

Customs Surrounding
Marriage, Birth, and Death: Unit 6

PART I

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| 1. Xiǎo Lǐde māma sǐ le. | Xiao Li's mother died. |
| 2. A: Nǐ shuō wǒmen shì fǒu gāi cānjiā tāde sānglǐ? | Do you think we should go to the funeral? |
| B: Wǒmen yīngdāng qù yíxià. | We should go. |
| 3. Xiǎo Lǐde māma jīntiān chū bìn. | The funeral procession for Xiao Li's mother is today. |
| 4. Yìbān rén de sānglǐ méiyǒu nàme duōde guīju le. | Most people's funerals don't have so many special customs anymore. |
| 5. Yìbān cānjiā sānglǐde rén dōu sòng wǎnlián huò huāquān. | Most people who attend a funeral send a funeral scroll or a flower wreath. |
| 6. Xiě wǎnlián fǎnzhèng láiibují le. | It's too late to write a funeral scroll anyway. |
| 7. Wǒmen qù mǎi yíge huāquān rúhé? | How about if we go buy a flower wreath? |
| 8. Niánqīng fùnǚ xǐhuan chuān huā yīfu. | Young women like to wear multicolored clothing. |
| 9. Nǎ néng ràng nǐ pòfei? | How could I make you spend money? |
| 10. Wǒ qù gěi tā mǎi diǎn xiǎo lǐwù jiù shì le. | I'll just go and buy her a little present. |
| 11. Zhǐ yào bú tài guì, wǒ hái shì dā jìchéngchē qu. | As long as it's not too expensive, it would be best if I took a taxi. |
| 12. Nǐ shuō wǒmen liǎngge rén héqilai sòng tā yí tào pánzi-wǎn zěnmeyàng? | What do you say the two of us give him a set of dishes together? |
| 13. Nǐ xiǎode Yángmíngshān Gōngmù zài nǎlǐ ma? | Do you know where Yangmingshan Public Cemetery is? |

NOTES ON PART I

Notes on No. 1

māma: 'mother, mom' Although this can be used as a term of address, like English 'Mom' or 'Mommy', it can also be used in informal conversation to refer to one's own or someone else's mother, as in wǒ māma 'my mother', or tā māma 'his mother'. For the term of direct address 'Mom', Mā is probably more commonly used than Māma.

Wǒ māma shàng bān qù le.

My mother has left for work.

Xiàwǔ, Māma jiù zuò huǒche lái kàn wǒ le.

This afternoon, Mom came by train to visit me.

sǐ: 'to die' This is a process verb, like bìng 'to become ill, to get sick', and therefore corresponds more closely to the English 'to become dead' than it does 'to be dead'. In English one can talk about a person who has a terminal illness, saying 'He is dying', but this does not translate directly into Chinese. In Chinese one can say Tā kuài (yào) sǐ le, 'He is about to die,' or Tā huóbuliǎo duó jiǔ le, 'He won't live much longer.'

Tīngshuō Lǎo Liúde fùqīn sǐ le.

I heard that Lǎo Liú's father has died.

Sǐ can be used directly before a noun as an adjective, meaning 'dead'. Shi sǐde may be used to mean 'is dead'.

Zhè shì yìtiáo sǐ yú.

This is a dead fish.

Zhèitiáo yú shì sǐde.

This fish is (a) dead (one).

Notes on No. 2

shì fǒu: 'is it (true) or isn't it (true that) ...' This phrase is a more formal-sounding equivalent of shì bu shì; fǒu in literary Chinese means 'or not'. In spoken Standard Chinese, the use of shì fǒu is more restricted than shì bu shì. First of all, shì fǒu has a more educated, formal ring to it than shì bu shì. Secondly, shì fǒu is usually used only before another verbal expression, as in the following examples:

Zhèzhǒng tiān shì fǒu huì xià yǔ?

Is (this weather) going to rain?

Jīnnián dōngtiān, nǐ shì fǒu xiǎng dào Mǎiān qū?

Are you hoping to go to Miami this winter?

Nǐ shì fǒu zhǔnbèi ànzhào zhège jìhuà qù zuò?

Are you planning to act according to this plan?

Nǐ yīnggāi xiǎngyixiǎng, nǐ
duì zhège rén shì fǒu liǎojiě.

You ought to think about whether you
understand this person or not.

