Expediting the Mastering of Chinese
A STUDY OF RECITATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF MANDARIN CHINESE

Alan W Abrams | Independent Chinese Language Studies III | 2018/12/17
When reflecting on how I started engaging in and learning Mandarin Chinese in 2002, I always think of the similarities to the way infants learn language. Their process begins akin to being submerged underwater, where sounds are heard without any comprehension. Despite this lack of understanding, just by virtue of being in the environment, there is an inseparable connection to it. Added to the connection is the child’s natural living inclination to absorb, learn and imitate. Eventually the process culminates in the learning of and articulation of their first words which really occurs largely by them just being immersed in the environment they live in.

Certainly, another important part of their learning to speak is the repetition of certain words spoken by parents and others in close proximity. It is the repetition heard which transforms itself into the eventual imitation. From then on out it is a matter of what the child is exposed to that determines the language it acquires, and it is repetition and imitation which are always very much a part of the increasing acquisition of language throughout their growth.

Within this paper is a study of recitation specifically for the purpose of Mandarin Chinese language acquisition. Recitation, as studied and practiced herein, is the regular voiced repetition of selected readings for an extended period. The practice of recitation that will be examined will last for only a little over a month, though this amount of time should give a good idea as to what could be done for a much longer time.

My motivating and guiding premise is that recitation is a dynamic and efficient method that can expedite language acquisition. Its application simultaneously touches so many skills and parts of language, including pronunciation, intonation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, reading comprehension and even listening. It expeditiously immerses the learner in the environment of language and does so with relative ease. That ease arises from its simplicity which in turn helps to create sustainability of study and practice, something so important for the lengthy learning venture that learning a language is.

Therefore, this work is to discover learning outcomes and any evidence of furthering language study in general through regular recitation practice. Prior to describing the actual learning outcomes, a description of the method of approach to the study will be given followed by an introduction to the selected texts. How much time, and how that time within the month was spent and used for this study, will be shown followed by a list of desired results. Those desired results will then be contrasted with the learning outcomes that actually resulted followed by how this work aided my own language study and some recommendations for future students. Along the way there will be some introductions, explanations and insights into the Chinese language.
This method of language learning might seem antiquated to some, and due to this antiquity somehow making it backward and of no value to learners in modern times. My own understanding and experience tell me that is far from the case. Its ease and simplicity are overlooked for high-tech and more complex methods, yet a major reason for the development of these increasingly technological and sophisticated methods is not their absolutely beneficial effect upon the language learning process but so often a desperate (or even financially beneficial) solution to the problem of misalignment of curriculum and course with students need, capability and interest. Constantly accumulated empirical evidence shows me that recitation holds far greater value in the process of language acquisition than is modernly considered, and this work is an effort to shed more light on its value.
Figure 1 Guan Gong, or Lord Guan, a general during the Eastern Han dynasty, and later deified following his death. Painted here reading a classic, even today he is worshipped not only in Chinese folk religion, but also in Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese Buddhism who regard him as a protector of their teachings.
The Approach to the Study

Recitation’s power to enhance language acquisition is posited to primarily lie in its repetitive nature. With that in mind a recitation session was undertaken at least once a day, 30 minutes in length, 5-6 days a week. There were a few days where two full sessions were done in one day, the second being done in the afternoon. Additionally, and at about a rate of 2-4 sessions per week, a recitation of supplemental reading related to the originally recited texts was done.

Vocabulary study was done first and foremost through the making of a handwritten list. Via primarily mdbg.net, as well as the use of a hardbacked dictionary of classical Chinese, I compiled my vocabulary lists based on unknown Chinese characters and words drawn from my selected texts. Reviewing of the lists, with the aim of complete memorization, was followed by the creating of example sentences for each new vocabulary word. The method of reviewing vocabulary lists, the method of reviewing and reciting example sentences and the method of combining the first two were all used in alternation and as additional methods of acquiring vocabulary to the main recitation method.

During sentence creation I made purposeful effort to create sentences unrelated to the original text that also contained modern grammar structures. The reasoning being that I wanted to also mold some of my own language usages closer to modern usages for sake of clarity of expression with others. Admittedly, reciting older classical texts does cleave one’s common language usages from popular usages.

