

PROGRESSIVE LESSONS

IN THE

CHINESE SPOKEN LANGUAGE

WITH

LISTS OF COMMON WORDS AND PHRASES, AND AN  
APPENDIX CONTAINING THE LAWS OF TONES  
IN THE PEKING DIALECT.

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## PREFACE.

This little work is intended to assist beginners in the Chinese spoken language. The request has often been made to me, to prepare a simple work in the form of a Vocabulary, as being a want felt by learners. The attempt is here made to supply this want, and to provide a manual which may be suitable for those, who wish to acquire the common phrases of conversation, without attempting to unravel the more subtle intricacies of the language.

In the first part of the work the standard Mandarin orthography has been used. It is found in a printed form in the Wu fang yuen yin **五方元音**, a compact and useful native dictionary which may be advantageously consulted for the sounds of words. Farther on, (beginning at the 25th page) I have adopted the peculiarities of the Peking dialect,—which are given with great fulness in Mr Wade's recent and valuable works "The book of Experiments," and "Elementary Course."

In the Appendix will be found the laws of the Peking dialect in regard to tones which will be of assistance to those who may be perplexed by a multitude of seeming irregularities in that dialect. These are here reduced to a system of laws sixteen in number.

All who desire to become really good speakers in this language should study the tones. The knowledge of this peculiarity in Chinese words, lends great distinctness to what is said, and the dryness of the study is much more than compensated, by the pleasure found in being readily understood. The difficulty experienced in distinguishing and learning the tones is much less than is generally supposed.

The tones are marked in this work chiefly (from p. 1 to p. 52) according to the standard five-tone system, or that now prevailing at Nanking, and in the northern part of Kiang-su and Ngan-hwei. Such is the system adhered to in the native Mandarin dictionary mentioned above, and by Premare, Morrison, Medhurst, and other authors.

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## LISTS OF USEFUL WORDS AND SHORT PHRASES.

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APPENDIX.

- I. Tones of the Peking dialect.
- II. Tones of the Nanking dialect.
- III. Tones at Chefoo.

*Alphabet and Tone marks.*

1. The five vowels i, e, a, o, u, when they are not followed by a final n or ng, have the Italian sound. They are the vowels contained in the words fee, fay, papa, foe, too.

2. The vowels i, e, when followed by n or ng, are pronounced as the vowels in fin, and fun. But after i and y, the vowel e is to be sounded as e in sent. A, o, u, when n and ng follow are unaffected by that circumstance.

3. The vowel i is heard like e, in *middle, tassel, ancle*.

4. The vowel u is heard like u, in the French words *tu, une*.

5. The vowel è is heard as the first e, in *there*, or as ea in *bear*.

6. The mute and sibilant consonants k, t, p, f, s, sh, ch, are pronounced as in English. Though sometimes a little softened in northern dialects, so as to be heard like g, d, b, etc., this need not be noticed in expressing their proper orthography.

7. An inverted comma above the line follows the consonants k, t, p, ts, ch, when they are aspirated. In such cases a strong guttural aspirate closely follows the sound of these consonants. Pronounce the word Tahiti without the vowel a. This might be expressed by T'iti, according to the orthography now explained.

8. In the mandarin of the north and the west, the initials h and s coincide before i and u. The sound formed by this union may be denominated a sibilant h, or an aspirated s, and the spelling *hs* has been proposed for it, but it will probably become sh in the course of years.

9. In the same dialects, ts and k coincide before the same vowels i and u. The sound thus formed may be written k, ts, or ch. It is not plainly defined, and is constantly hovering between these various phonetic values. After a further period of change, it will probably determine itself finally into a distinct ch.

10. Every word is pronounced evenly, or with a rising or falling inflection of the voice, or with a double inflection. It may be pitched high or low, according to the usage of any particular dialect, and be enunciated quickly or slowly. All words in the language are arranged in four or five large groups, and one of these tones or inflections is attached to each. Thus the great class to which each word belongs is known, by the intonation with which it is habitually pronounced.