

Customs Surrounding  
Marriage, Birth, and Death: Unit 3

PART I

1. Wǒ tīngshuō Zhōngguó kòngzhì  
rénkǒude gōngzuò zuòde hěn  
chénggōng. I hear that population control work  
has been done very successfully in  
China.
2. Zài chéngshìli zhùde rén yào  
yǒu yíge háizi děi zuòdao  
sān tōngguò. People who live in the city, if they  
want to have a child, must have  
'the three approvals'.
3. Sān tōngguòde yìsi yě jiùshì  
shuō děi yǒu sāngē dìfang  
tóngyì zhèwèi fùnǚ shēng  
háizi. 'The three approvals' means that a  
woman must have the consent of  
three places in order to have a  
child.
4. A: Nǐ sāngē dānwèi ne? Which three units?  
B: Zhèwèi fùnǚde gōngzuò dān-  
wèi, tā zhùde dìfangde  
jūmín wēiyuánhùi, hé  
pàichūsuǒ. The woman's work unit, the neighbor-  
hood committee of the place she  
lives, and the local police  
station.
5. Zhōngguó zhèngfǔ gēnju shénme  
pīzhǔn fùnǚmen shēng xiǎo-  
háir? On what basis does the Chinese  
government give official per-  
mission for women to give birth?
6. Gègè chéngshì měinián zhǐ kéyì  
zēngjiā yíding shùmùde háizi. The various cities can only increase  
by a specific number of children  
every year.
7. Wǒmen shìqū jīnniánde chūshēng-  
lǜ bù gāo. The birth rate in our municipal area  
this year isn't very high.
8. Wǒ zhǐ néng fēnpèigei nǐmen  
zhèiyìqū bābǎige míng'é. I can only assign a quota of eight  
hundred to your area.
9. Zhōngguó rénkǒu tài duō,  
zhèngfǔ tíchàng rénmin shí-  
xíng bìyùn. The population of China is too large,  
so the government encourages the  
people to practice birth control.
10. Bìyùn gōngjù dōu shì miǎnfèide. All contraceptive devices are free.
11. Wǒ yǐjīng dédào pīzhǔn, kéyì  
yǒu yìjiān xīn fángzi. I have already received permission  
to get a new room.

NOTES ON PART I

Notes on No. 1

kòngzhi: 'to control; control'. This can also be translated as 'to dominate; to command'.

Zhèige fángjiānde wēndù kòng-zhude bù hǎo, yìhuǐr lěng, yìhuǐr rè.

The temperature in this room isn't well regulated. It's cold one minute and hot the next.

Shíjiān méi bànfa kòngzhi, shéi yě bànbudao.

There is no way to control time; no one can do it.

Tāde bìng yǐjīng kòngzhìzhù le, yěxǔ jǐtiān yǐhòu, tā huì hǎoqilai.

His illness is under control now; maybe in another few days he will start to get better.

Yǒu yìxiē rén kòngzhìle zhèijià fēijī, bú ràng ta qǐfēi.

Some people have taken control of this airplane and won't let it take off.

chénggōng: 'to succeed; to be successful'.

Zhèiběn shū chénggōng le.

This book was a success.

Zhèiběn shū xiěde hěn chénggōng.

His book was written very successfully. (i.e., His book came off very well.)

Zhèige tāng chénggōng le, dàjiā dōu ài chī.

This soup is a success, everyone loves it.

Zhǐ yào nǐ nǔlì, nǐde shìqing yíding néng chénggōng.

So long as you work hard at it, your effort is sure to succeed.

Notes on No. 2

zuòdao: 'to achieve, to make (a goal)'. In Unit 2, Part II, you saw tándaο 'to talk about, to speak of', with the ending -dào meaning literally 'to, up to'. Here you see -dào used as an ending after the verb zuò 'to make'. You may think of -dào in zuòdao as conveying the meaning of reaching a goal.

Zhèijiān shì, wǒ yǐjīng zuòdao le.

I have already succeeded in doing this.

Nǐ shuōguo, zuótiān nǐ yào qù, nǐ zuòdao le ma?

You said that you wanted to go yesterday. Did you do so?

sān tōngguò: 'the three approvals'. The 'three approvals' have been in effect since 1973/74. At that time, the minimum marriage age was pushed upward, but most recently it has been relaxed to ages twenty-five for males and twenty-three for females. Most couples must still wait a number of years before they can have a child. The sāntōngguò guīdìng for city residents effectively means that, without these three approvals for a child, a pregnancy must end in abortion or else the child will have to live without food rations. (A government slogan is Yíge zuì hǎo, liǎngge gòule, "One is best, two is enough.") Applications to have children are reviewed and permission granted or denied by one's work unit, based on the total allowable city quota. A third child is strongly discouraged and life would be very difficult for it should it be born. Special gifts, privileges, and awards are given to one-child families. In the countryside, one can find four to six children in a household, but they of course could not easily move to the city.

