

## The 君子 *junzi* as a Protagonist: “Wisdom Psalms” in Wu Ching-hsiung’s Translation

Lih YARIV-LAOR

以“君子”為中心人物：

吳經熊譯筆下的“詩歌智慧書”

雅麗芙

[ABSTRACT] “Wisdom Psalms” which are part of biblical “Wisdom Literature” (as found in Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes) tend to advocate the right way of life contrasting the choices made by those who reject God (e.g. the foolish or the wicked) with those who embrace God's rule (the wise and righteous).

This article concentrates on a certain aspect in Wu Ching-hsiung’s 聖詠譯義初稿 *Shengyong yiyi chugao* [First Draft of a Translation of the Psalms]. It compares Wu’s version with the English translation he used as a source text (*Translation of Psalms and Canticles with Commentary* by James M’Sweeney, London 1901) as well as with three other Chinese versions. Through his way of

rendering some “Wisdom Psalms” Wu’s unique *Weltanschauung* is exposed and constructed.

## Introduction

This study sets up to look at 吳經熊 Wu Ching-hsiung’s Chinese version of the Psalms, more specifically at those Psalms called “Wisdom Psalms.” The text of the Psalms having exercised much influence both over Christian<sup>1</sup> and Judaic literature, its wide appeal has led to translated versions in many languages, evidently in Chinese. Wu Ching-hsiung’s 聖詠譯義初稿 *Shengyong yiyi chugao* [First Draft of a Translation of the Psalms], published in 1946 (with additions and corrections by 蔣介石 Chiang Kai-shek)<sup>2</sup> joins the practice of some scholars in China who, out of the entire Old Testament, chose to translate only the Psalms into Chinese<sup>3</sup>.

Different categorizations have been suggested within the corpus of 150 Psalms. One grouping has acquired the designation “Wisdom Psalms,” a title which links it directly to the genre of biblical “Wisdom Literature,” generally characterized by stylistic peculiarities and by universalistic content. Thematically, biblical “Wisdom Literature” tends to emphasize the contrast of choices in life made by those who reject God, that is, the wicked or the foolish, with those who embrace God’s rule, that is the wise and the righteous. Whereas biblical “Wisdom Literature,” usually refers to the books of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, it does not seem

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Moyise, Steve, and Maarten J. J. Menken (eds.), *The Psalms in the New Testament*. London, New York: T & T Clark International, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> 吳經熊譯，《聖詠譯義初稿》（上海：商務印書館，1946年）

<sup>3</sup> Notable among the authors who created their own Chinese versions of Psalms are William Charles Burns’s Mandarin version published by the LMS in 1867; John Chalmers, “A specimen of Chinese Metrical Psalms” translation into high wenli of twenty of the psalms which was privately published in 1890 in Hong Kong, and Fredercick Wiliiam Baller 1908 Mandarin version, also privately published in 1908.

to pose problems of definition. However the notion of "Wisdom Psalms," however, remains open to debate. Lacking agreement on the classification criteria of "Wisdom Psalms," scholars continue to argue which specific Psalms belong to this category.<sup>4</sup> As Wu Ching-hsiung's opus is imbued with moral issues, looking at Wu's Chinese version of the Psalms, one would naturally tend to observe those of the Psalms that speak about themes such as the desired qualities of a man and the right way a person should choose in life. Referring to a Psalm as a "Wisdom Psalm" would thus depend here on thematic criteria.

In order to study the characteristics of Wu Ching-hsiung's version of the Psalms, his text composed in the literary style is juxtaposed to three other Chinese versions of the Psalms. The three versions are respectively:

- a) the Delegates' version<sup>5</sup> (London Mission Version) published in 1854, in which the entire Bible was translated in a literary style;
- b) William Charles Burns's Psalms version<sup>6</sup> to Mandarin with tetrameters, published in 1867;

---

<sup>4</sup> A close examination reveals that the lists of 'Wisdom Psalms' compiled by different scholars vary greatly. See Kenneth Kuntz, "Reclaiming Biblical Wisdom Psalms: a Response to Crenshaw," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2003, 1:145-154; Avi Hurvitz, "Wisdom Vocabulary in the Hebrew Psalter: A Contribution to the Study of Wisdom Psalms," *Vetus Testamentum* 1988, 38 (1): 41-51.

