

## 9. Particles, Interjections and Onomatopoeic Words

### 9.1 Structural Particles

Structural particles are function words used to express the structural or grammatical relationship between components of a sentence. The three most common structural particles in Putonghua are 的, 地, and 得 — all pronounced *de*, in the neutral tone.

Looking at structural particles from the point of view of HP orthography, two points require consideration: 1) the question of separation in writing, which is treated in the following section; and 2) the question of whether to differentiate the three *de*'s in writing. These three homophonous particles are represented by three different characters in writing; would it perhaps be useful to create three different HP forms to differentiate them in HP writing? The basic principle of HP orthography is to take the language's sound system as the basis for spelling, and by this standard the three particles 的, 地, and 得 should all be written identically as "de." But it may be desirable in certain situations (such as Chinese-language word processing and other computer applications, and in machine translation) to differentiate the three. In this case, they may be assigned different written forms: 的, the most commonly used, as "d"; 地 as "di" (an alternate pronunciation of this character); and the third, 得, as "de."

Below follows a discussion of the usage and written forms of

the three de's and other common structural particles of Putonghua.

1) de 的

This particle occurs with higher frequency than any other in Putonghua, and its usages are more varied and complex than those of any other. According to statistical data, de 的 has a frequency of occurrence of 6% in written Putonghua; that is, de 的 appears on an average of once in every 17–18 words.

The principal function of de 的 is to link attributive words or phrases with their head words or phrases. The attributive preceding de 的 may be a noun, pronoun, verb, or adjective or a phrase functioning as any of these, a numeral–measure word phrase, prepositional phrase, or a number of other possibilities. The head word or phrase is always a noun or noun phrase. The relationship between attributive and head word can be possessive, modifying, restrictive, or other.

Researchers of HP orthography have in the past set up rules to govern when de 的 should be written together with the attributive preceding and when the two should be written separately; years of practical application, however, have proved these rules to be needlessly complex and ultimately unnecessary. For this reason, to the basic rules of HP orthography has been added one that states: when de 的 functions as a structural particle, it is always written separately from the words that precede and follow it. (There are a very small number of exceptions to this rule; these will be discussed below.) In the following section, the various kinds of attributive constructions in which de 的 appears are considered one by one, according to the nature of their attributive

component.

**a. Noun or noun phrase + de**

Attributive constructions of this type may be possessive, restrictive, or modifying in nature. Some examples of usage:

dìdì de shūbāo 弟弟的书包 (younger brother's bookbag);

rénmín de quánlì 人民的权利 (rights of the people);

gǒu de jiàoshēng 狗叫声 (the barking of a dog);

huā de xiāngwèi 花的香味 (fragrance of flowers);

māmā de ài 妈妈的爱 (mother's love);

zǔmǔ de sǐ 祖母的死 (death of a grandmother);

húlǐ de wěibā 狐狸的尾巴 (foxtail);

diàndēng de guāng 电灯的光 (lamplight);

xìn de nèiróng 信的内容 (contents of a letter);

zhàopiàn de bèimiàn 照片的背面 (back of a photograph);

tiě de lángān 铁的栏杆 (iron railings);

sùliào de wánjù 塑料的玩具 (plastic toys);

lìshǐ de jīngyàn 历史的经验 (the experience of history);

dōngbian de shùlín 东边的树林 (the forest to the east);

tiānshàng de fēngzhēng 天上的风筝 (kites in the sky);

jīnnián de jìhuà 今年的计划 (this year's program);

bàngwǎn de xiá 傍晚的霞 (evening clouds);

Xiǎo Wáng de mā 小王的妈 (Xiao Wang's mother);

Lǐ Míng de lùnwén 李明的论文 (Li Ming's dissertation);

Huáng Hé de shuǐ 黄河的水 (the waters of the Yellow River);