Notes on No. 3

yě jiùshi shuō: 'to mean; in other words, that is to say'.

Jìhuà shēngyù yě jiùshi shuō  
yào yǒu jìhuàde shēng xiǎo-  
hǎir.

Planned parenthood means having  
children in a planned way.

'Hébì' yě jiùshi shuō 'wèi-  
shénme xūyào'.

'Hébì' means 'why must'.

Tā bù néng zài shēng xiǎoháizi,  
yě jiùshi shuō wǒmen juéde  
tā zhìbuhǎo le.

She can't have children any more;  
that is to say, we feel that she  
cannot be cured.

Tā bù gěi ni dǎ diànhuà hǎo-  
xiàng yě jiùshi shuō tā bù  
xǐhuan ni.

The fact that he doesn't telephone  
you would seem to imply that he  
doesn't like you.

Dàifu shuō tā bù néng chī ròu,  
yě jiùshi shuō chī ròu duì  
tāde shēntǐ bù hǎo.

The doctor said that he couldn't eat  
meat, in other words, eating meat  
isn't good for his health.

When what follows is a more pointed explanation of what has just been said, jiùshi shuō can be used in place of yě jiùshi shuō, e.g.

Tā bù kéyǐ shēng háizi, jiùshi  
shuō tā hái méiyǒu zuòdao  
sān tōngguò.

She cannot have a child; that is to  
say, she has not yet gotten the  
three approvals.

tóngyì: 'consent, agreement; to agree, to agree with (what someone says or thinks)'.

A: Tóngyì bu tóngyì?

Do you agree?

B: Wǒ bù tóngyì.

I don't agree.

Wǒ bù tóngyì nǐde huà.

I don't agree with what you say.

Although in English we can say 'I agree with you', in Chinese it is wrong to say either Wǒ gēn nǐ tóngyì or Wǒ tóngyì nǐ. Tóngyì can be used in two ways: without an object, or with an object like tā shuōde 'what he said', tāde huà 'what he said', tāde jìhuà 'his plan', tāde yìjian 'his opinion'. If you want to say 'I don't agree with you', you can say Wǒ bù tóngyì, Nǐ shuōde, wǒ bù tóngyì, Wǒ bù tóngyì nǐde huà, Wǒ bù tóngyì nǐde yìjian, etc.

#### Notes on No. 4

dānwèi: '(work) unit'. This word is used in the PRC as a cover term for any organization or department of an organization. It may, for instance, refer to a factory, a school, a government organization, a store, or an army unit.

Nǐ zài nǐge dānwèi gōngzuò? is a common way of asking where someone works; compared with Nǐ zài nǎr gōngzuò?, the question Nǐ zài nǐge dānwèi gōngzuò? sounds more official.

Wǒmen dānwèi yǒu hěn duō nǚ  
lǎoshī.

There are a lot of women teachers in  
our unit. (Here, dānwèi refers to  
a school.)

To specify that you are talking about a place of work, you can say gōngzuò dānwèi, as in the Reference List sentence.

jūmín wěiyuánhùi: 'neighborhood committee'. The official duties of a neighborhood committee are diverse, ranging from sanitation maintenance to political study. Its actual role and duty remain ambiguous, as well as its relationship with the government. Although the government pays a committee's elected delegates, there is no official connection between the two. The power of the committee in local affairs remains large.

pàichūsuǒ: 'local police station'. The local police station is the lowest level of the Bureau of Public Security. In addition to taking care of matters of a criminal nature, the pàichūsuǒ is familiar with the history and political situation of every one of its residents. Along with the gōngzuò dānwèi and the jūmín wěiyuánhùi, it affects the daily life of each citizen.

#### Notes on No. 5

gēnju: 'according to, on the basis of; basis'.

Nǐ gēnju shénme shuō zhèige  
huà?

On what basis do you say this?

Nǐ shuōde huà yǒu méiyǒu  
gēnju?

Is there a basis for what you're  
saying?

pīzhǔn: 'to give official permission (to someone to do something)'.

Dānwèi pīzhǔn tā jiēhūn le.

Her unit gave her permission to  
marry.

