

Customs Surrounding  
Marriage, Birth, and Death: Unit 2

PART I

1. Hòutiān shì nǐmen xiǎojiē  
dàxǐde rìzi.  
The day after tomorrow is your daughter's wedding day.
2. Xīnláng zài Táiwān Yínháng  
gōngzuò, rén hěn lǎoshi, yě  
hěn shàngjìn.  
The bridegroom works at the Bank of Taiwan. He's very honest and very ambitious.
3. Wǒmen Xiùyún gēn tā jiāowǎng  
yǐjīng yìniánduō le, duì tā  
hěn mǎnyì.  
Our Xiùyún has been seeing him for over a year now, and she's very pleased with him.
4. A: Nǐmen gēn nánfāngde fùmǔ  
shǒu bu shǒu?  
Did you know the groom's parents very well before?  
B: Bú tài shǒu. Kěshi zǎo jiù  
tīngshuōguo.  
Not too well. But we'd heard of them long before.  
B: Tāmen yì lái tíqǐn wǒmen  
jiù dāying le.  
As soon as they came to propose the marriage we agreed to it.
5. A: Tāmen tánlái tánqù tánle  
hěn jiǔ bù néng juédìng.  
They talked and talked for a long time and couldn't decide.  
A: Kěshi hòulái háishi wǒ gào-  
su tamen yīnggāi zěnmē  
bàn.  
But later it was I who told them what they should do, after all.
6. Wǒ nǚerde hūnlǐ zài Èméi Cān-  
tīng jǔxíng.  
My daughter's wedding will be held at the Omei Restaurant.
7. Tīngshuō jiéhūn lǐfú shì  
xīnniáng zìjǐ zuòde, tā zhēn  
nénggàn.  
I hear that the wedding gown was made by the bride herself. She's really capable.
8. Wǒ zhù yīyuànde shíhou nǐmen  
hái sòng huā lai, ài,  
zhēn shì tài xièxie le.  
When I was in the hospital you even sent flowers. Thanks so much.

## NOTES ON PART I

### Notes on No. 1

xiǎojiē: 'daughter'. You have seen xiǎojiē meaning 'Miss' or 'young lady'. Here it is used to mean 'daughter'. Note, however, that it is used only in referring to someone else's daughter, not in referring to one's own daughter(s).

Tā yǒu jǐwèi xiǎojiē?                      How many daughters does he have?

Nǐmen xiǎojiē zhēn piàoliang.              Your daughter is really pretty.

Xiǎojiē, meaning either 'Miss' or 'daughter', is not in current usage in the PRC.

dà xǐde rìzi: 'wedding day', literally 'big joyful day'. Xǐ 'to be glad, joyful', is used in several expressions having to do with weddings. The character for xǐ is often used as a decoration. For weddings, two xǐ characters together are used as a decoration.

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### Notes on No. 2

rén hěn lǎoshi: 'he's very honest'. Rén, 'person', can be used to refer to a person's character. It can be used with a noun or pronoun before it, for example Tā rén hěn lǎoshi, literally 'As for him, his person is very honest'. The wording Tā rén ... is often used to talk about the way someone truly is:

Tā rén hěn ài bāngzhu bié rén.              He (is the sort of person who) likes to help others.

Liú Xiānsheng rén hěn tèbié,  
shénme shìqing dōu yào wèn  
yige wèishenme.                              Mr. Liú is a different sort of person, he has to ask 'why' about everything.

Tā rén hěn kèqì.                              He's a very polite sort of person.

Sometimes rén refers to a person's mental state of being:

Wǒ hēde tài duō, rén hái yǒu  
diǎnr bu qīngchu.                              I had too much to drink and I'm still a little foggy.

Rén also sometimes refers to a person's physical self. This meaning is mostly used in situations where a contrast is implied, something like 'And

as for the person himself, ...'. For example:

Wǒ yìzhí zhǐshì hé tā tōng  
diànhuà, jīntiān zǎoshang,  
cái dìyīcì jiàn miàn, tā  
rén fēicháng piàoliàng.

All along I had only talked to her  
over the phone, but this morning  
I met her for the first time.  
She's very beautiful.

Tāmen jiéhūn bú dào yíge yuè,  
xiānsheng jiù dào Jiāzhōu  
niàn shū qu le, rén zài  
Měiguó, xīn zài Táiwān, shū  
zěnme niàndehǎo ne?

They hadn't even been married for  
one month when her husband went to  
California to go to school. He  
was in America, but his heart was  
in Taiwan, how could he possibly  
study well?

### Notes on No. 3

jiāowǎng: 'to associate with, to have dealings with', often said of  
boyfriend-girlfriend relationships.

Wǒ hé tā méiyǒu shénme tèbiéde  
jiāowǎng.

There's no special relationship  
between him and me. (Said by a  
daughter in explanation to her  
mother.)

In the PRC jiāowǎng is not used this way; use rènshi, 'to know (a person)' or  
jiāo péngyou, 'to make friends' instead. In the PRC, you will hear jiāowǎng  
used in phrases such as "liàngguó rénmínde jiāowǎng", 'the contact (association)  
between the peoples of these two countries'.

