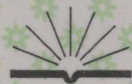
Edwin G. Pulleyblank

Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar



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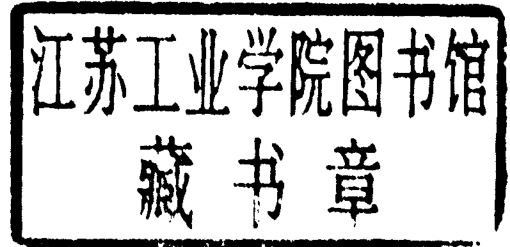
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Contents

Preface /xiii
Abbreviations /xv

I. Introduction /3
  1. Historical Outline /3
  2. Sound /4
    (a) *Fǎnqiè* 反切 /5
    (b) Tones /6
  3. Symbol /7
  4. Syllable and Word /8
  5. Morphology /10
II. Some Basic Principles of Classical Chinese Syntax /12
  1. Word Classes /12
  2. Subject and Predicate /13
  3. Word Order /14
III. Noun Predication /16
  1. Verbless Noun Predication /16
    (a) Questions /16
    (b) Pronouns and Particles with Verbless Noun Predicates /17
    (c) Verbless Comparisons with *Yóu* 猶 /18
    (d) Omission of *Yě* 也 /18
    (e) The Aspect Particle *Yǐ* 已 after Verbless Noun Predicates /19
    (f) Other Meanings of *Yě* 也 /20
  2. The Copula Verb *Wéi* 為 /20
  3. The Copula *Yuē* 曰 /21
  4. The Preclassical Copula *Wéi* 唯 /22
IV. Verbal Predicates /23
  1. Classes of Verbs /23
  2. Adjectives /24
  3. Nouns Used as Verbs /25
  4. Intransitive Verbs /26
  5. Transitive Verbs — Active and Passive /27
  6. Verbs of Motion and Location — Intransitive and Transitive /28

7. The Verbs *Yǒu* 有 'have; there is/are' and *Wú* 無 'not have; there is/are not' /30
8. Transitive Verbs with Two Objects /31
9. Passive Constructions /35
V. Compound Verbal Predicates /39
1. Coordination /39
2. Clause Objects — Verb Phrases as Objects of Transitive Verbs /39
3. Pivot Constructions — The Causative /40
4. Verb Phrases as Complements to Adjectives /42
(a) Adjectives That Make a Following Verb Passive /42
(b) Other Adjectives That Take Verb Phrases as Complements /44
5. Verbs in Series /44
(a) The Construction in General — The Particle *Ér* 而 /44
(b) *Dé* (*ér*) 得 (而), *Shuài* (*ér*) 率 (而), etc. /46
6. Coverbs /47
(a) Transitive Verbs Corresponding to Prepositions /47
(i) *Yǐ* 以 'take, use; with, by means of' /47
(ii) *Yòng* 用 'use; with' /50
(iii) *Yǔ* 與 'accompany; give; with; and' /50
(iv) *Wèi* 為 'for, on behalf of, for the sake of' /51
(v) *Zì* 自, *Yóu* 由, *Cóng* 從 'follow from' /52
(b) Coverbs of Place /53
(i) *Yú* 于 'go; to, at' /53
(ii) *Yú* 於 'in, at, to, from, than, etc.' /53
(iii) *Hū* 乎 /54
(iv) Locative complements /54
(v) Omission of the coverb in locative complements /55
(vi) Pronominal substitutes *yuán* 爰 and *yān* 焉 /56
(vii) X *zhī yú* 之於 Y /56
(c) Descriptive Complements with *Rú* 如 and *Yóu* 猶 /57
(d) Coverbs as Subordinating Conjunctions /57
VI. Numerical Expressions /58
1. As Predicates /58
2. As Complements /58
3. As Modifiers of Nouns /59
4. *Yòu* 有 'and' /60
VII. Noun Phrases and Nominalization /61
1. Coordination and Subordination of Nouns /61

(a) Coordination /61
(b) Subordination /61
2. Nominalization /62
(a) Unmarked Nominalization /62
(b) Marked Nominalization by Inserting *Zhī* 之 /64
(c) *Zhě* 者 /66
(d) *Suǒ* 所 /68
VIII. Topicalization and Exposure /69
1. Exposure of an Element That is Not the Subject /69
2. Exposure of the Subject /71
3. *Zé* 則 Marking Exposure /72
4. *X zhī yú* 之於 Y /73
5. Other Particles Marking Topicalization or Contrastive Exposure /73
(a) *Yě* 也 /73
(b) *Wéi* 唯 /74
(c) *Zhě* 者 /74
(d) *Fú* 夫 /74
(e) *Ruò fú* 若夫 /75
IX. Pronouns and Related Words /76
1. Personal Pronouns /76
(a) First Person /76
(b) Second Person /77
(c) Third Person /78
(d) Reflexive Personal Pronoun /83
(e) Personal Pronouns with Negative Particles /84
2. Demonstratives /85
(a) *Shì* 是 /85
(b) *Cǐ* 此 /86
(c) *Bǐ* 彼 /86
(d) *Sī* 斯 /88
(e) *Zī* 茲 /88
(f) *Shí* 實, *Shí* 寔 /89
(g) *Shí* 時 /89
(h) *Fú* 夫 /89
(i) *Ěr* 爾 /90
(j) *Ruò* 若 /90
3. Interrogatives /91
(a) (i) *Shuí* 誰 /91

