



# Cantonese II

## Week 13



嚟嘅 lai4 ge3 / 嚟□ lai4 gaa3 = lai2 de 來的 (Mandarin)

ni1 go3 hai6 ngo5 baa4 baa1 lai4 ge3

呢個係我爸爸嚟嘅

This is my father

keoi5 m4 hai6 mei5 gwok3 jan4, keoi5 hai6 jing1 gwok3 jan4 lai4 gaa3

佢唔係美國人，佢係英國人嚟□

He is not American, he is British

Daa2 syun3 打算

What do you plan to have for dinner?

What do you plan to do in the weekend?

**C. To state something will happen soon** (Track 238)

食咗飯  
食緊飯  
就黎食飯  
會食飯



<u>(Topic / Subject)</u>	<b>zāu lèi</b> 就嚟 (soon)	<u>Event / Activity</u>	<b>làa!</b> 喇! [Pt]
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- |                  |     |                |
|------------------|-----|----------------|
| 1. cāak jīm      | 測驗  | (test; quiz)   |
| 2. lõk tòng      | 落堂  | (finish class) |
| 3. sīk fāan      | 食飯  | (eat a meal)   |
| 4. fòng gǎa      | 放假  | (on holiday)   |
| 5. lõk cē        | 落車  | (get off)      |
| 6. dòu           | 到   | (arrive)       |
| 7. bàat dím      | 八點  | (8 o'clock)    |
| 9. Sìng Dǎan Zit | 聖誕節 | (Christmas)    |

1. I will have exam soon.
2. I will have vacation soon. (fong3 gaa3)
3. What is he doing?  
He is reading. (tai2 syu1)
  
4. What are you doing?  
I am going to the university. (daai6 hok6)
  
5. What are you eating?  
I am eating noodles. (min6)
  
6. What will you do this weekend?  
I will go to the park. (gung1 jyun2)
  
7. What book did you read?  
I read XXX.
  
8. How long have you been learning Mandarin?  
I have been learning for X years.
  
9. Have you done your homework?  
I am doing it!



## Exercise 9.3

Substitute a modifier (e.g. **géi** 幾, **gam** 咁, **taai** 太, **gau saai** 夠晒) for **hóu** 好:

mun5 zuk1  
lek1  
Gui6 叻  
dak1 ji3  
套戲 tou3 hei3      long6 maan6  
tau4 faat3...dyun2  
gaa1 si1家俦 peng4  
gaau3 sau6...ceot1 meng2  
laan5  
soeng2... leng3

We are satisfied.

She's smart (capable).

They're tired.

The children are cute.

The film is romantic.

Her hair is very short.

The furniture is cheap.

The professor is famous.

The student is lazy.

The photos are pretty.

Translate the following into Cantonese using adverbs.

1. I was in Prague 【bou3 laai1 gaak3】 (yesterday)
2. She arrived at the university (just now)
3. I have met him (before)
4. They won the first prize (last time)
5. We were still small 【sai3 go3 細個】 (then)
6. I used to be a nurse 【wu6 si6 護士】 (originally)
7. We will contact 【lyun4 lok3 聯絡】 you (next time)
8. He got angry 【nau1 嬲】 (immediately)
9. I will treat you a meal 【ceng2 sik6 faan6 請吃飯】 (in the future)
10. We used to live in America 【mei5 gwok3】 (before)
11. My father arrived home (just now)
12. I liked swimming (then)

# UNIT 12

## Comparison

Gwo3 過 and di 啲

In this unit, we look at ways of making simple comparisons. In colloquial Cantonese, there are two basic kinds of comparison:

- (a) Where two things are explicitly being compared, **gwo** 過 is used to mean ‘more (adjective) than (noun)’. The word order is similar to the English (and quite unlike that in Mandarin):

Jenny sai3 gwo3 ngo5

Jenny 細過我

Jenny is younger than me.

baat3 lau2 hou2 gwo3 ji6 lau2

八樓好過二樓

The eighth floor is better than the second floor.

ni1 deoi3 gwai3 gwo3 go2 deoi3

呢對貴過嗰對

This pair is more expensive than that one.

Note that **gwo** 過 is also a verb meaning ‘cross’ or ‘pass’, so it is natural that it comes to mean ‘surpass’ in comparisons.

- (b) If the object of comparison is not expressed (i.e. there is no ‘than ...’), **di** 啲 is used instead:

Jenny sai3 di1 Jenny 細啲

Jenny is younger.

baat3 lau2 hou2 di1 八樓好啲

The eighth floor is better.

go2 deoi3 gwai3 di1 嗰對貴啲

That pair is more expensive.

