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Reading the Psalms of 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 Cross-textually and Inter-textually

ARCHIE CHI CHUNG LEE

Abstract

This paper intends to look at the inter-textuality and cross-textuality of 1 Chronicles 16 and the Psalter in the context of the revolutionary movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1853–1864) in Qing China (1644–1911), when historical tradition was adopted for religious and political foundation of the new “Heavenly Capital” which was set up by Hong Xiuquan. The thesis to be underlined is that the employment of historical recitation from different sources of the past, whether they are in written form or from common liturgical usage or from popular oral circulation, are often reinterpreted in a new context whose function is to illustrate the author’s intention to legitimize and inaugurate his/her project at present. The case of the adaptation of Hong’s appropriation of both Chinese historical narrative and biblical material will help us read 1 Chronicles 16 as an anchor text for the post-exilic community engaging with the restoration of the cult in Jerusalem. There is no doubt that contextualization involves the conscious effort of re-appropriation and re-interpretation. The insertion of Psalms 105, 96 and 106 into 1 Chronicles 16 does not only represent a work of redaction but a new creation of the Chronicler whose production can be taken as an authorial work embedded with a conscious purpose.

I. INTRODUCTION

The First Book of Chronicles 16 incorporates in its literary arrangement Psalms 105:1–15; 96:1–13 and 106:1, 47–48. The three Psalms are taken from the “Fourth Book” of the Psalter (90–106). It is of interest to scholars that there are implications for both the canonical formation of the Psalms and the new function of the Psalter for 1 and 2 Chronicles. The latter is our major concern in this paper. While Psalms 105 and 106 are regarded as “historical psalms” and 96 is usually understood as a psalm of praise related to Enthronement Festival (Mowinckel)¹ or Zion Festival (Kraus),² it is intriguing to find their assigned roles in the present context of the inaugural service of bringing the Ark to the tabernacle in Jerusalem and the cultic establishment founded by David (1 Chron. 16:1–7). This paper intends to study the inter-textuality of 1 Chronicles 16 with the Psalter and cross-textuality³ of the two biblical passages in the context of the revolutionary movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (*Taiping tianguo* 太平天國, 1853–1864) in Qing China (1644–1911). In the cross-textual reading, attention will be paid to the adaptation of historical traditions for religious and political foundation in both the case of David’s inauguration of the House of God at Jerusalem and that of Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全, the Heavenly King (*Tian Wang* 天王), who set up the new “Heavenly

¹ Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, foreword by James L. Crenshaw (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2004).

² Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament* (Richmond: John Knox, 1966).

³ There is no need to repeat the two approaches adopted in the studies of the biblical text as much has been written on them. For inter-textual interpretation and the Bible, see Danna Nolan Fewell, ed., *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) and Richard B. Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy A. Huizenga, eds., *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008). For reference to cross-textual reading, readers are advised to consult the following publications of Archie C. C. Lee, “Cross-Textual Hermeneutics in Asia,” in *Asian Theology on the Way, Christianity, Culture and Context*, ed. Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar (London: SPCK, 2012), 31–38; “Cross-Textual Biblical Studies in Multi-scriptural Contexts,” in *Transforming Graduate Biblical Education: Ethos and Discipline*, eds. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Kent Harold Richards (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 35–45; and “Cross-textual Hermeneutics and Identity in Multi-textual Asia,” in *Christian Theology in Asia: Emerging Forms and Themes*, ed. Sebastian Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 179–204.

Capital” for the Taiping Kingdom in Nanjing 南京. Hong re-interpreted Chinese history in his attempt to construct an ideological basis for the legitimization of the Kingdom’s existence and the centrality of Nanjing, the “Little Paradise,” the New Jerusalem on earth, which was claimed to be the physical presence of Shangdi’s⁴ chosen capital on earth in parallel with the “Great Paradise” in heaven.

Our thesis is that the employment of historical recitation from different sources of the past, whether they are in written form or from common liturgical usage or from popular oral circulation, are often re-interpreted in a new context with the purpose to illustrate the author’s intention to legitimize and inaugurate his/her project for the present. The case of Hong’s appropriation of both Chinese historical narrative and biblical material will help us read 1 Chronicles 16 as one of the texts for the post-exilic community engaging with the restoration of the cult in Jerusalem. The community finds justification and empowerment from the anachronistic reading of the present back to the authority of David, the founder of the cult of Jerusalem and the acclaimed patron of the Psalter. There is no doubt that contextualization involves the conscious effort of re-appropriation and re-interpretation. The insertion of Psalms 105, 96 and 106 into 1 Chronicles 16 does not only represent a work of redaction but a new creation of the Chronicler⁵ whose production can be taken as an authorial work embedded with a conscious purpose. The selection of Psalms 105:1–15 on Abraham the Patriarch as God’s chosen prophet with God’s eternal covenant underlines the author’s aspiration to describe the landless people of Israel in the Exile anticipating the inheritance of the land promised to Abraham. Sara Japhet has shown clearly that the Chronicler connect God’s covenant to Abraham with the post-exilic community.⁶ The Chronicler’s change of

⁴ *Shangdi* 上帝 is originally a Chinese term for the ancient deity in China. It was adopted by the Protestant missionaries for the rendering of the biblical God. It was also used by the Jesuits in China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries before the Vatican’s ban of the term in favor of “*Tianchu* 天主” (The Lord of Heaven). See discussion of Archie C. C. Lee, “Naming God in Asia: Cross-Textual Reading in Multi-Cultural Context,” *Quest: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Asian Christian Scholars* 3 (2004): 21–42 and “God’s Asian Names: Rendering the Biblical God in Chinese,” a web publication on *SBL Forum*, November 2005, <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=456>.