(ii) *Shú* 孰 /92
(iii) *Chóu* 疇 /93
(b) (i) *Hé* 何 /93
(ii) *Xī* 奚 /95
(iii) *Hú* 胡 /95
(iv) *Hé* 曷 /95
(v) *Hé* 盍 /95
(c) (i) *Yān* 焉, *ān* 安 /96
(ii) *Wū hú* 惡乎, *wū* 惡, *wū* 烏 /96
4. Indefinite Pronouns /97
(a) *Tuō* 他 /97
(b) *Mǒu* 某 /97
(c) *Rén* 人 /97
X. Adverbs /99
1. Adverbial Use of Nouns /99
2. Adjectives as Adverbs /100
3. Verbs as Adverbs /101
4. Numerical Expressions as Adverbs /101
5. Expressive Adverbs in *Rán* 然, *Rú* 如, etc. /102
XI. Negation /103
1. P/f Negatives /103
(a) *Bú* 不 /103
(b) *Fǒu* 否 /103
(c) *Fú* 弗 /104
(d) *Fēi* 非 /106
(e) *Pǒ* 叵 /106
(f) *Hé* 盍 /107
2. M/w Negatives /107
(a) *Wú* 毋, *wú* 無 and *wú* 无 /107
(i) *Wú* 無 as prohibitive particle /107
(ii) *Wú* 無 'not have.' See Section IV.7
(b) *Wù* 勿 'do not' /108
(c) *Wáng* 亡 /109
(d) *Wǎng* 罔 /109
(e) *Mò* 莫 /109
(f) *Wèi* 未 /109
(g) *Wéi* 微 /110
(h) *Mǐ* 靡 /110

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(i) *Miè* 滅 /110
(j) *Mò* 末 /111
XII. Aspect, Time, and Mood /112
1. Verbal Aspect — Preverbal Particles /112
(a) *Jì* 既 /113
(b) *Wèi* 未 /114
(c) Preverbal *Yǐ* 已 /115
2. Sentential Aspect — Sentence Final Particles /116
(a) *Yǐ* 矣 /116
(b) *Yě* 也 /118
(c) *Yǐ* 已 (*Yě yǐ* 也已, *Yě yǐ yǐ* 也已矣) /118
3. Time Words /119
(a) Time Expressions in Topic Position /119
(b) *Cháng* 嘗 /119
(c) *Céng* 曾 /119
(d) *Jiāng* 將 /120
(e) *Qiě* 且 /121
(f) *Fāng* 方 /121
(g) *Shǐ* 始 /121
(h) *Chū* 初 /122
4. Modality /122
(a) *Qí* 其 /123
(b) *Dài* 殆, *Shù jī* 庶幾 /124
(c) *Gài* 蓋 /124
(d) *Wú* 毋, *Wú* 無, and *Wù* 勿 /124
(e) *Níng* 寧 /125
XIII. Adnominal and Adverbial Words of Inclusion and Restriction /126
1. Words of Inclusion /126
(a) *Zhū* 諸 'all; members of the class of' /126
(b) *Fán* 凡 'all' /127
(c) *Jiē* 皆, *Jǔ* 舉 'all' /127
(d) *Jū* 俱 'both, together' /129
(e) *Gè* 各 'each' /130
(f) *Měi* 每 'every (time), always; whenever' /130
(g) Words of Verbal Origin /131
2. Restriction /131
(a) *Wéi* 唯 'only' /131
(i) Introducing the subject or an exposed element /131

(ii) Introducing a noun predicate /132
(iii) In adverbial position restricting the predicate /132
(b) *Dú* 獨 'only' /133
(c) Other Similar Words /133
(d) Restriction by Final Particles /134
3. Some, None /134
(a) *Huò* 或 'some one; some' /134
(b) *Mò* 莫 'no one; none' /136
4. Reflexive and Reciprocal Pronominal Adverbs /136
(a) *Zì* 自 'oneself' /136
(b) *Xiāng* 相 'each other, mutually' /136
(c) *Shēn* 身 'body, person, self' /137
(d) *Jiāo* 交 'in exchange, mutually'; *Hù* 互 'mutually'/137
XIV. Imperative, Interrogative and Exclamatory Sentences /138
1. Imperative Sentences /138
(a) Unmarked /138
(b) *Qǐng* 請 'I beg of you; please' /138
(c) Prohibition. See XI.2
(d) Modal *Qí* 其 in Imperative Sentences. See XII.4a.
2. Interrogative Sentences /139
(a) Simple Questions /
(i) The final particle *Hū* 乎 /139
(ii) *Yě hū* 也乎, *yú* 與(歟), *yé* 邪(耶) /139
(iii) *Zhū* 諸 /140
(iv) *Fǒu* 否. See XI.1b.
(v) Interrogative pronouns. See IX.3
(b) Rhetorical Questions /140
(i) Negative questions requiring affirmative answers /140
(ii) *Qí* 其 in rhetorical questions /142
(iii) *Qǐ* 豈 /142
(iv) *Yōng* 庸, *Jù* 詎, *Qú* 渠, *Yōng jù* 庸遽, etc. /144
(v) *Wú* 無 in rhetorical questions /144
(vi) *Fú* 夫 'is it not' /145
(vii) Rhetorical questions with interrogative pronouns /145
(viii) *Kuàng* 況 'how much the more' /146
3. Exclamatory Sentences /146
(a) *Zāi* 哉 /146
(b) Inversion of Subject and Predicate /147

XV. Complex Sentences /148
1. Parataxis and Hypotaxis /148
2. Conditional Clauses /149
(a) Parataxis /149
(b) Subordination by a Particle in the If-Clause /150
(i) *Ruò* 若, *Rú* 如, *Ér* 而 /150
(ii) *Shǐ* 使, *Líng* 令, etc., 'supposing' /151
(iii) *Gǒu* 苟 /152
(iv) *Chéng* 誠, *Xìn* 信 /153
(v) *Jí* 即 /153
(vi) *Fēi* 非 /154
(vii) *Wēi* 微 /154
(c) Subordination by a Particle in the Main Clause /154
(i) *Zé* 則 'then' /154
(ii) *Sī* 斯 'then' /155
(iii) *Jí* 即 'then' /155
3. Concessive Clauses /156
(a) *Suī* 雖 'although, even if' /156
(b) *Suī* ... *ér* ... 雖 ... 而 ... /157
(c) *Fēi* ... *ér* ... 非 ... 而 ... /157
(d) *Zòng* 縱 /158
4. Temporal Clauses /158
(a) Verbs in Series /158
(b) Aspect Particles in the First Clause /158
(c) *Jí* 及 'when' /158
(d) *Simultaneity* — Dāng 當, Fāng 方, ... shí 時 /160
(e) Topic Phrases /161
(f) *Ér hòu* 而後, *Rán hòu* 然後 /161
5. Cause, Reason /161
(a) The Coverb *Yǐ* 以 /161
(b) *Gù* 故 'reason' /162
(c) Explanatory Noun Predicate after Main Clause. See VII.2a.ii and XII.3c)
Notes /163
Sources of Examples /169
Bibliography /171
Index of Chinese Vocabulary Items /175
General Index /189

