

THE CHINESE FACE



AND THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS AND CHARACTER



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Dream of the Red Chamber

AND THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS AND CHARACTER

Face

- 臉 liǎn 臉兒 liǎnr ‘face’
- 臉面 liǎn-miàn ‘face’
- 頭臉 tóu-liǎn ‘head and face’
- 體面 tǐ-miàn ‘body and face; respectability’
- 老臉 lǎo-liǎn ‘old face’
- 面子 miàn-zi ‘superficial’

Functions of face

- Protective cover
 - but with its own emotional content
 - protection against shame
 - linked to position, pride, self-respect
 - can be earned, takes time
 - can be given, taken away, had, lost, lacked etc.
- Communicative channel
 - not always according to will

Protective cover: lose face

- Adjective
 - 丟臉 diū-liǎn
- Verb-object expression
 - 丟了臉面 diū-le liǎn-miàn
- Embarrassment and shame
- Loss of self-respect

Protective cover: lose face

- Takes time to build up, but may be lost quickly
把我這幾年的臉面都丟了
'lost my face from all these years'
- May be both individual and collective
丟的是你賈家的臉
'what is lost is the face of the Jiǎ family'

Protective cover: hurt face

- Adjective
 - 傷臉 shāng-liǎn
- Verb-object expression
 - 傷臉面 shāng liǎn-miàn
- Alternative expression
 - 礙臉面 ài liǎn-miàn ‘obstruct face’
 - 保不住臉 bǎo-bu-zhù liǎn ‘unable to protect face’
 - 我的臉擱在那裡 wǒ de liǎn gē zài nǎlǐ ‘where can I put my face’
- Humiliation

Protective cover: have or lack face

- 有臉 yǒu liǎn ‘have face’
 - high position, honour, self-respect, pride
- 沒臉(面) méi liǎn(miàn) ‘lack face’
 - low position, shame, shamelessness
 - 有那麼大臉 ‘have such a big face’
 - 你還充有臉呢 ‘you really have a face’
 - 沒臉面的奴才們 ‘slaves lacking face’

Protective cover: give face

- 給……臉 ‘give face’
- 賞……臉(兒) ‘award somebody face’
- 給……沒臉 ‘give somebody a lack of face’
- 給……留(個)臉(兒) ‘save face for somebody’
- 給……留一些兒體面 ‘save body-and-face for somebody’

Protective face: get/want/leave face

- 得臉(面) 'get face'
- 外人知道，這性命臉面要也不要？
'If outsiders got to know about it, how can you still want your life and your face?'
- 要臉做什麼 'Why should I want face'
- 留臉面 'save face'
- 臉面也不能剩一點兒
'can't even leave behind a little trace of face'

Protective cover: exploit face

- 仗著……臉面 ‘lean on somebody’s face’
- 逞了……臉 ‘show off somebody’s face’
- Respectability, social position
 - 難道這些人的臉面，和你討一個情，還討不下來不成？
 - ‘With these people’s face, can’t I ask you for a favour?’

Protecting cover: look to sb.'s face

- 看我們奶奶的老臉 'looking to Grannie's old face'
- 不看我的臉， 權且看老太太 'even if you don't look to my face, at least look to the old lady'

Protective cover: having face to do sth.

- 什麼臉出去見人 ‘what face do I have to see people = how can I face people’
- 你還有臉來問 ‘you still have the face to ask = you still have the shamelessness to ask’
- 還有臉先要五十兩銀子，真不害臊 ‘you have the face to ask for 50 taels of silver, you really are shameless’
- 我還有什麼臉來過這日子 ‘what face do I have to live [the rest of] my life’
- 叫妹子日後抬頭豎臉的見人呢 ‘let her raise her head and face to see people in the future’
- 有頭臉管事 ‘have head and face to decide things’

Protective cover: ignoring face

- 老臉顧不成 ‘don’t care about my old face’
- 外頭的臉面都不顧了 ‘don’t care about my face outside’
- 仗著我這不怕臊的臉 ‘leaning on this face of mine, with no fear of shame’
- 捨著老臉 ‘let go of my old face’

Protective cover: thick facial skin

- 臉皮(子)厚

‘have thick facial skin; make the facial skin thick’



Protective cover: other expressions

- 臉上過不去 'can't pass by on the face'
- 臉上下不來 'can't go down on the face'
- 臉上礙不過去 'can't obstruct past the face'

Protective cover: good or pretty face

- 我這臉還好 'This face of mine is quite good'
- 臉上不好看 'It's not pretty on the face'
- 府上臉面不好看 'The mansion's face will not be pretty'

Protective cover: the feeling face

- 臉上羞慚 'embarrassed in the face'
- 臉上沒趣 'no fun in the face'
- 臉上沒意思 'no fun in the face'



Protecting cover: cover face

- 用手帕子蓋上臉 ‘cover the face with a handkerchief’
- 拿袖子遮了臉 ‘cover the face with the sleeves’
- 兩手捂起臉來 ‘cover the face with the hands’
- 酒蓋住了臉 ‘the wine covered the face’
- 仗著酒蓋臉 ‘exploit the face-covering effect of wine’

