Unit 2

Yù bù zhuó, bù chéng qì.

jade not carve, not become implement

A saying, in classical style, conveying the importance of discipline and perseverance in achieving success. The root meaning of qì (器) is a ‘vessel’, ie something that can be put to use. Its extended meanings include ‘utensils’, and ‘talent’.

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2.1 Pronunciation

As before, to set the articulatory positions of your mouth and tongue for Chinese speech, contrast the following sets of Chinese and English words:

a) lèi lay  b) lái lie  c) chū chew true
mèi May  shǎi shy  shū shoo shrew
zhèi Jay  mái my  zhū shoo drew
běi bay  pái pie  zhǔo jaw drawer
pēi pay  bái buy  zhōu Joe dro[ve]
fēi Fay

d) dízi deeds  xīzi seeds
tóuzi toads  qíci cheats
luózi lords  bǐcī beets (or beats)

2.2 Adverbs

In the first unit, you were introduced to a number of words that are classed ‘adverbs’: hén, bù, yě and hái or háishi. It is difficult to characterize the general function of adverbs beyond rather abstract notions like ‘degree’, ‘amount’, or ‘manner’; but they can be defined positionally as words that are placed before, and are semantically linked to, a following verb (or other adverb).
2.2.1 Tài with le

Tài, seen only in negative sentences in the first unit (bú tài lèi), is also common in positive sentences, where it is frequently found with a final le: Tài hǎo le ‘Great’; Tài jǐnzhǎng le ‘[I]’m real anxious’; Tài nán le ‘[It]’s too difficult’. Le in this context conveys a sense of excess (cf. English ‘exceedingly’), and as such, can be regarded as a special case of the notion of ‘new situation’. Notice that negative sentences with tài often suggest moderation rather than excess, so do not attract final le.

2.2.2 Other adverbs

Below are examples of some additional common adverbs: dōu ‘all’, gèng ‘even more’, bijiào (pronounced bijiào by some) ‘rather; quite; fairly’, and zǒngshì ‘always’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>詞組形式</th>
<th>釋義</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dōu ‘all’</td>
<td>Tāmen dōu hěn è.</td>
<td>[They]’re all hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dōu duì.</td>
<td>[They]’re all right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dōu méi chī ne.</td>
<td>None [of them] has eaten [yet].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gèng ‘even more’</td>
<td>Xiànzài hěn lěng, kěshí yiqián gèng lěng.</td>
<td>[It]’s cold now, but [it] was even colder before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bijiào ‘quite’</td>
<td>Wǒ jǐntiān bijiào máng.</td>
<td>I’m fairly busy today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zuótiān bijiào rè.</td>
<td>Yesterday was fairly warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zǒngshì ‘always’</td>
<td>Xuéshēng zǒngshì hěn máng hěn lèi; dànshì lǎoshī gèng máng gèng lèi.</td>
<td>Students are always busy and tired, but teachers are even more tired and busy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.3 Intensifying or backing off

a) Fēicháng ‘very; especially; unusually’

Rather than answering a yes-no question about a state with a neutral positive response (Nǐ lèi ma? Hěn lèi.), you may want to intensify your answer. Fēicháng, an adverb whose literal meaning is ‘not-often’, is one of a number of options:

Jǐntiān fēicháng rè! It’s really hot today.
Fēicháng hǎo! Great!

b) Jíle ‘extremely’

Another option is the intensifying suffix jíle, which follows SVs directly (and is therefore not an adverb). Jíle is a compound of jí ‘the extreme point’ or ‘axis’(cf. Běijī ‘North Pole’), plus le (cf. the le associated with tài). It is quite productive and can follow almost any SV to mean ‘very SV’. [Note: tiānqì ‘weather’]

Hǎo jíle! Excellent!
Tiānqì rè jíle! The weather’s extremely hot!
c) **Yǒu <yī>diǎnr**  ‘kind of; quite; a bit’

However, rather than intensifying your answer, you may want to back off and answer ‘kind of; rather; a bit’. The construction is **yǒu <yī>diǎnr + SV ‘(have a-bit SV)’**, which does appear in the adverbial slot, and can be interpreted as a complex adverb. The **yī** of **yǐdiǎnr** is often elided (hence the < >). Taiwan and other southern Mandarin regions, where the final ‘r’ is not usual, say **yǒu yǐdiǎn SV**. Like the English ‘a bit’, this construction only appears with states that can be interpreted as undesirable. So **tā yǒu yǐdiǎnr gāo** ‘he’s a bit tall’ suggests that his height is problematical. [Note the presence of **yǒu** ‘have’ in the Chinese, with no direct correspondence in the English equivalent!]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ADV</strong></th>
<th>~Eng equivalent</th>
<th>with SVs</th>
<th>with V&lt;sub&gt;act&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hén</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>hén lèi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bù</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>bú lèi</td>
<td>bú shàngbān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yè</td>
<td>too; also</td>
<td>yè hén lèi</td>
<td>yè chí le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hái ~ háishi</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>hái hǎo háishi hén lèi</td>
<td>hái méi zōu ne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāi</td>
<td>very; too</td>
<td>tāi māng le</td>
<td>bù tāi māng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōu</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>dōu hén gāo</td>
<td>dōu shuǐjiào le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gèng</td>
<td>even more</td>
<td>gèng rè</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bǐjiǎo ~ bǐjiāo</td>
<td>rather; relatively</td>
<td>bǐjiāo lèng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zōngshì</td>
<td>always</td>
<td>zōngshì hén máng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fēicháng</td>
<td>extremely; very</td>
<td>fēicháng lèng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECIAL CONSTRUCTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>~Eng equivalent</th>
<th>with SVs</th>
<th>with V&lt;sub&gt;act&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jíle</td>
<td>‘very; extremely’</td>
<td>hǎo jíle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǒu&lt;yī&gt;diǎn&lt;r&gt;</td>
<td>‘kind of; rather; a bit’</td>
<td>yǒu diǎn r guí</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2.4 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that conjoin linguistic units, either as equal partners, as in the case of ‘and’ or ‘but’ (called ‘coordinating conjunctions’), or in a skewed partnership, as in the case of ‘if’ and ‘because’ (called ‘subordinating conjunctions’). In Chinese, there is no word quite comparable to English ‘and’ that connects sentences; that function is often served by the adverb, **yè**:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ADV</strong></th>
<th>~Eng equivalent</th>
<th>with SVs</th>
<th>with V&lt;sub&gt;act&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hén</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>hén lèi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bù</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>bú lèi</td>
<td>bú shàngbān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yè</td>
<td>too; also</td>
<td>yè hén lèi</td>
<td>yè chí le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hái ~ háishi</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>hái hǎo háishi hén lèi</td>
<td>hái méi zōu ne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāi</td>
<td>very; too</td>
<td>tāi māng le</td>
<td>bù tāi māng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōu</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>dōu hén gāo</td>
<td>dōu shuǐjiào le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gèng</td>
<td>even more</td>
<td>gèng rè</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bǐjiǎo ~ bǐjiāo</td>
<td>rather; relatively</td>
<td>bǐjiāo lèng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zōngshì</td>
<td>always</td>
<td>zōngshì hén máng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fēicháng</td>
<td>extremely; very</td>
<td>fēicháng lèng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Zuòtiān wǒ bù shūfu, jìntiān yě bù tài hǎo. I wasn’t very well yesterday, and [I’m] not too well today, either.

