Learning Chinese

A FOUNDATION COURSE IN MANDARIN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

JULIAN K. WHEATLEY 魏久安
Learning Chinese comes with an extensive set of audio clips that serve as a personal guide to the Chinese language material in the book. These, as well as vocabulary lists (both Chinese-to-English and English-to-Chinese), keys to exercises, and other special features, can be found at the companion Web site yalebooks.com/wheatley.
CONTENTS

Preface xi
Acknowledgments xv
Introduction xvii

THE CORE UNITS 1

Unit 14 9
  14.1 A lighthearted narrative on regional languages and urban development 10
  14.2 Verb reduplication and tentativeness 16
  14.3 Complex verbs, the bā construction, and giving instructions 18
  14.4 Degree and comparison 22
  14.5 Cities and population 32
  14.6 At the fruit stand: Buying and bargaining 37
  14.7 Tastes and ‘adding more to’ 45
  14.8 Verb-le and an excursion to the Great Wall 48
  14.9 Pronunciation 56
  14.10 Rhymes and rhythms 58

Unit 15 62
  15.1 The literature teacher 63
  15.2 Patterns with dui 66
  15.3 Temporal and logical sequence 67
CONTENTS
15.4 Family and professions 73
15.5 Setting the stage: Verb-zhe 81
15.6 More on Chinese regional languages 90
15.7 To bǎ or not to bǎ? 94
15.8 Verb combos (3) 96
15.9 Stand a little closer 102
15.10 Waiting and rushing 103
15.11 Smoking 104
15.12 Rhymes and rhythms 109

Unit 16 113
16.1 Méi Tàidé: The story 114
16.2 Adverbials 120
16.3 May I ask you some personal questions? 128
16.4 Indefinites 136
16.5 Religion 141
16.6 Verb combos (4) 143
16.7 Bèi and the relevance of passive voice 147
16.8 Driving and owning a car (1) 153
16.9 Banquets and toasts 161
16.10 Rhymes and rhythms 164

Unit 17 169
17.1 A geography lesson 170
17.2 Places to see in Beijing 180
17.3 Requests 183
17.4 Modification (with de) 189
17.5 Clothing and shape 194
17.6 Constructions with yì ‘one’ 200
17.7 Dialogue: My younger sister moved to Australia 201
17.8 Driving and owning a car (2) 206
17.9 In the convenience store 211
17.10 Confrontation (1) 215
17.11 Rhymes and rhythms 218
## Unit 18
- 18.1 Studying characters 223
- 18.2 Transformations with *chéng* ‘become’, and more on *bā* 229
- 18.3 Taking photographs 233
- 18.4 Chinese etiquette 237
- 18.5 The extended family 240
- 18.6 Death 251
- 18.7 Feeling ill 255
- 18.8 At the temple 258
- 18.9 The Chinese school system 261
- 18.10 Confrontation (2) 266
- 18.11 Rhymes and rhythms 271
- Appendix: Body parts 275

## Unit 19
- 19.1 Tianjin memories 279
- 19.2 Apologies and excuses 285
- 19.3 Current events 288
- 19.4 Sports 292
- 19.5 From telephones to texting 297
- 19.6 Making a telephone call 305
- 19.7 Bargaining: The way Chinese might do it 309
- 19.8 Exploring the city of Zhenjiang (*Zhènjiāng*) 313
- 19.9 Interjections, vivid adjectives, and word-forming affixes 323
- 19.10 The North Wind and the Sun 331

## THE CHARACTER UNITS

### Unit 20
- 20.0 复习 / 複習 *Fūxí* ‘Review’ 341
- 20.1 First set 346
- 20.2 Second set 355
PREFACE

The elementary level of *Learning Chinese* began with two lists: ten basic features of the text and ten general principles for using the text. Except for the third basic feature (which refers to sample schedules provided in Appendix 2 of that volume), both lists also apply to the intermediate level, so they are reproduced here.

A. Ten basic features of *Learning Chinese*

1. Provides instruction in spoken and written Mandarin; no prior background assumed.
2. Serves as a comprehensive resource for the foundation levels of Chinese language study. The elementary level (first year) and intermediate level (second year) cover approximately 200 class hours.
3. Not applicable to the intermediate level.
4. Presents rich content (based on the author’s own experience learning Chinese) that is presented incrementally and in detail, is carefully sequenced, and builds toward dialogues or narratives that recapitulate important content.
5. Includes a variety of exercises and audio materials for self-study. The companion Web site, yalebooks.com/wheatley, provides a full set of audio clips, as well as comprehensive vocabulary lists, exercise keys, and other features.
6. Contains content that is easily transformed into class activities, and easily supplemented by online or other materials.
7. Includes conversational lessons and character lessons that can be used separately or together.
8. Includes conversational and character lessons that are related but not identical to each other, and which can be interleaved.
9. Teaches reading with both the traditional (Taiwan) and simplified (Mainland) character sets.
10. Teaches characters inductively, by emphasizing reading in context as much as possible.

《汉语基础教材》：十个主要特点

一、供零起点学生口语和书面语学习的汉语入门教材。

二、这是一套综合性的基础教材。共两册，第一册是初级水平，第二册是中级水平，大约需要修读200个课时。

三、Not applicable to the intermediate level.

四、作者根据自己的汉语学习经历，精心编排话题，并以循序渐进的方式逐步开展，每课最后还编排了一段对话或叙述以重现该课的重要话题。内容充实，层次分明。

五、为自学者提供多样化的书面练习及录音资料。

六、教材内容易转换成课堂活动，也便于通过网络或其他途径进行补充。

七、会话教材与汉字教材可以分开使用，也可以相互配合使用。

八、会话教材与汉字教材内容相关，但不互相依赖，自成体系。

九、汉字教材以繁简汉字编写。

十、识字教学采用归纳法，透过高重现率的篇章，使学习者能够在真实语境中自然学习。
B. Ten general principles for using Learning Chinese

1. Prepare before class, perform in class, and consolidate after class.
2. Move from simple to complex, from familiar to novel, and from rote to realistic.
3. Focus on typical interchanges, personalize them when possible, and compound them into longer conversations.
4. Recognize that Mandarin usage varies as much as English. Regard Learning Chinese as a guide, but accept additional input from teachers and your own observations.
5. Learn functional phrases rather than individual words; visualize interactions and match appropriate language; and act out scenarios from cues.
6. Distinguish character recognition from reading, and focus reading activities on comprehension.
7. Write characters to improve recognition ability, but utilize word processing programs to compose texts.
8. Consolidate conversational skills while studying the character units; consolidate character skills while studying the conversational units.
9. As much as possible, learn language in context rather than from lists. (But be mindful that lists can help with recall and review.)
10. Know the core, test the core (i.e., that practiced in class). For character material, test comprehension.

使用《汉语基础教材》的十个基本原则

一、强调课前预习，课中练习以及课后复习。

二、从简单到复杂，从陌生到熟悉，从机械操练到自然交际。

三、先熟记典型的会话，再向个性化延伸，最后扩展为完整的会话。

四、汉语表达同英语一样复杂多变，学生可将本教材作为用法指南使用，不仅应该听取老师的建议，自己也应勤于观察。
五、与其只学习个别生词，不如学习如何使用词组；借助提示，摹拟实际交流情境，演练与之相匹配的表达方式。

六、分清识字和阅读的不同；阅读活动最好以理解为主。

七、通过书写汉字来提高辨认字形的能力，同时借助拼音输入软件来写作。

八、学习汉字时，同时加强会话能力；学习会话时，同时加强汉字能力，互相促进。

九、与其利用生字表、生词表学习，不如利用有上下文的课文学习。(生字表、生词表可用来回忆与复习。)

十、掌握核心教材，测试核心教材；所谓核心教材指的是课堂教学中所使用的教材。至于汉字教材则主要用来测试理解能力。
INTRODUCTION

—From Zōu Dào Jingzi Lǐ (Through the Looking Glass), translated by Yuen Ren Chao

The intermediate level of Learning Chinese continues along the same lines as the elementary level, with spoken and character units of related—but not identical—content designed to be interleaved or used independently. Chinese material in the spoken units is transcribed in Hanyu pinyin, whereas material in the character units is written primarily in the simplified set of characters (though the traditional set is used occasionally). This division of spoken and written language allows for faster acquisition of vocabulary, and—more generally—it ensures that the development of speaking ability is not adversely affected by factors related to character acquisition, which involves an entirely different set of skills.

Organization

The spoken units in the intermediate level (Units 14–19) are organized like those in the elementary level. Each of the six units introduces a progression of grammatical and notional topics, commentary and exercises, conversations and narratives, and a variety of rote material ranging from epigraphs to rhymes and rhythms. (These spoken units are supported by audio clips provided on the Learning Chinese Web site.)
The bilingual format, with Chinese and English in parallel columns (duìzhào), provides a convenient comparative perspective and allows learners to practice retelling the material as a step toward internalizing it and, ultimately, making use of it in novel settings both in and out of the classroom. The intermediate level differs from the elementary level in that it makes greater use of narrative material along with dialogues for the oral component. This narrative material includes personal accounts and presentations on subjects of general interest, such as regional languages and geography. The narratives should be regarded as informal oral presentations, transcribed into pinyin for ease of reference and vocabulary retrieval.

The character units introduce characters from both the traditional set (in use in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and many overseas Chinese communities) and the simplified set (now standard on the Mainland and in use in Singapore and some overseas communities). Actual reading is conducted mostly with the simplified set. The traditional set is limited to occasional, clearly demarcated examples and exercises. Character material is presented inductively as much as possible. Individual graphs are introduced in large format, a few dozen at a time, with notes to provide a level of analysis and to assist with recognition. Reading begins with compounds and phrases, proceeds to sentences in context (typically comment and response), and where feasible, culminates in longer selections. The focus is on reading, though writing (by hand or keyboard) is recognized as an important support for character recognition, particularly in the early stages of learning. Writing in the sense of composition is mostly left to later stages of learning, though some guided composition exercises appear in the oral units.

The sequence of units

The intermediate level contains six spoken-language units, two character units, and four appendices. Learners who have used the elementary level of Learning Chinese, and whose initial course met three to four hours a week in class, will probably begin this level at the beginning of their third semester of study (second year). Others with more hours per week at the elementary level will begin this level late in their second semester (first year).
Learners who are studying only the spoken language and have completed Unit 7, the last of the spoken units in the previous volume, can continue with Units 14–19. Learners who are interleaving spoken and character units have a choice. Since the last lesson of the previous volume was a spoken unit (Unit 7), strict sequence would be to follow with the next character unit (Unit 20) and then continue with Units 14, 21, 15, and so on. However, it is also possible—and perhaps preferable—to delay Unit 20 for one lesson. That would mean starting with a spoken unit (Unit 14), before picking up the sequence with Unit 20 and continuing with Units 15, 21, 16, and so on. One reason for this is that some learners may prefer to begin a new semester or a new phase with a spoken lesson. Another reason is that Unit 21 anticipates the shift to other published readers or texts by introducing material not covered in previous spoken units—thus violating the general principle that character lessons apply characters to words and grammatical patterns introduced in earlier spoken units. For this reason, delaying Unit 21 has advantages.

The two options are (with character units marked *):

Strict order: (Unit 7) → 20* → 14 → 21* → 15 → reader of choice → 16 → reader of choice → etc.

Relaxed order: (Unit 7) → 14 → 20* → 15 → 21* → 16 → reader of choice → 17 → reader of choice → etc.

Appendix 1 contains information about cuisine, dining, and menus, and it has no fixed place in the sequence. The long menu, which includes both pinyin and characters, can be used for recitation practice as well as a prop in dialogues. Select parts can also be used to supplement the sections on food in the regular units. Appendix 2 lists measure words. Appendix 3 lists the characters introduced in Learning Chinese for reference. Simplified characters are organized by total number of strokes and are matched to pinyin. Traditional characters (that contrast with their simplified equivalents) are also organized by number of strokes, but they are matched to the corresponding simplified characters. This appendix also includes a section that introduces general principles of simplification. Appendix 4 gives stroke orders for characters introduced in the intermediate level.
The intermediate level has two character units. They are geared to the first two or three spoken units (that is, Units 14, 15, and 16). The eight character units (including the six from the elementary level) constitute a foundation. After completing Unit 21, you will be familiar with roughly 500 commonly used characters; you will have become accustomed to the actual process of reading in Chinese; you will know a great deal about the construction of characters that can be applied to new material; and you will be familiar enough with traditional graphs to make the shift from simplified to traditional when needed. With this foundation in place, further progress with reading is best obtained by turning to good textbooks that already exist—with traditional Chinese stories that are graded for level and edited for learners and with annotations and vocabulary lists (and in many cases, exercises and recordings). A number of these are recommended in the coda to Unit 21.

Sūzhōu
THE CORE UNITS
Pinyin

In many Chinese language textbooks, pinyin appears in small script above or below individual characters, where it functions as a diacritical system to indicate pronunciation. Questions of word division and punctuation do not arise. However, in *Learning Chinese*, pinyin is used to transcribe continuous oral text, so certain writing conventions, designed to make reading easier, are followed. These conventions are enumerated in a document that was first published in 1996, an English translation of which, entitled “Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography,” is reprinted as Appendix 1 of John DeFrancis’s *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003).

Word division

According to the basic rules outlined in this article, capitalization and punctuation more or less follow English practice. However, the article leaves some cases of word division unaddressed. Ideally, these issues would be resolved by reference to dictionaries, as they would be in English. In Chinese, however, pinyin conventions are not strongly established, and dictionaries vary in their usage. *Learning Chinese* follows the conventions of the *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary*, which has the virtue of at least focusing on pinyin usage for its organization and retrieval system.

Most pinyin rules for word division are unsurprising and seem to conform to intuitions about what constitutes a word (even if the notion of a ‘word’ is not so highly profiled in Chinese as it is in English). However, the rules for writing certain kinds of complex verbs in pinyin deserve comment. The Basic Rules state that “when both a verb (or adjective) and its complement are monosyllabic, they are to be written together; otherwise the two are to be separated”. Thus: *tingdōng* ‘understand’ (‘listen-understand’); *xuēhuì* ‘to master’ (‘study-master’), but *zōu jīnqù* ‘walk in’ (‘walk enter-go’); *ná qīlái* ‘lift up’ (‘take rise-come’).