Xuéxiào pīzhǔn tā qù Shànghǎi  
le.

His school gave him permission to go  
to Shanghai.

Wǒ mǎi zhèige diànshì shì dédao  
pīzhǔnde.

I got permission to buy this  
television.

fùnǚmen: 'women'. -Men is a plural ending for nouns and pronouns. You have seen it in the pronouns wǒmen, zánmen, nǐmen, and tāmen. After a noun, however, -men is never obligatory. It is usually used with nouns which designate humans (although in literature you may sometimes see it used with nouns referring to animals as well).

Nǚshìmen, xiānshengmen.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Note that the group referred to by a noun phrase with -men must be of unspecified number; it is wrong to say liǎngge fùnǚmen or sānge jiàoshòumen, etc.

#### Notes on No. 6

gègè: 'each and every, all of the various'. The first gè (a specifier like zhèi-) literally means 'each...' or 'the various, the different...'. The second ge is the counter ge, as in yíge rén 'one person'.

Jiǔyuèli, gègè xuéxiào dōu  
kāi xué le.

In September all the schools open.

Měiguode gègè zhōu dōu yǒu  
zìjǐde zhèngfǔ.

Each of the American states has its  
government.

zēngjiā: 'to increase; to increase by (such-and-such an amount)'.

Jīnnián wǒmen xuéxiào de xué-  
shēng zēngjiā le.

The students in our school increased  
this year.

Zhèige yīyuànde bìnggrén bù néng  
zài zēngjiā le.

The patients in this hospital cannot  
increase any further.

Zhèijǐtiān nǐ máng bu máng,  
zài gěi ni zēngjiā yìdiǎnr  
gōngzuò, hǎo bu hǎo?

Have you been busy the past few days?  
Would it be okay if I give you  
some more work to do?

Wǒmen dānwèi yòu zēngjiāle  
liǎngge bàngōngshì.

They added two more offices on to  
our unit.

yídìng: 'specific, certain, definite, set'. In addition to the meaning of yídìng which you already know, namely 'certainly, surely', it can also mean 'set (by regulation, decision, or convention), fixed, particular,' as in

Tā bàn shìqing yǒu yídìng bànfa. He goes about doing things with a  
definite method.

Měiniān zài yídìngde rìzi, tā Every year he goes back to see his  
dōu huíqù kàn māma. mother on a set date.

#### Notes on No. 7

shìqū: 'city proper, municipal area', the area within a chéngshì where population and buildings are relatively concentrated. Shìqū is used when you are emphasizing the city proper or contrasting it to the suburbs [jiāoqū]. It is an administratively more exact term than chéngshì. [The Peking municipal area, Běijīng shìqū, is made up of eight urban districts, chéngqū.]

chūshēnglǜ: 'birth rate'. Chūshēng means 'to be born'. The chūshēnglǜ is usually considered to be the number of births per one thousand population in one year.

#### Notes on No. 8

fēnpèi: 'distribute; allot; assign; distribution'.

Wǒ tīngshuō xiàge yuè jiù kényi I've heard that you'll be assigned  
gěi ni fēnpei gōngzuò. work next month.

Wǒ xīwang néng zǎo yìdiǎn I hope that housing can be assigned  
fēnpèidào fángzi. soon.

Tīngshuō tā fēnpèi dào Dōngběi I've heard that he has been assigned  
qù gōngzuò le. to go work in Manchuria.

míng'é: 'the number of people assigned or allowed; quota of people'. Míng'é does not exactly correspond to 'quota'. 'Quota' is a fixed number of places which must be filled. Míng'é is (1) a fixed number of places which must not be exceeded, or (2) one such place. Bābǎige míng'é is literally '800 name given-numbers', i.e. 'a quota of 800 names.'

#### Note on No. 9

bìyùn: Literally, 'avoid-pregnancy', i.e. 'contraception'. Shíxíng

bìyùn 'to carry out (the government policy of encouraging) contraception, to practice birth control'.

Note on No. 10

miǎnfèide: Literally 'exempt from charge', i.e. 'free (of charge)'.

Zhèige zhǎnlǎn kényi miǎnfèi cānguān.                      You can visit this exhibit for free.

Sānyuè Báhào, fùnǚ hé hái'zi                      On March 8th, women and children can  
dào gōngyuán qù dōu shì                      go to parks free of charge.  
miǎnfèide.

Lǚxíng bù piányi a! Fēijīpiào                      Travelling is not cheap. Plane  
kě bú shì miǎnfèide.                      tickets are certainly not free!

