written before the Opium War (1840), while Hong read it after the war. At that time, Chinese society became increasingly unstable, and the people were disappointed at the Qing government. The Canton area where Hong lived was particularly in ferment. War, rebellions, and plague prevailed, and the inhabitants, including Hong, were extremely agitated. As Hamberg (1854) records, Hong had expressed his hatred against the Manchus between 1845 and 1846, shortly after reading Liang’s book (p. 29). Therefore, it is not surprising that Hong would become more radical after reading the translated Bible, especially when the books of the Torah and Revelation vividly describe the promise of a new land and the arrival of a new world.

A few years after reading the Bible, Hong established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in 1851. The doctrines had then become radically different from Christian doctrines. However, Hong published Gützlaff’s version of the Bible without any awareness of this difference. It was not until the challenge from Western missionaries that he realized this

¹⁸ Liang’s book was published in 1832, when Chinese society was relatively stable. Liang wrote in the book: “the age is also considered a good time around the country, without severe famine or disaster” (Liang, 1985, p. 433). This also explains why Liang kept appealing for a contented attitude to the status quo, while Hong saw it necessary to radically change the world.

difference and decided to alter the translation. The following chapter will investigate the publication and the alteration of the Bible in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

Chapter 4 The Taiping Bible

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom published two versions of the Bible. This chapter will discuss the difference between the two versions, as well as their difference from Gützlaff's translation.

4.1 Selection of Books

Translation is about selection. What translators and readers select or deselect can help us understand the reason and the effect of their choices. Morrison and Gützlaff selected and translated all books of the Bible, which is in accordance with the Protestants' evangelical aim. One of their vital missionary approaches is to translate the Bible into local languages. Liang selected biblical chapters from Morrison's translation and made it echo the themes in his self-penned articles. Likewise, Hong's selection of the books of the Bible also reflect his religious and political views and purposes.

Two versions of the Bible were published in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and both of which were based on Gützlaff's version. The first version was published in 1853, the year when the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom established its capital in Nanjing. The title of the Bible is the same as Gützlaff's version (旧遗诏圣书 和 新遗诏圣书), and the verses are almost the same. The second was published in 1860. “钦定” (authorized) was added to the Bible's title, and extensive alterations and annotations can be found throughout the whole text, especially in the New Testament. The alteration reflects Hong's new attitude toward the text. In the early years, he had believed the Bible as the heavenly gift from God. But a few years after establishing the kingdom, he considered it a book that needed to be completed by him: “朕来乃是成约书” (I come to complete the book of the testament) (Hong, 1979b, p. 53).

Neither of the Taiping versions includes the entire Bible. Only part of the books were printed. In addition, the proportion of the biblical books are radically different between the two versions as well. The first version includes the first six books of the Old Testament (the Torah and Joshua), while there is only one book from the New

Testament (Matthew's Gospel). As for the authorized version, the proportion from the Old Testament stays the same (the Torah and Joshua), whereas the entire New Testament was published.

Three questions arise about the publication. First, why does the first version include only Matthew's Gospel of the New Testament? Second, why does the first version include the first six books of the Old Testament, instead of other books? Third, why is there a significant increase in the proportion of the New Testament in the authorized Taiping version?

Hong obviously preferred the Old Testament to the New Testament. According to Hamberg (1854), Hong had a high appreciation of the doctrines of Christianity, but he thought that the doctrines of patience and humility, which could mainly be found in the New Testament, could not be applied to the "present time", because the main objective then was to "manage" the "perverted generation" (p. 43). Apparently the books in the Old Testament, especially the first few books, are more in line with the needs of Hong. The internal governance and the military strategy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was similar to the doctrines in the Old Testament, which emphasizes strict laws and mercilessness to enemies. The first six books of the Old Testament detailed in great depth how God ruled his people. He led the chosen people to leave Egypt and travel to the promised land of Canaan. He punished by killing those who did not believe in God or who violate God's orders. For example, in Exodus 32, some people of Israel secretly worshiped idols, and God commanded Moses to slaughter three thousand people. In Numbers 15, a man picked up sticks on the Sabbath day, which violated the law of the Sabbath. God commanded Moses to stone him to death. In Joshua 1:18, God told Joshua that "Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death". Hong's policy was similar to God's policy in the Old Testament. As mentioned before, anyone in the kingdom that violated the Ten Commandments would be sentenced to death. Hong also followed an important feature of the military practices recorded in Torah and Joshua, namely that of eradicating alien peoples.¹⁹ When Hong's army occupied the cities full of Manchu people, such as Nanjing and Hefei, he claimed that

¹⁹ For example, Numbers 21, 31, Deuteronomy 3, 20, Joshua 6, 8, 10.

Manchus were demons and commanded his troops to slaughter all the Manchu inhabitants.

However, there is no such slaughter in the New Testament (except for the apocalypse scene described in Revelation). What it mostly emphasizes is the acts of Jesus and his apostles who spread God's gospel. The doctrines are mainly about virtues such as faith, love, hope, humility, patience, and so on.²⁰ It even points out the need to pray for the enemy.²¹ These ideas were considered unsuitable by Hong, and they can only be found in one book in the Taiping publications, namely 天父诗 (Poems of the Heavenly Father). It is a collection of Hong's poems for educating his concubines. Other Taiping publications only touch upon topics such as the crucifixion of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, and his command to spread the gospel.²² In other words, the doctrines prevalent in the New Testament were only adopted by Hong to regulate his concubines.

The description of the Bible in 太平天日 (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*), an important religious publication in the kingdom, also indicates Hong's attitudes toward different parts of the Bible. It defines the Old Testament as the "first class" book (一等书), which is "当前下凡显迹设诫所传之书" (a book that recorded [the superior emperor's] performance of miracles and commandments when [he] descended into the world); whilst the New Testament is "second class", which is "差.....兄基督下凡显神迹捐命赎罪及行为所遗传之书" (a book that records the deeds of the brother Christ who was commanded to descend into the world, perform miracles, sacrifice his life, and atone for sins) (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, 1957, pp. 635-636). Obviously, this contrasts to the view held by Christianity. Hong's classification of them as first class and second class is closely related to his understanding of God and Jesus. Hong believed that the Old Testament was about God while the New Testament about Jesus. He strictly distinguished between God and Jesus, and considered Jesus' position to be lower than that of God, hence the New Testament was also regarded of lower importance than the Old Testament.

20 For example, I Corinthians 13, Galatians 3:28, I Timothy 2.

21 For example, Matthew 5:38-42, Acts 7:59-60.

22 That is, the endings of the Gospels: Matthew 27-28, Mark 15-16, Luke 23-24, and John 19-20.

As to why only the first six books were selected from the Old Testament, there is no clear answer to it. Reilly (2004) speculates that the decision might be based on economic feasibility (p. 74). That is to say, the Taipings might have considered the first six books sufficient for illustrating the doctrines that they needed. After all, the first six books of the Old Testament account for 20.12 percent of the entire Bible, while the entire New Testament accounts for 25.59 percent.²³ So the six books might have been considered long enough to educate the Taiping citizens in the doctrines. Liang's influence could be an important factor as well. The reference that Liang makes to the Old Testament is limited to its first few books. Hence Hong might likewise have considered the first few books of the Old Testament the most important.

The reasons why Matthew's Gospel was published in the first version are two-fold. The first is the influence of Liang. The longest biblical excerpt in Liang's book is Matthew 5-7, which is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus elaborated the doctrines and promised that the "kingdom of heaven" had arrived. As mentioned in previous chapter, the term "天国" (kingdom of heaven) only appears in Matthew (both in Morrison's and Gützlaff's translations), and Liang's elaboration might have led to Hong's deviant interpretation (that it was requesting him to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth). This can be revealed in the authorized Taiping version, in which Hong annotated in Matthew 5 that Jesus teaching had announced the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In other words, the Gospel of Matthew was important to Hong, because Hong interpreted apocalyptic meaning from it. Second, The Gospel of Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, so it was printed first. Hong might have planned to publish the remaining books. But the Western missionaries challenge occurred and led the Taipings' to terminate printing of the entire Bible, and publish an authorized Taiping version instead.

Then, what made Hong decide to publish the entire New Testament, while keeping the same proportion of the Old Testament in the authorized Taiping version? Does it mean Hong decided to incorporate more doctrines from the New Testament about peace and love in his religion, and put more emphasis on Jesus? Obviously this is not the case. First, the Taipings' strict rules of governance and cruel acts against the Manchus did not

²³ The source of data: statistics of the Old and New Testaments: http://www.konline.org/biblestudy/JBS_A/JA_01.doc.html.

change. Second, the strict separation between God the Father and Jesus also did not change. Third, most of his alterations and annotations are in the New Testament; if he had agreed with the doctrines, he would not change them in the first place. In fact, it is his disagreement with the New Testament that he decided to publish it, but only after changing the contents and making critical annotations. The fuse that stimulated him to do so is the challenge from the Western missionaries. In 1854 (the second year after the commencement of printing the first version), Western missionaries, led by Walter Henry Medhurst (son of Walter Henry Medhurst), arrived in the kingdom with the British navy. They submitted a letter to establish diplomatic and trade relations. But it also included seven questions about the doctrines and rituals in the kingdom. The Taipings, represented by Yang Xiuqing, in response to the questions, issued 50 questions to the missionaries in return, all of which were about doctrine. Yang's tone in his reply to the missionaries was considered arrogant by the British. For example, Yang addressed them as “夷弟”, which was translated into “the barbarian younger brethren” by Medhurst (cited in Gregory, 1969, p. 178). In addition, Yang's questions implied that the Western missionaries had misunderstood the doctrines of God, and that the Taiping's doctrines were the correct ones. In response, the missionaries, represented by the Navy officer Mellersh, protested against being addressed as “夷”, and answered all the questions regarding the doctrines.²⁴ The answers were brief and solid, and frequently referred verses from the Bible, especially from the New Testament. The answers shattered the foundation of the Taiping doctrines, and challenged the legitimacy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the role of Hong Xiuquan. In the end, Mellersh suggested, “... I would recommend you rather to consult the only revealed will of God contained in the Old and New Testaments. Study these humbly and carefully and you can never go astray” (cited in Gregory, 1969, p. 190)

The missionaries' answers challenged every aspect of the Taiping doctrines, such as the view that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is the kingdom of heaven, that Hong was the second son of God and younger brother of Jesus, that God has a concrete body, and that the Manchus are demons. Merely one month after the contact with the missionaries in 1854, the Taipings, represented by Yang, terminated the printing of the New Testament,

²⁴ The translation “夷” was done by missionaries. It was a very sensitive translation, and it had caused diplomatic conflict China before. More could be found in Liu (2004).

and Hong started altering the Bible. Clearly the challenge made Hong realize that the contents in the Bible had the potential to jeopardize the Taiping doctrines. The New Testament became the main target of his alterations, probably because most of the references that the missionaries had made came from the New Testament.

The authorized Taiping version is extensively altered. It illustrates the role that readers can play when constructing the meaning of a translation. It is a response to the missionaries' challenge, and represents the final form of Hong's interpretation of Christian doctrines. The rest of this chapter will analyze the difference between Gützlaff's translation and the Taiping's two versions of the Bible, so as to illustrate how the verses and terms were used, misused, and interpreted in the context of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

4.2 Alteration in the First Taiping Version

The verses in the first Taiping version does not have much difference from Gützlaff's translation. But some of the discrepancies worth pointing out, and they illustrate Hong's motivation. The first version of the Taiping Bible published six books of the Old Testament, but only four of them are extant, while the other two (Deuteronomy and Joshua) are missing. Hence this research can only compare the first four books of the Old Testament.

4.2.1 The Old Testament

There are a few alterations in the Old Testament in the first Taiping version. They can be divided into three groups: 1. Wording and grammar; 2. Cultural censorship; and 3. Taboo characters, specifically the replacement of the Chinese character “魂” (soul) with 魂”²⁵.

4.2.1.1 Wording and Grammar

²⁵ In addition, there are some typographical errors, such as “猎夫” (hunter) as “腊夫” (Genesis 10:9), “大国” (great nation) as “人国” (man nation). But none of the typographical errors might lead to severe misunderstanding in the core doctrines.

Differences in wording refer to discrepancies in content words, namely nouns and verbs; and changes in grammar refer to modifications in syntactical elements such as conjunctions, prepositions and order of words. By comparison, the discrepancies mainly exist in the first four chapters of Genesis (17 discrepancies),²⁶ while the rest of Genesis and the three other books include only 13 discrepancies (nine in the rest of Genesis, three in Exodus, and one in Leviticus). The discrepancies have no significant impact on the contents.

The following three examples illustrate the discrepancies in wording:

Example 4.2-1:

KJV: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth (Genesis 1:16-17).

Gützlaff's version: 又造星辰焉。上帝遂置之于天空，以照地上 [And made the stars. The superior emperor then set them in heaven, to light upon the earth].

First Taiping version: 又创造诸天星宿，遂置之于天空，以照地上 [And created a variety of stars, then set them in heaven, to light upon the earth].

Example 4.2-2:

KJV: and every winged fowl after his kind... (Genesis 1:21)

Gützlaff's version: 又造有翼之鸟，各随其类也... [and made winged fowl, each after its kind...].

First Taiping version: 又造有翼之鸟，各随其类生殖... [and made winged fowl, each after its kind and reproduce...].

Example 4.2-3:

KJV: Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth (Genesis 1:22.)

²⁶ By "occasions", refers to the discrepancies found in a complete sentence or paragraph.

Gützlaff's version: 生物必增益，充满海中之水，鸟亦必加多于地也
[Creatures must multiply, fill the waters in the seas, fowl also must multiply on the ground].

First Taiping version: 生物必增益，充满海中之水，鸟亦必加多满空中
[Creatures must multiply, fill the waters in the seas, fowls must also multiply fully in the sky].

In example 4.2-1, the verb “造” (made) is replaced with “创造” (created). The noun “星辰” is replaced with “诸天星辰” (a variety of stars), making it a four-character phrase, which is favored in written Chinese. But the meanings remain the same. “上帝” is omitted, and the reason might be the effort to maintain the same length of sentence. This phenomenon is very common in both versions of the Taiping Bible, i.e., the characters are altered, omitted, or added, but the length of the whole sentence is maintained the same. The above three examples also illustrate the feature. Example 4.2-2 is an exception, the revised version is longer, but such instance is rare. In example 4.2-3, “于地也” (on the ground) is replaced with “满空中” (fully in the sky). The change of wording makes the meaning slightly different from the original verse, but none of it does affect any fundamental doctrines.

The discrepancies in grammar can be shown in the following two examples:

Example 4.2-4:

KJV: and God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:10)

Gützlaff's version: 又上帝观之乃善 [and the superior emperor saw that it was good].

First Taiping version: 且上帝观之乃善 [and the superior emperor saw that it was good].

Example 4.2-5:

KJV: thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid. (Genesis 4:14)

Güzlaff's version: 却今日主逐我出地面并避主面 [but today the lord drove me out from the face of the earth, and avoid the lord's face].

First Taiping version: 却今日主逐我出地而令避主面 [but today the lord drove me out from the the earth, and made me avoid the lord's face].

In these two examples, the change of conjunction from “又” to “且”, and the change of “面并” (face [of the earth] and) to “而令” (and made) does not change the meaning of the verses significantly. So as do other grammatical discrepancies found in the Taiping Bible.

It is uncertain whether the discrepancies indicate that Hong altered the first version or that Hong printed another version of Güzlaff's translation which the current study has not acquired. Güzlaff revised the translation many times and published more than ten versions. But it is more probable that it was altered by Hong. The reasons for this are: First, most of the discrepancies are in the first four chapters of Genesis. If Hong had print another version of Güzlaff's translation, more revisions should be found in other parts of the Old Testament, at least in Genesis as well. Second, Some of the revised verses in the Taiping version deviate from the original meaning. Although it does not affect important doctrines, Güzlaff as a Bible translator probably would not have done that. Güzlaff's translation does not depart greatly from the contents of the original text in other verses. It is not possible for him to make an alteration such as changing “于地” (on the ground) to “空中” (in the sky) in example 4.2-3.

4.2.1.2 Ethical Issues

Hong altered the content of the Bible that violated ethical norms in Chinese culture, especially incest. The alteration is obvious and direct: Genesis 19:31-38 is completely deleted. The verses narrate Lot's daughters' sexual relationship with their father.

Another example is found in Genesis 38:9. But it is uncertain whether it is a deliberate alteration. Onan, the second son of Judah, refused to father a child by Tamar, because he “knew that the seed should not be his” (Genesis 38:9). Gützlaff’s translation is “惟阿南知所生子非归自” (and Onan knew that the born child does not belong to him). But in the first Taiping version, the negative character 非 is missing: “惟阿南知所生子非归自” (and Onan knew that the born child belonged to him). In other words, the reason why Onan refused to father a child is totally reversed. However, it is uncertain whether the discrepancy in the verse about Onan is caused by deliberate alteration or a typographical mistake (there are five typographical errors in the first Taiping version of the Old Testament, and 41 in the authorized Taiping version). The latter is more reasonable, because the subsequent verses 14-16, which narrate the sexual relationship between Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar, is intact in the first Taiping version. They could be seen as ethically unacceptable as the ones in Genesis 19:31-38 (Lot and his daughters). Therefore, it is unlikely that Hong would have omitted a negative word in Genesis 38:9, without changing anything in Genesis 38:14-26. As will be seen in 4.3.2, the authorized version completely changed the verses in Genesis 38.

Why did Hong leave Genesis 38:14-26 intact in the first version? Given that Hong had always emphasized the strict law of the Ten Commandments, especially the seventh law against adultery, it is impossible that he would have agreed to the sexual relationship between Judah and Tamar.²⁷ The possible answer is that Hong did not read throughout the whole Bible, at least not Genesis 38. He had instruction from Roberts for only three months in Guangzhou in 1847, from whom he also acquired Gützlaff’s version. Then he returned to his God-worshipping Society, which soon became a force of insurrection. The years between his acquisition of the Bible and the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom were full of migration, conflict, and war. In addition, the printing of Taiping texts began immediately after Hong established his capital in Nanjing. So he might not have had enough time to read the biblical verses thoroughly, and assumed that most of the contents are in accordance with his doctrines. After all, he learnt from Liang’s book, which he had held in high esteem, that the Bible was the holiest book.

²⁷ It is necessary to point out that the sexual relationships described in Genesis 19:31-38 was only acceptable in ancient Hebrew culture, and this was recorded in Genesis. Sexual relations and marriage between blood related family members were prohibited after Moses led the Israelite people out of Egypt and established the laws, see Leviticus 17 and Deuteronomy 25.

Hence he might not have expected so many verses that would impair his doctrines. This also explains why Hong was shocked by the Western missionaries who used the Bible to challenge the Taipings (Xia, 2006, p. 124).

The question is, if Hong had not read the Old Testament thoroughly, why did he manage to discover and delete the verses about Lot and his daughters in Genesis 19? Again, it might be the influence of Liang. Liang's book narrates God's destruction of the two sin cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, and God's rescue of Lot from death. Liang is trying to educate readers that they should not commit crimes, otherwise they would be punished with disaster (Liang, 1985, pp. 271-274). It might be Liang's mention of Sodom and Lot that led Hong to notice the chapter in the Old Testament, which led him to discover that verses in Genesis 19:31-38 were not appropriate.

In the rest of the Bible, a few verses that go against Chinese ethics can also be found but remain unchanged in the first Taiping version. For example, Genesis 39:7 and Leviticus 19:20. They are altered in the authorized version, which will be discussed later.

4.2.1.3 Taboo Characters

One particular character is replaced throughout the verses in the first Taiping Bible. “魂” (soul) occurs six times in Gützlaff's version, are all replaced with “云人” (soul). Hong intended to purify everything in the kingdom, including language. “魂” was considered a taboo character in the kingdom. It is composed of two characters, “云” (cloud, spiritual) and “鬼” (spirit, ghost, devil). In other words “魂” contains certain evilness. Hong claimed that his mission was to slaughter the devil, therefore any character that contained the character “鬼” was to be eliminated. “云人” is a neologism created by Hong, it implies that the soul would remain in the form of man (人) after death.

More taboo characters are found in the authorized Taiping version, and they will be discussed later.

4.2.2 The New Testament

The first version of the Taiping Bible only includes Matthew's Gospel, and the verses are almost the same, except for 13 typographical errors, and two discrepancies.

Example 4.2-6:

KJV: Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Matthew 6:34)

Gützlaff's version: 一旦之惡足于一旦也 [one day's evilness is sufficient for one day].

First Taiping version: 一旦之勞足于一旦也 [one day's labor is sufficient for one day].

Example 4.2-7:

KJV: Son of David (Matthew 20:30)

Gützlaff's version: 大辟之裔 [Da Pi's descendant]

First Taiping version: 大辟之子 [Da Pi's son]

In example 4.2-6, "evil" is translated by Gützlaff as "惡" (evilness), while in the Taiping version it is translated as "勞" (labor). However, in 1836 and 1839 versions of Gützlaff's translation, the character is "勞" as well, which is the same as in the Taiping version. In other words, it might not be an alternation; instead, Hong might have referred to a different version of Gützlaff's translation, rather than the 1840 version. But it is the only instance where the Taiping version is different from the 1840 version while the same as the 1836 and 1839 versions. In the second example, "son" is translated into "裔" (descendant) (consistent among three versions of Gützlaff's translation), while the Taiping version uses "子" (son). It is unknown whether it is a alteration by Hong or that it is Gützlaff's translation in another version that Hong adopted.

Except for the above mentioned discrepancies, the first version of the Taiping Bible is the same as Gützlaff's translation. Although the verses in Matthew 22:24-26 also

conflict with the Chinese ethical taboo concerning incest, Hong did not alter them as he did in the Old Testament.

Generally speaking, Hong did not make many changes in the first version of the Taiping Bible. The key doctrines and verses were left intact. The only two significant changes are the deletion of Genesis 19:31-38, and the replacement of “魂” (soul) with “云”. The discussion on the verses related to ethical issues also reveals that Hong might not have read the Bible carefully, which explains the inconsistent pattern of Hong’s changes. We will see in the subsequent sections that Hong made thorough and consistent alterations in the authorized Taiping version.

4.3 Alteration and Annotation in the Authorized Taiping Version

One of Hong’s edict issued in 1860 reveals part of the factors that he concern about the original biblical verses: “约书不好些当去。偕皇称帝逆爷亲。父女妹嫂不可训，弟夺兄赍悖天情。基督乃主言乃诏，不是尔我这等称” (The bad elements in the testaments should be eliminated. Entitling “皇” or “帝” (both mean “emperor”) to oneself is violating the Father. Father and daughter, sister, and sister-in-law should not be slept with. Younger brother deceiving the older into giving up his property is against the heavenly principle. Ji Du (Christ) is lord and his words should be “诏” (a honorific term used by emperors in China). Do not use the pronouns such as 尔 (you) or 我 (me).) (Hong, 1979b, p. 52).

The second, fifth, and sixth verses of Hong’s edict is related to censorship of taboo characters. In order to express reverence for God and Jesus, Hong replaced all the corresponding nouns and verbs in the Bible with honorific ones, such as replacing the first pronoun “我” (I, me) with “朕” (the royal “we”). The latter was exclusively used by Chinese emperors. In addition, he replaced the nouns and verbs related to earthly kings with humbler ones to imply their lower status as compared with God or Jesus.

On the other hand, “父女妹嫂不可训，弟夺兄赍悖天情” refer to ethical issues in the Bible. The first verse has to do with incest, and the second one refers to Jacob’s deception in Genesis 25-27. Hong rewrote the verses that were against Chinese cultural practices. These will be discussed in 4.3.2.

However, Hong’s alterations are far more extensive than what he claimed in the edict. As mentioned previously, the doctrines of the Taiping religion are radically different from those of Christianity. For example, Hong believed that Jesus was not God, and that the Bible foretold the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The difference prompted conflict between the Taipings and Western missionaries, and Hong’s decision to alter the Bible. A large proportion of Hong’s alteration concern the doctrines. Chapter One listed seven main differences between the Taiping religion and Christianity. According to the differences, the alterations and annotations in the authorized Taiping Bible can be divided into six categories:

1. Taboo characters;
2. God;
3. Kingdom of heaven;
4. The Trinity;
5. Reinterpretation of the concept of “god” (神);
6. Hong’s self-identification in the Bible.

These fall into the group of political censorship, because it is directly related to Hong’s attempt to guarantee the legitimacy of his political status. The other kinds of alteration are related to ethical issues and customs, which are labeled as nonpolitical censorship. Although all of the alterations and annotations can be seen as motivated by Hong’s intention to ensure his reign, the latter kind of censorship is not directly related to political issues.

Contrary to the discrepancies found in the first version of the Taiping Bible, there is not a single case of grammatical or wording revision. And there is no evidence of refining

expressions for clarity. Lefevere (1992) classifies censorship in translation into two groups, one is poetic, and the other is ideological. Hong's censorship in the first version of the Taiping Bible concerns both poetic and ideological factors. However, all of his censorship in the authorized Taiping version is ideological. The sharp contrast indicates Hong's change of attitude toward the Bible.

The following sections will discuss Hong's censorship in detail.

4.3.1 Political Censorship

Political censorship concerns the most important verses that are directly related to Hong's major political or religious propaganda. Western missionaries' challenge undermined the Taiping doctrines and caused doubts within his kingdom. Hong's political censorship can be seen as an attempt to regain the political power.

4.3.1.1 Taboo Characters

Taboo characters refer to characters that are avoided or replaced with other characters for the reason of veneration or (religious or cultural) taboos. It was an tradition in China before the 20th century. Hong paid particular attention to taboo characters. The Taiping publication 钦定敬避字样 (*Authorized List of Taboo Characters*) lists dozens of characters. In addition to the ones listed, there are other characters that are replaced as well, such as the replacement of “圣会” (church, literally “holy society”) with “圣覲” (holy court), and “菩萨” (Buddha, Bodhisattva) with the homophone “该杀” (literally “should kill”).

There are 14 kinds of taboo characters found in the authorized Taiping Bible, and they could be divided into five categories.

4.3.1.1.1 Avoidance of certain characters in the titles for God and Jesus:

(a) *The three characters in “皇上帝” (imperial superior emperor) are avoided when referring to other kings and officials. “皇帝” (emperor, translation of*

“king”) is replaced with “郭侯” (town governor), “上宪” (high official, translation of “ruler” or “dignity”) is replaced with 官宪 (governmental official).

(b) *The four characters in “耶稣基督” (Ye Su Ji Du, the translation of “Jesus Christ”) are replaced with other homophones when used in other names.* Hence, in other names, “耶” is replaced with “也” or “雅”, “酥” with “苏”, “基” with “居”, and “督” with “笃”. When “耶” is used at the end of sentence as an indicator of question, it is replaced with other function characters such as “哉”, “也”, “乎”, or “焉”. When “督” is used as a verb, referring to supervision, it is replaced with a synonym “率”.

(c) “火” and “华” in God’s title “爷火华” is avoided. It is used in Liang’s book as the transliteration of “Jehovah”. But the translation cannot be found in Gützlaff’s translation. Still, the characters were regarded as taboo characters. “爷” (father, lord, grandfather) occurs only three times in Gützlaff’s version and they all have to do with God or Jesus, therefore they remain unchanged. “火” is replaced with “炎”, which is a rarely used synonym; and “华” (lustrous) is replaced with “花” (flower). It is noticeable that the transliteration of “Jehovah” in Gützlaff’s version is “爷贺华” (Ye He Hua) (in Exodus 6:3). But Hong did not regulate Gützlaff’s “贺” as a taboo character. The reason might be that Gützlaff’s transliteration only occurs once in the whole Bible, whereas Liang’s transliteration occurs frequently in his book. Therefore Hong noticed Liang’s version, but not Gützlaff’s.

4.3.1.1.2 Taboo Characters in reverence for God and Jesus.

This category includes the pronouns and verbs that have to do with God and Jesus:

(a) *The first person pronouns of God and Jesus are replaced:* “我”, “吾”, and “余” are replaced with “朕”. Although Hong claimed that only God the Father could be called the emperor, “朕” (the royal “we”) is used to refer to God the Father, Jesus, and Hong himself.

(b) *The verbs referring to God or Jesus' speech are replaced with royal ones:* “谓”, “讲”, “语”, “招”, etc., which are commonly verbs for “saying”, are replaced with “诏”, “谕”, or “令”, which are used by an addresser with high status, such as an emperor.

(c) *The objects related to God or Jesus:* God's “座” (seat) is replaced with “殿” (court, palace), “会账房” (tabernacle of the congregation, literally “congregation house”) is replaced with “觐帐殿” (palace of congregation). Jesus' “圣会” (holy society) or “公会” (public society) are replaced with “圣觐” (holy court) or “公觐” (public court). However, this kind of replacement is not consistent. The ones in Genesis and Exodus are not changed. Some of them are changed in other books of the Old Testament. But it becomes more consistent in the New Testament, where all the nouns of the above-mentioned objects are replaced.

(d) *Second person pronouns and verbs that have to do with God or Jesus:* for example, when other characters are addressing God or Jesus, “尔” or “汝” (you) are replaced with “主” (my lord, master). And when other characters are talking to God or Jesus, the addressers' first person pronoun “吾” (I or me) is replaced with “臣” ([your] minister), and when they are responding to God or Jesus, the verbs “语” (say) and “答” (answer) are replaced with “奏” (humbly present one's words to the throne). The replacement sometimes makes the narrative sound quite strange. For example, in Matthew 26, Jewish chief priests, scribes and elders were against Jesus. But the phrase that they “语耶稣曰” (said unto him [Jesus]) is changed into “奏基督曰” (humbly present to Ji Du (Christ) their words).²⁸ And when they are addressing Jesus, “尔” (you) is replaced with “主” (my lord,

28 Throughout the three gospels (the Taiping version of the Gospel of John is missing) and the first ten chapters of Acts, Hong replaced all of “耶稣” (Jesus) with “基督” (Christ) (unless the original translation is “基督”). But he did not do so in the rest of the New Testament. The reason is unknown.

master).²⁹ So the trial of Jesus reads very awkwardly. However, the original verbs are not changed when the same narrative occurs in Mark 14 and Luke 22.

4.3.1.1.3 Downgrading the titles for secular sovereigns, officials, and gods.

(a) *Imperial terms*, such as “王” (king), “臣” (minister, official), “谕” (instruct), “奏” (humbly present one’s words to the throne), and “主” (lord, master) are all avoided when referring to the secular persons. In order to foil the lofty status of God and Jesus, Hong downgrade the titles and verbs of all the secular kings and officials. So “王” (king) is downgraded to “侯” (governor), “臣” (official, minister) to “属” (subordinate), kings’ “谕” (instruction) to “示” (show), the officials’ “奏” (humbly present) to “告” or “禀” (tell), and “主” (lord) to “长” (senior). The replacement also affects the title of “David the king”, who is held in high esteem in the Old Testament. Gützlaff translates this into “大辟王” (Da Pi king), but it is changed to “大辟侯” (Da Pi governor) in the authorized Taiping version. The change also makes some expressions awkward. For example, in order to avoid “主”, Hong changed “主人” (master, literally “master man”) into “长人” (senior man, long man), and “自主” (free, literally “self mastery”) into “自长” (literally “self long” or “self grow”). The changes are purely for the sake of taboo characters, regardless of clarity.

(b) *Replacement of “菩萨” (Buddha or Bodhisattva)*. Gützlaff translates the terms referring to pagan gods, such as “god” (he also translates it into “神” in other occasions, see the discussion in 4.3.1.5), “goddess”, “idol”, “Molech”, “Peor”, and “Baal”, into “菩萨”. The Chinese term is a commonly used term referring not only to the Buddhist Buddha or Bodhisattva, but sometimes even to any idols in popular religion. The translation is quite domesticated. It might due to the

²⁹ Accordingly, in Matthew 27, Jesus called himself “朕” (the royal “we”) instead of “吾” (vernacular first pronoun “I”), and in Matthew 27:12, he “终无应答” (answered nothing) is replaced with “终无句诏” (issued no edict).

translator's awareness that Chinese people referred to idols as “菩萨”,³⁰ and he adopted this word for pagan terms, implying that idols were wrong gods.³¹ Hong's change is more radical. He created the phrase “该杀”, a term that sounds like “菩萨” but the meaning is totally different: “should kill”. It is a verb phrase rather than a noun. But Hong used it consistently to refer to “菩萨”, implying that all idols should be killed. It reveals his strong hatred against idolatry.

4.3.1.1.4 In accordance with the doctrines of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

(a) *Taboo characters of political institutions.* They include “国” (country, kingdom), “京” (capital), “宫” (palace), and “府” (court). In Hong's mind, his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is the only legitimate kingdom on earth, so the terms related to political institutions were exclusively referred to his kingdom. As a result, political institutions mentioned in the Bible are all replaced. “国” is replaced with “郭” (town)³²; “京” is replaced with “城” (city); “衙” (office) or “郡” (county); “宫” (palace) and “府” (mansion) are replaced with “衙” (office). For example, the translation of the title of Exodus, “出麦西国传” (legend of leaving Mai Xi country), is changed into “出麦西郭传” (legend of leaving Mai Xi town).