<sup>5</sup> The term *Delegates' Version* is commonly used to refer to the New Testament translation 新約全書 *Xinyue quanshu* published in 1852 and to the Old Testament 舊約全書 *Jiuyue quanshu* published in 1854. On this version see Patrick Hanan, "The Bible as Chinese literature: Medhurst, Wang Tao, and the Delegates' Version," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63 (2003), 197-239.

<sup>6</sup> Burns, William Chalmers, 《舊約詩篇官話》(北京, 1867年)

c) the *Studium biblicum franciscanum* version<sup>7</sup>, which is the standard Catholic version in Mandarin Chinese. Although the entire Catholic Bible was published as late as 1968, the text of the Psalms was already completed in 1946, the same year that Wu's translation appeared.

While the two 19<sup>th</sup> century versions, namely the Delegates' to the classical Chinese style and Burns' to Mandarin were both produced by Protestant authors, the two 20<sup>th</sup> century versions dealt with here, though different in style, were composed by Catholic authors.

**“The man” = *jūnzi***

“Blessed is...”

The opening verse of Psalm 1, unanimously agreed to be a *par excellence* chapter belonging to the category of “Wisdom Psalms” for its didactic, moral theme, says in the Hebrew original:

וְיִשְׁעֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ, וְיִשְׁעֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ, וְיִשְׁעֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ, וְיִשְׁעֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ.  
לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ.

*Ahrei-ha'ish asher lo halakh ba'atsat resha'im, uvederekh chatta'im lo amad, uvemoshav leitsim lo yashav* (Psalms 1:1) “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of the sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scoffers<sup>8</sup>.”

This verse, speaking almost the correct manner of conduct that a person should choose in life, establishes the tone of the entire book. Viewing the formulaic phrase *ashrei ha'ish...* “blessed is the man,<sup>9</sup>”

<sup>7</sup> *Sigao yiben* 思高譯本 *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* Version, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all English translations follow the English Standard Version.

<sup>9</sup> “Blessed” or “blessed is the man” is a formulaic statement found many times in the

which starts the Psalmic text, we notice that the second Hebrew word, *ha'ish*, meaning “the man” is generally literally rendered in most versions: the Latin Vulgate has *beatus vir...*; French versions, for example Crampon’s version<sup>10</sup>, which Wu Ching-hsiung might have consulted<sup>11</sup>, reads *Heureux l’homme...*; In the English versions we perceive, aside from the common “Blessed is the man,” also “Happy is the man,” and M’Sweeney’s *Translation of Psalms and Canticles, with Commentary*<sup>12</sup>, which is the text used by Wu Ching-hsiung, says: “Happy the man who...”. The different solutions to render Psalm 1:1 in the four Chinese versions observed here are:

Delegates: 惡者之謀兮弗從，罪人之途兮弗蹤，侮慢之位不居兮，福來降。

*è zhě zhī móu xī fú cóng, zuì rén zhī tú xī fú zōng, wǔmàn zhī wèi bù jū xī, fú lái jiàng.* “One who does not follow the villain’s schemes, does not pursue sinners’ ways, and does not dwell in scorners’ seats - blessing will descend upon him.”

Burns: 行為不從惡人計謀，站立不在罪人道路，落座不挨侮慢座位，這等的人，真是有福。 *xíng wéi bù cóng è rén jì móu, zhàn lì bù zài zuì rén dào lù, luò zuò bù āi wǔ màn zuò wèi, zhè děng de rén, zhēn shì yǒu fú.* “Those whose behaviour does not follow villains’s

---

Psalms and three times in Proverbs (3:13; 8:34; 20:7; 28:14). It is always used in connection with people and not God.

<sup>10</sup>Lefebvre ed. *La Sainte Bible*, traduction d’après les textes originaux par Augustin Crampon.. Société de S. Jean l’évangéliste. Desclée. Paris, Rome, Tournai: 1904

<sup>11</sup> See Zetzsche, Jost Oliver. *The Bible in China - The History of the Union Version or The Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China.*

Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustine. Nettetal: Steyler Verl, 1999, p. 420.

<sup>12</sup> James P. M’sweeney, *Translation of the Psalms and Canticles, with Commentary.* Sands & co., 1901

schemes, who do not stand in sinners' way, and who do not take their seat close to insolent people, this kind of people truly have blessing.”