### Notes on No. 4

nánfāng: "the bridegroom's side", a phrase which often refers to the  
bridegroom himself, and sometimes refers to the bridegroom's family,  
relatives, and friends collectively. Nánfāng, "the bridegroom's side",  
happens to be a homonym of nánfāng, 'the South'.

Zhōngguó rén jiéhūnde shíhou,  
nánfāng dà qǐng kè.

When Chinese get married, the groom's  
family hosts a big feast.

Jiéhūn yǐqián nánfāng nǚfāng  
bǐcǐ sòng lǐ.

Before a marriage, the groom's side  
and the bride's side give each  
other gifts.

[Nǚfāng means "the bride's side, referring either to "the bride" herself,  
or to 'the bride's family, relatives, and friends collectively'.]

shóu: 'to be familiar with ...' Also pronounced shú. Shóu is used  
with hé for people and with duì for places.

Wǒ hé tā hěn shóu.

I know him very well.

Tā duì Táiběi hěn shǒu.

She knows Taipei very well.

Shǒu also means 'to be cooked sufficiently' and 'to be ripe'.

zǎo: You've learned this as the verb 'to be early', now you see it used to mean 'long ago'.

Wǒ zǎo zhīdào nǐ bù huílai.

I knew long ago that you wouldn't come back.

Wǒ zǎo tīngshuō le.

I heard about it long ago.

Zǎo is usually followed by jiù to stress the idea of 'as early as that'.

Wǒ zǎo jiù gàosu tā nèijiàn shì le.

I told him that long ago. (Said to correct an impression that he didn't actually know it so early.)

Wǒ zǎo jiù xiǎng lái kàn ni, yìzhí méi shíjiān.

I've been meaning to come see you for a long time, but I never had the time.

tíqīn: 'to bring up a proposal of marriage' Traditionally, the man's parents would visit the parents of the woman they wished their son to marry in order to bring up the subject of marriage. The situation in Taiwan is changing rapidly today, but some marriages are still proposed in this way. More frequently, however, the children simply inform their parents of their own arrangement.

dāying: 'to agree (to something), to consent, to promise'

Tā dāying gěi wǒ nèijiàn dōngxi, zěnmé tā xiànzài yòu bù gěi le?

He agreed to give me that thing. How is that now he won't give it to me?

Nǐ dāying tā le, dāngrán yīnggāi péi tā qù.

You promised him, of course you should go with him.

Nǐ dāying zuòde shì, yídìng yào zuòdào.

You must do what you promise to do.

Nǐ dāyinglede shì, wèishénme bú zuò?

Why don't you do this thing that you have promised?

Nǐ dāyingguode shì, jiù yīnggāi zuòdào.

You ought to do things that you promise.

Wǒ méi dāying gěi ni yíge hùzhào.

I didn't promise to give you a passport.

Dāying can also mean 'to answer'.

Tā jiào ni, nǐ zěnme méi dāying? He called you, how come you  
didn't answer?

Notes on No. 5

tánlai tánqù: 'to talk over'.

Tánlai tánqù, yě bù néng jiějué We discussed it for a long time, but  
zhèige wèntí. still couldn't solve the problem.

Tánlai tánqù, tánde hěn yǒu It got very interesting, conversing  
yìsi. back and forth.

juédìng: 'to decide'.

Wǒ juédìng yào qù. I've decided that I'm going.

Wǒ yǐjīng juédìng jiù zhènme I've already decided that it'll be  
bàn. this way.

Wǒ hái méi juédìng gāi zěnme I haven't yet decided what should be  
bàn. done.

Notice that when you want to say 'I can't decide whether (to do something)' or 'I haven't decided whether (to do something)', the object of juédìng is a choice-type question.

Wǒ hái méi juédìng qù bu qù. I haven't yet decided whether to  
go or not.

Wǒ bù néng juédìng wǒ qù I can't decide whether to go  
bu qù. or not.

Wǒ hěn nán juédìng ràng bu I'm having a hard time deciding  
ràng ta qù. whether to let him to or not.

Wǒ shì bu shì gāi huíqu, It's hard to decide whether or  
hěn nán juédìng. not I should go back.

hòulái: 'afterwards, later'. You have already learned another word which can be translated as "afterwards" or "later": yǐhòu. Yǐhòu and hòulái are both nouns which express time. Here is a brief comparison of them.

(1) Yǐhòu can either follow another element 'in which case it is translated as "after ...") or it can be used by itself.

Tā lái le yǐhòu, wǒmen jiù zǒu After he came, we left.  
le.

Yǐhòu, tā méiyǒu zài lái guo. Afterwards, he never came back again.

Hòulái can only be used by itself.

Hòulái, tā shuì jiào le.

Afterwards, he went to sleep.

