

**The  
Discovery  
of  
Genesis**

# **The Discovery of Genesis**

**How the Truths of Genesis  
Were Found Hidden  
in the Chinese Language**

**C.H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson**

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TO

the memory of Liao Teck Sing, my beloved wife and  
companion of more than 50 years.

C. H. KANG

my daughter Laurel, sons Orlyn and Ted, and husband  
Roger, all of whom have encouraged me in the pursuit  
of this fascinating story.

ETHEL R. NELSON



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## Foreword

There is a genuine kinship between a good detective story and this volume by The Reverend C.H. Kang and Dr. Ethel R. Nelson. The authors start with the observance of some astonishing points of correspondence between certain characters in the Chinese language and elements of the Genesis account of man's early beginnings. They go on to analyze dozens of the ideographic pictures that make up words in the Chinese language. The evidence they compile is marshaled to support the thesis that the ancient picture writing of the Chinese language embodies memories of man's earliest days. The characters when broken down into component parts time and again reflect elements of the story of God and man recorded in the early chapters of Genesis. Man and Woman, the garden, the institution of marriage, the temptation and fall, death, Noah's flood, the tower of Babel — they are all there in the tiny drawings and strokes that make up the Chinese characters.

The authors remind us that China boasts of 4,500 years of unbroken civilization. The ancient Chinese were monotheists, serving a Supreme Heavenly Ruler.

It is not out of the question that their ancient beliefs reach back to the worship of the one true God, the Creator of Genesis chapters one and two. If indeed such is the case, this book represents one of the most startling theological discoveries of the ages.

Like patient and painstaking archaeologists the authors have pieced together the evidence. Many will agree. Doubtless some will challenge their work. But there is evidence here that demands further study—that evidence cannot be ignored. That evidence cannot be brushed aside by claiming that the corresponding points between the Chinese characters and Genesis are merely the product of chance. No, this book calls for far more serious consideration.

Among the book's virtues is the fact that it can be read with appreciation and understanding by those who are neither students of language nor conversant with Chinese.

It is indeed interesting in a day when China and the United States are resuming normal relations that the language of this ancient people speaks to us in characters that are hauntingly reminiscent of the early chapters of Genesis. Perhaps God has given us a point of reference to use today in proclaiming to the Chinese themselves the full story of the entire Bible with all the richness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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## Prolog . . . Genesis

More than 20 years ago a small book printed in Hong Kong entitled *Genesis and the Chinese*<sup>1</sup> came into my possession. I found its contents more than stimulating : Chinese characters were dissected and amazingly shown to tell the stories found in the early chapters of Genesis. I reorganized the material to follow the same chronological order as the Genesis history and repeatedly used it while studying the Bible with both Thai and Chinese students during my years as a medical missionary in Bangkok, Thailand. These presentations were always accepted with considerable interest and wonder.

Later, after we again took up residence in the United States, for the purpose of the continuing education of our children, my son informed me that a friend of his at college was the grandson of the author of *Genesis and the Chinese*. It was thus that the address of this elderly Chinese minister, C. H. Kang, was obtained. He presently resides in Singapore.

Assuring Pastor Kang of the enthusiasm I had found for his project among not only Orientals but also many Occidentals, I offered to prepare his material in a new

form for presentation to a wider audience. My fascination with the subject mounted as he sent a great volume of additional new characters to integrate into the manuscript.

船

*boat*

舟

*vessel*

八

*eight*

口

*mouth*

I was curious to know how he happened to become devoted to delving into the mysteries of the Chinese characters. About 40 years ago in China, he explained in a letter, he had been distributing Bible portions of the Book of Genesis as a chaplain in a mission hospital. A return visit to one patient's room resulted in a confrontation with a very intelligent but puzzled Chinese lady who told him what she thought of the tract: "It is a very fine fairy tale for children but hardly worth an adult's time!" She proceeded to let him know that in her opinion educated people believe in the evolutionary theory of origins.

Our Chinese friend was embarrassed that he had, at that time, too little scientific persuasive evidence to substantiate the Genesis narrative of beginnings. He himself had always accepted it by faith — simply as the Word of God. He wrestled with the problem for days until something that he had observed in a footnote of a Mandarin textbook used by a missionary came to mind. The character 船,<sup>2</sup> meaning *boat*, had been analyzed as follows: 舟 a *vessel*; 八 *eight*; and 口 *mouth or person*. A comment followed that, interestingly, Noah's ark, the first great boat, had just eight passengers: Noah and his wife, with his three sons and their wives.

