

2.8 Miscellany

2.8.1 Welcome

The dialogue at the end of this unit contains an expression used for welcoming someone to a place. Explicit welcomes are probably more likely to be seen written on signs in shops than spoken, but they are not out of place with foreigners. The verbs are huānyíng ‘welcome’ and lái ‘come’. With the verb lái, destinations (rather than locations *per se*) can follow directly without any equivalent to the English preposition ‘to’: lái Běijīng, lái Guǎngzhōu. Notice that in English, the people being welcomed (‘you’) are not mentioned, while in Chinese, they are (nǐmen):

Huānyíng nǐmen lái Chéngdū! Welcome to Chengdu.

In Chinese settings, explicit thanks are usually reserved for favors that go beyond the expected. But given the airport context, an expression of gratitude as a response to the welcome is not inappropriate. This one involves the verbs xiè ‘to thank’ – frequently repeated as xièxiè – and the verb, jiē ‘to meet; join’. The order is like that of English, but Chinese eschews connective words like ‘to’ and ‘for’. (‘Thank you for coming to meet us’ appears in Chinese as simply ‘thank you come meet us’.)

Xièxiè nǐmen lái jiē wǒmen. Thanks for coming to meet us.

In China, shops and other business establishments often have a formal expression of welcome written near the entrance. This expression is: 欢迎光临 huānyíng guānglín, or xièxiè guānglín (both with the preferred four syllables). Guānglín, literally ‘illustrious presence’, is a fancy word for ‘guest’ or ‘visitor’. Sometimes, especially at openings or sales, ‘welcome hostesses’ (huānyíng xiǎojiē), stationed at the shop entrance wearing red costumes, will welcome or thank you with the same phrases.



Huānyíng nǐmen! [JKW 2003]

2.8.2 Particles

In addition to ma and ne, there are two other common final particles which have been encountered in the first two units. One is the particle a, which among its diverse functions, gives a hearty tone to statements or exclamations, and which slightly softens the abruptness of questions:

Lěng a!	[Wow, it]'s cold!
Máng a!	Busy, huh?!
Shéi a?	[Knock, knock.] Who [is it]?

The other is ba, which is associated with *suggestion* or *consensus*:

Zǒu ba.	Let's go.
Nà hǎo ba.	That's fine then.
Shàngchē ba.	Let's board the bus.

2.8.3 Praise

Chinese will praise your efforts to speak their language (called Zhōngwén or Hànyǔ), and will typically make use of an expression involving the verb shuō 'speak' (or, in southern Mandarin, jiǎng) followed by the particle +de. If you wonder whether this +de is the same as the possessive de introduced earlier in this unit, the answer is that it is not. This +de is followed by SV expressions (eg an adverb plus a SV): shuō+de hěn hǎo. The other is either followed by a noun (wǒ de shūbāo) or has the potential to be followed by a noun (wǒ de [shūbāo]). Were meaning and distribution not sufficient evidence for positing two different de's, we should cite the fact that they are also written with different characters, 的 (wǒ de) and 得 (shuō+de), respectively. So in order to make the distinction clear (and prepare you for writing different characters), we write the former as de and the latter as +de. You should do the same.

Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo.	[You] speak Chinese very well.
~ jiǎng+de hěn hǎo.	

To which you respond, modestly, that in fact you don't speak at all well:

Shuō+de bù hǎo	[I] speak very poorly.
~ jiǎng+de bù hǎo.	

The latter can be preceded by the expression nǎlǐ (often repeated), which is the [more formal] word for 'where', but which is also used to deflect praise, as if questioning its basis:

Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo.	Nah, I speak rather badly.
~ jiǎng+de bù hǎo.	

When you see more examples, you will find that nothing can intervene in the combination shuō+de. So if Zhōngwén (or Hànyǔ) is mentioned, it cannot directly

follow shuō, but needs to be cited first, as shown in the examples above. Since Chinese are so gracious about praising one's feeble efforts to speak their language, it is good to get used to this interchange early. For now, though, practice it only as it appears, and only with the verb shuō and its southern Mandarin counterpart, jiǎng.

2.9 Dialogue: at the airport

Given the need to restrict vocabulary and structures, the following dialogue cannot be regarded as completely natural, but it serves as a good model for some of the material that has been introduced in the first two units.

Situation: Professor Wáng (W) has come to the airport with a university driver to meet half a dozen international students who are arriving in China to continue their study of Chinese. The students all have Chinese names as well as their regular ones. One of them (Dàwéi [Dw]) spots Wáng lǎoshī holding a sign and walks over to introduce himself; some of the others follow and introduce themselves too. [X designates any one or a few.]

Dw	Nín hǎo, wǒ shì Máo Dàwéi.	How are you, I'm Mao Dawei.
W.	O, Máo Dàwéi, wǒ shì Wáng lǎoshī.	Oh, Mao Dawei, I'm Prof. Wang.
An	Wáng lǎoshī, nín hǎo! Wǒ shì Lǐ Ānnà.	Prof. Wang, how are you? I'm Li Anna.
W.	Lǐ Ānnà, nǐ hǎo.	Li Anna, how are you?
Ym	Wáng lǎoshī, wǒ shì Xiǎolín Yóuměi.	Professor Wang, I'm Xiaolin Youmei.
W.	Xiǎolín Yóuměi, nǐ hǎo. Hǎo, sān ge rén le.	Xiaolin Youmei, hi. Okay, [that's] 3.
Ym	Hái yǒu tā – tā xìng Kǒng, jiào Kǒng Měi.	[pointing] And her too -- her name is Kong, she's called Kong Mei.
W.	Hǎo, Kǒng Měi, nǐ hǎo! Sì ge rén le. Nǐ ne?	Fine, how are you Kong Mei? [That's] 4 then. And [who are] you?
Jf	Wǒ shì Bái Jiéfei.	I'm Bai Jiefei.

