

Lesson 5: Weather and seasons

Jī rǎng gē

Rì chū ér zuò,
rì rù ér xī,
záo jǐng ér yǐn,
gēng tián ér shí.
Dì lì yǔ wǒ hé yǒu zāi?

Ram earth song

sun rise and work
sun set and rest
dig wells and drink
till fields and eat
Emperor power to us
what have 'the heck'
Classical Chinese – the original

Tàiyang chūlái jiù gōngzuò, sun come-out then work
tàiyang xià shān jiù xiūxi. sun behind-hills then rest
Zài dì lǐ wā gè jǐng hē shuǐ, at earth in dig a well drink water
zài tián lǐ zhòng dì chīfàn. at fields in till soil eat-meals
Huángdì de wēili duì wǒmen emperor DE might to us
yǒu shénme guānxi ne? have what connection NE
translated into Modern Chinese

Notice how Classical Chinese words not only often have different roots from their modern counterparts (yǐn – hē 'drink,' shí – chī 'eat,' both of which do survive in the common words for 'drink' and 'eat' in Cantonese), but they also tend more to single syllables (rì – tàiyang; zuò – gōngzuò; xī – xiūxi; hé - shénme). Almost all the words in the classical original above appear in the modern language, but often in compounds (yǐn > yǐnliào 'beverages,' xī > xiūxi 'to rest') or with different meanings (rì 'day' rather than 'sun').

A. Transitions

1. Connecting sentences

Conjunctions like kěshì, dànshì, and yīnwèi show logical relations between clauses:

Wǒmen bù néng xiūxi, yīnwèi
hái yǒu hěn duō gōngkè.

We can't rest because we still have lots
of homework.

When the subordinate clause (eg the yīnwèi clause) is placed first, the logical connection is often marked in the second clause as well. Here, we examine three such sets or paired connectors.

a) Yīnwèi...suǒyǐ 'because...so'

Yīnwèi is paired with suǒyǐ, whose literal meaning is 'so' or 'therefore'; but in many cases, it has no explicit correspondence in an English translation. In the Chinese, when only one of the two connectors is present, it is more likely to be the second, eg suǒyǐ rather than yīnwèi.

<Yīnwèi> tiānqì hěn rè suǒyǐ wǒmen
dōu hěn lèi.

Because the weather is so hot we're all
tired.

Generally, conjunctions like yīnwèi and suǒyǐ precede the subject (yīnwèi tiānqì). But where a single subject persists through the sentence, then it may precede yīnwèi:

Tāmen yīnwèi qián bú gòu suǒyǐ
bù néng mǎi hěn duō dōngxi.

They can't buy a lot of things because they
don't have much money.

b) Suīrán...kěshì / dànshì

Roughly the same conditions apply to the pair suīrán ... kěshì 'although...but.' And again, while English requires only the single conjunction 'although', Chinese often omits suīrán, leaving the only marking in the second clause.

<Suīrán> fùmǔ shì Zhōngguó rén, dànshì
tā méi qù guo Zhōngguó.

Although her parents are Chinese, she
hasn't been to China.

Tā <suīrán> hěn è kěshì bù xiǎng chīfàn.

Although he's hungry he doesn't want to
eat.

c) Yàoshi...jiù

The pair yàoshi ... jiù 'if...then' is a little different. In the first place, jiù is an adverb and, unlike suǒyǐ or kěshì, has to be placed directly before a verb (or another adverb). In addition, jiù is more likely to be omitted (with slight change of nuance) than suǒyǐ or kěshì.

Yàoshi qián bú gòu, nǐmen jiù yòng
xìnyòngkǎ.

If [you] don't have enough money [cash],
you can use a credit card.

Nǐ yàoshi méi diànnǎo kěyǐ qù wǎngbā
fā email.

If you don't have a computer, you can go
to an internet cafe to send email.

A slightly more formal alternative for yàoshi is rúguǒ:

Rúguǒ nǐ bù xiǎng qù, nà jiù ràng wǒ qù.

If you don't want to go, then let me go.

The conditional clause can also be implied either by the presence of jiù alone, or by the context:

<Yàoshi> tiānqì bù hǎo, bù néng qù.

[If] the weather's bad, [we] won't be able to
go.

<Yàoshi> méi qián jiù yòng xìnyòngkǎ.

[If you] don't have any money, use a credit
card.

Both yàoshi and rúguǒ can be buttressed by the phrase de huà placed at the end of the clause. (Huà 'word; speech'; cf. English 'let's say,' or simply 'say,' used as a conditional in sentences such as 'say it rains, then we meet inside').

Yàoshi nǐ yǒu diànnǎo de huà, wǒ zhè lǐ yǒu yíge Zhōngwén ruǎnjiàn. If you [happen to] have a computer, I have some Chinese software here.

Bù néng qù de huà, jiù dǎ ge diànhuà ba! If you can't go, then why don't you phone.

Exercise.

Choose a pair of conjoining words for the following sentences:

- 1) Mài kè Qiáodān shì ge dǎlánqiú de. Tā bù zěnmē ('so') gāo.
- 2) Tā hěn lèi. Tā bù néng gōngzuò ('work').
- 3) Tā bú ràng ('let') wǒ kàn diànshì ('TV'). Wǒ bú ràng tā tīng yīnyuè. ('listen music')
- 4) Zhōngwén kè hěn nán. Zhōngwén kè hěn yǒu yìsi.
- 5) Xuéshēng hěn duō. Lǎoshī hěn gāoxìng.
- 6) Nǐ hē tài duō kāfēi. Nǐ yídìng hěn jǐnzhāng.

2. Counting revisited

English distinguishes countable nouns – those that can be counted directly – from mass nouns – those that are counted by way of measures. People, tables, occasions are all countable (as shown by the presence of the plural 's') while air, vegetation, caffeine and research are not. The latter have to be measured out: 'three canisters of air', 'four ampules of caffeine' etc. In Chinese, all nouns behave like mass nouns and, when counted, have to be 'measured out' with 'measure words'. Strictly speaking, one can distinguish measures and classifiers. The former, typically, have a counterpart in English: gallon (of water); slab (or butter); block (of apartments). The latter do not. For simplicity, we will refer to both as Measures.