Nǐ niánji bù xiǎo le, nǐ shì
fǒu kǎolǚguo jiéhūnde wèntí?

You're not young anymore, have you
considered the question of marriage?

Jīnnián, nǐmen xuéxiàode xué-
shēng shì fǒu zēngjiā le?

This year did the (number of) students
in your school increase?

Wǒ bù zhīdào wǒde yìjian shì
fǒu néng dédao tóngyì.

I don't know whether my opinion will
be agreed with or not.

Zhèizhǒng dōngxì zài zhèli shì
fǒu mǎidedào?

Can this sort of thing be bought
here?

Note on No. 3

chū bìn: 'to transport the coffin to the burial place or to the tomb'.
Literally, this means 'take out the coffin'.

Liújiā míngtiān chū bìn.

The Liú's have the funeral procession
tomorrow.

Zuótiān, Liú Xiānsheng gěi tā
fùqīn chūle bìn yǐhòu, huí
jiā jiù bìng le.

Yesterday, after Mr. Liú accompanied
his father's coffin to the cemetery,
he went home and then got sick.

Note on No. 4

guīju: 'fixed standards of conduct, regulations, or customs'.

Ànzhào Zhōngguóde guīju, gěi
sǐrén chūle bìn yǐhòu hái
yào zuò shénme?

According to Chinese custom, after
accompanying the coffin of the
deceased to the cemetery, what
else should be done?

Kèrén lái le, zài máng yě yào
hē bēi chá, zhè shì wǒmende
guīju.

When a guest comes, no matter how
busy he is, he should have a cup
a cup of tea. This is our custom.

Yǒu guīju means 'to have manners':

Zhège háiizi bù dǒng shì, měi
guīju, zhēn ràng rén bù hǎo
yìsi.

This child does not understand about
things, he has no manners. It
really embarrasses a person.

Wángjiāde lǎodà zhǎngde hǎokàn,
yǒu yǒu guīju, zhēn hǎo.

The Wáng's oldest son is good looking
and he is well mannered. He's
really great.

Guǐju as an adjectival verb means 'to be proper, to be correct (of a person)'.
Lǎo Wángde nǚér rén hěn guǐju. Lǎo Wáng's daughter is very proper.

Notes on No. 5

dōu: Some of the uses of dōu do not correspond to 'all'. 'All' in English is often described as 'collective', that is, referring to all the members in a group. Dōu in Chinese is often described as 'distributive', that is referring to the members of a group as individuals. This usage sometimes is translated as 'each'. Notice that in the Reference List sentence dōu in combination with yìbān and another noun produces this meaning.

Hěn duō Zhōngguó rén dào le
Měiguó dōu xiǎng niàn shū.

A lot of Chinese want to study after
they get to the United States.

Qiánjīnián, xǔduō xuéshēng
bìyè yǐhòu dōu dào nóngcūn
qu le.

Several years ago many students went
to the countryside after they
graduated.

Yìbān Zhōngguó rén dōu juéde
xué Yīngwén bǐ xué Zhōngwén
nán.

The average Chinese thinks that
English is harder to learn than
Chinese.

wǎnlián: 'funeral scroll, scroll of condolence', literally 'elegiac--couplet'. [Lián is short for duìlián 'a written or inscribed couplet (pair of parallel sentences)'.] Traditionally, white cloth scrolls in one to three strips were written for the deceased by friends. More recently a new practice has developed which is to send scrolls or wreaths bearing one character: diàn, "to sacrifice." Sending flowers has been brought in by Western custom.

Xiàwǔ wǒ dào Liújiā qu, nǐ gěi
xiě ge wǎnlián hǎo bu hǎo?

This afternoon I'm going to the Liu's,
could you write a funeral scroll
for them?

huò: 'or'. You have learned huòshi and huòzhě for 'or'. Huò is a more literary variant, but it can still be heard in conversation.

Jīntiān wǎnshàng huò míngtiān
wǎnshàng nǐ dào wǒ zhèlǐ lái
yítàng hǎo bu hǎo?

Come over to my house tonight or
tomorrow night, okay?

huāquān: 'flower wreath', literally 'flower circle'.

Wǒ xiǎng mǎi ge huāquān gěi
Liújiā sòngqu.

I want to buy a flower wreath to send
to the Liu's.

Note on No. 6

fǎnzhèng: 'anyway, anyhow, either way, in any case, all the same'.
Fǎnzhèng may come either before or after the subject of the sentence.