**di** 啲 literally means ‘a little’ but here serves largely to indicate a difference between the two items with respect to some property.



Translate the following into Cantonese

1. It's warmer today
2. She is happier now
3. My friend is older than me
4. She is much taller than before
5. It's slower this time
6. This restaurant is cheaper than that one
7. Cycling is better than walking
8. Your idea is better

Translate the following into Cantonese

1. It's warmer today (nyun5 暖)

gam1 jat6 nyun5 di1 今日暖啲

2. She is happier now

keoi5 ji4 gaa1 hoi1 sam1 di1 佢而家開心啲

3. My friend is older than me

ngo5 pang4 jau5 daai6 gwo3 ngo5 我朋友大過我

4. She is much taller than before

keoi5 gou1 gwo3 ji5 cin4 hou2 do1 佢高過以前好多

5. It's slower this time

gam1 ci3 maan6 di1 今次慢啲

6. This restaurant is cheaper than that one

ni1 gaan1 caan1 teng1 peng4 gwo3 go2 gaan2 呢間餐廳平過嗰間

7. Cycling is better than walking (haang4 lou6 行路)

caai2 daan1 ce1 hou2 gwo3 haang4 lou6 踩單車好過行路

8. Your idea is better (zyu2 ji3 主意)

nei5 ge3 zyu2 ji3 hou2 di1 你嘅主意好啲

Bei2

Translate the following into Cantonese

1. I have to pay (money)
2. I have to submit homework to the teacher
3. It is not allowed to eat in the library
4. Kids are not allowed to drink alcohol

Bei2

Translate the following into Cantonese

1. I have to pay (money)
2. You need to return some books.
3. I want to give a present (lai5 mat6 禮物) to my mom.
4. I gave my book to my friend to read.
5. I have to submit (gaau1交) homework (gung1 fo3功課) to the teacher
6. The teacher gave a lot of homework to us.
7. I will return some documents (man4 gin2 文件) to you
8. Grandma always gives presents to me
9. It is not allowed to eat (sik6 je5 食嘢) in the library (tou4 syu1 gun2圖書館)
10. Kids are not allowed to drink alcohol (jam2 zau2 飲酒) .

## Exercise 19.2

Add **gán** 緊 or **jyuh** 住 as appropriate to complete the following sentences:

Example ngo5 sai2 saam1 我洗衫 I'm washing clothes. → Ngóh sái-gán  
sāam 我洗緊衫

- 1 keoi5 zaa1 tiu4 so2 si4 我揸條鎖匙 I'm holding a key.
  - 2 keoi5 maai5 sung3 佢買餸 She is buying groceries.
  - 3 ngo5 dei6 hou2 gwaa3 nei5 我哋好掛你 We miss you very much.
  - 4 nei5 zyu2 mat1 je5 aa3? 你煮乜嘢呀? What are you cooking?
  - 5 keoi5 jam2 gaa3 fe1 佢飲咖啡 He's drinking coffee.
  - 6 dim2 gai2 nei5 mong6 ngo5 aa3? 點解你望我呀? Why are you staring at me?
  - 7 di1 sai3 lou6 zai2 cung1 loeng4 啲細路仔沖涼 The children are taking a bath.
  - 8 hou2 do1 jan4 wan2 gung1 好多人搵工 Many people are looking for a job.
  - 9 ngo5 ji4 gaa1 daap3 man6 tai4 我而家答問題 I'm answering questions right now.
- keoi5 sing4 jat6 zoek3 di1 gau6 saam1 m 佢成日著啲舊衫 He's always wearing old clothes.



Translate the following into Cantonese using zo2, gwo3, mei6 or mou5.

1. I've met his family before
2. He had breakfast this morning
3. I've heard this song before
4. He hasn't bought a new car before
5. I haven't gone to the school (but you will)

Translate the following into Cantonese using zo2, gwo3, mei6 or mou5.

1. I've met (gin3 見) his family ( uk1 kei5 jan4 屋企人 ) before
2. I've just washed my hair (sai2 tau4 洗頭) 。
3. He had breakfast (zou2 caan1 早餐) this morning (ziu1 朝)
4. I've heard (teng1 聽) this song (sau2 go1 首歌) before
5. I've been to Hong Kong once
6. She's won the first prize
7. He hasn't bought (maai5 買) a new car (san1 ce1 新車) before
8. I just sold (賣) the car
9. I haven't gone to the school (but you will)
10. I didn't go to the school
11. I haven't been to Thailand before
12. My father just went to Brno

## Passive Voice

Translate the following into Cantonese and also in passive voice.

