

Critical Terms in Theology

Journal for the Study of Christian Culture

神学关键词

基督教文化学刊

(第21辑·2009春)

中国人民大学基督教文化研究所主办



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Critical Terms in Theology

罗秉祥

Lo Ping-cheung

在解释本期主题旨趣之前,要先做三点说明。第一,在西方的神学院中,神学教育有其狭义与广义。广义的神学包括圣经科目、历史科目、神学科目及实践科目。这些不同领域的科目,都各有自己的辞书,要找共同的关键词并不容易。第二,在后现代思潮弥漫下,西方不少学者也强调尊重差异,保护多元,抗拒同一化;因此神学研究的课题与研究方法也日益多元化,神学的关键词也起了更多变化。第三,在中国学术界中,神学只是一个新兴学科,研究者分散在高校不同院系;除了文、史、哲,也在社会科学各领域中。基于这三个原因,本期所讲的神学关键词,不单是广义的,更强调是在人文学语境中的。换言之,所谓“关键”,固然是紧要的、决定性的意思,但同时更指对神学及人文学都同样重要的、必不可少的共同词汇。

关键词(critical term)略有别于钥字(keyword),除了强调其“起决定性作用”之外,还有因为“term”这个英文字来自拉丁文“terminus”,其意涵是界限。正如美国学者 Mark C. Taylor 所提示,

我们看重的关键词,是一些既有自由空间也有约束极限的术语。^①关键词既代表一个术语的区域范围,但也往往是一词多义的,是一个多重性复合体,因而这个关键词也在好几方面与其它关键词相连接,引领读者从一个关键词接驳到其它关键词。这些词汇的内涵既有严谨性,也有开放性。正因为如此,关键词彼此连接重迭,关键词之间交织成一个蜘蛛网,一个错综复杂的网络。不单关键词之间彼此交汇,不同学科,不同研究方法也彼此交汇,而且这个网络永远开放,永未完成。^②

因此,本期的要旨,并不只是提供一些“范畴”研究。更重要的是,我们希望促进从事基督教研究不同领域、不同学科、不同方法的学者都串联起来,交织在一起,彼此对话;特别使神学的关键词与其它人文学科的关键词也因此串联起来,在交汇之际增进彼此了解。

用汉语来讨论神学关键词,有一个复杂成分是西方所没有的,就是基督教在中国是一个近代的外来宗教。因此,用汉语讨论神学关键词,还添加了一个跨文化的因素。明末天主教来华时,要制定汉语的宗教关键词,只有两条路,一是创立自己的新词汇(如“天主”),二是在中文词汇中找些现成的关键词来用(如“上帝”)。但无论是第一或第二个方案,都绕不开这些词汇在当时汉语的语境,不能把这些词汇从国学(经、史、子、集)的语境切割分离。所以,当时不少的耶稣会神父同时也是汉学家。他们舍弃了理所当然的“基督教”这个汉译,而另创一个欧洲语文所没有的“天主教”这个词,把他们所传授的学问称为“天学”,在神学关键词上这已是一个

^① Mark C. Taylor, *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 16.

^② 同上,第17页。[Ibid., 17.] 此书收了22个关键词,本期翻译了其中两个。

非常重大的决定。因是之故，用汉语讨论“天主”或“天主教”这两个神学关键词，与用英文讨论“God”或“Catholic Christianity”这两个神学关键词，讨论的方式与内容一定有很大差异。

再者，由于汉语本身的合字为词的特点（因此我们用“关键词”而不是“钥字”），汉语的神学关键词还牵涉到复杂的修辞问题。第一，有些词是天主教与基督新教都共享，但突出与古汉语不同（如用“孝敬父母”而不是“孝顺父母”，“罪”而不是“过”，“灵魂”而不是“魂”，“创造”而不是“化生”）。这些遣词用字方式故意与古汉语保持距离，以突显出这些神学关键词在汉语的独特性。第二，有些词是天主教与基督新教不一致（如“天主”还是“上帝”或“神”？^①“恩宠”还是“恩典”？“宗徒”还是“使徒”？“祭祖”还是“敬祖”？）。再者，天主教比基督新教较多以“圣”字组词，如“圣事”、“圣人”、“圣徒”、“圣职”、“圣体”、“圣座”、“朝圣”等；这除了彼此神学有别之外，也牵涉到双方对国学及人文学语境的不同取态。一般来说，汉语天主教比汉语基督新教，更愿意用中国的古字古词。第三，有些关键词连基督新教内部都不一致（如究竟是“上帝”还是“神”？）。^②第四，有些关键词是当代教内与教外不一致（“圣诞”还是“耶诞”？“教宗”还是“教皇”？）。第五，有些基督教关键词与学术语境关键

