

# Yuè & the Sinitic Languages of the Pearl River Region — Unit 3.1

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## MC finals

攝 [撮] shè/sip3 final groups:

|   | MC                | 港客  | 廣     | 官    |   | MC                                           | 港客   | 廣     | 官     |
|---|-------------------|-----|-------|------|---|----------------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| 果 | kwa <sup>B</sup>  | gǒ  | gwo2  | guǒ  | 咸 | fiem <sup>A</sup>                            | hām  | haam4 | xián  |
| 假 | kæ <sup>B</sup>   | gǎ  | gaa2  | jiǎ  | 深 | ɕim <sup>A</sup>                             | cím  | sam1  | shēn  |
| 遇 | ɲju <sup>C</sup>  | ngì | jyu6  | yù   | 山 | ʂen <sup>A</sup>                             | sán  | saan1 | shān  |
| 蟹 | fiɛ <sup>B</sup>  | hǎi | haai5 | xiè  | 臻 | tʂin <sup>A</sup>                            | zín  | zeon1 | zhēn  |
| 止 | tɕi <sup>B</sup>  | zǐ  | zi2   | zhǐ  | 宕 | daŋ <sup>C</sup>                             | tòng | dong6 | dàng  |
| 效 | fiæw <sup>C</sup> | hàu | haau6 | xiào | 江 | kæw <sup>ɲA</sup>                            | góng | gong1 | jiāng |
| 流 | ljuw <sup>A</sup> | līu | lau4  | liú  | 曾 | tsəŋ <sup>A</sup>                            | zén  | zang1 | zēng  |
|   |                   |     |       |      | 梗 | kæŋ <sup>B</sup>                             | gǎng | gang2 | gěng  |
|   |                   |     |       |      | 通 | t <sup>h</sup> u <sup>w</sup> ŋ <sup>A</sup> | túng | tung1 | tōng  |

Table 1: Middle Chinese 攝 final groups

## MC finals

For Cantonese speakers, one way of learning these:

More than 90% of the time, characters in the final groups of

- 效 haau6 咸 haam4 山 saan1 宕 dong6 江 gong1  
have a long vowel
- 流 lau4 深 sam1 臻 zeon1 曾 zang1 梗 gang2 通 tung1  
have a short vowel

as indicated in the names.

## MC finals

|   | 開一   | 開二   | 開三       | 開四   | 合一    | 合二    | 合三        | 合四    |
|---|------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 果 | 歌 a  |      | 戈 ja     |      | 戈 wa  |       | 戈 wja     |       |
| 假 |      | 麻 æ  | 麻 jæ     |      |       | 麻 wæ  |           |       |
| 遇 |      |      |          |      | 模 u   |       | 魚 jə      |       |
| 遇 |      |      |          |      |       |       | 虞 ju      |       |
| 蟹 | 哈 əj | 皆 ej | 祭 j(i)ej | 齊 ej | 灰 wəj | 皆 wej | 祭 wj(i)ej | 齊 wej |
| 蟹 | 泰 aj | 佳 ε  | 廢 jəj    |      | 泰 waj | 佳 wε  | 廢 wjəj    |       |
| 蟹 |      | 夬 æj |          |      |       | 夬 wæj |           |       |
| 止 |      |      | 支 j(i)e  |      |       |       | 支 wj(i)e  |       |
| 止 |      |      | 脂 (j)ij  |      |       |       | 脂 w(j)ij  |       |
| 止 |      |      | 之 i      |      |       |       |           |       |
| 止 |      |      | 微 jji    |      |       |       | 微 wji     |       |
| 效 | 豪 aw | 肴 æw | 宵 j(i)ew | 蕭 ew |       |       |           |       |
| 流 | 侯 uw |      | 尤 juw    |      |       |       |           |       |
| 流 |      |      | 幽 jiw    |      |       |       |           |       |