(2) Both yǐhòu and hòulái may be used to refer to the past. (For example, in the reference list sentence, yǐhòu may be substituted for hòulái. But if you want to say "afterwards" or "later" referring to the future, you can only use yǐhòu. When it refers to the future time, yǐhòu can be translated in various ways, depending on the context:

Yǐhòude shìqing, děng yǐhòu  
zài shuō.

Let's wait until the future to see  
about future matters.

Yǐhòu nǐ yǒu kòng, qǐng cháng  
lái wán.

In the future when you have the time,  
please come over more often.

Wǒ yǐhòu zài gàosu nǐ.

I'll tell you later on.

Tāde hái'zi shuōle, yǐhòu tā  
yào gēn yíge Rìběn rén jiéhūn.

His child said that someday, he wants  
to marry a Japanese.

Usage Note: Yǐhòu has the meaning of "after that". It can imply that some past event functions as a dividing point in time, as a sort of time boundary, and yǐhòu refers to the period from the end of that time boundary up to another point of reference (usually the time of speaking). In this usage it is often translated as "since".

Tā zhǐ xiěle yìběn shū, yǐhòu  
zài méi xiěguo.

He only wrote one book, and hasn't  
written any since.

Ránhòu stresses the succession of one event upon the completion of a prior event.

Wǒ shàngwǔ zhǐ yǒu liǎngjié  
kè, ránhòu jiù méi shì le,  
wǒmen keyì chuān wán.

I have only two classes in the  
morning, and after that I don't  
have anything else to do, so we

háishi: 'in the end, after all' You have seen háishi meaning 'still', that is, that something remains the same way as it was. Here háishi is used to mean that the speaker feels that, all things considered, something is the case after all.

Háishi tā duì.

He is right, after all.

#### Note on No. 6

jǔxíng: 'to hold (a meeting, banquet, celebration, ceremony, etc.)'  
For this example you need to know that diǎnlǐ means 'ceremony'.

Notes on No. 8

hái: 'even, (to go) so far as to' You have seen hái meaning 'still' as in Nǐ hái zài zhèr!, 'You're still here!'. You've also seen hái meaning 'also, additionally', as in Wǒ hái yào mǎi yìpíng qìshuǐ., 'I also want to buy a bottle of soda.' Here you see hái meaning additionally in the sense of additional effort. The sentence Nǐmen hái sòng huā lai, hái expresses the speaker's feeling that sending flowers went beyond what was expected or necessary.

zhēn shí tài xièxie le: 'I really thank you so much!' You have seen tài used to mean 'very, extremely', as in Tài hǎo le!, 'Wonderful!'. Notice that here it is used with xièxie.

Taipei:

A woman goes to visit her old friend and to present her with a gift for her daughter and future son-in-law.

A: Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ! Zhège Xīng-qītiān jiù shì nǐmen èr xiǎo-jiède dàxǐde rìzi! Zhèli shì sònggei xīnláng xīnniángde lǐwù.

Congratulations! This Sunday is your second daughter's big day! Here's a present for the bride and groom.

B: Xièxie! Xièxie! Nǐ tài kèqi le.

Thank you! That's so nice of you.

A: Yìdiǎn xiǎo yìsi. Nǐ yídìng hěn máng ba! Hūnlǐ dōu zhǔnbèi-hǎo le meiyou?

It's just a little something. You must be busy! Is everything all ready for the wedding?

B: Zuì mángde shíhou yǐjīng guò le, xiànzài chàbuduō dōu zhǔnbèihǎo le.

The busiest time has already passed; almost everything is ready now.

A: Xīnláng shì nǎli rén a? Zài nǎli gōngzuò?

Where is the groom's family from? Where does he work?

B: Xīnláng shì Héběi rén, zài Táiwān Yínháng gōngzuò. Tā rén hěn lǎoshi, yě hěn shàngjìn.

The groom's family is from Hopei. He works at the Bank of Taiwan. He's very honest and ambitious.

A: Xiùyún gēn tā shì biéren jièshào rènshide háishi zìjǐ rènshide?

Were Xiuyun and he introduced by someone else or did they meet by themselves?

B: Shi Xiùyúnde lǎoshī jièshàode. Xiùyún gēn tā jiāowǎng dào xiànzài yǐjīng liǎngnián le, duì ta hěn mǎnyì.

They were introduced by Xiuyun's teacher. Xiuyun and he have been seeing each other for two years now, and she's very pleased with him.

A: Nǐmen gēn nánfāngde fùmǔ yǐqián shǒu bu shǒu?

Did you know the groom's parents well before?

B: Bù shǒu, kěshi wǒmen zǎo jiù tīngshuōguo tamen le. Tāmen liǎngwèi dōu zài TáiDà jiāo shū. Tāmen yì lái tíqīn wǒmen jiù dāying le.

No, but we had heard of them long before. They both teach at Taiwan University. As soon as they came to propose the marriage, we agreed to it.

A: Wǒ kànjian qǐngtiēshang xiězhe hūnlǐ zài Guóbīn Dàfàndiàn jǔxíng. Nǎli dìfang yòu dà yòu piàoliang. Zhēn hǎo.