Finally, with all of the above set up, it was time for the study to take on the form of practice, and the form in which recitation found prominence within China’s major philosophical systems. This was especially so for Confucianism, whose education system made its way into imperial and mainstream education of
ancient China utilizing very much the practice of recitation, particularly for early and elementary education. Theoretically, it was upon this foundation of recitation that not only were terms, concepts and principles to be employed, but by virtue of the repetition’s deep impression of content upon the learning mind great insight into fields of study, and spiritually speaking, even mystical insight into philosophical principles, could be had. This all was dependent and contingent upon practice.

Though a degree of philosophical insight was had for myself during this process, it is not of consequence for the pure learner of the Chinese language. What is being posited in this study is that for a language learner, an expeditious, efficient and sustainable process of language acquisition based foundationally upon recitation can be attained. In the following sections, along with other discoveries found during the month, evidence of, or lack thereof, toward the expediting and sustainability of language acquisition will be logged.

In summary, the basic outline of my approach to this study is as follows:

- Creation of vocabulary lists
- Recitation of original texts
- Review of vocabulary
- Creation of example sentences
- Recitation of example sentences
- Recitation of supplemental readings related to original texts
The Selected Texts

For this study of recitation and its effects upon the language acquisition process I chose texts decidedly possessing a spiritual, philosophical and moral bent. This is due to my own interest in these subjects as well as my own desire to further my study-practice of Chinese philosophy that I undertake for personal self-cultivation and improvement. These texts being in Chinese made them adequate for this language-focused study on Mandarin Chinese learning.

Although traditionally in ancient China, and in its mainstream pedagogic systems, texts on these subjects were used, purely for the sake of language acquisition texts of other subjects are fine for use. Actually, I am increasingly inclined to suggest that for nearly any course subject, a text or passage of the course’s foundational principles, and any other information deemed pertinent to the subject, can be crafted for recitation which will simultaneously act as fundamental support and constant impresser of course content that is studied in other ways.

Now to the texts chosen for this study. As noted above, the texts were chosen due to personal interest, and additionally, for brevity. Brevity was important as it allowed study of numerous texts and thus a wider range of subject matter. It also allowed me to complete a recitation session in about 30 minutes. This was important because for the sake of sustainability of study and practice of the texts, as well as for the maintaining of interest in them along with the long-term nature of study and practice required for this language, brevity was key. The texts included were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Chinese Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Eight Great Awakenings Sutra</td>
<td>A concise summary of eight fundamental and core practices and insights of Mahayana Buddhism.</td>
<td>佛说八大人觉经 (fo shuo ba da ren jue jing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wen Chang Di Jun’s Treatise on the Discipline of Proper Sexual Conduct</td>
<td>A virtue text attributed to the Chinese god of literature on the trappings of sexual misconduct and importance of proper sexuality.</td>
<td>文昌帝君戒淫文 (wen chang di jun jie yin wen)</td>
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<td>3. Xin Yao Fa Men</td>
<td>A seminal text of the Chinese Huayan Buddhist sect. It was written by Master Cheng Guan who in the Tang dynasty lived to be 102 years old during which he was given the title of Master Teacher by seven consecutive emperors, all of whom he personally advised.</td>
<td>心要法门 (xin yao fa men)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Classic of Purity and Quietude</td>
<td>A Daoist classic on the Dao and fundamental nature of humanity. It’s content, brevity, form and ease of memorization parallels Buddhism’s <em>Heart Sutra</em>.</td>
<td>太上清静经 (tai shang qing jing jing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Sutra on the Ten Wholesome Ways of Action—Adapted Version</td>
<td>The adapted version of this Buddhist text draws out the most salient points of the text which make up the virtuous foundation of all Buddhist study and practice.</td>
<td>佛说十善业道经 经要 (fo shuo shi shan ye dao jing jie yao)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time Spent on Recitation Study and Practice

A pure text recitation session (R) was undertaken at least once a day, 30 minutes in length, 5-6 days a week usually in the early morning. There were a few days where two full sessions were done in one day, the second being done in the afternoon. Additionally, vocabulary study (V) with example sentence recitation was supplemented during other parts of the day depending on my schedule, and usually occurred in the afternoon for a minimum of 20 minutes to as much as 60 minutes per study session. At about a rate of 2-4 sessions per week, starting in the second week of the study, a vocabulary study, recitation and reading of supplemental material (VR) related to the originally recited texts was done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Used</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VR</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 Hours 20 Minutes</td>
<td>11 hours 0 Minutes</td>
<td>2 Hour 0 Minutes</td>
<td>22 Hours 20 Minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Desired Learning Outcomes and Achievements

