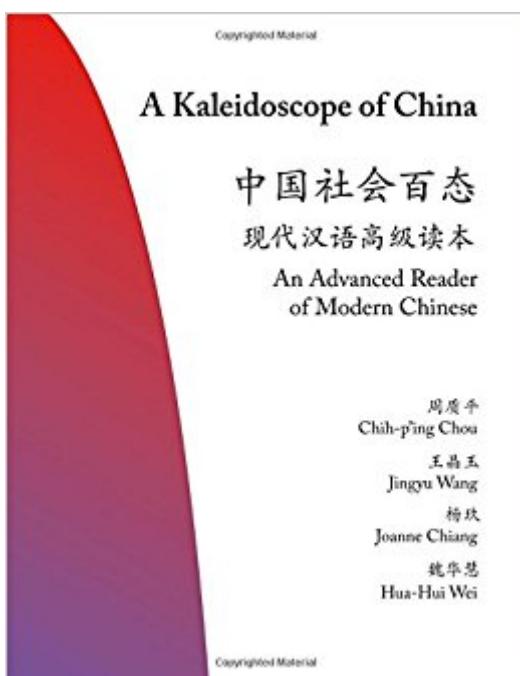


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# A Kaleidoscope Of China: An Advanced Reader Of Modern Chinese (The Princeton Language Program: Modern Chinese)



## **Synopsis**

A Kaleidoscope of China is an advanced Chinese-language textbook that gives students a greater command of Chinese while deepening their understanding of the social and cultural issues facing China today. Geared to the unique needs of students with two or more years of instruction in modern Chinese, this book features a stimulating selection of articles and essays from major newspapers and periodicals in China, offering a revealing look at contemporary Chinese society. Topics include: buying a home versus having a child; consumer exports to America; depression; online dating; cell phones; empty-nest syndrome; fast food; the Virginia Tech massacre; medicine; the 2008 Sichuan earthquake; and global warming. Every selection is accompanied by a vocabulary list, exercises, and grammar notes. No other Chinese-language textbook so effectively helps advanced students expand their language skills while immersing them in what is truly a kaleidoscope of today's China. Teaches advanced Chinese while providing a window into contemporary China. Features selections from actual Chinese newspapers and periodicals. Includes vocabulary lists, exercises, and grammar notes. Ideal for students with two or more years of instruction in modern Chinese.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Chou and his colleagues have once again produced a superb Chinese language textbook. This crack team of seasoned teachers is probably the best in the world when it comes to teaching

Chinese as a second language. A Kaleidoscope of China presents a veritable feast of fascinating essays. Students will not only find it stimulating but, more importantly, will learn well from it."--James M. Hargett, University at Albany, State University of New York"The well-chosen texts in A Kaleidoscope of China cover a wide spectrum of social and cultural issues in contemporary China. The targeted exercises not only help consolidate grammar points, sentence structures, and vocabulary, but also train students other language skills appropriate at this level. This book will be very well received by students and teachers alike."--Baozhang He, College of the Holy Cross

Chih-p`ing Chou is professor of East Asian studies at Princeton University and director of the university's Chinese language and Princeton in Beijing programs. Joanne Chiang is senior lecturer in Chinese at Princeton. Jingyu Wang and Hua-Hui Wei are former lecturers in Chinese at Princeton.

This is an excellent reader, with informative and useful articles on modern day Chinese life. However, an included MP3 version of the textbook would be extremely useful for students who are not already fluent.

The book is in a very good condition.

this is a nice textbook and pretty much one of the only options for advanced study. the only issue i had with it was the length of the articles and how spaced out everything was.. its really easy to miss a back page of a text because it appears the lesson is over, but there is a more on the next page.. this book is alright if you can bare studying chinese at this level.. its quite miserable at times

I used this text as part of an intensive summer program. My program covered approximately 16 of the book's 36 chapters. The texts are mostly drawn from newspapers, very often from the People's Daily and deal with issues that were appearing in the period roughly from 2005 to 2008. One of this book's strengths is the variety of topics covered by the articles. While some topics resurface occasionally, students can expect to be exposed to many different types of vocabulary. Articles that I studied dealt with the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, how cell phones are changing the way that we interact, and rural-urban inequality in China. Studying such a wide range of topics will give students the ability to access different kinds of material later and hopefully the ability to discuss many different types of topics. Since the texts are drawn mostly from mainland Chinese newspapers, there

is nothing so incendiary in content that it would prevent this book from being used in study abroad programs in mainland China or that it might raise eyebrows in Chinese departments in the US. In addition to learning what issues were important to Chinese authorities during that period covered by the texts, students of Chinese using this book will also learn the sort of discourse that is used in the People's Daily. A revelation to me was how both spiritual and material civilization (wenming) could be described as necessary to address China's public toilet problems. My initial impression using the book was that the level is pitched a bit too high for the target learner group, third- or fourth-year Chinese students. Students are presumably making a big jump into formal Chinese around this level. The way this book deals with that is by accompanying each text with a huge list of vocabulary, often numbering around 75 items. Grammar explanations and supplementary exercises are minimal, usually limited to about two pages in total. This can all be seen in 's book preview. It would be nice to have a little more instruction on differences between informal and formal Chinese.

Authors of Chinese textbooks should note that while students may develop a sense for formality in Chinese, the level of formality for each word or structure is not always obvious, especially for students who have had little exposure to Chinese outside the classroom. For the minority of students who insist on studying the complex set of characters, among whom I count myself, each chapter does have a traditional character version of the text. As another reviewer mentioned, there are occasional typos both in the vocabulary lists and in the texts, so it is important to verify that traditional characters are written correctly. I would generally not recommend this book for self study unless the student is already well into the advanced level (e.g. already finished with a Chinese major or the equivalent) and is looking for reading practice. For other students, a very good teacher could make this book interesting.

I want to start by saying this is a very good book for 3rd/4th year Chinese students. (I'll address the 5th year and beyond/independent study students below). The previous reviews are accurate. This book is not friendly to people who study traditional characters. It seems like the traditional versions of the text were simply affixed at the end of each chapter just to avoid criticism. The politicized nature of the book is a bit disconcerting, as it takes a very pro CCP stance (it has to, as it is used in China). If you have already studied All Things Considered, I would be less enthusiastic about this book, as it repeats several topics, grammar points, and vocabulary items. For those of you who are studying on your own or who really want to push the boundaries of your Chinese with some very difficult articles (good for those who want to take HSK level 6 or TOCFL Band C), I highly suggest "Thought and Society" and 《Thoughts on Society》. I would also recommend the book "The Chinese Way of Life" by Wang Gungwu, which is a great introduction to Chinese culture and society.

"The Independent Reader." I believe they have a simplified version should you need it, but as they are Taiwanese books, they are chiefly written in traditional characters. They are somewhat less politicized as the other two mentioned above, though, to their detriment, are rather old. Some of the topics seem outdated and the vocabulary is very 高級 (advanced, written language). These are certainly not for conversation, but for reading comprehension.

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