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► **To cite this version:**

Christine Lamarre. Early Hakka corpora held by the Basel Mission library: An introduction. Cahiers de linguistique - Asie Orientale, 2002, 31 (1), pp.71 - 104. 10.3406/clao.2002.1604 . hal-01492338

HAL Id: hal-01492338

<https://inalco.hal.science/hal-01492338>

Submitted on 18 Mar 2017

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Early Hakka corpora held by the Basel Mission library : an introduction

Christine Lamarre

Résumé

Nous présentons ici le fonds hakka de la bibliothèque de la Mission de Bâle (Suisse), fonds extrêmement riche mais peu connu, constitué de bibles et autres textes en hakka. Nous privilégions les documents les plus anciens de la collection (milieu du 19e siècle - début du 20e siècle). On y trouve des dictionnaires, une grammaire, ainsi que des textes en version romanisée et en caractères chinois. Il s'agit d'un corpus précieux pour les études linguistiques où l'on trouve des tournures très parlées. La page d'histoire que nous retraçons présente aussi un intérêt sociolinguistique : le hakka a failli disposer d'une langue écrite, une koine régionale unifiant plusieurs parlers.

Abstract

This paper gives a brief outline of the Hakka Bibles and other religious or educational books in Hakka held by the Basel Mission Library, translated, edited and published during the 19th century by protestant missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. These documents provide us with some very valuable material available for grammatical, phonological or lexical studies of the Hakka colloquial. They also tell us how a Chinese dialect happened to develop (for a limited period though) a written language in Latin script and then in Chinese characters.

Citer ce document / Cite this document :

Lamarre Christine. Early Hakka corpora held by the Basel Mission library : an introduction. In: Cahiers de linguistique - Asie orientale, vol. 31 1, 2002. pp. 71-104;

doi : 10.3406/clao.2002.1604

http://www.persee.fr/doc/clao_0153-3320_2002_num_31_1_1604

Document généré le 02/06/2016

Notes et documents

Early Hakka corpora held by the Basel Mission library: an introduction

Christine LAMARRE

This paper gives a brief outline of the Hakka Bibles and other religious or educational books in Hakka held by the Basel Mission Library, translated, edited and published during the 19th century by protestant missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. These documents provide us with some very valuable material available for grammatical, phonological or lexical studies of the Hakka colloquial. They also tell us how a Chinese dialect happened to develop (for a limited period though) a written language in Latin script and then in Chinese characters.

Key words : Chinese dialects - Hakka - Chinese Bibles - Christian Missions.

Nous présentons ici le fonds hakka de la bibliothèque de la Mission de Bâle (Suisse), fonds extrêmement riche mais peu connu, constitué de bibles et autres textes en hakka. Nous privilégions les documents les plus anciens de la collection (milieu du 19e siècle - début du 20e siècle). On y trouve des dictionnaires, une grammaire, ainsi que des textes en version romanisée et en caractères chinois. Il s'agit d'un corpus précieux pour les études linguistiques où l'on trouve des tournures très parlées. La page d'histoire que nous retraçons présente aussi un intérêt sociolinguistique : le hakka a failli disposer d'une langue écrite, une *koine* régionale unifiant plusieurs parlers.

Mots-clés : dialectes chinois - hakka - bibles en chinois - missionnaires.

Cahiers de Linguistique – Asie Orientale 31(1): 71-104 (2002)

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0153-3320/2002/031-71

INTRODUCTION

Among the few early Hakka written corpora that may be used for linguistic (including grammatical) studies, Bibles and other religious works translated by Protestant missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society stand out as very valuable material. This paper gives an outline of this material and its background so as to allow those interested in Hakka studies an easier access to these corpora, which include Bibles and schoolbooks (some in romanized Hakka and others in Chinese character), as well as dictionaries and a grammarbook. We describe mainly the early documents (second half of the 19th century~beginning of the 20th).

From a sociolinguistic point of view, the process leading to the development of a Hakka written language, first romanized then in Chinese character, is also quite enlightening (especially considering that Hakka is not written any longer).

The Basel Mission Society (Missionsstrasse 21, CH - 4003 Basel, Switzerland) holds two collections containing Bibles, one being a collection of several hundreds of Bibles in many languages "Bibel-Sammlung", of which a provisional catalogue is available but which includes only a few editions of Hakka Bibles. The other is the Chinese Collection, (formerly "Archivbücherei - Chinesische Sprachen", now "Betriebs Dokumentation"), which includes most of the Chinese Bibles held by this Mission, as well as other works in and on Chinese. An old catalogue (partly typed, partly handwritten) does exist for the latter collection, but the list is not chronological and is sometimes difficult to use, as it gives exclusively the German title of the books, but neither the Chinese characters nor the titles in the romanized Lepsius script, whereas the books themselves usually bear only the latter.¹

¹ A tentative list of the Hakka Bibles and the other documents written in colloquial Hakka kept in the Basel Mission Library is available on the CLAO website (<http://www.ehess.fr/centres/crlao/crlao.html>). Our tentative list includes the Hakka Bibles and the religious and educational publications held by the Basel Mission Library, in chronological order (religious works posterior to 1920 have been omitted except for Bibles). We also listed a monthly review in Lepsius script

Section 1. gives the historical background of this material, section 2. investigates some of its linguistic features, section 3. introduces the reader to the Lepsius script used for the romanized transcription, and the appendix provides her/him with a few biographical sketches of the people involved in the writing, translation and editing of this material.

1. THE TRANSLATION AND EDITION OF HAKKA BIBLES

1.1. From Romanized versions to Bibles in Chinese character

The first translation of St. Matthew's Gospel into Hakka by Lechler in 1860 may be counted as one of the earliest translations of a portion of the Bible into vernacular Chinese, along with Shanghai (Medhurst 1847), Fuzhou (1852), Amoy (1852), Nanjing Mandarin (1854), Ningbo (1861), or Northern Mandarin (1864). A clear and dependable account of the translation process of the Hakka Bibles is given by Marshall Broomhall (1907, *The Bible in China*, pp. 393-95):

published in Hong Kong in the 1880's, that did not appear in the original list of the Basel Mission Library. A list of Hakka Bibles published by other Christian missionary societies is given in appendix. However, material kept in the Archives is not included, but some manuscript dictionaries I had the opportunity to consult are mentioned in together with other Hakka dictionaries. Beside this, there are in the Archives some other Hakka material, for instance a manuscript text described in Hashimoto (1971) called *Fenzhuang-louzhuan baihua* 粉妝樓傳白話. Another manuscript held in the Basel Mission Library, *Zhonghua jiu lisu* 中華舊禮俗 [*Old Manner and Customs of China*], (by Zhang Zuji 張祖基, 4 vols., Hakka written in Chinese characters, 1929-1934, Meixian), was microfilmed and published in Japan by Pr. Hashimoto, who wrote an introduction both in English and in Japanese to the 1984 edition of the text (first published by Kenbun Shuppan 研文出版, Tokyo, 1980).

