

Unit 3

Zǐ yuē: Xué ér shí xī zhī, bú yì yuè hū?
 Master said: study and timely review it, not also pleasing Q.
The Master said, 'To learn and in due time rehearse it: is this not also pleasurable?'

Opening lines of the *Analects* of Confucius.
 (Brooks and Brooks translation) Classical Chinese

Contents

3.1 Pronunciation	
3.2 Amount	
3.3 Nationality	
3.4 The Cardinal Directions: NSEW	<i>Exercise 1</i>
3.5 Yes and no	<i>Exercise 2</i>
3.6 Thanks and sorry	<i>Exercise 3</i>
3.7 Things to drink	<i>Exercise 4</i>
3.8 Why, because, so	<i>Exercise 5</i>
3.9 Money	<i>Exercises 6,7</i>
3.10 Other numbered sets	<i>Exercise 8</i>
3.11 Courses and classes	<i>Exercise 9</i>
3.12 Dialogue: courses and classes	<i>Exercise 10</i>
3.13 Sounds and pinyin	<i>Exercise 11</i>
3.14 Summary	<i>Exercise 12</i>
3.15 Rhymes and rhythms	
<i>Appendix: Cities, countries and nationalities</i>	

3.1 Pronunciation: initials of rows 3 and 4

The sounds symbolized as z and c in pinyin (in row-3 of the initial chart) can be problematical for speakers of English, since they do not appear in initial position in English words. The word ‘tsunami’ for example, though represented in English dictionaries with the foreign ‘ts’ sound, is often anglicized as ‘tuname’ or ‘suname’ by English speakers. [*Tsunami* is a Japanese word, written with characters whose Chinese meanings are ‘shallows’ and ‘wave’; the Chinese word is hǎixiào ‘sea roar’.]

The row-4 initials, the retroflex consonants pronounced with the tongue tip raised [!], also present difficulties, not just for English speakers, but for the many Chinese in southern regions (including Taiwan) who, in colloquial speech, pronounce zh, ch and sh as z, c, and s, respectively. [Standard] Mandarin is unique to the region in having both the dental (row-3) and retroflex (row 4) series. Speakers of regional Chinese languages such as Cantonese and Hakka, or those who speak Southeast Asian languages such as Thai and Vietnamese usually have one or other of the series, but not both.

The following sets, then, focus on lines 3 and 4 of the initial consonant sounds. Read them across, assigning a single tone; ! reminds you to raise the tip of your tongue.

1. cu > tu > ch!u > su > zu > du > zh!u
2. ta > ca > sa > ch!a > sh!a
3. zh!e > de > ze > ce > te > ch!e > se
4. duo > zuo > zh!uo > tuo > cuo > ch!uo > suo > sh!uo
5. tou > cou > ch!ou > zh!ou > zou > dou > sou > sh!ou

3.2 Amount

3.2.1 Larger numbers

As you know, numbers in Chinese are well behaved: 11 is 10-1, 12 is 10-2; 20 is 2-10 and 30, 3-10; 41 is 4-10-1, etc. Higher numbers, also quite regular, are based on bǎi ‘100’, qiān ‘1000’ and wàn ‘10,000’.

sānshí	sìshísān	jiǔshíjiǔ	yìbǎi	30	43	99	100
yìbǎi wǔshísān	bābǎi sānshí			153		830	
yìqiān	yíwàn	yìbǎiwàn		1000	10,000	1 million	

Notes

- a) Notice the use of the apostrophe to clarify syllable boundaries in those cases where a final vowel of one syllable meets an initial vowel of another: shí'èr. In large numbers, pinyin conventions write spaces between numbers built around a particular multiple of ten, eg: yìbǎi bāshíbā ‘188’.
- b) You will have more need to use large numbers when the subject is population, as in §8.3. In Chinese, there is a root for 10,000 (wàn), but not for a million; the latter is based on wàn: liǎngbǎiwàn ‘2 million’ (ie 200 x 10,000).

