Unit 4

Hǔ sǐ liú pí, rén sǐ liú míng.
Tiger dies leaves skin, person dies leaves name!
Classical Chinese saying

Contents

4.1 Tone contrasts

Practice the following tonal contrasts by reading the columns of paired words. Place a short pause between each member of the pairs so as to keep their tonal contours distinct.

a) – versus /

cōng	cóng
cuō	cuó
jiā	jiá
qiān	qián
tiān	tián
mō	mó
xiā	xiá
shāo	sháo

b) – versus \

cū	cù
cūn	cùn
jiāng	jiàng
qī	qì
tōng	tòng
niē	niè
xiāng	xiàng
zāng	zàng

c) / versus v

chú	chǔ
chóu	chǒu
jiáo	jiǎo
qíng	qǐng
tú	tǔ
miáo	miǎo
shéng	shěng
zháo	zhǎo

4.2 Existence and location

4.2.1 Places

fànguǎn<r>	tǐyùguǎn	túshūguǎn	lǚguǎn
food-hall	PE-hall	map-book-hall	travel-bldg
restaurant	*gymnasium*	*library*	*hotel; hostel*
shūdiàn	shāngdiàn	fàndiàn	xǐshǒujiān
book-shop	trade-shop	food-shop	wash-hands-room
bookstore	*shop; store*	*hotel*	*lavatory*
cèsuǒ	zhāodàisuǒ	bàngōngshì	yínháng
lean-place	reception-place	do-work-room	silver-comp.
toilet; WC	*guest house*	*office*	*bank*
dìtiě	huǒchēzhàn	sùshè	cāntīng
ground-iron	train-station	lodge-inn	food-hall
underground train	*train station*	*dormitory*	*cafeteria*

Notes

a) Several generic words for various kinds of buildings or rooms are to be found in last position in a number of these compounds: jiān; guǎn; suǒ; shì; diàn; etc. Because these forms only occur in compounds (at least in modern Mandarin), it is difficult to give them distinct meanings, so the [syllable] glosses provided above are only suggestive.

b) Cèsuǒ ('leaning-shed') is the standard word for 'toilet', and is often found on signs; xǐshǒujiān 'wash-hands-room' is the term commonly used in public buildings and hotels. (Cf. §4.2.4.)

c) In spoken language, fànguǎn<r> is often generic for restaurants, along with cānguǎn and càiguǎn (neither with the 'r' option). Dining halls or cafeterias at universities or businesses are often called cāntīng. However, other terms, including several that contain the word jiǔ 'wine', also appear in restaurant names. These include fànzhuāng 'food-place+of+business' (for large restaurants), jiǔjiā 'wine-house' and jiǔlóu 'wine-building' [the last two especially common in Hong Kong]. Words for hotel also vary. Lǚguǎn is generic for small, local hotels. Kèzhàn ('guest-shelter') is used for inns in picturesque regions such as Lijiang in northwest Yunnan. Large hotels of the sort deemed suitable for foreigners are often referred to as fàndiàn (which, as the name suggests, were originally known for their fancy restaurants). Chinese government offices, universities, and even businesses often have at their disposal zhāodàisuǒ 'hostels (reception-buildings)', with basic amenities, for official (non-paying) or other (paying) guests.

4.2.2 Locations

Earlier, in §2.7.3, you encountered a number of position words, like shàng 'on' and lǐ 'in', that could be attached to nouns to form location phrases to follow zài 'be at': zài fēijī shàng 'aboard the airplane', zài sùshè lǐ 'in the dormitory'.

When position words are used alone (directly after zài), with no reference noun, they have to appear in more substantial form, with suffixes miàn<r> 'face; facet', biān<r> 'border; side' or (more colloquially) tou (which, in its toned form, tóu, means 'head'): zài fēijī shàng 'on the airplane', but zài shàngmian<r>, zài shàngbian<r>, or zài shàngtou, all 'on top; above; on board'. The choice of the two-syllable position word is not ruled out by the presence of a reference noun. Rhythmic considerations play a role, with a single-syllable noun being more likely to attract a single-syllable position word; thus, jiā lǐ 'in the house' rather than jiā lǐtou, and shān shàng 'on the hill' rather than shān shàngtou. But that is a tendancy rather than a hard and fast rule.

The repertoire of position words together with their possible suffixes is presented in the following table:

Position nouns

combining form	*rough meaning*	*+ mian<r>*	*+ tou*	*+ bian<r>*	*other*
shàng	*on; above*	shàngmian	shàngtou	shàngbianr	
xià	*under; below*	xiàmian	(xiàtou)	(xiàbianr)	dǐxia
qián	*in front; before*	qiánmian	qiántou	qiánbianr	
hòu	*behind; after*	hòumian	hòutou	hòubianr	
lǐ	*in; inside*	lǐmian	lǐtou	(lǐbianr)	nèi
wài	*outside*	wàimian	wàitou	wàibianr	
zuǒ	*left*			zuǒbianr	
yòu	*right*			yòubianr	
páng	*next to; beside*			pángbiānr	
dōng	*east*			dōngbianr	
nán	*south*			nánbianr	
xī	*west*			xībianr	
běi	*north*			běibianr	
	vicinity				fùjin
	center; in the middle of				zhōngxīn

Notes

a) Though dǐxia is more common than xiàmian and the other *xià*-combinations, this may be a product of the slight difference in meaning between xià 'below' or 'lower' and dǐxia 'underneath'; thus, shān xià 'at the foot of the mountains' but chēzi dǐxia 'underneath the car'.

b) While lǐ and its compounds are used for 'in; inside', nèi (with no compound forms) usually has a more abstract sense of 'within': guónèi 'within the country' (versus guówài); shìnèi 'in town' (versus shìwài).

c) Biānr, untoned in most combinations, is fully toned in pángbiānr 'next to; beside'.

d) Zhōngxīn, literally 'center (middle-heart)', as in: shì zhōngxīn 'in the middle of town' or xuésheng zhōngxīn 'student center'.

To begin with, you can focus on some combinations of noun and position noun that are particularly common. Here are some examples, along with some other phrases that can act as locations (after zài):

lóushàng	lóuxià	shānshàng	shísìhào lóu lǐ	fùjìn
bldg upper	bldg-below	mtn-on	14 number bldg	attach-near
upstairs	*downstairs*	*on the mtn*	*in building #14*	*in the vicinity*
chénglǐ	chéngwài	gébì	shì zhōngxīn	
city-inside	city-outside	separate-wall	town-center	
in town	*out of town*	*next door*	*city center*	

4.2.3 Existence versus location

As noted in Unit 2, the verb yǒu indicates existence, as well as possession. Existential sentences ('there is/are') in Chinese have the order: *Location* – yǒu – *item.*

location	*yǒu*	*item*	
Zhèr ~ zhèlǐ	yǒu	diànhuà	ma?
<Zhèr ~ zhèlǐ>	méiyou	<diànhuà>.	

Note that although zài is not usually present, the type of phase that can constitute locations in this pattern are the same as those that typically follow zài, ie places (Běijīng), position words (qiántou, zuǒbianr) or combinations of noun and position words (jiā lǐ, shì zhōngxīn):

Shànghǎi yǒu dìtiě, kěshi Nánjīng méiyou.	There's a metro in Shanghai, but not in Nanjing.
Zuǒbianr yǒu yí ge diànhuà.	There's a phone on the left.
Huǒchēzhàn zài shì zhōngxīn ma? *Fùjìn yǒu liǎng ge huǒchēzhàn: yí ge zài shì zhōngxīn, yí ge zài chéngwài.*	Is the train station in the town center? *There are 2 stations in the vicinity: one's in town, one's out of town.*

In many cases, a question about existence will elicit a response *about location*. Location, as noted earlier, is conveyed by a pattern built around zài, with the thing to be located mentioned before the position noun: zài chéngwài 'out of town'.

item	*zài*	*location*
Diànhuà	zài	nǎr?
<Diànhuà>	zài	lóushàng.

Usage

Zhèr yǒu xǐshǒujiān ma?	Is there a 'lavatory' here?
Yǒu, xǐshǒujiān zài hòutou.	*Yes [there is]; the lavatory's in the back.*

Qǐngwèn, yǒu méiyou cāntīng?
Yǒu, zài gébì.

Is there a cafeteria?
Yes, there is, [it]'s next door.

Wèi lǎoshī de bàngōngshì ne?
Zài lóushàng.

And [where's] Prof. Wei's office?
Upstairs.

Zhèr fùjin yǒu fànguǎnr ma?
Yǒu, lí zhèr bù yuǎn.

Are there any restaurants around here?
There are, not far away.

Qǐngwèn, dìtiě zài nǎlǐ?
Dìtiě ne, dìtiě zài qiánmian – bù yuǎn.

May I ask where the Metro is, please?
The Metro, the Metro's ahead – not far.

Qǐngwèn, dìtiě zài nǎlǐ? [JKW 2004]

Zhèr fùjin yǒu cèsuǒ ma?
Lóuxià hǎoxiàng yǒu.

Is there a toilet around here?
Seems there's one downstairs.

Liúxuéshēng sùshè zài nǎr?
Liúxuéshēng sùshè zài Xuéshēng Zhōngxīn pángbiānr.

Where's the foreign student dorm?
The foreign student dorm is next to the Student Center.

Shūdiàn zài nǎr?
Shūdiàn dōu zài chéng lǐ.

Where's the bookshop?
The bookshops are all in town.

Qǐngwèn, diànhuà zài nǎr?
Diànhuà ne, diànhuà zài nàr, zài zuǒbiānr.

May I ask where the phone is?
The phone's over there – on the left.

Note

Liúxuéshēng, literally 'remain-students', are students studying abroad ('overseas students'). At Chinese universities, they are frequently placed in a single dormitory or dormitory complex, often with better facilities.

4.2.4 Comfort stations

Traditionally, as expected from a society where the majority of people have been farmers and human waste has been an important fertilizer, Chinese have generally been less prone to create euphemisms about the waste products of the human body and the places where they are deposited. As noted above, the most common term nowadays for the latter is cèsuǒ. However, hotels and fancy restaurants are more prone to euphemisms such as xǐshǒujiān 'lavatory (wash-hands-room)' or guànxǐshì 'bathroom'; and the urban middle classes, particularly in Taiwan and overseas communities might also use huàzhuāngjiān 'powder room (make up-room)' or wèishēngjiān '(hygiene-room)'. The latter is abbreviated in house listings, such as sānshì liǎngwèi or sānfáng liǎngwèi, both '3 rooms, 2 bathrooms'. Examples:

Qǐngwèn, cèsuǒ zài nǎr?	Where's the toilet, please?
Zài hòubianr de yuànzi lǐ.	*In the back yard.*
Qǐngwèn, zhèr yǒu méiyǒu cèsuǒ?	Excuse me, is there a toilet [around] here?
Cèsuǒ ne, hǎoxiàng zài lóuxià.	*A toilet…uhm, [I] believe it's downstairs.*
Qǐngwèn, zhèr yǒu xǐshǒujiān ma?	Excuse me, is there a lavatory here?
Xuésheng Zhōngxīn yǒu.	*There's one in the Student Center.*

In the countryside, you are also likely to hear máofáng 'outhouse (thatched-house)'. The actual item, the bowl – the commode – is mǎtǒng 'horse-tub'or gōngtǒng 'public-tub'. The acts are sāniào 'to piss (release urine)', niàoniào 'to urinate; piss', or more euphemistically, xiǎobiàn, literally 'small-convenience', which can be a noun 'urine' as well as a verb 'urinate; pee'. Its larger complement is, unsurprisingly, dàbiàn N 'excrement' or V 'to defecate'. The less euphemistic version is lā shǐ 'to shit (pull shit)'. While it is interesting to know the gritty details, as a novice, you should probably limit yourself to questions about location, of the kind illustrated above; if someone needs to know 'what kind', then xiǎobiàn and dàbiàn are appropriate: qù xiǎobiàn, qù dàbiàn.

4.2.5 Born, grow up and live

In examples seen so far, zài phrases have preceded their associated verbs: zài fēijī shàng chī le. However, such is not always the case. With verbs of shifting (such as fàng 'put'), the *zài*-phrase appears after the verb (as a destination). And some verbs allow both pre- and post-verbal position of *zài*-phrases. This is true of the common verbs shēng 'be born', zhǎng 'grow up' and zhù 'live; reside'. But because the pre-verbal position has grammatical consequences that will not be properly introduced until a later unit, here we will focus on the post-verbal position, that is quite appropriate for making some introductory biographical notes:

Tā shēng zài Běijīng, yě zhǎng zài Běijīng, kěshi xiànzài zhù zài Xī'ān.	She was born in Beijing and grew up in Beijing, but now she lives in Xi'an.
Wǒ shēng zài Duōlúnduō, zhǎng zài Niǔ Yuē, xiànzài zhù zài Jiùjīnshān.	I was born in Toronto; I grew up in NY; and now I live in SF.

4.3 Time Phrases

4.3.1 Topic--comment

Phrases conveying 'time when' (as opposed to duration), like those that convey location of action (as opposed to destination) also generally appear *before* their associated verb:

Tā zuótiān bù shūfu, kěshi jīntiān hǎo le.	He wasn't well yesterday, but he's okay today.