Extending the ‘monosyllabic’ rule to the potential forms gives *tingdedōng* ‘can understand’ and *xuēbuhuí* ‘cannot master’—written as wholes. Extending the
THE CORE UNITS

non-monosyllabic rule to the potential forms gives zǒu bu jìnqu ‘cannot walk in’ and ná de qǐlai ‘can lift up’—written with spaces. The ‘monosyllabic rule’ is not exemplified for all cases in the Basic Rules; the ABC dictionary consistently follows the rule for the monosyllabic type (writing tīngdōng and tīngdēdōng), but it is inconsistent with the non-monosyllabic type (zǒu jìnqu). (Careful readers will have noted that in the elementary volume, this distinction was not adhered to. The author now prefers to minimize exceptions to the norm to the few described in the next paragraph.)

In a few cases, the intermediate level of Learning Chinese, like the elementary level, will go against pinyin conventions for the sake of pedagogy. These cases are as follows:

1. Changed tones are indicated for the words bù ‘not’ and yī ‘one; a’ (and derivatives). Thus, we see bù duì but bù hǎo; yī ge and yīkuàir but yì běn and yìdiànér. Changed tones that result from the regular rule that affects two low-toned words are not specially indicated (hence, hěn hǎo).

2. The particle that connects verbs to adjective complement structures is distinguished from de with other functions by a plus: shuō+de hěn hǎo but tā shuō de huà.

Hyphens

Hyphens are employed in ordinal numbers (dì-yī kè ‘lesson 1’), in coordinate constructions (sān-sísí kuài qián ‘thirty or forty dollars’), in certain kinds of abbreviations (Yīng-Hàn zìdiǎn ‘English-Chinese dictionary’), in reduplicated coordinate constructions (qīngqīng-chūchū, from qīngchu ‘clear; distinct’), and in certain types of four-syllable idioms where each disyllable is a segment (gūlòu-guāwén ‘ignorant and ill-informed’, composed of gūlòu ‘ignorance’ and guāwén ‘of limited experience’; but mòmíngqímiào ‘inexplicable’ ['not-understand-its-subtlety']). Where there is uncertainty, particularly regarding four-syllable expressions, Learning Chinese strays on the side of more hyphens rather than fewer, so as to improve readability.
Syllables without tone

Syllables without tone are called qīngshēng in Chinese, literally ‘light-tone’ but often translated as ‘neutral tone’. Three types of qīngshēng can be distinguished: unstressed particles, such as the de of wǒ de or the le of gòu le, which never appear with full tone; unstressed syllables in compounds, such as qīngchu ‘clear’, which appear fully toned in other contexts (qīngqīng-chūchū); and unstressed syllables that result from destressing in casual speech (zhuō zi shàng > zhuō zì shàng).

Learning Chinese follows the common convention of indicating qīngshēng by simply omitting the tone mark. Another method of indicating qīngshēng is with a preceding dot (a convention introduced by Yuen Ren Chao, though he originally made use of another Romanization, called Gwoyeu Romatzyh). Thus, qīngchu = qìng.chù, indicating a neutral tone while still signaling the underlying tone. However, given the amount of pinyin text in Learning Chinese, the profusion of dots would damage the readability of the transcription. The only exceptions you will see are in compounds such as xiǎojié, kěyì, or náli, in which the third-tone shift interacts with destressing to give xiáojie, kěyì, and náli (a transcription that removes the underlying tone of both syllables). Words such as this are written with the dot convention. Therefore, we write xiǎo.jié (= xiáojie), kě.yì (= kěyì), and ná.lǐ (= náli).

Variation in Mandarin

Orthographies provide enough information for readers to recognize words (and phrases) and activate internalized rules of pronunciation. That is why Australians, Scots, and Americans can retain their own pronunciations when reading aloud from a book written in standard English orthography. Under certain conditions, English spelling can be modified to represent accents or local usage, but readers usually read out standard spelling in their own accents.

Pinyin can also operate as a standard orthography, allowing for accents and pronunciations within the range of standard Mandarin. The transient neutral tone would not need to be indicated, nor would the suffixed r of northern speech. Yìdiǎn would represent yìdiǎn (southern) or yìdiānr (northern); shì bù
shi would represent shi bú shi (careful speech), shi bu shì (casual speech), or shì bu shì (fast); mànmàn zǒu would represent mànmàn zǒu (southern speech) or mànmānr zǒu (northern); and bā ge would represent the occurring alternatives bā ge and bá ge. Variant Mandarin pronunciations (still within the range of the standard) would be applied according to the speaker’s own speech.

However, pinyin is not usually used as an orthography. Rather, it is used as a transcription system (as well as a diacritic system, as noted above). In teaching materials and, to an extent, in dictionaries and other reference works, variant pronunciations are indicated (so long as they fall within the notion of standard Mandarin)—particularly the major geographical variants such as yìdiǎnr and yìdiān or mànmàn zǒu and mànmānr zǒu.

Under ideal circumstances, the pinyin material in Learning Chinese would transcribe actual spoken material and represent the speech of particular individuals at particular times. For various practical reasons, the material for the spoken units of Learning Chinese was composed rather than recorded, but it was composed as if spoken by a particular person in a particular place. In many cases, that person is assumed to be an educated northerner who makes moderate use of the r suffix but is in other respects not too local in his or her pronunciation. Learners who prefer a non-northern idiom can, at least, omit the r from their pronunciation—one of the more salient hallmarks of northern speech. In any case, learners of Chinese should always be ready to observe language as it is actually spoken (or otherwise used) and adjust or annotate their textbooks and dictionaries accordingly.

**Chinese-English translation and glosses**

Except for the long narratives, most of the spoken Chinese material in Learning Chinese is presented alongside an idiomatic English translation. Translation between languages is far less problematical at the level of utterance (speech in context), so, at foundation levels, a parallel translation serves to clarify meaning in context (which reflects the intention of the speakers), while it also provides the learner with cues to practice producing the Chinese.

Ultimately, it is also useful to break down utterances into phrases, words, and smaller meaningful segments. Unlike utterances, individual words do not match
up easily across languages. Nevertheless, at beginning levels, a word-for-word gloss is useful. The usual practice is to provide an English approximation for each Chinese word (yù ‘jade’) or a series of English words that gives a rough sense of the range of the Chinese (shōushi ‘tidy up; put in order; pack’). In some cases, a definition is required (lòufáng ‘a building of more than one story’).

For compounds (which are prevalent), identification of the component parts (morphemes) helps with recall. For most compounds, Learning Chinese includes, in parentheses, an analysis of components, for example, rénao ‘buzzing with excitement’ (‘hot-noisy’) and gòoxiào-túpiàn ‘emoticon’ (‘make-laugh picture’). The glossaries sometimes identify one component with another by phrasing comparable to the English ‘the pen of pigpen’. Thus, for pūbiàn ‘widespread’, the glossary might say pūtōng de pū ‘the pu of putong’—‘common’. Speakers of Chinese often use this phrasing for identifying characters; learners make use of it for identifying morphemes.

For longer narratives, the intermediate level generally provides a list of annotated phrases. Phrases, in fact, tend to be more effective units of study than individual words: yào zūnshōu guìdīng ‘one should obey the rules’; wèile fāzhān diànlǐ ‘in order to develop electrical power’. Ultimately, these phrases can also be broken down into words: zūnshōu ‘observe; abide by’; guìdīng ‘rule; regulation; stipulation’. It is the phrase, however, that forms the ideal unit of study.

As with the elementary level, cumulative vocabulary lists (along with other material) are provided on the Web site rather than in the book. This not only saves space but also discourages list learning (as opposed to learning material in an authentic context, which is far more effective). Within the book, glossaries of words or phrases are listed after the relevant selection in order of their appearance—whether it is a narrative, a dialogue, or a series of example sentences. There is no need for every word in these lists to become part of your active vocabulary. Some words you may only recognize in the narrow context of the unit material. In any case, the lists often contain a level of redundancy, incorporating words encountered earlier, which allows some flexibility to the order in which unit material is used.
Most of the narratives in the intermediate volume have the following format. They are preceded by a short preview that provides context and introduces key words and expressions. They are followed not by the usual list of words (headed ‘Vocabulary’) but by a list of citations (headed ‘Annotations’), which includes problematical segments of the text and provides analysis, translation, and illustrative examples. The annotations are meant to be consulted while reading or listening to the narratives. They can also serve as a reminder of what has been covered, for purposes of review.

Finally, two other changes are introduced in this volume. One is that part-of-speech labels (noun, adverb, pronoun, and so on) are no longer included in the vocabulary lists. The reason for this is that Chinese usage has undergone many changes in recent years, and there are a significant number of cases where part of speech is neither clear nor unanimously understood. The other change introduced in this volume is relatively minor. In English glosses, pronouns and other words with no explicit correspondent in Chinese are no longer placed in brackets. Therefore, *yīnggāi shuō* . . . is simply glossed as ‘they should say . . .’ rather than ‘[they] should say . . .’ as was done in the elementary level.

All other conventions used in the first volume are retained, as follows:

( ) Parentheses enclose literal meanings: ‘buzzing with excitement’ (‘hot-noisy’).

x y Spaces separate words: *Hěn duō rén xuānzé wàichū dāgōng*.

x-y Hyphens are used in standard pinyin transcription to link certain constituents: *dì-yī ‘first’* or *Ōu-Gòng-Tī ‘the EEC’*. In the English glosses, hyphens separate disyllabic constituents of four-syllable compounds: *gǎoxiào-túpiàn ‘emoticon’* (‘make-laugh picture’).

[ ] Brackets enclose notes on style or other relevant information: *jiákè ‘jacket’* [from English].

< > Angle brackets indicate optional material: *zhào <yī> zhāng xiàng*.

/ A solidus distinguishes speech categories in glosses (without actually labeling them): *tànsuǒ ‘to explore; probe* / *explorations’.*
This indicates that the previous word or expression is colloquial:

shā [coll].

∼ A tilde is placed between options: bīrú shuō ∼ pìrú shuō.

* An asterisk is placed before unacceptable or ungrammatical material:

*bù yǒu.

**Dictionaries**

The close match between sound and symbol in pinyin makes the *ABC Chinese-English Comprehensive Dictionary* a particularly useful resource for *Learning Chinese*. This dictionary is the only comprehensive dictionary with strict alphabetical ordering of entries by pinyin spelling. In effect, whatever can be written in pinyin (words overheard in conversation or encountered in the spoken language units of *Learning Chinese*, for example) can be looked up without regard to characters—that is, in the same way English words are looked up. (The ABC also allows you to look up the pronunciation of unknown characters using traditional procedures before proceeding to the alphabetic lookup for glosses.)
Unit 14

Zuò yǒu lǐxiāng, yǒu dàodé, yǒu wénhuà, yǒu jìlǜ de gòngmín.
‘Be good, moral, disciplined citizens.’
(‘Be have ideals, have morality, have culture, have discipline DE citizens.’)
—Public sign at Kunming Teachers College (1999)

Zhìfù guāngróng.
‘To get rich is glorious.’
(‘Get-wealth bright-honor.’)
—Attributed to Dèng Xiāoping and regarded as a signal of the shift away from ideology in modern China

This unit, like the units that follow, begins with an informal narrative that serves for review, consolidation, and vocabulary development. Several grammatical topics follow, including the use of verb reduplication to express tentativeness, the bā construction that serves to spotlight items of current interest, and various means for expressing degree and comparison (for example, ‘extremely hot’ and ‘hotter than’). The unit then shifts to the topic of buying and bargaining, and it includes two dialogues that take place at a fruit stand, which are followed by a discussion of flavors. Toward the end of the unit, there is a section that deals with postverbal le, culminating in a dialogue about a visit to one of the more spectacular sections of the Great Wall. The unit ends with some pronunciation exercises, a song, a rhyme, and a rondo.
14.1 A lighthearted narrative on regional languages and urban development (Exercise 1) 10

14.2 Verb reduplication and tentativeness 16

14.3 Complex verbs, the bā construction, and giving instructions (Exercise 2) 18

14.4 Degree and comparison (Exercise 3) 22

14.5 Cities and population (Exercise 4) 32

14.6 At the fruit stand: Buying and bargaining 37

14.7 Tastes and ‘adding more to’ (Exercise 5) 45

14.8 Verb-le and an excursion to the Great Wall (Exercises 6, 7) 48

14.9 Pronunciation (Exercise 8) 56

14.10 Rhymes and rhythms 58

14.1 A lighthearted narrative on regional languages and urban development

Fāngyán are regional language groups (dìfang de yǔyán). Chinese is said to have seven or eight such groups. (Hànyǔ yǒu qī-bā ge dà fāngyán.) They each have different names. (Bùtóng de fāngyán yǒu bùtóng de míngzi.) Lin Mei is a Chinese teacher. Her mother is from Shanghai (Shànghǎi), so she speaks (huì shuō or huì jiǎng) Shanghainese, as well as Mandarin. Shanghainese (Shànghǎihuà) is completely unlike Mandarin. (Gèn Pǔtōnghuà wánquán bùtóng.) Lin Mei can understand Shanghainese (tìngdèdōng Shànghǎihuà), but she doesn’t understand Cantonese (tìngbudōng Guǎngdōnghuà). Cantonese and Shanghainese are completely different (wánquán bù yìyàng). For example (bìfāng shuō or shuō ge lìzi): ‘he’ or ‘she’ (tā in Mandarin) is pronounced ‘kœy’ in Cantonese and ‘fī’ in Shanghainese. (Even without indicating tones, and without knowing quite how to read the transcription, it’s clear the two are completely different from each other and quite different from Mandarin.) People from Suzhou and Ningbo (Sūzhōurén, Níngbōrén)—cities that are not far from Shanghai—speak varieties of language that are quite similar to (yǒu yídànrxìàng) the language spoken by natives of Shanghai. Now here is the rest of the story.


shi Shànghāihuà de yí ge cí. Nòngtáng yǒu yǔdiăn xiàng hùtòngr, kěshì bù zēnme ānjìng, bù zēnme hǎokàn!

Bèijīng yǐqián hùtòngr hěn duō; Shànghāi yǐqián nòngtáng yě hěn duō. Kěshì xiànzài, bù yǐyàng. Yǐqián de hùtòngr shì xiànzài de gòuwù zhōngxín le; yǐqián de nòngtáng shì xiànzài de dālóu le! Yǒude Zhōngguórén hěn xīhuàn gòuwù zhōngxín. Wèishénme ne? Yǐnwèi hěn fāngbiàn, dōngxi hěn duō, yǒu chī de, hē de, wǎnr de. Gòuwù-zhōngxín hěn gǎnjìng, méiyōu hāozi, méiyōu zhāngláng, méiyōu chōngzi, méiyōu zhīzhū, méiyōu wénzi. Xiàng ge gōngdiàn yǐyáng, xiàng ge shìwài-tǎoyuán yǐyáng!

