Unit 5

Huó dào lǎo, xué dào lǎo, [hái yǒu sān fēn xuébudào]!
live to old-age, study to old-age, still have 3 parts [of 10] study-not-reach

Said of a difficult course of study – like learning Chinese.
Often, only the first half of the saying is cited, with the second half left understood.

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5.1 Tone contrasts

In reading the follow sets aloud, focus on the tones, as well as the occasional tone shift:

a) Feicháng mēn. b) Mēn jīle. c) Yǒu yídiǎnr mēn.
Feicháng lèng. Lèng jīle. Yǒu yídiǎnr lèng.
Feicháng rè. Rè jīle. Yǒu yídiǎnr guì.

d) Juéde hēn mēn. e) Mēn-sīle. f) Hǎo mēn a!
Juéde hēn nán. Māng-sīle. Hǎo máng a!
Juéde hēn lèng. Lèng-sīle. Hǎo lèng a!
Juéde hēn lèi. Rè-sīle. Hǎo guì a!

Notes
a) Mēn ‘stuffy; close’; cf. mēnrè ‘muggy’;
b) Sǐ ‘to die’; SV-sīle ‘SV to death’, ie ‘extremely’; perhaps more used by females in China.
c) Hǎo can function as an adverb with SVs, meaning ‘very; so’.

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5.2 One thing OR another

5.2.1 Vocabulary
First some pairs of words (some of which you have encountered), and some verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nouns</th>
<th>lóushàng</th>
<th>píjiū</th>
<th>Zhōngguó cài</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nánde</td>
<td>lóushàng</td>
<td>píjiū</td>
<td>Zhōngguó cài</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nüde</td>
<td>lóuxià</td>
<td>qishuí&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>wàiguó cài</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>male</th>
<th>upstairs</th>
<th>beer</th>
<th>Chinese food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>downstairs</td>
<td>beverages</td>
<td>foreign food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verbs</th>
<th>zui</th>
<th>děi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zhàozhào yào qù xǐhuan zui děi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look for want go [to] like; prefer most; very must; have to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 Or
In English, ‘or’ sometimes has an inclusive meaning similar to ‘and’:

I drink tea or coffee in the morning, beer in the evening.
Do you have any classes on Saturday or Sunday? / No, none.

However, ‘or’ in English also appears in ‘disjunctive questions’, where it links alternatives. In the latter case, a distinct pause can appear before ‘or’:

Will you have tea… or coffee? / Tea please.
Are you in the morning class… or the afternoon? / The afternoon.

In Chinese, the two ‘ors’ – the inclusive, and the disjunctive -- are expressed differently. The first is expressed with huòzhě (or huòshí or simply huò). As a conjunction, it can appear between nouns -- or nounphrases:

Jīntiān huòzhě míngtiān dōu xǐng. Today or tomorrow are both okay.

Báishikēlè huò kékǒukēlè dōu kěyí. Pepsi or Coke, either one is fine.

Wǒ zǎoshàng hē chá huòzhě kāfēi, wǎnshàng hē píjiū. Mornings I drink tea or coffee, evenings I drink beer!
The second ‘or’ – the alternative ‘or’, which is typically (but not exclusively) found in questions – is expressed with háishi (which in other contexts, means ‘still’). Unlike huòzhě, háishi is an adverb, so it needs to be followed by a verb (as in ii below). However, where the verb would otherwise be shì (see i below), háishi alone suffices – *háishi shì does not occur.

i.  Hé Bó shì nánde háishi núde?  
    Hé Bó ne, tā dāngrán shì nánde!  
    Tā shì Méiguórén háishi Zhōngguórén?  
    Yēxū shì Méiguórén.  
    Shi nǐ de háishi tā de?  
    Dāngrán shì tā de, wǒ nǎlǐ huì yǒu zhème nánkǎn de xiézǐ?!  
    Nǐ shì běnkēshēng háishi yánjìūshēng?  
    Wǒ shì ěrniānjì de yánjìūshēng.  

ii. Hē chá háishi hē kāfēi?  
    Chá hǎo, xièxiè.  
    Yào chī Zhōngguó cài háishi chī wāiguó cài?  
    Wǒmen zài Zhōngguó yīnggāi chī Zhōngguó cài!  
    Nǐmen qù Bēijīng háishi qù Shànghǎi?  
    Xiān qù Bēijīng.  
    Zhāo Wèi lǎoshī háishi zhāo Zhāng lǎoshī?  
    Zhāo Zhāng lǎoshī.  
    Nà, chǐfàn, nǐmen xīhuan hē píjīu háishi hē qīshūr.  
    Wǒmen bǐ jiào xīhún hái chá.  
    Guílín shì zài nánbiānr háishi zài běiānr?  
    Guílín zài Guǎngxī, zài nánbīānr.  

The response to an ‘or’ question may include a list of items. These may be juxtaposed, or they may be explicitly linked with huòzhě ~ huǒshī ~ huò:
Chá kāfēi dōu xíng. Tea or coffee are both fine.
Chá huòzhě kāfēi dōu xíng. Either tea or coffee will be fine.
Libàisān libāisi dōu kēyī. Wednesday or Thursday are both possible.
Libàisān huò libāisi dōu kēyī. Either Wednesday or Thursday is fine.

Exercise 1.
1. Are you in the morning class or the afternoon?
2. Are you going today or tomorrow?
3. Either Coke [Kēkōu kēlè] or Pepsi [Bāishi kēlè] is fine – it doesn’t matter.
4. Do Koreans drink coffee…or tea in the morning?
5. Do you have Chinese class in the morning or in the afternoon?
6. Do you prefer coffee of tea with breakfast. / Usually either is fine, but today I’m tired, [so] I’ll have coffee.
7. Are you in school, or working? I was in school, but now I’m working.

5.3 At the beginning of class
To show respect, students quite naturally stand when the teacher enters and greet him or her appropriately: Wèi lǎoshi, hǎo. Then still standing, Wèi lǎoshi asks for a count off: yī, èr, sān, sì…. And the conversation under §5.3.1 below ensues; but first, some more vocabulary:

shuāngshù ‘even number’
dānshù ‘odd number’
dàjiā ‘everyone’
bàn ‘partner; mate’
uò bànr ‘act as partner’
zěnmě bàn ‘what to do?’ (‘how manage’)

Notes
a) Shuāng means ‘a pair’, dān ‘a unit’; shù shì shùxué de shù.
b) Dàjiā, literally ‘large family’, figuratively ‘all of us’.
c) Bàn ‘partner’ (a noun) is not related to bàn ‘do; manage’ (a verb); however, bàn is etymologically related to bànr ‘half’.

5.3.1 Dialogues

lǎoshi >> xuéshēng
Wèishénme? Yǐnwèi shuāngshù, dàjiā dōu yǒu bànr.
5.4 Expanding the V+de construction

5.4.1 Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
<td>write [characters]</td>
<td>say [lang.]</td>
<td>do [food]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>speak; talk; say</td>
<td>cook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Zhōngwén</th>
<th>Hányǔ</th>
<th>Zhōngguó huà</th>
<th>SV biāozhūn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Chinese lg</td>
<td>Chinese speech</td>
<td>be proper; correct; standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note

Like chīfān, when no other object is present or can be provided from the context, the verbs in the top row usually appear with the generic objects shown.

