Contents

Special Topic: China Studies

1 The Sino-US Relations and Alliance Structures in Northeast Asia
   Shen Ding-qi

28 An Advocacy of Trade Liberalization between China and MRB Countries
   Yin Xing-min

54 Can Democracy Save China's Environment?
   Zheng Shi-ping

83 Action on Ageing in China: A Multi-Perspective Analysis
   Jing Yu-jie

104 Collecting and Collection: Local Chinese Culture in Robert Morrison's Dictionary
   Si Jie

Articles

123 The Constructional Meaning and the Semantic Make-up of the Chinese Bil-construction
   Zhang Ning-ning

Book Reviews

150 He Jun-fang, Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology
   by Naran Bilik

159 Zhou Bao-hua, Effects Research: The History of Ideas of Media Audience Relationship
   by Shen Guo-lin

164 Jack Linchuan Qiu, Working-Class Network Society: Communication Technology and the Information Have-Less in Urban China
   by Deng Jian-gao

169 Sun De-jang, Multi-foot Balancing and a “Quasi-Alliance” Theory
   by Wu Cheng-jiu

New Books

Within the Academe

175 The Inaugural Conference of the RIETEH at Fudan University Held in Changting, Zhejiang
   Xi Tian-yang

Contributors
目录

中国学研究专题
1 中美关系与东北亚同盟结构 / 朱丁立
28 中国与奥大利亚汉语贸易自由化的倡议 / 彭子民
54 民主能否挽救中国的人权 / 汤世平
83 中国的人权状况：一个角度的分析 / 郭文晶
104 汇字与汇词：马礼逊《字典》中的中国地方文化 / 刘佳

其他文章
123 汉语“把”字句的语义学与语义构成 / 张宁宁

书评
150 中国语言人类学的突破与局限——评何俊英《语言人类学教程》／纳日碧力戈
159 我们为何如此关心媒体效应——评周晓虹《媒体研究：人类传播观念与行为的变迁》／沈国瑜
164 数字鸿沟：差序视野下的城市中的传播技术和信息贫困者／邓建国
169 理论与历史的结合——评孙德刚《多元平衡与“准联盟”理论研究》／吴建秋

172 书讯

学术通讯
175 复旦大学经济思想与经济史研究所创立会议在浙江长兴召开／姜天祥
179 作者简介
Collecting and Collection: Local Chinese Culture in Robert Morrison's Dictionary

Si Jia

Abstract: Taking the personal experience of Robert Morrison into account, this paper focuses on the rapport between the author and his works. As the first Protestant missionary to China, Robert Morrison endeavored to learn the Chinese language and to collect local cultural information, so as to encyclopedically present his knowledge of Chinese through the language reference books he compiled. This paper examines the range of linguistic registers of the represented examples from Morrison's dictionaries, so as to discuss the way in which various registers are combined into the text and how they are related with different social arenas. Placing Morrison’s works in a wider social and intellectual context, this paper also discusses issues of cultural exchange between China and early nineteenth-century Europe.

Key words: English-Chinese dictionary; Robert Morrison; Protestant missionaries; local Chinese culture

The early nineteenth century was a unique era, during which Western scholars and missionaries were attempting to penetrate the pre-existing cultural barriers that divided China from the West for the purpose of conveying a comprehensive range of information back to the Western audience. Early Protestant missionaries in China, though experiencing difficulties in terms of living conditions and cultural adaptation, never quit their work of collecting local social information. Their practice can be revealed from the reference books that the Protestant missionaries compiled, in which Chinese local customs, indigenous gods, and social norms were freshly introduced and some of them fully discussed.

Due to the fact that early Protestant missionaries in China were discouraged from making contacts with local people, most of them ran some risk to study the Chinese language. Robert Morrison (1782-1834), the first Protestant missionary in China, viewed the task of compiling dictionaries and reference materials as a struggle to acquire a better knowledge of the Chinese (Brookhall 53). Therefore, dictionaries became specialized tools for making fundamental cultural translations, in contrast to the commonsense view that they are merely language learning tools.

Based on this argument, this paper will examine both the linguistic and the cultural contexts of these dictionaries. In Morrison’s eyes, learning vernacular and spoken language, instead of focusing on written works, was more helpful for understanding what he saw was the real Chinese culture. Therefore, when he was gathering linguistic materials for his works, he paid special attention to sources such as local sayings, proverbs, vernacular fictions, secular beliefs, and daily customs. This paper will examine the range of linguistic registers of the represented examples from Morrison’s dictionaries, so as to discuss the way in which various registers are combined into the text and how they are related with different social arenas. Placing Morrison’s works in a wider social and intellectual context, this paper also discusses issues of cultural exchange between China and early nineteenth-century Europe.