Běijīng Shì de shìzhǎng 北京市的市长 (the mayor of Beijing);

chuán shàng de chéngkè 船上的乘客 (the passengers on the boat);

dìqiú shàng de shēngwù 地球上的生物 (the living creatures of

the earth);

dà mén wài de shí shī zi 大门外的石狮子 (the stone lions outside the gate);

wú guǐ diàn chē de chē piào 无轨电车的车票 (trolley bus ticket);

gāo shè jī guān qiāng de zǐ dàn 高射机关枪的子弹 (bullets of the antiaircraft machine gun);

Zhōng huá Rén mín Gònghéguó de zhǔ xí 中华人民共和国的主席 (Chairman of the People's Republic of China);

Hàn zú hé Zàng zú de yǔ yán yán jiū 汉族和藏族的语言研究 (linguistic research of the Han and Tibetan nationalities);

xīn xiū de lóu fáng de yáng tái 新修的楼房的阳台 (the balconies of the newly constructed building).

de 的 is written separately from a preceding noun or noun phrase even when the head word following is omitted:

Wǒ yào mǎi Zhōngwén de, bù mǎi wàiwén de. 我要买中文的, 不买外文的。 (I want to buy it in Chinese, not in a foreign language.)

Below are a few more examples of “noun + de” constructions. These are relatively unusual usages, as can be seen from the fact that the English translations give no suggestion of the presence of the particle de 的 in the original. Here again, de 的 is written separately:

Dà jiā dōu kāi Lǎo Wáng de wán xiào. 大家都开老王的玩笑。 (Everybody's making fun of Lao Wang.);

Jīn tiān wǎn shàng qù kàn gē jù Bái máo nǚ, Xiǎo Liú de Xǐ'ér, Xiǎo Zhāng de Dà chūn. 今天晚上去看歌剧《白毛女》, 小刘的喜儿, 小张的大春。 (We're going to see the opera *The*

*White-Haired Girl* tonight, with Xiao Liu as Xi'er and Xiao Zhang as Dachun.).

**b) Pronoun or pronoun phrase + de**

Attributive constructions of this type are very close in form to noun or noun phrase + de constructions. A few examples:

wǒ de mǔqīn 我的母亲 (my mother);

nǐ de yǔsǎn 你的雨伞 (your umbrella);

tā de qùshì 她的去世 (her death);

wǒmen de zǔguó 我们的祖国 (our country);

shuí de qiānbǐ 谁的铅笔(whose pencil);

zìjǐ de shìr 自己的事 (one's own affairs);

zhèyàng de rén 这样的人 (people of that sort);

zěmeyàng de xìnggé 怎么样的性格 (what sort of a temperament);

tā zìjǐ de cuòwù 他自己的错误 (his own mistake);

wǒmen dàjiā de kànfǎ 我们大家的看法 (our opinion);

tā hé wǒ de lǎoshī 他和我的老师 (his and my teacher; or possibly, he and my teacher);

bùguān nǐ wǒ de shìr 不关你我的事 (no affair of yours or mine).

de 的 is written separately from a preceding pronoun or pronoun phrase even when the head word following is omitted:

Wǒ de huài le, jiè nǐ de yòngyong. 我的坏了，借你的用用。  
(Mine's broken; let me borrow yours.).

A few examples of less typical "pronoun + de" constructions (compare them to the "noun + de" constructions above):

Bié kāi tā de wánxiào! 别开他的玩笑。 (Don't make fun of him!);

Jīntiān kāihuì shì shuí de zhǔxǐ? 今天开会是谁的主席。  
(Who's the chairman of the meeting today?);

Yī dà duī pò xié, làn wàzi shénme de. 一大堆破鞋烂袜子什么的。  
(a pile of worn-out shoes, old socks and such).

