

Lesson 4

Hǔ sǐ liú pí, rén sǐ liú míng.

Tiger dies leaves skin, person dies leaves name!

Classical Chinese saying

I. Time Phrases

1. Order of elements: topic--comment

Phrases conveying ‘time when’ (as opposed to duration) and ‘place where’ generally appear before their associated verb:

Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng chī le.

We ate on the plane.

Wǒmen zài cāntīng chī le.

We ate at the cafeteria.

Tā zuótiān bù shūfu, kěshì 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?

Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, hěn lèi, yě hěn jǐnzhāng.

Typically, first position in a Chinese sentence introduces the topic, and what follows is a comment on that topic:

Zuótiān tā zěnmeyàng?

[Let’s talk about] yesterday: how was he?

Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, jīntiān hǎo le.

[contrasting the two days]

Tā zuótiān zěnmeyàng?

[Let’s talk about him:] how was he
yesterday?

*Tā zuótiān bù shūfu, hěn lèi,
yě hěn jǐnzhāng.*

*He wasn’t well yesterday; he was tired,
and anxious.*

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’. (The character for wǔ ‘noon’, 午, was originally a picture of a sundial.)

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 words zhōng ‘clock’ (originally ‘bell’). Zhōng is measured out by diǎn ‘dots; points’ to form phrases such as jiǔ diǎn zhōng (reduceable to jiǔ diǎn) ‘9 o’clock’. Time is questioned with jǐ: jǐ diǎn zhōng. In asking or giving clock time, a le is often present in final position suggesting ‘by now’. Complex time phrases in Chinese move from large units to small: zǎoshàng jiǔ diǎn ‘9 in the morning’; míngtiān xiàwǔ sān diǎn ‘tomorrow afternoon at 3’.

Xiànzài jǐdiǎn <zhōng> le? <i>Shídiǎn.</i>	What time is it now? <i>[It’s] 10:00.</i>
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Zǎoshàng jiǔdiǎn dào shídiǎn yǒu kè.	I have a class from 9 -10 in the morning.
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Zhōngwén kè shì jiǔdiǎn dào shídiǎn.	Chinese class is 9 -10.
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b) Details

Fēn, literally ‘divide; a part’, is used for minutes (as well as cents); seconds are miǎo – both are measure words.

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’:

Xiànzài jiǔdiǎn bàn le.	It’s now 9:30.
Xiànzài jiǔdiǎn sānshí fēn le.	

Quarter to and quarter past are expressed with kè, literally ‘a cut’ (derived 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 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, 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	

3. Time of events

Meals are named by time of day plus roots such as fàn ‘rice; food; meals’, cān [tsān!] ‘meal’, or in the case of breakfast, diǎn ‘snack’.

zǎofàn	zhōngfàn	wǎnfàn
zǎocān	zhōngcān	wǎncān
zǎodiǎn		

Since so many students have little more than a cup of coffee or a glass of juice for breakfast, it will be useful to learn a few expressions to go with the verb hē ‘drink’. So here are some drinks:

kāfēi	chá	júzhishuǐ	chéngzhī	guǒzhī	niúǎi
coffee	tea	orange juice (tangerine)	orange juice	fruit juice	milk

It is also useful to be able to express some uncertainty about time, with ‘hedging’ words such as yěxǔ ‘maybe; probably; possibly’, dàgài ‘approximately; probably’ (also a noun meaning ‘rough idea’), or chàbuduō ‘approximately (less-not-much)’. The last two are more likely to be used when estimating an amount, or a time.

For now, it will only be possible to ask generic questions, such as ‘what time do you eat breakfast?’; questions about the past introduce a number of complications that will be dealt with in later lessons. 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 (or chángcháng)	‘often’
píngcháng	‘usually’
jīngcháng	‘frequently; often; regularly’
tōngcháng	‘generally; normally’.

Example dialogues

1. Zhōngguó rén píngcháng jǐ diǎn chī zǎofàn? What time do Chinese usually eat breakfast?

Dàgài liù dào qī diǎn ba. About 6 or 7. How about
Měiguó rén ne? Americans?

Měiguó rén ne, jīngcháng jiǔ diǎn shàng bān. 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 shì
zhèi yàng. 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. Jīdiǎn shàng kè? Jīdiǎn xià kè? What time does class start? What time
do [you] get out of class?
*Wǒmen chàbuduō shí diǎn shàng
kè, shíyī diǎn xià kè. We start class at about 10 and end at 11.*
4. Chī zǎofàn le méi? Have you eaten breakfast?
- Hái méi. Not yet*
- Nǐ bú shì jiǔ diǎn yǒu kè ma? Don't you have a 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 I don't feel like [any], I'll just have
kāfēi jiù xíng le. coffee [and that'll be fine.]*

Notes

- Xīfàn 'watery-rice', a kind of gruel, to which pickles, preserved meats, vegetables and other items are added; called zhōu in some parts of the country.
- Miàntiáo 'wheat[flour]-lengths', generic for noodles.
- Nǐ bú shì... 'isn't it the case that...'
- Yǐjīng ADV 'already', often with le.