*Studium biblicum*: 凡不隨從惡人的計謀，不插足於罪人的道路，不參與譏諷者的席位…像這樣的人才是有福的。 *fán bù suí cóng è rén de jì móu, bù chā zú yú zuì rén de dào lù, bù cān yǔ jī fēng zhě de xí wèi...xiàng zhè yàng de rén cái shì yǒu fú de*. “Whoever does not follow villains' schemes, does not set his feet in sinners' way, and does not occupy in mockers' seats, only people of this kind will be blessed.”

These three versions, although varying in style, actually share a common vocabulary (惡者 è zhě, 惡人 è rén ‘villains,’ 從 cóng, 隨從 suí cóng ‘follow,’ 罪人 zuì rén ‘sinners,’ etc.). Also, regarding the word meaning ‘man’ of the formulaic phrase “blessed is the man,” while the Delegates’ version remains implicit, both Burns’s and the *Studium biblicum*’s versions clearly have 人 rén ‘man.’

In Wu Ching-hsiung’s text, however, an utterly different rendering of this Psalmic opening verse is seen: 長樂唯君子，為善百祥集。不偕無道行，恥與群小立。 *cháng lè wéi jūn zǐ, wéi shàn bǎi xiáng jí. bù xié wú dào xíng, chǐ yǔ qún xiǎo lì*. “Of protracted-blessing is the *jūnzi*, who does a myriad of good deeds, who does not associate himself with the impious, and who is ashamed to stand in the company of lowly fellows.”

“Happy, of protracted-blessing, be...,” we start reading, but the following word is not “the man,” as we would have expected, but the 君子 *jūnzi*, the person of high standing<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, the term 君子

<sup>13</sup> Among the various translations found for the term *jūnzi* are “a man of complete virtue,” “a superior man,” etc.

*jūnzi* used by Wu Ching-hsiung is marked as the most significant constituent in the phrase by the character preceding it, 唯 *wéi*, which serves as a focus marker. Thus, the reader is presented at the very beginning with the fact that the text does not speak of just a ‘man,’ but precisely of a person of high standing<sup>14</sup>. It is the 君子 *jūnzi* who should be careful concerning the company he keeps and the moral types with whom he associates. The choice made by Wu Ching-hsiung, unlike any other translator, in using the term 君子 *jūnzi*, immediately alludes to the Confucian lore. Moreover, giving each Psalm its own heading, Wu assigned to Psalm 1 the title 君子與小人 *jūn zi yǔ xiǎo rén*, thus leaving no doubt as to the way he views the contradiction between the biblical righteous man on the one hand and wicked man on the other. This starting point seems to forecast the specific viewpoint of Wu Ching-hsiung as imbued in his entire Psalm opus.

The notion that Wu Ching-hsiung is interested in the *jūnzi* as the Psalmic model person is further strengthened when we look at his rendering of Psalm 15.

*“who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?” - The Desired Features of the Person who Deserves Staying Close to God*

מי יגור באהלה; מי-ישכן, בהר קדשך *Mi yagur be'oholeikha, mi yishkon behar kodshekha?* (Psalms 15:1). The question enunciated in Psalm 15:1 meaning to inquire ‘who is eligible to be close to God,’ really seeks out for an answer which refers to the person who possesses the

---

<sup>14</sup> According to Brownlee (Brownlee, W. H. “Psalms 1-2 as a Coronation Liturgy,” *Biblica* 52, 1971, 326-327), who examined the Hebrew original, Psalm 1 does indeed focus on a man of high standing, as verse 1 uses the term *ish* rather than *adam*, the usual term for a man.

qualities stated in the verses that follow, all specific and concrete virtues relating to social behaviour. The first desired feature spelled out as an answer to this question stresses integrity and truth speaking (Psalm 15:2):

וְדַבֵּר אֱמֶת, בְּלִבּוֹ הוֹלֵךְ תָּמִים, וַיַּעַל צֶדֶק;

*Holekh tamim ufo 'el tsedek; vedover emet bilevavo* “He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks the truth in his heart.”

The four Chinese versions readings to this verse are:

Delegates: 所行惟義，坦然平直兮，所言無僞，盹然真實兮。*suǒ xíng wéi yì, tǎn rán píng zhí xī, suǒ yán wú wéi, dǔn rán zhēn shí xī*. “What he comes out is only justice, calmly and frankly, his words are not false, but serene and true.”