Nǐ jí shenme, fǎnzhèng gǎnbu-
shāng kāi huì le, mànman zǒu
ba!

What are you so anxious for, we won't
make it in time for the meeting
anyway, so let's just take our time!

Fǎnzhèng wǒ bù mǎi, méi qián
méi guānxi.

I'm not going to buy it anyway, so
it doesn't matter that I don't have
any money.

Wǒ fǎnzhèng méi shì, wǒmen jiù
tántan zhèige wèntí ba.

I don't have anything to do anyway,
so let's talk about this.

Fǎnzhèng wǒ yào qù, nǐ bú qù
yě kéyì.

I'm going anyway; it's okay if you
don't go or It's okay if you
don't go; anyway, I'm going.

Fǎnzhèng is often prefaced by a clause beginning with bù guǎn 'no
matter whether...':

Bù guǎn nǐ qù bu qù, fǎnzhèng
wǒ yào qù.

No matter whether you go or not, I'm
going anyway.

Note on No. 7

rúhé: 'how; how about; in what way'. This is a literary word which
means about the same as zěnmeyàng. In a more plain, colloquial style, the
Reference List sentence could also be said as Wǒmen qù mǎi yige huāquān
zěnmeyàng? Spoken Standard Chinese draws more on the written style in an
area like Taiwan, where a majority of the population learn Standard Chinese
in school, rather than at home. A speaker from Peking might consider
Wǒmen mǎi yige huāquān rúhé to sound a little stiff and unnatural. You
should be able to understand rúhé, but use it yourself only in speaking with
people who use it, or in writing.

Míngtiān Lǎo Zhāng qǐng wǒmen
dàjiā chī fàn, nǐ juéde rúhá?

Tomorrow Lǎo Zhāng has invited all
of us to eat, what do you think?

Zhèjiàn shìde jiéguǒ rúhé?

What was the outcome of this matter?

"Jiào wǒ rúhé bù xiǎng ta?"

"(It makes me so that) How could I
not miss her?" (name of famous
popular song of the 30's)

Note on No. 8

huā: 'to be multicolored'.

Jīntiān tā chuānle yíjiàn huā
yīfu, hǎo piàoliàng!

Today she's wearing a multicolored
dress. It's gorgeous!

Note on No. 9

Nǎ néng ràng ni pòfei: Nǎ or nǎr (Peking) is used in rhetorical questions.

Tā méi qián, nǎ néng jiēhūn!

He has no money, how can he get
married?

Zài Yéye nali nǎ(r) néng nàme
shuō huà!

How can you talk like that in front
of Grandpa?

Nǐ shi wǒmen jiāde rén, nǎ(r)
néng bú ràng ni zhīdao zánmen
jiāde shì ne?

You're family, how could we not let
you know what's going on in our
family?

Wǒ shuōde shì jǐbǎiniǎnqián
de shì, nà shíhoude Měiguó nǎ(r)
yǒu shenme chéngshì!

I'm talking about something several
hundred years ago, how could
America have had any cities at that
time?

A: Wǒ nǎ(r) míngbai!

Like heck I understand!

B: Nǐ nàme cōngmíngde rén,
nǎ(r) huì bù míngbai!

You're such a smart person, how could
you not understand?

Nǐ kàn, nǎ(r) yǒu zhèyang bàn
shìde, bù jīngguò jūmín
wēiyuánhùi, jiù xiǎng shēng
háizi, nà nǎ(r) xíng?

Look, how can you go about things
like this? You want to have a
child without going through your
neighborhood committee, how can
that be okay?

Tā yìzhí zài chénglǐ zhùzhe,
nǎ(r) dào guo nóngcūn ne!

When has he ever been to the country-
side! He's always lived in the city!

A: Zěnmeyàng? Xiǎo Zhāng kuài
jiēhūn le ba?

How's it going? Is Xiǎo Zhāng going
to get married soon?

B: Nǎr a! Nǚjiā fùmǔ bú yuàn-
yi, máfan dà le!

You must be kidding! The girl's
parents don't want it. There's
a lot of trouble.

Note on No. 10

jiù shì le: This phrase is used at the end of a sentence to mean '...that's all'. It can have several different implications, depending on the context:

- (1) "Don't worry, this matter can simply be taken care of like this."
(something is virtually taken care of)

Wǒ yòu wàngle bǎ shū dàilái,
búguò wǒ yídìng jiègei nǐ
jiù shì le.

