



# C 中国传统文化

## Chapter 1 Traditional Chinese Culture



### 中国人姓名

### Chinese Personal Names

**A** modern Chinese usually has (1) a surname (“family name”) or xìng 姓 and (2) a given name (“first name” or “Christian name”), or míng 名 (or míngzi 名字), always in that order. Thus Dèng Xiǎopíng is Mr. Dèng with the personal name Xiǎopíng the same way John Jones is Mr. Jones with the personal name John.

In ancient China, however, naming was very complicated and one person usually had several names, and naming involved xing, shi, ming, and zi. Each of these four words meant a different thing. Xing and shi together formed today’s surname, and ming and zi today’s given name. Today, people use xingshi to refer to a person’s surname, mingzi to refer to one’s given name.

Study of ancient Chinese documents shows that xing originally referred to the names of different matriarchal tribes. It also had something to do with the place where people lived. Researches show that xing came into being during the matrilineal society period, i. e. , around four to five thousand years ago.





Nearly always the family name (surname) is one-syllable long. The only common modern surnames that are two-syllables long are *ōuyāng* and *Sīmǎ*.



## 中国人姓名

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## Chinese Personal Names

**现**代中国人的姓名通常由姓(家庭姓氏)和名(个人所起的名字)组成,并且姓在前,名在后。因此,邓小平被称为邓先生,个人的名字为小平。正如约翰·琼斯被称为琼斯先生,个人的名字为约翰。

在中国古代,起名非常复杂。一个人可以有好几个名字,包括姓、氏、名、字,每一个都表达不同的意思。姓和氏演变为现在的姓,名和字则演变为现在的名。所以现在人们通常用姓氏来指一个人的姓,用名字来指一个人所起的名。

据对中国古代文献的研究表明,“姓”最初被用来指不同的女氏族部落,和人们的居住地也有某些关系。研究表明,“姓”出现于母系社会时期,大约四千至五千年之前。

几乎所有家庭的姓都是一个音节,常见的两个音节的姓有欧阳、司马等。



## 中国农历

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## The Chinese Lunar Calendar

**T**he Chinese Lunar Calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, and is constructed in a different fashion than the Western solar calendar. In the Chinese calendar, the beginning of the year falls somewhere between late January and early February.

The Chinese have adopted the Western calendar, but the lunar calendar is still used for festive occasions such as the Chinese New Year. Many Chinese calendars will print both the solar dates and the Chinese lunar dates.



## 中国农历

# The Chinese Lunar Calendar

**与** 西方的阳历不同,中国农历是以月亮的运转来确定的。根据中国的农历,新年的开始大约在阳历的1月下旬至2月上旬之间。

中国早已开始使用阳历,但是,中国的传统节日(例如春节等)还是应用传统的阴历。许多中国的年历既印有阳历,又印有阴历。



## 24 节气

# The 24 Solar Terms

**T**he 24 solar terms is a gross name of the system that comprises of 12 major solar terms and 12 minor solar terms interlaced with each other.

Starting from “vernal equinox”, the 12 major solar terms are “vernal equinox”, “corn rain”, “corn forms”, “summer solstice”, “great heat”, “end of heat”, “autumnal equinox”, “frost”, “light snow”, “winter solstice”, “severe cold” and “spring showers”. Each major solar term falls on one of the 12 lunar months designated by the 12 earthly branches. The minor solar term after “vernal equinox” is “bright and clear”, and then in turn “summer commences”, “corn on ear”, “moderate heat”, “autumn commences”, “white dew”, “cold dew”, “winter commences”, “heavy snow”, “moderate cold”, “spring commences” and “insects waken”.

From the Earth’s perspective, the Sun moves through a year across the stars or celestial sphere along a path known as the ecliptic, which is measured in 360 degrees longitude. The 24 solar terms divide the ecliptic into 24 equal segments, with 15 degrees of the Sun’s longitude between the terms. At “vernal equinox”, the Sun’s longitude is 0 degree; at “bright and clear”, the Sun’s longitude is 15 degrees; and so forth.

