

Lesson 3: Names and titles

Hǔ sǐ liú pí,
rén sǐ liú míng.

A **tiger** dies, **leaves** his skin,
a person dies, leaves his **name**!

Classical Chinese saying

A. Transitions

1. *Duìbùqǐ* 'sorry; excuse me (face-not-worthy)'

Duìbùqǐ!

Duìbùqǐ, lǎoshī, wǒ lái wǎn le.

Duìbùqǐ! / Méi guānxi.

Sorry! [I didn't hear, understand etc.]

Sorry, sir, I'm late. (...come be-late LE.)

Sorry. / It doesn't matter. (Not+have connection.)

2. *Giving reasons: yīnwèi* 'because':

Be sure you can translate the following:

Nǐ wèishénme hěn lèi?

Nǐ wèishénme hěn jǐnzhāng?

Nǐ wèishénme bù shūfu?

Shùxué wèishénme hěn nán?

Tā wèishénme méiyǒu biéde kè?

Yīnwèi yǒu hěn duō gōngkè.

Yīnwèi yǒu hěn duō kǎoshì.

Yīnwèi wǒ hěn lěng.

Yīnwèi měitiān yǒu kǎoshì.

Bù zhīdao, wǒ bù rènshi tā.

3. *I don't know ...*

Epistemological verbs such as 'know' or 'ask' are often used to report about a question. In English, this has some interesting grammatical consequences, as shown below:

Direct speech (schematic)

I asked: "Where are you going?"

>

Reported speech (actual)

I asked where you were going.

We don't know: "Is he Chinese?"

>

We don't know whether/if he's Chinese (or not).

I don't know: "Why is she nervous?">

I don't know why she's nervous.

In English, reporting speech has certain grammatical consequences, such as 'agreement of tenses' ('were going,' not 'are going' in the first example), non-question word order ('where you were going' rather than 'where were you going') and insertion of 'if' or 'whether' in *yes-no questions*. Chinese, on the other hand, does not require such contortions, as the following examples show.

a) Zhīdào (or zhīdao – especially in positive statements)

Direct speech

Reported speech

Wǒ bù zhīdào: “Tā wèishénme hěn jǐnzhāng?”

Wǒ bù zhīdào tā wèishénme hěn jǐnzhāng.

I don't know: “Why is he so nervous?”

I don't know why he's so nervous.

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

Wǒmen bù zhīdào: “Tā shì Zhōngguó rén ma?”

>

Wǒmen bù zhīdào tā shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén.

We don't know: “Is she Chinese?”

We don't know if she's Chinese (or not).

Not: *Wǒmen bù zhīdào tā shì Zhōngguó rén ma.

Notice that the reported speech always contains a question-word, like *shénme*, or a V-not-V question.

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

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

or

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

b) Wèn ‘ask [a question]’

Wèn occurs in expressions such as qǐngwèn ‘may [I] ask = excuse me’ and wèntí ‘question; problem.’ (Yǒu wèntí ma?) Its root meaning is ‘ask [a question].’ Questions embedded after wèn have the same properties as those after zhīdào:

Tā wèn wǒ: “Diànhuà shì duōshao?”

> Tā wèn wǒ diànhuà shì duōshao.

Tā wèn wǒ: “Nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén ma?”

> Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén.

Wèn also requires the V-not-V form with yes-no questions; notice that Chinese does not require repetition of the pronoun in a sentence like the last: ‘He asked me if I were Chinese’ (with both ‘me’ and ‘I’) is usually expressed as: Tā wèn wǒ shì bu shì Zhōngguó rén (with only one wǒ).

Exercise:

How would you say the following in Chinese?

1. Do you know who Bǎoyù is? / Sorry, I don't.
2. I don't know whether Bǎoyù is hungry (or not).
3. Do you know why Bǎoyù is nervous?
4. Do you know if Bǎoyù likes [ài] Dàiyú?
5. We don't know what Bǎoyù's surname is.

(*Jiǎ Bǎoyù and Lín Dàiyú are, respectively, male and female characters in the Chinese classic novel Hóng Lóu Mèng 'Dream of the Red Chamber'.*)

4. How many all together?

yígòng	'altogether'
duōshao	'how many'
jǐge	'how many' (of certain things, eg people, places); <u>jǐge</u> presupposes a relative small number, eg brothers and sisters
sān ge	'three' (eg people or places)
sānshí ge	'thirty' (eg students)
gòu	'be+enough' <u>Gòu le ma?</u> 'Is [that] enough?'

Yígòng yǒu duōshao xuéshēng?	How many students all together?
<Yígòng> yǒu èrshíjiǔ ge.	29 <all together>.
Jǐge lǎoshī jǐge xuéshēng?	How many teachers, how many students?
Yí ge lǎoshī, sān ge xuéshēng.	One teacher [and] three students.
Sān ge bú gòu!	Three [of them] isn't enough!

5. New Stative Verbs

kě'ài	'be-loveable; cute (able-love)'
kù	[slang] 'cool' (from the English word, but usually written with the Chinese character that means 'cruel'); [more in Taiwan?]
piàoliang	'lovely; beautiful' (of places and people - but not usually men); cf. <u>hǎokàn</u> 'nice looking'
yǒumíng	'famous (have-name)'
hǎowánr	'be-fun; amusing (good-be+fun),' of places, things, people etc.
yǒu yìsi	'interesting; enjoyable (have meaning),' of places, people etc.
méi<yǒu> yìsi	'dull (not+have meaning)'
rènao	'lively; bustling (hot-noisy)' – considered a positive feature
guài	'weird; peculiar,' more of people
qíguài	'strange; surprising,' more of events
qiáng	'strong; good,, eg of sports teams

Examples:

Hěn kě'ài!	Cute!
Tā hěn piàoliang.	She's pretty!

Zhen kù!
Tā fùqin hěn yǒumíng.
Hěn hǎowánr!
Zhōngwén gōngkè hěn yǒuyìsi!
Yǒu yìsi ma? / Méiyou yìsi!
Zhen qíguài!
Tā hěn guài.
Hěn rènào.
Hánguó de hěn qiáng.

[That'] really cool!
Her father's famous.
What fun!
The Chinese homework is quite interesting.
Is [it] interesting? / No.
[That'] really strange! (of a situation)
He's peculiar.
[It = this place]'s very lively.
Korea's [team] is strong.

6. Class expressions:

Shénme yìsi?
Yīngwén zěnmē shuō?
Zhōngwén zěnmē shuō?
Tones, Zhōngwén zěnmē shuō?
Zài shuō.
Qǐng zài shuō yí biàn.
Shēngdiào!

