



# Cantonese II

## Week 12



## zyu6 住 in negative sentences

The aspect marker **zyuh** 住 normally attaches to a verb to indicate continuous aspect (ongoing actions: see *Basic Cantonese*, Unit 19). In negative sentences, it comes at the end of the clause and means ‘not ... yet’ or ‘for the time being’:

ngo5 m4 faan1 uk1 kei2 zyu6 我唔返屋企住

I'm not going home yet.

nei5 m4 hou2 gong2 bei2 jan4 teng1 zyu6

Don't tell anyone yet.

你唔好講畀人聽住

mai5 zau2 zyu6 ! 咪走住!

Don't go yet!

gaa3 ce1 mei6 zaa1 dak1 zyu6 架車未揸得住

The car can't be driven yet.

ngo5 dei6 zaam6 si4 m4 sai2 bun1 zyu6

We don't need to move for the time being.

我哋暫時唔使搬住

## Exercise 16.2

Negate the sentences using the appropriate negative word together with **zyu6** 住 to give the meaning specified.

- Exam maai4 daan1 laa1 埋單啦 (Don't) pay the bill (yet).  
→ m4 hou2 maai4 daan1 zyu6 (la) (Don't) pay the bill (yet).  
唔好埋單住(啦)
- 1 sau1 sin3 laa1 收線啦 (Don't) hang up (yet).  
2 ngo5 daa2 syun3 bun1 uk1 我打算搬屋 I'm (not) planning to move house (yet).  
我打算搬屋  
3 sau1 maai4 fung1 seon3 laa1 (Don't) put the letter away (yet).  
收埋封信啦  
4 ngo5 dei6 heoi3 dak1 gaa3 laa3 We can(not) go (yet).  
我哋去得啱喇  
5 fat6 go3 hok6 saang1 laa1 (Don't) punish the student (yet).  
罰個學生啦  
6 daa2 hoi1 di1 lai5 mat6 laa1 (Don't) open the presents (yet).  
打開啲禮物啦  
7 soeng5 cong4 fan3 gaau3 laa1 (Don't) go to bed (yet).  
上床瞓覺啦  
8 keoi5 wan2 dou2 gung1 She has (not) found a job (yet).  
佢搵到工  
9 nei5 jing1 goi1 fong3 hei3 You should (not) give up (yet).  
你應該放棄  
10 ngo5 jiu3 hok6 pou2 tung1 waa2 I (don't) need to learn Putonghua (yet).  
我要學普通話

# UNIT 11

## Serial verbs

A class of words in Chinese are known as ‘coverbs’ because of the way they co-occur with another verb.

keoi5 gan1 ngo5 hok6 zyu2 sung3 He’s learning to cook from me.  
 (COVERB) (VERB)  
 佢跟我學者餸

keoi5 wai6 zo2 ngo5 bei2 lou5 baan2 naau6 He was told off by the boss for my sake.  
 (COVERB) (VERB)  
 佢為咗我畀老闆鬧

In Cantonese, these include a number of words which serve both as independent verbs and as coverbs:

	<i>As verb</i>	<i>As coverb</i>
hai2 喺	be at	at
tung4 同	accompany	with
gan1 跟	follow	with
dou3 到	reach	until
deoi3 對	face	towards
hoeng3 向	face	towards (direction)
wai6 (zo2) 為(咗)	–	for (the sake of)

Given that their meanings have to do with spatial relationships, it is tempting to equate the coverbs with prepositions, as the English translations suggest. However, the coverbs behave like verbs in taking aspect markers such as **jó** 咗, **gwo** 過, **gán** 跟, **jyuh** 住 etc. and verbal particles such as **saai** 晒 and **fān** 返:

**Ga chē heung-jó gó bihn hàahng** 架車向咗嗰邊行

The car went off in that direction.

**Go BBC geijé tùhng-gwo kéuih jough fóngmahn** 個BBC記者同過佢做訪問

The BBC reporter has done an interview with her.

Notice how the additional verb typically takes the place of a preposition. The meaning which results often seems to be that of a preposition rather than a verb, e. **bong1** 幫 literally means 'help' but in a serial verb construction it means to do something for another's benefit, not to help the person to accomplish something:

nei5 bong1 ngo5 daa2 go3 din6 waa2 aa1 你幫我打個電話㗎

(lit. you help me dial a telephone)

Make a call for me.

