

# THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

*A Non-Profit Institution for the Promotion of Semantics and Semantography*

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SEMANTOGRAPHY, SERIES NO. 102

## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND NOTES BEFORE THE FIRST LECTURE ON SEMANTOGRAPHY

Note: A few of the original prints from Shanghai papers are available and will be added to this re-print. When this stock is exhausted only this re-print will be supplied.

On the 29th January, 1943 the following article appeared in the Shanghai Weekly "Our Life".

### A NEW WORLD - WRITING

An Interesting Invention by C.K. Bliss

The Bible story about the building of the Tower of Babel has a great significance. A group of people, united by a common task, failed, because they couldn't understand each other. The best way to understand the people is to learn their language. However, this is a very difficult task. The result is misunderstandings all over the world.

Man has invented and constructed the most marvellous things, which are of benefit to all. It seems, therefore, that he should also be capable to invent a system for common intercourse between the nations. And it is, perhaps, significant that it was a Jew, representative of a nation which is dispersed among all nations of the world, Dr. Zamenhof, who invented in 1883 a new auxiliary language, Esperanto, to link all nations in common understanding. Esperanto means "Hope", but to-day, 60 years later, we must admit that his hope have not been fulfilled, yet. National prejudice and pride account for this failure, no doubt, but mankind has no time to wait a few hundred years more until the seed of Esperanto will strike root. There are men among all nations, who are simply craving for an international means of communication, and whose work is of the greatest importance to mankind. These men are Scientists and Research Workers all over the world, working in thousands of laboratories, universities, hospitals and industrial centres and busily engaged in scientific research work with only one aim in view: a better, easier and healthier life for the future generations of man. The most important part in these Research Institutes is the Library, in which is preserved the wealth of experience of the Scientists of all ages, and the scientific contemporary periodicals written in all languages which contain data about the scientific work which is being done all over the world. Only one who is himself engaged in scientific research can realise the tremendous importance of a scientific report about the same work done by somebody else. These few lines can save him years of labour and costly experiments, acquainting him quickly with the result achieved by another worker, who spent those years, labour and money to find out what the next scientist can use as a step to future work.

But the difficulty is that scientific periodicals and new scientific books are written in too many languages. Moreover, they are very costly because it is impossible to sell many copies and therefore not every laboratory can afford them. In the Middle Age it was different. All scientists spoke and communicated with each other in Latin, and all scientific books were written in Latin. A student was able to attend any University in Europe, because everywhere the lectures were given in Latin. Galilei could write in Latin to Kepler, and Kepler could write to Kopernikus. That tremendous advantage has since been entirely lost.

It is, therefore, only natural that at Scientific Congresses the demand for an international means of communication between scientists has been raised and different Committees have been appointed to study this question. But, alas! - no headway has been made, although Esperanto and Basic English have presented themselves as a ready tool. The whole question is as difficult as it is important. Everybody knows that to acquire a new language hard study, practice and, moreover, special opportunities are necessary. The most difficult things are the vocables,



strange words which are so difficult to learn and to remember.

I am glad to present a new system, which is based on the oldest principles and which has one great advantage: no learning of vocabels. I believe that it could be successfully applied. I am quite prepared to be laughed at, but I am firmly convinced that the generations to come will adopt a system like this, sooner or later.

My system is based on the recognised fact that it is easier to read a certain language than to speak it. Everybody knows from experience that many people can read fairly well an English book or a newspaper and at the same time are unable to speak English. My system is therefore based on Reading and not on Speaking and I was led to it by the study of Chinese writing..

My study of the Chinese Character Writing has enchanted me completely, especially the extraordinary possibilities of a non-alphabetical hieroglyphic writing, possessing that tremendous advantage that it can be read by different nations, who speak different languages. I believe that this accounts to some extent for the fact that the great nations of East Asia, although composed of different races, are tied together by a common classical literature and cultural traditions simply because they can learn and read in their own language the meaning of the written characters.

Imagine the incredible aspect that such a character writing had be applied in Europe and that a book or a newspaper written and printed in Greece, for instance, could be read by any Frenchman, Dane, Italian or by a man knowing only Bascian dialect used in a small Spanish province. Or imagine that Moliere, Goethe, Shakespeare, Dante and all other great men would have written their immortal works in a character writing, which everybody in Europe, no matter what his language was, could read and appreciate. How much more mutual understanding would have been achieved in the world and how much misunderstanding would have been avoided!

But let us go back to facts more real, sober and businesslike. If such an international Character Writing would exist, which must be very easy to acquire, it would be possible that, let us say, a Swede could write a business letter to a man in Buenos Aires who speaks only Spanish, and the latter could pass on the letter to a Portugese who knows only his language, but they all could read the same letter in their own language. Moreover, any book printed in this new writing could be read everywhere in the world.

This fantastic idea simply took my breath away, and I started the work in September, 1942. I realized that Chinese Character writing could not be applied as its knowledge is very difficult to acquire for a foreigner owing to the fact that the original simple characters have changed their appearance through ages to such an extent that the result today is often a very complicated system of many strokes and pictures, in which the original meaning is very often impossible to trace.

A new international character writing must be extraordinary simple, and the meaning must be expressed by the picture itself. This seemed to me simply an impossible task. Try to express in a pictorial form by a few strokes "Consciousness" or "Education". I started therefore the work merely playing with it. Very soon, however, I discovered that when using a definite system and a few rules of Chinese writing, the matter is not so difficult at all. Then it occurred to me that my new writing would be writable on a typewriter. I imagined, of course, in the beginning a monster typewriter with hundreds of keys like one used for Chinese with about 1500 characters.