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 often runs from 12 – 1:30 or even 2:00. Any sort of official meeting begins punctually. Here are some very basic queries on business hours:

Yíngyè shíjiān jǐ diǎn dào jǐ diǎn?	What are [your] business hours?
Nǐ jǐ diǎn kāi mén?	When do you open (open door)?
Jǐ diǎn guān mén?	When do you close (close door)?
Jǐ diǎn dǎ yáng?	When do [you] close up? ('douse fire')
	<i>[colloquial and more northern]</i>

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 shift for summer time (*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 lihai.	The time lag / jet lag is bad!
Wo háishi hěn lèi -- yīnwèi shíchā.	I'm still tired – because of the time lag.

Exercise 1. 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, just have 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.

II. DE

As noted in L-1, the addition of *de* to a pronoun turns it into a possessive pronoun:

nǐ de lǎoshī	your teacher
tā de bàogào	her report

It also turns a noun into an attribute of another noun, serving a function similar to the 's or s' of written English, or to a preposition such as 'on' or 'of':

Zhāng xiānshēng de xíngli	Mr. Zhang's luggage
Mǎ shīfu de dìdi	Master Ma's younger brother
xuéshēng de zuòyè	students' homework
jīntiān de bào	today's newspaper
Àoyùnhuì de xiāoxi	a report on the Olympic Games
Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi	a report on the World Cup

Notes

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

The attribute function of de is particularly common in expressions that identifying particular words – or characters:

shēngrì de shēng	the <i>sheng</i> of 'birthday'
Dōngnánxībēi de xī ma? <i>Bù, xiāoxi de xī</i>	The <i>xi</i> of 'NSEW'? <i>No, the xi of 'news-report'.</i>
Wǒ xìng Lù (路)!	My [sur]name' s Lu.
<i>Dàlù de Lù (陆) ma?</i>	<i>The Lu of 'mainland' ?</i>
<i>Bù, mǎlù de Lù (路).</i>	<i>No, the Lu of 'mainroad' .</i>

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.

- i. Zhè shì tā de xíngli. > Zhè shì tā de. These are his.
 Shì xuéshēng de zuòyè ma? > Shì xuéshēng de ma? Are [these] the students'?'
 Nà shì zuótiān de bào.> Nà shì zuótiān de. That's yesterday's.
 Tā shì IBM de ma? Is she from IBM?
Bù, tā shì BT de. No, she's from BT.
- ii. Xìng Máo de yě shì lǎoshī ma? Is the person named Mao also a teacher?
Wǒ bú tài qīngchū. I'm not sure.
 Xìng Zhào de shì lǎobǎn, The person named Zhao's the boss; the
 xìng Lǐ de shì tā qīzi. person named Li is his wife.

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?

2. Where de might be expected but is not found

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.

but Zhè shì wǒ de hǎo péngyou. This is my good friend.
 Zhè shì wǒ dìdi. This is my younger brother.

but Zhè shì wǒ de lǎoshī. This is my teacher.
 Zhè shì wǒ shūshu. This is my uncle [father’s y. bro.]

but Zhè shì Chén lǎoshī de jiějie. This is Prof. Chen’s older sister.
 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 generally require an intermediary de to modify a following 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 cannot intercede – or at least, is not required. Such combinations verge on becoming compound words. Compare the following:

lǎo péngyou	old friends
<i>but</i>	
hěn hǎo de péngyou	good friends
hǎo cài	good food
<i>but</i>	
bù hǎochī de cài	food that’s not good

dà yú	big fish
<i>but</i>	
nà me 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: yú dǔ ‘fish stomach’; mǎ chē ‘horse cart’. Those that are not word-like require de: xiàng de bí zǐ ‘an elephant’s nose’; sù shè de dà mén ‘the main door of the dormitory’.

d) Duō (and shǎo) as attributes

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 dì fāng wèi shén me yǒu nà me duō rén? How come this place has so many people?

Nǐ yǒu zhè me duō xíng li! 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:

Wǒ mèi mei de xiān shēng de lǎoshī The teacher of the husband of my younger sister is my uncle’s wife.
shì wǒ shū shu de tài tai.

Exercise 2.

1. Explain that [tomatoes] big one’s aren’t necessarily tasty, and small ones aren’t all bad.
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 – and note that it’s very interesting!
9. Ask how do he (the addressee) feels about present day music?
10. Explain that you don’t usually drink coffee in the morning.

III. Names in detail

1. The form of names

Chinese names are usually either two or three syllables long:

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

Names of four or more syllables are usually foreign:

Zhōngcūn Yángzǐ	(Japanese)
Yuēhàn Shīmìsī	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.)