I forgot to bring the book again,
but I'm going to lend it to you
for sure, don't worry.

Wǒ zhào nín shuōde bàn jiù
shì le.

I'll simply do as you say.

Děng yíxià gěi nǐ bàn jiù shì
le, nǐ jí shénme!

I'll take care of it for you in a
moment, don't worry, why are you
so anxious?

Ànzhào zhège jìhua zuò jiù shì
le, yǒu shénme hǎo tán-de?!

Do it according to this plan
and that's all there is to it!
What else is there to discuss?

- (2) 'Only, just this, nothing more than this'.

Zhèliǎngge hái'zi chàbuduō,
búguò Lǎo Dà cōngmíng yídiǎnr
jiù shì le.

These two children are about the
same, but the older one is a little
more intelligent, that's all.

Tā lái, méiyǒu shénme shì,
búguò xiǎng yào nàběn shū
jiù shì le.

When he came he wasn't up to anything
special, he just wanted that book,
that's all.

- (3) 'that's all that can be done about it'.

Fǎnzhèng wǒ gēn nǐ shuōguo jiù
shì le.

In any case, I've told you, and that's
all I can do.

Notes on No. 11

zhǐ yào: 'as long as, so long as, if only'.

Zhǐ yào wǒ jīntiān wǎnshang
yǒu kòng, jiù kěyǐ bǎ zhèběn
shū kànwán.

As long as I have time tonight, I can
finish reading this book.

dā: 'to travel by, to take (a bus, car, train, boat, etc.)'

Wǒ yě yào dào xuéxiào qu, dā
nín de chē xíng bu xíng?

I'm going to school too, can I get
a ride with you?

Wǒ dācuò le chē, jiéguǒ pǎodao
Běitóu qu le.

I got on the wrong bus, and ended up
in Běitóu.

Měitiān wǒ dā sīlù chē shàng
bān.

I take the Route 4 bus to work every
day.

Note on No. 12

héqilai: 'to combine, to put together, to unite'. Hé is a verb meaning 'to combine, to put together, to unite, to merge'. You should learn to use hé in the following combinations: hézai yìqǐ 'to combine (two or more things together)', héqilai 'to combine (forces), to come together, to put together', héchéng 'to combine into, to merge into'.

Wǒmen liǎngjiā héqilai mǎixiǎo
zhè liùjiān fángzi.

Our two families bought these six
rooms together.

Zhèliǎngge jùzi héchéng yíge,
róngyì shuō yidiǎnr.

If you combine these two sentences
into one, it's easier to say.

Zhèliǎngbān hézai yìqǐ, zhǐ
yǒu shíge xuéshēng, hái bú
suàn tài duō.

If these two classes are combined,
there are only ten students; that's
still not too many.

Notes on No. 13

xiǎode: 'know'. This is a synonym of zhīdao, and can be used in most of the same ways that zhīdao can be used. Xiǎode is not, however, commonly used in Peking; it is mostly used in southern areas.

gōngmù: 'public cemetery'.

Gāngcái tā yòu dào gōngmù qu
le, gěi tā māma sòng yībǎ
huā.

Just now she went to the cemetery
again and left a bunch of flowers
(on her mother's grave).

Taipei:

Two friends who work together at the Bank of Taiwan are having a talk:

- A: Tīngshuō Xiǎo Lǐde Māma sǐle.
Nǐ xiǎng wǒmen shì fǒu gāi qù
cānjiā tāde sānglǐ?
I heard that Xiǎo Lǐ's mother died.
Do you think we should go to the
funeral?
- B: Wǒmen gēn Xiǎo Lǐ yǐjīng shì
shíjīniánde lǎo péngyou le,
nǎ néng bú qù!
We've been friends with Xiǎo Lǐ for
over ten years, how could we not go!
- A: Sānglǐ yǒu méiyǒu shénme
tèbié guīju? Wǒ zhǎngde zhènme
dà le, hái méi cānjiāguo sānglǐ
ne!
Are there any special customs at
funerals? I've reached this age
without ever having been to a funeral!
- B: Zhǐ yào bù chuān huā yīfu
dàgài jiù kéyi le.
As long as you don't wear multi-
colored clothes it should be okay.
- A: Wǒmen gāi sòng diǎn shénme
dōngxī ma?
Should we send some kind of gift?
- B: Yìbān rén dōu sòng wǎnlián
huò huāquān. Wǒmen liǎngge rén
kéyi héqilai sòng yíge huāquān.
Nǐ kàn rúhé?
Most people send a funeral scroll
or a flower wreath. The two of us
can send a flower wreath together.
What do you think?
- A: Dāngrán hǎo....Nǐ zhīdao bu
zhīdao tā māma nǎtiān chū bīn?
Of course that would be good....Do
you know what day his mother's funeral
procession will be?
- B: Xià Lǐbàisān xiàwǔ sāndiǎn.
Next Wednesday afternoon at 3.
- A: Yào zàngzai nǎlǐ?
Where is she going to be buried?
- B: Yángmíngshān Dìyī Gōngmù.
In Yángmíngshān Public Cemetery No.
1.
- A: Zěnme qù?
How do you get there?
- B: Wǒ yě bù xiǎode. Fǎnzhèng
dào shíhou wǒmen dā jìchéngchē
qu jiù shì le.
I don't know either. Anyway,
when the time comes we'll just take
a cab there.
- A: Xiǎng bu xiǎng xiànzài qù
kànkàn Xiǎo Lǐ?
Do you want to go see Xiǎo Lǐ
now?
- B: Bù xíng. Wǒ jīntiān wǎnshang
yǒu shìqing.
I can't. I'm busy tonight.

A: Nàme míngtiān jiàn.

Then I'll see you tomorrow.

B: Míngtiān jiàn.

See you tomorrow.

PART II

- | | |
|---|--|
| 14. Zài Táiběi yǒu rén <u>rènwéi</u>
Yángmíngshān gōngmù <u>fēngshuǐ</u>
hǎo. | In Taipei there are people who
believe that the feng-shui in
Yangmingshan Cemetery is good. |
| 15. Shéi dōu xīwàng tāde <u>zǐsūn</u>
<u>hòudài fādǎ</u> . | Everyone hopes that his descendants
will be prosperous. |
| 16. <u>Jiǎngjiu</u> fēngshuǐ hǎo bu hǎo
háishi jiù <u>guānniàn</u> . | To be particular about whether the
<u>fengshui</u> is good or not is an old
way of thinking. |
| 17. Wǒ mǔqīn bù <u>míxìn</u> , tā shuō
<u>tǔzàng</u> , <u>huǒzàng</u> dōu kěyī. | My mother isn't superstitious; she
says that either burial or
cremation is okay. |
| 18. Wǒmen <u>yídao</u> qù <u>Jílè Bīnyígǔǎn</u>
ba! | Let's go to the Paradise Funeral
Home together, okay? |
| 19. Wǒ kàndào chū bīnde rén <u>dàdōu</u>
zhǐ zài <u>shǒubìshàng dài xiào</u> . | I saw that most of the people in the
funeral procession were only
wearing mourning on their arm. |
| 20. Wǒ cónglái bù chuān <u>huī yīfu</u> . | I never wear gray clothing. |
| 21. Kèrén dōu yào zài <u>qiānmíngbù-</u>
shàng qiān míng, zhè shì
wǒmende <u>xíguàn</u> . | The guests are all supposed to sign
their name in a guest book. This
is our custom. |

NOTES ON PART II

Notes on No. 14

rènwéi: 'to think (that), to consider (that), to believe (that)'. This is a very common verb used to express that someone has formed an opinion or made a judgment about a person or thing.

Wǒ rènwéi zhè shì yíge hěn
zhòngyàode wèntí.

I think this is a very important
question.

Wǒ bú rènwéi nǐ yīnggāi zuò
zhèjiàn shì.

I don't think you should do this.

fēngshuǐ: Literally 'wind and water', this means the geographical outlay of something to be built, such as a grave or the foundation of a house. The traditional Chinese science of fēngshuǐ, or geomancy, is concerned with the good and bad influences which the location of a grave or building are believed to exert over a family and its descendants. In particular, the dead are influenced by and able to influence the celestial bodies for the benefit of the living. Each family, therefore, is naturally interested in arranging the most auspicious placement for its family grave.

Zhège fāngzide fēngshuǐ bù hǎo. The fengshui of this house is no good.

Zhèlǐde fēngshuǐ bú cuò. The fengshui here is pretty good.

