

# Make the most of Uncover John Seeker Bible Studies in Chinese

## Why Uncover in Chinese?

China has officially been an atheist country for over 70 years with Chinese students taught in school that there is no God. The number of Chinese students in British universities far exceeds any other nationality; almost one third of non-EU students in the UK is from China. This is the only country showing a significant increase in student numbers (14% rise since 2012-13). With 95,000 Chinese students coming to our universities, onto courses and into halls, there is an amazing opportunity for them to be free to hear about and explore Jesus. With no prior knowledge about Jesus, Chinese students are more curious about the gospel and relatively easier to talk to than your average Brit.



## How do I use it?

Chinese culture has different priorities to Western culture, so the invitations we often use like, 'For the sake of intellectual credibility why don't we read...', don't work so well with Chinese students. Their focus is often on more pragmatic issues, such as, 'How will this improve my relationships?'. Christians are freer to share the difference Jesus makes to our own hopes/fears/studies/relationships.

Some possible questions to ask include:

- *Would you like to understand better the Christian beliefs behind British culture?*
- *Would you like to practice your English by looking at some of the Bible with me?*

These questions appeal to Chinese students as they are often curious to know more about our history and culture. Inviting Chinese friends around for a cup of tea and a chance to practice English is a good starting point to building a deeper friendship. Chinese students are also very proud of their culture, so why not ask your friend to teach you some basic Chinese phrases or to cook some Chinese food in return? It's considered an honour in China to be invited to your home for food and a sign of friendship. Alternatively, in Chinese culture the restaurant has the same role as the pub in British culture, where people relax and build relationship. No matter where you meet, share food together!

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## What's different about Chinese Uncover John?

The Chinese Uncover John studies are almost exactly the same as the English Uncover John studies. However, we in UCCF have worked with COCM (Chinese Overseas Christian Mission) to ensure that the context and meaning of words would make the most sense for a Chinese speaker. Therefore, there are some changes, particularly over some of the introduction questions. And don't worry if you can't read Chinese. That's why we produced this resource; most Chinese students will want to study in English and speak in English, but to be sure they have really understood the text and the questions asked, we want them to have the Chinese in front of them. You can carry on as you would have with an English-speaker one-to-one or with a group of friends. But with Chinese Uncover John, you won't lose things in translation.

This document lists changes compared with the English Church edition © 2015.

### Page 5: Introductory text

Fang Zhouzi is a Chinese popular scientific writer who is well known for his campaign against pseudoscience and fraud in China. He once wrote in his publication, 'I am a hard-core atheist. I am confident to declare this after a long time... I don't have any evidence to prove that God does not exist, but I strongly speculate that he does not exist so that I don't want to waste my time.'

### Page 7: What does this mean for us?

Some people hope there is no God. The atheist Fang Zhouzi also said, 'The existence of human being is merely a coincidence and such an existence does not have any particular meaning. We can't gain comfort by simply believing God. Is it because we want to have such comfort that we must believe in this false existence?' Fang perceived religion to be life-diminishing...(the rest is the same as the English).

### Page 9: Introductory text

There was a scene in the film Chariots of Fire – when someone asked an Olympic athlete (Harold Abrahams) why he wanted to run, he answered, 'I'm 24 and I've never known contentment. I'm forever in pursuit and I don't even know what I am chasing ... I will raise my eyes and look down that corridor; 4 feet wide, with 10 lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But will I?'

### Page 10: Question 6

Question 6 is: Why did this woman go to the well alone at noon? How do her past relationships explain this? (This is because Chinese usually uses separate sentences to explain complicated meanings.)

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## Page 11: What does this mean for us?

Jesus locates our emptiness or 'thirst' in our alienation from God. He promises to bring us into an intimate relationship with God as Father, which will completely satisfy our thirst.

Everyone had experienced the emptiness. Sammi Cheng, one of the most prominent female singers in Hong Kong, once said, 'I worked hard to achieve something but I was never myself. I was used to live according to a set of values which told me that the more accomplishment I achieve, the more value I have. When I eventually had everything that others are longing for, I suddenly found out that my heart is empty. I tried to fill it up with more accomplishment but it made me feel even more depressed.'

How do you respond to what Sammi Cheng says? Where do we tend to look to find satisfaction? Are you optimistic or cynical about the possibility of finding lasting fulfilment?

## Page 15: What does this mean for us? Last paragraph

People think that all religions aim to persuade us to perform good deeds, therefore they are more comfortable thinking about Jesus as a great teacher. But how would you respond to Jesus' claim here?

## Page 17: Introductory text

Topic of death is always a taboo, especially in the East. In recent years, some universities in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong started to run courses on "Death". But Professor Wang Yifang from Peking University commented, 'Death course is like a bitter chocolate bean. If you ask people to simply taste the bitterness, they won't do it. Therefore, we have to mix it up with sugar and milk to make it taste like chocolate. As long as people take this chocolate bean, they will start to taste the bitterness inside it.'

## Page 21: Introductory text

Human nature came into existence as a mixture of both good and evil. When one does good, he is a good person; When one does evil, he is an evil person.

- Yang Xiong Fa Yan Xiu Sheng (Literal meaning: Exemplary Sayings), Philosopher and writer, Western Han Dynasty (202 BC – 8 AD)

The line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.

- Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Russian writer and Nobel laureates in Literature

Do you agree with this description of humanity? Why?

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## What next?

Think about your Chinese friends and acquaintances. Pray for them. Prepare to explore Jesus together in John's Gospel with your copy of Uncover John Seeker Bible Studies in Chinese.

Go to <https://www.uccf.org.uk/uncover/chinese.htm>.

Here's a video on understanding Chinese students: [bit.ly/chinese-student-ministry](http://bit.ly/chinese-student-ministry)

Want to think more about befriending students of all nations and languages? Talk to a UCCF CU Staff Worker, Friends International Staff Worker or COCM Staff Worker.

## Encouragements

When I showed the English Uncover to some Chinese students they were impressed with the interactive design of the book. The material itself is good so the only thing is for Christians to be willing to seek out their Chinese friends and spend time with them.

- Min Yin, COCM

In Chinese culture community is really important. Please don't just do formal studies and leave it at that, but also share your life together and show the difference knowing Jesus makes in everyday life. Those things put together will be an amazing witness indeed!

- a graduate who spent the three years working in China

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