Notes on No. 11

dédao: 'to receive, to get'.

Tā dédao hùzhào yǐhòu mǎshàng                      He left immediately after getting his  
jiù zǒu le.                      passport.

Tā dédao pīzhǔn kényi liú'zai                      He has gotten permission to stay in  
Běijīng gōngzuò.                      Peking to work.

yìjiān xīn fángzi: 'a new room'. Notice that although you have seen fángzi meaning 'house', it is being used here in the wider sense of 'a place to live'. In this phrase it is preceded by the counter for rooms of a house, jiān. Thus the whole phrase means 'a new room', not 'a new house'.

Living quarters in Peking and many other Chinese cities are very scarce. (Housing in Shanghai is more critical than Peking.) When a newly married couple applies for housing, they will be assigned a room that does not exceed 8-10 square meters. Rarely do living quarters have private baths, toilets, or kitchens. Later, when children come along, they will continue to live in the same size room.

Peking:

A Canadian tourist talks with her guide:

A: Wǒ zài Jiānádàde shihou jiù tīngshuō Zhōngguó kòngzhì rénkǒude gōngzuò zuòde hěn chénggōng. Nǐ kéyi bu kéyi gěi wo jiāngyijiāng?

When I was in Canada I heard that population control work is being done very successfully in China. Could you tell me about it?

B: Hǎo. Wǒ xiān shuōshuo zài chéngshìli shì zěnmé zuòde. Zài chéngshìli rúguo yǒu rén yào yǒu yíge háizi, děi zuòdao sān tōngguò.

Okay. First I'll talk about how it's being done in the cities. In the city if there's someone who wants to have a child, they have to get the 'three approvals'.

A: Shénme shì sān tōngguò?

What are the 'three approvals'?

B: Jiùshi děi yǒu nǐ gōngzuò dānwèi, nǐ zhùde dìfāngde jūmín wēiyuánhùi, hé pàichūsuǒde tóngyì.

It means that you must have the consent of your work unit, the neighborhood committee of the place you live, and the local police station.

A: Zhèi sānge dānwèi gēnju shénme pīzhǔn fùnǚmen shēng xiǎoháir?

On what basis do these three units give official permission to women to have children?

B: Gègè chéngshì měinián yǒu yídingde chūshēnglǜ, yě jiùshi shuō měinián zhǐ kéyi zēngjiā yíding shùmùde háizi. Zhèixiē míng'ér jiù àn rénkǒu fēnpèigei gègè shìqū. Gègè shìqū zài fēnpèigei yào shēng háizide nǚ-tóngzhì, suǒyì fùnǚ dōu shì dédao pīzhǔn yǐhòu cái huáiyùnde.

Each year the various cities have specific birth rates; that is to say, each year they can only increase by a specific number of children. These quotas are distributed among the various cities according to population. The various cities then distribute them to women comrades who want to have children. So women don't get pregnant until they receive official permission.

A: Zài nóngcūn, rénmen yě shíxíng bìyùn ma?

Do the people in the country also practice birth control?

B: Yě shíxíng bìyùn, kěshi bú xiàng chéngshìli zuòde nàme chénggōng.

They practice birth control too, but it isn't as successful as in the city.

A: Bìyùn gōngjù guì bu guì?

Are contraceptive devices expensive?

B: Zhèngfǔ tíchàng rénmin shíxíng bìyùn, suǒyì bìyùn yào hé bìyùn gōngjù dōu shì miǎnfèide.

The government encourages people to practice birth control, so all contraceptive medicines and devices are free.

PART II

12. Zài Zhōngguo, yǒu gōngzúde fùnǚ shēng hái'zi yǒu chǎnjià, hái yǒu gōngzī. In China working women get maternity leave when they have a child and they still receive their pay.
13. Hěn duō Zhōngguo fùnǚ yòng gèzhǒng bìyùn gōngjù shíxíng jìhuà shēngyù. Many Chinese women use various kinds of contraceptive devices to carry out family planning.
14. Zhōngguo rén zuò juéyù shǒushù-de duō bu duō? Are there many Chinese people who have contraceptive surgery performed on them?
15. Bìyùn shībàide rén kéyì dào yīyuàn qu zuò réngōng liúchǎn, hái kéyì yǒu liǎngge xīngqīde jià. A person who fails at birth control can go to the hospital to have an abortion performed, and they can also have two weeks of leave.
16. Zài shǎoshù mínzú dìqū rénkǒu bǐjiào shǎo. The population is relatively small in the national minority areas.
17. Zhōngguo rén xiāngxìn hóngtáng duì chǎnfù shì yìzhǒng hěn hǎode yíngyǎngpǐn. Chinese believe that brown sugar is a very nutritional food for women who have given birth within the last month.
18. Tā hé biérén bù tóng, tā shì wǒ zuì qīnjìnde péngyou. She's different from other people, she's my closest friend.
19. Shǒuxiān yào qù gěi Māma mǎi xiānhuā, ránhòu hái yào gěi nǐ bǎ wánjù xiūlihǎo. First I have to go buy fresh flowers for your mother, and then I have to fix your toy for you too.
20. Tándào Zhōngguode nóngcūn, gèdìde qíngkuàng dōu bù tóng. As for the rural areas of China, the situation is different in various places.