What meaning?
How's [it] said in English?
How's [it] said in Chinese?
How do [you] say 'tones' in Chinese?
Say [it] again.
Please say it once again.
Tones!

Exercise: Translate

- 1) Sorry teacher, I'm nervous. / Never mind, try [saying it] again.
- 2) Why are you nervous? / Because I haven't eaten yet.
- 3) He asked me why I was nervous.
- 4) How do you say 'mosquito' in Chinese?
- 5) How many students altogether? / Only 4 today!
- 6) I only have \$10 – that's not enough.
- 7) The teacher's strict but the class is interesting.
- 8) Do you know if the teacher's Chinese?

B. Dialogue

Pronunciation notes for the following dialogue:

qù: [q-yù]; contrast with chù 'choo'; cf. jù vs. zhù, xū vs. shū; u with the 5th row of initials in the consonant chart is always pronounced yu [ü]; elsewhere, it is oo.

nǎr: The r-less form is nǎlǐ.

Zhōu is a man in his 30s; Zhāng is a younger women, a graduate student from abroad.

Zhāng. Zhōu xiānshēng, nín hǎo.

Hello Mr. Zhou.

Zhōu. Ei, Zhāng xiǎojie, nǐ hǎo.
Nǐ qù nǎr? / Nǐ qù nǎlǐ?

Ah, Miss Zhang, how are you? Where are you going?(You go where?)

Zhāng. Túshūguǎn.

[To the] library.

Zhōu. Qù túshūguǎn zuò gōngkè ma?	<i>[You] going to the library to do [your] homework? (Go library to+do homework MA?)</i>
Zhāng. Bù, kàn bào qu.	No, [I'] going to read the paper.
Zhou. O, kàn bào qu?!	<i>Oh, [you'] re going to read the paper?!</i>
Zhāng. Shì, zài túshūguǎn kàn bào hěn shūfu, yīnwèi nàr yǒu kōngtiáo.	Yes, it's comfortable reading the paper in the library, 'cos there's airconditioning!
Zhōu. O, nàr yǒu kōngtiáo!?	<i>Oh, there's airconditioning there!?</i>
Zhāng. Wǒmen kěyǐ zài nàr kànkan Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi.	We can read about the World Cup there. (...read World Cup reports.)
Zhōu. O, shì zhèiyàng a, Shìjiè Bēi yǒu shénme xiāoxi?	<i>Oh, [so] that's it; what news about the World Cup?</i>
Zhāng. Zhōngguó shū le! Tài kěxī le!	China lost – such a pity!
Zhōu. Hái yǒu ne?	<i>What else?</i>
Zhāng. Zuótiān de, Yīngguó hé Āgēntíng. Yīngguó yíng le!	Yesterday's, England and the Argentine. England won.
Zhōu. Jǐ bǐ jǐ?	<i>What was the score? (How+much versus how+much?)</i>
Zhāng. Yī bǐ líng.	One nil!
Zhōu. Nà Yīngguó yě hěn qiáng! ...Dui le, míngtiān xīngqītiān, nǐ shàng nàr qù?	<i>Well, England's quite strong too! ...Well, tomorrow's Sunday, where are you off to?</i>
Zhāng. Wǒmen qù chéng lǐ, kàn péngyou, mǎi dōngxì.	We're going into town, to see some friends and shop.
Zhōu. Bú cuò. Yo, bù zǎo le, wǒ gāi zǒu le.	<i>Nice. Wow, it's getting late, I should be off.</i>
Zhāng. Hǎo, Zhōu xiānshēng, zàijiàn, zàijiàn.	Okay, goodbye Mr. Zhōu.
Zhōu. Hǎo, xīngqīyī jiàn.	<i>Fine, see you Monday.</i>

This conversation serves to introduce the following topics:

Destination (going to...);
the transitive verb *kàn* ‘see’;
purpose (in order to...);
location: *yǒu* and *zài* patterns;
scores for sporting events;
DE revisited.

C. Analysis

1. Destination:

As noted above, the relevant question word for destination is nǎr ‘where’ or its variant nǎlǐ (nǎ ‘which’ plus lǐ ‘in’); the phrase shénme difang ‘what place’ is also an option.

Nǐmen qù nǎr?	Where are you all going?
Tā qù nǎlǐ?	Where’s she going?
Nǐ qù shénme difang?	Where are you going?

Answers appear in place of the question word or expression:

Wǒ qù Běijīng.	I’m going to Beijing.
Tāmen qù túshūguǎn.	They’re going to the library.
Wǒ yīnggāi qù shàng kè.	I should be off to class. (‘attend class’)

Like shénme, nǎr or nǎlǐ can also serve as an indefinite:

Nǐ qù nǎr/nǎlǐ?	Where are you going?
Wǒ bú qù nǎr/ <u>nǎlǐ</u> .	I’m not going anywhere (in particular.)

You can mention a specific time, either a day of the week, or a date. Or you can use the word xiànzài ‘now’. Recall the placement of time words – before or after the subject (if present) and before their associated verb:

Xiànzài nǐ qù shénme difang?	Where are you going now?
Wǒ xiànzài qù shàng kè.	I’m going to class now.
Bāyuè sānhào wǒ qù Běijīng; wǔhào qù Shànghǎi.	I’m going to Beijing on Aug. 3rd; and to Shanghai on the 5th.

In the early stages of your study of Chinese, it is acceptable to insert English *nouns* into your conversation: Wǒ qù library / cafeteria / airport, etc. The main thing is to establish your credentials by producing the grammatical framework of the sentence – which includes the verb - with confidence.

2. The verb *kàn* ‘see’

The verb *kàn*, whose root meaning is usually said to be ‘see,’ may, in combination with different objects, show a wide range of English translations:

kàn shū	‘(see books) to read’ (as an activity in its own right)
kàn bào	‘(see report) read the newspaper’
kàn Hóng Lóu Mèng	‘to read <i>The Dream of the Red Chamber</i> ’
kàn péngyou	‘(see friends) visit friends’
kàn dìtú	‘(see map) look at a map’
kàn bìng	‘(see illness) see a doctor; see a patient’
kàn rènao	‘(see hubbub) go where the excitement is’

3. Purpose

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

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

Purpose can be questioned by *zuò shénme*, *gàn shénme*, *gànmá*, all literally ‘do what’; the particle *-ne*, associated with on going action, may also appear.

Nǐ qù túshūguǎn zuò shénme <ne>?
Nǐ qù túshūguǎn gàn shénme <ne>?
Nǐ qù túshūguǎn gànmá <ne>?

The verb *gàn*, common as the ordinary word for ‘do; make’ in northern China, is avoided by polite circles in Taiwan and overseas communities because of sexual connotations. And even amongst Mainlanders, *gànmá* often carries overtones of disbelief particularly when followed by *ne*: *Gànmá ne?* ‘What [on earth] are [you] doing?’

