
Chapter 1. Customs Surrounding

Marriage, Birth and Death

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Objectives

General

The purpose of the Module on Customs Surrounding Marriage, Birth and Death is to furnish you with the linguistic skills and cultural Background information you need to take part in conversations about changing attitudes and practices with regard to courtship, marriage, birth, divorce, death and funerals in China, and to conduct yourself in a culturally appropriate manner when you come in contact with Chinese people at the time of one of these significant events in their lives.

Before starting the MBD module, you should have at least completed the Arranging a Meeting Module. You may, of course, use this module at any later point in the course.

Specific

When you have finished this module, you should be able to:

1. Ask about the age when most people get married.
2. Ask about how a wedding is celebrated and what differences there are in marriage practices between the city and the country.
3. Ask about the current local customs regarding gifts for weddings, births, and funerals.
4. Ask about the frequency of divorce.
5. Talk about the functions and statuses of the people who play a role in arranging a present-day traditional marriage.
6. Ask questions about the bride, the groom, and the ceremony in a modern-day wedding.
7. Ask about population control efforts, changes in population control policy, restrictions on young people having children, what factors are taken into consideration in family planning, and how old most couples are when they have children.
8. Congratulate a new mother. Ask about a new-born infant's health, appetite, and weight, and describe the baby in terms of traditional values.
9. Talk about the traditional beliefs and practices with regard to the mother's health before and after giving birth.
10. Present condolences to someone whose relative has died, comfort and express concern for that person.
11. Ask, after deciding if appropriate, about the circumstances of the death and the funeral.
12. Apologize for not being able to attend a funeral.
13. Ask what attire and behavior are appropriate when attending a funeral.

Unit 1

Part 1

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 1

tíchàng: “to advocate, to promote, to initiate, to recommend, to encourage”

Zhè shì shéi tíchàngde?

Who advocates this?

niánqīng: “to be young” (literally “years-light” or “years green”. There are two different characters with the same sound used for the second syllable.)

Tā zhènme niánqīng, zhènme piàoliang!

She's so young and so beautiful!

Wǒ niánqīngde shíhou, bù xǐhuan kàn shū.

When I was young, I didn't like to read.

Zhèxiē niánqīng rén dōu ài kàn diànyǐng.

These young people all love to go to the movies.

Nèige niánqīngde Zhōngguó rén, Yīngwén shuōde bú cuò.

That young Chinese person speaks pretty good English.

jiéhūn: “to get married”, also pronounced jiēhūn. Notice that in Chinese you talk of “getting married”, while in English we talk of “being married”. And it follows grammatically that jiéhūn is a process verb, not a state verb. Jiéhūn will always be seen with an aspect marker such as le or will be negated with méi.

Tāmen jiéhūnle méiyǒu?

Have they gotten married yet? (This is the equivalent of 'Are they married?')

Nǐ jiéhūn duó jiǔ le?

How long have you been married?

jiéhūn is a verb-object compound, literally meaning “to knot marriage”. **jié** and **hūn** can be separated by aspect markers, such as **de** or **guo**.

Nǐ shì shénme shíhou jiéde hūn? OR Nǐ shì shénme shíhou jiéhūnde?

When did you get married?

Wáng Xiānsheng jiéguo sāncì hūn.

Mr. Wáng has been married three times.

To say “get married to someone” use the pattern **gēn ... jiéhūn**.

Tā gēn shéi jiéhūn le?

To whom did he get married?

Notes on №2

wǎnliàn wǎnhūn: “late involvement and late marriage”. **Wǎnliàn** is an abbreviation for **wǎn liàn'ài**, “mature love”, (**liàn'ài** means “romantic love, courtship”), and **wǎnhūn** is an abbreviation for **wǎn jiéhūn**, “late marriage”. This policy has been promoted since the 1960s, but only actively enforced since the 1970s. It is difficult to generalize about the required minimum marriage ages, as they differ from city to city and might be non-existent in certain rural and national minority areas, where the government is trying to increase the population. The minimum age has been progressively raised over the years, until 1978 when the rules were eased a bit. In general, if the combined ages of the couple exceeds fifty years (or the female's age exceeds the male's), then the marriage is allowable.

Notes on №3

qīngnián: “youth, young person”. Do not confuse this noun with the adjectival verb **niánqīng**, “to be young”. (See Notes on No. 1)

In this sentence, the noun **qīngnián** is used to modify the noun **lǎoshī**, “teacher”.

A:	Wǒ jìde sānshinián yǐqián nǐ tèbié ài chī táng.
	I remember that thirty years ago you especially loved to eat candy.
B:	Shì a, nèi shíhou wǒmen dōu háishi qīngnián. Xiànzài lǎo le, yá bù xíng le.
	Yes. Back then we were all young people. Now I'm old, and my teeth aren't good any more.

nǚli: “to be hardworking, to diligent”, or as an adverb, “diligently, be hard”.

Tā suīrán hěn nǚli, kěshi tāde Yīngwen háishi bù xíng.

Although he's very hardworking, his English is still not good enough.

Wǒ děi nǔlì xué Zhōngwén.

I have to study Chinese very hard.

Notes on №4

nóngcūn: “rural areas, countryside, village”.

Nóngcūnde kōngqì bǐ chénglǐ hǎoduō le.

The air in the country is much better than in the city.

Tāmen jiā zài nóngcūn zhù.

Their family lives in the country.

shíxíng: “to practice, to carry out (a method, policy, plan, reform)”.

Nǐ zhèige jìhuà hěn hǎo, kěshì wǒ xiǎng bù néng shíxíng.

This plan of yours is very good, but I don't think it can be carried out.

Zhèige bànfǎ yǐjīng shíxíng le sānge xīngqīle, kěshì jiéguǒ bù hǎo.

This method has been in practice for three weeks, but the results aren't good.

Notes on №5

chéng: “to constitute, to make, to become”.

Tāde xuéxí yìzhí hěn hǎo, biyè yǐhòu ānpai gōngzuò bù chéng wèntí.

His studies have been good all along, so after he graduates, setting up a job for him won't constitute a problem.

Wǒde nǚr xiànzài chéng le jiějie, tā zhēn xǐhuan tāde xiǎo mèimei.

My daughter has become an older sister. She really likes her little sister.

fēngqì: “established practice, custom; general mood”.

Xiànzài yǒu bù shǎo qīngnián bú yào zài shāngdiànli mài dōngxì, zhèizhōng fēngqì zhēn bù hǎo.

There are a lot of young people now who don't want to sell things in shops. This practice is really bad.

Xiànzài zài Zhōngguó, yòu yǒule niàn shūde fēngqì.

Now in China there is again a general atmosphere of study.

Notes on №6

hé: “with”. You have seen hé used between two nouns or pronouns as a conjunction meaning “and”. Here you see it used as a prepositional verb meaning “with”. The word gēn, which you have seen, also has both meanings, “and” and “with”.

Formerly, gēn was the most frequently used word for “with” or “and” in the Mandarin spoken in North China, and he was more often written. But he has come into wide conversational use in pǔtōnghuà. In addition to this variation, school children in Taiwan are sometimes taught to say hàn instead of he, which is the same character with another pronunciation.

Generally speaking, if you use hé or gēn you should not have any problem being understood by any speaker of Standard Chinese.

liàn'ài: “to fall in love, to be in love; romantic love, courtship”. This is the socially acceptable way to describe a romantic relationship between two people. Notice that liàn'ài can be used both as noun and as a verb. (Liàn'ài is written with an apostrophe to show where the syllable division is: liàn ài, not lià nài.)

Tāmen liàn'àile hǎojiú nián le.

They've been in love for quite a few years now.

Tāmen xiànzài kāishǐ liàn'ài le.

They've just started to fall in love.

Wǒmende liàn'ài zhǐ yǒu sāntiān, jiù bù xíng le.

Our love is only three days old and already it's over.

The noun liàn'ài is often used in the phrase tán liàn'ài, “to be romantically involved” or more literally “to talk of love”.

Tāmen liǎngge tán liàn'ài yǐjīng tánle hěn jiǔ le.

The two of them have been in love for quite a while now.

Wǒ méiyǒu hé tā tán liàn'ài.

I'm not in love with her.

In China young people tend to go out in groups. When two people are seen going out alone, then it is assumed that they have serious intentions for the future.

Notes on №7

kě: “really, certainly”. This is an adverb which intensifies state verbs. Kě can be used before a negative.

Tāmen liǎngge kě hǎo le!

The two of them are very good friends.

Kě bú shì ma!

Isn't that so! (Really! or No kidding!)

Nà kě bù xíng!

That really won't do!

Nà kě bú shì yíjiàn hǎo shì.

That's really not a good thing.

Nǐ kě yào xiǎoxīn!

You've got to be careful!