"If this is not a mere happenstance, there should be other Biblically relevant characters," reasoned Kang. Quickly he wrote down the character for *to create* 造, and was astonished as he analyzed the components in

this figure for the first time: 土 is *dust or mud*; 口 a *mouth*; 丿 the small downward stroke to the left of 土 indicates *movement or life*; and 辶 means *able to walk*. The text in Genesis 2:7 came to his mind. “Then the Lord God formed man of *dust from the ground*, and breathed [with his *mouth*] into his nostrils the *breath of life*; and man became a living being” (not a baby but an adult, *able to walk*). Dissection of this character stimulated Pastor Kang’s interest and resulted in a search which has lasted four decades.

My personal study into the history of the written Chinese language through various treatises in English found in Harvard’s Chinese-Japanese Yenching Library gave its approximate time of origin as 2500 B.C. This dating is provocative, for it coincides quite closely with the time (2218 B.C.) of the great dispersion of races from the tower of Babel, as calculated from the Biblical genealogies in a recent chronological study.<sup>3</sup>

Discussion of this project with other missionaries from the Orient and friends precipitated some questions. How does one know that these characters are actually very ancient and not more recently contrived through the influence of Christian missionaries during the past two or three centuries, for the purpose of promoting their religious concepts? The answer to this is that very basic, fundamental, primitive, and nonreligious kinds of words are involved, including, for example: *come, go, desire, beginning, complete, first, forbidden, garden, drown, cruel, rebellion*, and scores more.

A few friends versed in the Chinese language brought up the possibility that these might be “phonetic” rather than “ideographic” characters. This point will

造  
create

土  
dust, mud

丿  
“p’ieh,” show  
life, motion

辶  
walking

be later discussed. The more ancient forms of all the characters presented have also been researched and bear out the interpretations given, oftentimes being even more explicit.

A third query has been: How does one know that the point of reference for the characters is not a pagan concept rather than a source parallel with our Scriptures? My reply to this points out that the original religion of the ancient Chinese at the time when the written language was being formulated was monotheistic in nature. They had no idols, no mythology, but worshiped a single Supreme Ruler of Heaven. The polytheistic cults of Taoism and Buddhism came about 2,000 years later. As one becomes acquainted with the study and the multiplicity of key words such as *flesh, a lord, reptile, naked, clothing, to hide, sorrow*, for example, it becomes increasingly credible that the ideographic references are to the same historical events as recorded in Genesis. But one must decide for oneself the veracity of the study.

Many long letters passed between Singapore and Stoneham, Massachusetts. When I had a rough manuscript in hand, a trip to Singapore in 1975 at long last allowed me to go over the material with Pastor Kang to our mutual satisfaction. But it was soon apparent that our study was far from complete.

Only one who has attempted to collaborate on a project such as ours can appreciate the frustrations of a 13,000 mile separation and a two-week wait for a reply to a letter. I finally realized that a second visit would be necessary in order to satisfactorily complete the thesis, and this was accomplished in the fall of 1976. This surely would be the last trip! But the end was not yet in

sight. Revisions and progress were slow when mixed with both professional and homemaking careers. The summer of 1978 again found me in Singapore. On this trip I was also able to confer with Dr. Andrew Chiu, president of Concordia Seminary in Hong Kong, who enthusiastically endorsed the project.

One very difficult aspect of writing this book has been particularly challenging—to make it readable for both the creationist and evolutionist. Some explanations may appear redundant to those with a good Biblical background but are quite necessary for any who are not well acquainted with the Scriptures. A missionary would be suspect as being sympathetic with creationistic thinking, but I have really tried to remember that I also was once quite ignorant of any concepts of origins other than the evolutionary processes presented during my younger years in public school. I would not want to “turn” anyone “off” by a dogmatic or prejudiced presentation; I prefer to allow room for an honest appraisal of the subject matter introduced.

Another problem involves some new and unconventional ways of interpreting certain characters. Only those knowledgeable in the Chinese language would detect these apparent innovations. For this reason, there are explanatory study notes for each chapter. They are listed with the book references in numerical order at the end of the book. It is hoped that Chinese friends will withhold judgment until all the facts are in, for admittedly we are looking at characters in a somewhat different way. But this is not new! Many books<sup>4</sup> have been written in an attempt to decipher ideographically the original intent of the venerable writing, so this book is not unique except in its interpretative foundation in sacred primeval

history. One's natural skepticism gives way to pondering mathematical probability when viewing the great number of characters which accurately portray these ancient sagas. Could so many meaningful ideograms "just happen" — just evolve — without intelligent synthesis?