NOTES ON PART II

Notes on No. 12

chǎnjià: 'maternity leave'. The syllable chǎn, literally 'to give birth to' is used in compounds meaning 'maternity, delivery, birth'. It can also be used outside the context of human reproduction in compounds meaning 'to produce, production', as in chǎnpǐn 'product'.]

gōngzī: 'wages, pay', literally 'labor-capital'.

...yǒu chǎnjià, hái yǒu gōngzī: For a normal birth, a woman is given fifty-six days of paid leave; for a difficult birth, seventy days; and for twins, ninety days after the birth. After this period, one hour per day is allowed off in order to nurse the baby.

### Notes on No. 13

gèzhǒng: 'various kinds, every kind'. Gè 'each' is a specifier like zhèi- 'this' or nèi- 'that'. As a specifier, it can be followed by counters. Here you see ge- used with the counter -zhǒng 'types, kinds, sort, species'. Here are some other ways gè- is used:

Tā néng dào gèguó qù lǚxíng  
zhēn bú cuò.

It's great that he can go to all  
sorts of countries.

Xuéshengmen yīnggāi yǒu gèrén-  
de xuéxi jìhua.

Students should each have their own  
plan of study.

Míngtiānde diànyǐng piào gègè  
dānwèi dōu yǒu.

Each and every unit has movie tickets  
for tomorrow.

Sometimes ge- is followed directly by the noun.

Jǐntiān xiàwǔ gè dānwèi dōu  
kāi huì.

This afternoon every unit is having  
a meeting.

bìyùn gōngjù: 'contraceptive devices'. This does not refer to birth control pills. [Bìyùnpǐn 'birth control products' includes both bìyùnyào 'birth control pills' and bìyùn gōngjù.]

jìhuà shēngyù: 'family planning, planned parenthood'. Jìhuà means 'plan; to plan'. Shēngyù literally means 'to give birth to and raise'.

### Notes on No. 14

juéyù: 'sterilization,' or 'to sterilize, to be sterilized,' applies to operations for men and women. Sterilization for women is still much more common than for men; and more prevalent in the cities than in the countryside.

Tā juédìng juéyù.

He has decided on sterilization.

Juéyù shì jiějué Zhōngguó  
rénkǒu wèntíde yíge hǎo bànfǎ.

Sterilization is one good way to  
solve China's population problem.

shǒushù: 'surgery'.

Dàifu gěi ta zuòde shǒushù hěn  
chénggōng.

The surgery the doctor performed on  
him was very successful.

Notes on No. 15

shībài: 'to fail'.

Tā zuò mǎimai shībài le.

He failed in business.

Nǐ gēnju shénme shuō tā shībài  
le?

On what basis do you say that he  
failed?

réngōng liúchǎn: 'abortion', more literally, 'artificial miscarriage'.

dào yīyuàn qu zuò réngōng liúchǎn: 'go to the hospital to have an  
abortion performed'. Zuò réngōng liúchǎn here means 'to have an abortion  
done', not of course 'to do an abortion'. Compare the following two sentences:

Yīshēng gěi ta zuòle réngōng  
liúchǎn.

The doctor performed an abortion on  
her.

Tā zuòle réngōng liúchǎn.

She had an abortion.

In the first sentence, the subject of the sentence (yīshēng) performed the  
abortion. In the second sentence, the subject of the sentence (tā) had the  
abortion performed. In some cases, a verb-object in Chinese can mean either  
'to do something' or 'to have something done'. Here are some more examples:

Zhènme hǎode yīfu, shéi gěi nǐ  
zuòde?

Who made such nice clothes for you?

Zài Měiguó zuò yīfu hěn guǐ.

It's really expensive to have clothes  
made in America.

jià: 'leave, vacation'. You have seen this as part of the word  
chǎnjià 'maternity leave'. Here you see it used by itself.