"The Hakka dialect was not known by Europeans previous to 1845, and the Revs. T. Hamberg and R. Lechler of the Basel Mission were the first missionaries to study it thoroughly. St. Matthew's Gospel, translated by Lechler, was published by the Basel Mission at Berlin in 1860, and again in 1866 – with the addition of St. Luke, based on an earlier edition printed at Hongkong in 1865 – in larger types by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was printed in the Lepsius system of Romanised. Other books followed from 1874 up to 1883, by which time the whole New Testament was completed.

Parts of this Romanised New Testament were subsequently revised and reprinted. Without giving the details of each man's work, the following were those who had the chief part in the translation: the Revs. R. Lechler, Ph. Winnes, C. Piton, G.A. Gussman, and two Chinese helpers, Kong Fat-lin and Li Shin-en. The New Testament mentioned above was all in the Lepsius Romanised system, but by 1883 the whole of the New Testament was also published in the character, the British and Foreign Bible Society bearing the expense. Subsequently a revision of this New Testament was undertaken and completed early in 1904. This revision was carried through by the Revs. A. Nagel, assisted by the Revs. G.A. Gussman and W. Ebert, all of the Basel Mission."

This information is based on various British and Foreign Bible Society's documents (among which its editorial correspondence and minutes), that have been checked with the British Museum Catalogue and corrected by G. Gussman from the Basel Mission. It is completed by W. Canton, who tells us in his *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (vol.3, 1910 : 446) how the Basel missionaries' translations were added in 1865-66 to the various Chinese Bibles published with the financial help of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Canton (1910 : 455) gives further details on Kong Fat-lin's share in the translation:

"St. Mark and the Acts appeared in the Hakka tongue in 1874. A volume containing St. John, Romans, and the First and Second Corinthians, the work of the Rev. Kong Fatlin, a native missionary educated at Basel, left the press in 1879. The four Epistles,

Galatians to Colossians, by the same translator, were issued in 1881; and the Rev. C.P. Piton of the Basel Mission finished the rest of the New Testament in 1883."

These facts are confirmed by K.S. Latourette (1929/1975, pp. 431-432. note 61 p. 432, 759) and A. Garnier. The latter adds (1933 : 66) that the "New Testament, however, was published in an unusual system of Romanisation, and it was thought advisable to publish another edition in character. This was done in the same year 1883, a revised edition being issued in 1904."

As for the Old Testament, we know from the same sources (Broomhall, Garnier) that in 1885, the British & Foreign Bible Society had promised to bear the expense of the production of the Old Testament in character. Of this work, Genesis and Exodus were translated by the Rev. C. Piton, and published in 1886, and later the Old Testament was completed by Mr. Otto Schultze.

More details about each version are available in our list (see note 1).

1.2. The process of translation and revision.

1.2.1. The part of native Hakkas

From the various sources quoted above, we know about the translators: Lechler, Piton, Kong Fat-lin etc. Usually the translation work was team-work, the first draft written by the translator in charge being revised by other specialists like Lechler. The names of Kong Fat-lin (also known as Kong Ayoun) and Li Shin-en, among the translators and revisors, prove that native Hakka speakers took an active part in the translation in the 1870's and 1880's when the core of the translation of the New Testament was completed.

We also know now from Lutz & Lutz (1998 : 58) that earlier in the 1850's and the 1860's, another Chinese helper, Tai Wunkong, was instrumental in translating the first part of the Bible ever translated in Hakka colloquial, that is Lechler's translation of Matthew in 1860. His name was probably erased from the official

records because of his later rejection of Christian faith, so I was not aware of his contribution before I had access to Lutz & Lutz's work.

1.2.2. Translation from which language?

Tai's translation of Matthew (for Lechler, published 1860) was likely worked out from Wenli. We know (Lutz and Lutz 1998) that he had a classical education and did not have direct access to any foreign language version. Besides Spillet (1975) tells us that the early translations (in Lepsius Script) had been made from the Wenli (Classical Chinese) versions up to 1874. That could account for the style of the 1860 translation, available only in romanized transcription, which has a slightly more literary flavour than the later ones.

The later translations were probably made from several original texts: according to Spillet, from 1874 translations into Hakka were made from the original languages. This coincides with the time when Kong Fat-lin came back from Basel, where before his ordination he was instructed in German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Thus we know from the 1882 and 1883 editorial reports of the BFBS that the translation of the end of the New Testament (some Epistles ~ Revelation) by Kong Fat-lin, Piton etc., had been made from the Greek version. The title-page of the first Gospel translated by Piton in the Chinese character, St. Luke in 1881, bears the mention in Chinese that it had been translated from the Greek text. Of course other versions, including the other Chinese translations (by the 1870's Mandarin versions were also available), must have been consulted too in the translation process.

1.2.3. Romanized transcription vs. Chinese characters

In 1881-1883, the whole New Testament was completed in the Chinese character by Piton, Kong Ayoun, Guzman etc... Reprints follow up to 1905, using wooden blocks. At that time the page was printed on one side only, then folded in the Chinese style. In 1906, a revised version was published by Nagel, Guzman, Ebert etc. A further revision followed in 1913.

Our list of the Hakka New Testament (whole Bibles or portions of it) in Chinese character kept at the Basel Mission Library comprises about 30 titles, published between 1881 and 1937. Romanized versions include less than 20 titles, and were published between 1860 and 1896 (or maybe 1897). Basically, romanized versions belong to the 19th century, whereas 20th century Hakka Bibles are all written in Chinese character. This shift, though, was not predictable before 1890, as can be seen from Reusch's testimony at the 1890 General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries held at Shanghai:

"the demand for the portions of Holy Scriptures published in character (Hakka) colloquial has been hitherto (up to 1888) very small. From this I conclude that the Chinese have no liking for it. I believe that this method of writing has no great future, since it neither takes away the difficulty of the character system, nor offers the advantages of the Roman letter. Still the character colloquial may be of use to the candidates for baptism who in their youth have learned character for some years without having attained an understanding of the classical style" (p. 84).

