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Reviews (I)

by
various authors

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CONTENTS

Invited Reviews

Reviews by the Editor

Invited Reviews

Unger, J. Marshall. *The Fifth Generation Fallacy: Why Japan Is Betting Its Future on Artificial Intelligence*. Oxford University Press, 1987. 230 pages. Glossary, references, index.

Four years ago James Unger's colleague at the University of Hawaii, John DeFrancis, published a book-length treatise on the Chinese writing system arguing that the latter could and should be replaced by a system of phonetic representation. Although DeFrancis left few stones unturned, one question cast doubt on his thesis: if Chinese characters are such an unmitigated curse, how is it that one of the world's most literate and prosperous societies could achieve this status with a character-based orthography? One would think, in view of the Japanese example, that the burden of denial should fall on those eager to change the established convention.

Unger takes up this burden in *The Fifth Generation Fallacy*. The title itself, faintly reminiscent of DeFrancis' earlier work, does not convey the fact that the book, like DeFrancis', is a sustained indictment of character writing, albeit from a different perspective. What it does suggest is that all is not well in the land of *kanji*. Unger believes the only plausible explanation for Japan's commitment to "Fifth Generation" computers is that the present technology cannot solve problems caused by the *kanji-kana* mixed script. As the gap widens, Japan increasingly is under pressure to choose between rationalizing its orthography, or accepting second-class world status. Neither being desirable, the Japanese have decided to attack the problem with what they do best: hi-tech innovation. Hence the Fifth Generation project. Having begun, however, with misconceptions about the nature of artificial intelligence, and the relationship of their script to language, the project is doomed to fail, but not before wrecking the basis for *kanji* use itself.

Unger begins his defense of this highly original thesis with an excellent description of the contemporary Japanese writing system. There's no doubt about it, the system is intricate. One is already reeling from the complexities before the discussion even turns to *kanji*. By contrast, the two systems he describes for writing Japanese alphabetically are models of simplicity. If the reader finds the difference between these and the traditional orthography striking, how much more so it should seem to the computer programmer who must specify formally what the practiced user of the character script has learned to take for granted.

Chapter two lists the more obvious costs Japanese pay for the luxury of maintaining this writing system. Due to the unprincipled structure of character forms and their various, unpredictable readings, even such basic functions as filing and index making are complicated to an extent that is difficult for a Westerner to appreciate. Unger makes two other points here that are fascinating. The first is a warning not to infer from the "book loving" nature of Japanese that the character script possesses great utility. Bookstores proliferate in Japan because the library system is underdeveloped, itself a result of the difficulties Japanese have compiling catalogs of any sort. People **buy** what they read, creating the illusion of a greater demand for books than in countries where books are routinely borrowed. Another clue that something is amiss comes from observing what the Japanese are reading. Comic books account for one-quarter of everthing published, while the demand for serious works is declining. Equally intriguing is Unger's explanation for another anomaly of present-day Japan: the slow growth of the computer software industry. Again, the fault is with traditional writing. Because of the absence of general standards on how to manage the script, mainframe manufacturers are expected by users to supply the needed software with their own equipment -- a complete reversal of the situation elsewhere, and one more example of how *kanji* cause the Japanese to waste resources.

In chapter three Unger addresses some less tangible consequences of character usage in Japan, specifically those relating to literacy, and the perception that many Japanese hold of the role of characters in language and society. I have mixed feelings about this chapter. I wish Unger had left it out, or better yet, allowed himself space to support his arguments with more substance. I shall dwell at some length on these negative aspects of the book, since I see little purpose in restating the many points with which I agree.

Unger begins his discussion of literacy in Japan with the reasonable demand that qualitative standards be applied to the concept. However, the only thing concrete that emerges from seven pages is that the author has **no idea** what the "rate" may have been historically, or what literacy may have constituted qualitatively, although he is willing to concede that the situation in Europe was no better or worse. The first actual statistic does not appear until 1948, from a survey conducted by the occupation army which showed complete illiteracy to be very low, but "full" literacy to be only 6.2%. According to the author, "Full literacy was defined as answering all questions correctly", which seems like pretty stiff criteria, expecially when we find that the ability to write characters from dictation was the "most important skill tested." The drill, in any case, like so many other surveys and experiments, seems to have little to do with reading. Assuming nevertheless that pre-reform literacy was low in quality, the author goes on to say that "even today, despite the thoroughness of Japanese secondary education, the quality of literacy it imparts is not uniformly high" (p. 92). This statement is supported by information DeFrancis (1984, p. 217) provides about one man's **belief** that graduates of the nine-year program can understand all 1,945 "common use" characters, but write only "500 or so". To me this seems like an endorsement of the script to the extent that the concern is with reading, the more so when one considers that there is no need for a Japanese in his informal writings to use nearly as many *kanji* as he can read; *kana* is sufficient for most of the text. The author then turns another flattering statistic into a defamatory one. Citing Rohlen's (1983, p. 3) observation that more that 90% of Japanese students graduate from senior high school, Unger interprets this as meaning that "the burden of learning thousands of kanji, once shouldered by only a small, virtually all-male fraction of the school-age population, must now be borne by nearly all Japanese children" (p. 93). That is, the mixed character script is bad because it causes illiteracy **and** because the mass of people become literate in it.

Unger's whole argument that *kanji* cause illiteracy is riddled with such non sequitors. On the one hand he maintains that the script reforms of 1946-59 did much to improve the system of writing; if the script is bad now, it was worse then (p. 83-84). On the other hand, he points to an attrition in "the willingness of young Japanese to read material written at a high level" (p. 93), which obviously cannot be related to the difficulty of the writing system *per se*. Nor are the symptoms he describes peculiar to Japan: few would claim that illiteracy (however that is defined) is less of a problem in America, despite our use of an alphabet. Similarly, his contention that *kanji* are responsible for the high rate of juvenile suicides overlooks the presence of this phenomenon in other countries not burdened by a character script. Extending this theme to behavior generally, Unger adds to the litany of *kanji*'s failures "the increasing incidence of school-related violence", the "outright refusal to attend school", etc. all of which are too familiar to American readers to need comment. His claim of "a connection between kanji-based literacy and at least some of these problems areas" (p. 97) is no more or less valid than the conflicting assertion made by some conservative South Koreas that all of the latter country's ills can be attributed to a deemphasis of character-based education.

Literacy is hard to pin down, even conceptually, and I concede there is room for various interpretations. History is another grey area. Unger correctly notes that the Japanese themselves, not allied armies, were responsible for the first set of reforms that began in 1946, but goes on to blame the later loss of enthusiasm for writing reform on the "filibuster tactics" of a few conservatives, which "gave the Minister of Education a free hand in appointing new members" to the committee on language policy. This is certainly one way of describing what happened, although it neglects to point out that, prior to this, the minority of intellectuals who wanted reform had managed to insulate themselves from conflicting views and controlled policy by appointing new members to the committee on the recommendation of seated members only. Unger is also unhappy with the 1981 "common use" character list, not so much because it expanded the earlier list by some 5% but because, as implied in its preamble, the document is a "guideline" (*meyasu*) for character use, not a prescribed limit. To Unger, this is one more "subversion" of the *Tōyō kanji* principle, the first being when society elected to interpret the 1946 list of 1,850 characters as a floor rather than a ceiling. Never mind that the original concept had proven itself unworkable, unenforceable, and was an infringement of democratic rights.

My final complaint centers on Unger's treatment of Suzuki Takao and the theory of "semantic transparency", partly because it is unfair, partly because I have used the term myself and feel obliged to defend it. Unger portrays Suzuki as Japan's best known perpetrator of the "ideographic myth", which more than anything else causes Japanese to cling to the *kanji* script. No doubt the myth -- and unquestionably it is a myth -- has helped shape Japanese attitudes toward their writing system. The problem with Unger's assertion is that Suzuki never made this claim. Professor Suzuki bases his theory on the observation that characters, by and large, represent morphemes -- basic units of meaning. When one learns characters, one also learns particular morphemes. Since these linguistic units are used again in various combinations to form words, and can be identified by their *kanji* representations, one is able to learn, understand and remember new vocabulary better than if words were written phonetically because one knows the components. Moreover, since Sinitic words (*on* 'readings') typically refer to higher abstractions, the effort taken by youngsters to learn characters pays dividends later, when one is faced with thousands of scientific, technical and academic terms. Users of alphabetic scripts, by contrast are deprived of this advantage; for them, the morphological relationships between words are opaque (Suzuki, 1975, 1987). This aspect of the claim is, on the surface, entirely reasonable, and Suzuki is not the only one making it (cf. Pak for Korean., Tao Kun[1] for Chinese). It is a strong claim for the superiority of character writing, and although I no longer believe it myself, it deserves to be treated with a good deal more attention than Unger and others have given it. Dismissing the theory with a few sentences (borrowed from Miller) about confusing "meaning with etymology", and with a single counterexample (Suzuki gives hundreds) from English is not enough.

The second part of Suzuki's claim I find less plausible: that Japanese enjoy a further special advantage in that having early on learned a *kun* equivalent for each character, the student automatically understands a *kanji*'s "inherent meaning". There are two problems with this assertion, although it is still far from an "ideographic" theory. Firstly, *kun* usage of characters has been declining (Sokolov, p. 104). The 1,850 characters of the *Tōyō* list, for example, have only 1,098 recognized native readings. Seconly, if it is true that the transfer of meanings assimilated though everyday speech (*kun*) to word-components representing higher abstractions (*on*) occurs through their identification in characters, the phenomenon must be even truer of Chinese where the meanings **and** "readings" are transferable. Suzuki seems to have forgotten that Chinese children also begin life using basic vocabulary and that, unlike Japanese, all of their written vocabulary is represented by characters. Claims about the Japanese language's "uniqueness" seem less compelling in light of this, and I have no quibble with Unger's dismissal of this rhetoric. We are all tired of hearing it.

The rhetoric, however, does hold a grain of truth, and in this connection I must take issue with Unger's handling of another of Suzuki's viewpoints, i.e., "the startling claim that the Japanese writing system is a synchronic part of the Japanese language, on a par with syntax and phonology" (p. 201). Unger's riposte does not leave the reader any better informed: "This claim is no more compatible with the findings of linguistic science than creationism is with modern biology." Not only is criticism of this sort unhelpful, it errs in its implication that "linguistic science" is still bogged down in the Neogrammarian dictum that writing is "subordinate" to speech. There are plenty of linguists in the West today, with no axe to grind for any particular language, who make the same claim for writing generally that Suzuki does for Japanese orthography: that both speech **and** writing are coequal representations of the underlying language (Suzuki, 1977). Unger may not agree with this view, but it hardly seems right to call it "startling". The author is on much firmer ground when he points out, later in the chapter, the procedural errors and unproven assumptions attending psycholinguistic experiments and clinical surveys that allege the functional superiority of *kanji* over *rōmanji* and all-*kana* texts. As he correctly notes, there is no evidence worthy of the name that characters are processed by readers differently than other writing systems, or (in non-contrived circumstances) in different parts of the brain.

Unger is at his best when exposing the foibles of the Artificial Intelligence concept, and the incompatibility of traditional Japanese script with computers -- of any sort. These, after all, are

the book's main themes, and here the author acquits himself admirably. Chapter four criticizes the strong-AI view that "all meaning is reducible to information in the narrow sense of mathematical information theory." While symbol manipulation may be a necessary condition for intelligence as we understand it, it is not a **sufficient** condition (p. 112). This is demonstrable logically, and also empirically by the difficulties technicians encounter trying to get computers to recognize characters, handwritten or printed, or to "decide" when to print characters instead of *kana*. Chapter five moves into the "real bottleneck" of *kanji* computerization -- input. There are three options. The first, which the author calls "inscriptive", involves writing the characters with a stylus and matching the result with a stored pattern. Optical recognition devices also fall into this category. Both put severe constraints on the quality of the text to be input, and can hardly be considered a solution. The second technique, "transcriptive" input, converts strings of *kana* or *rōmanji* semi-automatically into *kanji*. The user designates what parts of the text should appear in what subscripts. Since a given phonetic input can pair with several characters or combinations, one must select the intended *kanji* from among the candidates offered on a visual display terminal. While simple in concept, even the most ingenious (and expensive) devices have a number of snags, not the least of which being their tendency "to encourage the use of rare kanji, unusual readings, and inconsistent okurigana that the writer would never think of without prompting from the machine" (p. 155). The author's choice -- if he has to choose -- is method three or "descriptive" input, where each character has its own tag name. This method has been unfairly maligned as the worst sort of "hunt-and-peck" typing, when in fact at least one version using "nearly all primitive, eye-hand coordination intelligence" is efficient, cheap, and can accommodate a larger character set. Another advantage, I suspect, from the author's perspective is that the skills needed to use the device can be forgotten as easily as they were acquired. There is no expensive gadgetry diffused throughout Japan that may inhibit Japanese from reforming the writing system.

The book's final chapter seeks to validate the author's hypothesis that the real goal of the Fifth Generation project is *kanji*-capable computers that will rescue Japan from the morass of inefficiency that makes white collar productivity so low, while preserving what many Japanese mistakenly believe to be an indispensable element of their culture. Although the goal has not been specified in these terms, it can be inferred from statements made by those heading the project, and by analyzing its priorities. Unger's prognosis is uncompromising: it will "like virtually all other AI work... produce interesting but limited results, none of which justify the working hypothesis of strong AI. As an attack on the kanji problem, it is guaranteed to fail...." (p. 192). Most of what Unger complains about, here and throughout the book, regarding input, memory, internal handling and printing or display of character text are better described as inconveniences, large and expensive, but hardly an epistemological indictment of computerized *kanji* processing. There are other problems, however, that Unger claims will not disappear no matter how much money the Japanese throw at them. By these I understand him to mean: (1) transcriptive input of character text can never be fully automated owing to the need for semantic decisions that cannot be specified in phonetic terms. (2) A computer cannot read the meaning or pronunciation of a character without understanding how that character is functioning in the linguistic and semantic context. No amount of rule addition will solve this problem. (3) Even if all the inconsistencies of character representation in Japanese could be eliminated (accounted for by rules, case by case) there is no way a computer can supply character representation in the output stage for the machine-internal representation of Japanese text (unless this has already been provided) since the ability to do so involves making decisions on what the text is supposed to mean.

What puzzles me most about Unger is how one person can hold such strong anti-reductionist views in one field -- information science -- yet be so throughly invested in the behaviorist paradigm in another, i.e., linguistics. As a consequence of the latter, the author is led to explain the above dilemma as evolving from the fact that *kanji* is "parasitic" on language, and in my view misses the point. Characters, for the most part, represent language at the morphemic level whereas alphabets (and *kana*) do so at the level of the phoneme (and mora).[2] Processing texts specified in terms of the latter requires no inferences to be made about the meaning of the

symbols bound between two blank spaces; the task falls on the user instead. With characters, however, this is specified for the reader up to the level of morpheme or word. To do this the computer itself must make judgements on the intended meaning of a string of symbols, a task that no machine can perform consistently.

The obvious solution is to abandon this misguided project, and substitute a romanized script for computer use. This is already the case for many such applications; its extension to computers generally would bring all the benefits of state-of-the-art data processing in one, low cost step. Unger believes that, whatever the Japanese do, this solution will manifest itself by default. If the AI machines fail spectacularly, the sheer cost of maintaining a society encumbered by traditional script will force a turn to the only practical alternative. If reasonably effective transcriptive devices are produced, however, at a cost low enough for general use, deterioration of handwriting skills will separate *kanji* from its human base, with the same result. Accordingly, if the Japanese wish to preserve *kanji* in other areas of life, the prudent thing would be to abandon them where they are least needed (p. 195).