As coauthor of C. H. Kang's thought-challenging work, I make no apologies for not being a linguist. I have learned a bit about the Chinese written language during the months of ingesting the submitted characters with their analyses. Perhaps someone, such as myself not engrained in previously accumulated knowledge and biases of the language can be more objective and critical. From the viewpoint of an English-speaking readership, something not clear to me would certainly be equally puzzling and unconvincing to others.

A most annoying experience has been trying to scrutinize a tiny printed character to identify each little stroke in its composition. Therefore a standard part of my equipment has become a three-inch magnifying glass. This is quite impractical, however, for the readers of this book, so each new character under discussion, along with its unfamiliar constituent radicals, have been greatly enlarged and placed in the margins, together with the English equivalents.

All Biblical references are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) unless otherwise specified e.g. King James Version (KJV), New English Bible (NEB) etc. The more ancient calligraphy found in the text and notes is taken from the work of Lin Tze Ching.<sup>5</sup>

The outline followed in this book is intended to substantiate evidence for the truthfulness of the Genesis

account, climaxed with the introduction of the heretofore unrecognized twin account of Genesis found in the Chinese characters. A brief glimpse into the ancient history and religious background is necessary first to set the stage. Then, in order to understand and appreciate the structure of the Chinese characters, a brief introduction to the written language is added to stimulate interest and launch the reader into the investigation. The body of the book follows thereafter, keeping with the Genesis chronology, as specific characters are scrutinized one by one and reduced to meaningful component parts. Very quickly the reader will begin to recognize the simpler symbols and enjoy the flavor of discovery.

There are many whom we would like to thank for their ideas, counsel given, or review of the manuscript, in whole or in part. Dr. Lit-sen Chang, special lecturer in missions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, reviewed the completed manuscript and made a number of helpful suggestions.

A special thanks is extended to Dr. E. C. Zimmerman veteran missionary to China for his careful and helpful critique of the entire completed manuscript. I would also like to mention by name others who have been most helpful at some stage in the preparation of the book: Dr. Frances Read, David Doucette, J. R. Spangler, Nancy Wall, Otho Eusey, Dr. Lynn Sauls, John Wood, Dr. Cynthia Watts, Dr. Gerard Damsteegt, Ezra Longway, Lillian Lo, and D.T. Djang.

Finally, I would like to express my great appreciation for the kindness, interest and patience of the staff of Thai Watana Panich Press Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand, who have pains-takingly type-set the book with the disadvantage of working in two

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foreign languages—English and Chinese! Little does one realize, viewing the completed book, the separate problems they incurred in acquiring Chinese type, the services of a calligrapher, and the reproductions by their press artist of the unfamiliar ancient forms. The technology they found challenging, and the whole was accomplished without complaint!

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## Chapter 1: Not Without Witness

Theories of man's origin have haunted scientists and theologians alike for years. They have debated the authenticity of the beginnings of life on this earth as recorded in Genesis. Interested people the world around, it seems, have either accepted these writings "by faith" or have considered them mere fables.<sup>1</sup>

What would be your reaction to an extra-Biblical source of the same narratives as portrayed in the first 11 chapters of Genesis—those "hard-to-believe" early writings? One or two fragmentary stories are found in many early cultures—the creation, the fall of mankind into sin, Noah's flood—but the whole picture is not there; and vivid, accurate, unmuddled details are lacking. One might think of looking into the most ancient records and artifacts of the oldest civilization in the world for confirmation. That would lead us to China, which proudly claims the distinction of 4,500 years of unbroken civilization. But China? Who would consider this country, with its religious mixtures of ancestral worship, Taoism and its myths and magic, Buddhism and its superstitions and divinations, Confucianism and its scholarly teach-

上帝

*ShangTi*

帝

*emperor*

上

*above  
(heavenly)*

ings, as the depository of anything Judeo-Christian?

Yet, if we take a journey backward in time, passing the first century B. C., when Buddhism was introduced; the fifth century B. C., when Taoism and Confucianism simultaneously blossomed; and continue back 1,500 or even 2,000 years more, we find a different religious atmosphere. There we find the little-appreciated evidence that these ancient people served only *one* God, had *no* myths or idols, and kept a strict moral code.<sup>2</sup> They called their God *ShangTi* 上帝 (Shang Ti, Shangti, Shangti), the Heavenly (*above*) 上 *Emperor* 帝 .