The master-mind of the translation into Chinese character was Piton, one of those who advocated the respect of traditional Chinese culture and an education that did not cut the Chinese pupils from their roots (see his biographical notice in the Appendix). Lutz and Lutz (1998 : 234) quote the following extract of Piton's correspondence, dated 1882, who comments on the shift from Lepsius to Chinese characters:

"After nearly twenty years of much effort and a great amount of money spent in this direction [use of Lepsius], we have been somewhat disappointed at the results attained. Grown up people could not as a rule be induced to use the romanized method, and even those who have gone through our schools, though they often employ that system for writing letters to each other, still they do not read the New Testament in romanized if they read it at all, preferring to use the Wen-li version, which they have been

instructed to use when in school, but which nevertheless most of them understand but imperfectly..."

We have tried to write the Hakka colloquial with Chinese characters...; it [Hakka] includes a large number of words for which there exist no characters at all. But this difficulty has now been overcome. We have taken from the *bendi* colloquial a number of unauthorized characters which have already become more or less familiar by being used in publications in the latter; for other sounds we have used characters which are read in the same or a similar way, only adding sometimes the character "mouth" on its left...

As for the Chinese preachers ordained in Basel, Lutz and Lutz (1998 : 30, 231-232) note the role of Kong Fat-lin, who insisted on the importance for Chinese evangelists to be trained in classical Chinese as well, so as not to lower their social rank in the eyes of other educated Chinese.

The definitive shift to the character versions in the 20th century can also be accounted for by various global changes in China, like the opening of schools of "Western Knowledge" in Jiayingzhou 嘉應州, or by the increasing weight of the indigenous clergy in the Basel Mission churches and schools.

1.2.4. Differences among versions

One obvious difference between the 1883 character version and later versions (1906/1931) is the shift to less idiomatic characters for dialectal lexicon, like particles, personal or demonstrative pronouns etc... The 1883 version, like other religious texts issued in the 1880s by the Basel Mission, used characters with a reading homophonous to the the dialectal morpheme to be transcribed, making it very easy to read aloud when one knows the dialect, but probably difficult to accept as a literary text. Gibson stated at the 1890 General Conference (p. 74) about the Hakka version that:

"An edition of the Hakka New Testament in character was published in 1883. It appears to follow the Romanized editions, but is not rigidly conformed to them. It also is disfigured by the use of characters to represent sounds without regard to meaning, such as the following:

<i>pân</i> (奔)	to flee, used in the sense of <i>give</i> , and as a sign of the passive.
<i>yu</i> (禺) [sic]	a monkey, used in the sense of <i>you</i> or <i>thou</i> . [N.B. 禺 is probably a mistake for 禹, C.L.]
<i>yai</i> (厓)	a precipice, used in the sense of I.
<i>tang</i> (棟)	a beam, used in the sense of midst.
<i>teu</i> (兜)	a helmet, used as a sign of the plural after pronouns.

Notwithstanding blemishes of this kind, which seem inseparable from the character colloquials, this version is found of considerable use in the Hakka missions."

Thus, to solve the problem of colloquial dialect words without characters, the use of characters of a similar pronunciation (with or without the character "mouth" on the left, that denotes they are used for their phonetic value) is typical of the early versions. For instance the character for "house" 家 preceded by the character "mouth" 口, denotes the morpheme "his/her" (*kiá' yinping* [high level tone]) of similar pronunciation. These characters were coined by the Basel Mission staff, and likely appeared as quite transparent to local readers.

On the contrary, the revised 1906 version adopted a set of characters borrowed either from Wenli (i.e. Classical Chinese), Mandarin or from Cantonese, which made it easier to read for an outsider, but more opaque as to the phonetic shape of dialectal lexicon. This shift to more usual characters may be explained also by practical printing reasons: the British and Foreign Bible Society had accepted to bear the expense of printing, and it was obviously easier to use standard characters than the very peculiar dialectal characters used only in Hakka. The first versions of the Chinese character editions were printed from woodblocks in Canton apparently, whereas the 1906 revised version, as well as the later

editions, were printed by the British & Foreign Bible Society in Shanghai. Later editions thus include a page (客話音表) that lists the characters used to transcribe dialectal lexicon, and provides their reading, like for instance:

吾 音涯，汝 音禺，其 居也切，畀俾被 俱音兵，等 音兜

A special diacritic mark (a small circle like those marking tones) is then added to these characters in order to indicate that they are not to be given their normal reading. The characters quoted above are thus used for the Hakka words meaning "I", "you", "his/her", "give/passive marker" and the plural suffix, that is for the meanings they refer to in classical Chinese. In earlier character versions, these words were written respectively as 厓 or 涯，禺，喙，奔 (俾) and 兜，that is using characters with a similar pronunciation or coining new ones with the addition on the left of the character for "mouth". The use of characters originally devised for Cantonese was also frequent, for the third person pronoun 佢 ("he/she") or the negation 唔, for instance.

1.2.5. Corresponding romanized and Chinese character versions

It took me some time before I could find romanized versions that seem to correspond to the texts in Chinese characters. The comparison between character versions and romanized versions has to be made for each of the portions translated, as the revision process was made portion by portion. A preliminary comparison showed that the 1881-1883 character version of the New Testament seems to correspond to the last Lepsius versions dated 1892-96.

As for the syntactic variations between the various versions, although we often find various wordings that translate the same sentence both in the romanized and in the character versions, a first look gives the feeling of a rather homogeneous *état de langue*, which a thorough comparison will either confirm or infirm. As a first step one must determine how many different versions exist for a same portion of the Bible, before working out the nature and the extent of these differences. Quite a painstaking task!

2. THE LINGUISTIC VALUE OF THE BASEL MATERIAL

2.1. Early appraisals from various scholars

H. Vömel (born 1878 in Prussia) wrote one of the first scientific works on Hakka phonology (1914). Sent to the Hakka field as a missionary for the Basel Mission from 1901 to 1911, he presented a thesis on the Hakka dialect at Leipzig University. Vömel gives a short list of the Basel Mission's translations and comments on the language they reflect.

