

COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGES



Zuò huǒche qù Běijīng (A Train Trip to Beijing)

Huáng (H) is taking a train trip from Hankou to Beijing to visit a friend. He buys a ticket at the Hankou Railroad Station, and finds out from the ticket seller (SPY) where to board his train. On the train he gets into a conversation with a fellow passenger named Chén (C).

Frame 1

(At the ticket window)

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| 1 H: Wǒ yào qù Běijīng.
Qǐngwèn, <u>kuàichēpiào</u> duōshǎo
qián? | I want to go to Beijing. May
I ask, please, how much is a
ticket on the express train? |
| 2 SPY: <u>Pǔtōng-kuàichē</u> hái shì
<u>tèbié-kuàichē</u> ? | The Ordinary Express, or the
Special Express? |
| 3 H: <u>Tèbié-kuàichē</u> . | The Special Express. |
| 4 SPY: Dào Běijīng qùde <u>tèkuài</u>
<u>chēpiào</u> sìshíqīkuài. | The ticket for the Special
Express to Beijing is \$47.00. |
| 5 H: Qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ yīzhāng. | Please give me one. |
| 6 SPY: Hǎo. Zhèi shì nǐde
piào. Zhèibān <u>tèkuài</u> zài
<u>èrhào zhàntái</u> . | Good! Here is your ticket.
This Special Express is on
platform No. 2. |

Notes:

6 -Ban (-cì) and -hào. Two measures are used in this statement. One is -ban (or -cì) used to measure train or bus trips or airplane flights. The other is -hào, "number," commonly used to number the platforms zhàntái OR yuètái at train stations.

Other common expressions used by travelers:

Dào Shànghǎi qùde fēijī,
měi xīngqī yǒu jǐbān?

How many flights a week are
there to Shanghai?

Dào Hánkǒu gùde huǒchē, There are two trains to Hankou
 měitiān yǒu liǎngcì. each day.
 Zhèibānde piào màiwánle, The tickets are all sold out
 nín xiàbān zǒu ba! for this trip. I suggest you
 take the next one.
 Hánkǒude huǒchēzhàn hěn The Hankou railroad station is
 dà, yǒu báge zhàntái. very large; it has eight
 platforms.

Frame 2

(On the train)

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| 7 | H: (talking to another passenger, Mr. Chen.) Qīngwèn, nǐ qù nǎr? | May I ask, please, where you are going? |
| 8 | C: Wǒ qù Běijīng. Nǐ ne? | I'm going to Beijing. How about you? |
| 9 | H: Wǒ yě qù Běijīng. Wǒ qù kàn wǒ(đe) yíge lǎo péngyou. Zhèi shí wǒ dīyíci qù Běijīng. Nǐ qùguò Běijīng ma? | I'm also going to Beijing. I'm going to visit an old friend. This is my first trip to Beijing. Have you ever been there before? |
| 10 | C: Jiěfàng yǐhòu méiqùguò. | I haven't been (there) since the Liberation. |
| 11 | H: Wǒ xiǎng, yǒu hěn duō dìfāng nǐ yěxǔ dōu búrènde le. | I would think there are a lot of places you perhaps won't recognize. |
| 12 | C: Hěn kěnéng. | That's very possible. |

Notes:

9 Experiential Particle -guò. The particle -guò, used as a verb ending, indicates the experience "has been," or "has never been."
 Examples:

Tā chīguo Rìběn fàn.

He has eaten Japanese food before.

Wǒ méi xiěguo Zhōngguo zì.

I have never (before) written Chinese characters.

Tā shuōguo Fàguo huà.

He has spoken French before.

Nǐ méiqīngguo wǒmen chī dōngxī.

You have never invited us to eat anything.

10 Main clause modified by a conditional clause. The conditional phrase jiěfàng yǐhòu, "after the Liberation," modifies the main clause méiqùguo, "never been there." Examples:

Jiěfàng yǐqián qùguo.

(I'd) been there before the Liberation.

Wǒ yǒu qiándè shíhòu,
gěiguó tā sānbǎi.

When I had money, I gave him \$300.

Tā méi tàिताide shíhòu,
yǒuguó sāndòng fàngze.

When he was unmarried, he had three houses.

Frame 3

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| 13 | H: Wǒ nèige lǎo péngyou shuō, tā shàngcǐ huí Běijīng, líkai chēzhàn, jīngguo Tiānānmén-Guǎngchǎng de shíhòu, juéde hěn duō dìfāng dōu biànle yàngzi le. | My old friend said that the last time he returned to Beijing, when he left the station and passed through the broad square of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, he felt that a lot of places had changed. |
| 14 | C: Nǐ tīng(shuō) méitīngshuōguo Rénmín-Dàhuìtáng, Zhōngshān Gōngyuán zhèixiē yǒumíng de dìfāng? | Have you ever heard of these famous places, the Great Hall of the People and the Sun Yat-Sen Park? |
| 15 | H: Wǒ měi jīhuà zhèicǐde lǚxíng yǐqián bǔdàn tīngshuōguo, yě zài huàbào shàng kànjiànguó. | Before planning this trip, I had not only heard of these places, but also seen them in pictorial magazines |

Notes:

13 Double -le with simple un-measured object. In this case, the double -le indicates completed action. Actually, one -le can serve the same purpose. Examples:

Dōu biànle yàngzi le.

Dōu biàn yàngzi le.

Dōu biànle yàngzi.

14 Asking questions using the experiential particle -guò. There are five different patterns for asking questions concerning "experience."