① 有趣的是，尽管对于“God”的汉语翻译三方有分歧意见，但对于其它汉语译词，却三方都一致，如“神学”、“神性”、“无神论”等。

② 这个“译名问题”的争论，始于19世纪中叶《圣经》的翻译工作，到今日今日还没有共识。参尤思德：《和合本与中文圣经翻译》，蔡锦图译（香港：国际圣经协会，2002年），第72-80页。[see Jost Oliver Zetzsche, *The Bible in China: the History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*, trans. Daniel K. Choi (Hong Kong: International Bible Society, 2002), 72-80.]

词皆一致,但表述各异(如“道”,“经”)。^①

以“经”为例,我们可看到汉语神学关键词的复杂性。英文的 Bible 汉语译作《圣经》,但这非必然的译法。拉丁文及希腊文的“biblia”,只是书本的意思。天主教传教士于乾隆年代开始译经,虽称为《古新圣经》,但没有完成及出版。基督教传教士马礼逊完成了中译工作,是以《神天圣书》之书名于 1823 年出版,及后另有新译本,以《神天新旧遗诏全书》为书名出版。^②再及后,才终于定案为《新旧约圣经》。在古汉语,“圣经”一词是指儒家的经书(参《钦定四库全书·总目录》),日文版本 Bible 现在还称为《圣书》。所以,当汉语基督教确定自己的经典不叫《圣书》,而称之为《圣经》,可说是引入一个关键词的争论了。

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由于汉语神学关键词这个复杂的跨文化特征,教会内部对某些关键词的理解也不一致。清朝的礼仪之争,其实可说是“祭祀”这个神学关键词之争。反对信徒祭祖的方济各会传教士认为“祭祀惟敬天主可用,而不可用于他位”,^③但耶稣会传教士则认为“祭祀祖先,出于亲爱之义,依儒礼亦无求佑之说,惟尽孝思之念而已。虽设立祖先之牌,非谓祖先之魂在木排位之上,不过抒子孙报本追

^① 古汉语中一个很强烈的谴责语是“离经叛道”,但是离了哪本经,叛了哪个道?后来语境已很模糊了。基督教当然并非始作俑者。自从汉朝有《经》的出现后,《老子》被称为《道德经》,《庄子》被称为《南华真经》,中文佛教典籍也把经与论分开。

^② 参赵维本:《译经溯源:现代五大中文圣经翻译史》,香港:中国神学研究院,1993年,第14-19页。[See Zhao Weiben, *Tracing the Source of Translating the Bible: History of the Translation of Five Selected Modern Chinese Version of Holy Bible* (Hong Kong: China Graduate School of Theology, 1993), 14-19.]

^③ 转引自李大刚:《中国礼仪之争:历史、文献和意义》,上海:上海古籍出版社,1998年,第193页。[Quoted from Li Tiangang, *The Argument of Chinese Etiquette: History, Documents and Significance* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Press, 1998), 193.]

远,如在之意耳。”^①同样论争,后来在基督新教传教士与华人信徒中也发生过。用今天的话来说,这个关键词争论是“祭祖”是否等同“祖先崇拜”?中国文化的关键词“祭”,与基督教文化的关键词“崇拜”,两者是什么关系?