In his "Elements of Hakka Dialectology" (1967 : 310-11), Yang Fu-mien comments the contributions of Basel missionaries:

"In 1847, in response to an appeal by the Rev. K.F.A. Güzloff, the Barmen and Basel Missionary Society sent out three missionaries to Hong Kong. Two of them, the Swede Theodore Hamberg, and the German Rudolph Lechler, learned the Hakka dialect. In 1851 Hamberg bought two old houses in Hong Kong and turned them into the church of the Basel Mission, which was the first church using the Hakka dialect for its services. Hamberg also started the compilation of a German and Hakka dictionary. This was completed by Lechler after Hamberg's death (1854) and eventually published under the title *Kleines Deutsch-Hakka Wörterbuch* (Basel 1909). Other missionaries such as E.J. Eitel, Charles Piton and M. Schaub also studied the language and the history of Hakka ...

Hamberg and Lechler's Hakka dictionary was circulated in manuscript form and copied for about fifty years by the young missionaries of the Basel and Berlin Missions. It was revised and abridged by Rev. Charles Piton, one of the best Hakka students of that time. On the basis of the Basel manuscripts and other material an English Presbyterian missionary, Rev. Donald MacIver, compiled *A Chinese-English Dictionary: Hakka Dialect as spoken in Kwangtung Province* (Shanghai 1905). This was revised by M.C. Mackenzie in 1926 and is recognized as the best existing Hakka-English dictionary."

In his study *Hakka Dialect* (1973), Mantaro Hashimoto also gives a fair account of the Basel Mission contributions. Besides, in an earlier article written in Japanese (1971), he related with emotion his first visit to the Basel Mission during the summer of 1971. Like Yang, he stressed the more directly linguistic contributions of the Basel missionaries rather than the Bibles:

"What deserves most our attention, however, from the point of view of the history of Hakka linguistics is, I think, the publication by the Basel Missionary Society of a Hakka Grammar: *Kleine Hakka-Grammatik* and a Hakka dictionary: *Kleines Deutsch-Hakka-Wörterbuch*. By the way, the former is the earliest systematic grammar of Hakka ever written. And even if it was never published, the first Hakka-English/Hakka-Deutsch sizeable dictionary was compiled by the hands of Basel Mission Society missionaries as well." [Both the grammar and the dictionary were published in 1909.] (Hashimoto 1971, my translation)

At least two other Japanese scholars have mentioned the Basel Mission translations: Shiga (1973, p. 14-15, 24, 30), and Ishida (1987) who listed in his annotated list of works related to the linguistic study of Hakka two Hakka Bibles translated by Basel missionaries (the 1887 romanized version of St. Matthew, and the 1931 edition of the whole Bible in Chinese character), that he describes as "written in an elegant colloquial style of Hakka".

My personal appreciation of these corpora is very high: when I studied some specific grammatical construction in it, such as potential complements, aspect particles, or the use of adverb [tsang] (departing tone) at the end of a sentence with a modal meaning, the data I obtained were always homogeneous, and congruent with field data or other independant sources (see Lamarre 1996, 1997, 2000). This opinion is shared by Zhang Shuangqing et al. (1999) and will likely be confirmed by further studies.

2.2. What kind of Hakka? Early comments on the matter.

MacIver's 1905 dictionary is based partly on the manuscript

dictionary prepared by the missionaries of the Basel Missionary Society (mainly Hamberg and Lechler). In his preface he states: "The Basel MSS. gives Hakka as spoken in the S.W. corner of the chief Hakka field; the present book gives in the main the language of the N.E. part of the field. This geographical fact will explain many of the variations." In the Introduction to the same dictionary (NB: the long part 2. concerning the Hakka Language has been cut from the 1926 edition), he adds:

"Almost all previous writers on Hakka – the Basel MSS., Eitel, the romanized books of the Basel missionaries, and Parker in Giles' Dictionary – all represent in the main the Sin-on form of Hakka."

Sin-on is Xin'an 新安, that is Bao'an 寶安 district, located north of Hong Kong. The area is called the *Unterland* by the Basel missionaries, as opposed to the *Oberland* (the area of Meizhou, in the N.E. of Guandong Province).

Similarly, Vömel (1914) states that the Basel Mission material reflects mainly the Hakka dialect of the area of Bao'an. *The British and Foreign Bible Society Report for the year of 1880* gives it as the dialect used in Hongkong and neighbourhood. Hashimoto (1971 : 11) too assumes that

"from what I could see of the first chapter [of the *Kleine Hakka-Grammatik*, on phonetics] and the romanized transcription, the Hakka dialect [described] is slightly different from the Meixian dialect – or at least from the contemporary Meixian dialect. Considering Rev. Hamberg's field of activity, it may be a dialect spoken in the Hong Kong area." (our translation)

This supposition is confirmed by the area Hakka contributors originate from. Kong Ayun (his family name was 江, Christian name Kong Fat-lin), one of the few Basel Mission's ordained pastors, whose name has been retained as one of the translators of the Bible, is a native of Lilong (Lilang in Mandarin, located in the Sin-on district). From the 1860's, Lilong was the chief

educational center of the Basel China Mission, with an elementary and a middle school for boys, a girls' school, and a seminary for preachers and teachers. As for Li Schin-en, the other native translator we know of (also ordained in Basel), he was brought up in Hong Kong. Tai Wunkong, who took part in the translation of the Gospel of Matthew published in 1860, also came from Xin'an district (Lutz and Lutz 1998).

At the end of the 19th century, after the 1890 General Conference to be more precise, various committees having been established to coordinate the so-called "literary work" (translation and editing work) by the different missions working in a same linguistic field, we find records in the Editorial Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society that hint that the Hakka of the Basel Mission translations was not conform to a more eastern use of the dialect:

"Hakka (Chinese character). – A representative Committee has been formed for the revision of the Scriptures, with a view to making the books more suitable to the whole Hakka field." (*Report of the BFBS for the year of 1893*, Appendix B: A Record of translation and revision ... 1892-93).

During the same period, the Basel Mission activities spread into the *Oberland* as well, as is reflected by the move of the seminary, then by the relocation of the administrative headquarters of the Basel Hakka Mission into the Meizhou area, so one can suppose that the Basel Mission Hakka corpora may have reflected more the Meizhou dialect in their later stage (end of the 19th c.). It is significant that Charles Piton, who was posted in the Oberland station of Nyenhangli (Yuankeng 源坑) in the mid-1860s, in his "Remarks on the Syllabary of the Hakka Dialect by Mr. E.H. Parker" (1880), observed that the Hakka dialect of the Sin-on district is "very little suited for the fixing of a Hakka syllabary". Piton picked up several phonetic features given by Parker as Hakka features in general, to note that they were actually specific to the Sin-on area only. Those features do not appear in the Jiayingzhou (Meizhou) dialect, which is for Piton the purest form of the Hakka

dialect, contrasting with the Sin-on (Xin'an) dialect that has been influenced by the Puntis (本地, i.e. the Cantonese): confusion between [n] and [l], [ts'en] 曾 and [ts'ien] 錢, [kong] 江 and [kuang] 光, [shu] 書 and [shiu] 手, etc...