## MC finals

|   | 開一                  | 開二    | 開三          | 開四    | 合一                  | 合二     | 合三                   | 合四     |
|---|---------------------|-------|-------------|-------|---------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| 咸 | 覃合 əm               | 咸洽 ɛm | 鹽葉 j(i)em   | 添帖 em | 凡乏 wjəm             |        |                      |        |
| 咸 | 談盍 am               | 銜狎 æm | 嚴業 jæm      |       |                     |        |                      |        |
| 深 | 侵緝 (j)im            |       |             |       |                     |        |                      |        |
| 山 | 寒曷 an               | 山黠 ɛn | 仙薛 j(i)en   | 先屑 en | 桓末 wan              | 山黠 wɛn | 仙薛 wj(i)en           | 先屑 wen |
| 山 |                     | 刪轄 æn | 元月 jən      |       |                     | 刪轄 wæn | 元月 wjən              |        |
| 臻 | 痕 ən                |       | 真質/臻櫛 (j)in |       | 魂沒 wən              |        | 諄術 w(j)in            |        |
| 臻 |                     |       | 殷迄 jin      |       |                     |        | 文物 jun               |        |
| 宕 | 唐鐸 aŋ               |       | 陽藥 jaŋ      |       | 唐鐸 waŋ              |        | 陽藥 wjaŋ              |        |
| 江 | 江覺 æ <sup>w</sup> ŋ |       |             |       |                     |        |                      |        |
| 曾 | 登德 əŋ               |       | 蒸職 iŋ       |       | 登德 wəŋ              |        | 職 wik                |        |
| 梗 |                     | 庚陌 æŋ | 庚陌 jæŋ      | 青錫 eŋ |                     | 庚陌 wæŋ | 庚 wjæŋ               | 青 weŋ  |
| 梗 |                     | 耕麥 ɛŋ | 清昔 j(i)eŋ   |       |                     | 耕麥 wɛŋ | 清昔 wj(i)eŋ           |        |
| 通 |                     |       |             |       | 東屋 u <sup>w</sup> ŋ |        | 東屋 ju <sup>w</sup> ŋ |        |
| 通 |                     |       |             |       | 冬沃 ə <sup>w</sup> ŋ |        | 鐘燭 jə <sup>w</sup> ŋ |        |

## MC finals

MC codas: -j -w -m -n -ŋ -p -t -k

> 95% retained in Cantonese

However, with vowels: all sorts of changes in Cantonese  
(very not conservative)

# Middle Chinese

|               |      |                    |
|---------------|------|--------------------|
|               | 編號   | 1911               |
|               | 漢字   | 法                  |
|               | 中古音  | 方法                 |
|               | 國際音標 | 咸合三入乏非             |
| 方言點           |      |                    |
| 北 京           |      | fa <sup>214</sup>  |
| 廣 州 (市 區)     |      | fat <sup>33</sup>  |
| 香 港 (市 區)     |      | fat <sup>33</sup>  |
| 香 港 (新 界 錦 田) |      | fæk <sup>35</sup>  |
| 澳 門 (市 區)     |      | fat <sup>33</sup>  |
| 番 禺 (市 橋)     |      | fat <sup>33</sup>  |
| 花 縣 (花 山)     |      | fat <sup>33</sup>  |
| 從 化 (城 內)     |      | fat <sup>23</sup>  |
| 增 城 (縣 城)     |      | fak <sup>33</sup>  |
| 佛 山 (市 區)     |      | fat <sup>33</sup>  |
| 南 海 (沙 頭)     |      | p'et <sup>33</sup> |

法：咸合三入 乏非

- 咸：咸攝 (-am/-ap), 1 of 16 groups of finals
- 合：合 “rounded” vs. 開 (non-rn)
- 三：1234 “divisions” of finals
- 入：平上去入 Tones ABCD
- 乏：乏 -jəp<sup>D</sup> final (廣韻 has 57<sup>A</sup> + 55<sup>B</sup> + 60<sup>C</sup> + 34<sup>D</sup> = 206 finals)
- 非：非 pf- [LMC], 1 of about 40 initials (非乏 pfjəp<sup>D</sup>)