正如前述,本期的主题特别希望促进神学的关键词与其它人文学科的关键词串联起来,在交汇之际增进彼此了解。但由于中西文化差异,西方的同类型神学关键词在汉语神学中,只是一部分而已,还必须增加一些与中国文化有关的关键词,如家庭、孝、伦常、祭祀、天、道、读经、异端、报应等。本期有一篇“罪过”的论文,也是朝这个方向努力。

本学刊这期专题只是一个开始点,为基督教研究这个广大无边的领域提供一个新切入点,及反映出这个领域的一个动态发展。敬请各位同道指正。

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^① 转引自中国社会科学院世界宗教研究所基督教研究室编:《中国天主教基础知识》,北京:宗教文化出版社,1999年,第191页。[Quoted from *The Basic Knowledge of the Catholic Church in China*, ed. Department of Christianity in Institute of World Religions in Chinese Academy of Social Science (Beijing: Religious Cultural Press, 1999), 191.]

Critical Terms in Theology

Lo Ping-cheung

6

Three explanations are in order before I elaborate on the theme of this journal issue. First, “theology” has a narrow and a wide sense in Western seminaries, divinity schools and departments of theology. “Theology” in the wide sense includes Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, Church History, and Practical Theology. Each of these fields has its own dictionaries and encyclopedias. It is not easy to find common critical terms across these four fields. Second, with the influence of Postmodernism, more and more Western scholars emphasize respecting differences, protecting pluralism, and resisting conformity. Consequently, pluralism in subject matter and methodology has been ascending in Theological Studies; critical terms in theology have been undergoing changes as well. Third, Theological Studies is a new discipline in Chinese universities and academies. Their scholars are widely spread out in Literature, Philosophy, History, and various Social Sciences. In virtue of these three factors, “Critical Terms in Theology” in this issue is to be understood in the wide sense; furthermore, it is to be understood in the context of humanistic studies. In other words, “critical terms in theology” here means not only important and essential terms in general, but also significant and indispensable terms for *both* theology and other

humanities.

A “critical term” is not entirely the same as a “keyword.” For one thing, it has the connotation of decisiveness. For another, the English word “term” comes from the Latin word “*terminus*,” whose etymological meaning is boundary. As American scholar Mark C. Taylor observes, critical terms “function as enabling constraints that simultaneously create possibilities and circumscribe the limits of exploration. But even when lines of definition seem to be clearly drawn, terms remain irreducibly complex. . . . The complexity renders terms polysemous and multivocal.”^① Accordingly, a critical term intersects with other critical terms, leading readers from one term to another. Such intersections of critical terms become a web. Not only that the critical terms themselves intersect, different disciplines and methodologies intersect as well. Consequently, this web is always incomplete and open.^②

The nature of this thematic issue of the journal is therefore not “category studies.” Rather, we hope to bring together scholars of different disciplines, fields, and methodologies to have dialogue through these critical terms. We especially hope to interweave critical terms in theology with those in other humanities and to foster better mutual understanding.

To discuss theological critical terms in Chinese will encounter one complication which is absent in the West, *viz.*, Christianity is a “foreign” religion that came to China only recently. No discussion of

① Mark C. Taylor, *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 16.

② Taylor, *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, 17. This book collects twenty-two critical terms and two of them are translated in this issue.

critical terms in theology in Chinese can avoid its cross-cultural dimension. When Catholic Christianity came to China in late Ming Dynasty it had to create Chinese critical terms. There were and still are only two ways of doing it. One either creates its own new terms in Chinese (e.g., God as *tianzhu*) or chooses and picks from existing terms (e.g., God as *shangdi*). Either way, one cannot bypass the usages and etymologies of these terms at that time, and cannot separate them from the contexts of these terms or their components from classical Chinese learning (studies of canonical writings, history, philosophy, literature). It is therefore no surprise that many of these Jesuit missionaries became “Sinologists.” They made a critical decision in terming this new religion the Religion of the Lord of Heaven (*tianzhujiao*) rather than the Christ Religion (*jidujiao*) and in calling their learning Heaven Studies (*tianxue*) rather than theology (*shenxue*). Accordingly, to discuss the critical terms “God” (“*tianzhu*”) and “Catholic Christianity” (“*tianzhujiao*”) in Chinese will be very different from discussing them in English.