In the Basel Mission Archives, there are a considerable amount of letters and meeting minutes that will be helpful in unraveling the whole story of the Basel Mission linguistic policy, both in its schools and in its translating work. I hope someone versed both in Hakka phonetics and in 19th century German manuscripts will take up this task. This has been done partly by Lutz and Lutz (1998), but not for a linguistic purpose.

2.3. Internal evidence: a few phonological and grammatical features

Only a thorough analysis of each of the many volumes kept at Basel will allow us to know for sure to what extent this material reflects a homogeneous dialect, to what extent and when it shifted from the Hakka of the Hong Kong area to the Hakka dialect of Meixian, if it ever did. In her study on a Hakka community closely related to the Basel Mission, Constable (1994 : 36) writes that:

"According to one man from Shung Him Tong [崇謙堂], he was grateful to the Basel missionaries because they helped create a unified, standardized 'beautiful Hakka church dialect', drawing from the Baoan and Meixian dialects, so that all Hakka could communicate with one another."

Such a *koine* would of course integrate features from various areas. To give a rough idea of the phonetic features reflected in the Basel Mission material, I used the criteria adopted by MacIver (1905) to distinguish between 3 groups of Hakka dialects, i.e. Huizhou (Fui-chu), Meixian (Ka-yin-chu) and Chaozhou (Ch'au-chu). The Basel Mission material referred to in this preliminary survey is a handy volume dated 1884 (*Dialogue for Confirmation* 結過洗禮約問答), which happens to be written in a combination of Lepsius script and Chinese characters. When the

characters were not easily available, I used a schoolbook called *First Book of Reading* (*khi³ mung² tshen³ hok⁵*, 1879), which has a corresponding character version 啓蒙淺學 (undated, abbreviated into QM). For the third group of criteria I consulted also the *Kleine Hakka Grammatik* (1909, abbreviated into KHG). From the readings of the characters that appear in the Basel Mission material, and if Maciver's criteria are valid, it seems that the dialect reflected has much in common with the Huizhou group (to which belongs the Hakka dialect of the Hong Kong area). [N.B. the tonal marks are omitted here.]

More precisions will of course be obtained through a thorough analysis of this material, by checking it with recent survey data about Hakka dialects. One will find Laurent Sagart's 1982 description of the dialect spoken in Sung Him Tong (a Hong Kong Hakka community in the New Territories founded by the Basel Mission, the same that was studied by Constable) very helpful. Sagart also compares in detail many other phonetic features of that dialect with some Hakka dialects spoken in other areas. Henne's study (1964) on the Sathewkok dialect, located in the same Hong Kong area, will be a useful reference too.

A first and recent step in this direction is Zhang, Wan & Zhuang (1999). They made use of some Basel material to compare its phonological system and some lexical items with the Hakka dialect spoken nowadays in the Hong Kong and Dongguan area, and found many common features. Liu Zhenfa's work will also help shedding light on the matter. In his 1999 article comparing Meixian, Taiwan and Hong Kong Hakka dialects, he noted for instance that the latter read passive marker 分 (or 奔, the verb "to give") [pin] instead of [pun], and that the negation (a syllabic nasal) was pronounced with a *yinping* (high level) tone in Hong Kong Hakka, whereas in Meixian (called Meizhou now) we have a *yangping* (low level) tone. Liu argues from the *yinping* pronunciation of the negation that Hong Kong Hakka is not always closer to Cantonese than Meixian or Taiwan Hakka. These two features of Hong Kong Hakka also appear in the Basel Mission material, and I found them in Zijin (located between Hong Kong and Meizhou) too in October 2000.

Initials:

	distinction of l and n	去	口	褲	快	光	官	頑	外	毋	物
BM 1884	+	hi	heu	/	khai	kong	kon	/	ngoi	/	vut
BM QM	+	hi	heu	fu	khwai	kong	kon	/	ngoi	/	vut
Huizhou	-	hi	heu	fu	fai	kong	kon	ngan	ngoi	vu	vut
Meixian	+	hi	heu	khu	khwai	kwong	kwon	ngan	ngoi	vu	vut
Chaozhou	+	khi	kheu	khu	khwai	kwong	kwan	ngwan	ngwai	mu	mut

Finals:

	鞋	雞	生	爭	好	帽	朝	善	錢	天	列	穢	歲	館	碗	牛	慧
1884	hai	/	sang	/	hau	mau	/	shen	/	then	let	voi	/	/	/	nyu	fui
QM	hai	kai	sang	tsang	hau	mau	šau	shen	tshen	then	/	voi	soi	/	von	nyu	/
Hui	hai	kai	sang	tsang	hau	mau	chau	shen	tshen	then	let	voi	soi	kwon	von	nyu	fui
Mei	he	ke	sen	tsen	/	/	chau	shan	tshien	thien	liet	ve	se	kwon	von	nyu	fi
Chao	he	ke	sen	tsen	hó	mò	cheu	shan	tshien	thien	liet	ve	se	kwon	van	nyeu	fi

Usual lexicon:

	present participle	diminutive	this	above	to place
BM 1884	kin	tsai	le	/	fong
BM QM	kin 緊	tsai	nya	/	fong
BM KHG	kin ³	tsai ³	nya ³ or le ³	tang ³ kau ¹	/
Huizhou	kin	tsai	nya	tang kau	fong
Meixian	ten	tsu	le / ye	tang kau	piong
Chaozhou	kin	tsu	li	shong poi	piong

From the point of view of the syntactic features reflected in the Basel Mission material, facts hint at links with the Hong Kong area too. In Lamarre (1996, 1997), I described the potential complement according to a late (1931) version of the New Testament in Chinese character, and found specific features, distinct indeed from the Meixian dialect, and closer to Cantonese (for instance placing the negation before the verb when negating the compound V+*de* 得). Lamarre (2000) analyses the sentence-final use of adverb TSANG (正 "just", corresponding to Mandarin 才 *cái* or 再 *zài*) in Basel Mission *New Testament* and in the Zijin Hakka dialect (Guangdong), and claims that this sentence-final use is prevalent mainly in the central part of Guangdong.

