

Vocabulary List: *I Dream of Popo* / 我夢見婆婆

● HSK 1–2 · Beginner

● HSK 3–4 · Lower Intermediate

● HSK 5 · Intermediate

● HSK 6 · Upper Intermediate

● HSK 7–9 · Advanced

● Beyond HSK

HSK 1–2 · Beginner

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE FROM THE STORY
红包 / 紅包 <i>hóng bāo</i>	a red envelope with money inside, given as a gift	她給我一個紅包。 <i>tā gěi wǒ yī gè hóng bāo.</i> She gave me a red envelope.
年糕 / 年糕 <i>nián gāo</i>	sticky rice cake eaten at Lunar New Year	她煎起香脆、甜甜的年糕。 <i>tā jiān qǐ xiāng cuì, tián tián de nián gāo.</i> She fried up crispy, sweet New Year's cakes.
水饺 / 水餃 <i>shuǐ jiǎo</i>	dumplings (Taiwan word; Mainland Chinese usually says 饺子 jiǎo zi)	我好想吃你包的水餃。 <i>wǒ hǎo xiǎng chī nǐ bāo de shuǐ jiǎo.</i> I really miss your dumplings.
微笑 / 微笑 <i>wēi xiào</i>	to smile; a gentle smile	她微笑著。 <i>tā wēi xiào zhe.</i> She smiles.
语言 / 語言 <i>yǔ yán</i>	language	我在學一個新的語言。 <i>wǒ zài xué yī gè xīn de yǔ yán.</i> I'm learning a new language.

HSK 3–4 · Lower Intermediate

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE FROM THE STORY
怀抱 / 懷裡 <i>huái lǐ</i>	in someone's arms; being held close	我在婆婆的懷裡做夢。 <i>wǒ zài pó po de huái lǐ zuò mèng.</i> I dream in Popo's arms.
宝贝 / 寶貝 <i>bǎo bèi</i>	darling; sweetheart (a loving thing to call someone)	「貝貝心，貝貝肝。」 「 <i>bèi bèi xīn, bèi bèi gān.</i> 」 "My darling heart, my darling liver." (a term of deep endearment) 貝貝 is a loving nickname form of 寶貝. 心 (heart) and 肝 (liver) are both used in Chinese to express that someone is precious to you.
熟悉 / 熟悉 <i>shú xī</i>	familiar; feeling like something you know well	什麼味道都還是那麼熟悉。 <i>shén me wèi dào dōu hái shì nà me shú xī.</i> Everything smells the same.
陌生 / 陌生 <i>mò shēng</i>	unfamiliar; strange; like something doesn't belong to you	這樣叫她感覺有點陌生。 <i>zhè yàng jiào tā gǎn jué yǒu diǎn mò shēng.</i> Calling her that felt a little strange.

承诺 / 承諾 <i>chéng nuò</i>	a promise	那是一個承諾，也是一個吻。 <i>nà shì yí gè chéng nuò, yě shì yí gè wěn.</i> A promise and a kiss.
祈祷 / 祈禱 <i>qí dǎo</i>	to pray	聽說婆婆生病了，我為她祈禱。 <i>tīng shuō pó po shēng bìng le, wǒ wèi tā qí dǎo.</i> When we heard Popo was sick, I prayed for her.
探望 / 探望 <i>tàn wàng</i>	to visit someone (especially an elder or someone who is sick)	回去探望的時候，我緊緊地抱住婆婆。 <i>huí qù tàn wàng de shí hòu, wǒ jǐn jǐn de bào zhù pó po.</i> When I went back to visit, I hugged Popo tight.

HSK 5 · Intermediate

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE FROM THE STORY
顺口 / 順口 <i>shùn kǒu</i>	rolls off the tongue easily; feels natural to say	這些詞說起來越來越顺口。 <i>zhè xiē cí shuō qǐ lái yuè lái yuè shùn kǒu.</i> The words came easier and easier off my tongue.
瘦弱 / 瘦弱 <i>shòu ruò</i>	thin and weak; frail	厚重的棉被下她好瘦弱。 <i>hòu zhòng de mián bèi xià tā hǎo shòu ruò.</i> Under the heavy blankets she looked so frail.
肤色 / 膚色 <i>fū sè</i>	skin color; skin tone	這些孩子有各種深淺的膚色。 <i>zhè xiē hái zǐ yǒu gè zhǒng shēn qiǎn de fū sè.</i> Kids with skin of every shade.
轻柔 / 輕柔 <i>qīng róu</i>	soft and gentle	婆婆的聲音像鳥叫聲一樣輕柔地傳來。 <i>pó po de shēng yīn xiàng niǎo jiào shēng yí yàng qīng róu de chuán lái.</i> Popo's voice came back as softly as birdsong.

