

Customs Surrounding  
Marriage, Birth, and Death: Unit 4

PART I

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|---|---|
| 1. Nǐde <u>fúqi</u> zhēn hǎo.   | You are really blessed with good fortune.   |
| 2. Zhāng Tàitai de <u>xífu tóuyitài</u> jiù gěi ta shēngle yige dà <u>sūnzi</u> . | Mrs. Zhang's daughter-in-law in her first pregnancy presented her with a fine grandson. |
| 3. Wǒ zhèli yǒu yige <u>hóngbāo</u> shì gěi <u>xiǎo bǎobaode</u> .                | I have a "red envelope" for the baby.   |
| 4. <u>Bù gǎn dāng!</u>  | I'm flattered. You shouldn't have!  |
| 5. Nǐ zhēnshì tài kèqi le. Hébi <u>pòfei</u> ne?                                  | You're too polite. Why should you spend so much money?                                  |
| 6. A: Nǐde nǚér shēngxialaide shíhou yǒu duō <u>zhòng</u> ?                       | How much did your daughter weigh when she was born?                                     |
| B: <u>Qībàng</u> bàn.   | Seven and a half pounds.  |
| 7. A: Wǒ gāng <u>wèile</u> ta bù jiǔ, tā yòu kū le.                               | I just fed him not long ago, and now he's crying again.                                 |
| B: Dàgài yòu yào <u>chī nǎi</u> le.   | He probably wants to nurse again.   |
| 8. Tā <u>zhǎngde</u> hěn piàoliang.   | She is very pretty.   |
| 9. A: Nǐ zhège hái zi hěn yǒu <u>fúxiàng</u> , <u>ěrduo</u> zhǎngde zhēn dà.      | This child of yours has a lucky physiognomy. His ears are really big.                   |
| B: <u>Tuǒ nín de fú!</u>  | It's because of your lucky influence.   |

NOTES ON PART I

Note on No. 1

fúqi: 'blessings, good fortune, luck'.

Wǒ hěn yǒu fúqi, érzi bāng wǒ bù shǎo máng.

I'm very fortunate, my son helps me a lot.

Nǐ zhēn méi fúqi, gāng chū  
mén jiù xià yǔ le.

You really have bad luck. You just  
leave on a trip and then it rains.

Notes on No. 2

xífu: 'daughter-in-law, son's wife'.

Tā xífu hǎo piàoliang!

Her daughter-in-law is so beautiful!

Wǒ xífu gōngzuò mángjíle.

My daughter-in-law is very busy.

tóu-: 'first', (literally 'head') as in tóuyitiān, 'the first day'.

Tóu- is used much like dì-: before a number and a counter, which may or may not be followed by a noun.

tóuyìcì

the first time

tóuyìge rén

the first person

tóuliǎngge rén

the first two people

tóusānběn

the first three volumes

In tóuyìge, tóu- is stressed and yì is in the neutral tone. Also notice that the word for 'two' is liǎng- (not èr as is usually the case when a counter follows).

Now here is a comparison of tóu- and dì-:

(1) Tóuyìge rén and dìyìge rén are both translated as 'the first person', and tóuyìge is for the most part interchangeable with dìyìge.

(2) Although the yì in tóuyìge is unstressed and written without a tone mark over it, the yì in dìyìge is stressed and said with a second tone (or sometimes with a first tone).

(3) The word for 'two' is liǎng after tóu-, but èr after dì-. Dìèrge means 'the second one', while tóuliǎngge means 'the first two'.

(4) Tóu- must be used with a counter, but dì- can be used with just a number after it. Here are some examples of dì- used with a number but no counter after it:

Wǒ yào mǎi zhège dōngxì.  
Dìyī, zuòde hěn hǎo; dìèr,  
hěn piányì.

I'm going to buy this. First, it's  
very well made; second, it's  
inexpensive.

Tā shì dìyī, wǒ shì dìèr.

He is first, I'm second.

But tóuyī-, tóuliǎng-, tóusān- always have a counter word after the number.

tāi: This is the counter for pregnancies, whether carried to term or not. Literally tāi means 'embryo'. The expression tóuyitāi can also be said tóutāi.

Tóusāntāi dōu shì nǚde, dào  
dìsìtāi cái shēngle ge érzi.

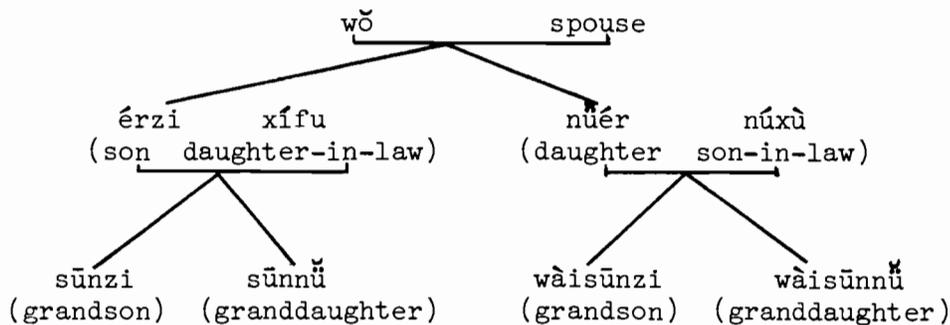
The first three babies were all girls;  
it wasn't until the fourth that  
she had a boy.