**c. Verb or verb phrase + de**

Attributive constructions of this type are either restrictive or modifying in nature:

chàng de gē 唱的歌 (the song being sung);

xuéxí de cáiliào 学习的材料 (materials for study);

qiánjìn de dàolù 前进的道路 (the path of advance);

jìlái de xìn 寄来的信 (the letter that was sent);

chēngzhe de sǎn 撑着的伞 (the umbrella being carried);

dǎpòle de wǎn 打破了的碗 (the bowl that was broken);

zǒu jìnlái de rén 走进来的人 (the person who came in);

zhěnglǐ hǎo de shū 整理好的书 (the books that have been arranged);

kàn huā de rén 看花儿的人 (the person looking at the flowers);

mài cài de lǎotóur 卖菜的老头儿 (the old man selling vegetables);

chī chóngzi de zhíwù 吃虫子的植物 (insectivorous plants);

dǎ diànbào de fèiyòng 打电报的费用 (telegraph fee);

dǎsǎo wèishēng de gōngzuò rényuán 打扫卫生的工作人员 (sanitation personnel).

de 的 is written separately from a preceding verb or verb phrase even when the head words following is omitted:

mài huā de 卖花的 (flower seller);

dǎ lánqiú de 打篮球的 (basketball player);

## Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography

kāi chóuduǎnpù de 开绸缎铺的 (silk store proprietor);  
mài báicài, luóbo de 卖白菜萝卜的 (the person who sells tur-  
nips and Chinese cabbage);

Chī de, chuān de, yòng de, yàngyang dōu yǒu. 吃的, 穿的,  
用的, 样样都有。 (They have all kinds of food, clothing, and  
other items of use.);

Wei, lái de shì shuí? 喂, 来的是谁? (Who's there?);

Tīng, chàng de shì Jīngjù 《Hóngméiji》. 听, 唱的是京剧  
《红梅记》。 (Listen, it's the Peking opera "Tale of Red Plum  
Blossoms" they're singing.).

A few examples of less typical "verb + de" usages:

Wǒ zuótiān jìn de chéng. 我昨天进的城。

(I went downtown yesterday.);

Xiǎo Wáng jīnnián kǎo de dàxué.

小王今年考的大学。

(Xiao Wang was accepted into college this year.);

Wūzi li de rén, kū de kū, jiào de jiào.

屋子里的人, 哭的哭, 叫的叫。

(Some of the people in the room were crying, some  
shouting.);

Huār dōu luò le, xià yǔ xià de.

花儿都落了, 下雨下的。

(The flowers have all been beaten off the trees by the rain.);

Yǎnjīng dōu jìnshì le, kàn shū kàn de.

眼睛都近视了，看书看的。

(I'm nearsighted from too much reading.)

d. Adjective or adjective phrase + de

Attributive constructions of this type are modifying or descriptive in nature. A few examples:

hóng de huā 红的花 (red flowers);

lǜ de yèzi 绿的叶子 (green leaves);

hǎo de bànfa 好的办法 (a good solution);

xīn de wèntí 新的问题 (a new problem);

měilì de chéngshì 美丽的城市 (a beautiful city);

qiānxū de rén 谦虚的人 (a modest person);

xìngfú de shēnghuó 幸福的生活 (a happy life);

xuěbái de zhǐ 雪白的纸 (snow-white paper);

wānwān de méimáo 弯弯的眉毛 (arched eyebrows);

huángdēngdēng de gǔzi 黄澄澄的谷子 (golden millet);

zuì gāo de shānfēng 最高的山峰 (highest peak);

bù qīngjié de shíwù 不清洁的食物 (unsanitary food);

shífēn kěxī de shìr 十分可惜的事 (a truly unfortunate occurrence);

zhèyàng zhēnguì de lǐpǐn 这样珍贵的礼品 (such precious gifts);

liǎng jīn zhòng de lǐyú 两斤重的鲤鱼 (a two-pound carp);

tián ér xiāng de huāshēngtáng 甜而香的花生糖 (sweet and tasty peanut brittle);

guāngróng ér jiǎnjù de rènwu 光荣而艰巨的任务 (a glorious but arduous task);

yòu hēi yòu shòu de liǎn 又黑又瘦的脸 (a thin, dark face);



wǔguāng-shísè de huòwù 五光十色的货物 (all sorts of merchandise);

luànrqībāozāo de dōngxi 乱七八糟的东西 (things in a mess, odds and ends).