3.2.2 Some more measure phrases

Drinks can be measured with bēi ‘cup; glass’ or píng ‘bottle’. Cups, bēizi, on the other hand, and bottles píngzi, are measured with gè. Books are measured with běn ‘stem; binding’. Vehicles, including bicycles, are measured with liàng (falling tone); however, in Taiwan Mandarin, bicycles are often measured with jià ‘frame’.

yì bēi chá <i>a cup of tea</i>	liǎng bēi kāfēi <i>2 cups of coffee</i>	sān bēi qìshuǐ <i>3 glasses of soda</i>	sì bēi <i>4 cups [of...]</i>
yì píng píjiǔ <i>a bottle of beer</i>	liǎng píng kělè <i>2 bottles of cola</i>	sì píng jiǔ <i>4 bottles of wine</i>	sān píng <i>3 bottles [of...]</i>
yí ge bēizi <i>1 item cup</i>	liǎng ge píngzi <i>2 items bottle</i>	sān ge bēizi <i>3 items cup</i>	sì ge <i>4 [of them]</i>

yì běn shū <i>a book</i>	liǎng běn zìdiǎn <i>2 dictionaries</i>	sān běn shū <i>3 books</i>	shí běn <i>10 [of them]</i>
yí liàng chēzi <i>a car</i>	liǎng liàng qìchē <i>2 automobiles</i>	yí liàng zìxíngchē <i>a bike</i>	sān jià dānchē <i>3 bikes [Taiwan]</i>

3.3 Nationality

3.3.1 Country names

Zhōngguó	Rìběn	Yīnní	Yīndù	Hánguó
Àodàliyà	Jiānádà	Měiguó	Mòxīgē	Éguó
Fǎguó	Yīngguó	Déguó	Yìdàlì	Xībānyá

Some country names – mostly those with a history of independence and national power – are composed of a single syllable plus guó ‘country; nation’, on the model of Zhōngguó ‘China (middle-country)’. For these countries, the first syllable is chosen for its sound as well as meaning: Měiguó ‘the USA (beautiful-country)’; Yīngguó ‘England; Britain (hero-country)’; Fǎguó ‘France (law-country)’; Déguó ‘Germany (virtue-country)’; Tàiguó ‘Thailand (peace-country)’.

Countries with deep historical ties to China retain their old names. Nippon, a name that is cognate with the English name Japan, is the source of the Chinese name, Rìběn, literally ‘sun-root’, ie from the Chinese perspective, the direction of the sunrise. Vietnam, a name that contains the Chinese root nán ‘south’ and the name of an ethnic group called Yuè in Chinese, is Yuènnán in Mandarin. Most other countries are simply transliterated: Jiānádà, Yìdàlì, Fēilǚbīn, Yīndù. City names, except for those in Japan and Korea, are almost all transliterated: Zhījiāgē, Bèi’érfāsītè, Tèlāwéifū. A few are translated rather than transliterated, eg Salt Lake City, Yánhúchéng ‘salt-lake-city’. A more extensive list of country and city names, with English equivalents, is provided in the appendix to this unit.

3.3.2 Asking about nationality

rén ‘person’	-guó ‘country’	dìfang ‘place’
Zhōngguó rén ‘a Chinese’	Zhōngguó ‘China’	shénme dìfang ‘what place’

There are several ways of asking about nationality, all of them involving the categorial verb shì. Recall that nǎ and něi represent the same word, as do nà and nèi; the first members of each pair (nǎ, nà) *tend to be* ‘free’ forms; the second (něi, nèi) *tend to be* bound to measures: nǎ but něi ge.

- i) Nǐ shì něiguó [~ nǎguó] rén? (‘you be which-country person’)
- ii) Nǐ shì nǎr ~ nǎlǐ de <rén>? (‘you be where DE person’)

iii) Nǐ shì shénme dìfang rén? ('you be what place person')

iv) Nǐ shì <cóng> shénme dìfang lái de? ('you be from what place come one')

Options (ii- iv) do not, strictly speaking, ask about nationality, but about place, and can be answered with a city or town, as well as a country name. The last, (iv) represents two options: with cóng [ts-] 'from', the question is, strictly speaking, about the country of residence – or by implication, where you were born. Without cóng, it could simply mean 'where do you [happen to have] come from'.

