

Lesson 4: Nationality, origins

Rù guó wèn jìn, Enter country ask what-is-forbidden,
rù xiāng wèn sú, enter village ask customs,
rù mén wèn huì. enter home ask taboos.

From the Zhōu Lǐ 'The Rites of Zhou,' in Classical Chinese

Sì hǎi zhīnèi jiē xiōngdì 4 seas within all brothers.

Analects of Confucius, Classical Chinese

A. Transition

1. Adverbs reviewed:

Translate the following sentences into good English – noting the adjustments that are necessary; then try back-translating from English into Chinese.

Zōngcái bù yídìng hěn yǒu qián, kěshì yídìng hěn máng.

Fùzǒngtǒng bù yídìng hěn yǒumíng, dànshì fùzǒngtǒng yídìng hěn lei.

Wǒmen yígòng zhǐ yǒu sān kuài qián – sān kuài bú gòu!

Tā hěn máng; wǒ yě hěn máng, shì yīnwèi kǎoshì hěn duō.

Zhēn lèi, zuótīān yǒu kǎoshì, jīntīān yǒu bàogào!

Nǐ bú lèi, wǒ yě bú lèi, zánmen qù kàn péngyou, hǎo bù hǎo?

Zhōngwén hěn nán, dànshì lǎoshī dōu bù yán

Wǒmen dōu hěn è, hái méi chī fàn ne!

Wǒ wèn tāmen è bú è. / Tāmen zěnmē shuō? / Shuō dōu bú è.

Wǒmen bù dōu hěn è: tāmen hái méi chīfàn; kěshì wǒ ne, wǒ yǐjīng ('already') chī le!

Exercise: Provide rough equivalents in Chinese for the following:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. I'm really tired! | 2. We're tired too. |
| 3. We're all tired. | 4. But none of us is nervous. |
| 5. I'm still hungry. | 6. I'm tired and nervous. |
| 7. He's so cute. | 8. Cool! |

Because age is crucial to status in China, age is questioned more readily than in English speaking countries. Of the several ways of asking the question, the most neutral uses the phrase duō dà ‘(to+what+degree be+big) how old,’ often with a final le (‘change of state,’ suggesting ‘so far.’) If a verb is present to link the subject with duō dà, it is usually yǒu, not shì. Here are some examples:

Qǐng wèn, nín duō dà <le>? /	Excuse me, how old are you (by now)?
Wǒ èrshíbā suì <le>.	I’m 28.

Tā duō dà <le>? /	How old is he (by now)?
Tā zhǐ yǒu bā suì <le>.	He’s only 8.

Zhǐ, as adverb, requires a following verb, and the one used for age is yǒu (not shì).

c) Year in school or college

‘Year’ or ‘class’ in school or college is niánjí, a compound consisting of nián ‘year’ and jí ‘level’: yìniánjí ‘first year (‘freshman’), èrniánjí ‘second year (sophomore)’ etc. The question is formed with the low toned jǐ ‘how many; how much’; hence, jǐniánjí ‘what year.’

Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì jǐniánjí de <xuéshēng>? (... ‘how+many levels DE student?)	May I ask your year in school, please?
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Wǒ shì sìniánjí de <xuéshēng>.	I’m a fourth year student.
Wǒ shì Qīng Huá sānniánjí de xuéshēng.	I’m a 3rd year student at Qing Hua.
Wǒ bú shì xuéshēng.	I’m not a student.
Wǒ shì yánjiūshēng.	I’m a graduate student (‘postgraduate’). (‘research student’)

Exercises. Explain:

that you are [years old];

that you're a [number] year student at [university];

that you were born in [date];

that you came to [place] in [year];

that you're going to China to study Chinese in June.

3. *Dǎsuàn 'plan to'*

Míngtiān méiyǒu kè, wǒmen dǎsuàn qù
Cháng Chéng.

No class tomorrow, we're planning to
go to the Great Wall ('long wall').

Míngtiān wǒmen dǎsuàn qù chéng lǐ
mǎi dōngxi.

We're planning to go shopping in
town tomorrow.

Wǒ míngnián dǎsuàn qù Běijīng
xuéxí Zhōngwén.

Next year, I'm planning to go to
Beijing to study Chinese.

4. *cóng...dào 'from...to...'*

cóng xīngqīyī dào xīngqīsì

from Monday to Thursday

or cóng xīngqīyī dào wǔ

cóng èryuè dào sìyuè

from February to April

cóng míngtiān dào lǐbàiwǔ

from tomorrow to Friday

Cóng xīngqīsān dào xīngqīwǔ

We don't have class from Wed.

wǒmen méiyǒu kè.

to Friday.

Notice that *cóng-dào* phrases are 'time when' and - unlike English equivalents – *they are placed before their verb*.

5. *Alternatives to the construction qù + place*

We have seen that destination can be expressed directly after the verb qù (or lái): qù Běijīng, lái Měiguó. This pattern is probably a southern feature of Mandarin, since it is common to southern regional languages such as Cantonese and Hokkien, and contrasts with another

pattern commonly used in Mandarin, one that involves the prepositional dào ‘to,’ just introduced in the last section (and a final qu that is often toneless):

Nǐ qù nǎr? > Nǐ dào nǎr qu?
Wǒ qù Běijīng. > Wǒ dào Běijīng qu.

Though stylistic factors may favor one pattern over the other in some contexts, for the most part the two seem to be synonymous. The following examples introduce the verb xiǎng ‘think; think of; intend to; plan to; want to’ and the noun sùshè ‘dormitory’:

Qǐng wèn:

Nǐ xiànzài qù nǎr? / Wǒ qù sùshè. >
Nǐ xiànzài dào nǎr qu? / Wǒ dào sùshè qu.

Jīntiān, wǒ bù xiǎng qù túshūguǎn, wǒ xiǎng qù chéng lǐ kàn péngyou. >
Jīntiān, wǒ bù xiǎng dào túshūguǎn qu, wǒ xiǎng dào chéng lǐ qu kàn péngyou.

And some examples with the indefinite use of nǎr or nǎlǐ:

Nǐ qù nǎr? / Wǒ bú qù nǎr! >
Nǐ dào nǎr qu? / Wǒ bú dào nǎr qu.

There is, in fact, an alternative to the prepositional form with dào that uses shàng ‘ascend; on,’ but shàng in this context seems to carry with it a special nuance of ‘setting off for someplace,’ and so is much more common in the question than in the answer:

Nǐ qù nǎr?	Where are you going?	Wǒ qù túshūguǎn.
Nǐ dào nǎr qu?	Where are you going?	Wǒ dào túshūguǎn qu.
Nǐ shàng nǎr qu?	Where are you off to?	Wǒ shàng túshūguǎn qu.

