

## Unit 6

Tiān bú pà, dì bú pà, zhǐ pà [wàiguó rén, etc.] shuō Zhōngguó huà!

*Nothing to fear from heaven, nothing to fear from earth – the only thing to fear is  
[‘foreigners’, etc.] speaking Chinese!*

*(Self-depreciatory phrase, taught to the author by one of his Chinese teachers.)*

### Contents

6.1	Opposites	
6.2	Describing people	<i>Exercise 1</i>
6.3	Verb+ <u>guo</u>	<i>Exercise 2</i>
6.4	When, before, after	
6.5	When?	<i>Exercise 3, 4</i>
6.6	Places of work	<i>Exercise 5</i>
6.7	Directions	<i>Exercise 6</i>
6.8	The <i>shi-de</i> construction	<i>Exercises 7, 8</i>
6.9	Dialogue: Where are you from?	<i>Exercise 9</i>
6.10	Calling Michael Jordan	<i>Exercise 10</i>
6.11	Food (3)	
6.12	Highlights	<i>Exercise 11</i>
6.13	Rhymes and rhythms	
	<i>Appendix 1: Chinese historical periods</i>	

### 6.1 Opposites

With SVs, opposites can be formed by negation: duì > bú duì. However, in many cases, there exists a word that can stand in for the negative phrase as a true opposite: duì ‘right’ > cuò ‘wrong’. Occasionally, if they share a domain but are regarded as contrary, pairs of nouns can also be treated as opposites: xuésheng and lǎoshī; nánde and nǚde; gǒu ‘dog’ and māo ‘cat’. Exploration of opposites can reveal subtle cultural and linguistic differences. Chinese, for example, consider the opposite of xīn ‘new’ to be either lǎo ‘old’ [in the sense

of former or antiquated] or jiù ‘old’ [in the sense of used or dilapidated]. But lǎo, in the context of foods such as tofu, can also mean ‘tough’, opposite to nèn ‘soft’ [like baby’s skin]:

Ròu tài lǎo le.                      The meat’s tough!  
Zhè dòufu hěn nèn.                This tofu’s quite soft.

Shēng (chūshēng de shēng, xuéshēng de shēng) can mean ‘raw; unripe’ (as well as ‘to bear; be born’) and as such, is opposed to shóu ‘ripe; cooked’. Shóu has a range of meanings, from ‘ripe’ to ‘familiar’ and ‘experienced’; it also has two pronunciations, shóu and shú, the latter more common with the meaning ‘familiar; experienced’ rather than ‘ripe’.

Rìběn rén hěn xǐhuan chī shēngyú.    The Japanese like to eat raw fish [‘sashimi’].

Yīngguó rén bǐjiào xǐhuan chī        The English prefer well-cooked meat.  
shóuròu!

In Chinese, the term for ‘opposite’ is xiāngfǎn ‘mutual opposition’. Thus:

Rè de xiāngfǎn shì shénme?        What’s the opposite of ‘hot’?  
<Rè de xiāngfǎn> shì lěng.        Cold.

Dà ne, dà de xiāngfǎn shì shénme?    And ‘big’, what’s the opposite of ‘big’?  
Ng, dà de xiāngfǎn yěxǔ shì xiǎo.    Uh, the opposite of ‘big’, I suppose, is ‘small’.

Gāo ne?                                    And ‘tall’?  
Nà, gāo de xiāngfǎn shì ǎi;        Well, the opposite of ‘gao’ is ‘short’;  
gāo de xiāngfǎn yě shì dī.        the opposite of ‘gao’ is also ‘low’.

Below is a list of opposites with rough English glosses. A feel for their range and usage will have to wait until they have been encountered in different settings; but for now,

you can practice pronunciation and start to get familiar with the words (SVs, as well as some nouns or noun-phrases) by asking for, or responding with, their opposites, as follows:

Q: [ ] de xiāngfǎn shì shénme?

A: [ ] de xiāngfǎn shì [ ].

*List*

duō    shǎo	shàng   xià	zài chéng lǐ	zài xiāngxià
<i>many   few</i>	<i>above   below</i>	<i>in town</i>	<i>in the country</i>
gāo    ǎi	gāo    dī	cháng   duǎn	guì    piányi
<i>tall    short</i>	<i>high   low</i>	<i>long   short</i>	<i>expensive   cheap</i>
hǎo    huài	kuài    màn	pàng    shòu	zuǒ    yòu
<i>good   bad</i>	<i>fast   slow</i>	<i>fat   thin</i>	<i>left   right</i>
xiāng   chòu	gānjìng   zāng	cōngmíng   bèn	nán    róngyì
<i>fragrant   smelly</i>	<i>clean   dirty</i>	<i>clever; stupid</i>	<i>difficult   easy</i>

## 6.2 Describing people

Describing people involves a number of constructions. Most simply, a SV may suffice:

Tā hěn cōngmíng.	She's very clever.
Tā hěn kě'ài.	She's quite cute.
Tā yǒu diǎnr juè.	He's a bit gruff.
Tā yǒu diǎnr tiáopí.	She's kind of mischievous.
Tāmen dōu hěn guāi.	They're very well behaved [of children].
Tā bǐjiào pàng.	He's kind of heavy. ('fat')
Tā hěn shuài.	He's good looking. ('smooth; in command')
Tā hěn piàoliang.	She's pretty.
Tā yǒu diǎnr hàixiū.	She's kind of shy.
Tā hěn kù.	<S>he's cool.

## Notes

- juè a colloquial word meaning ‘blunt’ or ‘gruff’.
- tiáopí, guāi words typically applied to children: ‘naughty’ and ‘good’.
- shuài the sense seems to be ‘controlled; unruffled; cool’ and thence ‘good looking’; shuài is usually applied to men. Piàoliang ‘pretty; beautiful’, but whose literal meaning seems to be ‘rinsed with light’, is usually applied to women (also to clothes and beautiful things).

In cases in which one aspect, or part of a person is being described, then the pattern is ‘topic-comment’, which often corresponds to a sentence with ‘have’ in English: eg: Tā yǎnjing hěn dà. ‘She has big eyes. (she eyes quite big)’

<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>COMMENT</i>	
<i>person</i>	<i>part</i>	<adv> <i>SV</i>
Tā	rén	hěn hǎo.
Tā	yǎnjing	hěn dà.
Tā	gèzi~gèr	hěn gāo.

- Tā rén hěn hǎo. He’s very nice.
- Tā shēntǐ bú cuò. She’s in good shape.
- Tā yǎnjing hěn yǒushén. She has ‘sparkling’ eyes. (‘animated’)
- Tā gèzi hěn gāo. He’s quite tall.
- Tā liǎn hěn kuān. She has a broad face.
- Tā pífu hěn bái / hēi. He has light skin / dark skin. (‘black/white’)
- Tā bízi hěn gāo. He has a big nose. (‘high’)

In spite of the earlier example of ‘skin’, which can be characterized as bái or hēi, colors tend to be incorporated in a ‘categorical’ construction with shì ... de (‘he hair be black-color ones’), as follows:

- Tā tóufa shì hēisè de. He has black hair.
- Tā tóufa shì huángsè de. She has brown hair. (‘yellow’)

## Notes

Tā rén hěn hǎo. Rén here has the sense of ‘as a person’, ie ‘he’s very nice’. Shēntǐ, on the other hand, is the physical body.

yǎnjing ‘eye’, with qīngshēng on the second syllable; contrast with yǎnjìng ‘glasses’, literally ‘eye-mirrors’, with final falling tone.

gèzi ‘height; stature’; also gèr.

bízi large or prominent noses are described as gāo, as well as dà

liǎn faces are often described as kuān ‘broad’ [typical of north China] or cháng ‘long’ or shòu ‘thin’ [more typical of south China].

pífū ‘skin’; people in China are often described in terms of skin tone.

tóufa The Chinese usually describe the shades of brown to blonde hair that are characteristic of northern Europeans not as brown (zōngsè) but as huángsè de ‘yellow’. If finer distinctions are made, then ‘blond’ is jīnsè de (‘gold’) or jīnhuángsè de (‘golden yellow’), and zōngsè de can be used for darker browns.

