

Chapter 4

The National Language on the Mainland

After demonstrating his revolutionary vigor for *guoyu* and collecting teaching experience with Chinese and Korean students, Wei Jianguo entered the official, institutionalized sphere of language planning. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, the fact that language planning was institutionalized did not mean that all battles were fought and won.

4.1 From “Old” to “New National Pronunciation”

Wei Jianguo's official involvement in the national language planning began in December 1928, when Qian Xuantong encouraged Wei Jianguo to participate in the Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the National Language (*Guoyu tongyi choubenhui*)¹ established by the Ministry of Education (*Jiaoyu bu* 教育部). Wei was elected member of the standing committee (*changwu huiyuan* 常務會員).² The Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the National Language was established on April 21, 1919,³ and its first session took place on May 4, 1919. Its personnel was tightly intertwined with Peking University.⁴

Its aims were:

统一语言，提倡言文一致，改革文字⁵

1 Cao Da 曹达, “Wei Jianguo nianpu” (1996), 8.

2 Huang Yingzhe 黄英哲, “Wei Jianguo yu zhanhou Taiwan ‘guoyu’ yundong (1946-1948)” 魏建功與戰後台灣「國語」運動 (1946-1948) [Wei Jianguo and the post-war ‘national language’ movement in Taiwan], in: *Taiwan wenxue yanjiu xuebao* 台灣文學研究學報 [Taiwanese literature research journal] 1 (2005), 93.

3 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 391.

4 Lin, Xiaoqing Diana, *Peking University: Chinese Scholarship and Intellectuals, 1898–1937*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005, 111-12.

5 Cao Da 曹达, “Wei Jianguo nianpu” (1996).

Unify the language, advocate the congruence of language and writing, reform the script

Wei Jiāngōng's activities in the Preparatory Committee starting in 1928 were focused on editing and compiling. He edited the “National language ten-day periodical” (*Guoyu xunkan* 國語旬刊) and was in charge of the data/material management at the “Large Dictionary Compilation Office” (Da cidian bianzuan chu 大辭典編纂處).⁶ This is just one of the many compilation projects Wei Jiāngōng took on in his life.

In her book, Elisabeth Kaske interprets the establishment of this committee in 1919 as an important turning point and the ending point of her investigation, since it represented the starting point of official *guoyu* promotion by the government:

The establishment of the Preparatory Committee as a permanent institution attached to the Ministry of Education was an important step in the process of institutionalizing language planning in the educational system. [...] [T]he intellectual elite of China began to accept their responsibility for the elaboration and standardization of *baihua* as a modern literary language of the Chinese nation.⁷

While the (written) vernacular, *baihua*, was adopted as literary language, *guoyu*, the spoken form, should also be discussed. It was the main focus of the phonologist Wei Jiāngōng. During his phase of student activism, Wei Jiāngōng articulated clearly that he wanted a national language, that China needed a national language. However, he was not very clear about what this national language should be like and especially how it should sound like. What he had articulated so far only concerned writing. He expressed his support for a written language that was understandable for all readers.

In the following sections, I will illustrate how Wei Jiāngōng wanted the Beijing dialect to be the model for *guoyu*, and that he employed his expertise and research in phonology to legitimize this claim. To contextualize Wei Jiāngōng's support of the Beijing dialect, and especially its four tones, we need to know that the 1913 Conference for the unification of reading pronunciations (Duyin tongyi hui) decided on a mix of several dialects' pronunciations. The result was called “blue-green Mandarin” *lan-qing guanhua* 藍青官話 by its critics. After its abolition, it was called the “old national pronunciation” (*lao guoyin* 老國音). *Lan-qing* implies that it was corrupted, not pure or mixed. In the 1920s, while Wei Jiāngōng was a student, there was a debate between adherents of the national pronunciation of the time (i.e. old pronunciation) and proponents of the Beijing pronunciation. Li Jinxi was the loudest of the latter group. While Wei Jiāngōng studied at the Chinese department of Peking University at that time, he participated in the Dialect Fact-Finding Committee (Fangyan diaocha hui 方言調查會) established in 1924. This work would provide him and the other linguists with material about the Beijing dialect, until a Beijing-dialect-based “new national pronunciation” (*xin guoyin* 新國音) was introduced.

6 Cao Da 曹達, “Wei Jiāngōng nianpu” (1996), 9.

7 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 391–2.

However, its implementation and dissemination took much longer. Those familiar with the language situation in China might say that it is still far from being completed today. There was the need for an accurate description of the pronunciation to form the basis for prescription, such as handbooks or teaching material. Here, it is apparent that when Wei Jianguo was active, the phase of identity crisis and self-doubt with its radical reform calls was over. A phase of consolidation, decision and implementation was beginning. In terms of political history, however, the times were still uncertain and full of trouble.

The approach describing Wei Jianguo’s involvement in the standardization and implementation of *guoyu* is chronological as well as topical. If we want to understand the situation Wei Jianguo encountered when he entered the Preparatory Committee, we need to examine the events of the national language discourse immediately preceding Wei Jianguo’s appointment.

One important issue was the question of the “entering tone” *rusheng* 入聲, which was a feature of the “old” national pronunciation. The Beijing pronunciation does not have an entering tone. The research of the phonologists provided historical and linguistic explanation for this fact. Its goal was to facilitate the adoption of the Beijing pronunciation by the often Southern-influenced elite. By demonstrating how it historically evolved from Middle Chinese (MC, to which many southern dialects are closer), the linguists showed that it was not as barbaric as critics claimed. They affirmed its Chinese-ness, and made it acceptable as *guoyu*.

4.1.1 “Blue-Green” Mandarin as National Language

Republican language planning had begun before the Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the National Language (*Guoyu tongyi choubenhui*) was founded. In 1911, the Central Education Conference (*Zhongyang jiaoyu huiyi* 中央教育會議) “had adopted the Beijing dialect as the basis of a future pronunciation standard”.⁸ However, it included the checked entering tone *rusheng* (or *ru*-tone) and was based on *guanhua* grammar. Cai Yuanpei expressed his dissatisfaction in 1912 during the Provisional Education Conference (*Linshi jiaoyu huiyi* 臨時教育會議). He stated that due to the diversity of the Chinese language in the different regions, simply adopting the language of one area would be met with resistance. Therefore, the national language first needed to be unified.⁹ Here, Kaske summarizes Cai Yuanpei’s objections to the unification of the national language:

Cai Yuanpei’s claim that the unification of the national language was still a contested issue reflects nationalist disdain for the Beijing dialect and the use of a language too closely associated with the previous dynasty.¹⁰

⁸ Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 406.

⁹ Kaske quotes Cai Yuanpei’s “Opening address at the Provisional Education Conference” (*Quanguo linshi jiaoyu huiyi kaihuici* 全國臨時教育會議開會詞). See Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 405–6.

¹⁰ Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 406.

To resolve the issue of the Beijing dialect and/or Northern Mandarin, the 1913 Conference for the Unification of Reading Pronunciations (Duyin tongyi hui, the predecessor of the Preparatory Committee) agreed on setting the pronunciation of 6500 characters with democratic means.¹¹ Which characters were they? This corpus was based on the rhyme book “Subtleties of phonology” *Yinyun chanwei* 音韻闡微, commissioned by the imperial court and compiled by Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642–1718) and Wang Lansheng 王蘭生 (1680–1737) in 1726.¹² That such a rhyme book was employed for language planning in the Republic, with its focus on nation-building, demonstrates how traditional philology played a much larger role for these processes than usually assumed.

Wu Zhihui, a native of Jiangsu province, was strongly against the Beijing pronunciation, and he wished to bring the *rusheng* and voiced initials into the national pronunciation.¹³ The numerous scholars from Jiangsu and Zhejiang who were involved were successful: This earlier *guoyu* pronunciation included the entering tone.¹⁴ The pronunciation system that was an arbitrary mix of northern and southern pronunciations was then called “blue-green Mandarin” and later “old pronunciation”.

The entering tone is of special interest for Wei Jianguo. In Middle Chinese (MC),¹⁵ the entering tone is characterized by the finals -p, -t, -k and a shorter vowel. In Southern Mandarin and many modern dialects that still display an entering tone, it is characterized by a glottal stop [ʔ] at the end of a short vowel.¹⁶

The features of “national pronunciation” *guoyin* in comparison to the Beijing dialect have been summarized neatly by Kaske.¹⁷ Here, I present some of the most important features of her summary:

- The “entering tone” *rusheng* is the fifth tone.
- Middle Chinese *rusheng* syllables that ended in -k, diphthongized in the modern Beijing dialect, are not diphthongized: [pai] 白 – [pɔʔ].
- “Sharp” (*jianyin* 尖音) and “rounded” (*tuanyin* 團音) initial consonants are differentiated: [ts], [tsʰ], [s] vs. [tɕ], [tɕʰ], [ç]: [tsʰiŋ] 青 vs. [tɕʰiŋ] 清.¹⁸

11 Kaden, Klaus, “Sprachpolitik”, in: *Das große China-Lexikon*, ed. by Staiger, Brunhild, Stefan Friedrich, and Hans-Wilm Schütte, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008, 705–708, see 705–6.

12 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 43.

13 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 408.

14 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 413.

15 The Middle Chinese tones are “level” *ping* 平, “rising” *shang* 上, “departing” *qu* 去 and “entering” *ru* 入. See Baxter, William H., and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese – A New Reconstruction* (2014), 14.

16 Li, Chris Wen-Chao, “Rù 入 Tone Development in Běijīng Mandarin”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 627–635. In some regional dialects today, some different entering tone codas may be found. Yun, Mai, “Rù 入 Tone Development in Non-Mandarin Dialects”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 3, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 641–646. Wei Jianguo does not discuss them.

17 Kaske bases her summary on the work of Zhao Yuanren and Dorothea Wippermann, and on the “Comparative table of national and Beijing pronunciation” (*Guoyin jingyin duizhaobiao* 國音京音對照表) by Wang Pu, see: Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 413–15.

18 Note that the “sharp-rounded” (*jian-tuan*) terminology for sibilants and velar-laryngeals may be an influence from the pointy or rounded letters of the Manchu script. The distinction is still an important

- A number of other initials and finals that do not exist in the modern Beijing dialect were included in the national pronunciation, such as the velar nasal [ŋ] as initial.

Kaske concludes that this pronunciation system resembled the “bookish Mandarin of the old philologists”. With its mixture of northern and southern pronunciation, it came rather close to what Zhang Binglin had requested.¹⁹ However, in the speaking and teaching practice, this standard resulted in what detractors called “blue-green Mandarin (*lan-qing guanhua*), since every speaker or teacher applied his own phonetic dispositions to the national pronunciation.²⁰

Zhao Yuanren (Yuen Ren Chao) retrospectively said the following about the dissemination of this pronunciation standard in 1923:

I wasn’t so interested in the reform from writing in the classical form to writing in the colloquial form. I just followed the fashion and started writing more and more in the colloquial form. As for the unification of the language, I was fairly active. I think it was 1912 or later – I don’t remember the exact date – when a system of so-called kuo-yin national pronunciation was decided on, including entering tones and the difference between “o” and “e” (in different dialects, “o” and “e” were varieties of the same phoneme, but in this national pronunciation – kuo-yin – they were distinguished).²¹ One of the most important distinctions is between sharp and rounded – that is, between tsi, tsi, si and chi, ch’i, hsi, a distinction which has always been kept by singers of Peking opera. But in the natural speech of Peking, that is not distinguished.

I mentioned the addition of the entering tone (in addition to the first, second, third and fourth tones) with glottal stop endings. Those were the main features of this artificial kuo-yin, and I made a special set of records for it and a textbook to go with it.²²

From Zhao Yuanren’s statement, one can conclude that this mixed Mandarin standard was not successfully implemented. The mixed standard was not the only proposed standard phonology. Already in 1920, Zhang Shiyi 張士一 (1886–1969) called for the use of the Beijing dialect as pronunciation standard. His statement had a major influence on later developments:

中華民國的標準語。就是有教育的北京本地人所說的話。²³

The standard language of the Republic of China is the language of an educated native of Beijing.

feature of Peking opera pronunciation. See Söderblom Saarela, Mårten, “Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911)” (2015), 390ff. See also Wang Weimin 王为民, “Manwen wenxian yu jian-tuanyin wenti” 满文文献与尖团音问题 [Documents in the Manchu script and the *Jian-Tuan* problem], in: *Zhongguo yuwen* 中国语文 [Chinese language and script] 3 (2017), 339–348.

19 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 415.

20 Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 452.

21 This is about [ɔ] (ㄛ) like the exclamation 哦, and [ɤ] (ㄝ) like 饿 “hungry”.

22 Chao, Yuen Ren, interview by Levenson, Rosemary, “Chinese linguist, phonologist, composer and author, Yuen Ren Chao”, URL: http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb8779p27v&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text (visited on June 30, 2017).

23 Zhang Shiyi 張士一, “Guoyu tongyi wenti” 國語統一問題 [The problem of the unification of the national language], in: *Jiaoyu chao* 教育潮 [Education magazine] 1.9–10 (1920), 23–58, see 35.

Others, such as Liu Fu, remained enthusiastic supporters of the old mixed national pronunciation, while many began to favor the Beijing standard. A real fight then began:

In the early 1920s, when debate on “national pronunciation” vs. “Beijing pronunciation” raged in educational circles, Liu Fu sent a letter from Paris claiming that “my ideal national language is ... nothing more than the generally accepted progressive blue-green Mandarin.”²⁴

Wei Jiāngōng, looking back on the 1920s (while he was in Taiwan in 1948), remembered the “fight between the ‘capital’s pronunciation’ and the ‘national pronunciation’” (“*jīngyīn*”, “*guoyīn*” *zhī zhēng* “京音”、“國音”之爭). He echoed Zhang Shiyi’s solutions for the “Problem of the unification of the national language” (*guoyu tongyi wenti* 國語統一問題). One of these included his idea of a standard, in Wei Jiāngōng’s words:

至少受過中等教育的北京本地人的話為國語的標準²⁵

the language a native from Beijing speaks who has received at least middle school education as the standard for the national language

This view deeply influenced Wei Jiāngōng; he would state nearly the same during his activities in Taiwan (see page 141).²⁶

The following sections will demonstrate how Wei Jiāngōng was substantially involved in reconstructing the historical evolution of the Beijing northern pronunciation. Together with Li Jīnxi and Bāi Dīzhōu, he demonstrated that the tonal specificities and the loss of the entering tone were not arbitrary mutilations but a historical development that can be described with scientific means. By showing that this change (the loss of the entering tone in particular) was caused by natural (socio-) linguistic developments in a more or less systematic fashion, they tried to counter many intellectuals’ disdain for the Beijing dialect. Through demonstrating that this change was a natural development involving countless Chinese speakers over time, they emphasized that the Beijing dialect was suitable as a standard language due to its history.