Preface

This *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* has grown out of notes prepared over the years for teaching Classical Chinese to undergraduates at the University of Cambridge and the University of British Columbia, as well as at summer schools in Bloomington, Indiana, Columbus, Ohio, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the 1960s. When I began the study of this language at the end of the Second World War, there were very few textbooks or other learning aids available. There was, in fact, still a widespread belief that Chinese, especially the classical language, had no grammar and that the only way to learn it was by a kind of osmosis. By reading texts with a teacher, preferably a native speaker of a modern spoken form of the language, one was supposed to absorb a facility at guessing at the meanings of passages by piecing together the meanings of successive words as provided in a dictionary.

There had, of course, been pioneering works by western sinologists in the nineteenth century, particularly noteworthy being Georg von der Gabelentz, *Chinesische Grammatik* (1881), but these were held in little regard. Rather more heed was paid to the contributions of Bernhard Karlgren, whose work had first put the study of Middle and Old Chinese pronunciation on a scientific basis and who had also made many insightful observations on the grammar of the classical language. There were others, like my old teacher, Walter Simon, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, or George Kennedy at Yale and Harold Shadick at Cornell, who were trying to apply modern linguistic theory to Classical Chinese. Nevertheless, it would be true to say that there was nothing approaching a coherent analysis of the syntax of the language available. I felt this lack even more acutely when, all too soon, I found myself in the position of having to teach the language myself. Along with other contemporaries, like William Dobson and Angus Graham, I found myself pushed into doing research in this area. After publishing two or three papers on grammatical questions, I concentrated my publication more on historical phonology but I continued to think about questions of syntax and to prepare teaching notes for my students. The *Outline* that I offer here is the end result of this process.

The world has, of course, changed greatly in the half century since I began to study Chinese, not least in linguistic theory, which has been revolutionized by the theories of Noam Chomsky and his followers. While this has inspired much recent work on Modern Chinese grammar, it has, unfortunately, had comparatively little impact so far on the study of the classical language. We are still at the stage of struggling to work out the

basic patterns of Classical Chinese syntax. Perhaps some students will be inspired by the unsolved problems that they find in this book to apply new theoretical tools and bring the grammar of Classical Chinese into the linguistic mainstream instead of being in a rather esoteric backwater. Meanwhile, I am encouraged by the reactions of those who have seen and used earlier versions both at the University of British Columbia and elsewhere to think that students and teachers will continue to find it a useful introduction to the language.

It is impossible in a short work of this kind to argue fully for all the positions taken, let alone discuss the views of other scholars who agree or differ from them. I have endeavoured in the endnotes to acknowledge major contributions of my predecessors and contemporaries but I am only too aware that the references I have made are far from complete in this regard. I can only hope that my colleagues will forgive me, bearing in mind my primarily pedagogical aim.

In preparing this work for publication I have been greatly assisted by a generous grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The grant was provided for a *Concise Dictionary of Classical Chinese*, of which the *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* was to serve as an introduction. In the end it has seemed better to publish the *Outline* separately. The *Dictionary* exists in the form of a preliminary draft on computer but will still require much work before it is in publishable form.

Among those whom the grant has enabled me to employ, Dr. Gary Arbuckle must be specially mentioned for his help in preparing the computerized text of this book. I should also like to thank Mr. Jingtao Sun and the copy editor of the UBC Press who have proofread the text with great care and caught many errors. Errors that remain are of course my own responsibility.

I also acknowledge with gratitude the publication grants which the book has received from the Humanities Federation of Canada and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation.

Abbreviations

EM	Early Mandarin
EMC	Early Middle Chinese
Gōng	*Gōngyáng zhuàn* 公羊傳
Guǎn	*Guǎnzǐ* 管子
GY	*Guóyǔ* 國語
HF	*Hán Fēizǐ* 韓非子
LMC	Late Middle Chinese
LY	*Lúnyǔ* 論語
Mèng	*Mèngzǐ* 孟子
Mò	*Mòzǐ* 墨子
OC	Old Chinese
Shī	*Shījīng* 詩經
Shū	*Shū jīng* 書經
Xún	*Xúnzǐ* 荀子
ZGC	*Zhànguó cè* 戰國策
Zhuāng	*Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子
Zuǒ	*Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳

原书缺页

I. Introduction

1. Historical Outline

Chinese was the principal vehicle of culture and civilization for the whole of East Asia for many centuries and today is spoken by more people than any other language. The earliest known examples of written Chinese are the so-called 'oracle bones,' records of divination from the last capital of the Shāng 商 dynasty at Ānyáng 安陽. They date from approximately -1300 to -1050. From the following centuries, after the founding of the Zhōu 周 dynasty, come inscriptions on bronze vessels recording royal donations and other such events. The earliest of the Chinese classics — parts of the *Book of Changes* (*Yìjīng* 易經), the *Book of Documents* (*Shūjīng* 書經), and the *Book of Odes* (*Shījīng* 詩經) — also date from the early centuries of the Zhōu dynasty. All these texts are written in an archaic form of Chinese referred to as preclassical.

