



Semantography(Blissymbolics) Series No230

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PROFESSOR OLIVER L. REISER'S CHAPTERS FOR  
"ONE WRITING FOR ONE WORLD"

as proposed in an abridged version to be made later for a publication of the  
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION YEAR  
(Chairman Mrs. Helen Tucker, Toronto Canada)

Introductory Note: In 1951 Professor Reiser gave his lecture to the American Association for the Advancement of Science under the title UNIFIED SYMBOLISM FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN SCIENCE. In this lecture he gave an account on C.K.Bliss' Semantography, and accompanied his explanations by the pamphlet forming Semantography Series No. 52.

In 1965 an enlarged version of his lecture with more chapters on Semantography was published by the Semantography Publishing Co. of Sydney, which publication forms Semantography Series No. 150.

In 1963 Professor Reiser and C.K. Bliss agreed to a joint publication on a new book with the title ONE WRITING FOR ONE WORLD. Professor Reiser would write the Foreword and the first chapters which would include the text of his first chapters on UNIFIED SYMBOLISM FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN SCIENCE. Then would follow an introductory chapter on Bliss's work. Afterwards Bliss would explain the application of his symbols for all human activities in communication and commerce, industry and science, education and ethics, etc.etc.

Now in 1964 Bliss is making a proposal to the Women's International Liaison Committee for International Co-operation Year for a booklet of not more than 100 pages to be sponsored by this Committee in conjunction with the forthcoming International Co-operation Year in 1965. In order to give enough information to the members of this committee, the relevant chapter written by Professor Reiser is reprinted below, but the reader must bear in mind that the following text is much too elaborate for the proposed booklet. As soon as the chairman Mrs. Helen Tucker agrees to the proposed 100 page booklet a drastic abridgement of the following text will be made by Professor Reiser and C.K. Bliss. The text below has been composed in 1963 in order to satisfy the scholar and the layman who may have their doubts and counterarguments against this new mode of communication. As the members of the Women's committee and the other committees for International Co-operation Year may have their doubts too, the full text of Prof. Reiser's explanations is printed herebelow, which text however will be heavily shortened for the proposed booklet.

It should be born in mind that the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations has proposed the promotion of international symbols which can be read in all languages as the best means to foster international co-operation, and that the United Nations General Assembly has already approved this promotion.

It is proposed that Mrs. Helen Tucker writes a Foreword to the Booklet.

INTRODUCTION TO  
"ONE WRITING FOR ONE WORLD"

by Professor Oliver L. Reiser.

The first chapters of this book form part of my paper read at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Philadelphia 1951 under the title

UNIFIED SYMBOLISM FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN SCIENCE

The complete text is to be found in the publication mentioned below which carries also the text of another paper of mine read at the Conference of the International Society of Significs in Amsterdam 1953. Both these papers and a detailed account of Bliss' work were published under the title

UNIFIED SYMBOLISM FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN SCIENCE  
including  
BLISS SYMBOLS (SEMANTOGRAPHY)  
and  
LOGIC, CYBERNETICS, AND SEMANTICS

For details of this<sup>1</sup> and other publications mentioned and numbered in the book see the bibliography at the end. The chapters on Bliss' work are taken from his extensive writings<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore natural that he appears as co-author.

Bliss is one of those researchers whose extraordinary experiences (as told in this book) have singled him out to fight a heroic struggle against overwhelming odds. More than one thousand years ago, the Sanscrit symbols 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 were introduced into Europe by Arab mathematicians. But the schools refused to teach those new-fangled symbols. Instead they persisted for 600 long years afterwards in continuing to teach mathematics with Roman symbols, multiplying say MDCCCCLXXXIX by DCCCXLVIII. They also persisted for over 200 years after the death of Comenius in not adopting his idea of pictures in school books.

According to a recent Columbia University study<sup>3</sup> it takes something like 15 years for a new teaching concept to reach 3% of U.S.A. schools, 50 years for it to reach all of them. It may take hundreds of years until all schools of the world will begin teaching Bliss' simple symbols and their symbolic logic and semantics.

Bliss was fascinated by the idea of "One Writing for One World" which could be read, just like  $1 + 2 = 3$ , in all languages of the world, and which could also expose illogical falsehoods, like  $1 + 2 = 4$ . He called it World Writing but realizing that this is understood in English only, he changed to an international scientific name in Greek roots Semantography (from semanticos, significant meaning, and graphein, to write). However, this word proved a real tongue twister. It has been misquoted in books and journals as Semantology, Semagrophy, etc. In some bibliographies Bliss does not even appear as the author. Instead another man is named, though he wrote only an article on Bliss' Semantography.