Although some Chinese are fond of using the word **kě**, to other Chinese it may sound too full of local color with which they do not identify.

Dialogue in Peking

An American exchange student talks with her language teacher. They are both in their late twenties.

Notes on the Dialogue

...zài èrshiwǔliùsùì yǐhòu cái jiéhūn: This is quite a change from Imperial times, when females might be married off at age thirteen and males at age six so as to insure the family fortunes or fend off economic difficulties later. Nonetheless, regulations are less strict in the countryside today, where one can marry perhaps at age twenty.

Part 2

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 2

yíshì: “ceremony, function” This can be used to refer to a range of different ceremonies, from the signing of a treaty or agreement to the taking of marital vows.

In old China, marriages were celebrated extravagantly. It was not uncommon to find families going into debt because of the joyous occasion, which marked a new generation added to the family line. This elaborate ritual served to strengthen familial bonds and the newlyweds' feeling of obligation owed to the family.

In PRC cities of today, lack of extra money and coupons to purchase food for guests, celebration space, and free time for preparation limit the celebration often to procedural formality alone—registration

with the local police bureau. Wedding dinners may still be enjoyed in the countryside, where there are fewer restrictions on time and food.

Notes on №9

qīnqi: “relatives” **Qīnqi** is slightly different from the English word “relatives” in that it does not include one's immediate family, that is parents or children, but is used to refer to all other relatives. (One's immediate family are called **jiāli rén**.)

Nǐmen jiā qīnqi duō ma?

Do you have a lot of relatives in your family?

Wǒmen jiā qīnqi kě duō le!

We have lots of relatives in our family.

sònggei: “give (a gift) to ...” The verb **song** has several meanings. One is “to send”, as in **Wǒ bǎ nǐde xíngli sòngshàngqu le**, “I sent your luggage upstairs.” Another is to give someone something as a present.

Here you see **sòng** with the prepositional verb **gěi** “for, to” after it. You have also seen **jiāogei**, “to hand over to ..., to submit to...”. When **gěi** is used after the main verb as a prepositional verb, it must be followed by the indirect object, that is, the person or thing to whom something is given. **Gěi** can also be used this way with **jì** “to send”, and **mài** “to sell”.

Wǒ bǎ zhèjiàn yīfu jùgei wǒ mèimei le.

I sent this piece of clothing to my younger sister.

Tā bǎ fángzi màigei wǒ le.

He sold his house to me.

In these examples the direct object, clothing or house, is up front in the sentence, making it necessary to use **gěi** to put the indirect object after the main verb. This usually happens in sentences where the object is specific and the **bǎ** construction is preferred. When **song** is followed by an indirect object, however, the **gěi** is usually optional.

Wǒ yào sòng ta yíge xiǎo lǐwù.

I am going to give him a small present.

Wǒ yào sònggei ta yíge xiǎo lǐwù.

I am going to give him a small present.

...sònggei ni shénme lǐwù?: Wedding gifts for friends and relatives in the PRC are generally “useful” items. Common among these are **nuǎnpíng**, hot water jugs; **huāpíng**, vases; **táidēng**, table lamps; **bǐ**, pens; **liǎnpǎn**, wash basins; or **cānjù**, kitchen items.

zuò: “to act as, to serve as”. **Tāmen sònggei wo yìxiē xiǎo lǐwù zuǒ jìniàn**. is literally “They gave me a few small presents to serve as mementos.”

Zhèige xuéxiǎo bìyède xuésheng, hěn duō dōu zuò lǎoshī le.

A lot of students who graduated from this school have become teachers.

Yòng zhèiběn xīn shū zuò lǐwù, hǎo bu hǎo?

Would it be okay to use this new book as a present?

Zuò, “to act as, to serve as” is often seen used with yòng, “to use” as in the example above, yòng ... zuò ..., “to use (something) as (something) else”.

jìniàn: “memento, remembrance; to commemorate”.

Wǒ gěi ta yìzhāng zhàopiàn zuò jìniàn.

I'll give him a photo as a memento.

Notes on №10

xǔduō: “many; a great deal (of), lots (of)”. Xǔduō is used as a number (it can be followed by a counter) to modify other nouns.

A:	Hái yǒu duōshao qián?
	How much money is there left?
B:	Hái yǒu xǔduō.
	There's still a lot left, or There's a lot more.

Tā mǎile xǔduō (zhāng) huà.

He bought a lot of paintings.

Xǔduō has several things in common with hěn duō, in addition to similarity of meaning. Used as modifiers in front of nouns, both xǔduō and hěn duō can (1) be used alone, (2) be used with de, and (3) be followed by a counter, but not usually -ge.

Tā rènshi xǔduō rén.

Tā rènshi hěn duō rén.

He knows a lot of people.

Tā jiànle xǔduō(de) rén.

Tā jiànle hen duō(de) rén.

He saw (met with) a lot of people.

Bìchǔli yǒu hěnde duō (jiàn) dàyī.

There are a lot of overcoats in the closet.

Tā xiěle xǔduō (běn) shū.

He wrote a lot of books.

Hěnde duō is probably more common than xǔduō. Some speakers feel that they do not use xǔduō in conversation; many speakers, however, do not feel any restriction about using it in conversation.

...zhùdao nǚjiār qu: “to go live with the wife’s family” You’ve seen the prepositional verb dào used after main verbs, as in nádao lóushàng qu, “take it upstairs”. Following verbs expressing some kind of motion, the use of dào is fairly straightforward. But in the above example from the Reference List, dào is used with a verb which is not usually thought of as expressing motion, zhù, “to live, to inhabit”. Here is another example of zhù used in a phrase expressing motion:

Tā shì zuótiān zhùjinlaide.

He moved in yesterday.

The verbs zhàn “to stand” and zuò “to sit” can also be used in phrases expressing motion.

Qǐng ni zhàndào nèibianr qu, hǎo bu hǎo?

Would you please go stand over there.

Qǐng ni zuòdao qiánbianr qu, hǎo bu hǎo?

Would you please go sit up front.

Due to the lack of housing, which might involve a wait of from one to three years for newlyweds, it is not infrequent now to find the groom join the household of his new bride. This is in contrast to former tradition, which stated that the woman became part of the man’s family, and of course, moved into his family’s house.

In the past, for the groom to join the household of his new bride carried special significance. It was called rù zhūi and might take place when a family had only female children and the father wanted his daughter’s husband to take his last name in order to carry on the family line.

qūbié: “difference” When expressing the difference between two things, use ... gēn ... yǒu qūbié.

Zhèiběn zidiǎn gēn nàiběn yǒu hěnde dàde qūbié.

There is a big difference between this dictionary and that one.

Zhèige xuéxiào gēn nàige xuéxiào yǒu shénme qūbié?

What is the difference between this school and that one?

Zhèiliǎngge bànfāde qūbié zài nǎr?

What is the difference between these two methods?

Kě bú shì ma! : “Yes, indeed!, I'll say!”, or more literally, “Isn't it so! **Kě bú shì ma!** is often used in northern China to indicate hearty agreement, or to indicate that something makes perfect sense to the speaker, something like English “Well, of course!” or “Really!”.

bù shǎo: Literally “not a little”, in other words, “quite a lot”.

Tā yǒu bù shǎo huà yào gēn ni shuō.

He has a lot he wants to say to you.

Zài Měiguó bù shǎo rén yǒu qìchē.

In America a lot of people have cars.

érqiě: “furthermore, moreover”

Jīntiān tiānqì bù hǎo, érqiě hǎoxiàng yào xià xuě.

The weather is bad today, and furthermore it looks as if it's going to snow.

Ěrqiě is often used in the pattern **bú dàn...érqiě** “not only ... but also...” or “not only ... moreover...”:

Zhèzhǒng huā hǔ dàn hǎo kàn, érqiě fēicháng xiāng.

This kind of flower is not only pretty, but it's also very fragrant.

Wǒ bú dàn ài chī táng, érqiě shénme tián dōngxi dōu ài chī.

I not only like to eat candy, (moreover) I like to eat anything sweet.

Tā bú dàn xuéguo Zhōngwén, érqiě xuéde bú cuò.

Not only has he studied Chinese, but moreover he has learned it quite well.

Wǒ bù dàn méiyǒu hé tā tán liàn'ài, érqiě wǒ yě bú dà xǐhuan tā.

Not only am I not in love with her, moreover I don't like her very much.

Dialogue in Peking

The American exchange student and her language teacher continue their conversation:

Part 3

Reference List

Reference Notes

Reference List

Notes on Part 3

Notes on №12

shuāngfāng: “both sides, both parties”

Zhèijiàn shìqíng shì Zhōngguó hé Měiguó shuāngfāng dōu zhīdaode.

