

John Ross and Bible women in the early Protestant mission of northern Korea and Eastern China

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Introduction

This article presents the vernacular works of a Scottish missionary, John Ross, closely relating to Bible women of early East Asian mission. Through this work, it aims to look into the relations between Western missionaries and indigenous people in the mission field: that is, those who deliver or supply Christianity to the indigenous and those who receive it in their own way in practice.

In the mid nineteenth century, western missionaries, particularly English speaking mission agents, started to experience new native agents in their mission field, who they used to convert and train male natives as Christian evangelists. According to the British Foreign Bible Society (after B.F.B.S.) documents from 1860, there had been a lot of reports describing their Bible women's activities. For instance, 'Bible Mission-Women' appeared in the British mission situation.¹ The role of Bible Mission-Women is 1) to introduce and make women and children read the Bible², 2) to help and educate the poor³ and 3) to be charged with ministry as evangelists. At the extent, there is

¹ The document, 'A few words to Bible Mission-Women' in 1861 describes the British situation of the period when Christian women worked in mission a lot ; "... "Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" is one description of Bible Mission-women. "In patience possess ye your souls" is another, because the most fervent, zealous person must prepare herself to meet with disappointment and failure..." *A few words to Bible Mission-Women*, (London: Wertheim, Macintosh, and Hunt, 1861), p. 8.

² "We must always endeavour to connect the reading of the Bible in some clear and obvious way with our daily life, and in many cases it is more easy to do this in reading it to the poor than to any other class; they are less occupied with variety of thoughts and books. ...let the little children be noticed by the Bible-woman, that they may learn to welcome her as a friend of the family. Indeed this is one way in which she could become a very valuable Mission-woman to the poor." *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

³ "It is intended that all the Mission-women shall be selected from that class which known poverty in some way. Each woman ought to have "worked for her living," as we say, and felt something of the privations in order that they may be able to sympathize fully with the troubles and poverty of those they visit; and moreover, that they may by experience be able to advise in some points of economy and management better than lady visitors have hitherto been likely to do. At the same time, it must not be

'Bible readers' shown in some reports. They are more than just readers, in American's Asian missions. They did not have any barriers of their own language or cultural adjustment problems in the field, in order to send them to women's groups and native people in the role of Bible reader.⁴

In this respect, we need to see the contribution of a Scottish missionary in Asia mission, particularly relating important role of Bible women in colporteurs. It seems to me how practical relation between missionaries and indigenous women for mission led the success of mission works and development of Christianity in the mission field.

For this, we will see firstly the life and contribution of a missionary John Ross and then look into mission works regarding colportage of Bible women. Finally, the mutual influence of Bible women will be presented in the Protestant vernacular mission and initial step of evangelism of Korea. Let us see the life of John Ross in the beginning.

1. Who is John Ross?

1.1 From Scotland to North Korea⁵

John Ross was born on 9th August 1842 as the eldest son of Hugh Ross and Catherine Sutherland. At that time, Ross' family lived in Migg town located in Inverness where people used the Gaelic language. So, he learnt English when

forgotten that this, like all other efforts of the kind, is for the gradual improvement and raising of the poor. We desire to lift them out of the state of degradation and misery into which from ignorance, poverty, helplessness and want of friends, they may have sunk." Ibid., p. 9.

⁴ "...The work among the women is quite as encouraging as any we have, and as to visible result, we have had as much to encourage us here as in Ningpo, the only field with which I am as well acquainted as with our own. What I do is done almost entirely through my Bible reader. She visits daily from house to house when the weather will permit, and is well received. She has on her list ten women who are anxious to hear, and whom she visits regularly ... Mrs. Seng was baptized at our last communion. The latter is upwards of sixty years old, and first heard of the true God from our Bible reader six years ago." Mrs. Samuel Dodd, 'China-Hangchow', *Woman's Work for Woman of the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Mission* (Woman's Work) 1875, Vol.V. No. 6, pp. 298-299.

