

PREFACE.

It seems incredible that in these days of advanced learning, there has heretofore been no suitable handbook of the Chinese language;—a book that would enable a student to acquire, without a teacher, a working knowledge of Chinese. The absence of such a book is the *raison d'être* of our “CHINESE MADE EASY”.

THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE is, strange to say, easier to acquire than ancient Greek or Latin, or many modern European languages. German, French, Spanish, and Italian are each in turn, more difficult to learn than Chinese. Let us take for example the word HAND. In German we must remember whether the word HAND be of masculine, feminine or neuter gender; in French, Spanish or Italian we must recall whether the word be of masculine or feminine gender; whereas in Chinese, as in English, all we need burden our memory with is the word “HAND”, which in Cantonese Chinese, is *sow*. Once learned the word *sow* is irrevocably fixed in our memory. The simplicity of such a language is at once self evident, when we are told that words have neither gender nor declension; that verbs have no conjugation (and may be either active, transitive, neuter or even causal); that the language is composed mainly of monosyllabic words, which are really root ideas; and that a word may be used either as a noun, verb, adverb or conjunction, depending simply on the context or as the exigencies of the surrounding words demand.

This has led to the popular fallacy that the Chinese language has no grammar. What is meant by that statement is that a grammar *per se* has never been made by the Chinese themselves. Nevertheless the Chinese language does adhere to certain forms in the use of speech, which forms it is necessary

for us to acquire to speak, read, and write the language correctly; hence as grammar may be defined to be "the art of speaking, reading and writing a language correctly", the Chinese language may be said to have a grammar. Just as in English, there are some words which have the same sound and yet convey different meanings, so in Chinese; this is not hard to comprehend. Thus in English FOUR, FOR, FORE, are each spelled differently, though pronounced alike; there is with us no ambiguity as to idea, for by context we instinctively know the meaning intended; so with the Chinese. This similarity of sounds has led to the adoption by Europeans, of a system of "tones", which system, seeks by the placing of circumflex signs at the four corners of a given Chinese character, to convey the exact tone of the word. This is an artificial method, and one the Chinese themselves do not employ; because of the difficulty of mastering this artificial method, and the discouragement it lends to the study of Chinese, and because we do not deem it absolutely essential to the purpose of this volume, no attempt has been made by us to supply tones, as we believe by the employment of our system of phonetics and the close application of the contents of our book, such a system of tones will be found unnecessary. We have previously noted that the Chinese language was originally mainly a monosyllabic language; in reality few words are not compound; a glance at the words in our book having brackets will show the correctness of our statement. These compound words quite simplify the acquiring of the language, as by their use, many words which might be capable of misconstruction (phonetically) are thereby made comprehensible.

DIALECTS. There are employed throughout the Chinese Empire eight* dialects, each one of which differs from the other as much as English does from Dutch. This book is written in the Cantonese dialect since the majority of the Chinese who are to be found here and outside of China are from the Canton Provinces. Mandarin is the official language of China. It is well here to call attention to the fact, that written Chinese is uniformly the same over all China; a Chinese manuscript is equally intelligible to an inhabitant of the far north or the extreme south of China, "just as the Arabic and Roman numerals are understood all over Europe, although pronounced differently by various nations."

WRITTEN CHINESE. There is a popular fallacious notion that written

* This refers to the main dialects; there are said to be twenty nine dialects in use throughout the Chinese Empire.

Chinese is unusually difficult to acquire. This is not so, the reader is requested to look over the section on Chinese writing before commencing the study of Chinese. Once the idea of written Chinese is grasped, it ought not to be more difficult for us to write a 15 stroke Chinese word, than it is for a Chinaman, to learn to write such a word as PLENIPOTENTIARY. This has only 15 letters in its composition yet it takes about 32 separate strokes of the pen to print the same. A more fascinating accomplishment could scarce be imagined than the ability to write Chinese characters.

THE VALUE OF A KNOWLEDGE OF CHINESE. This can not be overestimated, since to acquire it, gives one as much mental training as do many of the subjects found in a college curriculum. There is something fascinating in the thought that in acquiring a modern language, (i. e. Chinese) we are at the same time acquiring a language more ancient than that of Athens or Rome; a language which is unique, in that it is known to at least a third of the world's population; moreover it is the only live language extant, that antedates the Christian era.