I saw on the invitation that the wedding is being held at the Ambassador Hotel. It's very spacious and beautiful there. That's great.

- B: Shì a! Wōmen gēn nánfāngde fùmǔ tánlái tánqù tánle hǎo jiǔ, bù zhīdào zài nàli jǔxíng hūnlǐ zuì hǎo. Hòulái háishi wǒ juédìng zài Guóbīn Dàfàndiàn jǔxíng.
- Yes. We discussed it back and forth for a long time with his parents. We didn't know where it would be best to hold the wedding. Afterwards I was the one who decided that we would have it at the Ambassador Hotel.
- A: Ng! Guóbīn Dàfàndiàn bù zhǐ shì dìfang piàoliang, nàlide cài yě tèbié hǎo.
- Oh! Not only is the Ambassador Hotel a beautiful place, but the food there is especially good too.
- B: Duì le.
- That's right.
- A: Xīnniángde jiéhūn lǐfú zài nàli mǎide?
- Where did you buy the bride's wedding gown?
- B: Bú shì mǎide, shì Xiùyún zìjǐ zuòde.
- It isn't bought. Xiuyun made it herself.
- A: Nǐmen èr xiǎojie zhēn nénggàn.
- Your second daughter sure is capable.
- Tiān bù zǎo le, wǒ gāi zǒu le.
- It's getting late, I ought to be going.
- B: Nǐ hái zìjǐ sòng lǐwù lai, zhēn shì xièxie! Xīngqītiān yíding lái, á!
- You even brought the gifts yourself. Thank you so much. Be sure to come on Sunday!

#### NOTES ON THE DIALOGUE

Guóbīn Dàfàndiàn bù zhǐ shì dìfang piàoliang, nàlide cài yě tèbié hǎo. Traditional wedding foods included huāshēng, peanuts; liánzǐ, lotus seeds; and zǎozi, dates, all of which symbolize fertility in that shēng(zǐ) means "give birth to" (a son); liánzǐ sounds like part of the phrase liánshēng guìzǐ, "have sons consecutively"; and zǎozi sounds like part of zǎoshēng guìzǐ, "have an early son." The wedding marked the beginning of that generation's carrying on of the family line. Today few adhere to these symbols and food is served according to family preference.

Bú shì mǎide, shì Xiùyún zìjǐ zuòde: Wedding gowns in Taiwan these days are frequently hand-made or tailor-made, as tailoring is affordable and the quality of work surpasses that of ready-made items. Brides may wear two gowns: a white one for the ceremony (which may be in a church nowadays) and a traditional Chinese red one at the celebration.

PART II

9. Xīnláng jiā xìn Jīdūjiào,  
fùmǔ xīwàng tāmen zài  
jiàotáng jiéhūn.  
The family of the bridegroom are  
Christians and the parents hope  
they will be married in church.
10. Xīnniáng jiā xìn FÓ, fùmǔ bú  
ràng tāmen zài jiàotáng  
jiéhūn.  
The family of the bride are Buddhists,  
and her parents won't let them be  
married in church.
11. Tāmen yào zài fǎyuàn gōngzhèng  
jiéhūn ma?  
Are they going to have a civil  
marriage in court?
12. Hūnlǐ yǐhòu bādiǎn zhōng rù xī.  
After the wedding ceremony the  
banquet will start at eight.
13. Zhège wèntí hěn fùzá.  
This question is very complicated.
14. Wǒde yìjian shì děng liǎngge  
xīngqī wǒmen zài tántan.  
My opinion is that we should wait  
two weeks and talk about it again.
15. Tāmen qǐng shéi zhènghūn?  
Whom did they ask to witness the  
marriage?
16. A: Hūnlǐ yǐhòu tāmen mǎshàng  
jiù qù dù mìyuè ma?  
After the wedding are they going to  
leave right away to go on their  
honeymoon?  
B: Bù, yào děng huí mén yǐhòu  
cái qù.  
No, they're going to wait until  
after the bride's first visit to  
her family before they go.
17. Hòutiān yíding lái chí xǐjiǔ!  
Be sure to come to the wedding  
banquet the day after tomorrow.
18. A: Nǐmen xiǎojie hūnlǐshàng  
jièshaorén shì nǎliǎngwèi  
a?  
Who are the two people who are going  
to be the introducers at your  
daughter's wedding?  
B: Yíwèi shì lái zuò méide Lǐ  
Jiàoshòu.  
One is Professor Li who was the go-  
between.
19. Nàwèi yóuzhèngjú Júzhǎng shì  
wǒmen jiā duōniǎnde lǎo  
péngyou.  
That postmaster is a friend of our  
family from many years back.
20. Tándào jiéhūn, nǐ yě yīnggāi  
kuài diǎn qù zū jiàn jiéhūn  
lǐfú.  
Speaking of the wedding, you really  
ought to hurry up and go rent a  
wedding gown.

NOTES ON PART II

Notes on No. 9

xìn Jīdūjiào: 'to believe in (Protestant) Christianity' This is one way of saying 'to be a (Protestant) Christian'.