2. *Xìng*

Surnames (*xìng*) precede given names (*míngzi*). The *xìng* in the Chinese names given above are Wáng, Lǐ, Liú, Dù, Cuī, Jiāng etc.

Xìng are rather limited in number. In fact, an expression for ‘the common people’ is lǎobǎixìng ‘old hundred names’, suggesting that there were only 100 *xìng* – though in fact, there are considerably more (and bǎi in that expression was not intended literally.) Most *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 Lu’s cited in an earlier example); others differ only in only tone, eg: Wáng (王) and Wāng (汪).

A number of surnames have been introduced in previous lessons. Though Chinese find it peculiar to present surnames as sound alone without characters, it is useful to be

familiar with the pronunciation of common names before you have learned the characters for them. So 45 names (including those already encountered) are provided below. They are organized roughly in terms of frequency, each with an exemplar from Chinese history. [The order of *xing* follows that in Shan Lin's *What's in a Chinese Name* (Singapore: Federal Publications, 1981), according to which the first 10 names on the list account for 40% of the population, the second ten, 10%, the third ten, 10% and all 45 cover surnames of 70% of the population. (Wilkinson's list of the ten most frequent surnames includes the same ten but in different order.)

Since many Chinese resident in the US and Europe are of Cantonese or other heritage, the anglicized spelling of surnames frequently conforms to the sound of regional languages. To give some sense of this range, Cantonese pronunciations of *xing* are also provided, using the Yale romanization developed for Cantonese. [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.)] You will notice that Cantonese is conservative in retaining final consonants (Yè ~ Yihp; Guō ~ Gok), but has fewer distinctions in the initial position than Mandarin, a fact illustrated by the fact that the Mandarin surnames Wáng and Huáng are both pronounced Wòhng in Cantonese.

	<i>Example of historical person</i>	<i>Cantonese pronunciation</i>
Zhāng	Zhāng Xuéliáng (1901-), Manchurian warlord	Jèung
Wáng	Wáng Ānshí (1021-1081), poet and reformer	Wòhng
Lǐ	Lǐ Sī (...-208 BC), chancellor to Qín emperor	Léih
Zhào	Zhào Ziyáng (1915-...), PRC politician	Jiuh
Chén	Chén Yì (1901-72), PRC military commander	Chàhn
Yáng	Yáng Guǐfēi (...-756), famous concubine	Yèuhng
Wú	Wú Sānguī (...-1678), general who let Manchus in	Ngh (')
Liú	Liú Bāng (247-195 BC), 1st emperor of Hàn, k.a. Gāo Zǔ	Làuh
Huáng	Huángdì (trad. 2698-2598 BC), the Yellow Emperor	Wòhng
Zhōu	Zhōu Ēnlái (1898-1976), first PRC premier	Jàu
Xú	Xú Zhìmó (1896-1931), poet and essayist	Chèuih
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 (14BC-49), conqueror of Vietnam in 42 AD	Máh
Gāo	Gāo Chái (6th C BC), a disciple of Confucius	Gòu
Hú	Hú Shì (1891-1962), promoted vernacular writing	Wùh
Zhèng	Zhèng Hé (...-1431?), voyaged to E. Africa in Ming dyn.	Jehng
Guō	Guō Mòruò (1892-1978), playwright, writer	Gok
Xiāo	Xiāo Hé (...-193 BC), advisor to Liú Bāng	Siu
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	Héui
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 literary figure, statesman	Hòhn
Dèng	Dèng Xiǎopíng (1902-1999), post-Mao leader	Dahng
Liáng	Liáng Qíchāo (1873-1929), early 20th C thinker	Lèuhng
Yè	Yè Míngshēn (1807-60), Governor of Canton	Yihp
Fāng	Fāng Guózhēn (...-1374), pirate, and governor	Fòng
Cūi	Cūi Jiàn, PRC's first rock star	Chèui
Chéng	Chéng Miǎo (3 rd C BCE), inventor of small seal chars.	Chihng
Pān	Pān Fēi (5th-6th C), concubine, intro' foot binding?	Pòon
Cáo	Cáo Cāo (155-220), general from 3 Kingdoms period	Chouh
Féng	Féng Yǒulán (1895-1990), philosopher	Fuhng
Wāng	Wāng Lái (18th C), mathematician	Wòng
Cài	Cài Shùn (1st C), one of the 24 exemplars of filialpiety	Choi
Yuán	Yuán Shìkǎi (1859-1916), first president of ROC	Yùhn
Lú	Lú Shēng (8th C), young lad in 'Dream of Yellow Millet'	Lòuh
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 Tang poet	Douh
Péng	Péng Zǔ (2nd millennium BC), a Chinese Methuselah	Pàhng
Lù	Lù Yú (...- 804), famous hermit	Luhk

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' (see 4 below); *rǔmíngs* are still common, eg xiǎobǎo 'little treasure'.