1. From Religious to Cultural Practice

Robert Morrison was appointed by the London Missionary Society as the first Protestant missionary to China. (1) He arrived at Canton in 1807; however, about one year later, because of the lack of a base for conducting missionary work, Morrison moved to Macao, where he was employed by the East India Company as a translator till 1815. It was then that he began to publish, e.g. A Grammar of the Chinese Language (2) and A Dictionary of the Chinese Language (abbreviated as Dictionary henceforth). (3)


(2) The book also has a Chinese title, 聯用語言之技 [Tongyong yuyan zhi ji] (Semnopith, Printed at the Mission-Press, 1815).

(3) The complete title of this dictionary is: A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, in three parts. Part the first, containing Chinese and English arranged according to the keys; part the second, Chinese and English arranged alphabetically, and part the third, consisting of English and Chinese [Macao: Printed at the Honorable East India Company’s Press; London; Published and Sold by Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, Leadenhall Street, 1815-1823]. This paper discusses only the third part, which is viewed as the first English-Chinese dictionary in China.
Robert Morrison's attempts to compile dictionaries and grammar books mainly served the purpose of religious preaching, because learning the Chinese language, translating the Gospel into Chinese, and using it to convert the Chinese people were the chief missions that Morrison received from the London Missionary Society before he left England. However, right after he arrived at Canton in September 1807, Morrison had problems adapting to the local custom in daily life. "At first, he supposed, that it would greatly facilitate his object, to live in the manner of the native; and under this idea, supplied himself with such articles as are commonly used by the Chinese in dress, and at meals; but he shortly perceived, that his idea was erroneous" (Milne 64). Simply wearing Chinese clothes and eating Chinese meals cannot change the cultural habits imbedded in the body of any non-native people. Morrison quickly realized that mastering the language was the key to penetrating a different culture. Therefore, he spent a fairly large sum of money to employ two local teachers who agreed to tutor him in Chinese, although he noticed that it was a capital offence for a Chinese to teach the language to a foreigner (Broomhall 55). Only one month later, in a letter to his father, Morrison wrote: "During the last month I have been engaged in studying the language, conversing with Chinese at their shops, and receiving some of them at my lodgings, endeavouring to gain as much knowledge as possible respecting them, [...]." (Morrison, Life and Labour, 178).

As a missionary, before he could reach the local populace, Morrison first had to overcome his main stumbling block, that is, the complexity of the Chinese language. Not only was there a long tradition of classical written style, but also a set of spoken forms that was greatly different from the written language. Among the spoken forms, there also existed differences between Mandarin and the dialects. Morrison obviously noticed the complexity of the Chinese language during the initial stage of his study at Canton, as he wrote in his first language reference book, A Grammar of the Chinese Language, "[t]he pronunciation of the character is in the provincial dialect different from that of the Kwan dialect." He went on to say, "[t]he Provincial dialect is called pe hua 白话; tou hua 士话, and tou tan 士谈 in contradiction from the proper and general language of the Empire, called kwun hua 官话, "public officer's speech or language" (Morrison, A Grammar of the Chinese Language, 259). Robert Morrison's living experience in Canton and Macao and the contact with the local Chinese society made him understand more details of the language, as he further noticed that, "in the Canton dialect, there are words for which they have no character, and there are others, for which the people of the province have formed a character" (Morrison 259).

Morrison's efforts to explore the features of the local dialect were directly related with his work as a missionary, and his perception of the nature of the language shaped his approach to the local populace. As a preacher, he first had to know the indigenous people's beliefs, and then to convert them. At the same time, understanding the unique culture of the Chinese people was necessary for pursuing his preaching goal. In the preface to the second part of his Dictionary, Morrison pointed out the characteristics of both the Chinese people and Chinese culture: "The Chinese are an original people. Their modes of thinking and reasoning are original; and are often widely different from those of Europeans; which difference is sometimes amusingly apparent in the disquisitions of European writers, who try to trace the motives of Chinese conduct in various cases [...]." (Morrison, Dictionary, Part II, Vol. I, "Preface"). Furthermore, since language and culture are inter-related, learning local expressions and vernacular languages would benefit the understanding of those so-called "original modes of thinking," as believed by Robert Morrison; and vice versa, "an ignorance of the usages and mind of China, will always subject a foreigner to a misapprehension of their language, in anything that is a little more reconcile than, hand a chair;—or bring a plate" (Morrison, Dictionary, Part II, Vol. I, "Preface").

