

comprehensive working grammar of the language, and is aimed apparently at random somewhere between the teacher and the student in such a way that neither is likely to benefit greatly.

For the teacher it is not comprehensive enough or analytical enough to provide in-depth material which would add much colour and weight to classroom presentation. For the student it is so perfunctory (perhaps ‘ungenerous’ might be a better word) in its treatment of many major grammar points that it is hard to see how the innocent mind could get to grips with much of it. As in the earlier book there is for the most part a curious assumption that the student already knows a wide vocabulary which can be understood when it appears in newly introduced grammatical contexts, while here and there, as if waking briefly from this unwarranted assumption, a word or term is suddenly explained (as with *houchih* ‘resemble’ on p. 85). As for the ‘workbook’ element, it consists of a few brief and repetitive exercises at the end of each unit. Little or no attempt seems to have been made to make the exercises original or interesting or to depart from the stolid fare of ‘fill in the blanks’ and ‘using formula x, change y to z’. The teacher will not stimulate the student with this material, and because of the vocabulary problem the student will often not be able to understand it without a teacher.

The book is more useful than *Basic Cantonese* if only because a learner who has progressed that much further has a better chance of relating to some at least of the material, but both are marred in principle by their failure to identify and target a specific readership. *Cantonese: a comprehensive grammar* by the same authors remains a towering achievement and neither of these ‘spin-offs’ comes even close to matching it in usefulness. Having said which, they do contain some new material elegantly rendered into exact English equivalents; they deal unswervingly with everyday usage in straightforward language devoid of jargon and pretentiousness; they are refreshingly free from contrived and unnatural examples (indeed many of the examples are sourced); and they show evidence of the insight and originality of approach which mark the earlier work of these two gifted authors. Even the most experienced teacher of Cantonese will find some food for productive thought at points in the text. For example, the casually thrown away remark on p. 16 associating tone change with familiarity is enlightening; the treatment of classifiers in Unit 8 is sparingly phrased but satisfyingly full; and the discussion of causatives and resultatives with *dou* in Unit 14 is unusual. By contrast rather heavy weather is made of the use and positioning of the adverbs *dou* (pp. 97–8) and *jauh* (p. 137), both of which would be better explained as being positioned *before* the verb rather than *after* other features; and the sketchiness of Unit 7 on adjectives and stative verbs makes the distinction between them less than clear.

As with most other Routledge publications there are no Chinese characters used in this book. Since there can nowadays be no significant cost barrier to including characters, their omission must presumably be ascribed to misguided editorial policy.

HUGH D. R. BAKER

YIP PO-CHING:

*The Chinese lexicon: a comprehensive survey.*

x, 390 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. £75.

‘*The Chinese lexicon* is a detailed study of the words and word combinations used in modern Chinese.’ When teaching Chinese to English-speaking learners,

it is inevitable that comparisons between Chinese and English are made. Written English can be analysed in different meaningful units, i.e. sentences, clauses, phrases, words and morphemes. Written Chinese can similarly be analysed in terms of sentences, clauses, phrases and, arguably, morphemes. What then is the Chinese equivalent to the category 'words'? Is it 字 *zì* (character) or 词 *cí* (word)? To answer this question, we need not only to define the intricate relationship between characters and words—which is not always straightforward—we should also have a broad view on how the language has functioned in its historical as well as modern development.

It is fortunate that we now have a book which deals with the Chinese lexicon in English in such a detailed manner. Yip Po-ching's *The Chinese lexicon: a comprehensive survey* offers us a broad picture of the words and word combinations used in modern Chinese. We know, for example, that more than two-thirds of modern Chinese words are disyllabic. It seems convenient to adopt a word-based approach in teaching spoken Chinese. However, if we look at modern Chinese against its historical and developmental background, we will find that:

What we can clearly see is that in the monosyllabically oriented classical lexicon, the increase in words is reflected in the increase in written symbols, whereas in the modern lexicon, the increase in words corresponds directly with the increase of disyllabic combinations, whilst the number of individual characters employed for the purpose has not only been vastly reduced but has subsequently remained constant (p. 18).

What does this claim, based on research findings, suggest to us in terms of pedagogic considerations in teaching Chinese as a foreign language?