Currently, my own empirical evidence of the efficacy of recitation for language learning and acquisition is much less than the evidence I have for the recitation of spiritual/philosophical texts for the betterment of self-cultivation. During my previous immersions into recitation for the sake of spiritual study and practice I did notice along the way that my Chinese speaking, fluency in particular, had gone up to a new level. My pronunciation had also received a much-needed refresher, allowing it to recover a higher prior level, since levels amongst the language skills are in constant flux.

Those previous immersions in recitation also gave a boost of confidence when speaking. Although the arising of this confidence had its explanation in the cycle of positive reinforcement that comes with seeing other skills improve, it also had its explanation in the simultaneously occurring self-development due to the texts recited. Suffice to say, with regards the improvement of language skills, I had enough to go on to then aim for the same, and more, achievements this time around. The outcomes and achievements looked for were:

- Memorization of all new vocabulary
- Memorization of parts of recited texts
- Improved pronunciation when speaking fast specifically
- Increased speaking fluency
- Improved articulation
- Increased language learning efficiency
- Increased Immersion in the language environment
- Increased interest in linguistic, cultural, philosophical and spiritual study
- Continued consistent interest in philosophical-spiritual study and practice
- Discovery of more Chinese characters containing deeper spiritual meanings
The Profundity of Chinese Characters

My path down the road of Chinese language learning has led up to spirituality so many times. In what used to be so uncanny, but is no longer any surprise, I found through teachers, friends and other sources that the meanings of many Chinese characters entailed profundity related to the human mind, health, emotions, morality, and philosophical and spiritual truth. In fact, the characters appear to me more and more like keys or passwords into discovering those things beyond merely being a means of common communication. In the next section, the actual learning outcomes and achievements will be displayed with an additional taste of the spiritual world of Chinese characters.

Figure 2 Character for the cosmic Dao, also known as the Great Way, path, road, method. The top right character is "head," with the stroke moving from the left side to right and below means "walking." The entire character symbolizes wherever the head is going, it best be following the Cosmic Dao!
Learning Outcomes Achieved

In the relatively short amount of time of this study there were quite a few learning outcomes. Those outcomes revolved notably around memorization, acquiring of vocabulary outside of the selected texts, spontaneous review of vocabulary related to the texts, discovery of Chinese characters with implied spiritual meanings, usage of learned vocabulary in daily conversation and more.

Without taking any standardized tests to possibly quantify an actual raise in my language level or bettering of my skills, it can only be said with assurance that in this short amount of time my level did not decline as can happen sometimes, even when studying. Via raised awareness of learning outcomes and personal areas in need of improvement, coupled with focused effort on those outcomes and needs and by virtue of setting the conditions for improvement through consistent study and practice, suggest a natural enhancement and improvement to my language did occur.

The learning outcomes explicitly noted can be seen below:

- I gave myself a final test of the mix of single character and two-character words, a total of 133 words. The test consisted of looking simply at the English meaning and then guessing the Chinese character, pronouncing it and writing it in Chinese. The results were that 133 of the words meanings were memorized and pronounced correctly, while 127 words were written correctly (or 6 writing mistakes).

- *The Classic of Purity and Quietude*, about 450 characters long, was memorized completely. On a side note, I had had the first 40 characters memorized before this study.

- I experienced a moderate though substantial reinvigoration of interest in solely studying language for language’s sake. As usually much of what I study of the language is a byproduct of studying a subject of interest. I
found my curiosity in exploring new words was activated as they came up in my daily life outside of recitation and study time.

New Words from Daily Life

One example of a new word learned in daily life was “materialism,” (唯物主义). After learning this word, I discovered that in the past I had been describing the meaning rather than directly saying it.

Another example was “decent” (体面), a word that surprised me because although the two characters that make up the word are very common, I have known them for years and their meaning together very simple, I had not seen or heard this word before. Normally I would not have inquired further with the people I was with at the time, but due to this study, the recitation practice and vocabulary study, I was compelled to inquire and learn.

