

Unit 8, Review Dialogue

In Lǐ Píng and Tom's room, Tom (A) is getting his things packed, when Lǐ Píng (B) comes in.

- B: Tāngmǔ, wǒ tīngshuō nǐ yào qù dàlù le?
Tom, I hear you're going to the mainland?
- A: Shì a, shàngwǔ wǒ dào lǐngshìguān qù kàn yige péngyou. Zhèng-hǎor yǒu yige gōngsī dào dàlù qu tán shēngyì. Tāmen yào yige dǎ zì dǎde kuài, yòu dǒng diǎnr Zhōngwénde rén.
Yeah! I went to the consulate this morning to visit a friend, and there just happened to be a company going to the mainland on business. They wanted someone who could type fast and who understood a little Chinese.
- B: Nǐ yùnqì zhēn bú cuò. Yào qù duō jiǔ ne?
You're so lucky. How long are you going for?
- A: Yào kàn qíngkuàng, dàgài bànge yuè dào yíge yuè.
We'll have to see. Probably two weeks to a month.
- B: Wǒ yě dào Táiwān qù bànge yuè. Wáng Chéng qǐng wǒ hé Xiǎo Wén dào tā jiā qu wánr.
And I'm going to Taiwan for two weeks. Wáng Chéng invited Xiǎo Wén (Lǐ Wén) and me to his house.
- A: Ahà! Zhè yíxià zhēn bú cuò, wǒ qù dàlù, nǐ qù Táiwān, huílai yǐhòu wǒmen lái yige kǎoshì, kànkan shéi duì shèhuì qíngkuàng yánjiūde bǐjiào hǎo.
That's great! You're going to Taiwan and I'm going to the mainland. When we get back we'll have to have a little contest and see who's done a better job of studying society.
- B: Hǎo!
Okay.
- (Lǐ Píng's grandmother (C) enters.)
- C: Xiǎo Píng, Tāngmǔ, nǐmen dōu zài zhèr ne!
Hi, Xiǎo Píng. Hi, Tom.*
- B: Nǎinai, nín zěnme bú shuì wǔjiào le?
How come you're not taking your nap, grandma?***
- A: Lǐ Nǎinai, duìbuqǐ, wǒmen bǎ nín chǎoxǐng le.
I'm sorry Grandma Lǐ, we woke you up.

*Notice that grandma says literally "You are both here." This, however, is not a statement made after looking for the two and finally finding them. It's simply a common way of greeting or starting a conversation: you state the obvious.

**More literally, "How is it you are no longer taking your nap?" (New-situation le)

C: Méiyou, wǒ yě gāi qīlai le.*

No you didn't. It was about time I got up anyway.

Tāngmǔ a, nǐ dào dàlù qu, bú xiàng zài Měiguó, zài Xiānggǎng; yào zhīdao duō zhàogu zìjǐ. Xiǎo Píng māma chūqu gěi ni mǎi diǎnr dōngxī dàishang.

Tom, when you go to the mainland, it won't be like America or Hong Kong; you'll have to know how to look after yourself. Xiǎo Píng's mother went out to get you some things to take with you.

A: Lǐ Nǎinai, wǒ shénme dōu yǒu, bú yòng dài le.

I have everything, Grandma Lǐ, I don't need to take anything else.

(Xiǎo Wén (E) comes in quietly.)

E: Wǒ nǎinai, wǒ mā dōu téng ni, nǐ jiu dàishang ba!

My grandmother and mother are fond of you, go ahead and take the things!

A: Lǐ Nǎinai, wǒ huí Měiguó yǐqián, hái xiǎng zài lái yíci, xíng bu xíng?

Grandma Lǐ, I have to come back here once again before I go to America. Will that be okay?

C: Zhèi hái zi, zěnme bù xíng ne? Zhèr jiù shì nǐde jiā ya!

Oh, this youngster! How could it not be all right? This is your home!

A: Nín yào wǒ gěi nín dài diǎnr shénme dōngxī a?

