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Welcome to *New Practical Chinese Reader!*

This textbook features several imaginary characters to make your Chinese learning experience more enjoyable: international students Ding Libo, Lin Na, and Ma Dawei; Chinese teachers Mr. Yang, Ms. Chen, and Professor Zhang; Chinese students Song Hua, and Wang Xiaoyun; and Chinese reporter Lu Yuping. They, together with the help of your instructor, will act as tour guides for your adventure, guiding you and your classmates into the fascinating world of Chinese, the language with the largest number of speakers in the world today. Now let's get to know our companions for this journey:

人物介绍

Introduction to Main Characters in the Text



丁力波 Dīng Lìbō

A Canadian student,
aged 21, male.

Gubo is his father;
Ding Yun is his mother.



马大为 Mǎ Dàwéi

An American student,
aged 22, male.



林娜 Lín Nà

A British student,
aged 19, female.



宋华 Sòng Huá

A Chinese student,
aged 20, male.



王小云 Wáng Xiǎoyún

A Chinese student,
aged 20, female.



陆雨平 Lù Yǔpíng

A Chinese reporter,
aged 26, male.



陈老师 Chén lǎoshī

A Chinese teacher,
aged 30, female.



张教授 Zhāng jiàoshòu

A Chinese professor,
aged 48, male.



杨老师 Yáng lǎoshī

A Chinese teacher,
aged 32, male.

This lesson begins by introducing some sounds unique to the Chinese language, including tones. The Chinese writing system dates back more than four thousand years, and it is especially intriguing to see how Chinese characters developed since their basically pictographic origins in ancient China. By the end of the lesson, you will know eleven Chinese characters and be able to express some everyday greetings in Chinese.

第一课 Lesson 1

Nǐ hǎo
你好

一. 课文 Text

(一)

【打招呼】 Saying hello

Lù Yǔpíng: Libō, nǐ hǎo.^①

陆雨平: 力波,你好。

Libō: Nǐ hǎo, Lù Yǔpíng.

力波: 你好,陆雨平。



生词 New Words

1. nǐ	Pr	你	you
2. hǎo	A	好	good; well; fine; O.K.
3. Lù Yǔpíng	PN	陆雨平	(name of a Chinese reporter)
4. Lìbō	PN	力波	(name of a Canadian student)

(二)

Lìbō: Lín Nà, nǐ hǎo ma? ②

力波: 林娜, 你好吗?

Lín Nà: Wǒ hěn hǎo, nǐ ne? ③

林娜: 我很好, 你呢?

Lìbō: Yě hěn hǎo. ④

力波: 也很好。

【问候】 Greetings



生词 New Words

- | | | | |
|-----------|------|------------------|---|
| 1. ma | QPt | 吗 | (interrogative particle for question expecting yes-no answer) |
| 2. wǒ | Pr | 我 | I; me |
| 3. hěn | Adv | 很 | very |
| 4. ne | MdPt | 呢 | (a modal particle used for elliptical questions) |
| 5. yě | Adv | 也 ⁽¹⁾ | too; also |
| 6. Lín Nà | PN | 林娜 | (name of a British student) |

二. 注释 Notes

① Nǐ hǎo.

“Hello!”, “How do you do?”

This is the most common form of greeting in Chinese. It can be used at any time of day when meeting people for the first time or for people you already know. The response to this greeting form is also “你好”(“Nǐ hǎo”).

② Nǐ hǎo ma?

“How are you?”

This is also a form of greeting, often used after you have not seen someone for some time, and the response is usually “我很好”(“Wǒ hěn hǎo”) or other similar formulae.

③ Nǐ ne?

“And (how are) you?”

④ Yě hěn hǎo.

“(I am) fine (literally, very good), too.”

This is an elliptical sentence, with the subject “我”(wǒ) omitted. In spoken Chinese, when the context is explicit and there is no ambiguity, the subject is often omitted. One may also say “很好”(“Hěn hǎo”) to answer the question “你好吗?” (“Nǐ hǎo ma? ”).

三. 语音练习

Pronunciation Drills

声母 Initials: b p m n l h

韵母 Finals: a o e i u ü

ao en ie in ing uo

[1] Students are required to master the characters of the purple new words in this lesson.