Although I understand and sympathize with what Unger is trying to do here, these crocodile tears for the *kanji*'s demise are not very convincing. One of the few things we can know abut the future is that writing everywhere will be done increasingly by machines. If Unger can win his point for *rōmaji* in computer applications, it is only a matter of time until this displaces traditional script as Japan's major orthography. By the time the Japanese noticed what had happened, it would be too late for a reversal, and no one would care anyway. If, on the other hand, the AI program does succeed -- and it seems likely that the use of the character script will be facilitated to some degree -- Japanese will be saddled with *kanji* forever. Unger knows this, and so do the traditionalists sponsoring the Fifth Generation project. If a genuine writing reform is to be carried out in Japan, it will happen now, or not for a very long time.

Unger has written a controversial book on a complex subject where emotions run high. I have tried to show where I disagree, not because I object to what he would accomplish but rather to pre-emt crticism of his overall thesis, which in my opinion comes through unscathed. That is, there is very little *kanji* can do that alphabetically written **words** cannot do as well or better, with less complexity. As applied to computers, no amount of sophistication can compensate for the difference. This timely book deserves the widest possible reading.

Notes

1. In Seybolt and Chiang, p. 117.

2. Structurally. How these scripts function psycholinguistically is another matter.

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Rejoinder

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I am very pleased with the foregoing review of my book *The Fifth Generation Fallacy,* first, because the reviewer's appraisal is positive, and second, because the reviewer's complaints about Chapter 3 provide me an opportunity to bring out several points that were beyond the scope of the book. I believe the reviewer (whose name, incidentally, I do not know as of this writing) allowed himself to be swayed by adverse emotional reactions to my conclusions on first reading; upon a careful second reading, I think that even he will agree that most of his complaints are groundless.

The reviewer's confusion is most apparent when he writes: "Unger's whole argument that *kanji* cause illiteracy is riddled with ... non-sequiturs." The goal of the first part of Chapter 3, however, is not to show "that *kanji* cause illiteracy," but simply to cast doubt on the alleged successfulness of kanji-based literacy in Japan. To say that the use of kanji in Japanese writing has made it difficult for many Japanese, past and present, to achieve full, socially empowering literacy (my point) is not at all to say "that *kanji* cause illiteracy" (the reviewer's straw man). My position is quite different:

> Japanese culture has not flourished **because of** the complexities of its writing system, but it has undeniably flourished in spite of them.... The Japanese writing system is not defective in any sense per se, but the computer has placed it in a technological environment in which it must grow and change. (Unger 1987:12)

Besides misunderstanding the goal of the first part of Chapter 3, the reviewer misconstrues its arguments. Of the opening, for example, he writes

> [T]he only thing concrete that emerges from seven pages is that the author has **no idea** what the 'rate' [of literacy] may have been historically, or what literacy may have constituted qualitatively.... The first actual statistic does not appear until 1948, from a survey conducted by the occupation army....

In fact, we have a fairly good idea what the rate and level of literacy were in prewar Japan, and I marshall a wide variety of statistical, interpretative, and anecdotal evidence to inform the reader of it. In a word, prewar Japanese literacy was what Neustupný and other experts call "restricted literacy" (Unger 1987:95). During and immediately after the war, many Americans, influenced by wartime propaganda, mistakenly believed that Japan was a grossly illiterate nation; knowlegeable scholars (e.g. Sansom [1946]) strove to correct this error. Unfortunately, in so

doing, they sent the pendulum swinging to the other extreme; I am merely trying to pull it back towards center.

None of the evidence I cite is definitive and some of it is conflicting, **but the preponderance of it clearly shows that most Japanese could not read or write everything they wanted to**, even though few of them could not read or write at all. I am sure that if I hadn't warned readers sufficiently of the problems inherent in collecting and interpreting relevant historical data, the reviewer would have taken me to task for a lack of scholarly caution. I was only being prudent when I wrote "The first full-fledged attempt to measure literacy was carried out in 1948" (Unger 1987:90-91). That survey (which, as I make clear, was carried out by Japanese civilians, not U.S. army personnel) confirmed that reading and writing skills, though widespread, were not uniformly high in quality -- exactly the picture that emerges from the evidence on the seven pages the reviewer complains about.

My citation of the 1948 survey obviously bothers the reviewer, for he wrenches statements I make about the survey (including the previously quoted one) out of context in an attempt to show I am guilty of biased interpretation. To take another example, compare his summary (left) and what I actually wrote (right):

According to the author, "Full literacy was defined as answering all questions correctly," which seems like pretty stiff criteria, especially when we find that the ability to write characters from dictation was the "most important skill tested." The drill, in any case, like so many other surveys and experiments, seems to have little to do with reading.

Full literacy was defined as answering all questions correctly; illiteracy was defined as scoring zero. By today's standards, all the questions were very simple. The ability to write kanji from dictation (*kanji no kakitori*), which was identified as the single most important skill tested, was found to be"remarkably low" in *all* groups surveyed.... [T]he claim, long made by script reform advocates, that the average Japanese experienced trouble dealing with mass communication media was deemed proven. (Unger 1987:92)

The conclusions the reviewer does not like are not my conclusions but those of Ishiguro Yoshimi and the other Japanese who conducted what, to this day, is probably the most extensive and statistically sophisticated literacy survey ever attempted. I am perhaps at fault for not making sufficiently clear that *kanji no kakitori* "was identified as the most important skill tested" in the statistical sense: scores on that part of the test best predicted overall performance. Be that as it may, the question of whether or not the test problems simulated actual reading is a red herring: the survey test was so short and simple that, if anything, it was biased **in favor of** finding a high rate of literacy.

Moving on to the postwar period, the reviewer faults me for citing "one man's **belief** that graduates of the nine-year program can understand all 1,945 'common use' characters, but write only '500 or so.'" He does not tell the reader (as I do) that that "one man" just happens to be the head of the historical records section of the National Institute for Educational Research. In any case, having said that "one man's **belief**" doesn't prove anything, the reviewer proceeds to cite the very same statement!

> To me this seems like an endorsement of the script to the extent that the concern is with reading, the more so when one considers that there is no need for a Japanese in his informal writings to use more than a handful of *kanji; kana* is sufficient for most of the text.

Not only is the reviewer being inconsistent when he himself relies on Dr. Satō's statement, he also has the facts wrong: even in their "informal writings," Japanese very much feel compelled by social pressure to substitute kango for Yamato-kotoba, use kanji rather than

hiragana when there is a choice, and so forth. Furthermore, the reviewer's point that the ratio of kana to kanji in most writing is greater than 1 is irrelevant to the point I am making, viz. that command over all 1,945 jôyô kanji is the de facto criterion for getting into highly competitive schools. Nothing the reviewer says refutes my claim that many Japanese, even today, do not live up to the artificial standard of literacy ordained by the Ministry of Education.

In short, the reviewer, lacking factual information with which to make his own case, picks up facts I have brought to his attention and hurls them back at me, as if subjective interpretation were all that mattered. For example, in defense of the LDP's packing of the Kokugo Shingikai, he says:

> [T]he minority of intellectuals who wanted [script] reform had managed to insulate themselves from conflicting views and controlled policy by appointing new members to the committee on the recommendation of seated members only.

This just isn't true: supporters of script reform included men like Kindaichi Kyôsuke, who were bona fide establishment academicians; they were well aware of opposing viewpoints, and did not prevent scholars holding them from joining the committee. To take another example,

> Citing Rohlen's... observation that more than 90% of Japanese students graduate from senior high school, Unger interprets this as meaning that "the burden of learning thousands of kanji, once shouldered by only a small, virtually all-male fraction of the school-age population, must now be borne by nearly all Japanese children" (p. 93). That is, the mixed character script is bad because it causes illiteracy **and** because the mass of people become literate in it.

But to say that "only a small, virtually all-male fraction of the school-age population" had to master 2,000 and more kanji before the war is simply to state a verifiable historical fact; likewise, to point out that many times more young Japanese must meet the same standards today is only to state the obvious. The only interpretation involved here is that of the reviewer, who is jumping (in a rather paranoid way) to an obviously false conclusion I never draw.

Why does the reviewer take my statements out of context, twist their meaning, and drag in irrelevancies? The reason, I am forced to conclude, is that my questioning of the myth of a super-literate Japan touches a raw nerve. If Japan isn't a nation of 99-percent literacy, then perhaps other myths about kanji are false as well. Of these, the reviewer seems to have a strong emotional attachment to one in particular, one which concerns the nature of writing systems in general. Concerning this, the reviewer and I have a fundamental disagreement; let me define some terms to help explain it.

> ° An **ideogram** is a unit of writing that stands for a unit of meaning independently of how that meaning happens to be expressed in any particular language; the reviewer and I agree it makes no sense to speak of an ideographic writing system, but others seem to think otherwise (see below).
> ° A **logogram** is a unit of writing that stands for a morphophonemically definable string (its reading) in a particular language that cannot be inferred by inspection; e.g., the symbol <&> used in an English text for the word *and*. N.B. the reading may be but need not be the realization of a morpheme.
> ° A unit of writing that does provide a phonetic clue, no matter how crude, to its reading is a **phonogram**; e.g., the letter combinations <write> and <right>, each of which stands for a word pronounced /rait/ in English.
> ° A set of symbols that can be combined according to prescribed rules to form units and combinations of units that represent any possible utterance of a particular language is a **writing system** for that language.

Notice that these definitions do not refer to "smallest units" or require that a logogram or

phonogram represent a specific unit of linguistic structure (morpheme or phoneme, respectively). The only material question is whether a discernible unit of writing (an English word, a Chinese character) does or does not provide a clue to the form of its reading. What makes a writing a logogram is its intrinsic opacity with respect to the linguistic form for which it stands in a particular context. Since this opacity is a function of the context (including the reader's prior knowledge or lack of it) as well as of the visual form of the writing, any particular writing may be logographic under certain circumstances (even a letter of the alphabet, such as <W> substituting for *Viva!* in an Italian text).

Now the disagreement between the reviewer and me is this: I believe there is a universal limit on the percentage of logograms any learnable writing system can contain. In particular, I believe (along with DeFrancis 1984) that the so-called radical-plus-phonetic characters of Chinese, which constitute the overwhelming majority of all characters, are learnable only because they function phonographically; furthermore, I contend that, for different reasons (described later), the large number of kanji used in Japanese writing are learnable only because of the intrinsic and contextual clues that enable readers and writers to associate them with linguistic forms. The reviewer, on the other hand, assumes that all characters are logograms until proven otherwise:

> [Chinese] characters, by and large, represent morphemes -- basic linguistic units of meaning. When one learns characters, one also learns particular morphemes. Since these morphemes are used again in various combinations to form words, and can be identified by their *kanji* representations, one is able to learn, understand and remember new vocabulary better than if words were written phonetically because one knows the components.

I will return to why I think this statement is wrong later.

Now, however, I must digress a moment to comment on another aspect of the foregoing statement. The reviewer claims it summarizes the views of Suzuki Takao. If one consults what Suzuki actually wrote in the work the reviewer cites, one finds this: "It is well-known that Chinese characters, as a writing system, signify meaning independently of sounds. For this reason, they are commonly known as logograms" (Suzuki 1975:178). Where are the reviewer's morphemes? The merit of "logogram" versus "ideogram" is precisely that logograms refer to morphemes and other observable strings of language; their existence therefore does not entail any particular ontological assumptions about meaning. No one disputes that individual logograms exist: the question is whether there are any **learnable systems** of writing that consist entirely of logograms and are robust enough to transcribe **any** utterance of a particular language. The problem with "ideogram" is that it presupposes a world filled with atomic "meanings" independent of any language. The reviewer rejects ideograms in favor of logograms because he refuses (rightly) to accept this presupposition; Suzuki, however, embraces it even though he uses the word "logogram" instead of "ideogram".

Furthermore, although the reviewer obviously thinks that his arguments apply with equal force to Chinese and Japanese, Suzuki does not. Suzuki's whole argument hinges on the observation "that Chinese characters in Japanese (**though not in Chinese**) have a twofold phonetic realization" (Suzuki 1975:182, emphasis added). It is this "twofold phonetic realization" (i.e., the coexistence of on and kun readings) that makes kanji semantically transparent to the Japanese (but not the Chinese or, *a fortiori*, the Koreans). The reason that Suzuki does not grant that Latin and Greek roots have the same "semantic transparency" for English speakers that kanji have for Japanese is **not** that they are written with combinations of meaningless letters (the reviewer's point) but that Japanese can and allegedly do associate native words with kanji. According to Suzuki, Japanese use these native glosses to discover the true meaning of words they have never seen before (Suzuki 1975:188-189). Since I quote this very passage in my book (Unger 1987:99-100), I am forced to conclude that the reviewer is a victim of wishful thinking; in his desire to defend Chinese characters in general, he has naively overlooked the parochial dimension of Suzuki's thesis, which in any case is factually wrong for

the reasons I state on page 100 of my book.

Let us now return to the reviewer's logograms. As already remarked, the key issue here is **learnablity**. Can a symbol system that consists solely of non-mnemonic symbol/string associations be both learnable and coextensive with a natural language? Unless one can produce an example of a system consisting **only** of logograms that is both learnable and fully expressive, the fact that, say, Chinese script may contain a higher percentage of logograms than Japanese is no more significant than the fact that Japanese may contain a higher percentage than English. There is no principled basis for drawing a line across the continuum: the only universal is the limit on the ratio of non-mnemonic to mnemonic associations that can be tolerated.

In my book, I introduce (in a different context) a distinction I think helps clarify the situation:

> In cryptography, a *code* is an arbitrary substitution of one word or phrase for another. There is no rhyme or reason to it, and *only* those words or phrases in a message for which there is a prearranged substitution can be encoded or decoded. A *cipher*, on the other hand, is a procedure for changing or scrambling the letters of a message. Once you know the rules of the procedure, you can encipher or decipher *any* message whatsoever. (Unger 1987:40)

A codebook is thus an example of a genuine logographic system. Even if every word of an encoded message were a word of English, knowledge of the English lexicon would be of no help in cracking it. That is why big bulky codebooks must be compiled; why no one can commit more than a very small code to memory; why intrinsically less secure ciphers are generally preferred to codes. A code can **either** be learnable **or** comprehensive but it cannot be both. For that reason alone, any writing system people actually use must incorporate a certain amount of "cipher," i.e. include a minimum core of elements that can be analyzed or assembled by rule in terms of the forms of a particular language.

But there is corroborating empirical evidence too. When any Chinese character is used transcriptively, to write a foreign word or a word like *dōngxi* 'thing', it is obviously being used phonographically, not logographically. Even more important, the overwhelming majority of Chinese characters give definite phonetic information about the syllables they represent in Chinese. So do many kanji in Sino-Japanese words. Kun-yomi in Japanese are often deducible on the basis of the context provided by adjacent kana. Finally, the non-mnemonic characters that do occur in Chinese and Japanese texts frequently represent less or more than a single morpheme. Thus, in Japanese, kanji usage includes ateji (cf. the case of Chinese *dōngxi* mentioned above), jukujikun, and kanji-plus-kana combination in which the kanji falls short of or overshoots the morpheme boundary. And even when the reading of a kanji happens to coincide with an actual allomorph, it may not correspond to a productive morpheme of the modern language because of historical semantic changes -- obviously this applies to Chinese as well. Though it is conceivable that someone might someday prove experimantally that readers of Chinese and Japanese learn some characters by associating them only with the meanings, not the forms, of morphemes, the foregoing facts make it clear that a large number of characters must be learned on a phonographic rather than a logographic basis.