Did you want me to bring you back something?

C: Duì le, zhèr yǒu yìzhāng dānzi, shì yìxiē gōngyìpǐn, qián jiù zài zhèige xìnfēnglì, nǐ kàn zhe mǎi ba!

Yes, here's a list.*** It's some handicrafts. The money is in this envelope. Buy what you can.

E: Nǎinai, zánmen jiā yǒu nàme xiē gōngyìpǐn, hái mǎi tā gàn shénme!

We have so many handicrafts already, why do you want to buy more of them?

C: Shǎ hái zi, děng dao nǐ jiēhūnde shíhou jiu yǒu yòng le.

Silly girl! They'll come in handy when you get married.

E: Nàme nántǐng!

Ugh! That sounds awful!

C: Nà yǒu shénme nántǐng, hǎo shìr ma!

What's so awful about that? That (marriage) is a happy event.

*In other words, they did wake her up with their talking.

**Grandma is referring to living conditions--it's not as comfortable on the mainland as in the U.S. or Hong Kong.

***This is a natural example of how one who has freely extended favors is not shy to ask a favor in return.

- C: Yǒu yìsi ba,¹ Tāngmǔ, nǐ bù zhī-
dào, rén lǎo le, guānniàn yě lǎo
le, yǒude shíhour zhēnde yào gǎi-
gai le. Oh, it's interesting all right.¹
You don't know, Tom, when a person
gets old, their ideas get old too.
Sometimes one really has to change
a bit.
- (Xiǎo Píng's mother [F] comes in carrying some things.)
- B: Mā, nǐ huílai le? Hi mom, you're back?
- F: Huílai le. Hi, yeah, I'm back.
- A: Bómǔ, wǒ shuō shénme hǎo ne?
Nín shízài tài kèqi le. Auntie, what can I say? This is
really too polite of you.
- F: Zhèidiǎn chīde, yòngde, dōu
dàiqu, zhèliǎngjiàn yīfu
děngyixià chuānchuan kàn, héshì
bu héshì. This food and these things are for
you to take with you. And these two
things to wear you can try on later
and see if they fit you.
- A: Bómǔ, nà jiu xièxie le. Well then, thanks a lot, auntie.
- F: Nàme yidiǎndiǎn dōngxi xiè
shenme. Lùshang hǎohǎo zhàogu
zìjǐ, shìqing wánle jiu huílai,
xiūxi jǐtiān zài huí Měiguó. Why should you thank me for these
odds and ends! You just look after
yourself very carefully while you're
traveling, and when the job is fin-
ished come back here and rest up for
a few days before you go back to
America.
- A: Ng, wǒ yídìng huílai. Okay, I'll be sure and come back.
- C: Guò liǎngtiān, Xiǎo Píng, Xiǎo
Wén yě yào zǒu le. Xiǎo Píng
mā,² jīnr³ wǎnshang zám⁴ bú zuò
fàn le. Dēng huǐr Xiǎo Píng
bàba huílai, yíkuàir chūqu chī
wǎnfàn, gěi háizimen sòngsong
xíng, hǎo bu hǎo? In another day or two Xiǎo Píng and
Xiǎo Wén will be leaving too. Mom,
let's not make dinner tonight. When
Xiǎo Píng's father gets back, we'll
all go out to dinner and have a going-
away party for the kids, okay?
- F: Hǎode, hǎode. All right.

¹Grandma's reply intimates that the experience of her granddaughter having a Japanese boyfriend put her through some difficult times and made her reflect deeply on her opinions.

²Grandma Lǐ here addresses her daughter-in-law as Xiǎo Píng mā, "Xiǎo Píng's mother." Compare this with the way some grandparents in English-speaking countries call their grandchildren's parents "Mom" and "Dad" even though they are their own children.

³jīnr: jǐntiān (Běijīng)

⁴zám: The slurred pronunciation of zǎnmen used in conversation. (Běijīng)