

REVIEW ARTICLES

A COMMENT ON THREE RECENT BOOKS ON THE *BIBLE* IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY CHINA

Marián GÁLIK

Institute of Oriental and African Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences,
Klemensova 19, 813 64, Bratislava, Slovakia

The aim of this review article is to introduce to interested readers the recent books and studies concerned with the translations of the *Bible* into Chinese, and the biblical impact on Chinese literature and intellectual history in premodern, modern and contemporary China.

In 1999 three books appeared on the book market which meant an unusually impressive start in a neglected realm of scholarship: the impact of the *Bible* on modern intellectual history, literature and the problems connected with its translation into the different languages, dialects or literary styles of China. This start did not come *ex nihilo*, it was prepared for a longer time, even for the centuries, but in no earlier period were so many important studies published within such a short period.

The three books to be analyzed here are: Irene Eber, Sze-kar Wan, Knut Walf in collaboration with Roman Malek (eds.): *Bible in Modern China. The Literary and Intellectual Impact*. Sankt Augustin, Institute Monumenta Serica in cooperation with The Harry S Truman Research Institute for Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1999, 450 pp., Irene Eber: *The Jewish Bishop & the Chinese Bible. S.I.J. Schereschewsky (1831–1906)*. Leiden: Brill 1999, 287 pp. and Jost Oliver Zetzsche: *The Bible in China. The History of the Union Version or The Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*. Sankt Augustin, Institute Monumenta Serica 1999, 456 pp.

A few words about the prehistory of this undertaking:

The first book under review is the proceedings of the first international workshop: *The Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact*, held in Jerusalem, June 23–28, 1999, after three years of preparation which started in June

1993 when the most important organizers met in Smolenice Castle, Slovakia, and decided about the place and topic of the workshop. The new situation in the study of questions of religion after the fall of the communist governments in Europe, and a religious thaw in the People's Republic of China during the 1980s, made it possible that a workshop of this kind could be held with the participants of different countries of the world and representatives of Chinese studies working in the realm of the *Bible* and modern China. The workshop started at the end of the festivities connected with 3,000 Anniversary of Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel and Judah. On Monday, June 25, the participants saw from the windows of the Maierdsdorf Faculty Club, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem on Mount Scopus, the splendid fireworks over the City of David, and expressed the hope that this Chinese invention will mean a promise of future joy and of common understanding for the inhabitants of this City, country, and even of the whole of mankind.¹

The second book was written by Irene Eber, the host of the Jerusalem workshop. In the second half of the 1990s, she worked not only on the organization of the extraordinary event just mentioned, on editing of workshop proceedings, but also in the preceeding years (altogether about ten or more) on this book concerned with S.I.J. Shereshevsky, probably the most talented among all, and most dedicated to the cause of translating the *Bible* into Chinese. Hers is the first book concerned with one translator of the *Bible* into Chinese who was very good in Hebrew, which was not often the case among the translators.

The third book, that by Jost O. Zetzsche, a young German scholar, now living in the U.S.A., was written in the 1990s on the basis of the author's PhD thesis at Hamburg University. It is an extraordinarily important and meritorious work, characterized as "the history of the *Union Version*" and the process of its translation. It became in reality a concise history of all *Bible* translations in the last two or more hundred years.

1

In her *Introduction* to the first book, Irene Eber, *spiritus rector* of Jerusalem workshop and *arbiter* among the editors, mentioned that each "Chinese encounter with the West was also an encounter with Christians and Christianity" (p. 13). It is true, if we understand it in the Western sense. In traditional China "Western lands" (Xi yu) comprised mostly Central Asia and even India. From the beginning in the seventh century when Nestorians reached Chang'an, the Capital of Tang China, up to our days, Christians always constituted a small or great segment of foreigners coming to, or expelled from the Middle Kingdom. Often they came with merchants, in the last centuries even with gunboats, but it was the spirit of times, manifesting

¹ GÁLIK, M.: "On the Necessity of the 'Third Covenant' and Interreligious Understanding: Confessions of an Idealist". *Human Affairs* (Bratislava), 7, 1997, 1, pp. 86–93.

the Prometheo-Faustian strains of Western civilization. The Western countries brought, or even forced them to accept, the Euro-American forms of social, political and cultural life, or at least some kind of adaptation. This was a part of the slow and later more dynamic globalization, which seems to be inevitable in the course of modern world history.