Zhōngguórén, yǒude xīhuàn lǎo de dōngxi, xīhuàn chuántōnggōng; tāmān hěn xīhuàn Bèijīng de hùtòngr. Yǒude xīhuàn xīn de, xiàndài de, hěn xīhuàn dà chéngshì de gòuwù-zhōngxín, mótiān-dālóu. Bù zhīdào nǐmen Méiguórén, Ōuzhōurén de kànfa zēnmeyàng!

** VOCABULARY **

guān tā jiào . . . literally, ‘charge her with the name of . . .’, with both person and name having their own verb.

This is a more colloquial version of jiào followed by person and name: Lǎo péngyou dōu jiào tā Xiǎo Lín.

yóuyú ‘owing to; as a result of; due to [the fact that]

('source-in')

gēn . . . bùtóng ‘different from . . .’ (‘with . . . not same')
tán ‘talk; discuss’: overlaps with shuō ‘speak; say; talk about’. Shuōshuō would also be possible here, but tán tán suggests the participation of all parties, hence ‘discuss’.

shǔyú ‘belong to’: cf. Tā shǔ mǎ ‘She’s the year of the horse’.

bǐfāng shuō ‘for example’: also bǐrú shuō ~ pīrú shuō

Chūnqiū Shídài ‘The Spring and Autumn Period’ (770–464 BCE), a historical division of the Zhōu Dynasty, named for the Chunqiu annals of that period.
`pùbiàn` ‘widespread’: `pùtōng de pǔ`  
`guójì` ‘country’ (‘nation-home’): `guójí` ‘nationality’ and `guójì` ‘international’  
`jiējìn` ‘be close to; be near; be intimate with’ (‘join-close’):  
`gēn . . . jiējìn`  
`biànhuà` ‘changes’: the same `huà` of `huàxué` ‘chemistry’  
(‘study of transformations’)  
`hùtòng` The name given to a particular type of alley that is typically found in Beijing (Bēijīng). The Mandarin word is supposedly borrowed from Mongolian.  
`ānjìng` ‘peaceful’ (‘peace-quiet’)  
`cháguán` ‘teashop’ (‘tea-shop’): `fānguǎn`, `túshūguǎn`  
`cì` ‘word’: `Tà méi cí le`. ‘She’s run out of things to say.’  
`nòngháng` Mandarin pronunciation of a Shanghai word for ‘lane’ or ‘alley’.  
`bù zěnme . . .` ‘not so [adjective]’: This is the indefinite use of `zěnme`; cf. `bù zěnme gāo`, `bù zěnme lěng`.  
`gòuwù zhǒngxìn` ‘goods center’: a translation of the English ‘shopping center’; cf. `shāngchǎng` ‘mall’ (‘business-gathering place’)  
`dálóu` ‘big building’: ‘Skyscraper’ has a literal Chinese equivalent—`mótiān-dálóu` (‘scrape-sky big-building’).  
`fāngbiàn` ‘be convenient’: colloquially, ‘to go to the restroom’  
`gānjìng` ‘be clean’  
`lǎoshǔ` ‘mice’: `hàozi` ‘rats’; `zhāngláng` ‘roaches’; `chóngzì` ‘insects’; `zhīzhū` ‘spiders’; `wénzǐ` ‘mosquitoes’  
`gōngdiàn` ‘palace’  
`shìwài-táoyuán` (‘world-outside peach-garden’): alludes to a well-known tale about a man who discovered a distant, secret garden  
`xìn de` ‘new things’: cf. `chī de, hē de, wánr de`  
`xiàndài` ‘modern times’ (‘new-age’)  
`kànfā` ‘viewpoint; opinion’ (‘seeing-way’)
NOTE ON ‘OLD’  Chinese has two words that overlap with English ‘old’. One is lǎo (as in lǎoshī ‘teacher’ and lǎohǔ ‘tiger’, where it is better translated as ‘venerable’ or ‘worthy of respect’); the other is jiù (as in Jiǔjīnshān [‘old-gold-mountain’]—the Chinese name for San Francisco). In general terms, lǎo is the opposite of shào ‘young’, whereas jiù is the opposite of xīn ‘new’. Lǎo also means ‘tough’, as of meat, and is the opposite of nèn ‘tender’. Lǎo has basically positive connotations, but jiù tends to have negative ones. The following are some typical examples or collocations.

lǎo
old; experienced; longstanding; of earlier times:
positive in tone
Tà lǎo le. ‘He’s getting old.’
lǎo dīfang ‘the usual place’
lǎo péngyou ‘a good friend’
lǎoshǒu ‘an old hand; expert’
lǎojiā ‘hometown’
lǎorén ‘old people’
lǎo gōngrén ‘experienced worker’
lǎo chuántōng ‘old customs’
jiù ‘used; old-fashioned; deteriorated; out-of-date; former’: often negative in tone

Jiù le. ‘It’s worn out.’
Jǐqǐ jiù le. ‘This machine’s antiquated.’
jiùchē ‘used car’
jiùshū ‘used book’
jiùyīfu ‘worn-out clothes’
jiùshèhuì ‘the old society’ [pre-1949]
jiùsīxiāng ‘old-fashioned ideas’
jiùhuò ‘second-hand goods; junk’

In 1966, at the beginning of the period known as the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong called for the destruction of the Sì Jiù ‘four olds’—jiùwénhuà ‘old culture’, jiùsīxiāng ‘old thought’, jiùfēngsú ‘old customs’, and jiùxíguàn ‘old practices’.

Exercise 1

Answer the following questions about the narrative.

1. Wèishénme yǒu rén shuō Lín Méi shì Shànghǎi lái de?
2. Tā de xuéshēng shì shénme difang lái de?
3. Tā fùqín huì jiāng shénme huà?
4. Mǔqín zhì huì jiāng Shànghǎihuà ba?
5. Bābā yǒu shǐhou tīngbudōng Lín Méi shuō de huà, wèishénme?
6. Shénme shì fāngyán?
7. Wú fāngyán shì shénme? Wèishénme jiào ‘Wú’?
8. Hútòngr gèn nòngtáng zěnme bù yìyáng?
9. Wèishénme xiànzài de Bēijīng hútòngr bù duō le?
10. Yóurén bǐjiào xīhuàn hútòngr, wèishénme?
11. Gòuwù zhōngxīn shì shénme?
12. Mòtiān-dálóu shì shénme?
14.2 Verb reduplication and tentativeness

In Chinese, as in other languages, it is sometimes useful to give an impression of wariness or nonchalance by suggesting that an action involves a minimum of effort. One way to achieve this effect is to reduplicate the verb (with the repeated syllable normally unstressed).

Shànglái kànkan ba. ‘Come on up and take a look.’

There are a number of variations. With single-syllable verbs, such as kàn ‘look’ or zuò ‘sit’, yī ‘one’ can be inserted between the verbs, as if to say ‘look a look’ or ‘sit a sitting’. In this case, both iterations of the verb can be toned (kànyìkàn), though in fast speech, the second iteration of the verb will be unstressed (kànyīkàn). The postverbal le (see §14.8), if present, appears after the first instance of the verb.

Kànyìkàn. ‘Take a look.’
Ta kànle yí kàn. ‘She took a look.’
Zuòyizuò. ‘Sit for a bit.’
Tā zuòle yī zuò. ‘He sat for a while.’
Zánmen zǒuyízōu, hǎo bu hào? ‘Let’s take a walk, how about it?’

The same effect can be achieved by adding the phrase yíxià ‘one time’ instead of the second iteration of the verb. Therefore, the options for single-syllable verbs are as follows.

Dēngdēng! ‘Hang on!’
Dēngyídēng! ‘Wait a sec!’
Dēngyìxiār! ‘Hold on!’
Two-syllable verbs, such as 休, are more restricted. They too can be reiterated, or followed by 体下, but they do not accept a medial 体. For two-syllable verbs, the options are as follows.

Xiū xiū ba.  ‘Let’s take a break.’
Wǒ gěi nǐ jiēshào jiēshào.  ‘Let me introduce you.’

Other common examples include the following.

Nǐ chángchang ba.  ‘Have a taste, why don’t you?’
Nǐ chángyícháng ba.  ‘Sleep for a bit.’
Nǐ chángyixiàr ba.
Nǐ cāicai ~ cāiyīcāi ~ cāiyīxiàr.  ‘Take a guess.’
Nǐ wènwen tà ba.  ‘Why don’t you just ask her?’
Nǐ de zìdīn, néng kànkan ma?  ‘Can I take a look at your dictionary?’
Mōmo ~ mōyǐmō ~ mōyǐxiàr!  ‘Feel this!’

Certain verbs of cognition and consideration seem especially prone to reduplication patterns.

xiǎng  ‘think’
kāolǜ  ‘think over; consider’
shāngliang  ‘discuss; consult’
tán  ‘talk; chat; discuss’

Xiān gěn tā tányītán.  ‘Talk to her first.’
Zánmen shāngliang shāngliang.  ‘Let’s talk about it.’
Ràng wǒ kāolǜ yǐxiàr.  ‘Let me think it over.’
Kāolǜ involves a delay or postponement, so it is not surprising that in certain contexts, sentences such as the last example may serve as an indirect way of denying a request—a way of saying ‘no’. There are, of course, other expressions that serve the same purpose of delaying a decision. For example: Yǐhòu zài shuò ba. ‘Why don’t we talk about it later?’

14.3 Complex verbs, the bà construction, and giving instructions

In certain situations—giving instructions, for example—Chinese will highlight the noun (or noun phrases) of interest (‘window’ and ‘door’ in the examples that follow) by placing it before the associated verb and marking it with bà.

Qǐng bà chuānghu dǎkāi. ‘Open the window, please.’
Qǐng bà mén guānshàng. ‘Close the door, please.’
Chūqù de shíhou, qǐng bà mén suǒshàng. ‘Lock the door when you go out, please.’

Historically, bà derives from a verb meaning ‘take’, and it is sometimes possible to get a feel for the function of bà by translating it as ‘take’.

Qǐng bà shūbāo fàng zài wàitou. ‘Please take your bookbags and put them outside’ (i.e., ‘Put your bookbags outside, please’).

NOTE

Fàng zài wàitou. You have encountered other cases in which zài (usually unstressed) is placed after the verb: Wǒ shēng zài Guǎngzhōu, zhǎng zài Xiāng Gǎng, xiǎnzài jià zhù zài Luòshānjì. With the verbs shēng, zhǎng, and zhù, the zài phrase may also be placed before the verb with a nuance of difference: Wǒ zài Guǎngzhōu shēng de ‘I was born in Guangzhou’. With the verb fàng, however, the place where the thing ends up is consistently mentioned after the verb: fàng zài zhūōzi shàng, fàng zài qiántou, fàng zài tóu shàng.

Bà typically appears before noun phrases that refer to things moved, changed, or otherwise affected by an action verb. The bà phrase is drawn close to the
verb, so adverbs (such as xiān in the next example) tend to appear before it rather than after it.

Wǒ xiān bǎ chē kāi guòlai, hǎo bu hǎo? ‘I’ll drive my car over first, okay?
Nǐmen zài zhèr děng wǒ. ‘Wait here for me.’

An effective way to get a feel for the function of bǎ is to give instructions to your classmates or friends to move things around, and then have them confirm that they’ve done it.

Xiān bǎ shūbāo fàng zai wàitou. ‘Please put your bookbags outside.’
Hǎo, wǒ bǎ shūbāo fàng zai wàitou le. ‘Okay, I’ve put the bookbags outside.’
Xiànzài bǎ yǐfū fàng zai chuáng shang. ‘Now put the clothes on the bed.’
Hǎo, wǒ yǐjīng bǎ yǐfū fàng zai chuáng shang le. ‘Okay, I’ve already put the clothes on the bed.’
Xiànzài bǎ yǐzǐ fàng zai qiànbùnénr. ‘Now put the chairs in front.’
Bǎ mínzǐ xié zài hēibiānshang. ‘Write your name on the blackboard.’

Bǎ is never associated with a ‘naked’ verb, but it typically occurs with combinations of verb plus complement (xiě + zai phrase, in the last examples; dākāi ‘do’ + ‘open’, guānshǎng ‘close’ + ‘up’ in the earlier ones). ‘Directional complements’ are another common kind of verb combination that often satisfies the conditions for using bǎ.

In the elementary level of Learning Chinese (§7.1.3), it was shown that motion (directional) verbs (e.g., shàng, chū, guò) combine with an untoned lái or qù to form combinations such as xiàlai, guòqu, and huílai. Now you will see that these pairs can combine with compatible verbs such as ná ‘hold; take’; tái ‘lift; raise [with palms up’; kāi ‘drive’; fàng ‘put’; and bān ‘move; remove; take away’. The complete paradigm can be illustrated with ná ‘carry; bring; take’.
ná shànglai  ‘bring them up here’
ná shàngqu  ‘take them up there’
ná xiàlai  ‘bring them down here’
ná xiàqu  ‘take them down there’
ná jinlai  ‘bring them in here’
ná jìnqu  ‘take them in there’
ná chūlai  ‘bring them out here’
ná chūqu  ‘take them out there’
ná huílai  ‘bring them back here’
ná huíqu  ‘take them back there’
ná guòlai  ‘bring them over here’
ná guòqu  ‘take them over there’

With other verbs, the same construction applies.

bān jinlai  ‘move in here’
fàng jìnqu  ‘put them in there’
tái chūlai  ‘carry them out here’
tái chūqu  ‘carry them out there’
kāi huílai  ‘drive them back here’
bān huíqu  ‘move back there’
kāi guòlai  ‘drive it over here’
kāi guòqu  ‘drive it over there’

An additional directional complement can be added to the set: qīlai  ‘rise [here]’ (for which there is no corresponding *qīqu). The qīlai complement has a number of extended meanings (§15.8.3), but with verbs of motion, it often corresponds to the English verbal particle ‘up’.

zhàn qīlai  ‘stand up’
ná qīlai  ‘hold up’
tái qīlai  ‘lift up’
UNIT 14

USAGE

a. Nǐ de dòngxi nàme duō ya!
   Wǒ bāng nǐ nà chūlái,
   hǎo bu hǎo?
   Méi guānxi, wǒ zìjǐ ná ba!
   Bù, wǒ bāng nǐ ná.
   ‘You have so many things! I’ll help
   you bring them out, okay?’

b. Nǐ zhù <zai> jǐ lóu?
   Liù lóu.
   Hǎo, wǒ bāng nǐ ná shàngqu ba.
   ‘What floor do you live on?’
   ‘The 6th.’
   ‘Okay, let me help you take
   them up.’