The first issue is the question of the entering tone. By scientifically demonstrating how the evolution of the northern pronunciation led to the loss of the entering tone, the linguists gave legitimacy to the Beijing dialect as *guoyu*.

24 The punctuation follows Kaske. Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 454.

25 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Zhongguo yuwen jiaoyu jingshen he xunlian fangfa de yanbian – ‘Guoyu shuohua jiaocai ji jiaofa’ xu” 中國語文教育精神和訓練方法的演變——《國語說話教材及教法》序 [The evolution educational spirit and the practicing methods of Chinese language and literature – Preface to ‘Teaching material and teaching methods for speaking the national language’], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 392–399, see 398.

26 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong zai Taiwan de yiyi’ shenjie” (2001), 306.

4.1.2 Li Jinxi Against the Entering Tone in the National Language

One linguist was opposed to the blue-green Mandarin: Li Jinxi. The introduction (*Xuyan* 叙言) to his 1923 “Beijing pronunciation entering tone character list” (*Jingyin rusheng zi pu* 京音入聲字譜) became the “manifesto” (*xuanyan* 宣言²⁷) that called for abolishing the entering tone in the national pronunciation.

Li Jinxi’s argument can be summarized in the following points:

1. There is a dispute (*zheng* 爭) between advocates of the “national pronunciation” (*guoyin*) and the Beijing pronunciation (*jingyin*).
2. There is a natural development that causes national pronunciation to converge towards the Beijing dialect; *guoyin* has a “tendency” (*qushi*)²⁸ to “Beijingize” (*jingyinhua* 京音化).
3. No phonetic standard has yet been established. While tones have been agreed on in principle, everybody pronounces the tones according to his home dialect, which results in “blue-green Mandarin” (*lan-qing guanhua*). This is the unintended result.
4. As a consequence, the tones of *one* dialect must be chosen for the national pronunciation, and this dialect is naturally the Beijing dialect. “Of course the four tones (*sisheng* 四聲)²⁹ of “the language of Beijing” (*Beijingyu* 北京語) have this “qualification” (*zige* 資格).
5. The pronunciation would then have to be learned like a foreign tongue, which would be easy for children and illiterates, but more difficult for people familiar with the characters, who often deduce a character’s reading from their knowledge of other characters.
6. However, since the pronunciation of script is an arbitrary system, it can be altered.
7. The occurrence of the entering tone (*rusheng*) in many Southern dialects³⁰ and in Southern Mandarin is heterogenous, while the South-Eastern dialects pronounce it clearly, the South-Western dialects do not clearly distinguish between the *ru*-, *yang*- and *ping*-tones. (In Southern Mandarin, the *rusheng* has often developed into the *yang-ping* tone.)³¹
8. In Northern Mandarin, the entering tone is distributed into all four tones (*yangping*, *yinping*, *shang*, *qu*), and a regular distribution is not obvious for today’s speakers.

27 Ma Si 马嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jiangong* (2007), 106.

28 The term “tendency” is used by Wei Jiangong in 1925 to describe how characters naturally evolve into a phonetic script. See Wei Jiangong 魏建功, “Cong Zhongguo wenzi de qushi shang lun hanzhi – fangkuaizi – de yinggai feichu” (1925). This will be discussed further in section 7.1.2 on page 195.

29 The tones of Modern Standard Chinese are: 1 *yinping* 陰平, 2 *yangping* 陽平, 3 *shang* 上, 4 *qu* 去.

30 Li Jinxi himself, like many important intellectuals of the time, identified as a southerner. He was born in Xiangtan 湘潭.

31 Li Jinxi actually offers a more detailed account of the tones in the different dialects, mentioning the respective rivers (Huai 淮, Yang 揚, Gan 贛, Xiang 湘, etc.) to refer to the geographical distribution of the dialects. Rivers have been important geographical features used for identity-building for a long time in Chinese history. For example, the Han dynasty was named after the river Han 漢.

9. However, a systematic relationship exists between the distribution of tones in the various dialects. In other words, the *rusheng* was transformed into another tone whenever it disappeared.

10. Speakers will have to memorize the tones for characters that formerly had *rusheng*. This is the purpose that the *Jingyin rusheng zi pu* serves.³²

Subsequently, Li Jinxi explains what source material he used for compiling the *Jingyin rusheng zipu*. He lists around a dozen rhyme books (*yunshu* 韻書), vocabularies (*cihui* 詞彙) and dictionaries.³³ He explains the phonetic systems that they represent and their relationship with one other. First, he mentions the *Zhongyuan yinyun* 中原音韻 (“Sounds and Rhymes of the Central Plains” by Zhou Deqing 周德清, 1324, Yuan dynasty), which also plays a significant role for Wei Jianguo. It is “arguably the earliest extant record of a *ri*-tone-less Mandarin variety, which some take to be ancestral to the Běijīng dialect”.³⁴

The *Zhongyuan yinyun* “eliminates the independent category of entering tone; instead, Middle Chinese entering tone words are appended to the list of words in the tones they have merged with, although they are clearly marked as entering tone words.”³⁵ In terms of arrangement, the *Zhongyuan yinyun* is a novelty. While preceding Middle Chinese rhyme books in the *Qieyun* system were primarily organized by the different tones, the *Zhongyuan yinyun* was organized by rhyme. The rhymes were then, at the lower level, classified by tones.³⁶

Which language the *Zhongyuan yinyun* exactly represents is still debated. Its use as described by Söderblom Saarela is “to facilitate the writing of a northern tradition of vernacular verse”.³⁷ Li Jinxi belongs to the group of scholars that see it as a phonetic system preceding and related to the Beijing dialect. Therefore, it is “ancestral to modern Mandarin”.³⁸

這書雖是為製曲而作的，却真是當時實地的調查的北京音。³⁹

Although its purpose is making songs, the book was really carrying out field research about the Beijing pronunciation at that time.

Why are these “songs” or “arias” (*qu* 曲) important?

32 Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, “Jingyin rusheng zi pu” 京音入聲字譜 [Table of the characters in the entering tone in the Beijing pronunciation], in: *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 [Eastern Miscellany] 21. 紀念號 (1923), 64–68.

33 One is a publication by the Presbyterians: *A Pocket Dictionary and Pekingese Syllabary* by C. Goodrich, printed in 1918. It is an example of the strong influence protestant missionaries exercised. See Mak, George Kam Wah, *Protestant Bible Translation and Mandarin as the National Language of China* (Sinica Leidensia 131), Leiden: Brill, 2016. Li Jinxi notes that the *Dictionary* uses “Arabic numbers” (*yalabo shuma* 亞拉伯數碼) to indicate the four tones of the Beijing dialect. Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, “Jingyin rusheng zi pu” (1923), 67.

34 Some scholars believed that the *Zongyuan yinyun* does not prove the loss of the entering tone, such as Lu Zhiwei. Li, Chris Wen-Chao, “Rù 入 Tone Development in Běijīng Mandarin” (2017), 633.

35 Wang, Hongzhi, “Rù 入 Tone Development in Mandarin Dialects”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 635–641, see 636.

36 Oh, Young, “Rime Dictionaries”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, vol. 3, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 600–608, see 600, 604. See also: Söderblom Saarela, Mårten, “Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911)” (2015), 73.

37 Söderblom Saarela, Mårten, “Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911)” (2015), 73.

38 Wang, Hongzhi, “Rù 入 Tone Development in Mandarin Dialects” (2017), 637.

39 Emphasis as in original. Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, “Jingyin rusheng zi pu” (1923), 66.

As Viatcheslav Vetrov explains in his dissertation on the Yuan drama, the arias can be seen as representing the phonetic system of a language variety spoken in the North of China in the 14th century. They have been preserved in Zhou Deqing’s *Zhongyuan yinyun* which was used as a handbook for the composition of these arias. Vetrov also summarizes Zhou’s division of the rhymes into 19 groups, as well as his explanation of how verses in the *qu*-arias are constructed.⁴⁰

Both the *Zhongyuan yinyun* as well as Yuan drama played an important role in the quest for the history and legitimization of Beijing-based pronunciation for *guoyu*. Wei Jianguo’s research, which demonstrates their influence, will be covered in the following sections. I will explain certain characteristics of the Yuan drama that made it an important object of study for the language planners in the first half of the 20th century.

In Yuan drama, dialogue passages in vernacular prose alternate with rhymed arias (*qu*) in the classical written language (*wenyan*). This vernacular prose, in contrast to *wenyan*, *baihua*, is called *binbai* 賓白 when referring to Yuan drama. Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–1593) explained that the arias are the “master” (*zhu* 主, or main part), the prose dialogs a mere “guest” (*bin* 賓). *Bai* means that they are clear and easy to understand.⁴¹

Hu Shi, whose 1928 “History of vernacular literature” (*Baihua wenxue shi* 白話文學史) became very influential in the discourse on the use of the vernacular in literature and how to modernize China’s language situation, defined *baihua* as clear and easy to understand. It was a living language, as opposed to a dead language *wenyan*.⁴²

The Yuan drama *binbai* prose is seen as one of the earliest occurrences of “*baihua*” (vernacular) in literature or performing art. What do we know about its pronunciation? We can infer the pronunciation from the rhymed *qu*-arias, which were composed with the aid of rhyme books such as the *Zhongyuan yinyun*. Therefore, the *Zhongyuan yinyun* also indicates the pronunciation of the *binbai* prose. Li Jinxi, Wei Jianguo and many other linguists believed that to be the spoken dialect of the Yuan capital, now Beijing.⁴³

The main body of Li Jinxi’s *Jingyin rusheng zipu* comprises a list of characters pronounced in the *ru*-tone in many dialects. It also lists them by the tones used in the Beijing dialect. In this way, a dialect speaker using the *ru*-tone can look up the pronunciation of the different characters. This again shows the close connection between research, the creation of reference material, and the realization of language planning measures.

40 Vetrov, Viatcheslav, *Das Traummotiv im Yuan-Drama. Zur Semiotik der chinesischen Formelemente*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010, 56.

41 Vetrov, Viatcheslav, *Das Traummotiv im Yuan-Drama. Zur Semiotik der chinesischen Formelemente* (2010), 20.

42 Vetrov discusses different concepts of *baihua* and *wenyan* which are both present in Yuan drama. See Vetrov, Viatcheslav, *Das Traummotiv im Yuan-Drama. Zur Semiotik der chinesischen Formelemente* (2010), 158ff.

43 Schleppe has argued that not all Yuan songs are entirely void of the entering tone. Southern poets of the Yuan dynasty also wrote songs that contained a *ru*-tone. Schleppe, Wayne, “A Note on Entering Tones in Yuan Songs”, in: *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 19.1 (1991), 63–78.

4.1.3 The New National Pronunciation

Li Jinxi's call was heard. In his *History of the national language movement (Guoyu yundong shigang)*, Li details how the Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the National Language (Guoyu tongyi choubenhui) convened in 1924, led by Wu Jingheng (Wu Zhihui), and how they discussed the revision of the "Dictionary of national pronunciation" *Guoyin zidian* 國音字典.⁴⁴ They decided to use the "beautiful Beijing pronunciation as standard" (*piaoliang de Beijing yin* 漂亮的北京音為標準) but also included some "alternative readings" (*youdu* 又讀) with the former pronunciation.⁴⁵ In 1925 and 1926, the Preparatory Committee convened again. In 1926, and after more than half a year of work, they (Qian Xuantong, Li Jinxi, Wang Yi 汪怡 (1878–1960), Xiao Jialin and Bai Dizhou) presented a draft for the "Revised dictionary of national pronunciation" *Zengxiu guoyin zidian* 增修國音字典.⁴⁶

In the following year, they also compiled the "National language homophone dictionary" *Guoyu tongyin zidian* 國語同音字典, which followed the ordering of Zhuyin zimu, and the "National language frequently used character vocabulary" *Guoyin changyong zihui* 國音常用字彙, which grouped all homophones together in the four tones. This volume was aimed at the primary and middle school students.

In these publications, Li Jinxi explains the phonetic features by naming the four differences to the "old national pronunciation":

1. The initials [v] (ㄅ), [ŋ] (ㄋ) and [ɲ] (ㄐ) are no longer used.⁴⁷
2. There is no distinction between *jianyin* and *tuanyin*. There is only [ts] (ㄗ), [ts^h] (ㄘ), [s] (ㄙ); [tɕ] (ㄑ), [tɕ^h] (ㄒ), [ɕ] (ㄔ).⁴⁸
3. The three vowels [ɔ] (ㄛ), [ɤ] (ㄜ) and [ɛ] (ㄝ) are differentiated.

In the "Declaration of the countrywide national language movement assembly" (*Quanguo guoyu yundong dahui xuanyan* 全國國語運動大會宣言), Li Jinxi proclaims that the Beijing dialect is the standard dialect and the common language of the Chinese Republic. He also stated that this situation has come about naturally, and that it is not at all an artificial language.⁴⁹ This naturalness of language development is also crucial for Wei Jiangong's concept of language.

44 First published 1919, made official standard dictionary 1920. Wippermann, Dorothea, *Das Phonetische Alphabet Zhuyin Zimu – Entstehung und Verbreitung im Zuge der Nationalsprachlichen Bewegung in der Republik China 1912–1949* (1985), 43.

45 Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, *Guoyu yundong shigang*, vol. 2, (1990), 171.

46 Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, *Guoyu yundong shigang*, vol. 2, (1990), 171.

47 Note the Zhuyin characters that are no longer part of today's standard set. I extend my thanks to Herbert Voß DANTE e.V. for enabling me in the display of them. As a remark: In Li Jinxi's sentence, the particle that we would nowadays use, *le* 了, is represented with *lo* 咯为ㄛ (with Zhuyin annotation). Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, *Guoyu yundong shigang*, vol. 2, (1990), 172.

48 Pinyin: *z-, c-, s-; j-, q- x-*. Li also provides the syllabic spelling with *-i* and *-u* to show that [tsi] became obsolete, and that this syllable should be pronounced [tɕi]. See Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, *Guoyu yundong shigang*, vol. 2, (1990), 172.

49 Li Jinxii, *Quanguo guoyu yundong dahui xuanyan*, has been published twice: In the publication organ of the assembly, the *Quanguo guoyu yundong dahui huikan* 全國國語運動大會會刊 and in *Guoyu zhoukan*, Vol. 29, December 2, 1925, see Li Jinxi 黎錦熙, "Quanguo guoyu yundong dahui xuanyan" (1925).