A few years later, in the concluding remarks of another of his philological works, A View of China, Morrison recalled his experience of learning Chinese and commented that "it is scarcely possible for a person in Europe, without a Chinese Assistant, to study the Language with success" (Morrison A View of China 120). Therefore, Morrison's personal suggestion for the audience is to learn vernacular and colloquial Chinese instead of the style of fine writing. The reason is, if learners cannot acquire the help from native speakers directly, the written
vernaculars can partly play the role as substitution for the speech of the living natives. Moreover, by reading the vernaculars, learners can penetrate the "original mind" of local people, so as to help them understand the language comprehensively. Thus, the reading list he suggested for the "Chinese Student" consisted of colloquial fictions, the paraphrase of fine essays, and the commentary of classics. For example, Morrison guided his readers to begin with the fiction *Huo Qiu Zhan* (好逑传, translated into English under the title of *The Pleasing History* by Morrison), which is considered a perfect example of colloquial materials. *Honglou Meng* (红楼梦, *Dreams of the Red Chamber*) is also an inspiring novel of the kind, yet Morrison asked the audience to skip "the lines of Poetry at the commencement of each section," "all descriptions of person's dress," "the words of inscriptions above doors (bian'e, 匾额)," and "also sentences contained on rolls of paper (dulian, 对联)," because these are categorized under "the Classical Literature of the Chinese" (Morrison, *A View of China* 120-21). For the next step, the Student is advised to choose the edition of *Shengyu Guangzuan Yan* (圣谕广训衍, *Commentary on the Explanations of the Sacred Edict*), instead of the original imperial production, *Sheng Yu* (圣谕, *The Sacred Edict*), for the reason that readers can find considerable assistance from the lines of colloquial paraphrase of each section (Morrison, *A View of China* 120-21).

As we know, *Sheng Yu* was first delivered in an edict by the Emperor Kangxi 順治 in 1670, the ninth year of his reign. The text is comprised of sixteen maxims, and each maxim contains only seven characters. Written in a concise literary mode, the maxims are aimed to teach ordinary people how to behave properly in terms of family ethics, living management, social customs, and various community affairs. In 1724, the Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 released an explanatory version of the original text, which is entitled *Shengyu Guangzuan* (圣谕广训, *Explanations of the Sacred Edict*), and each passage of the explanations contains as many as six hundred characters (Zhou 581–83). The explanatory text was designed to be read aloud in public twice a month.

---

3 The phrase "Chinese Student" or "the Student," appearing frequently in the concluding sections of this book, is always capitalized. This could refer either to foreign readers who wanted to learn the Chinese language, or, more specifically, to the students (actually staff) in the East India Company who were studying the language with him at that time.

by community leaders, and due to this fact, scholars of the Yongzheng and Qianlong 乾隆 reigns also drafted a few colloquial versions (e.g. *Shengyu Guangzuan Yan* 圣谕广训衍[Commentary on the Explanations of the Sacred Edict] written by Wang You-pu 王又朴), so as to facilitate common people's understanding of the original literary text.

Tracing the textual evolution of *The Sacred Edict*, Robert Morrison took the literature not only as a reading guidance for the "Student," but also as a means with which his own activities of religious preaching could be combined. As for the vernacular version of *Sheng Yu* 圣谕, Morrison seriously considered it as the style to imitate in the planned translating work of the Sacred Scriptures into Chinese. According to his colleague William Milne's record:

He at first inclined to the middle style; but afterwards, on feeling an imperial work, called 圣谕 Sheng-yu, designed to be read twice a month, in the Public Halls of the different provinces, for the instruction of the people in relative, and political duties, and which is paraphrased in a perfectly colloquial style, he resolved to imitate this work. (Milne 93)

Furthermore, Milne explained the reasons why Morrison chose this style:

First, because it is more easily understood by the bulk of the people. Second, because it is intelligible when read in an audience, which the high classical style is not at all. The middle style is also intelligible when read in public, but not so easily understood as the lower style. Third, because it can be quoted verbatim when preaching, and understood by the people without any paraphrastic explanation. (Milne 93)