Notes on No. 15

zǐsūn: 'sons and grandsons', or used in a more general sense, 'offspring, descendants'. For this example, you have to know that Huángdì means 'the Yellow Emperor', a legendary ruler thought of as the father of Chinese civilization.

Zhōngguó rén dōu shì Huángdì-de zǐsūn. The Chinese are all descendants of the Yellow Emperor.

hòudài: 'descendants, posterity, later generations'.

Wǒmen de hòudài dōu yīnggāi jìzhu zhèijiàn shì! Our descendants should all remember this!

Tā méiyǒu hòudài. He is without descendants.

fādá: 'to be prosperous, to be flourishing; to be developed, to be well-developed'. For the first example, you need to know that gōngshāngyè means 'industry and commerce'.

Měiguó de gōngshāngyè fēicháng fādá. America's industry and commerce are very developed.

Zhèijiā rénjiā hěn fādá. This family is prosperous.

Notes on No. 16

jiǎngjiu: 'to be particular about, to be meticulous about, to pay attention to, to strive for'.

Zhège rén hěn jiǎngjiu chī, hěn jiǎngjiu chuān. This person is particular about what he eats and what he wears.

Nèige hái zi tài jiǎngjiu chuān. That kid pays too much attention to what she wears.

Jiǎngjiu can also mean 'to be elegant'.

Nǐmen jiāde jiājū zhēn jiǎngjiu. Your furniture is truly elegant.

guānniàn: 'way of thinking, concept, notion, view, sense (of), mentality (of).'

Měiguó rén de guānniàn gēn
Zhōngguó rén de guānniàn yǒude
yíyàng, yǒude bù yíyàng.

Sometimes the American way of thinking
and the Chinese way is the same,
sometimes not.

Nǐ kàn ba, zài guò jǐnián nián-
qīng rén yīnggāi wǎnliàn wǎn-
hūn jiù huì biànchéng yìzhǒng
guānniàn.

You watch, in more few years, it will
have become an accepted notion that
young people should get involved
late and marry late.

Notes on No. 17

míxìn: 'to be superstitious (about); superstition'.

Shāngcháode shíhou Zhōngguó rén
bǐjiào míxìn, xiànzài bǐjiào
bù míxìn le.

During the Shang Dynasty, the Chinese
were relatively superstitious, now
they aren't so much any more.

Yǒude Zhōngguó rén míxìn fēng-
shuǐ.

Some Chinese are superstitious about
fengshui.

tǔzàng: 'to bury (a dead person)', literally 'ground-bury'. This word is used only in contrast to other ways of disposing of a dead body, for example cremation or burial at sea. [If no contrast with other forms of disposal is implied, then the word for 'to bury' is simply zàng (for formal burials), mái (for informal burials), máizàng, or ānzàng (literally 'peacefully bury', a respectful term).]

Èguó rén shuōguo tāmen yào
máizàng Měiguó.

The Russians said they wanted to
bury Americans.

huǒzàng: 'to cremate; cremation'. In this word, you may think of zàng 'to bury' as extended to mean 'to dispose of (a dead body)'. Huǒ means 'fire'.

Note on No. 18

yídào: 'together'. You have already learned yìqǐ and yíkuàir for 'together'. Yídào is mostly used by speakers of southern Mandarin and is little used by northerners.

Yàohuá hé tāde nǚpéngyou yídào
kàn diànyǐng qù le.

Yàohuá and his girlfriend went to
see a movie.

Háizimen zài yídào wánr.

The children are playing together.

Notes on No. 19

dàdōu: 'for the most part, mostly'. Another word with the same meaning which is probably used by more people than dàdōu is dàduō.

Zài Yīndù rénmin dàdōu (or
dàduō) xìn Yīndujiào.

In India the people are mostly Hindu.

Zhōngguó rén dàduō shì nóngmín.

Chinese for the most part are rural people.

shǒubì: 'arm (from the wrist to the shoulder)'. Other words for 'arm' used in different regions are gēbei and gēbo (Peking gēbe).

Xiǎo Lǐ gēbo shòule shāng,
Xiǎo Wǎngde tuǐ yě shòule
shang.

Xiǎo Lǐ was hurt in the arm, and also
Xiǎo Wǎng was hurt in the leg.

Gāngcái, wǒ bù xiǎoxin pèngdao-
le ménshang, dào xiànzài
shǒubì hái téng ne.