4. Examples of destinations and purposes:

a) Places

Wǒ qù Niǔyuē.	I’m going to New York.
Tā qù Lúndūn.	She’s going to London.
Wǒmen qù Jiùjīnshān.	We’re going to San Francisco.
Tāmen qù Běijīng.	They’re going to Beijing.
Wǒ qù Shànghǎi.	I’m going to Shanghai.
Tā qù Guǎngzhōu.	He’s going to Canton.
Tāmen qù Xiānggǎng.	They’re going to Hong Kong.
Wǒ qù Xī’ān.	I’m going to Xi’an.
Wǒ yě qù Kūnmíng.	I’m going to Kunming too.
Wǒmen qù chéng lǐ.	We’re going into town.
Wǒ qù wàitōu.	I’m going outside.

b) Purposes

Wǒ qù mǎi dōngxi.	I'm going shopping. ('buy things')
Wǒ qù zuò gōngkè.	I'm going to do my homework.
Wǒ qù shàng kè.	I'm going to class. (shàng 'go up; attend')
Wǒ qù duànliàn duànliàn.	I'm going to workout. ('train' – more Mainland)
Wǒ qù yùndong yùndong.	I'm going to workout. ('exercise' – more Taiwan)
Wǒ qù kàn péngyou.	I'm going to visit a friend.
Wǒ qù qǔ yīfu.	I'm going to pick up [my] clothes. ('get; fetch')
Wǒmen qù kāihuì	We're going to a conference. ('hold-meeting')

c) places and purposes

Wǒ qù Shànghǎi mǎi dōngxi.	I'm going to Shanghai to buy some things = I'm going shopping in Shanghai.
Wǒ qù Lúndūn kàn qīnqī.	I'm going to London to visit relatives.
Wǒ qù túshūguǎn kànshū.	I'm going to the library to read.
Wǒ qù túshūguǎn xuéxí!	I'm going to the library to study.
Wǒ qù chéng lǐ kàn péngyou.	I'm going to visit some friends in town.
Wǒ qù wàitou kàn fēijī.	I'm going outside to look at the airplanes.
Wǒmen qù chéng lǐ mǎi dōngxi.	We're going shopping in town.

d) In purpose clauses, the verb qù 'go' may be repeated, or simply postponed until the end of the sentence (where it is usually toneless):

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

5. Location

a) Existential sentences:

There are a number of sentence types that involve location. The dialogue illustrates two of them. One is an 'existential' type (related to the existential function of yǒu discussed in lesson 2 (A.3)). In this type, Chinese begins with the location (while English generally

begins with the existential verb ‘there is/are). Or another way of putting it, Chinese aligns existential sentences with possessive sentences:

Possession

Tā yǒu hěnduō péngyou.	She has a lot of friends.
Běijīng yǒu hěnduō hùtōng.	There are lots of hutong (‘lanes’) in Beijing.

Existence

Nàr yǒu kōngtiáo.	There’s air conditioning there.
Túshūguǎn yǒu diànhuà ma?	Is there a telephone in the library?

Existential sentences can be contrasted with locational ones, which involve a known item that is located by zài ‘be+at’:

Xíngli zài nàr.	The baggage is over there.
Diànhuà zài wàitōu.	The phone is outside.
Tāmen zài Niǚ Yuē.	They’re in New York.

b) Location before the verb:

We have also seen location marked by zài, either before the verb, or after. Generally, the zai-phrase is placed before the verb if it indicates the location of the event:

Wǒmen kěyǐ zài túshūguǎn chīfàn.	We can eat in the library.
Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng chī le.	We ate on the airplane.
Zài shénme dìfang mǎi piào?	Where does one buy tickets?

c) Location after the verb:

But if the location is not the place of action but rather, the endpoint of it, then the zài phrase follows. We can illustrate with the common verb fàng ‘put’:

Fàng zài nǎr?	Where do [we] put [it]?
Kěyǐ fàng zài nàr!	[You] can put [it] there.
Fàng zài wàitōu.	Put [it] outside.

Some verbs, however, allow position before the verb, and after the verb – with only a slight change of nuance. Location with zhù ‘live; stay’ can be interpreted as the place where the living takes place (zài Běijīng zhù) or the place where you end up (zhù zài Běijīng). There are some grammatical consequences to this which we will have to examine more closely later. For now, focus on familiar examples:

Location yǒu item:

Nàr yǒu kōngtiáo.	There is airconditioning there.
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Zài+location + V...:

Kěyǐ zài túshūguǎn kàn bào.	You can read the paper in the library.
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V zài+location:

Tā shēng zài Sūzhōu, xiànzài
yě zhù zài Sūzhōu.

She was born in Suzhou, and now she lives
in Suzhou.

Exercise:

1. There are a lot of large cities in China.
2. Why are there lots of people outside?
3. Can you buy tickets at the library?
4. Please put it outside.
5. I was born in Tiānjīn, but I live in Beijing nowadays.
6. We're going to Shanghai on the 18th.
7. My father's in Kūnmíng.

6. Scores

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

We can begin with the verbs yíng 'win' and shū 'lose'; in order to avoid complications, we use them in only in simplest of sentences, as shown. The final le indicates that the contest has already taken place (and so you're reporting it).

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

Scores are indicated with bǐ 'compare; than; to': thus a basketball score might be 99 bǐ 98; football 2 bǐ 0. The score can be questioned with jǐ 'how many': jǐ bǐ jǐ? Finally, a simple way to indicate the two teams is to list them with the coordinator hé 'and':

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

Exercise. Translate:

1. How about the US and Mexico, who won?
2. The US won, 2:1.
3. Did England win? / Yes, 3:1.
4. What was the score? / 98 – 92. Boston won. Boston's pretty strong!
5. 95 to what? / I'm not sure.
6. In pingpong [pīngpāngqiú], China's #1; the US is #1 in basketball [lánqiú].

7. DE

As we saw in L-1, the addition of de to a pronoun turns it into a possessive pronoun:

nǐ de lǎoshī	your teacher
tā de bàogào	her report

Added to a noun, it acts like the ‘s (or s’)

Zhāng xiānshēng de xíngli	Mr. Zhang’s luggage
Mǎ shīfu de dìdì	Master Ma’s younger brother

In many cases, the noun following de is implied, in which case it can be glossed as ‘the one/thing associated with’:

Zhè shì tā de xíngli.	>	Zhè shì tā de.	These are his.
Shì xuéshēng de zuòyè ma?	>	Shì xuéshēng de ma?	Is [it] the students’?
Nà shì zuótiān de bào.>		Nà shì zuótiān de.	That’s yesterday’s.
		Tā shì IBM de ma?	Is she from IBM?
		Bù, tā shì BT de.	No, she’s from BT.

