Unit 2

Yǔ bù zhuó, bù chéng qì.
jadı 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’, i.e. 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
méi May  shāi shy  shū shoo
zhèi Jay  mài my  shēn shun
bēi bay  pái pie  zhuō jaw
pēi pay  bái buy  zhōu Joe
fēi Fay  

d) dízi deeds  xízi seeds
tóuzi toads  qíci cheats
lúózi lords  bìci beets (or beats)

2.2 Adverbs

In the first unit, you were introduced to a number of words that are classed ‘adverbs’: hěn, bù, yě, hái or háishi and yijing. 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 jǐnzhāng 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 in the same way: bú tài hǎo.

2.2.2 Other adverbs

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dōu</td>
<td>Tāmen dōu hěn è.</td>
<td>[They]’re all hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘all’</td>
<td>Dōu dui.</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</td>
<td>Xiànzài hěn lěng, kēshì</td>
<td>[It]’s cold now, but [it] was even colder before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘even more’</td>
<td>Yǐqián gèng lěng.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bijiào</td>
<td>Wǒ jǐntiān bijiāo máng.</td>
<td>I’m fairly busy today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘quite’</td>
<td>Zuótiān bijiāo rè.</td>
<td>Yesterday was fairly warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zǒngshi</td>
<td>Xuéshēng zǒngshi hěn máng hěn lèi; dānshì</td>
<td>Students are always busy and tired, but teachers are even more so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘always’</td>
<td>Lǎoshī gèng máng gèng lèi.</td>
<td></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! [It]’s unusually good!

b) ADV’s tǐng and mán ~ mǎn as intensifiers

Some mention needs to be made here of two adverbs that are very common in certain phrases in colloquial speech. One is tǐng, whose core meaning is actually ‘straight; erect’, but which, as an ADV, carries the force of English ‘very’ or ‘really’. The other is mán, which has a variant in low tone, mǎn. The variants may reflect confusion between two different roots, one, mán, with a core meaning of ‘fierce’ and an adverbial meaning of ‘entirely; utterly’; and the other mǎn, with a core meaning of ‘full’, extended to ‘very; full’ in the adverbial position. The distinction may have been obscured in part by the fact that the two merge to mǎn when the low-tone rule applies in common phrases such as
mán hǎo. For whatever reason, they seem to be treated as synonymous in colloquial speech by many speakers.

Exclamations with mǎn or tǐng often occur with a final de (written with the same character as possessive de, 的, and sometimes referred to as situational-de):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tǐng hǎo de.</th>
<th>Perfect; great!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mán hǎo de.</td>
<td>[That]’s great!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some common collocations, roughly glossed to convey the tone of the Chinese; mán is given in rising tone, but you may find that speakers from Taiwan and parts of southern China tend to say mǎn in contexts where the low tone is permitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tǐng bú cuò de.</th>
<th>Not bad!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tǐng shūfu.</td>
<td>[It]’s quite comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tǐng yǒu yìsi de!</td>
<td>How interesting!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mán hāochī de!</td>
<td>[It]’s delicious!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mán piàoliàng.</td>
<td>[She]’s real attractive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mán bú cuò de!</td>
<td>[That]’s pretty darn good!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mán bú zāihu.</td>
<td>[He] doesn’t give a damn. (‘to care; be concerned’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**c) -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. Běijí ‘North Pole’), plus le. It is quite productive and can follow almost any SV to mean ‘extremely SV’.

| Hǎo jíle! | Excellent! |
| Tiānqì rè jíle! | The weather’s extremely hot! |

**d) Yǒu <yì> diànr ‘kind of; a bit’**

Rather than intensifying your answer, you may want to back off and answer ‘kind of; rather; a bit’. The construction is yǒu <yì> diànr + SV ‘(have a-bit SV)’, a phrase that appears in the adverbial slot and can be interpreted as a complex adverb. The yì of <yì> diànr is often elided (hence the < >). Taiwan and other southern Mandarin regions, where the final ‘r’ is not usual, say yǒu yídiān SV. Like the English ‘a bit’, this construction conveys some sort of inadequacy. So tā yǒu yídiānr 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!]

| Wǒ jīntiān yǒu (yì) diànr máng. | I’m kind of busy today. |
| Jīntiān yǒu (yì) diànr rè. | It’s rather hot today. |
| Wǒmen yǒu (yì) diànr è. | We’re a bit hungry |
Summary of Adverbs (and other expressions of degree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADV</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>bú</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>bú lèi</td>
<td>bú shàngbān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yě</td>
<td>too; also</td>
<td>yě hěn lèi</td>
<td>yě chī le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hái ~ háishi</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>hái hào</td>
<td>hái méi zōu ne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōu</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>dōu hěn gāo</td>
<td>dōu shuǐjiào le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǐjīng</td>
<td>already</td>
<td>yǐjīng zǒu le</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tài</td>
<td>very; too</td>
<td>tài mǎng le</td>
<td>bú tài mǎng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hěn</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>hěn lèi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tīng, mán ~ mán</td>
<td>very; really</td>
<td>mán bú cuò</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gèng</td>
<td>even more</td>
<td>gèng rè</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bǐjiāo ~ bǐjiāo</td>
<td>rather; relatively</td>
<td>bǐjiāo lèng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zǒngshí</td>
<td>always</td>
<td>zǒngshí hěn mǎng</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;yi&gt;&lt;diǎnr&gt;</td>
<td>‘kind of; rather; a bit’</td>
<td>yǒu diǎnr guì</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, yě:

Zuótiān wǒ bú shūfu, jǐntiān yě bú tài hǎo. I wasn’t very well yesterday, and [I]’m not too well today, either.