Zuòtiān hěn rè, jìntiān yě hěn rè. It was hot yesterday, and it’s hot today, too.

As noted in §1.7.5, conjunctions kěshì and dànshì (the latter probably more common in non-northern regions) correspond to English ‘but’ or ‘however’. A third word, búguò, can also be mentioned here; though its range of meaning is broader than that of the other two, it has considerable overlap with them, and can also often be translated as ‘but; however’.

Tāmen hái méi chīfàn, kěshì dōu bù è. They haven’t eaten, but they aren’t hungry.

Wǒ chīfàn le, dànshì hái méi xīzǎo. I’ve eaten, but I haven’t bathed yet.

Tā zǒu le, búguò jìntiān bù shàngbān. She’s left, but she’s not going to work today.

cf. Tā zǒu le, búguò jìntiān méi shàngbān. She’s gone, but she didn’t go to work today.

2.3 More SVs

Here are some additional SVs, that can be incorporated in the patterns introduced in the first two units.

**Of people:**

- yán ‘strict’
- lìhai ‘formidable; tough’

**Of tasks:**

- nán ‘difficult’
- róngyì ‘easy’

**Of things:**

- hǎochī ‘nice’
- huǒtīng ‘nice’
- guì ‘expensive’

- [to eat]
- [sounding]

**Of people or things:**

- qīngchu ‘clear’
- hǎokàn ‘nice [looking]’

Several of these SVs can be applied to people, such as lǎoshī ‘teachers’ and xuéshēng ‘students’; others, as noted, are more like to apply to things, such as Zhōngwén ‘Chinese language’ or dōngxi ‘things’.

2.3.1 Questions with zěnme ‘how is it!’

The question word zěnme (pronounced [zèmeyàng], without the first ‘n’) is used to ask questions corresponding to ‘how is X’. Zěnme is also used as an informal greeting, rather like English ‘how’s it going’.

42
Jiàntiān zēnmeyàng? How is [it] today?
Hěn rè. [It]'s hot.

Zhōngwén zēnmeyàng? How’s Chinese [class]?
Hěn nán! Lǎoshī hěn yán. [It]'s difficult. The teacher’s strict.
Lǎoshī zēnmeyàng? How’s the teacher?
Hěn lihài, tǎ féicháng yán. [She]’s formidable; she’s really strict.

Tā zēnmeyàng? How is he?
Hěn lèi, shuìjiào le. [He]'s tired, [he]'s gone to bed.

Tāmen zēnmeyàng? How are they doing?
Bù shūfu, méi shàngkè. [They] aren’t well, [they] weren’t in class.

2.3.2 Examples

Zhōngwén zēnmeyàng? What’s Chinese like?
Bù nán yě bù róngyì. [It]’s not difficult, nor is [it] easy.

Zēnmeyàng? Hāochī ma? How is [it]? Good?
Hái kěyǐ. [It]’s okay.
Guī bu guī? Is [it] expensive?
Bù tài guī, hái xíng. Not too – [it]’s reasonable.

Qīngchu le ma? Is [it] clear now?
Qīngchu le. [It] is.

Tiānqì zēnmeyàng? How’s the weather?
Zuótiān féicháng lěng, kěshì jǐntiān hǎo le. Yesterday was very cold, but today’s okay.

2.3.3 Juéde ‘feel; think’
Zēnmeyàng may be combined with, or may elicit the verb juéde ‘feel; think’ to form a more specific question about internal states:

Xiànzài nǐ juéde zēnmeyàng? How do you feel now?
Wǒ juéde bù shūfu. I’m not feeling well.
Wǒ hěn jìnzhāng. I’m nervous.
Wǒ juéde hěn lèi. I feel quite tired.

2.3.4 Zēnmeyàng as a greeting
Responses to zēnmeyàng as an informal greeting include the following:

Zēnmeyàng? Hái hǎo. [I]’m fine.
Hái xíng. [I]’m okay. (still alright)
Hái kěyǐ. Passable. (still be+possible)
Bú cuò. Not bad. (not be+erroneous)
Māma-hūhū. So-so.
Lāo yàngzi. The usual. (old way)

Notes
a) Xíng is a verb with meanings that range from ‘go’ to ‘be all right’.
b) Kěyǐ is a verb meaning ‘can; may; be acceptable’.
c) Cuò is a SV meaning ‘be wrong; be mistaken’.
d) Māma-hūhū is a complex SV that is formed by repetition of the parts of the SV māhu ‘casual; careless’.

Exercise 1.
Perform a dialogue between the two students, Mao Dawei and Li Lisan, along the following lines:

Máo Dàwéi   Lì Lisān

Hi, Lisān! Hello, Dàwéi. How do you feel today?

Tired. How about you? I’m a bit tired too – I still haven’t eaten. How about you, hungry?

No, I already ate. Was it good?

It was okay. How’re your teachers? Strict? Very, they’re formidable! Chinese is tough!.

But Japanese is even harder. They’re both hard! …Well, I must be off.

Okay, see you later. Okay, bye, take it easy.