Xíng Máo de yě shì lǎoshī ma?	Is the person named Mao also a teacher?
Wǒ bú tài qīngchu.	I’m not sure.

Xíng Zhào de shì lǎobǎn,	The person named Zhao’s the boss; the
xíng Lǐ de shì tā tàitai.	person named Li is his wife.

Shìjiè Bēi de xiāoxi hěn yǒu yìsi.	The news about the World Cup is quite interesting.
Yǒu Àoyùnhuì de xiāoxi ma?	Any news on the Olympics?

Note: Àoyùnhuì ‘(Ol[ympic]-sports-meeting) Olympics’

8. Where de might be expected but is not found

a) Country names

Expressions like Zhōngguó rén, Zhōngwén lǎoshī, or Běijīng dìtú do not usually require an intervening de. The rule is that country names (and language names) may be directly juxtaposed to following nouns.

b) Pronouns with kin terms

While tā-de lǎoshī requires de, tā dìdì often omits it. Why? The rule is that pronouns (only!) are generally attached to family terms directly.

Tā de péngyou	but	tā <de> tàitai
Wǒ de lǎoshī		wǒ <de> dìdì

Exercise

Explain that:

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

D. Names (detail)

1. The form of names

Chinese names are usually either two or three syllables long:

Wáng Mǎng	Lǐ Péng	Liú Bāng
Dù Fǔ	Cuī Jiàn	Jiāng Qīng
Dèng Xiǎopíng	Lǐ Dēnghuī	Lǐ Guāngyào
Jiāng Zémín	Zhū Róngjī	Máo Zédōng

Names of four or more syllables are usually foreign:

Zhōngcūn Yángzǐ	(Japanese)
Yuēhàn Shǐmìsī	John Smith

Notice that two-syllable *xìng*, like two-syllable *míngzi* are, by convention, written without spaces. (English syllabification practices are not suitable for pinyin; eg, to cite a real example, the *míngzi*, Geling, will 'wrap around' as Gel-ing rather than Ge-ling.)

2. *xìng*

Surnames (*xìng*) precede given names (*míngzi*). The *xìng* in the names given above are Wáng, Lǐ, Liú, Dù, Cuī, Jiāng etc.

Xìng are rather limited in number. In fact, an expression for 'the common people' is lǎobǎixìng 'old hundred names.' Most *xìng* are single-syllable (Zhāng, Wáng, Lǐ) but a few are double-syllable (Sīmǎ, Ōuyáng, Sītú). Sīmǎ, you should know, was the *xìng* of China's first major historian, Sīmǎ Qiān (145-86 BC), who wrote the Shǐ Jì, a history of China from earliest times to the time when he lived, in the Han dynasty.

The character primer called the Bǎijiāxìng 'Hundred family names' (that first appeared in the 10th century) gives over 400 single-syllable surnames and some 40 double. In modern times, rare surnames would enlarge those numbers considerably, but

relatively few surnames account for a large percentage of the population. Wilkinson's *Manual* lists the most common 20 *xìng* as follows (reading down from the left):

Lǐ	Chén	Xú	Lín
Wáng	Zhào	Sūn	Hé
Zhāng	Huáng	Hú	Guō
Liú	Zhōu	Zhū	Mǎ
Yáng	Wú	Gāo	Luó

These 20 names account for about 50% of the population. It is estimated that people named Lǐ alone number around 100 million.

Some *xìng* have meanings: Bái 'white,' Wáng 'king.' But others are (now) just names, eg Wú (of persons, as well as the name of several historical states).

Summary:

Xìng occupy first position in the name.

Most surnames are single syllable: Zhāng, Wáng, Lǐ.

A few disyllabic *xìng* are Chinese: Sīmǎ, Ōuyáng, Sītǔ; others are foreign, eg Japanese.

Xìng do not usually stand alone; they require either a *míngzi* or title:

Zhōu lǎoshī, nín hǎo; Zhōu Yún, huānyíng nǐ lái Běijīng.

3. *Míngzi*

Given names (*míngzi*) are more various and often selected for their meaning (as well as for their characters): Cài Qiáng 'Cai strong'; Cài Pǔ 'Cai great'; Cáo Hóng 'Cao red' (red being an auspicious color); Lín Yíxī 'Lin happy-hope'; Zhāng Shūxiá 'Zhāng virtuous-chivalrous'; Luó Jiāqí 'Luo family-in+good+order.' In many cases it is possible to guess the sex of the person from the meanings of the name. (Of the 6 names mentioned in this paragraph, #3,4,5 are female, #1,2,6 are male, as it turns out.)

It is common practice to incorporate generational names in the *míngzi* by assigning a particular syllable (often chosen from a poem) to each generation. So for example, Kǒng Lìnghuī and Kǒng Lìngwén share the syllable (or character) lìng to mark them as the same generation. Such practices allow people from the same district to work out – and remember - their kinship when they meet.

4. *Presenting names*

The verbs for presenting names are (using Wáng Ānshí as a model):

> xìng for surnames:

	Nǐ xìng shénme? you be+surnamed what?	/	Wǒ xìng Wáng.
(polite)	[Nín] guàixìng?	/	Wǒ xìng Wáng.

> jiào for míngzi or full names:

Nǐ jiào shénme (míngzi)? / Wǒ jiào Ānshí.
you be+named what (given+name)

Nǐ de míngzi jiào shénme? / Wǒ jiào Ānshí.
Wǒ jiào Wáng Ānshí.

> shì for míngzi, full names or xìng + title.

While jiào names (and xìng ‘surnames’), shì identifies (e.g. from an implied list, from within a group); for this reason, it allows title as well as míngzi or full name:

Wǒ shì Wáng lǎoshī.
Wǒ shì Wáng Ānshí.
Wǒ shì Ānshí.

5. Notes on jiào

To reiterate: jiào may introduce a míngzi--provided it has at least two syllables; or it may introduce a full name. jiào may not be followed by a single syllable! Conversely, xìng may not introduce a míngzi or a full name.

e.g.:

<i>Wáng Ānshí</i>	<i>Hú Shì</i>	<i>Sītú Huīlíng</i>
Xìng Wáng.	Xìng Hú.	Xìng Sītú.
Jiào Ānshí.	Jiào Hú Shì.	Jiào Huīlíng.
Jiào Wáng Ānshí.		Jiào Sītú Huīlíng
Shì Wáng lǎoshī.	Shì Hú Shì.	Shì Sītú Huīlíng.

