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PREFACE

Huanying: An Invitation to Chinese (欢迎：中学汉语课本) is a series designed for secondary school students who are non-native speakers of Chinese with minimal or no background in Mandarin Chinese. Following the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), *Huanying* will offer four volumes covering four years of study at the secondary school level and taking students to an intermediate-high level of language proficiency, or the equivalent of two years of college Chinese.

Huanying is organized around thematic units that are essential to everyday communication. All material in each unit—vocabulary, grammar, idiomatic expressions, and culture—is carefully developed with learners’ interests and real-life uses in mind. *Huanying* intends to develop language proficiency by taking students gradually from their immediate surroundings to the bigger world. The topic domain is similar throughout the series—self, family, school, daily life, and the larger community—with each subsequent volume building more complexity and depth into the themes and calling for more complex language use. Throughout the series, students learn vocabulary related to each theme, grammar and idiomatic expressions needed to communicate about the theme, and cultural information that helps to contextualize the language use. Language practice focuses on authentic communicative tasks that integrate several modalities of language skills and are intellectually engaging. Individual, pair, and group activities are rooted in meaningful contexts that appeal to students’ interests and allow them to present, interpret, and negotiate meanings through active communication.

Each volume of *Huanying* is designed for an entire school year, based on one instructional hour (50 minutes) of language class per day. With language use gaining more depth and complexity, the length of material grows as well. Volumes 1 and 2 are comprised of six units, Volumes 3 and 4 are comprised of four units. Each unit includes five lessons and one unit review lesson. Teachers may plan to use a week to study one lesson. After the unit review lesson, a unit test can be given to students to assess their learning; pre-prepared unit tests appear in the *Huanying Teacher’s Book*.

What Is the Pedagogical Philosophy Behind *Huanying*?

Our Goal: Communication and Self-Awareness

Huanying was developed based on a belief that the purpose of learning Chinese is not only to communicate in Chinese accurately and appropriately, but also to develop competence in shaping the content of interactions by understanding speakers of other languages. *Huanying* is designed to help students achieve this goal through monitored language input via sequenced and organized instruction; vigorous language practice via performance-based communicative tasks and constant reinforcement of language skills; systematic evaluation via quizzes, unit tests, and student self-assessment; and in-depth experience of the rich and varied social and cultural contexts in which language practice is embedded. All of the above serve the purpose of helping students communicate in Chinese from the very first day of class and gradually develop the knowledge and ability not only to understand but also to reflect.

Our Content: Incorporating the “5 C’s”

Huanying reflects the philosophy outlined by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Incorporating the principles of “5 C’s” (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, Communities), it strives to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills that will enable them to be “linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad.” *Huanying*’s primary focus is on meaningfulness, which is the core of communication. By embedding language input and output in communicative tasks set in a broader socio-cultural context, *Huanying* requires students to draw from other academic disciplines and the knowledge of their own cultures to facilitate their understanding of Chinese language and culture. *Huanying* also provides students with opportunities to extend their knowledge in Chinese by exploring the Chinese-speaking communities around them. The ultimate goal of *Huanying* is for students to become more aware of themselves, as well as their own language and culture, through the study of Chinese.

Our Approach: Teaching for Understanding

Huanying differs from traditional Chinese language instructional approaches by adopting an integrated approach that promotes teaching for understanding. Instead of teaching discrete bits and pieces of language (vocabulary, sentence structures, and idiomatic expressions) through repetitive drills without any meaningful context, *Huanying* takes real-life communication tasks as its starting point. This holistic approach allows *Huanying* to teach vocabulary,

grammar, and cultural information not in isolation, but rather in context. In order to enhance accuracy in language use, language points are practiced in context. Practice of form, meaning, and function are always interwoven in the communication tasks. Through varied forms of learning tasks, students learn to comprehend, use, and analyze the Chinese language. In brief, *Huanying's* approach affords students opportunities to construct their own understanding of new concepts and, therefore, to become more effective learners. Based on our belief in teaching for understanding, *Huanying* pays particular attention to topics and situations that are both authentic and appealing to students. Authenticity and relevance are motivational tools that produce life-long learners.

Our Strategy for Success: Negotiate Meaning in Context

Successful language learners know how to negotiate meaning by relying on their previous knowledge and by analyzing and discovering cues from the communicative context. To help students become successful language learners, the activities in *Huanying* are designed to stimulate students' schemata, or schemes of how one perceives the world, to aid students in comprehension—understanding both the main ideas and specific information—and to guide students step-by-step through challenging tasks. *Huanying* also tries to convey the idea that language proficiency cannot be achieved from word-by-word translation. Effective learners approach language learning by looking at context and structure, not by putting together dictionary definitions.