   Nǐ tài kèqi le. Máfān nín le.
   ‘You’re too kind. If you
   don’t mind then.’

c. Wǒ xiàn bā chē kǎi guòlái,
   hǎo bu hǎo?
   Hǎo, nà wǒ zài zhèlǐ děng nǐ.
   Wǒ yǐhuí jǐu dào.
   ‘I’ll drive my car over first, okay?’
   ‘Fine, so I’ll wait for you here.’
   ‘I’ll be back shortly.’

Notice that when the thing moved is explicitly mentioned, it is placed before the verb as an object of the preposition (co-verb) bā. The following exercise provides more examples.

Dà biānché? ‘Hitching a ride?’
Using directional verb combos such as those illustrated in §14.3, request that your friend help you in the manner indicated. Notice that objects are mentioned—clothes, shoes, suitcases, and so on—but places are not. How to express these places (e.g., drawers, room) will be covered later.

Please help me put the books down there.

Qǐng bāng wǒ bā shū fàng xiàqu.

Please help me to take the clothes out of the drawers.

Qǐng bāng wǒ bā yīfu ná chūlai.

1. Please put the clothes back in the drawers.
2. Please bring the flowers up here.
3. Please carry the luggage down there.
4. Please lift up this suitcase. (xiāngzì)
5. Please take these clothes out of the drawers.
6. Please take the shoes out of the room.
7. Please lift this computer up onto the rack.
8. Please bring the keys back here.
9. Please carry the musical instruments over there.
10. Please move the things out there.
11. Please drive the car over there.
12. Please lift up the fridge. (bīngxiāng)
13. Please put the dictionaries back there.

Exercise 2

14.4 Degree and comparison

14.4.1 Degree of intensity

Questions about degrees of intensity can be asked using the question phrase yōu duō (or yōu duōma) ‘to what degree’. In certain cases, yōu can be omitted.

Xiàtiān yōu duō rè? ‘How hot are the summers?’
Tā <yōu> duō gāo? ‘How tall is he?’
Dào fēijīchāng <yōu> duō yuǎn? ‘How far is the airport?’
Responses often include adverbs or constructions that indicate degree. The examples below are organized into types, and they include a number of new constructions.

a. With the modification placed before the stative verb:

- Jīntiān hěn rè. ‘Today’s quite hot.’
- Jīntiān tīng rè <de>! ‘It’s really hot today!’
- Jīntiān fēicháng rè. ‘Today’s unusually hot.’
- Jīntiān bǐjiào rè. ‘It’s quite (~ rather) hot today.’
- Jīntiān xiāngdāng rè. ‘It’s relatively (~ rather ~ quite) hot today.’
- Jīntiān yōu diànnr rè. ‘Today’s sort of (~ quite) hot.’

b. With the modification placed after the stative verb:

- Jīntiān rè jíle. ‘It’s really hot today.’ (‘hot to-the-max’)
- Jīntiān rè sīle. ‘It’s boiling today.’ (‘hot to-death’)

c. With the modification mediated by the particle +de ‘to the extent that’:

- Jīntiān rè+de hěn. ‘It’s very hot today.’ (‘hot+to very’)
- Jīntiān rè+de bùdéliao. ‘It’s awfully hot today.’ (‘hot+to amazing’)
- Jīntiān rè+de yàomìng! ‘It’s excruciatingly hot today! (‘hot+to want-life’)
- Jīntiān rè+de yàosi! ‘It’s hot as hell today!’ (‘hot+to want-death’)
- Jīntiān rè+de shéi dōu bù xiāng chūqu! ‘Today’s so hot that no one wants to go out!’

The first example (under c.) contrasts with Jīntiān hěn rè ‘It’s quite hot today’, in which hěn has hardly any intensifying function. The last example involves a full sentence shéi dōu bù xiāng chūqu ‘no one wants to go out’, placed as a complement to rè+de. A literal translation would be ‘hot to the extent that no one wants to go out’.

14.4.2 ‘Than’ comparatives

Comparison is often implicit in the unmodified stative verb, but it is canceled by the presence of preverbal hěn (as noted in the previous paragraph).
Therefore, in the right context, tā gāo corresponds to English ‘she’s taller’, but tā hěn gāo corresponds to ‘she’s quite tall’.

Shéi gāo? / Tā gāo. ‘Who’s taller?’ / ‘She’s taller.’
Tā gāo yìdiăn. ‘She’s a bit taller.’
Tā shāowēi gāo yìdiăn. ‘He’s a wee bit taller.’
Gāo duōshao? ‘How much taller?’
Tā gāo yì cùn. ‘He’s an inch taller.’ (‘taller by an inch’)
Tā gāo yì bèi. ‘She’s twice as tall.’ (‘taller by one multiple’)
Tā gāo yì tóu. ‘He’s a head taller.’ (‘taller by a head’)

NOTES
a. Shāowēi (or more formally, shāo) is an adverb meaning ‘slightly; a bit’. (For wēi, cf. Wēiruăn ‘Microsoft’.) Like other adverbs, shāowēi appears before a verb or stative verb (adjective) but typically also in conjunction with a postverbal yìdiăn: shāowēi lǎo yìdiănr ‘It’s a bit tough [of meat].’
b. Yí bèi ‘by one-fold; twice as’

Explicit comparison is signaled by bǐ ‘compare; than’, which (unlike English counterparts) is placed before the associated verb. By contrast, expressions indicating the degree or amount of comparison are placed after the stative verb. The construction, then, is A—bǐ—B—SV (degree). For example, bǐ Tiānjīn dà yìdiăn ‘bigger than Tianjin’ (‘than Tianjin bigger [by] a-bit’).

Bēijīng bǐ Tiānjīn dà. ‘Beijing is bigger than Tianjin.’
Bēijīng bǐ Tiānjīn dà yìdiăn. ‘Beijing is a bit bigger than Tianjin.’
(‘Beijing than Tianjin is bigger by a bit.’)

Bēijīng bǐ Tiānjīn shāowēi dà yìdiăn. ‘Beijing’s a little bit bigger than Tianjin. (‘Bj than Tj is somewhat bigger by a bit.’)
Bēijīng bǐ Tiānjīn dà hěn duō. ‘Beijing’s a lot bigger than Tianjin.’
(‘Bj than Tj is bigger by quite a lot.’)
Beijing bǐ Tiānjin dà +de duō. ‘Beijing is much bigger than Tianjin.’ ('Bj than Tj is bigger to the extent of a lot.')

Beijing bǐ Tiānjin dà duōle. ‘Beijing is a lot bigger than Tianjin.’ ('Bj than Tj is bigger by a whole lot.')

Beijing bǐ Tiānjin dà yí bèi. ‘Beijing is twice as big as Tianjin.’ ('Bj than Tj is bigger by one-fold.')

NOTES
a. In English, we generally mean ‘in terms of population’ when we say that one city is bigger than another. Likewise, dà in the previous set of sentences is more likely to mean population (rénkǒu) than area (miànjǐ).

b. Notice that the various ways of expressing degree with noncomparatives do not overlap with those of the comparatives: +de hěn, +de bùdélǐǎo, and so on are unique to noncomparatives; +de duō, duōle, and so on are unique to comparatives.

DIALOGUE

Jiǎ: Shànghǎi shì Zhōngguó rénkǒu zuì duō de chéngshì ba? ‘Shanghai is the city with the largest population in China, right?’
Yǐ: Shì, bǐ Bēijīng duō. ‘Right, it’s got more than Beijing.’
Jiǎ: Bì Bēijīng duō duōshào? ‘How much more than Beijing?’
Yǐ: Bì Bēijīng duō jībǎiwàn. ‘Several million more than Beijing.’
Jiǎ: Nà, Shànghǎi shì shìjiè shàng zuì dà de ba? ‘So Shanghai’s the largest city in the world?’
Yǐ: Bù, wǒ xiǎng Mòxīgē Shì gèng dà. ‘No, Mexico City’s even bigger, I think.’
14.4.3 ‘As’ comparatives
The claim that ‘Beijing is bigger than Tianjin’ is usually not negated with ‘Beijing isn’t bigger’ but with ‘Beijing isn’t as big as’. In other words, rather than *bù bǐ Tiānjīn dà* (which is possible in certain contexts), the negative is usually *méi<you> Tiānjīn <néme> dà*. In actual conversation, the bǐ versus méiyōu patterns may serve to shift perspective.

1. *Běijīng méiyōu Shānghǎi <néme> dà.*
   *Duì a, Shānghǎi bǐ Běijīng dà duōle.*
   ‘Beijing’s not as big as Shanghai.’
   ‘Right, Shanghai’s a lot bigger than Beijing.’

### Table: Comparative and Noncomparative Adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noncomparative</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-</td>
<td>SV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘quite tired’</td>
<td>hěn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘very’</td>
<td>féicháng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘rather’</td>
<td>bǐjiào</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘quite’</td>
<td>xiàngdàng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘a bit’</td>
<td>yōu yìdiǎnr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘extremely’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘exhausted’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘very’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘awfully’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘terribly’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘dreadfully’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘so tired that’</td>
<td>lèi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Miǎndiàn méiyōu Tàiguó
   <nàme> fādá.
   Shì a, Miǎndiàn bǐjiào luòhòu.
   ‘Burma’s not as developed as Thailand.’

3. Kūnmíng de hāibá méiyōu
   Xīníng de <nàme> gāo.
   Shì a, Xīníng de hāibá shì
   sānqiān duō mǐ.
   Kěshì Lāsà de gèng gāo. Zài Lāsà
   hūxī hén kǔnīn.
   ‘Kunming’s elevation isn’t as high as Xining’s.’
   ‘That’s right; Xining is over 3,000 meters high.’

4. Yúnnán de lānhóu hěn kě’ài, dànshì
   méiyōu xióngmāo kě’ài.
   Shì a, xióngmāo zui kě’ài.
   ‘The sloths in Yunnan are quite cute, but they’re not as cute as
   pandas.’
   ‘True, pandas are the cutest.’

5. Yúnnán de Shí Lín hěn
   zhuàngguān, kěshì méiyōu
   Guilín de nàme zhuàngguān.
   ‘The Stone Forest of Yunnan is
   spectacular, but it’s not as
   spectacular as Guilin.’

VOCABULARY

luòhòu ‘less developed’: Countries are often characterized
   as fādá ‘developed’ or luòhòu ‘less developed’
   (‘fall-back’).

hāibá ‘elevation; height’ (‘sea-exceed’)

hūxī ‘to breathe’ (‘breathe out-breathe in’)

kūnīn ‘difficult; laborious’ (‘hard pressed-difficult’)

lānhóu ‘sloths’ (‘lazy-monkey’)

xióngmāo ‘pandas’ (‘bear-cat’)

zhuàngguān ‘be spectacular’ (‘robust-sight’)

Even in spoken language, the more formal expression būrú (‘not resemble’) can substitute for méiyōu . . . <nàme>. When būrú is not followed by a stative verb, it is understood to mean ‘as good as’.

Hàn’yǔ ne, Wáng Xiǎobīn būrú Léi Hānbó. = Hàn’yǔ ne, Wáng Xiǎobīn
méiyōu Léi Hānbó <nàme> hào.
Otherwise, a stative verb may be explicitly mentioned.

Lǎoshī bùrú xuéshēng
  cōngmíng, kěshì xuéshēng
  bùrú lǎoshī yǒu jīngyàn.

‘The teachers aren’t as intelligent as the students, but the students aren’t as experienced as the teachers.’

About ten years ago, a Nanjing (Nánjīng) newspaper, Yángzǐ Wànbiào, had the following headline, directed to the youth of Nanjing.

Shàngxiāng bùrú
  shàngwǎng, qiúshén
  bùrú qiúzhī.

‘Better to surf the Web than get stoned; better to seek knowledge than get religion.’ (‘Go on-incense not-like go on-web, seek-divinity not-like seek-knowledge.’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shànghǎi bǐ Běijīng dà + de duō.</td>
<td>Běijīng méiyǒu Shànghǎi &lt;nàme&gt; dà.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Shanghai’s much bigger than Beijing.’</td>
<td>[Běijīng bùrú Shànghǎi dà.] ‘Beijing isn’t as big as Shanghai.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14.4.4 Comparing abilities

Comparing how well people do something (‘You speak Chinese better than I do’) combines the comparative construction (‘better than’) with V+de (‘speak better’). There are a number of options; the comparison can be mentioned first (‘you than me speak better’), or V+de can be mentioned first (‘you speak better than I do’).

V+de before bí

Tā <shuō Yingyǔ> shuō+de bí wǒ hǎo.  ‘He speaks English better than I do.’

Tā <chànggēr> chàng+de bí wǒ hǎo.  ‘She sings better than I do.’

bí before V+de

Tā <Yīngyǔ> bí wǒ shuō+de hǎo.  ‘He speaks English better than I do.’

Tā <gēr> bí wǒ chàng+de hǎo.  ‘She sings better than I do.’

Since these are comparatives, they are subject to the same modification of degree as simple comparatives.

Tā shuō+de bí wǒ hǎo yìdiǎnr.  ‘She speaks a bit better than I do.’

Tā shuō+de bí wǒ hǎo+de duō.  ‘She speaks much better than I do.’

Tā shuō+de bí wǒ hǎo duōle.  ‘She speaks a lot better than I do.’

As the previous three examples show, an object need not be present. If, for clarity or another reason, an object is stated, then it cannot be placed directly after the verb when the +de construction is used. Instead, it has to be mentioned earlier. There are two possibilities. First, the verb and object can be ‘exposed’ first, and the verb is repeated before +de: Tā chànggēr chàng+de bí wǒ hǎo. This is usual in those cases where the object is closely tied to the verb (chànggēr, chīfàn, lǚyīn). Second, the object can simply be mentioned before the verb: Tā Yingyǔ shuō+de bí wǒ hǎo. Exercise 3 provides practice.
Exercise 3

Get used to the options by trying slight variations on the model sentences cited previously, first without the objects, then with them. Start by writing the answers, and then practice saying them.

\[
\text{Tā / wǒ / xiě / hǎo > Tā bǐ wǒ xiě+de hǎo} \sim \text{Tā xiě+de bǐ wǒ hǎo.}
\]

\[
\text{Tā / wǒ / xiě / zì / hǎo > Tā xiězì bǐ wǒ xiě+de hǎo} \sim \text{Tā xiězì xiě+de bǐ wǒ hǎo.}
\]

Now try to form sentences with the following words (two ways for the first, then one way when you add the object).