(See Chapter 10, Idioms and Classical Elements, for the written form of idioms like those used as adjectives in the last two examples.)

de 的 is written separately from a preceding adjective or adjective phrase even when the head word following is omitted:

Zhèr de chènyci hěn duō, wǒ tiāole yī jiàn qiǎnhóng de.

这儿的衬衣很多，我挑了一件浅红的。

(They have a lot of shirts here; I picked a pink one.);

Wǒ liǎng gè hái'zǐ, dà de qī suì, xiǎo de sān suì.

我两个孩子，大的七岁，小的三岁。

(I have two children; the older one is seven years old, the younger three.).

**e. Adverb + de:**

lǐlái de xíguàn 历来的习惯 (a tradition of long standing);

zànshí de kùnnán 暂时的困难 (temporary difficulties);

wànyī de jīhuì 万一的机会 (a chance in ten thousand);

yīguàn de biǎoxiàn 一贯的表现 (a persistent manifestation).

**f. Onomatopoeic word + de**

In writing, onomatopoeic words are sometimes enclosed in quotation marks for visual effect:

“hu” de yī shēng “忽”的一声 (with a whistling sound);

huahua de liúshuǐ 哗哗的流水 (a burbling stream);

dida dida de nàozhōng 嘀嗒嘀嗒的闹钟 (a ticking alarm clock).

**g. Numeral—measure word phrase + de**

yī zhuō de cài 一桌的菜 (a table covered with food);

yī liǎn de hànshuǐ 一脸的汗水 (a face covered with sweat);

yī páipái de lóufáng 一排排的楼房 (row after row of buildings).

**h. Prepositional phrase + de:**

duì guójiā de gòngxiàn 对国家的贡献 (devotion to one's country);

guānyú dìzhèn de zhīshi 关于地震的知识 (knowledge about earthquakes).

**i. Subject—predicate construction + de:**

wǒ xǐhuān de xiézi 我喜欢的鞋子 (the shoes I like);

tā fābiāo de wénzhāng 他发表的文章 (the article he published);

bìng hào chī de fàn 病号吃的饭 (the patient's diet);

gōngyè fāzhǎn de sùdù 工业发展的速度 (the speed with which industry develops);

Lǐ Míng jīngxīn shèjì de tú'àn 李明精心设计的图案 (the design Li Ming painstakingly worked up).

de 的 is written separately from a preceding subject—predicate construction even when the head word following is omitted.

Tā shuō de wǒ tīng bu qīngchū. 他说的我听不清楚。(I couldn't hear clearly what he was saying.).

de 的 is written together with the component it follows only in the following cases:

yǒude 有的 (some): Yǒude rén tànxi, yǒude rén liúlèi. 有的人叹息，有的人流泪。(Some people were sighing, while others wept.).

shìde 是的 (yes, certainly): Shìde, wǒ jiù qù. 是的，我就去。  
(Certainly, I'll go right away.).

shìde 似的 (like, as): Xiàng hóuzi shìde, tiàolái tiàoqù. 像猴子似的，跳来跳去。(Jumping around, just like a monkey.).

## 2) de 地

The principal function of this particle is to link an adverbial modifier to the verb or adjective it modifies. de 地 is always written separately from the elements preceding and following it. The various kinds of de construction are discussed one by one below, according to the nature of the adverbial modifier.

### a. Noun or noun phrase + de

This construction is only seldom used:

kēxué de lùnzhèng 科学地论证 (scientifically demonstrate);

bùfēn de jiějué 部分地解决 (partially solve);

xíngshìzhǔyì de kàn wèntí 形式主义地看问题 (look at issues from a formalistic viewpoint);

yí gè zì yí gè zì de niàn 一个字一个字地念 (read word by word);

yí jiā yí hù de sōuchá 一家一户地搜查 (conduct a house-by-house search).