Zuótiān hěn rè, jǐntiān yě hěn rè. It was hot yesterday, and it’s hot today, too.

As noted in §1.7.5, conjunctions kěshí and dānshì (the latter probably more common in non-northern regions) correspond to English ‘but’ or ‘however’. A third word, bùguò, 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’. 
They haven’t eaten, but they aren’t hungry.

I’ve eaten, but I haven’t bathed yet.

She’s left, but she’s not going to work today.

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’
  - lihai ‘formidable; tough’

- **Of tasks**
  - nán ‘difficult’
  - róngyi ‘easy’

- **Of things**
  - hǎochī ‘nice [to eat]’
  - hàotǐng ‘nice [sounding]’
  - guì ‘expensive’

- **Of people or things**
  - qǐngchu ‘clear’
  - hǎokàn ‘nice [looking]’
  - piàoliang ‘pretty’

- **Of situations**
  - xíng ‘be okay; be satisfactory; [it’ll] do’

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

2.3.1 Questions with zěnmeyàng ‘how is it?’

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jǐntiān zěnmeyàng?</td>
<td>How is [it] today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hěn rè.</td>
<td>[It]’s hot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhōngwén zěnmeyàng?</td>
<td>How’s Chinese [class]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hěn nán! Lǎoshī hěn yán.</td>
<td>[It]’s difficult. The teacher’s strict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.2 Examples

- Lǎoshī zěnmeyàng?
  - How’s the teacher?
  - Hěn lìhái, tā fēicháng yán. [She]’s formidable; she’s really strict.
Tā zěnmeyàng?  How is he?
Hěn lèi, shuǐjiào le.  [He]’s tired, [he]’s gone to bed.

Tāmen zěnmeyàng?  How are they doing?
Bù shūfu, méi shāngkè.  [They]’re not well, [they] weren’t in class.

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

Zěnmeyàng? Háochī ma?  How is [it]? Good?
Hái kěyǐ.  [It]’s okay.
Guì bu guì?  Is [it] expensive?
Bù tài guì, hái xíng.  Not too – [it]’s reasonable.

Tīānqì zěnmeyàng?  How’s the weather?
Zuótiān fēicháng lèng, kěshí jīntiān hǎo le.  Yesterday was very cold, but today’s okay.

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

Xiànzài nǐ juéde zěnmeyàng?  How do you feel now?
Wō juéde bù shūfu.  I’m not feeling well.
Wō hěn jīnzhāng.  I’m nervous.
Wō juéde hěn lèi.  I feel quite tired.
Hái xíng.  Okay.

2.3.4 Zěnmeyàng as a greeting
Responses to zěnmeyàng as an informal greeting include the following:

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

Notes
a) Kěyǐ is a verb meaning ‘may; be acceptable’.
b) Cuò is a SV meaning ‘be wrong; be mistaken’.
c) Māma-hūhū is a complex SV that is formed by repetition of the parts of the SV māhu ‘be casual; careless’.
Exercise 1.
*Perform a dialogue between the two students, Máo Dàwéi and Lì Lisān, along the following lines:*

**Máo Dàwéi**

Hi, Lisān!

Tired. How about you?

No, I already ate.

It was okay. How’re your teachers? Strict?

But Japanese is even harder.

Okay, see you later.

**Lì Lisān**

Hello, Dàwéi. How’re you feeling today?

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

Was it good?

Very, they’re formidable! Chinese is tough!

They’re both hard! …Well, I must be off.

Okay, bye, take it easy.

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2.4 Nouns and modification

This section begins with some additions to your repertoire of inanimate nouns. You will have a chance to practice these in context later in this unit as well as subsequently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yàoshi</th>
<th>keys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shū</td>
<td>books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hùzhào</td>
<td>passport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xìngli</td>
<td>luggage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bǐ</td>
<td>pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiānbǐ</td>
<td>pencil (lead-pen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>màozì</td>
<td>cap; hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>píbāo</td>
<td>wallet (leather-pack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tānqǐ</td>
<td>weather (sky-air)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bào&lt;zhì&gt;</td>
<td>newspaper (report-paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zìxíngchē</td>
<td>bike (self-go-vehicle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dānchē</td>
<td>bike (unit-vehicle)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| yānjìng  | glasses (eye-mirror) |
| shūbāo   | backpack (book-bundle) |
| xié      | shoes [xiézi in the South] |
| <yǔ>sàn  | [rain]umbrella |
| bǐjīběn | notebook (pen-note-book) |
| shǒujī  | cell-phone (hand-machine) |
| xìnyòngkǎ | credit card (credit-card) |
| dōngxi   | [physical] things |
| yīfū     | clothes |
| zìdiǎn   | dictionary (character-records) |
| chēzǐ    | small vehicle; car |
| qichē    | car; automobile |

2.4.1 Measure-words

Nouns lead to the subject of ‘measure-words’. In English, one can distinguish two kinds of nouns: those that can be counted directly, and those that can only be counted in terms of a container or amount.
It is true that wine, soup, and tea can also be counted directly if the meaning is ‘varieties of’: 10 wines; 4 soups; 5 teas. But otherwise, such nouns need to be measured out. In Chinese (as well as in many other languages in the region, including Thai, Vietnamese and Burmese), all nouns can be considered non-countable, and are counted through the mediation of another noun-like word. [The vocabulary in these examples is only for illustration – it need not be internalized yet.]

