

## Chinese Podcast Transcript

Alex:

Hello and welcome to Iowa State University's world languages and cultures first pod cast. This is Alex, your friendly neighborhood announcer and I'm here to give you the inside scoop on the great Chinese language and literature program we have here at ISU. Have you ever wondered about Chinese, a language which to some of us seems so far away? Well, by the end of this pod cast you have learned to recognize a few words in Chinese and may have decided to take a trip to the Far East yourself. But first, for those of you not familiar with pod cast, I'll just give you a very brief description of what the pod cast program is all about and why we're doing it. In short, we record these small infomercials to give you all the data required to take advantage of the programs we have here at ISU's world languages and cultures department. Our first ten pod cast will be about each of the programs that are offered at the department of languages and cultures.

In each of these pod cast you will learn a little bit about the languages taught at ISU as well as current opportunities in connection with those languages at Iowa State in Iowa and the world. Today we're talking about the Chinese language and literature program that ISU offers. For starters, did you know that already China is the most populated country in the world and Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world? Over one fifth of the world's populations, over 1.2 billion people to be specific, speak Chinese. You will soon find that businesses in the US and around the world will have to contend and work with Chinese businessmen and women.

Americas and Europeans are quickly realizing the importance of learning the Chinese language and culture. In 1999, 250 thousand foreigners pored into China to learn about business, international relations and Chinese philosophy. Each year that number continues to grow. In France, Chinese has become the foreign language with the fastest development in high schools and in the beginning of 2003 some 7600 students in the US made Chinese study their first

choice. Chinese has eight main dialects, you've probably heard about Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese. One of those is the official language of China. Which one? You are absolutely right, Mandarin is the official language of China and Cantonese is the second most widely spoken dialect. We asked ISU Professor Aili Mu about the difference between Mandarin and Cantonese and this is what she said.

Aili:

There is a huge province in China, southern China, right across the border from Hong Kong and its called Canton. The people in that province speak Cantonese and the same for the people that live in Hong Kong. And it's so different from Mandarin that I was born in Beijing and grew up with Mandarin Chinese; I lived in Hong Kong for one year and still could not understand proper Cantonese. I could catch phrases but it's and entirely new language for me. It's stranger than French and German and I had to use English to communicate. I was told that the difference in spoken language between the two probably is bigger than the difference between French and English.

Alex:

Did you know that Chinese is a tonal language? Two words that have a slight difference in tone may sounds almost identical to English speakers but mean completely different things in Chinese. For example, eyes and glasses are almost identical in Chinese. Pig's feet and bishop are also two words that sound almost identical in Chinese.

Aili:

Chinese is a tonal language, which means when you have one syllable it may have different meanings depending on the tone.

Alex:

Besides these facts, we are going to rely on a bit of the spoken word.

Melissa:

My name is Melissa Nasers, I'm a junior here at Iowa State and I'm majoring in agricultural education and international agriculture. I became interested after my study abroad trip this past May. I was in China

for twenty five days and it was just a cultural immersion trip basically. We got a few words here and there, but after that trip I became interested in the language and culture so that's when I started taking Chinese this semester. Since I'm working on a double major in agricultural education and international agriculture now, I hope to either work for a non profit organization that perhaps does work in China so the language would come in handy there or I am also looking for jobs in the USDA in foreign relations, so anything that would get me a HR or foreign relations job in China or working with China.

Nathan:

My name is Nathan Gustafson, I'm a senior at Iowa State and I'm majoring in environmental studies and political science. China is rapidly becoming just as much of an influence in the world as America is today so I feel that by learning Chinese I will have an edge on getting a good job or a good career. By being able to speak the Chinese language since so many businesses are involved with China. I feel that the Chinese program is fantastic here at Iowa State. Everyone seems to care so much about how you are doing and how much progress you are making in speaking Chinese that you can't help but improve your skills since so many people are seemingly caring about the way that you are progressing.

William:

I'm William Shepard, I'm a freshman at Iowa State and I'm majoring in computer engineering. I honestly think that Chinese was easier to learn than I thought that it was going to be. I like the fact that they lay out a grammatical structure and they don't really deviate from it as much as English. One of our teachers told us that not everyone from China knows martial arts.