Tā shēng tóutāide shíhou,  
shēntǐ bú cuò. Shēng dìèr-  
tāide shíhou jiù bù xíng le.

When she had her first baby, she  
was still in pretty good health.  
But when she had her second, it  
wasn't good any more.

shēng: 'to give birth to...' Notice that the Chinese verb shēng is used in an active sense which is not always reflected in the English. Compare the various translations of shēng in the Reference List, the above examples and the dialogue.

sūnzi: 'grandson'. This only refers to the son of one's son. The son of one's daughter and son-in-law is called wàisūnzi. Here is a chart showing how these terms relate to each other.



### Notes on No. 3

hóngbāo: 'a red envelope with money in it, given as a gift or bribe'. These gifts of money may be given to children by people at least a generation older. This usually happens at festive occasions, like New Years or a birthday. The amount given varies greatly but there is one thing to remember: 'Do not give an amount with the number four in it! The number four, sì, closely resembles the verb "to die," sǐ, and is therefore considered unlucky. Chinese youth were without any real opportunity to make money in the past, so this is one way that it is made up for.

xiǎo bǎobao: Literally 'little treasure', in other words 'the little darling' or 'the baby'. This word is usually used by women. Some people use the word bǎobao (with or without xiǎo) in addressing or speaking about babies or children.

The second bǎo in bǎobao is neutral tone; even though it was originally also third tone, it does not make the first bǎo change to a rising tone, as you might expect (e.g. náli). The first bǎo in bǎobao is pronounced low,

without any rise in pitch. (Some people also say bǎobǎo and xiǎo bǎobǎo.)

[There are many other words used to refer to babies. Some terms used by both men and women include (xiǎo) bēibì, (xiǎo) guāiguai, xiǎo jiǎhuo. Some terms used mostly by men include xiǎo bēibei and xiǎo budiǎnr.]

#### Note on No. 4

bù gǎn dāng: 'I'm flattered'. Literally, this means 'I dare not assume (the honor you pay me)'. This is a polite response to a compliment (such as 'You speak Chinese very well'), to a respectful gesture (such as helping someone put on their coat), or to a respectful phrase (like 'Qǐngjiào').

#### Note on No. 5

pòfei: 'spend money (on someone)', also sometimes translated as 'to spend recklessly'.

Ràng nín pòfei. or Jiào nín pòfei.

I have caused you to spend a lot of money. (i.e., 'you shouldn't have spent all that money on me')

Tā shì wǒ sūnzi, wèi ta pòfei liǎngge qián shì yīnggāide.

He's my grandson, it's only right that I should spend a little money on him.

Tā shēngrìde shíhou, Wáng Xiānsheng pòfeide zhēn bù shǎo.

For his birthday, Mr. Wang really spent quite a bit of money on him.

#### Notes on No. 6

yǒu duō zhòng: 'how heavy?' Zhòng is the adjectival verb 'to be heavy'. Notice the similarity between asking age, weight and height. In each the pattern is literally 'have how much (of some quality)'.

Nǐ yǒu duō dà?

How old are you?

Nèizhāng zhuōzi yǒu duō zhòng?

How heavy is that table?

Tā yǒu duō gāo?

How tall is she?

This pattern is usually confined to measurements of some sort.

bàng: 'pound (unit of weight)'. In addition to the traditional Chinese units of weight such as dàn 'picul (100 liters approximately)', jīn 'catty (1 1/3 lbs.)', liǎng 'tael (105 grams approximately)', and the metric system of weights, such as gōngliǎng '100 grams' and gōngjīn 'kilogram', you also find customary American units such as 'pound' used.

gāng wèile tā bù jiǔ: This means 'It's only been a short while SINCE I fed him.', NOT 'I fed him for only a short while.' Chinese can distinguish between the duration of a continued activity and the duration of something not happening by putting these two types of duration phrases in different places in the sentence.

Let's review time when and time spent, and take a look at how you express TIME WITHIN WHICH something didn't happen and TIME ELAPSED since something happened.

1. Simple duration phrases, that is phrases telling how long an activity went on, follow the verb. These contrast with phrases telling the time when something happened, which come before the verb.

Simple duration

Tā zài Xiānggǎng zhù liǎng-tiān.	He's staying in Hong Kong for two days.
Tā zuòle wǔfēn zhōng, jiù zǒu le.	He sat for five minutes and then left.

Time when

Tā shì zuótiān dào de.	She arrived yesterday.
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2. The amount of time something did not happen, that is the TIME WITHIN WHICH the activity has not taken place, is expressed in negative sentences with time phrases before the verb.