My amazement grew with every evening as I continued my work, and I was completely and jubilantly knocked out, when I figured out how many hundreds of keys my new typewriter should have. Reducing all my characters to their simple elements, I found out to my astonishment that only 28 keys all in all (with a little adjustment of the typewriter) would be necessary to express more than 7500 different words. Now, an ordinary typewriter has 42 keys. If I discarded the capital letters, I would have a typewriter capable to write my new international character writing and would also have the complete alphabet in small letters, numbers, marks, etc.



This seems incredible, but I will prove the truth in my lecture, arranged by the Cultural--Educational Committee of the Shanghai Jewish Club in the nearest future in the Club. Admission is free and everybody is invited to come and if he can, knock me down in the discussion. But I believe that my system will survive. I have experienced many times with joy that after I had explained to some of my friends a few elementary characters for a few minutes, they were immediately able to read new characters I presented to them. If you, my dear reader, do not believe me, please come, hear and see. The date of the lecture will be announced in "Our Life".

On the 5th February, 1943 the following note appeared in the same Journal.

"NEW WORLD WRITING" -- MR. BLISS'S

LECTURE IN SHANGHAI JEWISH CLUB

Mr. C.K. Bliss's lecture on "New World Writing", the introduction to which was published in the last issue of "Our Life" and provoked tremendous interest among our readers, will be delivered on Tuesday, February 23rd in the Shanghai Jewish Club. In course of this lecture Mr. Bliss will explain in detail his invented system of New World Writing - an epoch making discovery. It is superfluous to mention that this lecture should attract the interest of the local public, for even apart from its most interesting topic Mr. Bliss's reputation as a lecturer is well established with our public.

On the 19th February, 1943 the following note appeared in the same Journal.

MR. C. K. BLISS WILL SPEAK ON "WORLD WRITING"

ON FEBRUARY 23RD IN JEWISH CLUB

The lecture most eagerly expected by the wide public is that of Mr. C.K. Bliss who is to speak on his newly invented system of "World Writing" on February 23rd at 8 p.m. in the Shanghai Jewish Club. The fundamental principles of this system were explained by Mr. Bliss in his article published in "Our Life" and it is hoped that all the readers of this paper will be interested to learn the details of his wonderful invention which may prove one day an epoch-making discovery for mankind.

Bliss issued his own invitation cards to his friends which read -

MR. C. K. BLISS has great pleasure in inviting you to his

L E C T U R E

about his

N E W W O R L D W R I T I N G

with demonstrations

Explanatory note:

This is an invention of mine, based on the principles of Chinese Writing. A new Character-Writing, scientifically constructed and simplified, very easy to acquire and to type on an ordinary, specially adjusted, typewriter.

This is not an auxiliary language like Esperanto, but it makes it possible that a letter, a book, a newspaper could be read by anybody, no matter what language he speaks.

Time: Tuesday, February, 23, 8 p.m.

Location: Lecture Hall S.J.C. 1623, Avenue Road  
(alight Hart Road, former Masonic Hall)

On the 19th February the following note appeared in the Shanghai Jewish Chronicle printed in German.

Mr. C.K. Bliss will give an interesting lecture about his invention a "New World Writing" in the Jewish Club, Tuesday 23rd February at 8:0 p.m. (admission free). His invention is based on the principles of Chinese writing. It can be learnt easily and it can be typed on a typewriter. It is not an auxiliary language like Esperanto but it makes it possible that a letter, a book, a news-



paper could be read by anyone no matter what language he speaks.

On the 18th February, 1943 a terrible blow fell upon the 16,000 refugees who lived in Shanghai. The Japanese forced them out of their homes, flats, offices, shops etc. and segregated them in a special area in the Japanese part of Shanghai. The exodus had to be completed in 3 months and here is an article and the text of the Japanese proclamation from "Our Life".

### THE PROCLAMATION

On February 18th the Commanders-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy and Army in the Shanghai Area issued a joint Proclamation concerning restriction of residence and business of stateless refugees who have arrived in Shanghai since 1937. This Proclamation, which will become effective on May 18th, affects many thousands of Jewish refugees from Europe who reside and have businesses in French Concession and Settlement and who will have to move within three months into the designated area in the northern district.

We are publishing below the official text of the Proclamation and the map showing the restricted sector in the northern part of the city where stateless refugees will be segregated as from May 18, 1943. The border is indicated by the shaded line running through the centre.

Proclamation Concerning Restriction of Residence and Business of Stateless Refugees.

1. Due to military necessity places of residence and business of the stateless refugees in the Shanghai area shall hereafter be restricted to the under-mentioned area in the International Settlement;

East of the line connection Chaoufoong Road, Muirhead Road and Dent Road;  
West of Yangtzepoo Creek;

North of the line connecting East Seward Road, Muirhead Road and Wayside Road; and South of the boundary of the International Settlement.

2. The stateless refugees at present residing and/or carrying on business in the districts other than the above area shall remove their places of residence and/or business into the area designated above by May 18th, 1943

Permission must be obtained from the Japanese authorities for the transfer, sale, purchase or lease of the rooms, houses, shops or any other establishments, which are situated outside the designated area and now being occupied or used by the stateless refugees.

3. Persons who will have violated this Proclamation or obstructed its enforcement shall be liable to severe punishment.

Commanders-in-Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army  
and Navy in the Shanghai Area.

February 18, 1943.

Terror swept the community of refugees and Bliss and his wife being refugees themselves, were terror stricken too. In this atmosphere Bliss gave his lecture 5 days later (see Semantography Series No. 103).