

LESSON NOTES

Intermediate S1 #6

Running from Your Problem in Hong Kong

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TRADITIONAL CHINESE

1. A: 好耐冇見，近排幾好嗎？
2. B: 幾好，有心，你呢？
3. A: 都係咁上下啦。聽講你要移民？
4. B: 係啊，諗住過美國囉。
5. A: 點解咁突然？
6. B: 爭人錢，要著草。

JYUTPING

1. A: hou2 noi6 mou5 gin3, gan6 paai2 gei2 hou2 maa3 ?
2. B: gei2 hou2, jau5 sam1, nei5 ne1 ?
3. A: dou1 hai6 gam3 soeng6 haa5 laa1. teng1 gong2 nei5 jiu3 ji4 man4 ?
4. B: hai6 aa3, lam2 zyu6 gwo3 mei5 gwok3 lo1.
5. A: dim2 gaai2 gam3 dat6 jin4 ?
6. B: zaang1 jan4 cin2, jiu3 zoek3 cou2.

ENGLISH

CONT'D OVER

1. A: Haven't seen you for a while, how have you been lately?
2. B: I'm okay, thanks, how about you?
3. A: About the same. I hear that you're going to emigrate?
4. B: Yes, I'm thinking of living in the states.
5. A: Why so suddenly?
6. B: I owe money. I need to run away.

VOCABULARY

Traditional	Romanization	English	Class
著草	zoek3 cou2	to run away	verb
爭	zaang1	to owe	verb
突然	dat6 jin4	suddenly	adverb
美國	mei5 gwok3	United States (of America)	noun
諗	lam2	to think	verb
移民	ji4 man4	to immigrate	verb
有心	jau5 sam1	to be considerate	adjective
近排	gan6 paai2	recently	adverb
聽講	teng1 gong2	to have heard	verb
好耐冇見	hou2 noi6 mou5 gin3	not to have met for a while	phrase

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>佢比人追債，準備要著草。 <i>keoi5 bei2 jan4 zeoi1 zaai3, zeon2 bei6 jiu3 zoek3 cou2.</i></p> <p>Other people are chasing him down for money, so he's preparing for run away.</p>	<p>我前世一定爭咗佢好多，呢世嚟還俾佢，都係宿命。 <i>ngo5 cin4 sai3 jat1 ding6 caang1 zo2 keoi5 hou2 do1, ni1 sai3 lei4 waan4 bei2 keoi5, dou1 hai6 suk1 ming6.</i></p> <p>I must have owed her a lot in a previous life and now it's my destiny to pay her back.</p>
<p>點解你突然間要移民去美國啊？ <i>dim2 gaai2 nei5 dat6 jin4 gaan1 jiu3 ji4 man4 heoi3 mei5 gwok3 aa3?</i></p> <p>Why do you want to immigrate to the United State all of a sudden?</p>	<p>佢爸爸一九八九年嚟美國。 <i>keoi5 baa4 baa1 jat1 gau2 baat3 gau2 nin4 lai4 mei5 gwok3.</i></p> <p>His dad came to America in 1989.</p>
<p>我諗住過年嘅時候去日本旅遊。 <i>ngo5 lam2 zyu6 gwo3 nin4 ge3 si4 hau6 heoi3 jat6 bun2 lei5 jau4.</i></p> <p>I plan to go to Japan during the New Years holiday.</p>	<p>喺九七年，香港有大量嘅人移民到外國。 <i>hai2 gau2 cat1 nin4, hoeng1 gong2 jau5 daai6 loeng6 ge3 jan4 ji4 man4 dou3 ngoi6 gwok3.</i></p> <p>A lot of people in Hong Kong immigrated to foreign countries in 1997.</p>
<p>你買咁多嘢嚟探我，真係有心啦！ <i>nei5 maa5 gam3 do1 je5 lai4 taam3 ngo5, zan1 hai6 jau5 sam1 laa3.</i></p> <p>You are really considerate, buying this many things and coming and seeing me.</p>	<p>好耐冇見，唔知佢近排點。 <i>hou2 noi6 mou5 gin3, m4 zi1 keoi5 gan6 paai2 dim2.</i></p> <p>We haven't seen each other in long time, I don't know how he's been lately.</p>
<p>聽講今日老細主動話請客。 <i>teng1 gong2 gam1 jat6 lou5 sai3 zyu2 dung6 waa6 ceng2 haak3.</i></p> <p>I heard the boss is treating us today.</p>	<p>我哋係最好嘅朋友，但係好耐冇見喇。 <i>ngo5 dei6 hai6 zeoi3 hou2 ge3 pang4 jau5, daan6 hai6 hou2 noi6 mou5 gin3 laa3.</i></p> <p>We are best friends, but haven't seen each other for a while.</p>

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is 咁上下

都係咁上下啦。

"It's about the same as always."

Our grammar focus in this lesson is on the phrase 咁上下 (*gam3 soeng6 haa5*), which can be translated as "I'm doing okay," or "just passingly." In our dialogue, we hear this in use when our first speaker answers a question with the statement 都係咁上下啦 (*dou1 hai6 gam3 soeng6 haa5 laa1*) "It's about the same as always". There are two situations in which we can use this phrase. The first one is when something is neither good nor bad. This is the usage in our dialogue. The second usage is more complex. In these cases we have to be talking about something which has an expected range of values, and in these cases we imply that the value is somewhat indistinguishably in the middle.

You can see both of these usages in the following sample sentences.

For Example:

1. 我奶奶情況都係咁上下啦。
ngo5 naai4 naai2 cing4 fong3 dou1 hai6 gam3 soeng6 haa5 laa1.
"My grandma's situation is neither good nor bad."
2. 老爺車開唔快, 係咁上下嘍啦。
lou5 je4 ce1 hoi1 m4 faai3, hai6 gam3 soeng6 haa5 gaa3 laa1.
"The car is really old and can't go quickly. This is more or less the speed it goes."
3. 佢嘅粵語水平係咁上下嘍啦。
keoi5 ge3 jyut6 jyu5 sei2 ping4 hai6 gam3 soeng6 haa5 gaa3 laa1.
"His Cantonese level is just so-so."

The situation in which 咁上下 means "neither good nor bad" is easiest to remember. But remember that it can also be used generally to suggest that the state of something is in an intermediary category, with nothing particular to distinguish it towards either extreme.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Immigrating to Hong

Hong Kong is one of the most multicultural cities in the world, due in part to what has historically been the island's relatively liberal immigration policy. While permanent residents can sponsor family members and get them a permanent visa that way, it is also possible to get a permanent visa to Hong Kong through either an investor class visa, or by applying through a general points-based system. While the amount of capital required for an investor visa is quite significant (well over one million USD at this point), skills-based immigration is considerably easier, especially for those with fluency in both English as well as at least one Chinese-based language (Putonghua or Cantonese) and who have worked in a senior position in a specialized sector of the economy. If you're curious how you would rank, you can find the points system online at http://www.immd.gov.hk/ehhtml/QMAS_8.htm. At present, the minimum passing grade for consideration is around eighty points.