There are two major approaches to Chinese language teaching in terms of reading, which are generally termed 字本位 'character-based' and 词本位 'word-based'. We see that textbooks published in China are mostly 'word-based': two- or three-character words are presented as a unit. The meaning of the individual characters which constitute a word is not given. It is down to the teacher who uses the textbook to deal with this. The character-based approach, in contrast, pays attention to individual characters and their capacity to form new words. This latter approach seems to be favoured outside China, and is represented predominantly by the popular textbooks used in the UK and France, namely, *Colloquial Chinese* by T'ung and Pollard (London: Routledge, 1982) and *Méthode d'initiation à la langue et à l'écriture chinoises* by Joel Bellassen and Zhang Pengpeng (Paris: La Compagnie, 1989). The fact that some 2,000 to 3,000 core characters can form many thousands of words, and cope with the expansion of modern-day vocabulary, must deserve the attention of not only linguists but also of teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. This is precisely the rationale behind the character-based approach.

The question that follows is: how, then, does this comparatively small body of characters manage to deal with what seems to be an ever increasing number of words? *The Chinese lexicon* illustrates systematically the morphological, syntactic, phonoaesthetic and rhetorical features governing word formation in the Chinese lexicon. It provides a comprehensive analysis of how characters and words interact. We find ample examples of the varied ways in which words are formed. All of this is no doubt very useful for learners and teachers of Chinese alike.

In the appendix, the author lists dozens of intra- and inter-lexical strategies

of the Chinese and English lexicons with examples for each strategy. The section is interesting, even fascinating, to read on its own.

To conclude, *The Chinese lexicon* will be an invaluable resource for learners of Chinese at intermediate and advanced levels, even more so for teachers of Chinese, who will find it a comprehensive as well as an easy-to-use reference work.

LIANYI SONG

MARJORIE DRYBURGH:

*North China and Japanese expansion, 1933–1937: regional power and the national interest.*

viii, 249 pp. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000. £45.

Marjorie Dryburgh's important new book is a welcome addition to the slowly growing literature on the effects of Japanese encroachment on Chinese politics in the 1930s. The book uses a wealth of contemporary Chinese-language sources, combined with memoir literature, and sets forth a powerful argument that the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kaishek exacerbated its problems in dealing with Japan by adopting too rigid an attitude towards regional Chinese militarists in North China. In doing so, it helps create a more nuanced picture of the way in which Chinese nationalism developed in the early part of the last century.

The essential work on the way in which Chiang Kaishek's regime responded to Japanese aggression in the 1930s is Parks Coble's *Facing Japan: Chinese politics and Japanese imperialism* (1991). Coble's work gave us the 'view from Nanjing', showing the various pressures on Chiang's regime—warlordism, the threat from the Communist party, factionalism—which forced him to adopt a policy of appeasement towards the Japanese after the occupation of Manchuria in 1931. Dryburgh switches focus, looking at the question from the point of view of one of the regional militarists with whom Chiang and the Japanese both had to deal. Her central figure is Song Zheyuan, commander of the 29th Army and political leader in the Hebei-Chaha'er region of North China. Throughout the period 1933 to 1937, Song was caught between two conflicting sets of demands. On the one hand, Chiang Kaishek demanded that Song show his loyalty to the central government in Nanjing by resisting Japanese pressure to grant the latter military and political rights in North China; yet Chiang refused to give Song any significant military backing so that he could defend his position. On the other, the North China Garrison Army, the Japanese military force in the region, wooed Song with promises of support if he encouraged North China to become autonomous from the Nanjing regime, and threatened him with retaliation if he refused. In Dryburgh's account, Song's skill as a political juggler comes through first and foremost, as he frequently kept his own statements vague and unfocused, giving the impression that he was a simpleton. When Song refused to carry out Nanjing's demands, a common reaction among Chiang's officials was therefore not to assume that Song was being defiant, but rather that he was not particularly intelligent, and could not be expected fully to understand his role in the wider national picture. In retrospect, however, the impression that one gets is of a skilled political operator, playing a weak hand well. For four years, as Sino-Japanese tensions escalated between 1933 and 1937, Song managed to maintain a large swathe of North China broadly under his