

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

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

5 Maroubra Bay Road, Pagewood, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia

FOUNDER and DIRECTOR: C. K. BLISS, B. Sc.



SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES NO. 104

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND NOTES 1943-1946

FOLLOWING THE FIRST LECTURES 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 26th February, 1943 the following note appeared in "Our Life".

"NEW WORLD WRITING"

Mr. C.K. Bliss delivered his long expected lecture on "New World Writing" - his own invented system on Tuesday, February 23rd at the Shanghai Jewish Club before a numerous and enthusiastic audience.

Having explained that he was led to the invention by the study of the Chinese characters, Mr. Bliss stated that his system is based on the same principles as the former pictorial delineation of the meaning of the word, but rather simplified. "Just as Chinese characters could be read by anyone even not speaking Chinese language, so the New Language could be read and understood by people speaking different tongues", said Mr. Bliss, emphasizing the need of a simple medium of communication between scientists and research workers to whom especially he dedicated his work.

Mr. Bliss's language consists of a number of extremely simple signs, the combination of which enables to express the 850 words of which, as we know, consists Basic English. Thus Mr. Bliss's system is based on Basic English, and as with the use of a Basic English Dictionary, which translates the meaning of 7,500 words into 850, one is able to read almost any book, so having learned the principles of the New Language which are extremely simple, one is able to express in it the most abstract words.

Mr. Bliss worked with chalk on the blackboard and left the audience dumbfounded with astonishment by expressing sentences readable in every language with a few curves and lines.

The lecture left a deep impression upon the audience, and our readers should look forward to Mr. Bliss's further articles explaining in detail his system which he promised to contribute to "Our Life".

On the same date the following article appeared in German in the Shanghai Jewish Chronicle.

"NEW WORLD WRITING"

An interesting invention by C.K. Bliss (lecture delivered by the author in the Jewish Club).

As an introduction it may be said that this is no helpless attempt for a new auxiliary language similar to Esperanto. In spite of all enthusiasm Esperanto has not found any practical application. Besides national interests there were difficulties which we emigrants are now able to understand fully. It is very difficult to learn a new language and it is even more difficult to remember everything learned if you are not forced to use the new language.

However, time is pressing. There is a group of people, perhaps the most valuable ones, who need an international medium of understanding as much as the hungry needs a bite of bread.

These are the scientific researchers who work in thousands of laboratories, university institutes, hospitals and industrial centres of the whole world, with only one aim before them: a better, easier and healthier life for the coming generations.

Perhaps the most important department of those research institutions is the library. Here the experiences of researchers are collected, here are the journals which report about the last research results. Everyone who has worked in a scientific field knows that before the start of any research many weeks and months of library research are necessary. In reality however no library can acquire all the newest books and all the necessary journals. The prices of acquisition are high because of the small editions and then there are the many languages. I myself have for a number of years done research in technical libraries in a number of European capitals. I was able to get through English, French and Italian publications but I was completely helpless when I found that the relevant report I was looking for was available in volume 27, year 1903 issue 34 page 465 of "Reports of the Swedish University Upsala".

It was better in the so-called dark ages. In the scholarly world Latin was spoken and written. Students were able to take part in any University of Europe and could read any book. Galilei could correspond with Kepler, and Kepler with Copernicus. It must be possible to re-create this progressive state of affairs.

The creation of a simple and easy international medium of communication would mean the creation of a wonderful tool which could advance mankind by decades and centuries, in its endeavours for progress and mutual understanding. Here then is my idea built upon the oldest principles, which removes completely the difficulty of learning a new language. It is ^{not} a language and a writing, but a writing only. Many emigrants know that it is much easier to read an English book but one has great difficulties to speak English fairly well.

When I arrived in Shanghai 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years ago, I was fascinated by the curious and wonderful Chinese characters and I started painfully with brush and ink to penetrate the mysteries of this unique hieroglyphic writing. One factor captivated me completely: that different people in East Asia who speak different languages are able to read books in Chinese writing, for instance about Confucius, in their own language. I believe that the common cultural traditions of the peoples of East Asia is based on this factor.

How would it have been, I pondered, if by some remarkable chance in the history of mankind a similar writing would have existed in Europe. Then Dante, Moliere, Shakespeare, Goethe and all the others would have written their great works in such a writing and people from the southern-most point of Spain up to the north-cape in Norway would have been able to read these works in the "original" without a translation. A thought almost beyond our imagination!