(b) *Avoidance of “千总”.* Literally “thousand govern”, the term is the translation of “centurion”. Hong replaced it with a newly created term 师帅 (literally “division leader”). The replacement seems to avoid using the same character (千)

30 Gützlaff translates “gods” into “菩萨” only when the verses are narrating people's acts of worshipping idols or other gods. On the other hand, when the verses are praising God as the one greater than any other god, he translates it into “诸神” (gods). See the discussion in 4.3.1.5.

31 In addition, Gützlaff's translation might also be influenced by Morrison's version. Morrison translates “goddess” in Acts 19:37 as “女菩萨” (female Buddha). But his translation of “gods and idols” is quite different from Gützlaff's. For example, he translates “gods” as “神类” (gods) in Joshua 24:14, and “列神” (variety of gods) in Acts 7:40, and “idols” as “伪神” (fake god) in I Corinthians 8:4, and “偶像” (clay idol) in Acts 17:16.

32 Hong also replaced the character “國” with “国” when referring to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, “太平天国”. The new character “国” is composed of a “king” (王) and a square, implying that the (heavenly) king is in charge of the country.

that refers to Yang Xiuqing, who was entitled “九千岁” (nine thousand years old). But it might also have to do with Hong’s hostility against the Qing government, because “千总” was a title of an official position in the Qing government. Gützlaff adopted a number of official titles from the Qing government system. In addition to “千总”, there are “制台” (deputy), “巡抚” (judgment seat), “守备” (another version for “centurion”), and “按察司” (judge). Hong replaced them with newly created titles or titles used in the Ming dynasty, the dynasty that had ruled by ethnic Han Chinese before the Manchu’s Qing dynasty.³³ Both “制台” and “巡抚” is changed into “总制” (a title used in the Ming dynasty), “守备” is replaced with “军帅” (a title used in the Ming dynasty), and “按察司” is replaced with “总制” or “典执法” (a title created by Hong).

(c) *Avoidance of “魂” (soul)*. As mentioned in the discussion of the first Taiping Bible, “魂” is replaced with the neologism “𧈧”, so as to avoid the “鬼” part of the character. Hong’s substitution implies the doctrine that the souls of the Taiping citizens will not turn into devils (鬼) after death, and will remain in the form of man (人).

(d) *Avoidance of characters that imply mortality*. Characters “卒”, “死”, “崩”, and “故” all refer to “death”. When biblical verses narrate the death of important ancestors, prophets, or apostles, such as Adam, Jacob, or Moses, the death characters are replaced with “升” (lift, rise). The term implies that the persons concerned were not dead, but was lifted up to heaven. On the other hand, the terms referring to the death of non-believers or enemies of God are not changed, such as Herod who intended to kill Jesus. This replacement is closely linked to Hong’s view of the kingdom of heaven. He claimed that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is the kingdom of heaven on the earth and the dwelling for the flesh, and the “天国” (kingdom of heaven) is the dwelling for the souls (Hong 2004, 274). In other words, he claimed that people who believed in God would not die,

³³ 反清复明 (Overthrow Qing and restore Ming) was a common anti-Qing sentiment prevailed at Hong’s time. Hong’s alteration of the official titles might have been an echo of it.

they would simply move to another dwelling. The replacement is similar to the change of “魂” into “云”. They can be seen as Hong’s subtle method of glorifying his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. However, he did not change the death (死) of Jesus described in the gospels, because the narrative clearly states that Jesus was resurrected after three days.

4.3.1.1.5 Other taboo characters

In addition to the above-mentioned taboo characters, there are 202 less frequent or inconsistent character changes.

The most distinctive one is the replacement of “蝗蚱” (locusts) with “蚘蚱”. The original translation occurs only four times in the Bible: once in Matthew 1:6, and three times in Revelation 9 (verses 3, 4, and 7). The replacement “蚘” refers to another kind of pest similar to locust. The reason for the substitution is similar to the case of “魂” (replaced with 云). The character “蝗” is composed of “皇” (emperor). The replacement avoids an undesirable association between emperor and insect. However, the same character in Matthew 1:6 is not changed, which is probably a result of negligence.

In addition, Hong also occasionally replaced some characters to strengthen the negative or positive sense. For example, in Mark 3:6 and Luke 22:1, the Pharisees’ intention to “punish by killing” (诛, translation of “kill”, “destroy”) Jesus is replaced with “害” (murder). Likewise, in Acts 13:27, the act of “declaring guilty of” (定罪, translation of “condemning”) Jesus is replaced with “accusing falsely” (诬害). On the other hand, in Acts 24:5, when Tertullus spitefully called Paul as “拿撒勒流之头目” (a ringleader of the Nazarene sect), it is replaced with “拿撒勒主之门人” (a disciple of the Nazarene lord), which alters the meaning of the original text. But such alterations are not consistent throughout the Bible.

Hong also replaced the characters of “爹” (father) and “神” (god) in the translation of any nouns other than those that refer to God. “犹阿爹” (You Ah Die), the transliteration of “Euodias” in Philippians 4:2, is changed to “犹阿侈” (You Ah Chi). Words containing the character “神” (god) are altered as well. For example, in Acts 17:22, “武神山” (literally “martial god’s hill”), the translation of “Mars’ hill”, is replaced with 武伸山 (“martial stretch hill”). He also limits the sense of “神” in some contexts, for example, he changed “诸神” (all gods) into “邪神” (wicked god) in Exodus 18:11 (“the LORD is greater than all gods”). This will be discussed in more detail in 4.3.1.4 and 4.3.1.5.

Two reasons can be inferred from Hong’s replacement of taboo characters in the Bible. The first is highlighting the superiority of God and Jesus, and the second is complying with the doctrines of the Taiping religion. Both help him strengthen his reign, because he considered his own status similar to the status of God and Jesus. This is also reflected in other Taiping publications. For example, Hong also called himself “朕” (the royal “we”), and other officials addressed him as “主” (lord). The little hut that he dwelled in when he had the vision in 1837, when he had been a student failed in the imperial exams, was described as a “palace” (宫) (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, 1957, p. 640). In the conflict between the Taipings and the missionaries in 1854, when Yang told the missionaries about Hong’s experience of learning the Bible with Issachar Jacox Roberts in Guangzhou in 1847 (before the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom), he described the event as “天王御驾……访察其所传上帝真道符合” (the heavenly king traveled in the imperial carriage...and examined whether his [Roberts’] preaching was consistent with the superior emperor’s genuine teaching) (cited in Luo & Wang, 2004, p. 30). These expressions reveal that Hong presented himself as an emperor, similar to any other emperor in Chinese history, the only difference is that he did not call himself “皇” (emperor), but “王” (king). In addition, Hong claimed that he was the second son of God, and the younger brother of Jesus. Therefore, when he tried to make God and Jesus loftier in the background of Chinese culture with the method of taboo characters, he also glorify his own status. In other words, the ultimate impact of

his goal regarding taboo characters is to make himself and his kingdom holier and the narrative in the Bible more legitimate to Chinese readers.

Hong's alteration of taboo characters also reflect the influence of Chinese culture when interpreting a foreign text, hence the conflict between Chinese culture and Christianity. In Western culture, the titles or the names of ancestors or saints were not considered taboo words. In fact they were commonly used in naming descendants. However, in traditional Chinese culture, ancestors' and emperors' names or titles were prohibited to use in daily language and written books. Alternative characters had to be substituted for them when referring to other persons or objects. Any violation was considered immoral, and even illegal when it had to do with the emperors. The rules of taboo characters reflect the traditional Chinese view of social hierarchy. Traditional Confucianism emphasized associate social hierarchy with ethical principles. It held that the subordinate (e.g. sons, younger brothers, officials) should always obey the superior (e.g. fathers, elder brothers, emperors). This view contradicts with Hong's earlier view that all people are brothers and sisters after he read Liang's book (Hong, 1979, pp. 11-22). However, after establishing the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, he stopped mentioning equality, and turned to stress hierarchy. He even pointed out that any infringement of the this social hierarchy was a violation of “天伦” (heavenly ethics) (*Poems of the Heavenly Father*, 2004, p. 475). Therefore, the replacement of taboo characters in the authorized Taiping Bible not only reveal the influence of Confucianism on Hong, but also reveal his change of political agenda after ruling his kingdom.

4.3.1.2 God

God was considered the supreme and only god in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and this view is in accordance with Christian doctrine. However, Hong understood the concept of God as the Father, and he did not considered Jesus or the Holy Ghost as God. Hong's interpretation of the Trinity will be discussed in 4.3.1.4, which will focus on the relationship between the three godheads. The present section will discuss the alteration of the verses that mainly have to do with the image of God.

According to Christianity, God has no concrete and fixed image. But Hong interpreted God as being a tall old man with golden hair. In addition, Hong believed that God was the only emperor of the world, and other emperors were illegal. The former section indicates that Hong tried to emphasize the imperial status of God by revising the taboo characters. As mentioned before, Liang tried to associate God with emperor to emphasize God's might, and Hong's early writings strengthened the idea. The main reason for the association is the implication of the terms. Most terms used in Liang's book and Gützlaff's translation are related to emperors. For example, Liang referred to God as “神天上帝” (divine heavenly superior emperor), and Gützlaff translated “God” into “皇上帝” (imperial superior emperor) in the Old Testament and “上帝” (superior emperor) in the New Testament. The character “帝” implies the imperial state of God.

Hong's alterations regarding God can be divided into two groups. The first is the image of God, and the second is the relationship between God and man.

4.3.1.2.1 The image of God

The verses regarding the image of God can be further divided into two groups, the first has to do with the relationship between angel, while the second is direct statement regarding God's image.

(a) Replacement of angel with God

In Christian theology, angel are the messengers or the representatives of God, in the latter case of which one could say he sees God when he sees an angel (Jacob, 1958, p. 76). In other words, angels could be seen as the manifestation of God, at least in certain verses (e.g. Genesis 16:13, Judges 6:22). The Chinese translation of “angel” is “天使” (heavenly messenger), which implies the angels' status as messengers. The alterations in the authorized Bible reveals Hong's strict distinction between God and angel: God does not need angels to exercise his power, and people should not refer to angels as God.

For example, in Genesis 18, God arrived at the entrance of Abraham's tent, in the form of “three men”. The nouns and pronouns switch between singular and plural. Abraham addressed them as “My Lord” (Genesis 18:3), and in verse 9 the pronoun is “they”, but

in 13 it is switched to the singular “the Lord”, while in verse 16 God is referred to as the plural noun: “the men”. Here is the comparison between the translations:

Example 4.3-1:

KJV: (8) And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. (9) And they said unto him ... (13) And the LORD said unto Abraham ... (16) And the men rose up from thence ... (Genesis 18:8-9; 13; 16)

Gützlaff's version: (8) 遂将乳奶与乳油并所烹之犊排列客前，自待树下而客食也。 (9) 客曰... (13) 皇上帝谓亚伯刺罕曰... (16) 客人遂起... [(8) And [he] arranged milk and milk oil and the cooked calf in front of the guest/guests, [and he] stood under the tree and the guest ate (9) The guest/guests said...(13) The imperial superior emperor said unto Ya Bo La Han...(16) The guest/guests then rose...].

Authorized Taiping version: (8) 遂将乳奶与乳油并所烹之犊排列主前，自待树下而主食也。 (9) 主曰... (13) 皇上帝谓亚伯刺罕曰... (16) 上主遂起... [(8) And [he] arranged milk and milk oil and the cooked calf in front of the lord, [and he] stood under the tree and the lord ate (9) The lord said...(13) The imperial superior emperor said unto Ya Bo La Han...(16) The superior lord then rose...].

Chinese characters do not reflect the form of singular or plural, neither do the verbs change accordingly. So the noun “客” (guest) could be either singular or plural, depending on the context. The pronouns and nouns in Gützlaff's translation are indeed as ambiguous as the original ones. Hong's replacement, “皇上帝” and “上主”, makes the reference more consistent. This reveals that he understood God with a fixed image and that he could reveal himself bodily form. The next example also reveals Hong's view of the relationship between angels and God. In Genesis 19, God sent two angels to destroy Sodom. But Hong replaced all words meaning “angel” with the title of God.

Example 4.3-2:

KJV: (1) And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; (2) And he said, Behold now, my lords ... (10) But the men put forth their hand ... (12) And the men said unto Lot ... (13) ... the LORD hath sent us to destroy it ... (15) ... the angels hastened Lot ... (16) ... the men laid hold upon his hand, ... (Genesis 19:1-2; 10; 12-13; 15-16)

Gützlaff's version: (1) 当日晚上，二位天使到锁顿，而罗特坐邑门。且罗特一见之，起迎，面伏于地，(2) 曰，吾主...(10) 其人遂伸手拉罗特入家... (12) 其人遂谓罗特曰... (13)...皇上帝差我毁之... (15)...天使催令罗特曰 ... (16)... 该人执其手... [(1) That night, two heavenly messengers arrived in Suo Dun, and Luo Te sat in the town gate. Rose, and bowed with his face toward the ground. (2) Said, my lord... (10) The man/men then put forth his/their hand... (12) The man/men then said unto Luo Te... (13)...the imperial superior emperor sent me/us to destroy it... (15)...the heavenly messenger/messengers hastened Luo Te and said... (16)...the man/men took his hand...].

Authorized Taiping version: (1) 当日晚上，皇上帝到锁顿，而罗特坐邑门。且罗特一见之，起迎，面伏于地，(2) 曰，吾主...(10) 上主遂伸手拉罗特入家... (12) 上主遂谓罗特曰... (13)...皇上帝义怒毁之... (15)...上主催令罗特曰 ... (16)...上主执其手... [(1) That night, the imperial superior emperor arrived in Suo Dun, and Luo Te sat in the town gate. Rose, and bowed with his face toward the ground. (2) Said, my lord... (10) The superior lord then put forth his/their hand... (12) The superior lord then said unto Luo Te... (13)...the imperial superior emperor is to furiously destroy it... (15)...the imperial superior emperor hastened Luo Te and said... (16)...the superior lord took his hand...]

The angels in these verses are not so much a manifestation of God as messengers of God, which could be inferred with Lot's addressing them as "my lords" (instead of "my Lord"). Hong replaced all references to the angels with God, making the narrative imply that the actions were all taken directly by God, instead of through the hands of angels.

Another alteration is found in Numbers 22, which also reflects Hong's distinction between God and angels. The phrase “皇上帝之天使” (imperial superior emperor's angel) occurs four times in verses 23-27. The verses describe “the angel of the LORD” stood in the way as a warning to Balaam, without saying a word. Hong did not alter any of these phrases. But from verse 31 to the end of the chapter, the angel started talking and condemned Balaam. It is in the latter verses that Hong replaced all of the phrase “皇上帝之天使” (imperial superior emperor's angel) with “皇上帝之天神” (the heavenly spirit of imperial superior emperor), hence implying that it was the “imperial superior emperor” himself rather than a heavenly messenger who had been condemning Balaam. The pattern of Hong's alteration shows that he only altered the reference to angels with the ones to God when the angel was exercising power or authority.

The same pattern of alteration can be found in the New Testament as well. Hong only altered the reference to angels when they were exercising power.

For example, in the 13th and 19th verses of Matthew 2, when “the angel of the Lord” told Joseph to take Jesus and Mary and escape to Bethlehem, the term “天使” (heavenly messenger) is replaced with “上主” (superior lord). The reason for this alteration is that the angel requested Joseph to leave without claiming that it was the will of God, which would not be acceptable to Hong. The following three examples illustrate the same pattern.

Example 4.3-3:

KJV: (8) Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: (9) But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God³⁴ (Luke 12:8-9).

Gützlaff's version: 且我告尔，凡在人前认我，则人子在神使之前将认之。但凡在人前不认我，我亦在神使之前不认之 [And I say unto you. Whoever recognizes me before men, then man's son will recognize him before divine

³⁴ A similar narrative is found in Matthew 10:32-33. But in this case Jesus mentioned the Father instead of the angel: “(32) Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (33) But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

messenger. But whoever does not recognize me before men, I will not recognize him before the divine messenger).

Authorized Taiping version: 且朕诏尔，凡在人前认朕，则人子在神父之前将认之。但凡在人前不认朕，朕亦在神父之前不认之 [And I say unto you. Whoever recognizes me before men, then man's son will recognize him before divine father. But whoever does not recognize me before men, I will not recognize him before the divine father].

Example 4.3-4:

KJV: Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15:10).

Gützlaff version: 如此吾告尔知，罪恶一人如若悔改，则神使前如是喜乐也 [Likewise I say unto you, if a sinned man repents, there is joy before the divine messenger for that].

Authorized Taiping version: 如此朕诏尔知，罪恶一人如若悔改，则神父前如是喜乐也 [Likewise I instruct you, if a sinned man repents, there is joy before the divine father for that].

In Acts 7:38, when the verse refers to Moses' reception of the Ten Commandments, the term of angel is replaced as well.

Example 4.3-5:

KJV: This is he, that was ... with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina ... (Acts 7:38)

Gützlaff's version: 此人在西奈山听天使谕吾祖... [This man in the mount Sina listened to the heavenly messenger instructing our ancestor...].

Authorized Taiping version: 此人在西奈山听上主谕吾祖... [This man in the mount Sina listened to the superior lord instructing our ancestor...].

The alterations share the same pattern that, when angel was exercising God's power or authority, Hong would replace the terms for angel with ones for God, such as with “上帝” (imperial superior emperor) and “上主” (superior lord). In contrast, when the angels were merely delivering a message from God or Jesus with a clear statement that it came from God (e.g. Matthew 28, Luke 2), or when the angels were serving Jesus (Matthew 4), the term for angels remains unchanged. This pattern shows Hong's interpretation of God: God is an almighty god with a fixed body, and he does not need any other form to manifest himself and exercise his power. An angel is merely a messenger delivering messages.

(b) Alteration of the image of God

Christianity holds that God does not have a specific image. But Hong's alteration reveals his belief that God has one. This research found four verses that state that God does not have an image. Hong altered three of them:

In Colossians 1:15, when Paul refers to Jesus “who is the image of the invisible God”. Hong changed the translation “彼乃无现上帝之像” (he is the image of the invisible superior emperor) into “彼具其父上帝之像” (he has the image of his father the superior emperor). The alteration not only denies the doctrine that God has no image, but also suggests that Jesus is not God, but merely his son.

In Hebrews 11:27, Hong changed “无形之上帝” (the invisible superior emperor), the translation of “him who is invisible”, into “至尊之上帝” (the supreme superior emperor).

In I John 4:12, Hong altered “总无人见上帝也” (No one has ever seen superior emperor), the translation of “no man hath seen God at any time”, into “罕有人见上帝也” (rare person/persons has seen the superior emperor).

In addition, Hong also added annotation to Mark 12 and 1 John 5, and insisted that he had been to heaven and had seen the “superior emperor” with his own eyes.

The only verse on the invisibility of God that is left unchanged is I Timothy 1:17:

Example 4.3-6

KJV: Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. (I Timothy 1:17)

Gützlaff's version: 夫尊敬光荣归其永远常生无现之王、独有睿智之上帝，至世世焉 [The honor and glory belong to the eternal, immortal, not shown king, the only wise superior emperor, to generations after generations].

Authorized Taiping version: 夫尊敬光荣归其永远常生无现上主、独有睿智之上帝，至世世焉 [The honor and glory belong to the eternal, immortal, not shown superior lord, the only wise superior emperor, to generations after generations].

The only alteration in this verse is the replacement of “之王” (king) with “上主” (superior lord), because “王” was usually referred to Hong himself. But he did not change the translation for “invisible”. However, the expression “无现” (not shown) is ambiguous. It could mean that the object is temporally hidden. Hong might have not realized that it referred to God's invisibility.

Nevertheless, Hong's other alterations strictly distinguish between God and angels, and eliminates the evidence that clearly refer to God as being invisible.

4.3.1.2.2 The relationship between God and man

Hong regarded God as the sole emperor of the world, and he interpreted the words and deeds of God using the Chinese emperor as a reference model. The previous section on taboo characters indicates that Hong paid particular attention to emphasizing the imperial sense of God; for example, he replaced all first person pronouns related to God with the royal “we” (朕). God's address, such as “语” (say), was changed into “诏” (instruct), and the vernacular second person pronoun “尔” (you) referring to God was replaced with “主” (lord). These taboo characters reflect Hong's emphasis on social hierarchy and ethical principles. Likewise, the alteration in the description or narrative of the relationship between God and men also reflects his views.

In the Bible, God indeed commanded the world like an emperor. But in the books that the Taiping published, there are originally three narratives that describe the relationship between God and man as friends. Hong altered two of them.

Example 4.3-7:

KJV: (22) And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters ... (24) And Enoch walked with God ... (Genesis 5:22; 24)

Gützlaff's version: (22) 夫以诺生米土撒拉后，与上帝往来连三百年，另生子女... (24) 夫以诺与上帝相交... [(22) After Mi Nuo begat Mi Shi Sa La, he got along with the superior emperor for three hundred years, and begat other sons and daughters...(24) And Mi Nuo made friends with the superior emperor...].

Authorized Taiping version: (22) 夫以诺生米土撒拉后，得上帝恩眷连三百年，另生子女... (24) 夫以诺蒙上帝眷顾... [(22) After Mi Nuo begat Mi Shi Sa La, he was favored by the imperial emperor for three hundred years, and begat other sons and daughters...(24) And Mi Nuo was favored by the imperial emperor...].

The metaphorical expression “walked with God” refers to the righteous Enoch who favored by God. Ironically, Hong’s alteration is closer to the metaphorical meaning of the phrase, while Gützlaff’s two translations are elaborated further (“与上帝往来” (got along with the superior emperor) and “与上帝相交” (made friends with the superior emperor)). But Hong did not know any foreign language, so the correspondence with original meaning is merely an coincidence. In fact, Hong’s alteration indicates his view of Chinese social hierarchy, namely that the superior emperor had a imperial status, and it was disrespectful for a mortal man to make friends with him. In addition, the translation “相交” could also suggest sexual activities. This will be discussed in 4.3.2.1.

A similar alteration is found in James 2:23:

Example 4.3-8:

KJV: ... and he [Abraham] was called the Friend of God. (James 2:23)

Gützlaff's version: 如此亚伯拉罕称为上帝之友矣 [And Ya Bo La Han was called the superior emperor's friend].

Authorized Taiping Version: 如此亚伯拉罕称为上帝之仆矣 [And Ya Bo La Han was called the superior emperor's servant].

The Taiping version strengthens the impression that the “superior emperor” is an emperor, who, like any other Chinese emperors, should not be approached by any ordinary man as his equal.

The only verses that describes God and man as friends but remains unchanged is Exodus 33:11:

Example 4.3-9:

KJV: And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. (Exodus 33:11)

Gützlaff's Version: 夫皇上帝与摩西面叙如人与友谈焉 [And the imperial superior emperor and Mo Xi spoke face to face like a man and his friend talking].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫皇上帝与摩西面叙如人与友谈焉 [And the imperial superior emperor and Mo Xi spoke face to face like a man and his friend talking].

An ordinary man walking with an emperor is completely unacceptable in the Chinese culture. The difference between this verse and the other two verses that are changed is that this narrative is in the form of simile (the use of “如”), while the previous two are metaphors. A simile might have been considered acceptable by Hong.

In Christianity, “walking with God” is a common expression, which indicates the intimate relationship between God and men. In addition, the incarnation of Jesus in the New Testament, namely that God arrives in the world in the form of a man, further emphasized this close relationship. But Hong's alteration denies it. On one hand, he

altered the taboo characters and the description of God in order to separate God from men, making God unapproachable like a Chinese emperor; on the other, he objected to the doctrine that Jesus is also God. As a result, God in the Taiping Bible became more like a Chinese emperor.

4.3.1.3 Kingdom of Heaven

The concept of the “kingdom of heaven” is crucial to Hong and his kingdom. The political and religious foundation of the kingdom is mainly based on his interpretation of the concept. As mentioned in the Western missionaries’ letter to the Taipings in 1854, Christians do not interpret the concept as a kingdom of this world (cited in Gregory, 1969, pp. 191-193). Rather it refers to the reign of God. In both Morrison’s and Gützlaff’s versions, the “kingdom of heaven” is translated into “天国” (heavenly kingdom), and “kingdom of God” into “神国” (god’s/divine kingdom). Although the terms were new in Chinese language, they do not read foreign. In fact, the translated terms could stimulate relevance to a series of existing political concepts in Chinese, for example, China was called “神州” (god’s/divine land), the emperor was called “天子” (heavenly son), and the monarch was called “天朝” (heavenly dynasty). As a result, it was very easy for Chinese readers, without sufficient knowledge in Christian doctrines, to infer political senses instead of spiritual ones out of the terms.

Although Liang was taught directly by Morrison and Milne, and became a Protestant preacher, he did not explain the concept clearly. Moreover, he even implied in his book that the kingdom of heaven could exist in the mortal world (see 3.3.2). As a result, the ambiguous nature of the concept left Hong to allocate his own meaning to the term, and his interpretation became more radical and political.

Hong believed that the kingdom of heaven described in the Bible confirmed the arrival of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. When they posed 50 questions to the British missionaries in their debate in 1854, the Taipings quoted five verses from the New Testament, and two of which were quoted for the support of the legitimacy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In the authorized Taiping Bible, Hong added 16

annotations to emphasize that the verses had foretold the establishment of his kingdom. In addition, he also altered the verses to validate the same idea.

A large part of Hong's alteration has to do with death, specifically the death of the prophets and the ancestors. They are closely related to Hong's interpretation of the kingdom of heaven. As mentioned before on taboo characters, Hong replaced the terms for death such as “死”, “崩”, and “卒” with “升” (lift, rise), so as to imply that righteous men would not die, but simply be lifted up to heaven. In addition, he also alter the narrative about certain cases of death. For example:

Example 4.3-10:

KJV: (1) And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. (2) And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her (Genesis 23:1-2).

Gützlaff's Version: (1) 且撒刺氏享寿一百二十有七岁，正活其年纪。(2) 便卒于迦南地四雄之邑，即是希伯崙，亚伯刺罕遂来为撒刺哀哭 [(1) And Sa La enjoyed a life with one hundred and twenty-seven years, and lived exactly the years. (2) Then she died in the city of four heroes in the Jia Nan land, namely Xi Bo Lun. Ya Bo La Han then came and sadly cried for Sa La].

Authorized Taiping Version: (1) 且撒刺氏享寿一百二十有七岁，正活其年纪。(2) 便升于迦南地四雄之邑，即是希伯崙，亚伯刺罕遂来为撒刺葬也 [(1) And Sa La enjoyed a life with one hundred and twenty-seven years, and lived exactly the years. (2) Then she rose in the city of four heroes in the Jia Nan land, namely Xi Bo Lun. Ya Bo La Han then came and buried Sa La].

In the authorized Taiping Bible, Abraham did not show any signs of grief for Sarah, but simply buried her. A similar alteration could be found in the narrative of the death of Israel.

Example 4.3-11:

KJV: (1) And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him ... (3) And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days. (4) And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying ... (5) My father made me swear ... (10) And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. (11) And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan. (Genesis 50: 1; 3-4; 10-11)

Gützlaff's Version: (1) 约色弗遂偃父面涕哭，且亲嘴之也。... (3) 且四旬满，如此满殓人之日，则麦西人为之守丧七十日。(4) 丧期毕，约色弗谓王家人曰，幸蒙汝恩，请奏王闻云... (5) 家父令我发誓... (10) 抵约耳坦河外，于荆棘禾场，在彼惨哭哀涕，且约色弗为先君守孝七日。(11) 夫迦南居民看荆场之丧，则曰此乃麦西国人甚哀哭也，故称约耳坦河外之处曰，麦西人之哀哭也[(1) Yue Se Fu then fell on the father's face and wept, and kissed his mouth... (3) And forty days were full, so it filled the days of embalming, and the Mai Xi people kept vigil for seventy days. (4) After the vigil, Yue Se Fu talked to the king's family and said, I am lucky and grateful for your grace, please present my memorial to the king and let him hear... (5) My father ordered me to swear... (10) They arrived outside Yue Er Tan river, in the thorns field, and there they tragically cried and sorrowfully wept, and Yue Se Fu for the deceased father kept vigil for seven days. (11) The Jia Nan inhabitants saw the thorns field's vigil, then said it was Mai Xi country's people's deep sorrow cries, and called the place outside the Yue Er Dan river Mai Xi people's sorrow cry].

Authorized Taiping Version: (1) [deleted] ... (3) [deleted] (4) 约色弗谓侯家人曰，幸蒙汝恩，请稟侯闻云... (5) 家父令我发誓... (10) 抵约耳坦河外，于荆棘禾场... (11) 夫迦南居民看荆场之丧，则曰此乃麦西郭人之丧葬也，故称

约耳坦河外之处曰，麦西人之丧葬也 [(1) [deleted]... (3) [deleted] (4) Yue Se Fu talked to the governor's family and said, I am lucky and grateful for your grace, please present my memorial to the governor and let him hear... (5) My father ordered me to swear... (10) They arrived outside Yue Er Tan river, in the thorns field... (11) The Jia Nan inhabitants saw the thorns field's vigil, then said it was Mai Xi country's people's funeral, and called the place outside the Yue Er Dan river Mai Xi people's funeral].

All the sorrowful signs are deleted. The effect is that the people did not show any signs of sorrow on the death of Israel.

Why did Hong delete the narrative of sorrow over death? Because he claimed that death was a good thing for the Taiping citizens (as long as they had believed God), because their souls would go to heaven. In other words, death does not exist in the kingdom. Essentially, this view is not far away from the Christian view of death. But according to Christian doctrines, it would not be so until the arrival of a new world.³⁵ So Hong's implication is that his kingdom is the new world. If we look into Hong's religious literature, we find out that the alteration indeed serves a political purpose. In one of his earliest works, he describes the life of a God believer as “生前皇上帝看顾，死后魂升天堂，永远在天上享福，何等快活威风” (when alive they could be looked after by the superior emperor, after death their souls will be brought to heaven, forever in heaven and enjoy happiness, how joyful and prestigious it would be) (Hong, 1979, p. 22). His words suggest that there would be no sorrow for a believer either when he/she is alive or dead. After the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, he stopped mentioning death, and even prohibited death and sorrow: “升天是头等好事，宜欢不宜哭” (rising to heaven is the top good matter, [you] should laugh and should not cry) (Hong, 1979, p. 152). The alteration in the above mentioned biblical verses reflects the same view³⁶. So what is the connection between Hong's view on death and the doctrine

35 Revelation 21:4: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

36 But the alteration is not consistent. Deuteronomy 34:5-8 narrates the death of Moses, Hong only replaced the character “崩” (died) in verse 5 with “升” (lift, rise), but did not alter “哀哭” (sadly cry), which is the translation of “weeping and mourning”.

of the kingdom of heaven? The alteration and annotation of an important verse in the New Testament reveals the answer:

Example 4.3-12:

KJV: Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (I Corinthians 15:50).

Gützlaff's Version: 列位兄弟，请听吾言，骨肉不能接嗣神国，坏者不可获无坏之业也 [Brothers, please listen to my words. Bones and flesh could not inherit the god's/divine kingdom, the corrupted could not acquire uncorrupted's property].

Authorized Taiping Version: 列位兄弟，吾言，灵魂俱能接嗣神国，两者俱可获真福之业也 [Brothers, I say. soul and flesh could both inherit the god's/divine kingdom, and both could inherit the property of true bliss].

The original verses and Gützlaff is on resurrection, and it points out that resurrection is not of the body, but of the soul. The kingdom of God (kingdom of heaven) is spiritual, instead of material. But Hong completely changed the verse, reversed the original doctrine, and stressed the idea that the flesh could also inherit the god's/divine kingdom. Moreover, Hong's emphasized his interpretation in the annotation next to the verse:

神国在天是上帝大天堂，天上三十三天是也。神国在地是上帝小天堂，天朝是也。天上大天堂是灵魂归荣上帝享福之天堂，凡间小天堂是肉身归荣上帝荣光之天堂。须知。钦此 [The god's/divine kingdom in heaven is the superior emperor's big heavenly hall, the thirty-three layer of heaven. The god's/divine kingdom on earth is the superior emperor's small heavenly hall, namely the heavenly dynasty [the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom]. The big heavenly hall in heaven is the heavenly hall where the soul honorably returns to the superior emperor and enjoy bliss. The mortal small heavenly hall is the heavenly hall where the flesh honorably returns to the superior emperor's glory. Remember this. Imperially endorsed]. (Hong, 2004, p. 274)

The alteration and annotation illustrate how Hong interpreted the concept of the kingdom of heaven into a term meaning “a monarch of this world”. That is to say, he wanted to convey a message that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is the kingdom of heaven, and as long as the citizens are loyal to it, both their flesh and soul could enter the promised kingdom of heaven.

