

**The Term Question in Korea 1882-1911, and its Chinese Roots:
A Study in Continuity and Divergence**

**BY
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been presented to any other academic institution than the University of Edinburgh, to which it is submitted for the award of the degree of doctor of philosophy. It has been composed by myself, and is a result of my own research.

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2011

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to study Western missionaries' theological debate over the choice of the name of God, known as the Term Question, in the Korean Bible, a controversy which implied a certain theological position in terms of the degree of continuity or discontinuity between existing Korean theistic belief and faith in the God of Bible.

This thesis seeks three goals. First, it attempts to analyse the Chinese roots of the Term Question in Korea. In China, the Term Question first arose among Roman Catholic missions from 1637 to 1742 between an indigenous Confucian term, *Shangti* 上帝 (Sovereign on High), favoured by the Jesuits, notably Matteo Ricci, and a neologism, *T'ienzhu* 天主 (the Lord of Heaven), used by the Dominicans and the Franciscans. A second phase of the Chinese Term Question involved nineteenth-century Protestant missions, and confronted missions with a choice between *Shangti*, most notably advocated by James Legge of the London Missionary Society, and *Shen* 神 (a generic term for god), supported by a majority of American missionaries.

These three Chinese theistic terms were imported into the Korea mission field. John Ross of the United Presbyterian Church in Manchuria, in his first Korean New Testament (1877-1887), translated the name of God as *Hananim*, the Supreme Lord of Korean indigenous religion, on the basis of the *Shangti* edition of the Delegates' Version. The first Korean Roman Catholics and later the Anglican missions in Korea adopted *Ch'onzhu* (Chinese *T'ienzhu*), following Catholic practice in China. A Korean diplomat in Japan, Su-Jung Lee, adopted *Shin* (Chinese *Shen*) from the *Shen* edition of the Chinese Bible, in his Korean Bible translations (1883-1885). The need to choose between these three Korean theistic terms, derived theologically from the three corresponding Chinese theistic terms, consequently triggered the Term Question in Korea from 1882 to 1911.

Second, the thesis argues that there was a significant theological continuity between the Chinese and Korean Term Questions. The Term Question in both China and Korea proceeded on a similar pattern; it was a terminological controversy between an indigenous theistic term (*Shangti* and *Hananim*) on the one hand and a neologism (*T'ienzhu* and Korean *Ch'onzhu*) or a generic term (*Shen* and Korean *Shin*) on the other hand. Central to both Term Questions was the theological issue of whether a primitive monotheism, congruent with Christian belief, had existed among the Chinese and Koreans. It will suggest that whilst those who adhered to a degeneration theory of the history of religions used either *Shangti* or *Hananim* as the name of the God of the Bible, those who rejected the existence of primitive monotheism preferred to use the neologism or the generic term.

Third, this thesis suggests that there was, nevertheless, a significant divergence between the Term Question in China and that in Korea. Whereas the Term Question in China became polarised for over three centuries between two equal and opposite parties – between the Jesuits (*Shangti*) and the Dominicans-Franciscans (*T'ienzhu*), and later between the *Shangti* party and the *Shen* party in Protestant missions, that in

Korea was a short-term argument for three decades between a vast majority (of the *Hananim* party) and a small minority (the opponents of *Hananim*). It is argued that the disproportion in Korea in favour of *Hananim* was due to the much closer analogy between *Hananim* and the Christian trinity, as seen in the Dan-Gun myth, than was the case with *Shangti* in Chinese religion. For this reason, the thesis concludes by suggesting that the adoption of the indigenous monotheistic term, *Hananim*, in a Christian form contributed to the higher rate of growth of the Korean church compared to that of the church in China.

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(Lamentations 3:22-23)

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fails. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness

我們不至消滅、是出於耶和華諸般的慈愛、是因他的憐憫、不至斷絕。
每早晨這都是新的。你的誠實、極其廣大。

여호와의 인자와 긍휼이 무궁하시므로... 이것들이 아침마다 새로우니 주의 성실하심이 크심이로다.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The Bible Translations, Societies and Committees

ABS	American Bible Society
AV-KBT	Authorised Version of the (entire) Korean Bible Translation in 1911
AV-KNT	Authorised Version of the Korean New Testament in 1906
BCK	Bible Committee of Korea in 1904
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
CBT	Chinese Bible Translation
DV	Delegates' Version
KBS	Korean Bible Society
KBT	Korean Bible Translation
KNT	Korean New Testament
NBSS	National Bible Society of Scotland
PBCK	Permanent Bible Committee of Korea formed in 1887
PEBCK	Permanent Executive Bible Committee of Korea formed in 1893
RV	Revised Version
SJL	Su-Jung Lee (Version)

Denominations, Church Bodies and Mission Societies

ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
AMN	American Methodist Episcopal Church, North
AMS	American Methodist Episcopal Church, South
CMS	Church Missionary Society
FMB	Foreign Mission Board
GCEMK	General Council of Evangelical Missions in Korea
GCMC	General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai (in 1877, 1890 and 1907)
IPC	Irish Presbyterian Church
LMS	London Missionary Society
PCUS	Presbyterian Church in the United States (South)
PCUSA	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (North)
SPG	Society of the Propagation of the Gospel
UPC	United Presbyterian Church (of Scotland)
USPG	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

Archives, Libraires and Publications

<i>CR</i>	<i>Chinese Recorder</i>
<i>CRMJ</i>	<i>Chinese Recorder & Missionary Journal</i>
<i>CUL</i>	<i>Cambridge University Library</i>

<i>DHKBS</i>	<i>Documents of the History of the Korean Bible Society</i>
<i>HKBS</i>	<i>History of Korea Bible Society</i>
<i>HGUP</i>	<i>Horace G. Underwood Papers</i>
<i>IBMR</i>	<i>International Bulletin of Missionary Research</i>
<i>IKCH</i>	<i>Institute for Korean Church History</i>
<i>KMF</i>	<i>Korea Mission Field</i>
<i>KR</i>	<i>Korea Review</i>
<i>MRW</i>	<i>Missionary Review of the World</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Religions of Eastern Asia</i>
<i>RGCPMC</i>	<i>Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai</i>
<i>SOAS</i>	<i>School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London</i>
<i>TMLH</i>	<i>True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven</i>
<i>UPM</i>	<i>United Presbyterian Magazine</i>
<i>WMC</i>	<i>World Missionary Conference Edinburgh, 1910</i>
<i>YCHD</i>	<i>Yun Chi-Ho's Diary (Yun Chi-Ho Ilgi)</i>

Chapter 1: Introduction

(Acts 17:22-23) Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious, for as I was walking along I saw your many altars. And one of them had this inscription on it – “To an Unknown God.” You have been worshipping him without knowing who he is, and now I wish to tell you about him.

1. Introduction to the Thesis

It would not be an exaggeration to say that no issue has been more controversial in the history of Christian missions in most mission fields than translating the name of God into vernacular languages, known as the Term Question, because the progress of Christian missions has essentially depended on the ability of indigenous people to acknowledge the Christian God in terms that made sense within their traditional worldview.¹ Before introducing the specific subject matter of this thesis, we will briefly cite a number of examples which illustrate how this theme has recurred throughout the history of Christian missions.

In the sixteenth century, in the case of Roman Catholic missions among the Quechua-speaking Peruvian Indians in Latin America, while the indigenous people had an obvious monotheistic notion of the Christian God in the belief in their own divinities, such as *Viracocha* and *Pachacamac*, the Spanish Roman Catholic missionaries who were aligned with Francisco Pizarro’s conquest of Peru in 1535 and the Jesuit missionary José de Acosta rejected the use of the vernacular divine names but introduced a loan-word *Dios*.² The foreign missionaries’ imposition of a loan-word *Dios* upon the Peruvian Indians resulted in ‘two different modes of naming God’, because the Peruvian Indians adhered to their ancient faith in the names of *Viracocha* and *Pachacamac*.³

In sixteenth-century Japan, when Francis Xavier (1506-1552) and his Jesuit confreres translated the Catechism into Japanese in Malacca in 1547 with the aid of a

¹ Bong-Rin Ro, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans’, in *The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God*, eds. William David Spencer and Aida Besançon Spencer (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), pp. 214-15; Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2009), p. 192.

² Sang-Keun Kim, *Strange Names of God* (New York & Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 86-94.

³ *Ibid*, p. 99.

Japanese assistant Anjiro, a former *Shingon* Buddhist, they adopted the name of God as *Dainichi* (大日: the Great Sun), a Buddhist term, by accepting Anjiro's translation.⁴ However, the Jesuit missionaries surprisingly took the view that *Dainichi* was totally incompatible with the biblical understanding of God owing to its inescapably Buddhist associations.⁵ Thus they re-translated the divine name as *Daisu*, a Japanese pronunciation of the Latin term for God *Deus*.⁶ Yet, *Daisu* turned out to be more problematic term than *Dainichi*, because *Daisu* was phonetically understood as a *Great Lie* (*dai uso*) by the Japanese people.⁷

In the Philippines in the eighteenth century, while the Tagalog-speaking Filipinos already had the notion of a Supreme Being under the name of *bathala*, the Dominican missionaries aggressively urged the indigenous Christians to use *Dios* as the name of God with the result that the local people merged *Dios* with *bathala* within their existing framework.⁸

We take up one more case relating to Protestant missionaries' translation of the Bible into the Zulu language in South Africa in the nineteenth century. In opposition to the use of the Zulus' indigenous divine name, *uNkulunkulu*, the American Methodist and ABCFM missionaries introduced the new terms, such as *uJehova*, *Elohim* and *uTixo* (used by earlier missionaries among the Xhosa people, the Zulus' neighbours), while Anglican missionaries, such as Reverend Francis Owen and Bishop John Colenso, borrowed *uDio*, derived phonetically from the Latin *Deus*.⁹ In contrast, the Norwegian missionaries adopted the indigenous divine name *uNkulunkulu*.¹⁰ As a result, the missionaries among the Zulus became embroiled in the Term Question for over a century. However, no Zulu Christians chose to use the

⁴ For further study on Xavier's mission in Japan, see Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. P., 1994), pp. 20-31; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 2nd ed., pp. 128-33; Ross and Sanneh writes the Japanese names as 'Yajiro', whereas Kim writes it as 'Anjiro'.

⁵ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 29.

⁶ George H. Dunne, S. J., *Generation of Giants* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), p. 281.

⁷ Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 84-5.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 24-5.

⁹ John S. Mbiti, 'Challenges of Language, Culture, and Interpretation in Translating the Greek New Testament', *Swedish Missiological Themes*, vol. 97, no. 2 (2009), pp. 148-49; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, pp. 207-08; the problem is that there are some obvious differences of this story between Mbiti's account and Sanneh's account. However, I merged the two different stories.

¹⁰ Mbiti, 'Challenges of Language', pp. 148-49.

loan-words – *uJehova, Elohim, uTixo* and *uDio* –, and as a result, the missionaries found they had no option but to adopt the vernacular Zulu term for God *uNkulunkulu*, denoting ‘a being which elicits a feeling and atmosphere of antiquity and age’¹¹, in the Zulu Bible translations of 1897, 1922 and 1924.¹²

In short, we may find that the Term Question has recurred in different forms in most mission fields – in Latin America, Asia and Africa – since Christians commenced their cross-cultural mission.

We may also note that a common question among these terminological controversies, that has provoked consistent disagreement among Christian missionaries, has been the issue of whether a name of a highest deity of indigenous religion could be adopted as the name of God in the vernacular Bible translation and Christian worship or whether a foreign loan-word from a biblical or ‘a missionary language’ (such as *Jehovah, Elohim, Theos, Deus, Deos*, etc.) should be introduced as the name of God in the vernacular Bible translation.¹³ To a deeper and wider extent, the common question underlying these controversies was the issue of ‘whether the Christian God had preceded among the indigenous peoples before Christian missionaries’ arrival’¹⁴ or whether there was a radical discontinuity of monotheistic belief among the indigenous peoples between ‘pre-Christian past’ and ‘Christian present’.¹⁵

In this respect, Andrew F. Walls has argued that a vernacular divine name of indigenous religion could be suitable for the name of the Christian God, for it reflects the continuity of Christian monotheistic belief among indigenous religions between

¹¹ Axel-Ivor Berglund, *Zulu Thought Patterns and Symbolism* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1976), pp. 32-7 cited in William A. Brown, ‘Concepts of God in Africa’, *The Journal of Religious Thought*, vol. 39, no. 2 (Fall-Wint. 1982-83), p. 14.

¹² Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 208; however, Mbiti notes that ‘the latest translation of the New Testament and Psalms into Zulu (1986), uses (as may be appropriate) three vernacular names of God’; cf. Mbiti, ‘Challenges of Language’, p. 149.

¹³ Mbiti, ‘Challenges of Language’, p. 149.

¹⁴ Mbiti, ‘Challenges of Language’, p. 146; Kwame Bediako, ‘The Significance of Modern African Christianity – A Manifesto’, *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1995), pp. 51-67, cited in James L. Cox, *Rational Ancestors* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), pp. 27-8; Lamin Sanneh, ‘The Horizontal and the Vertical in Mission: An African Perspective’, *IBMR* (Oct. 1983), p. 166.

¹⁵ Andrew F. Walls, ‘African Christianity in the History of Religions’, *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1996), p. 187.

pre-Christian past and Christian present.¹⁶ However, he notes that the proper choice of the term for God has been controversial in many mission fields.¹⁷ Furthermore, in many cases the old divinities of indigenous religions have not simply disappeared but become ‘demonised’, and ‘are now seen as the embodiment of opposition to the God of Church and Bible, now with his vernacular name.’¹⁸ These demonic remnants have resulted in ‘power encounters’ between the evangelists or local Christian figures and ‘the local ruling spiritual power’.¹⁹

Lamin Sanneh has argued that as indigenous people possessed ‘a deep sense of the reality of God’ and ‘maintained toward God proper attitudes of reverence, worship, and sacrifice’ in God’s providence, missionaries had no need ‘to invent the notion of God all over again’ but could adopt the vernacular divine name in the Bible translation.²⁰ However, he also notes that adopting a vernacular name of God triggered ‘an unprecedented difficulty’, because ‘the multiplicity of languages’ in mission fields ‘meant a corresponding multiplicity of the terms by which God is addressed.’²¹

Similarly, John S. Mbiti and Kwame Bediako have maintained that ‘the biblical God had already been at work’ among indigenous people (particularly Africans) prior to the arrival of foreign missionaries, and thus the local people had a vast variety of indigenous divine names that were thereby ‘equivalent’ to the name of the God of the Bible.²² Yet, Mbiti notes that in some cases the terminological controversy was still an ongoing process, because some western missionaries were not convinced that the God whom the missionaries preached was in fact the same God whom indigenous people had already worshipped before the arrival of the missionaries.²³

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Idem, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), pp. 124-25.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 2nd ed., pp. 192, 196.

²¹ Ibid, p. 192.

²² Mbiti, ‘Challenges of Language’, p. 146; Bediako, ‘The Significance of Modern African Christianity’, pp. 51-67, cited in Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, pp. 27-8; Mbiti says that in most cases the 718 Bible translations into African languages (up to end of 2008) have adopted the pre-existing vernacular names of God.

²³ Mbiti, ‘Challenges of Language’, pp. 147-48.

In summary, these prominent scholars of world Christianity – Walls, Sanneh, Mbiti and Bediako – commonly note that translating the name of God into the vernacular language in Bible translation, viz. the Term Question, has been an ongoing controversy, which provoked consistent disagreement among foreign missionaries as well as indigenous theologians, over whether the name of God of the Bible should be translated by using a pre-existing vernacular divine name of an indigenous religion or whether a neologism should be coined by importing an alien biblical or western name.

The Term Questions in China and Korea

We now turn our attention to the specific concern of this thesis, namely the relationship between the Term Questions in China and Korea. The Term Question in China was the most vexed and longest lasting case of all, and historically and theologically had a direct effect on the Term Question in its neighbouring country, Korea.

The Term Question in China first emerged among the Roman Catholic missions from 1637 to 1742, as one of the two major issues of the famous Chinese Rites Controversy. The first issue of the Chinese Rites Controversy was which term was suitable for the name of God – either the name of the Chinese Confucian deity, *Shangti* (上帝: the Supreme Lord of the Confucianism), initiated by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) of the Jesuits in 1603, or a neologism, *T'ienzhu* (天主: the Lord of Heaven), coined by the Spanish Dominicans and Franciscans.²⁴ The second issue of the controversy was whether Chinese believers' practice of ancestor rites should be permitted as a cultural and moral veneration to their sages and forefathers (the Jesuits' position) or forbidden as idolatrous worship (the Dominicans and Franciscans' position).²⁵ As the Dominicans and Franciscans complained to the Vatican that the Jesuits were encouraging heterodoxy, the Term Question in China among the Roman Catholic missions lasted over one century, i.e. from 1637 till 1742.

²⁴ Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (TMLH)*, trans., Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Resources, 1985), p. 10.

²⁵ For further study on this issue, see George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy : From Its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985); David E. Mungello ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1994)

In its second phase, the Term Question in China re-surfaced among the Protestant missions in the nineteenth century, as a result of an argument between the *Shangti* party, consisting of a majority of British missionaries, notably James Legge (1815-1897) of the LMS, and the *Shen* (神: a generic term for god) party, consisting of a majority of the American missionaries.²⁶ Whilst Legge, one of the most monumental missionary scholars who produced an English translation of the Confucian Classics and was appointed Professor of Chinese Languages and Literature in Oxford University, argued as the spokesman of the *Shangti* party that the name of God of the Bible should be used as *Shangti*, the *Shen* party claimed that *Shen*, a generic term for god, should be used. Despite protracted missionary endeavours to produce an agreed Chinese term for God, the Protestant version of the Term Question in China lasted for one hundred years (1807-1890) with the result that two Protestant versions of the Bible came to co-exist in China – the *Shangti* edition, published by the BFBS in 1854, and the *Shen* edition, published by the ABS in 1863.²⁷

Thus, the thesis will investigate what theological rationale lay behind the missionaries' terminological controversy in the Confucian context of China, how the controversy provoked disagreement or division among foreign missionaries, and how the controversy historically and theologically influenced the Term Question in Korea.

This thesis is primarily concerned with the Term Question in Korea, with particular reference to its relationship to the preceding, and much more protracted, Term Question in China. The history of the Term Question in Korea in relation to the Korean Bible translation may be introduced as follows.

American Protestant missionaries, mainly Presbyterians and Methodists, began to arrive in Korea from 1884 onwards, and became the dominant Protestant missionary groups in the Korea mission field.²⁸ Afterwards, a minority of Canadian Presbyterian, Australian Presbyterian, Anglican (SPG) and other missionaries commenced their mission in Korea. One of their primary and urgent tasks was to

²⁶ Jost O. Zetzsche, *The Bible in China* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1999), pp. 81-2.

²⁷ Thor Strandenaes, *Principles of Chinese Bible Translation* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), pp. 48-50.

²⁸ Dae Young Ryu, *Early American Missionaries in Korea 1884-1910* (Seoul: Institute for Korean Church History, 2001), pp. 91-3.

translate the Bible into Korean for the common people, including women, who could only read the Korean alphabet, whereas in cooperation with the Bible societies they distributed the Chinese Bible for benefit of men in the upper Confucian classes whose education was based on the Confucian Classics.²⁹

The Korea missionaries found that the Korean Bible had already been translated by John Ross and John McIntyre of the UPC (viz. the UPC Version) in Manchuria from 1877 to 1887, using the term for God as *Hananim*, the Supreme Being of Korean indigenous religion, under the auspices of the BFBS and the NBSS. Another version of the Korean Bible was translated by Su-Jung Lee (viz. the Su-Jung Lee Version) in Tokyo, using *Shin*, a generic term for god (Chinese *Shen* 神), from 1883 to 1885 with support of the ABS.

However, as the Korea missionaries found many translating errors, north-western provincialisms and an unsuitable name for God in the two translations, they terminated their use. Instead, in order to translate their own version, they, in cooperation with the British, Scottish and American Bible societies, formed a series of translation committees – the PBCK in 1887, the PEBCK in 1893 and the BCK in 1904 – and appointed a board of Bible translators, who thus produced a number of versions of the Korean Bible with a variety of terms for God. As a result, the chief dispute which arose among the Bible translators was over which term should be most suitable for the name of God of the Bible, the so-called Korean chapter of the Term Question.

On the one hand, they could choose to translate it using *Hananim*, as in the UPC Version. Alternatively, they could transliterate the biblical name *Jehovah*, namely *Yohowa*, or coin a new word compounded from biblical sources, or use other names that were compatible with biblical meaning. The attraction of the former option was that it would enable Koreans to understand ‘God’ within their pre-existing religious framework, although it ran the risk of syncretism; the latter option had the virtue of distinguishing ‘God’ from one who was merely the highest of local deities, but ran the risk of being wholly alien to Koreans. Hence, central to the Term Question in Korea was the question of whether *Hananim*, the name of the Korean Supreme Being, could be adopted as the term for God in the Bible.

²⁹ See p. 112, footnote #104; p. 130, footnote #6.

In order to find a solution of the question, the young Korea missionaries referred to the precedent of the Term Question in China, making use of comparative studies of Sino-Korean ancient history and religions, and influenced by the awareness that China and Korea were contiguous countries who had shared religious and cultural traditions since 1122 BC.³⁰ On the basis of this fact, this thesis will investigate the ways in which the Korea missionaries' study of the precedent of the Term Question in China and of Sino-Korea religions and history influenced their approaches to the Term Question in Korea.

The Korea missionaries noted that the common central issue underlying the Term Question in both China and Korea was the question of whether Chinese and Koreans in the pre-historic period were originally monotheists who worshipped a Supreme Being who was the same God as that proclaimed by the foreign missionaries; the answer to this question then dictated whether the name of the local highest being – *Shangti* in China and *Hananim* in Korea – could be adopted as the term for God in the vernacular Bible translations or whether they should be rejected on account of the risk of syncretism. For this reason, they sought to illuminate the Term Question in Korea in the light of the experience gained in China.

In referring to the precedent of the Term Question in China, the majority of the Korea missionaries followed the pioneering use of *Hananim* in the UPC Version, translated by John Ross who argued that the term *Hananim* was an analogous theological term to *Shangti*, whilst a handful of missionaries, notably Horace G. Underwood of the PCUSA and the SPG missionaries, opposed it, and argued instead for the use *Ch'onzhu* (천주: the Lord of Heaven: Chinese *T'ienzhu* 天主).³¹ The result will assess how far reference to the Chinese version of the Term Question influenced the eventual resolution of the Term Question in Korea, when the missionaries, eventually decided to use *Hananim* as the term for God in the authorised version of the Korean New Testament in 1906 and the entire Bible in 1911.

³⁰ See pp. 154-55, footnote #158.

³¹ 천주, the Korean transliteration of the Chinese word *T'ienzhu* 天主 can be *Ch'onju* or *Ch'onzhu*. However, this thesis will use *Ch'onzhu*, as it is closer to the Chinese pronunciation *T'ienzhu* than the case of *Ch'onju*. This is because the primal aim of this thesis is to study how the Term Question in Korea was theologically and historically related to that in China.

For these significant reasons, a number of scholars have researched the Term Question in Korea, as the following section will indicate, but none has adequately related the issue to the Term Question in China.

2. Literature Review

(1) The Term Question in China

In the first place, we will see how the Chinese Term Question has been studied by Western, Chinese and Korean scholars so far.

As the Term Question (a part of the Chinese Rites Controversy) in China among the Roman Catholic missions and the Protestant missions was one of the most significant issues in the history of Christian mission in China, it has been studied by a large number of Chinese and Western scholars. Specifically, we can cite several notable studies as follows: regarding the Rites Controversy, George Minamiki's *The Chinese Rites Controversy: from Its Beginning to Modern Times* (1985) and D. E. Mungello's *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (1994);³² regarding the Term Question among the Protestant missions, George O. Lillegard's *The Chinese Term Question, An Analysis of the Problem and Historical Sketch of the Controversy* (1929), G. W. Sheppard's *The Problem of Translating 'God' into Chinese* (1955), Douglas G. Spelman's *Christianity in Chinese: The Protestant Term Question* (1969) and Irene Eber's *The Interminable Term Question* (1999).

In his book *Strange Names of God* (2004), Sang-Keun Kim deals with how Matteo Ricci of the Jesuits translated *Shangti* as the name of God in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (天主實義: hereafter the *TMLH*) in 1603 and how the Chinese Confucian literati responded to the term.³³ He particularly argues that Ricci's translation of *Shangti* can be attributed to two sources of theological influence – Italian Renaissance humanism and Thomas Aquinas' natural theology, namely Thomism. First, he argues that one of the aspects of Renaissance humanism manifested well in Ricci's mission work in China was that he thoroughly delved into

³² See p. 5, footnote #25.

³³ Kim, *Strange Names of God*.

the classics of Chinese antiquity, notably the Confucian Classics, as the Renaissance Humanists venerated antiquity.³⁴ Ricci's reading led him to believe that *Shangti* could be identified with the Christian God, *Deus*, on the grounds that the attributes of *Shangti*, shown in ancient Confucian Classics, were remarkably similar to those of *Deus*. Second, Kim argues that the Thomism of the Collegio Romano,³⁵ the first institution of Jesuit theological education where the early Jesuit missionaries, including Ricci, had been educated, led Ricci to believe that the Chinese Confucian literati had been given natural light (or reason) which enabled them to have a dim deistic knowledge of the Supreme Being without special Christian revelation.³⁶ He thus argues that Ricci, finding that the Chinese people's original natural enlightenment had been progressively corrupted by the influence of Buddhism, Taoism and later Neo-Confucianism, tried to restore it by using *Shangti*. In addition, he briefly deals with how the Term Question in China among Protestant missionaries proceeded in the nineteenth century. However, he does not extend its research to the fact that the Korean term *Hananim* theologically and historically originated from the Chinese term *Shangti*, although he discussed extensively the theological and historical origin of the Chinese term *Shangti*.

In his PhD dissertation at Peking University 'The Controversy over the Translation of the Name of God of the Chinese Christianity in the 19th century'

³⁴ Kim argues that as the early Jesuit educators – Ignatius of Loyola, Jeronimo Nadal, Rector of the Jesuit educational system and founder of the first Jesuit College in Messina, Sicily in 1548, and others – studied in the University of Paris, over which the Renaissance Humanistic tradition were prevalent. As a result, the tradition was transmitted from the University of Paris to the Jesuit colleges in Italy, which consequently become 'the Italy-centred Christian humanism.' Thus it is no wonder that Ricci and other Jesuit missionaries, educated in the colleges, had been under the influence of Renaissance Humanism; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 33-70.

³⁵ It is generally known that Aquinas wrote the *Summa Contra Gentiles* [Summa de veritate fidei catholicae contra gentiles: hereafter *SCG*] during 1258-1264 for the Dominican missionaries who worked for Muslims in Iberian Peninsula. In his *SCG* and *Summa Theologica* [hereafter *ST*] Aquinas argued that human reason is a stepping stone to Christian faith; 'since the knowledge of God is accessible to human reason and vice versa.' Among many questions of *ST*, Question 12 on human knowledge of God and Question 13 on divine name could be the most indispensable part for Ricci in identifying *Shangti* with *Deus*; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 53, 57, 60.

³⁶ The Collegio Romano was founded in Italy in 1551, where Thomism was established as a dominant educational framework by Francisco Suarez, who argued that God provides a way in which those who had never heard of Christ before Western missionaries arrived in the non-Christian world may be 'enlightened and moved sufficiently for an act of faith.' On the basis of this fact, Kim argues that most theologians and students of the college including Ricci became Thomists in their theological orientation; *ibid*, pp. 33-70.

(2009),³⁷ Chung-Su Seol deals with the Term Question among the Protestant missions between *Shangti* and *Shen*, and the Chinese response to the Term Question. Holding a neutral position between the two terms, he argues that while the name of the Confucian highest divinity, *Shangti*, was effective in accommodating Christianity to the upper classes of Confucian scholars' context, the generic term for god, *Shen*, was relevant to the common and lower Chinese classes' religious framework which was based on polytheism or pantheism. He also argues that whilst the missionaries had to choose either *Shangti* or *Shen* in the Bible translation, the Chinese theologians accepted both terms, and re-interpreted them as Christian theistic terms through their indigenous conceptual framework. However, he did not assess how far reference to the Term Question in China among the Roman Catholic missions affected that among the Protestant missions, nor how the Chinese Term Question theologically and historically influenced the Korean Term Question. Neither did he attempt to relate the theological factors at work in the missionaries' terminological controversy to the history of religion.

In short, it can be observed that no one has studied how the Chinese Term Question influenced or was related to the Korean Term Question.

(2) The Term Question in Korea

In the second place, we will see how the Term Question in Korea has been studied by Korean scholars.

In his Th.D. thesis at Boston University 'An Analysis of the Terms Used for God in Korea in the Context of Indigenization' (1977), Young-Bok Rha dealt with the Korean traditional concepts of God and the Korean Term Question in the 1960s and 1970s, which turned on which of the two options – *Hananim* or *Haneunim* – is the right Korean name for God. This modern phase of the Korean Term Question came to a head when the Protestant and Roman Catholic Joint Version of the Korean Bible, viz. *Gong-Dong-Byun-Yeok-Seong-Seo* (공동번역성서), was published in

³⁷ 《从本色化看 19 世纪新教关于“God”的汉译之争》，北京大学博士学位论文，2009 年 5 月

1971.³⁸ He surveyed thirteen different terms used for God in Korea which can be classified into three groups; the first group of terms was brought from China; the second group was connected with Korean shamanism; and the third group was related to the Dan-Gun myth.³⁹ He argued that *Haneunim* (하느님: the Lord of Heaven) among the thirteen terms is the most suitable for indigenising the Christian concept of God into the pluralistic religious context of Korea. This was because the word *Haneunim* was etymologically derived from *Haneulnim* (하늘님: the Lord of Heaven)⁴⁰ – a compound word of *Haneul* (하늘: heaven) and *nim* (님: a honorific suffix) –, which is compatible with the Korean traditional concept of High God in Heaven.

It is interesting to note that Rha relied substantially upon the earlier research on the Dan-Gun myth of Sung-Bum Yun, who assumed that the triune notion of the Dan-Gun myth had been formed under the influence of the Nestorian mission in North-East Asia in the seventh century.⁴¹ In line with Yun, Rha also argued that the Korean concept of *Haneunim* had been the result of the indigenisation of Nestorian concept of the Christian God into Korea mind. On the other hand, he argued that although the meaning of *Hananim* (하나님), the Great One, was closer to the monotheistic image of the Christian God than *Haneunim*, *Hananim* was intentionally shaped by Protestant missionaries to become the point of contact with the Christian God.

However, it can be suggested that Rha's thesis has several weaknesses as follows. First, his thesis essentially relied upon Yun's prior research into the Dan-

³⁸ Young-Bok Rha, *An Analysis of the Terms Used for God in Korea in the Context of Indigenization* (PhD thesis, Boston University, 1977)

³⁹ Ro, 'Communicating the Concept of God in Korean Culture', pp. 341-45; Rha listed up as follows - *Ch'on* (heaven) and *Shang-Je* (supreme lord: Chinese Shangti) of Confucianism, *Sam-Sin* (three-gods) of Dan-Gun Gyo (the Dan-Gun Religion), *Ok-Hwang-Je* (the supreme emperor) of Taoism, *Shin-Ryung* (gods and spirits) and *Chon-Shin* (heavenly gods) of animism, *Ch'onzhu* (the lord of heaven: Chinese *T'ienzhu*) of Roman Catholic, *Ha Nul Nim* (the Lord of Heaven) of Shamanism, *Han Ul Nim* (One Great Spirit) of Dae-Jong-Gyo (the Great Shaman Religion), *Bu Cheo Nim* of Buddhism, *Han Ool Nim* (Our Great God) of Ch'on Do Gyo (the Heavenly Way Religion), *Hananim* of Protestants and *Haneunim* of Shamanism.

⁴⁰ Rha accordingly argued that *Haneulnim* (and the Chinese theological term *T'ien* [天: heaven]) was etymologically derived from the Mongolian primitive monotheistic theological term of *tengri*, denoting the highest god in heaven, on the grounds that the Korean language and its original race belonged to the Ural-Altai ethnic group including Mongolians and Koreans.

⁴¹ Sung Bum Yun, 'The Dan-Gun Myth is the *Vestigium Trinitatis*', *Christian Thought* (October, 1963), pp. 14-18; see p. 194, footnote #125.

Gun myth without any criticism, although Yun's research was not firmly based on historical and archaeological evidence. Second, he ignored the fact that, as we will see in Chapter 5, the early Korea missionaries generally understood *Hananim* not only as the One Great One but also as the Lord of Heaven which was the same as the meaning of *Haneunim*. Third, he appears to be unaware of the fact that a majority of prominent Korean scholars support the theory that the word *Haneul* (하늘: heaven) is a compound noun derived from *Han*, denoting etymologically *great* and *one*, and a suffix; that is, a compound word *Haneul-Nim*, consisting of *Haneul* and a honorific suffix *Nim*, can also denote 'The One Great One'.⁴² Fourth, whilst he attempted to relate the origin of *Haneunim* to the indigenisation of Nestorian mission, he does not deal with how it was theologically and historically related to the Chinese theological terms, *Shangti* and *T'ien*.

Sung-Deuk Oak, Assistant Professor of Korean Christianity in the University of California at Los Angeles, studied the Term Question (1893-1911) in his Master of Theology dissertation 'the Studies on the Major Disputes in the Early Korean Bible Translation 1877-1939',⁴³ which was then published as a part of a book entitled *The History of the Korean Bible Society*.⁴⁴ In the section 'The Term Question 1893-1911', he surveyed the history of the Term Question from its beginning in 1893 to its end in 1911, and includes how John Ross of the UPC translated the term *Hananim* in the UPC Version⁴⁵ on the basis of the Chinese term *Shangti*. He particularly argued that while the Korea missionaries generally understood *Hananim* as the Lord of Heaven before the twentieth century, their researches into Korean history and religions led them at the turn of the twentieth century to discover a new

⁴² Dong-Sik Ryu, *퉁류도와 한국의 종교사상 (Pung-Ryu-Do & the Korean Religious Thoughts)* (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., 2004); see also Kwang-Ok Yi, *Research into the Concept of Haneunim amongst Ancient Korean* (ThM thesis, Roman Catholic Seminary, Korea, 1998), p. 7; Nam-Sun Choi, *Light Cultural Theory: Chosun of Chosun People* (Seoul: Tamgudang, 1928); Ju-Dong Yang, *Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Sinmun-sa, 1947); Sang-Tae Sim, *Korean Church in 2000 AD* (Seoul: Sung Paulo Press, 1993), cited in Sung-wook Hong, *Naming God in Korea* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), pp. 40-4.

⁴³ Sung-Deuk Oak, *초기 한글성경번역에 나타난 주요 논쟁 연구 1877-1939 (Studies on the Major Controversies in the early Korean Bible Translation)* (ThM thesis, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Korea, 1993), pp. 22-42.

⁴⁴ Man-Yol Yi, Sung-Deuk Oak and Dae-Young Ryu eds., *The History of Korean Bible Society* (hereafter Yi eds., *HKBS*), vol. II (Seoul: Korean Bible Society, 1994), pp. 104-18.

⁴⁵ In the dissertation, Oak describes it as 'the Ross Version'.

meaning of *Hananim* as the ‘One Great One’. As a result, they resolved the Term Question through adopting *Hananim* on account of its analogous meaning to the monotheistic Christian God. However, while Oak briefly described the history of the Term Question in China as a historical background to that in Korea and how Ross derived *Hananim* from *Shangti* in the UPC Version, it did not adequately cover how the Korea missionaries theologically related the Term Question in Korea to that in China.

In two later articles, ‘Shamanistic Tan’gun and Christian Hananim: Protestant missionaries’ Interpretation of Korean Founding myth, 1895-1934’ (2001)⁴⁶ and ‘North American Missionaries’ Understanding of the T’angun and Kija Myths of Korea, 1884-1934’ (2002),⁴⁷ Oak argued that the parallel between the Korean trinity of the shamanistic Tan’gun myth and the Christian Trinity led the Korea missionaries to select *Hananim* as the term for God in the Bible. He suggested that two theological factors enabled the Korea missionaries to resolve the Term Question – the historical theory of the degradation of religions and the fulfilment theory of relationship between Christianity and world religions. While the former led them to discover ‘the vestige of primitive monotheism and primitive revelation in the Dan-Gun myth and its *Hananim*’,⁴⁸ the latter enabled them to see how the shamanistic god of *Hananim* of the Dan-Gun myth had been transformed into a new Christian God.⁴⁹ In particular he argued that at the turn of the twentieth century Korean missionaries generally accepted the fulfilment theory of religions as expressed in the Report of Commission IV (‘*The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*’) of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.⁵⁰ As no Korea missionaries were invited to complete the questionnaires, issued by Commission IV, he assumed that the Korea missionaries’ attitude toward non-Christian religions were similar to those of the China missionaries whose questionnaire replies showed that

⁴⁶ Sung-Deuk Oak, ‘Shamanistic Tan’gun and Christian Hananim: Protestant missionaries’ Interpretation of Korean Founding Myth, 1895-1934’, *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 7-1 (2001)

⁴⁷ Sung-Deuk Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding of the T’angun and Kija Myths of Korea, 1884-1934’, *Acta Korea*, vol. 4 (2002), pp. 1-16.

⁴⁸ Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 15; emphasis mine.

⁴⁹ Oak, ‘Shamanistic Tan’gun’, pp. 50-2, 54-5.

⁵⁰ World Missionary Conference 1910, *Report of Commission IV* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1910)

they perceived Chinese religions as a preparation for Christianity based on the fulfilment theory.⁵¹

However, this argument may be questioned as follows. First, as we will see in Chapter 5, the Korea missionaries did not accept the fulfilment theory but instead adhered to a theory of primitive monotheism, and it was this that enabled them to resolve the Korean Term Question. Second, as Brian Stanley points out based on his re-examination of the questionnaire replies, submitted by the China missionaries to the Commission IV, not all China missionaries accepted the fulfilment theory, but showed a variety of theological positions on the relationship of Christianity to Chinese religions.⁵² Third, while Oak's articles clearly articulated the theological factors behind the Korea missionaries' resolution of the Term Question, he did not discuss in any detail how the missionaries related the Term Question in Korea to that in China; that is, his research does not cover the Chinese roots of the Term Question in Korea.

In contrast to Rha's thesis, Sung-Wook Hong argues in his book *Naming God in Korea* (2009) that *Hananim*, rather than *Haneunim*, is the most contextualised Korean term for God. As Rha does, Hong's book mainly aims to deal with the Korean Term Question in the 1960s and 1970s between *Hananim* and *Haneunim*; while relatively conservative Protestants argued in favour of the use of *Hananim*, liberal Protestants (and Roman Catholics) preferred to use *Haneunim* on the grounds that they believed it possible to trace the origin of the term to indigenous Korean religion. Although the joint version was eventually published with the use of *Haneunim*, it was rarely used by Korean Protestants, who instead held the *Hananim* edition of the Korean Bible. In conclusion, he spells out that he opts for *Hananim* based on the contextualisation perspective; the word *Hananim* has not only become contextualised in Korean religious culture but also gained a new meaning, that of the Great One, which is more analogous to the Christian God, within the Korean mind. In order to support this conclusion, he suggests three theological implications of naming *Hananim* as the term for God; it can be a significant element in forming the

⁵¹ Oak, 'Shamanistic Tan'gun', pp. 50-2, 54-5.

⁵² Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 233-35, 245-47.

identity of Korean Christianity; it is ‘an application of the translatability of Christianity into the Korean context’; and it obviously demonstrates how the Gospel is related to cultures.⁵³

While Hong’s book deals fairly with the terminological controversy in Korea between the 1960s and 1971, it may be criticised as follows. First, while Hong attempts to trace the historical and etymological origin of the term of the Korean High God to ancient Korean religion, he does not study how the history of Korean religion is related to a theory of primitive monotheism. Second, although he underscores the distinctive uniqueness of *Hananim* as the suitable name of God in comparison with the Chinese term *Shangti* or *Ch’un-je* (天帝: Emperor of Heaven: Chinese *Tiendi*), he incorrectly argues that the Chinese term is inadequate because it was rendered on the basis of an evolutionary theory. Third, while he attempts to trace the historical and etymological origin of the term for the Korean High God to ancient Korean religion, he does not study how its origin is related to a theory of primitive monotheism.

From an explicitly missiological perspective, Bong-Rin Ro’s article, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans’ (1998), aims to gain a theological understanding of the indigenous Korean concept of God and how effectively to communicate the gospel to Koreans who have a different concept of God of Christianity.⁵⁴ Drawn from the history of the early Protestant mission in Korea, he argues that *Hananim* is the most suitable term for God for the following reasons. Although Koreans have traditionally worshipped a variety of gods and spirits, the monotheistic concept of God still remains in *Hananim*, the highest God of Korean shamanism who rules over gods and spirits. On the basis of this fact, the term *Hananim* enabled Koreans to accept the God of the Bible at the initial stage of Protestant mission in Korea.

In summary, whilst these scholars have made the most significant scholarly contributions to aspects of the Term Questions in China and Korea, none of them has adequately explicated the relationship between the Term Questions in China and

⁵³ Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 142.

⁵⁴ Ro, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans,’ pp. 207-30.

Korea, or sufficiently related the controversies to debates about the history of religions.

3. The Significance of the Thesis

We may indicate the significance of this thesis in accordance with the foregoing summary of the literature review as follows.

First, these scholars have mainly studied whether the Korea missionaries adequately understood the etymological or linguistic origin of the Korean divine terms of indigenous religions – *Hananim* and *Haneunim* – in an attempt to suggest a solution for the modern Korean Term Question provoked by the publication of the Protestant-Roman Catholic Joint Version between 1960s and 1971. However, relatively little research has been carried out on how the missionaries' acceptance of a theory of the history of religion – either a degeneration theory of religion or an evolutionary theory of religion – impacted the course and outcome of the Korean Term Question.

Since the eighteenth century the controversy between the two theories of the history of religion had proceeded among thinkers; while a degeneration theory of the history of religion (or a theory of primitive monotheism) argued that the original religion of humankind was monotheism but had become corrupted into polytheism, pantheism or idolatry practices, an evolutionary theory of the history of religion argued that religion had evolved from its lower primitive form to a higher form of monotheism.⁵⁵ When the China and Korea Protestant missionaries confronted the Term Question in the vernacular Bible translations in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the controversy between the two theories lay behind their arguments. Commonly, central to the Term Question in China and Korea was a

⁵⁵ See, Wilhelm Schmidt, *The Origin and Growth of Religion: Facts and Theories* (London: Methuen, 1931); Ninian Smart, *The World Religions*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1998), p. 34; Helmer Ringgren & Ake V. Ström, *Religions of Mankind Today & Yesterday [Religionerna i Historia Och Nutid. English]* (Edinburgh ; London : Oliver & Boyd, 1967), pp. xxiii-xxiv; Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), p. 64; cf. William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (London: Oxford U. P., 1940), pp. 189-207; Norman L. Geisler, 'Primitive Monotheism', *Christian Apologetics Journal*, vol. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 1-2; see p. 226, footnote #61.

question of whether Chinese and Koreans were originally monotheists who worshipped the indigenous Supreme Beings – *Shangti* in China and *Hananim* in Korea –, and so whether those divine names of the indigenous religions could be adopted as the term for God in the Chinese and Korean Bible translations.

Thus, this thesis will pursue the questions: Which theory of the history of religion did the Bible translating missionaries hold? And how did the theory they accepted influenced the course and outcome of the Term Question in Korea? Hence, the chapters that follow will survey how the controversy between the two opposite theories has proceeded during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. They will consider how the Christian missionaries in Korea, particularly Horace G. Underwood of the PCUSA, understood the history of religion; whether they adhered to a degeneration theory which posited monotheism had originally existed among primitive people or to an evolutionary theory which held that the origin of religion was polytheistic or pantheistic but had evolved into monotheism.

Therefore, this thesis is significant for Korean religious studies in examining the protracted debate that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries over whether a form of indigenous Korean religion in the pre-historic period was compatible with Christian monotheism or polytheism (and whether the indigenous religion thereafter degenerated into polytheism or thereafter evolved to monotheism) in the light of the history of religion. It will also relate the study of the Korean Term Question to wider themes in the history of religion.

Second, the significance of this thesis lies in its demonstration, with special reference to the Korean Term Question, that mission policy decisions in one field could be affected by knowledge of the history of missions in another, suggesting that scholars with a narrow specialism should maintain a wide horizon. The literature review shows us that, while numerous attempts to study the Korean Term Question have been done within the domestic Korean context or the Chinese Term Question within the Chinese context, there has been minimal research into examining how the Term Question in Korea was historically and theologically related to that in China. The Korea missionaries viewed their mission enterprise with a regional, East Asian lens, rather than one limited to the Korean context. Facing the Term Question in the course of the Bible translation, they referred to the precedent of the Chinese Term

Question in order to find a solution, and undertook comparative studies of Sino-Korean history and religions. In doing so, they came to have a wider Sino-Korean lens that led them to the resolution of the Term Question.

Third, the significance of this thesis is its demonstration, with special reference to the North American Protestant missionaries in Korea between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, that missionaries could change their minds, sometimes on major policy or even theological matters. The literature review shows that while those scholars have studied what theological factors lay behind the China and Korea missionaries' translation of the name of God in the vernacular Bibles, few scholars have researched how their theologies and stances have been transformed in the course of the translation work. In particular, the Korea missionaries held a very conservative evangelical theology at the initial stage of their mission enterprise, regarding the Korean indigenous religions as an obstacle to the Christian mission.⁵⁶ However, as they were influenced by works of scholarship on religious studies, their theology changed.

Fourth, in terms of the study of world Christianity, the significance of this thesis is to investigate how Christianity became inculturated into the Korean religious soil with special reference to the Western Protestant missionaries' translation of the Korean name of God in the Bible translation. Chapter 7 will suggest that we may regard Korean indigenous religion as an 'already existing' vernacular language in the light of Andrew F. Walls' theory of 'translation' and 'conversion'.⁵⁷ This thesis will therefore investigate how the source language of Christianity was 'translated' into the vernacular language of Korean indigenous religion; how Christianity was not 'substituted' for the old Korean indigenous religion, but rather how the theistic framework of that religion was *converted* or re-oriented toward Christ.⁵⁸ In this respect, the importance of this study lies also in

⁵⁶ Arthur J. Brown, *The Mastery of The Far East* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 540; Ryu, *Early American Missionaries in Korea 1884-1910*, pp. 91-3.

⁵⁷ James L. Cox, 'The Classification "Primal Religions" as a Non-Empirical Christian Theological Construct', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1996), pp. 67-9; Andrew F. Walls, 'The Mission of the Church Today', *Word & World*, vol. 20, no. 1 (winter 2000), pp. 19-21; Andrew F. Walls, 'The Translation Principle in Christian History', in *The Missionary Movement in Christianity History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), pp. 24-39.

⁵⁸ Walls, 'The Translation Principle in Christian History', pp. 24-39.

examining how Christianity had been similarly or divergently translated into each indigenous religion in China and Korea; how each indigenous religion had been divergently converted toward Christianity; and what theological factors lay behind the similarity or the divergence.

Fifth, this thesis is significant for Christian mission studies in demonstrating that the efficiency of Christianity's expansion in a cross-cultural setting substantially depended on missionaries' effective communication of the God of the Bible, the most central theme of Christianity, in terms relevant to local people in midst of their polytheistic and pantheistic contexts. The crucial determinant is how much or how little a Christian missionary dares to adapt the Christian faith to a local culture in order to communicate the Christian message in a way that local people can understand by their own religious and cultural perception.⁵⁹

Lastly, this thesis will highlight an issue of wider interest for scholars of religion, namely the extent to which missionaries have ceaselessly searched for analogies and correspondences between Christian doctrine and the tenets of other religious systems, in order to provide a bridge for evangelism. That is to say, this thesis will examine how far the Bible translations led them to the construction (and arguably the distortion) of other religious systems in a Christian image.⁶⁰

4. Primary Goals and Research Questions

As the title of this thesis indicates, it pursues three goals. First, it aims to study the uncharted terrain of the Chinese roots of the Term Question in Korea. Second, it will explore the theological and historical continuity between the Term Question in China and that in Korea; particularly how the Korean monotheistic term *Hananim*

⁵⁹ Mungello, *Curious Land*. p. 15; cf. Stephen Neill, 'Accommodation' in *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*, eds. Idem, Gerald H. Anderson and John Goodwill eds. (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1970), pp. 3-4; George R. Hunsberger, 'Accommodation', in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), pp. 31-2.

⁶⁰ See p. 170, footnote #217; cf. James L. Cox, *Rational Ancestors: Scientific Rationality and African Indigenous Religions* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), p. 16; Cox's chapter was first published under the title of 'The Classification "Primal Religions" as a Non-Empirical Christian Theological Construct'; Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York & Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2000), pp. 3-37.

was correlated with the Chinese monotheistic term *Shangti*. Third, it will investigate how the Term Question in Korea proceeded on a trajectory divergent from that in China, and what theological reasons lay behind the divergence.

In accordance with these primary goals, the thesis will raise several primary research questions: (1) As for the Chinese roots of the Korean Term Question, how were the Korean theistic terms – *Hananim*, *Shin* and *Ch'onzhu* – related to the Chinese theistic terms – *Shangti*, *Shen* and *T'ienzhu*? (2) In terms of the theological continuity between the Term Question in China and that in Korea, what were the common theological factors behind the China missionaries' (particularly Matteo Ricci and James Legge) adoption of *Shangti* in the Chinese Bible and the Korea missionaries' (particularly John Ross and Horace G. Underwood) adoption of *Hananim* in the Korean Bible? And was *Hananim* in fact an analogous theological term to *Shangti*? (3) With respect to the divergence between the two Term Questions, why was the Term Question in Korea resolved within only three decades, whereas that in China lasted 'interminably' over three centuries (1637-1890)? In addition, why did the term *Hananim*, in comparison with *Shangti*, generate such an active response of the Korean people to the 'God' of the Bible with the result of a more rapid and massive influx to Protestantism than that shown by the Chinese people?

In seeking to answer each of these questions in the three categories, this thesis will pursue the following three lines of historical inquiry:

(1) The thesis will trace the Chinese theological origins of the Korean theistic terms, exploring how the Chinese terms were transmitted to Korea.

(2) The thesis will examine whether the Bible translating missionaries in China and Korea subscribed to a degeneration theory (or an evolution theory) of religion; in what ways did the theory they accepted impact the course and outcome of the Term Question in Korea? Particular attention will be paid to how the theological stance of Horace G. Underwood (PCUSA), who presided over the translation process from 1887 to 1911, was changed – from being the most rigid opponent of the use of *Hananim* to one who accepted it as the name of God – by his reading of Legge's *Religions of China* (1880), which supported his argument that Chinese religion was originally monotheistic.

The thesis will assess the extent of the theological parallelism between *Hananim* and *Shangti*. Since China and Korea were contiguous countries which had shared a common cultural-religious heritage for centuries, was it the case that *Hananim* as the Korean Shamanistic Supreme Being could be regarded as a corresponding theological term to *Shangti* as the Confucian Supreme Being because both terms conjointly reflected the common primitive monotheism in Korea and China? In particular, how far did the Korea missionaries follow the example of John Ross of the UPC, who saw that the term *Hananim* was an analogous theological term to *Shangti*, and hence pioneered the use of the first Korean New Testament (1877-1887)? The thesis will also consider whether *Hananim* was a term whose associations proved more readily reconcilable with Christian trinitarian belief than was the case with *Shangti*.

(3) In seeking to answer the question why the Term Question in Korea was resolved much more rapidly than in China, the thesis will analyse the reasons for the very different disposition of the two contending parties in Korea, as compared with China. Unlike the Term Question in China which became interminably polarised between two equal and opposite parties (the *Shangti* and *Shen* parties), a vast majority of Protestant missionaries in Korea preferred *Hananim*, while the original opponents of *Hananim*, notably Underwood, were always in a small minority. In addition, it will discuss the extent to which the translators' option for *Hananim* played an important role in attracting Koreans of diverse social classes to Christianity.

5. The Scope of the Research

In the first place, this thesis will describe the name of the Supreme Being of the Korean indigenous religion as *Hananim* (하나님). In fact, the Korean indigenous understanding of a Supreme Being was associated with 'the One who rules in heaven', who was called by a variety of reverent names, such as *Haneul-nim* (하늘님: the Lord of Heaven), *Haneul* (하늘: the Heaven), *Han-eal-nim* (한얼님: Our Great God), *Han-ul-nim* (한울님: Our Great Spirit), *Haneunim* (하느님: the Lord of Heaven) and *Hananim*

(하나님).⁶¹ Of these names, as we will see in Chapter 4, John Ross (UPC) used *Haneunim* in his first KNT in 1882, and thereafter changed from *Haneunim* to *Hananim* in 1883.⁶² This was because he attempted to simplify the phonetic value of ‘eu’ in *Haneunim* (하느님) into ‘a’ in *Hananim* (하나님).⁶³ As will be seen in Chapter 5, the early Korea missionaries, residing mainly in Seoul, borrowed *Hananim* from the UPC Version,⁶⁴ and thereafter changed it in a form of a standard style used in a capital of Korea, Seoul, viz. *Hanǎnim* (하느님).⁶⁵ However, as the meaning of *Haneunim*, *Hananim* and *Hanǎnim* was exactly the same, namely the Lord of Heaven (or the Great One), this thesis will adopt only the usage *Hananim*.

In the second place, this thesis will be limited to deal with the early stage of the Term Question in Korea, which arose between 1882 and 1911, in seeking for its theological continuity and discontinuity with the precedent of the Term Question in China from 1637 to 1890. In other words, this thesis will not study the subsequent Korean Term Question among Korean Protestants in the 1910s and 1920s between the advocates of *Hananim* (하나님) and *Hanǎnim* (하느님),⁶⁶ nor with the Term Question among the modern Korean Protestants in the 1960s and 1970s between the advocates of *Hananim* (하나님) and *Haneunim* (하느님).⁶⁷

6. Review of Primary Sources

We will now review the primary and archival sources used for the purpose of this research as follows. The sources can be divided into two categories: first, the Term Question in China, and secondly that in Korea.

⁶¹ Ro, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God’, pp. 219-24; Duk-Hwang Kim, *A History of Religions in Korea* (Seoul: Daeji Moonhwa-sa, 1988), p. 50; Rha, *An Analysis of the Terms Used for God in Korea*.

⁶² John Ross, *The Gospel of Luke & Acts*, 1883, BSS.604.E83.3, BFBS, Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL).

⁶³ Sung-Deuk Oak, *Sources of Korean Christianity* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2002), p. 261.

⁶⁴ Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 340.

⁶⁵ ㄴ denotes ㄴ + *a-rae-ha* (아래 하); see pp. 133, 148.

⁶⁶ See Oak, *Studies on the Major Controversies*, pp. 39-40, 68-79.

⁶⁷ See Hong, *Naming God in Korea*.

(1) The Term Question in China

The primary sources regarding the Term Question in China can be divided into two parts:

- i. the Term Question among Roman Catholic missions
- ii. the Term Question among Protestant missions.

- i. The Term Question among Roman Catholic missions

In the first place, in order to explore what theological factors lay behind Ricci's translation of *Shangti* as the name of God in the course of the Term Question, this thesis will consult his diary, which was 'a narrative account of the China mission from the first Jesuit settlement at Macao in 1565 to the time of Ricci's death' in 1610.⁶⁸ The diary was originally written by Ricci in Italian, and was brought from Macao to Rome in 1614 by Father Nicola Trigault, who translated it into Latin and published it in 1615, along with an account of Ricci's death and burial;⁶⁹ the Latin-translated diary was then translated by Louis J. Gallagher under the title of *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*. In addition to Ricci's diaries, the letters of the pioneer Jesuit missionaries in China – Father Michele Ruggieri, Francesco Pasio and Matteo Ricci – during 1583 and 1584 have also been translated into English and published by M. Howard Rienstra under the title of *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-1584* (1986). These letters are useful in enabling us to understand how the Jesuit missionaries saw the Chinese culture and religions at the initial stage of their mission.⁷⁰

Use will also be made of Ricci's original treatise of the *TMLH*, in which he originally used the term *Shangti* and described his theological rationale for the use of the term. This Chinese-written book was translated into English with introduction and notes by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen, S. J., and published as a book in 1905 by the Institute of Jesuit Sources in cooperation with the Ricci Institute

⁶⁸ Louis J. Gallagher, S. J. trans., *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610* [hereafter *JMR*] (New York: Random House, 1953), p. xvii.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ M. Howard Rienstra, ed. and trans., *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-1584* (Minnesota: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986)

in Taipei, Twain.⁷¹ It was also translated into Korean by Young-Bae Song, Professor of Oriental Philosophy at the Seoul National University, and other Korean scholars through textual examination of the seven different translations in four different languages – Hong Kong edition (1904), Shanghai edition (1935) and Twain edition (1966) in Chinese; English edition (1985); French edition (1811); and Japanese edition (1971).

ii. The Term Question among Protestants

Reference will be made to a large number of original articles on the Term Question produced by the China Protestant missionaries. The two opposing parties – the *Shangti* party and the *Shen* party – entered the terminological controversy by exchanging many articles, which were mostly published in the *Chinese Recorder* (and *Missionary Journal*) and the *Chinese Repository*. In particular, special attention will be made to the writings of three main figures at the initial stage of the Term Question in the mid-nineteenth century – William J. Boone of the American Episcopal Mission, spokesman for the *Shen* party, and Walter H. Medhurst and James Legge of the LMS, leading figures in the *Shangti* party.

This thesis makes extensive use of Legge's original treatises on the Term Question, because, as we will see in Chapter 3, he was the most ardent proponent of the *Shangti* party and the most formidable missionary scholar of the Chinese studies who produced an English translation of the Confucian Classics from 1861 to 1895 and the six volumes of *the Sacred Books of China*, as part of Fredric Max Müller's series of *the Sacred Books the East*, from 1879 to 1902; he additionally wrote a number of articles and books on the Term Question in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.⁷²

In addition, use will be made of the *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai*, in 1877 and 1890 because the China missionaries engaged in serious discussion of the Term Question at these conferences.⁷³

⁷¹ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 10.

⁷² See pp. 73-84.

⁷³ General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China 1877, *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877* (Shanghai:

(2) The Term Question in Korea

The primary sources regarding the Term Question in Korea (in relation to the Korean Bible translation) can be divided into two categories:

- i. Those Relating to the UPC Version in Manchuria and the Su-Jung Lee Version in Tokyo
- ii. Those Relating to the Bible Translation Process in Korea

i. Sources Relating to the UPC Version and the Su-Jung Lee Version

The main source is the correspondence and reports of John Ross and John McIntyre, UPC missionaries in Manchuria, regarding the translation of the UPC Version and its distribution from 1877 to 1887; these were sent to the Board of the Foreign Mission of the UPC, the BFBS in London and the NBSS in Glasgow. These were compiled and published in *The Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian Church* (hereafter *MRUP*).

The correspondence of the China and Korea agents of the BFBS, and the minutes, quarterly and annual reports regarding the UPC Version are preserved in the archives of the BFBS in Cambridge University Library. Similar records of the agents of the NBSS are extant in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. Copies of the Korea records of most of these two collections are available in the archival collections of the Korean Bible Society, and most of the relevant correspondence and minutes have been published by the Korean Bible Society under the title of *The Documents of the History of the Korean Bible Society*. Careful comparison has been made with the original archives in Cambridge and Edinburgh to assess the accuracy of the published version.

Reference will be also made to the correspondence and reports of Henry Loomis, the Japan agent of the ABS who was also in charge of the Korea mission field, regarding the translation of the Su-Jung Lee Version and its distribution from 1883 to 1887. These letters and reports were sent from Japan to the headquarters of

Presbyterian Mission Press, 1878); General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China 1890, *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai, May 7-20, 1890* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1890)

the ABS in New York. Most of them have been collected and published in the two volumes of *the Documents of the History of the Korean Bible Society*.

ii. Sources Relating to the Bible Translation Process in Korea

The second category is correspondence, reports, minutes and treatises regarding the Bible translation committees and the Term Question produced by the Korea missionaries. These documents can themselves be divided into four parts as follows.

- a) The correspondence, reports and minutes of the two American denominational missionaries, the PCUSA and American Methodist Episcopal Church (North), who were actively involved in the translation committee of the Korean Bible and the Term Question. These were sent to the BFBS, the leading publisher of the Korean Bible, and the foreign mission boards of their denominations in USA. These are preserved in the archives of the BFBS in Cambridge University Library and in those of the ABS in New York, and have been collected and published in the English-Korean parallel volumes entitled *the Documents of the History of the Korean Bible Society*.
- b) The personal papers of Horace G. Underwood (PCUSA), who was the Korean Bible translating missionary chiefly responsible for the completion of the AV-KNT in 1906 and the AV-KBT in 1911 and the resulting resolution of the Term Question: Particular attention will be devoted to Underwood's papers, since he was the most significant figure in the Term Question in Korea. Underwood and his wife (L. H. Underwood) produced a vast variety of papers – letters written to the Bible Societies, to his colleagues and to the secretaries of the Board of the Foreign Mission of the PCUSA (Frank F. Ellinwood, Arthur J. Brown and Robert E. Speer), in addition to minutes, the articles in mission magazines and Underwood's speeches at mission conferences and sermons at churches in Korea, USA and Canada. Most of Underwood's papers have been compiled and published by Sung-Deuk Oak in the five volumes entitled *Horace Grant Underwood Papers* (hereafter *HGUP*).

- c) The Korea missionaries' treatises on the Dan-Gun myth, the foundational story of ancient Korea: As we will see in Chapter 6, as the Korea missionaries' discovery of a 'Korean Trinity' of the Dan-Gun myth essentially led them to affirm *Hananim* as the name of God of the Bible, they wrote a number of treatises on the myth.

Homer B. Hulbert (AMN) wrote a series of articles on the history of Korea from the ancient period of the Dan-Gun myth in the twenty-fourth century BC till 1904, which appeared in *The Korea Review* from January 1901 through December 1904, and these articles have been re-published by Clarence W. Weems as a book under the title of *Hulbert's History of Korea*.⁷⁴ At the beginning of this series of articles, Hulbert delved into the Dan-Gun myth as a source of understanding the origin of the Korean race, which significantly helped other missionaries to discover the 'Korean Trinity' in the myth.

In 1900 the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was founded in the Seoul Union on 11 June 1900, and James S. Gale (PCUSA) was elected the Corresponding Secretary.⁷⁵ In the Society's meetings, the Korea missionaries – Gale, Hulbert and George H. Jones (AMN) – presented articles on the Dan-Gun myth.⁷⁶ In addition, Gale wrote a series of articles, 'A History of the Korean People' published in the *Korea Mission Field* from July 1924 to September 1927, which included a discussion of the Dan-Gun myth.⁷⁷

- d) The archives of the SPG missionaries. As we will see in Chapter 5, the SPG missionaries, notably Mark H. Trollope, one of the Board of the Translators, favoured the use of *Ch'onzhu* (the Lord of Heaven: Chinese *T'ienzhu* 天主) which was a major factor in bringing the Term Question in Korea to its peak in 1894. As the SPG missionaries' correspondence regarding the Term Question in 1894 was

⁷⁴ Weems ed., *Hulbert's History of Korea*, vol. I, II.

⁷⁵ Richard Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale and His History of the Korean People* (Seoul: Taewon Publishing Company, 1972), p. 33.

⁷⁶ Ibid; Weems ed., *Hulbert's History of Korea*; Oak, 'North American Missionaries' Understanding', p. 5.

⁷⁷ James S. Gale, 'A History of Korean People', *Korea Mission Field* (July, 1924), pp. 134-36.

mostly included in the *Document of the History of the Korean Bible Society*, this thesis has used the compiled book. However, checks have been made with the original archives preserved at the archives of the USPG (United Society of the Propagation of the Gospel) at Rhodes House, in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University.

In addition, in order to explore how Koreans responded to the terms for God used by the Korean and Chinese Bible – particularly *Hananim* and *Shangti* –, a case study has been undertaken of Chi-Ho Yun, one of the most significant Korean Christian political leaders. The thesis will examine how he used the terms for God in his diaries written in three different languages – Korean, Chinese and English.⁷⁸ Yun recorded his diaries from 1883 to 1945, and they have been compiled and published by the National History Compilation Committee (hereafter NHCC) in Korea in the eleven volumes entitled *Yun Ch'ihō Ilgi* (*Yun Ch'i-Ho's Diary*: 윤치호 일기). The diaries are also available on the website of NHCC.⁷⁹

7. The Structure of the Thesis

Part I of the thesis aims to explore the Chinese theological roots of the Term Question in Korea; more specifically, it will seek to relate the origins of the Korean theistic term *Hananim* to the Chinese theistic term *Shangti*.