6. Follow up Qs, with final qu (often toneless): Are you going there to []?

Hǎo, nà wǒ zǒu le, wǒ gāi qù túshūguǎn:

Zuò gōngkè qu ma? [You] going [there] to do homework?

Kàn bào qu ma? [You] going [there] to read the paper?

Míngtiān děi qù Běijīng:

Kāihuì qu ma? [You] going [there] to a meeting?

Kàn péngyou qu ma? [You] going [there] to visit friends?

Hǎo, wǒ xiànzài děi qù chéng lǐ:

Qǔ yīfu qu ma? [You] going [there] to pick up [your] clothes?

Mǎi dōngxī qu ma? [You] going [there] to shop?

Chīfàn qu ma? [You] going [there] to eat?

7. More destinations:

fànguǎnr	restaurant	cāntīng	cafeteria
yóujú	post office	shāngdiàn	shop; store
shísì hào lóu	(14 # bldg) building #14		

As China modernizes, and the shops on the street change their form and function, new terms come into use. Here are a few which seem to be current:

wǎngbā	internet café (net-bar)
kāfēiguǎn / kāfēidiàn	coffee shop
lěngyǐndiàn	(cold-drink-shop)
shípǐnjiē	food-street (food-goods-street)
xiǎochī zhōngxīn	food center (snack center)

8. More purposes:

zǒu(yì)zǒu	take a walk
zhuàn(yì)zhuàn	take a stroll
xiūxi	take a rest
shuìjiào	sleep

kàn fēngjǐng	look at the scenery
hē kāfēi, chá	to drink coffee, tea
jiè shū	borrow a book
xuéxí	to study (in general)
mǎi bào(zhì)	buy a paper
mǎi yīfu	buy some clothes
mǎi lǐwù	buy a present
mǎi piào, yóupiào	buy a ticket, stamps
xǐ yīfu	wash [your] clothes
dǎ diànhuà	make a telephone call
fā email	send some email
yòng diànnǎo	use [your] computer

B. Dialogue: Biographical questions

Jiǎ is a Chinese student who has just met Yǐ an overseas student who has been studying Chinese at Qīng Huá Dàxué in Beijing for the past year.

Jiǎ	Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì něiguó rén?	May I ask your nationality?
Yǐ	Wǒ shì Jiānádà rén.	I'm Canadian.
Jiǎ	Kěshì nǐ xiàng <yí>ge Zhōngguó rén.	But you look like a Chinese.
Yǐ	Wǒ fùqīn shì Zhōngguó rén, mǔqīn shì Měiguó rén, kěshì wǒ shēng zài Jiānádà. Nǐ qù guo ma?	My father's Chinese, my mother's American, but I was born in Canada. Have you been?
Jiǎ	Méi qù guo, kěshì hěn xiǎng qù. Nǐ shì Jiānádà shénme dìfāng rén?	I haven't, but I'd love to. Whereabouts in Canada are you from?

Yǐ	<i>Duōlúnduō, wǒ shēng zai Duōlúnduō, wǒ yě zhù zai Duōlúnduō.</i>	<i>Toronto, I was born in Toronto. and I live in Toronto.</i>
Jiā	Duōlúnduō hěn yǒumíng!	Toronto is famous.
Yǐ	<i>Shì ma?</i>	<i>[That] so?</i>
Jiǎ.	Shì a, yīnwèi Zhōngguó rén hěn duō!	Yes, because there are lots of Chinese there.
Yǐ	<i>Nà, nǐ ne? Nǐ shì Běijīng rén ba?</i>	<i>And you, you're from Beijing?!</i>
Jiǎ	Bù, wǒ shēng zai Xī'ān, yě zhāng zai Xī'ān kěshì xiànzài zhù zai Běijīng.	No, I was born in Xi'an, and I grew up in Xi'an but now I live in Beijing.
Yǐ	<i>Nǐ shì něinián lái Běijīng de?</i>	<i>Which year did you come to Beijing?</i>
Jiā	Wǒ shì 1999 nián lái de. Wǒ fùmǔ hái zhù zài Xī'ān.	I came in 1999. My parents still live in Xi'an.
Yǐ	<i>Nà nǐ xǐ bù xǐhuān Běijīng?</i>	<i>So do you like Beijing?</i>
Jiā	Běijīng bú cuò, kěshì wǒ hěn xiǎng Xī'ān.	Beijing's not bad, but I miss Xi'an.
Yǐ	<i>Wǒ qù guo Xī'ān, Xī'ān hěn hǎowánr.</i>	<i>I've been to Xi'an, it's a great place to visit.</i>
Jiā	Nǐ shì shénme shíhou qù de?	When was it that you went?

Yǐ	Wǒ shì qùnián qù de.	I went last year.
Jiā	Xiàcì qù, nǐ yīnggāi dào wǒ jiā wánr. wánr.	Next time you go, you should go and visit my home. (...to my home to+enjoy.)

This dialogue introduces the following:

- About nationality and origin;
- The verbs *xiàng* ‘resemble; like’ and *xiǎng* ‘intend to’;
- Patterns with a following *zài*: born in, grow up in, live in;
- The *shì...de* pattern; ‘when’ and ‘which year’;
- V+*guo* ‘have you ever V’d’;
- Ellipsis of V-not-V questions and delaying the not-V part;
- Expressions with *shàng* ‘ascend’ and *xià* ‘descend’;
- The verb *wánr* ‘to have a good time’.

C. Analysis

1. Nationality

There are several ways of asking about nationality; you should try to be familiar with them all.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| a) Nǐ shì něiguó rén?
(Nǐ shì nǎguó rén?) | you be which-country person |
| b) Nǐ shì nǎr de rén? | you be where DE person |
| c) Nǐ shì shénme dìfang rén? | you be what place person |
| d) Nǐ shì shénme dìfang lái de? | you be what place come one |

For the first (a), něiguó is preferred by teachers, but nǎguó is often heard. Options (b-d) do not, strictly speaking, ask about nationality, but about place, and can be answered with a city or town, as well as a country name. In fact (c) is often the follow up question to (a). The responses to these questions usually take the same form as the question, ie:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| A. Nǐ shì shénme dìfang lái de? | Where are you from? |
| B. Wǒ shì Riběn lái de. | I'm from Japan. |