## 6.2.1 SVs as attributes

There is a line in the popular song, *Lóng de chuánrén*, ‘Descendants of the Dragon’ that reads:

hēi yǎnjing hēi tóufa huáng pífū, yǒngyǒng yuǎnyuǎn shì lóng de chuánrén  
 black eyes black hair yellow skin, eternally be dragon’s descendants

The line shows that in addition to the ‘person (part-SV)’ pattern illustrated above (tā yǎnjing hěn dà), there is the option of placing color words and other SVs before the noun that they modify: dà bízi; gāo gèzi, etc. When characterizing a subject, such expressions are idiosyncratic. For example, although it is possible to say tā bízi hěn gāo, the alternative expression is usually tā <shi> gāo bíliáng<r> ‘he’s high nose-bridged’, ie ‘he’s got a large nose’ rather than just tā <shi> gāo bízi – though tā <shi> dà bízi ‘he[’s] big-nose[d]’ is also said.

Tā gèzi ~ gèr hěn gāo. > Tā <shi> gāo gèzi ~ gèr.

Tā bízǐ hěn gāo.

Tā &lt;shi&gt; gāo bǐliáng&lt;r&gt; ~ dà bízǐ.

Tā tóufa shì hēisè de.

Tā &lt;shi&gt; hēi tóufa.

There is a nuance of difference between the two patterns. The first simply describes the person as tall, etc.; the second is more absolute, placing him in a category of tall people: Tā <shi> gāo gèzi ‘He’s of tall stature’. At this point, it is enough to be aware that both options exist.

### 6.2.2 Zhǎng + DE

Instead of just describing someone as gāo ‘tall’ or piàoliang ‘pretty’, Chinese often use the expression zhǎng+de ‘grow up [to be...] – with no final-le’.

Tā zhǎng+de zhēn shuài.

He’s [grown up] very handsome.

Tā zhǎng+de hěn gāo.

She’s [grown up] very tall.

Tā zhǎng+de hěn shòu.

She’s [grown up] very thin.

Tā zhǎng+de hěn zhuàng!

He’s [grown up] very strong.

#### Summary of descriptions

<i>person</i>	<i>part</i>	<i>link</i>	<i>attribute</i>
Tā			hěn gāo. yǒu diǎnr juè.
Tā		[shi]	gāo gèzi. hēi tóufa.
Tā	rén gèzi		hěn hǎo. hěn gāo.
Tā	tóufa	<shi>	huángsè de.
Tā		zhǎng+de	hěn gāo. zhēn shuài.

#### Exercise 1.

Describe the following people, as indicated:

1. A sibling: tall; good looking; decent person.
2. A classmate: short; sparkling eyes; thin.

3. An American friend: brown hair; healthy; cute.
  4. Your teacher: tall; a bit overweight; gruff.
  5. A friend: tall, dark, big eyes.
  6. The kid next door: skinny; big eyes, mischievous.
- 

### 6.3 Verb + guò ‘have you ever...’

When people hear you speaking Chinese, they are bound to ask you if you have ever been to China; if you have, they might also ask you if, when you were there, you had visited the Stone Forest (Shí Lín) in the southwest, or seen the terracotta figures (bīngmǎyǒng ‘soldiers-horses-figures’) at Xi’an, if you had eaten special Chinese foods like sea cucumber (hǎishēn) or shark’s fin (yúchì), or done any of a host of other things. As you know from the brief remarks in §3.3.4, such questions, as well as their typical responses make use of a verb suffix, guò (untuned in northern speech), placed directly after the verb: qùguo; chīguo; kànguo. Guò’s root meaning is ‘pass; cross over’, but as a verb suffix, it signals that an event has [ever] occurred in the past, or has occurred over a period in the past, but says nothing about precisely when it occurred in that period. For this reason, guò is sometimes referred to as an ‘experiential’ suffix; its general meaning is ‘have ever had the experience of’; ‘did ever have the experience of’.

#### 6.3.1 *Guo* patterns

Responses to questions with guo retain the guo in negative responses as well as positive. The negative response is, like that with le, formed with méiyou.

Shàng ge xīngqī, nǐ shàngguo  
bān ma?

*Méi shàngguo, bù shūfu.*

Did you go to work [at all] last week?

*No, I didn’t, I was indisposed.*

It should be noted that speakers from southern regions including Taiwan tend to align the positive and negative responses, responding to the first with yǒu (with or without V-guo) and the second with méiyǒu (with or without V-guo):

- |   |   |                                |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
|   | Nǐ qùguo Táiwān ma?                     | Have you [ever] been to China? |
| + | <i>Yǒu.</i> / <i>Qùguo.</i>             | [I] have.                      |
| - | <i>Méiyǒu.</i> / <i>Méi qùguo &gt;.</i> | [I] haven't.                   |

The *V-not-V* question juxtaposes the positive with a final méi<you>, that can be regarded as a truncated version of the full negative, méi<you> qùguo Zhōngguó.

Nǐ qùguo Zhōngguó méiyǒu?	Have you been to China [or not]?
<i>Hái méi qùguo, kěshì hěn xiǎng qù.</i>	<i>Not yet, but I'd like to.</i>

Shàng ge xīngqī, nǐ kànguo diànyǐng méiyǒu?	Did you see any films last week?
<i>Méi kànguo; shàng ge xīngqī yǒu hěn duō kǎoshì, bù néng qù kàn diànyǐng.</i>	<i>No; last week, [I] had a lot of exams, I couldn't go to [any] films.</i>

### 6.3.2 'Ever/never' and 'once; ever'

Two adverbs are particularly drawn to the construction with guò:

cónglái	<i>only in negative sentences; meaning 'never'; sometimes reduced to just <u>cóng</u>;</i>
céngjīng	<i>not with negative sentences; meaning 'formerly; at some time; once; ever'; often reduced to <u>céng</u> in writing.</i>

Wǒ cónglái méi chīguo hǎishēn.	I've never [ever] eaten 'sea cucumber'.
--------------------------------	---

Nǐ shì bu shì céngjīng xuéguo	Have you previously studied Chinese?
-------------------------------	--------------------------------------



Hànyǔ? / *Bù, wǒ méi xuéguo.* / *No, I haven't.*

The indefinite use of shénme, meaning ‘any’, is also common with comments about experience:

Shàng ge xīngqī nǐ kànguo                      Did you go to any Chinese movies last week?  
shénme Zhōngguó diànyǐng ma?  
*Kànguo Wòhǔ Cánglóng.*                      [*I*] saw ‘Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon’.

#### Summary

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>	
‘have ever eaten x’	Chīguo hǎishēn ma?	Chīguo.	+
	Chīguo hǎishēn méi<you>?	Méi<you> chīguo.	–
		[Méiyou.]	–
‘have eaten; did eat’	Chīguo fàn le ma?	Chī<guo> le.	+
	Chīguo fàn le méi<you>?	Hái méi<you>	–
		<chīguo<fàn>>> ne.	