In September, 1942 the thought occurred to me to try to find out whether it is possible to invent a scientifically constructed and specially simplified writing which is based on the principles of Chinese writing. Such a new world writing, I said to myself, would have to be typable on a typewriter of ordinary size, (under no circumstances on a Chinese typewriter which has about 2,500 characters and is unwieldly and slow).

Then it would be possible that for instance a Swede would write a letter in his own language to a business friend in Brazil who understands only Portuguese but would be able to read the Swede's letter in Portuguese. The Brazilian might show the letter to a Dutchman who would read the letter in Dutch. And all of them would read the same letter in their own languages.

This fantastic idea almost took my breath away, but my astonishment grew with the progress of my work as great simplifications came to light. To-day I am so far advanced that I can say: the system is laid down, it is practicable.

End of article.

Two months later over 12,000 refugees living in various parts of Shanghai had to move to the segregation area in the Japanese quarters of Shanghai. My wife and I took up quarters in a small room and kitchen and we had to begin life again trying to make a living by any means. For me it was the knowledge of having found something worthwhile to live for which made me forget all the hardship of the day. In the evening hours I worked at my "World Writing". However, it was not easy because I was terribly tired. Having been deprived of an office and of my previous livelihood of a film service (making 8 and 16 m.m. films and film titles) I was now forced to peddle around with cameras and was all day on my bicycle. After a while I got permission to enter the other quarters of Shanghai and from morning until evening I pedalled through the busy streets of Shanghai selling and buying cameras from private people. Consider the oppressive heat of Shanghai and you will realise that in the evening when I came home I was very tired. In order to keep awake I hired a man, Mr. Kars. He was a journalist from Vienna and hoped to make a living in Shanghai by establishing the school of Basic English. He failed in this because of the prime failure of Basic English which forces people to say "I have knowledge" instead of "I know" (see my writings on Basic English). However, Kars was interested in new language designs and above all, he was so poor and destitute that he was ready to do anything for money. He accepted therefore, my offer of evening work with enthusiasm and for 5 evenings a week he came up to our place, had a good meal and then we started work. In winter time when his little room was cold he could sit in our room. In the end, he turned against me, because I refused to fit my symbols to Basic English, when I later realised its great drawbacks.

We started work in May 1943 and began with finding appropriate symbols to the 850 words of Basic English. To be frank, I was so dead tired in the evenings that I dreaded the ringing of the doorbell announcing Mr. Kars. However, soon my old fascination took hold of me and we worked.

I gave a number of lectures in the segregation area which soon was called the Shanghai Ghetto. Besides speaking about my world writing I gave other lectures and wrote articles on other matters which appeared in some papers. The lecture most enthusiastically received was given to the Hongkew Medical Society, a group of doctors from Europe which was under the leadership of Dr. Friedrich who became my ardent friend and supporter. So far, I can not find a draft of this lecture in my papers. Should it turn up I shall add it to this issue.

As my work became now known among Chinese and Europeans alike, my friend Mr. Loewenberg, owner of a bookshop and lending library, drew my attention to an article which appeared in the German periodical Die Boettcher Strasse. "The Boettcher Street" is a street in Bremen which I have visited some years ago. It consists of a number of houses, built in medieval style containing various museums, all being the collection of the owner of the famous "coffeinfree" coffee Hag manufacturer. The periodical Die Boettcher Strasse was the organ of the cultural and artistic activities going on in this centre.

The article in question appeared in the issue of October, 1928 and it contains a proposal by a German teacher, Mr. F. Gilbert of Tokyo to make Chinese character writing a world auxiliary writing. The title of his article is "China-Bild-Schrift Als Welthilfsschrift", meaning "China Picture-writing as World Auxiliary Writing". It is a long article and at present I have not the time to translate it and make all the drawings of Chinese characters which Mr. Gilbert brings forward in his article. However, it is most interesting for the study of the idea behind Semantography and therefore I shall translate it for a later issue. However, as far as my work is concerned Gilbert told me nothing new and Gilbert did not take that step which I took, namely to realise that Chinese characters are cumbersome and complicated and that a modern scientific simplified writing must be invented.

Should I not be able to translate the article for a later issue I wish to inform the later researcher that the article is to be found in volume 1 of my collected notes for the story of Semantography.