Time Within with a Negative Verb

Wǒmen yìnián méi jiàn le.	We haven't seen each other for a year.
Wǒ yǐjīng yíge yuè méi qù nàr le.	I haven't been going there for a month now.

3. To express the time elapsed since an activity took place the duration phrase is again placed after the verb.

Time elapsed in an affirmative sentence

Wǒ zuòwánle yǐjǐng yíge zhōngtóu le.	I've been done for an hour already.
Tā cái zǒule yíge xīngqi.	It's been only a week since he left.
Wǒ gāng líkāi zhèige wūzi bù jiǔ.	I've been out of the room only a short while.

Note on No. 7

chī nǎi: 'to eat (mother's) milk', in other words, "to breastfeed" and by extension 'to drink milk', even from a bottle. Similarly, wèi nǎi can mean 'to feed milk (to a baby)' without specifying mother's milk or otherwise. To distinguish between breast feeding and bottle feeding, one can say chī māmade nǎi, 'to eat mother's milk'. And from the mother's point of view, one can say māma zìjǐ gěi hái'zi wèi nǎi, 'the mother nurses the child herself.'

Note on No. 8

Tā zhǎngde hěn piàoliang: 'She's very pretty.' Zhǎngde piàoliang literally means 'grow pretty', but it should be translated simply as 'is pretty'. Zhǎngde ... is often used in descriptions of the appearance of living things. In these cases, zhǎngde ... is absent of any meaning such as 'has grown ...', 'has come to be ...' or 'has become ...'; it simply means 'is, are'.

Tā zhǎngde hěn hǎokàn.	She is very beautiful.
Tā zhǎngde gēn wǒ yíyàng gāo.	She is just as tall as I am.
Tāde liǎn zhǎngde gēn wǒ mèi- mei yíyàng.	Her face looks just like my little sister.

There is almost no difference in meaning between Tā hěn piàoliang and Tā zhǎngde hěn piàoliang. Both are used frequently. But there is a difference in meaning between Tā zhǎngde hěn gāo and Tā zhǎnggāo le: the former means 'He is very tall', and the latter 'He has grown tall'.

fúxiàng: 'auspicious physiognomy'. This phrase implies something more than 'lucky face'. The word fú expresses the destiny of a person to enjoy a life of good fortune. Xiàng is a person's looks considered from the point of view of fortune telling. Traditionally, it was believed that a person's destiny could be determined from the individual variations of his hands, bones, face, ears, hair, and so forth. The xiàng includes the face, ears, hairline, and bumps on the head.

...ěrduo zhǎngde zhēn dà: Portraits of some of the most admired men in Chinese history depict them with long ears. (Long ears are thought to indicate wisdom.) It was thought that rulers in particular were so endowed. Buddha is also pictured with long ears, as he appeared in Indian portrayals.

Taipei:

Mrs. Sòng's daughter-in-law, Bǎolán, has just recently had a baby. A friend of the family, Mrs. Zhāng, comes to pay them a visit:

- Z: Sòng Taitai, nín xífù shēngle meiyóu? Mrs. Sòng, has your daughter-in-law had the baby yet?
- S: Shēng le. Shēngle ge nánháizi. Yes. It's a boy.
- Z: Òu! Nín fúqi zhēn hǎo. Tā tóuyitāi jiù gěi nín shēngle yige dà sūnzi. Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ. Oh! How lucky you are. She had a nice big grandson for you--and it was her first! Congratulations.
- S: Xièxie, xièxie! Lái kànkàn wǒ xífù gēn xiǎo bǎobao ba! Thank you. Come see my daughter-in-law and the baby!
- Z: Hǎo. Okay.
- Bǎolán! Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ! Nǐ hǎo ma? Congratulations, Bǎolán! How are you?
- B: Wǒ hěn hǎo. Zhāng Bómǔ, nín lái le. Well Mrs. Zhāng! I'm fine, thanks.
- Z: Òu! Nǐ zhè háizi hěn yǒu fúxiàng, ěrduo zhǎngde nàme dà! Oh! He's got a very lucky physiognomy. Such big ears!
- B: Xièxie! Tuō nín de fú! Thank you! It's because of your lucky influence!
- Z: Tā shēngxialaide shíhou yǒu duō zhòng a? How much did he weigh at birth?
- B: Qībàng bàn. Seven and a half pounds.
- Z: Ńg, zhēn bù xiǎo. Hm. That's really pretty big.
- S: Tā zhēn néng chī. Bǎolán gāng wèile ta bù jiǔ, xiànzài yòu kū le. Dàgài yòu yào chī nǎi le. He eats like a horse. Bǎolán just fed him a little while ago, and now he's crying again. He probably wants to nurse again.
- Z: Tā kūde shēngyin hěn dà. Shēntǐ yídìng hěn jiànkāng. He cries so loudly. He must be very healthy.
- B: Duì! Tā cóng yīyuàn huílai yíge lǐbài jiù zhǎngle yībàng. Yes! In the week after he came back from the hospital, he gained a pound.
- Z: Wǒ lái yǐqián xiǎngzhe nǐ yīnggāi shēngle, suǒyǐ Before I came I thought you should have had the baby by now, so I got a

zhǔnbèile yíge hóngbāo. Shi  
gěi xiǎo bǎobaode.