The Jerusalem workshop and its proceedings aimed to show the impact of the Hebrew and Christian *Bible* in this process of modernization of China, with one exception: the activities of Jesuit missionaries in the biblical realm in early seventeenth century China. This part written by Nicolas Standaert complements, modifies, or even corrects the opinions of Jacques Gernet in his well-known monograph *China and the Christian Impact. A Conflict of Cultures*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1990.

The book under review is divided into three parts related to the translation, reception and appropriation of the *Bible*.

As to the translation of the *Bible*, I would like to mention firstly Lihi Yariv-Laor's theoretical essay: "Linguistic Aspects of Translating the Bible into Chinese". It is because precisely these aspects are not studied enough and the biblical translators are usually not linguists, or men of letters. In China, especially after this work was no longer conducted by European missionaries, not all translators were well prepared as the linguists, neither from theoretical or practical point of view. Theories of translation were not enough elaborated in that time, or the translators were unaware of them, or neglected them in the last decades. In her paper Yariv-Laor analyses the Chinese means for translating biblical Hebrew distinctions and tries to explain what she understands under "interpretation through translation". The last is concerned with the fact that since the forms and means "in the source language (she had in mind mostly Hebrew or Syriac, M.G.) may be different from those available in the target language, the very act of translation obviously calls for interpretation" (pp. 116–117). She highlights the Mandarin translation of Shereshevsky and she thinks that the famous *Union Version* "was to a large extent based on Schereshevsky's translation" (p. 119).

"Father Gabriele M. Allegra, O.F.M. (1907–1976) and the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*: The First Complete Chinese Catholic Translation of the Bible" by Arnulf Camps, is the first deeper research into a Bible translation project by Franciscans in China. Starting more than one hundred years after the Protestants, the Catholics may be proud of this accomplishment. Although it came rather late, it was well received even by the Protestants. Robert P. Kramers characterized this translation, finished in 1961, as a "monument of scholarly achievement, religious fervour and sincerity".²

² JIA BAOLUO (KRAMERS, R.P.): "Zuijin zhi Zhongwen Shengjing yiben" ("Recent Chinese Bible Translations"). In: *Shengjing Hanyi lunwen ji (Studies in Chinese Translations of the Bible)*. Hong Kong, The Council on Christian Literature for Overseas Chinese 1965, p. 33.

"Wu Ching-hsiung's Chinese Translation of Images of the Most High in the Psalms" by Francis K.H. So, is another great accomplishment by a Chinese Catholic in the biblical legacy. It is not an ordinary translation of the *Bible*, although published with the *imprimatur* of the Catholic Church, and it was not translated by a learned theologian, but by a "legislator and lawyer, and post-war diplomatic minister to Vatican" (p. 321). Through Madame Kong, sister of Sun Meiling, wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang, the highest Chinese political authority, read them and asked Wu to continue the translation and to collaborate. It seems to me that it was not necessary to highlight this collaboration in such a way as has been done in Professor So's paper. Otherwise the effort of Wu Jingxiong in translation of the *Psalms* into classical Chinese is worthy of admiration and it was well received by Chinese intellectuals.

"The Work of Lifetimes. Why the *Union Version* Took Nearly Three Decades to Complete" by the youngest of the participants in the workshop, Jost Oliver Zetzsche, will be put aside here, since I shall devote more attention to its author in the last section of this contribution.