Mr. Loewenberg, mentioned above, was very active in the cultural field and organised periodical lectures to refugees, youths and adults, and so he invited me to speak about my world writing. Here below is a translation of my prepared notes for this lecture which is in so far interesting as it favours a new approach which I hoped would appeal to the intellectuals forming the audience.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the end of our last meeting Mr. Loewenberg made a proposal that the theme of the next lecture should be: Is modern man not more capable to realise instinctively the good and the genuine and has this ability been buried in him? Another speaker said that the cause for this is to be found in our modern times with its standardisation and type-casting. Loewenberg then said that I might have something to say about this theme in my lecture about my world writing. I was very much perplexed about this, as I could not construct any connection between this theme and my writing. Besides I personally believe that modern times has not buried in us the sense for the good and the genuine. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that the last 150 years in which science and research could develop freely, have brought more progress for mankind than the last one million years. My apostle is Hendrick William Van Loom who said "the progress of mankind is getting on in a tremendous pace".

Some days later I stopped Loewenberg on the street and told him that I cannot say anything in my lecture to the theme which he mentioned. Loewenberg answered using a famous German quotation "my dear Bliss I believe that two souls are living in your breast". Now I have found out already that when I showed something of my work to Loewenberg it turned out that he could tell me much more about myself than I know. And because he said everything in such beautiful words, out of sheer vanity, I started to think what he meant about the two souls in my breast. And there I remembered the saying of Rabbi Sober when he realised the idea behind my writing. Rabbi Sober said then "Your writing forces people to think and to write simply, clearly and naturally". Here apparently is a reference to simplicity and naturalness which somehow may come under the heading of the good and the genuine.

I have asked myself the following question: Which original step have I done really when I build up this new system of world writing? I think I have pushed through all the ballast and rubbish which has accumulated in ordinary writing during the thousands of years, I have pushed through to the cradle of mankind, to the time when man began to make the first written signs. I myself started from this primary and natural beginning but I was not hindered by the ballast of former times. I have upon the basis of modern methods built up a new system which I hope will sooner or later be used by the peoples.

I apologise beforehand because I am going to use a simile in a way which might be evaluated as immodest. Sigmund Freud too has in his psycho-analysis uncovered the simple and natural prime causes of the human soul and has given us hope that we modern men might be able to build up, with the help of modern research methods, a happier community by starting from the natural prime causes working in man.

(A note in-between. In dictating the translation of the German manuscript I find it extremely difficult to get the proper English words for the German meanings and moreover to try to make the translation as near as possible to the original German text. German sentences are very long and the result of this translation might bring some awkward English sentences which I beg to excuse.)

Now recalling what Loewenberg said, I would like to vary my stand point and I would say it might be true that something has been buried within a modern mind which at the time was simple and natural but this has not been done by modern times, but on the contrary by the superstitious ballast of past millenias, by the accumulated old beliefs and things, or even rubbish, which we have taken over and carried around with us. With this I do not want to say anything against the great and glorious achievements of men of the past. On the contrary, they appear like lonely rocks in the sea. There are a few old medieval preparations used by primitive people that are very good and modern medicine can do nothing but to acknowledge their great potential healing power. On the other hand, some old people's medicine of the past has left us so much nonsense and quackery and has caused terrible suffering.

Now please follow me on my way which leads us back to primitive primeval man. He has learnt to speak but he has not yet learnt to write. Let us assume 2 valleys which are separated by an unsurmountable mountain chain and in these 2 valleys live 2 tribes who do not know anything from each other and therefore have no common linguistic stem and stock. If we suppose that with the first tribe the word for "table" is "abu" then we may assume that table means with the other tribe "kasidar". In short a completely

different language.

If we now ask ourselves how the beginning of writing happened with these primitive people we must know first that as far as we modern men know, the development of writing has gone 2 different ways, namely 1. the phonetic writing and 2. the hieroglyphic or character writing in which there is a meaning to every sign without indicating in any way how the pronunciation of the word is to be made. The prototype of the phonetic writing is our alphabet, which has been invented as the saying goes, by the Phonizians. Prototype of the hieroglyphic or character writing is the Egyptian picture writing and especially the Chinese writing which is certainly much older than the Egyptian writing. If we now ask ourselves which system was the primary one then my opinion is, and it can be easily proved, that it was the character writing. Psycho-analysis has told us that the biogenetic law which Haeckel found is applicable to our thoughts and feelings and thinking. In a few years the infant goes through those phases which mankind in its infancy had to go during hundreds of thousands of years. Then primeval man and modern child has something in common, namely the urge to scribble. Primeval man started to scribble on the walls of his caves. He pictured the sun as a circle, the moon as a half-circle and so forth and in the end he was able to draw a number of things which he saw in nature. To do this, he needed no special system of writing.