Measures follow numbers (as well as demonstratives such as zhè and nà), and can be followed by, or more typically can substitute for, a set of nouns. In Chinese, one measure, gè, is particularly versatile, occurring with a range of animate and inanimate nouns – almost as a default measure. In many cases, the selection of one measure over another can provide different shades of meaning, eg, with kè, mén 'course' versus táng 'class.'

kè: yì mén kè, liǎng mén kè, sān mén kè
 kè: yì táng kè, liǎng táng kè, sān táng kè
 person: yí ge rén, liǎng ge xuéshēng, sān ge péngyou, sì ge dìdi

qián: yí kuài qián, liǎng kuài, sān kuài; shí kuài, shísi kuài, èrshíyī kuài, yìbǎi kuài qián
 lǐbài: yí ge lǐbài, liǎng ge lǐbài, sān ge lǐbài, sì ge lǐbài
 xīngqī: yí ge xīngqī, liǎng ge xīngqī, sān ge xīngqī, sì ge xīngqī
 yuè: yí ge yuè, liǎng ge yuè, sān ge yuè, sì ge yuè

Not all measures have associated nouns. Tiān and nián - but not lǐbài/xīngqī and yuè – are measures without nouns:

tiān: yì tiān, liǎng tiān, sān tiān, sì tiān
nián: yì nián, liǎng nián, sān nián, sì nián

There are also measures that substitute not for nouns but for verbal events – these are called verbal measures, eg cì ‘times’ and biàn ‘time (viewed as a duration)’:

‘one time’ yí cì liǎng cì sān cì sì cì wǔ cì liù cì qī cì bā cì
‘once through’ yí biàn, liǎng biàn, sān biàn. [Qǐng zài shuō yí biàn.]

And cf. the ordinal series:

‘first time’ dìyī cì, dì'èr cì, disān cì, diwǔ cì

Measure words are only occasionally encountered in these early lessons, so we can begin by simply reciting the phrases above and getting used to the form. Later, we will have more occasion to encounter them in discourse.

3. *How many; how much:*

The two words that question amounts – that are answered by a number - are duōshao and jǐ. They differ both in their syntax and meaning. Duōshao does not usually require a following measure word (such as gè); jǐ does. Duōshao does not anticipate a particular number; jǐ anticipates relatively few. Thus, asking about the number of students in a dormitory you would use duōshao; but asking about the number of siblings in a family you would use jǐgè. Examples:

Tā zhù duōshao hào? What number does she live at?
Jīntiān de kè yǒu duōshao xuéshēng? How many students in today's class?

Tā jǐ suì? How old is he? [to a child]
Yǒu jǐ mén kè? How many courses?
Jīntiān yǒu jǐ táng? How many classes today?

There are some apparent exceptions to the use of jǐ. Sports scores, for example - even basketball scores, which involve high numbers – tend to be queried with jǐ: jǐ bǐ jǐ?

The special nuance of jǐ is reflected in its function as an indefinite, where it has gained a special meaning of ‘a few; several.’

Wǒ zhǐ yǒu jǐgè. I only have a few.

4. Time words

In earlier lessons we have encountered a number of time words, so here we enlarge the repertoire and present them in a synoptic table. Recall that, unlike in English, time words precede their associated verbs:

	<i>past</i>	<i>now</i>	<i>future</i>	
qiántiān	zuótiān	jīntiān	míngtiān	hòutiān
qiánnián	qùnián	jīnnián	míngnián	hòunián
	shàngge lǐbài	zhèige lǐbài	xiàge lǐbài	
	shàngge xīngqī	zhèige xīngqī	xiàge xīngqī	
	shàngge yuè	zhèige yuè	xiàge yuè	

5. Shénme shíhou ‘when’ – more examples:

Nǐ shénme shíhou dào Běijīng qu?
Wǒ lǐbài’èr dào Běijīng qu, lǐbàiliù
dào Tiānjīn<g> qù.

When are you going to Beijing?
I’m going to Beijing on Tuesday and
to Tianjin on Saturday.

Nǐ shénme shíhou shàng kè?
Wǒ jīntiān méiyǒu kè.

When does class begin?
I don’t have any classes today.

Nǐ shì shénme shíhou lái de?
Wǒ shì shàngge xīngqīliù lái de.

When was it you came?
I came last Saturday.

In regions where Cantonese influence is strong (including Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia), the Cantonese expression for ‘when’ gives rise to Mandarin jǐshí ‘which time’:

Tā jǐshí qù Jílóngpō?

When’s he going to Kuala Lumpur?

6. New verbs, in the pattern of Chī le ma?

<i>Q</i>	+	--	
<i>Chī le ma?</i>	<i>Chī le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>eat</i>
<i>Chī le méiyǒu?</i>	<i>Chī le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	
<i>Mǎi le ma?</i>	<i>Mǎi le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>buy</i>
<i>Kàn le méiyǒu?</i>	<i>Kàn le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>look at [read]</i>
<i>Zuò le ma?</i>	<i>Zuò le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>do; make</i>
<i>Shuō le méiyǒu?</i>	<i>Shuō le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>say</i>
<i>Xiě le ma?</i>	<i>Xiě le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>write</i>
<i>Wán le méiyǒu?</i>	<i>Wán le.</i>	<i>Hái méi ne.</i>	<i>finish</i>

Tā qù le ma?	Qù le.	Hái méi ne.	go
Tā lái le meiyóu?	Lái le.	Hái méi ne.	come; arrive

7. 'Ought' and 'must'

There are a number of common verbs that convey notions of obligation and necessity:

děi	'have to; must' [only in positive]
búbì	'needn't' [only in negative]
<yīng>gāi	'ought; should; have to'
xūyào	'should; have to; need; to require'
bìxū	'need to'
bìyào	'need; obligatory; necessary' [mostly in a few common phrases]

Míngtiān wǒ děi qù Niǚ Yuē kàn mǔqīn. I have to go to NY tomorrow to visit my mother.

Búbì dōu qù, yí ge rén qù jiù xíng le. No need for you all to go, one will do.

Wǒ děi qù, kěshì nǐmen búbì qù. I have to go, but you don't have to.

Nǐ yīnggāi xiūxi. You should take a rest.

Míngtiān yǒu kǎoshì, wǒ gāi qù túshūguǎn xuéxí. Tomorrow [there's] a test, I should go to the library to study

Zhōumò yǒu kèrén lái, wǒ xūyào qù shāngdiàn mǎi chī de dōngxì. We're having guests on the weekend, [so] I need to go to the store to buy s/t to eat.

Rúguǒ nǐ yào xuéxí Zhōngwén nǐ bìxū yǒu yì běn zìdiǎn. If you want to study Chinese, you need to have a dictionary.

Bú bìyào de máfan / shǒuxù. Unnecessary bother / procedures.

8. Intensifiers

Certain SVs occur in common phrases with intensifying adverbs such as tǐng 'quite; very' and mǎn 'perfectly.' Mǎn is pronounced on the low tone (as shown), and is usually written with the character for 'full' (滿), but in some cases it is written with a character that represents a word with rising tone, mán, meaning 'fierce' (蠻) [cf. English colloquial expressions such as 'raining something fierce']. The confusion may have come about because of the tone shift before common words like hǎo, which results in indistinguishable rising tones for both. Regardless of etymology (and character), usage for both tǐng and mǎn is rather idiosyncratic; expressions with mǎn or tǐng often show a final de (sometimes called *situational-de*): tǐng hǎo de 'perfect; great.' The two adverbs are most common with a few positively oriented SVs:

Mǎn hǎo de.	Great!
Mǎn bú cuò de.	Terrific!
Mǎn shūfu de.	[It']s really comfortable.