5.4.2 Recall: praising language ability

Nǐ shuō+de hěn hǎo.  You speak very well
Nǐ jiāng+de bú cuò.  You speak pretty well.

Nothing can intervene between the verb, shuō and +de, so an object has to be mentioned first, either alone, or with repetition of the verb:

Nǐ Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn biāozhūn.
Nǐ jiāng Zhōngwén, jiāng+de hěn hǎo.
Nǐ Hányǔ shuō+de hěn hǎo.
Zhōngguó huà jiāng+de hěn biāozhūn.

Now, the same construction can be applied to other verbs:

Nǐ de Hánzi bú cuò.  Your characters are pretty good.
Hánzi xiě+de hěn hǎo.  You write characters well.
Tā chàng+de hěn hǎo.  She sings well.
Tā chàng+de bú tài hǎo.  He doesn’t sing very well.
Nǐ chànggē chàng+de hěn hǎo!  You sing well.

Wō zuòfàn zuò+de hěn chà.  I’m a terrible cook.
Nǐ zuò+de bú cuò!  You cook pretty well.

Wō xǐhuān chànggē, dānshi chàng+de bú hǎo.  I like to sing, but I don’t sing well.
Nǐ tài kěqì, nǐ chàng+de bú cuò!  You’re too ‘modest’, you sing pretty well.

Wō xǐhuān zuòfàn kěshi zuò+de bú hǎo.  I like to cook, but I don’t cook well.
Méi guānxì, wōmen qù fāngguăn chīfàn ba, wǒ qǐngkè.  Never mind, let’s go to a restaurant - I’ll treat.

5.4.3  Hui ‘be able’; yídiǎn<r> ‘a bit’
The response to someone praising your language ability is the modest:

Nālǐ, nālǐ <shuō+de bù hǎo>.

To this you can add a sentence with the modal verb hui ‘be able to [of learned abilities]’ and the noun yídiǎnr ‘a bit; a little’, often with final-r.

Wō zhī hui shuō yídiǎnr.  I only speak a little.
Wō zhī hui shuō yídiǎndiǎn.  I speak very little!

Yídiǎnr can appear between an action verb and its object:

Wōmen chī yídiǎnr fàn, hǎo bu hǎo?  Let’s have a bit to eat, okay?
Hē diǎnr qǐshuǐ ba.  Have a soft drink.
Zài zhèr kēyī mài diǎnr dōngxi.  You can do a bit of shopping here.

Contrast this use of yídiǎnr directly after a verb (as part of the object) with the yǒu yídiǎnr pattern, that precedes SVs:

V  yídiǎnr  O
Hē yídiǎnr chá ba.  Why don’t you have some tea.

Subject  yǒu yídiǎnr  SV
Zhè chá yǒu yídiǎnr kǔ.  This tea’s a little bitter.
Exercise 2.
Translate:
1. She speaks very good Chinese.
2. I’m a lousy cook, but I love to eat Chinese food.
3. She speaks [Chinese] quite well, but she doesn’t write very well.
4. You sing well. / Nah, not so well!
5. You speak [Chinese] very well. / No, I only speak a little!
6. Have some tea. / Thanks….This is great – what kind is it?
7. I find coffee a little bitter; I prefer tea.

5.5 Music and musicians

5.5.1 Singers, styles and other vocabulary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gē</th>
<th>yì shòu gē</th>
<th>gēshǒu</th>
<th>gēxīng</th>
<th>bǐjiào xǐhuàn / zuì xǐhuàn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>song</td>
<td>a M song</td>
<td>song-hand</td>
<td>song-star</td>
<td>quite like / most like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a song</td>
<td>singer</td>
<td>star singer</td>
<td>prefer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mǎo Wáng  Jiàkéchóng  Jiékèxùn  Pàwāluódí  Mài Dāngnà
cat king  armor-shell-insects  M. Jackson  Pavorotti  Madonna

| yáogǔn | xīhā | juéshì<yuè> | xiāngcūn-yīnyuè |
| rocknroll | hiphop | jazz | country-music |

| gǔdiān-yīnyuè | mingē |
| classical music | folksongs |

Notes
a) Shǒu ‘M for songs, poems’ and gēshǒu de shǒu are homophones – pronounced the same, but are different words (written with different characters).
b) Zuì ‘most’, eg: zuì dà ‘biggest’, zuì duō ‘most’, zuì nán ‘hardest’ etc.

5.5.2 Dialogue – musical preferences

Nǐ zuì xǐhuàn shènme yàng de yīnyuè? What kinds of music do you prefer? yīnyuè?
Wǒ bǐjiào xǐhuàn yáogǔnyuè hé xīhā. I prefer rock and hiphop.

Nèi ge gēshǒu? Which singers?
Zhōngguó de ma?  Chinese [ones]?
Shì.  Yes.
Xīhuān Zhōu Jiélún, Nà Yīng.  I like Zhou Jielun, Na Ying.
Nà, Xīfāng de ne? And Western ones?
Nà nǐ yě xīhuàn juéshì ma? Do you like jazz too?
Juéshì ne, hái kěshì wǒ bù cháng tīng, tīngbuguàn. Often listen [to it], I'm not used [to it].

5.5.3 Musical instruments
Talking about music often leads to questions about playing musical instruments. Traditional Chinese instruments include the shēng ‘a reed instrument’, the dǐ ‘flute’, the pípa ‘lute’, and various kinds of qín ‘stringed instruments’. Questions about traditional music or instruments can include the SV chuántōng ‘traditional’:

Nǐ xīhuàn Zhōngguó chuántōng de yǐnyuè ma?
Nǐ shuō de shì shēng, dǐ, pípa zhèi yàng de yǐnyuè ma?
Jiūshì a.
Ng, hái kěyí. Wǒ bù cháng tīng nà yàng de yǐnyuè!

You mean (‘what you say is’) music such as shengs, di’s and pipas?
Precisely.
Yeah, it’s okay. I don’t listen to that kind of music much.

Words for modern instruments are mostly based on the traditional names (though jítā is a loanword):

Chinese does not have a single verb corresponding to English ‘play’, that can be used for any instrument (as well as football). The most general is probably tán ‘pluck’, which can be used for almost all stringed instruments (including the piano). However, the Chinese verb huì ‘be able to [of learned abilities]’, unlike its English counterparts such as ‘can’ or ‘be able’, has the virtue of not requiring expression of the skill itself. [The following sentence could, therefore, be literally translated as ‘Can I ask what instrument you are able in?’]

Qǐngwèn, nǐ huì shénme yuèqì?
Wǒ huì tán diānr jítā, kěshì tán+de bú tài hǎo.

Can I ask what musical instrument you play?
I can play some guitar, but I don’t play very well.