1. 拼音 Spelling

bā	bō	bī	bū	bīn	bīng
pā	pō	pī	pū	pīn	pīng
mā	mō	mī	mū		
nē	nāo	niē			
lē	lāo	liē	luō		
hē	hāo		huō		

2. 四声 The four tones

ā	á	ǎ	à	
nī	ní	nǐ	nì	
hāo	háo	hǎo	hào	nǐ hǎo
lī	lí	lǐ	lì	
bō	bó	bǒ	bò	Lìbō
līn	lín	lǐn	lìn	
nā	ná	nǎ	nà	Lín Nà
lū	lú	lǔ	lù	
yū	yú	yǔ	yù	
pīng	píng			Lù Yǔpíng
wō		wǒ	wò	
	hén	hěn	hèn	wǒ hěn hǎo
yē	yé	yě	yè	yě hěn hǎo

3. 辨音 Sound discrimination

bā	——	pā	nǚ	——	nǚ	wǔ	——	hǔ
(eight)			(female)			(five)		(tiger)
bīng	——	bīn	piě	——	biě	huǒ	——	wǒ
(ice)			(left-falling strokes)			(fire)		(I)

4. 辨调 Tone discrimination

mǎ	——	mā	mù	——	mǔ	yī	——	yí
(horse)		(mom)	(wood)			(one)		
yě	——	yè	lì	——	lǐ	mén	——	mèn
(also)		(night)	(strength)		(in)	(door)		

(二) 【问候 Greetings】

1. 完成下列会话 Complete the following dialogue

Mǎ Lì: Nǐ hǎo ma?

Lù Yì: _____, _____?

Mǎ Lì: Wǒ yě hěn hǎo.

2. 情景会话 Situational dialogue

You run into a Chinese friend whom you haven't seen for a long time. What will you say to him/her?

(三) 听述 Listen and repeat

你好吗?

我很好,你呢?

我也很好。

五. 语音

Phonetics

1. 声母和韵母 Initials and finals

A syllable in the common speech of modern Chinese usually consists of an initial, which is a consonant that begins the syllable, and a final, which constitutes the rest of the syllable. For example, in the syllable “píng”, “p” is the initial and “ing” is the final. A syllable can stand without an initial, such as “yě”, but all syllables must have a final. In the common speech of modern Chinese, there are altogether 21 initials and 38 finals.

2. 发音要领 Pronunciation key

Initials: m, n, l, h are pronounced similarly to their counterparts in the English language.

b like “p” in “speak” (unaspirated, voiceless)

p like “p” in “park” (aspirated, voiceless)

Note: Particular attention should be paid to the pronunciation of the aspirated and unaspirated consonants: b-p.

Finals: e like “e” in “her”

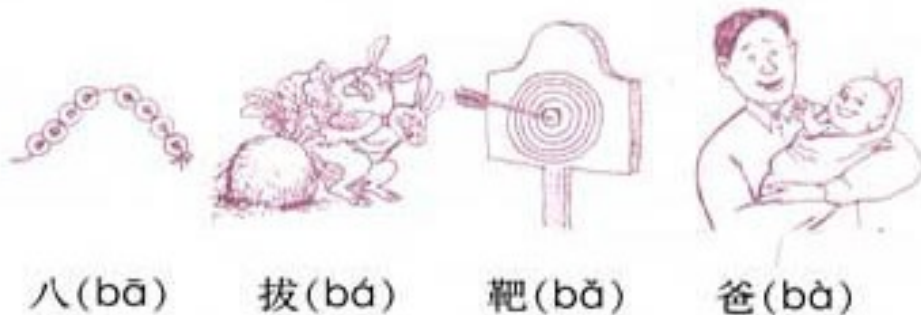
ie like “ye” in “yes”

-ng (final) a nasalised sound like the “ng” in “bang” without pronouncing the “g”

Note: The pronunciation of the “e” in a compound final is different from that of the simple final “e”.

3. 声调 Tones

Chinese is a tonal language in which the tones convey differences in meaning.



In common speech there are four basic tones, represented respectively by the following tone marks:

- “ˉ” for the first tone,
- “ˊ” for the second tone,
- “ˇ” for the third tone, and
- “ˋ” for the fourth tone.

When a syllable contains only a single vowel, the tone mark is placed directly above the vowel letter as in “lù” and “hěn”. The dot over the vowel “i” should be dropped if the tone mark is placed above it, as in “nǐ”, “nín” and “píng”. When the final of the syllable is composed of two or more vowels, the tone mark should be placed above the vowel pronounced with the mouth widest open (e.g. hǎo).

The openness of the mouth for the vowels, from widest to smallest is as follows:

a o e i u ü

4. 三声变调 Third-tone sandhi

A third tone, when immediately followed by another third tone, should be pronounced in the second tone, but with the tone mark “ˇ” remaining unchanged. For example:

nǐ hǎo → ní hǎo Wǒ hěn hǎo. → Wó hén hǎo.
hěn hǎo → hén hǎo Yě hěn hǎo. → Yé hén hǎo.

