



Classical Chinese Primer (Reader)

John C. Y. Wang, Sue-mei Wu, Shaoyu Jiang, Frank F. S. Hsueh

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While the teaching of Modern Chinese as a foreign language has made progress by leaps and bounds, the same cannot be said about the teaching of Classical Chinese. This is regrettable as the influence of the latter on the former in terms of both vocabulary and syntax is pervasive and profound, so much so that many of the subtler points and fine nuances in Modern Chinese will be missed unless one also has acquired at least a rudimentary knowledge of Classical Chinese. At the same time, a good and solid foundation in Classical Chinese is a must if one would pursue reading any text written before the 20th century. Moreover, precisely because Classical Chinese has ceased to be used as the official medium of written expression and a true proficiency in it can only be acquired through extensive reading of classical texts from China's long past, there is a real need for more fully annotated and clearly analyzed readers and other teaching aids designed especially for the beginning students. "Classical Chinese Primer" is thus meant to be an attempt to address this urgent need in the teaching of Classical Chinese. Designed for those who have studied Modern Chinese for one or two years, but who have had no exposure to Classical Chinese before, "Classical Chinese Primer" is in a set of two volumes: the reader itself and a workbook. This reader includes forty lessons in total, covering selected readings from ancient fables, philosophical texts, as well as historical and literary writings. Each selection is accompanied by annotations and clear and jargon-free grammar notes. Beginners of Classical Chinese will find this reader useful in building up their basic grammatical knowledge of the language.

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