1. Speaking:
   \[
   \text{Nǐ / wǒ / shuō / hǎo} \rightarrow
   \]
   Add Zhōngwén \rightarrow

2. Speaking:
   \[
   \text{Tā / wǒ / shuō / qīngchu} \rightarrow
   \]
   Add huà \rightarrow

3. Driving:
   \[
   \text{Tā / wǒ / kāi / kuài} \rightarrow
   \]
   Add chē \rightarrow

4. Speaking:
   \[
   \text{Tāmen / wǒmen / shuō / biáozhǔn ('proper')} \rightarrow
   \]
   Add sìshēng ('the four tones') \rightarrow

Now praise others over yourself; the person in brackets is the other person—the starting point. One answer is fine. There is no need to give variations.

\[
\text{dā lánqiú ('play basketball') [hǎo} \rightarrow [Xiǎo Bì] \ldots
\]

\[
\text{Xiǎo Bì <lánqiú> dā+de bǐ wǒ hǎo} \sim <dā lánqiú> dā de+bǐ
\]
\[
\text{wǒ hǎo} \sim <lánqiú> bǐ wǒ dǎ+de hǎo.
\]
1. chánggēr [hào ting duō le] → [nǐ] . . .
2. zuòfàn [hào + de duō] → [tā] . . .
3. xiězi [qìng chu yǐ diăn] → [jiē jie] . . .
4. yòng kuàizi [hǎo] → [Xiǎolín Yóuměi] . . .
5. bāo jiǎozi (‘wrap dumplings’) [kuài] → [Qiánchéng] . . .
6. zhāng [gāo] → [dì] . . .
7. pào [màn] → [Lǎnhóu / xióngmào] . . .

Write out your answers in preparation for answering aloud in class:

1. Explain that Yáo Míng is thirty centimeters taller than Kobe Bryant. (Note: Kobe Bryant is called Xiǎo Fēi Xiá ‘young flying knight’, which is, incidentally, also the Chinese name of Peter Pan. Centimeters are gōngfēn or lǐmǐ, both of which are M words. Thirty centimeters is roughly one foot.)
2. Explain to your friend that you both like to sing, but she sings much better than you do.
3. Explain that you have an older brother who is five years older than you.
4. Explain that eating your own cooking (zìjǐ zuò de) is always much better than eating out.
5. Note that apartments (houses) are twice as expensive in Beijing as they are in Xining (Xíníng).
6. Explain that it’s frustrating (tǎoyān) your friend doesn’t study as hard (yònggōng) as you do, but he speaks more fluently.
7. Explain that in the winter in Lhasa, it’s so cold that no one (shéi dōu) dares (gān) to go out.
8. Explain that the weather has gotten a bit warmer (nuān huo) recently.
14.5 Cities and population

In the course of making comparisons, it is often useful to cite the largest, best, most expensive, or least attractive item in the set—in other words, to form superlatives. In Chinese, these are formed with zuì: zuì hǎo ‘best’ and zuì piányi ‘least expensive’ are examples. Zuì can also appear before verbs such as xǐhuan ‘like’ and yuànyì ‘willing’. In addition, zuì can be repeated for effect.

Wǒ zuì bù xǐhuan tíngxiè. ‘I dislike dictation most of all.’
Wǒ zuì bù yuànyì gèn tàmen yíkuài. ‘I’m not at all willing to go with them.’
Wǒ zuì zuì xǐhuan de shì zhè dào cài. ‘This is the dish I really, really like best.’

shìjìè shàng zuì dà de chéngshì ‘the largest city (~ cities) in the world’
shìjìè shàng zuì guì de qìché ‘the most expensive car (~ cars) in the world’
shìjìè shàng zuì lěng de dìfāng ‘the coldest place (~ places) in the world’

Chinese uses the expression zhī yī ‘one of’, which contains zhī, a relic from classical Chinese that serves—among other things—to mark modification (a little like modern de), and yī ‘one’.

zuì dà de chéngshì zhī yī ‘one of the largest cities in the world’
zuì hǎo de Zhōngguó mǐjiù zhī yī ‘one of the best Chinese rice wines’
Zhōngguó shì wù ge Ānlì-huì chéngyuánghuó zhī yī. ‘China is one of the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council.’

NOTE

The Chinese equivalents to what are called acronyms in alphabetic languages (e.g., NATO or WTO) are shortened or so-called telescoped phrases. They are typically made up of the first syllables added to a generic. Thus, Áolínpi kè Yùndōnghuì ‘Olympic Games’ gets shortened to Æo-yùn-huí; Ānquán Lishihuí ‘Security Council’ (‘Security Directorship Organization’) gets
shortened to Ān-lǐ-huí; and Shìjiè Màoyì Zǔzhī ‘World Trade Organization’ gets shortened to Shì-mào Zǔzhī.

The same pattern with zhī yì is also the basis of fractions and percentages. One-third is rendered in Chinese as sān fēn zhī yì ‘one of three parts’, one-fourth is sì fēn zhī yì ‘one of four parts’, and 75 percent is bāi fēn zhī qīshíwǔ ‘seventy-five parts of one hundred’.

\[
\begin{align*}
sān fēn zhī yì & \quad \text{‘one-third’} \\
sì fēn zhī yì & \quad \text{‘one-fourth’} \\
wǔ fēn zhī èr & \quad \text{‘two-fifths’} \\
bāi fēn zhī wǔ & \quad \text{‘5 percent’} \\
bāi fēn zhī èrshí & \quad \text{‘20 percent’} \\
bāi fēn zhī qīshíwǔ & \quad \text{‘75 percent’}
\end{align*}
\]

14.5.1 Approximate numbers
Large numbers and figures are usually approximations. There are several expressions that may be used to indicate a figure is a rough estimate. Chàbuduō and dàgài have been used in earlier units, and both are placed before the amount. Dàyuē ‘about; around; approximately’ (‘big-about’) also appears before the amount. Zuòyòu, on the other hand, combines roots for left and right to mean ‘more or less’ and is placed after the amount.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Shí Lín zài Kūnmíng de dōngbianr,} & \quad \text{‘The Stone Forest is about} \\
\text{chàbuduō yǒu yìbāi sānshí gōnglǐ.} & \quad \text{130 kilometers east of Kunming.’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dālǐ zài Kūnmíng de xībianr,} & \quad \text{‘Dali is about} \\
\text{dàgài yǒu sìbāi gōnglǐ.} & \quad \text{400 kilometers} \\
\text{Méi nián, dàyuē yǒu yìbāiwàn} & \quad \text{west of Kunming.’} \\
\text{nóngmíngōng jinchéng.} & \quad \text{‘About one million rural} \\
\text{Xīchāng zài Kūnmíng de běibianr yǒu} & \quad \text{workers move to the cities} \\
\text{wùbāi gōnglǐ zuòyòu.} & \quad \text{every year.’} \\
\text{Xīchāng is about 500} & \quad \text{‘Xichang is about 500} \\
\text{kilometers north of} & \quad \text{kilometers north of} \\
\text{Kunming.’} & \quad \text{Kunming.’}
\end{align*}
\]
14.5.2 Large numbers
In addition to the numerals 0–9, Chinese has simple words for five powers of ten: shí ‘ten’, bǎi ‘hundred’, qiān ‘thousand’, wàn ‘ten thousand’, and yì ‘hundred million’. (For extremely large numbers, hundred million can also be expressed as wàn wàn ‘ten thousand ten thousands’.) Notably missing—at least from an English perspective—is ‘million’, which in Chinese is expressed only as a compound: bǎi wàn (‘hundred-ten thousand’). Nowadays, large numbers are often written out in Arabic numerals (without commas) rather than characters, though they are, of course, read out in Chinese. (Arabic numerals are logograms, like Chinese characters, which represent words but do not indicate pronunciation.)

One important rule to note is that in stating large numbers, the highest possible power of ten is always used. In other words, 1,500 is always expressed in Chinese as yī qiān wǔ bǎi ěr rather than as *shí wǔ bǎi ěr. The key to forming large numbers, then, is to keep the five basic powers of ten in mind and work down from the largest power to the smallest. Empty tens and hundreds slots (whether one or more than one) that are not final in the figure are signaled by líng ‘zero’. Therefore, 1,000,300 is yī bǎi wàn líng sān bǎi ěr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yī bǎi líng wǔ</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiǔ bǎi líng èr</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiǔ bǎi bā shí ěr</td>
<td>982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī qiān èr bǎi (–liǎng bǎi) líng yī</td>
<td>1,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī wàn yī qiān líng sì shí wǔ</td>
<td>11,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sì wàn wǔ qiān jiǔ bǎi líng sì</td>
<td>45,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shí wàn</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sān shí wàn wǔ qiān jiǔ bǎi bā shí wǔ</td>
<td>345,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī bǎi wàn líng jiǔ</td>
<td>1,000,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī bǎi wàn líng sān bǎi ěr</td>
<td>1,000,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bā bǎi wǔ shí wàn líng bā bǎi</td>
<td>8,500,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī qiān yī bǎi wǔ shí wàn</td>
<td>11,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yì yī sì qiān wàn</td>
<td>140,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shí sān yì sì qiān wàn</td>
<td>1,340,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 4

One of the more common occasions to cite very large numbers is when you are talking about population, so here are some rough figures to practice with. (Zhōngguó rénkǒu shìshísānyì.) You can cite them as approximations, using zuòyòu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1.3 billion</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>35 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>8 million</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>24 million</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>238 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>4.5 million</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>61.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>59 million</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>310 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>14 million</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>18 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>8 million</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>2.8 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write Chinese equivalents for the following sentences.

1. The Jin Mao Building (Jīn Mào Dàshà) in Shanghai is one of the tallest buildings (dàlóu) in the world. The Oriental Pearl Tower (Dōngfāng Míngzhú Tà) is also one of the tallest; it is 468 meters tall.
2. Walmart (Wò’ěrmǎ) is one of the largest companies in the world.
3. Thirty percent of MIT graduate students are from abroad.
4. Although everyone in our Chinese class has been abroad, about 15 percent of us have never studied a foreign language before.
5. Louis Cha (Jīn Yōng) is one of the most popular authors in the world; his books have sold more than one hundred million copies.

NOTES

a. gōngsī ‘company’; gǔfèn yǒuxiàn gōngsī ‘limited company’ (‘stocks limited company’); móuyì gōngsī ‘trading corporation’ (‘trade company’)

b. Louis Cha is the English name of author Zhā Liángyōng, whose pen name is Jīn Yōng (Gām Yūhng in Cantonese). He has resided in Hong Kong for most of his life.
14.5.3 Comparing cities
The following four short interchanges give you a chance to combine comparison with large numbers as you talk about some of the world’s largest urban conglomerations.

a.  
Shànghǎi shì bu shì Zhōngguó zuì dà de chéngshì?  
Nǐ shì shuō rénkǒu ma?  
Shì.  
Nà dàgài Shànghǎi bǐ Bèijīng dà yídīnr. Tíngshuō xiànzǎi shì yǐqiān bābǎiwàn.  
‘Is Shanghai the largest city in China?’  
‘Are you talking about population?’  
‘Yes.’  
‘I guess Shanghai’s a bit bigger than Beijing. I hear it has eighteen million nowadays.’

b.  
Měiguó zuì dà de chéngshì shì nèi ge?  
Shì Niǔyuè; Luòshānji di-èr.  
Zhíjiāng bù shì bǐ Luòshānji dà ma?  
Bù, Zhíjiāng shì dì-sān . . . huòzhě xiànzǎi Xīāsidùn [Háosidùn] kěnèng bǐ Zhíjiāng shàowéi dà yídīnr.  
‘What is the largest city in the United States?’  
‘It’s New York; Los Angeles is second.’  
‘Isn’t Chicago bigger than Los Angeles?’  
‘No, Chicago is number three . . . or, now, perhaps Houston’s a little bigger than Chicago.’

c.  
Zhōngguó ma, Shànghǎi zuì dà, kěshì dì-èr, dì-sān wǒ bú tài qīngchù.  
Bèijīng shì bu shì dì-èr?  
Yóurén shuō Chóngqìng yěshì Zhōngguó zuì dà de chéngshì zhī yǐ.  
Kěshì Chóngqìng hǎoxiàng méiyǒu Bèijīng nàme dà.  
Chóngqìng shì ge zhíxiáshì, dui ma?  
‘As for China, Shanghai’s the largest, but I’m not sure about which is second and third.’  
‘Is Beijing second?’  
‘Some say that Chongqing is also one of the biggest cities in China.’  
‘But Chongqing doesn’t seem to be as big as Beijing.’  
‘Chongqing is a directly administered city, isn’t it?’
Dui a, Bēijīng, Tiānjīn, Shānhǎi, Chóngqīng dōu shì zhíxiáshì.

‘Right, Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing are all directly administered cities.’

Bēijīng de rénkǒu shì duōshao?

Bēijīng de wǒ bù zhīdào, Tiānjīn de rénkǒu shì bābǎiwàn ba.

‘What’s Beijing’s population?’

‘I don’t know what Beijing’s is, but Tianjin’s is eight million, I guess.’

 Zhōngguó shì shìjiè shàng rénkǒu zuì duō de guójiā, yǒu shísān yì yì. Yìndù shì di-èr, rénkǒu shì shì yì zuò yòu.

‘China is the largest country in the world, with 1.3 billion people. India is second, with a population of about one billion.’

Kēshí yǒu rén shuò zài 2050 (èrlíng wǔlíng nián), Yìndù huì yǒu shíliù yì, Zhōngguó shì sì yì. Nèi yàng, Yìndù huì shì zuì dà de.

‘But people say that by 2050, India will have 1.6 billion, and China will have 1.4 billion. That’ll make India the largest country.’

### 14.6 At the fruit stand: Buying and bargaining

Purchases in China, as in many countries, can be subject to bargaining. This requires a certain amount of time and engagement, but it also offers a chance for language practice. The rules for bargaining are difficult to make explicit. In any case, outsiders (to say nothing of foreigners) cannot really know local prices, so the best hope is to get within a few percentage points of a good price. Chinese friends will generally say you overpaid (Nǐ gěi tài duō le), but you can respond that you got a free language lesson in return: Yǒu jiē huì liàn xí Zhōngwén! (‘have opportunity to practice Chinese’).