Although Morrison later decided that the Chinese materials in his reference works should be of a middle style between classical and vernacular, his emphasis was clearly always on vernacular materials rather than the Classics, which he referred to as "high style." This is due to his realization that the majority of the common people would be able to understand a version of Scriptures formed on the style of classical books (Milne 93). Correspondingly, in order to contact and convert the populace, Morrison collected a large amount of information on local Chinese culture. His frequent visit to Buddhist temples in Canton, as well as his experience of buying various books pertaining to vernacular
Chinese may corroborate this fact. In his report to the London Missionary Society in December 1809, Morrison wrote that during the past two years living at Canton and Macao, he succeeded in acquiring 1,229 books in total (Morrison, *Life and Labour*, vol. I, 258). Though covering a wide range of subjects relating to Chinese literature, history, religion, medicine, and so on, the books turned out mostly to be vernaculars (Broomhall, 54; West, *Catalogue*, p. XIV). In another letter to his father in August 1808, Morrison mentioned that he had already started to prepare his work of compiling a dictionary and was picking up words and phrases day by day, as his knowledge of Chinese advanced (Morrison, *Life and Labour*, vol. I, 222). In other words, Morrison not only consulted the books for his own study purpose, but also used them as linguistic materials to prepare the work of compiling Chinese dictionaries and language references.

2. Linguistic Registers in Morrison’s Dictionary

As a language reference tool, the bilingual dictionary has its own expressive mode within a certain textual organization. Usually, a definition is first applied to a word, followed by a sentence example, which helps readers to understand the semantic meaning. Some examples, delivered as phrases and usages, may also imply specific linguistic circumstances, which are beyond the general meaning of the word. Furthermore, taken as a whole, the explanatory examples form a diversity of linguistic registers. As a bilingual dictionary full of interpretations of another set of concepts, the way in which examples are listed will directly lead to the result how an alien culture will be translated.

To understand how various linguistic registers are combined in Morrison’s Dictionary and what those registers exactly represent, let us first go over the historical context of the Dictionary. As mentioned above, vernacular speeches from popular cultures and secular lives constituted the basis of Morrison’s knowledge about China. However, these linguistic registers of local people’s daily life did not reach his European audience during the first couple of years when he was collecting linguistic materials and making reports of missionary works. In fact, by the end of the eighteenth century, although some scholars had stated that the monosyllabic nature of Chinese characters was a feature that distinguished Chinese from European languages, most Europeans were still vague about its details. For example, in 1788, James Beattie wrote in *The Theory of Language*, “we are apt to admire what we do not understand” (Beattie 114). It is in fact an expression indicating there was still inadequate knowledge about the Chinese language among Europeans at the time. In June 1812, it was before the publication of Morrison’s Dictionary that an advertisement appeared on the first page of his other book, *Horse Sinicae; Translations from the Popular Literature of the Chinese*, which said, “[i]t is presumed that such a publication will be acceptable to the British public, as contributing a portion of gratification to the attention and curiosity which have been excited, within the last twenty years, with regard to that extraordinary nation” (Morrison, *Horse Sinicae*, 1).

Morrison’s job of compiling a dictionary was therefore not only conceived as the outcome of a comprehensive language reference, but also presented a range of cultural information to fulfill the necessity of understanding the detail. At the same time, because he knew his dictionary was the only one available in China in the early nineteenth century, what he wrote down there would be a direct guide of both language and culture to the coming Protestant missionaries. In using the vernacular sayings he picked up from local books to compile a dictionary, he had to consider more. In the third part of his Dictionary, which consists of English and Chinese (and is usually referred to as Morrison’s “English and Chinese Dictionary”), a feature of the practice of choosing and selecting appeared as a result by way of organizing different entries with different lengths. Some of them are in only one or two sentences, while others may be as long as over six pages. The following part of the paper will focus on the content of this part and discuss what the main registers of Morrison’s Dictionary are and how they

---


(7) Such as Matteo Ricci and Alfonso Semedo’s presentations of the Chinese language, see Mengelto, *Canton Law*, p. 77.
function in terms of cultural translation.

Words related to Chinese popular religions, including Buddhism and Taoism, are apparently favored by Morrison in his Dictionary. A certain category of these are found, such as “absorbed” (佛灭), “create” (创造), “creed” (信仰), “eternal” (无变化), “ethical writings” (善书), “happiness” (福), “hell” (地狱), etc. There are also some related expressions, such as “A retribution evident to people’s eyes” (果报昭昭在人耳目), “Spiritual body is that which has no visible figure” (法身即无像), etc. Among them, the longest interpretation is given under the word “ethical writings,” with the title “A true scripture to awaken the world,” by the Holy Imperial Prince Kwan-foo-tseri”. It is an ethical teaching, which instructs people to venerate heaven and earth, to get along with brothers and friends, to act properly in public, and to believe that all the good behaviors and reverent practices will be observed by the gods. The real author of this text remains unknown, though it is often attributed to Guan fuzi 关夫子, a famous deified warrior of the third century. The style of the text can be determined as a “middle” one, between fine classics and vulgar colloquialism. For example, the first couplet is: “毁天灭地, 为神明; 献祖宗, 腐双亲” (Venerate heaven and earth, perform the rites to the gods; Worship your ancestors, be dutiful to your parents). The ninth one is: “动心向道, 改过自新; 清治仁慈, 慈念不海” (Turn the mind to right principles, reform errors and renovate yourself; Be filled with benevolence and kindness, retain no vicious thoughts). There are thirty couplets in total (Morrison, Dictionary, part II, 146-81).