This matter is known to both America and China.

bǐcǐ: “the one and the other; each other, mutually”

Suīrán wǒmen méiyǒu shuō huà, kěshì bǐcǐ dōu zhīdao, tāde bìng méiyǒu bànfa le.

Although we didn't say anything, we both knew.
There was nothing that could be done for his illness.

A:	Zhōumō hǎo!
	Have a nice weekend.
B:	Bǐcǐ, bǐcǐ!
	You too!

liǎojiě: “to understand; to acquaint oneself with, to try to understand”

Zhèijiàn shì, wǒ bù dǒng, hái děi qù liǎojiě yíxià.

I don't understand this, I have to go back and try to understand it again.

Wǒ liǎojiě tā.

I understand her.

Tā juéde tā méiyǒu yíge péngyou zhēnde liǎojiě tā.

He feels that he doesn't have a single friend who really knows him.

Notice that when you want to say “to know someone” meaning “to understand someone”, the Chinese word to use is **liǎojiě**, not **rènshi** (which simply means to have made someone's acquaintance)

Notes on №13

...**lǐhūnde bú tài duō**: “There aren't many people getting divorced ...;” **Lǐhūnde**, “those (people) who get divorced”, is a noun phrase in which **lǐhūn** is **nominalized** by **-de**.

Notes on №14

fūfù: “husband and wife, married couple”.

Tāmen fūfù liǎngge dōu fēicháng hǎo.

Those two (that couple) are both very nice.

bú zài yíge dìqū gōngzuò: “do not work in the same region”. **Yíge**, “one”, is frequently used to mean “one and the same”. Here are some more examples:

Wǒmen dōu zài yíge xuéxiào niàn shū.

All of us go to the same school.

Tāmen liǎngge dōu shì yíge lǎoshī jiāochulaide.

They are both the product of the same teacher.

Notes on №15

tàncǐnjià: “leave for visiting family”. **Tàn qīn** means to visit one's closest relatives, usually parents, a spouse, or children.

Míngtiān tā jiù qù Shànghǎi tàn qīn le.

Tomorrow he's going to Shanghai to visit his family.

Notes on №16

zǒngshi: “always, all the time”. This adverb may also occur as **zǒng**.

Tā zǒngshi ài qù Huáměi kāfēitīng.

He always loves to go to the **Huáměi** Coffeehouse.

nénggòu: “can, to be able to”. This is a synonym of **něng**.

Notes on №17

jīngguo: “to pass by or through, to go through”. **Jīngguo** can mean 1) to pass by or through something physically, or 2) to go through an experience.

Jīngguo zhèicì xuéxí yǐhòu wǒ kě qīngchū duō le.

As a result of this study, I see things a lot more clearly.

Wǒ měitiān xià bān huí jiāde shíhou, dōu jīngguo Bǎihuò Dàlóu.

Every day on my way home from work I pass by the Bǎihuò Dàlóu.

Nǐ jīngguo zhèige wūzide shíhou, nǐ méiyǒu kànjian wǒmen zài lǐtōu gōngzuò ma?

When you passed by this room, didn't you see us working inside?

xiāngdāng: “quite, pretty (good, degree of. etc.); considerable, a considerable degree of”

Tāde shēntǐ xiāngdāng hǎo.

His health is quite good.

kǎolù: “to consider; consideration”

Wǒ yǐjīng kǎolùguo le, tā háishi yīnggāi shàng dàxué.

I have already given it consideration he should still go to college.

dànshi: “but”, a synonym of kěshi.

Wǒ yǐjīng qùguo le, dànshi wǒ méiyǒu kàndào tā.

I already went there, but I didn't see her.

Notes on №18

nánnǚ: “male and female”.

Nánnǚde shìqing zuì nán shuō.

Matters between men and women are the hardest to judge.

yīngdāng: “should, ought to”. Yīngdāng is a less-frequently heard word for yīnggāi. These two words share in common the following meanings:

1. “should” in the sense of obligation or duty.

Zánmen shì tóngzhì, yīngdāng (or yīnggāi) bǐcǐ bāngmáng.

We two are comrades, we should help each other.

2. “ought to” in the sense of “it would be suitable to”.

Wàitou lěng, nǐ yīnggāi (or yīngdāng) duō chuān yidiǎnr.

It's cold out, you should put on some more clothing.

3. “should” in the sense of “it would be desirable to”.

Nǐ yīnggāi (or yīngdāng) shìyishi, zhēn hǎo wánr.

You should try this, it's fun.

4. “should” in the sense of “it is expected”.

Shídiǎn zhōng le, tā yīnggāi (or yīngdāng) kuài dào le.

It's ten o'clock, he should be here soon.

Tā xué Zhōngwén xuéle sānnián le, yīnggāi xuéde bú cuò le.

He's been studying Chinese for three years, he should be pretty good by now.

bǐjiào: “relatively, comparatively, by comparison”. Also pronounced **bǐjiǎo**.

Jīntiān bǐjiào rè.

It's hotter today.

Zhèjiàn yīfu gǎile yǐhòu, bǐjiào hǎo yidiǎnr.

After this article of clothing is altered, it will be better.

Zhèi liǎngtiān tā bǐjiào shūfu yidiǎnr, bù zěnme fā shāo le.

The past couple of days he's been feeling better, he doesn't have such a high fever any more.

You may sometimes hear Chinese speakers use **bǐjiào** before other adverbial expressions like **bú tài** “not too”, **bù zěnme** “not so”, **bú nàme** “not so” or hen “very”. Careful speakers, however, feel that **bǐjiào** should not be used in such cases.

Notes on №19

huì: “will; might; be likely to”. The auxiliary verb **huì** is used to express likelihood here.

Míngtiān tā huì bu huì lái?

Will he come tomorrow?

Wǒ qù bǎ mén guānhǎo, nǐ huì bu huì juéde tài rè?

If I go close the door, will you feel too hot?

jiějué: “to solve, to settle (a problem), to overcome (a difficulty)”.

Nǐ bú yao jí, qiǎnde wèntí yǐjīng jiějué le.

Don't get anxious, the problem of money has already been solved.

Dialogue in Washington, D. C.

A graduate student in Chinese studies talks with an exchange student from Peking.

Notes on the Dialogue

...nánjia hái yào sòng xǔduō lǐwù ma?: In traditional China, the groom's family gave gifts to the bride's family to compensate for the loss of their daughter. (For the loss of the daughter might also entail a substantial loss of property and servants.) In Taiwan, it is still the man's family who in most cases pays for the wedding arrangements. In the PRC today, these customs no longer exist.

Xiànzài Zhōngguó lǐhūnde duō bu duō?: Although allowed by law with the mutual consent of both parties, it is not easy to obtain a divorce in the PRC. With the exceptions of one party being either politically questionable or terminally ill, the majority of couples are asked to resolve their differences via study and group criticism.

...yǒu yìxiē fūfù bú zài yíge dìfāng gōngzuò: Many couples still have to be split up in order for each to have work. (Jobs are arranged for and assigned by the local government.) This is, of course, a great hardship since it is improbable that either will be able to arrange a transfer of job to the other's workplace. The splits are arranged in order to increase rural population and provide labor for rural jobs. The partner left in the city, usually the woman, can go to the countryside to join her spouse, but rural life is so difficult that this is not likely.

...suǐrán měinián yǒu bàngè yuède tànqīnjià: There are two types of leave for visiting one's family in the PRC. One is for unmarried children to return home to see their parents, the other is for couples who are assigned to different places for work. These trips are paid for by one's work unit (but communes have no family leave provisions). If the person on leave is working relatively near his home, he is allowed a fifteen day visit once per year and a worker who is located relatively far from home can take a thirty day visit once every two years.

Vocabulary

Unit 2

Part 1

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 1

Notes on №1

xiáojie: “daughter”. You have seen **xiáojie** meaning “Miss” or “young lady”. Here it is used to mean “daughter”. Note, however, that it is used only in referring to someone else's daughter, not in referring to one's own daughter(s).

Tā yǒu jǐwèi xiáojie?

How many daughters does he have?

Nǐmen xiáojie zhēn piàoliang.

Your daughter is really pretty.

Xiáojie, meaning either “Miss” or “daughter”, is not in current usage in the PRC.

dā xǐde rìzi: “wedding day”, literally “big joyful day”. **Xī** “to be glad, joyful”, is used in several expressions having to do with weddings. The character for **xī** is often used as a decoration. For weddings, two **xī** characters together are used as a decoration.

Notes on №2

rén hěn lǎoshi: “he's very honest”. **Rén**, “person”, can be used to refer to a person's character. It can be used with a noun or pronoun before it, for example **Tā rén hěn lǎoshi**, literally “As for him, his person is very honest”. The wording **Tā rén ...** is often used to talk about the way someone truly is:

Tā rén hěn ài bāngzhu bié rén.

