Complete Lesson Transcript – Lesson 3 [English]

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Adam: Hello everyone, my name is Adam and welcome to lesson 3 of ChineseLearnOnline.com.

Kirin: Hello . My name is Kirin.

Adam: For lesson transcripts and other tools to help you learn Chinese, please visit our website. Now let's start with a review by listening a very simple conversation using some of the vocabulary taught in Lesson Two.

Kirin: Hello .
Raphael: Hello .
Kirin: How are you ?
Raphael: I'm very good . Thanks .
Kirin: Goodbye .
Raphael: Goodbye .

Adam: Hopefully you were able to follow along. Now that we know how to say "hello," what if I wanted to say "Hello everybody" or "Hello everyone"? How would I say that?

Kirin: Hello everyone .

Adam: Again.

Kirin: Hello everyone .

Adam: Ok , so let's break that down. This is an interesting one. There are three characters here, two of which are new. I highly recommend you take a look at the vocabulary link for this lesson which shows you what these Chinese characters look like, since it will give you extra insight into the language – which will be very valuable specially later on.

The first character is big which is a fourth tone. big means "big." If you look at what this character looks like on our site, it looks like a man stretching his hands out to show that something is big. Tell me that doesn't fascinate you! The second character was house which is a first tone. house means "house" or "family," and the last character we should all know by now good which means "good."

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So putting those three together we get "big family good." So in this context "big family" or "my very extended family" means… "everyone!" So by saying "everyone good" you are actually saying "Hello everyone!"

Kirin: Hello everyone .

Adam: As we said in our last lesson, where possible we try and break down the meanings of words into their literal definitions to help you figure out how these words and phrases are constructed and to help you piece things together on your own. I find that it also helps in memory to translate these words into something tangible to help you remember them.

So we'll continue on with a very simple introduction – "I am Adam." How would I say that, Kirin?

Kirin: I am Adam .

Adam: Alright, so let's analyze that. We have I , which means "I." Then we have a new character to be . That's a fourth tone and is the verb "to be" followed by "Adam," which is of course my English name.

Kirin: I am Adam .

Adam: Now one nice thing about Chinese is that you don't have to worry about conjugations of verbs. So in English you'd have "I am," "you are," "he or she is". In Chinese you just use the verb to be . Now we already know the words for I, you and he or she, so let's try this. We have… "I am."

Kirin: I am .

Adam: "You are."

Kirin: You are .

Adam: "He or she is."

Kirin: He or she is .

Adam: Great. See how easy that was. Now moving along, usually during introductions people want to know where you're from, so let's look at some of the main countries around the world. Let's start with America:

Kirin: America .

Adam: So that's a third tone followed by a second tone. Again please?

Kirin: America .

Adam: Now beautiful means "beautiful" and country means "country" so the literal translation for "America" in Chinese is actually "beautiful country."

Kirin: America .

Adam: Isn't that interesting? Let's do another one: China

Kirin: China .

Adam: So that's a first tone followed by a second tone.

Kirin: China .

Adam: Now this actually ends up meaning "middle country" which makes sense since that's where the Chinese language originates.

Kirin: China .

Adam: Now the names of many countries in Chinese end in country meaning "country." In some cases there is a literal meaning as in the case of China or America. In other cases though, the Chinese version is just a transliteration of the English name into Chinese characters. For example, how would you say Canada?

Kirin: Canada .

Adam: So that's a first, second and a fourth tone for the three characters there.

Kirin: Canada .

Adam: In this case there is no sense in forming a literal meaning since there isn't one – it's just meant to sound like the English name "Canada."

Kirin: Canada .

Adam: Let's do another one – England.

Kirin: England .

Adam: So that's a first tone Hero followed by country which kind of sounds like England. Let's do another one, France.

Kirin: France .

Adam: So that's a third tone followed by the second for country . Let's try Australia.

Kirin: Australia .

Adam: So that's a fourth tone and a first tone.

Kirin: Australia .

Adam: Now in the case of Australia they don't use country for "country," they use continent which actually means "continent," so it has its own special name! Now of course we recognize that there are a lot of countries out there and we do have listeners from different parts of the world, so on our website, in our "Lesson three ," vocabulary link, we do have a listing of other popular countries and their Chinese equivalents. If there is one that you'd like to know that isn't on the list, send to me a comment and we'll gladly add it.

Now knowing the word in Chinese for a country allows you easy access to some other useful vocabulary. How would you say "American"?

Kirin: American .

Adam: As you can see, this is the name of the country with a second tone person added to the end of it.

Kirin: American .

Adam: Person means "person". So if you look at the vocabulary link for this lesson on our website, the character looks like a headless person. So by saying American you are literally saying "America person" or "American."

Kirin: American .

Adam: Similarly, to say a "Chinese person" you would say:

Kirin: Chinese (person) .

Adam: How about Canadian?

Kirin: Canadian .

Adam: Someone from England.

Kirin: British .

Adam: And so on. Now by knowing the country, you can also come up with the names of some languages. How do you say the "Chinese language"?

Kirin: Chinese .

Adam: So here you have middle from China with a second tone language added after it.

Kirin: Chinese (language) .

Adam: So that gives us the language spoken in China – which, of course, is Chinese. Similarly, for "English" we could say:

Kirin: English (language) .

Adam: …which is the language from England . Again take a look at the vocabulary link for lesson three on our website to see various countries, their people and their languages.

Again, the premium pages for the first 4 lessons of each level are made available for free, so take a look and see if you like the information there. We'll be building upon it in our next lesson so take the time to review all of it on the site or by listening to this podcast again, then join us again for lesson 4.

Kirin: Thanks . Goodbye !