- W. *Bái Jiéfēi, nǐ hǎo....* *Bai Jiefei, hi....*
Nà hǎo, huānyíng nǐmen lái Běijīng! *Okay, then, welcome to Beijing!*
- All *Xièxie, xièxie nǐmen lái jiē wǒmen.* *Thanks; thank you for coming to meet us.*
- W. *Zhè shì Gāo shīfu.* *This is Mr. Gao.*
- All *Gāo shīfu, nín hǎo.* *Mr. Gao, how are you?*
- Gāo *Èi, nǐmen hǎo, nǐmen hǎo.* *Ah, how are you, how are you?*
Zhōngwén shuō+de hěn hǎo! *[You] speak Chinese very well!*
- All *Nǎlǐ, nǎlǐ, shuō+de bù hǎo!* *Nah, we don't speak very well.*

- W. *Nǐmen hěn lèi ba.* *You're probably tired.*
- X. *Bù, bú tài lèi, hái hǎo.* *No, not too, [we]'re okay.*
- W. *È ma? Chīfàn le ma?* *Are [you] hungry? Have [you] eaten?*
- X. *Bú è, zài fēijī shàng chī le.* *No, [we]'re not, [we] ate on the airplane.*
- W. *Nà, nǐmen de xíngli ne?* *And your bags?*
- X. *Zài zhèr: yī, èr, sān, sì, wǔ, liù.* *[They]'re here: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*
Dōu zài zhèr. *[They]'re all here.*

- W. *Nà hǎo, wǒmen zǒu ba. Shàng chē ba.* *Fine, let's go then. All aboard!*
- X. *Hǎo, hǎo.* *Okay.*
- W. *Jīntiān yǒu diǎnr rè, nǐmen rè ma?* *[Aboard the minibus.] [It]'s kind of hot today; are you hot?*
- X. *Bù, bú rè, hái hǎo. Wǒmen dōu hěn shūfu.* *No, [we]'re not, [we]'re fine. We're all comfortable.*
- W. *Xíngli, hùzhào, sǎn dōu yǒu ma?* *[You] have [your] bags, [your] passports, umbrellas?*
- X. *Dōu yǒu, dōu yǒu, xièxie.* *[We] have them all, thanks.*

- W. *Hǎo, nà wǒmen zǒu ba.* *Fine, so... let's go then!*
- X. *Běijīng hěn yuǎn ma?* *Is Beijing far?*
- W. *Bù, lí zhèr bù yuǎn – hěn jìn!* *No, it's not far from here – quite close!*

This model conversation is quite ambitious. All its vocabulary is fairly new, of course, and it also introduces quite a few grammatical patterns and features. But a bold beginning has the advantage of giving you interesting material to work with from the start. To make it more manageable, it is divided into four sections. The first involves collecting all the people; the second, with welcoming them; the third, with finding out how they are; and the fourth, with getting to the minibus to drive to Beijing. Get familiar with the scenario first, then visualize the conversation. You should be able to re-enact it more or less as presented before trying it out with partners.

Exercise 6.

a) Translate the following

1. Okay, that's three people.
2. Who's the first person? The second?
3. That's it then, I'm off.
4. It's late, I should be going.
5. We've all eaten, we ate on the plane.
6. We're not hungry, we're fine.
7. Welcome to [...].
8. Thanks for coming to meet us.
9. That's it then, see you tomorrow.
10. Okay, bye, take it easy.
11. How about you – you thirsty?
12. That looks like my umbrella.

b) Comment that

1. you haven't eaten yet.
2. they haven't left yet.
3. she hasn't had her shower yet.
4. he hasn't got out of class yet.
5. you haven't read the day's paper yet.
6. you were tired yesterday, but today you're fine.
7. you're not nervous anymore.
8. you were cold on the plane, but you're fine now.
9. they've already gone to bed.

2.9.1 Airports and airlines

China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects in the last few decades, including the construction of new airports (jīchǎng) and the reconstruction of old ones. An airport said to be the world's largest is due to be completed near Beijing in time for the 2008 Olympics. Some of the better known airports are Capital (Shǒudū) in Beijing, Báiyún ('white clouds') in Canton, and Hóngqiáo (the old airport) and Pǔdōng (the new) in Shanghai – the last two both named after districts. Pǔdōng, which like so many of the new airports is far out of town, is served by a German-built mag-lev (magnetic levitation) train (officially called a cíxuán-fúchē 'magnet-suspend float-vehicle', but colloquially referred to as a diàncíchē 'electromagnetic-vehicle'). It reaches a top speed of 430 kilometers an hour during its 7-8 minute run between the airport and an outlying subway station.

Airlines are proliferating and consolidating in China. 'Airline' is hángkōng gōngsī, literally 'aviation company'. Here is a list of some of the larger Chinese airlines for you to practice saying:

Zhōngguó Hángkōng Gōngsī	Air China
Zhōngguó Dōngfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Eastern Airlines
Zhōngguó Běifāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Northern Airlines
Zhōngguó Xīběi Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Northwest Airlines
Zhōngguó Nánfāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Southern Airlines
Zhōngguó Xīnán Hángkōng Gōngsī	China Southwest Airlines
Xīnjiāng Hángkōng Gōngsī	Xinjiang Airlines
Yúnnán Hángkōng Gōngsī	Yunnan Airlines
Gǎnglóng Hángkōng Gōngsī	Dragonair [Hong Kong-dragon...]



Arriving at Xīníng. [JKW 2005]

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