

Travel in Chinese - Lesson 61 - Train

1. (雪梅在网上查资料)

同事：雪梅，都下班了，怎么还不走啊？

2. 雪梅：我在查一些和哈尔滨有关的资料和图片。

3. 同事：哈尔滨？怎么，你要去那儿旅游吗？

4. 雪梅：对啊，你以前老说哈尔滨挺好的，所以这次放长假，我们全家人打算去哈尔滨看看。

5. 同事：是啊，那儿可是个好地方。不过现在正是旺季，人恐怕是少不了的。

6. 雪梅：对了，正好跟你打听一下儿，你说现在去哈尔滨，坐什么车比较方便？

7. 同事：坐火车啊，又便宜又快，现在的火车都提速了，不比从前啦。

8. 雪梅：提速？那现在去哈尔滨大概要多长时间？

9. 同事：以前去哈尔滨，差不多要在火车上晃悠一整天呢，现在晚上上车睡一觉，第二天一早就到了。

10. 雪梅：是吗？那可真的方便多了。

11. 人豪：(推门而入) 哎，雪梅，等了你半天都不见你下来，不是说好了下班在楼下等的吗？

12. 雪梅：刚才我一直在和小李聊去哈尔滨的事，我把这事给忘了。对了，小李，这是我先生，黄人豪。(对人豪) 这是我同事，小李。

13. 人豪：你好。/ 小李：你好，黄先生！

14. 雪梅：我刚才和小李聊了半天，我觉得坐火车去哈尔滨也挺方便的。

15. 黄：那当然好啦，可是你以前不是一直害怕坐中国的火车吗？总说人多又挤。

16. 雪梅：说实在的，即使是现在我还是有点儿担心。

17. 同事：没事，现在有空调了，冬天不冷，夏天也不热。

18. 人豪：对，要是在 20 年前啊，出门正好赶上一个三伏天，车厢里又闷又热，衣服就像水洗过似的。不过现在，时代不同了。

19. 同事：(点头表示同意人豪说的) 雪梅，现在是旺季，去哈尔滨的人特别多，你们最好还是提前订票比较保险。

20. 人豪：现在好象提前五天就能买了。

21. 雪梅：是吗？那去哪儿买呀？

22. 黄：现在都联网了，在哪儿买都一样。

23. 雪梅：我记得咱家楼下就有一个售票处，我们明天去吧。

24. 人豪：好的。那我们先走吧。

25. 雪梅：小李，我们先走了，谢谢。(二人向小李再见)

26. (在火车票代售处)

黄：三张去哈尔滨的火车票。

27. 售票员：卧铺还是硬座？

- 28.黄：卧铺。
- 29.售票员：18 号的硬卧已经卖完了，只有软卧和硬座票。
- 30.黄：别的售票处能不能有？
- 31.售票员：这是联网的，我这儿没有，别人那儿也没有。
- 32.（雪梅、黄商量）
- 雪梅：硬座是什么样子的？很硬的座位吗？
- 33.黄：就是不能躺着，座位并不硬。
- 34.雪梅：那太受罪了，还是软卧吧。
- 35.黄：软卧太贵了，比飞机票便宜点儿。也便宜不到哪儿去。
- 36.雪梅：贵就贵吧，不是要体验一下在中国坐火车的感觉嘛！
- 37.（雪梅买票）
- 黄：那买三张软卧票吧。
- 38.售票员：软卧三张，12 次，晚上 9 点零五发车。

Translation:

1. （Xuemei looking for information on the internet）
Colleague: Xuemei, it's time to finish work, why are you still here?
2. Xuemei: I'm looking up some information and pictures on Harbin.
3. Colleague: Harbin? Why, are you going there for a holiday?
4. Xuemei: Yes, you used to always say how nice Harbin was, so for the upcoming holidays, our whole family will visit Harbin.
5. Colleague: Hmm, that is a nice place. But it's peak season now, there'll be lots of people.
6. Xuemei: Oh right, I was just going to ask you, what's the best way to go to Harbin now?
7. Colleague: Take the train, it's cheaper and fast, nowadays the trains have sped up, not like in the old days.
8. Xuemei: Sped up? Then how long does it take to Harbin now?
9. Colleague: You used to have to spend a whole day on the train going to Harbin, now you just spend a night on the train and you're there in the morning
10. Xuemei: Really? That's a lot more convenient.
11. Renhao: （enters the door）Hey, Xuemei, didn't we agree to meet downstairs after work? I've been waiting for you?
12. Xuemei: I was chatting to Xiao Li about going to Harbin and forgot. Xiao Li, this is my husband, Huang Renhao.
（to Renhao）This is my colleague, Xiao Li.
13. Renhao: Hello. / Xiao Li: Hello Mr. Huang
14. Xuemei: I've just been chatting with Xiao Li, I think it's pretty convenient to take the train to Harbin too.
15. Huang: Of course it's good, but weren't you always worried about taking Chinese trains? You said they were too crowded.
16. Xuemei: To be honest, even now I am still a bit worried.
17. Colleague: It'll be alright, the trains are air-conditioned these days, so they won't be cold in winter, nor hot in summer.
18. Renhao: Yes, if this was 20 years ago and you happened to be traveling on a hot summer's day, the carriage would be so humid and hot, your clothes would be dripping wet. But now times have changed.

