



mandarin chinese
conversation
elizabeth scurfield
and song lianyi



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conversation**
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and song lianyi

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Recorded at Alchemy Studios, London.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: a catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: on file.

First published in UK 2005 by Hodder Education, 338 Euston Road, London, NW1 3BH.

First published in US 2005 by Contemporary Books, a Division of the McGraw-Hill Companies, 1 Prudential Plaza, 130 East Randolph Street, Chicago, IL 60601 USA.

This edition published 2005.

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Typeset by Transet Limited, Coventry, England.

Printed in Great Britain for Hodder Education, a division of Hodder Headline, 338 Euston Road, London, NW1 3BH.

Impression number 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3
Year 2010 2009 2008 2007 2006

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If you want to learn Chinese script, try *Beginner's Chinese Script* in the **teach yourself** range.

Track listing

1

CD1

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tracks 13–21: conversation 2: exchanging information and asking for a telephone number

tracks 22–28: conversation 3: having a drink and having a meal

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CD2

tracks 1–4: conversation 5: asking for directions and going to a local attraction (*conc.*)

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tracks 13–19: conversation 7: sightseeing

tracks 20–26: conversation 8: being ill and seeing a doctor

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tracks 35–41: conversation 10: making friends and keeping in touch

CD3

track 1: introduction

track 2: conversation 1: part 1

track 3: conversation 1: part 2

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track 8: conversation 4

track 9: conversation 5

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track 11: conversation 7: part 1

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track 13: conversation 8

track 14: conversation 9

track 15: conversation 10

Conversation 1: Getting to know people

Part 1: Getting to know people (1)

Wang Nín hǎo!

Brown Nǐ hǎo!

Wang Nín shì Bùlǎng xiānsheng ma?

Brown Shì.

Wang Wǒ jiào Wáng Lì.

Brown Wǒ jiào Peter Brown.

Wang Bùlǎng xiānsheng, huānyíng nín lái Běijīng.

Brown Xièxie.

Part 2: Getting to know people (2)

Leigh Qǐng wèn, nǐ shì Chén xiǎojie ma?

Chen Shì. Wǒ jiào Chén Yīngyīng. Nǐ shì...?

Leigh Wǒ jiào Pat Leigh. Wǒ lái jiàn nǐ.

Chen A, Lǐ xiānsheng, nǐ hǎo!

Leigh Chén xiǎojie, huānyíng nǐ lái Lúndūn.

Chen Xièxie nǐ lái jiàn wǒ.

The four symbols ˉ ˊ ˇ ˋ refer to the Chinese tones. See page 30 for a full explanation of these tones.

Wang *Hello.*

Brown *Hello.*

Wang *Are you Mr Brown?*

Brown *Yes.*

Wang *My name is Wang Lili.*

Brown *My name is Peter Brown.*

Wang *Mr Brown, welcome to Beijing.*

Brown *Thank you.*

Leigh *Excuse me, are you Miss Chen?*

Chen *Yes, my name is Chen Yingying. You are...?*

Leigh *My name is Pat Leigh. I've come to meet you.*

Chen *Ah, Mr Leigh, hello.*

Leigh *Miss Chen, welcome to London.*

Chen *Thank you for coming to meet me.*

Conversation 2: Exchanging information and asking for a telephone number

Part 1: Exchanging information

- Brown** Nǐ yǒu míngpiàn ma?
Wang Duìbuqǐ. Méi yǒu.
Brown Méi guānxi.
Wang Zhè shì wǒ-de diànhuà.
Brown Líng yāo èr sān qī bā jiǔ liù wǔ sì.
Wang Duì.
Brown Xièxie nǐ.
Wang Nín-de diànhuà ne?
Brown Líng yāo èr sān qī bā jiǔ sì sān liù.
Wang Xièxie, xièxie.

Part 2: Asking for a telephone number

- Chinese woman** Wéi, nǐ hǎo!
Brown Shì Chén Yīngyīng ma?
Chinese woman Bú shì. Chén Yīngyīng bú zài.
Brown Nǐ yǒu tā-de shǒujī diànhuà ma?
Chinese woman Yǒu. Qǐng děng-yi-děng.
(A moment later.)
Chinese woman Yāo sān èr.
Brown Yāo sān èr.
Chinese woman Sì liù bā wǔ.
Brown Liù bā wǔ.
Chinese woman Bú duì, sì liù bā wǔ.
Brown Sì liù bā wǔ.
Chinese woman Líng sì yāo qī.

See page 30 for a full explanation of the use of the hyphen.

Brown *Do you have a name card?*
Wang *I am sorry. I don't (have one).*
Brown *It doesn't matter. (No problem.)*
Wang *This is my telephone (number).*
Brown *0123 789 654.*
Wang *Correct.*
Brown *Thank you.*
Wang *What about your telephone number?*
Brown *0123 789 436.*
Wang *Thank you.*

Chinese woman *Hello.*
Brown *Are you Chen Yingying?*
Chinese woman *No. She is not in.*
Brown *Do you have her mobile phone number?*
Chinese woman *Yes. A moment, please.*
(A moment later.)
Chinese woman *132.*
Brown *132.*
Chinese woman *4685.*
Brown *685.*
Chinese woman *No, it's 4685.*
Brown *4685.*
Chinese woman *0417.*

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- Brown** Líng sì yāo qī.
Chinese woman Duì.
Brown Yāo sān èr sì liù bā wǔ líng sì yāo qī.
Chinese woman Duì.
Brown Xièxie nǐ.
Chinese woman Bú xiè.