Moreover, since the time that Bliss proved for the first time that less than 100 symbol elements are sufficient for communication across all languages, others came forth (and more will come forth in the future) with new proposals for new semantographies. Bliss' friends therefore advocate a new word which would make Bliss' work distinct from later schemes. The new word is Blissymbolics which covers his symbols, and his symbolic logic and semantics. His friends say:

"Today blind mankind writes in 'Braille'.  
A day will come when seeing and thinking  
mankind will write and think in 'Bliss'."

May their vision come true, the sooner the better.

Pittsburgh 1963  
Pa. U.S.A.

Oliver L. Reiser  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Pittsburgh."

Now follows the first chapter SYMBOLISM AND COMMUNICATION from Prof. Reiser's original paper. But as this text is mostly addressed to the scholar, it need not be repeated here.

The second chapter of Prof. Reiser's original paper is titled SYMBOLISM FOR WORLD UNDERSTANDING, and again this chapter is written for the scholar, and need not be repeated here. However, Professor Reiser may write an abridged version of both chapters and these will then be included here. The following third chapter BLISSYMBOLICS (SEMANTOGRAPHY) is now reprinted in full, but as said before, this chapter will be heavily abridged for the proposed booklet.

### B L I S S Y M B O L I C S ( S E M A N T O G R A P H Y )

This is about as far as my own speculations had gone when - to my surprise and delight - I received a communication from an investigator in Australia which gave a measure of validity to these fugitive speculations. It turned out that an industrial chemist - Mr. C.K. Bliss of Sydney, Australia - had already realized the ambition of the great mathematician Leibniz. As already indicated, the aim of Leibniz was the production of a symbolism that would provide a universal communication system, and a simple symbolic logic and semantics. Now Bliss claims to have accomplished that: the creation of "One logical Writing for One logical World." This new language design comes with the high praise of Bertrand Russell, and other scholars, suggesting that we do well to study thoroughly Bliss' creation.

In explaining his project, Bliss informs me that he was inspired by my words in THE WORLD SENSORIUM?, to the effect that

"The central difficulty with Scientific Humanism has been that it has tried to put an immensely simple message into words, whereas such a message can only be written into a form of a universal picture language.

The job is to find a layout, a picture basis, so simple and so huge that it is usable by anyone who has mastered the movies or can punch a radio panel."

My claim was taken literally by Bliss. Examples of his system and his symbols are shown in the following pages.

It is my opinion that Bliss's system has great virtues. Among its advantages is the fact that it offers a new kind of universal literacy to the three quarters of the world's population who are illiterate. Blissymbolics is at its simplest level a picture writing (as Leibniz wanted it to be), and primitive people in all continents could quickly master and use these pictorial symbols.

In Asia and Africa hundreds of different languages are spoken. Even adjacent villages may have different languages. Now one primer could be used for all languages.

Scientists have found in Africa that natives, engulfed by superstitions, are not able to adopt improvements in agriculture, hygiene and the like without the stimulus of literacy. Teach a man the magic of reading and writing, and he will realize that he can improve his life. Bliss' work provides, therefore, a powerful stimulus and aid to President Truman's "Point Four Program" (now the Technical Assistance Program of the United Nations). Again, the widespread use of a system of universal symbolism would eventually result in the elimination of the abuses of language whereby dictators and their ministers of propaganda periodically unbalance our democratic systems.

One of such catastrophes, the Hitler holocaust, had a direct bearing on Bliss' life and work. During the last 20 years Bliss had been interviewed by newspapermen, and their articles appeared in papers and journals. Though these articles were highly favourable to Bliss' work, he was unhappy about their references to his life which he thought to be utterly unimportant. However, the reporters explained that they are only following a procedure which had proved highly successful for 2000 years, since the great biographer Plutarch invented it. The idea is to present the work of a man by showing that his extraordinary experiences provided the innovator with the insight and the impetus for the creation of his new work. There were plenty of "extraordinary experiences" in Bliss' life. His world collapsed with tragedy to him and to millions of others.