1. Someone ate my bread (min6 baau1 麵包)
2. Someone borrowed my money (ze3 cin2 借錢)
3. My father broke (zing2 waai6 整壞) the computer (bou6 din6 nou5 部電腦)
4. I washed (sai2 洗) the clothes (saam1 衫)
5. He has broken (daa2 laan6 打爛) the glass (zek6 隻 bui1 杯)
6. Someone open the box (soeng1 箱)
7. Someone stole (tau1 偷) her wallet (ngan4 baau1 銀包)
8. Someone scammed (aak1 呃) his money

# UNIT 25

## Sentence particles

Sentence particles are one of the most challenging features of Cantonese for learners of the language. Without them, many Cantonese sentences sound incomplete, abrupt or even impolite. Cantonese has a rich repertoire of particles which serve a variety of communicative functions in different speech contexts and are probably best learnt from direct experience. Below we introduce some of the most basic and frequently used particles, bearing in mind that there are altogether some thirty particles in use.

Perhaps the most basic particle is **aa3** 呀, because of its importance for politeness and in asking questions. It is the most common, and most neutral, of the sentence particles, serving to soften the force of a statement or question.

**aa3** 呀 is regularly used in questions, as we have seen in Units 23–24:

nei5 heoi3 m4 heoi3 keoi5 uk1 kei2 aa3 ?

Are you going to his house?

你去唔去佢屋企呀?

keoi5 hai6 m4 hai6 zyu6 hai2 saa1 tin4 aa3 ?

Does she live in Shatin?

佢係唔係住嚟沙田呀?

ngo5 dei6 heoi3 bin1 dou6 sik6 faan6 aa3 ?

Where shall we go to eat?

我哋去邊度食飯呀?

**aa3** 呀 can also be used in affirmative sentences, for example, to soften the force of a negative response (see Unit 24):

A: nei5 hai6 m4 hai6 m4 syu1 fuk6 aa3 ? Are you sick?

你係唔係唔舒服呀?

m4 hai6 aa3 唔係呀

No.

me1 咩 is used in a particular kind of question, expressing surprise or the unexpected:

nei5 m4 zi1 me1 ? 你唔知咩?

ngo5 dei6 m4 gau3 me1? 我哋唔夠咩?

Don't you know?

Don't we have enough?



## Exercise 25.1

Add an appropriate particle at the end of each sentence (choose from 嘞, **la** 喇, **ge3** 嘅, **gaa3** 架 or **lai4 gaa3** 㗎):

1 **I** **di1 min6 sik6 dak1** **k** 啲麵食得 \_\_\_\_

The noodles are ready to eat.

2 **D** **di1 min6 m4 sik6 dak1** **k** 啲麵唔食得 \_\_\_\_

The noodles cannot be eaten (are inedible).

3 **N** **ngo5 zing6 hai6 tai2 haa5** **h** 我淨係睇下 \_\_\_\_

I'm just looking.

4 **I** **ngo5 sai3 lou2 zou6 wui6 gai3 si1** **i** 我細佬做會計師 \_\_\_\_

My younger brother is an accountant.



## The magic of gwai2 鬼

One of the most versatile elements in colloquial spoken Cantonese, **gwái** 鬼, gives a native flavour and colour to ordinary daily expressions in the language. From the Cantonese learner's point of view, to master the different properties of **gwái** 鬼 may be difficult without sufficient exposure to authentic input as spoken by ordinary people on the street. Examples are typically absent from textbooks, which follow the prescriptive tradition in providing formal, prestigious examples for learners. The literal meaning of **gwái** 鬼 is 'ghost', 'devil', but it has taken on other meanings which are extensions of the original ones, such as mischievousness, frivolousness, strangeness etc. Chinese people generally have a rich **gwái** 鬼 culture, and Cantonese is no exception: the ghost festival (**gwái-jit** 鬼節) falls on the fourteenth day of the seventh month of the Chinese calendar, which is the Chinese equivalent of Halloween in the West. **Gwái** 鬼 commonly appears:

- As the final element of a compound:

laan5 gwai2 懶鬼

a lazy person

mou5 daam2 gwai2 冇膽鬼

a coward

seoi1 gwai2 衰鬼

rascal (may be affectionate, referring to

zau2 gwai2 酒鬼

someone intimate)



- As the initial element of a nominal compound:

gwai2 lou2	鬼佬	adult male foreigner	gwai2 po4	鬼婆	adult female foreigner
gwai2 zai2	鬼仔	child or young male foreigner	gwai2 mui1	鬼妹	child or young female foreigner

In these expressions, **gwái** 鬼 refers to foreigners who have Western features. A common practice is to refer to Westerners as **gwái** 鬼 as opposed to **yàhn** 人 ‘humans’:

keoi5 hai6 jan4 ding6 hai6 gwai2 aa3 ?