⁵ The term Chronicler is used to refer to the author-editor of the two books of Chronicles. It is assumed that a school or group of people is involved and therefore they will be referred to by plural pronoun in this article.

⁶ Sara Japhet, “Conquest and Settlement in Chronicles,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 205–218.

the original “Abraham” in Psalms 105:6 into “Israel” in their incorporated piece (1 Chron. 16:13) well illustrates the intention. The change from “God remembers His covenant forever” (105:8) to “you remember His covenant forever” (16:15) will not escape any reader’s eye. As such, not only the ancestor, but also the present exilic community in particular, is called to remember God’s saving deeds and promise of the land:

Remember the marvelous works that He has done,
The wonders He wrought, the judgments of His mouth,
O! You seed of Israel, His servant
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones.

Remember His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded to a thousand generations.
(16:12–13, 15)⁷

We will follow the theoretical framework of inter-textual reading between 1 Chronicles 16 and its source text of the Psalms; and contextual reading of the former with a Chinese text from Hong’s Bible⁸ at the time of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The inter-textual interpretation will help us see the editorial-authorial effort of the Chronicler while the exercise in cross-textual reading opens up a wide horizon in understanding the political and religious construction of historical recitation in the Second Temple community in the composition of the Chronicles in light of the Taiping Kingdom.

II. THE JERUSALEM ON EARTH IN HONG XIUQUAN’S APPROPRIATION

In the Taiping writings, the Bible was the historical tradition used to re-read Chinese history for the purpose of restoring the Chinese wor-

⁷ Unless otherwise specified, the rendering is the author’s.

⁸ Hong’s Bible refers to the Chinese version of the Bible presumably translated by Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (郭實獵, 1803–1851). For a focused study of Hong and his Bible, see the present author’s work in “The Bible in China: Religion of God’s Chinese Son,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 29 (2008): 21–38.

ship of Shangdi in ancient times. Hong Xiuquan, the acclaimed leader who conquered and occupied the southern provinces of China from the declining Qing Dynasty, advocated that Shangdi in ancient China is the same God worshipped by the people of Israel in the Bible. Chinese classics are often cited to support this claim in writings such as *The Book on the Principles of Heavenly Matters* (*Tianqing daoli shu* 天情道理書):

With regard to the world of ancients, there was only the true Way, and everyone, whether sovereign, minister, scholar or commoner, worshipped the August Shangdi. . . . The old records still exist, clear and evident, and can be examined.⁹

Hong himself was believed to be commissioned by God as God's second son to bring the Chinese back to the restored cult of Shangdi.

Hong inserted 82 annotations to the Bible to bring the biblical text in line with his theological position, especially on the understanding of the humanity of Jesus and the modified doctrine of the Trinity,¹⁰ and to justify his mission to fight against the devil embodied in Chinese idolatry and in the barbarous Qing Empire. He was convinced that God had commissioned him and his Society of Shangdi Worshipers to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.¹¹ One clear example of his altering of the biblical text is found in 1 Corinthians 15:50 where the Chinese version Hong used following the original to say that "Please listen to my word, brothers, bone and flesh cannot inherit God's Kingdom and what is mortal cannot possess immortality" (骨肉不能接嗣神國，壞者不可獲無壞之業也). Hong replaced the word "bone" with "soul" (魂肉俱能接嗣神國) and change the next sentence to mean "both (soul and flesh) would

⁹ Franz Michael, ed., *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents*, vol. 2 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), 370.

¹⁰ Jonathan Spence sums up the 70 commentaries in the New Testament in "the dual themes of family relationships and the uniqueness of God as Father" and one emphasis of Hong that "Jesus cannot be God, is not God, just as he Hong is not God, can never be, and will never claim to be." Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 291.

¹¹ See the author's previous studies on the Taiping Bible: "Depiction of the Devil and the Education of Chinese Children: The Bible in the Taiping Trimetrical Classic," in *Text, Images, and Otherness in Children's Bibles: What is in the Picture?* eds. Caroline Vander Stichele and Hugh S. Pyper (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 173–192; "Reading Iconoclastic Stipulations in Numbers 33:50–56 from the Pluralistic Religious Context of China," *Leviticus and Numbers: Text @ Context*, eds. Athalya Brenner and Archie Lee (Minnneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 213–226.

gain inheritance of true blessing” (兩者俱可獲真福之業也). On the margin of this particular verse, Hong inserted one of the longest annotations. He claims that for the life of a human, the soul comes first followed by the physical body. The soul comes from the “Soul Father” which later enters the mother’s womb to take on the physical form and a physical body. While the flesh is born of the human father the soul is from the “Soul Father.”¹² With this understanding of the dual source of human beings in terms of the spiritual and physical, Hong further develops the ideology of the Great Paradise (*Da tiantang* 大天堂) of the Divine Kingdom (*Shenguo* 神國) in heaven, which is said to be in heaven above,¹³ and the Little Paradise (*Xiao tiantang* 小天堂) on earth, which is also the Divine Kingdom and is represented by Hong’s Heavenly Dynasty. Hong then addresses the two different functions of the twofold paradise in terms of the dual source of humans:

The Great Paradise above is where the soul returns in glory—the Paradise of Shangdi’s blessings. The Little Paradise is where the physical body returns in glory—the Paradise of Shangdi’s splendors.¹⁴

This very idea may have come from the first Chinese Protestant preacher, Liang Fa, whose book entitled “Good Words to Admonish the World” was distributed to Hong in 1836 and it has had a great impact on Hong in his understanding of Protestantism. In the book of Liang there is a paragraph on the two meanings of “the Kingdom of Heaven”:

The term “Heavenly Kingdom” has two interpretations. One to describe the blessing of eternal happiness in Paradise, which would be enjoyed by the souls of the righteous people after their physical bodies passed away; the other refers to the earthly congregations of be-

¹² Referred to by Spence, *God’s Chinese Son*, 293. For a full translation of the paragraph, see Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 232.