## Early Cantonese

Earliest text with elements identifiable as Cantonese:

《花箋記》 faa1 zin1 gei3 “Flowery Scroll” (late Ming: 17<sup>th</sup> C, or perhaps 16<sup>th</sup> C) *English translation thereof is said to have inspired Goethe’s*  
„Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten “





# Early Cantonese

Earliest Cantonese rime book:

《分韻撮要》 fan1 wan5 cyut3 jiu3 (early Qing dynasty)

Earliest known edition: 壁魚本《分韻撮要》

eds. 武溪溫儀鳳岐山 & 姪武溪溫繼聖端石, undated (17xx ?); kept in BSB

Slightly later edition: 元亨本《分韻撮要》; kept in Leiden U

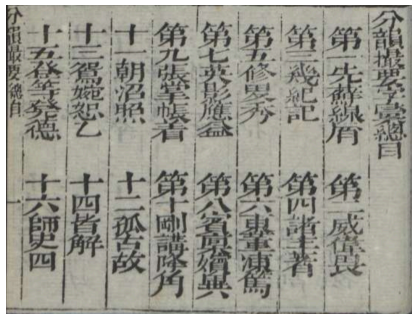
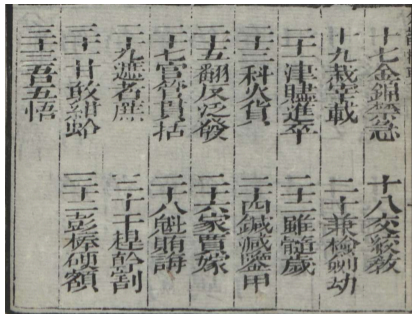
Most-famous dated edition:

《江湖尺牘分韻撮要合集》(1782)

Only recorded literary pronunciations.

*(Many older traits of Cantonese recorded in this book can still be found in many other Yue dialects)*

# Early Cantonese



《江湖尺牘分韻撮要合集》

[https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3343668834&PHYSID=PHYS\\_0013](https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3343668834&PHYSID=PHYS_0013)

[https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3343668834&PHYSID=PHYS\\_0014](https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3343668834&PHYSID=PHYS_0014)

壁魚本《分韻撮要》[https://dfg-viewer.de/show?tx\\_dlf%5Bdouble%5D=1&tx\\_dlf%5Bid%5D=https%3A%2F%2Fapi.digital-e-sammlungen.de%2Fdfg%2Fmets%2Fmods%2Fv1%2Fdigitalobjects%2Fidentifier%2Fmdz-obj%3Absb00093581&tx\\_dlf%5Bpage%5D=9&tx\\_dlf%5Bpagegrid%5D=0&cHash=39333f2bace4954d9f45feaefddb3e86](https://dfg-viewer.de/show?tx_dlf%5Bdouble%5D=1&tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=https%3A%2F%2Fapi.digital-e-sammlungen.de%2Fdfg%2Fmets%2Fmods%2Fv1%2Fdigitalobjects%2Fidentifier%2Fmdz-obj%3Absb00093581&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=9&tx_dlf%5Bpagegrid%5D=0&cHash=39333f2bace4954d9f45feaefddb3e86)

3Absb00093581&tx\_dlf%5Bpage%5D=27&tx\_dlf%5Bpagegrid%5D=0&cHash=ef6204e2a0ef404332587bd99fe8aabc

# Early Cantonese: onsets

Sham 岑 (2020)'s reconstruction (from pre-1782 editions; see also Lau 刘 & Cheung 张 2003)

表十一 《分韻撮要》二十四聲類

|                |                       |   |   |   |
|----------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| p              | p <sup>h</sup>        | m | f |   |
| t              | t <sup>h</sup>        | n |   | l |
| ts             | ts <sup>h</sup>       |   | s |   |
| <b>tɕ</b>      | <b>tɕ<sup>h</sup></b> | ɲ | ɕ | j |
| k              | k <sup>h</sup>        | ŋ | h |   |
| k <sup>w</sup> | k <sup>wh</sup>       |   |   | w |
|                |                       |   |   | ∅ |