The reviewer's tacit assumption -- that units of writing ought to be presumed to be logographic until proven otherwise -- is, of course, not without some justification. It is naive to assume that people necessarily "sound out" words of English just because English is written alphabetically and the letters of the alphabet are supposed to refer to sounds. Likewise, just because Chinese characters are traditionally said to be meaning-representing rather than sound-representing characters, it is naive to assume that that is actually what they are. On this point I think we can all agree. The disagreement begins when the reviewer, noting that some Chinese characters are necessarily logographic (give no hint of the phonetic strings they stand for), proclaims that the whole system of characters is logographic, thus introducing a powerful dichotomy into the classification of writing systems by pure induction. As the codebook example shows, however, people cannot learn and use writing systems that are wholly logographic.

I find it astonishing that the reviewer should miss this point because the eminent psycholinguist William Wang, in a memorable review of Morris Halle (Wang 1980:200), put his finger on exactly this problem. According to Halle (1969:18), learning Chinese characters is like remembering so many arbitrary telephone numbers. Wang observed that this "is to compliment the Chinese for memory feats of which few mortals are capable." Just so: Halle should have said that learning **a truly logographic writing system** would be like memorizing thousands of phone numbers; therefore, Chinese script can **not** be a logographic system.

To conclude, I want to try to resolve a dilemma that troubles the reviewer. Perhaps this will help him see that we are really closer to agreement than he thinks. He writes:

> What puzzles me most about Unger is how one person can hold such strong anti-reductionist views in one field -- information science -- yet be so thoroughly invested in the behaviorist paradigm in another, i.e., linguistics.

The problem here is that the reviewer believes, incorrectly, that he has made great progress by ditching "ideogram" and adopting "logogram". He fails to see that the switch from language-independent idea to morpheme does not answer but merely postpones the question of how morphemes acquire meanings. Strong-AI theorists believe that atomic meanings are independent of any particular language; for example, they think machine translation is feasible precisely because all meaning is, in their opinion, reducible to language-independent formal rule schemata. For them, the universe of atomic meanings pre-exists natural languages, which are merely imperfect mappings of this Platonic realm. Needless to say, Suzuki Takao and others who talk about language-independent meanings with respect to kanji subscribe to exactly the same assumptions about the ontology of meaning. As an "anti-reductionist," I would be inconsistent if if I did take the position that ideographic systems are impossible in principle. Indeed, a major contention of my book is that Japanese have swallowed strong AI theory hook, line, and sinker because belief in the Ideographic Myth has predisposed them to do so. It is the reviewer who is the puzzle: he praises my criticisms of strong-AI theory -- for which I thank him -- but fails to see that his own view of kanji leaves him defenseless against the intellectual assault of the Physical Symbol System Hypothesis and strong-AI reductionism.

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Hashimoto Mantarō, Suzuki Takao, Yamadao Hisao. *A Decision for the Chinese Character Nations -- Toward the Future of Kanji* (*Kanji minzoku no ketsudan -- Kanji no mirai ni mukete*). Tokyo: Daishukan, 1987. 487 pages.

This is an unusual book, in structure and in the way its contributors approach the theme. Its first part consists of nearly 300 pages of colloquial dialogue, being a revised transcription of a ten-hour discussion held in 1981 by the book's three main contributors. Hashimoto Mantarō (now deceased) was a professor in Tokyo University's College of Foreign Languages specializing in Chinese. Suzuki Takao is professor of sociolinguistics at Keio University, known in the West for his controversial works on the Japanese writing system. Yamada Hisao is a Tokyo University professor of information science, whose interests include linguistics and the Japanese language. All are experts in their fields. In his preface to the book Hashimoto claims that the three, with their different backgrounds and perspectives, have "extremely antithetical positions" on the problems addressed -- a judgement we shall challenge presently.

The book's second part is a collection of papers read in May 1986 at a symposium titled "The History and Future of Kanji Culture" (Kanji bunka no rekishi to shōrai). The first three papers are by the aboved-named scholars, and expand on themes raised during the 1981 session. The remainder were contributed by language specialists from the other East Asian countries which use or have used Chinese characters: Li Rong and Zhou Youguang from China, Kang Shin Hang from Korea, and Nguyen Tai Can from Vietnam. Kawamoto Hōei, a professor of languages at Keio University also contributed a paper on Vietnamese. Unlike most studies of Chinese characters, the participants in this symposium were less concerned with their origin and historical development than with the implications this type of writing has for the future of their countries.

True to its purpose, the symposium, and to that extent the book itself, is genuinely international. In the past, language experts from these individual countries have tended to forget that their experiences with Chinese characters, and the consequent problems they now face, are shared across four languages, each different enough to make comparisons useful. Although Vietnamese replaced the characters long ago with an alphabet, their legacy continues in the form of thousands of Chinese-style borrowings. The impact of these and other character-induced idiosyncracies on Vietnamese morphology will have to be taken into account by other countries contemplating similar reforms. Hashimoto et al. are to be commended for recognizing this, and for encouraging East Asia-wide participation.

Regrettably, this cosmopolitanism does not extend to the attitudes of the speakers selected. In a book which advertises itself as an exchange of views on the efficacy of writing in Chinese characters, conspicuously missing is any real treatment of the logical alternative: phonetic scripts. The good and bad aspects of Chinese characters are discussed entirely within the context of their relationship to the languages using them. There is something to be said for this type of approach, but it leaves begging the more fundamental question of what these languages **would** be like if the nature of their written representation had been different or were changed.

The same bias is evident in the way the participants are represented. Yamada is portrayed as the romanization advocate who has been outside his country too long to appreciate that there is more to a writing system than its compatibility with computers. Suzuki, the nationalist, sits at the other pole; he would like to see a more "positive" role for the characters. Hashimoto brings up the middle. While approving the current conventions, he would support certain changes needed to let the characters go on functioning. This **seems** like a fair distribution of opinions -- until one realizes that there is only one participant favoring phoneticization and two solidly opposed. Even Zhou Youguang, who can usually be depended on to criticize the characters, was uncharacteristically reticent, assuring everyone that Chinese *Pinyin* poses no threat to the character standard. Some Japanese reviewers have suggested that the book's purpose is to rehabilitate the image of Chinese characters, and in fact there are places in the discussion where Yamada is reminded that arguments favoring their abolition (*kanji haishiron*) were not welcome.

To me, the book seems like an incredible whitewash.

Its other flaw is a lack of cohesiveness. As symposiums go, the material is as integrated as one can expect. As a book, I find it lacking in direction. In the first half particularly, themes appear and disappear with little effort made to exploit these exhaustively. It is not until well toward the end of the book that anyone (Kang) bothers to describe systematically the nature of the problems and the issues at stake. The good news is that this format allowed participants to focus on their special interests. Most of the papers were quite good. In addition, the discussion's informality provided some entertaining moments -- and some insight into how deeply emotions run on these issues.

Another consequence of the book's structure is that the number of topics raised is more than we can cover here. We can only summarize a few of the key points. Suzuki begins the book and ends it with his usual complaint about the status of writing in Western linguistics. Proceeding from the premise that language **is** speech, linguists assume that writing systems are defective for failing to represent it. This characterization is bad enough in the abstract, but is wholly inapplicable to Japanese, where visual discrimination plays a vital role. The phonology of spoken Japanese is too simple to support the large lexicon used by a modern society. Higher level words if based on sound would be too long or ambiguous. Fortunately, *kanji* provide a way out. What Japanese lacks in phonological distinctiveness the characters make up for with graphic complexity. Were it not for *kanji*, we "May have ended up as a race of people napping in the shade of coconut trees" (p. 324).

This is only half the story. According to Suzuki, not only do *kanji* compensate for a deficiency in the language's phonology, they also **enhance** performance overall by providing users with a short-cut to high level terms. Since characters designate morphemes, which are reinforced by the colloquial *kun* readings, words using these morphemes can be identified and understood more easily. Westerners by comparison must memorize higher vocabulary word by word with little support, since the morphemes of their languages are written phonetically, and are therefore less "transparent". The same applies to words **in** Japanese. Foreign borrowings in *katakana* are as opaque to Japanese readers as they are originally to Westerners. They cannot be used to form new vocabulary because the meanings of their contituents are not known with precision. What the language needs are fewer loanwords, and more attention paid to *kanji*, through better instruction and by expanding the number of *kun* readings.

Yamada sees the role of characters rather differently. He questions their usefulness in discriminating homonyms, claiming instead that the characters themselves cause the ambiguity by allowing users to create new vocabulary that cannot be understood phonetically (p. 51). The ease with which these Sinitic morphs are artificially fused together has caused a loss in the ability to make genuine words.[1] By contrast, Americans and Europeans have a knack for remembering a new word the first time they see or **hear** it. There is no evidence that they suffer a disadvantage relative to Japanese speakers (readers) in learning and retaining high level vocabulary. The hypothesis that *kanji* facilitate learning is flawed in at least three other respects: (1) psycholinguistic experiments of various types show that logographic scripts induce distortions in one's apprehension of the designated concept. Such interference from the written medium (ideally a neutral vehicle) inhibits one's understanding of subtle nuances in science and philosophy. (2) *Kanji* prevent the merger of concepts that for practical purposes have already merged, forcing the user to distinguish two ideas when there is only one. Since this expansion of meanings cannot be avoided, the "transparency" of a word's meaning through its character representation applies to the etymological roots only. It is irrelevant to the word's meaning as a whole. (3) If a Suzuki claims the characters offer a "handhold" (*tegaki*) on memory, then meanings are necessarily accessed for each character encountered, whether or not these relate individually to the composite meaning. The effect is to further confuse the reader.

Hashimoto agrees that people learn words as single units: a whole concept is tied to a representation. The confusion Yamada complains of, however, is not caused by the characters, but by the Sinitic vocabulary itself. Hashimoto is annoyed by one-concept words (in English) that become *kango* compounds with 4 or 5 roots; this kind of overnanalysis is counterproductive (p. 100). In his view, the major problem with Japanese is that the development of its vocabulary

has reached an impasse. Foreign *katakana* loanwords are not used productively, probably because of their excessive length. The Sinitic vocabulary, for its part, has already produced enough homonyms to make **oral communication on technical matters difficult.** Fortunately, the two together form their own solution: by shortening a *katakana* borrowing to four syllables (or the first two syllables of two words) and assigning **these** readings to Chinese characters chosen for their semantic correspondence, the foreign morphemes become productive within Japanese, and the homonym problem is lessened by the removal of restrictions on what sounds can appear where. Hashimoto calls this *shōkun,* a new system of *kun* readings for the present Shōwa era.

Yamada sees nothing new here, not in principle. Hashimoto is actually proposing a reincarnation of the old *tenchū* (Chinese: *zhuanzhu*) class of characters. These "express with the same character a different word (of different pronunciation) which is related semantically but does not necessarily have the same meaning" (1987b, pp. 51-52). While many such usages existed anciently, they were weeded out so thoroughly in Chinese that the meaning of the class itself was lost until recently. The existing *kun* readings of characters are also a form of this, and have been disappearing from the language for the same reason (described by Anttila as a tendency of languages to preserve a one form-one meaning relationship). Hashimoto's solution would fare no better. The characters which he would have people read with (abridged) English pronunciations would be reinterpreted soon thereafter with the usual *on* readings.

Yamada uses history to reestablish the teleological argument that phonetic writing is the endpoint of orthographic development. Suzuki sees nothing of the sort happening: development can be evaluated against particular languages only, some being more suitable than others for different types of representation. Since written Japanese confers advantages on the reader that other scripts in other languages do not, Japan's treatment of writing is progressive (p. 322). Moreover, there is an evolutionary advantage to be gained for humans generally by some of its members using different technologies.

These and related issues will continue to be debated. One point on which the authors do agree, however, is the need to study writing rigorously, as a discipline within linguistic science. Until misconceptions about the medium itself are resolved, there is little that can be done practically to facilitate its use, in Japan or anywhere else.

Note

1. Yamada, 1987b, p. 45. Points raised by Suzuki and Hashimoto are addressed by Yamada in this article.

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Ramsey, S. Robert. *The Languages of China.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. 340 pages. Appendices, notes, maps, index.

Yesterday morning my wife received a telephone call from a friend who had just emigrated to the United States. Both being Taiwanese, they proceeded to converse in the region's Southern Min dialect. Although I speak "Chinese", knew the party on the other end of the line, and had a general idea beforehand what the conversation would be about, I could not understand any of it. Frustrated, I asked my two children -- both native speakers of Mandarin -- to intercede. They didn't do any better. The elder one thought they were talking "about Taiwan or something."

By contrast, a few weeks ago the four of us saw the movie "Crocodile Dundee II". Notwithstanding what seemed to me gross differences in phonology, word choice, and sometimes even syntax, Paul Hogan's Australian brogue was clear enough to all of us. My wife and children who have been speaking English -- American English -- for less than four years never missed a punch line, no small feat when one considers that the essence of humor is a clash with context-induced expectations.

I have chosen these down-to-earth examples to illustrate a point that sometimes gets lost in scholarly treatments of the so-called Chinese "dialects", Professor Ramsey's among them. That is, no matter what linguistic affinities can be shown to exist between the 7 or 8 major varieties of spoken Chinese, and whatever the Chinese themselves may feel about them, the overwhelming majority of Chinese who speak one type cannot understand another type without long exposure or special training. This contrasts with the ease by which even non-native speakers understand what we recognize as different **dialects** of English. The examples can be multiplied. There is the native of Shanghai who grimaces with embarrassment when asked to identify the taped speech of another Wu speaker: "Oh, heh heh, that's Ningpo *tuhua*" (the country bumpkin style of a speaker from Ningpo), a genuine dialectical difference that parallels the American-Australian example. Then there is the Mandarin speaker who has to use English in a Chinese restaurant because the Cantonese waiter cannot understand a word of what he is saying, and vice versa, which is illustrative of what everyone else in the world would call different languages. Ramsey, of course, is aware of all this, and takes pains to describe these differences in great and fascinating detail. He is also aware of the controversy, more political than linguistic, over what these Chinese varieties should be called. I can only assume that he has chosen to treat these as dialects for the benefit of the non-specialist, who may never have heard of Chinese languages, since the author has shown no reluctance elsewhere in the book to tread on other sacred cows of Chinese nationalism.

Fortunately, Ramsey's book is much more than a treatment of Chinese dialects. It is the first published attempt to describe exhaustively the linguistic variety within **China.** There are few others as qualified to do this. Professor Ramsey reads, speaks and has taught all of the major East Asian languages. He was tutored by a famous proponent of the Altaic hypothesis in the linguistics of the languages to China's north, and has managed to acquire a genuine feel for the situation at the southern periphery as well. Those who have studied under him finish his course on Chinese linguistics with a deeper appreciation of the language's complexity, and an abiding respect for his consummate skills as a phonetician. Ramsey brings this all together to write *The Languages of China.* He has sifted through an enormous amount of data on one of the world's most linguistically diversified countries, and has been able to present these facts in a readable fashion without compromising detail. There is another fundamental way in which the book differs from the usual accounts, that being the author's approach to language in general. Ramsey sees language not as an abstract, disembodied system, but as a part of the culture of the people who use it. Turning the pages of this book, one appreciates for the first time the geographical, historical and ethnological factors that have made these languages what they are. The specialist is given new data in a new context. The reader with a general interest in China is rewarded with a different perspective on what life in that multi-ethnic nation is all about.

The book's first part (half of the book's pages) is devoted entirely to Chinese, which means in terms of the number of languages that the country's major language gets most of the attention. There are chapters on linguistic geography, the "dialects", the standard and how it emerged, history, phonology, grammar and writing. The chapter on history is the best introduction to the problem to be found anywhere. In his treatment of pronunciation (and in an appendix of Chinese Sounds) the reader is given clear, step-by-step instructions on how these

sounds relate to the standard *Pinyin* notation, and how they can be reproduced from what the English speaker already knows. This is typical of the care he shows for his readers. Good organization enables him to cover a lot of ground quickly. He does the whole of syntax in twenty pages without missing anything important, and without getting bogged down in trivia. Nor does the author shy from theoretical issues, as evidenced by his arguments against a recent incarnation of the "Primitive Language Myth" which claims that abstract reasoning is unnatural to the Chinese because the language lacks provisions for counterfactual expression. Ramsey first demonstrates by a number of devices that this conclusion does not follow from the premises; this done, he demolishes the premise itself with examples of how Chinese do express this in their grammar, when it is appropriate and not already apparent from context.