### b. Verb or verb phrase + de

This construction too is seldom used:

lái huí de bēnpǎo 来回地奔跑 (run back and forth);

zhuózhòng de jiǎngjiāng 着重地讲讲 (discuss emphatically);

bù tíng de liú 不停地流 (flow ceaselessly);

shuō bu chū lái de gāoxìng 说不出来地高兴 (happy though unable to express it in words).

**c. Adjective or adjective phrase + de**

This is the most common *de* construction by far:  
suǐbiàn de kàn 随便地看 (look over casually);  
zìxì de yánjiū 仔细地研究 (consider carefully);  
móhu de tīngjiàn 模糊地听见 (hear indistinctly);  
mànmàn de zǒu 慢慢地走 (walk slowly);  
qīngqīng de qīdǎo 轻轻地敲 (knock gently);  
hěn kuài de xuéhuì 很快地学会 (master rapidly);  
gèng hǎo de gàn 更好地干 (do (something) even better);  
bù dà yúkuài de zǒu le 不大愉快地走了 (left rather unhappily);  
fēicháng xiángxi de jièshào 非常详细地介绍 (present in great detail).

**d. Adverb + de**

This form is only seldom used:  
géwài de gāoxìng 格外地高兴 (especially happy);  
fēicháng de rènzhēn 非常地认真 (extremely conscientious);  
ǒurán de xiǎngqǐ 偶然地想起 (recall by chance);  
zàisān de zhǔfù 再三地嘱咐 (exhort repeatedly);  
jīngcháng de tāolùn 经常地讨论 (discuss often);  
jiànjian de liáng le 渐渐地凉了 (slowly cooled off).

**e. Onomatopoeic word + de**

“pēng” de xiǎng le “砰”地响了 (banged);  
“hōng” de zhàkāi le “轰”地炸开了 (exploded with a boom);  
“gēgē” de xiào “格格”地笑 (chuckle);  
huahua de liú 哗哗地流 ((of water) gurgle).

**f. Numeral-measure word phrase + de**

yī kǒu yī kǒu de chī 一口一口地吃 (eat bite by bite);

yī tàng yī tàng de pǎo 一趟一趟地跑 (make trip after trip);  
yī dà piàn yī dà piàn de kāikǎn 一大片一大片地开垦 (open  
up filed after field for cultivation).

**g. Set phrase or idiom + de**

jùjīng-huìshén de tīng 聚精会神地听 (listen with rapt atten-  
tion);

diānsǎn-dǎosì de shuō 颠三倒四地说 (talk disconnectedly);

yòu kuài yòu hǎo de wánchéng 又快又好地完成 (complete  
quickly and well);

yuè lái yuè zhòng de wǎng xià yā 越来越重地往下压 (press  
down harder and harder).

**h Subject-predicate construction + de:**

shēngyīn chàn dǒu de shuō 声音颤抖地说 (say in a trembling  
voice);

liǎng shǒu yòngjìn de bāi 两手用劲地掰 (break apart with the  
hands, using all one's strength).

**3) de 得**

The principal function of this particle is to link a verb or adjective with its complement. The complement expresses possibility, degree, or result, and may be composed of a single word or a phrase. The verb or adjective preceding de 得 may only be a single word, never a phrase. de 得 is in principle written separately from the elements preceding and following it. The bu 不 that negates a de 得 expressing possibility is also written separately from the elements around it. A few examples of de 得 (and bu 不) in use:

**a. Verb + de:**

Complement expressing possibility:

## Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography

ná de dòng 拿得动 (can move);  
ná bu dòng 拿不动 (can't budge);  
tīng de dǒng 听得懂 (understand what one hears);  
tīng bu dǒng 听不懂 (fail to understand what one hears);  
chī de bǎo 吃得饱 (get enough to eat);  
chī bu bǎo 吃不饱 (not get enough to eat);  
zhì de hǎo 治得好 (cure);  
zhì bu hǎo 治不好 (fail to cure).