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

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 8 month 22 day born....

Kǒngzǐ (*qián* 551 – qián 479): Chūn Qiū **mòqī**, sīxiǎngjiā, zhèngzhìjiā, jiàoyùjiā, Rújiā de **chuàngshǐzhě**. Míng Qiū, zì Zhōngní. **Lǚguó** 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 Lǚ (near modern southeast Qǔbù in Shāndōng.)**

Exercise 3

First, note the word for century, shìjì, and then make use of the question and response formed with de to ask questions, and respond, about people on the list above:

[...] shì shénme shìjì de rén? [...]’s a person from what century?
Tā shì shíjiǔ shìjì de: 1807 nián *He’s from the 19th C: 1807 – 1860.*
dào 1860 nián.

4. Míngzì ('name-character')

Given names (míngzì) are more various and often selected for their meaning (as well as for 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’; Lúo 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 *míngzì* by assigning a particular syllable (often chosen from a poem) to each generation. So for example the *míngzì* of Kǒng Líng huī and Kǒng Líng wén share the syllable (or, rather, the character) líng to mark them as the same generation. Such practices allow people from the same district to work out – and remember - their kinship when they meet.

5. Usage

On the whole, people do not ask names or introduce themselves, but wait to be introduced. But if you do ask a stranger a name (say, someone seated next to you on a train) you would – as noted in lesson 2 -- use the polite form, guìxìng, often with the deferential pronoun nín. And generally, the response would supply xìng and míngzì:

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

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

(Taiwan) Guixìng? / Bìxìng Wèi. (Lit. ‘shabby surname...’)
 (Mainland) Guixìng? / Miǎn guì, xìng Wèi. (Lit. ‘dispense with guì...’)

Exercise 4.

Assuming you were an official of appropriate rank and eminence to address the question, write out how the following people might respond (in the modern world) to <Nín> guixìng?

1. Hú Shì, (20th C. philosopher and reformer, graduate of Cornell University): Wǒ xìng Hú, jiào Hú Shì.
2. Sīmǎ Qiān (the Han dynasty historian):
3. Zhāng Xuéliáng (Manchurian warlord):
4. Hán Yù (Tang dynasty scholar):
5. Yáng Guifēi (courtesan, from the late Tang dynasty):
6. Cūi Jiàn (rock musician):

IV. Years

1. Dates

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
1946	yījiǔsìliù nián
1840	yībāsilíng nián
2000	èrlínglínglíng nián or liǎngqiān nián ‘2 thousand years’

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 special features that will have to wait until a later lesson.

2. Age

While in English, age as well as duration are both given in ‘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 age is counted with suì (originally used for the planet ‘Jupiter’, with its revolutionary period of 12 years, and later for the

yearly cycle of seasons). Thus: shíbā suì '18 years old', èrshíyī suì '21 years old', jiǔ suì '9 years old'.

Because age is crucial to status in China, it is important to discover what a person's age really is. However, the question is usually asked indirectly, by inquiring which of the 12 zodiac signs you belong to (eg rat, ox, tiger, rabbit), and then to infer your generation and thus, your birthyear (details in a later lesson). To ask about other people, the most neutral phrase is duō dà (or, for some speakers, duó dà, with rising tone on duó) 'how old (to+what+degree be+big)', often with a final le ('new situation', suggesting 'so far'). If a verb is present to link the subject with duō dà, it is usually yǒu, not shì, as the example below shows.

Tā duō dà <le>?	How old is she [by now]?
Tā èrshíbā suì <le>.	She's 28.

Tā duō dà <le>?	How old is he [by now]?
Tā zhǐ yǒu bā suì.	He's only 8.

Note

Zhǐ, as it turns out, is not compatible with le in this context; cf. L-7 (II-4-a).

3. Year in school or college

'Year' or 'grade' in school or college is niánjí, a compound consisting of nián 'year' and jí 'level': yìniánjí 'first year (freshman)'; èrniánjí 'second year (sophomore)', etc. The question of 'which year' is formed with the low toned jǐ 'how many; how much'; hence, jǐniánjí 'what year':

Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì jǐniánjí de < xuéshēng >?	Excuse me [may I ask], what grade you're in?
Wǒ shì sìniánjí de < xuéshēng >.	I'm a fourth year student.
Wǒ shì Qīng Huá sānniánjí de xuéshēng.	I'm a 3rd year student at Tsinghua.
Wǒ bú shì xuéshēng.	I'm not a student.
Wǒ shì yánjiūshēng.	I'm a graduate student /'postgraduate'. ('research-student')

V. Subjects of study

1. Major

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

Nǐ de zhuānyè shì shénme?	What's your specialty/major?
Nǐ de zhǔxiū shì shénme?	[Taiwan usage]
Shì wùlǐ(xué).	Physics.
Shì yīnyuè(xué).	Music

2. *Zài* + verb ‘action in progress’

Zài not only occurs with noun objects to form location phrases (*zài bàngōngshì* ‘in the office’; *zài wàitōu* ‘outside’), but it occurs in the adverb position, before a verb, to emphasize ‘action in progress’ – often in conjunction with a final *ne*:

Tā hái zài xǐzǎo.	She’s still eating.
Tā zài kàn bào 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?