### 6.3.3 Xiē ‘several’

If you discover that someone has been to China, then you might want to know which places s/he’s been to. Něi ge dìfang would mean ‘which place’; but to ask ‘which places’, the M-phrase needs to be replaced by xiē ‘several’, as in the following example:

Nǐ qùguo Zhōngguó ma?                      Have you been to China?  
*Qùguo, wǒ shì qùnián qù de.*                      *I have, I went last year.*  
O, nà nǐ qùguo nǐ xiē dìfang?                      Oh, so which places did you go to?  
*Qùguo Běijīng, Xī’ān, Shànghǎi;*                      *I went to Beijing, Xi’an, Shanghai;*  
*hái yǒu Guǎngzhōu, Chóngqìng.*                      *and also Canton and Chungking.*  
Hěn duō ya!                      A lot!

*Other examples*

Nèi xiē shū dōu shì nǐ de ma?	Are these books all yours?
Zhè xiē dōngxi dōu hěn guì.	These things are all expensive.

**6.3.4 Times**

Frequently, you will want to respond to a *guo*-question with a number of ‘times’ or ‘occasions’: yí cì ‘once’, liǎng cì ‘twice’, dì-yī cì ‘the 1<sup>st</sup> time’. Huí (possibly more stylistically informal than cì) is used in much the same way: liǎng huí, sān huí. Cì and huí are M-words, but because they measure verbal events (and are not associated with a following noun), they are called ‘verbal measures’. Another common verbal measure is biàn ‘once through’ (as when repeating something). Here are some examples:

Wǒ qùguo yí cì.	I’ve been [there] once.
Wǒ jiànguo tā jǐ cì.	I’ve met her a few times.
Wǒ chīguo hǎo jǐ cì.	I’ve eaten it a ‘good many times’.
Wǒ lái guo yí huí.	I’ve been here once before.
Qǐng nǐ zài shuō yí biàn.	Would you mind repeating [that].
Nǐ lái guo Běijīng ma?	Have you been to Beijing before?
Wǒ zhè shì dì-yī cì!	This is my first time. (‘For me, this is 1 <sup>st</sup> time.’)
Dì-yī cì bú cuò, dànshi dì-èr cì gèng hǎowánr.	The 1st time wasn’t bad, but the 2nd time was even more fun.

*Notes*

- While kàn has a basic meaning of ‘look’ (cf. kànshū, kànbìng), jiàn (zàijiàn de jiàn) suggests an encounter. The two may be combined as kànjiàn ‘see’: Kànjiàn le méiyóu? ‘Did [you] see [it]? Otherwise jiàn suggests meeting, visiting, catching sight of.
- Hǎo jǐ cì, with hǎo used here as an emphatic adverb.

c) Zài (zàijiàn de zài – 再) ‘again’ is, of course, homophonous but otherwise distinct from zài zhèr de zài (在).

### 6.3.5 Dialogues

<i>foods</i>	hǎishēn	pídàn ~ sōnghuā	yúchì
	<i>sea cucumber</i>	<i>preserved eggs</i>	<i>shark-fin [soup]</i>

Other interesting foods include: yànwō ‘bird’s nest [soup] (swallow nest)’; jiǎoyú ‘soft-shelled turtle (shell-fish)’; yāzhēn ‘duck’s gizzard’ – more of a snack; hóunǎo ‘monkey brain’; and xióngzhǎng ‘bear paw’. The last two are often talked about but rarely ever eaten.



**Kūnmíng.** Shop specializing in yànwō, bàoyú, yúchì, hǎishēn. [JKW 2002]

<i>films</i>	Wòhǔ Cánglóng	Dàhóng Dēnglóng Gāogāo Guà.
	<i>Crouching tiger, hidden dragon</i>	big red lantern high hang <i>Raise the Red Lantern</i>
<i>places in Yunnan</i>	Kūmíng	Dàlǐ
		Lǐjiāng
		Shílín
		<i>The Stone Forest</i>

- i) Nǐ chīguo hǎishēn ma? Have you ever had sea cucumber?  
 Méi chīguo, cóng méi chīguo; No, I never have? You?  
 nǐ ne?  
 Wǒ chīguo hǎo jǐ cì. I've had it quite a few times.  
 Wèidào zěnmeyàng? How does it taste?  
 Méi shénme wèidào, húaliūliū de. There's no particular taste, it's 'slick'.  
 Lái yí ge chángcháng ba. Why don't we try one.  
 Hǎo, fúwùyuán, qǐng lái ge Okay, waiter/waitress, bring us a  
 cōngpá-hǎishēn. 'onion-braised sea cucumber'

a) Wèidào N 'taste; flavor';

b) Huá SV 'slippery'; huáliūliū 'slick; slippery'.

c) Cháng 'taste'; chángchang 'have a taste'. The word is homophonous with, but otherwise unrelated to cháng ~ chángchang 'often'.

d) Ways of hailing waiters or waitresses vary with time and place (as well as the age and status of both parties). On the Mainland, people often call out with the very familiar xiǎohuǒzi 'young fellow' or xiǎojié to youngish waiters and waitresses, respectively. The safer path for a foreigner on the Mainland, is to use the term fúwùyuán 'service person', as in the dialogue. Older customers may simply call out lǎojià 'excuse me; may I trouble you'.

e) Lái, in the context of ordering food, means 'cause to come', ie 'bring'.

## ii) Sūzhōu

- Jiǎ Qǐngwèn, nǐ shì nǐ guó rén? May I ask which country you're from?  
 Yǐ Wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén. I'm Chinese.  
 Jiǎ Nǐ shì Zhōngguó shénme Whereabouts in China are you from?  
 dìfang rén?  
 Yǐ Sūzhōu rén. From Suzhou.  
 Jiǎ O, Sūzhōu; wǒ méi qùguo kěshi Oh, Suzhou; I haven't been there, but  
 tīngshuōguo nài ge dìfang. I've heard of the place.

<i>Yi</i>	<i>Shì ma?</i>	<i>[That] so?</i>
<i>Jiǎ</i>	<i>Dāngrán a, Sūzhōu hěn yǒumíng, tīngshuō yǒu hěn duō yùnhé, qiáo, chuántǒng de fángzi....</i>	<i>Of course, Suzhou's famous, [I] hear [it] has lots of canals, bridges, traditional houses....</i>
<i>Yī</i>	<i>Shì a, 'Sūzhōu yuánlín' hěn piàoliang. Wǒmen cháng shuō: 'Shàng yǒu tiāntáng, xià yǒu Sū Háng.'</i>	<i>Yes, Sūzhōu gardens are quite beautiful. We often say: 'There's paradise above, and Su(zhou) and Hang(zhou) below.'</i>

## Notes

<i>Sūzhōu:</i>	An ancient city, west of Shanghai, close to Lake Tai ( <u>Tài Hú</u> ), known for its canals, stone bridges, and fine mansions. Until the growth of Shanghai in modern times, Suzhou was the most 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' ( <u>Zhuō Zhèng Yuán</u> ). Much of the old city has been obliterated in recent years by industrial growth and extensive building. <u>Hángzhōu</u> is another historically important city, southwest of Shanghai.
<i>tīngshuō guo</i>	'[I]'ve heard [it] said'; cf. <u>tīngshuō</u> '[I] hear [that]'.
<i>yùnhé</i>	'canal (transport-river)'; the <u>Dà Yùnhé</u> is the ancient Grand Canal, whose southern terminus is at <u>Hángzhōu</u> . From Hangzhou, it runs north to the Yangtze a little to the east of <u>Zhènjiāng</u> , then continues northeast towards <u>Běijīng</u> .
<i>qiáo</i>	'bridge'; <u>yí zuò qiáo, yí ge qiáo</u> .
<i>huāyuán</i>	'gardens (flower-garden)'; cf. <u>gōngyuán</u> 'public gardens'.
<i>fángzi</i>	'houses'; <u>yì suǒ fángzi</u> or <u>yí dòng fángzi</u> .
<i>yuánlín</i>	'(garden-groves)', a more formal term for gardens. Tourist brochures for Suzhou use the phrase <u>Sūzhōu Yuánlín</u> 'Suzhou gardens'.