Part two begins with the statement that "the sixty-seven million non-Han citizens of China are far from a negligible constituency, even in a country of over a billion people." Here the author breaks new ground by assembling in a concise, readable package the essential data on the several dozen non-Han languages used within China's borders. These he divides into northern and southern types on the basis of common areal features. This is a book about languages spoken within one geopolitical area, and the author is under no compulsion to demonstrate genetic relationships where there are none, or, conversely, to treat languages spoken outside China even where these relationships do exist. His decision to omit Tibetan -- a language which, unlike most of the other minority languages he deals with, may actually have a genetic affiliation with Chinese -- will be seen by some as a blatant reproach. Others will be offended by his having mentioned it at all. The same can be said about his neglect of Taiwan; problems like this come with the turf. As with the book's first part, the material here is punctuated by many useful charts and illustrations. I found the discussions of minority writing systems particularly interesting.

It is also in the book's second part that my pique about the so-called Chinese "dialects" was most aroused, by his classification of the non-Chinese languages. For example, we find that "Mongolian is a very closely related family of languages. Many of these languages differ so little from each other they could be thought of as dialects of the same language" (p. 194). Still they are considered "languages", as opposed to Chinese "dialects" which in the author's own words "are as different from each other as French from Italian and, when taken together, are probably more complex than the whole Romance family" (p. 16). But still they are "dialects". The following, however, may bring the point home more forcibly:

> It is easy to confuse "Chinese" with "Mandarin". Chinese is a large family of languages of which Mandarin is only one member. Mandarin is the best-known and most important of these languages, of course: it is spoken by some (700) million people, far more than all the rest of the Chinese population combined; it is also the official language of the (Chinese state). Nor can any other Chinese language compare with present-day Mandarin for literary or cultural significance. However, Mandarin should not be used to stand for all the Chinese languages..." (pp. 179-180).

I have taken the extraordinary liberty of substituting "Chinese" and "Mandarin" for the original "Turkic" and "Turkish" in the passage above, because it seems to describe so well the relationship that exists between the different varieties of Chinese. One cannot have it both ways. Either Mandarin (with its own three or four major dialects), Shanghainese, Southern Min, etc. are different languages within the family of Chinese languages, or the criteria used to distinguish variety elsewhere in the world must be revised. This is a linguistic issue, and I cannot see the sense in clouding it by using "dialects" to describe what "in other, less cohesive contexts... would unquestionably be considered different languages" (p. 18).

Chinese do indeed perceive these regional varieties as dialects of the same language. But to the extent that this perception is based on linguistic factors at all, it is the result of the treatment Chinese gives to its morphemes: (1) these units are all the same length -- usually one syllable long, **for the cognates most users think of when making comparisons**; (2) their

integrity **within** each "dialect" is preserved, for the most part, by the language's isolating structure; (3) they are further highlighted by the morphemic character writing system, which (4) can be read by users in the sounds of their own "dialects". Although the number of morphemes actually shared by any two varieties particularly in their common use vocabularies does not exceed 85% by frequency, the above factors endow those morphemes which are shared with a more universal character (more visible and autonomous) that can be exploited by bilingual speakers (as minority users increasingly are) who have mastered phonetic correspondences and differences in syntax. Speakers imagine that because **some** of their knowledge is directly transferable, and part of that in a regular one-for-one fashion, the two are different aspects of the same underlying system -- as they surely are, in the same way that French and Italian also evolved from a common parent and retain these reflexes. None of this, however, has any bearing on the fact that the result of these differences is mutual unintelligibility, as strict as one finds anywhere.

Professor Ramsey has taught us that there is more being spoken in China than Chinese. He has not sufficiently emphasized, however, that there is more included in this latter term than a number of related "dialects". This complaint relates to his taxonomy, of course, and has no connection with the value or validity of the myriad of facts he presents. And this is what bothers me. The book, because of its scope and excellence, is destined to become one of a handful of standard works on China and Chinese that will be consulted by scholars of various disciplines, and enjoyed by many others for years to come. How much better it would have been had the author used the opportunity to set things straight on this issue as well.

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Cole, James H. *Shaohsing: Competition and Cooperation in Nineteenth-Century China.* The Association for Asian Studies Monograph No. XLIV. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986. xv, 315 pages. Maps, tables, appendices.

During the Ch'ing period, Chekiang province's Shao-hsing prefecture was famous for its wine and notorious for its pettifoggers (*sung-shih*), private secretaries (*mu-yu*), and government clerks. All these exports were in great demand throughout China. In this monograph, James Cole explores the ways in which over-population and the cut-throat competition for success in the traditional examination system created a plentiful supply of educated men who, frustrated in their ambition to obtain examination degrees and prestigious official rank, were willing to migrate to other localities and enter government service in less exalted capacities. Sometimes highly skilled in administrative procedures and bureaucratic maneuvering but always able to count on the Shao-hsing connection for placement and advancement along their career paths, these men comprised the famous Shao-hsing network of government clerks that extended from the provincial level directly up through the central government ministries, especially the Boards of Revenue and Civil Office. No less well known were the private secretaries, those advisors and confidants without whom few provincial and local officials were competent to handle the minutiae of administrative law and procedure necessary for the smooth functioning of day-to-day bureaucratic routine. Wang Hui-tsu (1731-1807), a native of Shao-hsing's Hsiao-shan county, was only the most famous among many such men. A somewhat more poorly recognized phenomenon has been the prominence of Shao-hsing natives in the very bottom tier of officialdom. Cole shows that in 1892 (for example), of the jail wardens, assistant county magistrates, county registrars, and other low-ranking local officials throughout the empire as a whole, this single prefecture supplied over seven percent, or more than three times the total of Hangchow prefecture, the next largest provider of such subofficials. We need look no further

than Wang Hui-tsu's father, Wang K'ai who served as jail warden in Ch'i-hsien, Honan, to find a prime example of this career pattern.

Even as late as the mid-eighteenth century when he began his career, Wang Hui-tsu felt that private secretaries from Shao-hsing continued to attempt to adhere to strict Confucian ethical and moral norms in the course of their duties. By the late nineteenth century, however, private secretaries, known as *Shao-hsing shih-yeh,* had, in the opinion of many, become little more than pettifoggers or legal specialists in charge of managing litigation for their office-holding employers. Lu Hsün (1881-1936), a native of Shao-hsing's Kuei-chi county, as well as China's greatest modern writer, was sorely discomfited by the infamy of Shao-hsing private secretaries, to say nothing of the even more disreputable pettifoggers, clerks, and subofficials. As Cole relates (pp. 5-6), "...when Lu Hsun was living in Peking, he did not like to admit that he was from Shaohsing. When asked his native place, he answered 'Chekiang.'"

But Cole is interested in more than the ubiquity and notoriety of Shao-hsing's clerks and quasi-officials. In the three chapters comprising Part One, the author is concerned to show how interlineage, urban-rural, core-periphery, and class (especially landlord-tenant) conflict or competition over relatively scarce physical and social resources within the prefecture created a milieu in which, in Lu Hsün's telling formulation, the dominant ethic was "eat people."[1] Cole devotes successive chapters to gentry-merchant local elites, respectable commoners, and outlaws and marginal elements, including the déclassé *to-min* ("fallen" or "lazy people"), who were a disadvantaged hereditary, virtually caste-like group anomalous in a society otherwise marked by relatively high social mobility. Cole finds that although numerous large, wealthy, vertically-integrated lineages tended to dampen class conflict by uniting both rich and poor members in competition with other lineages, conflict between groups that exhibited horizontal unity, such as economic classes or residents of core and peripheral counties also characterized the prefecture.

Three more chapters in Part Two discuss the far-flung network of Shao-hsing natives that made up such a large fraction of both the officials and staff of the Ch'ing bureaucracy. The law of avoidance that prevented officials from serving in their home locality operated in conjuction with the fierce competition for examination degrees and official positions to produce an emigrant tradition in Shao-hsing for those aspiring to government careers. The ability of outsiders to sit for the examinations in Shun-t'ien, the prefecture in which Peking was situated, was especially alluring to natives of Shao-hsing where quotas and competition made examination success extremely difficult. Even for the *sheng-yuan*, the lowest degree, quotas were set at eight percent or lower for counties in Shao-hsing during the late Ch'ing. It was no wonder that many Shao-hsing candidates opted to travel to the capital to take the examinations. Of course, in absolute terms the prefecture was highly successful in fostering degree holders. Shao-hsing, which had produced the second-highest total of *chin-shih* degree winners during the Ming, did nearly as well during the Ch'ing, ranking fifth among all prefectures in China. Relatively speaking, however, the chances of success were slight. Given the difficulty of achieving examination success in their native place, degrees held by Shao-hsing men may have been much more prestigious than those obtained elsewhere. Cole (p. 107) notes the claim that passing the *sheng-yuan* exam in Shao-hsing was more difficult (and thus the degree more esteemed and more lucrative) than passing the *chü-jen* examination in one of the less literate provinces.

The future of those few who obtained degrees under their native place quota or that of Shun-t'ien prefecture was, therefore, assured. The vast majority of Shao-hsing aspirants, however, were forced to choose other career paths. Even for failed degree candidates, the Shao-hsing tradition of skill in use of the written word, of expertise in bureaucratic procedures, and of connections to and cooperation with other Shao-hsing natives opened many doors. Wealthy lineages seized on the availability of purchased lower degrees, in particular the *chien-sheng*, to situate their members in the lower reaches of the Ch'ing state. In fact, as the author notes (p. 126), Shao-hsing lineages pursued a dual strategy striving for examination success but not disdaining the contributions to lineage wealth and status that could be made by subofficials, private secretaries, and clerks.

Shao-hsing's success in manipulating the imperial system to its advantage was perhaps

dysfunctional in the larger context of building a modern state. Native-place solidarity was not necessarily conducive to nation building. As old imperial institutions, especially the examination and legal systems, were swept aside in the early twentieth century, the prefecture's residents tried to adjust to new circumstances. In an epilogue, Cole briefly discusses three arenas, the judiciary, modernized education, and local self-government, in which local reforms aimed in part at creation of a new kind of national polity were instituted. He seems to conclude that the debilitating legacy of Shao-hsing's past doomed to futility these attempts at enabling locality and state to compete and survive in a hostile new world.

The author makes good use of gazetteers, genealogies, memoirs, fiction, and other sources for local social history. Nevertheless, as he frankly admits, his evidence is often fragmentary and the resulting argument only suggestive or even speculative. These problems seem unavoidable. The unsavory or unorthodox aspects of Shao-hsing's society upon which he has chosen to focus are the very topics that local elites, who were responsible for much of the historical record, expressly attempted to obscure. In spite of such handicaps, Dr. Cole has produced a valuable and stimulating discussion of important aspects of state and society of the late Ch'ing dynasty as seen through the prism of one of its most famous and notorious localities.

Note

1. Lu Hsun, "A Madman's Diary," *Selected Works,* vol. 1 (Peking, 1956), cited by Cole, p. 12.

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Tiee, Henry Hung-Yeh. *A Reference Grammar of Chinese Sentences.* Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1986. xxix, 348 pp. Comparative romanization table, selected bibliography.

In producing this work, the author has provided a reference grammar with example sentences which may be used primarily to supplement other materials in a course intended for intermediate-level students of Chinese.

This volume is a collection of Chinese sentences arranged by chapter according to sentence type. The sentence types are categorized according to both syntactic structure and semantic function. Sentence patterns are presented using syntactic categories such as noun phrase and verb phrase. Since the internal structures of these categories are persented early in the text, the reader is provided with a clear, methodical account of how sentences are constructed through the combination of smaller syntactic units. There is an initial section on pronunciation which is detailed and useful. Unfamiliar technical terms are studiously avoided.

In the first chapter, basic clause patterns are presented, providing the framework for the construction of simple sentences. Elements such as noun and verb phrases are properly included, but other information, such as lists of interrogative and other pronoun types, seem out of place in a chapter which deals with clause patterns. Chapter 2, which describes negation in basic sentences, might have been more appropriately subsumed under a discussion of the predicate.

Chapter 3 covers the formation of questions in Mandarin. Three question types are given: 'yes/no' questions (choice-type or those which use the question particle *ma*), 'information' questions (those that use question words), and 'alternative' questions (generally, questions in which it is possible to use *haishi* 'or'). This is an interesting analysis, but the inclusion of tag questions, which are normally considered a fourth separate category, in the 'yes/no' question
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category, may cause a bit of confusion. For example, this analysis requires questions such as *Ta shi bu shi hen gao* ('Is he or is he not tall') to be considered 'tag questions' (p. 68).

Chapter 4 presents a traditional analysis of time, aspect, and change of status in Mandarin. This chapter provides a description of the aspect particle *le*, time words, and other types of aspect such as inceptive, durative, successive and experiential. A perhaps overly sharp distinction is drawn between 'verbal *le*' as indicating perfective aspect, and 'sentence-final *le*' as indicating change of state. In order to keep this analytical paradigm consistent, some marginally acceptable senetences with verbal *le* are used to demonstrate the perfective, and examples of sentence final *le* which do mark the perfective are avoided (e.g., *?Ta xiele zi* rather than *Ta xie zi le* for 'He has written the words').

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the internal structure of complex noun phrases. The structure of complex nominals provided (p. 122) implies that the nominal modifies the noun directly when all modifiers are present e.g., **Zhei sanben hong (de) wo (de) shu*, which should properly be *wo (de) zhei sanben hong (de) shu* ('these three red books of mine'). Also, two pages are spent demonstrating a fact about relative clauses in Chinese that is also true of relative clauses in virtually all languages, viz., a noun in a relative clause is always deleted when it is identical to the noun modified by the relative clause.

Chapter 6 deals with adverbial constructions, and is extermely broad in its scope, since an adverbial is defined as anything which modifies a verb or another adverb. Most items discussed in this chapter do properly fit in this category, such as 'intensifiers' (e.g., *tai* 'too', *hen* 'very'), scope modifiers (*dou* 'all', *wanquan* 'totally' and *guang* 'barely'), time modification, and the superlative (*zui* 'most'). Several items, however, seem rather out of place in a discussion of adverbials. For example, place (*zai*), 'from' and 'to' (*cong* and *dao*), coverbs (*gen, gei, ti, yong, dui, wei*; collectively termed 'conditions'), distance (*li*), comparison using *bi* and *you*, similarity (*gen...yiyang*), and question words.

Chapter 7 deals with complements, defined as words which are "...an essential part of the predicate...". This loose definition results in a structural and functional overlap with the adverbial category discussed in chapter 6. Five semantic categories are given: resultative, directional, potential, descriptive (manner and extent using *de*), and quantifier (e.g., *Nei haizi gaole liang cun* 'that child has grown two inches').

Chapter 8 discusses modality, which is defined as the speaker's subjective feeling regarding that which is expressed by the predicate. Included in this category are auxiliaries (e.g., *yinggai* 'should', *dei* 'must', *yiding*, 'certainly') and most final particles (e.g., *a, ba, ne*). Some auxiliaries do not appear to fit the definition of modal given above (e.g., *yuanyi* 'to be willing', and *hui* 'to be able'), since they have nothing to do with the speaker's attitude. Also, what is termed 'certainty *de*' is the *de* of the *shi...de* construction, and does not seem to belong in a discussion of modality.