Bliss was born in Austria and studied and lived in Vienna. In 1922 he received his university degree in chemical engineering. He worked as chemist and executive in a firm making electric and electronic equipment. As head of the patent department he had to deal with many scientific publications and patent specifications in too many languages. He thought therefore of new ways to break through the language barrier. Esperanto, Basic English, Interlingua, Interglossa, etc.etc. appeared to him to be foreign tongues in fact, - and foreign language learning has proved a failure, admitted by foreign language teachers all over the world. They can boast a few gifted pupils, but for most of us who went through years of highschool learning, all we remember is a smattering only. The mother tongue is an irresistible force, and people all over the world go on babbling from the cradle to the coffin, as their mother babbled to them when they were babies. But children and people of all languages can learn to read  $1 + 2 = 3$  without translation in any of their many mother tongues.

Bliss the chemist was also fascinated by the possibilities of chemical symbolism.  $H_2O$  means water, wasser, acqua, agua, eau, voda, etc.etc. in all languages. Moreover, the chemical symbols are logical. They show the "meaning elements" of which water is composed, and even their ratio. Another way to bridge all languages seemed to Bliss the pictorial symbols of electronics. Since 1923 he was actively engaged in the manufacture of radio valves and parts. He used extensively the pictorial symbols for a radio set, as shown in a wiring diagram.

When Hitler overran Austria, Bliss was carried off to Dachau and Buchenwald. His wife rescued him by an heroic effort. They both fled to China. In China he found that radio mechanics of various nationalities in that international city of Shanghai could read the parts of any radio diagram in any of their languages.

China and the Chinese script proved sheer fascination for Bliss. He saw an entirely different way of writing, which works beautifully in society, commerce, industry, and even in science. Whereas the symbols of the alphabet are sound symbols, the Chinese symbols represent directly ideas, and are therefore independent of any sound and any language. Bliss saw in open wonder how Chinese from different parts of China, who could not understand each other in speech, could nevertheless read the same newspaper, and the same book, and could write letters to each other. Then he came across the books of Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain, late of Tokyo University, who prophesied<sup>B</sup>

"Ideographic writing will surely achieve the final victory over phonetic writing."

And he proved it with the symbols of mathematics, chemistry, physics etc.etc.

This prophecy is ridiculed by Western linguists. But they never tried to climb what Lin Yu Tang called "the second Great Wall of China" - its ideographic script. Bliss followed the few Western scholars who climbed the wall, and he saw what they have seen and described: a wonderland of communication where people of different languages could read the same books, could read even very old books in very old languages long forgotten. He began to understand why the Chinese people became the largest nation on earth, uniting different races and languages. He began to understand why China developed what is probably the oldest culture on earth, with great advances in the humanities and sciences. He began to understand why foreign tribes who invaded China became Chinese in the end, in contrast to Europe where the invader imposed his language and culture on the conquered people. The main factor was the unifying Chinese script, which even the invading people learned to read in their own languages. This Chinese script was the main spiritual and political factor which unified the various races, which enabled wise and inventive men of those races to study, share, and contribute to the united advances in philosophy, science, and technology. As said before, Bliss saw a wonderland when he climbed that second Great Wall of China. And he saw there an even greater wonder, as will be told later.

He began to study the ancient writings of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hebrew, and the others. He soon discovered a falsehood believed by most Western people, namely that ancient nations began first with the backward picture writing, before advancing to the better phonetic writing. For instance, almost everyone believes that the hieroglyphic script of ancient Egypt is a picture writing. It is nothing

hieroglyphics shown on the margin

nothing of the sort. Even the oldest hieroglyphics, going back almost 5000 B.C. are a fully fledged alphabetic writing<sup>9</sup>. Look at the pictures representing the name K L E O P A T R A in hieroglyphics. Every picture represents a sound letter. For instance, the L is represented by the picture of a Lion (Labo in Egyptian) or by a Lotus flower, or by other pictures. The two letters A in the name of CleopAtrA are represented by the picture of an eagle, which picture appears there-fore twice. There are twenty different pictures for the letter A, and thirty different pictures for the letter H, etc.etc.

Why such complexities? Because, as the word hieroglyphics says, it was a sacred script known only to the priesthood. And they had no interest nor intention in letting the lay people learn of their sacred secrets. On the contrary, they made it deliberately incomprehensible. Sometimes they added a picture, but not to represent a sound, but a symbol, as for instance a feather to mean truth. Sometimes they added pictures to differentiate between different meanings of the same word. For instance, ab meant dancing, but also thirst. And sometimes they added pictures as a pun, just as we do for fun in rebus riddles where for instance the picture of two arms do not mean limbs, but weapons (arms). No wonder that only priests could know what all those complexities could mean.