Often a distinction is made between ‘measures’ and ‘classifiers’. The phrases on the right all involve measures, which serve to portion out a substance that is otherwise not naturally bound; all the examples are, in fact, liquids. Chinese often uses Measures where English would use them, as the examples show. Classifiers, on the other hand, are rare in English; perhaps ‘block’ is an example, as in ‘block of apartments’. Classifiers serve to classify nouns along various physical dimensions. Tiáo for example is a classifier used typically for sinuous things, such as roads, rivers, and fish:

Interestingly, in many cases, the original impetus for a particular classifier has been obscured by cultural change. Items of news, for example, are still classified with tiáo (yì tiáo xīnwén ‘an item of news’) even though news is no longer delivered by way of a sinuous tickertape. The use of tiáo for watches may also be a relic of those days when people carried a fob watch on long, sinuous chains.

Rather than keep the notional distinction between classifiers and measures, both will be referred to as ‘Measure-words’, abbreviated as M’s. Before you encounter M’s in sentences, it will be useful to practice them in phrases. We begin with the default M, gè
(usually untoned). It appears with many personal nouns, including rén ‘person’ and xuésheng ‘student’. Note that when combined with an M, the number ‘two’ (but not a number ending in ‘two’, such as 12 or 22) is expressed as liǎng (‘pair’) rather than èr: liǎng 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 yì 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, it still elicits the shift before ‘losing’ its tone: yí ge.

The following sets can be recited regularly until familiar:

- yí ge rén liǎng ge rén sān ge rén wǔ ge rén shí ge rén.
  1 person  2 people  3 people  5 people  10 people.
- yí ge xuésheng liǎng ge xuésheng sān ge xuésheng
  1 student  2 students  3 students.
- yí ge liǎng ge di-yī ge di-èr ge di-sān ge
  1 of them  2 of them  the 1st [one]  the 2nd [one]  the 3rd [one]

The particle le following phrases like these (as in the main dialogue below) underscores the relevance of the ‘new situation’: Sì ge rén le. ‘So that’s 4 [people].’

Another particularly useful M is kuài ‘lump; chunk; piece’, which in the context of money (qián), means yuán, generally translated as ‘dollar’. The yuán is a unit of the currency known as rénmínbi [MB] ‘people’s currency’.

- yí kuài qián liǎng kuài qián sān kuài qián wǔ kuài qián shí kuài qián
- yí kuài liǎng kuài sān kuài wǔ kuài shí kuài

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: wò ‘I’ > wò de ‘my; mine’. The full system is shown below:

- wò de wòmen de my; mine our; ours
- nǐ de nǐmen de your; yours your; yours [plural]
- tā de tāmen de his; her; hers their; theirs

These may combine with nouns, as follows:

- wò de zìdiǎn  my dictionary
- tā de hùzhào  her passport
wōmen de xíngli  our luggage
wǒ de xié<zi>  my shoes
nǐ de dōngxi  your things

The possessive marker de may also link noun modifiers to other nouns:

xuésheng de shūbāo  students’ bags
lǎoshī de shū  teachers’ books
Zhāng lǎoshī de yānjìng  Professor Zhang’s glasses
zuótiān de tiānqì  yesterday’s weather
jǐntiān de bāo<zhi>  today’s newspaper

2.4.3 Demonstrative pronouns
Demonstrative pronouns (‘this’ and ‘that’) and locational pronouns (‘here’ and ‘there’) are shown in the chart below. Examples in context will follow later in the unit.

<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 ~ zhèlǐ ‘here’</td>
<td>nàr ~ nǎlǐ ‘there’</td>
<td>nàr ~ nǎlǐ ‘where’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
a) The forms, zhèi, nèi and něi, are generally found only in combination with a following M: zhè but zhèi ge ‘this one’; nà but nèi ge ‘that [one]’.
b) On the Mainland, where both forms of the locational pronouns occur, the r-forms are more colloquial, the lǐ-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 nǎr as nǎ, or [particularly in Taiwan] use zhělǐ, nǎlǐ and nǎlǐ (> nálǐ). Notice that in all cases, the distal forms differ from the question forms only in tone: nà / nǎ; nèi / něi, 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\textsuperscript{th}
his things  4 students  Prof. Zhang’s passport
yesterday’s paper  2 dollars  her bike
How’s Liáng Zhīfǔ doing today? / She’s 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 linked to days, as follows:

Jīntiān jiǔ yuè bā hào. Today’s the 8th of September.
Zuótiān qī hào. Yesterday was the 7th.
Míngtiān jiǔ hào. Tomorrow’s the 9th.

But the addition of an adverb, such bu, requires a verb, and in such cases, shì [usually untoned] must be expressed:

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

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

Jīntiān <shì> jiǔ yuè shì hào. Today’s September 10th.
Míngtiān <shì> Zhōngqū Jìé. Tomorrow’s the ‘Mid-Autumn Festival’. [ie the ‘Moon Festival’]

Naming and other kinds of identification sometimes omit 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 xuéshēng, tā shì lǎoshī. We’re students, he’s a teacher.
Zhè shì jīntiān de bāo. This is today’s paper.
Shì nǐ de yào shì ma? Are [these] your keys?
Bú shì wǒ de sān, shì tā de. [That]’s not my umbrella, [it]’s his.
Tāmen dōu shì xuéshēng. They’re all students.

