

Article

Linguistic Contributions of Protestant Missionaries in South China: An Overview of Cantonese Religious and Pedagogical Publications (1828–1939)

Shin Kataoka ^{1,*}  and Yin Ping Lee ²

¹ Department of Linguistics and Modern Language Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China

² Independent Researcher, Hong Kong SAR, China

* Correspondence: pingongsan@gmail.com

Abstract: Robert Morrison 馬禮遜, the first Protestant missionary to China, came to Guangdong as an employee of the East India Company and with the support of the London Missionary Society in 1807. Amongst his path-breaking translation work, he published the first Chinese Bible (*Shen Tian Shengshu* 神天聖書) in 1823. As many foreigners in Guangdong could not speak Cantonese, Morrison compiled a three-volume Cantonese learning aid, *A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* (1828), using specifically Cantonese Chinese characters and his Cantonese romanization system. In consequence, missionaries translated Christian literature and the Bible into Cantonese, for they realized that proficiency in Cantonese was essential for proselytization among ordinary people. Over the past twenty years, we have collected and identified around 260 Cantonese works written and translated by Western Protestant missionaries, and these Cantonese writings can be categorized as follows: 1. dictionaries; 2. textbooks; 3. Christian literature; 4. Bibles; and 5. miscellanea. In the study of the Western Protestant missions, their linguistic contribution is relatively under-represented. Through analyzing the phonological, lexical, and grammatical features of early Cantonese expressions in these selected missionary works, we strive to highlight the missionaries' contributions to the diachronic study of the Cantonese language in modern southern China.

Keywords: Bible; Cantonese; Chinese Christianity; dictionaries; missionaries; textbooks



Citation: Kataoka, Shin, and Yin Ping Lee. 2024. Linguistic Contributions of Protestant Missionaries in South China: An Overview of Cantonese Religious and Pedagogical Publications (1828–1939). *Religions* 15: 751. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15060751>

Academic Editors: Lars Laamann and Joseph Tse-Hei Lee

Received: 2 May 2024

Revised: 10 June 2024

Accepted: 14 June 2024

Published: 20 June 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

For the Protestant missionaries arriving in China in the first half of the nineteenth century, the first step of proselytization was focused on the acquisition of spoken and written Chinese languages. They quickly uncovered the diversity of China's linguistic landscape in which different languages or dialects co-existed and were used by different social classes. In Guangdong Province, for example, the literati spoke Mandarin (*guanhua* 官話) and used classical Chinese¹ as the written form of communication. The middle-class people spoke Cantonese and could read and write formal Chinese,² with an occasional mixture of Mandarin and Cantonese vernacular lexemes. The lower classes spoke Cantonese only and were illiterate. To better communicate with people of different classes, missionaries in Guangdong's Pearl River Delta had to learn formal Mandarin, classical Chinese, and vernacular Cantonese (Turner 1894).

The most important training center for Protestant missionaries was the Anglo-Chinese College 英華書院 first established in Melaka by the Ultra Ganges Mission in 1818 and, following the Opium War, transferred to the newly established British Crown Colony of Hong Kong in 1843 (Tiedemann 2021). Since the Anglo-Chinese College taught only classical Chinese and Mandarin and there were no other teaching materials for foreigners, missionaries in Guangdong took the first step to produce Cantonese dictionaries and textbooks.

To write Cantonese sentences, they borrowed dialect characters from the printed local vernacular (Li 2011) and added phonetic symbols to create their romanization system.

The next step was to produce Christian literature, such as the Bible and tracts, in Cantonese. Akin to the Protestant reformers in Europe, the missionaries believed that it was only through their own mother tongue that Cantonese speakers would be able to understand God's words accurately. For the literati class, Bibles in classical Chinese produced by Robert Morrison and his successors were thought to be appropriate. Meanwhile, the missionaries considered it more desirable to produce new versions of biblical texts in vernacular Cantonese. Therefore, American missionary Charles F. Preston 丕思業 translated the Gospels of John and Matthew into Cantonese in 1862. As the lower class was illiterate and could not even recognize these Cantonese writings, the German missionaries Wilhelm Louis 呂威廉 and Ernst Faber 花之安 decided to translate the Gospel of Luke into romanized Cantonese in 1867.

Because of the different views taken by various denominations, missionaries often debated about the proper Chinese rendering of major religious terms for "God" and "Spirit". The British missionaries preferred 上帝 (*Shangdi*) and 聖神 (*Shengshen*), whereas their American colleagues opted for 神 (*Shen*) and 聖靈 (*Shengling*). Missionaries in Guangdong basically followed the same convention in translating the Cantonese Bibles.

Since the first Cantonese missionary work was published in 1828 and the last entire Cantonese Bible in mainland China was printed in 1939,³ we decided to focus on the evolution of Cantonese works by Protestant missionaries during the period 1828 to 1939.⁴

2. Background

Many missionaries in China were actively engaged in the production of religious and secular publications in Chinese because they believed it was the quickest and most effective way to convey their mission. The importance of Western missionaries' translation of the Bible in late Qing and Republican China has been studied by many scholars (Broomhall 1934; Zhongwen Shengjing Xinyi Hui 1986; Zetzsche 1999; Mak 2016; Tong 2018). Their focus was mainly on the socio-cultural impact of classical and Mandarin Chinese Bibles and little attention has been paid to the history of vernacular Chinese Bibles.

The lists of Chinese Bibles compiled by the British and Foreign and American Bible Societies (Darlow and Moule 1903; Hykes 1916; Spillett 1975) mentioned many vernacular Bibles including those in Cantonese but provided no information on other Cantonese religious publications. For example, in *Readings in Cantonese Colloquial*, James D. Ball 波乃耶 (Ball 1894) listed many religious publications other than Bibles and referred to them as "Cantonese colloquial literature", including catechisms, liturgies, hymns, Sunday school materials, and novels. Ball placed Bibles in the category of "literature", but this article treats Cantonese Bibles as a separate item because publications of this sacred text far outnumbered those in other genres. Nonetheless, Ball should be credited for putting together the first comprehensive list of translated Cantonese Christian literature.

A new approach was brought to the study of missionary materials when linguists started to use missionaries' pedagogical materials in their diachronic study of Chinese dialects; examples include Cheung (2021, 2023) and Yue (2004), both of whom thought highly of the missionary materials as linguistic data for research. Due to the limitations of language manuals, it was difficult for them to conduct discourse analysis of religious texts such as Bibles and Christian literature. There are five online corpora that have been developed by linguists for early Cantonese materials.⁵ However, their coverage is limited in terms of the number of materials used.

You (2002) compiled a detailed list of materials on dialects published by missionaries in South China. He classified these diverse materials into four categories, namely: Bible, dictionaries, textbooks, and books of common reading. Each entry included bibliographical information and the library that housed the materials. Although You provided good guidance relating to the missionary literature on dialects, he offered no detailed content information and his work contained particular errors concerning the Cantonese publications.

In addition, many missionaries in Guangdong developed their own Cantonese romanization systems. Bauer (2005) examined Morrison's and Williams' systems. Lee and Kataoka (2006) explored the impact of Morrison's romanization and Lee (2009) compared it with other missionary systems. Kataoka and Lee also analyzed the practicality and impact of these systems in separate papers.⁶ Thus, the diverse patterns of Cantonese romanizations are discussed in this article.

3. Methodology

Although Cantonese religious and pedagogical materials are equally important in the study of missionary publications in Cantonese, no research has ever attempted to cover both areas. The objectives of this article are five-fold: 1. collecting more information on Cantonese religious and pedagogical materials through analyzing information from a variety of historical publications as well as the relevant secondary literature; 2. creating a typology of the identified materials; 3. scrutinizing the biographies and contributions contained in *Chinese Recorder*, *China Review*, the pioneering work by Alexander Wylie (1867), and the archival data of the related mission societies; 4. exploring the linguistic properties of Cantonese in terms of lexis, syntax, and phonetics; 5. examining the contribution of the above materials to Cantonese linguistics.