Since jiào is associated with two or three syllables (but not one), some Chinese speakers find jiào Sītú (two syllables, but actually a double-barreled xìng) acceptable.

6. Usage

On the whole, people do not ask names, but wait to be introduced. But if you do ask a stranger a name (say someone seated next to you on a train) you would use the polite form, guìxìng, often with the deferential pronoun nín. [Gui’s common meaning is ‘be+expensive’ but in this context, it suggests the meaning ‘worthy’ – ‘your worthy name’].

[Nín] guìxìng? / Wǒ xìng Wèi.

In Taiwan, and sometimes on the Mainland, people may answer with humble forms:

(Taiwan) Guìxìng? / Bìxìng Wèi. (Lit. 'shabby surname')
(Mainland) Guìxìng? / Miǎn guì, xìng Wèi. (Lit. 'dispense with gui')

But typically, the response to guìxìng is to give your xìng and then volunteer your full name:

Model: Guìxìng? / Wǒ xìng Wèi, [wǒ] jiào Wèi Jiǔ'ān.

Exercise

a) Assuming you were an official of appropriate rank and eminence to address the question) write out how the following people might respond to <Nín> guìxìng?

1. Hú Shì, (20th C. philosopher and reformer, graduate of Cornell University): Wǒ xìng Hú, jiào Hú Shì.
2. Sīmǎ Qiān (the Han dynasty historian): Wǒ xìng...
3. Zhāng Xuéliáng (Manchurian warlord): Wǒ xìng...
4. Hán Yù (Tang dynasty scholar): Wǒ xìng...
5. Yáng Guīfēi (courtesan, from the late Tang dynasty): Wǒ xìng...

E. Introductions

Making introductions usually involves names and titles (Zhào Fāngfāng, Chén Huībó, Wèi lǎoshī, Yú tàitai), pointing words (zhè, nà), set expressions of greeting (nǐ hǎo) and often, some explanation of the connection, provided in a phrase such as zhè shì wǒ de lǎoshī ‘this is my teacher’. The last category includes noun forms or address words and titles, eg: xuéshēng ‘student’; xiānshēng ‘husband’ as well as ‘Mr.’ (and ‘teacher’); tàitai ‘wife’ as well as ‘Mrs.’

1. Demonstratives

Zhè ‘this’ and nà ‘that’, introduced earlier, are demonstratives. Later you will find that when these words combine with measure words, they are often pronounced zhèi and nèi, respectively, eg zhè ‘this’ but zhèi ge ‘this one’; nà ‘that’ but nèi ge ‘that one.’ You have also encountered place words corresponding to the set of demonstratives: zhèr (zhèlǐ) ‘here,’ nàr (nàlǐ) ‘there’ and nǎr (nǎlǐ) ‘where.’

2. Possessives (first phase)

To keep things manageable, we will provide relational information about people, in the format:

Zhè shì wǒ (de) ‘This is my....’

a) *With de:*

Zhè shì	wǒ de lǎoshī.	
	wǒ de Zhōngwén lǎoshī.	Chinese teacher
	wǒ de xuésheng	student
	wǒ de tóngxué.	classmate

wǒ de péngyou.	friend
wǒ de lǎo péngyou.	old = good friend
wǒ de lǎobǎn.	boss (sometimes jocular)

b) *Usually without de:*

Zhè shì	wǒ fùqīn.	father
	wǒ bàba.	Dad (intimate)
	wǒ mǔqīn	mother
	wǒ māma.	Mum (intimate)
	wǒ fùmǔ.	parents
	wǒ gēge.	older brother
	wǒ dìdì.	younger brother
	wǒ jiějie.	older sister
	wǒ mèimei.	younger sister

[not Taiwan]	wǒ àirén	spouse (husband, wife)
	wǒ xiānshēng	husband (neutral)
[younger people?]	wǒ lǎogōng	husband (intimate)
	wǒ taitai	wife (neutral)

3. Words for husband and wife

In Chinese, as in English, words for spouse go in and out of fashion. The use of lǎogōng for ‘husband,’ for example, seems to have been influenced by films and TV programs from Hong Kong and Taiwan, so that the term is current among younger urban people in the Mainland. There is a female version of lǎogōng, lǎopó, but this seems to have a jocular or even disrespectful tone, along the lines of English ‘my old lady,’ and does not appear to be particularly common on the Mainland. Older terms such as qīzi ‘wife’ and zhàngfu ‘husband,’ seem to be in decline and are used only by older people.

The PRC used to promote the use of àirén ‘love-person’ as a term for spouse (husband or wife), and the phrase zhè shì wǒ àirén is still common on the Mainland. The term causes some giggles among non-Mainlanders, for in Taiwan, àirén sometimes has the meaning of ‘sweetheart.’ (Àirén is not the normal word for ‘lover,’ however; that is qíng rén ‘feelings-person’ - the word used for the Chinese title of the French film, *The Lover*, for example.)

Another term that has come into vogue in informal situations on the Mainland is nèiwèi for ‘spouse’ (literally ‘that-one’). Peculiarly, it combines with a plural possessive pronoun even when the reference is singular: wǒmen nèiwèi ‘(our spouse) my husband/wife.’ This may be because it derives from the phrase wǒmen jiā de nèiwèi ‘our family DE spouse.’ Thus: Nǐmen nèiwèi zěmmeyàng? ‘How’s your spouse?’

Foreigners, though they may hear intimate or familiar terms, should be careful not to use them unless their relationship warrants it!

4. Responses

After being introduced, you can respond in various ways, eg ‘to Professor Qi’:

- O Qí lǎoshī, nǐ hǎo. Oh, Prof. Qi, how are you?
O, Qí lǎoshī, hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ. Oh, Prof. Qi, nice to meet you.
O, Qí lǎoshī, jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng. Oh, Prof. Qi, honored to meet you.

a) *Hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ*

In English, we feel the need to confirm the worth of meeting someone by saying eg ‘nice to meet you.’ Traditionally in China, the equivalent would be expressed by saying simply hǎo, or one of a number of deferential expressions. But nowadays, people in the more cosmopolitan cities - and particularly when they are talking to foreigners - will use the phrase hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ (‘very happy know you’) in more or less the same situations as English ‘nice to meet you.’

You don’t need to say hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ in the process of an introduction, but once one person has said it, the other tends to respond in the same way. The response may have a slightly different emphasis, expressed in the word order: Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng! ‘Happy to meet you too! = my pleasure!’

b) *Jiǔyǎng (dà míng)*

The response to being introduced to someone of eminence is jiǔyǎng, literally ‘long+time-admire’ – often repeated as jiǔyǎng jiǔyǎng. Sometimes dà míng ‘great name’ is added to that to give the meaning ‘I’ve long heard about you.’

c) *Kin term*

Another way of showing respect is to respond with a kin term; children and sometimes young adults, for example, may address elders as āyí ‘auntie’ or shūshu ‘uncle’.