Bargaining for expensive items—such as jewelry or crafts—is a rather different skill from making minor purchases of commodity items. There may be a ‘give’ of a few percentage points built into the asking price of fruit or vegetables at your local market, which might increase to 10–20 percent in the price of cotton material at your local bazaar. However, the difference between asking price and best price for an expensive item sold in a market or shop may be upwards of 300 percent—particularly at notorious bargain markets frequently
by tourists, such as Yǎxiū Fúzhōu Shāngchǎng ‘Yaxiu Clothing Market’ in east Beijing or Xiāngyáng Shāngchǎng in Shanghai.

Merchants know that if you make an absurdly low counter offer of, say, 30 percent of asking price, then that constitutes a promise, and you are stuck with the goods even if you eventually figure out they are only worth 10 percent of the original asking price. With this in mind, it’s always wise to respond to the question ‘What are you willing to pay?’ with the counter question ‘What’s your best price?’ Many people claim that, for more expensive purchases, it’s best to get help from a local friend.

For low-intensity bargaining, the following examples include some useful phrases with which to begin.

Starting out

\[ \text{Wǒ jiùshì kànkan.} \quad \text{‘I’m just looking.’} \]
\[ \text{Wǒ kànkan, kěyī ma?} \quad \text{‘Can I take a look at this [pointing]?’} \]

Resisting

\[ \text{Wǒ zài xiǎngxiǎng.} \quad \text{‘I’m thinking about it.’} \]
\[ \text{Wǒ zài zhuànzhuan.} \quad \text{‘I’m just strolling about.’} \]
\[ \text{Wǒ zài guàngguàng.} \quad \text{‘I’m just looking around.’} \]

Seeking a reduction

\[ \text{Kěyǐ piányí yìdiǎnr ma?} \quad \text{‘Can you make it a bit cheaper?’} \]
\[ \text{Piányí yìdiǎnr, xíng ma?} \quad \text{‘Can you make it a bit cheaper, okay?’} \]
\[ \text{Néng bu néng piányí yìdiǎnr?} \quad \text{‘Can you make it a bit cheaper?’} \]
\[ \text{Tài guì le, piányí diǎnr ba?} \quad \text{‘Too expensive; make it a bit cheaper, okay?’} \]

Finding the bottom

\[ \text{Ni zui dì duōshào qián?} \quad \text{‘How much is your lowest (best) price?’} \]
\[ \text{Ni gěi wǒ ge zui dì jià.} \quad \text{‘Give me your best (lowest) price.’} \]
\[ \text{Shuō ge zui dì jià ba.} \quad \text{‘Tell me your best price.’} \]

Discounts

\[ \text{Dàzhě ma?} \quad \text{‘Do you give a discount?’} \]
\[ \text{Yǒu zhékòu ma?} \quad \text{‘Any discount?’} \]
Xíng, dā ge jiūzhé. ‘Okay, I’ll give it to you for 90 percent.’ (10 percent off)

Chéng, gěi nǐ ge bāwūzhé. ‘Okay, I’ll give it to you for 85 percent.’ (15 percent off)

Hǎo, dā ge qīzhé. ‘Okay, I’ll give it to you for 70 percent.’ (30 percent off)

Seller’s strategies

Nǐ yuànyì chǔ duōshao? ‘How much are you willing to pay?’

Huòzhēn-jūshí, méi piān nǐ! ‘The goods are true, and the price is right—I’m not taking you for a ride!’

Yǐ fèn jiàqian yǐ fèn huò. ‘You get what you pay for.’ (‘One cent of price, one cent worth of thing’)

Yǐ kuài sān, wǒ jiù méi dé zhuàn le. ‘At ¥1.30, I won’t be making anything.’

Jǐnkōu de bǐjiào guì. ‘Imported things cost a bit more.’

Agreeing to the sale

Nà hǎo ba, mài gei nǐ ba. ‘Okay, that’s fine, I’ll sell it to you.’ [seller]

Dě dé dé, nǐ názōu ba. ‘Okay, okay, okay, you’ve got it.’ [seller]

Xíng, xíng, xíng ~ Hǎo, hǎo, hǎo. Jiù zhē jià le. ‘Fine, at that price then.’ [buyer]

VOCABULARY

dī ‘low’: zuì dī jià ‘lowest price’, with jià short for jiàgé ‘price’
dázhé ‘to offer a price break, give a discount’: cf. zhēkòu ‘discount’

yuànyì ‘be willing to’

zhuàn ‘profit; to earn’

jǐnkōu ‘import’ (‘enter-port’)

dě dé dé Dé as a full verb often means ‘get; obtain’, as in dé zhuàn ‘obtain profit’; here, the sense is ‘go ahead; all right; fine’.
NOTES

a. Zhé has a range of meanings, from ‘snap’ to ‘fold’, but in combination with dǎ, it means ‘break’ or ‘discount’. Although English typically focuses on the amount of reduction (‘10 percent off’), Chinese states the resulting discounted price (‘90 percent’). It indicates this with a numerical modifier before zhé: jiǔzhé ‘90 percent’; bāshíwǔzhé, ‘85 percent’.

b. Chéng is an alternative to xíng or hǎo. As a full verb, chéng means ‘become; accomplish; succeed’, but as a response, it means ‘agreed; fine; okay’.

c. Chūduōshào, with chū ‘go out’ in this context means ‘cause to go out’ or ‘give; spend’.

d. Méi dé zhuàn ‘won’t get any profit’: dé ‘get; obtain’ is the verb, and zhuàn is a noun.

e. With transactional verbs that involve movement away from the possessor, such as mài ‘sell’ or dì ‘to pass; to forward’, the recipient—the person who ends up with the object in question—can be introduced with gěi (often untoned), which is placed directly after the verb: mài gěi tā ‘sell to him’ or dì gěi tā ‘pass it to her’.

14.6.1 Buying fruit

Here are two plausible conversations between a foreign customer (gùkè ‘customer’) and the proprietor of an open-air fruit stand (lǎobān ‘owner; boss’).

Lǎobān: Kuài lái, kuài lái, hǎochi de Tiānjīn lǐ. ‘Quick, come and get ‘em, tasty Tianjin pears.’

Gùkè: Tián bu tián? ‘Are they sweet?’

Lǎobān: Bāo tián, yòu dà yòu tián. Lái, shìyíxiàr. ‘Guaranteed sweet, big and sweet. Here, have a taste.’

Gùkè: Ng. hào tián. zénme mài a? ‘Hm, pretty sweet. How are they sold?’

Lǎobān: Yí kuài wǔ yì jīn. ‘¥1.50 a catty.’

Gùkè: Nà, dàgè yōu jǐ ge? ‘So, about how many is that?’

Lǎobān: Sì dàò wù ge ba. ‘About four or five.’

Gùkè: Lǎobān, yí kuài sān yì jīn kěyǐ ma? ‘Laoban, how about ¥1.30 a catty?’

Lǎobān: Mǎi liǎng jīn suàn nǐ yí kuài shì yì jīn. ‘Buy two catties, and I’ll make it ¥1.40 each.’

Gùkè: Hǎo, ná liǎng jīn. ‘Good, I’ll take two catties.’
VOCABULARY

bǎo  ‘to be assured, to guarantee’
jīn  ‘jin, catty’: a unit of weight equal to one-half a kilogram (liǎng ‘ounce’ is equivalent to 0.05 kg, so 10 liangs = 1 jīn)
yòu . . . yòu . . . ‘both . . . and . . .’: yòu dà yòu tián ‘big and sweet’
shì ‘to try’: shìshì kàn ‘try it and see’
zěnme mài ‘how much’ (‘how are they sold’)
suàn ‘calculate, count, make it [an amount]’

NOTE
Shì ‘try’ adds another member to a large set of homophones that, even ignoring parts of compounds (e.g., diànhì ‘televisions’; kǎoshì ‘test’), includes shì ‘be’, shì ‘thing’ (shìqìng), shì ‘room’ (jiào shì ‘classroom’), and shì ‘market, municipality’.

Lǎobān:  Guòlái kànkan, yòu xīnxiān yòu piányi de shuǐguǒ.
Gùkē:   Nǐ hǎo, láobān, wǒ yào mài píngguǒ.
Gùkē:   Nǎ zhòng tiǎn?
Lǎobān:  Nín chángcháng zhè zhòng.
Gùkē:   Ng, hào tián. Hǎo de, wǒ yào zhè zhòng. Duōshào qián yì jīn?
Lǎobān:  Wǔ kuài qián yì jīn.
Lǎobān:  Yō! Nǐn de Zhōngwén zhēn hǎo, hái hùi kānjià.
Gùkē:   Nǎ.lì, nǎ.lì, māmāhūhū. Sì kuài qián yī jīn, zěnmenyàng?
Lāobān: Bù xíng, zuì dì si kuài wǔ. ‘Can’t do; my best is ¥4.50.’
Gùkè: Hǎo ba, wǒ yào wǔ ge. ‘Okay, I’ll take five.’
Lāobān: Yígòng sān jīn, shísān kuài wǔ. ‘That’s three catties, ¥13.50.’
Gùkè: Gěi nǐ yībāi kuài. ‘Here’s ¥100.’
Lāobān: Nǐn yǒu lǐngqián ma? ‘Do you have any change?’
Gùkè: Wǒ zháozhao. Ng, hǎo, yǒu liǎng zhāng liǎng kuài de hé liǎng zhāng wǔ kuài de. ‘Let me see. Umm, okay, here are two twos and two fives. Just right, ¥14.’
zhèng hǎo shì kuài de. ‘Just right, ¥14.’
Lāobān: Tài hǎo le, zhǎo nín wǔ máo. ‘Great, here’s ¥0.50 in change.’
Gùkè: Xièxiè, zàijiàn. ‘Thanks, goodbye.’
Lāobān: Màn zōu, xià cì zài lái. ‘Take it easy—come again.’

VOCABULARY

xīnxiān ‘fresh’ (‘new-fresh’)
Yō! ‘What have we here?’ ‘Wow’: exclamation of surprise
tiāo ‘choose; select’
jiàng ‘price’
kǎnjì ‘to beat down the price; bargain’ (‘chop-price’) [coll];
cf. tāojià-huānjì ‘to haggle’ (‘give-price return-price’);
jiāng jiàqìan ‘to bargain’ (‘talk-price’)
lǐngqián ‘small change’ (‘odd bits-money’)

NOTES

a. Zhǎo nín wǔ máo literally means ‘find you ¥0.50’, but in English one would say ‘Here’s ¥0.50 in change.’
b. Màn zōu, xià cì zài lái is a conventional phrase.

14.6.2 The names of fruit

Fruit names can vary from place to place in the Chinese-speaking world. Pineapple, for example is usually cited as bōluó in standard Mandarin dictionaries. In Taiwan, however, it is called fènglí (‘phoenix-pear’), and in Singapore, it is called huánglí (‘yellow-pear’). The names cited in this section are those that seem to have the broadest currency.
Many kinds of fruit can be counted with the general measure word 个: 两个 ‘two apples’, 十个 ‘ten persimmons’, 两个香蕉 ‘two bananas’. In shops and at stalls, though, fruit can often be bought in slices (片) or cubes (块). Grapes and bananas are generally bought in bunches (串). Single grapes are counted with 个.

bōluó ‘pineapple’
chéngzi ‘orange’
gānjú ‘mandarin orange’
gānzhé ‘sugar cane’
hámigú ‘muskmelon’ (‘Hami-melon’)
huòlóngguǒ ‘red pitaya; dragon fruit’ (‘fire-dragon-fruit’)
júzì ‘tangerine’
lí ‘pear’
liúlián ‘durian’
lízhī ‘lychee’
lízi ‘plum’
lóngyān ‘longan’ (‘dragon-eye’)

Mài shuǐguǒ de. (Shànghǎi)
### THE CORE UNITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>măngguǒ</td>
<td>‘mango’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mǐhóutáo</td>
<td>‘kiwi’ (‘macaque-peach’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mùguà</td>
<td>‘papaya’ (‘wood-melon’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>níngménɡ</td>
<td>‘lemon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>píngguǒ</td>
<td>‘apple’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pútao</td>
<td>‘grapes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shíliu</td>
<td>‘pomegranate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìzi</td>
<td>‘persimmon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>táo&lt;zi&gt;</td>
<td>‘peach’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàngjiāo</td>
<td>‘banana’ (‘frangant-plantain’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xíguā</td>
<td>‘watermelon’ (‘west-melon’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xìng</td>
<td>‘apricot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yánɡtáo</td>
<td>‘starfruit’ (‘sun-pear’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yèzi</td>
<td>‘coconut’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yóuzi</td>
<td>‘pomelo’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NOTES

a. Hami, a place in Xinjiang Province, gives its name to the hāmǐguā—the muskmelon. Musk-melons have a raised network over their yellowish outer rinds, giving rise to the alternative English names ‘netted melon’ and ‘nutmeg melon’. Their flesh is yellowish to greenish and tastes like cantaloupe.

b. Huǒlǒngguǒ, sometimes called lǒnghuāguǒ (‘dragon-pearl-fruit’), is the fruit of a cactus native to Central and South America, but it is now also cultivated in Southeast Asia, southern China, and other places.

c. Mǐhóu ‘macaque’ is a kind of monkey. The Chinese name for kiwi is mǐhóutáo. The kiwi fruit may seem well named, for it has the color and look of a kiwi bird’s body, and most of the kiwi fruit we eat in the United States comes from New Zealand—the home of the kiwi bird. However, the fruit is, in fact, native to central and southern China, where it goes under a variety of names, including mǐhóutáo (‘macaque-monkey peach’) and mǐhóuli (‘macaque-monkey-pear’). Supposedly, the fruit is a favorite of monkeys.

d. The fruit called lìzhī in Mandarin is rendered into English spelling as ‘litchee’, ‘lichee’, or ‘lychee’.

e. The name liúlián is borrowed, probably first into Cantonese, from Malay durian. Note how the strongly voiced Malay d and r were not heard as pinyin d and r, but rather as l. The durian is known for its offensive smell (for which it is generally banned from hotel rooms and public transportation) and its thick, creamy fruit. In Chinese, the smell would be described as hěn chòu ‘foul’ but the taste as hěn xiānɡ ‘fragrant’.
14.7 Tastes and ‘adding more to’

