



JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of ADVANCED
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The Hopkins China Forum and



The Royal Asiatic Society China

cordially invite you to:

China's Search for a Common Language: The Past and Future of Putonghua

David Moser

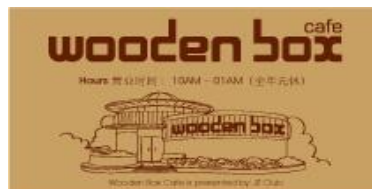
Associate Dean, Yenching Academy of Peking University

with special thanks to:



Monday, February 5th, 2018

19:00pm – 20:15 pm



9 Qinghai Lu (just to the South of Nanjing West Road)
青海路 9 号, 近南京西路, 地铁二号线南京西路站

18:45 – Doors Open
19:00 – Lecture
19:45 – Q&A
20:15 – Mixer/Live Jazz

Please RSVP to Frank Tsai of Hopkins China Forum at editor@shanghai-review.org.

Throughout the world, hundreds of millions of people, Chinese and foreign, are learning a version of Chinese called Putonghua. Few students of this language are aware that the Chinese they are learning is not the naturally existing “language of the Chinese people” – for there never was such a thing – but is actually an artificially constructed hybrid form, a linguistic patchwork of compromises based upon many thorny linguistic, historical and political factors. Since the turn of the twentieth century a host of linguists and political leaders, from the radical intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement, to leaders such as Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, all fought linguistic wars to establish a national language for a linguistically fractured China. In the process, many radical proposals were put forth, such as abolishing the Chinese language itself and replacing it with Esperanto, and eradicating the Chinese characters in favor of an alphabetic script. This talk traces the story of China’s language unification project, the current language policy in China, and the pedagogical issues of teaching Chinese language and script in the 21st century era of cyberspace and the Internet.

[David Moser](#) has been based in Beijing for over 25 years, active in academic and media circles. Moser was a visiting scholar at Peking University in 1987-89, and a visiting professor for five years at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, where he taught courses in Translation Theory and Psycholinguistics. He is currently Associate Dean of the Yenching Academy at Peking University. He appears often on BBC radio as a commentator on the daily program Business Matters, and is also a frequent China analyst on Al Jazeera television. Professor Moser has worked at China Central Television (CCTV) in Beijing as a program advisor, translator, and host, and continues to be active on Chinese television as a commentator in both Chinese and English on news shows such as CCTV Dialogue and World Insight. Moser is author of [A Billion Voices: China’s Search for a Common Language](#) (2016) published by Penguin, and is also a co-host of the [Sinica Podcast](#), an influential China current affairs podcast widely listened to by journalists and China watchers throughout the world. He holds a Master’s and a Ph.D. in Chinese Studies from the University of Michigan, with a major in Chinese Linguistics and Philosophy.

[Hopkins China Forum](#) events are organized under the auspices of The Johns Hopkins University and its alumni associations worldwide. For more information, please contact Frank Tsai of the Hopkins Club of Shanghai at editor@shanghai-review.org.