¹³ The conception of “thirty-three heaven” has its origin in both Daoism and Buddhism. The writings of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom reveal the conglomeration of different religious traditions into its formulation.

¹⁴ A modified rendering based on the translation in Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 232.

lievers in Jesus when they assemble to worship the divine Shangdi in heaven.¹⁵

Hong found in Acts 15 a quoted prophecy for his claim of rebuilding the fallen temple. It is a text on the Jerusalem Council when James affirmed Simon's talk about God's work among the Gentiles and objected to the position of requiring the Gentiles to circumcise in verses 13 to 19:

My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago.

Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God. (NRSV)

Hong added an annotation to strengthen Shangdi's commission of him to rebuild the temple in Nanjing:

Now God and Christ have come down into the world to rebuild God's tabernacle in the Heavenly Capital [*Tianjing* 天京] and the Heavenly Dynasty [*Tianchao* 天朝]. All throughout the realm are united in one. Everyone seeks the Supreme Lord. Respect this.¹⁶

The new capital of the Heavenly Kingdom in Nanjing, being the Little Paradise on earth, is the New Jerusalem. Hong explained this in the annotation on John's vision of the new heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:

¹⁵ 「天國二字，有兩樣解法。一樣指天堂永樂之福，係善人肉身死後，其靈魂享受之真福也。一樣指地上凡敬信救世主耶穌的眾人，聚集拜神天上帝之公會也。」 Liang Fa 梁發, *Good Words to Admonish the World* (*Guanshi liangyan* 勸世良言), in George Hunter McNeur, *China's First Preacher, Liang A-fa, 1789–1855* (Shanghai: Kwang Hsueh Publishing House, Oxford University Press, China Agency, 1934). For a recent study of Liang and his impact on Hong, see Kim Sukjoo, "Liang Fa's Quanshi liangyan and Its Impact on the Taiping Movement," (Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 2011).

¹⁶ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 231.

On earth, as in heaven, that which John saw was the Great Paradise above. It is the same in heaven and on earth. The New Jerusalem, the Heavenly Capital [*Tianjing*], is where God and Christ descended into the world, bringing both myself and the Young Monarch¹⁷ to be the sovereigns, establishing the Paradise of the Heavenly Dynasty. Shangdi's Paradise now exists among humans. It is fulfilled. Respect this.¹⁸

Since the New Jerusalem in Nanjing should have the presence of Shangdi and Jesus Christ in order to demonstrate the splendors and divine status, Hong built two temples for them.

Now the Elder Brother has come. The Heavenly Dynasty has the Temple of the Heavenly Father, Shangdi, the True God; it also has the Elder Brother Christ's Temple, wherein are already inscribed the names of Shangdi and Christ. The New Jerusalem sent down from heaven by Shangdi the Heavenly Father is our present Heavenly Capital [*Tianjing*]. It is fulfilled. Respect this.¹⁹

Hong's advocacy for the establishment of the Little Heaven on earth requires a new recitation of the past, incorporating the belief and restored worship of Shangdi into the reconstructed ideology based on the Chinese historical material and that of the Bible. Biblical traditions are co-opted to integrate into the Chinese historical accounts in the various writings of the Taipings. For the first time in public recitation of the past in China, the Taipings put the theme of creation from Genesis at the very beginning of Chinese historical understanding. Human history has also been divided in accordance with the biblical view of divine action in human history. Shangdi was angry for four times because of humanity's perversion and deception by the Devil and, for four times in human history, Shangdi has descended to punish the wicked and save the righteous. The fourfold great anger of Shangdi begins with Noah's flood to destroy humanity, followed by the redemption of Israel from the devilish Pharaoh in Exodus. The third anger was manifested in the incarnation of Jesus. The pretext for the coming of Jesus involves the perversion of the Chinese under the former emperors. China has been included in the retelling of the salvation story of Jesus.

¹⁷ Referring to Hong's son.

¹⁸ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 237.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

But since the emergence of Daoism in the Qin [dynasty] and the reception of Buddhism in the Han times, the delusion of humans by the demons has increased by the day, and all humans have forgotten the grace and virtue of the Heavenly Father. The Heavenly Father's merits were falsely recognized as the merits of the demons. Therefore, the Heavenly Father, observing this from above, saw that the people of the mortal world followed the demons and were being transformed into demons; strange and peculiar, they were no longer humans. The Heavenly Father once again became greatly angered; yet if he were to annihilate them completely, he could not bear it in his heart; if he were to tolerate them, it would not be consonant with righteousness. At that time, the elder son of the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Elder Brother, Jesus, shouldered the great burden and willingly offered to sacrifice his life to redeem the sins of the humans of the world. The Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, sincere in his pity for the world and profound in his love for humanity, spared not his eldest son, but sent him down to be born in Judea, and to redeem our sins in order to propagate the true Way.²⁰

Hong sees the Fall of China which goes back to the time when the Chinese adopted Buddhism and further their perversion in Daoism.²¹ The previous dynasties from Qin, Han and Song till today, all went the evil ways and, from Emperor Hui of Song six hundred years ago, Shangdi's name and power were usurped and no one has any knowledge of the True Shangdi in Heaven. Hong's commission is, therefore, seen in restoring the sovereignty of Shangdi and his target is clearly and concretely to overthrow the present Manchurian regime of Qing.²²

²⁰ *The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Matters*, in Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 371–372.