In addition to the above mentioned examples, Hong’s also added 16 annotations next to important verses and emphasize his interpretation on the kingdom of heaven. The verses in the New Testament often imply that the kingdom of heaven is coming.³⁷ This expression is normally understood as an appeal that people should strengthen their faith, and fill the world with love, in addition, it also signals that the judgement will come unexpectedly, and people should always remain alert and believe in God. But Hong’s annotation stressed that the verses had foretold the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Here are a few examples.

First, Hong interpreted Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount as the prophecy of the arrival of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Matthew 5-7 are the first chapters in the New Testament that narrates the teaching of Jesus. It conveys the central doctrine of Jesus, especially on the teaching of Kingdom of heaven. As mentioned before, Liang quoted all three chapters in his book, which is the longest quotation he used. In addition, Matthew was the only book from the New Testament that the Taiping published in their first version of the Bible. Hence it was held in high esteem in both Christianity and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In Matthew 5, Jesus promised that the poor, hungry, and sad are blessed, “for their’s is the kingdom of heaven”. These verses are normally understood as a teaching that suggests that one should have gratitude and peace in all circumstances. However, Hong’s annotation in Matthew 5 focused the implications of the term “天国” (heavenly kingdom), and elaborated that there was a big heavenly hall and the small heavenly hall. He associated the term “天国” (heavenly kingdom) with his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and pointed out that “天国来在凡间，今日天父天兄下凡创开天国是也” (the heavenly kingdom comes to the mortal world, namely the heavenly

³⁷ For example, Matthew 3:1, 4:17.

kingdom created by the heavenly father and the heavenly older brother these days) (Hong, 2004, p. 117).

Hong's annotation in Matthew 5 also illustrates Hong did not properly understand certain verses. In order to prove that Jesus had foretold the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, he wrote that “故太兄预诏云，天国迩来” (therefore the imperial older brother instructed in a prediction: the heavenly kingdom is coming near) (Hong, 2004, p. 117). The phrase “天国迩来” (the heavenly kingdom is coming near) was also quoted in the Taiping's letter to the Western missionaries, as evidence to challenge the missionaries' objection to the legitimacy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (cited in Luo & Wang, 2004, p. 32). However, as pointed out by the missionaries, the phrase was indeed said by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:1-2:

KJV: In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,
And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

当是日，行浸礼师名约翰来，在犹太野宣道云，天国迩来，尔当悔罪矣 [on that day, the baptist called Yue Han came, and preached in the You Tai wilderness and said, the heavenly kingdom is coming near, you should repent sins].

Jesus said the same words (“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”) in Matthew 4:17, but it was translated differently in Gützlaff's Version.

自此以后，耶稣启宣云，天国近矣，汝应当悔罪 [from then on, Jesus started the preach and said, the heavenly kingdom is close, you should repent sins].³⁸

The two translations were phrased differently in Chinese, but Hong still confused John's words as Jesus'.

Second, Hong interpreted Jesus' metaphor about the use of the sword as Taiping's military actions. In Matthew 10:34, Jesus said:

38 In the authorized Taiping version, Hong replaced Jesus' name “耶稣” (Ye Su) with “基督”. As mentioned before, this is a common alteration found in the three gospels.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

In the authorized Taiping version, the verse is:

莫想朕临在地使太平也，朕来非立太平，乃使刀也 [Do not think that I came to the earth to make peace. I came not to establish the great peace, but to use a sword].

Except for the replacement of “吾” (I) with “朕” (the royal “we”), the verse is the same as in Gützlaff’s version. In Christianity, the verse is interpreted as the conflict between faith and the secular world. Jesus tried to encourage the believers to hold on to the truth and be firm in their faith (Feng, 2010, p. 26; p. 130). But Hong interpreted this as a permit to violent uprising. “Peace” is translated as “太平”, and it must have been particular favored by Hong. He pointed out in the annotation:

今爷哥下凡斩邪留正，验矣。钦此 [now father and the older brother descended to the mortal world, slaying the evil and retaining the righteousness. Proved. Imperially endorsed]. (Hong Xiuquan, 2004, p. 125)

In an imperial edict that he issued to Issachar Jacox Roberts, he made a similar remark. He tried to justify that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was a kingdom that had been appointed by God:

哥来使刀今日是 [it is the day when the older brother comes and uses the sword] (Hong, 1979b, 53).

Obviously, it resonates with his annotation in Matthew 10:34. Ironically, Jesus’ words about “I came not to send peace” is translated into “朕来非立太平” (I came not to establish the great peace). We will see later in this section that, in fact, Hong frequently took the word “太平” as a sign in the Bible that predicts the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. But Jesus’ words reveal that he would not come to establish the “great peace” (which in Hong’s mind was referred to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom). But no explanation was offered by Hong.

Thirdly, Hong interpreted the metaphor of the kingdom of heaven as an omen of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus used different kinds of metaphors to explain the kingdom of heaven. When Jesus used the parable of the wheat and the tares to illustrate the difference between faithful believers and weak people, he implied that only the righteous could be accepted into the kingdom of heaven like the harvest of the wheat, while sinners will be destroyed, like the burning of the tares. Hong annotated that it had happened in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom:

今天地安息期至，爷哥下凡斩邪留正，收麦焚稗，验矣。义人享福在天父之国，验矣。钦此 [Now the end time of the heaven and earth has come. The father and the older brother descended to the mortal world, slaying the evil and protecting the righteousness. Proved. The righteous enjoy bliss in the heavenly father's kingdom. Proved. Imperially endorsed] (Hong, 2004, p. 129).³⁹

When Jesus used the parable of the fishing net to illustrate that at the end of the world, righteous people would be kept like good fish, while the evil will be thrown away like bad fish, Hong again pointed out that it was realized in his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom:

择美掷歹，验矣。钦此 [Keep the good and throw away the bad. Proved. Imperially endorsed]. (Hong, 2004, p. 129)

Fourthly, Hong interpreted the word “太平” (“taiping”, great peace) in the verses as the prophecy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Hong's annotation about this is first seen in Luke. In Luke 2:13-14, the angels described the birth of Jesus:

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The authorized Taiping Bible kept Gützlaff's translation:

率然大众天军偕天使颂赞上帝云，天上荣归上帝，在地太平，人间恩和矣
[Suddenly a multitude of heavenly army with angels praised the superior emperor

³⁹ Hong confused Sabbath (安息期) with Judgment Day (“末日”) in the annotation. He mentioned the Sabbath twice in the annotation of the New Testament, once here, and another instance when he was referring to the arrival of himself.

and said, in heaven the honor belongs to the superior emperor, on earth there is great peace, the mortal world is in harmony].

Hong annotated next to the verses:

今日应验矣。钦此 [Today it has come true. Imperially endorsed] (Hong, 2004, p. 175]

Hong did not explain what “it” referred to. But we can infer from an earlier event in Taiping history that it means the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. When the Taiping asked the fifty questions to the Western missionaries, they quoted Luke 2:13-14, implying that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had been foretold in the Bible.

The key term here is “太平” (great peace). As mentioned before, the term could also be found in one chapter of Liang’s book, and Hong took it as his ideal. It is also the title of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In addition, there is similarity between the verse “天上荣归上帝，在地太平” (in heaven the honor belongs to the superior emperor, on earth there is great peace) and Hong’s narrative of the big heavenly hall in heaven and the small heavenly hall on earth (i.e., the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom). In other words, the verse was interpreted by Hong as an implication that there are two kingdoms of heaven. That is what he meant by “it has come true”. As we will see in later discussion, Hong added the word “太平” in Revelation to strengthen this implication.

In addition to the examples mentioned above, Hong added similar annotations in Matthew 24, Acts 15, Romans 10, and I Thessalonians 4, interpreting the verses as the prophecy of the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. By this he conveyed a clear message to the reader that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is a new world that replaces the old.

Hong regarded his kingdom as the realization of the kingdom of heaven on earth. It could be seen as a form of Millennialism, namely a thought that the current world is corrupted and it is destined to be completely destroyed and replaced with a new world (Naquin, 1981, pp. 160-164). However, as mentioned in Chapter Three, it was not Hong’s intention to overthrow the government immediately after reading Liang’s book, although he did show some rebelliousness. Reading of Bible made him more radical.

The part of the Bible that impacted him the most was the book of Revelation. As apocalyptic literature, Revelation is radically different with other books in the New Testament in terms of narrative and tone. It is radical in nature and full of metaphors. The book was composed when the Christian church was oppressed by the authorities, which might explain why the book expressed a strong opposition to the secular world (Coogan, 2010, pp .2153-2155). It depicts Judgement Day, the rebellion of the secular monarch against God, the destruction of the world, and the arrival of a new world. Hong's annotation in Revelation indicates that he made a strong connection between the verses and the legitimacy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Revelation describes the kingdom of heaven as a kingdom that descends to the mortal world, and depicts the capital of the new world as the New Jerusalem. Hong took them as the proof of his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In his annotation and alteration, he tried to equate the arrival of the new world with the establishment of his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and New Jerusalem as his capital “天京” (heavenly capital, namely Nanjing, China). When Revelation firstly mentions “New Jerusalem” in Revelation 3:12, Hong altered the name “新耶路撒冷者” (the new Ye Lu Sa Leng) into “新也路撒冷即天京” (new Ye Lu Sa Leng namely the heavenly capital), and annotated next to it that the establishment of “天京” (the heavenly capital) in his kingdom was the proof of the arrival of New Jerusalem. Likewise, whenever the verses describe the scene of the new world, Hong annotated or altered them to point out that it refers to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom:

(a) In Revelation 11, the angel celebrated the reign of God and the Christ. Hong annotated that “今天父上帝、太兄基督下凡，带朕暨幼主管理，世世靡暨矣，今验矣” (now the heavenly father superior emperor and the imperial older brother descended to the mortal world, and led me and the infant lord to administer, to generations after generations. Now it has been proved.).⁴⁰ (Hong, 2004, p. 358)

(b) Revelation 21 depicts the birth of the new world, and the arrival of the New Jerusalem. Hong altered and annotated the verses to imply that they refer to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. He altered the first two verses:

Example 4.3-13:

⁴⁰ “幼主” (infant lord) refers to Hong's son.

KJV: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven ... (Revelation 21:1-2)

Gützlaff's Version: 当时我看新天新地，因初之天与初之地过去，后未有海矣。我约翰看见圣城耶路撒冷，自上帝来，由天而降... [Then I saw the new heaven and the new earth, because the first heaven and the first heaven were passed away, afterwards there was no sea. I John saw the holy city Ye Lu Sa Leng, came from the superior emperor, descending from heaven...].

Authorized Taiping Version: 当时我看新天新地，因初之天与初之地过去，后未有海，太平矣。我约翰看见圣城也路撒冷，自上帝来，由天而降... [Then I saw the new heaven and the new earth, because the first heaven and the first heaven were passed away, afterwards there was no sea. There is great peace. I John saw the holy city Ye Lu Sa Leng, came from the superior emperor, descending from heaven...].

In addition to replacing the taboo character “耶” with “也”, Hong added the word “太平” (great peace). It is obviously an attempt to imply the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

Then, Hong annotated that what John saw was the “大天堂” (big heavenly hall), “天上一地下一样” (the heaven and the earth are the same), and that the New Jerusalem is his heavenly capital that was ruled by the superior emperor, the imperial older brother, himself, and his son the infant lord (幼主) (Hong, 2004, p. 367).

As described previously in this chapter, Hong regarded the word “太平” in Luke's Gospel as the prophecy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. His addition of “太平” and his annotation in Revelation 21 reflects the same view. In other words, he wanted to associate “太平”, the new world, and his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

(c) In Revelation 22, which is the end of the New Testament, the angel told John that what he had seen would come true, and “blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the

prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:7). The seventh verse was translated by Gützlaff as:

但凡守此书之预言者福矣 [whoever kept this book’s prophecy is blessed].

Hong altered it into:

今上帝基督下凡，但凡守此书之预言者福矣” (now the superior emperor and Ji Du descended to the mortal world, whoever kept this book’s prophecy is blessed).

In addition, he emphasized again in the annotation that “the superior emperor” and “Ji Du” has arrived in this mortal world (Hong, 2004, p. 368). In other words, Hong attempted to convince readers that the prophecy in the verses had already been fulfilled.

On the other hand, Revelation also describes the destruction of the old world, and Hong interpreted them as what was happening in China at the time, and implied that he was the one who could save the world. This will be discussed in 4.3.1.6.

As could be seen from Hong’s annotation and alteration in the authorized Taiping Bible, he interpreted the verses relevant to the kingdom of heaven to support the legitimacy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

4.3.1.4 The Trinity

The most fundamental conflict between the Taiping religion and Christianity is the doctrine of the Trinity. Hong completely repudiated the doctrine.

The Trinity regards God as three godheads, namely the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Ghost. They are three persons but belong to one God. The problem is that neither the term “trinity” nor the doctrine is defined or stated in the Bible. This doctrine gradually formed over Christianity long history. In the early Christian sects, the views on the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost were separated. Some did not believe that Jesus and God were one, and some did not believe that Jesus had both divinity and humanity. After decades of debate, the doctrine was finally established in 325 at the Council of Nicea, making it a mainstream tenet of the Christian faith. The

other sects that were against the Trinity were dismissed as heretical (Lindberg, 2006, pp. 22-28).

As mentioned before in Chapter Three, Liang's book, which was the first Christian book that Hong read, does not explain the doctrine of the Trinity. Instead, the narrative led Hong to establish a belief similar to Unitarianism, namely believing that God is one person. After all, there is no similar concept in Chinese culture to help him understand the doctrine by merely reading the verses in the Bible. In addition, the traditional view of Confucianism emphasized the differences in hierarchy between father and son. In this context, it is almost impossible for Hong to understand the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost like what a Christian does. Even though Jesus is described as the savior in Liang's book, Hong did not consider him the same as the superior emperor. Instead, he called Jesus "prince" (太子) (Hong, 1979, p. 22). This wrong impression also affected his later interpretation when reading the Bible. The third person of the Trinity, namely Holy Ghost, was even more confusing to him. This problem is largely due to misleading translations. Morrison translated it as "圣风" (holy wind) or "圣神风" (holy divine wind), and Liang did not explain it further. Hong almost completely ignored the Holy Ghost in Christian doctrines.

As a result, the doctrine of the Trinity was abandoned by Hong. His interpretation is that the heavenly father is the only superior emperor, and the prince Ye Su's (Jesus) position is lower than him. The Western missionaries stated in their reply to the Taipings that Jesus, the Holy Ghost, and the Father belong to the same and one god (cited in Gregory, 1969). But Hong's alteration in the authorized version indicate that he insisted on his own understanding. Most of Hong's alterations in the Bible are on the denial of the Trinity. Generally speaking, there are three kinds of alterations: 1. alteration of key verses; 2. distinction between Jesus and God; and 3. interpretation of the term "Holy Ghost".

4.3.1.4.1 Alteration of key verses

There are three verses that are considered the most important to the doctrine of the Trinity, and the three godheads could be found in the same verses (Achtemeier, 1971, pp. 1098-1099; Myers, 1975, pp. 1019-1021). Hong altered all of them:

Example 4.3-14:

KJV: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen. (II Corinthians 13:14)

Gützlaff's Version: 且愿主耶稣基督之恩典，上帝之慈爱，圣神之交通偕尔众焉。心正所愿也 [And I hope the lord Ye Su Ji Du's grace, the superior emperor's love, the holy god's communion be with you all. It is my heart's wish].

Authorized Taiping Version: 且愿主耶稣基督之恩典，上帝圣神之慈爱交通偕尔众焉。心正所愿也 [And I hope the lord Ye Su Ji Du's grace, the superior emperor holy god's love and communion be with you all. It is my heart's wish].

The verse is considered the earliest one in biblical verses that imply the doctrine of the Trinity (Achtemeier, 1996, p. 1099). However, Hong's alterations eliminate the implication. "The Holy Ghost" was translated by Gützlaff as "圣神" (holy god/spirit), and it is a confusing translation, because it could be understood as another title for God, which is what Hong did. He considered it an alternative title just like "上主" (superior lord) or "上帝" (superior emperor) (to be discussed in 4.3.1.5). In Taiping publications, God's title could be very long with a combination of titles, for example, "天父上主皇上帝" (the heavenly father and superior lord and imperial superior emperor). Therefore, the movement of "圣神" in front of "上帝" turns "上帝圣神" into another title for God. Hong did not delete or alter the part of Jesus. After all, the verse does not state that Jesus is God.

Example 4.3-15:

KJV: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19)

Gützlaff's Version: 且尔往，以诸民为徒，因父，子，圣神之名施之以浸礼矣 [And you go, treat all nations as students, and in the name of the father, the son, the holy god, offer the immerse ritual].

Authorized Taiping Version: 且尔往，以诸民为徒，因圣神父子之名施之以浸礼矣 [And you go, treat all nations as students, and in the name of the holy god father and the son, offer the immerse ritual].

The placement of “圣神” (holy god/spirit) ahead of “父” (father) is similar to the previous example. The movement turns it into an adjective for “父” and “子”, which could result in two interpretations: 1. “圣神父” (holy spiritual father) and “子” (son); and 2. “圣神父” (holy spiritual father) and “圣神子” (holy spiritual son). The second interpretation might imply that Jesus is as divine as God. But many of Hong’s annotations throughout the New Testament oppose this implication, in which he pointed out that Jesus was not God (see the following discussion on the distinction between God and Jesus). Hence only the first interpretation is possible after Hong’s alteration.

Example 4.3-16:

KJV: (7) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (I John 5:7-8)

Gützlaff’s Version: (7) 在天供证者有三，即神父，神道，圣神，又此三者合一也。(8) 在地供证者亦有三，即神，水，血，此三者归一也 [(7) In heaven there are three that testify, namely the divine father, the divine word, the holy god, and these three are one. (8) In earth there are also three that testify, namely the god, water, blood, and the three are one].

Authorized Taiping Version:(7) 在天上帝圣神真神独一，即天父上主皇上帝是其独一也。(8) 在地供证者则有三，即，神，水，血，此三者归一也 [(7) In heaven the superior emperor holy god true god is the only one, namely the heavenly father superior lord imperial superior emperor is the only one. (8) In earth there are instead three that testify, namely the god, water, blood, and the three are one].

The alteration in this example is more radical. Hong completely rewrote the seventh verse, because if he had merely rearrange the characters like the two previous examples, he would have had to explain the phrase “此三者合一也” (these three are one). Even if he had changed the character “三” (three) into “二” (two), the statement (these two are one) would still contradict his view that Jesus was not God. Therefore Hong resorted to a complete rewriting. The rewritten version emphasizes that the “superior emperor” is the only one in heaven. In addition, in order to eliminate anything that might make it appear that he had altered the text, he changed the character “亦” (also) into a “则” (instead/whereas), so as to eliminate possible doubts.

In summary, all the three most important verses in the Bible that could support the doctrine of the Trinity were altered by Hong. He turned them into verses that support his view on the relationship between the three godheads.

In addition to alteration, Hong also annotated in I John 5 and explained the relationship between God, Jesus, and Holy Ghost, and even condemned the doctrine of the Trinity:

上帝独一至尊。基督是上帝太子，子由父生，原本一体合一，但父自父，子由子，一而二，二而一也.....盖天父上帝是独一真神，独一圣神，上帝曰，除朕外不可有别神别帝也。圣神即是上帝也，若另有圣神，则是有别神矣。即圣神风亦是圣神上帝之风，非风是圣神也。风是东王，天上使风者也。圣神自圣神，风自风，一而二，二而一。子由父生，原本一体合一，但父自父，子自子，又合一，又分开也.....爷知新约有错记，故降东王诏证，圣神是上帝，风是东王.....父自父，子自子，兄自兄，弟自弟，一而二，二而一，一下凡间而名分定矣。若泥解基督即上帝，则是有别帝矣，使太兄心何安？今太兄下凡，降圣旨教导朕曰，秀全胞弟，尔后来不好称帝，爷方是帝也。太兄周时说子爷，况朕亲上高天，见过天父多少，见过天妈多少，见过太兄多少，见过太嫂多少，有凭有据正为多，上天下凡总是一样，耳闻不若目见也。钦此 [The superior emperor is the sole supreme one. Ji Du (Christ) is the superior emperor's prince. The son is born of the father. Originally the body was united into one. But now father is father, and son is son. One is yet two, and

two is yet one...Because the heavenly father superior emperor is the only true god, the only holy god. The superior emperor said: “except for me there is not allowed to be other gods or other emperors”. The holy god is the superior emperor. If there is another holy god, it means there would be another god. That is to say the holy divine wind is the wind of the holy god, and the wind is not the holy god. The wind is the East King, who commands the wind in heaven. The holy god is the holy god. The wind is the wind. One is yet two, and two is yet one. The son was born of the father. Originally the body was united into one. But father is father. Son is son. They were one but now are also separated...The father knew that the New Testament was falsely recorded, so he sent the East King to issue the edict (of altering the Bible). The holy god is the imperial emperor. The wind is the East King...Father is father. Son is son. Older brother is older brother. Younger brother is younger brother. One is yet two, and two is yet one. Once they had come down to the mortal world the positions have been determined. If people confuse Ji Du (Christ) with the superior emperor, then there would be another emperor. How turbulent would that cause the imperial older brother’s heart feel? Now the imperial older brother came down to the mortal world, and delivered the imperial edict to me and instructed: “Xiuquan, my younger brother, you shall not call yourself an emperor. The father is the emperor”. The imperial older brother kept telling me about the father. In addition, I had been to the higher heaven, had seen the heavenly father a lot, had seen the heavenly mother a lot, had seen the imperial older sister-in-law a lot. There are so many evidence. The heaven and this mortal world are always the same. To hear with ears could not be compared to to see with eyes. Imperially endorsed]. (Hong, 2004, pp. 344-346)

The annotation is closely related to the doctrine of the Trinity and the problem of translation. First, Hong’s strict separation of “圣神风” from “圣神” is based on his interpretation of the literal meanings. But they are both translations of the same term. The first is Morrison’s translation and the second is Gützlaff’s. But Hong interpreted “圣神” (holy god) as one of the titles of God, whereas “圣神风” (holy divine wind) as a wind blown by God. Two versions of translation led to two distinct paths.

Secondly, Hong's annotation indicates that his interpretation of God and Jesus is based on Chinese moral standards rather than Christian doctrines. Hong emphasized that Jesus had told him not to call himself emperor. His elaboration is based on traditional Chinese social hierarchy. Likewise, he interpreted that the heavenly family consisted of the heavenly father, the heavenly mother, and the heavenly sister-in-law. Such view is obviously based on the model of a mortal family. The statement that “一下凡间而名分定矣” (once they had come down to the mortal world the positions have been determined) also reflects his mindset of Chinese social hierarchy.

Finally, the annotation also reflects Hong's attitude towards the Old Testament and the New Testament. When he tried to justify that Jesus was not God, he quoted from the Ten Commandments, “上帝曰，除朕外不可有别神别帝也” (The superior emperor said: “except for me there is not allowed to be other gods or other emperors”).⁴¹ In addition, he mentioned that “新约有错记” (the New Testament was falsely recorded). It implies that the New Testament was more problematic in Hong's mind.

4.3.1.4.2 Distinction between Jesus and God

In addition to altering the verses that directly state the equal status of the three godheads in the Trinity, Hong also altered and annotated the verses that imply the divinity of Jesus.

The verses in the Bible often switch between titles of Jesus and God, and a Christian would infer that Jesus is God. It is exactly what Hong tried to eliminate. In Gützlaff's translation, the character “主” (Lord) is referred to either Jesus or God, but Hong distinguished the title very strictly. His alteration reveals that he understood “上主” (superior lord) as God, and “救主” (savior lord) as Jesus. In the New Testament, the phrase “God our saviour” occurs six times. Gützlaff translated it into “救主上帝” (savior lord superior emperor), but Hong replaced all of them with “上主上帝” (superior lord superior emperor). On the other hand, “上主耶稣” (superior lord Ye

⁴¹ The verse that Hong quoted is from the Old Testament (Exodus 20:3 or Deuteronomy 5:7). But it is not a translation by Gützlaff. Instead, it is closer to Morrison's translation in Exodus. This research could not find the exact source of Hong's quotation. Hong might have referred other Christian works when he worked on the authorized Taiping Bible.

Su), which is the translation of “the Lord, even Jesus” in Acts 9:17, was replaced with “救主耶稣” (savior lord Ye Su). The following examples also indicate his intention to distinguish between Jesus and God.

Example 4.3-17:

KJV: To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:25)

Gützlaff's Version: 夫吾救主，独有容智之上帝，愿辉耀、威仪、管辖、权势，自今以后归之至万世焉。正心所愿矣 [To our savior lord, the only wise superior emperor, [I] wish glory, majesty, dominion, power, from now on belong to you to ten thousand generations. It is my heart's wish].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫吾救主之神父，独有容智之上帝，愿辉耀、威仪、管辖、权势，自今以后归之主万世焉。正心所愿矣 [To our savior lord's divine father, the only wise superior emperor, [I] wish glory, majesty, dominion, power, from now on belong to you to ten thousand generations. It is my heart's wish].

Gützlaff divided the phrase “the only wise God our Saviour” into two phrases, and made it into “our savior lord” (吾救主) and “the only wise superior emperor” (the only wise superior emperor). Hong added “之神父” ([one]'s divine father) behind “救主” (savior lord). The revised version implies that “救主” is referred to Jesus, and the “divine father” is God. “主” is used as a verb (dominate) and replaces the preposition “至” (to), but it does not change the overall meaning.

Hong's designation “救主” solely to Jesus might be influenced with Liang book. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Liang replaced “耶稣” with “救世主” (world savior lord), and “耶稣基督” with “救世主耶稣” (world savior lord Ye Su). Hong's earliest description on Jesus in his early writings was “救世主耶稣，皇上帝太子也” (world savior lord Ye Su, is the imperial superior emperor's imperial son) (Hong, 1979, p. 22). It could be inferred that Hong had established a fixed association between “救世

主” (world savior lord) or “救主” (savior lord) and Jesus. On the other hand, the character “上” (superior) entails a loftier sense than “救”, and it is constantly associated with the superior emperor in biblical verses, such as 上帝 (superior emperor). So it would be very easy for Hong to associate the character solely with God, and interpreted “上主” (superior lord) solely as “上帝” (superior emperor).

In addition to the distinction between “上主” and “救主”, Hong also altered the character “主” when it becomes equivocal. For example:

Example 4.3-18:

KJV: (36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ ... (39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2: 36; 39)

Gützlaff's Version: (36) 故以色列人举家果然可知，尔所钉十字架上之耶稣，上帝置之为主基督矣... (39) 即许约涉尔并尔子孙及诸远人，俱吾主上帝所招者也 [(36) Therefore Isreal's all families assuredly know, that Ye Su nailed on the cross, the superior emperor has made him the lord Ji Du...(39) For the promise is unto you, and your sons and grandsons, and to all the far people, and all of them are called by our lord the superior emperor].

Authorized Taiping Version: (36) 故以色列人举家果然可知，尔所钉十字架上之基督耶稣，上帝置之为主基督矣... (39) 即许约涉尔并尔子孙及诸远人，俱上帝及基督所招者也 [(36) Therefore Isreal's all families assuredly know, that Ji Du Ye Su nailed on the cross, the superior emperor has made him the lord Ji Du... (39) For the promise is unto you, and your sons and grandsons, and to all the far people, and all of them are called by the superior emperor and Ji Du].

In verse 36, the character “主” (lord) refers to Jesus,⁴² whereas the one in verse 39 refers to God. For a Christian this would not cause any misunderstanding, because he/she believes that Jesus is God. But for Hong, who did not believe that Jesus was God, would have considered it very ambiguous. Therefore “主” in verse 39 is deleted, and the whole phrase “吾主上帝” (our lord the superior emperor) is replaced with “上帝及基督” (the superior emperor and Ji Du).

In addition to the character “主”, Hong also altered 19 verses that imply that Jesus is God. Here are two examples:

Example 4.3-19:

KJV: And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (I John 5:20)

Gützlaff's Version: 吾知上帝之子降临，赐我通达识真主，吾亦在真主，即神子耶稣基督也。此真上帝，亦永生矣 [And we know that the superior emperor's son descends, grants us an understanding to know the true lord, we also are in the true lord, namely the divine son Ye Su Ji Du. This is the true superior emperor, and is/who also has eternal life].

Authorized Taiping Version: 吾知上帝之子降临，赐我通达识圣主，吾亦在圣主，即神子耶稣基督也。此真基督，先永生矣 [And we know that the superior emperor's son descends, grants us an understanding to know the holy lord, we also are in the holy lord, namely the divine son Ye Su Ji Du. This is the true Ji Du, and is/who has firstly eternal life].

In this example, Hong replaced “真主” (true lord) with “圣主” (holy lord). The alteration indicates that Hong regarded “真主” (true god) as God, while “圣主” (holy

⁴² In addition, Hong also added “基督” (Ji Du) before “耶稣” (Ye Su). This is a very common alteration in the authorized Taiping Bible. It shows that Hong tended to regard the word “基督” as part of Jesus' name. Obviously he did not understand the meaning of the term (i.e., savior), because the revision makes the meaning in 36 redundant: “that Ji Du Ye Su nailed on the cross, the superior emperor has made him the lord Ji Du”.

god) as Jesus.⁴³ The replacement of “此真上帝” (this is the true superior emperor) with “此真基督” (this is the true Ji Du) reveals Hong’s denial of Jesus’ deity. In addition, the replacement of “亦” (also) with “先” (firstly) has a subtle implication. As mentioned in the discussion of the kingdom of heaven, Hong promised that his kingdom was the kingdom of heaven for Taiping citizens on earth. Hence “先” (firstly) turns the verse into an implication that other people could also have eternal life.

Example 4.3-20:

KJV: But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. (Hebrews 1:8)

Gützlaff’s Version: 惟对神子曰，上帝坎，主之座位至永远，主国之权柄乃义柄 [But unto the divine son [he] said, O superior emperor, lord’s seat forever, lord kingdom’s authority is righteousness].

Authorized Taiping Version: 惟对神子曰，上帝之子坎，主之殿位至永远，主国之权柄乃义柄 [But unto the divine son [he] said, O superior emperor’s son, lord’s seat forever, lord kingdom’s authority is righteousness].

Hong added “之子” (son) behind “上帝” (superior emperor). It eliminates the possible implication that the “divine son” is the “superior emperor”.

Hong not only altered the verses to avoid readers interpreting that Jesus is God, he also kept emphasizing in the annotation that Jesus was not God. Out of the 74 annotations in the New Testament in the authorized Taiping version, 30 point out that Jesus is not God. They could be further divided into three groups: (a) *emphasis that Jesus is only the son of God, not God himself*. (b) *explaining the miracles of Jesus as the power of God, not by Jesus himself*. (c) *interpreting difficult verses, with which to support his view that Jesus is not God*.

(a) *Emphasis that Jesus is only the son of God, not God himself*.

43 “圣主” (the holy lord) is another title that Hong frequently used to refer to Jesus in Taiping publications. But he never used it to refer to God. It also proves that Hong had a strict distinction between God’s and Jesus’ titles.

The previous discussion points out that Hong tended to interpret the relationship between God and Jesus as father and son, or emperor and prince. Hong believed that their positions should not be confused, i.e., a son should not at the same time be his father. As a result, whenever a verse stated that Jesus was the son of God, Hong would point out that it proved his own view correct. Here are a few of his annotations:

以赛亚证太兄是上帝之子 [Yi Sai Ya [Isaiah] testified that the imperial older brother is superior emperor's son]. (In Matthew 2) (Hong, 2004, p. 114)

约翰证太兄是上帝之子 [Yue Han [John] testified that the imperial older brother is the superior emperor's son]. (In Matthew 3) (Hong, 2004, p. 115)

太兄自证是上帝之子 [The imperial older brother testified himself that he is the imperial emperor's son]. (In Matthew 10) (Hong, 2004, p. 124)

基督为上帝之子，太兄及门生齐证皆然 [Ji Du [Christ] is the superior emperor's son, and the imperial older brother and disciples all testified that]. (In Matthew 16) (Hong, 2004, p. 133)

Hong kept pointing out that the ancestors and disciples in the Bible testified that Jesus was the son of God. What he tried to convey is that, because Jesus is the son of God, it is impossible that he is God himself, just like the fact that a son cannot not be his own father. Hong's other annotations on the same issue are more direct, and he pointed out that Jesus is not God. For example:

保罗亦证基督是上帝之子，非是上帝 [Bao Luo [Paul] also testified that Ji Du is the superior emperor's son, not the superior emperor]. (In Romans 1) (Hong, 2004, p. 244)

“上帝独一，基督是上帝太子，不是上帝 [the superior emperor is the only one, Ji Du is the superior emperor's imperial son, not the superior emperor]. (In Romans 9) (Hong, 2004, p. 252)

(b) Explaining the miracles of Jesus as the power of God, not by Jesus himself.