Complement expressing result:

jī de kū 急得哭 (worried to tears);  
dǎ de téng 打得疼 (beaten sore);  
xiào de chū yǎnlèi 笑得出眼泪 (laugh so hard one cries);  
chuī de wǒ tóu fāyūn 吹得我头发晕 (blew until I felt dizzy).

Complement expressing degree:

pǎo de kuài 跑得快 (run fast);  
shuì de xiāng 睡得香 (sleep well);  
dǎsǎo de gāngān-jìngjìng 打扫得干干净净 (clean up spick and span);  
xiě de fēicháng hǎo 写得非常好 (written extremely well);  
kàn de rùle mí 看得入了迷 (watch entranced);  
tīng gùshi tīng de wǒ lián fàn yě wàngle chī 听故事听得我连饭也忘了吃 (listened so absorbedly to the story that I forgot to eat my meal).

### b. Adjective + de

Constructions of this type always express degree:

hǎo de hěn 好得很 (very good);  
duō de duō 多得多 (much more);  
lěng de yàomìng 冷得要命 (freezing cold);

hēi de kànbujiàn rén 黑得看不见人 (so dark one can't see the people around one);

měilì de méiyǒu bànfǎ xíngróng 美丽得没有办法形容 (indescribably lovely);

gāoxìng de jǐnjǐn wòzhu tā de shǒu shuō: "Xièxie! Xièxie!" 高兴得紧紧握住他的手说: "谢谢! 谢谢!" (So happy I could only grasp his hand and say, "Thank you! Thank you!").

There are two main situations in which de 得 should be written as one unit with the component that precedes or follows it. Let us take a look at these:

(1) de 得 sometimes joins together with the verb that precedes it to form a single word. Sometimes a bu 不 is interposed between the verb and de 得 to indicate negation. In either case, all elements are written as one unit. The most common such words are listed below:

dǒngde 懂得 (to understand);

jìde 记得 (to remember);

jiànde 见得 (to seem);

juéde 觉得 (to feel);

kuìde 亏得 (fortunately);

láide 来得 (to be competent (to do something));

liǎode 了得 (terrible);

miǎnde 免得 (in order to avoid);

rènde 认得 (to recognize);

shěde 舍得 (not to grudge, willing to go without);

shǐde 使得 (to cause);

xiǎnde 显得 (to seem, appear);

xiǎode 晓得 (to know);

zhíde 值得 (to be worth);  
bābude 巴不得 (to be very eager to);  
guàibude 怪不得 (no wonder);  
láibude 来不得 (impermissible);  
liǎobude 了不得 (terrific);  
miǎnbude 免不得 (unavoidable);  
shěbude 舍不得 (to be reluctant);  
shìbude 使不得 (cannot);  
yuànbude 怨不得 (no wonder).

(2) In certain trisyllabic verb-complement constructions in which de 得 (or the negative marker bu 不) forms the middle syllable, the meaning of the complement has altered and the whole has come to express a single concept. In this case, all three syllables should be written as one unit. Some of the more common examples of this construction are listed below:

jí: láidejí 来得及 (there's still time; to be in time);  
    láibují 来不及 (there's no time; to be too late);  
kǎi: chīdekǎi 吃得开 (to be popular);  
    chībūkǎi 吃不开 (be unpopular);  
qǐ: duìdeqǐ 对得起 (not let somebody down);  
    duìbuqǐ 对不起 (let somebody down; also, "excuse me");  
qù: guòdeqù 过得去 (feel at ease);  
    guòbùqù 过不去 (feel sorry, apologetic);  
shàng: gǎndeshàng 赶得上 (keep up with, catch up with);  
    gǎnbùshàng 赶不上 (fall behind);  
xiāo: chīdexiāo 吃得消 (be able to bear);  
    chībùxiāo 吃不消 (be unable to bear);  
zhào: shùdezhào 数得着 (be considered as);



shǔbuzhao 数不着 (not be considered as, not count as);  
zhù: kàodezhù 靠得住 (reliable);  
kàobuzhù 靠不住 (unreliable).