Some country names – mostly those with a history of independence and political power – are composed of a single syllable plus guó ‘country; nation,’ on the model of Zhōngguó ‘China (middle-country).’ For these countries the first syllable is chosen for its sound as well as meaning: Měiguó ‘(beautiful-country) the USA’; Yīngguó ‘(hero-country) England; Britain’; Fǎguó ‘(law-country) France’; Déguó ‘(virtue-country) Germany’; Tàiguó ‘(peace-country) Thailand.’ Countries with close historical ties to China have often retained their old names. Nippon, a name that is cognate with the English name Japan, is the source of the Chinese name, Rìběn, literally ‘sun-root,’ ie from the Chinese perspective, ‘the rising sun.’ Miǎndiàn is an old Chinese name for Burma; the new name for that country, Myanmar, reveals the connection more clearly. Most other countries are simply transliterated: Jiānádà, Yìdàlì, Fèilùbān, Yìndù, Bāxī. City names, except for those in Japan and Korea, are almost all transliterated: Zhījiāgē, Bèi’érfāsītè, Tèlāwéifū. A few are translated rather than transliterated, eg Salt Lake City, Yánhúchéng ‘salt-lake-city,’ and the two mentioned in an earlier lesson, Cambridge, Jiànqiáo and Oxford Niújīn. The appendix to this lesson provides an extensive list of country and city names.

2. *Xiàng versus xiǎng*

Xiàng, with falling tone, is a SV with the meaning of ‘be like; resemble’; it often occurs with yíyàng ‘the same’ (cf. zěnmeyàng, zhèiyàng). Examples:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Tā xiàng Zhōngguó rén <yíyàng>. | She looks Chinese! |
| Tā hěn xiàng tā bàba. | He looks like his father. |
| Tā xiàng niǎo <yíyàng>, néng fēi! | He’s like a bird, [he] can fly. |
| Tā hěn gāo, xiàng ge jùrén! | He’s tall, like a giant! |

Xiǎng, with low tone, is quite a different word. Its core meaning is ‘think’, which is extended to the meaning of ‘think of’ or ‘miss’:

Wǒ hěn xiǎng nǐ.

[I] miss you.

Nǐ hěn xiǎng Zhōngguó ba!

You must miss China.

But more commonly still, xiǎng has the meaning of ‘intend to; feel like; want to’:

Wǒ hěn xiǎng qù Zhōngguó.

I want to go to China.

Nǐ xiǎng dào nǎli qù?

Where are you thinking of going?

3. *The position of zài phrases*

In previous lessons, we have encountered phrases in which zài is a main verb: xínglǐ zài zhèr; as well as those in which the zài phrase appears before an associated verb: zài fēijī shàng chī fàn ‘to eat on the airplane.’ In lesson 3, it was noted that some verbs (shēng and zhù, for example) allow zài phrases to occur directly after them: shēng zài Běijīng ‘be born in Běijīng’; zhù zài Xī’ān ‘live in Xi’an.’ As we will see below, on certain occasions, zài phrases may also occur before these same verbs. What determines these shifting positions?

In some cases, the difference in the two positions - before a verb versus after a verb – can be seen to reflect the notional difference between ‘location’ and ‘goal.’ Thus, with the verb fàng ‘put,’ which involves the movement of something from one place to another (‘a goal’), the zài phrase generally follows: fàng zài zhèr ‘put it here.’ While with chī ‘eat,’ on the other hand, an activity that takes place in a certain setting (‘a location’), the zài phrase generally precedes the verb: zài fànguǎnr chī fàn ‘to eat in a restaurant.’ So far so good. But what about verbs like zhù that, as we noted in the previous paragraph, allow both positions?

Wǒ zhù zài Táinán.

I live in Tainan.

Wǒ zài Táinán zhù.

I live in Tainan.

Presumably with such verbs, the notion of location and goal get conflated. ‘Live’ can be seen as the action of ‘settling down in a place’ in which case the zài phrase is a goal, or it can be thought of as a state or situation, in which case the zài phrase is a location. Rather than trying

to see the logic, it is better to begin by remembering that the three common verbs zhù ‘live; stay’, shēng ‘be born’, and – we add here - zhǎng or zhǎngdà ‘grow up’ - all allow both positions, and then learn to distinguish the options from particular examples in the dialogues (or in later lessons, narratives).

4. The *shì... de* pattern – first encounter:

a) Něinián, shénme shíhou, with non-past events

Earlier in this lesson, in the second section of the Transitions (A-2a), we noted that the year could be questioned with něinián ‘which year,’ but grammatical complications kept us from pursuing the topic further in the transitions section. Now, having had a chance to examine the dialogue, we return to it. Time-when phrases (unlike the location phrases of the previous section) are consistently placed before their associated verb in Chinese – we have seen examples such as: Wǒ míngtiān qù chéng lǐ kàn péngyou. And with a future (or unrealized) event, a question with něinián follows the same pattern: Qǐng wèn, nǐ něinián qù Běijīng?

A more general expression than něinián is shénme shíhou ‘what time; when’:

Q. Qǐng wèn, nǐ shénme shíhou qù Běijīng? May I ask when you’re going to Beijing?

A. Xīngqīliù qù. I’m going on Saturday.

Q. Nǐ shénme shíhou dào chéng lǐ qu? When are you going into town?

A. Xiànzài bú qù le, hái děi xuéxí! I’m not going after all, I still have to study!

b) Past events

So much for unrealized events – those planned for, or just happening, in the future. But for events that have happened – those in the past – the presence of time phrases often has interesting grammatical consequences. When the associated verb is present (rather than omitted through ellipsis), a mysterious de – the familiar particle used in an unfamiliar way – may appear after the verb (after the object in some cases, but in front of it in others). And at the other end of the sentence, the time phrase may be introduced by shì ‘be’:

Nǐ <shì> něinián lái de?	When was it you came?
Wǒ <shì> qùnián lái de.	I came last year.
Qùnián.	Last year. (elliptical answer)

This is the so-called *shì...de* construction. For now, we can simply note that it is found only with past events, and that it has the effect of highlighting the circumstances of the verbal event (the time and the place, for example). In this respect, it is similar in function (and to a degree, in form) to the so-called cleft construction of English, which also spotlights the circumstances (time, place etc.) by using the verb ‘be’ and the notional equivalent of *de*, ‘that.’ The English construction, however, is optional; the Chinese – at least in this case – is required.

I was born in 1946.	>	It was in 1946 - that I was born.
0		Wǒ shì 1946 nián - shēng de.