**Dàyùnhé, Sūzhōu.** [JKW 1982]

**Exercise 2.**

*Write out the corresponding Chinese in the space on the left.*

Have you been to Beijing?

*No, not yet, but my sister has; I'd like to go.*

Have you ever eaten preserved eggs?

*Never, but I'd love to try some.*

Have you had breakfast yet?

*Not yet.*

Okay, let's go and have breakfast – we can order preserved eggs.

*You eat preserved eggs for breakfast?*

Of course, preserved eggs, rice gruel, pickles [pàocài], and noodles.

## 6.4 When, before, after

English and Chinese differ in the position of what are known as ‘subordinating conjunctions’, such as ‘when’, ‘before’ and ‘after’ in expressions like ‘when you’re in class’ or ‘after eating’ or ‘before going to bed’. In English such words appear at the head of their clauses; in Chinese they appear at the foot.

shàngkè de shíhou	when [you]’re in class
chīfàn yǐhòu	after [you]’ve eaten a meal
shuǐjiào yǐqián	before [you] go to bed

The expressions involved have a number of forms:

	<i>colloquial</i>	<i>formal</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>when</i>	<zài/dāng>...de shí<hou>		shí
<i>before</i>	yǐqián	zhīqián	qián
<i>after</i>	yǐhòu	zhīhòu	hòu

### 6.4.1 When

De shí<hou> means literally, ‘the time of [having class]’, ‘the time of [having your bath]’ etc.

shàng kè de shíhou	while in class
xǐzǎo de shíhou	when bathing
chīfàn de shí	while eating
zài Zhōngguó de shí	when in China
xiǎo de shíhou	when [I was] young

Kāichē de shíhou bù yīnggāi hē píjiǔ.  
You shouldn’t drink beer when you drive.

Kāichē de shíhou wǒ bǐjiào xǐhuan tīng màn yīnyuè.  
When I drive, I prefer to listen to slow music.

Tā xǐzǎo de shíhou xǐhuan chànggē. She likes to sing in the bath.

Měnggǔrén chīfàn de shíhou Mongolians generally drink ‘white liquor’  
jīngcháng hē báijiǔ. with their meals.

Nǐ zài Zhōngguó de shíhou When you were in China, did you visit  
qùguo xīnán méiyǒu? the southwest.  
*Qùguo, qùguo Kūnmíng, [I] did, I went to Kunming, Dali and Lijiang.*  
*Dàlǐ, Lìjiāng.*

Nǐ Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo; You speak Chinese very well; did you  
nǐ shì bu shì céngjīng xuéguo? study it before? (‘is it the case that you...’)  
*Nǐ tài kèqi, wǒ cóng méi xuéguo. You’re too nice; no, I’ve never studied before.*  
[NB céngjīng not with a negated verb.]

Additional nuances may be created by the addition of zài ‘at’ or dāng ‘right at’ at the head of the *when-clause* in conjunction with de shí<hou> at the foot:

<Dāng> tā huílái de shíhou, wǒmen When he got back we were still in the bath.  
hái zài xǐzǎo.

<Zài> chīfàn de shíhou bù yīnggāi You shouldn’t drink cold drinks with [your]  
hē lěngyǐn. meals.

#### 6.4.2 Before and after

Expressions equivalent to ‘before’ and ‘after’ are formed with the yǐ of kěyǐ, originally a verb meaning ‘take; use’; hence yǐqián ‘take as before’ and yǐhòu ‘take as after’. Now however, the meanings have congealed into unitary subordinating conjunctions, with the first syllable often omitted in written texts. A more formal version of both words make use of zhī (a particle common in Classical Chinese): zhīqián; zhīhòu.



Shuǐjiào yǐqián bù yīnggāi hē kāfēi. You shouldn't drink coffee before going to bed.

Chīfàn yǐhòu, bù yīnggāi qu yóuyǒng. You shouldn't go swimming after you eat.

Appendix II of this unit lists the more prominent dynasties of Chinese history. 'Dynasty' is cháodài in Chinese, which, in combination with a dynastic name, is reduced to cháo: Tángcháo, Sòngcháo. To help you learn the sequence, as well as to practice yǐqián and yǐhòu, you can ask questions and respond along the following lines:

Tángcháo yǐqián shì nǐ ge cháodài?	Which dynasty is before the Tang?
Nà shì Qíncháo. [Qínshǐhuáng de cháodài.]	That's the Qin. [The dynasty of Qinshihuang (the 1 <sup>st</sup> emperor of Ch'in).]

Nà, Tángcháo yǐhòu ne? Tángcháo yǐhòu shì shénme cháodài?	And after the Tang? What dynasty is after the Tang?
---	---

Tángcháo yǐhòu shì Sòngcháo.	After the Tang is the Song.
------------------------------	-----------------------------

Sòngcháo yǐhòu ne?	And after the Song?
--------------------	---------------------

Sòngcháo yǐhòu shì Yuáncháo. [Ménggǔ rén de cháodài.]	After the Song is the Yuan. [The Mongol dynasty.]
---	---

## 6.5 When?

The phrase corresponding to the English questions 'when; what time' is shénme shíhou. However, particular segments of time can be questioned with něi or jǐ, as you have seen in earlier units: něi nián 'which year'; něi ge yuè 'which month'; něi ge xīngqī 'which week'; něi tiān 'which day'; lǐbàijǐ 'which day of the week'; jǐ yuè 'what month'; jǐ hào 'what day'. Like other time [when] and place [where] words, such questions generally appear *after* the subject and before the verb (or predicate):

Qǐngwèn, nǐ shénme shíhou qù Běijīng? <i>Xīngqīliù qù.</i>	May I ask when you're going to Beijing? <i>I'm going on Saturday.</i>
--	---

Qǐngwèn, nǐ nǐ nián qù Běijīng? <i>Wǒ dǎsuàn 2008 nián qù, Àoyùnhuì</i> <i>de nèi nián.</i>	May I ask which year you're going to B? <i>I'm planning to go in 2008, the year of</i> <i>the Olympics.</i>
---	---

In regions where Cantonese influence is strong (including Singapore and other parts of Southeast Asia), instead of the shénme shíhou of standard Mandarin, the expression jǐshí ‘which time’, based on the Cantonese, is often heard:

Tā jǐshí qù Jílóngpō? <i>Tā bú qù Jílóngpō, tā qù Mǎliùjiǎ.</i>	When's he going to Kuala Lumpur? <i>He's not going to KL, he's going to</i> <i>Malacca.</i>
--	---

### **Exercise 3.**

Write a paragraph along the following lines:

When I was in China, I didn't have much money; I ate noodles for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I didn't eat seafood, and I've still never eaten sea cucumber or soft-shelled turtle – all too expensive! In China, everyday after I got up, I bathed, ate some noodles, and went to the university. I had classes from 9 to 12:30. I ate lunch at 1:00. While I ate, I often read the day's paper. In the afternoon, I did my homework. *[Recall that le does not mark habitual or generic events.]*

---

**6.5.1 No time for....**

Expressions with shíhou (shénme shíhou, shàngkè de shíhou) involve specific periods of time. Shíjiān, on the other hand, is time in a more abstract sense. Here are some common examples:

Shíjiān dào le.	Time's up; it's time.
Zhījiāge shíjiān	Chicago time
Shíjiān bù zǎo le.	It's not early.
Méiyǒu shíjiān chīfàn.	There's no time to have a meal.
Wǒ jīntiān méiyǒu shíjiān kànbào.	I don't have any time to read the paper today.