Conversation 3: Having a drink and having a meal

Part 1: Having a drink

- Waitress** Nǐmen hē shénme?
Wang Wǒmen hē chá.
Waitress Hē shénme chá?
Brown Wǒ hē hóng chá.
Waitress Nín ne?
Wang Wǒ hē lǚ chá.
Waitress Qǐng dēng-yi-dēng.
Brown Xièxie.
(Waitress comes with the tea.)
Waitress Zhè shì nín-de hóng chá.
Brown Xièxie.
Waitress Zhè shì nín-de lǚ chá.
Wang Xièxie.
Brown Zhēn hǎohē.

Brown 0417.
Chinese woman *Correct.*
Brown 132 4685 0417.
Chinese woman *Correct.*
Brown *Thank you.*
Chinese woman *You're welcome.*

Waitress *What will you drink?*
Wang *We'll have tea.*
Waitress *What kind of tea?*
Brown *I'll have black tea.*
Waitress *What about you?*
Wang *I'll have green tea.*
Waitress *A moment, please.*
Wang *Thank you.*
(Waitress comes with the tea.)
Waitress *This (here) is your black tea.*
Brown *Thank you.*
Waitress *This (here) is your green tea.*
Wang *Thank you.*
Brown *It's really delicious.*

Part 2: Having a meal

Waiter Nǐmen chī shénme?

Wang Tā chī jiǎozi.

Waiter Nín ne?

Wang Wǒ chī miàntiáo.

Brown Wǒmen bù chī ròu.

Waiter Nǐmen hē shénme?

Brown Píjiǔ.

Waiter Qǐng děng-yi-děng.

(A little while later the waiter brings the food but not the beer.)

Waiter Zhè shì nín-de jiǎozi.

Brown Xièxie.

Waiter Zhè shì nín-de miàntiáo.

Wang Píjiǔ ne?

Waiter Duìbuqǐ. Qǐng děng-yi-děng.

(A little later.)

Brown Jiǎozi zhēn hǎochī.

Wang Píjiǔ yě zhēn hǎohē.

Waiter *What would you like to eat?*

Wang *He'll have boiled dumplings.*

Waiter *What about you?*

Wang *I'll have noodles.*

Brown *We don't eat meat. (We are vegetarian.)*

Waiter *What would you like to drink?*

Brown *Beer.*

Waiter *Please wait for a while.*

(A little while later the waiter brings the food but not the beer.)

Waiter *These are your boiled dumplings.*

Brown *Thanks.*

Waiter *These are your noodles.*

Wang *What about the beer?*

Waiter *I'm sorry. Please wait for a while.*

(A little later.)

Brown *The boiled dumplings are delicious.*

Wang *The beer is tasty too.*

Conversation 4: Booking a room and booking a table

Part 1: Booking a room

- Receptionist** Nín hǎo.
Brown Qǐng wèn, yǒu fángjiān ma?
Receptionist Yǒu. Jǐ wèi?
Brown Liǎng wèi.
Receptionist Jǐ tiān?
Brown Liǎng tiān.
Receptionist Dānrén fángjiān, shuāngrén fángjiān?
Brown Liǎng ge dānrén fángjiān.
Receptionist Yí ge fángjiān, bā bǎi kuài yì tiān.
Brown Shōu xìnyòng kǎ ma?
Receptionist Shōu.

Part 2: Booking a table

- Waiter** Nín hǎo. Jǐ wèi?
Brown Liǎng wèi.
Waiter Yùdìng le ma?
Brown Méi you.
Waiter Xī-yān ma?
Brown Bù xī-yān.
Waiter Qǐng dào zhèibiān.
(At the end of the dinner.)
Brown Shōu xìnyòng kǎ ma?
Waiter Duìbuqǐ, bù shōu. Zhǐ shōu xiànjīn.

Receptionist *Hello.*
Brown *Do you have any rooms available, please?*
Receptionist *Yes, we do. (For) how many?*
Brown *Two people.*
Receptionist *For how many days?*
Brown *Two days.*
Receptionist *Single rooms (or) double rooms?*
Brown *Two single rooms.*
Receptionist *800 kuai a day per room.*
Brown *Do you take credit cards?*
Receptionist *Yes.*

Waiter *Hello. How many?*
Brown *Two.*
Waiter *Have you reserved?*
Brown *No.*
Waiter *(Do you) smoke?*
Brown *No.*
Waiter *Please come this way.*
(At the end of the dinner.)
Brown *Do you take credit cards?*
Waiter *Sorry, no (credit cards). Only cash.*

Conversation 5: Asking for directions and going to a local attraction

Part 1: Asking for directions

- Leigh** Qǐng wèn, chēzhàn zài nǎr?
Passer-by Zài qiánbiān.
Leigh Yuǎn bu yuǎn?
Passer-by Bù yuǎn. Zǒu lù shí fēnzhōng.
Leigh Sì fēnzhōng?
Passer-by Shí fēnzhōng.
Leigh Shí fēnzhōng.
Passer-by Duì. Yízhí wǎng qián zǒu.
Leigh Wǎng qián zǒu.
Passer-by Duì. Chēzhàn zài nǐ-de yòubiān.
Leigh Yòubiān.
Passer-by Duì. Bù yuǎn.
Leigh Xièxie.

Part 2: Going to a local attraction

- Brown** Qǐng wèn, yùndòngchǎng zài nǎr?
Passer-by Nèi ge yùndòngchǎng?
Brown Zhōngguó zúqiú yùndòngchǎng.
Passer-by O, zài nèibiān.
Brown Yuǎn bu yuǎn?
Passer-by Bù yuǎn. Zǒu lù qī, bā fēnzhōng.
Brown Qī, bā fēnzhōng.
Passer-by Duì. Zài chēzhàn de zuǒbiān.
Brown Chēzhàn de zuǒbiān.
Passer-by Duì. Bù yuǎn.
Brown Xièxie nǐ.