Chapters 9, 11 and 12 deal largely with different types of complex sentences. Included in these chapters are cause-effect sentences, conditionals, topicalization, serial predicates, telescopic sentences (also known as 'pivotal NPs'), the object marker *ba*, and the use of the passive with *bei*. Chapter 10, 'Special Sentence Types', describes imperative sentences, existential sentences, and impersonal sentences.

This book, although appealing in physical appearance and very easy to read, nonetheless contains a disturbing number of tone and pinyin typographical errors. Another problem is the fact that the exercises at the end of each section are not provided with an English gloss. This means that in many cases students can only understand the exercises by rummaging through the text in search of the appropriate vocabulary items. The book would thus be enhanced by the inclusion of a glossary of vocabulary items used. In addition to the suggested glossary, the value of the book as a reference grammar would be enhanced by the inclusion of an index which would allow the reader to find easily specific grammatical particles and structures.

This work is of value to the teacher of Chinese, or to anyone else with a need to find examples of a particular sentence type. As stated in the preface, the book is intended as a general guide to the different types of Chinese sentences, and would best find use as a supplementary rather than a primary course text.

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Reviews by the Editor

Pollack, David. *The Fracture of Meaning: Japan's Synthesis of China from the Eighth through the Eighteenth Centuries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. xv + 250 pages.

This is the most brilliant book I have read since embarking upon the study of Asian civilizations in 1967. On virtually every page there are startlingly penetrating perceptions concerning the relationship between language and text. Even more than Richard Robinson's magisterial *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967) or Hajime Nakamura's wide-ranging *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan*, revised English translation edited by Philip P. Wiener (Honolulu: The University of Press of Hawaii, 1974), *The Fracture of Meaning* gets at the heart of the significance of the Chinese tetragraphic script for culture. Quite simply, reading this book leaves one breathless; there is in it almost an overcharge of electrifying analysis. Only someone so deeply immersed in both Chinese (his Ph.D. dissertation was on the linked-verse poetry of Han Yu and his circle) and Japanese (he is perfectly at home with both modern and classical texts) civilizations as Pollack could have achieved the remarkable synthesis presented in *The Fracture of Meaning*.

If one were forced to name his specialization, I suppose that one might refer to David Pollack as a student of late medieval Japanese literature, poetry in particular. It is almost incredible that someone working in such an ostensibly esoteric field could come up with so many gems of insight into truly weighty issues of linguistics, aesthetics, theories of literary criticism, semiotics, history of religions, and other disciplines. For example, even professional Chinese linguists are foggy about the nature of the so-called "dialects", but Pollack tells us (p. 6) accurately and straightforwardly that "what we call Chinese is actually a group of mutually unintelligible languages." The book is filled with such statements of razor-sharp veracity that cut through centuries of scholarly obfuscation like a precious samurai sword swishing through the misty air.

It almost seems unjust that so much wisdom and learning should be concentrated in a single person, as though robbing others of their sense and sapience. Pollack conveys more **useful knowledge** in this one medium-sized book than does a whole army of your run-of-the-mill Sinologists and Japanologists. It is truly mystfiying to me how so much sheer **acumen** could be given to one individual, almost as though it were at the expense of his floundering colleagues.

Any book that offers such a sustained challenge to the sacred cows of East Asian studies is bound to evoke criticism and controversy from the guardians of stuffy convention. But isn't that the business of the honest and dedicated scholar anyway -- to poke holes in the shibboleths of orthodoxy and misconception? Scholarship that does not take risks is unworthy of the name.

Pollack sees a dialectic between China and Japan (*wakan*) that manifests itself in various guises: content / form, spirit / learning, orality / literacy, heart / words, void / phenomenon, emotion / restraint where, in each case, the former member of the pair is the Japanese attribute and the latter is the Chinese vehicle. The author demonstrates repeatedly the tension between Japanese sentiment and Chinese structure, an opposition so powerful that a fundamental dissonance within Japanese culture was inevitable. This schism persists to the present day and is evident in the extremely complicated feelings the Japanese people have about *Yamato-damashii* ("the soul of Japan").

This is the kind of book that one might wait a whole lifetime for, secretly suspecting that no mortal is capable of writing it. I close this humble review, ashamed that no paean of which I am capable would suffice to express the debt of profound gratitude I feel to Pollack for having written this repository of unflinching honesty, with a cordial invitation to all serious students of East Asian civilizations to read what I unhesitatingly consider to be the most important work of the decade in our field.

Norman, Jerry. *Chinese*. Cambridge Language Surveys. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. xii + 292 pages.

This book is a model of compactness and economy. In less than 300 pages, the author provides an enormous amount of information on a wide variety of vital subjects pertaining to Han languages and dialects. Among the topics covered are the astonishing number of different ancient and modern languages that are subsumed under the single rubric "Chinese", historical phonology, the tetragraphic script, classical and literary forms, the development of the written vernacular, standard Mandarin, non-standard topolects, lexicography, and sociolinguistics. Each chapter concludes with briefly annotated suggestions for further reading and there is a longer general bibliography at the back of the book. There is also a section (pp. 266-273) of concise but informative notes. The whole is presented in a most competent and professional manner.

More than with any other language group, the history and politics of Chinese has engendered controversy. Most will agree that it is to Jerry Norman's credit that, for the most part, he skillfully manages to avoid taking sides on such emotional problems as romanization, the proper role of written topolects, and contested linguistic terminology. Yet this does not mean that he avoids discussing them, for he actually offers careful surveys of these and many other sensitive issues.

In some respects, Norman's book is a genuine tour de force. His ability to explicate the intricacies of grammar and syntax without resort to tetragraphs (he uses English tags instead) is particularly impressive. As might be expected from our greatest dialectician of Chinese languages, his treatment of Han topolects is masterful.

While there are many aspects of Chinese linguistics that remain unsettled (e.g. the relationship between spoken languages and written text from the earliest period, whether or not there was a single standard vernacular during the Tang and later periods, and so forth), this book deserves to be recognized as a classical statement of our current knowledge of the Chinese language group. In this sense, it is highly authoritative and deserves to be on the reference shelf of everyone who has an interest in the Chinese Han languages and their historical development.

On one point I strongly disagree with the author, however, and that is the contention that Chinese "has more speakers than any language spoken in the modern world." Chinese, as the author himself recognizes on the very first page, is decidedly **not** a single language. Thus it is most inappropriate to refer to it in the singular, especially with the definite article ("**the** Chinese language", a phrase that occurs repeatedly in this book), as a linguistic entity below the level of a language group.

Aside from this reservation, Norman deserves the highest accolades for having produced a work that is certain to become an indispensable handbook for all students and teachers of the history of Chinese Han languages.

Leon, N. H. *Character Indexes of Modern Chinese (Xiandai Hanyu Hanzi Jianzi)*. Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, 42. London and Malmö: Curzon, 1981. xv + 508 pages.

The complexity of the Chinese tetragraphic (*fangkuaizi*) writing system is partially revealed in the more than 500 pages of this reference guide. The first 152 pages of the book consist of the 9,423 tetragraphs of the *New China Dictionary (Xinhua Zidian)* arranged according to the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (Pinyin). If the pronunciation of a given character is known, one may use it to find the radical and residual strokes which compose it or an identifying four-corner code number. Unfortunately, throughout the volume, Leon refers only to the 189 radicals -- one of the many sets that have appeared under the auspices of various authorities in the PRC. Hence, Leon's radical designations are useless to those who must consult the hundreds of reference books that are arranged according to the traditional 214 radicals.

Pages 153-252 enable the extremely rare individual who might happen to know the system of 189 radicals to look up the pronunciation of a given character. Pages 253-275 would permit the even rarer individual who has learned the **new** Four-Corner Numeral System to look up the

pronunciation of a given character. Here again, this cuts the user off from the standard reference works published by Commercial Press and other Chinese presses from the late twenties on that were arranged according to the **old** Four-Corner Numeral System.

I would venture to assert that not even one-half of one per cent of all the practicing Sinologists in the world are sufficiently familiar with either the 189 radicals or the new four-corner code to be able to use them without enormous amounts of aggravation. Nor do I have much faith that they will attempt to learn these new finding systems for fear that other similarly transitory methods will be introduced to replace them.

Pages 377-475 list the tetragraphs by the so-called "rapid" stroke-order numbers (*kuaisu bishun haoma jianzi*). Like so many of the literally hundreds of panacean systems for ordering tetragraphs that have been proliferating in this era of anxiety over the (not-so-mysterious) lack of user-friendly Chinese computers, this "rapid" system is really a misnomer. It should actually be called the "slow" system, just as the infamous "easy" system (*yima*) that is being widely touted on the mainland now should really be called the "difficult" system. Most of the code numbers in the "rapid" system are six digits long; choosing which six strokes to encode takes time and the act of encoding itself requires a considerable expenditure of intellection. Regardless of what Leon or Jiang Zheng, the inventor of the "rapid" system, may claim, it is hard to learn and hard to use.

The reason for this is the simple fact that any system which attempts to provide a rational ordering of 10,000 discrete and arbitrarily constructed items is bound to be exceedingly complicated, especially when most of these items consist of **at least** 10 separate components (strokes in the case of the tetragraphs). Sooner or later, computer and software companies who have poured millions of dollars and thousands of man-hours into the development of hardware and programs for the manipulation of the tetragraphs will become enlightened. There **never** will be an efficient, economical, easy-to-learn means of processing Chinese characters nor will there ever be a speedy method for touch-typing Chinese characters. Why? There are too many of them. It may be countered that there are "too many" words in alphabetical languages, yet computers handle them with facility. This is to ignore the fundamental differences between spelled-out English words, for example, and written Chinese characters. Every single one of the former consists of 26 (and only 26) repeatable components that **bear a direct relationship to the living, spoken language.** The latter, on the other hand, consist of a body of between ten to sixty thousand elements (depending upon the inclusiveness of the font) that it is impossible to analyze rigorously and infallibly according to the spatial arrangement of the strokes or by any other criterion. One might almost say that, in the attempted design of rational ordering systems for Chinese characters, exceptions **are** a rule (for example, how many strokes are there in the character *xiao* ["artemesia"; a surname]?). Still more forbidding is the fact that the tetragraphs bear no clear and necessary relationship to the spoken language. This is probably the major stumbling block in the analysis of written Chinese languages, but it is unlikely to dawn upon those who are committed to the dream of tetragraphic word processing until a great deal more of historical research demonstrates that fact irrefutably.

Appendix I (pp. 477-482) is a list of simplified characters for experimental use in the Second Scheme for Simplifying Chinese Characters (draft of December 20, 1977). This was abolished, before official promulgation, in 1986. Appendix 2 consists of essential *kanji* in modern Japanese. It is subdivided into those that are for current use (*tōyō kanji*), those that are for common use (*jōyō kanji*), and those that are for use in personal names. It should be noted that the Japanese authorities are determined to keep the total number of *kanji* below the figure of 2,000.

Considering all of the vast confusion that is built into the Chinese script, it is fitting for the compiler to focus his prefatory discussion on language reform. Regrettably, Leon needs to reform some of his own ideas about Chinese languages before pronouncing further about the presumed progress of the PRC in that area. He begins with the following sentences:

> What is commonly referred to as the Chinese language is really the language of the Han people, who constitute over ninety-three per cent of China's population. The Chinese language is one of the most developed languages in the world. For various

> historical reasons, however, it has not reached a total unification, and a great diversity of dialects still exists.

What, pray tell, is "**the** Chinese language"? *Hanyu,* to which Leon must be referring, is in reality an aggregation of mutually unintelligible languages (Amoy, Fukienese, Cantonese, Shanghainese, etc.) that bear approximately the same degree of relatedness to each other as do the members of the Indic, Romance, Germanic, or Slavic language groups. Leon, of course, is not to be blamed for this terminological imprecision with regard to Chinese languages and dialects, for he has inherited it from generations of earlier Sinologists.

Leon shows himself to be more on target in the next sentences when he recognizes that, "although the Chinese characters have played a brilliant role in the long history of Chinese culture, their excessive complexity is a hindrance to further cultural development." The remainder of the preface is a succinct, sensible, and accurate (though now slightly out of date) account of language reform in the PRC since 1949. So long as China is saddled with the cumbersome tetragraphs, books like Leon's will be welcome to the serious student of Chinese languages. And even for many, many years after that, the Sinologist who works with historical materials written in tetragraphs will be happy to have them.

Hu, Shiu-ying, comp. *An Enumeration of Chinese Materia Medica.* With editorial assistance from Y. C. Kong and Paul P. H. But. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1980. xxiv + 287 pages.

This Sino-English list of medicinal plant, animal, mineral, and miscellaneous names is the end product of nearly a century of scientific work. The compiler, Shiu-ying Hu, briefly outlines the extent of her indebtedness to her predecessors (pp. xiii-xxii). We are, in turn, indebted to her for providing us with a reliable and handy guidebook to approximately 2,000 different items. We should be particularly grateful to Dr. Hu because she had the wisdom to arrange the entries in a single alphabetical sequence that makes it extremely easy to consult.

The entries in Part I consist of the following components: serial number, Wade-Giles transcription, tetragraphs, botanical name (Linnaean classification), common English name or descriptor, Latin or Latinate pharmaceutical name.

Part II is a systematic arrangement of the items in Part I according to their family, species, or other biological grouping.

The four appendices which follow are:

I-A	A guide to the syllables of the Wade system of romanization.
I-B	A table for the conversion of Pinyin to the Wade system.
II-A	An alphabetical list of biological families with reference numbers keyed to Part II.
II-B	A generic list with family numbers or abbreviations indicating the position of each genus in Part II.
III	A conversion chart which can be used to find the complicated forms of Chinese characters from the simplified forms. This appears to have been photographically reproduced from some other source. About half of the tetragraphs in this chart are so illegible, indistinct, blurred, or blotted as to be of little use to anyone who might need to consult them.
IV	An index of the Chinese names by total stroke count and shape of strokes of initial tetragraphs. This index is keyed by serial number to Part I of the volume.

This long-awaited handbook is so designed that it will be of use not only to Sinologists but to botanists, pharmacists, chemists, medical researchers, and many others. There is no longer any excuse for not giving a precise translation of the majority of plant names that one might encounter in dealing with Chinese texts and Chinese people.

Ayers, Donald M. *English Words from Latin and Greek Elements*. Second edition revised and expanded by Thomas D. Worthen, with the assistance of R. L. Cherry. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1986. Accompanying workbook by Helena Dettmar and Marcia Lindgren; instructor's manual by R. L. Cherry. xxii + 290 pages; viii + 291 pages.

Originally published in 1965, Ayers' *English Words* went through twelve printings in its first edition. Such popularity is not surprising in light of the intrinsic merits of the book that are evident in its plan and in its execution. The book begins with an introduction that is packed with a wealth of relevant linguistic information on the Indo-European family of languages and the historical development of the English vocabulary. All of this is presented in a lucid and unforbidding fashion.

Part I of the book is concerned with word elements from Latin and Part II with word elements from Greek. Ayers stresses heavily the importance of looking up words in a good dictionary and always paying attention to the etymological notes when one does so. Scattered throughout the book are frequent exercises. This is not just a descriptive work about the nature of the classical elements in the English lexicon. It is a practical tool for expanding one's functional vocabulary, probably the best there is.