Henne (1966), however, considers the *Kleine Hakka Grammatik*, the grammarbook issued in 1909 by the Basel Mission, as a description of the Meixian variety of Hakka. From a first look at it, I am not sure he is totally right: for instance the diminutive form added to nouns is given as *tsai*³, with the mention that in Tschonglok (長樂 = Wuhua 五華) *tsi*³*li*¹ is used instead. Another example: the aspect markers described in this grammarbook, the durative 緊 *kin* or the completive 開 *hoi* for instance, correspond to those appearing in the Bibles, but do not fit with Meixian either, which uses respectively 等 [ten] and 撇 [het] or [phet]. To my opinion Basel Mission's grammarbook reflects mainly the central area of Guangdong, though it sometimes tried to include various features of the whole Hakka field.

3. ON THE LEPSIUS SYSTEM OF ROMANIZATION

3.1. Karl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884) was a German Egyptologist who in 1855 published a *Standard Alphabet for Reducing Unwritten Languages and Foreign Graphic Systems to a Uniform Orthography in European Letters*. [The book bears the mention: "By Dr. R. Lepsius, Professor at the University, and member of the Royal Academy, Berlin. Recommended for adoption by the Church Missionary Society". See Lepsius 1855]. This system was to be

used by many missionaries to describe African and Asian languages (the present IPA system was developed only in the late 1880s). Two handbooks of Lepsius Script (the first edition of his *Standard Alphabet*, see Lepsius 1855) can be found in the Chinese Collection of the Basel Mission. The handbook was designed to provide missionaries with an efficient instrument for their linguistic work:

"... for many years the committees of the principal Missionary Societies have regarded it as an important object to reduce to writing the languages of the nations to which their missionaries have penetrated, and to prepare in all these languages translations of the sacred Scriptures, as well as Christian tracts. This presupposes an accurate and scientific study of those languages, and the preparation of grammars and dictionaries, which, in order to be clearly understood, must be founded upon a comparison of the foreign with the European languages, and upon the latest improvements of linguistic science." (*Handbook*, p. 5).

The system was based on "physiological", that is articulatory, principles. The "Advertisement" at the beginning of the book includes declarations by various missionary societies which adopted this system as a "standard alphabet" to be used in fields like Africa (we find symbols for clicks in it). Among them are two German-speaking societies which happened later to work among the Guangdong Hakkas, the Basle Evangelical Missionary Society and the Rhine Missionary Society (or "Barmen"). From the 1855 edition I consulted (and the introduction by Lechler to his 1860 translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew), it seems, though, that nothing was designed for the transcription of tones, which were likely devised by Lechler.

3.2. The Lepsius system of Romanization has been used, with a few variations, for all the romanized Hakka texts published by the Basel missionaries – the first being the translation of St. Matthew's Gospel by R. Lechler – as well as for the unpublished manuscript dictionary by Reverends Hamberg and Lechler. Lepsius commented himself on the first translation of Matthew by Lechler (his 1864

letter is kept in the Archives). Besides, all of the Basel Mission schools used Lepsius romanization to teach their pupils in Chinese:

"The Missionaries of the Rhenish and Berlin Societies, as well as those of the Basle Society, teach the Roman alphabet in all their schools; and it is through the children thus taught, that the knowledge of Scriptural Truth is expected to reach the parents and others. These Missionaries warmly advocate the desirableness of using translations into the colloquial dialects, as they are convinced that the Scriptures cannot be made very accessible to the unlearned solely through the Delegates' version of the Bible." [Annual Report of the BFBS for the year 1873].

The Delegate's version is written in Classical Chinese. This policy is confirmed by the reports given by Revs. Reusch, Gussman and Bender at the 1890 General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China (p. 84-85):

"Pupils learn to read and write Romanised colloquial well in one year, giving less than half the school hours to the study. To learn to read and write as well in character would require several years, giving all the school hours to it. In Romanized colloquial, after one year's training, the pupils can write short essays and write out lessons in arithmetic and other studies. [...] Romanized colloquial is an aid in schools to learning character [...]."

3.3. However, when missionaries from other missions (mostly English-speaking), who had in the meantime devised and developed other romanized transcriptions, tried to coordinate their efforts in the Hakka field, the fact that the Lepsius transcription system was not widely used in China became a hindrance. Thus Donald MacIver remarked about the romanization system he adopted in his dictionary (1905) that "The Basel MSS. and the books published by the Basel Mission are according to the standard Alphabet of Lepsius, a very scientific system. It is, however, difficult and expensive to print so much so that all other missions decline to

adopt it." (Introduction, 1905). Such a stance can be found in the following record of the *Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for the year 1893* (Appendix B: A Record of Translation and Revision ... 1892-93): "Hakka (Roman character). – It has been suggested to the Revision Committee to drop Lepsius' system of Romanisation and to follow the lines adopted in the Fûhchow, Amoy."

Actually, the British and Foreign Bible Society did reissue in 1918 another Hakka Romanised New Testament, first published in 1916 by the English Presbyterian Mission at Wukingfu (五經富 North of Swatow), as well as its revised version in 1924. The European translator of this Bible was M.C. Mackenzie, who edited MacIver's *Hakka-English Dictionary* in a revised and enlarged version in 1926. The romanisation system used in this version was thus MacIver's system.

On the contrary, the last Bibles printed in Lepsius script date to the end of the 19th century. All the editions in Lepsius script were printed in Basel, even after the BFBS agreed to bear the expense in 1865, probably for technical reasons. Bibles in Chinese character, which began to be published in 1881, were not printed at Basel but in China, first in Hong Kong and Canton, and later in Shanghai.

In spite of the pressure put on the Basel Missionary Society to give up Lepsius romanization, the Basel Mission's own publications went on using it even in the 20th century: the *Abridged German-Hakka dictionary* and the *Small Grammarbook* published in 1909, quite after this recommendation, still use the Lepsius system, as well as other romanized religious books used in the Basel Mission's Churches or Seminaries. Although most of the books in Lepsius were printed in Basel, the Basel China Mission did print Hakka texts in Lepsius Script in China. For instance *Heidenbote* (a review issued by the Basel Mission) of Feb. 1880 reports the publication in Hong Kong of a new monthly review (*Šin⁴-fui⁴ Nyet⁴-pau⁴*), edited by Reusch. They had fonts sent from Europe to print this review in the Lepsius script.

