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NOTES ON HISTORY OF THE FIRST KOREAN TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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The history of the first translation of the New Testament into the Korean language covers more than 10 years — from 1876 till 1887. The article follows the chronological principle of the translation process, deals with main characteristics of the process and makes its focus on the attribution of the authorship of the translation. The official author of the translation is considered to be John Ross — a Protestant missionary from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, but the question keeps to be open since the great part of the translation work was carried out by many Korean translations, whose names are still remain unknown. The article supplies at least a partial answer to it. Refs 20. Tables 1.

Keywords: Christianity, Korea, New Testament, translation.

К ИСТОРИИ ПЕРВОГО ПЕРЕВОДА НОВОГО ЗАВЕТА НА КОРЕЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

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В статье прослеживается история создания текста первого полного перевода Нового Завета на корейский язык, охватывающая период с 1876 г. по 1887 г., рассматриваются особенности процесса перевода, а также затрагивается тема атрибуции авторства перевода, на настоящее время представляющая собой открытый вопрос. Официальным автором перевода считается протестантский миссионер из Объединенной пресвитерианской церкви Шотландии Джон Росс, однако при внимательном изучении истории перевода данного текста становится очевидным, что существенную роль в процессе сыграли корейские переводчики, чьи имена в значительной мере остаются неизвестными до сих пор. Библиогр. 20 назв. Табл. 1.

Ключевые слова: христианство, Корея, Новый Завет, перевод.

Introduction

The year 1910 is remarkable in the history of the Asian Museum (now Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences), for it was in that year that its collection was replenished with an extensive assembly of books, contributed by Iosif Antonovich Goshkevich, a prominent Russian missionary, diplomat and orientalist. As a translator and personal counsellor with the expedition of Ye. V. Putyatin, over the period from 1852 to 1855 I. A. Goshkevich obtained a lot of books for his personal library during his visits to the ports of China and Korea. A special place in that collection belongs to one of the earliest translations of the Holy Writ into Korean — the «*Yesu syeonggyo syeongseyo*» (The Holy Scriptures of Jesus Teaching, Kor. 예수성교성서).

The volume in question is a book made of 48 sheets printed typographically. It consists of 28 chapters and the «Interpretation of Names» (*gangmyeongpyeon*; Kor. 강명편) — a list of some proper names with accompanying explanatory statements. The date on the cover provides information about the time it was printed — «*gwangsesibi-nyeon*»

(12th year of the reign under the slogan *gwang-syui*, 광세십이년), which corresponds to 1886 of the Gregorian calendar. The artefact has reached us in good condition, the printed matter exhibits no damage. The cover of the book is made of thin light yellow paper, with the title placed in the middle «*Yesu syeonggyo syeongsyeo*» (The Holy Scriptures of Jesus Teaching, Kor. 예수성경성서), part of the title is offset to the left — «*Mattwe bogeum*» (The Gospel of Matthew, Kor. 맛복음). The place of printing, indicated to the left off the middle, is: «Shenyang, «The Light of Culture» Lecture hall» (*Simyang mungwang syeoweon*, Kor. 심양문광서원) [1, p. 113].

Based on the given information identifying the author of the translation presents a certain difficulty, as neither the cover nor the text mentions the translator's name. Yet, based on the information concerning the date and place of publication, as well as the data obtained from the study of the translations of the Holy Scriptures into Korean¹, we can venture a guess that the author of the translation should officially be considered John Ross — a Protestant missionary from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Considering that the object of the present paper is the printed edition of «*Yesu syeonggyo syeongsyeo*», published in 1887, the aim of the paper is to determine the identity of the translator of the «*Yesu syeonggyo syeongsyeo*». Along with this we intend to clarify the context and circumstances of the translation of the New Testament as well as special details of the translation process.

Translation of the Holy Scriptures: preliminary work

John Ross was born on July 6, 1842, in a Scottish village of Nigg as the eldest son to the family of Hugh Ross and Catherine Sutherland. His father owned a tailor's shop near the town of Balintore situated on the northern coast of the Moray-Firth being at the time an important sea port in the East of Scotland. As a child, J. Ross spent a lot of time in father's shop, listening to the stories travellers and merchants told about other countries, their traditions and customs, that not only encouraged a broad worldview, but also laid a firm foundation for acquiring various language skills in the future. J. Ross' distinctive language abilities were determined to a certain degree by the fact that his native language was Gaelic, and by the time he started school he was also rather fluent in English [4, p. 44–49]. Life in a bilingual community, apparently, gave him eventually a substantial advantage when learning first Chinese and then Korean.