1 faai3 di1 bong1 go3 wun6 niu6 pin2 laa1 快啲幫個BB換尿片啦

(lit. quickly help the baby change nappy)

Change the nappy for the baby quickly.

Clearly one cannot 'help' a baby to change a nappy and the intended meaning is to change it for him or her. Similarly, the ver **wan2** 搵 by itself means 'look for' but in the serial verb construction this meaning is attenuated to the point where it means 'with' or 'use':

nei5 wan2 faai3 bou3 mut3/maat3 haa5 keoi5 laa1

你搵塊布抹下佢啦

(lit. you look for sheet cloth wipe a little it)

Give it a wipe with a cloth.

nei5 wan2 go3 goi3 kam2 zyu6 go3 wok6 laa1

你搵個蓋住個鑊啦

Use the lid to cover the wok.

Since chances are that the cover of the wok is lying within reach of the cook, this need not entail any actual searching. Similarly, it is hardly necessary to look for one's own hands:

wan2 zek3 sau2 ze1 zyu6 deoi3 ngaan5 搵隻手遮住對眼  
Cover one's eyes with one hand.

Common meanings expressed by serial verbs include:

- With – instrument

nei5 m4 ho2 ji5 sing4 jat6 jung6 cin2 gaai2 kyut3 man6 tai4

你唔可以成日用錢解決問題

You can't always solve problems with money.

- Together with – accompanying

ngo5 pui4 nei5 sik6 faan6 laa1 我陪你食飯啦

(lit. I accompany you eat rice)

I'll have lunch with you.

- For, on one's behalf

nei5 doi6 ngo5 gung1 hei2 Rowena aa1 我恭喜你Rowena吖

(lit. you replace me congratulate Rowena)

Send my congratulations to Rowena.

ngo5 dang6 keoi5 dei6 gou1 hing3 我戩佢哋高興

I feel happy for them.

m4 goi1 nei5 wai6 haa5 jan4 dei6 zoek6 soeng2 唔該你為下人哋著想

Please try to show consideration for others.

ni1 go3 hai6 wai6 nei5 dok6 san1 deng6 zou6 ge3 呢個係為你度身訂造嘅

This is tailor made for you.

## Simultaneous actions

A series of verbs can express simultaneous actions, especially with the continuous aspect marker **zyu6** 住 attached to the first verb (see *Basic Cantonese*, Unit 19):

**zaa1 zyu6** fan6 bou3 zi2 dang2 jan4 揸住份報紙等人

Wait for someone (while) carrying a newspaper.

go3 nei5 **laam5 zyu6** go3 gung1 zai2 fan3 gaau3 個女攞住個公仔瞓覺

The daughter sleeps hugging a soft toy.

**jan2 zyu6** ngaan5 lei6 gong2 zoi3 gin3 忍住眼淚講再見

Say goodbye (while) holding back one's tears.

## Purpose

When one action is done for the purpose of another, the verbs appear as a series:

ngo5 jiu3 ceot1 heoi3 saan3 bou6 我要出去散步

I have to go out to take a walk.

keoi5 joek3 ngo5 heoi3 gaai1 佢約我去街

She arranged with me to go out

ngo5 dei6 jung6 cin2 maai5 si4 gaan3 我哋用錢買時間

we use money to buy time.

The verb **zou6** 做 'do' can indicate the purpose for which something is done (acquired, used etc.):

ngo5 ceng2 nei5 zou6 ngo5 go3 bou2 biu1

我請你做我嘅保鏢

I'll hire you as my bodyguard.

ging2 caat3 wan2 ngo5 zou6 zing3 jan4

警察搵我做證人

The police asked me to be a witness

ni1 go3 sung3 bei2 nei5 zou6 gei2 nim6 ban2

呢個送畀你做紀念品

This is for you as a souvenir.

The verbs of motion **lai4** 嚟 'come' and sometimes **heoi3** 去 'go' are used similarly:

lo2 lai4/ heoi3 maai6

擺嚟/去賣

Take them to sell.

maai5 lai4 sung3 bei2 jan4

買嚟送畀人

Buy to give to someone.

