5 Miscellany

5.1 Tonal shifts

Before leaving the survey of sounds and notation, we need to return to the subject of tone, and take note of the phenomenon of tonal shifts (called 'tone sandhi' by linguists). It turns out that in certain contexts, tones undergo shifts from one to the other. (In Mandarin, the contexts where this occurs are very limited; in regional languages such as Hokkien, such shifts are much more pervasive.) We will mention these shifts here, and then practice producing them more systematically over the course of later units.

5.2 Low-tone shift

If two low tones (tone-3s) appear consecutively *in the same phrase*, the first shifts to a rising tone:

3	+	3	>	2 + 3	
low	+	low	>	rising + low	
hěn + hǎo		>		hén hǎo	'good'
hěn + lěng		>		hén lěng	'cold'
Lǐ + lǎoshī		>		Lí lǎoshī	'Professor Lee'

It is, of course, possible to have three or more low tones in a row, but such cases will be considered later.

5.3 Two single-word shifts

The are also a few more idiosyncratic shifts that involve only single words. The negative, <u>bu</u>, is falling tone except when followed by another falling tone, in which case it shifts to rising tone: <u>bù hǎo</u> 'not well', but <u>bú lèi</u> 'not tired'. In the latter case, the result is a trajectory like the sides of a mountain, up, then down, and students in the past have kept track of this shift by calling it the 'Fuji shift', after Mount Fuji (which is, of course, in Japan, not China). Below, <u>bu</u> is shown in combination with some adjectival verbs (called Stative Verbs in Chinese grammatical tradition); these sets (involving stative verbs from the conversational material in Unit 1) should be repeated regularly until fully internalized.

bù gāo	'not tall'
bù máng	'not busy'
bù hǎo	'not well'

And exaggerated >	bú lèi	'not tired'	bú è 'not hungry'
	bú rè	'not hot'	bú cuò 'not bad'

Another single-word shift involves the numeral <u>yi</u> 'one'. In counting, and in many compounds, it is level toned: <u>yī</u>, <u>èr</u>, <u>sān</u>, <u>sì</u> '1, 2, 3, 4'; <u>yīshēng</u>. But where <u>yi</u> is grammatically linked to a following 'measure word', it shows the same tonal shift as <u>bu</u>, rising before a falling tone (<u>yí fèn</u> 'a copy'), but falling before any other (<u>yì bāo</u> 'a pack').

yì zhāng	'a [table]'
yì tiáo	'a [fish]'
yì běn	'a [book]'

but yí fèn   'a copy [of a newspaper]'

Note that the low tone shift (<u>hěn</u> + <u>hǎo</u> > <u>hén</u> <u>hǎo</u>) applies to any word (or syllable) that fits the grammatical condition (of being within a phrase); but the shift from falling to rising affects only a few words, including <u>bu</u> and <u>yi</u>.

5.4 The apostrophe

In certain contexts, an apostrophe appears between the syllables of a compound written in pinyin: <u>Xī'ān</u> [the name of a city in China]; <u>hǎi'ōu</u> 'seagull'; <u>chǒng'ài</u> 'dote on'. The apostrophe is used when a syllable beginning with a vowel letter (a, e, o) is preceded (without space) by another syllable; in other words, where the syllable boundary is ambiguous. By convention, the apostrophe is only used when the trailing syllable begins with a vowel; a word like <u>yīngān</u>, with two potential syllable divisions, is always to be interpreted as yīn + gān, never yīng + ān (which would be <u>yīng'ān</u>).

6 Writing connected text in pinyin

Unlike earlier systems of Chinese phonetic notation, some of which were intended as fully fledged auxiliary writing systems that could co-exist with (or even replace) characters, pinyin was intended as an adjunct to characters, used to indicate pronunciation and to provide a means for alphabetical ordering. For this reason, the rules and conventions for writing connected text in pinyin were not well defined at first. However increasing use of computers for the production of text and in everyday communication, as well as the proliferation of contact between China and the rest of the world has put a premium on the use of pinyin. Nowadays, in addition to its use in pedagogical materials such as this book, pinyin is used for emailing, for input in word processing, for url or email addresses, and to complement characters on advertisements, announcements, and menus, particularly those intended for an international audience in Chinese cities and abroad.