J. Ross got higher education at Theological College in Edinburgh, graduating in 1870. The idea about educational work abroad interested Ross already in 1868 when he started correspondence with Hamilton M. MacGill, the secretary of the Foreign Mission Board [4, p. 51]. However, the choice of further direction of activities for J. Ross did not look so simple, as his long-cherished dream was also missionary work in the highlands of Northern Scotland [4, p. 56]. After long deliberations, he chose the Chinese mission, where he went with his wife M. A. Stuart in April 1872, arriving in Yantai (Chin. 烟台) on August 23, 1872. But in less than two months the couple moved to the city of Yingkow (Chin. 營口) situated on the opposite Eastern part of the Bohai Gulf, as J. Ross' ambition for working in Manchuria, almost untouched by protestant missionaries at the time, was becoming more

¹ See for ex.: [2, p. 409–505; 3, p. 571–597].

and more apparent [5, p. 34–35]. His eagerness can be traced in words he said later: «I was sent to steal the hearts of the Chinese people» [4, p. 34].

It is customary for the studies of the history of the first translation of the New Testament into Korean to distinguish the following stages:

1. Autumn 1874 — summer 1877: preparation period;
2. Summer 1877 — March 1879: the first stage of translation under the supervision of John Ross;
3. April 1879 — May 1881: the second stage of translation under the supervision of John MacIntyre, while J. Ross searched for sources of financing the translation in Great Britain;
4. June 1881 — autumn 1886: the third stage of translation under the supervision of John Ross, publishing individual Gospels, editing the whole of the New Testament text [5, p. 47].

This periodization draws on, first, the original text and principles of translation, and second, the content of the work implemented. That is why in the synopsis of the translation's history we will follow this chronological pattern.

Soon upon arriving in Yingkow, J. Ross started preparing for the trip towards the Korean border; the country was named Choson (Kor. 조선) at the time. In the late 19th century, China and Korea had a specially designated territory between them, which was used for trade as well as for carrying out customs examination. These two functions were performed by a small settlement of Koryeomun (Korean gates, Kor. 고려문) situated not far from the Chinese fortress Fenghuang (Chin. 凰城). In the periods from March to June, in August, from September to October, as well as in December trade sprang lively in Koryeomun, as in those periods it was allowed to cross the border [6, p. 49].

John Ross started thinking about his first trip to Koryeomun long before 1874, when he went there for the first time; it is highly probable that he had heard about this place from A. Williamson who had travelled there in 1868 [4, p. 85]. In other words, contrary to some Korean researchers who consider that J. Ross' coming to Koryeomun in 1874 was accidental [7, p. 49], his diaries and correspondence with BFBS (British and Foreign Bible Society) warrant a conclusion that that trip was part of the plan designed long before [8].

J. Ross himself considered his first visit to Koryeomun a failure, as he was unable to find a teacher of Korean for himself or get any valuable information about the Korean people. Koreans were interested not in the teaching but in the brand of his clothes [5, p. 34]. However, the biggest obstacle was the increasing surveillance on the Chinese and Korean part because the J. Ross' visit to Koryeomun coincided with the beginning of active trade. At the time, there was an acting law in Korea according to which, punishment for being found in any complicity with foreigners was death penalty. Nevertheless, J. Ross managed to hand out several copies of the Chinese translation of the Holy Scripture, and also purchase 6 books of historical tales in Korean [9, p. 206–207].

During his second coming in April 1876 J. Ross thoughtfully took an assistant². He sent him to Koryeomun alone to look for a teacher of Korean, and he himself, being in Fenghuang 11 kilometres away from Koryeomun, opened the doors of his temporary dwelling for Koreans. All through the week dozens of people visited J. Ross, from them he learned Korean letter forms and some information about political and economic situation

² Judging by the sources, while that man was a native Korean, he had not spoken his native language for many years, that is why Ross could not rely on him in the translation work [9, p. 206].

in Korea. However, the most important result was that J. Ross through his assistant managed to find a person who agreed to accompany him to Yingkow in order to teach him Korean, as well as to help in translating the New Testament into Korean. Realizing that in his conditions to have such a Korean was a rare luck, J. Ross paid him the amount equal to the two months' wages — yet, to his great disappointment, in three days on the way to Yingkow the man disappeared [9, p. 207–208].