Notes on No. 10

xìn Fó: 'to believe in Buddha' This is one way of saying 'to be a Buddhist'.

Notes on No. 11

zài fǎyuàn: 'in court' Zài is the verb 'to be in, at, or on', in other words 'to be located (someplace)'. Zài must be followed by a place word or a place phrase. Just what is considered to be a place word or phrase may be difficult for the non-native speaker to figure out. Words which are not considered to be place words or phrases must have a locational ending such as -lǐ or -shàng added to them. (Nǐ zài chēshàng mǎi piào., 'You buy the ticket on the bus.')

The names of institutions in Chinese are considered to be place words. The phrase 'in court' does not need a locational ending, zài fǎyuàn. Here are some other words which can function as place words by themselves. Many of these end with syllables such as -shì (shǐ) 'house, apartment', -jú 'office, shop', -diàn 'inn, shop', -chǎng 'field, open ground', -tīng 'hall, room', -suǒ 'place, room', -jiān 'house, rooms', guān 'public office, hall'.

Jǐntiān xiàwǔ zài bàngōngshì jiàn!	See you at the office this afternoon!
Zài běnshì yǒu wǔge yóuzhèng-jú!	There are five post offices in this city.
Nǐ zài cáiféngdiàn zuòde ba?	You must have had that made at a tailor's.
Nǐ zài cāntīng kàndào ta le ma?	Did you see him in the dining room?

Other words which behave in a similar way are:

càishìchǎng	market	fùjìn	area
cèsuǒ	toilet	fúwùtái	service desk
dàfàndiàn	hotel	Gōngānjú	Bureau of Public Security
shāngdiàn	store	gōngsī	company
dàlóu	building	gōngyǔ	apartment

dāshiguǎn	embassy	gōngyuán	park
dìqū	region	huìkèshì	reception room
fàndiàn	restaurant	huǒchēzhàn	railroad station
fángjiān	room	jǐngchájú	police station
fànguǎnzi	restaurant	kāfēitīng	coffeehouse
fàntīng	dining room	lǎojiā	hometown
fēijichǎng	airport	and many more...including proper names of Restaurants, buildings, associations, organizations, etc.	

gōngzhèng: 'notarization, government witness'. A gōngzhèng rén is a notary public.

Note on No. 12

rù xī: 'to take one's seat at a banquet', literally 'to enter the mat(ted area)'.

Wǒmen kuài diǎnr zhǔnbèi,  
tāmen liùdiǎn zhōng jiù  
yào rù xī le.

Let's get ready a little faster,  
the banquet starts at 6:00.

Note on No. 13

fùzá: 'to be complicated, to be complex'. Questions, problems, or situations can be fùzá if there are many pieces or factors figuring into the problem. It is also possible to use fùzá to imply that the situation is messy, problem-ridden.

Tāmen jiāde qíngkuàng tài fùzá,  
wǒ gǎobuqīngchu.

Their family situation is too complicated, I can't make heads or tails of it. (This sentence has an ambiguity in both languages.)

Zhèige wèntí tài fùzá, hěn nán  
shuōqīngchu.

This question is so complicated, it's very hard to explain it clearly.

Zhèige jùzi tài fùzá, zuì hǎo  
bú zhèiyangr xiě.

This sentence is too complicated, it would be best not to write it this way.

Fùzá can also be used in a complimentary way. (For this example you need to know that sīxiǎng means 'thinking, thought'.)

Tāde sīxiǎng hěn fùzá.

His thinking is very complex.

This sentence might be said of an Einstein. The opposite of fùzá in this

case would be jiǎndān 'to be simple', as in 'simple-minded'.

Fùzá is also pronounced fǔzá.

Note on No. 14

yìjiàn: 'idea, view, opinion, suggestion'.

Gāngcái tā tánle duì zhèiběn  
shūde yìjian, wǒ juéde duì  
wǒmen hěn yǒu bāngzhu.

He just told us his opinions on this  
book, and I feel that they're  
really helpful to us.

Wǒ hěn xiǎng zhīdào, zài zhèige  
wèntíshang, Zhōngguó zhèng-  
fǔde yìjian shì shénme?

I'd very much like to know what the  
Chinese government's view is on  
this question.

Wǒ xiǎng xiān qù Shànghǎi, zài  
dào Wǔhàn, nǐde yìjian  
zěnmeyang?

I'd like to go to Shanghai first and  
then to Wuhan, what's your opinion?

Wǒde yìjian shì xiān qù Wǔhàn,  
zài dào Shànghǎi qù. Yīnwei  
zài guò yíge yuè, Wǔhàn fēi-  
cháng rèle.

My opinion is to first go to Wuhan,  
then to Shanghai, because after  
a month, Wuhan will be extremely  
hot.

Note on No. 15

zhènghūn: 'to witness a marriage'. Witnesses formerly were persons of good reputation and venerable old age. Today, familiarity is most important. The witness makes a brief speech during the ceremony and stamps the marriage certificate with his name seal. He receives no remuneration for this service, but is honored to have been asked.