In contrast, Chinese script began as a picto-ideography and it is still one, though it too has been made complex and cumbersome by Chinese scholars who invented complex symbols for complex meanings. This is a pasttime of the scholars of all times, including our modern time in which scholars take a devilish delight in using or inventing long and complex words, in order to make their speech and writing as unintelligible as possible to helpless lay people, to hapless students, and even to highbrows and colleagues of the other faculties.

That a picto-ideography could achieve more than a phonetic writing is difficult to believe for Western people. Only a genius like Leibniz could foresee its great possibilities for a modern world. In order to understand the tremendous significance in Leibniz' own prophecy (as quoted later on) let us realize that survival of our human society depends to a large extent whether or not the peoples of the world will go on believing the lies of demagogues, dictators and despots. Leibniz could not dream of modern pulp papers, radio and TV which enable the wordmongers to inject millions of lies into millions of minds. And lies can be told and printed in any language, even in any artificial language like Esperanto. But lies cannot be told in the symbols of mathematics, and Leibniz the mathematician was well aware of this. Today, children have learned to laugh at a lie like  $2 + 2 = 5$ . But they cry bitterly about the lies which hurt them deeply: "You talk too much! You gaggle like a goose! You are an ass! Your tears are crocodile's tears! You are stupid! You are insincere! You are a failure! You are bad, very bad! You will never do good!" and so on, in millions of homes, causing oceans of tears, world misery without end, not only in the minds of children, but adults too, who make their lives miserable by words. But they dont argue whether  $2 + 2 = 4$  or perhaps 5? They have learned the symbols of mathematics and how to operate them. A day will come when they and their children will laugh about those hurting lies, when they will see through the falsehoods because they have learned to operate the simple symbols of Blissymbolics.

In order to realize the great possibilities of a new kind of logical symbol writing, let us study first the effects of Chinese ideographic writing, of which Hall Chamberlain prophesied that "ideographic writing will surely achieve the final victory over phonetic writing!" This victory has already been won in the sciences like mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology, etc.etc. An even greater victory has been won in every European, American, and any other country where road warning signs in alphabetical native words are taken down and replaced by pictographs. The picture of a bent arrow means CURVE in all languages.

Of course, as said before, many Western linguists (and any other ignorant) ridicule the prophecy of Hall Chamberlain. Surely, symbols cannot equal words in the great poetry of English, French, and other languages. They cannot be used for great works of great writers like Shakespeare and Schiller, Dante and Dostojevski, and the many others. But strange as it may seem, Chinese writing is superior over Western writing even in this respect. The fact<sup>18</sup> that Chinese poems are the world's finest, and here is how Professor Ernest Fenollosa explains it<sup>10</sup>

"The Chinese written language has absorbed the poetic substance of nature...and has through its very pictorial visibility been able to retain its original creative poetry with far more vigour and vividness than any phonetic tongue."

As an illustration see later in the text the Chinese symbol for lightning and sample poetry in Blissymbolics. But there are more wonders to come. A poem written say 1500 years ago in old English conveys no meaning to people of modern England. Read these lines<sup>11</sup>.

"Uren fader thic arth in heofnas, sic gehalgud thin noma;  
to cymeth thin ric, sic thin willa sue is in heofnas and in eartho..."

It is the most venerable poetry of the Lord's Prayer, as written 1200 years ago in England. How it was pronounced, no one knows. Or let us look at Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" written not more than about 500 years ago. It is almost unintelligible to us, and we can enjoy it only when translated into modern English. Or let us look at Shakespeare's English, written only about 350 years ago. It contains many passages, even in the most modern, most edited editions, which baffle everyone, except the teachers of English who - alas - haggle among themselves about their different interpretations. How all this compares with poetry and literature in Chinese writing is summed up by the scholar Robert Wilhelm<sup>12</sup>

"The distinctive character of Chinese literature is probably one reason why Chinese tradition has proved more enduring than the Roman. The alphabetical script employed in Europe reproduces only a pronunciation of the language. When the pronunciation alters and the spoken language becomes incomprehensible, the whole literature loses its meaning. So it comes about that those contributions to literature belonging to early linguistic stages are consigned to the realms of antiquity and cease to count as a live factor in civilisation..."

