



# Cantonese II

## Week 8



# UNIT 16

## Verbs of giving

bei2 畀

給

**bei** 畀 is an important verb used both on its own as a verb meaning 'give' and together with other verbs of giving. The verb **bei** 畀 takes two objects, the direct object (representing what is given) followed by the indirect object (representing the person to whom something is given):

keoi5 bei2 zo2 jat1 baak3 man1 ngo5 佢畀咗一百蚊我

(lit. she gave one hundred dollars me)

She gave me a hundred dollars.

ngo5 bei2 zo2 tiu4 so2 si4 ngo5 taai3 taai2 我畀咗條鎖匙我太太

I gave my wife the key.

bei2 gan1 coi3 ngo5 aa1 畀斤菜我啱

Give me a catty of vegetables, please.

nei5 bei2 di1 min2 keoi5 laa1 你畀啲面佢啦!

Show her some respect!



Note that the order of the two objects here is the reverse of that in English as well as that in Mandarin.

With other verbs of giving such as **gei3** 寄 'send' and **waan4** 還 'return', **bei2** 畀 'to' is used to introduce the indirect object:

ngo5 pang4 jau5 **gei3** zo2 zoeng1 kaat1 **bei2** ngo5 我朋友寄咗張卡畀我

My friend sent me a card.

ngo5 ji5 ging1 **waan4** zo2 cin2 **bei2** nei5 我已經還咗錢畀你

I've already returned the money to you.

keoi5 lou5 gung1 **lau4** zo2 gaan1 uk1 **bei2** keoi5 佢老公留咗間屋畀佢

Her husband left her the house.

Note here the verb **sung3** 送 which is used in this pattern to mean 'give' in the sense of giving presents:

di1 tung4 si6 **sung3** zo2 di1 faa1 **bei2** keoi5 啲同事送咗啲花畀佢

Her colleagues gave her some flowers.

keoi5 nin4 nin4 sung3 saang1 jat6 lai5 mat6 bei2 ngo5 go3 zai2

佢年年送生日禮物畀我個仔  
She gives my son a birthday present every year.

ni1 zek3 gaai3 zi2 sung3 bei2 nei5 ge3 ! 呢隻戒子送畀你嘅!

This ring is (a present) for you!

A third verb may be added to the construction to indicate the purpose for which the object will be used:

keoi5 wui5 gei3 di1 man4 gin2 bei2 nei5 cim1 meng2

佢會寄啲文件畀你簽名  
She will send the documents for you to sign.

go3 hok6 saang1 lo2 zo2 pin1 man4 zoeng1 bei2 ngo5 tai2

個學生攞咗篇文章畀我睇  
The student brought an article for me to read.

keoi5 jiu3 zyu2 faan6 bei2 uk1 kei5 jan4 sik6

佢要煮飯畀屋企人食  
She has to cook for her family (to eat).



## Béi 畀 and permission

béi 畀 can also indicate permission (allowing, letting someone do something):

lou5 si1 **bei2** ngo5 dei6 zou2 di1 zau2

老師畀我哋早啲走

ngo5 **bei2** nei5 jung6 ngo5 bou6 din6 nou5 **óuh**

我畀你用我個電腦

m4 hou2 **bei2** jan4 zi1 aa3 唔好畀人知呀

The teacher let us leave early.

I'll let you use my computer.

Don't let anyone know.

Translate the following into Cantonese

1. I haven't paid
2. I didn't pay
3. Talking on the phone (gong2 din6 waa2) is not allowed in cinemas (hei3 jyun2)
4. He returned money to me
5. I bought a gift (lai5 mat6 禮物) to her
6. Can you give me your phone number?



## Experiential gwo 過

The ‘experiential’ meaning of **gwo** 過 corresponds to one of the meanings of the present perfect in English – that something has happened at least once. Given a human subject, this is essentially the concept of experience, hence the grammatical term ‘experiential’ to describe this function. Typical cases are:

nei5 jau5 mou4 sik6 gwo3 gong2 sik1 sai1 caan1 aa3? 你有冇食過港式西餐呀?