Burns: 誰有正直，所行公義，話語說出，和心相對。*shéi yǒu zhèng zhí, suǒ xíng gōng yì, huà yǔ shuō chū, hé xīn xiàng duì*. “He who has uprightness, what he puts into practice is righteousness, the words he speaks out and his heart match each other.”

Studium biblicum: 只有那行為正直，作事公平，從自己心裏說誠實話的人。*Zhǐ yǒu nà xíng wéi zhèng zhí, zuò shì gōng píng, cóng zì jǐ xīn lǐ shuō chéng shí huà de rén*. “Precisely that man whose conduct is upright, whose actions are fair, who speaks honest words from his own heart.”

Wu Ching-hsiung: 其惟行善者，心口無欺謾。*qí wéi xíng shàn zhě, xīn kǒu wú qī màn*. “He who only does good, whose heart and mouth (thoughts and words) lack deceitfulness.”

Again, there is a remarkable difference between Wu’s version and the others. The first three Chinese versions follow the Hebrew



original in using affirmative expressions describing the feature of integrity and uprightness of the person who is eligible to be close to the Almighty. Likewise is M’Swiney’s very literal translation which reads: “He-that-walks perfectly. And works justly; And speaks truth in his heart.” Unlike these versions, Wu Ching-hsiung’s transmission of the human desirable quality referred to in Psalm 15:2 is highlighted idiomatically by using a negative phrase 無欺謾 *wú qī màn* “lacking deceitfulness,” thus putting emphasis on the virtue of honesty and uprightness.

The second feature figuring in this Psalm relates to different harms a person may cause others using his tongue: gossiping, hurting people, denigrating others.

לֹא-רָגַל, עַל-לְשׁוֹנוֹ--לֹא-עָשָׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ רָעָה; וְדָרְפָהּ, לֹא-נִשְׂאָ עַל-קַרְבּוֹ.

*Lo ragal ‘al leshono, lo ‘asa lere‘ehu ra‘a, vecherpa lo nasa ‘al krovo* (Psalm 15:3). “Who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend.”

Delegates: 不背友朋，不誹人兮，不出惡言，辱裡鄰兮。 *bù bèi yǒu péng, bù fěi rén xī, bù chū è yán, rǔ lǐ lín xī*. “(He) does not turn his back on his friends, does not slander other people, does not produce malicious talk, nor brings dishonor on his neighbourhood.”

Burns: 不用舌頭，搬弄是非，不造飛言，不害鄰友。 *bù yòng shé tóu, bān nòng shì fēi, bù zào fēi yán, bù hài lín yǒu*. “(He) does not use his tongue to sow discord among people, does not create rumors, does not harm his friends and neighbours.”

Studium biblicum: 他不信口非議，危害兄弟，更不會對鄰裡，恃勢詆欺。 *tā bù xìn kǒu fēi yì, wéi hài xiōng dì, gèng bù huì duì lín lǐ, shì shì dǐ qī* “He does not criticize uttering without thinking, harming

his brothers, moreover, he is unlikely to rely on his position to slander and cheat his neighbours.”

Wu Ching-hsiung: 既無讒人舌，又無噁心肝。處世惟忠厚，克己待人寬。 *jì wú chán rén shé, yòu wú ǎ xīn gān. chǔ shì wéi zhōng hòu, kè jǐ dài rén kuān.* “As he does not slander others with his tongue, he also does not possess all evil heart, his conduct in society is honest and considerate, self restrained he treats people leniently.”

Reading Wu’s version, the well-educated reader who has a thorough acquaintance with Confucian texts, certainly does not fail to recognize the connotations used by Wu Ching-hsiung in eulogizing the desired virtues of the person who deserves being close to God. Noticing the compound 克己 *kè jǐ*, for example, would not one be allude to the phrase cited by Confucius, 克己復禮為仁 *kè jǐ fù lǐ wéi rén* “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety is perfect virtue<sup>15</sup>”? or, encountering the character 寬 *kuān* in Wu’s version, could a scholar not call to mind the phrase 寬則得眾<sup>16</sup> *kuān zé dé zhòng* “by his generosity he won all” ?