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| (1) | Nǐ chīguo Fàguo fàn ma? | Have you ever eaten French food? |
| (2) | Nǐ méichīguo Fàguo fàn ma? | Have you never eaten French food? |
| (3) | Nǐ chīguo méichīguo Fàguo fàn? | Have you or haven't you ever eaten French food? |

- (4) Nǐ chīguo Fàguo fàn Have you ever eaten French food?
 méichīguo?
- (5) Nǐ chīguo Fàguo fàn Have you ever eaten French food?
 méiyóu?

15 Non-functional use of negative méi-. The English meaning of the following two sentences is identical:

- (1) Wǒ méijihuà zhèicǐde Before I planned this trip ...
 lǚxíng yǐqián ...
- (2) Wǒ jihuà zhèicǐde "
 lǚxíng yǐqián ...

This application of méi-, an idiom often confusing to non-native speakers, is common Chinese usage. Though it seems to mean "Before I didn't plan this trip," it really means "Before I planned this trip." The meaning is the same with or without méi- which is simply a nonfunctional idiom in this case. However, in other contexts, using or not using méi- can make a significant difference in meaning--which will be discussed in later lessons.

Frame 4

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| 16 | C: Nǐ gēn nǐ nèige lǎo péng-you <u>rènshí</u> duó <u>jiǔ</u> le? | (For) how long (a period of time) have you known that old friend of yours? |
| 17 | H: Wǒmen cóng xiǎo jiù <u>rènshí</u> le. Cóngqián wǒmen lǎo zài yìqǐ gōngzuò. Wǒmen hái zài yìqǐ <u>dǎguo</u> <u>zhàng</u> ne. | We've known each other since we were (quite) small. We always worked together before. We also fought (in war) together. |
| 18 | C: Nǐmen shì yìqǐ zài Yuènnán <u>dǎde</u> <u>zhàng</u> ma? | Did you fight together in the Vietnam War? |
| 19 | H: Shìde. Nèige shíhòu wǒmen dōu bú dào èrshí <u>sui</u> . Xiànzài dōu guòle sānshí le. <u>Rìzi</u> guòde zhēn kuài a! | That's right. At that time neither (of us) was as yet twenty years of age. Now we're both past thirty. The days really go by fast! |
| 20 | C: Xiànzài nǐmen yòu néng zài yìqǐ le. Wǒ zhēn tī nǐmen <u>gāoxìng</u> . | Now you can (both) be together again. I am really happy for you. |

Notes:

16 Rènshī and rènde. The verbs rènshī, "to know, recognize, understand" and rènde, "to know, recognize" are interchangeable when used to know or to recognize a person, place, friend, or thing. When "to understand," or "understanding" is intended, use rènshī, not rènde. Examples:

Nǐ děi rènshī nǐ zìjǐ,
yǒu shénme dìfāng
zuòde búduì.

You must know/understand/realize
yourself, where you made
mistake.

Qǐng nǐ shuōshuo nǐ duì
zhèijiàn shìqíngde
rènshī.

Please say what your understand-
ing is of this matter.

16 Jiǔ indicates a rather long time period. Hěn jiǔ méijiàn, a frequently used expression, translates to the colloquial English "Long time no see."

17 Cóng xiǎo(r). The idiomatic phrase cong xiǎor, "since childhood," is the ellipsis of cóng xiǎo háizide shíhou, "from the time when (I) was a child." Other examples:

Tā cóng xiǎo(r) jiù hěn
xīhuan niànshū.

He has been very fond of study-
ing since he was very young.

Tā cóng xiǎo(r) jiù búài
shuō huà.

He hasn't liked to talk since
he was quite small.

18 Shì ... de pattern with Verb-Object compound. There are two ways to use this pattern: (1) with -de attached to the verb, and (2) with -de attached to the object. Examples:

Nǐmen shì yìqǐ zài Yuènnán
dǎde zhàng ma?

Did you fight together in Viet-
nam?

Nǐmen shì yìqǐ zài Yuènnán
dǎzhàngde ma?

Tā shì wǔsuì shàngde xué.

He/she went to school at the
age of five.

Tā shì wǔsuì shàngxuéde.

19 Búdào and guòle. The adverbs búdào, "to be not quite, does not reach" and guòle, "to be already past, it's over" are common expressions used before a number or a destination. Examples:

Tā búdào wǔsuì.

He/she is not quite five years
old.

Wǒde qián búdào yìqiān-
kuài.

I don't have quite \$1000.

Tā gēge yǐjīng guòle
sìshísuì le.

His older brother is already
over forty.

Rìzi guòde zhen kuài!, "Time flies!" Rìzi has several meanings besides that in this idiomatic expression.

- (1) rìzi, "a special day" or hǎo rìzi, "a (special) lucky day."

Jīntiān shì shénme rìzi? What day is today?/What is special about it?

- (2) rìzi, "a date"

Qīng kè, děi xiān dīng yíge rìzi. When you give a party, you must first fix a date.

- (3) rìzi, "time"

Gāoxìngde rìzi, guòde hěn kuài. Bùgāoxìngde rìzi, guòde hěn màn. When you're happy, time flies. When you're unhappy, time crawls.

- (4) rìzi, "daily expense" in the combination guò rìzi, "living, getting along."

Nèiwèi tàitai hěn huì guò rìzi. That housewife really knows how to manage her household expenses/affairs.

Méi qián, rìzi bùhǎo guò. If you have no money, it is difficult to get along (make ends meet).