2.4 Nouns and modification
This section begins with some additions to your repertoire of inanimate nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yàoshi</th>
<th>keys</th>
<th>shū</th>
<th>books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hùzhào</td>
<td>passport</td>
<td>xié</td>
<td>shoes [xiézi in the South]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xíngli</td>
<td>luggage</td>
<td>&lt;yǔ&gt;sǎn</td>
<td>[rain]umbrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shūbāo</td>
<td>bookbag</td>
<td>yǎnjīng</td>
<td>(eye-mirror) glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bī</td>
<td>pen</td>
<td>bijiběn</td>
<td>(pen-note-book) notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pìbāo</td>
<td>(leather-pack) wallet</td>
<td>dōngxī</td>
<td>[physical] things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiānqì</td>
<td>(sky-air) weather</td>
<td>yīfū</td>
<td>clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bāozhī</td>
<td>(report-paper) newspaper</td>
<td>zìdīān</td>
<td>dictionary (character-records)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4.1 Measure Words
In English, things – or rather, nouns – can sometimes be counted directly (one person; two things; three airplanes) and sometimes only by way of a counter (three pieces of luggage; four head – or heads - of lettuce). In Chinese, the first category is not found; when counted, all nouns require the mediation of a ‘classifier’ or ‘measure word (M)’. To get used to M’s, we will begin with gè (usually untoned), the M that appears with many personal nouns, including rén ‘person’ and xuéshēng ‘student’. When combined with an M, the number ‘two’ (but not a number ending in ‘two’, such as 12 or 22) is expressed as liàng (‘pair’) rather than èr: liàng ge ‘two [of them]’. And as that example shows, in context, the noun itself may be omitted.

Recall that the tone of yī ‘one’, level when counting or when clearly designating the number ‘1’, shifts to either falling or rising when yī is in conjunction with a following M. The basic tone of gè is falling (hence yí gè) and even though, as noted, gè is often toneless when followed by a noun, it still elicits the shift before ‘losing’ its tone: yí ge.

The following sets can be recited regularly, in sequence (in this unit and subsequently), until familiar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yí ge rén</th>
<th>liàng ge rén</th>
<th>sān ge rén</th>
<th>wǔ ge rén</th>
<th>shí ge rén</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>2 people</td>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>5 people</td>
<td>10 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yí ge xuéshēng</th>
<th>liàng ge xuéshēng</th>
<th>sān ge xuéshēng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 student</td>
<td>2 students</td>
<td>3 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yí ge</th>
<th>liàng ge</th>
<th>sān ge</th>
<th>wǔ ge</th>
<th>shí ge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 of them</td>
<td>2 of them</td>
<td>3 of them</td>
<td>5 of them</td>
<td>10 of them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The particle le following phrases like these (as in the dialogue below) is categorized as new situation-le: sì ge rén le ‘so that’s 4 [people]’.

2.4.2 Possessive pronouns
In English, possessive pronouns have quite a complicated relationship to ordinary pronouns (eg ‘I > my >mine’; ‘she > her >hers’), but in Chinese, they are formed in a perfectly regular fashion by the addition of the ‘possessive marker’, de: wǒ ‘I’ > wǒ de ‘my; mine’. The full system is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wǒ de</th>
<th>wǒmen de</th>
<th>my; mine</th>
<th>our; ours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nǐ de</td>
<td>nǐmen de</td>
<td>your; yours</td>
<td>your; yours [plural]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tā de</td>
<td>tāmen de</td>
<td>his; her; hers</td>
<td>their; theirs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These may combine with nouns, as follows:

| wǒ de zìdiǎn | my dictionary |
| tā de húzhào | her passport  |
| wǒmen de xíngli | our luggage  |
The possessive marker de may also link noun modifiers to other nouns:

- lāoshī de shū  teachers’ books
- wǒ de xié<zi>  my shoes

**2.4.3 Demonstrative pronouns**

Demonstrative pronouns (‘this’ and ‘that’) and the ‘locational pronouns’ (‘here’ and ‘there’) are shown in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>proximate</th>
<th>distal</th>
<th>question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zhè ~ zhèi ‘this’</td>
<td>nà ~ nèi ‘that’</td>
<td>nà ~ nèi ‘which’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhèr ~ zhèlí ‘here’</td>
<td>nàr ~ nàlí ‘there’</td>
<td>nàr ~ nàlí ‘where’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

a) The forms, zhèi, nèi and nèi, are generally found only in combination with a following M: zhè but zhèi gē ‘this one’; nà but nèi gē ‘that [one]’.
b) On the Mainland, where both forms of the locational pronouns occur, the r-forms are more colloquial, the li-forms, more formal. Non-northern speakers of Mandarin, who tend to eschew forms with the r-suffix, either merge the locational pronouns with the demonstratives, pronouncing zhèr as zhè, nàr as nà, and nàl as nà, or [particularly in Taiwan] use zhèlí, nǎlí and nǎlí (> nálí). Notice that in all cases, the distal forms differ from the question forms only in tone: nà / nà; nèi / nèi, etc.
c) Before a pause, nà is often used in an extended sense, translated in English as ‘well; so; then; in that case’:

Nà, wǒmen zǒu ba.  Well, let’s go then. (so we leave BA)
Nà, nǐ de xíngli ne?  So how about your luggage then?

**Exercise 2.**

Provide Chinese equivalents for the following phrases and sentences:

- my wallet  3 teachers  their clothes
- her glasses  2 people  the newspaper on July 4\(^{th}\)
- his things  4 students  Prof. Zhang’s passport

How’s Liáng Zhīfǔ doing today? / She feels much better.
How was the weather yesterday? / It was ‘freezing’ cold!
2.5 Identity

Statements such as ‘Today’s Monday’ or ‘I’m Oliver’ or ‘She’s an engineer’ involve identity or category. In English, the primary verb that serves to identify or categorize is ‘be’ (whose forms include ‘is’, ‘are’, ‘was’, etc.). In Chinese, the relationship is sometimes expressed by simple juxtaposition, with no explicit linking verb. Dates, for example, can be appended to days, as follows:

Jīntiān jiǔyuè bā hào.     Today’s the 8\textsuperscript{th} of September.
Zuótiān qī hào.            Yesterday was the 7\textsuperscript{th}.
Míngtiān jiù hào.          Tomorrow’s the 9\textsuperscript{th}.

But the addition of the negating adverb, bu, to the identity relationship requires an explicit verb, shì [usually untoned]:

Jīntiān bú shì bā hào, shì jiǔ hào.  It’s not the 8th today, it’s the 9th.

And shì [also untoned] can also be present in the positive sentences:

Jīntiān <shì> jiǔyuè shì hào.     Today’s September 10\textsuperscript{th}.
Míngtiān <shì> Zhōngqīu Jié.      Tomorrow’s the ‘Mid-Autumn Festival’. [aka the ‘Moon Festival’]

Naming and other kinds of identification sometimes omit the shì in fast speech, but more commonly it can be heard as a toneless whisper, ‘sh’.