The classical period proper begins with Confucius 孔子 (-551 to -479) and continues through the Warring States period to the unification and founding of the empire by Qín 秦 in -221. This was the period of the major philosophers and also of the first works of narrative history. Though all the productions of the period are in Classical Chinese, there is considerable linguistic diversity among them. This is, no doubt, partly the result of the geographical disunity and decentralization of the country, which allowed various regional dialects to become the vehicles of literature in their own areas. It is also the result of historical evolution. Exhaustive studies of these differences have yet to be made, but one can distinguish at least the following: (a) a rather archaic form of literary language, showing features in common with the *Shījīng* and probably based on a central dialect, used in historical texts such as the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 and *Guóyǔ* 國語; (b) a Lǔ 魯 dialect used in the Confucian *Analects* (*Lúnyǔ* 論語; more archaic) and Mencius (*Mèngzǐ* 孟子; more evolved); (c) a Chǔ 楚 dialect used in the *Lí Sāo* 離騷 and other early poems of the *Chǔcí* 楚辭; and (d) a third-century dialect found in texts such as *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, and *Hán Fēizǐ* 韓非子, showing an evolution towards a common literary standard but still with marked differences between different texts.

With the imperial unification under Qín and Hàn 漢, the movement towards a common literary standard was accelerated, not only by the

centralization of the government, but also by the increasing tendency towards imitation of classical models in preference to the living spoken language. An important influence in this respect was the triumph of Confucianism which made the Confucian classics the basis for education and for advancement in government service. In a comparatively early text like the *Records of the Historian* (*Shǐjì* 史記) one can still detect influence from the spoken language, but as time went on Literary Chinese (*wén yán* 文言) became increasingly a dead language, playing a role like that of Latin in Western Europe, from which the current spoken language increasingly diverged.

Literary Chinese was never completely static and uniform. Different styles were fashioned by successive literary movements and for special purposes such as government documents or Buddhist writings. There was no development of a prescriptive grammar and people learned to write by imitating earlier models rather than by obeying explicit rules as in the case of Latin. The spoken language always had some influence even in belles lettres and poetry, and still more in writings of a more practical nature. The result is that even those well versed in classical texts may have difficulty when they first encounter later material, such as official documents of the Qīng 清 dynasty.

2. Sound

Chinese characters are sometimes referred to as if they directly represent ideas. This is a fallacy. Even though many of them are pictorial or otherwise iconic in origin, in their use as a system of writing they are conventional symbols for particular spoken words. Thus synonyms (words that are the same in meaning but different in sound) are normally written with different characters, while homophones (words that are the same in sound but different in meaning) may be written with the same character. For example, *quǎn* 'dog' is written 犬, based on a pictogram for 'dog,' but *gǒu*, which also means 'dog,' is written 狗, with a distorted form of 犬 + *gǒu* 句 'hook' to represent the sound. On the other hand, *ān* 'how? where?' and *ān* 'peace' are both written 安.

Since in Chinese, as in every other language, the spoken form is primary, it is desirable to get back, as closely as possible, to the actual sounds that underlie the characters. Unfortunately, since the characters represent whole syllables and give no direct phonetic information, and since the sounds have changed greatly over the centuries, this is only possible

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through a difficult process of reconstruction. The most widely used system of reconstruction is that of Bernhard Karlgren as published in *Grammata Serica Recensa* (1957). This gives two reconstructions, one for what he calls Ancient Chinese, based on the *Qièyùn* 切韻, a rhyme dictionary of +602, and one for what he calls Archaic Chinese, based on the rhymes of the *Shījīng*, relevant to a period terminating around -600.

A revised system of reconstruction for the *Qièyùn*, called Early Middle Chinese (EMC), together with a reconstruction for Late Middle Chinese (LMC) of the Táng period, which together replace Karlgren's Ancient Chinese, is published in Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese and Early Mandarin* (1991), which also contains a new reconstruction of Early Mandarin (EM) of the Yuán 元 period.

The reconstruction of stages earlier than EMC is a much more difficult problem since the available evidence is more fragmentary. While the rhyme patterns of the *Shījīng*, worked out by scholars of the Qīng period, and the rhyming of poets at various periods between then and the *Qièyùn* provide evidence for the evolution of the finals, that is the rhyming parts of syllables, comparable systematic evidence for the non-rhyming parts, the initial consonants or groups of consonants, is lacking. Anything that purports to be a complete reconstruction of Old Chinese (OC), such as Karlgren's Archaic Chinese, is bound to be somewhat illusory at the present time. In this *Outline*, reconstructed readings in EMC or LMC will be given from time to time for illustrative purposes. Tentative reconstructions in OC will also sometimes be given, marked with an asterisk *.

Apart from systems of reconstruction which propose actual phonetic values, there are some traditional methods used by commentators for indicating how characters should be read that readers of classical texts should be aware of. These are the traditional spelling system known as *fǎnqiè* and the system of indicating the four ancient tones by small circles at the four corners of characters.

(a) Fǎnqiè

This term, literally 'turning-cutting,' combines two alternative terms, *fǎn* 反 'turn' and *qiè* 切 'cut,'[1] for a method invented by commentators of the Later Hàn period for spelling the sound of one word by means of two others, one of which had the same initial and the other of which had the same final. For example, *dōng* 東 'east' might be spelled *dé* 德 'virtue' +

gōng 工 'work.' In the course of time, such spellings became the basis for rhyme dictionaries which classified words by rhymes and then, within each rhyme, by homophone groups with the same non-rhyming parts. The earliest of these dictionaries that is (partially) extant is the *Qièyùn* 切韻, completed in +601 by Lù Fǎyán 陸法言. It went through many revisions and enlargements culminating in the *Guǎngyùn* 廣韻 of +1008, which is still extant. Though the *Qiè yùn* has not survived in its original form, extensive manuscript fragments have been recovered from Dunhuang and there are also partial or complete manuscripts of some of the intermediate recensions. It is important to realize that, as the language changed, *fǎnqiè* spellings became out of date. *Fǎnqiè* spellings contained in such dictionaries as the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* 康熙字典, the *Cíyuán* 辭源, and Morohashi's *Dai Kanwa jiten* 大漢和辭典 are mostly taken from dictionaries of the Táng 唐 and Sòng 宋 periods and may give erroneous results if interpreted in terms of modern Pekingese.