However, time phrases – but not usually location phrases – may also appear before the subject:

Zuótiān tā zěnmeyàng?	How was she yesterday?
Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, hěn lèi, yě hěn jǐnzhāng, suǒyǐ méiyou qù shàngkè.	*Yesterday, she didn't feel well, [she] was tired and nervous, so [she] didn't go to class.*
Lǐbàiwǔ wǒmen dōu méiyou kè.	None of us has class on Fridays.
Xiètiān-xièdì!	*Thank heavens!*

The difference – position before or after the subject – has to do with what you are talking about. Typically, first position in a Chinese sentence introduces the topic, and what follows is a comment on that topic:

Zuótiān tā zěnmeyàng?	[About yesterday:] How was he yesterday?
Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, jīntiān hǎo le.	*He wasn't well yesterday, but he's fine today.*
Tā zuótiān zěnmeyàng?	[About him:] How was he yesterday?
Tā zuótiān juéde bù shūfu, hěn lèi, yě hěn jǐnzhāng.	*He didn't feel well yesterday; he was tired, and anxious.*

4.3.2 Clock time

a) The hours

Clock times are also 'time when' phrases, often appearing in conjunction with jīntiān, zuótiān or with words for divisions of the day like the following, based on roots zǎo 'early', wǎn 'late', and wǔ 'noon':

zǎoshàng	shàngwǔ	zhōngwǔ	xiàwǔ	wǎnshàng
morning	mid-morning	noon	afternoon	evening

Like English, where the term 'o'clock' derives from 'of the clock', clock time in Chinese is based on the word zhōng 'clock' (originally 'bell'). Zhōng is measured out by diǎn 'dots; points' (cf. yìdiǎn 'a bit') to form phrases such as jiǔ diǎn zhōng (reduceable to jiǔ diǎn) '9 o'clock'. Time is questioned with jǐ: Jǐ diǎn zhōng? 'What time is [it]?' In asking or giving clock time, le is often present in final position, suggesting 'by now'. Complex time phrases in Chinese move, like dates, from large units to small: zǎoshàng jiǔ diǎn '9 in the morning'; míngtiān xiàwǔ sān diǎn 'tomorrow afternoon at 3'.

Xiànzài jǐ diǎn <zhōng> le?	What time is it now?
Shí diǎn.	*[It's] 10:00.*
Zǎoshàng jiǔdiǎn dào shídiǎn yǒu kè.	I have a class from 9 -10 in the morning.
Zhōngwén kè <shi> jiǔdiǎn dào shídiǎn.	Chinese class is 9 -10.

b) Details

Fēn, literally 'divide; a part', is used for minutes (as well as cents); seconds are miǎo – both are measure words (so they can be counted directly):

jiǔ diǎn shí fēn	9:10	sān diǎn sānshíwǔ fēn	3:35
shí'èr diǎn líng sì	12:04	liù diǎn shíwǔ fēn	6:15

The half hour is either 30 minutes (sānshí fēn) or bàn 'half' (after diǎn, the M-word):

Xiànzài jiǔ diǎn bàn le.	It's now 9:30.
Xiànzài jiǔ diǎn sānshí fēn le.	

Quarter to and quarter past are expressed with kè, literally 'a cut' (from the notch that marked the measuring stick on old water clocks): yí kè 'quarter'. 'Quarter past' is yí kè (some say guò yí kè) added to the hour; 'quarter to' is chà yí kè 'less by one quarter', placed either before or after the (coming) hour. Older speakers, and people from Taiwan, sometimes use sān kè 'three quarters' for 'quarter to'.

jiǔ diǎn <guò> yí kè	'quarter past 9'
chà yí kè shí diǎn	'quarter to 10'
shí diǎn chà yí kè	'quarter to 10'

In general, time past the half hour can be expressed as a lack, using chà + minutes, placed either before or after the hour:

chà wǔ fēn shí diǎn	'five to 10'
shí diǎn chà wǔ fēn	
chà yí kè sì diǎn	'quarter to 4'
sì diǎn chà yí kè	

Clock time – summary

Day and segment	*to*	*hour*	*minutes (to/after)*	*<o'clock>*
jīntiān zǎoshàng		yì diǎn	líng wǔ fēn	<zhōng>
zuótiān shàngwǔ		liǎng diǎn	shí fēn	
míngtiān zhōngwǔ		shí'èr diǎn	shíwǔ fēn ~ <guò> yíkè	
xiàwǔ		…	èrshíwǔ fēn	
wǎnshàng		…	sānshí fēn ~ bàn [sān kè]	
	chà shí fēn	…	chà shí fēn	
	chà yíkè	…	chà yíkè	
		Jǐ diǎn		<zhōng>?

In colloquial language, wǎnshàng extends until bedtime, even if it's very late; similarly, zǎoshàng is when you get up, even if it's very early:

Wǒ wǎnshàng liǎng diǎn shuìjiào, zǎoshàng shí diǎn qǐlai,
cóng shàngwǔ shíyī diǎn dào xiàwǔ sì diǎn yǒu kè.

Tiānwén kè shi xīngqīsì wǎnshàng shíyī diǎn dào liǎng diǎn. — Astronomy ('heaven-inscription') class is Thursday evenings, 11 to 2 am.

Where needed, more specialized time words are available, of course, eg: yèlǐ 'in the night', bànyè 'at midnight; late at night', língchén 'very early in the morning; before dawn', qīngzǎo 'early morning'.

Exercise 1.
Buying train tickets
To buy a train ticket, you need to state the time and destination. Tickets are usually one-way, so that is not a variable. On short-distance express trains, such as the one from Shànghǎi to Nánjīng (stopping at Sūzhōu, Wúxī and Zhènjiāng), there is an option between soft seat (first class) and hard seat. But on long distance inter-city trains, there are commonly four types of ticket, plus a standing ticket.

yìngzuò 'hard-seat' — yìngwò 'hard-berth'
ruǎnzuò 'soft-seat' — ruǎnwò 'soft-berth'
zhànpiào 'standing-ticket'

Zhànpiào are sold (often for the same price) when yìngzuò are sold out. Berths are 4 (ruǎnwò) to a cabin, or 6 (yìngwò) to a section, with egress to toilets and washrooms as well as dining car by way of a corridor along the station side of the carriage. A team of service staff (fúwùyuán) keep the cabins clean, make beds, sell snacks and reading matter, and on some lines, even rent out portable TVs and other electronic equipment for the duration of the journey.

It is possible to buy tickets through hotels up to three days in advance, and most travelers do that (paying a service fee, shǒuxùfèi 'procedure-fee'). Buying at the station is more difficult. There, you generally have to work your way up to a small ticket window and state your needs succinctly, along the lines indicated below. Tickets are counted with zhāng, the measure for flat things (tables, maps, photographs, etc.)

Place	*Time*	*Type*	*Number*
Chéngdū	shàngwǔ jiǔ diǎn	ruǎnwò	liǎng zhāng

Now practice buying tickets according to the specifications indicated:

1.	Xīníng	4:00 this afternoon	hard berth	1
2.	Xī'ān	8 tomorrow morning	soft seat	2
3.	Hūhéhàotè	7 this evening	soft berth	3
4	Lánzhōu	2:30 this afternoon	hard seat	1
5.	Hā'ěrbīn	tomorrow morn. 7	soft seat	2
6.	Guìlín	this afternoon 3:25	hard berth	1
7.	Chóngqìng	July 7, 7:00 pm	soft berth	4

Yìngwò, nǐ juéde shūfu ma? [JKW 2003]

4.3.3 Time of events (meals)

Meals are named by time of day added to roots such as fàn 'rice; food; meals', cān [tsān!] 'meal', or in the case of breakfast, diǎn 'snack' (cognate to yìdiǎn 'a little'):

zǎofàn	zhōngfàn	wǎnfàn
zǎocān	zhōngcān	wǎncān
zǎodiǎn		

Recall that it is possible to express some uncertainty about time with the adverb dàgài ‘approximately; probably’. Other ‘hedging’ words include yěxǔ ‘maybe; probably; possibly’ and chàbuduō ‘approximately (less-not-much)’.

For now, it will only be possible to ask generic questions, such as ‘at what time do you eat breakfast’; questions about the past introduce a number of complications that will be dealt with later. So in addition to měitiān ‘everyday’ it will be useful to learn the following expressions, all built on cháng ‘often’, that have to do with habitual events:

cháng ~ chángcháng	often
píngcháng	usually
jīngcháng	frequently; often; regularly
tōngcháng	generally; normally

Usage

1.	Zhōngguó rén píngcháng jǐ diǎn chī zǎofàn?	What time do Chinese usually eat breakfast?
	Dàgài liù dào qī diǎn ba. Měiguó rén ne?	*About 6 to 7. How about Americans?*
	Měiguó rén ne, jīngcháng jiǔ diǎn shàngbān. Yěxǔ qī diǎn bàn, bā diǎn chī zǎofàn.	Americans generally start work at 9. So maybe they eat breakfast at 7:30 [or] 8:00.
2.	Xuéshēng ne, yīnwèi hěn máng, chángcháng zhǐ hē kāfēi bù chī zǎodiǎn.	Students, because they are so busy, they often just drink coffee and don’t eat breakfast.
	Zhōngguó xuéshēng hěn shǎo shi zhèi yàngr. Zhōngguó xuéshēng tōngcháng chī zǎodiǎn.	*Chinese students are rarely like that. Chinese students regularly eat breakfast.*
	Tāmen chī shénme?	What do they eat?
	Chī xīfàn, miàntiáo<r>.	*Rice porridge, noodles.*
3.	Jǐdiǎn shàngkè? Jǐdiǎn xiàkè?	What time does class start? What time do [you] get out of class?
	Wǒmen chàbuduō shí diǎn shàngkè shíyī diǎn xiàkè.	*We start class at about 10 and end at 11.*
4.	Chīguo zǎofàn le méi?	Have you eaten breakfast?
	Hái méi ne.	*Not yet.*

Nǐ bú shi jiǔ diǎn yǒu kè ma?	Isn't is the case that you have class at 9:00?
Zěnme hái méi chī zǎofàn ne?	How come you haven't eaten breakfast yet?
Ai, wǒ bù xiǎng chī, wǒ hē kāfēi jiù xíng le.	*I don't feel like [any], I'll just have coffee [and that'll be fine].*

Notes

a) Xīfàn 'watery-rice', a kind of gruel, to which pickles, preserved meats, vegetables and other items are added; similar to what is often called zhōu in some parts of the country.
b) Miàntiáo 'wheat[flour]-lengths', generic for noodles.
c) Nǐ bú shi…. 'isn't it the case that…'
d) Xiǎng 'think > feel like'

4.3.4 Business hours

bàngōng shíjiān	office hours
yíngyè shíjiān	business hours

Most urban communities in China have long operated on international business hours, often with adjustment for a longer lunch hour than most English speaking countries. Business hours (banks, offices) vary with region, but typically they are M-F, 8:30 – 5:30. Shops often keep much longer hours, and stay open on the weekend. Lunch breaks can run from 12 – 1:30 or even 2:00. Any sort of official meeting begins punctually. Here, more for reference at this point, are some basic queries about business hours:

Yíngyè shíjiān jǐ diǎn dào jǐ diǎn?	What are [your] business hours?
Nǐ jǐ diǎn kāimén?	When do you open (open door)?
Jǐ diǎn guānmén?	When do you close (close door)?

4.3.5 Time zones (shíqū)

It comes as a surprise for many people to find out that China operates on a single time zone, eight hours in advance of Greenwich Meantime (and conveniently, 12 hours in advance of the Eastern time zone of the US). Chinese lands far to the west are sparsely populated, so this system causes minimal disruption. For a period beginning in 1986, there was a daylight-savings shift (xiàshízhì 'summer-time-system'), but this was found impracticable and was abandoned a few years ago (as of 2003). The word shíchā literally 'time difference', also means 'jetlag'. (The noun form, chā, with level tone, is related to the verb form chà 'to lack', with falling tone.)

Shíchā hěn lìhai.	The time lag / jet lag is bad!
Wo háishi hěn lèi – yīnwèi shíchā.	I'm still tired – because of the time lag.

Exercise 2.
Ask or explain:
1. What time do you bathe?
2. I generally bathe in the morning at 6 or 7.
3. I don't eat any breakfast, I just have some tea.
4. But I usually eat lunch and dinner. Lunch at noon, dinner at 7.
5. We start class at about 2 and end at 3.
6. I have two classes today, one at 10 and one at 2.
7. The lecture is at 9, the section at 10.
8. From 2:00 to 4:00 this afternoon, we have a Chinese test.
9. I've already bathed, but I haven't eaten yet.
10. Do you always eat a breakfast? / Not necessarily.
11. What time do you close, please?
12. Have you ever been to Xichang? It's in Sichuan, about 400 kms from Chongqing.

4.4 DE revisited

As noted in §2.4.2, the addition of de turns a noun into an attribute of another noun, serving a function similar to the apostrophe-s of written English, or to prepositions such as 'on' or 'of':

Zhāng xiānshēng de xíngli	Mr. Zhang's luggage
Mǎ shīfu de dìdi	Master Ma's younger brother
xuésheng de zuòyè	students' homework
jīntiān de bàozhi	today's newpaper
zhèi ge xīngqītiān de piào	tickets for this Sunday [upcoming]
sān suì de nǚháir	a 3 year old girl ('female-child')
yǐqián de lǎoshī	a former teacher
Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi hěn yǒuyìsi.	The news about the World Cup is quite interesting.
Yǒu shénme Àoyùnhuì de xiāoxi ma?	Any news on the Olympics?

Notes

a) Shìjiè Bēi 'World Cup'; cf. Ōuzhōu Bēi 'Euro Cup'; Àoyùnhuì 'Olympics (Ol[ympic]-sports-meeting)'.
b) Xiāoxi 'report; news'.