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? <i>Chī kǒuxiāngtáng.</i>	What are you eating? <i>Chewing gum (‘mouth-fragrant-candy’)</i>
Nǐ kàn shénme ne? <i>Kàn Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi!</i>	What are you reading? <i>An article on the World Cup.</i>

3. *Studying*

There are a number of verbs used for studying and learning:

xué study; learn	xuéxí study; learn; emulate [Mainland]	dúshū ~ niànshū study at university
---------------------	--	--

Excerpt from an interview

Jiǎ	Nǐ mèimei duō dà le?	How old is your sister?
Yī	Èrshíqī suì	27.
Jiǎ	Tā hái zài dúshū ma?	Is she still studying?
Yī	Duì, tā hái zài dúshū, shì xuéshēng, zài Qīnghuá Dàxué. Xué yīxué de.	Yes, she’s still studying, she’s a student, at Tsinghua University, studying medicine.

Notes

- Qīnghuá Dàxué* in Beijing is usually anglicized with pinyin, ie Qinghua, but the university of the same name in Xīnzhú, Taiwan, is anglicized as Tsinghua, using a different Romanization.
- Yīxué*, literally ‘medicine-study’.

When the question ‘what are you studying’ is not about what you happen 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 ‘what is it that you are studying’ or more literally ‘you be one who studies what’:

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

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.

Jiǎ. Qǐngwèn, nǐ shì něi ge dàxué? Which university are you [at]?
 Yī. Wǒ shì Běi Dà. I'm [at] Peking University [sic].
 Jiǎ. Nǐ shì niàn shénme de? What are you studying?
 Yī. Wǒ shì niàn shāngyè de. I'm studying business.
 Jiǎ Něi ge xì? Which department?
 Yī Zhōngwén xì. The Chinese department

4. Courses of study

Below, for reference, is a list of courses (including those from lesson-3):

yǔyánxué	linguistics (language-study)
wénxué	literature (writing-study)
bǐjiào wénxué	comparative literature
lishǐ(xué)	history
rénlèixué	anthropology (man-kind)
yīnyuè(xué)	music
shāngyè	business (business-occupation)
guǎnlǐ(xué)	management (manage-study)
jīngjì(xué)	economics
wùlǐ(xué)	physics (things-principles)
huàxué	chemistry (transformation-study)
shēngwù(xué)	biology (life-matter)
shùxué	mathematics (number-study)
yīxué	medicine

engineering

gōngchéng(xué)	engineering
jìsuànjì(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	aeronautical engineering
hángkōng hángtiānxué	aero-astro (aviation space+flight)
cáiliào gōngchéngxué	material science (material engineering)

5. *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 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, as follows: 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
Yēlǚ Dàxué	Yale University
Pǔlínshìdùn 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 Jīn Dàxué	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 Shǐfàn 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 Jiaotong (‘Communications’) U.
Zhōngshān Dàxué	Sun Yat-sen University, Canton
Guólì Táiwān Dàxué ~ Táí Dà	National Taiwan University, in Taipei

Exercise 5. Explain:

- that you are [years old];
- that you’re at [university/school];
- that you’re a [grade] student there;

that your major is [...];
that you're in the [...] department;
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.

VI. Forms of Address

We can make a distinction between ordinary forms of address, like Mr. and Mrs. on the one hand, and titles like 'professor' and 'mayor' which convey rank, on the other. Both follow surnames in Chinese (and in some cases, full names).

1. General address forms

For men: xiānshēng 'Mr.; professor (first-born)': Wáng xiānshēng; Wáng Nǎi xiānshēng. Xiānshēng is also a formal term for 'husband' – more for another's husband than for one's own. For a time on the Mainland, xiānshēng was also used as a deferential title for older and eminent professors - male or female; this usage now seems rarer.

For women In the recent past, there have been a number of titles used for addressing women but on the Mainland, though they have regained some currency since the Mao era, they are still not very common. Nowadays Chinese often say they avoid using any of the social (as opposed to professional) titles for women. However, the following are still used outside the Mainland, and in more restricted contexts, on the Mainland as well.

Tàitai 'Mrs. (great; grand)', used with husband's xìng (Zhū tàitai), was avoided as a term of address [on the Mainland] during the Mao years, and it is still rather uncommon there. It is restricted in use to older married women, or [in Taiwan] as a term for 'wife'.

