

LESSON NOTES

Lower Intermediate S1 #4 Have You Been Made a Fool of in China?

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TRADITIONAL CHINESE

1. A: 喺私人鋪頭買嘢要小心!
2. B: 佢哋搵過你笨?
3. A: 我上次比人呃咗幾千蚊。
4. B: 咁大貪? 有冇搞錯啊!
5. A: 咪係囉! 激死我。

JYUTPING

1. A: hai2 si1 jan4 pou3 tau2 maai5 je5 jiu3 siu2 sam1!
2. B: keoi5 dei6 wan2 gwo3 nei5 ban6?
3. A: ngo5 seong6 ci3 bei2 jan4 ngaak1 zo2 gei2 cin1 man1.
4. B: gam3 daai6 taam1? jau5 mou5 gaau2 co3 aa3!
5. A: mai6 hai6 lo1! gik1 sei2 ngo5.

ENGLISH

1. A: Be careful if you're shopping in private shops.
2. B: Did someone cheat you?

CONT'D OVER

3. A: I was taken for several thousand dollars last time.
4. B: That much? Were they crazy?
5. A: You bet! It really got me angry.

VOCABULARY

Traditional	Romanization	English	Class
有冇搞錯	jau5 mou5 gaau2 co3	is there a mistake?	expression
搵笨	wan2 ban6	to take advantage (of someone)	verb
私人	si1 jan4	private	adjective
鋪頭	pou3 tau2	shop	noun
激	gik1	to anger	verb
大貪	daai6 taam1	greedy	adjective
呃	ngaak1	to cheat; to deceive	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>你有冇搞錯，佢真係咁講？ <i>nei5 jau5 mou5 gaau2 co3, keoi5 zan1 hai6 gaam2 gong2?</i></p> <p>Are you sure this is exactly what he said?</p>	<p>小心俾人搵笨。 <i>siu5 saam1 bei2 jan4 wan2 ban6.</i></p> <p>Be careful not to be cheated.</p>
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<p>我好鍾意香港嘅私人鋪頭。 ngo5 hou2 zung2 ji3 hoeng1 gong2 ge3 si1 jan4 pou3 tau2.</p> <p>I really like private stores in Hong Kong.</p>	<p>我哋平時去嗰間鋪頭嘅邊度? ngo5 dei6 ping4 si4 heoi3 go2 gaan1 pou3 tau2 hai2 bin1 dou6?</p> <p>Where is the store to which we often go?</p>
<p>如果你呃我，你會激嬲我。 jyu4 gwo2 nei5 ngaak1 ngo5, nei5 wui5 gik1 nau1 ngo5.</p> <p>If you cheat me, you'll anger me.</p>	<p>佢個人好大貪㗎! keoi5 go3 jan4 hou2 daai6 taam1 gaa3.</p> <p>He is really greedy.</p>
<p>佢哋可能呃你。 keoi5 dei6 ho2 nang4 ngaak1 nei5.</p> <p>They might cheat you.</p>	

GRAMMAR

The focus of this lesson is a tricky verb

In our vocabulary section, we taught you the word 搵笨 (*wan2 ban6*), which is used to suggest that someone has been cheated or taken advantage of. A simple example of this is the sentence 我尋日俾人搵笨 (*ngo5 cam4 jat6 bei2 jan4 wan2 ban6*), which is in the passive voice and which we would consequently translate as "I was tricked yesterday."

But what happens if we want to switch this into the active voice, and have the verb take an object? This is what we see in the question 佢哋搵過你笨? (*keoi5 dei6 wan2 gwo3 nei5 ban6*) "they tricked you before?". And our problem here is that this verb is originally a verb-adjective construction where the meaning is taken from the combination of the two. And in these cases even though we might consider this a standalone word, the rules for adding direct objects are somewhat complex. Particularly, you have to split the verb from its complement and insert the new object right in the middle of the word. Consider the following examples:

- 搵我笨
wan2 ngo5 ban6
"Trick me."

2. 搵我老細笨
wan2 ngo5 lou5 sai3 ban6
"Cheat my boss."

3. 唔好搵我笨
m4 hou2 wan2 ngo5 ban6
"Don't try to cheat me."

This can be a confusing to English speakers, if only because it isn't common in the English language to split up existing words into sub-units in order to change the meaning of those words. But this is very common in Cantonese when we are dealing with two character words which consist of a verb and then a complement of some sort which completes the meaning. So don't be tricked and keep your eyes open for this sort of thing!

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Tips on Shopping in Hong Kong

Despite our dialogue, fraud in Hong Kong retail stores is virtually unheard of, or is almost always accidental. In our time in Hong Kong we've had many instances of being chased after by shopkeepers who gave us the incorrect change or accidentally short-changed us out of a few Hong Kong dollars. With that said, the prices in many Hong Kong retail stores are fairly high given the high rents. If you're on a budget, consider shopping more in Kowloon than on the island itself.