The responses to the questions usually take the same form as the question, eg:

Nǐ shì < cóng > shénme dìfang lái de? Where are you from?
 Wǒ shì <cóng> Riběn lái de. I'm from Japan.

Nǐ shì něiguó rén? Which country are you from?
 Wǒ shì Hánguó rén. I'm from Korea.

Occasionally in conversation, people will ask about nationality using the more formal word, guójí 'nationality':

Nǐ de guójí shì shénme? What's your nationality?
 Wǒ shì Měiguó guójí. I'm an American citizen.

Nǐ shì shénme guójí? What's your nationality?
 Wǒ de guójí shì Jiānádà. My nationality is Canadian.
 or Wǒ shì Jiānádà rén. I'm from Canada.

3.3.3 Foreigners

'Foreign' in Chinese is wàiguó 'outside-country'; 'foreigners' are wàiguó rén. Foreigners are also called yáng rén. Yáng actually means 'seas', but with implications of 'overseas'; cf. words such as yángwáwa 'a doll [European features]' or the now archaic yánghuǒ 'matches ([over]seas fire)'.

In China, foreigners of European ancestry are generally called lǎowài 'venerable foreigners': Ei, nǐ kàn, lǎowài lái le 'Hey, look, here comes the foreigner!' In southern China, local equivalents of the Cantonese term, *guailo* 'ghost people' (incorporated in regional Mandarin as guǐlǎo) is used much like lǎowài. The presence of the rather respectable prefix lǎo makes both terms acceptable. Yáng guǐzi 'foreign devils', however, is regarded as rather disparaging; one recent and widely used Chinese-to-Chinese dictionary gives its definition as [translated] 'an archaic term of disparagement for Westerners who invaded our country'. So even though one may occasionally use it tongue-in-cheek to refer to oneself, generally, it is better to avoid it.

3.3.4 Have you been there? V-guo

Talking about nationality or place of origin is likely to lead to questions about prior travel, so it is worthwhile taking a short digression to introduce the basics of the verb suffix guò [usually untuned] prior to a more detailed exposition in a later unit. Here we concentrate on two exchanges, the first involving the verb qù ‘go’, and the second involving the verb chī ‘eat’:

	Nǐ qùguo Zhōngguó ma?	Have you [ever] been to China?
+	<i>Qùguo.</i>	<i>[I] have.</i>
–	<i>Méi<you> qùguo.</i>	<i>[I] haven’t.</i>
	Nǐ chīguo hǎishēn ma?	Have you [ever] eaten sea cucumber?
+	<i>Chīguo.</i>	<i>I have.</i>
–	<i>Méi<you> chīguo.</i>	<i>No, I haven’t.</i>

Note that responses to questions with guò retain the guò in negative responses as well as positive. The negative response, like that with le, is formed with méi<you>.

‘Experiential’ guò should remind you of a construction that you encountered in Unit 1. There you learned several ways to ask if someone had had their meal, one way involving final le, and another that involved both le and the post-verbal guò: Nǐ chīguo fàn le ma? / Chī<guo> le. ‘Have you had your meal? / I have.’ Clearly the question does not mean ‘have you *ever* eaten’, along the lines of: Nǐ chīguo hǎishēn ma? ‘Have you [ever] eaten sea cucumber?’ So it is necessary to keep the two uses of guò distinct: the one, co-occurring with le but not being required in the answer (hence the <>); and the other, not associated with le, but being required in the answer – at least, if the verb is expressed. Context will normally lead you to overlook potential ambiguity, just as it does in English with, eg ‘Have you eaten sea-cucumber?’ and ‘Have you eaten?’.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Nǐ shì Zhōngguó shénme dìfāng lái de?
<i>Wǒ shì Xī’ān rén.</i>
Xī’ān, wǒ qùguo Xī’ān. Xī’ān hěn yǒumíng!
<i>Shì ma?</i> | Whereabouts in China are you from?