Practicing the example sentences in this section and in the dialogue will help us to get used to the rhythm of this pattern; in later lessons, we fill in the details and place it in a larger grammatical context. Here are some examples involving time:

Q.	Tāmen <shì> něinián lái de?	When did they come [here]?
A.	Tāmen <shì> qùnián lái de.	They came last year.
Q.	Tāmen <shì> něinián lái Měiguó de?	In which year did they come to the US?
	Tāmen <shì> shénme shíhou lái Měiguó de?	When did they come to the US?
A.	Tāmen <shì> 1997 nián lái de.	They came in 1997.
Q.	Nǐ <shì> něinián qù de?	Which year did you go [there]?
	Nǐ <shì> shénme shíhou qù de?	When did you go [there]?
A.	Wǒ <shì> qùnián qù de.	I went last year.

- A. Wǒ <shì> zuótiān qù de. I went yesterday.
 A. Wǒmen <shì> líbàiliù qù de. We came [here] on Saturday.

c) *Highlighting place*

Now let us turn to ‘place,’ and our three verbs shēng, zhù and zhǎng<dà>. In lesson 3, the first two appeared in the context of reporting on biographical information (one’s own, or other’s) - rather than recounting a string of events in a story. This is a typical context for the zài phrase to appear after the verb. Thus a statement like the following is common and should – with one’s own data – be memorized.

Wǒ shēng zai Tiānjīn<g>, zhǎng zai Běijīng, xiànzài zhù zai Bōshìdùn.	I was born in Tiānjīn, grew up in Běijīng, and now live in Boston.
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However, in another context, such as that of a follow up question to the response ‘wǒ shì 1946 nián shēng de’, the location phrase will be placed before the verb, and when in that position, it has to be cast in the *shi...de* pattern:

- Q Nǐ shì shénme dìfang shēng de? Where was it that you were born?
 A Wǒ shì zài Sūzhōu shēng de, I was born in Suzhou.
 zài Sūzhōu zhǎng<dà> de, grew up in Sūzhōu,
 xiànzài yě zài Sūzhōu zhù. and I live in Sūzhōu now.

Note that (in all cases) the *shi...de* pattern (a) requires the time or place to appear before the verb (so does not appear with shēng zài Sūzhōu) (b) is appropriate only for events that have already occurred (so not in xiànzài yě zài Sūzhōu zhù), and (c) the shì, may be omitted, but the de is required (as in the second clause of shì zài Sūzhōu shēng de, zài Sūzhōu zhǎngdà de).

Exercise. Provide a Chinese translation for the following conversation:

“Hello. I’m a student at MIT. My parents were born in Canton City, but I was born in the US, in Chicago. I grew up in Chicago, but now, of course, I live in Boston. I have an older sister.

She was also born in Canton.”

“When did your parents come to the US?”

“They came in 1982.”

“Do they still live in Chicago?”

“Yes, they do. But they’re coming to see me on Saturday.”

5. *VERB+guo*

Commonly, people will ask if you have ever been to a particular place, or ever done some particular thing –regardless of precisely when. This meaning is achieved by placing guo (untoned in northern speech), whose root meaning is ‘pass; cross over,’ after the verb. Like le, guo is associated with yǒu/méiyǒu, but with a difference:

Nǐ qù guo Zhōngguó ma? Have you been to China?

Nǐ qù guo Zhōngguó méi<you>?

Wǒ qù guo. I’ve been there.

Wǒ méi<you> qù guo. I haven’t [ever] been [there]

Wǒ hái méi<you> qù guo. I still haven’t [ever] been [there].

There are parallels to patterns associated with the le:

Q. Nǐ chīfàn le ma? Have you eaten?

Nǐ chīfàn le méi<you>?

A. Chī le. I have.

Méi<you> chī ne. I haven’t.

Hái méi<you> chī ne. Not yet.

Both constructions make use of the verb méi<you> in the negative, as well as in the V-not-V question. However, note the differences: while le itself only appears in the positive, guo remains in both positive and negative!

Other examples:

Nǐ zuò guo fēijī ma?

Dāngrán zuò guo.

Have you ever flown on an airplane?

Of course I have.

Nǐ chī guo Zhōngguó fàn ma?

Méi chī guo, hěn xiǎng chī.

Have you ever eaten Chinese food?

No I haven't [but] I really want to.

Exercise. Write out the corresponding Chinese in the space on the right.

Have you been to Beijing? /

No, not yet.

My sister has.

I'd like to go.

Have you ever eaten hǎishēn?

(‘seaslug, aka sea cucumber’)

Not yet, but I'd love to try some.

Have you eaten yet?

Not yet.

Okay, let's go and eat, we can have some seaslug.

6. Ellipsis of the second syllable of disyllabic verbs.

As we have seen, two syllable SVs such as jǐnzhāng or hǎochī frequently appear in the following pattern:

Jǐn bù jǐnzhāng?

Hǎo bù hǎochī?

Hǎo bù hǎokàn?

Shū bù shūfu?

This is also true of disyllabic non-stative verbs, such as kěyǐ, xǐhuān (‘like’):

Kě bù kěyǐ?

Xǐ bù xǐhuān?

SVs that incorporate yǒu, form V-not-V questions with yǒu méiyǒu:

Yǒu méiyǒu yìsi? Is [it] interesting?

Yǒu méiyǒu yòng? Is [it] useful?

b) Most of the verb-not-verb questions you have seen so far do not involve objects, eg Lèi bú lèi? But when an object is involved, the negated verb may sometimes appear, lightly toned, *after* it:

Shì bu shì xuéshēng? > Shì xuéshēng bu shì?

Yǒu méiyǒu yìsi? > Yǒu yìsi méiyǒu?

This pattern recalls the normal order for V-not-V versions of V+le or V+guo sentences:

Chīfàn le ma? > Chīfàn <le> méiyǒu?

Nǐ qù guo Zhōngguó ma? > Nǐ qù guo Zhōngguó méiyǒu?

Exercise. Write out the alternate form for the following (and, of course, be able to translate):

1. Tā shì Měiguó rén ma?
2. Ruǎnjiàn (software) yǒuyòng ma?
3. Nǐ chī guo hǎishēn ma?
4. Nǐ yào qù Cháng Chéng ma?
5. Nǐ chīfàn le ma?

