

Northern and Southern variations on a theme: Notes on the Mandarin koiné of Qīng China

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Abstract

This paper examines two Qīng period records of the Guānhuà for what they reveal about the Mandarin koiné during that dynasty, especially with regard to Mandarin spoken in south China: the *Kāngxī Dictionary* and Gāo Jingtíng's *Zhèngyīn cuōyào*. The *Kāngxī Dictionary* provides us with a Mandarin rime table that illustrates evidence for the prestige Mandarin pronunciation of the early Qīng, which turns out not to have been based on Beijing phonology. Gāo Jingtíng's book was the first indigenous textbook of Mandarin and contains many passages that provide fascinating glimpses of language use in urban areas along the corridors of travel between Guǎngzhōu and Běijīng, as well as a rather detailed presentation of the phonology of the Mandarin of his day. Taken together, these two sources reveal much about the history of Mandarin in south during Qīng. They are witnesses that allow us to sketch out an outline of the phonology of Qīng Mandarin and identify its most salient characteristics.

Key words

Qīng Mandarin, Mandarin koine, the *Kāngxī Dictionary*, *Zhèngyīn cuōyào*

1. Introduction

It is generally assumed that the national capital is a priori the locus of the spoken standard in China in traditional times. This leads to the conclusion that China's historical koiné known as Guānhuà 官話 was thus based on the Běijīng 北京 dialect as soon as the capital moved to Běijīng in the early decades of the Míng dynasty in 1421. But the linguistic and geographical basis of the “standard Mandarin dialect” in Qīng times presents a far more complex picture. The Guānhuà that served as the “standard language for officials” in the Míng and the Qīng had a wide geographical base and took a much greater variety of forms than the single city of Běijīng can account for. It had two major varieties, a northern type and a southern type, that coexisted for much of the history of the two dynasties. The variety that carried the most weight in over the centuries was actually not the northern type akin to Běijīng, but the southern type, which was a five-tone southern-type Mandarin. Various permutations of this standard lasted from the early Míng through the end of the Qīng and even into the Republican period.

2. The two types of Mandarin

From the perspective of dialect evolution, Qīng period Mandarin was not a single language. Since well before the Míng, the Mandarin dialects already demonstrated great diversity.¹ The oldest and deepest split within the Mandarin dialects is that between northern and southern types. Though similar in many ways, there are clear and significant phonological differences between these two types. From a historical perspective, the southern type is older and more conservative, while the northern type is an innovative variety that made its first encroachment deep into Chinese territory only following the collapse of the Northern Sòng 宋 (960–1127) and the Jīn 金 (1115–1234) takeover of north China. Prior to that, the southern type was dominant in the central plains, including in Kāifēng 開封, the Northern Sòng capital, until its speakers fled south with the dynasty. Later, the descendant of this southern type was widely spoken in the regions of modern Ānhuī 安徽 and Jiāngsū 江蘇, the territories from which Zhū Yuánzhāng 朱元璋 (1328–1398) marched forth to expel the Mongol Yuán 元 (1271–1368) dynasty and established the Míng dynasty. The language of the capital of Zhū Yuánzhāng's new Míng dynasty, Nánjīng 南京, was a variety of this southern type, which thus can also be called the Jiāngnán 江南 (‘south of the Yangtze’) type. This Jiāngnán Mandarin carried forward the prestige of the southern Mandarin that had been established in the Sòng and came to serve as the exemplar for the Mandarin-based lingua franca spoken by officials in the Míng, or in other words, Guānhuà.²

The prestige of the language is demonstrated by the preference for Guānhuà pronunciation and usage, particularly that of southern Mandarin, among the educated literati and others of elevated social status and mobility in their conversation and reading practices, as well as in their interactions across dialect and other linguistic boundaries. The discussion below provides a number of examples that illustrate this preference and the various forms it takes. The wide

¹ This summary overview of the history of Mandarin is based in part on Coblin (2000) and Simmons (2015).