Another desirable feature articulated in Psalm 15:4 refers to being loyal to one’s oath, keeping one’s word in all circumstances: נִשְׁבַּע לְהַרְע, וְלֹא יִמָּר *nishba lehara, velo yamir* “Who swears to his own hurt and does not change.” The Chinese renderings of this verse are:

Delegates: 雖己有損，不易其志兮 *suī jǐ yǒu sǔn, bù yì qí zhì xī* “Even though (this is) harmful for himself, he does not change his determination.”

<sup>15</sup> *Lún Yǔ*, book 12. English translation by James Legge.

<sup>16</sup> *Lún Yǔ*, book 20.

Burns: 雖己吃虧，也不肯改 *suī jǐ chī kuī, yě bù kěn gǎi*  
“even though he himself suffers loss, he still is not willing to change.”

Studium Biblicum: 宣誓雖損己，亦不作廢 *xuān shì suī sǔn jǐ, yì bù zuò fèi* “When he makes a vow, although it harms himself, he still does not annul it.”

Wu Ching-hsiung: 一言九鼎重<sup>17</sup>，得失非所患。 *yī yán jiǔ dǐng chóng, dé shī*

*fēi suǒ huàn.* “One word is worth nine tripods, neither gains nor losses are shattered.”

One more virtue of the person who is praised by the Psalmic author is that which deals with the underprivileged in society: “Who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent” (Psalm 15:5).

כִּסְפוֹ, לֹא-נָתַן בְּנִשְׁבָּה -- וְשִׁחַד עַל-נַקִּי, לֹא לָקַח

*kaspo lo natan beneshekh, veshochad ‘al naki lo lakach*

Delegates: 不貸人金，重權其子母兮，不受苞苴，害彼無辜兮。  
*bù dài rén jīn, zhòng quán qí zǐ mǔ xī, bù shòu bāo jū, hài bǐ wú gū xī.*  
“Who does not lend money to other people at compound interest, and does not accept bribe harming these innocents.”

---

<sup>17</sup> Here, as in numerous other verses all along his Psalms and New Testament versions, Wu introduces a four-character set phrase (成语 *cheng yu*). See Toshikazu S. Foley, “Four-character Set Phrases. A Study of their Use in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Versions of the Chinese New Testament.” *Hong Kong Journal of Catholic Studies* 2011 (2): 45-97.

Burns: 不放錢財，收重利息，不受賄賂，殘害無辜。 *bù fàng qián cái, shōu zhòng lì xī, bù shòu huì lù, cán hài wú gū.* “Who does not lend money collecting heavy interest, and does not receive bribes injuring the innocent.”

Studium Biblicum: 從不放債，貪取重利，從不受賄，傷害無罪。 *cóng bù fàng zhài, tān qǔ zhòng lì, cóng bù shòu huì, shāng hài wú zuì.* “Who never lends money greedily fetching high interest, never accepts bribe harming the guiltless.”

Wu Ching-hsiung: 不將重利剝，不作貪污官。 *bù jiāng zhòng lì bō, bù zuò tān wū guān.* “Not skinning at high interest, not being a corrupt official.”

Here again, Wu’s version does not use a relatively literal translation as do the other versions which use expressions meaning “to accept a bribe.” Instead, confident that the person spoken of in these verses is a person of high standing who holds an official post, Wu Ching-hsiung summarizes the idea of not accepting bribes by saying 不作貪污官 “not being a corrupt official.” This agrees very well with his stress on right conduct in society: 處世惟忠厚，克己待人寬 “self restrained he treats people leniently.” In Wu’s eyes, it is clear that the one who behaves honestly and considerately, who is self restrained and treats people leniently is a 官 *guan* “official.” The official, accordingly and naturally, is not corrupt.

Psalm 15 treats specific ways of behaviour appropriate to the person who pays special attention to inter-personal relations, not hurting others and especially not harming the underprivileged in society. In Wu Ching-hsiung’s perspective, the ideal persona of a *jūnzi* is here revealed. So, even without direct use of the term *jūnzi* in these verses, the expressions and terms Wu uses, drawing on Confucian

lore, leave no doubt that the desired qualities of a model person in the Psalms fully coincides with those of the Confucian *jūnzi*.