At “vernal equinox” and “autumnal equinox”, the periods of daylight and the



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night are equal in length. The period of daylight is the longest at “summer solstice” and the shortest at “winter solstice” (northern hemisphere). These were the earliest solar terms determined in ancient time. Then it came the four solar terms “spring commences”, “summer commences”, “autumn commences” and “winter commences”. Other solar terms were named later according to the weather and agricultural activities prevalent at the respective times of the seasons. The “24 solar terms” reflects to some extent the climate over central China in ancient time.

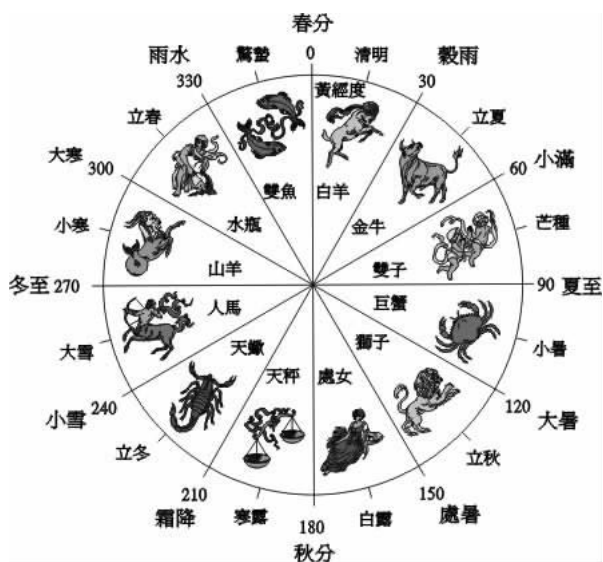
Each lunar month in the Agricultural Calendar contains a major solar term. A lunar month that does not include a major solar term is taken as the leap month of the preceding month. In 19 tropical years there will be 228 major solar terms and 235 synodic months. So 7 lunar months will not contain major solar terms and they are classified as leap months.



# 24 节气

## The 24 Solar Terms

- 十四节气是一个统称,其中包括十二个中气和十二个节气,中气和节气
- 相间地排列。



从春分起十二个中气分别是春分、谷雨、小满、夏至、大暑、处暑、秋分、霜降、小雪、冬至、大寒和雨水,分属于12个以地支排列的月份。春分后的节气是清明,其后的节气依次是立夏、芒种、小暑、立秋、白露、寒露、立冬、大雪、小寒、立春和惊蛰。

从地球上观测,太阳一年里在恒星间或天球划过的轨道称为黄道,以360度黄经来量度。二十四节气正好把黄道分成24等份,即每个



节气相差黄经 15 度。春分时黄经为 0 度,清明时黄经为 15 度,依此类推。

春分和秋分昼夜平分,夏至昼最长(北半球,下同),冬至昼最短,春分、秋分、夏至和冬至是古人最初确立的节气。其后加入的是立春、立夏、立秋和立冬。至于其他的节气,便以该段季节常见的天气现象或农业活动而命名,这些节气从某种程度上反映了古代中原地区的气候。

农历规定每一个月必定要有一个中气,没有中气的月份,便成为前一个月的闰月。原来 19 个“回归年”共有 228 个中气和 235 个“朔望月”,即有 7 个月没有中气,这些没有中气的月便正好成为闰月。



## 十二生肖 The Twelve Animal Signs

In traditional China, dating methods were cyclical means something that is repeated time after time according to a pattern. A popular folk method which reflected this cyclical method of recording years are the Twelve Animal Signs. Every year is assigned an animal name or “sign” according to a repeating cycle: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar. Therefore, every twelve years the same animal name or “sign” would reappear.





A cultural sidelight of the animal signs in Chinese folklore is that horoscopes have developed around the animal signs. For example, a Chinese horoscope may predict that a person born in the Year of the Horse would be, “cheerful, popular, and loves to compliment others”.