Xiǎojie 'Miss (small-big+sister)', was until very recently a common form of address for younger women, married or unmarried but always with the woman's xìng: Téng xiǎojie (married to, say, Zhū xiānshēng). It still has some currency, but in recent years, in larger cities on the Mainland at least, the term has come to be associated with sānpéi xiǎojie, '3-keep+company girls' whose name derives from three services they perform. So it tends to be avoided by many, even with a xìng. Nǚshì, a formal term for 'Miss', or 'Ms' – again always with the woman's own xìng -- might be starting to fill the gap, but at present, the preferred form of address for women without professional titles seems to be full name or mingzi. In certain regions, jiě 'older sister' is appended to the xìng to form a name used between good friends: Hóngjiě 'sister Hong'. (Cf. the skipping rope rhyme at the end of lesson-5.) Xiǎojie is also used as a noun meaning 'young woman'.

Fūrén, always with the husband's *xing*, is a formal title for women of eminence (whether by way of their husbands' position, as in the first two of the following examples, or not, as in the last): Hán fūrén [wife of an ambassador], Zhū Róngjī fūrén, and regularly, Dài Zhuō'ěr fūrén 'Mrs. Thatcher'.

2. 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'.

3. Titles

lǎoshī 'professor; master (venerable-teacher)'
Liú lǎoshī. Used for addressing teachers of both sexes, and on the Mainland, for people of other professions as well, so that its meaning is shifting from 'teacher' to 'expert'. For example, people who work in a post office or other government office are sometimes addressed as lǎoshī. [See shīfu, below.] Lǎoshī can be used for self, eg to students: Wǒ shì Liú lǎoshī. Though the expression lǎoshī, hǎo does occur as a passing greeting, a more considered greeting is usually required – one that includes the *xìng*: Wèi lǎoshī, nín hǎo, etc.

jiàoshòu 'professor (teaching-instruct)'
Zhōu jiàoshòu; Zhào Yuánrèn 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

dǎoyán 'director [or films or plays]' Zhāng [Yìmóu] dǎoyán

(...)-zhǎng 'head of; chief of (...)'

eg:	xiàozhǎng	principle of a school	(xiào 'school')
	yuànzǎng	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;
Kělíndùn zǒngtǒng;
Bùshí zǒngtǒng.

zhǔxí 'chairman (main-seat)' Máo zhǔxí

Most of the titles in this list – except lǎoshī – 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 usually 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. Addressing strangers

a) Used by locals or foreigners

The safest course for foreigners may be to avoid forms of address when speaking to strangers, and to simply begin with qǐngwèn 'excuse me'. Otherwise, xiānshēng 'sir', or with care, shīfu 'master' can be used, eg: Xiānshēng, jièguāng, jièguāng 'Sir, can I get through (borrow light)? Shīfu, qǐngwèn, Pān yuànzǎng de bàngōngshì zài nǎr? 'Excuse me sir, [could you tell me] where Dean Pan's office is?'

b) More used by locals (also see under kinterms, below)

shīfu sir; m'am [originally to blue collar workers; to taxi drivers, construction workers etc.]

lǎo shīfu as above, except to older people

lǎobǎn boss [of a shop or small business]

tóngzhì comrade [modeled on Russian usage], in use into the 80s. Tóngzhì was never an appropriate term of address for foreigners to use. Nowadays, it has become an address form between male urban homosexuals.

c) Kin and friendship terms

Chinese, like many cultures (including English in some regions and times) often uses kin and friendship terms for address where no actual relationship exists. Here are some examples, more for reference than for actual use at this stage. Usage varies greatly with region and with age of speaker. Unless otherwise stated, these terms are not used as titles (ie not with a xìng).

shūshu	‘uncle (father’s younger brother)’, to a man of one’s father’s generation, eg child to adult, or young adult to father of good friend.
dàshū	as above, but by older speakers rather than children.
āyí	‘auntie; nanny’, often child to woman of mother’s generation.
bófù	‘uncle’ [f’s elder bro.], used in addressing a male of parents’ generation.
bómǔ	‘aunt’ [wife of f’s elder bro.], used in addressing female of parents’ gen.
dàyé;	(<u>yéyé</u> = ‘grandfather; uncle’); ‘sir’, to old looking men, but not very old.
dà mā	‘madam’ > more in the north (?), to older looking women, but not very old; in southern regions, the term <u>dàniáng</u> may be more common.
dàdiē	(<u>diē</u> , a regional and colloquial word for ‘father’), used in addressing men of one’s father’s generation.
dàshěnr	‘aunty’; more in the countryside, an affectionate term for women of in the 40-50 age range. Also after a xìng: <u>Wáng shěnr</u> ‘Aunt(ie) Wang’.
xiǎo péngyou	‘little friend’ > adult to child.

5. 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 a form of address for people in other professions. Where once one would address a bus driver as sījī shīfu ‘driver master’, one occasionally hears sījī lǎoshī.