Chapter 2 will survey the seventeenth-century Term Question in China, as one of the two reasons for the Chinese Rites Controversy, among Roman Catholic missions. It will explore the Chinese origin, viz. *Shangti*, of the Korean theological term *Hananim*; when Ricci produced the *TMLH* in 1603, he used *Shangti*, borrowed from the Confucian Classics, on the grounds that the term *Shangti* originally had personal monotheistic attributes that were remarkably analogous to those of the

⁷⁸ *Yun Ch'ihō Ilgi* (*Yun Ch'i-Ho's Diary*: hereafter *YCHD*) 1883-1924, 11 vols. (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee [hereafter NHCC], 1973-1989); NHCC also compiled Yun's correspondences as vol. 12; no diaries remain for the period from July 1906 to December 1915, because those were taken by the Japanese Government in Korea, by which Korea was annexed from 1910 to 1945. According to testimony of Yun's descendants, the Japanese police returned part of the diaries to them; cf. Shin Ahn, 'Yun Chi-ho's Religious Experience and Thought', *Christianity and History in Korea*, vol. 27 (Sep. 2007), pp. 47-9; Stanley, *WMC 1910*, p. 120.

⁷⁹ <http://www.history.go.kr/app.main.Main.top>

Christian concept of God. This chapter will also suggest that the theological rationale behind Ricci's translation of *Shangti* in *TMLH* was mostly compatible with a degeneration theory of religion.

Chapter 3 will discuss the Term Question in nineteenth century China among Protestant missions. It will focus in particular on James Legge, whose English translation of the Confucian Classics in the late nineteenth century followed Ricci in using the term *Shangti*. It will discuss the importance of a degeneration theory of the history of religions as a factor influencing Legge's preference for *Shangti* over the term *Shen*, favoured by a majority of American missionaries, and will consider how far Legge was consciously following Ricci's theology in this respect.

Part II of the thesis investigates both the similarities and the divergent aspects of the Term Question in Korea, as compared to that in China.

Chapter 4 discusses John Ross's translation of *Hananim* in the first Korean New Testament, viz. the UPC Version. It will explore how Ross, his colleague John McIntyre and Korean assistants, under the theological influence of Legge, translated the term for God as *Hananim* on the model of the use of *Shangti* in the Chinese Delegates' Version. It will particularly investigate the theological influence of Legge upon Ross in regard to their belief in the existence of primitive monotheism in China and Korea.

Chapter 5 emphasises the degree of theological continuity of the Term Question between China and Korea, particularly the theological continuity of a primitive monotheism between the Chinese term *Shangti* and the Korean term *Hananim*. It will narrate the course of the Term Question in Korea from 1882 to 1903. It will identify the theory of primitive monotheism as the common theological factor behind the missionaries' translation of *Shangti* and *Hananim*.

Chapter 6 seeks to uncover the theological divergence of the Term Question between China and Korea, particularly the theological distinctiveness of *Hananim* in regard to its triune and incarnational attributes in comparison with *Shangti*. It will deal with how the Term Question in Korea was resolved from 1904 to 1911, showing how it proceeded in a contrasting manner to that in China. The chapter will consider the importance of the missionaries' research into ancient Korean history and

religions, particularly the Dan-Gun myth (the founding story of ancient Korea), in leading them to discover a close analogy between *Hananim* and the Christian God, combining the strong monotheism of the Great-One with a triune notion of Three-in-One and incarnation – a distinctive analogy that did not to the same extent to *Shangti* in Chinese religion. Consequently, the missionaries, in cooperation with the Bible Societies, decided to use *Hananim* in the publication of the Authorised Version of the Korean New Testament (hereafter AV-KNT) in 1906 and the Authorised Version of the entire Korean Bible (hereafter AV-KBT) in 1911. In particular, the chapter will assess the degree to which Horace G. Underwood's eventual change of mind in accepting *Hananim* as the term for God was influenced by his reading of Legge's *Religions of China* (1880). In addition, this chapter will also suggest that the Protestant option for the term *Hananim* in 1906-1911 was one of the significant reasons for the Korean people's more positive response to Christianity and their more rapid and massive influx into the Korean Protestant Churches in the twentieth century as compared with religious trends in China during the same period.

Chapter 7, the Conclusion, will integrate the arguments of the thesis. Additionally, we will examine the overall argument of this thesis in a wider perspective. We will relate its findings – not only to a Christian missiological viewpoint based on the theory of 'Primal Religions' but also to question that modern scholars of religion have raised about the tendency of Western commentators to construct other religions in a Christian image.

Part I: The Chinese Roots of the Term Question in Korea

Chapter 2: The Term Question among Roman Catholic missions in Early Modern China:

Introduction

As will be seen in Chapter 5, the Term Question in Korea reached its peak when the Korea missionaries debated which term – either *Hananim* or *Ch'onzhu* (the Lord of Heaven: the Korean transliteration of Chinese *T'ienzhu*) – would be more suitable for the name of God of the Bible in 1894.

Hence, Chapter 2 aims to explore how the two Korean theistic terms, which provoked the second dispute phase, i.e. the sharpest phase, of the Korean Term Question in 1894 and 1895, were derived from the two Chinese theistic terms. Specifically, this chapter will seek to relate the origins of the two Korean theistic terms – *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* – to the Chinese theistic terms – *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu*.

In this regard, this chapter will raise two research questions as follows: (1) Why did Matteo Ricci of the Jesuits adopt *Shangti* from the Confucian Classics as the name for God in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (hereafter *TMLH*), and what were the theological factors underlying his adoption of *Shangti*? (2) How were the Chinese theistic terms brought from China to Korea, how were they used in Korea and how did they affect the Korean Term Question?

In accordance with these questions, this chapter will argue as follows: (1) the theological factors underlying Ricci's translation of *Shangti* were broadly compatible with a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion. (2) The Chinese terms *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu* were brought from China to Korea by Korean envoys and Roman Catholic missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and were translated into the Korean terms – *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* respectively. These two terms would later provoke the most hotly debated phase of the Korean Term Question among Protestant missionaries in Korea in the course of the Korean Bible translation in 1894 and 1895.

1. Matteo Ricci's Adoption of *Shangti* in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*

In response to the first research question, this chapter will first see how Ricci composed the *TMLH* and what theological factors lay behind his adoption of *Shangti* as the name of God in that book.

(1) *T'ienzhu* in the *True Record of the Lord of Heaven*

In 1552, the first attempt of the Jesuits to enter into China was made by Francis Xavier (1506-1552), Spanish priest and one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus at the University of Paris along with Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556).¹ The Jesuit mission in China began on a full scale when Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), Superintendent of the Jesuit mission in India and North-East Asia, sent Michele de Ruggieri (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)² to Macao in 1579 and 1582 respectively.³ In 1583, Ruggieri and Ricci eventually succeeded in gaining a permanent residence at Chao-Ching in Guang-Zhou Province, and built a Mission House.⁴

In the initial stage of their mission, as the Jesuits regarded Buddhism as the point of contact with Christianity, they attempted to introduce Christianity to the Chinese by

¹ Liam M. Brockey, *Journey to the East; The Jesuit Mission to China 1579-1724* (Cambridge: Harvard U. P., 2007), p. 28; Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. P., 1994), p. 40.

² Ricci was born in Macerata nearby Rome on 6 October 1552. He went to Rome to study law at the age of 16, and he joined the Society of Jesus in 1571. In the following year, Ricci began to study at the Roman College. After a short period of language training at the University of Coimbra in Portuguese in 1577, Ricci arrived at Goa, the Portuguese outpost on the central west coast of India, on 13 September 1578, with 13 other Jesuit priests including Michele Ruggieri. Ricci continued his required studies on theology in Goa from 1578 to 1581 and was ordained in 1580 at Cochin. Returning to Goa in April, 1582, he was dispatched to the newly organised Jesuit China mission, and then arrived in Macao. In fact, the Visitor Valignano who was in charge of the Jesuit mission in the Far East sent Ricci to Macao on August 1582 to join Michele Ruggieri who had been dispatched by Valignano in 1579.; cf. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 32-46, 118-41; Sangkeun Kim, *Strange Names of God* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 151.

³ Michele Ruggieri's letter on 7 Feb. 1583, in M. Howard Rienstra, ed. and trans., *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-1584* [hereafter *JLC*] (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 15-6; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 40; Brockey, *Journey to the East*, p. 302; cf. Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (Taipei: Cheng-Wen Publishing Company, 1966), p. 92.

⁴ Ricci's letter on 13 Nov. 1584 in *JLC*, p. 24; Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man from the West* (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1955), pp. 16-40.

adopting Buddhist terms and notions.⁵ Thus, they took the traditional robes of the Buddhist monks and shaved their heads and faces like the Buddhist monks,⁶ and even took Buddhist name.⁷ As a result, the Chinese identified the Jesuits with Buddhist monks.⁸

To introduce Christianity to the Chinese, Ruggieri began to translate a Latin catechism into the Chinese language with the aid of Ricci and an unknown Chinese helper who was later baptised by Francisco Cabral, the Superior at the Jesuit Mission in Macao.⁹ The Jesuits now had to translate the name of God into Chinese. Ruggieri adopted the term *T'ienzhu*, the Lord of Heaven (*T'ien*: Heaven + *Zhu*: Lord), when he saw that a young Chinese catechumen, namely Ciu-Ni-Co, inscribed the word *T'ienzhu* in front of the altar which Ruggieri had asked the young Chinese to look after during his absence.¹⁰

At that time, the term *T'ienzhu* referred to 'the Lord of certain of the heavens of Buddhist cosmology.'¹¹ According to the Historical Records (*Shiji* 史記) published around 100 BC, *T'ienzhu* was 'the name of the divinity of the official religion, one of the eight divinities venerated on the *Tai-shan* (泰山: the Great Mountain).'¹² One of the famous late Ming Buddhist leaders, Zhu-Hung (1535-1615), argued, when he heard the Christian message from the We

⁵ David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), p. 14; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 146-47.

⁶ Ibid; Chung-Yan Joyce Chan, 'Commands from Heaven: Matteo Ricci's Christianity in the Eyes of Ming Confucian Officials', *Missiology*, vol. 31, no. 31 (July 2003), pp. 273-75.

⁷ Eric Reinders, *Borrowed Gods and Foreign Bodies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 23.

⁸ Chan, 'Commands from Heaven', pp. 273-75.

⁹ Ricci's letter on 13 Nov. 1584 in *JLC*, p. 24; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 144.

¹⁰ Louis J. Gallagher, S. J. trans., *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610* [hereafter *JMR*] (New York: Random House, 1953), pp. 145-47; see p. 50, footnote #118.

¹¹ Paulos Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings of the Christian Doctrine of Salvation* (PhD thesis, University of Helsinki, 2006), pp. 81-2; cf. Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1985), p. 217; Andrew Ross argued that the root of *T'ienzhu* was in 'both Confucian and Daoist tradition'. However his argument may be incorrect, as I describe above. Ross did not include any primary or secondary source to support this argument in his book; cf. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 148.

¹² Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, pp. 81-2.

stern Catholic missionaries, that the term *T'ienzhu* was synonymous with the Buddhism term, the *Thushita* Heaven.¹³

However, the Jesuits, as Ricci recorded in his journey in 1584, after their careful research into the Chinese language for the most suitable term for God, chose '*T'ienzhu*, meaning the Lord of Heaven', instead of 'saying God [*Deus*]'.¹⁴ As a result, when Ruggieri with the aid of Ricci and the unknown Chinese helper composed a Christian catechism book in Chinese under the title of the *True Record of the Lord of Heaven – A New Compilation from India* (天主實錄: *T'ienzhu Shih-Lu*: Latin *Vera et brevis divinarum rerum expositio*), he used *T'ienzhu* as the term for God.¹⁵ As Ruggieri favoured Buddhism, he adopted many Buddhist terms in this book.¹⁶ The Jesuits used the term *T'ienzhu* until 1592, and the Dominicans and the Franciscans used it later on.¹⁷

(2) 'Draw Close to Confucianism and Repudiate Buddhism'

In November 1588, Ruggieri was sent back to Italy by order of Valignano.¹⁸ In the next year, Ricci moved from Zhao-Ching to Shao-Chou in Kwang-Tung Province, where he began to cultivate his friendship with a Confucian scholar, Chiu Tai So.¹⁹ Ricci introduced western science and knowledge to him, and in return he introduced Ricci to the Confucian Classics.²⁰ He thus studied the classics that led him to several significant changes.

First, Ricci decided to disconnect with Buddhism, and instead focus his mission on the upper classes of Confucian literati with the use of western science and

¹³ cf. Douglas Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth Century China', *Church History*, vol. 38 (1969), pp. 235-36, cited in Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 146.

¹⁴ *JMR*, pp. 154-55.

¹⁵ Matteo Ricci, S. J., *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* [hereafter *TMLH*], trans. & eds., Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Resources, 1985), p. 12; Sukehiro Hirakawa, *Matteo Ricci*, trans. Young Hee Noh (Seoul: East-Asia Publishing Co., 2002), p. 359; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 144.

¹⁶ Hirakawa, *Matteo Ricci*, p. 359; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 152-53.

¹⁷ *JMR*, pp. 154-55.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 193-99.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 217-27, 230-35.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 230-35.; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 124-26.

intellectualism under the slogan of ‘Draw close to Confucianism and repudiate Buddhism’.²¹

To understand why Ricci turned away from Buddhists to Confucians, it is necessary to look briefly at sixteenth-century Chinese society. Confucian literati received the most respect and prestige of any classes in traditional Chinese society.²² Many literati, who had been successful in the official examinations, held social prestige and official appointments that enabled them not only to obtain financial rewards from holding office but also to create networks of political and social influence upon their society. Furthermore, they invested these financial rewards in farmland that provided them with profit as well as refuge in the event of dismissal from office or retirement.²³ By contrast, the poor were more closely connected with Buddhism, Daoism and other popular religious sects.²⁴ Thus, the literati denounced Buddhist monks as uneducated and heterodox.²⁵

For this reason, while Ricci (and Ruggieri) had favoured Buddhism in the initial stage of their mission in Zhao-Ching from 1583 to 1588, Ricci in 1594 decided to take off Buddhist dress, and instead wore the Confucian literati’s garb to present himself as a Confucian scholar.²⁶ Furthermore, he adopted a Chinese name: Li Ma-Dou (利瑪竇).²⁷ This choice was reasonable, because the highly educated Jesuits, many of whom came from prominent family backgrounds in Europe, could be relevant to the highly educated and socially prestigious Confucian literati.²⁸ That is to say, the Jesuit attempt was to work ‘from the top-down’ in converting the high social classes.²⁹

Second, it was about then that Ricci initiated the missionary strategy in which he accommodated Chinese Confucian cultures to Christianity, known famously as ‘the accommodation method’.³⁰ This was because he came to the view that the basic ethics

²¹ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 22; Chan, ‘Commands from Heaven’, pp. 273-75.

²² Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West*, p. 13.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 13, 22.

²⁶ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 16.

²⁷ Charles E. Ronan, S. J. eds., *East Meets West, The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773* (Chicago: Loyola U. P., 1988), p. xx; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 125; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 152-53.

²⁸ Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West*, p. 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁰ David E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), p. 15.

of Christianity were not incompatible with those of Confucianism, and thus Christianity could supplement what was ancient and true within original Confucianism (保儒).³¹ As a result of the accommodation method in favour of Confucianism, he was able to gain a number of Confucian literati, including the ‘Three Pillars’ – Xu Guang-Ji (徐光启: 1562-1633), Li Zhi-Zao (李之藻: 1565-1630) and Yang Ting-Yun (杨廷筠: 1557-1627).³² These three pre-eminent figures were upper-class Confucian literati, distinguished intellectuals and high political officials, who greatly contributed not only to the building up of Chinese Catholicism, but also introducing China to western societies.³³ As such, Ricci became known as one of the most famous Jesuit missionaries who advocated the accommodation method along with Roberto de Nobili in South India.³⁴

In 1591, Ricci now found that many Buddhism terms had been used in the *True Record of the Lord of Heaven* (hereafter *TRLH*).³⁵ In the same year, therefore, in order to introduce Christianity to the learned Confucian scholars in accordance with a theistic tradition of Confucianism, Ricci began to rewrite the usable parts of the *TRLH*, removing Buddhist terms and substituting terms and phrases from the Confucian Classics.³⁶ To introduce Confucianism to the West, he also began a Latin translation of the *Four Books* (四書: *Shi Shu*) of the Confucian Classics.³⁷

On the way to Beijing in pursuit of his dream to convert the Chinese emperor, Ricci continued to compose a number of treatises outlining a Confucian-Christian dialogue. In 1595, he composed the *Chiao-yu lun* (交友論: *On Friendship*)³⁸ in Nanking (南京). In 1597, he was appointed the head of the Jesuit mission in China.³⁹ In 1601, he

³¹ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 147-48; cf. Samuel H. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. II (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), pp. 111-13.

³² Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, pp. 32-4; for further studies on the Three Pillars’ conversion, see Willard J. Peterson, ‘Why did they become Christians?’, in *East Meets West*, eds., Ronan, pp. 129-52.; Chan, ‘Commands from Heaven’, pp. 273-75.

³³ Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West*, pp. 14-7.

³⁴ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 15; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 124-28.

³⁵ See p. 34.

³⁶ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 15; Ronan, *East Meets West*, p. xx.

³⁷ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 10; Ronan, *East Meets West*, p. xx.

³⁸ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, p. 42; this book translated a series of aphorisms from Western thinkers such as Cicero and Seneca to introduce friendship and ethics from a Western perspective, and became one of the most popular Western books in the late Ming dynasty.

³⁹ Ronan, *East meets West*, p. xx.

eventually took residence in Beijing, though he was unable to meet the Chinese emperor.⁴⁰

The years 1601-1610 marked the peak of Ricci's composition works.⁴¹ He published the *TMLH* in 1603, the *Er-shih wu-yan* (二十五言: *Twenty-five Sayings*)⁴² in 1605, and a set of essays describing his debates with Chinese literati, the *Ch'i-jen Shih-p'ien* (畸人十篇: *the Ten Discourses by an Extraordinary Man*)⁴³, in 1608.⁴⁴ In addition to those books, in order to introduce Western mathematics to Chinese Confucians, he translated the first six books of the *Clavius' Commentary of Euclid's Elements of Geometry* into Chinese under the title of *Chi-ho yuan-pen* (幾何原本)⁴⁵ in 1607 with the aid of Xu Guang-Ji, one of the Three Pillars.⁴⁶

Ricci died on 11 May 1610, and was buried on the outskirts of Beijing.⁴⁷ His burial site was specially designated by the Chinese emperor at the request of Xu Guang-Ji and many other Chinese literati in honour of his contributions to China.⁴⁸ Thanks to Ricci's endeavours, the Jesuits were able to open their mission in Shanghai in 1608 and Hangchow in 1611, by request of two of the Three Pillars – Xu Guang-Ji and Li Zhi-Zao – respectively.⁴⁹

(3) *Shangti* in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*

Among Ricci's many treatises, we will pay special attention to the *TMLH*, because it explained what theological factors lay behind his adoption of *Shangti*, and is

⁴⁰ George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy: from Its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago: Loyola U. P., 1985), p. 15.

⁴¹ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 10.

⁴² This is a reference book drawn from classical Western authors; cf. Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 51-2.

⁴³ This is a set of essays describing his debates with Chinese literati; cf. *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Roman, *East Meets West*, p. xxi.

⁴⁵ As previously seen, when Ricci studied philosophy, theology and mathematics at the Roman College, Christopher Clavius, the distinguished mathematicians and friend of Kepler and Galileo, was his teacher of mathematics. Thus, it is no wonder that Ricci translated his teacher's formidable mathematical treatise into Chinese; Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 4.

⁴⁶ See p. 37, footnote #32.

⁴⁷ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 10; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 32-46, 118-41; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 151.

⁴⁸ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

regarded as one of the most important Christian treatises written in Chinese for the following reasons.⁵⁰

First, it is regarded as one of the most influential Christian books on Chinese intellectuals (along with Clavius' Commentary).⁵¹ Second, it was 'not aiming at producing a catechism of the type of the Calvinist Smaller and Greater Catechisms', but was rather the first intellectual and apologetic attempt by a Western Roman Catholic scholar 'to use a Chinese way of thinking to introduce Christianity' to Chinese Confucian scholars.⁵² In this regard, the writing style of this book was a conversation of questions and answers between a Chinese Confucian scholar (*Chung-shih* 中士) and a Western Christian scholar (*His-shih* 西士), following the 'conventional Confucian writing style of fictional conversation' or analects.⁵³ Third, it played an important role in building up a bridge between Christianity and Confucian scholars, including the Q'ing Empire, Kang-Xi, and it was used for four hundred years.⁵⁴ Fourth, it was the first piece of Christian literature to reach Korea, and contributed enormously to the foundation of the Korean Roman Catholic churches by leading a group of Korean Confucians to Christianity before the arrival of any foreign missionaries in the country.⁵⁵ We will come back to this issue later in this chapter.

Shangti (or Ti) and T'ien in the Confucian Classics

Before we delve into the *TMLH*, we will look briefly at the Confucian Classics and how *Shangti* (or *Ti*) and *T'ien* were characterised in these books. This will help us to understand how Ricci's study of the classics led him to produce the *TMLH* with the use of *Shangti* or *T'ien*.

It is generally agreed that Confucianism or the Confucian tradition was entirely derived from the Confucian Classics, because these classics were the primary textbooks of the Confucian way of life, values, ideals and political functions and applications, and the root from which various Confucian branches developed.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. xiii, 10.

⁵¹ Ibid; Chan, 'Commands from Heaven', p. 274.

⁵² Ibid; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147.

⁵³ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 28; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 162.

⁵⁴ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 146; see pp. 54-7.

⁵⁶ Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2000), pp. 47-52.

The Confucian Classics consist of two kinds of sacred writings – the *Five Sacred Books* (*Wu-jing* 五經) and the *Four Books* (*Si-shu* 四書).⁵⁷ The *Five Sacred Classics*, considered as the source of Confucianism and established by Confucius (孔子) during the Western-Han Dynasty (c.a. 206 BC – 8 AD), refer to the canonical books, consisting of the *Book of Odes* or the *Book of Songs/Poetry* (*Shi-jing* 詩經), the *Book of History* or the *Book of Documents* (*Shu-jing* 書經), the *Book of Rites* (*Li-ji* 禮記), the *Book of Changes* (*Yi-jing* 易經) and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun-qiu* 春秋); all of these books were edited by Confucius during the Zhou 趙 Dynasty (1027-256 BC).⁵⁸ Among them, the *Book of History* was considered the oldest and the most important classic, because ‘many of its ideas were regarded as the original source of Confucian philosophy, ethics, religion and politics.’⁵⁹ The *Four Books*, established under the philosopher Zhu-Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), consist of the *Analects* (*Lun-yu* 論語), the *Great Learning* (*Da-xue* 大學), the *Doctrine of Mean* (*Zhong-yong* 中庸) and the *Book of Mencius* (*Meng-zi* 孟子).⁶⁰

According to the classics, particularly the *Book of History*, in the ancient period – comprising the Xia 夏 Dynasty (c.a. 2183-1752 BC), the Shang 商 Dynasty (c.a. 1751-1122 BC) and the early Zhou 周 Dynasty (c.a. 1122-221 BC) –, the Chinese legendary sage-kings offered their sacrifices to the Supreme Deity, *Shangti*, at the Round Mound.⁶¹ The Chinese character *Shangti* 上帝 is a compound word of *Shang* (上: above) and *Ti* (帝: Sovereign or Lord), thereby referring to the Sovereign on High or the Supreme Lord.⁶² *Shangti* was believed to be the omnipotent and omniscient Supreme God over all spiritual beings, a deity who commanded rain, wind, thunder, harvest and victories or defeats in wars.⁶³ The Chinese kings’ worship of *Shangti*, described in the

⁵⁷ Ibid; it became the Twelve and Thirteen Classics.

⁵⁸ Michael Nylan, *The Five Confucian Classics* (New Heaven: Yale U. P., 2001); Jost O. Zetzsche, *The Bible in China* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica, 1999), p. 20.

⁵⁹ Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, p. 61.

⁶⁰ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, pp. 287-8; Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, pp. 63-7; Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, p. 20.

⁶¹ James Legge trans., *The Chinese Classics*, vol. III, *Shoo King* (Taipei: South Materials Center reprint, 1983), pp. 23, 26, 33-5, 511; cf. idem, *The Religions of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880), pp. 23-6.

⁶² Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 200.

⁶³ Joseph Shih, ‘The Notions of God in the Ancient Chinese Religion’, *Numen*, vol. 16 (Sept. 1969), p. 100; cf. Chan Kei Thong, *Finding God in Ancient China* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), pp. 88-106; Raymond P. Petzholt, *China’s Ancient Monotheistic Religious Roots in Shang Ti and Its Importance for the Evangelization of the Chinese* (Doctor of Ministry thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000)

Book of History, was proven to be a historical truth when the character *Shangti* was discovered by archaeological excavation of oracle bone inscriptions (甲骨文 *Jia-ku-wen*), dating from the Shang Dynasty, in Anyang in 1924.⁶⁴

However, the term *Shangti* was gradually replaced by *T'ien* (天: Heaven), a personal transcendental supreme deity, during the Zhou Dynasty. The Shang Dynasty was conquered by King Wen (武王) of the Zhou Dynasty in 1122 BC. After King Wen's death, while his son, King Cheng, was still a minor, the Duke of Zhou in fact ruled the country.⁶⁵ According to the *Book of Rites*, the Duke of Zhou believed that *T'ien* punished the Shang Dynasty, and gave it to the Zhou Dynasty. This was because the Shang rulers had neglected the commands of *T'ien*. Thus the Duke of Zhou became aware that he was appointed by the Mandate of Heaven (*T'ien-ming* 天命) to rule his country, and believed that *T'ien* was a transcendental supreme deity, having the ultimate power to control and determine the course of the natural and the human world.⁶⁶

In consequence, the emperors of the Zhou Dynasty, bearing the title of the Son of Heaven (*T'ien-tsu* 天子), began to worship not only *Shangti* but also *T'ien* on behalf of their people once a year to welcome the arrival of the longest day.⁶⁷ Thus the two names – *Shangti* and *T'ien* – were used interchangeably to denote the same Supreme Deity from the early Zhou Dynasty onwards, and so the Zhou rulers worshipped both *Shangti* and *T'ien*.⁶⁸ In some cases the two names were mixed as *Hwang-Tien Shangti* (皇天上帝: August Heaven the Lord on High) by the Zhou people.⁶⁹ It has been suggested that the two names – *Shangti* and *T'ien* – of the same Chinese Supreme Deity can be viewed as parallel respectively to the two names of the Israel God – *Yahweh* and *Elohim* – in the Old Testament.⁷⁰

As such, those names of the Chinese Supreme Deity often appeared in the Confucian Classics. Specifically, in the *Book of History*, *T'ien* appears in 29 sections,

⁶⁴ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 291; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 198-200.

⁶⁵ Shih, 'The Notions of God', p. 99.

⁶⁶ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, pp. 194-95; Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, pp. 143, 196-99.

⁶⁷ Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, p. 197.

⁶⁸ Shih, 'The Notions of God', p. 101; Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, p. 143.

⁶⁹ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 292.

⁷⁰ Tsu-Kung Chuang, 'Shang-di: God from the Chinese Perspective', in *The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God*, eds. William D. Spencer and Aida Besançon Spencer (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), p. 193; G. W. Sheppard, 'The Problem of Translating God into Chinese', *The Bible Translator*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1955), p. 29.

Shangti in 12 sections, *Ti* in 4 sections, *Huang-T'ien* 皇天 in 3 sections, *Huang-Ti* 皇帝 and *Huang-Ti Shangti* in 1 section. In the *Book of Odes*, *T'ien* appears in 19 sections, *Huang-T'ien* in 12 sections, *Ti* in 9 sections, *Shangti* in 8 sections, *Huang-Ti* in 2 sections and *Huang-T'ien Shangti* in one section.⁷¹ However, *Shangti* was increasingly replaced by *T'ien* in the late Zhou Dynasty. After the Zhou Dynasty, the religious aspect was gradually taken out of the Chinese notion of *T'ien*, and this notion had degenerated into an impersonal atheistic principle in the era of Neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty and the Ming Dynasty.⁷² We will come back to this point later in this chapter.

Shangti (or Ti) and T'ien in the TMLH

We now return to the translation of the name of God into Chinese in the *TMLH*. As previously seen, Ruggieri and Ricci had mainly used *T'ienzhu* in the *TRLH* until 1592. However, from 1592 onwards, as Ricci was much influenced by the Confucian Classics, he now found that the Chinese understanding of the Confucian Supreme Deity *Shangti* or *T'ien* characterised in the Confucian Classics, could be reconciled with the Christian monotheistic notion of God.⁷³ That is to say, he believed that the ancient Chinese had possessed a monotheistic belief in *Shangti* who was phenomenally analogous to the Christian God, *Deus*, whom the Western missionaries worshipped.⁷⁴ Thus, he attempted to introduce *Deus* as an equivalent term to *Shangti*.⁷⁵

Specifically, in Chapter 1 (‘第 1 篇; 論天主始制天地萬物, 而主宰安養之’: *A Discussion on the Creation of Heaven, Earth, and All Things by the Lord of Heaven, and on The Way He Exercise Authority and Sustains Them*) and Chapter 2 (‘第 2 篇; 解釋世人錯認天主’: *An Explanation of Mistaken Views Concerning the Lord of Heaven Current Among Men*), Ricci argued that the One Supreme Being existed; and that this Supreme Deity is *T'ienzhu* (the Lord of Heaven) who is also called *Shangti* in China and *Deus* (God) in the West:

⁷¹ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 292.

⁷² Chuang, ‘Shang-di’, p. 196; see pp. 45-8.

⁷³ Ronan, *East Meets West*, p. xx.

⁷⁴ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 93; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147.

⁷⁵ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 12.

The Western scholar says[西士曰]: You, Sir, wish first to inquire about the One who is said to have created heaven, earth, and all things and to exercise constant authority over them. I assert, then, that there is nothing under heaven which is more evident than the truth of His existence... Now this Someone is none other than the Lord of Heaven [*T'ienzhu*] whom our Western nations term *Deus*.⁷⁶

The Western scholar says: He who is called the Lord of Heaven in my humble country is He who is called God [*Shangti*] in Chinese.⁷⁷

In Chapter 2, in order to show that the monotheistic attributes of *Shangti* were consonant with those of *Deus*, Ricci cited eleven usages of *Shangti* from the Confucian Classics: the *Book of History*, the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of Changes* and the *Book of Rites*⁷⁸ of the *Five Sacred Classics*, and the *Doctrine of Mean* of the *Four Books*. We cite five examples of these usages:

Quoting Confucius [孔子], the *Doctrine of the Mean* [中庸] says, “The ceremonies of sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are meant for the service of the Sovereign on High [*Shangti*].”

中庸引孔子曰 郊社之禮以事上帝也

One of the hymns to the Zhou sovereigns [周頌] in the [*Book of Odes* 詩經] runs as follows... “Greatly illustrious were Ch’eng and K’ang, crowned by the Sovereign on High [*Shangti*].”

周頌曰：“執競武王，无兢维烈。不显成康，上帝是皇。”

The *Book of Changes* [易經] has the following: “The Sovereign [*Shangti*] emerges from Chen in the east.”

雅云：“维此文王，小心翼翼，昭事上帝。”

In the *Book of Rites* [禮記] it is stated: “When all these points are as they ought to be, the Sovereign on High [*Shangti*] will accept the sacrifices.”

易曰：“帝出乎震。”夫帝也者，非天之谓，苍天者抱八方，何能出于一乎？

In the “Metal-bound Coffin” of the *Book of History* [書經] the Duke of Zhou [周公] says: And moreover he [武王] was appointed in the hall of the Sovereign [*Shangti*] to extend his aid to the four quarters of the empire.”

汤誓曰：“夏氏有罪，予畏上帝，不敢不正。”⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that, in the *TMLH*, Ricci mainly referred to the two oldest books of the Confucian Classics, the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*.⁸⁰ This was

⁷⁶ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 102, 106-07; all the English translations of this work are directly cited in Lancashire’s translation.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 123.

⁷⁸ Ricci did not cite anything from *Chun-qui* 春秋.

⁷⁹ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 122-25.

because these books made more frequent reference to *Shangti* than did other books,⁸¹ and described how the ancient Chinese kings worshipped *Shangti* as the monotheistic Supreme Being during the Xia, Shang and early Zhou Dynasty.⁸²

Ricci also argued that the Chinese notion of *T'ien* (Heaven) was congruent with the Christian conception of God on the grounds of his etymological analysis of the ancient Chinese character *T'ien* 天; according to Ricci, this letter was as regarded as a compounded word of 'one (一)' and 'great (大)', thereby denoting 'one great'.⁸³ It is interesting to note that, as we will see in Chapter 3, James Legge of the LMS adopted this same argument of Ricci when he argued in favour of the use of *T'ien* and *Shangti* as the terms for God.⁸⁴

Finally, Ricci concluded that 'having leafed through a great number of ancient books [i.e. the Confucian Classics], it is quite clear to me that the Sovereign on High [*Shangti*] and the Lord of Heaven [*Deus*] are different only in name.'⁸⁵

Therefore, we may conclude that Ricci's adoption of *Shangti* from the Confucian Classics as the name of God in the *TMLH* can be attributed to his conviction of the fact that the ancient Chinese had a monotheistic belief in the Confucian Supreme Deity, viz. 'Confucian monotheism', which was compatible with Christian monotheism.⁸⁶ In other words, he believed that a concept of God, that was compatible with Christian doctrine, had existed among the ancient Chinese people before the foreign missionaries' arrival in China.

In addition to this theological reason, as seen in the Introduction, Sang-Keun Kim in his book *Strange Names of God* (2004) suggests two further theological influences – Italian Renaissance humanism and Thomas Aquinas' natural theology, viz. Thomism –

⁸⁰ See pp. 39-40.

⁸¹ Nicolas Standaert, *The Fascinating God: A Challenge to Modern Chinese Theology presented by A Text on the Name of God written by a 17th Century Chinese Student of Theology* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1995), p. 86, cited in Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 204; cf. occurrences of *Shangti* in *Wujing* (五經) are as follows: 書經 *Shujing* 32 times, 詩經 *Shijing* 24 times, 禮記 *Liji* 20 times, 春秋 *Chunqiu* 8 times, 易經 *Yijing* 2 times.

⁸² See pp. 40-1.

⁸³ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 125.

⁸⁴ See p. 86, footnote #143.

⁸⁵ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 124-25.

⁸⁶ Erik Zürcher, 'Jesuit Accommodation', in *The Chinese Rites Controversy*, ed. Mungello, p. 50; Ronan, *East Meets West*, p. xx; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147.

which led Ricci to believe that the Chinese Confucians had been providentially given a natural reason that enabled them to possess a deistic knowledge of the Supreme Being without special Christian revelation.⁸⁷

(4) The Degeneration of ‘Confucian Monotheism’

Ricci’s intensive studies of the Confucian Classics also led him to another important conclusion. He now came to distinguish between what he called ‘original Confucianism’ (原儒教) and atheistic ‘Neo-Confucianism’ (新儒教); while the former referred to ancient monotheistic Confucianism, characterised in the original texts of the Confucian Classics, the latter denoted the ‘interpretations’ of the original texts by the greatest Chinese philosopher, Zhu-Xi (朱熹 : 1130-1200).⁸⁸

To understand Ricci’s view of Neo-Confucianism, we need to look at how Neo-Confucianism developed in more detail.⁸⁹ In traditional understanding Neo-Confucianism developed in two schools or branches. The first school was the *Ch’eng-Zhu* Neo-Confucianism or ‘the School of Principle’, after its leading spirits – Ch’eng I (1033-1107) and Zhu Xi. This school was blended with Buddhism and Taoism, and was rationalistic or realistic in emphasising the creation notion of *Tai-Ji* (太極: the Supreme Ultimate), and *li* (principle) and *qi* (vital force). The second party was the *Lu-Wang* Neo-Confucianism or ‘the School of Mind’ after its two leading representatives – Lu Hsiang-Shan (1139-1193) and Wang Yang-Ming (王陽明: 1472–1529). This school stressed inner development, and was idealistic and relatively more closely blended with Buddhism and Taoism than was the first school.⁹⁰ As Mungello argues, Ricci showed little awareness of *Lu-Wang* Neo-Confucianism, but only opposed *Ch’eng-Zhu* Neo-Confucianism.⁹¹ For this reason, we will focus on only *Ch’eng-Zhu* Neo-Confucianism.

⁸⁷ See pp. 9-10.

⁸⁸ John D. Young, *Confucianism and Christianity: the First Encounter* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong U. P., 1983), p. 28, cited in Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 61; George Dunne, *Generation of Giants* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), p. 32, cited in Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 153; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147.

⁸⁹ This section is mainly indebted to Mungello, *Curious Land*, pp. 60-2.

⁹⁰ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 306.

⁹¹ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 60.

Neo-Confucianism (established by Zhu Xi) became prevalent among the Confucian literati during the Song 宋 Dynasty (960-1279) and the Ming 明 Dynasty (1368-1644) which Ricci encountered.⁹² According to Zhu Xi's dualistic philosophy, influenced by Buddhism and Taoism, one of the core components of Neo-Confucianism was *Tai-Ji* (太極: the Supreme Ultimate), the first cause of creation; the cosmos emanated from the union of *qi* (氣: vital force) and *li* (理: natural principle or law), derived originally from *Tai-Ji*.⁹³ Thus, Neo-Confucianism progressively excluded a monotheistic deity who was the creator of the world, and instead adhered to an atheistic principle of creation.⁹⁴

In view of this fact, Ricci observed that as 'original Confucianism' had become mixed with atheistic Mahayana Buddhism, originated in India, and pantheistic Taoism, it had been modified into a form of atheistic Neo-Confucianism in the Song and the Ming Dynasties.⁹⁵ That is to say, he noted that a monotheistic notion of original Confucianism had degenerated into an atheistic humanistic principle, such as *T'ai-Ji*, *Tien-li* (天理: Heavenly Principle or Natural Law), *Xing* (性: Human Nature) and *Tao* (道: Way).⁹⁶ At the same time, the Chinese monotheistic belief in a personal Supreme Deity *T'ien* (Heaven) in the ancient period had also been transformed into a formalistic belief in an impersonal *T'ien*.⁹⁷

For this reason, in his *TMLH*, while Ricci upheld ancient Confucianism, he denounced Buddhism, Taoism and Neo-Confucianism. First, he castigated Taoism, established by 'Lao Tzu', which regarded 'nothing 無', and Buddhism, which he denounced as 'voidness 空'.⁹⁸

Second, in referring to the ancient Confucian Classics, he pointed out that 'the superior men of ancient times [viz. the Chinese sages] worshipped and revered the Sovereign on High [*Shangti*], of Heaven and earth, but I have never heard of them

⁹² Ibid, pp. 59-61.

⁹³ Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, p. 105; Dong-Sik Ryu, *풍류도와 한국의 종교사상 (Pung-Ryu-Do & the Korean Religious Thoughts)* (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., 2004), pp. 115-17; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147.

⁹⁴ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 148.

⁹⁶ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 91; cf. Ralph Covell, *Confucius, the Buddha, and Christ: A History of the Gospel in Chinese* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), pp. 45-56.

⁹⁷ Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 91.

⁹⁸ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 98-9.

paying respect to the Supreme Ultimate [*Tai-Ji*].⁹⁹ In other words, he argued that ‘the work of creation’ of the universe is ‘established by the Lord of Heaven’, and thus ‘neither principle nor the Supreme Ultimate would be able to fill this role.’¹⁰⁰ In particular, he mentioned *the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (太極圖說), produced by Zhou Tun-Yi (周敦頤: 1017-73), one of the famous Neo-Confucian scholars during the Song Dynasty.¹⁰¹ This diagram was about Zhou’s theory of emanation that illustrated visually the creation process of the *Tai-ji* through the union of ‘*qi* (*yang*)’ and ‘*li* (*yin*)’.¹⁰² This theory had offered a substantial foundation for Neo-Confucian metaphysics and cosmology, and Zhu-Xi then developed the principle of *Tai-Ji* on the basis of Zhou’s diagram.¹⁰³ However, Ricci did not hesitate to criticise this diagram:

The Western scholar says: Superior men have no reason to oppose any theory which accords with the truth, but I am afraid it is difficult to harmonise explanations of the Supreme Ultimate [*Tai-ji*] with the truth. The theory, from what I have seen of the diagram illustrating the Ultimateless and the Supreme Ultimate, is based on symbols representing *Yang* and *Yin*; and what is [the reality of which] these symbols [are an expression]? It is obvious, then, that the Supreme Ultimate cannot be the reality which produced heaven and earth. The truth concerning the Lord of Heaven has been handed down from ancient times. It is complete, and is deficient in nothing.¹⁰⁴

At the end of Chapter 2 in the *TMLH*, the Chinese scholar eventually admitted the Western scholar’s argument which denied that *Tai-Ji* is the origin of creation.¹⁰⁵ However, as Ricci criticised the core principle of Neo-Confucianism that was predominant among Neo-Confucian scholars in the Ming Dynasty, it provoked their

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 106-07.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 121.

¹⁰¹ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 61.

¹⁰² Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, pp. 115-17; Zhou also ‘combined his theory with that of Wu-hsing (五行), according to which the cosmos is composed of Five Elements: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. Neo-Confucian cosmology and metaphysics were elaborated according to this diagram’; Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 61, see p. 46, footnote #93.

¹⁰³ Feng, Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Free Press, 1966); Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 106; Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, p. 301.

¹⁰⁴ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 106-07.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

responses to the *TMLH* both negatively (in the shape of an anti-Ricci party) or positively (through a pro-Ricci party, e.g. the Three Pillars).¹⁰⁶

In conclusion, Ricci argued in his journal that the ancient Chinese had known and worshipped ‘one supreme being’, as the classics described. That is to say, he argued that they had retained vestiges of the primitive revelation of God to the Chinese in a form of Confucianism.¹⁰⁷ However, he believed that this ‘Confucian monotheism’ had degenerated into atheistic Neo-Confucianism, as human nature became corrupt:

From the very beginning of their history, it is recorded in the writings [of the Confucian Classics] that they recognised and worshipped *one supreme being* whom they called the King of Heaven... Just as fallen human nature continues to degenerate without the help of divine grace, so, too, *primitive ideas of religion* become so obscure with the passing of time, that there are very few who do not descend to the worse error of atheism when they abandon the cult of inanimate gods.¹⁰⁸

Therefore, it may be suggested that Ricci’s view of Confucianism was in harmony with a degeneration theory of religion.

2. The Chinese Term Question among Roman Catholic Missions

Among the Jesuits

In this section, we will review briefly how the Chinese Term Question proceeded among the Roman Catholic orders. Up until Ricci’s death in 1611, nobody had dared to question the equivalence between *Shangti* of the Confucian Classics and the Christian God.¹⁰⁹ However, after Ricci’s death, the Term Question first arose among the Jesuits themselves when Nicolo Longobardi questioned whether the Chinese correctly understood *Shangti* as ‘a personal, unique, all-powerful and creator God’ or still

¹⁰⁶ Hirakawa, *Matteo Ricci*, p. 451; for further studies on Confucians’ response to the *TMLH*, see Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 197-266.

¹⁰⁷ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 28; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 147; Song Young-Bae, ‘마레오리치의 선교활동의 개략과 그의 유교관’ (Survey of Matteo Ricci’s Mission and His Perspective on Confucianism), in Matteo Ricci, *On Friendship and Other Two Books*, trans. & ed., idem (Seoul: Seoul National U. P., 2000), p. 475.

¹⁰⁸ *JMR*, pp. 93-4; Zurcher, ‘Jesuit Accommodation’, p. 50; emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁹ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 30.

acknowledged *Shangti* as their traditional deity.¹¹⁰ It then proceeded between the pro-Ricci group (e. g. Alfonso Vagnone, Giulio Aleni, Diego de Pantoja, Nicolas Trigault and Rodrigo de Figueiredo) and the anti-Ricci group (e.g. Joao Rodrigues, Pascoal Mendes and Nicolo Longobardi). Whereas the former group carefully argued that *Shangti* was more admissible than other terms, the latter group opposed the use of all the existing Chinese terms – *T'ienzhu*, *Shangti* and *T'ien* – on the grounds of their ambiguity, but insisted instead on employing Latin terms with pronunciations transliterated into Chinese, just as the Jesuits in Japan used *Daius*.¹¹¹ As a result, two conferences were held on this issue at Macao in 1618 and Jia-Ding in 1627, and Superior General Muzio Vitelleschi and the China Visitor Andre Palmeiro prohibited the term *Shangti* in 1625 and 1627 respectively.¹¹² Nevertheless, a number of Jesuits did not stop using *Shangti*, and printed Chinese books with the use of *Shangti*.¹¹³

Between the Jesuits and the Spanish Orders (Dominicans and Franciscans)

The Term Question re-occurred between the Jesuits (*Shangti*) on the one hand and the Dominicans and Franciscans (*T'ienzhu*) on the other hand.

In the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, Christian mission in China was dominated by the Jesuits. As well as their use of *Shangti*, the Jesuits allowed Chinese believers to practise ancestor rites, because the Jesuits regarded the rites not as idolatrous worship but simply as civic rituals intended to express the Chinese people's respect and gratitude to their ancestors and supremely to *Master K'ungz, the Most Holy Teacher* (至聖孔子).¹¹⁴ However, the Jesuits were cautious with regard to some elements in the rites which seemed to be superstitious. In their conferences in 1603 and 1605, they thus issued guidelines regarding the permissible and prohibited elements of the rites.¹¹⁵

The Dominicans and the Franciscans arrived in China in 1631 and 1633 respectively. The new Spanish mission orders were surprised to find that the Jesuits

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 85-8; Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 4.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 30; Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 85-8; Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Reinders, *Borrowed Gods*, p. 24.

¹¹⁵ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 12 (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America), p. 513.

used the name of the Chinese heathen deity *Shangti* or *T'ien* (Heaven) for the Christian God, and still permitted Chinese believers to practise ancestral rites. Consequently they reported the Jesuits to the Vatican for heterodoxy and idolatry in 1637, claiming that both terms *Shangti* and *T'ien* and the Chinese ancestor rites should be forbidden.¹¹⁶ This was the beginning of the Chinese Rites Controversy.¹¹⁷

The Spanish orders instead used the term *T'ienzhu*. As previously seen, although the term was largely connected with Buddhism, the Spanish orders in fact transformed its meaning into a new meaning congruent with Christian orthodoxy. This term *T'ienzhu* was a compounded word, merging two ancient Chinese terms – *T'ien* (天 : Heaven, in both a physical and deified sense) and *Zhu* (主: lord or master) – to form *T'ienzhu* (天主: the Lord of Heaven).¹¹⁸ In ordinary usage, the latter Chinese word *Zhu* had no specifically religious association, but refers to ‘a human status of honour, of personal authority and responsibility’.¹¹⁹ As we see above, the Spanish orders regarded the word *T'ien* (Heaven) itself as an inappropriate term for God. However, the two words, *T'ien* and *Zhu*, were so familiar to the Chinese that ‘when linked together they form a name indicating with unmistakable clearness both the universality and the personality of God as perceived in Christian faith.’¹²⁰ In addition, the Spanish orders argued that *T'ienzhu* is ‘less ambiguous’ than *Shangti* or *T'ien*.¹²¹ This suggestion was offered as a solution and ‘a matter of expediency’ of the Term Question by the Spanish orders.¹²² Hence, although the term *T'ienzhu* was connected with Buddhism and initiated by the Jesuits in 1583, it was in fact a ‘coinage’ of the Spanish orders to denote *Deus*.¹²³ That is to say, this neologism *T'ienzhu* was an attempt by the Spanish orders to present a form of orthodox Christianity, and to prevent Christianity from being tainted by Chinese

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 514.

¹¹⁷ Ricci, *TLMH*, p. 46.

¹¹⁸ Mungello, *Curious Land*, p. 232; see p. 34, footnote #10.

¹¹⁹ Sheppard, ‘The Problem of Translating God into Chinese’, p. 27.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Zurcher, ‘Jesuit Accommodation’, p. 51.

¹²² Ibid; Sheppard, ‘The Problem of Translating God into Chinese’, p. 27.

¹²³ Chuang, ‘Shang-di’, p. 205.

heathenism.¹²⁴ However, as we will see, it did not attract the Chinese, because it was foreign to Chinese religious traditions.¹²⁵

In contrast, the Jesuits' use of *Shangti* based on the accommodation method (along with their attractive intellectualism and scientific technology) facilitated the effective transition of the Confucian scholars from their impersonal theistic notions to a form of theism congruent with Christian belief. As a result, the Jesuits gained a large number of Chinese believers, mainly from the upper classes of Confucian literati, including the Three Pillars.¹²⁶ Furthermore, the Jesuits eventually attained an Edict of Toleration from the Emperor of the Q'ing Dynasty, Kang-xi, who is considered one of the greatest emperors in all of China's history, on 22 March 1692, an edict that permitted the legality of the Roman Catholic missions in China.¹²⁷ It is noteworthy that as Kang-xi studied the *TMLH* for six months, he became in favour of the Jesuits, and this was one reason why he issued the edict.¹²⁸ This edict of 1692 is often regarded as the climax of the Roman Catholic (actually the Jesuit) mission in China, and can be validly compared with 'the Edict of Milan' of AD 313 issued by Emperor Constantine.¹²⁹

On the other hand, it is widely held among sinologists that the Jesuits' use of *Shangti* caused an ambiguous conversion of Chinese Confucian believers from adherence to a traditional indigenous deity to the Christian God. We may cite two examples. First, in the case of the Three Pillars, although they had been baptised by the Jesuits, it is questionable whether they were truly converted from Confucianism to Christianity.¹³⁰ On the basis of their probing into the treatises of the Three Pillars, these sinologists argue that the reason why the Three Pillars accepted Christianity was not so much for religious but for political purposes; they accepted the Jesuits' Western religion not only to facilitate the Portuguese Jesuits' scientific technology and intellectualism to enrich their country, but also to draw the Portuguese militant power, allied with the

¹²⁴ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 26.

¹²⁵ Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West*, p. 13.

¹²⁶ See p. 37, footnote #32; cf. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, pp. 78-127.

¹²⁷ Ricci, *TLMH*, p. 39.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 176.

¹³⁰ Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, pp. 30-40; Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 85-8; Huang, *Confronting Confucian Understandings*, pp. 88-130; Kim, *Strange Names of God*, pp. 216-36.

Jesuits, into China to protect their country from the invasion of the northern Mongolian tribes during the late Ming Dynasty.¹³¹ Second, in the case of Kang-Xi, when he was urged by the Jesuits to accept baptism, ‘he always excused himself by saying that he worshipped the same God as the Christians.’¹³²

Lasting over a century, the Chinese Rites Controversy was finally brought to an end by three papal decrees issued by the Vatican in 1704 (Pope Clement XI), 1710 (Pope Clement XI), 1715 (the bull *Ex illa die* issued by Pope Clement XI) and 1742 (the bull *Ex quo singulari* issued by Pope Benedict XIV).¹³³ The decrees ruled in favour of Dominican and Franciscan arguments and prohibited all Roman Catholics in China from using *Shangti* or *T’ien*, and from practising ancestral rites, and ordered them to use *T’ienzhu* instead.¹³⁴ As a result, the Roman Catholic faith in China had been named *Tienzhu Jiao* (天主教) ever since the papal decrees were issued.

However, the papal decrees provoked the hostility of the Q’ing Emperors to Roman Catholicism – Kang-Xi (康熙: r. 1661-1722), Yung-Cheng (雍正: r. 1722-35) and Ch’ien-Lung (乾隆: r. 1736-96). In reaction to the papal decrees, these Chinese emperors then issued mandates that prohibited Christian missions in China (though a few Jesuits remained in Beijing). Furthermore, the imperial mandates were followed by the great persecutions of Roman Catholic missions from 1746 to 1748.¹³⁵

Afterwards, Pope Clement XIV ordered the dissolution of the Jesuit society in 1773.¹³⁶ The dissolution of the Jesuits provoked confusion and a vacuum of authority among the Roman Catholic community in China, whereas only a few Jesuits were allowed to remain in the imperial government in Beijing for communication with Vatican. Furthermore, additional persecutions followed in 1781, 1784, 1805 and 1811.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Herbert A. Giles, *Religions of Ancient China* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), pp. 17-18, cited in Petzholt, *China's Ancient Monotheistic Religious Roots in Shang Ti*, p. 102.

¹³³ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 515; Minamiki spelled out that the making of these decisions had involved ‘a half seven popes and two apostolic delegates; two Chinese emperors and their courts; the kings of Portugal, Spain, France; the Jesuit confessor of Louis XIV; the Holy Office and the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, the theology faculty of the Sorbonne; the Jansenists; preachers like Fenelon and Bossuet; writers like Voltaire and Leibnitz; the missionaries, their congregations and superiors’; Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy*, pp. ix-x.

¹³⁴ Minamiki, *The Chinese rites controversy*, pp. 43-76; *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 515.

¹³⁵ Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, p. 166.

¹³⁶ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 198.

As a result, the door of China was actually closed to foreign missionaries until Robert Morrison of the LMS arrived in Canton in 1807. Nevertheless Christian literature, produced by the Jesuits and other Roman Catholic missionaries, still circulated among Chinese believers.¹³⁷

3. The Transmission of the Chinese Theistic Terms to Korea

In accordance with the second research question raised in the Introduction, this section will look at how the two Chinese terms were brought to Korea. To understand this, we first need to look at how a number of religions were brought from China to Korea. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism were all imported from China to Korea from the fourth century onwards during the period of the Three Kingdoms.¹³⁸ In particular, Confucianism along with the Chinese characters (by which the Confucian Classics were written) was imported from China to Korea and Japan (and Vietnam) from the fourth to the seventh centuries.¹³⁹ As a result, the Chinese characters became a kind of *lingua franca* in the whole of the Far East.¹⁴⁰

In the fifteenth century during the period of the Choson Dynasty (1392-1910), Neo-Confucianism, established by Zhu-Xi, was fully imported to Korea (Korean *Zhu-Ja-Hak* or *Sung-Li-Hak*: Chinese *Hsing-li Hsueh*) with the result that it enormously impacted the upper and middle classes of Koreans.¹⁴¹ Consequently, these Korean classes fully accepted Neo-Confucianism, becoming Korean Confucian literati. They used adapted Chinese characters as a written-Korean language, known as *Han-Ja* (漢子: 한자) or *Han-Mun* (漢文: 한문), to read the classics, and their education was also based on the classics. This means that the Korean Confucian literati absorbed an atheistic form of Neo-Confucianism before they came into contact with the *TMLH*.

¹³⁷ Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol.II, pp. 132-33.

¹³⁸ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 89-90; James H. Grayson, *Korea-Religious History* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), p. 50; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, pp. 48-9.

¹³⁹ Grayson, *Korea-Religious History*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁰ Choong Chee Pang, 'Studying Christianity and Doing Theology Extra Ecclesiam in China', in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed. Sebastian C. H. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2008), p. 103.

¹⁴¹ Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, pp. 115-17; Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 89-90; Grayson, *Korea-Religious History*, pp. 230-31; see p. 149, footnote #130.

(1) *Shangti in the True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*

The *TMLH* was first introduced from China to Korea when Korean envoys in China brought it along with a variety of Chinese-translated Christian literature and Western science books, given to them by the Jesuits in Beijing, to Korea in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries.¹⁴²

The Roman Catholic churches in Beijing, built up by the Jesuits, became famous as the places where Korean envoys gained Western scientific knowledge. Thus, a total of 167 Korean envoys visited the churches in Beijing from 1636 up to 1783, the year of the visit of Seung-Hun Yi, the first baptised Korean Roman Catholic, to Beijing.¹⁴³ As the Korean envoys came into contact with the Jesuits in Beijing before the final papal decree of 1742 became known in China and Korea, the Jesuits freely provided the Korean envoys with Chinese-translated Christian literature including the *TMLH* as well as other materials. Thus, the Korean envoys became the first ones to come in contact with Roman Catholic teaching and the first to introduce it to Korea, where it became known as the ‘Western Knowledge (西學: *Seo-Hak*)’.¹⁴⁴

The Western Knowledge and European scientific books were attractive, especially to the Korean Confucian literati, who studied them intensively. As a result, these Confucian scholars, known as *Shil-Hak Pa*, developed the Western Knowledge as the ‘Practical Knowledge (實學: *Shil-Hak*)’ that became one of the most important subjects of Korean academic study.¹⁴⁵

At the same time, Korean Confucian scholars became interested in three Chinese-translated Roman Catholic doctrinal books written by Matteo Ricci – the *TMLH*, *On Friendship* and *the Ten Discourses of an Extraordinary Man*.¹⁴⁶ These books introduced Roman Catholicism to them. Among these three books, they paid special attention to the *TMLH*, because it explained why the God of the Western Religion in Heaven (*T'ienzhu*

¹⁴² In-Cheol Kang, 한국 천주교의 역사사회학 (*The Socio-Historical Studies on Roman Catholic in Korea*) (Seoul: The Korea Theological College Press, 2006), p. 28; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 146.

¹⁴³ Hae-Jong Chon, *History of Korea and China relations* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1970), pp. 72-3, cited in Jai-Keun Choi, *The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea* (Seoul: The Hermit Kingdom Press, 2006), p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ The Institute for Korean Church History [hereafter IKCH], *The History of Korean Christianity*, vol. I (Seoul: Christian Literature, 1989), p. 65; Choi, *The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁵ IKCH, *The History of Korean Christianity*, vol. I, pp. 66, 79.

¹⁴⁶ Choi, *The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea*, p. 22.

or *Deus*) was congruent with *Shangti* of the Confucian Classics.¹⁴⁷ As such, they produced many treatises in response to the *TMLH*. For example, Su-Kwang Lee (1563-1628) travelled as an emissary to Beijing three times during the years of 1590, 1597 and 1611, and described his journey in a book under the title of *The Topical Discourse of Ji-Bong* (芝峰類說: *Ji-Bong-Yu-Seol*) what was the first book to introduce the *TMLH*.¹⁴⁸ Besides, several other books can be cited as follows – *The Folklore of Yeo-Woo* (於于野譚: *Yeo-Wu-Ya-Dam*) written by Mong-In Yu (1559-1623), *The Response to the TMLH* (天主實義跋: *Bal-Ch'on-Ju-Shil-Eui*) by Ik Yi (1681-1763), *The Controversy on the Western Knowledge* (西學辨: *Seo-Hak-Byeon*) by Hu-Dam Shin (1701-1761) and *The Thoughts on the Heavenly Knowledge* (天學考: *Ch'on-Hak Go*) and *the Question & Answers on the Heavenly Knowledge* (天學問答: *Ch'on-Ju-Mun-Dap*) by Jung-Bok Ahn (1712-1791).¹⁴⁹

On the one hand, several Korean scholars, notably Ik Yi and Hu-Dam Shin, criticised the *TMLH* on the grounds that the *Shangti* of Confucianism could not be the same as the God of Roman Catholic teachings. On the other hand, the *TMLH* enabled them to accept the Roman Catholic faith, because it led them from their atheistic notion of Neo-Confucianism (or at least an impersonal theistic notion of Heaven) to a similar theistic notion of God to that of Christianity. That is to say, the *TMLH* led them to regard *Deus* as the equivalent to *Shangti* of the Confucian Classics.¹⁵⁰ For instance, Ik Yi admitted in his *The Response to the TMLH* that the Christian God is synonymous with the Confucian *Shangti*, although he criticised the Roman Catholic notion of heaven and hell.¹⁵¹

In 1784, the first Korean Roman Catholic church was founded by two figures – Seung-Hun Lee (李承薰 :1756-1801) and Buk Yi (李穡 :1754-1785). Whereas the former was a priest, the latter was a theologian who wrote several doctrinal books.¹⁵² As the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁴⁹ (Daniel) Sung-Ho Ahn, 'The Theological Continuity in the use of *Shangti* between the *TMLH* written by Matteo Ricci and the English Translation of the Confucian Classics Used by James Legge', *Christianity and History in Korea*, vol. 32 (2010), p. 330.

¹⁵⁰ Jean Song-Bae Ri, *Confuciansme et Christianisme*, trans. 유교와 그리스도교 (Seoul: Benedict Press, 1977), p. 120; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 146.

¹⁵¹ Choi, *The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea*, p. 13.

¹⁵² Ri, *Confuciansme et Christianisme*, p. 120.

two Koreans along with their friends had studied Christian literature, they had become interested in the new Western religion. When Seung-Hun Lee was dispatched to Beijing as one of the Korean envoys, Buk Yi requested him to make contact with the Roman Catholic priests in Beijing to learn the Western religion, and bring Roman Catholic doctrinal books to Korea. Consequently, Seung-Hun Lee was baptised with the baptismal name of Peter Lee by J. J. de Grammon of the French Jesuits in Beijing in February 1784; he was the first baptised Korean Roman Catholic.¹⁵³ He brought back to Korea many Christian doctrinal books including the *TMLH* and other books given by the Jesuits.¹⁵⁴ As Buk Yi eagerly studied these doctrinal books including the *TMLH*, he eventually accepted Roman Catholicism. The two men then founded the first Korean Roman Catholic Church in 1784, an independent church led by Seung-Hun Lee.¹⁵⁵ Father Jean Song-Bae Ri, one of the most prominent Korean Roman Catholic theologians, has argued in his *Confucianisme et Christianisme* (1977) that the *TMLH* was the most popular book read by Korean Confucians, and that Buk Yi and Seung-Hun Lee's acceptance of Roman Catholicism can primarily be attributed to their reading the *TMLH* which led them to regard *Shangti* and the God of Christianity as one and the same.¹⁵⁶

For the purpose of Roman Catholic evangelisation of the Koreans, Buk Yi wrote two Christian books – *the Doxology for the Lord of Heaven* (天主恭敬歌) and *the Core Doctrines of Holy Religion* (聖教要旨).¹⁵⁷ While the former was a collection of hymns, the latter was a theological treatise for Korean Confucian scholars. Yi wrote the latter book on the basis of the Confucian Classics and the *TMLH*, a book in which he identified the Christian God with *Shangti* who created the world:

¹⁵³ Sebastian C. H. Kim, 'The Word and the Spirit: Overcoming Poverty, Injustice and Division in Korea', in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed., idem (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2008), p. 129; IKCH, *The History of Korean Christianity*, vol. I, p. 71.

¹⁵⁴ Seok-Jae Lee, *중국천주교회와 조선천주교회의 연계활동에 관한 연구* (*Studies on the Cooperation of Roman Catholic Churches in China and Korea*) (Seoul: Korea Academic Informatics, 2006), p. 25; although the Pope ordered the Jesuits' dissolution in China in 1773, a few Jesuits still remained in Beijing as contact persons with Vatican.

¹⁵⁵ IKCH, *The History of Korean Christianity*, vol. I, p. 75.

¹⁵⁶ Ri, *Confucianisme et Christianisme*, p. 120; cf. Choi, *The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea*, pp. 26, 169.

¹⁵⁷ Ri, *Confucianisme et Christianisme*, p. 120.

Before humans came into being, *Shangti* already existed. He is the only one Holy God above all. He created heaven, earth and all things in the world, and the creatures were wonderful and marvellous.¹⁵⁸

It is interesting to note that the central value and the structure of *the Core Doctrines of Holy Religion* – 修身齊家治國平天下 (*if you discipline yourself, take care of your family and rule your country, the peace will come upon all the world*)¹⁵⁹ were identical with those of the *Five Sacred Books* of the Confucian Classics.¹⁶⁰ This suggests that whereas Ricci pursued the commonality between Roman Catholicism and Confucianism in the light of a Western Christian's viewpoint, Buk Yi approached it in the light of a Confucian perspective.¹⁶¹

In summary, these cases of Ik Yi, Seung-Hun Lee and Buk Yi and other Korean Confucian scholars, who commonly accepted Roman Catholic teaching through reading the *TMLH*, show that the term *Shangti*, as used in the *TMLH*, impacted the foundation of the early Korean Roman Catholic churches by leading Korean Confucian scholars, whose framework was built upon the Confucian Classics, to move from a largely impersonal Confucian notion of the Supreme Deity towards a concept of God, similar to that of Christianity's God at the initial stage of the birth of Korean Roman Catholic churches.¹⁶² Hence, we may suggest that the term *Shangti*, initiated by Ricci, was imported from China to Korea, when the Korean envoys to China brought the *TMLH* in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, and in consequence the *TMLH* significantly impacted the growth of Roman Catholic churches in Korea.¹⁶³ Furthermore, as we will see in the following chapters, Korea Protestant missionaries and the BFBS also distributed the *Shangti* edition of the Delegates' Version (hereafter DV), translated by China Protestant missionaries in 1854, to the upper and middle classes of Korean Confucian literati in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

¹⁵⁸ Buk Yi, *the Core Doctrines of Holy Religion* (聖教要旨) cited in Ibid, p. 61; translation and emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁹ Translation mine.

¹⁶⁰ Ri, *Confucianisme et Christianisme*, p. 120.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² See p. 39, footnote #55.

¹⁶³ Kang, *The Socio-Historical Studies on Roman Catholic in Korea*, p. 28; Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 146.

(2) *T'ienzhu*

The term *Tienzhu* became widely adopted in Korea after a Chinese priest arrived in Korea in 1794, followed in the early nineteenth century by several French priests. To understand how the term was brought to Korea, we need to look at the brief history of early Korean Roman Catholic churches.