(b) *Tones*

Middle Chinese had a system of four 'tones' (*sì shēng* 四聲) which, according to tradition, were first recognized and named by Shěn Yuē 沈約 in the +5th century. They are called *píng* 平 'level,' *shǎng* 上 'rising,' *qù* 去 'departing,' and *rù* 入 'entering.' Though they are the same in number as the four tones of Pekingese, they do not correspond one for one. The old 'level' tone has split into Pekingese tones 1 and 2, depending on whether the initial consonant was originally voiceless or voiced. Words in the old 'rising' tone with voiceless initials or with initial liquids or nasals have Pekingese tone 3. Words in the old 'departing' tone and words in the 'rising' tone with originally voiced stops or fricatives have tone 4 in Pekingese. Words in the Middle Chinese 'entering' tone originally ended in -p, -t, or -k, still preserved in Cantonese. These endings have been lost in Pekingese and the words in question may have any of the four Pekingese tones.

Since many characters have more than one reading, often differing in tone, commentators had to indicate which reading was to be followed. One method was to give a *fǎnqiè* spelling. Another was to place a small circle or half circle at one of the four corners of the character in question, starting at the lower left. Usually the most common reading of the character was left unmarked. Thus the word *wáng* 王 'king,' in the 'level' tone, is not marked but the word *wàng* 王 'to be king,' in 'departing' tone, is marked 王 in texts using this system.

Throughout this book the pronunciation of Chinese characters is indicated in the modern standard language known as *pǔtōnghuà* 普通話 'common speech' in the new standard romanization, *pīnyīn* 拼音. Teachers of Classical Chinese have sometimes preferred to use a spelling system based on a reconstruction of ancient pronunciation but, while this has the advantage of focusing attention on the fact that the ancient language was pronounced very differently from the modern language and may seem justified from a purist point of view, in the present uncertainties and absence of agreement about ancient pronunciation it seems to place an artificial and unnecessary burden on the learner. Instead, ancient pronunciation will only be referred to as seems necessary for explanatory purposes. There are still problems, however. One of the most serious is that in current usage colloquial pronunciations have largely replaced special literary readings that were still regularly followed in the reading of classical texts as late as the first half of the present century and are still in use among conservative scholars in Táiwān 臺灣 and elsewhere. This sometimes has the unfortunate consequence of obscuring important distinctions that were still transparent when the system of reading pronunciations was in vogue. In the present work I have followed the principle adopted in my *Lexicon* (1991) of adhering to older reading pronunciations in such cases. Words to which this decision has been applied include (C. = Colloquial): *chí* 治 'to govern' (C. *zhì*), *guō* 過 'to pass' (C. *guò*), *jū* 俱 (C. *jù*), *qí* 期 (C. *qī*), *tuō* 他 (C. *tā*), *wéi* 微 (C. *wēi*), *wéi* 危 (C. *wēi*), *yì* 曳 (C. *yè*).

3. Symbol

Xǔ Shèn 許慎, who compiled the first etymological dictionary of Chinese characters, the *Shuōwén jiězì* 說文解字 (*Explanations of Graphs and Analysis of Characters*), around the beginning of the +2nd century, classified Chinese characters into six types: (a) *zhǐ shì* 指事 'pointing to things,' that is, graphs that directly symbolize ideas, for example, *shàng* 上 'up,' *xià* 下 'down'; (b) *xiàng xíng* 象形 'imitating shapes,' that is, graphs derived from pictograms, such as *rì* 日 'sun' and *yuè* 月 'moon'; (c) *xíng shēng* 形聲 'form and sound,' that is, graphs that combine two simpler graphs, one representing the sound and one referring to the meaning, for example, *jiāng* 江 'river' and *hé* 河 'river' — in each case the element on the left, derived from the pictogram for 'water,' is combined with another element which has nothing to do with the meaning but stands for a word that was similar in sound to the particular

word that was being written; (d) *huì yì* 會意 'combined meanings,' for example *míng* 鳴 'cry,' composed of 'mouth' + 'bird'; (e) *zhuǎn zhù* 轉注 'transferred notation,' an uncommon category, apparently meaning cases where words of different sound but similar meaning are written with similar graphs, for example, *lǎo* 老 'old' and *kǎo* 考 'old'; and (f) *jiǎjiè* 假借 'borrowing,' where a character used for another word of the same or similar sound, for example, *ān* 安 'peace,' is used to write the interrogative pronoun *ān* 'where? how?'

Of these six types, (a), (b), (d) and (e) are non-phonetic, that is, the meaning is directly represented in an iconic way without reference to the sound. Types (c) and (f) are based on a phonetic principle and together they account for the great majority of characters. There is no hard and fast line between (c) and (f). With the addition of a semantic determinant ('signific' or 'radical'), a *jiǎjiè* becomes a *xíng shēng*, for which the more usual term is *xiéshēng* 諧聲. The addition of significs was very fluid before the Hàn dynasty. Thus, the graph 女, which originated as a pictogram for *nǚ* 'woman,' was borrowed (*jiǎjiè*) for *rǔ* 'you' at an early period. Later the graph 汝, which has the element 'water' as signific and originated as a *xiéshēng* graph for the name of the Rǔ River in Hénán, was borrowed as the standard graph for *rǔ* 'you.' The choice of significs could also be variable. Thus the graph 說, with the 'speech' signific, which was later confined to the readings *shuō* 'explain; explanation; doctrine, theory; story; (later) say' and *shuì* 'persuade,' is often used for *yuè* 'be pleased' in pre-Hàn texts, for which the standard graph eventually became 悅, with the 'heart' signific.

