

MISSION EVANGELIQUE DE L'INDOCHINE FRANÇAISE

(Christian and Missionary Alliance)

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MISSIONNAIRE

IMPRIMERIE DE LA MISSION

Rue de la Citadelle

Hanoi, le 11th March, 1925

To the Chairman and Members
of the Executive Committee
of the French Indochina Mission

Dear Brethren,

For several days I have been in a real quandary reading through the proofs of the first 32 pages of Genesis, the first 32 pages of our new Annamese Bible.

In view of the fact that this mission has repeatedly appealed for a simple BIBLE, in view of the fact that the sub-committee appointed by the executive committee of two years ago so unanimously instructed us and made the necessary suggestions pointing out to us what language was desired by the MISSION for this Bible, I feel that we as translators have not been faithful to these repeated desires, that is, in the first half of Genesis which I have just been reading. However it is much better than it has ever been before, and I am willing to let matters go as Mr. Olsen insists, but there are two or three words which I want you to AGAIN pass upon and authorize the Hanoi translators to change.

In our suggestions to Mr. Olsen, made repeatedly, we asked for "ngo" to be omitted and a more generally known term used, or if "ngo" must be used to put "hau" immediately after it. Here in Hanoi "ngo" will make this Genesis most difficult for our people to listen to ~~from~~ when read from the pulpit, and I venture to say the ordinary person will NOT UNDERSTAND IT. WHY MUST WE HAVE WHAT OUR PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND? Mr. Khoi uses words that are we know understandable throughout the Annamese speaking districts of this land. WHY MUST WE BE COMPELLED BY MR. OLSEN TO USE THIS HARDLY UNDERSTOOD TERM. The three members above mentioned of the sub-committee unanimously crossed it out, and two of these members came, one from Cochinchina and the other from ANNAM. IS MR. OLSEN RUNNING THIS MISSION OR NOT? I suggest that authorization be given us to change this "ngo" and use the terms more generally understood, either "hau cho" or "de" or as a concession to Mr. Olsen's feelings, "ngo hau."

Again Mr. Olsen insists on using the expression "hang-ha sa-so." It is understood by about half the people here, perhaps more. But why should we use the Buddhist

expression? Why not complete it and say, "Hằng-hà sa-số Phật, Vô-lượng công-đức Phật?" The literal meaning of the four words is, "Ganges River sand Number." But you will notice the American Revised says, "And will multiply thee exceedingly." Here is nothing about the Ganges River, nothing about the sand number. Of course we know the accepted meaning now is numerous, but I do not find that one version in the Chinese has availed itself of this expression, and the term is a "Chinese one." Why not put simply what Mr. Khoi suggested, "lãn cho đông-đoi người thêm nhiều qua-bộ." This is simple Annamese, but should it be rejected because it is simple and understood by all? Shall the desire and will of the executive committee and the conference be thwarted? I leave the responsibility with you fellow members of the executive committee.

I mention just these two things. There are others, but these are the most important for which I desire that you shall place yourself upon record. Therefore I am keeping up the type till I have instructions from you by telegraph to either let these two things go, and the "ngo" is repeated throughout the whole Genesis, or to change them. I will willingly meet with Mr. Olsen's thunder upon these two points. I have no bitterness in my heart, nothing but love, and I say this conscientiously, **BUT THE BIBLE IS TO ME A SACRED BOOK**, and I understand that the Bible Society asks for a translation, **NOT AN INTERPRETATION** as will be the case in the use of this latter phrase, going to one of the best known Buddhist books for help to use a phrase for which we have a perfectly simple word.

I shall be therefore very grateful to have some word by telegraph giving instructions as mentioned above. You can either wire the Chairman, which perhaps will be more in order, so that he can wire me. In the meantime I will pray with my whole heart and soul and mind that the LORD will guide you and that we shall prove that we are men and women with red corpuscles in our blood, with the desire to give these Annamese the BIBLE IN A LANGUAGE THAT SHALL BE SIMPLE ENOUGH FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND.

Trusting that all unfortunate expressions that may have crept into this hasty letter (to catch the night train which leaves within the hour) will be understood in the light of the circumstances under which they are typed, and praying that the LORD HIMSELF will guide and direct,

Yours in HIM as ever,

Wm. S. Sadman

This matter is urgent as the whole Bible is being held up.