As Seung-Hun Lee and Buk Yi eagerly preached Roman Catholicism to Koreans, the Korean Roman Catholic churches multiplied and grew, and the churches were autonomously led by indigenous leaders.¹⁶⁴ The Korean Roman Catholics, particularly Yu-Il Yun, thus requested the Roman Catholic bishop in Beijing, viz. Alexander de Gouvea (1751-1808) of the Franciscan Society, to send missionaries to Korea. In response to their request, a Chinese priest, Cho Wen-Mo, was dispatched by the bishop, and arrived in Korea on 23 December 1794.¹⁶⁵ After he secretly led the Korean Roman Catholic churches for six years, he was executed in the *Sin-Yu* Persecution in the year of 1801.¹⁶⁶

At the turn of the nineteenth century, French Catholic missionaries of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (*Société des Missions étrangères de Paris*: hereafter PFMS), dispatched by the bishop in Beijing, arrived in Korea; Pierre Philibert Maubant arrived in Korea on 12 January 1836, J. H. Chastan arrived in January 1837 and L. M. J. Imbert, appointed the first bishop of Korea, in December 1837.¹⁶⁷

When the French Catholic missionaries entered Korea, the final papal decree of 1742 was already known by Roman Catholics all over China. Thus, there is no doubt that the French priests educated Korean Roman Catholics to use the term *T'ienzhu* instead of *Shangti*, and to turn away from their ancestor worship tradition.

As we will see in Chapter 5, the term *T'ienzhu* was linguistically transformed by the French Catholic missionaries into the form of *Ch'onzhu* (천주), the Korean transliteration of the Chinese letter *T'ienzhu* (天主): *Ch'onzhu* is a compounded word of *Ch'on* (천: Chinese *T'ien* 天), referring to heaven, and *Zhu* (주: Chinese *Zhu* 主), referring to a

¹⁶⁴ Kim, 'The Word and the Spirit', p. 129; Seok-Woo Choi, '한국교회의 창설과 초창기 이승훈의 교회활동 (The Foundation of Korean Roman Catholic Church and Seung-Hun Lee's Early Contribution to its Growth)', *Studies on the Korean Church History*, vol. 8 (1992), pp. 12-16.

¹⁶⁵ Lee, *Studies on the Cooperation of Roman Catholic Churches*, pp. 47-9.

¹⁶⁶ IKCH, *The History of Korean Christianity*, vol. I, p. 92.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

lord, master, or sovereign. Thus, the meaning of *Ch'onzhu* (*Chon+Zhu*) is the Lord of Heaven, which is the same as that of *T'ienzhu*.¹⁶⁸ Specifically, when the French Catholic priests, F. C. Ridel, the bishop of Korea, and G. Coste published the *Korea-French Dictionary* (韓佛字典: *Han-Bul Ja Jun*) in 1880 with the aid of a Korean Catholic, Ji-Huk Choi, they translated 'God' as *Ch'onzhu*.¹⁶⁹ As a result, the Roman Catholic faith in Korea had been named *Ch'onzhu-Gyo* (Chinese *Tienzhu Jiao* 天主教) ever since the papal decrees were issued.

Yet, this new Roman Catholic tradition in its opposition to ancestor worship provoked several relentless persecutions of Roman Catholics by the Korean government during the years of 1801 (the *Sin-Yu* Persecution), 1839 (the *Gee-Hae* Persecution), 1846 (the *Byung-Oh* Persecution) and 1866 (the *Byung-In* Persecution).¹⁷⁰ In turn, these persecutions caused the Korea-French War in 1866, a war which was initiated by the French warships' invasion of Korea in reaction to the Korea government's executions of the French priests.¹⁷¹ Despite terrible persecutions, the Korean Roman Catholic churches grew, and finally gained the religious freedom from the Korean government when a Korea-French Diplomatic Treaty of 1886 was signed.¹⁷²

Conclusion

In accordance with the first research question, this chapter has suggested that Ricci's adoption of *Shangti* in *TMLH* may be attributed to several theological factors.

First, Ricci found evidence in the Confucian Classics that a monotheistic understanding of God had been present among the ancient Chinese people before foreign missionaries' arrival in China. Thus he argued that there was a continuity of a monotheistic belief among them between 'pre-Christian past' and 'Christian present'.¹⁷³ He claimed that there had been a primal revelation of the Christian God, which was manifested to the Chinese people as the descriptions of *Shangti* within the Confucian

¹⁶⁸ See p. 50, footnote #118; p. 140, footnote #73.

¹⁶⁹ Man-Yol Yi and Sung-Deuk Oak, eds., *The History of the Korean Bible Society* [hereafter Yi eds., *HKBS*], vol. I (Seoul: Korean Bible Society, 1993), p. 126; they also published the *Grammaire Coréenne* (the Korean Grammar written in French) in 1881.

¹⁷⁰ Kim, 'The Word and the Spirit', p. 129

¹⁷¹ IKCH, *The History of Korean Christianity*, vol. I, pp. 116-17.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 116-17.

¹⁷³ Walls, 'African Christianity in the History of Religions', p. 187; see p. 3.

Classics. Thus, he equated God with *Shangti*, and ‘used the Confucian Classics to prove that some of the basic religious concepts of Catholicism were already to be found in China of ancient times.’¹⁷⁴ Hence, he came to translate the name of God as *Shangti* on the grounds that *Shangti* was fundamentally compatible with the Christian God.

Second, if we borrow Andrew F. Walls’ model of ‘translation’ and ‘conversion’, the basic theological commonality between Christianity and Confucianism, combined with the Chinese monotheistic belief in the One God, led Ricci to present Christianity as something that did not ‘*replace what was already there*’ within ancient Chinese Confucianism, but rather *supplemented it*.¹⁷⁵ In this regard, Pope John Paul II praised what Ricci did in China on the 400th anniversary of Ricci’s arrival in China on 25 October 1982:

Just as the Fathers of the Church thought in regard to Christianity and Greek culture, so Matteo Ricci was rightly convinced that faith in Christ would not bring any harm to Chinese culture, but rather would enrich and perfect it.¹⁷⁶

Third, however, Ricci argued that ancient Chinese monotheism had degenerated into atheistic Neo-Confucian philosophy, as it became intermingled with Buddhism and Taoism.

Therefore, it may be suggested that the theological factors behind Ricci’s translation of the name of God in the *TMLH* were related to a degeneration theory of religion.

In addition, this chapter has surveyed how the Chinese Term Question (as a part of the Chinese Rites Controversy) proceeded among the Jesuits and between the Jesuits (*Shangti*) and the Spanish orders (*T’ienzhu*). It has shown that each term impacted the Roman Catholic mission in China both positively and negatively. Although the Confucian theistic term *Shangti* enabled Confucian literati to understand the Christian God within their existing Confucian framework, it did so at the risk of syncretism. The

¹⁷⁴ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 47.

¹⁷⁵ Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 147-48; Andrew F. Walls, ‘The Translation Principle’, in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 2005), pp. 25-6; emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁶ Ricci, *TMLH*, p. 52; this speech was made ‘during the concluding session of the International Ricci Studies Congress which was held at the University of Macerata and the Pontifical Gregorian University to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Ricci’s arrival in China.’

neologism *T'ienzhu* undoubtedly presented a form of orthodox Christianity to the Chinese; however, it did not attract them since it was alien to them.

Returning to the research second question, this chapter has shown how the two Chinese theistic terms, *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu*, which provoked the Chinese Term Question (Rites Controversy), were transmitted from China to Korea in the period from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. First, *Shangti* (and *T'ienzhu*), as used by Ricci in the *TMLH*, were brought to Korea after Korean envoys imbibed the term from the Jesuits in China, and brought it to Korea in the period between 1636 and 1783. Second, after the bull *Ex quo singulari* of 1742 became known in China and Korea, the term *T'ienzhu* became widely adopted by Korean Roman Catholics as the foreign missionaries of the PFMS introduced it to Korean Catholics.

In the following chapters, we will look at how the terms *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu* were transmitted into *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* respectively, and how these two Korean terms provoked the second dispute phase, i.e. the most controversial phase, of the Korean Term Question in 1894 and 1895.

In the next chapter, we will explore more specifically how the two Korean theistic terms (*Hananim* and *Shin*), derived from the Chinese theistic terms, provoked the First Dispute Phase of the Korean Term Question in 1887; we will look at how the Protestant version of the Chinese Term Question proceeded between the *Shangti* party and the *Shen* party in the nineteenth century, and explore what theological factors lay behind the Term Question.

Chapter 3: The Term Question among Protestant Missions in Nineteenth-Century China

Introduction

The previous chapter was devoted to the Chinese roots of the Korean Term Question. More specifically, Chapter 2 dealt with the seventeenth-century Catholic debate in China between *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu*, and how these terms were transmitted from Catholicism in China to Catholicism in Korea, thereby presenting the historical background to the second dispute phase (1894-1903) of the Korean Term Question between *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* (the Korean transliteration of *T'ienzhu*).

Chapter 3 will focus on the nineteenth-century Protestant controversy in China between *Shangti* and *Shen*. By doing so, this chapter aims to explain the historical background to the first dispute phase (1887-1893) of the Korean Term Question between *Hananim* and *Shin* (the Korean transliteration of *Shen*), and hence lays the foundation for the theological continuity between the Protestant Term Question in China – *Shangti* vs. *Shen* – and the first dispute phase (1887-1893) of the Korean Term Question – *Hananim* (corresponding theologically to *Shangti*) vs. *Shin* (the Korean transliteration of *Shen*) –, as we will see in the following chapters.

The chapter will pay special attention to James Legge. This is because he, by following Matteo Ricci's theological position (as seen in Chapter 2), has become recognised as the most pre-eminent sinologist and advocate in the nineteenth century of the term *Shangti*, i.e. the 'Champion of *Shangti*'¹, translating it as God in his English translations of the Confucian Classics. Moreover, the concentration on Legge is appropriate due to the fact that Legge's theology partially influenced John Ross's (UPC) transformation of the Chinese *Shangti* into the Korean *Hananim* in his first Korean New Testament (as will be seen in Chapter 4), and also Horace G. Underwood's (PCUSA) acceptance of *Hananim* as the name of the biblical God with the result that the Korean Term Question was resolved in 1906 and 1911 (as will be seen in Chapter 5 and 6).

¹ Lau Tze-yui, *James Legge (1815-1897) and Chinese Culture: A Missiological Study in Scholarship, Translation and Evangelisation* (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994), p. 163.

In this regard, this chapter will set out a range of research questions: (1) What were the theological factors underlying the Protestant Term Question in China? Specifically, what theology lay behind Legge's advocacy of *Shangti* for God and the arguments of other missionaries' for *Shen*? (2) How was the Protestant Term Question in China related theologically to the Catholic Term Question in China? In particular, how was the theology of Legge that supported his use of *Shangti* related to that of Ricci which lay behind his adoption of *Shangti* in the *TMLH*?

In accordance with these questions, this chapter will present two main arguments. First, that the theology underlying Legge's adoption of *Shangti* was related to a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion. Second, in view of the first argument, that Ricci and Legge shared a common theology of Chinese religion, compatible with a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, and this theological continuity between the two figures can be explained by reference to Ricci's partial theological influence upon Legge.

The First Phase of the Protestant Term Question 1847-1854

The Protestant Term Question in nineteenth-century China can be divided into two phases – the first phase from 1847 to 1854 and the second phase from 1881 to 1890.² The first phase of the Term Question involved a large number of missionaries' treatises on the Term Question from 1847 onwards, and remained heated until 1854.³

1. The Course of the Protestant Term Question from 1847 onwards

As seen in the previous chapter, the door of China was thoroughly closed to foreign missionaries before the first Opium War (1839-1841). Nonetheless, there were sustained efforts by missionaries in translating the Bible into Chinese before the war. Robert Morrison (1782-1843) of the London Missionary Society (hereafter LMS) and the East India Company arrived at Guang-Zhou (or Canton) in 7

² Lauren F. Pfister, *The Whole Duty of Man; James Legge and the Scottish Protestant Encounter with China*, vol. II (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 187-96; Lau, *James Legge*, p. 160.

³ Pfister, *The Whole Duty of Man*, vol. II, pp. 187-96.

September 7 1807 as the first Protestant missionary in China.⁴ In 1823, he completed the translation of the Chinese Bible in 21 volumes, viz. *Shen-Tien Sheng-Shu* (神天聖書: the Holy Scripture of the Heavenly God), with the aid of a Chinese assistant, Yong Sam-tak (容三德)⁵, and his LMS colleague, William C. Milne, D. D. (1785-1822), who arrived in Macao in 1813.⁶ In this translation, Morrison used *Shen* as the name of God.

In 1822, Joshua Marshman (1768-1837) of the Baptist Missionary Society completed a Chinese Bible translation in five volumes, known as the Marshman-Lassar edition, at Serampore in India in 1822 with the aid of Joannes Lassar (1781-1835?), a young Armenian who was born and raised in Macao.⁷ This translation was presented to the BFBS in London in May 1823 by Marshman's oldest son, John Clark Marshman (1794-1877).⁸ In this translation also, Marshman used *Shen* for the name of God.

However, the next generation of missionaries in China found that both the Marshman-Lassar and the Morrison-Milne editions had many typographical errors which led natives to misunderstandings and incomprehension.⁹ They then formed a revision committee, consisting of Walter Henry Medhurst (1796-1857) of the LMS,¹⁰

⁴ Marshall Broomhall, *The Bible in China* (London: China Inland Mission, 1934), p. 53; Morrison's translation relied on the two copies which he brought from London. The first one was the Latin-Chinese Dictionary lent to him by the Royal Society in London. The second one was the partial Chinese Bible Translation, known as the Basset manuscript stored in the British Museum, a manuscript which was originally produced by the Catholic missionary Jean Basset (1662-1707) in China, and consisted of the Four Gospels, the book of Acts, the Pauline Letters, and the first chapter of Hebrews. In this manuscript, Basset used *Shen* for the name of God. For this reason, it is plausible that Morrison also used *Shen* as the name of God in his translation by following the Basset manuscript.

⁵ He studied English in England before Morrison left England for China in 1807. Morrison was introduced to him by Moseley, one of the founding members of the BFBS.

⁶ Jost O. Zetzsche, *The Bible in China* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1999), p. 43.

⁷ A. J. Garnier, *Chinese Versions of the Bible* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society, 1934), pp. 15-6.

⁸ Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, p. 56.

⁹ Douglas G. Spelman, 'Christianity in Chinese: The Protestant Term Question', *Papers on China*, vol. 22a, (May 1969), p. 26.

¹⁰ Medhurst arrived in Malaca in June 1817. He was originally sent by the LMS to print the Christian literature, yet very soon he started to work in other areas as well. Although Morrison asked Medhurst to revise his translation, Medhurst firstly refused it because of his insufficient Chinese; cf. Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), p. 25.

Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1803-1851) from Prussia,¹¹ Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801-1861) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (hereafter ABCFM)¹² and John Robert Morrison (1814-1843) of the LMS, son of Robert Morison.¹³ In this translation, they used *Shangti*. The committee published a revised version of the New Testament in 1835 and of the Old Testament in 1838 in Singapore.¹⁴ This revised translation played a part in the emergence of the Tai-Ping movement (太平天國: 1850-1864), since the translation was used by Hong Xiu-Quan (洪秀全: 1813-1864), the leader of the rebels.¹⁵

However, it was not until 1847 that the modern Chinese Term Question finally came to a head among the delegates of the NT translation committee of the DV. In the aftermath of the first Anglo-Chinese or Opium War, the Nan-Jing (南京) Treaty was issued in 1842, a treaty which permitted foreign residence at five ports along the south-east coast.¹⁶ In 1844, the United States also obtained a treaty opening the same five ports to Americans.¹⁷ In December of the same year, the French also gained a similar treaty that allowed Roman Catholic churches to be erected in the ports and

¹¹ After John R. Morrison's death, his role was taken over by Gützlaff. He had been sent by the Netherlands Missionary Society (Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap) in 1827 to Java, which was the first of the many places in Asia where he would launch his diverse and sometimes notorious activities. While Gützlaff stayed in Siam almost three years, he translated the N.T. in Siamese, Cambodian and Laos, with some tracts and dictionaries are finished. He was also the first Protestant to translate a biblical book into Japanese. His Gospel of John was published in 1837.

¹² Bridgman was the first American missionary to China. He was sent by the ABCFM to Canton in 1830. In 1832 he founded the *Chinese Repository*, a magazine which presented China's history and civilisation with considerable objectivity, and which is today's main resource for mission activities in China until 1851.

¹³ John R. Morrison also took part in the translation work, but only as a 'secondary labourer on the new version', correcting the translations made by others. But he did not have enough time after succeeding his father in his post as translator to the government in Hong Kong in 1834.

¹⁴ The revision of the Old Testament was most likely left to Gützlaff alone. The revision of the Old Testament was supported by the LMS, while that of the whole Bible was published by the joint cooperation of the LMS, the BFBS and the ABS.

¹⁵ Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (Taipei: Cheng-Wen Publishing Company, 1966), p. 224.

¹⁶ The five open ports were Canton 廣州 (or Guangzhou), Xiamen 廈門 (or Amoy), Fuzhou 福州, Ningbo 寧波 and Shanghai 上海. In addition, Hong Kong was ceded to Britain.

¹⁷ Kenneth S. Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: Macmillian Company, 1943), p. 368.

the Chinese to accept Roman Catholicism.¹⁸ From this point, the treaty ports were to open to foreign missionaries, who then started their full-scale mission enterprise.

The primary task that foreign Protestant missionaries now undertook was translating Christian literature, including the Bible into Chinese. In doing so, they produced a variety of versions of the Chinese Scriptures, and used more than fourteen names of God. These two problems caused the Chinese believers' confusion in understanding Christianity.¹⁹ As a result, the missionaries formed the Protestant Missionary Conference which took place at Hong Kong from 22 August to 4 September 1843, aiming at cooperation in producing a unified Chinese Bible translation and a unified term for God.²⁰ A special committee was formed for the translation of the disputed term for God,²¹ a committee to which Medhurst (LMS) and James Legge (LMS) were appointed.²² However, this committee was not able to reach any conclusion during the conference. So it was decided that the final decision for the translation of the term for God would be left to the Delegates' Committee.²³

The New Testament Translation Committee

As shown below, the delegates elected for the translation of the New Testament (hereafter NT) were Walter H. Medhurst (LMS), William J. Boone (APECM) and Walter M. Lowrie (APM), John Stronach (LMS) and Elijah C. Bridgman (ABCFM), and among them was Medhurst who was elected as secretary.²⁴

On 28 June 1847, the five delegates first met at Medhurst's home in Shanghai, and started their work.²⁵ To ensure the quality of the Chinese, 'each man had with him at every session his best Chinese tutor.'²⁶ Translating *θεος* (*theos*: God) in the Book of Matthew 1:23 on 5 July 1847, they debated how the term should be

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Walter H. Medhurst, *An Inquiry into the Proper Mode of Rendering the Word God in Translating the Sacred Scriptures into the Chinese Language* (Shanghai: The Mission Press, 1847), pp. 158-59.

²⁰ *Chinese Repository* (1843), p. 551; Ganier, *Chinese Versions of the Bible*, pp. 24-5.

²¹ Another special committee was also formed to deal with 'baptism', consisting of Bridgman (ABCFM) and William Dean (GMC).

²² Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, p. 79.

²³ Spelman, 'The Protestant Term Question', p. 27.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, p. 63.

²⁶ Spelman, 'The Protestant Term Question', p. 27; cf. William C. Milne, *Life in China* (London: Routledge, 1857), pp. 504-05.

translated. Whilst Medhurst and Stronach of the LMS were in favour of *Shangti* 上帝, the three Americans, Bridgman, Boone and Lowrie, preferred *Shen* 神, a generic term for god. Due to this Term Question, the Delegates' Committee was suspended between 5 July and 22 November 1847 to let the delegates study the question and write their opinions. As this question became seriously polarised between the two parties, Lowrie predicted that 'I greatly fear that the result of all will be, that each side will hold its own view, and Dr. Medhurst and Mr. Stronach will secede. In that case there will be two versions or none.'²⁷

[Table 3-1] The New Testament Translation Committee of Delegates' Version in 1847

Nationality	Name	Date	Society	Term	Mission Station
British	Walter H. Medhurst	1796-1857	LMS	<i>Shangti</i>	Shanghai/Ningpo
British	William C. Milne ²⁸	1815-1864	LMS	<i>Shangti</i>	Shanghai/Ningpo
British	John Stronach	1810-1888	LMS	<i>Shangti</i>	Xiamen (or Amoy)
American	(Walter M. Lowrie) ²⁹	1819-1847	APM*	-	Shanghai/Ningpo
American	William J. Boone	1811-1874	APECM**	<i>Shen</i>	Shanghai/Ningpo
American	Elijah C. Bridgman	1801-1861	ABCFM***	<i>Shen</i>	Canton/Hong Kong

*APM: American Presbyterian Mission

**APECM: American Protestant Episcopal Church Mission

***ABCFM: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

The NT committee meeting was resumed on 22 November 1847, yet they still could not reach an agreement on a unified term despite intensive research on this issue for four months. At that time, there were only four delegates, since Lowrie had been killed by Chinese pirates at the coast of Chekiang on 17 August 1847, and his successor, Milne (LMS), had not yet been appointed to succeed him.³⁰ As it was decided in the conference in Hong Kong in 1843 that each station, regardless of the number of delegates it sent, had only one vote on each decision for the final revision, the four men voted on the choice of the term.³¹ The result led to a 'deadlock', with

²⁷ Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, pp. 64-5.

²⁸ William Charles Milne was the son of William Milne who was the colleague of Robert Morrison for the Morrison/Milne translation.

²⁹ As Lowrie was murdered by the Chinese pirates at the coast of Chekiang on 17 August 1847, he was replaced by Milne.

³⁰ *Chinese Recorder* (Dec. 1847), p. 607.

³¹ Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, p. 80.

‘two for and two against each term’.³² Thus, the question was again raised by them whether their work should cease or continue by leaving the term ‘God’ a blank.³³ They then agreed with the latter course, and so their work started again from January 1848 onwards.³⁴ In consequence, the NT committee completed the translation of the NT in 1852, whilst they had not yet reached a compromise on the Term Question.

As the delegates as well as other missionaries produced over six hundred papers on the Term Question, the controversy gradually extended to the whole missionary community. Specifically, the Term Question became polarised between two parties – the *Shangti* party (supported by the BFBS), consisting of Germans, English and Scottish Presbyterians, Wesleyans and LMS missionaries, and the *Shen* party (supported by the ABS), consisting of Americans and followers of the Church of England.³⁵

Furthermore, the Term Question also involved the Bible societies; while the BFBS was in favour of the LMS delegates’ use of *Shangti*, the ABS supported the American delegates’ use of *Shen*. The Bible societies and the missionaries decided that the Chinese Bible should be published either in a *Shangti* edition or a *Shen* edition – in accordance with their respective preferences.³⁶ In turn, the NT committee split shortly before the publication of the NT. As a result, in 1854, the BFBS alone published the NT, known as the NT of the Delegates’ Version (hereafter DV) with the use of *Shangti*.³⁷

The Old Testament Translation Committee

The Old Testament (hereafter OT) committee of the DV also split into an LMS party and an American party on 18 February 1851 on account of their different translating principles. The LMS party adhered to what would later become known as the ‘dynamic equivalence principle’ in the hope that their translation would be

³² Spelman, ‘The Protestant Term Question’, p. 28.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid; Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, p. 90.

³⁵ Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 277.

³⁶ Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, pp. 60-70.

³⁷ Thor Strandenaes, *Principles of Chinese Bible Translation* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), pp. 48-50.

understood by all Chinese.³⁸ In contrast, the American party adhered to a classical understanding of literal translation principles in order for their translation to be faithful to the original text even though it could be hardly understood by the Chinese.³⁹ This division within the OT committee was explicitly due to the different translation principles. However, the preceding dispute among the NT committee for the Term Question implicitly provoked this division within the OT committee.⁴⁰

On 20 February 1851, the LMS missionaries, Medhurst, Stronach, Milne and Legge⁴¹, then formed an independent committee, which then completed the OT translation. In 1854, their OT version, together with the NT of the DV, was published by the BFBS as one volume, known as the DV of the entire Chinese Bible.⁴² It is important to note that this DV was brought to Korea by the BFBS, and distributed to the Korean Confucian literati. Furthermore, the DV was used as the basis of the translation of the Bible into Korean by both Scottish and North American Presbyterian missionaries in the late nineteenth century. We will come back to this crucial point in Chapter 4.

The American delegates on the OT committee meanwhile worked on a separate translation of the OT. In March 1862, their OT version was completed, mainly by Bridgman, with cooperation from M. S. Culbertson (1819-1862).⁴³ They also revised the NT in accordance with their literal translation principles. Their OT and NT versions were made up as one volume, and published by the ABS in 1863, a translation which became known as the Bridgman-Culbertson (hereafter B-C) Version, using the term *Shen*.⁴⁴ It should be noted that this B-C Version was also brought to Korea by the ABS, and used as the basis of the Korean Bible translation by Su-Jung Lee in Tokyo with the support of the ABS. We will return to this point in Chapter 4.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, p. 90.

⁴¹ Legge was invited to the OT committee, yet he played a minor role; Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, p. 102.

⁴² Hubert W. Spillett, *A Catalogue of Scriptures in the Language of China and the Republic of China* (London: BFBS, 1975), p. xiii.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Strandenaes, *Principles of Chinese Bible Translation*, pp. 48-50.

2. The Theological Factors behind the Term Question

This section will look at what theological factors lay behind the Term Question during this initial phase. We will pay our special attention to Medhurst (LMS), Legge (LMS) and Boone (AECM), because they produced the most significant contributions to the debate; Medhurst and Legge played the most important roles as the spokesmen of the *Shangti* party, whereas Boone was the chief spokesman of the *Shen* party.⁴⁵

William J. Boone: the *Shen* party

First of all, Boone⁴⁶ asserted that the Chinese did not have a natural understanding of monotheism on the grounds that ‘the Chinese have been polytheists from the highest ages to which their history extends’, and thus ‘the great enemy to be here beaten down is polytheism.’⁴⁷ For this reason, he argued that a new and specifically Christian monotheistic concept of God should be introduced to the Chinese.⁴⁸

Boone observed that the authors of the OT books had rendered the name of God as the Hebrew *Elohim*, which is ‘not a proper *name* of the true God, but a *generic term*, applied to heathen Deities as well as to Jehovah’ in the polytheistic context of the Ancient Near East.⁴⁹ Likewise, ‘the Septuagint translators’ and the NT

⁴⁵ Irene Eber, ‘The Interminable Term Question’, in *Bible in Modern China*, eds., idem, Sze-Kar Wan and Knut Walt [hereafter Eber eds.] (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1999), pp. 138-47; although the first spokesman of the *Shangti* party was Medhurst, it became Legge later on.

⁴⁶ Boone was converted to Christianity during a revival movement in 1833-34, while he was a law student at Charleston in South Carolina at his age of twenty one. At the first meeting of the newly-organised Board of Foreign Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1835, the board made up their mission to China, and Boone was convinced that he was called as a China missionary. To prepare himself for the duty, he studied medicine, and became a medical doctor. Boone together with his wife arrived in Macao in 1840, and operated the Morrison Education Society in 1841 along with Milne. He also worked for Chinese immigrants at Batavia in Indonesia in 1837, and Amoy in 1842. While staying in America in 1844, he was consecrated Missionary Bishop for China. When Rev. J. Hobson, British Chaplain at Shanghai, died in April 1862, Boone replaced his position in the pulpit for the chief part. He died on 17 July 1864 due to dysentery, and was buried in the Shanghai cemetery: cf. Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese*, p. 99-101.

⁴⁷ William J. Boone, *An Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language* (Canton: Chinese Repository, 1848), pp. 2, 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

authors had employed the Greek *θεός*, which was also a generic term for god in the Greco-Roman polytheistic context, rather than a specific name for god, such as *Zeus* or *Jupiter*. He further noted that the polytheistic context of the Ancient Near East and Greco-Roman empire was similar to that of the China. Therefore, on the basis of this principle of Bible translation, he asserted that the name of God must be translated as *Shen*, a generic term for god, by stating that ‘if then a translator, engaged in rendering the Sacred Scripture into the language of a polytheistic people, desires to follow the example of inspired men, he must employ the *generic name* for God used by them, and not the *name* of the chief deity.’⁵⁰

On the other hand, Boone asserted that the use of *Shangti* as the name of God would be highly ambiguous for the Chinese, because it could be regarded by them either as a specific name of a Chinese high god or as the name of a Chinese emperor, *Huangti* (皇帝), thereby contending that ‘the use of the name of any heathen Deity would be derogatory to the glory and honor of Jehova.’⁵¹ Furthermore, he insisted that the use of *Shangti* would constitute disobedience to the first of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2) by stating that ‘let the reader substitute Jupiter, or the name of the chief God of any polytheistic system with which he is acquainted, for God in the first clause and God in the second, and he will see how completely the bearing of this [First] Commandment, on polytheism, is nullified.’⁵²

In referring to the commentaries of the *Yi-Jing* (易經: the *Book of Change*), one of the *Five Sacred Classics*, by M. Visdelou and Zhu-Xi, Boone argued that, in the Chinese’ view, the creation is not attributed to *Shangti* but to the union process of the ‘*Tai-Ji*’ (太極 : ‘the Primitive Reason’ or the Ultimate Supremacy) between ‘*yang*’ (*qi* 氣: Heaven) and *yin* (*li* 理: Earth),⁵³ whereas *Shangti* or *Ti* denoted ‘the supreme emperor’ or ‘the emperor’ respectively.⁵⁴

In summary, Boone, on behalf of the *Shen* party, argued that *Shen*, a generic term for god, should be used as the term for God in theological education on the

⁵⁰ Ibid; emphasis original.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See, pp. 45-7.

⁵⁴ William J. Boone, *Defense of An Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language* (Canton: Chinese Repository, 1850), pp. 20-1.

grounds that the Chinese had never been monotheistic, whilst the use of *Shangti* could be an idolatrous practice.

Walter H. Medhurst (the *Shangti* party)

In order to find which term might be more suitable as the term for the God of the Bible in the light of a Chinese perspective, Medhurst consulted several texts from three major Chinese religions – Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

First, to define the term *Shangti*, Medhurst consulted the *Imperial Dictionary of Kang-Xi* made by the Emperor Kang-Xi of the Q'ing Dynasty. In this dictionary, *Shang* 上 referred to 'above' or 'first' and *Ti* 帝 to 'sovereign' or 'ruling power of invisible heaven', and thus the compounded word *Shangti* denoted 'the Sovereign on High'.⁵⁵ On the basis of this definition, he argued that 'the most just and natural rendering of the term *Shangti* is the Supreme God.'⁵⁶ In addition, he noted that this dictionary identified *Shangti* with *Heaven*, not as a visible one but 'the Power of the universe.'⁵⁷

Second, Medhurst referred to the Confucian Classics, since these texts had been most influential upon the Chinese mind, and had formed the basis of Chinese thought since ancient times.⁵⁸ Specifically, he noted that the *Great Learning* (大學: *Da-Sue*), the first volume of the *Four Books* (四書), indicated that the Chinese emperors should be subordinate to *Shangti* (or Heaven) in order to rule their people and countries rightly.⁵⁹ In other words, he observed that the Chinese emperors and Confucians regarded *Shangti* as the Supreme Lord 'who reigns over the whole world' and had at his disposal 'the thrones of princes' and all 'human events'.⁶⁰ Hence, his consultation of the Confucian Classics led him to the conclusion that the Chinese understood *Shangti* as the Supreme Lord on High, exalted above any monarchs or lords on the earth, including even the Chinese emperors who were actually deified by the Chinese people.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 258-59; Eber eds., 'The Interminable Term Question', p. 139.

⁵⁶ Medhurst, *A Dissertation*, p. 259.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 213.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 204; emphasis original.

⁶⁰ Ibid; Medhurst, *An Inquiry*, p. 164.

Third, Medhurst noted that although ancient Confucianism had been intermingled with Buddhism and Taoism, the Chinese monotheistic notion of *Shangti* as the Supreme God still remained in other religions. Specifically, he referred to several classics of Taoism (道教) such as, the *Scripture of the Three Wonderful Officials* (三官妙經: *Sankwan meoujing*) and the *Comprehensive Mirror of Holy Immortals* (歷代神仙通鑒: *Shenxian thungjian*). These classics also led him to ‘remark on the use to which the word *Ti* (帝) is applied, and see no way of translating it, but by rendering it God.’⁶¹ He also found in the *Record of the Mature Way* (成道記: *Ching taou ke*), a Buddhist classic, that the word *Ti* was also used to denote the ‘God of Heaven (天宰: *Tien Tee*).’⁶²

In contrast to Boone, Medhurst argued that the term *Shen* would not be a suitable term for God for the following reasons. First, *Shen* generally denoted a ‘spiritual being’ or a ‘spiritual energy’.⁶³ Second, on the grounds that *Shen*, always along with *Kwei* (鬼), denoted an ‘evil spirit’ or a ‘false spirit’, it would lead the Chinese to falsely identify God with an evil spirit.⁶⁴ Third, he argued based on the commentary of the *Yi-Jing* that while *Ti* (帝: of *Shangti*) is ‘the substance of *Shen*’, ‘*Shen* is the use of *Ti*’; ‘the one [*Ti*] referring to the essential or material part of a being or thing, and the other [*Shen*] to the acting out or working of that being.’⁶⁵ Hence, in Medhurst’s view, whilst *Ti* (of *Shangti*) was the primary substance of the creation, *Shen* is basically subordinate to *Ti*, as ‘the use of *Ti*’.⁶⁶

In short, in contrast to Boone, Medhurst asserted that *Shangti* was the most suitable term for the biblical God in the light of a Chinese perspective, whereas *Shen* would cause the Chinese falsely to identify God with an evil spirit.

James Legge (the *Shangti* party)

⁶¹ Medhurst, *A Dissertation*, pp. 246-47.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp. 248-49.

⁶³ *Idem*, *On the True Meaning of the Word Shin*, (Shanghai: The Mission Press, 1849); this pamphlet is available in the Council for World Mission Library in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

⁶⁴ *Ibid*; Eber eds., ‘The Interminable Term Question’, pp. 139-41.

⁶⁵ Medhurst, *A Dissertation*, p. 273; in this source, he described *Ti* as ‘*Te*’, and *Shen* as ‘*Shin*’.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

As previously seen, Legge⁶⁷ and Medhurst were appointed at the Protestant Missionary Conference at Hong Kong in 1843 as members of the special committee to examine the Chinese term for God. Before Legge went back to England in the end of 1845 due to his bad health, he had thought that *Shen* was a suitable Chinese term for God, whereas Medhurst preferred *Shangti*.⁶⁸ This was because Legge had at first followed the teaching of two senior LMS missionaries, Morrison and Samuel Kidd (1799-1843), both of whom favoured *Shen*. Kidd received his first lesson in Chinese from Morrison in 1824, and arrived at Malacca in 21 November of the same year.⁶⁹ Kidd was then appointed Professor of Chinese in the Anglo-Chinese College in 1827 (and became principal in 1828)⁷⁰, before serving as Professor of Chinese Language and Literature in University College, London, from 1837 to 1842. Legge learned the Chinese language from Kidd, and initially followed his teaching on the term for God.⁷¹ However, Legge recorded that after he returned from England to Hong Kong on 22 July 1848, he changed his mind in favour of *Shangti* rather *Shen*, stating that ‘I have arrived at my present conviction that *Shang-Te* [*Shangti*], and *Shang-Te* alone, is the word which the Chinese language affords us to translate the original words for God, in every instance of their occurrence.’⁷²

As Legge began to address the Term Question, he wrote his first article, *An Argument for Shang Te* in 1850 in response to Boone’s article, *An Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language* (1848). In this article, Legge argued that ‘*Elohim*, *Theos*, or *God* is not a generic, but relative term, has regard to servants, and implies dominion.’⁷³ That is to say, in his view, ‘the

⁶⁷ Legge was born at Huntly, Aberdeen in 1815. He graduated from King’s College, Aberdeen University, and studied at Highbury College, London. He was appointed by the LMS to the Chinese mission at Malacca in 1839, and married to Mary Isabella, the daughter of Rev. John R. Morrison in the same year. He arrived at Malacca in 1840, and succeeded Mr. Evans as Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College. In 1843, the college was subsequently moved to Hong Kong where Legge lived for nearly thirty years, charging the Union Chapel; cf. Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese*, pp. 117-19; James Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, Etc. from 1796 to 1923* (London: LMS, 1923), p. 46.

⁶⁸ James Legge, *An Argument for Shang Te as the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos, in the Chinese Language* (Hong Kong, 1850), pp. iii-iv.; cf. Lau, *James Legge*, pp. 157-60.

⁶⁹ Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries*, p. 24.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant missionaries to the Chinese*, pp. 47-8.

⁷² Legge, *An Argument for Shang Te*, pp. iii-iv; emphasis mine.

⁷³ Legge, *An Argument for Shang Te*, p. 8.

relationship between the Supreme Being and his creatures is “the most intimate and relative”, as the relationship between master and servants, parents and children, and husband and wife is close.⁷⁴ For this reason, he asserted that *Shangti*, as a relative term that expresses the relationship of supreme master over servants, only refers to God, whilst *Shen*, as a generic term, denotes a spirit.⁷⁵ It is noteworthy that, in this article, he rarely referred to the Confucian Classics, but cited other scholars’ work, notably Sir George T. Stanton’s *An Inquiry into the Proper Mode of Rendering the Word God in Translating the Sacred Scripture into the Chinese Language* (1849).⁷⁶ This means that he did not begin a full-scale study of the classics in order to solve the Term Question at this time, but rather engaged in a rhetorical debate. For this reason, Lauren Pfister points out that this article ‘bristled at times with rhetorical sarcasm’ against Boone.⁷⁷ However, he wrote a subsequent series of six letters, published in 1850 as a single pamphlet, and these letters show that he had begun to consult the classics on this question.

In 1852, Legge made his most important contribution to the Term Question, *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* (1852), which presented his ‘most convincing arguments and most compelling evidence’.⁷⁸ In the course of his arguments, he referred to ‘nearly forty Chinese authoritative writers and commentators as well as the titles of more than twenty-five Chinese works’, including texts from a number of Confucian literati, a few Daoist and two modern Roman Catholic works.⁷⁹ The most important among these references were the imperial prayers published in the ritual guidebooks for imperial worship at the Altar of Heaven in Beijing during the Ming (1368-1644) and Q’ing (1644-1912) dynasties, viz. *The Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (大明會典: *Da Ming Hui Dian*) and *The*

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 24-5.

⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 26, 29.

⁷⁶ It was printed in London.

⁷⁷ Pfister, *Striving for the Whole Duty of Man*, vol. I, p. 191

⁷⁸ James Legge, *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits: with an Examination of the Defense of an Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos, into the Chinese Language*, by William J. Boone (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Register office, 1852); Pfister, *Striving for the Whole Duty of Man*, vol. I, p. 191.

⁷⁹ Pfister, *Striving for the Whole Duty of Man*, vol. I, p. 193.

Collected Statutes of the Qing Dynasty (大清會典: *Da Qing Hui Dian*) respectively.⁸⁰ These two liturgical books in fact provided him with important evidence of Chinese monotheistic worship to *Shangti*, and thus he often used these sources as a basis of his argument.⁸¹ His main arguments in *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* were as follows.

First, Legge argued that a primitive monotheism had existed among the Chinese since the legendary Chinese kings – Yao (c.a. r. 2358-2258 BC) and Shun (c.a. r. 2255-2205 BC) – first offered his worship to one God, *Shangti*, although he admitted that it did not take exactly the same form as a ‘pure’ Judeo-Christian monotheism.⁸² Furthermore, he asserted that ‘the God whom they [the Chinese] worship’ is ‘the same whom we [Christians] adore.’⁸³ In his view, the existence of this form of ‘certainly monotheism’ among the Chinese could be attributed to the fact that ‘He has been pleased in much larger measure to reveal Himself’ to the Chinese.⁸⁴ More specifically, on the basis of Scripture (Romans 1:18-32), he suggested that this primitive monotheism had taken root in Yahweh’s revelation to the Jewish people, and it had been brought to the Chinese by one group of Noah’s descendants after the collapse of the Tower of Babel.⁸⁵ Accordingly, he perceived the Jewish-Chinese people, who resided at Kai-Feung in Central China and worshipped God in their synagogues, as important evidence which demonstrated that the Chinese people had possessed a vestige of Yahweh’s primal revelation that was given by one of Noah’s descendants.⁸⁶

Second, Legge argued that this primitive monotheism among the Chinese had degenerated into atheistic Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties, a new Confucian philosophy of which one of the most essential principles was *Tai-Ji* (the Ultimate Supremacy) based on Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the *Yi-Jing* (*the Book of Changes*).⁸⁷ He castigated Neo-Confucianism by stating that ‘the substitution of this

⁸⁰ Ibid; Legge, *The Notions*, pp. 23-31.

⁸¹ Pfister, *Striving for the Whole Duty of Man*, vol. I, p. 193.

⁸² Legge, *The Notions*, p. 53; see p. 40, footnote #61.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 112-23.

⁸⁶ Klaus Koschorke et. al, eds., *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450-1990* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), p. 6; Legge, *The Notions*, p. 133-34.

⁸⁷ See p. 45-7, 71.

le [of the *Tai-Ji*] in the room of *Shang-Te* is nothing but a poor mystification of the Sung scholars [of Neo-Confucianism]; it is a vagary of the philosophy falsely so called of China.⁸⁸ Accordingly, he sharply criticised Boone, who incorrectly argued on the basis of his misinterpretation of the *Yi-Jing* that in Neo-Confucianism the creation was ascribed not to *Shangti* but to the *Tai-Ji*.⁸⁹ Instead, Legge insisted by referring to other scholars' correct interpretation of the *Yi-Jing* that the book still maintained that *Shangti* had created all things in the world:

It is a pity he [Boone] did not study the classic for himself... In a collection of explanations of the *Yih-king* [*Yi-Jing*] taken from the philosophers, and first published in the reign of K'ang-he, we read: "When Heaven produces and completes the myriads of things, and rules and governs them, the title given to that Being is *Te* [*Shangti*] (天地生成萬物而主宰之者謂之帝)." The truth is that those scholars, while they try to explain away the declarations about *Shang-te* in the classics, by substituting for the personal Being a principle of order or primitive reason [*Tai-Ji*], often forgot themselves.⁹⁰

Third, in line with Medhurst, Legge opposed the use of *Shen* as a term for God on the grounds that *Shen*, always accompanied by *Kwei*, would encourage the Chinese to perceive the Christian God as a demonic spirit. Instead, he argued that *Shen* simply denoted a 'spirit'.⁹¹

In summary, there were three theological factors underlying the three missionaries' responses to the first phase of the Protestant Term Question. First, the critical divergence between the *Shangti* party and the *Shen* party was over the question of whether a form of primitive monotheism, congruent with Christian monotheism, had existed among the Chinese (as the *Shangti* party claimed) or not (as the *Shen* party maintained) centuries before the arrival of foreign missionaries. Second, whilst the *Shangti* party argued that the term *Shen* denoted a spirit, the *Shen* party argued that it was the most proper generic term for God. Third, the theology of Legge, the spokesman of the *Shangti* party, was particularly related to a degeneration theory of religion; the Chinese religion had been monotheistic around the twenty-fourth century BC, yet it had degenerated into an atheistic philosophy of neo-

⁸⁸ Legge, *The Notions*, pp. 112-23; emphasis original.

⁸⁹ Legge, *The Notions*, p. 32.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

⁹¹ Legge, *The Notions*, pp. 140-62; see p. 73.

Confucianism in the Song (960-1279) and the Ming (1368-1644) dynasties; that is, Neo-Confucianism had subverted the Chinese monotheistic notion.

The Second Phase of the Protestant Term Question 1877-1890

The heated controversy of the Term Question cooled from 1854, because, as previously seen, the Bible societies and the missionaries decided to publish two editions of the Chinese Bible – the *Shangti* edition of the DV and the *Shen* edition of the B-C Version – which missionaries could use in accordance with their preferences.⁹² In consequence, no significant article and papers on the subject had appeared between 1855 and 1876.⁹³ The second phase of the Term Question began when the opponents of Legge wrote several public letters in 1877 to criticise his affirmative use of *Shangti* in his English translations of the Confucian Classics (1861-1872) and the *Sacred Books of China* (1877-1891), and was principally ended in the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai in 1890 where the missionaries reached an agreement to terminate it by producing ‘the Union Version’.⁹⁴ In this section, we will explore how the Term Question during this phase processed, and investigate what theological motivations impelled Legge and his opponents.

1. James Legge’s Adherence to a Degeneration Theory of Chinese Religion: His Translation of *Shangti* (and *T’ien*) for God

(1) James Legge’s Translation of *Shangti* for God

As previously noted, Legge began to study the Confucian Classics in 1850 to address the Term Question. Consequently, just as Ricci had translated the Confucian Classics into Latin, Legge also produced his monumental English translations of the Confucian Classics; the eight-volume first edition was published in Hong Kong from 1861 to 1872 (afterwards, the five-volume second edition and its partially revised

⁹² Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, pp. 60-70.

⁹³ Lau, *James Legge*, p. 160.

⁹⁴ For further studies on the Union Version in the conference in 1890, see Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, pp. 193-284.

editions were published in Oxford from 1893 to 1895).⁹⁵ The first volume appeared in 1861, entitled the *Chinese Classics*, consisting of the three books of the *Four Books – Confucian Analects* 論語, the *Great Learning* 大學 and the *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸.⁹⁶ In this volume, he did not hesitate to translate *Shangti* as God, whilst rendering *Shen* as a spirit; specifically, in Index VII, he defined 上帝 (*Shangti*) as ‘God, the most High God’, 帝 (*Ti*) as ‘God’ and 神 (*Shen*) as ‘a spirit, spirits’.⁹⁷

After completing the first volume of the Confucian Classics in 1872, Legge visited the imperial Altar and Temple of Heaven (*T'ien Tan* 天壇) in Beijing (or Peking) on 21 April 1873 together with his three LMS colleagues, John Dudgeon⁹⁸ and Samuel and Edith Meech.⁹⁹ As Girardot argues, the Altar was ‘the most important monument to what Legge believed to be continuing sacrificial rituals of true monotheistic worship to *Shangti/Tien*’, a practice that had degenerated by the infusion of idolatrous elements.¹⁰⁰ That is to say, Legge came to believe at the Altar that the Chinese monotheistic worship of God, *Shangti* or *T'ien*, had been

⁹⁵ The eight-volume first editions published in Hong Kong from 1861 to 1872 were as follows; *Confucian Analects*, *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean* (1861); *The Works of Mencius* (1861); *The Shu King* or the *Book of Historical Documents* (1865); *The She King*, or *Book of Ancient Poetry* (1871); *The Chun Chiu*, with the *Tso Chwan* (1872); *The Hsiao King*, or *Classic of Filial Piety* (‘*The Sacred Books of the East*,’ vol. iii.) (1879); *The Yi King*, or *Book of Changes* (‘*The Sacred Books of the East*,’ vol. xvi.); *The Li Ki*, or *Treaties on the Rules of Propriety* (‘*The Sacred Books of the East*,’ vols. Xxvii, xxviii) (1885); The five-volume second and partially revised editions published in Oxford from 1893 to 1895 were as follows; *The Chinese Classics*, Second Edition Revised, vol. I-V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893).

⁹⁶ James Legge trans., 2nd ed. revised, *Chinese Classics: Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean*, vol. I (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1893)

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, Index VII, pp. 449, 466, 484.

⁹⁸ John Dudgeon (1837-1901) was born in Scotland, and served not only as a LMS medical missionary in China, but also as a translator. Dudgeon studied medicine at the University of Glasgow, in which he gained M.D. and Master of Surgery in 1862. In 1863, he was appointed to the Medical Mission of the LMS to serve at the hospital in Peking established by William Lockhart. He arrived at Shanghai in December 1863. He was also Medical Attendant to the British Legation in Peking (modern-day Beijing) from 1864-1868. Dudgeon was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at the Imperial College (Tongwen guan) during the 1870s and 1880s; Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations*, p. 24.

⁹⁹ Samuel Evans Meech (1845-1922) was appointed to the LMS mission at Peking on 24 July 1871, arriving at Shanghai on 12 December 1871 and proceeding to Peking on 25 October 1872. He married at Peking in 1872. He engaged in Pastoral and Evangelistic work in Peking and its out-stations. He served for many years as Secretary of the North China District Committee. cf. Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁰ Girardot, *James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, pp. 86-7.

wonderfully maintained for 4,000 years, regardless of the situation of the capital which had varied at different times.¹⁰¹ As a result, he, together with his LMS colleagues, took off their shoes and sang a doxology to God at the Altar. In his *Religions of China* (1880), he described this in more detail:

It is indeed a wonderful fact to think of, that a worship of the one God has been maintained in the vicinity of their capitals by the sovereigns of China almost continuously for more than four thousand years. I felt this fact profoundly when I stood early one morning [on 21 April 1873] by the Altar of Heaven, in the southern suburb of Peking. It was without my shoes that I went up to the top of it; and there around the central slab of the marble with which it was paved, free of flaw as the cerulean vault above, hand in hand with the friends [Dudgeon and Mr. and Mrs. Meech] who accompanied me, I joined in singing the doxology, beginning – ‘Praise God from whom all blessing flow.’¹⁰²

However, this provocative liturgical performance prompted harsh criticism from his colleagues, as we will see later on.¹⁰³ He also became aware of the similarity between the Chinese Emperors’ giving the ‘special burnt-offering’ of a whole bull to *Shangti* or *T’ien* at the Altar in Beijing and the ancient Jewish sacrifices to *Yahweh* at the Temple in Jerusalem, described in the OT (particularly Leviticus).¹⁰⁴ It is noteworthy that, after his visit to the Altar, he also visited the old Portuguese cemetery at the outskirts of Beijing which housed the tombs of the famous Jesuits (Ricci, Schaal, Lombard, Verbiest and others), and paid his veneration to them.¹⁰⁵

In 1876, Legge was appointed Professor of Chinese Language and Literature in Oxford University.¹⁰⁶ In 1877, Legge wrote a paper, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity*, which was then read by William Muirhead (LMS) on behalf of Legge at

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 251; cf. James Legge, ‘Journey in North China and America’, 12, dated 22 April 1873, Peking at LMS Archives, China-Personal Papers, James Legge, Box 7.

¹⁰³ Donald Treadgold, *The West in Russia and China: Religious and Secular Thought in Modern Times*, vol. 2, China, 1582-1949 (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1973), p. 44.

¹⁰⁴ Girardot, *James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 88.

¹⁰⁶ James Legge, *Inaugural Lecture on the Constitution of a Chinese Chair in the University of Oxford* (Oxford and London: James Parker and Co., 1876); this lecture was delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre on 27 October 1876; cf. Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations*, p. 46.

the Protestant Missionary Conference in Shanghai on 11 May 1877.¹⁰⁷ This paper was intended to present two main arguments; first, it claimed a degeneration of Chinese primitive monotheistic faith in *Shangti* in order to defend his translation of *Shangti* as God in his English translations of the Confucian Classics (1861-1872), and criticise the use of *Shen* as God; and second, it underscored the basic common elements between Christianity and Confucianism.

In this paper, Legge observed that ‘the early Chinese did not see in the various worship that they practiced anything inconsistent with their ideas of *Shang-ti*’, the monotheistic Supreme Deity, yet this monotheistic faith had degenerated into a ‘mass of superstition and idolatry, often approaching to fetishism spiritual beings’, on account of the ‘influences of Taoism and Buddhism.’¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, he noted that these idolatrous practices did not ‘detract’ the Chinese from their original monotheistic faith in *Shangti*, as the ‘Supreme Ruler of men’.¹⁰⁹ To prove the preservation of monotheistic belief in *Shangti* in the modern Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) in the midst of the polytheistic context of popular religion, he recalled the ‘preliminary prayer [to *Shangti*] addressed in 1538 by the emperor of the Ming Dynasty’, viz. *The Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (大明會典), from his article in 1852.¹¹⁰ In this ritual, Legge noted that the emperor of China worshiped ‘one God’, whilst he also worshipped ‘many other imaginary spiritual beings, who are under Him and inferior to Him, but who may act the part of mediators between the worshipper and Him.’¹¹¹ Accordingly, he asserted that *Shen* simply referred to these multiple spiritual beings, which were subordinate to *Shangti*, thereby concluding that the God should be translated as not *Shen* but *Shangti*.

Legge also appealed to the missionaries in the conference that as ‘there is so much in Confucianism about God’, China missionaries ‘must supplement largely in the statement in the Confucian books about Him’ in order to bring ‘Chinese readers and hearers to think as we do about God.’¹¹² In other words, he argued that ‘Confucianism is not antagonistic to Christianity’, whilst ‘atheistic Buddhism’ and

¹⁰⁷ James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1877)

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6; see pp. 75-6, footnote #80; Legge, *The Notions*, pp. 23-31.

¹¹¹ Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity*, p. 6.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

‘pantheistic Brahmanism’ were nothing but an obstacle to Christian missions on the grounds that these religions ‘cannot set forth the gospel as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.’¹¹³ Furthermore, he even believed that Confucius was ‘a man sent of God’, and ‘*Confucius* was raised by God for the instruction of the Chinese people.’¹¹⁴ On the basis of this belief, he argued that Confucianism could be utilised by missionaries to lead the Chinese to Christianity, just as the Apostle Paul had taught that the OT was ‘*a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ*.’¹¹⁵

Finally, although Legge expected that ‘all the members of the Conference will not agree with me’, he concluded with confidence in this paper that ‘the *Ti* and *Shang-ti* of the Chinese Classics is God – our God – the true God.’¹¹⁶

However, this provocative paper was ‘withdrawn by common consent’ from the conference ‘after full consultation’, because the conference was concerned that its contribution to the vexed Term Question between the *Shangti* and the *Shen* parties might cause the conference to be disharmonious.¹¹⁷ Instead, the conference formed a special representative committee to address the Term Question rather pursuing their plenary discussion on it.¹¹⁸ The special committee, consisting of W. A. Russell, R. Lechler, H. Blodget, C. Hartwell, J. Edkins, and C. W. Mateer, reported that ‘we have been unable to discover any satisfactory basis of agreement, and that it has been found impracticable to present a digest of arguments’, thus suggesting ‘mutual forbearance’.¹¹⁹

In 1880, Legge produced *Religions of China*, a collection of his lectures on Chinese religions delivered at ‘the College of the Presbyterian Church of England’ in London.¹²⁰ In this book, he particularly opposed an evolutionary theory of religion. Specifically, he criticised his contemporary, Cornelis P. Tiele (1830-1902), Professor of Comparative Religious Studies in Leiden University, who was regarded as one of the most prominent evolutionists of the late nineteenth century and applied

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 15.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 10-11; emphasis original.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 11; emphasis original.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 3; emphasis mine.

¹¹⁷ ‘The Shanghai Missionary Conference’, *Chinese Recorder* (May-June, 1877), p. 242.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 248.

¹²⁰ James Legge, *Religions of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880), preface.

evolutionary theory to a study of primitive religion as well as folklore, sociology, and psychology.¹²¹ Tiele argued that ‘the religion of the old Chinese empire’ is best characterised as ‘a purified and organised worship of spirits’ with ‘a predominant fetishist tendency’.¹²² In opposition to Tiele’s evolutionary theory, Legge contended that ‘five thousand years ago the Chinese were monotheists, – not henotheists, but monotheists’, and ‘this monotheism was in danger of being corrupted, we have seen, by a nature worship on the one hand, and by a system of superstitious divination on the other.’¹²³ Therefore, it is obvious that Legge’s theology of Chinese religion was clearly dependent on a degeneration theory of the history of religion.

As well as his *Chinese Classics* (1861-1872), Legge also produced the six volumes of the *Sacred Books of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism*, published between 1879 and 1891.¹²⁴ These volumes became parts of the *Sacred Books of the East* series, edited by Frederic Max Müller (1823-1900), one of the most pre-eminent German Orientalists and Professor of Comparative Theology at Oxford University, and published in fifty volumes between 1879 and 1902.¹²⁵ All of these translations led him to the conclusion that ‘*Ti* 帝 was the term corresponding in Chinese to our God and that *Shang Ti* was the same.’ He asserted that ‘in this view I have never

¹²¹ Tiele delivered two lectures in regard to the evolutionary theory of religion as the Gifford Lectures in the Edinburgh University in 1897 and 1899, which were published under the title of *Elements of the Science of Religion*; cf. Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 4; C. P. Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1897-99); *Series: Gifford Lectures in the University of Edinburgh*, 1896-1998; Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion A History* (London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 133; Morris Jastrow, Jr., *The Study of Religion* (London: W. Scott, 1901), pp. 52-3.

¹²² C. P. Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion to the Spread of the Universal Religion*, trans., J. Estlin Carpenter (Trubner and Co., 1877), cited in Legge, *Religions of China*, pp. 17-9.

¹²³ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 16.

¹²⁴ Girardot, *James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 11; The six-volumes of the *Sacred Books of China* were as follows: *The Sacred Books of China*, Part I of *The Texts of Confucianism*, *The Shû King*, *The Religions Portions of the Shih King*, *The Hsiâo King* (1879); Part II of *The Texts of Confucianism*; *The Yi King (I Ching)* (1882); Part III of *The Texts of Confucianism*, *The Lî Kî*, Part 1 of 2 (1885); Part IV of *The Texts of Confucianism*, *The Lî Kî*, Part 2 of 2 (1885); *The Texts of Taoism*, Part 1 of 2, *The Tâo teh king (Tao te Ching)*, *The Writings of Kwang-tze*, Books I-XVII. (1891); *The Texts of Taoism*, Part 2 of 2, *The Writings of Kwang Tse*, Books XVII-XXXIII, *The Thâi-shang Tractate of Actions and Their Retributions*, other Taoist Texts, and the Index to vols. 39 and 40. (1891)

¹²⁵ Girardot, *James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 11.

wavered, and I have rendered both the names by God in all the volumes of Chinese Classics thus far translated and published.¹²⁶ Hence, he finally stated as follows:

I came to the conclusion that *Ti*, on its first employment by the Chinese fathers, was intended to express the same concept which our fathers expressed by God... I render *Ti* by God and *Shang Ti* by the Supreme God.¹²⁷

Therefore, it is clear that Legge's affirmation of the term *Shangti* (or *Ti*) had been inductively drawn from his intensive reading of the Confucian Classics, in much the same way as Ricci's did.

In summary, the theological factors behind Legge's use of *Shangti* for God can be summarised as follows. First, he came to believe that the Chinese had held a primitive monotheistic belief in *Shangti* within the framework of Confucianism from the twenty-fourth century BC. Second, that this monotheism had degenerated into an atheistic Neo-Confucianism or idolatrous practices, as it had been increasingly influenced by Buddhism and Taoism. Third, that whilst Confucianism could be reconciled with Christianity on the basis of the affinities between the two religions, atheistic Buddhism and pantheistic Taoism were incompatible with Christianity. Lastly, we have identified a theological continuity between Ricci and Legge in regard to the basis of their sympathetic attitude to Confucianism. We will come back to the last point later on.

(2) The Anti-Legge Party

Legge's shocking liturgical performance at the Altar of Heaven in 1873 and his provocative treatises of Chinese religion with their use of *Shangti* for God, including his first volume of the *Sacred Books of China*, triggered the second phase of the Term Question in 1877.

¹²⁶ James Legge, *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. III, *The Sacred Books of China: the Texts of Confucianism, Part I, the Shu King, the Religious Portions of the Shih King, the Hsiao King*, "Preface", pp. xxiii-xxiv (23-24), dated 18 April 1879.

¹²⁷ Idem, *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. XVI, *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism, Part II, the Yi King*, 'Preface', pp. xix-xx (19-20), dated 16 March 1882; emphasis original.

The Inquirer

Andrew P. Harper, the influential American Baptist editor of the *Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* (hereafter *CRMJ*) and one of the most critical opponents of Legge, began to attack Legge in 1877 by writing several articles.¹²⁸ The first was ‘The Meaning of the Word Shin [*Shen*]’ (1877), which argued that ‘*T’ien*, *Shangti* and all the other false gods which they have been worshipping in the place of Jehovah, are to be forsaken.’¹²⁹ The second was ‘Is the *Shangti* of the Chinese Classics the same as Jehovah of the Sacred Scriptures?’ (1877).¹³⁰

It was not until 1880 that Harper, on behalf of ‘twenty-three missionaries’, harshly criticised Legge in a full-scale attack by writing a long public letter to F. Max Müller, entitled ‘A Letter to Professor F. Max Müller on the Sacred Books of China’, under the pseudonym of ‘the Inquirer’.¹³¹ This letter was published in his own journal of the *CRMJ* in 1880, and as a pamphlet edition as well.

In his open letter, Harper first pointed out that Legge held that ‘the Chinese in the Chinese Classics write about the true God, Jehovah, that they use *Tien*, Heaven, as the absolute term to designate Jehovah, and *Ti* and *Shangti* are used when referring to God as synonymous with Heaven.’¹³² However, Harper contended that ‘the Being thus revered and worshipped by the Chinese and called Heaven – is defied Heaven, the visible Heavens considered as a god – as the chief god of the Chinese’; that is, ‘Heaven is the absolute name of the chief god’, and thus ‘*Ti* or *Shangti* is one of the names of Heaven.’¹³³ Hence, he asserted that ‘*Tien*, Heaven, is as different and distinct from Jehovah, as Zeus the chief god of the Greeks, or Jupiter, the chief god of the Romans, or Varuna the chief god of the Hindoos, is *different from and distinct from Jehovah*.’¹³⁴

Second, Harper noted that the Chinese emperors offered their worship to four different gods – Heaven, Earth, Sun and Moon – at four different places of the Altar

¹²⁸ Girardot, *James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage*, pp. 87, 229, 277-8.

¹²⁹ Inquirer, ‘The Meaning of the Word “Shin”’, *CRMJ*, vol. 8 (1877), pp. 84, 92.

¹³⁰ Idem, ‘Is the *Shangti* of the Chinese Classics the same as Jehovah of the Sacred Scriptures?’, *CRMJ* (Sept.-Oct. 1877), pp. 411-26.

¹³¹ Ibid; Inquirer [A. P. Harper], ‘A Letter to Professor F. Max Müller on the Sacred Books of China, Part I. The Shu King, Shih King, and the Hsiao King’, *CRMJ*, vol. 11 (May-June 1880), pp. 161-87.

¹³² Ibid, p. 164.

¹³³ Ibid, pp. 165, 168; emphasis mine.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 169; emphasis original.

of Heaven: ‘there is an altar to Heaven, on the South side of the city; there is an altar to the Earth on the North side of the city – there is one to the Sun on the East side, and to the Moon on the West side of the city.’¹³⁵ On the basis of this fact, he argued that Heaven (*T’ien*) was simply ‘a nature god’, i.e. one of the four objects of the Chinese state worship at the Altar.¹³⁶ He thus regarded Legge’s striking doxology uttered when standing with bare feet at the Altar of Heaven as a clear case of idolatry and furthermore as a ‘blasphemy’.¹³⁷

Third, in order to support his criticism of Legge, Harper made reference to the decree of Pope Clement XI of 1704,¹³⁸ which read: ‘That to express our idea of the most high and good God, the name *Tien* must be absolutely rejected.’¹³⁹ As such, Harper’s theological position was essentially identical with that taken by the Dominicans and the Franciscans who attacked the Jesuits’ use of *T’ien* and *Shangti*. We will return to this point in due course.

In conclusion, Harper firmly stated that *Shen* is ‘the most suitable’ term for God, whereas Legge’s use of *T’ien* (and *Shangti* or *Ti*) to signify God was nothing but ‘a crime as well as a blunder’.¹⁴⁰ Instead, he suggested to Legge that he ‘could have left the words *Ti* and *Shangti* un-translated’ or ‘could have translated them by the words Ruler and Supreme Ruler.’¹⁴¹

Legge’s Response to the ‘Inquirer’

In reaction to the attack of the ‘Inquirer’, Legge wrote a long public letter to Müller in 1881 to defend his argument for *Shangti* in response to the three critical points made by Harper. As for Harper’s first critical point, Legge, in referring to Ricci’s etymological analysis of *T’ien* in the *TMLH*,¹⁴² noted that the ancient Chinese character *T’ien* 天, consisting of ‘one (一)’ and ‘great (大)’, meant ‘the Great One’.¹⁴³

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 172.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid, pp. 161-64; Girardot, *James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage*, pp. 86-9.

¹³⁸ See p. 52, footnote #133.

¹³⁹ Inquirer, ‘A Letter to Professor F. Max Müller’, p. 179.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 182.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 181.

¹⁴² See p. 44, footnote #83, 84.

¹⁴³ James Legge, ‘A letter to Professor F. Max Müller’, *CRMJ*, vol. 12, (Jan.-Feb. 1881), p. 39; cf. idem, *Religions of China*, pp. 8-11.