4. Cantonese Publications by Western Missionaries

We identified 267 Cantonese works by Protestant missionaries between 1828 and 1939. Following the classifications by Ball (1894) and You (2002) with some modifications, we divided the works into five categories: 1. dictionaries; 2. textbooks; 3. Christian literature; 4. Bibles; and 5. miscellanea. Figure 1 shows that the earliest published works were largely dictionaries and textbooks. From 1862 onwards, missionaries published an increasing number of Christian literary works, and individual translations of the Cantonese Bible began to appear. Starting in the 1870s, the missionaries of different societies decided to work collectively on the translation of the Cantonese Bible. Subsequently, the number of Cantonese Bibles continued to increase, reaching its peak in the 1910s.

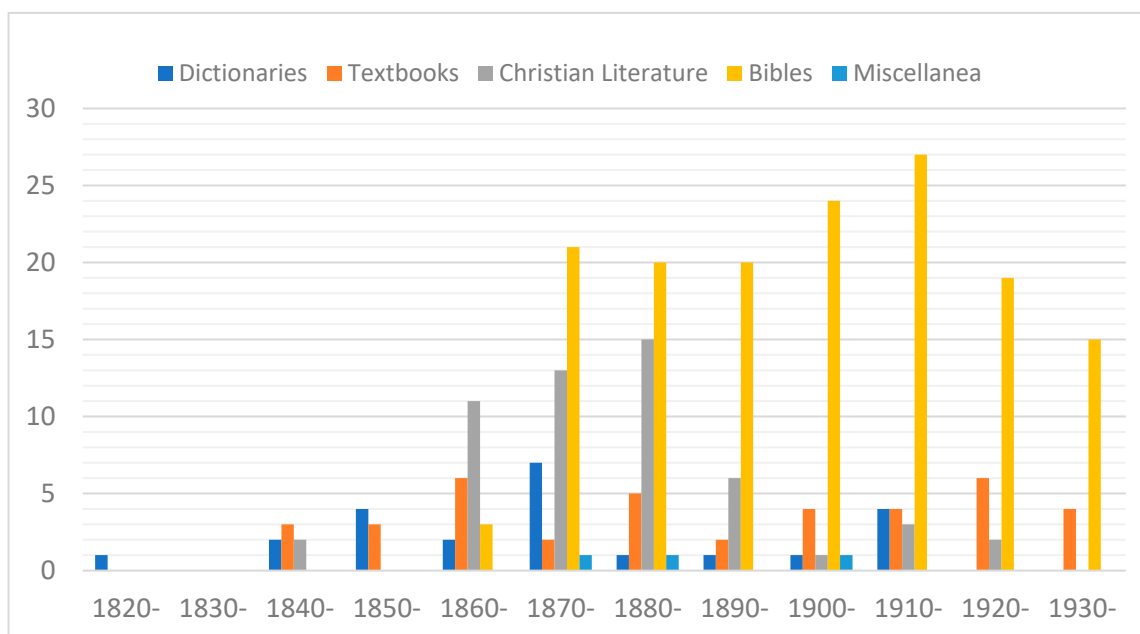


Figure 1. Quantification of publications by categories.

Then, we analyzed representative publications belonging to each category of the missionaries' linguistic contributions to the diachronic research into Cantonese.

4.1. Dictionaries

4.1.1. *An English and Cantonese Pocket Dictionary* 英粵字典

Published in Hong Kong in seven editions from 1859 to 1907, *An English and Cantonese Pocket Dictionary* was well received by contemporary readers. The language spoken in Guangzhou had previously been generally referred to as the Canton dialect, but after this dictionary came out in 1859, the word “Cantonese” had become the most common term used in later Cantonese learning manuals. Despite its small size, with only 163 pages, this English–Cantonese dictionary was convenient as it covered a wide range of expressions used in daily life. Benjamin C. Henry described this dictionary as “a most useful book” (Henry 1885, p. 226).

The author, John Chalmers 湛約翰 (1825–1899), was affiliated with the London Missionary Society. He began studying Chinese as soon as he arrived in Hong Kong in 1852. After a few years, he had mastered the language and could preach in Cantonese in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. He compiled the dictionary to help foreigners learn Cantonese. The first edition was published by the London Missionary Society Press in Hong Kong in 1859.

Organized in alphabetical order, each English entry was given an equivalent in Chinese characters followed by the Cantonese romanization (Table 1).

Table 1. Entries by Chalmers (1859).

A	Abacus, 算盤 <i>suen'-p'oon</i>
Z	Zebra, 虎斑馬 <i>foo'-paan-ma'</i>

The Cantonese romanization designed by Chalmers employed the Anglicized spelling, which was more familiar to the English-speaking communities in Guangdong. The sound [yn] was spelled ‘uen’ as in ‘suen’ 算, and [u] as ‘oo’ as in ‘p’oon’ 盤, which contrasted with the European continental spelling of vowels in Elijah C. Bridgman 裨治文’s Cantonese textbook (1842), where [yn] and [u] were spelled ‘ün’ and ‘u’, respectively. The Cantonese tones were marked with diacritics at the end of each syllable as well as using italic fonts for the high tones. The Cantonese rising tones were marked with the acute accent / as in *foo'* 虎, symbolically indicating the rising contour. The spelling rules and tone marks used in Chalmers’ dictionaries influenced later Cantonese romanization systems, especially the “Standard Romanization” system (Cowles 1920), which can still be partially found in place and personal names in Hong Kong.

The words and phrases in the dictionary provide helpful information about the nineteenth-century Cantonese lexicon. Below are some examples:

- Terms still used in modern Cantonese, e.g., slipper, 拖鞋 *t'oh-haai*;
- Terms different from modern Cantonese, e.g., kiss, 啾面珠 *chuet-min' -chue*;
- Cantonese colloquial expressions, e.g., nothing, 冇乜野 *mo' -mat-ye'*;
- Formal Cantonese expressions, e.g., almighty, 無所不能 *moo-shoh' -pat-nang*;
- Loanwords of the time, e.g., (country) America, 亞默利加 *A' -mak-li' -ka*, (food) cheese, 牛奶餅 *ngau-naai' peng'*, (religion) Bible, 聖經 *Shing' -King*, (month) April, 英四月 *Ying-sze' -uet*;
- Historical terms that are no longer used, e.g., sedan chair 轎 *kiu'*.

4.1.2. *A Chinese Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect*

Compiled by Ernst Johann Eitel 歐德理 (1838–1908) in 1877, this dictionary was a comprehensive Cantonese and Chinese learning aid.

Having arrived in Hong Kong as a member of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in 1862, Eitel first evangelized among the Hakkas. In 1865, he transferred to the London Missionary Society and started to preach in Cantonese. He later served as a senior civil officer in the Hong Kong colonial government. He compiled this dictionary to sat-

isfy the needs of many learners who wanted to master Cantonese terms used in different linguistic registers. He collected the colloquial, written, and classical languages through consulting the dictionaries of his predecessors, in addition to Cantonese expressions that he had learned while in Guangdong. The dictionary was published by Trübner & Co. in London in 1877, while the second edition was revised by Immanuel G. Genähr 葉道勝 and published by Kelly & Walsh in Hong Kong in 1910–1912 as *A Chinese–English Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect*.

Eitel’s Cantonese romanization system was a modification of Williams’ system (Williams 1856), changing the total number of Cantonese tones from Williams’ eight tones to nine tones based on the accurate observation by the German missionaries Louis and Faber in their Gospel of Luke in Cantonese romanization (1867). The dictionary had 1018 pages, with entries arranged alphabetically based on the Cantonese pronunciation of Chinese characters. Each entry was given its Chinese character, its pronunciation in romanized Cantonese, and the meaning in English, followed by examples of compound words or phrases indicating their linguistic categories with abbreviations, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of entries from Eitel (1877).

