

# COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGES



## Yìfēng xìn (A letter)

An American student studying Chinese in Washington, D.C. writes a letter to his friend, asking him to correct a diary entry written in Chinese which he encloses. The diary tells about a movie reception at the Chinese Embassy.

### Frame 1

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Dàwèi:  | David:  |
| 2 Nǐ shànggèyuè gěi wǒde xìn yǐjīng shòudàole. Zuì jīn lǎoshī jiāo wǒmen zěnmeyòng "lái" biǎoshì "zhèr," yòng "qù" biǎoshì "nèr." | I've already received the letter you sent me last month. Recently (my) teacher has been teaching us how to use "come" to indicate "here," and "go" to indicate "there." |
| 3 Zhèizhǒng yǔfǎ wǒ hái zhǎngwòde búgòu hǎo.  | I haven't yet grasped this type of grammar too well.  |
| 4 Xiàmiàn shì wǒ yòng zhèizhǒng yǔfǎ xiěde yīpiānrìjì.  | Below is an entry from my diary where I used this type of grammar.  |
| 5 Qǐng nǐ gǎizhèng.   | Please correct it (for me).   |

### Notes:

1 Direct address to the recipient of a letter. There are several ways to address the recipient of a letter:

(1) To an ordinary friend

By given name: Dàwèi (David):

Mǎlǐ (Mary):

Yuēhàn (John):

(2) To a teacher

By Last name: Tán Lǎoshī:

Mr. Tán:

2 Resultative Verb Compounds (RV) shōudàole, "received." In Chinese, Resultative Verb (RV) compounds consist of two verbs. The first verb is the action and the second is the result or extension of the action of the first verb. For instance: kàn, "to read" is the first verb, and dǒng, "to understand" is the second verb. The RV compound is kàndǒng, "read and understand." However, in an actual situation there are two possibilities; one is the positive result and the other the negative result. The compounds are:

Actual-Positive: kàndǒngle (have) read and understood (it)

Actual-Negative: méikàndǒng (have) read it, but didn't understand (it)

Logically, one would expect it to be kàn-méidǒng, "read it - didn't understand," but in Chinese, méi always negates the entire compound, méikàndǒng. Other examples:

## Actual-Positive

shōudào  
(received)  
tīngdǒng  
(heard and understood)  
kànjiàn  
(saw [it])  
zuòhǎo  
(did well, finished)  
chībǎo  
(ate and was satisfied)  
mǎidào  
(tried and bought [it])

## Actual-Negative

méishōudào  
(haven't received)  
méitīngdǒng  
(heard but didn't understand)  
méikànjiàn  
(didn't see [it])  
méizuòhǎo  
(didn't do well, didn't finish)  
méichībǎo  
(ate but wasn't satisfied)  
méimǎidào  
(tried but couldn't buy [it])

Note: In Chinese, NOT EVERY VERB can be used as the second verb in RV compounds.

There are four ways to ask a question using a RV compound:

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) Nín chībǎo le ma?        | Have you eaten until satisfied?    |
| (2) Nín méichībǎo ma?        | Haven't you eaten until satisfied? |
| (3) Nín chībǎo le méichībǎo? | Have you eaten until satisfied?    |
| (4) Nín chībǎo le méiyou?    | Have you eaten until satisfied?    |

3 Gòu, "enough" used as an adverb. Examples:

Zhèige zhuōzi búgòu dà.	This table is not large enough.
Nǐde qián búgòu duō, tā búhuì xǐhuan nǐ.	(If) you haven't sufficient money, she won't like you.

4 Positional Noun -miàn, "side" can be used in the following combinations:

shàngmian	Shàngmian nèijù huà wǒ bùdǒng. (I don't understand the sentence above.)
xiàmian	Xiàmian shì yìfēng xìn. (Below is a letter.)
lǐmian	Lǐmian yǒu hěn duō rén. (There are a lot of people inside.)
wàimian	Wàimian hěn hǎokàn ([It] is very beautiful outside.)
qiánmian	Qiánmian shì Tán Lǎoshī. ([That's] Mr. Tan in front.)
hòumian	Hòumian yǒu rén shuǐjiào. ([There's] someone sleeping behind [us or it].)

5 Idiomatic Expression Qǐng gǎizhèng. "Please correct it for me."

## Frame 2

(The Diary)

6	Wúyuè wǔrì, xīngqīliù.	Saturday the fifth of May.
7	Jīntiān wǒ dào Zhōngguó Dàshǐguǎn qù cānjiāle yíge diànyǐng zhāodàihuì.	Today I went to the Chinese Embassy to attend a movie reception (reception showing a movie).
8	Wǒ wǎnshàng qīdiǎn dào le Dàshǐguǎn, gāng yào jìnqu.	I arrived at the Embassy at seven p.m., and was just about to go in.
9	Yǒu yíge zhāodàiyuán zhàn zài lǐmian shuō: "Qǐng jìnlái!" Wǒ jìnqu le yíhòu, tā shuō:	There was an usher standing inside who said, "Please come in!" After I went in, he said,
10	"Jīntiān yǎnde diànyǐng shì Bái Máo Nǚ, zài lóushàng huīyīshì yǎn. Wǒ dài nǐ shàngqu."	"The movie being shown today is <u>The Whitehaired Girl</u> ; it is being shown in the upstairs conference room. I'll take you up."