⁵ See *Chon Rosu: Han'gug-ui ch'ot son'gyo-sa* (John Ross, Korea's First Missionary), (Taegu: Kymyung UP, 1982).

he started school. In the mid 1860s he studied theology in the United Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, later working under Rev. George Brown's supervision in Inverness as a trainee. Nevertheless, he dreamed of mission work. From the autumn of 1868, he kept in touch with Dr, William McGill, a General Secretary of World Mission. He supported John Ross' idea and then asked his opinion on certain matters of mission in Indian or Chinese.⁶ With McGill's support, he chose Chinese mission in 1871, and in 1879, he was ordained, married to Miss Stewart and sent by the World Mission to China.

On 23rd August 1872, John Ross and his wife arrived in Sangdong where Alexander Williamson, a representative of the National Bible Society of Scotland led the Chinese mission group of John McKenzie, Lewis Nicol and Dr. William A. Henderson. Williamson had visited the 'Corean Gate'⁷ in 1867, and showed his interest in propagating Christianity to the Korean people. Ross learnt Chinese.

Even though he had lost his wife, he did not stop learning Chinese. The reason for this was that Ross had serious difficulties with Dr. Hunter of the Irish Presbyterian mission in China. To Irish missionaries, John Ross as a Scot was not easily acceptable. During these events, he continued to work in mission for example with travelling evangelisation. Through this repetitive work, he had found the base of his mission work, handled widely in order to strengthen his position vis a vis the Irish Presbyterian mission in Shina, with whom he had problems. His way, exemplified in his 1873 working, was to base his Christianity touching local culture without eliminating religious, cultural or ethical elements in the process of mission: he knew Confucian books and ethics very well, studying the *Sasesamkyung* (four books and three classics of Confucianism). Based on his rich knowledge of his mission field, he had few troubles with natives, for the respected Chinese culture.⁸

⁶ After finishing his pastoral work in Inverness, he went to a church in Portree of Isle of Skye. For 2 years, he had difficulties in the work there. And then he moved to Stornoway in Isle of Lewis.

⁷ "The Corean Gate is the name given to a small village, the most advanced outpost of China towards Corea. At the extreme east end of a long street, but standing out from and at right angles to it, is a small house over thirty feet long, divided into three parts, the north and south portions are rooms with the ordinary kang, in which the tax collectors live. The central division is the gate through which all goods imported or exported must pass, and have duty levied... Thus the only mode of communication is through the gate-a precaution taken against smuggling" John Ross, 'China', *the United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, May 1, 1875., p. 472.

⁸ He intended to preach in the church building not at street. He always got the style of lecturing with the

In 1874, Irish and Scots missionaries divided the mission area in Manchuria. The Irish mission society took the west, and the Scottish mission society took the east and north. The eastern area of Manchuria was very close to the North Korean part. This negotiation resulted firstly in removing the competition between denominational mission societies and in concentrating on the mission, to North Korea, the border of which he visited in 1871.⁹

1.2 His mission methods and contributions

He studied hard and researched Chinese religion and culture.¹⁰ Applying what he knew of Chinese values to his mission work and training native agents. He learned Korean through Yi Eung-chan who was a businessman selling Korean medicines, writing his first 'Corean Primer' in 1877 and based on the 'Mandarin Primer'.¹¹ This 'Corean Primer' had special characters, exactly representing

name of religious discussion. This style is that firstly some one had lecture and then some audiences or participants asked questions or added footnoting. This method is closely similar to Chinese culture. Since third century, there has been a method of Chungdam(清淡, uprightness) which was applied to Chinese philosophical discussion. Using this method, a lot of Chinese people were able to accept Christianity easier.

⁹ "On Monday, the 10th day of 9th moon, I was informed that a number of Coreans had crossed the river and were encamped 60 li from the gate; nearer they dared not come till the gate was formally opened. That afternoon I saw about twenty Coreans, chiefly servants, clad in garments that were once white. They came to secure and prepare lodgung for their employers. . . I told the market would not be in full swing for another week, the Coreans never feeling at home till the return of the superior magistrates who accompany them. I was much disappointed, and resolving to return, if possible, at a more favourable time, did what I could in the way of preaching and endeavouring to sell copies of dospel, etc. I was successful enough in getting an audience and a healing for the greater part of the afternoon;" Ibid.