He (is the sort of person who) likes to help others.

Liú Xiānsheng rén hěn tèbié, shénme shìqing dōu yào wèn yige wèishenme.

Mr. Liú is a different sort of person, he has to ask “why” about everything.

Tā rén hén kèqi.

He's a very polite sort of person.

Sometimes **rén** refers to a person's mental state of being:

Wǒ hēde tài duō, rén hái yǒu diǎnr bu qīngchu.

I had too much to drink and I'm still a little foggy.

Rén also sometimes refers to a person's physical self. This meaning is mostly used in situations where a contrast is implied, something like “And as for the person himself, ...”. For example:

Wǒ yìzhí zhǐshì hé tā tōng diànhuà, jīntiān zǎoshang, cái dìyīcì jiàn miàn, tā rén fēicháng piàoliàng.

All along I had only talked to her over the phone, but this morning I met her for the first time. She's very beautiful.

Tāmen jiéhūn bu dào yíge yuè, xiānsheng jiù dào Jiāzhōu niàn shū qu le, rén zài Měiguó, xīn zài Tǎiwān, shū zěnme niàndehǎo ne?

They hadn't even been married for one month when her husband went to California to go to school. He was in America, but his heart was in Taiwan, how could he possibly study well?

Notes on №3

jiāowǎng: “to associate with, to have dealings with”, often said of boyfriend-girlfriend relationships.

Wǒ hé tā méiyǒu shénme tèbiéde jiāowǎng.

There's no special relationship between him and me.
(Said by a daughter in explanation to her mother.)

In the PRC **jiāowǎng** is not used this way; use **rènshi**, “to know (a person)” or **jiāo péngyou**, “to make friends” instead. In the PRC, you will hear **jiāowǎng** used in phrases such as **liàngguó rénmínde jiāowǎng**, “the contact (association) between the peoples of these two countries”.

Notes on №4

nánfāng: “the bridegroom's side”, a phrase which often refers to the bridegroom himself, and sometimes refers to the bridegroom's family, relatives, and friends collectively. **Nánfāng**, “the bridegroom's side”, happens to be a homonym of **nánfāng**, “the South”.

Zhōngguó rén jiéhūnde shíhou, nánfāng dà qǐng kè.

When Chinese get married, the groom's family hosts a big feast.

Jiéhūn yǐqiǎn nánfāng nǚfāng bǐcǐ sòng lǐ.

Before a marriage, the groom's side and the bride's side give each other gifts.

[**Nǚfāng** means “the bride's side,” referring either to “the bride” herself, or to “the bride's family, relatives, and friends collectively”.]

shóu: “to be familiar with ...” Also pronounced **shú**. **Shóu** is used with **hé** for people and with **duì** for places.

Wǒ hé tā hěn shóu.

I know him very well.

Tā duì Tǎiběi hěn shóu.

She knows Taipei very well.

Shóu also means “to be cooked sufficiently” and “to be ripe”.

zǎo: You've learned this as the verb “to be early”, now you see it used to mean “long ago”.

Wǒ zǎo zhīdào nǐ bù huilai.

I knew long ago that you wouldn't come back.

Wǒ zǎo tīngshuō le.

I heard about it long ago.

Zǎo is usually followed by **jiù** to stress the idea of “as early as that”.

Wǒ zǎo jiù gàosu tā nèijiàn shì le.

I told him that long ago. (Said to correct an impression that he didn't actually know it so early.)

Wǒ zǎo jiù xiǎng lái kàn nǐ, yizhí méi shíjiān.

I've been meaning to come see you for a long time, but I never had the time.

tíqǐn: “to bring up a proposal of marriage” Traditionally, the man's parents would visit the parents of the woman they wished their son to marry in order to bring up the subject of marriage. The situation in Taiwan is changing rapidly today, but some marriages are still proposed in this way. More frequently, however, the children simply inform their parents of their own arrangement.

dāying: “to agree (to something), to consent, to promise”

Tā dāying gěi wǒ nèijiàn dōngxi, zěnmē tā xiànzài yòu bù gěi le?

He agreed to give me that thing. How is that now he won't give it to me?

Nǐ dāying ta le, dāngrán yīnggāi péi ta qù.

You promised him, of course you should go with him.

Nǐ dāying zuòde shì, yīdìng yào zuòdào.

You must do what you promise to do.

Nǐ dāyinglede shì, wèishénme bú zuò?

Why don't you do this thing that you have promised?

Nǐ dāyingguode shì, jiù yīnggāi zuòdào.

You ought to do things that you promise.

Wǒ méi dāying gěi nǐ yíge hùzhào.

I didn't promise to give you a passport.

Dāyǐng can also mean “to answer”.

Tā jiào nǐ, nǐ zěnméi méi dāyǐng?

He called you, how come you didn't answer?

Notes on №5

tánlai tánqù: “to talk over”.

Tánlai tánqù, yě bù néng jiějué zhèige wèntí.

We discussed it for a long time, but still couldn't solve the problem.

Tánlai tánqù, tánde hěn yǒu yìsi.

It got very interesting, conversing back and forth.

juédìng: “to decide”.

Wǒ juédìng yào qù.

I've decided that I'm going.

Wǒ yǐjīng juédìng jiù zhènméi bàn.

I've already decided that it'll be this way.

Wǒ hái méi juédìng gāi zěnméi bàn.

I haven't yet decided what should be done.

Notice that when you want to say “I can't decide whether (to do something)” or “I haven't decided whether (to do something)”, the object of **juédìng** is a choice-type question.

Wǒ hái méi juédìng qù bu qù.

I haven't yet decided whether to go or not.

Wǒ bù néng juédìng wǒ qù bu qù.

I can't decide whether to go or not.

Wǒ hěn nán juédìng ràng bu ràng ta qù.

I'm having a hard time deciding whether to let him to or not.

Wǒ shì bu shì gāi huíqu hěn nán juédìng.

It's hard to decide whether or not I should go back.

hòulái: “afterwards, later”. You have already learned another word which can be translated as “afterwards” or “later”: **yǐhòu**. **Yǐhòu** and **hòulái** are both nouns which express time. Here is a brief comparison of them.

1. **Yǐhòu** can either follow another element, in which case it is translated as “after ...”) or it can be used by itself.

Tā lái le yǐhòu, wǒmen jiù zǒu le.

After he came, we left.

Yǐhòu, tā méiyǒu zài lái guo.

Afterwards, he never came back again.

Hòulái can only be used by itself.

Hòulái, tā shuì jiào le.

Afterwards, he went to sleep.

2. Both **yǐhòu** and **hòulái** may be used to refer to the past. (For example, in the reference list sentence, **yǐhòu** may be substituted for **hòulái**. But if you want to say “afterwards” or “later” referring to the future, you can only use **yǐhòu**. When it refers to the future time, **yǐhòu** can be translated in various ways, depending on the context:

Yǐhòude shíqīng, děng yǐhòu zài shuō.

Let's wait until the future to see about future matters.

Yǐhòu nǐ yǒu kòng, qǐng cháng lái wán.

In the future when you have the time, please come over more often.

Wǒ yǐhòu zài gào su nǐ.

I'll tell you later on.

Tā de hái zǐ shuō le, yǐhòu tā yào gēn yí ge Rìběn rén jiéhūn.

His child said that someday, he wants to marry a Japanese.

Usage Note: **Yǐhòu** has the meaning of “after that”. It can imply that some past event functions as a dividing point in time, as a sort of time boundary, and **yǐhòu** refers to the period from the end of that time boundary up to another point of reference (usually the time of speaking). In this usage it is often translated as “since”.

Tā zhǐ xiě le yí běn shū, yǐhòu zài méi xiě guo.

He only wrote one book, and hasn't written any since.

Ránhòu stresses the succession of one event upon the completion of a prior event.

Wǒ shàngwū zhǐ yǒu liǎngjié kè, ránhòu jiù méi shì le, wǒmen kéyì chūqù wánr.

I have only two classes in the morning, and after that I don't have anything else to do, so we can go out play.

háishi: “in the end, after all” You have seen **háishi** meaning “still” that is, that something remains the same way as it was. Here **háishi** is used to mean that the speaker feels that, all things considered, something is the case after all.

Háishi tā duì.

He is right, after all.

Notes on №6

jǔxíng: “to hold (a meeting, banquet, celebration, ceremony, etc.)” For this example you need to know that **diǎnlǐ** means “ceremony”.

Míngtiān jǔxíng biyè diǎnlǐ.

Tomorrow the graduation ceremony will be held.