Exercise 3.
Hot lines in Kunming:
Hot lines (rèxiàn) – phone numbers which allow you to inquire about a subject for a small charge -- are popular in China – or at least, they were in the year 2000. In the city of Kūnmíng, (zài Yúnnán), you could dial a hotline number to get an explanation of your personality based on your color preferences: those who like red, for example, are warm and enthusiastic (rèqíng) and uninhibited (běnfāng).
Other lines allowed you to select a song and have it played over the telephone. (Such lines are less common now that the novelty has worn off.) Here are some of the selections. You can make your own choice, as well as initiate a brief discussion with the operator along the following lines:

Wéi, wǒ xiǎng tīng yī shǒu gē. Hello, I’d like to listen to a song.
Nèi ge gē xīng? Which singer?
Wǒ yào tīng Cuǐ Jiàn de [gē]. I’d like to listen to one of Cui Jian’s.
Cuǐ Jiàn de nèi shǒu gē? Which one of Cui Jian’s?
Cuǐ Jiàn de Huáfāng Gūniāng ba. Cui Jian’s ‘Flower House Girl’, is it?
Èr líng jiù sān. #2093.
Hǎo, #2093. Okay, #2093.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>singer</th>
<th>sex</th>
<th>song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2093</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn</td>
<td>男</td>
<td>Huáfāng Gūniāng ‘flower house girl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2094</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn</td>
<td>男</td>
<td>Yìwǔ suǒyǒu ‘to have nothing at all’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2095</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn</td>
<td>男</td>
<td>Cuǐ Jiàn de Huáfāng Gūniāng ba. ‘Flower House Girl’, is it? #2093.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2096</td>
<td>Zhāng Xuéyǒu</td>
<td>男</td>
<td>Qīngwāng ‘Web of love’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2097</td>
<td>Zhāng Xuéyǒu</td>
<td>男</td>
<td>Nǐ lèng ĂE xiàng fēng! ‘You’re cold as the wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2098</td>
<td>Wáng Fēi</td>
<td>女</td>
<td>Wǒ yuānyì ‘I’m willing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2099</td>
<td>Wáng Fēi</td>
<td>男</td>
<td>Nǚrēn ‘Woman’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>Tián Zhèn</td>
<td>女</td>
<td>Yēhuā ‘Wild flower’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2101</td>
<td>Tián Zhèn</td>
<td>女</td>
<td>Zìyóu zìzài ‘Free and easy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2102</td>
<td>Kē Yīmīn</td>
<td>女</td>
<td>Āi wǒ ‘Love me’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2103</td>
<td>Dēng Lìjūn</td>
<td>女</td>
<td>Yè lái xiāng ‘Fragrance in the night’ = name of a flower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Verbs of cognition

5.6.1 Knowing
Knowledge of facts is expressed by the verb zhīdào (with the second syllable often fully toned in the negative, bù zhīdào). In southern Mandarin, xiăode is the colloquial equivalent.
Nǐ zhīdao ma? Nǐ xiăo de ma? Do you know?
Bù zhīdào. Bù xiăo de. [I] don’t.
Zhī bu zhīdào? Xiăo bu xiăo de? Do [you] know (or not)?

Tā wěishénme hěn jīnzhāng? Wǒ bù zhīdào ~ bù xiăo de.

Knowing someone, or being acquainted with someone or something, is expressed by a different verb in Mandarin: rènshì. (The same distinction is made in the Romance languages.) Contrast the two usages in the examples below:

Tā shì bu shì Yáng Lán? Is that Yang Lan?
Wǒ bù xiăo de! Shéi shì Yáng Lán? I don’t know. Who’s Yang Lan?

Tā shì Yáng Lán ma? Is that Yang Lan?
Wǒ bù xiăo de, wǒ bù rènshì tā. I don’t know, I don’t know her.

Shi Zhōngguórén ma? Is [she] Chinese?
Bù zhīdào, wǒ bù rènshì tā. [I] don’t know, I don’t know her.

[Yáng Lán used to work for CCTV as a newscaster; she came to the US to attend graduate school at Columbia University, then returned to China to become an immensely popular talk show host.]

5.6.2 Understanding
a) The verb dǒng ‘understand’

Dǒng ma? Dǒng.
Dǒng bu dǒng? Duìbuqǐ, wǒ bù dǒng.

Another word, míngbai, composed of míng ‘bright’ (also seen in míngtiān) and bái ‘white’, means ‘understand’ in the sense of ‘to get it’. Because ‘understanding’ often comes as a breakthrough, both dǒng and míngbai (míngtiān de míng, báitiān de bái) are associated with the ‘new situation’ le.

i) Dǒng le ma? Dǒng le. I understand [now].
Chábuduō le! Just about.
Jīběnhǎng dǒng le! Basically, I do.
Duībuqǐ, hāishi bù dǒng! Sorry, I still don’t get it.

ii) Míngbai ma? Míngbai le! [Now] I get it!

iii) Nǐ dǒng wǒ de yìsi ma? Dǒng. Do you understand ‘my meaning’? I do.

b) Dǒng in a ‘potential construction’
The dialogue in Unit 4 began with the question in which the verbs kàn ‘look; read’ and dǒng ‘understand’ are combined in a phrase mediated by de (which turns out to be
written +de, ie 好): Ni kàndedǒng ma? A positive response would be kàndedǒng; a negative one, kànbudǒng. Tīng ‘listen’ may substitute for kàn if the stimulus is aural rather than visual (see chart below).

The relationship between the two verbs is one of action (kàn) and result (dǒng). The presence of the internal de or bu makes the construction ‘potential’ rather than ‘actual’, so the translation of kàndedǒng is not just ‘understand’ but ‘manage to understand’; similarly, kànbudǒng is ‘not succeed in understanding’. The complete paradigm is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actual</td>
<td>Kànd le.</td>
<td>Méi kànd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tīngd le.</td>
<td>Méi tīngd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential</td>
<td>Kàndedǒng.</td>
<td>Kànbudǒng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tīngdedǒng.</td>
<td>Tīngbudǒng.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[I] understood [it]. [I] didn’t understand [it]

Other examples of the potential construction encountered in earlier units include:

duìbuqī ‘(not worthy of facing); sorry’
shuāibudāo ‘manage not to fall down’
chideguàn ‘be in the habit of eating’
chībuguàn ‘not be in the habit of eating’
tīngbuguàn ‘not be in the habit of listening [to it]’
xuēbuwán ‘not able to learn it completely’

5.6.3 Reporting on questions
Verbs such as zhīdao, as well as wèn ‘ask’, are often used to report on questions. In English, this has some interesting grammatical consequences, as shown below:

Direct speech (schematic)          Reported speech (actual)
I asked: “Where are you going?”    >    I asked where you were going.
We don’t know: “Is he Chinese?”   >    We don’t know whether/if he’s Chinese [or not].
I don’t know: “Why is she so nervous?” >    I don’t know why she’s so nervous.