¹⁰ See *Mission Methods in Manchuria* written by Rev. John Ross (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1903). In chapter 1, he presented what is the Chinese consciousness of sin. This shows he possessed a great understanding of Chinese culture. "Many years ago in my native land I heard a missionary publicly declare that the Chinese were destitute of a sense of sin. When one mingles with the Chinese in the large towns and the untiring industry of the people, their unwearied struggle to keep their heads above the waters of poverty, and their no less all-absorbing efforts to attain to an easy competency, the conviction cannot fail to be driven in that the all-controlling thought of the Chinese is what they shall eat, what they shall drink and wherewithal they shall obtain the other comforts or necessities of life. The same conviction would certainly arise in the mind of thoughtful Chinese who had the opportunity of passing days or months, or even years, in the busy centres of industry in our home lands." pp. 9-10.

¹¹ John Ross, *Corean Primer; Lessons in corean on al ordinary subject transliterated on the principles of the 'mandarine primer*, (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, MDCCCLXXVII), p. 3. "The Lessons, matter, arrangement and number., are those of may "Mandarin Primer," where the English is rendered idiomatically. The transliteration is also on the principle of the Primer. And in comparing the two little books it will be discovered what a remarkable proportion of Chinese words has become incorporated with the Corean language, supplying defects, displacing some words and used alongside of others, (as bit, 'light' and gwang 'light' metaphorically), like Latine and Saxon in English, Chinese being the Latin of the Coreans, through which their learning has been acquired. This comparison requires only to note the

Korean pronunciation, the expressions and sounds are totally based on North Korean dialect in the period. From 1878, Ross had a mission arena in Shenyang, where he translated the Bible from English to Korean.

He wrote the first Korean grammar book, 'Corean Primer', and a Korean history, *History of Corea, Ancient and Modern with Description of Manners and customs, Language and geography*¹². These were saved aids for western Protestant missionaries to Korea with information a language, people, politics, economics, religion and culture of Korea.

2. John Ross version Bible to Korea

The Ross version Bible came into Korea via three routs, from Japan, Manchuria and Inner Manchuria. The Bible would be the first edition of the Gospel of Luke and John in Korean, published in 1882. Ross wrote a letter to Arthington on 24th March 1882,

"I should much like if you send on £50 to cover the cost of John's Gospel. If you so desire it, £10 or £12 more might be sent to engage a member as colporteur and within the year 6,000 copies of the gospel would be circulating and preaching in as many centres throughout the length of the land from our shores to those of Japan. From what the Coreans tell me, I believe that though having to distribute in secret, the sales would cover travelling expenses"¹³.

The Ross version Bible gained a route into Korea from Japan and an influx of bible selling began in Korea. According to a record in 1882, Ross sent 1000 copies of Luke and John to J. A. Thomas from Manchuria, the NBSS of agent and missionary of the U. P. Church in Japan with a view to introducing them into Korea.¹⁴ Rev. Thomas and his wife Mrs. Thomas who became the first white

defects of the Corean alphabet and its numerous example of the ancient pronunciation."

¹² John Ross, *History of Corea, Ancient and Modern with Description of Manners and customs, Language and geography*, (London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster row, 1891).

¹³ Editorial Correspondence of the British Foreign Bible Society- Inward, Vol. 17, P. 76f.

¹⁴ *ECI-BFBS*, Vol. 17, p. 177. and *The BFBS AR* in 1888, p.287. the first Korean Bible, 'Jesu Söngkyo Lukabokum Jyunsö (예수성교누가복음전서, The Book of Luke of Jesus Christ' was published in March 1882. After 1883, the BFBS supported to publish Ross version Bible.

woman to enter Korea when they visited in 1884,¹⁵ distributed Ross' text; they distributed 1,155 copies of the gospels Luke and John to Koreans in 1885 and 1,250 in 1886. Judging from the fact that there were no more reports on scripture circulation until 1895, Ross' version seems not to have been available.¹⁶ After failing his version by Japanese routes, another Korean version of the four Gospels and Acts, which was translated in Japan by Soo Jung Yi published by the B.F.B.S. in 1884.