² Coblin (2007) notes that “during most of the Míng/Qīng period the preferred way of pronouncing Guānhuà (hereafter GH) had originated in the Yangtze Watershed (Lǐ 1980; Lǚ 1985; Yang 1989; Coblin 1997). In addition to this, there was also a less prestigious northern type of GH pronunciation. The Chinese of traditional times were well aware of this difference. They referred to the southern type pronunciation as *nányīn* 南音 and to the northern as *běiyīn* 北音”. Also see Lǐ Xīnkú 1997.

geographical distribution and deep historical roots of Míng period Guānhuà, dating back to its northern Sòng origins, added to the prestige that Mandarin gained through association with the Míng dynasty's founding emperor. This prestige and the accompanying influence held fast even following the move of the Míng capital to Běijīng in 1421 and through the end of the Qīng dynasty.

3. The Southern Mandarin in the *Imperial Dictionary*

In the mid 17th century a non-Chinese ethnic group, the Manchus, swept in from the northeast to push out the Míng rulers and establish the Qīng dynasty. By this time, southern Mandarin-based Guānhuà had become deeply and firmly entrenched as the prestigious lingua franca, or common koiné — the common supra-regional spoken language — of the native Chinese Hàn 漢 literati. So much so that the new non-Chinese rulers yielded to its prestige and essentially codified it in the *Imperial Dictionary* that was compiled under the fourth Qīng emperor, Kāngxī 康熙 (r. 1661–1722): the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* 康熙字典 completed in 1716 under the direction of Zhāng Yùshū 張玉書 (1642–1711). It is no surprise, then, that the French scholar DuHalde identified Jiāngnán (“*Kiang nan*”) Mandarin as “convenient for the government” when he wrote in 1735:

The Mandarin-Language is properly that which was formerly spoken at court in the province of *Kiang nan*, and spread into the other Provinces among the polite People; and hence it is that this Language is better spoken in the Provinces adjoining to *Kiang nan* than in the others, but by slow degrees it was introduced in all Parts of the Empire, which is very convenient for the government;... (DuHalde 1741:389-390; emphasis added.)

This language is reflected in the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* in the first of two rime tables the Qīng compilers included in the introductory material to the dictionary.³ (The second rime table in the dictionary is a traditional *Qièyùn* 切韻 rime table.) It is unnecessary, and perhaps impossible, to identify a specific dialect that underlies the Mandarin rime table in the dictionary. It is even entirely possible that the table was not based on any single dialect. Nonetheless, it reflects features that are characteristic of the Jiāngnán prestige language and that were also taken to be indispensable elements of the commonly accepted colloquial standard. The principal southern Mandarin features that can be discerned in the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* rime table are illustrated in Table 1. The key features are as follows:

- The shift of Common Chinese voiced obstruent initials to voiceless aspirated initials
 - In a two register *píng* 平 tone.
- The loss of Common Chinese final consonants -p, -t, and -k
 - With *rù* 入 tone preserved as a category, having a weak final glottal stop -ʔ.
- A resulting system of five tones:
 - Upper (*shàng* 上, *qīng* 清, or *yīn* 陰) *píng* 平, lower (*xià* 下, *zhuó* 濁, or *yáng* 陽) *píng* 平, *shǎng* 上, *qù* 去, and *rù* 入.

³ See Lǐ Xīnkúí 1980a (rpt. 1997) for a detailed introduction to both of the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* rime tables.

In Table 1, pre-Mandarin ancestral dialect forms (the starred syllables) are represented by Common Dialectal Chinese (CDC); modern Mandarin is represented by *Hànyǔ pīnyīn* 汉语拼音.⁴ The evolution of the forms from CDC to Mandarin is indicated with arrows. The Mandarin distinction between upper and lower *píng* tones is reflected in the distinction between first tone (with level tone mark, as in *ā*) and second tone (with rising tone mark, as in *á*) in *pīnyīn*. Thus, for example, *tíng* 庭 ‘hall, courtyard’, which is derived from a syllable with CDC voiced initial *d-, has evolved to contrast (in tone only) with *tīng* 聽 ‘listen’, which is derived from a syllable with a voiceless aspirated initial *th-, the former being in lower *píng* tone and the latter being in upper *píng* tone. Note also that syllables with sonorant initials (*n-* in the examples) remain in the *shǎng* tone (third tone with inverted circumflex, as in *ǎ*), while those with CDC voiced initials in the *shǎng* tone have merged with *qù* tone (fourth tone with falling tone mark, as in *à*). This means, for example, that *dì* 弟 ‘younger brother’ is not “*dī*”. These are also distinctive characteristics of Mandarin dialects in general. A glottal stop [ʔ] has been added to the Mandarin *rù* tone syllables, indicated by italics in Table 1, which was commonly pronounced in traditional southern Mandarin.⁵

Table 1. Representative Mandarin tones and initials in the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* Mandarin rime table.

