

徐梵澄文集

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第二卷

小学菁华

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华东师范大学出版社

## 编者说明

《小学菁华》，为梵澄于1963年编辑的一部汉英字典，后在法国学者的催促下，于1976年晚出于南印度。

此书序后，是汉语史的一个简略概说，书末为现代（文字改革之前）的语音符号系统，亦给出一些书写方法的正确例子，读者可依此作字帖加以临摹。字典正文部分，在其所属的偏旁、部首之下，给出每一字的原形和拼音，字形三体并列：仿宋、大篆、楷书；在对应之英文名词下，又给出同一字之篆体的不同写法；其下是英文注解。

梵澄指出：汉语自古以来虽无一套成文字的语法规则，但是它的语法结构却很完善，有佛经翻译为其明证。另外，汉字在书写和印刷上有节约空间之优点；更重要的是，它有高度的化合性，即这种单音节的文字之不同组合，会生成新的概念与意义，从而较顺利地增益我们汉文字之语言宝库，以适应时代发展的需要。每一个

受过教育的中国人都有这样的体会：我们今天阅读二千五百年前之孔夫子的箴言，并没有什么障碍。这说明：

基于一种文字形体的语言，其生命会延续的更为长久，一个不断向前行驶的永恒的舟楫传送的牢靠的知识——无论是物质的还是精神的——可以是人类之最伟大的保护者。（梵澄语）

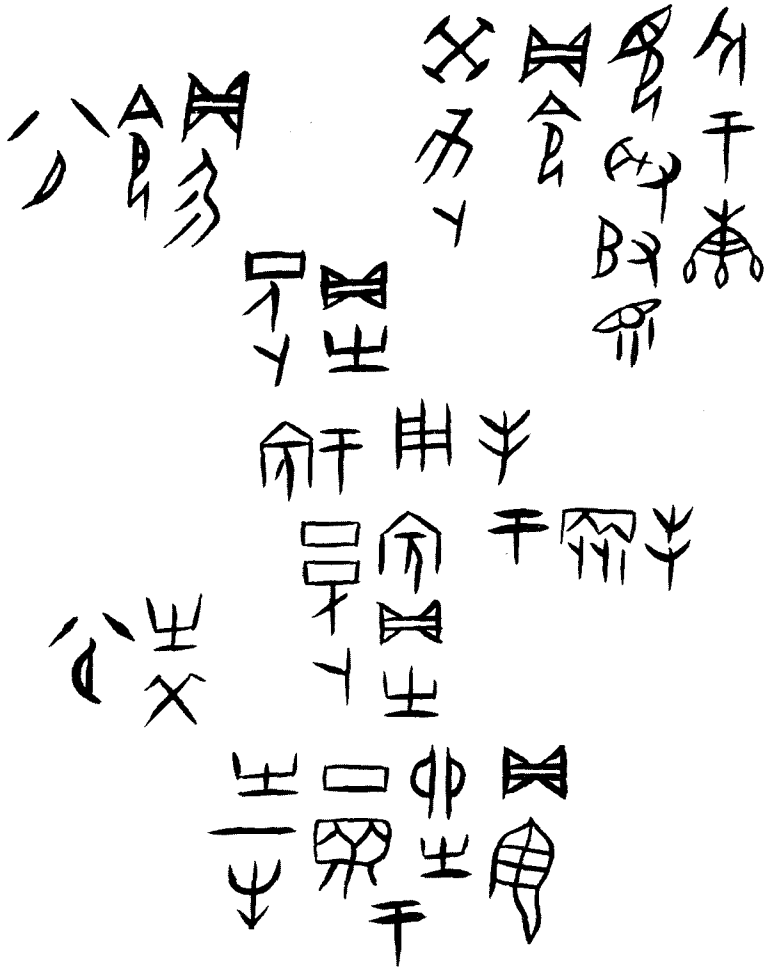


Plate I Inscriptions on tortoise shells



1



2



3



4



5



6



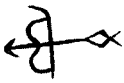
7



8



9



10



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14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21

Plate II Words gathered from inscriptions on tortoise shells

執

1

變

2

及

3

啟

4

牧

5

教

6

羔

7

既

8

即

9

射

10

饗

11

昊

12

宿

13

印

14

彘

15

劓

16

頰

17

野

18

漁

19

白

20

春

21

Plate III The words in Plate II written in modern "proper" script

王曠德也文也其德  
 上崩或以其德也其  
 我上王曠我由也其  
 我子部其德也其  
 夫從部王曠之德也其  
 兒口又介其德也其  
 目福保今字其德也其  
 成也其德也其德也其  
 大王其德也其德也其  
 倉心其德也其德也其  
 不顯且其德也其德也其  
 十二其德也其德也其  
 今其德也其德也其  
 其德也其德也其德也其

Plate IV Major Script of the Western  
 Chow Dynasty(1122—770 B. C.)





Plate V Major Script of the Chow Dynasty  
engraved on a bronze plate

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## Introduction

During the past sixty years or more, great efforts have been made by the intelligentsia in China towards the simplification of the language, and, with the abolition of many dialects, towards the standardization of the national tongue with the idea of a gradual reduction and final disappearance of illiteracy. Much indeed has been done, but in view of the immensity of the population and the complexity and profundity of the language itself, even the considerable achievement of the past decade can only be regarded as a first step on the long journey ahead.

First, as a prelude to this *Analysis*, a word must be said about learning the language. As a result of the great demand for knowledge of Chinese in recent years, there have been many complaints about the difficulties non Chinese have in learning it.