There was another route of the Ross version Bible to Korea. The distribution of Bibles was carried out in two ways, among Koreans in Manchuria and Koreans visiting Manchuria. For instance, Kim Chung-song's case is very typical. He worked as a compositor from spring 1882.¹⁷ Or, some people worked using official connections, acquaintances visiting Manchuria; "A translator in Moukden had 200 left to give to the Corean Embassy which passes through Moukden from Peking in a few days".¹⁸

The third route from Manchuria was also complicated. According to a document of the B.F.B.S. in 6th October 1882, the first colporteurs are Yi Eung-chan who was 'long re-established in good conduct and the evangelist in Paek Wee-joo must be Hong Chun who was employed by McIntyre.¹⁹ Both men had worked for Ross as teachers, translators, or compositors. Now they were working as colporteurs. They went back to Korea with Ross version bibles and short collections. Working with Ross translating Bibles and teaching Koreans, they would be indoctrinated into Ross' Christian ideas and then already interpret Christianity themselves on the basis of their own cultural-religious background. Those who possessed this indigenous Christian ideology were powerful messengers for mission work.

According to the magazine, 'Bible Society Monthly Reporter' in July 1884, the state of affairs in that period was noted as follows;

The Rev. John Ross writes from Moukden, on the border of China and

¹⁵ *QRNBSS*, Oct. 1884, 'A visit to Corea'.

¹⁶ *The BFBS AR*, for 1885 p. 42, & for 1886, p. 46.

¹⁷ *The Christian Dawn in Korea*, p. 243f.

¹⁸ *ECI- BFBS*, Vol. 17, P. 338

¹⁹ *ECI- BFBS*, Vol. 17, pp. 177ff.

Corea, under date March 20, as follows:- “Your colporteur Li (a Corean)²⁰, while acting as compositor, returned two years ago to his native land, taking with him several copies of Luke and John, then newly printed. A copy of each he gave to a friend, Jang, who had never been an idolater, but had always believed in the Supreme Being. During those two years he studied the Gospels attentively, as, having given up business, he had abundant leisure. Several months ago he came here with the colporteur, taking with him a younger brother. He was intimately acquainted with the Scriptures he had read, his errand here being to solve some difficulties and especially to be baptized. Both he and his younger brother were baptized, and I persuaded him to remain with me for a few months, as the literary man whom I had hoped for had not come to my assistance. He is doing good work, being an excellent Chinese scholar, as well as knowing accurately his own language. He is the first fruit of your new version. Of very many who speak highly of the doctrines revealed to time through it I cannot speak particularly time will manifest them...A younger man, formerly a compositor, who came back a few days ago from a visit to his mother, who was seriously unwell, has just gone to Corea at his own special request, to sell tow boxes of our Gospels. He knows nothing of danger, though, of course, his sales are transacted in dwelling-houses and inns, not in the public street.”²¹

This is a good record showing how Korean mission agents like colporteurs were devoted to bible selling and mission, having understood Christianity from translating the Bible with Ross at a time when Korea was displaying antagonistic Christianity that corrupting religion from the ‘western’ world. This third route was the most effective way of Bible influx to Korea. Then how did the people of the period evaluate the Ross version Bible? First of all, we need to know what was the Ross’ criticism to the Chinese Bible for Korean people and how he emphasised on the superiority of his Korean version Bible.

“I have read a great deal of a translation being made in Japan²². Specimens

²⁰ The man who had his surname, Li can be deduced Yi Eung-chan in the period of this report and the outlook of this report written by Rev. John Ross.

²¹ ‘An Open Door in Corea’, *Bible Society Monthly Reporter*, July 1884, (London: the British and Foreign Bible Society), pp. 127-128.