Exercise

a) Liáng Mínmǐn, a (female) teacher, meets Dèng Lìlì (female) and introduces her student, Mǎ Yán (a male); fill in Dèng Lìlì’s responses:

- Liáng: Nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Liáng, jiào Liáng Mínmǐn.
Dèng:
Liáng: Dèng Lìlì, nǐ hǎo. Zhè shì Mǎ Yán, wǒ de xuéshēng.
Dèng:
Mǎ Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng.

b) *Translate:*

- 1) Miss Chén, this is my classmate, Wáng Bīnbīn.
- 2) This is my good friend, Bì Xiùqióng.
- 3) This is my younger sister, Chén Xiùxiù.
- 4) Professor Gāo, I’ve heard a lot about you.

F. Forms of Address

We can make a distinction between ordinary forms of address, like Mr. and Mrs., and titles which convey rank. Both follow surnames in Chinese (and in some cases, full names).

1. Common address forms - not usually used for oneself

- xiānshēng ‘Mr.; professor (first-born)’
Wáng xiānshēng; Wáng Nǚ xiānshēng. For a time on the Mainland, xiānshēng was used as a deferential title for older and eminent professors - male or female; this usage now seems rare for females, though it is still applied to older male professors.
- tàitai ‘Mrs.’ [with husband’s xìng]
Zhū tàitai. During the Mao years, tàitai was avoided as a term of address on the Mainland. Now it is common.
- fūrén ‘wife (man-person)’ [formal, also with husband’s xìng]
Hán fūrén; Zhū Róngjī fūrén. Typically used when referring to, or introducing, wives of officials, important persons.
- xiǎojie ‘miss (small-big+sister)’ [with woman’s xìng]
Téng xiǎojie, married to, say, Zhū xiānshēng; it is common to address women with their own surnames and either xiǎojie or a title or kinterm.

Other terms: There are a number of other terms that fit in this category but which beginning students are less likely to use. Here are two examples, using the surname Chén. Later, if you get a chance to work in Chinese businesses, you can observe the variety of titles and forms of address in more detail.

[Chén] lǎo used to address older people (male or female) of some eminence

[Chén] gōng to engineers or others who have, or had, positions in industry; gōng is short for gōngchéngshī ‘(engineering-teacher) engineer’

2. Titles.

- lǎoshī ‘master; professor (venerable-teacher)’
Wèi lǎoshī. Used for addressing teachers of both sexes, and on the Mainland, for people of other professions as well (see jiàoshòu, shīfu). Can be used of self: Wǒ shì Liú lǎoshī.

jiàoshòu	‘professor (teaching-instruct)’ <u>Zhōu jiàoshòu</u> ; <u>Zhào Yuánrèn jiàoshòu</u> . Nowadays on the Mainland, teachers of all ranks are usually addressed, and often address each other, as <u>lǎoshī</u> . <u>Jiàoshòu</u> is more likely to be used in formal settings, eg introductions, where it is important to indicate rank explicitly.		
zhǔrèn	‘director; chairperson (main-official+post)’ [of a company, academic department etc.] <u>Liào zhǔrèn</u>		
jīnglǐ	‘manager (of a company etc.)’ <u>Qián jīnglǐ</u>		
zǒngcái	‘director-general; CEO (overall-rule)’ <u>Cáo zǒngcái</u>		
(...)zhǎng	‘head of; chief of (...)’		
eg:	xiàozhǎng	principle of a school	(xiào ‘school’)
	yuànzǎng	dean; director of hospital etc.	(yuàn ‘public facility’)
	shìzhǎng	mayor	(shì ‘city’)
	shěngzhǎng	governor	(shěng ‘province’)
	kēzhǎng	department head (hospital)	(kē ‘section’)
	chùzhǎng	section chief (government)	(chù ‘office’)
	huìzhǎng	president of an association	(huì ‘association’)
	chǎngzhǎng	head of a factory	(chǎng ‘factory’)
zǒngtǒng	‘president’	Lǐ zǒngtǒng; Kělíndùn zǒngtǒng; Bùshí zǒngtǒng.	
zhǔxí	‘(main-seat) chairman’		Máo zhǔxí

Most of the titles in this list – except lǎoshī – can be prefixed with fù- ‘vice; deputy; associate.’ But while fù- might appear on a business card as part of the description of a person’s rank, office or function, it is not usually used in address. Thus a Mr. Li who is a fùzhǔrèn ‘associate director’ would usually be introduced simply as Lǐ zhǔrèn. A variety of possible fù-titles are listed below:

fùjiàoshòu	associate professor	fùxiàozhǎng	vice principal
fùzhǔrèn	associate director	fùshìzhǎng	vice mayor
fùjīnglǐ	deputy manager	fùzǒngtǒng	vice president

3. Addressing strangers

a) Used by locals or foreigners

xiǎojie	Xiǎojie, qǐngwèn...	Miss, may I ask ...
xiānshēng	Xiānshēng, jièguāng, jièguāng.	Sir, pardon me, can I get through? (...borrow-light.)

Note:

Though the expression lǎoshī, hǎo does occur as a passing greeting, a more considered greeting is usually required – one that includes the *xìng*: Wèi lǎoshī, nín hǎo, etc.

b) More used by locals (also see under kinterms, below)

shīfu	sir; m'am (originally to blue collar workers; to taxi drivers, construction workers etc.)
lǎo shīfu	as above, except older
lǎobǎn	boss (often endearingly)
tóngzhì	comrade (modeled on Russian usage); less common nowadays; hardly ever appropriate for foreigners to use.

c) Kinterms.

Chinese, like many cultures (including English in some regions and times) often uses kinterms for address where no actual kinship exists. Here are some examples, more for reference than for actual use at this stage. Usage varies greatly with region and with age of speaker. Unless otherwise stated, these kinterms are not used as titles (ie not with *xìng*).

shūshu	'uncle (father's younger brother)' > a man of one's father's generation (child to adult; young adult to father of good friend, etc.)
dàshū	as above, but older speakers rather than children
āyí	'auntie; nanny' > eg child to woman of mother's generation
dāmā	'madam' > more in the north(?), to older looking women, but not very old; in southern regions, the term <u>dàniáng</u> may be more common.
dàshěnr	'aunty'; more in the countryside, an affectionate term for women of in the 40-50 age range. Also after a <i>xìng</i> : <u>Wáng shěnr</u> 'Aunt(ie) Wang.'
dàyé; lǎodàyé	(<u>yéyé</u> = 'grandfather; uncle') sir, to old looking men, but not very old; also <u>lǎodàyé</u> .
xiǎo dìdi	'little brother' > adult to male child [especially in Taiwan?]
xiǎo mèimei	'little sister' > adult to female child [especially in Taiwan?]
xiǎo péngyou	'little friend' > adult to child

4. The changing scene

There has been considerable shift in the use of titles and address forms in the Mainland since the days of Mao Zedong. When the Communist Party was taken more seriously there, tóngzhì, comrade was the common form of address, and with the prestige of the proletariat, shīfu 'master in trade' spread from blue collar factory workers to workers in all professions as a form of address. Now lǎoshī seems to be taking over from shīfu, spreading from being a form of address for teachers to a form of address for people in other professions. Where once one would address a bus driver as sījī shīfu 'driver master,' one now hears sījī lǎoshī.