		Southern Mandarin				Northern Mandarin			
<i>Initial Type</i>	<i>ní</i> 泥	<i>dìng</i> 定	<i>tòu</i> 透	<i>duān</i> 端	<i>ní</i> 泥	<i>dìng</i> 定	<i>tòu</i> 透	<i>duān</i> 端	
	*n- <i>Sonorant</i>	*d- <i>Voiced</i>	*th- <i>Voiceless Aspirated</i>	*t- <i>Voiceless</i>	*n- <i>Sonorant</i>	*d- <i>Voiced</i>	*th- <i>Voiceless Aspirated</i>	*t- <i>Voiceless</i>	
<i>Tone</i>									
平 <i>píng</i>	寧 níng	庭→ [*diang]	庭 (≠聽) tíng (≠tíng)	丁 dīng	泥 ní	提→ [*diai]	提 (≠梯) tí (≠tī)	低 dī	
上 <i>shǎng</i>	顛 níng	訂 →dìng	挺 tǐng	頂 dǐng	禰 nǐ	弟 →dì	體 tǐ	底 dǐ	
去 <i>qù</i>	甯 níng	定 dìng	聽 tīng	錠 dìng	泥 nì	地 dì	剃 tì	帝 dì	
入 <i>rù</i> →	(溺) (*niak)	(狄) (*diak)	(剔) (*thiak)	(的) (*tiak)	溺 <i>nì?</i>	狄 <i>dì?</i>	剔 <i>tī?</i>	的 <i>dì?</i>	

The status of the *rù* tone constitutes the primary phonological distinction between northern and southern types of Mandarin. Southern Mandarin had the *rù* tone and northern Mandarin did not have it. Chinese scholars were well aware of this difference from very early on. In a late Míng discussion of the regional characteristics of Guānhuà, Zhāng Wèi 張位 (1538–1605) in his

⁴ Based on Norman 2006, CDC is a rendering of the shared phonology of the Chinese dialects, excluding the Mǐn 閩 dialects. It is thus representative of the common ancestral features of the non-Mǐn dialects.

⁵ The glottal stop ending is found on most *rù* syllables in modern Mandarin dialects that preserve the *rù* tone in the Jiāng-Huái region and elsewhere. The *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* also clearly states that the “*rù* tone is short with an abrupt ending 入聲短促急收藏” and “makes use of a shortened syllable 借短言” where it is found. Lǐ Xīnkúí surmised that the *rù* tone ending was already lost in the language represented in the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*, but that the *rù* tone category still maintained its own distinctive characteristics (“还是有它自己的特点”), see Lǐ 1980a (rpt. 1997): 286. Our judgment is that the exact phonetic realization of the *rù* tone varied depending on the speaker.

Wèn qí jí 問奇集 [*Collected Notes on the Unusual*] (preface 1590) addresses the issue in a section titled “Gèdì xiāngyīn 各地鄉音” [“Regional Pronunciations of Various Places”]:

大約江以北入聲多作平聲，常有音無字，不能具載；江南多患齒音不清，然此亦官話中鄉音耳。若其各處土語，更未易通也。(juàn B, p. 41a.)

‘In general, the *rù* tone is pronounced as a *píng* tone north of the Yangtze; and there are also many pronunciations that have no corresponding Chinese character which cannot be fully listed here. South of the Yangtze the dental sounds frequently suffer from muddled pronunciation; but this is merely a regional accent in Guānhuà. If the various local dialects are used, it is even more difficult to communicate.’