Have you eaten Hong Kong-style western food?

nei5 heoi3 gwo3 taai3 hung1 gun2 mei6 aa3? 你去過太空館未呀?

Have you been to the Space Museum?

Adverbs which call for **gwo** 過 include cang4 ging1 曾經 ‘once’ and mei6 未 ‘not yet’:

keoi5 cang4 ging1 oi3 gwo3 ngo5 She once loved me.

佢曾經愛過我

ngo5 mei6 jam2 gwo3 ni1 zek3 zau2 I’ve not drunk this wine before.

我未飲過呢隻酒

zo2 咗 **versus** gwo3 過

**jó** 咗 and **gwo** 過 may appear similar in meaning, both corresponding to the present perfect forms of the verb in English. Indeed there will be cases when either makes sense:

ngo5 tai2 **zo2** saam1 go3 ji1 sang1

我睇咗三個醫生

I've (just) seen three doctors.

ngo5 tai2 **gwo3** saam1 go3 ji1 sang1

我睇過三個醫生

I've seen three doctors  
(before).



- Ask if someone has tried ( si3 ) Czech cuisine ( zit6 hak1 coi3)
- Ask if someone had dinner yet
- Ask 1 question using gwo3
- Ask 1 question using zo2

## Exercise 18.3

Negate the following sentences (refer to Unit 14 if necessary):

Example: keoi5 dei6 git3 zo2 fan1 佢哋結咗婚 They've gotten married. →  
keoi5 dei6 mou4 git3 fan1 佢哋冇結婚 (They have not gotten married.)  
keoi5 dei6 mei6 git3 fan1 佢哋未結婚 (They're not married yet.)

1 di1 hok6 saang1 zau2 zo2  
啲學生走咗

2 ngo5 go3 zai2 heoi3 gwo3 jing1 gwok3  
我個仔去過英國

3 keoi5 lo2 zo2 ce1 paai4  
佢擺咗車牌

4 ngo5 dei6 zou6 gwo3 zing3 fu2 gung1  
我哋做過政府工

The students have gone.

My son has been to England.

She's got her driving licence.

We've worked for the government  
before.



5 ngo5 deng6 zo2 fong2

我訂咗房

I've reserved a room.

6 go3 bei3 syu1 fong3 zo2 gaa3

個秘書放咗假

The secretary has taken a day off.

7 ngo5 jam2 gwo3 cing1 dou2 be1 zau2 u

我飲過青島啤酒

I've drunk Tsingtao beer before.

8 ngo5 tung4 keoi5 paak3 gwo3 to1 o-tō

我同佢拍過拖

I've been on a date with him.

9 din6 fai3 gaa1 zo2 gaa3

電費加咗價

Electricity costs have gone up.

10 lou5 baan2 naau6 gwo3 keoi5 uih

老闆鬧過佢

The boss has scolded him before.



## Exercise 18.4

Choose an appropriate adverb to add to each sentence from the list (a–f):

1 keoi5 mei6 si3 gwo3 ci4 dou3

佢未試過遲到

She's never been late.

2 ngo5 dei6 heoi3 gwo3 nei5 uk1 kei2

我哋去過你屋企

We've been to your house.

3 ngo5 sin1 saang1 faan1 zo2 se2 zi6 lau4

我先生返咗寫字樓

My husband has gone to the office.

4 keoi5 saang1 zo2 go3 zai2

佢生咗個仔

She's had a child.

5 ngo5 haau2 leoi6 gwo3 ci4 zik1

我考慮過辭職

I've considered resigning.