Notes on No. 16

shǎoshù mínzú: 'minority nationalities', often translated as 'national  
minorities'. Besides the Han people, China has over fifty national minorities  
which are spread out over fifty to sixty percent of the land area and make up  
six percent of the total population of the country. The largest minorities  
are the Mongols (mostly in the Nèi Měnggǔ Zìzhìqū, 'Inner Mongolian Autonomous  
Region'), the Hui (Chinese Muslims), Tibetans, Uighurs (in the Xīnjiāng Wéiwú-  
ěr Zìzhìqū, 'Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region'), and the Miao (found in  
several southern provinces).

Shǎoshù mínzúde yīfu dōu hěn  
hǎo kàn.

The clothing of the national minorities  
is very beautiful.

Zhōngguó yǒu wǔshíjǐge shǎoshù-  
mínzú.

China has fifty-odd minority  
nationalities.

Notes on No. 17

xiāngxìn: 'to believe (that), to trust (someone), to believe in, to have faith in'.

Wǒ xiāngxìn, wǒmen liǎngguó  
rénmínde yǒuyì yídìng huì  
búduàn fāzhǎn.

I believe that the friendship between  
the people of our two countries  
will constantly grow.

Compare xiāngxìn to the verb xìn, which you learned in the last unit. For the second example you need to know yǒu is a verb meaning 'it's up to...'.

Bié xìn tāde huà.

Don't believe what he says.

Xìn bu xìn yǒu nǐ.

Believe it or not, as you like.

hóngtáng: 'brown sugar', literally 'red sugar'. The Chinese often use brown sugar in cooking and for medicinal purposes. For example, a common remedy for colds is a hot drink made by boiling ginger root and brown sugar in water [jiāngtāng], or simply brown sugar water [tángshuǐ].

chǎnfù: 'a woman who has given birth within the last month'. [Contrast this word with yùnfù 'a pregnant woman'.] The birth of a child is celebrated on the successful completion of the first month of life.

yíngyǎngpǐn: 'a nutritional food item'. Yíngyǎng means 'nutrition', for example:

Dòujiāng hěn yǒu yíngyǎng.

Soy bean milk is very nutritious.

-Pǐn is a syllable used in many words to mean 'item, article, product', [for example jìniǎnpǐn 'souvenir', yòngpǐn 'item of use', chǎnpǐn 'produce', gōngyèpǐn 'industrial product'].

As the Reference List sentence shows, the mother's health continues to be an important consideration even after the child is born. Both mother's and baby's health are carefully attended to after birth, while Western medicine emphasizes the mother's health only as long as she is carrying the child.

Notes on No. 18

bù tóng: 'to be not the same, to be different'. This is often used in

the pattern ...hé ... bù tóng, '... is different from ...'.

Hùzhào hé lǚxíngzhèng wánquán  
bù tóng, nǐ bú yào nòngcuò  
le.

A passport and a travel permit are  
completely different. Don't mistake  
them.

Zhèige gōngchǎng jīnnián hé  
qùniánde qíngkuàng hěn bù  
tóng.

The situation in the factory this  
year is very different from last  
year.

Bù tóng can also be used as a noun as in

Tāde dānwèi hé nǐde yǒu hěn  
dàde bù tóng.

There is a big difference between  
his work unit and yours.

You should be aware that tóng 'same', cannot be used as the main verb of a sentence to mean 'to be the same'. To say, 'These two things are the same', you must say Zhèiliǎngge dōngxi shì yíyàngde.

qīnjìn: 'to be close (to), to be on intimate terms (with)'.

Zhèiliǎngge rén hěn qīnjìn.

These two are on intimate terms.

Dàjiā dōu yuànyì qīnjìn ta.

Everyone wants to be friends with him.

#### Notes on No. 19

shǒuxiān: 'first (of all), in the first place, first; first, before anyone/anything else'.

Jīntiān dàjiā kāi huì shǒuxiān  
shì yào jiějué wǒmen chǎng  
shēngchǎnshàngde wèntí.

The first thing we want to do at  
today's meeting is to solve our  
factory's problems in production.

Zài fàndiànli shǒuxiān yào  
zhùyì jiějuéhǎo kèrénmende  
chī fàn hé xiūxi wèntí.

A hotel must first of all pay attention  
to solving the dining and rest  
problems of the guests.

Zuìjìn wàiguó péngyou hěn duō.  
Wǒmen shǒuxiān yào jiějué  
zhùde wèntí.