In English, reporting speech involves grammatical features such as ‘agreement of tenses’ (‘were going,’ not ‘are going’ in the first example), non-question word order (‘where you were going’ rather than ‘where were you going’) and insertion of ‘if’ or ‘whether’ in yes-no questions. Chinese, fortunately, does not require such contortions, as the following examples show.
a) Zhīdào

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct speech</th>
<th>Reported speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ bù zhīdào: “Tā wèishénme hěn jīnzhāng?”</td>
<td>Wǒ bù zhīdào tā wèishénme hěn jīnzhāng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know: “Why is he so nervous?”</td>
<td>I don’t know why he’s so nervous.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is one constraint that needs to be noted, however: if the embedded question is a *yes-no* question, then it must have the *V-not-V* form; it cannot be a *ma-question*. The reason for this is that *ma* functions like the rising question intonation in English – it envelopes the whole sentence, not just a part of it. Some examples will make this clear:

| We don’t know: “Is she Chinese?”                 | We don’t know if she’s Chinese (or not).            |

Notice that the reported speech—the object of *zhīdào* -- always contains a *question-form*, like *shénme*, or a *V-not-V* question.

There are times when *ma* does show up at the end of the sentence, but if it does, it goes with the ‘higher verb’ - *zhīdào*, not with the internal question:

Nǐ zhī bu zhīdào {tā shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén}.

or

Nǐ zhīdào {tā shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén} ma?

b) Wèn ‘ask [a question]’

*Wèn* occurs in expressions such as *qǐngwèn* ‘may [I] ask; excuse me’ and *wèntí* ‘question; problem’. (Yǒu wèntí ma?) The root meaning of *wèn* is ‘ask [a question]’. Questions embedded after *wèn* have the same properties as those after *zhīdào*, eg requiring the *V-not-V* form with *yes-no* questions:

Tā wèn wǒ: “Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén ma?” > Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén.
Tā wèn wǒ: “Nǐ shì shénme difang rén?” > Tā wèn wǒ shì shénme difang rén.

Notice that Chinese does not require repetition of the pronoun in a sentence like the last: ‘He asked me if I were Chinese’ (with both ‘me’ and ‘I’) is usually expressed as: Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén (with only one wǒ).
Exercise 4.

a) Translate the following:
1. Wǒ bù zhīdao tā de yàoshi zài nàr.
2. Tā wèn wǒ yòu méiyǒu hùzhào.
3. Wǒ bù xiǎode tā de guójì shénme.
4. Tāmen wèn wǒ xǐ bù xiǎhuān Shijiè Běi.
5. Tā wèn wǒ jī diǎn chī záodiān.
6. Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì bènkěshēng.

b) How would you say the following in Chinese? Recall that shì bu shì ‘is it the case that’ is often used to question certain assumptions.
1. Do you know who Bǎoyù is? / Sorry, I don’t.
2. I don’t know whether Bǎoyù is hungry (or not).
3. Do you know why Bǎoyù is nervous?
4. He’s nervous because he’s going to see Dàiyú.
5. Do you know if Bǎoyù likes [ài] Dàiyú?
6. We don’t know what Bǎoyù’s surname is.

[Jiā Bǎoyù and Lín Dàiyú are, respectively, male and female characters in the Chinese classic novel Hóng Lóu Mèng ‘Dream of the Red Chamber’.

5.7 Destination

5.7.1 Going places

huíjiā return home
chéng lǐ into town
xiāngxià ‘town in’
wàiguó ‘outside-country’
fēijīchǎng ‘airplane-area’
Cháng Chéng Great Wall

3.7.1 Going places

5.7.2 Where to?

Destination may be expressed directly (i) after the motion verbs, lái ‘come’ and qù ‘go’: lái Běijīng ‘come to Beijing’; qù Běijīng ‘go to Beijing’. The same meaning can also be expressed prepositionally (ii), with the destination placed before lái or qù (both usually untoned) as the object of dào ‘to’ or shàng ‘on’. So the options are as follows:

i. Nǐmen qù nǎr ~ nǎlǐ? Where are you going?
Wǒmen qù Běijīng. We’re going to Beijing.

ii. Nǐmen dào nǎr ~ nǎlǐ qu? same
Wǒmen dào Běijīng qu.
Nǐmen shàng nǎr ~ nǎlǐ qu? same
Wǒmen shàng Běijīng qu.

Though there may be stylistic reasons for choosing the direct pattern over the prepositional, the two patterns are essentially synonymous. The direct pattern accords
with the order of verb and destination in regional languages such as Cantonese and Hokkien and for that reason, is preferred by southern speakers (including Taiwanese). Of the two prepositional options, the shàng qu pattern seems to carry a special nuance of ‘setting off for some place’ so it may be more common in the question than in the answer.

**Other examples**

Tāmen qù shénme difang? Where abouts are they going to?

Wǒmen dào chéng lí qu. We’re going into town.

Wǒmen shàng jīchāng qu -- jiē péngyou. We’re off to the airport -- to meet some friends.

Wǒmen huíjiā. We’re going home.

Notice that ‘go home’ is not expressed with qù but with huí ‘return’.

### 5.7.3 Zǒu versus qù; líkāi versus láidào

Zǒu can also be translated ‘go’, but ‘go’ in the sense of ‘leave’. Zǒu cannot take a specific object; qù can:

Wǒ gāi zǒu le. I should be off.

Wǒ bāyuè sānhào qù Běijīng. I’m going to Beijing on August 8th.

To leave a place can be expressed by the verb, líkāi (with the first syllable identified with the lí associated with jìn or yuǎn):

Wǒmen míngtiān líkāi Běijīng, qù Chángchūn. We’re leaving Beijing tomorrow and going to Changchun.

Líkāi can be paired with the compound verb láidào ‘arrive at; get to’ (best treated as a unit):

Wǒmen xīngqīwǔ wǎnshàng láidào Chéngdū. We arrive at Chengdu on Friday evening.

### 5.7.4 Nǎr ~ nàlǐ as an indefinite

Like shénme, nǎr ~ nàlǐ can also serve as an indefinite – in either the direct pattern, or the prepositional:

Nǐ qù nǎr ~ nàlǐ? Where are you going?

Wǒ bú qù nǎr ~ nàlǐ. I’m not going anywhere (in particular).

Nǐ dào nǎr ~ nàlǐ qù? Where are you going?

Wǒ bú dào nǎr ~ nàlǐ qù. I’m not going anywhere (in particular).
5.7.5 Destination with other verbs.
With the verbs lái and qù, the destination either follows the verb immediately without any mediation (qù Běijīng), or it is governed by dào ‘to’ and placed before the verb (dào Běijīng qù). However, with other motion verbs (such as bà ‘move [one's home]’, zōu ‘walk’, pāo ‘run’, kǎi ‘drive’, destination is placed after the verb, mediated by dào ‘to; towards’ (and sometimes followed ultimately by a toneless lái or qù to indicate direction to or away from the speaker):

Wǒmen bāyuè bān dào Tiānjīn <qu>. In August, we’re moving to Tiānjīn.

Bù néng kāi dào Guīlín, tài yuǎn. [You] can’t drive to Guilin, it’s too far.

Nǐmen pāo dào nǎr? Where are you running to?

The saying at the beginning of this unit also fits the pattern:

Huó dào lǎo, xué dào lǎo… [If] you live till old age, and study till old age….