We can see in the examples of Table 1 that the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* Mandarin rime table maintains a distinct *rù* tone whose constituent syllables have shifted to be parallel with, or close in pronunciation to, open syllables with the same main vowel, but not merged with them.⁶ At the same time, the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* also clearly depicts the Mandarin shift of Common Dialectal Chinese voiced obstruent initials in *píng* tone syllables to voiceless aspirated initials, also illustrated in Table 1. Taken together, this pair of phonological features confirms that the *Imperial Dictionary* rime table represents a type of Mandarin, and that southern Mandarin is the type the compilers’ preferred.

The early Qīng preference for the southern Guānhuà koiné is also reflected in revisions that the Manchus made in transcriptions of Chinese following their conquest of China. Common Dialectal Chinese velar initials before high-front vowels were already palatalized when the Manchus first began learning Chinese from speakers in northeast China. Reflecting this, the Manchus transcribed a palatal pronunciation in Manchu renderings of Chinese syllables in their early translations of Chinese, such as the translation of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms (*Sān guó yǎnyì* 三國演義), *Ilan gurun*. But after moving into Běijīng, their transcriptions of the same syllables *reverted* to a southern Mandarin velar pronunciation, as illustrated in Table 2 in which the relevant initial consonants are indicated in bold.⁷

The preservation of the velar pronunciation was a characteristic feature of the Guānhuà koiné well into the 19th century. The fact that the Manchus adopted this feature in their Chinese transcriptions after their conquest of the Míng is strong corroboration of the prestige of the southern Mandarin that is reflected in the *Kāngxī Imperial Dictionary*, the authoritative position of which the Qīng court went to severe lengths to maintain (Kaske 2008: 43). China’s ruling elite clearly continued to prefer the Jiāngnán Guānhuà that had dominated in the Míng, and the Manchus were persuaded that it was the preferred prestige form.⁸ Hence, the closest thing there is to a recorded “standard” Guānhuà promulgated widely in the Qīng is a five-tone southern type Mandarin.

⁶ This is in contrast to what is seen in the 14th century *Zhōngyuán yīnyùn*, which has merged the *rù* syllables into the other tones and represents a Mandarin clearly of the northern type.

⁷ Data in Table 2 is from an unpublished presentation by Jerry Norman from 1989, courtesy of William G. Boltz.

⁸ Coblin 2003 provides an extensive discussion of the influence of southern Guānhuà on the Mandarin learned by the Manchus as reflected in the *Qīngwén qīméng* 清文啟蒙, a Manchu textbook for Chinese readers dated 1761. Elements of the issue are also discussed in Yamazaki Masato 1990.

Table 2. Shift of Manchu transcriptions from prepalatal to velar.

	<i>English Translation</i>	<i>Modern Mandarin</i>	三國演義 <i>Ilan gurun</i> (1650)	康熙 <i>Kāngxī and later</i> (r. 1661–1722)
將軍	‘general’	<i>jiāngjūn</i>	jiyangjiūn	jiyanggiyūn
郡	‘prefecture’	<i>jùn</i>	jiyūn	Giyūn
橋	‘bridge’	<i>qiáo</i>	coo	Kiyoo
京	‘capital’	<i>jīng</i>	jing	Ging
嘉	‘fine’	<i>jiā</i>	jiya	Giya
校	‘school’	<i>xiào</i>	siyo	Hiyoo
許	‘allow’	<i>xǔ</i>	sioi	Hioi
九	‘nine’	<i>jiǔ</i>	jio	Gio
金	‘gold’	<i>jīn</i>	jin	Gin
諧	‘in harmony’	<i>xié</i>	jiyai	Giyai

4. The Mandarin Recorded in Gāo Jìngtíng’s *Zhèngyīn cuōyào*

One hundred years after the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* was completed, the southern type of Mandarin continued to prevail as the preferred colloquial variety, though the northern type was also heard in both north and south China. Coexisting with northern Mandarin, the Jiāngnán type of Guānhuà had widespread currency as the relatively dominant lingua franca for use throughout the empire. A contemporary description of the situation is provided by Gāo Jìngtíng 高靜亭 (fl. 19th c.), the compiler of the first indigenous textbook of Guānhuà, the *Zhèngyīn cuōyào* 正音撮要 [*Synopsis of standard pronunciation*].⁹ Gāo Jìngtíng was from Xīqiáo township in what is modern Nánhǎi city in Guǎngdōng (廣東省南海市西樵鎮). He tells us in the preface to his text that he learned Guānhuà after traveling with his father to Northern Zhílì 北直隸 (in the area of modern Héběi 河北) when he was 13 years old. The pronunciation of Northern Zhílì in 1752 had been designated as the standard for the pronunciation of court rituals administered by the Hónglúsi 鴻臚寺, the Court of Imperial Ceremonies (Hirata 2000). While living there in his teens, Gāo developed a fairly confident proficiency in Guānhuà and decided to compile a reference for those of his home province and others who wished to learn that language.