Defining or disambiguating words, or identifying the character associated with a particular syllable, often involves DE in its function of linking attributes to nouns:

i)	Něi ge 'shēng'?	Which 'sheng'?
	Shēngrì de shēng.	*The sheng of 'shengri [birthday]'.*
ii)	Dōngnánxīběi de xī ma?	The *xi* of 'dongnan-xibei'?
	Bù, xiāoxi de xī	*No, the xi of 'xiaoxi'.*
iii)	Wǒ xìng Lù (路)!	My [sur]name's Lu.
	Dàlù de Lù (陆) ma?	*The Lu of 'mainland'?*
	Bù, mǎlù de Lù (路).	No, the Lu of 'mainroad'.
	Mǎlù de lù shì bu shi zǒulù de lù?	*Is the 'lu' of 'malu' [main road] the 'lu' of 'zoulu' [to walk]?*
	Duì, shi zǒulù de lù.	That's right, the 'lu' of 'zoulu'.
iv)	Zǒulù de lù zěnme xiě?	How do you write the lu of zoulu?
	Shi zhèi yàngr xiě: 路; yígòng 13 ge bǐhuà. Lù nèi ge zì nǐ yǐjing xuéguo ma?	*This way: 路; 13 strokes in all. Have you already studied the character for road?*
	Xuéguo, kěshi wàng le.	[We]'ve studied [it], but [we]'ve forgotten [it].

4.4.1 Where the noun head is omitted

In many cases, the noun following de is implied, in which case it can be glossed as 'the one/thing associated with'; in some cases, the form without the head noun is more natural.

Zhè shi tā de xíngli.	>	Zhè shi tā de.	These are his.
Shi xuésheng de zuòyè ma?	>	Shi xuésheng de ma?	Are [these] the students'?
Nà shi zuótiān de bào.	>	Nà shì zuótiān de.	That's yesterday's.
		Tā shi IBM de ma?	Is she from IBM?
		Bù, tā shi Wēiruǎn de.	*No, she's from MS.*

Xìng Máo de yě shi lǎoshī ma? Is the person named Mao also a teacher?
Wǒ bú tài qīngchu. *I'm not sure.*

Xìng Zhào de shi lǎobǎn, The person named Zhao's the boss; the
xìng Lǐ de shi tā qīzi. one named Li is his wife.

4.4.2 Where de does not appear

a) Country names

Expressions like Zhōngguó rén, Zhōngwén lǎoshī, or Běijīng dìtú 'map of Beijing' do not usually require an intervening de. The rule is that country names (and language names) may be directly attributed to following nouns.

b) Pronouns with kin terms
While tā de lǎoshī requires de, tā dìdi often omits it. Why? The rule is that pronouns (only!) tend to attach directly to kin terms.

	Zhè shì wǒ de péngyou.	This is my friend.
but	Zhè shì wǒ dìdi.	This is my younger brother.
	Zhè shì wǒ de lǎoshī.	This is my teacher.
but	Zhè shì wǒ shūshu.	This is my uncle ['father's y. bro.']
	Zhè shì Chén lǎoshī de jiějie.	This is Prof. Chen's older sister.
but	Zhè shì tā jiějie.	This is her older sister.

c) SVs without modifiers
SV phrases such as hěn hǎo, hěn hǎokàn, bù hǎochī, nàme guì, hěn hǎotīng are generally followed by de when they modify a noun:

bù hǎokàn de dìfang	an unattractive place
hěn hǎochī de Zhōngguó cài	delicious Chinese food
nàme yuǎn de dìfang	such a distant place
bù hǎotīng de yīnyuè	horrible sounding music

But bare (unmodified) SVs (especially single-syllable ones) may be so closely associated with a following noun that de does not intercede – or at least, is not required. Such combinations verge on becoming compound words. Compare the following:

lǎo péngyou	old friends
but	
hěn hǎo de péngyou	good friends
hǎo cài	good food
but	
bù hǎochī de cài	food that's not good
dàyú	big fish
but	
nàme dà de yú	such a big fish

A similar distinction is possible with some combinations of nouns. Those that combine as compound words do not require an intervening –de: yúdǔ 'fish stomach'; mǎchē 'horse cart'. Those that are less word-like require –de: xiàng de bízi 'an elephant's nose'; sùshè de dàmén 'the main door of the dormitory'.

d) Duō (and shǎo) as attributes
As noted in §3.8.1, duō (and shǎo) are exceptional as SV attributes in (i) requiring a modifying adverb, such as hěn, and (b) *not* requiring a connecting de:

Tā yǒu hěn duō Zhōngguó péngyou.	He has lots of Chinese friends.
Zhèi ge dìfang wèishénme yǒu nàme duō rén?	How come this place has so many people?
Nǐ yǒu zhème duō xíngli!	You have such a lot of luggage!

e) Several de's in the same phrase
Finally, where several de's might appear in the same phrase, the first is often omitted:

wǒ <de> péngyou de lǎoshī	my friend's teacher

But sometimes, having several de's in the same phrase is unavoidable. The presence of several de's in the following sentence is just as awkward and unavoidable as the several *of's* in the English equivalent:

Wǒ mèimei de xiānshēng de lǎoshī shi wǒ shūshu de tàitai.	The teacher of the husband of my younger sister is my uncle's wife.

Exercise 3.
1. Explain that big ones aren't necessarily tasty, and small ones aren't all bad. [tomatoes]
2. Introduce your good friend, Liú Shíjiǔ.
3. Ask her if the keys belong to her.
4. Explain that your bags aren't here; they're still on the plane.
5. Explain that he's not your brother; that you don't have any brothers.
6. Explain that she's the boss's wife.
7. Explain that his older brother's wife is your Chinese teacher.
8. Announce that there's a report on the Olympics in yesterday's paper.
9. Ask how he (the addressee) feels about present day music [yīnyuè]?
10. Explain that you don't usually drink coffee in the morning.
11. Ask how to say 'tomato' in Chinese; then ask how it's written.

4.5 Names in detail

Some basic information about names and titles was presented in Unit 1 (§1.6.1 and 1.9.1) and Unit 2 (§2.6). This section adds further details.

4.5.1 The form of names

Chinese names are usually either two or three syllables long:

Wáng Mǎng	Lǐ Péng	Liú Bāng
Dù Fǔ	Cuī Jiàn	Jiāng Qīng
Dèng Xiǎopíng	Lǐ Dēnghuī	Lǐ Guāngyào
Jiāng Zémín	Zhū Róngjī	Máo Zédōng

Names of four or more syllables are usually foreign:

Zhōngcūn Yángzǐ	(Japanese)
Yuēhàn Shǐmìsī	John Smith

Notice that two-syllable *xìng*, like two-syllable *míngzi* are, by convention, written without spaces. (English syllabification practices are not suitable for pinyin; so, for example, a name like, Geling, will by English syllabification rules 'wrap around' as Gel-ing rather than the correct Ge-ling.)

4.5.2 Xìng

Xìng are rather limited in number. In fact, an expression for 'the common people' lǎobǎixìng 'old hundred names' suggests that there are only 100 *xìng*, though in fact, there are considerably more (and bǎi in that expression was not intended literally). Most [Chinese] *xìng* are single-syllable (Zhāng, Wáng, Lǐ), but a few are double-syllable (Sīmǎ, Ōuyáng, Sītú). Sīmǎ, you should know, was the *xìng* of China's first major historian, Sīmǎ Qiān (145-86 BC), who wrote the Shǐ Jì, a history of China from earliest times to the Han dynasty, when he lived.

The character primer called the Bǎijiāxìng 'Multitude of Family Names (100-family-names)', that first appeared in the 10th century, gives over 400 single-syllable surnames and some 40 double. In modern times, rare surnames would enlarge those numbers, but relatively few surnames account for a large percentage of the population. It has been estimated that 20 surnames account for about 50% of the population; people named *Lǐ* alone may number as many as 100 million. Some *xìng* have meanings: Bái 'white', Wáng 'king'. But others are (now) just names, eg Wú (of persons, as well as the name of several historical states). Some names are homophonous, differing only in character (eg the two Lù's [路，陆] cited in an earlier example); others differ only in tone, eg: Wáng (王) and Wāng (汪).

4.5.3 Other names

In addition to their public names (xìng), Chinese traditionally had (and some still have) a number of other names, including the zì, a disyllabic name taken (mostly by males) for use outside the family, and hào, adult nickname (again, more for males). Still other names were given in infancy (rǔmíng or xiǎomíng), in childhood (míng), or, at the other extreme, after death (shìhào). In modern times, the *míng* and the *zì* combine to form the *míngzì* 'given name'; *rǔmíng*s are still common, eg xiǎobǎo 'little treasure'.

It is worth examining the first lines of traditional biographical entries to see how names are cited. Here are two examples, one about a modern leader, Dèng Xiǎopíng (from an exhibit in the Hong Kong Museum of History), the other, from an entry in the *Cí Hǎi* ('word sea'), one of the more comprehensive of modern Chinese-to-Chinese dictionaries. It is introducing Confucius, who lived in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. Both entries are rendered in pinyin, with underscoring and highlighting to make the correspondences clearer:

i) Dèng Xiǎopíng yuánmíng Dèng Xiānshèng, xuémíng Dèng Xīxián, 1904 nián 8 yuè, 22 rì chūshēng….

Deng Xiaoping former name Deng Xiansheng, school [formal] name Deng Xixian, 1904 [year] August 22 [day] born….

ii) Kǒngzǐ (***gōngyuánqián*** 551 – gōngyuánqián 479): Chūn Qiū **mòqī**, sīxiǎngjiā, zhèngzhìjiā, jiàoyùjiā, Rújiā de **chuàngshǐzhě**. Míng Qiū, zì Zhōngní. **Lǔguó** Zōuyì (**jìn** Shāndōng Qǔbù dōngnán) **rén**.

*Confucius (**BC** 551 – BC 479): **End of** the Spring and Autumn period; a philosopher, statesman, educator and **founder of** the Confucian School. His 'ming' was Qiū, his 'zi' was Zhōngní. He was **a man** from Zōuyì in **the state of Lǔ** (**near** modern southeast Qǔbù in Shāndōng).*

4.5.4 Míngzi ('name-character')

Given names, míngzi, are more various than xìng and often selected for their meaning (along with well the appearance of their characters): Cài Qiáng 'Cai strong'; Cài Pǔ 'Cai great'; Cáo Hóng 'Cao red' [red being an auspicious color]; Lín Yíxī 'Lin happy-hope'; Zhāng Shūxiá 'Zhāng virtuous-chivalrous'; Luó Jiāqí 'Luo family-in+good+order'. In many cases it is possible to guess the sex of the person from the meanings of the name. (Of the 6 names mentioned in this paragraph, #3,4,5 are female, #1,2,6 are male, as it turns out.)

It is common practice to incorporate generational names in the *míngzi* by assigning a particular syllable (often chosen from a poem) to each generation. So for example, Máo Zédōng's younger brothers were Máo Zémín and Máo Zétán; his younger sister was Máo Zéhóng . All contain the syllable Zé (泽). Such practices allow people from the same district to work out – and remember - their kinship when they meet.

4.5.5 Usage

At pre-arranged meetings, people will introduce themselves and immediately present a business card. But at other times, people may wait to be introduced. If you do ask a stranger a name (say, someone seated next to you on a train) you would – as noted in Unit 2 -- use the polite form, guìxìng, often with the deferential pronoun nín. And generally, the response would supply xìng and míngzi:

[Nín] guìxìng? Wǒ xìng Liú, jiào Liú Shíjiǔ.

In Taiwan, and sometimes on the Mainland, people may answer with humble forms:

(Taiwan)	Guìxìng? /	Bìxìng Wèi.	(Lit. 'shabby surname…')
(Mainland)	Guìxìng? /	Miǎn guì, xìng Wèi.	(Lit. 'dispense with guì…')

4.6 Years

4.6.1 Dates

As noted in §1.3.4, years in dates are usually expressed as strings of single digits (rather than large numbers) placed before nián 'year'. The only exception is the millennium year, 2000, which is sometimes expressed as 'two thousand' (making it, at a stretch, potentially ambiguous with 2000 years [in duration]).

2002	èrlínglíng'èr nián	
1998	yījiǔjiǔbā nián	
1840	yībāsìlíng nián	
2000	èrlínglínglíng nián	or liǎngqiān nián

The question word used to elicit a year as a date is něi nián 'which year'. [Recall něi is the combining form of nǎ 'which', just as nèi is the combining form of nà.] But asking about dates in the past introduces some grammatical features that will have to wait until a later unit.

In the Republic of China – Taiwan, years are numbered formally from the establishment of the Republic, with 1912 as year #1. Here are the dates on two newspapers, one from the Mainland, and one from Taiwan:

Zhōngguó Dàlù [PRC]	*Táiwān [ROC]*
èr líng líng èr nián	jiǔshíyī nián
shíyuè	shíyuè
èrshíyī rì	èrshíyī rì
xīngqīyī	xīngqīyī

Observe the year: Mainland 2002 - Taiwan 91. If you subtract the Taiwan year, 91, from 2002, you get 1911, the date of the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of a republic (gònghéguó). In Chinese, the official name of Taiwan is still Zhōnghuá Mínguó 'The Republic of China [ROC]'; the Mainland is called Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó 'The People's Republic of China [PRC]'. So to translate the ROC date into the PRC, or western calendar date, you add 1911 years. In speech, the ROC year is only used on formal occasions in Taiwan, but it is still usual in official writing.

4.6.2 Historical notes on dating

In Unit 1, you were introduced to a set of 10 terms of fixed order, the tiāngān or 'heavenly stems', which the Chinese use to designate members of a sequence.