In Germany, for instance, Gothic material has now practically vanished from current literature, which comprises the production of a couple of centuries at most. In China, Confucius and Mencius still survive in the consciousness of civilisation."

Bliss soaked all this up in ever growing enthusiasm. He had long talks in Shanghai with European and Chinese sinologists (students of Chinese culture). They made an amazing assertion. They said that

A European nation would have been a reality centuries ago, if Europe had an ideographic writing, if Basques and Bulgarians, Frenchmen and Finns, Greek and Germans, Scotsmen and Spaniards etc.etc. had one common bond of communication in being able to read the same book and the same paper, and correspond with each other - though speaking many different languages.

The great European writers would have written their immortal works in the universal European writing, and thus their works could be enjoyed by all the peoples of Europe. This would be the basis of a common heritage, a common culture, a common feeling of being one great community, and this would in time lead to political unity, to one European nation.

This is no idle dream. It happened in China, and it formed the largest nation on earth where the ideographic script united culturally and politically over 600 million of racially different people. Through the centuries, the word patterns of Chinese symbols have influenced the various languages of China so much that they are now as similar as different dialects.

Unfortunately, the Chinese symbols do not contain a simple logic and semantics. Hence, communist word mongers had no difficulty to use them for their propaganda lies. They have no difficulty to write of "American imperialism", "British hypocrisy", or "China's peaceful expansionism." But such fallacious statements cannot be written down in the logical symbols of Blissymbolics. Any youngster trained in them could see through the fraud (as will be shown later on).

When Bliss started work, he was ignorant of Leibniz' speculations on a logical simple symbolism. He was also ignorant of the fact that Western linguists and logicians had declared Leibniz' speculations impossible to realize. And so he followed literally Gray's words

"Where Ignorance is Bliss  
'tis folly to be wise."

This is not the first time that unorthodox innovators have confounded the experts. Bliss began with a serious study of Chinese characters (as they are called). He was soon dismayed (but not discouraged) by the complexity of many Chinese symbols. And yet - only about 1500 symbols are sufficient to read the papers, to write or type letters on a typewriter (not much larger than an ordinary one) on which, however, one stroke types one whole word. He saw in wonder how Chinese write in flowing cursive lines quicker than many of us write long alphabetical words.

And then he saw something which he had not seen anywhere in the world: street libraries for children. Children from 3 years of age would bring their penny to an old Chinese, and would sit around him reading children's tales. This convinced Bliss that even the complex characters are easy to learn because they are pictorial basically. He was soon able to take them in at a glance in much the same way as we take in at a glance a whole word, or a complex musical chord.

His Western friends ridiculed his enthusiasm about the 1500 symbols, which they compared with the simplicity of the 26 letters of the alphabet. Bliss had difficulty to convince them that they are suffering under a fallacious delusion. The 26 letters are nothing more than elementary sound symbols for the composition of words. Similarly, the few straight and curved strokes of Chinese script are elementary line symbols, also for the composition of words. In short, every word is a compound symbol composed of Latin letters or Chinese strokes. But whereas in Chinese symbols many meanings are pictorial and hence recognizable and easy to learn, the meaning of words written with the alphabet have to be learned the hard way. Latin letters are not pictorial. This difference is hard to grasp for Western people, simply because we have grown up with the familiarity of the written and printed words in Latin letters, which appear to us self-explanatory. In order to realize that this is a delusion only, let us make a test.

Let us for instance compose with Latin letters some words of which we assume that we have never heard of them before. These words are Pictography, Semantography, and Cybernetics. If we know English, and are told that these are English words we may at least guess how to pronounce them properly (though we may never be sure, considering the irregularities of English pronunciation). But we wouldn't know what these complex letter symbols mean. It would be even worse with a foreign language, which too uses Latin letters for the composition of word symbols as for instance Bilderschrift, Bedeutungsschrift, and Elektrosteuertechnik. Here we are even unable to guess the proper pronunciation, though these words are composed with the same 26 sound symbols as English. And of course we wouldn't have the slightest idea what these complex letter symbols really mean - unless someone tells us that Bilderschrift means Pictography, Bedeutungsschrift means Semantography and Elektrosteuertechnik means Cybernetics in the German language.