In contrast to this the construction of an alphabetical writing needed a tremendous amount of thought having been accumulated. Here we have a system which could have been created only by prolonged consideration. Firstly man must have become conscious that he is capable of producing sounds with tongue and larynx. Therefore, there must have been firstly a classification of the various sounds made, as to hissing sounds, lip sounds, guttural sounds, consonants and vowels before man could start to build up sound symbols on the basis of this classification. Having found the signs for these sound groups man had then to combine them into other groups which then resulted into the writing of various words.

This consideration gives me the belief that phonetic writing must have arisen in a later epoch of human history and that picture writing in its primitive form was the primary writing.

Now let us pose the question which system, picture writing or phonetic writing is the better system. We would then say without much thought that surely the phonetic is the better system because with the phonetic we have to learn about 26 different signs only whereas with the picture writing we must learn thousands and thousands of signs. The fact that in China 90% of the people are illiterate is perhaps the best proof for this, because Chinese writing comprises about 80,000 different signs. We know that the Government is endeavouring to create in various parts of the country so-called "1,000 character schools". There the people who want to learn are taught at least 1,000 characters. From this consideration it appears that in comparison with the phonetic writing, character writing is bad and must be rejected.

(Note written in 1955: My knowledge about Chinese character writing was very superficial in 1943. The fact is that there might have been 80,000 different characters invented and accumulated by scholars in the past. The most detailed Chinese dictionary of Giles however, lists not more than 13,000 signs. Besides, Chinese typewriters contain at the utmost 2,500 characters and most of them have only 1500 which are completely sufficient to express anything which people want to express. In the Chinese typewriter it takes a little longer time to find the character but then one pressing types a whole word and in fact Chinese typists are very quick. The 1,000 character schools are therefore completely sufficient for people who want to read the newspapers or other contemporary writing. The illiteracy in China is not caused by the complex Chinese writing but by the failure of the Government to provide schools and furthermore by the poverty of the peasants who need every helping hand in the field to stave off starvation. In Shanghai where even the lowliest coolie and rickshaw puller can afford to send his child to school, every child is literate by the age of 4 and I have seen and filmed something in Shanghai which I have not found anywhere in the world: street libraries. For the smallest coin children are able to select books from these street libraries maintained by an old Chinese. I have many pictures to show these little children sitting around and reading avidly. . Now to return to my lecture of 1943 and the foregoing paragraphs in which I assumed the impression of the foreigner that Chinese character writing is archaic and therefore bad.)

Continuation of lecture:

Well, so I thought when I arrived in China and I had pity of the poor Chinese that they are burdened with this unfortunate script. Slowly however doubts began to come up and to-day I am fairly convinced that the basic idea of picture-writing is to be evaluated much higher than the idea of phonetic writing because of its universal application. To-day I am firmly convinced that the tremendous growth of the Chinese people amounting to 450 million can be explained in the main by this writing. We know very well that the Chinese people have taken in untold other tribes which slowly were converted to Chinese. In this conversion Chinese script has played an important role. I myself, a stranger have made a similar experience with myself when I started to acquaint myself with Chinese culture and literature. If you do this and you start to learn to read Chinese then you realise very quickly that you will be able to learn much quicker to read than to speak because you will read firstly in your own language. This I shall explain now in detail. Let us consider again the 2 tribes living in their mountain-separated valleys. Let us ask ourselves which system we would give them in order to enable them to communicate with each other. If we had given them both the phonetic writing then they might be able to read each others script but they would not understand it. If the first tribe reads "abu" the second tribe must learn first what "abu" means and vice versa.

If however, we would have given both tribes the same picture writing then they would be able to read immediately each others literature which have been developed in the meantime. They would do so without being able to speak the language of the other tribe. Now this is indeed what happens to-day before our very eyes. A Japanese who cannot speak a single word of Chinese can read Chinese books and a Chinese could read a Japanese book if it does not contain other signs, namely the Japanese signs of Katakana a phonetic script which has been developed during the last centuries and which in Japan is used together with Chinese characters.

End of lecture notes.

This is all what I have found in my papers. It might well be that I shall find more notes, but I assume that, immediately after this introduction I went on to show my symbols. This latter might be the case because it was the procedure with all my lectures; a short introduction and then the showing of my symbols. I have translated this introduction because I have tried to impress and convince the intellectuals in the audience. Unfortunately I must state that with few exceptions these European intellectuals did not agree with me that a universal writing bridging all languages would be a good idea. I have found later on that intellectuals with deep rooted prejudices are my worst audiences.

In October, 1944 the Shanghai Weekly "Our Life" published the following interview which tells the story of the past 1½ years. This article is interesting because it reflects our life in the ghetto of Hongkew, the so-called "designated area" as named by the Japanese.