On the basis of this analysis, he argued that *T'ien* denoted not 'the visible Heaven' but 'the concept of God'.¹⁴⁴ He additionally argued that as '*Ti* and *Shangti*' were the 'personal names' of *T'ien*, these names were used interchangeably to signify God.¹⁴⁵

In response to Harper's second point, Legge made renewed reference to the series of the Ming Dynasty emperors' prayers to *Shangti*, viz. *The Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (大明會典), from his early article in 1852.¹⁴⁶ By referring to this source, he asserted that the Chinese emperors believed that *Shangti* (or *T'ien*) was not the same as 'the visible Heaven' but the Creator who made 'Heaven', 'Earth' and 'All things', including 'Sun' and 'Moon'.¹⁴⁷

In regard to Harper's third point, commending the decree of Pope Clement XI of 1704, Legge contended that the decree was a 'mistake'.¹⁴⁸ Specifically, he noted that the decree held that if God was named as *Shangti* (上帝 or *Ti* 帝: emperor), which was similar to '*Hwang-Ti* (皇帝: Great or August *Ti*)', the title of the Chinese emperor, the Chinese people would identify God with the emperors. However, Legge observed that *Ti* had been already employed to designate '*T'ien*' for God '2000 years' before the Chinese emperor was first called *Hwang-Ti* in the Chin Dynasty in 221 BC.¹⁴⁹ Hence, Legge suggested that if Pope Clement XI and the Spanish orders had clearly apprehended the true meaning of *Shangti*, the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Catholics 'would have been saved from the controversy about terms, which embittered their relations among themselves, embroiled them with the emperors of China, operated disastrously to check the progress of their missions', and further the nineteenth century Protestants 'should never have heard of "the term question" and they would not have attempted to evade a difficulty of their own fancying by a device unworthy of the scholarship by which many of them were distinguished.'¹⁵⁰

Other Opponents of Legge

¹⁴⁴ Legge, 'A letter to Professor F. Max Müller', p. 39.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.; see pp. 40-2.

¹⁴⁶ See pp. 75-6, footnote #80; Legge, *The Notions*, pp. 22-32; idem, *Religions of China*, pp. 43-51.

¹⁴⁷ Legge, 'A letter to Professor F. Max Müller', p. 40.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 49-50; see p. 52, #133.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 49-50.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 50.

In support of Harper, Robert Nelson, an American Episcopal missionary and one of the chairmen of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai in 1877, wrote a long article in the May-June 1877 issue of the *CRMJ*.¹⁵¹ In this article, he objected to Legge's use of *Shangti*, and furthermore charged Legge with 'heresy' for his shocking liturgical performance at the Altar of Heaven.¹⁵² He maintained that Legge had revived the heretical accommodation method, employed by the early Jesuits in the course of the Chinese Rites Controversy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁵³ In 1878, Nelson wrote another article in reaction to Legge's paper, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity*, attacking Legge in a similar way.¹⁵⁴

In addition to Harper and Nelson, John S. Burdon (1826-1907), the bishop of Victoria in Hong Kong and a missionary of the Church Missionary Society (hereafter CMS), forwarded a circular letter to Müller in order to attack Legge's use of *Shangti* and *T'ien* in the *Sacred Books of China*, a letter which dated 25 June 1880 and signed by 'twenty-four missionaries'.¹⁵⁵ This letter supported the Dominicans and Franciscans in favour of the term *T'ienzhu*, whereas it denounced the Jesuits.¹⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that although Bishop Burdon, unlike the SPG missionaries, would have had no sympathy with Roman Catholic usages, he (along with other missionaries in North, including American Episcopalians) preferred the term

¹⁵¹ Robert Nelson, '[Review of James Legge's] Confucianism in Relation to Christianity', *CR*, vol. 8 (May-June 1877); Girardot, *James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 228.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 229.

¹⁵³ Girardot, *James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 229.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Nelson, '[Review of James Legge's] Confucianism in Relation to Christianity', *CRMJ*, vol. 8 (July-Aug. 1878)

¹⁵⁵ This letter was included in John Chalmers' article under the title of 'The Interminable Question', *China Review*, vol. 9 (1881), pp. 228-33, cited in Girardot, *James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, pp. 277, 657; according to the list of signatures, the 'twenty-four missionaries' compromised: Thomas McClatchie, the Anglican canon of Hong Kong and Shanghai; Burdon himself; Robert Nelson; A. P. Harper; Matthew Yates; Edward C. Lord; Frederick F. Gough; John L. Nevius; T. P. Crawford; H. Blodget; Samuel I. J. Schereschewsky; Elliot Thompson; Charles Butcher; William J. Boone (a son of Legge's original enemy, William Boone); Hunter Corbett; Charles Hills; John Wherry; James Bates; L.D. Chapin; Chauncey Goodrich; J. A. Leyenberger; and Henry V. Noyes.

¹⁵⁶ Chalmers, 'The Interminable Question'; Burdon, *The Chinese Term for God*; Burdon, *Burdon's letter to the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*

T'ienzhu.¹⁵⁷ To understand why he preferred this term, we need to look at the formation of the Peking Bible Translation Committee.

In the aftermath of the Tien-jin 天進 Treaty (1858) and the Convention of Peking (1860), the interior of China in the northern area, including Peking (北京 or Beijing) and Tien-jin, were subsequently opened to foreigners as well as Protestant missionaries. Reaching the area, the Protestant missionaries realised that they should translate the Bible into Mandarin which was broadly used among the common classes in the northern China.¹⁵⁸ This resulted in the formation of the Peking Translation Committee in 1864, comprising five members – Bishop Burdon, Samuel I. J. Schereschewsky (American Episcopal Church Mission: 1831-1906), Henry Blodget (ABCFM: 1825-1903), William A. P. Martin (PCUSA: 1827-1916) and Joseph Edkins (LMS: 1823-1905).¹⁵⁹ In order that they might avoid an outbreak of the Term Question between *Shangti* and *Shen*, they proposed to use a new compromise term, *T'ienzhu*, the term used by Catholics since 1704.¹⁶⁰ As a result, the *T'ienzhu* edition of the Peking Version was published jointly by the BFBS, NBSS and ABS. However, those missionaries in mid- and southern China, notably James Legge and Griffith John (LMS), rigidly opposed the use of *Tienzhu*, because it could cause the Chinese to identify the Protestant tradition with Catholicism.¹⁶¹ As a result, the *Tienzhu* edition was not extensively used by the Protestant missionaries, and in consequence the Term Question was continuously processed with two terms, *Shangti* and *Shen*.

2. The Theological Continuity between the Catholic Term Question and the Protestant Term Question in China

The course of the second phase of the Protestant Term Question suggests that there is a theological continuity in the use of *Shangti* (or *T'ien*) between Matteo Ricci

¹⁵⁷ Eugene Stock, *The History of The Church Missionary Society*, vol. III (London: CMS, 1899), p. 219.

¹⁵⁸ Zetzsche, *The Bible in China*, pp. 139, 145-6.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 82-3.

¹⁶⁰ See p. 52, footnote #133.

¹⁶¹ Eber eds., 'The Interminable Term Question', pp. 147, 149-52.

and James Legge. Specifically, Legge followed Ricci's theological position in regard to the Term Question and the Ancestor Rites Controversy as follows.

First, in his two articles, 'The Land of Sinim' (1859) and 'The Nestorian Movement' (1888), in which Legge intensively dealt with the history of the Chinese Rites Controversy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Legge spelled out that he entirely supported Ricci as follows:

Ricci had been too liberal in his views about the use of religious terms and ritual practices, not only for Dominicans and Franciscans, but also for some of his Jesuit brethren. Did the Chinese really mean God when they spoke of *T'ien* 天 (Heaven) and *Shangti* 上帝 [Term Question]? And might the converts be permitted still to use those terms? Was it really religious worship which they paid to Confucius 孔子 and to their parents and ancestors in their mourning rites, or merely the expression of their grateful homage to the Sage, and of their filial piety? And might the converts still be allowed to pay it [Ancestor Rites Controversy]? Ricci had replied to these questions in the affirmative. *About the terms I entirely agree with his opinion, nor do I altogether differ from him about the ritual practices.*¹⁶²

Second, just as Ricci and his Jesuit confreres opposed the decree of Pope Clement XI in favour of the Dominicans and Franciscans, Legge also objected to the decree by regarding it as a 'mistake' and an obstacle to both Catholic and Protestant missions in China.¹⁶³

Third, Legge expressed his 'homage to the ability, perseverance, and devotion' of many Jesuits,¹⁶⁴ of whom he paid special honour to Ricci by stating that 'he was a man of great scientific acquirements, of invincible perseverance, of various resources, and of winning manners, maintaining with all these gifts a single eye to the conversion of the Chinese, the bringing the people of all ranks to the faith of Christianity.'¹⁶⁵ He argued that Robert Morrison, his senior LMS colleague and the first pioneer Protestant missionary in China, was 'far inferior to Ricci in scholarly training',¹⁶⁶ whereas he exalted Ricci as 'one of the ablest men'.¹⁶⁷ In this sense, as previously seen, when Legge visited the Altar of Heaven in Beijing in 1873, he

¹⁶² James Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of His-an Fu in Shen-Hsi, China* (London: Trübner & Co., 1888), p. 58; emphasis mine.

¹⁶³ Ibid; see p. 87, footnote #148.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 59.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 55.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 60.

¹⁶⁷ Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 35.

visited the Portuguese cemetery in order to show his veneration to the early Jesuit missionaries including Ricci.¹⁶⁸

As such, Ricci's theological influence on Legge suggests several common aspects in the theological attitude towards Chinese religion between the two figures as follows. First, just as Ricci upheld the affinity between Confucianism and Christianity with the slogan of 'Christianity supplements Confucianism and displaces Buddhism', Legge also regarded Confucianism as '*a schoolmaster*' to lead the Chinese to Christianity.¹⁶⁹

Second, both Ricci and Legge held that a monotheistic belief in *Shangti* or *T'ien*, viz. 'Confucian monotheism' (Ricci) or 'primitive monotheism' (Legge), had prevailed among the Chinese in the twenty-fourth century BC, yet had subsequently degenerated into an atheistic Neo-Confucianism and polytheism under the influence of Buddhism and Taoism. Their theology of Chinese religion was closely associated with a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, which led them to use *Shangti* or *T'ien* as the name of God.

Third, Legge subscribed to the Jesuits' accommodation method, developed by Ricci.¹⁷⁰ Legge believed that this method led the Jesuits to the success of their missions in China, gaining a number of Chinese literati converts, including the Three Pillars.¹⁷¹ In this regard, Legge's opponents, including 'the Inquirer', spelled out that 'Legge was in danger of reviving the old Jesuitical heresy of accommodationism, another dangerously sympathetic approach to heathenism.'¹⁷² Girardot also argues that Legge's treatises and the liturgical performance at the Altar of Heaven suggested 'a connection with the early Jesuit missionaries who accommodated traditional Chinese rituals, actions that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries scandalised more orthodox Catholic missionaries and the papacy.'¹⁷³ Specifically, in the *TMLH*, in order to justify his accommodation of Chinese ancestor rites to Christianity, Ricci made a reference to one section (Chapter XX and Verse 6) of the *Doctrine of the*

¹⁶⁸ Girardot, *James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 229; see p. 80, footnote #105.

¹⁶⁹ See, p. 82, footnote #115; emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁰ Legge, *The Nestorian Monument*, p. 59.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*; see p. 37, footnote #32.

¹⁷² Girardot, *James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage*, p. 229.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 88.

Mean 中庸, one of the *Four Books* of the Confucian Classics, in regard to a Confucius' teaching for ancestor rites. By following Ricci,¹⁷⁴ Legge also cited the same section with his commentary about the Jesuits, which supported the Jesuits' accommodation of ancestor rites:

[Ricci's *TMLH*]

Our Lord of Heaven is the Sovereign on High [*Shangti*] in the ancient canonical writings: Quoting Confucius, the Doctrine of the Mean says: "the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are meant for the service of the Sovereign on High"¹⁷⁵.

[Legge's English translation of the classics]

By the ceremonies of the sacrifice to Heaven and Earth they served God [*Shangti*], and by the ceremonies of the ancestral temple they sacrificed ceremonies to their ancestors.

[Legge's commentary]

The two concluding sentences are important, as the *Jesuits* mainly based on them the defence of their practice in permitting their converts to continue the sacrifices to their ancestors.¹⁷⁶

Hence, Legge's attitude to Chinese stood in clear continuity with that of Ricci, a continuity which was closely related to their common acceptance of a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion.¹⁷⁷

A similar theological continuity may be observed in the opposition to the use of *Shangti* or *T'ien* between the Dominicans and Franciscans on the one hand and the opponents of Legge on the other hand. Specifically, during the second phase of the Protestant Term Question, the opponents of Legge – Harper, Nelson and Burdon – commonly supported the decree of Pope Clement XI of 1704 in favour of the Dominicans and Franciscans, whilst they opposed Legge's use of *Shangti* or *T'ien*.

¹⁷⁴ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 122-23.

¹⁷⁴ See, p. 43.

¹⁷⁵ Ricci, *TMLH*, pp. 122-23.

¹⁷⁶ James Legge trans., *Chinese Classics*, 2nd ed., vol. I (1861), *the Great Learning*, Chapter X. 5, p. 404 and Its Commentary, pp. 239-40; *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter XIX. 6, p. 269; Legge's commentary was cited in Lau, *James Legge*, p. 163; emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁷ (Daniel) Sung-Ho Ahn, 'The Theological Continuity in the Use of *Shangti* between Matteo Ricci's *TMLH* and Jame Legge's English Translation of the Confucian Classics', *Christianity and History in Korea*, vol. 32 (2010)

Therefore, the parallelism is undeniable between the Catholic Term Question in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the second phase of the Protestant Term Question in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

This chapter will conclude by returning to the research questions raised in the Introduction.

This chapter has suggested, first, that Legge's theological justification for the use of the title *Shangti* (or *T'ien*), drawn from the Confucian Classics, for the name of God is attributable to his adherence to a degeneration theory of religion. On the basis of his study of the Confucian Classics to produce its English translations (the Chinese Classics and the *Sacred Books of China*), he believed that the Chinese primitive monotheistic belief in *Shangti*, viz. 'Confucian monotheism', had existed among the Chinese since the Chinese legendary kings initiated their monotheistic worship to *Shangti* around the twenty-fourth century BC. Yet, in his view, Confucian monotheism had been corrupted by Buddhism and Taoism into an atheistic form of Neo-Confucianism and into idolatrous practices. Nevertheless, he believed that the series of prayers addressed by the Ming Emperors to *Shangti*, viz. *The Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (大明會典), was remarkable evidence which demonstrated that elements of 'Confucian monotheism' had been still preserved even in early modern China.

On the other hand, those missionaries, who asserted that the generic term *Shen* should be used for God, argued that *Shangti*, a high god of Chinese heathenism, could not signify a Christian concept of God on the grounds that monotheism had never existed in China.

In the second place, this chapter has suggested that there were a series of theological parallels between the Catholic Term Question in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the Protestant Term Question in the nineteenth century. Both Term Questions revolved around the issue of whether *Shangti* (or *T'ien*), the name of the Confucian Supreme Deity, could be adopted for God (as Ricci/the Jesuits and Legge/the *Shangti* party argued) or not (as the Spanish orders and the

Shen party/‘the Inquirer’ both maintained); in other words, it was about whether a form of monotheism, capable of being reconciled with Christian belief, had existed among the Chinese or not. This theological parallel was due to the fact that the Protestants referred to the precedent Chinese Rites Controversy to find a solution when they engaged in the Term Question.

Specifically, we have argued that Legge’s theological justification for the use of *Shangti* was indebted to Ricci’s theology and accommodation method.¹⁷⁸ For both men, their use of *Shangti* was mostly reliant upon their study of the Confucian Classics; Ricci and Legge translated the classics into Latin and English respectively. On the basis of the Confucian Classics, they both claimed to have discovered ‘Confucian monotheism’ (Ricci) or ‘primitive monotheism’ (Legge). They both argued that Christian missionaries should accommodate Confucianism to their Christian mission, because they both believed that Confucianism could supplement Christianity on account of their commonality.

In conclusion, Legge’s theology of the Protestant Term Question in China may be seen as an example of the contention advanced by modern missiologists such as Andrew F. Walls, who argue that Christianity did not come to ‘*replace what was already there*’ (in this case a primitive monotheistic belief in *Shangti* among the Chinese), but rather to ‘*convert what was already there*’ by re-orienting its direction toward Christianity,¹⁷⁹ as there was a continuity of a Chinese monotheistic belief in the Supreme God between ‘the pre-Christian past’ and ‘the Christian present’.¹⁸⁰ A missiological contention can also be extensively observed in Ricci’s adoption of *Shangti* as the name of God in the *TMLH*.

In the next chapter, we will look at how both *Shangti* and *Shen* were brought to Korea more intensively, and how they were transformed into *Hananim* and *Shin* respectively.

¹⁷⁸ Ahn, ‘The Theological Continuity of *Shangti*’

¹⁷⁹ Andrew F. Walls, ‘The Translation Principle in Christian History’ in *The Missionary Movement in Christianity History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), pp. 25-6; see also Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. P., 1994), pp. 147-48.

¹⁸⁰ Andrew F. Walls, ‘African Christianity in the History of Religions’, *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1996), p. 187.

Part II: The Term Question in Korea, Its Continuity with and Divergence from the Term Question in China

Chapter 4: The Preliminary Phase of the Term Question in Korea 1882-1886

Introduction

The previous chapters have been devoted to the Chinese roots of the Korean Term Question. Chapter 2 focussed on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic debate in China between *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu*, and how these terms were transmitted from Catholicism in China to Catholicism in Korea, thereby presenting the historical background to the second dispute phase of the Korean Term Question between *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* (the Korean transliteration of *T'ienzhu*). Chapter 3 traced how the Korean theistic terms – *Hananim* and *Shin* –, which provoked the first dispute phase of the Korean Term Question, were derived from the Chinese theistic terms – *Shangti* and *Shen* – which caused the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China.

Chapter 4 will specifically discuss how the Chinese term *Shangti* was transmitted to Korea as *Hananim* by means of John Ross's translation of the first Korean New Testament (hereafter KNT) in Manchuria, and how the Chinese term *Shen* was imported to Korea as *Shin* through Su-Jung Lee's translation of the Korean Bible in Japan. It will pay special attention to Ross and Su-Jung Lee, the original channels of the transmission of *Shangti* into *Hananim* and *Shen* to *Shin* respectively.

In the first place, this chapter sets out three research questions regarding Ross: (1) What was Ross's theological attitude towards Confucianism and its term for the Supreme Lord, *Shangti*? (2) What theological factors led Ross to translate *Shangti* as *Hananim* in his first KNT? (3) What were the theological influences upon Ross's adherence to a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, and his translation of the term for God as *Hananim*?

In accordance with these research questions, this chapter will present three main arguments. First, that Ross understood Confucianism as a useful starting point for Christian mission, and believed that the ancient Chinese had been monotheists

who had given their offerings to One Supreme God, *Shangti*. Second, that the degeneration theory of the history of religion led Ross to perceive *Hananim* as a corresponding theistic term to *Shangti*, believing that both terms commonly reflected a primitive monotheism, resembling a form of Christian monotheism. Third, that the theological influence of James Legge and, behind him, of the Jesuits, who regarded *Shangti* as a consonant theistic term with God on account of its monotheistic character, led Ross to adopt *Hananim* as the term for God in his first KNT.

In the second place, with respect to Su-Jung Lee, this chapter raises a further research question: what theological factors lay behind his translation of the name of God as *Shin*? It will be argued that Lee merely adopted the term *Shin* from the basis of his translation, which was the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culbertson Version published in 1863 by the America Bible Society (hereafter ABS).

John Ross's Translation of *Hananim* for God in Manchuria

John Ross's Mission in Manchuria

The UPC launched their missions in China in 1862, and set up their mission station at Ning-po (寧波) in Che-kiang Province on the central-east coast.¹ In 1870, the UPC removed their mission station to Che-foo in Shang-dong Province on the north-east coast in order to target northern China.² In 1870, Alexander Williamson (1829-1890), the China agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland (hereafter NBSS), joined the UPC mission through the mutual consent of the NBSS and the UPC.³ Afterwards, several UPC missionaries, including John McIntyre (1837-1905), landed in Che-foo in 1871 and 1872. In January 1872, Williamson appealed to the UPC to send a young missionary,⁴ and consequently John Ross (1842-1915), a graduate of the UPC Theological Hall in Edinburgh, was appointed as a China missionary on 27 February 1872.⁵ His ordination then took place on 20 March 1872,

¹ Sungil Choi, *John Ross and the Korean Protestant Church* (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992), p. 59.

² *Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian Church* (hereafter *MRUP*) (1870), p. 82.

³ Choi, *John Ross*, p. 59.

⁴ Alexander Williamson, 'The Claims of China on the Attention of Christian Men', *MRUP* (1872), pp. 17-29.

⁵ *United Presbyterian Magazine for 1872* (hereafter *UPM*) p. 227.

and he married M. A. Stewart on 26 March 1872 at Chapel Hill Church in the presbytery of Elgin and Inverness.⁶ Ross and his wife left Scotland in April and arrived at Che-foo on 23 August 1872.⁷

Upon Ross's arrival, Williamson appealed to the UPC that Ross should be sent to New-chang in order to establish the new UPC mission station for the Manchuria mission. This was because there were only two Irish Presbyterian (hereafter IPC) missionaries – Dr. Joseph Hunter and Dr. Hugh Waddle – in Manchuria,⁸ whereas Che-foo station was occupied by a number of foreign missionaries. As a result, the Rosses were relocated to New-chang in Manchuria in October 1872.⁹

Afterwards, Ross appealed to the UPC to send out missionaries to reinforce the New-chang station. Consequently, in late 1875, McIntyre was transferred from Wei-huen in Shan-dong Province to New-chang to be Ross's colleague, and thereafter five additional missionaries arrived in Manchuria.¹⁰ In early 1876, McIntyre married the sister of John Ross, Catherine Ross, who came to New-chang to take care of Ross's children due to the death of Ross's first wife, M. A. Stewart, in 1873.¹¹ Handing over the New-chang station to McIntyre's family, Ross then moved to Mukden (or Shen-yang 瀋陽), the capital of Manchuria and the second largest city of the China empire, in early 1876 in an attempt to establish a new base for the Manchuria inland mission.¹²

Ross worked in Manchuria as a pioneer missionary for thirty-eight years until he retired in 1910. The Foreign Mission Board (hereafter FMB) of the United Free

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Mahn-Yol Yi and Sung-Deuk Oak eds., *The History of the Korean Bible Society*, vol. I [hereafter Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I] (Seoul: Korean Bible Society, 1994), p. 32.

⁸ James H. Grayson, 'A Spark in North East Asia: A Personal Hagiography of a Scottish Missionary to Manchuria: John Ross (1842-1915)', in *Sainthood Revisioned*, ed. Clyde Binfield (Sheffield: Sheffield Academy Press, 1995), p. 96.

⁹ John Ross, 'History of the Manchurian Mission', *Chinese Recorder* (hereafter *CR*) (July 1887), p. 255; cf. L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910*, rev. ed. (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., c1987), p. 51.

¹⁰ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 35; the five missionaries were Rev. James Webster and Dr. Douglas Christie in Manchuria, Rev. Alexander Westwater and Dr. A. M. Westwater in Cheefoo, and Miss Pitty of the Zena mission in Manchuria. However, in 1886, Rev. Westwater and Dr. Westwater were transferred to Manchuria; cf. Choi, *John Ross*, p. 69.

¹¹ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 35.

¹² John Ross, 'Notes of Manchuria', *CRMJ*, vol. 6 (May-June 1875), p. 220; cf. Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 65.

Church of Scotland (UFC), to which Ross was transferred following the union between the UPC and the Free Church of Scotland, recorded in 1915 that Ross was the founder of the Manchuria mission, and had ‘built up a great mission, which now included 3 colleges, 2 hospitals, 7 congregations, 18 outstations and a Christian community of 4242 souls.’¹³ In recent times, James H. Grayson has written that Ross was ‘clearly the most energetic and the one who had the clearest idea of a missionary strategy and a plan for the development of a mission’ in Manchuria.¹⁴

Ross’s contribution to the foundation of the Manchuria mission can be summarised in four points. First, in order for the Chinese church to be indigenous, he established theological education institutes to train Chinese ministers and lay evangelists. The first formal programme of theological education was established in 1887, which developed into a more systematic scheme for ministerial training in 1894.¹⁵ The United Theological College was established in Mukden in 1898 under the leadership of Ross, and he was appointed the first principal and a professor.¹⁶ As a result, the theological education institute produced the first ordained Chinese pastors in 1896.¹⁷

Second, Ross achieved union between the UPC and the IPC missions. He felt strongly that the UPC and IPC should form a united Presbyterian church in Manchuria.¹⁸ By 1887, in response to Ross’s appeal, the two Presbyterian missions had reached a territorial comity agreement, defining the boundaries of their respective areas of work. At a united conference of the two Presbyterian missions in Mukden on 23-29 May 1891, the two missions eventually agreed to form the single Presbyterian Church of Manchuria, and McIntyre was elected its first moderator.¹⁹ Ross recorded that the union church later supervised ‘23 congregations of fully 3000

¹³ *Minutes of the Foreign Mission Board of the UFC 1915* (hereafter *MFMB-UFC*), p. 568.

¹⁴ Grayson, ‘A Spark in North East Asia’, p. 97.

¹⁵ James H. Grayson, ‘The Legacy of John Ross’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (hereafter *IBMR*), vol. 23, no. 4 (Oct. 1999), p. 169.

¹⁶ Choi, *John Ross*, pp. 78-9.

¹⁷ Grayson, ‘The Legacy of John Ross’, p. 169.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 170.

¹⁹ John Ross, ‘Notes on Mission Work in Manchuria’, *CRMJ*, vol. 26 (Jan. 1895), p. 18; cf. Choi, *John*, p. 73.

people received into the Church by baptism'.²⁰ As previously noted, the union church established the United Theological College in 1898.²¹

Third, in order to evangelise Korea which was closed to any foreign missionaries, Ross translated the first KNT.

Lastly, he wrote a number of treatises on the linguistics, religions, history and culture of both China and Korea, which contributed to the work of the next generation of missionaries.²² For instance, during his furlough in Britain from 1879 till 1881, he wrote the *History of Corea* (1879), the first English text of the Korea History, and the *Manchus: the Reigning Dynasty of China* (1880), which led to Ross being awarded a doctoral degree of theology from Glasgow University in March 1894.²³ We will explore these last two points in more detail in the following sections.

In addition, it is noteworthy that Ross was one of the correspondents of Commission I, *Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World* at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.²⁴ After he retired in 1910, he returned to Edinburgh. He then attended the missionary conference, and spoke about his Manchuria mission work at the debate on the Commission I report.²⁵ He served Mayfield Church in Edinburgh as an elder until he died in 1915.

1. John Ross's Adherence to a Degeneration Theory of the History of Chinese Religion: His Preference for *Shangti* for God

Ross's remarkable contribution to the Manchuria mission never interrupted his labours in producing a number of treatises on China, Manchuria and Korea.²⁶ We will analyse these treatises in order to explore Ross's theological attitude towards Chinese religion, particularly Confucianism, and how it is related to a degeneration theory of Chinese religion.

²⁰ Ross, 'Notes on Mission Work in Manchuria', p. 18

²¹ Ibid, pp. 71-80.

²² Grayson, 'The Legacy of John Ross', p. 170.

²³ Choi, *John Ross*, pp. 78-9.

²⁴ Copies of his questionnaire replies may be found in the Special Collections in Yale Divinity School and the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

²⁵ World Missionary Conference 1910, *Report of Commission I* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier), pp. 429-30.

²⁶ Grayson, 'A Spark in North East Asia', p. 103.

(1) John Ross's Sympathetic Theological Attitude towards Confucianism

According to Ross's treatises, it is clear that he had held a sympathetic theological attitude towards Confucianism since he began the mission in Manchuria in 1870s. His intensive study of the Confucian Classics led him to the conclusion that Confucianism could be used as a foundation for Christian mission on account of the theological parallels between Confucianism and Christianity.²⁷

In his early article 'Obstacles to the Gospel in China' (1877), Ross argued that Confucianism could be 'a schoolmaster' to lead the Chinese to Christianity, and thus 'Confucius is the John forerunning Christ and preparing the way' of Christianity.²⁸

In May 1886, he presented his article, 'Our Attitude toward Confucianism', at the North China Religious Book and Tract Society in Beijing.²⁹ In this article, he underscored that Apostle Paul cited the Greek poet of 'Epimenides', who was held 'in much esteem in Crete', to enable his preaching of Christianity to be relevant to the Greek audiences' philosophical framework at the Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17:28).³⁰ Likewise, he asserted that a missionary could employ the Confucian texts on the grounds that these texts carried 'far greater authority' to the Chinese than any other sources, and the teaching of the Confucian texts could be 'by no means irreconcilable' with that of Christianity.³¹ More specifically, he argued that the *Four Books* of the Confucian Classics had 'incomparable value' both in teaching the attributes of the Christian God – 'the Omnipresence, the Almighty Power and the universal care of the one living God' – and 'in convincing of sin',³² thereby stating that 'there appears to be no substantial reason against the use of Confucianism as an ally in our work.'³³

Ross's sympathetic attitude towards Confucianism was borne out by his ministry. For instance, he founded a day school for boys and girls in Mukden, where

²⁷ John Ross, 'After-Sermon Conversation', *MRUP* (Oct. 1877), pp. 647-50; idem, 'Description of the Chinese New Year', *MRUP* (Aug. 1876), pp. 253-55; cf. Grayson, 'A Spark in North East Asia', p. 98.

²⁸ John Ross, 'Obstacles to the Gospel in China', *MRUP* (Jan. 1877), p. 411; emphasis mine.

²⁹ Idem, 'Our Attitude toward Confucianism', *CRMJ*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Jan. 1887)

³⁰ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts; the English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, seventh impression (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977), pp. 359-60.

³¹ Ross, 'Our Attitude toward Confucianism', pp. 7-8.

³² Ross, 'The Riots and their Lessons', *CRMJ* (Aug. 1892), p. 382.

³³ Ross, 'Our Attitude toward Confucianism', pp. 5-6; idem, 'The Riots and their Lessons', p. 382.

‘nothing should be taught but the *Four Books [Classics]*’ as ‘the only books’ for the first year students by a Chinese teacher, while Christian books and hymns were additionally used from the second year.³⁴ He claimed that the use of the Confucian Classics as text books in the school, based on his sympathetic attitude towards Confucianism, had resulted that ‘the literary class, instead of inciting the people against us, have been our good friend’³⁵, and furthermore the Chinese’ antagonistic attitude to both foreigners and Christianity ‘has never been again been resuscitated.’³⁶

Thus, Ross spelled out that ‘Confucianism shall be yoked to the plough of Christianity and shall assist, and must assist, in breaking up the stubborn soil’ of the Chinese, thereby stating that Confucianism could be an aid for Christianity by ‘bringing the Chinese mind to acknowledge the necessity of “repentance towards God and of faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ”.’³⁷ Hence, in his article ‘The Chinese People and their Religions’, presented at the Philosophical Society of Glasgow on 27 February 1901, he rhetorically concluded as follows:

But the hope of China consists in the fact that the system of Confucius holds the first place in the study and the esteem of the Chinese people. It will blend with Christianity in the immediate future, as did Platonism or the teaching of Aristotle in the past. The living sap of Christianity will enter into the dry, but shapely tree of Confucianism, and cause it to bring forth good fruit in rich abundance for the well-being of China.³⁸

(2) John Ross’s Advocate of a Degeneration Theory of the History of Chinese Religion

On the basis of his sympathetic attitude towards Confucianism, Ross argued that the theistic truths of ancient Confucianism, congruent with those of Christianity,

³⁴ Ross, ‘Our Attitude toward Confucianism’, p. 7; Ross described this issue more in detail in his another article: ‘My reply to it was the opening of a day-school where the Four Books alone were taught, and into which not a scrap of Christian literature did I allow for the first year. Next year the boys were eager to learn Christian hymns, and they and their parents desired to read Christian books’; idem, ‘The Riots and their Lessons’, p. 382.

³⁵ Ross, ‘Our Attitude toward Confucianism’, p. 7.

³⁶ John Ross, *Mission Methods in Manchuria* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1903), pp. 155-56.

³⁷ Ross, ‘Our Attitude toward Confucianism’, pp. 4, 10-11.

³⁸ John Ross, ‘The Chinese People and Their Religions’, *Philosophical Society of Glasgow* (1900-01), p. 14.

were to be found in the ‘earliest dawn of Chinese literature’, which had been transmitted by the Confucian Classics, since the pre-historic period.³⁹ For this reason, Ross had studied the Confucian Classics intensively since he commenced the mission in Manchuria in 1872.⁴⁰ Consequently, he wrote a book entitled *The Original Religion of China* in 1909 which was the collection of his life-long research into the classics.⁴¹ Particularly, this book was intended to trace the earliest form of Chinese religion centuries before the period of Confucius (551-479 BC), an original form that could be differentiated from ‘the mixed forms’ of Chinese religion in post-Confucian period.⁴² Hence, we will pay special attention to this book.

Ross used five text books as sources – the *Book of History*, the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of Changes (Yi-jing)*, the *Book of Ritual (Li-ji)* and the *Directory of the Manchus (Ta-jing-whi-tien)* – of which his research mainly relied upon the first two books, which were the most authoritative ones and contained the historical accounts of the primal period.⁴³ He spelled out that his work had been significantly aided by James Legge’s English translation of the Confucian Classics, praising Legge as someone ‘who seems to have been virtually the only student of Chinese lore who was alive to the great importance of the oldest form of the Chinese Religion.’⁴⁴

Ross divided ancient Chinese history into three separate periods: the first was ‘the primal-ancient’ period (‘25th -12th century BC’: the pre-historic era and the Xia and Shang Dynasties); the second was ‘the mid-ancient’ period (‘12th-6th century BC’: the Zhou Dynasty); and the third was ‘the near-ancient’ period (from ‘6th century BC’ to ‘an undefined date subsequent to the beginning of the Christian era’).⁴⁵ He then argued that ‘each of these periods possesses its own distinctive religious characteristics’ – ‘pure monotheistic’, ‘dualistic’ and ‘materialistic’ respectively. We will now consider the unique religious features of each of these periods as follows.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See p. 100, footnote #27.

⁴¹ In addition, during the last fifteen years of his life (1900-1915), he wrote two more books – *Mission Methods in Manchuria* (1903) and the *Origin of the Chinese People* (published posthumously in 1916); cf. Grayson, ‘The Legacy of John Ross’, p. 67.

⁴² John Ross, *The Original Religion of China* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1909), p. 5.

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 26-33.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 22.

In the first place, Ross argued that the form of Chinese religion in the ‘primal-ancient period’ was ‘purely monotheistic’.⁴⁶ According to the *Book of History*, he noted that ‘Shun [the ancient Chinese king: c.a. the twenty-third and twenty-second century BC] on his accession offered the customary sacrifice to God [*Shangti* (or *T’ien*)⁴⁷] in the year 2283 BC’,⁴⁸ and this primitive monotheistic belief had been handed down ‘in a line of unbroken continuity’ in the primal-ancient period; King Yu of the Xia Dynasty (c.a. 2205-1600 BC) and King Tang of the Shang Dynasty (c.a. 1600-1046 BC) also offered their sacrifices to *Shangti* (or *T’ien*).⁴⁹ Ross noted that the Chinese name *Shangti* (上帝) ‘is composed of two separate words’; *Shang* (上) means ‘above’, ‘superior to’, *Ti* (帝) means ‘ruler’, and thus *Shangti* refers to ‘Supreme Ruler’ or ‘King of kings’, demonstrating that the name *Shangti* reflected Confucian monotheism.⁵⁰ In turn, he argued that this earliest monotheistic meaning of *Shangti* was harmonised with that of Yahweh by spelling out that ‘the idea underlying the name Yahweh – the continually existing One – is implied in the uninterrupted use from unknown antiquity of the name *Shangti*.’⁵¹ Therefore, he concluded that the form of the Chinese religion in the primal-ancient period was monotheistic by stating that ‘the belief in the existence of one Supreme Ruler [*Shangti* (or *T’ien*)] is among the earliest beliefs of the Chinese known to us.’⁵²

In line with this conclusion, Ross wrote an article ‘Chinese Classic Theology’ (1902), which was intended to show readers, particularly ‘young missionaries’, that the ancient Chinese had grasped a measure of theological truth, which could form a point of contact with the Christian knowledge of God.⁵³ In this article, he collected all the usages of *Shangti* (or *Ti*), *T’ien* and *Shen* from the *Book of History*, the *Book of Odes* and the *Four Books* in order to analyse how the attributes of these theistic

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See pp. 40-2; it should be observed that Matteo Ricci originally used these two terms interchangeably by referring to the Confucian Classics; like Ricci and Legge, Ross also argued that the terms *Shangti* and *T’ien* had been used interchangeably to ‘denote the One God and only Supreme Ruler over heaven and earth’ in the primal-ancient period; Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, pp. 35-9.

⁴⁸ Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, pp. 23-4, 40; see p. 40, footnote #61, p. 76, #82.

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 21-2, 34-57.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, p. 25.

⁵³ John Ross, ‘Chinese Classic Theology’, *CR*, vol. 33 (Sep. 1902), p. 436.

terms were characterised in the Confucian Classics. This research led him to the implicit conclusion that the attributes of both *Shangti* (or *Ti*) and *T'ien* – ‘all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing, intelligent, reasoning personality, everywhere present’ – were consonant with those of the Christian God.⁵⁴

We should note that in the *Original Religion of China*, Ross emphasised the ‘family likeness between the original Confucianism and the ancient religion of the Jews [i.e. Jewish monotheism]’ on the grounds that the origins of Confucianism lay in the ancient Jewish religion.⁵⁵ To understand this argument more in detail, we need to look at another of his articles, ‘The Chinese People and Their Religions’. In referring to the research of the LMS missionary, Joseph Edkins (1823-1905), one of the most prominent missionary sinologists, Ross asserted that a group of Noah’s descendants had migrated from West Asia to ‘the Yellow river’ (the original place of ancient Chinese civilisation) after the Deluge (which, according to Ross, had occurred at 2349 BC), and thus brought their monotheistic belief in Yahweh to China.⁵⁶

In the second place, as previously seen, Ross argued in the *Original Religion of China* that Confucian monotheism had degenerated into being ‘dualistic’ in the ‘mid-ancient’ period, and thereafter had become ‘materialistic’ or ‘agnostic’ in the ‘near-ancient’ period, emphasising the clear difference between ‘the pure monotheism’ and ‘the dualism of the succeeding ages’.⁵⁷

First, Ross explained how Confucian monotheism had degenerated into dualism in the mid-ancient period. He noted that the *Book of Change (Yi-Jing)*, produced by King Wen in the twelfth century BC, presented the dualistic theory of creation, viz. the *yin-yang* theory:

In it [*Yi-jing*] occurs the phrase ‘yin and yang’, the two great originating principles by whose action all things have been evolved, all things both the living and the dead. These terms are defined – reversing the order to ‘yang and yin’ – as ‘aggressive and receptive’, ‘action and rest’. They are represented in animated nature by male and female. But animate or inanimate, everything

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 436-37.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁶ Ross, ‘The Chinese People and Their Religions’, p. 4; see p. 76.

⁵⁷ Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, p. 59.

visible is classifiable under either of these two. Everything is either masculine or female; there is no neuter. Heaven is *yang*, earth is *yin*. Light is *yang*, darkness is *yin*. The sun is *yang*, the moon *yin*. The south is *yang*, the north *yin*. The north bank of a river, because facing south, is *yang*, and the south bank *yin*.⁵⁸

Based on this *yin-yang* theory, the Chinese rulers of the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC) began to offer their sacrifices to both Heaven and Earth in the 'second ancient period (i.e. 'the mid-ancient period'), whilst they still worshipped *Shangti* or *T'ien*.⁵⁹ Specifically, King Wu (the founder of the Zhou Dynasty) began to offer sacrifices to the 'Supreme Heaven and Sovereign Earth', and Prince Wu (King Wu's political assistant) also stated that 'Heaven is the universal Father and Earth the universal Mother.'⁶⁰ Consequently, Ross spelled out that the Chinese monotheistic notion of the One Supreme God, *Shangti* or *T'ien*, had been gradually replaced with a dualistic notion of Heaven in the Zhou Dynasty.

Second, Ross maintained that this Chinese dualistic notion of Heaven had then been transformed into a 'materialistic' or 'atheistic' notion of an impersonal Heaven in the modern period.⁶¹ He further argued that the foundation of the Chinese materialistic or agnostic view could be traced to this dualistic principle.⁶²

However, he asserted that although the materialistic notion had ever since 'enshrouded like a mist, more or less dense, Chinese ideas about the Supreme', it still could afford 'an excellent common standing-ground for friendly intercourse between the Western and the Eastern mind', and was 'invaluable as a foundation on which to build up the Christian ideas of God.'⁶³

Ross opposed some scholars' attempts to apply an evolutionary theory of the history of religion to Chinese religion.⁶⁴ Specifically, he opposed the 'ghost theory', initiated by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)⁶⁵ and thereafter elaborated by Sir Edward

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 63-4; see pp. 71, 76-7.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 63.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 64-5.

⁶² Ibid, p. 64.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 66; cf. Ross, *The Chinese People and Their Religions*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, p. 18.

⁶⁵ Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History* (London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 34; Ugo Bianchi, *The History of Religions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 71.

Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) as an ‘animistic theory’ in his *Primitive Culture*.⁶⁶ According to Spencer, the ghost theory argued that ‘the rudimentary form of all religion is the propitiation of dead ancestors, who are supposed to be still existing, and to be capable of working good or evil to their descendents.’⁶⁷ Ross attacked this theory as follows:

The endeavour to trace the original Religion of China to the worship of ancestors or a belief in ghosts, is to rely on a theory which is without a particle of foundation and in direct contrariety to all known facts. For we are ushered at one step into the presence of a Religion in which there is One God supreme over all in heaven and earth, all other spirits being subordinate to Him.⁶⁸

Hence, we may conclude that Ross’s theology of Chinese religion was based on a degeneration theory of the history of religion, and that he opposed an evolutionary theory of the history of religion.

John Ross’s Translation of God as Shangti and T’ien

On the basis of his conviction of the analogy between the two terms, *Shangti* (or *T’ien*) and God, Ross translated God as *Shangti* in his *Mandarin Primer* (1876), a Chinese language textbook for English readers.⁶⁹ Specifically, in the ‘Lesson LXII, God and Salvation’, he identified *Shangti* with God by explaining the meaning of *Shangti* as follows: ‘上帝[*Shangti*]是造化天地的: God creator of heaven and earth’; ‘非上帝[*Shangti*]的恩点: Beyond the mercy of God’; ‘萬物的主宰就是上帝[*Shangti*]: Governor of all things is even God.’⁷⁰ In the same chapter, he identified *Shangti* with the term *T’ien* 天, denoting Heaven or the Supreme Lord: ‘人人都得罪 天[*T’ien*]了: All men have sinned against *Heaven*’; ‘能哄人不能瞞天[*T’ien*]: You may cheat men, you cannot deceive *Heaven*.’⁷¹ Therefore, it may be suggested that Ross understood

⁶⁶ Walter H. Capps, *Religious Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 84-7; Ninian Smart, *The World Religions*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 34; Helmer Ringgren, *Religions of Mankind Today & Yesterday* (Edinburgh; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), p. xxiv.

⁶⁷ Herbert Spencer, ‘The Origins of Animal-Worship’, *Essays II* (1874), p. 102, cited in Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, p. 34; Bianchi, *The History of Religions*, p. 71.

⁶⁸ Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, pp. 22-3, 25.

⁶⁹ John Ross, *Mandarin Primer: Being Easy Lessons for Beginners, Transliterated According to the European Mode of Using Roman Letters* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1876)

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Lesson LXII *God and Salvation*, pp. 97-100.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp. 98-100.

Shangti and *T'ien* as the corresponding theistic terms to Yahweh or God, just as Ricci and Legge had done before him.

On the other hand, Ross argued that, among the Chinese, the two terms *Shen* and *Kwei* (鬼: demons, devil) were combined together, or in some cases used interchangeably, to indicate 'deities of a lower order and of subordinate rank' or demonic spirits or gods who were under the control of *Shangti*.⁷² Hence, just as Legge did, he asserted that 'the name *Shen* and *Kwei* are never employed with the significance of Supreme God', but denoted plural spiritual beings.⁷³ He further observed that although the Chinese revered *Shen*, denoting 'a plurality' of inferior and ancestral spirits of the departed and gods of various grades in heaven, the air and on the earth, they offered their sacrifices to the One Supreme God, *Shangti*, who ruled over all beings of *Shen*.⁷⁴ In particular, he stressed in his article 'Chinese Classic Theology' (1902) that 'the departed spirits of ancestors', whom the Chinese traditionally worshipped, were also subordinate to *Shangti*.⁷⁵

Hence, he argued that the Chinese original religion was 'not henotheistic' but 'monotheistic' on the grounds that, in the Chinese view, these spirits were regarded as 'subordinate to the One Supreme God.'⁷⁶ In this regard, we may note that any characterisation of the nature of ancient Chinese religion – monotheism, henotheism and monolatry – has to be illuminated in the light of the complex religious context of East Asia on the grounds that the three religious frameworks have in most cases coexisted within East Asian contexts.⁷⁷

Accordingly, in his *Mandarin Primer*, Ross rendered the 'god of wealth' as *Tsai-Shen* (財神), asserting that it 'cannot save men' but was only 'a piece of paper' painted with the five colors, arguing that it is not *Tsai-Shen* but *Shangti* or *T'ien* who governs everything on the earth: '財神不過一張紙: god [*Shen*] of wealth is no more than a piece of paper'; '畫上畫的畫五色: Painted, painted with the 5 colors'; '他看不聽不 : It cannot see, cannot hear. '; '保不了人以天爲主: Cannot save men.

⁷² Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, pp. 37, 139-81; see p. 73; p. 77, footnote #91.

⁷³ Ibid, pp. 35-9.

⁷⁴ Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Ross, 'Chinese Classic Theology', p. 438.

⁷⁶ Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, p. 21.

⁷⁷ See pp. 182-84; cf. Andrew F. Walls, 'Primal Religious Traditions in Today's World', in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), p. 125.

Heaven [*T'ien*] is the Lord'; '應當時時記念他 : Should constantly think of him'; '萬物的主宰就是上帝: Governor of all things is even God [*Shangti*].'⁷⁸

Therefore, it is clear that Ross belonged not to the *Shen* party but the *Shangti* party in the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China.

(3) The Theological Continuity between the Jesuits and John Ross

It is important to note that Ross's position was in theological continuity with that taken by the Jesuits in the seventeenth century. This continuity is more than mere parallelism. There is evidence that the theological influence of the Jesuits, who regarded *Shangti* as a consonant theistic term with God, led Ross to adopt *Hananim* as the term for God in his first KNT.

First, Ross showed his respect to the Jesuit missionaries in China. Specifically, in his early book, *History of Corea* (1879), he expressed his veneration to 'the Jesuits' zeal, bravery and perseverance', thereby arguing that their 'average mental capacity' was superior to that of 'the average Protestant missionary of even the present day.'⁷⁹ Accordingly, he asserted that if the Protestant missionaries changed places with the Jesuits, 'no such fruits could have been shown in the east as the Romanists can show in their past.'⁸⁰ Contrarily, he argued that if the Jesuits had worked under the Protestant system, 'we believe the indelible work done would have been immensely greater' than it had been under the Jesuits.⁸¹

Second, Ross praised the Jesuits' accommodation method. In response to two violent anti-foreign movements directed against foreign missionaries – the Tien-tsin massacre of 1870 and the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 – he wrote two articles, 'Riots and their Lessons' (1892) and 'The Situation in China' (1900), respectively. In these articles, he criticised those missionaries who 'have ignored Chinese customs, have neglected Chinese notions of property, paid little respect to their ideals of social life'

⁷⁸ Ross, *Mandarin Primer*, pp. 99-100.

⁷⁹ John Ross, *History of Corea* (London: Elliot Stock, 1891), pp. 291-92; as noted, the first edition was published in 1879.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

and regarded the Chinese as ‘an inferior race’.⁸² He judged that their ‘lack of sympathy with the Chinese’ provoked the anti-foreign movements.⁸³

On the other hand, Ross argued that ‘the talented Jesuits’, who accommodated the Chinese culture to their Christian missions, ‘were not only tolerated but held high esteem, both at [imperial] court and in the province.’⁸⁴ He further asserted that as a result of their accommodation method the Jesuits ‘made many converts and acquired great influence.’⁸⁵ Hence, he stated that ‘the missionaries in Manchuria have been anxious to *accommodate* themselves as far as possible to Chinese ideas of modesty and property, in the site and height of their houses, in their dress, in their mutual social relationship, and in their treatment of Chinese socially and in everyday life’, just as the Jesuits did.⁸⁶

Several common aspects between the Jesuits and Ross’s mission may be identified. In the first place, as the Jesuits accommodated Christian mission to Chinese customs, particularly ancestral veneration, Ross also tolerated it. To understand his theological position on ancestral veneration, we may refer to how he debated this issue at the international Protestant missionary conferences in 1888 and 1890.

At the London Missionary Conference (hereafter LMC) of 1888, Ross argued that the word ‘*worship*’ of the term ‘ancestral worship’ could be replaced by ‘*ritual*’ or ‘*veneration*’.⁸⁷ This was because, in his view, it was not a religious worship but a traditional custom of the Chinese to pay veneration to their forefathers based on ‘filial spirit’.⁸⁸

One of the most controversial issues in the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai (hereafter GCMC) in 1890 was the

⁸² John Ross, *The Situation in China* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, ca. 1900), pp. 12-3.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ross, ‘The Riots and their Lessons’, pp. 380-81.

⁸⁵ Ross, *The Situation in China*, pp. 12-3.

⁸⁶ Ibid; emphasis mine.

⁸⁷ James Johnston ed., *Report of the London Missionary Conference 1888* (hereafter *RLMC*), vol. 2 (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1889), p. 97; emphasis mine; cf. Ross, *Mission Methods in Manchuria*, p. 224.

⁸⁸ Johnston ed., *RLMC*, vol. 2, p. 97.

question of whether ancestral worship should be tolerated.⁸⁹ Specifically, the most fierce debate arose among missionaries on account of an essay by William A. P. Martin of the PCUSA and a Professor at Peking University entitled ‘Ancestral Worship: A Plea for Toleration’, which appealed to missionaries to accommodate ancestral veneration.⁹⁰ At a previous GCMC in 1877, most missionaries, under the leadership of conservatives, such as Griffith John (LMS), J. Hudson Taylor (China Inland Mission) and M. T. Yates (American Southern Baptist), had regarded it as ‘the most formidable obstacle’ to Christian mission.⁹¹ Likewise in 1890, a majority of missionaries, such as Henry Blodget (ABCFM)⁹², Ernest Faber (General Evangelical Protestant Missionary Society), M. Schaub (Basel Mission), W. Muirhead (LMS), Professor Thwing (New York University) and J. Hudson Taylor, were against Martin’s plea.⁹³ By contrast, a minority of missionaries, among them Timothy Richard (English Baptist), Gilbert Reid and John Ross, urged that it should be accommodated.⁹⁴ Specifically, illustrating his case from interviews with the Chinese people and a Korean prince, Ross argued that missionaries’ opposition to ancestral worship would cause the door of Christianity to be closed to the Chinese and Koreans. The second case in Ross’s speech led him to conclude that ‘there are other literary men in Moukden who agree with him [a Chinese Christian who still held the ancestor worship custom]. They are believers, read the Scripture and have family worship, but they say, “We cannot enter the church as long as you forbid absolutely all connection with this ancient custom”’.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ (Daniel) Sung Ho Ahn, ‘The Ancestor Question: the Historical Divergent Viewpoints on Ancestor Worship of the China Missionaries in the Shanghai Missionary Conferences in 1877, 1890 and 1907’ (unpublished paper), *Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity*, 2010.

⁹⁰ W. A. P. Martin, ‘Ancestral Worship: A Plea for Toleration’, *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877* [hereafter *RGC 1877*] (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1878), pp. 619-31.

⁹¹ M. T. Yates, ‘Ancestral Worship’, *RGC 1877*, p. 385.

⁹² Henry Blodget, ‘The Attitude of Christianity towards Ancestral Worship’, *RGC, held at Shanghai, May 7-20, 1890* [hereafter *RGC 1890*] (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1890), pp. 631-54.

⁹³ *RGC 1890*, pp. 654-60.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 657; another two cases can be found in the same page; in addition, Ross also insisted that polygamy could be tolerated.; cf. *RLMC*, vol. II, pp. 51-7, 63; W. Clark, ‘Polygamy in the Mission Field’, *UPM* (1889), pp. 18-9; John Ross, ‘Polygamy in the Mission Field’, *UPM* (1889), pp. 66-7; (Daniel) Sung Ho Ahn, ‘The Polygamy Controversy in Korea; A Comparative Study of the Divergent Responses to Polygamy of the Scottish and North American Presbyterian missions in late 19th century

In the second place, like the early Jesuits who targeted the high classes of Confucian literati, including Emperor Kang-Xi, by ‘a top-down method’,⁹⁶ Ross also stressed that a Christian missionary should aim ‘not merely at the conversion of farmers here and some artisans there’ but also at the high class of literati ‘who form the most powerful and vital force in China’ for the purpose of the ‘Christianisation of China’.⁹⁷

In summary, Ross asserted that missionaries should accommodate native customs, notably ancestor rituals, to Christianity, and thus the parallels between the culturally accommodationist strategies of the Jesuits and Ross are striking.

2. John Ross’s Translation of *Hananim* for God from *Shangti* in the First Korean New Testament

In this section, we will explore how Ross, in the course of the translation of the first KNT, rendered the name of God as *Hananim*, the Supreme Being of a Korean indigenous religion, on the basis of a degeneration of theory of the history of religion.⁹⁸

We need first to understand what factors led Ross to translate the KNT, although his primary mission was to the Chinese in Manchuria. First, his translation of the KNT had been inspired by his senior UPC missionary, Alexander Williamson. As Williamson had been interested in mission in Korea,⁹⁹ he sent Robert J. Thomas (1839-1866) to Korea in 1866 to distribute the Chinese Bible as an agent of the NBSS,¹⁰⁰ and distributed the Chinese Bible and Chinese Christian literature to the

Korea mission field’ (unpublished paper), *Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity 2009*.

⁹⁶ See p. 36, footnote #29.

⁹⁷ Ross, ‘Our Attitude toward Confucianism’, p. 6; idem, ‘Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Manchuria’, pp. 366-67.

⁹⁸ For further studies on the UPC missionaries’ translation of the first KNT, see Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I ; Choi, *John Ross*.

⁹⁹ Alexander Williamson, *Journeys in North China, Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia; with Some Account of Corea*, vol. II (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), pp. 295-312; *Annual Report of the NBSS, 1865*, pp. 35-7.

¹⁰⁰ William Griffis, *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1885), p. 392; Harry A. Rhodes, ed., *History of the Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. 1884-1934* (Seoul,

Korean people at the Corean Gate in Manchuria in September 1867.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, he advised Ross and McIntyre to move to Manchuria in 1872 not only for the Chinese mission but also for the Korean mission.¹⁰² Second, although the door of Korea was not closed to Christian missions as a result of the national isolation policy of Korea (viz. *Shae-Guk-Jung-Chack*: 쇄국정책), Ross expected that it would soon be open. This was because the Kwang-Hwa Treaty had been signed in 1876 between Japan and Korea, a treaty which allowed foreigners to undertake their trading business in Korea.¹⁰³ Third, he noted that a Korean Bible, using the Korean alphabet (*Han-geul*), could be used for common and low-classes Korean people, women and children, whereas a Chinese Bible could be relevant to the literati class.¹⁰⁴ Lastly, on the basis of the Three-Self Principles, known in the Korean context as the Nevius-Plan advocated by John L. Nevius (1829-1893) of the PCUSA in Shang-tong Province,¹⁰⁵ Ross expected that native Korean agents, rather than foreign missionaries who were forbidden to enter the interior of Korea, could build up self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches in Korea by bringing the Korean Bible.¹⁰⁶

Ross's translation work can be divided into four phases: (1) the preparatory phase (1874-1877), (2) the initial phase (1877-March 1879), (3) the early translating and revising phase (April 1879-August 1881), and (4) the completing phase (September 1881-1887).¹⁰⁷

(1) The Preparatory Phase (1874-1877)

Chosen Mission Presbyterian Church, 1934), p. 5; Yong Gyu Park, *History of the Korean Church 1784-1910* (Seoul: Life book, 2004), pp. 271-74.

¹⁰¹ *Annual Report of the National Bible Society of Scotland for 1868*, p. 44; Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p. 49.

¹⁰² Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 35; cf. Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p. 51

¹⁰³ John Ross, 'The Christian Dawn in Corea', *Missionary Review of the World* [hereafter *MRW*] (April 1890)

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*; see p. 130, footnote #5, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Nevius wrote this method in a series of articles in the *Chinese Recorder* in 1885, which were published as a book in 1886, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (New York: Foreign Mission Library); see p. 129, footnote #2.

¹⁰⁶ John Ross, 'Missionary Methods', *CRMJ*, vol. 29 (May 1898), p. 247.

¹⁰⁷ cf. Choi, *John Ross*, p. 110; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 46-7.

The preparatory phase started in 1874 when Ross made his first visit to the Corean Gate, and closed in 1877 when he published the *Corean Primer*.¹⁰⁸

In order for Ross to translate the Korean Bible, he needed Korean assistants. Thus, he made visits in 1874 and 1876 to the Corean Gate, which many Korean people visited for trading business with Chinese people.¹⁰⁹ Upon his second visit in 1876, he found a Korean assistant, Ung-Chan Lee, who converted to Christianity and thereafter baptised by McIntyre in 1879, and conveyed the Korean Bible to Koreans as a colporteur of the Bible societies.¹¹⁰ With the aid of Lee, Ross first published the *Corean Primer* in 1877 in an attempt to prepare the translation of the Bible into Korean.¹¹¹ This primer was the first English textbook for the Korean language, that was intended to teach the Korean language to missionaries and commercial traders when the door of Korea opened in the future.¹¹² Whereas the *Mandarin Primer* had 43 chapters, the *Corean Primer* consisted of 33 chapters. As its title indicates, Ross recorded that the *Corean Primer* was produced on the basis of the *Mandarin Primer* (1876), because he discovered that ‘a remarkable portion of Chinese words has been incorporated with the Corean language.’¹¹³

Ross did not include the word ‘God’ in the *Corean Primer*, whereas he translated it as *Shangti* in the *Mandarin Primer*. This was probably because he had not yet decided which Korean term would be suitable for the God of the Scriptures, and was looking for a Korean theistic word in the light of the degeneration theory of the history of religion. That is to say, as he produced the *Corean Primer* on the basis of the *Mandarin Primer*, he was looking for an analogical Korean theistic term to *Shangti*. In the following section, we will see how he chose the Korean term.

(2) The Initial Phase (1877-March 1879)

¹⁰⁸ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 46-7.

¹⁰⁹ John Ross, ‘To the Corean Gate’, *MRUP* (Jan. 1877), pp. 355-57.

¹¹⁰ John Ross, ‘Corean Version of the New Testament, Part II’, *MRUP* (May 1883), pp. 206-08.

¹¹¹ John Ross, *Corean Primer: Being Lessons in Corean on All Ordinary Subjects, Transliterated on the Principles of the Mandarin Primer* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1877); cf. idem, *Mandarin Primer*

¹¹² Grayson, ‘The Legacy of John Ross’, p. 168.

¹¹³ Ibid.

At New-chang in 1878, Ross gained a few more Korean assistants, including the Seo brothers – Sang-Yun (徐相崙: 1848-1926) and Sang-Woo (徐相佑: better known as Kyung-Jo 景祚) – who were sufficiently educated to be able to read Chinese literature.¹¹⁴ It is noteworthy that Sang-Yun helped Ross and McIntyre to translate the Gospel of Luke and John, and was baptised in April 1882.¹¹⁵ He became the first Korean colporteur of the BFBS, and so brought the Korean Bible to his home town (So-rae in west coast) and to Seoul where he significantly contributed to the foundation of the first Presbyterian Church in September 1887.¹¹⁶ The UPC Versions, using the term *Hananim*, played an important role in forming the early indigenous Korean Christian communities in both Manchuria and Korea without the aid of foreign missionaries.¹¹⁷

With the aid of these Korean assistants, Ross proceeded with the translation work. Consequently, when he left Manchuria for his furlough on April 1879, he finished drafts of the Gospels, Acts and Romans. Thus he brought the drafts to Britain in order to request the Bible societies to publish them.¹¹⁸ It is important to note that Ross used the *Shangti* edition of the Delegates' Version (hereafter DV), produced by the LMS, as the basis of the Bible translation.¹¹⁹ The Korean assistants first produced a rough draft of the Korean translation from the DV, and Ross then proofread it.

Ross has not left any primary sources that indicate which term he used as the name of God during this phase (1877-1879) and why he chose it. However, he later recorded in his *History of Corea* (1879) that he translated God as *Haneunim* (he changed this to *Hananim* from 1883 onwards). The first verse of the Gospel of John read as follows:

Beginning	(in) word	was;	word	God	company
Chu-ume	dogha	isuni	donun	<i>Haneunim</i> uro	dubooru ¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Ross, 'The Christian Dawn in Corea', pp. 241-48.

¹¹⁵ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 58.

¹¹⁶ Ross to Wright, 9 Oct. 1882, BSA/E3, BFBS, Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL)

¹¹⁷ For the further study on this issue, see Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 89-119.

¹¹⁸ Ross, *MRUP* (1880), p. 15.

¹¹⁹ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 49; see p. 69, footnote #42.

¹²⁰ Ross, *History of Corea*, p. 381; emphasis mine.

Hence, we may suggest that Ross understood *Haneunim* as an analogical Korean theistic term to *Shangti* of the DV, used by Ross as the basis of the Korean Bible translation.¹²¹ We will come back to this question in more detail in the following section.

(3) The Early Translating and Revising Phase (April 1879 - June 1881)

McIntyre's Contribution to the Bible Translation

As Ross left Manchuria for furlough in Britain in April 1879, McIntyre came to take up the translation work in his place. McIntyre recorded that although he had no intention to carry on the translation work at the beginning of 1879,¹²² he eventually resolved that 'I am therefore laying myself out for this work.'¹²³

It is noteworthy that of the Korean assistants involved in the translation work, four of them converted to Christianity, and were baptised by McIntyre. They then formed the first Korean Protestant community outside Korea (in Newchang) in 1879.¹²⁴ McIntyre recorded that as '900 Coreans' visited and interacted with this Christian community, the community grew.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the Korean converts became colporteurs, who brought the Korean Bible to Korean immigrants in Manchuria and the interior of Korea.¹²⁶

The deeper McIntyre became involved in the Korean translation work, the more enthusiastic he became in regarding the translation as his life work.¹²⁷ As a result, he and his Korean assistants finally completed a draft of the whole New Testament in August 1881.¹²⁸

In addition to the Korean Bible translation, as a result of his tireless endeavour to study the Korean language, McIntyre collected 'a vocabulary of over two thousand five hundred words',¹²⁹ on the basis of which he published *The Corean Grammar*

¹²¹ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 49.

¹²² John McIntyre, *MRUP* (1880), p. 279.

¹²³ John McIntyre, *MRUP* (1881), pp. 270-71.

¹²⁴ John McIntyre, *MRUP* (1881), p. 270; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 38-46.

¹²⁵ John McIntyre, *MRUP* (1883), p. 220.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Choi, *John Ross*, p. 113.

¹²⁸ *Quartely Report of NBSS* (hereafter *QRNBSS*), June 1881, pp. 665-67; Choi, *John Ross*, p. 116.

¹²⁹ John McIntyre, *MRUP* (1881), p. 271.

and *The Analysis of Sentences*.¹³⁰ He also wrote an article, ‘Corean Tone Book’ (1880), which argued that the pronunciation of Korean is similar to the ancient pronunciation of Chinese as shown in the ‘ancient Confucian Classics’ (六經).¹³¹ He also produced Korean translations of famous Christian tracts written in Chinese, such as *Evidence of Christianity* (天道溯源), *Peep of Day* (定道戒命), Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (天路歷程), *Summary of Old Testament* (舊約要史)’ and *Wade’s Colloquial Series* for the Mandarin learners.¹³² These tracts were imported to Korea, and used by missionaries in Korea as important aids for Christian mission.¹³³

Ross’s Translation of the Korean Name of God as Hannonim

During his furlough in Britain from April 1879 to 1881, Ross wrote a two-volume history of Northeast Asia (Manchuria and Korea) which used Chinese written sources. In his view, although Manchuria had played a historically and geographically ‘pivotal role’ in influencing ‘the course of both China and Korea history’, there had been no historical book on Northeast Asia in any European language.¹³⁴ The first volume was entitled *History of Corea* (1879) and the second volume *The Manchus; or, the Reigning Dynasty of China* (1880).¹³⁵ The former was the first English-language history of Korea, and the latter earned Ross a doctoral degree from the University of Glasgow.

It will be recalled that Ross had stated in the *History of Corea* that ‘the Coreans have one native name, and one borrowed from the Chinese, for the Supreme Being. The former is *Hannonim*, from *hanul*, heaven; the latter *Shangde* [*Shangti*].’¹³⁶ Hence, it may be suggested that he understood the Korean term, ‘*Hannonim*’, as an indigenous theistic corresponding to *Shangti*. In turn, he adopted ‘*Hannonim*’ (he

¹³⁰ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 50-1.

¹³¹ John McIntyre, ‘Corean Tone Book’, *CRMJ*, vol. 11 (1880), pp. 124-28.

¹³² John McIntyre, *MRUP* (1881), pp. 15, 279.