4. CONCLUSION

In his 1971 article, Pr. Hashimoto advocated whoever would visit the Basel Mission Society to draw up a complete list of its Hakka Bibles, and to ask the director to publish a catalogue of its collection — or at least of the Hakka Collection. When I visited Basel for the first time in September 1996, I felt compelled by his words: fifteen years have passed now since Pr. Hashimoto left us... There is still much to be done before a full catalogue may be published, but I hope this short introduction (which is completed by a tentative list of the Bibles and other documents in Hakka kept in the Basel Mission Library, see the *Cahiers'* web site) will be a first step to realize Pr. Hashimoto's wishes. As for "the earliest systematic grammar of Hakka ever written", thanks to the help of Dr. Hilary Chappell (La Trobe University, Australia) who has just completed the translation of the German text into English, I hope we will soon be able to publish an English version including a character transcription and English gloss of the examples.

APPENDIX: A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

We made use of various sources, among which the Personal Files kept at the Basel Mission's Archives.

HAMBERG Theodore 韓山文，韓山明 (1839-1854). Wylie (1867 *Memorials...*, p. 159-160) provides us with the following information:

"Theodore Hamberg, a native of Sweden, was remarkably gifted with vocal power, which was developed in his early days. Being ordained to the ministry of the Gospel, he was sent to China as a missionary, by the Ev.MS at Basle, to labour in connection with the Chinese Missionary Union under the direction of Dr. Gutzlaff. He left Europe in company with the Rev. R. Lechler about the end of 1846, and reached Hong Kong on March 19th, 1847. Being appointed to the eastern part of Kwangtung province as his sphere, he early began to itinerate with the native preachers, but met with some opposition from the authorities at the outset. When Dr. Gutzlaff left for Europe in September, 1849, Mr. Hamberg took charge of the Chinese Union; but on discovering the impositions that were practised, he gave up all connection with it. He spent a good deal of time at Pukak [布吉], Fungfo and Lilong among the Hakkas, a race of Chinese settlers in the Eastern part of the province, and was the first missionary to learn their dialect. He was elected a delegate for Hong Kong to the Committee for translating the Old Testament, which met at Shanghai in 1850, but never went to take his place there. In 1852, he was married at Hong Kong, and returned to his station at Pukak, where he remained till the spring of 1854, but was then induced to go to Hong Kong on account of his health, and there he died on May 13th. [...]"

Apart from a Manuscript dictionary of the Hakka dialect (Hakka-English, uncompleted) kept in the Archives of the Basel Mission, he has also written a *General Account of Christian martyrs* (apparently in Mandarin), and published books on the Taiping leader Hong Xiuquan: *The visions of Hung-Siu-Tshuen and*

the Origins of the Kwang-si Insurrection. (Hongkong, 1854) and *The Chinese Rebel Chief, Hung-Siu-Tshuen, and the origin of the Insurrection in China.* (London, 1855).

KONG Ayun 江 ?? (Christian name Fat-lin, 1845-1928). Born 4 Feb. 1845 at Lilong 李朗 (Lilang, north of Shenzhen) in a family closely linked to the Basel Mission (see Lutz & Lutz 1998 for further details). Baptized at 13, attended the Basel Mission school then was sent to the Basel Missionhaus in March 1865, as the second Chinese missionary. There he learned English, German, Latin, Hebrew etc., and was ordained at Stuttgart Aug. 1871. After he returned to China in 1871, he was posted to Nyenhangli, then to Hoschuwan for 17 years. He left the Basel Mission in 1901 to become an interpreter for the Qingdao Prefecture (German-Chinese), went to Tsinanfu (Jinan, Shandong) in 1903, but retired in 1911 to Kutschuk 古竹 where he died on the 8 of July 1928. See the obituary notice in the *Heidenbote* 1929: "Ein Chinesischer Veteran". Lutz and Lutz (1998 : 30) note about him:

With his education, position as an ordained minister, and success in winning conversions, he frequently reported directly to Basel and he had the prestige to act as spokesman to the Chinese. Opposing the heavy reliance on romanization in Basel schools, for example, he advocated greater attention to Chinese characters and literature. [...] Also among his credits was the translation of eight books of the New Testament into Hakka with publication in both romanized Chinese and characters in 1883.

His mother worked with the mission after his father's death, and was able to write Christian texts for women in romanized Hakka, (ibid. pp. 25-28).

LECHLER Rudolph Christian Friedrich 黎力基 (1824-1908). Was with Th. Hamberg the pioneer and founder of the Basel Mission to China. Arrived in China with Hamberg in March 1847, aged 23. They went out in response to Guztloff's advocacy, but found his plans impracticable. Lechler first worked unsuccessfully in the

Swatow area (Iamtsau) then moved back to Hong Kong in 1852 and decided to work among the Hakkas. Stayed in Europe 1858-60 for health reasons, back in Hong Kong in 1861 with a new wife (the first had died in 1854). Based mainly in Hong Kong and Lilong but travelled the whole Hakka field. Spent his last years in China at Hinnen 興寧. Returned home 1899, after 52 years of work. Was supervising the whole China Mission, and keeping in touch with the Hakka emigrated communities in Hawaii, Borneo and Guyana.

Is known for the first translation of the Bible (Matthew) into the Hakka dialect (using the Lepsius romanisation system) published in 1860 in Berlin. Compiled a manuscript Hakka dictionary kept in the Archives of the Basel Mission, and contributed to the later translations of other parts of the Bible as well as of other Christian works (Hymnbooks etc.). Wrote numerous articles in the *Chinese Recorder* (for instance in 1871, and 1878 "The Hakka Chinese").

Other works: *Drei Vorträge über China*, Neue Folge, Basel 1874, S. 224 ff. [quoted by Vömel]

Biography by Schlatter, Wilhelm. *Rudolf Lechler. Ein Lebensbild aus der Basler Mission in China*. Basel, 1911.

LI Chin-en [or Li Schin En] 李承恩. Born in 1855, as the youngest son of a Basel Mission preacher. His father Li Tschin-kau 李正高, who was acquainted with Hong Xiuquan and Hong Rengan, came from Tshyang-yen 清遠 (Qingyuan, Guangdong, south of Yingde). Was baptised at Hong Kong in 1859, attended the Basel Mission's school in Lilong.