²² This bible would be translated by Yi Su-jōng.

have been sent me of the Gospels and Acts. It is not a translation, but the Chinese literary version given with diacritical marks though these marks are not always correctly used, I do not see that they can do much harm as they are placed beside the text. At the same time this “version” leaves matters exactly where they were. To a good Chinese scholar they are of little or no value, as he could make them for himself, while to a poor scholar, or to the nineteenthths of the population who know not Chinese, nothing can be of any service which is not written in their own language.”²³

He pointed out the problems of the Chinese version Bible in comparison to his Korean version Bible. Firstly, the Chinese version Bible for Koreans did not make the exact meaning of the Bible understood to Korean people who were only able to speak Korean. At that time, most books had been written in Chinese letters in Korea even though Korean script, the *Ŏnmun* had been created in the fifteenth century of the early *Chŏson* dynasty. This script was then mainly used among women and not men. This shows the illiteracy problem is to be considered in Korean society, since Korean men positioned in over upper class continued to use the prestigious Chinese script but most Korean women except some high-class women were not supposed to. Nevertheless, among Koreans including women, most middle class people had used the *Ŏnmun* in the period. Ross recognised this problem and the need of the *Ŏnmun* in the Korean mission.

“My interest in the people deepened with the progress of the year and as, after many amusing and futile attempts, I was able to find a clue to their language, I resolved to have the Scriptures in part or wholly translated into that language. This resolution was all the more decisive on discovering that everybody in Corea knew their beautifully simple phonetic alphabet, that ‘even all the women and children could read it’.”²⁴

With regards to the number of Koreans’ Chinese literacy, the Chinese version was not a good tool to evangelise Korea. This version did not lend itself

²³ *ECI-BFBS*, Vol. 20, p. 144f (8th March 1885).

²⁴ Rev. J. Ross, ‘Corean New Testament’, *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*, Vol. XIV, Shanghai, November-December, 1883, p. 491.

practical to the ordinary Korean, but only to the high class. To make Christianity popular amongst Koreans, the Ross *Ŏnmun* version Bible was accepted as the most appropriate for the Korean readers who were interested in Christianity or already Christians.

However, some missionaries rejected the Ross version Bible the ground of North Korea dialect. In 1887²⁵ the “Permanent Executive Bible Committee” decided to revise Ross’ text, for second readers²⁶, but by 1893, therefore the committee revision had become a new translation, published in 1900, the Old Testament being completed by 1911, the whole being called the Authorised Korean Version.²⁷

3. Women’s marks; John Ross and Miss Davison in terms of colportage and Bible women

This section will discuss whether there was any work with native women or female missionaries, among Ross’ works, translation and Bible selling.

According to ‘The Women’s Missionary magazine of the United Free Church of Scotland’, in the Moukden area in the early 1900s, a female missionary offered native women mission training. The female missionary was Miss Davison. Since 1900, her reports regularly appeared in the magazine. The Moukden area was Ross’ mission arena. Also, he moved several times from this to the Korean borders. In addition, when he had considered Korean vernacular work with Korean men and then travelled to the Korean borders for evangelisation, he needed someone able to work with women because his wife had died. Why we

²⁵ By this time, there were only two missionary societies established at the end of 1884, American Presbyterian Mission (North), and American Methodist Episcopal Church (Northern Methodist) in 1889, the Australian Presbyterian Mission and the Anglican Mission (S.P.G.) p. 156 Sungil Choi, *John Ross (1842-1915) and the Korean Protestant Church: the first Korean bible and its relation to the Protestant origins in Korea*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992.

²⁶ Rev. Reynolds, ‘Bible Translation in Korea’, *The Missionary*, October 1898, pp. 499-500. “Under the present constitution, the “Permanent Executive Bible Committee”, consisting of two members from each Protestant Evangelical Mission, has full and permanent control of the whole work of Bible translation. The actual work of translating however, is done by a “board of five official translators,” selected by this permanent committee. Salaries of native assistants cost of publication, etc., are defrayed by the permanent committee with funds contributed by the three Bible societies-the American, the British and Foreign and the National Bible Society of Scotland- in the proportion two-fifths, two-fifth and one fifth, respectively.”

