

**Manual  
of  
Spoken  
Dzongkha**

**Manual of Spoken Dzongkha  
in Roman transcription**

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## Preface

A strong need for a handy learning material for Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan, has from long ago been felt by an ever increasing number of foreign consultants, experts, volunteers, etc. who are posted in the country. One or two available texts give vocabulary and examples but provide no grammatical explanations. Under these circumstances, a foreigner has no choice but to learn Dzongkha orally and to figure out the structure of Dzongkha on his/her own, which makes the learning of the language far more difficult.

This manual has been prepared in the hope of remedying the present state of affairs to a certain extent. It does not claim to be a complete Dzongkha self-taught manual; it is simply meant to be a companion for foreigners venturing for the first time into spoken Dzongkha.

Although the learning of written Dzongkha is desirable and necessary for a thorough understanding of the language, it is beyond the scope of this manual which is limited to spoken Dzongkha. Therefore the Dzongkha script has not been used and the entire text has been written in a phonetical transcription in Roman alphabet.

It is assumed that the user of the manual is living in a Dzongkha speaking area and/or is in constant contact with native Dzongkha speakers. Therefore in part I, the sound system of spoken Dzongkha is given first in order to help the user to hear and pronounce properly the speech sounds of Dzongkha. Then an outline of grammar is given so that the user can first understand the structure of Dzongkha sentences which he/she comes across in his/her contacts with Dzongkha speakers, and then construct for himself/herself basic Dzongkha phrases. In part II, some daily topics have been chosen at random to give conversational examples and relevant vocabulary.

As a whole it is a mere skeleton which is incomplete in many respects. Lessons and practice with native Dzongkha speakers are required to complement it and to correct its eventual errors.

It is hoped that this manual will nonetheless prove to be of some help as an introductory guide for all those who are interested in learning Dzongkha. This manual will have amply served its purpose if it contributes to the development of Dzongkha and to a better communication and understanding between foreigners visiting or working in Bhutan and the Bhutanese people.

Y.I.

### Lesson 1: Pronunciation

The notation of the Dzongkha pronunciation followed here is at best approximate and may be found to be inadequate or inconsistent in some respects. Its purpose is to allow anyone to familiarise himself with the sounds of Dzongkha and to communicate in Dzongkha with a minimum of instruction and without special training.

However, native English speakers will have at the start a hard time hearing and pronouncing correctly some of the Dzongkha sounds. First of all there are several consonants like *ng*, *ts*, *pc*, *tr*, vowels like *ä*, *ü*, *ö*, or nasalised vowels like *ong*, *eng*, etc., which are not present in English.

In addition to these individual sounds, one encounters fundamental phonemic oppositions, such as:

- (1) high vs low tones/pitches,
- (2) aspirated vs non-aspirated consonants,
- (3) voiced vs unvoiced consonants, and
- (4) short vs long vowels,

some of which are unfamiliar to English speakers. The awareness of these oppositions, if not perfect mastery or command of them, is extremely important for a proper oral communication in Dzongkha.

Out of the four oppositions mentioned above, native English speakers are well aware of the third pair **voiced** and **unvoiced** and there shouldn't be much problem for them. For example, in English the words 'fan' and 'van' mean completely different things, but the difference of sound between them is slight: 'f' being **unvoiced**, 'v' **voiced**. Place your fingers at the base of your throat and say the word 'fan' holding the /f/ sound for a few seconds. Then say the word 'van' holding the /v/ for a few seconds. You will notice that the /v/ sound in 'van' causes vibrations in the throat. This is because the sound is made 'with voice' not just air -- we call it a voiced sound. What will be new to English speakers are the unvoiced nasal /nh/ and the liquid /lh/ sounds; these are distinguished in Dzongkha from /n/ and /l/, which are voiced as in English.

**Aspiration** is a short puff of air after the release of a stop consonant (like p, t, k) and before the voicing of the following vowel begins. English speakers (except Scots) generally pronounce initial /p/, /t/, and /k/ with aspiration (i.e. like Dzongkha ph, th, kh), for example in the English words 'pit', 'top', 'key', etc. The same letters are pronounced without aspiration after /s/, as in 'spit', 'stop', 'ski', etc, and in syllables after a stressed syllable, as the /p/ in 'leopard'. Thus English speakers use both aspirated and unaspirated consonants, but they do not pay attention to



the difference because they occur in different contexts. To imitate the Dzongkha unaspirated k, English speakers may find it helpful to try to pronounce 'ski' without the /s/, etc.

As for **high** and **low tone/pitch**, the important thing is to know that each Dzongkha word is pronounced either with high tone or with low tone (as indicated below). Like everything else, the tones are best learned by imitating the pronunciation of native Dzongkha speakers.