B: Bù gǎn dāng. Nín tài kèqi  
le. Hébi pòfei ne?

Z: Bú shi kèqi. Zhǐ shi yìdiǎn  
xiǎo yìsi.

B: Xièxie! Xièxie!

'red envelope' ready. It's for the  
baby.

You shouldn't have. That's too  
polite of you. Why should you spend  
money?

I'm not being polite. This is just  
a little something to express my  
feelings.

Thank you!

PART II

10. Zhōngguo rén xiāngxìn chǎnfù  
mǎnyuè yǐqián bù kéyì  
chūi fēng. Chinese people believe that women  
who have just given birth should  
stay out of drafts until the child  
is a full month old.
11. Chǎnfù zuò yuèzide shíhou yào  
tèbié xiǎoxīn. Women who have just given birth  
should be especially careful during  
the month after delivery.
12. Zhōngguo rén dōu shuō chǐ  
Zhōngyàode shíhou, bú yào  
chī shēnglěng. Chinese people say that when you  
take Chinese medicine, you shouldn't  
eat raw or cold things.
13. Yīshēng shuō wǒ déle fēngshǐ,  
zuì hǎo bú yào pèng lěngshuǐ. The doctor says I've got rheumatism  
and that it would be best for me  
not to come in contact with cold  
water.
14. Nǐ yīnggāi duō tǎngzhe, zhùyì  
xiūxi, zhèyang cái néng  
huīfude kuài. You should lie down more and pay  
attention to your rest; that's  
the only way you'll recover quickly.
15. Jiàndao Wáng Bùzhǎngde shíhou  
qiānwàn dāngxīn, bié suǐbiàn  
shuō huà. When you see Secretary Wáng, be sure  
to watch yourself, don't be care-  
less in what you say.
16. Tā jiéhūn yǐqián duì tā xiān-  
sheng liǎojiěde búgòu,  
jiéguǒ jiéhūn yǐhòu hěn  
tòngkǔ. Before she got married she didn't  
understand her husband well enough  
and as a result she suffered a lot  
after the marriage.
17. Nǐ kàn tā duó kuài, yíxiàzi  
jiù bǎ fàn zuòhǎo le. Look at how fast he is, he got dinner  
ready in no time at all.
18. Nà shì Wángjiāde xīfu, zhènme  
pàng! That is the Wáng family's daughter-  
in-law, she's so fat!

NOTES ON PART II

Notes on No. 10

mǎnyuè: 'thirtieth day after a child is born', literally, 'full-month'.  
(It also means 'full moon'.) This refers to a baby's completion of the  
first full month of life and is a cause of celebration.

Wángjiā háizi kuài mǎnyuè le,  
qǐng dàjiā qù chī mǎnyuè  
jiǔ.

The Wang's baby is about to be a  
month old, and they're asking  
everyone to go take part in the  
'full month' banquet.

chuī fēng: Literally, 'to blow wind', but actually 'to be in a current of air, a draft, the wind'. Although what blows is the wind, fēng 'wind' seems to be in the object position in this phrase. Chǎnfù bù kěyǐ chuī fēng does not mean "Women recently delivered of a child cannot blow wind", but rather, "Women recently delivered of a child cannot have wind blow on them." Traditionally, Chinese women were to stay out of drafts because of the very poor overall health situation of the country, and because of the importance of caring for the next generation. Of the three (Confucian) ways to be unfilial, the worst was to be heirless.

Nǐde bìng gāng hǎo, bú yào  
chūqu chuī fēng.

You're just over your illness,  
don't go out in a draft.

### Notes on No. 11

zuò yuèzi: Literally, 'to sit the yuèzi', yuèzi being the month after giving birth during which a woman is supposed to take special care of her health. There are different motivations underlying this custom. Woman's most important function (indeed her only one) was to aide in perpetuating the family line. Therefore it was essential to take special precautions for her own health so that she would nurse a healthy baby. Another idea was that a woman's body at this time was "dirty" and to avoid offending the door gods she should not go past them.

Tā zuò yuèzide shíhou, kě xiǎo-  
xīn, méi chūguo yìtiān mén.

During the first month after delivery  
she was extremely careful. She  
didn't go out once.

xiǎoxīn: 'to be careful', literally, 'small-heart'. Xiǎoxīn is an adjectival verb which can be used with or without an object following.

Tā zhèige rén bù zěnmeyàng, hé  
tā zuò péngyou yào xiǎoxīn.

This guy is nothing special, you'd  
better be careful making friends  
with him.

Xiǎoxīn! Qiánbianr shi hóngdēng.

Careful! There's a red light up  
ahead.

Xiǎoxīn nèige rén!

Be careful of that person!

Xiǎoxīn guò mǎlù.

