

Preface

Communicating in Chinese (CIC) was inspired by Mrs. Hope Staab, a Chinese language teacher at Punahou, a private secondary school in Hawaii, who agitated at length for an interactive, task-based curriculum in Chinese, similar to volumes already available in Spanish, French, and other more commonly taught languages. *CIC* was supported from beginning to end by the US Department of Education, first with three consecutive grants from the Mathematics, Science and Critical Foreign Languages program, and finally through funding to the University of Hawaii's National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC).

CIC is not a self-study curriculum. Rather, it consists of materials to support language-focused interaction between teachers and students, and among students themselves.

This Listening and Speaking volume is written in English and *pinyin*, the form of romanized Chinese currently in use in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since this volume aims to develop students' listening and speaking skills, romanization is used in place of Chinese characters to represent spoken Chinese, *pinyin* being a far better guide to pronunciation than characters, which are unnecessary at this stage but will appear in the Reading and Writing volume. The choice of *Hanyu pinyin*, as opposed to other forms of romanization available in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or overseas, was made strictly on grounds of expediency, since *pinyin* is the form of romanization most widely used in contemporary media. Orthographic rules laid out in *Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography* (1990) by Yin Binyong and Mary Felley were the basis of romanization here; the 1989 edition of *Hanyu Pinyin Cihui* was an additional guide. In those rare instances where these two sources are in conflict, *CIC* has followed the *Cihui*.

The short dialogues that appear in the text are not set in a specific location: most are equally applicable to any Chinese locale. Some even imply a Chinese enclave overseas. The type of language used is similarly unaligned by intent. Consultants to this curriculum have come from the PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the U. S. Under their scrutiny, the language models that have survived in this text are those that are largely non-dialectal, and generally acceptable as modern standard Chinese.

The ten topics covered in this Listening and Speaking volume roughly correspond to the topics suggested by the proficiency levels detailed in the Introduction which follows.

The members of the original teams that began curriculum writing projects in 1986 include David Ashworth, Hazel Hasegawa, Susan Hirata, Nobuko Kawaura, Yutaka Sato, and Margaret Yamashita, all (at the time) of the University of Hawaii, except for Ms. Hasegawa, who was released to us by the Hawaii Department of Education. I am particularly grateful to David Ashworth and Hazel Hasegawa for their continuing support. Three teachers in Honolulu have tested the curriculum over the course of three years, have provided very valuable feedback, and have had to put up with having to depend upon

materials that were just barely being produced in time for class—Hope Staab, Maylani Chang, and Yao Wheeler. Hope Staab in particular was instrumental in getting this project started and keeping it going in the early days. Additionally, Lisa Lin (Ohio) and Kathy Chen (Connecticut) used the draft forms of the materials and suggested modifications. David Hiple, Richard Chi, Ying-che Li and Ronald Walton reviewed draft versions of the curriculum and provided suggestions and encouragement. My first intern in the NFLRC, Stephen Fleming, later a regular, full-time instructor with the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, test-used the curriculum in experimental sections of beginning Chinese at the University of Hawaii. He provided extensive input, particularly on the grammar notes, which is reflected in the current version of the curriculum. Five teachers who participated in the 1991 Summer Intensive Teacher Training Institute in Foreign Languages at the University of Hawaii, sponsored by the NFLRC, utilized the near-final draft of the curriculum and offered critique and additional instructional ideas. They are Hazel Hasegawa, Wenchao He, Yvonne Swun, Eugenia Wu, and Rina Wu. I also thank a number of people who assisted with the production of the curriculum: illustrators Kasumi Ochiai, Natalie Kikkawa, Pepito Galvez, Randy Fagaragan, and Xiaolin Wang, calligraphers Rosa Chiang and Peter Kobayashi, language editors Xu Huang, Rosa Chiang, Meiling Ng, Xia Chen, Yuqing Bai and Lei Ye, proof-reader and word-processor Debbie Sharkey, computer specialists James Herman III, who created the tone-marks for the word-processing program, and Jon Ciliberto, who helped with printing various drafts. Daniel Cole of the Center for Chinese Studies designed the templates that generated the final version of the book, and assisted with each step of the desk-top publication process. The Chinese-English/English-Chinese indexes were developed by Daniel Cole and Yuqing Bai, with help from student assistants Woei Ang and Ip Hung Mar. Allen Awaya, a high school teacher who made numerous trips to Taiwan and the PRC, contributed many of the photographs that appear in the book. Other photographs were provided by William Crampton, a graduate student in Chinese Studies at the University of Hawaii and frequent sojourner in the PRC. The photograph of a Chinese dorm-room in Unit Eight was obtained by Ping Hao, the University of Hawaii's 1991–92 exchange professor from Peking University, from his home institution. John Montanaro of Far Eastern Publications wrote copious lists of suggestions to improve late drafts of the book, most of which have been incorporated. Finally, I am grateful to the University of Hawaii's College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature; School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies; and the Centers for Chinese and Japanese Studies, for monetary, staff, and moral support over many years.

Introduction

Communicating in Chinese is intended to facilitate a proficiency- (or performance-) based curriculum. The notion of “proficiency-based” foreign language education derives from current perspectives on standardized testing of learner performance using the foreign language.

It is projected that in a natural language environment, you would acquire control of functions involving the use of language in a rough order. You begin by gaining control of simple, high-frequency tasks (greeting, asking and stating personal information, decoding street signs) that are required of all language users, and eventually attaining control of more complex, higher level tasks that are less commonly required of a smaller subset of users (hypothesizing, abstracting, reading a technical journal).