With fruit—and with food in general—it is useful to be able to describe and compare flavors. In English, we talk about the four basic flavors: bitter, salty, sour, and sweet. Some would add a fifth: savory or piquant. There are also words for lack of taste, such as bland. Chinese, with its predilection for sets of five, recognizes 五味 ‘five flavors’. In fact, in Chinese, it is possible to add one or two other flavors to the basic five (麻 and 酸). Here is a list of words for tastes, along with typical substances associated with those tastes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASTES</th>
<th>TYPICAL FOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>là ‘hot’</td>
<td>làjiāo ‘chilies’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jiāng ‘ginger’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suān ‘sour’</td>
<td>cù ‘vinegar’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tián ‘sweet’</td>
<td>táng ‘sugar’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xián ‘salty’</td>
<td>yán ‘salt’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jiāngyóu ‘soy sauce’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kǔ ‘bitter’</td>
<td>kūguā ‘bitter melon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>má ‘numbing’</td>
<td>huājiāo ‘Sichuan pepper’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sè ‘astringent;</td>
<td>bù shú de shízi ‘unripe persimmons’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puckery</td>
<td>háishuǐ ‘sea water’ (which is also considered kǔ and xián)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES

a. Related words (that are not quite tastes) include dàn ‘bland’, xiāng ‘fragrant’, and chòu ‘smelly’.

b. Other groups of five include the 五色 ‘five colors’ (red, yellow, blue, white, and black) and the 五香 ‘five aromas’ (of fennel, brown pepper, aniseed, cinnamon, and cloves). Both sets are associated with cooking and cuisine. There are also the 五金 ‘five metals’ (gold, silver, copper, iron, and tin)—as in 五金 shàngdiàn ‘ironmongers, hardware store’—and the 五谷 ‘five cereals’ (rice, spiked millet, panicled millet, wheat, and beans). The predilection for sets of five is probably a legacy of concepts such as the 五脏 ‘five elements’ that are so important to traditional notions of health and medicine in China.

c. As a list, the five flavors (五味) are often ordered as là, suān, gān, kǔ, xián, with the bound word gān ‘sweet’ instead of tián.
d. The Chinese word for black pepper is hújiāo ‘foreign pepper’. Hújiāo is not used as much in Chinese cooking as huājiāo ‘flower pepper’—also called fagara, brown pepper, or Sichuan pepper. Unlike the sharp heat of làjiāo ‘chilies’, which are associated with Hunan cuisine, huājiāo has a slightly numbing effect and, mixed with làjiāo, is characteristic of Sichuan food. Recall Sichuan dishes that begin with ‘málà’, such as málà ěrduō (‘numbing-spicy pig-ears’) and málà jīsī (‘numbing-spicy shredded-chicken’).

e. Sé is also the taste of unripe pears and peaches (lí, táo).

We will end this section with a short comment in praise of Chinese cuisine.

Zhōngguó rén shuō xīfāng cài kòuwèir tài dàn, mèiyǒu wéidào; tāmen yě shuǒ nánfāng cài (xiàng Yīndù de, Tàiguó de) kòuwèir tài zhòng. Xīfāng de tài dàn, nánfāng de tài zhòng, kēshì Zhōngguó de zhèng hǎo!

*The Chinese say that Western food tastes too bland—it doesn’t have any flavor. They say southern food (such as Indian and Thai) tastes too rich. Western food is too bland, southern is too rich, but Chinese is just right!*

14.7.1 Adding or subtracting amounts

If the food is not salty enough, then you can request more salt to be added: Qǐng duō fāng yìdiǎnr yán. If you need another drink, then you can ask the server to bring another glass: Qǐng duō lái yī bēi. Though this pattern also occurs with zǎo ‘early’ and wàn ‘late’, it is most common with duō and shǎo, which are normally stative verbs, but here fill the adverbial position. The pattern is as follows—note the contrast with English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVERB</th>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>duō / shǎo</td>
<td>fāng</td>
<td>amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gěi</td>
<td>amount</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here are some relevant verbs, followed by examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gěi</td>
<td>‘give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fàng</td>
<td>‘put’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ná</td>
<td>‘hold; take’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lái</td>
<td>‘bring’ [cause to come]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niàn</td>
<td>‘read’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Duō chí yìdiānr cài!**
   ‘Have some more food!’
   Xièxie, chībāo le, chībāo le.
   ‘Thank you, I’m fine, I’m full.’

2. **Tài dàn le, gāi duō fāng yìdiānr yàn / jiàngyóu.**
   ‘It’s too bland; you should add more salt / soy sauce.’
   Bù, bù, hái hǎo, zhè yàngr hái hǎo.
   ‘No, it’s fine; it’s fine as is.’

3. **Qǐng duō fāng yí kuài táng.**
   ‘Another cube of sugar please.’
   Yí kuài gòu le ma?
   ‘One more is enough?’
   Gòu le, gòu le.
   ‘Yeah, that’s fine.’

4. **Qǐng duō lái sān píng kuàngquánshuǐ.**
   ‘Please bring three more bottles of mineral water.’

5. **Qǐng duō lái liǎng ge bēizi.**
   ‘Please bring two more glasses.’

6. **Qǐng zài tiān shuāng kuài zǐ.**
   ‘Please bring another pair of chopsticks.’ (‘again add pair chopsticks’)

7. **Qǐng duō dú ~ niàn yì háng / yí duàn / yí yè.**
   ‘Please read one more line / paragraph / page.’

8. **Wǒ duō ná liǎng ge, háo bu hǎo?**
   ‘I’ll take two more, okay?’

9. **Wǒ duō mài yí gè.**
   ‘I’ll take (buy) another.’

10. **Nà tài zhòng le, shǎo ná yì-liàng bèn, háo bu hǎo?**
    ‘That’s too heavy; take one or two fewer books, okay?’

When only one item is involved, the effect of the *duō* pattern can be achieved with *zài* ‘again; more’.

11. **Zài chī yìdiānr ba.**
    ‘Eat some more.’

12. **Qǐng zài lái yì píng kělè.**
    ‘Please bring another bottle of cola.’

13. **Nǐ zài ná yì gè, háo bu hǎo?**
    ‘Take another one, okay?’
In fact, zài and duō can co-occur.

14. Qǐng zài duō lái yìdiǎnr cài! ‘Please have some more food!’
   (‘please again additionally eat some food’)

**Exercise 5**

Provide Chinese equivalents for the following sentences.

1. Sichuan food is hot, but it isn’t as hot as Hunan food. Thai food is even hotter, I feel.
2. If you prefer a saltier taste, then put more soy sauce in.
3. I’m not used to hot food, so please put fewer chilies in, so please don’t cook it too spicy.
4. Lychees are a bit too sweet for me; I prefer plums or peaches.
5. Durian is cheaper in southern regions than it is in the north. Durian tastes a bit sour.
6. Cantonese food tends to be a little sweet, with not much soy sauce. Sichuan food is hot and numbing.
7. If durian is even a tiny bit overripe [shú], then it stinks to high heaven. However, if it’s too unripe [shēng], then it doesn’t taste good. When you buy it, it should be fragrant.

14.8 Verb-le and an excursion to the Great Wall

As noted in earlier units, le may appear at the foot of a sentence to signal a change in phase (xiànzài hǎo le; yìjīng chīfàn le), or it may intervene between a verb and its object to signal priority or completion. (Of course, if no object is present, then le can only be distinguished by context or meaning.) The following sections deal with the latter type, which can be designated ‘verb-le’ (V-le).

Historically, the two types—or two positions—of le are thought to have different sources, a fact which sheds some light on their modern functions.
Postverbal le (perfective le) is said to derive from destressing the verb liǎo ‘finish; settle’ (which, like le, is also written רצי). In fact, in recitation styles, le is read as liǎo. A good example is the following line from the song 《东方红》 ‘The East is Red’, in which chūliǎo is used, rather than the normal colloquial chūle.

Zhōngguó chūliǎo yí ge Máo Zédōng ‘From within China there appeared a person named Mao Zedong’

Sentence le, on the other hand, is thought to derive from destressing the verb lái ‘come’. Therefore, lěng le, in an etymological sense, indicates ‘to have come into a state of being cold’. The following sections deal with V-le, whose general function is to indicate completion.

14.8.1 Sequence of events
One particularly clear manifestation of V-le is found in sequences (cf. §5.12.2), where the second event is conditional on the completion of the first, and the first verb is marked with le. Often, the second clause contains the adverb jiù ‘then’ [temporal or logical] (which is often unstressed/untoned).

Shénme shíhou mǎi piào? ‘When do we buy our tickets?’
Shàngle chē jiù mǎi piào. ‘You buy tickets after you board.’

Where the conditions are more severe, cái (cf. §7.7) may substitute for jiù.

Néng chūqu wánr ma? ‘Can I go out to play?’
Nǐ chīle fàn cái néng chūqu wánr. ‘Not until you’ve eaten can you go out to play.’
Wǒ zǎoshang chīle xiànrǐng cái yǒu jīngshen. ‘Mornings—I can’t function until I’ve had a meat-stuffed pancake.’

In such cases, the ‘V-le O’ (V-le + object) construction occupies the same position in the sentence as a time word.

Wǒ sān diǎn huíjiā. ‘I’m going home at 3:00.’
Wǒ chīle fàn jiù huíjiā. ‘I’m going home after I eat.’
Wǒ xiàle kè cái huíjiā. ‘I’m not going home until after class.’
Le used after the first verb in these sentences serves much the same purpose as yihòu ‘afterwards’. In fact, when the second event is less likely to follow immediately on the first, yihòu may be preferred.

*Tā biyè yihòu dāsuàn qù Zhōngguó liúxué.*  ‘He’s planning to go abroad to study in China after he graduates.’

Even with the presence of the postverbal *le* in the first clause (chíle fàn; xiàle kè), you can still find the other *le*—sentence *le*—modifying the whole sentence. Contrast the following sets of questions and answers.

*Nǐ jīntiān jì diàn huíjiā?*  ‘When are you going home today?’
*Wǒ xiàle kè jiù huíjiā.*  ‘I’m going home right after class.’

*Tā jīntiān jǐ diàn huíjiā le?*  ‘When did she go home today?’
*Tā xiàle kè jiù huíjiā le.*  ‘She went home right after class.’

*Tāmén hǎi zài ma?*  ‘Are they still here?’
*Bù, tāmén xiàle kè jiù zǒu le.*  ‘No, they left after class.’

14.8.2 Verb *le* in simple sentences
Verb *le* offers the speaker a way to highlight those events in a narrative that are of particular significance because they have been completed before the time of speaking.

*Tāmén mǎile hěn duō dōngxi.*  ‘They bought a lot of things.’
*Tā zǒule yì ge xiǎoshí.*  ‘She walked for an hour.’

If an object is present (hěn duō dōngxi), *le* will generally follow the verb but precede the object or other noun complement (e.g., mǎile hěn duō dōngxi; zǒule yì ge xiǎoshí). Note the position of *le* in the following examples.

*Wǒmén zài Chángchéng shàng pále liǎng ge zhōngtiāo.*  ‘We walked along the Great Wall for a couple of hours.’
*Tā shuǐle bā ge xiǎoshí<de> jiào.*  ‘She slept eight hours <of sleep>.’

*Tā dào chéng lǐ qù bānle yīxiē shìqǐng.*  ‘He went into town to do some things.’
*Tā bìngle sān tiān.*  ‘She was ill for three days.’
More illustrations:

1. Jiā:  Lèi ma?
   Yǐ:  Hén lèi, shuì+de bù hǎo.
   Jiā:  Zàogāo!
   Yǐ:  Zhí shuìle sān-sì ge zhōngtou!
   Jiā:  Nà, nǐ yīnggāi xiūxi yíxiàr.
   ‘Tired?’
   ‘Sure am; I didn’t sleep well.’
   ‘Too bad!’
   ‘I only slept three or four hours!’
   ‘You should take a break then.’

2. Jiā:  Mǎile yíxīě shénme?
   Yǐ:  Mǎile ge táidēng, yī ge shōuỳìngjì, yī běn zìdiǎn.
   ‘What sort of things did you buy ~ have you bought?’

3. Shíjiān hěn jìnzhàng, wǒmén qùle Xīnìng, kěshì měi dào Lāsà.
   ‘The time was tight! We got to Xining, but we didn’t make it to Lhasa.’

4. Wǒ xiàndiē diànhuà, ránhòu qù chī fàn.
   ‘I made a phone call first and then went and finished my meal.’

5. Tā chīle mǐfàn, yě chīle miàn.
   ‘She ate the rice as well as the noodles.’

6. Tā gānggāng chīle fàn.
   ‘She just now finished her meal.’

14.8.3 Le and nonduration
It’s appropriate to make one last point while we are dealing with le. As you know, duration is expressed by a phrase placed after the verb (and before associated objects).

Zuòtiān wǎnshang wǒ zhī shuǐle sān ge xiǎoshí, jǐntiān hěn hútu.
   ‘I only slept three hours last night; today, I’m quite muddled.’

Duìbùqǐ, nǐ děngle hěn jiù le!
   ‘Sorry, you’ve been waiting a long time!’

Bù, gāng dào.
   ‘No, just got here.’

However, not doing something for a period of time is treated differently in Chinese. The time of deprivation is treated as though it were ‘time when’ and
placed before the verb. Final le (i.e., sentence le) underscores the fact that the deprivation continues to the present.

\begin{align*}
&Wō sān ge yuè méi jìhuí shuō Hànyǔ le. & ‘I haven’t had a chance to speak Chinese for three months.’ \\
&Nǐ zuì hǎo duō fǔxí yíxià. & ‘You’d better review some more then.’ \\
&Wō sān tiān méi shuìjiào le. & ‘I haven’t slept for three days.’ \\
&Nà nǐ yídìng hēn lèi ba. & ‘You must be tired.’ \\
&Wō èrshí duō xiǎoshí méi chīfàn le. & ‘I haven’t eaten for over twenty hours.’ \\
&Nà nǐ yídìng hēn è ba! & ‘You must be hungry!’
\end{align*}

Therefore, not having done something for a time is not treated the same way as having done something for a time. Sentences such as the following, in which the duration is denied or corrected, are not exceptions to the rule—the duration happened and is questioned.

\begin{align*}
&Wō méi shuì jìu ge xiǎoshí; wǒ & ‘I didn’t sleep nine hours; I said I slept six hours.’ \\
&shuō shuǐle liù ge xiǎoshí.
\end{align*}

**Summary of le (and related patterns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-le</th>
<th>xiànzài hǎo le</th>
<th>it's okay now</th>
<th>change of state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-le</td>
<td>bù zào le</td>
<td>it's getting late</td>
<td>change of state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-le</td>
<td>yǐjīng xiàkè le</td>
<td>class is over already</td>
<td>new phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-le</td>
<td>qù Chángchéng le</td>
<td>went to the Great Wall</td>
<td>earlier event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg</td>
<td>méi qù Chángchéng</td>
<td>didn’t go to the GW</td>
<td>didn’t happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-guo</td>
<td>qùguo Chángchéng</td>
<td>has been to the GW</td>
<td>had the experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNIT 14

Neg  méi qùguò  Chángchéng  haven’t ever been to GW
V-le  bànle yixiè shiqing  took care of some business
Shi . . . de  <shi> zuótiān qù de  went yesterday
V-le O  xiàle kè  after class gets out
V-le O  dàole Xínǐng  made it to Xining

Exercise 6

Explain the following situations in Chinese.