Be careful crossing the street.

shēnglěng: 'raw or cold foods'. Traditional Chinese medicine divides foods into yīn and yáng. Yīn are "cool" (liángxìngde) foods, that is, foods that make the system cool; yáng foods are "hot" (rèxìngde), that is, they make the system hot. These characteristics are not dependant on the degree temperature at which the food is eaten, but are rather inherent in the food. For example crab, white sugar, and most vegetables and fruits are yīn or cool, while hot pepper, lard, millet, brown sugar, and certain fruits such as canteloupe and lichee nuts are all particularly yáng or hot. Generally speaking, yáng foods harmonize with body temperature while yīn foods shock the system. Nonetheless, a balance between the two kinds of foods must be maintained. Too much yáng food can cause the body's "heat" to rise too much (shàng huǒ), minor symptoms of which might include a cough, fever, dry mouth, blisters on the tongue, and constipation. On the other hand, too much yīn food is bad for the stomach and can cause diarrhea.

The body's "heat" (huǒ) can be regulated by eating one or the other kind of foods. Thus in hot weather, when the huǒ naturally rises, one should eat "cool" foods to lower the huǒ (qīng huǒ), and in the winter one should eat "hot" foods. Likewise, certain illnesses call for the eating of one kind of food or the other: one should eat "cool" foods to counteract infections and fevers, while one should eat "hot" foods to build up one's strength if one has a disease which makes him weak. In particular, women giving birth should eat plenty of the "hot" type of foods.

Shēnglěng, raw or cold foods, have also traditionally been considered bad for women who are pregnant or have just given birth. Given sanitary conditions in traditional China, this is understandable.

Chī shēnglěngde dōngxì yídìng  
yào xǐgānjīng.

When eating raw things, be sure to  
wash them well.

Notes on No. 13

dé: 'to get, a catch (a disease)'. Dé bìng means 'to get an illness'.

Wǒ dé bìng yǐhòu, méi bànfa  
niàn shū le.

After I got sick, I couldn't study  
any more.

Tā dé bìng yǐqián, shēntǐ hěn  
hǎo.

Before she got ill, her health was  
very good.

Tā déde shì shénme bìng?

What illness was it that she got?

Here are some examples of dé followed by the name of an illness:

Tā dé gǎnmào yǐhòu, jiù méiyòu  
chūlaiguo.

He didn't go out after he got a cold.

Qùnián dōngtiān, tā déle xuěyā  
gāo. Last winter, he got high blood  
pressure.

Here are some more examples sentences showing various uses of dé:

Jīnnián guò shēngrì wo déle  
yìběn xīn shū. I got a new book on my birthday this  
year.

Xiǎodì jīntiān néng dé hǎojǐ-  
ge hóngbāo! Little brother will be able to get  
a lot of "red envelopes" today!

Of course, dé cannot be used in all cases when we would say 'get' in English. For one thing, dé only means to receive passively, whereas English 'get' sometimes denotes actively seeking to obtain, as in 'I'm going to the supply room to get some paper and pens', or 'I got a package of cereal at the supermarket'. In these cases, dé would not be appropriate in Chinese. To show you some other ways in which the English word 'get' is expressed in Chinese, here are some Chinese sentences which do not use dé although the English translation uses 'get':

Zuótiān lái nǐde diànhuà le. Yesterday you got a phone call (but  
you weren't here to get it.)

Zuótiān wǒ jiēdào tāde diànhuà  
le. Yesterday I got a phone call from  
him (and was there to receive it.)

Tā zēngjiā gōngzī le. He got a raise in wages.

Tā jiā xīnshuǐ le. He got a raise in salary.

Wǒ shōudào le yíge zhàngdān. I got a bill.

Wǒ cóng tā nàr bǎ jiègěi tāde  
nèiběn shū náhuilai le. I got the book back which I lent him.

Yě gěi wǒ ná yíge lai. Get one for me too.

Cóng shénme dìfang wǒ néng  
mǎidào yíge xiàng zhèiyangrde? Where can I get (buy) one of those?

fēngshī: 'rheumatism', literally 'wind-humid'.

Tā yǒu fēngshī, tiān yì lěng  
tuǐ téngde lìhai. He has rheumatism, as soon as it gets  
cold, his leg hurts severely.

pèng: 'to touch', only in the sense of one object coming into contact with another. The verb pèng can also mean to come into contact with something in a violent way, 'to hit, to bump into'. Whether pèng means merely 'to touch' or 'to bump into' must be determined by context.

Nǐ bié pèng zhèige zhuōzi.

Don't touch this table.

Tāde chē kě bùdeliǎo. Biérén  
pèng dōu bù néng pèng, gèng  
bú yào shuō jièqu kāi le!

His car is terrific! Other people  
can't even touch it, not to mention  
borrowing it to drive!

[Some other words meaning 'to touch' are āi 'to be close to, to be next to, to be touching'

Tā zuì pà dǎ zhēn. Zhēn hái  
méi āidao ta, tā jiù dà jiào.