Notes on №8

hái: “even, (to go) so far as to” You have seen **hái** meaning “still” -as in **Nǐ hái zài zhèr!**, “You're still here!”. You've also seen **hái** meaning “also, additionally”, as in **Wǒ hái yào mǎi yìpíng qìshuǐ.**, “I also want to buy a bottle of soda.” Here you see **hái** meaning additionally in the sense of additional effort. The sentence **Nǐmen hái sòng huā lǎi,** **hái** expresses the speaker's feeling that sending flowers went beyond what was expected or necessary.

zhēn shì tài xièxie le: “I really thank you so much.” You have seen **tài** used to mean “very, extremely”, as in **Tài hǎo le!**, “Wonderful!”. Notice that here it is used with **xièxie**.

Dialogue in Taipei

A woman goes to visit her old friend and to present her with a gift for her daughter and future son-in-law.

Notes on the Dialogue

Guōbǐn Dàfāndiàn bù zhǐ shì difāng piàoliang, nàlǐde cài yě tèbié hǎo. Traditional wedding foods included **huāshēng**, peanuts; **liánzǐ**, lotus seeds; and **zǎozǐ**, dates, all of which symbolize fertility in that **shēng(zǐ)** means “give birth to” (a son); **liánzǐ** sounds like part of the phrase **liǎnshēng guǐzǐ**, “have sons consecutively”; and **zǎozǐ** sounds like part of **zǎoshēng guǐzǐ**, “have an early son.” The wedding

marked the beginning of that generation's carrying on of the family line. Today few adhere to these symbols and food is served according to family preference.

Bú shì mǎide, shì Xiùyún zìjǐ zuòde: Wedding gowns in Taiwan these days are frequently hand-made or tailor-made, as tailoring is affordable and the quality of work surpasses that of ready-made items. Brides may wear two gowns: a white one for the ceremony (which may be in a church nowadays) and a traditional Chinese red one at the celebration.

Part 2

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on Part 2

Notes on №9

xìn Jīdūjiào: “to believe in (Protestant) Christianity”. This is one way of saying “to be a (Protestant) Christian”.

Notes on №10

xìn Fó: “to believe in Buddha”. This is one way of saying “to be a Buddhist”.

Notes on №11

zài fǎyuàn: “in court” **Zài** is the verb “to be in, at, or on”, in other words “to be located (someplace)”. **Zài** must be followed by a place word or a place phrase. Just what is considered to be a place word or phrase may be difficult for the non-native speaker to figure out. Words which are not considered to be place words or phrases must have a locational ending such as -li or -shang added to them. (**Nǐ zài chēshang mǎi piào.**, “You buy the ticket on the bus.”)

The names of institutions in Chinese are considered to be place words. The phrase “in court” does not need a locational ending, **zài fǎyuàn**. Here are some other words which can function as place words by themselves. Many of these end with syllables such as -**shì** (**shì**) “house, apartment”, -**jú** “office, shop”, -**diàn** “inn, shop”, -**chǎng** “field, open ground”, -**tīng** “hall, room”, -**suǒ** “place, room”, -**jiān** “house, rooms”, **guǎn** “public office, hall”.

Jīntiān xiàwǔ zài bàngōngshì jiàn!

See you at the office this afternoon!

Zài běnshì yǒu wǔge yóuzhèngjú!

There are five post offices in this city!

Nǐ zài cáifēngdiàn zuòde ba?

You must have had that made at a tailor's.

Nǐ zài cāntīng kàndào ta le ma?

Did you see him in the dining room?

Other words which behave in a similar way are:

càishichǎng		market	fùjìn		area
cèsuǒ		toilet	fúwùtái		service desk
dǎfāndiàn		hotel	Gōngānjú		Bureau of Public Security
shāngdiàn		store	gōngsī		company
dàlou		building	gōngyù		apartment
dàshiguǎn		embassy	gōngyuǎn		park
dìqū		region	huìkèshì		reception room
fàndiàn		restaurant	huǒchēzhàn		railroad station
fàngjiān		room	jǐngchájú		police station
fānguǎnzi		restaurant	kāfēitīng		coffeehouse
fàntīng		dining room	lǎojiā		hometown
fēijīchǎng		airport			

and many more... including proper names of Restaurants, buildings, associations, organizations, etc.

gōngzhèng: “notarization, government witness”. A gōngzhèng rén is a notary public.

Notes on №12

rù xí: “to take one's seat at a banquet”, literally “to enter the mat(ted area)”.

Wǒmen kuài diǎnr zhǔnbèi, tāmen liùdiǎn zhōng jiù yào rù xí le.

Let's get ready a little faster, the banquet starts at 6:00.

Notes on №13

fùzá: “to be complicated, to be complex”. Questions, problems, or situations can be fùzá if there are many pieces or factors figuring into the problem. It is also possible to use fùzá to imply that the situation is messy, problem-ridden.

Tāmen jiāde qíngkuàng tài fùzá, wǒ gǎobuqīngchu.

Their family situation is too complicated, I can't make heads or tails of it. (This sentence has an ambiguity in both languages.)

Zhèige wèntí tài fùzá, hěn nán shuōqīngchu.

This question is so complicated, it's very hard to explain it clearly.

Zhèige wèn tí tài fùzá, zuì hǎo bú zhèiyangr xiě.

This sentence is too complicated, it would be best not to write it this way.

Fùzá can also be used in a complimentary way. (For this example you need to know that *sixiǎng* means “thinking, thought”.)

Tāde sixiǎng hěn fùzá.

His thinking is very complex.

This sentence might be said of an Einstein. The opposite of *fùzá* in this case would, be *jiǎndān* “to be simple”, as in “simple-minded”.

Fùzá is also pronounced *fūzā*.

Notes on №14

yìjiàn: “idea, view, opinion, suggestion”.

Gāngcái tā tánle duì zhèiběn shūde yìjian, wǒ juéde duì wǒmen hěn yǒu bāngzhu.

He just told us his opinions on this book, and I feel that they're really helpful to us.

Wǒ hěn xiǎng zhīdào, zài zhèige wèntíshang, Zhōngguó zhèngfǔde yìjian shì shénme?

I'd very much like to know what the Chinese government's view is on this question.

Wǒ xiǎng xiān qù Shànghǎi, zài dào Wǔhàn, nǐde yìjian zěnmeyang?

I'd like to go to Shànghǎi first and then to Wǔhàn, what's your opinion?

Wǒde yìjian shì xiān qù Wǔhàn, zài dào Shànghǎi qu. Yīnwei zài guò yíge yuè, Wǔhàn fēicháng rèle.

My opinion is to first go to Wǔhàn, then to Shànghǎi, because after a month, Wǔhàn will be extremely hot.

Notes on №15

zhènghūn: “to witness a marriage”. Witnesses formerly were persons of good reputation and venerable old age. Today, familiarity is most important. The witness makes a brief speech during the ceremony and stamps the marriage certificate with his name seal. He receives no remuneration for this service, but is honored to have been asked.

Notes on №16

dù miyuè: “to spend one's honeymoon”. *Dù* is the verb “to spend, to pass” (something which is an amount of time, like a holiday). *Miyuè* is literally “honey-moon”.

huímén: “the bride's first visit to her own family on the third day after the wedding”, literally “return to the door”. When the newlyweds return home for this first visit, the family of the bride is given a chance to entertain the couple. More friends and relatives are invited and introduced to them. (It is the groom's family which arranges the marriage ceremony.)

Notes on №17

xǐjiǔ: “wedding banquet”. Notice that in the Reference List sentence the phrase **lái chī xǐjiǔ** is translated as “to come to the wedding banquet”. A more literal translation might be “come to eat a wedding feast!”. The verb **chī** could also be rendered into English by “attend” or “take part”, as in “Be sure to come take part in the wedding banquet the day after tomorrow”.

Notes on №18

hūnlǐshàng: “at the wedding”. Notice that in English you say “at the wedding” while in Chinese you say **hūnlǐshàng**, literally “on the wedding”. **-Shàng** would also be the locative ending to use for “at the meeting” (**huishàng**).

jièshaorén: “introducer”. This is one person in the cast of people who play a part in getting two people together in marriage. Originally, the “introducer” functioned in much the same way as match-makers - finding a good mate for a friend or relative. Today, most young people find their own mates. The “introducer”, however, still have a ceremonial function. They accompany the bride and groom during the ceremony (one for the bride and one for the groom).

zuò méi: “to act as the go-between for two families whose children are to be married”. This person arranged the details of the match. He acted as a go-between for the families of the bride and groom, settling points which were usually of a financial nature. Often the **zuò méide** was also the **jièshaorén**. Traditionally, the go-between was an older woman who made a profession of it. She was paid for her services in money if the family was wealthy or in the best pork legs if they were poor. Today any adult can act as the go-between, although the practice is becoming less and less common. During the wedding ceremony, the go-between places his stamp on the wedding certificate.

Wo gěi ni zuò méi, hǎo bu hǎo?