One of the most important lessons to be learned from Ayers' approach is that the majority of English words are made up of parts and that these parts are analyzable in terms of their meaning and function. The same approach could profitably be applied to the study of Chinese words. Let us take, for example, *paiwaizhuyi*. The root (or "base" element, as Ayers would call it) of the word is *pai* ("to exclude"). Standing in objective relationship to it is *wai* ("foreign"). *Zhuyi* is a suffix, borrowed from Japanese *shugi,* that corresponds to English "-ism". Hence the whole word may be thought of etymologically as "exclude-foreign-ism", i.e., "exclusivism" or "antiforeignism". It is often used for "xenophobia" but a more precise Mandarin equivalent of the latter would be *juwaizheng* (etymologically analyzable as "to fear" + "foreign" + "disease"). *Qianjin* may be broken down into "forward" + "move ahead", hence "advance". And so forth.

In most cases, the etymologies of Chinese words appear to be somewhat more transparent than those of English words. The reason for this is the long history of tetragraphs as the only acceptable written medium for Chinese languages, including classical and vernacular varieties. The nature of the tetragraphs is such that they have tended to separate equidistantly the bits of meaning that go together to make up words and sentences. Recorded in tetragraphs, it may appear that Mao Zedong made this statement, *wen zi bi xu gai ge yao zou shi jie wen zi gong tong de pin yin fang xiang* ("writing" "graph" "must" "necessary" "change" "get rid of" "have to" "walk" "world" "boundary" "writing" "graph" "common" "same" "particle of modification" "to put side by side" "sound[s]" "place" "towards"), when he really said nothing of the sort. Rather than uttering a lot of monosyllabic gibberish, what Mao really said was *Wenzi bixu gaige, yao zou shijie wenzi gongtongde pinyin fangxiang* ("[Our] script must be reformed; we should follow the direction of phoneticization that is common to the [other] scripts of the world").

One of the problems with tetragraphs, to be sure, is that they lead to extreme over-etymologization, such that a polysyllabic word is often thought of as so many separate bits of meaning. It is frequently difficult for readers of Chinese tetragraphic texts to determine which syllables belong together. If the Chinese were indeed to adopt romanization as their script in the near future, it would be a tremendously long time until the effects of tetragraphs wore off. Even the final retroflex "r" that is a feature of so many nouns in Mandarin deceptively appears in the script as though it were an entirely separate syllable. *Beng* ("need not") was originally written as though it were *buyong* (literally, "not use") until a single tetragraph (composed of the two graphs for *bu* and *yong*!) was coined to represent it. It may well be claimed that *beng* is only an oral fusion of *bu* and *yong,* but then how does one explain the appearance of such curious expressions as *bengyong* and *bengying,* both of which mean the same as *buyong*?!!! Although a phonetic script would make it much easier to record more accurately such natural permutations and combinations of the evolving language, the etymological components of Chinese will remain

highly visible in comparison with other languages that have not been subject to several thousand years of tetragraphic distortion.

Such are the musings of a student of Chinese language and literature after reading Ayers' educational textbook on the Greek and Latin elements in English words. In closing, we may well ask, "What are the corresponding elements of Mandarin words?" In most cases, the answer is clearly "Classical Chinese". A knowledge of various styles and periods of Classical Chinese will be of assistance to one who seeks mastery of Mandarin vocabulary. Nonetheless, it will not **ensure** that mastery, because Mandarin is a quite different language from Classical Chinese, one that has a different grammar, syntax, and -- yes -- a different lexicon as well. The same may be said of the relationship of Greek and Latin to English. In both cases, an acquaintance with classical studies is of value to the learner of modern languages. Students of modern Chinese languages are not yet blessed with a counterpart to Ayers' *English Words*. Let us hope that one day soon they will be.

Chen Gang, comp. *A Dictionary of Peking Colloquialisms (Beijing Fangyan Cidian)*. Peking: Commercial Press (Shangwu Yinshuguan), 1985. 14 + 346 pages.

This is a splendid work of scholarship that embraces more than 6,000 fascinating entries. The items included consist of words and expressions, some of which can be attested as early as circa 1900, that are still current in colloquial Pekingese today. The richness of this collection and the care with which it has been assembled raise all sorts of stimulating questions about Chinese speech and its relationship to the tetragraphs. The gist of my remarks in the following paragraphs would apply equally well to other Han dialects and languages.

The overwhelming reaction one receives after reading through this excellent dictionary is that the tetragraphs do a very **poor** job of recording living language. In trying to write down Peking dialect with tetragraphs, one is often forced to make up nonce characters or to borrow inappropriate existing characters. In many cases, the characters that one ends up using do not accurately reflect the actual sounds or meanings of the words they are meant to stand for. One expression may be written in six or more different ways. On the other hand, a single character or group of characters may stand for several different pronunciations. Some characters are given pronunciations that are radically at variance with their accustomed values in Mandarin (e.g. *bu lühu* 不理乎 "not pay attention to", *cúxie, cúxi, cùji* 促狭 "fond of teasing or embarrassing others"). Even though Chen has attempted to regularize and rationalize the use of tetragraphs for use in recording Pekingese, the huge discrepancies between them and actual speech is evident throughout his dictionary.

Fortunately, Chen is not only an excellent linguist but a sensible one. Each entry is provided with a romanized transcription that annotates the sound of the term or expression in question far more accurately than the tetragraphs. To give only a single example, there is a word *rua* which means "brittle", "faint", and so forth. This may be written, in characters, as 软 , 软 , 按 , 弱 , 搦 , 弱欠 , 揉 .... Such pathetic stabs in the dark only lead to confusion and ultimately sheer unintelligibility.

Chen Gang's dictionary is a treasure trove of intriguing information about real language. I shall mention only a couple of such delectations. Particularly among the Hui (Muslim) "nationality", there is the Pekingese word *samesa* which signifies a triangular, deep-fried pastry filled with goat's meat. Chen correctly identifies this with Turkish *samsa* (cf. "samosa" which can be found in many American supermarkets). Someone who willingly and servilely does another's bidding in Pekingese is called a *cuibar*. Chen writes this in characters as 催巴儿 or 催把儿. Wang Meng, in his recent short story, "Crushed Beneath the Wheels (*Lun Xia*)", wrote the same word as 催按儿 *cuibor* (the word is actually pronounced more like *cuibər*) and could probably best be written as *cuiber* in conventional alphabetical script. It is obvious that no one has the foggiest notion of the etymological origins of this colorful term or of thousands of other comparably vivid expressions in the living language. The meanings of 催 , 巴 , 儿 , 把, and 按 have nothing whatsoever to do with the meaning of *cuiber*, although I am certain that someone (probably a muddled scholar) could force out a "folk" etymology from them. The

tetragraphs only lead to confusion when one is trying to make sense of such expressions. I suspect that many of them have entered Pekingese from other dialects and languages (both Han and non-Han). It is to Chen's credit that he has succeeded in identifying several dozen Peking colloquialisms with Manchu, Mongolian, Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and English words. A vast amount of linguistic archeology remains to be done in order to remedy the obfuscation imposed on living Chinese languages by the clasically oriented tetragraphs.

The highest accolade which I wish to award to Chen Gang has been saved for the last, namely that he is the first lexicographer in China to have published a dictionary in the most intelligent and workable arrangement available, namely, a single-sort alphabetical ordering. This is a momentous occasion and Chen is to be enthusiastically congratulated for having had the wisdom and courage to break through centuries of prejudice in bringing to reality a finding system that is both convenient and efficient. His prescience will be echoed by many lexicographers in the future, bringing great benefit to his Chinese compatriots and to everyone in the world who shares an interest in the progress of Chinese civilization.

Cheung, Dominic, ed. and tr. *The Isle Full of Noises: Modern Chinese Poetry from Taiwan.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1987. xii + 265 pages.

Upon first blush, the title reads like a mistranslation for "the isle full of [poetic] sounds." "Noises" is jarring, but we are forced to accept the Shakespearean reference (*Tempest,* 3.2.146) at face value. This slightly acerbic initial encounter with the book sets the tone for the remainder of our communion with it.

Here is a judicious selection of the works of 32 poets "from Taiwan" who were mostly born in the forties or later. About half of them live in America or have studied here. Some have close ties to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, and Europe. One cannot help but get the impression that poetry in Taiwan is a ragged assemblage of individual and disparate voices. Noises indeed! And many of them are not even on the island. After reading through this volume, it is still impossible to formulate a clear opinion about what constitutes the authentic poetic tradition on Taiwan today.

A large part of the problem lies in the unsettled state of language. In the last seventy-five years, Classical Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Mandarin, and English have all played important roles in the literary education of poets associated with Taiwan. All of the poems in this anthology were ostensibly written in Mandarin, but the impact of the other four languages is obvious. In the words of the editor himself:

> It is evident that the background of the development of modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan is quite complicated. Poets bearing a strong Chinese sentiment were writing in Japanese; other poets, strongly committed to the Taiwanese identity, were writing in Japanese and Chinese. Generally speaking, after the 1937 ban on the use of Chinese, Taiwanese poets fell into a language vacuum, despite the 1945 recovery of Taiwan, and they have not yet fully recovered from this Chinese language deficiency.

It would be interesting to read a genuine **Taiwanese** poem, if such exists. We know that Taiwanese nationalists such as Lian Wenqing, Lian Yatang, Huang Shihui, and Guo Qiusheng advocated Taiwanese vernacular literature during the twenties and thirties, but nothing significant seems to have come of their efforts. The confused state of affairs that existed at that time can be seen vividly in Zhang Wojun's 1925 attempt to "elevate" the Taiwanese language so as to express Mandarin more meaningfully (?).

The peculiar linguistic state of affairs in Taiwan is also reflected in John Kwan Terry's (Guan Jieming) 1972 discovery that English translations of modern poems from Taiwan "actually sounded more like they had been composed in English than in Chinese" (*Isle,* p. 16). Kwan Terry did not mean to compliment the translators of Chinese poems but rather to denigrate their authors. The situation has not changed much, for many of the poems in this volume reflect a

purely English ethos. Zheng Chouyu's "Ladder-climbing and Grocery" (Pati ji zawu) and "Gateway Arch" (Qiuzhang de Gong), for example, seem to have been conceived in English, composed in Mandarin, then rendered back into English. These are authentically **American** poems that speak of Maryland crab, Green Bay trout, the tall grass of Oklahoma, and the great chief McIntosh.

An eloquent expression of the history of language in Taiwan during the last half a millennium is presented in Zhan Che's "She Is Not Mute" (Ta Bu Shi Yaba). This is a narrative poem which tells the story of an aboriginal girl, White Cloud (Baiyun), whose land has been occupied successively by the Manchus, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, and now Chinese. She, who once loved to sing, has been robbed of her tongue and ravished of her soul.

Foreign words, phrases, and sentences are often injected into these poems: *"tempus fugit"*, "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/ A stately pleasure dome decree..." and so forth. Zhang Cuo is particularly fond of things Japanese. It is Yang Mu, however, who makes the most conscious attempt to assimilate the Japanese experience and esthetic to the Chinese past and the Taiwanese reality. His "Second Label: Porcelain (to Chouyu)" (Di'er Ti: Ci de [Feng Chouyu]) is essentially a lesson in exegesis on the Japanese words *"Sawa no tsuru"* (澤 の 鶴). His "Somewhat" (彷 彿) concludes with the Japanese version of the first three lines of the poem. The most sensitive poets represented in this volume all seem to be striving to enlarge and internationalize the scope of Chinese verse.

An inhibiting factor in this effort, however, are the Chinese tetragraphs. Lo Qing's little brother and sister come to ask him how to write the character "tree" (*shu*). First he tries to describe it to them pictographically but finds himself entrapped in a whirl of strokes and blobs. Finally, he himself becomes so perplexed that he secretly looks it up in a reference book, studies the character for a long while, then goes back and writes it down for them meticulously. The tragedy that he foists upon these innocent young minds occurs when he succumbs to the deception of telling them that "It's very easy,/ Just do it slowly and patiently,/ Like writing 'brother' and 'sister,'/ Altogether, sixteen strokes."

Perhaps the most telling of all the poems in this volume, however, is Du Ye's celebrated "Glove and Love". So powerfully does it speak to us of the current Chinese linguistic angst that I feel obliged to quote it entire:

> A printed English word quietly lies upon the desk,
> "Glove."
> I use it to ward off the chill of life.
> The pair of dark leather gloves she left on the desk,
> Eclipsing the first letter of the word,
> Reveals another entire word,
> "Love."
>
> There is no phonetic alphabet,
> We can read the word only in silence;
> She picks up the gloves from the desk
> And hides away love;
> I quietly put them on my cold hands,
> And let love completely hide in my gloves.

Here is an epochal poem, written neither in English nor in Chinese, but lying somewhere in between. Reading this poem, one feels almost as though he has wandered into another dimension.

Dominic Cheung's introduction is both informed and informative, but it is plagued with the same technical and stylistic blemishes that are evident throughout the book: typographical errors, inaccurate transcriptions, and occasionally unidiomatic English. In spite of these infelicities, *The Isle Full of Noises* merits our attention for the issues it raises about poetry, language, and culture in Taiwan today.

Chaves, Jonathan, ed. and tr. *The Columbia Book of Later Chinese Poetry: Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing Dynasties (1279-1911).* New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. xiii + 483 pages.

This is a bountiful selection of pieces by 43 poets from the last three Chinese dynasties. Most of the poems are in the *shi* ("lyric verse") form which is a departure from the usual practice of concentrating more heavily on *ci* ("lyric meters") and *qu* ("cantos") in the later stages of the Chinese poetic tradition. Partially following the great Japanese critic, Yoshikawa Kojiro, Chaves makes a case in his introduction for restoring the *shi* form to its position of primacy. It must be admitted that, among prestige poets, *shi* remained the preferred type of poetry till the very end of the imperial system in 1911 and the consequent demise of the classical language shortly thereafter. This is so in spite of the fact that the form had passed its heyday during the Tang period nearly a thousand years before. Yet, if only out of sheer curiosity, one wonders what a truly representative collection of poetry for later dynasties might look like. How large a role did vernacular verse play in this period? Precious little of it has survived (e.g. Feng Menglong's "Hill Songs" 山歌), but we know next to nothing about its position vis-à-vis *shi* or even *ci* and *qu,* for that matter.

Many other tantalizing questions come to mind. What factors were operative when a poet chose to write in one of the available forms? Was his choice determined by content? Mood? Were there any sociological overtones?

These are, of course, not questions that we should expect Professor Chaves to answer for us. His task has been to present a judicious balance of elite, literati poetry -- the *crème de la crème* -- and this he has done well. The poems are expertly translated, and Chaves does a commendable job of trying to distinguish the various styles of the individual poets.

The pleasure afforded by this handsome volume is enhanced by a section of plates (between pp. 350 and 351) giving samples of painting and calligraphy by several of the poets. As do his biographical sketches and informative annotations, Chaves' ability to treat in an integral, enlightening manner the poetic and artistic oeuvre of Chinese literati reveals a rare talent of his own. We can be grateful for the sensitivity and critical insight that went into the making of this substantial anthology.

Bilancia, Philip R. *Dictionary of Chinese Law and Government: Chinese-English.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981. xv + 822 pages.

Hucker, Charles O. *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. ix + 676 pages.

Here are two magnificent reference tools, each of which represents an enormous personal investment of time and energy on the part of their respective compilers. Further, since both bear the Stanford imprint, we are indebted to the vision and astuteness of the editors at the Press in seeing these two major projects through to marketable completion.

The most striking feature shared by the two dictionaries in common is that they are both arranged according to a strict alphabetical order.[1] Although these are specialized reference tools, they are the most convenient to use of all Chinese-English dictionaries known to me. With the Hucker dictionary, all that one need do to find a given term is search for it in a single alphabetical listing. No radicals, corners, codes, strokes, or head characters to worry about. The Bilancia dictionary requires a somewhat more complicated search, since it groups entries according to the sound of the tetragraph used to represent the first syllable. This arrangement is approximately the same as that used in the familiar Mathews' dictionary except that: 1. the initial tetragraphs are not set off as headings for sections; 2. all expressions beginning with the first tone of a given sound precede those beginning with the other tones, second tone initials come before third, and third

before fourth; 3. under a given initial tetragraph, items are listed in alphabetical sequence of the sounds of the succeeding tetragraphs rather than radical order. For the very rare instances when one does not know the pronunciation of a whole word (*ci*), both dictionaries provide radical indexes at the back. Both also have conversion tables so that those familiar with other systems will be able to interpret the traditional Wade-Giles transcription employed therein.