Traditionally, these tiāngān were used in combination with another set of 12, known as the dìzhī 'the earthly branches'. The two sets formed a cycle of 60 gānzhī.

tiāngān	甲 乙 丙 丁 戊 己 庚 辛 任 癸 jiǎ yǐ bǐng dīng wù jǐ gēng xīn rén guǐ	(10)
dìzhī	子 丑 寅 卯 辰 巳 午 未 申 酉 戌 亥 zǐ chǒu yín mǎo chén sì wǔ wèi shēn yǒu xū hài	(12)

A sequence of 60 is achieved by combining the two sets in pairs, 甲子 jiǎzǐ, 乙丑 yǐchǒu, 丙寅 bǐngyín, and so on until the tenth, 癸酉 guǐyǒu, at which point the tiāngān begin again while the dìzhī continue: 甲戌 jiǎxū, 乙亥 yǐhài, 丙子 bǐngzǐ. After six repetitions of the tiāngān and five of the dìzhī, ending on 癸亥 guǐhài, all 60 possible combinations of the two sets will have been used, and the cycle begins again.

The gānzhī sets are attested as early as the Shang dynasty (1523-1028 BCE) on oracle bone inscriptions, when they were apparently used to count days (Wilkenson: 176). But the sets, individually as 10 or 12, or in combination as a set of 60, also came to designate other temporal units, such as years and hours. The 60 gānzhī were used to specify the dates of specific historical events. This was done by specifying the ruling emperor, either by name, or more usually, by reign name (niánhào), and then by counting from the first year of his reign using the gānzhī pairs.

Reign names of which several were often used over a single reign, were chosen for their auspicious meanings. The better known emperors are often known only by their reign names. Thus, Kāngxī, meaning 'vitality and brilliance' is the reign name of the great Qing emperor who ruled from 1661-1722. The well-known dictionary compiled during his reign is referred to, in English, as the *Kangxi Dictionary*. It contains almost 50,000 entries, and is still sold in Chinese bookshops. Kangxi's grandson, the Qiánlóng emperor (also known by is reign name) is also well-known in the West. His long and eventful rule from 1736 - 96 just exceeded a 60 year gānzhī cycle. Some historical events are still commonly referred to by their gānzhī names, eg the Xīnhài Gémìng 'the 1911 Revolution' (xīnhài being year 48 of the 60 cycle).

The 12 dìzhī were also used to designate time of day, each one being assigned a two-hour period, beginning with 11pm to 1 am. These 'hours' (or shí) also correlated with the shēngxiào, the 12 animals of the zodiac (§4.6.4), so that the first dìzhī, 子 zǐ, linked to the first animal shǔ 'rat', designated the two hours from 11 pm to 1 am, the second, 丑 chǒu , linked with niú 'ox', designated the 'hour' 1 am to 3 am, and so on. The five 'hours' that fall in the night (at least in the most populated regions) were also called the wǔgēng, or 'five changes' or 'shifts' (yìgēng to wǔgēng). In cities, daytime 'hours' were announced by rhythmical beats from the official drum (gǔ), often lodged in drum towers (gǔlóu) of the sort that survive in cities such as Xi'an and Beijing. The drumming would then be repeated in more distant neighborhoods.

In addition to the dìzhī 'hours', from very early times time was also kept by means of water clocks or 'clepsydra' (a word derived from Greek roots for 'steal' and 'water'). Water clocks measured time by the flow of water through a small aperture. Chinese water clocks traditionally divided the day into 100 equal divisions, called kè. The root meaning of kè is 'to inscribe', suggesting markings on a gauge; the usage survives in the modern terms for for 'quarter past' and 'quarter to' the hour, yíkè and sānkè. One kè represented 14.4 minutes, or approximately 1/8th of a 'double hour' (or 1/100 of a day).

In 1912, the new Republic of China officially adopted the Gregorian calendar, and 1912 was named year one of the new era (so 2004 is year 93). In the modern era, Chinese have sometimes dated from the birthdate of Huángdì 'the Yellow Emperor' (one of the five mythical founding emperors). At the beginning of the Republic, this date was fixed as 4609 years before year one of the Republic, ie 2698 BCE.

4.6.3 Age

While in English, age and duration are both given in years ('3 years old', 'for 3 years'), in Chinese there is a distinction. Years of duration are counted with nián (originally 'a harvest' or 'harvest year'): sān nián '3 years'; sānshí nián '30 years'. But years of age are counted with suì (originally used for the planet 'Jupiter', with its revolutionary period of 12 years, then for the yearly cycle of seasons). Thus: shíbā suì '18 years old', èrshíyī suì '21 years old', jiǔ suì '9 years old'.

Asking about the age of adults, one can safely use the following expression:

Tā duō dà le?	(S/he how big by+now?)
Tā èrshíbā <suì> le.	*S/he's 28.*

The addition of the noun niánjì 'age' makes the expressions a little more formal, and therefore more appropriate for a direct inquiry:

Nǐ duō dà niánjì?	(You how big age?)
Tā niánjì duō dà le?	(S/he age how big by+now?)

As the examples show, age can be expressed without a verb, much like dates in, where shì can be omitted in cases where there is no adverbial modification. Shì may also appear when rejecting an age:

Tā bú shi sìshí suì, tā shi shísì suì.	She's not 40, she's 14.

But otherwise, when a verb has to be supplied for an adverbial modifier, it is usually yǒu (rather than shì):

Tā duō dà?	How old is he?
Tā zhǐ yǒu bā suì.	*He's only 8.*

With children, it is possible to ask about age directly using the basic expression: Nǐ jǐ suì? 'How many years old are you?' There are also deferential ways of asking about the age of older people. Sometimes, using the respectful form of address for old people, lǎorénjiā, will convey sufficient deference:

<Lǎorénjiā> jīnnián duō dà niánjì?	<Kind sir> may I ask how old [you] are this year?

Other expressions are also available that convey the tone of English 'May I ask your age, sir?'

<Lǎorénjiā> guì gèng?	(<venerable+sir> worthy-age?)
<Lǎorénjiā> gāoshòu?	(<venerable+sir> long-life?)

One additional point: age is frequently given as an approximation, in which case lái (cognate with lái 'come') can be inserted between the number (typically a multiple of ten) and the M, suì:

Tā duō dà?	How old is he?
Tā <yǒu> wǔshí lái suì	*She's about 50 [50 ~ 55]; she's 50 something.*

Notes

a) Notice that duō in duō dà functions as a question word meaning ' to what degree'.
b) Le often appears with expressions of age in the sense of 'so far; by now'; however, the restrictive adverb zhǐ, is not compatible with final le.
d) Suì can be omitted where the number is above a single digit: èrshíbā <suì>.

4.6.4 The animal signs

At times, it may be inappropriate to ask someone directly about his/her age, but it is nevertheless important to know roughly how old a person is so as to be able to use proper levels of deference. So Chinese often ask what one's zodiac sign is instead, and infer age from that. Birth signs, called shēngxiào ('born-resemble') or shǔxiàng '(belong-appearance)' are the 12 animals associated with the Chinese zodiac, begining with the rat and ending with the pig. For reference, two recent cyles of years are noted here:

shǔ > niú > hǔ > tù > lóng > shé > mǎ > yáng > hóu > jī > gǒu > zhū.
rat > ox > tiger > hare > dragon > snake >horse >goat > monkey >chicken >dog > pig

1984 > 85 > 86 >	87 >	88 >	89 >	90 >	91 >	92 >	93 >	94 >	95
1972 > 73 > 74 >	75 >	76 >	77 >	78 >	79 >	80 >	81 >	82 >	83

Comments about birth signs generally make use of the verb shǔ 'belong to': Wǒ shǔ mǎ, tā shǔ tù! 'I'm the horse [year], she's the hare.' So to discover a person's age, you can ask:

Qǐngwèn, nǐ <shi> shǔ shénme de?	What's your animal sign, please?
Wǒ <shi> shǔ lóng de.	*I'm the year of the dragon.*

Notes

a) The pattern here with *shi and de* translates literally 'you be belong [to] what one', which suggests a permanent status rather than a fleeting one; however, people do ask the question in its leaner form as well: Nǐ shǔ shénme?
b) In 2005, a person born in the year of the dragon is either 17, 29, 41, etc. In most cases, the correct choice will be obvious.

Though traditionally, they have played a relatively small role in the casting of horoscopes and predicting the future, in recent years, particularly in more cosmopolitan places such as Hong Kong, the zodiac signs have come to play a more important role in the matching of couples for marriage, as well as in other social activities.

4.6.5 Year in school or college

'Year' or 'grade' in school or college is niánjí (unfortunately close to niánjì 'age', introduced in the previous section). Niánjí is a compound consisting of nián 'year' and jí 'level'. Different levels are expressed as yīniánjí 'first year (freshman)'; èrniánjí 'second year (sophomore)', etc. The question, 'which level', is formed with the low toned jǐ 'how many; how much'; hence, jǐniánjí 'what year':

Q.	Qǐngwèn, nǐ shi jǐniánjí de <xuésheng>?	Excuse me [may I ask], what grade you're in?
A.	*Wǒ shi sìniánjí de <xuésheng>.*	*I'm a fourth year student.*
	Wǒ shi Qīng Huá sānniánjí de xuésheng.	*I'm a 3rd year student at Tsinghua.*
	Wǒ bú shi xuésheng.	*I'm not a student.*
	Wǒ shi yánjiūshēng.	*I'm a graduate (or Brit. 'post-graduate') student. (research-student)*

4.7 Studying and working

4.7.1 Vocabulary

N	***N or V***	***V+O***	***V+O***	***V***	***V***
zhuānyè	zhǔxiū	dúshū	niànshū	xuéxí	xué
a major [PRC]; a specialty; a discipline	*a major; to major in [Tw]*	*study; attend school*	*read; study [Tw]*	*to study; to learn; emulate [PRC]*	*study; learn; imitate*

V+O	*V+O*	*V*	*V+O*	*V+O*
shàngxué	kāixué	gōngzuò	gànhuór	bìyè
attend-school	begin-school	*a job*;	do-livlihood	conclude-undertaking
attend school; go to school	*start school*	*to work; have a job*	*to be doing s/t; to work [PRC]*	*graduate*

In later units, you will discover that the difference between a two-syllable verb such as xuéxí or gōngzuò and a verb + object (V+O) such as gànhuór or bìyè is that the latter combination is much less stable. With V+O constructions, the O can be detached from the verb: Gàn shénme huó ne? 'What's [he] doing?'

4.7.2 Major; specialization

A major subject of study, or a specialization, is zhuānyè 'special-study' or, particularly in Taiwan, zhǔxiū 'main-study'; the latter is also a verb, 'to specialize; to major'.

Nǐ de zhuānyè / zhǔxiū shi shénme?	What's your specialty/major?
Shi wùlǐ(xué).	*Physics.*
Shi yīnyuè(xué).	*Music*

4.7.3 To study

There are a number of verbs used for studying and learning, with differences in usage between the Mainland and Taiwan.

a) One set includes the verbs xué and xuéxí 'study; learn', the latter rarely used in Taiwan. Xuéxí is often used for the *activity* of studying (often expressed as niànshū in Taiwan).

Dàjiā dōu zài nǎr?	Where is everyone?
Dōu zài túshūguǎn xuéxí ~ niànshū; míngtiān yǒu kǎoshì.	*They're in the library studying; there's a test tomorrow.*

But in many contexts, both the single and [except in Taiwan] the disyllabic form are both possible:

Xuésheng dōu yīnggāi xué<xí> wàiyǔ, bú duì ma?	Students should all study foreign languages, no?
Ng, dōu yīnggāi xué!	*Yes, they should!*

However, xué is preferred in the following examples (both of which translate 'learn' rather than 'study'):

Zhōngwén hěn nán xué ba.	Chinese must be tough to learn.
Yǒu diǎnr nán, kěshì fēicháng yǒu yìsi.	*It is a bit, but it's fascinating!*
Tā hěn cōngmíng, xué+de hěn kuài.	She's quite bright -- [she] learns fast.

b) Xuéxí also means 'emulate', with the model, usually introduced by xiàng 'towards':

Xiàng Léi Fēng xuéxí!	'Learn from Lei Feng (Emulate Lei Feng)'. [Lei Feng is a well-known labor hero from the 1960s.]

c) When the question 'what are you studying' is not about what you *happen* to be studying at that moment, but rather what field of study you are committed to, then the question (and answer) is usually cast as a nominalization, ie 'you be one [de] who studies what'. (cf. Nǐ <shi> shǔ shénme de? in §4.6.3.)

Q	Nǐ shì xué shénme de?	What are you studying?
A	*Wo shi xué wùlǐxué de.*	*I'm studying physics.*

4.7.4 Zài + verb 'action in progress'

Talking about being in school versus working often leads to comments that express ongoing action, such as: 'she's still in school' or 'he's working now'. So here we take a brief detour to consider how to express action in progress in Chinese.

It turns out that zài 'be at' not only occurs with noun objects to form location phrases (zài bàngōngshì 'in the office'; zài wàitou 'outside') and post-verbal phrases (tā shēng zài Sūzhōu), but it occurs in the adverb position, before a verb, to emphasize 'action in progress' – often in conjunction with a final ne, which suggests a level of immediacy and engagement.