²¹ *The Taiping Imperial Declaration (Taiping zhaoshu 太平詔書)*, in Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 38–39. In some cases the Fall goes back further to earlier period:

Why is it that in the present day there are so few who know and acknowledge the Great Shangdi's favor and grace, and from where does the misfortune originate? On examining China's historical records, we find that from the time of Pangu down to the Three Dynasties both sovereigns and subjects together honored and worshipped the Great God. Things began to grow worse during the time of Shao-hao (少昊), when the Jiuli (九黎) first believed in corrupt demons and extended the mischief to the Sanmia (三苗), who imitated it and carried it further.

Taken from "An Exhortation on the Origin and Virtue for the Awakening of the Age," in *The Taiping Imperial Declaration* and this translation with some modification is from Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 43–44.

²² See the poetic formulation of the story in the Taiping Trimetrical Classics. Archie C. C. Lee, "Depiction of the Devil and the Education of Chinese Children: The Bible in

The story of Jesus continues directly with China in describing the great wickedness of the Manchurians, the devilish barbarians, who seized and occupied China.

They induced humanity to believe in demons even more profoundly. The devilish demons conducted strange practices to an even greater extreme; they deceived, seduced, and ensnared the souls of humans under heaven, causing them to sink into hell where they could not turn to heaven.²³

The commission of Hong demonstrated Shangdi's fourth great anger and was seen as the great evidence of Shangdi's great powers in showing mercy and saving humanity. Hong was sent from Heaven to become "the true Taiping Sovereign of the ten thousand nations of the world, and to save the people of the world."²⁴

The divine commission of Hong, to descend from Heaven to China to drive out Satan the Devil and to eliminate all evils, forms the core and climax in the Taiping historical recitation. The focus is of course placed on the contemporary era of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom; but the past is re-appropriated to account for the contextual reality of the present. The same recitation is repeatedly published in both prose and poetic forms.²⁵ The audience is invited to identify with the regime and to offer allegiance to its leader. Hong blends together the two texts into a new poetical production affirming the divine intervention in choosing

the Taiping Trimetrical Classic," in *Text, Images, and Otherness in Children's Bibles: What is in the Picture?* eds. Caroline Vander Stichele and Hugh S. Pyper (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 173–192.

²³ *The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Matters*, in Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 371–372.

²⁴ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 373.

²⁵ It is shorter in poetic version: "A Composition on Awakening of the Age" (*Xingshi wen* 醒世文):

前因世人受妖惑，不拜真神拜邪神。天父一次發大怒，欲滅世間瞞天人。四十日夜降大雨，洪水橫流沒凡塵。擲亞一家拜上帝，仰賴天恩幸獨存。又有麥西郭妖狂，嫉妒色列苦害侵。天父二次發大怒，救出色列海水分。皆因色列修煉好，故蒙天父大恩憐。世人俱被妖迷蒙，邪魔漸次惑人靈。天父恩德均忘盡，欲滅凡間獲罪人。天兄耶穌來懇奏，大作擔當下凡塵。捐命代贖世人罪，寶血淋漓十字釘。天兄救世何等苦，死去三日復還生。天父上帝恩愛世，不惜太子受苦辛。代贖吾儕重罪孽，後命門生傳福音。迨至妖胡竊天國，以譬引譬害愈深。泥塑木偶祈保佑，專拜該殺陷沉淪。天父復又發大怒，差生真主定乾坤。賜劍賜璽真真命，親囑勿慌放膽行。永掌山河為真主，援救弟妹上天廷。

The same ideas are expressed. For English translation, see Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 688–689.

both Hong the sovereign and the city Nanjing for the sake of all nations:

Our Heavenly King, having personally received Shangdi's mandate shall eternally rule over the mountains and rivers. The righteous uprising in Jintian signaled the formation of a valiant and invincible army, and the establishment of the capital in Nanjing lays an everlasting firm foundation. The capital is called the Heavenly Capital in accordance with Heaven's mandate, and our country is called Heavenly Kingdom in consonance with God's will.²⁶

Since Hong has portrayed himself as both the kingdom-builder and cult-founder of the Heavenly Dynasty and the New Jerusalem on earth, he then changed the original text of his Bible in Genesis 14 from "The King of Salam" to "The King of Heavenly Dynasty." Thereafter, he made ways to identify himself with the ancient king and high priest in the figure of Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and Hebrews 7. He added two annotations to the two passages respectively:

The Melchizedek was none other than myself. Formerly when I was in heaven I descended into the world and made manifest these real events, as proof of my descent into the world at this time to become the sovereign. As for the things Heaven does, there must be a previous allusion to them.²⁷

This Melchizedek is none other than myself. Formerly in heaven our Old Mother bore the Elder Brother and also all those of my generation. At that time I knew the Father was going to have my Elder Brother born of Abraham's descendants. Therefore I comforted the officers and troops, and congratulated and blessed Abraham, for Abraham was a good man. The Father's sacred directive says, "The *King of Grain* (*He Wang* 禾王)²⁸ is responsible, saves the virtuous

²⁶ This is the author's modified translation based on that of Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 253. The paragraph was written by He Chenquan, one of the scholars of the Taipings.