Leigh *Excuse me, where is the station?*

Passer-by *Up ahead.*

Leigh *Is it far?*

Passer-by *Not far. Ten minutes on foot.*

Leigh *Four minutes?*

Passer-by *Ten minutes.*

Leigh *Ten minutes?*

Passer-by *Yes. Go straight ahead.*

Leigh *Straight ahead.*

Passer-by *Yes. The station is on your right.*

Leigh *Right side.*

Passer-by *Yes. Not far.*

Leigh *Thank you.*

Brown *Excuse me, where is the stadium?*

Passer-by *Which stadium?*

Brown *The Chinese national football stadium.*

Passer-by *Oh, over there.*

Brown *Is it far?*

Passer-by *Not far. Seven or eight minutes on foot.*

Brown *Seven or eight minutes.*

Passer-by *Yes. On the left of the station.*

Brown *Left of the station.*

Passer-by *Yes. Not far.*

Brown *Thank you.*

Conversation 6: Taking a train and getting a bus

Part 1: Taking a train

Clerk Qù nǎr?

Leigh Qù Xī'ān.

Clerk Jǐ zhāng?

Leigh Liǎng zhāng.

Clerk Liǎng zhāng qù Xī'ān de huǒchē piào duì ma?

Leigh Duì.

Clerk Jīntiān de ma?

Leigh Duì.

Clerk Wǎnshàng shí diǎn líng qī fēn.

Brown Nǎi ge zhàntái?

Clerk Dì-qī zhàntái.

Brown Dì jǐ zhàntái?

Clerk Dì-qī.

Brown Qǐng wèn, cèsuǒ zài nǎr?

Clerk Zài nèibiān.

See page 30 for a full explanation of the use of the apostrophe.

- Clerk** *Where are you going?*
- Leigh** *To Xi'an.*
- Clerk** *How many (tickets)?*
- Leigh** *Two.*
- Clerk** *Two train tickets to Xi'an, is that right?*
- Leigh** *That's correct.*
- Clerk** *For today?*
- Leigh** *Yes.*
- Clerk** *10.07 this evening.*
- Brown** *Which platform?*
- Clerk** *Platform number 7.*
- Brown** *Which one?*
- Clerk** *Number 7.*
- Brown** *Excuse me, where is the toilet?*
- Clerk** *Over there.*

Part 2: Getting a bus

- Brown** Qǐng wèn, qù Bīng-mǎ-yǒng zuò shénme chē?
- Receptionist** Chūzūchē.
- Brown** Yǒu gōnggòng qìchē ma?
- Receptionist** Yǒu.
- Brown** Jǐ diǎn?
- Receptionist** Qī diǎn, qī diǎn shí fēn, bā diǎn.
- Leigh** Gōnggòng qìchēzhàn zài nǎr?
- Receptionist** Zài nèibiān.
- Brown** Yuǎn bu yuǎn?
- Receptionist** Bù yuǎn, zǒu lù sān fēnzhōng.
- Brown** Xièxie nǐ.
- Receptionist** Bú xiè.

Brown *Excuse me, how should we go to the Terracotta Army (Museum)?*

Receptionist *Taxi.*

Brown *Is there a bus?*

Receptionist *Yes.*

Brown *What time?*

Receptionist *7 o'clock, 7.10, 8 o'clock.*

Leigh *Where is the bus stop?*

Receptionist *Over there.*

Brown *Is it far?*

Receptionist *Not far, it's three minutes on foot.*

Brown *Thank you.*

Receptionist *Don't mention it.*

Conversation 7: Sightseeing

Part 1: Going sightseeing

Leigh Jīntiān zhēn lěng.

Brown Zhēn lěng.

Leigh Nǐ xǐhuan zhèxiē bīngdēng ma?

Guide Hěn xǐhuan.

Leigh Nǐ xǐhuan nǎi ge?

Guide Nèi ge.

Leigh Nǎi ge?

Guide Nèi ge hóng-de.

Brown Zhēn piàoliang.

Leigh Peter, nǐ xǐhuan nǎi ge?

Brown Wǒ zuì xǐhuan nèi ge gāo-de.

Guide Wa, tài piàoliang le.

Leigh Wǒ yě xǐhuan.

Part 2: More sightseeing

Guide Leigh xiānsheng, lěng bu lěng?

Leigh Bù lěng.

Guide Brown xiānsheng, nǐ ne?

Brown Wǒ yě bù lěng.

Guide Nǐmen xǐhuan nèi ge tǎ ma?

Leigh Bú tài xǐhuan, Peter, nǐ ne?

Brown Wǒ hěn xǐhuan.

Guide Nǐ wèishénme bù xǐhuan?

Leigh Yàngzi hěn qíguài.

Guide Nèi ge gāo lóu ne?

Leigh Yě bù xǐhuan.

Brown Nǐ kàn, nèi ge miào zhēn piàoliang.

Leigh Zhēn piàoliang. Wǒ yě xǐhuan.