Notes on No. 16

dù mìyuè: 'to spend one's honeymoon'. Dù is the verb 'to spend, to pass (something which is an amount of time, like a holiday)'. Mìyuè is literally 'honey-moon'.

huímén: 'the bride's first visit to her own family on the third day after the wedding', literally 'return to the door'. When the newlyweds return home for this first visit, the family of the bride is given a chance to entertain the couple. More friends and relatives are invited and introduced to them. (It is the groom's family which arranges the marriage ceremony.)

Note on No. 17

xǐjiǔ: 'wedding banquet'. Notice that in the Reference List sentence the phrase lái chī xǐjiǔ is translated as 'to come to the wedding banquet'. A more literal translation might be 'come to eat a wedding feast!'. The verb chī could also be rendered into English by 'attend' or 'take part', as in 'Be sure to come take part in the wedding banquet the day after tomorrow'.

Notes on No. 18

hūnlǐshàng: 'at the wedding'. Notice that in English you say 'at the wedding' while in Chinese you say hūnlǐshàng, literally 'on the wedding'. -Shang would also be the locative ending to use for 'at the meeting (huìshang)'.

jièshaorén: 'introducer'. This is one person in the cast of people who play a part in getting two people together in marriage. Originally, the "introducer" functioned in much the same way as match-makers - finding a good mate for a friend or relative. Today, most young people find their own mates. The "introducers", however, still have a ceremonial function. They accompany the bride and groom during the ceremony (one for the bride and one for the groom).

zuò méi: 'to act as the go-between for two families whose children are to be married'. This person arranged the details of the match. He acted as a go-between for the families of the bride and groom, settling points which were usually of a financial nature. Often the zuò méide was also the jièshaorén. Traditionally, the go-between was an older woman who made a profession of it. She was paid for her services in money if the family was wealthy or in the best pork legs if they were poor. Today any adult can act as the go-between, although the practice is becoming less and less common. During the wedding ceremony, the go-between places his stamp on the wedding certificate.

Wǒ gěi ni zuò méi, hǎo bu hǎo?

I'll act as go-between for you,  
all right?

Zhāng Tàitai qǐng wǒ tǐ tāde  
nǚér zuò méi.

Mrs. Chang asked me to act as go-  
between for her daughter.

Notes on No. 19

júzhǎng: 'head of an office or bureau'. Júzhǎng is only used when the Chinese name of the office or bureau ends with the syllable -jú, as in yóuzhèngjú, 'post office'. You've also seen bùzhǎng, 'minister of a bureau' and kēzhǎng, 'section chief'.

duōnián: 'many years'. Here are some examples:

Wǒmen duōnián bú jiàn le.

We haven't seen each other for many  
years.

Wǒmen zài yìqǐ gōngzuòle  
duōnián le.

We've been working together for many  
years.

Wǒ zhù zài zhèr duōnián le,  
kěshì méi tīngshuōguo zhèige  
rén.

I've been living here for many years,  
but I've never heard of this  
person.

### Notes on No. 20

tándaο: 'to talk about, to speak of'. This is used to refer to something that was just brought up in conversation. You have seen dào used as a main verb meaning 'to go to, to arrive at', and as a prepositional verb meaning 'to towards'. Now you see that dào is also used as a verb ending. Literally, it means 'to, up to', but its translation into English sometimes changes, depending on the meaning of the verb it is used with. When used with tán, 'to talk, to chat', -dào can be translated as 'about' or 'of'. Here are some other examples of -dào used with verbs you've already studied:

Wǒmen gāngcái hái shuōdào nǐ,  
nǐ jiù lái le.

We were even talking of you just now,  
and here you are!

Jīntiān nǐ gēn ta jiāngdào  
wo méiyóu?

Did you talk about me with him today?

Wǒ chángcháng xiǎngdào wǒde  
háizi.

I often think of my child.

Notice that in the Reference List sentence, tándaο is used at the beginning of the sentence to introduce a topic, like we use 'speaking of ...' in English. Here are some other examples:

Tándaο jiéhūnde shì, wǒ hái  
děi xiǎngyixiang.

When it comes to talking about  
marriage, I have to think it over.

Tándaο zěnmē xiě Zhōngguó zì,  
tā bǐ wǒ zhīdaode duō.

When we talk about writing Chinese  
characters, he knows a lot more  
than I do.

yě: 'really, after all'. You have seen yě meaning 'too, also'. Another common meaning of yě is '(even though) ... nevertheless, still'. For example:

Wǒ suīrán shì Zhōngguó rén wǒ  
yě huì shuō yìdiǎn Yīngwén.

Although I am Chinese, I can still  
speak a little English.

A: Zhèige diànyǐng zěnmeyàng?

How was the movie?

B: Bú shì hěn hǎo, dànshì yě  
hái kěyǐ.

It wasn't great, but it was pretty  
good nevertheless.

Wǒ suīrán méi dào guo Tiān Ān  
Mén, yě zài diànshìshàng  
kàn jiānguo.