A	呀	[a.p. <i>ŋgá</i> , o.p. <i>á</i> and <i>á'</i>] <i>Ca.</i> an emphatic final particle. See <i>á</i> .— <i>Co.</i> 唔好 <i>ɿm</i> <i>‘hò á’</i> not at all good.
Y	116.4. 野 Yé	<i>Co.</i> 一支 <i>yat</i> , <i>ɿhí</i> <i>‘yé</i> a ballad; 仔 <i>‘yé</i> <i>‘tsai</i> bastard; 有 <i>‘yau</i> <i>‘yé</i> there is something; 有 啲 <i>‘yau</i> <i>tik</i> , <i>‘yé</i> a little; 閒 <i>hán</i> <i>‘yé</i> an ordinary thing; 好 <i>‘hò</i> <i>‘yé</i> a good thing; 乜 <i>mat</i> , <i>‘yé</i> what; 做乜 <i>tsò</i> ² <i>mat</i> , <i>‘yé</i> why? 爲乜 <i>wai</i> ² <i>mat</i> , <i>‘yé</i> why? 叫 做乜 <i>kiá</i> ² <i>tsò</i> ² <i>mat</i> , <i>‘yé</i> what is it called?

Eitel summarized the collected vocabularies into 24 categories and used abbreviations next to each word or phrase to indicate which category it belonged to. For example, readers focusing on learning Cantonese would pay attention to expressions with the abbreviation *Ca* (Table 3).

Table 3. Abbreviations used by Eitel (1877).

Abbreviations	Remarks	Words	Phrases
1 B	In Buddhistic phraseology	<i>fat</i> 佛	B. <i>fat</i> <i>kau</i> 佛教 Buddhism
2 Ca	In the Cantonese Dialect	<i>wá</i> 搵	Ca. read <i>wé</i> cratch
3 Cl	The following phrases are purely classical	<i>sin</i> 焉	Cl. <i>‘i sin tsoi</i> 已焉哉 classical writing final particles
4 Co	The following phrases are purely vernacular	<i>hi</i> 戲	Co. <i>hi</i> <i>‘t’ai hi</i> 去睇戲 go to see a play
5 T	A Technical or scientific term	<i>mi</i> 微	T. <i>hin mi keng</i> 顯微鏡 microscope

4.2. Textbooks

4.2.1. Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect

This textbook was primarily designed for foreigners to learn Cantonese, but the author claimed that Cantonese people could also use it to learn English. It recorded many newly coined loanwords, reflecting the increasing cross-lingual communications between Cantonese and Westerners, thereby enriching the Cantonese lexicon.

Elijah Coleman Bridgman 裨治文 (1801–1861) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions began studying Chinese upon his arrival in Macau in 1830. In 1832, he founded *The Chinese Repository*, the first periodical to introduce Chinese history and culture to Westerners. He wrote this textbook because no comprehensive textbooks were available for foreigners to learn Cantonese. Published in 1841 by Williams in Macau, the *Chrestomathy* has 373 pages in 17 chapters covering the study of Chinese, the human body, kindred relations, classes of men, domestic affairs, commercial affairs, and medicine.

In the introduction, Bridgman explained that one standard method of rendering Cantonese characters was to put the radical mouth “口” on the left side and the homophones of the word on the right, for example: “口” + “丫” = “𠵱.” This method influenced later missionaries in writing Cantonese colloquial words with the radical mouth. The content was presented in three columns, with English sentences aligned to Cantonese characters and their romanized pronunciations (Table 4).

Table 4. Examples from Bridgman (1841).

English	Cantonese	Romanization
(p. 7) If so, then it is requisite to take up one topic after another and proceed in order.	咁樣就要逐一逐二學嘍。	˩kóm yéung˩, sau˩ chuk˩ yat˩ chuk˩ í˩ hók˩ lá˩.
(p. 165) Rice pancakes should be fried till they are brown	飯班戟要煎嫩	Fán˩ ˩pán kik˩ íú˩ ˩tsín nün˩.
(p. 181) Do the Chinese use milk and sugar with their tea?	唐人有搵牛乳共糖嚟攪茶有冇呢?	˩T'óng ˩yan ˩yau ˩kái ˩ngau ˩yü kung˩ ˩t'óng ˩lai ˩káu ˩ch'á ˩yau ˩mò ˩ní?

What follows are various examples of nineteenth-century Cantonese.

- Phonology: “咁” (p. 7) was transliterated as “kóm,” but it is now pronounced “kam” (or “gam” in current romanization), which suggests the syllable “óm” historically merging with “am”.
- Lexicon (1): Currently, the term for “pancake” in modern Cantonese is a loanword “班戟.” The example “班戟” (p. 165) indicates that this loanword has been in use in Cantonese for at least 180 years.
- Lexicon (2): The morpheme “唐” (p. 181) originates from the name of the Tang dynasty (618–907 A.D.). However, today’s Cantonese does not use the compound “唐人” to mean Chinese people except for the fixed expression referring to old Chinese migrant settlements, “唐人街” (Chinatowns). The term “唐人” was commonly used in the nineteenth century.
- Syntax: The word order of the yes–no question “有+object+有冇呢?” (p. 181) in this textbook is different from the contemporary pattern “有冇+object?”. This variation reveals that the interrogative pattern in Cantonese has changed since the mid-nineteenth century.
- Culture: The question, “do the Chinese use milk and sugar with their tea?” (p. 181) reveals a cultural difference between China and the West. It is now a widespread practice for Chinese to drink black tea with milk.

4.2.2. *The Beginner's First Book in the Chinese Language (Canton Vernacular)*

Medical missions were an effective method of evangelization in China. One famous example was Dr. Peter Parker, who reached out to patients in Guangzhou for evangelistic purposes. Authored by Thomas T. Devan 咁凡 (1809–1890), an American Baptist medical missionary who arrived in Hong Kong in 1844, *The Beginner's First Book in the Chinese Language* covered Cantonese grammar, medicine, and religion to help Western medical missionaries communicate with the Cantonese. Since there were no textbooks for him to learn Cantonese medical and religious terms, he compiled this textbook, which was published in 1847 at the “China Mail” Office in Hong Kong. Subsequently, the book was released in three editions, shaping the ways in which future missionaries published new Cantonese learning manuals with medical and religious terminologies. Devan paid much attention to the evolving social situation in Guangdong, mentioning the term “opium” in the dialogue.

Devan's text had 166 pages in total. In the first section, there were themes such as numbers, divisions of time, relations of life, buildings, furniture, dress, and food, under which English entries were aligned with Chinese characters followed by Cantonese pronunciations in romanization. The romanization system was borrowed from Williams.⁷ Devan did not label the Cantonese tones in the first two editions, but he finally realized the importance of tone-marking in Cantonese and included the tone marks in the third version. He classified Cantonese words into different lexical categories based on the Western linguistic tradition.

- Lexical categories

Devan classified the Cantonese lexicon according to grammatical categories (Table 5).

Table 5. Examples of Grammatical Categories in Devan (1847).

Categories	English	Cantonese Characters	Cantonese Romanization
Nouns	baggage	行李	hang lí
Pronouns	we/us	你哋	ní tí
Adjectives	good	好	ho
Verbs	ask	問	mun
Adverbs	here	呢處	ní chú
Prepositions	towards	向	haung
Conjunctions	because	因為	yan wei

Terms in some lexical categories, especially Cantonese classifiers and particles, differ greatly from those in English. Devan gave detailed instructions on how to use such words.

Classifiers: Devan illustrated that “*between a numeral and a noun, an appropriate word, called a Classifier, is introduced.*” He gave 61 examples of classifiers, such as 封 fung.

e.g., one letter 一封信 yat fung sun

Particles: Devan presented an explanation of sentence-final particles, which he thought were fascinating. They are used to colorize sentences with the speaker's modality. He listed 17 examples of such particles, e.g., the imperative particle employed when a change of place is contemplated: 嚟 Lá.