In the New Testament gospels, Jesus often manifested miracles, such as healing illness, resurrection of the dead, etc. which all could be seen as evidence that Jesus is God. Hong, on the other hand, tried to explain the miracles in his own way.

For example, when Jesus healed leprosy (Matthew 8), Hong annotated that the reason was:

上帝住临太兄头上 [the superior emperor dwelled on the head of the imperial older brother]. (Hong, 2004, p. 121)

Likewise, when Jesus healed the fever, blind, dumb, and lame, etc (Matthew 8). Hong explained that the reason was:

上帝住临太兄头上，并非因为耶稣是上帝 [the superior dwelled on the head of the imperial older brother, not because Ye Su was the superior emperor]. (Hong, 2004, pp. 121)⁴⁴

What Hong meant by “住临” (dwell, or temporary stay), is divine possession. It means that the human body is temporarily possessed or inspired by a god or a spirit. Such a belief had existed both in biblical culture and Chinese popular religion. The former developed the belief and regarded the Holy Spirit as a godhead of God. But the latter never made such a distinction. The Chinese people simply believed that a god or a spirit would descend to the mortal world and possess a human body whenever necessary. The Taiping high officials often adopted this method when they tried to gain more political prestige, especially Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui, who respectively claimed themselves as the representatives of God and Jesus. Therefore, in Hong’s interpretation, Jesus’ miracles were also a result of divine possession.

Certain verses describe believers praising Jesus as God after he performed the miracles. Hong added annotation and pointed out that they were praising God instead of Jesus (Hong, 2004, pp. 122, 182, 213).

(c) Interpreting difficult verses about Jesus’ deity.

⁴⁴ Similar annotations can be found in Matthew 9 and Mark 2.

There are a few verses about Jesus that are quite ambiguous. Hong interpreted them and used them to justify that Jesus was not God. For example:

Example 4.3-21:

KJV: (35) And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? (36) For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. (37) David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly. (Matthew 12:35-37)

Gützlaff's Version: (35) 耶稣殿里教训，答曰，书士皆言，基督乃大辟之裔，如何？(36) 夫大辟感于圣神，曰，上主已告吾主云，坐吾右手，待服诸敌为尔脚踏也。(37) 且大辟自称基督为主，基督如何为大辟之子乎？众多喜听其教。 [Ye Su in the temple taught, and answered: "Scribes all said, that Ji Du is Da Pi's descendant, why is that? And Da Pi was inspired by the holy god, and said, the superior lord has told our lord and said, sit on my right hand, till I conquered all enemies and make them your footstool. And Da Pi himself called Ji Du lord. Why Ji Du is Da Pi's son?" The crowd liked to hear his teaching].

Authorized Taiping Version: (35) 基督殿里教训，诏曰，书士皆言，基督乃大辟之裔，如何？(36) 夫大辟感于圣神，曰，上帝已告吾主云，坐朕右手，待服诸敌为尔脚踏也。(37) 且大辟自称基督为主，基督如何为大辟之子乎？众多喜听其教 [Ji Du in the temple taught, and instructed: "Scribes all said, that Ji Du is Da Pi's descendant, why is that? And Da Pi was inspired by the holy god, and said, the superior emperor has told our lord and said, sit on my right hand, till I conquered all enemies and make them your footstool. And Da Pi himself called Ji Du lord. Why Ji Du is Da Pi's son?" The crowd liked to hear his teaching].

The only alterations are the replacement of “耶稣” with “基督”，“答” with “诏”，and “主” with “帝”，which do not affect the general meaning. However, Hong added a question in the annotation:

尔偏误解基督即上帝，上天合为一。缘何大辟之前，太兄未生，得见上主语太兄乎？” [You stubbornly misunderstood Ji Du as the superior emperor, who rose into heaven and combined into one. Then why is that in the days of Da Pi, before the birth of the imperial older brother, he could see and talked with the superior lord about the imperial older brother?] .(Hong, 2004, p. 166)

Hong directly addressed readers with a second pronoun “尔” (you). This is very rare. It could be seen as a direct response to the Western missionaries, who replied to the Taipings in 1853 that “after he [Jesus] ascended to Heaven, he was a spirit and one with God” (cited in Gregory, 1969, p. 191).

Feng (2010) points out that Jesus’ question implies that the Pharisees only saw the humanity of Christ, not his divinity (p. 59). In other words, this passage suggests that Jesus is divine, and he is with God as one. But Hong read an opposite meaning from the verses. Not only did he fail to find any implication about Jesus being God, he even considered it proof that Jesus was not God.⁴⁵

Jesus’ words mentioned above is based on Psalm 110 of the Old Testament (Hong did not publish the Psalms). A similar verse can be found in Acts 7:55-56. when “[Stephen] looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God”. Hong also annotated and expressed the same point:

上帝是神父，基督是神子，一而二矣，况太兄亦曾自证乎？今何误认基督即上帝乎？ [The superior emperor is the divine father. Ji Du is the divine son. One is yet two. Furthermore the imperial older brother testified it himself. Why misunderstand Ji Du as the superior emperor?]. (Hong, 2004, p. 218)

Hong’s annotations in both occasions express an interpretation in opposite to Christians’ idea. In the Jewish and early Christian tradition, it was a symbol of nobility to say that someone stood by the right hand side of a lord. And when it refers to Jesus standing by the right hand side of God, the New Testament creates an association with the Old Testament (Psalm 110), which reflects Christian belief that Jesus is the Messiah. In other words, in the context of Christianity, the expression (Jesus standing on the right

⁴⁵ Similar verses can be found in Matthew 22:41-46 and Luke 20:41-44. But Hong did not add any annotation to these verses.

hand of God) is a metaphorical way to say that Jesus is the Messiah and he is as divine as God. But such background knowledge did not exist in Chinese culture. Moreover, Hong had imagined a model of a divine family in heaven based on a traditional Chinese family (see 4.3.1.4). Hence Hong interpreted the verses very literally, and reached an conclusion opposite to Christians'. In other words, for a Christian, the phrase proves that Jesus is the Messiah; whereas for Hong, the verse would prove that Jesus was completely separated from God.

4.3.1.4.3 Interpretation of the Holy Ghost

Hong conflated the Holy Ghost with God. It is largely due to misinterpretation of the translated terms.

Terms referring to the concept include “the Holy Spirit”, “the Holy Ghost”, “the Spirit of God”, “the Spirit”, and occasionally “the spirit” with a lower case “s” (e.g. in Matthew 12:18, 22:43). Gützlaff’s translation is very consistent. He mostly translated them as “圣神” (holy god), and on a very few occasions he would use other translations, and this will be discussed later. Hong’s alteration mainly concerns the term “圣神” (holy god). His interpretation could be reflected on both his annotations and his alterations.

(a) Interpretation of “圣神”

Gützlaff’s translation “圣神” is confusing in that it could easily be understood as a title for a god, because “圣” means “holy”, and “神” means “god”. After reading Liang’s book, Hong pointed out that the “superior emperor” was the only “真神” (true god) (Hong, 1979, p. 18). The meaning of “圣神” (holy god) and “真神” (true god) are very close. It is very easy for a Chinese reader to interpret them as synonyms. After all, now that the “superior emperor” is the “true god”, it is quite logical to interpret that he is holy as well. In I John 5, Hong annotated that God was “独一真神，独一圣神” (the only true god, the only holy god) (Hong, 2004, p. 345). In other annotations, he used “圣神” as a title of God four times in his annotations in the New Testament, respectively in Matthew 3, 4, Mark 1, and I Corinthians 2.

As mentioned before, the doctrine of the Trinity was developed after the New Testament. In other words, the New Testament did not state that the Holy Ghost was another godhead of God. As a result, when it was translated into Chinese, the Chinese reader would find it difficult to tell the difference between God and the Holy Ghost, especially when one was called the only god while the other was called the “holy god” (圣神). The ambiguity left a interpretative gap that needed to be filled by a reader, and the result might be Hong’s radical interpretation. In his understanding, “圣神” could only be God, otherwise there would be two gods:

圣神即是上帝也，若另有圣神，则是有别神矣” [the holy god is the superior emperor. If there was another holy god, there would be another god]. (Hong, 2004, p. 345)

Obviously, Hong regarded “圣神” as another title for God.

(b) Alteration of “圣神”

Hong’s alteration of the verses also indicates his endeavor to prove that “圣神” is the title of God. The translation “圣神” occurs 180 times in Gützlaff’s translation of the New Testament (while only once in the Old Testament). 137 of them are changed, 7 of them are relocated, and 36 of them remain unchanged.

	Changed	Relocated	Unchanged	Total
Three Gospels	7	1	16	24
Rest of NT	130	6	20	156
Total	137	7	36	180

Among the 137 alterations, Hong replaced 118 of the term “圣神” (holy god) with “上帝圣神” (superior emperor holy god) or “圣神上帝” (holy divine superior emperor), with different words. He changed it into other nouns in the other 19 occasions. As for the 7 relocations, he moved the term and changed the meaning of the verses.

While in the unchanged 36 terms, 8 of them are in accordance with Hong’s views, because the translation is “上帝之圣神” (the superior emperor’s holy god), “上主圣神”

(the superior lord's holy god) or “上帝圣神” (superior emperor holy god), which do not imply that “圣神” is another godhead. The other 28 verses are unchanged with only the term “圣神” (holy god) being used.

Under what conditions did Hong alter the term “圣神” or keep it intact? First it is necessary to investigate the pattern of alteration throughout the New Testament. This research finds that it is mostly left unchanged in the three Gospels (with the Gospel of John missing in the extant authorized Taiping Bible), in which the term occurs 24 times. 8 of them are changed or relocated, while the other 16 are left unchanged. However, the term occurs 156 times in the rest of the New Testament. 136 of them are changed or relocated, and only 20 of them are kept intact. In other words, Hong kept most of the verses with “圣神” unchanged in the three Gospels, while altering most of the verses in the rest of the New Testament.

In the three Gospels, Hong mostly kept the term intact. But there are patterns. The term occurs firstly in Matthew 1, and it is replaced with “上帝”.

Example 4.3-23:

KJV: (18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost ... (20) ... Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 1:18, 20)

Gützlaff's Version: (18) 夫耶稣基督降生之情如左。其母玛利亚既许聘约色弗，未相接之先，遇之由圣神而蒙被怀孕也... (20)...大辟之子约色弗，尔妻玛利亚毋惧娶来，因所有怀孕感于圣神而生也 [(18) The event of Ye Su Ji Du's birth is as as follows. His mother Ma Li Ya was engaged to Yue Se Fu. Before they were together, she was met by the holy god and was pregnant... (20)... Da Pi's son Yue Se Fu, fear not to marry your wife Ma Li Ya, because her pregnancy and what she gave birth to was inspired by the holy god].

Authorized Taiping Version: (18) 夫耶稣基督降生之情如左。其母玛利亚既许聘约色弗，未相接之先，遇之由上帝而蒙被怀孕也... (20)...大辟之子约色弗，尔妻玛利亚毋惧娶来，因所有怀孕感于上帝而生也 [(18) The event of Ye Su Ji Du's birth is as follows. His mother Ma Li Ya was engaged to Yue Se Fu. Before they were together, she was met by the superior emperor and was pregnant... (20)... Da Pi's son Yue Se Fu, fear not to marry your wife Ma Li Ya, because her pregnancy and what she gave birth to was inspired by the superior emperor].

Hong replaced the both “圣神” (the holy god) with “上帝” (the superior emperor). In order to understand the motivation behind this alteration, we need to take into account the context. The translation “圣神” occurs only once in the first six books of the Old Testament.⁴⁶ On the other hand, it occurs frequently in the New Testament. Therefore, from the perspective of a Chinese reader, the term would appear to be a new concept when he started reading the New Testament.

Hong revised the term into “上帝” (superior emperor) when it first appears in Matthew 1:18. When it occurs the second time in the New Testament (“the Holy Ghost” in Matthew 3:11), Hong also altered it to “圣神上帝” (holy divine superior emperor), and made an annotation next to the verse that “圣神是上帝” (the holy god is the superior emperor) (Hong, 2004, p. 115). When it occurs the third time (“the Spirit of God” in Matthew 3:16), the original translation is combined with “the superior emperor”: “上帝之圣神” (the superior emperor's holy god/spirit); Hong did not change it, because it suggests a close connection between “the superior emperor” and “the holy god”. Whereas when “圣神” occurs the fourth time (“the Spirit” in Matthew 4:1), Hong again changed it into a phrase “上帝之圣神” (the superior emperor's holy god), and annotated that “上帝是圣神” (the superior emperor is the holy god) (Hong, 2004, p. 116).

⁴⁶ In Genesis 41:38. It is the translation of “the Spirit of God”. In other verses in the Old Testament, Gützlaff translated the phrase as “上帝之神” (the superior emperor's god/spirit). See Gützlaff's translation of Genesis 1:2, Exodus 31:3, 35:31, and Numbers 24:2.

The motivation behind these four alterations can be inferred from the narrative of the verses. In the very first chapter of the New Testament, “圣神” (the holy god) appears in Matthew 1:18, whereas the term “上帝” (the superior emperor) does not appear until the 23rd verse. In addition, a Chinese reader of the translation will encounter the description that the so-called “圣神” inspiring Mary and giving birth to Jesus. So a Chinese reader might be tempted to interpret it as a new god. Hong replaced “圣神” with “上帝”, so as to avoid the possible misinterpretation. In other words, he leads the reader to equate these two terms (圣神 and 上帝). When the same narrative is found in Luke 1:34-35, Hong kept the translation “圣神” intact, but he again annotated that:

圣神上帝降临他，非是说圣神上帝入他腹成孕为人也 [the holy divine superior emperor dwelled on him (her). It is not saying that the holy divine superior emperor entered an abdomen and gave birth to man]. (Hong, 2004, p. 173)

Two other verses with the translation “圣神” in Matthew’s Gospel are also altered (verses 31 and 32 in Matthew 12), while the term is mostly remained unchanged in the other two gospels. The tendency is that Hong alters most of the translations of “圣神” in Matthew’s gospel, and leaves them unchanged in Mark and Luke.

However, the pattern is very different in the rest of the New Testament (from Acts to Revelation). Most of the term “圣神” are altered or relocated. For example:

Example 4.3-24:

KJV: Until the day in which he [Jesus] was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen (Acts 1:2).

Gützlaff’s Version: 迄于耶稣以圣神命其特选圣差而升天堂之日 [Until the day in which Ye Su through the holy god commanded his chosen holy apostles to rise up to heaven].

Authorized Taiping Version: 迄于基督耶稣降圣旨命其特选圣差而升天堂之日
[Until the day in which Ye Su issued the imperial edict and commanded his
chosen holy apostles to rise up to heaven].

The pronoun “其” (his) in Gützlaff’s translation refers to Jesus, instead of the Holy Ghost. But for a Chinese reader without access to the original text, he/she could understand it as either 耶稣 (Ye Su) or 圣神 (the holy god). So it is possible for a reader to interpret the verse as Jesus (耶稣) giving a command through the “holy god”, who is referred to God in Hong’s mind. For Hong this ambiguity would be morally unacceptable, because it would mean that the prince (Jesus) gave orders through the emperor (God). The replacement eliminates the possible interpretation that he tried to avoid.

In contrast to Hong’s interpretation, “圣神” is not equal to “上帝”. It frequently appears in the rest of the New Testament. Without a correct understanding of the Trinity, it is very confusing in many verses to understand the relationship between the “holy god” (Holy Ghost), the “superior emperor” (God), and “Ye Su” (Jesus). This might prompt Hong to consistently alter the term in the rest of the New Testament. He changed or relocated the term, and it reflects that he understood “圣神” as the synonym “上帝”.

Nevertheless, Hong kept 20 of the term intact in the rest of the New Testament. For example:

Example 4.3-25:

KJV: ...walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. (Acts 9:31)

Gützlaff’s Version: 敬畏上主而行，获圣神安慰而添增 [...respect and fear the superior lord and walk, and be granted the holy god’s comfort, and multiply].

Authorized Taiping Version: 敬畏上主而行，获圣神安慰而添增 [...respect and fear the superior lord and walk, and be granted the holy god's comfort, and multiply].

The verse is unchanged probably because the two clauses could be understood as having a parallel relationship, hence both “上主” and “圣神” could be understood as referring to God.

The verb “赐” (grant) is closely related to Hong's pattern of alteration. In Acts and Romans, there are 9 cases when Hong did not alter the term “圣神”. 4 of them are related to the verb “赐” (grant). Here are two examples:

Example 4.3-26:

KJV: Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. (Acts 2:33)

Gütlaff's Version: 是人升举上帝之右，得父所应许之圣神已赐，此即尔所见闻者也 [The man rose to the superior emperor's right hand, had received the grant of/from the holy god that the father promises, this is what you saw and heard].

Authorized Taiping Version: 是人升举上帝之右，得父所应许之圣神已赐，此即尔所见闻者也 [The man rose to the superior emperor's right hand, received the grant of/from the holy god that the father promises, this is what you saw and heard].

Example 4.3-27:

KJV: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:5)

Gütlaff's Version: 又怀望不得羞愧，因蒙圣神之赐，上帝之爱情感我心 [And possess hope and not get shame, because of the grant of/from the holy god, the superior emperor's love touches my heart].

Authorized Taiping Version: 又怀望不得羞愧，因蒙圣神之赐，上帝之爱情感我心 [And possess hope and not get shame, because of the grant of/from the holy god, the superior emperor's love touches my heart].

In the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles, it is common to describe the reception of the Holy Ghost as a “gift” for “Christian ministry”, and “[it] extends the presence and power of Christ” (Achteemeier, 1996, p. 433). But the translations in the above two examples are ambiguous about this. Both “圣神已赐” and “圣神之赐” could be understood as either “a grant as a holy god” or “a grant from the holy god”. As Hong understood the term “圣神” as God, only the second interpretation makes sense. In other words, he did not alter them because he interpreted both of the phrases as God bestowing a grant, instead of God granting the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, if the verses indeed state that God grant the Holy Ghost, Hong would alter them. For example.:

Example 4.3-28:

KJV: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he [God] saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour (Titus 3:5-6).

Gützlaff's Version: 非由吾行之义功，乃依其矜怜，由重生之洗清及圣神之复新，上帝救我矣。而以吾救主耶稣基督，上帝厚赐我圣神 [Not from my works of righteous achievement, but according to his mercy. From the rebirth's washing and cleaning and the holy god's renewing, the superior emperor saved us. And through our savior lord Ye Su Ji Du, the superior emperor generously granted me the holy god].

Authorized Taiping Version: 非由吾行之义功，乃依其矜怜，由重生之洗清及上帝圣神之复新，上帝救我矣。而以吾救主耶稣基督，上帝圣神厚赐我 [Not from my works of righteous achievement, but according to his mercy. From the rebirth's washing and cleaning and the superior emperor holy god's renewing,

the superior emperor saved us. And through our savior lord Ye Su Ji Du, the superior emperor holy god generously granted me].

In this example, Hong altered the first “圣神” into “上帝圣神”, and relocated the second one behind “上帝”. In this way the meaning of the last sentence is completely changed.

In addition to relocating the term of “圣神”, there are 5 instances when Hong also replaced the verb “赐” (grant) with other verbs. For example:

Example 4.3-29:

KJV: Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (II Corinthians 5:5)

Gützlaff's Version: 夫令我成就此事者上帝也。又上帝赐我圣神为质当 [Now the one that accomplish this thing is the superior emperor. And the superior emperor granted me the holy god as the earnest].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫令我成就此事者上帝也。又上帝圣神临我为质当 [Now the one that accomplish this thing is the superior emperor. And the superior emperor holy god came to me as the earnest].

Example 4.3-30:

KJV: He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. (I Thessalonians 4:8)

Gützlaff's Version: 故欺者不欺人，乃欺上帝。夫上帝赐我圣神矣 [So the bully is not bullying man, but bullying the superior emperor. The superior emperor granted me the holy god].

Authorized Taiping Version: 故欺者不欺人，乃欺上帝。夫上帝圣神入我心矣 [So the bully is not bullying man, but bullying the superior emperor. The superior emperor holy god entered my heart].

In both examples, the Holy Ghost is described as a gift, while Hong eliminated such description.

The examples show that Hong made very careful adjustments on the term “圣神”. The altered version presents “圣神” as an alternative title for God. It eliminates any traces that could suggest that the Holy Ghost is another godhead of God. As a result, together with his interpretation of Jesus, Hong eradicated the doctrine of the Trinity from the New Testament.

However, there is one annotation that seems contradict to Hong’s other annotations, because it seems to support the doctrine of the Trinity. It is found in Mark 1:

Example 4.3-31:

KJV: ...the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Mark 1:10-11)

Gützlaff’s Version: 圣神如鸽降临其上也。又由天声响云，汝乃朕爱之子，朕所喜悦者也 [the holy god like a dove descended upon him. And from heaven a voice said: you are the son I love, the one I am pleased].

Authorized Taiping Version: 圣神如鸽降临其上也。又由天声响云，汝乃朕爱之子，朕所喜悦者也 [the holy god like a dove descended upon him. And from heaven a voice said: you are the son I love, the one I am pleased].

As mentioned before, Hong generally kept the translation “圣神” unchanged in Mark and Luke, and so does this verse. However, Hong made an annotation that:

圣神上帝也，既住临太兄其上，又引太兄，何得另有圣神成太兄的身，又另外有一圣神凑成三位？其中有一圣灵东王也。须知。钦此 [The holy god is the superior emperor. Now that he dwelled upon the imperial older brother, and guided the imperial older brother, why is that there is another holy god that became the body of the imperial older brother, and why is that there is another

holy god that accounts to three persons? One of them is the holy spirit East King. Notice this. Imperially endorsed].(Hong, 2004, pp. 150-151)

It is obvious that Hong completely disagreed with the doctrine of the Trinity, but why did he contradictorily point out that there are three persons? The key lies in the term “圣灵” (holy spirit). This is a translation by baptist missionaries for the term “the Holy Ghost”. It cannot be found in either Gützlaff’s translation or Liang’s book.⁴⁷ A hymn in the Taiping publication “天条书” (*The Book of Heavenly Principles*) reveals its source. It is entitled “七日礼拜颂赞皇上帝恩德” (“Seven day service praising the imperial superior emperor’s grace”). The beginning of the hymn is:

赞美上帝为天圣父， 赞美耶稣为救世圣主， 赞美圣神风为圣灵， 赞美三位为合一真神” (Praise the superior emperor as the heavenly holy father. Praise Ye Su as the saving world holy lord. Praise the holy divine wind as the holy spirit. Praise the three as the combined one true god) (*The Book of Heavenly Principles*, 1979, p. 31).

According to Jen (1958), the hymn originated from a doxology taught in baptist churches in China. Hong learnt it when he stayed with and learnt from Roberts in Guangzhou in 1847 (p. 1715). Hong obviously did not grasp the message of the hymn, otherwise he would not have negated the doctrine of the Trinity (and if he had understood it but had deliberately negated it, he would not have added this annotation in the first place). Jen (1958) points out that Hong adopted this hymn only because he wanted to follow the custom of the church, and treated the hymn as a symbol of ritual and belief (p. 1716). Hymns played an important role in the worship activities in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and it was one of the primary forms of service for the Taiping citizens. *The Book of Heavenly Principles* was one of the major publications in the kingdom, hence the hymn must have been widely known to the people. The above-mentioned verses in Mark 1:10-11 are resonant with the hymn. And Hong’s interpretation could be seen as an endeavor to resolve possible confusion. The third verse of the hymn is “赞美圣神风为圣灵” (Praise the holy divine wind as the holy

⁴⁷ “圣灵” is also one of the translations for “the Holy Spirit” by Morrison. But he adopted this very rarely. The translation could not be found in Liang’s book.

spirit). As mentioned before, Hong interpreted the term “圣神风” (holy divine wind) as the wind from God, and he granted the title to Yang Xiuqing. So what he tried to convey in his annotation about “凑成三位” (accounts to three persons) is not to approve the doctrine of the Trinity, but simply to link the verses in Mark 1 with the hymn, and to give his explanation of the latter. In other words, the annotation is not admitting the doctrine of the Trinity, but rather giving an explanation on a popular hymn resonant with the biblical verses.

4.3.1.5 Reinterpretation of the concept of “god”

Hong’s interpretation on “圣神” (the holy god) is closely related to his interpretation of the character “神” (god/divinity/spirit). The character has multiple meanings. It could either be used as a noun to refer to a deity, a spiritual creature, a ghost, a soul, the mind of man, or talent, or as an adjective to mean divine, miraculous, mysterious, or clever. Gützlaff used it as a polysemous word with multiple meanings in his translation as well. The character “神” in Gützlaff’s translation has a wide range of meanings, it can be used to refer to the Holy Spirit, other gods, spiritual creatures, souls, and sometimes angels. But Hong tended to restrict it to only one meaning. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Hong treated “圣神” as a title for God, and it is partially the effect of a misleading translation: Gützlaff translated the Holy Spirit as “圣神” with the character “神” referring to “spirit”. But it is easy for a Chinese reader to interpret the character “神” as referring to “god”. Hence “圣神” could be interpreted as “holy god” (hence interpreted by Hong as God), instead of “holy spirit”. Hong’s alteration results in a much narrower range of use for the character “神”, and it reflects Hong’s understanding of God. This section differentiates Gützlaff’s use of the character “神” into five groups according to the original meaning in the Bible (*the Holy Spirit, other gods, spiritual attributes, soul and mind, and angel*), and investigates how Hong dealt with it.

4.3.1.5.1 Holy Spirit

Except for the term “圣神”, Gützlaff occasionally used the character “神” solely to refer to the Holy Spirit. But Hong altered some of them when the meaning contradicts his view on God. For example:

Example 4.3-32:

KJV:And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts... (Galatians 4:6)

Gützlaff's Version: 既为子类，上帝已差其子之神降临尔心... [because you are sons, the superior emperor has sent his son's god/spirit to descend upon your heart].

Authorized Taiping Version: 既为子类，蒙已差其子之上帝圣神降临尔心... [because you are sons, the superior emperor divine god who sent his son has descend upon your heart].

As could be seen in the KJV and Gützlaff's version, the phrase “其子之神” (his son's god/spirit) refers to the Holy Spirit. The original verse imply the close relationship of Jesus to God as well as the divinity of Jesus because of the phrase “the Spirit of his Son”. But Hong's alteration removed the implication. The subject “his son's spirit” is replaced with “the superior emperor divine god”, and “sent his son” serves as the modifier.

Here is another example:

Example 4.3-33:

KJV:That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. (Ephesians 1:17)

Gützlaff's Version: 求吾主耶稣基督之上帝即荣光天父，可赋尔智慧，赐启明之神，令尔识之 [Beg my lord Ye Su Ji Du's superior emperor namely the glory heavenly father, to gift you wise, grant the inspiration spirit, making you know him].

Authorized Taiping Version: 求吾主耶稣基督之上帝即荣光天父，可赋尔智慧，赐启明之愷，令尔识之 [Beg my lord Ye Su Ji Du's superior emperor namely the glory heavenly father, to gift you wise, grant the inspiration knowledge, making you know him].

According to the context and the original verse, we understand that the word “spirit” with a lower case “s” also refers to the Holy Spirit. But Hong altered the translation “神” into “情”. The reason is similar to the examples in 4.3.1.4, in which Hong removed the expression that the Holy Spirit could be granted as a gift. The alteration reveals that Hong regarded the character “神” as referring to God. Hence, in his understanding, it would be impossible and illogical for God to grant impossible.

4.3.1.5.2 Other gods

In the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, there are certain verses that mention the pagan gods of other nations. Other gods are compared with God, so as to emphasize the almighty nature of God. In Gützlaff's translation, some of the gods are also translated into terms with the character “神”. Hong altered all of them. His alteration could be divided into three kinds: *the replacement with homophones, the use of other characters, and the addition of “邪” (evil) to differentiate pagan gods from the one-true God.*

As mentioned in the discussion of taboo characters, Hong replaced the character “神” with homophones when it had been used in other titles. For example, in Acts 17:19, 22, 34, he replaced “武神山” (martial god hill/Wu Shen Shan), the translation of “Mars hill”, with “武伸山” (martial stretch hill/Wu Shen Shan). Likewise, in Acts 28:11 he replaced “雷神双子” (thunder god's twins/Lei Shen Shuang Zi), the translation of “Castor and Pollux”, with “雷伸双子” (thunder stretch twins/Lei Shen Shuang Zi).

Hong also replaced the character with other characters:

Example 4.3-34:

KJV:Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? (Exodus 15:11)

Gützlaff's Version: 在诸神中谁像似上帝 [Among all gods who is like the superior emperor?].

Authorized Taiping Version: 在天地中谁像似上帝 [Within heaven and earth who is like the superior emperor?].

Example 4.3-35:

KJV: the LORD your God is God of gods. (Deuteronomy 10:17)

Gützlaff's Version: 汝上主皇上帝乃万神之上帝 [Your superior lord imperial superior emperor is ten thousand gods' superior emperor].

Authorized Taiping Version: 汝上主皇上帝乃万郭之上帝 [Your superior lord imperial superior emperor is ten thousand nations' superior emperor].

In other verses, Hong also added the character “邪” (evil) to emphasize that other gods are evil:

Example 4.3-36:

KJV: The LORD is greater than all gods (Esocus 18:11).

Gützlaff's Version: 皇上帝超出诸神 [The imperial superior emperor surpasses all gods].

Authorized Taiping Version: 皇上帝超出邪神 [The imperial superior emperor surpasses evil gods].

Example 4.3-37:

KJV: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not... (II Corinthians 4:4)

Gützlaff's Version: 乃俗世之神迷惑不信者之心... [The secular gods bewilder the non-believers' heart].

Authorized Taiping Version: 乃俗世邪神迷惑不信者之心... [The secular evil gods bewilder the non-believers' heart].

Gützlaff sometimes translated “god” into “邪神” (evil god), otherwise Hong would have added the adjective character “邪”. For example:

Example 4.3-38:

KJV: For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many. (I Corinthians 8:5)

Gützlaff's Version: 夫天地内虽有多邪神名，亦依人见有多神，多主 [Although in heaven and earth there are many evil gods' names, and as people saw there are many gods, many lords].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫天地内虽有多邪神名，亦依人见有邪神，妖狂 [Although in heaven and earth there are many evil gods' names, and as people saw there are evil gods, wicked monstrous demons].

Except for the translation “邪神”, Gützlaff also translated “other gods” into “异神” (alien god) (in Exodus 20:3, Deuteronomy 28:14). Hong did not alter it into “邪神”, and the reason might be that the character “异” already implies a sense of evilness.

The character “神” is replaced with the character in “圣” (sage, holy) when it is related with the apostles. In Acts 28, Paul was bitten by a viper, but he did not die from the venom, and the barbarous people thought that he was a god:

Example 4.3-39:

KJV:Howbeit they [the barbarous people] looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. (Acts 28:6)

Gützlaff's Version: 夷人望待，或发肿率[卒]死倒地，久待看无害，转意曰乃神矣 [The barbarous people watched and waited, for him to have swollen, to fall down dead. They waited long and saw no harm, and changed minds and said [he] was a god].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夷人望待，或发肿率[卒]死倒地，久待看无害，转意曰乃圣矣 [The barbarous people watched and waited, for him to have swollen, to fall down dead. They waited long and saw no harm, and changed minds and said [he] was holy/a sage].

Hong's alteration reveals how he differentiated between the characters “圣” and “神”. Obviously, his alteration reveals that the latter is more superior. As mentioned before, Hong made a strict distinction between “圣主” (holy lord) and “上主” (superior lord), with the former referring to Jesus and the latter to God..

4.3.1.5.3 Spiritual attributes

Except for other gods, Gützlaff also used the character “神” (god) three times as an adjective, when translating “spirit”, “spiritual”, and “wonder” in the following three examples:

Example 4.3-40:

KJV: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12⁴⁸)

Gützlaff's Version: 盖我所战者非骨肉也，乃君长，管辖此暗世之上宪，高峻处之神恶也 [Because what I am fighting is not against flesh and bones, but against the reigning principals, the superior officials ruling this dark age, and the divine evilness in high places].

48 Morrison's translation of the verse is also quoted in Liang's book. See Chapter Three.

Authorized Taiping Version: 盖我所战者非骨肉也，乃侯长，管辖此暗世之宜宪，高峻处之鬼恶也 [Because what I am fighting is not against flesh and bones, but against the governors, the administrative officials ruling this dark age, the ghostly evilness in high places].

Example 4.3-41:

KJV: And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:8)

Gützlaff's Version: 其尸必丢在大城之街市，此城神样称所多马，亦称埃及多，在彼吾主被钉十字架矣 [Their body must be thrown into the street market of the big city, the city is divine and called Suo Duo Ma, and it is also called Ai Ji Duo, where our lord was nailed to a cross].