Exercise 6

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: | |
| 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 old man whom you meet in a park: | |
| 9 | Your bus driver, named Zhào: | |
| 10 | Your teacher’s husband whose surname is Huáng: | |

VII. 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’.

1. Relational information

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

Zhè shì wǒ (de) ‘This is my....’

a) With de

Zhè shì	wǒ de lǎoshī.	
	wǒ de Zhōngwén lǎoshī.	Chinese teacher
	wǒ de xuésheng	student
	wǒ de tóngxué.	classmate
	wǒ de péngyou.	friend
	wǒ de lǎo péngyou.	old = good friend
	wǒ de lǎobǎn.	boss [slightly jocular]
	Zhāng lǎoshī de xuéshēng	Prof. Zhang’s student

b) Usually without de

Zhè shì	wǒ fùqin.	father
	wǒ bàba.	Dad (intimate)
	wǒ mǔqin	mother
	wǒ māma.	Mum (intimate)
	wǒ gēge.	older brother
	wǒ dìdì.	younger brother
	wǒ jiějie.	older sister
	wǒ mèimei.	younger sister
[not Taiwan]	wǒ àirén	spouse (husband, wife)
	wǒ zhàngfu	husband (neutral)
	wǒ lǎogōng	husband (neutral)
	wǒ xiānshēng	husband (formal)
	wǒ qīzi	wife (neutral)
	wǒ lǎopo	wife (informal)
	wǒ xífū	wife (regional)
[more Taiwan]	wǒ tàitai	wife (formal)

2. 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 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 might be the less commonly used lǎotóuzi ‘my old man’.) Terms such as qīzi ‘wife’ and zhàngfu ‘husband’ are fairly neutral terms. Southerners often use xífū<r>, which in many regions, means ‘daughter-in-law’, for wife, eg: Sǎozi shì gēge de xífū. ‘*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 term for spouse (husband or wife), and the phrase zhè shì wǒ àirén is still used on the Mainland. The term causes some giggles among non-Mainlanders, for in Taiwan, àirén sometimes has the meaning of ‘sweetheart’. (Àirén is not the normal word for ‘lover,’ however; that is qíng rén ‘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 your spouse?’

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

3. Responses

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

O Qí lǎoshī, nín hǎo.

Oh, Prof. Qi, how are you?

The response to being introduced to someone of eminence is jiǔyǎng, literally ‘long+time-admire’ – often repeated as jiǔyǎng jiǔyǎng ‘[I]’ve heard a lot about you’. Sometimes dà míng ‘great name’ is added: jiǔyǎng dà míng.

O, Qí lǎoshī, jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng.

Oh, Prof. Qi, honored to meet you.

Another way of showing respect is to respond with a kin term; children and sometimes young adults, for example, may address elders as āyí ‘auntie’ or shūshu ‘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 - and particularly when they are talking to foreigners - will use a phrase hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ (‘very happy know 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!’. There is a variant, hěn gāoxìng jiàndào nǐ ‘very pleased to see you’, which may be more common on taking leave than meeting.

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

4. Dialogues

1. 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.

(CÀI) Wénjiā (f)

CHÉN Huībó (m)

*You [Wèi]

Wèi Cài Wénjiā, zhè shì wǒ de péngyou, Chén Huībó.

Cài Wénjiā, this is my friend, Chen Huibo.

Cài Chén Huībó, nǐ hǎo; wǒ shì Cài Wénjiā.

Chen Huibo, how are you? I’m Cài Wénjiā

Chén Cài Wénjiā, nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo.

Cài Wénjiā, how are you.

2. 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 Eì, nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Huáng, zhè shì wǒ de míngpiàn. Nín guàixìng?

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].

Notes

guì: often [g-way], though some pronounce it more like [g-wee].
jiào: rhymes with xiǎo;
piàn: rhymes with jiàn, xiān
Wēiruǎn de: ‘of ~ from Microsoft (tiny-soft DE)’

3. In China, you will find yourself in situations when you have to talk to children. Here’s a way to start off:

Dà	Xiǎo péngyou, nǐ hǎo.	Hi, little friend.
<i>Xiǎo</i>	(to female) Āyí hǎo. (to male) Shūshu, hǎo.	<i>Hello, auntie. Hello, uncle.</i>
Dà	Xiǎo péngyou chī shénme ne?	What are [you] eating?
<i>Xiǎo</i>	<i>Chī táng ne!</i>	<i>Candy.</i>
Dà	Hǎochī ma?	Is it good?
<i>Xiǎo.</i>	<i>Hǎochī.</i>	<i>Yes.</i>
Dà	Hǎo, xiǎo péngyou, zàijiàn.	Okay, goodbye.
<i>Xiǎo</i>	<i>Āyí / Shūshu zàijiàn.</i>	<i>Bye auntie/uncle.</i>
Dà	Zhēn kě'ài!	Cute!

