

**SYLLABARY OF THE  
SHANGHAI  
VERNACULAR**

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Syllabary of the Shanghai Vernacular by Shanghai Christian Vernacular Society

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**SHANGHAI CHRISTIAN VERNACULAR SOCIETY**

**SYLLABARY OF THE  
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上海土白集字

CALIFORNIA

SYLLABARY

OF THE

SHANGHAI VERNACULAR.

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## PREFACE.

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This Syllabary is published under the auspices of the Shanghai Christian Vernacular Society. The burden of the work has fallen upon three experienced and well known Chinese teachers; viz., 鍾子能, 吳應卿 and 郝潤之. They have done their work carefully, but it is inevitable that in the first work of the kind there should be many mistakes and omissions. Suggestions, corrections and criticisms will be gratefully received. They may be sent to the Secretary of the Shanghai Christian Vernacular Society, 18 Peking Road.

## PRONUNCIATION OF SHANGHAI SYLLABLES.

THE true pronunciation of Chinese sounds can only be learned from a Chinese teacher. A large majority of the sounds have no true equivalent in English; hence the student should bear in mind that any *Romanization used does not represent English sounds, but Chinese sounds*. This fact can not be too strongly emphasized. The committee which formulated the present Union System of Romanization did not have in mind the representation of Chinese sounds by their nearest English equivalents so much as it had in view the production of a complete, simple and systematic table of letters and combinations whereby all the Chinese sounds should be represented by Roman letters or combinations thereof,—and this without the use of diacritical marks. It should also be borne in mind by the student that this system does not divide a word into all its phonetic elements; but rather does it follow a plan well-known to Chinese scholars; viz., that of dividing each syllable represented by a Chinese character into two elements,—one initial and one final.

### THE INITIALS.

The Initials are divided into a "Higher," a "Middle" or "Aspirated," and a "Lower" Series.

1. The HIGHER SERIES comprises sounds represented by—*p, 'm, 'v, t, ts, s, 'l, 'n, 'ny, ng, k, ky, kw, (pure vowel sounds), i and 'w.*

2. The MIDDLE or ASPIRATED SERIES comprises sounds represented by—*p', f, t', ts', k', ch, kw, h, ky and hw.*

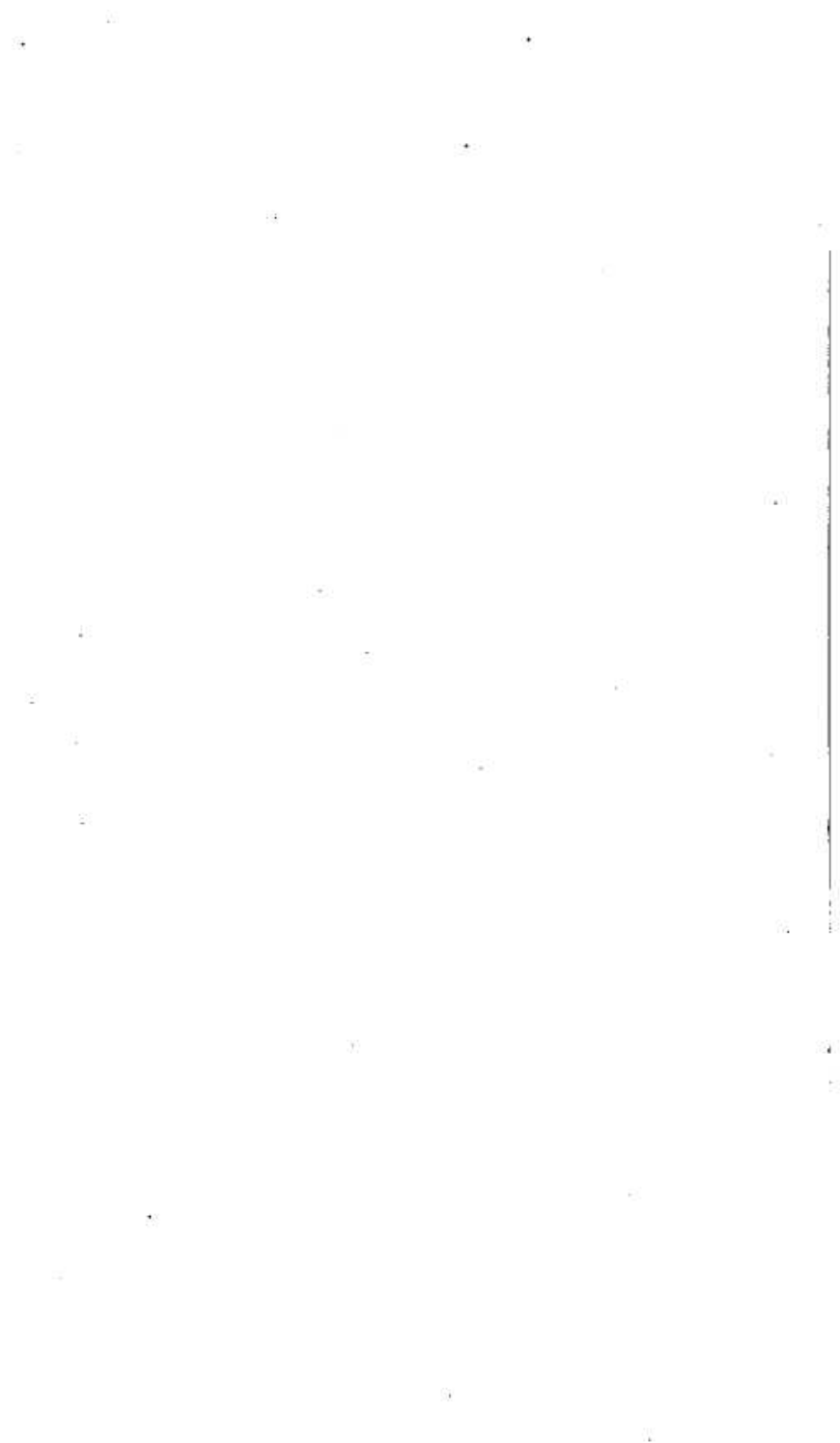
3. The LOWER SERIES comprises sounds represented by—*b, m, v, d, ds, z, l, n, ny, ng, g, j, gw, (or low vowel sounds, slightly aspirated), y and w.*