She is extremely afraid of getting  
shots. She cries out before the  
needle has even touched her.

dòng: 'to touch, to handle'

Nǐ bié dòng wo zhuōzishangde  
dōngxi, děng yìhuǐ wǒ huí-  
laile zìjǐ shōushi.

Don't touch the things on my desk,  
in a while when I come back I'll  
straighten them up myself.

mō: 'to feel, to rub, to touch' Here you also need to know that ruǎn means 'to be soft, yielding to the touch'.

Zhèijiàn yīfu zhēn hǎo, mōshang-  
qu ruǎnruǎnde; chuānzhe yídìng  
hěn shūfu.

This piece of clothing is really nice,  
very soft to the touch; it must be  
very comfortable to wear.]

#### Notes on No. 14

tǎng: 'to lie down'. This is an action verb. Under most circumstances, it requires some kind of complement: either a zài phrase telling where the subject ended up in a lying position, as in

Tā tǎngzai chuángshang le.

He lay down on the bed.

or the durative aspect marker -zhe, as in

Tā zài chuángshang tǎngzhe.

He is/was lying on the bed.

or the directional ending -xia(lai), as in

Dàifu jiào wo tǎngxia.

The doctor told me to lie down.

or the completion le, as in

Tǎngle bàntiān, háishi bu  
shūfu.

I lay down for quite a long time,  
but still felt ill.

Tā tǎngle yìhuǐr, jiù juéde  
hǎo yìdiǎnr le.

After I laid down for a while, I felt  
better.

huīfu: 'to restore; to return to (an original state); to recover (one's health)'.  
'

Zhèige gōngchǎng yǐjīng huīfu  
shēngchǎn le.

This factory has already restored  
production. (Production in many  
areas was stopped during the  
turmoil of the Great Cultural  
Revolution.)

Tā qiánjǐnián dào nóngcūn qu  
le. Zuìjìn cái huīfu  
gōngzuò.

She went to the countryside several  
years ago. Only recently did she  
return to work.

A: Wǒ shàngge yuè shēng bìng-  
le, zhèige xīngqī cái  
huīfu yìdiānr.

I was sick last month and only this  
week am feeling like myself again.

B: Kàn nǐde yàngzi, huīfude  
bú cuò.

Looking at your appearance I'd say  
you're pretty well recovered.

Notes on No. 15

qiānwàn: 'by all means, for sure', literally 'thousand ten-thousands'.

Nèitiáo jiēshang chē tài duō,  
nǐ qiānwàn bié qù.

There are too many cars on that  
street, you are absolutely not to  
go there.

Nǐ gāng xué kāi chē, qiānwàn  
xiǎoxīn.

You've only just learned to drive a  
car, be sure to be careful.

Qiānwàn zhùyì, bú yào xiěcuò  
le, xiěcuòle kě máfan.

Be sure to be careful, don't write  
this incorrectly, if you do it'll  
be so much trouble.

dāngxīn: 'to watch out, to watch oneself, to be cautious'. Not to be  
confused with dānxīn, 'to worry'.

Gāng xiàle xuě, chū mén dāngxīn!

It's just snowed, watch yourself when  
you go out.

Kāi chē shàng jiē dāngxīn yì-  
diǎnr a!

Watch yourself when you go out  
driving downtown!

Notes on No. 16

jiéguǒ: 'as a result, and so ...'. One of the uses of this word is to  
connect the thought of one sentence with the next. (Another is as the noun  
'result(s)'). It provides a transition from one sentence to another, as in

'As a result, then ...'. Below is a monologue which takes place in Peking, in which the speaker uses the word jiéguǒ in this way several times. (This is not meant to be an example of eloquence; in fact, you should not use jiéguǒ as repetitively as this speaker.)

Wǒ tīngshuō Xiǎo Wáng hé Xiǎo Lǐ tán liàn'ài le. Tánle zěnmē yàng ne? Tánle bú cuò. Liǎngge rén dōu méiyǒu yìjian. Jiéguǒ Xiǎo Wángde fùqīn bù tóngyì. Zhèijiàn shì kě jiù bù hǎo bàn le. Xiǎngle bàntiān, jiéguǒ háishi Xiǎo Wáng qù zhǎo jūmín wēiyuánhuì. Jūwēihuìde gānbu hé Xiǎo Wáng tánle bàntiān, jiéguǒ hái bù xíng. Zěnmē bàn? Xiǎo Wáng yǒu qù zhǎo pàichūsuo. Pàichūsuođe gānbu yǒu lái hé Lǎo Wáng tánle bàntiān, háishi méiyǒu jiéguǒ. Zúihòu nǐ xiǎng zěnmeyàng, Xiǎo Lǐ zìjǐ lái hé Lǎo Wáng tánle, shuō jiéhūn yǐhòu bù bānchūqu zhù, tā zhàogu lǎorénjiā. Zhèihuǐr Lǎo Wáng mǎnyì le. Jiéguǒ Xiǎo Wáng Xiǎo Lǐ gāogāoxìngxìng jiéhūn le.