Bilancia's dictionary is more than just a collection of legal and political technical terms. Because it endeavors to include a wide variety of entries relating to the already broad fields of law and government, this dictionary will be useful to anyone who is studying nearly any aspect of the PRC. Altogether it has more than 25,000 terms, at least 15,000 examples of usage, and more than 30,000 cross-references.

Hucker's dictionary is one of the most important Sinological research tools to appear in this century. Chinese official titles are notoriously difficult to understand and translate, but now we have a source that will permit us to be reliable as well as consistent in dealing with them. This extremely useful dictionary brings together the scattered results of a century of efforts on the part of about a dozen dedicated Sinologists (H. S. Brunnert, V. V. Hagelstrom, Edouard Biot, Homer Dubs, Hans Bielenstein, Edward Kracke, Robert des Rotours, Chang Fu-jui, and others) who have worked on the official titles of different dynasties.

Hucker begins his dictionary with a learned disquisition (pp. 1-96b) that describes the governmental organization of China era by era in concise prose and straightforward charts. The main body of the dictionary consists of 8,291 entries that are veritable goldmines of valuable information about the derivations of arcane titles, their shifting significations throughout history, and references to standard secondary sources. Hucker's dictionary is capable of saving the Sinologist thousands of hours of agonizing effort during the course of his scholarly career.

Both Hucker's and Bilancia's dictionaries are beautifully printed on good quality paper and give clear directions to the user. The judiciously supplied tetragraphs are extremely sharp and easy to read. Stanford University Press and the compilers deserve the warmest congratulations for these most welcome additions to our reference shelves.

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1. For a description and rationale of single-sort alphabetical ordering for Chinese reference works, see the reviewer's "The Need for an Alphabetically Arranged General Usage Dictionary of Mandarin Chinese," *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 1 (February 1986).

Logan, Robert K. *The Alphabet Effect: The Impact of the Phonetic Alphabet on the Development of Western Civilization*. New York: William Morrow, 1986. 272 pages.

The author of this highly significant book is a professor of physics at the University of Toronto and a disciple of the renowned communications theorists, Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan. Logan juggles a large number of disparate, but related, topics within the confines of less than 250 pages, so that experts are bound to find many places at which they take exception to this or that detail. The book would have benefited from more careful proofreading and stylistic editing. At times the writing soars, but occasionally it is rather clumsy.

What makes *The Alphabet Effect* so exciting, however, are the stimulating ideas it proffers and the courageous, forthright manner in which they are presented. Logan begins with an introduction to the alphabet as the "mother of invention". He swiftly reviews the latest scholarship which chronicles the invention of writing by the Sumerians around 3,100 Before the International Era and the creation of the consonantal "alphabet" by the Canaanites some 1,500 years later. After briefly examining the spread of the vowelless Semitic scripts across Asia, Logan turns his attention to the development of the complete phonetic alphabet by the Greeks.

Then comes that portion of the book which will be of most immediate interest to readers of *Sino-Platonic Papers*, namely a discussion of why the Chinese never developed an alphabet and the implications this has held for their civilization. Regrettably, Logan reveals some basic misconceptions concerning the nature of Chinese languages, such as that "contemporary Chinese are able to read texts 3,500 years old" (p. 43). This is true only of a few individuals with

specialized training in epigraphy and paleography. Nor are all Chinese words (*ci*) monosyllabic. Logan makes the outlandish assertion that there are "2,365 different Mandarin words, each with its own unique pictogram or character, that are all pronounced *shih*" (p. 44). The book is replete with such egregious misunderstandings of the nature of Chinese script and languages. Throughout, Logan insistently refers to the Chinese tetragraphs as ideograms or pictographs. It is unfortunate that he did not consult more reliable, recent authorities (such as John DeFrancis and S. Robert Ramsey) because his succumbing to so many of the old myths and canards concerning Chinese languages undercuts the credibility of what is otherwise an extremely valuable and thought-provoking study. Yet, in spite of the bad linguistic advice Logan received, the contrasts he draws between Chinese and Western cultural patterns display an impressive perceptivity.

This book is bound to provoke either ire or ecstasy among students of Chinese. The tetragraphs (*fangkuaizi*) and their role in the civilization are employed at strategic points as a control for arguments that Logan builds concerning the development of Western civilization. Very early in his presentation (pp. 21-22), Logan makes the blunt claim: "The use of the phonetic alphabet [in the West but not in China] helps to explain why Western and Chinese thinking are so different (abstract and theoretical for the West versus concrete and practical for the East)." In fact, it is clear that Logan's preoccupation with the stark differences between Western theoretical science and Chinese "phenomenological" technology constitutes the basic motivation for his investigations.

Nitpicking Sinologists will readily spot dozens of minor errors. Most of these are so obvious that there is no reason for me to catalogue them here. Let us hope, however, that Logan's vulnerability to the criticism of technical minutiae will not cause readers to lose sight of his brilliant insights which are eminently worthy of consideration. Not everyone will immediately agree with the proposition that the alphabetic script "creates the environmental conditions under which abstract theoretical science flourishes" (p. 54) or that the difficulty of classifying and ordering Chinese tetragraphs "make them less conducive to abstract scientific thinking than an alphabetic script" (p. 55). But the mere utterance of such statements serves to heighten the awareness of scholars to the question of the potential *causes* for fundamental cultural differences between China and the West.

Other topics raised by Logan that merit the careful scrutiny of students of Chinese civilization are the radically different role of printing in China and in the West, the political implications of the rise of vernaculars, the relationship between orality and literacy, individualism versus social hierarchy, and the origins of monotheism and codified law. Many of Logan's most important observations derive from his conceptualization of the alphabet as a powerful and effective system for organizing all sorts of things. Perhaps the most fascinating of all Logan's perceptions is his last, namely that in the context of global information processing, the left-brain proclivities of the alphabetic West and the right-brain predispositions of morphosyllabic East Asia are drawing closer together. If Logan's conclusions are valid, there is hope that the future will witness the birth of a new ecumenical civilization that embraces the virtues of the logical, rational, abstract alphabetic mind and the analogical, intuitive, concrete heart, while at the same time dispensing with the excesses of both. At the very least, Robert Logan has written a book that deserves serious reflection on the part of students of both Chinese and Western civilizations.

Liu Zhengtan, Gao Mingkai, et al., comp. *A Dictionary of Loan Words and Hybrid Words in Chinese (Hanyu Wailai Cidian)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Reference Book Publishing House (Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe), 1984. 422 pages.

Editing and Translating Section of *Mandarin Daily* Publishers (*Guoyu Ribao* Chuban Bu Bianyi Zu), comp. *The Mandarin Daily Dictionary of Loan Words (Guoyu Ribao Wailaiyu Cidian)*. Taipei: *Mandarin Daily* Publishers, 1981. 7 + 532 pages.

The most striking thing about both of these books is how small they are in comparison

with dictionaries of word borrowings for other major world languages. The Shanghai (henceforth SH) volume treats roughly 8,000 foreign words (the overwhelming majority of which are no longer current) borrowed into Chinese and the Taipei (TP) volume only 1,820. The foreign words adopted into Japanese and English that are actively used on a daily basis number in the tens of thousands. The ability of a language to accommodate word borrowings is an index of its strength, resiliency, and international stature. In this review, I shall inquire into the causes for the poor word borrowing capacity of Chinese.

It is **not** the case that new words and the concepts or objects they signify fail to reach China. In the Chinese Buddhist canon, for example, we can find over 35,000 new words introduced into Chinese from Sanskrit and other languages during the period from the late Han to the end of the Tang dynasty. The problem is that the arbiters of linguistic and stylistic rectitude in China have relentlessly hunted them out and ruthlessly extirpated all but a tiny percentage that had worked their way irrevocably into common speech ("Buddha", "Zen", "Boddhisattva", and so forth).

The process of purifying Chinese of undesirable foreign elements continues unabated in this century. *Bashi* was a perfectly good term for signifying "bus", but it has been replaced by the clumsy *gonggongqiche.* Although *leishe* (literally "thunder ray") was an apt equivalent for "laser" (actually an acronym for l[ight] a[mplification by] s[timulated] e[mission of] r[adiation]), Chinese physicists have announced with a surge of nationalistic pride that they have invented their own name for this new device, namely *jiguang* (literally "excited light"). The heights of ridiculousness to which this practice may rise is exemplified by the rejection of *jiyin* (literally "foundation-factor") in favor of the more authentically Chinese sounding *moban* (literally "model board"[!]) for "gene". A serviceable technical term that was more or less compatible with international biological usage has given way to an awkward expression that, while supposedly salving Han egos, is **opaque** to all except those who thought it up. It is as though those who concoct such ungainly calques and neologisms imagined that, by creating words which **seem** to be Han in nature, they have gained merit for themselves and their country. In my estimation, the true situation is exactly the opposite.

This narrowly nationalistic self-deception actually leads to a tragic impoverishment of the tongue. The precision and grandeur of the English language depends in large measure on its hugely rich vocabulary which has been borrowed from across the globe. By accepting new words (and hence new ideas) into one's language, one expands the horizons of the mind and the vision of the soul. In effect, Chinese linguistic puritans stultify the thoughts of their compatriots by restricting them to old concepts that must be regurgitated over and over again.

The drive to create a thoroughbred Chinese term for every new word that comes from abroad also leads to chaos. There are, for instance, more than a dozen different **translations** of the word "microphone" in Chinese but only one Japanese **transcription** (*maiku[rohon]*). It should be painfully clear that the Japanese are going to be able to make better use of the products of modern technology than the Chinese because they have exact, comprehensible, internationally accepted designations for them. The folly of Chinese linguistic policy with regard to word borrowing most assuredly is a major factor in holding back social and scientific progress. Unfortunately, aside from the one very recent and refreshing exception to be mentioned below, I do not know of any critics who are aware of the deplorable consequences of such narrow-mindedness.

This amounts to what I see as a language crisis of virtually mortal proportions. While Chinese authorities stubbornly insist on maintaining the purity of Han languages, the realms of business, education, and science pragmatically turn to English or Japanese. Why? To get the job done. In fighting fiercely to preserve the chastity of their native tongue, the guardians of linguistic rectitude are witnessing the erosion of its actual utility in the modern world.

Should we attribute this erroneous approach to word-borrowing merely to the stubbornness and stupidity of those who set themselves up as the protectors of the language? By no means should we do so, for the crucial issue lies far deeper. The single most significant obstacle in inhibiting the enrichment of Chinese languages by the addition of foreign words is the script. The watchdogs of linguistic purity only fall prey to the prejudices which it

institutionalizes. New words flow freely into Chinese at the spoken level ("taxi", "captain", "clamp", "vitamin", and thousands of others). It is only when they come to be written down that they are discriminated against. The reason for this is the lack of flexibility in the script. This is true even of borrowings from other Chinese dialects and languages into officially sanctioned book Mandarin. If Chinese were permitted to use a more convenient phonetic notation, such as Pinyin, many of the seemingly innate prejudices against foreign words would disappear immediately.

After completing the first draft of this review, I received in the mail the offprint of an article by Liu Yongquan entitled "Terminological Development and Organization in China" that appeared in *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 59 (1986), 33-46. It was most gratifying to find that Liu had independently arrived at some of the same conclusions I had. On p. 42, we read the following:

> Thus, it can be seen that it is not the Chinese language but the Chinese character which does not tolerate loanwords. Chinese would be able to absorb a large number of phonetic loanwords (at least in regard strictly to pure terms) just as other languages do, if the phoneticization of Chinese writing is realized. Then Chinese terminology would gradually draw close to the internationalized terminology. Recently the author made a statistical analysis of Japanese computer terms, the result of which suffices to prove the possibility of drawing close to internationalized terminology. Statistics based on the *Japanese-Chinese Computer Lexicon* reveal that three-fourths of the total number of entries are loanwords. The amount is so high, yet it did not cause confusion. It seems that no confusion will be caused at all because the loanwords are written in katagana, which is clear at a glance and useful for segmenting the words in a Japanese text. The statistics also reveal that the Japanese have transferred foreign words by means of a semantic approach with the aid of kanji in the past, but they transfer foreign words by means of a phonetic approach with the aid of katagana now. How can there be such change? It is important to find the inner cause of this change. It is known that there was no significant change in the structure of the Japanese language during this period. It is apparent that the main cause does not lie in the structure but in the medium of transcription.

Another beneficial side-effect of such linguistic liberality might be the gradual expansion of the phonemic inventory for Mandarin. Complaints about the small number of possible syllables available in Mandarin would vanish once foreign words are permitted to enter the language in their original guise (just as "tsetse fly" and other formerly alien terms have expanded the phonemic inventory of English).

Aside from these general considerations on the phenomenon of word borrowing in Chinese, what may be said about the contents and quality of SH and TP? The former is built upon the impressive achievements of the two principal compilers, Gao Mingkai and Liu Zhengtan, in their *Studies on Word Borrowings in Modern Chinese (Xiandai Hanyu Wailaici Yanjiu)* (Peking: Language Reform Publishing House [Wenzi Gaige Chubanshe], 1958). SH has definite scholarly aspirations and makes use of secondary resources in many languages, though it must be cited with caution as an authority. Wisely, SH has been arranged in alphabetical order (multiple sort according to head characters and succeeding characters of each entry). The main body of the dictionary is preceded by a superfluous alphabetical index of head characters and succeeded by a total stroke count index of head characters (subdivided according to the shape of initial strokes in each character).

TP has fewer scholarly pretensions but possesses the virtue of being more discursive and leisurely in its explanations. The main body of the dictionary is arranged according to the pronunciations of head characters as recorded in the National Phonetic Symbols that are still used on Taiwan. Fortunately, the reconstructions of the original terms are given in romanized form. Preceding the main body of the dictionary is an index of entries according to the radical sequence

of head characters. Following the main body of the dictionary is an alphabetical listing of all borrowed words in their original forms. The publication of these two dictionaries of foreign words in Mandarin at about the same time and on both sides of the Taiwan Straits offers some encouragement that the vital matter of word borrowings will be taken more seriously by Chinese linguistic planners in the future. The health of their language, and hence of their culture, depends upon it.

Shao Xiantu, Zhou Dingguo, et al., comp. *A Dictionary of the Origins of Foreign Place Names (Waiguo Diming Yuyuan Cidian)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Reference Book Publishing House (Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe), 1983. 6 + 42 + 567 pages.

This is a very handy yet moderately learned collection of explanations of the derivations of more than 4,200 geographical names. The bibliographical sources (pp. 565-567) drawn upon by the compilers are standard reference works in Europe, the Americas, India, Southeast Asia, and Japan. The main arrangement of the dictionary is by total stroke count of the initial characters (simplified forms) of the Chinese equivalent transcriptions, followed by succeeding characters in total stroke count order. Two-syllable names beginning with the same character are grouped together, then three-syllable names, and so forth. This makes it a bit difficult to locate a desired item, especially because there are often variant Chinese transcriptions of the same foreign name. It would have been more convenient to arrange the entries by the sounds of the characters. The index of entries by total strokes and then by the shapes of successive strokes of the characters that occupies the first 39 pages of the dictionary is virtually useless. More to be appreciated is an alphabetical index of the entries according to their original orthographies that may be found on pp. 493-564. Each entry is accompanied by the original orthography of the name or, in the case of Japanese words, with its romanization. A concise paragraph of information concerning the etymology, history, and toponymic legends associated with the place is given.