In this way, Ross' initial plan to find a person who knew Korean was no success. Soon after his return, J. Ross was visited by a Korean who would become his most valuable translator. Later J. Ross would call him one of the most intelligent people he ever met (Ross 1883b). His name was Yi Eung-chan (Kor. 이응찬)³.

The first stage of translation: J. Ross

Before actually beginning to translate the biblical text, J. Ross in co-authorship with Yi Eung-chan published the first textbook of Korean in English titled «Corean Primer» (1877). It should have become the guideline for missionaries on studying Korean speech, writing and pronunciation [6, p. 62; 10]. The essential drawback of the textbook was that it had been compiled not in the central dialect, but in the regional register of the North-West, the town of Uiju (Kor. 의주) located in the province of Pyeongan-to — Yi Eung-chan himself was a native of that town⁴. However, the textbook contributed a lot to changing the manner of conducting missionary activity in Korea, from then on set to imparting Christian ideas through the texts written not in Chinese, but in the language native to Koreans.

In this way, J. Ross prepared the ground for implementing his old dream — «to give the Holy Scripture to the souls living in darkness» [6, p. 61]. Right after publishing «Corean Primer» J. Ross and Yi Eung-chan commenced the translation of the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew⁵. In the period up to J. Ross' departure to Great Britain, the text of the Delegates version of New Testament in Chinese (Chin. 漢文文理聖經) published in 1852 served as the original for translation. Keeping in mind his intention to make an initial draft and detailed version of translation, Ross followed the principle of direct word-for-word rendering [5, p. 49].

Besides Yi Eung-chan during the first stage of translation (summer 1877— March 1879) several «friends» from Uiju also participated in the work [6, p. 54]. About 6–7 Koreans worked in the second stage of the translation under the guidance of J. Ross. Here we shall make a short digression concerning Korean translators who also participated in the typing, printing and distributing the text of the first New Testament in Korean. Unfortunately, their names are not mentioned either in J. Ross' letters or J. MacIntyre's letters. This is probably due to the fear of Koreans that their cooperation with foreigners would be exposed. The missionaries only mentioned some characteristics of the work done by a

³ On the assumption of a number of researchers, Yi Eung-chan was the person who earlier fled from Ross during his second trip to Koryemun in 1876, yet, judging by J. Ross' written records this seems unlikely [2, p. 420–421; 9, p. 206–209].

⁴ At that time Ross mistakenly assumed that the provincial subdialect of Uiju does not differ much from the central one.

⁵ According to some materials, the beginning of translating the New Testament dates back to 1875, yet this seems hardly probable, as it is only in 1876 that Ross met Yi Eung-chan and started studying Korean [11].

certain translator and the time of implementing the translation. Based on that information, as well as testimonies left behind by some Koreans participating in the project, as of the present moment the personalities of only a small group of the translators have been established. Most of their names are, unfortunately, still unknown⁶.

Yi Eung-chan had to suspend his translation activity for some time, as one of his acquaintances had recognized him and had started blackmailing him [6, p. 53–55]. By the time of Yi Eung-chan's hasty departure in spring 1878, Ross did not yet know Korean well enough to make translation on his own with no assistance from Korean translators. So he made a decision to go back to Yingkow for the summer of 1878. John MacIntyre with his wife Catherine Ross, John Ross' younger sister, was there at the time.

In summer 1878 there happened an event which Ross himself consequently classified in one of his letters as a «providential accident»: he is visited by a Korean who had directly linked his recovery from fever in the missionary hospital with the preaching of J. MacIntyre [6, p. 54]. Encouraged by the effect of the teaching, the convert enthusiastically takes up the work of translating the Gospel of Luke [5, p. 58]. Seo Sang-ryun (Kor. 서상륜)⁷ — that was his name — would later become a famous preacher and the founder of one of the first Christian churches in Korea in the village of Sorae.

In early 1879 in Yingkow J. MacIntyre was visited by two young Koreans from Uiju. Someone from their home town had given them a copy of the New Testament text in Chinese (the one that was handed over by J. Ross during his first trip to Koryeomun). They came with an apparent desire to get baptized. J. MacIntyre assigned the work of the translating the text to one of them, and after some time sent them both back to their relatives, so that they could openly express their intention to their relatives — and return if their zeal remained. Only one of the two young people returned. In early 1879 he got baptized by J. MacIntyre and thus became the first Korean baptized by a foreign protestant missionary [13, p. 278]. His name is not mentioned in any of the available sources, but it is known that up to autumn of 1881 he was one of the regular translators.

