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A Kaleidoscope of China. An Advanced Reader of Modern Chinese
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In recent years, a huge amount of new publications of teaching materials for the Modern Chinese language has seen daylight, both in China and abroad, both in simplified and in non-simplified character form. This phenomenon can only be acclaimed by the increasing number of Chinese language teachers, teaching an increasingly differentiated students' audience. Especially for teaching Chinese at basic level, the choice of manuals is abundant. Also an increasing amount of crash courses, as well as specialized courses in, e.g., Business Chinese is available on the market. In comparison, the number of handbooks that bridge the gap between a basic knowledge and an advanced knowledge and that are suited for a more general audience with a broad interest in Chinese culture and society, is relatively small. It is in this section that we have to welcome the present publication 'A Kaleidoscope of China,' a handbook that follows after the 2006 publication of 'Anything Goes,' equally with Princeton University Press.

A Kaleidoscope of China is compiled by Chinese language teachers of the Department of East Asian Studies at Princeton University, and thus builds on an extensive experience with language teaching to university students at different levels. In 36 lessons, a kaleidoscopic view of China is presented, using edited texts, which are - with a few exceptions - selected from major Chinese newspapers (Renmin Ribao, Beijing Qingnian Bao, Cankao Xiaoxi, Aomen Ribao, Dongfang Xin Bao) from the period 2002-2008. Despite their being selected from newspapers, the topics that are selected are such that they extend beyond a mere short term value, and remain valuable as voices and witnesses of the wide range of issues determining contemporary China: issues that regard the contemporary Chinese youth, environmental issues, issues relating to the position of China in the globalized world, etc.

All texts are accompanied by a vocabulary list, with an average of ca. 100 words and expressions. The use of this vocabulary and these expressions is illustrated with further examples. The book does not provide in-depth grammatical analysis. As is clear of the large amount of new words and expressions, it primarily focuses on reading comprehension. Each lesson is complemented by vocabulary exercises, and suggestions for conversation and composition exercises complete each lesson. At the end of the book, all vocabulary is listed in two indexes, one according to pinyin order, and one according to the English translation of the vocabulary.

While basically making use of simplified characters, the vocabulary lists also
give the non-simplified forms of the characters, and the complete texts are also offered in non-simplified character form. This helps students to also become familiar with that part of the Chinese world that uses non-simplified characters and to also improve their reading skills in texts in non-simplified characters.

The book is suited for students who have studied - depending on the program - two or three years of Modern Chinese. Both in its choice of topics and in its arrangement of the material, this book is a valuable tool to bridge the gap for students who have achieved a basic command of Chinese and who are now focused on achieving advanced levels of reading comprehension, especially for university students. Extensive experience in Chinese pedagogy has taught us that it is this gap that is especially difficult to overcome. In its scope and arrangement, this book definitely will be a welcome tool for many language teachers.

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