But don’t forget, shì is not required with SVs:

Xuéshēng zōngshī hěn lèi, The students are always tired, right?
duí bu duì?
2.5.1 Questions
Now we can introduce the question words shéi (or shuí) ‘who, whom’ and shénme ‘what’ (which, like zhēnme, 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 information supplied in the answer. Note the differences in word order between the English sentences and the Chinese:

- Tā shì shéi?    Who’s that?
  Tā shì wǒ de lāoshī.  That’s my teacher.

- Nà shì shénme?  What’s that?
  Nà shì wǒ de hùzhào.  That’s my passport.

- <Shì> shéi de yàoshi?  Whose keys are [these]?
  <Shì> wǒ de – xièxie.  [They] ’re mine – thanks.

- <Shì> shuí de xíngli?  Whose luggage?
  <Shì> wǒmen de.  It’s ours.

- Zhè shì shéi de?  Whose is this?
  Shì wǒ de.  It’s mine.

- Shèi shì di-yī ge?  Who is the first [one]?
  Tā shì di-yī ge.  He’s the first.

- Di-èr ge ne?  And the second?
  Tā shì di-èr ge.  She’s the second.

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 hàoxiàng ‘seems like (good-resemble)’. The following short interchanges involve trying to guess the contents of a series of wrapped packages by feeling them:

- Di-yī shì shénme?  What’s the first?
  Di-yī hàoxiàng shì yàoshi.  The first seems like keys.

- Zhè shì shénme?  What’s this?
  Hàoxiàng shì shū.  Seems like a book.

- Nà, zhè shì shénme?  Well, what’s this?
  Hàoxiàng shì xiézi.  Seems like shoes.

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:
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>
<tr>
<td>Is that your bike?</td>
<td>No, it’s Léi Fēng’s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Names and titles
Names need not be 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 §1.6.1 and §1.9.1.

2.6.1 Names
Some common English names are directly transliterated into Chinese: Yuēhàn Shìmìsī ‘John Smith’, keeping the English word order of given name before surname. 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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wèi Délì</th>
<th>Paul Wheatley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Táng Lìlì</td>
<td>Lily Tomlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Máo Xiān’ān</td>
<td>Anne Moussoussin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Léi Hànbo</td>
<td>Robert Leonhardt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lǐ Dān</td>
<td>David Lippmann</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cūī Lín</th>
<th>Kāng Yòuwéi</th>
<th>Yuán Shào</th>
<th>Zhèng Chénggōng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhèng Hé</td>
<td>Máo Qílíng</td>
<td>Wáng Li</td>
<td>Báí Súzhēn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6.2 Xìng

Chinese names consist of a surname, or xìng, in initial position, followed by a given name or míngzi, literally ‘name-characters’. Xìng are usually – but not always – single syllables. As a verb, xìng is almost always used when asking for, or responding with, someone’s surname:

Tai xìng shénme? What’s her surname?
Tā xìng Huáng. She’s surnamed Huang.
Xìng Wáng? Wang?
Bú shì xìng Wáng, tā xìng Huáng. No, not Wang, she’s named Huang.

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 likely to persist longer as xìng plus title. So under normal levels of politeness, you would question someone about their xìng, not about their míngzi. However, in the appropriate context, it is possible to seek someone’s full name (regardless of the number of syllables). In such cases, the verb jiào ‘be called’ is used. Jiào can take either the person or the word míngzi as its subject; and it takes as its object at least two syllables of a name, never a single syllable. Below are some options, first for Lǐ Xiāngjūn, a three-syllable name, then for Zhèng Hé, with only two.

Q A
Tai jiào shénme míngzi? Tai jiào Lǐ Xiāngjūn.
Tai de míngzi jiào shénme? Tai <de míngzi> jiào <Lǐ> Xiāngjūn.

Tai jiào shénme míngzi? Tai jiào Zhèng Hé.
Tai de míngzi jiào shénme? Tai <de míngzi> jiào Zhèng Hé.

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> guìxing?

[Xǔ Xiān] Wo 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 ‘mister (first-born)’ is the
generic title for adult males. In Taiwan, or overseas communities, xiăojie ‘Miss; Ms
(small older-sister)’ 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,
mature women can be addressed, 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
xiăojie is used much less there. On the Mainland, if no professional title (such as lǎoshī)
is available, the options are to use full name or mingzi, or simply to avoid direct address
completely.

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 for males or
females, of the sort that might appear on a business card. Note the order surname before
title:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>surname</th>
<th>(given name) title</th>
<th>surname</th>
<th>(given name) title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wèi</td>
<td>&lt;Bóyáng&gt; lǎoshī</td>
<td>Shí</td>
<td>&lt;Jílóng&gt; xiānshēng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chén</td>
<td>&lt;Yuē&gt; xiăojie</td>
<td>Wáng</td>
<td>&lt;Guóbāo&gt; shīfū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhōu</td>
<td>&lt;Lǐ&gt; jīnglǐ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6.6 Shì with names
As noted above, 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 Guānghū; tā shì Wáng Shuò; tā shì Táng Bīn; wǒ shì Wèi lǎoshī.
Di-yī ge shì Xiāo Míngzuò, di-èr ge shì Li Míng, di-sān ge shì Xiè Jíng.