Tā shì Wáng Shuò, wǒ de lǎoshī.  He’s Wang Shuo, my teacher.
Wǒmen shì xuésheng, tā shì lǎoshī. We’re students, he’s a teacher.
Zhè shì jīntiān de bào.          This is today’s paper.
Shì nǐ de yàoshi ma?            Are [these] your keys?
Bú shì wǒ de sǎn, shì tā de.   [That]’s not my umbrella, [it]’s his.
Tāmen dōu shì xuésheng.         They’re all students.

But don’t forget, unlike the English ‘be’, shì is not required with SVs:

Xuésheng zōngshì hěn lèi.        The students are always tired.
Dui bu dui?                      Is [that] right?

2.5.1 Questions

Now we can introduce the question words shéi (or shuí) ‘who, whom’ and shénme ‘what’ (which, like zēnme, is pronounced [shéme], without the ‘n’). Unlike English, where
question words generally appear at the head of the sentence, in Chinese, they remain in
the position of the answer. Note the differences in word order between the English
sentences and the Chinese:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tā shì shéi?</td>
<td>那个是谁？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā shì wǒ de lǎoshī.</td>
<td>那是我的老师。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nà shì shénme?</td>
<td>那是什么？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nà shì wǒ de hùzhào.</td>
<td>那是我的护照。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Shì&gt; shéi de yàoshi?</td>
<td>&lt;是&gt;是谁的钥匙？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Shì&gt; wǒ de – xièxie.</td>
<td>&lt;是&gt;我的 – 谢谢。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Shì&gt; shuí de xíngli?</td>
<td>&lt;是&gt;谁的行李？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Shì&gt; wǒmen de.</td>
<td>&lt;是&gt;我们的。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhè shì shéi de?</td>
<td>这是谁的？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shi wǒ de.</td>
<td>这是我的。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shéi shì dì-yī?</td>
<td>谁是第一？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā shì dì-yī.</td>
<td>他是第一。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di-èr ne?</td>
<td>第二呢？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā shì di-èr.</td>
<td>她是第二。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.2 Hedging your answer
Frequently, when asked about identity, the answer is less than certain, so you may want
to hedge your reply with a word like hǎoxiàng ‘(good-resemble) seems like’. The
following short interchanges involve trying to guess the contents of a series of wrapped
packages by feeling them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dì-yī shì shénme?</td>
<td>第一是什么？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dì-yī hǎoxiàng shì yàoshi.</td>
<td>第一似乎像钥匙。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhè shì shénme?</td>
<td>这是什么？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hǎoxiàng shì shū.</td>
<td>好像是一本书。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nà, zhè shì shénme?</td>
<td>那，这是什么？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hǎoxiàng shì xiézi.</td>
<td>好像是鞋子。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.3 Naming
Naming is also a form of identification. And in fact, if you were to go round the
classroom naming all your tóngxué ‘classmates’, you could do so with the verb shì as
follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nà shì Máo Xiān’ān.</td>
<td>那是毛先安。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nà shì Léi Hānbo.</td>
<td>那是雷汉波。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48
Exercise 3.
Provide Chinese for the interchanges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it the 29th today?</td>
<td>No, it’s the 30th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this your umbrella?</td>
<td>No, that’s Prof. Zhang’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who’s first?</td>
<td>Seems like Wáng Jié is 1st and Liú Guózhèng is 2nd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you all students?</td>
<td>Yes, we’re all Prof. Wèi’s students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Names and titles
Names are not only introduced by shì. In some contexts more specialized verbs must be used. One you encountered in Unit 1: xìng ‘be surnamed’ (which also functions as a noun meaning ‘surname’). Another is jiào ‘to be named; to call’. But before we illustrate their use, we should add to the brief remarks about names and titles made in Unit 1 (§1.6.1 and §1.9.1).

2.6.1 Names
Some common English names are directly transliterated into Chinese: Yuēhàn Shīmìsī ‘John Smith’, keeping the English word order of given name before surname. But students of Chinese are usually given Chinese names, based on their own (either their surnames if they have enough syllables, or their full names), and these conform to Chinese types of two or three syllables. In such cases, Chinese word order, with surname before given, is followed. (In all but the first example below, English surnames are reduced to single syllables in the Chinese, as shown by the highlighting.)

| Wèi Délì  | Paul Wheatley |
| Táng Lìlì | Lily Tomlin   |
| Máo Xiān’ān | Anne Mauboussin |
| Léi Hánbó  | Robert Leonhardt |
| Lǐ Dān     | David Lippmann |

Such names are indistinguishable from names of actual Chinese, such as these:

| Cuǐ Lín  | Kāng Yòuwèi | Yuán Shào | Zhèng Chénggōng |
| Zhèng Hé  | Máo Qǐlíng | Wáng Lì  | Bái Súzhēn    |

2.6.2 Xìng
Chinese names consist of a surname, or xìng, in initial position, followed by a given name or míngzi. Xìng are usually – but not always – single syllables. Xìng – the verb -- is almost always used when asking for, or responding with, someone’s surname (though
note the final sentence of the following interchange, where the two surnames are in contrast).

| Tā xìng shénme? | What’s her surname? |
| Tā xìng Huáng. | She’s surnamed Huang. |
| Xìng Wáng? | Wang? |

When addressing someone directly, the honorific expression guìxìng ‘worthy-surname’ (cf. guì ‘expensive’) – with or without a pronoun – is the usual question:

<Nín> guìxìng? May [I] ask your surname [please]?
Wǒ xìng Wèi. I’m surnamed Wei.

2.6.3 Jiào
In much of the English speaking world, where informality tends to be considered a virtue, the shift from surname to given name can proceed very quickly. However, in Chinese, address in a professional setting is more likely to persist for a while as xìng plus title, or as full name (xìng + mínɡzǐ). So under normal levels of politeness, you would question someone about their xìng, not about their mínɡzǐ. However, on occasions when it is appropriate to ask about someone’s full name, or given name (eg when questioning children, or asking about the name of someone who is not present), then the verb jiào ‘be named’ is used. Here are some options, first for Lǐ Xiāngjūn, then for Zhèng Hé:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tā jiào shénme mínɡzǐ?</td>
<td>Tā jiào &lt;Lǐ&gt; Xiāngjūn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā de mínɡzǐ jiào shénme?</td>
<td>Tā &lt;de mínɡzǐ&gt; jiào &lt;Lǐ&gt; Xiāngjūn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā de mínɡzǐ jiào shénme?</td>
<td>Tā &lt;de mínɡzǐ&gt; jiào Zhèng Hé.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tā jiào shénme mínɡzǐ?</td>
<td>Tā jiào Zhèng Hé.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6.4 Asking and giving a name
Typically, in face-to-face interaction, one asks politely for a surname, and in many cases, the response will be just a surname. However, where statuses are more or less matched, once the surname is provided, it is often followed by the full name, and this is a good model for the foreign student to copy:

<Nín> guìxìng?
[Xǔ Xiān] Wǒ xìng Xǔ, jiào Xǔ Xiān.