Authorized Taiping Version: 其尸必丢在大城之街市，此城名样称所多马，亦称埃及多，在彼吾主被钉十字架矣 [Their body must be thrown into the street market of the big city, the city is named and called Suo Duo Ma, and it is also called Ai Ji Duo, where our lord was nailed to a cross].

Example 4.3-42:

KJV: And he [another beast] doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men... (Revelation 13:13)

Gützlaff's Version: 其[他兽]大行神迹，使火由天降地在人之前 [he [another beast] greatly manifested divine miracles, making fire from heaven fell on earth before men].

Authorized Taiping Version: 其[他兽]大行怪迹，使炎由天降地在人之前 [he [another beast] greatly manifested eerie miracles, making fire from heaven fell on earth before men].

In the three examples, the character “神” is used to describe spiritual yet evil attributes. Hong’s alterations reveals that he intended to avoid using it in negative contexts.

4.3.1.5.4 Soul and mind

When the term “spirit” refers to men’s soul, Gützlaff translated it twice into “神”. Hong replaced both of them.

Example 4.3-43:

KJV: And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway... (Luke 8:54-55)

Gützlaff’s Version: 耶稣逐众，执女手，呼曰，女儿起来，且女之神回，即起 [Ye Su dislodged the crowd, held the woman’s hand, yelled, girl, arise. And the woman’s spirit/god came again, then [she] rose].

Authorized Taiping Version: 基督逐众，执女手，呼曰，女儿起来，且女之灵回，即起 [Ji Du dislodged the crowd, held the woman’s hand, yelled, girl, arise. And the woman’s soul came again, then [she] rose].

Example 4.3-44:

KJV: Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (Hebrews 12:8)

Gützlaff’s Version: 夫肉身之父加责我者，我无不敬之。何况灵神之父，岂不可服之得生活乎？ [When the flesh’s father critiqued me, I showed no disrespect. Let alone the spiritual god’s/spirit’s father, how could I not obey him and live?].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫肉身之父加责我者，我无不敬之。何况灵灵之父，岂不可服之得生活乎？ [When the flesh’s father critiqued me, I showed no disrespect. Let alone the spiritual soul’s father, how could I not obey him and live?].

In both cases, Hong replaced the character “神” with “人”.

A special case is found in the verses in I John 4. The word “spirit” could either mean the spiritual being as opposed to the flesh, or it could mean a metaphor for man. Gützlaff translated all of them using the character “神”. Hong, on the other hand, altered all of them:

Example 4.3-45:

KJV:(1) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God... (2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist...(6) Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (John 4:1-3, 6)

Gützlaff's Version: (1) 爱友乎，不可得信诸神，乃试其神或由上帝否...(2) 上帝之神以此可知也，凡神自认耶稣基督降世者，即由上帝也。(3) 凡神不认耶稣基督降世者，非由上帝也。此乃尔素闻有敌基督者之神必来... (6)吾由上帝也，有识上帝者听我也，非由上帝者不听我也。真神，假神，以此可辨知矣 [(1) Beloved friend, you should not believe all gods/spirits, but try if the god/spirit is from the superior emperor or not...(2) By this you know the superior emperor's god/spirit. Whichever god/spirit that recognizes Ye Su Ji Du who descended to the age, is from the superior emperor...(3) Whichever god/spirit who does not recognizes Ye Su Ji Du who descended to the age, is not from the superior emperor, but must from the anti-Ji Du people that you have ever heard... (6) I am from the superior emperor. The ones who recognize the superior emperor listen to me. The ones who do not come from the superior emperor do not listen to me. True god/spirit, false god/spirit, can be distinguished by this].

Authorized Taiping Version: (1) 爱弟乎，不可得信诸人，乃试其人或由上帝否...(2) 上帝之人以此可知也，凡人自认耶稣基督降世者，即由上帝也。(3) 凡人不认耶稣基督降世者，非由上帝也。此乃尔素闻有敌基督者之人必来...

(6) 吾由上帝也，有识上帝者听我也，非由上帝者不听我也。真人，假人，以此可辨知矣 [(1) Beloved younger brother, you should not believe all men, but try if the man is from the superior emperor or not...(2) By this you know the superior emperor's man. Whichever man that recognizes Ye Su Ji Du who descended to the age, is from the superior emperor...(3) Whichever man who does not recognizes Ye Su Ji Du who descended to the age, is not from the superior emperor, but must from the anti-Ji Du people that you have ever heard... (6) I am from the superior emperor. The ones who recognize the superior emperor listen to me. The ones who do not come from the superior emperor do not listen to me. True man, false man, can be distinguished by this].

Hong's alteration reflects his political motivation. The intention is similar to his replacement of “魂” with “人” (for the sake of replacing “鬼” (ghost, devil) in “魂” with “人” (man)). That is, he tried to use the verses to imply that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was where the true humans dwell, and that only the superior emperor's people are the true men, while others that do not believe the superior emperor are not men. In other words, he was implying that only Taiping citizens, or whoever believed in the superior emperor (e.g. the Western missionaries, though Hong considered that they misunderstood the Bible), were the true men, while others were false. After alteration, the verse could be used as a proof that the fight against the Qing government was justified, and killing the Manchus was legitimate because they were not true men, but devils.

4.3.1.5.5 Angel

The term “spirit” in the New Testament sometimes also refers to angels. After all, angels are spiritual creatures. Gützlaff translated the “spirit” in this case into “神” as well. Hong replaced all of them. The replacement not only reflects Hong's interpretation of the character “神”, but also his understanding of the concept of angel.

In Hebrews 1:7, Gützlaff firstly translated the “spirit”, meaning angel, into “神” (god), and Hong replaced it with “云” (soul):

Exmample 4.3-46:

KJV: And of the angels he [God] saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire (Hebrews 1:7).

Gützlaff's Version: 论及天使有云，其造天使为神灵，其设本役为火焰矣 [Regarding the heavenly messenger he said, he made the heavenly messenger as a god/divine spirit, and appointed the job as fire flame].

Authorized Taiping Version: 论及天使有云，其造天使为灵魂，其设本役为火焰矣 [Regarding the heavenly messenger he said, he made the heavenly messenger as a soul spirit, and appointed the job as fire flame].

Gützlaff's translation “神灵” is confusing. It could mean “the spirit of a god”. But the term could also simply mean “god”, which is a common expression in Chinese. So the verse would be that God created a god, which Hong would not agree with. The replacement is “云” (soul), and it is worth noticing. As mentioned before, the reason why Hong replaced “魂” with “云” is that he wanted the Taiping citizens to believe that both their body and their soul would stay in the kingdom of heaven (i.e., his claim that the body lives in the small heavenly hall while the soul lives in the big heavenly hall. See 4.3.1.3). So his alteration in this verse implies that the angels are souls. In other words, he was implying that anyone who died in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom would become angels.

The implication could be seen in other cases of alteration as well.

The translation “神” for angels could also be frequently found in Revelation. The most frequent phrase relevant to angels is “the seven Spirits” (in Revelation 1, 3, 4, 5). According to Revelation 8:2, the phrase refers to the seven angels of God.⁴⁹ Gützlaff translated the phrase into “七神” (seven gods/spirits), while Hong altered all of them into “七圣” (seven sages). For example:

Example 4.3-47:

⁴⁹ Revelation 8:2: “And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.”

KJV:...from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne (Revelation 1:4:).

Gützlaff's Version: ...由昔在，今在，将来之主，又由在位前之七神 [... from the past, present, and future lord, and from the seven gods/spirits before the throne].

Authorized Taiping Version: ...由昔在，今在，将来之主，又由在位前之七圣 [... from the past, present, and future lord, and from the seven sages before the throne].

Example 4.3-48:

KJV: And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 4:5).

Gützlaff's Version: 座中雷电闪烁，霹雳开声，座前有七灯火燃焉也，即上帝之七神矣 [In the seat the thunderbolts flashed, crackling and rambling. Before the seat there were seven lamp fire burning, namely the superior emperor's seven gods/spirits].

Authorized Taiping Version: 殿中雷电闪烁，霹雳开声，殿前有七灯炎燃焉也，即上帝之七圣矣 [In the court the thunderbolts flashed, crackling and rambling. Before the court there were seven lamp fire burning, namely the superior emperor's seven sages].

These two examples are closely related to Hong's interpretation of the concept of angels. He altered the character “神” (referring to the angels) into “圣” (sage), making it closer to men, because in Chinese culture, a sage could be seen as a mortal of high moral standards and great achievement. The blending of man, sage, and angel could be seen in his alteration and annotation in I Corinthians 6, where Paul mentioned that at the end of the world the saints would judge the world with the Christ. Hong altered and annotated the verses:

Example 4.3-49:

KJV:(2) Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?... (3) Know ye not that we shall judge angels? (I Corinthians 6:2-3).

Gützlaff's Version: (2) 尔岂不知圣徒将审判世界? ... (3) 岂不知吾等将审天使...乎? [(2) Do you not know that the sages will judge the world?... (3) Do you not know that we will judge the heavenly messengers?].

Authorized Taiping Version: (2) 尔岂不知圣徒将审判世界? ... (3) 岂不知吾等将审选民...乎? [(2) Do you not know that the sages will judge the world?... (3) Do you not know that we will judge the selected people?].

Although the altered verses in the authorized Taiping version does not have the phrase “天使” (heavenly messenger), Hong added the annotation and pointed out that “连圣徒亦是天使” (even the sages are heavenly messengers) (Hong, 2004, p. 264). Hong's interpretation makes a close connection between angels and men.

The effect of Hong's alteration of the character “神” referring to angels is killing two birds with one stone. On one hand, he removed the possible interpretation of the character “神” that contradicts his views on God; on the other, he implied the benefits of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: the soul would not become demons after death, but would rise up to heaven and become an angel.

The reason why being an angel could be used as an attractive benefit has to do with the political connotation of the translation. “天” is often used in the context of Chinese royalty. The phrase “天使” could be understood as the “imperial messenger”, namely a messenger working for the emperor. So a further implication would be that any one who belongs to the kingdom would have the chance to gain royal privilege. The vision had been the ideal for many Chinese people. A similar political ideal that he promised to the citizens could be seen in a decree that he issued before the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom:

功臣职位世袭，到小天堂封赏，在世威风无比，在天则享福无疆 [The meritorious heroes' titles will be hereditary, which will be granted after we arrive in the small heavenly hall. In the mortal world you will enjoy incomparable power and prestige. In heaven you will enjoy endless bliss] (Hong, 1979, 34).

The discussion in this section illustrate that Hong extensively altered the usage of the character “神” in Gützlaff's translation, and the result shows that he narrowed the character's meaning as exclusively referred to God. The alteration and annotation also reveal his political agenda.

4.3.1.6 Self Identification

As mentioned before, Hong associated certain biblical verses with the East King Yang Xiuqing, because he granted the title of “圣神风” (holy divine wind) to Yang. In addition to that, Hong also tried to associate certain verses with his own identity, and tried to validate his own status as the son of God, and the king of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

As recorded by Hamberg (1854), when reading Liang's book, Hong often associated himself with the contents, and interpreted the adjective “全” and second pronouns “尔” and “汝” as referring to himself (pp. 22-23). Although he was not that irrational when altering the Bible, he still tried to spot any traces that could be explained as referring to himself. He did not add his name in the verses, or replace other people's name with his. Nevertheless, he altered or annotated the verses to convince readers that there were hints of his identity. His annotation and alteration could be divided into three kinds: 1. *Finding hints from characters*; 2. *Interpreting certain biblical figures as referring to himself*; and 3. *Emphasizing that he had seen heaven*.

4.3.1.6.1 Finding hints from characters

Hong tried to find his identity in the Bible on the basis of his name and titles. The right part of Hong's surname “洪” is “氵”, which is known as the component of “三点水” (three dots of water) in Chinese writing system. And the first character of his given

name “秀” includes the character “禾” (wheat).⁵⁰ In addition, he called himself “日” (the Sun/day) or “光” (light).⁵¹ These elements were all used by Hong as traces of his identity in the Bible.

The beginning of Genesis 1 narrates God creating light. Hong added the first annotation:

爷是光，哥是光，主是光 [the father is light, the older brother is light, the lord is light] (Hong, 2004, p. 2).

The way that he paralleled the character “主” (the lord) with “爷” (the father) and “哥” (the older brother) means that “the lord” was referring to himself, because the same method of narrative can frequently be found in his poem collection “天父诗” (*Poems of the Heavenly Father*). He added this annotation at the beginning of the Bible, and it highlights his status and reminds readers of his importance in the Bible.

In Genesis 9, Noah saw the rainbow after the great flood, and it was the symbol of the covenant between God and the earth (Genesis 9:12-14). Hong added next to the verses:

爷立永约现天虹，天虹弯弯似把弓。弯弯一点是洪日，朕是日头故姓洪。爷先立此，系好预诏差洪日作主也 [The father established the eternal covenant shown in the heavenly rainbow. The rainbow was curved like a bow. Curved with a dot was the Hong Sun. I am the Sun so my surname is Hong. The father established it first, so as to decree beforehand and send Hong Sun to govern] (Hong, 2004, p. 9).

What Hong meant by “弯弯一点是洪日” illustrates a circle with a dot inside, and it symbolizes the Sun. “洪日” (Hong Sun/day) indicates that Hong refers the Sun to

⁵⁰ Hong's original name was “红火秀” (Hong Huoxiu). He changed the name to avoid the taboo character 火 used in God's title (神爷火华 in Liang's book) (Hamburg, 1854). More discussion can be found in Spence (1996).

⁵¹ “太平天日” (The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle), the title of an important publication in Taiping that chronicles the life of Hong, is literally read as the Taiping Heavenly Sun”. It includes the character “日” (the Sun/day), and it implies the connection between the Sun and Hong.

himself. The annotation served as both an explanation of his title “日” (the Sun/day) and an association between the covenant of God and his identity. The title “洪日” was frequently used when he referred to himself in the annotations. He mentioned himself as the Sun a few times in the Bible, and they all have to do with the prophecy on the end of the world. For example, in Matthew 24:29, Jesus described the scene as “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken”. The verses mention the darkened Sun and the Moon, and Hong took it as the hint for implying his identity. In his annotation, Hong pointed out that “the imperial older brother” (太兄) was “issuing a secret decree” (降隐诏), and he explained the verses as a sign that related to himself, his wife, and his army:

朕是太阳，降世为人则变暗矣。朕妻太阴，降世为人则不发光矣。天兵天将是星宿，降世为人则自天坠地矣 [I am the Sun, descending to the mortal world and being a human, so I have become darkened. My wife is the Moon, descending to the mortal world and being a human, so she has no longer radiated. The heavenly soldiers and the heavenly generals are the stars, they descended to the mortal and have become humans, and they fell from heaven] (Hong, 2004, pp. 142-143).

The darkened Sun, Moon, and the fallen stars did not have any mystic symbols in Christianity. The verses mean that the destruction of the old world also includes the old heaven. But Hong considered them as the signs of his identity. Similar annotations can also be found in Revelation 6 and 12. All of the verses that Hong annotated described the destruction of the old world and the symbolic meaning of the Sun. Hong’s annotation on the token of the Sun at the end of the world also reveals his ideology of Millennialism. In other words, he tended to associate the end of the world with his own identity, so that he could claim himself as the one who created the new world.

This also explains why Hong altered the verses that forbids the worship of the Sun and the Moon:

Example 4.3-50:

KJV: (2) If there be found among you...man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, (3) And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the Sun, or Moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; (5) Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die (Deuteronomy 17:2-5).

Gützlaff's Version: (2)...若遇男女在汝上主皇上帝之眼内行恶弊而犯其约，(3) 且往事拜异神，或日月，或天之群我非所谕者...(5) 则必带出作此等恶弊之男女到门，且以石击此男女致死矣 [(2)...if you find a man or woman in your superior lord imperial superior emperor's eyes performing wickedness and violating his covenant, (3) and going to worship alien gods, or the Sun and the Moon, or the multitude in heaven that are not what I have instructed...(5) then you must take out the man or the woman who have done the wickedness to the gate, and use stones to hit the man or the woman to death].

Authorized Taiping Version: (2)...若遇男女在汝上主皇上帝之眼内行恶弊而犯其约，(3) 且往事拜异神，或山岳，或天之群我非所谕者...(5) 则必带出作此等恶弊之男女到门，且以石击此男女致死矣 [(2)...if you find a man or woman in your superior lord imperial superior emperor's eyes performing wickedness and violating his covenant, (3) and going to worship alien gods, or hills and mountains, or the multitude in heaven that are not what I have instructed...(5) then you must take out the man or the woman who have done the wickedness to the gate, and use stones to hit the man or the woman to death].

Hong replaced the phrase “日月” (the Sun and the Moon) with “山岳” (hills and mountains), hence removing the contradictory doctrine in the Bible that might jeopardize his interpretation of the Sun.

In addition to the Sun, Hong also associated his surname (洪) with the verses. In Matthew 27:40, Jesus was crucified, and the people mocked him and said:

Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself.

The verse was translated by Gützlaff as:

尔毁上帝之殿三日复建之者，今且自救也 [you who destroys the superior emperor's temple and in three days rebuilds it, now save yourself].

There is a radical difference between the Christian interpretation and Hong's interpretation upon this verse. In Christianity, the saying that Jesus would rebuild God's temple in three days is a metaphor for his resurrection in three days. Relevant verses could be found in Matthew 16:21 and John 2:19. The British missionaries, when answering one of the Taiping's questions which quoted the verse as a proof of the reign of Hong, also pointed out that it meant the coming death of Jesus and his resurrection (cited in Gregory, 1969, p. 192). On the other hand, Hong interpreted the verse as a hint of his identity and his kingdom in the annotation:

三点是洪，三日是洪日。太兄隐诏，洪日作主，复建上帝已毁之殿” (Three dots is the character “Hong”. Three days is Hong Day/sun. The imperial brother was issuing a secret decree, that the Hong Sun/day would govern, who would rebuild the imperial emperor's destructed temple) (Hong, 2004, p. 148).

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the component “ 丶 ” in the character “洪” is called “三点水” (three dots of water). Hence Hong tried to make a connection between number three, the component of his surname, his identity, and the biblical verse. By rebuilding the temple, he was referring to the establishment of the capital of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (Hong, 2004, p. 228).

In addition, Hong also associated his given name “秀” with biblical verses. Before the establishment of the kingdom, Hong had made use of the character “秀” as a token for creating an aura of holiness. Both Hong Xiuqing's and Yang Xiuqing's names include the character “秀”. They took “禾” (wheat), the composing part of “秀” (excellent, elegant) as their secretive titles. Hong was called “禾王” (wheat king), and Yang was called “禾乃” (literally translated as “wheat be”, they are the two components of “秀”) (*Heavenly Brother's Holy Edicts*, 2004, p. 272).

Hong revealed the implication in his annotation on Revelation 14:14-16:

Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

It was translated by Gützlaff and kept intact in the authorized Taiping version as:

可将钩镰而刈禾，因地上之穡已熟，而刈禾之时至矣 [[you] could use the sickle to reap wheat, because the harvest on the earth is ripe, and the time for reaping wheat is come].

Hong annotated the verse:

今当禾熟之时，即得救之候。朕是禾王，东王禾乃，禾是比天国良民，禾王，禾乃俱是天国良民之主也，验矣” (Now when the wheat is ripe, it is the time for salvation. I am the wheat king, and the East King is the wheat be. The wheat is the metaphor for the heavenly kingdom’s loyal people. The wheat king and the wheat be are the lords of the heavenly kingdom’s loyal people. Proved) (Hong, 2004, p. 361).

The reaping metaphor in Revelation is interpreted as the selection of righteous people on Judgment Day in Christianity (Feng, 2010, p. 552). But Hong explained wheat as the loyal people of his kingdom, and related the metaphor to his and Yang’s secretive titles. Hence the scene of the end of the world is again associated with Hong’s identity.

However, Hong’s association of his name and titles with the verses does not cover all relevant verses. For example, the description of the darkened Sun and the Moon could also be found in Mark 13 and Luke 21, but Hong did not add any annotation. The characters “日” (the Sun/day) and “光” (light) appear hundreds of times throughout the Bible, and Hong only annotated the two verses mentioned above. Both the metaphor of building God’s temple in three days and the metaphor of wheat could also be found elsewhere in Matthew (e.g. Matthew 13:36-43, Matthew 16:21), but Hong left them intact. Nevertheless, the examples discussed above reflect his intention to associate his identity (as well as his wife’s and Yang’s identity) to the Bible.

4.3.1.6.2 Interpreting biblical figures

Hong also made use of two biblical figures to represent himself, one is Melchizedek, and the other is the newborn child in Revelation.

Melchizedek is a mysterious figure in the Bible. He is mentioned rarely in the Bible: twice in the Old Testament, and once in the New Testament. Why did Hong select Melchizedek as the embodiment of himself in the Bible? The answer can be revealed from Hong's alterations and annotations.

In Genesis 14, the name of Melchizedek appears in the Bible for the first time. He celebrated the victory of Abram (Abraham) and blessed him. The verse describes him as the highest priest of God. Hong altered and annotated the verses:

Example 4.3-51:

KJV: And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all (Genesis 14:18-20).

Gützlaff's Version: 又撒冷王即是至上帝之祭司麦基洗德带幔与酒而出。且祝之云，愿至上主上帝，天地之大主降亚伯兰以福也。至上主上帝既降服尔敌，愿颂祝之。亚伯兰遂抽诸物十分之一奉其王也 [Then the Sa Leng king namely the most superior emperor's master of ceremonies Mai Ji Xi De brought bread and wine and appeared. And [he] blessed [him] and said, [I] wish the most superior lord superior emperor, the great lord of heaven and earth, grant bliss to Ya Bo Lan. The superior lord superior emperor has tamed your enemy, may him be praised. Ya Bo Lan then took one-tenth of all things and presented them to the king].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫天朝王即是至上帝之祭主麦居洗德带幔与饼而出。且祝之云，愿至上主上帝，天地之大主降亚伯兰以福也。至上主上帝既降服尔敌，愿颂祝之。亚伯兰遂抽诸物十分之一贡王也 [And the heavenly dynasty king namely the most superior emperor's lord of ceremonies Mai Ju Xi

De brought bread and flat cakes and appeared. And [he] blessed [him] and said, [I] wish the most superior lord superior emperor, the great lord of heaven and earth, grant bliss to Ya Bo Lan. The superior lord superior emperor has tamed your enemy, may him be praised. Ya Bo Lan then took one-tenth of all things and paid them as tributes to the king].

The most salient alteration in the verses is the replacement of “撒冷王” (Sa Leng king) with “天朝王” (heavenly dynasty king). “天朝” refers to the monarch of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and Hong called himself “天王” (heavenly king). Therefore, he was suggesting that he was Melchizedek. In addition, as mentioned in 4.3.1.1 about taboo characters, Hong downgraded all characters related to mortal kings (e.g., replacement of “王” (king) with “侯” (governor)). However, he did the opposite on Melchizedek. He did not downgrade the status of Melchizedek. On the contrary, he made Melchizedek more superior: he replaced “祭司” (master of ceremonies) with “祭主” (lord of ceremonies), and “奉” (to present) with “贡” (to pay tribute). Other alterations include the replacement of “基” (Ji, to avoid Christ’s title 基督) with “居” (Ju) to avoid Jesus’ title, and “酒” (wine) with “饼” (flat cake) because the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom forbade alcohol.

Moreover, in his annotation next to the verses, he made it clear that he was Melchizedek:

此麦基洗德就是朕⁵²。朕前在天上，下凡显此实迹，以作今日下凡作主之凭据也... [this Melchizedek is me. I used to be in heaven, and descended to the mortal world to perform this miracle, so as to leave an evidence for descending to the mortal world and governing nowadays...] (Hong, 2004, pp. 13-14).

In the rest of the annotation, Hong continued to justify his point by claiming that “because when the heaven disposes there must be a prologue” (盖天作事必有引), and he argued that the Exodus was the prologue of God’s “descending to the mortal world,

⁵² Hong called Melchizedek “麦基洗德” instead of “麦居洗德” in the annotation. In other words, he did not replace the taboo character “基” as he did in the verse. It might indicate that Hong might not have annotated and altered the Bible at the same time. He might have annotated it first, then altered the verses.

governing and establishing the kingdom of heaven” (“今日爷下凡作主开天国”), the birth of Jesus and his redemption for men were the prologues of his “descending to the mortal world and taking the great responsibility of governing (“下凡作主大担当”), whereas Hong’s (Melchizedek’s) gift of a blessing to Abraham was the prologue of his “descending to the mortal world, governing and saving the people” (“下凡作主救人善”) (Hong, 2004, pp. 13-14). Hong associated his role not only with Melchizedek, but also with the whole narrative of the Bible, implying that he and his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had been foretold in the Bible.

The other verse on Melchizedek in the Old Testament is found in Psalm 110:4. But because the Taiping did not publish the Psalms, there is no way for us to know whether Hong would alter it or not. Nevertheless, he altered and annotated the verses on Melchizedek in the New Testament. The name, with a different spelling as “Melchisedec” in the New Testament, appears in Hebrews 5, 6, and 7, among which the verses in Hebrews 7 described him in detail, and it is those verses that Hong took for interpretation.

Example 4.3-52

KJV: For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils (Hebrews 7:1-4).

Gützlaff’s Version: 昔亚伯拉罕胜列王而凯旋，遇撒冷之王，即至上帝之祭司麦基洗德，蒙其祝福。亚伯拉罕将诸物抽十分之一送之。夫麦基洗德译名本乃义王，又撒冷之王即平王。其无父，无母，亦无族谱，无始日，无终生，成如上帝之子，永为祭司也。尔观看若先祖亚伯拉罕抽赃物十分之一送与此人，则其何等尊乎 [In the past, Ya Bo La Han won the kings and returned in

triumph, and met the king of Sa Leng, namely the most superior emperor's master of ceremonies Mai Ji Xi De, and was blessed by him. Ya Bo La Han took one-tenth of all things and gifted him. The translated name of Mai Ji Xi De originally means the righteous king, or the king of Sa Leng namely the peaceful/flat king. He had no father, no mother, and no pedigree, no starting day, no ending life, and he was like the superior emperor's son, the eternal master of ceremonies. You can see that even the ancestor Ya Bo La Han took one tenth of the pillage and gifted this man. Then how great he was].

Authorized Taiping Version: 昔亚伯拉罕胜列侯而凯旋，遇撒冷之王，即至上帝之祭主麦居洗德，蒙其祝福。亚伯拉罕将诸物抽十分之一贡之。夫麦居洗德译名本乃天王，又撒冷之王即太平王。其无父，无母，亦无族谱，无始日，无终生，成如上帝之子，永为祭主也。尔观看若先祖亚伯拉罕抽赃物十分之一贡与此人，则其何等尊乎 [In the past, Ya Bo La Han won the governors and returned in triumph, and met the king of Sa Leng, namely the most superior emperor's lord of ceremonies Mai Ji Xi De, and was blessed by him. Ya Bo La Han took one tenth of all things and paid them as tributes to him. The translated name of Mai Ji Xi De originally means the heavenly king, or the king of Sa Leng namely great peace/Taiping king. He had no father, no mother, and no pedigree, no starting day, no ending life, and he was like the superior emperor's son, the eternal lord of ceremonies. You can see that even the ancestor Ya Bo La Han took one-tenth of the pillage and paid it as tribute to this man. Then how great he was].

The most obvious difference between Gützlaff's version and the authorized Taiping version is the titles of Melchizedek ("Melchisedec"). "义王" (righteous king) was replaced with "天王" (heavenly king), and "平王" (peaceful/flat king)⁵³ was replaced with "太平王" (great peace/Taiping king).⁵⁴ Both of the replacements are titles for

53 The Chinese character "平" could either mean "flat", or the abbreviation of "和平" (peace) or "太平" (great peace).

54 However, in 1836 and 1839 versions of Gützlaff's translation, the original translation of "King of peace" is "太平之王" (the king of great peace), which is very close to the one in the authorized Taiping version. So it is not certain whether "太平王" in the Taiping version is Hong's alteration or Gützlaff's translation. Nonetheless, the 1840 version is the closest one to the authorized Taiping version amongst the three versions. In addition, The replacement of "义王" (righteous king) with "天王" (heavenly king) is obviously Hong's alteration. So even "太平王" was Gützlaff translation, it would be taken by Hong to validate his identity.

Hong. In addition, the alteration of the noun “祭司” (master of ceremonies) into “祭主” (lord of ceremonies) and of the verb “送” (to gift) into “贡” (to pay tribute) is similar to his alteration in the last example, and it makes the status of Melchizedek even more superior.

In addition, Hong added annotation to the verse, and emphasized that:

此麦基洗德就是朕。前在天上，老妈生太兄暨朕辈，朕时知爷将差太兄由亚伯拉罕后裔而生，故朕劳将兵，犒劳祝福亚伯拉罕……以作今日下凡作主之凭据焉 [This Mai Ji Xi De is me. Previously in heaven, mum gave birth to the imperial brother and me. I knew that the father would send the imperial brother to be born as Ya Bo La Han's descendant. So I rewarded the generals and soldiers, and rewarded and blessed Ya Bo La Han... so as to make it the evidence for [me to] descend to the mortal world and govern].⁵⁵ (Hong, 2004, p. 323)

The Bible rarely mentions the figure of Melchizedek, and he remains as a mystery. He was also mentioned in other Hebrew and Christian literature, but the views on him are diversified. Feng (2010) pointed out that in some Hebrew traditions he was regarded the son of God (p. 473). The description of him in Hebrews 7:3 strengthens this cryptic sense. And according to the Christian interpretation, his mysterious appearance in the Old Testament was considered a prophecy and metaphor for the arrival of Jesus (Myers, 1987, p. 707). But the same verses was taken by Hong as predicting his own identity and the legitimacy of his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

In addition to Melchizedek, Hong also associated himself with another mysterious figure in the Bible. It is the child that appears in Revelation 12. The chapter describes the scene when a woman gave birth to a child, and the great red dragon of Satan attempted to eat the child and chased behind them. The child was taken to the throne of God, and the woman fled into the wilderness and was protected by God. In the Christian interpretation, the scene is a metaphor for the church and the danger that it face against the authorities: the woman is the Virgin Mary or the church, the child is Jesus, and the

⁵⁵ Hong was aware that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham. This indicates that he had certain knowledge of Bible history. In other words, he had read the Bible and was quite careful when altering it.

pursuit of the red dragon is the persecution of Jesus and the Christian church. But the metaphor was interpreted differently by Hong:

Example 4.3-53:

KJV:(1) ...a woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet...(5) And she brought forth a man child... (6) And the woman fled into the wilderness... (Revelation 12:1, 5, 6)

Gützlaff's Version: (1)...有一妇人身穿太阳，脚下太阴... (5) 且妇生男儿... (6) 妇逃旷野... [(1)...there was a woman wearing the Sun, and the Moon under her feet... (5) And the woman gave birth to a male child... (6) The woman fled into the wilderness...].

Authorized Taiping Version: (1)...有一亚妈身穿太阳，脚下太阴... (5) 且妈生男儿... (6) 妈逃旷野...[(1)...there was a mother wearing the Sun, and the Moon under her feet... (5) And the mother gave birth to a male child... (6) The mother fled into the wilderness...].

Hong changed “妇人” (woman) into “亚妈” (mother), and tried to explain the scene in his annotation. He pointed out that the mother was the one that gave birth to him when he descended to the world, hence the male child was himself. Again, he associated himself to the apocalyptic scene. He did not forget to explain why he was both Melchizedek and the child. He pointed out that before the start of heaven and earth, he had been born from the “original wife” (“元配”) of God, and he had known that God would send the Jesus as the descendant of Abraham, so he had become the priest Melchizedek in order to “save” (救) and bless Abraham. Then, in order to send Hong to “govern the mortal world” (作主凡间), God commanded Hong to be born from another mother, namely the mother mentioned in the verses. Furthermore, Hong associated his title “日” (the Sun/day) with the verses, he wrote that:

朕还记得，朕入这位亚妈之胎，爷做有记号，即是身穿太阳，以示身内胎生是太阳也 [I still remember, when I entered this mother's womb, the father made a

mark, namely the clothing of the Sun, to signal that the birth would be the Sun] (Hong, 2004, pp. 358-359).

To summarize, Hong made a clear distinction between his embodiment as Melchizedek and the newborn child. Melchizedek is a past incarnation which enabled him to establish a close connection with God and Jesus. Such a mysterious figure creates sense of divinity about himself. On the other hand, the newborn child described in Revelation symbolizes his arrival in the present age as the one who would save the age.

As for how to “govern the mortal world” (“作主凡间”) (Hong, 2004, p. 359), Hong continued associating him and his kingdom with the description in Revelation 12. In Revelation 12:7-12, the verses depicted the fight between the angels and the great red dragon. In the end, the dragon was cast out, and the loud voice in heaven celebrated the victory of God and the arrival of the kingdom of God and the power of the Christ.