**“The righteous” = *jūnzi***

The Psalmic desired features of a person taken together sum up to portray the disposition of a *tsadik*, “righteous-one” or “just-one.” This kind of person, who not only achieves the moral qualities enumerated in the Psalms, but also, of course, reveres God, shall be successful. Many verses express the Psalmic idea of the righteous’ flourishing in contradiction to the fate awaiting the wicked. The following verse, containing the Hebrew word *tsadik*, refers to the bright future of the righteous צַדִּיק, בְּתֵמַר יִפְרַח; *Tsadik katamar yifrach* “The righteous flourish like the palm tree” (Psalm 92:12). Translated literally, the Hebrew word *tsadik* in this Psalm is always transmitted as “just-man,” “righteous-man,” or its equivalents in the following European versions:

Vulgate (Latin): “*iustus ut palma florebit*”

Crampon (French): “*Le juste croîtra comme le palmier*”

Luther<sup>18</sup> (German): “Der Gerechte wird grünen wie ein Palmbaum”

M’Swiney: “The just-man shall flourish like the palm tree”

Accordingly, the Chinese versions viewed here, apart from the version composed by Wu Ching-hsiung, employ the character 義 *yì*

---

<sup>18</sup> Luther Bibel 1912.

‘justice,’ ‘righteousness’ in compounds and phrases (義者 *yì zhě*, 行義之人 *xíng yì zhī rén*, 正義的人 *zhèng yì de rén*) defining the kind of person who will flourish like a date tree. In addition, following the original, these versions employ a word meaning “like” (譬 *pì*, 如同 *rú tóng*, 像 *xiàng*) within a sentence in the indicative mood to introduce the image of a palm tree:

Delegates: 義者發葫，譬彼棗樹 *yì zhě fā hú, pì bǐ zǎo shù* “The righteous-one will grow a calabash gourd, like those date trees.”

Burns: 行義之人，定然發旺，如同棗樹 *xíng yì zhī rén, dìng rán fā wàng, rú tóng zǎo shù* “The man who acts righteously, will certainly grow vigorous, like the date tree.”

Studium biblicum: 正義的人像棕櫚茂盛 *zhèng yì de rén xiàng zōng lú mào shèng* “The man of justice will be luxuriant like a palm tree.”

Totally departing from either the original or from any other translated versions, Wu Ching-hsiung’s version reads: 雍雍君子，何以比擬？鳳尾之棕，鬱鬱蔥蔥 *yōngyōng jūnzi, héyǐ bǐnǐ? fèngwěi zhī zōng, yùyù cōngcōng*. “The harmonious *jūnzi*, how to compare him? To buds of a palm tree, verdant and luxuriant.”

To introduce the image of this well known verse, Wu Ching-hsiung uses an interrogative sentence, posing the question “to what can the *jūnzi* be compared?” But, the verse deals with “the righteous”! Wu Ching-hsiung is evidently aware of the very close association existing in the mind of his literati readers between the concepts of 義 *yì* and that of 君子 *jūnzi* (as, for example, when recalling the phrase 君子喻於義，小人喻於利<sup>19</sup> *jūn zi yù yú yì, xiǎo*

<sup>19</sup> *Lún Yǔ* book 4, chapter 16.

*rén yù yú lì* “The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain”).

Thus, totally departing from the text which he knew from the very neat translation by M’Swiney, Wu Ching-hsiung moves towards the ideal with which he identifies: Wu is the one and only translator to Chinese who employs the term *jūnzi* in referring to “the righteous” in this verse. Moreover, his version, containing an interrogative form as well as reduplicated and alliterated compounds, emerges to be more poetic than those of the other translators.

愷悌君子 *kǎitì jūnzi* (*Psalm 68:3, Psalm 103:18*)

The conceptual affinity between the notion of the righteous person and that of the Confucian *jūnzi* established by Wu Ching-hsiung recurs in several other cases. A notable example is the verse 愷悌君子 *kǎitì jūnzi* “happy and easygoing *jūnzi*” repeated by Wu in Psalm 68:3 as well as in Psalm 103:18. Interestingly however, neither in the original nor in the other translated versions do these two verses show any similarity, except for the Hebrew word *tzadikim* “righteous ones” appearing in one verse, and the root *tz.d.k.* “be right” figuring in the other. The two Hebrew verses followed by their English translations are:

וְצַדִּיקִים יִשְׂמְחוּ יַעֲלֶצוּ, לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים; וְיִשְׂשׂוּ בְשִׂמְחָה.