There is also a contrast between a level and a falling melodic contour which intersects with the high vs low tone/pitch opposition. However as this feature is extremely subtle, it is not treated in this rather introductory manual.

The following is the complete list of the Dzongkha speech sounds used in this manual.

- Each roman letter or group of roman letters represents a distinct Dzongkha sound : for example, *tr* and *pch* are each a single Dzongkha sound (which are not present in English) and are not the successive combination of two (*t* and *r*) and three (*p*, *c* and *h*) sounds.

- Some Roman letters or groups of letters do not represent the sound as English speakers would expect in English notation. Examples of how they should be pronounced will be given at the end. The remaining letters are pronounced much the same way as in English.

#### - Consonants

Groups	I	II	III
	<u>High tone</u>		<u>Low tone</u>
		<u>aspirated</u>	
	k	kh	g
	c	ch	j
	t	th	d
	tr	thr	dr
	p	ph	b
	pc	pch	bj
	ts	tsh	dz
	sh		zh
	s		z

Words beginning with consonants of groups I and II have a high tone and are unvoiced. The difference between them is the absence (group I) and presence (group II) of the aspiration (puff of air, which is marked by *h*, except the cases of *sh* and *zh*).

Words beginning with consonants of group III have a low tone and are usually voiced.

Groups IV (high tone): 'ng, 'ny, 'n, nh, 'm, 'y, 'l, lh, 'w, h  
 V (low tone): ng, ny, n, m, y, r, l, w

The apostrophe ( ' ) is used to mark the high tone/pitch. Tone is especially important in words beginning with consonants of these two groups. The following pairs of words can only be distinguished by the tonal difference:

<u>High tone</u>	<u>Low tone</u>
'nga - drum, five	nga - I/me
'nya - to borrow	nya - fish
'na - pus	na - barley
'nam - weather	nam - when
'mi - person	mi - negative particle
'lo - cough	lo - year
'lam - lama	lam - road
'wang - religious blessing	wang - Wang (Thimphu region)

**- Vowels**

Simple vowels: a, ä, i, u, ü, e, o, ö

Diphthongs (combination of simple vowels): ai, au, äu, iu, eu, ou

**- Length**

Simple vowels are either short or long. A colon (:) after a vowel indicates a long vowel.

kam - dry	ka:m - star
'map - husband	'ma:p - red
'lo - cough	'lo: - talk, speech

**- Tone/pitch**

In the same way as for the consonants, the apostrophe is used to indicate a high tone in words beginning with a vowel:

- 'ai - mother
- 'ü: - country, home

- Nasalisation

Long vowels in syllables with no final consonant may be nasalised and in this case they are noted by *-ng* at the end. The nasality is actually inherent in the vowel, not after it; therefore *-ng* should not be pronounced like the final sound in English 'king', 'ring' etc.

*ming* - name

*bunthang* - Bumthang

*dong* - face

*dzong* - dzong (fortress-monastery)

(In those cases, as there is no ambiguity about the length of the vowel, the colon is omitted)

In order to facilitate correct pronunciation of disyllabic and multisyllabic words, a hyphen (-) has occasionally been placed between syllables, particularly when two contiguous syllables end and begin with the same consonant or when there is a long or difficult combination.

The brackets are used to indicate the syllables which might be skipped over. For example, *throm(kha)* might be pronounced *thromkha* or *throm* (without *kha*). Likewise, *nyi (gi) ming* = *nyi gi ming* or *nyi ming*; *ya(ng)* = *yang* or *ya*.

- Examples of Dzongkha sounds and their similar sounds in English

(in certain cases, no example is given because there is no similar sound in English)

Vowels

**a** - Something between 'a' in 'about' and 'ar' in 'car'

*ap* - father

*nga* - I/me

*am* - lady (respectful term for married women)

**a:** - long a; 'a' in 'father'

*la:* - work

*ka:m* - star

*'ma:p* - red

**ang** - nasalised a

*chang* - chang (beer)

*tshang* - nest, den

*'lang* - bull, ox

**ä** - an unlauded vowel similar to the German 'ä'. Between 'e' in 'bed' and 'a' in 'fat'.

*gä:* - eight

*chä:* - shortage

*bä* - wool

**i** - 'ee' in 'bee' (but relatively short in duration)

*chim* - house

*kishi* - flea

*'mito* - eye

**i:** - long i; 'ee' in 'bee' (but relatively long in duration)

*tsi:p* - astrologer

*tshi:* - joint

*ti:m* - heel

**ing** - nasalised i

*'ing* - to be

*ming* - name

*shing* - wood, tree

**u** - 'oo' in 'too' (but relatively short in duration)

*gu* - nine

*chu* - water

*'yu* - turquoise

*lu* - sheep

**u:** - long u; 'oo' in 'too' (but relatively long in duration)

*'ngu:-* to weep

*zu:* - body

*lu:-ni* - to pour

**ung** - nasalised u

*'lung* - wind

*zhung* - government

*lekhung* - office

**ü** - an unmlauted vowel similar to German 'ü' or French 'u'. English speakers can try to pronounce

'i' (i.e. 'ee' in 'bee') while holding the lips rounded as if to whistle.