The dragon was described in verse 9 as:

The great dragon ...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. (Revelation 12:9)

Here is the comparison between Gützlaff’s translation and the authorized Taiping version:

Gützlaff’s Version: 大龙，即其老蛇，亦称魔鬼，恶敌，诱惑全世者 [Big dragon, namely that old serpent, was also called the devil, and the evil enemy, which lured the whole age].

Authorized Taiping Version: 大龙，即其老蛇，亦称魔鬼，即阎罗妖，诱惑全世者 [Big dragon, namely that old serpent, was also called the devil, namely the Yama devil, which lured the whole age].

The term “阎罗妖” (Yama devil), which replaces “恶敌” (evil enemy), is a Buddhist term referring to demons. It was a term that the Taipings used to refer to the devil, and specifically to the Qing government and the Manchus. It was a Buddhist term. Hong’s annotation reveals his desire to associate his political and military agenda with the

verse. A connection between dragon (the symbol of Chinese emperor) and the devil implies Hong's propaganda of overthrowing the Chinese monarch. In Hong's interpretation, the devil was what he was appointed to destroy:

蛇魔阎罗妖，亦知得着妈身胎是朕，上帝特差生入世诛灭这蛇者，故蛇欲吞食之，冀占上帝之业。岂知上帝无所不能，生出之儿蛇不能害……故今爷哥下凡带朕作主，专诛灭此蛇也。今蛇兽伏诛，天下太平矣，验矣。钦此 [the serpent demon Yama devil, also knew that the mother was giving birth to me. The superior emperor sent me to be born in this age and execute this serpent. Therefore the serpent wanted to devour the child, and to usurp the superior emperor's achievement. But it did not know that there was nothing that the superior emperor could not do, and the born child could not be hurt by the serpent...Therefore the father and the brother brought me down to the mortal world to govern, and to aim at executing that serpent. Now the serpent has been executed, and there is great peace/Taiping under the heaven. Proved. Imperially endorsed]. (Hong, 2004, p. 359)

Although Hong selected only two figures in the Bible, and although both of them are rarely found in the Bible, Hong's selection of the figures, alterations, and annotation all reveal his intention. The association with Melchizedek helps him justify his relationship with God and Jesus, and the association with the child enables him to present himself as a chosen savior on a apocalypse scene, and it also helps him prove that his holy war against the Qing government is validated in the Bible.

Hong's selection of the two figures also reveals his knowledge of the Bible. The selection is not random, but a result of deliberation. First, both figures are rarely mentioned in the Bible, hence there would be little evidence for anyone to challenge Hong's claim. Second, both figures are mysterious, honorable (Melchizedek was respected by Abraham, the ancestor of Jesus, and was called the son of God; the new born child in Revelation 12 was brought to the throne of God), and closely related to God and Jesus, yet neither of their identities are clearly defined. So it leaves gaps that could be filled with Hong's own interpretation. There are other mysterious figures in the Bible, for example, Enoch, who walked with God for three hundred years and was taken

up to heaven (Genesis 5). But he was merely described as a righteous man, without any implication that he was holy or divine, and Hong did not make any association with Enoch. Hong's association with the two figures reveals his political motivation, i.e., to convince readers of the divinity of himself and the legitimacy of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

4.3.1.6.3 Emphasis on the personal experience

Hong also mentioned in some of his annotations that he had been taken up to heaven and saw God with his own eyes. He also tried to connect biblical verses with this claim.

This kind of annotation appears four times throughout the authorized Taiping Bible, and three have been discussed previously in 4.3.1.4 and in this section: two (in Matthew 12, I John 5) oppose the doctrine of the Trinity, and one of them (in Revelation 12) is used to justify that Hong was Melchizedek and the child born in Revelation 12.

The fourth annotation is found in Revelation 21:9, on “the bride” or “the Lamb’s wife”. The annotation again reflects the conflict in interpretation between Christianity and Hong. Christian interpretation of “the Lamb’s wife” is that it is a metaphor for the Church: Jesus is the lamb, and the Church is the bride, and the verse indicates the intimate relationship between Jesus and the Church. But Hong’s interpretation is completely different. He claimed that it referred to Jesus’ wife in heaven. Hong called her “天嫂” (heavenly sister-in-law). In order to support his interpretation, Hong emphasized that he had been to heaven and had seen the heavenly sister-in-law many times (Hong, 2004, p. 367).

In fact, all the emphasis on his personal experience in heaven in the four annotations not only reveal his intention to associate himself with the biblical narrative, but also serve as the direct attack against Western missionaries. Hong believed that Jesus was not God, the doctrine of the Trinity was wrong, he was the second son of God, and there was a family in heaven similar to a Chinese one. These views are radically different from the Christian doctrines. But they became the political and religious foundation for the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and helped Hong validate his own identity.

4.3.2 Nonpolitical Censorship

Previous sections of this chapter discuss the alterations and annotations in of Bible that reflect the Hong's political motivations. He altered the biblical doctrines according to his own personal understanding, and used them to support his political and religious agenda.

This section is going to discuss nonpolitical alterations, which also helped Hong to maintain his reign, but not directly. In addition, they are less related to political or religious issues, but are more related to ethical and traditional customs. The alterations are divided into two groups, one is ethical principles, and the other is secular customs. In contrast to the political alterations which are mostly found in the New Testament, the nonpolitical alterations are mainly found in the Old Testament.

4.3.2.1 Ethical Principles

Hong issued a decree in 1860 that stated his reasons for altering the Bible, it mainly touched upon ethical issues. Hong decided to alter the contents that were against the “天情” (heavenly principles) (Hong, 1979, p. 52).

As mentioned in 4.2 on the first Taiping Bible, the main alteration concerning ethical issues is the deletion of Genesis 19:31-38. Hong omitted the narrative on the sexual relationship between Lot and his daughters. But he did not alter other other, similar content.

On the other hand, the alteration in the authorized Taiping version is much more systematic and consistent. Generally speaking, there are three kinds of alterations in terms of ethics, they involve: *sexual expressions, sexual taboos, and the behavior of ancestors.*

4.3.2.1.1 Sexual expressions

The first is the alteration of sexual expressions or narratives. In Gützlaff's version, he used the expressions such as “交” (associate, cross, intercourse, copulate) or “相交” (intersect, intercourse) to refer to sexual activities. Hong altered some of them, for example:

Example 4.3-56:

KJV: Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine... (Genesis 35:22)

Gützlaff's Version: 流便交家父之妾辟拉... [Liu Bian copulated with the family father's concubine Pi La].

Authorized Taiping Version: 流便不敬父之妾辟拉... [Liu Bian disrespect the father's concubine Pi La].

Hong altered the verse, and eliminated the adultery between Reuben and his father's concubine.

Likewise, when Jacob, Reuben's father, condemned his adultery, Hong altered the verse:

Example 4.3-57:

KJV: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch (Genesis 49:4).

Gützlaff's Version: 犹水之放荡，尔上父榻，又污之，又登我床也 [Like the unstableness of water, you went up to father's couch, and dirtied it, and stepped onto my bed].

Authorized Taiping Version: 犹水之放荡，无所禁止，又秽褻，不畏上帝也。 [Like the unstableness of water, with no principles to follow, obscene, and not fear the superior emperor].

Although the verse did not directly mention Reuben's adultery, Hong altered the verse completely to avoid any traces that might suggest sexual activity.

In Genesis 39, the wife of Joseph's master wanted to sleep with Joseph. Hong replaced all sexual suggestive expressions.

Example 4.3-58:

KJV:(7) And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me... (10) And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her... (12) And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me... (14) That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. (Genesis 39: 7, 10, 12, 14)

Gützlaff's Version: (7) 此后主母将眼传情与约色弗，曰，与我相交... (10) 遇主母日日叙谈，约色弗其不肯听，并不同在相交也... (12) 主母就捉其衣曰，与我相交... (14) [主母]曰，尔看家主带希伯来人入来，以辱我也。方才入内，欲与我交，我举大声而呼 [(7) Afterwards the female lord used her eyes to deliver her affection on Yue Se Fu, and said, copulate with me... (10) The female lord talked day after day. Yue Se Fu refused to hear, and he did not copulate... (12) The female lord caught his garment and said, copulate with me... (14) [The female lord] said, you see, the Xi Bo Lai man brought by the lord came in and insulted me. Just now he went inside, and wanted to copulate with me. I raised my voice and yelled].

Authorized Taiping Version: (7) 此后长母想变妖，欲与约色弗犯第七天条... (10) 遇长母日日叙谈，约色弗其不肯，曰，犯第七条该斩也... (12) 长母就捉其衣曰，与我犯条.....(14) [长母]曰，尔看家长带希伯来人入来，以辱我也。方才入内，欲与我犯条，我举大声而呼 [(7) Afterwards the female senior wanted to become a devil, and desired to violate the seventh heavenly rule... (10) The female senior talked day after day. Yue Se Fu refused, and said, violating the seventh heavenly rule will be beheaded... (12) The female senior caught his garment and said, violate the rule with me... (14) [The female senior] said, you

see, the Xi Bo Lai man brought by the lord came in and insulted me. Just now he went inside, and wanted to violate the rule with me. I raised my voice and yelled].

The so-called “the seventh heavenly rule” refers to the seventh commandment in the Old Testament that forbids adultery. The Ten Commandments were considered the highest law in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The seventh Commandment was of particular importance in Hong’s opinion. He kept emphasizing the felony of adultery. In *Poems of the Heavenly Father* (天父诗), a collection of poems that Hong wrote to regulate concubines, the seventh commandment the most frequently mentioned commandment.⁵⁶ In addition, he even issued decree to emphasize the importance of following the seventh commandment, and he pointed out that the criminals would be executed without mercy (Hong, 1979b, p. 36). In addition, his alteration about “[wanting] to become a devil” (想变妖) also resonates with the previous discussions about “云” (the replacement of “魂” (soul)) in 4.3.1.1 and the distinction between “true man” and “false man” in 4.3.1.4. Hong’s alteration reflects his implication that anyone who did not follow the rules of his kingdom would be considered demons.

The alteration of “交” or “相交” can only be found in the two above-mentioned examples. Whereas when they are used as sexual expressions in other verses, such as Genesis 38:2, Exodus 20:15, and Leviticus 15:18, the translation is kept intact. But the sexual relationships in these are not adultery. Hence Hong only altered the verses when he considered the relationship inappropriate.

In addition, it also explains three cases of alteration that first appears strange:

Example 4.3-59:

KJV: And Enoch walked with God... (Genesis 5:24)

Gützlaff’s Version: 夫以诺与上帝相交... [And Mi Nuo made friends with the superior emperor...]

⁵⁶ In poems 72, 156, 161, 292, 302, 401, and 465.

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫以诺蒙上帝眷顾... [And Mi Nuo was favored by the imperial emperor...]

“相交” is a polysemous phrase. It can either mean “to copulate” or “to make friends” (without any sexual implication). As shown in the previous two examples, it has been used to refer to sexual intercourse. Hence Hong’s replacement in this example might be a consideration of avoiding undesired interpretation.

Hong also replaced the phrase “交通”:

Example 4.3-60:

KJV: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (I John 1:3)

Gützlaff’s Version: 吾所见闻者报尔知之，使汝交通我，又我交通天父，并其子耶稣基督矣 [What we have seen and heard are reported to and known by you, so that you could associate/collude/copulate with me, and I associate/collude/copulate with the heavenly father, and his son Ye Su Ji Du].

Authorized Taiping Version: 吾所见闻者报尔知之，使汝认识我，又我认识天父，并其子耶稣基督矣 [What we have seen and heard are reported to and known by you, so that you could acquaint with me, and I acquaint with the heavenly father, and his son Ye Su Ji Du].

Example 4.3-61:

KJV: If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies. (Philippians 2:1).

Gützlaff’s Version: 今夫在基督有安慰仁爱之慕，圣神之交通，心怀慈悲 [Now in Ji Du there is comfort, benevolence and love, the holy god’s association/collusion/copulation, the heart is full of mercy].

钦定版:今夫在基督有安慰仁爱之慕，上帝圣神之感通，心怀慈悲 [Now in Ji Du there is comfort, benevolence and love, the superior emperor holy god's inspiration, the heart is full of mercy].

Similar to “相交”，“交通” is also very polysemous, it means “traffic”，“communication”，“association”，or “collusion”，and also “copulation”. The term in the examples can be easily interpreted as “communication”. Nevertheless, Hong replaced them. It can be inferred that Hong might want to avoid any inappropriate suggestion of sexual activities.

Similar alterations can be found in I John 1:6-7, and Revelation 1:9. However, the alteration of “交通” is not consistent. The term is found intact in many other verses, where it all refers to “communication” or “association”.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the altered terms of “交”，“相交”，“交通” found in the authorized Taiping version can be explained as Hong's intention to avoid potential interpretation on sexual activities.

4.3.2.1.2 Sexual taboos

Hong also altered the verses that contradicted Chinese sexual taboos. Similar to the first version of the Taiping Bible, he also deleted Genesis 19:30-38 (Lot and his daughters) in the authorized Taiping version. In addition, he made similar and consistent alterations in the rest of biblical verses:

Example 4.3-62:

KJV:And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. (Leviticus 19:20)

Gützlaff's Version: 女婢与丈夫许娉者，并未释放，若与人私通，亦必受鞭，因未放亦无死罪 [If a maidservant, who is betrothed to a husband and not

⁵⁷ See II Corinthians 13:14, Galatians 2:9, 5:11, Philippians 1:5, 3:10, Hebrews 12:14, 18:4.

released, commits adultery with another man, [she] should be scourged, because she is not released so it is not capital crime].

Authorized Taiping Version: 女婢与丈夫许娉者，并未释放，若与人私通，亦必正法，因犯奸则必斩也 [If a maidservant, who is betrothed to a husband and not released, commits adultery with another man, [she] should be executed, because she commits adultery and should be beheaded].

In the Hebrew tradition, if a betrothed bondmaid was not released, she was not considered a wife, but merely the property of the master. Hence even if she had secret intercourse with another man, she would not be sentenced to death (Feng, 2006, p. 213). However, there was no such tradition in Chinese tradition. If a maid committed adultery, she would be sentenced to death immediately, because she would be considered bringing shame to the master's family. Moreover, Hong particularly emphasized the felony of adultery. So it is not surprising that he altered the verse.

Example 4.3-63:

KJV: If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

Gützlaff's Version: 人若遇未聘之女，捉之苟合而露出，则其苟合之人与女之父必赐银五十两而为本妻，既已屈之，是以终日不得休之 [If a man meets a unbetrothed woman, captures her and copulates with her but is exposed, then the man who has copulated should grant fifty liang of silver to the woman's father and marry her as wife. Now that he has forced her. He should not divorce her all his days].⁵⁸

Authorized Taiping Version: 人若遇未聘之女，捉之苟合而露出，则其苟合之人是强奸，是犯第七天条，必按天法诛之，女亦无罪，因非其本心愿也 [If a

⁵⁸ "Liang" (两) is a unit of weight in China. One liang equals 50 grams.

man meets a unbetrothed woman, captures her and copulates with her but is exposed, then the man who has copulated has committed rape, which violates the seventh heavenly rule. He should be executed according to the heavenly law. The woman is innocent, because it is not of her own volition].

The alteration again indicates the difference between ancient Hebrew law and Chinese tradition. In the Hebrew tradition, if a virgin was raped, she would not be accepted as a wife in any other families, because marrying a raped virgin was considered shame. So the law required that the raper should marry the woman, so as to guarantee her livelihood (Achteemeier, 1996, p. 656). However, such a tradition did not exist in Chinese culture. Although marrying a raped woman would also humiliate a family, there was no such rule or law to require that a rapist should marry her. On the contrary, the rapist would be sentenced to death. Therefore, although the altered version mentions the seventh commandment, Hong's alteration is in accordance with Chinese tradition.

The most salient alteration in the Bible is in Genesis 38:8-26. Hong completely rewrote all the verses. They are too long to be shown in this research, and a summary is as follows: The original verses depict the sexual relationships in Judah's family among the brothers, the father and Tamar. Tamar's husband died without children. For the sake of bearing offspring for Judah's family, Tamar then had sexual relationships with her brother-in-law (Onan, who was later killed by God for refusing to do it). Judah (Tamar's father-in-law) was reluctant to offer his youngest son (Shelah) to Tamar. Then Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and slept with Judah. On the other hand, in the authorized Taiping version, Tamar did not have any sexual relationship with her brother-in-law or father-in-law, instead, she was a virtuous daughter-in-law who took care of Judah and kept reminding him to arrange a wife for his youngest son (Shelah). The sexual relationships in the family was completely removed by Hong.

A similar narrative, which reflect the same Hebrew tradition in the previous example, could be found in Deuteronomy 25:5-7. Hong altered the verses as well:

Example 4.3-64:

KJV: If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go

in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife... (Deuteronomy 25:5-7)

Gützlaff's Version: 若兄弟共居，而一人死并无子，则其死者之妻毋得结亲在外与异人矣，乃丈夫之弟必进而娶之，而尽丈夫弟之本分也。初所生之子，必接其死兄之名，以免在以色列删其名焉。倘该人不肯娶兄之妻... [If the brothers live together, and one brother dies without a child, then the deceased man's wife should not marry an alien man from the outside. The husband's brother must then marry her, to fulfill the duty as the husband's brother. The firstborn child must succeed in the name of the deceased brother, so as to avoid the name being removed from Israel. If the man does not agree to marry his brother's wife...].

Authorized Taiping Version: 若兄弟共居，而一人死并无子，则其死者之妻毋得结亲在外与异人矣，乃丈夫之弟必进而养之终老，而尽丈夫弟之本分也。其娶妻生子，必接其死兄之嗣，以免在以色列删其名焉。倘该人不肯养兄之妻... [If the brothers live together, and one brother dies without a child, then the deceased man's wife should not marry an alien man from the outside. The husband's brother must then support her life till the end, to fulfill the duty as the husband's brother. After he marries, the child he begets must succeed to the deceased brother's family, so as to avoid the name being removed from Israel. If the man does not agree to support his brother's wife...].

The original verses regulates the obligation of a deceased man's brother. The brother should marry the deceased brother's wife, and the first born child should inherit the deceased brother's family. But in the authorized Taiping version this kind of marriage is completely removed, and is replaced with a scenario common in Chinese tradition.

Similar verses about the marriage between a brother and a widowed sister-in-law can also be found in Matthew 22:24-26, Mark 12:19-22, and Luke 20:38-31. Hong altered all of them like the above two examples.

The form of marriage described in the last example is called the “levirate marriage” or the “levirate law”, which regulates that the deceased man’s brother had the obligation to marry the former’s wife, so as to reproduce offspring for the family (Attridge, 2006, p. 292; Achtemeier, 1996, p. 656). This explains why Onan was killed by God for refusing sexual intercourse with Tamar, his deceased brother’s wife. For the same reason, even Tamar slept with Judah, her father-in-law, she was considered righteous because she was fulfilling the obligation of reproducing offspring for the family (Genesis 38:26).

On the other hand, in Chinese tradition, marriage and sexual relationship between a father-in-law and a daughter-in-law, or one between brother-in-law and a sister-in-law would be completely unacceptable. Both would be considered incest, which was against both moral standards and the law. Both the laws in the Ming and Qing dynasties considered it a capital crime. Although Hong tried to overthrow the Qing dynasty, he obviously agreed with the Qing regulation regarding this issue.

In addition, the New Testament also mentions certain regulations concerning married women. Hong altered them as well:

Example 4.3-65:

KJV: For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (Romans 7:2-3)

Gützlaff’s Version: 盖有夫之妇，平生按法服夫，但其夫故，则除夫之法也。倘夫尚在而妇另嫁他人，则谓奔淫，但其夫没，则除其法，虽另嫁他夫，亦不为淫也 [For the woman who has a man should obey him as long as he lives. But if the man deceases, then the man’s law is removed. If the man is still alive and the woman marries another man, it is called adultery. But if the man dies, then the law is removed. Even if she marries another man, it would not be adultery].

Authorized Taiping Version: 盖有夫之妇，平生按法服夫，但其夫故，亦仍夫之法也。倘夫尚在而妇另嫁他人，则谓奔淫，但其夫升，亦仍其法，虽另嫁他夫，亦不为淫也 [For the woman who has a man should obey him as long as he lives. But if the man deceases, then the man's law still followed. If the man is still alive and the woman marries another man, it is called adultery. But if the man rises, then the law is still followed. Even if she marries another man, it would not be adultery].

The original verse points out that the woman would be free from her husband's control if he dies, but Hong completely reversed the meaning, and the woman would have to be submissive to her husband even he dies. The altered version is in accordance with the Chinese traditional view of a typical widow, who would stay in the husband's family till her death. However, Hong did not alter the last sentence, which makes it illogical: the woman should follow the deceased husband's law, but she could also marry another man.⁵⁹ Hong's alteration is not consistent. When similar verses appear in I Corinthians 7:39, he did not alter it.

The last case of alteration of this kind concerns the behavior of a husband and a wife:

Example 4.3-66:

KJV: Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. (Colossians 3:19)

Gützlaff's Version: 夫当爱妇，断勿干惹之 [Husbands should love the wives, and should not bully them].

Authorized Taiping Version: 夫当爱妇，断勿容纵之 [Husbands should love the wives, and should not pamper them].

Although similar advice can also be found in I Corinthians 7:3, Ephesians 5:25, 33, and I Peter 3:7 (which points out that husbands should love their wives), none was as clear as this example that points out that husbands should not be bitter against their wives.

⁵⁹ Hong did not understand the verse properly. It is a metaphor for resurrection. The reason why Paul mentioned the example of the woman and her husband's law is to argue that the law only applies when a man lives in flesh. Paul's opinion is that there would be no need of law after the resurrection.

However, Hong reversed the meaning. The altered version is in accordance with Hong's view of the marital relationship in Chinese tradition, which regulates that a woman should always obey her husband. Hong's poems in *Poems of the Heavenly Father*, originally published in 1857, express the same point of view. It emphasizes the proper behavior (for example, they were not allowed to look at Hong in the eye, and were not allowed to mention any male person) and dressing of the concubines. A minor violation would be beaten, and a serious one will be punished by deprivation of limbs or life (*Poems of the Heavenly Father*, 2004). In addition, according to an account that records the conversation between Hong and Yang, Hong kicked his pregnant concubine(s) with his boot, or commanded his guards to flog his concubine(s) with rods (*The Book of Edicts of the Heavenly Father during his Descent to Earth*, 2004, pp. 25-26). Obviously, Hong had a very harsh attitude towards women, and it is similar to the patriarchal model of a Chinese family. This explains why he replaced the verse about how husbands should treat their wives.

In addition to alterations, Hong also added one annotation in the New Testament and opposed to monogamy. In Titus 1:6, regarding the qualification of elders, Paul advised, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly". Gützlaff's translation was intact in the authorized Taiping version:

即有无责之人，只娶一妻，子女兼信，而无放荡横逆之名，则可立之也 [if there is a blameless man, who is married to only one wife, whose sons and daughters are all faithful, with no name of unruliness or rebelliousness, could be appointed].

But Hong added an annotation and offered an alternative:

今上帝圣旨妻大员不止。钦此 [Now the superior emperor's holy decree is that the high officials do not have limit on wives]. (Hong, 2004, p. 316)

Hong's annotation shows his objection to the original verse. It is strange that Hong did not alter the verse directly. The reason might be that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had two forms of marriage: Polygamy for high officials, and monogamy for low officials and ordinary people (Zeng, 1994). Therefore, he needed to keep the original verse intact

to promote monogamy, but added the annotation to offer the privilege of polygamy to the high officials.⁶⁰

4.3.2.1.3 Ancestors' Behavior

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew patriarchs and ancestors sometimes deceive others for exploitation or self protection, even those who were considered highly honorable: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Hong altered the descriptions that he considered as dishonest or to some extent inappropriate behavior.

The first one is Noah. When he was drunk, he slept nakedly. Hong altered the verses:

Example 4.3-67:

KJV: (21) And he [Noah] drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent... (24) And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him (Genesis 9:21, 24).

Gützlaff's Version: (21) (挪亚) 饮酒成醉，露身在账房...(24) 挪亚醉醒，方知季子所为也 [(21) [Noah] drank wine and was drunken, exposing his body in the tent...(24) Noah awoke from his drunkenness, and knew what his younger son had done].

Authorized Taiping Version: (21) (挪亚) 困倦熟睡，跌身在床下...(24) 挪亚睡醒，方知季子所为也 [(21) [Noah] was tired and fell asleep, falling down from the bed...(24) Noah awoke from his sleep, and knew what his younger son had done].

Two kinds of behavior are omitted in the authorized Taiping Version: nakedness and drunkenness. The reason for the deletion of nakedness is that such a description of an ancestor would usually not be recorded in a Chinese holy book. The deletion of

⁶⁰ In an interview by Joseph Edkins with Hong Rengan, the latter pointed out that Hong had been aware that polygamy was against the doctrines. But Yang Xiuqing (the East King) strongly advocated it (Edkins, 1860). However, Hong Rengan's words might not be true. After all, the interview was conducted after the Tianjing Incident (Heavenly Capital Incident), in which Yang had been executed for mutiny. Because Hong Rengan was Hong Xiuquan's cousin, he could have tried to vindicate Hong by imputing the blame to Yang.

drunkenness is because the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom forbade drinking wine. This will be discussed in next section.

Then, Hong also altered the incident involving the deceit of Abraham (Abram) and Isaac. Both lied to others, and put their wives in jeopardy, so as to escape death. Hong altered the relevant verses:

Example 4.3-68:

KJV: (13) Say, I [Abram] pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee... (16) And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. (17) And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. (18) And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? (19) Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. (Genesis 12:13, 16-19)

Gützlaff's Version: (13) 故求尔可谓乃本妹，俾得我为尔成兴，我命缘尔亦得保也... (16) 且王缘妇厚待亚伯兰，其有牛羊，骆驼，牝牡之驴并奴婢矣。 (17) 然皇上帝因亚伯兰之妻撒赦，即降重灾加王与其家矣。 (18) 王遂召亚伯兰曰，曷作此事施我耶，缘何不称云，乃吾妻。为何称之妹哉，致我娶之为妻，今且看本妻带同去罢 [(13) So I beg you to say that you are my sister, so that I could be flourish because of you, and my life could be saved because of you... (16) And the king generously entertained Ya Bo Lan because of the woman, there were sheep and oxen, camel, male and female donkeys, and male and female servants. (17) But the imperial superior emperor, because of Ya Bo Lan's wife Sa La, dropped heavy disease to the king and his family. (18) The king then summon Ya Bo Lan and said, why did you do this to me, why did you not say that "she is my wife"? Why did you say that she is your sister, and led me to marry her as my wife? Now please see your wife, take her, and leave together].

Authorized Taiping Version: (13) 故我与尔恳求吾祖之上帝，保全我与尔在彼不至拆散也... (16) 且侯缘妇欲杀亚伯兰，其有牛羊，骆驼，牝牡之驴并奴婢矣。(17) 然皇上帝因亚伯兰之妻撒敕，即降重灾加侯与其家矣。(18) 侯遂召亚伯兰曰，尔诚上帝恩爱哉。缘我娶尔妻为吾妻，(19) 无何而皇上帝降重灾于我也，今且看本妻带同去罢 [(13) So I and you beg our ancestors' superior emperor, protect me and you there so that we would not be separated. (16) And the governor wanted to kill Ya Bo Lan because of Ya Bo Lan, who had sheep and oxen, camel, male and female donkeys, and male and female servants. (17) But the imperial superior emperor, because of Ya Bo Lan's wife Sa La, dropped heavy disease on the king and his family. (18) The governor then summon Ya Bo Lan and said, you indeed are the one that the superior emperor favors and loves. Because I married your wife as my wife. (19) Otherwise there would be no reason that the superior emperor dropped heavy disease on me. Now please see your wife, take her, and leave together].

A similar narrative can also be found in Genesis 20, and Hong altered it as well:

Example 4.3-69

KJV: (2) And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah... (11) And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. (12) And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. (13) And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother. (Genesis 20:2, 11-13)

Gützlaff's version: (2) 亚伯刺罕⁶称其妻撒刺氏为妹也，故其腊之王亚庇米力召撒刺入宫矣...(11) 亚伯刺罕曰，因我想，在此处果然不敬畏上帝，恐为本妻将来诛我也。(12) 但此妇果然我妹，即父亲之女，并不母亲之女，后成本妻。(13) 当时上帝令我离父家而游，我曾谓妇曰，将来所到之处，必认我为兄，正是尔所施我之恩焉 [(2) Ya Bo La Han claimed that his wife Sa La was

his sister, so the Qi La king Ya Bi Mi Li summoned Sa La into the palace... (11) Ya Bo La Han said, because I thought, this place indeed did not honor and fear the superior emperor. I was afraid that I would be killed because of my wife. (12) But this woman is truly my sister, namely my father's daughter, but not my mother's daughter, later she became my wife. (13) At that time the superior emperor commanded me to leave the father's home and travel, I used to tell the woman, in the future wherever we would go, you should recognize me as brother, and that would be the grace that you grant me].⁶¹

Authorized Taiping version: (2) 亚伯刺罕因其妻撒刺氏色美也，故其腊之王亚庇米力召撒刺入宫矣...(11) 亚伯刺罕曰，因我想，在此处果然不敬畏上帝，恐为本妻将来诛我也。(12) 媒者逼我曰我妹，即父亲之女，并不母亲之女，不是本妻。(13) 当时上帝令我离父家而游，我曾谓妇曰，将来所到之处，人欲尔为妻，惟求上帝施我尔恩焉 [(2) Because Ya Bo La Han's wife Sa La was beautiful, the Qi La king Ya Bi Mi Li summoned Sa La into the palace... (11) Ya Bo La Han said, because I thought, this place indeed did not honor and fear the superior emperor. I was afraid that I would be killed because of my wife. (12) The matchmaker forced me to say that she was my sister, namely my father's daughter, but not my mother's daughter, not my wife. (13) At that time the superior emperor commanded me to leave the father's home and travel, I used to tell the woman, in the future wherever we would go, if people want to take you as wife, the only way is to beg the superior emperor to grant me/us grace].

The original verses not only describes Abraham's deceit, but also reveals that Sarah was Abraham's half-sister. Before Moses established the law, marriages between brothers and sisters had been considered ideal (Feng, 2006, p. 33). But to a Chinese reader, Abraham not only lied to others, but also committed incest. Hong's alteration eliminated both of these sensitive issues.

61 In Gützlaff's translation, Abraham is translated as “亚伯刺罕” (Ya Bo La Han) in Genesis, but it is translated as “亚伯拉罕” (Ya Bo La Han) in Exodus and subsequent books. The third character is different.

A similar narrative can be found in Genesis 26:6-9 about Abraham's son Isaac, who also lied to others that his wife was his sister. Hong also completely altered this lie described in the verses.

The fourth ancestor who was censored by Hong is Jacob, and the main issue is sons' birthright. In the Hebrew tradition, the eldest brother could inherit twice as much of his father's property than the younger brother. Furthermore, the father's blessing of a son was holy and could not be altered. Jacob first tricked Esau, his older brother, and obtained his older brother's birthright (Genesis 25:29-34). Then he followed his mother Rebekah's advice and deceptively gained the blessing of Isaac by pretending to be Esau (Genesis 27:11-27). What Hong wrote about “弟夺兄赍悖天情” (Younger brother deceiving the older into giving up his property is against the heavenly principle) refers to Jacob's deception. Hong rewrote the narrative. In the authorized Taiping version, Jacob did not trick Esau, but only advised him to share the family's field and till them together (“耕...家产之业”). Whereas in Genesis 27, Jacob did not pretend to be Esau, and he even told his father that he was Jacob, and Isaac was moved by his “extremely pious request for blessing” (“格外虔诚求祝福”), and willingly granted him his blessing.

Hong's alteration removes all the inappropriate behavior of four important ancestors in the Old Testament. Noah was the patriarch of the only family that had survived after the Great Flood, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all important ancestors in the Old Testament. Hong pointed out that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham (Hong, 2004, p. 358). Hence it is normal for a reader of the Taiping Bible to interpret Hong of the same pedigree, because he claimed that he was the younger brother of Jesus. Hence Hong needed to tailor the ancestors' behaviors according to the norms of Chinese culture. In Chinese tradition, ancestors lived perfect lives and so were considered role models for their descendants. Therefore any text by or about them would not contain any dubious moral or unethical behavior. However, the Old Testament does not whitewash the behavior of the Hebrew patriarchs. Some of their behavior might be inappropriate, some might even be later considered immoral or even illegal after Moses established the law (e.g., marriage between a brother and sister, sexual relationships between father and daughter, see Leviticus 18). In other words, the Old Testament reflects how the

civilization of the Hebrew people developed and the establishment of the law that ruled their society. Hong's alterations of the verses dealing with the Hebrew patriarchs, on the other hand, show these people in the best light possible.