Discussions of critical terms in theology in Chinese are further complicated by an important feature of the Chinese language, *viz.*, terms (*ci*) are often the joining of two or more separate words (*zi*). This is another reason we use “critical terms” instead of “key words.” The creative way in which one puts together different words reveals theological and philosophical subtleties that are profound. Consider the five examples below. First, Christians use the term “*xiaojing fumu*” (to respect parents in filial piety) instead of the more common term “*xiaoshun fumu*” (to obey parents in filial piety), “*zui*” instead of “*guo*” for “sin,” and

“*chuangzao*” instead of “*huasheng*” for “creation.” These terms are coined in such a way that a critical distance is maintained between critical terms in theology and critical terms in ancient usages; theological distinctiveness is thereby preserved. Second, some Protestant Chinese theological critical terms are different from the Catholic ones. For examples, Catholics say “*tianzhu*” whereas Protestants say “*shangdi*” or “*shen*” for “God,”^① Catholics say “*enchong*” whereas Protestants say “*endian*” for “grace,” Catholics use “*zongtu*” but Protestants use “*shitu*” for “apostles,” Catholics feel free to say “*jizu*” whereas Protestants discreetly say “*jingzu*” for “rituals to ancestors.” Catholics are also much more willing to use the word “*sheng*,” a reserved term for emperor, to compose terms, such as “*shengshi*” (holy rites), “*shengren*” (saints), “*shengtu*” (saints), “*shengzhi*” (holy office), “*shengti*” (holy communion), “*shengzhuo*” (holy seat), “*chaosheng*” (pilgrimage), etc. Such divergences reflect not only theological differences but also different assessments of ancient Chinese learning and their idioms. In general, Chinese Catholics are more willing than Chinese Protestants to use words and terms of ancient learning. Third, there are critical terms that are not even shared by all Protestants, such as should it be “*shangdi*” or “*shen*” for “God”?^② Fourth, there are Christianity-related critical terms that are not shared by Christians and non-Christians.

① Interestingly, although there are three Chinese theological terms for “God,” the Chinese terms for “theology,” “divinity,” and “atheism” are the same for all denominations.

② This “Term Question” controversy arose in the mid-nineteenth century Protestant bible translation work, and is still not resolved today. See Jost Oliver Zetzsche, trans. Cai Jintu, *The Bible in China: the history of the Union Version or the culmination of Protestant missionary Bible translation in China* (Hong Kong: International Bible Society, 2002), 72 – 80.

Christians call Christmas “*shengdan*” (Holy Birthday) whereas non-Christians would only call it “*yedan*” (Birthday of Je[sus]). Catholics call the Pope “*jiaozong*” (the source of [Christian] religion) whereas non-Catholics call him “*jiaohuang*” (the emperor of [Christian] religion). Fifth, there are critical terms that are first used by ancient Chinese learning and Christians adopt them to their use (e.g., “*dao*” as translation for “*logos*” and “*jing*” as rendition for Bible).^①

More explanations about “*jing*” can illustrate the complexity of theological critical terms in the Chinese language. “Bible” in Chinese is now rendered as “*shengjing*” (Holy Canon), but this is not the only possible translation. The word “Bible” came from “*biblia*” in Greek and Latin, which means simply books. The Catholics started translating the Bible in the Qing Dynasty, which was not accomplished. It was tentatively entitled “*guxin shengjing*” (Old and New Holy Canon). The Protestant missionary Robert Morrison finished the first complete translation and published it as “*shentian shengshu*” (Godly and Heavenly Holy Book) in 1823. Another translation by other missionaries was entitled “*shentian xinjiu yizhao quanshu*” (Godly and Heavenly Old and New Testament Complete Writings).^② It was still later that another translation was published and was entitled “*xinjiuyue shengjing*” (Old and New Covenant Holy Canon), and the term has stayed till this day. What is noteworthy is

① Christianity was not the first religion to adopt the use of the term “*jing*” for their scriptures. Both Daoism and Buddhism eventually adopted this term for their most important writings as well.