- Medical expressions

Devan divided medical terms into four categories, as in the table below. He provided practical phrases that could be used in communication between doctor and patient. Asking about the habit of smoking opium reflected contemporary customs in Guangdong (Table 6).

Table 6. Examples of medical expressions in [Devan \(1847\)](#).

Categories	English	Cantonese Characters	Cantonese Romanization
Anatomy	Sacrum	尾龍骨	<i>Mí long kwut</i>
Diseases	Diarrhoea	肚疴	<i>To ó</i>
Remedies	Peppermint	薄荷	<i>Pók hó</i>
Medical phrases	Do you smoke opium?	你食鴉片唔呀	<i>Ní shek á pín im á</i>

- Religious expressions

Religious dialogues were designed so missionaries could effectively preach in Cantonese (Table 7).

Table 7. Examples of religious expressions in [Devan \(1847\)](#).

English	Cantonese	Romanization
Pray to Jesus to save your soul.	稟求耶穌救你靈魂	<i>Pun kow ya soo kow ní leng wun.</i>

4.2.3. Cantonese Made Easy

Cantonese Made Easy was published in four editions from 1883 to 1924 and was included in the syllabus of the Hong Kong Civil Service Examination. A Chinese–Portuguese textbook called *Phrases usuaes dos dialectos de Cantão e Peking*, published in 1884, used Cantonese sentences from this book.⁸ The author designed a Cantonese romanization system that could reflect the standard sounds and tones of the time and gave very detailed explanations of Cantonese grammar with practical sentences. Because of his detailed descriptions of the Cantonese language, this textbook has been used by modern linguists for diachronic study.

The author, James Dyer Ball 波乃耶 (1847–1919), was born and raised in Guangzhou. His parents, half-sister, brothers-in-law, and father-in-law were all missionaries in Guangdong.⁹ Although not a missionary, he was a devout Christian, actively involved in church activities. Being bilingual in English and Cantonese, he wrote many books and articles in English on the Cantonese language and society. He was a frequent contributor to the *Chinese Recorder* and *China Review*.

Another prominent work by Ball was his *Readings in Cantonese Colloquial* in 1894. In that book, he selected 29 works of Cantonese Bibles and tracts translated by Protestant missionaries so that Western learners of Cantonese could improve their reading ability in Cantonese. Moreover, the textbook included a list of 64 Cantonese Christian literary works translated by Western Protestant missionaries prior to 1894.

This article used the third edition of *Cantonese Made Easy* (1907) because it was the best-edited version. It was 253 pages long and included an Introduction, Text, Grammar, Appendix, and Index. The introduction explained which variety of Cantonese was considered as standard. Ball explained that only the pronunciations of “Sái Kwán” 西關 were purely standard, criticizing the pronunciations employed in [Williams’s \(1856\)](#) and [Eitel’s \(1877\)](#) dictionaries, such as í and ü, for which Ball used éi and öü, respectively (Table 8).

Table 8. Differences in spelling.

Example	你 (You)	去 (Go)
Williams/Eitel	ní	hü
Ball	néi	höü

It is worth emphasizing that Ball’s textbook was the first to explain the variant tones in Cantonese and the different situations in which they were used. For example, the “wá”

話 in Cantonese was to be pronounced with a rising tone rather than with the low-level tone used in reading.

Ball’s textbook consists of fifteen lessons, including home life, relationships, opposites, monetary concerns, trade, medicine, and education. Each sentence is presented in written Cantonese characters and romanization, with a verbatim meaning in English (Table 9).

Table 9. Examples from Ball (1907).

我講笑話啫。	“Ngo ˩kong siu˩ wá˩ * che˩”
I am only jesting.	I speak laughing words only.

In terms of the Cantonese lexicon, Ball recorded terms that were popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as those used extensively in the nineteenth century and in modern Cantonese. The publication also indicates the emergence of neologisms whilst old terms were still in use (Table 10).

Table 10. Examples from Ball (1907).

19th Century	Early 20th Century	21st Century	Meaning/Function
共	孖	同	and/with
乜誰	乜人	邊個	who
曉	嘍	咗	perfective aspect marker

Ball differentiated fourteen grammatical categories including nouns, classifiers, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, postpositions, conjunctions, and finals. For example, 哋 téi is the plural marker of pronouns and 嘍 kwá is a sentence particle implying doubt or some degree of probability. He also recorded many words that are no longer in use in modern Cantonese, such as 嘍 pé, which is the conjunction used in disjunctive questions, meaning “or”.

4.3. Christian Literature

4.3.1. The Parable of the Prodigal Son 浪子悔改¹⁰

This booklet was the first Cantonese sermon manuscript. The method of preaching with a Cantonese manuscript not only helped the missionary, but it also served to increase the Cantonese people’s receptiveness to Christianity, so other missionaries followed suit. There is no year of publication or publisher listed for this pamphlet. Since it was used directly after the author arrived in Hong Kong, it is assumed that the booklet was published by the London Missionary Society in 1844.

James Legge 理雅各 (1815–1897), the well-known sinologist who first translated the Chinese classics into English, started his career in Malacca in 1839 under the London Missionary Society. He then moved to Hong Kong in 1843. It is less known that Legge was a pioneer of Cantonese literature. *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* is the Cantonese translation of Luke 15, and Legge used it as a sermon text when he knocked on people’s doors from house to house and preached to the Cantonese audience. He prepared this tract for a preaching reference.¹¹ The pamphlet has six pages and contains the following two parts:

- Bible Stories

e.g., 有一個人有兩個仔，個個細仔對佢嘅老頭話我應得嘅家業你分過我咯，佢嘅老頭就分了過佢。

(*New American Bible*: “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them.”)

- Sermon

e.g., 聖書有話，上帝「無所不愛」，就係「溺於邪污」嘅人，上帝亦望佢。

(Our translation: “The Holy Book says that God loves all. HE will even look after those who indulge in moral defilement.”)

This work has some noteworthy linguistic and stylistic features.

- Linguistically, it is interesting to notice that the recipient was expressed by “過” as in “分過我.” When marking the recipient, modern Cantonese uses only “俾,” e.g., “分俾我,” but no instance of “俾” was found in this material.
- Stylistically, Legge used two different literary styles in this booklet. In storytelling, he employed the purely Cantonese colloquial style to make the story more vivid and attract the audience. However, for sermons containing many religious concepts, he chose a more literary style, such as “無所不愛” (love everything) or “溺於邪污” (wallow in evil influences), resulting in the sermons sounding more formal in style. Legge’s selection of different expressive styles implies his advanced level of classical Chinese language.

4.3.2. *Important Selections from the Life of Christ in the Canton Dialect* 耶穌言行撮要俗話¹²

Published in 1863, this book was the first Cantonese biography of Jesus Christ. It consisted of one hundred stories about Jesus from his birth to his crucifixion and ascension in the Four Gospels and the Acts. Each story started with a heading, imitating the Chinese vernacular novel tradition, which influenced later Cantonese Bibles. Table 11 shows the number of stories from the New Testament.

Table 11. Sources of stories in Preston (1863).

Matthew	Mark	John	Luke	Acts	Total
33	11	25	30	1	100

The editor-cum-compiler, Charles Finney Preston 丕思業 (1829–1877), was affiliated with the American Presbyterian Mission. After arriving in Guangzhou in 1854, he began conducting church services and preaching in the streets. After two years of language study, he became fluent in Cantonese. Because of his friendly personality and language proficiency, he was welcomed by many Cantonese people (Henry 1877, pp. 342–44). He also trained Chinese colporteurs to distribute Bibles and Gospel tracts (Anonymous 1875, p. 235). This book recorded several nineteenth-century Cantonese words that are no longer used in modern Cantonese:

- 歡喜: verb meaning “to like” (modern Cantonese: 鍾意)
e.g., 祈禱個陣時、咪似偽善嘅、因為佢歡喜企倒會堂。
(When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues.)
- 倒: locative preposition used after a verb (modern Cantonese: 喺)
e.g., 耶穌同使徒落山、企倒平地噃。
(Jesus and his disciples went down the hill and stood on a level place.)
- 搵: instrumental preposition meaning “with” (modern Cantonese: 用)
e.g., 馬利亞已經懷孕適值喺個噃，產期已到，就生個大仔，搵布包住佢、擠佢喺槽噃。
(Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger.)

