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| Symbols. | Pronunciation and Examples |
| á | As *a* in f*a*ther, 揩k’á, wipe; 拜pá’, *worship* |
| a | As a in s*a*nd, or in h*a*t; 鉛 k’a*n*, *lead*; 蠟lah, *wax* |
| au | As in P*au*l, or as *a* in f*a*ll, or o in gone; 老‘lau, *old*. |
| b or p | As in 病*p*ing’, *sickness*; 生病sáng bing’, *to be sick* |
| d or t | As in 道*t*au’, *doctrine*; 神道zun dau’, *men canonized for their virtues* |
| dz | A compound of d and z; 盡dzing’, *exhaust*. |
| dzz | do. as *dze* in a*dze*. The sound z marks a peculiar vowel sound which is sometimes between *i* and *e*. 辭dzz, *to leave.* |
| é | As *ai* in f*ai*l, or *a* in m*a*le, 來lé, *come* |
| e | As e in led or let; she, ten. |
| eu | Nearly as ou in cousin lengthened; 手‘seu, *hand*. |
| f | As in 夫fú, or 轎夫 kiau’fú, *chair-bearer.* |
|  |  |
| g or k | As in 其*k*í, *he*, before *i, ü* often heard like *ji*; 共衆 kúng’ tsúng’, *altogether*。 |
| *h* | A feeble aspirate, often lost, 合*h*eh, *combine*, 皇 *h*wong, *emperor.* When quite lost, as in the latter word, it will be omitted. |
| h and h’ | A strong guttural aspirate, nearly equivalent to *sh* when occurring before í and ü; 海‘hé, *sea*; 喜‘h’í, *glad*. Before í and ü, the superior comma will be used. |
| í | As *i* in mar*i*ne; 西sí, *west*. |
| i | As *i* in s*i*ng or s*i*t; 心sing, *heart* . |
| dj | Nearly as *j* in *J*une; djü’, *preface*. This sound may also be read z. The natives either. |
| k | 古今kú kiun, *ancient and modern*. |
| k’ | A strongly aspirated sound 空k’úng, *empty*. It is often mistaken by foreign ears when occurring before i and ü, for the aspirated c’h but should be separated from that sound in careful pronunciation; 去k’í, *go*; usually heard chi’ aspirated[[1]](#footnote-1). |
| l | 禮‘lí, *propriety* |
| m or *m* | 米‘mí, *rice*; 唔沒*m* méh, *there is no more* |
| n | 女‘nü, *woman* |
| ng or ng | A nasal consonant used as the beginning or close of a syllable. When no distinct vowel sound accompanies it, it is marked as ng; 江kong, *river*; 我‘ngú, *I*; 五‘ng, *five*. |
| an, en, ûn | A slightly nasal, best heard before another word; 但*t*a*n*’, but; 敢‘kén, *dare*; 幹kûn, *dry*; 算sûn’, *count*; 搬轉 pèn ‘tsén, *to whirl round*. |
| ó | As *o* in g*o*; 怕p’ô’, *fear*. |
| o | As *o* in g*o*ng and g*o*t; 當 tong, *ought*, *bear*; 落 loh, *fall* |
| ö | As ö in Göthe; 端 tön, *correct*; 看 k’ön’, *see*; 奪töh, *rob.* |
|  |  |
| p | 比pí, *compare*. |
| p’ | As p with a strong aspirate; 譬p’iʻ, *like*. |
| rh | A peculiar Chinese sound\*, the same as in mandarin; 而 rh, *and* |
| s | 所’sú, *which*, *therefore*. |
| sz | A peculiar Chinese sibilant[[2]](#footnote-2), pronounced as in mandarin, and nearly as se in cas*tle*, whi*stle*, t, l, being supposed omitted; 詩 sz, *poetry*. |
| t | 多tú, *many*. |
| t’ | As t with a strong aspirate; 拖t’ú, *to draw*. |
| ts | 做tsúʻ, do |
| ts’ | The last strongly aspirated; 秋ts’ieu*, Autumn* |
| tsz | A peculiar Chinese sibilant, pronounced as in mandarin as ts in hats; 子 ‘tsz, *a son*; 知tsz, *know*. |
| ts’z | The above with a strong aspirate; 雌ts’z, female. |
| ú | As u in r*u*le; 素súʻ, *common*, *plain*. |
| u | As u in r*u*n; 門 mun, *door*; 等’tung, *wait*. |
| ü | French u as in vert*u*; German ü as in Tübingen; 虚h’ü, *empty*. |
| û | 處ts’ûʻ, *place*. This vowel is between ó and ú. |
| v or f | 佛feh, Buddha; 房fong, *house*, More of v than f. |
| w | 光kwong, *light*; 王wong, *king* |
| y | 右yeu’, *right-hand*; 要 yauʻ, *to want.* |
| z or s | 象siángʻ, *elephant*; 坐zúʻ, *sit* |

An apostrophe’ preceding the word, denotes the second tone.

A comma ‘ following the word, denotes the third tone.

The fourth tone will be written with h, k or g final.

Words left unmarked are in the first tone.[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. When a native is asked whether k‘i‘ or c‘hi‘ is the more correct pronunciation of he replies the former. Yet the orthography by c‘hi‘ seems to the foreigner more like the true sound. The fact is that the sound is in a state of transition from k’i’ to c’hi’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This sound is better described as s and a peculiar vowel ï or t, s, and ï. The mark ï denotes a vowel peculiar to China but like e in *castle*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The further subdivision into upper and lower tones needs no mark, being indicated uniformly by the initial letter. Thus, b, g, d, z, l, m, n, r, and any letters italicized are in the lower tones; other initial letters denote upper tones. There are a few exceptions which will be noted afterwards. A final italic letter denotes nasal. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)