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Lower Intermediate S1

Taking an Overdue Nap in Hong Kong

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Traditional Chinese

- A 個看更呢？
B 佢話要瞓返陣。
A 咁而家邊個睇門口啊？
B 我頂緊佢班。
A 咁都安全啲。

Jyutping

- A Go3 hon1 gaang1 ne1?
B Koi5 waa6 jiu3 hap1 faan1 zan6.
A Gam2 ji4 gaa1 bin1 go3 tai2 mun4 hau2 aa3?
B Ngo5 ding2 gan2 koi5 baan1.
A Gam2 dou1 on1 cyun4 di1.

English

- A Where is the guard?
B He said he needed to take a nap.
A But who is watching the gate?
B I am taking his shift.
A Then it's safe.

Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
看更	hon1 gaang1	guard
瞓陣	hap1 zan6	to take a nap
看門	hon1 mun4	to be on guard
頂班	ding2 baan1	to take a shift
輪班	leon4 baan1	to be on shift
班	baan	shift
安全	on1 cyun4	safe

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

個看更喺門口攔住佢，要佢出示身份證。	Go3 hon1 gaang1 hai2 mun4 hau2 laan4 zyu6 zo2 koi5, jiu3 koi5 ceot1 si6 san1 fan2 zing4.	At the gate the guard stopped him and told him to show his identity card.
今日一早就起身去返工，我而家要瞓陣先。	Gam1 jat6 jat1 zou2 zau6 hei2 san1 heoi3 faan1 gong1, ngo5 ji4 gaa1 jiu3 hap1 zan6 sin1.	I woke up early to go to work in the morning; I need to take a nap now.
點解無人看門口嘍？打個電話去物業問吓。	Dim2 gaai2 mou5 jan4 hon1 mun4 hau2 gaa3? Daa2 go3 din6 waa2 heoi3 mat6 jip6 man6 haa5.	Why nobody is on guard? Call the property management department.
佢今日身體唔舒服，所以由我嚟頂班。	Koi5 gam1 jat6 san1 tai2 m4 syu1 fuk6, so2 ji5 jau4 ngo5 lai4 ding2 baan1.	He is uncomfortable today, so I am taking his shift.
下星期三係佢輪班，我放假。	Haa6 sing1 kei4 saam1 hai6 koi5 leon4 baan1, ngo5 fong3 gaa3.	Next Wednesday will be his shift, and I'll be on holiday.
除佢之外大部份人都係返日頭嘅班。	Ceoi4 zo2 koi5 zi1 ngoi6 daai6 bou6 fan6 jan4 dou1 hai6 faan1 jat6 tau2 ge3 baan1.	Most people work the day shift, except him.
唔使擔心，你喺呢度好安全。	M4 sai2 daam1 sam1, nei5 hai2 nei1 dou6 hou2 on1 cyun4.	Don't worry, you will be safe here.

Grammar Points

The Focus of this Lesson is When Something is Long Overdue

佢話要瞓返陣。

"He said he needed to take a nap."

In our grammar discussion for this lesson, we are going to talk about the verb complement 返. As you are already aware, verb complements are characters which can be added to the end of other verbs to change their meaning in subtle ways. In this case, by adding 返 after a verb, we communicate that something has not been done in a while, and that it is about time for it to happen. In our dialogue, we see this with the line 佢話要瞓返陣 ("he said he needed

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to take a nap"). The heavy lifting in this expression is done by our verb complement, which suggests that the guard has not slept for a long time and is due a nap.

Consider the following additional examples. In each case, pay attention to how including this verb complement changes the meaning of the sentence by adding the sense that a certain course of action is proper, or long overdue:

1. 我已經做咗好多日，而家想放返幾日假。
"I've been doing this for a few days and need to take a break."
2. 上個星期佢請病假，今日上返佢班。
"He called in sick last week and will get back to work today."
3. 你做咗幾個鐘頭啦，休息返陣啦。
"You've worked for several hours, and should take a break."

This is a very typical and quite a colloquial expression. It is also special in the sense that it really changes the emotion behind the sentence—the change in meaning is implied through this emotion. So try this out the next time you want to suggest that something is long overdue: add 返 after any verb and give a long sigh for extra effect!

Cultural Insight

[What's the Minimum Wage in Hong Kong?](#)

In 2010, the Minimum Wage Bill passed by the District Board in Hong Kong raised the lowest hourly wage in Hong Kong to 28 HKD. In response, a number of commercial and residential buildings have cut back on security staff because of the need to reduce guard wages. This has led many companies to replace staff with video security systems and central monitoring stations. Of course, one disadvantage of these new systems is that they can't chase down thieves...only record their actions.