- /ts t<sup>h</sup> s/ vs. /tɕ tɕ<sup>h</sup> ɕ/  
鄒 zau1 秋 cau1 修 sau1  
周 žau1 抽 čau1 收 šau1  
(now no distinction)
- /ɲ/ vs. /j/  
魚 ñyu4 vs. 于 [于] jyu4  
(now merged into /j/)  
(/ɲ/ < MC [ɲ] or [ŋ])

Sham, Ricky Yiu Ho 岑堯昊. 2020. 《分韻撮要》版本與音系新論 Innovations on Fenyun Cuoyao: Textual history and phonological reconstruction. *Current Research in Chinese Linguistics* 中國語文通訊 99(1).  
[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/clrc/crc1\\_99\\_1/sham.pdf](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/clrc/crc1_99_1/sham.pdf)

Lau, Chun Fat 刘振发 & Cheung, Kwan Hin 张群显. 2003. 清初的粤语音系：《分韻撮要》的声韵系统. In 詹伯慧 (ed.), 第八届国际粤方言研讨会论文集, 206–223. 北京: 中国社会科学出版社.

## Early Cantonese: rimes

表十八 《分韻撮要》五十一韻類

|    |   |    |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|----|---|----|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| *a | a | ai | au | am | an | aŋ   | ap | at | ak |
| *ɐ |   | ɛi | ɛu | ɛm | ɛn | ɛŋ   | ɛp | ɛt | ɛk |
| *ɛ | ɛ |    |    |    |    | (ɛŋ) |    |    | ɛk |
| *ɔ | ɔ | ɔi |    | ɔm | ɔn | ɔŋ   | ɔp | ɔt | ɔk |
| *œ | œ |    |    |    |    | œŋ   |    |    | œk |
| *ə | ə | əy |    |    | ən |      |    | ət |    |
| *e | e |    |    |    |    | eŋ   |    |    | ek |
|    |   |    | iu | im | in |      | ip | it |    |
| *o | o |    |    |    |    | oŋ   |    |    | ok |
|    |   | ui |    |    | un |      |    | ut |    |
| *y |   |    |    |    | yn |      |    | yt |    |
| *ɿ | ɿ |    |    |    |    |      |    |    |    |
|    |   |    |    |    | ŋ  | ʔm   |    |    |    |

- [e o ə] ([ɿ u y]?) > [i u y] 文 [ɛ ɔ œ] 白  
e.g. 誅伐 zyu1 文 fat6  
zoe1 白 zyu6 saai3  
(my POV: 苦  
Canto. [fu˧]  
Nan. Ping. [hɔ˧]  
Viet. khô<sup>文</sup> / khó<sup>白</sup>)
- [ɿ]([ʔ]): allophone of /e/ (i) / ts ts<sup>h</sup> s<sub>-</sub>  
子 [tszɿ] vs. 止 [tɕiɿ]  
(cf. Brit. HK spelling of 子 Tsz)

- [i y] > [ej əy] (except tɕ tɕ<sup>h</sup> ɕ ɲ j):  
你 [nejɿ], (子 [tszɿ],) 止 [tɕiɿ], 耳 [niɿ], 企 (倚) [k<sup>h</sup>ejɿ]  
女 [nəyɿ], 咀 [tsəyɿ], 主 [tɕyɿ], 語 [nyɿ], 拒 [k<sup>h</sup>əyɿ]

# Early Cantonese: rimes

- [u] > [ow] (except f k<sup>w</sup> k<sup>wh</sup> w<sub>-</sub>):  
補 [pow<sup>1</sup>], 甫 [fu<sup>1</sup>], 嫂 [sow<sup>1</sup>], 稿 [kow<sup>1</sup>], 古 [k<sup>w</sup>u<sup>1</sup>]  
(cf. Brit. HK spelling of 古 Kwu; modern Canto. 稿 gou<sup>2</sup>, 古 gu<sup>2</sup>)