I'll act as go-between for you, all right?

Zhāng Tàitai qǐng wǒ tǐ tādē nǚér zuò méi.

Mrs. Chang asked me to act as go-between for her daughter.

Notes on №19

júzhǎng: “head of an office or bureau”. **Júzhǎng** is only used when the Chinese name of the office or bureau ends with the syllable **-jú**, as in **yóuzhèngjú**, “post office”. You've also seen **bùzhǎng**, “minister of a bureau” and **kēzhǎng**, “section chief”.

duōnián: “many years”.

Here are some examples:

Wǒmen duōnián bú jiàn le.

We haven't seen each other for many years.

Wǒmen zài yìqǐ gōngzuòle duōnián le.

We've been working together for many years.

Wǒ zhù zài zhèr duōnián le, kěshi méi tīngshuōguo zhèige rén.

I've been living here for many years, but I've never heard of this person.

Notes on №20

tándaο: “to talk about, to speak of”. This is used to refer to something that was just brought up in conversation. You have seen **dào** used as a main verb meaning “to go to, to arrive at”, and as a prepositional verb meaning “to towards”. Now you see that **dào** is also used as a verb ending. Literally, it means “to, up to”, but its translation into English sometimes changes, depending on the meaning of the verb it is used with. When used with **tán**, “to talk, to chat”, **-dào** can be translated as “about” or “of”. Here are some other examples of **-dào** used with verbs you've already studied:

Wǒmen gāngcái hái shuōdào nǐ, nǐ jiù lái le.

We were even talking of you Just now, and here you are!

Jīntiān nǐ gēn tā jiǎngdào wǒ méiyǒu?

Did you talk about me with him today?

Wǒ chángcháng xiǎngdào wǒde hái zi.

I often think of my child.

Notice that in the Reference List sentence, **tándaο** is used at the beginning of the sentence to introduce a topic, like we use “speaking of ...” in English. Here are some other examples:

Tándaο jiéhūnde shì, wǒ hái dèi xiǎngyixiang.

When it comes to talking about marriage, I have to think it over.

Tándaο zěnmē xiě Zhōngguó zì, tā bǐ wǒ zhīdaode duō.

When we talk about writing Chinese characters, he knows a lot more than I do.

yě: “really, after all”. You have seen **yě** meaning “too, also”. Another common meaning of **yě** is “(even though) ... nevertheless, still”. For example:

Wǒ suīrán shì Zhōngguó rén wǒ yě huì shuō yìdiǎn Yīngwén.

Although I am Chinese, I can still speak a little English.

A: Zhèige diànyǐng zěnmeyàng?

How was the movie?

B: *Bú shì hěn hǎo, dànshì yě hái kéyì.*

It wasn't great, but it was pretty good nevertheless.

Wǒ suīrán méi dào guo Tiān Men, yě zài diànshìshàng Ān kàn jiānguo.

Although I've never been to Tian An Men, I've seen it on television.

In addition, *yě* often is used to contrast the thought expressed in the sentence with another thought. This meaning can be paraphrased something like this: “in spite of anything which might be believed to the contrary, indeed what I am saying is true.” Sometimes, however, *yě* is used when there is not much to contrast it with, and means little more than “we really ought to agree that what I am saying is true.”

There are many different possible ways to translate this *yě* into English. The following examples are meant to show some of its range of meaning and some of its possible translations.

Xiànzài shíyīdiǎn bàn le, wǒ yě yào shàng kè le, wǒmende wèntí míngtiān zài tán ba!

It's eleven-thirty. I really have to be going to class. Let's talk about our question tomorrow, okay?

Zhōngguó rénkǒu tài duō, zhèngfǔ tīchàng wǎnliàn wǎnhūn yě shì yīnggāide.

The population of China is too large, it really is right for the government to promote late marriage and late involvement.

Tāmen wèishénme yào líhūn, wǒ yě bù zhīdào.

Why they wanted to get a divorce, I really don't know.

A: *Nǐ zěnméi hái méi bǎ zhèxiē yīfu xǐwán?*

How come you still haven't finished washing these clothes?

B: *Wǒ yě bú shì nǐde yòngren, báitiān wǒ yě shàng bān, wǒ méiyǒu zhènméi duō shíjiān.*

I'm not your servant, after all; I work during the day too, and I don't have all that much time.

Nǐ xiànzài yě gāi míngbai le ba?

Now you (really) ought to understand, don't you?

Wǒmen liǎngge rènshi yě yǒu jǐnián le, nǐ yīnggāi liǎojiě wo.

We have known each other for several years, after all; you ought to understand me.

Dialogue in Taipei

Notes on the Dialogue

...liǎngge háizi yào dào fǎyuàn gōngzhèng jíéhūn: Traditional wedding ceremonies were held at home or in ancestral halls (not in temples or pagodas). Modern ones are likely to be held in hotels or restaurants, as there is more room and food is then easier to prepare.

Tāmen jìhuà yào dào Ālǐ Shān qù: Ālǐ Shān and Riyuè Tán (Sun-Moon Lake) are the two most popular honeymoon spots on Taiwan. An average honeymoon stay might last one week.

Vocabulary

Unit 3

Part 1

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes in Part 1

Notes on №1

kòngzhi: “to control; control”. This can also be translated as “to dominate; to command”.

Zhèige fāngjiānde wēndù kòngzhude hù hǎo, yìhuìr lěng, yìhuìr rè.

The temperature in this room isn't well regulated. It's cold one minute and hot the next.

Shíjiān méi bànfa kòngzhi, shéi yě bànbudào.

There is no way to control time; no one can do it.

Tāde bìng yǐjīng kòngzhìle, yěxǔ jǐtiān yǐhòu, tā huì hǎoqilai.

His illness is under control now; maybe in another few days he will start to get better.

Yǒu yìxiē rén kòngzhìle zhèijīa fēijī, hú ràng ta qǐfēi.

Some people have taken control of this airplane and won't let it take off.

chénggōng: “to succeed; to be successful”.

Zhèihěn shū chénggōng le.

This hook was a success.

Zhèihěn shū xiǎode hěn chénggōng.

His hook was written very successfully, (i.e., His hook came off very well.)

Zhèige tāng chénggōng le, dàjiā dōu ài chī.

This soup is a success, everyone loves it.

Zhǐ yào nǐ nǚli, nǐde shìqing yíding néng chénggōng.

So long as you work hard at it, your effort is sure to succeed.

Notes on №2

zuòdào: “to achieve, to make (a goal)”. In Unit 2, Part II, you saw tándao “to talk about, to speak of”, with the ending -dào meaning literally “to, up to”. Here you see -dào used as an ending after the verb zuò “to make”. You may think of -dào in zuòdào as conveying the meaning of reaching a goal.

Zhèijiān shì, wǒ yǐjīng zuòdào le.

I have already succeeded in doing this.

Nǐ shuōguo, zuótiān nǐ yào qù, nǐ zuòdào le ma?

You said that you wanted to go yesterday. Did you do so?

sān tōngguò: “the three approvals”. The “three approvals” have been in effect since 1973/74. At that time, the minimum marriage age was pushed upward, but most recently it has been relaxed to ages twenty-five for males and twenty-three for females. Most couples must still wait a number of years before they can have a child. The sāntōngguò guīdìng for city residents effectively means that, without these three approvals for a child, a pregnancy must end in abortion or else the child will have to live without food rations. (A government slogan is Yíge zuì hǎo, liǎngge gòule, “One is best, two is enough.”) Applications to have children are reviewed and permission granted or denied by one's work unit, based on the total allowable city quota. A third child is strongly discouraged and life would be very difficult for it should it be born. Special gifts, privileges, and awards are given to one-child families. In the countryside, one can find four to six children in a household, but they of course could not easily move to the city.

Notes on №3

yě jiùshi shuō: “to mean; in other words, that is to say”.

Jihuà shēngyù yě jiùshi shuō yào yǒu jihuade shēng xiǎoháir.

Planned parenthood means having children in a planned way.

“Hébi” yě jiùshi shuō “wèishénme xūyào”.

“Hébi” means “why must”.

Tā bù néng zài shēng xiǎoháizi, yě jiùshi shuō wǒmen juéde tā zhibuhǎo le.

She can't have children any more; that is to say, we feel that she cannot be cured.

Tā bù gěi nǐ dǎ diànhuà hǎoxiàng yě jiùshi shuō tā bù xǐhuan nǐ.

The fact that he doesn't telephone you would seem to imply that he doesn't like you.

Dàifu shuō tā bù néng chī ròu, yě jiùshi shuō chī ròu duì tāde shēntǐ bù hǎo.

The doctor said that he couldn't eat meat, in other words, eating meat isn't good for his health.