Gāo described the prevalence and usefulness of the Mandarin koiné in the preface to his textbook (dated 1810) as follows:

論官話能通行 “Guānhuà Affords Easy Passage”

康熙字典有云鄉談，豈但分南北。每郡相鄰，自不同。蓋謂天下州郡各有鄉談土語。這府縣的人就不曉得那府縣的人說話，各省皆是，非獨閩廣為然。余嘗經過江南、浙江、河南、兩湖地方，一處處方言土語不同。就是他們鄰府鄰縣的人也不通曉。惟有經過水陸大馬頭，那些行戶買賣人都會說官話。但他望他的街坊的人，說土話，我們又都懂不得了。後來進京住着更奇怪了。街上逛的人多着呢，三五成群，唧唧呱呱打鄉談，不知他說什麼，及至看他到店裡買東西，他又滿嘴官話，北話也有，南話也有，

⁹ Identified as “the earliest standard pronunciation text of the Qing dynasty 目前所見最早的清代‘正音課本’” by Wáng Wèimín 2000.

都說得清清楚楚的，問起他們來，據說各省鄉邨的人，要想出門求名求利，沒有一個不學官話的。不學就不能通行。但是各省人，口音多是端正，他說官話，不覺為難人，都易懂，獨閩廣兩省人，口音多不正當，物件稱呼，又差得遠。(juàn 卷 1, p. 3a.)

‘What the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* refers to as local colloquial, can hardly be simply northern and southern differences. All adjoining prefectures are naturally different, and it can generally be said that all of the provinces and prefectures in the empire each has its own local colloquial and regional patois. The people of one county do not understand the speech of another county; and such is the case in all the provinces, not simply in Fújiàn and Guǎngdōng. I have traveled in Jiāngnán, Zhèjiāng, Hénán, Húběi and Húnán. The local language and regional patois is different in each place. Even among neighboring counties and prefectures they do not understand each other. Only **when traveling on the canals and at the wharves, the people of those businesses engaging in commerce all know how to speak Guānhuà.** But they speak the local patois to the people of their neighborhood; and we do not understand. It is even stranger in the capital. There are great numbers of people strolling in the avenues, in groups of 3 or 5, speaking their local colloquial in a great cacophony. One has no idea what they are saying. But when they enter the shops to make purchases, they are fully conversant in Guānhuà, of which **northern and southern vernaculars can both be heard**, all spoken quite clearly. When asked where they are from, we learn they are from towns and villages in all the provinces. **Not one of those who wish to journey forth in search of fame and fortune does not learn Guānhuà.** If one does not learn it, it is not possible to get around. But in all the provinces, most have a fairly standard accent. And when they speak Guānhuà, one discerns no difficulty, all are easy to understand. Only people from Fújiàn and Guǎngdōng have poor accents; and in speaking of things and addressing others, they are off by a long shot.’ (Emphasis added.)

In its character and widespread regional utility, the Guānhuà that Gāo describes here represents a classic koiné situation. This koiné, a term which can be nicely rendered in Chinese as *tōngyǔ* 通語, was clearly a socially accepted common supra-regional vernacular language standard that formed through contact between two or more mutually intelligible varieties or dialects of Mandarin.¹⁰ As Gāo notes, its speakers did not abandon their own native vernaculars or dialects, but rather used the Mandarin koiné for communication across China’s vast territories while continuing to use their own local languages at home and with their provincial compatriots.