Nǐ shì bu shì Zhāng xiānshēng? Are you Mr. Zhang?
Zhāng jīnglǐ, hǎo. How are you, Manager Zhang?
Zhè shì Dū shīfū. This is Master Du.
Wǒ shì Wáng lǎoshī; tāmen dōu shì I’m Prof. Wang and these are my students.
wǒ de xuéshēng.
Chén xiăojie shì Bēijīng rén. Miss Chen is from Beijing.

Exercise 4.
a) Assuming you were an official of appropriate rank and eminence to address the
question, write out how the following people might respond (in the modern world) to
<Nín> guìxìng?
1. Hú Shì, (20th C. philosopher and reformer, graduate of Cornell University):
   Wǒ xìng Hú, jiào Hú Shì.
2. Sīmà Qiān (the Han dynasty historian):
3. Zhāng Xuéliáng (Manchurian warlord):
4. Hán Yù (Tang dynasty scholar):
5. Yáng Guìfēi (courtesan, from the late Tang dynasty):
6. Cuī Jiàn (rock musician):

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 Měilíng.
4. Hi, my name’s Lǐ Dān.
5. Who’s he? / He’s my teacher.
6. That’s Zhōu Lì.
7. His surname’s Chén, full name, Chén Bó.
8. And him? / His surname’s Xù, full name, Xū Xiān.
11. This is master Wèi.
12. Her name’s Smith [Shǐmǐsī].

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

### 2.7.1 Some Chinese place names

China is called Zhōngguó, often given the literal gloss of ‘middle kingdom’, a name which goes back to the time when it designated the ruling principality among the many that owed it fealty. The Chinese are then Zhōngguó rén ‘Chinese-people’.

Administrative units of the People’s Republic include provinces (省 shěng), prefectures (地 dì), counties (县 xiàn), townships (乡 xiāng) and villages (村 cūn). Of these, the county (xiàn) is the unit with the longest historical continuity, dating back some 2500 years. In modern mainland China the highest, or provincial level contains 33 divisions: 22 provinces (with Taiwan considered a 23rd), 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities, which are cities ruled by the central government (Běijīng, Shànghǎi, Tiānjīn and Chóngqìng), and 2 special autonomous districts (Hong Kong [ Xiāng Gāng] and Macau [Aomén]).
Taiwan, which administers the island of Tāiwān, the Pescadores Islands (Pēnghú), as well as 13 small, scattered offshore islands, has a slightly different administrative structure. It has two centrally administered cities, Taipei (Táiběi) and the south-western city of Kaohsiung (Gāoxióng).

The chart below lists important cities. They can be located in terms of their province (using the verb zài), or in terms of their proximity to another place (using the lí pattern that follows in §2.7.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quadrant</th>
<th>The city of:</th>
<th>is in</th>
<th>the province (shēng) of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Xīnīng</td>
<td>zài</td>
<td>Qīnhāi &lt;shēng&gt;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Wūlūmùqì</td>
<td></td>
<td>Xīnjiāng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Hūhēhàotè</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Nèiménggū.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Shènyáng</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liáóníng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Chángchūn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jǐlín.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Hā’èrbīn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hēilóngjiāng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Lāsà</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Xīzāng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Xī’ān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shānxī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Nánjīng</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jiāngsū.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Guāngzhōu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guāngdōng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Guīlīn</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Guāngxī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Chéngdū</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sìchūān.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Kūnmíng</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yūnnán.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

a) Nèiménggū ‘Inner Mongolia’, Xīzāng ‘Tibet’ and Guāngxī ‘Shanxi’ are autonomous regions, zìzhìqū.

b) Shènyáng was formerly called by its Manchu name, Mukden.

c) The names of two provinces are distinguished only by tone: Shānxī ‘mountains-west’ (which is west of the province of Shāndōng ‘mountains-east’), and Shānxī (‘pass-west’), sometimes romanized as ‘Shaanxi’ or ‘Shenshi’ to distinguish it, which is west again of Shānxī.

2.7.2 Proximity

Relative proximity of one place to another can be expressed by a construction that involves the word lí ‘[away] from’, and the SVs jīn ‘be close’ and yuǎn ‘be far’. Notice the difference in word order from English.
Tiānjīn lì Bèijīng bǐjiào jǐn.  Tiānjīn’s quite close to Bèijīng.

Xī’ān zài Shānxī, lì Bèijīng bǐjiào yuǎn.  Xi’an’s in Shanxi, quite far from Beijing.

Xīnìng lì Chéngdū hěn jǐn ma?  Bù jǐn; Xīnìng lì Lánzhōu hěn jǐn.  Is Xining near Chengdu?  No, it’s not; it’s close to Lanzhou.

Xī’ān lì Bèijīng hěn yuǎn, dànhì Xīnìng gèng yuǎn.  Xi’an is far from Bèijīng, but Xining is even farther.