Secular beliefs and daily ritual activities intertwined with each other in traditional Chinese society. From the perspective of local people, this kind of religious doctrine provided people with regulations under which they should conduct daily behavior. However, as a teaching tool, it should neither be completely colloquial, diminishing its solemnity, nor too obscure in classical style, beyond the average person’s knowledge. This is just the style Morrison wanted to follow to serve the purpose of translating the Bible into Chinese, because, as mentioned above, he decided to adhere to what he termed the “middle” style in collecting Chinese materials for his reference works. Thus, in his Dictionary, he also recorded a large amount of extracts from Shengyin Guangyuan Yan 圣 誉广训, which is a colloquial explanation of the imperial moral admonitions originally made by the emperor Kangxi 康熙 in classical style.

Another focus of Morrison’s attention was beliefs and customs of local Chinese people, as expressed in their vernacular sayings and idioms. As a missionary, Morrison tried to understand the similarities and differences between local Chinese beliefs and Christianity, in order to find a good way to preach his own religion. For this reason, Morrison started to observe the diversity of Chinese life carefully as soon as he arrived at Canton:

The religious rites, & c., of the Chinese are ridiculous and cumbersome. They have, in one street or another, and to one demon or another, perpetually splendid illuminations, music, theatrical performances in presence of their idols, repasts of fruits, and wine, and cakes, and feast, and roasted pig, & c., placed before them; with the burning of candles, small sticks, paper and fireworks. I have seen them prostrate themselves to the full-armed moon, pour out libations and present fruits to her. The detail would be endless. (Eliza Morrison, Life and Labours, 163).

In his dictionary, Morrison gathered abundant information about Chinese lives and customs under such entries as “almanac” and “calendar.” He uses the word “kalender” (sic) to render the Chinese word huangli 黄历, which is, however, more like a handbook used in daily life. In addition to the list of the days of the month, it contains lucky and unlucky days, the birthdays of the gods, and explanations on what activities are appropriate and what should be avoided on certain days. Although legally the calendar was only published by the imperial government in a standard format, it actually imbedded numerous local beliefs and family rites, which were generally consulted by all local Chinese. The version of the huangli 黄历, as cited in Morrison’s Dictionary, dated from 1821, or the first year in the emperor Daoguang’s 道光 reign. He picked the contents of five days (the first three days of the first month and the second and fifth day of the fifth month) and translated them into English. The first day of the traditional Chinese New Year is especially important. According to geomantic omens, on this day, “财神在东南” (“the god of wealth is directly south”), so when a person first sets his foot on the floor, after rising out of bed, he should walk towards southwest, the direction of the god of joy; “喜神在正南” (“the god of joy is in the southwest”), and should be met by
those who wish to be rich. And on this day, "宜安床牧羊, 忌词讼"("It is proper to place a bed, to begin to rear animals, and to trade; however, shun making legal cases, and the capping of young men, and the braiding of young women's hair before marriage need to be avoided") (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, 240). He also recorded a charm in vernacular verse that was originally written on ordinary paper and passed up in different parts of the house for the fifth day of the fifth month. It says, "雷霆帝乍、五月五日午时书, 官非口舌尽消除, 龙蛇鼠蚁逃苗灰, 百病千年一切除"("birthday of the Thunder Palace Emperor: On the fifth day of the fifth moon I write this at noon; May all litigations and altercations be quite excluded; May all snakes, mice, rats, ants all run away; May a hundred diseases, and a thousand calamities be every one expelled!") (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, 241). As a calendar, in addition to these important ritual days, under the entries of every day of the year, there was also abundant information instructing people what to do at different times of the day. Practitioners of this kind of ritual behavior thus took it seriously by abiding in their everyday life. Therefore, by supplying information about the Chinese calendar in his Dictionary, Morrison did not merely portray a cultural scene to the coming Protestants, but more importantly, paved the way for readers to comprehend the routine activities of local people.