"The Bible Translations into Miao: Chinese Influence *versus* Linguistic Autonomy" by Joakim Enwall, is a rather exceptional piece of writing, treating the problems about the *New Testament* translations into two languages in Southern China: the Hmu and A-Hmao groups of the Miao nationality in Guizhou and Yunnan Provinces. It is interesting to observe that the A-Hmao who lived "in an extremely barren mountain area, in scattered hamlets, almost without any contacts with the Chinese" (p. 220) received the biblical message much more better than the Hmu who had the Chinese living in the vicinity. The Hmu who were eager to enter Chinese society, were not interested in missionary activities.

In the 19th century, "The Interminable Term Question", (paper by Irene Eber), "monotonously or annoyingly protracted or continued"³ discussion about the terms not existing in the Chinese language, among them "no term more vexing than the one for 'God'" (p. 135), was the most important. The books and articles written about it were more or less useless, since they could not solve the question. The words are usually linguistic signs, and if they should be more telling than these signs, they should be loaded with deeper meanings than the words themselves. To quarrel about the *Tianzhu* (Catholics), *Shangdi*, or *Shen* (Protestants) was often a not very useful intellectual exercise, since it did not and could not come to positive and generally acceptable results. It would be much better to discuss the content and the approximate meaning of the concept of God in Jewish or Christian interpretation. Up to now we may find all these three (and also other) words for God in the Chinese *Bibles*, and in the case of Protestants, we may buy and read a *Shangdi* or *Shen* edition according to the reader's taste and decision. Otherwise they are com-

³ *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Usage*. New York, Portland House 1989, p. 743.

pletely the same. Eber's essay is a good and short introduction to the problem which seems not to be protracted anymore.

"Christian *Theologoumena* in Western Translations of the Daoists" by Knut Walf is similar to that of Irene Eber, although it has much more to do with the Daoist than with Judaeo-Christian Canon. Walf is well-known for his interest in Taoist bibliography,⁴ but since he studied theology, he is well prepared for the study of this kind where Christian theological terminology was used in the translations and analysis of Taoist works during the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. Dao and Logos, Dao – an impersonal principle, Dao and God are discussed mostly, especially in its later stage, within esoteric framework of Western theosophical movement.

Two papers in the proceedings are concerned with Chinese Protestant theology. The first one by Laureen Pfister: "A Transmitter but not a Creator. Ho Tsun-sheen (1817–1871), The First Modern Chinese Protestant Theologian", a friend and "key disciple" of the famous translator of *The Chinese Classics* James Legge, is about a Chinese Christian who tried to connect the ethical legacy of Confucian philosophers with the biblical teachings. The second by Sze-kar Wan: "The Emerging Hermeneutics of the Chinese Church: The Debate Between Wu Leichuan and T.C. Chao and the Chinese *Problematik*", tries to analyse the lives and writings of two colleagues from Yanjing University and later rivals in relation to the divine and human face of Jesus Christ. This aspect, by the way, will be the topic of the book publication prepared for the print by Professor Roman Malek in the Holy Year 2000.

Three papers in the book under review are connected with the biblical impact on modern Chinese fiction. The first and the longest contribution was written by Lewis S. Robinson: "The Bible in Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction". Those who read his influential book *Double-Edged Sword. Christianity & 20th Century Chinese Fiction*, Hong Kong, Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre 1986, will observe immediately, that with the exception of the last two pages (pp. 276–277), this paper is a short version of the book. Taiwanese fiction is omitted here, but briefly analysed in the book.

"Wang Jingzhi's *Yesu de fenfu* (The Instructions by Jesus): A Christian Novel?" by Raoul David Findeisen, analyses the mentioned work written under the motto from *St. John*, 8, 7: "Let whichever of you is free from sin throw the first stone at her". Jesus' instruction was not followed by the characters in Wang Jingzhi's novel where the "Chinese Pharisees" crucified the woman committing adultery onto a door and fixed the corpse of the decapitated adulterer with the head between her legs.