Exercise:

Greet the following people appropriately:

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| Eg | A teacher named Zhào | Zhào lǎoshī, nín hǎo. |
| 1 | A married woman whose husband’s surname is Bái: | |
| 2 | A young woman surnamed Guō: | |
| 3 | The wife of an important official named Zhū: | |
| 4 | A CEO named Dèng: | |
| 5 | The eminent professor Xú: | |
| 6 | The deputy manager of a company, named Qián: | |
| 7 | The principal of a school, named Yuán: | |
| 8 | An old man whom you meet in a park: | |
| 9 | Your bus driver, named Zhào: | |
| 10 | Your teacher’s husband whose surname is Huáng: | |

G Sample dialogues

1. Asking names

a) Relatively polite or formal ways of asking names, e.g. on meeting on a train. (Hng = xìng Huáng de, Wáng = xìng Wáng-de). Note the word for business card, míngpiàn, literally ‘name-card’.

Hng	Ei, nín hǎo, wǒ xìng Huáng, zhè shì wǒ de míngpiàn. Nín guìxìng?	Hi, how are you? My (sur)name’s Huang; this is my card. What’s your [sur]name?
-----	--	--

(Looking at the card.)

Wáng	O, Húang lǎoshī, nín hǎo. Wǒ jiào Wáng Ānshí – wǒ de míngpiàn.	Oh, Prof. Huang, how are you? I’m [named] Wang Anshi – my card.
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(He too looks at the card.)

Hng	A Wáng jīnglǐ, nín hǎo. O nín shì Wēiruǎn de! Wēiruǎn hěn yǒumíng a!	Ah. Manager Wang, how do you do? Oh, you’re with Microsoft! Microsoft’s famous!
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Wáng	Hái xíng ba!	I guess [if you say so]. <i>(Still okay BA.)</i>
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guì:	often [g-way], though some pronounce guì more like [g-wee].
jiào:	rhymes with <u>xiǎo</u>
piàn	rhymes with <u>jiàn</u> , <u>xiān</u> ; <u>míngpiàn</u>
Wēiruǎn de	‘(tiny-soft DE)’

2. Introductions:

a)

- Jiǎ. Mínmǐn, zhè shì wǒ de péngyou, Zhāng Jīn. Minmin, this is my friend, Zhang Jin.
- Yí. A, Zhāng Jīn, nǐ hǎo. Ah, Zhang Jin, how do you do.

b)

- Jiǎ. Zhōu xiānshēng, zhè shì Wèi lǎoshī, wǒ de Zhōngwén lǎoshī. Mr. Zhou, this is Prof. Wei, my Chinese teacher.
- Yí. O, Wèi lǎoshī, jiǔyǎng, jiǔyǎng! Ah, Prof. Wei, I've heard a lot about you.

c)

- Jiǎ. Máo xiǎojie, zhè shì wǒ māma. Miss Mao, this is my mother.
- Yí. O, āyí, nǐ hǎo. Oh, auntie, how do you do.

d)

This conversation involves three people, Wèi (male), Zhào Fāngfāng (female) and Chén Huībó (male). Wèi is the first speaker. He wishes to introduce his friend Zhào Fāngfāng to Chén Huībó. Wèi gets Zhào Fāngfāng's attention by calling out her míngzi (Fāngfāng), then leads Chén over to her and says something about him. The two then acknowledge each other.

- Wèi Fāngfāng, zhè shì wǒ de péngyou, Chén Huībó. Fangfang, this is my friend, Chen Huibo.
- Zhào Chén Huībó, nǐ hǎo; wǒ shì Zhào Fāngfāng. Chen Huibo, how are you? I'm Zhao Fangfang.
- Chén Zhào Fāngfāng, nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo, hěn gāoxìng rènshi nǐ. Zhao Fangfang, how are you? (very happy know you) Glad to meet you.
- Zhào Rènshi nǐ, wǒ yě hěn gāoxìng. Nice to meet you too.

zhè: rhymes with rè; cf. zhì, which rhymes with shì, chì, rì etc.

With all the names, and the different roles, introductions can be confusing. A diagram is helpful:

You are introducing Chén Huībó (male) to your friend (Zhào) Fāngfāng (female), whom you address simply as Fāngfāng; she immediately greets Chén and gives her full name:

(ZHÀO) Fāngfāng (f)

CHÉN Huībó (m)

*You

e)

In China, you will find yourself in situations when you have to talk to children. Here's a way to start off [dà 'be-big' is an adult, xiǎo 'be-small' is a child]:

Dà	Xiǎo péngyou, nǐ hǎo.	Hi, little friend.
Xiǎo	(to female) Āyí hǎo. (to male) Shūshu, hǎo.	Hello, auntie. Hello, uncle.
Dà	Xiǎo péngyou chī shénme ne?	What are [you] eating?
Xiǎo	Chī táng ne!	Candy.
Dà	Hǎochī ma?	Is it good?
Xiǎo.	Hǎochī.	Yes.
Dà	Hǎo, xiǎo péngyou, zàijiàn.	Okay, goodbye.
Xiǎo	Āyí/Shūshu zàijiàn.	Bye auntie/uncle.
Dà	Zhēn kě'ài!	(really loveable) Cute!

Notes:

chī...ne

the final ne suggests ongoing action; cf. Kàn shénme ne?

zhēn

adverb 'really; truly'; cp. Zhēn yǒu yìsi 'really interesting'

H. Pinyin

1. Initials:

Recall your initials chart, and the complementary distribution of sounds:

-i is never 'ee'

-u is 'oo', never 'yu'

zì zhì
cì chì
sì shì
rì

zū (zūn...) zhū (zhūn...)
cū (cūn...) chū (chūn...)
sū (sūn...) shū (shūn...)
rū (rūn...)

-i is 'ee only'

-u is 'yu' never 'oo'

ji (jie, jian...)
qi (qie, qian...)
xi (xie, xian...)

ju (jue, juan...)
qu (que, quan...)
xu (xue, xuan...)