Recently there have been many foreign  
friends. We must first of all  
solve the lodging problems.

xiānhuā: 'fresh flowers', as opposed to dried or artificial flowers, which the Chinese are also fond of.

wánjù: '(children's) toy'.

Míngtiān érzi guò shēngrì, gěi  
ta mǎi ge wánjù.

Tomorrow is our boy's birthday,  
let's buy him a toy.

gèdì: 'each place; various places'. Here you see the specifier -gè 'each' used in another compound. Here are some more examples:

Wǒ hěn xiǎng dào Měiguó gèdì  
qù kànyìkàn, Měiguó shì ge  
wěidàde guójiā.

I'd very much like to go visit lots  
of places in America. America is  
a great country.

Zài Zhōngguó gèdì cānguān yǒu-  
lǎnle sānge xīngqī, wǒ gāi  
huí guó le.

I've visited and sightseen lots of  
places in China for three weeks,  
it's time to go back home.

Peking:

A Canadian student in Peking interviews a population control worker:

A: Wǒ zài Jiānádàde shihou jiù tīngshuō Zhōngguó kòngzhì rénkǒude gōngzuò zuòde hěn chénggōng. Nǐ néng bu néng gěi wǒ jiǎngyijiǎng nǐmen shì zěnmē zuòde?

When I was in Canada I heard that population control work is being done very successfully in China. Could you explain to me what you do?

C: Shǒuxiān, zhèngfǔ tíchàng wǎnhūn. Ērqiě, yìbānde shuō, zài chéngli jiéle hūnde rén liǎngnián yǐhòu cái yào hái zi. Tāmen yào xiǎoháir yìqián yīnggāi zuòdao sān tōngguò.

First, the government promotes late marriage. Furthermore, generally speaking, in the city, married people don't have children until after two years. Before they have a child they should have the 'three approvals'.

A: 'Sān tōngguò' shì shénme yìsi ne?

What does the 'three approvals' mean?

C: 'Sān tōngguò' yě jiùshi shuō yīnggāi dédao nǐ gōngzuò dānwèi, nǐ zhùde dìfāngde jūmín wēiyuánhùi hé pàichūsuǒ zhèisāngē dìfāngde tóngyì.

The 'three approvals' means that you should have the consent of your work unit, the neighborhood committee of the place you live, and the local police station.

A: Gè dānwèi gēnjū shénme biāozhǔn pīzhǔn fùnǚmen shēng xiǎoháir ne?

According to what criteria do the various units give official permission to women to have children?

C: Gè chéngshì dōu yǒu yídingde rénkǒu chūshēnglǜ, měinián měige chéngshì zhǐ kēyǐ zēngjiā yíding shùmùde hái zi. Zhèxiē míng'è jiù fēnpèigei gègè shìqūde xiǎng shēng hái zide nǚtóngzhì. Fùnǚ dōu shì dédao pīzhǔn yǐhòu cái huáiyūnde.

All the various cities have set population birth rates, and each year they can only increase by a certain number of children. These quotas are apportioned among women comrades in all the various cities who want to have children. Women do not become pregnant until they receive official permission.

Bù xiǎng yào hái zide kēyǐ shíxíng bìyùn; bìyùn gōngjù hé bìyùn yào dōu shì miǎnfèide.

Those who do not want to have children can practice birth control; all contraceptive medicines and contraceptive devices are free.

A: Rúguo bìyùn shībàile zěnmē bàn?

What is done if birth control fails?

C: Kēyǐ dào yīyuàn zuò réngōng liúchǎn, shǒushù búbì zìjǐ gěi qián, hái yǒu liǎngge xīngqīde

One can go to the hospital to have an abortion. A person doesn't have to pay for the operation herself, and

jià, yòu yǒu gōngzǐ.

there is two weeks' leave with pay.

A: Wǒ hǎoxiàng tīngshuō Zhōngguó fùnǚ shēng hái zide shíhou yǒu wǔshíliùtiān de chǎnjià, érqiě kéyǐ duō mǎi yìxiē yíngyǎngpǐn, shì bu shì?

It seems to me I've heard that when Chinese women have children they get 56 days' maternity leave, and they can also buy extra nutritional food items. Is that so?

C: Duì le, chǎnjià yǒu gōngzǐ. Chǎnfù hái kéyǐ mǎi yìliǎngjīn hóngtáng, duō mǎi yìliǎngjīn jīdàn. Zhōngguó rén dōu xiāng-xīn hóngtáng duì chǎnfù hěn hǎo.