My contribution "Mythopoeic Warrior and *Femme Fatale*. Mao Dun's Version of Samson and Delilah" was one in the series of the Chinese works of fiction con-

⁴ WOLF, K.: *Westliche Taoismus-Bibliographie (WTB). Western Bibliography of Taoism*. Vierte verbesserte und erweiterte Auflage. Essen, Die Blaue Eule 1997, 194 pp.

cerned with mythopoeic topic and Liang Gong's "Twenty Years of Studies of Biblical Literature in the People's Republic of China (1976–1996)", analysed the book publications and other writings after, but also before the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China.⁵

And last but not least, in these proceedings we find the essay by Wolfgang Kubin: "The Sickness God" – The Sickness Man. The Problem of Imperfection in China and in the West", starting with the sixth day of the Creation, ending in the "age of the death of God", and analysing human beings in our days as the worst among God's creation, although He originally made them to be like himself. Millions of victims in the twentieth century are the proof of it. The essay was published also in Chinese and in German translation.⁶

2

Irene Eber's book on Schereschewsky, dedicated to very talented and certainly the best expert on the Jewish *Bible* among the translators of the *Bible* into Chinese, is the work of painstaking efforts and of love. In our correspondence, Irene Eber often mentioned "her Bishop" and for a long time strived for the moment when the book would be finished and published. For a Jewish woman born in Poland, a Jew from nearby Lithuania was her "neighbour". Since the time, when she first time saw Schereschewsky's translation in the Mandarin version, nearly thirty years have passed, of which about one decade (if not fully) was devoted mostly to the life and work of this extraordinary man.

Eber's work was not easy, especially as his life was concerned, since there was not enough material coming from him or his relatives or friends concerning this question. She tried to reconstruct most vividly his environment in Lithuania, Russia, Germany and the United States combining the little information about his life with the rich data concerning the schools he attended, their curricula, his acquaintances, the spiritual climate of different places and his attitudes to the rapidly changing circumstances in his dynamic life.

⁵ See also my essay presenting the overall picture from another perspective: "The Reception of the Bible in Mainland China (1980–1992): Observation of a Literary Comparatist." *Asian and African Studies*, n.s., 4, 1995, 1, pp. 24–46.

⁶ The Chinese translation appeared in *Daofeng (Logos and Pneuma)* (Hong Kong), 6, 1977, pp. 75–93 and German translation in *Minima Sinica* (Bonn), 1, 1999, pp. 1–24. Kubin's paper was discussed in relation to the problem of revolution and secularization in modern and contemporary China in the journals *Logos and Pneuma*, 7, 1997, pp. 229–289 and in *Ershiyei shiji (Twenty-first Century)*, 51, 1999, pp. 118–128. The last essay by Wang Jinmin appeared in German version: "Revolution, Traditionalismus, Wahrheitigkeit. Eine Typologie der Reflexionen auf die traditionelle Kultur im China des 20. Jahrhunderts." *Minima Sinica*, 1, 2000, pp. 1–14.

Schereschewsky was born into relatively well-to-do family of Ashkenazi Jews, although his mother was of Sephardi origin. Both parents died when he was a child. As an orphan he lived in the house of his older half-brother. Already as a small boy he learned Hebrew, prayers and the *Bible* in the family school. Later he did not attend a Yeshiva (an orthodox Jewish institution of higher learning) – since it was too expensive – but the government sponsored Jewish Rabbinic school in Zhitomir. This one was much more liberal, and he studied there, from his sixteenth year onward, probably as a future Rabbi. He became fluent not only in Hebrew and in Jewish tradition, but also in Russian, Russian history and other secular subjects, including mathematics, physics, geography, German and French. New vistas opened to the young Jewish student. One of them was a possibility to come into contact with the agents of the London Bible Society and to browse *New Testament* which he had never read before. Many young Jews were disgusted, but Schereschewsky certainly not, and probably already at the end of his stay in Zhitomir in 1852, he became “a believer in the life-giving verities of Christianity” (p. 30).