He was then recommended by Lechler to go to Basel, where he was educated from 1872 to 1878 and was ordained in 1878. Back to China, he served as a catechist at the Hong Kong Hakka Church (1883-8), then was posted in Lilong, Longheu, Lilong again (1890), then in Khitschong (1897). Married the daughter of Shung Him Tong's founder, pastor Ling Kailin. Left the Basel Mission in 1897. Died at Kiau Tschau (probably Jiaozhou, Shandong) in 1908. [Sources: Constable 1994, Lee 1994 etc.] According to Lutz and Lutz (1998 : 142), during a period of ill health he was assigned to translate the Book of Psalms into Hakka Colloquial.

PITON Charles 畢安 (1835-1905). Born in Strasbourg in 1835, worked for a while for an publishing house, attended the Basel seminary from 1859 to 1862, ordained in 1862. After a brief stay on the Gold Coast (West Africa, in 1862-1863), was sent to China. Arrived in China in 1864. Married in 1868 in Strasbourg Sophie Perrenon von Hirrlingen, who joined him in 1869 to lead the boys-school in Nyenhangli 嘉應 (Jiaying Prefecture). In 1874 went to Lilong to replace Bellon and worked at the translation of the Bible.

In 1884, after twenty years in China, he returned home owing to his wife's health, and until 1905 engaged in Deputation work for the Basel Mission in Neuchâtel (cf. *Le Missionnaire*, Lausanne). Dies 1905 in Crailsheim, Württemberg. (cf. *Heidenbote* 1905 : 78-9). Piton wrote many articles on the Hakkas, among them one entitled "Remarks on the syllabary of the Hakka dialect by Mr. E.H. Parker", in *China Review* vol. VIII (1879-80) pp. 316-318. He also published various books on China such as *La Chine, sa religion, ses mœurs, ses missions* (1880), *L'infanticide en Chine* (1887), *Confucius, sa vie, son oeuvre et son enseignement*, etc...

TAI Wunkong 戴文光 1823-1889. Native of Xin'an district not far from Lilang, he received classical education and was a school-master in Kowloon. He became associated with Hamberg in 1849 until his death in 1854 and served as his language teacher in classical Chinese, whereas Dai's wife, also a native of Xin'an district, instructed him in Hakka. The only information I could get on him comes from Lutz and Lutz 1998, who comment in detail on his contribution to the linguistic work of the Base missionaries (pp. 57-58):

"Shortly after returning to Hong Kong from Dongfu in July 1849, Hamberg had undertaken a systematic study of the Hakka dialect. He also began to devise aids for Basel missionaries learning Hakka and for the composition of Christian literature in romanized Hakka: a syllabary, a phrase book, and a dictionary. In January 1850 he sent Basel a graph illustrating the Hakka and

Mandarin equivalents of thirty-five German words along with a report on the phonetic differences between Hakka and Mandarin... A half year later he reported further progress: 'I have now begun a systematic compilation of Hakka based on Dietman's system [of romanization]. Once finished, it will contain 20,000 examples, i.e., sentences.'

Not until 1852 did Hamberg involve Dai Wenguang in his systematization of the Hakka dialect. This was because the whole project was anchored to the latin alphabet, and none of his Gehilfen was conversant with it. it was only in January 1852 that Hamberg began to teach his Hakka associates and their families the Latin alphabet. Though it took several months for most of them to learn the technique of romanizing their spoken dialect, Dai mastered it in a month. Therafter he and Hamberg worked closely together on the linguistic project. Hamberg reported: 'My Gehilfe Dai has been of much help to me in relation to the language and I work with him continuously on a dictionary of the Hakka language. This is an improved version of the work that I had begun as early as 1849.'

After Hamberg's death 1854 Lechler completed Hamberg's dictionary. It was published in 1854 under Lechler's name. Lechler and Dai began to work almost immediately on a revision:

"The Gehilfe Dai is presently of indispensable use to me because he knows how to write his language in European letters. As you doubtless know, there are not enough [Chinese] characters in which to express the popular dialect, but it can be written in our alphabet. I go over what he has written and copy it in my book [dictionary] together with the German translation.'...

By the end of 1857 Lechler stated that Dai had finished inserting the Chinese characters and the revised Hakka dictionary was going into page proof. 'After Dai had finished, I put him to work translating the Gospel of Matthew into the popular dialect using Latin script... Along with such work, Dai is also my [language] teacher, preaching Gehilfe, and secretary, depending on my needs... With respect to the translation of the Hakka dictionary into English, I have now reached the letter R.' Lechler left on home furlough in 1858, returning to China in 1860; that same

year he published the Hakka translation of the Book of Matthew.... Obviously Dai was much more than an assistant in the translation and linguistic work; he did much of the actual composition in romanized Hakka, with Lechler or Winnes revising the draft and in the case of the dictionary furnishing German definitions; Dai was also responsible for any publications employing Chinese characters."

Dai broke with the Basel Mission after Lechler had left to Europe in 1858 and reverted with most of his family to the traditional religious and moral beliefs and customs of the Hakka Chinese (Lutz and Lutz 1998 : 68). According to Lutz & Lutz (1998 : 206), converts were expected to forsake the Confucian classics and their doctrines, but Dai, although he was willing to admit the validity of the spiritual concepts of Christianity, saw no need to condemn Confucian ethics. His rejection of Christian faith thus illustrates the difficulties of the missionaries in appealing to the *literati*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was carried out during a sabbatical leave in France in 1996-1997, and was made possible by the gracious assistance of several people. I am especially indebted to :

- Mr Marcus Buess and Mr. Paul Jenkins, respectively librarian and archivist for the Basel Evangelical Society, who gave me unlimited access to the Basel Mission Collection and the best possible working conditions. Pr. Jenkins remembered the last visit paid by Pr. Hashimoto to Basel.
- Rev. Alan Jesson, in charge with the Bible Society's Collection in Cambridge University Library, who helped me through the Library so I can get the best of my brief stay in Cambridge, and see various Bibles and other documents of this very rich collection.

- Pr. Y. Murakami, of Tenri University, who helped me through the Tenri University Library's collection of Chinese Bibles, and other colleagues like Shi Rujie, Y. Kizu, and A. Noma who provided me with various information concerning Chinese Bibles held respectively by the British and Foreign Bible Society, Doshisha University and Tohoku University (the latter holds 19th century editions of the Basel Bibles in Chinese characters). I also thank T. Klein, from Freiburg University, who helped me through the Basel archives and other related sources, for his enlightening comments about the historical background of Basel Mission's linguistic work and Charles Piton's contribution.

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