That's right. The maternity leave is paid. In the month after delivery, a woman can also buy one or two catties of brown sugar, and one or two extra catties of eggs. Chinese believe that brown sugar is very good for women during the month after delivery.

A: Rénmen shēng hái zide shíhou, qīnqī péngyou sòng bu sòng lǐwù?

When someone has a baby, do relatives and friends give presents?

C: Qīnqī hé qīnjìnde péngyou hái shì huì sòng yìxiē xiǎo lǐwù, xiàng xiǎoháizide yīfu la, xiǎo tǎnzi la, xiǎo màozi la, wánjù shenmede. Yě yǒu rén huì sòng yìxiē shuǐguǒ huòzhě xiānhuā.

Relatives and close friends will still give a few small gifts, like clothes for the baby, little blankets, little hats, toys, and so forth. There are also people who will give a little fruit or fresh flowers.

A: Yíge jiā tíng kéyǐ yǒu jǐge xiǎoháir?

How many children can one family have?

C: Zài chéngshìlǐ niánqīng fūfù zuì duō yào liǎngge háizi.

In the city young couples have two children at the most.

A: Nóngcūnde qíngkuàng zěnmeyàng?

What's the situation like in the rural areas?

C: Gèdì nóngcūnde qíngkuàng bù tóng. Rénkǒu duōde dìfang zhèngfǔ tíchàng jìhuà shēngyù. Nóngcūnlǐde rén yě yǒng gè-zhōng bìyùn gōngjù. Bù shǎo rén yǒule liǎngge háizi yǐhòu jiù zuò juéyù shǒushù, nǎnde zuò, nǚde zuò, dōu kéyǐ. Nóngmín juéde zuò juéyù shǒushù bǐ yǒng bìyùn gōngjù fāngbiānde duō.

The situation in rural areas is different in different places. Where there's a large population the government promotes family planning. People in the rural areas also use all the various kinds of contraceptive devices. Quite a few people undergo contraceptive surgery after they've had two children. Either men or women may have this done. The peasants feel that having contraceptive surgery performed is much more convenient than using contraceptive devices.

Kěshi zài shǎoshù mínzú dìqū,  
yīnwei rénkǒu shǎo, zhèngfǔ bù  
tíchàng jìhuà shēngyù, suǒyǐ  
yìbānde jiāting kěyǐ duō yǒu  
jǐge xiǎoháir.

But in the areas populated by  
minority nationalities, because the  
population is smaller, the government  
doesn't advocate family planning, so  
the average family can have a few  
more children.

#### NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE

Rénmen shēng háizide shíhou, qīnqī péngyou sòng bu song lǐwù?: As  
stated in the dialogue, friends and relatives in the PRC give useful items  
for the baby, like clothes, hats, cups, or perhaps a chicken for the mother.  
These are presented casually.

Vocabulary

bìyùn	contraception
bù tóng	to be different
chǎnfù	a woman who has given birth within the last month
chǎnjià	maternity leave
chénggōng、	to succeed, to be successful
chūshēnglǜ	birth rate
dānwèi	unit
-dào	(indicates successful accomplishment of something)
dédao	to receive, to get
fēnpèi	to assign, to apportion, to allot
gèdì	the various places, each place
gègè	various
gēnjù (gēnju)	according to, based on
gèzhǒng	various kinds, types
gōngzī	wages, pay
hóngtáng	brown sugar
jià	vacation, leave
jiāting	family
jìhua shēngyù	planned parenthood, family planning
juéyù	sterilization
jūmín wěiyuánhùi	neighborhood committee
kòngzhi	to control
-men	plural suffix
miǎnfèi	to be free of charge
míng'é	the number of people assigned or allowed, quota (of people)
nóngmín	peasant
nǚ	female
pàichūsuǒ(r)	the local police station
pīzhǔn	to give official permission
qíngkuàng	situation
qīnjìn	to be close (to a person)

réngōng liúchǎn	abortion
sān tōngguò shǎoshù mínzú	"the three approvals" minority nationality, national minority
shēngyù shībài shìqū shǒushù shǒuxiān shùmu	to give birth to and raise to fail urban area or district operation, surgery first number
tōngguò tóngyì	to pass, to approve to consent, to agree
wánjù	toy
xiāngxìn xiānhuā xiǎoháir	to believe fresh flowers child, children
yě jiù shì shuō yìbān yìbānde shuō yídìng yíngyǎngpǐn	to mean; in other words ordinary, general, common generally speaking to be specific food items of special nutritional value
zēngjiā	to increase