¹³³ Sung-Deuk Oak, ‘Chinese Protestant Literature and Early Korean Protestantism’, in *Christianity in Korea*, eds., Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2006), pp. 72-93.

¹³⁴ Grayson, ‘The Legacy of John Ross’, p. 169.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Ross, *History of Corea*, p. 355; the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese *Shangti* (上帝) is *Shangje* (상제). However, Ross described it here as *Shangde* (상대) which was north-western provincial dialect of *Shangje*, since Ross’s Korean assistants were most likely from the north-western province of Korea; cf. see p. 134, footnote #31.

changed it to *Haneunim* in 1882 and then *Hananim* in 1883) as the name of God in the Gospel of John and other books of the NT.

Ross explained that ‘the name *Hannonim* [*Hananim*] is so distinctive and so universally used’, and thus he preferred it over the Chinese terms for God – *Shangti* and *Shen*.¹³⁷ This was because he believed that the Korean vernacular term would prevent the Korea mission field from becoming embroiled in the same vexed Term Question as had afflicted the China missionaries, leading to ‘unseemly squabbles which occurred long ago among Chinese missionaries on this subject.’¹³⁸

The Theological Influence of Legge upon Ross In Regard To the Term Question

During his furlough in Britain from 1879 until 1881, Ross came into contact with Legge. First, when the *History of Corea* was published in 1879, Ross sent it to Legge, then Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at Oxford University. Praising it as an ‘excellent work’, Legge in turn cited some parts of Ross’s book in regard to Taoism in his book *The Religions of China*, published in 1880:

In a recent and excellent work, ‘The History of Corea,’ by Rev. John Ross, the author says that ‘Taoism, which divides Chinese attention with Buddhism, is almost unknown in Corea’ (p. 355)¹³⁹; and in the same chapter he quotes from a native treatise on religion that they have ‘the Religion of Reason, whose teaching is summed up in the two words Clean and Empty.’ Mr. Ross thinks that this Tao is meant for Buddhism; but the Taoism of Corea is simply that of the Tao Teh King, while the Taoist religion is happily unknown.¹⁴⁰

Second, when Edwin Palmer’s edition of the Greek text used by the Revised Version of the NT (hereafter RV) was published in Oxford in 1881,¹⁴¹ Ross recorded in his letter to Wright, the Editorial Secretary of the BFBS, that it was ‘kindly sent me by Professor Legge of Oxford.’¹⁴²

Why did Ross send his book *History of Corea* to Legge in 1879, and in turn why did Legge send the Oxford edition to Ross in 1881? Although there is no

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 230.

¹⁴¹ Edwin Palmer, *The Greek Testament with the Readings Adopted by the Revisers of the Authorised Version* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1881); Choi, *John Ross*, p. 184; cf. F. F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, 3rd ed. (Guildford and London: Lutterworth Press, 1979), pp. 135-44.

¹⁴² Ross to Wright, 24 March 1882, 16 & 28 March 1889, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

surviving correspondence between Legge and Ross from 1879 to 1881,¹⁴³ it is reasonable to infer that Ross sent the book to Legge in order to look for Legge's advice on the translation of the name of God in the KNT, and in turn Legge gave Ross advice about the Term Question with the revised version.

As previously seen, one of the main goals of Ross's furlough in Britain was to request the NBSS or the BFBS to publish the draft of several books of the KNT.¹⁴⁴ He was aware that his choice of the Korean name of God could either provoke the Term Question to a new level of rancour as had been the case in China or bring it to a speedy resolution. For this reason, it may be that before his draft was published as part of the Korean Scriptures, he first looked for advice from a veteran missionary who was an expert on the Term Question with full knowledge of Chinese religions (which were similar to Korea religions in Ross's view).¹⁴⁵ Legge was exactly the kind of missionary Ross sought, and thus it is likely that Ross initiated the contact with Legge by sending his book to him. Accordingly, Ross spelled out in the preface of his *History of Corea* that 'Dr. Legge's noble work in his translation of the Chinese Classics provides a more thorough and satisfactory means of judging this [Corean] people.'¹⁴⁶

In turn, as previously noted, Legge then quoted some parts of Ross's book in regard to Taoism in Korea. It may be suggested that, in response to Ross's book, Legge gave Ross the RV with a recommendation to use it as a basis of his Korean Bible translation. In consequence, when Ross resumed the translation of the KNT in Manchuria in August 1881, he recorded that he revised the draft of his Korean

¹⁴³ Legge's various primary sources (papers, sermons, journals, cuttings, family documents and correspondences) are mainly stored in the Special Collections of the SOAS – (1) Legge Family Papers, 1859-1897, 1 box, Requisition: MS 380476 ; (2) James Legge Papers, 1831-c. 1905, 7 boxes, Requisition: CWM/LMS/China/Personal/Boxes 4-10; in addition, CWM/Ultra-Ganges/China-Malaca/Incoming Lettes/Box 3 (1839-1843); CWM/South China/Incoming Letters/Boxes 4-7 (1843-1873). However, there is no direct correspondence between Legge and Ross; cf. Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China; James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 752; Lau Tze-yui, *James Legge (1815-1897) and Chinese Culture: A Missiological Study in Scholarship, Translation and Evangelisation* (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994), p. 184.

¹⁴⁴ Ross to Wright, 24 March 1882, 16 & 28 March 1889, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

¹⁴⁵ Ross argued in the *History of Corea* that as China (Manchuria) and Korea had been contiguous countries which had shared a common socio-political heritage for centuries, the Korean custom and religions became similar to those of China.

¹⁴⁶ Ross, *History of Corea*, p. vi; cf. see p. 102, footnote #44.

translation on the basis of the RV ‘which was kindly sent me by Professor Legge of Oxford.’¹⁴⁷ He further stated that ‘I follow it simpliciter though I confess I had previously greater leanings to the readings of the Sinatic Codex than are manifested in the Revised Edition [RV].’¹⁴⁸ As a result, when he completed the Korean translation of the Gospel of John and Mark in 1882-1883, he left out the story of the adulterous woman in the Gospel of John (8:1-11) and the long ending of the Gospel of Mark (16:9-20) in accordance with the textual revisions of the RV:

I have left out all words, clauses or sentences omitted in the [Oxford] Revised Version and adopted its readings. The Revisers however seem to have shrunk from omitting the story of the woman taken in adultery (8th of John) and the conclusion of Mark’s Gospel. I have left out both. That the conclusion of Mark’s Gospel is an extension of addition to the preceding verses, few students can doubt, and though the story of the woman is not without evidences as to its genuineness there is I think little doubt as to its lack of authenticity... As the Korean is an entirely new Version I had not the same reasons to shrink from keeping out these passages as the Revisers had from putting them out.¹⁴⁹

However, Ross re-inserted the verses in 1883, because the BFBS, the publisher of Ross’s Korean translations, did not allow him to leave out those verses.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, after he completed the translation of the KNT, he stated that the draft was ‘based upon the Revised Version copies of the Greek and English of which Professor Legge kindly forwarded to me’ in 1881.¹⁵¹

Hence, Ross’s application of the textual criticism of the RV to his Korean Bible translation suggests that the theological influence of Legge upon Ross was not inconsiderable. In line with this argument, Norman J. Girardot, a prominent sinologist who has researched James Legge and his contribution to the Term Question, argues in his book, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage* (2002), that John Ross favoured ‘a Leggian emphasis’ in missionary work.¹⁵² Another outstanding sinologist of James Legge, Lauren F. Pfister similarly spells out in his *The Whole Duty of Man; James Legge and the*

¹⁴⁷ Ross to Wright, 24 March 1882, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL

¹⁴⁸ Ibid; emphasis original.

¹⁴⁹ Ross to Wright, 24 Jan. 1883, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL

¹⁵⁰ Ross to Wright, 22 July 1883, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL

¹⁵¹ Ross to Wright, 28 March 1889, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL

¹⁵² Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, pp. 284-85; however, Girardot incorrectly described John Ross as ‘the liberal American missionary’.

Scottish Protestant Encounter with China that Ross followed Legge's accommodation principle.¹⁵³

Therefore, we may surmise that it was most probably Legge who led Ross to affirm the adoption of *Hananim* (*Haneunim* in 1879 and *Haneunim* in 1882) as the name of the God of the Korean Bible, a term that corresponded to the Confucian primitive monotheistic term, *Shangti*.¹⁵⁴

(4) The Completion Phase (September 1881-1887)

Ross returned from Britain to Manchuria on 25 May 1881. However, McIntyre continued his translation work until August 1881, and consequently finished a draft of the entire KNT. Ross then resumed the supervision of the translation work from McIntyre, and recommenced it in September 1881. McIntyre left on his furlough from March 1882 to the spring of 1884.¹⁵⁵ So the completion phase started in September 1881, when Ross resumed the translation work, and continued until 1887, when Ross completed the translation of the entire KNT.

Haneunim (1881-1882)

In early October 1881, Ross published the Korean translation of two booklets under the auspices of the NBSS – the *Catechism* (*Ye-Su-Seong-Gyo-Mun-Dap*: 예수성교문답) and *Dogma* (*Ye-Su-Seong-Gyo-Yo-Ryung*: 예수성교요령) of the UPC. In these booklets, Ross translated the term for God as *Haneunim*. The first four sentences of the Catechism read as follows:

Q : How were all things in the world come to be?

A : God [하느님: *Haneunim*] created them.

Q : Who is God [하느님: *Haneunim*]?

A : He is everlasting, unseen, the beginning and the end, almighty, and his wisdom is unfathomable.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Lauren F. Pfister, *The Whole Duty of Man; James Legge and the Scottish Protestant Encounter with China*, vol. II (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 358.

¹⁵⁴ For the further details on this issue, see (Daniel) Sung Ho Ahn, 'The Influence of the Term Controversy in the Delegates' Version of the Chinese Bible Translation on the early Korean Bible Translation (1843-1911)', *Christianity and History in Korea*, vol. 30 (March 2009), pp. 230-36.

¹⁵⁵ Choi, *John Ross*, p. 117.

¹⁵⁶ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 63-4.

As Ross's knowledge of the Korean language improved, he substantially revised the *Corean Primer* (1877), and republished it as *Korean Speech with Grammar and Vocabulary* in March 1882.¹⁵⁷

In 1882, Ross completed the Gospel of Luke, which was the first portion of the Bible to be published in Korean, and thereafter the Gospel of John.¹⁵⁸ Three thousand copies of each of the Gospels were published by the NBSS and the BFBS. In these books, he translated the term for God as *Haneunim*. The first verse of the Gospel of John was translated as follows:

(1:1) 처음에도가있으되도가하느님[God: *Haneunim*]과함께하니도는곳
하느님[God: *Haneunim*]이라

(1:1) In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God and he was God.¹⁵⁹

Hananim (from 1883 onwards)

On 9 October 1883, Ross completed his revision of the Gospel of Luke.¹⁶⁰ It is important to note that he changed the term for God from *Haneunim* to *Hananim* in this revised edition.¹⁶¹ This was because he attempted to simplify the phonetic value of 'eu' in *Haneunim* (하느님) into 'a' in *Hananim* (하나님).¹⁶² However, the meaning of both *Haneunim* in 1882 and *Hananim* in 1883 was the same, namely the Supreme Lord on High, which was similar with *Shangti* (the Sovereign on High).¹⁶³ In October 1883, he also revised the Gospel of John, first published in 1882, and published 5,000 copies.¹⁶⁴ In March 1884, he revised the Gospel of Mark, and published 5,000 copies.¹⁶⁵ Beside these Gospels, Ross continued to proceed with his translation of other books, using *Hananim*.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁷ Grayson, 'The Legacy of John Ross', p. 168.

¹⁵⁸ The original editions are to be found in the Bible Society archives at CUL.

¹⁵⁹ John Ross, *예수성교 누가복음전서* (the Gospel of Luke), 1882, B8S.604.E82.1 D&M.5984, BFBS, CUL; cf. Mahn-Yol Yi, *기독교수용사연구* (*Studies on the History of Christianity in Korea*) (Seoul: Doorae Publication, 1998), p. 75; I revised the old Korean style in 1882 into the modern Korean style.

¹⁶⁰ John Ross, *The Gospel of Luke & Acts*, 1883, BSS.604.E83.3, BFBS, CUL; Yi, *Studies on the History of Christianity in Korea*, pp. 78-9.

¹⁶¹ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 72-3; see p. 117f.

¹⁶² Sung-Deuk Oak, *Sources of Korean Christianity* (Los Angeles: UCLA), p. 261.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*; cf. see pp. 22-3.

¹⁶⁴ Yi, *Studies on the History of Christianity in Korea*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁶ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 73.

At the end of 1886, Ross finally completed the final draft of the entire KNT, of which 5,000 copies were published by the BFBS in 1887, entitled *Ye-Su-Syung-Gyo-Jeon-Seo* (예수성경전서).¹⁶⁷ In this book, he used *Hananim* as the term for God.

After the first KNT was published, Ross wrote an article, ‘The Gods of Corea’, on 11 July 1887. In this article, he presented a list of twenty-one Korean gods ‘for the purpose of comparing with other gods of other nations’, asserting that the Koreans worshipped *Hananim* over all other gods.¹⁶⁸ It should be noted that he stated in this article that ‘by this term [*Hananim*] – “Lord of Heaven” – they [the Koreans] always translate the Chinese *Shangti*’, thereby asserting that the Chinese *Shangti* was a corresponding theistic term to the Korean *Hananim*.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, he stated that the Chinese *Shen* was ‘always’ translated as ‘*Kuei-Shen*’, denoting demonic powers.¹⁷⁰

He concluded that the choice of *Hananim* as the Korean name for God was providential in order to keep the Korea mission field from a repetition of the vexed Chinese Term Question, provoking division among missionaries:

From all I have ever heard of the name *Hananim* I have felt thankful that the Coreans had a term which should prevent the shade of any difficulty regarding the [term] question which in order times so sadly, and may I add so unseemly, divided into the counsels of good men in China.¹⁷¹

Therefore, it is clear that Ross understood *Hananim* as a theologically consonant term with *Shangti*, whereas he perceived *Shen* (or *Kuei-Shen*) as unsuitable Korean term for God. Accordingly, it may be inferred that he thought that both *Shangti* and *Hananim* commonly reflected a primitive monotheism among the Chinese and Koreans, a notion which was congruent with Christian monotheism.

As previously noted, as Ross’s Korean assistants were involved in the Korean Bible translation, they became colporteurs of the BFBS or the NBSS, who then brought the Scriptures to Koreans in Manchuria and to the interior of Korea. As a result, the term *Hananim* used in the UPC Version was imported to Korea. In

¹⁶⁷ John Ross, *MRUP* (1887), p. 226; Choi, *John Ross*, p. 118.

¹⁶⁸ John Ross, ‘The Gods of Corea’, *CRMJ*, vol. 19 (Feb. 1888), p. 92.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; see pp. 107-08.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*; see p. 117, footnote #138.

addition, as the BFBS distributed the *Shangti* edition of the DV to Korea for the use of high-class Koreans, the Chinese term *Shangti* also was brought to Korea. We will come back to this issue in Chapter 5 in more detail.

Su-Jung Lee's Translation of *Shin* for God in Japan

1. Su-Jung Lee's Translation of *Shin* for God from *Shen* in His Korean Bible Translations in Japan

While the UPC Version, using *Hananim*, was produced by John Ross in Manchuria, another Korean translation, using *Shin* (신: Chinese *Shen* 神), was also produced by Su-Jung Lee in Japan from 1883 to 1885.

Su-Jung Lee (ca. 1842-1887), one of the Korean diplomatic team to Japan, arrived at Yokohama on 29 September 1882 at the age of 40.¹⁷² Lee converted to Christianity with the aid of Tsuda Shen, a Japanese Protestant. He was then baptised by G. W. Knox (PCUSA: 1853-1912) at No-Wol-Jung Church in Tokyo on 29 April 1883.¹⁷³ He then played a key role in forming the first Korean Christian community in Tokyo and inspiring American Protestant churches to send their missionaries to Korea.¹⁷⁴

After his conversion, Lee was requested to translate the Bible into Korean by Henry Loomis (1839-1920), the Japan agent of the ABS.¹⁷⁵ Lee then translated the five books of the Chinese New Testament – the Four Gospels and the Book of Acts – into the Chinese with Korean language suffixes (added to aid the reading of Chinese texts), viz. the *Hyun-To-Han-Han-Shin-Yak-Sung-Gyung* (懸吐漢韓新約聖書: hereafter the *Hyun-To* Version) in 1883, and one thousand copies of each translation were published from 1883 to 1884 by the ABS.¹⁷⁶ On 10 April 1884, Lee completed the

¹⁷² For further study on Su-Jng Lee's translation, see Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 125-76.

¹⁷³ Loomis to Gilman, 11 May 1883 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 303; Loomis described Lee's name as a Japanese pronunciation, viz. 'Rijutei', in his letters.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 125-34.

¹⁷⁵ Loomis to Gilman, 30 May 1883 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 304.

¹⁷⁶ Loomis to Gilman, 21 June 1883 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 304; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 148-49.

translation of the Gospel of Mark as a Chinese-Korean mixed version, of which 6,000 copies were published at Yokohama in February 1885 by the ABS.¹⁷⁷

It should be noted that Lee used the Chinese term *Shen* in the *Hyun-To* Version, and translated the term for God as *Shin* (신: the Korean transliteration of the Chinese term *Shen* 神) in the Gospel of Mark. The first verse of the Gospel of Mark (1:1) may be compared with the UPC Version in 1887 as follows:

(Mark 1:1 in the Lee Version of 1885)

神 [Shin]의 子예수基督의 福音이니 그 처음이라.

[Here begins the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God]

(Mark 1:1 in the UPC Version of 1887)

하나님 [Hananim]의 아달예수키리스토복음의 처음이라.

[Here begins the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God]¹⁷⁸

Lee used three major sources of reference as the basis of his translation work; the first was the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culbertson Version published in Shanghai in 1864 by the ABS;¹⁷⁹ the second was the UPC Versions (the Gospel of Luke and John), which used *Hananim*;¹⁸⁰ and the third was the *Korean-French Dictionary* published in 1880 by the French Catholic missionaries, a dictionary in which the term for God was translated as *Ch'onzhu*.¹⁸¹ Hence, he had three options – *Shen*, *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* respectively –, from which he then chose *Shen* (*Shin*). It may be suggested that his choice of *Shen* reflected the primary basis of his translation, i.e. the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culbertson Version, and was due to the request of the ABS who preferred *Shen* over *Shangti*.¹⁸² In other words, his choice does not seem to be a result of his own theological judgment, since when he translated the Gospel of Mark in 1884 he had only been a Christian for one year.

2. The Import of the Terms *Shen* and *Shin* to Korea

¹⁷⁷ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 153-57.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 145; see p. 69, footnote #44.

¹⁸⁰ Loomis to Gilman, 19 & 30 July, 7 Sep. 1883, 15 Aug. 1884, cited in Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 148.

¹⁸¹ See p. 59, footnote #169.

¹⁸² cf. Sung-Deuk Oak, 초기 한글성경번역에 나타난 주요논쟁연구 (*Studies on the Major Disputes*) (ThM thesis, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Korea, 1993), pp. 27-8.

As Lee's translation of the Gospel of Mark was distributed in Korea by early American missionaries with the auspice of the ABS, the term *Shin* was imported to Korea. To change a ship at Japan for Korea, first two clerical missionaries – Horace G. Underwood (PCUSA) and Henry G. Appenzeller and his wife (American Methodist, North) – arrived at Yokohama on 24 January and February 1885 respectively, and were given the Su Jung Lee Versions. They then brought Lee's translation of the Gospel of Mark to Korea as they arrived in Korea on 5 April 1885.¹⁸³ The Gospel of Mark was widely imported by early American missionaries to Seoul and southern Korea (Pusan and Taegu), and was popularly used until 1887.¹⁸⁴ It is noteworthy that while the UPC Versions were distributed under the auspice of the British Bible societies (the BFBS and the NBSS) in northern Korea and among Koreans in Manchuria, the Su Jug Lee Versions were provided under the auspice of the ABS in the southern Korea.

As Lee's *Hyun-To* Versions (the five books of the NT) were distributed in Korea, the Chinese term *Shen* was also brought into Korea. In particular, the *Hyun-To* Version, based on the Chinese languages, attracted the educated Koreans who favoured Chinese literature.¹⁸⁵ As a result, as the ABS launched their full-scale enterprise in the Korea mission field from 1887 onwards, they distributed a number of the *Hyun-To* versions.¹⁸⁶

Conclusion

In accordance with the research questions raised in the Introduction, we may conclude this chapter as follows.

In the first place, with respect to Ross, this chapter has shown that (1) he held a sympathetic theological attitude towards Confucianism, believing that Confucianism could be an aid to Christian mission on account of the common theological ground between the two religions. On the basis of this theological position, Ross, in referring

¹⁸³ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 154-55.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 168-70.

¹⁸⁵ Appenzeller to Bryant, 4 Dec. 1888, cited in Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 167; see p. 112, footnote #104.

¹⁸⁶ Loomis to Gilman, 6 Sep. 1892 in *DKBS*, vol. I, p. 455; *ABS Annual Report for 1891*, p. 155; cf. Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 168.

to the oldest books of the Confucian Classics (the *Book of History* and the *Book of Odes*), believed that the ancient Chinese had been monotheists who had worshipped the One Supreme God of Confucianism, *Shangti*, consonant with the Christian God. Yet, he argued that the ‘Confucian monotheism’ had degenerated into a form of dualism and thereafter into atheistic materialism. On the other hand, he opposed several contemporary scholars’ application of evolutionary theory to the history of Chinese religion. These scholars held that Chinese religion had originally been polytheistic (or was merely ancestor worship), yet had evolved over time to a higher monotheistic form. We have argued that Ross’s theology was grounded in a degeneration theory of the history of religion. (2) It has been suggested that the degeneration theory led Ross to believe that primitive monotheism originally existed in Korea just as in the case of China. In turn, using the lens of the degeneration theory, he found *Hananim*, the Supreme Lord of Korean indigenous religion, to constitute evidence of a primitive monotheism among the Koreans just as *Shangti* did among the Chinese. Hence, he came to believe that the Chinese *Shangti* was a corresponding theistic term to the Korean *Hananim*. (3) We have also shown that Ross followed the Jesuits’ accommodation method, which enabled him to hold a sympathetic attitude towards Confucianism and tolerate Chinese customs, particularly ancestral worship. We also have inferred that Legge’s theological influence upon Ross, particularly during Ross’s furlough in Britain from 1879 to 1881, led him to affirm the adoption of *Hananim* as the name of God in his first KNT. We have also noted the theological parallels between Legge and Ross; both held a sympathetic theological attitude towards Confucianism by regarding Confucianism as ‘a schoolmaster’ to lead the Chinese to Christianity;¹⁸⁷ both believed that a form of primitive monotheism had existed among ancient Confucianism, viz. ‘Confucian monotheism’, that it had been brought to China by one group of Noah’s descendants, which had subsequently degenerated into an atheistic form;¹⁸⁸ both attacked the

¹⁸⁷ See p. 82, footnote #115 (Legge); p. 100, footnote #28 (Ross)

¹⁸⁸ See p. 76, footnote #85, 86 (Legge); p. 104, footnote #56 (Ross)

evolutionary theory of the history of Chinese religion;¹⁸⁹ and both followed the Jesuits' accommodation strategy.¹⁹⁰

In the second place, we have explored how Su-Jung Lee's translation of *Shin* for God was based on his use of the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culbertson Version, and both Su Jung Lee's Version and the *Shen* edition were imported from Japan to Korea by the American Protestant missionaries under the auspices of the ABS.

In the following chapter, we will explore how these Korean theistic terms – *Hananim*, *Shin* and *Ch'onzhu* –, derived from the Chinese terms, provoked the Korean Term Question in two phases – first between *Hananim* and *Shen* in 1887 and thereafter between *Hananim* and *Chonzhu* in 1894 – in the course of the Korean Bible translations.

¹⁸⁹ See pp. 82-3 (Legge); p. 106 (Ross)

¹⁹⁰ See pp. 91-2 (Legge); pp. 109-11 (Ross)

Chapter 5:
The Continuity of the Term Question between China and Korea:
The Dispute Phase of the Term Question in Korea 1887-1903

Introduction

The previous chapters have shown how the Chinese theistic terms (*Shangti*, *T'ienzhu* and *Shen*) were transmitted to Korea as Korean theistic terms (*Hananim*, *Ch'onzhu* and *Shin* respectively).

Chapter 5 focuses the theological continuity between the Term Question in China and the Term Question in Korea. Specifically, it aims to explore how these Korean terms, derived from these Chinese terms, provoked the Term Question in Korea in the course of the Korea missionaries' translation of the Bible. The dispute phase of the Term Question arose in 1887 between advocates of *Hananim* and *Shin*, paralleling the argument between *Shangti* and *Shen* among nineteenth-century Protestants in China. A second dispute phase of the Term Question emerged in 1894 between advocates of *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* (and additionally between the *Shangti* edition and the *T'ienzhu* edition of the Chinese Bible), paralleling the argument between *Shangti* and *T'ienzhu* among Catholics in seventeenth and eighteenth century China. However, most Korea missionaries consistently preferred the Korean term *Hananim* (and the *Shangti* edition of the Chinese Bible), whilst Horace G. Underwood and a small minority opposed it, and favoured *Ch'onzhu*.

Hence, this chapter will set out three research questions: (1) what theology lay behind most Korea missionaries' preference for the Korean term *Hananim* and the Chinese term *Shangti*? (2) What were the theological factors behind the opposition of Underwood and the small minority of missionaries who agreed with him to the use of *Hananim* and their preference of *Ch'onzhu*? (3) What theological continuities lay behind this similar pattern of the Term Question in China and Korea?

In accordance with these research questions, this chapter will present three main arguments. First, that most Korea missionaries generally held a degeneration theory of the history of Korean religion, which led them to perceive both *Hananim* and *Shangti* as primitive monotheistic terms, consonant with a form of Christian monotheism. Thus, they understood *Shangti* as a corresponding theistic term to *Hananim*. Second, that Underwood regarded *Shangti* and *Hananim* as the names of

heathen gods, just as the seventeenth and eighteenth century Spanish mission orders in China did. Third, that there is a theological similarity between the Chinese and Korean Term Questions, namely, that both involved a terminological controversy between an indigenous theistic term (*Shangti* and *Hananim*) on the one hand and a generic term (*Shen* and Korean *Shin*) or a neologism (*T'ienzhu* and Korean *Ch'onzhu*) on the other hand.

The Korean Term Question can be divided into two phases – the dispute phase and the resolution phase. The dispute phase extended from 1887 till 1903, during which the Term Question reached to its peak. Second, the resolution phase extended from 1904 till 1911, during which the Term Question was resolved, as the term *Hananim* had been affirmed by all concerned as the appropriate name for the God of the Bible. Chapter 5 will deal with the dispute phase, and Chapter 6 will cover the resolution phase.

The First Dispute Phase of the Term Question 1887-1892

The dispute phase can be sub-divided into two periods in accordance with the missionaries' formation of the Bible translation committees; in the first period, the translation work proceeded under the auspices of the PBCK from 1887 to 1892, and in the second phase, it proceeded under that of the PEBCK from 1893 to 1903.

American Protestant missionaries, mainly Presbyterians and Methodists, began to arrive in Korea from 1884 onwards, and became the dominant missionary groups in the Korea mission field.¹ Afterwards, a minority of other missionaries – Canadian Presbyterians, Australian Presbyterians and Anglicans (SPG) commenced their mission in Korea.

These early missionaries, particularly the PCUSA and PCUS, established a mission policy based on the 'Nevius Plan' in 1893,² a policy which led them to target mainly the lower Korean classes and women of all classes who were excluded from educational opportunity and thus could not read the Confucian Classics in the

¹ Dae Young Ryu, *Early American Missionaries in Korea 1884-1910* (Seoul: IKCH, 2001), p. 91-3.

² For further studies on the PCUSA missionaries' application of the Nevius Plan, see Charles A. Clark, *The Nevius Plan for Mission Work* (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1937)

Chinese language but the Korean alphabet, viz. *Han-geul* (한글). For this reason, the missionaries decided to produce all documents in *Han-geul*, and translate the Bible into Korean.³

To understand why they established this mission policy, we need to look at the socio-linguistic structure of nineteenth century Korea which the missionaries encountered. The Koreans did not have their own letters, but adopted the Chinese letters, viz. *Han-Ja* (漢子: 한자) or *Han-Mun* (漢文: 한문), used to write Korean by using adapted Chinese characters until King Se-Jong (r. 1418-50) of the Yi-Choson Dynasty (1392-1910) invented the Korean alphabet, viz. *Han-Guel* (한글) or *Enmoum* (音韻: 음운), in 1446.⁴ However, the Korean upper classes, whose education was based on the Chinese-written Confucian Classics, preferred to use the Chinese letters, whereas they denounced the Korean alphabet as a vulgar language. The middle classes could read both Chinese letters and Korean alphabet, and the lower classes and women of all classes could read only the Korean alphabet, but not understand the Chinese letters.

In order to reach the Korean middle and lower classes and the women,⁵ the missionaries decided to produce all documents in *Han-geul*, and translate the Bible into Korean.⁶ Furthermore, Charles A. Clark (PCUSA), who worked as Professor of Pastoral Theology and Religious Education in Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pyung Yang, spelled out that they emphasised ‘the universal use of the Bible in every part of the work’,⁷ regarding it as ‘one of the most vital’ of the various methods in

³ Man-Yol Yi ed., ‘한국교회의 성장과 그 요인 (The Korean Church Growth and Its Factors)’, in 한국기독교와 민족통일운동 (*The Korean Christianity and the National Unification Movement*), ed., idem (Seoul: IKCH, 2001), p. 207; idem, 한국기독교문화운동사 (*The History of the Korean Christianity Cultural Movement*) 3rd ed. (Seoul: Korean Christianity Publisher, 1992), p. 87; Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea* (ThD thesis, Boston University, 2002), p. 190; cf. see p. 112, footnote #104.

⁴ Dae-Gyu Noh eds., *국어학서설 (Introduction to the Korean linguistics)* (Seoul: Shin-won Press, 1994), pp. 466-77.

⁵ Yi ed., ‘The Korean Church Growth and Its Factors’, p. 207; idem, *The History of the Korean Christianity Cultural Movement*, p. 87; Oak, *The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea*, p. 190.

⁶ Yi, *The History of the Korean Christianity Cultural Movement*, p. 87; Oak, *The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea*, p. 190.

⁷ Charles A. Clark, *The Nevius Plan for Mission Work* (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1937), pp. 19-22; Clark described in its preface that ‘nine years ago, in 1928, the write published the book called, “*The Korean Church and the Nevius Method*”, the same being the dissertation which he had presented for his Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Chicago.’

the Nevius Plan.⁸ It is noteworthy that Clark argued that the emphasis on the Bible ‘has been more the secret of the successes [of the Korea mission] than the other more often mentioned methods of self-support, self-government and self-propagation.’⁹

In consequence, the Korea missionaries formed a Bible translation committee in 1887, namely the Permanent Bible Committee of Korea (hereafter PBCK), in order to produce the Korean Bible. At the same time, they borrowed the UPC Version, using *Hananim*, from Manchuria and the Su-Jung Lee Version, using *Shin*, from Japan on account of the lack of their Korean language. As a result, the Term Question arose between the respect use of advocates of *Hananim* and *Shin* in 1887.

1. The Formation of the PBCK in 1887

When Underwood stayed at the home of Dr. James C. Hepburn¹⁰ (PCUSA) in Japan during his furlough in February 1887, Hepburn proposed to Underwood that the Korea missionaries should organise a Bible committee on the model of the Japanese Bible Translation Committee.¹¹ Under the leadership of Underwood, four American missionaries (two of them were ordained and two of them were medical doctors) – Underwood (PCUSA), Dr. W. J. Heron (PCUSA), Rev. Henry G. Appenzeller (AMN) and Dr. William B. Scranton (AMN) – organised the Bible committee, viz. the PBCK, on 11 April, 1887, a committee which was ‘in charge of the translation, conservation, and publication of the Scripture into Korean’.¹² Underwood was appointed as the Chairman, and Appenzeller as the Secretary.¹³ However, Dr. Heron died in 1890, and was replaced by James S. Gale (PCUSA).¹⁴

⁸ Clark, *The Nevius Plan*, pp. 19-22.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hepburn played the key role in translating the Japanese Bible. He translated the Gospel of Mark and John in 1872, was appointed as the Chair of the JBTC in the same year. The JBTC completed the New Testament in 1880, and the Old Testament in 1888.

¹¹ Underwood to Ellinwood, 8 Mar. 1887 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 412; H. G. Underwood, ‘Bible Translating’, *KMF*, vol. 7, no. 10 (Oct. 1911), p. 296.

¹² W. D. Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, *KMF*, vol. 26, no. 9 (Sept. 1935), p. 187.

¹³ Underwood, ‘Bible Translating’, p. 296; *Minutes of the Bible Committee for the Translation of the Bible into Korean*, 7 Feb. 1887 (New York: ABS Library), cited in Sung-Deuk Oak, *초기 한글성경번역에 나타난 주요논쟁연구 (Studies on the Major Controversies in the early Korean Bible Translation 1877-1939)* (ThM thesis, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Korea, 1993), p. 6.

¹⁴ W. D. Reynolds, ‘The Contribution of the Bible Societies to the Christianization of Korea’, *KMF*, vol. 12, no. 5 (May 1916), p. 127.

The PBCK established two sub-committees, the Translating Committee and the General Revising Committee, ‘the personnel of each being the same four missionaries’.¹⁵ Underwood was also appointed as the Secretary of the Translating Committee.¹⁶

[Table 5-1] The Board of Translators of the PBCK in 1887

Nationality	Name	Year	Denomination	Role
American	Horace G. Underwood	1859-1916	PCUSA	Chairman
American	Dr. W. J. Heron	? -1890	PCUSA	
American	Dr. William B. Scranton	1856-1922	AMN	
American	Henry G. Appenzeller	1858-1902	ANM	Secretary
Canadian	James S. Gale	1863-1937	PCUSA*	

* Gale was sent by the YMCA Toronto, yet transferred to the PCUSA in 1891

However, the PBCK system was unsuccessful, because the number of missionaries who could be devoted to the translation work was absolutely insufficient, and even these four missionaries were too busy to undertake fully the translation work owing to the pressure of their own ministries.¹⁷ As a result, the missionaries of the Translating Committee produced individual versions rather than authorised versions.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the PBCK proceeded with the translation from 1887 to 1892,¹⁹ and by the end of 1892 ‘individual versions of about two-thirds of the New Testament’ were ready for publication.²⁰

It is important to note that Underwood became the most central figure in translating the Korean Bible during this period as the initial advocate of the foundation of the PBCK, the Chairman of the PBCK and the Secretary of the Translating Committee of the PBCK.

2. The Term Question between *Hananim* and *Shin* in 1887

¹⁵ W. D. Reynolds, ‘Translation of the Scriptures into Korean’, *Korea Repository*, vol. 6 (May 1906), p. 172.

¹⁶ *Minutes of the Bible Committee for the Translation of the Bible into Korean*, 7 Feb. 1887.

¹⁷ Mahn-Yol Yi and Sung-Deuk Oak eds., *The History of Korean Bible Society*, vol. I [hereafter Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I] (Seoul: KBS, 1993), p. 206.

¹⁸ *Ibid*; Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, pp. 186-87.

¹⁹ Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, p. 187.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

As noted in the previous chapter, the American Bible Society (hereafter the ABS), under the leadership of Henry Loomis (the Japan agent of the ABS who also covered the Korea mission field), provided the Korea mission field with the Su-Jung Lee version, using the term *Shin*, as well as the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culberson Version through the American missionaries.

However, as Underwood recorded, ‘the most common term for God’ used by the vast majority of missionaries, including Underwood himself,²¹ was *Hanǎnim*, referring to the ‘Honorable Heaven’ or the Lord of Heaven, borrowed from the UPC version.²² As noted in the Introduction of this thesis, while the Korea missionaries borrowed *Hananim* (하나님: a form of a north-western provincial style) from the UPC Versions, they changed it to *Hanǎnim* (하느님)²³ in a form of a standard style used in a capital of Korea, Seoul.²⁴ This was because the term *Hananim*, employed by the UPC Versions, produced by Ross’s Korean assistants who were mainly from north-western Korea, was not widely used among the Koreans in Seoul.²⁵ However, as the meaning of both *Hananim* and *Hanǎnim* was exactly the same, namely the Lord of Heaven, this thesis will adopt the usage *Hananim*.

What theological factor then lay behind the preference of the majority of missionaries for the term *Hananim* instead of *Shin*? Underwood proposed to the PBCK in 1887 that they should terminate the Su-Jung Lee versions on account of its use of the unsuitable term *Shin* (Chinese *Shen*) as the name of God. This was because the term could cause Koreans to regard Jesus as ‘the son of a demon’ since *Shin*, accompanied mostly by the term *Gui* (Chinese *Kwei* 鬼), idiomatically referred to a demonic spirit (*Gui-Shin* 귀신) in the Korean language.²⁶ Consequently, as Appenzeller recorded, the PBCK made a decision to terminate the publication of the Su-Jung Lee Version, but instead use it as a basis for the PBCK’s new translation:

We have long been acquainted with your version [Gospel of Mark] made by Mr. Rijutei [Su-Jung Lee], have shown it to Koreans and had them pass judgment on

²¹ Underwood to Ellinwood, 27 Mar. 1891, 17 May 1891 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 634.

²² Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 340.

²³ ‘ㄴ’ denotes ‘ㄴ + *a-rae-ha* (아래 하)’; see pp. 22-3, footnote #63.

²⁴ See p. 23, footnote #65.

²⁵ See p. 134, footnote #31; Oak, *Studies on the Major Controversies*, p. 26.

²⁶ Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 340.

it. We soon saw that it contained errors of such a nature that we could not use it – it will not do to give the Koreans the impression that Jesus Christ is the son of a demon. We are certainly justifiable in avoiding such errors. No further apology is needed.²⁷

Here we may note several important facts as follows. First, a theological continuity can be observed between the Protestant Term Question in China and the first dispute phase of the Protestant Term Question in Korea; as the former arose between *Shangti* and *Shen*, the latter turned on the dispute between *Hananim*, derived from *Shangti*, and *Shin* from *Shen*. Accordingly, the PBCK's theological rationale in opposing *Shin* was very similar to that of the *Shangti* party, notably Legge of the LMS²⁸ and Ross of the UPC,²⁹ in China. Second, although the PBCK, consisting of the four American missionaries, were politically connected with the ABS, who preferred to use *Shin*, they refused to use it. This was because the Korea missionaries, in their discussion about the Term Question, occasionally read references to the precedent of the Term Question in China, which then gave the Korea missionaries an independent basis of judgment on the Korean Term Question.³⁰

In addition to this Term Question controversy, Underwood also proposed to the PBCK in 1877 that the PBCK should terminate the UPC Version, since it could not be understood in much of the Korean peninsula on account of its strong north-western provincial dialect,³¹ and had 'many mistakes' arising from literal translation from the Chinese characters.³² He instead suggested that the PBCK should proceed with their 'own translation', because revising the UPC Version would require much more labour than translating a new version.³³ In response to his suggestion, the PBCK formed a revision committee of the UPC Version.³⁴

²⁷ Appenzeller to Gilman, 9 Aug. 1887 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 377.

²⁸ See p. 73, footnote #64; p. 77, footnote #91.

²⁹ Ross, 'Corean New Testament', pp. 494-95; see p. 107.

³⁰ Bryant to Wright, 25 April 1891, BSA/E3, BFBS, Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL).

³¹ Ross to Wright, 29 Sept. 1883, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Ross recorded that 'almost all the Koreans with whom I have come in contact belong to the Western province of Pingyang [Pyung-yang]. They pronounce and therefore spell very differently from the capital [Seoul]'; see p. 133, footnote #25.

³² Bryant to Wright, 12 June 1889, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 204.

In conclusion, we may suggest that there is a significant theological continuity between this first dispute phase of the Term Question in Korea and the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China. They were both terminological controversies in a similar pattern between an indigenous theistic term (*Shangti* and *Hananim*) and a generic term (*Shen* and *Shin*).

The Term Question between *Hananim* and *Yohowa* in 1893

This section will be devoted to the short period in 1893 during which the Term Question consisted of a debate between *Hananim* and *Yohowah*.

1. The Reconstitution of the PBCK as the PEBCK in 1893

In 1893, Alexander Kenmure (1856-1910),³⁵ one of three China agents of the BFBS, visited Seoul in order to establish the local station of the BFBS in Korea. During this visit, he proposed that the Korea missionaries should change the structure of the PBCK from the model of the Japanese Bible Translation Committee to that of the United Chinese Bible Translation Committee, because the former model was not suitable to the Korea mission field.³⁶ As a result of his proposal, on 16 May 1893, the Korea missionaries reconstituted the PBCK as the PEBCK,³⁷ which was in ‘charge of the translation, revision, publication and conservation of the text of the Holy Scriptures in the Korean language’ with authority to appoint the Board of Translators.³⁸ W. M. Junkin (PCUS: 1865-1908)³⁹ was appointed as the Chairman, and Dr. William B. Scranton (AMN) as the Secretary.⁴⁰ Scranton recorded that the

³⁵ Kenmure, when he was a student of the Free Church of Scotland College in Glasgow in 1885, applied for the China agent of BFBS. In 1896, he set up the BFBS station in Seoul, and was appointed as the first Korea agent of the BFBS; cf. Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 245.

³⁶ Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, p. 187; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 247.

³⁷ Reynolds, ‘Fifty Years of Bible Translation, Part I’, p. 117.

³⁸ Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Reynolds, ‘Translation of the Scriptures into Korean’, p. 173.

³⁹ Junkin was born in Virginia, and graduated from Washington Univ. and Union Seminary. He arrived in Korea in 1892 as the first PCUS missionary; Seung-Tae Kim & Hye-Jin Park eds., *내한선교사열람(The List of the Korea Missionaries)* (Seoul: IKCH, 1994), p. 327.

⁴⁰ Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

PEBCK made a decision to request the three Bible Societies (BFBS, ABS and NBSS) to make ‘their financial contributions of £100 (= \$500), specifically two-fifth of contributions from the BFBS, two-fifth from the ABS, and one-fifth from the NBSS, to the production of the Korean Bible.’⁴¹

The PEBCK subsequently reconstituted the Translating Committee of the PBCK as the Board of (Official)⁴² Translators, ‘who should also act as revisions and critics of each other’s work as well’,⁴³ and abolished the General Revising Committee of the PBCK.⁴⁴ According to the new constitution of the PEBCK, the Board of Translators was to consist of two members from each Protestant denomination.⁴⁵ The PEBCK thus appointed five translators: Underwood (PCUSA), Gale (PCUSA), Dr. Scranton (AMN), Appenzeller (AMN) and additionally Mark A. Trollope (SPG) as a junior member who did not have a right to vote.⁴⁶ Trollope was appointed by a proposal of Kenmure, because Kenmure wanted to add one British missionary into a Board, that as dominated by the American missionaries.⁴⁷ In the autumn of 1895, Reynolds (PCUS) was added to the Board.⁴⁸

[Table 5-2] The Board of Translators of the PEBCK in 1893

Nationality	Name	Year	Denomination	Position
American	Horace G. Underwood	1859-1916	PCUSA	Chairman
Canadian	James S. Gale	1863-1937	PCUSA	
American	Dr. William B. Scranton	1856-1922	AMN	Secretary
American	Henry G. Appenzeller	1858-1902	AMN	
British (English)	Mark A. Trollope*	1862-1930	SPG	
American	William D. Reynolds**	1867-1951	PCUS	

*Trollope resigned from the Board in 1899.

**Reynolds was added in 1895.

⁴¹ Scranton to Wright, 24 Oct. 1894 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 261.

⁴² While the Korea missionaries interchangeably used either the Board of Official Translators or the Board of Translators, this thesis will use only ‘the Board of Translator’.

⁴³ Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Reynolds, ‘Translation of the Scriptures into Korean’, p. 173; Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

⁴⁶ Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, pp. 186-87.

⁴⁷ Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 247.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The first meeting of the Board was held on 11 October 1893 at Scranton's house, and the Board appointed Underwood as the Chairman and Scranton as the Secretary.⁴⁹ It is important to note that Underwood became the key person in the Korean Bible translation as the Chairman of the Board.

Underwood proposed to the PEBCK that the UPC Version should be terminated, because it was useless in the interior of Korea on account of its strong north-western provincial dialects and many translating errors.⁵⁰ Although Ross and Bryant, the China agents of the BFBS and the publisher of the UPC Version, opposed Underwood's proposal,⁵¹ the PEBCK decided to terminate the UPC Version on 12 May 1893 for several reasons, such as 'a) excess of Chinese; b) provincialism [of northwestern dialect]; c) bad spelling; d) mistakes; e) bad printing'.⁵² It is notable that Underwood played a key role in terminating the UPC Version in 1893 as well as the Su-Jung Lee Version in 1887. Second, we should note that although the PEBCK missionaries terminated the UPC Version, they ironically adopted the use of *Hananim* from that version.

2. The Term Question between *Hananim* and *Yohowa* (*Jehovah*) in 1893

After Underwood came back to Korea in the summer of 1893 after his two years' furlough in America,⁵³ he was urgently requested to produce a Korean hymnbook by Samuel A. Moffett (1864-1939),⁵⁴ the Chair of the PCUSA mission in Korea and the editorial committee of the PCUSA, consisting of Moffett, Gale and Mrs. Gifford.⁵⁵ He then compiled the hymnbook with a total of 106 songs, named *Chan-Yang-Ga*. It should be noted that he omitted *Hananim*, the 'most common term

⁴⁹ Reynolds, 'Translation of the Scriptures into Korean', p. 174.

⁵⁰ Underwood to Ellinwood, 16 April 1886 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 380.

⁵¹ For further study on this issue, see Oak, *Study of the Major Controversies*, pp. 5-17.

⁵² Kenmure to Wright, 27 May 1893, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

⁵³ Bryant to Wright, 12 June 1889, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

⁵⁴ Moffett graduated from McCormick Seminary in 1888, and arrived in Korea in 1890. He founded the PCUSA station in Pyung-yang, where he established the Presbyterian Seminary as the first Principal. He was appointed the Chair of the Korea Presbytery in 1919, and served the Pyung-yang Presbyterian Seminary as the Principal from 1904-1924. Moffett was regarded as one of the most influential missionaries upon the early Korea mission; cf. Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, p. 386.

⁵⁵ Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 340.

for God' used in Korea, and simply transliterated *Jehovah* as 'Yohowah (여호와)' and other biblical terms ('Lord, Father in Heaven, Almighty Lord'),⁵⁶ asserting that 'I cannot conscientiously use this term [*Hananim*].'⁵⁷

What theology lay behind Underwood's opposition to the use of *Hananim*, and his adherence to use *Yohowa*? He explained in 1893 and 1894 that this was because, in his view, the term *Hananim* referred to 'heathen gods'⁵⁸ or 'the chief of the gods in the Heavens or sky', just as the Chinese term *Shangti* did in China.⁵⁹ In an attempt to support her husband, Lillias H. Underwood asserted in 1894 that as *Hananim* (or *Shangti* in China) was 'the special provincial name of the chief heathen deity who was like Zeus or Jupiter or Baal', it could lead the Korean people to 'various errors in belief concerning Him', i.e. a syncretistic form of Christian worship.⁶⁰

After the hymnbook was completed in 1894, Underwood expected that 'all would rejoice with me' in the publication of the hymnbook.⁶¹ Contrary to his expectation, most missionaries 'bitterly and determinedly' opposed the hymnbook,⁶² while only a very few missionaries of the PCUSA, such as Dr. Oliver R. Avison (1860-1956)⁶³ and Samuel F. Moore (1860-1906)⁶⁴, supported it.⁶⁵ This was primarily because Underwood had omitted *Hananim* and substituted *Yohowah* with the result that the Term Question now became a vexed issue in Korea.⁶⁶ As a result, at the annual meeting of the PCUSA in October 1893, they decided to reject

⁵⁶ While Underwood recorded that he used four terms, he primarily used *Yohowa*. Thus this thesis will use only *Yohowah*; L. H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), p. 123.

⁵⁷ Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893, pp. 340-41.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 342.

⁵⁹ Underwood to Ellinwood, 2 Feb. 1894 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 360.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 366-67.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 341.

⁶² Underwood to Ellinwood, 16 Aug. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 372.

⁶³ Avison was born in Canada, graduated from the Medical College of Toronto University in 1890, and arrived in Korea as a medical missionary in 1892. He was appointed as the first President of the Severance Hospital in Seoul in 1904, and served as the Principal of the Severance Medical College in Seoul from 1913-35. His two sons, Gordon and Douglas, also became Korea missionaries; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, pp. 148-49.

⁶⁴ Moore graduated from McCormick Seminary in 1892, and arrived in Korea in the same year; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, pp. 325-26.

⁶⁵ L. H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, p. 123; see p. 145, footnote #111.

⁶⁶ Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. II, pp. 340, 342.

Underwood's hymnbook, stating that it 'was not to be adopted or used by the mission'.⁶⁷

In 1895, Graham Lee and Mrs. Gifford of the PCUSA published a new hymnbook, named *Chan-Song-Shee*, with a total of 54 songs, which used *Hananim* as the name for God.⁶⁸ The Council of the PCUSA Mission in Korea in 1902 decided to use the *Chan-Song-Shee* as an official hymnbook.⁶⁹ As a result, Underwood's hymnbook, the *Chan-Yang-Ga*, employing the term *Yohowah*, rapidly fell into disuse in the Korea mission field with the result that this phase of the Term Question, between *Hananim* and *Yohowah* was resolved within a short period (1893-94).⁷⁰

The Second Dispute Phase of the Term Question 1893-1903

This section will be devoted to the second dispute phase of the Term Question (1893-1903), and will argue for a theological continuity between the Term Question in nineteenth-century Korea (*Hananim* vs. *Ch'onzhu*) and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic Term Question in China (*Shangti* vs. *T'ienzhu*).

1. The Term Question between *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu* from 1894 to 1903

The Board of Translators' Decision to Use Ch'onzhu in 1894

Proceeding with the Korean Bible translation, the Board of Translators faced a choice between *Hananim* and *Ch'onzhu*. The Board reached a decision in the spring of 1894 to vote to choose one of the two terms. Scranton (AMN), the Secretary of the

⁶⁷ L. H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, pp. 123-24; Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893, 2 Nov. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. II, pp. 340-5, 345-52.

⁶⁸ Gyung-Bae Min, *한국교회 찬송가사 (The History of Korean Hymnbook)* (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., 1997), p. 38.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Besides *Yohowah*, Underwood additionally used *Cham-Shin* (the True-God: Chinese *Jin-Shen* 眞神) in his Korean Christian literature in 1893 and 1894. The term *Jin-Shen* was advocated by the American missionaries during the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China. This term was a compounded word, consisting of *shen* and an affix, *Jin* (true). However, this term was rarely used by other missionaries, it also disappeared soon; cf. Mahn-Yol Yi, Sung-Deuk Oak and Dae-Young Ryu eds., *The History of Korean Bible Society*, vol. II [hereafter Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II] (Seoul: KBS, 1994), pp. 106-08.

Board, reported in a letter to Wright, the Editorial Secretary of the BFBS, that the five members on the Board had decided to choose *Ch'onzhu* by a majority of 'four to one', and argued that *Ch'onzhu* was 'the most suitable term' for God and the 'wisest choice'.⁷¹ He was assured that 'there is almost no term question remaining in Korea' because the Korea missionaries 'have reached union in the whole field' by the choice of *Ch'onzhu*.⁷² He further spelled out that the Korea missionaries generally favoured the *T'ienzhu* (天主: Korean *Ch'onzhu*) edition of the Chinese Bible on the grounds that it was a counterpart of the Korean term *Chonzhu*.⁷³

What factors then led Scranton to prefer *Ch'onzhu* over *Hananim*? First, Scranton understood that '*Hananim* is merely the translation into vernacular of the Chinese term *Ch'onzhu*' on the grounds that the meaning of both terms is the Lord of Heaven (however, the meaning of *Hananim* is the Lord of Heaven or the Great One).⁷⁴

Second, Scranton informed that *Ch'onzhu* was the most suitable term for the purpose of achieving 'union' between Protestant missions and the SPG mission in Korea who favoured *Ch'onzhu*.⁷⁵ In order to understand this argument, we need to explore the theology of the SPG mission in Korea to the Term Question. In response to the request of Bishop Charles J. Corfe (1843-1921),⁷⁶ Mark N. Trollope⁷⁷, the only British missionary on the Board, began in 1891 to translate into Korean Anglican tract, viz. the *Cho-Man-Min-Gwang* (*the Light Shed on People*: 照萬民光: published in 1894), for the use of their own mission.⁷⁸ In this translation, the SPG mission used *Ch'onzhu* (Chinese *T'ienzhu*) in accordance with the practice of 'Bishop Scott' and the

⁷¹ Scranton to Wright, 24 Oct. 1894 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 263.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*; see p. 59, footnote #168.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; see p. 148, footnote #127.

⁷⁵ Scranton to Wright, 24 Oct. 1894 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 263.

⁷⁶ Corfe graduated from Oxford University, was consecrated as the Bishop of Korea in 1889, and arrived in Korea on 29 September 1890. He focused on medical mission works by establishing hospitals. He resigned as the Bishop of Korea in 1904, and worked in China; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, p. 217.

⁷⁷ Trollope graduated from Oxford University, was ordained as a priest in 1888, and arrived in Korea on 19 March 1891. He came back to Korea in 1911 as the third Bishop of Korea. He was appointed as the Chair of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1917, and contributed to Korean studies; *Ibid.*, p. 501.

⁷⁸ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, p. 111.

SPG mission in northern China who already used its Chinese root, *T'ienzhu*.⁷⁹ The SPG mission in both China and Korea adopted *T'ienzhu* (or *Ch'onzhu*) following the practice of Roman Catholic missions in both China and Korea, who had used these terms since the bull *Ex quo singulari* of 1742.⁸⁰ This was because the 'Anglo-Catholic' SPG mission, who sought to align the Anglican Church with ancient Catholic practice under the influence of the Oxford (or Tractarian) Movement, was likely to favour Roman Catholics' translation usage.⁸¹ Hence, it is not surprising that Bishop Corfe adopted *Ch'onzhu*, and had 'nothing to do with any other terms'.⁸² For this reason, Scranton believed that the union between the Protestant and SPG missions in Korea would be promoted by adopting the term *Ch'onzhu*.

Third, according to Underwood, whereas the Presbyterian missionaries were not prepared to 'compromise or yield an inch' and insisted on the use of *Hananim*, the 'whole Methodist mission', including Scranton, were 'willing to give up' *Hananim* and take *Ch'onzhu*.⁸³ However, it is not necessarily true that 'the whole Methodist mission' gave up using *Hananim* as Underwood alleged, because several Methodist missionaries, notably Jones and Hulbert, insisted on using *Hananim* as the term for God. We will come back to this issue later on.

Lastly, we should note that Scranton transferred his membership from the American Methodist Episcopal Church (North) to the Protestant Episcopal Church later on, and thus it is no wonder that he particularly favoured the SPG's usage of *Ch'onzhu*.⁸⁴

The Korea Missionaries' Advocacy of the Use of the Korean Term Hananim and the Chinese Term Shangti

⁷⁹ Dyer to Wright, 3 Oct. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; cf. Mark N. Trollope's *Original Correspondences 1891-1929; the SPG and East Asia* (the Copies of the SPG Mission's Letters Received and Sent), 1872-1931.

⁸⁰ See p. 52, footnote #133.

⁸¹ Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1994); cf. Deuk-Joo Lee, 한국토착교회형성사연구 (*The Study on the History of the Korean Indigenous Church*) (Seoul: IKCH, 2000), pp. 66-9.

⁸² Dyer to Wright, 6 July 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; cf. Oak, *Study of the Major Controversies*, p. 33.

⁸³ Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 May 1894 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 369.

⁸⁴ Oak, *Study of the Major Controversies*, p. 37.

However, contrary to Scranton's view, the Board's decision provoked 'strong objections to the term *Ch'onzhu*' from most Protestant missionaries with the result that the Term Question now acquired highly controversial status. This was because most Protestant missionaries preferred the Korean term *Hananim* over *Ch'onzhu*, and the Chinese term *Shangti* over *T'ienzhu*.⁸⁵ In October 1894, the Protestant missionaries, under the leadership of Moffett (PCUSA), then appealed to the Board to use *Hananim* in the Korean Bible and the *Shangti* edition of the Chinese Bible by submitting a letter signed by 'twenty-five missionaries' who in fact represented the whole community of Protestant missionaries in Korea at that time.⁸⁶ Another reason for these Protestant missionaries' opposition to the term *Ch'onzhu*, used already by Catholics in Korea, was that they wanted to distinguish themselves from Catholics in Korea.⁸⁷ Accordingly, F. S. Miller, the Korea agent of the BFBS in succession to Kenmure and a PEBCK member, complained to Wright that what Scranton recorded on 24 October 1894 was neither the whole opinion of the Protestant missionaries nor that of the PEBCK, but was 'purely a personal view' of Scranton.⁸⁸ However, the Board refused to change its decision, but suggested that the 'twenty-five missionaries' should 'participate in a paper discussion' of this Term Question.⁸⁹

In reaction to the refusal of the Board, the missionaries then re-submitted a second letter with the 'thirty-two' signatures of the Protestant missionaries to the PEBCK in order to request the PEBCK to print a *Hananim* edition of the Korean Bible in addition to the *Ch'onzhu* edition of the Korean Bible, if the Board would not reverse its vote.⁹⁰ Accepting the petition of the 'thirty-two missionaries', i.e. the *Hananim* party, the PEBCK reached a compromise in which they had decided to print 1500 copies of the four Gospels and Acts, of which 500 copies used the term *Ch'onzhu* and 1000 copies with *Hananim*.⁹¹

As far as the Chinese Bible was concerned, as Daniel L. Gifford recorded, 'most if not all missionaries who prefer *Hananim* in the *Enmoum* [Korean Alphabet]

⁸⁵ Gifford to Turley, 10 Dec. 1894 in Dyer to Wright, 21 Dec. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

⁸⁶ Ibid; Oak, *Study of the Major Controversies*, p. 33.

⁸⁷ Turley to Paul, 26 Nov. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, p.111.

⁸⁸ Miller to Wright, 5 May 1895, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; see p. 140, footnote #71.

⁸⁹ Gifford to Turley, 10 Dec. 1894, cited in Dyer to Wright, 21 Dec. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

⁹⁰ Ibid; emphasis mine.

⁹¹ Scranton to Wright, 24 Oct. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

use the *Sang Chei* [*Shangti*] version in the Chinese.’⁹² As previously noted, although the Korea missionaries mainly targeted the common Korean classes and women based on the Nevius method, the missionaries became aware from the beginning of their missions that it was essential to meet the demands for the Chinese Bible among the upper and middle classes.⁹³ Specifically, Underwood reported that missionaries should meet ‘all the many increased demands’ for the ‘Chinese copies of the Scriptures, some Chinese commentaries and some Chinese tracts’.⁹⁴ Furthermore, it was reported that this Chinese Christian literature played an important role in leading the Korean Confucians to Christianity.⁹⁵ For instance, Underwood recorded that Chun-Gyung Noh, his Korean teacher, converted to Christianity under the influence of the *Shangti* edition of the Delegates’ Version (hereafter DV) and Chinese-written Christian literature, and was baptised by Underwood on 18 July 1886.⁹⁶

In an attempt to meet these demands, the BFBS, in cooperation with the Korea missionaries, distributed the *Shangti* editions of the Chinese Versions (the DV and the Gospels and a small portion of the NT of the Griffith John Version, both of which were translated by the LMS missionaries) in preference to the other two options – the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman and Culbertson Version⁹⁷ and the *T’ienzhu* edition⁹⁸ of the Peking Version.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the Bible committees, including Underwood and Gale, also used the *Shangti* edition of the DV as a basis of their Korean Bible translation.¹⁰⁰

⁹² Gifford to Turley, 10 Dec. 1894 in Dyer letter to Wright, 21 Dec. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; emphasis mine.

⁹³ *ABS Annual Report for 1890, 1894*, pp. 154, 161; *BFBS Annual Report for 1892*, pp. 249-50; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 113, 221-2.

⁹⁴ Underwood to Ellinwood, July 9th 1886 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 384.

⁹⁵ *ABS Annual Report for 1890, 1894*, pp. 154, 161; *BFBS Annual Report for 1892*, pp. 249-50; Underwood to Ellinwood, 9 July 1886 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 382; Yi eds., *HKBS*, pp. 227-30.

⁹⁶ Underwood to Ellinwood, 9 July 1886 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 381; H. G. Appenzeller Diary, 24 July 1886, cited in IKCHS, *A History of Korean Church*, vol. I, p. 242.

⁹⁷ See p. 69, footnote #44.

⁹⁸ See pp. 88-9.

⁹⁹ Bryant to Wright, 15 Aug. 1891, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Gifford to Loomis, 10 Nov. 1892 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 457; *BFBS Annual Report for 1892*, pp. 249-50; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 113, 221.

¹⁰⁰ Underwood to Ellinwood, 6 July 1885, 8 Mar. 1887, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. II, pp. 340, 412; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 209-10, 234; Oak, *Study of the Major Controversies*, p. 29; Underwood and Gale used the term *Shang-Dae* (상대), a form of a Korean transliteration of the Chinese term *Shangti* 上帝. But this term had disappeared soon.

Besides, the Bible committees and the BFBS agreed to produce a Chinese-Korean Diglot Version (or Parallel Bible) that used both *Shangti* and *Hananim* side by side for the respective benefit of both the upper and the middle classes.¹⁰¹ This translation task was assigned to M. C. Fenwick (1863-1935)¹⁰² of the Canadian Baptist Mission and his Korean assistant Gyung-Jo Seo, who then produced the Gospel of John in February 1890. Fenwick used the UPC Version (for Korean) and the *Shangti* edition of the DV (for Chinese) as the basis of this translation,¹⁰³ and the first verse of this version read as follows:

(Chinese) 元始道有道與上帝 [*Shangti*] 共在 道即上帝 [*Shangti*]
 (Korean) 처음에 도가잇스되 도가하나님 [*Hananim*] 과함께 하니 도는곳하나님이라.
 [English: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God].¹⁰⁴

Underwood's Adherence to the Use of Ch'onzhu, 1894-1904

Despite that fact that both Korean *Ch'onzhu* (and Chinese *T'ienzhu*) were rarely used by most Protestant missionaries,¹⁰⁵ Underwood used it in a number of Christian publications from 1894 to 1904 – for instance, the *Ye-Su-Gyo-Mun-Dap* (the Catechism) in 1894 and his Korean translation of the *Gu-Se-Gyo-Mun-Dap* (the Christianity Catechism), produced by Mrs. H. S. Nevius in China in 1895.¹⁰⁶ In this regard, Kenmure, the Korea agent of the BFBS, recorded that Underwood was ‘the only missionary apart from the Roman Catholics and the English Church Mission’ who used *Ch'onzhu* with the result that he caused the ‘great annoyance of his colleagues’ who mostly used *Hananim*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Bryant to Wright, 12 June 1890, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; *Annual Report for 1890*, Appendix B, p. 440, cited in Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, pp. 227-30.

¹⁰² Fenwick was born in Toronto, Canada. He arrived in 1889, and came to study at Gordon College in Boston, USA from 1893 to 1896. He came back to Korea in 1896. He found the Korea Christian Mission, and independently translated the Korean Bible and hymnbook; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, p. 249.

¹⁰³ Yi eds., *HKBS*, pp. 227-30.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁰⁵ Turley to Paul, 26 Nov. 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL.

¹⁰⁶ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 106-09, 113; he additionally used the term *Shangzhu* (the Lord on High 上主), consisting of *Shang* (上: high or upper) and *Zhu* (主: lord or master), in the *Christian Newspaper* from 1897 to April 1901. This term seemed to be a compounded word of *Shang*, from *Shangti*, and *Zhu*, from *Ch'onzhu*.

¹⁰⁷ Kenmure to Ritson, 21 June 1901, 19 Feb. 1903, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL.

When Robert E. Speer (1867-1947), the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the PCUSA, made his visit to the Korea mission field from 2 August 1896 to 2 September 1896,¹⁰⁸ he wrote his field report of 1897 in a pamphlet of forty-seven pages, which included comment on the Term Question as follows:

The vast majority of the missionaries accept one term [*Hananim*]. One, two, or three, I believe, hold to another, but they are strong and conscientious. Such a disagreement now prepares for greater disagreement further on.¹⁰⁹

In this report, the ‘one’ clearly referred to Underwood. Who then were the ‘two or three’? Lillias, Underwood’s wife, recorded that ‘Mr. Moore, Dr. Avison (in part) and Mr. Underwood are one side [*Chonzhu*], all the others on the other [*Hananim*]’.¹¹⁰ It is notable that when Underwood used *Yohowah* in the Korean hymnbook of 1893, Moore and Avison also took Underwood’s side, whereas most missionaries strongly opposed the term.¹¹¹

Speer recorded that he ‘marvelled’ that the Korea missionaries were ‘most unfortunately’ sowing ‘such baleful seed’ of ‘the disadvantages of quarrel and conflict’ over the Term Question into the soil of Korea mission field, when they could have profited from the prior experience of the Term Question in China.¹¹² Hence, he asserted that Underwood and the other two missionaries ‘ought to agree’ on the use of one unified term, viz. *Hananim*.

