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Lower Intermediate S1

Is Someone Nagging You in Cantonese?

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Traditional Chinese

- A 我行開一陣。
B 又出去買零食？
A 係又點？
B 好心你食少啲垃圾嘢啦！
A 好心你出少句聲啦！我自己有分數。

Jyutping

- A Ngo5 haang4 hoi1 jat1 zan6.
B Jau6 ceot1 heoi3 maai5 ling4 sik6?
A Hai6 jau6 dim2?
B Hou2 sam1 nei5 sik6 siu2 di1 laap6 zaap6 je5 laa1!
A Hou2 sam1 nei5 ceot1 siu2 geoi3 seng1 laa1! Ngo5 zi6 gei2 jau5 fan1 sou3.

English

- A I am going out.
B Out to buy snacks again?
A So what?
B Please cut down on junk food.
A Please cut down on your nagging! I know what I'm doing.

Vocabulary

Traditional	Jyutping	English
行開	haang4 hoi1	to go away
一陣	jat1 zan6	a while
好心	hou2 sam	please
零食	ling4 sik6	snack
點心	dim2 sam1	dim sum
長氣	ceong4 hei3	verbose
垃圾嘢	laap6 zaap6 je5	junk food
有分數	jau5 fan1 sou3	know fairly well

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Vocabulary Sample Sentences

唔該行開啲啦，我睇唔到電視啊。	M4 goi1 haang4 hoi1 di1 laa1,ngo5 tai2 m4 dou2 din6 si6 aa3.	Please go away, I cannot watch TV.
我而家去訓一陣，你五點鐘叫醒我。	Ngo5 ji4 gaa1 heoi3 fan3 jat1 zan6,nei5 ng5 dim2 zung1 giu3 seng2 ngo5.	I am going to sleep for a while, wake me up at 5:00.
我而家好忙，你先唔好同我講嘢一陣。	ngo5 ji4 gaa1 hou2 mong4, nei5 sin1 m4 hou2 tung4 ngo5 gong2 je5 jat1 zan6.	I'm really busy now, please don't talk to me for a while.
好心你就早啲戒煙啦，對身體唔好嘍。	Hou2 sam1 nei5 zau6 zou2 di1 gaai3 jin1 laa1,deoi3 san1 tai2 m4 hou2 gaa3.	Please quit smoking quickly, it's bad for your health.
食太多零食對小朋友嘅身體唔好嘍。	Sik6 taai3 do1 ling4 sik6 deoi3 siu2 pang4 jau5 ge3 san1 tai2 m4 hou2 gaa3.	Eating too many snacks is bad for the child's health.
蘿蔔糕係一種香港人好鍾意食嘅點心。	Lo4 baak6 gou1 hai6 jat1 zung2 heong1 gong2 jan4 hou2 zung1 ji3 sik6 ge3 dim2 sam1.	Carrot cake is a popular dim sum in Hong Kong.
我無法想像佢係一個咁長氣嘅人。	Ngo5 mou5 faat3 seong2 zeong6 koi5 hai6 jat1 go3 gam3 ceong4 hei2 ge3 jan4.	I can't imagine that he is such a verbose man.
你就係因為食太多垃圾嘢先變到咁肥。	Nei5 zau6 hai6 jan1 wai6 sik6 bin3 dou3 gam3 fei4.	You are so fat because of eating so many junk foods.
唔使擔心，我好有分數嘅。	M4 sai2 daam1 sam1,ngo5 hou2 jau5 fan1 sou3 ge3.	Don't worry about that,I know it fairly well.

Grammar Points

The Focus of this Lesson is How to Talk Someone into Doing Things

好心你食少啲垃圾嘢啦！

"Eat less junk food, for god's sake!"

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Our grammar focus in this lesson is to talk people into or out of doing things in Cantonese. The key pattern is 好心你...啦(hou2 sum1 nei5...laa1), which literally translates as "(I) sincerely (think) you (should do something)" but actually sounds to Cantonese ears like "for god's sake, do X already, will you?" Despite the fact that the word 好心 means "a good heart," it is losing the original meaning from long ago and has become just another way to nag. So use it with caution as it is not the most polite phrase in the world and is usually said among close friends or family only. I grew up listening to my mother nagging with this pattern: 好心你快啲做功課啦! (hou2 sum1 nei5 faai3 di1 zou6 gung1 fo3 laa1!) "Do your homework already!" or 好心你勤力啲啦! (hou2 sum1 nei5 kan4 lik6 di1 laa1!) "Work harder, will you?"

1. 好心你食少支煙啦!
Hou2 sum1 nei5 sik6 siu2 zi1 jin1 laa1!
"Smoke fewer cigarettes, will you?"
2. 好心你食少啲拉雜嘢啦!
Hou2 sum1 nei5 sik6 siu2 di1 laap6 zaap6 je5 laa1!
"Eat less junk food."
3. 好心你出少句聲啦!
Hou2 sum1 nei5 ceut1 siu2 geoi3 seng1 laa1.
"Talk less, will you?"

Try using this pattern to create sentences with the pronouns like he, she or they. For instance, you can say 好心佢就唔好成日食烟啦 ("She should not be smoking all the time") and 好心佢哋就买少啲零食啦 ("They should buy less snacks").

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Cultural Insight

Life is Sweet in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a gourmet paradise that offers exotic international cuisine. Part of this includes an international feast of snacks and desserts. You can easily find stores and stalls selling treats throughout Hong Kong that open well into the night. Popular treats include delicious 雞蛋仔 (gai1 daan6 zai2, "egg puffs" or "egg waffles") and 魚蛋 (jyu4 daan2, "fish balls"). And don't be surprised if your Hong Kong friend asks you to join him for a bowl of 糖水 (tong4 sei2, "sweet") after a full course dinner. It is a habit of a true Hong Kong resident to eat dessert even after a full meal and Hong Kong style desserts are just too good to resist.

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Even if you are not a big fan of sweets, you will be amazed by the varieties and popularity of the ones available in Hong Kong.