− While reviewing photos on my cell phone of my written vocabulary lists, I was reciting example sentences using new vocabulary. Though the sentences were topically unrelated to the original text, when reviewing the word “to embroider” (绣), one phrase from the original text that contained the word, along with the following phrase that made up an entire sentence, all naturally arose in my mind. At that time, early in the study, the complete meaning of the sentence using “to embroider” was not fully understood yet, as the text is classical Chinese, but the vocabulary word was understood and I was able to recite the full sentence clearly and fluently from memory. That eventually aided my comprehension of the sentence.

− About mid-way through the study I decided I wanted to speed up my Chinese speaking a bit as I found it lagging at times, which made the listeners mind wander. So, I stepped up the speed of the recitations which in turn, with an added touch of awareness while speaking, sped up my conversational speaking.

− As originally desired, I discovered more Chinese characters with an implied spiritual meaning. The first two characters given as examples directly below don’t come from the selected texts, but came about due to this recitation study, its practice and its ability to stimulate interest and
intrigue into exploring language, and in this case, Chinese characters, further. Here are two examples:

1. 忍, "to endure." This character, which caught my eye on the homepage of zhongwen.com, is the combination of the characters for “sharp blade” and “heart, mind.” Though this character explored is not in any of the recited texts, due to my own interest and its connection to the content of the text *Eight Great Awakenings Sutra*, I explored the character more. Once I learned and internalized the character’s parts and their meanings a connection was made in my mind and yet another example of the spiritual wisdom of Chinese characters was revealed.

   Within Mahayana Buddhism there is the concept and practice of the path of the Bodhisattva. It is a spiritual practice of a Buddhist practitioner who lives and practices spiritually to aid other human and sentient beings in the alleviation of their suffering and the realizing of humanity’s true nature (enlightenment) and purpose in life. Within this practice are six parts and practices called the Six Paramitas. One of those parts, which uses the character in the image below in its name, is called the practice of *tolerance*, and hence the connection to the meaning of “to endure.”

   Figure 3 ren, to endure.

   Tolerance in this sense is characterized by understanding that all events that happen to oneself are karmic, or in other words, what goes around comes around. From the point of view of the practice of tolerance is that karmically good and bad events of success and harm both are tools that can erode the ego, a prime cause of pain and suffering. Looking back at the character, the top character represents
“blades” and “barbs,” such as insult and harm which attack the “heart, mind” are part and parcel of karmic life and the practice of tolerance. The lesson, and thus the practice, is that the best way to deal with the “sharp blades” of life is to stay the reactions of anger and violence, swallow one’s pride and endure the insults as they erode the ego until no one is left to be insulted.

2. 忠, “honest, devoted, loyal.” This character is the combination of the two characters for “center, middle” on top, and below, “heart, mind.” Via a supplemental reading of a commentary on the Eight Great Awakenings Sutra, the writer, a Chinese Buddhist teacher, explained the meaning of this character. He pointed to a specific relationship between “honest, devoted, loyal” and the most upright and centered part of the mind, or the fundamental nature of humanity. Making much sense to me, this was a new way of looking at this character as usually its meaning is solely applied to external human relationships, and specifically within the Confucianist tradition, between the relations of rulers-ministers, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger brother, friend-friend. Yet “honesty, devotion, loyalty” in these relationships are basically dependent upon an internal “honest, devoted, loyal” relationship between the individual’s mind and humanity’s fundamental nature. If that is done than the external expression of the character’s meaning takes place readily in external relations.

3. 慢, “profligate, depraved, extravagant.” This character is the combination of the radical (part of the character) for “mind, heart,” and the character for “to change; change; easy.” Reviewing this word it occurred to me that a mind that is under the constant change of the whims of desire and greed is much like a “profligate, depraved, extravagant” persons mind. This character is symbolizing a state of mentality and emotionality that is contrary to the calm mind concentrated upon the “unwavering and unchanging” Mean (from the Confucian classic Doctrine of the Mean), or, the fundamental nature of humanity.

- Use of new vocabulary in conversation in daily life. While talking with my wife using voice messaging on a social networking app, I felt compelled to use “to view” (鉴) from my vocabulary list. With a quick lookup of how to use the word in a sentence I learned, using said character and another character in a new grammatical form, how to use “in light of,” and promptly used it.
How the Work Helped me to Further my Language Study

As stated above, my own language acquisition prior to doing this study had been largely a byproduct of study of personal interests that happened to be in the Chinese language. Therefore, this study brought language into a primary focus which helped me to be more engaged with and active within my language environment purely for the sake of the language. Whereas normal habits had become inclined towards not engaging in new words that came up in life, through this month of work I was more aware of new words and active in the pursuit of their meanings, either through conversation with others or simple dictionary look-ups on my own. This of course increased my vocabulary as well as immersion within the language environment.