**Exercise 4.** Let it be known that you don't have time anymore to:

go swimming.	go see the Great Wall.
to exercise.	phone them.
buy a present for her.	to ask them which floor the toilet's on.
write a letter to them.	to ask them when they're going home.
buy a present for her.	listen to music.

**6.6 Places of work**

On the Mainland, the subdivisions of government organizations (including universities) are called dānwèi, usually translated as 'unit' or 'work unit'. In the socialist system, your dānwèi provided social amenities from housing to schooling, as well as access to social services and to routes of legitimate advancement.

Tā zài nǐ ge dānwèi gōngzuò?	Which is her work unit? [PRC]
Tā zài jīchǎng gōngzuò, shì jīnglǐ.	She works at the airport; she's a manager.
Nǐ zài shénme dìfang gōngzuò?	Where do you work?
Wǒ zài Hǎidiàn de yí ge diànnǎo gōngsī gōngzuò.	I work in a computer company in Haidian [NW Beijing].

*Other places of work*

gōngsī	gōngchǎng	zhèngfǔ-bùmén	lǚxíngshè	yīyuàn	zhěnsuǒ
<i>company</i>	<i>factory</i>	<i>government office</i>	<i>travel agency</i>	<i>hospital</i>	<i>clinic</i>

xuéxiào	xiǎoxué	zhōngxué	gāozhōng	dàxué
<i>schools</i>	<i>elem. school</i>	<i>mid. school</i>	<i>high school</i>	<i>university</i>

*Usage*

<p>           Jiǎ      Wǒ jiārén dōu shì lǎoshī:            wǒ bà zài dàxué jiāo gōngchéng;            mā zài zhōngxué jiāo wùlǐ; mèimei            zài xiǎoxué jiāo yīnyuè.         </p>	<p>           My family members are all teachers:            Dad teaches engineering in college;            Mum teaches physics in middle school; and            my younger sister teaches music in an            elementary school.         </p>
---	---

<p>           Yǐ      Wǒ jiārén dōu shì yīshēng! Fùmǔ            dōu zài Dì-yī Rénmín Yīyuàn            gōngzuò, jiějie zài zhěnsuǒ gōngzuò.         </p>	<p> <i>My family members are all doctors: my            parents both work at #1 People's Hospital,            and my older sister works in a clinic.</i> </p>
---	---

*Notes*

a) Yīshēng or dàifu 'doctor'; cf. yīxué 'medicine [as a field of study]'

**Exercise 5**

*Provide Chinese sentences with the following information:*

1. Zhōu Shuǎng: works in a travel agency in Kunming.
2. Sū Ruì: a teacher, works at #6 Elementary School in Xi'an.
3. Wáng Jié: works in an automobile factory (qìchēchǎng) in Changchun.
4. Jiāng Táo: a director in an engineering company in Zhèngzhōu.
5. Jiǎng Zhōngrén: works at the hospital, in town.

## 6.7 Directions

So long as one accepts the fact that asking directions will provide little more than that – a direction, then asking directions can be a good way to engage strangers and confirm that you are heading in the right direction. Here are some basic phrases:

wàng qián zǒu	wàng zuǒ zhuǎn ~ guǎi	yìzhí zǒu
towards front go	towards left turn	straight go
<i>keep going straight</i>	<i>turn left</i>	<i>walk straight ahead</i>
cóng zhèi biān	zài ~ dào dì-sān ge lùkǒu<r>	hónglǜdēng
from this side	at ~ on reaching the 3 <sup>rd</sup> intersection	red-green-light
<i>this way</i>	<i>[in 3 blocks]</i>	<i>traffic light</i>
chēzhàn <de> duìmiàn		jiù zài yòubiān
station DE opposite		then on the right-side
<i>opposite the station</i>		<i>it's on the right</i>

### Notes

- a) Wàng ‘towards’ is one of a number of directional coverbs that include cóng ‘from’, dào ‘to’, zuò ‘by; on’, and xiàng. The last is similar in meaning to wàng, and in fact, xiàng could substitute for wàng in wàng qián zǒu. Xiàng also appears in the second half of the saying: Hǎohǎo xuéxí, tiāntiān xiàng shàng ‘advance daily’.
- b) For ‘turn’, guǎi may be more common in the north, zhuǎn, more common in the south.
- c) Duìmiàn is another in the class of words known as position words, eg qiántou, zuǒbiān (cf §4.2.2). So like them, the reference place precedes: fángzi qiántou ‘in front of the house’; fángzi duìmiàn ‘opposite the house’.

Chēzhàn shì bu shì wàng qián zǒu?  
*Shì, yìzhí zǒu, hěn jìn.*

Is the station this way?  
*Yes, straight ahead, it's quite close.*

Xiānsheng, qǐngwèn, dìtiě...dìtiězhàn  
zài nǎlǐ?

*Zài hónglǜdēng nàr, wàng zuǒ guǎi,  
yìzhí zǒu, dìtiězhàn jiu zài yòu biānr.*

Sir, may I ask where the Metro  
...the Metro station is?

*Turn left at the light, go straight, and  
the Metro station's on the right.*

Qǐngwèn, Tiāntán zěnme zǒu?

*Tiāntán...wàng nán zǒu, guò liǎng sān  
ge lùkǒu jiu dào le!*

May I ask how you get to 'The Temple  
of Heaven'?

*The Temple of Heaven, go south, past  
2 or 3 intersections and you're there.*



**Wángfǔ Dàjiē, wàng yòu zhuǎn!** [JKW 2005]

### Exercise 6

Give directions, as indicated:

1. #5 High School: straight ahead for 2 blocks, on the left.
2. Shìjiè Màoùyì Zhōngxīn ('World Trade Center'): turn left at the light, go a couple of blocks, it's opposite the train station.
3. People's Hospital: left at the second light, then it's on the right.

4. Cháhuā Bīnguǎn ('Camelia Guesthouse', in Kūnmíng): on Dōngfāng Dōng Lù, opposite the stadium; straight ahead, through the next intersection and you're there.
5. Travel Agency: third floor, this way.

## 6.8 The *shì-de* construction

Reporting on an event (that has happened) is, under the appropriate conversational conditions, marked by le, either in sentence-final position or under certain conditions, directly after the verb. However, with the addition of a phrase designating location, time, or other *circumstances*, there are two options: the le option, and the shì-de option. In the latter case, a de (the *possessive-de* 的, as it turns out) is placed at the foot of the sentence, and, optionally, the time or location (the latter always in its pre-verbal position) is highlighted by a preceding shì:

- i. *le*                                      Wǒmen zài fēijī shàng chī le.
- ii. *shì...de*                              Wǒmen <shì> zài fēijī shàng chī de.