I have published a number of articles in "Our Life" about various subjects. These articles do not deal with Semantography and are therefore of no special interest here. They are collected in a separate volume kept in my home.

THE "WORLD WRITING"

The six years' contact of Jewish European emigration with Asiatic culture has resulted, as far as we know, only in one work of ingenious creation, namely, the "World Writing" of Mr. C. K. Bliss, a well-known lecturer. His invention is an international character - writing, inspired by Chinese writing system but scientifically simplified and typable on an adjusted typewriter of ordinary size. Any book, paper or letter written in this new character-writing could be read by everybody, no matter what language he speaks.

As one and a half year have passed since Mr. Bliss published his initial article in "Our Life" (No. 91 of January 29, 1943) we asked him for an interview,

- "Are you still enthusiastic about your idea?"

"More than ever. My international writing avoids the difficulty of learning new vocables and descreying them (as necessary for Esperanto). Moreover, it meets a burning need of Science. Even the wealthiest University in the world is unable to purchase all the scientific books (high prized because printed in small editions) and subscribe to all scientific magazines, periodicals, reports or dissertations. Moreover, the greater part of them would be inaccessible to the students being written in languages unknown to them. Imagine, however, every scientific book in my writing, readable by every student in the world in his own language and available for less than a five-cent detective story."

- "Do you believe in the practicability of your idea?"

"Absolutely, because I am following the line which Science has already adopted in using international words and signs in Medicine, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics etc. A chart of a radio-apparatus, for instance, no matter how complicated it is, could be read by any radio-mechanic in his own language."

- "How many signs do you use?"

"All in all about 150 different signs composed by about 40 keys of an ordinary typewriter. With this more than 25,000 words could be expressed (following the work of Ogden's Basic English) which is more than necessary. This seems incredible, but it is true, and for this reason every scientist, when he grasps my idea, gets quite excited about it."

- "How do you overcome the great differences in grammar in various languages?"

"By using definitions of Einstein's space-time world. For instance, the timeline contains only a Past, a Present and a Future. This does away with Imperfectum, Plusquamperfectum, Second Future etc. etc. Any language describes events in our space-time world. I have found a few universal rules which are applicable to any language on our Earth, or some other planet or elsewhere in our space-time universe."

- "Have you given any more lectures after your first lecture in the Jewish Club?"

"By invitation of Dr. Friedrichs I spoke before the Hongkew Medical Society and was deeply moved by their enthusiasm. They all, being men of science, know how difficult it is to look up a medical report written in an unknown language. Discouraging, however, was another lecture given before Jewish intellectuals, and most distressing was a lecture delivered to Jewish Youth in Hongkew."

- "Are you discouraged by this?"

"Not a bit, on the contrary! Think, for instance of the year 1843. Our greatgrandfathers writing with goose-quills and completely unaware of future typewriters, telegraph and high-pressure salesmanship! At that time Gabelsberger started to draw small strokes, points and curls and called it "Stenography" (short-hand). "What for?" asked the people; "he is crazy..."

- "How is your work progressing?"

"The system is soundly built. Now comes the tremendous detail work, compiling the dictionaries, etc. Mr. Ferdinand Kars, founder of the Shanghai Basic English School, faithfully works with me, for which I am very grateful to him. I would like to be ready with my initial book for publication when peace comes, but my greatest obstacle is lack of time. From morning till evening I am pedalling through Shanghai in order to secure a decent living and come home dead tired. Still, I sit down to work till late at night, but this is not enough. I should work at it at least half a day and I should be in a position to make my constructional adjustments to the typewriter!"

- "Have you tried to find a sponsor or patron for your work?"

"Some enthusiastic people referred me to some educated, wealthy Jews, they, however, in turn referred me to some educated, wealthy Chinese and these referred me back to wealthy, educated Jews.... So I went back to work without help!"

- "What benefit do you expect for yourself from your invention?"

"There will be no money for me in it. On the contrary: it means hard work and lots of grievances. Moreover, knowing the usual slow trend of ideas, like Gabelsberger, I shall not live to see my idea commonly adopted. What I can achieve through my work, is but adding a little honour to the Jewish name."

- "We think your work deserves to be supported"- said we, thanking Mr. Bliss for his most interesting interview. And we really meant it.

I have a number of files containing my notes written during the war years in Shanghai. They will be of interest to the students of whom I hope they will study the early part of my work. I hope to find the time to type them down properly and to incorporate them into the Semantography Series at a later date. Here below I refer only to the notes which appeared in Shanghai papers.