② Cf. Zhao Weiben, *Tracing Bible Translation—A History of the Translation of Five Modern Chinese Versions of the Bible* (Hong Kong: China Graduate School of Theology, 1993), 14 - 19.

that in ancient Chinese language, the critical term “*shengjing*” (Holy Canon) was used to refer to Confucian canonical writings. The Bible in Japanese has been called simply “*shengshu*” (Holy Book) in accordance to the literal meaning of “*biblia*.” Accordingly, when Chinese Christianity decided to call the Bible “*shengjing*” (Holy Canon) rather than “*shengshu*” (Holy Book), as it was once called, Chinese Christianity chose to introduce a debate on a critical term in China.

As a result of the cross-cultural complexity of theological critical terms in the Chinese language, the meanings and significance of some critical terms have been sharply debated. The Rite Controversy in Qing Dynasty, which led to the prohibition of Catholic missionary work in China, can be understood as a controversy of understanding the critical term “*jisi*” (offering). Franciscan missionaries objected against Chinese Catholics doing offering to their ancestors because “offering should be made to God exclusively.”^① Jesuit missionaries had a different view. “Offerings are made to ancestors only out of family love. Confucian rituals of offering do not have the component of asking for the ancestors’ blessings and protection. The rituals are meant only to express remembrance out of filial piety. Even though they made offerings to tablets of ancestors, it does not imply that the ancestors’ souls inhabit in the tablets. The tablets are there to signify as if the ancestors were present. It

^① Quoted from Li Tiangang, *The Chinese Rites Controversy: History, Documents, and Significance* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Press, 1998), 193.

is to express the descendents' sentiment of remembering their origin.”^① The same controversy occurred again later among the Protestant missionaries and Chinese churches. In today's idiom, the controversy can be understood as whether or not the critical terms “ancestor offering” and “ancestor worship” are equivalent. Put it in another way, what kind of relationship is there between “*ji*” (offering), a critical term in Chinese culture, and “*chongbai*” (worship), a critical term in Christianity?

As explained above, the intention of this thematic issue of our journal is to promote meeting points for critical terms in theology and critical terms in other humanities so that mutual understanding can be enhanced. However, in virtue of cultural differences, critical terms in Western theology can be only one portion of theological critical terms in the Chinese contexts. Some critical terms from the Chinese culture should form another portion. Examples are: family, filial piety, human relationships, offering and sacrifice, Heaven, Dao, Canon study, heresy, retribution, etc. The article “sin and wrongdoing” in this issue is an effort toward this direction of enriching theological critical terms in the Chinese language.

This thematic issue of our journal is just a beginning. We aspire to provide another approach in the vast and boundless field of Christian Studies and to show the dynamic progress of some research findings so far. We hope to receive feedback and comments from our readers.

① Quoted from Research Unit of Christianity, Institute of World Religions, The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, ed., *Fundamental Knowledge of Chinese Catholic Christianity* (Beijing: Religious Culture Press, 1999), 191.

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征稿启事暨 匿名审稿制度说明

世界上的真理并不多。我们所关注和我们所能论说的一切，其实都是以既有的文化积累为前提，都是古老真理的延续或者前人思想的引申。

世人探寻真理的途径却很多。因此才有各自独立、而又彼此相关的信仰和文化，才有不同信仰与文化之间的交流或碰撞，才有精神信念的分享和文化创造的更新。

14 在近代以来的西方，基督教的信仰与文化已经成为一种基本的范型。其科学、人文以及社会体制的各个方面，无不浸透着基督教的内在精神。因而国人所谓的“西学”，在相当程度上正是导源于基督教的观念、学说和文化。

西学之东渐，使得百年来的中国文化问题始终离不开西学与国学的相互砥砺，离不开二者在认知方式、社会统序、生存态度、价值体系上的一系列磨合。其中的争论和辩难，往往成为传统或现代、持守或开放的主要标志。

而在近年的中国，对历史沉疴的反思以及与现代世界的融和，使我们发现自身的文化处境实际上与西方日渐相似。这既使更多的对话成为可能，又使体用之争、优劣之争失去了原本的意义。我们所需要的，已经不是过于直接地走向一个相对简单的结论，而是在争论和辩难的途中稍事停留。

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