6 gaan1 zau2 lau4 saan1 zo2 mun4

間酒樓門咗門

The restaurant has closed.

a ji5 ging1

已經

already

b ngaam1 ngaam1

啱啱

just

cang4 ging1

曾經

once

d ji5 cin4

以前

before

e zeoi3 gan6

最近

recently

f cung4 loi4

從來

never

# UNIT 19

## Activities

### Gán 緊 and jyuh 住

gan2

zyu6

The aspect markers **gán** 緊 and **jyuh** 住 attached to verbs express ongoing actions.

hai2 dou6

### Progressive gán 緊 and háidouh 喺度

The progressive suffix **-gán** 緊, like the English progressive ‘-ing’, is used for ongoing activities:

keoi5 ji4 gaa1 hoi1 gan2 wui2

佢而家開緊會

She’s having a meeting.

keoi5 dei6 loeng5 go3 king1 gan2 gai2 .gái

佢哋兩個傾緊偈

The two of them are chatting.



Although referring most often to the present, verbs with **gán** 緊 may apply to an activity in the past. In such cases, there is typically a past time adverb present to make this clear (see Unit 11; note also the adverb **zung6** 仲 'still'):

gau6 nin2 keoi5 zung6 duk6 gan2 zung1 hok6 舊年佢仲讀緊中學

Last year she was still studying in secondary school.

keoi5 dei6 soeng6 go3 jyut6 zung6 paak3 gan2 to1, ji4 gaa1 ji5 ging1 fan1 zo2 sau2 laa3

佢哋上個月仲拍緊拖, 而家已經分咗手喇

Last month, they were still dating; now they're already separated.



gan2

Similarly, **gán** 緊 may be used in subordinate clauses referring to the past:

ngo5 duk6 gan2 siu2 hok6 go2 zan6 si4, keoi5 ji5 ging1 sik1 ngo5

我讀緊小學嗰陣時, 佢已經識我

(lit. I studying primary school that time, he already knew me)

When I was in primary school, she already knew me.

nei5 fan3 gan2 gaau3 go2 zan6 si4, jau5 jan4 daa2 din6 waa2 lai4

你瞓緊覺嗰陣時, 有人打電話嚟

(lit. you sleeping that time, somebody telephoned come)

Somebody called while you were sleeping.

An alternative means of describing an ongoing action is by using **hai2 dou6** 喺度, which literally means 'to be here/there':

ngo5 hai2 dou6 zou6 gung1 fo3

我喺度做功課

I'm (here) doing homework.

nei5 hai2 dou6 dang2 bin1 go3 aa3?

你喺度等邊個呀?

Who are you waiting for?

keoi5 dei6 hai2 dou6 aai3 gaau1

佢哋喺度嗌交

They're having an argument.

Because of the literal meaning 'here', it is suitable where the activity is going on in a location close to the speaker. **háidouh** 喺度 and **gán** 緊 can also be used together in expressing progressive meaning:

keoi5 hai2 dou6 zyu2 gan2 faan6

佢喺度煮緊飯

She's cooking.

lou5 baan2 hai2 dou6 se2 gan2 seon3

老闆喺度寫緊信

The boss is writing letters.



## Continuous

zyu6

住

Mandarin: zhe 著

zyu6 住 added to a verb describes a continuous activity or state without change. It is associated with particular verbs, such as those denoting stationary situations:

gaa3 din6 daan1 ce1 zo2 zyu6 go3 ceot1 hau2 架電單車阻住個出口

The motorbike is blocking the exit.

keoi5 sing4 jat6 zaa1 zyu6 fan6 bou3 zi2 佢成日揸住份報紙

She's always holding a newspaper.

ngo5 jat6 jat6 deoi3 zyu6 tung4 jat1 baan1 jan4 baan yàhn 我日日對住同樣一班人

I face the same bunch of people every day.