4.1.4 Wei Jiāngōng on the *Yīn* 陰, *Yáng* 陽 and *Rù* 入 Tones

What did Wei Jiāngōng say about the question of entering tone in *guoyu*? We will start with a phonological article that discusses the interdependency of three tones in Old Chinese (OC). It has been taken up by Bai Dizhou in his article on the evolution of the entering tone in the northern pronunciation. I will discuss this article afterwards.

A short remark on the editions need to be made: Wei Jiāngōng’s “Study of the three Old Chinese tones *yīn*, *yáng* and *rù*” (Gu yīn yáng rù sān shēng kǎo 古陰陽入三聲攷)⁵⁰ was published twice, namely in *Guoxue jikan* 國學季刊 (National learning quarterly) 2.2, and in *Gouyu xunkan* 1.3, both published in 1929. In the collection of Wei Jiāngōng’s manuscripts, I found three versions. Two are handwritten fragments.⁵¹ There is also a worn copy of the *Guoxue jikan* edition (manuscript no. 00144), which contains annotations in red ink that show corrections of Wei Jiāngōng. These indicate his dissatisfaction with the typesetting, particularly the IPA characters.⁵² I will, however, quote the version from the *Wenji*, since it appeared to have solved these problems. Content-wise, I have not found any difference in the versions. In the compilation process of the *Wenji*, Wei Jiāngōng’s manuscripts were consulted.

When this article was published in 1929, Wei Jiāngōng was already a member of the Preparatory Committee. He examined the tones of Old Chinese. While he does not explicitly mention *guoyu*, this text helped him gain the experience, standing and fame required to convincingly discuss the question of tone in Northern Mandarin, the Beijing dialect, and *guoyu*.

While “Gu yīn yáng rù sān shēng kǎo” attempted to establish a network of interdependencies of tones over time in great detail, I will provide some general information that will contextualize the following discussion and hopefully help readers who are not experts in phonology.

The main achievements in the reconstruction of Old and Middle Chinese were made by scholars of the Qing dynasty. In the early 20th century, Chinese scholars, as well as Western scholars, such as the famous Bernhard Karlgren, also made considerable progress on the basis of the findings of these Qing scholars.

In Old Chinese, there were three tones *yīn*, *yáng* and *rù*. These are not tones in the sense of pitch, like in Modern Chinese. Instead they reflect certain characteristics of the syllable. Therefore, Wei Jiāngōng said:

古音無有所謂平上去入（以下簡稱“四聲”）⁵³

50 攷 = 考。

51 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yīn yáng rù sān shēng kǎo” 古陰陽入三聲攷 [Study of the three Old Chinese tones *yīn*, *yáng* and *rù*], Beijing, family possession, 1929 (?) [a]. (Manuscript no. 00139 on Pile 5.) Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yīn yáng rù sān shēng kǎo” 古陰陽入三聲攷 [Study of the three Old Chinese tones *yīn*, *yáng* and *rù*], Beijing, family possession, 1929 (?) [b]. (Manuscript no. 00141, also on Pile 5.)

52 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yīn yáng rù sān shēng kǎo” 古陰陽入三聲攷 [Study of the three Old Chinese tones *yīn*, *yáng* and *rù*], in: *Guoxue jikan* 國學季刊 [National learning quarterly] 2.2 (1929), 299–361.

53 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yīn yáng rù sān shēng kǎo” 古陰陽入三聲攷 [Study of the three tones *yīn*, *shang* and *rù* in Old Chinese], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng],

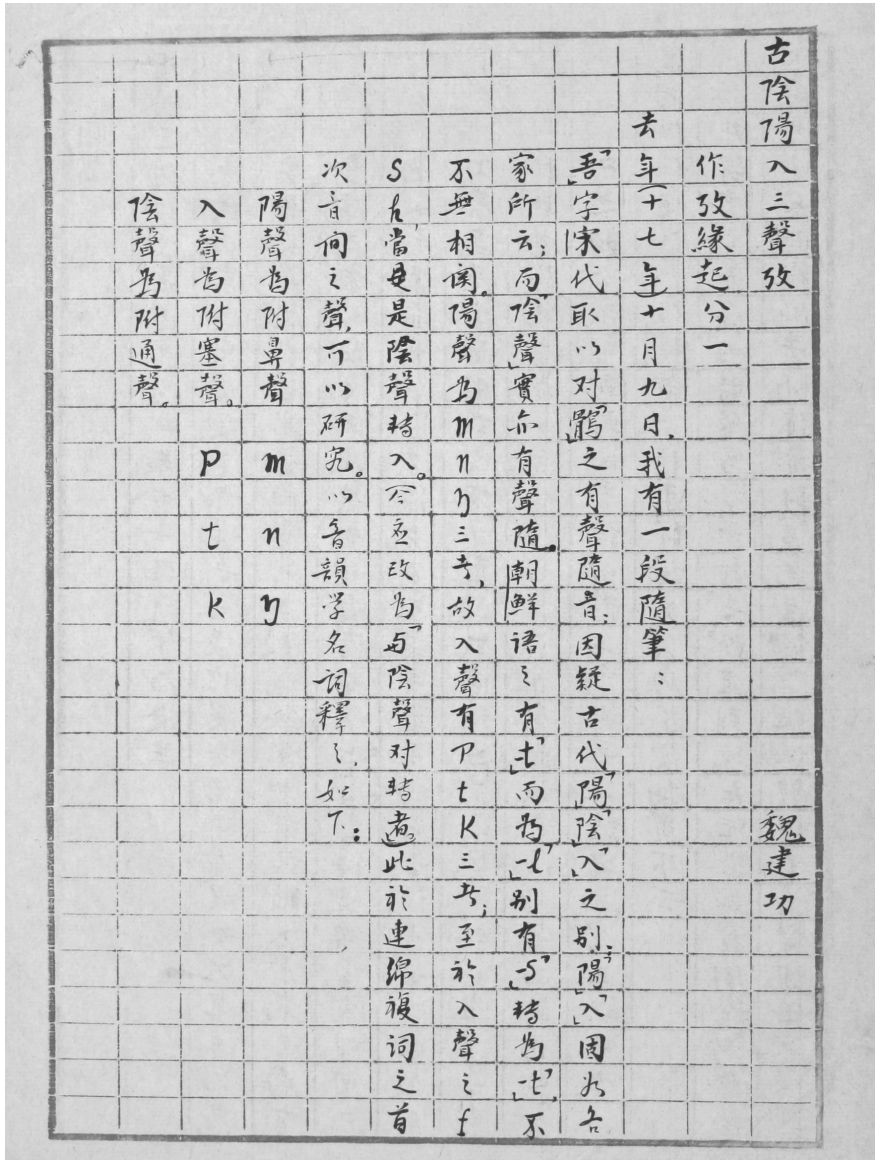


Figure 2: Page from Wei Jianguo, “Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao” 古陰陽入三聲攷 (Study of the three Old Chinese tones *yin*, *yang* and *ru*), family possession, Beijing, 1929 (?).

Old Chinese pronunciation does not have the so-called level, rising, departing and entering [tones] (abbreviated as “four tones” below)

Since the rhyme book *Qieyun* of the Middle Chinese period contains the four tones, Wei wanted to clarify its relationship with Old Chinese. Wei Jiāngōng, however, was reluctant to make a distinction between Old (*shànggǔ* 上古) and Middle (*zhōnggǔ* 中古) Chinese in use today. He felt it would obstruct finer differences.⁵⁴ Wei Jiāngōng proceeds with a list of his basic assumptions:

(1) 古三聲是字音組織上的問題。

The three tones in Old Chinese is an issue of a character’s phonetic structure.

(2) 今四聲是字音聲調上的問題。⁵⁵

The four tones in use today is an issue of a character’s tone and pitch.

This is an important point that is also made by Baxter and Sagart. To avoid confusion with actual pitch-characterized “tones”, they call the *san sheng* 三聲 of Old Chinese “three categories of rhymes”. They write, just like Wei Jiāngōng, that *yinsheng* words have no coda or a vocalic coda, that *rusheng* words have a voiceless stop coda, namely -k, -t or -p, and that *yangsheng* words have nasal codas, such as -m, -n, -ng.⁵⁶

Wei Jiāngōng also states that it is not clear if the syllables could have pitch-tones (assumption 3), in addition to the three tones of Old Chinese. While “*rusheng*” is used both in OC and MC, it refers to two very different concepts (assumption 4). In assumption 5, Wei Jiāngōng refutes previous claims from scholars, stating that they mistakenly identified the OC and the MC or modern *rusheng* as *rusheng*. These scholars include Kong Guanglin 孔廣林 (1746 – ca. 1814), Huang Kan and Duan Yucai, and they claimed that OC has no *ru*-tone, no *shang*- and *qu*-tones or no *qu*-tone, respectively. Wei Jiāngōng continues (assumption 6), that by systematically comparing OC tones with the four tones, these scholars and others were able to establish a systematic relationship.⁵⁷

In his last assumption, number 7, Wei Jiāngōng makes reference to the article “*Rusheng kao*” 入聲考 by Hu Shi. This article is the main motivation for Wei Jiāngōng to discuss the “tones” of OC. In “*Rusheng kao*”, Hu Shi discusses handed-down theories about the tones of OC, and tries to establish a systematic relationship between the OC and MC tones.⁵⁸ Hu also states that while Cantonese (*Yueyu* 粵語) has conserved the entering tone with the three different codas (-k, -t, -p), the dialects around the midstream and the lower reaches of the Yangzi

ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 3, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 176–274, see 191.

54 Mǔnning, Mariana, “Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功 (1901-1980)” (2017), 509.

55 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao” (2001), 191.

56 See Baxter, William H., and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese – A New Reconstruction* (2014), 22. See also Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao” (2001), 177. In his earlier work, Baxter presents more approaches to the loss of consonantal distinctions and appearance of tones from OC to MC. See: Baxter, William H., *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 64), Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992, 302ff.

57 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao” (2001), 191.

58 Hu Shi 胡適, “*Rusheng kao*” 入聲考 [Study of the entering tone], in: *Xinyue* 新月 [New moon] 1.11 (1929).

River (Chang Jiang 長江) have lost this distinction, and their entering tone is only a very short final (*duancu de shousheng* 短促的收聲). In all northern areas since the Song and Yuan dynasties, the entering tone has been distributed into the three tones *ping*, *shang* and *qu*⁵⁹ (The *ping*-tone is further divided into *yinping* and *yangping*, which makes four tones altogether).

Wei Jiāngōng criticizes Hu Shi for being inconsistent in his terminology and corrects those assumptions of Hu Shi he believes to be incorrect.⁶⁰ Wei Jiāngōng believes Hu Shi's conclusion that the entering tone somehow changed into the *yin* or *yang* tones does not make sense since it confuses categories that are chronologically distinct.⁶¹ Motivated by his conclusion, Wei Jiāngōng presents his own system of establishing the connection between OC and MC tones.

Why have I covered these seemingly obscure depths of historical phonology? I would like to demonstrate how the two discourses on tones – the highly technical philological discourse and the practical, implementation-oriented language planning discourse – merged. At this point, Wei Jiāngōng was still a passionate phonologist. We will see how this will gradually change. For Wei and his colleagues, the historical reconstruction of the origins of the modern language would lend legitimacy to their language planning. They nurtured the image that modern *guoyu* is based on tradition. Furthermore, the *baihua* movement has been examined much more in comparison to the *guoyu* movement. The issue of a common language and of a written language that represents the spoken language accessible to everyone has often been studied in literature. However, I would like to approach it from another angle: linguistics, especially the study of historical phonology.

4.1.5 Bai Dizhou on the Evolution of the Entering Tone in Northern Pronunciation

If the northern pronunciation (*beiyin* 北音) does not have an entering tone, it must have been lost at some point, since it was present in Middle Chinese (MC). Since regular change in many languages have been observed over time, Bai Dizhou⁶² attempted to find out how the tones changed over time. He also looked out for a rule or system to the change. His goal was to find the systematic relationship in which the entering tone disappeared in the northern pronunciation. However, he wanted to accomplish an impossible task: to this day, no one has been able to achieve this goal. A regular, systematic development and explana-

59 Hu Shi 胡適, "Rusheng kao" (1929), 1.

60 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao" (2001), 179–80.

61 See Hu Shi 胡適, "Rusheng kao" (1929), 20. See also Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao" (2001), 191.

62 Bai Dizhou, given name Zhenying 鎮瀛, of Mongolian descent, was an important linguist of the time. Like Wei Jiāngōng, his research stretched from the area of phonology into the planning of *guoyu*. As a graduate of Peking University, he was also involved with many of the leading scholars and intellectuals of the time. He was an "intimate friend" (*zhiyou* 知友 and colleague of Wei Jiāngōng. They worked together in Liu Bannong's phonetics laboratory. He was also a member of the Preparatory Committee. See Ma Si 馬嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jiāngōng* (2007), 110–111.

tion for the disappearance of the entering tone in the northern pronunciation would lend *guoyu* legitimacy. This makes Bai Dizhou’s “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” 北音入聲演變考⁶³ from 1931 an important, influential stepping stone in making the northern pronunciation the standard for *guoyu*.

Bai Dizhou’s article can be summarized in the following fashion:

First (section 1), he criticizes phonologists’ preference for examining the ancient pronunciation (*guyin* 古音, usually OC and MC), thereby overlooking the early modern regional pronunciation (*jindai fangyin* 近代方音). While the research of ancient pronunciation is important, Bai Dizhou points out that

1. Phonologists often neglect the limitations of time and place, which leads to a lack of differentiation between the different sources. As a result, the pronunciation of an area far too large and a time period too broad is presented as a single phonological system.
2. Phonologists share the prejudice that the pronunciation after Tang and Song dynasties have no worth.⁶⁴

He names examples of conclusions that are too broad or even wrong, particularly rhyme books that were attributed wrongly or overlooked.⁶⁵

Bai Dizhou points out that he wants to focus on early modern pronunciation, i.e. Yuan, Ming, and Qing times as well as the entering tone of the northern pronunciation.

Next (section two), he presents the specific geographical area (*quyu* 區域) of this northern pronunciation (*beiyin*) that is the focus of his research. He claims that this pronunciation corresponds to today’s *guoyu* and former *guanhua*.

北音就可以說是國語，一向稱之為官話。⁶⁶

We can say that the northern pronunciation is the national language; up to now it was called Mandarin.