People's Republic of China (PRC): Administrative Divisions & Territorial Disputes

Figure by MIT OCW.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/c/e9/China_administrative.png/

2.7.3 Zài ‘be+at’

In certain contexts, zài may appear without a [following] object, typically when it means ‘be at home’, or as a euphemism for ‘be alive’: tā bù zài ‘he’s not at home’ or ‘he’s passed away’ (the latter meaning more often with le, bù zài le, since that is likely to be news). Otherwise, zài is followed by words or phrases that are locations. But just what constitutes a location is not always obvious. Place names are locations as the examples in §2.7.1 show. So are the locational pronouns:
Otherwise, most nouns need to be followed by one of a number of position words, such as shàng ‘on’ or lǐ ‘in’, before they can be locations and thereby act as objects to zài:

| zhèr ~ zhèlǐ | ‘here’ |
| nàr ~ nǎlǐ | ‘there’ |
| nàr ~ nǎlǐ | ‘where’ |

zài fēijī shàng on the plane
zài shūbāo lǐ in [my] bookbag

However, some common words for places do not always require following position words like shàng or lǐ. Sometimes additional position words are optional; sometimes they add a slight nuance of difference.

| jiā <lǐ> | at home |
| cāntīng <lǐ> | in the cafeteria |
| jīchāng | at the airport |

Before pronouns can act as objects of zài, they need support from one of the locational pronouns, such as zhèr ~ zhèlǐ: zài wǒ zhèr, literally ‘at me here’; zài tā nàr ‘at her there’. English actually expresses the notion more naturally with the verb ‘have’:

Qǐngwèn, jǐntiān de báo Excuse me, where’s today’s paper?
zài nàr ~ nǎlǐ?
Zài wǒ zhèr ~ zhèlǐ. I have it.
Xínglǐ ne? And the luggage?
Xínglǐ zài tā nàr. He has the luggage.

2.7.4 Zài as a main verb; zài as a co-verb

Zài may be used as a main verb (as in §2.7.1 and below), but it can also introduce a location and appear prior to another verb, in which case it is called a co-verb in Chinese grammatical tradition (CV).

a) Examples of zài as a main verb

Qǐngwèn, Mǎ lāoshī zài ma? Excuse me, is Prof. Ma here?
Mǎ lāoshī xiànzài zài Yúnnán. Prof. Ma is currently in Yunnan.

Yāoshī zài nàr?
Zài nàr. / Zài tā nàr. Where are the keys?
[They] ’re over there. / She has [them].

Nánjīng lǐ Héfēi bù tài yuǎn, Nanjing’s not far from Hefei,
kēshí Nánjīng zài Jiāngsū, but Nanjing’s in Jiangsu, [and]
Héfēi zài Ānhuī. Hefei’s in Anhui.
Wǒ de hùzhào zāi nǐ nár ma? Do you have my passport?
Bú zài wǒ zhèr! I don’t have [it].
Nǐ de xíngli zāi nǎr? Where are your bags?
Hái zài fēijī shàng. [They]’re still on the airplane.

b) Zài as a co-verb
Co-verbs are like verbs in allowing direct modification by adverbs, but they frequently correspond to prepositions in English.

Xuéshēng zhōngshí zài cāntīng chífān. Students always eat in the cafeteria.

Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng shuìjiào le. We slept on the plane.

Zài jiā lǐ chífān bǐjiào hǎo. It’s better to eat at home.

In such cases, the zài-phrase expresses the location of an action. Later, you will see that zài-phrases also follow certain verbs (where zài is usually untoned): shēng zài Běijīng ‘born in Beijing’.

2.7.5 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: Chīfān le méiyǒu? Used alone, as a main verb, it conveys possession and existence:

Possession
Wǒ yǒu sān ge hùzhào. I have 3 passports.
Wǒ méiyǒu sān. I don’t have an umbrella.
Xuéshēng dōu yǒu zìdīǎn. The students all have dictionaries.

Existence
Wǒ méiyǒu xíngli. I don’t have any baggage.
Nánjīng méiyǒu dìtiě. There’s no underground railway in Nanjing.
Chēzī lǐ yǒu yīfū, yè yǒu shūbāo. There are clothes and bookbags in the car.
**Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity; category</th>
<th>(bú) shì</th>
<th>Nà shì jīntiān de báo. Tā shì lāoshī.</th>
<th>is</th>
<th>That’s today’s paper. She’s a teacher.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>(bú) zài</td>
<td>Chéngdū zài Sìchuān.</td>
<td>is (in etc.)</td>
<td>Chengdu’s in Sichuan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence</td>
<td>(méi)yòu</td>
<td>Xī’ān méiyou jīchāng.</td>
<td>[there] is /are</td>
<td>There’s no airport in Xi’an.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession</td>
<td>(méi)yòu</td>
<td>Wǒ méiyou hūzhāo.</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>I don’t have a passport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>li…(bú) jìn / (bù) yuǎn</td>
<td>Tiānjīn lí Běijīng bù yuǎn.</td>
<td>is close to / is far from</td>
<td>Tianjin’s close to Beijing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 and C -dialogues.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jiǎ</th>
<th>Yǐ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. -Where’s the paper please?</td>
<td>-Yesterday’s?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-No, today’s.</td>
<td>-Sorry, I don’t have it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-You had it earlier.</td>
<td>-But I don’t have it now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. -Have you eaten yet?</td>
<td>-I have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Oh, you’ve already eaten!</td>
<td>-Yes, in the dorm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Is your dorm far from here?</td>
<td>-It’s kind of far.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. -Whose bookbag?</td>
<td>-Not mine, I don’t have a bookbag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Is it Li Dān’s?</td>
<td>-No, I have Li Dan’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Is it ‘young’ Liú’s?</td>
<td>-No, he’s not up yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Then it’s Sūn Hào’s.</td>
<td>-Is it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 signs in shops than spoken, but they are not out of place with foreigners. The verbs are huānyìng ‘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):
Huānyìng nǐmen lái Chéngdū! Welcome to Chengdu.

