REVIEWS

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Important achievements in Chinese studies of Hungary

Huba BARTOS–Imre HAMAR 2017. *Kínai–magyar szótár* [Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary]. 包甫博–郝清新: 汉匈词典. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, ELTE Konfuciusz Intézet. 2097 pp.
Huba BARTOS–Imre HAMAR–Melinda PAP 2024. *Magyar–kínai szótár* [Hungarian–Chinese Dictionary]. 包甫博–郝清新–梅林达: 匈汉词典. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, ELTE Konfuciusz Intézet. 2155 pp.

The year 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Hungarian–Chinese diplomatic relations, while in the previous year, the Chinese Department of Eötvös Loránd University celebrated its 100th anniversary, marking a century of Chinese language and culture education in Hungary. These two milestones are closely connected: Hungarian Chinese speakers and experts play a vital role in fostering strong diplomatic relations, while robust diplomatic ties can, in turn, stimulate greater interest in Chinese language and culture. Over the years, the Chinese Department of Eötvös Loránd University has made significant contributions to the development of Chinese studies in Hungary—not only by training Chinese speakers and experts but also by publishing key teaching materials and producing important research across various fields of Chinese studies. Furthermore, the department, on many occasions, has served as a bridge between the two nations by organising international conferences and important academic meetings. One of the institution's latest achievements came in 2024 with the publication of new Chinese–Hungarian and Hungarian–Chinese dictionaries. This publication is not only a departmental success but also a major advancement in Chinese studies in Hungary, as these dictionaries support language learners, translators, and anyone seeking to navigate and connect the two languages and cultures in their daily work and life.

The first Chinese–Hungarian and Hungarian–Chinese dictionaries to be published, were edited by Huba Bartos, PhD, and Imre Hamar, DSc. The first edition of the dictionaries was published in 1998, followed by a second edition in 2001 and a third edition in 2013. The editors-in-chief, Huba Bartos, PhD, and Imre Hamar, DSc, are prominent scholars in the field of Hungarian sinology.

Huba Bartos is the deputy director-general of the Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and an associate professor at the Department of Chinese Studies at Eötvös Loránd University. Imre Hamar is vice-rector for international affairs at Eötvös Loránd University, head of the Department of Chinese Studies and the Confucius Institute, and the director of the Institute of East Asian Studies.

The work on the new, two-volume *Kínai–magyar szótár* [Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary] was started in 2014 with the support of the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (Hanban) and the Hungarian State. Containing 6,090 first-level headwords and some 74,000 linked compound headwords, it is the largest Chinese–Hungarian dictionary ever published. The commemorative copies were handed over to Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (李克强) and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at a ceremony in November 2017 during the 16+1 Summit in Budapest. The dictionary is commercially available since the end of 2018.

In parallel with the *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* project, work began on its counterpart, the *Magyar–kínai szótár* [Hungarian–Chinese Dictionary], which contains 57,000 headwords. It was published 2024, with Melinda Pap, PhD, assistant professor at Eötvös Loránd University, joining the editors-in-chief. Her main research area is Chinese Buddhism, and she teaches both undergraduate and PhD courses at the Department of Chinese Studies, where she has been working since 2008. She recently joined the ELTE Roman World and the Far East Research Group. In addition to the editors-in-chief, one should not forget the many other sinologists who have contributed to the dictionaries with their excellent work.

By 'Chinese', the editors of the dictionary mean the modern Chinese vernacular, which is based on Mandarin dialects, mainly the Beijing dialect. In mainland China, it is referred to as *putonghua* 普通话, while in Taiwan the term used is *guoyu* 國語. As a modern Chinese dictionary, its content is largely based on the vocabulary of modern vernacular and literary language. However, the authors also considered *putonghua*'s historical antecedents (*guanhua* 官话), the classical written language (*wenyan* 文言 or *guwen* 古文), the literary language derived from the language of traditional drama and prose (*baihua* 白话), dialect-specific expressions, and set phrases that usually consist of four characters (*chengyu* 成语). The dictionaries mainly apply the simplified characters (*jiantizi* 简体字) used in the People's Republic of China, but the *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* also includes characters' traditional versions (*fantizi* 繁体字) in brackets, if the latter differs from the simplified form.

The vocabulary is not only diverse but also very up to date, with words of recent origin and culture-specific words. The *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* is based on the glossaries of the most standard monolingual and bilingual diction-

aries, such as *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary* (John Defrancis ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (现代汉语词典 Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2013), *Pleco* (electronic dictionary, https://www.pleco.com/), and *A Modern Chinese–English Dictionary* (现代汉英词典 Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2014). The *Hungarian–Chinese Dictionary* is based on the *Hungarian–German Dictionary* (eds. Előd Halász–Csaba Földes–Pál Uzonyi) published in 2002 and the *Hungarian–Russian Dictionary* (eds. László Gáldi–Pál Uzonyi) published by Akadémiai Kiadó in 2013. For both language pairs, the carefully selected examples accompanying the articles are remarkable, as they help to give the words a more precise meaning in context for the user.

Due to the nature of the Chinese writing system, the ability to use a printed Chinese dictionary can almost be considered a special competence in itself that a language learner must acquire separately. However, the *Chinese–Hungarian Dictionary* also describes in detail the process of looking up characters. Printed Chinese dictionaries can be very helpful after one has a bit of practice, but for a new, Western user, the process of finding the characters can be difficult. Professional language users may still find themselves in jobs and situations where the use of a printed dictionary is indispensable but online dictionaries are often considered to be more user-friendly by Chinese learners. To meet the needs of the widest possible range of Chinese language users, an online version of the dictionaries is also available.[1]

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[1] www.szotar.net.