*vetzaddikim yismechu ya'altzu lifnei elohim veyasisu vesimchah.*

“But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!” (Psalm 68:3)

וְהִתְקַדְּדוּ יְהוָה, מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם-- עַל-יְרֵאָיו; וְצַדִּיקָתוֹ, לִבְנֵי בְנִים. לְשִׂמְחָתוֹ בְּרִיתוֹ  
וּלְזִכְרֵי פִקְדוֹתָיו, לְעִשׂוֹתָם.

*vechesed hashem me'olam ve'ad-olam al yere'av vetzidkato livnei vanim. leshomerei verito ulezokherei fikkudav la'asotam.* “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to keep his commandments.”

Transmitting the first of these two dissimilar verses, Wu writes: 愷悌君子，體逸心沖 *kǎi tì jūn zǐ, tǐ yì xīn chōng* “happy and easygoing *jūnzi*, their body is at ease, their mind is in a state of excitement,” and in Psalm 103:17-18 Wu composes: 愷悌君子，聖道是遵 *kǎi tì jūn zǐ, shèng dào shì zūn* “happy and easygoing *jūnzi* who does observe the *shèngdào*.” Here, in addition to the *jūnzi*, the compound *shèngdào* alludes to his Psalm 1:2: 優遊聖道中，涵泳徹朝夕 “Contentedly absorbed in the *shèngdào* (lit. the holy way,” the law of God”) he meditates day and night.”

Not every occurrence of the word meaning “righteous-one” is however quasi-automatically or quasi-mechanically transmitted by Wu to *jūnzi*. As a matter of fact, one can recognize a tendency to use *jūnzi* when it is a matter of the righteous independent way of conduct, out of his own determination. On the other hand, when the text talks about God’s attitude toward the righteous-ones, other expressions, such as 賢者 *xián zhě* “virtuous-ones” or 善人 *shàn rén* “well-doers” are employed by Wu (See, for example, his renderings of Psalm 1:6 “For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish,” 我主識善人，無道終淪滅, and of Psalm 34:15: “The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry,” 主目所樂視，賢者之行實，主耳所樂聽，賢者之陳述).

**“You” = *jūnzi***



The crucial demonstration that Wu Ching-hsiung considers the addressee of the book of Psalms as a *jūnzi*, is clearly provided by his rendering of Psalm 128:2. The original says:

יִגַּע פִּפְיָךְ, כִּי תֵאָכֵל; אֲשַׁרְיָךְ, וְטוֹב לָךְ

*yegia' kappeikha ki tokhel; ashreikha vetov lakh.* “You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.” M’Swiney translates: “The labour of thy hands, thou-shalt-surely eat; happy art thou, and it shall be well with thee.” Accordingly, Chinese versions, except the one compiled by Wu Ching-hsiung, render this verse addressing a second-person:

Delegates: 勤勞而得食，獲福而享通兮。 *qín láo ér dé shí, huò fú ér xiǎng tōng xī.* “If you are hard working then you obtain food, gain happiness and enjoyment.”

Burns: 必無徒勞，定然得食，福氣加增，事事順利。 *bì wú tú láo, dìng rán dé shí, fú qì jiā zēng, shì shì shùn lì.* “With no futile labour you certainly obtain food, good fortune will increase and everything will go smoothly”

Studium biblicum: 你能吃你雙手賺來的食物，你便實在幸運，也萬事有福。 *nǐ néng chī nǐ shuāng shǒu zhuàn lái de shí wù, nǐ biàn shì zài xìng yùn, yě wàn shì yǒu fú.* “If you are able to eat the food that your pair of hands have earned, you will then be really fortunate, and all things will be blessed.”

This second-person narrative is absent in Wu Ching-hsiung’s opus, where we read:

勤勞應有果，君子豈終窮？*qín láo yìng yǒu guǒ, jūn zǐ qǐ zhōng qióng?* “As hard work has to have fruit, would a *jūnzi* be poor in the end?”

## Conclusion

Wu’s version appears very conscientiously premeditated: from the very first verse, the reader is introduced to his concept – that the person addressed in the Psalms is a *jūnzi*. By using this term, as well as other phrases and expressions from the Confucian lexis, Wu at once imposes a Confucian connotation on the Psalms, suggesting that there is no incongruity between Confucian ethics and biblical Judeo-Christian morality. Whether we recall Walter Benjamin’s seminal essay “The Task of the Translator”<sup>20</sup> or talk about deconstruction referring to Jacques Derrida<sup>21</sup>, it is clear that what we find in Wu Ching-hsiung’s idiosyncratic poetic Psalm opus perfectly conveys his worldview: East and West, Confucian and Judeo-Christian ideas not only do not contradict each other; on the contrary - they coexist in harmony.