²⁷ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 225.

²⁸ "The King of Grain" refers to Hong Xiuquan whose name contains the Chinese characters of both "grain" (*he* 禾) and "king" (*wang* 王).

man.” This is said solely as a proof that today I have come down to the earth to assume responsibility. Respect this.²⁹

By re-appropriating the biblical sources Hong perceived himself as the founder of the religious center of Shangdi on earth. He wanted to quest for justification of his role in the divine plan and a popular support for the capital and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Scholars were then selected from the most-learned in Nanjing (Jinlin, that is, Jinling 金陵) and commissioned to express in written form the reasons for the choice of Nanjing as capital of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and to praise Hong’s rule as being divinely ordained with the “Heavenly Mandate” from Shangdi. “A Discourse on the Establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Jinlin” with contributions from 41 scholars has been collected and published.³⁰ The physical and geographical impressiveness of Nanjing is usually underlined and its military strength is highly praised. Discourses were being created for the divine choice of Shangdi in the whole matter and Nanjing’s direct access to heaven is also stressed.

Up in Heaven, within God’s abode, the Heavenly Father rules supreme and the Heavenly Elder Brother (Jesus) lives in glory. The gates are made of precious stones and the palaces of yellow gold. Multitudinous are the manifestations of divine power; an enumeration would be difficult to complete. Our Sovereign petitions above to express his will to reside in heaven. The Heavenly Father replies, “No, do not follow my footsteps. Jinlin is beautiful and has access path to heaven. It has mountains and rivers, farms and fields, palaces and walls; material wealth is concentrated there, and it is always full of people. Moreover, the earth-pulse is permeated with the royal qi; it possesses natural defense barriers and enjoys a dominating position as a heavenly city. Establish your Heavenly Capital there and the ten thousand nations all will come. Unity will prevail generation after generation, and the enjoyment of prosperity will be endless.”³¹

One notes the uplifting of Nanjing to the greatest dimension in space and time. It is a heavenly city that will enjoy prosperity from genera-

²⁹ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 233. Hong is identified as Melchizedek also in the annotations on Revelation 12. Ibid., 326.

³⁰ Ibid., 253–276.

³¹ Ibid., 259–260. Taiping tianguo lishi bowuguan 太平天國歷史博物館, ed., *Taiping tianguo yinshu* 太平天國印書, book 2 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin, 1979), 422.

tion to generation and the universality of the city is expressed in the way that many nations and peoples from afar will come to the city to pay homage.

One scholar named Tang Futing also labored on the same issue of putting forward the divine will of Shangdi to choose the place and to further show the obedience of Hong to follow Shangdi's will in the establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Nanjing:

Our Sovereign, in compliance with Shangdi's command and using his invincible power, has come straight to Jinlin and ascended to the throne. Thus the name of the Heavenly Capital is established; since the place where the Heavenly Father occupies his throne is Heavenly Paradise, the capital where the true Sovereign establishes his throne should of course be called the Heavenly Capital. As we know that those who attend the Heavenly Father in heaven are supremely eminent, those who serve our Heavenly King in the Heavenly Capital must be eminent beyond compare.

This place, surrounded by water and encircled by mountains, has already seen the auspicious signs of flying female phoenixes and soaring male phoenixes. This is why the Heavenly Capital is established in Jinlin. You people within the four seas should all know of this, since not only has an unshakable foundation of ten thousand years been secured, but moreover, an era has begun in which the ten thousand nations will come to pay homage.³²

Another scholar by the name of Song Rongsheng ascribed to Hong as the "Son of Heaven," a royal title reserved to the emperor of China, in contrast to the Manchurians who are referred to as "barbarians" from whom Hong took Jinlin and made it into his capital. Song proposes the idea of the city being predetermined by Shangdi when heaven and earth were created. The whole world with the myriads of people will be delighted by the establishment of the city as capital and it will endure forever till ten thousand generations:

Now our true Son of Heaven in his awe-inspiring anger swept the [Manchu] barbarians into extinction and occupied Chin-ling, where he established the Heavenly Capital. The consolidation of Chin-ling with its moats and ponds has indeed made the people of the world happy and obedient, and myriads of people are thereto attracted.

³² Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 271. For the Chinese original, see Taiping tianguo lishi bowuguan, *Taiping tianguo yinshu*, 2:430.

Hence, we know that when our Heavenly Father created heaven and earth, he predetermined this place where later our true Sovereign of the Taiping was to establish a foundation that would not collapse after ten thousand years, and there create a timeless empire of ten thousand generations!³³

Hong was praised for his embodying Heaven's way in practicing the Way and following Shangdi's will.³⁴ The establishment of the capital is thought to be a religious act with cultic function evoking the consequence of homage being paid by all people and allegiance being offered by the nations:

Upholding Heaven's true mandate, our Sovereign has been the first to lay the foundation; and in unifying and ruling the people, the principle of the worship of God has been placed foremost. The establishment of the capital here today is indeed the result of our Heavenly Father's great decision and our Heavenly Elder Brother's shouldering of the responsibility. So the capital is named the Heavenly Capital. . . . This is not only as righteous as God's will but is moreover compatible with the Heavenly Elder Brother's great virtue. Heaven and state being of one family, the people are all the more industrious and conscientious at heart; with peace and unification achieved, everywhere a magnificent prosperity arises.³⁵

