

GOSSIPING IN A COFFEE SHOP

kou-pi-tiam-lai+ han-tam

1. kun-lai+ sieng-li+ sia: khuan? How's business now?
2. cin tam. Very dull.
3. li e sieng-li+ u hō chiū-ni+ kap siaq-
e ke-ci:+ ieng-hiong+ bou? Is your business affected by the price of rubber and tin?
4. cū-zian ū. tāk ē lāng+ lōng siāng khuān. tī cīt piēng, boū-lūn li+ sī khīt-
ciāq+ ā sī cū-pūn-kā, tāk ē lāng+ lōng tiōuq uā-khou chiū-ni+ kap siaq. li+ kōng tiōuq+ bou? Of course! Everybody is. No matter whether you are a beggar or a capitalist in this country, everybody depends on rubber and tin. Don't you agree?
5. boū chou. huān-lou+ boū lō-iēng. ciōng-
lai+ ciēng-hiēng+ tai-khai+ uē, khàq hou. Yes, I agree. There's no point in worrying about it. Things will probably get better in the future.
6. kouq ciāq cīt puē té. suī-zian bāk-
ciēng+ ē ciēng-hiēng+ boū luā hou, siēng-uāq thiēng-tō+ khiok buē cin kē. Have another cup of tea. Although conditions are not very good just now the standard of living is not bad.
7. sī+ o, pūt-kou+ thiā: kōng ū cin cuē lāng+ boū kāng+ cuē. That's true but I hear there are many people unemployed.
8. li e piēng-iū+ óng+e ē siēng-li+ tōng-
kīm+ cai:-iū:? How's your friend Wong's business now?
9. li+ sī kōng hit ē cuē ūn-sū siēng-li+ ē óng+e, ā m sī? Do you mean Wong who's in the transport business?
10. sī. guà+ siū:+ ī cīt cūn+ tiā:-tiōuq thàn cin cuē cí:. Yes. I think he must be earning a lot of money just now.
11. sī+ o. ī bā-lū lai Lām-iú:+ ē sí, cin boū-khāng. guà+ uē ki-tīt ī tī Bā-tú-
lút+ cuē siāu-huān, buē saū-chiū. ī cīt cūn+ ciāq ū cí:, guà+ siū:+ kā: sī tiōuq chai-phiōu. Yes, he is. When he first came to the 'South Seas' he was very poor. I remember he used to be a hawker in Batu Road. He sold brooms. He has so much money now I think he must have won a lottery.
12. khiān-chai. khuà: pou-cuà, ciāq-kù+ ū kōng-khī cin cuē cīt piēng+ tōk-lip+ ē tai-ci. li e khuà:-huat, cai:-iū:? Maybe. I read in the papers a lot of talk these days about this country becoming independent. What do you think about it?
13. guà+ boū phāq-liū-lī ciēng-tī. guà+ nā uē ke zit, ū piēng-ān, ciū hou. I don't bother about politics. I just want to make a living and have some peace and quiet.
14. cōng-sī li+ sī Mā-lai-ā+ ē kōng-bín, li+ ū kōng-bín-kuān. li+ buē sai boū kuān-sīm ciēng-tī. ē lê-pai+ bèq suān-kū tē hōng gi-huē. li+ bèq taū sīm-miq lāng+ ē phiōu? (li+ bèq suān sīm-miq lāng?) But you are a Malayan citizen, you have citizenship. You have no alternative but to take an interest in politics. Next week there's going to be an election for the local council. Who are you going to vote for?

15. guà+ tū-tū kǎ lí kōng guà+ boū phàq-liū-lī cièng-tī, in-ũ guà+ sīm-miq cièng-tòng+ lōng boū sū-kǎq. I told you just now I don't bother about politics as I don't like any of the parties.
16. ǔ ià:, Tiū: Hòk-bièng+ bèq káp ī ē bò+ lǐ-hūn, lì+ ǔ thiā: kōng+ bou? By the way, did you hear that Cheung Fuk Ming is going to divorce his wife?
17. m̄ cai- le. sīm-miq m̄ tiouq? I didn't know. What's the trouble?
18. ǔ lāng kōng ī ē bò+ kǎp thāi-tī+e Iū: Huā-hīn+ ǔ kuān-hē. m̄ cai ǔ ià:+ bou. nǎ ũ, iǎ boū kī-kuǎi. Some people say that his wife is having an affair with Yeung Wa Hing, the butcher. I don't know if it's true, but I wouldn't be surprised.
19. guà+ tièng lê-pai+ tǐ Kīm-lièng chai-kuàn+ tū-tiouq Iú:+e, ī boū kōng-khī. ī sǐ cǐt ē kuài lāng. guà+ buē siōng-sīn+ i. ī tǎk pai chiou-chiōu, káp lí hñg+ a hō:+ a. ī tai-khai+ bèq chuǎ Tiú:+e ē bò, in-ũ in taú+ cīn ũ lui. I met Yeung last week at the Golden Dragon Restaurant and he didn't say anything about it. I don't trust him. He always smiles and agrees with what you say. He probably wants to marry Tseung's wife because her family is very rich.
20. kǎ: uē ân-ní. lì+ ē-hñg- ǔ iéng- bou? lì+ bèq lai gūn taú+ ciǎq piǎn-pñg+ m? Very likely. Are you free tonight? Would you like to come to my place and have a simple meal?
21. kám-siā. guà- kuī tiām+ lai? It's very kind of you. What time shall I come?
22. kù cai lì, công-sǐ m̄ thāng siū: uǎ:. chuǎ lí ē thāi-thai+ lai, làn+ phàq kuī khuān bā-chiōk. Any time you like but not too late. Bring your wife along and we can have a game of mahjong.
23. guà+ boū ài puǎq kiàu. guà+ kiā: sū cí:. pút-kou+ guà+ iau sū-kàq bā-chiōk, nǎ boū puǎq siū: tuā, ciū uē sai+tit. I'm not very fond of gambling. I'm too frightened of losing my money. But I like mahjong and I don't mind if the stakes are not too high.
24. eq, lì+ ǔ thiā: kōng Lou-tièk+ ē bò+ tièng lê-pai+ siāng-si:+ bou? By the way, did you hear that Loh Tak's wife had twins last week?
25. ǔ ià: ? ī cǐt cūn+ tièk-khāk ǔ cǐt loū gīnà+ la. Really? She must have about a dozen children now.
26. guà+ siū:+ Lou+e lōng-cōng+ ǔ cǎp é. khàq cuē+ sǐ tē-zǐ bò+ sí:+ e. ī ē sō-huī+ kǎ: cīn ouq tít. I think Loh has ten altogether. Most of them are by the second wife. He must have a hard time to make ends meet.
27. ǔ ē gīnà+ í-kièng tuǎ-hǎn, uē thàn lui+ la. ī ē tuǎ kià:+ Kōng-cōng+ tǐ cǐt kièng chai-kuàn+ tēq cuè hē-kí. Some of the children are grown up and are earning their living. The eldest son, Kwong Tsung, is a waiter in a restaurant.
28. guà+ tiouq khī+ la. Thām Tōng-hīn+ chiā: guā khī Tai-tóng+ ciǎq tiām-sīm. kám-siā lí ē té. cai-huē. I must go now. Tam Tung Sing has invited me to "snacks" at the Tai Tung. Thanks for the tea. See you again.

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by

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