## References

Benjamin, Walter. “The Task of the Translator,” in Hannah Arendt (ed.), *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.

---

<sup>20</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” in *Illuminations*. edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt ; translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1985

<sup>21</sup> Jacques Derrida. “From Des tours de Babel” translated by Joseph F. Graham in *Difference in Translation*. Ithaca: Cornell Univeristy Press, 1985

Burns, Islay. *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns*. London: James Nisbet & Co, 1870.

Brownlee, W. H. "Psalms 1-2 as a Coronation Liturgy," *Biblica* 52 (1971), 326-327.

Derrida, Jacques.. "From Des tours de Babel" translated by Joseph F. Graham in *Difference in Translation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Eriksson, Lars Olov. "Come, Children, listen to me!" Psalm 34 in *Hebrew Bible and in Early Christian Writings*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1991.

Fang, Mark. "Translating and Chanting the Psalms: A Retrospective on the Use of the Bible in the Chinese Catholic Church in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century," in Chloe Starr, (ed.) *Reading Christian Scriptures in China*. London: T & T Clark, 2008.

Haft, Lloyd. "Perspectives on John C. H. Wu's Translation of the New Testament," in Chloe Starr, (ed.) *Reading Christian Scriptures in China*. London: T & T Clark, 2008.

Hanan, Patrick. "The Bible as Chinese literature: Medhurst, Wang Tao, and the Delegates' Version," in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63 (2003), 197-239.

Hurvitz, Avi, 1988. "Wisdom Vocabulary in the Hebrew Psalter: A Contribution to the Study of Wisdom Psalms," *Vetus Testamentum* 38 (1), pp. 41-51.

Hurvitz, Avi. *Shki'ey hokhma besefer Tehilim* (Wisdom Language in Biblical Psalmody), Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991.

Marlin, E. Thomas, "Psalm 1 and 112 as a Paradigm for the Comparison of Wisdom Motifs in the Psalms," *JETS* 29/1, 1986 15-24.

Moyise, Steve and Maarten J. J. Menken (eds.) *The Psalms in the New Testament*. London, New York: T & T Clark International, 2004.

So, Francis K. H., "Wu Ching-hsiung's Chinese Translation of Images of the Most High in the Psalms," in Irene Eber, Sze-kar Wan, and Knut Walf (eds.) in collaboration with Roman Malek, *Bible in Modern China - The Literary and Intellectual Impact*. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XLIII. Sankt Augustin- Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1999.

So, Francis K. H. "Hymnic Characteristics in the *New Testament*: Wu Ching-hsiung's Translation and Appropriation," in *Hong Kong Journal of Catholic Studies* (2011) vol. 2, pp. 434-455.

Wu, John Ching-hsiung. *Chinese Humanism and Christian Spirituality*. Jamaica, N. Y.: St. John's University Press, 1965.

Zetzsche, Jost Oliver, *The Bible in China - The History of the Union Version or The Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*. Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustine. Nettetal: Steyler Verl, 1999.

## Chinese Bible Versions

Delegates’ Version 委辦譯本 or 代表譯本, 1854.

Burns, William Chalmers Version of the Psalms, 舊約詩篇官話, Peking, 1867.

Wu Ching-hsiung Version of the Psalms 聖詠譯義, 1946.

*Sigao yiben* 思高譯本 *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Version*, 1968.

[摘要] 《詩歌智慧書》是《聖經》<智慧文學>(Wisdom Literature)的一部分(如同在〈箴言〉、〈約伯記〉、〈雅歌〉和〈傳道書〉中所見)，旨在宣揚有別於不信神者(例如愚昧或邪惡的人)所選，信神者(有智慧且正義的人)所采的正確生活之道。

本文關注於吳經熊《聖詠譯義初稿》中的特定面上。本文比較了吳經熊的譯文，與其據以翻譯的英文原本(*Translation of Psalms and Canticles with Commentary*, James M’Swiney, London 1901)及另外三種中文版譯文。通過其對部分“詩歌智慧書”翻譯和表現的方式，吳經熊獨特的世界觀(*Weltanschauung*)也被呈現、建構出來。