4.3.3. *Bible History for the Least and Lowest* 述史淺譯¹³

Published in 1866, this book series contained the first Cantonese historical accounts of the ancient biblical world based on the Old and New Testaments (Collins 1866). At that time, there was no Cantonese version of the entire Bible, so this series served as a

key reference for other missionaries in Guangdong. J. D. Ball described this book series as “simple, though not puerile, good, and idiomatic” (Ball 1894, p. xiii).

The translator, Mrs. Mary Lucy Collins 花波, was with the American Presbyterian Mission. Her father, Dyer Ball of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, was one of the earliest medical missionaries in Guangdong. Born and raised in Guangzhou, Collins acquired native fluency in Cantonese. Her half-brother, J. D. Ball, was the author of *Cantonese Made Easy*. She translated the *Bible History for the Least and Lowest* into Cantonese. Published in five volumes, Volumes 1–3 covered the Old Testament (Volumes 1: 172p, Volume 2: 169p, and Volume 3: 134p) whilst Volumes 4 and 5 covered the New Testament (Volume 4: 129p and Volume 5: 128p).

In the preface, Collins stated that the Bible taught the equality of men and women. Like the other two female missionaries of the American Presbyterian Mission, Lillie B. Happer and Harriet N. Noyes, Collins engaged in women’s education. Traditionally, women had few opportunities for schooling and missionaries played an important role in teaching women to read and write, thereby improving their quality of life. It was not until the early Republican era that secular institutions began to promote the cultural advancement of women through mass education.

Collins’ proficiency in Cantonese could be seen from her use of relatively complex sentences, as in the following example:

多謝神、唔止俾番個仔約瑟過我、又加兩個孫添。

(Thanks to God, I not only got a son, Joseph, but also two grandchildren.)

Collins also recorded terms specific to the Cantonese lexicon of the nineteenth century.

- 拈: verb meaning “to hold” (modern Cantonese: 擰)
e.g., 手上雖係拈住盞燈其實冇油嘅。
(Though you are holding a lamp, there is no oil in it.)
- 是必: modal adverb meaning “certainly” (modern Cantonese: 一定) e.g., 將所得嘅好處嚟做唔好事，神是必刑罰我哋。

(If we do bad things with good things we gain, God will definitely punish us.)

We also notice the author’s deliberate addition of words in translation. For instance, the author added a vocative address term 表姊妹 (female cousin) to salute Elizabeth when she visited Zachariah’s house. It is believed that she added the term so that Cantonese readers could easily understand the close relationship of the two well-known Biblical characters. Collins borrowed some local Buddhist terms such as 保佑 and 菩薩 to refer to the Christian terms “bless” and “gods of the Gentiles” in the Bible, so that the Cantonese people could understand Christian doctrine more easily.

4.4. Bibles

Both Tables 12 and 13 summarize the history of the Cantonese Bible.

Table 12. Brief History of Cantonese Bible (Chinese character version).

Personal	
1862	C.F. Preston 丕思業 (APS) translated Matthew and John.
1872–1877	G. Piercy 俾士 (WMMS) translated Genesis, Galatians to Revelation.
Collective	
1870	Preston, Piercy, and A. Krolczyk 公孫惠 (RM) sent a letter to BFBS to obtain their approval to publish a Cantonese Bible. ¹⁴
1873	Preston, Piercy, and Krolczyk published the Union version (Gospels and Acts) (BFBS: 上帝 version/ABS: 神 version).

Table 12. *Cont.*

1886	A.P. Happer 哈巴安德, H.V. Noyes 那夏禮, and B.C. Henry 香便文 (APS) completed the translation of the New Testament (except Gospels and Acts), published by ABS.
1894	Noyes and Henry completed the translation of the Old Testament (except Genesis and Psalms).
1905	The entire Cantonese Bible published by ABS.
1907	The entire Cantonese Bible published by BFBS with the Old Testament revised by I.G. Genähr 葉道勝.
1908–1938	Continuous revision and publication of the entire and portions of the Cantonese Bible.
1939	The last entire Cantonese Bible published in mainland China.
1959	No Cantonese Bible was published in 1940–1958. The Cantonese Bible was reprinted in Hong Kong by HKBS in 1959 and has been revised and published since then.

Abbreviations: BFBS: British and Foreign Bible Society, ABS: American Bible Society, HKBS: Hong Kong Bible Society, APS: American Presbyterian Society, WMMS: Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society, RM: Rhenish Mission.

Table 13. Brief history of the Cantonese Bible (romanized version).

Personal	
1867	W. Louis 呂威廉 and E. Faber 花之安 (RM) published Luke from BFBS in Lepsius' system.
Collective	
1892	R.H. Graves 紀好弼 (SBC) published Mark from BFBS in the "Standard Romanization".
1905–07	The missionaries of CMS published the whole Bible from ABS in the revised "Standard Romanization".

Abbreviations: BFBS: British and Foreign Bible Society, ABS: American Bible Society, RM: Rhenish Mission, CMS: Church Mission Society, SBC: Southern Baptist Convention.

The following sections identify representative versions of the Cantonese Bible for further analysis, including the first romanized Bible and the first entire Cantonese Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS).

4.4.1. *Das Evangelium des Lucas im Volksdialekte der Puntli Chinesen* 路加傳福音書本地俗話¹⁵

This romanized version of the Gospel of Luke was published in 1867. It was the first Bible to be transliterated into Cantonese. Since many lower-class people in Guangdong then were illiterate, the Cantonese character version of the Bible was unsuitable for them. The missionaries first taught the romanization system to the uneducated so that they could read the Bible and understand the truths of Christianity. It was also convenient for Western missionaries to have the romanized version so they could read out the verses in Cantonese more easily. This romanized Gospel influenced the later romanized versions of the Cantonese Bible, shifting the system from Lepsius' to the "Standard Romanization" (Kataoka and Lee 2009).

The Rhenish Mission in China adopted Lepsius' "Standard Alphabet" (Lepsius 1981) in the early 1860s to romanize the Gospel of Luke into Hakka.¹⁶ Wilhelm Louis 呂威廉 (1815–1897), pastor in Guangdong and founder of a Bible school in Fuyong,¹⁷ translated the Gospel of Luke into Cantonese, which was then transliterated into Lepsius' system by another missionary, Ernst Faber 花之安 (1839–1899), in 1865. The Gospel was then published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1867.

That sixty-page booklet set out to explain how the Cantonese romanization system worked in practice, presenting twenty-four chapters of the Gospel of Luke. Each chapter was written in romanization with no Chinese characters. The following is an excerpt from Chapter 8 (Table 14).

Table 14. Excerpt from [Louis and Faber \(1867\)](#).

Luke 8:4–8	<p>4. Tšwǎn' yan hei' kok, tšhǔ' šǝn lǔi' tsui' tsǎp lei kin' Yē-sǝ, Yē-sǝ, koñ' pi' yǔ', wǎ: 5. Yau' ko' sǎt, tšun' kǝ' yan, tšhǔt, hǔ' sǎt, tšun', sǎt, ko' ši, yau' ti, tšun' lok tsoi' lǝ' pǎn, pi' yan tšhai' hǔ, tsǝk, tsei' lei šǝk hǔ. 6. Yau' ti, lok tsoi' ša, kǝ' ti', šǎn, tšhǔt, lei tsau' fu, hǔ, yan, wei' mǝ' mat, tǝ, yǔn'. 7. Yau' ti, lok tsoi' kǝn, kǝk, lǔi' thau, kǝn, kǝk, thuñ mai yat, ha' šǎn, tsau' khai' khǔ' ǎt, tšǔ'. 8. Yau' ti, lok tsoi' fi ti' kǝ', šǎn, tšhǔt, lei, ki, šat yau' yat, pǎk, phui'. Koñ' yǔn, tsau' tai' šǝn, wǎ: yau' yi' to' ho' yi' theñ, kǝ', tsau' yǝn, koi, theñ, la' !</p>
---------------	--

Below, we convert the romanized text into Cantonese characters and give the corresponding verses in the King James version for reference.