In Chinese settings, explicit thanks are usually reserved for favors that go beyond the expected. But given the airport context, an expression of gratitude as a response to the welcome is not inappropriate. This one involves the verbs xiē ‘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 lái jiē wǒmen. Thanks for coming to meet us.

In China, shops and other business establishments often have a formal expression of welcome written near the entrance. This expression is: 欢迎光临 huānyìng guānglín, or xièxiè guānglín (both with the preferred four syllables). Guānglín, literally ‘illustrious presence’, is a fancy word for ‘guest’ or ‘visitor’. Sometimes, especially at openings or sales, ‘welcome hostesses’ (huānyìng xiǎojie), stationed at the shop entrance wearing red costumes, will welcome or thank you with the same phrases.

![Image of people at an entrance]

Huānyìng nǐmen! [JKW 2003]

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

- Lěng a! [Wow, it]’s cold!
- Máng a! Busy, huh?!
- Shéi a? [Knock, 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.
Shàngchē ba. Let’s board the bus.

2.8.3 Praise
Chinese will praise your efforts to speak their language (called Zhōngwén or Hányǔ), and will typically make use of an expression involving the verb shuō ‘speak’ (or, in southern Mandarin, jiàng) 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 shùbāo) or has the potential to be followed by a noun (wǒ de [shùbāo]). 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 (wǒ de) and 得 (shuō+de), 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.
~ jiàng+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.
~ jiàng+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.
~ jiàng+de bù hǎo.

When you see more examples, you will find that nothing can intervene in the combination shuō+de. So if Zhōngwén (or Hányǔ) is mentioned, it cannot directly follow shuō, but needs to be cited 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, though, practice it only as it appears, and only with the verb shuō and its southern Mandarin counterpart, jiàng.
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. [X designates any one or a few.]

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 lǎoshī, wǒ shì Xiǎolín Yóumēi. Professor Wang, I’m Xiaolin Youmei.

W. Xiǎolín Yóumēi, nǐ hǎo. Xiaolin Youmei, hi. Okay, [that’s] 3.
Hǎo, sān ge rén le. And [who are] you?

Ym Hái yǒu tā – tā xìng Kong, jiào Kǒng Mèi. [pointing] And her too -- her name is Kong, she’s called Kong Mei.

W. Hǎo, Kǒng Mèi, nǐ hǎo! Fine, how are you Kong Mei? [That’s] 4
Si ge rén le. Nǐ ne? then. And [who are] you?

Jf Wǒ shì Bái Jiéfēi. I’m Bai Jiefei.

W. Bái Jiéfēi, nǐ hǎo…. Bai Jiefei, hi….
Nà hǎo, huānyíng nǐmen lái Bèijīng! Okay, then, welcome to Beijing!

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

W. Zhè shì Gāo shīfù. This is Mr. Gao.

All Gāo shīfù, nǐn hǎo. Mr. Gao, how are you?
Gāo Ėi, 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.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
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.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
W.  Nà hǎo, wǒmen zǒu ba. Shàng chē ba.  Fine, let’s go then. All aboard!
X.  Hǎo, hǎo.  Okay.
W.  Jīntiān yǒu diànr rè, nǐmen rè ma?  [Aboard the minibus.] [It]’s kind of hot today; are you hot?
X.  Bú, bú rè, hái hǎo. Wǒmen dōu hěn shūfū.  No, [we]’re not, [we]’re fine. We’re all comfortable.
W.  Xíngli, hùzhào, sān dōu yǒu ma?  [You] have [your] bags, [your] passports, umbrellas?
X.  Dōu yǒu, dōu yǒu, xièxie.  [We] have them all, thanks.
W.  Hǎo, nà wǒmen zǒu ba.  Fine, so... let’s go then!
X.  Bēijīng hěn yuǎn ma?  Is Beijing far?
W.  Bù, lí zhèr bù yuǎn – hěn jin!  No, it’s not far from here – quite close!
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.

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.

b) 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.

2.9.1 Airports and airlines

China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects in the last few decades, including the construction of new airports (jīchǎng) and the reconstruction of old ones. An airport said to be the world’s largest is due to be completed near Beijing in time for the 2008 Olympics. Some of the better known airports are Capital (Shōudū) in Beijing, Báiyún (‘white clouds’) in Canton, and Hóngqiáo (the old airport) and Pǔdōng (the new) in Shanghai – the last two both named after districts. Pǔdōng, which like so many of the new airports is far out of town, is served by a German-built mag-lev (magnetic levitation) train (officially called a cǐxuǎn-fūchē ‘magnet-suspend float-vehicle’, but colloquially
referred to as a diàncíchē ‘electromagnetic-vehicle’). It reaches a top speed of 430 kilometers an hour during its 7-8 minute run between the airport and an outlying subway station.