Hence, Speer’s report supplies further evidence that Underwood had become the central figure in the Term Question in Korea. Furthermore, he was the most influential figure in translating the Bible into Korean in his capacity not only as the secretary of the Board of Translators but also as the ‘best acquainted with the Korean language’ who was ‘acknowledged by the other missionaries and emphasised by the

¹⁰⁸ Robert E. Speer, *Report on the Mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions*, 1897, p. 3 in *Christianity and History in Korea*, vol. 15 (Aug. 2001), pp. 218-19; Speer left Princeton Theological Seminary in his second year of 1891 to accept a call from Frank F. Ellinwood as the secretary of the BFM-PCUSA, and served the board until his retirement in 1937. Speer then made the world trip beginning in 1896. During this trip, he made his visitation to Korea during one month in 1897; he arrived in Pusan together with W. Henry Grant on 2 August, visited Pyung-yang and Seoul, and left Korea for China after on 2 September; cf. Gerald H. Anderson ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), p. 633.

¹⁰⁹ Speer, *Report on the Mission in Korea*, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ Underwood to Ellinwood, 22 April 1896 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 394.

¹¹¹ See p. 138, footnote #65.

¹¹² Speer, *Report on the Mission in Korea*, p. 3.

natives'¹¹³ and the 'best Korean scholars'.¹¹⁴ In November 1889, he published a Korean language study book, *An Introduction to the Korean Spoken Language*, and a Korean-English and English-Korean dictionary, entitled *A Concise Dictionary of the Korean language*, in Japan.¹¹⁵

Therefore, we may observe that the Term Question mainly revolved around the rivalry between the two Korean terms (*Hananim* vs. *Ch'onzhu*) and the two Chinese terms (*Shangti* vs. *T'ienzhu*) during this second dispute phase. However, as previously noted, the majority of Korea missionaries firmly favoured the Korean *Hananim* and the Chinese *Shangti*. As a result, the PEBCK completed a tentative version of the *Hananim* edition of the entire Korean New Testament, published in 1900 with a ceremonial service in Seoul.¹¹⁶ The BFBS, in accordance with the request of the vast majority of the Protestant missionaries, continued to distribute neither the *T'ienzhu* edition nor the *Shen* edition, but the *Shangti* editions of the Chinese Bible.¹¹⁷

2. The Theological Factors behind the Term Question

What theology underlies this second dispute phase of the Term Question? More specifically, what theological factors lay behind the majority of Korea missionaries' preference of the Korean term *Hananim* and the Chinese *Shangti*, and Underwood's adherence to the use of *Ch'onzhu*?

(1) The Theological Factors behind the Korea Missionaries' Preference for the Korean Term *Hananim*

The Korean Indigenous Understanding of Hananim as the Supreme Being

We first need to discuss the Korean indigenous understanding of *Hananim* and the etymological origin of this term *Hananim*.

¹¹³ Bryant to Wright, 22 June 1888, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL.

¹¹⁴ Bryant to Wright, 4 Dec. 1888, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL.

¹¹⁵ Underwood to Ellinwood, 10 July 1889 in *HGUP*, vol. II, pp. 551-52; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. I, p. 194.

¹¹⁶ H. G. Appenzeller's diary, Oct. 3 1900, cited in Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 52-4; notably, Underwood and Scranton also attended this service.

¹¹⁷ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 113, 221-2.

The Koreans originally worshipped *Hananim* as the Supreme Being through shamanistic rituals in the pre-historic period. It is commonly agreed by scholars that the primordial Korean ethnic group, who first settled in the Korea peninsula around two hundred millennia (viz. the Palaeolithic Age), originated in the Palaeo-Asiatic people (widely Ural-Altaiics and specifically Mongolian or Turkish people) in Eastern Siberia, Central Asia and Manchuria. This is because the material and religious culture of the Korean people seem to be similar to those of the Palaeo-Asiatic people.¹¹⁸ Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the primal belief of these Koreans was shamanism¹¹⁹, which was broadly prevalent amongst the Palaeo-Asiatic people.¹²⁰ In particular, one of the primary aspects of Korean shamanism was the worship of *heaven* or *sky* (or *sun* in some cases).¹²¹ More specifically, they revered *Haneull-nim* (하늘님) – consisting of *Haneull* (*heaven*) and an honorific suffix *nim* (*lord* or *master*), thereby referring to the Lord of Heaven – as a Supreme Being, as Grayson argues:

The shamanistic influence may be seen in the indigenous belief in a supreme [being], heavenly spirit called *Hanullim* in Korean or *Ch'on-sin* in Sino-Korean, and in the body of heavenly spirits which carry out his will. Shamanistic also is the belief in the ability of certain unusual persons to communicate with the realm of spirits, in particular with *Hanullim*, the Lord of Heaven.¹²²

In accord with Grayson, in his *A History of Religions in Korea*, Duk-Hwang Kim also argues that the Korean people of ‘the primitive age’ performed a variety of shamanistic services to worship the *sun* in heaven, ‘the source of the light as the

¹¹⁸ Carter J. Eckert, eds., *Korea Old and New, A History* (Seoul: Korea Institute, Harvard U. P., 1990), pp. 1-8; Chi-hun Cho, *Introduction to Korean Cultural History* (Seoul: Tamgu-dang, 1989), pp. 22-30, cited Sung-wook Hong, *Naming God in Korea* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), pp. 45-6; James H. Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 13-4; Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity* (Seoul: Holym Corporation, 1967), pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁹ Dong-Sik Ryu, *한국무교의 역사와 구조 (The History and System of Korean Shamanism)* (Seoul: Yon-Sei U. P., 1997), p. 50; Yeon-Tak Kim, *한국종교와 교회성장 (The Korean Religions and Protestant Church Growth in Korea)* (Anyang, Korea: Korea Presbyterian Seminary Press, 1998), p. 40; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 45; Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 5-6; Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, pp. 13, 19; cf. Eckert, eds. *Korea Old and New, A History*, p. 5.

¹²⁰ Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), pp. 58-64; Duk-Hwang Kim, *A History of Religions in Korea* (Seoul: Daeji Moonhwa-sa, 1988), pp. 20-1; James H. Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), pp. 215-34.

¹²¹ Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 50; Kim, *A History of Religions in Korea*, p. 2; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, pp. 45-6.

¹²² Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, p. 19.

Great Master’, referring to *Haneull-nim* or ‘*Hananim* (Might God in Heaven)’.¹²³ This Supreme Being is seated atop the hierarchical structure of many gods and spirits as the highest being.¹²⁴

Besides the term *Haneull-nim*, this Supreme Being was associated with a variety of reverent names, such as *Haneul* (하늘: the Heaven), *Han-eal-nim* (한얼님: Our Great God), *Han-ul-nim* (한울님: Our Great Spirit), *Haneunim* (하느님: the Lord of Heaven), *Hananim* (하나님), *Chun* (천: Heaven: Chinese *T’ien*), *Chun-shin* (천신: the Heavenly Spirit), *Shin-ryung* (신령: Gods and Spirits) and *Ok-hwang-shang-je* (옥황상제: the Supreme Emperor) and so on.¹²⁵ Of these names, *Haneull-nim* (or in some cases *Haneul* only) was used most frequently from the pre-historic period to early modern times, and the two compounded terms, *Haneunim* (하느님) and *Hananim* (하나님), derived etymologically from *Hanll-nim*, have been most commonly used among Korean Protestants and Catholics in the modern period.¹²⁶ As both two compounded terms, *Haneunim* and *Hananim*, have been etymologically derived from *Hanll-nim*, they commonly refer to the Lord of Heaven. On the other hand, the meaning of *Hananim* has become divergent from *Haneull-nim*. The first term *Haneunim* consists of *haneul* (하늘: heaven) and an honorific suffix *nim* (님: lord, master or ruler), thereby denoting the Lord of Heaven. The second term *Hananim* (하나님) consists of *hana* (하나), referring to *haneul* (하늘: heaven) or *one* (*hana*: 하나) or *great* (*han*: 한), and an honorific suffix *nim* (님), thus signifying ‘the Lord of Heaven’ or ‘the Great One’.¹²⁷

However, as Buddhism (and partially Taoism) had been imported from China to Korea during the period of Buddhism dominance (57 BC - 1392 AD),¹²⁸ the

¹²³ Kim, *A History of Religions in Korea*, pp. 19-21.

¹²⁴ Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009), p. 13; Nam Hyuk Jang, *Shamanism in Korean Christianity* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2004), p. 28.

¹²⁵ See p. 12, footnote #39; Bong Rin Ro, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans’, in *God through the Looking Glass: Glimpses from the Arts*, eds., William David and Aída Besançon Spencer (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), pp. 219-24; Kim, *A History of Religions in Korea*, p. 50.

¹²⁶ Ro, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God’, p. 222; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 39.

¹²⁷ For further studies on this etymological analysis of *Hananim*, see Nam-Sun Choi, ‘Gye-Go-Dap-Jon’, *Spring and Autumn*, vol. 14 (June, 1918); Gee-Bak Yi, ‘The Issues of the Dan-Gun Myth’, *The Dan-Gun Myth Papers*, 1988, p. 67; Gwan-Uh Chon, ‘Dan-Gun’, *The Biographical History of Korea* (1982), p. 159; Jong-Ik Yi, ‘The Studies on Han’, *The Papers of Eastern Thoughts* (1975), pp. 424-25; See-In Park, *The Altaic Myths* (Seoul: Samjungdan, 1980), p. 102, cited in Ho-Ik Heoh, *단군신화와 기독교* (*Dan-Gun Myth and Christianity*) (Seoul: Christian Literature, 2003), pp. 74-9.

¹²⁸ From the Three Kingdoms (from fourth to seventh century), the United Kingdom of *Shilla* (660-936) and *Parhae* (699-926) and to the *Koryo* Dynasty (936-1392)

Koreans had become polytheistic and pantheistic who worshipped not only the Supreme Being but also various gods, beings and ancestral spirits.¹²⁹ Afterwards, as Neo-Confucianism (Korean *Chu-ja-hak* or *Sung-li-hak*) and its Chinese-written sacred texts had been also brought from China to Korea during the Yi-Choson Dynasty (1392-1910 AD), known as ‘the Golden Age of Confucianism’, the Korean monotheistic belief in the Supreme Being had been modified as a merely formal belief in an impersonal *Heaven* (Korean *Ch'on*: Chinese *T'ien*) or moral value, a framework which became predominant among the high classes of Korean literati who were the dominant power in the governmental and educational stratum.¹³⁰ However, the uneducated normal and lower Korea people (viz. *pyung-min* and *shang-nom*), who were excluded from senior positions in the government and educational opportunity based on the Chinese-written Confucian Classics, maintained their monotheistic belief in the Supreme Being through their shamanistic ritual practices.¹³¹

In summary, the Korean indigenous understanding of *Hananim* as the Supreme Being, and the etymological origin of *Hananim* show us that *Hananim*, the Great One, is congruent with the Christian God. More specifically, the Korean monotheistic understanding of *Hananim* had been preserved among them since the primal period, a notion which underlay the foreign religions in a form of substratum. This notion was preserved in oral forms (myth or folklore), including the Dan-Gun myth, and was not recorded in written forms until the thirteenth century.¹³² This distinctive notion, as we will see, led the Korea missionaries to adopt *Hananim* as the name of the biblical God.

¹²⁹ Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, pp. 82, 118.; Grayson, *Korea-Religious History*, p. 216; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, pp. 48-9, 73.

¹³⁰ Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 51.

¹³¹ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 89-91.

¹³² Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 50; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 53; cf. James H. Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001), pp. 26-7, 30; for instance, the famous six foundation mythological stories of the Korean people – Dan-Gun (the founder of ancient Choson), Chu-mong (the founder of Kokuryo), Pak Hukkuse (the founder of Shilla), Kim Suro (the progenitor of the Kimhae Kim clan), and Suk Tarae (the progenitor of Kyungju Kim clan) – were recorded in *Samguk Yusa* (三國遺事: Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), written and compiled by the learned Buddhist monk Iryon (1206-89) in 1281-83 A.D.

The Korea Missionaries Understanding of Hananim as Evidence for Primitive Monotheism

This section will consider what theological factors lay behind most Protestant missionaries' preference for the Korean term *Hananim* and the Chinese term *Shangti*. To do this, we will look at several influential Korea missionaries' articles which exhibit positive appreciation of the term *Hananim* as supplying evidence for the existence of a primitive monotheism in Korea.

In his *Gu-Se-Rhon* (1895: *Discourse on Salvation*), written together with a Korean scholar, Myung-Oh Choi, Moffett (PCUSA), the Chair of the PEBCK and the PCUSA mission in Korea,¹³³ spelled out that *Hananim* is the 'Only One, not two' and the 'Lord of all in heaven and earth', excluding any other gods such as 'Hades, Buddha and devil.'¹³⁴

Appenzeller (AMN), one of the Board of the Translators of the PEBCK, similarly argued in his translation of the *Myo-Chuk-Mun-Dap* (廟祝問答: *Dialogue with a Temple-Keeper*) in 1893-1898 that *Hananim* is the 'Only Supreme One' who excluded the recognition of other gods.¹³⁵

In his 'Studies in Korean; Korean Etymology' (1892), George H. Jones (AMN: 1867-1919),¹³⁶ a member of the Board of Translators of the PBECK (1893-1903) and the BCK (1904-1911) and the Editor of the *Korea Repository*, argued that the ancient Chinese compounded theological term 天 (*T'ien*: heaven) consisted of the upper element, 一 (one), and the lower element, 大 (great), thereby referring to the 'one or

¹³³ See p. 137, footnote #54.

¹³⁴ Samuel Moffett & Myng-Oh Choi, *Gu-Se-Rhon* (Seoul: Sam-Mun Press, 1895), p. 5, cited in Oak, *Study of the Controversies*, p. 34.

¹³⁵ H. G. Appenzeller trans., *The Myo-Chuk-Mun-Dap*, 2nd ed. (Seoul: Methodist Press, 1895), p. 13, cited in Oak, *Study of the Controversies*, p. 34; this tract was originally produced by Ferdinand Genähr of the Rhenish Missionary Society in China in 1856. It was divided into two parts – 'conversations on the folly of idolatry' of native Chinese religions and "an explanation of Christian doctrine"; Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), p. 162; cf. Sung-Deuk Oak, 'Chinese Protestant Literature and Early Korean Protestantism', in *Christianity in Korea*, eds. Robert E. Buswell Jr. & Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), pp. 79-80.

¹³⁶ Jones graduated from the American University in 1887, and arrived in Korea in September 1887. He was regarded as a formidable Korea scholar; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, pp. 325-26.

only greatness'.¹³⁷ Likewise, he argued that the ancient Korean compounded word *Hananim* was derived from '*hanal* – one', referring to 'the source or beginning of all things', and thus denoted a primitive monotheistic supreme deity.¹³⁸

In view of this etymological analysis, Jones similarly asserted in his paper, presented at Union Theological Seminary in New York, that *Hananim* is 'a Supreme God' as 'The One Great One', 'who is a spirit personality unconnected with Confucianism or Buddhism and standing aloof even from the Animistic nature worship of the masses', and thus that Koreans were monotheists.¹³⁹ On the basis of his research into ancient Korean history and religion from 1895 to 1910, he concluded in his commemoration of the Quarter-Centennial of the Korea mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church mission that a primitive monotheism had been maintained in the 'Korean people's original faith in *Hananim*'.¹⁴⁰

In his article 'Korean Ideas of God' (1900), James S. Gale (PCUSA), who had been actively involved in the translation committees since 1887, argued that *Hananim* is the one God by referring to a renowned Korean scholar, Mr. Chu, who stated that 'Our God is the *Great One*, and is called by us *Hananim*, from the word *Hana*, meaning one, and *nim*, meaning lord, master, king. The one great Lord of Creation is *Hananim*. We associate him with the building of the universe.'¹⁴¹

Gale in his book *Korea in Transition* also spelled out that *Hananim* is 'the one Great One' and 'the Supreme Ruler for whom there is no image or likeness in heaven or earth or under the earth.'¹⁴² When he read from the Book of Genesis to Korean people in a village, saying that 'in the beginning some One created the heavens and

¹³⁷ George H. Jones, 'Studies in Korean, Korean Etymology', *KR* (Nov. 1892), pp. 332-33; cf. Oak, *Study of the Major Controversies*, pp. 38-9.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ George H. Jones, *The Rise of the Church in Korea*, Ch. #5. typed script, Jones Papers (New York: Union Theological Seminary), cited in Sung-Deuk Oak, 'North American Missionaries' Understanding of the Tangun and Kija myth of Korea, 1884-1934', *Acta Koreana*, vol. 4 (2002), p. 10.

¹⁴⁰ George H. Jones, *Korean Mission* (New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1910), pp. 15-7, cited in Sung-Deuk Oak, 'Shamanistic Tan'gun and Christian Hananim', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 7-1 (2001), p. 49.

¹⁴¹ James S. Gale, 'Korean Ideas of God', *Missionary Review of the World* (hereafter *MRW*) (Sept. 1900), p. 697.

¹⁴² James S. Gale, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement of USA and Canada, 1909), pp. 78-9.

the earth', they answered it is '*Hananim*.'¹⁴³ In another article 'The Korean's View of God', he argued that the Koreans had 'never been without a deep rooted conviction that God lives, and that He is near', because he found 'abundant proof' in 'the multitude of Korean writers' which indicated 'the immanence of God' in Korea.¹⁴⁴

Gale wrote a series of articles, entitled the 'History of the Korean People' in the *Korea Mission Field* (hereafter *KMF*). In one of these articles, he referred to two treatises written in 1785 by a Korean Confucian scholar, Chongbok An (安鼎福) – *Thoughts on the Heavenly Knowledge* (天學考) and *Question and Answer on the Lord of Heaven* (天主問答).¹⁴⁵ These treatises were produced on the basis of the two oldest books of the Confucian Classics – '*the Book of History*' and '*the Book of Songs* (or *Odes*)' – in response to the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (hereafter *TMLH*) written by Ricci in 1603.¹⁴⁶ By referring to An's two treatises, Gale stated that 'by these quotations [*the Book of History* and *the Book of Songs*] An Chongbok would make it clear that the Far East has never been without the knowledge of God' from 'the earliest ages'.¹⁴⁷ It should be noted that Gale supported Ricci's *TMLH* which argued for the existence of monotheism in Confucianism. This leads us to suggest that there is a theological continuity between Ricci's theology for Confucian monotheism behind *Shangti* (and *T'ien*) and Gale's theology for Korean primitive monotheism underlying *Hananim*.

In his *The Passing of Korea*, Homer B. Hulbert (1863-1949: AMN)¹⁴⁸ observed that 'the purest religious notion which the Korean today possesses is the belief in *Hananim*, a being entirely unconnected with either of the imported cults and

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 79.

¹⁴⁴ James S. Gale, 'The Korean's View of God', *KMF* (March 1916), pp. 66-7.

¹⁴⁵ The Institute of Korean Church History Studies [hereafter IKCHS], *A History of Korean Church*, vol. I (Seoul: Christian Literature Press, 1989), p. 65; Sukehiro Hiramawa, *Matteo Ricci*, trans. Young Hee Noh (Seoul: East-Asian Publishing Co., 2002), p. 659.

¹⁴⁶ See p. 55, footnote #149.

¹⁴⁷ James S. Gale, 'The History of the Korean People, Chapter XXXIII', *KMF* (April 1927), pp. 82-3; Richard Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale and his History of the Korean People* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1972), pp. 289-90.

¹⁴⁸ Hulbert was one of the earliest Korea missionaries, arriving in Korea in 1886. He was one of the most formidable Korean scholars as the Director of the *Korean Repository*, the Korean studies magazine, and the First Editor of the *Korea Review*; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, pp. 313-14.

as far removed from the crude nature-worship’, and ‘the Koreans all consider this being to be the Supreme Ruler of the universe.’¹⁴⁹ This observation led him to the conclusion that ‘the Koreans are *strictly monotheists*’ on the grounds that ‘the attributes and powers ascribed to this being [*Hananim*] are in such consonance with those of Jehovah that the foreign missionaries (Protestant) have almost universally accepted the term for use in teaching Christianity.’¹⁵⁰

When Charles A. Clark (1878-1961: PCUSA) visited villages on an evangelistic tour in 1903, he observed that the Koreans believed in *Hananim* as ‘the One God’.¹⁵¹ On the basis of this observation and his comparative research into Sino-Korea religions, he asserted that ‘in the beginning, there was one supreme God, *Hananim*’ and ‘there is much evidence for a primitive monotheism’ in Korea.¹⁵² However, he found that their primitive monotheistic belief in *Hananim* ‘has *degenerated*, leaving *Hananim* as a name with little of its former content of meaning and authority’, as ‘the more developed religions from China came in and stopped the right development of a pantheon.’¹⁵³

According to the *Tong-Yi-Chun* (東夷傳: Chinese *Tong-Lieh-Chuan*) of the *Wee-Chee* (魏志: Chinese *Wei-Chih*) one of the oldest Chinese historical books to record the religious rituals of the ancient Korean people, the Ye Kook tribe¹⁵⁴ resided in the north-east of the Korea peninsula around the fifteenth century BC, and regularly performed shamanistic ritual ceremonies (namely *Mu-Chon*) to worship the Supreme Being, *Hananim*.¹⁵⁵ In view of this historical fact, Clark noted that Korean primitive monotheism could be traced to the shamanistic worship of *Hananim* by ‘the Ye Kook

¹⁴⁹ Homer B. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (London: W. Heinemann, 1906), pp. 404-05; emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*; emphasis mine.

¹⁵¹ Charles A. Clark, ‘The River and the Mountains’, *Korea Field* (Aug. 1903), p. 114, cited in Ho-Woo Lee, *Charles A. Clark: His Contribution to the Theological Formation of the Korean Church* (Seoul: Word of Life, 2005), pp. 306-07.

¹⁵² Charles A. Clark, *Religions of Old Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1932); reprinted (Seoul: Christian Literature Society for Korea, 1961), p. 197; emphasis mine.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 217; emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 196; Grayson describes this tribe as ‘Tong-Ye’ people. However, Tong-Ye was synonymous with Ye; cf. Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, pp. 14-21.

¹⁵⁵ Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, pp. 46-50; Kim, *A History of Religions in Korea*, pp. 50-1; Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, pp. 14-21.

people' in 'the dim ages of Korean history long before any of foreign religions came into the country.'¹⁵⁶

Therefore, a variety of evidence leads us to the conclusion that the Korea missionaries held a degeneration theory of the history of Korean religion, by which they discovered a close analogy between *Hananim*, reflecting a Korean primitive monotheism as the Great One, and the Christian God. For this reason, the vast majority of Korea missionaries, namely the *Hananim* party, preferred *Hananim* as the term for the biblical God over any other term.

(2) The Theological Factors behind the Korea Missionaries' Preference for the Chinese Term *Shangti*

What theological factors led the Korea missionaries to favour the Chinese term *Shangti*? How was the Chinese term *Shangti* related to the Korean term *Hananim*?

The Korea missionaries generally understood that as China and Korea were contiguous countries, they had shared a common cultural-religious heritage for centuries.¹⁵⁷ For instance, Gale (PCUSA), Underwood (PCUSA), Hulbert (AMN), and Clark (PCUSA) commonly believed that the Chinese civilisation was initially brought by Kija to Korea in 1122 BC, and thereafter Chinese religions, along with the Chinese letters, were also brought to Korea from the fourth century AD onwards.¹⁵⁸ For this reason, they undertook comparative research into the Sino-Korean cultures and religions, and in consequence found that Confucianism had become a common religion in China and Korea.¹⁵⁹ That is, the Korea missionaries understood that Chinese and Korean Confucians shared a common monotheistic notion of the Confucian Supreme Lord *Shangti*.¹⁶⁰

In view of this fact, when the Korea missionaries discussed the Term Question, they referred to the precedent of the Term Question in China, comparing the Term

¹⁵⁶ Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 196.

¹⁵⁷ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 89-91.

¹⁵⁸ See p. 8, footnote #29; James S. Gale, 'A History of the Korean People, Chapter I', *KMF* (July 1924), p. 136; Horace G. Underwood, *Religions of Eastern Asia* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1910), p. 96; Clarence N. Weems ed. 2nd ed., *Hulbert's History of Korea*, vol. I (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1905 & reprinted in 1962), pp. 1-15; Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 27.

¹⁵⁹ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 89-91.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Question in Korea with that in China.¹⁶¹ As a result, they observed that *Hananim* was an analogous theistic term to *Shangti* on the grounds that both terms reflected a common primitive monotheism. To support these arguments, we will analyse several publications of the Korea missionaries.

According to *Everyday life in Korea*, written by Daniel L. Gifford (1861-1900: PCUSA) in 1898,¹⁶² the Korea missionaries' comparative research into the Term Question in China and Korea led them to recognise that *Shangti* and *Hananim* were theologically correlated with one another, because the two terms denoted the same supreme deity:

The [term] question is simply this: the Chinese and the Koreans too, recognise a supreme deity who, by the Chinese, is called *Shangti* and by the Koreans, *Hananim*, and of whom their conceptions are pure, though very vague. The term question, then, consists in whether or not it is allowable to adopt as the name for God the term *Shangti*, or *Hananim*, and explain our conception of Him by the attributes we affirm of God... At the head of their system of belief is *Hananim*, whom the Chinese recognise as *Shangti*.¹⁶³

In his *The Passing of Korea*, Hulbert (AMN) argued that the Chinese *Shangti*, to whom Chinese emperors offered their worship at the Altar of Heaven, was connected with 'the Korean *Hananim*' because both supreme beings grew 'out of a common concept of Divinity in the two countries'.¹⁶⁴

Although Underwood in 1894 voiced his criticism of those who used the name of heathen deities (*Shangti* and *Hananim*) as the term for God, his remarks show that the Korea missionaries, particularly the PCUSA missionaries, used the term *Hananim* as a parallel theistic term to *Shangti*, as both terms jointly denoted 'the chief of gods' in heaven.¹⁶⁵ In agreement with her husband, Lillias H. Underwood

¹⁶¹ For instances, Bryant to Wright, 25 April 1891, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Dyer to Wright, 6 July 1894, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; Loomis to Gilman, 12 Dec. 1893, 22 May 1894 in *DHKBS*, vol. I, p. 483; Daniel L. Gifford, *Every Day Life in Korea* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898), pp. 88-9.

¹⁶² Gifford arrived in Korea in 1888. He served the *Sae-Mun-An* Presbyterian Church, founded by Underwood in 1887, and taught at the Underwood Academic Institute in 1892; Kim & Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries*, pp. 264-65.

¹⁶³ Gifford, *Everyday Life in Korea*, pp. 88-9; cf. Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, p. 26.; *Korea Review* [hereafter *KR*] (Sept. 1989), p. 355, cited in Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, p. 113; Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 May 1894 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 369; emphasis mine.

¹⁶⁴ Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, pp. 404-05.

¹⁶⁵ Underwood to Ellinwood, 2 Feb. 1894 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 360.

also asserted that *Shangti* and *Hananim* commonly signified the names of ‘the chief god of heaven’ in China and Korea respectively.¹⁶⁶

Gale argued in his article ‘The Korean’s View of God’ that as the Christian God had been present with ‘a wide variety of names’ to the Hebrews, such as ‘*El, Elohim, Eloah, El-Shadday, Jehovah, etc.*’, he had also been manifested by many names in Korea, including ‘*Hananim, Chun* [Heaven: Chinese *T’ien*], and *Shang-je* [Chinese *Shangti*]’, all of whom denoted ‘the same God’.¹⁶⁷ In his *Korea in Transition*, he affirmed the theological coherence between *Shangti* (or *T’ien*) and *Hananim* by asserting that ‘He is *Hananim*, the one Great One; His name in Chinese and also in Korean is made up of terms meaning “one” and “great”’.¹⁶⁸

In his series of articles the ‘History of the Korean People’, Gale, in referring to the Confucian Classics and a treatise by a Korean scholar, Changop Kim, asserted that, in the view of Korean Confucians, *T’ien* or *Shangti* signified the Supreme God, just as *Hananim* did:

As we read them [Confucian Classics] we find the great subjects that he [Confucius] discussed, including God, whether under the name of *T’ien* or *Shang-ti*. Some scholars have thought that *T’ien* refers solely to the blue sky and never to the Supreme Being, possessor of heaven and earth, and fountainhead of thought and personality. We can best answer this by a quotation from Kim Changop, a Korean scholar who was born in 1658. Speaking of this name he says, “Now *T’ien* is not the blue heavens, but God who resides in the heart, and is the one to be feared.”¹⁶⁹

This article suggests that Gale accepted the theological position of Ricci, who originally regarded *Shangti* or *T’ien* as the name of God. Hence, when Gale translated into English a Korean poem, entitled *Heaven*, written by the sixteenth-century scholar Song Ikp’il, he did not hesitate to render *Heaven* as ‘God’.¹⁷⁰

In referring to James Legge who was the most ardent advocate of a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, Charles A. Clark (PCUSA)

¹⁶⁶ Lillias H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years Among the Topknots or Life in Korea* (New York: American Track Society, 1904), p. 104.

¹⁶⁷ Gale, ‘The Korean’s View of God’, pp. 66-7.

¹⁶⁸ Gale, *Korea in Transition*, p. 78.

¹⁶⁹ Gale, ‘The History of the Korean People, Chapter IV’, pp. 201-02; Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, pp. 106-07; emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁰ Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, pp. 56-7; see p. 152.

argued that just as *Shangti*, to whom the legendary Chinese kings – Yao (c.a. r. 2358-2258 BC) and Shun (c.a. r. 2255-2205 BC) – had offered sacrifices, signified the existence of primitive monotheism in China, *Hananim* denoted the presence of a similar monotheistic notion in Korea:

Legge has argued vigorously for a primitive monotheism in China back in the dim ages before the ‘days of Kings Yao and Shun’ (as the Koreans say in speaking of that age), and there is a good deal of evidence for it. The worship of God [*Hananim*] by Tagoon on the high altar on the island of Kangwha, of which we speak in a later lecture, points to much the same thing [a primitive monotheism] in Korea.¹⁷¹

Accordingly, Clark concluded that ‘*Hananim* and *Sangchei* [*Shangti*] are all one and the same Person, God.’¹⁷²

In addition to the Korea missionaries’ articles, we should note that Frank F. Ellinwood (1826-1908), who supervised the PCUSA missionaries in Korea as the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the PCUSA (along with Arthur J. Brown and Robert E. Speer) from 1884 to 1903,¹⁷³ also argued for a primitive monotheism of *Shangti*.¹⁷⁴ His theological and administrative influence upon the PCUSA missionaries on the Bible translation committees, including the Term Question issue, was not inconsiderable.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, he supervised the PCUSA missionaries in Korea during 1884 to 1903 during the period of the Term Question.

¹⁷¹ Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 118; cf. see pp. 129-30.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁷³ Ellinwood was born in Clinton, New York, and graduated from Hamilton College, New York and from Princeton Theological Seminary. He served pastorates at Second Baptist Church of Belvidere, New Jersey (1853-1854), and Central Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York (1854-1865). He also held administrative posts for the Presbyterian Committee of Church Election (1866-1870) and the Memorial Fund Committee (1870-1871), cited in Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Mission*, p. 197.

¹⁷⁴ Harry A. Rhodes, *History of the Korea mission, Presbyterian Church U. S. A., 1884-1934*, vol. I (Seoul, Chosen mission PCUSA), p. 466; Brown supervised them from 1903 till 1929, and thereafter Cleland B. McAfee did from 1929 onwards.

¹⁷⁵ See also Arthur J. Brown, *The Foreign Missionary* (New York: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1907), p. 211; Dae Young Ryu, ‘The Origin of Characteristics of Evangelical Protestantism in Korea’, *Church History*, vol. 77, no. 2 (June 2008), p. 373; Underwood to Ellinwood, 28 Oct. 1893 in *HGUP*, vol. II, pp. 366, 349; Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea; North American Missionaries’ Attitudes towards Korean Religions, 1884-1910* (PhD thesis, Boston University, 2002), p. 110; John F. Piper, Jr. *Robert E. Speer; prophet of the American Church* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2000), pp. 145-52.

In his book *The Oriental Religions and Christianity* (1892), a collection of his lectures on oriental religions at Union Theological Seminary, New York in 1891, Ellinwood supported a degeneration theory of the history of oriental religions based on the OT and NT records, whilst he criticised an evolutionary theory of the history of the religion.¹⁷⁶ Relying upon Legge's several treatises¹⁷⁷ and the *Book of History* and *Odes* of the Confucian Classics, he concluded that a primitive monotheistic belief in *Shangti* had existed in China.¹⁷⁸ Notably, he even admitted that the 'true and living God' had existed within the Altar of Heaven, thereby giving implicit support to Legge's striking liturgical performance at the altar.¹⁷⁹ Hence, we may suggest that Legge's theological influence led Ellinwood to accept the existence of a primitive monotheism in China. In turn, it is reasonable to suggest that Ellinwood's theological influence upon the PCUSA missionaries in Korea may have been one factor inclining them to perceive *Shangti* as a monotheistic term corresponding to *Hananim*.

Therefore, all the evidence leads us to the conclusion that the Korea missionaries perceived *Shangti* as an analogous theistic term to *Hananim* in the light of a degeneration theory of the history of Sino-Korean religion, as both terms signified a common primitive monotheism in China and Korea. In this understanding, they followed the initiative of John Ross of the UPC in his first Korean New Testament. In view of this fact, they favoured the Confucian monotheistic term *Shangti* in the Chinese Bible (the DV and the Griffith John Version), believing that it would enable Korean Confucians to know the Christian God within their existing Confucian framework. In addition, the Bible committees also used the *Shangti* edition of the DV as a basis of their Korean Bible translation.¹⁸⁰

It is important to note that the theology of religions, held by most Korea missionaries was based on a degeneration theory of the history of Sino-Korean religions, was consonant with that of Ricci, Legge and Ross on the one hand, and in

¹⁷⁶ Frank F. Ellinwood, *Oriental Religions and Christianity* (New York: Scribner, 1892), pp. 220-24; cf. idem, *Questions and Phases of Modern Missions* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899), pp. 11, 14, 22-5.

¹⁷⁷ *The Religions of China* (1880); *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* (1852); *Confucianism in relation to Christianity* (1877)

¹⁷⁸ Ellinwood, *Oriental Religions*, pp. 240-45.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 244-45.

¹⁸⁰ Yi eds., p. 233; see p. 143, footnote #100.

contrast to that of the Spanish Catholics (the Dominicans and the Franciscans) and the Protestant *Shen* party on the other hand.

(3) The Korean Confucians Understanding of *Shangti* as a Corresponding Monotheistic Term to *Hananim*

We will now consider further evidence from Korean Christian sources for *Shangti* as an analogous theological term to *Hananim*. We will pay special attention to two significant Korean figures – Byung-Heon Choi and Chi-Ho Yun.

1) Byung-Heon Choi's understanding of *Shangti* (*Shang-Je*) and *Hananim*

Byung-Heon Choi (1858-1927) was born to farmer parents of humble origins, and became a Confucian scholar at the age of twenty in 1878. When he met Appenzeller (AMN) in 1888 to learn Western civilisation, Appenzeller gave him a *Shangti* edition of the Chinese Bible, by which Choi came to study Christianity. In 1889, he began to teach the Chinese characters at *Bae-Jae* Academy founded by Appenzeller. On 8 February 1893, he was eventually baptised by Jones (AMN).¹⁸¹ He began to work with Appenzeller as a co-editor of the *Choson Christian Magazine* in 1897, and became involved in Korean Bible translation as an assistant to Appenzeller from 1897 onwards. He became a co-founder along with Jones of the *Monthly Magazine of Theology* (神學月報) in 1900.¹⁸² In 1902, he was ordained as a Methodist pastor, and became the second senior pastor of Jung-Dong Methodist Church, in succession to the founder Appenzeller who died in a ship wreck in the same year.¹⁸³ He worked at Jung-Dong Methodist Church for 20 years, and was appointed as the Superintendent, who supervised Methodist churches in the mid-western area of Korea from 1914 till 1922. After his retirement in 1922, he became a

¹⁸¹ Henry G. Appenzeller, *Annual Report of Superintendent 1889* in *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Korea Mission 1884-1943* [hereafter ARMEC], p. 290-92; Mahn-Yol Lee, *Appenzeller; the First Korea Missionary* (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., 2007), p. 328.

¹⁸² Dong-Sik Ryu, *한국신학의 광맥 (The Lode of Korean Theology)* (Seoul: Dasan Press, 2003), pp. 84-5.

¹⁸³ George H. Jones, *Annual Report of Superintendent 1902*, p. 312.

Professor of Comparative Religious Studies and Chinese Studies at *Hyup-Sung* Methodist Theological Seminary until his death in 1927.¹⁸⁴

Choi's understanding of *Hananim* and *Shangti* is of interest for the following reasons. First, he had both common and upper social backgrounds; while he was brought up in a lower-class family, he became a Confucian scholar later on. Thus, he became familiar with both the Korean and Chinese characters. Second, as he was involved in the Bible translation committees as a Korean assistant who produced a tentative draft on the basis of the Chinese Bible, he had experience of the Term Question. Third, as he was an ordained Methodist pastor, who worked for both upper and lower classes, he understood both classes' theological viewpoint on the Term Question. Fourth, he was a rare Korean theologian of the late nineteenth century, who wrote the first comparative religious study of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. We will pay attention to his three articles as follows.

First, Choi wrote an article, entitled 'The Way of Human Sin 罪道里' (1901), which was the first theological treatise written by a Korean Protestant theologian.¹⁸⁵ In this article, as he narrated the history of God's salvation, he used *Hananim* as the name of the God of the Bible.¹⁸⁶ Second, in 1907, he wrote a series of articles on the comparative studies of Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity, viz. *Sung-San-Yu-Ram-Gi* (聖山遊覽記: *The Journey at the Holy Mountain*), which were published as a book under the title of *Sung-San-Myung-Gyung* (聖山明鏡: *The Beautiful Site at the Holy Mountain*) in 1912. In these articles, he interchangeably used as terms for God, Heaven, *Shang-Je* (Chinese *Shangti*) and *Hananim* by identifying that 'the Eastern Heaven is the same as the Western Heaven, the Western *Shang-Je* [God] is the same as the Eastern *Shang-Je*', and 'Gong-Ja [Chinese Confucius] was sent by *Hananim*.'¹⁸⁷ Third, from 1916 to 1919, he wrote another series of articles on Christian apologetic to Confucianism and Buddhism, 'Jong-Gyo-Byun-Jeung-Ron (宗教辨證論)', which was published as a book under the title of *Man-Jong-Il-Yeon* in

¹⁸⁴ Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, p. 191.

¹⁸⁵ Byung-Heon Choi, 'The Way of Human Sin', *Monthly Magazine of Theology*, vol. 1, no. 8 (July 1901), p. 312, cited in Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, p. 186.

¹⁸⁶ Choi, 'The Way of Human Sin', p. 312; English translation and emphasis mine.

¹⁸⁷ Choi, *Sung-San-Myung-Gyung*, pp. 24-48, cited in Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, p. 100; English translation mine.

1922. Here he stated that ‘*Shang-Je* of Confucianism’, denoting ‘the Ruler over all the creation’, is ‘the same as Jehovah *Hananim* of Christianity who is the only one, omniscience and omnipotence.’¹⁸⁸

Therefore, Choi’s treatises indicate that for him also *Shangti* was an analogous theistic term to *Hananim*.

2) Chi-Ho Yun’s Understanding of *Shangti* (*Shang-Je*) and *Hananim*

We will now turn to the second case study of the Methodist, Chi-Ho Yun (尹致昊: 1864-1945), who was one of the most significant political and educational leaders in Korean modern history.

Yun studied English and other subjects at *Dong-In-Sa* secondary school in Japan, founded by Nagamura, a Japanese Christian leader of Meiji Reformation (明治維新), from 1881 to 1883. He left for Shanghai, where he enrolled in the Anglo-Chinese College (中西書院), established by the American Methodist Young J. Allen, and converted to Christianity in 1887. After he graduated from the college in October 1888, he, with the support of the college, continued to study theology at Vanderbilt University (for 3 years) and Emory College (for 2 years) in USA.¹⁸⁹ In November 1893, he returned to teach at the college in Shanghai, and then came back to Korea in 1895 to serve as vice-minister of education.

Yun had played a key role in enabling the American Methodist Episcopal Church South (hereafter AMS) to commence their mission as a result of his study in USA in 1884.¹⁹⁰ In 1896, with Jae-Phil Seo, who had also just returned from USA, Yun began to publish the first Korean newspaper written in the Korean-alphabet, viz. *Dong-Nip-Sin-Mun* (獨立新聞: the *Independent Newspaper*). He was actively involved in the YMCA from 1903 onwards, and became the founder and first

¹⁸⁸ Choi, *Man-Jong-Il-Yeon*, 10f, cited in Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Dos*, p. 202; English translation mine.

¹⁸⁹ For further study on Yun’s studies in USA, see Kim Hyung-Chan, ‘Yun Chi-Ho in America: The Training of a Korean Patriot in the South, 1888-1893’, *Korea Journal* (June 1978), pp. 15-24.

¹⁹⁰ *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Korea Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (hereafter *MKM-MEPS*), 1897, III-VI.; cf. *The Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (hereafter *ARMS*), 1884, pp. 204-05, cited in IKCH, *A History of Korean Church*, vol. I, pp. 177-82.

principal of the Anglo-Korean College in Gae-Sung in 1906.¹⁹¹ Yun was invited by John R. Mott as the sole Korean delegate at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, speaking about the rapid growth of the Korean Protestant churches in the Commission I debate¹⁹² and participating in the debate on the church in the mission field for Commission II.¹⁹³

The Theistic Terms Used in Chi-Ho Yun's Diaries

Yun recorded his diaries from 1883 to 1945 in three languages (first Chinese, secondly Korean, and thirdly English), using three different names for the deity – *Shangti* in Chinese, *Hananim* in Korean and God in English.¹⁹⁴ For this reason, we will analyse his diaries which will show us his comparative religious viewpoint as a Korean-Confucian-Protestant, and how he theologically related the notion of God to that of *Shangti* and *Hananim*.

As previously noted, when Yun studied at the Anglo-Chinese College from 28 January 1885 till September 1888, he converted to Christianity under the guidance of Professor W. Bonnel. He was then baptised by Bonnel on 10 March 1887, and wrote his public testimony in English, viz. *Won-Bong-Jin-Gyo-Seo* (願奉眞教書: *the Letter for my Desiring and Hoping the True-Religion*).¹⁹⁵ In this testimony, he recorded that while he was studying at the college, he ‘lately read over the four principal

¹⁹¹ For the further study on Yun's biography, see Shin Ahn, *From Conversion to Transformation: A Religious Interpretation of Yun Chi-ho* (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006); Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* [hereafter *WMC 1910*] (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans., 2009), pp. 118-21.

¹⁹² World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission I* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier), pp. 410-11; cf. Stanley, *WMC 1910*, pp. 118-21.

¹⁹³ World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission II* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier), pp. 358-59; cf. Stanley, *WMC 1910*, pp. 118-21.

¹⁹⁴ *Yun Ch'i-Ho's Diary (Yun Ch'ihō Ilgi*: hereafter *YCHD*) 1883-1924, 11 vols (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee (국사편찬위원회: hereafter NHCC), 1973-1989); NHCC also compiled Yun's correspondences as Volume 12; no diaries remain for the period from July 1906 to December 1915, because those were taken by the Japanese Government, by which Korea was annexed from 1910 to 1945. According to testimony of Yun's descendants, the Japanese police returned part of the diaries to them; cf. Shin Ahn, 'Yun Chi-ho's Religious Experience and Thought', *Christianity and History in Korea*, vol. 27 (Sep. 2007), pp. 47-9; Stanley, *WMC 1910*, p. 120.

¹⁹⁵ *YCHD*, 10 Mar. 1887, vol. I, p. 256; cf. NHCC Website; <http://db.history.go.kr>; 'A Korean's Confession', *The Gospels in All Lands* (June 1887), pp. 274-75.

Confucian books [the Four Classics]’ from which he ‘found many good proverbs’.¹⁹⁶ This means that he preserved his Confucian framework, even after his conversion to Christianity.¹⁹⁷

Initially while Yun studied at the college, he wrote his diaries in Chinese letters from 1 January 1883 to 9 October 1887,¹⁹⁸ rendering the name of God as *Shangti*.¹⁹⁹ We will cite one example from his diary on 9 October 1887:

漢師不來，英課如前，午後四時半，往戒酒會堂，我等宜靠上帝[*Shangti*]助祐之事
余之對西士女童蒙以英語演，此次爲始

[English Translation] The Chinese teacher did not appear, and the English class remained. At 4:30 in the afternoon, I went to the Hall of Stop-Drinking. We needed the help from *Shangti* [God] with this matter. This was the first time that I spoke to Western ladies and children in English.²⁰⁰

In a second phase, Yun wrote his diaries in Korean from 10 October 1887 to 15 November 1889.²⁰¹ During this period, he graduated from the college in October 1888, and began to study theology at Vanderbilt University and Emory College in USA. Hence, it may be suggested that his study of theology led him to compare Christianity with his own religion. He now gave the name of God *Hananim* (or ‘*Hanunnim*’) and *Haneul* (Heaven: Chinese *T’ien* 天). We will cite one example from this period from his diary on 10 October 1887:

금년 내 일신 정을 도라보 하느님[*Hanunnim*]²⁰² 은혜를 감일 여러가지라...
야소구주[Jesus the Saviour]의 도와주신 덕이요, 제니, 신무병 옛스며, 제, 의식의 걱정

¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, Yun underscored the discontinuity between Christianity and Confucianism, that is, the superiority of Christianity over any other East Asian religions. For instance, he delineated Korea as ‘a heathen land’ or ‘heathen society’, whereas he regarded Christianity as ‘the Divine Religion’; ‘A Korean’s Confession’, p. 274; cf. Ahn, ‘Yun Chi-ho’s Religious Experience and Thought’, p. 52.

¹⁹⁷ ‘A Korean’s Confession’, p. 274; cf. Kim, ‘Yun Ch’i-ho in America’, p. 17.

¹⁹⁸ *YCHD*, 9 Oct. 1887, vol. 1, p. 287.

¹⁹⁹ It is not clear which version of Chinese Bible he read in the college. However, it can be speculated that he contacted with the *Shen* edition, probably used by the American Methodist missionaries of the college. This was because, as seen in Chapter 3, American missionaries in China generally favoured the *Shen* edition in contrast to British missionaries who favoured the *Shangti* edition. Whether Yun read the *Shangti* edition or the *Shen* edition, the evidence clearly shows that he described the Christian God as the Confucian theistic term *Shangti* based on his Confucian framework.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*; I owe the proofreading of this English translation to Benjamin Wu.

²⁰¹ *YCHD*, 10 Oct. 1887, vol. I, p. 287.

²⁰² In 1887, as the Korean grammar and the Korean term for God had not been standardised, a variety of expressions of *Hananim* had been used, such as *Hananim* (하나님), *Hanānim* (하 ~ 님), *Haneunim* (하느님), and *Haneulnim* (하늘님) in the late-nineteenth century. However, because all of these

음껏고, 제, 공부의 거침 읍셔 일년중 비록가 심약하고 게을너 하늘[Haneul: Heaven]이
주신와 돈을 다 잘씨지 못엿으나 웃지 하늘[Haneul]이 내게 박하리요.

[English Translation] as I review this year, I thank *Hananim* [God] for His abundant grace... By the favour of Jesus the Saviour, I was healthy, had no anxiety, and studied with my best [during this year]. However, as sometimes I became weak and lazy, I did not well manage my money that was given by *Heaven*. Thus *Heaven* would punish me.²⁰³

Several important points can be observed in this Korean diary. First, Yun identified *Hananim* with *Shangti* in the sense that he referred to the same Christian God under the different names at almost the same date, i.e. *Shangti* on 9 October 1887 and *Hananim* on 10 October 1887. Second, he also identified *Heaven* with *Hananim* by using the terms interchangeably. In addition to his Korean diaries, when he produced three Korean anthems comprising the 15 songs of the *Chan-Mi-Ga* (the *Praise Songs*) in 1908, he also referred to ‘the Grace of *Haneu*[*Hana*]nim’.²⁰⁴

In a third period, as Yun studied theology in USA, he began to write his diaries in English, with the use of God from 15 November 1889 onwards.²⁰⁵

Hence, the trajectory of his use of three names of God in three different languages in his diaries shows that, by means of his interreligious (Korean-Confucian-Protestant) theological lens, Yun illuminated *Shangti* as a corresponding theistic term to *Hananim*, just as Byung-Heon Choi did.²⁰⁶

The case studies of Choi and Yun lead us to the conclusion that Korean Confucians regarded *Shangti* as an analogous theological term to *Hananim*, just as the Korea missionaries did. Besides, it shows us that the monotheistic resonance of

expressions had the same meaning, the Lord of Heaven or the Great One, this thesis will plainly describe it as *Hananim* (하나님); see pp. 22-3.

²⁰³ *YCHD*, 29 Dec. 1888, vol I, p. 297; English translation and emphasis mine.

²⁰⁴ The original account is: ‘동해물과 백두산이 마르고 닳도록 하느님이 보우하사 우리나라 만세 [the Eastern Sea would be dried and White Mountain would be gone, Long live Korea because of the Grace of *Haneunim*]’; English translation is mine; *YCHD*, 29 Dec. 1888, vol II (Seoul: Tamgudang, 1975), p. 273, cited in Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, p. 55; the original manuscript is stored at Emory University.

²⁰⁵ *YCHD*, 15 Oct. 1889, vol. I, p. 407; he described why he changed his language; ‘my diary has hitherto been kept in Korean. But its vocabulary is not as yet rich enough to express all what I want to say. Have therefore determined to keep the Diary in English.’

²⁰⁶ For further study on Yun’s conversion from his Confucian background, see Ryu, *Pung-Ryu-Do*, pp. 225-27; Ahn, ‘Yun Chi-ho’s Religious Experience and Thought’, p. 52; Duk-Ju Lee, *한국 그리스도인들의 개종이야기 (The Conversion History of Korean Christianity)* (Seoul: Jun-Mang Sha, 1990), p. 144f.

Shangti and *Hananim* was suited to pave the way for Korean Confucians' understanding of the Christian God as being both the God of traditional Confucian and Korean indigenous belief, and the God of the universe. We may therefore suggest that this is the reason why the Korea missionaries preferred to use the *Hananim* edition of the Korean Bible as well as the *Shangti* edition of the Chinese Scriptures.

(4) The Theological Factors behind Underwood's Adherence to the Use of *Ch'onzhu*

What theological factors lay behind Underwood's opposition to the use of *Hananim* and preference for the term *Ch'onzhu* from 1894 to 1905?

In September 1892, Underwood presented a paper on 'Romanism on the Foreign Mission Field' at the Fifth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System in Toronto, Canada. This paper was intended to show how the Jesuits had syncretised Christian truth with 'the form of heathenism' in many mission fields by their accommodation (or adaptation) method.²⁰⁷ He introduced the five mission methods of the 'Jesuit Rules', of which the first and fourth were about the accommodation method:

(1) A missionary who hopes for success must assume that the character of a divine or philosopher of the country in which he preaches. This conduct removes great part of the prejudice usually entertained against foreigners. A Jesuit, therefore, as soon as he enters upon his office in a heathen country, changes his character. In India he becomes a Brahmin; in Siam, a Talapsian; in China, a Bonze, or Confucian and Philsophic; in Africa a Marabout. In this way the Jesuit gains the hearts and the attention of the people.

(4) He must make use of whatever has the appearance of truth and piety in the religion of the country where he preaches, and endeavour to reconcile it to his own doctrine. It is not material that this cannot be done without distorting the heathen, as well as the Christian religion. The little sin committed upon such an occasion, is amply atoned for by the benefit it produces.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Horace G. Underwood, 'Romanism on the Foreign Mission Field', *Reports of the 5th General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System* (Toronto: 1892), pp. 409-15, in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 726.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 727.

Underwood illustrated his point by citing three cases of Jesuit missionaries – several Jesuits in the Congo in Africa, Francis Xavier in South India, Robert de Nobili in Madura and Matteo Ricci in China – in order to show how their mission had resulted in syncretism. He alleged that Catholicism in Congo was ‘a very heathenish kind of Catholicism’, and a native Romish priest ‘had a wife and five concubines and boasted in it’; that Xavier’s converts were ‘nothing but baptised pagans’ who then made ‘pilgrimage’ to a statue of Xavier in Cape Comorin; that de Nobli, who identified himself as ‘a Brahmin rajah [priest]’ with a Brahmin dress, made Christianity ‘an admixture of heathenism and the Gospel’; and that Ricci applied ‘the same accommodation to the system’ of the Chinese people.²⁰⁹ He particularly castigated Ricci’s accommodation method in China by quoting a Catholic bishop’s statement against the Jesuits as follows:

“Their missionary character and object are kept a profound secret, and their only avowed pursuits those of physicians or teachers of mathematics or fine arts, in which capacity they find admission among all classes, even into the imperial palace. They have obtained a tolerably large number of adherents among the lower orders and in remote provinces, but only by means of a dishonest compromise, allowing the converts to retain many of their pagan prejudices and idolatrous ceremonies; for they consider their great object gained if they enlarge the number of their nominal followers, however destitute they may be of a real conversion of heart.”²¹⁰

Although Underwood did not mention who this bishop was, it may be inferred that the bishop was either a Dominican or a Franciscan. Hence, it is clear that the theological factors behind Underwood’s opposition to the use of a name of heathen deity as the name of God were closely similar to those influencing the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dominicans and Franciscans.

Now we will explore Lillias H. Underwood’s two books, *Fifteen Years among the Topknots or Life in Korea* and *Underwood of Korea*, in which she, in support of her husband, explained why *Hananim* should be rejected. First of all, Lillias and her husband understood that the Term Question in Korea was connected with that in

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 729; Underwood also recorded that Ricci was ‘accused by Romanists of carrying this even to the point of marrying a Chinese woman.’

²¹⁰ Ibid.

China. She argued that *Shangti* and *Hananim* commonly denoted the names of the chief god of heaven in China and Korea respectively:

China, Japan and Korea alike use the Chinese characters and have words which means 'gods', or things worshipped, but they do not have either a definite article or capitals, such as those by which in English we can change 'gods' into 'the God' or 'God'. They also have *names* (quite a different matter) signifying the chief god of heaven (Sangchai [*Shangti*] or *Hananim*), the god of earth (Tangnim) and others.²¹¹

Lillias criticised 'some missionaries' in China and Korea who used these names of heathen gods as a point of contact with the Christian God.²¹² She further insisted that 'the use of a heathen cognomen of one of these gods' would lead to 'dangerous mistakes in the minds of the members of the infant native church' and even be 'an insult to Jehovah'.²¹³ It is clear from her record that by 'some missionaries' she meant Catholics and Protestants in China who favoured the term *Shangti* and the majority of the *Hananim* party in Korea.²¹⁴

By contrast, Lillias mentioned other missionaries in China and Korea 'who conscientiously believe that the personal name of a heathen deity should not be in any way be applied to the Eternal Jehovah', because 'such a course is in direct conflict with God's own word [Exodus 20:3-5]'.²¹⁵ She said that this view was adopted by 'a large minority of Protestants, and all Romanists in China, and by all Episcopalians [the SPG] and Romanists in Korea', and concluded that 'such was Dr. Underwood's view at this time'.²¹⁶ It is clear in her account that the mention of 'all Romanists' referred to Catholics who opposed the use of *Shangti* but preferred to use *T'ienzhu*; likewise, the SPG and Catholic missionaries in Korea denoted those who denied the use of *Hananim* but favoured a Korean form of *T'ienzhu*, viz. *Ch'onzhu*. Hence, it may be deduced that the theological viewpoint of the Underwoods to the Term Question was similar to that of the Dominicans and the Franciscans in the seventeenth century.

²¹¹ Lillias H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years*, p. 104; emphasis original.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid*; idem, *Underwood of Korea*, p. 125.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*; idem, *Underwood of Korea*, p. 126.

In summary, on the one hand, the primary theological factor behind the Underwoods' opposition to *Shangti* and *Hananim* was that they regarded them as these terms as names of heathen deities in East Asia. It can be seen that Underwood's use of *Ch'onzhu* was consonant with the seventeenth-century Spanish Roman Catholic missions in China (the Dominicans and the Franciscans) as opposed to that of the Jesuits in China. There was thus a significant theological continuity between the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic Term Question in China and this second dispute phase of the Term Question in Korea.

Conclusion

In accordance with the research questions raised in the Introduction, we may conclude this chapter as follows.

In the first place, this chapter has shown that the Korea missionaries' predominant preference for *Hananim* (the Great One) as the name of the God of the Bible was influenced by a degeneration theory of the history of Korean religion which held that a primitive monotheistic belief in *Hananim*, resembling a form of Christian monotheism, had existed in Korea, but had degenerated into polytheistic practices.

The Korea missionaries' comparative research into Sino-Korean religions and the antecedent of the Chinese Term Question led them to the conclusion that the *Shangti* was an analogous theistic term to *Hananim* in a sense that both terms denoted primitive monotheism in China and Korea. In this understanding, they followed the initiative of John Ross of the UPC in his first KNT, a Bible translator who originally regarded *Hananim* as a corresponding theistic term to *Shangti*.

The case studies of the two Korean Confucian Protestants (Byung-Heon Choi and Chi-Ho Yun) have also shown that Korean Confucians also understood *Hananim* was a synonymous theistic term with *Shangti* in a Korean Confucian framework, just as the Korea missionaries suggested. The case studies have also suggested that the monotheistic resonance of *Shangti* was suited to pave the way for Korean Confucians' understanding of the Christian God as being both the God of traditional Confucian and Korean indigenous belief and the God of the universe.

In the second place, the opposition of Underwood and a small minority of the missionary community, such as his wife Lillias, Moore (PCUSA), Dr. Avison (PCUSA), Dr. Scranton (AMN) and the SPG mission, to the use of *Hananim* was due to the fact that they regarded both *Hananim* and *Shangti* as names of East Asian heathen gods. In this sense, Underwood criticised the accommodation method of the early Jesuits, including Ricci, who originally used *Shangti* as the term for God, just as the Dominicans and the Franciscans had one before. This was because Underwood judged that the Jesuits syncretised the Christian truth with heathenism by this method. As a result, Underwood, who presided over the translation process during the dispute phase (1887-1903), played the central role in provoking the Term Question in Korea.

In the third place, this chapter has suggested that there is a significant theological continuity between the Chinese Term Question and the dispute phase of the Korean Term Question. Specifically, the first dispute phase of the Term Question in Korea followed an analogous pattern to the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China, since both were a terminological controversy between an indigenous theistic term (*Hananim* and its Chinese equivalent *Shangti*) and a generic term (*Shin* and its Chinese root *Shen*); the second dispute phase of the Term Question in Korea was also similar to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic Term Question in China, as both were a controversy between an indigenous theistic term (*Hananim* and *Shangti*) and a coined term (*Ch'onzhu* and its Chinese root *T'ienzhu*).

On the other hand, we have also observed a significant divergence between the Chinese and Korean Term Question; whereas the former was a polarised controversy between two equal and opposite parties (between the Jesuits and the Spanish orders, and between the *Shangti* and *Shen* party), the latter was a dispute between the vast majority – compromising the *Hananim* party – and a small minority, who made up the *Shen* party (the ABS) in 1887, the *Jehovah* party in 1893, and the *Ch'onzhu* or anti-*Hananim* party in 1894 and 1895.

Finally, it should be observed that the viewpoint of both Korea missionaries and Korean Protestants toward Korean indigenous religion was influenced by their evangelistical goals, which led them to a construction of *Hananim* in a Christian

image.²¹⁷ Whether consciously or unconsciously, they repeatedly reshaped the image of *Hananim* into conformity with the Christian concept of God in order to evangelise the Korean people more effectively by means of the term *Hananim*. The PCUSA missionary in Korea, Charles A. Clark (PCUSA), suggested that the Protestant missionaries' usage of *Hananim* had actually re-shaped the meaning of *Hananim* to produce a closer affinity with Christian theology by stating that 'the Protestant Christians of the country have seized upon this word [*Hananim*] and have defined it and defined it until, for Christians, it holds all of the content in the English word for God.'²¹⁸ That is to say, whilst the original meaning of a Supreme Being of Korean indigenous religion, *Hananim* (or *Haneunim*), was 'the Lord of Heaven', the Protestant missionaries and Korean Protestants re-defined it as 'the Great One', bringing its meaning closer to that of Judaeo-Christian monotheism. Modern scholars debate whether 'the Great One' was one of the original etymological meanings of *Hananim* or whether it was artificially added by the early Korea missionaries in order that they might utilise it as the point of contact with the biblical God.²¹⁹ However, the judgment of L. George Paik, a prominent Korean Church historian, seems convincing: '*Hana-Nim*, in the present linguistic situation, is neither colloquial, nor standard, nor of course Catholic, but the Protestant term for God. When the Protestants adopted the term, they gave it a new etymological content: *Hana* for one or only and *Nim* for Lord.'²²⁰

We will deal with this important issue in the Conclusion of this thesis in more detail. However, this thesis is not primarily intended to judge whether the Korea missionaries' argument for the existence of a primitive monotheism in Korea is true or false in the light of modern scholarship. Rather, it is concerned to analyse how the Korea missionaries had developed their theology of a Supreme Being of Korean

²¹⁷ See, p. 20, footnote #60; cf. James L. Cox, *Rational Ancestors: Scientific Rationality and African Indigenous Religions* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), pp. 15-33; Cox's chapter was first published under the title of 'The Classification "Primal Religions" as a Non-Empirical Christian Theological Construct'; idem, *From Primitive to Indigenous* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York & Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2000), pp. 3-37.

²¹⁸ Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 196.

²¹⁹ For further studies on this controversial issue among modern scholars, see Hong, *Naming God in Korea*; Ro, 'Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans', pp. 219-24; Rha, *An Analysis of the Terms Used for God in Korea in the Context of Indigenization*.

²²⁰ L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910*, 4th ed. (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., 1987), pp. 253-54.

indigenous religion (for the purpose of their productive Christian mission in Korea) in the course of the Korean Term Question.

In the next chapter, we will see how Underwood eventually accepted *Hananim* as the term for God in 1905, and how the Term Question was subsequently resolved when an authorised version of the KNT, using *Hananim*, was published in 1906.

Chapter 6:
The Resolution Phase of the Term Question in Korea 1904-1911:
The Divergence of the Term Question between China and Korea

Introduction

The previous chapter has shown how the Korean theistic terms, derived from the Chinese theistic terms, provoked the dispute phase of the Korean Term Question, and has argued that there was a significant theological continuity between the Term Question in China and that in Korea.

This last chapter will argue that there was a significant divergence between the two Term Questions. To do it, this chapter aims to explore how the Term Question was resolved within only three decades (1887-1911) by the Korea missionaries' affirmation of the term *Hananim* in the Authorised Version of the Korean New Testament (1906: hereafter AV-KNT) and the entire Korean Bible (1911: hereafter AV-KBT), in contrast to the 'Interminable' Term Question in China which lasted for three centuries (1637-1890).¹ In particular, it will deal with the theological factors which enabled the Korea missionaries (particularly the Board of Translators) to resolve the Term Question, and will consider the results for Christian missions in Korea that followed from the adoption of the term *Hananim*. It will pay special attention to how Horace G. Underwood (PCUSA) accepted the term *Hananim* as the name of the God of the Bible around 1905,² and what theological and sociological factors lay behind his acceptance of *Hananim*. His prominence in the chapter follows from his status as the central figure of the Korean Term Question who presided over the translation work and was originally the strongest opponent of the term *Hananim*, as seen in the previous chapter.

This chapter will set out three research questions: (1) what factors inspired Underwood to accept *Hananim* as the term for God? (2) What theological reasons lay behind the Korea missionaries' resolution of the Term Question, and why was the Term Question in Korea resolved within only three decades (1887-1906) whilst that in China lasted interminably over three centuries (1633-1890)? (3) What theological

¹ John Chalmers, 'The Interminable Question', *China Review*, vol. 9 (1881), pp. 228-33.

² See p. 176, footnote #21.

factors did the Korea missionaries and modern Christian scholars suggest lay behind the rapid and massive influx into Protestantism in early twentieth-century Korea?

In accordance with these research questions, this chapter will present three main arguments: (1) Underwood's change of mind was due to several theological and sociological reasons. First, that he was influenced by Legge's book *Religions of China* (1880) which argued for a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, a book which led Underwood to perceive *Hananim* as a primitive monotheistic deity in Korea. Second, that his appointment as the Chairman of the General Council of Ecumenical Missions in Korea in 1905 and the increasing need for the vernacular Scriptures during the Russo-Japan War (1904-1905) and the following Japanese protectorate (1905) led him to accept the term *Hananim* in order to pursue ecumenism among the Korea missionaries and to print the Korean Bible as soon as possible. (2) The predominant missionary support for *Hananim* and much quicker resolution of the Term Question in Korea than was the case with China was owing to the fact that the Korea missionaries found a distinctive similarity between the Korean indigenous notion of incarnation and trinity in the Dan-Gun myth and Christian incarnationalism and trinitarianism, a phenomenal analogy that did not apply to the same extent to *Shangti* (or *T'ien*) in China. (3) It will argue on the basis of the Korea missionaries' testimony as well as modern Christian scholars' analysis that the adoption of the term *Hananim* was one of the most significant reasons for the rapid growth of the Korean Protestant Churches in the twentieth century.