The printed forms of the characters that were standard until the recent official script simplification, and that are still standard in Taiwan, are in a style known as *kǎishū* 楷書. This style evolved during the Former Hàn dynasty out of the earlier 'clerical style,' *lìshū* 隸書, which, in turn, was based on the 'Small Seal,' *xiǎo zhuàn* 小篆, which came into being as a result of Lǐ Sī's 李斯 script reform under the First Emperor of Qín. In Hàn times the obsolete forms of writing of the pre-Qín period were known as *gǔ wén* 古文 'ancient script.' An earlier form of script, traditionally attributed to Zhòu 籀, the Grand Scribe of King Xuān 宣 of Zhōu (r. -827 to -782), was known as 'Large Seal' *dà zhuàn* 大篆.

4. Syllable and Word

In general the syllable, written with a single character, and the word correspond in Classical Chinese, but there are a few exceptions which may be classified as follows:

(a) Bound compounds, that is, words whose meanings cannot be deduced simply from the separate morphemes of which they are composed, for example *jūnzǐ* 君子 'gentleman, superior man; gentlemanly,' composed of *jūn* 君 'ruler, lord' + *zǐ* 子 'son'; *shùjī* 庶幾 'almost; probably,' composed of *shù* 'many' + *jī* 'few' (compare modern *duōshǎo* 多少). In Classical Chinese such bound compounds are not numerous and, in general, when two morphemes are used in combination, the meaning of the whole can be readily deduced from the meanings of the parts.

(b) Disyllabic expressions formed by total or partial reduplication of monosyllables, e.g., *xūyú* 須臾 'a moment,' derived from *xū* 須 'wait.' These often form expressive adjectives or adverbs, e.g., *zhuó zhuó* 濯濯 'glistening' (describing the plumage of birds), *hú sù* 觳觫 'trembling, frightened.' Names of insects and small animals are often formed in this way, e.g., *táng láng* 螳螂 'praying mantis,' *xī shuài* 蟋蟀 'cricket' (EMC sit ʂwit).

(c) Polysyllabic foreign loanwords, e.g., *shā mén* 沙門 'Buddhist monk,' from Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, *tuó tuó* 橐駝 or *luò tuo* 駱駝 'camel,' borrowed in early Hàn from an unknown foreign language, probably Xiōngnú 匈奴. Clearly identifiable words of this kind are not found before the Hàn dynasty.

(d) In some cases two monosyllables have contracted into a single syllable written with one character. This is like the modern *bié* 別 'don't,' from *bù yào* 不要, or English *don't* from *do not*. Among the contractions of this kind in Classical Chinese are:

(i) *zhū* 諸 = *zhī hū* 之乎, where *zhī* is the object pronoun and *hū* is either the final question particle or a variant of the coverb *yú* 於 'in, at, to, from' (see Section IV) (*zhū* is also a separate word meaning 'all, the class of')
(ii) *zhān* 旃 = *zhī yān* 之焉 (rare)
(iii) *ěr* 耳 = *ér yǐ* 而已 'only'
(iv) *hé* 盍 = *hú pù* 胡不 'why not'
(v) *yú* 與 (also written 歟) = *yě hū* 也乎
(vi) *yé* 邪 (also written 耶) = *yě hū* 也乎, probably a dialect variant of (v).

(e) In other cases a monosyllabic particle is bimorphemic, that is, it is equivalent in meaning to two morphemes, even though one of the elements cannot be identified as a separate word. Thus the postverbal particle *yān* 焉 is equivalent in meaning to an expected **yú zhī* 於之 'in it, to it, etc.'

which is never found. A similar formation is found in some other words, like *rán* 然, equivalent to *rú zhī* 如之 '(it) is like that, (it) is so,' with various specialized grammatical usages, and *yún* 云 'says (so)' related to *yuē* 曰 'say' (see IX.1c.vii below).

5. Morphology

In Modern Chinese there is very little morphology, that is, changes in the forms of words to convey differences in meaning, apart from noun suffixes, such as *-men* 們, which forms plurals of pronouns and is used in certain circumstances with nouns referring to persons treated as collective groups, and *-zi* 子 and *-r* 兒, which originally formed diminutives, and verb suffixes such as the aspect markers *-le* 了 and *-zhe* 著. There are, however, still words which are clearly related in both sound and meaning. Sometimes it is a case of one character having two different pronunciations, such as, *hǎo* 好 'good,' also pronounced *hào* in the sense of 'to like, love,' or *cháng* 長 'long,' also pronounced *zhǎng* in the sense of 'grow; elder.' In other cases the words are written with different characters which share the same phonetic element, for example, *zhāng* 張 'stretch,' *zhàng* 脹 or 漲 'to swell' (originally also written 張) and *zhàng* 帳 'curtain, tent' (that is, 'something stretched'), which are all semantically related to *cháng* 'long'; or *xìng* 性 '(inborn) nature' and *xìng* 姓 'clan name, surname,' which are related in sound and sense to *shēng* 生 'be born, live, alive' and have it as the phonetic part of their graphs.

In the classical language there were many more cases of this kind, and also cases in which obviously related words are written with totally unrelated graphs, for example, the first person pronouns *wú* 吾 and *wǒ* 我 (EMC ŋɔ and ŋa'), or the second person pronouns *ěr* 爾 (EMC ɲiǎ'), *rǔ* 汝 (EMC ɲiǎ'), *ruò* 若 (EMC ɲiak). These have been called word families. As our understanding of the phonology of Old Chinese improves, it is becoming possible to explain some of this morphology in terms of affixes of various kinds. The following are some of the most important patterns.

