

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

A Non-Profit Educational Research Organisation.

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AN APPROACH TO PROFESSOR NEEDHAM

Dr. Joseph Needham F.R.S. of Cambridge has visited China in 1945 and passed through Shanghai on his way to Paris to attend the first conference of Unesco. An article about Dr. Needham appeared in the Shanghai Herald and Bliss managed to meet Professor Needham and to show him his work. Needham who speaks and writes Chinese, grasped immediately the value and importance of Bliss work. He suggested that Bliss should incorporate into his system all Chinese characters with not more than 4 strokes. Bliss gave him the notes he had prepared for this meeting and also copies of articles which appeared in Shanghai papers. He urged him to draw attention to his work at the Unesco conference when in Paris. This Dr. Needham promised to do.

In 1946 Bliss immigrated to Australia and wrote a number of letters to Needham. However, no answer came. Bliss cannot find any more the copies of these letters except the one which is re-printed below.

Needham was one of the first great hopes of Bliss and the fact that Needham chose to ignore Bliss letters and refused him the meanest courtesy of an acknowledgment speaks for itself. Bliss had the very same experience with a number of other scholars. The following letter is re-printed below in order to show that Bliss has been courteous, polite, and submissive in this, as in all the other approaches to professors.

Sydney, 5th October, 1950

Professor Joseph Needham,
University of Cambridge,
CAMBRIDGE. ENGLAND.

Dear Professor Needham,

Four and a half years ago, the attached article appeared in the Shanghai Herald, and I was delighted to meet you and discuss with you my work on Shanghai's airfield. You promised to bring the matter before UNESCO but - as my subsequent letters have not been answered - I concluded that your attempts have failed.

In the meantime, I have worked for three years, completing an extensive work of three volumes in duplicated form which is now purchased by Public and University Reference Libraries (see page 12 of the attached Brochure). I shall soon approach Cambridge University Library.

The attached Brochure will show you that men of learning like Bertrand Russell, Lancelot Hogben, Carleton Washburne and others, have favourably commented on my work, and various educational authorities in Australia, India, etc., have expressed interest.

Now, I remember that you too, liked the idea of a modern picto-ideography very much, and I remember that you gave me good advice. I hope therefore, that you will be interested in this letter, and that you will not refuse me your help. I want nothing more than a letter. Here is the reason.

I have not approached UNESCO myself, fearing a polite declining letter. But now a noted educationalist, Dr. P. Volkov Editor of the Educational Journal, THE NEW ERA, has presented officially my work to UNESCO Paris. She has also commissioned Professor Patrick Meredith of the University of Leeds to review my work. I am glad to report that Professor Meredith has gladly accepted this, and has written to me, congratulating me on my "pioneer effort".

The matter is now with Dr. M. Akrawi, head of the Education Clearing House

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of UNESCO Paris. I am torn between hope and fear and I am writing to you, begging you to help me.

You do not need to say a single word in my favour. What I want is that you should ask for a detailed and careful investigation.

I am afraid a declining letter may be forthcoming any day, and so I close this letter with the plea: "Please write at once, before it is too late". UNESCO is in great need of a spectacular innovation to overcome illiteracy in the Babel of the backward areas of the world. HERE IS ONE PRIMER FOR ONE WORLD.

I remain, thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Encl. Brochure No. 6
Article.