²⁷ About the concrete process of Korean version Bible, See ‘fifty years of Bible Translation and Revision’, *Korea Mission Field*, 1935, pp. 116-118. There was presented about how the Ross version had negotiated with modified version or the other version in the situation of Korea. To sum up, Rev. E. Brayent, agent of the BFBS in Tientsin, finally persuaded American missionaries working in Korea and suggested to

need to point out the conjecture from his stories is the link between Ross and women in the mission. Following the mission trend which most missionaries' wives mainly managed the mission for native women, Ross would be impossible to work for native women, particularly Korean women. Here we could have some questions; was there any concern of Ross who was eager to Korean colportage about Bible women? If he had, could Miss Davison and Ross work together for colportage?

Miss Mary S. Davison was working for a hospital and particularly in the training of Bible women in Moudken. She arrived in China on 23rd September 1901 with Dr. Mary C. Horner.²⁸ Her work was mainly educating Chinese girls and ladies.²⁹ It was developing quickly and obtained many fruits like establishing a girls' school and training school of Bible women.³⁰ Through her work and her Bible women activities³¹, she was able to examine ten women to be baptised within three years.³² She expressed her wonderful impression of her works in the following;

“With some of these women, we made the experiment of sending them out as bible-women, and from the first the plan has worked well and their ministrations have proved very fruitful. This is not to be wondered at. These women, belonging as they do to the people themselves, know how to find access to the home of the women. They know the common speech of the people, and what is of even more importance, they know the involved etiquette of Chinese life and intercourse. They come and go in the streets and among the villages without attracting any stir. So far our choice of agents has been restricted to middle aged women, especially widows.”³³

Her major task was to educate and discipline Bible women. According to

²⁸ *The Women's Missionary magazine of the United Free Church of Scotland (After WMM)*, Vol. 1 No.10 October 1901., p. 242. And No.60 December 1905 p.279.

²⁹ *WMM*, Vol. 2. No. 15. March 1902., p. 51. “ We are going quietly about our work; it is the day of small things compared with the great work that was being carried on before I am going, whenever I can to hire a room and open a girl school.”

³⁰ *WMM*, Vol. 2. No. 17 May 1902, pp. 109-110.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108. “In the immediate future, it will be impossible foreign women to take up their former method of work of itinerating in the towns and villages, and more dependence than ever will be placed in the bible-women. More and more of our time and strength will thus be devoted to the work of fitting them for this important work”

³² *WMM*, Vol. 3. No. 35 November 1903, p. 254.

³³ *WMM*, Vol. 1. No. 5 1901 p.106.

records until 1913, she successfully trained Chinese Bible women are colporteurs. One document in 1910³⁴ shows that Ross had known Davison, having spent Christmas with the same mission society in Manchuria.

4. The essential foundation: link of Bible women in early Protestant mission of Korea

In early Protestant mission in Korea, vernacular works of the Bible and the role of colportage were important. Native colporteurs are called *maesŏin* or *kwonsŏ* (bookseller) colporteurs for men, *puin* (Mrs.) being added for women.³⁵ The duties of *puin kwonsŏ* and *kwonsŏ* were selling enormous numbers of Korean or Chinese Bibles, propagating the gospel and teaching Christian doctrine.

The Annual Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society (the B.F.B.S.) cite the number of *puin kwonsŏ* in Korean mission from 1892 onwards. However, their number suddenly declines from 1920 onwards. A Korean historian, Yi Man-yŏl came to the conclusion that the reason for this decline was a rapid increase in church development after 1920.³⁶

In the situation, John Ross translated of the Bible from English to Korean, using *Ŏnmun* script³⁷. In addition, he eagerly focused on evangelism with colporteurs.

³⁴ John Ross, 'Christmas at Moukden', *WMM*, Vol. 10 no, 110 February 1910, p. 36.