The utilitarian advantage also is not to be underestimated. The opening of the 20th Century already gives promise of the prominent rôle China is yet to play in world politics. Moreover commercially, the knowledge to be obtained from our book, will be of inestimable value to those who contemplate doing business with the Chinese. We hope to see the day when a knowledge of the Chinese language will be as common an accomplishment, as a knowledge of German, French, Spanish, or Italian, is to-day.

It would be a good plan before sending Missionaries to China to require of them at least six months study of the Chinese language before embarking for China. Only those who have evinced an ability for acquiring the Chinese language *here* should be sent to China. This method would save a considerable outlay of money as there are many worthy people who cannot acquire any foreign language.

OUR BOOK. In presenting to the public the result of several years unremitting labor we believe we have filled a long felt want. We trust that it may stimulate a thirst for knowledge of things Chinese and that those who are started on the right road by our efforts may continue until they have mastered Chinese thoroughly. The publication of another work now in preparation by us, will we trust, enable the *advanced* student of Chinese to become *master* of the art of reading, writing, and speaking Chinese correctly.

Our method is, so far as we are aware, entirely original and unique, in that it presents the study of Chinese, in true Chinese form. The first section of easy graded lessons is quite comprehensive and if thoroughly mastered by the student will give a solid, broad and deep foundation for the superstructure.

In presenting the Chinese primer, we have adopted an original plan, by making of it an interlinear production. The Chinese primer was purchased in New York City and the interlineations and interpretations thereof supplied by us. In obscure passages, or when in doubt as to the exact interpretation thereof, we have followed the rendering of Professor GILES, than whom a greater Chinese scholar does not exist. Apart from its value as a Chinese model, the English translation gives us an index to Chinese thought. Some of the aphorisms are unique and others are majestic in their simple grandeur. The third section of the book is important, in that it contains an immense amount of valuable material to those who would acquire Chinese. For unlike any Chinese work that we have ever seen, there is here presented for the first time a comprehensive analytical presentation of Chinese words. Take for example the word 牛油 BUTTER; in Chinese it is called *ngow nigh yow*; now it so happens that each one of these three, is a word in itself, any one of which may be met with independently in the language. Our book gives the meaning of each word. Translated, *ngow nigh yow* (butter) is literally cows, milk, oil. It will be seen on investigation of the third section of our book, that (contrary to the general idea of the Chinese language being mainly composed of monosyllabic words) many words are compound, being composed of two or more words; the exact meaning of each component part has been given by us in each instance; this method is of inestimable value to the student of Chinese.

The fourth section of our book contains about one thousand words in large and small type, arranged as to strokes, and having opposite each character the root or "RADICAL" number. It seems strange indeed that never before, so far as we are aware, has such a representation of Chinese writing been given either by a native or foreigner. This arrangement, together with our chapter on "*How To Write Chinese*" enables the student to readily grasp the idea of writing Chinese.

We have also given several sample pages from a Chinese-English dictionary. These reproductions will give the student a clear idea as to the construction and form of a dictionary. There will also be found a couple of Chinese Poetical selections. The copious index which we have made, will we

trust, add to the value of our book. We are indebted to some earlier writers, notably LOBSCHIED, KENNY and BEVAN.

To Professor GILES we are deeply indebted for the many kindly suggestions he has made, as well as for the sympathetic interest he has shown in our work since it's inception.

In conclusion we wish to extend to our printers, the firm of E. J. BRILL, of Leyden, Holland, and their able corps of assistants under F. DE STOPPELAAR, Esq., our sincere thanks for the unfailing and untiring efforts they have put forth to make a successful issue of our book possible. When it is remembered that our printers have been separated from us by over four thousand miles of ocean, any small typographical errors will no doubt be indulgently overlooked by the careful reader.

In presenting this book to the public, we trust that any imperfections which may unfold on the perusal of it's pages will be taken lightly, inasmuch as we have each given to the consummation of our work, many hours which professional men can but poorly afford. Being a work of love, we can only hope that "Love's Labor" has not been lost.

WALTER BROOKS BROUNER.
FUNG YUET MOW.