<i>I’m from Xi’an.</i>
Xi’an, I’ve been there. Xi’an’s famous!
<i>Is it?</i> |
| | | |
| 2 | Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ba?
<i>Bù, wǒ shì Jiānádà rén.</i>
<Nǐ shì> Jiānádà shénme dìfāng rén?
<i>Wēngēhuá. Nǐ qùguo ma?</i>
Méi qùguo, kěshì hěn xiǎng qù. | I take it you’re American.
<i>No, I’m from Canada.</i>
Whereabouts in Canada [are your from]?
<i>Vancouver. Have you been?</i>
No, but I’d love to go. |

Notes

- a) hěn yǒumíng ‘quite have-name’; the Chinese speaker responds unassumingly even though he probably feels that Xi’an, with 2500 years of history, should be hěn yǒumíng.
 b) xiǎng, literally ‘think; think of’ but often, as here, used to indicate intention ‘want to; feel like’.

3.3.5 More on proximity

Cóng should be distinguished from lí, which has a similar meaning and appears in the same place in sentence structure. While cóng is associated with movement, lí is associated only with distance, and with the SVs jìn ‘close’ and yuǎn ‘far’.

Tā cóng Dàlián lái de; Dàlián
 zài Liáoníng shěng, lí Běijīng
 bù yuǎn.

She’s from Dalian; Dalian’s in
 Liaoning province, not far from Beijing.

An actual distance may be substituted for jìn and yuǎn. Distances in Chinese are measured in lǐ (low tone), equivalent to half a kilometer (or a third of a mile), or in gōnglǐ ‘kilometers’, but not usually in English miles (Yīnglǐ). All are M-words, so 100 kms. would be yībǎi gōnglǐ. The noun lù ‘road’ can, in certain cases, be added to the measure phrase, optionally mediated by de: yībǎi gōnglǐ <de> lù ‘100 kms [of road]’. Since mileage is a noun, a verb still has to be provided, and in Chinese it is usually yǒu ‘have’ (unlike English, which uses ‘is’). Distances are often approximate, of course, so it is also useful to learn the adverb dàgài ‘approximately’.

Jīchǎng lí wǒ de jiā yǒu
 wǔ gōnglǐ <lù>.

The airport is 5 kms. from my house.

Xīníng lí Xī’ān dàgài yǒu yīqiān
 gōnglǐ – hěn yuǎn.

Xining is about 1000 kms. from Xī’ān –
 [it]’s a long way off.

Wǒ de jiā lí huǒchēzhàn yǒu
 liǎng lǐ lù – bú tài yuǎn.

My house is 2 ‘miles’ from the station –
 not so far.

3.4 The cardinal directions: NSEW

Most of the cardinal directions are already familiar from place names (as well as from airline names). Běijīng, with běi, is the ‘northern capital’. Until the early 15th century, Nánjīng was the ‘southern capital’. The Japanese capital, Tokyo, is actually the Japanese reading of the characters that, in Mandarin, are pronounced Dōngjīng the ‘eastern capital’. That leaves xī ‘west’, which is represented in the Chinese city of Xī’ān (‘western-peace’), as well as in the Chinese name for Tibet, Xīzàng ‘western-repository’. The four directions are conventionally ordered either dōngnán-xīběi ‘ESWB’, or dōngxī-nánběi ‘EWSN’.