Notes:

6 The day of the month in writing is often rì instead of hào.

8 Motion and Direction compounded with -lái and -qù. This was first introduced in Lesson 13 with huílai, "come back" and huíqù, "go back." In this lesson there are more compounds:

shànglai (come up)	shàngqu (go up)
xiàlai (come down)	xiàqu (go down)
jìnlai (come in)	jìngu (go in)
chūlai (come out)	chūqu (go out)

Zhèr, "here" and nèr, "there" are not needed because they are an integral part of lái and qù respectively.

## Frame 3

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|----|---|---|
| 11 | Nèige shíhòu yǒu hěn duō rén<br><u>shànglǒu</u> , <u>xiàlǒu</u> .   | At the time there were a lot<br>of people going upstairs and<br>downstairs.                 |
| 12 | Tā shuō: "Lóushàng yǎn diàn-<br>yǐng(r), <u>lóuxià</u> yǒu zhǎnlǎn; | He said, "There is a movie<br>showing upstairs, and down-<br>stairs there is an exhibition, |
| 13 | suǒyǐ yǒu zhènmě duō rén<br><u>shànglai</u> , <u>xiàqu</u> ."       | so that's why there are so<br>many people coming up and going<br>down."                     |

Notes:

11 Shànglǒu, "go upstairs" and xiàlǒu, "go downstairs," are treated as verb-object compounds. One can say: shàng hěn gāode lǒu, "go up a very tall building."

12 Lóushàng, "upstairs" and lóuxià, "downstairs" are treated as Place Words.

## Frame 4

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 14 | Dào le lóushàng huìyìshì, wǒ<br>gāng yào jìngu, jiù kànjiàn<br>Hé Lǎnmíng zhèng yào cóng<br><u>lǐmian chūlai</u> . | Arriving at the conference room<br>upstairs, I was just about to<br>go in when I saw He Luming just<br>about to come out from inside. |
|----|--|---|

## Frame 4 (Continued)

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|----|--|---|
| 15 | Tā kànjiàn wǒ, jiù jiào:<br>"Xiǎo Ān!"   | Seeing me, he called, "Young Ān!"   |
| 16 | Wǒ shuō: "Xiǎo Hé, <u>ei</u> , nǐ<br>zěnmē yě lái le? Nǐ shénme<br>shíhòu cóng Rìběn huílái de?" | I said, "Young Hé, hey, how<br>come you've come too? When<br>did you come back from Japan?" |
| 17 | Tā zǒudào wǒ qiánbiān(r)<br>shuō: "Wǒ zuótiān huílái de.<br>Diànyǐng kuài kāishǐ le."            | Walking up to me, he said, "I<br>returned yesterday. The movie<br>is just about to begin."  |
| 18 | Wǒ chūqu hē diǎnr shuǐ, jiù<br>huílái.   | I'm going out to get a drink<br>of water; I'll be right back.                               |
| 19 | Wǒmen zuòzài yìqǐ ba.  | Let's sit together.   |

Notes:

17 Another positional noun ending, -biān can be used in the following combinations:

shàngbiān(r)	above, on top of, on
xiàbiān(r)	below, under, beneath
lǐbiān(r)	inside
wàibiān(r)	outside
qiánbiān(r)	in front
hòubiān(r)	behind, in back of, in the rear of

## Frame 5

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 20 | Kànwánle diànyǐng, wǒ duì dà-<br>shǐguǎnde zhāodàiyuán shuō:                                      | After seeing the movie, I said<br>to the embassy usher,   |
| 21 | "Xièxie nǐmende <u>zhāodài</u> .<br>Xīwàng yǐhòu hái yǒu <u>zhèi</u> -<br>yàng de <u>jīhuì</u> ." | "Thank you for your hospital-<br>ity. I hope that in the future<br>there will again be opportuni-<br>ties like this." |

Notes:

20 Resultative Verb compound kànwánle, "viewed the complete film" (Lit. saw (it) to the end) is the actual-positive case. The actual-negative case would be méikànwán, "didn't see (it) to the end" (i.e. left before the ending).

Suppose the homework assignment had been to read three books:

John reports:

"Xiānsheng, shū tài  
duō, wǒ méikànwán."

"Sir, there were too many books;  
I didn't finish reading them."

Margaret reports:

"Wǒ kànwánle."

"I read them all (finished  
assignment)."

### Frame 6

22	Dàwèi, wǒ bùcháng yòng Zhōng-wén xiě rìjì, suǒyǐ xiěde bùhǎo.	David, I don't often write Chinese in my diary, so I've written it badly.
23	Qǐng duō zhǐjiào.	Please give your advice.
24	Zhù	Wishing you
25	Yíqiè dōu hǎo.	well in everything.
26	An Déshēng 1984 nián, Jiǔyuè yīrì	Anderson September 1, 1984

### Notes:

23 Qǐng duō zhǐjiào. Idiomatic expression: "Your advice is appreciated/please comment/give advice."

24 Zhù. Idiomatic expression: "Wish you."

25 Yíqiè dōu hǎo. Idiomatic expression: "All will be well; everything will go your way."

26 Name or signature, and date