I heard that Xiǎo Wáng and Xiǎo Lǐ are in love. How serious? Really serious. The two of them had no problems with the idea (of getting married). But then Xiǎo Wáng's father didn't agree. The whole thing became difficult to arrange. They thought for a long time, and as a result it was Xiǎo Wáng who went to seek out the neighborhood committee. The neighborhood committee cadres talked with Old Wáng (Xiǎo Wáng's father) for a long time. But then it still didn't go over. What to do? Xiǎo Wáng then went to seek out the local police station. And the police station cadres went to talk with Old Wáng too, but still no result. Well what do you think happened in the end? Xiǎo Lǐ went herself to talk with Old Wáng. She said that after they married they wouldn't move out, that she would take care of the old gentleman. That's when Old Wáng became satisfied. So in the end Xiǎo Wáng and Xiǎo Lǐ were happily married.

tòngkǔ: 'to be in pain, to be suffering'.

Tā nài shíhou hěn tòngkǔ.

She was in a great deal of pain at that time.

Liàn'ài shǐbàile tā hěn tòngkǔ.

It was very hard on him when they broke up.

Zhèijiàn shìqing ràng ta fēicháng tòngkǔ.

This matter pained him a great deal.

#### Notes on No. 17

duó kuài: 'how fast!' Duó or the alternate form duóme is used in exclamatory sentences to mean 'how ...!' Here are some more examples:

Nǐ kàn cái shuōle liǎngjù huà, tā jiù bù gāoxìng le. Duó

You see you only have to say two sentences and she gets unhappy.

ràng rén bù hǎo yìsi!	It really makes a person embarrassed!
Zhèi kùzi zhènme duǎn, chuān-shang duó nánshòu!	These pants are so short, when you wear them they'll be so uncomfortable.
Zhèiběn shū xiěde duó hǎo!	This book is so well written!
Wǒ bǎ chē yàoshi fàngzi chuángshang. Duó bèn!	I left the car keys on the bed. How stupid!
<u>yíxiàzi</u> : 'in a flash, at one blow, at one fell swoop, all at once, in no time'.	
Wǒ huà hái méi shuōwán, tā yíxiàzi jiù shēngqì le. Shéi zhīdao wèishénme?	I hadn't yet finished speaking when he got angry all of a sudden. Who knows why?

Notes on No. 18

Wángjiā: 'the Wang family', referring either to the people, the social unit, or their home (in which case it can be used as a place word).

pàng: 'to be fat, to get fat'. The verb pàng can be used in two ways: one as an adjectival verb 'to be fat', the other as a process verb 'to get fat'. To the Chinese, a fat baby is not only a healthy baby, it is a beautiful one. Plumpness and roundness are two features admired in babies and children.

Adjectival verb (state)

Tā hěn pàng.	He is fat.
Tā xiǎo shíhou bú pàng.	She wasn't fat when she was little.
Wǒ hěn pà pàng, shénme dou bù gǎn chǐ.	I'm afraid of being fat, I don't dare eat anything.

Process verb

Zuìjìn shēntǐ hǎole, tā pàng duō le.	Lately his health got better and he got very fat.
Nǐ shì bu shi pàngle yìdiǎndiǎn, Èrgē a?	Haven't you put on just a little bit of weight, Older Brother?

Taipei:

Mrs. Fāng pays a visit to Mrs. Zhāng and her daughter-in-law to see the daughter-in-law's new baby:

- F: Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ! Zhāng Taitai, nín zhēn yǒu fúqi, nín de xīfu tóuyitāi jiù gěi nín shēngle yíge dà pàng sūnzi. Nín de xīfu hé xiǎo bǎobao cóng yīyuàn huílaile meiyou? Tāmen dōu hǎo ba?
- Z: Xièxie, xièxie! Tāmen dōu hǎo, jīntiān zǎoshang gāng cóng yīyuàn huílai.
- F: Wǒ zhèli yǒu yíge hóngbāo, shì gěi xiǎo bǎobaode.
- Z: Ai! Bù gǎn dāng, nín zhēn shì tài kèqi le, hébì pòfei ne?
- F: Náli, náli! Zhǐ shì yìdiǎn xiǎo yìsi. Háizi yǒu duō zhòng a?
- Z: Háizi shēngxialaide shíhou shì bābàng qī. Zhège háizi shēntǐ zhēn hǎo, zhēn néng chī. Gāng wèibǎo, yíxiàzi yòu è le. Nǐ tīng, tā yòu kū le, shēngyin zhēn dà, dàgài yòu yào chī nǎi le. Wǒmen qù kànkān.
- C: Ò! Fāng Bómǔ, nín yě lái le!
- F: Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ! Wǒ lái kàn nǐ érzi lai le! Zhège háizi zhǎngde zhēn hǎo, duō yǒu fúxiàng!
- C: Xièxie, xièxie! Tuō nín de fú!
- Congratulations! Mrs. Zhāng, you're so lucky! Your daughter-in-law had a big fat grandson for you--and it was just her first! Have your daughter-in-law and the little darling come back from the hospital yet? They're both doing well, I hope?
- Thank you! They're both fine. They just came back from the hospital this morning.
- I have a 'red envelope' for the baby here.
- Oh! You shouldn't have. You're really too kind. Why should you spend all this money?
- Don't be silly. This is just a little something to express my feelings. How much does the baby weigh?
- He was eight pounds seven ounces at birth. He's really a healthy baby, and he eats a lot. Right after his feeding, in no time he's hungry again. Listen, he's crying again. What a loud voice! He probably wants to nurse again. Let's go see.
- Oh! Auntie Fāng, you've come too!
- Congratulations! I've come to see your son! He looks so good! What a lucky physiognomy!
- Thank you! It's all thanks to your lucky influence!