19. Colleague: (nods in agreement with Renhao) Xuemei, it's the peak season now, lots of people are going to Harbin, it's safer to book your tickets in advance.
20. Renhao: I think you can buy tickets 5 days in advance.
21. Xuemei: Really? Where can we buy them from?
22. Huang: They're all networked now, it doesn't matter where you buy from.
23. Xuemei: I remember there's a ticket outlet just downstairs in our building, let's go tomorrow.
24. Renhao: OK. Then let's go.
25. Xuemei: Xiao Li, thanks for your advice, we're going. (the two bid Xiao Li farewell)
26. (at the train tickets sales outlet)
Huang: Three train tickets to Harbin for the eighteenth.
27. Ticket Salesperson: Sleeper or seat?
28. Huang: Sleeper.
29. Ticket Salesperson: Sleeper seats for the 18th are sold out, we only have tickets for soft sleepers and hard seats.
30. Huang: Would other sales outlets have tickets?
31. Ticket Salesperson: No, we're on networked, if I don't have any here, other people won't have any either.
32. (Xuemei、Huang discuss) Xuemei: What are the hard seats like? Are the seats really hard?
33. Huang: It just means you can't lie down, the seats aren't hard.
34. Xuemei: That's too uncomfortable, let's buy the soft sleeper tickets.
35. Huang: The soft sleepers are too expensive, it's only slightly cheaper than plane tickets. Actually they're not that cheap at all.
36. Xuemei: Never mind the extra cost, we want to experience trains in China!
37. (Xuemei buys tickets)
Huang: We'll take three soft sleeper tickets.
38. Ticket Salesperson: three soft sleeper tickets, the no. 12 service, leaves at 9:05pm.

Bookmarks

1) 老 always

例) 雨老下个不停, 我们今天还是别出去了。

It never stops raining. Let's not go out today.

例) 他开会老迟到。

He's always late for meetings.

2) 大概 generally, roughly

例) 从西单到天安门广场, 走路大概需要二十分钟。

To walk from Xidan to Tian'anmen Square takes about 20 minutes.

例) 我大概月底回国。

I'm going back to my country around the end of the month.

3) 差不多 almost

例) 咱们的钱差不多快用光了。

We've almost spent all our money.

例) 他们俩的个子差不多一样高。

They are of about the same height.

Sign Posts

Trains in China

China has one of the largest and busiest rail networks in the world, and trains link almost every town and city. Some people may still imagine Chinese trains to be old-fashioned and crowded. In fact, some routes still used traditional steam engines until 10 or 20 years ago. But today the best trains are very modern and comfortable and safe.

Trains in China have four classes: soft seat, soft sleeper, hard seat, and hard sleeper. Short distance trains normally have just hard class seats, or sometimes hard seats and soft seats, but no sleeper bunks. Long distance trains have soft and hard class sleepers as well as a few cars with hard seats, the so-called “cheap seats”. Soft sleepers have comfortable 4-berth compartments with full bedding provided. Hard class sleepers have bunks in an open-style dormitory cars, usually arranged in bays of 6 (upper, middle and lower) on one side of the aisle, with pairs of seats on the other side of the aisle for daytime use. For long trips, both hard class and soft class sleepers are quite comfortable, but soft class does provide much more space and privacy.

The most important trains on the Beijing-Shanghai, Beijing-Hong Kong, and some other routes also have deluxe soft class with 2-berth compartments as well as the normal 4-berth soft class. Of course, most long-distance trains have a restaurant car serving full meals.

So, how do you book a train ticket?

Reservations for the best Z-category express trains open 20 days in advance, but for most other trains bookings only open 4-10 days before departure. The rules appear to vary! However, you can't buy a ticket before bookings open. You can generally only book a train journey at the station where your journey starts, so (for example) the reservations office at Shanghai can sell you a Shanghai-Beijing ticket but not a Beijing-Xian ticket. You would have to purchase these tickets when you arrive in Beijing, so allow for a few days wait or else have someone in Beijing buy the tickets for you. Berths are best booked at least 2-3 days in advance, apart from peak periods (mainly the Spring Festival, May Day holiday, and National Day in October) when tickets should be booked as soon as reservations open. Many people travel during these times and tickets can be scarce.

Trains with a 'Z' in the train number are the best trains with the most modern coaches. "Z" stands for 直快, indicating that it arrives at the destination with little or no interim stops. Trains with a 'T' in the train number are the next best. The “T” stands for 特 as in 特快, 'extra' fast. Trains with a 'K' in the train number are just 快 'fast'. They will stop at many more stations along the way and generally take much longer to arrive at the final destination. At any rate, traveling by train is a great way to see the countryside and meet other travelers and local people along the way.

Substitution and Extension

1)哪儿都/也 anywhere, everywhere

例) 这样的东西哪儿都能买到。

You can buy that thing anywhere.

例) 我周末哪儿也不想去, 就想呆在家里。

I don't want to go anywhere on the weekend. I just want to stay at home.

2) 形容词+不到哪去 not by much

例) 你照相的技术比他好不到哪儿去。neither good

Your skill at photography isn't much better than his.

例) 堵车的时候，打车比坐公交车快不到哪儿去。

In a traffic jam, it's not much faster to take a taxi than it is to take a bus.

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