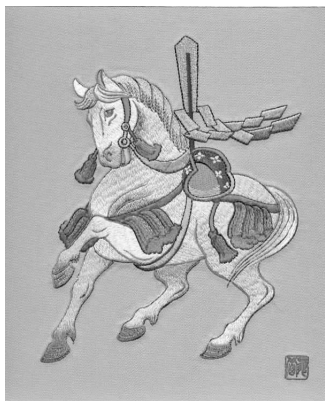
The animal signs also serve a useful social function for finding out people's ages. Instead of asking directly how old a person is, people often ask what is his or her animal sign. This would place that person's age within a cycle of 12 years, and with a bit of common sense, we can deduce the exact age. More often, people ask for animal signs not to compute a person's exact numerical age, but to simply know who is older among friends and acquaintances.



## 十二生肖

## The Twelve Animal Signs

**根** 据中国传统文化,日期是循环的,也就是说,日期的循环是周而复始的。记录这周而复始日期的最流行的民间方法就是十二生肖,即:每一年由一个动物代表,每隔十二年进行一个循环。这十二个动物分别是:鼠、牛、虎、兔、龙、蛇、马、羊、猴、鸡、狗、猪。



十二生肖在中国民间传说中有其文化内涵,占星术就是由其发展而来的。例如,中国的属相认为马年出生的人“快乐、受欢迎、爱恭维他人”。

属相还有助于在社交活动中获悉别人的年龄。为了避免直接问及一个人的年龄,人们通常问他的属相,这就可以确定他在十二生肖的排位,从而通过常识,计算出他的确切年龄。然而,人们通常问属相并不是要计算一个人的年龄,更多的是在朋友和熟人之间弄明白谁的年龄更大一些。



## 文房四宝

### The Four Treasures of the Study

The Four Treasures of the Study are the writing tools with Chinese characteristics. Also known as “the Scholar’s Four Jewels”, namely the writing brush, ink-stick, paper and ink-slab. The study got its name in the Northern and Southern dynasties, referring only to the study of the literati. The Four Treasures, varied and colorful, are famous for their hubi (writing brush produced in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province), huimo (ink-stick produced in Huizhou, Anhui Province), xuanzhi (rice paper or xuan paper, made in Xuancheng, Anhui Province), and duanyan (ink-slab made in Duanxi, Guangdong Province).



## 文房四宝

### The Four Treasures of the Study

文房四宝是中国独具特色的文书工具,专指文人书房而言,因笔、墨、纸、砚为文房中经常使用,故被人们誉为“文房四宝”。文房之名,始于南北朝时期,四宝品类繁多,丰富多彩,以湖笔、徽墨、宣纸、端砚著称,至今仍享有盛名。





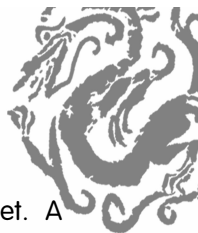
## 对联

## Duilian or Chinese Couplets

**D**uilian (Chinese couplets written on scrolls, etc. or a pair of scrolls containing a poetic couplet), also known as ying lian (pillar couplets) or dui zi (antithetical couplets), is a unique literary genre in China. Generally speaking, duilian can be classified into Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) couplets, wedding couplets, longevity couplets, elegiac couplets, decorative couplets, trade couplets, social couplets, and miscellaneous couplets including facetious or humorous couplets. Couplets can be long or short. The shortest one contains one or two characters, and the longest one several hundred characters, which can be seen on ancient Chinese architecture. The structure of the couplets can be zheng dui (parallel in meaning), fan dui (antithetical in meaning), liushui dui (same meaning expressed in two sentences, e. g. a couplet), and jiju dui (a couplet made of two lines from different poets), etc.