Cantonese characters:

4. 眾人喺各村城裡聚集嚟見耶穌，耶穌講比喻，話：5. 有個撒種嘅人，出去撒種，撒個時，有啲種落在路邊，被人踩曉，雀仔嚟食曉。6. 有啲落在沙嘅地，生出嚟就枯曉，因為冇乜滋潤。7. 有啲落在荊棘裡頭，荊棘同埋一下生，就搵佢壓住。8. 有啲落在肥田嘅，生出嚟，結實有一百倍。講完，就大聲話：有耳朵可以聽嘅，就應該聽嘍！

King James Version:

4. *And when many people were gathered together and were coming to him out of every city, he spoke by a parable: 5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8. And others fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.)*

This text was the first to explain Cantonese as having nine tones. Cantonese was always believed to have only eight tones according to previous Chinese and Western publications. Later publications followed the Rhenish linguistic framework.

This booklet also recorded the pronunciation of Cantonese in the nineteenth century, which was different from that of modern Cantonese, for instance through differentiating the dental set [ts]/[tsʰ]/[s] from the palatal set [tʃ]/[tʃʰ]/[ʃ]. Other publications by missionaries also made this dental/palatal distinction, based on the actual pronunciation of early Cantonese. However, these consonants have merged in modern Cantonese, and only the dental set is used.

The sales of romanized Cantonese Bibles dropped drastically after the turn of the twentieth century because of the promotion of the Chinese National Phonetic Script ([Stauf-fer 1922](#)).¹⁸ We believe the improvement of ordinary people's education level also led Cantonese people to prefer the Chinese character version to the romanized version.

4.4.2. Canton Colloquial Bible 舊新約全書: 廣東話

This first Cantonese Bible, published in 1907 by the British and Foreign Bible Society ([Anonymous 1907](#)), resulted from many missionaries' efforts after 1862. The New Testament was first translated by British, American, and German missionaries and was later revised by Immanuel G. Genähr 葉道勝 and Au Fung-chi 區鳳墀 ([Spillett 1975](#)). Most of the

translation of the Old Testament was completed by American missionaries Henry Vernum Noyes 那夏禮 and Benjamin Couch Henry 香便文 (Ball 1894; Broomhall 1907) and was later revised by Genähr (Spillet 1975). The translator Noyes (1836–1914) had been made available by the American Presbyterian Mission. In addition to establishing churches, Henry also devoted himself to education and founded the Pui Ying School 培英學校 and the Theological Seminary in Guangzhou to train local students and preachers (Anonymous 1914, pp. 310–14). He was the president of Lingnan University 嶺南大學 from 1896 to 1899 (Lee and Mill 2005). The translator Henry (1850–1901), also affiliated with the American Presbyterian Mission, went to Guangdong in 1873. He later became the president of Lingnan University from 1893 to 1894 (Lee and Mill 2005). The revisor Genähr (1897–1928) was the son of the Rhenish missionary Ferdinand Genähr 葉納清. Born in Guangdong, he had native fluency in Cantonese.¹⁹ Apart from the Cantonese Bible, he also took part in the translation of the Union version (Wen-li). Another revisor, Au Fung-chi (1847–1914) was a leading member of the London Missionary Society and a teacher of Chinese to Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

This Cantonese Bible has many distinctive lexical features that are worth noting. For example:

- The translation of the name “David”: In the previous versions of Cantonese Bibles, the name “David” was translated as “大關” following the Delegation version. In this version, “大衛” was used, which aligns with the term used in Mandarin Bibles.
- 2, The use of the localized term for “fig leaf”: In Genesis 3:7, Adam and Eve used “無花果葉” (fig leaves) to make themselves aprons to go around them after eating the forbidden fruit and realizing they were naked. Since the fig tree was not well known in China, this Bible used “蕉葉” (banana leaves), the more familiar term in southern China.
- The use of terms that are not used in modern Cantonese: e.g., 熱頭 (the sun), 共埋 (together with), 婢 (slave girl).
- The use of radical mouth: The terms “cherub” (angel/singular) or “cherubim” (angels/plural) often appear in the Old Testament, such as Genesis 3:24. Since they were unfamiliar in Cantonese, this Bible coined a word “嚟啲” to transliterate “cherubim”. The Cantonese Bible published in 2006 by the Hong Kong Bible Society still uses “嚟啲,” in sharp contrast to “基路伯,” the transliteration of “cherub” used in the Union version.

4.5. Miscellanea

Some Cantonese publications by missionaries do not fall into the above four categories, such as Piercy’s *Sacred Edict* 聖諭廣訓 (Piercy 1872), Ball’s cookery book (Ball 1890), and Nelson’s elementary textbook 幼學保身要言 (Nelson 1900). Although they are unique and interesting materials, it is beyond the scope of our research to discuss them in this article.²⁰

5. Closing Remarks

Following the Protestant missionaries’ arrival in China in the early nineteenth century, they confronted the fact that different classes of Chinese communicated in different dialects. In Guangdong Province, for example, the literati used classical Chinese as the unified form of written language, so the first religious books were translated into classical Chinese. Since the middle-class population could not read classical Chinese, the missionaries borrowed vernacular Cantonese characters to translate religious texts and created a Cantonese romanization system to translate Christian literature for the illiterate.

In our research, we found 267 items by Protestant missionaries that were classified into five categories. We were also able to examine the biographical and denominational data of the authors. The resulting evidence provided us with valuable data to explore the features of Cantonese in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Apart from their linguistic contributions, their method of writing Cantonese as it was spoken provided an

indirect modeling for the Cantonese orthography that is still used in Cantonese colloquial writing in Hong Kong today. Furthermore, the romanization of Cantonese was a remarkable linguistic contribution that the missionaries made to preserve and advance the study of Cantonese beyond the church. In Hong Kong, personal and place names in English are primarily spelled in romanized Cantonese. The Cantonese government romanization system is called the “Eitel/Dyer Ball system” in commemoration of the contributions of Eitel and Ball as Hong Kong senior civil officers (Hong Kong Colonial Secretariat 1960). Through analyzing the changing linguistic features of these works, it is now possible for us to see what nineteenth-century Cantonese was like in terms of phonology, lexis, and syntax. Compared to today’s Cantonese, we can see how the language has evolved considerably over the past two hundred years.

In brief, whilst the history of the Protestant missions in China has been studied from a variety of academic aspects, only little is known about their linguistic contributions to the diachronic study of Chinese dialects. This article offers a singular perspective on the missionaries’ linguistic contributions in the Cantonese-speaking region of Guangdong Province. In fact, missionaries in the Chaozhou, Hakka, Min, and Wu-speaking areas published vernacular pedagogical and religious materials (Broomhall 1907; Spillett 1975; You 2002; Choi 2018),²¹ following the widespread appreciation of vernacular works at the 1877 general missionary conference in Shanghai (Goodrich 1877). These translated materials are still of great value in the diachronic study of these dialects today and should open new avenues for further research into Chinese missionary linguistics.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.K. and Y.P.L.; methodology, S.K. and Y.P.L.; formal analysis, S.K. and Y.P.L.; investigation, S.K. and Y.P.L.; resources, S.K. and Y.P.L.; data curation, S.K. and Y.P.L.; writing—original draft preparation, S.K. and Y.P.L.; writing—review and editing, S.K. and Y.P.L.; supervision, Y.P.L.; project administration, S.K.; funding acquisition, S.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by Lord Wilson Heritage Trust (Reference number: HAB/C 27/9/129/1).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The original data presented in the study are openly available in the monograph at https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/clrc/english/pub_monographs_2022.html. The textual data are also partially available in the publicly open database at <https://corpus.eduhk.hk/cantobible/>.