Vernacular sayings are scattered throughout the Dictionary, yet under the word "proverb," there is a group. Covering a relatively small scope, this group particularly deals with how to get along with the surrounding persons and circumstances. The style is quite instructive, for these sayings are teachings from the elders to their children. This is exactly one of the main functions of proverbs, as in a local community the elders usually have authority and social prestige to tell about the human nature and living experience by using proverbs and sayings. Therefore, to explain the word "proverb," Morrison quoted a few sayings describing general characteristics of local human behavior. For example, "proverb says, 忍得一时忍, 终身无恼阁 [repress your momentary anger, and your whole life will be without vexation or sorrow]" (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, 342). To describe the difficulty of ascertaining unpredictable things, people say, "入人口无依, 说话无定期 [the two bits of skin that form man's mouth talk at random"] (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, 342). To express that people have the extremes of closeness and openness of mind, they say, "牛皮灯笼总不白 [A cow's hide lantern will never show light]; an abdominal skin of crystal, lets heart, and liver, and all be seen"] (ibid.) Morrison sometimes would provide an annotation to a proverb so as to explain to the audience what exactly it indicates. After translating the saying "蛇入竹筒, 曲性难改 [Although a snake enters a straight bamboo tube, it is impossible to alter its crooked nature]," he further annotated, "by this it is intended to express the difficulty of changing a bad man's disposition" (ibid.). It was also Morrison's style to quote Chinese proverbs and sayings whenever necessary to explain an English word. He interpreted the word "particles" as "虚字眼," and advanced to a description that there are four types of particles. To tell the audience that it is not an easy task to differentiate various particles, Morrison cited: "The proverb says, 之者乎者也者焉者, 七字能分是秀才 [He who can discriminate properly the seven particles, zhi, zhu, zhe, ye, yi, yu, zai, is a master of arts]" (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, 311). The seven particles in classical Chinese were thus combined in one sentence and might also facilitate readers' memorization. Morrison quoted about twenty in total under the titles of "proverb," "saying," and "adage," and numerous proverbs and sayings can be found scattered throughout his Dictionary.

Besides proverbs, vernacular fictions and novels include many everyday expressions as well. As mentioned above, Morrison considered Honglou Meng 红楼梦 to be a great literary work and language learning tool full of colloquial materials. Correspondingly in his Dictionary, one can recognize that quite a few sentences for explanatory examples are directly quoted from the novel Honglou Meng. Therefore, names of the main figures such as Fengjie 视姐, Baoji 玉宝, Shi Xiang-yun 史湘云, and so on were kept the same as those in the novel, and their expressions retain equal vividness. (8) Morrison once suggested that the "Chinese Student" should read the lines of colloquial phrase of Shengyu Guangce Yan 圣谕广训衍, and therefore in his Dictionary, one

(8) For example, on page 311 it quotes, "我也朝去入晚回, 一路走是又怕你们当心" ("I also am of the same party as Xiyou and Yuanyang. If I go away, I am afraid that I shall sweep away your hospitality").
can also find numerous examples relating to this particular text. (9)


For early Protestant missionaries in China, Morrison's Dictionary was considered a treasure for learning the Chinese language; yet at the same time it also provided abundant information pertaining to local popular culture. Today, we find the expression through the process of historical-cultural translation, because the way foreigners try to learn to be "natives" and the method they use to learn another culture are different than the ones employed by natives from that same culture. As Morrison himself claimed, "what is perfectly clear and explicit to a Native, is often dark and ambiguous to a Foreigner" (Morrison, A View of China, 1). The statement can be supported by a look into what kind of books Morrison collected to learn Chinese and to compile language references. Numerous popular books can be found in Morrison's Collection at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. According to Andrew West's investigation, there are 76 vernacular fictions, 216 books on native religions, and 133 works on traditional Chinese medicine, etc., in total, constituting more than half of the collection (West, XII). It is known that Chinese scholars in the Qing Dynasty normally pursued rare books and fine editions, and it is thought that the earlier the book, the greater its value. Morrison, on the other hand, just wanted to buy books that would be helpful for him to understand native Chinese culture and to learn the language. Also, they should be affordable, because Morrison did not receive regular salary until becoming an official translator in the East India Company in 1809, two years after his arrival. As a result, most books in his collection were obtained from local book markets, and were products of contemporary local publishers. (10)

As mentioned above, Morrison's endeavor to collect books from the locals had direct relations with his job of compiling language reference books. His prime interest in collecting textual materials corresponded with the priority of explanatory examples presented in his Dictionary. In the library of Yale Divinity School, there is a manuscript copy of his Dictionary. However, since this is almost a final edition, it does not have many differences from the printed version. The process of his compiling work remains largely unknown; however, in a letter of July 5, 1831, to the editor of the Asiatic Journal, Morrison described some considerable details:

I know of no better way of writing a Dictionary of any language, than that which I pursued; namely, to make use of all the native Dictionaries I could collect, with the original books referred to them; to employ native scholars to assist me in consulting those several works, and in ascertaining their exact meaning (Morrison, Life and Labours, vol. II, 485).