But as far as I know, Chinese students in the past have made similar complaints about the difficulty of learning foreign languages. In fact, no language can be easy. Even English, a language so widely used that it has assumed an international importance nowadays, can by no means be described as easy, especially for us Chinese. Since every living language must be growing and changing all the time, it is difficult for anyone except an occasional great poet, prosaist, dramatist or philologist to justly say that he has a complete mastery and command of his own mother tongue. With the ancient languages such as Greek or Latin or Sanskrit, the case is even more burdensome. Even at the very first, the numerous inflections of nouns, conjugations of verbs, and, in Sanskrit, the lengthy compounds carry the student into deep waters.

Within the Indo-European family the diverse tongues have still somehow an affinity to each other, though there was in the past actually no one Indo-German language in existence. In their fundamental structure, they all have a phonetic system, a grammar and a syntax, all comparable to well-hewn, well-paved paths for travellers to follow. English and French are examples of this; they are so similar to each other that between them there are approximately 6,000 words more or less alike, with only slight differences of spelling or meaning, as they are mostly of a common Latin origin. Naturally an Englishman can learn French easily, and vice-versa, especially as both are popular and commonly used nowadays. About one hundred and thirty million

people in the world use French as an official language, a fact reminiscent of its glorious past when, beginning in the seventeenth century, it was used chiefly in the diplomatic as well as in high cultural fields. But the tendency of the present day is more and more towards the expansion and predominance of English. Apart from Mandarin Chinese, English is now spoken as a first language by more people than any other language in the world, according to the most recent statistics.

Yet Chinese, though now used by the largest population of the world, is still confined within the boundaries of its realm. As opposed to any language of the Indo-European family, Chinese has neither an alphabet nor any written grammar. In fact everything about it is different. Yet no one can deny that it is a language of high culture with a history of nearly 5,000 years, and it is a living one still. Let us then sensibly ask; could it have lasted so long and been so widely used if it were actually so difficult to learn?

The difficulties arise for many reasons. The problem is a very complicated one, and in the end it is even connected with our modern educational system in general. Usually as a second language it is not learned in the right way. Psychologically speaking, the difficulty is not so much with the language itself as with our own mental attitude. We are all in a sense bound by our prejudices and habits, and figuratively speaking, one may say that there is scarcely anyone who can empty himself like a vessel of its contents for the new liquid to be poured in. A child learns things more readily than an adult because he is empty or free. If

that upper chamber is crowded or clouded, how can light shine upon it from outside or any ray shine forth from within?

Moreover, society in modern times has changed and life has become much busier. We have neither the leisure nor the patience to dive deep and immerse ourselves in the cultural atmosphere of another land, even when we have partially learned its language; and what is learned apart from its cultural context can easily be lost. The blissful olive tree, a gift from Athene, begins to bear fruit only thirty years after planting, yet it yields fruit for a hundred years before it withers away. In seeking knowledge in general, we are nowadays often too anxious, if not too ambitious, for its fruits; and we want to hasten the process of acquiring it, to make it easier and more comfortable like the commodities of our daily life. This phenomenon is explicable and excusable because, as one of the underlying principles of our civilisation, it is our common urge to make things easier and happier. But why do we want to learn a foreign language? It is because we want to understand the other people, their living habits, their mentality, their culture, all their achievements both in the material and spiritual fields in order to march together to the higher goals of life and eventually to create a happier world for all. By this means we can learn and assimilate what is best in another race, and when the other people are backward we may hasten their progress. As Sri Aurobindo once remarked in *The Future Poetry*, "To know other countries is not to belittle but enlarge our own country and help it to a greater power of its own

being". ①For all this, language is of course the key. But there is one important factor which we should never ignore — Time. Scientists must often devote an entire lifetime to certain researches, and some experiments, such as in botany, must be carried on through generations. The same is the case with learning any foreign language. From the very beginning we must be prepared to spend many years in study, possibly without thinking of reaping the fruits. With the Chinese language that is especially true.

Another difficulty is connected with the method of teaching. Most modern methods are successful to a large extent, but the result is never total or complete. Nowadays a number of students of approximately the same age gather in a classroom where the knowledge is imparted by the instructor, using a textbook if available. Tape recordings and films are used as an auxiliary to lectures on general and on special subjects. The student is asked to work a great deal by himself writing essays, doing extra reading etc. Then after a certain period of time an examination is given. When that is passed, the student receives a certificate or diploma and the course is ended. This is the modern democratic way, and considering its merits in extending education to the masses and in bringing about some sort of standardization of learning, it is even admirable. Unfortunately it is also a bed of Procrustes. Assuming that the professor is quite competent, his influence inspiring, and his method of teaching ideal, a good

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① p. 328, Ashram edition, 1953.



number of students may come up to the standard, still others may fall below the level, and the best ones may shoot far above the level and then not proceed farther. Experienced professors can see that it is still a matter of firing shots at random in a certain direction, expecting that many may hit the mark, knowing that some may fail. But they would say that there is no better way, due to the nature of the educational institutions. In fact not only the standardization but also the ways of examination are not free from imperfections. But it seems that scarcely any better way can be found, considering the simple fact that so many students have to be taught every year.

Coming to this point one cannot keep from thinking of the ancient Chinese way. The system of education in China in ancient times is indeed unsuitable to our modern age, but with regard to the teaching of its national language, the method was an excellent one. This must have been true also in the ancient Graeco-Roman world. Scholars or men of letters were too numerous to be counted in those times when culture flourished—as there must be periods of such flowering, whether short or long, in every dynasty—but they were never mass-produced like goods from a factory. Collectivism in a certain sense always existed, but the individuality of each person was respected. The special characteristic is that everyone was taught individually and separately by a teacher or several teachers successively or at the same time. It was like exploring a foreign land unknown to the pupil but well-known to the master, and, taken by the hand, he might proceed