³⁵ According to Daehan Kidokkyohaesoehae Haeknusa (the Hundred Years History of Korea Christian Publication), the Korean Bible society (called by Daehan Sŏnkyo Sehoe in Korean) employed Maeseoin (賣書) or Kwonsŏ(權書) with the aim to sell bibles in 1915. Particularly, *kwonsŏ* in 1925 came from that the group of Korean colporteurs. They called themselves *kwonsŏ* as meaning a person who reads the bible to people or persuades others to buy them. Jang-sik Yi, *Daehan Kidokkyohaesoehae Haeknusa* (the Hundred Years History of Korea Christian Publication), (Seoul: The Korean Christian Publication, 1984), pp. 178-188. This about *kwonsŏ* also appears in the document of 'A History of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1912-1923', particularly, page 385 and line 17. The History Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, *A History of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1912-1923*, (Seoul: The Church Historical Society of Korea, 1968). In this circumstance, the bible women written by the documents of mission society like the BFBS or magazine like the Korean Mission Field were called sometimes by *puin* (Mrs.) *Kwonsŏ*.

³⁶ Yi Man-yŏl *Han'guk Kidokkyo wa Minsokweesik* (The Korean Christianity and Nationalism), (Seoul: Jisiksanubsa, 2000), pp. 356-374 He analysed the reason 1) the commission sellers, 2) the settling development of Korean church, 3) the vigorous activities of *chŏndo puin* and so forth.

³⁷ Hyun Hee Lee a 1980s historian described Korean women and *Ŏnmun* this way; "In the male dominated situation of *Chosŏn*, the women were not able to be educated equally to men. On the other hand, they not only learned but also contributed to preserve Korean script, *Ŏnmun* which was treated contemptuously (although some scholars by the special order of the king Sejong firstly created it in

Ross' Bible was more powerful than that of the Chinese Bible version translated by a Korean intellectual, Yi Su-jöng in that period.

The several positive outcomes of his work are appeared; firstly *Önmun* was recognised as the most effective tool of Korean mission. In this respect, we can notice a western male missionary considered a script who Korean people generally thought of humble orthography belong to mainly women. Historical evaluations should be focus on this fact of Ross' contribution to Korean mission in the gender perspective. Secondly through the *Önmun* bible, a lot of Korean women had a chance to study Korean letters with the help of *puin kwonsö*s, the illiteracy of Korean women was being addressed through religious propagation before the Authorised New Testament in 1900 was published by the 'Permanent Executive Bible Committee'. This point is very important that before 1900, many *puin kwonsö* had been worked with the great achievements of the early Korean mission shown by a lot of mission records in the Scripture circulations. In the period, for a large number of Korean women who were illiterate and some Korean women who had known the *Önmun*, *puin kwonsö* needed the Ross version bible in order to enable the illiterate women to read bibles through *Önmun* script. Thirdly in order to spread the *Önmun* bible, training courses or schools for *puin kwonsö* were gradually being established. In these points, the Ross version Bible contributed to the mission of *puin kwonsö*.

Accordingly, John Ross played an important role in initial activities of Korean Bible women whether he recognised his indirect influence himself or not.

5. Conclusion

The mission relation between missionaries and the indigenous is very important in practice seen by mission history. In the respect, I introduced a vital case of the relation in North Eastern Asia from mid nineteenth to early twentieth century.

I insist that John Ross contribute initial evangelism and mission works of indigenous women in vernacular works with special attention. Also, it shows that

order to possess the national language for the Korean people). In addition, there were prominent *Önmun* literatures of some female authors." Yi Hyön-hi, *Han'guk Kündae Yösöng Kaehwasa* (The History of Women Enlightenment in the Modern Period of Korea), (Seoul: Ewoo Monhwasa, 1982), p. 12.

vernacular works play a role in Christian education of illiterate women in mission field and early evangelistic development for church growth by women. This visible and invisible relation need to be concerned in mission studies.

Accordingly, those who research missiology by male-dominated or feminist should consider these kinds of case in mission history and at the extent research them with interest. By this, we will see the various mission cases, and learn mission methods in substance.

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