Note how the object of the main verb is omitted, being understood as 'it' or 'them' according to the context.



zou6 做 and lai4 嚟 can be combined in this function:

lo2 lai4/heoi3 zou6 caam1 haau2 攞嚟/去做參考

Use it as a reference.

ni1 di1 se2 zo2 jung6 lai4 zou6 gaau3 coi4 呢啲寫咗用嚟做教材

When these are written up we can use them as teaching material.

## Combining serial verbs

By combining two or more of the serial verb types we can easily end up with three or more verbs in a series:

bong1 ngo5 wan2 zi1 liu2 se2 bou3 gou3 幫我搵資料寫報告

(lit. help me find material write report)

Get some material for me to write my report.

doi6 ngo5 se2 seon3 man6 hau6 keoi5 代我寫信問候佢

(lit. replace me write letter ask after her)

Write a letter on my behalf to ask how she is.

cang4 lau2 hei2 hou2 jung6 lai4 zou6 se2 zi6 lau4 層樓起好用嚟做寫字樓

(lit. the flat build finish use come do office)

When the flat is finished it will be used as an office.

### Exercise 11.1

Insert a verb from the list provided wan2 搵, bong1 幫, jung6 用, doi6 代:

Example ngo5 go3 zai2 bong1 ngo5 sai2 gaa3 ce1 我個仔幫我洗架車

My son washes the car for me.

1 ngo5 ho2 ji5 \_\_ nei5 se2 gaai3 siu6 seon3

我可以 \_\_ 你寫介紹信

2 nei5 jiu3 \_\_ lik6 daa2 go3 bo1

你要 \_\_ 力打個波

3 \_\_ ngo5 gam6 zung1 aa1

我揸鐘吓?

4 Nei5 \_\_ zek3 sau2 gam6 zyu6 zoeng1 zi2 laa1

你 \_\_ 隻右手揸任張紙啦

5 cing2 nei5 \_\_ nou5 nam2 jat1 haa5

請你 \_\_ 腦諗一吓

6 keoi5 mou4 si4 gaan3 \_\_ lai4 soeng5 tong4

佢冇時間 \_\_ 嚟上堂

7 gaa3 paau2 ce1 \_\_ lai4 bei2 coi3 ge3

架跑車 \_\_ 嚟比賽嘅

8 nei5 ho2 m4 ho2 ji5 \_\_ ngo5 man6 hau6 keoi5 aa3?

keun a:

你可唔可以 \_\_ 我問候佢呀?

I can write a recommendation letter for you.

You have to hit the ball with strength.

Would you press the bell for me?

Use your right hand to press the sheet down.

Please use your brain to think a little.

He doesn't have time to do relief teaching for you.

The sports car is used for competition.

Could you send greetings on my behalf?

## Exercise 11.2

Formulate a serial verb construction by adding a verb phrase:

Example: ngo5 doi6 keoi5 我代佢 I'm taking his place.  
→ ngo5 doi6 keoi5 gaau3 jat1 tong4 I'm teaching a class for him.  
我代佢教一堂

1. 等我幫你 dang2 ngo5 bong1 nei5
2. 佢向我 keoi5 hoeng3 ngo5
3. 啲親戚代佢 di1 can1 cik1 doi6 keoi5
4. 醫生幫我 ji1 sang1 bong1 ngo5
5. 佢陪我 keoi5 pui4 ngo5

## Exercise 11.3

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Serial verbs

Add a second verb phrase to specify the purpose of the action (zou6 做 lai4 黎 heoi3 去 may be added):

ngo5 dei6 jung6 cin2 lai4 /heoi3 maai5 si4 gaan3 我哋用錢(嚟/去)買時間

We use money (to buy time).

1. 佢用水果黎 keoi5 jung6 seoi2 gwo2 lai4
2. 教授畀時間我地 gaau3 sau6 bei2 si4 gaan3 ngo5 dei6
3. 我攞本書 ngo5 lo2 bun2 syu1
4. 我買咗雪糕 ngo5 maai5 zo2 syut3 gou1
5. 佢搵部相機 keoi5 wan2 bou6 soeng2 gei1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArsREWaN9hw>