Although I've never been to Tian An  
Men, I've seen it on television.

In addition, yě often is used to contrast the thought expressed in the sentence with another thought. This meaning can be paraphrased something like this: "in spite of anything which might be believed to the contrary, indeed what I am saying is true." Sometimes, however, yě is used when there is not much to contrast it with, and means little more than "we really ought to agree that what I am saying is true."

There are many different possible ways to translate this yě into English. The following examples are meant to show some of its range of meaning and some of its possible translations.

Xiànzài shíyīdiǎn bàn le, wǒ  
yě yào shàng kè le, wǒmende  
wèntí míngtiān zài tán ba!

It's eleven-thirty. I really have  
to be going to class. Let's talk  
about our question tomorrow, okay?

Zhōngguó rénkǒu tài duō,  
zhèngfǔ tíchàng wǎnliàn wǎn-  
hūn yě shì yīnggāide.

The population of China is too large,  
it really is right for the govern-  
ment to promote late marriage and  
late involvement.

Tāmen wèishénme yào líhūn, wǒ  
yě bù zhīdào.

Why they wanted to get a divorce, I  
really don't know.

A: Nǐ zěnméi hái méi bǎ zhèxiē  
yīfu xǐwán?

How come you still haven't finished  
washing these clothes?

B: Wǒ yě bú shì nǐde yòngren,  
báitiān wǒ yě shàng bān,  
wǒ méiyǒu zhènméi duō  
shíjiān.

I'm not your servant, after all; I  
work during the day too, and I  
don't have all that much time.

Nǐ xiànzài yě gāi míngbai le  
ba?

Now you (really) ought to understand,  
don't you?

Wǒmen liǎngge rènshi yě yǒu  
jǐnián le, nǐ yīnggāi liǎo-  
jiě wǒ.

We have known each other for several  
years, after all; you ought to  
understand me.

Taipei:

The day before a young couple is to be married, a friend pays a visit to the mother of the bride:

A: Gōngxǐ, gōngxǐ! Míngtiān shì nǐmen xiǎojié dàxǐde rìzi! Xīnlǎng shì shénme rén a? Tāmen shì zěnme rènshide?

Congratulations! Tomorrow's your daughter's big day! Who's the bridegroom? How did they meet?

B: Shi péngyou jièshàode. Nánfāngde fùqīn gēn wǒ xiānsheng zài yóuzhèngjú shì tóngshì, búguò yǐqián bú tài shǒu. Hòulái lìngwài yíge xìng Lǐde tóngshì jiù lái zuò méi, jièshào tāmen rènshi. Tāmen jiāowǎng dào xiànzài yě yìnián duō le. Nàge nánháizi xiànzài èrshíbāsùì, rén hěn lǎoshi, yě hěn shàngjìn. Xiànzài zài Táiwān Yínháng gōngzuò. Tā bàngōngshìlide rén dōu shuō tā nénggàn. Xiùyún duì ta hěn mǎnyì, érqiě Xiùyún yǐjīng èrshísìsùì le, yě dào le gāi jiéhūnde shíhou le, suǒyǐ nánfāng yì lái tíqīn wǒmen jiù dāying le.

They were introduced by friends. The father of the groom is a colleague of my husband's at the post office, but they didn't know each other very well before. Afterwards, another colleague by the name of Li came to act as the go-between and introduced them. They have been seeing each other for over a year now. The young man is twenty-eight years old now. He's very honest and ambitious. He works at the Bank of Taiwan. The people at his office all say he's very capable. Xiuyun is very pleased with him, and besides, she's twenty-four years old; she has reached the time when she should get married. So as soon as his family came to propose the marriage, we agreed to it.

A: Wǒ kàn qǐngtiēshang shuō wūdiǎn zhōng zài Guóbīn Dàfàndiàn jǔxíng hūnlǐ, liùdiǎn zhōng rù xī. Nà dìfang hěn dà, cài yě hěn hǎo, míngtiān yíding hěn rènao.

I see it says on the invitation that the ceremony will be held at the Ambassador Hotel at five o'clock, and that the banquet starts at six. It's a very big place, and the food is very good. It should be very lively tomorrow.

B: Tándào jǔxíng hūnlǐ a, yìjian duō le. Zhēn fùzá. Xiān shì liǎngge háizi yào dào fǎyuàn gōngzhèng jiéhūn, kěshì nánfāngde fùmǔ bù dāying. Tāmen xìn Jīdūjiào, yíding yào dào jiàotáng qù. Wǒmen jiā xìn Fó, zěnme kéyǐ ràng tāmen dào jiàotáng qù jǔxíng hūnlǐ ne! Hòulái, liǎngjiā tánlái tánqù, zuìhòu cái juédìng háishì zài Guóbīn Dàfàndiàn

As far as the wedding ceremony is concerned, there were a lot of different opinions. It was really complicated. At first the two children wanted to go to court and have a civil marriage, but the parents of the groom didn't agree to that. They're Christians, and insisted on going to a church. Our family is Buddhist; how could we let them go to a church to hold the wedding! Later, our two families discussed it back and

jǔxíng hūnlǐ.

forth, and finally we decided it would be best to hold the wedding at the Ambassador Hotel.