Tā chī zǎofàn le ma?	Has she eaten?
Hái méi ne, tā hái zài xǐzǎo ne.	*No, not yet; she's still showering.*
Zhāng Héng zài nǎr?	Where's Zhang Heng?
Tā zài kànbào ne.	*He's reading the paper.*
Duìbuqǐ, wǒ hái zài chīfàn ne.	Sorry, I'm still eating.
Nǐ <zài> chī shénme ne?	*What are you eating?*
Zhōu Shuǎng qǐlai le ma?	Is Zhou Shuang up?
Hái méi ne, tā hái zài shuìjiào ne.	*No, not yet, he's still sleeping.*

Ongoing action need not always be explicitly marked with zài; sometimes the final ne suffices to suggest that the action is in progress:

Nǐ chī shénme ne?	What are you eating?
Chī kǒuxiāngtáng ne.	*Chewing gum ('mouth-fragrant-candy')*
Nǐ kàn shénme ne?	What are you reading?
Kàn Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi ne!	*An article on the World Cup.*

4.7.5 Studying; being in school

Studying in the sense of being in school (or college) is expressed by one of a set of words that includes the synonymous verb+object compounds, dúshū and niànshū, literally 'be studying (study books)'. The two overlap with shàngxué, also a verb+object, which has the sense of 'being in school; studying' as well as 'starting school' – at the beginning of the day. In the following interchange, all three V+Os are acceptable:

Jiǎ	Nǐ mèimei duō dà le?	How old is your sister?
Yǐ	*Èrshíqī*	*27.*
Jiǎ	Tā hái zài dúshū ma?	Is she still in school?
Yǐ	*Duì, tā hái zài dúshū, shi dàxué de xuésheng, zài Qīnghuá Dàxué xué yīxué de.*	*Yes, she is, she's a university student, studying medicine at Tsinghua University.*

However, in the following interchange, where the sense is 'go to school; begin school for the day', shàngxué is more likely:

Měitiān jǐ diǎn <qù> shàngxué?	What time does [he] go to school?
Tā měitiān qī diǎn bàn qù shàngxué.	*He goes to school every day at 7:30.*

'To begin the term at a school (or university)' is kāixué (the kāi of kāihuì 'hold/attend a meeting' or kāichē 'drive [a vehicle]'):

Wǒmen jiǔyuè èr hào kāixué.	We start classes on September 2nd.
Zhōngguó xuésheng yě shi jiǔ yuèfen kāixué.	*Chinese students start in September, too.*
O, Zhōngguó dàxué yě shi jiǔyuèfèn kāixué ma?	Oh, Chinese universities also begin in September?
Shì de.	*That's right!*

4.7.6 Work

Students graduate and get jobs. In which case, the interchange in the previous section might read:

Jiǎ	Nǐ mèimei duō dà le?	How old is your sister?
Yǐ	*Èrshíqī*	*27.*

Jiǎ	Tā hái zài dúshū ma?	Is she still in school?
Yǐ	*Tā bìyè le, tā gōngzuò le.*	*She's graduated, she's working.*
Jiǎ	Shénme gōngzuò?	What sort of job?
Yǐ	*Tā shi gǎo diànnǎo de.*	*She does computing.*

Note:

gǎo a verb with a broad range of meaning: 'do; make; manage; deal with; set up; pick up; etc.

Other examples

Jiǎ	Tā zài shénme dìfang gōngzuò?	Where does he work?
Yǐ	*Tā zài bǎoxiǎn gōngsī gōngzuò.*	*He works in an insurance company*

Jiǎ	Nǐ zhǎo shéi?	Who are you looking for?
Yǐ	*Zhǎo xiǎo Féng – Féng Xiǎoquán.*	*Young Feng – Feng Xiaoquan.*
Jiǎ	Tā zài gànhuó ne, zài cāngkù.	He's working, in the warehouse.
Yǐ	*Zhème wǎn, hái zài gànhuó ne?*	*So late [and] he's still at work?*
Jiǎ	Ng, tā shìr ~ shìqing tài duō le!	Yup, he's got too much [to do].

4.7.7 College and department

Establishing a person's department (xì) or school or university (dàxué) makes use of the question word něi (nǎ) and the general M gè: něi ge xì; něi ge dàxué. There are two ways to ask about university and department. One uses zài:

Nǐ shi zài něi ge dàxué?	Which university are you at?
Nǐ shi zài něi ge xì?	Which department are you in?

The other does not use zài, but rather, the nominalizing pattern but with shi and final de, along the lines of the earlier statements of a major: wǒ shi xué wùlǐ de 'I study physics.'

Nǐ shi něi ge dàxué de?	Which is your university?
Nǐ shi něi ge xì de?	Which is your department?

So, for example:

Jiǎ. Qǐngwèn, nǐ shi něi ge dàxué de?	Which university are you at?
Yǐ. Wǒ shi Běijīng Dàxué de.	*I'm at Peking University [sic].*

Jiă. O, Běi Dà; nà nĭ shi xué shénme de?	Oh, Bei Da; so what are you studying?
Yĭ. Wŏ shi xué guănlĭxué de.	*I'm studying management.*
Jiă Zài něi ge xì?	In which department?
Yĭ Zài Jīngji xì.	*Economics.*

Exercise 4.

Explain: that you are [years old];
that you're at [university / school];
that you're an [grad / undergrad];
that you're a [grade-level] student there;
that your major is […];
that you're in the department of […];
that you are taking [number] of subjects this semester; [list]
that you have [number] of classes today;
that you have classes today at [time] and [time];
that you have classes everyday except Wednesday.
that you were born and grew up in Chengdu, but now you live in Nanjing.

4.8 Forms of address

In general, Chinese place more importance on address forms of all kinds than Americans, a fact that reflects the importance of status in Chinese society. We can make a distinction, on the one hand, between forms of address that take the place of names of either strangers (like English 'sir', 'buddy', 'mac') or intimates (like 'sis', 'dad' and 'auntie') and, on the other hand, titles, that can occur with surnames (eg 'Mr.', 'Mrs.' and 'Professor').

4.8.1 Forms of address used instead of names

The safest course for foreigners may be to avoid forms of address when speaking to strangers, particularly to women, and to simply begin with qĭngwèn 'may I ask [you]', or with the more courtly expression, láojià 'excuse me; may I bother you' [more used in northern regions and by older speakers]. Otherwise, lăoshī can be used to address male or female clerks and civil servants (as well as teachers, of course); xiānshēng 'sir' may be used to address adult males of the salaried classes; and shīfu 'master' (or lăo shīfu for older people) can be used to address blue collar workers. Shop-keepers, male or female, can be addressed as lăobăn, which is similar in tone to English 'boss' [of a shop or small business]. Tóngzhì 'comrade' [modeled on Russian usage], in use into the 80s, was never an appropriate term of address for foreigners to use to Chinese. [Nowadays, it is said to be current among male urban homosexuals.]

Xiānshēng, jièguāng, jièguāng	Sirs, can I get through? ('borrow light')
Láojià ~ qĭngwèn, xĭshŏujiān shì bu shi zài zhèi lóu?	Excuse me, is the restroom on this floor?

Shīfu, qǐngwèn, Pān yuànzhǎng de bàngōngshì zài nǎr?	Excuse me sir, [could you tell me] where Dean Pan's office is?
Lǎobǎn, yǒu méiyou bǐjìběn?	Sir, do you have any notebooks?

In Chinese, as in English (Miss? M'am?), there is probably no really appropriate way to address a female stranger, at least not on the Mainland. Xiǎojie 'Miss', that had some currency there in the past, and may still survive as a term of address in overseas communities, is now rare, possibly because the term has been contaminated by association with expressions such as sānpéi xiǎojie, '3 [ways]-keep+company girls'.

Chinese, like many cultures often uses kin terms for address where no actual relationship exists, in the same way that English-speaking children often use the terms 'uncle' and 'auntie' for adults of their parents' generation. In China, usage varies greatly with region and age of speaker, but some typical examples are listed below – more for reference at this point than for usage. Unless otherwise stated, these terms are not used as titles (ie not with a xìng).

shūshu	'uncle (father's younger brother)', eg a child to a male of his parents' age.
dàshū	as with shūshu, but by older speakers rather than children.
āyí	'auntie; nanny', eg a child to a woman of his parents' age.
bófù	'uncle (father's elder brother)', eg a young adult addressing the father of a good friend.
bómǔ	'aunt (wife of father's elder brother)', eg a young adult addressing the mother of a good friend.
dàye	'uncle' (yéye = 'paternal grandfather'); 'sir', to an elderly man.
lǎorénjia	'Sir [to old men]'; a respectful term of address to elderly men.
dàmā	'madam (father's elder brother's wife); to elderly women. Dàmā is more used in the north; dàniáng is more common in the south.
dàshěnr	'aunty'; used more in the countryside, as an affectionate term for women near the age of one's mother. Also after a *xìng* as: Wáng shěnr 'Aunt(ie) Wang'.
xiǎo dì; xiǎo mèi<r>	'little brother; little sister': used by some to address young waiters or other attendants, acquaintances; can be patronizing.
xiǎo péngyou	'little friend' > adult to child.
gērmen	'brother-*plural*'; form of address used by young men amongst themselves (cf. English 'man; buddy; dude; brother').

4.8.2 The changing scene

As noted above, there has been considerable shift in the use of titles and address forms in the Mainland since the days of Mao Zedong. When the Communist Party was taken more seriously there, tóngzhì 'comrade' was the common form of address, and with the prestige of the proletariat, shīfu 'master in trade' spread from blue collar factory workers to workers in other professions as a form of address. Now lǎoshī seems to be taking over from shīfu, spreading from being a form of address for teachers to civil servants and people in other professions.

4.8.3 General titles

Most of the non-professional titles have been mentioned in earlier units, so we will only summarize them here:

	as title	*general meanings*	*example*	*notes*
xiānsheng	Mr.	[other's] husband; or professor [m,f]	Wáng xiānsheng	*general Mainland*
lǎoshī	Mr. or Ms.	teacher	Wáng lǎoshī	*general*
shīfu	'Master'		Gāo shīfu	*Mainland*
tàitai	Mrs.	[other's] wife	Wáng tàitai	*Taiwan*
fūrén	Mrs.; Lady	[other's] wife	Wáng fūrén	*general*
nǚshì	Ms.		Téng nǚshì	*mostly written*
xiǎojie	Miss	young woman	Téng xiǎojie	*more Taiwan*

Notes

a) Titles such as xiānsheng can also follow full names: Wáng xiānshēng; Wáng Nǎi xiānshēng. For a time, xiānshēng was also used as a deferential title for older and eminent professors – male or female; this usage now seems rarer.

b) Tàitai 'Mrs. (great; grand)' and fūrén 'Lady' are both used with husband's xìng. Téng xiǎojie married to, say, Zhū xiānsheng could be addressed as Zhū tàitai, or Zhū fūrén, if appropriate.

c) Nǚshì, a formal term for 'Miss', or 'Ms' – again always with the woman's own *xing* – might be starting to fill the gap left by the decline of xiǎojie, but at present, the preferred form of address for women without professional titles seems to be full name or *mingzi* (when appropriate). In certain regions, jiě 'older sister' is appended to the xìng to form a name used between good friends: Hóngjiě 'sister Hong'.

d) Fūrén is a common form of address for wives of high officials, Zhū Róngjī fūrén. Mrs. Thatcher, former Prime Minster of Great Britain is called Dài Zhuō'ěr fūrén or Sàqiè'ěr fūrén, as well as Tiě Niángzǐ 'the Iron Lady'.

e) Lǎoshī can be used for self, eg to students: Wǒ shì Liú lǎoshī. Though the expression lǎoshī, hǎo does occur as a passing greeting or acknowledgement, a

more considered greeting is more appropriate – one that includes the *xìng*: Wèi lǎoshī, hǎo, etc.

4.8.4 Other terms

There are a number of other terms that fit in the category of 'address forms' but which beginning students, and foreigners in general, are less likely to use. Here are two examples, using the surname Chén. Later, if you get a chance to work in a Chinese enterprise, you can observe the variety of titles and forms of address in more detail.

Chén lǎo	used to address older people (male or female) of some eminence.
Chén gōng	to engineers or others who have, or had, positions in industry; gōng is short for gōngchéngshī 'engineer'.

4.8.5 Professional titles

Professional titles are job titles, the sort that would be inscribed on a business card. They are used on first meeting, during the introductions, but later such titles are likely to be replaced by something less formal such as lǎoshī, xiānsheng or even full name (xìng+míngzi). Here is a selection of professional titles:

jiàoshòu	'professor (teaching-instruct)' Zhōu jiàoshòu; ZhàoYuánrèn jiàoshòu. Nowadays on the Mainland, teachers of all ranks are usually addressed, and often address each other, as lǎoshī. Jiàoshòu is more likely to be used in formal settings, eg introductions, where it is important to indicate rank explicitly.
jīnglǐ	'manager [of a company etc.]'; Qián jīnglǐ
zhǔrèn	'director; head; chairperson (main-official+post)' [of a company, academic department, etc.]; Liào zhǔrèn
dǒngshì	'director; trustee'; Huáng dǒngshì
zǒngcái	'director-general; CEO (overall-rule)'; Cáo zǒngcái
dáoyǎn	'director [of films or plays]' Zhāng [Yìmóu] dáoyǎn
(...)-zhǎng	*'head of; chief of (...)'*

eg	xiàozhǎng	principle of a school	(xiào 'school')
	yuànzhǎng	dean; director of hospital etc.	(yuàn 'public facility')
	shìzhǎng	mayor	(shì 'city')
	shěngzhǎng	governor	(shěng 'province')
	kēzhǎng	department head (hospital)	(kē 'section')
	chùzhǎng	section chief (government)	(chù 'office')
	huìzhǎng	president of an association	(huì 'association')
	chǎngzhǎng	head of a factory	(chǎng 'factory')

zǒngtǒng	'president'	Lǐ zǒngtǒng; Kèlíndùn zǒngtǒng; Bùshí zǒngtǒng
zhǔxí	'chairman (main-seat)'	Máo zhǔxí

The titles on this list can be prefixed with fù- 'vice; deputy; associate'. But while fù- might appear on a business card as part of the description of a person's rank, office or function, it is not usually used in direct address. Thus a Mr. Lee who is a fùzhǔrèn 'associate director' would be introduced and addressed simply as Lǐ zhǔrèn. A variety of possible fù-titles are listed below:

fùjiàoshòu	associate professor	fùxiàozhǎng	vice principal
fùzhǔrèn	associate director	fùshìzhǎng	vice mayor
fùjīnglǐ	deputy manager	fùzǒngtǒng	vice president

4.8.6 From title to prefix

As friendships among Chinese develop, there comes a point when address shifts from the relatively formal xìng + title to other forms, including full name, míngzi or hào 'nickname'. One of the possibilities, common amongst males, makes use of the prefix lǎo 'old; venerable; etc.' So instead of Wáng xiānsheng, friends might address Wáng as lǎo Wáng (nicely translated in Yuan and Church's *The Oxford Starter Chinese Dictionary*, as 'my pal [Wáng etc.]'). The factors that condition this shift involve age, relative status and other aspects of the relationship. Because it involves a degree of camaraderie that is not easily extended to non-locals, foreigners should probably wait for an explicit invitation before making such a shift.

