

nr 6
June 2012



www.chinese4.eu

Bulletin



China's rising international status is starting to draw the attention of governments around the world. China's entry into the WTO in 2001 and its successful hosting of 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing helped significantly increase the number of foreigners interested in learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Since the first one established in South Korea in 2004, more than 350 Confucius Institutes and over 500 Confucius classrooms have been set up in 105 coun-

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The contents of this brochure reflect the views only of the Chinese for Europeans Project Partners, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.





Start learning Chinese – a language of mystery and charm

First of all it is a language with the largest number of people using it as mother tongue. In China's mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Singapore, Chinese is an official language. It is also one of the six working languages of the UN. One in fifth of the people on our planet speaks Chinese.

It is a scientific language. Because of its conciseness and logic. There are over a million words in English but all of them can be expressed with only 4000 Chinese hieroglyphs.

tries and regions over the world, with over 40 million people learning Chinese. In Europe alone there are 117 institutes, more than any other continent. Now Confucius Institute is the place to study Chinese and get to know the Chinese culture. It is a bridge friendship and collaboration between the Chinese people and peoples of the world. In countries like Canada, Germany, Australia, Japan, and Republic of Korea, Chinese is offered as one of the foreign languages taught in colleague. Bulgaria and Serbia have introduced Chinese in high school.

International schools and corporations now see how valuable it is for their employees and students to have Chinese language skills. Language is a tool that bridges education, economy, science and technology, foreign affairs, and politics.

Chinese is the oldest yet most stable language in the world. Phonetic languages change with time. Chinese is written with hieroglyphs, not according to spoken language. For this reason, Chinese students can read and understand articles written 2000 years ago by Confucius.

It is a language of philosophy. The Chinese hieroglyphs have many ideographic elements, which means that words are formed from their meaning. For example, the hieroglyph „trust” is composed of the hieroglyph „person” and the hieroglyph „word”, meaning that a person is trustworthy if he keeps his words and does what he has promised; the hieroglyph „pleasure” is composed of the hieroglyph „donate”, meaning that a person is happy by donating to others.

And finally it is an artistic language. It is expressed first in its hand writing. The Chinese words come from hieroglyphs, which are drawings in nature and gradually evolve into art.

Don't Think Chinese is as Difficult as You Imagine!

Some people have the desire to learn Chinese, but they are afraid that the language is too difficult, and some even assert that the most difficult thing to do in the world is to learn Chinese. As a matter of fact, this is a misunderstanding – it's true that the learning of any unrelated language will be comparatively difficult than that of a related



language. The Chinese language is not related to European languages, therefore to English-speaking people, it is not as easy to study as French or Spanish, for example. However, the learning of Chinese is in no way as difficult as some people imagine.

Can you say Ma? Great! You're ready to learn Chinese. Now learn Chinese again.

Can you say Ma? That's right, as if it were a question. Wait a second, now you've learned the word horse! Let's learn Chinese yet again. The word Ma means... hemp! Let's learn Chinese yet a fourth time. You know what you're going to say, right? Ma! That's right. If you can say Ma, you are ready to learn Chinese for the verb „to curse“. Chinese words are different according to their tones.

Is it difficult to learn Chinese? Less difficult than you'd think. Consider the examples where you learn Chinese for horse, hemp, mother, and to curse. The good news is, you only need to learn Chinese for a single syllable and you get at least 4 words out of it. Here's the catch when you want to learn Chinese seriously: it's the tonal system. It is a well known but very true joke that it's all too easy to call your mother (in my case, mother in law) a horse.

What makes it hardest for some people to learn Chinese is that it's a tonal language. If you learn Chinese for the word Ma, you have to use what's known as „the first tone“ for that Chinese word. The first tone sounds like you're speaking the word Ma with no inflection. If you speak „Ma?“ like a question, you are now ready to learn the Chinese word for „hemp“, which is a quick rise in inflection like a sentence. Ready to learn Chinese for the word „horse“? Then say „Ma...?“ like a question with slower inflection, the way you might ask your child „Are sure?“. That is the third tone.

Let's learn Chinese for the word „scold”. Imagine you were disappointed in your mother. You'd say „Ma”, with your inflection (the tone of your voice) dropping quickly. OK, you've learned a real Chinese word. Don't tell you weren't ready to learn Chinese. There are four different tones in Chinese, but words with the same inflection mean different things in different sentences. Chinese is even more context dependent than English. The truth is, once you learn Chinese for the word „Ma” in all four tones, you know how to speak at least 15 words!

CONGRATULATIONS! For you have already become a part of C4EU community! Sign-up and we will send you a brief message whenever free learning materials are available.

PARTNERS



Mescomp Technologies SA
Aleje Jerozolimskie 47
00-697 Warszawa
Poland
www.tech.mescomp.pl



University of Antwerp Management School
Sint-Jacobsmarkt 9-13
2000 Antwerp
Belgium
www.uams.be



International Certificate Conference e.V.
Berner Heerweg 183
22159 Hamburg
Germany
www.icc-languages.eu



Fondazione Italia Cina
Palazzo Clerici – Via Clerici 5
20121 MILANO
Italy
www.italychina.org



Soros International House
A MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL HOUSE WORLD ORGANISATION

Soros International House
Konstitucijos ave 23A
08105 Vilnius
Lithuania
www.sih.lt



EduActive
Pileckiego 104/149
02-781 Warsaw
Poland
www.eduactive.pl