7. Shàng and xià

Shàng and xià are opposites, meaning ‘upper; go up, get on’ and ‘lower; go down, get off’ respectively. Here are some typical examples:

shàng chē ‘board a vehicle’

xià chē ‘get off a vehicle’

shàng kè ‘attend class’

xià kè ‘get out of class’

shàng bān ‘go to work’ (‘go+on shift’)	xià bān ‘get out of work’ (‘get+off shift’)
shàngcì ‘last time’	xiàcì ‘next time’
shàng ge xīngqī ‘last week’	xià ge xīngqī ‘next week’
shàng ge yuè ‘last month’	xià ge yuè ‘next month’
(but qùnián ‘last year’ and zuótiān ‘yesterday’)	míngnián ‘next year’ míngtiān ‘tomorrow’)
lóushàng ‘upstairs’	lóuxià ‘downstairs’

Note: lóu ‘building’; shísìhào lóu ‘building #14’; dàlóu ‘multi-storied building’

8. *Wánr*

Colloquial speech in Beijing and other parts of the northeast is notable for the presence of *r-syllables*, characterized by a final ‘r’ whose influence spreads though out the syllable. Certain of these *r-syllables* may be present in standard Mandarin, but Mandarin speakers from Taiwan and regions outside the northeast often avoid them. In order to provide a representation of *r-* and *r-less* speech, the pinyin convention is to take the *r-less* syllable as basic, and then add ‘r’ to indicate the possibility of the ‘r’ option. Native speakers know how ‘r’ affects a syllable. Learners will have to internalize such rules more slowly. Wánr for example, can be written wán and be pronounced [wáhn] or it can be written wánr, in which case it is pronounced, roughly, [wáhr] – with no ‘n’ sound at all. Wánr symbolizes both possibilities.

Wánr is interesting not only for its pronunciation, but also for its meaning. In dictionaries, it is glossed ‘play; have fun’ but in many cases an appropriate translation is difficult to find. In the Chinese world, wánr is the counterpart of ‘work’ (gōngzuò) – and notice that in English we do sometimes place ‘work and play’ in opposition. Here are some sample sentences:

Yǒu kòng qǐng zài lái wánr.	If you have some time, come by again.
(zài = ‘again’)	(Have spare+time please again come play.)
Nèi ge dìfang hěn hǎo wánr.	That place is very interesting.
	(That GE place very good play.)
MIT xuéshēng hěn xǐhuān wánr diànnǎo.	MIT students love to fool around with computers.

Note the last example, in which wánr is used not as a SV, but as a transitive verb; cf. máng ‘be busy’ and máng shénme ‘be busy at what.’

Exercise. Write questions that would elicit the following answers:

1. Wǒmen shì shàngge xīngqī sì lái de.
2. Zhōngwén kè, xīngqī yī dào sì dōu yǒu.
3. Xiàge yuè dǎsuàn qù Huáng Shān kànkan fēngjǐng.
4. Lóuxià yǒu diànhuà, lóushàng méiyǒu.
5. Wǒ hái méi qù guo, dànshì hěn xiǎng qù.

D: Sample texts:

1. Nationality and hometown

Jiǎ	Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì nǚguó rén?	May I ask where you’re from?
Yǐ	Wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén.	I’m Chinese.
Jiǎ	Nǐ shì Zhōngguó shénme dìfang rén?	Whereabouts in China are you from?
Yǐ	Sūzhōu rén.	From Suzhou.
Jiǎ	O, Sūzhōu, tīngshuō guo nèige dìfang.	Oh, Suzhou, I’ve heard of the place (...hear-tell GUO that-GE place.)
Yǐ	Shì ma?	[That] so?
Jiǎ	Shì a, Sūzhōu hěn yǒumíng, Tīngshuō yǒu hěn duō yùnhé, qiáo, chuántǒng de fángzi....	Yes, Suzhou’s famous, [I’ve] heard it has lots of canals, bridges, traditional houses....

Yī	Shì a, ‘Sūzhōu yuánlín’ hěn piàoliang.	Yes, Sūzhōu gardens are quite beautiful.
	Wǒmen cháng shuō:	We often say:
	‘Shàng yǒu tiāntáng,	‘There’s paradise above,
	Xià yǒu Sū Háng.’	and Su(zhōu) and Hang(zhōu) below.’

Notes

Sūzhōu An ancient city, west of Shanghai, close to Lake Tai (Tài Hú), known for its canals and stone bridges. Until the growth of Shanghai in modern times, Suzhou was an important cultural and administrative center of the region. Its earlier wealth is reflected in the great houses and gardens that belonged to merchants and officials; one of the best known has the quaint name of ‘The Humble Administrator’s Garden’ (Zhuō Zhèng Yuán). Much of the old city has been obliterated in recent years by industrial growth and extensive building. Hángzhōu, mentioned in the saying that closes the dialogue, is another historically important city, southwest of Shanghai.

yùnhé ‘(transport-river)’ canal; the Dà Yùnhé is the ancient Grand Canal that begins in Hángzhōu, passes through Sūzhōu, and goes well over 1000 miles to Běijīng.

qiáo ‘bridge’

huāyuán ‘(flower-garden) gardens’

fángzi ‘houses’

chuántǒng ‘traditional’

yuánlín ‘(garden-groves),’ a more formal term for gardens; tourist brochures use the phrase Sūzhōu Yuánlín ‘Suzhou gardens.’

2 Nationality

Bó Ài, a male student from Europe, meets a Chinese youth named Wú:

Wú: Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ba!? You must be American.

Bó: Duìbuqǐ? Sorry!?

Wú: Wǒ wèn nǐ shì bu shì Měiguó rén? I asked you if you were American.

Bó	Bù, wǒ shì Lúndūn lái de.	No, I'm from London.
Wú	O, Yīngguó Lúndūn. Hǎo dìfang.	Oh, London in England. A great place.
Bo	Nín qù guo ma?	You've been?
Wú	Méi qù guo, tīngshuō guo.	No, [I] haven't been, [I]ve heard of [it].

3 Parrying compliments with nǎi:

Bó Ài, a foreign student in China, thinks he recognizes Luó xiānshēng, a friend of Zhōu lǎoshī, his teacher.

Bó:	Qǐng wèn, nín shì bu shì Luó xiānshēng.	Excuse me, are you Mr. Luo?
Luó:	Wǒ jiù shì. Nín shì něi wèi?	Yes, I am. And who are you?
Bó:	Luó xiānshēng, wǒ shì Bó Ài, Zhōu lǎoshī de xuésheng!	Mr. Luo, I'm Bo Ai, Prof. Zhou's student.
Luó:	O, Bó Ài, nǐ hǎo. Nǐ de Zhōngwén zhēn hǎo!	Oh, Bo Ai, how do you do. Your Chinese is very good.
Bó:	Nǎi, nǎi, wǒ zhǐ huì shuō yìdiǎndiǎn.	No, no, (it's not.). I can only speak a tiny bit.
Luó	Nǐ shì shénme dìfang lái de?	Where are you from?
Bó:	Luòshānjī.	Los Angeles.
Luó	O, Hǎolái wū! Hǎo dìfang!	Oh, Hollywood, great place!