This language can be used throughout the entire country; it is spoken in Liaoning 遼寧, Jilin 吉林, Heilongjiang 黑龍江, Hebei 河北, Shanxi 山西, Henan 河南, Shandong, Shaanxi 陝西 and Gansu 甘肅. From this vast area, where the language is not entirely uniform, he takes Beijing (Beiping) as representative (*daibiao* 代表). The Beijing pronunciation has the qualification to be the representative pronunciation for 600 years. Only few provinces close to the Yellow River do not share this northern pronunciation.⁶⁷

63 I am very grateful to Christian Obst for providing me with a scan of the article from the Brown University Library. It is a facsimile edition which bears the original page numbers as well as a sequential numbering running through all volumes. Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” [Study of the evolution of the entering tone in the northern pronunciation], in: *Guoyu zhoukan* 國語週刊 [National language weekly] (1931), 1–42.

64 The Song dynasty was followed by the Mongol-ruled Yuan dynasty, which marks the beginning of Early Modern Chinese. Text genres (such as drama) that were originally not considered prestigious began to reflect the spoken language to a higher degree (see page 104). If a scholar focuses mainly on the Classics and is mainly concerned with the reconstruction of Old Chinese to read the Classics, this period may look like a demise of language.

65 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” (1931), 1–2.

66 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” (1931), 3.

67 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” (1931), 3.

While this northern pronunciation has “existed since ancient times” (*gu yi you zhi* 古已有之), it has undergone changes, as Bai Dizhou points out.⁶⁸

He presents the following assumptions to justify why the Beiping pronunciation is representative of a rather homogenous sound system for the past 600 years in Beiping (= Beijing) and the northern area:

1. Since it might not be possible to speak of one completely homogenous language, differences and developments of this long time period will be taken into account.
2. However, the examined geographical scope is constant. Therefore, it is likely that the languages were unified. The reasons for that are:
 - (a) Infrastructure was already rather advanced at that time, so it was easy for the language to become “standardized” or “uniform” (*huayi* 劃一).
 - (b) The empire was unified; Beiping was the capital for most of this time. The time of the Hongwu 洪武 reign (1368–1398) with Nanjing as capital is negligibly short.
 - (c) Given that Beiping was a place where people from all places met, its language underwent many changes as it spread to other places of the empire through the travels and assignments of the numerous officials, envoys, scholars and members of the gentry from the different provinces.⁶⁹ This is how the Beijing dialect (*jinghua* 京話), through many intangible modifications by the numerous different speakers, came to attain its quality as the standard (*yangcheng le biao zhun de zige* 養成了標準的資格).
 - (d) The songs in Yuan drama *Yuanqu* 元曲⁷⁰ were rhymed according to this very northern pronunciation. Later, the very popular vernacular novels (*baihua xiaoshuo* 白話小說) were written with this pronunciation in mind.
3. This is how the Beijing pronunciation came to unify not only the north but also perhaps the entire country.⁷¹

The following chapters will show how Wei Jianguo made similar assumptions in his discussion of the development of the Beijing dialect as well as in the legitimization of *guoyu* in Taiwan. This is not surprising: both scholars did not only know each other but also frequented the same scholars and teachers, worked together in Liu Bannong’s phonetics laboratory, and they were both in the Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the National Language (*Guoyu tongyi choubei hui*).⁷²

68 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” (1931), 4.

69 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” (1931), 4.

70 The term *qu* 曲 can refer to a type of poetry, “song”, “aria” (or “air”), or “drama” or “opera”. Therefore, it can denote the arias in the drama or opera of the Yuan dynasty, as well as the entire drama as a genre.

71 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao” (1931), 5.

72 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Wenfaxue de lilun yu shiji” (2001), 400.

After explaining that the entering tone is characterized by a stop consonant or “occlusive” (*shesheng* 塞聲)⁷³ at the end of the rhyme, and that it was one of the three tones (*yin*, *yang*, *ru*) of Ancient Chinese (*guyin*),⁷⁴ Bai Dizhou makes reference to his “friend” (*pengyou* 朋友) Wei Jiangong’s article “*Gu yin yang ru san sheng kao*” (see above) that also provides a similar explanation.

This gradual tone evolution happened in three ways:

1. keeping the original features (*mianmu* 面目), such as the *rusheng* in Min 閩 and Guang[dong] 廣 dialects (i.e. Cantonese/Yue)
2. turning the three possible *rusheng* endings into a glottal stop,⁷⁵ such as the *rusheng* in Jiang[su] 江 and Zhe[jiang] 浙 dialects
3. having the coda (*shengwei* 聲尾) disappearing completely and distributing the former *rusheng*-syllables in all the different tones (*shengdiao* 聲調), such as in the northern language (*beifangyu* 北方語) (in the language of the South-West, the *rusheng* only became the *yangping*-tone)

Bai Dizhou next asks when the coda disappeared in the northern pronunciation (*beiyin*). He uses the poem “Mocking the incorrect language of my wife’s family” (*Xi qizu yu bu zheng* 戲妻族語不正) from the Tang dynasty poet Hu Ceng 胡曾 (ca. 840–?) as an example.⁷⁶

呼“十”卻為“石”，喚“針”將作“真”。

忽然雲雨至，總道是天“因”。⁷⁷

xu “dzyip” khjak hjwe “dzyek”, xwanH “tsyim” tsjang tsak “tsyin”.

xwot nyen hjun hjuX tsjihH, tsuwngX daoX dzyeX then “jin”.⁷⁸

When she shouts “ten” it becomes “stone”; when she calls out “needle” it will come out as “true”.

Suddenly, clouds and rain arrive, and she finally says the sky is “cause”.

Instead of “cause” she meant “dark”, *yin* 陰 = ‘im. This shows how the distinct *yangsheng* codas -m and -n were confused.

In terms of *rusheng*, both *dzyip* 十 and *dzyek* 石 are *rusheng* syllables. They differ in their main vowels (-i- vs. -e-) and codas (-p vs. -k). In Modern Standard

73 *Sesheng* could also be translated as “plosive” or “stop sound”, which are synonyms for “occlusive”. Nowadays, the terms *seyin* 塞音 (sometimes also read *saiyin*), *bisaiyin* 閉塞音 and *baopoyin* 爆破音 are usually employed. Note that (*bi-*) *saiyin* is the direct semantic equivalent of “occlusive” and *baopoyin* of “plosive”.

74 As I have mentioned above, *guyin* was often a general term for Old and Middle Chinese. Note that this clear-cut distinction has also not always been made. Bai Dizhou criticizes the fact that Old Chinese has been studied much more than Middle Chinese, but he does this without the clear-cut technical terms of today. However, from the dynasties and rhyme books he mentioned, it can be inferred that *guyin* referred to both. I here decided to equate “*guyin*” with “Ancient Chinese”, since Bernhard Karlgren established the two terms Archaic Chinese and Ancient Chinese before Old Chinese and Middle Chinese became popular. Ancient Chinese is *de facto* Middle Chinese, and the term “ancient” reflects well Bai’s “*gu*”.

75 Glottal stop: *shengmen jian de* 聲門阻的 “?” (= blocking the glottis).

76 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “*Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao*” (1931), 5.

77 Here, I used Bai Dizhou’s punctuation, see: Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, “*Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao*” (1931), 5. The poem is included in the *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 [Complete Tang Poems], vol. 870.

78 The MC pronunciation is indicated according to Kroll, Paul W., *A Student’s Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2015.

Chinese, both are pronounced *shí*.⁷⁹ Bai Dizhou uses this humorous poem to illustrate how the pronunciation of the entering tone was already changing and formerly clear distinctions were gradually disappearing in the Tang dynasty.⁸⁰

Hu Ceng's poem seems to have been a welcome example of pronunciation change for other phonologists as well. In 1949, Luo Changpei used the poem to argue that the Tang local pronunciation (*fangyin* 方音) already evolved from the pronunciation reflected in the rhyme book *Guangyun*.⁸¹ Luo's explanations go actually further than Bai's (admittedly, they were written nearly two decades later). Luo points out that the rhyme groups (*yunbu* 韻部), formerly distinct, gradually merged until the Tang era. The syllables *dzyip* 十 and *dzyek* 石 were in the distinct *Guangyun* rhyme groups -ip 緝 and -jek 昔, respectively. The items *tsyim* 針 and 'im 陰 were in the rhyme group -im 侵, and *tsyin* 真 and 'jin 因 were in the rhyme group -in 真.⁸²

Bai Dizhou admits that he cannot say exactly when the entering tone disappeared from the northern pronunciation. However, he states his aim: to use existing material to illustrate the tones the former *rusheng* syllables that lost their coda were transformed into and to show how they evolved.⁸³

After enumerating and describing the source material he used and showing the tonal development in elaborate tables, Bai Dizhou makes the following conclusions:⁸⁴

1. The *yinping* tone was interchangeable (*zhuan* 轉) with and subsequently transformed into the departing tone.
2. In the *yangping* tone category, some characters were interchangeable with the *yinping* or *qusheng*.⁸⁵

79 The convergence already happened in the Yuan dynasty, according to Pulleyblank's reconstruction of Old Mandarin: *shí*. Pulleyblank, Edwin G., *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*, Vancouver: 1991, UBC, 283.

80 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, "Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao" (1931), 5.

81 Luo dates the *Guangyun* to a time preceding the Tang era, thereby implicitly referring to its predecessor *Qieyun* from 601. Only fragments have been found until today; *Guangyun* is actually the main access point to its predecessor. If the *Qieyun* reflects the pronunciation of the capital Chang'an 長安, the elite speech of the Lower Yangzi region, or even an eclectic mix of dialects, or an artificial speech would then be disputed. Chennault, Cynthia L., et al. (ed.), *Early Medieval Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2015, 226–227, 229.

82 Luo Changpei 羅常培, *Zhongguo yinyunxue daolun* 中國音韻學導論 [Introduction to Chinese phonology], Beijing: Guoli Beijing daxue chubanshu 國立北京大學出版部, 1949, 2. The title calligraphy of the book is by Wei Jianguo.

83 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, "Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao" (1931), 5–6.

84 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, "Beiyin rusheng yanbian kao" (1931), 42.

85 The term *zhuan* 轉 merits an explanation because it appears in many phonological texts. In that context, it has acquired a specialized technical meaning. Coblin explains that in "Medieval Chinese Buddhist terminology, the verb *zhuàn* 轉 meant to turn or scroll through a devotional text from beginning to end, reading it aloud to accumulate merit." It was then used to describe the secular, phonological practice of taking a "Sanskrit initial consonant through the full sequence of vowels with which it could co-occur" or taking a "vowel through the full series of initial consonants it might follow". Coblin, W. South, "Zhang Linzhi on the Yunjing", in: *The Chinese Rime Tables: Linguistic Philosophy and Historical-Comparative Phonology*, ed. by Branner, David Prager, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2006, 123–150, see 126.

3. *Zhuoniu zi* 濁紐字, i.e. characters with a voiced initial consonant⁸⁶ gradually changed without a rule (*bushen guize de qushi* 不甚規則的趨勢).

4. *Ping* turned to *qu*, and *qu* turned *ping*.

Bai Dizhou employed his methods in a very careful way. Stating that the number of characters was too small for an adequate statistical analysis, Bai saw that it was hard to reach a definite conclusion. Nonetheless, he claimed that a distinct rule for the development of the entering tone would probably not be found for two reasons:

The first reason Bai mentioned is that voiced obstruents (*zhengzhuo sheng* 正濁聲)⁸⁷ no longer existed in the northern pronunciation. The distinction of the *zhuo* initial gradually disappeared, and voiced and voiceless initials were mixed.

The second reason can be summarized as follows. Before this development, which would include Middle Chinese poetry, the principle of correctly alternating between “level” *ping* 平 and “oblique” *ze* 仄 tones had to be followed. Every tone that was not “level” *ping* was “oblique” *ze*. The level-oblique pattern in recited text is an important feature of prosody. Northerners who did not have the entering tone still wanted to follow the aesthetic conventions of the *ping-ze* prosody. Therefore, they read the former entering tone syllables in a shortened form of the departing tone. This is how formal reading of classical texts and colloquial, spoken language drifted apart.⁸⁸

An overview is presented by Zhang Binglin (= Zhang Taiyan) in his *Guogu lunheng* 國故論衡 (Critical comments on the national heritage, 1910). There, he presents a diagram of phonetic interchangeabilities between the different rhyme groups, and he defines the different possible interchangeabilities with a prefix to *zhuo*. Depending on the kind of *zhuo*, the rhymes share certain features. The two syllables could either rhyme in certain occasions, while in other occasions they share a certain feature, such as the main vowel. I am grateful for Prof. Zhu Jianing’s advice on that matter. Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, *Guogu lunheng* 國故論衡 [Critical comments on the national heritage] (Penglai ge congshu 蓬萊閣丛书), Shanghai 上海: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2003, 12.

In Bai Dizhou’s case, I would like to point out that he chose to use the term *zhuo* instead of *bian* 變, since he wanted to refrain from making a temporal assertion. *Bian* 變 (= to change) implies that there is a point of before and after: this means the change that is completed at a given moment of time. The term *zhuo*, in contrast, denotes that there is a time period in which both phonetic or graphic representations were in use. It can point to a development in which both tones (in this case) were temporarily present for that character and also indicate that both tones were used for a considerably long time period.

86 *Zhuo* 濁 literally “muddy” or “turbid”, as opposed to voiceless, “clear” *qing* 清. See Norman, Jerry, *Chinese* (1988), 30. *Niu* 紐 means “initial”.

87 I think these “entirely muddy initials” are identical to *quanzhuo* 全濁 initials, see Norman, Jerry, *Chinese* (1988), 30.

88 The Tang dynasty saw the introduction of the “modern style poem” *jinti shi* 近體詩, which defined these *ping-ze* tonal patterns. Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2018), 438. Defined as the language used in the Tang dynasty, Middle Chinese (MC) provided the phonetic basis for this stylistic norm. Cf. Mazanec, Thomas J, and Yu Taiming 余泰明, “Jià Dào’s Rhythm, or, How to Translate the Tones of Medieval Chinese”, in: *Journal of Oriental Studies* 49.1, Special Issue: Experiments in Translating Classical Chinese Poetry (2016), 27–48, see 33. See also: Stimson, Hugh M., “The Sound of a Targ Poem: ‘Grieving about Greenslope,’” by Duh-Fuu”, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89.1 (1969), 59–67. See also: Mei, Tsu-lin, and Yu-kung Kao, “Tu Fu’s ‘Autumn Meditations’: An Exercise in Linguistic Criticism”, in: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968), 44–80.