2.6.5 Titles
Here is a short selection of titles to add to lǎoshī. All of them follow a xìng – though some may be used alone under certain conditions. Xiānshēng ‘(first-born) mister’ is the generic title for adult males. In Taiwan, or overseas communities, xiǎojié ‘(small older-sister) Miss; Ms’ is quite a common title for unmarried women up to a certain age or, still
with the woman’s xìng, even for young married women. In the same communities, married women can be addressed – this time with the husband’s xìng -- as tàitai (etymologically related to tài, the adverb). The latter term is hardly ever used on the Mainland, and even xiǎojie is used much less there. On the Mainland, if no professional title (such as lǎoshī) is available, women are more likely to be addressed with full name or míngzi.

Shīfū (literally ‘craftsman’, but often translated as ‘master’) has shifted in its usage in the last few decades, but traditionally, it has been used to address blue-collar workers (male or female). Finally, jīnglǐ ‘manager’, is a professional title (of the sort that might appear on a business card) – also for males or females. Note the order surname before title:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>surname</th>
<th>(given name)</th>
<th>title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wèi</td>
<td>(Bóyáng)</td>
<td>lǎoshī, Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shī</td>
<td>(Jílóng)</td>
<td>xiǎnsheng, Mr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chén</td>
<td>(Yuè)</td>
<td>xiǎojie, Miss; Ms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wáng</td>
<td>(Guóbāo)</td>
<td>shīfū, ‘master’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhōu</td>
<td>(Lì)</td>
<td>jīnglǐ, manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6.6 Shi with names
As we saw earlier, while surnames (alone) can only be introduced with the verb xìng, full names can be introduced by shì as well as jiào. In fact, unlike the other two verbs, shì can also introduce name and title. The shì option identifies one of a known group, and as such, is often appropriate to a classroom setting:

Tā shì Lǐ Guānghuì; tā shì Wáng Shuò; tā shì Táng Bīn; wǒ shì Wèi lǎoshī.
Di-yī shì Xiāo Míngzuǒ, di-èr shì Lǐ Míng, di-sān shì Xiè Jīng.

Nǐ shì bu shì Zhāng xiǎnsheng?
Zhāng jīnglǐ, hǎo.
Zhè shì Dū shīfū.
Wǒ shì Wáng láoshī; tāmén dōu shì wǒ de xuéshēng.
Chén xiǎojie shì Běijīng rén.

Exercise 4.
a) Take on the names provided in parentheses and introduce yourself:
1. [Chén Zhìpéng ]
2. [Zōu Lì]
3. [Téng Qiūyún]
4. [Máo Wénlóng]
5. [Léi Hànbó]
6. [Wáng Lì]

b) Translate the following, being careful to follow Chinese word order.
1. I’m a teacher.
2. Who’s she?
3. Her surname’s Sòng, her full name’s Sòng Měiling.
4. Hi, my name’s Lǐ Dān.
5. Who’s he?
6. He’s my teacher.
7. That’s Zhōu Lǐ.
8. This is Yáng Qiànyì.
9. His surname’s Chén, full name Chén Bó.
10. And him? / His surname’s Xǔ, full name, Xǔ Xiān.
11. This is master Wèi.
12. Her names Smith, but she seems to be Chinese. [Zhōngguó rén]

2.7 Location and existence

In English, location is expressed with the same verb as identity (or category): the verb ‘to be’ (is, am, are, etc.). Chinese, however, uses entirely different verbs. Identity is signaled by shì; location, by zài ‘be at’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>LOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tā shì xuésheng.</td>
<td>Tā zài Běijīng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s a student.</td>
<td>She’s in Beijing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.1 Some Chinese place names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The city of:</th>
<th>is in</th>
<th>the province (shèng) of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nánjīng</td>
<td>zài</td>
<td>Jiāngsū &lt;shēng&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xī’ān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shānxī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guǎngzhōu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guāngdōng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chéngdū</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sīchūān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kūnmíng</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yúnnán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xīnǐng</td>
<td></td>
<td>Qīnghǎi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four of the largest cities in China, Běijīng, Shānghāi, Tiānjīn [usually pronounced Tiānjīng] and Chóngqìng, are under the jurisdiction of the central government, and so even though some of them are surrounded by a single province, strictly speaking they are not part of those provinces.

2.7.2 Proximity

Relative proximity of one place to another can be expressed by the following construction, involving the word lǐ ‘[away] from’, and the SVs jìn ‘be close’ and yuǎn ‘be far’. Notice the difference in word order from English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place-1</th>
<th>lǐ place-2</th>
<th>hēn jìn / yuǎn.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Běijīng</td>
<td>lǐ Guǎngzhōu</td>
<td>hēn yuǎn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Běijīng</td>
<td>from Canton</td>
<td>very close/far.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples

Tiānjīn lǐ Běijīng bījiào jìn.  
Tiānjīn’s quite close to Běijīng.

Xī’ān zài Shānxī, lǐ Běijīng hěn yuǎn.
Xī’ān’s in Shānxī, quite far from Běijīng.

Xīnìng lǐ Chéngdū hěn jìn ma?  
Bú jìn; Xīnìng lǐ Lánzhōu hěn jìn.  
Is Xīnìng near Chéngdū?
No, it’s not; it’s close to Lánzhōu.

Xī’ān lǐ Běijīng hěn yuǎn, dānshì Xīnìng gèng yuǎn.  
Xī’ān is far from Běijīng, but Xīnìng is even farther.