*küp* - thread, brother-in-law

*lüt* - manure

*dün* - seven

**ü:** - long ü.

*'ü:* - country, home

*'ngü:* - silver

*bü:* - snake

**e** - Like French 'é'. Like 'a' in English 'make' but a 'pure' vowel (i.e. with the same sound from beginning to end), not a diphthong.

*me* - fire

*sem* - feeling

*sep* - yellow

**e:** - long e

*se:* - gold

*se:m* - princess

*caze:* - iron nail

**eng** - nasalised e

*meng* - there is not

**o** - 'o' in 'off'

*mo* - she

*om* - milk, breast

*kho* - he

**o:** - long o

*tho:* - storey

*no:* - cow

*bo:m* - big

**ong** - nasalized o

*khong* - they

*dzong* - dzong (fortress- monastery)

*gong* - price

**ö** - an unmlauted vowel similar to German 'ö'; English speakers can round the lips and try to pronounce 'e' (as in 'bed').

*sön* - seed

*böp* - Tibetan

*pön* - king, lord

*gön* - cucumber

- Diphthongs

**ai** - 'i' in 'ice'

*'ai* - mother

**au** - 'ou' in 'house', or 'ow' in 'cow'

*khau* - snow

*gau* - charm box

*bau* - goiter

**a:u** - **au** with long a. Hold longer the first a vowel sound of **au**

*ga:u* - blacksmith

*da:u* - buttermilk

**iu** -

*kiu* - birth

*tiu* - navel

*driu* - bullet

**eu** -

*theu* - dust

*pceu* - forehead

*seu* - lunch (honorific), hailstorm

**ou** - 'o' in 'code'

*kou* - leather

*zou* - carpenter

*drou* - taste

## Consonants

**k** - 'k' in 'ski'

*kau* - pillar

*kam* - dry

*ka:p* - white

*kep* - waist

**kh** - **k** with a short puff of air: 'k' in 'key'

*kha* - mouth

*khau* - snow

*kho* - he/him

**g** - 'g' in 'goat'

*gä:* - eight

*gu* - nine

*go* - door

**c** - 'tch' in 'kitchen' (unaspirated)

*ci:* - one

*ca* - iron

*ce* - tongue

*cutham* - ten

**ch** - **c** with a short puff of air; 'ch' in 'chin' (aspirated)

*cha* - pair

*chö* - you

*cha:p* - rain

*chu* - water, river

**j** - 'j' in 'judge'

*ja* - tea

*jo-ni* - to go

*jau* - beard

*ji* - weight

**t, th, d:** the tongue touches the teeth rather than just behind the teeth as in English.

**t** - 't' in 'stop'

*ta* - horse

*tang-ni* - to send

*to* - rice, food

*tup* - OK

**th** - **t** with a short puff of air: 't' in 'top'

*thap* - hearth

*thung-ni* - to drink

*thum* - spoon

*thong-ni* - to see

**d** - 'd' in 'deed'

*da* - arrow

*do* - stone

*dau* - moon, month

*dong* - face

**tr, thr, dr:** Retroflex consonants

These sounds are made by touching the roof of the mouth with the tip of the tongue. Thus the Dzongkha **tr** is pronounced further back in the mouth than the English 't', while the Dzongkha **t** is pronounced further forward (touching the teeth). In addition, you may notice a very slight 'sh' sound after the Dzongkha **tr**.

**tr** -

*trashhi* - Tashi (personal name), auspicious

*'ngütram* - Ngultram (Nu. = Bhutanese currency unit)

**thr** - **tr** with a short puff of air

*thra* - blood, design

*thrangthrang* - straight

*throm(kha)* - market

**dr** -

*dru:* - dragon

*drasho* - Dasho (title)

*drom* - box

*dropa* - morning

**p** - 'p' in 'speak'

*pa:* - large piece of cooked meat

*pao* - hero

*pep* - leech

*pako* - skin

**ph** - **p** with a short puff of air: 'p' in 'peak'

*phap* - pig

*pha:* - that side, there

*pho:p* - cup

**b** - 'b' in 'bell'

*ba* - target

*bau* - goiter

*bo:m* - big

*böp* - Tibetan

**pc, pch, bj:** This set of sounds peculiar to Dzongkha is difficult to master. Pronounce **p** or **ph** with a simultaneous **sh**, and **b** with a simultaneous **zh**.