Bai Dizhou provides an example of drift by making reference to Li Jinxi's *Jingyin rusheng zipu*. Li's work shows that *yang* and *ping* syllables have the *qusheng* as alternative reading. In modern days, according to Bai Dizhou, the reading of the classics has been abolished in the education system, and they are now recited like the spoken colloquial language (*kouyu*). He also states that *kouyu* as well as the recital of classical texts changes with the natural language development. This change cannot be planned or regulated.

Bai Dizhou concludes with naming the three phases of the entering tone in northern pronunciation:

1. Voiced obstruents are read in *yangping*, voiced sonorants⁸⁹ are read in the *qu*-tone, and voiceless initials are read in the *shang*-tone (正濁讀陽平，次濁讀去聲，清紐讀上聲).
2. Syllables with a voiced obstruent initial are still read like before. If either of them are aspirated or not aspirated, or if they are fricative, the syllables with a voiceless initial are transformed into *yangping* and *qu*-tones. (正濁次濁仍舊，清紐依送氣不送氣或擦聲的關係，改讀陽平與去聲). Some are still read in the *shang*-tone, which recalls history (*lishi de yiji* 歷史的遺跡). That one part needs to be read in *yingping* is a newly appeared tendency.
3. Bai Dizhou concludes that the situation remains unchanged, but he is afraid that future development will have no rules at all.⁹⁰

Bai Dizhou's endeavor to explain what happened to the entering tone in the northern pronunciation does not produce the desired result of a simple and regular rule of change. He attests that after a certain regular development, regularity decreases. During the later stage of development in particular, it does not seem to be regular at all. He is not the only scholar left with this admittedly unsatisfying conclusion: it is also attested by Chris Wen-Chao Li, who gives an overview of the *ru*-tone research.⁹¹ Bai, Wei and their colleagues were driven by both scientific inquisitiveness and the desire to legitimate language policy. Through this unsatisfying conclusion, they demonstrate the dominance of description over prescription in science.⁹²

4.1.6 The New National Pronunciation in Practice

While the new national pronunciation was theoretically established in 1924 and systematized in 1926 (see section 4.1.3, page 106), implementing and promulgating it was still a challenge. The use of the transcriptions Zhuyin and Gwoyeu Romatzyh was an important means to spread the national pronunciation. While Gwoyeu Romatzyh was officially introduced in 1928, Zhuyin remained the more

89 "Secondary muddy", Norman, Jerry, *Chinese* (1988), 30.

90 Bai Dizhou 白滌洲, "Beiying rusheng yanbian kao" (1931), 42.

91 Li, Chris Wen-Chao, "Rù 入 Tone Development in Bèijīng Mandarin" (2017).

92 To contrast this conclusion with other possible interpretations I refer to Hossenfelder, who argues that aesthetic expectations have obscured objective research in physics: Hossenfelder, Sabine, *Lost in Math: How Beauty Leads Physics Astray*, New York: Basic Books, 2018.

widely used transcription.⁹³ The Ministry of Education tried to promulgate it in different publications. For example, it arranged for Gwoyeu Romatzyh to be printed in newspapers. However, teaching material was still scarce and did not reach the remote areas of the Republic.⁹⁴

The journal *Guoyu zhoukan* remained an important medium for Wei Jiāngōng and the *guoyu* promoters. Bai Dizhou explained the phonetics of the new national pronunciation in 1932 in three *Guoyu zhoukan* editions.⁹⁵ Gwoyeu Romatzyh appears in the title of *Guoyu zhoukan*. However, Zhuyin is still Wei Jiāngōng’s preferred transcription. An experienced seal carver, he produced seals with Zhuyin inscriptions and the reader is encouraged to guess which names they represent. Wei Jiāngōng appears as Tianxing Shangui 天行山鬼, one of his pseudonyms.⁹⁶ He produced seals for many well known people; impressions of most of the seals are collected in an album.⁹⁷

A breakthrough for the Preparatory Committee (Guoyu tongyi choubieihui) was the publication of the *Guoyin changyong zihui* in 1932, which was made the official standard dictionary by the Ministry of Education in the same year.⁹⁸ It finally replaced the *Guoyin zidian* from 1919/1920, which still comprised the old pronunciation. This shows the length of time required for discourse among scholars to produce tangible effects for the populace.

This breakthrough in the implementation of language policy was prompted by political changes, especially the consolidation of the government in Nanjing. The capital gave this historical period its name: the Nanjing Decade (1927–1937). It was a period of comparable stability despite the continuing warlordism, the threat of the communists⁹⁹ and of Japan. Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石,

93 Latinxua Sinwenz began circulating in northern China in 1929. Simmons, Richard VanNess, “Whence Came Mandarin? Qīng Guānhuà, the Běijīng Dialect, and the National Language Standard in Early Republican China” (2017), 65. It was developed by Chinese and Soviet linguists in the Soviet Union and found wider application in the 1930s and 1940s, especially in the communist controlled areas, such as Yan’an 延安. Wippermann, Dorothea, “Transcription Systems, Overview”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 396–404, see 398. See also Belde, Klaus, *Saomang: Kommunistische Alphabetisierungsarbeit im ländlichen China vom Jiangxi-Sowjet bis zum Ende des Großen Sprungs nach vorn (1933–60)* (Chinathemen 7), Bochum: Studienverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1982, 49ff.

94 Wippermann, Dorothea, *Das Phonetische Alphabet Zhuyin Zimu – Entstehung und Verbreitung im Zuge der Nationalsprachlichen Bewegung in der Republik China 1912–1949* (1985), 58–63.

95 Vol. 28, April 2, 1932, Vol 29, April 9, 1932, and Vol 30, April 16, 1932 Bai Dizhou 白濤洲, “Shenme shi ‘xin guoyin’” [What is the ‘new national pronunciation’], in: *Guoyu zhoukan* 國語週刊 [National language weekly] 28, 29, 30 (1932).

96 See *Guoyu zhoukan* vols. 18, 29, and 30, 1932. It is also mentioned in: Wippermann, Dorothea, *Das Phonetische Alphabet Zhuyin Zimu – Entstehung und Verbreitung im Zuge der Nationalsprachlichen Bewegung in der Republik China 1912–1949* (1985).

97 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, *Tianxing Shangui yintui: Wei Jiāngōng yinpu* 天行山鬼印蛻: 魏建功印譜 [Seal imprints of Tianxing Shangui: Album of seal impressions of Wei Jiāngōng], Beijing 北京: Zhongguo shudian 中国书店, 2001.

98 Simmons, Richard VanNess, “Transcription Systems: Gwoyeu Romatzyh 國語羅馬字”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 4, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 416–424.

99 The communists were nearly completely driven back and only survived thanks to the Long March. Schmidt-Glitzner, Helwig, *Das Neue China: Von den Opiumkriegen bis heute*, München ³: C. H. Beck, 2004, 57.

1887–1975) was not only president of the state, but also chairman of the KMT and commander-in-chief of the army. Thanks to him and rising nationalism, the republic was able to realize much more sovereignty with respect to the imperialist powers.¹⁰⁰ In domestic terms, this stability came hand-in-hand with a high degree of authoritarianism and political repressions.¹⁰¹

4.2 From Drama Rhymes to the “New Rhymes of China”

Wei Jiāngōng’s involvement in *guoyu* planning on the Mainland hit its zenith in 1941 with the publication of the *Zhonghua xinyun* 中華新韻, the “New rhymes of China”. This was a rhyme book with the national pronunciation that he compiled as a member of a small team. It was made the official reference work for the pronunciation of the national language by the Republican government. Here, his journey was shaped by his knowledge and experience as a historical phonologist and folklore researcher.

The following sections depict this research path chronologically with representative texts by Wei Jiāngōng. These texts illustrate his research on evidence of the history of the pronunciation that formed the basis for *guoyu* and its legitimization. They also show how Wei Jiāngōng sought out a model of the “living language”, since the written vernacular does not fully indicate actual pronunciation. He advocated a pronunciation system that was not only alive, but also looked back on a certain history that would give it traditional legitimacy. Such a system would be acceptable to commoners and intellectuals alike.

The main issues addressed by Wei Jiāngōng in the following texts are rhyming, traditional philology (and its use of rhyme books), folk performative arts, and Beijing as a melting pot with both Han and non-Han influence. This discussion starts with Wei Jiāngōng’s views on rhyming and ends with it.

4.2.1 Wei Jiāngōng on the Thirteen Rhymes of Drama

What is Wei Jiāngōng’s position in the discourse on the national pronunciation?

In his article “About broad-rhyme classes” (Shuo zher 說轍兒),¹⁰² which was published in two parts in *Guoyu zhoukan* in the volumes 103 and 104 in September 1933,¹⁰³ Wei Jiāngōng addressed the question of rhyming in the national language. Rhymes, as can be seen from the long history of rhyme books, play an important role in Chinese phonology. The issue of rhyming of syllables goes

100 Schoppa, R. Keith, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History* (2000), 81.

101 Schoppa, R. Keith, *Revolution and its Past* (2006), 211.

102 The term *zhe* is used by Wei Jiāngōng in two ways. One is simply “rhyme”. The other is “broad-rhyme classes” found in Beijing popular performing art, as the following explanations will show.

103 The article was also included in *Wei Jiāngōng Wenji*: Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Shuo ‘zher’” 說“轍兒” [About ‘broad-rhyme classes’], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇兴, vol. 3, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 317–332.

beyond aesthetics for the composition of poetry or song: it essentially determines a syllable’s pronunciation. Since Chinese has a finite number of syllables, two widespread ways of indicating a character’s pronunciation were the “direct pronunciation method” (*zhiyinfa* 直音法)¹⁰⁴ or the *fanqie* 反切 method.¹⁰⁵ The former indicates a homophone to help readers with pronunciation. The latter divides a syllable into two parts: an initial and a rhyme (or final); it indicates one character where the initial is pronounced the same way and another character with the same rhyme. Since phonetic transcriptions only became widespread in the 20th century, these methods were important indicators for the pronunciation for a long time.

The starting point for Wei Jiāngōng’s article was a letter by a certain She Yun 舍耘,¹⁰⁶ who wrote:

韻從流水，並無“轍”數 [...].¹⁰⁷

The rhymes follow [the principle of] flowing water; there is no such thing as a number of “rhymes” [...].

She Yun’s view was an ideal starting point for Wei Jiāngōng to start explaining the rhymes of the new national pronunciation as well as historic rhymes. In this text, Wei Jiāngōng takes on two roles: that of a historical phonologist and of a supporter of a unified, accessible national language. Wei’s explanations mark the starting point of actual convergence between his involvement in the scientific phonology discourse and the language planning discourse that required applied teachings and teaching material. Wei Jiāngōng’s endeavor to provide a systematic description of the national pronunciation that respected the spoken language and handed-down phonological traditions resulted in the “New Rhymes of China” (*Zhonghua xinyun*) nearly a decade later, published in 1941. However, in 1933, he refuted She Yun’s claim and believed that there was a finite number of rhymes.

In the second paragraph of the article, Wei Jiāngōng emphasized his role as a linguist, stating that he was not a literary critic. Specifically, he did not want to make any value judgement about the quality of a rhymed body of a text.¹⁰⁸ However, if a body of text is written in verses (*yunwen tili de dongxi* 韻文體例

104 Early evidence include the dictionaries *Erya* from the 3rd century BCE (at least in part) and Xu Shen’s 許慎 (ca. 58–ca. 148) *Shuowen jiezi* from 121 CE. Sound glosses in the *Shuowen* are marked with “read like” (*duruo* 讀若). Cf. Coblin, Weldon South, “Ēryǎ 爾雅”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 2, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 188–192. See also Boltz, William G., “Shuōwén jiězì 說文解字”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 4, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 46–55.

105 It first appeared in the 2nd to 3rd century CE. For more information about *fanqie* and other “traditional” Chinese sound glossing methods, see: Sun, Jingtāo, and Hede Wu, “Fanqiè 反切”, in: *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, ed. by Sybesma, Rint, et al., vol. 2, Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2017, 225–228. and Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2018), 27.

106 Unfortunately, Wei Jiāngōng neither indicates any details about this person nor mentions the date of the letter. It was not yet possible to locate any biographical information.

107 Wenli 文狸 (= Wei Jiāngōng), “Shuo zher” 說轍兒 [About broad-rhyme classes], in: *Guoyu zhoukan* 國語週刊 [National language weekly] 103 (1933), 1–2, see 1.

108 The question of the literary quality of vernacular poetry and of rhyming in *baihua* was discussed in the 1930s. One such example is Lu Xun’s letter to Du Tan 杜談 (1911–1986, pen name Dou Yinfu 竇隱夫), editor of the magazine “New Poetry” (*Xin shige* 新詩歌) from 1934. Lu Xun believes that the new *baihua* poetry should also roughly rhyme to make it easy to remember, easy to read out aloud or

的東西), it produces a harmonious sound (*shengyin hexie* 聲音和諧) when it is read aloud, and the listener will find it pleasant to hear (*haoting* 好聽). In folk literature and art (*minzhong wenyi* 民眾文藝)¹⁰⁹ in the Mandarin-speaking area (lit. “national language area” *guoyu quyu* 國語區域),¹¹⁰ there is a specialized term for rhymes: “be fitting to the ruts” (*he zher* 合轍兒):

合轍兒者，押韻之謂也。

Be fitting to the ruts means to rhyme.

Literal translations of *zhe* 轍 are “rut” or “trail”,¹¹¹ referring to the furrows made by vehicles on a road.¹¹² However, I will continue to use *zhe* or *zher* with the Beijing-typical retroflex final.¹¹³

Wei Jiangong explains the terminology and unravels his sources. His explanation also includes his concepts of language, or, to be more exact, his concept of how rhyming should be done and the role it plays. His text contains technical terms, some of which are typical for the performing arts in Beijing. This is why I follow some of his arguments in greater detail. Note that Wei’s discussion also picks up the above-discussed texts by Li Jinxi and Bai Dizhou, and it also makes reference to the *Zhongyuan yinyun* and Yuan drama.

這個“轍兒”就是我們常說的“韻”。¹¹⁴

This “*zher*” is what we usually refer to as “rhyme”.