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lái and qù</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>qù nǎr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qù chéng lǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lái Běijīng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not lái or qù (primarily)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>generic [non-spec.] object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bànjī ‘moving’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zōu dào nǎr?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kǎichē ‘driving’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huǐjīa ‘going home’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7.6 Specifying a time
You can mention a specific time, either a day of the week, or a date. Recall the placement of time words – before or after the subject (if present), but before their associated verb:

Nǐ xiānzài qù shénme difang? Where are you going now?
Wǒ xiānzài qù shàngkè. I’m going to class now.

Bāyuè sān hào wǒ qù Běijīng; I’m going to Beijing on Aug. 3rd;
wǔ hào qù Shànghāi. and to Shanghai on the 5th.
We’re moving house in October.

Where are you moving to?

We’re moving to ‘East Town’.

We’re leaving Zhenjiang [in Jiangsu] on the 3rd, and we’ll get to Lijiang [Yunnan] on the 5th.

5.7.7 Inserting foreign words

Particularly in the early stages of studying Chinese, it is acceptable to insert English nouns into your conversation: Wǒ qù library / cafeteria / airport, etc. Foreign verbs, however, resist insertion into Chinese; instead they are recast as nouns attached to a general Chinese verb such as zuò ‘do; make’. So ‘reserve’ might appear as zuò yí ge reservation. The main thing is to establish your credentials by producing the grammatical framework of the sentence – which includes the verb - with confidence.

Exercise 5.

Explain that:

- they’ve gone home.
- they’ve already left Beijing.
- they’re moving to the countryside.
- they’re going abroad.
- they’re going to the airport to meet someone.
- you should be leaving.
- you’re not going anywhere this evening because you’re so tired.
- you’re driving to the airport this afternoon.
- you’re going to Kunming on the 9th and Guilin on the 12th.

5.8 Purpose

5.8.1 The verb kàn ‘look at’

The verb kàn, whose root meaning is ‘look at’, may, in combination with different objects, show a wide range of English translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kànshū</td>
<td>to read (look+at books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kànbào</td>
<td>read the newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn diànyīng</td>
<td>see a movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn diànshì</td>
<td>watch TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn Hóng Lóu Mèng</td>
<td>to read The Dream of the Red Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn péngyou</td>
<td>visit friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn qīnqī</td>
<td>visit relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn dítú</td>
<td>look at a map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn bìng</td>
<td>see a doctor; see a patient (look+at illness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn rènáo</td>
<td>go where the excitement is (look+at hubbub)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.8.2 Other things to do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mǎi dōngxi</td>
<td>VO</td>
<td>shop (‘buy things’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuò gōngkè</td>
<td>VO</td>
<td>do homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qū yīfū</td>
<td>VO</td>
<td>pick up [one’s] clothes (‘get; fetch clothes’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāihuì</td>
<td>VO</td>
<td>hold / attend a meeting; conference (‘open-meeting’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōngzuò</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>to work [also N ‘a job’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duànliàn</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>exercise; workout; train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǔndòng</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>exercise; do sports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both duànliàn and yǔndòng, being repetitive actions, are often doubled: qù duànliàn duànliàn; qù yǔndòng yǔndòng. Cf. kànkan ‘take a look’.

5.8.3 Reasons for going somewhere

The verb qù, with or without an explicit destination, may be followed by an expression of purpose; if the destination is present, then it precedes the purpose (as it does in English):

Wǒmen qù <Běijīng> kàn péngyou. We’re going <to Beijing> to visit friends.
Tā qù <túshūguān> zuò gōngkè. He’s going <to the library> to do his hwk.

Purpose can be questioned by zuò shénme, gàn shénme, gānmá, all literally ‘do what’; the particle, ne, associated with close engagement, may also appear:

Nǐ qù túshūguān zuò shénme <ne>?
Nǐ qù túshūguān gàn shénme <ne>?
Nǐ qù túshūguān gānmá <ne>?

The verb gàn, common as the ordinary word for ‘do; make’ in northern China, is avoided by polite circles in Taiwan and overseas communities because of sexual overtones. Gānmá often carries overtones of disbelief, particularly when followed by ne: Gānmá ne? ‘What [on earth] are [you] doing?’ A safe strategy is to use zuò shénme but be prepared to hear all three.

5.8.4 Qù and purpose

In purpose clauses, the verb qù ‘go’ may be repeated at, or postponed to the end of the sentence (where it is usually toneless).

Tā qù mǎi dōngxi. She’s going shopping.
Tā qù mǎi dōngxi qu.
Tā mǎi dōngxi qu.

Qù kàn péngyou. [He]’s going to see a friend.
Qù kàn péngyou qu.
Kàn péngyou qu.
Wǒ qù shàngkè. I’m going to class.
Wǒ qù shàngkè qu. Wǒ shàngkè qu.
Tā qù chéng lǐ mǎi dōngxi qu. She’s going into town to shop.
Wǒmen qù Sūzhōu kàn péngyou qu. We’re going to Suzhou to visit friends.
Wǒ qù MIT shàngkè qu. I’m going to MIT to attend classes.

5.8.5 Intention
You can assert your intention or resolution to go somewhere (or do something) with the following verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yào</td>
<td>want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiǎng</td>
<td>think &gt; feel like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dāsuàn</td>
<td>plan; intend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juédìng</td>
<td>decide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of destination plus purpose

Nǐ yào qù nǎr? dāsuàn dào nǎlǐ qu? xiǎng qù shénme dìfang? juédìng dào nǎlǐ qu le?

Wǒmen bāyuè dāsuàn qù Shànghǎi mài dōngxi. In August, we’re going shopping in Shanghai.
Wǒ yào dào Lúndūn qu kàn qīnqi. I want to go to London to visit [my] relatives.
Tāmen qù túshūguǎn xuéxi. They’re going to the library to study.
Shí diǎn wǒ déi qù bàngōngshī kàn láoshī At 10, I have to go to the office to see [my] teacher.
Kěyǐ qù lóushàng zhǎo Chén láoshī. [You] can go upstairs and look for Prof. Chen.
Zámen qù wài tou kàn fēijī ba! Let’s go out and look at the airplanes.
Tāmen juédìng qù Táiwān kàn qīnqi. They’ve decided to go to Taiwan to visit relatives.
Hěn duō rén dōu xiǎng qù Xiāng Gǎng zhǎo gōngzuò. Lots of people would like to go to HK to find work.
Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>intention</th>
<th>destination</th>
<th>purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wōmen</td>
<td>dāsūàn</td>
<td>qù chéng lǐ</td>
<td>mài dōngxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāmen</td>
<td>xiǎng</td>
<td>qù túshūguān</td>
<td>kàn báo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāmen</td>
<td>juédìng</td>
<td>bān dào Běijīng qu</td>
<td>sháng dàxué</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9  In the past

5.9.1  Not having done something [yet]

The non-occurrence of particular events scheduled or expected is regularly indicated by méi<you> before the verb:

- I haven’t washed yet.  Wō hái méi xīzāo.
- They haven’t left yet.  Tāmen hái méi zōu ne.
- I haven’t read today’s paper yet.  Hái méi kàn jīntiān de bào.
- I didn’t read the World Cup report.  Méi kàn Shìjiè Běi de xiāoxi.
- They haven’t arrived yet.  Tāmen hái méi lái ne.
- They didn’t go to Beijing.  Tāmen méi qù Běijīng.
- They haven’t decided yet.  Tāmen hái méi juédìng ne.
- They haven’t gone home yet.  Tāmen hái méi huíjiā.