But we are still as dumbfounded as before - unless someone explains to us in simple words that Pictography means a writing in which pictorial symbols are used, that Semantography is a writing in which semantics is used, and that Cybernetics means the science which deals with the operations of electronic computers and servo-mechanisms. Again we would feel ignorant, and would have to ask our man for more explanations. We may guess that pictorial means picture, but what does semantics mean, what does electronic mean, and computer, and servo-mechanism?????

In short, every word of every language written in Latin letters, or Greek letters, or Cyrillic (Russian), Hebrew, Sanscrit (Hindu), Arabic, or in any other alphabetical letters - every word so written is a complex letter symbol, the meaning of which has to be learned and memorized the hard way in years of study and use. Peasants of Europe know about 3000 words (that means 3000 letter symbols) which are enough for them to make themselves understood among themselves. Ordinary people know about 8000 words, intellectuals about 15,000 to 20,000 words, scholars about 50,000 to 100,000 words, that is, letter symbols.

Where then is the simplicity of the 26 Latin letters which give no indication as to what the words could possibly mean? There are a few words like splash which indicate the sound made by throwing something into water, but does the letter symbol w-a-t-e-r indicate a liquid? It does not.

It is different in Chinese symbols, and this explains why Chinese children learn them so quickly (provided their father can afford to let them learn, instead of let them work). Water in Chinese symbols is indicated in the simplest form by three little strokes which look like three drops of water. Mouth looks like a mouth (though drawn a bit squarely in brush strokes). Add a few horizontal lines, which look like printed lines in a book, and you have the symbol for word. Add the symbol for lightning, and you have the combination for electric word which means a telegram. But the Chinese symbols tell children much more than the Greek combination of tele(far) and gram(write). Note: all these characters will be shown on the margin

The symbol for lightning is a delightful combination of basic meanings and pictures. From the roof of the world, drops of rain are falling on the field below which is divided into 4 plots. And the lightning strikes in one bold stroke from the sky to the earth below. No wonder that children learn these symbols quickly. No wonder that Chinese poems are more vivid than European poems. When a poet writes the word lightning in his poem on the awesome beauty of a thunderstorm, it has some effect. But the Chinese symbol for lightning used in a poem is more effectful. In fact, it is almost a poem in itself, as Prof. Fenollosa explained before.

Bliss was simply fascinated by such pictorial combinations of basic meanings. However he was soon disappointed by the illogical combination of other symbols. This goes back to the many attempts throughout the centuries to establish a phonetic writing in China. The Japanese too have made similar attempts. They have adopted the Chinese symbols many centuries ago, but later introduced two phonetic syllable writings Katakana and Hiragana. But, Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain explained, all those attempts to abandon the Chinese ideographs have failed dismally. Ideographic writing comes out victorious in competition with phonetic writing. Today, Katakana is used in Japan mostly for grammatical inflections. The main meanings are expressed in about 1500 Chinese symbols. Only one small newspaper is printed wholly in Katakana. All other papers and books use the Chinese symbols extensively.

The attempts to introduce sounds in the Chinese written language had a curious, illogical and unhappy result. Chinese scholars wanted to give some indication how new and unfamiliar words should be pronounced. Take the meaning of overseas. It is symbolized with the three drops of water. To this is added the symbol for sheep. Why sheep? Because every Chinese knows the word for sheep "yan" in Shanghai dialect. And "yan" is therefore the pronunciation for the meaning of overseas. However, after some time you don't see the sheep in the combination. You grasp with a glance all the strokes and immediately the meaning of overseas comes to your mind. When Bliss walked through the streets and looked at the now familiar signs on shops or newspaper headlines, he did not read them in Shanghai dialect. He read them in English, or often in German. Hence, looking at the combination of water and sheep, immediately the word overseas, or Uebersee came into his mind, not yan, not water, and not sheep.

There is another catastrophic peculiarity of Chinese speech which has added to the difficulties which Bliss faced. Chinese words are monosyllabic, that is they consist of one syllable only, like Kung-Fu-Tse, meaning Kung Reverend Master, Confucius. Hence Mr. Wang, Mr. Wu, Mr. Whe, Mr. Li, Mr. Lin, etc. all single syllable names. But when counting all possible vocal combinations of single syllables like ya, ye, yi, yo, yu, yan, yang, yeng, ying, yong, yoong, etc.etc. there are all in all not more than about 400 possible syllables available to express all words. Hence, yan does not only mean sheep and overseas. It has other meanings too, just as in English there are many monosyllabic words which have a number of meanings like band, bank, bark, board, etc. A "band" may mean a ribbon, an orchestra, or a gang. The meaning must be grasped by the other words in the sentence, as a "board of directors" cannot mean a "board of plywood".