- Leigh** *It's really cold today.*
- Brown** *Really cold.*
- Leigh** *Do you like these ice lanterns?*
- Guide** *Very much.*
- Leigh** *Which one do you like?*
- Guide** *That one.*
- Leigh** *Which one?*
- Guide** *That red one.*
- Brown** *[It's] Really pretty.*
- Leigh** *Peter, which do you like?*
- Brown** *I like the tall one best.*
- Guide** *Oh, it's so beautiful!*
- Leigh** *I like it too.*
-
- Guide** *Are you cold, Mr Leigh?*
- Leigh** *No (lit. not cold).*
- Guide** *What about you, Mr. Brown?*
- Brown** *I am not cold either.*
- Guide** *Do you like that pagoda?*
- Leigh** *Not really. What about you, Peter?*
- Brown** *I like it very much.*
- Guide** *Why don't you like it?*
- Leigh** *It looks strange.*
- Guide** *What about that tall building?*
- Leigh** *I don't like it either.*
- Brown** *Look, that temple is really beautiful.*
- Leigh** *It's really beautiful. I like it too.*

Conversation 8: Being ill and seeing a doctor

Part 1: Being ill

- Leigh** Qǐng wèn, fùjìn yǒu yàofáng ma?
Receptionist Nín zěnmē le?
Leigh Wǒ-de péngyou yǒudiǎnr bù shūfu.
Receptionist Tā nǎr bù shūfu?
Leigh Tóu téng, dùzi téng.
Receptionist Tā yīnggāi qù yīyuàn.
Leigh Fùjìn yǒu yīyuàn ma?
Receptionist Yǒu.
Leigh Hěn jìn ma?
Receptionist Bù hěn jìn. Nǐmen zuò chūzūchē qù ba.

Part 2: Seeing a doctor

- Doctor** Nǐ zěnmē le?
Leigh Wǒ-de péngyou hěn bù shūfu.
Doctor Zěnmē bù shūfu?
Leigh Tā tóu téng, dùzi téng.
Doctor Wǒ lái kànkan.
(The doctor examines Peter Brown.)
Doctor Chī Zhōngyào ba.
Leigh Shénme Zhōngyào?
Doctor Zhèi zhǒng yào hěn hǎo.
Leigh Zěnmē chī?
Doctor Yì tiān chī sān cì.
Leigh Xièxie nín.

Leigh *Excuse me, is there a pharmacy near here?*
Receptionist *What's the problem? / What's the matter with you?*
Leigh *My friend is not feeling very well.*
Receptionist *Where is he feeling uncomfortable?*
Leigh *Headache, stomach ache.*
Receptionist *He should go to hospital.*
Leigh *Is there a hospital nearby?*
Receptionist *Yes.*
Leigh *Very close?*
Receptionist *Not very. You'd better take a taxi.*

Doctor *What's the problem?*
Leigh *My friend is feeling very bad.*
Doctor *In what way?*
Leigh *He has a headache and stomach ache.*
Doctor *Let me have a look.*
(The doctor examines Peter Brown.)
Doctor *Why not take some Chinese medicine?*
Leigh *What Chinese medicine?*
Doctor *This kind of medicine is good / effective.*
Leigh *How do you take it?*
Doctor *(You) take it three times a day.*
Leigh *Thank you.*

Conversation 9: Going shopping and buying a souvenir

Part 1: Going shopping

Vendor Nǐ xiǎng mǎi shénme?

Leigh Zhèi ge Zhōngwén jiào shénme?

Vendor Tóujīn.

Leigh Wǒ mǎi liǎng tiáo.

Vendor Xiānsheng, mǎi yì tiáo língdài ba.

Leigh Wǒ bù xǐhuan zhèi zhǒng yánsè.

Vendor Zhèi tiáo zěnmeyàng?

Leigh Zhèi tiáo búcuò.

Vendor Zhēn hǎokàn.

Leigh Hǎo ba. Wǒ mǎi zhèi tiáo.

Vendor Mǎi liǎng tiáo ba. Yì tiáo shí kuài, liǎng tiáo shíbā kuài.

Leigh Hǎo ba. Wǒ mǎi liǎng tiáo.

Part 2: Buying a souvenir

Vendor Xiānsheng, mǎi yì jiàn máoyī ba.

Brown Wǒ bù xǐhuan zhèi ge yánsè.

Vendor Nǐ xǐhuan shénme yánsè?

Brown Yǒu lǜ-de ma?

Vendor Yǒu. Zhèi jiàn zěnmeyàng?

Brown Wǒ kěyi shìshi ma?

Vendor Kěyi.

Brown Yǒudiǎnr xiǎo.

Vendor Shìshi zhèi jiàn ba.

Brown Yǒudiǎnr dà.

Vendor Bú dà, bú dà.

Brown Hǎo ba, wǒ mǎi zhèi jiàn.

Vendor *Can I help you?*
Leigh *What's this called in Chinese?*
Vendor *Scarf.*
Leigh *I'll have two.*
Vendor *Sir, how about buying a tie?*
Leigh *I don't like this colour.*
Vendor *How about this one?*
Leigh *This one is pretty nice.*
Vendor *It's really nice (good looking).*
Leigh *OK. I'll have this one.*
Vendor *Have two then. Ten kuai for one and 18 kuai for two.*
Leigh *OK. I'll have two.*

Vendor *Sir, how about buying a sweater?*
Brown *I don't like this colour.*
Vendor *What colour do you like?*
Brown *Any green ones?*
Vendor *Yes. What about this one?*
Brown *Can I try it?*
Vendor *Yes.*
Brown *A little too small.*
Vendor *Try this one then.*
Brown *A little too big.*
Vendor *No, no, not big.*
Brown *OK, I'll have this one.*

Conversation 10: Making friends and keeping in touch

Part 1: Making friends

- Brown** Zǎoshang hǎo!
- Local** Zǎoshang hǎo! Nǐmen shì nǎi guó rén?
- Brown** Wǒ shì Yīngguó-rén.
- Local** Nǐ ne?
- Leigh** Wǒ shì Měiguó-rén.
- Local** Nǐmen huì dǎ tàijíquán ma?
- Brown / Leigh** Bú huì.
- Local** Xiǎng bu xiǎng xué?
- Leigh** Xiǎng xué, kěshì tài nán le.
- Local** Bù nán, bù nán. Lái, wǒ jiāo nǐmen.