The point of the eternal dimension of the capital is further coupled by the international aspect of all the peoples of the world paying homage to the capital and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The nations are part of the divine plan of salvation undertaken by Hong. They are invited to come to the Little Paradise to acknowledge the sovereign power of Shangdi and are expected to join the worship of Shangdi in praise of the Heavenly Father:

Our Heavenly Father, whose power is vast and great and whose mercy is extensive and profound, has ordered the Heavenly King to wipe out the Manchu demons and rebuild the world, protect the Heavenly Kingdom, and establish an eternal Heavenly Capital. Henceforth, over endless years and endless generations, such boundless happiness will prevail through myriads of years. With the same

³³ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 257.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 261–262.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 263–264.

morale and one heart, the thousand and hundred states will return to the truth, fearing to be left behind. The ten thousand states will sing their praise in unison, and the whole world will ever bask in its glory. Peace will be established in the world, arising out of the Heavenly Capital's majesty.³⁶

Almost all the 41 scholars expressed in stereotypical phrases the language of universal acknowledgement of all the nations which will pay homage and offer allegiance to Hong and his Heavenly Kingdom.³⁷ The whole world will become one and heaven and all humans will come from the "four seas" to join together in great union.³⁸

From the above presentation of Hong's context of adopting the biblical historical tradition to the setting of his life and time, we discern an example of contextual reading of the Bible for the project of restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem for the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Though a different context is found in the Book of Chronicles in quoting and editing the Psalms in its narrative of David's founding of the cult in 1 Chronicles 16, Hong's appropriation of traditions at his disposal may shed some lights on our understanding of the purpose of the Chronicler in doing something similar for the aim of securing David's legitimacy and authority for the cult of the Second Temple period.

III. THE PLACE OF JERUSALEM IN CHRONICLES' NEW PSALM

The Chronicler have twice incorporated the Psalms into its own new context. The first is at David's successful transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem as well as the founding of the cultic establishment (1 Chron. 16:8–36). The second is at the time of Solomon's prayer for the dedication of the temple of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 6:40–42). Both cases are concerned with Jerusalem and its cultic establishment that the Psalms are em-

³⁶ Written by Liu Sheng-p'ei (Liu Shengpei 劉盛培). Modified translation based on that of Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 264.

³⁷ Ibid., 254, 255, 259, 260–270, etc. There are echoes in the scholars' writings of the biblical message expressed by Isaiah 2:1–4 and Micah 4:2–5 in the universal center of Jerusalem and the nations streaming to it to learn of the Torah of God.

³⁸ Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion*, 264.

ployed to testify, legitimize and expound. The incorporation of portions of the three psalms in 1 Chronicles 16 represents the longest poetic texts in the predominantly prose narrative of Chronicles.³⁹ The three psalms are portions of a historical psalm (Ps. 105:1–15), a kingship psalm (Ps. 96:1–13b) and a communal historical liturgy of prayer for deliverance and a doxology (Ps. 106:1, 47–48). H. G. M. Williamson is of the opinion that 1 Chronicles 16:5–36 has much in common with 1 Chronicles 29:10–19 as both passages “appropriately provide a framework to the whole section of 1 Chronicles 17–29, which has been totally dominated by David’s preparation for building the temple.”⁴⁰

The Chronicler quoted the three psalms 105, 96 and 106 to create a new psalm which is well embedded into the present context of David’s historical appointment of choral singers of Asaph and the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem. The intention of the Chronicler in incorporating the three canonical psalms into its text (1 Chron. 16:8–36) can be delineated from three different arenas: first, the selection and placement of the Psalms concerned (Ps. 96, 105 and 106); second, the meaning and role of the canonical psalms in the context of Chronicles; third, the theological assertion seen through textual differences between Chronicles and the three quoted psalms.⁴¹ The selection of the historical narrative of Abraham from Psalms 105:1–15 embodies the description of the community’s present reality of being small in number and wandering among the nations, but having indispensable possession of God’s eternal covenant with Abraham. The change from “when they were a few in number” (Ps. 105:12) to “when you were a few in number” (1 Chron. 16:19) and from “the seed of Abraham” in Psalms 105:6 to “the seed of Israel” (1 Chron. 16:13) intensifies the identification of the audience of the Chronicler who are in possession of God’s eternally binding covenant with God’s “servants” and “chosen ones.” The thirty some imperatives and jussives of 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 function to appeal to the readers of Chronicles to see themselves as the contemporary

³⁹ The other cases are 1 Chronicles 12:19; 2 Chronicles 6:40–42; 10:16; 20:21. See Pancratius C. Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 170.

⁴⁰ H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 186, quoted in Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles*, 171.

⁴¹ There are 45 textual differences, most of which are orthographical and grammatical variants in addition to textual corruption and conscious avoidance of anachronisms. Butler refers to the change from “in his sanctuary” (Ps. 96:6) to “in his place” and from “to his courts” (Ps. 96:8) to “before him.”

audience of the Jerusalem cult of the monarchical periods of David and Solomon. The intention is even more evident and pointed when it involves the alternation of subject in “He [God] is ever mindful of his covenant” in Psalms 105:8 to a second person plural imperative verb addressing the readers: “You shall be ever mindful of his covenant” (1 Chron. 16:15). The change from a third person singular verb of “remember” when referring to God’s remembering to a second person plural imperative is beyond any doubt that the new text addresses the present community. The people are invited not only to remember God’s marvelous works and wonders of the past (1 Chron. 16:12 / Ps. 105:5), but also God’s eternal covenant with Abraham and his offspring. The present community should then claim the status of being the people of Israel in inheriting the land promised.