Tests of your proficiency in the foreign language place your level of accomplishment somewhere along this hypothetical continuum. Can you accomplish simple communicative tasks, pertaining to personal needs? Can you meet progressively more challenging demands in general social interaction (state, reiterate, describe, narrate)? Can you meet professional needs (negotiate, state and defend a position, explain a technical issue)?

Following are simplified proficiency level descriptions for listening and speaking, based on generic and Chinese-specific descriptions promulgated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Listening

Novice Level Able to recognize learned material and isolated words and phrases when these are strongly supported by context.

Intermediate Level Able to understand main ideas and some facts from interactive exchanges and simple connected aural texts.

Advanced Level Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation, including some topics where comprehension is complicated due to an unexpected sequence of events.

Superior Level Able to understand concrete and abstract topics in extended discourse offered by speakers using native-like discourse strategies.

Speaking

Novice Level Able to communicate minimally, using memorized words and phrases.

Intermediate Level Able to create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements; initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; and ask and answer questions.

Advanced Level Able to converse in a clearly participatory fashion; initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to

a complication or an unforeseen turn of events; satisfy the requirements of school and work situations; and narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

Superior Level Able to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

(Novice and Intermediate levels are further divided into Low, Mid, and High subranges, and Advanced is further divided into Advanced and Advanced High subranges. Reading and Writing guidelines are described in *Communicating in Chinese, Student's Book for Reading and Writing*.)

Communicating in Chinese, Listening and Speaking, aims to help you attain the **Intermediate Level** in both listening and speaking. Specifically, we hope that you will be able to handle everyday situations that involve asking and answering questions, making and responding to simple statements, and maintaining uncomplicated face-to-face conversation. Topics will be limited to personal background, basic needs such as getting meals, shopping, and transportation, and routine social functions.

Some advice to the learner

This student text is a reference volume/workbook, mostly to use outside of class to prepare for and to review classwork. Ideally, you will not refer to it very much during class sessions. The instructor will conduct a variety of activities during class, which are intended to familiarize you with the various structures and usages of Chinese, and to provide you opportunities to use them to express what you wish.

Do not expect to gain full control over every item in every lesson: some information has been provided as a preview, to afford you some familiarity with a new concept (particularly in the "slice of life" conversations that precede the *Culture Notes* in each lesson). You will require many encounters with the material in many different forms before you will be able to use it freely and accurately. Do your best to become as comfortable with as much of the lesson as you can, but expect that you will come to know some of the material very well, some of it only partially, and some of it hardly at all. As the course proceeds, much of what was murky in one lesson will become clearer after subsequent lessons.

Do feel free to take risks. If you do not understand something, try to guess at what it means, using whatever contextual clues you can to assist you. Some lessons contain items that have not formally introduced anywhere, with the expectation that you can use contextual information to interpret them, even if incorrectly at first. In the long run, it is as important for you to develop **strategies** for extracting meaning from unknown language in context as it is to memorize the meaning of that language.

Please try to **understand and to express yourself fearlessly** in Chinese, without undue concern for "sounding foreign" or for maintaining absolute accuracy at this stage (you cannot). Of course, you should **aim** to be accurate, but do not sacrifice an opportunity to communicate because you are afraid that what you think you

understand or what you are about to say might not be quite right. You will have to make many mistakes in the course of learning any language, foreign or your own, initially. As long as you can detect that there are discrepancies between your own performance and the language modelled by your teacher and other live or recorded sources, you stand a good chance of self-correcting in time to keep your progress on track.

If you accept that language learning is the process of acquiring **SKILLS** rather than of memorizing a body of knowledge, you will realize that foreign language is not a subject for which you can cram successfully. Practice and study sessions **at regular intervals over a long period of time** will be more useful in building up your foreign language stamina and competence than occasional, extended bouts with the material. An athlete trains daily over the course of months and years; similarly, a successful language learner disciplines him/herself to work steadily with the material for an extended period of time. If you allocate yourself five hours a week of study for this class, it is better to distribute the time evenly, say an hour a day, rather than five hours the night before the test.

Each lesson in the book begins with a reference **list of key terms and expressions** pertinent to the skill described for that lesson. Through your classroom activities, you will become familiar with these terms, and will begin to experiment with using them to accomplish tasks that your teacher will set. Following the list are brief **dialogue puzzles** that you have to solve, which then will provide you models of simulated native-speaker interaction. These dialogues are *more or less* limited to the vocabulary and structures you have been exposed to in this and previous lessons, although on rare occasion you will encounter a term that you might not have seen before, but likely can decipher from context. Next is a "slice of life" **contextualized conversation** based on the theme of the lesson, but **NOT** limited to its language. English translations are provided. These conversations are intended to impart a "flavor" of more natural interactions in a Chinese setting, and to help you build up a tolerance for language that is not strictly tailored to your level of competence. Similarly, **photograph captions** are not strictly limited to language you know: guess at their meaning given the context in which they occur. The **structure and culture notes** are for you to read at your leisure, at home, to give you some background information about the language you are using in class. The **structure exercise** should be completed at home and checked in class; it is intended to help you develop the ability to monitor the grammatical accuracy of your own speech.

Foreign language is the key to a new universe: a different people, culture, social system. It is possible for you to become sufficiently competent to navigate in that universe, an accomplishment which will surely bring you reward enough to compensate for the innumerable hours you will have invested in learning the language. Even if you never attain the upper reaches of competence, if you never become a Superior, or an Advanced, or even a higher Intermediate level performer, the glimmers of understanding enjoyed by a Novice Mid or High are illuminating when compared with the darkness that surrounds someone who isn't even on the scale— a zero.