Though he indicates in the above passage that this koiné encompasses both “northern and southern vernaculars” (*běiyǔ* 北語 and *nányǔ* 南語), we find that the Mandarin pronunciation represented in his *Zhèngyīn cuōyào* is firmly of the southern type. In the fourth *juàn* 卷 of *Zhèngyīn cuōyào*, Gāo presents a syllabary of homophones for the Guānhuà of his text, with pronunciations glossed using the traditional *fǎnqiè* 反切 method — a set of two speller characters, the first of which shares an initial (alliterates) with the glossed syllable, and the

¹⁰ The Chinese word *tōngyǔ* 通語 ‘*lingua franca*, koiné’ dates back at least as early as Yáng Xióng’s 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) *Fāngyán* 方言 [*Regional language*], in which it is frequently used.

second of which shares the final and tone (and thus rhymes) with the glossed syllable. An analysis of Gāo’s pronunciation glosses in this *juàn* reveals that the Guānhuà presented in his textbook has the typical five-tones of the Jiāngnán koiné:

1. *Yīnpíng* syllables are always glossed with second-syllable speller characters that have a *yīnpíng* tone. For example, *dōng* 東 is glossed with *dēng+gōng* (登公切), as opposed to the *dé+hóng* (德紅切) of the traditional *Qièyùn* system in the *Guǎngyùn* 廣韻; *tāng* 湯 is glossed with *tái+shāng* (台商切).
2. *Yángpíng* syllables are always glossed with second-syllable speller characters that have a *yángpíng* tone. For example, *pín* 貧 is glossed with *pí+mín* (皮民切), as opposed to the *fú+jīn* (符巾) of the *Guǎngyùn*; *lán* 藍 is glossed with *lí+nán* (梨南切).
3. Upper *shǎng* syllables (that correspond to the traditional *yīnshǎng* category) are always glossed with second-syllable speller characters that have a *shǎng* tone: *děng* 等 is glossed *dīng+gěng* (丁梗切); *zhǐ* 紙 is *zhēn+yǐ* (真以切) with a note that it is homophonous with *zhǐ* 止. As is typical of Mandarin, this tone includes syllables with sonorant initials: *měi* 每 is glossed *mí+wěi* (迷委切) with a note that it is homophonous with *měi* 美.
4. *Qù* tone reflects a merger of traditional *Qièyùn* upper and lower (*yīn* and *yáng*) *qù* tones together with lower (*yáng*) *shǎng*, all of which categories are distinct in Common Dialectal Chinese. Hence *jiù+wò* (臼臥切) glosses the pronunciation of *yángshǎng zuò* 坐 and *yīnqù zuò* 做, while *jì+jiù* (記就切) glosses *yángqù jiù* 舊, *yángshǎng jiù* 舅, and *yīnqù jiù* 救. We also find a note that says *yángqù dòng* 洞 is homophonous with *yángshǎng dòng* 動 (“洞入動字”).
5. *Rù* tone syllables form a discrete category in Gāo’s system. They are all provided with *fǎnqiè* spellings that are separate from the other tones and are grouped together with no distinction between Common Dialectal Chinese final consonants *-p, *-t, and *-k. Thus *lì* 立, *lì* 力, and *lì* 笠 (respectively having CDC endings *-p, *-t, and *-k) are all glossed with *lái+dí* (來敵切); and *jí* 及 and *jí* 吉 (ending in CDC *-p and *-t respectively) are *jì+yī* (計一切). Moreover, there is no upper and lower register distinction in the *rù* tone of *Zhèngyīn cuōyào*. Thus for example, *jī+xū* (基戍切) serves as the pronunciation gloss for both Common Dialectal Chinese upper register syllables *jú* 橘, *jú* 鞠 and *jú* 菊, as well as CDC lower register syllables *jú* 局 and *jú* 跼.

