
The author of this book, John F. Copper, is the Stanley J. Buckman Distinguished Professor of International Studies at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. The author of more than twenty books on China, Taiwan, and Asian affairs, he has also published over 150 articles and pieces in scholarly journals and newspapers.

This is the second edition of his Historical Dictionary of Taiwan (Republic of China), which was published in 1993. For this second edition, Copper has updated and expanded the Table of Contents and added an Appendix II.

The Chronology of Important Events covers 10,000 BC to 1998. Pre-1950, the chronology is oversimplified. Only six events are mentioned between 10,000 BC and 1517, when Portuguese vessels sighted the island of Taiwan. The chronology of the very important period of Japanese rule from 1895 to 1945 is summarized by only eight events. Post-1950, the coverage of events is more comprehensive.


The 499 entries in this Dictionary are alphabetically arranged and vary in length from 18 words to 402 words. Annotations are succinct and in some cases, too brief. For example, in his descriptions of individuals, the author never mentions the person’s educational background.

All entries are under English names. Chinese language names are given in parentheses, but there are no entries under the Chinese names cross-referenced to the English entries. Therefore, the user has to know the English name of the institution (or organization) and cannot find the entry by the Chinese name. This is a problem for the user who knows only the Chinese name of an organization. The organizations that existed during the period of Japanese rule between 1895 and 1945 should have been romanized in Japanese because they were known in Japanese during this period and cannot be recognized and found by the user under Chinese romanization. Future editions would be improved by adding entries under both Chinese and Japanese romanization in these cases, and cross references to entries for English names.

Although the book is called an historical dictionary, only very few entries are related to Dutch rule (1622-1662) of Taiwan, and there are also few entries from the fifty year period of Japanese colonial rule. The dictionary includes some institutions which are not located in Taiwan, such as the Institute for Taiwan Studies in Beijing and Xiamen.

The 58-page bibliography includes only works in English language. It is divided into nine subject categories: geography, history, culture, society, economics, educations, politics, military and security, and foreign policy. The coverage of each subject is uneven; works on history take
up three pages while titles on economics occupy fifteen pages. There are only three titles in literature, which is included in culture, and works on art are not mentioned at all.

The author uses the Wade-Giles system of romanization without the umlaut. Probably he intended the book to be used by readers who do not read Chinese and Japanese. Unfortunately the book lacks a glossary of Chinese and Japanese words. The inclusion of a glossary would certainly help readers to identify personal and organizational names in Chinese or Japanese. In a brief check of this book, more than thirty errors were found, many of them incorrect Wade-Giles romanization. In other cases, dates for individual persons are inaccurate.

Despite the criticisms stated above, Professor Copper's contribution should be recognized and appreciated. This concise historical dictionary is a convenient tool for Taiwan studies that will benefit both general users and researchers.

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This Chinese-English dictionary contains 2807 special terms frequently used in the historical archives of the Ming and Qing periods. The dictionary covers terms in various areas, such as central and local officials, organizations, military and judiciary systems, rules and regulations, society, the economy, postal affairs, transportation, construction, nationalities, and religion. The dictionary is intended for use by Chinese and foreign archivists, researchers, scholars, and students who will handle or study historical archives of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Terms are given in pinyin and Wade-Giles romanizations and are arranged according to the alphabetical order of the pinyin romanizations. Terms of identical romanization are arranged in the sequence of the tone from first to the fourth, but the tones are not indicated in the dictionary. Regular terms are entered in lower case, and the first letter of proper names and personal names is capitalized. For each entry, the compiler indicates the dynastic period when the term was used--Ming, Qing (Ch'ing), or Ming-Qing (Ch'ing).

Each entry includes the Chinese term or name with pinyin and Wade-Giles romanizations, dynastic period, English translation of the term, official rank and official title, and a brief description of the term.

For the convenience of users who know only one romanization method, the compiler attaches Pinyin to Wade-Giles and Wade-Giles to Pinyin conversion tables. Also attached is an "Index of Syllables of Hanyupinyin (the phonetic Transcription of Chinese Characters)", which, however, includes only the first character of selected terms.

There are eight very useful appendices to the book: (1) Brief Chinese Dynastic Chronology; (2) Chronological Table for the Ming Emperors; (3) Chronological Table for the Qing Emperors; (4)
List of the Administrative Provinces of the Qing Dynasty; (5) Table of Central and Governmental Organs in the Qing Dynasty; (6) Conversion Table: the Original Chinese Characters Complex Forms to the Simplified Forms; (7) The Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches; (8) The Twenty-four Solar Terms. A list of twenty-two major reference books is given at the end of the book.

This first Chinese-English dictionary of historical archives in the Ming and Qing will prove very useful and possibly indispensable to students, researchers, and scholars of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The coverage is extensive and the English translations valuable. In his translations and descriptions of official titles Li appears to have relied heavily on Charles O. Hucker’s *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. Careful users of these two dictionaries will notice that Li’s English translations and descriptions of official titles are taken directly from Hucker’s dictionary. Li does not mention his use of Hucker’s translations and descriptions, though *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* is included in the list of major reference resources. However, Li’s translations of other archival terms are not from Hucker’s dictionary. Users of Li’s dictionary should also consult Hucker’s dictionary for official titles in the Ming and Qing periods.

Li Hongwei is to be commended for his contribution to the study of the historical archives in the Ming and Qing dynasties. This dictionary should be in the libraries of all universities that offer studies of Chinese history.

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