HSK 6 · Upper Intermediate

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE FROM THE STORY
弥漫 / 瀰漫 <i>mí màn</i>	to fill the air; to spread all around (used for smells, fog, feelings)	周圍都是桂花的香味。 <i>zhōu wéi dōu shì guì huā de xiāng wèi.</i> The smell of osmanthus filled the air all around. <i>The final translation uses 周圍都是 rather than 瀰漫 — but this word captures the same feeling and appears widely in Chinese literature.</i>
别扭 / 別扭 <i>bié niǔ</i>	awkward; uncomfortable; not feeling right	「你好」說出口卻感覺那麼别扭。 <i>「nǐ hǎo」shuō chū kǒu què gǎn jué nà me bié niǔ.</i> "Ni hao" felt so awkward coming out of my mouth.

HSK 7-9 · Advanced

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE FROM THE STORY
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难以抓住 / 難以抓住

nán yǐ zhuā zhù

hard to hold on to; hard to catch (used here for words that slip away)

很多詞也很難以抓住，像深井裡的魚。

hěn duō cí yě hěn nán yǐ zhuā zhù, xiàng shēn jǐng lǐ de yú.

So many words were hard to hold on to, like fish in a deep well.

Beyond HSK · Cultural & Set Phrases

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE FROM THE STORY
婆婆 / 婆婆 <i>pó po</i>	grandmother (warm and informal — more like "Nana" than "grandmother")	我在婆婆的懷裡做夢。 <i>wǒ zài pó po de huái lǐ zuò mèng.</i> I dream in Popo's arms. <i>Technically means paternal grandmother, but used here as a loving nickname. The more formal word 祖母 (zǔ mǔ) appears in the story as "my grandma" — written in English to show how strange the formal word feels to the child.</i>
贝贝心，贝贝肝 / 貝貝心，貝貝肝 <i>bèi bèi xīn, bèi bèi gān</i>	a lullaby phrase meaning "my darling heart, my darling liver" — used to express that a child is utterly precious	她唱著：「貝貝心，貝貝肝。」 <i>tā chàng zhe: "bèi bèi xīn, bèi bèi gān."</i> She sang: "My darling heart, my darling liver." <i>In Chinese, 心 (heart) and 肝 (liver) are both used as words of endearment. Calling someone your 肝 means they are as vital to you as your own organs.</i>
大年初一 / 大年初一 <i>dà nián chū yī</i>	the first day of the Lunar New Year	大年初一，我向婆婆鞠躬拜年。 <i>dà nián chū yī, wǒ xiàng pó po jū gōng bài nián.</i> On the first day of Lunar New Year, I bowed to Popo.
鞠躬拜年 / 鞠躬拜年 <i>jū gōng bài nián</i>	to bow and give New Year greetings to an elder	我向婆婆鞠躬拜年。 <i>wǒ xiàng pó po jū gōng bài nián.</i> I bowed to Popo to wish her a happy new year.
一路平安 / 一路平安 <i>yī lù píng ān</i>	"Safe travels" — a set phrase said when someone leaves on a trip	「一路平安，」婆婆說。 <i>"yī lù píng ān," pó po shuō.</i> "Safe travels," Popo said.
桂花 / 桂花 <i>guì huā</i>	osmanthus flower — small, sweet-smelling, blooms in autumn in Taiwan	周圍都是桂花的香味。 <i>zhōu wéi dōu shì guì huā de xiāng wèi.</i> The smell of osmanthus was all around. <i>桂花 has been a symbol of homesickness in Chinese poetry for over a thousand years.</i>
酱油 / 醬油 <i>jiàng yóu</i>	soy sauce	水餃蘸著醬油和麻油。 <i>shuǐ jiǎo zhān zhe jiàng yóu hé má yóu.</i> Dumplings dipped in soy sauce and sesame oil.
麻油 / 麻油 <i>má yóu</i>	sesame oil	蘸著醬油和麻油。 <i>zhān zhe jiàng yóu hé má yóu.</i> Dipped in soy sauce and sesame oil.