

## Introduction

### I. Distinctive Features of the Dictionary

The present dictionary carries further the distinctive features first presented in the *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary*, namely:

1. It offers the powerful advantage of arranging entries in single-sort alphabetical order as by far the simplest and fastest way to look up a term whose pronunciation is known. Alone among look-up systems, the *ABC Dictionary* enables users to find words seen only in transcription or heard but not seen in written form. And, since most dictionary consultation involves characters whose pronunciation is known (not just by native speakers, but also by learners beyond the very beginning level), in the long run the total savings in time is enormous. (Radical and stroke-order indexes of characters are provided for those cases where the pronunciation of a term is not known.)
2. It has been compiled with the aid of computers and lends itself to further development in electronic as well as printed form.
3. It makes use of the latest PRC lexicographical developments in respect to selection of terms and rules of orthography.
4. It utilizes frequency data from both the PRC and Taiwan to indicate the relative frequency of entries that are complete homographs (identical even as to tones) or partial homographs (identical except for tones) as an aid to student learning and computer inputting.
5. It presents a unique one-to-one correspondence between transcription and characters that permits calling up on computer the desired characters for any entry by simple uninterrupted typing of the corresponding transcription.
6. It introduces an innovative typographical format that enables its entries to be packed into less space than would be required by conventional dictionaries, without sacrificing legibility.

Additional distinctive features include the following:

1. It draws on an extensive range of sources to present in one volume more entries than any other dictionary of comparable size. It contains 196,501 head entries (7,904 single-syllable and 188,597 multi-syllable entries). Counting parts of speech or numbered definitions as distinct entries, it contains, respectively, over 206,000 or 233,000 entries.
2. It presents for each entry (where appropriate) the traditional character equivalents for the preceding simplified characters.
3. It provides information regarding boundness of individual characters, including differences in bound status for different meanings or uses of the same character.
4. It indicates the appropriate measure word that should be used for a particular noun.
5. It provides in the Comprehensive Radical Chart a novel look-up procedure that facilitates access to the traditional, simplified, and variant forms of characters.

### II. Selection and Definition of Entries

In the selection of entries we have been guided by the desire to make our coverage as extensive as possible in the areas of the humanities and social sciences. To this end, we have rechecked some of the sources consulted in the compilation of the *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary* and we have exhaustively consulted a great variety of other sources, including both general dictionaries and specialized works in the areas of literature, linguistics, archeology, slang, and

many others. Under *Works Consulted*, we list both the works consulted in the compilation of the *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary* and those consulted for the present work.

In contrast with our earlier practice, in the present comprehensive dictionary we have undertaken to provide entries for all characters that occur in any term in the dictionary, whether as free forms or as parts of multi-character combinations. This has resulted in a more detailed analysis of meaningful single-character entries that can stand alone, and in the addition of several thousand entries for characters that occur only in combinations, sometimes with meanings of their own, sometimes with no meaning of their own but as part of one or several multi-syllabic monomorphemic words. For these bound characters, we indicate their combinatorial potential with one or more examples.

In defining the entries we have consulted a great variety of works in order to take account of the sometimes surprisingly diverse meanings attached to a word. The works consulted, which are listed below, include ones that reflect usage in Taiwan as well as the PRC. Our definitions indicate the area of usage, not only the one just mentioned but also other environments (such as linguistics, law, etc.) and register (such as slang, colloquial, etc.). A particular effort has been made to distinguish items that occur chiefly in written materials rather than in ordinary speech. As a further help to Western students, we include information on parts of speech as appropriate for each definition.