Morrison wrote this letter also as a response to the public, because a German Orientalist, Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1788-1835) had accused Morrison of merely translating the Chinese dictionary Kangxi Zidian 康熙字典, rather than creating a new one. It is true that the materials of the first two parts of his Dictionary, which are in a Chinese-English format, stem from the most authorized Chinese dictionary Kangxi Zidian of the time. However, the third part, in an English-Chinese format, has nothing to do with it;

Further, the native scholars collected colloquial phrases and terms, and Dr. Morrison continually selected words and phrases from the Chinese books, which he daily read. The third part of the Dictionary was almost entirely composed of these selections. [...]. In the whole of the work, there was no mere copying from one book into another; no mere translation from one language into another, but an exercise of judgment and choice, throughout (ibid., 456).

If we take an overview of Morrison's works relating to language, we may get a clearer picture of the way this type of "judgment and choice" was made in the process of compiling a dictionary. Besides A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, Morrison produced several other philological works, such as A View of China, for Philological Purpose (Macao, 1817) and Chinese Miscellany, Consisting of Original Extracts from Chinese Authors (London, 1825). Although they are not dictionaries in format, they also contain English-Chinese bilingual words and

(9) For instance, on page 207, under the title "manner"—"The public manners, 风俗, 世象": "万事皆要以你们风俗变化无常的教训你们" ("His manner wishing your manners to be substantially good, is very particularly careful to instruct you").

(10) Andrew West also gave a rough calculation on these data in his Catalogue, pp. XII-K.
phrases. As for the content, these works are much more comprehensive in introducing the general ideas of the Chinese language and culture. A View of China contains information about "chronology, geography, government, time, festivals, and religion"—six different parts in total. In the introductory part, the author explains why he is trying to compile this indirect information as the background knowledge for learning the language, as well as the connection between a true dictionary and its background information. "A Dictionary therefore of a Foreign Language, ought to have annexed to it an outline of the History, Geography, Religion, Philosophy, Government and Customs of the Country" (Morrison, A View of China, 1). Compared with the main linguistic registers in A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, the topics and examples here cover a wider range of information. One may possibly think that, after ten years of his residence in Canton and Macao, Morrison would be able to provide his readers in England with a relatively more comprehensive portrait of Chinese society. Therefore, he would include some more extensive linguistic sources when he worked on this volume after compiling his Dictionary. However, the materials contained in this volume were almost collected at the same time as those in the Dictionary, as the author pointed out in the preface that they "were at first intended to be attached to the Chinese Dictionary, Printed by Order of the Honourable the East India Company; and to bound up with it." In fact, most of the materials on religion and customs in this volume are exactly the same as those in his Dictionary. As both linguistic learning materials and cultural background information, proverbs, local idioms, and vernacular sayings are repeatedly displayed in Morrison's works. Morrison included them as a necessary part in his earlier Dictionary, whereas he planned to append information such as chronology, geography, and government. However, later he decided to move these appended materials to a separate volume, thus "they will probably be more convenient, printed in the present form and bound up by themselves" (ibid).

In Chinese Miscellany, Morrison paid particular attention to the explanation of the Chinese writing system. In addition to philological remarks, he also included several plates with all the written symbols drawn in picture form so as to help readers understand the evolution of the Chinese script. However, in his Dictionary, he only briefly stated

what liushu 六书 ("six Classes") is, without going into details with further explanations and drawings. Moreover, in order to display all the character "Radicals," he not only used some extracts from Chinese authors, but also copied "specimen of Chinese verses" by himself. These pictures and extracts look much like the linguistic materials that Morrison collected for language learning in the early years, and the sentences written by him revealed his own writing practices (see Figures 1 and 2). For instance, instead of using another clearer way to list all the radicals in a specific order, he took what he collected before and put a number on top of each character, indicating the radical order. This kind of texts was perhaps not prepared for this book originally, for it did not match the printing format. Therefore, from the materials Morrison used in these later works, one can verify that the author did indeed select certain examples prior to putting them in his earlier philological works and saved the remaining ones for later editions.

