

Lesson 16: Lí Tâi-gí òh gōa kú à?

How long have you been learning Taiwanese?

Tù-i-ōe ❖ Dialogue 🗣️ 52

A-peh: Lí Tâi-gí òh gōa-kú à?

Ha-lí: Góa kan-nā òh n̄ng kó-gòeh niā-niā.

A-peh: Lí ê Tâi-gí kóng-liáu chīn-hó.

Ha-lí: Nà-ā-ū, sī-lí m̄-kam hiâm ê. Góa kan-nā ē-hiáu kóng chit-sút-á niā-niā, iá-ko chin ham-bān ê.

A-peh: Lí kin-nî kui hòe?

Ha-lí: Góa it-kēng jī-cháp-saⁿ hòe à.

A-peh: Án-ne lí siùⁿ káu ê. Lí kiát-hun a bōe?

Ha-lí: Góa kiát-hun a, góa kū-nî kiát-hun ê.

A-peh: Chiah-nih siàu-liân tō kiát-hun o'h. Ū gín-á bōe?

Ha-lí: Iá-bōe ê.

Sin-gí ❖ New Vocabulary

a-peh (-à)	N	father's brother, old person
Ha-lí	N	Harry [a foreigner's name]
niā-niā	Adv	only [used only at end of sentence]
-liáu (see Lesson 16)	Aux	[resultative auxiliary; to say how something was done]
nà-ū (= nà-ā-ū)	Int	not at all
m̄-kam (see Lesson 8)	Adj	mean, stingy
hiām	V	to complain, criticise
-ê	Suf	[a suffix]
kan-nā (= tâ ⁿ)	Adv	only
ham-bān	Adv	not good/unskillful
jī-cháp-sa ⁿ	Num	twenty-three
hòe	MW	[MW for age in years]
siù ⁿ	V	to have a Chinese birth sign
káu	N	dog
-à (see Lesson 6)	Suf	[perfect tense]
kiat-hun	V	to marry
chiah-nih	Adv	such
siàu-liân	Adj	young
tō (=chiū)	Adv	as soon as/then
gín-á	N	baby, child
iá-bōe	Adv	not yet
kin-nî	N	this year
hia ⁿ -tī	N	brother
chí-mōai (-mōe)	N	sister

Lesson 16

Dialogue (translation)

A: How long have you been learning Taiwanese?

B: I've been learning for only two months.

A: You speak very well.

B: Not at all, you are just being polite. I can only speak a little, I am not that good yet.

A: How old are you?

B: I am already 23 years old .

A: Then your Chinese birth sign should be “monkey”. Are you married?

B: Yes I am, I married last year.

A: So young to be married! Do you have children?

B: Not yet.

Bûn-hoat tiōng-tiám ❖ Grammar Points

V + **liáu** + Adv + Adj (+ V) “result” auxiliary

- Lí ê jī siá liáu chīn súi.
Your hand writing is very nice.
- Lí ê koa chiù liáu chīn hó (thiaⁿ).
You sing very nicely.
- Lí ê chhài chú liáu chīn hó (chiáh).
Your food is very nice.
- Lí ê koa chiù liáu be-pháiⁿ thiaⁿ.
Your singing is very nice to listen to.
- Lí ê chhài chú liáu be-pháiⁿ chiáh .
Your cooking is very nice to eat.

ê suffix used at the end of a sentence to explain something

- Góa kû-nî kiát-hun ê.
I got married last year.
- Góa siūⁿ-beh chhiáh-khòⁿ-māi ê.
I would like to try it.
- He sī siáⁿ-lâng thèh-lái ê?
Who brought that to you?
- Góa iá-bōe ū gín-á ê.
I don't have children yet.
- Góa siūⁿ gû ê.
My Chinese birth sign is the cow.

Kù-hîn ❖ Sentence Patterns

1. This pattern shows how to express small quantities (“diminutive”):

S	kan-nā	V	Adv	niā-niā
góa	kan-nā	ē-hiáu	chit-sút-á	niā-niā
I	only	know	little	only

→ Góa kan-nā ē-hiáu chit-sút-á niā-niā.

I know only a little.

→ Góa kan-nā ū kúi-kho-á niā-niā.

I have only a few dollars.

→ Góa kan-nā ū kúi-pún-á niā-niā.

I have only a few books.

2. Asking someone’s age: in Taiwanese we often use the expression below or **Lí siùⁿ siàⁿ?** instead of literally asking ‘How old are you?’

S	MW	N	IP
lí	kúi	nî-chhù	ê
you	which	year	pos

→ Góa 77 nî-chhù ê, góa siùⁿ lêng ê.

I was born in 77, my animal sign is the dragon.

→ Góa 74 nî-chhù ê, góa siùⁿ gû.

I was born in 74, my animal sign is the cow.

→ Góa 84 nî-chhù ê, siùⁿ ti.

I was born in 84, my animal sign is the pig.

Pó-chhiog sin-gí ❖ Additional Vocabulary 🗨️ 53

mê-nî	Adv	next year
āu-nî	Adv	the year after next
í-chêng	Adv	before
Jít-gí	N	Japanese language
bô-hó	Adv	not good
bái	Adj	not good, ugly
bōe-bái (be-bái)	Adj	not bad
be-phái ⁿ	Adv	not bad
má-má hu-hu	Adj	so-so, not particularly good
chán	Adj	great
gâu	Adj	good, skillful
kè	V	(of a female) to marry, to take a husband
chhōa	V	(of a male) to marry, to take a wife
bah-chàng	N	steamed glutinous rice dumplings in bamboo leaves and filled with meat
thêh-lâi	V	to bring

Lesson 16

Chinese animal horoscope

seng-siù ⁿ	the twelve signs	years (nî-chhù - in Taiwanese calendar)
chhú	mouse	1972 (61) / 1984 (73)
gû	cow	1973 (62) / 1985 (74)
hó	tiger	1974 (63) / 1986 (75)
thò	rabbit	1975 (64) / 1987 (76)
lêng	dragon	1976 (65) / 1988 (77)
chôa	snake	1977 (66) / 1989 (78)
bé	horse	1978 (67) / 1990 (79)
iû ⁿ	sheep	1979 (68) / 1991 (80)
kâu	monkey	1980 (69) / 1992 (81)
ke	chicken	1981 (70) / 1993 (82)
káu	dog	1982 (71) / 1994 (83)
ti	pig	1983 (72) / 1995 (84)

Liān-sip ❖ Exercises

A. Complete the following sentences:

1. Góa () óh n̄ng kò-gòeh niā-niā.
2. Sī-lí () hiām ê.
3. Góa () chin ham-bān ê.
4. Góa () jī-cháp-saⁿ hòe à.
5. () siàu-liân tō kiát-hun o' h.

B. Translate the following sentences:

1. How long have you been learning Taiwanese?
→
2. I have been learning for three months already.
→
3. How is your Taiwanese?
→
4. I can only speak a little.
→
5. Are you married?
→
6. Do you have any children?
→