Gāo’s Mandarin phonology also evidences a preservation of the so-called *jiānyīn* 尖音 pronunciation: Common Dialectal Chinese dental sibilants are preserved before high-front vowels and are not palatalized. This can be seen where *cǐ+jié* (此節切) is used to gloss the pronunciation of *qiè* 切 and *qiè* 妾, which both would thus be pronounced “*ciè*” ([tɕʰieʔ^{ri}] not [tɕʰieʔⁿⁱ]) in Gāo’s Guānhuà. Also note *jìng+dài* (靜代切) glosses *yīnqù zài* 再 and *yángshǎng zài* 在, which reveals that Gāo’s Guānhuà would pronounce *jìng* 靜 as “*zìng*” ([tsiŋ^{qu}] not [tɕiŋ^{qu}]). This preservation of *jiānyīn* dental sibilants before high front vowels is a further hallmark feature of the southern Mandarin based Míng-Qīng Guānhuà koiné. Finally, it is of note that Gāo’s Guānhuà *fǎnqiè* spellings maintain a clear distinction between initials *n-* and *l-*, and between velar and dental nasal final consonants *-n* and *-ng*. But CDC final *-m is merged with final *-n. For example, *nán* 南 (CDC *nom²) and *nán* 難 (CDC *nan²) are both glossed *níng+lán* (寧蘭切).

Because it contains a *rù* tone, the importance of which was described above, the quintuple tone system represented in the phonology of the *Zhèngyīn cuōyào* and that is found in most other forms of southern Mandarin carried powerful normative influence. This normative influence is evident, for example, in a 19th century description of a Jiāngnán Mandarin dialect that had seven tones. The eighty scroll *Yùnshǐ* 韻史 [*History of rimes*] compiled by the Qīng scholar Hé Xuān 何萱 (1774–1841) presents the phonology of Hé’s hometown dialect near modern Tàixīng 泰興. The modern dialects of the Tàixīng-Rúgāo 如皋 region in Jiāngsū have a seven tone phonology, with upper and lower registers in both the *qù* and the *rù* tones. But though Hé Xuān is able to meticulously and accurately reflect the voiceless aspirated obstruents that are characteristic of syllables in *yángqù* and *yángqù* tone categories in all of the Tōng-Tài 通泰 area dialects (but not seen in other Mandarin varieties), his phonological glosses merge upper *qù* with lower *qù*, and upper *rù* with lower *rù*. The result is that his phonological system clearly distinguishes only the five tones typical of southern Mandarin. This led the modern scholar Lǚ Guóyáo 魯國堯 to remark that Hé Xuān “did not dare completely turn his back on established tradition” 不敢盡背舊傳統 (1988: 188), while Gù Qián 顧黔 subsequently noted that Hé “clearly carried forth the five-tone interpretation of the Yuán and Míng periods” 顯然是承元明以來五聲之說 (1996: 170, 2001: 6).¹¹

5. Conclusion

To sum up our characterization of the Qīng Mandarin standard, we have identified the following salient features regarding China’s prestige koiné Guānhuà in the early 19th century based on the *Imperial Dictionary* and Gāo Jingtíng’s *Zhèngyīn cuōyào*:

- i. It had five-tones: upper *píng*, lower *píng*, *shǎng*, *qù*, and *rù*, as discerned even in the Mandarin rime table of the *Kāngxī Dictionary*.
- ii. The lower *shǎng* of CDC is merged with *qù* (excluding syllables with sonorant initials) and there is no upper-lower register distinction in the *qù* and *rù* tones, as illustrated in Table 3.
- iii. CDC voiced initials are voiceless aspirated in the lower *píng* and voiceless unaspirated in the *shǎng*, *qù*, and *rù* tones.
- iv. CDC velars before high front vowels were not palatalized and remained velar in pronunciation (as illustrated by the Manchu transcriptions in Table 2).
- v. CDC dental sibilants are preserved before high front vowels, as the so-called *jānyīn*, and are not palatalized.
- vi. CDC final consonants *-p, *-t, and *-k are merged under single *rù* tone spellings; and CDC final *-m is merged with final *-n.

Table 3: The five tones of Qīng Guānhuà.

	<i>píng</i> 平	<i>shǎng</i> 上	<i>qù</i> 去	<i>rù</i> 入
<i>yīn</i> 陰	1	3		
<i>yáng</i> 陽	2		4	5

¹¹ Simmons 2014 provides a detailed analysis of the phonology and tones in Hé Xuān’s *Yùnshǐ*.

This Mandarin koiné and these characteristics were well established and already at least 500 years old by the start of the 19th century, when considered in light of their Sòng origins noted above. Clearly, they had not been dislodged by the move of the capital in the Míng; nor had they been superseded later, after close to two centuries of Manchu rule in the Qīng.

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