He started his University studies in Breslau, although he was not officially enrolled. Here he prolonged his studies of the *Old Testament*, received the first systematic introduction to the *New Testament*, Christian theology, Greek and Shakespearian English. Probably here he was often in contact with missionaries whose aim was the conversions of Jews. They also helped him to escape to America, his first *Promised Land*. After reaching New York, Schereschewsky at first joined the Presbyterian Church and one of its seminaries in Allegheny City near Pittsburgh, then the Episcopal Church and its seminary in New York. His flexibility was caused not by opportunistic thinking, but by a simple fact, that for him the Episcopal Church was more liberal and he rejected the “Calvinist inflexibility” (p. 57) of his Presbyterian teachers. Instead of becoming Rabbi, he ended as a Protestant pastor.

In December 1859 Schereschewsky reached Shanghai and he left it in spring 1862 for Peking. He did not think that Shanghai was the proper place for his work as a translator. The Shanghai stay was a period of preparation for his Peking Mandarin translation of the *Bible*. In spite of the fact that Schereschewsky was not happy in Shanghai, his life there was most colourful and Eber’s descriptions, too.

In Peking Schereschewsky started with the translation of the Mandarin (*guanhua*) version of the *Bible*, at first in collaboration with friends, later he continued alone and finished it in 1872. He was *Bible*-possessed, and with one exception, and this was the founding of St. John’s College in Shanghai (1879), he was not able to do anything else. After his paralysis in 1881 he had to finish teaching. Then he started with another project: the translation of the whole *Bible* into “easy classical language” (*qian wenli*) which he finished in 1902. Such an accomplishment is probably exceptional not only in China, but probably in the whole world. Usually these projects are done by a smaller or greater group of translators. It is necessary to say that like all foreign translators, he had talented indigenous assistants.

Professor Eber was mostly interested in the first Mandarin version, since according to her opinion, it had great impact on the subsequent *Mandarin Union Version* published in 1919 to which J.O. Zetzsche devoted his book. Chapter Five of Eber's monograph: "The Chinese Old Testament and Notes" is very important and interesting, since it analyses the translation techniques, vocabulary, stylistic devices, often in relation to the following *Union Version*. Probably even more time and space should be devoted to comparative analyses of both translations to prove which one was more valuable. We cannot judge prematurely (p. 188). In any case, the *Union Version* was much more successful. It was not very nice of its translators that they did not acknowledge their debt to Schereschewsky's translation.

Much attention of Mrs. Eber was paid to the "biblical field" of 19th century China.⁷ We see how really "un-Christian" was the spirit of some translators, missionaries and their wives or relatives. Certainly it was completely contradictory to that we may find in the books of the *New Testament*. What this "spirit" is concerned, Eber is critical toward her Bishop, too. Notwithstanding his ingenious capacities, the extraordinary results of his life-time work, he was "emotional, strung, fidgety, impatient" and "articulate, opinionated, perhaps argumentative, and he did not mince his words to the point of arrogance" (p. 235). He certainly was not humble, as the personalities of his calibre should be, if they would like to maintain an equilibrium between their knowledge and truly ethical behaviour according to Christian postulates.

3

The book by Dr. J.O. Zetzsche presents a really extraordinary *Leistung* for a young researcher. Even if it should be, in his humble original intention, a "history of the *Union Version*" (see the title), it is much more, since pp. 25–189 are concerned with the short analyses, or at least references to all important translations from the beginning in the seventh century up to 1890. At the end of the monograph, on pp. 411–422, all important translations after the *Union Version* up to our days, are mentioned. Although there were some treatises or relatively many studies about different translations, with the exception of Thor Strandenæs, *Principles of Chinese Bible Translation: As Expressed in Five Selected Versions of the New Testament by Mt 5:1–12 and Col.1*, PhD. thesis. Uppsala, Almqvist 1987, and Eber's book reviewed here, no one used the rich archival material, very useful for

⁷ Under "biblical field" I understand a pendant to "literary field" analysed in Pierre BOURDIEU's "The Field of Cultural Production, Or: The Economic World Reversed", *Poetics*, 12, 1983, pp. 311–356. For the application of the second in China, see a pioneering book HOCKX, M. (ed.): *The Literary Field of Twentieth-Century China*. Richmond Surrey, Curzon Press 1999.

historico-critical study. During his research Zetzsche visited twenty three and corresponded with thirteen different institutions storing the archival and other materials.