Spenser:

My name is Spenser Frank, I'm a freshman here at Iowa State majoring in finance international business and I'm doing a Chinese minor to coincide with my finance international business it will end up being a LCP, languages and cultures for professions minor in Chinese. I hope to eventually end up living over there working for a corporation doing finance tying in

probably more of the investing side but really just understanding more the Chinese market and the American market corresponding back and forth. I don't mind writing it, once you learn how to do it it's almost like a little game when you go back to your childhood where you have an apple and it represents a b and you have to figure out the code. It's almost like playing a little game with your self trying to figure it out. It's a lot of fun. I've found learning Chinese to be harder in some regards but also easier in some regards. Harder because obviously it takes a lot more time but easier because the whole program here is designed for you to succeed and if you just put in the effort they are there to help you and you will learn how to speak it. We got done with our midterms and our professor turned to us and said, "Congratulations guys, what you have completed here up to this half of the semester, most colleges complete it in one full semester." I love it because at the end of the first year I should be able to go over there and survive.

Alex:

I'm sure you're interested in what Iowa State University has to offer in terms of academic programs. ISU offers a Chinese minor program which consists of 19 credit hours. Classes offered to fulfill the major consist of not only Chinese language courses but also Chinese culture, history and archaeology. There are also political science courses that are offered that focus on China. If you have any questions about the Chinese minor program here at ISU, be sure to contact Elizabeth Rectanus, the foreign language and literature advisor.

The Chinese student organization here at ISU is great to join if you want to build friendships among Chinese, American and other international students. The Chinese student organization was established in 1979 and has since been a great way for students to share backgrounds, stories, cultural experiences and also to celebrate holidays and festivals common to the Chinese culture. This community also organizes sports clubs like volleyball, basketball and soccer. In addition to this, a dragon boat race team and a karaoke team has been formed. There is always something fun going on with the Chinese student organization so be sure to check them out. Did you

ever consider visiting China? If you are an ISU student you may want to explore this opportunity. The college of liberal arts and sciences is sponsoring a study tour of China in May 2006. Students will earn three credits for the experience, university studies 336, which is a summer course. This will meet the international perspectives requirement and count towards 300 level credit for graduation. University studies 336 will be offered this spring 2006 on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8:30 pm. Did you know that according to the Chinese business etiquette you should use both hands when getting and receiving business cards and you should not put them away right after receiving? Did you also know that it is rude in China to show the soles of your shoes? Chinese people also prefer to be presented and introduced formally. It's considered rude to be on a first name basis until a relationship is well established. Little things like this may help in a business situation but being too concerned about cultural differences may not always give you the upper hand. As Professor Mu explains:

Aili:

I think the most important thing is don't worry too much whether I did this right. Did I behave the proper way? The most important thing I think is your sincerity or attitude and whether you show you have the desire to respect the other party. Once you demonstrate that, whatever misunderstanding or misbehavior can be addressed and eventually it will be resolved.

Alex:

For more information about the Chinese language program, along with the many other language programs at Iowa State, please check out Iowa State's website at [www.language.iastate.edu](http://www.language.iastate.edu). Another great resource for learning about Chinese culture and their relationships between US and Asia is the Asia society. Some of you may have already heard about this. It is a great site full of interesting information. [www.asiasociety.org](http://www.asiasociety.org). Well, I hope you've enjoyed our show about the Chinese language program at Iowa State, and that you have also picked up some useful and interesting information not only about the Chinese language but about its culture as well. Please tune in next week to learn more about how the study of world languages can compliment your

major or add dimension to your professional career. Thank you for listening and please make sure to catch our show next week at this time. We would like to thank the Chinese program's faculty for their time and support: Dr. Aili Mu, Dongming Zhang, and Eric Shi. This project is an initiative of ISU Foreign Language Learning Center and was funded in part by recruitment and retention grant from the professional and scientific council and the ISU department of foreign languages and literature. Lori Lynch is our producer. Daniel Francis is our sound editor. Mehmet Sahin is our interviewer and advisor. Keith Swanson is our technical guru. Julio Rodriguez is our advisor and myself, Alex Ely, am your announcer. Music for this show is under creative commons license, for details please visit our website [www.language.iastate.edu/podcast](http://www.language.iastate.edu/podcast).