Duilian developed from antithesis or antithetical parallelism of lüshi, or regulated verse, a poem of eight lines, each containing five or seven characters, with a strict tonal pattern and rhyme scheme. Therefore it contains some of the characteristics of this special poetic form. A couplet must have the following features: one, each line having an equal number of characters, and the same sense groups; two, strictly adhering to the tonal patterns, e. g. level tone versus oblique tone; three, characters of the same part of speech having to be used, and in the same position, that is, function words versus function words and content words versus content words. In other words, it should be nouns versus nouns, verbs versus verbs, adjectives versus adjectives, numerals versus numerals, adverbs versus adverbs, and that characters of corresponding parts of speech in either line should be in the same position; four, the interconnection of the contents. The meaning of the first line should be interrelated to that of the second, yet the two sentences must not have the same meaning. As for pasted or hung couplets, it is a tradition to write them vertically and when pasted or hung, the first line should always be on the right and the second on the left, not the other way round. Another thing, closely related to the couplet, is called heng pi, a horizontal scroll bearing an in-





scription, or horizontal plaque, which is in fact the title or theme of the couplet. A good heng pi adds the finishing touch to the couplet. Whether it is to chant things to express one's aspirations or describe the scenery to give vent to one's feelings, the writer is expected to be very good at summarization, and proficient in Chinese so as to produce a couplet in a few characters, which is excellent in both content and language, full of aesthetic beauty, and thought-provoking.

With the cultural exchanges among different countries, duilian or Chinese couplets began to spread to Vietnam, Korea, Japan, and Singapore. And the custom of pasting Spring Festival couplets during the New Year is observed in these countries as well.



## 对联

## Duilian or Chinese Couplets

**对**联,雅称楹联,俗称对子,是中国一种独特的文学艺术形式。对联的种类分为春联、喜联、寿联、挽联、装饰联、行业联、交际联和杂联(包括谐趣联)等等。对联句式比较灵活,可长可短,伸缩自如。短的仅一两个字,长的可达几百字。在我国古建筑中,甚至还有多达数百字的长联。对联形式多样,有正对、反对、流水对、联珠对、集句对等。

对联是由律诗的对偶句发展而来的,它保留着律诗的某些特点。对联必须具备以下特点:一要字数相等,断句一致;二要平仄相合,音调和谐;三要词性相对,位置相同,一般称为“虚对虚,实对实”,就是名词对名词,动词对动词,形容词对形容词,数量词对数量词,副词对副词,而且相对的词必须在相同的位置上;四要内容相关,上下衔接,上下联的含义必须相互衔接,但又不能重复。此外,张挂的对联,传统做法还必须直写竖贴,自右而左,由上而下,不能颠倒。与对联紧密相关的横批,可以说是对联的题目,也是对联的中心。好的横批在对联中可以起到画龙点睛的作用。对联无论是咏物言志,还是写景抒情,





都要求作者有较高的概括力与驾驭文字的本领,才可能以寥寥数语,做到文情并茂,形神兼备,给人以思想和艺术的感觉。

随着各国文化交流的发展,对联还传入越南、朝鲜、韩国、日本、新加坡等国。这些国家有的地方至今还保留着贴对联的风俗。



## 中国印章 Chinese Seals

**S**eal cutting, though based on Chinese calligraphy, is a comparatively independent traditional art form. It takes Chinese characters as its form of expression, using carving knives instead of the writing brushes, and stone instead of paper. Similar to inscriptions on ancient bronze and stone tablets, it can be viewed as a pocket edition of tablet inscription. The seal has many names in history. It was called xiyin (literally meaning the imperial or royal seal) during the Warring States Period, the Qin and Han dynasties, and the Wei and Jin periods. The Ming and the Qing dynasties were universally acknowledged to be the two golden periods in the history of seal cutting, and coincidentally the seal was known as seal cutting then. And the long period from the Tang Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty turned out to be a time when the royal seal was on the wane and seal cutting waiting to be rejuvenated. The use of the seal also varied. Clay impression was used before the Sui and Tang dynasties and inkpad or red ink paste has been used since the Tang and the Song dynasties.

Xiyin can be classified into official seals and private seals. Official seals refer to those of emperors and officials. The making materials used in ancient times mainly include gold, silver, copper, jade, amber, agate, stone, bamboo and wood. And copper seals constituted an overwhelming majority. Most of the seals were cast, and some were carved.

“Chinese Seal, Dancing Beijing”, the emblem of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games officially unveiled on August 3, 2003, is a combination of the five rings, a Chinese seal character of Beijing and “Beijing 2008” in English.