In Cantonese speaking areas, the equivalent of lǎo is a (without tone), and so in southern regions (as well as in many communities of Southeast Asian Chinese), this prefix is borrowed into Mandarin, eg Abāo = lǎo Bāo, Améi = lǎo Méi.

Another prefix, xiǎo, is also used before xìng, as a term of endearment for young adults, particularly women (xiǎo Bì 'young Bi') or by contrast with another of the same surname who is older or has other features (size, maturity) that sets her or him apart.

Finally, it should be noted that intimates will (more in the northeast than south?) sometimes use xiǎo in front of the last syllable of a *given name*: thus Chén Bó might be addressed as Xiǎobó (rather than lǎo Chén or xiǎo Chén, or simply, Chén Bó).

full name	*sex*	*informal*	*intimate*	*with title (formal)*
Bái Sùzhēn	fem.	xiǎo Bái	Xiǎozhēn	Bái lǎoshī
Zhāng Dàmíng	male	lǎo Zhāng	Xiǎomíng	Zhāng jīnglǐ
Liáng Àimín	fem.	xiǎo Liáng	Xiǎomín	Liáng zhǔrèn

Exercise 5.
Greet the following people appropriately.

Eg A teacher named Zhào >> Zhào lǎoshī, nín hǎo.
1 A middle-aged, married woman whose husband's surname is Bái:
2 A young woman surnamed Guō Měifāng:
3 The wife of an important official named Zhū:
4 A CEO named Dèng:
5 The eminent Professor Xú:
6 The deputy manager of a company, named Qián:
7 The principal of a school, named Yuán:
8 An elderly man seated on a park bench; an elderly women:
9 Your bus driver, named Zhào:
10 Your teacher's husband, whose surname is Huáng:

4.9 Introductions

Making introductions usually involves names and titles (Zhào Fāngfāng, Chén lǎoshī), pointing words (zhè, nà), set expressions of greeting (nǐ hǎo) and often, some explanation of the connection, provided in a phrase such as zhè shì wǒ de lǎoshī 'this is my teacher'. A host may express his intention to introduce someone, using the disyllabic verb, jièshào 'introduce', as follows:

Zhāng lǎoshī, wǒ gěi nǐ	Prof. Zhang, let me introduce you.
jièshao jièshao! Zhè shi….	This is….

Notice how gěi shifts in meaning from its core sense of 'give' to 'for [your benefit]' when it is subordinated to the main verb, jièshào. Instead of zhè shi, the polite measure word for people, wèi will often be used: zhèi wèi shi….

4.9.1 Relational information

To keep things manageable, you can provide relational information about people in the format:

Zhè <wèi> shi wǒ <de>	This is my....

a) With de

Zhè <wèi> shi wǒ de lǎoshī.	This is my teacher.
wǒ de Zhōngwén lǎoshī.	Chinese teacher.
wǒ de xuésheng	student.
wǒ de tóngxué.	classmate.
wǒ de péngyou.	friend.
wǒ de lǎo péngyou.	good friend.
wǒ de lǎobǎn.	boss [slightly jocular].
Zhāng lǎoshī de xuésheng	Prof. Zhang's student.

b) Usually without de

Zhè shi	wǒ fùqin.	father.
	wǒ bà<ba>	Dad (intimate).
	wǒ mǔqin	mother.
	wǒ mā<ma>	Mum (intimate).
	wǒ gēge.	older brother.
	wǒ dìdi.	younger brother.
	wǒ jiějie.	older sister.
	wǒ mèimei.	younger sister.
	wǒ àirén [not in Tw]	spouse (husband, wife).
	wǒ zhàngfu	husband (neutral).
	wǒ lǎogōng	husband (neutral).
	wǒ xiānshēng	husband (formal).
	wǒ qīzi	wife (neutral).
	wǒ lǎopo ~ lǎopó	wife (informal).
	wǒ xífu	wife (regional).
	wǒ tàitai [more in Tw]	wife (formal).

4.9.2 A note on words for husband and wife

In Chinese, as in English, words for 'spouse' go in and out of fashion. The use of lǎogōng for 'husband', for example, was probably influenced by films and TV programs from Hong Kong and Taiwan, so that the term is current among younger urban people in the Mainland. The female version of lǎogōng, lǎopó, is also quite common, though for some, it has a slightly jocular (and some would add, disrespectful) tone, along the lines of English 'my old lady'. (The male equivalent would be lǎotóuzi 'my old man'.) Terms such as qīzi 'wife' and zhàngfu 'husband' are fairly neutral.

Máo Zédōng yǒu sì ge qīzi	Mao had 4 wives.
Máo Zédōng yǒu sì ge lǎopó.	

Nèirén 'wife (within-person)' has a humble tone. Southerners often use xífu, a variant on xífù 'daughter-in-law', for wife, eg: Sǎozi shi gēge de xífu. '*Saozi* [sister-in-law] is the wife of one's elder brother.'

The PRC used to promote the use of àirén 'love-person' as a egalitarian term for spouse (husband or wife), and the phrase zhè shì wǒ àirén is still current on the Mainland. The term causes some giggles among non-Mainlanders, for in Taiwan, àirén sometimes has the meaning of 'sweetheart'. (Aìrén is not the normal word for 'lover,' however; that is qíngrén 'feelings-person', the word used for the Chinese title of the French film, *The Lover*, for example.)

Another term that has come into vogue in informal situations on the Mainland is nèiwèi for 'spouse' (literally 'that-one'). Peculiarly, it combines with a plural possessive pronoun even when the reference is singular: wǒmen nèiwèi '(our spouse) my

husband/wife'. This may be because it derives from the phrase wǒmen jiā de nèiwèi 'our family DE spouse'. Thus: Nǐmen nèiwèi zěnmeyàng? 'How's the wife / the old man?'

Foreigners, though they may hear intimate or familiar terms, should be careful not to use them unless their relationship warrants it!

4.9.3 Responses

A typical response to an introduction uses an appropriate title with the surname, and a conventional expression of greeting:

A, Qí lǎoshī, nín hǎo. Oh, Prof. Qi, how are you?

The response to being introduced to someone of eminence is jiǔyǎng, literally 'long+time-look+up+to', often repeated as jiǔyǎng jiǔyǎng '[I]'ve heard a lot about you'. Sometimes dàmíng 'great name' is added: jiǔyáng dàmíng.

O, Qí lǎoshī, jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng. Oh, Prof. Qi, honored to meet you.

Children and sometimes young adults may show respect by addressing elders as shūshu 'uncle' or āyí 'auntie': Shūshu hǎo. 'How are you, uncle.'

In English, we feel the need to confirm the worth of meeting someone by saying eg 'nice to meet you', either after an introduction, or at the end of an initial introduction, before taking leave. Traditionally, Chinese had no comparable expression, but nowadays, people in the more cosmopolitan cities, particularly when they are talking to foreigners, will use a phrase hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ ('very happy know you'), or hěn gāoxìng jiàndào nǐ ('very happy see you'), in more or less the same situations as English 'nice to meet you'. The response may have a slightly different emphasis, expressed in the word order: Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng! 'Happy to meet you too! = my pleasure!'.

A, Qí lǎoshī, hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ. Oh, Prof. Qi, nice to meet you.

4.9.4 Dialogues

a) You [Wèi] are introducing your friend Chén Huībó to your classmate, a student from China named Cài Wénjiā. You get Cài's attention by calling out her name, and as you guide her towards Chén, you explain to her who he is. Cài then (re)states her full name, and the two acknowledge each other.

	CHÉN Huībó (m)	(CÀI) Wénjiā (f) **You* [Wèi]
Wèi	Cài Wénjiā, wǒ gěi nǐ jièshao jièshao; zhè shi wǒ de péngyou, Chén Huībó.	Cài Wénjiā, let me introduce you; this is my friend, Chen Huibo.

Cài	*Chén Huībó, nǐ hǎo; wo shi Cài Wénjiā.*	*Chen Huibo, how are you? I'm Cài Wénjiā*
Chén	Cài Wénjiā, nǐ hǎo.	Cài Wénjiā, how are you.

b) Now a relatively formal introduction, between people sharing a train cabin. (Hng = xìng Huáng de, jiàoshòu; Zh. = xìng Zhōu de, jīnglǐ.) Note the word for business card, míngpiàn, literally 'name-slice'.

Hng	Ei, nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Huáng, zhè shì wǒ de míngpiàn. Nín guìxìng?	Hi, how are you? My (sur)name's Huang; this is my card. What's your [sur]name?
	(Looking at the card.)	
Zh	*O, Húang lǎoshī, nín hǎo. Wǒ jiào Zhōu Bǎolín – wǒ de míngpiàn.*	*Oh, Prof. Huang, how are you? I'm named Zhou Baolin – my card.*
		(He too looks at the card.)
Hng	A Zhōu jīnglǐ, nín hǎo. O nín shì Wēiruǎn de! Wēiruǎn hěn yǒumíng a!	Ah. Manager Wang, how do you do? Oh, you're with Microsoft! Microsoft's famous!
Wáng	*Hái xíng ba!*	*I guess [if you say so].*

Note

Wēiruǎn de 'of ~ from Microsoft (tiny-soft DE)'

Exercise 6

a) Introductions:

Liáng Mínmǐn, a teacher, meets Dèng Lìlì also a teacher (both female) and introduces her student, Mǎ Yán (a male); fill in Dèng Lìlì' s responses:

Liáng:	Nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Liáng, jiào Liáng Mímǐn.
Dèng:	??
Liáng:	Dèng Lìlì, nǐ hǎo. Zhè shì Mǎ Yán, wǒ de xuéshēng.
Dèng:	??
Mǎ	Dèng lǎoshī, hǎo. Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng.

b) Translate:

1) Miss Chén, this is my classmate, Wáng Bīnbīn.
2) This is my good friend, Bì Xiùqióng.
3) This is my younger sister, Chén Xiùxiù.
4) Professor Gāo, I've heard a lot about you.
5) Let me introduce you – this is Manager Wang, he's at Intel.
6) This is Li Dawei, he's been to China, and he's studying Chinese.

Dào Miányáng le ma? [JKW 2004]

4.10 Dialogue: on the bus to Miányáng

Méi Tàidé (Theo Meyering), a foreign student traveling by bus from Chéngdū to Miányáng [about 111 kms. to the northeast], is attempting to read the local paper; the man sitting next to him, who has been watching him for a while, breaks into conversation:

Ōu-y	Kàndedǒng ma?	Can you read [it]?
Méi:	*Néng kàndǒng yìdiǎnr.*	*I can read a bit.*
Ōu-y:	Hànzì hěn duō ya!	Chinese has a *lohhht* of characters!
Méi:	*Shì, tài duō le!*	*Yes, too many!*
Ōu-y:	Wǒ xìng Ōuyáng – zhè shì wǒde míngpiàn.	My name's Ouyang – here's my card.
Méi:	*A, Ōuyáng xiānsheng…Ōuyáng jīnglǐ, nín hǎo! Hěn gāoxìng rènshi nín.*	*Oh, Mr. Ouyang…Manager Ouyang, how do you do! Nice to meet you.*
Ōu-y:	Zhè shi wǒ àiren, Xiāo Měifāng.	This is my wife, Xiao Meifang.