The time before the end of the war in the Pacific was very trying as air raid followed after air raid and American bombers dropped bombs on various areas in Shanghai. At one time great damage was done in the area where we lived and houses not more than 5 yards away from the house where we lived were damaged, set on fire and many people lost their lives in the houses and the street. I had built an air raid shelter in the courtyard where my wife and neighbors took refuge when bombers came over. At that time I was in the city crouching in a doorway and being mortally afraid when I heard bombs were dropped over Hongkew. As soon as the air raid was over, I hurried on my bicycle home and was appalled by the destruction on the way. With trembling heart I turned the corner of my home and saw the corner house on fire, but thank heavens our house was undamaged. Another house only 5 yards away from our house was destroyed but my house stood and my wife was safe. Our home was covered with plaster which fell from the ceiling. As many houses around our house were on fire we evacuated our belongings to a safe place and took our 2 little cats with us. We formed lines passing buckets to the houses burning but the fire continued even during the night.

At last peace came and we were free. Many of the refugees got jobs with the United States Army and I was among them working in the post exchange on the camera counter. There I had the good fortune to meet a number of American Officers and among them the Officers of the Educational Branch I. & E. Section, Headquarters, United States Forces, China Theatre. They had set up schools for the G.I. who had to stay in China for a time and thus could learn a number of subjects. The Chief of the Educational Branch, Major N. H. McCollom arranged then for me to give a lecture about my "World Writing" and here below is the text of the invitation which went out.

EDUCATIONAL BRANCH I. AND E. SECTION

Headquarters, United States Forces, China Theatre

A C O R D I A L I N V I T A T I O N

is extended to:
to attend a

L E C T U R E

given by

MR. C. K. BLISS, B.Sc.

(Post Exchange, Photo Dept)

on his

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

This is a new scientific character writing (inspired by the study of Chinese character writing) but of amazing simplicity, typable on an ordinary adjusted typewriter and readable in every language, dialect and idiom.

It is not a new artificial language. A scientific report, a circular letter, a cablegram or an American picture magazine with captions written in this "World Writing" can be read by Everyone, the world over, in his own mother tongue, be he an Eskimo or a Bushman.

Science, Information Services, and International Business need this new invention.

The Shanghai Herald brought the following note:

"WORLD WRITING"

Mr. C. K. Bliss, B.Sc., (Post Exchange, Photo Dept.) will give a lecture on his system of "World Writing" at the Shanghai Central School, 137 Hamilton House on Monday, March 4, at 7 p.m. sharp.

Mr. Bliss has devised a most ingenious system of scientific character writing inspired by the study of Chinese characters, which he claims is of amazing simplicity, typable on an ordinary adjusted typewriter and readable in every language, dialect and idiom.

Not only are G.I.s. welcome to the lecture but members of the general public also and an interesting evening is promised.

The China Press brought the following note:

WORLD WRITING SYSTEM TO BE EXPLAINED

The U.S. Army Information and Education Section is sponsoring a lecture by Mr. C.K. Bliss, B.Sc., on the topic of "World Writing". It will discuss what Mr. Bliss terms "a new scientific character writing - inspired by the study of Chinese character writing - and is simple, typable on an ordinary adjusted typewriter and legible in every language and dialect."

It is not a new artificial writing as anything written in this "World Writing" can be read by everyone, the world over, in his own mother tongue, the lecturer says. The public is cordially invited to attend the lecture at Shanghai Central School, 137 Hamilton House, tomorrow at 7 p.m.

The North China Daily News brought the following note:

NEW "WORLD WRITING" SYSTEM PROPOUNDED

The theory of a new sign language, which he described as "World Writing" was expounded last evening by Mr. C. K. Bliss, B.Sc., in a lecture to servicemen of the United States forces and civilians.

Inspired by his study of Chinese characters, Mr. Bliss claimed that his new system, which consists of sixteen known signs, 12 new signs and some sixty symbols which many as children have scribbled on paper, sets a new standard of language-simplicity through character writing.

By demonstration, the speaker attempted to show how it was possible to express with these few signs and symbols everything that could be expressed in simple words.

He pointed out that science had already adopted in mathematics, physics and chemistry signs that were readable to men of all nations, and added that his sign system brought this scientific trend to its last consequence.

His experience as a research workers had shown him that science needs an international means of intercourse. At every scientific congress the same problem was brought up, but hitherto no solution had been found. Mr. Bliss hoped that his system might be the answer to the problem, or at least an indication to it.

A lively discussion concluded the lecture.