Just now I was careless and bumped
into the door, and my arm still
hurts now.

dàixiào: 'to wear mourning'. Formerly, people wore certain types of clothes while in mourning (sackcloth or white from head to foot). Nowadays, customs differ widely, but some small item is usually still worn to indicate a death in the family. These include a white flower in the hair, a coarse cloth patch on the arm or in the hair, or a black armband.

Tā fùqin sǐle kuài sānnián le,
tā hái dàixiào ne!

Her father has been dead for almost
three years and she is still wearing
mourning!

Notes on No. 20

cónglái bù: 'never, never does...'. In the last unit, you saw the pattern cónglái méi(you), meaning 'have never...' or 'had never...'. Cónglái means 'from the past up until now (it has always been this way)'.

Wǒ cónglái bú yuànyì zǎoshang
niàn shū.

I never want to study in the morning.

huī: 'to be gray'.

Zài Zhōngguó dàduōshù rén dōu
xǐhuan chuān lán sè hé huīsè de
yīfu.

The great majority of people in China
like to wear blue or gray clothing.

qiānmíngbù: 'guest book', literally, 'sign-name record book'.

qiān míng: 'to sign one's name'.

Qǐng nǐ zài zhèlǐ qiān míng. Please sign here.

xíguàn: 'custom, habit'. The definition of xíguàn in a Chinese dictionary reads: 'behavior, tendency, or social practice cultivated over a long period of time, and which is hard to change abruptly'. Compare this with fēngsú 'custom', which you learned in Unit 1: 'the sum total of etiquette, usual practices, etc. adhered to over a long period of time in the development of society'.

Notice that xíguàn may refer to the way of an individual or of a community, whereas fēngsú only refers to the way of a community.

Taipei:

An American student attending Taiwan National University is talking with a Chinese classmate and friend:

- A: Tīngshuō Wáng Lǎoshīde fùqīn qùshì le. Nǐ xiǎng wǒmen shì fǒu gāi qù cānjiā sānglǐ?
I heard that Teacher Wáng's father died. Do you think we should attend the funeral?
- B: Wǒ xiǎng wǒmen yīngdāng qù.
I think we ought to go.
- A: Tīngshuō sānglǐ zài Jílè Bìnyígǔǎn jǔxíng. Nǐ xiǎode Jílè Bìnyígǔǎn zài nǎli ma?
I hear that the funeral is going to be held at the Paradise Funeral Home. Do you know where that is?
- B: Xiǎode. Jiù zài Nánjīng Dōnglù.
Yes. it's on Nanking East Road.
- A: Wǒ cónglái méi cānjiāguo Zhōngguo rén de sānglǐ, bù zhīdào nǐmen yǒu nǎxiē guīju. Nǐ néng bu néng gēn wǒ jiǎngyíjiǎng?
I've never been to a Chinese funeral, so I don't know what special practices you have. Could you tell me about them?
- B: Kéyì. Xiànzài yìbān rén de sānglǐ dōu hěn jiǎndān, méiyǒu tài duōde guīju. Búguò, nǐ bú yào chuān hóngde, lǜde, huòshì huāde yīfu. Chuān hēide, huǐde, lán de dōu kéyì. Qù cānjiā sānglǐde rén dādōu sòng wǎnlián huò huāquān. Wǒ xiǎng wǒmen kéyì héqilai sòng yìge huāquān.
Okay. These days the average person's funeral is very simple. There aren't too many special customs. But you shouldn't wear red, green, or multi-colored clothing. Black, gray, and blue would all be okay to wear. Most people who attend a funeral send a funeral scroll or a flower wreath. I think we could send a flower wreath together.
- A: Hǎo.
Okay.
- B: Dào bìnyígǔǎnde shíhou, nǐ yí jìn mén jiù huì kàndào zhuōzishang fàngzhe qiānmíngbù, nǐ yào zài shàngmian qiān míng.
When you get to the funeral home, as soon as you go in the door you'll see a guest book on the table. You should sign your name in it.
- A: Ng. Wáng Lǎoshīde fùqīn yào tǔzàng háishi huǒzàng, nǐ tīngshuō le ma?
Uh huh. Have you heard whether Teacher Wáng's father is going to be buried or cremated?
- B: Tīngshuō shì yào tǔzàng.
I heard he's going to be buried.
- A: Yào zàngzai nǎli?
Where is he going to be buried?

