



Absolute Beginner S1 A Lesson in Cantonese Civility

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Traditional Chinese

你好。
你好。
你嘅啤酒。
唔該。
唔使客氣。

Jyutping

nei5 hou2。
nei5 hou2。
nei5 ge3 be1 zau2。
m4 goi1。
m4 sai2 haak3 hei3。

English

Hello.
Hello.
Your beer.
Thank you.
You're welcome.

Vocabulary

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Traditional	Jyutping	English
嘅	ge3	possessive particle
你嘅	nei5 ge3	your, yours
唔使客氣	m4 sai2 haak3 hei3	You're welcome.
唔該	m4 goi1	please; thank you; excuse me
唔該曬	m4 goi1 saai3	Thank you very much.
啤酒	be1 zau2	beer
佢	keoi5	he, she, it
我哋	ngo5 dei6	we
你哋	nei5 dei6	you
佢哋	keoi5 dei6	they

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

我嘅單車唔見咗。	ngo5 ge3 daan1 ce1 m4 gin6 zo2.	My bike is missing.
呢本係唔係你嘅書？	ni1 bun2 hai6 m4 hai6 nei5 ge3 syu1?	Is this your book?
唔使咁客氣。	m4 sai2 gam2 haak3 hei3.	You're most welcome.
唔該細聲啲。	m4 goi1 sai3 seng1 di1.	Please lower your volume.
真係唔該晒。	zan1 hai6 m4 goi1 saai3.	A million thanks.
兩支生力啤幾錢？	loeng5 zi1 sang1 lik6 be1 gei2 cin2 ?	How much are two San Miguel's?
佢係我朋友。	keoi5 hai6 ngo5 pang4 jau5.	He is my friend.
我哋都係中國人。	ngo5 dei6 dou1 hai6 zung1 gwok3 jan4.	We are all Chinese.
你哋一齊去？	nei5 dei6 jat1 cai4 heoi3?	Are you going together?
佢哋嘅事你唔好理。	keoi5 dei6 ge3 si6 nei5 m4 hou2 lei5.	Stay away from their business.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson is the Possessive Particle 嘅 (ge3)

你嘅啤酒。

nei5 ge3 be1 zau2

"Your beer."

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嘅 (ge3) is a structural particle we use to show possession or ownership. The noun before 嘅 (ge3) is the owner of the object after 嘅 (ge3). For example, to say "my book" in Cantonese, connect the subject 我 (ngo5) - "I" and the object 書 (syu1) - "book" with the particle 嘅 (ge3): 我嘅書.

The word order is always as follows: owner + 嘅 (ge3) + owned. Furthermore, you can use all pronouns with the possessive particle 嘅.

Cantonese	Jyutping	"English"
我嘅	ngo5 ge3	"mine"
你嘅	nei5 ge3	"yours"
佢嘅	keoi5 ge3	"his"/"hers"/"its"
我哋嘅	ngo5 dei6 ge3	"ours"
你哋嘅	nei5 dei6 ge3	"yours" - plural
佢哋嘅	keoi5 dei6 ge3	"theirs"

When speaking about family members, we drop 嘅 (ge3). For instance, "my mother" is 我媽媽 (ngo5 maa4 maa1).

For Example:

1. 你嘅啤酒。
nei5 ge3 be1 zau2
"Your beer."
2. 我嘅水。
ngo5 ge3 sei2
"My water."

Cultural Insight

Service in Hong Kong

Taking a cue from Britain, Hong Kong has a culture with a developed and sophisticated hospitality industry. This includes a custom of tipping. This is quite evident when contrasted with mainland Guangdong where tipping is unheard of and service can be hit or miss. Go to any sit-down restaurant in Hong Kong, and you will likely find a fifteen percent service charge added to your bill. In Hong Kong, the service staff is smaller and more efficient. In Guangdong, an army of waiters and waitresses fly through the restaurant filling orders as they are shouted at from across the room by impatient customers.

Given the differences in labor cost and cost of living in general, meals in Hong Kong are more expensive. But remember, in China, you get what you pay for. The meal may be cheaper, but don't assume you will receive top-notch service. But then again, mainland

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China can surprise you by providing excellent service at a fraction of the cost.