Huanying involves students in every step of the learning process. Students not only actively participate in learning activities, but also make decisions about using appropriate strategies to accomplish tasks. To help students build a tolerance for some ambiguity and risk as they explore a new language, we have purposefully made certain pedagogical decisions: 1) We do not provide English translations for dialogues and texts in the textbook and workbook, 2) In the texts and activities we include some new words that are not glossed yet do not interfere with students' overall comprehension of the text/task, 3) We gradually decrease the use of pinyin as learning progresses, 4) Starting from Volume 3, we gradually increase the use of Chinese in language explanation and culture information, and 5) We ask students to periodically assess their own learning.

How Is *Huanying* Structured?

The structure of *Huanying* can be best described by using the “3 P's” (Presentation, Practice, Production) language instruction model as an analogy. The textbook focuses on presentation, and the student workbook focuses on practice and production.

As many teachers still rely on textbooks as the starting point for class organization and planning, we want to assist teachers to achieve success in their teaching. The textbook and workbook are derived from a carefully planned communicative curriculum, with corresponding goals and tasks. The teacher's book is intended to make lesson preparation more efficient for busy teachers; it contains workbook activities, answer keys, suggestions on how to facilitate a learner-centered classroom, plus quizzes and unit tests.

Textbook

Volume 3 of *Huanying* includes four units, each focusing on one theme. There are five lessons and a review lesson in each unit, so that two units are typically covered per semester. Learning goals are clearly stated at the beginning of each unit, and students can check their progress by taking a self-assessment questionnaire at the end of the unit. A typical lesson consists of two dialogues or texts (with new vocabulary highlighted in color), a new word list (with simplified and traditional characters, pinyin, parts of speech, and English explanations), language notes, some knowledge-related language activities (“Extend Your Knowledge”), and information about Chinese proverbs, idioms, stories, and culture.

At the end of the textbook four indexes are provided: vocabulary (Chinese-English and English-Chinese), proper nouns, and language notes. There is also an appendix of dialogues and texts in traditional characters, designed for students who would like to learn traditional Chinese characters alongside simplified ones.

Workbooks

The workbook component contains a wealth of communicative, ready-to-use language activities and is divided into two parts: Volume 3 Part 1 for the first semester, and Volume 3 Part 2 for the second semester. For each lesson, the workbook has three types of language practice: Listening Practice, Integrated Language Practice, and Writing Practice. Listening Practice involves two or more skills—usually listening/reading, listening/writing, listening/speaking, etc. It is distinct from Integrated Language Practice because students will need the accompanying audio files to complete these activities. Integrated Language Practice includes a variety of communicative activities such as interviews, bingo, board games, role-play, email correspondence, oral reports, and more. Students will benefit from this hands-on format that lets them use different language skills simultaneously (for example, interviewing a classmate while taking notes and filling out a chart in the workbook). Teachers will benefit because all of the activities are presented in a convenient, ready-to-use format—students can do all activities directly in their workbooks and photocopying other materials is not necessary.

Writing Practice (in place of Chinese Character Practice in Volumes 1 and 2) focuses on helping students master the new words and sentence structures while improving language accuracy. It can also be used for homework assignments.

Audio Files

Huanying's accompanying audio files contain recordings of the dialogues, texts, and vocabulary in the textbook, along with audio clips to be used for Listening Practice in the workbook. Audio files can be downloaded free of charge from the publisher's website <http://www.cheng-tsui.com/downloads/huanying>.

Teacher's Books

The teachers' book includes copies of all student workbook activities with answer keys, together with "Notes to the Teacher" (in both simplified Chinese and English) that help teachers effectively conduct the activities and facilitate a communicative classroom environment. Additional information at the front of the book includes general tips on lesson planning and classroom management, and an overview chart of content covered in the course. The appendix contains quizzes and unit tests, with answer keys. Two quizzes are provided for every lesson: one is a vocabulary quiz that can be given at the beginning of the lesson or after the vocabulary is learned, and the other is a general quiz that can be given at the end of the lesson. Preparing for quizzes and tests is made simple for teachers—just a matter of photocopying.

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We hope that *Huanying* will introduce secondary school students to Chinese language and culture in a practical and engaging way. Learning a foreign language opens up a new world for exploration, and the new world welcomes (*huanying*) young adventurers.

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