The two options are mutually exclusive: either you choose the *le option*, or the *shì-de*, but not both. As noted in the previous section, biographical information can be provided in a matter-of-fact way without *shì-de*: wǒ chūshēng zài Běijīng, yě zhǎng zài Běijīng, etc. However, where the focus is more explicitly on the place, time or other circumstances, then the *shì-de* pattern is required. In a typical context, an event is established with le or guo, but the follow up questions utilize *shì-de*:

	<i>Q</i>	<i>A</i>	
1	Nǐ qùguo Zhōngguó ma?	Qùguo.	
	Něi nián qù de?	Qùnián <qù de>.	<i>focus on when</i>
	Yí ge rén qù de ma?	Yí ge rén qù de.	<i>focus on with whom</i>
	Shénme shíhou huílái de?	Wǔyuèfen huílái de.	<i>focus on when</i>

2	Chīfàn le méiyóu?	Chī le.	
	Zài jiā lí chī de ma?	Zài cāntīng chī de.	<i>focus on where</i>
	Hǎochī ma?	Mǎma hūhū.	

Similarly, when asking when or where someone was born, or where s/he grew up, the focus is not usually on the birth or childhood – which can be taken for granted – but on the time or location. If you ask a couple when or where they met or got married, the focus is particularly on time and place:

Wǒ <shi> 1946 nián shēng de.	I was born in 1946.
Wǒ <shi> zài Běijīng shēng de.	I was born in Beijing.
Wǒ yě <shi> zài nàr zhǎngdà de.	And I grew up there, too.
Wǒmen <shi> zài Duōlúnduō rènshi de.	We met in Toronto.
Wǒ <shi> zài Bālǐ shàng zhōngxué de.	I went to high school in Paris.

### Notes

a) As you may have observed, zhǎng and zhǎngdà differ in distribution: zhǎngdà does not occur with following zài. So the two patterns are: zài Běijīng zhǎngdà de, but zhǎng zai Běijīng.

The prototypical cases of the *shi-de* construction involve past events, and so it is useful to regard that as a rule. Talking about where you live, for example, does not allow the *shi-de* pattern:

Wǒ zài Jīntái Lù zhù,	I live on Jintai Road, not far from
lí Hóng Miào hěn jìn.	Hóng Miào.

or

Wǒ zhù zài Jīntái Lù, lí Hóng Miào hěn jìn.



In some respects, the *shi-de* pattern 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 (or ‘marked’); the Chinese – at least in the situations illustrated – is required.

We met at university. > It was at university - that we met.  
Wǒmen shì zài dàxué rènshi de.

Notice the stress pattern of the English, with high pitch on ‘uniVERsity’, and low pitch on ‘that we met’, which is the part that can be taken for granted, or treated as the lead in for the item of interest, which is *the place*.

### 6.8.1 The position of objects

The position of de in the *shi-de* construction is complicated by the presence of an object. But not for all speakers. As a rule, the de of the *shi-de* construction is placed at the foot of the sentence; but speakers in the traditional Mandarin speaking regions of the north and northeast (as opposed to southern speakers) tend to treat objects (that are not pronouns) differently. They place de *before* the object, rather than after it:

non-northern regions:	Wǒ <shì> zài Bālí shàng dàxué de.	I went to university in Paris.
northern regions:	Wǒ <shì> zài Bālí shàng de dàxué.	
non-northern regions:	Tāmen shì nǐ nián lái Běijīng de?	When did they come to Bj?
northern regions:	Tāmen shì nǐ nián lái de Běijīng?	
Only option with a pronoun:	Wǒ shàng dàxué de shíhou rènshi tā de.	I met her when I was at university.

In *shi-de* sentences, de before the object (shàng de dàxué) differs from de after the object (shàng dàxué de) only stylistically (or rhythmically); the two options are otherwise synonymous. The intrusive de is written with the same character (的) as the possessive, but does not function like the latter, though it is possible to construct a written sentence (in speech, intonation is likely to distinguish them) that is potentially ambiguous between the two:

<i>attributive</i>	Shì [zuótiān mǎi de] piào.	[That]’s the ticket we bought yesterday.
<i>ambiguous</i>	Shì zuótiān mǎi de piào.	[Both meanings possible.]
<i>shi-de</i>	Shì zuótiān mǎi piào de.	[We] bought the ticket yesterday.

### Exercise 7.

Provide Chinese equivalents:

1. He was born in Xi’an but grew up in Dátóng.
2. My father was born in 1943.
3. He met my mother in Nanjing.
4. She was born in Zhènjiāng.
5. He went to college in San Francisco.

### 6.8.2 *Shì-de in short*

- i) Highlights when, where, how or other circumstances; frequent in follow-up questions.
- ii) Generally found only in talking about past events.
 

<i>past</i>	Tā shì qùnián qù de.
<i>future</i>	Tā 2008 nián dǎsuàn qù Zhōngguó kàn Àoyùnhuì.
<i>current</i>	Tā zài Xī’ān shēng de, kěshì xiànzài zài Běijīng zhù.
- iii) The shì is optional (depending on emphasis), but the de is required.

- iv) Generally places attention on a preverbal phrase. This means that if there is an option, as with location phrases (which can appear before or after verbs like shēng and zhǎng), then it is the preverbal option that will be selected:

Tā shì zài Běijīng shēng de, zài Běijīng zhǎngdà de, xiànzài yě zài Běijīng zhù.

The only obvious exceptions to the preverbal rule are purpose clauses. Recall that purpose usually follows destination in Chinese: qù Běijīng mǎi dōngxi; dào chéng lǐ qǔ hùzhào qu. There is no convenient preverbal option. Yet purpose can be subject to the *shi-de* formula:

Nǐ shì qù mǎi lǐwù de ma? Did you go to buy presents?  
*Shì, wǒ shì qù mǎi lǐwù de!* Yes, I went to get some presents.

Such sentences can be recast with final qù (recall the various options with purpose clauses), in which case the sentence looks more like a typical *shi-de* sentence, with mǎi lǐwù the focus of shì, and de following a verb, qù:

Nǐ shì mǎi lǐwù qu de ma? Did you go to buy presents?  
*Shì, wǒ shì mǎi lǐwù qu de!* Yes, I went to get some presents.

- v. When objects – *other than pronouns* – are present, de can be placed before them:

Wǒ <shì> zài Běijīng shàng dàxué de ~ zài Běijīng shàng de dàxué.

### **Exercise 8.**

Provide a Chinese translation for the following conversation:

“Hello. I’m a student at [...]. 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. They’re coming to see me on Saturday.”

### 6.9 Dialogue: Where are you from?

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

Jiǎ	Qǐngwèn, nǐ shì nǐ guó 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 qùguo ma?	My father’s Chinese, my mother’s American, but I was born in Canada. Have you been?
Jiǎ	Méi qùguo, 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	Duōlúnduō, wǒ shēng zài Duōlúnduō, wǒ yě zhù zài Duōlúnduō.	Toronto, I was born in Toronto. and I live in Toronto.
Jiǎ	O, Duōlúnduō, wǒ nàr yǒu qīnqī.	Oh, Toronto, I have relatives there.
Yǐ	Shì ma?	Really?