The first attempts at a *Union Version* started in 1843. The British annexation of Hong Kong and the Treaty of Nanking after the victorious Opium Wars made it possible. The number of missionaries slowly, but gradually increased, and due to a number of different denominations and Bible societies, "Bible translation became the only field of cooperation in Protestant missions during that time" (p. 77). In 1852 the so-called *Delegates' Version* of the *New Testament* was published, but then the "United Army" of Protestants was not able to join their efforts for translation of the *Old Testament*. The reasons for it were manifold and the "interminable question" of the terms was one of them. Mostly because of God, their most important aim in translating the *Bible*, they were not able to compromise: the British were mostly for *Shangdi*, the Americans mostly for *Shen*. The representatives of different denominations did not succeed in producing a united translation of the *Old Testament*. New translations by Protestants of different denominations followed, and in the years 1853–1890, when the successful attempt at a *Union Version* started, Zetzsche mentions twenty one different translations of the *Bible*, published partly or fully, privately, by Church denominations or Bible societies.

Nearly fifty years passed and Protestant missionaries tried once again to come to a decision on a *Union Version*. The General Conference took place in Shanghai, May 7–20, 1890.

Very long conferences followed in different parts of China over 29 years. During these conferences (probably would better to say: workshops), the whole *New* and *Old Testaments* were translated by different translators, of whom nearly all were dead or no longer in China, when the whole *Mandarin Union Version* was published. The missionaries always worked with indigenous Chinese teachers.

Zetzsche's method of analysis is very similar to that of Eber. He is very much interested in the whole Chinese "biblical field" and succeeds in being a very conscious chronicler of the long and complicated process of translation. I personally would prefer to read in his book more textual examples, linguistic and stylistic analyses of the different versions. If from time to time, he has done what would be in accord with my inner desire, these items were "taken from the New Testament, and in most cases from the first chapter of the Gospel of John" (p. 15). St. John's Gospel is, of course, important for Christians and for its theological legacy, but where the problem of translation is concerned, the books of the *Old Testament* were a much harder nut to crack. Probably the most important among the Western translators of the *Mandarin Union Version* Calvin W. Mateer allegedly said before his death in 1908: "Pray that I may be spared to finish the translation of the Old Testament, especially the Psalms" (p. 307).

The success of the publication of the *Mandarin Union Version* was the best in the all previous history of biblical translation into Chinese. It helped to promote the cultural revolution in the May Fourth Movement of 1919, to codify the "national

language" (*guoyu*) and create to some extent modern Chinese literature in the vernacular (*baihua*).⁸ Up to these days this translation is the most popular among the readers of the Protestants denominations, and probably among Chinese readers in general.

Just two small remarks to this remarkable book. Both are concerned the translations of the *Song of Songs*. The translator of *Gezhong zhi ge* (*Song of Solomon*) was not Chen Luoia, but the well-known poet Chen Mengjia (1911–1966). Its basic text was not the *English Revised Version* (p. 412), but R.G. Moulton's, *The Modern Reader's Bible*.⁹ Zetzsche does not mention Wu Shutian's (1903–1942) translation entitled *Yage* (*Song of Songs*) from 1930, published by Beixin shuju, Shanghai. In the book, among other studies, is also Zhou Zuoren's (1885–1967) translation of Havelock Ellis' essay on the *Song of Songs* and *Ecclesiastes*, which probably was a cause of the rumour that Zhou was also one of the translators of this probably most beautiful love song in world literature.¹⁰