1. The Reconstitution of the PEBCK as the BCK in 1904

At the turn of the twentieth century, Korea fell into a hazardous political situation. First, the Russo-Japanese War took place from 9 February 1904 to 28 May 1905 because of the competitive imperial ambition of the Russia and Japan in seeking to dominate the Korea peninsula (and Manchuria as well).³ Second, the victory of Japan over the war led to the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty in 1905, which enabled Japan to dominate Korea's foreign affairs and all trades through Korean ports.

³ Horace N. Allen, *Korea the Fact and Fancy* (Methodist Publishing House, 1904), p. 236.

This desperate situation unsettled the Koreans. Whilst it made them distrust their traditional religions, it made them more inclined to receive a new western religion, Protestantism, and opened the door of the Korea mission field to Protestant mission.⁴ Kenmure, the Korea agent of the BFBS, recorded that sales of the Korean Bible ‘much improved’ during the war, and commented that ‘no doubt the war will ultimately prove to have been a blessing to the church as well as the country.’⁵ Thus, this desperate political situation urged the Korea missionaries and the Bible societies to complete the translation of the Korean Bible rapidly in response to the urgent demand for the Korean Bible.

Prior to 1904, the Bible societies could not avoid unnecessary competition in such a small mission field as Korea, and each attempted to dominate the market place; the BFBS established its station at Seoul in 1896 (the NBSS only contributed to the financial support for the translation and publication through the BFBS), and the ABS established its sub-station at Seoul in 1895 (their main-station was in Japan).⁶ However, in order that the Korea missionaries and the three Bible societies might cooperate with one another to meet the urgent demand for the Korean Scriptures, they formed the Bible Committee of Korea (hereafter BCK) on 1 January 1904 under a reformed constitution, and W. C. Swearer (AMN) was elected as the Chairman and Kenmure (BFBS) as the General Secretary.⁷ The BCK organised the joint agency of the Bible Societies, consisting of the BFBS, NBSS and ABS.⁸

The Change of the Board of Translators

As the former PEBCCK (1893-1903) was transformed into the BCK in 1904, the membership of the Board of Translators was largely changed.⁹ Of the six members, two resigned and one was replaced; Trollope (SPG) resigned in 1899 because of his

⁴ Elmer M. Cable, ‘Report of Pyung-Yang Station’, *Korea Mission of the PCUSA*, 1904, pp. 5-6.

⁵ Kenmure to the General Secretaries of the BFBS, ABS, and NBSS, 9 July 1904 in *DHKBS*, vol. II, p. 409.

⁶ Mahn-Yol Yi, Sung-Deuk Oak and Dae Young Ryu eds., *The History of Korean Bible Society*, vol. II [hereafter Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II] (Seoul: KBS, 1994), pp. 240-74.

⁷ *Minutes of the BCK*, 15 Sept. 1904 in *DHKBS*, vol. II, p. 645; cf. Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 275-303.

⁸ Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 275-303.

⁹ Horace G. Underwood, ‘Bible Translating’, *KMF*, vol. 7, no. 10 (Oct. 1911), p. 296; cf. see p. 137, [Table 5-2].

removal to Kangwha Island to commence the SPG mission;¹⁰ Appenzeller (AMN) died in a shipwreck on 11 June 1902, and Jones (AMN) was elected to fill his place;¹¹ and Scranton was detained indefinitely in the United States.¹² In addition, four missionaries were newly elected at various times, namely Samuel A. Moffett (PCUSA), Dr. R. A. Hardie (AMS), W. A. Noble (AMN), and Robert Grierson (Canadian Presbyterian), yet all found it impracticable to participate in the Board.¹³ The BCK therefore appointed four new members of the Board, namely Underwood (PCUSA), Gale (PCUSA), Reynolds (PCUS), and Jones (AMN),¹⁴ and Underwood was re-appointed as Chairman and Reynolds as Secretary.¹⁵

[Table 6-1] The Board of Translators of the BCK in 1904

Nationality	Name	Year	Denomination	Role
American	Horace G. Underwood	1859-1916	PCUSA	Chairman
Canadian	James S. Gale	1863-1937	PCUSA	
American	William D. Reynolds	1867-1951	PCUS	Secretary
American	George H. Jones	1865-1918	AMN	

However, Kenmure recorded that Jones was too ‘unsteady’ to participate in the Board,¹⁶ and Reynolds was too busy to contribute to the Board owing to ‘building of a house for himself’, whereas Underwood and Gale worked hard.¹⁷ For this reason, the translation work was in fact allocated to Underwood and Gale with the aid of their Korean assistants – Kim Myeng Jun (of Underwood) and Ye Chang Jin (of Gale).¹⁸

¹⁰ W. D. Reynolds, ‘Fifty Years of Bible Translation and Revision, Part I’, *KMF*, vol. 31, no. 6 (June 1935), p. 117.

¹¹ W. D. Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, *KMF*, vol. 26, no. 9 (Sept. 1930), p. 188; idem, ‘Translation of the Scriptures into Korean’, *KR*, no. 5 (May 1906), p. 189.

¹² Idem, ‘Early Bible Translation’, p. 188.

¹³ Idem, ‘The Board of Translators’, *KMF*, vol. 2, no. 6, (April 1906), p. 101.

¹⁴ Kenmure to Haven, 18 Feb. 1904, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL

¹⁵ Kenmure to the General Secretaries of three Bible Societies, 27 Feb. 1904, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL

¹⁶ Kenmure to Ritson, 21 April & 8 May 1903, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL; *Minutes of the PEBCK*, 17 July 1903 in *DHKBS*, vol. II, p. 627; cf. Underwood to Brown, 16, 28 Nov. 1903, in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 365, 369.

¹⁷ Kenmure to Ritson, 21 April & 8 May 1903, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL; cf. Underwood to Brown, 16 & 28 Nov. 1903 in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 365, 369.

¹⁸ Underwood, ‘Bible Translating’, p. 296; however, Underwood recorded that Reynolds, with the aid of his Korean assistant Kim Chong Sam, significantly contributed to the translation of the Korean Old Testament, and the completion of the AV-KBT in 1911.

The Board of Translators subsequently completed a tentative revised version of the AV-KNT in 1904, which used *Hananim*.¹⁹ However the BCK could not print the permanent scripts of the AV-KNT until 1905, because the Board was sharply divided between Underwood (of the *Ch'onzhu* party), on the one side, and Gale and Reynolds (of the *Hananim* party), on the other side, because of the Term Question.²⁰

2. Underwood's Acceptance of the Term *Hananim* around 1905

In the course of 1905, however, Underwood came to accept *Hananim*.²¹ Furthermore, he, along with Gale and Reynolds, suggested that the BCK should form a special committee for the *Shangti-Hananim* edition of the Chinese-Korean Diglot Version in 1905.²² As a result, in 1906 the Board eventually completed the translation of an AV-KNT, using *Hananim* as the affirmed term for God.²³

(1) The Theological Factors for Underwood's Acceptance of *Hananim*: Legge's *the Religions of China* (1880)

What factors then led Underwood to accept *Hananim* in 1905? Lillias Underwood in her book *Underwood of Korea* explained how her husband came to change his mind. His 'delving into books on Chinese and early Korean religions', viz. 'light', led him to now admit that the Koreans were originally primitive monotheists who had worshipped *Hananim*, 'signifying the great and *only* One', as early as the 'Kingdom of Kokurei' in the fifth century BC (an ancient kingdom who resided in the mountain valleys to the north of the middle reaches of the Yalu or Ap-

¹⁹ *Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.* [hereafter *AR-MSMEC*] for 1900, p. 16; *Annual Report of BFBS for 1901*, p. 204, cited in Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, p. 52.

²⁰ Kenmure to Mr. Sharp, 6 Aug. 1903, BSA/B3, BFBS, CUL; Kenmure to Ritson, 22 Dec. 1903, BFBS, CUL; cf. Reynolds, 'The Board of Translators', pp. 101-03.

²¹ Although it is not clear when Underwood's mind was changed, it was mostly around 1905, because Lillias H. Underwood never mentioned in her book *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea*, published in 1904, that Underwood changed his mind to accept the term *Hananim*; Lillias Underwood, *Fifteen Years Among the Topknots or Life in Korea* (New York: American Track Society, 1904), p. 104; cf. Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, p. 114.

²² 'Reports of Committee on Mixed Script,' *Minutes of 13th Annual Meeting of the Council of Presbyterian Missions in Korea*, 1905, p. 38, in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 632-33.

²³ Reynolds, 'Early Bible Translation', p. 188.

rok River).²⁴ He further acknowledged that the Koreans ‘had drifted away’ from their original primitive monotheistic faith in *Hananim*.²⁵ Hence, he now accepted a degeneration theory of the history of Korean religion.

Underwood's Appreciation of Primitive Monotheism in China

What book or books on Chinese religion did Lillias Underwood have in mind? We may suggest that the primary influence was *The Religions of China* (1880), written by James Legge, the Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at Oxford University.²⁶ This is because Underwood spelled out in his book *The Religions of Eastern Asia* that he had been considerably influenced by Legge’s book, stating that ‘Dr. Legge, in his admirable treatise on “The Religions of China” has given us a most instructive and enlightened account of the possibilities of its primitive faith.’²⁷ For this reason, we will delve into *The Religions of Eastern Asia* in order to analyse how *The Religions of China* had specifically impacted Underwood’s change of his mind.

While Underwood was staying in the USA for his furlough from 1906 till 1908, he delivered a series of lectures on East Asian religions at New York University in the summer of 1908 under the auspices of the ‘Charles Deems Lectureship’.²⁸ His lectures were published under the title of *The Religions of Eastern Asia* (1908). These lectures dealt with the East Asian religions, Taoism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Shamanism and Buddhism in China, Japan and Korea in order to ‘ascertain what concept of God the natives of those countries have, and to compare those Eastern religions with Christianity.’²⁹ According to Lillias, the thesis of this book was to

²⁴ Lillias Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, p. 126; Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, pp. 14-21; Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Mu-Gyo*, pp. 46-50; Kim, *A history of religions in Korea*, pp. 50-1; according to these reference books, the Koguryo people had regularly performed a monotheistic ritual ceremony, viz. *Tong-maeng*, to worship *Hananim*.

²⁵ Lillias Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, p. 126.

²⁶ See p. 80, footnote #106; James Legge, *The Religions of China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880); he stated that while he also referred to Douglas’ *Confucianism and Taoism* and Gile’s *Chinese Literature*, he mainly relied on Legge’s book.

²⁷ Horace G. Underwood, *The Religions of Eastern Asia* [hereafter *REA*] (New York: Macmillian, 1910), pp. 143-44.

²⁸ Lillias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, pp. 269-70.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

demonstrate that ‘the earliest religion of all these people was a monotheism, and that the universal tendency of all peoples in religion’ were ‘downward and not upward’, suggesting clearly that Underwood now held a degeneration theory of the history of East Asian religions.³⁰

First, he referred to at some length Legge’s argument for the existence of a primitive monotheism in China based on *Shu-Jing* (the *Book of History*);³¹ this oldest book of the Confucian Classics described how the earliest Chinese sage kings, Yao (堯: c.a. r. 2358 - 2258 BC) and Shun (舜: c.a. r. 2255 – 2205 BC), when they ascended to the throne as the supreme rulers, gave their offerings to *Shangti* or *T’ien* who ruled over other spirits or gods or lesser deities.³² Following Legge, Underwood now believed that the term *Shangti* or *T’ien* supplied clear evidence of Chinese primitive monotheism rather than either *monolatry* or *henotheism*, thereby concluding that ‘Certainly, then, it seems that in all probability Dr. Legge was right in his conclusion quoted above, and that in the earliest days the Chinese were monotheists.’³³

By citing Legge’s important work on *the Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (大明會典: the Ming Emperor’s prayer to *Shangti* which was said at the Altar of Heaven from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries),³⁴ he made an attempt to prove that a Chinese primitive monotheistic belief had been preserved in modern China.³⁵ In addition, in referring to Legge’s philological studies on the primitive Chinese ideographic characters,³⁶ he now concluded that the Chinese terms *T’ien* (天:

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Legge, *The Religions of China*, pp. 23-6.

³² Ibid; see pp. 40-1.

³³ Underwood, *REA*, pp. 8-10.

³⁴ See pp. 75-6, footnote #80; Legge, *The Religions of China*, pp. 18-9; idem, *The Notions*, pp. 23-35; idem, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity*, p. 5.

³⁵ Underwood, *REA*, p. 14.; although Underwood also referred to the work of Martin (1827-1916: PCUSA), one of the most renowned mission sinologists and Professor at Peking University, he mainly relied on Legge’s works; cf. William A. P. Martin, *The Chinese: Their Education, Philosophy, and Letters* (New York: Harper, 1881), pp. 100-01.

³⁶ Legge, *The Religions of China*, pp. 6-16; cf. F. Max Müller, *Science of Language* (London: Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864), pp. 437-38; it is noteworthy that Legge wrote that his work was referred to Müller who stated that ‘in Chinese *T’ien* means sky and day, and the same word, like the Aryan *Dyu* is recognised in Chinese as the name of God. Even though, by an edict of the Pope in 1715, Roman Catholic missionaries were prohibited from using *Tien* as the name for God, and ordered to use *Tien chu*, Lord of heaven, instead, language has proved more powerful than the Pope. In the

Heaven), 'the One Great Being', and *Shangti*, 'One Supreme Ruler', both denoted a primitive monotheistic deity rather than being alternative names of one who was simply the highest among a pantheon of Chinese gods in heaven.³⁷ He spelled out that whereas *T'ien* corresponded to *Yahweh*, *Shangti* was the 'personal name' of *T'ien*.³⁸

Second, Underwood cited Legge's argument for the historical degeneration of Chinese religion by stating that the Chinese had been 'in danger of being corrupted by nature worship, on one hand, and by a system of superstitious divination, on the other.'³⁹ As a result, he spelled out, 'the stars and planets, the spirits of hills and mountain streams, were all admitted to their pantheon; exorcists arose who claimed to have power with, and even over, some of these deities, and the pure worship of the one God gave place to the grossest superstitions.'⁴⁰

Accordingly, just as Legge criticised his contemporary, the prominent evolutionist Cornelius P. Tiele, who argued that the Chinese were originally predominantly fetishists,⁴¹ Underwood also opposed the evolutionary theory of the history of religion:

The evolution theory in regard to religion, as commonly stated, has not been proven; and, in fact, its most ardent advocates have never been able to show in history a single people or nation who, starting out with ancestor worship, fetishes, or nature-worship, have evolved without the aid of a revelation, from their polytheism what they themselves acknowledge to be the highest theistic ideal, a monotheism.⁴²

Therefore, it can be argued that Underwood's reading of Legge's *The Religions of China* led him to change of his mind to admit the existence of a primitive Chinese monotheistic belief in *Shangti* or *T'ien* and its degeneration, whereas he had

Tartaric and Mongolic dialects, *Tengri*, possibly derived from the same source as *Tien*, signifies 1, heaven, 2, the God of heaven, 3, God in general, or good and evil spirits'; emphasis his.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Underwood, *REA*, pp. 4-6.

³⁹ Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 16, cited in Underwood, *REA*, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Underwood, *REA*, p. 7.

⁴¹ See pp. 82-3; C. P. Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion to the Spread of the Universal Religion*, translated by J. Estlin Carpenter (Trubner and Co., 1877) cited in Legge, *The Religions of China*, pp. 17-9.

⁴² Underwood, *REA*, pp. 231-32; cf. see p. 106.

previously regarded these terms merely as the names of ‘heathen gods’⁴³ or as ‘the chief of the gods in sky’,⁴⁴ which could lead the Koreans to ‘various errors in belief concerning Him’, and specifically towards a syncretistic form of Christian worship.⁴⁵ In turn, *The Religions of China* led him to re-evaluate the Korean Supreme Being *Hananim* in the light of a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, looking for a similar trajectory to the degeneration of Chinese religion in ancient Korean history and religion. He believed that there was a natural religious affinity between these two countries on the grounds that China and Korea had been brotherhood nations – ‘anything good possessed by the elder [China] was to be shared with the younger [Korea]’ – since Kija originally brought Chinese civilisation to Korea in 1122 BC.⁴⁶

Underwood’s Appreciation of Primitive Monotheism in Korea

Now we will specifically explore how Underwood applied the insights he had derived from the *Religions of China* to his study of earliest Korean history and religion.

First, Underwood and most Korea missionaries commonly observed that shamanism was the distinctive indigenous religion of the Koreans, and was the oldest and the most influential religion in Korea.⁴⁷ In contrast, in his view, other major religions (Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) were imported from China to Korea from the fourth century AD onwards, and did not so much affect the Koreans.⁴⁸ For instance, in referring to Ross’s book, *History of Corea*, Underwood spelled that Taoism was almost ‘unknown’ in Korea.⁴⁹ We will come back to this issue more in detail.

Second, like Legge who studied the oldest Chinese historical books, the *Book of History (Su-Jing)* of the Confucian Classics, in order to find evidence for primitive monotheism in China in ancient Chinese history, Underwood also studied several

⁴³ Ibid, p. 342.

⁴⁴ Underwood to Ellinwood, 2 Feb. 1894 in *HGUP*, vol. II, p. 360.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 366-67; see p. 138, footnote #60.

⁴⁶ Underwood to Ellinwood, 2 Feb. 1894 in *HGUP*, vol. II, pp. 366-67.

⁴⁷ Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908), pp. 77-99.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Underwood, *REA*, p. 108; Ross, *History of Corea*, p. 355; Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 230; see p. 117.

books of ancient Korean history, such as ‘*Dong-Guk Tong-Gam* (東國通鑑: the Chronicle Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom)’⁵⁰ and ‘*Dong-Sa Chan-Yo* (東史纂要: the Digestive Compiled History of the East)’, for the same purpose.⁵¹ As a result, he paid attention to the Dan-Gun myth (a legendary history of earliest Korea), recorded in the *Dong-Guk Tong-Gam*. He found evidence in the myth that the Koreans’ monotheistic belief in *Hananim* had existed since Dan-Gun, the first Korean King, initiated a monotheistic worship to ‘one divine being named Wan-in’, referring to *Hananim*, in the twenty-fourth century BC, before foreign religions were imported from China to Korea.⁵² In view of this fact, he believed that ‘Korea for herself had possessed originally in all probability a pure monotheism’ which was in substantial consonance with Jewish monotheism.⁵³

It is therefore noteworthy that Underwood believed he had found a parallel between the original monotheistic worship of the earliest Korean King (Dan-Gun) to *Hananim* in the twenty-fourth century BC, as recorded in the oldest Korean historical books, and the original monotheistic worship offered by the early Chinese king – Yao (c.a. r. 2358 – 2258 BC) and Shun (c.a. r. 2255 - 2205 BC), both of whom were Dan-Gun’s contemporaries – to *Shangti*, as recorded in the oldest book of the Confucian Classics. In this sense, he stressed the ‘wonderful correspondence of the ancient state records of the two countries’.⁵⁴ He thus concluded that ‘in the most primitive times the peoples of Korea and China were monotheists’, thereby delineating *Hananim* and *Shangti* as the ‘foot prints of the Creator’ on the ‘cliffs of

⁵⁰ This is a chronicle of earliest Korean history, compiled by Seo Geo-jeong (1420-1488) and other scholars in 1485. It was originally commissioned by King Sejo in 1446, but completed under the reign of Seong-Jong of Choson. It is the earliest extant record to list the names of the rulers from Dan-Gun in the Ancient Choson throughout the end of Koryo Dynasty (1392 AD). In particular, it records the theory of three Ancient Chosons (Dan-Gun Choson – Kija Choson – Wiman Choson) in the view of the fact that Korea (Choson) was founded by Chinese immigrants; cf. Sung-Deuk Oak, ‘North American Missionaries’ Understanding of the Tan’gun and Kija myths of Korea, 1884-1934’, *Acta Korea*, vol. 4, 2002, p. 2; James H. Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), pp. 26-7, 30; Sung-wook Hong, *Naming God in Korea* (London: Regnum, 2008), pp. 55-6.

⁵¹ This book is a digest of Korean history, compiled by Un Oh in 1609. Although this book did not include the Dan-Gun myth, Underwood referred to it.

⁵² Underwood, *REA*, pp. 105, 109; see Appendix: the English Translation of the Dan-Gun Myth

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 131, 261.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 235.

Korea' and 'in the history of China' respectively.⁵⁵ That is, he understood *Hananim* as a corresponding monotheistic term to *Shangti*.

Third, as Legge acknowledged *Shangti* as a vestige of Yahweh's original revelation to mankind, Underwood perceived Korean primitive monotheism as 'a remnant of the still more ancient times when God Himself made personal direct revelations to the fathers of the race, walked with Enoch and talked as friend to friend to Abraham.'⁵⁶ This was on the grounds that he believed that a group of Noah's descendants had migrated from the Near East to the Far East after the 'Flood', they conveyed monotheistic belief to East Asia.⁵⁷

Fourth, as Legge subscribed to a degeneration theory of the history of Chinese religion, Underwood also argued that the Koreans 'have wandered from their old monotheism and even to a certain extent from the pure henotheism of later time'⁵⁸, and thereafter 'the high ideal of *Hananim* has much modified what would otherwise have been a doubly degrading influence of Korea's polytheism.'⁵⁹

In summary, Underwood's change of mind to accept *Hananim* around 1905 may be attributed to his reading of Legge's *the Religions of China*. In consequence, he now adhered to a degeneration theory of the history of East Asian religions, thereby admitting that the Koreans and the Chinese had originally worshipped God through their own monotheistic deities, *Hananim* and *Shangti* respectively, yet had fallen into polytheistic practices.

Underwood's Understanding of Monotheism, Henotheism and Monolatry within the Context of East Asia

Here we must consider in what sense (if at all) Underwood had come to admit the existence of monotheism in China and Korea, granted his continuing recognition that the ancient Chinese and Koreans had at the same time believed in other gods, spirits or 'lesser deities'.⁶⁰ In this regard, he himself posed the question, 'the question,

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 245-46.

⁵⁶ Underwood, *REA*, pp. 245-46.

⁵⁷ Ibid; see p. 76, footnote #85, 86.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 114.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 134.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 14.

of course, naturally arises; was this pure *monotheism*, or was it *henotheism* or simply *monolatry*?'⁶¹ First of all, he defined these three theistic notions as follows; *monotheism* denotes one that excludes 'the possibility of the existence of all other gods'; *monolatry* represents 'the exclusive worship of but one idol, or the worship of but one god, by a tribe or nation as its *special deity*, whether that god be an idol or a spirit'; and *henotheism* refers to 'the idea of one supreme god, considered as supreme among many, and as controlling the actions of the lesser deities.'⁶²

On the basis of these definitions, Underwood attempted to trace the origin of primitive monotheism in accordance with a chronological history of ancient Korea. First, according to the records, 'the people of South Korea' and 'the people of Kokorai' about 'the time of the first century BC' worshipped not only *Hananim* but also 'the spirits of the earth, of the harvest of the stars, and invisible powers' at festivals in the summer and autumn.⁶³ Hence he regarded their faith as *henotheism*. Second, 'going still farther back, to the people of Puyu, from whom the people of Kokorai sprang', he observed that 'the religion of this state was the worship of the heavens, and *absolutely no mention of any other spirits or lesser deities is made*.'⁶⁴ Third, 'going still farther back in our Korean records' to Dan-Gun (*Dong-Guk Tong-Gam* and *Dong-Sa Chan-Yo*)⁶⁵ in 2332 BC, he noted that Dan-Gun had given monotheistic worship to *Hananim* (or Hwan-in) alone. Hence, he came to conclude with confidence that 'can we not conclude that here also there is *a strong probability of a primitive monotheism*, and do we not also find in the present-day worship of the land an added proof of this?'⁶⁶ Therefore, it is clear that Underwood now believed that the ancient Koreans were originally and '*strictly monotheists*', worshipping *Hananim* alone, the attributes and powers ascribed to which were 'in such consonance with those of Jehovah.'⁶⁷

However, he observed that 'in later times' they had degenerated into henotheists, who worshipped *Hananim* as well as other gods and lesser deities, and

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 11; emphasis mine.

⁶² Ibid, p. 8; emphasis original.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 103-04.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 104; emphasis original.

⁶⁵ See p. 181, footnote #50, 51.

⁶⁶ Underwood, *REA*, p. 106; emphasis original.

⁶⁷ Homer B. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei U. P., 1969), p. 404; Underwood, *REA*, p. 111; emphasis mine.

thereafter into ones who held ‘a nature religion with its consequent polytheism.’⁶⁸ Nevertheless, in Underwood’s view, ‘even to this day there survives a sort of henotheism which, to a larger measure, has preserved the native concept of the deity from the degradations common to all pure polytheism.’⁶⁹

To help us understand this complex issue, we may look at Walls. In referring to Geoffrey Parrinder, Walls writes that in the African religious context ‘how misleading it can be to use the words monotheistic, polytheistic, and pantheistic of an African religion, for the very same society may produce examples of all three attitudes (or what in Western culture would be so designated) without any sense of the perceptions being incompatible.’⁷⁰ In view of this fact, the distinctions drawn by western scholarship between the three theistic frameworks – *monotheism*, *monolatry* and *henotheism* – may fail to do justice to the complex religious context of East Asia, because the three religious frameworks may in fact have co-existed within East Asian contexts. Hence, the distinction between the three in both China and Korea was in reality probably less clear than Underwood implied.

(2) The Sociological Factors Influencing Underwood’s Acceptance of *Hananim*

In addition to these theological reasons, we may suggest two more sociological factors behind Underwood’s change of his mind as follows.

First, in order for the Korea Protestant missionaries to proceed cooperatively with effective and rapid mission work, four Presbyterian missions (PCUSA, PCUS, Australian Presbyterian and Canadian Presbyterian) and two American Methodist missions (AMN and AMS) agreed to found an ecumenical and interdenominational Protestant missions council in Korea on 11 September 1905 under the slogan of ‘One Protestant Christian Church in Korea’.⁷¹ Hence, they established the General Council

⁶⁸ Underwood, *REA*, p. 131.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Andrew F. Walls, ‘Primal Religious Traditions in Today’s World’, in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), p. 125; this article was first published in Frank B. Whaling, ed., *Religion in Today’s World* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987)

⁷¹ *Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the General Council of Evangelical Missions in Korea* [hereafter *MFAM-GCEMK*], 11 Sept. 1905 in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 633-35; S. F. Moore, ‘Movement

of Evangelical Missions in Korea (hereafter GCEMK) on 15 September 1905, and Underwood was elected as Chairman and D. A. Bunker (PCUSA: 1853-1932)⁷² as Secretary.⁷³ This was followed by a territorial comity agreement, dividing the Korea mission field between the denominational missions.⁷⁴

As a result, Underwood was now assigned significant responsibility as the first Chair of the GCEMK to pursue ecumenism among the Korea Protestant missionaries. This may have made more inclined him to change his mind to accept the *Hananim* in order to resolve the Term Question. This was because the Term Question was one of the most persistent obstacles to ecumenism among the missionaries, particularly the Bible committee, and furthermore it was Underwood himself who provoked the Term Question by disagreeing with the use of *Hananim*.

Second, during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 to 1905 and the subsequent Japanese protectorate in 1905, Underwood became aware that the need for the Korean Scriptures had increased heavily, and furthermore the Koreans had become sceptical of their old traditional faiths and more prepared to receive a new western religion, Christianity. This impending situation urged him to change his mind to accept the term *Hananim* in order to resolve the Term Question, because the BCK had to publish the permanent script of the Korean Bible with a unified term for God, *Hananim*.

3. The Resolution of the Term Question in 1906 and 1911

In addition to Underwood's acceptance of *Hananim* around 1905, Kenmure recorded that the *Ch'onzhu* edition had become 'dead stock' at the turn of the twentieth century on account of 'the unpopular term for the name of God – *Ch'un Chu* [*Ch'onzhu*]'.⁷⁵ For this reason, he suggested to the BFBS, the main publisher of

for Church Union in Korea', *Missionary Review of the World* [hereafter *MRW*] 18/10 (Oct. 1905), pp. 689-92, 905.

⁷² Bunker graduated from Union Theological Seminary in New York, and arrived in Korea in 1887. He was one of the founding members of the Korean Tract Society in 1890; Sung-Tae Kim and Hae-Jin Park eds., *The List of the Korea Missionaries* (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History [hereafter *IKCH*], 1994), p. 190.

⁷³ *MFAM-GCEMK*, pp. 633-35; Moore, 'Movement for Church Union in Korea', pp. 689-92, 905.

⁷⁴ *MFAM-GCEMK*, pp. 633-35.

⁷⁵ Kenmure to Ritson, 27 Mar. 1903, BSA/E3, BFBS, CUL; emphasis mine.

the Korean Bible, that ‘1 percent of any edition printed would meet all requirements in *Ch’un Chu*; 5% would be an extravagant proportion’, expecting that ‘a resolution not to reprint in this term [*Ch’onzhu*] would be very welcome to the missionaries in Korea’ who were ‘unanimous for the term *Hananim*.’⁷⁶ He pointed out that ‘only one missionary [Underwood] – outside of the English Mission Church [SPG] – uses this term [*Ch’onzhu*].’⁷⁷ Thus, Bunker proposed to the PEBCK on 13 March 1903 that the term *Ch’onzhu* in the remaining stock of 5,000 copies of Acts should be altered to *Hananim*, and this proposal was ‘agreed’.⁷⁸ Consequently, the *Ch’onzhu* edition fell into disuse by the Korea Protestant missionaries (only except Underwood and the SPG mission) from 1903 onwards.

As a result, the Term Question in Korea was eventually resolved in 1906. The BCK subsequently published the permanent scripts of the AV-KNT, affirming *Hananim* as the name of God, in 1906. Furthermore, the Board of Translators, contributed by Reynolds, Underwood and Gale and their Korean assistants,⁷⁹ completed the translation of the Old Testament, using *Hananim*, on 2 April 1910.⁸⁰ In subsequence, the BCK eventually published the permanent scripts of the entire AV-KBT in Yokohama in March 1911 with the result that the Korean Term Question had been completely resolved within three decades (1887-1911).⁸¹ The AV-KBT was the first Korean Bible to be issued not as an individual (or private) version but an authorised version of the official Bible committee.⁸² In the *Missionary Review of the World* in 1911, the North American missionaries in Korea unanimously declared that the Korean Term Question had been solved within ‘twenty-five years’ by the term *Hananim*.⁸³

4. The Theological Factors behind the Resolution of the Term Question

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ *Minutes of the PEBCK*, 13 Mar. 1903 in *DHKBS*, vol. II, p. 623.

⁷⁹ Underwood, ‘Bible Translating’, p. 296.

⁸⁰ For further study on this translation work, see Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 70-9.

⁸¹ Reynolds, ‘Early Bible Translation’, p. 188; Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 79-82.

⁸² Yi eds., *HKBS*, vol. II, pp. 79-82.

⁸³ ‘Korea-The Changes of Seven Years’, *MRW* (Feb. 1911), p. 144, cited in Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 9.

This section will elaborate what theological factors lay behind the Korea missionaries' (particularly the three main contributors of the Board of Translators) rapid resolution of the Term Question in 1906 and 1911 in contrast to the Chinese Term Question which lasted over three centuries.

(1) Introduction to the Dan-Gun myth

We will now introduce the Dan-Gun myth, because it offered an important evidence that led the Korea missionaries to affirm the term *Hananim* as the name of God, as will be seen.

It is commonly agreed by scholars that the Dan-Gun myth is one of the most important Korean mythological stories among a variety of ancient Korean folklores and myths, because it describes the oldest Korean history and its original religious tradition in the twenty-fourth century BC.⁸⁴ This myth had been inherited for centuries in oral forms only (myth or folklore) because the Koreans did not have a written language. It was not until the thirteenth century that the myth was officially recorded by the *idu* script (a linguistic system of representing Korean phonology through Chinese letters).⁸⁵ As a result, the myth can be found in several sources – notably, *Samguk Yusa* (三國遺事: Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms),⁸⁶ *Chewang Ungi* (帝王韻紀: Rhymed Chronicles of Sovereigns),⁸⁷ *Sejong Sillok* (世宗實錄: The Veritable Annals of the Reign of King Sejong),⁸⁸ *Ungje-Si* (應制詩: Poem on the imperial request)⁸⁹ and *Dong-*

⁸⁴ Bong Rin Ro, 'Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans', in *God Through the Looking Glass: Glimpses from the Arts*, eds., William David Spencer and Aida Besançon Spencer (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), p. 223.

⁸⁵ Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 50; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 53.

⁸⁶ This was written and compiled by the learned Buddhist monk Iryon (1206-89) during the Koryo Dynasty (1281-83 AD). This is the earliest extant record of the Dan-Gun myth, and regarded as the most authentic record of the five sources. It covered legends from many Korean kingdoms, including ancient Choson, Wiman Choson, Puyo, Gaya and the Three Kingdoms. This is the earliest extant record of the Dan-Gun myth; Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 27; Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea*, pp. 26-7, 30.

⁸⁷ This is a contemporary work with *Samguk Yusa*, was written by a government official Yi Seung-Hyu (1224-1301) in 1287 AD.

⁸⁸ This was compiled by Hwang Bo-In, Kim Jong-Seo, and Jeong In-Ji from 1452 to 1454 to record the detail politics of King Sejong (r. 1418-50 AD).

Guk Tong-Gam (東國通鑑: The Chronicle Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom).⁹⁰ Of these five sources, this thesis cites the English translation of the whole text of the Dan-Gun myth from the *Samguk Yusa* in the Appendix, and I owe this text to James H. Grayson's work.⁹¹

It can be observed that the text has five scenes and one final redacted scene. The first scene depicts 'the discussion between the Father, Hwan-in (the Lord of Heaven or the Great One), and his Son, Hwan-ung'; the Son desires to descend to rule over the inhabitants below. The Father thus selects the place where his Son will descend to earth, and gives his Son the symbols of his authority (three heavenly treasures). The second scene portrays the Son's descent to earth; Hwan-ung descends to earth on the peak of a sacred mountain by a sacred tree near an altar there. He brings with him three principal ministers and three thousand assistants. The third scene shows a bear and tiger pleading with Hwan-ung to transform them into human beings. The fourth scene narrates the 'Union of Heaven and Earth'; the bear which has been transformed into a woman, Ung-Nyo, pleads with Hwan-ung to give her a son. Hwan-ung then marries her, and she gives a birth to a child, Dan-Gun. The fifth scene describes the establishment of the Korea (*Choson*) State 'in the fiftieth year of the Emperor Yao [c.a. the twenty-fourth century BC], in the reign year Kyongin; the son who was born by Hwan-ung and the bear woman establishes a state of *Choson*. The final scene is about the 'change of dynasty' from Dan-Gun to Ki-Ja.⁹²

The Characteristics of the Dan-Gun myth

In the Dan-Gun myth, we may observe several important characteristics. In the first place, the myth was related to *Hananim*, because Hwan-In, one of three main figures of the myth, denoted *Hananim*. To understand this relationship, we need an etymological analysis of Hwan-In. It is commonly agreed by scholars that the Korean word *Hananim* was etymologically derived from Hwan-In, a compounded Chinese

⁸⁹ This was a collection of poems, written by Kwon Kun (1352-1409) as one of the royal embassy to the Ming court in Peking in 1396. This was then compiled and annotated under the title of *Ungje-Siju* by his grandson Kwon Nam in 1462.

⁹⁰ See p. 181, footnote #50, 51.

⁹¹ See the Appendix; Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea*, p. 31.

⁹² I owe this section to Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea*, p. 33.

word of Hwan (桓) and In (因).⁹³ The former word, *Hwan* (桓), can be spoken as the Korean word *Han* (한), and the latter word *In* (因) can be spoken as a Korean word *Nim* (님). Hence, Hwan-In (桓因), can be spoken as a Korean word, *Han-Nim*, from which the compounded Korean word, *Hananim* (하나님), was derived.⁹⁴ In terms of their meanings, *Hwan* refers to heaven, sky, brightness and in many cases great or one, and *In* refers to an honourable suffix (lord, master or majesty), corresponding to *Nim*, a Korean honourable suffix.⁹⁵ Thus, the meaning of Hwan-In is the Lord of Heaven or the Great One, both of which the meaning is also the same as that of *Hananim*. In addition, the second main figure, Hwan-ung, denotes the Son of *Hananim* on the grounds that a Chinese word, Ung (雄), refers to son as the masculine gender.⁹⁶ The third main figure, Dan-Gun Wang-gum, is a compounded word of Dan-Gun and Wang-gum. As several authoritative Korean linguistic scholars, notably Nam-Sun Choi and Ju-Dong Yang, argue that the first word Dan-Gun was etymologically derived from the Mongolian word *tengri*, which refers to *heaven*.⁹⁷ While the second word Wang-gum has various meanings, it generally refers to a ruler on the earth.⁹⁸ Thus, Dan-Gun Wang-gum can be interpreted as the Heavenly Ruler on the earth who worshipped *Hananim*. In summary, on the grounds that the three main characters of the Dan-Gun myth – Hwain-in, Hwan-ung and Dan-Gun Wang-gum – correspond to *Hananim*, the Son of *Hananim* and the Heavenly Ruler on the earth respectively, the Dan-Gun myth can be said to be coherent with *Hananim*.

In the second place, in view of the first observation above, we may find that the Dan-Gun myth reflected the Korean notion of a triune deity on the grounds that *Hananim* has three persons – Hwain-in, Hwan-ung and Dan-Gun.

⁹³ Nam-Sun Choi, 'Gye-Go-Dap-Jon', *Spring and Autumn*, vol. 14 (June, 1918); Gee-Bak Yi, 'The Issues of the Dan-Gun Myth', *The Dan-Gun Myth Papers* (1988), p. 67; Gwan-Uh Chon, 'Dan-Gun', *The Biographical History of Korea* (1982), p. 159; Jong-Ik Yi, 'The Studies on Han', *The Papers of Eastern Thoughts* (1975), pp. 424-5; See-In Park, *The Altaic Myths* (Seoul: Samjungdan, 1980), p. 102, cited in Ho-Ik Heoh, *Dan-Gun Myth and Christianity* (Seoul: Christian Literature, 2003), pp. 74-9.

⁹⁴ Heoh, *Dan-Gun Myth*, pp. 74-7.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 31; Heoh, *Dan-Gun Myth*, pp. 82-9.

⁹⁷ Ju-Dong Yang, *Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Sinmun-sa, 1947), pp 125-6, cited in Sung Bum Yun, 'The Birth of the Concept of God in Korea', *Christian Thought* (June, 1969), pp. 106-09; Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 31.

⁹⁸ Heoh, *Dan-Gun Myth and Christianity*, pp. 110-17.

In the third place, it can be observed that the Dan-Gun myth shows the Korean understanding of incarnation; Hwan-ung himself wanted to descend to earth, and although Dan-Gun belongs to Heaven, he governed the Korea state as a link between Heaven and earth.

In the fourth place, a number of scholars, notably James H. Grayson, suggest that several shamanistic aspects can be observed in the Dan-Gun myth.⁹⁹ According to Grayson, first, the mention of the ‘descent of the spirits of Hwan-ung [the Son of Hwan-in]’ from heaven to earth and of ‘a link’ – a sacred altar – between heaven and earth may be a typical element of shamanism among the Ural-Altaic people.¹⁰⁰ Second, Dan-Gun himself can be referred to as the first and ‘chief Korean shaman’ in the sense that he, as the first Ruler of the Korean state (*Choson*), initiated an offering to Hwan-in in order to seek the ‘link’ between heaven and earth.¹⁰¹ Third, as previously noted, the word *Dan-Gun* itself may reflect a shamanistic aspect; it is etymologically derived from *tengri* (referring to heaven or sky; the Mongol or Ural-Altaic language), which had been broadly worshipped as a Supreme Being in shamanistic rituals among the Ural-Altaic people in Siberia and Central Asia.¹⁰²

In the last place, the Dan-Gun myth demonstrates that these Korean theistic concepts had been formed before foreign religions were brought from China to Korea. Specifically, the myth mentions that Dan-Gun, who initiated the monotheistic worship of *Hananim*, established the Korean state ‘in the fiftieth year of the Emperor Yao [c.a. r. 2356 - 2255 BC: one of the sage Chinese kings]’. Thus, a Korean indigenous religious tradition, viz. shamanism, originated long centuries before the arrival of foreign religions in Korea from the fourth century AD onwards.¹⁰³ In

⁹⁹ Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, p. 241; Taek-Gyu Kim, ‘The Shamanistic Structure in the Dan-Gun Myth’, *Linguistics and Literature*, vol. 5 (1959), p. 85, cited in Heoh, *Dan-Gun Myth and Christianity*, pp. 104-6; Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 34; Yun, ‘The Birth of the Concept of God in Korea’, p. 105; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁰ Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, p. 241.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 2nd ed. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), pp. 60-3; *idem*, *Shamanism*, 2nd ed. (Princeton & London: Princeton U. P., 1992), pp. 9, 461-62, 504-07; Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, p. 241; Kim, ‘The Shamanistic Structure in the Dan-Gun Myth’, p. 85, cited in Heoh, *Dan-Gun Myth*, pp. 104-06; Ryu, *The History and System of Korean Shamanism*, p. 34; Yun, ‘The Birth of the Concept of God in Korea’, p. 105; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 60.

¹⁰³ Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History*, p. 241.

addition, according to Grayson, the probable date of the origin of the myth is between 800 BC and 400 BC or the middle of the first millennium BC.¹⁰⁴

The Preservation of the Korean Theistic Notion of the Dan-Gun Myth

Several historical records and historic remains indicate that the Korean religious concept of the Dan-Gun myth had been preserved since it emerged.

First, we will cite several historical records from the eighth-century Shilla Dynasty and the thirteenth-century Koryo Dynasty. When Kim Saeng (金生: 711-791), one of the most famous Korean calligraphers in the Shilla Dynasty, offered his prayer to God when seeking his special gift of calligraphy, Dan-Gun answered that ‘I am Tan’gun [Dan-Gun] and come down to bless you according to the longings of your heart.’¹⁰⁵ According to the record of Kyu-Bo Yi (李奎報: 1168-1241), a famous Korean scholar and poet in the Koryo Dynasty who wrote *Dong-Guk I-Sang Guk-Jip* (東國李相國集: *Collected works of Minister Yi of Korea*), when Solgo, a famous painter of the Koryo Dynasty, prayed to God for many years, Dan-Gun answered that ‘I am the god-man, Tan’gun [Dan-Gun]. Moved by your earnest prayers, I have come to give you the divinely pointed brush.’¹⁰⁶

Second, in fifteenth-century Choson Dynasty, i.e. 1429, Koreans built up the Dan-Gun Temple, viz. the *Sam-Sung-Sa* (三聖祠: the Three-Holy-Gods Temple), in honour of Dan-Gun, nearby Pyung-Yang, the capital of the ancient Korea state, which was founded by Dan-Gun and believed to have been the place where Dan-Gun originally came down from heaven.¹⁰⁷ Inside the temple, they erected the shrine of Dan-Gun where they offered worship to the triune *Hananim*.¹⁰⁸ Besides, they also built other Dan-Gun altars in Eui-Ju, Mt. Paik-Du, Seoul and many other places,

¹⁰⁴ Idem, *Myths and Legends from Korea*, pp. 31-42.

¹⁰⁵ James S. Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, *KMF* (July 1924), p. 134; Richard Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale and his History of the Korean people* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, 1972), pp. 93-4.

¹⁰⁶ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, p. 134.

¹⁰⁷ The temple was called as the *Sam-Sung-Sa*, located at Mt. Ku-Wol, Mun-Hwa in South Hwang-Hae Province, North Korea; Charles A. Clark, *Religions of Old Korea* (New York: Revell, 1932; reprinted Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1961), p. 140.

¹⁰⁸ Homer B. Hulbert, ‘Part I Ancient Korea: Chapter I’, *KR* (Jan. 1901), pp. 33-5; Clarence N. Weems ed., *Hulbert's History of Korea* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1962), pp. 1-4, 93-4; Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, p. 134; Underwood, *REA*, p. 109.

where they offered their worship to *Hananim*, and these altars were associated with the Dan-Gun Temple nearby Pyung-Yang.¹⁰⁹

Third, the emergence of the *Dan-Gun Gyo* (檀君教: The Religion of Dan-Gun) or the *Dae-Jong-Gyo* (大倥教: The Religion of the Great Progenitor) in the early twentieth century demonstrates that the Koreans had preserved at least some elements of remembrance of the Dan-Gun myth even to the modern period.¹¹⁰ The *Dan-Gun Gyo*, founded by Cheol Na (1863-1916) on 15 January 1909, was a religious movement which promoted resurgence of the ancient Korean belief in the Dan-Gun myth.¹¹¹ Specifically, the *Dan-Gun Gyo* adopted the triune theistic notion of the Dan-Gun myth and Christianity as its core doctrine,¹¹² and thus worshipped the Trinitarian God – *Hananim* (God the Creator), Hwanung (God the Teacher) and Dan-Gun (God the Ruler).¹¹³

Fourth, the Koreans continued to maintain the original ‘Dan-Gun Altar’ on the top of Mt. Mari in the Kang-Hwa Island as a sacred place, where Dan-Gun first worshipped *Hananim* in the twenty-fourth century BC, and the Koreans continuously offered offerings to Dan-Gun.¹¹⁴

In summary, all these historical records lead to the conclusion that the Korean understanding of the Dan-Gun myth had been maintained until the modern period. Accordingly, James Gale argued that ‘these [records] are witnesses to the fact that someone called Tan’gun sometimes, somewhere, impressed the people of Korea with his power and personality.’¹¹⁵ It is therefore notable in this section that the Koreans had held a retained residual understanding of both incarnation (‘the god-man’) and

¹⁰⁹ Underwood, *REA*, p. 100.

¹¹⁰ The name *Dan-Gun Gyo* was changed to *Dae-Jong-Gyo* in 1910 because of the Japanese colonial government; Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, pp. 140-43; Yon-Tak Kim, *Protestant Church Growth in Korea* (An-yang: Korea Theological Seminary Public., 1998), p. 72.

¹¹¹ Kim, *Protestant Church Growth in Korea*, p. 72.

¹¹² Ho-Sang Ahn, *The Ancient History of the Korea: Dong I Race* (Seoul: Institute of Korean Culture, 1974), pp. 74-86.

¹¹³ Donald L. Baker, ‘Globalization and Korea’s New Religions’, in *Korea Confronts Globalization*, eds., idem (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 211; because its doctrine was syncretised with several religions, such as Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism and their own beliefs, it is strictly judged as a heresy by orthodox evangelical Korean churches.

¹¹⁴ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, p. 134; Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, pp. 93-4; Underwood, *REA*, p. 109.

¹¹⁵ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, p. 134.

trinity through the Dan-Gun myth. We will see how these distinctive notions facilitated the Korea missionaries' resolution of the Term Question in the following sections.

(2) The Korea Missionaries' Understanding of the Dan-Gun Myth: Its Relation to the Resolution of the Term Question¹¹⁶

The section will explore how the Korea missionaries discovered the Korean triune and incarnation concept in the Dan-Gun myth, and how they related them to Christian incarnationism and trinitarianism, and hence facilitated the complete resolution of the Term Question in 1911. This section will pay special attention to the three main figures of the Board of Translators of the AV-KBT – Gale (PCUSA), Underwood (PCUSA) and Reynolds (PCUS) – because the completion of the AV-KBT in 1911 was mostly attributed to their contributions.¹¹⁷ In addition to them, this section will also deal with Hulbert (AMN) and Clark (PCUSA), since Hulbert's early research to the myth led other missionaries to be interested in the myth,¹¹⁸ and Clark's summarisation of other missionaries' study of the myth will lead us to an important conclusion of this section.

At a meeting of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in December 1900, Hulbert (AMN) presented a paper, 'Korean Survivals', which argued that the origin of the Korean state and people could be traced to Dan-Gun, not the Chinese immigrant, Ki-Ja.¹¹⁹

Hulbert wrote a series of articles 'The History of Korea' in the *Korea Review*, from January 1901 through December 1904, and these articles were compiled as a book, entitled *Hulbert's History of Korea* in 1962.¹²⁰ In the first article in January

¹¹⁶ For the further study on this issue, see Oak's two articles to which this section is indebted, 'Shamanistic Tangun and Christian Hananim', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 7-1 (2001), pp. 42-57; 'North American missionaries' Understanding of the Tangun and Kija myths of Korea, 1884-1934', *Acta Korea*, vol. 4 (2002), pp. 1-16.

¹¹⁷ Underwood, 'Bible Translating', p. 296.

¹¹⁸ Oak, 'Shamanistic Tangun and Christian Hananim', p. 46.

¹¹⁹ Homer B. Hulbert, 'Korean Survivals', *Transaction of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* [hereafter *TKB*], vol. I (1900), pp. 1-24, cited in Oak, 'North American missionaries' Understanding', p. 5.

¹²⁰ Weems ed., *Hulbert's History of Korea*, Editor's foreword, pp. ED10-11.

1901, in referring to ‘an abstract in nine volumes of the four great ancient histories of Korea’, viz. *Dong-Sa-Gang-Yo* (東史綱要: *the Eastern Digestive History*)¹²¹, he introduced the Dan-Gun myth, and added his own commentary. In this commentary, he emphasised that Dan-Gun offered monotheistic worship to *Hananim* at the ‘Tan-gun’s Altar in 2265 BC’.¹²² Second, he drew attention to the ‘Korean trinity’ – ‘Whan-in, Whan-ung and Tan-gun’.¹²³ Third, he highlighted the ‘incarnation’ of Whan-ung, the Son of Whan-in (*Hananim*), saying that ‘as he [Whan-ung] had not yet taken human shape, he found it difficult to assume control of a purely human kingdom; searching for means of *incarnation* he found it in the following manner.’¹²⁴

In his book *The Passing of Korea* (1906), Hulbert further expounded what he termed ‘the Korean trinity’ and ‘incarnation’, and interestingly added a notion of the Virgin Mary:

In Munwha there is a shrine to the *Korean trinity*, Whanin, Whanung and Tangun, the first being the creator, the second his son, and the third his earthly incarnation. Our interest in the story is enhanced by the fact that he came to earth in the form of a wind, and was *incarnated* through the medium of a virgin.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Ibid, Editor’s Introduction, pp. ED 71-9; in his earlier ‘Introductory Note’ of this series in the *KR* for January 1901, Hulbert identified the four ‘great’ works as follows – the *Dong-Guk-Tong-Gam* (東國通鑑 by So Geo-Jung in 1484; period covered from Dan-Gun to Koryo), the *Dong-Sa-Chan-Yo* (東史纂要 by O Un in c. 1600; from Three Kingdom to Koryo), the *Dong-Sa-Hoe-Gang* (東史會綱 by Yim Sang-Dok in c. 1719; from Three Kingdom to King Gong-Min of Koryo), and the *Dong-Sa-Po-Yu* (東史補遺 by Cho Jung in 1646; from Dan-Gun to Koryo); cf. see p. 181, footnote #50, 51.

¹²² Weems ed., *Hulbert’s History of Korea*, p. 3.

¹²³ Ibid, p. 4.

¹²⁴ Ibid, pp. 1-2; emphasis mine.

¹²⁵ Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, pp. 288-91; emphasis mine; on the basis of this research, Sung-Bum Yun argued that the origin of the Korean triune notion of the Dan-Gun myth had been formed under the influence of Nestorians who came to the Northeast Asia during the eighth and ninth century AD. However, his argument has been harshly criticised by many scholars on account of the lack of supporting scientific and archaeological evidence. Moreover, it cannot be correct on the grounds that the Dan-Gun myth itself demonstrates that the myth had emerged (in the twenty-fourth century BC) such long centuries before the Nestorians arrived in Northeast then; cf. Sung Bum Yun, ‘The Dan-Gun Myth is the *Vestigium Trinitatis*’, *Christian Thought* (October, 1963), pp. 14-18; idem, ‘The Birth of the Concept of God in Korea’, p. 121; Young-bok Rha, *An Analysis of the Terms used for God in Korea in the Context of Indigenization* (ThD thesis, Boston University, 1977), p. 59; Hong, *Naming God in Korea*, p. 59; Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 6; Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity* (Seoul: Holym Corporation, 1967), pp. 14-5; see p. 12, footnote #41.

As James S. Gale (PCUSA), a member of the Board of the Translators, began to study the Dan-Gun myth in 1895,¹²⁶ he wrote an article ‘Tangun’. In this article, he highlighted the ‘Triune Spirit’ of the Dan-Gun myth, stating that ‘Whan-in is God (*Ch’un* [Chinese *T’ien*: Heaven]); Whan-oong is the Spirit (*Sin* [Chinese *Shen*]); and the Tan-goon is the God-man (*Sin-in*), these three constitute the Triune Spirit (*Samsin*).’¹²⁷ Second, he emphasised an incarnation of the myth, spelling out that ‘Whan-gum changed from a Spirit into a man’, viz. the ‘God-man’.¹²⁸

In one of his multi-part articles ‘the History of the Korean People’, Gale claimed the Korean ‘divine trinity’ by referring to *Ko-Keum-Gi* (古今記: the *Record of Past throughout Present*)¹²⁹, reading that ‘Hwanin is God (*ch’on*), Hwanung is the spirit (*sin*), and Tan’gun is the god-man (*sinin*); these three constitute a divine trinity (*samsin*).’¹³⁰ Accordingly, he regarded Dan-Gun as ‘the third person of a divine trinity’.¹³¹ Second, he also claimed the incarnation notion of the myth by affirming Dan-Gun as ‘*shin-in* (神人: God-man), which translated, may mean *divine man, angel, spirit, or god*.’¹³² Third, he asserted that Dan-Gun played a role in being an example of the worship to God (Hwan-in) as the first priest or the mediator between the Koreans and God ‘throughout all ages’.¹³³ In addition, he argued that Pyongyang, founded by Dan-Gun as the capital of ancient Korea (*Choson*), was ‘one of the oldest cities in the world, contemporary with Thebes¹³⁴ and Shinar’.¹³⁵ The city ‘Shinar’ was a place where one group of Noah’s descendants resided in the aftermath of the Deluge (Genesis 10:10) and built the Babel Tower (Genesis 11:2).¹³⁶

In short, Gale argued that there were parallels between the Korean theistic beliefs contained in the Dan-Gun myth and the Judeo-Christian revelation.

¹²⁶ James S. Gale, ‘Korean History’, *Korea Repository* (Sept. 1895), p. 321, cited in Oak, ‘Shamanistic Tangun and Christian Hananim’, p. 44.

¹²⁷ James S. Gale, ‘Tan-goon’, *The Korean Magazine* (Sept. 1917), p. 404, cited in Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 11.

¹²⁸ Gale, ‘Tan-goon’, p. 404, cited in Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 11.

¹²⁹ Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, p. 93.

¹³⁰ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People, Chapter I’, p. 134; Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, p. 93.

¹³¹ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People, Chapter I’, p. 134.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ This was a city of Ancient Egypt built in around 3,200 BC.

¹³⁵ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, p. 134; Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, p. 93.

¹³⁶ Gale, ‘A History of the Korean People’, p. 134; Rutt ed., *James Scarth Gale*, p. 93.

George H. Jones (AMN), a member of the Board of Translators, also suggested in his paper, presented at the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, that Dan-Gun might be a 'great shaman' as a god-man, and that 'his worship on the great altar on Kanghwa was a simply shamanistic performance.'¹³⁷, thereby implying that Dan-Gun could be corresponding to the incarnated God, Jesus Christ. Underwood (PCUSA), the Chair of the Board of Translators, similarly related the Dan-Gun myth to Korean shamanism. He drew attention to the incarnation motif in the Dan-Gun myth by stating that Hwan-ung, who came from Hwan-in (*Hananim*), 'desired incarnation', and subsequently 'breathed upon her [a woman who was derived from a bear], and she was conceived and gave a birth to Tangun.'¹³⁸

In his article on the completion of the AV-KBT in 1911, Reynolds (PCUS), the Secretary of the Board of Translators, related the story of the 'supernatural birth' of Dan-Gun from the bear-woman in the Dan-Gun myth to that of Jesus from the Virgin Mary in the Gospel of Matthew 1:23.¹³⁹ Accordingly, he acknowledged the birth story of Dan-Gun as 'a vague prophecy' of the Scriptures.

Reviewing these Korea missionaries' study of the Dan-Gun myth, Clark (PCUSA) observed that the Korean knowledge of the Dan-Gun myth played a role as a *preparatio evangelica*:

Many of the Christians in Korea first had their interest in the Christian Gospel aroused through their knowledge of Tangoon and his God, and they have recognised that He is one and the same as the God of their Bible. May the day come when all Koreans may be led to do likewise!¹⁴⁰

In summary, those missionaries commonly asserted that the Korean trinity and incarnation, found in the Dan-Gun myth, could be regarded as a partial anticipation of the Christian doctrines of trinity and incarnation; that is, Whanin, Whanin-Tangun, the 'wind' and the supernatural birth of Dan-Gun, respectively, were the counterparts of God, Jesus and the supernatural birth of Jesus, conceived from the Virgin Mary

¹³⁷ George H. Jones, 'The Spirit Worship of the Koreans', *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2/1 (1901), pp. 35-41; Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 176.

¹³⁸ Underwood, *REA*, p. 105; emphasis original

¹³⁹ W. D. Reynolds, 'Here and There', *The Bible in the World* (Oct. 1911), p. 318, cited in Oak, 'North American Missionaries' Understanding', p. 9; Matthew 1:23 reads, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us".'

¹⁴⁰ Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 143; Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, p. 6.

through the Holy Spirit.¹⁴¹ Hence, we may suggest that the Korea missionaries' (particularly the members of the Board of Translators) study of the Dan-Gun myth led them to identify remarkable apparent affinities between the Korean ideas of trinity and incarnation and the Christian doctrines of trinity and incarnation.

In the Korea missionaries' view, these notions were very unique, distinctive concepts which did not apply to the same extent to the Chinese term *Shangti* or *T'ien*. More specifically, while the Korean understanding of incarnation, seen in the myth, can be parallel to the Chinese notion of *T'ien-tsu* (天子: the Son of the Heavenly Lord), there seems to be an obvious difference between two concepts. Whilst *T'ien-tsu* denoted a Chinese emperor or a highest political ruler, sanctioned by the Heavenly Mandate (天命: *T'ien-ming*) to offer a worship to the Supreme Lord at the Altar of Heaven on behalf of the Chinese people,¹⁴² Dan-Gun was regarded as an emanation of *Hananim* by a process of incarnation. Moreover, while a Supreme Being of indigenous religions is broadly perceived as a transcendent being that is far away from human being or human being cannot approach him, the Korean understanding of the incarnated Supreme Being, i.e. a God-man, is unique.

Therefore, as Spencer J. Palmer asserts, it may be inferred that these apparently close analogies between the triune and incarnated *Hananim*, as seen in the Dan-Gun myth, and the Christian doctrine of God enabled the Korea missionaries to affirm *Hananim* as the most suitable term for the God of the Bible with the result that the Term Question in Korea was resolved much faster than was that in China.¹⁴³ However, the question needs to be faced whether these missionaries' Christian perspective led them to re-fashion the indigenous concepts of the Dan-Gun myth into a false conformity with Christian trinitarian theology. We will come back to this point in the Conclusion of this chapter.

5. The Impact of the Term *Hananim* on the Rapid Growth of Korean Protestant Churches

(1) Evangelical Leaders' Reports of the Koreans' Response to Christianity

¹⁴¹ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 14-5.

¹⁴² Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea*, p. 36.

¹⁴³ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, p. 16.

Several evangelical Christian leaders and Korea missionaries reported that Koreans had responded phenomenally to Christian missions and Protestant churches were growing rapidly. John R. Mott (1865-1955), one of the most significant figures in the modern evangelical mission movement, notably as the General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) and the Chair of the World Missionary Conference 1910 in Edinburgh,¹⁴⁴ reported on the striking progress of Christian missionary work in Korea after his return from visiting Korea in 1907:

Yet the marvelous progress of missionary work in that land, the activity of the Christians, their zeal for the cause, their self-sacrificing energy in church work, have challenged the attention of the whole world, until the eyes of all Christendom are riveted on that little despised bud of which John R. Mott, just after his return from visiting Korea¹⁴⁵

Mott thus expected that Korea 'will be the first nation in modern times to be Christianised if the church will take advantage of her present opportunity.'¹⁴⁶ Similarly, Dr. J. E. Kittredge introduced how he was impressed by the Koreans' marvelous response to Christianity after his visitation to the Far East in 1908:

No land interested in more than Korea. Korea was the goal of my desire. Seoul and Pyeng Yang held me almost spell bound. That Wednesday evening prayer meeting with its 1,100 attendants and more, I shall never forget. It was an uplift toward the uppermost heights. The character of converts, the pressing into the kingdom, the immense harvests just crying out for gathers, the economy of missions in that land, the thoroughness of the work, the splendid promise just ahead, and the imperative call of the present hour-Korea's crisis hour-tremendously impressed me.¹⁴⁷

Among the Korea missionaries Underwood frequently reported the outstanding progress of Christian mission in Korea as an 'Editorial Correspondent in Seoul' of the *Missionary Review of the World*.¹⁴⁸ He remarked on the much higher growth of Korean Protestant churches than that seen in China or Japan, although fewer Protestant missionaries had worked in Korea for a much shorter period than in

¹⁴⁴ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* [hereafter *WMCE 1910*] (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Horace G. Underwood, 'Korea's Crisis Hour', *KMF* (Sept. 1908), pp. 99-101.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Horace G. Underwood, 'Korea', *MRW* (April, 1890), p. 295 in *HGUP*, vol. I, p. 685.

China.¹⁴⁹ Specifically, he reported that, as of 1890, while there were 24 missionaries for 12 million Koreans ('one to every 500,000'), there were 550 missionaries for 300 or 400 million Chinese ('one to 300,000'). Despite this disproportion in the numbers of missionaries between China and Korea, he underscored that the results of the Christian missions in Korea were 'more marked than in the opening up of any other field' including China.¹⁵⁰ He further spelled out that whilst the China missionaries had to wait 'a score of years before they baptised first convert, almost a century before they had enough members with which to organise a church', the earliest Korea Protestant missionaries, arriving in 1884 and 1885, baptised the first convert on '11 July 1886' and organised the 'first church in Korea, a Presbyterian church, in September 1887 with a score of members', and thus 'marvelous indeed as was the record of the first seven years [1884-1890], it was as nothing compared to that of the ten years since passed.'¹⁵¹ He concluded that 'no mission field since apostolic days had been so wonderfully blessed.'¹⁵² He optimistically predicted that Korea would be 'a Christian Korea', leading her neighbouring countries, China and Japan, to Christianity:

I set this nation reaching out strong glad arms of influence to China on the one hand and to Japan on the other, softening the prejudice and conservatism of the one, and steadying the faith of the other; thus Korea with a hand in that of either sister, the three join the great circle of Christian nations who praise the Lamb forever and ever and hail Jesus King of kings and Lord of lords.¹⁵³

Accordingly, the Commission I of the World Missionary Conference 1910 in Edinburgh reported that 'Korea is the perhaps the most attractive and responsive

¹⁴⁹ See also his articles, 'Address', *Report of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the AISMA* (Pittsburgh: Murdoch, Kerr & Co., 1892), pp. 53-4; 'The Golden Opportunity in Korea', *MRW* (Sept. 1902), pp. 665-66 in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 516-17; 'The Need for Workers in Korea', *World-Wide Evangelization* (New York: SVM, 1902), pp. 403-06 in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 649-50; 'Twenty Years of Missionary Work in Korea', *Korea Field* (Nov. 1904), pp. 205-10; this paper was presented at the Conference of the twentieth anniversary of the Korea mission of the Board of Foreign Missions, PCUSA, held on September 22, 1904, cited in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 655-66.

¹⁵⁰ Underwood, 'Korea', pp. 685-86.

¹⁵¹ Idem, 'The Golden Opportunity', pp. 516-17 in *HGUP*, vol. III, p. 517.

¹⁵² Idem, 'Twenty Years of Missionary Work in Korea', pp. 205-10 in *HGUP*, vol. III, p. 664.