Part 2: Keeping in touch

- Local** Zhèi shì wǒ-de míngpiàn.
- Leigh** Duìbuqǐ, wǒ méi yǒu míngpiàn.
- Local** Méi guānxi.
- Brown** Wǒ yě méi yǒu.
- Local** Nǐmen yǒu yīmèi'er ma?
- Leigh** Yǒu. Zhèi shì wǒmen-de diànzǐ-yóujiàn.
- Local** Xièxie nǐmen.
- Brown** Zhèi shì wǒ-de diànhuà.
- Local** Xièxie nín.
- Brown** Huānyíng nín míngnián qù Yīngguó.
- Local** Huānyíng nǐmen zài lái Zhōngguó.
- Leigh** Zàijiàn.
- Local** Zàijiàn.
- Leigh / Brown** Zàijiàn.

- Brown** *Good morning!*
- Local** *Good morning! Which country are you from?*
- Brown** *I'm British.*
- Local** *What about you?*
- Leigh** *I'm an American.*
- Local** *Can you do Tai Chi?*
- Brown / Leigh** *No.*
- Local** *Would you like to learn?*
- Leigh** *Yes, but it's too hard.*
- Local** *No, no, not hard. Come on, let me teach you.*
-
- Local** *This is my name card.*
- Leigh** *I'm sorry, I don't have one.*
- Local** *It doesn't matter.*
- Brown** *Neither do I.*
- Local** *Do you have (an) e-mail?*
- Leigh** *Yes. Here are our e-mail addresses.*
- Local** *Thank you.*
- Brown** *This is my telephone (number).*
- Local** *Thank you.*
- Brown** *Do come to Britain next year (literally: Welcome you next year go Britain).*
- Local** *Do come to China again (literally: Welcome you again come China).*
- Leigh** *Goodbye.*
- Local** *Goodbye.*
- Leigh / Brown** *Goodbye.*

Cultural information

Nǐ vs. *Nín*

The difference between *nǐ* and *nín* is similar to *tu* and *vous* in French. *Nín* is used for people senior to you (generally a generation above you), people with higher social status (e.g. teachers, officials) and your superior at work. Many Chinese will probably use *nín hǎo* for foreigners when they say hello. When people know each other well, they prefer to use *nǐ*. This is especially true for young people. However, there are individual differences, i.e. some people tend to use *nín* more than others.

Surname first

In most Western names the given name comes first, hence first name, and the family name comes last, hence last name. In Chinese, surnames always come first. This is because a surname is shared by all members of the family, and is regarded as being the most important. What is important should come first. Your given name is your own, thus only secondary. If you address someone with his or her title, such as Dr, Mr, Miss, Professor, etc. the title comes after the surname or full name: *Wáng xiānsheng*, for Mr Wáng, *Chén Yīngying xiǎojie* for Miss Yīngying Chén.

Name cards

In China, exchanging name cards or business cards is far more common than it is in the West. If you decide to do business in China, a business card with your name, title and contact details in Chinese on it will make the initial encounter a little smoother and convince the Chinese people you deal with that you really mean business!

Telephone etiquette

In China, the most common greeting when picking up the phone is *wéi*, although these days more and more people say *wéi* followed by *nǐ hǎo*.

It's very unusual to say your number when picking up the phone.

Tea vs. coffee

Tea is by far the most popular drink in China, although coffee and other soft drinks are becoming more and more popular among the younger generation.

Dumplings of all kinds

The Chinese love food with stuffing, i.e. dumplings of all kinds. *Jiǎozi* are the most popular, particularly in the north. Other types of dumplings are *bāozi* (steamed dumplings), *xiànbǐng* (fried pancakes) and *guōtiē* (fried *bāozi*).

Eating lots of meat is something of a status symbol – it shows you have money. Not so long ago, most rural Chinese survived on rice or noodles with vegetables and ate very little meat. Meat was only eaten on special occasions as it was so expensive. Nowadays many more Chinese can afford to eat meat so not eating meat might be seen as an indication that you are poor, so this might also be a reason why compared to the West there are far fewer vegetarians in China.

Credit cards

Plastic cards are popular in China. Recent statistics show there are nearly 100 million of them in China. However, these are mostly cards for drawing cash out at ATMs, not full credit cards. Although big hotels and restaurants in big cities take credit cards, it's still much less common in China than it is in the West. Therefore, you probably need to ask *Shōu xīnyòng kǎ ma?* quite often if you don't carry much cash with you. And certainly before you sit down in a nice restaurant for a meal with several friends!

Smoking

There is not much awareness at present in China about the danger smoking poses to health and even less awareness of the dangers of passive smoking. What brand of cigarette you smoke is a status symbol and fewer and fewer people in urban China smoke Chinese cigarettes. Cartons of cigarettes have always been favoured as small gifts to smooth your way through small-scale negotiations of many

kinds. Some rural women, doing physical labour either in the town or country, smoke quite heavily but generally more men smoke than women.

Which way to go?

It is common when people give you directions that they tell you to go north, south, east, or west rather than left, right, etc. The four directions are: *dōng* (east), *xī* (west), *nán* (south) and *běi* (north). Note the order in which the Chinese say these – *dōng* (east) first because China is in the East and that is therefore the most important reference point, followed by *xī* (west), *nán* (south), and lastly *běi* (north). People say *wǎng dōng zǒu*, for ‘go east’, literally ‘towards east walk’, or *wǎng nán zǒu*, for ‘go south’, etc.

Single or return?

In China, it is still not easy to book return tickets for train and coach journeys. You may now book return flights but there is usually no discount, that is, it’s simply twice the single fare.

Direct or indirect?