Acknowledgments: We are grateful to the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. Thanks are also due to editors Joseph Lee and Lars Laamann for providing clear and thoughtful guidance for revisions. This article was based on the data collected in our monograph (Kataoka and Lee 2022), published by T.T.Ng Chinese Language Centre with the funding by Lord Wilson Heritage Trust. We would like to thank T.T.Ng Chinese Language Centre and Lord Wilson Heritage Trust for their kind permissions to partially reuse the content of this monograph.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Western Protestant missionaries referred to classical Chinese as 深文理 or Wen-li.
- ² Western Protestant missionaries referred to plain classical Chinese as 淺文理 or Easy Wen-li.
- ³ A Cantonese Bible was reproduced in 1959 by Hong Kong Bible Society and several versions have been published since then. See Section 4.4 for the brief history of the Cantonese Bible.
- ⁴ Catholic missionaries also produced both religious and pedagogical Cantonese works, but they were small in number and therefore are not included in this article. These works can be found in You (2002) and Kataoka and Lee (2022).
- ⁵ These five corpora are as follows: 1. Early Cantonese Colloquial Texts: A Database; 2. Early Cantonese Tagged Database; 3. Database of Early Chinese Dialects; 4. Database of the 19th Century (1865–1894) Cantonese Christian Writings; 5. The Database of Early Cantonese Bible and Christian Literature. For details, see Kataoka and Lee (2022).

- ⁶ See [Kataoka and Lee \(2008\)](#) for the “Standard Romanization”; [Kataoka \(2014\)](#) for the Government system; and [Kataoka and Lee \(2022\)](#) for the Lepsius system.
- ⁷ Devan made reference to Williams’ romanization used in his textbook *Easy Lessons in Chinese* (1842). The same romanization was used in Williams’ dictionary ([Williams 1856](#)).
- ⁸ See the website of Biblioteca Pública de Macau: https://www.library.gov.mo/zh-hant/library-collections/special-collections/ancient-texts?ancient=book_185 (accessed on 1 June 2024).
- ⁹ Ball’s family members were as follows: parents Dyer Ball and Isabella Robertson, half-sister Mary L. Collins, brothers-in-law John B. French and Andrew P. Happer, and father-in-law Samuel J. Smith.
- ¹⁰ The English title is our translation. There is no English title for this book. See ([Legge 1844](#)).
- ¹¹ Legge described his early church life in Hong Kong in his letter to Ball. See [Ball \(1894, p. viii\)](#).
- ¹² The English title is Ball’s translation. See [Ball \(1894\)](#).
- ¹³ The English title is taken from the original English book.
- ¹⁴ The letter was published in the annual report of BFBS ([British and Foreign Bible Society 1870](#)). In the letter, three missionaries asked for permission to publish a Cantonese Bible in order to serve less educated people. The letter proposed that the Cantonese Bible should be translated based on the eight principles, including the use of Textus Receptus as the base, the use of elegant Cantonese terms, and featured no discussion over the terms for God, Spirit, and Baptism. It did not disclose the names of the three missionaries, but [Kataoka \(2022\)](#) proved that they were Piercy, Preston, and Krolczyk. See [Kataoka \(2022\)](#) for details.
- ¹⁵ The Cantonese title is taken from the title in Cantonese romanization written on the first page of this Gospel.
- ¹⁶ Many missionaries used Lepsius’ romanization system to transliterate world languages including Chinese dialects ([Lepsius 1981](#)).
- ¹⁷ See the Rhenish missionary website for details: https://www.rhenish.org/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=8&Pid=2&Version=0&Charset=big5_hkscs&page=0 (accessed on 1 June 2024).
- ¹⁸ According to [Stauffer \(1922\)](#), sales figures for the Cantonese romanized Bible were 15,350 for the period 1890–1920, declining to 524 in 1916–1920, indicating a drastic fall in the last four years.
- ¹⁹ Genähr revised the second edition of Eitel’s dictionary. See Section 4.4.2. for details.
- ²⁰ See [Chen \(2024\)](#), and [Kataoka and Lee \(forthcoming\)](#).
- ²¹ For example, [Edkins \(1868\)](#) published a reference grammar based on the Shanghai dialect.

References

- Anonymous. 1875. Notices of Recent Publications. *Chinese Recorder* 6: 235.
- Anonymous. 1907. *Canton Colloquial Bible (Jiu xin yue quanshu: Guangdonghua 舊新約全書: 廣東話)*. China: British and Foreign Bible Society.
- Anonymous. 1914. In Memoriam--Henry V. Noyes, D.D. *Chinese Recorder* 45: 310–14.
- Ball, James Dyer. 1890. *The English-Chinese Cookery Book: Containing 200 Receipts in English and Chinese*. Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh.
- Ball, James Dyer. 1894. *Readings in Cantonese Colloquial: Being Selections from Books in the Cantonese Vernacular with Free and Literal Translations of the Chinese Character and Romanized Spelling*. Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh, pp. vii–xxxii.
- Ball, James Dyer. 1907. *Cantonese Made Easy: A Book of Simple Sentences in the Cantonese Dialect, with Free And Literal Translations, and Directions for the Rendering of English Grammatical Forms in Chinese*, 3rd ed. Singapore: Kelly & Walsh.
- Bauer, Robert Stuart. 2005. Two 19th century missionaries’ contributions to historical Cantonese phonology. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 10: 21–46.
- Bridgman, Elijah Coleman. 1841. *Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect*. Macao: S. Wells Williams.
- British and Foreign Bible Society. 1870. *The Sixty-Sixth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society*. London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, pp. 221–24.
- Broomhall, Marshall. 1907. The Bible in the Chinese Empire. In *The Chinese Empire: A General & Missionary Survey*. Edited by Marshall Broomhall. London: China Inland Mission, pp. 389–92.
- Broomhall, Marshall. 1934. *The Bible in China*. London: The China Inland Mission.
- Chalmers, John. 1859. *An English and Cantonese Pocket Dictionary (Ying Yue Zidian 英粵字典)*. Hong Kong: London Missionary Society’s Press.
- Chen, Sixing. 2024. Making Knowledge in the Local Settings: Vernacular Education and Cantonese Elementary Textbooks. *Religions* 15: 299. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Cheung, Hung-nin Samuel 張洪年. 2021. *Xianggang Yueyu: Er-bai nian cangsang tansuo 香港粵語: 二百年滄桑探索 [Cantonese in Hong Kong: An Exploration of the Past 200 Years]*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.
- Cheung, Hung-nin Samuel. 2023. *Cantonese since the 19th Century*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.
- Choi, Daniel Kam-to. 2018. *Shengjing zai Zhongguo 聖經在中國 [The Bible in China: With a Historical Catalogue of the Chinese Bible]*. Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies.
- Collins, Mary Lucy. 1866. *Shu shi Qian yi 述史淺譯 [Bible History for the Least and Lowest]*. Guangzhou: Shuangmendi Fuyintang 雙門底福音堂.