Exercise:

a) Write lines 3, 4, and 5 of your initial chart (z, c, s etc.) on a small sheet of paper, one for every three students. Then, as your teacher recites the list of words twice, determine by consensus which initial is involved:

[Samples: xie, chu, xi, qu, su, shu, zhun, jun, xian, ci, shuai, xu, cai, shi, xi, shun etc.]

b) Now, by column, read aloud the following sets:

yī	èr	sān	sì	wǔ	liù	qī	bā	jiǔ	shí
dou	zhuo	gou	tuo	lou	po	zou	shuo	rou	mo
duo	zhou	guo	tou	luo	pou	zuo	shou	ruo	mou

Notice that row-5 initials do not appear in this exercise; why is that?

2. Tone combos II:

Recall the prototype examples of the six sets of tone combos presented in lesson 2: lǎoshī, hái hǎo, zàijiàn, bú rè, hěn máng, bù gāo. Now we add six more combos, for a total of 12, leaving only three more (in lesson 4) to complete the set of 15.

dāngrán	lánqiú	kǎoshì
Zhōngwén	píngcháng	lǐbài
Kūnmíng	tóngxué	zhǔrèn
jīnglǐ	gāoxìng	fùmǔ
Wēiruǎn	gōngkè	qù nǎr
xīnkǔ	kāi huì	diànnǎo 'computer'

I. Rymes

a) A traditional rhyme for the new year which mentions several new year customs, such as buying new clothes and setting off fire crackers.

Xīnnián dào, xīnnián dào,
chuān xīn yī, dài xīn mào,
pīpī pāpā fàng biānpào!

new year arrives, new year arrives
wear new clothes, wear new hat
pipi papa set-off firecrackers

b) This next rhyme, with its wonderfully provocative content, tells the story of life in a factory – from the workers’ point of view:

Èrlóu sānlóu, chángzhǎng shūjì	2nd floor, 3rd floor, factory-head sect’y
sìlóu, wǔlóu, qīnqī guānxi,	4th floor, 5th floor, kin connections
gōngrén jiējí, dǐngtiānlìdì,	workers (social)class, salt-of-the-earth
zhīzú chánglè, zán bù shēngqì.	be content with one’s lot, we not angry

Notes:

shūjì	secretary of a political or other organization (book-note+down)
dǐngtiān lìdì	be of indomitable spirit (support-sky set+up-ground)
zhīzú chánglè	(be+content+with+one’s+lot – lasting+happiness)
zán	a reduced form of <u>zámen</u>

[Overheard at a seminar on Chinese language teaching, Harvard, 2002.]

Exercises

With your knowledge of pinyin, see if you can read out and recognize Chinese versions of the English place names, and other words borrowed from English:

<i>1. Place names</i>	<i>hint</i>	<i>English word</i>
Fóluólǐdá		
Yálishāngnà		
Māsàzhūsài		
Nèibùlāsījiā		
Éhài’è		
Élègāng	Yes, it’s a state.	
Zhījiāgē	city	
Àidīngbǎo	in Scotland	
Hóngdūlāsī	Central America	
Ālāsījiā		
Àodàliyà		
Bāxī		
Dálāsī	Texas	
Mìxīxībǐ		
Mìsūlǐ		
Bājīstǎn		

2. *Common nouns*

qiǎokeli or zhūgǔli	food
zhūgǔli shèngdài	a treat
sānmíngzhì	food
hànbǎobāo	fast food
qīsī hànbǎo or zhīshì hànbǎobāo	
shālā	leafy food
bīsà bǐng	fast food (<u>bǐng</u> ‘biscuit; cracker’)
wéitāmìng	
kěkǒukělè	
Màidāngláo	
Hànbǎowáng	wáng ‘king’

3. *People (Mainland usage)*

Shāshībīyà	
Yuēhàn Mí’ěrdùn	poet
Suǒfēiyà Luólán	
Mǎlóng Báilándù	‘The horror, the horror!’
Hāimíngwèi	
Àosēn Wēi’ěrsī	
Gélǐgāolì Pàikè	
Yīnggélì Bāomán	
Luósīfú	4 terms
Dùlǔmén	1 term, but big bang
Gé’ěrbāqiáofū	USSR
Shīwǎxīngé	‘I’ll be back – as governor!’
Shītàilóng	

2. *Here are some sentences written by students learning Chinese; identify the mistakes and correct them, giving a brief reason or general rule:*

1. *Wǒmen hái méi chī le.
2. *Méiyǒu kǎoshì míngtiān.
3. *Zhōu, nǐ è bu è?
4. *Míngtiān yǒu shénme kǎoshì? / Míngtiān méiyǒu.
5. *Chī fàn le ma? / Hái méi ne? / Wǒ yě. (‘Me neither!’)
6. *Tā hěn hǎochī.
7. *Míngtiān shémme kǎoshì yǒu?

3. Hot lines (rèxiàn) are popular in China. In the city of Kūnmíng, (in Yúnnán, in the far southwest of China), you could (in the year 2000) dial the hotline number 95003 followed by 19918 to get an explanation of your personality based on your color preferences: those who like red, for example, are warm and enthusiastic (rèqíng) and uninhibited (bēnfàng).

Other numbers let you listen to popular songs. Here is a selection of songs by some well-known Chinese singers. State your choice and read out the number. In a conversation, the question would be Nǐ yào nǎige? ‘You want which-one?’ with the verb yào ‘want’; the answer: Wǒ yào èr líng jiǔ sān, Cuī Jiàn, Huáfāng Gūniang. You’ll have to guess which character means male (nán), and which female (nǚ).

#	singer	sex	song
2093	Cuī Jiàn	男	Huáfāng Gūniang ‘flower house girl’
2094	Cuī Jiàn		Yīwú suǒyǒu ‘to have nothing at all’
2095	Cuī Jiàn		Cóng tóu zài lái ‘Let’s take it from the top again’
2096	Zhāng Xuéyǒu	男	Qíngwǎng ‘Web of love’
2097	Zhāng Xuéyǒu		Nǐ lěng DE xiàng fēng! ‘You’re cold as the wind’
2098	Wáng Fēi	女	Wǒ yuànyì ‘I’m willing’
2099	Wáng Fēi		Nǚrén ‘Woman’
2100	Tián Zhèn	女	Yěhuā ‘Wild flower’
2101	Tián Zhèn		Zìyóu zìzài ‘Free and easy’
2102	Kē Yǐmǐn	女	Ài wǒ ‘Love me’
2103	Dèng Lìjūn	女	Yè lái xiāng ‘Fragrance in the night’ = name of a flower