2.7.3 Zài ‘be+at’
Zài may be used as a main verb (as in §2.7.1) or as a subordinate verb (rather like an English preposition). It may be followed not only by place names, but also by locational pronouns. (For the difference between the r-forms and the li-forms, see §2.4.4.)

| zài   | zhèr ~ zhēlǐ | ‘here’ |
| nàr ~ nǎlǐ  | ‘there’ |
| nàr ~ nǎlǐ  | ‘where’ |

Zài can also be followed by nouns, but in most cases, the nouns also need to be followed by one of a number of locational words, such as shàng ‘on’ or lǐ ‘in’:

| zài | fēijī shàng | ‘(at airplane on) on the plane’ |
|     | sùshè lǐ    | ‘(at dormitory in) in the dorm’ |
|     | jiā lǐ       | ‘(home in) at home’ |

The full repertoire of such locational words (along with their variants) will be presented in a future unit. The above expressions will suffice for now.

Pronouns need to be followed by a locational pronoun before they can follow zài: zài wǒ zhèr ‘with me here’. English actually expresses the notion more naturally with the verb ‘have’: ‘I have it’.

| Qīngwěn, jīntiān de bào | Excuse me, where’s today’s paper? |
| zài nàr ~ nǎlǐ? | |

Zài wǒ zhèr ~ zhēlǐ.  
I have it. (‘[It]’s at me here.’)

Xīnglǐ ne?  
And the luggage?

Xīnglǐ zài tā nàr.  
He has the luggage. (‘[It]’s at him there.’)
a) Example of *zài* as a main verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yàoshi zài nǎr?</td>
<td>Where are [the] keys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zài nǎr.</td>
<td>Over there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nánjīng lǐ Héféi bú tài yuán,</td>
<td>Nanjing’s not far from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kěshí Nánjīng zài Jīngsū,</td>
<td>Hefei, but Nanjing’s in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Héféi zài Ānhuǐ.</td>
<td>Jiangsu, [and]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hefei’s in Anhui.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qǐngwèn, Mǎ làoshī zài ma?</td>
<td>Excuse me, is Prof. Ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mǎ làoshī xiànzài zài Yūnnán.</td>
<td>here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. Ma is currently in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yunnan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yàoshi zài nǎr?</td>
<td>Where are the keys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zài tā nǎr.</td>
<td>She has [them].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ de húzhāo zài nǐ nǎr ma?</td>
<td>Do you have my passport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bū zài wǒ zhèr!</td>
<td>I don’t have [it].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nǐ de xíngli zài nǎr?</td>
<td>Where are your bags?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hái zài fēijī shàng.</td>
<td>[They] ’re still on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>airplane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) *Zài* in conjunction with other verbs

*Zài* phrases also occur in conjunction with either a following verb (to express location) or an immediately preceding verb (to express resulting position):

- Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng chī le.  We ate on the airplane.
- Wǒ shēng zài Chéngdū – zài  I was born in Chengdu – in  Sichuān.
  Sichuan.

Additional examples of the positional distinction will appear in later units, after appropriate vocabulary has been introduced.

2.7.4 *The verb yǒu ‘have’*

The verb *yǒu*, with an ‘irregular’ negative méiyǒu or simply méi, was encountered in the previous unit as the negative counterpart of le with action verbs: Chīfàn le méiyǒu? Used alone, as a main verb, it conveys possession and existence:

**Possession**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ méiyǒu xíngli.</td>
<td>I don’t have any luggage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāmen méiyǒu láoshī.</td>
<td>They don’t have a teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Existence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Méiyǒu xíngli.</td>
<td>There’s no baggage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nánjīng méiyǒu dítìě.</td>
<td>There’s no underground railway in Nanjing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

| Identity; category | (bú) shì | Nà shì jīntiān de báo. Tā shì lāoshī. | is | That’s today’s paper. She’s a teacher.
| Location | (bú) zài | Chéngdū zài Sīchuán. | is (in etc.) | Chengdu’s in Sichuan.
| Existence | (méi)you | Xī’ān méiyǒu fēijīchǎng. | [there] is /are | There’s no airport in Xi’an.
| Possession | (méi)you | Wǒ méiyǒu hùzhào. | have | I don’t have a passport.
| Proximity | lí…(bú) jìn / (bú) yuǎn | Tiānjīn lí Běijīng bù yuǎn. | is close to / is far from | Tianjin’s close to Beijing.

Exercise 5.
Render the following short exchanges in idiomatic Chinese. [Hint: Chinese would probably not make use of the verb yǒu ‘have’ in the A-dialogue.]

A. -Where’s the paper please? -Yesterd ay’s?
   -No, today’s – I’ve already read yesterday’s. -Sorry, I don’t have it.
   -You had it earlier. -But I don’t have it now.

B. -I was born in Chūxióng, in Yunnan. -Is that near Kunming?
   -Quite near. And you, where were you born? -I was born here, in Beijing.
   -Oh, so you’re a Beijinger! -Yep.

C. -Have you eaten yet? -I have.
   -Oh, you’ve already eaten! -Yes, in the dorm.
   -Is your dorm far? -It’s kind of far.

D. -Whose bookbag? -Not mine, I don’t have a bookbag.
   -Is it Lǐ Dān’s? -No, I have Li Dan’s
   -Is it ‘young’ Liú’s? -No, he’s not up yet.
   -Then it’s Sūn Hǎo’s. -Is it?
2.8 Miscellany

2.8.1 Welcome
The dialogue at the end of this unit contains an expression used for welcoming someone to a place. Explicit welcomes are probably more likely to be seen written on posters than spoken, but they are not out of place with foreigners. The verbs are huānyíng ‘welcome’ and lái ‘come’. With the verb lái, destinations (rather than locations per se) can follow directly without any equivalent to the English preposition ‘to’: lái Běijīng, lái Guǎngzhōu. Notice that in English, the people being welcomed (‘you’) are not mentioned, while in Chinese, they are (nǐmen):

Huānyíng nǐmen lái Chéngdū! Welcome to Chengdu.

A full response to words of welcome involve expression of gratitude, with the verb xiè ‘to thank’ – frequently repeated as xièxiè – and the verb, jiē ‘to meet; join’. The order is like that of English, but Chinese eschews connective words like ‘to’ and ‘for’. (‘Thank you for coming to meet us’ appears in Chinese as simply ‘thank you come meet us’.)

Xièxiè nǐmen jiē wǒmen. Thanks for coming to meet us.

2.8.2 Particles
In addition to mà and ne, there are two other common final particles which have been encountered in the first two units. One is a, which among its diverse functions, gives a hearty tone to statements or exclamations, and which slightly softens the abruptness of questions:

Lèng a! [Wow, it]’s cold!
Máng a! Busy, huh?!
Shéi a? On hearing a knock: Who [is it]?