Wei argues that there is a specific difference between *zher* and *yun* 韻 (rhymes) in his explanations about different rhyming standards and practices. He proceeds as follows:

1. Wei Jiangong discusses the composition of rhymed texts.

2. There are handed down rhyming standards or poetic traditions¹¹⁵ that are still used, even if the spoken language has developed in a way where these rhymes do not rhyme anymore. Wei Jiangong refers to the rhyming standard called *Pingshuiyun* 平水韻 or *Shiyun* 詩韻 (they are often used synonymously). This ob-

to sing, like the song “Drizzling Rain” (*Maomaoyu* 毛毛雨) by the composer Li Jinhui 黎錦暉 (1891–1967, brother of Li Jinxi), drawing a parallel between song and poetry. See: Lu Xun 魯迅, *Lu Xun shuxin ji* 魯迅书信集 [Lu Xun letter collection], vol. 2, Beijing 北京: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1976, 655.

109 Wei Jiangong employs this term rather often. It is an umbrella term for folklore, storytelling and -singing, drama, and other genres that have been passed on orally and that are performed in a local dialect.

110 Referring to “Geographical Mandarin” as conceptualized in Sanders, Robert M., “The Four Languages of ‘Mandarin’” (1987). presented on 2.3.2 on page 45.

111 Kaske uses “trail” as translation. Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 45.

112 Ancient roads and rutways had ruts that guided the wheels; the axles had to fit the ruts. See Yang Zhenqi 杨振淇, *Jingju yinyun zhishi* 京剧音韵知识 [Peking opera phonology knowledge], Beijing 北京: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe 中国戏剧出版社, 1991, 141.

113 Wei Jiangong likes to add the retroflex final *er* 兒, as it is common in the Beijing dialect pronunciation. Since the two characters are spoken as one syllable, I transcribe it as *zher*. Wenli 文狸 (= Wei Jiangong), “Shuo *zher*” (1933), 1.

114 Wenli 文狸 (= Wei Jiangong), “Shuo *zher*” (1933), 1.

115 “Poetische Traditionen”, Behr, Wolfgang, *Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung*, Bochum: Projekt Verlag, 2008, 468.

ervation is confirmed by Wolfgang Behr, who explicitly states that this standard has been partially maintained until the Republican era.¹¹⁶

The *Pingshuiyun* (Pingshui rhymes) rhyming standard has its origins in the two rhyme dictionaries “Outline of the rhymes by the Ministry of Rites, newly printed in the renzi cyclic year [= 1252]” (*Renzi xinkan Libu yunlüe* 壬子新刊禮部韻略, 1252) by Liu Yuan 劉淵 and “Outline of rhymes, newly-carved in Pingshui” (*Pingshui xinkan yunlüe* 平水新刊韻略, 1229) by Wang Wenyu 王文鬱. Both Liu and Wang are said to be natives of Pingshui, which is located in modern-day Linfen 臨汾 in Shanxi 山西.¹¹⁷ The *Pingshuiyun* system became the rhyming standard for candidates in the imperial examinations after they were reintroduced in the Yuan dynasty in 1312. They came to be known as “poetic rhymes” *shiyun*, since it was the norm for “regulated poetry” (*lüshi* 律詩).¹¹⁸

Wei calls this rhyming standard extremely irrational (*ji bu heli* 極不合理). Its rhyming system not only diverges from how people speak but also from the system that is represented in proper or orthodox rhyme books (*zhengze yunshu de xitong* 正則韻書的系統). For more than 200 years, it was the standard for the imperial examinations, and only the very educated would make the effort to memorize its rhymes (or the characters representing these rhymes, *yunzi* 韻字).

3. Authors from popular literature and art (*minzhong wenyi*), however, do not have this *shiyun* standard (*shiyun de biao zhun* 詩韻的標準) in mind.

4. Roughly since Song and Yuan dynasties, the rhyming (*yunzhe* 韻轍) of the “proletariat” (*puluo* 普羅)¹¹⁹ developed naturally. While we cannot definitively say that the drama (*xiqu* 戲曲) of the Song and Yuan times was a popular per-

116 Behr, Wolfgang, *Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung* (2008), 468.

117 There is a certain disagreement about the exact background of the authors, which is discussed in: Yang Chunqiao 杨春俏, “Guanyu ‘Pingshui yun’ ruogan wenti de zai kaobian” 关于“平水韵”若干问题的再考辨 [Renewed study and differentiation about certain questions concerning the “rhymes of Pingshui”], in: *Xibei minzu daxue xuebao* (*Zhexue shehuikexue ban* 西北民族大学学报 [哲学社会科学版]) [Journal of the Northwest University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Science)] 3 (2009), 140–145.

118 Oh, Young, “Rime Dictionaries” (2017), 603–4.

119 *Puluo* (as abbreviation) and *puluolietaliya* 普羅列塔利亞 as phonetic loans of “proletariat” or “proletarian” circulated in the earlier phase of the reception of Marxism in China (and also in Japan). Also Lu Xun employed the term in 1930. See: Lu Xun 鲁迅, “‘Yingyi’ yu ‘wenxue de jieji xing’” “硬译”与“文学的阶级性” [‘Forced translation’ and the ‘class character of literature’], in: *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [Complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 4, Beijing 北京: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1989, 195–222, see 196. Wolfgang Lippert discusses the different terminologies and implications for Marxist terms and demonstrates how many neologisms came to China via Japan. He mentions the phonetic loan in a footnote. See Lippert, Wolfgang, *Entstehung und Funktion einiger chinesischer marxistischer Termini: Der lexikalisch-begriffliche Aspekt der Rezeption des Marxismus in Japan und China* (Münchener Ostasiatische Studien 19), Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979, 309. Lippert furthermore presents the nowadays accepted terms, such as *laodongzhe* 勞動者, *pingmin* 平民, *wuchanzhe* 無產者 and *wuchanjieji* 無產階級. See: Lippert, Wolfgang, “Marxism and the Development of the Chinese Political Lexicon”, in: *China in seinen biographischen Dimensionen*, ed. by Neder, Christina, Heiner Roetz, and Ines-Susanne Schilling, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001, 373–386, see 381.

forming art (*minzhong wenyi*), we can at least say that it was much more like the spoken language.¹²⁰

5. The rhyme book from that period, Zhou Deqing's *Zhongyuan yinyun*, confirms this, according to Wei Jianguo. The *Zhongyuan yinyun* is also different from the orthodox rhyme books (*zhengze yunshu*), and it can be said that it was slightly closer to the "natural" (*ziran* 自然) pronunciation.

6. The *zher* of the popular performing arts¹²¹ basically come from that *Zhongyuan yinyun*.

7. Actors and musicians¹²² practice the pronunciation in their recital and singing. This specialized enunciation or extravagant opera pronunciation is referred to as *yaozi* 咬字, or as Wei Jianguo quotes it in Beijing dialect, *yao ziyan* 咬字眼兒 (to "bite the words", literally), and it represents the "pronunciation of the central plains" (*zhongzhou yin* 中州音).

8. This *zhongzhou yin* is the predecessor of the Beijing pronunciation that is the standard for the national pronunciation (*guoyin biao zhun de Beiping yin* 國音標準的北平音). However, there are a few differences between the two.

9. While the Beijing pronunciation, which is the basis for the national pronunciation, is not completely identical with the pronunciation of the central plains, the rhymes (*zher*) of drama (*xiqu*) are very much the same. They are not entirely identical to the pronunciation of Beijing.

The *zher* conserve a certain historical inheritance (*lishi de yichuan* 歷史的遺傳), whereas the Beijing pronunciation changes freely over time (*ziyou de gen shidai zai bianhua* 自由的跟時代在變化).

We know that the system of national pronunciation is derived from the *Zhongyuan yinyun* rhyme book, which contains 19 rhymes. These have been synthesized into 12 rhymes in Fan Tengfeng's 樊騰鳳 (1601–1664) "Primordial sounds of the five regions" (*Wufang yuanyin* 五方元音).¹²³ The national pronunciation has 19 rhymes. I now will explain the rhymes using Wei's arguments.

The following includes a table showing the national pronunciation (*guoyin*) and the rhymes of the *Wufang yuanyin* and the *Zhongyuan yinyun*, see Table 1 below. This table follows Wei Jianguo's structure. The rhymes of *guoyin* are represented by Zhuyin. As well, I have added Pinyin, and in the case of *e* in Pinyin, which represents two distinct phonetic values, I have added the IPA symbol. The rhymes of the *Wufang yuanyin* and the *Zhongyuan yinyun* are each represented by a character of the respective pronunciation. The order of the rhymes from *Wufang yuanyin* and *Zhongyuan yinyun* is broken up to build a correlation with

120 In *Guoyu zhoukan* it is written 合於口語; the *Wenji* takes *wu* 唔 as a spelling mistake for *yu* 語 and corrects it.

121 It is to be noted that the Peking opera pronunciation originally comes from Hubei 湖北 and Anhui 安徽. See Yang Zhenqi 楊振淇, *Jingju yinyun zhishi* (1991), 31.

122 Actors are referred to as the ones from the "pear garden" Liyuan 梨園, the theater academy founded in the Tang dynasty in the 8th century, and the musicians as the ones that play a stringed instrument (*shua xian* 耍絃).

123 Söderblom Saarela argues that the division into 12 rhymes, as well as its initial-based phonological order, may indicate the influence of Manchu syllaberies during the Qing dynasty. See Söderblom Saarela, Mårten, "Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911)" (2015), 75–76.

the national pronunciation. The number of the original sequence is indicated in parentheses. Since *guoyin* contains more rhymes than the *Wufang yuanyin* and *Zhongyuan yinyun*, some of their rhymes repeat. The example of lines 19 and 20 shows that the *Wufang yuanyin* did not distinguish between *-u* and *-ü*.

The important developments that Wei Jiangong points out are the following characteristics of the national pronunciation that are different from the rhyme books:

1. ㄛ [ɤ] emerged as independent vowel, while in both rhyme books, only ㄛ [ɔ] and ㄝ [e] existed.
2. 儿 [aə], ㄓ [z], ㄓ [s] are differentiated.¹²⁴
3. ㄟ [ei] and ㄨ [i] are differentiated.
4. ㄨ [u] and ㄩ [y] are differentiated (Pinyin: *u* vs. *ü*).

In the following table (see Table 2), Wei Jiangong presents the 13 “big” and two “small” *zhe*. I added the *guoyu* pronunciation of the rhyme characters in Pinyin. The small *zhe* are rhoticized (*erhua* 兒化), meaning they are pronounced with a retroflex final. The table shows how certain rhymes are grouped together in single *zhe* that are distinguished in the national pronunciation. Using the list above as reference, we see that characteristic 1 is visible from Table 2 by looking at line 10, where we have the final [e], but the vowel [ɤ] is nowhere to be found. Characteristic 3 is visible by looking at line 3 in Table 2 which gives us [i]; [ei] cannot be found. All distinct rhymes that we find in Table 1 but not in Table 2 are differentiated in *guoyin* but not in the *zhe* for opera performance. This means that in performances, syllables not rhyming in the national pronunciation do rhyme. Wei Jiangong makes more tabular concordances, and we will come to the comparison with the rhymes of the national pronunciation in the *Zhonghua xinyun* below. He concludes:

有一種人以為十三道韻是金科玉律，那是不對的。你如果要作現代的國語韻文，最好依照現行的國音押韻，因為這是分析得最正確的韻類。你如果以為要照十三道韻押韻，最好大體上也給它變動變動，把那已成為音韻史上的痕跡的地方總得除去了。[...] 換句話說，十三音之必伸縮為十四、十五，地使然也；十三韻之將細析為十七、十八，時使然也。¹²⁵

There is one kind of person who thinks that the 13 *zhe* are an immutable precept. That is not correct. If you want to produce modern poetry [or rhymed prose], you best should rhyme according to the modern national pronunciation because it distinguishes the most correct way between the rhyme classes. If you want to rhyme according to the 13 *zhe*, you best also by and large change it a bit and eliminate the places where it has become a remnant of the phonological history. [...] To put it differently, the 13 sounds should actually be expanded to 14, 15, which are a regional effect; to distinguish the 13 *zhe* further into 17, 18, is an effect of time.

Secondary literature also suggests a direct relationship between all these above-mentioned rhyming sources. Nonetheless, the rhymes are not identical. How-

124 These three rhymes may seem odd, since their phonetic values could also be assigned to initials. However, Wei Jiangong treats them as single syllables that just consist of a rhyme and no initial.

125 Wenli 文狸 [= Wei Jiangong], “Shuo zher (xu) 說韻兒 (續)” [About broad-rhyme classes (continued)], in: *Guoyu zhoukan* 國語週刊 [National language weekly] 104 (1933), 1–2, see 2.

Table 1: Wei Jiangong's comparison of the rhymes of the national pronunciation (*guoyin*) and the rhyme books *Wufang yuanyin* and *Zhongyuan yinyun*.

No.	Zhuyin	Pinyin	<i>Wufang yuanyin</i>	<i>Zhongyuan yinyun</i>
1	ㄚ	a	馬 (十)	家麻 (十三)
2	ㄛ	o	駝 (八)	歌戈 (十二)
3	ㄛˊ	e [ɤ]	駝, 蛇 (九)	歌戈, 車遮 (十四)
4	ㄛˊ	e [e]	蛇	車遮
5	ㄞ	ai	豺 (十一)	皆來 (六)
6	ㄟ	ei	地 (十二)	齊微 (四)
7	ㄠ	ao	葵 (六)	蕭豪 (十一)
8	ㄡ	ou	牛 (五)	尤侯 (十六)
9	ㄢ	an	天 (一)	寒山 (八), 監咸 (十八)
10	(ㄨㄢ)	uan/wan		桓歡 (九)
11	(ㄩㄢ, ㄩㄢ)	ian/yan, yuan/uan		先天 (十), 廉纖 (十九)
12	ㄣ	en	人 (二)	真文 (七), 侵尋 (十七)
13	ㄤ	ang	羊 (四)	江陽 (二)
14	ㄥ	eng/ng	龍 (三)	東鍾 (一), 庚青 (十五)
15	ㄝ	er	地	支思
16	ㄝ	ri	地	支思
17	ㄝ	si	地	支思
18	ㄟ	i/yi	地	齊微
19	ㄨ	w/u	虎 (七)	魚模 (五)
20	ㄨ	yu/ü	虎	魚模

Table 2: The thirteen big and the two small *zhe*

No.	<i>zhe</i> rhyme characters	Pinyin (<i>guoyu</i>)
big <i>zhe</i>		
	大轍	da zhe
1	中, 東	zhong, dong
2	江, 陽	jiang, yang
3	一, 七	yi, qi
4	灰, 堆	hui, dui
5	油, 求	you, qiu
6	梭, 坡	suo, po
7	人, 辰	ren, chen
8	言, 前	yan, qian
9	發, 花	fa, hua
10	乜, 斜	mie, xie
11	懷, 來	huai, lai
12	姑, 蘇	gu, su
13	遙, 條	yao, tiao
small <i>zhe</i>		
	小轍	xiao zhe
1	人兒, 辰兒	renr, chenr
2	言兒, 前兒	yanr, qianr

ever, showing a systematic relationship between the historical pronunciation and *guoyu* pronunciation is a way of legitimizing the *guoyu* pronunciation. Wei Jianguo claims that there is a logical, explainable, systematic process of pronunciation change, a natural process describable by scientific research that provides the *guoyu* standard with scholarly authority. As has been mentioned above, many members of the intellectual elite were southerners, and traditional scholarship rested of course on the on Confucian classics. By tracing the *guoyu* pronunciation back to historical predecessors, Wei Jianguo legitimized modern language planning with history and tradition. This approach will also be seen in his legitimization of *guoyu* in Taiwan and is quite contrary to the approach he would adopt when legitimizing the script reform in the PRC.