The ordering of the directions in Chinese reflects the primacy of the east-west axis, a primacy that is underscored in the names of the diagonal quadrants: dōngběi ‘NE’, dōngnán ‘SW’, xīběi ‘NW’ and xīnán ‘SW’. Dōngběi (capitalized) is also the name of the northeast region of China that includes the three provinces of Hēilóngjiāng (‘black-dragon-river’), Jílín, and Liáoníng. This is roughly the area that was colonized by Japan before World War II and at the time, referred to (in English) as ‘Manchuria’ (ie, home of the Manchus, who ruled China as the Qing [Ch’ing] dynasty from 1644-1912). Although Beijing and Tianjin might be considered to be in the northeast of China, they are usually described as being in the north, zài běibiānr, with dōngběi reserved for cities that are actually in the Dōngběi region. The northwest region that includes Xīnjiāng and Qīnghǎi, is referred to as the Dàxīběi ‘The Great Northwest’; while the southwest region that includes Yúnnán, Sìchuān and Guìzhōu, is called the Xīnán.

On the whole, the directions require two syllables to function as nouns. So the diagonals may stand alone: Jílín zài dōngběi; Kūnmíng zài xīnán. But otherwise, the direction words need to combine with either biān<r> ‘side; bank’, bù ‘part’, or fāng ‘side; region’.

Běijīng zài běibù.	Beijing’s in the north.
Tiānjīn zài běibiānr;	Tianjin’s to the north.
Dàtóng zài běifāng.	Datong’s in the northern region.

The three options differ. Fāng, in particular, refers not to relative direction, but to a quadrant of the country: běifāng ‘the northern region’ or ‘the North’; nánfāng ‘the southern region’ or ‘the South’. Xīfāng and dōngfāng not only mean ‘the western region’ and ‘the eastern region’ respectively, but also (capitalized) ‘the West’ (ie the Occident) and ‘the East’ (the Orient). Combinations with bù (a combining version of bùfen ‘part’) refer to position within a whole; combinations with biānr are the least restricted, simply indicating a direction. So the southern province of Guǎngdōng is zài nánbù (since it is within China) as well as zài nánbiānr. But Yuènnán ‘Vietnam’, since it is a separate country, is only zài nánbiānr, not zài nánbù (at least, with reference to China).

Central regions can be referred to as zhōngbù (zhōng as in Zhōngguó and Zhōngwén).

Wǔhàn zài zhōngbù.	Wuhan is in the center [of the country].
Chóngqīng yě zài zhōngbù ma?	Is Chongqing in the middle as well?

Location with reference to the country is expressed with the larger unit first, unlike the English order: zài Zhōngguó běibù ‘in the north of China’. There is usually the option of inserting a possessive de between the country of reference and the direction (zài Zhōngguó de běibù, zài Zhōngguó de běibiānr). De makes a nuance of difference, and reveals the source of the Chinese word order as a possessive (or more accurately, an attributive) construction: ‘in China’s north’.

Běijīng zài Zhōngguó <de> běibù. Beijing's in the north of China.
 Niūyuē zài Měiguó <de> dōngběi. New York's in the northeast of the US.
 Yuènnán zài Zhōngguó <de> nánbiānr. Vietnam is south of China.

Summary of cardinal directions

xībēi<biānr>	běibiānr	dōngběi<biānr>
	[běifāng]	
xībēi<bù>	běibù	dōngběi<bù>
xībiānr		
[xīfāng] xībù	zhōngbù	dōngbù [dōngfāng]
		dōngbiānr
xīnán<bù>	nánbù	dōngnán<bù>
	[nánfāng]	
xīnán<biānr>	nánbiānr	dōngnán<biānr>

Exercise 1.

State, then write down the following geographic facts:

Tiānjīn's in the north of China, about 100 kms. from Běijīng. Shěnyáng is in the northeast, not far from Běijīng either. Shěnyáng is in Liáoníng. Chéngdū is in the middle of Sìchuān, Chóngqìng is south of Chéngdū, but it's not in the southern part of Sìchuān; it's a zhíxiáshì [ie under central administration]. Kūnmíng is in Yúnnán. Yúnnán isn't Yuènnán. Yúnnán is a part of China (yí bùfēn), but Yuènnán isn't part of China – it's southwest of China.

3.4.1 Dialogues

a) At a reception, Jiǎ, a student in London, finds himself next to Chén Yuè, a Chinese graduate student, and initiates a conversation in Chinese:

Jiǎ Qǐngwèn, nín guìxìng?

