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© 2020 by the Journal of Chinese Linguistics. ISSN 0091-3723/ The overture of Peking pronunciation's victory: The first published Peking orthography. By Ju Song.  
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## THE OVERTURE OF PEKING PRONUNCIATION'S VICTORY: THE FIRST PUBLISHED PEKING ORTHOGRAPHY

**Ju Song**

*Fudan University, Shanghai*


### ABSTRACT

Thomas Francis Wade (1818–1895) and his Wade-Giles System have been credited with promoting the victory of Peking pronunciation as the standard Mandarin. However, the first Peking orthography was not published by him, but another British consular official, Thomas Taylor Meadows (1815–1868), in his book *Desultory Notes* (1847). In the present paper the content and value of this orthography are examined by comparing Meadows and his contemporaries', especially Wade's, attitudes and treatment towards Peking Mandarin and a uniform Chinese transcription system, with specific reference to the development of Peking Mandarin in 19<sup>th</sup> century. It demonstrates that Wade adopted Meadows's opinion on the significance of Peking pronunciation, and his system was also influenced by Meadows's in many aspects. This study illuminates that Meadows' orthography, as a first try of an exclusive transcription system for Peking

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**Ju Song** (宋桔) [Songju@fudan.edu.cn]; International Cultural Exchange School, Fudan University, 220 Handan Rd. Shanghai, 200433, P.R.C.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8682-7970>

pronunciation, played the overture of its victory.

## KEYWORDS

Peking pronunciation Thomas Francis Wade Thomas Taylor Meadows  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The word “Mandarin” came from the Portuguese *mandarin*, a counselor or minister of state. And then the meaning expanded to include the language spoken by such officials. The corresponding term in Chinese was *Guanhua* 官话, which referred to the universal standard language or *koine* spoken by officials and educated people.

For hundreds of years, since the Jesuit missionaries transcribed Chinese into roman letters in 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Nanking<sup>1</sup> pronunciation (hereafter NP) had been predominant in the transcriptions of Mandarin (Standaert 2001, 865–866). Researches on early missionaries’ records and Chinese materials indicate that NP was the basis of Mandarin from the Ming to the beginning of Qing dynasty (Lu 1985; Coblin 2000, 537–552). During the Qing dynasty, the standard for Mandarin pronunciation gradually shifted from Nanking to Peking.<sup>2</sup> And as Robert Morrison (1782–1834) described in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a competition between them (Coblin 2003, 353).

The big change came with the switch from Mandarin orthographies<sup>3</sup> based on NP to Peking pronunciation (hereafter PP), and it was associated with Thomas Francis Wade (1818–1895) (Takata 2001, 141–142; Wilkinson 2012, 59). In 1859 British diplomat, Wade, published his first Peking orthography in *Hsin Ching Lu* (1859) and *The Peking Syllabary* (1859).<sup>4</sup> This syllabary was subsequently revised in *Yü-yen tzü-erh chi* (1867), then slightly modified by Herbert Allen Giles (1845–1935) in the *Chinese-English Dictionary* (1912), becoming the famous “Wade-Giles’s System”.

With reference to the immense and international influence of Wade and his work, Takata (2001, 142) recognized them as the starting point of the PP’s victory. In Coblin’s research (1997, 289–290; 2000, 541), Wade, Robert Thom (1807–1846), Joseph Edkins (1823–1905), and Herbert Giles

London: Wiley & Putnam.

*Yuanyin zhengkao* 圆音正考 (The study of jiantuan yin). 1835.  
Sanhuaitang.

## 北京官话胜利的序幕：最早出版的北京话拼写法

宋桔

复旦大学，上海

### 摘要

19 世纪英国外交官威妥玛 (Thomas Francis Wade, 1818–1895) 和他的拼音方案 (Wade-Giles System) 因推动了北京音成为官话标准音的进程而备受赞誉。然而，第一个北京音拼音方案其实出自另一位英国外交官——密迪乐 (Thomas Taylor Meadows, 1815–1868)，该方案刊登在他 1847 年出版的《随笔》(Desultory Notes) 中。本文结合 19 世纪北京官话发展的历史背景，通过比较密迪乐与同时期的汉学家（特别是威妥玛）对北京官话和统一汉语拼写系统的态度与处理方式来分析密迪乐方案的内容与价值。研究发现密迪乐不仅在北京音重要性的观念上深刻影响了威妥玛，而且在分类、选词、标记方式等多个方面影响了后者的拼音系统。本文的研究说明，密迪乐的拼写方案作为第一个专门的北京音罗马字转写系统，揭开了北京音获得标准音胜利的序幕。

### 关键词

北京音 威妥玛 密迪乐 北京音拼写系统