Méi	*Nín hǎo. Wǒde míngzi shi Theo Meyering, Méi Tàidé: Tàiguó de Tài, Déguó de Dé. Duìbuqǐ, xiànzài wǒ yǐjīng méiyou míngpiàn le.*	*Hello. My name's Theo Meyering, Mei Taide: the tai of Taiguo, the de of Deguo. I'm sorry, I'm already out of business cards.*
Xiāo:	Méi Tàidé, Méi xiānsheng, nǐ hǎo. Nǐ Zhōngwén jiǎng+de zhēn bàng!	Mei Taide, Mr. Mei, how do you do? You speak Chinese *reeeally* well!
Méi:	*Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, jiǎng+de mǎmahūhū. Wǒ hái zài xué ne, wǒ zài Sìchuān Dàxué xuéxí.*	*Nice of you to say so [but] I speak poorly. I'm still studying [it] – I'm studying at Sichuan University.*
Ōu-y:	Qǐngwèn nǐ shì cóng nǎ ge guójiā lái de?	May I ask what country you're from?
Méi:	*Wǒ shi Hélán rén; wǒ shēng zai Hélán. Kěshì xiànzài wǒ shi Měiguó Mìxīgēn Dàxué de xuéshēng.*	*I'm from Holland; I was born in Holland. But at present, I'm a student at Michigan University.*
Ōu-y	O, Mìxīgēn Dàxué, hěn yǒumíng. Nǐ shì jǐniánjí de xuésheng?	Oh, Michigan University, it's famous. What year are you?
Méi:	*Wǒ shi sìniánjí de.*	*I'm a senior.*
Ōu-y	Nǐ shi Zhōngwén xì de ma?	Are you in the Chinese department?
Méi	*Bù, wǒ shì Jīngjì xì de, wǒ xué Zhōngguó jīngjì…Ōuyáng xiānsheng, nín zài Chángchūn gōngzuò a?*	*No, I'm in economics, I'm studying Chinese economics. [So] you work in Changchun, Mr. Ouyang.*
Ōu-y	Duì, wǒ zài Chángchūn gōngzuò, búguò wǒ shi Shěnyáng rén.	Yes, I work in Changchun, but I'm from Shenyang.
Méi:	*Dōu zài Dōngběi, duì ba?*	*Both in the Northeast, right?*
Ōu-y	Duì, Chángchūn zài Jílín shěng, Shěnyáng zài Liáoníng. Shěnyáng lí Běijīng bù yuǎn.	That's right, Changchun is in Jilin province, Shenyang is in Liaoning. Shenyang isn't far from Bj.
Měi:	*Shěnyáng hěn dà, shì bu shi?*	*Shenyang's big, isn't it?*
Ōu-y	Shì, yǒu chàbuduō wǔbǎiwàn rén … Nǐ chīguò zhōngfàn le ma?	It is, it has about 5 million inhabitants…Have you had lunch?
Méi:	*Chī le, zài Chéngdū chī le.*	*I have – in Chengdu.*

Ōu-y	Nǐmen zhōngfàn dōu chī sānmíngzhì, shì bu shi?	You eat sandwiches for lunch, right?
Méi:	*Bù yídìng. Kěshì zài Zhōngguó, wǒ dāngrán chī Zhōngguó fàn.*	*Not necessarily. But in China, I eat Chinese food of course.*
Ōu-y	Zhōngguó fàn nǐ chīdeguàn ma?	Are you accustomed to eating Chinese food?
Méi:	*Dāngrán chīdeguàn, zài Hélán, zài Mèiguǒ, wǒ yě chángcháng chī Zhōngguó fàn. …Dào Miányáng le ma?*	*Of course I am, I often eat Chinese food in Holland and in the US. Have we reached Mianyang?*
Ōu-y	Hái méi dào ne. Zhè shì Déyáng. Wǒmen zài zhèr xiàchē. Dàgài yì diǎn bàn dào Miányáng.	Not yet. This is Deyang. We get off here. [You] get to Mianyang at about 1:30.
Méi:	*Oh, nǐmen zài Déyáng xiàchē?*	*Oh, you get off at Deyang?*
Ōu-:	Duì, wǒ yǒu ge jiějie zhù zài Déyáng.	Yes, I have an older sister living in Deyang.
Méi:	*Nǐmen de xíngli duō bu duō?*	*Do you have a lot of bags?*
Ōu-:	Bù duō – zhǐ yǒu yí jiàn. Hǎo, wǒmen xiàchē le. Zàijiàn!	No, just one. Okay, we're getting off. Good bye.
Méi:	*Hǎo, zàijian, zàijiàn!*	*Okay, goodbye.*

Notes

kàndedǒng 'can understand [by reading] (look-able+to-understand)'. Kàndedǒng is an example of what is sometimes known as the 'potential construction' (cf. §7.1), which involves an action (kàn) and result (dǒng) and an intervening +de (able to) or bu (unable to). Thus kànbudǒng 'cannot understand [by reading]'. Other examples: chīdeguàn, appearing later in this dialogue, 'be in the habit of eating (eat-get-accustomed)'; and earlier, in the rhyme at the end of Unit 2, shuāibudǎo 'won't fall down (slip-not-fall)'. The response to Ouyang's question might have been kàndedǒng 'I do' but Méi is more modest, and wishes to use yìdiǎnr 'a little'. Kàndedǒng or kànbudǒng do not permit gradations – either you do, or you don't; so the response with yìdiǎnr has to be néng kàndǒng yìdiǎnr 'can understand a bit'.

néng 'able to; can' [not usually for learned abilities]

Ōuyáng — An example of one of the 40 or so disyllabic surnames. Tā xìng Ōuyáng. Méi Tàidé re-addresses him with jīnglǐ after reading his business card.

Xiāo Měifāng — Notice the Méi Tàidé refrains from addressing Ōuyáng's wife with title or name. Neither tàitai nor xiǎojie is appropriate, and using her name might seem too familiar. So he just says nǐ hǎo.

àirén — 'spouse; wife; husband'. This is typical usage.

zhēn bàng — bàng is a noun, meaning 'club' or 'cudgel'; but in colloquial speech, it has come to function as a SV with the meaning 'good; strong'; cf. English 'smashing'. The expression is more common in certain regions than others, and probably certain age groups than others.

chīdeguàn — 'in the habit of eating (eat-get-accustomed)'

jiàn — M-word for 'luggage' (and, paradoxically, for 'clothes' and 'business affairs' as well).

4.11 Food (1)

In China, meals are central to social life. But for the student of Chinese, who may have to eat most meals out, learning how to read the menu and order meals takes a long time. Eating at Chinese restaurants overseas may give the impression that there is a set of basic dishes at the heart of every Chinese regional cuisine. But within China, menus start to seem infinitely variable. And what is more, you will find that rather than consulting the menu, Chinese customers are just as likely to base their orders on a conversation with the waiter about what is seasonal or fresh, or what the restaurant's specialties are. So we will have to build up competence about Chinese food incrementally. We will begin with elementary categories.

The basic distinction in food is between fàn and cài. Both words have core and extended meanings, as follows:

fàn	cooked rice	>	staples
cài	vegetables	>	dishes; courses

Fàn in its extended meaning includes cooked rice, wheat, millet and other grains that – at least in less affluent times – formed the main caloric intake. Cài in its extended meaning would normally have been vegetables, with some dry or fresh fish, and very occasionally, a small amount of pork. Now, of course, cài includes the vast repertoire of dishes that can be served alongside the staples. Any ambiguity between core and extended meanings can be eliminated through compounding:

báifàn; mǐfàn	cooked rice [as opposed to other staples]
qīngcài	vegetables [as opposed to other dishes]

Rice is the staple of southern China where it is eaten cooked (mǐfàn), or ground into flour for noodles (mǐfěn) and dumpling wraps. In the north, wheat is the staple and forms the basis of wheat noodles (miàn ~ miàntiáo) and wheat dumpling-wraps. At breakfast and lunch, Chinese often eat a rice gruel or 'congee' (xīfàn 'watery rice' or zhōu), to which can be added various kinds of vegetables, meats and sauces, as well as broken up yóutiáo 'fried dough sticks'.

miàn ~ miàntiáo	noodles	miànbāo	bread (wheat-bun)
mǐfěn	rice-flour noodles	dòufu	toufu
zhōu; xīfàn	rice porridge; congee	yóutiáo	fried dough sticks
bāozi	steamed stuffed buns		
guōtiē	pot stickers	jiǎozi	dumplings
tāng	soup	jīdàn	chicken eggs
ròu	meat	yā<ròu>	duck
zhūròu	pork	jī<ròu>	chicken
niúròu	beef	yángròu	lamb
yú	fish	hǎixiān	seafood
xiārén<r>	shimp meat	hǎishēn	sea cucumber

Notes

a) In combinations, parts of these citation forms are often dropped. In most cases, it is the second element: niúròu-miàn[tiáo] 'beef noodles'. But in some cases, it is the first: niúròu-chǎo [mǐ]fěn 'beef fried rice-noodles'.
b) On a menu, unspecified ròu usually means 'pork'.
c) Many Chinese avoid eating beef because of Buddhist tradition, and because of taboos about killing work animals.
d) Xiā is 'shrimp', rén<r> is 'kernal', so xiārénr 'shrimp meat'.
e) Sea cucumber is a euphemistic name for a kind of slug that lives on the bottom of the sea; eaten fresh, or dried, it is considered a delicacy.

Qīngzhēn xiānjī 'Muslim fresh chicken' at a street stall in Kunming. [JKW 1997]

4.11.1 Short narratives

a) Zhōngguórén zuì xǐhuan hē shénme?

Yǒu péngyou wèn wǒ Zhōngguó rén zuì xǐhuan hē shénme. Wǒ shuō chuántǒng de Zhōngguó rén xǐhuan hē chá huòzhě báikāishuǐ, kěshi xiànzài hěn duō Zhōngguó rén yě xǐhuan hē qìshuǐ, kělè, hé niúnǎi. Zhōngguó nánrén yě xǐhuan hē píjiǔ. Qīngdǎo píjiǔ shi zuì yǒumíng de Zhōngguó píjiǔ. Wǒ yě xǐhuan hē píjiǔ, kěshì bù néng hē tài duō, yì píng jiu gòu le! Zǎoshàng, wǒ yě hē kāfēi – hē yì bēi wǒ jiù bú huì juéde lèi!

b) Zuì xǐhuan chī shénme?

Nà, Zhōngguó rén zuì xǐhuan chī shénme? Zhè hěn nán shuō. Yīnwèi Zhōngguó rén chī de dōngxi tài duō le. Kěyǐ shuō běifāng rén bǐjiào xǐhuān chī miànshí, jiùshi yòng xiǎomàifěn zuò de shípǐn; nánfāng rén ne, tāmen bǐjiào xǐhuan chī mǐfàn. Měitiān dāngrán chī qīngcài, yě chī yìdiǎnr ròu, xiàng zhūròu, jīròu, niúròu. Ménggǔrén yě tèbié xǐhuan chī yángròu. Zhōngguó rén yě cháng chī hǎixiān, xiàng yú, xiārénr, hǎishēn. Yě xǐhuan chī bāozi, jiǎozi; zhèi lèi dōngxi kěyǐ shuō shi Zhōngguó chuántǒng de kuàicān. Língshí ne, tǐng duō de! Yǒu niúròugānr, guāzǐ<r>, huàméi.

Notes

yǒu péngyou	While English comfortably begins a sentence with an indefinite phrase such as 'a friend' or 'someone', Chinese makes use of the existential yǒu 'there is/are...': Yǒu rén wèn wǒ ...; Yǒu rén shuō.
chuántǒng	SV 'traditional'.
báikāishuǐ	'clear boiled water'
miànshí	'cooked wheaten food'; cf. shípǐn. In Mandarin shí is a combining root that appears in compounds having to do with food, eg shípǐn, língshí, below. It is cognate with Cantonese sihk, the verb 'to eat'.
jiùshi	[in this context] 'ie'
xiǎomài	'wheat'; cf. dàmài 'barley', yànmài 'oats', qiáomài 'buckwheat'
shípǐn	'food; comestibles'
Ménggǔ	Mongolia; cf. Nèi Ménggǔ 'Inner Mongolia'.
tèbié	SV 'special'; ADV 'especially'.
zhèi lèi	'this type', and particularly in the expression zhèi lèi dōngxi 'these sorts ~ categories of things'; cf. zhèi zhǒng 'this kind'.
kuàicān	'fast-food'
língshí	'nibbles; snacks (zero; incidental-food)'
niúròugānr	'beef jerky'; yí dàir 'a bag'
guāzǐ<r>	'water melon seeds'
huàméi	'preserved plums'; yì bāo 'a packet'

4.12 Pinyin: initial w and y

Though syllables may begin with the vowels a, o, e (eg è, ān, ōu etc.), *they do not* begin with i or u. Where medial i and u might occur at the beginning of a syllable, they are written y and w, respectively. You might think of such cases as follows:

duo, shuo, drop the Ci:	uo	>	wo
xie, bie, drop the Ci:	ie	>	ye

However, if i, u, ü are themselves vowels (as in nǐ, shū, nǚ), then dropping the Ci would leave only the vowels i, u, and ü, and if these were simply rewritten as y and w, you would end up with rather curious looking syllables like 'w' (shu, drop the Ci to get u > 'w') or 'wn' (shun > un > 'wn'). So in such cases, instead of upgrading i and u to y and w as before, y and w are **added** to them:

	as a syllable		
ji, drop the j:	i	>	yi
jin, drop the j:	in	>	yin
jing, drop the j:	ing	>	ying
shu, drop the sh:	u	>	wu
xu, drop the x:	u [ü]	>	yu
jun, drop the j:	un [ün]	>	yun
xue, drop the x:	ue [üe]	>	yue

There are a few **exceptions** to the pattern:

>>	jiu, drop the j:	iu >	**you;**	yu is taken [see above]
>>	gui, drop the g:	ui >	**wei;**	no syllable wi; rhymes with ei
>>	zhun, drop the zh:	un >	**wen;**	no syllable 'wun'; rhymes with en

Yí duì fūfù ('1 pair husband-wife') zhǐ shēng yí ge háizi hǎo. [JKW 1997]

Exercise 7.
Recognizing foreign place names: With your knowledge of pinyin, see if you can read out and recognize these Chinese versions of English place names and other English loans:

a) Place names	*hint*	*English*
Fóluólǐdá		
Yàlìsāngnà		
Mǎsàzhūsài		
Nèibùlàsījiā		
Éhài'é		
Élègāng	Yes, it's a state.	
Zhījiāgē	city	
Àidīngbǎo	in Scotland	
Hóngdūlāsī	Central America	
Ālāsījiā		
Àodàlìyà		
Bāxī		
Dálāsī	in Texas	
Xīn Ào'ěrliáng		
Bājīsītǎn		

b) Common nouns	
qiǎokelì or zhūgǔlì	food
sānmíngzhì	food
hànbǎobāo	
qǐsī ~ zhīshì hànbǎobāo	
shālā	leafy food
pǐsà bǐng	fast food (bǐng 'biscuit; cracker')
kěkǒukělè	
Màidāngláo	
Hànbǎowáng	wáng 'king'

c) People (Mainland usage)	
Shāshìbǐyà	
Suǒfēiyà Luólán	
Mǎlóng Báilándù	'The horror, the horror!'
Àosēn Wēi'ěrsī	
Gélǐgāolì Pàikè	
Yīnggélì Bāomán	
Luósīfú	4 terms
Gé'ěrbāqiáofū	USSR
Shīwǎxīngé	'I'll be back – as governor!'
Pàwǎluódì	Big stage presence!