- While cooking one day two words recited in the Sutra of Purity and Quietude naturally came to mind. Outside of the study environment, “to lead along (by the nose)” (牵) and “to dispel, send out” (遣) ran through my mind while engaging in a daily activity.

The above example is a manifestation of how recitation inspires further review and exploration of language, and notably in a natural and spontaneous manner. Originally, according to traditional Chinese education theory, one function of recitation is to sow seeds of wisdom, virtue and knowledge into the subconscious mind of the learner. What is intended to happen is that in the midst of living life the sown seeds of content will sprout naturally and spontaneously into the conscious mind imparting important personal understanding as well as deep and significant insight to the learner. Specifically, with regards language, by sowing seeds of, for example, new vocabulary, and impressing vocabulary deeper and deeper into the mind through recitation’s repetition, the seeds are to sprout forth into further exploration and a subsequent deeper impression of the vocabulary, all of which works toward greater and greater mastery.

Recitation provided substantially increased focus and engagement in language study, yet for success in the long-term process of acquiring a language toward mastery, focus and engagement require sustainability. Three attributes that arose from recitation practice and greatly established sustainability of focus and engagement in study and practice, were momentum, cohesion and creativity.
Momentum

- Whereas my schedule on certain days of the week was more flexible, which allowed me ample time for consistent recitation, vocabulary review, supplemental reading as well as writing of this paper, there were other days that of course didn’t allow for that. For those days, along with days those that found me tired or unmotivated, I at least engaged in a recitation session. Therefore, through recitation I was able to maintain the momentum of all methods and practices being used that would otherwise be compromised on busy or tired days.

Cohesion

- With regard recitation producing cohesion, it specifically relates to cohesion of the parts, and the practice, of the language. With so many parts of language being engaged and practiced via recitation, cohesion of those parts is easily maintained. Recitation acts as a base and hub from which pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency and more are all practiced at once. Just as speaking is a simultaneous expression and practice of all those parts, recitation also fits the bill for establishing, exercising and mastering that cohesion. On another level, recitation creates cohesion of practice, helping to avoid taking steps backward in practice in the face of a busy schedule, tiredness, lack of motivation or any other of life’s challenges.

Creativity

- I was inspired to find and employ audio versions of the text Eight Great Awakenings Sutra, Sutra of Purity and Quietude and The Sutra on the Ten Wholesome Ways of Action—Adapted Version thereby further developing an immersive language environment. These audios were played during recitation sessions but also played in the background while taking

Figure 4 I used a green calligraphic marker with a brush tip for vocabulary review as a creative kinesthetic learning aid.
Care of things around the house, while writing this paper and even when showering.

- Part of my process of memorizing The Sutra of Purity and Quietude was reciting it while walking to and from work, especially on a short and winding park path. Taking the recitation out of the usual environment invigorated the practice as well as produced another much-needed benefit, and a fourth attribute, of sustainable practice.

This fourth attribute needed for sustainability which recitation provided was increased calmness and clarity of mind. Though this is not directly related to language, it is related to learning in general, as it is actually a viable attribute for focus in the short-term, and especially, in the long-term effort of language learning.

- Daily multiple recitations of The Sutra of Purity and Quietude aided in calming my mind amidst the ups and downs of daily life. The quieting and calming of mind in turn aided focus which of course then helped my language study. Serendipitously, in my own teaching in China this year, I have been teaching a large number of very under-motivated students. This has led to frustration on my part, and unfortunately due to my own emotional habits, quite a bit of anger. As the frustration has knocked me “off-balance” and “muddied” my mind a few times, one thing that has been a great aid has been the recitation of this text. (On a side note, a possible future experiment would be to recite another non-spiritual/philosophical text to see if it had the same effect, for the said calming-effect could be connected directly to the spiritual aspect of the text. I surmise that if one can develop a greater degree of focus through reciting then other texts might work in this way too, at least partially).
Recommendations for Future Students of the Chinese Language