There is a preference for transcriptions in the main entries (e.g. Shengfulangxisiko) over the more common pseudo-Chinese toponyms (Jiujinshan or Sanfanshi), but the latter are given in the succeeding explanations.

The first appendix is a long list of geographical terms in foreign languages together with their Chinese translations. The second appendix is a brief introduction to the major languages of the world. While this is a handy enumeration, it is hard to understand the decision to place it in this particular work.

Similarly, it is not easy to fathom the reasons for the sizable investment in time and money devoted to this project by China's premier publisher of reference books. Does China really need a dictionary of foreign place names before it has one that explains the origins of Chinese toponyms? One clue for the justification of the present work may be found in the discussion of the name Vladivostok (Russian for "controlling the East"[!]). There (p. 378) we learn that this strategic port was ceded by the Qing government in the Sino-Russian Treaty of 1860 and that the common Chinese name for it is Haishenwei. The compilers seem to indicate that the latter name means "Sea Cucumber Harbor" but it is more likely to derive from an unspecified Manchu word. Another clue may be found in the discussion of Chomolungma which "used to be called" Mt. Everest. There are many other such hints sprinkled liberally throughout the dictionary.

Although this dictionary is full of arcane and interesting information, surely China is in much greater need of a standardized system of reference to all foreign place names. I have read dozens of complaints in letters to the editors of Chinese newspapers and magazines from readers who stumbled across long strings of characters that obviously referred to some foreign name but they had no idea what place (or person) was intended. Or they would encounter the same name transcribed in many different ways in various publications. I would merely make a modest proposal that the simplest solution to end the confusion would be to give the names in romanization and according to the pronunciation in the languages whence they derive. All Chinese schoolchildren learn romanization and nearly all Chinese typesetters are equipped to handle the 26 letters of the alphabet. Westerners are being required to say "Beijing" instead of

"Peking", which is all well and good; now it is only fitting that modern Chinese begin to say "New York" instead of "Niuyue".

Chang, Tsung-tung. *Metaphysik, Erkenntnis und Praktische Philosophie im Chuang-Tzu: Zur Neu-Interpretation und systematischen Darstellung der klassischen chinesischen Philosophie.* Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982. 486 pages.

This is a long, rambling, and diffuse work that attempts to put the late fourth-century B.I.E. philosopher, Zhuangzi, in the context of pre-Qin thought generally. The book is divided into three major sections, the first one dealing with metaphysical speculation, the second with epistemology, and the third with practical philosophy. The unsystematic conclusion presents an assortment of biographical data, critical views, and miscellaneous information about Zhuangzi. Appendices include lists of the extensive translations in the book from the *Zhuangzi, Laozi, Analects, Mecius, Mencius, Gongsunlongzi,* the *Springs and Autumns of Lyu Buwei, Xunzi,* and more than half a dozen other early sources; chronologies; bibliographies; and indices. Aside from the author's evident effort to be reasonably comprehensive, it is difficult to determine whether there was any special reason (such as the presentation of a thesis) for him to write this book.

Bloom, Irene, translated, edited, and with an introduction by the translator. *Knowledge Painfully Acquired: The* K'un-chih chi*of Lo Ch'in-shun.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1987. xii + 226 pages.

This is a carefully annotated and skillfully translated English version of the most important work of Wang Yang-ming's chief philosophical antagonist. Lo Ch'in-shun followed in the Neo-Confucian path of the Ch'eng brothers and Chu Hsi of the Sung period. Though his views were inimical to Buddhism and Taoism, he shows himself to be more informed and less dogmatic about them than most of his Ming cohorts in the Ch'eng-Chu tradition.

Lo's chief innovations were in the area of epistemology. The translation of the *K'un-chih chi [A Record of Learning in Spite of Constraints]* is preceded by an introduction which attempts to relate Lo's treatise to developments in Western philosophy, but basically seems to hold it to be *sui generis*. The *Record* is followed by translations of two letters to Wang Yang-ming, bibliography, glossary, and index. Meticulously prepared, Bloom's book wastes not a word. As a result, she has succeeded in making palatable material that might otherwise have come across as exceedingly tedious.

Research Institute for Language Pedagogy of the Peking College of Languages (Beijing Yuyan Xueyuan Yuyan Jiaoxue Yanjiusuo, comp. *Frequency Dictionary of Words in Modern Chinese (Xiandai Hanyu Pinlyu Cidian).* Peking: Peking College of Languages Press, 1986.

This volume was produced by the same people who brought us *Statistics and Analysis of Mandarin Vocabulary (Hanyu Cihui de Tongji yu Fenxi),* which I reviewed extensively in *Xin Tang / New China,* 7 (1986), 140-145. The major difference is that the breadth of the sample base for analysis has been greatly enlarged. In addition to the primary through high school pedagogical materials that were employed in the earlier study, this *Frequency Dictionary* examines 179 texts that are divided into four categories: political commentaries, popular science, scripts from the oral and performing arts, and literary texts.

Taken all together, the materials on which this dictionary is based consist of 31,159 different words (*ci*) occurring a total of 1,314,404 times (i.e. tokens). These words are composed of 4,574 different tetragraphs (*zi*) occurring a total of 1,808,114 times. Of the total 1,314,404 words in the entire sample, 8,367 occur 10 or more times and account for 95^{+}% of

the total. The average number of occurrences for the 8,000 highest frequency words is 156^{+}. The average number of occurrences for the 21,000 lowest frequency words is 2.8^{+}.

The dictionary is divided into several main sections: a frequency chart of words arranged alphabetically according to head characters (i.e., double sort alphabetical order) on pages 1-490, a chart of the highest 8,548 words arranged according to descending degree of usage (*shiyongdu*) on pages 491-656, a chart of the highest 8,441 words arranged according to descending frequency on pages 657-820, a chart of 22,446 relatively low usage and low frequency words on pages 821-960, a chart of the distribution of the 4,000 highest frequency words among the four categories of texts in the sample on pages 961-1280, a chart of the 360 words of broadest frequency on pages 1281-1288, an analysis of the distribution of the 300 highest frequency words on pages 1289-1298, a chart of the 4,574 tetragraphs (*fangkuaizi*) having an accumulated frequency of 100% (N.B.!) of the entire sample arranged according to descending frequency on pages 1299-1388, and an analysis of the word-forming ability (*gouci nengli*) of all the individual tetragraphs in the entire sample on pages 1389-1478. Appendices include the following: statistical computations of the number (i.e. "types") of different words (*cishu*) in each of the "token" classes (*cici dengji*), a comparison of the average length of words in the various categories of materials, statistical computations of the syllabic length of words according to the types and tokens of each of the various categories, the types and accumulated frequencies of the 9,000 words in the highest degrees of usage, a comparison of the syllabic structure and accumulated frequency of words in various frequency ranges.

What are some of the conclusions that may be drawn from this study? To begin with, the thousand highest frequency words amount to only 3.2% of the total number of different words but account for 73.13% of the total number of occurrences of all the words in the sample. The 5,000 highest frequency words count for only 16% of the total number of different words but have an accumulated frequency of 91.67% of all the occurrences of words in the sample. The 9,000 highest frequency words amount to 28.9% of the total number of different words and have an accumulated frequency of 95.84% of the entire sample. The remainder of low frequency words (occurring 8 or fewer times) are 22,159 in number (71.12% of the total number of different words) but amount to only 4.16% of the total number of occurrences in the entire sample.

In terms of length, among the 200 highest frequency words (more than 900 occurrences each) there are none which have three or more syllables. Only three of the first thousand words of highest frequency have three syllables and only two have four syllables whereas 550 have but one syllable and 445 have two syllables. Among the first thousand highest frequency words, monosyllabic words occur two and a half times more often in the total sample than bisyllabic words. Among the first 5,000 highest frequency words, monosyllabic words account for slightly more than half of the total sample. Among the 9,000 highest frequency words, on the other hand, the number of bisyllabic words in the total sample is 2.1 times greater than that of monosyllabic words. Of all 31,159 different words in the sample, 4,467 have three or more syllables (14.3% of the total number of different words) and occur 18,000 times (only 1.36% of the entire sample).

Put simply, what this means is that, like English, most of the very highest frequency words in Mandarin are monosyllabic. The **bulk of words in the language**, both in terms of number of different items and total number of occurrences, **is decidedly bisyllabic** and, among the lowest frequency words, polysyllabic. It is for this reason that, in the near future, alphabetical inputting of Mandarin is feasible for computer applications and, in the long run, romanization of the language itself will undoubtedly be realized. The monosyllabic myth is dead.

Liu Yuan, chief compiler. *Word List of Modern Mandarin (Xiandai Hanyu Cibiao)*. Peking: Zhongguo Biaozhun Chubanshe, 1984.

The following paragraphs are translated from the prefatory comments of the editors:

We have compiled this *Word List of Modern Mandarin* to meet the needs of the information age. This word list was compiled for technical personnel who are doing research on Chinese information processing and for workers in the social sciences. Altogether, the book includes approximately 100,000 general technical terms and words in common use. Among these is a group of 12,000 odd words that share the same pronunciation and tone(s) with at least one other word in the group and over 2,000 monosyllabic words. This is one of the largest word lists to have been published in China. All of the words in it are written out in Hanyu Pinyin with tones indicated. Because the standards for word division in Mandarin have not yet been formally promulgated, the word boundaries indicated herein should be considered as merely tentative.

The *Word List of Modern Mandarin* consists of the newest vocabulary taken from various types of Sinoxenic dictionaries, newspapers, and magazines distributed in China in recent years. After editing, omission of duplicates, and **overall arrangement by single-sort alphabetical order**, this work stands as the first in our Tetragraphic Information Series. Because of time constraints, the large number of words included, the breadth of fields covered, and the limitations of our own abilities, there are bound to be some defects and errors in this work, so we earnestly hope that readers will offer us their esteemed opinions.

The Editing Group of *A New English-Chinese Dictionary,* comp. *A New English-Chinese Dictionary*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987, revised and enlarged edition. 1,770 pages.

Superficially, this English-Mandarin dictionary may be considered as a companion to *A New Chinese-English Dictionary,* compiled by Ding Guangxun, et al. which was also published by the University of Washington Press (1985). The latter dictionary was described by the present reviewer in *Xin Tang / New China,* 7 (1986), pp. 138-141. Lexicographically speaking, the present dictionary is actually far superior to its companion, although it shares some of the same drawbacks in terms of format and intended audience.

A New English-Chinese Dictionary was first published in 1975 by the Shanghai Translation Publishing House. The Joint Publishing Company in Hong Kong has been distributing it outside of China. Now the University of Washington Press has gained the rights to distribute the dictionary in North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

The dictionary defines a total of more than 80,000 words, including derivations and compound words. A very serious drawback of the dictionary for the English speaker who wishes to use it as a reference tool for Chinese is that all of the notations, abbreviations, appendices, and explanatory apparatus is directed to speakers of Chinese languages. In other words, this is a reference book that was written with the needs of Chinese speakers in mind, not Americans, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, or other speakers of English. The phonetic transcriptions, at least, are given in the International Phonetic Alphabet and a comparative chart for Merriam-Webster Pronunciation Symbols is also provided. Another deficiency of the dictionary is that the print (particularly the Chinese tetragraphs) is so small and bunched together that it is very difficult to scan the long entries which offer an assortment of example sentences in English and Chinese. This is due to the fact that the edition under review is a compact (5" x 7") version of the dictionary. Even so, it is much too thick (2 3/4") to carry around in one's pocket, so nothing has been gained for the user by shrinking the size of the dictionary to its present small proportions.

The emphasis on coverage is decidedly in favor of the natural sciences over the social sciences and the humanities. Surprisingly, however, the dictionary includes a large number of slang and colloquial expressions, replete with usage notes. Also overrepresented are abbreviations and acronyms, some of which are extremely arcane or obscure. It is perhaps worth

mentioning that there are relatively more entries dealing with China and Asia than one would normally expect to find in a dictionary of this size.

Finally, the over 4,000 new entries dating from the 1960s onwards that have been added were not integrated into the main body of the dictionary. They have, instead, been relegated to a "supplement" which occupies the last part of the book.

If I were reviewing this dictionary in China for Chinese readers, maybe I could be more enthusiastic about it. From where I sit now, however, I find it hard to discern whom the North American publishers hope will buy -- let alone benefit from -- this dictionary.

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Woods, Lucia (Liu) and Katherine Flower, ed. *Everyday Mandarin: Chinese Video Course for Beginners*. London: BBC External Business and Development Group, in co-operation with Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, 1984. x + 113 pages; 2 audio cassettes; 1 video cassette.

This is a handsome package indeed, complete with flashy golden dragon leaping across the pale purple cover. Photographs and simple drawings are liberally sprinkled throughout the text. The typography is crisp, the layout is clear, and the paper is luxuriously, creamily thick.

The "course" consists of 60 brief lessons, each one divided into "Words and Phrases" (about 5 to 10 items per lesson), example "Sentences" (half a dozen or so), grammatical and lexical "Language Notes" (usually 2 or 3), a short drill section called "Practise your Chinese" (mostly made up of a few questions for the student to answer) and an occasional structured dialogue. Back matter includes a list of numbers and several paragraphs on how to use them, an explanation of calendrical terms, a chart of 19 measure words, another minimalist chart showing the function of 7 particles, a "Key to Exercises", and an index of lexical items arranged according to the alphabetical order of their English equivalents (not very handy for the utter tyro).

The package, which is intended for self-study, is rather skimpy for anyone who is serious about learning enough Mandarin for any practical purpose, but that is **not** the main reason why I cannot recommend it. Nor is the less than pure Pekingese pronunciation of the voices on the tapes. There are two fatal flaws in *Everyday Mandarin* that militate against its adoption. The first is its four-page introduction which reeks with misinformation. Such as:

> There are 289 radicals in Chinese. They provide clues to the general classification of the word. For example:
>
> 男 nan = man + field 田 (radical) strength 力
> (a person with strength to work in the fields)
>
> 华 hua = national
>
> 花 hua = flower
> (the *sound* comes from 华 but the *meaning* comes from the radical for *grass,* ⺾)

It would be difficult to pack more errors into such a short space unless one were trying to break a dubious record for mendacity. Or take "Chinese characters can be written down using the Roman alphabet." That would be a very neat trick which I would love to see demonstrated! How anyone who has the slightest pretension to knowledge of the workings of the Chinese script could make such a zany statement is beyond belief. The probable explanation for this outrageous blunder is that the authors obviously do not know the difference between a Chinese **character** and a Mandarin **word.** Damning evidence that they cannot tell one from the other is that the only polysyllabic "words" (*ci*) in the book written in orthographically correct Pinyin (at least part of
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the time) are Huayu, Hanyu, Putonghua, Zhongwen ("Mandarin"), *dianche* ("trolley bus"), *zhuozi* ("table"), Sulian ("Soviet Union"), Yingguo ("England", but not Ying wen ["Eng lish", as it were]), Faguo ("France"), Beijing, Shanghai, and a few other place names. Even poor Singapore is made to read in crucified Pinyin as though it meant "New Add Slope" (ghastly in comparison with "City of Lions", its real meaning)! My flesh creeps when I encounter such monstrosities as *jin tian* ("to day"), *xiong di jie mei* ("bro thers and sis ters"), *tai tai* ("wi fe"), and *xian sheng* ("hus band"). And I have only begun to scratch the surface. Fie upon the BBC for having failed to consult someone who recognizes a tetragraph when he sees one before squandering their pounds on this lavish production!

Everyday Mandarin seems to have been designed by people of good will but less than average intelligence for those innocents who are entirely devoid of the latter quality.

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