Many Westerners may find the Chinese impolite in that they make ‘negative’ comments about things either directly to you or in front of you to somebody else. For example, they might say to you, ‘You are too thin for this dress’. They believe it to be a fact, at least to them and therefore not at all impolite. They also like to suggest to you, for example, when it is cold, that you need to put on more clothes. This, to a Chinese person, is a sign of care and concern.

Although this has changed a great deal in cities and amongst the younger generation, it is still fairly common in daily life.

Chinese medicine

Chinese medicine is still very much part of people’s everyday life. Although Chinese people usually go to a general hospital, rather than a hospital specializing in Chinese medicine, they often use ready-made Chinese medicine (powders, pills, balls, plaster, etc.) for a variety of daily illnesses. People can purchase these medicines in pharmacies without a prescription.

Size matters!

In China, sizes of clothes and shoes are measured in centimetres.

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Loan words

Diànzǐ yóujiàn or *yīmèi'er* both mean 'e-mail' in English. They are both loan words. *Diànzǐ yóujiàn* is the literal translation into Chinese of 'electronic mail' whereas *yīmèi'er* is the transliteration of the word 'e-mail' into Chinese. Increasingly people are using both the English words as well as their Chinese translation. For example, Chinese people will use *WTO* for *Shìjiè Màoyì Zǔzhī*, the World Trade Organisation, *bye-bye* for *zàijiàn*, etc. As you can imagine, young people tend to use the English words.

Tones

Chinese is a tonal language. Every syllable in Chinese has its own tone. Mandarin Chinese has four distinct tones plus a neutral tone. This means that syllables that are pronounced the same but have different tones will mean different things.

The four tones are represented by the following marks which are put over the vowel or over the **main** vowel of a syllable where there are two or three vowels:

- 1st tone, high and level
- ˊ 2nd tone, rising
- ˇ 3rd tone, falling then rising
- ˋ 4th tone, falling

Tone changes

Occasionally syllables may change their tone. When two 3rd tones occur together, the first one is said as a 2nd tone to make it easier to say. We have still marked this as a 3rd tone in the booklet otherwise you may think that it is always a 2nd tone which it isn't. For example, *Nǐ hǎo* 'Hello' is actually said *Ní hǎo*.

If three 3rd tones occur together, the first two are normally said as 2nd tones: *Wǒ yě xǐhuan* is said as *Wó yé xǐhuan*.

Use of apostrophe

An apostrophe (') is used to show where the break comes between two syllables if there is any possible ambiguity in pronunciation. For example, *shí'èr* (not *shíèr*), *yīmèi'er* (not *yīmèier*).

Hyphens

We have used hyphens to show you that two syllables are closely linked together. This will encourage you to say them together. For example *wǒ-de*, *nǐ-de*, *Měiguó-rén*.

Listening skills: survival phrases

Please say it again.

Qǐng zài shuō yí cì.

Slowly, please.

Qǐng shuō màn yìdiǎnr.

Is that right?

Duì bu duì?

What does it mean?

Shì shénme yìsī?

I don't understand.

Tīng-bù-dǒng.

Chinese–English glossary

...ba <i>you'd better or let's</i>	fēnzhōng <i>minute (literally division or divide clock)</i>
bǎi <i>hundred</i>	fùjìn <i>nearby</i>
Běijīng <i>Beijing</i>	gāo <i>tall</i>
bīngdēng <i>ice lantern</i>	gè <i>measure word (for general use)</i>
Bīng-mǎ-yǒng <i>Terracotta Army</i>	gōnggòng qìchē <i>bus</i>
bù <i>no, not</i>	hǎochī <i>(good to eat) delicious</i>
bú xiè <i>you're welcome</i>	hǎohē <i>(good to drink) delicious</i>
bú zài <i>not to be in</i>	hē <i>to drink</i>
búcuò <i>pretty nice / good, not bad</i>	hěn <i>very</i>
cèsuǒ <i>toilet</i>	hóng <i>red (black for tea)</i>
chá <i>tea</i>	huānyíng <i>welcome</i>
chē a general word for <i>vehicle</i>	huì <i>be able to, know how to</i>
chēzhàn <i>bus stop, station</i>	huǒchē <i>train</i>
chī <i>to eat</i>	jǐ? <i>how many (small number)?</i>
chūzūchē <i>taxi</i>	jǐ diǎn? <i>what time?</i>
cì <i>time (as in 'three times')</i>	jiàn <i>measure word for an item of clothing</i>
dà <i>big</i>	jiāo <i>teach</i>
dǎ tàijíquán <i>do Tai Chi</i>	jiào <i>to be called, to call</i>
dānrén <i>single person / single</i>	jiǎozi <i>(boiled) dumpling</i>
de a little word indicating possession or belonging	jiē <i>to meet</i>
dì used before numerals to form ordinal numbers like first, second, etc.	jìn <i>near, close</i>
dì jǐ ...? <i>which (ordinal) number...?</i>	jīntiān <i>today</i>
diǎn <i>o'clock</i>	kěshì <i>but</i>
diànhuà <i>telephone</i>	kěyǐ <i>can</i>
diànzǐ yóujiàn <i>e-mail</i>	kuài (basic unit of) <i>Chinese currency</i>
duì <i>correct, yes</i>	lái <i>to come</i>
duìbuqǐ (<i>I'm</i>) <i>sorry</i>	lěng <i>cold</i>
dùzi téng <i>stomach ache</i>	liǎng <i>two (of something)</i>
fángjiān <i>room</i>	