Notes

a) Recall that hái is frequently accompanied by a final ne to indicate the situation is still unresolved or ongoing.

The negative with méi<you> is generally only applicable to action verbs. Verbs such as juéde ‘feel’, zhīdao ‘know’, yào ‘want’ which express emotional or cognitive states do not normally occur with preceding méi<you>. Whether a present or a past tense is appropriate for the English translation of such cases has to depend on context.

- Wō zuótiān bù shūfu – wō méi qù.  I didn’t feel well yesterday -- I didn’t go.
- Zuótiān méi qù ma?  Did you go yesterday?
- Méi qù, tài yuǎn, bù xiǎng qù nàme yuǎn.  No, I didn’t, it was too far;
- I didn’t want to go so far.
- Last year, I didn’t know her; nor did I know who her brother was.  Qùnián, wō bù rènshì tā; wō yě bù zhīdao tā gēge shì shéi.
5.9.2 The role of le

Reporting the occurrence of an event – ie the positive version of sentences such as those cited above with méiyou – involves a number of grammatical options, which are better introduced over several lessons. As shown earlier, introducing specific events that have happened usually requires the presence of a final le:

Zhōumò nǐmen qu nǎlǐ le?
Wōmen qu Cháng Chéng le.

Where did you go over the weekend?
We went to the Great Wall.

Jīntiān shàngwǔ nǐ dào nǎlǐ qu le?
Wōmen dào chéng lǐ qu mài dōngxi qu le.

Where did you go this morning?
We went shopping in town.

5.9.3 The position of le

Earlier, you saw sentence-final le with SVs signaling ‘new situation’: Zuótiān bù shūfū, jīntiān hǎo le. ‘[I] wasn’t well yesterday, but [I]’m okay today.’ And you have seen it with V_{act} in association with particular events that have happened: Wō xīzāo le. ‘I’ve bathed.’ However, le is not always sentence final. Under certain conditions, it is also found between a verb and its object. One concrete manifestation of such conditions is the presence of what is often called a ‘quantified object’ after the verb. A quantified object is one containing a number and measure phrase, such as liǎng ge, or as below, yī tàng ‘a trip’. In such cases, if le is present, it will be placed after the verb and before the quantified object, not at the foot of the sentence.

Zhōumò nǐmen qu nǎlǐ le?
Wōmen qu Cháng Chéng le.
Wōmen qu le yī tàng Cháng Chéng.

Where did you go over the weekend?
We went to the Great Wall.
We went took a trip to the Great Wall.

Notice that there is little difference in meaning between the two options; if you choose yī tàng in your response, le follows the verb, if you do not, it is placed at the end of the sentence. This quantified object rule is important, and you should retain it for future reference. However, at this point, you will not be burdened with examples in which le is placed between verb and object; the examples in this lesson can be expressed quite naturally without use of measure phrases that constitute quantified objects.

A caveat: With action verbs, it is easy to get the idea that le is simply an expression of past tense. However, you will find that it is actually used quite selectively. Just as with SVs, a new situation may be highlighted with le or not, so with V_{act}, the presence of le conveys a heightened relevance, and sometimes suggests more is to follow.
5.9.4 More time expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last year</th>
<th>Last month</th>
<th>Last week</th>
<th>Weekend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jīn nián</td>
<td>zhèi ge yuè</td>
<td>zhèi ge xīngqī</td>
<td>zhōumò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This year</td>
<td>This month</td>
<td>This week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Míng nián</td>
<td>Xià ge yuè</td>
<td>Xià ge xīngqī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.5 Examples, past events

Zuótiān shàng nǎr qu le? Where’d you go yesterday?
Shàng ge yuè, wǒmen dào Shànghǎi qu kàn shūshū qu le.
Zhōumò dào nǎlǐ qu le? Where’d you go over the weekend?
Xīngqīliù wǒmen qù chéng lǐ mǎi shōu jī qu le. Xīngqītiān qù jīchǎng jiē pèngyou le.
Húzhào yījīng qù le ma? Have you already picked up your passport?
Yījīng qù le. Yes, I have. [Note qù vs qǔ.]
Zuótiān méiyōu kè, dào nǎr qù le? No class yesterday, where’d you go?
Méi dào nǎr qù, wǒmen zài jiā lǐ zuò gōngkè ne. Didn’t go anywhere, we stayed at home and did homework.

The last sentence, in particular, serves to remind us that le, although associated with events that have happened, is not a past tense marker.

Exercise 6.

1. On the weekend, we’re going to visit the Great Wall; it’s not far from Beijing.
2. No class tomorrow; we’ve decided to go to the country to visit Mǎ Róng’s uncle.
3. Don’t forget your keys. / My keys, I already have; but I don’t know where my umbrella is.
4. Where have they gone? / They’ve gone upstairs to look for a phone.
5. I haven’t gone to get my visa (qiānzhēng) yet; I’m planning to go tomorrow.
5.10 And

There is considerable disparity in the way English and Chinese express coordination. English makes broader use of coordinating conjunctions, such as ‘and’; Chinese uses the equivalent of ‘and’ in a narrower range of grammatical contexts, and even there, often leaves the coordination unmarked.

Explicit coordination is expressed with gēn (with a range of meaning that includes ‘heel; follow; with; and’) or hé (often pronounced hàn by people from Taiwan). Both are only used to join nouns, pronouns, or more generally, phrases:

Dàlǐ gēn Lijiāng dòu zài Yúnnán de Dali and Lijiang are both in the north-west of Yunnan.

Míngtiān qù chéng lǐ kàn Wáng Tomorrow [I]’m going into town to see Professor Wang and her students.

Nán de gēn núde dōu shuō+de The males and females all speak [it] well.

dōu hǎo.

Lǎoshī, fùmǔ gēn xuéshēng dòu Teachers, parents and students all have to go děi qù. [there].

Regardless of whether a conjunction is present or not, Chinese tends to use the adverb dōu to support the coordination. Dōu does occasionally anticipates upcoming material, but much more often it refers ‘back’ to support already mentioned or implied material, which accounts for the order in the sentence: Wǒ kāfēi pǐjiǔ dòu bù hē.

Gēn and hé are not even optional in settings that involve verbs or clauses, such as those illustrated below. If marked at all, such connections are indicated by adverbs such as yě:

The students are nervous, and so are the teachers. Xuéshēng hěn jīnzhāng, lǎoshī yě hěn jīnzhāng.

They’re going to Beijing to visit friends and shop. Tāmen qù Bēijīng kàn péngyou mǎi dōngxi.

You should, therefore, be careful not to take your cue from English ‘and’. Here are some other examples where ‘and’ in English has no direct counterpart in the Chinese:
I’m fine – and you? Hái hǎo; nǐ ne?  
There are telephones next door and upstairs. Gèbì yǒu diànhuà, lóushāng yě yǒu.  
I eat breakfast at 7 and start work at 8:00. Wǒ qǐ diăn chī zǎodiǎn, bā diǎn shǎngbān.  