(a) There are many cases in which a word in departing tone is clearly derived from a word in one of the other three tones. This probably reflects an Old Chinese suffix *-s, cognate to the suffix *-s* in Tibetan. In some cases the derived word is a verb, e.g., *wàng* 王 'to be king,' derived from *wáng* 王 'king'; *hào* 好 'to like' derived from *hǎo* 好 'good,' *wù* 惡 'to hate,' derived from *è* 惡 'bad' (EMC ʔak, entering tone). In other cases it is a noun, e.g., *shèng* 乘 'vehicle,' from *chéng* 乘 'to ride (in a vehicle)'; *zuò* 坐 (EMC dzwa', rising tone) 'sit,' *zuò* 座 (EMC dzwa^h, departing tone) 'seat'; *duó* 度 (EMC dak, entering tone) 'to measure,' *dù* 度 (EMC dɔ^h, departing tone) 'a measure; degree.' And several other semantic relationships may be involved.[2]

(b) Alternation between Middle Chinese voiceless and voiced initials is often found in verbs with transitive and intransitive or neuter meaning respectively, e.g., *jiàn* 見 (EMC kɛn^h) 'see,' also read *xiàn* (EMC ɣɛn^h < *g-) 'appear' (now written 現 in this meaning); *zhǔ* 屬, 囑 (EMC tɕuawk) 'to attach, enjoin,' *shǔ* 屬 (EMC dʑuawk) 'be attached, belong.' This probably reflects a prefix *a-, cognate to Tibetan *ḥa-čhuṅ* and Burmese *ʔă-*.[3]

(c) Alternation, or ablaut,[4] between the vowel /ə/ and the vowel /a/ in Old Chinese may convey a similar semantic contrast, e.g., *tán* 譚 (EMC dəm) 'talk (about something),' *tán* 談 ((EMC dam) 'talk (intransitive); conversation.'

Other traces of morphology, including a prefix *s- and an infix (or prefix) *r-, can also be found.[5]

Even in the limited state of knowlege that has been achieved so far, it is important to be aware of morphological patterns of this kind. It is especially important to be aware that the same character can stand for two or more different, though related, words and to pay attention to readings given by ancient commentators which differentiate such words.

II. Some Basic Principles of Classical Chinese Syntax

1. Word Classes

In spite of the traces of morphology that can be discerned, words in Classical Chinese are not formally marked for grammatical function. Nevertheless, in their syntactical behaviour they do fall into distinct classes that correspond to such categories as nouns, verbs, and adjectives in other languages.

Traditional Chinese usage distinguishes between full words (*shízì* 實字) and empty words (*xūzì* 虛字). The former, also called content words, correspond to nouns, verbs, and adjectives that carry the main semantic content, and the latter to particles whose main function is to show grammatical relationships. Another traditional word for grammatical particles is *cí* 詞.

The basic division among content words is between nouns and verbs. They are distinguished by the types of syntactical constructions in which they appear. Verbs are by nature predicating words that require one or more nouns or noun phrases to complete their meaning. Thus, an intransitive verb like *lái* 來 'come' implies that someone or something 'comes' and a transitive verb like *shā* 殺 'kill' implies that someone or something 'kills' someone or something. By contrast, nouns like *mǎ* 馬 'horse,' *shí* 石 'stone,' and noun phrases (see Section VII) stand alone in terms of their meaning and require special constructions to function as predicates, e.g., the final particle *yě* 也 and the special negative *fēi* 非 (see Section III). For nominalization, constructions which allow verbs and verb phrases to play the roles of nouns in sentences see Section VII.2. On the use of nouns as verbs, see Section IV.3.

Adjectives form a separate category of content words in many languages, including English. In Chinese they are a subcategory of verbs, though, as we shall see, they have some peculiar properties that make them somewhat noun-like. Numerals and expressions of quantity also behave syntactically like verbs. Words that correspond to English prepositions are verbs of a special type, called coverbs.

As in other languages, words can be transferred from one grammatical category to another. Rules for deriving verbs from nouns and nouns from verbs, as well as for deriving transitive verbs from intransitive verbs and

adjectives and causative verbs from transitive verbs, will be given below. It is not true, however, as is sometimes alleged, that words in Chinese can be used indifferently in any grammatical category.

2. Subject and Predicate

As in English, Chinese sentences can, in general, be divided into two main parts, a subject and a predicate, although the subject may sometimes be unexpressed.

The subject is typically, and most commonly, a noun or noun phrase and the predicate a verb, as in

1. Mèngzǐ	|	jiàn Liáng Huì Wáng (*Mèng* 1A/1)
孟子	|	見 梁惠王
Mencius	|	saw King Huì of Liáng
Subject	|	Predicate

In general, English declarative sentences require an explicit subject. Hence the dummy subject *it* has to be inserted with impersonal verbs, as in *It is raining*, or an expletive *there* has to occupy the subject position in front of the verb *be*, when it predicates existence, as in *There are evil men in the world.* On the other hand, the second person subject pronoun *you* is normally omitted before a verb in the imperative and, if inserted, carries special emphasis — *You open the door!* versus *Open the door!* In Classical Chinese the subject is normally unexpressed in declarative sentences: (a) when it is understood from the context, (b) when it is indefinite, and (c) when it is impersonal (that is, when it is to be understood as the environment or the world in general), as in the following examples:

2. Yì yǒu rén yì ér yǐ yǐ 亦有仁義而已矣
[I] surely have benevolence and righteousness (to offer you) and that's all. (*Mèng* 1A/1)

The subject 'I' is understood from the context because Mencius is answering a question addressed to himself.)

3. Bù wéi nóng shí 不違農時
[If one] does not go against the proper seasons of agriculture, (*Mèng* 1A/3)

The indefinite 'one' is not expressed in Chinese. This is especially common in subordinate clauses.

4. Wèi yǒu rén yì ér yí qí qīn zhě yě 未有仁義而遺其親者也

There has never been one who was benevolent and righteous yet abandoned his parents. (*Mèng* 1A/1)

The verb *yǒu* 有 'have' is used impersonally to predicate existence, like *il y a* in French.

In imperative sentences, on the other hand, a second person subject is commonly expressed without implying any special emphasis. This means that only the context can distinguish declarative from imperative sentences (see Section XIV.1).