However, some other verses in the Bible could also be considered unethical according to Hong's standard, but he did not alter them. For example, in Mark 3:32 and Luke 8:19-20, Jesus' mother and brothers came and called him, but he responded with a tone that could be considered harsh and irreverent by a Chinese reader:

Who is my mother, or my brethren?...or whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

The translation is:

朕母谁哉，兄弟谁哉.....顺上帝之旨者，正朕兄弟姊妹及母亲也 [who is my mother? Who are my brothers?...Whoever obeys the superior emperor's decrees will be my brothers and sisters and mothers].⁶²

In the traditional Chinese view, children should always be humble and respectful towards their parents and senior siblings, and Hong also emphasized in *Poems of the Heavenly Father* that people should obey their parents (in poems 122 and 302). So Jesus' behavior could be considered a deviate act from traditional Chinese morality. But Hong did not alter it. The reason might be that Hong agreed with such view. After all, he considered both Jesus and himself the superior emperor's sons (hence exempted from the usual laws and moral standards), because they were born in heaven, and he specifically mentioned in his annotation that he was born by a heavenly mother (see 4.3.1.6). In addition, in his early works, he also advocated the union of people by proposing that "the men below heaven, are all brothers. The women below heaven, are all sisters" (天下多男子，尽是兄弟之辈；天下多女子，尽是姊妹之群) (Hong, 1979, p. 15). So it implies that he indeed had a view on parenthood and family relationships that to some extent deviates from traditional Chinese ethics. Hence he did not alter or annotate Jesus' words in Mark 3 and Luke 8.

⁶² Hong replaced the taboo characters "吾" and "耶". Gützlaff's version is: "吾母谁耶，兄弟谁耶.....顺上帝之旨者，正我兄弟姊妹及母亲也".

Nevertheless, the altered and annotated verses reveal Hong's clear intention to conform the contents of the Bible with Chinese ethics and traditions. Although Hong constantly attacked the Qing government and Chinese tradition, forbidding all ancient Chinese literature, his intervention in terms of sexual suggestive expressions, sexual taboos, and inappropriate behaviors of biblical figures indicate that he incorporated the traditional Chinese ethics in his interpretation of the Bible.

4.3.2.2 Secular Customs

Except for alterations in ethics, Hong also altered certain descriptions of secular customs that contradict Chinese tradition or Taiping customs, respectively *temperance* and *head covering*. The alterations have more to do with secular customs than religious or political concerns.

4.3.2.2.1 Temperance

Temperance refers to the prohibition of drinking alcohol. Hong replaced the character “酒” (alcohol, liquor) with other characters, such as “油” (oil), “汤” (liquid, soup), “谷” (grain), “茶” (tea), “饮” (drink), “麦” (wheat), “丹” (pill), “汁” (juice), “豆” (bean), “饼” (flat cake), and “厨” (dish), depending on the context. Titles and nouns related to alcohol are also replaced, for example, “酒吏” (butler), translation of “butler” in Genesis 40:1, is replaced with “厨吏” (cook); “酒醴” (sweet alcohol), translation of “wine” in Genesis 49:11, is replaced with “香茶” (fragrant tea); and “酒杯” (alcohol cup), translation of “cup” in Mark 14:23 (Jesus' cup of wine), is replaced with “饮杯” (drinking cup).

The only two exceptions are found in Luke 10 and Philippians 2. In Luke 10:34, “bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine” is translated as “趋来用药酒油斟伤捆之” (come and use the herbal liqueur and oil to pour on the wound and bind it). The reason reason might be that the alcohol here was used for medication. But it could also be merely negligence, as shown in the second exception: Philippians 2:17. The verse

(if... be offered upon the...service) is translated with the noun “奠酒” (memorial alcohol) as “如奠酒灌地” (if... be offered with memorial alcohol pouring onto the ground...). This might be a case of negligence, because the same noun is found in Exodus 25:29, and Hong deleted the character “酒”. In addition, the Taiping required that people should use “tea” (茶) in religious and memorial ceremonies.⁶³

There is no prohibition of drinking alcohol in the Bible. Even Jesus drank wine at the Last Supper, in which case Hong replaced “酒杯” (alcohol cup) with “饮杯” (drinking cup). Nevertheless, the Bible does prohibit excessive drinking, and the relevant verse was altered by Hong as well:

Example 4.3-70:

KJV:And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess... (Ephesians 5:18)

Gützlaff's Version: 勿酒醉过量... [do not become drunk with alcohol, which is excess...]

Authorized Taiping Version: 勿酒醉犯禁... [do not be drunk with alcohol, which is violating the rule...]

Obviously, by altering the verse, Hong heightened the standard, and the advice is turned into a rule.

Hong's prohibition on alcohol might be influenced with Liang's book. Although Liang did not point out that drinking alcohol should be prohibited, he frequently associated it with other inappropriate behavior, for example:

迷了酒色，已是昏乱灵心，大获罪于神天上帝 [...be lured in alcohol and sex, which has muddled and confused the spiritual heart, and committed severe crime in front of the divine heavenly superior emperor]. (Liang 1985, p. 27)

⁶³ In the first edition of “The Book of Heavenly Principles” (天条书) printed in 1852 (before the publication of the authorized Taiping Bible), the sacrifice included “牲醴茶饭” (animal, sweet alcohol, tea, and rice). But in 1853, the character “醴” (sweet alcohol) was replaced with “饌” (meal): “牲饌茶饭” (animal, meal, tea, and rice). See Hong 1979, pp. 29, 151.

财势酒色 [money, power, alcohol, and sex]. (Liang, 1985, p. 54)

行于邪淫恶欲，好酒好食筵席，及拜可恨之伪神与偶像 [...acts by wicked, lewd, and evil desires, yearns for alcohol and yearns for having banquet, and worships the loathsome false gods and idols]. (Liang, 1985, p. 105)

In this context, it would be easy for a reader to associate alcoholic drinking with other inappropriate or even wicked behavior. Hong, after reading Liang's book, expressed his loathing of alcohol in his early works, pointing out that the great and righteous would abstain from it and the ones who drank it would surely fail (Hong, 1979, p. 13). In addition, according to Hamberg's report (1854), Hong "was able to stand a good quantity of rice wine", but after his conversion, he completely abstained from it (p. 47). Therefore, the prohibition of alcohol is a result of both his interpretation of Liang's book and his own personal experience. Hong tended to regard alcoholic drinking as moral failure. Such an attitude is clearly revealed in his elimination of the character "酒" in the Bible.

4.3.2.2.2 Head Covering

The New Testament required that women should always cover their heads while praying or prophesying. The verse is:

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven". (I Corinthians 11:5)

The translation in the authorized Taiping version is the same as Gützlaff's version:

各女人祈祷传道时，不戴首帕则辱其首，因女人有此犹剃头一般 [when every woman prays or preaches the teachings, if she does not wear head cloth then she insults her head, because a woman like this is like her head being shaved].

Hong added an annotation here:

存心不在帕，去不去无拘。钦此 [preserve (doctrines in your) heart but not (with you) cloth, keeping or not keeping it is not restricted. Imperially endorsed].

The annotation reveals the cultural difference between the two cultures. In the era where the Old Testament and the New Testament were formed, the tradition was that the women should cover their head, especially in religious rituals. But there was no such tradition in China when Hong read the Bible.

Although there are not many kinds of alterations or annotations in terms of secular customs, the existing ones still reflect cultural differences. Hong's alterations indicates that he tended to tailor biblical customs according to the Chinese context.

4.4 Result

The chapter compared Gützlaff's translation and the two versions of the Taiping Bible. There are three major findings.

First, the proportion of the Old Testament and the New Testament is different between the two Taiping versions. The first Taiping version mainly focused on the Old Testament while the New Testament was marginalized. The authorized Taiping version put much more focus on the New Testament and published the entire of it, with the proportion of the Old Testament remaining unchanged. The main reason for the change of focus in the authorized version is the criticism from British missionaries and Hong's desire to alter the Bible according to his interpretation.

Second, the research has discovered that there are slight differences between Gützlaff's version and the first Taiping version. Two discrepancies are the most salient, the first is the deletion of Genesis 19:31-38 concerning ethical issues, and the second is the replacement of the character “魂” (soul) with the Taiping neologism “云人”, and the reason is that Hong tried to avoid the negative sense of original character, so as to imply the purity of his kingdom. The other discrepancies do not significantly influence the meaning, nor do they affect any important doctrines.

On the other hand, there are a large quantity of discrepancies between Gützlaff's translation and the authorized Taiping version. Hong's alterations are extensive and mostly consistent. All concern content rather than grammar. There is no evidence that Hong had any desire to improve the readability of the translation. In fact, many alterations obstruct readability.

This research has investigated the alterations/annotations in the authorized Taiping version of the Bible, and classified these into two groups, one is political censorship, and the other is nonpolitical censorship. Political censorship is mainly found in the New Testament, while nonpolitical censorship is mainly found in the Old Testament.

Regarding the two groups of alterations in the authorized Taiping version, the first group, political censorship, which includes political and religious alterations and annotations, accounts for the major portion of the changes. Hong altered the main doctrines of Christianity in such a way that indicates a radical difference in interpretation between Hong and Christianity. Generally speaking, Hong saw God and the kingdom of God as materialized entities, denied the doctrine of the Trinity by claiming both Jesus and himself were the imperial sons of God. In addition, he replaced a large number of characters by labeling them as taboo characters, which had been a traditional way that the Chinese monarch practiced censorship.

Nonpolitical censorship in the authorized Taiping version mainly concerns ethical issues in the Bible and secular customs, which to some extent contradict the Chinese tradition. This group of alterations directly reflects the influence of Chinese culture on Hong. Although he was determined rebel against the Chinese monarch and tradition, his censorship in this group ironically reveals the impact of Chinese tradition on him.

Hong's alteration in the authorized Taiping version also reveals that he was familiar with the contents of the Bible. He did not randomly alter the words, or incorporate himself haphazardly in the text. The most impressive alteration is his endeavor of embedding himself in the Bible. He found the two most mysterious figures in the Bible, which reflects his careful reading of biblical verses. Hence, Hong's alterations are deliberate and careful. The alterations and annotations found in the authorized Taiping version give us a full picture of Hong's unique interpretation of the Christian doctrines.

Chapter 5 Discussion

The previous chapter discussed the various kinds of censorship in the Bible made by Hong. Such censorship has an unique place in the history of the Christian Bible. There had been hundreds of heretical sects in Christianity, each interpreting the Bible in their own way. But Hong's interpretation is more radical, in that he directly altered the Bible to meet his own understanding.

More importantly, Hong altered the Bible completely on the basis of his understanding of a translation, and an imprecise Christian book by a newly baptized Chinese preacher (i.e., Liang). He had no access to any original text of the Bible, but he was convinced that his understanding was orthodox while the Western missionaries were mistaken. This highlights an important phenomenon concerning the effect of translation on a culture and society. The translators of the Bible, both Morrison and Gützlaff, tried to import the faith by translation. However, after the translation was introduced into Chinese, it left the target audience to interpret it on their own. So the after-effect of a translation is mainly realized by Chinese audience, not the translators.

In the case of the Bible and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the chain reaction of translation is all performed by the target audience: Liang Fa and Hong Xiuquan. Neither of them knew foreign text, and they had to interpret the text according to their knowledge and social background. Liang could have resorted to his Western teacher for guidance or help when writing the book, but this would not have guaranteed that readers would have interpreted the translation or the doctrines in a predetermined way. Moreover, Hong read Liang's book on his own. Even though he later had learnt with Issachar Jacox Roberts for three months, his departure from the church indicates that he clung to his own interpretation and disagreed with the missionary. In the end, Hong's interpretation was more radical, and it transformed himself, the translation, and Chinese society.

From the perspective of translation studies, the process from Morrison's translation of the Bible to the altered Bible in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, can lead us to

investigate the complex relationships between translation, culture, and society, and it also prompts us to reexamine the concept of translation itself.

5.1 Translation and Culture

Translation is a cultural activity. When a text is introduced into a target culture via translation, the target readers' interpretation might be radically different from the one that was widely accepted in the original culture. The reason is that the cultural background that the readers rely on prompts them to interpret a concept or a text in a divergent way. From the perspective of relevance theory, the state of knowledge plays an important role in determining how a receiver will interpret a piece of information. In other words, a receiver tends to associate the information with one's own knowledge background, infer the message according to what one has known, and construct the meaning. As a result, a text in a new cultural background could prompt the birth of new, even radical interpretation.

In the current case, the publication of the two versions of the Bible in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Hong's interpretation biblical verses reveal the cultural conflict and merge after a text is translated into a culturally heterogeneous society. The cultural conflict is realized in Hong's interpretations, and most importantly, in the interpretations of religious terms. As can be seen in previous discussions, Hong's interpretations of the doctrines are very often influenced with his understanding of the specific religious terms. Hence the current section is going to focus on Hong's interpretation of the translated terms.

The problem of term translation was noticed by Buddhist translators hundreds of years ago in China. In the earliest attempts, the translators adopted the "Geyi" (格义) method in translating the terms; that is, to explain Buddhist concepts using existing concepts and thoughts in Chinese culture. The method is similar to Nida's concept of functional equivalence (Chu, 2003, pp. 67-68). As a result, Buddhist terms were inevitably conflated with Chinese concepts, which would cause misunderstanding. Dao An (道安) criticized the Geyi method that "the old method of Geyi often distorts the truth" (先旧

格义，于理多违) (cited in Chu, 2003). In other words, although Geyi makes it easier for translators or interpreters to explain foreign concepts, it injects native elements into the concept, causes misinterpretations, and has the danger of distorting the original doctrines.

In order to avoid the negative effect of Geyi, some Buddhist translators suggested transliteration of the important Buddhist terms. Xuanzang (玄奘), for example, proposed the “five kinds of terms that should not be interpreted” (五种不翻), namely “mysterious terms, polysemous terms, new terms, existing terms, and reverence terms” (秘密故、含多义故、此无故、顺古故、生善故) (cited in Chu, 2003). He proposed that these terms should only be transliterated, so as to avoid misreading caused by Geyi. This is a foreignizing translation strategy. Although the terms might sound awkward when first introduced to the target audience, this avoids the distortion or deviation of important religious terms.

As can be seen in Morrison’s and Gützlaff’s translations, although they translated names using transliteration (e.g. “路加” for “Luke”, “耶稣” for “Jesus”, “以色列” or “以色耳” for “Israel”, etc.), they adopted a domesticating strategy when translating many of important biblical concepts. The most important and representative ones are “God” and “Kingdom of God”.

For the term “God”, Morrison translated it into “神”,⁶⁴ whereas Gützlaff translated it into “皇上帝” or “上帝” (“皇上帝” in the Old Testament, and “上帝” in the New Testament). All of them are easy for a Chinese reader to recognize, because both “神” and “上帝” existed in the Chinese terms, and “皇上帝” is not hard to understand. But it also means that it is easy for them to associate the translations with their knowledge of Chinese tradition and culture. Hong’s interpretation shows us how this can easily occur, and what it leads to.

Contemporary with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Western missionaries were fiercely disputing on how to translate the word “God”. One group of missionaries supported the

64 Although “Jehovah” was translated as “耶何瓦”, “爷贺华” by Gützlaff, and revised into “爷火华” by Liang Fa, Hong did not explain the term in any of his publications. He merely replaced the three Chinese characters of the term in Liang’s version.

translation “神” (god), while the other supported the translation “上帝” (superior emperor). Medhurst supported the latter (“上帝”), and his reason is that the term “上帝” in Chinese literature exclusively referred to the highest deity, while the term “神” is polysemous, which could not only refer to different gods, but also to ghosts or evils, hence “上帝” is more suitable as the translation of “God” (Medhurst, 1836, p. 35).

Morrison’s translation was published before the dispute, and he used “神”, but he and his colleague Milne seemed to change their opinion later, and turned to favor “上帝” (“views of Drs. Marshman, Morrison Milne, and others, communicated in former Numbers of the Repository”, 1847, pp. 122-123). Gützlaff, on the other hand, adopted the translation “上帝”. Medhurst might be the most important factor, he cooperated with Gützlaff when translating the Bible. Medhurst’s interpretation of “神” and “上帝” obviously influenced Gützlaff’s translation. “神” was used as a polysemous word in the Bible, while “上帝” was used to exclusively refer to “God”. As could be seen from its reception, the Chinese readers did prefer “上帝”: Liang frequently referred to God as “神天上帝” (divine heavenly superior emperor), despite the fact that his teacher Morrison translated “God” as “神”. Likewise, Hong kept mentioning “上帝” and associated it with Chinese literature in his earliest works.

In Chinese classics, the concept of “上帝” did share some similarity with the biblical concept of “God”: “上帝” is the highest deity. He is a personal god, and he does not have a specific image. However, just because it exists in the Chinese classics does not mean that the readers would not associate it with other concepts and terms, which could further influence the readers’ interpretation. For example, Hong interpreted the term by associating it with “玉皇大帝” (the Jade Emperor) and “皇帝” (emperor).

Hong’s association between “上帝” and “玉皇大帝” (the Jade Emperor) and “皇帝” (emperor) blends more cultural and political elements into the concept. The Jade Emperor is the most important god in Taoism and Chinese popular religions. He is depicted as an emperor in heaven in Chinese literature and paintings. In his early works, when condemning Chinese emperors for worshipping idols, Hong criticized Emperor

Huizong of Song (宋徽宗) for changing the title of God into “玉皇大帝” (Hong, 1979, pp. 20-21). This is crucial, in that Hong only censured the emperor for changing the title, but not for worshipping the idol of “玉皇大帝”. In other words, from Hong’s perspective, God is the Jade Emperor, and the only problem is that the title should not be “玉皇大帝”, but “上帝”. Hence the Jade Emperor was the prototype for Hong to interpret the image of God, and it explains why he understood God as an old man sitting in a heavenly palace and ruling the world, with a family that resembles a traditional Chinese family. In Hong’s interpretation, apart from his golden hair and black gown, God’s image was not so different from the Jade Emperor. That is to say, Hong achieved an optimal relevance by associating the image of God with Jade Emperor.

In addition to the Jade Emperor, Hong’s association of the term with “皇帝” (emperor) also injects elements from scenarios of Chinese emperors, and makes it more politically relevant to the Chinese audience. In his early works, Hong pointed out that God was the only emperor in the world, and no one else could use “帝” (emperor) in their title. This assertion makes his beliefs more political oriented at the very beginning. By implying that God is the only emperor and that the Chinese people had worshipped the “superior emperor” before they were misled by the evil Chinese emperors, Hong justified his military movement against the Qing monarch as a just war to guard Chinese tradition.

On the other hand, the concept of “神” in Chinese culture also influenced Hong’s interpretation of God. Although Gützlaff did not translate “God” as “神”, the implication could easily be found in the translation. Liang frequently referred to God as “神天上帝” (divine heavenly superior emperor) or “神爷火华” (god Ye Huo Hua). Both of the terms have the character “神”, so the equation of “神” with “上帝” could easily be established. Hong pointed out that the “imperial superior emperor” was the “genuine god” after reading Liang’s book (Hong, 1979, p. 18). Biblical verses also prompt the association. For example, the translation of Exodus 20:3 is “毋在本面崇异神焉” (do not worship alien gods in front of my face), so the reader would infer that the “superior emperor” is the only god that should be worshipped.⁶⁵ This also help explain

65 KJV: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”.

why Hong extensively altered the words with the character “神” in the Bible (see 4.3.1.5), and interpreted the term “圣神” (holy god, the translation of “Holy Spirit” or “Holy Ghost”) as an alternative title for God. More importantly, most of the gods in Chinese culture have concrete images, hence it is not surprising that Hong firmly asserted that God had a specific image.

Therefore, Hong’s interpretation of God is a mixture of various concepts, which is neither similar to any Chinese concept nor Christian concept. Certain elements from the biblical doctrines are kept in interpreting God: God as the only god in the world, God as the almighty lord, and anti-idolatry.⁶⁶ On the other hand, Chinese elements are also blended: God is described as an emperor in the heavenly palace, he has a concrete image, and also has a family in heaven.

Another concept that also reveals cultural conflict is the “kingdom of God”, or “kingdom of heaven”. As mentioned before, in both Morrison’s and Gützlaff’s translations of the Bible, the “kingdom of God” is translated as “神国” (god kingdom/divine kingdom) or “神之国” (god’s kingdom), and “kingdom of heaven” is translated as “天国” (heavenly kingdom) or “天之国” (heaven’s kingdom). These translations are neither domesticating nor foreignizing. These terms cannot be found in classic Chinese literature; however, they can easily be interpreted and associated with other concepts in Chinese. For example, there are other terms that appear similar: “天庭” (heavenly court), “天堂” (heavenly hall), “天朝” (heavenly dynasty), “上国” (superior kingdom), and “神权” (divine/god’s power). All of them are related to the Chinese monarch. Liang associated “天国” (heavenly kingdom) with “天堂” (heavenly hall, paradise, heaven). Hong also used the term “天国” (heavenly kingdom) as the title of his kingdom.

Interestingly, in both Morrison’s and Gützlaff’s translations, “神国” is more frequently found than “天国”, because the former can be found throughout the New Testament while the latter only occurs in the Gospel of Matthew. However, both Liang and Hong favored “天国” to “神国”. Liang explained the two terms by placing “天国” in front:

⁶⁶ Although Hong claimed that God had an image, no painting or sculpture of God is found in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

天国二字，有两样解法……神之国三字，亦同此义 [The two-character term heavenly kingdom, have two meanings...the three-character term god's kingdom means the same]. (Liang 1985, 87)

It implies that “天国” (heavenly kingdom) is more often used. Hong, on the other hand, claimed that his kingdom is “天国” (heavenly kingdom), while rarely mentioning “神国” or “神之国”.⁶⁷

Liang's and Hong's preference for “天国” reveals the relevance that they construct with their Chinese cultural background. The concept of “天” (heaven) was considered philosophically, religiously, and politically more superior than “神” (god).

In Chinese philosophy, “天” (Tian, heaven) has multiple meanings, it could refer to the intangible and divine will, for example, “天将兴之，谁能废之” (Heaven is going to prosper him, who could dismiss him) (*Historical Records* 史记), or “天将降大任于斯人也” (Heaven is about to confer a great office on any man) (*Mencius*, translated by Legge, 1985). In addition, it is also related to the concept of “道” (Tao, path), which is one of the central concepts in Chinese philosophy, and which refers to the ultimate truth that rules the cosmos. For example, “道之大原出于天，天不变，道亦不变” (the ultimate origin of Tao is Tian. [If] Tian does not change, Tao does not change, either) (*Book of Han* 汉书). Obviously, there is certain resemblance between “天” and Christian God. That is why when Matteo Ricci tried to reconcile Christianity with Chinese culture, he pointed out that the concept of “天” in the Chinese classics was referring to God (Ricci, 2001).

In Chinese popular religion, “天” also refers to other concepts such as “天堂” (heavenly hall, paradise) and “天庭” (heavenly court). Whereas in political discourse, “天” is also closely related to the monarch: China was called “天朝上国” (heavenly dynasty of the superior kingdom); Chinese emperor was called “天子” (heavenly son), who was considered the representative of heaven to rule the kingdom; the worship of “天” was

⁶⁷ He mentioned them only when the biblical verses contain such terms, for example, in I Corinthians 15:50. See 5.3.1.3.

the exclusive privilege of emperors and high officials (which was condemned by Hong, see 3.3).

Obviously, the character “天” could activate a series of natively philosophical, religious, and political concepts in the mind of Chinese readers in the nineteenth century. In other words, when they encountered the term “天国” (heavenly kingdom), they were prompted to interpret it according to their knowledge of Chinese culture, instead of constructing a completely new concept on the basis of the biblical verses. Both Liang’s and Hong’s interpretations indicate such a tendency. For example, Liang kept associating it with “天堂” (heavenly hall) in his book, while Hong associated it with the Chinese classics and the political system. However, their foci are different. Liang’s interpretation focuses on the association between the biblical term and Chinese religious concepts. But Hong’s interpretation focuses on a political implication. Hong’s focus led him construct a more deviated interpretation on biblical verses. Revelation became his favorite book of the Bible; the book’s metaphorical descriptions were interpreted in a dramatically different way, and the arrival of a kingdom of God was considered as evidence of the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

The concept of the “kingdom of God”/“kingdom of heaven” embeds a series of biblical doctrines, especially salvation and Millennialism in Revelation. But when it is translated into “天国” or “神国”, it could also activate a series of concepts in existing in Chinese culture. In the end, Hong’s interpretation of “天国” (heaven) becomes a blended one that incorporates both the apocalyptic sense of the biblical concept, and the secular sense associated with Chinese culture.

Regarding the motion of interpretation, Steiner points out that “[n]o language, no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed” (Steiner, 2001, p. 315). When biblical concepts are imported into Chinese culture, both the concepts and Chinese culture undergo changes because of it: the implications of Christian concepts are altered with the switch of linguistic symbols; Chinese readers’ knowledge and views are reshaped due to the encounter of the translated text, which then leads to the construction of new meanings when they try to seek optimal relevance with their cultural background.

5.2 Translation and Society

Translation is a social activity. In other words, translation has potential social effects. The current section is going to investigate the relationship between biblical translation, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and social change in China.

Scholars in translation studies have noticed the relationship between translation and the development or change of society, or at least part of a society. For example, Even-Zohar (1990) points out that, when the literary system of a nation is weak or is at a turning point, translation will occupy the dominant part of the system (p. 47). Other scholars also proposes a similar hypothesis that, the more a nation imports translations, the more unstable a nation becomes (Robinson, 1997, p. 37; Hermans, 1999, pp. 124). All these views point to the same direction, namely the active role of translation in social changes.

The relationship between translation and social change could be described as interactive. That is to say, they mutually influence each other. The interaction can be seen in various historical events. In China, one of the most representative is the peak of translation activities in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Chinese society was extremely unstable due to external threats and internal disputes. Intellectuals translated a large number of texts from outside China, attempting to import new ideas and change society. The translations, in turn, enabled the import of much foreign knowledge and ideas, and contributed profoundly to the cultural and political development of Chinese society. In world history, translation is also closely related to social changes. To name but a few, the biblical translation by such people as Marin Luther and William Tyndale contributed to the construction of national identities and the Protestant Reformation; the translation of Marxism contributed to the spread of Communist insurrection in the twentieth century.

The roles that translation plays in social changes could be divided into two types, one role is subverting existing thoughts and social structures. For example, during the Reformation, the Bible was translated into language that was familiar to ordinary people

(at that time, the church only allowed the Latin version of the Bible), and it served as a way to challenge the ideological monopoly of the Catholic Church (Bassnett, 1996). The other role is to construct or maintain a certain social structure. For example, countries in South America used translation to construct their cultural identity after independence from colonist countries in the twentieth century (Gentzler, 2008). In fact, translation can play different roles in different phases of the social change, or in different communities of the same society. Such is the case of biblical translation in China in the nineteenth century. First, translation generated subversive forces in Chinese society: the missionaries' translations of the Bible brought new knowledge to society; Liang altered it to be more acceptable to Chinese society; Liang's book brought Hong new knowledge, with which Hong gained power over the common people, established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and led a violent insurrection against the Qing monarchy. Secondly, translation served a role of maintaining a certain ideology within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The Biblical text was altered by Hong to meet his political and religious agenda.

However, how do we explain the mechanism between the interaction between translation and social change? Luhmann's social system theory can provide us with a suitable lens to scrutinize the relationship between the translation of the Bible, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and Chinese society.

Luhmann (1995) adopts the concept of a system to investigate social structure and society's operation. This system can be applied on different levels of the social structure. A social system has a relatively independent organizing and operational structure, but at the same time it also needs to interact with the external environment for the sake of evolution. The concept of system originates from biology. A living organism could be seen as a system. It operates indecently, but at the same time it needs to absorb nutrition from the outside, and collaborate or compete with other organisms, which compose an ecological environment. Likewise, society is composed of different kinds of social systems, for example, political system, educational system, legal system, and so on. All are social organisms with their independent laws of operation, but at the same time they are organized together, and operate and interact within the social environment.

The system is different from its environment, that is why it is relatively independent from the latter. But also because of this difference, the gap between the system and the environment leads to irritation. The system needs to deal with such irritation. According to Tyulenev (2012), who applies the concept of Luhmann's social system in translation studies, when a system is irritated, or stimulated by the environment (i.e., any element that does not belong to the system, including other systems), the system either ignores the irritation (which might cause the extinction of the system), or process the irritation in three stages: variation, selection and stabilization, in which way the system evolves (p. 159).

It should be pointed out that a "system" is not an ontological concept. In other words, systems do not exist in the real world, and it is only a conceptual construct for us to observe social structures. In Herman's words, "systems exist only in system theory" (Hermans, 1999, p. 103). Lefevere (1992) adopts the concept of system to discuss social factors of literary translation. The present discussion takes the same perspective as Lefevere's, which is to "make use of systems thinking as a heuristic construct" (Lefevere 1992, p. 12). That is to say, the present research does not attempt to discuss whether or not a social system exists. Instead, the discussion attempts to adopt the concept of a system that emphasizes society in structured and relative terms, and observes the change of a society and its relationship with translation by referring to Luhmann's social system, which regards the system's evolution as a reaction to the irritation from its environment.

As pointed out by Tyulenev (2012), translation plays an important role as mediator between a social system and its environment, because it imports differentiation into the system from the outside (pp. 159-160). It conforms to the view that translation is closely related to social change. The present discussion applies the concept of social system to two social structures, the first is the Chinese society, and the second is the society of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Both of them independently operates with its own norms and laws, and their evolution reveals a dynamic interaction mediated by translation between themselves and the environment.

China in the nineteenth century was a conservative society with a natural economy; that is, it focused more on agriculture than commercial exchange and international trade. It

was ruled by the Qing government. The main ideologies at the time were Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The government was reluctant to communicate with foreign countries. Hence the whole system lacks enough communication with the outside. On the contrary, the environment outside this system is international social structures which were mainly composed of Western countries, which were dominated by a capitalist economy and Christian faith. When international trade and ideologies began to expand to China, the incompatibility between the Chinese social system and the environment was inevitable. Military and trade conflicts became more and more frequent, and caused instability in the Chinese social system. Under this circumstances, translation imported foreign elements from the outside environment: the Protestant missionaries' translation of the Bible.

Because of the differentiation between a system and environment, when a foreign element is imported into the system, it needs to be transformed into an accepted form to be noticed. But also because of this differentiation, when the meaning is reproduced in the social system, it inevitably mutates. In the case of biblical translation, it was not immediately recognized and accepted in the Chinese social system in the early nineteenth century (the society was hostile to foreign elements); instead, it led to a chain of meaning mutation: Morrison's translation of the Bible was incorporated into Liang Fa's interpretation, which transformed the foreign elements into a more acceptable textual form. Liang's new text inspired Hong, who further distorted the meaning, and turned it into the foundation of a new religion and a new kingdom. In other words, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is the mutated form of the foreign elements, that is, the Christian doctrines, that could be recognized in the system and stimulate evolution.

As mentioned before, if a system evolves because of irritation from the environment, it undergoes three stages: variation, selection, and stabilization. Tyulenev (2012) points out that translation only provides options at the first stage, while the system decides how to deal with the options at the other two stages (p. 160). In other words, translation introduces new and various elements into the system to spur changes. But it is the system that determines which elements it is going to keep and how to incorporate.

Such a view allows us to have a broadened perspective when investigating the relationship between biblical translation, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and Chinese

society: biblical translation imported foreign elements into the social system of China, but it was transformed into the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. However, the effect of the biblical translation did not stop with the crackdown of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom by the Qing government. Instead, the translation event stimulated a series of social events. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was merely the result of the first stage, i.e., variation. For the social system of the Chinese society, Hong's kingdom helped it notice the difference between the system itself and the environment. It began to select and stabilize. The result was twofold. On the one hand, it eradicated the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom; on the other, because of the impact of the insurrection, the social system it changed itself correspondingly, so as to stabilize itself and reconcile itself with the environment.

The evolution of the system is manifested in the military development of the government, and it is closely related to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. At the beginning of the war between the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Qing government, the former overwhelmed the latter with Western weapons (guns and artillery). The defeat made the Qing government realize the importance of importing Western weapons. In order to defeat the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the officials of the Qing government, such as Li Hongzhang (李鸿章), Zeng Guofan (曾国藩), and Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠), purchased Western weapons, hired foreign troops, and established the Anqing Interior Arsenal (安庆内军械所), which was the first military enterprise in China. It became the prologue of the famous "Self-Strengthening Movement" (洋务运动), which was a movement for institutional reform for China's modernization in the late nineteenth century. In other words, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was the realization of the irritation of the environment to the system, and it stimulated the system to notice the difference between itself and the environment. In the processes of selection and stabilization, the system rejected the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, but chose to improve itself in terms of military aspects (and later institutional aspects). In the end, the system evolved.