It is supposed that the Chinese originally migrated from a site in Mesopotamia, for they show evidences of similarity to the later Babylo-Assyrian culture in arts, sciences, and government.<sup>3</sup> The approximate date of their origin, 2500 B. C., is surprisingly close to the strict chronological dating of the great event at the tower of Babel which resulted in the division of all mankind into new linguistic groups and the consequent dispersion of peoples over the face of the earth. If God at that time truly confused the mother tongues of earth, these people carried with them a newly acquired spoken language. They also must have had an accurate knowledge of historical events from the beginning of time, which they communicated by word of mouth. This should have been an accurate record, since the period spanned was only three patriarchal lifetimes: Adam to Methuselah to Shem (Genesis 5:3-32; 10:25; 11:10-16).

Because of the geographical isolation of China by mountain ranges, deserts, and oceans, this race of people was sealed off to itself, free from outside influences, as

it developed its own characteristic culture, nor was it disturbed for over 2,000 years.

When the Chinese, very early in their history as a separate people, found a need to communicate with a written language, a system of word-pictures was invented in keeping with the characteristic calligraphy of the ancient world. True to all primitive written languages, these so-called pictographs were satisfactory for representing objects but carried limitations in expressing abstract concepts. The early graphic symbols, therefore, were combined in meaningful ways to convey ideas, called ideograms, and these “picture stories” of necessity had to contain common knowledge in order to be understood. It would have been only natural to use as a basis for some of the ideograms the history of the ancient beginnings of humanity with which all were familiar by oral tradition. Consequently, the written Chinese language is composed of characters uniquely adapted to the possibility of containing the stories of Genesis.

We might illustrate at this point just what an ideogram is and how a concept such as the word “tempter,” for example, could be translated into an expressive written character by graphically depicting the story of Eve’s encounter with the devil in the Garden of Eden. In this first historic moment of temptation the devil must of course be pictured. Three primitive pictographs were selected to accomplish this: *a garden, field or landed property* 田 represents the Garden of Eden; *a man, son* 儿 shows the humanoid aspect of the devil, who spoke as a man to Eve, even though through the medium of a serpent; and the word *secret, private* 鬼 conveys his



*devil*



*man, son*



*garden, field*



*secret, private*

clandestine approach to Eve. These three symbols, together with the “p’ieh” 丿 indicating “alive,” are combined in *the devil* 鬼.

But to be more specific, the *devil* 鬼 radical is then placed under the *cover* 宀 of protecting *trees* 林. The *devil* 鬼 waited for Eve in the forbidden tree, which was located in the middle of the garden next to the tree of life—hence the two *trees* 林. Furthermore, he was under *cover* 宀, being hidden in the tree and also camouflaged as a serpent. By uniting these primitive pictographs into an ideographic character, the word *tempter* 魔 appears to have been designed. Or were these six significant constituent symbols brought together by mere chance?

宀

cover

木

tree

魔

tempter

厶 + 儿 + 田 + 丿 = 鬼 + 林 + 宀 = 魔  
secret man garden [alive] devil trees cover tempter

The preceding serves to illustrate the purpose of this book in exploring some of the pictographic and ideographic types of Chinese characters in order to unlock what we believe is a parallel account of the fascinating chronicle of beginnings. A feature which makes this hypothesis even more tenable is that the words to be discussed in this book are of themselves very relevant to the stories of Genesis. If the inventor of the written language were seeking to portray such words by pictographs or ideographs, it would be appropriate for him to find the earliest instance in oral tradition bearing an illustration. For example: the words *bring forth*, *complete*, or *finish* would be expected to refer to the creation week; while *first*, *perfect*, *beginning*, and *ancestor* should apply to Adam and Eve; and *warn*, *covet*, *naked*, *hide*,

*thorn*, and *sorrow*, are ideas first expressed in the temptation and fall of the original human pair.

There is reason to believe that the Chinese written language bears a testimony to prehistory with emerging details closely resembling the Hebrew portrayal. Some information contained by the ancient characters gives unexpected insights into the little-understood primeval world. The graphic symbols often seem to give specifications referring to the two worlds—either that of Adam and Eve in the mysterious preflood period, or to Noah and his family, the postdiluvian (postflood) common ancestors. Most remarkable of all is that the Chinese characters have survived intact through the intervening thousands of years with very little modification in the meaning of their constituent parts, although the actual written forms have undergone stylistic changes. Today this remarkable language represents the one remaining pictographic and ideographic language in current use in the modern world.

