

You are cordially invited to attend a seminar on:

*Phonetic Characteristics
of the Apical Sounds in
Standard Chinese*

By

Professor Eric Zee

City of University of Hong Kong

Date: Tuesday, 15 September 09

Time: 10.30am to 12.00pm

Venue: HSS Seminar Room 3 (HSS-B1-10)



Abstract

'Apical sounds' is a cover term used by dialectologists in China to refer to apical vowels and apical consonants. Karlgren (1915-1926) distinguished four types of apical vowels found in different Chinese dialects, and found that their distribution is uneven amongst the Northern as opposed to Southern dialects. According to Karlgren, the apical vowels are syllabic apical alveolar approximants, functioning as syllable nuclei. In this talk, data will be presented from four native speakers in the form of articulographic records. Palatographic and linguographic data will also be presented from one speaker showing that the so-called retroflex sibilants (Chao, 1948) do not have the underside of the tongue making contact on the anterior part of the hard palate, which make them look very different from 'true' reflex sounds such as those found in Hindi (Ladefoged and Maddieson, 1969). Finally, the articulatory and acoustic characteristics of the apical sounds of Standard Chinese will be discussed in terms of articulatory strategies.

About the Speaker

Dr. Eric Zee did his PhD in experimental phonetics at the Department of Linguistics, UCLA, under the supervision of the famous phonetician Peter Ladefoged. For many years, Professor Zee has taught Phonetics and Experimental Phonetics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the City University of Hong Kong. His main research interests are in the phonetic study of Chinese dialects, explanations for sound change in Chinese, and more recently typology of sounds in Chinese. He has carried out research on Beijing Mandarin, Hong Kong Cantonese, Shanghai, and Meixian Hakka. He has recently completed a study of the phonetic typologies of the vowels, consonant and tones in Chinese, based on the sound systems of a large number of dialects of the ten dialect families. Currently he is engaged in testing the acoustic vowel dispersion theory (Liljencrants and Lindblom, 1972) using data on Chinese vowel systems of different sizes and exploring the acoustic relativity of male and female vowels in these vowel systems. Professor Zee is a member of the International Phonetic Association and the Phonetic Association of China.

All are welcome.