The point here is not to prove that biblical translation and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom are the most critical elements for the evolution of the social system of China. What the research intends to point out is that the effect of translation on society is not

limited to a single translation event. If we investigate the relationship from the perspective of social system, we can find out that translation initiates a series of profound and continuous effects on the development of a society. Translation imports difference and variation into the system, and the system reacts to it and evolves itself. During the process, it is often the needs of the target society that determine which and how texts are translated and received. The effect of translation is not determined by a few individuals' will. Morrison, Liang Fa, and Gützlaff imported translations for the sake of preaching the Christian faith. Hong altered the translation and established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom with the purpose of overthrowing the Qing government. But in the end, it led to the evolution of the Chinese social system by modernizing the government both militarily and institutionally.

In addition, as pointed out by Tyulenev (2012), although some of the differences might be rejected by the social system, they leave traces and may be activated again later (p. 165). In the case of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, although it was crushed by the Qing government, it left traces for subsequent revolutions. The traces were rediscovered respectively by Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong. According to Golden (2000), both of them was inspired by Hong Xiuquan and his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom as the pioneer of revolution in China (p. 212).

The concept of social system can also be applied to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Hong established an unique kingdom on the basis of his interpretation of Christian doctrines. The kingdom itself could also be regarded as an independent system, and the environment was mainly composed of the Chinese society and international society. The main difference of the social system of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the social system of China is that the former ceased to exist. What is the characteristic of the Taiping social system that leads it to extinction, and what is its relationship with translation?

The Taiping social system is also stimulated by the environment. The first is the military threat from the Qing government, and the second is the ideological impact from Western missionaries. The former is obviously rejected by the Taiping social system. The present discussion is now going to focus on the impact of Western missionaries. As mentioned before, soon after the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the challenges

posed by the Western missionaries made Hong realize the difference between his doctrines and that of Christianity. In other words, this irritation makes the Taiping social system realize the difference between itself and the environment. The publication of the authorized Taiping version of the Bible then incorporated more books from the Bible. It appears that the Taiping social system imports the difference. However, the fourth chapter has pointed out that Hong made extensive alterations to the Bible, and the result is that the authorized Taiping version is not so much importing more Christian doctrines as conforming to Hong's interpretations. In other words, the differences are not imported, in fact, they are completely rejected and ignored.

The reason is that when new norms from translation is established within a social system, it can affect subsequent translations. The effect could be either linguistic-related or content-related. In the case of the Taiping social system, the effect is more related to the content. The translation of the Bible helped Hong establish the interpretative norms within the kingdom, but it also limited the interpretation of subsequent translations. Therefore, when the challenge to Taiping doctrines occurred and translations continued to be imported, the norms regulated the interpretation, and prevented the social system from realizing its difference from the environment.

As mentioned before, the gap between a system and its environment stimulates the former to evolve. But when the system ignores the gap and the irritation, it would not be compatible with the environment and would then cease to exist, just like what would happen when the environment is not suitable for a living organism. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is a case in point. Although the kingdom was established with foreign ideology, and also imported the Western weapons at the beginning, it ignored the stimulation of this Western influence and refused to evolve afterwards. This ignorance is manifested in two aspects, the first is Hong's alteration of the Bible to maintain Taiping doctrines instead of Christian ones, and the second is the refusal to make progress in terms of diplomacy and economy. Diplomatically, when foreign countries attempted to establish trade relations with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, it held a condescending attitude and treated foreign countries like dependent states. Such an attitude and the divergence from Christian doctrines led Western countries to give up any possible cooperation with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and turned to assist the Qing government in the crackdown. In addition, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom also

refused to carry out economical or institutional reform. Although Hong Rengan designed a grand plan for economic and political reform for the kingdom in his *New Essay on Economics and Politics* (资政新篇),⁶⁸ it was never put into effect. As a result, the Taiping social system completely ignored the external irritation and refused to evolve: in terms of religion and culture, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was against both Chinese culture and Christianity, and it resulted in rejection from both side;⁶⁹ in terms of economy and diplomacy, it stuck to its own way of operation without learning from the outside. In the end, the social system was incompatible with the environment and ultimately it ceased to exist.

This research illustrates the dynamic interaction between translation and society, and argues that they mutually influence each other. Translation is both the cause and the effect of changes in a society. First, an unstable society makes it easy for the importation of translation, and hence foreign ideas. The target society reshapes the ideas, constructs new meanings and power, which then turns them into a force of change. Meanwhile, society also changes its attitude and norms when interpreting new translations.

In addition, translation does not guarantee a predestined way of interpretation, because the meaning and effect are determined according to the needs of the target society. In other words, after a translation is introduced, it is very often the readers, rather than the translators, who continue to determine its meaning. The translation proper itself is merely the first stage of the encounter between a foreign text and the target society. As social system theory indicates, the structural difference between the system and its environment means that foreign elements undergo transformation in the importing process (Luhmann, 1995, p. 180). Such a transformation is realized both linguistically and culturally. As shown in Chapter Four, meanings in the translation could mutate into

68 This could also be regarded as a form of “translation”. Hong Rengan lived in Hong Kong for many years, and witnessed the industrialization of Western society. Based on the modernized structure of capitalist countries, he designed a comprehensive social reform for the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in his *New Essay on Economics and Politics* (资政新篇).

69 In an essay to encourage the Chinese people to fight against the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Zeng Guofan (曾国藩) stood on the moral grounds of defending Chinese tradition, and called for war against it. The essay attracted many students to enroll into his military force.

radically different ones in a new cultural background, which would then generate various ways of interpretation.

5.3 Deconstructing Translation

The translation of the Bible into Chinese and the subsequent interpretations by Liang and Hong illustrate the after effect of translation. It also prompts us to re-investigate the concept of translation.

Traditional views of translation regard the relationship between an original text and the translated text in terms of a dichotomy. The original is regarded as the dominant text, while the translated is considered as the derived. As a result, the task of the translator is to faithfully maintain the original contents and style in the translation. In addition, translation is regarded as imitation, “belles infidèles” (Chesterman & Wagner, 2002, p. 16), and the translator is described as “dancing on Ropes with fetter’d leg” (Dryden, 2004, p. 39)... all these views regard the translation as the subordinate of the original text.

However, deconstructionist studies prompt us to rethink the dichotomy between the original text and the translation. Benjamin (2000) regards translation as the afterlife of the original text. The translation continues the life of the original text to the readers one generation after another. If it is not for the translation, the original text would cease to exist in history. Therefore, it is not so much to say that the original text brings life to the translation as that the translation resurrects the original. Derrida (1985) further shakes the metaphysical foundation of the relationship between the original text and the translation. His deconstructionist view denies the stability of meaning. The original text is not static, every reading is a new construction of meaning, and it could be denied and reconstructed in the next act of reading. Translation is a magnified process of constructing meanings of a text: the translator reads the text, forms the meaning in his mind, organizes it in linguistic forms, and writes it down as the translation. The essential process is no different from any act of reading. Hence Steiner (2001) points out that “inside or between languages, human communication equals translation” (p.

27). From such a perspective, there is no static original text or translation, and any act of reading could therefore be regarded as translating.

More importantly, in the process of interlingual translation, due to the switching of linguistic codes, the elements of the target culture are inevitably blended into the text, making the meaning more complex and intangible. As we can see in the previous two sections, cultural background provides the knowledge basis for interpretation, and the texts that bring impact to the target society might neither be the original text nor the first version of translation, but the texts that have been interpreted several times.

Relating to the current case of the biblical translation and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, this section intends to touch upon two issues, the first is the form of translation, and the second is the power of translation.

In terms of the form of translation, this research discovered that the translation of the Bible underwent a series of alteration after it was published by Morrison in China. The texts include the new version by Gützlaff (retranslated on the basis of Morrison's translation), Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, and the two versions of the Bible published in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Except for Morrison's and Gützlaff's translations, the other three texts were altered and completed in the target society by native readers who are not translators. These texts neither belong to the native culture nor the original culture. But they are all "writing that is inspired by the encounter with other tongues" (Simon, 2006, p. 17). These texts were closely related to their original translation, but the translators did not always have the final say: Liang's book was written with the guidance of Morrison and Mile; but when it came to the Taiping Bible, it was purely completed by the target reader, Hong. Discussion on these new texts can help us reconsider the definition of translation.

Tymoczko (2007) criticizes traditional concepts of translation in Western theories, because they limit the range of and neglect many marginalized phenomena of translation. Studies in post-colonialism have found different forms of new texts that occur in target cultures when they are stimulated by foreign texts (e.g., Wakabayashi, 1998; Gentzler, 2008). These new texts do not conform to the traditional definitions of translation, but they do have close relationship with translation.

In order to avoid the tension between a tight definition and the elusive and various textual forms related to translation, Toury (2012) proposes a working hypothesis. He suggests suspending a definition of translation, and turning to focus on the texts that are considered translation in a target culture (p. 27). In that way we can better investigate how translation functions in a society. Pseudo-translation is such a case in point. This form of text is created in the target culture in the guise of translation, by way of conforming to the norms of a translation such as the stylistic features and print layouts. Although there is no interlingual communication, and no original texts, pseudo-translation should also be studied, because by studying their textual patterns, we can discover the translation norms of a certain society, so as to understand the cultural needs, textual selection, readers' expectations, and so on.

According to Toury (2012), when a text is regarded as a translation, there are three postulates. First, there is an original text. But the original text might not be real, hence it could merely be an assumed one. Such is the case in pseudo-translation. Second, there is transfer. In other words, there are some elements transferred from the original to the translation, such as meaning, linguistic form, and thoughts. Third, there is a certain relationship between the original and the translation, making people realize that the two texts are related (pp. 28-31). Toury's working hypothesis releases us from the prescriptive definitions of translation, suspends the limitations, and encourages us to study any texts that are considered translation in a certain target culture, identify the norms, and discover the function of translation in that society.

However, Toury's hypothesis ignores certain texts that are not considered translation in a society, but also function because of translation. Just like a translation in a culture might be a pseudo-translation, a text that is not considered a translation might be in fact a text that involves an original text and interlingual transfer. In the case of the Taiping Bible, it was altered on the basis of Gützlaff's version, which was a translation of the Bible. The Taiping Bible meets all Toury's criteria: first, there is an original for the Taiping Bible, namely the original texts of the Bible that Gützlaff's version (i.e., Taiping Bible's prototype) translated from.⁷⁰ Second, there is transfer from the original texts of

⁷⁰ The Protestants refer to many versions of the Bible when translating it including Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions. Hence there cannot be one text, but many texts.

the Bible. Despite Hong's alterations, the whole structure of the Taiping Bible and most of the verses were translated from the Bible. Third, there is a translation relationship between the Taiping Bible (based on Gützlaff's translation) and the original Bible. However, although the three postulates are realized, the Taiping Bible was not considered a translation in the kingdom. On the contrary, Hong considered it a holy book directly sent from heaven. Although he pointed out in his earliest works that the Bible was "foreign countries' holy scriptures" (番国圣经) (Hong, 1979, p. 17), he did not consider it a translation. In addition, He tried to argue that the doctrines was Chinese tradition (Hong, 1979, pp. 16-22). Hence he would have been more inclined to forge Bible's connection with Chinese culture, rather than emphasizing that it was a translation from the outside. After the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, he kept emphasizing that the Bible was the only correct book in the world (e.g., in 太平天日 (*The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*)). According to the interview by Joseph Edkins with Hong Rengan, the Bible was considered the superior authentic book in the kingdom (Edkins, 1860).

In addition, even when they found that the verses in the Bible conflicted with Taiping doctrines, neither Yang Xiuqing nor Hong Xiuquan blame the problem on translation. When the Western missionaries challenged the doctrines with specific verses, this led Yang to issue an order to alter the Bible; he could have explained that the alteration was to correct translation errors, but he merely mentioned that the Bible "was falsely recorded" (有错记) (*Heavenly Father's Holy Edicts*, 2004, p. 329). The word "recorded" implied that the Bible was originally written in Chinese. Moreover, when Hong altered the Bible, he had never claimed that he was correcting any translation mistakes. Instead, he treated the verses like a book originally written in Chinese. Such an attitude is best realized in his endeavor to replace taboo characters and his attempt to discover Chinese characters in biblical verses that hint at his identity. The present research cannot prove whether or not Hong and Yang truly believed that the Bible was originally written in Chinese, or that they deliberately ignored that fact that the Bible that they had published was a translation. Nonetheless, no publications in the kingdom claimed that the Taiping Bible was a translation. In fact, Hong's attitude towards the

Bible and the way that he treated it both implied to the target audience that the Bible was originally written in Chinese.

To sum up, the Taiping Bible was not regarded as a translation, but it conforms to the three postulates of Toury's hypothesis. In other words, although the text is not regarded as a translation in the target culture, it could still be a translation.

In fact, both pseudo-translation or the Taiping Bible reflect translation norms. In the case of the pseudo-translation, the target culture was more open to translation, hence it is more possible for new thoughts to be accepted in the guise of translation. On the other hand, in the case of the Taiping Bible, the target culture was hostile to translated texts, hence the translation could only be localized and be circulated in forms that were more acceptable to the target audience. In the end, it was even treated as an originally written text.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, traditional translation theories regard translation as the derivative work of the original, and the original holds a privilege status. However, this research illustrates an alternative situation. When the target culture gradually accepts the translation, and establishes the unique interpretation, the translation might surpass the original, and become the orthodox text. Under such a circumstance, the dichotomy between the original and the translation ceases to exist. Both of them stand on the equal line of competition, and the target culture determines which one is the orthodox.

This leads to the second issue of the section, namely the relationship between translation and power. The notion of power is two-fold here. The first is the power relationship between the original and the translation: the translation is not the subordinate of the original; instead, the translation could subvert the original, and becomes the new original. The second is the interpretative power of the ruling individuals and community.

Power via translation is vividly shown in Yang's reply to the Western missionaries and Hong's emphasis on his correctness in the annotations. Yang assumed that the Western missionaries had not understood the Bible properly. Hong condemned the Western missionaries as having misunderstood the Christian doctrines. Hong's attitude might

appear arrogant and fanatical; after all, the source of the Taiping doctrines is Christianity from the West. But this reflects the relationship between translation and power. When a translation is interpreted and altered by an individual or a community who holds power, he/she has the privilege to determine the orthodox meaning, hence an altered translation might replace the original and become the accepted truth. Such phenomenon is not uncommon in other translation events.

A similar case is the translation of “democracy” studied by Lianeri (2002). She discovers that the modern interpretation of democracy is completely different from its Greek source. During the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, intellectuals had rediscovered the concept of “democracy” from Greece. Due to the industrial revolution and the rise of the new class of capitalists, they adjusted the connotation of the concept to meet their new political agenda. Translation therefore became a subtle way for them to propagate their political philosophy. In the end, the new meaning of “democracy” completely subverted the original. The original meaning of “democracy” was even believed to be jeopardizing the spirit of the concept. In this case, the original text had no authority at all, a so-called “correct” version is the interpretation that conforms to the dominant ideology. Therefore, translation becomes the realization of ideological power.

Traditional views of translation consider the translation as the derivative of the original. However, if we expand the notions of “text”, “original”, and “translation” to any intellectual construct, we would find that the whole history of Christianity and the Bible is indeed a process of continuous replacement of the original with translations.

At the very source of the Christian faith, the Hebrew Bible had been a “translation” in the broad sense: the early narratives, such as Eden, the Great Flood, and the Babel could be found in contemporary or earlier sagas and myths in the region of Mesopotamia (for example, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which is older than the Hebrew Bible). The Hebrew Bible also recorded the rise and fall of the Hebrew nation, and interprets it as the will of Hebrew God. Such an interpretation is already a translation of the historical events.

Secondly, Christianity is the re-translation and replacement of its original, Judaism. When Jesus and his apostles preached their doctrines, they were interpreting the

doctrines of Judaism, and they were initially condemned as heretical. But as the interpretations were gradually accepted and became dominant, they surpassed the doctrines of Judaism and evolved into Christian doctrines.

Third, the formation of Paul's letters and the gospels was the translation of Jesus' teaching as well. Jesus did not leave any written documents. Believers could only organize and record his teachings by way of legends and oral accounts. In other words, the original was missing, and the believers could only reconstruct (or construct) Jesus' teaching by way of their own interpretations.

Fourth, the canonization of the books in the New Testament is in fact the competition between the "translations" of Jesus' teachings. Early Christianity did not have a widely accepted list of Christian books. Different churches supported different doctrines and adopted different books, and some of the books conflicted with each other. It took almost three hundred years for the bishops to settle on the 27 books now included in the New Testament. The main criterion for the selection is that they were the most popular books that were in accordance with the accepted doctrines of the church. The other books were considered apocrypha (books from dubious sources) or even pseudepigrapha (fake books). In other words, the reason why the 27 books were included in the New Testament is not that they came directly from the original teaching of Jesus (which had not existed in written form), but that they conformed to the ideology of the church.

Fifth, the authoritative nature of the Vulgate Bible in Latin is also a case of the suppression of translation over its original. After Christianity was authorized as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the Latin version of the Bible became dominant. As observed by Ehrman (2005), it later became the only legitimate version to be used in churches, and some bishops even believed that the Vulgate Bible was the only correct version, while the Hebrew and Greek versions were considered heretical.⁷¹ In addition, after the invention of printing, when translators wanted to print the Greek version of the New

71 The authoritative nature of the Vulgate Bible also influenced the Chinese translation of the Bible. When the Jesuits preached in China, the Catholic Church did not allow them to translate the Bible into other languages. Therefore the Jesuits in China never officially translated the Bible in China. Some individuals attempted to translate it into Chinese, for example, Jean Basset translated almost the whole New Testament in the sixteenth century, and Louis Antoine de Poirot translated the whole Bible in the eighteenth century; but they were not supported by the church, and neither of them published the translation officially.

Testament (previous versions had been hand written as manuscripts), the translator Desiderius Erasmus even referred to the Vulgate Bible to re-translate some of the missing yet controversial verses back into the Greek (the original language of the New Testament) (pp. 76-79). The status of the original and the translation was completely reversed.

Finally, after the Reformation, Protestants emphasized the return to the original (Hebrew and Greek Bible), so as to get rid of the interpretation autocracy on the Bible imposed by the Catholic church. But the return to the original only led to more interpretations and disputes, i.e., more translations. The various sects of Protestantism all claimed that their interpretation was the correct one. One of the most representative example is the dispute on the concept of “baptism” between Baptists and other Protestant sects.

By reviewing the process of the development of the Christian doctrines and the translation of the Bible, we can see that they all reflect the replacement of the original with translations. The *original* is not restricted to written words, such is the case of the Hebrew and the Greek versions of the Bible, but it also includes the historical events, the legends in other cultures, the teachings in the oral accounts, and written letters. All of them are translated and retranslated by the target audience.

Returning to the case of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, one of the most pertinent and ironic examples we can find is the interpretation of the kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven. Christianity does not consider it a kingdom in physical form on the earth, but a spiritual concept referring to the reign of God. Hong’s interpretation of it as a kingdom built on earth was refuted by Christian missionaries. But if we investigate the origin of the concept, we would find an interesting fact: Hong’s interpretation is closer to the original meaning in the ancient Hebrew context. Although the phrase “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven” can only be found in the New Testament, similar ideas can be found in Hebrew literature. According to Myers (1987), The earliest idea of the kingdom of God was related to their land. The Hebrew people worshiped their God (as opposed to gods worshipped by other nations), and considered their land a result of God’s promise. Hence, extending their boundaries of the land would be the realization of the reign of God and the manifestation of the triumph of God over other gods. It

naturally follows that a kingdom of the Hebrew people would refer to the kingdom of God. However, due to invasion by alien nations, the prospect of establishing the kingdom became vague. The suppression of the Hebrew people turned the prospect into a spiritual ideal, i.e., the anticipation that one day God would rule the world and release them from the dominion by other nations. At last, when the ideal was further reinterpreted in Christianity, it became a spiritual idea that had nothing to do with an earthly kingdom (pp. 624-625).

Therefore, if we regard the Hebrew conception of the land of God as the original, the Christian concept of the kingdom of God would be a completely subversive translation, whereas Hong's interpretation as an earthly kingdom is closer to its Hebrew original. But it was the latter that was considered heretical. Nonetheless, this section is not trying to prove that Hong's interpretation is correct while the Christian interpretation is wrong. The point is that the correctness or authoritativeness of a translation has more to do with interpretative power than with the original source.

Another example is the verses in the Bible that describe Jesus as sitting on the right hand side of God. The Christian interpretation is that it implies the divinity of God, while Hong's interpretation is that it implies the difference of Jesus from God.

Regarding the different interpretation of the same verses, St. Augustine's opinion indicates the influence of power in interpretation and translation. In early Christianity, people were confused with the biblical verses that conflicted with the doctrines taught in the church. St. Augustine's answer was that whenever the verses contradicted with the doctrines, the words should be read metaphorically (see Lefevere, 1992, p. 7). Fundamentally, such an opinion implies the dominance of ideology in interpreting a text. After all, whether a text is metaphorical or literal could only be determined by the target audience, especially the individual or the community who holds power. Hence the text (a verse or a translation) that is considered correct and orthodox is the approved one in the target audience, and other possibilities are very often suppressed. In the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Hong held absolute power, therefore his interpretation and his Bible was considered the authoritative one, whilst the Christian interpretation was considered incorrect. In other words, the original does not determine the meaning, the

audience determines which meaning they choose to believe in, and the selection is very often based on the dominant ideology.

In fact, if we attempt to trace back to the very origin of an original, we would find that the original could be an illusion as well. Because any original text has already been a translation. For example, the earlier legends and sagas that the Hebrew people encountered before the formation of the Old Testament were told and recorded by ancient people as well, hence they are also translations of their experiences. Likewise, the original meaning of the “kingdom of God” in the mind of the ancient Hebrews is also a translation of their view of the world. Even for a literary work that is considered an original work, it is questionable to say that it is that *original*. After all, the act of writing could be seen as a translation of the author’s experiences and thinking. In addition, the formation of a so-called original work might also be influenced by other works as well. For example, Dimock (2006) notices that Thoreau’s works, such as *Resistance to Civil Government* (also known as *Civil Disobedience*), was influenced by the Indian epic *Bhagavad Gita*. More importantly, not only did Thoreau’s works influence American society (e.g., Martin Luther King and the protests against the Vietnam War), they also influenced Gandhi, and inspired the latter to propose nonviolent civil disobedience, which had a dramatic impact on Indian society (pp. 15-16). In other words, the translation even influenced back to its source of original. Thoreau's works are written by himself, but they are influenced with other works as well and could be seen as a form of translation.

Therefore, not only is the meaning of an original unstable, the original work itself could be seen as a translation of other works as well. Hence a text does not hold onto an original or a source, it only reveals the intertextuality with other texts. The interpretation of the Bible in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, as well as the development of Christianity and the Bible, vividly reveal what Derrida (1985) refers to as trace: meaning is a continuous chain of signifiers, the so-called original text or original meaning are unstable (172); therefore, what exists is merely a series of interpretations and translations. In other words, an original can be seen as a hidden form of translation.

The sections in this chapter touch upon the topics of the power of translation, especially the subversion of translation. But it does not intend to provide any ethical judgement on

translation. It does not intend to imply that Christianity deceived the people and subverted Judaism, or that Hong's interpretation is a return to God's teaching or an improvement of Christian doctrines. What it intends to emphasize is that meaning flows with the process of human civilization, and translation is the major medium to witness such development. Translation is not a derivative of an original. The dichotomy does not exist, because the original is also a hidden form of translation.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This research discusses the relationship between the Chinese translations of the Bible and the altered versions of the Bible published in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. It reveals the complex process and resulting effects when a translation is introduced into a target culture: when a text is translated, it might stimulate a chain of interpretation, retranslation, alteration, generate a series of new texts, and provoke unanticipated social effects.

The focus of this research is on the relationship between the translation of the Bible and its influence on the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The subjects of the research include Morrison's and Gützlaff's translations of the Bible, Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, and two versions of the Taiping Bible. Morrison's translation of the Bible did not influence Hong directly, but via two related texts: Liang Fa's *Good Words to Admonish the Age* and Gützlaff's translation. Liang's book conflated biblical verses (excerpted from Morrison's translation) with Liang's own articles. It inspired Hong and converted him to a believer of God. Gützlaff's version was a retranslation of the Bible based on Morrison's version. Hong published part of this version but later made extensive alterations to it.

This research firstly investigated the relationship between Morrison's translation of the Bible and Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*. Via analyzing the contents and the structure of Liang's book, this research discovered that Liang's explanation of the doctrines deviated from Christian doctrines. His explanation and selection of biblical verses conveyed messages different from the ones that could be inferred from reading the Christian Bible. The reason for the divergence is two-fold, the first is the misleading and obscure translation of Morrison's translation, and the second is Liang's misleading narrative influenced by his cultural and knowledge background.

Then, the research analyzed the relationship between Liang's book and Hong's faith. By comparing Liang's and Hong's interpretations of important Christian concepts, it was discovered that Hong further interpreted them by incorporating more Confucian

elements, hence further deviating from Christian teachings. The influence of Confucianism is particularly obvious in his early works on the topics of God, the ideal society, and the identity of Jesus. There are also influence of Buddhism in Hong's interpretation of certain terms, such as heaven and the devil.

Hong's early interpretation was further developed and strengthened after reading the full version of the Bible translated by Gützlaff. His interpretation of Christian doctrines then incorporated more political elements. By discussing the contemporary social context and Hong's political ideal, this research speculated that the reading of the Bible, especially the book of Revelation, provided Hong with more interpretive gap to fill in and explain his political agenda.

The textual analysis mainly was mainly focused on the comparison between Gützlaff's translation and the two versions of the Taiping Bible. The difference found in the texts directly reveals how the translation was censored and how the meanings mutated after different phases of interpretation.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom published two versions of the Bible, the first version was published immediately after the establishment of the kingdom, while the authorized version was published ten years later. The selection of the biblical books reflects Hong's interpretation of the Christian doctrines. The first version of the Taiping Bible included the first six books of the Old Testament and only one book of the New Testament. In other words, the books from the Old Testament account for the major part of the first version of the Taiping Bible. This corresponds with the attitude of Hong, who favored the Old Testament, and considered the doctrines in the New Testament not suitable to Chinese society.

However, the authorized Taiping Bible included the entire New Testament while keeping the same portion of the Old Testament. The focus on the New Testament was mainly caused by the challenges raised by Christian missionaries in 1854. The doctrines in the New Testament could jeopardize the foundation of Hong's faith, therefore he extensively altered the contents and annotated it throughout.

In terms of Hong's alterations, the research discovered three categories of alteration: grammatical, political, and nonpolitical. Hong's focus and strategy of alteration is very

different between the two versions. In the first version of the Taiping Bible, there are relatively few alterations. Some grammatical discrepancies were found, but they do not significantly change the meaning of the verses, let alone the doctrines. The only political alteration in the first version is the replacement of “魂” (soul) with the neologism “云人”, so as to avoid the component “鬼” (evil) in the character, and to imply that Hong’s kingdom is the kingdom of heaven without any evil existing in it. In terms of nonpolitical alteration, Hong deleted the verses in Genesis 19:31-38, because they described incest between Lot and his daughters. But the alteration is not consistent. Grammatical alterations are mainly found in the first few chapters of Genesis, and other verses on incest were not altered or deleted. To sum up, the first version of the Taiping Bible is not significantly different from Gützlaff’s version.

The alterations and annotations in the authorized Taiping version, on the other hand, is very consistent and extensive. In contrast to the first version, there is no grammatical alterations throughout the authorized Taiping version. Hong’s alterations primarily concern the political aspect. The research divided the political censorship into six categories, and discussed how Hong altered and annotated the verses to make them accord with his own interpretation. They reflect his attempt to maintain his discursive power in religious and political issues. In terms of nonpolitical censorship, this research reveals Hong’s attempt to censor sexual content and certain behavior of the ancestors, so as to tally with Chinese traditions. It indicates that although he attacked the political system of the Chinese authorities, when facing ethical problems, he became the defender of Chinese tradition, and censored certain issues related to ethics and customs in the Bible.

By investigating the differences between the missionaries’ translations of the Bible and the Taiping Bible, we are able to discover the dynamic relationship between translation, culture, and society. This helps us to explore translation according to three aspects, namely translation and culture, translation and society, and translation and the concept of translation.

In terms of translation and culture, the research took the prospective of relevance theory, and tried to explain why the biblical terms was interpreted differently in Chinese culture. When the Bible entered China, readers’ interpretation would be associated with

and restricted by their knowledge background. In other words, their cultural background would filter and reshape the foreign text and blend the new concept with the existing concepts that Chinese readers knew. In addition, the missionaries' translations of the key terms “上帝” (God) and “天国” (kingdom of God), could easily activated a series of existing terms in China, prompting Chinese readers to associate the biblical terms with old ones. The interpretations of the Christian terms by Liang and Hong indicate strong influence with the Chinese culture. In their interpretations, the terms became a mixture with Christian and Chinese elements. The new interpretations by Liang and Hong reflect the conflict and mergence of cultural elements when a foreign text is placed in a target culture.

In terms of translation and society, this research discussed the function of translation in social change. Translation and the development of a society are mutually the cause and result of each other. Translation can either subvert or strengthen a certain social structure, and it is also the realization of it. When discussing the relationship among biblical translation, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and the Chinese society, the research adopted Luhmann's concept of social system and the framework of system evolution, and investigated the social functions of translation. Translation is the medium of the environment to irritate a social system by importing foreign elements, making the system realize the difference between itself and the environment. The system chooses to notice the difference and evolve itself, or ignores the difference. This research regarded Chinese society and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom respectively as two social systems, and studied how translation functions in the two systems. In the case of the social system of China, the biblical translation and its mutated form existing in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom made the system realize its difference from the environment. The system processed the irritation, and evolved itself in the end. Whereas in the case of the social system of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, translation helped the formation of the system and the establishment of new norms within it. But the norms restricted the subsequent evolution of the system. The social system ignored the outside irritation, and ceased to exist when it was found to be incompatible with the environment (the Chinese social system and international social systems). In both cases, the selection and the process of the imported new elements via translation were determined by the social

system. In other words, the meaning and the function initiated by the translation was not merely determined by any individual translators.

Because of the different meanings and functions that a translation could generate in a target society, the last section of Chapter Five discussed the concept of translation. After the Bible was translated by Morrison and imported into Chinese society, it stimulated the formation of Liang's *Good Words to Admonish the Age*, which incorporated both translation and original writing; it also inspired Hong to reinterpret Christian doctrines, and later even alter the new translation by Gützlaff to conform to his understanding. In both cases, the missionary translators had no final say on the meaning, and the readers determined the interpretation of the translation. Both Liang's book and the Taiping Bible are new texts stimulated by the encounter between foreign languages, but created in the target culture. This section touched upon two issues, the first was the form of translation, and the second was the power of translation. In terms of the form of translation, the research challenged Toury's working hypothesis of translation. Toury proposes that any texts in the culture that is considered translation should be studied in translation studies. But this research discovers that the texts that are not considered translation could also be translation and worth studying in translation studies. In addition, in the case of the Taiping Bible, all of Toury's three postulates of the translation hypothesis apply, but the text was not considered as a translation in the target culture. Hence it reflects the need to further explore the notion of translation.

The section continued with the topic of the power of translation. By power it refers both to the power in manipulating and determining the meaning of a translation, and the power relationship between a translation and an original. This research pointed out that the individual or the community in power determines the meaning and the status of a translation. When a translation or a further interpretation of it is considered correct and orthodox, it might surpass other versions, even the original text, and become the only authoritative text. In other words, a translation might replace its original and become the new original text. Such is the case of Hong's Taiping Bible. In addition, the whole history of Christianity also reflects a similar situation. Therefore, translation is not merely the subordinate of an original, and translation is not only the afterlife of an original, it might even depose the status of the original. The section continued by pointing out that even the existence of an original text is an illusion. There is not an

absolute and static meaning and an absolute original source. By referring to the example of the Taiping Bible and the development of Christianity and the formation of the Bible, the research argued that so-called original texts are merely hidden forms of translation. All texts are translations of others, and the dominant ideology determines which text is correct. In fact, the development of human civilization can be seen as a process of new translations replacing old ones.

Regarding the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Bible, some scholars argue that Hong Xiuquan merely used religion as a camouflage for his insurrection. The research does not intend to justify whether or not Hong believed in the doctrines that he proposed. Instead, the research attempts to disclose the mutual influence between translation, culture, and society. Translation is like transplanting a foreign organ into a host body; afterwards both the organ and the body undergo changes. The final result is determined by the changes on both sides. Likewise, when a translated text is transplanted into the host culture, both the translation and the host culture change each other and change themselves. In the end, both evolve due to the new stimulation. Translation not only brings new life to old texts, it brings new possibilities to the target society.

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