- [o] > [u] > [ow] occurred later than ([e ə] >) [i y] > [ej əu]  
Ball (1888) 你 <<sup>ɛ</sup>nei>, 女 <<sup>ɛ</sup>nui>, but 老 <<sup>ɛ</sup>lò>

|    |    |   |    |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|----|----|---|----|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| á  |    | z | í  | ú  | ü | e  | o  | ò | ö  |
| ái | ai |   |    | uí |   | éi | oi |   | ui |
| áu | au |   | íu |    |   |    |    |   |    |

歌 <<sub>ɛ</sub>ko> 高 <<sub>ɛ</sub>kò> 孤 <<sub>ɛ</sub>kwú>

- In 《分韻撮要》<sup>18C</sup>, there were no [ej ow], but [əu] has already existed.  
[əu] > [əu] <sup>≈MC</sup> 蟹合三 (祭 wj(i)ej), 止合三 (支 wj(i)e 脂 w(j)ij)  
戾 [ləu<sup>1</sup>], 隨 [ts<sup>h</sup>əu<sup>1</sup>]  
[y] > [əu] (except t<sub>ɕ</sub> t<sub>ɕ</sub><sup>h</sup> ɕ n j<sub>-</sub>) <sup>≈MC</sup> 遇合三 (魚 jə 虞 ju)  
慮 [ly<sup>1</sup>] > [ləu<sup>1</sup>], 除 [ts<sup>h</sup>y<sup>1</sup>] > [ts<sup>h</sup>əu<sup>1</sup>]  
[uj] > [əu] (only t<sup>h</sup> ts ts<sup>h</sup> s n l<sub>-</sub>) <sup>≈MC</sup> 蟹合一 (灰 wəj)  
雷 [luj<sup>1</sup>] > [ləu<sup>1</sup>], 崔 [ts<sup>h</sup>uj<sup>1</sup>] > [ts<sup>h</sup>əu<sup>1</sup>]

# Early Cantonese: rimes

- [ɔm ɔp] > [om op] > [ɐm ɐp] (> [am ap]) ≈ MC 咸開一 (覃合 əm əp 談盍 am ap)  
 窰 [tʰɔm˧] > [tʰom˧] > [tʰɐm˧]  
 甘 [kɔm˧] > [kom˧] > [kɐm˧]  
 坎 [hɔm˧] > [hom˧] > [hɐm˧]  
 暗 [ɔm˧] > [om˧] > [ɐm˧]  
 蛤 [kɔp˧] > [kop˧] > [kɐp˧] (> [kap˧]) tone DL1

Eitel (1877), Ball (1888) 蛤 <kòp̚> (vs. 割 <kot̚>)

Brit. HK spelling of 紅磡 Hung Hom; now hung4 ham3

和合石 Wo Hop Shek; now 和合石 wo4 hap6 sek6

See also these videos for the chronology of all of these sound changes:

<https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/1909783647604679296>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoutpVh\\_HFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoutpVh_HFU)