In January 1879 one more Korean named Paek Hong-Jun comes to Yingkow, whose aim was to go through baptismal service⁸. After working over the translation until April 1879 and receiving baptism, Paek returned to his native town of Uiju [14, p. 7–8]. The personality of this Korean in the history of translation of the Holy Scripture is remarkable in that he would later become a famous distributor of Christian books and a preacher who will suffer for his faith and end his life in prison in 1893. He will remain in history as an apostle or Paek the Disciple [15, p. 345].

The initial stage of the translation of the four Gospels of the New Testament («The Gospel of Luke», «The Gospel of John», «The Gospel of Mark», «The Gospel of Matthew»), as well as «The Acts of the Apostles» and «The Epistle to the Romans» was implemented before John Ross' departure for vacation in April 1879. Ross takes the translation of the four Gospels to his homeland in order to present them to NBSS (National Bible Society of

⁶ According to the available sources and materials, the number of Koreans, participating in translation and distribution of the New Testament amounted to 31 people, yet this is just the information registered in written records. The actual number of people who took part in the translation to some extent is really much bigger.

⁷ About his life see [12].

⁸ It is remarkable that he was a son of the man to whom Ross handed over the Chinese New Testament. So J. Ross' definition of his first trip to Koryeomun as «failed» was a somewhat hasty conclusion. Eventually, a church was founded in Uiju by the Koreans themselves.

Scotland) as the grounds for the financial request for project on the first translation of the New Testament into Korean [5, p.76–88].

If we trace chronologically the process of translating the New Testament text, it will look as follows. In the period from summer 1877 to spring (?) 1878 Yi Eung-chan and several other translators in Shenyang translated «The Gospel of John» and «The Gospel of Mark». From summer to late 1878 the main translator was Seo Sang-ryun, he made the translation of «The Gospel of Luke» in Yingkow. In the period from January to April 1879 «The Gospel of Matthew», «The Acts of the Apostles», as well as a part of «The Epistle to the Romans» were translated, the main translators being the first baptized Korean and Paek Hong-jun⁹.

The second stage of translation: J. MacIntyre

Right before J. Ross' departure to Great Britain in April 1879 Yi Eung-chan returned and expressed his desire to accompany him, but this idea could not be realized, and Yi Eung-chan stayed in Yingkow and took up a part of work on the translation of the New Testament, in particular, translation of the «The Epistle to the Romans» and «The Epistle to the Hebrews» [6, p. 58], and also started to teach J. MacIntyre Korean.

J. MacIntyre took upon himself John Ross' work on translation for the duration of his absence, so that the process would not be halted for two years. At the same time, being fascinated with studying Korean and feeling a responsibility for the first translation of the New Testament into Korean, he set himself a task to acquire enough competence in order not only to formally manage the translation process, but also to directly participate in writing commentaries and proofreading the translation, which he actually was able to attain [5, p. 50–53]. Most researchers note that J. MacIntyre's level of language proficiency was inferior to that of John Ross. Yet, J. MacIntyre's contribution to translation should be considered significant at least due to the fact that owing to his efforts the translation process continued up to J. Ross' return in June 1881.

Moreover, working on the translation J. MacIntyre felt there was a dire need for some coherent description of Korean grammar¹⁰, as well as a glossary of Korean vocabulary with translation into the languages he knew. Thus, as a result of his and Yi Eung-chan's joint work, «Corean Grammar» and «Analysis of Sentences» appeared in 1879 [6, p. 58]. By late 1879, the work on translating the texts starting from «The Acts of the Apostles» and to the end of the New Testament was completed [6, p. 63].

One of the technical innovations suggested by J. MacIntyre in 1880 was direct translation from the Greek New Testament¹¹. The process of work looked like this: in the daytime Yi Eung-chan made a draft translation from the text in the Classical Chinese language (Chin. 文言 *wényán*, Kor. 한문 *hanmun*), in the evening J. MacIntyre in Yi Eung-chan's room together with another translator checked and discussed the translation (at this stage they would turn to the Greek New Testament). Then in the morning J. MacIntyre listened

⁹ As said above, the sources also mention other translators, yet their names are not revealed. Besides, their involvement with translation was of intermittent character [6, p. 63].