Tǐng hǎo de!	Great!
Tǐng lěng de.	Freezing!
Tǐng yǒu yìsi de!	Interesting!

Another intensifier is -jíle, added to a SV: Hǎo jíle! Rè jíle! Jí's original meaning is an axis – cf. Běijí 'North Pole' – but it was extended to mean 'extreme'; thus 'to the max!' Jíle is quite productive and can follow almost any SV to mean 'very SV.'

Hǎo jíle!	Excellent!
Tiānqì rè jíle!	The weather's hot!
Hǎochī jíle!	Delicious!

B. Dialogue on weather and seasons

It is early summer in Beijing, and students are leaving for the break. *Jiǎ* is a student from abroad, studying in China. *Yǐ* is a resident.

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| Jiǎ | Hm, jīntiān yǒu diǎnr rè, shì ma? | Hm, it's a bit hot today, isn't it? |
| Yǐ | Shì, Běijīng xiàtiān dōu shì zhèi yàng, yòu rè yòu mēn. Qiūtiān chūntiān bǐjiào hǎo. Dōngtiān lěng, kěshì bù cháng xià xuě. | Yes, summer in Beijing is always like this, hot and muggy. Spring and autumn are better. Winter's cold, but it doesn't snow much. |
| Jiǎ | Jīntiān hěn rè, kěshì méi yángguāng. Zhèige - zěnmē shuō – jīntiān bú tài qīngchǔ de tiānqì Zhōngwén zěnmē shuō? | It's hot today, but there's no sun. This – how do you say it - today's not so clear weather, how do you say it in Chinese? |
| Yǐ | Hm, zěnmē shuō...yǒu diǎnr huīmēngmēngde. | Hm, how do [we] say it...it's a bit hazy. |
| Jiǎ | Méiyǒu tàiyang, měitiān huīmēngmēngde. Xiànzài dōu shì zhèi yàng! | No sun, and everyday [it']s hazy. [It']s always like this nowadays. |
| Yǐ | Nǐ jiàqī dǎsuàn zuò shénme? | What are you planning to do over the break? |
| Jiǎ | Wǒmen dào Kūnmíng qù. | We're going to Kunming. |
| Yǐ | Kūnmíng, aiya, hěn yuǎn. | Kunming, wow, [that]'s far. |

Jiǎ	Wǒmen qù Kūnmíng yīnwèi Kūnmíng tiānqì hěn hǎo.	We're going to Kunming because the weather's nice [there].
Yǐ	Wǒmen cháng shuō Kūnmíng tiānqì dōu shì chūntiān - sìjì rúchūn. Kōngqì yě hěn hǎo. Shì yīnwèi dìfāng hěn gāo – liǎngqiān mǐ gāo!	We often say [it'] always spring in Kunming – 4 seasons like spring. And the air's nice, because the place is high [up] – [it']s 2000 m. high.
Jiǎ	Liǎngqiān mǐ, nà jiùshì liùqiān chǐ. Shì hěn gāo! Tiānqì huì bú huì tài liáng?	2000 meters, that's 6000 feet. That is high. Will the weather [there] be too cool?
Yǐ	Yèlǐ yǒu diǎnr liáng, kěshì báitiān dōu hěn hǎo. Cóng liùyuè dào bāyuè cháng xià yǔ, kěshì tàiyang yě hěn duō.	Nights are a bit cool, but days are fine. From July to August, it often rains, but there's also a lot of sun.
Jiǎ	Kūnmíng dōngtiān zěnmeyàng?	How are the winters in Kunming?
Yǐ	Dōngtiān yǒu diǎnr lěng, kěshì bú shì tài lěng, háishi hěn shūfu.	Winter's are a bit cool, but not too cold, [they']re still comfortable.
Jiǎ	Nǐ qù guo ma?	Have you [ever] been?
Yǐ	Qù guo, wǒ shūshu zhù zài Kūnmíng.	I have, my uncle lives in Kunming.
Jiǎ	Nǐ shūshu?	Your uncle?
Yǐ	Shì, wǒ bàba de didi.	Yes, my father's younger brother.
Jiǎ	Nà nǐ ne, jiàqī nǐ xiǎng zuò shénme?	And you, what are you thinking of doing over the break?
Yǐ	Wǒ bú zuò shénme, wǒ huì zài zhèr, xiūxi xiūxi.	I'm not doing anything [in particular], I'll be here, resting.
Jiǎ	Nà yě hǎo.	That's good too!

Topics illustrated in this dialogue:

Backing off: yǒu <yì>diǎn SV
 The seasons
 Yòu...yòu 'both...and'
 Bǐjiào + SV
 Weather vocabulary

Huì, yào, cháng
 More on DE
 Interjections and ejaculations
 Shì + SVs 'be the case that...'

C. Analysis

1. Backing off: Yǒu yìdiǎnr SV

Rather than answering a yes-no question with a clear positive response (Nǐ lèi ma? Hěn lèi!) or an intensified response (lèi jíle, mǎn shūfu), you may want to back off a bit and answer ‘quite’ or ‘a bit.. The construction is yǒu <yì>diǎnr + SV ‘have a-bit SV’ – the yì is often elided. Taiwan and other southern Mandarin regions, which have an aversion to the final ‘r’ sound, say yǒu yìdiǎn SV. [Note the presence of yǒu in the Chinese, with no direct correspondence in the English equivalent!]

Wǒ jīntiān yǒu (yì)diǎnr máng.	I’m kind of busy today.
Jīntiān yǒu (yì)diǎnr rè.	It’s rather hot today.
Wǒmen yǒu (yì)diǎnr è.	We’re a bit hungry.
Xiàtiān yǒu (yì)diǎnr mēnrè.	Summer’s a bit humid.
Tā yǒu (yì)diǎnr guài!	(S)he’s a bit weird.
Xī’ān, qiūtiān yǒu (yì)diǎnr lěng.	[In] Xi’an, autumns are a bit cold.
Nǐ yǒu diǎnr xiàng nǐ tàitai.	You look a bit like your wife.

2. The seasons

Though not all parts of China enjoy four seasons, most parts do, and Chinese recognizes four seasons (sìgè jìjié or sìjì). Names for seasons end with -tian.

dōngtiān	winter
chūntiān [ch!-oo-n]	spring
xiàtiān	summer
qiūtiān [qiū rhymes with liù, jiù]	autumn; fall

Examples:

Běijīng, xiàtiān hěn rè, dōngtiān hěn lěng.	Beijing[‘s] summer is hot, [and] winter’s cold.
Guǎngdōng, dōngtiān bù lěng, xiàtiān hěn mēnrè.	[In] Canton, the winter’s aren’t cold, the summers are hot and humid.
Tiānjīn<g>, chūntiān hěn shūfu, qiūtiān yě bú cuò.	Tianjin’s comfortable in spring [and] autumns not bad either.
Kūnmíng tiānqì fēicháng hǎo, sìjì rúchūn	Kunming’s weather’s great - four seasons like spring.