lǐngdài <i>tie</i> (noun)	píjiǔ <i>beer</i>
lóu <i>building</i>	qiánbiān <i>the front, ahead</i> (literally <i>front side</i>)
lǜ <i>green</i>	qíguài <i>strange</i>
Lúndūn <i>London</i>	qǐng <i>please</i>
ma? <i>question particle</i>	qǐng děng-yi-děng <i>please wait for</i> <i>a moment</i>
mǎi <i>to buy</i>	qǐng wèn...? <i>may I ask...?</i>
máoyī <i>woollen sweater</i>	qù <i>go</i>
méi <i>not (have)</i>	ròu <i>meat</i>
méi guānxi <i>it doesn't matter</i>	shénme? <i>what?</i>
Měiguó-rén <i>American person</i>	shì <i>to be (am / are / is)</i>
miàntiáo <i>noodles</i>	shì ... ma? <i>is it ...?</i>
miào <i>temple</i>	shìshi <i>try it, have a go</i>
míngnián <i>next year</i>	shōu <i>to receive, to accept</i>
míngpiàn <i>name card</i>	shǒujī <i>mobile (telephone)</i>
nà ge / nèi ge <i>that one</i>	shuāngrén <i>two persons / twin</i>
nǎ ge / něi ge? <i>which one?</i>	shūfu <i>comfortable</i>
nǎ guó(rén)? <i>which country</i> <i>(person)?</i>	tā <i>he, she, him, her</i>
nàbiān / nèibiān <i>over there</i>	tǎ <i>tower, pagoda</i>
nán <i>difficult</i>	tài...le <i>too / so...</i>
nǎr? <i>where?</i>	tiān <i>day</i>
...ne? <i>what about...?</i>	tiáo <i>measure word for long, thin</i> <i>objects</i>
nèi gé / nàge <i>that one</i>	tóu téng <i>headache</i>
něi ge? / nǎ ge? <i>which one?</i>	tóujīn <i>scarf</i>
něi guó(rén)? <i>which country</i> <i>(person)?</i>	wǎng qián zǒu <i>walk or go ahead</i> <i>(literally towards front walk)</i>
nèibiān / nàbiān <i>over there</i>	wǎnshang <i>evening</i>
nǐ <i>you</i>	wéi <i>hello</i> when answering a call
nǐ hǎo <i>hello</i>	wèi <i>measure word for people</i>
nǐmen <i>you (plural)</i>	wèishénme? <i>why?</i>
nín <i>you (polite form)</i>	wǒ <i>I, me</i>
nín hǎo <i>hello (respectful)</i>	wǒ lái kànkan <i>let me have a look</i>
péngyou <i>friend</i>	wǒmen <i>we, us</i>
piào <i>ticket</i>	
piàoliang <i>beautiful, handsome</i> <i>(can refer to men as well as</i> <i>women)</i>	

xiǎng *would like to, want*
 xiānsheng *Mr*
 xiǎo *small*
 xiǎojie *Miss*
 xièxie *thank you*
 xǐhuan *to like*
 xìnyòng kǎ *credit card*
 xué *to learn*

yàngzi *looks, appearance*
 yánsè *colour*
 yào *medicine*
 yàofáng *pharmacy*
 yě *too, also*
 yīmèi'er *e-mail*
 yīnggāi *should*
 Yīngguó-rén *English / British person*
 yīyuàn *hospital*
 yìzhí *straight*
 yǒu *have*
 yòubiān *right side*
 yǒudiǎnr *a little bit*
 yǒuyidiǎnr *a little bit*
 yuǎn *far*
 yùndòngchǎng *stadium*

zài *again*
 zài *to be at or in*
 zàijiàn *goodbye*
 zǎoshang hǎo *good morning*
 zěnmē *how, in what way*
 ...zěnmeyàng? *how about...?*
 (nǐ) zěnmē le? *what's the matter (with you)?*
 zhāng *measure word for tickets*
 zhàntái *platform*
 zhè/zhèi *this*
 zhèi/zhè *this*
 zhèixiē/zhèxiē *these*
 zhēn *really*
 zhèxiē/zhèxiē *these*
 zhǒng *kind as in sort, variety (acts as a measure word)*
 Zhōngguó *China, Chinese*
 Zhōngwén *Chinese language*
 Zhōngyào *Chinese medicine*
 zhù *to stay, to live*
 zǒu lù *to walk (literally walk road)*
 zuì *the most*
 zuò *to take (bus or train)*
 zuǒbiān *left side*
 zúqiú *football*

English–Chinese glossary

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<i>accept (to)</i> shōu	<i>difficult</i> nán
<i>again</i> zài	<i>do Tai Chi</i> dǎ tàijíquán
<i>ahead</i> qiánbiān	<i>drink</i> hē
<i>also</i> yě	<i>dumpling (boiled)</i> jiǎozi
<i>American person</i> Měiguó-ren	<i>eat</i> chī
<i>appearance</i> yàngzi	<i>e-mail</i> diànzǐ yóujiàn, yīmèi'er
	<i>English / British person</i>
<i>(not) bad</i> búcuò	Yīngguó-rén
<i>be (am / are / is)</i> shì	<i>evening</i> wǎnshang
<i>be able to</i> huì	
<i>be at or in</i> zài	<i>far</i> yuǎn
<i>beautiful, handsome</i> piàoliang	<i>football</i> zúqiú
<i>beer</i> píjiǔ	<i>friend</i> péngyou
<i>Beijing</i> Běijīng	<i>front (literally front side)</i> qiánbiān
<i>big</i> dà	
<i>building</i> lóu	<i>go</i> qù
<i>bus</i> gōnggòng qìchē	<i>go ahead (literally towards front</i>
<i>bus stop, station</i> chēzhàn	<i>walk)</i> wǎng qián zǒu
<i>but</i> kěshì	<i>goodbye</i> zàijiàn
<i>buy</i> mǎi	<i>good morning</i> zǎoshang hǎo
	<i>good: pretty good</i> búcuò
<i>call (to)</i> jiào	<i>green</i> lǜ
<i>can</i> kěyǐ	
<i>China, Chinese</i> Zhōngguó	<i>have</i> yǒu
<i>Chinese language</i> Zhōngwén	<i>he</i> tā
<i>Chinese medicine</i> Zhōngyào	<i>headache</i> tóu téng
<i>close</i> jìn	<i>hello</i> nǐ hǎo
<i>cold</i> lěng	<i>hello (respectful)</i> nín hǎo
<i>colour</i> yánsè	<i>hello (when answering a</i>
<i>come</i> lái	<i>telephone call)</i> wéi
<i>comfortable</i> shūfu	<i>her</i> tā
<i>correct</i> duì	<i>him</i> tā
<i>credit card</i> xìnyòng kǎ	<i>hospital</i> yīyuàn
<i>currency, Chinese</i> kuài	<i>how...? zěnmē</i>
	<i>how about...? zěnmeyàng</i>
<i>day</i> tiān	<i>how many...? (small number)</i> jǐ?
<i>delicious (good to drink)</i> hǎohē;	<i>hundred</i> bǎi
<i>(good to eat)</i> hǎochī	