Notes:

jiù shì	‘(just be) precisely right.’ <u>Wǒ jiù shì</u> ‘I’m he; that’s me’ is the conventional way of confirming one’s identity; cf. <u>Wǒ jiù shì Lǐ Dān</u> .
něi wèi	‘(which one) who.’ <u>Wèi</u> is a polite ‘measure word’ (M). In this context, <u>něi wèi</u> is more polite than <u>shéi ~ shuí</u> .
zhēn hǎo	‘really good’ suggests more amazement than, say, <u>hěn hǎo</u> . A more colloquial alternative answer, especially popular in Taiwan, would be <u>zhēn bàng</u> ‘smashing’ (<u>bàng</u> originally a word meaning ‘stick; cudgel’).

nǎlǐ literally ‘where’, but in this context, a conventional way of responding to praise or flattery. Also: Nǎr de huà! ‘What are you saying? (Where DE words).’ Both are responses that, modestly, question the source or authenticity of the flattery.

4 We call him ‘fēirén’

A Chinese youth (Ch) asks an overseas student (For.) about an American sports star; people in China will often ask about foreign entertainers and sports people.

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| Ch. | Xǐhuān Mài kè Qiáodān ma? | Do you like Michael Jordan? |
| For. | Shéi / shuí? | Who? |
| Ch. | Mài kè Qiáodān, dǎ lánqiú de. | Michael Jordan, the one who plays basketball. |
| For. | O, <Michael Jordan>. Tā de míngzi zěnmē shuō? Qǐng zài shuō yí biàn. | Oh, Michael Jordan. How do you say his name? Please repeat it. (Please again say one time.) |
| Ch. | Mài kè Qiáodān. Wǒmen dōu jiào tā ‘Fēirén.’ | Michael Jordan. We all call him the ‘Flying Man.’ |
| For. | O, Fēirén. Shénme yìsi? | Oh, ‘feiren.’ What does [that] mean? |
| Ch. | Zěnmē shuō ne...tā xiàng niǎo [yíyàng], néng fēi. | (how say...he resemble bird the-same, can fly) How to say [it] - he’s like the birds, he can fly. |
| For. | Ei, bú cuò. | (agreement, not bad) Right! |

Notes:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| dǎ lánqiú de | literally ‘hit (play) basketball one,’ ie ‘the one who plays bb’ |
| fēirén | MJ is also called <u>lánqiú dàdì</u> ‘b-ball great emperor’ in China. |
| jiào tā fēirén | ‘call him <u>fēirén</u> ’; note the use of <u>jiào</u> with two objects, parallel to English ‘we call him X.’ |

niǎo N. bird; alternatively, tā xiàng fēijī ‘he’s like an airplane’
néng be able to; can; also nénggòu

This is a good time to mention some Chinese sports figures who are, or have been, well known outside China: Yáo Míng (dǎ lánqiú de, 2003, Xiūsīdùn) and Wáng Zhìzhì (dǎ lánqiú de, 2003, Yìndì’ānnà); Zhuāng Zédòng (dǎ pīngpāngqiú de guànjūn ‘a champion pingpong player’, flourished in the late 1950s, early 1960s); Láng Píng aka Tiělángtōu ‘iron-hammer’ (nǚde, dǎ páiqiú de guànjūn ‘a volleyball champion’ from the 1980s); Chén Féidé, whose English name is Michael Chang (dǎ wǎngqiú de guànjūn, 1990s).

E Pinyin and sounds

1. The rhymes

(a) Possible rhymes

The spoken syllable, or rather, its pinyin representation, can be divided into an *initial consonant* and a *rhyme*, the latter composed of a medial, a vowel, a final and a tone (eg –iào, uang.) You are already familiar with the inventory of initials, represented by the six-line chart beginning *bo po mo fo*. Now we look more closely at the rhymes. Here are some possibilities:

Vowel+Tone:	tā, bǐ, kè, è, shū
Medial + Vowel+Tone:	xiè, zuò, duì, xué, jiù, nué
Vowel + Ending+Tone	hěn, máng, hǎo, lèi, dōu
Medial + Vowel + Ending+Tone:	jiàn, jiǎng, jiāo

The most minimal written rhymes consist of only a vowel and a tone; one of a small number of medial sounds can precede the vowel, and one of an equally limited number of endings can follow. The **vowels** consist of a, e, i, o, u or ü. **Medials** are limited to j, u or ü, and **endings** to n, ng, i, and o. (But – note this - the combination oo – consisting of the vowel o and the ending o, is written ou rather than oo: dou; zhou etc.)

Exercise. Where to write the tone mark:

It is useful to be able to place the tone mark correctly in those pinyin syllables that have more than one vowel letter, eg lèi, lǎo or jiào. To do this properly, you need to distinguish the vowel proper, V, from the medial (M) and the final (F) letters. The tone mark is placed over the V.

To determine the V, you need to be able to rule out M and F. There are only three possible M: i, u (the latter, pronounced u or ü) and the rare ü. If one of those is present before another vowel letter, it is an M, eg xiè, zhuō, xué, and the following vowel is the V.

There are four possible F: i, o, n and ng; ‘o+o’, you recall, is written ou, so in that one case, u is also a final. If there are two vowel letters (and you have ruled out any M), the latter will be a F, and the previous letter will be the V: dōu, lèi, hǎo, jiāo.

Now try identifying the vowels (V) of the following syllables-- and add the indicated tone mark accordingly:

jiao (1)	zuo (4)	hai (2)	xue (2)	tie (1)	guo (2)
dou (1)	jiu (3)	qian (2)	guo (2)	bao (4)	gui (4)

b) A note on words beginning with y- or w-:

Though syllables may begin with the vowels *a*, *o*, *e* (eg è, ān, ōu etc.), *they do not* begin with *i* or *u*. Where medial *i* and *u* might occur at the beginning of a syllable, they are written *y* and *w*, respectively. You might think of such cases as follows:

	duo, shuo, drop the Ci:	uo	>	wo	
	xie, bie, drop the Ci:	ie	>	ye	
*	xue, jue, drop the Ci	ue	>	yue	[Note the <u>ü</u> sound]

However, if *i*, *u*, *ü* are themselves vowels (as in nǐ, shū, nǚ), then dropping the Ci would leave only the vowels *i*, *u*, and *ü*, and if these were simply rewritten as *y* and *w*, you would end up with rather curious looking syllables like ‘w’ (shu, drop the Ci to get u > w) or ‘wn’ (shun > un > wn); or ‘y’ and ‘yng.’ So in such cases, instead of upgrading *i* and *u* to *y* and *w* as before, *y* and *w* are **added** to them:

				<i>as a syllable</i>
ji, drop the j:	i	>	yi	
jin, drop the j:	in	>	yin	
jing, drop the j:	ing	>	ying	
shu, drop the sh:	u	>	wu	
xu, drop the x:	u	>	yu	[ü]
jun, drop the j:	un	>	yun	[ün]
xue, drop the x:	ue	>	yue	[üe]

There are a few **exceptions** to the neat pattern:

>>	jiu, drop the j:	iu >	you	<u>yu</u> is taken [see above]
>>	gui, drop the g:	ui >	wei	no syllable wi; rhymes with <u>ei</u>
>>	zhun, drop the zh:	un >	wen	no syllable ‘wun’; rhymes with <u>en</u>

c) The rhyme table

A complete table of rhymes is given below. It is too long and complicated to be immediately internalized like your chart of initials, but you can practice reading the rows aloud with the help of a teacher or native speaker. You should return to this chart frequently, and practice reading out all the rhymes. You can also map your progress through the chart by circling syllables, or adding examples to the lines, as you learn new vocabulary. The table below is organized by main vowel, and then subcategorized by medial and final. Asterisks (*) mark sets that need your special attention.

Rhymes with (a): *egs* *w/o C*

a	ta	cha	da	ma	ba	la	a
a-i	tai	chai	dai	mai	chai	zai	ai
a-o	tao	chao	dao	pao	zao	rao	ao
a-n	tan	ran	zhan	can	lan	pan	an
a-ng	dang	sang	zhang	mang	lang	zang	ang

i-a	jia	qia	xia				ya
i-a-o	jiao	qiao	xiao				yao
*	i-a-n	jian	qian	xian			yan
i-a-ng	jiang	qiang	xiang				yang

u-a	hua	gua	zhua	shua			wa
u-a-i	chuai						(wai)
u-a-n	huan	guan	zhuan	shuan	cuan		wan
u-a-ng	huang	guang	zhuang	shuang			wang

Rhymes with (e)

e	zhe	che	she	re	le		e
e-i	zhei	shei	lei	fei	bei		(ei)
e-n	zhen	shen	fen	cen	men		en
e-ng	leng	sheng	ceng	deng	zheng		(eng)

e-r (other r-rhymes are optional and discussed separately) er

i-e	jie	xie	lie	mie			ye
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	--	--	----

* **u-e** **jue** **que** **xue** **nüe** **lüe** **yue**

Rhymes with (o)

* **o** **bo** **po** **mo** **fo** **wo**

u-o	duo	tuo	luo	guo	shuo	zuo	wo
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	------	-----	----

* **o-u** **zhou** **zou** **dou** **lou** **hou** **chou** **ou**

o-ng	zhong	dong	long	zong			
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i-o-ng	jiong	xiong					yong
--------	-------	-------	--	--	--	--	------

Rhymes with (u) the 'oo' rhymes

	u	shu	lu	zhu	ru	zu	cu	wu
*	u-n	shun	lun	zhun	dun	kun	cun	<i>cf. wen</i>
*	i-u	jiu	qiu	xiu	liu	diu		<i>cf. you</i>

the 'ü' rhymes

*	ü	ju	qu	xu	lǜ	nǜ	yu
	ü-n	jun	qun	xun			yun

Rhymes with (i) the 'ee' rhymes

	i	li	bi	ti			yi
		ji	qi	xi			yi
	i-n	jin	qin	xin	lin	bin	yin
	i-ng	jing	qing	xing	ling	bing	ying
*	u-i	dui	gui	shui	rui	chui	<i>cf. wei</i>

the 'uh' rhymes

*	i	zi	ci	si			
		zhi	chi	shi	ri	--	

d) *Contrasts for special attention. Select a tone, and read down within each category:*

- (a) zhi chi shi ri
 zhe che she re
- (b) zhang chang dang lang ang
 zhong chong dong long ---
 zheng cheng deng leng eng

(c)	zhan zhen	chan chen	shan shen	ran ren			an en
(d)	duo dou	tuo tou	nuo nou	ruo rou	zhuo zhou	zuo zou	wo ou
(e)	dei dui diu	lei chui qiu	shei shui xiu	fei zhui jiu			ei wei you
(f)	hui huai	zhui zhuai	gui	sui guai	rui ----	----	wei wai
(g)	zhu ju	chu qu	shu xu	lu lü	nu nü		wu yu
(h)	jie ze	xie se	qie ce	lie le			ye e
(i)	bei bie	lei lie	shei xie	mei mie	zei —		ei ye
(j)	zhang jiang	chan qian	shun xiong	shang xiang			
(k)	zhuan zhun jun	chuan chun qun	shuan shun xun				wan wen yun

(l)	jin	bin	qin	yin	lin	yin
	jing	bing	qing	ying	ling	ying
(m)	jian		qian		xian	yan
	jiang		qiang		xiang	yang
(n)	xiang		qiang		jiang	yang
	xiong		qiong		jiong	yong
	song		cong		zong	
	——		chong		zhong	
(o)	ti	tie	tian	tiao		
	qi	qie	qian	qiao		
(p)	rao	rou	reng	ran		
	lao	lou	leng	lan		
(r)	zhong	chen	shang	zhuo	shuo	chu
	zong	cen	sang	zuo	suo	cu

Notice that while the sound [ü] occurs after the initials of row 5 (j, q, x), it does not need to be marked as such since only the sound [ü] is possible after those initials. Thus we write ju, qu, and xu (not jü, qü, and xü). However, with initials n and l, both [ü] and [u] (‘yu’ and ‘oo’) are possible so each must be indicated. So nü and nu, lü and lu.