The other is ba, which is associated with suggestion or consensus:

Zǒu ba. Let’s go.
Nà hǎo ba. That’s fine then.
Shàng chē ba. Let’s board the bus.

2.8.3 Praise
Chinese will praise your efforts to speak the language (which, as noted above, can be called Zhōngwén), and will typically make use of an expression involving the verb shuō ‘speak’ (or jiǎng in southern Mandarin) followed by the particle +de. If you wonder whether this +de is the same as the possessive de introduced earlier in this unit, the answer is that it is not. This +de is followed by SV expressions (eg an adverb plus a SV): shuō+de hěn hǎo. The other is either followed by a noun (wǒ de shūbāo) or has the potential to be followed by a noun (wǒ de [shūbāo]). Were meaning and distribution not sufficient evidence for positing two different de’s, we should cite the fact that they are also written with different characters, 的 and 得, respectively. So in order to make the
distinction clear (and prepare you for writing different characters), we write the former as de and the latter as +de. You should do the same.

Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo.   [You] speak Chinese very well.
~ jiāng+de hěn hǎo.

To which you respond, modestly, that in fact you don’t speak at all well:

Shuō+de bù hǎo   [I] speak very poorly.
~ jiāng+de bù hǎo.

The latter can be preceded by the expression nǎlǐ (often repeated), which is the [more formal] word for ‘where’, but which is also used to deflect praise, as if questioning its basis:

Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo.   Nah, I speak rather badly.
~ jiāng+de bù hǎo.

When you see more examples (eg §5.4.1), you will find that nothing can intervene in the combination shuō+de. So if Zhōngwén is mentioned, it cannot directly follow shuō, but needs to be mentioned first, as shown in the examples above. Since Chinese are so gracious about praising one’s feeble efforts to speak their language, it is good to get used to this interchange early. For now, practice it only as it appears, and only with the verb shuō and its southern Mandarin counterpart, jiāng.

2.9 Dialogue: at the airport

Given the need to restrict vocabulary and structures, the following dialogue cannot be regarded as completely natural, but it serves as a good model for some of the material that has been introduced in the first two units.

Situation: Professor Wáng (W) has come to the airport with a university driver to meet half a dozen international students who are arriving in China to continue their study of Chinese. The students all have Chinese names as well as their regular ones. One of them (Dàwéi [Dw]) spots Wáng lǎoshī holding a sign and walks over to introduce himself; some of the others follow and introduce themselves too:

Dw  Nín hǎo, wǒ shì Máo Dàwéi.   How are you, I’m Mao Dawei.
An  Wáng lǎoshī, nín hǎo! Wǒ shì Lǐ Ānnà. Prof. Wang, how are you? I’m Li Anna.
W.  Lǐ Ānnà, nǐ hǎo.   Li Anna, how are you?
Ym  Wáng làoshī, wǒ shì Xiǎolín Yóuměi.
Professor Wang, I’m Xiaolin Youmei.

W.  Xiǎolín Youméi, nǐ hǎo.  Xiaolin Youmei, hi.  Okay, [that’s] 3.
Hǎo, sān ge rèn le.

Ym  Hái yǒu tā – tā xìng Kōng, jiào Kōng Měi.
[pointing] And her too -- her name is Kong, she’s called Kong Meī.

W.  Hǎo, Kōng Měi, nǐ hǎo!  Fine, how are you Kong Meī?  [That’s] 4
Sì ge rèn le. Nǐ ne?

Jf  Wǒ shì Bái Jiéfēi.
I’m Bai Jiefei.

W.  Bái Jiéfēi, nǐ hǎo.... Bai Jiefei, hi....
Nà hǎo, huānyíng nǐmen lái Běijīng! That’s fine, welcome to Beijing!

All  Xièxie, xièxie nǐmen lái jiē wǒmen.  Thanks; thank you for coming to meet us.

W.  Zhè shì Gāo shīfū.  This is Mr. Gāo.

All  Gāo shīfū, nín hǎo.  Mr. Gāo, how are you?

Gāo  Ëi, nǐmen hǎo, nǐmen hǎo.
Ah, how are you, how are you?
Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo!
[You] speak Chinese very well!

All  Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo!  Nah, we don’t speak very well.

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W.  Nǐmen hěn lèi ba.  You’re probably tired.

X.  Bù, bù tài lèi, hái hǎo.  No, not too, [we]’re okay.


X.  Bú è, zài fēijī shàng chī le.  No, [we]’re not, [we] ate on the airplane.

W.  Nà, nǐmen de xíngli ne?  And your bags?

X.  Zài zhèr: yī, èr, sān, sì, wǔ, liù.  [They]’re here: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
Dōu zài zhèr.  [They]’re all here.

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This model conversation is quite ambitious. All its vocabulary is fairly new, of course, and it also introduces quite a few grammatical patterns and features. But a bold beginning has the advantage of giving you interesting material to work with from the start. To make it more manageable, it is divided into four sections. The first involves collecting all the people; the second, with welcoming them; the third, with finding out how they are; and the fourth, with getting to the minibus to drive to Beijing. Get familiar with the scenario first, then visualize the conversation. You should be able to re-enact it more or less as presented before trying it out with partners in class.

Exercise 6.

a) Translate the following:

1. Okay, that’s three people.
2. Who’s the first person? The second?
3. That’s it then, I’m off.
4. It’s late, I should be going.
5. We’ve all eaten, we ate on the plane.
6. We’re not hungry, we’re fine.
7. Welcome to […].
8. Thanks for coming to meet us.
9. That’s it then, see you tomorrow.
10. Okay, bye, take it easy.
11. How about you – you thirsty?
12. That looks like my umbrella.
Comment that:
1. you haven’t eaten yet.
2. they haven’t left yet.
3. she hasn’t had her shower yet.
4. he hasn’t got out of class yet.
5. you haven’t read the day’s paper yet.
6. you were tired yesterday, but today you’re fine.
7. you’re not nervous anymore.
8. you were cold on the plane, but you’re fine now.
9. they’ve already gone to bed.

2.10 Reflections: What have you learned?

2.10.1 Words
Short words predominate. It will turn out that most - but not all - Chinese words longer than a syllable are, historically at least, compounds: lǎoshī ‘old-teacher’ (with ‘old’ having the respectful connotations of ‘venerable’); xǐzǎo ‘wash-bathe’; hàoxiàng ‘good-likeness’.