4.13 Summary

Existence	Zhèr yǒu xǐshǒujiān ma? / Yǒu, xǐshǒujiān zài hòutou.
Location:	Zhèr fùjin yǒu Zhōngguó fànguǎnr ma? / Yǒu liǎng ge.
Born in…	Tā shēng zài Běijīng, yě zhǎng zài Běijīng, kěshi xiànzài zhù zài Xī'ān.
Clock time	Xiànzài jǐ diǎn <zhōng> le? / Shí diǎn. Wǒ wǎnshàng liǎng diǎn shuìjiào, zǎoshàng shí diǎn qǐlái.
Habitually	Zhōngguó rén píngcháng jǐ diǎn chī zǎodiǎn?
Tickets	Guìlín, jīntiān xiàwǔ 3:25, yìngzuò, yì zhāng.
DE	Shìjièbēi de xiāoxi; bù hǎotīng de yīnyuè shēngrì de shēng, dàlù de lù Tā shi IBM de.
No DE	tā dìdi; lǎo péngyou; zhème duō xíngli
Names	Guìxìng? / Wǒ xìng Bái, jiào Bái Sùzhēn.
Age	Nín <niánjì> duō dà le? / Zhǐ yǒu shíqī suì.
Sign	Nǐ <shi> shǔ shénme de? / Shǔ mǎ de.
Level	Nǐ shi jǐ niánjí de xuésheng? / Sān niánjí de.
Major	Zhuānyè shi shénme? / Shi wùlǐ.
Department	Nǐ zài něi ge xì? ~ Nǐ shi něi ge xì de?
Zài + V	Tā hái zài dúshū.
Studying	Tā zài túshūguǎn xuéxí.
Titles	Lǐ xiàozhǎng; Qián jīnglǐ
Introductions	Zhāng lǎoshī, wǒ gěi nǐ jièshao jièshao; zhè<i wèi> shi…
Nice to meet..	Jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng; hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ.
Understand?	Kàndedǒng ma? / Néng kàndǒng yìdiǎnr.
Work	Tā zài Cháng Chūn gōngzuò. / Tā gàn shénme huó ne?
Used to doing	Zhōngguó cài nǐ chīdeguàn ma?
Rice, wheat	Běifāng rén bǐjiào xǐhuān chī miàntiáo, nánfāng rén bǐjiào xǐhuān chī mǐfàn.
Someone…	Yǒu rén wèn wǒ….

Exercise 8

Vocabularly practice: Incorporate each of the following in a brief phrase that shows you know the meaning, eg: shàngwǔ > jīntiān shàngwǔ.

juéde	jièshao	fēicháng	jīchǎng
yàoshi	yǐjing	yídìng	yígòng
xiāoxi	xiànzài	mǐfěn	máfan
yìqiān	yǐqián	qiánmiàn	mùqián
shíchā	zhuānyè	shàngwǔ	xiàwǔ
duōshao	dōu shì	zuǒbianr	gànhuó<r>
jiǔyǎng	yángjiǔ	shàngbān	jīngcháng
zhōngwǔ	Zhōngwén	zhōngtou	zhōngbù
bàngōngshì	yánjiūshēng	jīchǎng	chǎngzhǎng
niánjì	mǐfàn	xīfàn	yěxǔ

4.14 Rhymes and rhythms

a) First, a traditional rhyme for the (lunar) new year which mentions several new-year customs, such as buying new clothes and setting off fire crackers.

Xīnnián dào, xīnnián dào,	New year arrives, new year arrives
chuān xīn yī, dài xīn mào,	wear new clothes, wear new hat
pīpī pāpā fàng biānpào!	*pipi papa* set-off firecrackers.

b) This next rhyme tells the story of life in a factory – from the workers' point of view:

Èrlóu sānlóu, chángzhǎng shūjì	2nd floor, 3rd floor, factory-head sect'y
sìlóu, wǔlóu, qīnqi guānxi,	4th floor, 5th floor, kin connections
gōngrén jiējí, dǐngtiān-lìdì,	workers (social) class, salt-of-the-earth
zhīzú chánglè, zán bù shēngqì.	be content with one's lot, we not angry.

[Overheard at a seminar on Chinese language teaching, Harvard, 2002.]

Notes:

shūjì	secretary of a political or other organization ('book-note+down')
dǐngtiān-lìdì	be of indomitable spirit ('support-sky set+up-ground')
zhīzú chánglè	be content with one's lot and be happy ('know-enough happiness')
zán	a reduced form of zámen

Appendix 1: Courses of study and university names

1. Courses of study

yǔyánxué	linguistics (language-study)
wénxué	literature (writing-study)
bǐjiào-wénxué	comparative literature
lìshǐ<xué>	history
rénlèixué	anthropology (man-kind)
yīnyuè	music
shāngyè	business (business-occupation)
guǎnlǐ<xué>	management (manage-study)
chéngshì-guǎnlǐxué	urban planning (city-manage-study)
jiànzhù<xué>	architecture
jīngjì<xué>	economics
wùlǐ<xué>	physics (things-principles)
huàxué	chemistry (transformation-study)
shēngwù<xué>	biology (life-matter)
yíchuánxué ~ jīyīnxué	genetics (heredity-study ~ gene-study)
dànǎo-rènzhīxué	brain and cognitive science
shùxué	mathematics (number-study)
yīxué	medicine

engineering

gōngchéng<xué>	engineering
jìsuànjī<xué> [Mainland]	computer science (calculate+machine)
diànnǎo<xué> [Taiwan]	computer science (electric-brain)
diànzǐ gōngchéng<xué>	electrical engineering
tǔmù gōngchéng<xué>	civil engineering (earth-wood)
jīxiè gōngchéng<xué>	mechanical engineering
hángkōng gōngchéng<xué>	aeronautical engineering
hángkōng hángtiān<xué>	aero-astro (aviation space+flight)
cáiliào gōngchéng<xué>	material science (material engineering)

2. The names of universities

Most non-Chinese universities have sinicized versions of their names, eg: Gēlúnbǐyà Dàxué 'Columbia University'. There are some exceptions: the Chinese names for Oxford and Cambridge Universities are translations of their etymological meanings, ie Niú Jīn 'Ox-Ford' and Jiàn Qiáo 'Cam-Bridge' [the Cam being the name of the river that runs through Cambridge]. MIT is also translated: Máshěng Lǐgōng Xuéyuàn, literally 'Massachusetts Science Institute'. The names of Chinese Universities often combine a location with dàxué 'university (big-learning)'. Some university names can be shortened: eg Běijīng Dàxué > Běi Dà; Táiwān Dàxué > Tái Dà. Here, for reference, are the names of some other well-known universities:

a) Non-Chinese

Kāngnǎi'ěr Dàxué ~ Kāng Dà	Cornell University
Gēlúnbǐyà Dàxué ~ Gē Dà	Columbia University
Hāfó Dàxué	Harvard University
Yēlǔ Dàxué	Yale University
Pǔlínsīdùn Dàxué	Princeton University
Dùkè Dàxué	Duke University
Shǐtǎnfú ~ Sītǎnfú	Stanford University
Bókèlì Dàxué	UC Berkeley
Mìxīgēn Dàxué	University of Michigan
Míngdé Dàxué ~ Míng Dà	Middlebury College, Vermont
Lúndūn Dàxué	London University
Niú JīnDàxué	Oxford University
Jiàn Qiáo Dàxué	Cambridge University
Àozhōu Guólì Dàxué (Ào Dà)	Australian National University (ANU)

b) Chinese:

Běijīng Dàxué ~ Běi Dà	Peking University, in n.w. Beijing
Qīnghuá Dàxué	Tsinghua University, in n.w. Beijing
Běijīng Shīfàn Dàxué ~ Běishī Dà	Beijing Normal University
Běijīng Hángkōng (Hángtiān) Dàxué ~ Háng Dà	Beijing University of Aeronautics [and Astronautics]

Rénmín Dàxué ~ Rén Dà	People's University, Beijing
Nánkāi Dàxué (~ Nándà)	Nankai University, in Tianjin
Nánjīng Dàxué ~ Nándà	Nanjing University, in Nanjing
Fùdàn Dàxué	Fudan University, in Shanghai
Jiāotōng Dàxué	Shanghai Jiaotang ('Communications') U.
Zhōngshān Dàxué	Sun Yat-sen University, Canton
Guólì Táiwān Dàxué~ Tái Dà	National Taiwan University, in Taibei

Appendix 2: The 45 most common surnames

Though it is peculiar to present surnames as sound alone, without characters, it is useful for learners to be familiar with the pronunciation of at least the most common surnames. So 45 names (including those already encountered) are provided below. They are organized in groups of 10, each with an exemplar from Chinese history. The frequency list of surnames is taken from Shan Lin's *What's in a Chinese Name* (Singapore: Federal Publications, 1981). According to this book, the first 10 names account for 40% of the population, the second 10, for 10%, the third ten, for 10% and the all 45, for 70% of the population (p.17).

Since many Chinese resident in the US and Europe are of Cantonese or other heritage, the varied spelling of surnames frequently conforms to the sound of regional languages. To give some sense of this range, Cantonese pronunciations are also provided, on the right, in the Yale system of romanization. In this system, Cantonese is analyzed as having three tones in two registers, one high and one low. The high set is marked as á, a, and à, and the low set as áh, ah, and àh (with 'a' standing in for all vowels).

Xìng	*Example*	*Cantonese pronunciation*
Zhāng	Zhāng Xuéliáng (1901 - 2001) NE China leader in 1920s	Jeùng
Wáng	Wáng Ānshí (1021 - 1081) poet and reformer	Wòhng
Lǐ	Lǐ Sī (3rd C BCE) chancellor to Qín emperor	Leíh
Zhào	Zhào Zǐyáng (1919 - 2005) PRC politician	Jiuh
Chén	Chén Yì (1901 - 72) PRC military commander	Chàhn
Yáng	Yáng Guìfēi (8th C) famous concubine	Yeùhng
Wú	Wú Sānguī (17th C) general who 'let the Manchus in'	Ngh (`)
Liú	Liú Bāng (247-195 BCE) 1st emperor of Hàn	Laùh
Huáng	Huángdì (trad. 2698 - 2598 BCE) Yellow Emperor	Wòhng
Zhōu	Zhōu Ēnlái (1898 -1976) first PRC premier	Jaù
Xú	Xú Zhìmó (1896 - 1931) poet and essayist	Cheuìh
Zhū	Zhū Yuánzhāng (1328 - 1399) 1st Ming emperor	Jyù
Lín	Lín Biāo (1907 - 1971) once designated to succeed Máo	Làhm
Sūn	Sūn Yìxiān (1866 -1925) Sun Yat Sen aka Sūn Zhōngshān	Syùn
Mǎ	Mǎ Yuán (14BCE - 49) conqueror of Vietnam in 42 AD	Máh
Gāo	Gāo Chái (6th C BCE) a disciple of Confucius	Goù
Hú	Hú Shì (1891 - 1962) promoted vernacular writing	Wùh

Zhèng	Zhèng Hé (15th C) led voyages to SEA and Africa	Jehng
Guō	Guō Mòruò (1892 -1978) playwrite, writer	Gok
Xiāo	Xiāo Hé (2nd C BCE) advisor to Liú Bāng	Siù
Xiè	Xiè Xiǎo'é (8th, 9th C) avenged death of kin	Jeh
Hé	Hé Diǎn (436 - 504) reclusive scholar	Hòh
Xǔ	Xǔ Xùn (240 - 374) magician and dragon slayer	Heúi
Sòng	Sòng Qínglíng (1892 -1982) wife of Sun Yatsen	Sung
Shěn	Shěn Yuē (441 - 513) scholar with double-pupil eyes	Sám
Luó	Luó Gōngyuǎn (8th C?) magician	Lòh
Hán	Hán Yù (768 - 824) Tang scholar	Hòhn
Dèng	Dèng Xiǎopíng (1904 -1997) post-Mao leader	Dahng
Liáng	Liáng Qǐchāo (1873 -1929) early 20th C intellectual	Leùhng
Yè	Yè Míngshēn (1807 - 60) Governer of Canton	Yihp
Fāng	Fāng Guózhēn (14th C) pirate, and governor	Fòng
Cuī	Cuī Jiàn, PRC's first major rock star	Cheùi
Chéng	Chéng Miǎo (3rd C BCE) inventor of small seal characters	Chìhng
Pān	Pān Fēi (5th-6th C) concubine, intro' foot binding?	Poòn
Cáo	Cáo Cāo (155 - 220) general from 3 Kingdoms period	Chouh
Feng	Féng Yǒulán (1895 -1990) philospher	Fuhng
Wāng	Wāng Lái (18th C) mathematician	Wòng
Cài	Cài Shùn (1st C) one of the 24 examples of filialpiety	Choi
Yuán	Yuán Shìkǎi (1859 -1916) first president of ROC	Yùhn
Lú	Lú Shēng (8th C) young lad in the Dream of Yellow Millet	Loùh
Táng	Táng Yín (1470 -1523) scholar and painter (Sūzhōu school)	Tòhng
Qián	Qián Liú (851 - 932) warrior prince	Chìhn
Dù	Dù Fǔ (712 -70) reknowned poet	Douh
Péng	Péng Zǔ (2nd millennium BCE) a Chinese Methuselah	Pàhng
Lù	Lù Yú (9th C) famous hermit	Luhk

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