Jiǎ	Wǒ tángxiōng zài nàr, shì yīshēng.	My cousin [older, father's side] is there -- [he]'s a doctor.
Yǐ	<i>Nà, nǐ ne? Nǐ shì Běijīng rén ba?</i>	<i>And you, you're from Beijing?</i>
Jiǎ	Bù, wǒ shēng zài Xī'ān, yě zhǎng zài Xī'ān kěshì xiànzài zhù zài 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 nǐ nián lái de Běijīng?</i>	<i>Which year did you come to Beijing?</i>
Jiǎ	Wǒ shì 1998 nián lái de. Wǒ fùmǔ hái zhù zài Xī'ān.	I came in 1998. My parents still live in Xi'an.
Yǐ	<i>Nà nǐ xǐ bù xǐhuan Běijīng?</i>	<i>So do you like Beijing?</i>
Jiǎ	Běijīng bú cuò, kěshì wǒ hěn xiǎng Xī'ān.	Beijing's not bad, but I miss Xi'an.
Yǐ	<i>Wǒ qùguo Xī'ān, Xī'ān hěn hǎowánr.</i>	<i>I've been to Xi'an, it's a great place to visit.</i>
Jiǎ	Nǐ shì shénme shíhou qù de?	When was it that you went?
Yǐ	<i>Wǒ shì qùnián qù de.</i>	<i>I went last year.</i>
Jiǎ	Xià cì qù, qǐng dào wǒ jiā lái wánrwánr.	Next time [you] go, you should 'come by my house'.
Yǐ	<i>O, xièxie, nǐ tài kèqi.</i>	<i>Oh, thanks, you're very kind.</i>

## Notes

- a) Tángxiōng ‘elder male cousin (on father’s side)’; cf. tángdì, tángjiě and tángmèi. Táng is ‘a room’ (cf. yì táng kè), ‘the main house’, or by extension, ‘the clan’. The táng cousins all share a surname. The mother’s side cousins are all biǎo, which means ‘surface’ or ‘outside’: biǎoxiōng, biǎodì, biǎojiě, biǎomèi.
- b) Qǐng dào wó jiā lái wánr is a conventional phrase, equivalent to ‘you must come by and see us’; often preceded by yǒu kòng<r> [qǐng dào....] ‘[if] you have free time...’

## 6.9.1 Wánr

Wánr is interesting not only for its pronunciation (one of the few common verbs with the r-suffix), but also for its meaning. In dictionaries, it is glossed ‘play; have fun; play around with’ but in many cases an appropriate translation is difficult to find. In the Chinese world, wánr is the counterpart of gōngzuò ‘work’; in English we sometimes place ‘work and play’ in opposition as well. So a better translation would be ‘have a good time; for some fun’. Wán<r> can also be a verb meaning ‘fool around with [for fun]’; cf. máng ‘be busy’ and máng shénme ‘be busy at what’.

Nèi ge dìfang hěn hǎowánr.	That place is very interesting.
Yǒu kòng<r> qǐng zài lái wánr.	If you have some time, come by again.
Zánmen gàn shénme wánr ne? <i>Dǎ májiàng ba!</i>	What shall we do for fun? <i>Why don't we play mahjong?</i>
MIT xuéshēng hěn xǐhuan wánr diànnǎo.	MIT students love to fool around with computers.

## Notes

- a) Qǐng zài lái wánr, with zài jiàn de zài (再), meaning ‘again’.

**Exercise 9.**

a) Translate:

1. There are a lot of large cities [dà chéngshì] in China.
2. Why are there so many people outside?
3. May I ask where you work?
4. I was born in Tianjin, but I live in Beijing nowadays.
5. We're going to Shanghai on the 18<sup>th</sup>.
6. My father's in Kunming – he's a manager for a computer company.
7. Next time you're in Kunming, please come by my house for a visit.

b) Write questions that would elicit the following answers:

1. Wǒmen shì shàngge xīngqī sì lái de.
2. Zhōngwén kè, lǐbàiyī dào sì dōu yǒu, lǐbàiwú méiyǒu.
3. Xiàge yuè wǒ dǎsuàn qù Huángshān kànkàn fēngjǐng [‘scenery’].
4. Lóuxià yǒu diànhuà, lóushàng méiyǒu.
5. Wǒ hái méi qùguo, dànshì hěn xiǎng qù.

**6.10 Calling Michael Jordan****6.10.1 Jiào with two objects**

The familiar verb 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’.
Nǐ jiào tā shénme?	What do you call her?
Péngyou dōu jiào wǒ Xiǎomíng.	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 guān tā jiào lǎoshī.	We call her ‘teacher’.
Tāmen guān tā jiào fàntǒng.	They call him ‘rice bucket’. (ie ‘big eater’)

### 6.10.2 Finding out how to address someone

Frequently, in talking to someone with status, it may not be 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’:

<p>Jiǎ: Qǐngwèn, nín zěnmē chēnghu?</p> <p>Yǐ: Nǐmen jiào wǒ Yáng lǎoshī jiu hǎo le.</p>	<p>Excuse me, sir/madame, how should you be addressed?</p> <p><i>It’s fine if you call me Yang laoshi.</i></p>
--	--

### 6.10.3 Dialogue

*People in China will often ask about foreign entertainers and sports people. Here, a Chinese youth (Ch.) asks an overseas student (For.) about an American sports star:*

Ch. Xǐhuan Mǎikè Qiáodān ma?	Do you like Michael Jordan?
For. Shéi / shuí?	Who?
Ch. Mǎikè 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.
Ch. Mǎikè Qiáodān. Wǒmen dōu jiào tā ‘Fēirén.’	Michael Jordan. We all call him the ‘Flying Man.’
For. Fēirén? Shénme yìsi?	Feiren? What does [that] mean?
Ch. Zěnmē shuō ne...tā xiàng niǎo <yíyàng>, néng fēi.	How to say [it] - he’s like the birds, he can fly.
For. Eì, bú cuò.	Right!



## Notes

dǎ lánqiú de literally ‘hit basketball one,’ ie ‘the one who plays basketball’  
 fēirén ‘flying-man’; MJ was also called lánqiú-dàdì ‘basketball-  
 great-emperor’ in China.  
 niǎo ‘bird’; alternatively, tā xiàng fēijī ‘he’s like an airplane’.

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).

## 6.10.4 Yíyàng ‘the same’

As observed in the previous dialogue, xiàng ‘resemble’ is optionally followed by the expression yíyàng ‘the same’, literally ‘one-kind’ (cf. jiu zhèi yàng<r> ba, zěnmeyàng and a host of other phrases that make use of the root yàng). Yíyàng can be used independently of xiàng, with items to be matched connected by conjunctions such as gēn or hé:

Tā gēn wǒ yíyàng: wǒmen	He’s like me: we’re both 1st year
dōu shì yì niánjí de xuésheng.	students.

Tā hé wǒ yíyàng: dōu shì dúshēngzi. He’s just like me; we’re both only children.

Nà nǐ shuō de hé tā shuō de bù	Now, what you are saying isn’t the same
yíyàng.	as what he’s saying.

Yí cì de cì hé yì huí de huí, yìsi	The cì of yí cì and the huí of yì huí have
chàbuduō yíyàng.	roughly the same meaning.

*Note*

Observe the order of elements in the last example: Topic [yí cì de cì hé yì huí de huí] followed by a comment [yìsì chàbuduō yíyàng]. Yìsì – sometimes called the inner subject – refines the scope of yíyàng.

**Exercise 10.**

1. He's very strict, so we call him 'the boss.'
2. She's my mother's sister, so we call her 'auntie.'
3. Because Mr. Chen's a director, people call his wife 'Madame' Chen.
4. Because he's rather old, we call him 'lǎodàye.'
5. Although [suīrán] she's not a teacher, we still call her Professor Liào.
6. Excuse me, may I ask how we should address you? / It's okay to call me Liáng Àimín or 'Professor' Liáng.
7. Their names are the same: they're both called Lín Měi.
8. They live in the same place. [ie 'The places they live in....']