Then came the lecture before the Rotary Club of Shanghai which was a great success and which I consider decisive because the assembled Americans, Britons and Chinese encouraged me to write a book about my work and to continue working on it. The Shanghai Herald of April 3th 1946 brought then an article which was accompanied by a picture of me explaining my symbols on a blackboard before the Rotary Club members. I have a number of copies of this issue. When this stock is exhausted the following text must suffice.

C.K. BLISS INVENTS SYSTEM OF WORLD WRITING

When a foreigner goes in for the study of Chinese character writing, something queer is bound to happen. This was the case with Mr. C. K. Bliss, B.Sc., well-

known Shanghai expert on Photography. He remembered his hardships in European University libraries, with all the scientific books printed in too many different languages. He remembered the lost paradise of the middle age, with Latin the universal scientific language and he remembered the failure of all artificial languages.

Being a research chemist himself, he is convinced that the greatest obstacle which science faces at present, is the lack of an international means of intercourse. Every scientific discovery, improvement, report and treaties should be made available immediately in a cheap form to every scientist the world over.

The study of Chinese character writing inspired him to the idea of a very simple sign writing, which everyone the world over could read in his own mother tongue. This could perhaps be the solution. With this idea in mind he worked through three years of black-out evenings until he thought his system complete, sound and simple.

Rotary Club Meeting

Invited as guest-speaker by the Rotary Club of Shanghai he presented his system at a recent Club meeting. It was a great success. He was able to show that only 60 to 80 signs all-in-all are necessary to express almost everything, even highly abstract words. His "World Writing" is typable on an ordinary adjusted typewriter. It could be used advantageously by Science, International Business, Traffic and Information.

Some 1,500,000,000 people or 75 percent of the whole world's population cannot read and write. For many tribes no alphabet for their peculiar sounds has yet been invented. This was and is one of the greatest worries of the missionaries. For countless millions living in cultured countries speaking their own peculiar dialect, the university lingua of their own country is as Greek to them as the Greek language. Now imagine "Life" magazine with a caption to all pictures printed in "World Writing". Everyone the world over could read it in his own mother tongue, be he an Eskimo or a Bushman. It is of amazing simplicity. The signs are similar to those which early cavemen scribbled on the rocks, which every child scribbles on a piece of paper. You can't forget the signs and many you will recognize at once. They are part of the heritage of man through the ages.

Mr. Ralph Mortensen, Rotarian, and China representative of the American Bible Society, has been much impressed and has requested Mr. Bliss to write the first chapter of the Bible in his "World Writing."

In the picture above this article Mr. Bliss is seen explaining a few signs. In the left upper corner of the blackboard you see the sign [L] . It stands for Opening. The next sign [] stands for Enclosure. But each of these signs stand also for more than a hundred different words, for instance opening, aperture, hole, gap, chasm, yawning, perforation interstice, orifice etc. With the verb-indicator (Action) it stands for to open, to gape, to perforate, to uncover, to unclose, to unveil, to unlock, to reveal, to bare, to expose and others. With the adjective-indicator (Quality) it stands for open, agape, gaping, ajar, unobstructed, uncovered, unprotected, exposed, bare and many others.

The greatest obstacle, the tremendous differences in grammar in all the different languages and dialects, Mr. Bliss claims to have overcome from the viewpoint of the physicist. His "Universal Grammar" consisting only of three groups he says, is valid on this earth as well as on any other planet or celestial body. There are material Things which perform Actions. A stone falls. A man thinks. Stone and man are Things. The fall, the thought are Actions. Things and Actions have Qualities. The stone is heavy, the man is intelligent, the fall is rapid, the thought is true. Therefore Heaviness, Intelligence, Rapidity and Truth are Qualities. These three clear divisions and a few Connector words like: and, or, with, without, if etc. and a few rules of universal syntax is all you need to know to operate the few signs of "World Writing." About the grammar of your own mother tongue you don't need to worry. You would surely fail at a grammar examination, but you can use your own mother tongue very well, so don't worry.

Said jokingly the President of the Rotary Club Mr. Wm. Z.L. Sung, after the speech: "If Mr. Bliss's system should be adopted universally, we educators will soon be out of business."

In thanking the speaker on behalf of the Rotary Club, Mr. Wm. Yinson Lee said that Mr. Bliss's system appeared to be the nearest approach to a universal written language he had seen and he was to be congratulated on his achievement.

He invited Mr. Bliss to repeat the lecture at the next meeting of the Shanghai "Y" Mens Club, which will take ^{place} tomorrow (Tuesday).

I was thus invited to give a lecture to the "Y" Mens Club. After this lecture the Shanghai Press brought the following article.