Appendix I: Countries and nationalities

Country, city and other geographical names modify nouns without *de*: Měiguó bàozhǐ ‘American newspapers’, Jiānádà rén ‘Canadians’, Zhōngguó fànguǎnr ‘Chinese restaurants’. Here is a list of place names for reference. Addition of rén to the country name regularly gives the name of the person from that country.

countries

China	Zhōngguó	Taiwan	Táiwān
Singapore	Xīnjiāpō	Japan	Rìběn
Indonesia	Yīnní	Vietnam	Yuènnán
Thailand	Tàiguó	Burma=Myanmar	Miǎndiàn
India	Yīndù	Pakistan	Bājisītǎn
Bangladesh	Mèngjiālā	(S) Korea	Hánguó
(N.) Korea	Cháoxiǎn	Philippines	Fěilùbīn
Ireland	Ài'ěrǎn	USA	Měiguó
Canada	Jiānádà	Mexico	Mòxīgē
Brazil	Bāxī	Argentina	Āgēntíng
Australia	Àodàliyà	New Zealand	Xīn Xīlán
South Africa	Nánfēi	Nigeria	Nírìlià
Egypt	Ājí	Iran	Yīlǎng
Afghanistan	Āfùhàn	England/UK	Yīngguó
Spain	Xībānyá	Germany	Déguó
Italy	Yìdàlì	France	Fǎguó (<i>some: Fàguó</i>)
Russia	Éguó (<i>som.: Èguó</i>)	Greece	Xīlà
Israel	Yīsèliè	Iraq	Yīlākè

City (chéngshì)

Shanghai	Shànghǎi	Hong Kong	Xiānggǎng
Běijīng	Běijīng	Shenyang	Shěnyáng
Canton	Guǎngzhōu	Shenzhen	Shēnzhèn
Běidàihé	Běidàihé	<i>(a resort on the coast near Beijing)</i>	
Qingdao	Qīngdǎo	Tianjin	Tiānjīn(g)
Chungking	Chóngqìng	Hsi-an	Xī'ān
Nanking	Nánjīng	Kunming	Kūnmíng
Gweilin	Guǐlín	Lhasa	Lāsà
Tokyo	Dōngjīng	Osaka	Dàbǎn
Seoul	Hánchéng	Jakarta	Yǎjiādá

Kuala Lumpur	Jílóngpō	Bangkok	Màngǔ
Hanoi	Hénèi	Saigon	Xīgòng
Delhi	Délǐ	Calcutta	Jiā'ěrgēdá
Manila	Mǎnílā	Dacca	Dákǎ
Mumbai/Bombay	Mèngmǎi	Baghdad	Bāgédá
Boston	Bōshìdùn	Chicago	Zhījīāgē
New York	Niǔ Yuē	Philadelphia	Fèichéng
Washington	Huáshèngdùn	San Francisco	Jiùjīnshān
Los Angeles	Luòshānjī	Salt Lake City	Yánhúchéng
Houston	Xiū~Háosīdùn	Dallas	Dálāsī
London	Lúndūn	Manchester	Mànchèsītè
Glasgow	Gèlāsēgē	Belfast	Bèi'érfāsītè
Dublin	Dūbólin	Paris	Bālí
Rome	Luómǎ	Athens	Yádiǎn
Cairo	Kāiluó	Tel Aviv	Tèlāwéifū
Sydney	Xīní	Perth	Bōsī

Notes on country and city names:

Korea. The PRC calls (North) Korea Cháoxiǎn, while Taiwan and overseas communities call (South) Korea Hánguó. Cháoxiǎn is a Chinese version of what is usually rendered Choson in English, the name of the dynasty that came to an end in 1910. Hán (distinct from falling toned Hàn of Hànrén ‘Chinese’) is also a traditional name, historically applied to ‘states’ on the south and western parts of the Korean peninsula. In the past, the name Gāolì was also applied, based on the same root that gave us the name Korea; cf. the Koryo dynasty.

San Francisco. The Cantonese name, pronounced Sānfānshì (shì ‘city’) in Mandarin, is obviously a transliteration of the English. The name commonly used in Mandarin, Jiùjīnshān means literally ‘old gold mountain,’ a reference to Gold Rush days, when numerous Chinese migrated to California from the coast of Canton province.

Huáshèngdùn. Also referred to in the US Chinese newspapers as Huáfǔ ‘national capital.’

Paris and Bali: If Paris is Bālǐ, you may wonder what the Chinese name for the island of Bali [Indonesia] is. It’s also Bālǐ. The distinction is made by adding dǎo ‘island’ to the latter: Bālǐdǎo. Cf. Hǎinándǎo ‘Hainan Island’ (off the southern coast of China).

Philadelphia. Fèichéng. Chéng is ‘city’ (originally ‘wall,’ a feature characteristic of cities). Fèi is a rendering of the first syllable of Philadelphia; cf Africa, Fēizhōu (a different *fei*, cf. Nánfēi ‘South Africa’).

Tokyo. Dōngjīng, literally ‘eastern capital.’ Cf. Běijīng ‘northern capital,’ and Nánjīng ‘southern capital.’ There is no *Xījīng*.

Russia. Éluósī or Éguó on the Mainland, but often Èguó in Taiwan. The USSR was called Sūlián - Sū from Sūwēi’āi ‘Soviet’ + lián meaning ‘unite.’

Canton, Chungking, Nanking, Peking etc. English spellings of Chinese names are not as irrational as they may at first seem. In an earlier transcription system, ‘ki’ was regularly used for what pinyin represents as ‘ji.’ In other transcriptions, the distinction between (pinyin) b, d, g and p, t, k etc. was represented as p, t, k and p’, t’, k’ etc. In common practice, the apostrophes were omitted, hence Peking, Taipei, the Tao Te Ching (the Taoist classic) rather than pinyin Beijing, Taibei, Dao De Jing (the Daoist classic). The name ‘Canton’ is based on the name of the province, Guǎngdōng, rather than the city, Guǎngzhōu.

G. Rhymes

a) A tale of betrayal and heartbreak:

Tiào shéng

Jiāngjiě, Jiāngjiě, hǎo Jiāngjiě,
nǐ shì rénmin de hǎo Jiāngjiě.

Pàntú, pàntú, Fǔ Zhìgāo,

Nǐ shì rénmin de ‘dà cǎobāo’.

Skipping rope

Sister Jiang, good Sister Jiang,

You are the people’s good Sister Jiang;

Traitor, traitor, Fu Zhigao

You are the people’s ‘great straw-
bundle’ (‘good-for-nothing’).

As I was told it, Fǔ Zhìgāo, a young man, and Jiāng, a young woman, served the people together; but Fǔ Zhìgāo betrayed her to the Guómíndǎng (Kuomintang, KMT), who had her executed; later Fǔ Zhìgāo was caught by the Communists (Gōngchǎndǎng, CCP) and put to death. Not a happy story, but a salubrious one.

b) Now something a little lighter, another nursery rhyme:

Yuèliang zǒu, wǒ yě zǒu,

wǒ hé yuèliang jiāo péngyou,

dài lǐ zhuāngzhe liǎng zhī dàn,

song gěi yuèliang dāng zǎofàn.

moon goes, I also go

I and moon make friends

pocket in filled+with 2 item eggs

to present to moon as breakfast.

Provided by Lǐ Yǒngyàn (Nanjing)

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