**6.11 Food (3)**

Chinese dishes are variously named. Some are descriptive: chǎojiǎodīng 'stirfried-chicken-cubes'; zhàcài-ròusī-tāng 'pickled-cabbage meat-shreds soup'. Others incorporate proper names: Yángzhōu-chǎofàn 'Yangzhou fried rice' (from Yángzhōu, a city on the north shore of the Yangtze, east of Nanjing). Numbers are also common: shāo'èrdōng 'cooked-2-winters', ie usually dōnggǔ 'winter mushrooms' and dōngsǔn 'winter bamboo-shoots'. Finally, there are dishes with poetic or allusive names: gǒubulǐ bāozi 'dog-not-obey steamed buns', a Tianjin specialty. Listed below are some other examples which can be incorporated in prior dialogues dealing with food.

máogū jīpiàn	('hairy-mushroom chicken-slices'), often listed on menus by its Cantonese name, 'moogoo gaipan'.
tángcùyú	'sweet and sour fish (sugar-vinegar-fish)'

Běijīng kǎoyā	‘Peking duck’
Dōngpòròu	a rich pork dish, associated with the Song dynasty poet and statesman, Sū Dōngpò, also called Sū Shì.
sānxiān-hǎishēn	‘3-fresh sea-cucumber’, ie sea cucumber with 3 fresh items, typically shredded pork, bamboo shoots and chicken.
máyǐ shàngshù	‘ants climb-tree’, spicy ground beef sauce poured over deepfried ‘beanthread’ noodles; the dish is named for the small bumps that appear on the noodles.
mápo dòufu	‘hot and spicy beancurd’, a Sichuan dish with cubes of beancurd, minced pork and spicy sauce

*soups*

jiācháng dòufu tāng	‘home-cooked beancurd soup’
zhūgān<r>tāng	‘pork-liver soup’



**Qǐng zài lái ge máyǐ-shàngshù!** [JKW 2001]

## 6.12 Highlights

### 6.12.1 Focus of class practice

Opposites	Cháng de xiāngfǎn shì duǎn.
Descriptions	Tā rén hěn hǎo, jiùshì yǒu diǎnr hàixiū. Tā tóufa shì hēisè de. – Tā shì hēi tóufa. Tā zhǎng+de hěn piàoliang.
V-guo	Tā cónglái méi qùguo Zhōngguó. Nǐ chīguo hǎishēn ma?
SVxx	Húaliūliū de.
Indefinite shénme	Méi shénme wèidào.
Times	Wǒ yǐjīng jiànguó tā jǐ cì. Qǐng zài shuō yí biàn.
When	Shàngkè de shíhou bù yīnggāi shuō Yīngwén.
Before	Shuǐjiào yǐqián bù yīnggāi zuò yùndòng.
After	Míngcháo yǐhòu shì Qīngcháo.
When?	Nǐ shénme shíhou néng qù qǔ hùzhào?
No time	Wǒmen méiyǒu shíjiān zuòfàn.
Place of work	Nǐ zài nǐ ge dānwèi gōngzuò? Wǒ bàba zài dì-èr Rénmín Yīyuàn gōngzuò.
Directions	Wàng qián zǒu, dào dì-yī ge lùkǒu wàng zuǒ zhuǎn. Qǐngwèn, dìtiězhàn zěnme zǒu? (Zěnme qù dìtiězhàn?)
Shi...de	Wǒ shì zài 1976 nián shēng de. Tā zài Běijīng shēng de, zài Běijīng zhǎngdà de, yě zài Běijīng zhù. Nǐ shì nǐ nián lái de Běijīng?
Call me X	Péngyou dōu jiào wǒ xiǎo Míng.
How to address you?	Nín zěnme chēnghu?
The same	Tā gēn wǒ yíyàng, dōu shì xué wùlǐ de.

**Exercise 11.**

Distinguish the following words (or compound parts) by citing them in a short phrase that reveals their meaning:

yǐjīng	jīngcháng	céngjīng	xiāngfǎn	yíyàng	kù
cónglái	huílai	méi lái	hěn guāi	sān kuài	kǔ
yīnwèi	yǐnliào	wèidào	jiào	qiáo	jiāo
gōngsī	gōngkè	gōngzuò	kǎoshì	gànhuór	biàn
zhù	qù	qǔ	yòu	yǒu	shíjiān
zhǎng	Zhāng	cháng	chàng	shàng	shíhou
shòu	shuō	shǒu	zuò	zuǒ	zǒu

---

### 6.13 Rhymes and rhythms

1) Here's some 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: duìbuqǐ rénmín, duìbuqǐ 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 finally, another nursery rhyme about small animals:

Chóng, chóng chóng, chóng

Chóng, chóng chóng, chóng fēi,

fēidào Nánshān hē lùshuǐ;

lùshuǐ hēbǎo le,

huítóu jiù pǎo le!

insects... fly

fly-to South Mountain to+drink dew

dew drink-full LE

turn-head then run LE



Newspaper kiosk, Kūnmíng [JKW 1997]

## Appendix I: Chinese historical periods

(dates, following Wilkinson, 2000, pp 10-12)

<i>Dynasty</i>	<i>pinyin</i>	<i>dates</i>	<i>notes</i>
夏朝	Xiàcháo <i>Hsia Kingdom</i>	Before 1554 BC	Dà Yú ‘Great Yu’, who controlled the floods.
商朝	Shāngcháo <i>Shang Dynasty</i>	~ 1600 – 1045 BC	Shāng Tāng (founder)
周朝	Zhōucháo <i>Chou Dynasty</i>	1045 – 256 BC	Zhōu Gōng ‘Duke of Chou’
春秋	Chūnqiū Shídài <i>Spring and Autumn Period</i>	770 – 476 BC	Kǒngzǐ ‘Confucius’
戰國	Zhànguó Shídài <i>Warring States Period</i>	475 – 221 BC	Měngzǐ ‘Mencius’
秦朝	Qíncháo <i>Ch’in Dynasty</i>	221 – 206 BC	Qínshǐhuáng ‘1 <sup>st</sup> Emp.of Ch’in’, political unification.
漢朝	Hàncháo <i>Han Dynasty</i>	202 BC – 220 AD	Liú Bāng (founder) k.a. Hàn Gāodì ‘Great Emp.of Han’
三國	Sānguó Shídài <i>Three Kingdoms</i>	220 – 280	Cáo Cāo, ruler of Wèi (north) Zhū Gěliàng, PM of Shǔ (west)
隋朝	Suícháo <i>Sui Dynasty</i>	581 – 618	Suí Yángdì, 1 <sup>st</sup> Emperor
唐朝	Tángcháo <i>Tang Dynasty</i>	618 – 907	Táng Tàizōng = Lǐ Shímín 1 <sup>st</sup> Emperor
宋朝	Sòngcháo <i>Sung Dynasty</i>	960 – 1279	Sòng Tàizǔ = Zhào Kuàngyīn

元朝	Yuáncháo <i>Yuan Dynasty</i>	1279 – 1368	Yuán Tàizǔ = Chéngjí Sīhàn [Mongol dunasty]
明朝	Míngcháo <i>Ming Dynasty</i>	1368 – 1644	Míng Tàizǔ = Zhū Yuánzhāng
清朝	Qīngcháo <i>Ch'ing Dynasty</i>	1644 – 1912	Kāngxī, emp. from 1654-1722; Qiánlóng, emp. from 1711-99
中華民國	Zhōnghuá Mínguó <i>The Republic of China</i>	1912 –	Sūn Zhōngshān = Sūn Yìxiān 'Sun Yatsen' [founder]
中華人民- 共和國	Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó <i>The People's Republic of China</i>	1949 –	Máo Zédōng [founder]



MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21G.103 Chinese III (Regular)  
Fall 2005

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.