## Early Cantonese: rimes

|             |              |              |              |              |                |            |            |             |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 家賈嫁<br>a 26 | 皆解介<br>ai 14 | 交絞教<br>au 18 | 緘減鑒<br>am 24 | 翻反泛<br>an 25 | 彭棒硬<br>aŋ 32   | 甲<br>ap 24 | 發<br>at 25 | 額<br>ak 32  |
|             | 威偉畏<br>ei 2  | 修叟秀<br>eu 5  | 金錦禁<br>em 17 | 賓稟嬪<br>en 8  | 登等凳<br>eŋ 15   | 急<br>ep 17 | 畢<br>et 8  | 得<br>ek 15  |
| 遮者蔗<br>ɛ 29 |              |              |              |              | (鄭)<br>(eŋ 7?) |            |            | (跣)<br>ek 7 |
| 科火貨<br>ɔ 22 | 栽宰載<br>ɔi 19 |              | 甘敢紺<br>om 31 | 干趕幹<br>on 30 | 剛講降<br>oŋ 10   | 蛤<br>op 31 | 割<br>ot 30 | 角<br>ok 10  |
| (œ?)        | 雖髓歲<br>ey 22 |              |              | 津驢進<br>en 21 | 張掌帳<br>œŋ 9    |            | 卒<br>et 21 | 着<br>œk 9   |
| 諸主著<br>ə 4  |              |              |              | 鴛婉怨<br>yn 13 |                |            | 乙<br>yt 13 |             |
| 幾紀記<br>e 3  |              | 朝沼照<br>iu 11 | 兼檢劍<br>im 20 | 先蘇線<br>in 1  | 英影應<br>eŋ 7    | 劫<br>ip 20 | 屑<br>it 1  | 益<br>ek 7   |
| 孤古故<br>o 12 | 魁賄誨<br>ui 28 |              |              | 官管貫<br>un 27 | 東董凍<br>oŋ 6    |            | 括<br>ut 27 | 篤<br>ok 6   |
| 師史四<br>ɿ 16 |              |              | (m?)         |              | 吾五悟<br>ɿ 33    |            |            |             |



## Early Cantonese: tones

Tones A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2 D1 D2:

溫儀鳳 & 溫繼聖, 17xx (?; before 1782)

《分韻撮要》

Elijah Coleman Bridgman 裨治文, 1841

*A Chinese chrestomathy in the Canton dialect*

Samuel Wells Williams 衛三畏, 1856

*Tonic dictionary of the Chinese language in the Canton dialect* 《英華分韻撮要》

Thomas Lathrop Stedman & Kuei-pan Li, 1888

*A Chinese and English Phrasebook in the Canton Dialect*

DS1/DL1 split:

陳澧 can4 lai5 <sup>Canton 1810–1882</sup>, 1851

《東塾初學編·音學》

Wilhelm Louis 呂威廉 <sup>1824–1883 HK</sup> & Ernst Faber 花之安 <sup>Coburg 1839–1899 Tsingtau</sup>,

1867 *Das Evangelium des Lucas im Volksdialekte der Punti Chinesen*

Ernst Johann (Ernest John) Eitel 歐德理 <sup>Esslingen N 1838–1908 Adelaide</sup>, 1877

*A Chinese dictionary in the Cantonese dialect*

James Dyer Ball 波乃耶 <sup>Canton 1847–1919 London</sup>, 1883

*Cantonese Made Easy* (later eds. 1888, 1907, 1924)

## Early Cantonese: tones

《分韻撮要》(17xx): D1 syllables with **L** vs. **S** vowels *seem* to be not treated differently (?)

D1 = A1 (?)

撐 策平聲 [čaang1: čaak in tone A]

撇 篇入聲 [pit: pin1 in tone D] (why not 編 pin3 tone D)

啐 尊入聲 [zyut: zyun1 in tone D] (why not 鑽 zyun3 tone D)

黜 諄入聲 [žēot: žeon1 in tone D]

D1 = C1 (?)

擦 粲入聲 [caat: caan3 tone D] (why not 餐 caan1 in tone D?)

Bridgman (1841), Williams (1856), Stedman & Li (1888):  
only have tone markings for D1<sub>s</sub> vs. D2<sub>s</sub> (for tone D)

*but this could be due to “faithfulness to tradition” and/or restrictions in the descriptive apparatus (i.e. no symbols to describe more than 2 tone D’s)*

## Early Cantonese: tones

陳澧 1851 《東塾初學編·音學》：

「粵音入聲有兩清一濁如必<sup>清</sup> 鰲<sup>亦清</sup> 別<sup>濁</sup> 是也」

[DS1: 必 bit1 (< \***bat1**); DL1 鰲 **bit3**; D2: 別 bit6]

Louis & Faber (1867): (Kataoka p.c.)