Note that verb + **iyuh** 住 can mean something different from the simple verb by itself, such as **nam2 zyu6** 諗住 'intend' versus **nam2** 諗 'think' or **tai2 zyu6** 睇住 'watch over' versus **tai** 睇 'look, see':

**ngo5 nam2 zyu6 ceng2 keoi5 dei6 sik6 faan6** 我諗住請佢哋食飯  
I intend to invite them to dinner.

**nei5 tai2 zyu6 ni1 loeng5 go3 sai3 lou6 zai2, m4 hou2 bei2 keoi5 dei6 daa2 gaau1**  
你睇住呢兩個細路仔, 唔好畀佢哋打交  
Keep an eye on these two kids, (and) don't let them fight.

A verb with **zyu6** 住 can also be used to describe an action carried out simultaneously with another:

**keoi5 mong6 zyu6 ngo5 siu3** 佢望住我笑  
(lit. he watching me smiled)  
He smiled (while looking) at me.

**keoi5 deoi3 zyu6 ngo5 haam3** 佢對住我喊  
She cried at (while facing) me.

**nei5 gan1 zyu6 ngo5 haang4** 你跟住我行  
Walk after (following) me.

Note that there is no conjunction linking the two verbs (which is a characteristic of the sequences of verb phrases known as serial verb constructions, see *Intermediate Cantonese*, Unit 11).



## Gán 緊 versus jyuh 住

Since both may be translated with progressive '-ing' forms in English, it can be difficult to choose between **gan2** and **zyu6**. As a general rule, **gán** 緊 is appropriate for activities involving change or movement and **jyuh** 住 for static

ones. In many cases, either is possible, sometimes with a marked difference of meaning:

a keoi5 lo2 gan2 di1 wun6 geoi6

佢攞緊啲玩具

He's fetching the toys.

b keoi5 lo2 zyu6 di1 wun6 geoi6

佢攞住啲玩具

He's holding the toys.

a keoi5 zoek3 gan2 saam1

佢著緊衫

She's getting dressed.

b keoi5 zoek3 zyu6 tiu4 dyun2 kwan4

佢著住條短裙

She was wearing a short skirt.

a keoi5 daai3 gan2 tiu4 zyun3 sek6 geng2 lin2

佢戴緊條鑽石頸鏈

She's putting on a diamond necklace.

b keoi5 daai3 zyu6 tiu4 zyun3 sek6 geng2 lin2

佢戴住條鑽石頸鏈

She's wearing a diamond necklace.

In each case **gán** 緊 indicates a dynamic, changing situation and **jyuh** 住 a static one.



## Exercise 19.1

Add **gán** 緊 and/or **háidouh** 喺度 to express progressive aspect in the following sentences:

Example keoi5 tai2 syu1 佢睇書 She's reading (a book). →  
**Keuih tai-gan syū** 佢睇緊書

- 1 ngo5 ji4 gaa1 wun6 saam1 我而家換衫 I'm changing (my clothes) now.
- 2 keoi5 dei6 kam4 maan5 daa2 maa4 zoek2 佢哋琴晚打麻雀 They were playing mahjong last night.
- 3 keoi5 gong2 din6 waa2 佢講電話 She's (talking) on the phone.
- 4 ji4 gaa1 lok6 jyu5 而家落雨 It's raining now.
- 5 di1 sai3 lou6 zai2 waan2 seoi2 啲細路仔玩水 The children are playing with water.
- 6 ngo5 dei6 haang4 lai4 我哋行嚟 We're coming (walking) over.
- 7 keoi5 ji4 gaa1 cung1 loeng4 佢而家冲凉 She's taking a shower.
- 8 ngo5 go3 zai2 waak6 waa2 我個仔畫畫 My son is drawing.
- 9 lou5 baan2 hoi1 wui2 老闆開會 The boss is having a meeting.
- 10 keoi5 zung6 nau1 gan2 ngo5 dei6 佢仲撈我哋 She's still angry with us.

## 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 Ngóh jā tiuh sósih 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 zyu6 di1 gau6 saam1 佢成日著啲舊衫 He's always wearing old clothes.