Similarly, when the Chinese say "yan ko" which means overseas commercial company, they know that it cannot mean sheep commercial company. Another catastrophic way to overcome these defects is to add another word which has the same meaning, a synonym. For instance "pi" means in Shanghai dialect a pig. But "pi" has many other meanings too. Hence, a synonym is added, like "pi-se", which means literally pig-swine (often used as an invective). This is why Chinese people say in English "I go look-see!" They are afraid that "look" (loo) may have other meanings too. Hence, they add the synonym "see" to make the meaning certain. But this adds only to the symbol confusion in Chinese, and makes all more complex.



All these complexities and perplexities did not daunt nor deter Bliss. He saw the main advantage: that symbols can be read and understood in all languages. And there was something else to give him courage. He remembered that pictorial symbols have already won out against Latin letters in Europe, in America and in any other country where road warning signs are shown in pictorial symbols, instead of in the native languages, which foreign motorists simply don't understand.

And there was something else, a promise much greater than symbols only. Bliss is no fool to think that we can abolish ordinary writing and printing in ordinary languages. Leibniz too said three hundred years ago, that the new symbols should be used only as an auxiliary writing where it is needed, where the language barrier must be bridged - without treacherous translations. But Bliss went further. He realized that English is the language with the simplest grammar. The same word can be used as a noun, a verb, an adjective, etc. without the adornment of special front and back syllables (prefixes and suffixes) which make German such a difficult language to learn. He found that Chinese words are interchangeable as English words are. And English words and word order fitted his symbol sequences nicely. He thinks that his symbols could form a bridge of learning from all other languages to English which is already a world language and destined to become the international language of mankind.

Bliss dreams of a day when pictorial magazines like LIFE INTERNATIONAL and others would carry beneath the caption in English a subcaption in his pictorial symbols. People all over the world like to look at pictures in picture magazines. They would be able to read the subcaption in their own language, and at the same time they would pick up the corresponding words in English. And English is far superior than Esperanto. It is already the mother tongue of hundreds of millions of people. It is studied by hundreds of millions of students in all countries, even in Russia. It is the language of communication not only in North America, Great Britain, and Australia, but also in Asia and Africa, where government officials, scholars and businessmen of different countries and provinces often cannot converse in their different native tongues. They use English as their common tongue of communication.

There is only one great difficulty, and Bliss thinks that his symbols can overcome it. This is the difficulty which foreigners are facing when they come across idiomatic expressions in English which look like idiotic gibberish to them. Take for instance the verb to put. The meaning is easily translatable in other languages. But our foreign students are utterly baffled when they learn that to put down means to write down, to put up a man, means to provide him with a room for a night, to put up with a man means to suffer his presence, and many more thousands of similar nonsensical expressions in English. Our foreigners get soon fed up with English, find it difficult to learn, utterly illogical and even nonsensical. What they do not realize is, that their own language contains thousands of similar idiomatic and idiotic expressions.

Here Blissymbols could make all the difference as an intermedium for the learning of English. When trying to write an idiomatic expression in pictorial symbols, the nonsense becomes visible. Hence the learner will refrain to learn them, and write and use instead the proper meanings which make sense in any language: to write down, instead of to put down, to provide nightquarters instead of to put up, to suffer instead of to put up with, and so on. These sentences are easily translatable in other languages. Once Blissymbolics is taught in schools, idiomatic expressions will be exposed and avoided when conversing or corresponding with foreigners in English. Thus through Blissymbolics English could be made more logical, less irregular, not only in grammar, but also in pronunciation, which too is a great hindrance for English to become the international language of mankind.

End of Prof. Reiser's Introduction.

The following chapters would show the symbols for human activities in road, rail, ship and plane transport. Then symbols for public places, for commerce and commercial correspondence, for international custom and other forms, for an international passport, then for industry and directions on packages, manufactured goods, etc. etc. then for the various sciences, and for education in logic and semantics. Lastly sample translations will be shown of the Bible, and of poetry, and how the symbols can be used in the propagation of a universal ethics which would transcend languages, religions and cultures, as Professor Reiser visualizes it.