It has been noted by scholars that the differences between the canonical psalms of 96, 105, 106 and the psalms in 1 Chronicles 16 can be explained as the Chronicler’s alternations as they are consistent with the concern of the Chronicler. Chapter 16 contains narrative of David’s transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem and the establishment of sacrificial offering in Jerusalem taken from 2 Samuel 6:1–19a. The editor-author of 1 Chronicles 15–16 basically follows 2 Samuel 6 up to verse 19b. Then, 2 Samuel 6:19c and 20a are left out by the Chronicler. Both sentences reported the act of returning home:

So all the people departed everyone to his house (לְבֵיתוֹ).
Then David returned to bless his household (אֶת-בֵּיתוֹ).

Perhaps, to the Chronicler, the destruction of the “house” in its triple sense of the temple, the palace, and dynasty (2 Sam. 7) is still a reality and a bitter experience to be endured. The people’s individual household is yet to be restored and established. It is at this critical juncture that David’s cultic appointment of temple singers to sing praise to the Lord is especially meaningful. 1 Chronicles 15:28 expands 2 Samuel 6:15 (“So David and all house of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouting of the horn”) by adding “and with trumpets and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps” in order to set the stage for David’s appointment of Asaph and his group who are reported to be equipped with musical instruments in 1 Chronicles 16:5–6. 1 Chronicles 16:1–3 and 16:43 are taken from 2 Samuel 6:17–20a and 16:46 and the Chronicler composed 16:4–7 and 37–42 before and after

the insertion of the Psalms respectively to refer to “David’s arrangement for the two-part choral service at Jerusalem and Gibeon”⁴² In 16:4, the Levites are appointed to “proclaim” (וְלִהְיוּ לְפָאֵר), “thank” (וְלִהְיוּ לְתוֹדָה) and “praise” (וְלִהְיוּ לְשִׁיר) YHWH, the God of Israel. In 16:7 David is portrayed as ordaining Asaph and his brothers on that day to “give thanks (לְתוֹדָה) to YHWH.” These Hebrew terms are all found to be key words in the three psalms and they anticipate the psalms to be incorporated in the new context. Jacob M. Myers underlines the importance of the Chronicler’s purpose in legitimizing the liturgical practice of the post-exilic context by tracing its foundation and authority to David.⁴³ Furthermore, Jerusalem should become the center of worship with choral music and service not only for Israel alone, but also for the nations.

Scholars often wonder why Psalms 96 was inserted into 1 Chronicles 16 between Psalms 105 and 106. It is important to recognize the fact that the people of Israel addressed in 1 Chronicles 16 are the people of God among all the nations and we can well perceive the significance of the insertion of Psalms 96 in-between Psalms 105 and 106 when we find the words for “nations”/“people”/“all the earth” appear repeatedly in Psalms 96.⁴⁴ The psalm of praise in Psalms 96 is quoted following Psalms 105:13–15 where Israel is said to go around among the nations and kingdoms and God is understood to reprove kings not to harm Israel, God’s anointed ones and prophets (1 Chron. 16:20–22). The historical recitation of the descent into Egypt and the wilderness guidance in Psalms 105:16–41 has been cut short at verse 15. “Touch not my anointed ones. Do my prophets no harm” represents the highlight of Psalms 105 and is refigured in the Chronicles as an address of God to the nations and their kings in the exilic context.⁴⁵ The nations are warned not to harm God’s anointed ones and prophets. Therefore, it is fitting to insert the psalm of praise (Ps. 96) which proclaims in God’s sovereignty; whereas kingship is introduced at this point to affirm the absolute power of God as the universal King and Judge of the earth.

⁴² John W. Kleinig, *The Lord’s Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 135.

⁴³ Jacob M. Myers, “The Kerygma of the Chronicler: History and Theology in the Service of Religion,” *Interpretation* 20 (1966): 259–273.

⁴⁴ Trent C. Butler, “A Forgotten Passage from a Forgotten Era (1 Chr. XVI 8–36),” *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978): 142–150.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 144.

For the new context in 1 Chronicles 16, the establishment of the Jerusalem cult is an occasion of thanksgiving and celebration of the salvation of Israel which has a universal dimension. Psalms 96 can be appropriately adopted to fulfill the function. The transition from Psalms 105:15 to 96:1b is very smooth as there are key words that connect the two: “among all nations” and “among all the peoples” (1 Chron. 16:24). The nations are invited to turn to the sovereign creator God and praise the Lord of Israel instead of harming God’s people (1 Chron. 16:25–30). The whole creation will join in the praise of Yahweh, the king (16:31–33).

The Chronicler have made one very significant change to Psalms 96: “His temple” in Psalms 96:6 is changed to “His place” (1 Chron. 16:27). This move may be due to the Chronicler’s awareness of the historical context of David’s time when the temple was not yet built; or it may be an indication of the time when the temple was still laid in destruction, waiting to be re-built. Jerusalem is then confirmed as God’s place chosen for the temple. This insertion of Psalms 96 may well represent an intentional editorial choice to achieve the shift of focus from the land of Israel to a larger context of the nations and the whole earth. Since Psalms 96:1a (“Sing to YHWH a new song”) is not immediately seen as suitable, it is therefore being omitted together with 96:2a (“Sing to YHWH, bless His name”), leaving 96:1b in perfect parallel to 2b:

Sing to YHWH, all the earth
Proclaim His salvation from day to day.