2.10.2 Meaning
In learning a foreign language, particularly a language that is linguistically and culturally distant from one’s native tongue, you quickly learn about the difficulties of translation. This is true for sentences as well as words. Hái hǎo, for example, as a response to lèi bu lèi, is composed of two words which, in other contexts, mean ‘still’ and ‘be+good’. But ‘still good’ does not make sense as a translation. ‘Not too’ or ‘no, I’m fine’ are closer to the Chinese sense, a fact we can only know from understanding how the Chinese functions in its context, then seeking an English expression that serves the same function (or has the same meaning in the context). As translators will tell you, this can be difficult to do, and in some cases nearly impossible without extensive circumlocution.

For learners, it is not enough to know the meaning of the sentence in context; learners want, and need to understand the role of sentence parts – words – in the formation of that meaning. One reason for this is that word meanings – or glosses, being more abstract, are more stable. ‘Good’ (or ‘be good’) is abstracted from the meaning of the word in specific contexts (where it may be translated variously as ‘be well’, ‘be okay’, ‘hello’, etc.) That is why, in addition to citing a meaning appropriate to the context, word meanings are also provided in parentheses: eg: Hái hǎo ‘[I]’m okay. (still be+good)’

Providing word-for-word glosses serves another purpose. It takes us into the world of the foreign language and reveals conceptual differences that help to define the other culture. The fact that chīfàn ‘have a meal’ (and, by extension, in other contexts ‘make a living’) is composed of chī ‘eat’ and fàn ‘cooked rice’, reveals the role of that staple in the Chinese diet. (It is a moot point whether translators should try to capture that
fact by translating  chīfān as ‘eat-rice’ rather than simply ‘eat’ or ‘have a meal’. What do you think?)

2.11 Pinyin notes and practice

2.11.1 Toneless syllables
As you have observed, not all syllables in Mandarin have a tone, eg: the second syllables in  xíngli and mǎng ma. In this respect, Mandarin contrasts with some of the regional languages such as Cantonese, in which most syllables are toned. There are several types of toneless syllable (called qīngshēng ‘light-tone’) in standard Mandarin:

(i) Particles such as ma, ne and ba never appear with a full tone, and so we can only write them with qīngshēng.

(ii) Many words show qīngshēng in the final syllable: shūfu ‘comfortable,’ or wòmen ‘we; us.’ On the evidence of compounds and other relatable expressions, these toneless syllables often turn out to have fully toned versions: shūfu has an adverbial form, shūshūfūfū in which final fū appears with a rising tone. But dictionaries list words such as wòmen and shūfu without tone on the second syllable, and we will do the same.

(iii) Certain words (syllables) are toned in some contexts, toneless in others: bú lèi (with bu toned) but hǎo bù hǎo (with bu toneless). We will follow pronunciation in such cases, writing the tone in citation in contexts where it is pronounced, but omitting it in appropriate grammatical contexts.

(iv) Finally, the incidence of qīngshēng varies with the rate and formality of speech as well as the region (with the northeast being particularly susceptible to toneless syllables). Thus in fast speech, jīntiān ‘today’ may be pronounced jīntian – without tone on tian. In these cases, we will still write the full tone, using current dictionaries as our guide.

For students’ purposes, the general rule is: you are always safe in writing the word in its lexical, careful, slow speech form, e.g.: wòmen, shūfu, hǎo bù hǎo, jīntiān.

a) Should changed tones be indicated when you write pinyin?
In this text, we do not write the changed tone for combinations of low tones; we write hèn hǎo, and apply the rule. This accords with the standard rules for writing pinyin entries in dictionaries or in continuous text. We do make an exception in writing the changed tones for bu and yi, however: bù gāo but bù lèi; yì zhāng but yì ge.

2.11.2 A pinyin quirk
Standard pinyin writes shénme, zěnme (‘how’) and zánmen (‘we [inclusive]’), all with a medial ‘n’ that is not reflected in the pronunciation. This compares to other systems of transcription, such as Yale which writes shéme, National Romanization, which writes sherme (with the ‘r’ representing the rising tone), and Zhuyin Fuhao which writes ṇẹ
口故, ie she me - none of them with an internal ‘n’. The reason pinyin writes a silent -n in these words has to do with the characters that represent them. The first syllable of shénme, zěnme and zámen are written with characters that are, in other contexts, pronounced shèn (with falling tone), zèn and zán respectively. While one is tempted to rectify the system and simply write shéme, zěme and zámen in conformity with actual pronunciations, pinyin is now regarded as a standard transliteration in the Chinese speaking world and we should accept it as it is - if for no other reason than the fact that reference materials as well as computer input systems are based on it.

2.11.3 Tone combos II
Recall the prototype examples of the six sets of tone combos presented in Unit 1: lǎoshī hái hào, zāijìàn, bù rè, 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kūnmíng</td>
<td>jīchāng (airport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Zhōngwén</td>
<td>Wēiruăn (Microsoft)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>huānghāi</td>
<td>tiānqì</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Héfēi</th>
<th>qīngwèn</th>
<th>12</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yúnnán</td>
<td>hāokān</td>
<td>dìtiĕ (underground train)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>tóngxué (classmate)</td>
<td>yānjīng</td>
<td>wùlǐ (physics)</td>
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</table>

Exercise 7.
a) Place the tone marks over the following words. (You may need to review the appropriate part of the lesson on sounds and symbols.)

- level tone: jie qiao nao jiu cui
- low: zei pou shao xiao bie
- rising: xue bei tuo zhui liao

b) Now focus on the problematical initials – those found on lines 3,4,5 of our initial chart. Assign a tone, and the practice reading down:

- ti ta dang dou dao
- ci ca zang si zou zao
- chi cha zhang shi zhou zhao
- qì qìa jiang xi jiu jiao

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2.12 Rhymes and rhythms

**Dà jiǎo**

Dà jiǎo dà, dà jiǎo dà, Big feet big, big feet big,
yīntiān xià yǔ bú hàipà; cloudy fall rain not fear;
Dà jiǎo hǎo, dà jiǎo hǎo, big feet good, big feet good,
yīntiān xià yǔ shuāibùdāo. cloudy fall rain slip-not-fall.

‘Big feet’ in contrast to bound feet, presumably. 

**Rào kòuling ‘toungue twisters’**

[Traditional] characters are included to show how the phonetic components of Chinese characters provide visual support for these tongue twisters.

Māma qí mǎ, mǎ màn, māma mà mà. Mum rides horse, horse slow, mum scolds horse.

Niúniú qiān niú, niú nìng, niúniú niú niú. Little-girl leads ox, ox cunning, little-girl wrenches ox.