Along with strong motivation and eagerness to learn, as well as a thick-skin to weather inevitable language mistakes that are made during the process, environment is of course key. Immersion in an environment where Chinese is solely, or mostly, used will propel the learning process along at a crisp pace that fosters a beneficial-cycle of reward. If going to China is not an option then exploration of local Chinese culture is an option if available. One thing to keep in mind is if, for example, a learner goes to a Chinese cultural festival, like a lion dance and parade, or to a night market etc., it’s best to follow one’s own interest rather than just set sights on meeting someone to practice Chinese with. Myself, and many other expats I have known in China, have had many empty conversations that did not establish a sustainable relationship because the motivation was only to practice language. If communication with someone can be based on a mutually intriguing topic or interest, then the ground can be laid for a relationship that can really help long-term language practice while boosting knowledge of the culture immensely.

If a learner does not have access to such an environment then the creation of one is a must. Though it was possible before, it is even more possible with today’s technology. Software programs, apps, websites, online forums, social networking, media, entertainment and global communication services can all help to create a fairly immersive environment. Depending on one’s motivation and time, a very immersive environment can be created with all of these tools at hand.

As for suggestions for what readings to select, I am always in favor of the classics. Though it is not practical for those who are absolutely not interested nor for the many that are pressed for time. Still, with the right selection of a classic, or even one of the adapted texts for educating children, placing it at the foundation of the learning process from which all kinds of language and culture can be taught and learned in a short time.

One of my favorites is the Confucian classic Great Learning and a Confucian early education text The Three Character Primer. Both are easy to memorize, have great lessons on humanity, morality, history and culture. Taught by the right person a learner can learn a ton about themselves, the language, history and culture of China. At the end of the day, doing recitation from a text, magazine article, a short chapter of a book etc., which falls in line with the learner’s
interest, even if it is very difficult, can be the base for, and the thread through, the language learning process.

Specifically, with regard recitation for improvement of Chinese language, I recommend this wholeheartedly for a few reasons. It is of no coincidence that for thousands of years in East Asia’s religious and philosophical systems they have promoted and used recitation for the benefit of their learners and practitioners. If one can get past the erroneous idea that just because something is old it is worthy of neglect (an approach unfortunately so many Chinese apply with regards their ancient culture) and see the educational value, the fact that recitation was a major part of ancient China’s traditional education is also of no coincidence.

Many of the reasons for its aid to language learning and education, and even mental-emotional health, have been described the above sections. For language learning in particular, and for beginners specifically, by at least learning a text’s pronunciation and then reciting it, an early leg up on improving language level can be attained quite early as pronunciation and fluency quickly approach authenticity. For more advanced learners who may be focusing more on a subject of study rather than solely on language, recitation of a related text is very valuable for refining language skills and grasping content meaning.

Additionally, it is due to so much learning happening simply due to environment and being involved in that environment that recitation stands out again. The beneficial environment for learning it creates is internal as well as external. Internally it provides a mental environment that fosters focus and deep mental impression of terminology as well as basic to advanced theoretical principles of any field of study or skill. This is also works for all parts of learning a language.

Externally, recitation provides a platform for the three types of learning: audio, visual and kinesthetic. As with any learning the more the body is, and the more senses that are involved, the better. The voicing, which can get rhythmic and chant-like, increases focus of all the senses, enhancing and deepening learning. For language learning this increased focus and subsequent absorption into the learning benefits mastering of all speaking skills in particular.

Granted, specific focus on the skills will be needed as no one thing is a “cure-all” for all “ailments” of language. In the event a beginning student chooses an advanced text to recite, other skills with appropriate levels of content will need to be practiced. Yet for an ever-growing list of reasons, and despite the brevity and incomplete nature of this study, I am gradually seeing recitation is an integral part of the process of language acquisition and content retention. Its power lies in its ease and simplicity which makes it highly efficient and helps to expedite language learning.
References


Resources

MDBG Online Chinese-English Dictionary.
https://www.mdbg.net/chinese/dictionary

Image References

Cover image. The Heart Sutra.
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Figure 1. Guan Gong Painting.
https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/312489845.html

Figure 2. Calligraphy of the Chinese character “to endure.”
http://www.sohu.com/a/102182547_139985

Figure 3. Green Marker and Calligraphy Vocabulary. Writer’s own image.