The change of focus from warning of the nations not to touch Abraham the prophet in 1 Chronicles 16:22 (c.f. Ps. 105:15) to the invitation of the nations to praise of the Lord (1 Chron. 16:23; Ps. 96:1) functions to underline the international dimension of Israel among the nations and all the earth is called to take part in the liturgy of praise and thanksgiving.

Both Psalms 105 and 106 begins with an invitation to give thanks (לְהוֹדוֹת) to YHWH and the latter ends with the same note of thanksgiving to God’s holy name (Ps. 106:47 = 1 Chron. 16:35). The Chronicler put a final touch to the refrain attached to Psalms 106 (v. 48) which is taken by almost all scholars as the editorial verse of the Psalter’s Book Four (90–106). The same editorial effort to make the cited psalms con-

temporary with the post-exilic community who are in need of God's protection from the nations⁴⁶ is further seen in quoting only Psalms 106:1, 47–48, leaving out the central verses in between. The Chronicler are conscious of Psalms 106 reciting the history of the sinfulness of the people and such a history is not relevant to the present audience. The omission of the whole psalm except the first and the last two verses is quite natural and rational for the context of 1 Chronicles in praise of God as it is stated in the introductory verses. "Praise," as the central theme of the quoted verses, fits well with David's appointment of the Levites "to commemorate" (וְלִזְכֹּר), "thank" (וְלְהוֹדוֹת) and "praise" (וְלִשְׁבַּח) the Lord, the Lord of Israel (1 Chron. 16:4).

In the concluding lines, the Chronicler add the word "and you say" (וְאַתֶּם) in the beginning of the prayer of petition (1 Chron. 16:35) and insert "God of our salvation" after "save us." The need for deliverance is also emphasized by adding yet another phrase "deliver us." This is how the verse is formulated:

And you say: "Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us and deliver us from among the nations that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and triumph in thy praise."⁴⁷

Indeed, the petition to YHWH to gather the people and deliver them from the nations (Ps. 106:47) forms the climax of the new psalm in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36.⁴⁸ Historical tradition of Israel is recited to remind God and the people of God's promise of salvation, which is yet to completely fulfilled, but the sign of it surely is at hand. The change from "let all the people say: 'Amen'" (106:48) to "and all the people said: 'Amen'" (16:36) indicates the Chronicler's awareness of the historical context of the move of the Ark to Jerusalem and the aim to historicize the participation of the audience. The last word further strengthens the intention to praise when the Chronicler changed "Hallelujah" ("Praise the Lord!" Ps. 106:48) to "and they praised the Lord"

⁴⁶ He suffered no one to do them wrong, for their sake He rebuked kings. "Touch not my anointed ones, and do my prophet no harm" (1 Chron. 16:21–22; Ps. 105:14–15).

⁴⁷ The words underlined are added by the Chronicler to Psalms 106:47.

⁴⁸ John W. Kleinig rejects this position of J. Hausmann to take Psalms 106:47 in 1 Chronicles 16:34 as the climax. John W. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 147–148.

(1 Chron. 16:36), making the audience of the post-exilic community feel being contemporary with David's time.

The newly arranged psalm ends with the formulaic doxology (Ps. 106:47). The verse calls for a new context of the post-exilic situation in need of God's help not only to gather the people and deliver them from among the nations, but also to re-establish the temple cult with the royal endorsement of David.

IV. CONCLUSION

What we have done above was to start with the example of how Hong Xiuquan adopts resources from both Chinese historical tradition and biblical material to make a case for his establishing the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and founding of the New Jerusalem in Nanjing as the Little Paradise on earth. Hong's appropriation has inspired us in reading the Chronicler's context of restoring Jerusalem and its cult at the post-exilic situation. Like the people of Israel who are called to be the seed of Abraham to inherit God's eternal covenant, Hong saw his mission as being commissioned by God in the same manner and as foot-step of Jesus. He is called to bring salvation to a perverse Chinese regime.

In 1 Chronicles 16, the assurance of God's protection of the people, who being referred to as God's servants, prophets and anointed ones, comes out loud and clear in the incorporation of Psalms 105:1–15. Hong saw himself and the Taiping Kingdom in the same light. Like the Chronicler, Hong did not intend to alienate the nations in treating them as enemies, but to invite them to join the praise and thanksgiving to Shangdi. The insertion of Psalms 96 in-between Psalms 105 and 106 certainly fulfills the intention of the Chronicler. As mentioned above, the beginning and ending verses of Psalms 106 (vs. 1, 47–48) are quoted to strengthen the contextual reading of addressing the contemporary audience and inviting them to plead for God's delivery as well as to join in the praise. The new cult has found a strong foundation in the royal initiation of David and David is perceived as the chosen one to do the necessary preparation for the building of the temple. Hong goes a step further to affirm his role as the founder of the heavenly Jerusalem on earth. He appealed to Shangdi as the ultimate basis of his legitimacy and authority in both political and religious power.

One further difference between the Chronicler and Hong lies in the latter's constant struggle with the issue of conversion to a foreign religion in the context of the Chinese culture, religious traditions and political environment. His solution is therefore to prove that Shangdi has been worshipped by the Chinese in the beginning. The Chronicler may be inspired to revive their own liturgical and historical tradition for a new context of rebuilding Jerusalem and its ruined temple; whereas Hong has to put the two historical traditions of the Bible and China together to create a new recitation to support the worship of Shangdi and to establish the notion of the New Jerusalem in the Heavenly Capital of Nanjing.