It is the purpose of this book to propose, therefore, that the ancient Chinese people were quite familiar with the same record which the Hebrew Moses is popularly given credit for writing some 700 to 1,000 years *later*. Imagine this information being stored in special characters that were in use hundreds of years before the first page of the Bible was written! Moreover we believe that the Chinese actually employed this historical knowledge as one small facet in the process of building their written language. The significance of this claim is broad. But most important, it appears to us to give support and added acceptance to the often-slandered account of the Biblical Genesis.

How is it that the factuality of Genesis is now universally questioned, whereas a century ago it was generally accepted in large portions of the world? Many people today are evolutionists, having been brought up from childhood accepting this idea. Early, they are taught in school and by the media to think the earth evolved through millions or billions of years. They are frequently unacquainted with the Scriptural explanation of creation except in a fanciful or ridiculing context. This educational influence has left too many closeminded on the subject of origins, accepting only the statements of the scientific world as fact.

Thanks to archaeological finds, the credibility of the Bible is increasing.<sup>4</sup> Gradually, archaeologists have been digging up evidence of ancient civilizations mentioned exclusively in the Bible. Inscriptions in clay and rock have been deciphered which describe with conclusive data the very peoples once considered mere Biblical hypotheses. The 1976 find of an entire library of intact clay tablets at Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla in Syria) by Italian archaeologists is eagerly being deciphered for meaningful associations with the early chapters of Genesis.<sup>5</sup> Will the early Hebrew pre-recorded history be clarified by these relic writings? Will a vast Semitic culture from the centuries prior to 2000 B.C. come to light?

There is much discussion about the origin of fossils, petrified forests, and coal and oil deposits. Do these prove evolution, or were they produced by an ancient universal flood with cataclysmic upheavals? *One* observation would meet with universal agreement: these are all remnants of a lush vegetation and vast fauna distribu-

ted worldwide, from present-day deserts to icy poles. The process which instantaneously froze, thereby preserving in toto, thousands of mammoths grazing on temperate vegetation,<sup>6</sup> encased ripe fruit in ice, petrified giant hardwood trees before the normal course of rotting could ensue, and liquified or carbonized other organic life into fuel for future generations must have involved the whole earth in a rapidly transpiring event.

What was the world like that nurtured these mute but splendid remnants of a former age? Each step in the process of creation is described in the first pages of Genesis as meeting God's quality-controlled perfection: "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). This primeval planet was so perfect that we can scarcely imagine how different it was from the most idyllic panorama on our present earth. We are pleased today with a much inferior familiar scene—the recovered world following the devastation of a universal catastrophe.

Terrariums have become popular in the last few years, and especially those people who have a hard time remembering to water their house plants appreciate that one can neglect the glass-encased ferns, mosses, or small-leaved plants for months at a time and see them repeatedly utilize and thrive on the meager moisture contained in the system. It has been proposed that our earth was once just such a vast enclosed greenhouse, for the great size and verdure of fossil plants suggest ideal primordial climatic conditions. A very even temperature could have been made possible by a globe-encircling vapor canopy as described in Genesis 1:6-8: "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst

*Not Without Witness*

of the waters [originally surrounding the earth], and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament [seas] from the waters which were above the firmament [water canopy]. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.” Also in Genesis 2:6 it is stated that a “mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.”

A water canopy encircling the earth would create an even temperature everywhere, thus eliminating winds and in turn rains. This protective vaporous mantle would also screen out harmful radiation and could conceivably contribute to the early longevity of mankind, as recorded in Genesis.<sup>7</sup> Truly the first world was a strangely wonderful place. But again, did it abruptly end with the emptying of the water canopy upon the earth during the universal flood? This possibility is depicted in Genesis when “all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the *windows of the heavens* were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights” (Genesis 7:11,12). According to the Biblical record, the whole earth was convulsed in a mighty upheaval as these tumultuous waters swept away the first world’s inhabitants and vegetation. Only Noah and his family, together with pairs of animal species, are recorded to have been preserved in a spacious vessel of his own making.

But how can we believe such an idealistic first world ever existed? How can we scientifically accept a “myth?” Is there any real evidence outside of fossils to substantiate the Genesis story? How about Noah’s ark? Would we believe the Bible if the remnants of a