

Unit 4, Review Dialogue

Early in the morning the day after Lǐ Píng (B) and Tom (A) arrive in Hong Kong, Lǐ Píng's grandmother (C) is straightening up the living room, when Lǐ Píng walks in.

- B: Nǎinai, nín zhēn zǎo. Wǒ mā ne? You're up so early, Grandma. Where's Mom?
- C: Tā ya, chūqu mǎi cài le. Ērzi huílai le, zǒng yào duō mǎi diǎnr cài ma! Nǐde péngyou ne? Tā hái méiyǒu qǐlai ba? Oh, she went out to buy some groceries. When a son comes back, you've always got to buy some extra food. Where's your friend? He's not up yet, is he?
- B: Qǐlai le, xǐ liǎn ne. Yes, he's up. He's washing his face.
- C: Xiǎo Píng a, nǐde péngyou jiào shénme míngzi, wǒ yòu wàng le. Xiǎo Píng, what's your friend's name? I've forgotten it again.
- B: Jiào "Tāngmǔ." "Tom."
- C: Ò, "Tāngmǔ," hái hǎo jì. Nǐ hé tā shuō, dào le zánmen jiā, jiù shì yìjiā rén, shénme shìr dōu bié kèqi. Tā yí kèqi, wǒ jiu bù zhīdào zěnme bàn hǎo le. Hm, "Tom," that's fairly easy to remember. You tell him that in our house he's just part of the family and he shouldn't be polite about anything. Once he starts in with the politeness, I won't know what to do.
- B: Wǒmen huílai yǐqián zài Tāngmǔ jiā zhù le liǎngtiān, tā bàba māma duì wǒ hěn hǎo. Tāngmǔ rén yě hěn hǎo, zài Měiguode shíhou, tā gěi wǒ bù shǎo bāng-zhu. Before we came back we stayed at Tom's house for a couple of days. His parents were very nice to me. Tom is also a very good person; when we were in America, he helped me a lot.
- C: Ò, zhèiyang hǎo, niánqīng rén yīnggāi hùxiāng bāng máng. Ài! Jìde nǐ yéye zài Rìběn nèi shíhou, pīnmìng niǎn shū, rénjiā Rìběn rén hái shì kànbuqǐ ya, nǎr yǒu shénme Rìběn péngyou. Zhǐ hǎo jǐge Zhōngguó xuésheng zhù zai yìqǐ. Ài! Mm. That's good. Young people ought to help each other out. (Sigh) I remember when your grandfather was in Japan, he studied like crazy, but those Japanese still looked down on him. He didn't have any Japanese friends to speak of. The Chinese students just had to live together. (Sigh)
- B: Nǎinai, guòqùde shì jiu bié qù xiǎng ta le. Grandma, don't go thinking about things from bygone days anymore.

*Questions ending in ne often ask the whereabouts of someone or something, hence the translation "Where's Mom?"

- C: Xiànzài hǎodeduō le, nǐ zài wàibianr niàn shū, wǒ bú nàme dānxīn le. These days, it's much better. I don't worry so much about you out there studying.
- (Tom enters.)
- A: Lǐ Nǎinai[°], nín zǎo! Good morning, Grandma Lǐ!
- C: Zǎo, Tāngmǔ, zuòle yìtiān fēijī bù duō shuì yihuǐr? Good morning, Tom. After a day on the airplane don't you want to get some more sleep?
- A: Shuìgòu le. Lǐ Nǎinai, nín zuòzhe ba, wǒmen bāng nín shōushi. No, I've gotten enough sleep. Grandma Lǐ, you sit down, we'll straighten up for you.
- C: Duō yǒu lǐmào de hái zi! What a well-mannered child!
- A: Lǐ Nǎinai, nín hé érzi, érxífur zhù zai yìqǐ, sūnzi, sūnnǚ yě cháng lái, nín de fúqi zhēn hǎo. Grandma Lǐ, you're so fortunate to live with your son and daughter-in-law, and to have your grandson and granddaughter come often.
- C: Shéi shuō bú shì ne? Wǒ cháng shuō, wǒmen jiāde fúqi dōu shì wǒ nà xiàoshunde érxífur dailaide. That's for sure. I often say that the good fortune of our family was all brought to us by that filial daughter-in-law of mine.
- B: Wǒ nǎinai yòu gāi^{°°} shuō wǒmen jiāde lìshǐ le. Here goes Grandma telling our family history again.
- A: Lǐ Nǎinai, zhèixiē shìr nín gěi wǒ jiǎngjiāng xíng bu xíng? Grandma Lǐ, could you tell me about these things?
- C: Hǎo wa. Shuōqilái huà jiu cháng le. ^{°°°} Wǒ hé Xiǎo Píng yéye dōu shì Shěnyáng rén. Rìben rén lái le yǐhòu, cáichǎn ya, túdì ya, dōu bù néng guǎn le, líkāi jiā pǎo dào le Nánfāng. Xiǎo Píng bàba zài Shànghǎi niàn shū cái rènshile wǒmen zhèige érxífu. Sure! It's a long story. Xiǎo Píng's grandfather and I are both from Shěnyáng (Mukden). When the Japanese came, we couldn't bother with our property or land any more; we left our home and fled to the South. Xiǎo Píng's father didn't meet our daughter-in-law ^{°°°°} until he was going to school in Shànghǎi.