¹⁰ The «Corean Primer» apparently lacked a stand-alone grammatical commentary (although John Ross did not set that task for himself while compiling the textbook).

¹¹ MacIntyre describes the process as «direct translation», but it was more of a «verification» of the translation [6, p. 64].

to the comments of the second translator for two hours, and after that the corrected text was handed over to Yi Eung-chan to rewrite on white paper. J. MacIntyre points out that sometimes other Koreans joined for the evening discussion, although he does not tell their names, only mentioning that their total number amounted to about 100 people [16, p. 665–667]. In the process of translation, reference material was also extended: during the course of work on the text of the Holy Scripture and talking with the Koreans J. MacIntyre compiled a word list of Korean vocabulary of 2500 units. He also got «The Commentary in the Korean Language to Classical Chinese treatises» (Kor. 언해본, Chin. 諺解本) for a large amount of money. Besides, the following year he purchased «Korean-French Dictionary» (Kor. 한불사전, Chin. 韓佛字典) published in 1880 by Catholic missionaries in Japan amounting to about 110 thousand entries [5, p. 50–52].

Final stage: completion of the text and publication

In June 1881 John Ross returned from Great Britain where he managed to negotiate the funds for translating the New Testament into Korean with NBSS. Following the agreement, NBSS provided for the supply of the types for the printing press, as well as trial publication of «The Gospel of Luke» and «The Gospel of John». J. Ross was not satisfied with the position of NBSS — he intended to continue further work on amending, improving the translation, and, subsequently, publishing the complete Korean New Testament. Due to those reasons, J. Ross negotiated financing of further translations with BFBS who readily agreed to support the project [5, p. 75–86].

The last stage of translation activity covers the period from the time of J. Ross' return in June 1886 to the finishing of the latest layout of the full translation of the New Testament in autumn 1886. In this period the originals for the translation were, first, The New Testament in the Original Greek [17], and second, the New Testament text in English [18] that Ross got from professor of Oxford University J. Legg during his stay in Great Britain¹².

The order of translation also sustained substantial changes: in the beginning the first Korean translator made translation from the New Testament in the Classical Chinese language, then Ross and Yi Eung-chan conducted a thorough comparison of the translation with the text of the Greek New Testament and made corrections, after that the first translator rewrote the text anew. Upon receiving the rewritten translation, J. Ross and Yi Eung-chan again proceeded to proofread it, this time based on the Greek New Testament and the dictionary of the Greek language. Finally, after scrupulous verification of terms the translation was handed over to typesetter [20]. By early 1883, the translation process acquired one more stage representing a kind of a final revision: after the first correction of the translation by J. Ross and Yi Eung-chan the text was handed over to the first translator who, having at his disposal no materials other than the corrected translation, implemented reverse translation from Korean into Classical Chinese [6, p. 68].

Up to autumn of 1886 when the full text of the translation of the New Testament into the Korean language was handed over to the typists for printing, the activity of Korean translators led by J. Ross was for the most part focused on the scrupulous verification of the text for cohesion of vocabulary, especially terms, and ultimate faithfulness in communicating figures of speech, as well as on re-translation of the text into the central dialect.

¹² Detailed information about influence of J. Legg's ideas on J. Ross see [19, p. 230–237].

Due to the fact that the main team of translators included natives of the North-Western region of Korea, the translation was filled with the lexical and grammatical features characteristic of the dialect of that area, as well as special orthographic style. J. MacIntyre was the first one to see a substantial difference between the North-Western and central dialects of the Korean language when he got «The Korean-French Dictionary» published in 1880 by French Catholics in Japan. Later J. Ross fully realized the need to rearrange the text so that it would correspond to the central dialect as much as possible after receiving in 1883 a review from the BFBS chairman in Japan William G. Aston for the translation of the joint edition of «The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles». In his letter G. Aston commented on the good quality of the translation, yet he pointed out that the text would be difficult to understand for the population of the central and southern parts of the Korean peninsula due to substantial difference in the spelling of the Central and North-Western dialects [5, p. 72].

After the initial issues of «The Gospel of Luke» and «The Gospel of John» in 1882, corrected translations of both Gospels appeared only one year later. They clearly demonstrate an attempt to bring the text more in line with the spelling rules of the central dialect. J. Ross kept this focus in further editions up to the completion of the work on translation in autumn of 1886 («The Gospel of Matthew» and «The Gospel of Mark» 1884, jointly «The Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Ephesians» 1884)¹³.