¹⁵³ Idem, 'Twenty Years of Missionary Work in Korea', pp. 205-10 in *HGUP*, vol. III, p. 666.

field in heathenism today'¹⁵⁴, and the Koreans showed 'a singular readiness to accept the Gospel'¹⁵⁵ and were 'admirable followers of Jesus'.¹⁵⁶ In consequence, the commission further remarked that 'the growth of the Church has been marvelous'.¹⁵⁷

It is noteworthy that the Bible societies reported the Koreans' more active acceptance of the Scriptures and the unprecedented quick growth of the Korean churches than was the case with her neighboring countries, including China. John H. Ritson, who made a visit to China, Korea, Japan, Manchuria and Siberia in connection with his attendance as a representative of the BFBS at the Protestant Missionary Conference in Shanghai in 1907, reported that 'in no country has the wide-spread circulation of the Scriptures done more to evangelise the people than in Korea.'¹⁵⁸ He further reported the subsequent result of their absorption of the Scriptures that 'the spiritual life of the Church has been quickened', and 'there has been a great ingathering into the Church from the heathen around', thereby concluding that 'of all the things seen and heard during the whole of my tour, nothing made so deep an impression on me as the spiritual awaking of Korea.'¹⁵⁹ On the basis of his observation, he optimistically expected that Korea would become a leading Christian country in East Asia, as Mott predicted:

Twenty-five years ago there was scarcely a Christian in Korea – last year there were 71,000 Church members and probationers in the Protestant communions alone, and it seems as though Korea would be the first nation in the East to become Christian. She is only a child among the nations, but "A little child shall lead them".¹⁶⁰

The BFBS, the main publisher of the Korean Bible, spelled out that 'it was wonderful how the seed [of the Scriptures] was sown, and sprang up' in the early stage of Protestant missions in Korea (1884-1904), underscoring that the Koreans

¹⁵⁴ World Missionary Conference, 1910 [hereafter WMC 1910], *Report of Commission I* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), p. 80.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁸ John H. Ritson, *Abroad for the Bible Society* (London: Robert Culley, 1911), p. 164.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

were ‘so hungry for the Word of God’.¹⁶¹ Subsequently, based upon the comparative sales records of the Scriptures in the world, they noted that the early twentieth century (1904-20) were ‘remarkable for a substantial increase in circulation’ of the Scriptures in Korea, thus stating that ‘these sales, averaging half a million yearly, were probably the highest in the world in proportion to the population concerned.’¹⁶² The NBSS, the original publisher of the early UPC Version, recorded that the Koreans ‘have so long acknowledged their indebtedness to the Word’ since they were ‘thronging the [NBSS] depot on market days’ to buy the Scriptures at the outset of Protestant missions in 1884.¹⁶³ John Fox, the Correspondence Secretary of the ABS, reported after his visit to Korea in 1907 that the Scriptures bore fruit ‘immediately, abundant and wonderful’, more than any other field, including China, with the result that ‘the ingathering exceed all expectations’.¹⁶⁴ He further suggested that this was because ‘God has been pleased early to send the early rain’, and thus expected that the Korea mission field created ‘unprecedented opportunity’ for the Christian mission.¹⁶⁵

Accordingly, the Commission I of the World Missionary Conference 1910 in Edinburgh reported that several ‘striking features stand out markedly in the work in missions in Korea; special prominence has been given to the Bible, which today is the book having the largest sale among the Korean people.’¹⁶⁶

(2) The Reasons for the Koreans’ Remarkable Response to Christianity

What factors lay behind the Koreans’ unusually favourable response to Christianity and the extraordinary growth of Korean Protestant churches in comparison with other mission fields such as China? A large number of Korean and

¹⁶¹ William Canton, *A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1884-1904* (London: John Murray, 1910), p. 219.

¹⁶² James M. Roe, *A History of the BFBS, 1905-1954* (London: The BFBS, 1965), p. 150; they specifically left the sale records in Korea: 50,000 copies in 1904, the total rose to 66,000 in 1910, 280,000 in 1911-1913, 827,000 in 1915 and 483,000 in 1920.

¹⁶³ William C. Somerville [General Secretary of the NBSS], *From Iona to Dunblane: the Story of the NBSS to 1948* (Edinburgh: the NBSS, 1948), p. 91; James C. F. Robertson, *The Bible in Korea* (London: the BFBS, 1954), pp. 32-3, 35.

¹⁶⁴ John Fox, ‘Report of Korea Mission Field on 24 December 1907’, in *HGUP*, vol. III, p. 488.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ WMC 1910, *Report of Commission I*, p. 75.

foreign scholars – notably, Man-Yol Yi, Bong-Rin Ro and Sebastian C. H. Kim (Korean scholars); Arthur J. Brown, Mark A. Noll, James H. Grayson, A. W. Wasson, R. E. Shearer and Kenneth M. Wells (foreign scholars) – have analysed the variety of theological and sociological reasons for such rapid growth of Korean Protestant Churches.¹⁶⁷ They commonly argue that the growth may be associated with several facts; the Korea missionaries’ adoption of the indigenising principles of John L. Nevius (viz. Nevius Method) in 1890; the political and social crisis of Korea caused by the Qing-Japan War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05); the vernacular Bible translation; and the trained native Christians’ eager contribution to evangelisation of the gospel and circulation of the Bible. Several scholars, notably Wells, also argue that Protestantism had partially revitalised a Korean ‘self-reconstruction nationalism’, encouraging political resistance movements to Japanese colonialism with the result that a number of nationalistic Korean political leaders (notably Chi-Ho Yun, Seung-Man Lee, Chang-Ho Ahn and Man-Sik Cho) and their followers became Christians.¹⁶⁸

In addition, those scholars particularly argue that it can be due to the Koreans’ extraordinary love of the Bible, viz. the ‘Bible-loving Christians’ or the ‘Bible-

¹⁶⁷ Man-Yol Yi ed., ‘한국교회의 성장과 그 요인(The Korean Church Growth and Its Factors)’, in 한국기독교와 민족통일운동 (*The Korean Christianity and the National Unification Movement*), ed. idem (Seoul: IKCH, 2001), pp. 173-217; Yi fairly lists up Korean scholars’ researches into this issue on footnote #1 & 2 in p. 173; see also Ro, ‘Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans’, pp. 229-30; Bong-Rin Ro & Marlin L. Nelson, eds., *Korean Church Growth Explosion*, revised ed., (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 1995); Sebastian C. H. Kim ed., *Christian Theology in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2008), pp. 130-34; Arthur J. Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919), pp. 515-23; Mark A. Noll, ‘Evangelical Identity, Power, and Culture in the ‘Great’ Nineteenth Century’, in *Christianity Reborn*, ed., Donald M. Lewis (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), p. 49; Daniel H. Bays & James H. Grayson, ‘Christianity in China, Korea and Japan’, in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 8, *World Christianities c.1815-c.1914*, eds., Sheridan Gilley & Brian Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2006), p. 508; A. W. Wasson, *Church Growth in Korea* (New York: I.M.C., 1934); R. E. Shearer, *Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1966)

¹⁶⁸ Kenneth M. Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937* (Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 1-9, 19-20; for the further study on the relation of Protestantism with Korean nationalism, see Wells’ treatises; ‘Yun Chi-ho and the Quest for National Integrity’, *Korea Journal* 22-1 (Jan. 1982); ‘The Rationale of Korean Economic Nationalism under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1922-1932: The Case of Cho Man-Sik’s Products Promotion Society’, *Modern Asian Studies* 19-4 (Nov. 1985); ‘Civic Morality in the Nationalist Thought of Yun Chi-Ho, 1881-1911’, *Papers on Far Eastern History* vol. 28 (Sept. 1983), cited in Jung-Shin Park, 한국기독교사인식 (*A New Understanding of Korean Church History*) (Seoul: Hye-Ahn Publish, 2004), pp. 17-37.

Christianity'.¹⁶⁹ Hence, Charles A. Clark (PCUSA) spelled out that 'the Korean Church is built upon the Bible, upon the simple Bible text.'¹⁷⁰ This distinctive aspect of the Korean Christians may be due to the fact, as Sebastian Kim explains, that 'the Korean education system was heavily influenced by the Confucian traditional method of teaching and learning.'¹⁷¹ Accordingly, Clark argued that 'the Korean Church accepts the Bible as God's Book of Authority, God's direct Word of power to men.'¹⁷²

The Korea Missionaries' Understanding of the Reason for the Koreans' Remarkable Response to Christianity

While taking due account of all these suggested reasons, we should also note the early twentieth century Korea missionaries, particularly the Board of Translators of the BCK, argued that one of the significant reasons for such remarkable growth could be the term *Hananim*; that is, this term prepared the Koreans' mind to be more ready to receive the God of the Bible within their existing religious framework than was the case of *Shangti* (or *T'ien*) in China. We will now explore their arguments, particularly those advocated by the members of the Board of Translators.

At the celebration service for the completion of the AV-KBT in 1911, Gale (PCUSA) presented his paper, 'Korea's Preparation for the Bible', in which he mentioned five noticeable points by which 'Korea prepared the way for the glad reception of the Bible.'¹⁷³ Of the five, two were related to the term *Hananim*. First, he affirmed the term *Hananim*, 'the One Great One', as the 'wonderful appellative by which Korea stood ready to welcome the coming of the Bible' because of its unique monotheistic attributes in contrast to the Chinese *Shang-Je* (*Shangti*) which simply denoted 'the highest of many personalities' or the Greek *Theos* or the Japanese *Kami* (a Japanese generic theistic term) which denoted 'many so called deities'.¹⁷⁴ For

¹⁶⁹ Kim, *Christian Theology in Asia*, pp. 131-32; 'Matters of Moment', *Bible in the World* (Mar. 1907), p. 70, cited in Yi ed., *The Korean Christianity*, p. 205.

¹⁷⁰ Charles A. Clark, *The Nevius Plan for Mission Work* (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1937), p. 20.

¹⁷¹ Kim, *Christian Theology in Asia*, pp. 131-32; Yi ed., *The Korean Christianity*, pp. 205-11.

¹⁷² Clark, *The Nevius Plan*, p. 21.

¹⁷³ James S. Gale, 'Korea's Preparation for the Bible', *KMF* (March 1912), pp. 86-8.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 86.

instance, he spelled out that when he told non-Christian Koreans in a village a story from the Scriptures about God, they answered as if the Bible was talking about *Hananim*, their supreme god:

Immediately when the Bible is read, 'In the beginning some One created the heavens and the earth', they answer, '*Hananim*.' 'Who is angry with the wicked every day?' 'God.' 'The heavens declare the glory of *Hananim*; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.'¹⁷⁵

Second, Gale remarked the distinctive resemblance of *Hananim* to the God of the Old Testament, whereas *Shangti* 'falls short' of suggesting Him.¹⁷⁶ Besides these two points, he also added a third, i.e. the distinctive 'exaltation of Literature' in Korea, by stating that 'she exalts books and so the Book of all books [including the Bible] finds its pathway prepared and as by a kind of prophetic prescience, a welcome accorded which is perhaps greater than that seen in any other part of the world [including China].'¹⁷⁷ This point is in accordance with the distinctive aspect of Korean Christianity as 'Bible-Christianity'.¹⁷⁸ He thus concluded that when the Bible was introduced to the Koreans, they naturally absorbed it, and further revered it as the sacred texts.¹⁷⁹

As previously noted, Underwood argued that whilst primitive monotheism in East Asia (Korea, China and Japan) commonly had deteriorated into polytheism, Korea had retained 'more of that primitive belief' or 'more of her ancient simplicity of belief' than China and Japan because of 'her longer and more complete isolation and retirement' from her neighboring countries.¹⁸⁰ He thus asserted that Korea's high ideal view of his Supreme God, *Hananim*, which has been 'providentially conserved for him', played an important role as 'an anchor' in keeping Korea from drifting farther from their ancient monotheistic faith, and thereby 'it is probably to a great extent due to the stronghold which this ancient faith still has upon him that he

¹⁷⁵ Idem, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1909), p. 79; emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁶ Idem, 'Korea's Preparation for the Bible', p. 86.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 88.

¹⁷⁸ Kim, *Christian Theology in Asia*, p. 132.

¹⁷⁹ *Annual Report of the Foreign Missionary Society of Methodist Episcopal Church for 1891*, p. 274; *Annual Report for BFBS for 1901*, p. 291; *Annual Report of BFBS for 1916*, p. 294.

¹⁸⁰ Underwood, *REA*, pp. 133-34, 242.

accepts Christianity with such phenomenal readiness.’¹⁸¹ Subsequently, as he continued to argue, the Koreans were ‘ready to listen to the Gospel, willing and eager to purchase’ the Scriptures, thus resulting in the high rate of the Scripture sales in Korea.¹⁸² Accordingly he delineated that the Koreans were ‘nothing but a simple child in the faith, who takes God at His word and believes in prayer’ and their ‘attitude is generally throughout the whole country is favorable’ to the Scriptures, thereby highlighting their high ‘receptivity’ of the Scriptures.¹⁸³

In 1915, George H. Jones (AMN), one of the Board of Translators and now the Editorial Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church (hereafter BFM-MEC), emphasised that the ‘Korean finds no difficulty in assenting to the existence of a deity’, because ‘he believes that there reigns a supreme God’, *Hananim*. He further argued that the ancient etymological meaning of *Hananim* was ‘the One Great One’, with a closer resemblance to the Christian God than did other theistic names in China. He thus concluded that *Hananim* was ‘one of the first points of contact between Christianity and native religious conceptions’ of a supreme god in Korea, an indigenous monotheistic name which enabled Koreans to accept the God of Christianity more rapidly than other countries.¹⁸⁴

In the *Missionary Review of the World* in 1911, the North American missionaries in Korea unanimously declared that *Hananim* was the ‘nearest equivalent’ theistic term to the Christian God in comparison with other theistic names in other mission fields, thereby solving the Korean Term Question only within ‘twenty-five years’.¹⁸⁵

Modern Christian Scholars’ Understanding of the Reasons for the Koreans’ Remarkable Response to Christianity

¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 133-34.

¹⁸² Idem, ‘Twenty Years of Missionary Work in Korea’, pp. 205-10 in *HGUP*, vol. III, p. 659.

¹⁸³ Idem, ‘The Growth of the Church in Korea’, pp. 99-101 in *HGUP*, vol. III, pp. 604-08.

¹⁸⁴ George H. Jones, *The Rise of Church in Korea*, Chapter 5 (G. H. Jones Papers, 1915, Missionary Research Library Collection, Union Theological Seminary Library, New York), cited in Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 9.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Korea-The Changes of Seven Years’, *MRW* (Feb. 1911), p. 144, cited in Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 9.

In line with the early twentieth-century Korea missionaries, a number of modern foreign and Korean Christian scholars conventionally argue that the adoption in a Christian form of the native term for the Supreme Being, *Hananim*, facilitated the Koreans' smooth acceptance of the God of Christianity with the result that it prompted more rapid and massive influx of converts into Protestantism than was seen in China.

First, we may cite several such arguments by foreign scholars. Mark A. Noll, relying upon three doctoral dissertations by Korean students in regard to Korean Bible translation,¹⁸⁶ argues that 'use of the term *Hananim* may have facilitated early Korean acceptance of a Protestant Christianity that missionaries regarded as traditional, even traditionally Western', and so the term *Hananim* 'may also have helped make it possible' for the Korean indigenous religious thought 'to be incorporated with the new framework of Protestant Christianity.'¹⁸⁷ James H. Grayson asserts that John Ross's introduction of the 'key theological term *Hananim*' in his first Korean Bible translation impacted the unprecedented growth of the early Korean Protestant Churches in Manchuria and the north-western Korea.¹⁸⁸ In his monograph *Korea and Christianity* (1967), Spencer J. Palmer also concludes that 'the rapid growth of Christianity in Korea can partially be explained on the basis of the fact' that the Koreans found 'a mirror of their own true god [*Hananim*] in Christian religion'.¹⁸⁹ In line with Palmer, Robert Scott remarks on the similarity between these two theistic terms as one of the most significant factors for the growth by stating that 'this God of the Koreans is similar to the God of the Jewish Old Testament... on this *deep-seated monotheism* the Christian missionary has built the amazing success.'¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Noll cites Sek-Keun O, *Der Volksglaube und das Christentum in Korea* (PhD thesis, Free University of Berlin, 1979); Jeong Man Choi, *Historical Development of the Indigenization Movement in the Korean Protestant Church* (Doctor of Missiology thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary); Ki Jong So, *The Translation of the Bible into Korean* (PhD thesis, Drew University, 1993)

¹⁸⁷ Noll, 'Evangelical Identity, Power, and Culture', pp. 49-51.

¹⁸⁸ Grayson, 'Christianity in China, Korea and Japan', pp. 506, 508; idem, *Korea-A Religious History*, p. 156.

¹⁸⁹ Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, pp. 17, 96.

¹⁹⁰ Robert Scott, 'Warring Mentalities in the Far East', *Asia* XX. 7 (Aug. 1920), p. 699; cf. Chang-Soon Kim, 'Christianity in Korea', *The Culture of Korea* (Honolulu, 1945-56), p. 108, cited in Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, p. 18; emphasis mine.

Second, we may cite several such arguments by Korean scholars. Bong-Rin Ro argues that the Korea missionaries' adoption of *Hananim* is 'one of the important reasons for Koreans' acceptance of the monotheistic God of the Bible; consequently, the churches have grown very rapidly among the Korean people.'¹⁹¹ Sung-Deuk Oak spells out that 'the identification of the traditional Korean god, *Hananim*, with the Christian God was one of the most important factors in the success of the Protestant missions in Korea.'¹⁹² The main thesis of *Naming God in Korea* (2009) by Sung-Wook Hong is that the term *Hananim*, a contextualised form of the Christian God in the Korean religious context, accordingly prepared the Koreans to accept the Christian God before the arrival of foreign missionaries, and consequently impacted the striking expansion of Protestantism in Korea.¹⁹³ In addition, it is further argued that as the Korean Bible with the use of *Hananim* prompted the 1907 Great Revival in Pyung-yang,¹⁹⁴ sweeping over the entire Korea peninsula, the Korean Protestant Churches had been transformed from a missionary-receiving-church to a missionary-sending-church.¹⁹⁵

In summary, it has been commonly argued both by the early twentieth-century Korea missionaries and by modern Christian scholars that the adoption of the term *Hananim* in the Korean Bible contributed to the growth of the Korean Protestant Churches.

Conclusion

This chapter will conclude by returning to the research questions raised in the introduction.

In the first place, this chapter has shown that Underwood's eventual change of mind to accept *Hananim* in 1905 may be attributed to several reasons. First, in the realm of theology, Legge's *Religions of China* inspired him to accept a degeneration

¹⁹¹ Ro, 'Communicating the Biblical Concept of God to Koreans', p. 223.

¹⁹² Oak 'Shamanistic Tan'gun and Christian Hananim', p. 42.

¹⁹³ Hong, *Naming God in Korea*; cf. Kim, 'Korean Religious Culture', p. 123.

¹⁹⁴ Yi ed., *The Korean Christianity*, pp. 210-11.

¹⁹⁵ Timothy Kiho Park, *The Missionary Movement of the Korean Church* (Pasadena: IAM, 1999), pp. 154-56.

theory of the history of Sino-Korean religions. In turn, this led him to study early Korean history, thereby reaching the conclusion that the Koreans had preserved a primitive monotheistic belief in the Supreme Being, *Hananim*, yet had degenerated into polytheistic tradition. Furthermore, he came to believe that *Hananim* played a significant role as an ‘anchor’ in keeping the Koreans from drifting away from their primitive faith, and prepared them to readily accept the God of Christianity. Second, from a sociological viewpoint, his responsibility as the elected Chairman of the GCEMK in 1905 to pursue ecumenism among the Korea Protestant missionaries led him to accept the term *Hananim* to resolve the Term Question, the most vexed hindrance to the union among the missionaries. Third, the urgent need for the Korean Bible during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and the following Japanese protectorate (1905) motivated him to accept *Hananim* in order to print the permanent script of the AV-KNT with the unified term for God.

In the second place, this chapter has shown a considerable theological divergence between the Term Question in China and that in Korea. Whilst the former lasted interminably for over three centuries between the two equal and opposite parties – between the Jesuits and the Spanish orders, and thereafter between the *Shangti* party and the *Shen* party – for over three centuries, the latter was a dispute that lasted for three decades only between the vast majority-the *Hananim* party and the anti-*Hananim* party (or the *Ch'onzhu* party) supported by a small minority, notably Underwood. This chapter has argued that this disproportion and the rapid resolution of the Korean Term Question can be attributed to the Korean missionaries’ (particularly the Board of Translators) discovery of much closer analogy between the ‘Korean Trinity’ and incarnation, seen in the Dan-Gun myth, and the Christian trinitarianism and incarnationism, than was the case with *Shangti* in China.

Third, in the view of the second conclusion, this chapter has suggested that the Korea missionaries understood that the adoption of the term *Hananim* in a Christian form in the Bible enabled the Koreans to make more effective transition from their indigenous image of the Supreme Being to the Christian image of God, and further contributed to the higher rate of growth of the Korean churches compared to that of the churches in China even though fewer Protestant missionaries worked in Korea

for a much shorter period than in China. This is because, in the Korea missionaries' view, the term *Hananim* constructed an effective bridge (or a point of contact) between the Korean religious culture and the imported Christian faith. That is, the Korea missionaries understood that the resonance of this term was uniquely suited to pave the way for an understanding of the monotheistic, incarnational and trinitarian God of Christianity as being both the God of traditional Korean belief and the God of the universe with the result that Koreans responded more positively to Christianity than did the Chinese.

However, we should take due note in conclusion of the strong probability that the Korea missionaries had seriously mis-read the historical evidence for the nature of early Korean religion, or, at the very least, had been highly selective in their reading of such evidence. James L. Cox contends that in Africa especially, Christian missionary scholars viewed indigenous religion through evangelistic spectacles, which led them to a non-empirical and non-scientific theological assumption; that is, the Christian God had preceded among the indigenous people 'particularly through the postulated universal belief in a Supreme Being' in order to make them be ready to receive the Christian God.¹⁹⁶ In turn, as Cox further suggests, as Christian missionaries presented Christianity among the indigenous people, they 'transformed' the Supreme Being variously known and named by indigenous peoples into conformity with 'Christian understanding of God'.¹⁹⁷ In consequence, as he further asserts, the Christian missionaries 'brought the new missionary intention from the outside into the original meaning of the Supreme Being.'¹⁹⁸

In support of Cox's argument, there can be little question that the Korea missionaries utilised the Dan-Gun myth as a point of contact with the Christian truth on grounds that were strictly non-empirical and non-scientific.¹⁹⁹ For instance, the Korean notion of the triune Supreme Being in the Dan-Gun myth seems to be incompatible with the Christian doctrine of trinity. More specifically, there are the

¹⁹⁶ James L. Cox, *From Primitive to Indigenous* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 27-8.

¹⁹⁷ Idem, *Rational Ancestors: Scientific Rationality and African Indigenous Religions* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), p. 24; this chapter is also published under the title of 'The Classification "Primal Religions" as a Non-Empirical Christian Theological Construct', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1996).

¹⁹⁸ Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, p. 24.

¹⁹⁹ Idem, *From Primitive to Indigenous*, pp. 25-6.

obvious major differences between the Trinitarian doctrine of the Dan-Gun myth and that of Christianity: in the Dan-Gun myth, the incarnated Son of the Lord of Heaven, or the incarnated Son of the Farther, (Hwan-ung) forms a union with the bear-woman (Ung-Nyo), and the offspring of that union, Dan-Gun, forms the third person of the Trinity. In the myth, the ‘Spirit’ is the second person of the Trinity and is synonymous with the Son of the Father (in fact the ‘Spirit’ is not explicitly described in the myth), and the God-man is a third person, derivative from the Son-Spirit. Nevertheless, it can be observed that the Korea missionaries’ missionary purpose and theological assumptions (without adequate empirical examination) presumably led them to transform or distort the original meaning of the myth into conformity with the Christian doctrine. Specifically, when the AV-KBT was published in 1911, the North American missionaries spelled out that whilst ‘there was no word in Korean language for the name of God’ at the outset of their mission, they at last ‘added to it [*Hananim*] a meaning it never had before.’²⁰⁰ Accordingly, as previously noted, Clark (PCUSA) confidentially regarded the Korean original knowledge of the Dan-Gun myth as a *preparatio evangelica*.²⁰¹ Moreover, in view of Cox’s criticism, the Korea missionaries’ argument for the term *Hananim* as one of the central reasons for the rapid growth of Korean churches could be in fact an attempt to justify the use of *Hananim*.

In other words, this non-empirical perspective led them to claim a theological ‘continuity’ between the non-Christian past and the Christian present by suggesting that the Christian God had a vernacular name among Korean primal religionists. It is noteworthy that their approach bears a remarkable similarity to more recent theorists of ‘primal religion’, such as Walls, John Mbiti, Kwame Bediako and Lamin Sanneh, who have argued for a similar continuity between ‘primal past’ and ‘Christian past’ in the African context.²⁰² Moreover, in a similar vein to the argument advanced by these primal religion theorists in particular relation to Africa, this confessional stance

²⁰⁰ ‘Korea-The Changes of Seven Years’, p. 144, cited in Oak, ‘North American missionaries’ Understanding’, p. 9.

²⁰¹ Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*, p. 143; see p. 196, footnote #140.

²⁰² For instance, see Andrew F. Walls, ‘The Evangelical Revival, the Missionary Movement, and Africa’, in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, eds. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and G. A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford U. P., 1994), pp. 310-30; Andrew F. Walls, ‘Primal Religious Traditions’, in *the Missionary Movement in Christianity History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), pp. 133-34.

enabled the Korea missionaries to attribute the great success of the Christian missions among Korean people to the supposed theological continuity between *Hananim* and the Christian God.²⁰³

However, we should reiterate here that this thesis is not primarily intended to examine whether the Korea missionaries' acknowledgment of the Korean trinity and incarnation in the Dan-Gun myth was true or false in the light of modern scholarship in religious studies. Rather, it has been mainly concerned to explore how the Korea missionaries' theology of indigenous religion had been developed in the course of the Korean Term Question in the light of a Christian missiological perspective. We will come back to this issue in the next chapter in more detail.

²⁰³ Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, pp. 23, 27.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The Korean Term Question in Wider Perspective: The Debate over ‘Primal Religion’

As the title of this thesis indicates, the three primary goals of this thesis were to study (1) the Chinese roots of the Term Question in Korea; (2) the theological continuity between the Term Questions in China and Korea; and (3) the divergence of the Term Question between the two countries. In accordance with these goals, the conclusions of this thesis can be summarised as follows. Additionally, in this chapter, we will set the overall argument of this thesis in a wider perspective – relating it not only to a missiological writing viewpoint based on the theory of ‘Primal Religion’ but also to critiques of this writing emanating from scholars of religious studies.

(1) In the first place, this thesis has analysed the Chinese roots of the Term Question in Korea. The Term Question in China first surfaced as a terminological controversy among Roman Catholic missions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Matteo Ricci of the Jesuits first used a Confucian theistic term, *Shangti* (上帝: the Supreme Lord) or *T'ien* (天: Heaven) adopted from the Confucian Classics, as the name of God in his *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, and his Jesuit confreres followed it. This was because Ricci believed that the ‘Confucian monotheism’, characterised in the Confucian Classics (particularly in the two oldest books, *the Book of History* and *the Book of Odes*), were essentially congruent with Christian monotheism. In contrast, the Spanish Dominicans and the Franciscans opposed the use of *Shangti* or *T'ien* by regarding these terms as the names of Chinese heathen gods, and favoured a neologism, *Tienzhu* (天主: the Lord of Heaven). This Catholic Term Question in China became part of the wider controversy over ancestral rites, known as the ‘Chinese Rites Controversy’, and lasted over a century (1637-1742). It was finally brought to an end by the three papal decrees issued by the Vatican in 1704 (Pope Clement XI), 1710 (Pope Clement XI), 1715 (the bull *Ex illa die* issued by Pope Clement XI) and 1742 (the bull *Ex quo singulari* issued by Pope Benedict XIV). The decrees ruled in favour of Dominican and Franciscan arguments and prohibited all Roman Catholics in China from the using *Shangti* or *T'ien* (and from practising ancestral rites), and ordered them to use *T'ienzhu* instead. A second phase

of the Chinese Term Question involved nineteenth century Protestant missions, and confronted missions with a choice between *Shangti* or *T'ien*, most notably advocated by James Legge and the LMS, and a generic term for god, *Shen* (神), supported by a majority of the American missionaries.

These Chinese theistic terms – *Shangti* (and partially *T'ien*), *T'ienzhu* and *Shen* – were imported into the Korea mission field, and transformed into Korean linguistic forms – *Hananim*, *Ch'onzhu* and *Shin* respectively. First, the terms *Shangti* and *T'ien*, used in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* and other Christian literature, were transmitted to Korea when Korean envoys were given them by the Jesuits in China, and were adopted in Korea from the seventeenth to the late-eighteenth centuries. The Scottish Presbyterian, John Ross of the UPC in Manchuria, in his first Korean New Testament (1877-1887), translated the name of God as *Hananim*, following the patterns set by the *Shangti* edition of the Delegates' Version. Moreover, the *Shangti* edition of the Delegates' Version was also distributed by the BFBS to Korean Confucian scholars. Second, the term *T'ienzhu* was introduced to Korea by French Catholic missionaries, who arrived in Korea from the late eighteenth century onwards. As a result, the first Korean Roman Catholics and later the Anglican mission (the SPG) adopted *Tienzhu* (Korean *Ch'onzhu*), following Catholic practice in China. Third, a Korean diplomat in Japan, Su-Jung Lee, adopted *Shen* (Korean *Shin*) from the *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culbertson Version, in his Korean Bible translations (1883-1885). This *Shen* edition of the Bridgman-Culbertson Version was also brought by the ABS to Korea. As a result, the need to choose between the three Korean theistic terms, derived theologically from the three Chinese divine terms, consequently triggered the Term Question in Korea from 1887 to 1911.

(2) In the second place, this thesis has argued that there was a significant measure of theological continuity between the Chinese and Korean Term Questions. The Term Questions in China and Korea proceeded on a similar pattern. First, the Catholic Term Question in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China and the second dispute phase (1894-1903) of the Term Question in Korea were both terminological controversies between an indigenous theistic term (*Shangti* or *T'ien* and *Hananim*) and a neologism (*T'ienzhu* and Korean *Ch'onzhu*). Second, the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China and the first dispute phase

(1887-1893) of the Term Question in Korea were both controversies between an indigenous theistic term (*Shangti* and *Hananim*) and a generic term (*Shen* and Korean *Shin*).

Central to both Term Questions was the theological issue of whether a primitive form of monotheism, consonant with Christian belief, had existed among the Chinese and Koreans. This thesis has suggested that those missionaries – such as Matteo Ricci, James Legge, John Ross and the *Hananim* party of the Korea Protestant missionaries –, who adhered to the existence of ‘Confucian monotheism’ (in the case of Ricci) or a degeneration theory of the history of religions, used either *Shangti* (and *T’ien*) or *Hananim* as the name of the God of the Bible. In contrast, it has suggested that those missionaries – such as the Dominicans and Franciscans, the *Shen* party of the Chinese Protestant missionaries and the anti-*Hananim* party of the Korea missionaries, notably Underwood –, who rejected the existence of primitive monotheism, preferred to introduce the neologism (*T’ienzhu* or *Ch’onzhu*) or the generic term (*Shin* or *Shen*) in order to teach the Christian theological orthodoxy of monotheism. The thesis has shown that those Korea missionaries, who favoured *Hananim* in the light of a degeneration theory of the history of East Asian religions, believed that *Hananim* corresponded to *Shangti*. This was because they understood that both terms represented a form of primitive monotheism in Korea and China.

(3) In the third place, this thesis has argued that there was, nevertheless, a significant divergence between the Term Question in China and that in Korea. The Term Question in China dragged on for over three centuries (1637-1890) and became interminably polarised between two equal and opposite parties – between the Jesuits (*Shangti* or *T’ien*) on the one hand and the Dominicans and Franciscans (*T’ienzhu*) on the other hand, and later between the *Shangti* party and the *Shen* party in Protestant missions. In contrast, the Term Question in Korea was a short-term argument for three decades (1887-1911) between a vast Protestant majority, comprising the *Hananim* party, and a small minority, comprising the opponents of *Hananim* (or the advocats of *Ch’onzhu*), notably Underwood (PCUSA). In particular, this thesis has shown that Underwood, who presided over the translation process from 1887 to 1911 and had been the fiercest opponent of the use of *Hananim*, came to accept *Hananim* as the name of God in 1905 with the result that the Korean Term

Question was eventually resolved when the first AV-KNT, affirming *Hananim* as the name of God, was published in 1906. We have suggested that his eventual change of mind was influenced by his reading of James Legge's *Religions of China*, arguing that the Chinese originally had been monotheists yet had degenerated into polytheists. He was now persuaded that the Koreans had already worshipped God through their own Supreme Being, *Hananim*, long centuries before Christianity was introduced.

The thesis has argued that this disproportion and the rapid resolution of the Korean Term was due to the Korea missionaries' discovery of an analogy between the Korean indigenous belief in the triune and incarnated Supreme Being, as seen in the Dan-Gun myth, and the Christian doctrine of Trinity and incarnation, a much closer analogy than was possible in the case of the Chinese theistic terms, *Shangti* (or *T'ien*), *T'ienzhu* and *Shen*. In view of this apparent congruence between *Hananim* and the Christian God, the Korea missionaries suggested that the adoption of the term *Hananim* in a Christian form facilitated the Koreans' effective transition from their indigenous image of the Supreme Being to a Christian image of God, a conclusion which a number of modern Korean and foreign Christian scholars have endorsed.¹ This was because the resonance of this term appeared uniquely suited to pave the way for an understanding of the monotheistic, trinitarian and incarnated God of Christianity as being both the God of traditional Korean belief and the God of the universe. In turn, they suggested that the Christian adoption of the term *Hananim* subsequently contributed to the higher rate of growth of the Korean church compared to that of the church in China, even though fewer Protestant missionaries worked in Korea for a much shorter period than in China.

In addition, this thesis has suggested another aspect of divergence between two Term Questions. The Chinese term *Shangti* (or *T'ien*), the Confucian Supreme Deity, reflected primitive monotheism in the Chinese Confucian context, and this notion had been reproduced in the Confucian Classics, since pre-historic times, i.e. around the twenty-fourth century BC. Comparatively, the Korean term *Hananim*, the Korean Supreme Being, represented 'deep-seated' primitive monotheism in the Korean shamanistic context,² and this concept had descended in oral rather than written

¹ See pp. 205-07.

² See p. 206, footnote #190.

forms, notably through the Dan-Gun myth, since the twenty-fourth century BC. As seen, this myth was not recorded in a written form until the thirteenth century AD.

The Parallel between the Korea Missionaries' Theology of Korean Religions and the Theory of 'Primal Religions'

In the final pages of this thesis, we intend to suggest that the Korea missionaries' theology of non-Christian religions in regard to the Term Question can be regarded as parallel to the theory of 'primal religions' which Andrew F. Walls and several other scholars have advocated in recent years. In particular, while Walls most frequently applies his theory of primal religions in the African context, he argues that this primal religions theory can be applied to any field because primal religions represent a 'worldwide phenomenon, not confined to any one religion of the world.'³ Specifically, in referring to Sung-Wook Hong's *Naming God in Korea* (2009), he applies his theory to the Korea context by spelling out that 'the God of the Bible, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has an ancient Korean vernacular name.'⁴

However, before exploring this parallel, we need to comment on the terminological change from the term *primitive* to *primal*. In the nineteenth century, James Legge, John Ross and the Korea missionaries broadly used the term *primitive*. According to James L. Cox, modern scholars in the 1970s, such as Harold W. Turner and John B. Taylor, rejected the term 'primitive' as reflecting 'negative connotations concerning the mentality and stage of development of indigenous peoples'.⁵ They advocated the term *primal* as an alternative. Accordingly, Turner observed that if we use the term *primitive*, 'it is a great mistake to think that a tribal society is primitive or poor in scientific knowledge, tools or agricultural methods, it must also be

³ Andrew F. Walls, 'Primal Religious Traditions in Today's World', in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), p. 120; this was first published in Frank B. Whaling, ed., *Religion in Today's World* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), pp. 250-78. Walls' article is cited in James L. Cox, *Rational Ancestors: Scientific Rationality and African Indigenous Religions* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998), p. 16; Cox's chapter was first published under the title of 'The Classification "Primal Religions" as a Non-Empirical Christian Theological Construct', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1996)

⁴ Sung-wook Hong, *Naming God in Korea* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), p. x.

⁵ Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, pp. 15-6.

primitive mentally and in its thinking about human life.’⁶ Moreover, the use of the term ‘primal religions’ is defended by Walls ‘as avoiding the bias of the term “primitive” and as overcoming the tendency of Western scientific classifications to employ “evolutionistic undertones”.’⁷

Nevertheless, we may find several common characteristics between the Korea missionaries’ theology of other religions and modern missiological theory of primal religions, which may be enumerated as follows.

In the first place, the Korea missionaries’ history of religions, which claimed that primitive monotheism in Korea had universally preceded other religions and underlay them as a form of substratum in China and Korea, can be seen as corresponding closely to the modern missiological theory of primal religions. Turner, who has played an important role in promoting the use of the term ‘primal religions’ in Britain, defines them as the ‘most basic or fundamental religious forms in the overall history of mankind’.⁸ He further notes that the primal religions ‘have preceded and contributed to the other great religious systems.’⁹ Walls also defines primal religions as those that have historical antecedence and ‘basic, elemental status in human experience’.¹⁰ Thus, he argues that primal religions ‘underlie all other faiths’, and so ‘all other believers, and for that matter non-believers are primalists underneath.’¹¹ Moreover, according to him, in many cases primal religions exist ‘in symbiosis with’ all the other religions, ‘continuing (sometimes more, sometimes less transformed) to have an active life within and around cultures and communities influenced by those faiths.’¹²

In the second place, in accordance with the first point, a parallel can be found between the religious typology of the Korea missionaries, who regarded the *myth* of Dan-Gun as the central evidence for the pre-existence of a Christian notion of trinity in Korea, and the primal religions theory which also acknowledges *myth* as one of

⁶ Ibid, p. 16; here Cox cites Harold W. Turner, *Living Tribal Religions: An Introductory Survey of the Religious Life of Tribal Societies on a Thematic Basis* (London: Ward Lock Educational, 1971), p. 7.

⁷ Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, p. 16; emphasis mine.

⁸ Ibid, p. 17.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Walls, ‘Primal Religious Traditions’, pp. 119, 121; Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, p. 17.

¹¹ Walls, ‘Primal Religious Traditions’, pp. 119, 121.

¹² Walls, ‘Primal Religious Traditions’, p. 119; Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, p. 17.

the typical features of primal religions. Specifically, Cox notes that one of the central characteristics of primal religions is that they rely on ‘oral or non-literary forms of communication’, typically *myths*, ‘the primary medium for conveying the oral traditions’, on the grounds that primal religions are ‘identified by the non-literary transmission of sacred stories’ without forms of ‘codified statements of belief’.¹³

In the third place, according to the explanatory framework of the Korea missionaries, they generally understood that a primal religion in Korea was effectively replaced by Christianity on account of their analogies to each other, as the Koreans turned away from their old faiths to Christianity because of their unsettled political situation from the late nineteenth century (the China-Japan War in 1895) to the early twentieth century (the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty). It can be argued that this understating is congruent with the arguments advanced by the theorists of primal religions. Walls asserts that adherents of the primal religions have often readily accepted Christianity after ‘they had experienced a failure of faith in their original religion.’¹⁴ Periods of political, social or economic crisis have often, in his view, led to crises of confidence in the spiritual efficacy of the traditional belief systems. For instance, Palmer argues that, in Korea missionaries’ view, the massive influx of Koreans into the Protestant Church between 1895 and 1910 was owing to ‘certainly analogies between Shamanism and Christianity’.¹⁵ Young-hoon Lee asserts that ‘shamanism made it easy for Koreans’ to accept Christianity and its ‘spiritual world’, whereas at the same time it brings negative aspects to Korean Christianity.¹⁶ Hong also argues spells out that the Korean shamanistic notion ‘provided a sort of prescience for Koreans prior to the introduction of the Christian God’ during those times.¹⁷

In the fourth place, the Korea missionaries asserted that the name of the Korean Supreme Being, *Hananim*, offered an apparent analogy to that of the Christian God, and this remarkable similarity between these two theistic terms essentially

¹³ Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, pp. 20-2.

¹⁴ Andrew F. Walls, ‘Ruminations on Rainmaking: the Transmission and Receipt of Religious Expertise in Africa’, in ed., J. C. Stone, *Expert in Africa* (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen African Studies Group), pp. 146-51, cited in Cox, *Rational Ancestors*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁵ Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity* (Seoul: Holym Corporation, 1967), p. 91.

¹⁶ Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009), p. 13.

¹⁷ Hong, *Naming in God in Korea*, p. 39.

contributed to the Koreans' active response to Christianity and furthermore the rapid growth of Korean churches. This argument can be seen to be closely consonant with the primal religions theory as follows. In the context of Africa, Walls claims the existence of a 'continuity' in monotheistic belief in God among African primal religions between 'the pre-Christian past' and 'the Christian present, and this continuity is clearly demonstrated by the fact that for each language group the Christian God has a particular vernacular African name.¹⁸ In many instances, he demonstrates, 'over much of West and Southern Africa' or 'sub-Saharan Africa', when the Christian missionaries proclaimed the Christian message through the use of a vernacular name of God – for instance, *Olorun* (the Owner or the Lord of Heaven)¹⁹ among the Yoruba, *Ngewo* among the Mende or *Modimo* among the Tswana – Africans remarkably 'responded to Christian preaching by recognising God in their pre-Christian past and in their vernacular languages.'²⁰ This was because, in Walls' view, the God of Israel and the Scriptures is conceptually coherent with the African primal religious past with the result that 'Christianity historically has had its great success' among primal African peoples.²¹ In line with Walls, Lamin Sanneh spells out that Africans had possessed 'a deep sense of the reality of God', 'heard of God, described God most eloquently and maintained toward God proper attitudes of reverence, worship, and sacrifice', and thus missionaries would have no need 'to invent the notion of God all over again' in God's providence.²² He thus argues that the God whom the missionaries came to serve had actually preceded them in African primal religions, and in consequence 'the areas of greatest Christian influence overlap nearly exactly with' the areas where those primal religions and cultures are dominant, and 'where missionaries also furnished the Scriptures in the mother tongue.'²³ John S. Mbiti also argues that African people held a deep monotheistic

¹⁸ Andrew F. Walls, 'African Christianity in the History of Religions', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1996), p. 187.

¹⁹ John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1970), p. 336; cf. William A. Brown, 'Concepts of God in Africa', *The Journal of Religious Thought*, vol. 39, no. 2 (Fall-Wint. 1982-83), p. 7.

²⁰ Walls, 'African Christianity', p. 187.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188; Cox, 'Classification', p. 69.

²² Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2009), pp. 192, 196.

²³ Lamin Sanneh, 'The Horizontal and the Vertical in Mission: An African Perspective', *IBMR* (Oct: 1983), p. 166; *idem*, *Translating the Message*, pp. 219, 223.

notion of, and belief in, God prior to the arrival of foreign Christian or Muslim missionaries, and so have a vast variety of existing indigenous names for God that were taken up in the missionaries' translation of the Scripture.²⁴ Specifically, he observes that the 718 Bible translations into African languages (up to the end of 2008) have adopted the pre-existing vernacular names of God.²⁵ Kwame Bediako also notes that 'when missionaries translated the Bible into African languages, they made the fundamental theological assumption that the biblical God had already been at working among Africans before the missionaries arrived.'²⁶ Hence, as Cox spells out, Walls and other mission scholars commonly suggest that a divine preparation had been implanted in the (African) primal religions in order to facilitate the indigenous people's subsequent acceptance of the Christian God.²⁷ This suggestion can be seen in essential continuity with the Korean missionaries' theology which underlay their adoption of *Hananim* as the God of the Bible.

In the fifth place, the Korea missionaries' translation of the name of God in the course of the Term Question can be viewed as compatible with Walls' model of *conversion* and *translation* as follows. First, Walls relates *incarnation*, 'the heart of Christian faith', to *translation* by arguing that when God in Christ became man, he was translated into humanity, 'a particular person who lived in a particular culture and a particular ethnic group at a particular place and time', as if humanity were 'a receptor language'.²⁸ Thus, according to Walls, like *incarnation*, *translation* should be done within a pre-existing cultural and linguistic framework of the very particular receptor.²⁹ Second, he argues that *conversion*, derived from the Greek noun *epistrophe* or verb *epistrepho* (to turn, return or turn around),³⁰ is neither 'a matter of

²⁴ John S. Mbiti, 'Challenges of Language, Culture, and Interpretation in Translating the Greek New Testament', *Swedish Missiological Themes*, vol. 97, no. 2 (2009), p. 146.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 147.

²⁶ Kwame Bediako, 'The Significance of Modern African Christianity – A Manifesto', *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1995), pp. 51-67, cited in Cox, 'Classification', p. 28.

²⁷ Cox, 'Classification', p. 28.

²⁸ Andrew F. Walls, 'The Mission of the Church Today', *Word & World*, vol. 20, no. 1 (winter 2000), p. 19.

²⁹ Andrew F. Walls, 'The Translation Principle', in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, ed., idem (Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 2005), pp. 25-6.

³⁰ Colin Brown, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. I (Grand Rapids and Exeter: Zondervan and Paternoster, 1975), p. 355, cited in Brian Stanley, 'Conversion to

substituting something new for something old (that is proselytising) nor ‘a matter of *adding* something new to something old, as a supplement or in synthesis’³¹; yet *conversion* is ‘*turning* what is already there’, including ‘the elements of the pre-conversion settings’, in a new direction to Christ.³² In other words, in Walls’ view, *conversion* refers to ‘the use of existing structures, the *turning* of those structures to new directions, the application of new material and standards to a system of thought and conduct already in place and functioning.’³³ As such, he argues that an indigenous people’s consciousness of the Christian God before the arrival of foreign missionaries reflects the pre-Christian cultural and religious processes, which are not *replaced* (that would be the way of the proselyte) but are redirected in a way of *conversion*.³⁴

Cox notes that Walls’ analysis of *conversion* and *translation* can be combined with a ‘description of primal religions in today’s world’ to provide the basis for a missionary theology. Primal religions are thus regarded as ‘the receptor or the base language’³⁵; when the source language of Christianity is translated by missionaries into ‘the receptor language’, ‘the incarnate Christ’ then takes flesh among primal religions and people.³⁶ In doing so, the primal religions will be *converted* or *turned* by the missionary process of translation toward Christianity.³⁷ Hence, in Walls’ theory, primal religions provide ‘a conceptual framework for the process of conversion to Christianity and the contextualisation of its message in a variety of ways among indigenous people.’³⁸

Now we may apply Walls’ missionary theology to the Korea missionaries’ translation of the name of God in the course of the Term Question. *Hananim*, the Supreme Being of the Korean primal religion, can be regarded as a pre-existing

Christianity: the Colonisation of the Mind?’ , *International Review of Mission*, (July 2003), p. 319; emphasis mine.

³¹ Andrew F. Walls, ‘Old Athens and New Jerusalem’, *IBMR*, vol. 21, no. 4 (1997), p. 148.

³² Walls, ‘The Translation Principle’, pp. 25-6; idem, ‘Old Athens and New Jerusalem’, p. 148; ‘The Mission of the Church Today’, p. 21; emphasis mine.

³³ Idem, ‘The Translation Principle’, pp. 25-6.

³⁴ Idem, ‘Old Athens and New Jerusalem’, p. 153.

³⁵ Cox, ‘Classification’, pp. 68-9.

³⁶ Cox, ‘Classification’, pp. 68-9; Walls, ‘The Mission of the Church Today’, pp. 19-21; Walls, ‘The Translation Principle’, pp. 24-39.

³⁷ Cox, ‘Classification’, pp. 68-9.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 69.

receptor language, i.e. *what is already there*, while the Christian concept of God (by whatever name 'God' is called) can be termed the source language. The Korea missionaries translated the source language, the Christian idea of *God*, into the receptor language, *Hananim*. Consequently, the original meaning of *Hananim* was *converted* or *turned* toward a new Christian meaning of *Hananim*. As a result, the Koreans came to acknowledge *Hananim* as the same being as the Christian God to the exclusion of other divine beings: 'the One excluding the Many'.³⁹ This translation process is neither a matter of *substituting* the new for what is already there nor a *change* of what is already there, but a matter of *converting* or *turning* what is already there (*Hananim* as the Supreme Being of the Korean primal religion) in a new direction toward Christianity (so that *Hananim* becomes the God of Christianity). In contrast, we have seen that several missionaries, notably Underwood, originally argued for the use of a neologism, such as *Ch'onzhu* (Chinese *T'ienzhu*) or *Yohowa* (the Korean transliteration of *Jehovah*), as the name of God with the result that these alternative terms triggered a heated terminological controversy. Their attempt can be viewed as an endeavour to *substitute* a new theistic concept for the old – that is a form of *proselytisation* – yet those new names were rejected, both by fellow missionaries and, more significantly, by the indigenous people.

James Cox's Criticism of the 'Primal Religions' Theory

On the one hand, Cox traces the root of the empirical academic study of 'indigenous religions' to the missionary study of indigenous religions.⁴⁰ According to Cox's analysis, 'the study of African traditional religion' was pioneered by missionary scholars at the University of Ibadan, and then most fully developed as the study of 'primal religions' by missionary scholars, notably Andrew Walls, at the University of Aberdeen and thereafter at the Centre for Study of Christianity in Non-Western World (now the Centre for Study of World Christianity) in the University of Edinburgh.⁴¹ On the other hand, Cox criticises the primal religions theory as 'a non-

³⁹ Walls, 'African Christianity', p. 192.

⁴⁰ James L. Cox, *From Primitive to Indigenous* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 16; Cox also argues that it takes root in James G. Frazer, a prominent anti-religionist and author of *The Golden Bough*.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 16-26; Cox describes how after he was appointed 'convener of the Religious Studies Subject Group in the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity in 1999', he began to develop the primal religions courses into a 'full-blown study' of Indigenous Religions.

empirical construct which seeks to consolidate a vast amount of religious data according to criteria which tell us very little about the content of the data itself.⁴² His specific criticism is as follows.

First, by making reference to Rosalind Shaw, who opposes the contention that ‘religions of indigenous people can be treated as a unity’, Cox argues that ‘the very idea of universality’ or ‘an all-encompassing cosmology’ of the primal religions theory has ‘no necessary or inherent connection’ to the vast variety of religious phenomena of indigenous people.⁴³ That is to say, in Cox’s view, because religions of indigenous peoples (no less than the so-called ‘world religions’ such as Judaism and Hinduism) have diverse characteristics or phenomena, they have few common features and thus cannot be simply classified into a single category of ‘primal religions’.⁴⁴ To support this criticism, he cites several examples which demonstrate that many African primal religions possess their own distinctive and localised aspects.⁴⁵ He also points out the additional problems of the primal religions theory which claims that ‘the religions of indigenous peoples not only share common characteristics but that those characteristics are somehow basic to all religions and thus underlie them all.’⁴⁶ He contends that this is a non-empirical and non-scientific concept, and thus suggests that all religions can be ‘descended from or are closely related to the religions of indigenous peoples’, rather than from universal primal religions.⁴⁷

Second, Cox argues that *myths*, ‘whether primarily preserved in written form or told and re-told in various oral contexts, are neither more nor less central for the so-called world religion than they are for the universal religions.’⁴⁸ According to him, this is because all religions, even including world religions such as Islam, Judaism

⁴² Cox, ‘Classification’, p. 17.

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 19-21.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 22; cf. Walls, ‘Primal Religious Traditions’, p. 121.

⁴⁷ Cox, ‘Classification’, p. 22.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 21-2.

and Christianity, 'live within a mythical framework, tell sacred stories and express aspects or meanings of the myth in rituals.'⁴⁹

Hence, Cox insists that the primal religions theory should be regarded as a non-empirical construction which overstates the affinity between historically and culturally divergent indigenous peoples⁵⁰, and whose use should be confined to 'Christian theologies of contextualisation'.⁵¹ Furthermore, he concludes that the theory must be excluded from the scientific study of religions in order to prevent 'an incursion of theology into the science of religion'.⁵² Otherwise, in his words, 'the contributions to academic studies made by the phenomenology and history of religions will be overtaken by reductionistic tendencies emanating both from theology and the social sciences.'⁵³ He instead suggests that the term primal religions should be replaced by 'the religions of "indigenous" people' in order to underscore the diverse characteristics of religions of indigenous peoples.⁵⁴

Returning to the Term Question, Cox, as noted, contends that the primal religions theory can be regarded as the product of 'theological assumptions' adopted on non-scientific grounds, a theory which has been artificially invented by missionary scholars for the purpose of understanding and forwarding Christian mission among indigenous peoples. Thus, he admits that whilst the theory must be excluded from the scientific study of religions, it can be 'extremely useful' for Christian mission theology which assumes that 'God had prepared the way for the missionary message by providing "primalists" with the essential categories of thought which would make them receptive to Christianity, particularly through the postulated universal belief in a Supreme Being.'⁵⁵ Specifically, he notes that, according to Walls, the primal religions have themselves been remoulded by Christianity, a universal religion, when Christianity had been presented to indigenous

⁴⁹ Cox, 'Classification', pp. 21-2; here Cox cites N. Smart, *The Phenomenon of Religion* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), pp. 79-120; M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959), p. 111.

⁵⁰ Cox, 'Classification', p. 23.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 17.

⁵² *Ibid*, pp. 17, 31.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 31.

⁵⁴ Cox, *From Primitive to Indigenous*, p. 27.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 27-8.

peoples.⁵⁶ In Cox's words, this process of re-interpretation can be particularly observed 'in the various names ascribed to the Supreme Being among primalists, names which in many Christian contexts have been taken over into regular rituals as a vernacular name for God.'⁵⁷ He points out that those diverse names of the Supreme Being 'have been transformed by the Christian understanding of God'; that is, 'such a transformation of the traditional words for the deity into the universal faith has resulted in a restatement of the original meaning into one which incorporates the new intention brought in from the outside.'⁵⁸ Hence, he implies that the primal religions theory may lead missionary scholars, animated by a Christian theological bias, into a distortion of the original meanings of the deities of indigenous religions to make them conform to the Christian God. This can be a primary reason why Walls and other primal religions theorists, such as Mbiti, Bedako and Sanneh, frequently argue that God has a personal name, a vernacular one, among African primal peoples, and have concluded that 'God is thus part of the African past.'⁵⁹ Moreover, this perspective can lead them to emphasise the great success of the Christian missions among primal peoples, and explain 'the increasing transformation of the religions of indigenous peoples by the world religions'.⁶⁰

The China and Korea Missionaries' Missiological Perspective on the Term Question

In the light of this current debate between scholars of mission studies and religion, we may observe that the China and Korea missionaries (particularly those who argued for the use of *Shangti* and *Hananim* as the name of God, known as the *Shangti* party and the *Hananim* party respectively) held a similar theological position to the modern primal religions theorists, and applied it to the religious contexts of East Asia. Specifically, the China and Korea missionaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their scholarly evangelical contemporaries, including James Legge and John Ross, generally held a degeneration theory of the history of religion,

⁵⁶ Cox, 'Classification', p. 24; Walls, 'Primal Religious Traditions', pp. 133-34.

⁵⁷ Cox, 'Classification', p. 24.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ For instance, see Andrew F. Walls, 'The Evangelical Revival, the Missionary Movement, and Africa', in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, eds. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and G. A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford U. P., 1994), pp. 310-30; Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, p. 96.

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 23, 27.

while they opposed an evolutionary theory of the history of religion.⁶¹ This degeneration theory led them to believe that a Supreme Being, a vestige of the Christian God or at least a being congruent with the Christian God, could be located in the oral or written traditions of most non-Christian peoples in East Asia. This Christian perspective led them to adopt a sympathetic attitude to East Asian religions, and further, according to Cox, to presuppose that ‘God had prepared people everywhere to understand and receive the Christian message when it was first presented to them.’⁶² For instance, the Commission IV of the World Missionary Conference 1910 in Edinburgh reported on the basis of the China missionaries’ correspondence that ‘the opinion of the majority of the writers is that the Confucian Classics, which have always been the chief study of China’s scholars, have kept alive the idea of the Supreme Ruler [*Shangti*] or Heaven [*T’ien*], and that somewhere at the back of every Chinese brain there lies a vague idea of Him “who is Lord over all, God blessed for ever more”.’⁶³ Moreover, this similarity can also be extensively observed in Matteo Ricci’s adoption of the vernacular name of the Confucian Supreme Deity, *Shangti*, as the name of God in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, as we have seen in Chapter 2.

However, in view of Cox’s criticism of the primal religion theory, there is little doubt that the Korea missionaries’ eagerness, whether consciously or unconsciously, to find points of contact with Christian truth amongst Korean religions as a form of *preparatio evangelica* led them to read a broadly Christian meaning into the Supreme Being of Korean indigenous religion and the Dan-Gun myth. More specifically, if we accept Cox’s criticism of the primal religion theory, then it is plausible to suggest that *Hananim*, the name of the Supreme Being of Korean indigenous religion, was ‘transformed’ by the Korea missionaries into the Christian understanding of the trine and incarnated God in the course of the Korean Term Question.⁶⁴ Subsequently, in Cox’s words, such a transformation of the traditional word for the Korean deity into a Christian image has resulted in ‘a restatement of the

⁶¹ See p. 17, footnote #55; pp. 82-3, footnote #121; pp. 105-06.

⁶² Cox, *From Primitive to Indigenous*, pp. 25-6.

⁶³ World Missionary Conference 1910, *Report of Commission IV* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), p. 66.

⁶⁴ Cox, *From Primitive to Indigenous*, pp. 25-6.

original meaning' into one which 'incorporates' the new Christian intention brought in from the outside.⁶⁵ For instance, such a transformation is explicitly commented on the *Report of Commission I* of the World Missionary Conference 1910 in Edinburgh, which asserted that: 'probably no language has been more modified and changed in such a short time by the injection of Christian thought and terminology than Korea. The old native term for the Supreme Being [*Hananim*] has been transformed by the Christian concept of His unity as opposed to polytheism, spirituality as opposed to idolatry, and infinity as opposed to limited and finite being.'⁶⁶ Moreover, Donald Baker, a modern religious scholar of Korean studies at the Centre for East Asian Studies in the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), has asserted that 'Christians have stolen this name *Hananim*' from the Korean indigenous religion, and thereby 'Christians have no right to call their God *Hananim*' as if *Hananim* were the same as the God of the Jewish people.⁶⁷

Therefore, if we look at the course of the Term Question in Korea in the light of the science of religious studies, we may wish to conclude that the Korea missionaries of the early twentieth century had deformed the original meaning of the Supreme Being of Korean indigenous religion, *Hananim*, and the Dan-Gun myth on non-empirical grounds connected to their overriding evangelistic purpose. A similar process of deformation may be extensively observed in Matteo Ricci's use of *Shangti* as the name of God in the course of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Rites Controversy (in Chapter 2), James Legge's advocacy of *Shangti* during the nineteenth-century Protestant Term Question in China (in Chapter 3) and John Ross's appreciation of *Hananim* as a corresponding monotheistic term to *Shangti* in his first Korean New Testament (in Chapter 4).

In turn, it can be suggested that from a religious studies perspective further research is needed to assess how far the Korea missionaries' quest for an analogy between *Hananim* and the Christian God has led to incorporation of indigenous religious motifs and approaches into popular Christian understanding, and to

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ World Missionary Conference 1910, *Report of Commission I* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), p. 73.

⁶⁷ Donald Baker, 'The Korean God is Not the Christian God', in *Religions of Korea in Practice*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 2007), pp. 470-71.

illegitimate construction of the Korean religious system in a Christian image. More specifically, more research is needed to examine how far and in what ways missionaries in Korea intentionally shaped the indigenous divine name *Hananim* into a resemblance of the Christian God; and how far they attempted to use *Hananim* as the point of contact with the Christian God for the purpose of productive evangelism.

Nevertheless, we should in conclusion reiterate that this thesis, as previously noted, is not primarily intended to examine whether the Korea missionaries' understanding of the Supreme Being of the Korean religion and the Dan-Gun myth was true or false in the light of modern scholarship in the science of religious studies. Rather, it is centrally concerned to explore how the Korea missionaries' theology of other religions in Korea was developed in the course of the Korean Term Question in the light of a Christian missological perspective.

It can certainly be affirmed that, whether the Korea missionaries' appreciation of *Hananim* as a corresponding theistic term to the Christian God is scientifically correct or incorrect, the evidence – contained in the field reports and numerical data presented by the evangelical leaders and the Bible societies in the early twentieth century – appears to suggest that the Korea missionaries' translation of *Hananim* as the name of the God of the Bible can indeed be associated with the Koreans' unprecedented response to the Bible and the subsequent remarkable growth of the early Korean Protestant Churches .

Finally, we may conclude this thesis by observing both the continuity and the discontinuity between the Term Questions in China and Korea. On the one hand, in the minds of the missionaries in both China and Korea, the Christian God, clothed in the dress of primitive monotheism, and bearing the name of *Shangti* or *Hananim*, had preceded the arrival of foreign missionaries in China and Korea. On the other hand, a major divergence between the two Term Questions can be also noted. The Korea missionaries believed that *Hananim* corresponded to the Christian God in a way that their China predecessors had never claimed for *Shangti*. They believed that *Hananim* was not simply the Supreme God, but also the triune and incarnate God, who had already been recognised by Koreans many long centuries before foreign missionaries entered Korea. In consequence, the Koreans were able to worship the biblical God

through their own God, *Hananim*, with the result that they naturally and quickly transited from their old image of God, *Hananim*, to the new Christian God.

To return to the biblical passage cited at the very beginning of this thesis, if we apply the apostle Paul's theological apologetics in the Areopagus Convention in Athens (as described in Acts 17) to the course of the Korean Term Question, *Hananim*, the Korean 'Unknown God' whom the Korean people had unconsciously worshipped through their own indigenous religion since the twenty-fourth century BC, had been not *substituted* but *converted* by the Korea missionaries into a new *Hananim*, the Only One, the Triune and Incarnate God of Christianity.

Appendix

The English Text of the Dan-Gun Myth¹

It is written in the Wei shu²: ‘Two thousand years ago, there was a man called Dan-Gun Wang-Gom. He established a city at Asadal and founded a nation called Choson (In another book it is called Muyop-san Mountain or Paeg-ak Mountain and is located in Paek-chu. It is also said to be to the east of Kaesong. This is the present Paek-kung place). This was in the time of the Emperor of Yao³.’

It is written in the *kogi* [an old book]⁴: ‘in ancient times, Chesok Hwanin had a *soja* [the second son of Hwanin], Hwanung. He desired to descend from Heaven and to possess the world of men (to live amongst men). His father, realizing his son’s intentions, descended to the three great mountains and saw that mankind would benefit [from his son’s actions]. He gave his son the three *Ch’on puin* [Three Heavenly Treasures]⁵ and commanded him to go and rule [over mankind].

Taking with him three thousands [spirits], Hwanung descended upon the summit of T’aebaek-Mountain⁶ beneath the tree by the Sacred Altar [Sandalwood Tree]. That area was called the Sacred City. He was known as Hwangung *Ch’on-wang* [Heavenly King]. Together with [his ministers of wind, rain and cloud] the Earl of Wind, the Master of Rain, and the Master of Cloud, Hwanung supervised [instructed mankind about] agriculture, the preservation of life, the curing of disease, punishments, the difference between right and wrong, in all some three hundred and sixty kinds of work for mankind.

At that time, there was a bear and a tiger which lived together in a cave. They constantly petitioned Sinung [Hwanung]. They wanted to be transformed into men. Then the god gave them a piece of Sacred mugwort and twenty pieces of garlic and said, ‘if you eat this and do not see light for one hundred days, you will receive a

¹ This text is cited from James H. Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), p. 31.

² Wei shu refers to a record of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534 AD), one of the ‘barbarian’ dynasties during the period of disunity from the third to sixth centuries.

³ Emperor Yao was the fourth of the Five Legendary Emperors of Chinese primordial time. He is alleged to have reigned from 2356 BC to 2255 BC.

⁴ Dan-Gun *kogi*, being a record of Dan-Gun and his dynasty, is no longer extant. Nothing is known about it other than that writer in the Koryo period quoted from it.

⁵ Chon puin means Heavenly seals or Heavenly Treasures. Although it is no longer known what these objects actually were, they were symbolic representations of the authority of the ruler.

⁶ T’aebaek-Mountain is regarded as being modern Paek-Du-Mountain (in China called Changbai Shan). A dead volcano, it is 2,774 meters high and stands astride the border between Manchuria and Korea. At its summit there is an enormous crater lake the *Ch’on-Ji* (Heavenly Lake).

human form.’ This bear and tiger took and ate. They fasted for three times seven days. The bear received a woman’s body. The tiger was not able to fast and did not receive a human body.

As there was no one with whom the woman Ung-nyo [bear woman] could marry, she went daily to the base of the tree by the altar to pray for a child. Hwanung changed [his form] and married her. She became pregnant and had a son. He was called Dan-Gun Wang-Gom.

In the fiftieth year of the Emperor Yao, in the reign year Kyongin, Dan-Gun established a city at Pyongyang and called the nation Choson. He later moved his city to Asadal on Paegak-san which was also known as Kunghol-san and also as Kummidal. He governed [the nation] for 1,500 years. King Hu of Chou⁷ in the reign year Chi-mao, enfeoffed Kija with [the state of] Choson. Dangun then transferred to Changdang-gyong. Later he returned to Asadal, hid himself, and became the Mountain God. [At this time] he was 1,908 years of age.’⁸

⁷ Hu, also called Wu, was the first emperor of the Chou Dynasty which succeeded the Shang. He is alleged to have reigned from 1125 BC to 1115 BC. Therefore, the text would place Kija’s enfeoffment in the year 1125 BC.

⁸ Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea*, p. 31.

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(**Note:** The titles of Korean books are given in the Korean language along with their English translations. Where both Korean and English titles are given by the original authors, I list only English titles.)

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