DS1, DL1, D2

必 pit, [bit1], 說 šüt, [šyut3], 日 yat [jat6]

Eitel (1877), Ball (1883):

DS1, DL1, D2

必 pit, [bit1], 鰲 pit, [bit3], 別 pit, [bit6]

## Early Cantonese: tones

Suprafixes:

Eitel (1877) “medial even tone” e.g. 貓 <sub>0</sub>máu [maau\*1]  
“3<sup>rd</sup> rising tone” (tone \*2), “4<sup>th</sup> entering tone” (tone \*2)

Ball (1888) also talks about a “medial even tone” & “3<sup>rd</sup> rising tone”

e.g. 貓 <sub>0</sub>máu\* [maau\*1], 渡 <sup>l</sup>tò\* [dǒ\*2], 賊 <sup>l</sup>ts‘ák\* [caak\*2]

# Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

(e.g. Kataoka 片岡 & Lee 李 2022: 121–126)

- Demonstrative: modern 個 go2 < 19<sup>th</sup> century 個/箇 go3 (same form as the classifier 個/箇 go3)

個啲幾多價錢呢。

[go3 di1 gei2 do1 gaa3cin4 ni1?]

that CLF:MASS how much price Q?

“What is the price of that?”

but go2 had started to be appear:

個張係揭單咩。

[go2 žoeng1 hai6 kit3daan1 me1?]

[that CLF be prom.note Q]

“That is a promissory note is it?”

Ball (1888:20) <https://archive.org/details/cantoneseemadeeas00ballrich/page/20/mode/2up>

Kataoka, Shin 片岡新 & Lee, Yin-Ping Cream 李燕萍. 2022. 晚清民初歐美傳教士書寫的廣東話文獻精選. Hong Kong: 香港中文大學中國文化研究所吳多泰中國語文研究中心.

## Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- modern 乜水 mat1 sei2 < 19<sup>th</sup> C 乜誰 mat1 šei4\*2  
乜人嚟㗎, 乜誰㗎, or 邊個㗎.  
[mi1 jan\*2 lai4 aa1? mi1 šei\*2 aa1? pin1 go3 aa1?]  
“Who has come? Who is it?”  
(modern: 邊個 is neutral; 乜水 has slight negative connotation)
- modern 定 (係) ding6(hai6), 19<sup>th</sup> C 嘅 (係) bei6(hai6)  
嗰個係仔嘅女呢.  
[go2 go3 hai6 zai2 bei6 nei5 ni1?]  
[that CLF be boy or girl Q]  
“Is that a boy or a girl?”  
打路去嘅搭船去呢.  
[daa2 lö6 hei3 bei6 daap3 šyun4 hei3 ni1?]  
[by road go or ride boat go Q]  
“Do you go by land, or by water?”

## Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- modern 度 dou6 < 19<sup>th</sup> C 處 šyu3

嚟呢處吖.

[lai4 ni1 šyu3 aa1.]

[come this place HOR]

“Come here.”

佢喺我處打工嘅.

[keoi5 hai2 ngo5 šyu3 daa2gung1 ge3.]

[3SG be.at 1SG place work<sup>mod</sup>]

“He is in my employ.”

Ball (1888:6) <https://archive.org/details/cantoneseemadeeas00ballrich/page/6/mode/2up>

- 19<sup>th</sup> C 使 šai2 INSTR

使手咯. 佢好勢兇嘅.

[šai2 šau2 lok3. keoi5 hō2 šai3hung1 ge3.]

[INSTR hand SFP 3SG very fierce MOD]

“With his hands; he is a very dangerous man.”

Ball (1888:12) <https://archive.org/details/cantoneseemadeeas00ballrich/page/12/mode/2up>

## Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- 曉 hiu1 & 嘸 žo2 (modern 咗 zo2 PERFECTIVE)

唔見曉咯

[m4gin3 hiu1 lok3,]

[lost PFV COS]

“it is lost.”

Ball (1888:81) <https://archive.org/details/cantoneseemadeeas00ballrich/page/80/mode/2up>

個陣時打嘸

[go3 žan6 ši4 daa2 žo2].