Presenting detailed chronology of the main stage of translation from 1881 to 1886 in a table based on J. Ross' personal correspondence, the whole process looks as follows¹⁴:

Table «The Process of Translating the New Testament into Korean (1881 — till final verification)» (Cit. ex [5, p. 56])

Period		Translators	Content of translation
1881	June	Yi Eung-chan, two baptized Koreans	«The Gospel of Luke», «The Gospel of John» — translation
	October 11	Yi Eung-chan and a former state official	«The Gospel of Luke», «The Gospel of John» — verification of the text
1882	March (?)	Seo Sang-ryun	«The Gospel of Luke» — verification of the text
	April		«The Gospel of John» — verification of the text
	May		«The Gospel of John» — verification of the text
	July (?)	A scholar aristocrat from Seoul	
	Autumn	A «scholar» (desiring to receive baptism)	
	October 6		4 Gospels are translated into the central dialect

¹³ Yet, despite all the efforts the final text of the full edition of the New Testament was not without dialecticisms, which after mid 1880s caused a heated discussion in the midst of foreign missionaries in Korea as to the appropriateness of J. Ross' translation for conducting missionary activity among the Korean population.

¹⁴ Besides the indicated Koreans, an even greater number of people took part in the translation. However, because the letters do not give their names — it is hardly possible to define their work in this table, yet their contribution to the collegiate translation effort remains ever so valuable. Since the table concerns only the translation work, it embraces the period of 1881–1886, excluding 1887 as a year of the actual publication of the New Testament in Korean.

	Period	Translators	Content of translation
1883	January 24		An attempt is made to translate from the Korean text into <i>wenyan</i>
	February 9		In «The Gospel of Luke» <i>hanmun</i> expressions are substituted for indigenous Korean ones; translation of chapters 1–10 of «The Acts of the Apostles» finished
	April 2		Translation of «The Acts of the Apostles» completely finished
	June 11		«The Gospel of John» — additional verification of the text
	July 22		Translation of «The Epistle to the Romans» finished
	July 23	The «scholar» continues work at the translation	Translation of «The Epistles to the Corinthians» started
	late	Yi Eung-chan dies of cholera	Translation of all Gospels, «The Acts of the Apostles» finished; remains verification of the text of «The Epistle to the Romans», «The 1 st Epistle to the Corinthians», «The 2 nd Epistle to the Corinthians»
	October 9		Translation of «The Epistles to the Corinthians» finished
1884	March 10		Translation of «The Epistle to the Philippians» finished; correction of the «The Epistle to the Galatians» text required
	Summer	Soldiers escaped to China after the «uprising of the years of « <i>im-o</i> » and public officers	Work at translation of «The Epistle to the Galatians», «The 1 st Epistle to the Corinthians», «The 2 nd Epistle to the Corinthians»
	End of year	Scholar from the «Korean village» ¹⁵	Verification of the text of «The Epistle to the Galatians» and «The Epistle to the Ephesians»
1885		J. Ross et al.	Translation of «The Epistle to the Philippians», «The Epistle to the Colossians», «The Epistles to the Thessalonians», «The Epistles to Timothy», «The Epistle to Titus», «The Epistle to Philemon», «The Epistle to the Hebrews», «The Epistle of James», «The Epistles of Peter», «The Epistles of John», «The Epistle of Jude», «The Apocalypse of John»
1886		J. Ross et al.	Final verification of the full text of the translation of the New Testament

Conclusion

Based on the results of research aimed at identifying the authors of the «*Yesu syeonggyo syeongsyeo*» we can conclude that the statement establishing J. Ross' sole authorship would be premature. The actual translation work was guided by him, however a great deal of effort was also contributed both by his colleague J. MacIntyre and a group of native Koreans as well. The full translation of the New Testament into the Korean language published in 1887 as a separate volume entitled «The Holy Scriptures of Jesus Teaching» became a pivotal event in the history of the Protestant Church in Korea. Although eventually the missionary committee in Korea later would make a decision to compile another translation of the New Testament in Korean, «The Holy Scriptures of Jesus Teaching» will be for them the fundamental original text. It signified transition to a new form of dissemi-

¹⁵ An area on the north side of Yalu river in China along the north-western boarder between Korea and China where several Korean settlements existed up to the middle of 1880-s.

nating Christian ideas among the local population, gradually taking them into intellectual and moral culture through the text in indigenous Korean.

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