

## Conventions

### Romanization

When the first professional translator between the Chinese and the English languages arrived in the port of Canton, there was no method of expressing the sounds of the various dialects of the Chinese language in the Roman alphabet for those who knew English. Robert Morrison was “*the* great pioneer”<sup>1</sup> who began to make a direct connection between the languages and cultures of China, England, and America. Before Morrison, those from Anglo-American cultures had to go through Portuguese, Latin, French or the pidgin languages spoken in Macao and Canton to learn about China.

Since Morrison, many others have provided improved methods of rendering the sounds of the Chinese language into the Roman alphabet. This led to an overwhelming array of systems, where every country with an alphabetically written language had a unique system of Romanizing Chinese. To the relief of most non-specialist students of China, the People’s Republic has provided us with our most current (probably not the last) solution in the form of the 汉语拼音 [hàn yǔ pīn yīn or Chinese (Hàn language) Phonetic Alphabet] system. Known commonly as 拼音 [pīn yīn], it is no better than

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1. Giles, Herbert A., Preface to *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, vii; I am grateful to Carolle Morini, the Caroline D. Bain Archivist and Reference Librarian at the Boston Athenaeum for encouraging my use of this quotation.

what came before and serious students of China both inside and outside of the country must also become familiar with previous standards of Romanization such as the Wade–Giles, Yale, and—probably the most accurate of them all—the 国语罗马字 [guó yǔ luó mǎ zì or National Romanization] system. This is not a political or linguistic stance on my part but simply a fact of life if one is to benefit from the centuries of scholarship on China both before and after Morrison’s arrival in what was then the Celestial Empire.

The 汉语拼音 [hàn yǔ pīn yīn or Chinese (Hàn language) Phonetic Alphabet] system is imperfect at best, and unfortunately both inside and outside of China its implementation leads not to clarity but to confusion. Partly due to China’s habit of not using tone marks with 汉语拼音 [hàn yǔ pīn yīn] and partly due to the Library of Congress’ and other major libraries’ decision not to include tone marks in their electronic catalogues, there is an ever spreading plague of Romanized Chinese texts without tones. Yet Mandarin Chinese is very much a tonal language where if tones are not taken into consideration there might be as many as four different words with completely different meanings that look exactly the same in Romanization but really are distinct in sound and meaning. Adding to this confusion, is the practice of running the syllables of polysyllabic words together in 拼音 [pīn yīn]. Initially this is to help a person who does not know the language and this provides some help in distinguishing words that are formed with a single Chinese word and character from those words that are comprised of multiple syllables. While this may work well with tones, without the tone marks these strings of letters become useful only as the most secure form of passwords for computer accounts. If any new direction is to be found in this book on the Humanities, then certainly it is my attempt to use Romanization properly. However, this volume goes further.

### 中文 [zhōng wén or Chinese Language]

In almost every style manual that I have consulted (especially *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*, *Modern Language Association Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*) Romance and Germanic languages are given equal status as English. Suggestions are always to write necessary terms in the original language in italics to distinguish these terms from English. Then an explanation can follow in brackets or as a footnote. However when it comes to Chinese, all these guides recommend that Chinese characters should not be included in the actual text but instead Romanization without tones should be used. Manuals all refer to the American Library Association–Library of Congress (ALA–LC) Romanization Tables as the source of this guidance. Despite a petition from an association of East Asian Studies Librarians in the United States to change this recommendation, this is still the accepted practice. Choosing not to include Chinese characters in the printing process may have been understandable in the past (Robert Morrison had to hire Chinese helpers to cut his own wooden movable type for the printing of his Chinese dictionary and in

even earlier times Etienne Fourmont spent the better part of his life producing a Chinese typeface in France), we must now make use of the benefits of twenty-first-century technology.

One of the most important revolutions in the printing of Chinese characters in the twentieth century was the gradual development of Input Method Editors (IMEs). Be it on a Mac or a PC, various companies have developed IMEs for the Chinese language. These software programs (most are shareware or freeware) allow a competent user of computers to insert Chinese characters into a word editing program. The simplest ones allow you to use 拼音 [pīn yīn] to first type out the terms and then you select from available choices the actual characters that you want to use. More complex IMEs allow you to choose from different Romanization systems. This however does mean that writing Chinese in this manner requires the author to write any text twice, first in Romanization and then with the help of IMEs in Chinese. While this method is still cumbersome, it is far more convenient than having to cut one's own movable type, or forcing poorly written Chinese characters on your reader who may be encountering the language for the very first time. Chinese characters in this volume are printed in 新宋体 [xīn sòng tǐ or new Song Dynasty script]. As a TrueType font in the Windows operating system it is called SimsSun and it serves as the default font for Chinese characters in Microsoft Word.

Conventions in this volume follow in spirit the 15th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers* (this was the latest edition available when I began editing this book). For gathering the writings of twelve scholars from six different countries and forming it into a single language and a single style, no style manual can be comprehensive in its recommendations. I have adopted several deviations from the style of the University of Chicago Press and in each case it is for the sake of clarity, readability, and a sense of fairness in treating languages and cultures. Of course this is a small step in a new direction in editing works that deal with China and there are bound to be mistakes or oversights. Such faults, when found, lie solely with me, the editor.

### Format for Chinese Characters and Personal Names

This volume uses the following rubric when Chinese terms are included in the text: Chinese Characters are written first and then the Romanization using 拼音 [pīn yīn] with tone marks follows the Chinese characters in square brackets. Also included in the brackets is either a translation of the Chinese term or its English equivalent. Using the title of this volume as an example, the reader will find the title of this book in the following style: 中国与人文和仁文 [zhōng guó yǔ rén wén hé rén wén or *China and the Humanities: At the Crossroads of the Human and the Humane*]. In addition to this deviation, surnames or family names in this volume have been capitalized. This helps the reader to distinguish which character in a Chinese name is the surname.

This format will seem strange to a casual Anglo–American reader but it does make the following statements. First, Chinese is a language that is written in Chinese characters. Second, 拼音 [pīn yīn] is not a language but only how we can represent the sound of each of the characters using an alphabetically written system of approximations. Finally in the twenty–first century, unlike in the age of Samuel Johnson, China is no longer so strange and difficult to understand—we as scholars in the Humanities (both East and West) must help China to make a sound translation of itself beyond the boundaries of language, culture, and geography.