

Chinese Linguistics in Eastern Europe: Historical and Institutional Overview

This entry provides a concise overview of the history of Chinese linguistics in the Eastern European region between Germany and the former Soviet Union.

Research on the *Chinese language* (by which term we mean here the totality of the geographical and historical varieties of the language of the Hà'n ethnic majority of China) in the Eastern half of Europe looks back to some two hundred years of scholarship. It has two major traditions, linked to the two political and cultural superpowers of the region in this period: Germany and Russia – treated in separate entries. Besides, there has been significant work going on since the middle of the 20th century in centers geographically located in between those two regional superpowers, especially in Poland, Czechoslovakia and its successor states, Hungary, and Romania. Interestingly, though, sinological scholarship in these centers was influenced much more by the achievements and personalities of French sinology than by the German or Russian tradition.

In the region between Germany and Russia, the most significant centers of sinology in the 20th century have been Warsaw (Poland), Prague (Czechoslovakia / Czech Republic), and Budapest (Hungary). In Poland, the Institute of Oriental Studies of Warsaw University was established in 1933, and had in its ranks Janusz Chmielewski (1916–1998), and his student Mieczysław Jerzy Künstler (Chinese name: Jīn Sīdé 金斯德; 1933–2007), as key personalities in Chinese linguistic scholarship. Chmielewski dealt extensively with various aspects of Chinese in his early career (Chmielewski 1956, 1957), but specialized in logic and philosophy later. Künstler, who studied under Chmielewski, and was subsequently primarily influenced by French sinologists (Demiéville, Gernet, Rygaloff), earned his doctorate in Warsaw in 1962 with a dissertation on Chinese historical grammar (published later as Künstler 1967), was promoted to the rank of full professor in 1986, and served as head of the Department of Sinology in Warsaw in the last decades of the 20th century. His scholarship focused on phonology (Künstler 1970, 1990) and historical linguistics. In his last years (2003–2006) he presided over the Committee of Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, which is in charge of publishing Poland's leading journal of Oriental studies: *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*. Chmielewski's and Künstler's legacies in Warsaw have been carried on by Ewa Zajdler (Chinese name: Cài Sùmíng 蔡素明), who studies various aspects of Modern Chinese (e.g., Zajdler 2005) and the non-Sinitic languages of Taiwan (Zajdler 2000).

Czechoslovakia possessed eminent schools of both linguistics (the Prague school of structuralism), and sinology (at the Oriental Institute of Academy of Sciences, as well as at Charles University), but compared to their significance, achievements in Chinese

linguistics have been less spectacular. The greatest figure of Czech sinology, Jaroslav Průšek (Chinese name: Pǔshíkè 普實克, 1906–1980) produced some linguistic studies himself, in the early stages of his career (e.g., Průšek 1950). But the most outstanding scholar in the field was his graduate student Oldřich Švarný (1920–2011), a specialist in the phonetics (and especially the prosody) of the Chinese language. He obtained his doctorate in 1963 with a dissertation on the question of morpheme and word in Modern Chinese (Švarný 1963). He worked in the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, then at Comenius University (Bratislava), and later at Palacký University (Olomouc). He published papers in English, French, and German (e.g., Švarný 1991a, 1991b), and authored dictionaries and textbooks of Modern Chinese. His influence is often acknowledged by European scholars, and a volume in the Monograph Series of the *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* was devoted to him as a *Festschrift* on his 80th birthday (Třísková ed. 2001). In recent years, the work of Hana Třísková (Chinese name Liào Mǐn 廖敏, b. 1958) and Lukáš Zádrapa (b. 1980, e.g. Zádrapa 2011) marks the continuation of Chinese linguistic research at the Prague institute.

In Hungary, investigations into the Chinese language were initiated at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) by Louis (Lajos) Ligeti (Chinese name Lǐ Gàití 李盖提 1902–1987), one-time student of H. Maspero and P. Pelliot, an expert on Altaic and Inner Asian languages, who directed the attention of a student of his, Barnabás Csongor (Chinese name Chén Guó 陳國, b. 1923), towards Chinese historical linguistics. Under Ligeti's supervision, he focused on sources in Altaic languages to find data that can be brought to bear on issues in Chinese historical phonology. His doctoral dissertation (1947) dealt with Chinese as reflected in the Uighur Script of the Tang era; it was later published as Csongor (1952), with a short sequel added as Csongor (1954). Later he extended the scope of his investigations to Chinese texts in Brâhmî and Tibetan scripts, a research topic he returned to when working with M. Hashimoto at Princeton, in 1970–1971, after which he devoted his energies to literary translation, and did not pursue linguistics any more. A student of his, Ferenc Mártonfi (Chinese name Mǎ Dōngfēi 馬東飛, 1945–1991), a scholar trained in various modern and classical languages, as well as general linguistics, wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Chinese transcriptions of Sanskrit Buddhist lexical items, and their role as a source for Middle Chinese phonology. It was published in two parts: Mártonfi (1974, 1975). He then continued his investigations of Chinese historical phonology, with an emphasis on Middle Sino-Korean, and was preparing a dissertation for an Academy doctorate on the typology of writing systems of the world, which, however, was left unfinished when he died at the age of 46. The Chinese linguistic tradition was revived in Budapest, both at Eötvös Loránd University, and in the Research Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in the early 2000s, with Huba Bartos (Chinese name: Bāo Fǔbó 包甫博, b. 1966) pursuing modern linguistic research (e.g., Bartos 2003), and Daniel Z. Kádár (Chinese name: Táng Zuǒlì 唐佐力, b. 1979) working on linguistic politeness, and discourse analysis in vernacular literary texts (e.g. Kádár 2007, 2010).

Romania was relatively late to join into Chinese linguistic research, with Florentina Vişan

(Chinese name: Wèi Shān 魏珊, b. 1947) starting to publish linguistic papers in the 1980s, and turning out a two-volume Chinese grammar in Romanian (Vişan 1998, 1999) at the University of Bucharest, where the Department of Chinese Language has been established in 1956. Her lead was followed by Luminița Bălan (Chinese name: Bái Lán 白蘭, b. 1965), with studies on Chinese grammar, lexicography, and the cognitive aspects of language (see, e.g., Vişan and Bălan 2005).

In all of these countries, there is currently more work going on in the field of Chinese linguistics, with a new generation of scholars, better integrated into European and international scholarship than their above-mentioned predecessors. This is also indicated by the fact that the biannual conference of the European Association of Chinese Linguistics (EACL) was held twice in this region (EACL 4: Budapest, 2006; EACL 6: Poznań, 2009).

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HUBA BARTOS