5.11 Sports and scores  
Chinese especially enjoy playing pingpong, badminton and football (soccer), and they enjoy watching football (local clubs as well as European and other international clubs), basketball (Chinese and NBA), swimming, and track and field (particularly during the run up to the Olympics). If you choose your topics carefully, you can at least inquire about scores; later (§8.1), you will learn the names of some sports.

Begin with the verbs yíng ‘win’ and shū ‘lose’; in order to avoid complications, we use them in only in the simplest of sentences, as shown. The final le indicates that the contest has already taken place.

Zhōngguó yíng le. China won.  
Bāxī shū le. Brazil lost.

5.11.1 Scores  
Scores are indicated with bǐ ‘compare; than; to’: thus a basketball score might be 99 bǐ 98; football 2 bǐ 0. The scores of low scoring sports can be questioned with jǐ ‘how many’: jǐ bǐ jǐ; high scoring games with duōshǎo: duōshǎo bǐ duōshǎo. Finally, a simple way to mention the two relevant teams is to list them with the conjunctions hé or gēn ‘and’:

Zhōngguó hé Bāxī, shéi yíng le? China and Brazil, who won?  
Riběn hé Táiguó, Táiguó shū le. Japan and Thailand, Thailand lost.

Exercise 7.  
a) Translate:  
1. How about the US and Mexico, who won?  
4. What was the score? / 98 – 92. Boston won. Boston’s pretty good (‘strong’)!  
5. 95 to what? / I’m not sure.  
6. In pingpong [pīngpāngqí], China’s #1; the US is #1 in basketball [lánqiú].

b) Translate:  
1. The tests are hard, and there’s lots of homework.  
2. I’m taking 5 courses and they’re all hard!  
3. Today’s class has 12 men and 12 women in.  
4. Who won the Japan and Korea [match]? (Riběn ‘Japan’, Hánguó ‘Korea’)  
5. The library and airport are both air-conditioned. (N. kōngtiáó)
 Zhōu Shuǎng is a man in his 40s who works in the foreign student office; Zhāng Yīng is the Chinese name of a younger women, an undergraduate from abroad who has been studying at the university for a year. They run into each other just outside the cafeteria.

Zhāng. Zhōu làoshī, nín hǎo. ‘Teacher’ Zhou, how are you?
Zhōu. Ei, Zhāng Yīng, nǐ hǎo. Ah, Zhang Ying, how are you?
Nǐ zài lǐtou a! You were inside!
Zhāng. Shì a, gāng chīwán fàn. Yes, we just finished.
Zhōu. Xiànzài shàng nǎr qu a? Where are you off to right now?
Zhāng. Túshūguān. [To the] library.
Zhāng. Bú shì zuò gōngkè qu, shì kanbào qu. Not to do my homework, to read the paper.
Zhōu. O, kànbiào qu. Oh, to read the paper!
Zhāng. Shi, túshūguān yǒu kōngtiáo, bǐjiào shūfu. Yeah, there’s airconditioning in the library, it’s quite comfortable.
Zhōu. Ng, jīntiān shì hěn rè! Yes, it IS hot, today!
Zhōu. Zhōngwén bào nǐ kàndédǒng ma? Are you able to read Chinese newspapers?
Zhāng. Néng kǎndǒng yìdiǎnr. Shìjiè Běi de xiǎoxī néng kǎndǒng, měi wèntì. I can read some. I can read about the World Cup – no problem [there]!
Zhōu. O, Shìjiè Běi. Zuótiān shì Zhōngguó hé Hánguó, nǐ kàn le míyǒu? Oh, the World Cup! It was China and Korea, yesterday – did you see it?
Zhāng. Kàn le, dāngrán kàn le. Sure, of course I did.
Zhōu. Tài kěxī le, Zhōngguó shū le. It’s too bad, China lost!
Zhōu. Nà, jīntiān shì Yīngguó hē Àgēntíng, shì bù shì?
Zhāng. Shì, Yīngguó yíng le.
Zhōu. Shì ma? Jǐ bǐ jǐ?
Zhāng. Yī bǐ lìng.
Zhōu. Èi, bù cuò, Yīngguó hěn qiáng.
Zhāng. Hái kěyǐ, búguò Bǎixī gèng qiáng, wǒ xiǎng.
Zhōu. Yīngguó hē Bǎixī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
Zhōu. Nà míntiān lībǎiliù, měi kě, nǐ shǎng nár qu?
Zhāng. Mǐngtiān bù dào nár qu, yěxǔ zài jiā lǐ xiūxi xiūxi, kān yídīn. Dànshí, wǒ xǐngqǐtiān dāsuàn dào Tiānjīn qù kàn pèngyou
dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
Zhōu. Yīngguó hé Bǎxī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
Zhōu. Nà míntiān lībǎiliù, měi kě, nǐ shǎng nár qu?
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dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
Zhōu. Yīngguó hé Bǎxī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
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Zhōu. Yīngguó hé Bǎxī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
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Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
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dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
Zhōu. Yīngguó hé Bǎxī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
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dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
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Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
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dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
Zhōu. Yīngguó hé Bǎxī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
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dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
Zhōu. Yīngguó hé Bǎxī shì xià ge lǐbaì ba.
Zhāng. Xià ge lǐba’èr.
Zhōu. Nà míntiān lībǎiliù, měi kě, nǐ shǎng nár qu?
Zhāng. Mǐngtiān bù dào nár qu, yěxǔ zài jiā lǐ xiūxi xiūxi, kān yídīn. Dànshí, wǒ xǐngqǐtiān dāsuàn dào Tiānjīn qù kàn pèngyou
dìǎnshì. Bùguò Bāxī gèng qí, wǒ xiǎng.
Exercise 8.

Explain that:
1. you are going to Beijing to visit friends.
2. you are not going anywhere tomorrow – you have a lot of homework.
3. you’re off to class – Chinese class.
4. you have to go and pick up your [clean] clothes now.
5. you don’t know what date they’re going to China.
6. that’s yesterday’s [paper], today’s is over here.
7. his wife’s luggage is still on the plane.
8. you’re going there to fetch the luggage.
9. your teacher’s outside.
10. you have lots of friends but they don’t understand Chinese.

5.13 Pinyin and sounds

5.13.2 More than two low tones in a phrase
We have now gained enough low toned words to meet strings of more than two. Observe how the following are realized:

1. Yě hěn lěng.      Yě hěn lěng or  Yě | hěn lěng.
2. Wǒ yě hěn kě.     Wó yě | hěn kě.
3. Láo Lǐ yě hěn hǎo. Láo Lǐ yě | hěn hǎo.

The second and fourth examples both have an even number of words (syllables). In such cases, the phrasing tends to be in pairs (as indicated) and the familiar tone shift takes place. But in (1) and (3), where the number of syllables is odd, there may be several options (as seen in the first example): either the phrase is divided into two moras (yě | hěn lěng), in which case the regular rule applies to the second. Or – especially in fast speech - the three form a tonal unit, with the first rising (normally), the second staying high, and the third low: Yě hěn lěng.