1. You generally sleep eight hours a night.
2. But last night you only slept three hours.
3. You generally get up at 7:30.
4. But this morning you didn’t get up until 9:00.
5. After you eat breakfast, you walk (zǒulù) for thirty minutes.
6. Every day you do an hour of Chinese homework.
7. You haven’t eaten for ages—you’re starving.
8. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, your first class is at 11:00.
9. You eat lunch after you get out of class.
10. Yesterday you didn’t go home until after you’d eaten dinner.
11. You had to study last night, so you only slept four hours.
12. Yesterday afternoon you went to Xidan and bought some souvenirs.
13. You’re not buying a standing ticket ever again—you haven’t slept for thirty hours.
Simátái

To Simátái

Jià: Zuòtiān gànmá le?  ‘What did you do yesterday?’
Yì: Wǒ qù mǎi xiézi le. ‘I went to buy some shoes.’
Yì: <Zài> Xídàn. ‘Xidan.’
Jià: Duōshào qián? ‘How much?’
Yì: 85 kuài. ‘¥85.’
Jià: Bú guì. ‘Not bad.’
Yì: Hái mǎile ji jiàn chēn̄yì. ‘I also bought some shirts.
Ránhòu wǒmen chī lâmiàn. Then we had some noodles.
Nǐmen ne? How about you?’
Jià: Wǒmen qù pá Chăngchéng le. ‘We went and climbed the
Great Wall.’
Yì: Zuò huōchē qù de ma? ‘Did you go by train?’
Jià: Bù, huōchē tài màn le, wǒmen shì zuò gōngjiāo qù de. ‘No, the train’s too slow; we
went by public bus.’
Yǐ:  
Huǒchē shì tài màn.  
‘The train is too slow.’

Jiǎ:  
Wōmen méi qù Bādálíng,  
wōmen qùle Sīmàtái. Zài Chāngchéng shàng zǒu le jī ge xiāoshi.  
‘And we didn’t go to Badaling, we went to Simatai. We walked for a few hours on the Great Wall.’

Yǐ:  
Sīmàtái, Bēijīng de dōngbēi biānr—nàme yuǎn!  
‘Simatai, northeast of Beijing—so far!’

Jiǎ:  
Bādálíng rěn tāi duō le, Sīmàtái shì yuǎnle yìdiǎnr, kěshì rén méi Bādálíng nàme duō.  
‘There are too many people at Badaling; Simatai is a little farther, but there aren’t as many people there.’

Yǐ:  
Ng̀. Nà, jīntiān dāsuàn gànmmá?  
‘Hm. And what are you doing today?’

Jiǎ:  
Jīntiān wǒ dēi xuěxí.  
‘Today I have to study.’

Yǐ:  
Wō yě shì. Xià xīngqī yǒu qímò kāoshi!  
‘Me too; I have finals next week!’

VOCABULARY

làmiàn (‘pull-noodles’) noodles made by pulling strips off a lump of dough
pá ‘climb; crawl’
Bādálíng Because it is relatively close to Beijing (about 70 km slightly northwest of the city), and is now served by an expressway (as well as a railway), Badaling is still the most popular tourist site on the Great Wall.

Sīmàtái The site of a much more impressive portion of the Great Wall, northeast of Beijing, farther away (110 km), and harder to reach—but now also becoming very popular. There are, of course, other Great Wall sites near Beijing, off the beaten path, but still accessible.
NOTE
Notice the position of le in yuānle yǐdiàn ‘is little father off’. With stative verbs (such as yuān), le appears before the amount and directly after the stative verb. For example, hāole hěn duó ‘feel much better now’ and zhòngle sān gōngjīn ‘put on three kilos [i.e., I gained weight]’, with zhòng ‘heavy’.

Exercise 7

Rearrange the words and phrases to form sentences.

1. xiàng / wōmen / qù / kàn / jiǔyuèfen / dào / míngnián / Xī’ān / qīng
2. xiùxi xiùxi / huíjiā / yào / xiànzài / wō
3. tǔshūguān / xiàng / bu / jīntiān / wō / qù / xiàng / wō / chéng lǐ / mǎi / qù / dōngxi / qù
4. jīnzhāng / dōu / làoshi / suǒyī / yán / yǐnwèi / hěn / xuěshēng / hěn
5. fānguānr / xīngqíliù / qù / kē / dōu / de / xuěshēng / chīfàn / èrniánjī / qù / méiyōu / suǒyī
7. fùmù / kēshì / Zhōngwén / tā / shuō / bù / huì / huì
8. lái de / tā / shí / láo Běijīng / Běijīng / suǒyī / jiào / pénghòu / dōu / tā

14.9 Pronunciation

Practice reading aloud the following tone sets. Read down, then across.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gòuwù</th>
<th>fāngyán</th>
<th>kūguā</th>
<th>lājiāo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sùshē</td>
<td>zhāngláng</td>
<td>hāixiān</td>
<td>zhuàngguān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shǐjiē</td>
<td>fēngsú</td>
<td>Yāxī</td>
<td>jiànkāng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shùyú</td>
<td>zǐjī</td>
<td>xióngmāo</td>
<td>mǎngguō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lánhóu</td>
<td>fǔmǔ</td>
<td>guójǐá</td>
<td>mǐjiù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hàibá</td>
<td>shāngwáng</td>
<td>huījīá</td>
<td>lǐxiāng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now practice full tone plus ˈqīngshēng.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>qīngchu</th>
<th>chóngzi</th>
<th>lǐzi</th>
<th>lǐzi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gùniāng</td>
<td>wénzi</td>
<td>bēnzì</td>
<td>hàozi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice reading these three-syllable words (including some common nouns and some proper nouns) slowly and carefully.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wò’érma</th>
<th>Simáágái</th>
<th>Bādálíng</th>
<th>kuàngquânsìţuì</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hâmiguá</td>
<td>huōlóngguó</td>
<td>zhâxiāshí</td>
<td>Wângfûjíng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guójíhuà</td>
<td>quânqîúhuà</td>
<td>lûxîngshè</td>
<td>yûyánxìüé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, practice reading these words with ɛrhùà. Definitions are provided out of interest, as well as to give you a sense of the kind of colloquial, familiar, local words that show the ɾ suffix.

| gûnr | ‘rod; stick’ |
| miáor | ‘sprouts’ |
| gûxuèr | ‘one’s offspring’ ('bone-blood') |
| zhâopiânr | ‘photograph’: also zhâopiàn with falling tone on piàn ‘slice’ |
| xíngrênr | ‘almond; apricot kernal’ ('apricot-kernal’) |
| miánbâozhâr | ‘breadcrumbs’ ('bread-scaps’) |
| miánbâopír | ‘crust’ ('bread-skin’)
| qiányuànr | ‘front courtyard’ |
| qiâohuôr | ‘tricky work, requiring some finesse’ |
| tuôr | ‘something serving as support; a tout’ [for a business] |
| sháor | ‘spoon; ladle’ |
| shûcâr | ‘fork in a tree’ |
| chuânménr | ‘drop in on someone’ ('string together-door’) |
| yûngmiànr | ‘head on; face-to-face; from the opposite direction’ ('receive-face’)
| tôufêngr | ‘part or parting of combed hair’ ('head-seam,fissure’)
| náizuír | ‘pacifier; nipple [on a baby’s milk bottle]’ ('milk-mouth’)
| chângpiânr | ‘phonograph record; disk’ ('song-disk’)
| gûnguâr | ‘rotund; something plump’ ('roly-gourd’)
| xiângchángr | ‘sausage’ ('fragrant-intestine’)

Copyright © 2014 by Yale University
zhàlánr ‘railings; bars’
shuǐniū ‘snail’ (‘water-ox’): cf. shuǐniú ‘water buffalo’
jiǎoyín ‘footprint; tracks’ (‘foot-print’)
méicír ‘be at a loss for words’ (‘without-words’)
méidīr ‘be unsure’ (‘without-basis’)
duíjīn ‘compatible; to one’s liking’ (‘to-strength’)
bīngguà ‘icicle’ (‘ice-hang’)
zhēnbír ‘eye of a needle’ (‘needle-nose’)

Exercise 8

Place the following words in short phrases that demonstrate your understanding of the differences among them. Proceed down the columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shìjiè</td>
<td>qīngchu</td>
<td>Yingyū</td>
<td>niánjí</td>
<td>yōumíng</td>
<td>guójí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shǐjiān</td>
<td>qīngcài</td>
<td>yījīng</td>
<td>biāozhūn</td>
<td>yōu yīsí</td>
<td>láojiā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shǐhou</td>
<td>cāntíng</td>
<td>yǐjíán</td>
<td>cháoài</td>
<td>yōu dàoli</td>
<td>guójíá</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.10 Rhymes and rhythms

Singing and dancing, in addition to language, are considered part of one’s cultural identity in China. In case you are asked to sing (at a banquet or on a tour bus), here is a song for you to fall back on—just in case you have not prepared anything else.

This is a song that is very popular in China, with a tune you should find easy to remember. Its Chinese title is Hóng Hé Gǔ (红河谷), which translates literally as ‘Red River Valley’. This is not the Red River that flows through Yunnan and across northern Vietnam, which, incidentally, is called Hóng Hé ‘red river’ or Yuán Hé ‘primary river’ in Chinese and Sông Hồng (‘river-red’) in Vietnamese. No, this Red River Valley is, apparently, in Manitoba, Canada. The song, which seems to have originated in the late 19th century, has passed into the North American folk repertoire.
Tián Hàojiàng, the opera bass at the New York Metropolitan Opera, recorded a fine version of the song on his 2009 CD: Zàijiàn Xiǎolù (再见小路) ‘Songs of Our Generation’. Here are the lyrics for the first verse and refrain, along with a literal translation.

Rénmen shuō, nǐ jiù yào lí kuài
cūnzhāng,
wǒmen jiāng huáinniàn nǐ de
wēixiāo,
Nǐ de yǎnjīng bǐ tàiyang gèng
míngliàng,
Zhàoyào zài wǒmen de xīn shàng.
Zǒu guòlái nǐ zuò zài wǒ de shēn
páng,
bú yào lí bié de zhèyàng
cōngmáng,
Yào jīzhù Hóng Hé Cūn, nǐ de
guìxiān,
hái yǒu nà rè'ài nǐ de gūniāng.

(‘people say, you then will leave
village’)  
(‘we will miss your DE smile’)  
(‘you DE eyes than sun more
bright’)  
(‘shine LOC our heart on’)  
(‘come over-here, you sit at my DE
body beside’)  
(‘not want leave+DE so hastily’)  
(‘must remember RRV, your
hometown’)  
(‘still have that ardent-love you
DE girl’)  

Wǒmen jiāng huáinniàn nǐ de wēixiāo.
Now, back to tradition, with a rhyme about the moon.

Yuè guāngguāng, zhào gūchāng.  
('moon bright, shine+on grain-fields')

gūchāng shàng, nóngrén máng.  
('grain-fields on, farmers busy')

Jīn nián dàogū shōuchéng hào.  
('this-year rice harvest good')

Jiājiā-hūhū lètáotáo.  
('every household full+of+joy')

Finally, a story (with measure words) that has the virtue of being brief but endless, so it can be easily remembered and recited line-by-line around a class.

Cóngqián yóu yì zuò shān,  
('Formerly be a M mountain')

shān lǐ yǒu ge miào,  
('mountain on have M temple')

miào lǐ yǒu ge héshàng jiāng gǔshì;  
('temple in have M priest tell story')

jiāng de shénme gǔshì?  
('tell DE what story')

Cóngqián yóu yì zuò shān . . .  
('Formerly be a M mountain . . .')

Summary

Owing to [the fact] yóuyú tā shì Zhōngwén lǎoshī
Different; not the same bùtóng de fāngyán / wánquán bù yíyáng
For example shuō ge lìzi / bǐfāng shuō
Old lǎo chuántōng / jiūchē
Tentative Qīng dēngyǐxiār / Zánmen shǎngliang
shǎngliang.
Directionals Wǒ bāng nǐ ná shàngqu, hǎo bu hǎo?
Bà Qīng bā mén guānshang.
Wǒ yǐjīng bā yīfù fāng zài chuáng shāng le.
Noncomparative Jīntiān xiāngdāng rè / Jīntiān rè+de
būdéliāo.
Comparatives
Běijīng bǐ Tiānjīn dà yídānр ~ dà duōle.
Bǐ Běijīng duō jī bāiwàn.
Běijīng méiyǒu Shànháй <nàme> dà.
Běijīng bùrú Shànháй dà.
Tā Hányǔ jiāng+de bǐ wǒ hǎo (dè duō, etc.).

One of . . .
shǐjìe shàng zuì dà de chéngshì zhī yì

Large numbers
bābāiwàn

Approximately
Yōu yībāi gōnglǐ zuóyòu.

Bargaining
Kēyī piányī yídānр ma? / Shuō ge zuì dì jià ba.

Discounts
Yōu zhèkòu ma? / Xíng, dà de jiùzhé.

Some more
Duō chí yídānр cài! / Xièxié, chībāo le, chībāo le.

Qǐng zài lái yì píng kēlē.

Sequence
Wǒ xiàle kè jiù huíjià. / Wǒ xiàle kè jiù huíjià le.
Wǒ xiàn dàle diànhuà, ránhòu qù chīle fàn.

Duration
Zuótiān shuìle bā ge xiāoshí <de jiào>.

Deprivation
Wǒ sān tiān měi shuǐjiào le.