UNIVERSAL SIGN LANGUAGE EXPLAINED BY INVENTOR BLISS

He says that it is crazy idea, but C.K. Bliss, photo-expert and chemist, wants the whole world to know about his invention of a new universal sign language, because "crazy ideas sometimes help the world."

Repeating his lecture on "Universal Sign Language", which he gave before the Rotary Club recently, at a regular meeting of the Y's Men's Club yesterday, he related with enthusiasm before an amused audience that his system is derived from the roots of Chinese writing.

Although for many years a great admirer of Esperanto, Bliss declared that no one could deny that it has been a failure. The sign writing, he claims, would overcome the greatest obstacle to the study of science - an international means of intercourse.

Taking a cue from the Chinese writing which originated from signs, Bliss has devised a simple system consisting of from 60 to 80 signs in all, which may be produced by a typewriter with only 42 keys. "These signs, simple as they are, can express anything, including the most abstract words," he stated.

Basic Signs Used

Bliss demonstrated that his language is based on a few basic signs such as: sun, moon, earth, water, man, women, house, ship, heart, ear. Apart from these, he has "classifiers", such as: up, down, opposite, much. To represent time, he uses two perpendicular axis as time coordinates. Anything that happens anytime may be marked at respective positions along the axis.

(☉ wheel)

For instance, a circle with a cross inside means movement. Two signs of movement topped by a horizontal stroke means a cart. Likewise the sign of a mouth beside two arrows pointing in the same direction means harmony, agreement, and so on. If the arrows point in opposite directions, it means disagreement, quarrel. "Harmony" plus a sign representing music denotes symphony. The meanings of this new language can be very complicated although the signs are seldom used for more than a single word.

Further examples given by Bliss were "happiness", written as a heart with an arrow beside it, pointing upward. This is interpreted as an elevation of feeling. A diagonal stroke through the heart means "love". The heart plus the sign for future means "hope." "Safety" is depicted by a heart under the roof. If this sign is added with another denoting an adjective, it means "safe".

With this system, Bliss abolished at a stroke the different shades among "beautiful", "pretty", "handsome", and similar words, because he said he needs only one word for all of them. He could delve into the depth of any technical and philosophical book with this simple way of solving complicated problems.

Wherever he meets with difficulty, he uses an Arabic number, as in the case of cereals, he gives a number to each. So "rice" is expressed by the sign of cereal next to the number "1", "Wheat" beside the number "2" and so on.

"You see, it's so easy and simple", he beamed.

Translates from Bible

He declared that Mr. Ralph Mortenson, China representative of the American Bible Society, has asked him to translate the first chapter of the Old Testament. At the Y's Men's meeting yesterday he employed his pet signs to express the first stage of creation.

"I am a photo-expert and chemist," he concluded, "but I feel my invention is

so convenient and would save so much trouble for the world that I am willing to devote two years of my time in propagating this new method, which will help some people to understand each other. If the world doesn't want it, then I would go back to my own business."

Another lecture took place in the Asia Seminar which consisted of evening classes frequented mainly by European refugees. The Shanghai Echo brought a note on this lecture in German which reads in translation.

A WORLD WRITING

Mr. C. Bliss spoke in the Asia Seminar about the World Writing which he invented. He started by explaining the development of writing in general and spoke then about the advantages of a uniform writing for the whole world, that means a writing which everyone could learn to read and understand without having to learn a foreign language and without making difficult mental efforts. The lecturer referred to the fact that the beginnings of such international communications are available for the intellectuals of all countries who can read mathematical equations, chemical formulae, technical abbreviations etc. the meaning of which is clear to all of them though they pronounce the relevant words differently in whatever mother tongue they speak. Bliss has occupied himself with the creation of a writing, the symbols of which communicate the meaning even to primitive people. A certain number of standard signs are to be learnt which have only one meaning and the same meaning for all mankind. A number of these standard signs (which altogether number not more than 500) are so-called classifiers which we know already from Chinese and Japanese writing. They enable anyone (who is not too much of a philosopher, as Bliss said) to express himself in an international medium of communication.

Whether the invention of Bliss has a greater future than Esperanto could not be judged on the basis of this short lecture. However, everyone respected the intuition, the invention and the great amount of mental work which was necessary to bring this idea into a practical form. Bliss got therefore the applause of a highly interested audience.

The article is signed with the initials L. Sch. He was a reporter of the Shanghai Echo. I have forgotten his name.

This was the last lecture given in Shanghai. The world was open again and everyone wanted to get out as quickly as possible. My hopes went out to Australia and on the 1st July, 1946 I left China.