[°]Tom knows that this way of addressing Grandma is proper for a friend of her grandson. He intentionally calls her Lǐ Nǎinai as soon as he sees her in order to establish the relationship.

^{°°}gāi: "will probably"

^{°°°}More literally, "When it comes to telling it, the talk is long."

^{°°°°}Notice that grandma's phrasing shows that the woman is first a daughter-in-law, then a wife.

- A: Nèi shíhou nǚháizi shàng dà-xuéde duō bu duō?
Were there many women who went to college in those days?
- C: Méiyou xiànzài zhème duō. Wǒmen érxífū jiā xiāngdāng yǒu qián, érqǐe yí dàjiā rén yǒu qī-bāshígè, zài Sūzhōu shéi dōu zhīdao tāmen jiā.
Not as many as there are now. My daughter-in-law's family was quite rich, and there were seventy or eighty people in that one big family. Everyone in Sūzhōu knew them.
- A: Zhèiyangrde jiāting guīju yídìng bù shǎo.
A family like that must have had a strict code of behavior.
- C: Shéi shuō bú shì ne! Tāmen jiāde xiǎojie bù néng zài wàibianr niàn shū, zhǐ néng qǐng lǎoshī dào jiāli jiāo diǎnr Sī Shū shenmede. Xiǎo Píng mǔqīn juéde yíge fùnǚ yào zài shèhuìshàng dúlì, yídìng děi chūqu niàn shū. Jiù zhèiyang, tā cái pǎo dào Shànghǎi niàn shū qu le.
You bet they did! Their young ladies couldn't go to school outside the home: they could only hire a teacher to come to the house and teach them a little of the Four Books and so forth. Xiǎo Píng's mother felt that if a woman wanted to be independent in society, she had to leave home to study. That's why she ran away to Shànghǎi to go to school.
- A: Zài nèi shíhou, zhēn bu róngyi.
That must have been really hard back then.
- C: Zài dàxuéde shíhou, Xiǎo Píngde fùmǔ shì hěn hǎode péngyou, kěshì zěnmè bàn ne? Wǒmen shénme dōu méiyou le, yě méiyou qián, zìjǐde érzǐ zěnmè néng hé zhèiyangr yíwèi xiǎojie jiēhūn ne? Xiǎo Píng mā bú nànmè xiǎng. . . .
When they were in college, Xiǎo Píng's parents were very good friends, but what were we to do? We didn't have a thing left, and we didn't have any money. How could our (own) son marry a young lady like that? But Xiǎo Píng's mother didn't think so. . . .
- A: Tā zěnmè xiǎng?
What did she think?
- C: Tā shuō tā yào zhǎo yíge zìjǐ xǐhuānde rén jiēhūn, dìwei hé qián dōu bú zhòngyào. Ài, tā chīle duōshao kǔ cái líkāile nèige dà jiāting.
She said she wanted to find a person she herself liked to get married to, and that status and money weren't important. (Sigh) What she went through to leave that big family.
- A: Nà, nǐmen zěnmè dào Xiānggǎng lái le ne?
Well then, how did you come to Hong Kong?
- C: Tāmen zài Yīngguó niànwán shū jiù lái Xiānggǎng zuò shì, yìnián yǐhòu yòu bǎ wǒmen jiēlai le, zhèiyangr yíjiā rén cái zài Xiānggǎng zhùxiālai le. Xiànzài wǒ niánji dà le, jiāli dà shìr xiǎo shìr dōu shì Xiǎo
When they finished school in England they came to Hong Kong to work; a year later they brought us out, and then our whole family settled here. Now that I'm getting on in years, Xiǎo Píng's mother takes care of all the big and small matters

Píng mǔqīn guān. Nǐ shuō wǒ
fúqī hǎo, zhēn shì yìdiǎnr yě
bú cuò.

B: Nǎinai, wǒ mā kuài huílai le
ba?

C: Kuài huílai le, wǒmen qù bǎ
zǎofàn nònghǎo ba.

A, B: Hǎo, zǒu ba.

here at home. So when you say I'm
blessed with good fortune, you're
absolutely right.

Grandma, Mom will be home soon,
won't she?

Yes. Let's go get breakfast
ready.

Okay, let's go.