In 1988, the State Language Commission issued a document with the translated title of "The Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography," and with a few minor exceptions, this textbook conforms to those proposed rules. [The <u>ABC Chinese-English Dictionary</u>, cited at the end of the Background chapter, contains a translation of this document as an appendix.] Only two general points will be mentioned here. First, normal punctuation practices hold. Sentences begin with capital letters, as do proper names; they end with periods, and other punctuation marks are used more or less as in English. Second, words, not syllables, are enclosed by spaces. Thus 'teacher' is written <u>lǎoshī</u>, not <u>lǎo shī</u>. Characters, by contrast, which always represent syllable-length units, are separated by a space regardless of word boundaries. Of course, defining what a word is can be problematical, but pinyin dictionaries or glossaries can be relied upon to make those decisions for us. Other conventions, such as the use of the hyphen, will be noted when needed. So when you write pinyin, it should look like this:

Gémìng bú shì qǐngkè chīfàn….
revolution not be invite-guests eat-meal
Revolution isn't [like] inviting guests over for a meal….
<div align="right">Mao Zedong</div>

Writing pinyin in this way makes it readable. And in fact, where emailing in characters is restricted by technical problems, pinyin can serve even without tone marks so long as the above orthographical conventions are observed: Geming bu shi qingke chifan….

7 Recapitulation

That completes our survey of the sounds and transcription of Mandarin Chinese. Already you will be able to pronounce the names of Chinese people and places considerably better than television and radio newscasters and announcers generally do. Exercise 7 reviews what you have covered in this lesson.

Exercise 7
a) Write out the formula for all possible pinyin syllables; list the medials; list the finals.

b) Place the tone marks given in the parentheses in the correct position in the syllables:

    xue (/)   bei (–)   sou (v)   jie (\)   bie (/)   suo (v)

c) List (or recite) 12 surnames, grouped by tone.

d) Write out the table of initial consonants. How many rows are there? Which rows are particularly problematical? What sounds (and vowel symbols) can follow the row-5 initials?

e) Pronounce the pairs on the tone indicated. Note: in this exercise, as well as in (h) below, not all syllables are actual Chinese words on the tone cited; cf. English 'brink' and 'blink', 'bring' and 'bling', but only 'brick' – no 'blick' (yet).

i.   (tone 1)   qi – ci, xi – si, ji – zi, qu – cu, xu – su, ju – zu

ii.   (tone 2)   zi – zhi, ci – chi, ji – zhi, xi – shi, si – shi, qi – chi

iii.   (tone 3)   de – dei, ge – gei, le – lei, zhe – zhei

iv.   (tone 3)   bie – bei, lie – lei, pie – pei, die – dei.

v.   (tone 1)   po–pou, bo–duo, luo–lou, tuo–po, ruo–rou, mo–luo, tuo–tou

f)   Pronounce the following personal and place names:

Zhōu Ēnlái	Máo Zédōng	Jiǎng Jièshí	Cáo Yǔ
(premier)	(chairman)	(Chiang Kai-shek)	(20th C playwrite)

Lǐ Dēnghuī	Lǐ Xiāngjūn	Sòng Měilíng	Wáng Zhìzhì
(former Tw pres.)	(a patriotic courtesan)	(wife of Chiang)	(b-ball player)

Dèng Xiǎopíng	Zhū Róngjī	Lǐ Xiǎolóng	Cáo Cāo
(post Mao leader)	(recent premier)	(Bruce Lee)	(historical figure)

Běijīng	Xī'ān	Guǎngzhōu	Zhèngzhōu
(capital)	(in Shaanxi)	(Canton city)	(city in Henan)

Sìchuān	Jiāngxī	Chóngqìng	Chǔxióng
(province)	(province)	(city in W. China)	(city in Yunnan)

g) Apply the tone-change rules to the following phrases:

hěn lěng	bu gāo	lǎobǎn	bu guì	lǎo Lǐ	yi běn
cold	not tall	'boss'	cheap	old Lee	one book

bu hǎo	yǔsǎn	bu duì	nǐ hǎo	bu cuò	yi fèn
not good	umbrella	wrong	hello	not bad	one copy

h) Read the sets listed below aloud. Each set of three syllables follows the pattern 'rising, rising, falling', like the usual list intonation of English '1, 2, 3', or 'boats, trains, planes'; lá, wéi, jìn!

lá	wéi	jìn!
láo	tái	dù!
sóu	sí	mìng!
zí	xiá	qìng!
ní	zhí	hòu!
lái	duó	zhèn!
fó	qí	cì!
xíng	cuó	shì!
móu	guó	shòu!
rén	béi	zhà!

Coda

Chinese who studied English in China in the sloganeering days prior to the 80s can often remember their first English sentence, because in those days textbook material was polemical and didactic and lesson content was carefully chosen for content and gravity. So let your first sentence also carry some weight, and be appropriate for the endeavors you are about to begin. Here it is, then:

> 種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆。
> Zhòng guā dé guā, zhòng dòu dé dòu.
> plant melon get melon, plant bean get bean
> *'[You] reap what you sow.'*

(Cf. xīguā 'water melon'; dòuzi 'beans; peas'.)

Zàijiàn.	'Goodbye. (again-see) '
Míngtiān jiàn.	'See you tomorrow! (tomorrow see)'

Shrine in a Kūnmíng restaurant to Guāndì, a guardian spirit revered by owners of small businesses, soldiers, secret societies and others. [JKW 1997]

17