[that CLF time hit PFV]

“[T]o have smitten,”

Ball (1888:83) <https://archive.org/details/cantoneseemadeeas00ballrich/page/82/mode/2up>

- these two markers had different syntactic positions:
  - 擰去曉 (ning1 heoi3 hiu1; take go PRV)
  - 擰嘸嚟 (ning1 zo2 lai4; take PRV come)
- Ball (1888): 曉 hiu1 already out of fashion



# Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- 19<sup>th</sup> C: VP NEG V

你噲講唐話唔噲呢.

[nei5 wui5 gong2 tong4 waa\*2 m4 wui5 ni1.]

[2SG can speak Tang language NEG can Q]

“Can you speak Chinese?”

Ball (1888:12) <https://archive.org/details/cantoneseemadeeas00ballrich/page/12/mode/2up>

Modern: V NEG VP

你識唔識講中文啊?

nei5 sik1 m4 sik1 gong2 zung1 man4\*2 aa3?

2SG know NEG know speak Chin. language Q

## Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- 19<sup>th</sup> C: give + THEME (+ 過) + RECIPIENT

俾個部書過我

[bei2 go3 bö6 šyu1 gwo3 ngo5,]

[give that CLF book DAT 1SG]

“give that book to me.”

俾部書佢

[bei2 bö6 šyu1 keoi5,]

[give CLF book 3SG]

“give him a book.”

Ball (1888:90) <https://archive.org/details/cantonese-made-eas00ballrich/page/90/mode/2up>

(過 RECIP still heard in 50s/60s Cantonese b&w films)

Modern: give + THEME (+ give) + RECIPIENT

畀本書 (畀) 佢

bei2 bun2 syu1 (bei2) keoi5

give CLF book (DAT) 3SG

“Give him/her a/the book.”

# Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

Chin (2022:41–53) Cantonese GIVE

- lexical use ‘give’
- INDIRECT OBJECT

我送錢畀佢

[ngo5 sung3 cin4\*2 bei2 keoi5]

[1SG gift money DAT 3SG]

“I gave him money.”

- BENEFICIARY

我織咗件冷衫畀你

[ngo5 zik1 zo2 gin6 laang1 saam1 bei2 nei5]

[1SG knit PFV CLF wool clothe DAT 2SG]

“I knitted a sweater for you.”

(another BEN construction:)

我同/幫佢哋寫信

[ngo5 tung4/bong1 keoi5 dei6 se2 seon3]

I wrote a letter for them.

# Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- **PERMISSIVE CAUSATIVE**

我畀你出去玩

[ngo5 bei2 nei5 ceot1 heoi3 waan2]

[1SG CAUS 2SG out go play]

“I let you play outside”

- **PASSIVE**

我畀阿爸打

[ngo5 bei2 aa3baa1\*4 daa2]

PASS “I was beaten by my father” or CAUS “I let my father beat me”

Modern: 畀 bei2 PASS (obligatory agented);

被 bei6 PASS (optionally agented) considered literary

Past: 被 bei6 PASS more commonly used

Ball (1888): only 被 bei6 PASS is used

已經被人打 (阻) 咯

[ji5ging1 bei6 jan4 daa2 (ʒo2) lok3,]

[already PASS person hit (PFV) COS]

“having been struck.”

## Early Cantonese: lexicon / grammar

- INSTRUMENTAL (now very dated)

畀個袋包住隻雞,

[bei2 go3 doi6\*2 baau1 zyu6 zek3 gai1]

[INSTR CLF bag wrap DUR CLF chicken]

“Use a bag to wrap the chicken” (Chin 2022:49)

fossilised expression:

畀心機 bei2 sam1 gei1 ‘to use one’s heart’

(Mandarin: 用心 yòng xīn)

Taishanese /ei̯/ ‘give’

件衫 □ 凍水洗

[ken̩ ʃam̩ ei̯ uŋ̩ ʃui̯ ʔai̯]

CLF shirt INSTR cold water wash

“Wash the shirt with cold water” (Chin 2022:50)