Airlines are proliferating and consolidating in China. ‘Airline’ is hàngkōng gōngsī, literally ‘aviation company’. Here is a list of some of the larger Chinese airlines for you to practice saying:

Zhōngguó Hángkōng Gōngsī  Air China
Zhōngguó Dōngfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī  China Eastern Airlines
Zhōngguó Běifāng Hángkōng Gōngsī  China Northern Airlines
Zhōngguó Xīběi Hángkōng Gōngsī  China Northwest Airlines
Zhōngguó Nánfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī  China Southern Airlines
Zhōngguó Xīnán Hángkōng Gōngsī  China Southwest Airlines
Xīnjiāng Hángkōng Gōngsī  Xinjiang Airlines
Yǔnnán Hángkōng Gōngsī  Yunnan Airlines
Gǎnglóng Hángkōng Gōngsī  Dragonair [Hong Kong-dragon…]

Arriving at Xīnín. [JKW 2005]

2.10 Reflections: What have you learned?

2.10.1 Words
Short words predominate. 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’); xīzào ‘wash-bathe’; hǎoxiàng ‘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 hào, 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’, ‘nice’). 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 chīfàn 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 xīngli and máng 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 qìngshēng ‘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 qìngshēng.

(ii) Many words show qìngshēng in the final syllable: shūfu ‘comfortable’, or wǒmen ‘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, shūshufūfū in which final fū appears with a rising tone. But dictionaries list words such as wǒmen 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 bú toned) but hǎo bú hǎo (with bú 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, jǐntiān ‘today’ may be pronounced jǐntian, 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.: wǒmen, shūfu, hǎo bù hǎo, jǐntiān.

a) Writing changed tones
In this text, we do not write the changed tone for combinations of low tones; we write hěn 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 bù and yì, however: bù gāo but bù lèī; 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 ㄕㄜ ㄇㄜ, 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 zánmen 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, zéme 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 (the next 6)
Recall the prototype examples of the six sets of tone combos presented in Unit 1: lǎoshī hǎi hǎo, zàijiān, 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.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kūnmíng</td>
<td>jīchāng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Zhōngwén</td>
<td>Wēiruǎn (Microsoft) qī hào</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>huānyīng</td>
<td>Qīnghǎi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Héfēi</td>
<td>qīngwèn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yǔnnán</td>
<td>hāokǎn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>tóngxué (classmate)</td>
<td>yānjīng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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 jiao 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
ch!i ch!a zhang shi zhou zhao
qi qia jiang xi jiu jiao

2.12 Summary

tài...le  Tài máng le. (Bú tài máng.)
Adverbs Zōngshi hěn mǎng hěn lèi; gèng mǎng; yǒu yìdiānr lèng; etc.
SVs Hěn nán; Bú hǎochǐ; Hěn lìhai.
Zěnmeyàng Jīntiān zěnmeyàng? Nǐ juéde zěnmeyàng?
Nouns yàoshi, xíngli, dōngxi, xíxingchē, etc.
M-words èrshí ge <xuéshēng>; sān kuài <qián>
DE wǒ de zìdiān; zuòtiān de bāo
Demonstr. zhè ~ zhělì; zhèr ~ zhèlǐ
Identity Jīntiān qǐ hào; Dōu shì wǒ de xuéshēng.
QWs shéi, shénme, nǎr ~ nǎlǐ, guixing, zěnmeyàng
Naming Tā xíng Zhāng, jiào Zhāng Dēmíng; tā shì Zhāng Dēmíng.
Titles Wèi lǎoshī, Gāo shīfū; Zhōu jīnglí
Location Xíngli dōu zài zhèr; Dōu zài wǒ zhèr.
Loc’n with V Wǒmen zài fēijǐ shǎng chī le.
Proximity Tiānjīn lǐ Běijīng hěn jìn.
Possession Wǒ méiyǒu xíngli.
Existence Nánjīng méiyǒu dūtǐ.
Welcome Huānyíng mīnün lài Běijīng. / Xièxié mīnün lài jiè wōmen.
PTs Shàngchē ba.
Praise Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo! / Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo.
Airports Zhōngguó Hángkōng Gōngsī; jīchāng; guójì, guójì
Qǐngshēng xíngli; zōu ba
2.13 Rhymes and rhythms

First a short rhyme that gives you practice with M-words: zhī (written with a different character from the zhī used with bǐ ‘pen’) is the M for animals such as chickens (yì zhī jī) and, as below, frogs; zhāng is a M for flat things such as tickets, tables, maps, lawns, as well as mouths; tiáo is a M for sinuous objects. Yǎnjìng ‘eye’ is tonally distinct from yǎnjīng ‘glasses’; eyes are counted by way of the default M, ge. Dàshēng, literally ‘big-sound’, is ‘loud’; xiǎoshēng is the opposite.

Yì zhī qīngwā

Yì zhī qīngwā, yi zhāng zuì,  one frog, one mouth
liǎng ge yǎnjìng, sì tiáo tuǐ.  two eyes, four legs.

Nǐ shuō:  You say it:
Shuō dàshēng yìdiǎnr:  Say it louder:
Shuō xiǎoshēng yìdiǎnr:  Say it softer:

Dà jiāo

Dà jiāo dà, dà jiāo dà,  Big feet big, big feet big,
yīntiān xiàyǔ bú hǎipà;  cloudy fall+rain not fear;
dà jiāo hǎo, dà jiāo hǎo,  big feet good, big feet good,
yīntiān xiàyǔ shuāibùdāo.  cloudy fall rain slip-not-fall.

Nursery rhyme (colloquial)  ‘Big feet’ in contrast to bound feet, presumably.

Ràokōuling ‘tongue twisters’

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

Māmā qímǎ, mǎ màn, māmā mà mà.  Mum rides horse, horse slow, mum scolds horse.

Niúniu qiān niú, niú nìng, niúniu niǔ niú.  Little-girl leads ox, ox cunning, little-girl wrenches ox.