*

⁸ Apart from the above mentioned work by L.S. Robinson, see GÁLIK, M.: "Wang Meng's Mythopoeic Vision of Golgotha and Apocalypse". *Annali. Istituto Orientale Napoli*, 52, 1992, 1, pp. 61–82, its German version "Mythopoeische Vision von Golgotha und Apokalypse by Wang Meng", trans. by R.D. Findeisen. *Minima Sinica*, 2, 1991, pp. 55–82. Also his other essays, as "Die junge Bing Xin, der alte Tagore und der Gute Hirte. Ein Fallbeispiel aus der modernen chinesischen Geistesgeschichte". In: KRÜßMANN, I., KUBIN, W., MÖLLER, H.-G. (eds.): *Der Abbruch des Turmbaus. Studien zum Geist im China und im Abendland. Festschrift für Rolf Trauzettel*. Sankt Augustin, Institute Monumenta Serica 1995, pp. 211–225 and its enlarged version: "Studies in Modern Chinese Intellectual History: VI. Young Bing Xin (1919–1923)", *Asian and African Studies*, n.s., 2, 1993, 1, pp. 41–60, "The Bible and Chinese Literature as Seen from the Angle of Intercultural Communication", *Asian and African Studies*, n.s., 2, 1993, 2, pp. 113–133, "Gu Cheng's Novel *Ying'er* and the Bible", *Asian and African Studies*, n.s., 5, 1996, 1, pp. 83–97 and its German version "Gu Chengs Roman *Ying'er* und die Bibel", trans. by B. Hoster. *China heute*, XVII, 1998, 2–3, pp. 66–73 and "Three Modern Taiwanese Poetesses (Rongzi, Xia Yu and Siren) on Three Wisdom Books of the Bible", *Asian and African Studies*, n.s., 5, 1996, 2, pp. 113–131. There are also some essays and two books by Chinese authors. Three essays are known to me in English: WANG SHU: "Xu Dishan and the 'New Man' in His Fiction", *The Chinese Theological Review*, 6, 1990, pp. 103–122, XU ZHENGLIN: "Ba Jin's Philosophy of Love and His Humanism", *ibid.*, 9, 1994, pp. 93–105 and LOU SHIBO: Lin Yutang's Journey of Faith, *ibid.*, pp. 106–122. Two books in Chinese are as follow: MA JIA: *Shizijia xia de paihui. Jidu zongjiao wenhua he Zhongguo xiandai wenxue* (*Wandering Under the Cross. Christian Culture and Modern Chinese Literature*). Shanghai, Xuelin chubanshe 1995 and YANG JIANLONG: *Kuangye de husheng. Zhongguo xiandai zuojia yu jidujiao wenhua* (*Crying in the Wilderness. Contemporary Chinese Writers and Christian Culture*). Shanghai, Jiaoyu chubanshe 1998.

⁹ CHEN MENGJIA: "Yi xu" ("Translator's Preface"). In: *Song of Songs*, p. 6.

¹⁰ TANG TAO: "'Yage' zhongyi" ("Song of Song' in Chinese Translation"). In: *Huian shuhua* (*Literary Chats*). Peking-Hong Kong, Sanlian shudian 1980, pp. 447–448.

The three books under review published on the eve of the twenty-first century and the third millennium, are a promise for the future Chinese studies in the biblical field. All three are milestones in biblical research in a not yet sufficiently studied realm. "There is in recent years a renewed scholarly interest in Chinese Christianity and in the Chinese Bible," wrote Professor Irene Eber at the end of her invaluable book, "and how it has functioned in Chinese history and culture. Scholars are raising questions about the Bible's literary value and its impact on poets and writers of fiction in the twentieth century" (p. 257). New problems and questions could be added to those mentioned now and in the next years.

There is a hope that the spirit of the Jerusalem workshop, initiated by Irene Eber and its participants, will win through in the near future, and already in the first years of the coming millennium, the interested readers will meet new fruits of this endeavour.