3. Yòu...yòu...(又...又)

Yòu, with falling tone has a core meaning of ‘once again,’ but yòu reiterated before a pair of verbs – more commonly SVs – often translates as ‘both...and’ or simply ‘and’:

Yòu kuài yòu shūfu.	[It’]s fast and comfortable.
Yòu lèi yòu jīnzhāng.	Tired and anxious.
Yòu lèi yòu è.	Tired and hungry.

4. Bǐjiào + SV

Bǐjiào (and colloquially, bǐjiǎo) is a particularly common adverb that appears mostly before SVs with the meaning of ‘rather; relatively [more]’:

Fēijī bǐjiào shūfu.	Planes are more comfortable.
Báitiān bǐjiào rè, yèli bǐjiào liáng.	Days are relatively warm, nights rather cool.

5. *Weather*

China’s geographical configuration, with a vast continental mass to its west and a large body of water to the east results in high pressure air masses over Mongolia in the winter (where the cold air contracts and becomes denser) and lower pressure ones over the ocean (which retains heat longer). As the continental land mass heats up through the spring, the high pressure is relieved (as air expands) while the air over the ocean (which is slower to heat) remains relatively higher density. These pressure differentials give rise to the monsoons (jìfēng in Chinese, ‘season-wind’): the winter monsoon bringing cold, dry air from the north and northwest, the summer monsoon, bringing warm, moist air from the ocean (and giving rise to heavy fogs along the northern coasts). As a result, winters in Beijing are cold and windy, but there is little snow.

The effect of the two monsoons is mitigated by mountain ranges, which protect the south from the cold dry winter monsoon, and the north – and to some degree the northeast - from the moisture of the summer one. Rainfall in Beijing (in the northeast) varies considerably from year to year, but is heaviest in July and August. Southern regions, south of the Jīnlíng mountain range (which runs south of the Yellow River, and south of Xī’an), have heavier rainfall, much of it between May and October. South of the Nánlíng range (which runs along the northern boundary of Canton province) the weather is subtropical, with no real winter season. On the Tibetan plateau, on the other hand, the winters are long and summer virtually nonexistent.

a) *Weather*

The ordinary word for weather is tiānqì, composed of ‘sky’ plus ‘qì.’ The root qì is important in Chinese physiology and medicine, and is familiar to English speakers as the first syllable for the word qìgōng, the name of a system of breathing exercises. Qì is sometimes translated as ‘spirit’ or ‘essence.’ It appears in a range of words having to do with weather (tiānqì, qìhòu ‘climate’) and mood (qìfēn ‘ambiance’ and shēngqì ‘get angry’ – ie ‘give rise to qì’).

Jīntiān tiānqì zěnmeyàng?	What’s the weather like today?
Zuótiān tiānqì bú cuò.	The weather’s not bad today.
Bōshìdùn tiānqì hái kěyǐ!	The weather in Boston is okay.
Lúndūn tiānqì bù lěng bú rè.	The weather in London’s neither too hot, nor too cold.
Kūnmíng tiānqì zhēn shūfu.	The weather’s very comfortable in Km.

b) *Rain and precipitation*

Corresponding to English ‘it’s raining,’ Chinese has xià yǔ, literally ‘falls rain.’ English provides an ‘ambient’ subject (‘it’) and treats rain as a verb. Chinese, on the other hand, represents the same notion with a verb of motion, xià, and a noun, yǔ – the latter placed after the verb. Some other kinds of precipitation follow the same pattern: xià xuě ‘(fall snow) to snow,’ xià wù ‘(fall fog) to be foggy.’

Nǐ kàn, xià yǔ le!	Look, it’s raining.
Běijīng cóng liùyuè dào bāyuè chángcháng xià yǔ.	From June to August, it often rains in Beijing.
Dōngtiān hěn lěng, dànshì bù cháng xià xuě.	The winter’s are cold, but it rarely snows.
Yào xià yǔ ma?	Is it going to rain?
Jiùjīnshān cháng xià wù.	It’s often foggy in SF.

Notes:

Paradoxically – given the fact that Chinese frequently omits subject pronouns where English requires them - English ‘look’ is often rendered *with* the subject pronoun in Chinese: Nǐ kàn.

The final le ‘new situation’ in the first example suggests either that (a) it is just starting to rain, or (b) the speaker is just becoming aware that it is raining.

Cháng or chángcháng ADV ‘often’

Yào ‘want’ but in this context ‘will; be about to’

c) *Sun and wind*

Weather reports often mention the sun tàiyang, literally ‘the great yang’ – yáng being the counterpart to yīn, the male and female polarities. (While there is a regional word, tàiyīn ‘the great yin’ for ‘moon, the standard word does not incorporate yīn. Rather it is composed of yuè ‘moon’ – familiar to you as the word for ‘month’ – and liàng ‘light’: yuèliàng.) Weather reports use tàiyang in the slightly extended meaning of ‘sunlight’ or ‘sunshine’: tàiyang hěn hǎo ‘it’s sunny.’ However, expressions like méiyóu tàiyang or yǒu hěn duō tàiyang, which seem natural enough in English, are rather awkward in Chinese and should be used warily (see below). In the dialogue, méi yángguāng ‘no sunlight’ is used instead.

Wind is fēng. The semantic spread of the word fēng is interesting. It incorporates notions such as ‘landscape’ (fēngjǐng ‘scenery,’ as well as the geomantic practice known as fēngshuǐ) and ‘personal bearing’ (yǒu fēngdù ‘have poise’), ‘style’ (fēngliú ‘notorious’, with the positive tone of ‘renowned’ for men, and the negative tone of ‘common’ for women), ‘custom’ (fēngsú ‘social customs’) and ‘taste’ (fēngwèi ‘flavor’).

Examples

Nánjīng, měitiān dōu hěn rè kěshì méiyóu tàiyáng – shì huīmēngmēngde!	It’s hot every day in Nanjing, but there’s no sun – it’s hazy.
--	---

Běijīng chūntiān fēng hěn dà, tù hěn duō. In the spring, the wind's strong and there's a lot of dust.

Zuótiān tiānqì bú tài hǎo - fēng tài dà! The weather wasn't very good yesterday – too much wind.

d) *Hot and humid*

Winter temperatures in China show vast variation between north and south: thus the mean temperature in January for Beijing in the northeast is $-4.6\text{C}/23.7\text{F}$ and for Canton in the southeast is $13.5\text{C}/56.3\text{F}$. But mean summer temperatures in north and south differ rather little. The mean average in July in Beijing is $26.0\text{C}/78.8\text{F}$, in Canton, it is $28.3\text{C}/82.9\text{F}$. Temperature is expressed in dù 'degrees' Celsius (Shèshì). In the summer, most of the heavily populated parts of China are hot and humid, or 'muggy': mēnrè, literally 'close; stuffy (eg of a room)' and 'hot.'