When what follows is a more pointed explanation of what has just been said, *jiùshi shuō* can be used in place of *yě jiùshi shuō*, e.g.

Tā bù kéyǐ shēng hái zi, jiùshi shuō tā hái méiyǒu zuòdao sān tōngguò.

She cannot have a child; that is to say, she has not yet gotten the three approvals.

tóngyì: “consent, agreement; to agree, to agree with (what someone says or thinks)”.

A:	<i>Tóngyì bu tóngyì?</i>
	Do you agree?
B:	<i>Wǒ bù tóngyì.</i>
	I don't agree.
	<i>Wǒ bù tóngyì nǐde huà.</i>
	I don't agree with what you say.

Although in English we can say “I agree with you”, in Chinese it is wrong to say either *Wǒ gēn nǐ tóngyì* or *Wǒ tóngyì nǐ*. *Tóngyì* can be used in two ways: without an object, or with an object like *tā shuōde* “what he said”, *tāde huà* “what he said”, *tāde jìhuà* “his plan”, *tāde yìjian* “his opinion”. If you want to say “I don't agree with you”, you can say *Wǒ bù tóngyì*, *Nǐ shuōde, wǒ bù tóngyì*, *Wǒ bù tóngyì nǐde huà*, *Wǒ bù tóngyì nǐde yìjian*, etc.

Notes on №4

dānwèi: W(work) unit”. This word is used in the PRC as a cover term for any organization or department of an organization. It may, for instance refer to a factory, a school, a government organization, a store, or an army unit.

Nǐ zài nǎige dānwèi gōngzuò? is a common way of asking where someone works; compared with *Nǐ zài nǎr gōngzuò?*, the question *Nǐ zài nǎige dānwèi gōngzuò?* sounds more official.

Wǒmen dānwèi yǒu hěn duō nǚ lǎoshī.

There are a lot of women teachers in our unit. (Here, *dānwèi* refers to a school.)

To specify that you are talking about a place of work, you can say *gōngzuò dānwèi*, as in the Reference List sentence.

jūmín wéiyuánhùi: “neighborhood committee”. The official duties of a neighborhood committee are diverse, ranging from sanitation maintenance to political study. Its actual role and duty remain am-

biguous, as well as its relationship with the government. Although the government pays a committee's elected delegates, there is no official connection between the two. The power of the committee in local affairs remains large.

pàichūsuǒ: “local police station”. The local police station is the lowest level of the Bureau of Public Security. In addition to taking care of matters of a criminal nature, the **pàichūsuǒ** is familiar with the history and political situation of every one of its residents. Along with the **gōngzuò dānwèi** and the **jūmín wēiyuánhùi**, it affects the daily life of each citizen.

Notes on №5

gēnju: “according to, on the basis of; basis”.

Nǐ gēnju shénme shuō zhèige huà?

On what basis do you say this?

Nǐ shuōde huà yǒu méiyǒu gēnju?

Is there a basis for what you're saying?

pīzhǔn: “to give official permission (to someone to do something)”.

Dānwèi pīzhǔn tā jiéhūn le.

Her unit gave her permission to marry.

Xuéxiào pīzhǔn tā qù Shànghǎi le.

His school gave him permission to go to Shanghai.

Wǒ mǎi zhèige diànshì shì dédao pīzhǔnde.

I got permission to buy this television.

fùnǚmen: “women”. -Men is a plural ending for nouns and pronouns. You have seen it in the pronouns women, **zánmen**, **nǐmen**, and **tāmen**. After a noun, however, -men is never obligatory. It is usually used with nouns which designate humans (although in literature you may sometimes see it used with nouns referring to animals as well).

Nǚshìmen, xiānshēngmen.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Note that the group referred to by a noun phrase with -men must be of unspecified number; it is wrong to say **liàngge fùnǚmen** or **sānge jiàoshòumen**, etc.

Notes on №6

gègè: “each and every, all of the various”. The first **gè** (a specifier like **zhèi-**) literally means “each...” or “the various, the different...”. The second **ge** is the counter **ge**, as in **yíge rén** “one person”.

Jiǔyuèlì, gègè xuéxiào dōu kāi xué le.

In September all the schools open.

Měiguode gègè zhōu dōu yǒu zìjǐde zhèngfǔ.

Each of the American states has its government.

zēngjiā: “to increase; to increase by (such-and-such an amount)”.

Jīnnián wǒmen xuéxiàode xuéshēng zēngjiā le.

The students in our school increased this year.

Zhèige yīyuànde bìngrén bù néng zài zēngjiā le.

The patients in this hospital cannot increase any further.

Zhèijǐtiān nǐ máng bu máng, zài gěi nǐ zēngjiā yìdiǎnr gōngzuò, hǎo bu hǎo?

Have you been busy the past few days? Would it be okay if I give you some more work to do?

Wǒmen dānwèi yòu zēngjiāle liǎngge bàngōngshì.

They added two more offices on to our unit.

yíding: “specific, certain, definite, set”. In addition to the meaning of **yíding** which you already know, namely “certainly, surely”, it can also mean “set (by regulation, decision, or convention), fixed, particular,” as in:

Tā bàn shìqīng yǒu yíding bànfǎ.

He goes about doing things with a definite method.

Měinián zài yídingde rìzì, tā dōu huíqu kàn māma.

Every year he goes back to see his mother on a set date.

Notes on №7

shìqū: “city proper, municipal area”, the area within a **chéngshì** where population and buildings are relatively concentrated. **Shìqū** is used when you are emphasizing the city proper or contrasting it to the suburbs [**jiāoqū**]. It is an administratively more exact term than **chéngshì**. [The Peking municipal area, **Běijīng shìqū**, is made up of eight urban districts, **chéngqū**.]

chūshēnglǜ: “birth rate”. **Chūshēng** means “to be born”. The **chūshēnglǜ** is usually considered to be the number of births per one thousand population in one year.

Notes on №8

fēnpèi: “distribute; allot; assign; distribution”.

Wǒ tīngshuō xiàge yuè jiù kényi gěi ni fēnpei gōngzuò.

I've heard that you'll be assigned work next month.

Wǒ xīwang néng zǎo yìdiān fēnpèidào fāngzi.

I hope that housing can be assigned soon.

Tīngshuō tā fēnpèi dào Dōngběi qù gōngzuò le.

I've heard that he has been assigned to go work in Manchuria.

míng'é: “the number of people assigned or allowed; quota of people”. **Míng'é** does not exactly correspond to “quota”. “Quota” is a fixed number of places which must be filled. **Míng'é** is (1) a fixed number of places which must not be exceeded, or (2) one such place. **Bābǎige míng'é** is literally “800 name given-numbers”, i.e. “a quota of 800 names.”

Notes on №9

bìyùn: Literally, “avoid-pregnancy”, i.e. “contraception”. **Shíxíng bìyùn** “to carry out (the government policy of encouraging) contraception, to practice birth control”.

Notes on №10

miǎnfèide: Literally “exempt from charge”, i.e. “free (of charge)”

Zhèige zhǎnlǎn kényi miǎnfèi cānguān.

You can visit this exhibit for free.

Sānyuè Báhào, fùnǚ hé háizi dào gōngyuán qù dōu shì miǎnfèide.

On March 8th, women and children can go to parks free of charge.

Lǚxíng bù piányi a! Fēijīpiào kě bú shì miǎnfèide.

Travelling is not cheap. Plane tickets are certainly not free!

Notes on №11

dédao: “to receive, to get”.

Tā dédao hùzhào yǐhòu mǎshàng jiù zōu le.

He left immediately after getting his passport.

Tā dédao pīzhǔn kényi liúzai Běijīng gōngzuò.

He has gotten permission to stay in Peking to work.

yìjiān xīn fángzi: “a new room”. Notice that although you have seen fángzi meaning “house”, it is being used here in the wider sense of “a place to live”. In this phrase it is preceded by the counter for rooms of a house, jiān. Thus the whole phrase means “a new room”, not “a new house”.

Living quarters in Peking and many other Chinese cities are very scarce. (Housing in Shanghai is more critical than Peking.) When a newly married couple applies for housing, they will be assigned a room that does not exceed 8-10 square meters. Rarely do living quarters have private baths, toilets, or kitchens. Later, when children come along, they will continue to live in the same size room.

Dialogue in Peking

A Canadian tourist talks with her guide:

Part 2

Reference List

Reference Notes

Notes on part 2

Notes on №12

chǎnjià: “maternity leave”. The syllable chǎn, literally “to give birth to” is used in compounds meaning “maternity, delivery, birth”. It can also be used outside the context of human reproduction in compounds meaning “to produce, production”, as in chǎnpǐn “product”.]

gōngzī: “wages, pay”, literally “labor-capital”.