#### 4) zhī 之

This structural particle is a holdover from classical Chinese. It is close in meaning and usage to de 的, and in most situations de 的 is used in preference to zhī 之. zhī 之 is used only in a limited number of environments. It is usually written separately from the words around it, as:

shàonián zhī jiā 少年之家 (Children's Center);  
wújià zhī bǎo 无价之宝 (a priceless treasure);  
qiān lǐ zhī wài 千里之外 (1,000 li away; very far away);  
chìzǐ zhī xīn 赤子之心 (the heart of a newborn child—utter innocence);  
yìliào zhī zhōng 意料之中 (as might be expected);  
xīnhūn zhī yè 新婚之夜 (wedding night);  
Huǒyào shì Zhōngguó gǔdài sì dà fāmíng zhī yī. 火药是中国古代四大发明之一。 (Gunpowder was one of the four great inventions of ancient China.).

zhī 之 is written as part of a larger unit in the compound fēnzhī 分之 (divided by) used in expressing fractions. (For more details, see Chapter 4, Section 3.)

#### 5) suǒ 所

This particle is another holdover from classical Chinese. It is most commonly seen in written language, where it is often followed by a verb to form a verb construction. suǒ 所 is usually written separately from the verb that follows it, as:

dàjiā suǒ tí de wèntí 大家所提的问题 (the questions that ev-

eryone has asked);

wǒ suǒ rènshi de péngyou 我所认识的朋友 (all my friends);

jù wǒ suǒ zhī 据我所知 (as far as I know);

yǒu suǒ tígāo 有所提高 (has enjoyed some improvement);

bèi biāomiàn xiànxàng suǒ míhuò 被表面现象所迷惑  
(misled by appearances).

suǒ 所 is written as one unit with a following verb in a limited number of words. The following are the most common words of this type:

suǒwèi 所谓 (so-called);

suǒyǒu 所有 (all, every);

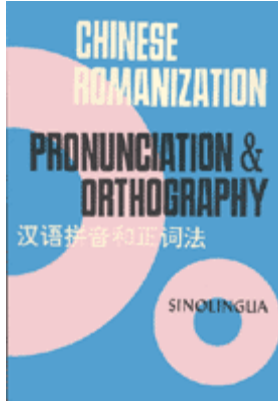
suǒshǔ 所属 (that one is affiliated with);

suǒzài 所在 (place, location).

## 9.2 Tense-Marking Particles

Tense-marking particles have already been discussed in some detail in Chapter 5, Verbs. It was noted there that the tense markers *zhe* 着 (indicating an action in progress) and *guo* 过 (indicating a past experience) are always written as a single unit with the verb they follow. The particle *le* 了 (indicating a completed action) is sometimes, but not always, written as a single unit with its verb. This is because *le* 了, unlike *zhe* 着 and *guo* 过, may be separated from its verb by other elements; and also because *le* 了 itself can act as a mood particle as well as a tense particle. (For details on *le* 了 as a mood particle, see Section 3 of chapter.)

This section is devoted to a discussion of orthography specifically as it relates to the tense particle *le* 了. Three rules are laid out to help the student master the written forms of this parti-



This is an excerpt from *Chinese Romanization: Pronunciation and Orthography*, by Yin Binyong, translated and edited by Mary Felley.

© 1990, [Sinolingua](http://www.sinolingua.com)

Yīn Bīnyōng, *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn hé Zhèngcífǎ*

尹斌庸, 汉语拼音和正词法

尹斌庸, 漢語拼音和正詞法

This PDF version was made by [www.pinyin.info](http://www.pinyin.info), where it appears with the kind permission of Sinolingua.

**Pīnyīn.info** *a guide to the writing of  
Mandarin Chinese in romanization*