Guǎngzhōu hěn mēnrè, báitiān Canton (city)'s very humid – 30 in the
sānshí dù, yèlǐ èrshíwǔ dù! daytime, 25 at night!
Shèshì 23 dù shì Huáshì 73 dù ba. 23C is 73F, right?

e) *The order of sentence elements in Chinese*

(time/place ~ subject) adverb--verb

Time/place and subject may reverse positions, but the rest of the order is fixed. Typically, first position in a Chinese sentence introduces the topic: jīntiān tiānqì...let's talk about today--what's the weather like? The less frequently seen order, tiānqì jīntiān... would suggest 'we're talking about weather--what's today's like'--contrasting it with yesterday's, perhaps. Compare the following:

Jīntiān wǒ hěn máng. (about the situation today)
Wǒ jīntiān hěn máng. (about the speaker)

Tā zuótiān bù shūfu, jīntiān hǎo le. (about him or her)
[LE here, marks the change of state]
Zuótiān tā bù shūfu, jīntiān hǎo le. (contrasting the two days)

f) *Dialogue. Talking informally about the weather:*

Jiǎ Jīntiān tiānqì zhēn bu cuò. Nice weather we're having today!

Yī Shì a, tiānqì fēicháng hǎo, [It] is, the weather's very good,
bù lěng bù rè, hěn shūfu. neither [too] cold nor [too] hot, [it]'s
[nice and] comfortable.

Jiǎ Wǒmen qù zǒuyizǒu ba. Why don't we take a walk?!

Yǐ	<i>Aiya, bù xíng, wǒ tài máng le!</i>	<i>Oh, no way, I'm too busy!</i>
Jiǎ	Ei, máng shénme ya?! Lái xiūxi xiūxi ba!	Hey, busy [about] what? Come on, take a break.
Yǐ	<i>Hǎo, hǎo, zánmen zǒu ba.</i>	<i>Okay, let's go then!</i>
fēicháng tài...le	unusually; extremely; very (not-often) <u>tài</u> 'very' attracts <u>le</u> in the positive, the notion being that a boundary has been crossed – 'a change of state.'	
<u>zǒuzou</u>	verbs of intentional action (<u>zǒu</u> , <u>kàn</u> , <u>xiě</u> but not <u>yǒu</u> , for example) can be reduplicated (without tone) for a casual or tentative effect: <u>zǒuzou</u> 'take a walk'; <u>kànkàn</u> 'take a look; try [it] out.' An intrusive <u>yi</u> 'one' restores the tone on the second syllable, but does not change the meaning: <u>zǒuyizǒu</u> '(walk one walk) take a walk'; cf. <u>zhuànyizhuàn</u> 'take a stroll.' <u>Xiūxi</u> 'rest' reduplicates as <u>xiūxi xiūxi</u> 'take a break,' but being a two-syllable verb, does not allow an intrusive <u>yi</u> .	
<u>máng</u>	<u>máng</u> appears in some common expressions with an object, as here: <u>Máng shénme?</u> 'Busy [with] what?'	

6. Future events

It is clear from many of the examples in earlier lessons that neither past nor future events require explicit grammatical indication in Chinese:

Zuótiān tiānqì hǎn rè.	The weather was hot yesterday.
Jīntiān yě hǎn rè.	It's hot today too.
Míngtiān wǒ dào Huángshān qù.	Tomorrow I'm going to 'Yellow Mountain.'

English, on the other hand, usually registers a past event or state with the past tense form of the verb (was), while the future is often only implied ('am going to,' which has present tense form). However, in Chinese, there are some situations involving future events that do have to be explicitly indicated. The last of the three sentences above registers an intention – something the speaker has some control over. But that sentence had been about weather, then it would have been a prediction, something over which the speaker had no control. As such it would have required a huì:

Míngtiān yě huì hǎn rè.	Tomorrow will be hot too!
Huì bú huì xià yǔ? / Bú huì ba.	Will it rain? / I don't think so!

Huì has a spread of meanings that includes 'be skilled at,' 'to meet,' and 'be likely to.' It is the last one that is associated with predictive sentences. Huì, once learned, tends to get over used, at least by speakers of English. It does not translate all cases of 'will' and should be used warily. The notion of 'prediction' will help.

The verb yào, with a root meaning of 'want,' can also be used with impending future events, in the sense of 'about to; going to; soon.' In such cases, it often attracts the

new situation le. [The addition of adverbs to the yào pattern can moderate the sense of immediacy; yào alone (with or without le) suggests ‘soon’ but not right away. Kuài yào ...le ‘quickly want’ suggests ‘very soon.’]

Wǒmen yào chī fàn le.	We’re about to eat.
Tā yào shuì jiào, míngtiān zài shuō, hǎo bù hǎo.	She’s getting ready for bed, can it wait until tomorrow?
Wǒmen yào qù jīchǎng jiē tāmen le.	We’re leaving for the airport soon to meet them.

7. More on DE

We have seen DE used in a variety of contexts: wǒ de, zuótiān de, IBM de, něinián shēng de? (a special use). In this lesson DE shows up in the dialogue linking a modifying phrase (bú tài qīngchǔ) to a noun (tiānqì.) The modifying phrase is longer, but de functions in the familiar way. Notice that with modifiers, where English uses a that-phrase (or who-phrase) the order of elements in the two languages is different; where English uses an adjectival phrase, the order is more or less the same.

bú tài qīngchǔ de tiānqì	weather that isn’t clear
bù hǎokàn de fēngjǐng	ugly landscape
bù yán de lǎoshī	teachers who aren’t strict
hěn cōngmíng de xuéshēng	smart students

The construction is not limited to SV modifiers. Phrases with de + nèige ‘that one; that’ are particularly common. Recall that the demonstratives zhè and nà change their form slightly when in combination with a measure word: nà > nèige; zhè > zhèige; and nǎ > něige.

Qǐng wèn:	Excuse me:
- kàn bào de <nèige> rén shì shéi?	who’s the person reading the paper?
- mǎi dōngxì de <nèige> rén shì shéi?	who’s the person buying stuff?
- jiē xuéshēng de <nèige> rén shì shéi?	who’s the person meeting the students?

In principle – and particularly in colloquial speech - it is possible to place the demonstrative, nèige first:

Nèi ge <dǎ lánqiú de> shì shénme rén? What sort of a person is the one playing bb?

And in the right context, either nèige, or even nèige rén can be omitted:

Dǎ diànhuà de shì wǒ de lǎoshī.	The one telephoning is my teacher.
Wánr diànnǎo de shì tóngxué.	The person playing with the computer is a classmate.