Communicative channel – facial expressions

- Acquired vs. inborn
- Realistic vs. filtered
- Spontaneous vs. volitional



Communicative channel

– change of colour

- Face colour
 - 色 臉色 面色 氣色 神色 情色
 - 怨色 'resentful look', 怒色 'angry look', 愧色 'embarrassed look', 悅色 'happy look'

Communicative channel

– change of colour

- Face colour
 - Red and purple: embarrassed
 - 臉紅耳赤 面紅耳赤 ‘face red ears red’
 - 紅脹了臉 ‘red and swollen in the face’
 - 紫脹了臉 ‘purple and swollen in the face’
 - 面紅耳熱 ‘red face and hot ears’
 - Red and purple: angry
 - 賭氣紅了臉: ‘red in the face with pent-up anger’

Communicative channel

– change of colour

- Face colour

- Yellow: anger

- 臉都氣黃了 ‘face turned yellow with anger’
 - 氣得面如金紙 ‘so angry his face was like gold-leaf’

- Yellow: fear

- 嚇得黃了臉 ‘so scared her face turned yellow’
 - 面如土色 ‘face like the colour of earth’
 - 唬得面上失色 ‘so scared his face lost colour’

- Yellow: natural colour

- 也不施脂粉，黃黃臉兒 ‘without rouge and powder, with a yellow face’

Communicative channel

– change of colour

- Face colour
 - White: anger
 - 氣白了臉 ‘so angry their faces turned white’
 - 氣得臉白氣噎 ‘so angry her face turned white and her breath began choking’
 - Green: anger
 - 氣得眼紅面青 ‘so angry her eyes turned red and her face green’

Communicative channel

– change of colour

- Eye colour

- Red with tears

- 眼圈兒紅了 ‘the rim of the eyes turned red’
 - 哭得眼紅 ‘cried so much her eyes turned red’
 - 眼紅紅的腫了 ‘the eyes turned red and swollen’
 - 眼圈微紅，雙腮帶赤 ‘both the eyes and the cheeks turned a little red’

- Red and purple with anger

- 眼都紅紫了 ‘the eyes turned red and purple’

Communicative channel

– emission of fluids

- Tears and snivel
 - 眼淚鼻涕哭出來 ‘cried out with both tears and snivel’
- Sweat
 - 急得一臉汗 ‘so distressed your face is filled with sweat’

Communicative channel

– muscular activity

- Laughing and smiling
 - 笑 xiào ‘laugh; smile’ (3750 occurrences in the novel)
 - 笑道 ‘said with a smile’ (2234 occurrences)
 - + 笑說(道) ‘said with a smile’, 笑問(道) ‘asked with a smile’, 笑答(道) ‘answered with a smile’, 笑回(道) ‘reported with a smile’...
 - 口內笑道 ‘his mouth smiling’
 - 抿著嘴兒 ‘smile with one’s lips pursed together’
 - 眉開眼笑 ‘his brows open and eyes smiling’
 - 腮上似笑不笑 ‘his cheeks only seeming to smile’
 - 鼻子裡笑了一聲 ‘laughed through the nose’
 - 滿臉是笑 ‘smiles all over his face’

Communicative channel

– muscular activity

- Staring and glaring 瞪 dèng 睜 zhēng 豎 shù 立 lì

– Fear

- 唬得兩眼直瞪 ‘so frightened his eyes went wide open’
- 目瞪口呆 ‘eyes staring and mouth gaping’
- 兩眼直豎 ‘raised her eyes’

– Anger

- 氣的眼睛直瞪瞪的 ‘so angry his eyes went wide open’
- 目瞪口呆 ‘eyes staring and mouth askance’
- 恨的瞪著他們 ‘stare at them with hatred’
- 鳳眼圓睜 ‘her phoenix eyes went wide open’
- 立起兩個騷眼睛來罵人 ‘raised her seductive eyes in abuse’

Communicative channel

- muscular activity

- Not looking straight at somebody
 - Disrespect or anger
 - 正眼也不看 ‘not even looking straight at him’
 - 眼皮兒也不抬 ‘not even raising the eyelids’
 - Fear
 - 正眼也不敢看 ‘not even daring to look straight at him’

Communicative channel

- muscular activity

- Frowning

- 皺眉 zhòu méi

- ‘raise one’s brows in worry, dislike or disgust’

- 蹙眉 cù méi

- ‘raise one’s brows in worry or strong anger’

- 立眉 lì méi

- ‘raise one’s brows in anger’

Communicative channel

– muscular activity

- Pout one's lips 努嘴 nǚ zuǐ
 - Pointing out the direction
 - Pointing to something in the situation that the recipient is not aware of
- Sticking one's tongue out
 - 吐舌 tǔ shé: astonishment; fear
 - 伸舌頭 shēn shétou: relief at escaping from an awkward or awful situation

Chinese face

- Face as the location of self-respect
- Blushing accompanied by swollenness
- Anger is yellow (or red, white, green)
- Laughter and smile is one concept
- Smiling should be done with lips pursed together