- Cowles, Roy Thomas. 1920. *Inductive Course in Cantonese*, 2nd ed. Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh.
- Darlow, Thomas H., and Horace F. Moule. 1903. *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society*. New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, vol. II, pp. 225–30.
- Devan, Thomas T. 1847. *The Beginner's First Book in the Chinese language Canton Vernacular*. Hong Kong: "China Mail" Office.
- Edkins, Joseph. 1868. *A Grammar of Colloquial Chinese, as Exhibited in the Shanghai Dialect*. Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press.
- Eitel, Ernst Johann. 1877. *A Chinese Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect*. London: Trübner and Co.
- Goodrich, Chauncey. 1877. Importance of a Vernacular Christian Literature. In *Records of the General Conference, Held in Shanghai, May 10–24*. Edited by General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China. Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, pp. 213–15.
- Henry, Benjamin C. 1877. In Memoriam: Rev. Charles F. Preston. *Chinese Recorder* 8: 342–44.
- Henry, Benjamin C. 1885. *The Cross and the Dragon or Light in the Broad East*. New York: Randolph.
- Hong Kong Colonial Secretariat. 1960. *A Gazetteer of Place Names in Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Hykes, John R. 1916. *Translations of the Scriptures into the Languages of China and Her Dependencies*. New York: American Bible Society, pp. 15–18.
- Kataoka, Shin 片岡新. 2014. Xianggang zhengfu Yueyu pinyin: yi ge luan zhong you xu de xitong 香港政府粵語拼音：一個亂中有序的系統 [Finding Order in Disorder: An Investigation into the Hong Kong Government Cantonese Romanization]. *Newsletter of Chinese Language* 93: 9–25.
- Kataoka, Shin 片岡新. 2022. Zi Shangdi shuo Yueyu yilai: Yueyu Shengjing de lishi yu yanbian 自上帝說粵語以來：粵語聖經的歷史與演變 [Ever since God Spoke Cantonese: The History and Development of the Cantonese Bible]. *Newsletter for Research in Chinese Studies* 41: 1–20.
- Kataoka, Shin 片岡新, and Yin Ping Lee 李燕萍. 2008. A System without a System: Cantonese Romanization Used in Hong Kong Place and Personal Names. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 11: 79–98.
- Kataoka, Shin 片岡新, and Yin Ping Lee 李燕萍. 2009. Shi-jiu shiji mo yi ge chengxian qihou de Yueyu luoma pinyin xitong: Biao zhun luoma fang'an 十九世紀末一個承先啟後的粵語羅馬拼音系統：標準羅馬方案 [A Cantonese Romanization System at the End of the 19th Century: The Standard Romanization Scheme]. In *Studies on Yue and Cantonese Dialects: Papers from the 13th International Conference 粵語跨學科研究：第十三屆國際粵方言研討會論文集*. Edited by Chin Chi On. Hong Kong: City University, pp. 231–44.
- Kataoka, Shin 片岡新, and Yin Ping Lee 李燕萍. 2022. Wan Qing Min chu Oumei chuanjiaoshi shuxie de Guangdonghua wenxian jingxuan 晚清民初歐美傳教士書寫的廣東話文獻精選 (1828–1927) [Selected Cantonese Publications by Western Missionaries in China (1828–1927)]. Hong Kong: T.T. Ng Chinese Language Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Available online: https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/clrc/english/pub_monographs_2022.html (accessed on 1 June 2024).
- Kataoka, Shin 片岡新, and Yin Ping Lee 李燕萍. Forthcoming. *Zhong wai renshi shuxie Guangdonghua zuopin jingxuan 中外人士書寫廣東話作品精選 [Selected Cantonese Works Written by Chinese and Non-Chinese]*. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
- Lee, Sui Ming, and Emily M. Mill, eds. 2005. *A Phoenix of South China: The Story of Lingnan (University) College, Sun Yat-sen University*. Hong Kong: Commercial Press.
- Lee, Yin Ping 李燕萍. 2009. Dui wai Yueyu jiaoxue pinyin fang'an de bijiao yu taolun 對外粵語教學拼音方案的比較與討論 [Comparison and Discussion of Cantonese Romanization for Teaching Cantonese as a Foreign Language]. In *Yuyanxue yu Huayu er yu jiaoxue 語言學與華語二語教學*. Edited by Wei Ping Wu 吳偉平 and Siu Lun Lee 李兆麟. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, pp. 195–210.
- Lee, Yin Ping 李燕萍, and Shin Kataoka 片岡新. 2006. Malixun dui Zhongwen de renshi 馬禮遜對中文的認識 [Robert Morrison's Understanding of the Chinese Language]. *Studies in Chinese linguistics* 22: 1–36.
- Legge, James. 1844. *Langzi Huigai 浪子悔改 [The Parable of the Prodigal Son]*. Hong Kong: London Missionary Society.
- Lepsius, Richard. 1981. *Standard Alphabet for Reducing Unwritten Languages and Foreign Graphic Systems to Uniform Orthography in European Letters*, 2nd & revised ed. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Li, Yuen Mei 李婉薇. 2011. *Qingmo minchu de Yueyu shuxie 清末民初的粵語書寫 [Cantonese Writing in the Late Qing Dynasty and Early Republic of China]*. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
- Louis, Wilhelm, and Ernst Faber. 1867. *Das Evangelium des Lucas im Volksdialekte der Punti Chinesen*. Hong Kong: British and Foreign Bible Society.
- Mak, George Kam Wah 麥金華. 2016. *Protestant Bible Translation and Mandarin as the National Language of China*. Leiden: Brill.
- Nelson, Jeannette May Elmor. 1900. *Youxue baoshen yaoyan 幼學保身要言 [Teaching Children to Protect Their Body]*. Place of publication and publisher unknown.
- Piercy, George. 1872. *Sheng yu guang xun 聖諭廣訓*. Guangzhou: Xiguan Taipingtang 西關太平塘.
- Preston, Charles Finney. 1863. *Yesu Yanxing Cuoyao Suhua 耶穌言行撮要俗話 [Important Selections from the Life of Christ in the Cantonese Dialect]*. Guangzhou: Shuangmendi Fuyintang 雙門底福音堂.
- Spillett, Hubert W. 1975. *A Catalogue of Scriptures in the Language of China and the Republic of China*. London: British and Foreign Bible Society, pp. 130–42.
- Stauffer, Milton T., ed. 1922. *The Christian Occupation of China*. Shanghai: China Continuation Committee.

- Tiedemann, Rolf Gerhard. 2021. Early Nineteenth-Century ‘Murmurings and Disputings’ in the Ultra-Ganges Missions. *Studies in World Christianity* 27: 232–52. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tong, Clement Tsz Ming 唐子明. 2018. *Qishi yu wenzi: Zhongwen Shengjing fanyi de gushi* 啟示與文字：中文聖經翻譯的故事 (1807–1919) [*Revelation and Text: The Story of Chinese Bible Translation (1807–1919)*]. Hong Kong: Tien Dao.
- Turner, John A. 1894. *Kwang Tung or Five Years in South China*. London: Partridge.
- Williams, Samuel Wells. 1856. *A Tonic Dictionary of the Chinese Language in the Canton Dialect*. China: The Office of the Chinese Repository.
- Wylie, Alexander. 1867. *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: Giving a List of their Publications, and Obituary Notices of the Deceased. With Copious Indexes*. Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press.
- You, Rujie 游汝傑. 2002. *Xiyang Chuanjiaoshi Hanyu Fangyan Zhuzuo Shumu Kaoshu* 西洋傳教士漢語方言著作書目考述 [*A Bibliographical Review of the Writings in Chinese Dialects by Western Missionaries*]. Ha’erbin: Heilongjiang Jiaoyu Chubanshe 黑龍江教育出版社.
- Yue, Anne O. 2004. Materials for the Diachronic Study of the Yue Dialects. In *The Joy of Research: A Festschrift in Honor of Professor William S-Y. Wang on his Seventieth Birthday*. Edited by Feng Shi 石鋒 and Zhongwei Shen 沈鍾偉. Tianjin: Nankai Daxue Chubanshe 南開大學出版社, pp. 246–71.
- Zetzsche, Jost O. 1999. *The Bible in China: The History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*. Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute.
- Zhongwen Shengjing Xinyi Hui 中文聖經新譯會. 1986. *Zhongwen Shengjing Fanyi Xiaoshi* 中文聖經翻譯小史 [*A Brief History of Chinese Bible Translation*]. Hong Kong: Tien Dao.

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.