7. Interjections (cf. ejaculations, expletives, exclamations)

Few textbooks – or grammars of Chinese – have much to say about interjections. However, they are quite frequent in informal speech, and need to be considered. The list below is tentative; as you observe Chinese speaking, you can add or amend it.

Interjections are conventionalized carriers of emotion, typically providing context for a following sentence; cf. English: aha (recognition), yikes (surprise and fear), whoopee (happiness). Interjections sometimes employ sounds outside the regular linguistic system, such as the English alveolar clicks, conventionally spelled tsk tsk or tut tut (disapproval).

Though they may occur elsewhere, interjections in Chinese are more frequent in initial position – or rather, prior position; though they often have a fixed intonation, it is not quite the same as the pitch and contour of the regular tones. Here are some examples:

Ng ~ M ~ uhn (falling)	weak assent; acknowledgement; uh huh
O (falling)	Oh [I see]
Ai (falling)	<i>resignation</i>
A (falling)	Ah! <i>Mild interest.</i>
Aiya	Goodness; gosh; wow! [something unexpected]
Aiyo [yaw]	[A slightly stronger version.]
Yo	Yikes; oh dear. <i>Surprise, probably related to ai yo.</i>
Wa	Wow! [more southern, Taiwan?]
Ha (falling, s/t abrupt)	Ha! [satisfaction]
Wei ~ wai	hello [telephoning; calling to someone]

9. When in doubt:

As noted earlier, Chinese differs from English in not requiring the presence of a form of the verb ‘to be’ to make adjectives into full predicates. Thus the meaning of lèi is ‘be+tired’ not just ‘tired.’

Nǐ lèi ma? Nǐ lèi bu lei?	Are you tired?
Wǒ hěn lèi.	I am.

However, responses of all kinds – whether involving a SV or ordinary Verb – can be questioned or reasserted by inserting shì or shì bu shì, as the following examples show:

Nǐ shì bu shì hěn lèi?	Is it the case that [you]’re tired?
Shì, wǒ shì hěn lèi.	Yes, I am.

Míngtiān nǐ shì bu shì yǒu hěn
duō gōngkè?
Bù, míngtiān méiyǒu gōngkè.

Do you [indeed] have a lot of
homework tomorrow?
No, [I] don't have any home-
work tomorrow.

Shì bu shì in such sentences questions an underlying assumption: 'They say she's strict. Is she?' Shì in the response confirms it. These 'confirming' shì's are also common as a way of questioning adverbs:

Wǒmen shì bú shì yíding děi qù? Is it the case that we HAVE to go?

Wǒmen shì bú shì dōu děi qù? / Do we ALL have to go? /
Bù, nǐ yíge rén qù jiù xíng le. No, it's okay to go alone.

Of course, if shì is the main verb of the sentence, then a yes-no question and corresponding answer may be formed in the usual way:

Tā shì bushì nǐ gēge? Is he your brother?
Shì, tā shì wǒ gēge. Yes, he is.

D. More on names

1. Jiào with two objects

As noted in the last dialogue, jiào can take two objects with the meaning 'call someone something':

Wǒmen jiào tā Chén lǎoshī.	We call him 'Chen laoshi.'
Dàjiā dōu jiào tā lǎo fūzǐ.	Everyone calls him 'the studious one.'
Zhōngguó rén jiào tā fēirén.	The Chinese call him the 'Flying Man.'
Nǐ jiào tā shémme?	What do you call her?
Péngyou dōu jiào wǒ xiǎo Míng.	Friends call me 'young' Míng.

A more colloquial form of this construction makes use of the verb guǎn whose root meaning (as a verb) is 'be in charge of':

Wǒmen guǎn tā jiào lǎoshī.	We call her 'teacher.'
Tāmen guǎn tā jiào fāntǒng.	They call him 'rice bucket.' (ie 'big eater')

Exercise

He's very strict, so we call him 'the boss.'

She's my mother's sister, so we call her 'auntie.'

Because Mr. Chen's a director, people call his wife 'Madame' Chen.

Because he's rather old, we call him 'lǎodàye.'

Although she's not a teacher, we still call her Professor Liào.

2. Finding out how to address someone.

Frequently, in talking to someone with status, it's not clear what form of address is appropriate. At such times a direct inquiry will help, using the verb chēnghu 'call or address,' or as is appropriate in this context, 'be called; be addressed':

Jiǎ. Qǐng wèn, nín zěnmē chēnghu?	Excuse me, sir/madame, how should you be addressed?
Yī Nǐmen jiào wǒ Yáng lǎoshī jiù hǎo le.	You can call me Prof. Yang.

3. Xiǎo, lǎo and dà prefixed to names:

a) Good friends may address one another with the friendly appellatives xiǎo '(small) young', lǎo 'old,' and occasionally, dà 'big,' placed before a surname. In addition, families will sometimes use xiǎo, and occasionally dà in front of the last syllable of a given name. Here are some examples:

full name	sex	informal	intimate	with title (formal)
Bái Sùzhēn	fem.	xiǎo Bái	xiǎo Zhēn	Bái lǎoshī
Zhāng Dàmíng	male	lǎo Zhāng	(xiǎo Míng)	Zhāng jīnglǐ
Liáng Àimín	fem.	xiǎo Liáng	xiǎo Mín	Liáng zhǔrèn
Wáng Zhìzhì	male	dà Wáng	dà Zhì	Wáng xiānshēng

The choice of xiǎo, lǎo or dà depends on a number of factors, including age, physical appearance, and personality. Older males, and occasionally, older females can be referred to as lǎo + surname: lǎo Wáng; lǎo Wèi. Younger males and females may be called xiǎo + surname or, among family, xiǎo + last syllable of míngzi: xiǎo Máo; xiǎo Míng; xiǎo Zhēn. And a tall person, particularly to distinguish him from another (shorter) person with the same surname, may be called dà: dà Chén, dà Bái. But foreigners should be wary of using such appellatives, and use name + title, full name, or míngzi when addressing Chinese unless explicitly told to use a more informal or intimate form by a Chinese friend.

E. Narrative

Now that sufficient vocabulary is available, we can present narratives along with dialogues in each lesson. Narratives have the advantage of providing a lot of vocabulary in context, that makes it easier to recall.

The following is a short narrative incorporating some of the vocabulary and sentence patterns from the first five lessons. Though restrictions on vocabulary make it a little stilted, the way phrases are simply juxtaposed to form strings is quite natural in colloquial speech (though less so in writing) and contrasts with English that usually requires more explicit marking. Once you have read the passage through a few times, you should translate it carefully, making sure that the English reads naturally. Once you are

satisfied with your translation, use it to back-translate into Chinese and see if you can learn to retell the story with some fluency.