May I ask what your name is?

Ch Wǒ xìng Chén, jiào Chén Yuè.

My name's Chen, Chen Yue.

Jiǎ	Chén Yuè, nǐ shì Zhōngguó lái de ba.	Chen Yue, you're from China, I take it.
Ch	Shì, wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén.	Right, I am.
Jiǎ	Zhōngguó shénme dìfāng rén?	[From] where abouts in China?
Ch	Chángchūn.	Changchun.
Jiǎ	O Chángchūn. Nà, Chángchūn zài Dōngběi, shì bu shì?	O, Changchun. Now, Changchun's in the NE, isn't it?
Ch	Shì, zài Jílín shěng.	Yes, in Jilin province.
Jiǎ	Lǐ Běijīng bǐjiào yuǎn ba.	Quite far from Beijing, right?
Ch	Ng, lí Běijīng hěn yuǎn, dàgài yìqiān gōnglǐ!	Yes, quite far from Beijing – about 1000 kilometers.
Jiǎ	O, shì hěn yuǎn!	Oh, [that] IS a long way.

b) Léi Hánbó, an overseas student, thinks she recognizes Zhāng Yīng from an encounter earlier in the week:

Léi	Nín shì bu shì Zhāng Yīng?	Are you Zhang Ying?
Zh	Wǒ shì Zhāng Yīng.	Yes, I'm Zhang Ying.
Léi	Zhāng Yīng, wǒ shì Léi Hánbó, Wèi lǎoshī de xuésheng.	Zhang Ying, I'm Lei Hanbo, Prof. Wei's student.
Zh	O, Léi Hánbó, nǐ hǎo. Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ba.	O, Lei Hanbo, how are you. You're American, right?
Léi	Shì, wǒ shì Měiguó Bōshìdùn rén.	Yes, I'm an American from Boston.
Zh	O, Bōshìdùn. Bōshìdùn hěn yǒumíng!	O, Boston. Boston's quite well known ('very have name').
Léi	Shì ma?	Really?

c) Jiǎ, a foreigner, and Yǐ, a Chinese, are looking at a series of numbered illustrations of political leaders in an old copy of *China Reconstructs*; Jiǎ – the foreigner, is asking questions about who's who:

- Jiǎ Nà, dì-yī ge shì Máo Zédōng ba. Well, #1 is Mao Zedong, I take it.
- Yǐ Shì, dì-yī ge shì Máo Zédōng. Yes, #1 is Mao Zedong.
- Jiǎ Máo Zédōng shì Húnán rén ba. Mao Zedong's from Hunan, right?
- Yǐ Shì, shì Húnnán rén. Yes, [he]'s from Hunan.
- Jiǎ Nà, dì-èr ge ne? And #2?
- Yǐ Dì-èr ge shì Zhōu Ēnlái. #2 is Zhou Enlai.
- Jiǎ O, Zhōu Ēnlái. Tā shì shénme dìfāng rén? Oh, Zhou Enlai. Where's he from?
- Yǐ Zhōu Ēnlái ne, tā shì Huái'ān rén. Zhou Enlai, he's from Huai'an.
- Jiǎ Huái'ān ne, zài Jiāngsū, shì bu shì? Huai'an, [that]'s in Jiangsu, isn't it?
- Yǐ Shì, zài Jiāngsū, lí Shànghǎi bù yuǎn. Yes, in Jiangsu, not far from Shanghai.
- Jiǎ Dì-sān ge ne? #3?
- Yǐ Dì-sān ge, nà shì Péng Déhuái. #3, that's Peng Dehuai.
- Jiǎ Péng Déhuái a, tā shì cóng shénme dìfāng lái de? Peng Dehuai, where's [he] from?
- Yǐ Péng Déhuái hǎoxiàng yě shì Húnán rén ba. Seems like Peng Dehuai's also from Hunan.



Dì-yī ge shì Máo Zédōng. [JKW 1982]

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