The predicate may be a noun or noun phrase instead of a verb, in which case it takes a special form (see Section III). Conversely, the subject may be a nominalized verb phrase (see Section VII).

3. Word Order

The basic rules of word order in Classical, as well as Modern, Chinese are: (a) the subject precedes the predicate, (b) a modifier (adjective, possessive noun, relative clause, adverb) precedes the word it modifies, (c) the verb precedes its object. All these rules have certain exceptions, as follows:

(a) The normal subject-predicate order is inverted in exclamatory sentences (see Section XIV.3).

(b) The object of a verb, or some other postverbal element, may be placed in exposed position in front for purposes of topicalization, contrast, or emphasis (see Section VIII).

(c) In certain cases pronoun objects precede the verb in Classical Chinese even when not exposed. Two rules which apply throughout the classical period are: (i) interrogative pronoun objects precede the verb (see Section IX.3); and (ii) when a verb is negated, unstressed personal pronouns are placed between the negative particle and the verb (see Section IX.1e). In the *Shījīng* and comparatively early texts of the classical period, such as the *Zuǒzhuàn* and *Guóyǔ*, an exposed object is regularly recapitulated by a pronoun, most often *zhī* 之 or *shì* 是, which is also placed in front of the verb. Later the rule is that the recapitulating pronoun takes its normal position after the verb, except in certain stereotyped expressions which preserve the earlier order (see Section VIII.1).

Note that in Classical Chinese there is a clear relationship between the rule that the subject precedes the verb and the rule that the modifier precedes the modified, since, when a verb phrase is nominalized, the particle of noun

subordination, *zhī* 之, is placed between the subject and the verb (see Section VII). That is, the subject is treated as a modifier of the nominalized verb.

III. Noun Predication

1. Verbless Noun Predication

When a noun or noun phrase forms the predicate of a sentence in Classical Chinese, there is normally no copula, like the verb 'to be' in English, or *shì* 是 in Modern Chinese. The rule in such cases is that the sentence ends in the final particle *yě* 也. There is also a special negative *fēi* 非 instead of the regular verbal negative *bù* 不. Thus we can set up the formula: A (*fēi* 非) B *yě* 也: 'A is (not) B.'

5. Fēi wǒ yě, bīng yě 非我也，兵也
It was not I, it was the weapon. (*Mèng* 1A/3)

Frequently the predicate in such a sentence is a verb phrase treated as a noun (unmarked nominalization — see Section VII.2a) or a relative clause with its head replaced by *zhě* 者 'that which, one who, etc.' (see Section VII.2c).

6. Shì bù wéi yě, fēi bù néng yě 是不為也，非不能也
This is not-doing, it is not not-being-able. (*Mèng* 1A/7)

7. Wèi tiān zhě yě 畏天者也
'... is one who fears Heaven. (*Mèng* 1B/3)

Note that *zhě* may be omitted when the relative clause contains *suǒ* 所 'that which' standing for the object of the verb in the clause (see Section VII.2d).

8. Sǒu zhī suǒ zhī yě 叟之所知也
It is what your reverence well knows. (*Mèng* 1A/7)

(a) *Questions*

In the early form of Classical Chinese found in the *Zuǒzhuàn* the interrogative particle *hū* 乎 is added after *yě* 也 to make a question. In later texts, *yě hū* 也乎 is replaced by *yú* 與 (also written *yú* 歟) or *yé* 邪 (also written *yé* 耶), which are probably dialect variants of one another and both phonetic fusions of *yě hū* 也乎. The Lǔ 魯 texts, represented by *Lúnyǔ*, and *Mèngzǐ* have exclusively *yú* 與, while *yé* 邪 predominates in other Warring States texts.[6]

9. Fú fēi jìn rén zhī zǐ yú 夫非盡人之子與
Are we not all the sons of some man? (*Mèng* 7A/36)

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10. Qí zhèng sè yé 其正色邪
Is it its true colour? (*Zhuāng* 1/4)

In some cases, especially in the *Lúnyǔ*, we find *yě yú* 也與 instead of the simple fused form *yú* 與. This is difficult to explain purely in phonetic terms and may represent a partial restoration of the unfused form in the course of oral transmission of the text.

The final particle *fú* 夫 'is it not?,' which is equivalent in meaning to modern *ba* 吧, and may be a fusion of *bù hū* 不乎 (see Section XIV.2b.vii), can also follow a noun predicate with *yě* 也.

11. Rán ér zhì cǐ jí zhě, mìng yě fú 然而至此極者，命也夫
That nonetheless I have reached this extremity, is fate, is it not? (*Zhuāng* 6/97)

(b) *Pronouns and Particles with Verbless Noun Predicates*

As in example **6**, the subject of a noun predicate may be resumed by a demonstrative pronoun, such as *shì* 是 'this, that,' *cǐ* 此 'this,' *sī* 斯 'this.'

12. Cǐ Wén Wáng zhī yǒng yě 此文王之勇也
This was King Wén's courage. (*Mèng* 1B/3)

13. Shì yì zǒu yě 是亦走也
This was also running away. (*Mèng* 1A/3)

Note that in Classical Chinese *shì* 是 is not itself a copula, with the meaning 'to be,' as in Modern Chinese. Its frequent occurrence as a resumptive pronoun introducing a noun predicate was no doubt influential in giving it this meaning, which it had acquired in the colloquial language by the Hàn period.

If the subject is plural, it is resumed by *jiē* 皆 'all.' Compare modern *dōu* 都.

14. Jiē gǔ shèng rén yě 皆古聖人也
They were all sages of old. (*Mèng* 2A/2)

The particles *nǎi* 乃 and *jí* 即, both of which also occur with verbal predicates in the sense of 'then, thereupon' (see Section XV), add emphasis to a noun predication, but are not copulas.

15. Shì nǎi rén shù yě 是乃仁術也
This indeed is the technique of (= used by) *rén*. (*Mèng* 1A/7)