It should be stated that the 13 *zhe* are an important element of Peking opera singing until today. Their relation to the *Zhonghua xinyun* rhymes and practical examples of lyrics can be found in Yang Zhanqi's *Jingju yinyun zhishi*.¹²⁶

4.2.2 The “Forging” of the Beijing Dialect

In the preface to Zhang Xunru's 張洵如 (Zhang Deze 張德澤, 1905–1998)¹²⁷ “The 13 broad-rhyme classes of the Beiping phonetic system” (*Beiping yinxi shisan zhe* 北平音系十三韻), Wei Jianguo explains his view on the genesis of the Beijing dialect.¹²⁸ He has already described the 13 *zhe* above, and here, he connects them

126 Yang Zhenqi 楊振淇, *Jingju yinyun zhishi* (1991), 141ff.

127 Zhang Xunru not only made a name for himself as linguist specializing in the language of Beijing, but also as specialist in archive studies. Together with Wei Jianguo, he participated the Committee for the Disposition of the Qing Imperial Possessions (Qingshi shanhou weiyuanhui 清室善后委员会, 1924) that was in charge of making an inventory of the objects that were kept in the imperial palace. Chiang, Nicole T. C., *Emperor Qianlong's Hidden Treasures: Reconsidering the Collection of the Qing Imperial Household*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019, 1. Also like Wei, he became a member of the Jiusan xueshe 九三學社 (see page 214). Anonymous, “Ming-Qing dang'an zhuanjia Zhang Deze xiansheng shishi” 明清档案专家张德泽先生逝世 [The Ming-Qing archive studies specialist Zhang Deze has passed away], in: *Lishi dang'an* 历史档案 [Historical Archives] 1 (1999), 137. See also Ma Si 马嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jianguo* (2007), 51. See also Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2018), 510. Many thanks to Dr. Jeanette Werning for pointing me to this source on the matter: Wang Hongjun 王宏钧 (ed.), *Zhongguo bowuguanxue jichu* 中国博物馆学基础 [The Basis of Chinese Museology], Shanghai 上海: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1990, 88–89.

128 Zhang Xunru's book *Beiping yinxi shisan zhe* was published in 1937 by Zhonghua yinshuju 中華印書局, distributed by the Large Dictionary Compilation Office of the Committee for the Promotion of the National Language (Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui Zhongguo Da cidian bianzuanchu 國語推行委員會中國大辭典編纂處), where Wei Jianguo worked. See Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Zhang Xunru 'Beiping yinxi shisan zhe' xu” 張洵如《北平音系十三韻》序 [Preface to Zhang Xunru's “The 13 broad-rhyme classes of the Beiping phonetic system”], in: *Wei Jianguo wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jianguo], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 2, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 295–312. In addition to being published in the book, the preface (*Xu* 序) by Wei was published in the volumes 282 to 285 of *Guoyu zhoukan*, which is by that time turned into a supplement of “World Daily” *Shijie ribao* 世界日報. *Shijie ribao* was founded in 1925 by the journalist Cheng Shewo 成舍我 (1898–1991), chief editor was Liu Bannong. Zhang Chengzhi 张承志, “Xinwenxue chuangujiang – Liu Bannong lun” 新文学闯将——刘半农论 [The New literature's trailblazer – On Liu Bannong], PhD dissertation, Jilin daxue 吉林大学, 2020, 148.

to the historical development of Beijing as a place. He explains how the development from the language of a place formerly known as Youzhou 幽州 (more below) to the Beijing dialect came about. It is a further example how Wei Jiāngōng as a phonologist endeavored to search for the roots of the national language.

The development of the Beijing dialect that Wei Jiāngōng envisages is heavily influenced by the geographical position of Beijing. Its location led to an influx of non-Chinese languages. The influence of these languages on the Chinese variety of Beijing has been used by critics to debase it. For example, Wu Zhìhuì had likened it to “dog-barking” (*goujiao* 狗叫).¹²⁹ Wei Jiāngōng finds rather objective words in comparison to other philologists.

Wei Jiāngōng recounts how the area of Beijing lay at the margins of the Chinese empire. Around the turn of the eras, non-Chinese languages were spoken there. Around the Tang dynasty, the location, which was named Youzhou at the time, became a point of exchange between the Chinese and the “barbarians” (*yi* 夷) Khitan (Qidan 契丹). The marginal position of Youzhou is exemplified by the following quote:

這幽州的名稱在《釋名》裏說是“在北，幽昧之地也”。關於這地方的地位自然是一種邊徼荒遠，其語言也不過是鄙語方言了。¹³⁰

This name Youzhou is defined in the *Shi ming*¹³¹ as “a dark place in the North”.¹³² About the position of this place, it is naturally a remote area situated at the margins. As well, only vulgar languages and dialects are spoken there.

Over time, this heterogenous array of dialects developed into a “language system”:

我們從這個事實的表現，可以知道揚雄、許慎的時代這一個區域的語言雖是有獨立系統的地位，而其中實在又要分得很繁複的小區間，等到魏晉以降就成了一個比較範圍寬泛的“幽州人語系”了，越往後越減少了特殊方言的色彩。¹³³

These facts tell us that during the times of Yang Xiong and Xu Shen [Han dynasty], while the language of this region had the status of an independent system, it still must be further divided into complicated little areas. It was only in the Wei and Jin dynasties it became a single encompassing “Youzhou

129 Ran 燃 [Wu Zhìhuì 吳稚暉], “Shu Fuzhou Ribao ‘Dongxue Xi jian’ pian hou” (1977), 470. This is Wu’s above-quoted *Xin shiji* article from 1909 (see page 90) in which he lamented that Manchu bannermen taught this variety of Chinese abroad. See also: Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 385. On the journal *Xin shiji*, see: Müller, Gotelind, *China, Kropotkin und der Anarchismus* (2001), 219ff.

130 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Zhang Xunru ‘Beiping yinxi shisan zhe’ xu” (2001), 295.

131 The *Shi ming* 釋名 (On Explaining Names) dates to ca. 200 CE. It was authored by Liu Xi 劉熙 and is a type of dictionary. The entries are ordered according to categories. Youzhou is found under the heading “explaining administrative divisions and states” (*Shi zhou guo* 釋州國). Most entries have a paranomastic sound gloss to indicate the pronunciation and an explanation or definition why Liu chose this particular sound gloss, often making an “extremely tenuous” semantic connection between the lexeme and the gloss. Cf. Bodman, Nicholas Cleaveland, *A Linguistic Study of the Shih Ming: Initials and Consonant Clusters*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954, 1–2.

132 Wei literally chose a mnemonic pun (*You* as the place name vs. *you(me)* “dark”) from the *Shi ming* to illustrate the remoteness and wildness of Youzhou.

133 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, “Zhang Xunru ‘Beiping yinxi shisan zhe’ xu” (2001), 296.

people language system”, and as time went by, its special dialect characteristics diminished.

Next, Wei Jianguo described how the Khitan installed their capital in modern-day Beijing, and how this marks the beginning of Beijing’s ascent to capital and metropolis.

公曆九百三十六年，這幽州和其他十五個州同時被石敬瑭送給了契丹人，第二年契丹人把幽州設析津府作了“南京”，因此成了華夷雜處的大都會，到現在整整一千年了！經過一千年的時間，那原來比較寬泛的“幽州人語系”似乎漸漸消滅變化成了另一個新的語言系統。這個語言系統是佔極重要的地位的，簡直是中國語的近代標準系統。我們稱之為“北平語系”。¹³⁴

In 936, this Youzhou and the other 15 provinces were simultaneously gifted to the Khitan by Shi Jingtang.¹³⁵ In the second year, the Khitan made Youzhou their “Southern Capital”, Xijinfu. This way it became a metropolis in which Chinese and Barbarians lived together, which is a full 1000 years until today! In the course of these 1000 years, this originally very broad “Youzhou people language system” slowly nearly disappeared and transformed into a new language system. This language system occupies an extremely important place: it namely is China’s modern standard system. We call it “Beiping language system”.

Wei Jianguo explains how a standard language is the result of a natural evolution. Following the natural laws of language development, the language was transformed. Certain features were selected to stay while others disappeared. This development followed the economy of language in particular, since the speakers strove for the lowest articulatory effort. The characteristics of several languages merged. As Beijing became a political center, its language came to be seen as standard.

大凡一個語言標準系統的成立，乃是許多不同語系的人薈萃在一處，互相融和，竭力推置，不知不覺，去泰去甚，把語言的音素選拔出最便易的，將語言的組織鍛鍊成最簡明的；所以都會最久的地方語言系統聚的最接雜，混合而成的標準却最易於溥及四方。¹³⁶

Generally speaking, the establishment of a language standard system is many people of different language systems coming together in one place, mixing with each other, doing their utmost to establish themselves in the new location, unconsciously shunning the extremes and maintaining the middle course, selecting the most convenient and easy from the phonetic features of the languages, and forging the language structure into its simplest and clearest form. Therefore, the oldest local language systems are made up of the most different [elements], mixing to become a standard that is nonetheless the easiest to be spread everywhere.

This concept of natural laws of language development is one of the concepts that Wei Jianguo would reiterate during his promotion of *guoyu* in Taiwan in the

134 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Zhang Xunru ‘Beiping yinxi shisan zhe’ xu” (2001), 297.

135 Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (892–942) of Later Jin (Hou Jin 後晉, 936–947).

136 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Zhang Xunru ‘Beiping yinxi shisan zhe’ xu” (2001), 297.

1940s. This ability to legitimize official language policy with a concept that appeared not only to be scientific evidence in a modern sense but also grounded in the traditional philological and historical knowledge system made him a valuable member of the language planning institutions.

4.2.3 The “New Rhymes of China” *Zhonghua Xinyun* 中華新韻

In 1937, war with Japan broke out. The Kuomintang government relocated to Chongqing 重慶 for the duration of the war. Peking University and other institutions, including the Ministry of Education’s Committee for the Promotion of the National Language (Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui)¹³⁷ moved southwards into Kuomintang-controlled areas, to avoid the turmoil of war and Japanese occupation. Wei Jianguo became professor of Changsha Interim University (Changsha linshi daxue 長沙臨時大學) and Kunming Southwestern United University (Xinan lianhe daxue 西南聯合大學).¹³⁸

In June 1940, the Committee for the Promotion of the National Language (Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui) was able to resume its work.¹³⁹ Wei Jianguo again became a member as well as a member of the standing committee. A general assembly conferred by the Ministry of Education in July decided Li Jinxi, Lu Qian 盧前 (1905–1951),¹⁴⁰ Xiao Jialin and Wei Jianguo should provide the standard for the survey of the national pronunciation (*guoyin*) and compile a rhyme book with this pronunciation, the “New rhymes of China” *Zhonghua xinyun* 中華新韻. After its completion, it was made the official national rhyme book by the government (國府頒布為國家韻書) in October 1941.¹⁴¹

137 The Preparatory Committee for the Unification of the National Language (Guoyu tongyi choubi weiyuanhui) was dissolved and re-established as Committee for the Promotion of the National Language (Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui) in 1935. The announcement of the founding of the Committee for the Promotion of the National Language claimed that the Preparatory Committee was “cut back” (*jinsuo* 緊縮) financially by the central government. As a result, a decision was made to dissolve it. Since the linguists involved, such as Li Jinxi, wanted to continue the promotion of *guoyu*, they talked to the education minister Wang Shijie 王世杰 (1891–1981), who agreed to the founding of the new committee. [Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui 國語推行委員會], “Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui guicheng ji weiyuanhui mingdan” (1935).

138 See Cao Da 曹达, “Wei Jianguo nianpu” (1996), 68. Wei Jianguo recounts more about his displacement to Sichuan in Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Huiyi jing’ai de laoshi Qian Xuantong” 回憶敬愛的老師錢玄同先生 [Remembering my beloved teacher Qian Xuantong], in: *Wei Jianguo wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jianguo], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 5, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 526–533.

139 Cao Da 曹达, “Wei Jianguo nianpu” (1996), 12.

140 Lu Qian is foremost known as poet, playwright and opera and drama historian. Firmly grounded in traditional practices of composition and rhyming, he began to advocate to rhyme according to modern colloquial pronunciation during the Second Sino-Japanese War. His participation in the compilation of the *Zhonghua xinyun* may have contributed to this development. Du Yunwei 杜运威, Ma Dayong 马大勇, “Lun Lu Qian *Zhongxing guchui* de ci shi jiazhi” 论卢前《中兴鼓吹》的词史价值 [About the value of Lu Qian’s ‘The trumpet of national resurgence’ for the history of *Ci* [poetry]], in: *Nanjing shifan daxue wenxueyuan xuebao* 南京师范大学文学院学报 [Journal of the School of Chinese Language and Culture of Nanjing Normal University] 2 (2016), 68–73, see 72.