The idea of "collecting and selecting" can also be revealed by Morrison's compilation of proverbs. As mentioned above, Morrison's Dictionary exhibited abundant local Chinese culture by quoting numerous examples of proverbs and local sayings. However, comparing the Dictionary with another language reference work by Morrison, A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect (广东省土话字汇), we can perceive quite a difference. This glossary book, which was published in 1828, about twenty years after his arrival in China, was certainly much more comprehensive. There are twenty-four categories in "Part three, Chinese words and phrases," which was classified under the help of natives. Two thirds of these categories consist of proverbs and sayings, some of which are exactly the same as those recorded in the Dictionary, such as in the categories of "affairs of the world," "friendship," "qualities of persons," and "riches and honors." However, there are also a number of proverbs talking about local weather, humor, quarrelling, railing, drinking, and eating, etc., which can rarely be found in his Dictionary. Although topics pertaining to local weather, humor, food, etc. convey more information about Chinese culture, their style is not as didactic as the style mentioned in his Dictionary above, and they seem not so urgent to be learnt. In other words, they were not the most vital ideas to influence Morrison in the construction of his text, as guidance for the coming Protestants. Thus, a reasonable
inference is that, in Morrison’s earlier dictionary, he chose what he thought was most crucial for outsiders to learn. The criterion of what is deemed important is how much information readers can receive from the content of his Dictionary, that is, by looking up new words and going through the examples that link word meanings to real linguistic functions.

From the viewpoint of the audience, they would benefit greatly from knowing linguistic circumstances indicated by such examples, if the sentences can help to guide them to adapt to daily life in a different culture. From the perspective of Morrison, on the other hand, as the first Protestant missionary who entered Chinese society, the closest information he was able to supply to tell outsiders how to behave were just gathered from the daily lives of local people. Thus, he particularly considered the didactic mode of expression in his observation and selection, such as those moral admonitions in ethical teachings and behavioral criteria in vernacular sayings. Thereupon, through the reading of his text, readers could adopt this mode of expression as a guideline for their missionary work. Moreover, they would not only know how to behave in Chinese society, but would also imitate the didactic nature of traditional Chinese admonitions in their preaching, by using “God says” instead of “the Sage says.” However, due to the limited length of the Dictionary, Morrison could only put the most crucial content in the first stage. This priority can be related to his own life experience in Canton during which he collected words and phrases based on his own preference. Or rather, he could display this type of interest by selecting certain materials as explanatory examples in his Dictionary and keeping other materials for later monographs. This kind of priority and preference also happened when other early Protestants in China were compiling dictionaries. In 1821, when Morrison was writing a preface for the last part of his Dictionary (Part III, English and Chinese), he recalled: “Thirteen years have elapsed since the Author first began to collect words for this Part of his Dictionary; and during the whole of that time gradual additions have been made to it; but completeness in it is not practicable” (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, Preface).

4. Conclusion

The initial task of compiling a bilingual dictionary was intertwined with early Protestant missionary activities in nineteenth-century China. In Alexander Wylie’s account, about fifteen Euro-American Protestant missionaries produced more than twenty English-Chinese reference books for studying written and colloquial Chinese (including dialects) between 1815 and 1867 (Wylie 306-12). A majority of these works enhanced the efficiency of language study among missionary groups in China, and many of them gave credit to Robert Morrison and his work A Dictionary of the Chinese Language.

In this paper, the third part of Morrison’s Dictionary is fully examined in terms of its entries, glossary, lexicon, and compilation method. Taking into consideration Morrison’s personal experience in early nineteenth-century Canton, we may notice that his job of compiling a comprehensive bilingual dictionary reveals much of his own cultural practice in a local Chinese environment. As shown above, the linguistic register of Morrison’s Dictionary covers mainly vernacular literature, popular religion, daily customs, and other things related to the local. In this regard, the third part of Morrison’s Dictionary is not only the first English-Chinese dictionary, but also an encyclopedic depository filled with local Chinese culture.

Taking Europe as a broad audience in a considerable geographic distance, we can see that Morrison’s works catered to the taste of its general public, which was keen on objects and information from the East through trade and exploration in late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In this sense, Morrison’s Dictionary certainly conveys a cultural message of how he lived and experienced in a local Chinese society. As the author pointed out clearly in his preface, the Dictionary should not be considered a practical reference tool in the first place. “The collection of words and phrases here presented will afford important assistance to a Student of the language, but it will not enable a person wholly ignorant of Chinese to express his thoughts in that language, by a bare reference to the English words here given” (Morrison, Dictionary, part III, Preface). Instead, it would provide the
potential audience with a deep insight into Chinese culture.

References

—. 1815-1823. A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, in Three Parts. Macao; Printed at the Honorable East India Company’s Press.
—. 1817. A View of China, for Philological Purpose; Containing a Sketch of Chinese Chronology, Geography, Religion, & Customs. Macao; Printed at the Honorable the East India Company’s Press.
—. 1828. A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect. Macao; Printed at the Honorable East India Company’s Press.