A: Shi qǐng shénme rén zhènghūn a?

Whom did you ask to witness the marriage?

B: Zhènghūnrén shi Yóuzhèngjú Zhāng Júzhāng. Tā gēn nánfāngde fùqīn shi duōniánde lǎo péngyou, suǒyǐ yì qǐng tā, tā mǎshàng jiù dāying le.

The witness is Postmaster Zhang. He's an old friend of many years of the groom's father, so as soon as we went to ask him, he agreed right away.

A: Yǒu méiyǒu jièshàorén? Jièshàorén shi shéi ya?

Are there any introducers? Who are they?

B: Nánfāngde jièshàorén jiù shi lái zuò méide nàwèi Lǐ Xiānsheng. Wǒmen zhèbiān jiù qǐngle Zhāng Zǐmíng Jiàoshòu. Tā shi Xiùyún niàn dàxué shíhoude lǎoshī.

The introducer for the groom's side is the Mr. Li who was the go-between. For our side we asked Professor Zhang Ziming. He was a teacher of Xiuyun's when she was in college.

A: Xīnniángde jiéhūn lǐfú shi zài shénme dìfang zuòde?

Where was the bride's wedding gown made?

B: Bú shi zuòde, shi zūde.

It wasn't (specially) made, it's rented.

A: Tāmen jiéhūn yǐhòu yào dào nǎlǐ qù dù mìyuè?

After they're married, where are they going to spend their honeymoon?

B: Tāmen jìhua yào dào Àlǐ Shān qù wán yíge xīngqī, búguò tāmen jiéhūn yǐhòu bù néng mǎshàng zǒu, yào děng huí mén yǐhòu cái qù.

They're planning to go to Mt. Ali for a week, but they can't leave right after the wedding. They have to wait until after the bride's first visit to her new parents' home before they go.

A: Ò, hǎo hǎo hǎo. Wǒ xiǎng nǐmen yíding hěn máng. Wǒ yīnggāi zǒu le.

Oh, okay. Well, you must be very busy, so I should be leaving now.

B: Nǐ nàme kèqi, hái zìjǐ lái sòng lǐwù lai. Xièxie, xièxie! Míngtiān yíding lái chī xǐjiǔ.

You're so polite, you even brought presents over in person. Thank you! Be sure to come to the banquet tomorrow.

A: Hǎo, míngtiān jiàn.

Okay, see you tomorrow.

...liǎngge háizi yào dào fǎyuàn gōngzhèng jiéhūn: Traditional wedding ceremonies were held at home or in ancestral halls (not in temples or pagodas). Modern ones are likely to be held in hotels or restaurants, as there is more room and food is then easier to prepare.

Tāmen jīhua yào dào Ālǐ Shān qù: Ālǐ Shān and Rìyuè Tán (Sun-Moon Lake) are the two most popular honeymoon spots on Taiwan. An average honeymoon stay might last one week.

Vocabulary

ài	(sound of sighing)
dàxǐ	great rejoicing
dàxǐde rìzi	wedding day
dāying	to agree (to something), to consent, to promise
dù	to pass
dù mìyuè	to go on a honeymoon, to spend one's honeymoon
duōnián	many years
fǎyuàn	court of law
Fó	Buddha
fùzá (fǔzá)	to be complicated
gōngzhèng jiéhūn	civil marriage
hái	even, (to go) so far as to
háishi	after all
hòulái	later, afterwards
huí mén	the return of the bride to her parents' home (usually on the third day after the wedding)
hūnlǐ	wedding
jiàotáng	church
jiāowǎng	to associate with, to have dealings with
Jīdūjiào	Christianity
jiéhūn lǐfú	wedding gown
jièshaorén	introducer
juédìng	to decide
jǔxíng	to hold (a meeting, ceremony, etc.)
Júzhǎng	head of an office or bureau (of which the last syllable is <u>jú</u> )
...-lái...-qù	(indicates repeating the action over and over again)
lǎoshi (lǎoshí)	to be honest
mǎnyì	to be pleased
mìyuè	honeymoon
nánfāng	the groom's side, the groom's family
nénggàn	to be capable
rén	person, self, body

rù xí	to take one's seat (at a gathering, meeting, or banquet)
shàngjìn shǒu	to be ambitious to be familiar (with), to know well
tándaο tánlái tánqù tíqǐn	to talk about; speaking of ... to talk back and forth to bring up a proposal of marriage
xiǎojiě (xiáojiě)	daughter (referring to someone else's daughter)
xǐjiǔ xìn xìn Fó xīnláng xīnniáng	wedding banquet; wedding wine to believe (in) to be a Buddhist bridegroom bride
yě yìjian	indeed, in fact, admittedly opinion
zǎo zhènghūn zhènghūnrén zū zuò méi	long ago to witness a marriage chief witness at a wedding ceremony to rent to act as go-between (for the families of a man and woman considering marriage)