141 Chien Tuo 錢拓 [Qian Tuo], “Wei Jianguo yinxue shuping” (2013), 5.

A digitized version of the *Zhonghua xinyun* is available online.¹⁴² It was also included in *Wei Jiangong wenji* in volume 1. The *Zhonghua xinyun* has many features of traditional publications, and its layout is similar to traditional rhyme books. It is printed from right to left, top to bottom. It does not mention Wei Jiangong by name,¹⁴³ although the annotation in the *Wei Jiangong wenji* version indicates he did the main compilation work while the others mainly did the revision.¹⁴⁴

The first page of *Zhonghua xinyun* bears this decree of the Republican government: this rhyme book was published and promulgated, and authorized by the Chairman Lin Sen 林森 (1868–1943), the president of the Executive Yuan Jiang Zhongzheng 蔣中正 (Chiang Kai-shek), and the minister of education Chen Lifu 陳立夫 (1900–2001). It is followed by Chen Lifu's public announcement that looking up the correct rhymes (*zhengyun* 正韻) required consultation of government publications (*guanshu* 官書) for all genres of text. Since the establishment of the Republic of China, no proper rhyme book was published. Only Zhuyin fuhao had been promulgated since 1918 to replace the *fanqie* transcription. In 1932, the *Guoyin changyong zihui* was published. He then explains how the Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui appointed Li Jinxi, Lu Qian and Wei Jiangong to compile this book, giving the *Zhonghua xinyun* government backing.

The rhyme book begins with explaining how the rhymes of the national pronunciation are connected to the rhymes of the central plains, as recorded in *Zhongyuan yinyun*. This explanation sheds light on Wei Jiangong's research on the 13 *zhe* and their connection to the *Zhongyuan yinyun*: he wanted to hear the rhymes of the central plains in practice, and the 13 *zhe* of the performing arts were for him a living tradition of this phonetic system.

The *Zhonghua xinyun* furthermore contains a rhyme table similar to those found in the traditional rhyme books. In it, the rhymes are represented with Zhuyin and a representative character. The main body is divided into the 18 rhymes, which are then again divided into the four tones (see Table 3). At the end, former *ru*-tone characters are listed and their modern standard pronunciation and tone are indicated.

If we compare Table 3 to Table 1 (page 124), we see the following differences: in line 5 of Table 3, [i] is no longer differentiated into the two items in Table 1 (lines 16 and 17). Line 14 of Table 3 encompasses what was formerly divided into 3 items in Table 1 (lines 9, 10 and 11). Item 18 in table 3, *-ong*, is new.

Wei Jiangong's view that a more or less direct evolution can be traced from former rhyme books over the 13 drama rhymes (*zhe*) to the national pronuncia-

142 Jiaoyu bu Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui 教育部國語推行委員會 [Ministry of Education Committee for the promotion of the national language] (ed.), *Zhonghua xinyun* 中華新韻 [New rhymes of China], Chengdu 成都: Ru gu shuju 茹古書局, 1941. (Accessible online: <https://taiwanebook.ncl.edu.tw/zh-tw/book/NCL-9900010685/reader>)

143 The same was the case with the *Xinhua zidian*.

144 Jiaoyu bu Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui 教育部國語推行委員會 [Wei Jiangong 魏建功], "Zhonghua xinyun" 中華新韻 [New rhymes of China], in: *Wei Jiangong wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiangong], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 马镇, vol. 1, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 571–632, see 571.

Table 3: The rhymes of *Zhonghua xinyun*

No.	Zhuyin	Pinyin	Character	Char. Pinyin
1	ㄚ	a, ia, ua	麻	ma
2	ㄛ	o, uo	波	bo
3	ㄜ	e	歌	ge
4	ㄝ	ie, üe	皆	jie
5	ㄝ	-i [i]	支	zhi
6	ㄝ	er	兒	er
7	ㄝ	i	齊	qi
8	ㄝ	ei, ui	微	wei
9	ㄝ	ai, uai	開	kai
10	ㄝ	u	模	mu (mo)
11	ㄝ	ü	魚	yu
12	ㄝ	ou, iu	侯	hou
13	ㄝ	ao, iao	豪	hao
14	ㄝ	an, ian, uan, üan	寒	han
15	ㄝ	en, in, ün	痕	hen
16	ㄝ	ang, iang, uang	唐	tang
17	ㄝ	eng, ing	庚	geng
18	ㄝ	ong, iong	東	dong

tion is also reflected in secondary literature. Gan Guofang published an article in which she establishes the systematic connection between the 206 rhymes of the *Guangyun*, the *Pingshuiyun*, the *Zhongyuan yinyun*, the 13 *zhe* and the *Zhonghua xinyun*.¹⁴⁵ All these rhyme schemes have been discussed by Wei Jianguo.

In his own presentation of the *Zhonghua xinyun*, Wei Jianguo returned to the practical issue of rhyming, the issue that had prompted him to write about the 13 *zhe*. He gave a talk at Central University (Zhongyang daxue 中央大學, in Chongqing at that time) in 1942 to explain the new rhyme book to the students. As well, he first reiterates that modern poetry was not necessarily rhymed. However, he makes a much longer historical reference. Consulting rhyme books to write poems started, according to Wei Jianguo, in the Song dynasty. The *Qieyun* had been developed further into the *Tangyun*, and authors could theoretically consult it when they composed poetry. However, comparing poem with the rhyme book shows a certain discrepancy. Although the rhyme book theoretically provided a standard, the poet might have been a dialect speaker. If a person with a different dialect now recites the poem, it might not rhyme. Therefore, the *Zhonghua xinyun* needs to provide a concrete standard for both the poet and reader. This would then ensure that the poet's creation can be appreciated just as the poet intended.

The history of rhyming was, according to Wei Jianguo, closely connected to the history of the imperial examinations. The "Outline of the rhymes of the Ministry of Rites" *Libu yunlüe* 禮部韻略 was compiled by Ding Du 丁度 (990–1053) under Song Renzong 宋仁宗 (r. 1022–1063) and finalized in 1037.¹⁴⁶ The rhyme book became an important reference work for the preparation for the imperial examination, since composing rhymed poetry was periodically part of the examination. It was divided into 206 rhymes, like the *Guangyun*.¹⁴⁷ Wei further claims that the examination essays in the *baguwen* 八股文 style ("eight-legged essays"), for example, had to be rhymed. Each dynasty then had its own official rhyme book, such as the *Hongwu zhengyun* 洪武正韻 of the Ming,¹⁴⁸ or the *Peiwen yunfu* 佩文韻府 of the Qing.¹⁴⁹ Since imperial examination candidates needed to memorize the rhymes, they composed poem to practice them. With these historical references, Wei provides historical legitimacy for his "New rhymes of China". He claims that the "New rhymes" were not only built on a well-established tradition in linguistics but also on a history of government authority.

145 Gan Guofang 甘国芳, "Erlingliu yun, Pingshui yun, Zhongyuan yinyun, Shisan zhe he Zhonghua xinyun zhijian de guanxi" 二〇六韵、平水韵、中原音韵、十三辙和中华新韵之间的关系 [The relationship between the 206 rhymes, the Pingshui yun, the Rhymes of the central plain, the Thirteen rhymes and the New rhymes of China], in: *Hubei di yi shifan xueyuan xuebao* 湖北第二师范学院学报 [Journal of Hubei Institute of Education] 31.10 (2014).

146 Cf. also: Oh, Young, "Rime Dictionaries" (2017), 603.

147 Söderblom Saarela, Márten, "Manchu and the Study of Language in China (1607–1911)" (2015), 72.

148 The rhyme book was commissioned by the Hongwu (r. 1368–1398) emperor, compiled by Yue Shaofeng 樂韶鳳 and published in 1375. Kaske, Elisabeth, *The Politics of Language in Chinese Education, 1895–1919* (2008), 47.

149 "Treasury of rhymes from the Hall of Honoring Literature", commissioned in 1704 and completed in 1711 by Zhang Yushu 張玉書 and others. Wilkinson, Endymion, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (2018), 85.

The problem of the different dialects' pronunciation, Wei Jianguo continues, still exists. Therefore, the Ministry of Education promulgated the national language pronunciation standard that is present in the *Zhonghua xinyun*. Wei Jianguo emphasizes that more than half of the rhymes, albeit being exemplified with different characters, are actually rhymes that have been passed on.¹⁵⁰

Wei Jianguo's emphasis on the fact that the rhymes were not new but could be traced back in history shows that language planning was and had to be based on tradition. Traditional scholarship, especially phonology, provided the basis for a modern national language. It utilized traditional tools, rhyme books, which were then used to promote the national language as standard language of the modern Republic of China. This also served as legitimization strategy, as traditionalists in the KMT were more likely to accept such a "traditionalist" procedure.

The approach of building modernity on tradition would also be used in the PRC, as Part III about the script reform will show. It was less clear, however, because explicitly all elitist notions were discarded, and the popular, "proletarian" element was pointed out. However, the script reform basically sought to re-establish the Chinese script tradition. The simplified characters that would be promoted were either historical shorthand forms or new characters constructed according to handed down, traditional methods. The reformers basically reclaimed command over the very Chinese "essence" of the Chinese script. As all these language planning events can be seen as a long-time effect of the May Fourth period, they are often seen as iconoclastic, just like perception of the whole period.¹⁵¹ Given these traditional approaches to language and script in mind, the iconoclasts of the May Fourth period might actually not have been that iconoclastic after all.

4.3 The National Language between Discourse and Reality

I have attempted to demonstrate how the language planning activities of Wei Jianguo and the other linguists tried to navigate between description and prescription. By describing its historical genesis with traditional philological methods, they provided legitimacy for a standard language that was, while politically implemented, *de facto* the closest any of the many language varieties of China could come to a "standard" or "common language" at that time. Hence, it could be said

150 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, "Guanyu *Zhonghua xinyun* - yi jiu si er nian qi yue zai Zhongyang daxue de jiangyan" (2001).

151 Schwarz summarizes some of the most influential intellectual positions of the era. Among these were Chen Duxiu with the slogan "Down with the Rotten Band of Confucian shopkeepers", who also motivated Qian Xuantong and Liu Bannong (Liu Fu) to "document the way in which outworn habits of mind were being perpetuated in modern-day China in the guise of Confucian learning." Chen had even gone so far to authoring the essay "On Iconoclasm" in 1918, criticizing how "idol worshippers" impeded the introduction of science in China by supporting traditional values like emperor worship or filial piety. Others, like Gu Jiegang, were less radical and rather wanted to criticize than completely reject tradition. See Schwarz, Vera, *The Chinese Enlightenment* (1986), 125-27.

that the existing language reality was cemented. However, while the status of Northern Mandarin was accepted and was nominally declared the national standard, it was not still widely used in regions outside the Mandarin-speaking area. As I mentioned above, even the most famous promoters of the national language still did not speak the national language in the 1950s, including Wei Jiāngōng.¹⁵² While the efforts in describing the language were completed, successful prescription (from today's point of view, one may also question its desirability) was still incomplete.

Although the country was divided because of the war with Japan and the linguists themselves were far from Beijing, the efforts to implement the national language were not paused but rather increased. As well, it is quite likely that the insistence on the Beijing dialect was instrumentalized to reclaim supremacy over the city that was occupied by the Japanese. In 1942, Wei Jiāngōng began to work as a professor of the Chinese Language Department (Guowenxi 國文系) of the National Women's Teacher's College (Guoli nüzi shifan xueyuan 國立女子師範學院) in Baisha 白沙, Sichuan.¹⁵³ He became academic dean (*jiaowu zhuren* 教務主任)¹⁵⁴ and director of the national language special training courses (*guoyu zhuanxiuke zhuren* 國語專修科主任) in 1943. It was one of three courses established at the orders of the Guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui.¹⁵⁵ As Wei was more philologist-researcher than pedagogue or didact, he himself managed the special training courses. Nonetheless, his teaching was focused on historical philology and he held, for example, the lecture "Outline of Chinese Graphemics" (*Wenzixue gaiyao* 文字學概要).¹⁵⁶

In 1944, to facilitate the promotion of the national language, the Ministry of Education published the "Guiding principles of the national language movement" (*Guoyu yundong gangling* 國語運動綱領).¹⁵⁷ They were presented at the "national language movement week" (*guoyu yundong zhou* 國語運動週) in Chongqing that year. These principles included the following: the reading pronunciation of the Chinese characters should be standardized, *guoyu* should be promoted in the entire country and as standard for foreigners learning Chinese, and the use of Zhuyin fuhao as transcription as well as *Zhuyin guozì* 注音國字 (characters accompanied with Zhuyin fuhao in small print) should be promoted. The explicit purpose of the *Zhuyin guozì* was to illustrate the pronunciation of characters to readers unfamiliar with them. Implicitly, it would help speakers with a low

152 Chen, Mengjia [陳夢家], "On the Future of Chinese Writing" (1978).

153 Ma Si 馬嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jiāngōng* (2007), 160.

154 Huang Yingzhe 黃英哲, "Wei Jiāngōng yu zhanhou Taiwan 'guoyu' yundong (1946-1948)" (2005), 93.

155 Cao Da 曹達, "Wei Jiāngōng nianpu" (1996), 13.

156 Ma Si 馬嘶, *Yidai zongshi Wei Jiāngōng* (2007), 162. Wei Jiāngōng discussed with Chen Duxiu (before his death in May 1942) Chen's textbook *Xiaoxue shizi jiaoben* 小學識字教本 (Primary school literacy textbook). Chen's idea behind the textbook was that the pupils should not solely memorize the characters, but know and understand the etymology behind them.

157 Wei Jiāngōng 魏建功, "Guoyu yundong gangling" 國語運動綱領 [Guiding principles of the national language movement], in: *Wei Jiāngōng wenji* 魏建功文集 [Collected works of Wei Jiāngōng], ed. by Ye Xiaochun 叶笑春, Rong Wenmin 戎文敏, Zhou Fang 周方 and Ma Zhenxing 馬鎮, vol. 4, Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 2001, 317-18.

literacy,¹⁵⁸ including learners, since they were expected to learn Zhuyin fuhao (37 characters) quickly. The pronounced aim of promoting Zhuyin fuhao presented by the “Guiding principles” was to “link up (= homogenize) the language at the border areas” (*goutong bianjiang yuwen* 溝通邊疆語文).¹⁵⁹

When he was in Taiwan in 1946, Wei Jianguo reformulated the “Guiding principles” to match the situation in Taiwan. Now, they included the following: *guoyu* should be learned by inferring from Hokkien, the Japanese linguistic influence should be wiped out, Zhuyin should be employed, and the Taiwanese should also be integrated into the culture of the Republic ideologically.¹⁶⁰ These reformulations will be discussed in the next chapter.

158 While Republic of China saw an increase in literacy thanks to a greater coverage of schooling, there is some disagreement about the exact numbers. The degree of literacy was furthermore different between urban or rural dwellers and the different social strata. See Seeberg, Vilma, *Literacy in China: The Effect of the National Development Context and Policy on Literacy Levels, 1049–79* (Chinathemen 52), Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1990, 47.

159 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong gangling” (2001), 317.

160 Wei Jianguo 魏建功, “Guoyu yundong gangling” (2001), 318.