Míngnián, qīyuèfèn, wǒ dǎsuàn qù Zhōngguó, qù Běijīng kàn qīnqī.
Xiàtiān Běijīng hěn rè, kěshì méi fǎzi, dōngtiān wǒ hái dǐ shàng kè, bù néng
qù biéde dìfang. Cóng liù yuèfèn dào bā yuèfèn, Běijīng cháng xià yǔ, tiānqì
fēicháng mēn(rè), bù shūfu; wǒmen yídìng hěn lèi, hěn xīnkǔ, děi xiūxi hěn
duō. Qù kàn shénme rén ne? Qù kàn wǒ shūshu, nà jiùshi wǒ bàba de dìdi.
Wǒ shūshu shì Zhōngguó hěn yǒumíng de chúshī, zài Běijīng fàndiàn
gōngzuò. Zhè shì tā de míngpiàn, nǐ kàn:

Ài Hóngfàn
Tèjí chúshī

Běijīng Fàndiàn
Wángfǔjǐng Dàjiē

Diànhuà: 701 7241
<Hongfan@sina.com>

Tā xìng Ài, jiào Ài Hóngfàn. Shēng zai Tiānjīn, yě zhǎng zai Tiānjīn,
kěshì 1995 nián lái Běijīng gōngzuò. Tā xiànzài zhù zai Wángfǔjǐng, Běijīng
zuì rènao de dìfang, zài Wángfǔjǐng de yíge fàndiàn gōngzuò. Nǐ qù
Zhōngguó nǐ yīnggāi qù kàn tā, míngpiàn shàng yǒu tā de diànhuà. Tā kěyǐ
qǐng nǐ chīfàn.

Ài xiānshēng de taitai, nà shì wǒ shēnshen, shì lǎoshī, zài Zhōngxué
jiāo shùxué hé lìshǐ. Tīngshuō tā yǒu diǎnr yán kěshì duì xuésheng hěn hǎo.
Tā shì shénme dìfang rén ne? Wǒ yīnggāi zhīdao, kěshì wǒ bù qīngchǔ – shì
bu shì Shànghǎi rén? Wǒ xiǎng shì.

Hǎo, jiù zhèiyàng, bù zǎo le, wǒ gāi zǒu le, jīntiān kè hěn duō, hái dǐ
qù túshūguǎn zuò gōngkè xuéxí. Hěn xīnkǔ! Kěshì méi bànfǎ, bù néng bù
zuò! Zài jiàn, húitóu jiàn!

néng ‘can; be able to’
shūshu ‘uncle = younger brother of father’; older brother of father is dàye in the
 north, bóbo in the south.
chúshī ‘chef (kitchen-teacher)’

gōngzuò	‘to work; job’
tèjí	‘superior; super (special-skill)’
fàndiàn	‘hotel; restaurant (food-shop)’ Cf. <u>fānguǎnr</u> ‘restaurant.’
Wángfǔjǐng	nàme of Beijing’s most glamorous shopping street
dàjiē	‘avenue (big-street)’
zuì	‘most’ (<u>zuì hǎo</u> ‘best’, <u>zuì dà</u> ‘biggest’)
shěnshe	<u>shūshu de taitai</u> ; also <u>shěnze</u>
zhōngxué	‘high school (middle-leaning)’
jiāo	‘teach’; the generic ‘teaching’ is jiāoshū ‘teach books.’
tīngshuō	‘it’s said that...(hear-say)’
duì...hǎo	‘good to(to [person] be-good)’

Exercise. True or false?

1. The speaker is in China.
2. The speaker would probably prefer to make his trip in winter.
3. The speaker is probably Chinese.
4. The speaker is in China from June to August.
5. The speaker’s uncle grew up in Beijing.
6. His uncle’s wife teaches literature and history.
7. *Shenshen* would probably correspond to ‘sister-in-law’ in English.
8. The speaker thinks his uncle’s wife is from Shanghai.
8. The speaker’s a bit anxious.

F. Pronunciation and pinyin

1. *Tone combos – the last three sets:*

tīngshuō	bù nán	Táiwān
kāfēi	dàxué	chúshī
jīntiān	tài máng	zuótiān
chūntiān		Lúndūn
cāntīng		xuéshēng

2. *Other sets:*

1	2	3	4
Gāo ma?	Hěn gāo.	Bù gāo.	Gāo bu gāo?
Nán ma?	Hěn nán.	Bù nán.	Nán bu nán?
Hǎo ma?	Hěn hǎo.	Bù hǎo.	Lěng bu lěng?
Lèi ma?	Hěn lèi.	Bú lèi.	Lèi bu lèi?
5	6	7	
Zhēn gāo.	Zhēn bù gāo.	Bú tài gāo.	
Zhēn nán.	Zhēn bù máng.	Bú tài máng.	
Zhēn lěng.	Zhēn bù hǎo.	Bú tài hǎo.	
Zhēn tàng.	Zhēn bú è.	Bú tài rè.	

mén	door	ménr	way; knack
kōng	empty	kòngr	empty space; spare time
dān	unit	dānr	bedsheet; on one's own

Southern speakers of Mandarin, who often regard the r-suffix as a northern affectation, can - and do - avoid using it in all but those cases like èr 'two' where there is no choice: instead of yìdiǎnr 'a bit' they will say yìdiǎn, instead of kòngr 'free time' they will say kòng, relying on only the tone (and context) to distinguish it from the level-toned kōng 'empty.' In reading, they will usually treat the r-suffix as a separate syllable, -ér, reading mén-ér, for example, instead of ménr. But all the words cited above can be found with the r pronunciation indicated in dictionaries; and for Beijing and other northern speakers, the r-pronunciations are standard.

Beijing speakers, on the other hand - particularly young men - make far more extensive use of the r-flavoring than other northern speakers. The following nursery rhyme, in which every last word has the r-suffix, illustrates. (*This rhyme is found in Chen Zishi, compiler, Beijing Tongyao Xuanji, Taipei: Da Zhongguo Guoshu Gongsi, 1969, p. 94.*)

Qióng tàitai

Qióng tàitair	poor wife
Bào zhe ge jiānr,	holds [her] shoulders
chī wán le fàn	eat-finish LE food
rào le ge wānr,	go+round LE the corner
yòu mǎi bīngláng yòu mǎi yānr.	and buy betel and tobacco.

Note

Bīngláng (derived from the Indonesian/Malay word *pinang*) is the areca nut, the main ingredient in chewable betel quids that are popular in Taiwan, south China, and in Southeast Asia. Chewing betel cleans the teeth, helps with digestion, and provides a pleasant sensation in the mouth and head. It also makes your saliva red and viscous – something that leads to excess expectoration.

a. Pronunciation

You will have observed that some of the r-words look quite unpronounceable, particularly those ending in 'nr' (yìdiǎnr, yānr). It turns out they are not pronounced as written; as you already know, yìdiǎnr is actually pronounced yìdiǎr; similarly, píngnr is pronounced píér [pyuhr]. The pinyin convention is to leave the syllables, to which the 'r' is added, intact. In that way, the original syllable can be easily identified, and both *r* and *r-less* versions can be listed together in a dictionary. This practice is probably also influenced by the tendency for character writing to preserve syllables and ignore sound changes.