...yǒu chǎnjià, hái yǒu gōngzī: For a normal birth, a woman is given fifty-six days of paid leave; for a difficult birth, seventy days; and for twins, ninety days after the birth. After this period, one hour per day is allowed off in order to nurse the baby.

Notes on №13

gèzhǒng: “various kinds, every kind”. Gè “each” is a specifier like zhèi- “this” or nèi- “that”. As a specifier, it can be followed by counters. Here you see gè- used with the counter -zhǒng “types, kinds, sort, species”. Here are some other ways gè- is used:

Tā néng dào gèguō qù lǚxíng zhēn bú cuò.

It's great that he can go to all sorts of countries.

Xuéshengmen yīnggāi yǒu gèrénde xuéxi jìhua.

Students should each have their own plan of study.

Míngtiānde diànyǐng piào gègè dānwèi dōu yǒu.

Each and every unit has movie tickets for tomorrow.

Sometimes *gè-* is followed directly by the noun.

Jīntiān xiàwǔ gè dānwèi dōu kāi huì.

This afternoon every unit is having a meeting.

bìyùn gōngjù: “contraceptive devices”. This does not refer to birth control pills. [*Bìyùnpǐn* “birth control products” includes both *bìyùnyào* “birth control pills” and *bìyùn gōngjù*.]

jìhuà shēngyù: “family planning, planned parenthood”. *Jìhuà* means “plan; to plan”. *Shēngyù* literally means “to give birth to and raise”.

Notes on №14

juéyù: “sterilization,” or “to sterilize, to be sterilized,” applies to operations for men and women. Sterilization for women is still much more common than for men; and more prevalent in the cities than in the countryside.

Tā juéding juéyù.

He has decided on sterilization.

Juéyù shì jiějué Zhōngguó rénkǒu wèntíde yíge hǎo bànfǎ.

Sterilization is one good way to solve China's population problem.

shǒushù: “surgery”.

Dàifu gěi ta zuòde shǒushù hěn chénggōng.

The surgery the doctor performed on him was very successful.

Notes on №15

shībài: “to fail”.

Tā zuò mǎimai shībài le.

He failed in business.

Nǐ gēnju shénme shuō tā shībài le?

On what basis do you say that he failed?

réngōng liúchǎn: “abortion”, more literally, “artificial miscarriage”.

dào yīyuàn qu zuò réngōng liúchǎn: “go to the hospital to have an abortion performed”. **Zuò réngōng liúchǎn** here means “to have an abortion done”, not of course “to do an abortion”. Compare the following two sentences:

Yīshēng gěi ta zuòle réngōng liúchǎn.
The doctor performed an abortion on her.
Tā zuòle réngōng liúchǎn.
She had an abortion.

In the first sentence, the subject of the sentence (**yīshēng**) performed the abortion. In the second sentence, the subject of the sentence (**tā**) had the abortion performed. In some cases, a verb-object in Chinese can mean either “to do something” or “to have something done”. Here are some more examples:

Zhènme hǎode yīfu, shéi gěi nǐ zuòde?
Who made such nice clothes for you?
Zài Měiguó zuò yīfu hěn guì.
It's really expensive to have clothes made in America.

jià: “leave, vacation”. You have seen this as part of the word **chǎnjià** “maternity leave”. Here you see it used by itself.

Notes on №16

shǎoshù mínzú: “minority nationalities”, often translated as “national minorities”. Besides the Han people, China has over fifty national minorities which are spread out over fifty to sixty percent of the land area and make up six percent of the total population of the country. The largest minorities are the Mongols (mostly in the **Nèi Měnggú Zìzhìqū**, “Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region”), the Hui (Chinese Muslims), Tibetans, Uighur (in the **Xīnjiāng Wéiwú'ěr Zìzhìqū**, “Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region”), and the **Miao** (found in several southern provinces).

Shǎoshù mínzúde yīfu dōu hěn hǎo kàn.
The clothing of the national minorities is very beautiful.
Zhōngguó yǒu wǔshíjīge shǎoshùmínzú.
China has fifty-odd minority nationalities.

Notes on №17

xiāngxìn: “to believe (that), to trust (someone), to believe in, to have faith in”.

Wǒ xiāngxìn, wǒmen liǎngguó rénmínde yǒuyì yíding huì búduàn fāzhǎn.

I believe that the friendship between the people of our two countries will constantly grow.

Compare **xiāngxìn** to the verb **xìn**, which you learned in the last unit. For the second example you need to know **yóu** is a verb meaning “it's up to...”.

Bié xìn tāde huà.

Don't believe what he says.

Xin bu xin you ni.

Believe it or not, as you like.

hōngtáng: “brown sugar”, literally “red sugar”. The Chinese often use brown sugar in cooking and for medicinal purposes. For example, a common remedy for colds is a hot drink made by boiling ginger root and brown sugar in water [**jiāngtāng**], or simply brown sugar water [**tángshuǐ**].

chǎnfù: “a woman who has given birth within the last month”. [Contrast this word with **yùnfù** “a pregnant woman”. The birth of a child is celebrated on the successful completion of the first month of life.

yíngyǎngpǐn: “a nutritional food item”. **Yíngyǎng** means “nutrition”, for example:

Dòujiāng hěn yǒu yíngyǎng.

Soy bean milk is very nutritious.

-Pǐn is a syllable used in many words to mean “item, article, product”, [for example **jìniànpǐn** “souvenir”, **yòngpǐn** “item of use”, **chǎnpǐn** “produce”, **gōngyèpǐn** “industrial product”].

As the Reference List sentence shows, the mother's health continues to be an important consideration even after the child is born. Both mother's and baby's health are carefully attended to after birth, while Western medicine emphasizes the mother's health only as long as she is carrying the child.

Notes on №18

bù tóng: “to be not the same, to be different”. This is often used in the pattern **...hé ... bù tóng**, “...is different from ...”.

Hùzhào hé lǚxíngzhèng wánquán bù tóng, nǐ bú yào nòngcuò le.

A passport and a travel permit are completely different. Don't mistake them.

Zhèige gōngchǎng jīnnián hé qùnián de qíngkuàng hěn bù tóng.

The situation in the factory this year is very different from last year.

Bù tóng can also be used as a noun as in

Tāde dānwèi hé nǐde yóu hěn dàde bù tóng.

There is a big difference between his work unit and yours.

You should be aware that **tóng** “same”, cannot be used as the main verb of a sentence to mean “to be the same”. To say, “These two things are the same”, you must say **Zhèiliǎngge dōngxi shì yíyàngde**.

qīnjìn: “to be close (to), to be on intimate terms (with)”.

Zhèiliǎngge rén hěn qīnjìn.

These two are on intimate terms.

Dàjiā dōu yuànyì qīnjìn ta.

Everyone wants to be friends with him.

Notes on №19

shǒuxiān: “first (of all), in the first place, first; first, before anyone/anything else”.

Jīntiān dàjiā kāi huì shǒuxiān shì yào jiějué wǒmen chǎng shēngchǎnshàngde wèntí.

The first thing we want to do at today's meeting is to solve our factory's problems in production.

Zài fàndiànli shǒuxiān yào zhùyì jiějuéhào kèrenmende chī fàn hé xiūxi wèntí.

A hotel must first of all pay attention to solving the dining and rest problems of the guests.

Zuìjìn wàiguó péngyou hěn duō. Wǒmen shǒuxiān yào jiějué zhùde wèntí.

Recently there have been many foreign friends. We must first of all solve the lodging problems.

xiānhuā: “fresh flowers”, as opposed to dried or artificial flowers, which the Chinese are also fond of.

wánjù: “(children's) toy”.

Míngtiān érzi guò shēngri, gěi ta mǎi ge wánjù.

Tomorrow is let's buy our boy's birthday, him a toy.

Notes on №20

gèdì: “each place; various places” Here you see the specifier **-gè** “each” used in another compound. Here are some more examples:

Wǒ hěn xiàng dào Měiguó gèdì qù kànyikàn, Měiguó shì ge wěidàde guójiā.

I'd very much like to go visit lots of places in America. America is a great country.

Zài Zhōngguó gèdì cāngūan yǒulǎnle sānge xīngqì, wǒ gāi huí guǒ le.

I've visited and sight-seen lots of places in China for three weeks, it's time to go back home.

Dialogue in Peking

A Canadian student in Peking interviews a population control worker:

Note on the Dialogue

[Rénmen shēng háizide shíhou, qīnqī péngyou sòng bu sòng lǐwù?](#): As stated in the dialogue, friends and relatives in the PRC give useful items for the baby, like clothes, hats, cups, or perhaps a chicken for the mother. These are presented casually.

Vocabulary

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Unit 5

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Unit Vocabulary List

Unit 6

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Vocabulary

Appendix

Unit Vocabulary Characters

Unit Vocabulary List