



Chinese Lessons with Serge Melnyk

Lesson 1

Greetings in Mandarin

Vocabulary

1. Nǐhǎo (你好) -hello, hi, how are you?

It's used to greet anyone, at any time of the day. You can greet people you already know or someone you meet for the first time.

Dialogue:

A: Nǐhǎo (你好) -hello.

B: Nǐhǎo (你好) -hello.

The response to this greeting is also Nǐhǎo.

2. Nǐhǎo ma? (你好吗?) -is another way of saying hello in Mandarin.

It's basically same as Nǐhǎo, except for some occasions, when Nǐhǎo ma is used to greet someone you have not seen for a long time.

We can translate it into English like "Hey, long time no see, how are you doing"?

3. Ma (吗) -is a question particle. It's added to the end of a sentence when you want to make a question. E.g. Hǎo-good. Hǎo ma?-Good?

4. Hǎojiǔ bújiàn (好久不见) -Long time no see.

5. Hěn (很) -very

6. Hěn hǎo (很好) -very good.

7. Yě (也) -also

8. Nǐ ne? (你呢?) -and you?

9. Ne (呢) -a particle that is used in elliptical questions.

10. Hǎo (好) -good.

11. Nǐ (你) -You

12. Wǒ (我) -I, me.

13. Xièxie (谢谢) -Thank you.

14. Zàijiàn (再见) -Good Bye

OK. That was enough, right? Now let me explain what the heck those numbers after each word are. (In this transcript, now we are using standard symbols for marking Chinese tones, not numbers-Chinese tones are explained in details in lesson 2)

This transcript was rewritten in order to substitute numbers used for marking tones with tone marks.

Chinese is a very musical language. There is no stress on a syllable like in many other languages.

Instead, they use special tones. Every syllable bears its own tone, which makes the syllable distinctive from other syllables. In Chinese phonetics, the minimum unit is a syllable.

Words in Chinese can consist of one, two, three or four syllables. Words, which consist of 5 or more syllables are not that common.

Situational Dialogue 1

A: Nǐhǎo!
你好 !
Hello!

B: Nǐhǎo !
你好 !
Hello!

Situational Dialogue 2

A: Hǎojiǔ bújiàn , Nǐ hǎo ma?
好久不见 , 你好吗?
Long time no see, how are you doing?

B: Hěn hǎo, Xièxie, Nǐ ne?
很好 , 谢谢 , 你呢?
Very good, thank you, and you?

A: Wǒ yě hěn hǎo.
我也很好
I'm also (doing) very good.

B: Zàijiàn!
再见 !
Good Bye!

A: Hǎo , zàijiàn!
好, 再见 !
Ok, good-bye!

Once you feel comfortable with the vocabulary of this lesson, please proceed to lesson 2 to learn about musical tones in Mandarin Chinese.

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