5. 拼写规则 Spelling rules

At the beginning of a syllable, “i” is written as “y” (e.g. iě → yě). “i” is written as “yi” when it forms a syllable all by itself (e.g. ī → yī).

At the beginning of a syllable, “u” is written as “w” (e.g. uǒ → wǒ). “u” is written as “wu” when it forms a syllable all by itself (e.g. ū → wū).

When “ü” is at the beginning of a syllable or forms a syllable by itself, a “y” is added to it and the two dots over it are omitted (e.g. ũ → yǔ).

汉语的语序 Word order in Chinese sentences

The main characteristic of Chinese grammar is that it lacks of morphological changes in person, tense, gender, number, and case in the strict sense. The word order, however, is very important to convey different grammatical meanings. The subject of a sentence is usually placed before the predicate. For example:

Subject	Predicate
你 Nǐ	好。 hǎo.
我 Wǒ	很 好。 hěn hǎo.
力波 Lìbō	也 很 好。 yě hěn hǎo.







Chinese characters originated from pictures. The history of their formation is very long, dating back to remote antiquity. Present-day Chinese characters, which evolved from ancient Chinese characters, are square-shaped. Here are some examples illustrating their long evolution:

Picture	Oracle Bone Inscription	Small Seal Character	Official Script	Complex Character in Regular Script	Simplified Character in Regular Script
					

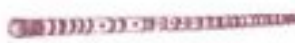





1. 汉字基本笔画 Basic strokes of Chinese characters

Chinese characters are written by combining various kinds of "strokes". These strokes can be divided into "basic" strokes and "combined" strokes.

Basic strokes of Chinese characters

stroke	Name	Example	Way to Write
	diǎn	门	The dot is written from top to bottom-right, as in the first stroke of "门".
	héng	一	The horizontal stroke is written from left to right.
	shù	木	The vertical stroke is written from top downward to bottom, as in the second stroke of "木".
	piě	力	The downward-left stroke is written from top to bottom-left, as in the second stroke of "力".
	nà	八	The downward-right stroke is written from top to bottom-right, as in the second stroke of "八".
	tí	我	The upward stroke is written from bottom-left to top-right, as in the fourth stroke of "我".

2. 认写基本汉字 Learn and write basic Chinese characters

- (1) 一 一
yī one 1 stroke 
- (2) 八 丿 八
bā eight 2 strokes  
- (3) 力 丿 力
lì strength 2 strokes  
- (4) 门 (門) 丶 丨 冂 门
mén door 3 strokes  
- (5) 也 丿 力 也
yě too; also 3 strokes

(6) 马 (馬)

一 冫 马 马

馬



mǎ horse 3 strokes

Note: “马” is written as “冫” on the left side of a character.

(7) 女

一 ㇇ 女 女

女



nǚ female 3 strokes

Note: “女” is written as “㇇” on the left side of a character.

(8) 五

一 一 丿 五 五



wǔ five 4 strokes

(9) 木

一 十 才 木

木



mù wood 4 strokes

Note: “木” is written as “才” on the left side of a character.

(10) 火

一 一 丶 火 火

火



huǒ fire 4 strokes

Note: “火” is written as “一” at the bottom of a character.

3. 认写课文中的汉字 Learn and write the Chinese characters appearing in the texts

林 lín

林 → 木 + 木

林



文化知识

Cultural Notes

The Chinese Language (*Hanyu*) and “Common Speech” (*Putonghua*)

Scholars think Chinese writing originated almost four thousand years ago and that the spoken language goes back to remote antiquity, making it one of the world's oldest languages. In spite of its great age, Chinese is now one of the most widely used living languages. The language is spoken in many dialects within China, as well as in many overseas Chinese communities, especially in Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas. And there are more than a billion native speakers of Chinese worldwide. It is one of the languages the United Nations uses when conducting official business.

Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. *Hanyu*, literally "language of the *Han*", refers to the standard Chinese language, and is spoken by the *Han*, *Hui*, *Manchu*, and other ethnic groups that constitute 94% of the population of China. There are fifty-six recognized ethnic groups in China, using as many as eighty different languages.

Chinese includes variants from seven main dialect groups. The northern or Mandarin dialect covers three fourths of China's territory and includes two thirds of its population. Standard Chinese is also known by its official designation, *Putonghua*, literally "common speech". *Putonghua* is based on the northern dialect, using the dialect of Beijing as the basis for its pronunciation and modern vernacular literature for its grammatical structure. This is the Chinese that is taught in this textbook.