F: Nǐ shēntǐ hǎo bu hǎo?  
Yuèzili yào xiǎoxīn, bú yào  
chǐ shēnglěngde dōngxī, bú  
yào chuī fēng, bú yào pèng  
lěng shuǐ, yě bú yào chū  
mén. Nǐ kàn, Liújiā nàge  
xīfu zuò yuèzi bú zhùyì, cháng  
kāi diàn bīngxiāng, yòng  
lěng shuǐ, jiéguǒ déle  
fēngshǐ, tòngkǔde hěn.  
Xiànzài hái yào tiāntiān  
chǐ Zhōngyào. Nǐ qiānwàn  
yào dāngxīn.

Z: Shì a! Wǒ yǐjīng gàosu  
ta le, yuèzili shénme shì  
dōu bú yào zuò, duō tǎngzhe,  
duō xiūxi, duō chǐ hǎode,  
shēntǐ jiù huífude kuài  
yidiǎn.

F: Wǒ zǒu le, guò jǐtiān zài  
lái kàn nǐ gēn xiǎo bǎobao.

C: Děng yíxià. Nǐ dài jǐge  
hóngdàn qu, mǎnyuède shíhou  
zài qǐng nǐ chǐ mǎnyuèjiǔ.

F: Hǎo hǎo hǎo, wǒ yíding lái.

How are you feeling? You have to  
be careful for the first month after  
giving birth. Don't eat raw or cold  
foods, stay out of drafts, avoid cold  
water, and don't leave the house.  
Look at Mrs. Liú who didn't pay  
attention during the first month after  
giving birth; she opened the refrig-  
erator a lot and used cold water, and  
ended up getting rheumatism. She  
suffered so much. Now she still has  
to take Chinese medicine every day.  
Be absolutely sure you watch out.

Right! I've already told her. You  
shouldn't do anything at all during  
the first month after giving birth.  
You should lie down a lot, get a lot  
of rest, eat a lot of good food, and  
then your health will come back  
faster.

I'm going to leave now. I'll come  
back in a few days to see you and the  
baby.

Wait a second. Take a few red eggs  
with you. We'll invite you to the  
celebration dinner when the baby is  
one month old.

All right, I'll be sure to come.

#### NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE

hóngdàn: Red eggs symbolize a combination of lucky influences: red  
is the color of happiness and dignity, while eggs are symbols of health and  
prosperity to the farmer. Hóngdàn are sometimes also used as gifts from  
a newly-engaged couple to their friends.

## Vocabulary

-bàng	pound (unit of weight)
bǎobao (bǎobao)	baby, darling (term of endearment for a young child)
bīngxiāng	refrigerator, ice box
bù gǎn dāng	I'm flattered, You shouldn't have, I don't deserve this
chī nǎi	to nurse, to suckle
chuī fēng	to have air blow on oneself, to be in a draft
dāngxīn	to watch out
dé	to get
duó kuài!	how fast!
ěrduo	ear
fēngshī	rheumatism
fúqi	blessings, luck
fúxiàng	lucky physiognomy
hóngbāo	a red envelope with a gift or bribe of money in it
hóngdàn	eggs dyed red
huīfu	to recover
jiéguǒ (jiéguǒ)	as a result; result, results
mǎnyuè	a full month after the birth of a baby
mǎnyuèjiǔ	celebration meal one month after a baby is born
pàng	to be fat
pèng	to touch
pòfei	to spend a lot of money (on someone), to go to some expense
qiānwàn	by all means, be sure to; (in combination with a negative sentence) by no means, under no circumstances
shēnglěng	raw or cold foods
shēngxialai	to be born
sūnzi	grandson
-tāi	birth

tǎng	to lie, to recline
tòngkǔ	to be painful
tóuyige	the first
tóuyìtāi	the first pregnancy, the first baby
tuō nín de fú	thanks to your lucky influence, many thanks
Wángjiā	the Wang family
wèi	to feed
xiǎo bǎobao (xiǎo bǎobǎo)	baby, darling (term of endearment for a young child)
xiǎoxīn	to be careful
xífū	daughter-in-law
yíxiàzǐ	an instant, a moment, a while
yuèzi	month of confinement after giving birth to a child
zhǎng	to grow; to be (pretty, etc.)
zhòng	to be heavy
zuò yuèzi	to go through the month of confinement and special care after childbirth