Notes:

chī...ne: the final ne conveys a tone of engagement or concern that is associated with on-going actions otherwise marked with zài (cf. V-2 in this lesson).
zhēn adverb ‘really; truly’; cp. zhēn yǒuyìsi ‘really interesting’.
kě'ài ‘capable-love’; cf. kěpà ‘frightening’ and kěchī ‘edible’.

Exercise 7

a) Introductions:

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

Liáng:	Nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Liáng, jiào Liáng Mínmǐn.
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.

VIII. Sounds and pinyin

1. Tone combos II

Recall the prototype examples of the six sets of tone combos presented in lesson 2: lǎoshī, hái hǎo, zài jiàn, bú rě, hěn máng, bù gāo. Now we add six more combos- the first three all beginning with level-toned syllables -- for a total of 12 of the 15.

dāngrán	jīnglǐ	gāoxìng
Zhōngwén	Wēiruǎn <small>Microsoft</small>	gōngkè
huānyíng	zhōngwǔ	zhuānyè
xuéxí	kǎoshì	xiàwǔ
píngcháng	lǐbài	shàngwǔ
tóngxué	zhǔrèn	wùlǐ

2. Pinyin words beginning with y and w

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'); or 'y' and 'yng'. So in such cases, instead of upgrading i and u to y and w as before, y and w are **added** to them:

	<i>as a syllable</i>		
ji, drop the j:	i	>	yi
jīn, drop the j:	in	>	yīn
jīng, drop the j:	ing	>	yīng
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	<u>yu</u> is taken [see above]
>> gui, drop the g:	ui >	wei	no syllable wi; rhymes with <u>ei</u>
>> zhun, drop the zh:	un >	wen	no syllable ‘wun’; rhymes with <u>en</u>

3. 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 words borrowed from English:

<i>a) Place names</i>	<i>hint</i>	<i>English</i>
Fóluólǐdá		
Yàlìsāngnà		
Māsàzhūsài		
Nèibùlāsījiā		
Éhài’è		
Élègāng	Yes, it’s a state.	
Zhǐjiāgē	city	
Àidīngbǎo	in Scotland	
Hóngdūlāsī	Central America	
Ālāsījiā		
Àodàlìyà		
Bāxī		
Dálāsī	Texas	
Mìxīxībǐ		
Mìsūlǐ		
Bājīstǎn		

<i>b) Common nouns</i>		
qiǎokèlì or zhūgǔlì	food	
sānmíngzhì	food	
hànbǎobāo	fast food	
qīsī ~ zhīshì hànbǎobāo		
shālā	leafy food	
bīsà bǐng	fast food (<u>bǐng</u> ‘biscuit; cracker’)	
kěkǒukělè		
Màidāngláo		
Hànbǎowáng	wáng ‘king’	

c) People (Mainland usage)

Shāshībǐyà	
Yuēhàn Mí'ěrdùn	poet
Suǒfēiyà Luólán	
Mǎlóng Báilándù	'The horror, the horror!'
Àosēn Wēi'ěrsī	
Gélīgāoli Pàikè	
Yīnggéli Bāomán	
Luósīfú	4 terms
Gé'ěrbāqiáofū	USSR
Shīwǎxīngé	'I'll be back – as governor!'
Jiékèxùn	The singer – not the president!
Pàwǎluódi	Big stage presence!

IX Highlights

1. Topics to practice in class:

Time of lunch, dinner etc.;	age and grade;
estimated times;	major; course of study;
what you drink for breakfast etc.;	which university;
ownership of items;	introductions and greetings.

2. Vocabulary practice:

Incorporate each of the following in a brief phrase that shows you know the meaning:

yěxǔ	zhuānyè	jīngcháng
shàngwǔ	juéde	yánjiūshēng
xiàwǔ	duōshao	niánjí
shìjì	dōu shì	xuéxí
jiǔyǎng	Zhōngwén	shàng bān
shíchā	zhōngwǔ	sān diǎn bàn
yàoshi	yíjīng	yídìng
xiāoxi	xiànzài	yīxué

X. Rhymes

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, chuān xīn yī, dài xīn mào, pīpī pāpā fàng biānpào!	new year arrives, new year arrives wear new clothes, wear new hat <i>pipi papa</i> set-off firecrackers
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b) This next rhyme tells the story of life in a factory – from the workers’ point of view:

Èrlóu sānlóu, chángzhǎng shūjì sìlóu, wǔlóu, qīnqi guānxi, gōngrén jiējí, dǐngtiān-lìdì, zhīzú chánglè, zán bù shēngqì.	2nd floor, 3rd floor, factory-head sect’y 4th floor, 5th floor, kin connections workers (social)class, salt-of-the-earth be content with one’s lot, we not angry
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[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 (‘know-enough happiness’)
zán	a reduced form of <u>zámen</u>

