PREFACE

This work is an attempt to apply to the teaching of the Foochow Dialect the principles adopted in the Primer of the Mandarin Dialect, written by Rev. F. W. Baller of the China Inland Mission. Mr. Baller’s Primer has been the model throughout, and in most places it has been very closely followed. At times, on account of the idiom of the Foochow Dialect differing extensively from the Mandarin idiom, it has been necessary to leave the original plan, but on the whole the book may be spoken of as a “Foochow Baller”, which, in the minds of those who have used the well known Mandarin Primer, is certainly a term of respect.

For the study of the Foochow Dialect to the present time, three books have been in use. There is first of all, the Dictionary of the Foochow Dialect, by Maclay and Baldwin, a most valuable work. Then there is Dr. Adam’s English-Chinese Dictionary, which also student of the Foochow Dialect should have. There is also the Manual of the Foochow Dialect. Its chapters on the use of the Numerary Adjunct, and on the Comparison of Adjectives are really very fine, and the Table of Tones in Combination, found at the end of the Book, is an absolute necessity to the acquirement of correct ways of pronunciation.

In the making of this Primer much help has been received from various sources, for which proper acknowledgement should be made.

First of all we are greatly obliged to the Rev. F. W. Baller for allowing us to make such use of his Primer as the model upon which this is based. Mr. Baller has expressed his great pleasure that such a use should be made of his work.

We are also indebted to the Manual of the Foochow Dialect for the Table of Tones in Combination, and for much of the matter found in the Lessons upon the use of the Numerary Adjunct and the Comparison of Adjectives.

Several Missionaries have given us valuable help and criticisms. Among these are the Rev. H. R. Caldwell of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, and Miss Hartwell of the American Board Mission.

Various Chinese teachers who have been employed have also rendered valuable service, and our own household servants have at times been successfully consulted as to which of two or more expressions were in the most common use, or in their own words gó bàng. Lastly we are extremely grateful to the Rev. LI. Lloyd, of the Church Missionary Society, who has kindly undertaken the final revision of the manuscript and the correction of the proofs. Under his experienced care there should be every chance of this Primer becoming a thoroughly accurate work.

In the hope that by the aid of this book, many new missionaries of the societies working in Foochow and neighbourhood will attain an accurate and fluent knowledge of the Foochow dialect, and so be able more effectually to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, the authors now send it forth.

“The work of our hands, establish Thou it.” Psalm XC: 17.

“Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,” I. Corinthians XV: 58.

DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS

For Orthography and Pronunciation, the student is referred to the instructions found in the Introduction to the Dictionary of the Foochow Dialect published by the Methodist Mission Press.

The practice of the British and Foreign Bible Society's edition of the Romanized New Testament has been followed, in the spelling of the words for *this* and *that* and the kindred words, which are spelt in the Dictionary with the final ui̤. The spelling uoi, in the opinion of the Authors, is preferable to ui̤, as it m that adopted in the Romanized Monthly Paper, and also in many educational works published in Romanized.

No system of Romanization can ever adequately represent Chinese sounds, which can only be properly learnt by listening to the speech of the Chinese themselves. The student must always bear in mind the important fact that Chinese sounds often differ widely from those of English words, and that Romanization only can suggest the sound, rather than adequately represent it. Hence the great advantage early on in the study of Chinese, of obtaining a knowledge of Chinese characters, and using a Bible and Hymnal in character, rather than In Romanized.

Tones in Combination

The Dictionary gives some excellent rules regarding the changes which take place in the sound of certain of the tones in combinations of two words, where the leading word often changes its tone entirely. This is especially true of the third, fourth and seventh tones, which revert to the first and second tones. The rules are stated so clearly in the Dictionary that there Is no need to repeat them here.

The Dictionary, however, omits to state that in the case of the third, fourth and seventh tones, the vowel sound also changes, reverting to the sound of the first and second tones. Thus, Hóng-hĭng(奮興) Revival, is pronounced hŭng-hĭng. Hók-cĭu(福州) the native name of the capital of Fuhkien Province is pronounced hū-cĭu. Hóng-gáu(奉教) to embrace the doctrines of a sect (this term is particularly applied to embracing Christianity) is pronounced hŭng-gáu.

Except for the tone mark, the Romanized gives no clue to such a change of vowel sounds. Here again it is important that the student should obtain his knowledge of these changes by careful attention to the sounds as spoken by the Chinese themselves. Much practice is necessary to perfection. Frequent reading with the teacher of the Table of Tones in Combination will give much help.

The Use of Romanized

The student should constantly practise writing sentences and phrases in the Romanized. By so doing, the necessary habit of thinking in Chinese as a preliminary to correct speaking of Chinese will be successfully cultivated.

Methods of Study

The student is recommended to first read through the whole of this Primer, so as to arrive at some idea of its scope and aim, then to read carefully through all the Lessons with the teacher, but not the Exercises, finally to study both Lessons and Exercises together. Please remember that this Primer does not claim to impart complete knowledge of the Foochow Colloquial Dialect, but only endeavors to put the student in the way of acquiring such a knowledge. Success in this direction will be the outcome of the student’s own perseverance. Primers rather fulfil the functions of Signposts than those of Stage coaches.

No Primer can ever supply the knowledge of a language that is obtained by constant intercourse with the people.

The great art of studying Chinese is to learn as many ways as possible of expressing the same idea. This Primer supplies the student with over a thousand colloquial words and phrases, but the student must not be content with knowing these. They are given here in order that he may learn many more, from the lips of the Chinese people themselves.

A most painful experience is to listen to missionaries reading off sentences culled from a Primer, under the impression that they are preaching the Gospel to the Chinese. Effective preaching is preaching that is alive, and the mere recitation of sentences from a Primer does not constitute preaching.

A little boy, the son of a Chinese Missionary was asked what he intended to be when he grew up. He expressed his intention to be a Missionary, like his father. “What do you intend to preach?” was asked him. “I intend to preach Chinese” was his reply. It is to be hoped that students of this work will learn to preach Chinese, and not ‘‘Primerese”.

The student must be willing to practise all that he learns, and must not be afraid of making mistakes. It is by making mistakes that one learns to talk correctly.

It is very important that the student should practise speaking to different people, and not confine his efforts to his teacher, or servants. Through familiarity, our servants soon learn to understand what we say, and will often successfully interpret some very marvellous Chinese, but this is no criterion that we are speaking the language correctly. A certain young Missionary of our acquantance, on being warned by a senior worker in the Mission that he was not speaking correctly，endeavoured to justify himself by saying that his “boy” understood what he said to him. One is reminded of the little boy who told his mother that he was cured of the habit of squinting, because he could now see two things where he could only see one before!

Care must be taken in the use of words holding meanings which are related to each other, but which have each of them their own specific use. In English we speak about a servant’s “wages” a clerk’s “salary”，and a clergyman’s “stipend”. Similar distinctions are observed in Chinese, and these must be thoroughly understood, or the student will perpetrate some most distressing “howlers”. A Missionary who possessed in a remarkable manner the gift of fluency in speech and accuracy of pronunciation, was one day heard, in translating an English address given in Foochow by a traveller who had visited the Yangtse Gorges, to speak of the bamboo towing line used on the boats that travel up the rapids, as a “só̤h”, being ignorant of the fact that this particular kind of rope is always known by the name of “năk”. Although he was a Missionary of experience, and a really fine speaker of the dialect, yet he perpetrated this “howler”. With the knowledge that mistakes of such a kind are possible, the student will be on his guard against them.