5.13.3 The r-suffix
a) Final-r in standard Mandarin
A very few words in standard Mandarin always occur with an r-final:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>érzi</td>
<td>‘child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ěr</td>
<td>‘two’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ěrduō</td>
<td>‘ear’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, a large number of words occur with a suffix ‘r’ in the speech of Beijing and other parts of the northern Mandarin speaking area. Most of these are nouns: kòng ‘spare time’; píng ‘bottle’, wányí ‘toys’, diànyī ‘films’, měnkōur ‘doorway’, xīnyānr ‘heart; cleverness’, wéizuī ‘a bib’, xìngrēnr ‘almonds’, etc. The suffix appears with a few non-nouns as well: shùnsfōur ‘easily; without problem’ and wǎnr ‘have fun’.

One historical source for this - though probably not the only one - is suggested by the writing system which writes the r-suffix with the ěr of ěrzi ‘son’ (儿/兒). Supposedly, ěr was originally attached to nouns in certain contexts as a ‘diminutive’, or expression of ‘familiarity’, but with time, it came to have a much more abstract meaning, ultimately ending up as little more than a marker of familiar nouns. As noted above, very few verbs appear with the r-suffix.

In some cases, the forms with and without –r (which may also show a tonal shift) have distinct though relatable meanings

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mén</td>
<td>door</td>
<td>ménr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kòng</td>
<td>empty</td>
<td>kòngr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dān</td>
<td>unit</td>
<td>dānr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>míng</td>
<td>name</td>
<td>míngr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Southern speakers of Mandarin, who often regard the r-suffix as a northern affectation, can -- and do -- avoid using it in all but those cases like ěr ‘two’ where there is no choice: instead of yǐdiānr ‘a bit’ they will say yǐdiān, instead of kòngr ‘free time’ they will say kōng, relying on only the tone (and context) to distinguish it from the level-toned kōng ‘empty’. In reading, they will often treat the r-suffix as a separate syllable, reading mén-ér, for example, instead of mén [mér].

b) Other cases of final-r
All the words cited above can be found with the r-pronunciation indicated in dictionaries; and for Beijing and other northern speakers, these r-pronunciations are standard. But not all r-usage can be considered standard. Some speakers in the Beijing region and in other parts of the north lard their speech with r’s. The following nursery rhyme, in which every last word has the r-suffix, illustrates. (*This rhyme is found in Chen Zishi, compiler, Beiping Tongyao Xuanji, Taibei: Dà Zhongguo Guoshu Gongsi, 1969, p. 94.)*

Qiòng tàitaitai

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qiòng tàitait</td>
<td>poor wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bàozhe ge jiānr,</td>
<td>holds [her] shoulders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chīwān le fānr</td>
<td>eat-finish LE food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rào le ge wānr,</td>
<td>go+round LE the corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yòu mài bīnglàng yòu mài yānr.</td>
<td>and buy betel and tobacco.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note

Bīngláng (derived from the Indonesian/Malay word *pinang*) is the areca nut, the main ingredient in chewable betel quids that are popular in Taiwan, south China, and in Southeast Asia. Chewing betel cleans the teeth, helps with digestion, and provides a pleasant sensation in the mouth and head. It also makes your saliva red and viscous – and leads to excess expectoration.

c) Pronunciation

You will have observed that some of the *r-words* look quite unpronounceable, particularly those ending in ‘nr’ or ‘ngr’ (*yìdiăn*, *yìngr*). It turns out they are not pronounced ‘as written’. As you already know, *yìdiăn* is actually pronounced *yìdiàr*; similarly, *píngr* is pronounced *pièr* [pyúhr]. The pinyin convention is to leave the syllables to which the ‘r’ is added, intact. In that way, the original syllable can be easily identified, and both *r* and *r-less* versions can be listed together in a dictionary.

It would be difficult at this early stage to present all possible *r-syllables* in the way that was done for other rhymes. Because the *r-words* are often regional, colloquial or slangy, relatively few are encountered in beginning textbooks. Here is a selection, ordered by final consonant of the syllable:

| yìr  [yèr] | | | | huángr [huángr] |

Note how the last two columns are pronounced. When *r* is applied to an *n-final* syllable, the *n* sound is lost completely: *diàn* > *diàr*; *bàn* > *bàr*. But when the *r* is applied to an *ng-final* syllable, the nasal endings survives as nasalization (indicated by the superscript -n), i.e. the vowels are pronounced nasally: *kònr* > [kò'nr], etc. These rules are hard to apply, so for now, we will focus on *r-words* that are frequently encountered, like *diānr*, *yàngr*, *huìr* and *kuàir*. 


5.14 Rhymes and rhythms

5.14.1 Tiào shéng ‘skipping rope [rhymes]’

a) A tale of betrayal and heartbreak:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tiào shéng</th>
<th>Jìàngjiě, Jìàngjiě, hào Jìàngjiě,</th>
<th>Sister Jiang, good Sister Jiang,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nǐ shì rén mín de hào Jìàngjiě.</td>
<td>You are the people’s good SJ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and with feeling &gt;</td>
<td>Pàntú, pàntú, Fǔ Zhīgāo,</td>
<td>Traitor, traitor, Fǔ Zhīgāo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nǐ shì rén mín de ‘dà cāobao’.</td>
<td>You are the people’s ‘great straw- bundle’ (‘good-for-nothing’).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fǔ Zhīgāo, a young man, and Jiàngjiě, a young woman, served the people together, but Fǔ Zhīgāo betrayed Jiàngjiě to the Guómíndāng (Kuomintang, KMT), who had her executed; later Fǔ Zhīgāo was caught by the Communists (Gōngchándāng, CCP) and put to death himself. Not a happy story, but a salubrious one. (The addition of jiě ‘sister’ to a xìng is a form of address between young females.)

b) A heroic beginning; ask your Chinese friends if they know other verses (or other skipping rhymes.)

| Dong Cúnruì, Dong Cúnruì, shíbā sui, shíbā sui, | 18 years of age, took part in a revolutionary guerilla force. |
| cānjiā géng yóu jīduì. | (‘take+part revolution roving-attack-troops’) |
| .... | |

*Provided by Huáng Fēiyā (MIT)*

c) And something a little lighter:

| Yuēliáng zǒu, wǒ yě zǒu, | moon goes, I also go |
| wǒ hé yuēliáng jiāo péngyou, | I and moon make friends |
| dài lǐ zhǔāngzhe liáng zhī dān, | pocket in filled+with 2 M eggs |
| sònggěi yuēliáng dǎng zāofàn. | to present to moon as breakfast. |

*Provided by Lǐ Yǒngyǎn (Nanjing)*

Notes:

a) *Zhuāngzhe* ‘be loaded with; to be packed with; install’; -zhe is a verb suffix that, among other functions, turns actions (‘to load’) into states (‘be loaded with’).

b) *Sònggěi* ‘to present to’, made up of two verbs, *sòng* ‘present’ and *gěi* ‘give’.

c) *Dàng* ‘treat as; regard as; be’; cf. *dàng kūzì* ‘pawn [your] trousers’ in the first rhyme in Unit 1.