- B: Yào zàngzai Yángmíngshān
Gōngmù, yīnwei tāmen rènwéi
nàlǐde fēngshuǐ hǎo, rén
zàngzai nàlǐ, tāde zǐsūn
hòudài jiù huì fādá.
- A: Táiwān xiànzài yǒu xiē rén
hái yǒu diǎn míxìn, shì bu shì?
- B: Shìde, búguò zhèxiē dōu shì
jiù guānniàn. Niánqīng rén
dàdōu bù jiǎngjiu zhèxiē le.
- A: Táiwān xiànzài hái yǒu dài
xiǎode xíguān ma?
- B: Yǒu. Nǐ méi kàndào Wáng
tā shǒubìshàng jiù dài zhe
xiào ne. Yǐqián de rén dài
xiào yào dài yīnián! Xiànzài de
rén duōbàn zhǐ dài yībǎitiān
le.
- A: Míngtiān wǒmen shénme shíhou
qù?
- B: Xiàwǔ yìdiǎn zhōng wǒ zài
Táidà ménkǒu děng nǐ, wǒmen
yídào qù.
- A: Hǎo.
- In Yángmíngshān Public Cemetery,
because they believe that the
fengshui there is good, and that if
a person is buried there his
descendants will be prosperous.
- There are still some people in
Taiwan who are a little superstitious,
aren't there?
- Yes. But these are all old notions.
For the most part, young people don't
pay much attention to this kind of
thing any more.
- Does the custom of wearing mourning
still exist in Taiwan?
- Yes. Didn't you see Teacher Wáng,
she's wearing mourning on her arm.
Before, people had to wear mourning
for a year! Now most people only
wear it for a hundred days.
- What time shall we go there
tomorrow?
- I'll wait for you at the gate of
Taiwan University at one o'clock, and
we can go together.
- Okay.

NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE

Funeral procedures in the PRC today are very simple. In the interest of sanitation (bodies might have some communicable disease) and economy (ground burials are expensive and consume government agricultural land), deceased city residents are required to be cremated. By government regulation the immediate family is allowed two days of paid leave, sàng jià. The funeral involves someone saying a few kind words about the deceased in the presence of relatives and people from his work unit. Those present are dressed plainly, bearing a white flower. Ashes are placed in carved wood or porcelain boxes in a gǔhuī cúnfàngchù, a building reserved for this purpose. It is not necessary to give anything to the family of the deceased

but people sometimes give money or other small items. In the countryside, there might be a large feast at the deceased's home. There is an attitude which says a funeral is a time of gladness when the deceased enters the world of the non-living. [A funeral is a "white joyous event," bái xīshì. A wedding is a "red event." Together they are sometimes referred to as hóngbái xīshì, red and white joyous events.]

Vocabulary

bìnyígǔǎn	funeral home
chū bìn	to hold a funeral procession
cónglái bù	never
cónglái dǒu	always (in the past)
cónglái měi	have never
dā	travel by, take (a taxi, bus, train, airplane, etc.)
dàdǒu	for the most part
dài xiào	to wear mourning
fādá	to be developed, to be prosperous
fǎnzhèng	anyway, in any case
fēngshuǐ	the Chinese science of geomancy (that is, the influence of landscape on people and their fortunes)
gāi	should, ought to
gōngmù	public cemetery
guānniàn	concept, notion, view
guīju	special customs, established rules
héqilai	to combine, to join together
hòudài	descendants
huā	to be multicolored
huāquān	flower wreath
huī	to be gray
huò	or
huǒzàng	cremation
jiǎngjiu	to be particular about; to be elegant, to be tasteful
Jílè Bìnyígǔǎn	Paradise Funeral Home (in Tapei)
jiù shì le	..., that's all
māma	mother, mom
míxìn	to be superstitious; superstition
nǎ (nǎli, nǎr)	how (used in rhetorical questions to deny something)
qiān míng	to sign one's name
qiānmíngbù	guest book
rènwéi	to think that, to believe that

rúhé	how, in what way; how (someone or something) is; how is it (literary form)
shì fǒu shǒubì sǐ	(literary form meaning <u>shì bu shi</u>) arm to die
tǔzàng	burial (the word used in contrast to cremation or burial at sea)
wǎnlián	funeral scroll
xiǎode xíguàn	to know habit, custom
Yángmíngshān yídào	a mountain in suburban Taipei together
zhǐ yào zǐsūn	as long as, if only descendants