I wǒ
ice lantern bīngdēng
is it...? shì...ma?

kind (acts as a measure word)
zhǒng
know how to huì

learn xué
left side zuǒbiān
let me have a look wǒ lái kànkan
let's ...ba
like (to) xǐhuan
(a) little bit yǎuyidiǎnr or yǎudiǎnr
live (to) zhù
London Lúndūn
looks yàngzi

matter: it doesn't matter méi
guānxi; what's the matter (with
you)? (nǐ) zěnmē le?
may I ask...? qǐng wèn...?

me wǒ
measure word (for an item of
clothing) jiàn
measure word (for general use) gè
measure word (for long, thin
objects) tiáo
measure word (for people
(polite)) wèi
measure word (for tickets) zhāng
meat ròu
medicine yào
meet, to jiù
minute (literally division or divide
clock) fēnzhōng
Miss xiǎojiě
mobile (telephone) shǒujī
most: the most zuì
Mr xiānsheng
name card míngpiàn

near jìn
nearby fùjìn
next year míngnián
nice búcuò
no, not bù
noodles miàntiáo
not (have) méi
not to be in bú zài

o'clock diǎn
over there nàibiān / nàibiān

pagoda tā
particle indicating possession or
belonging de
pharmacy yàofáng
platform zhàntái
please qǐng; please wait for a
moment qǐng děng-yi-děng

question particle ...ma?

really zhēn
receive shōu
red (black for tea) hóng
right side yòubiān
room fángjiān

scarf tóujīn
she tā
should yīnggāi
single person dānrén
small xiǎo
so... tài...le
sorry (I'm sorry) duìbuqǐ
sort zhǒng (acts as a measure
word)
stadium yùndòngchǎng
stay zhù
stomach ache dùzi téng
straight yìzhí

strange qíguài

Tai Chi tàijíquán
take (bus or train) zuò
tall gāo
taxi chūzūchē
tea chá
teach jiāo
telephone diànhuà
temple miào
Terracotta Army Bīng-mǎ-yǒng
thank you xièxie
that one nèi ge / nà ge
these zhèixiē / zhèxiē
this zhèi / zhè
ticket piào
tie (noun) língdài
time (as in 'three times') cì
what time? jǐ diǎn?
today jīntiān
toilet cèsuǒ
too tài...le
tower tǎ
train huǒchē
try it shìshi
two (of something) liǎng
two persons / twin shuāngrén

us wǒmen

vehicle (a general word) chē
very hěn

walk (literally: walk road) zǒu lù
want xiǎng
we wǒmen
welcome huānyíng
you're welcome bú xiè
what? shénme?
what about...? ...ne?
where? nǎr?
which country (person)? něi/nǎ
guó(rén)?
which (ordinal) number...? dì
jǐ...?
which one? něi ge? / nǎ ge?
why? wèishénme?
woollen sweater máoyī
would like to xiǎng

yes duì
you nǐ
you (plural) nǐmen
you (polite form) nín

Numbers

0 líng	10 shí	20 èrshí (<i>two tens</i>)	100 yì bǎi
1 yī	11 shíyī	30 sānshí (<i>three tens</i>)	200 èr bǎi or liǎng bǎi
2 èr	12 shí'èr	40 sìshí	
3 sān	13 shísān	50 wǔshí	
4 sì	14 shísì	60 liùshí	
5 wǔ	15 shíwǔ	70 qīshí	
6 liù	16 shíliù	80 bāshí	
7 qī	17 shíqī	90 jiǔshí	
8 bā	18 shíbā		
9 jiǔ	19 shíjiǔ		

Days of the week

xīngqīyī	<i>Monday</i>
xīngqī'èr	<i>Tuesday</i>
xīngqīsān	<i>Wednesday</i>
xīngqīsì	<i>Thursday</i>
xīngqīwǔ	<i>Friday</i>
xīngqīliù	<i>Saturday</i>
xīngqīrì or xīngqītiān	<i>Sunday</i>

Months of the year

yīyuè <i>January</i>	qīyuè <i>July</i>
èryuè <i>February</i>	bāyuè <i>August</i>
sānyuè <i>March</i>	jiǔyuè <i>September</i>
sìyuè <i>April</i>	shíyuè <i>October</i>
wǔyuè <i>May</i>	shíyīyuè <i>November</i>
liùyuè <i>June</i>	shí'èryuè <i>December</i>

Seasons

chūntiān	<i>spring</i>
xiàtiān	<i>summer</i>
qiūtiān	<i>autumn</i>
dōngtiān	<i>winter</i>

Subject index

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