N. B. Let it be remembered that the difference between the Higher and Lower Series of initial sounds is *not so much a difference in consonantal quality as a difference in pitch*; but there is a real consonantal difference.

The following descriptions of sounds may be found helpful, but the true sound in most cases must be learned from a Chinese teacher. After each description there is given a Chinese character representing, or containing, the sound described.







*p*—pronounced much the same as in English, but a little harder and without any aspiration. 百

*p'*—aspirated; somewhat as an American or Irishman would pronounce *p* in *pin*, but with a more decided aspiration. 拍

*b*—not quite so hard as in English. 白

*'m*—higher and more explosive than *m*. 每

*m*—as in English. 煤

*'v*—a sound slightly harder and less aspirated than the English

*f*. 勿

*f*—as in English. 法

*v*—Nearly as in English, but often approaching *w*, with which it is sometimes confused. 罰

*t*—harder and with less aspiration than in English. 丁

*t'*—softer and more aspirated. 聽

*d*—softer than in English. 停

*t<sub>s</sub>*—harder and less aspirated than in English. 節

*t<sub>s</sub>'*—softer and aspirated. 切

*dz*—softer than in English. The majority of Shanghai natives fail to distinguish between this sound and that represented by *z*. 集

*s*—as in English. 息

*z*—softer and more sibilant than in English. 席

*'l*—lighter and more explosive than *l*. 拎

*l*—as in English. 鈴

*'n*—higher and more explosive than *n*. 乃

*n*—as in English. 內

*'ny*—higher and quicker than *ny*. 拈

*ny*—Much the same as *n* in *new*, but with a more decided *y* sound following the *n*. 年

*'ng*—higher and quicker than *ng*. 一 顏

*ng*—harder than *ng* in *song*. 顏

*k*—harder and with less aspiration than in English. 加

*k'*—softer and with more aspiration. 措

*g*—as in *go*, but softer. 茄

*ky*—a peculiar sound which can not be represented by any English combination. Perhaps *ky* might better represent it. 雞

*ch*—softer and with more aspiration than *ch* in *church*. 氣

*j*—a little harder than *j* in *jug*. 旗

*kw*—as *qu* in *quart*. 規

*k'w*—the same sound aspirated and softer. 塊

*gw*—softer than *gu* in *Guelph*. 葵

Vowel initials are pronounced higher and purer than in English.