佢係人定係鬼呀?

Is he Chinese or Western?

ngo5 di1 zai2 neoi2 go3 joeng2 bun3 jan4 bun3 gwai2

我啲子女個樣半人半鬼

My children look half Chinese and half Western.

hou2 coi2 ngo5 lou5 baan2 gwai2 gwai2 dei2 ge3

好彩我老闆鬼鬼嘅嘅 (from an advertisement)  
Fortunately, my boss is pretty Westernized.

These terms have lost the ‘devilish’ connotations and are hardly insulting, though in polite company including foreigners they are avoided, **sai1 jan4** 西人 (Westerner) and **ngo5 gwok3 jan4** 外國人 (foreigner) being used instead.

Intensification **gwái** 鬼 can occur



- With adjective phrases: for emphasis and intensification, **gwái** 鬼 can occur after degree modifiers such as **hou2** 好 'very' **gam3** 咁 'so' as an intensifier to modify an adjective:

**gam1 ziu1 gam3 gwai2 dung3 ge3 !** 今朝咁鬼凍嘅!

It's so cold this morning!

**dim2 gaai2 nei5 gam3 gwai2 yim1 zim1 gaa3?**

Why are you so choosy?

點解你咁鬼奄尖㗎?

**gwái** 鬼 can be inserted in the middle of a bisyllabic adjective:

**maa4 faan4** 麻煩

troublesome

→

**màh-gwái-fàahn**

really

麻鬼煩

troublesome

**si6 daan6** 是但

indifferent

→

**sih-gwái-daahn**

It doesn't

是鬼但

matter a bit

**do1 jyu4** 多餘

superfluous

→

**dō-gwái-yùh**

totally

多鬼餘

unnecessary

- **gwái** 鬼 may come between the verb and aspect marker:

**gaa3 gei1 wai6 gwai2 zo2** 架機壞鬼咗

The machine has gone and broken down.

These usages express frustration or annoyance. Although mildly expletive, **gwái** 鬼 is not particularly offensive to native speakers.

- In questions, where **gwái** 鬼 can also occur between **bin1** 邊 and **go3** 個 as in **bin1 gwai2 go3** 邊鬼個 ‘who on earth’ or between **bīn** 邊 and classifier:

**bin1 gwai2 gaa3 ce1 zong6 faa1 ngo5 gaa3 ce1 aa3?**

Which damned car scratched mine?

**ga a?**

邊鬼架車撞花我嗰架呀?

- In rhetorical questions (see Unit 17):

**gwai2 zi1 me1?** 鬼知咩?

How on earth should I know?

**gwai2 bong1 keoi5 aa3** 鬼幫佢呀

Only the devil will help him.  
(i.e. nobody will)



## Exercise 24.3

Add **gwái** 鬼 to indicate frustration in the following statements and questions.

Example: ngo5 gwai2 zi1 me1 ? 我(鬼)知咩? How (on earth) should I know?

1 tou3 hei3 hou2 mun6 套戲好悶

The film was pretty (damn) boring.

2 bin1 go3 hai2 dou6 cou4 aa3?

Who (on earth) is making such a racket?

邊個喺度嘈呀?

fai3 si6 heoi3 laa3 費事去喇

There's no (earthly) point in going.

gaa3 ce1 maai6 zo2 laa3 架車賣咗喇

The car's (damn well) been sold.

5 nei5 heoi3 zo2 bin1 dou6 aa3?

Where (the hell) have you been?

你去咗邊度呀?

6 gam3 coeng4 hei3 gaa3! 咁長氣㗎!

He's so long-winded!

邊個	Who	Bin1 go6
咩 / 乜嘢	what	Me1 / Mat1 je5
邊度	Where	Bin1 dou6
點解	Why	Dim2 gai2
幾時	When	Gei2 si4
點 (樣)	How	Dim2 (yoeng2)
幾多	How many/ much	Gei2 do1