

Mandarin Dialect Islands in Jintarn County, Jiangsu, China

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Abstract

Two quite different local dialects are spoken in present day Jintarn: the Old Jintarn dialect and what is locally identified as Jiangbeeihuah. This results from a large migration of peasants from north of the Yangtze into Jintarn and its immediate environs in the wake of the Taypyng Rebellion (1851-1864) during the mid-19th century. These immigrants settled in Jintarn county following a protracted siege of the city by the Taypyng armies. Jiangbeeihuah, also called “New Jintarnhuah”, is the dialect spoken by the descendants of these 19th century immigrants, while Old Jintarn is the dialect spoken by those whose ancestry traces back to the generations that lived in Jintarn prior to the Taypyng Rebellion.

Jiangbeeihuah is markedly different from the older surrounding dialects. It is indisputably Mandarin, basically a variety of the southernmost type of Jiang-Hwai Mandarin found in the Nantong-Tongtay region of Jiangsu, just north of the Yangtze River. New Jintarn can be identified as affiliated with the Jiang-Hwai Mandarin dialects of southeast and central Jiangsu because its correspondents to Wu syllables that normally have murmured obstruents are aspirated in all tones:

<i>Old Jintarn</i>	<i>New Jintarn</i>	<i>Standard Chinese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
Tsəŋ ³¹	Ts'ən ¹³	<i>Chern</i>	[the surname 陈]
tsuɔ ³¹	ts'a ³⁵	<i>char</i>	“tea”
za ¹³ (ho ⁵³)	ts'ɛ ³⁵ (hu ²¹³)	<i>chair(huoo)</i>	“firewood”
pɔ ¹³	p'ɔ ⁵³	<i>baw</i>	“to embrace”
ton ¹³	t'on ⁵³	<i>donq</i>	“cave, hole”
tɛ ¹³ (tɛ ³¹)	t'ɛ ⁵³ (tsl ¹)	<i>day(.tz)</i>	“bag, pocket”
tæ ¹³	t'æ ⁿ⁵³	<i>dann</i>	“tasteless, insipid”
piŋ ¹³	p'in ⁵³	<i>binq</i>	“to be sick”

Table 1: *Aspirated initials in New Jintarn*

The present paper discusses the distribution of the two types of Jintarn dialect in detail and examine their geographic range using linguistic maps displaying data from the region's dialects gathered in recent fieldwork.

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