It would be difficult at this early stage of our study to present all possible r-syllables in the way that we have done for other rhymes. Because the r-word are often

regional, colloquial or slangy, relatively few are encountered in beginning textbooks. Here, we will practice only a selection. The following examples are ordered by final consonant of the syllable; r seems to be especially compatible with roots ending in nasals in modern Mandarin - the last two columns:

zìr	[zèr]	huàr	gàir [gàr]	bànr	píng ⁿ r [pié ⁿ r]
cír	[cér]	gēr	wèir [wèr]	ménr	chóng ⁿ r [chó ⁿ r]
shìr	[shèr]	xià ⁿ r	kuàir [kuà ⁿ r]	diǎnr	kòng ⁿ r [kò ⁿ r]
pír	[piér]		huǐr [huě ⁿ r]	guǎn [guǎ ⁿ r]	yàng ⁿ r [yà ⁿ r]
yìr	[yèr]			gùnr [guè ⁿ r]	huáng ⁿ r [huá ⁿ r]

Note how the last two columns are pronounced. When r is applied to an n-final syllable, the n sound is lost completely: diǎn > diǎr; bàn > bàr. But when the r is applied to an ng final syllable, the nasal endings survives as nasalization (indicated by the superscript -n), ie the vowels are pronounced nasally: kòngⁿr > [kòⁿr] etc. These rules are hard to apply, so for now, we will focus on r-words that are frequently encountered, like diǎnr, yàngⁿr, huǐr and kuàir.

F. reading practice

Here are some words and phrases (many of them, signs) that you have not encountered before. Meanings are provided only to satisfy curiosity. With your developing knowledge of pinyin, you can try reading them aloud:

hóngdēnglóng	‘(red-lantern)’ <i>Dàhóng dēnglóng gāogāo guà</i> is the name of a fairly recent Chinese film, ‘Raise the Red Lantern.’
jūzhùqū	‘(reside-live-district) residential district’
zhíxiáshì	‘(direct-jurisdiction-city)’; a city that is ruled directly by the central government, eg <u>Běijīng</u> , <u>Tiānjīn(g)</u> and <u>Chóngqìng</u> in present-day China. Cf. Washington D.C.
jiāotōng shūniǚ	‘(communication pivot) communication or transportation hub,’ eg <u>Zhèngzhōu</u>
sīfǎjú	‘(judiciary bureau)’
ānquán tōngdào	‘(safety route) emergency route’
jǐnjí chūkǒu	‘(emergency exit) emergency exit’
shāngwùzhōngxīn	‘(business-center)’
gòuwùzhōngxīn	‘(buying-center) shopping center’

jìnzhǐ xīyān '(prohibit draw+in-smoke) No smoking'

Yíngyè shíjiān '(operation hours) business hours'

G. Written weather reports

1. Weather reports in Chinese newspapers are usually limited to a brief description of the skies, the wind velocity and the high and low temperatures. The language is concise rather than colloquial, but otherwise fairly straightforward. Here are some examples, with glosses. The first is from a newspaper sold in Nanjing called *Yángzi Wǎnbào* ('Yangtze Evening News'); the Arabic numbers are in the original. The second is taken, slightly edited, from the internet.

(a) *Yángzi Wǎnbào, 1999 nián, 7 yuè, 26 hào (unedited)*

Nánjīng shìqū tiānqì: jīntiān xiàwǔ dào yèli duōyún,
Nánjīng city-region afternoon to night many-clouds

míngtiān báitiān duōyún zhuǎnyīn yǒu zhènyǔ,
tomorrow daytime becoming-cloudy have showers

piān dōng fēng 4-5 jí, wēndù 33 C – 25 C.
towards east wind temp.

(b) *Internet, 1999 nián 10 yuè 25 rì (edited slightly)*

Běijīng: duōyún zhuǎnqíng, piān xī fēng 3 jí, wēndù 20-24.
many-clouds becoming-clear towards west wind temp

2. Below is a chart that shows the weather in the main Mainland (Dàlù) cities. From it, you can read off temperature, obviously, and with a little help from the glossary below, cloud and rain conditions. The temperatures, of course, you can characterize as lěng or rè etc. The other conditions (zhuǎnyín, duōyún etc.) will sound like what they are - weather report language; but in the context, that is acceptable.

Dàlù Tiānqì

Guǎng- zhōu*	Fú- zhōu	Kūn- míng	Hàn- kǒu	Háng- zhōu	Shàng- hǎi	Nán- jīng	Běi- jīng	Tiān- jīn	Xī- ān	Kāi- fēng	Shěn- yáng
duō- yún	zhuǎn- yīn	zhèn- yǔ	yǔ- tiān	duō- yún	yǔ- tiān	zhuǎn- qíng	duō- yún	zhuǎn- yīn	yīn- tiān	qíng- tiān	yǔ- tiān
31	35	22	25	33	30	25	27	26	28	30	25
27	26	19	23	25	24	23	20	18	22	22	20

Notes:

*A large number of Mainland cities have zhōu as their second syllable: Sūzhōu, Hángzhōu, Xúzhōu, Lánzhōu, Fúzhōu, Chángzhōu, Yángzhōu, Guǎngzhōu, Gǎnzhōu etc. In old China, zhōu was an administrative unit, and the various cities that retain this syllable were once provincial centers.

Phrases, with literal meanings:

duōyún	‘many clouds’
zhuǎn yīn	‘turn overcast’
zhuǎn qíng	‘turn clear’
zhènyǔ	‘a shower of rain’
yǔtiān	‘rain day’
yīntiān	‘overcast day’
qíngtiān	‘clear day’

H. Rhymes

1) Here’s a bit of political irony, overheard at a meeting of Chinese teachers; no one wished to go on record, so it is cited anonymously.

Néng hē yì jīn, hē bā liǎng:
duìbùqǐ rénmin,
duìbùqǐ dǎng.

Can drink 1 jin [but] drinks 8 ounces:
apologies to the people,
apologies to the party.

Néng hē bā liǎng, hē yì jīn:
rénmín hé dǎng
xīnliánxīn.

Can drink 8 ozs. [but] drinks 1 jin:
people and party,
heart-linked-to heart.

Notes:

Jīn is a Chinese measure equal to 1/2 a kilogram; a jīn contains 16 liǎng or ‘ounces.’ Rénmín are ‘the people’ and dǎng is ‘the [communist] party.’ Xīn is ‘heart; feelings.’

2) And another nursery rhyme about insects:

Chóng, chóng chóng, chóng

Chóng, chóng chóng, chóng fēi,
fēidào Nánshān hē lùshǔi,
lùshǔi hēbǎo le
huítóu jù pǎo le!

insects... fly
fly-to South Mountain to+drink dew
dew drink-full LE
turn-head then run LE

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