**pc** -

*pca* - monkey

*pcimi* - village representative

*pceu* - forehead

**pch** - **pc** with a short puff of air

*pcha:m* - broom

*pchem* - rosary

*pchi* - flour

**bj** - close to 'bj' in 'object'; but not two consecutive consonants but a single sound.

*bjä* - bird

*bjop* - nomad, herdsman

*bjä:* - summer

*bjili* - cat

**ts** - 'ts' in 'cats'

*tsa* - grass, vein

*tsip* - wall

*tsi:* - account

*tsä:* - rust

*tsi:p* - astrologer

**tsh** - **ts** with a short puff of air

*tsha* - salt

*tshä* - measure

*tsho* - lake

*tsham* - border

**dz** - 'ds' in 'ends'

*dzong* - dzong (fortress-monastery)

*dzamling* - world

*dzongkha* - Dzongkha language

*dzenä* - leprosy

**sh** - 'sh' in 'ship'

*sha* - meat

*shau* - stag

*sha:* - east

**zh - sh** with low tone (usually voiced); like 's' in English 'measure'

*zhi* - four

*zhu* - bow (weapon)

*zhung* - government

**s - 's'** in 'sight'

*sa* - earth

*sa:p* - new

*so* - tooth

*sim* - younger sister

**z - s** with low tone (usually voiced); like 'z' in English 'zoo'

*zu:* - body

*zou* - carpenter

*zung-ni* - to catch

**y - 'y'** in 'yard'

*'yön* - left

*'yä* - right

*'ya* - yak

**r - 'r'** in 'rat'

*ra* - goat

*ri:m* - long

*ruto* - bone

**l - 'l'** in 'letter'

*la* - pass

*la:* - work

*lo* - year

**lh - unvoiced l** said with a simultaneous puff of air

*lha* - god

*lhakhang* - temple

*lho* - south

**w - 'w'** in 'wood'

*wo* - wooden tub

*'wang* - (religious) blessing

*wang* - Thimphu valley (traditional name for)

**h - 'h'** in 'head'

*ha:* - Ha (a district)

*höm* - blue

*hago-ni* - to understand

- Nasals

**ng - 'ng'** in 'hang'. English speakers are used to this sound as a final sound, but they will have practice to say it as the initial sound of a word.

*'nga* - drum, five

*nga* - I/me

*'ngü:* - silver

**ny - 'ny'** in 'canyon'

*'nyi:* - two

*nya* - fish

*'nyugu* - bamboo pen

*nyim* - day



**n** - 'n' in 'nose'

*'na* - pus

*nam* - when

**nh** - unvoiced **n** said with a simultaneous puff of air (extremely rare)

*nhap* - snot

**m** - 'm' in 'meat'

*'mi* - man, person

*ma:* - butter

*na* - barley

*nang* - inside

*me* - fire

## Lesson 2: Nouns, pronouns and adjectives (1)

Indo-European grammatical categories can not really be applied to Dzongkha which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. One has to note that translated equivalents between English and Dzongkha are not necessarily of the same part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.), and the parts of speech are not used in the same ways.

### Nouns

In general, Dzongkha nouns don't decline: unlike Greek and Latin, they don't change form in accordance with the case, gender and number.

#### - Gender

There is no grammatical gender. In order to specifically express the masculine and feminine gender, Dzongkha has three different ways:

1) using different words:

*ta* - horse (general)

*'ya* - yak (male)

*ba* - cow

*sep* - stallion

*bjim* - yak (female)

*'lang* - bull

*göm* - mare

2) adding *pho* 'male' or *mo* 'female' before the word:

*pho dre* - mule (male)

*mo dre* - mule (female)

3) adding *p* 'male' (which is of rare occurrence) or *m* 'female', at the end of the word:

*bjä* - bird (general)

*bu* - child, son

*bjap* - cock

*bum* - daughter

*bjam* - hen

#### - Plurals

Dzongkha nouns do not change form in the plural. Plurality is not often expressed but generally deduced from the context, including the absence of the indefinite article *ci*: which derives from the numeral 'one'. Otherwise, it can be expressed specifically by

1) adding after the noun the plural particle - *tsu* :

*alu tsu* - children

2) adding after the noun one of the plural demonstrative adjectives (these, those), words (e.g. many, a few, etc.) or numerals:

*chim anitsu* - these houses

*pecha phetsu* - those books

*'mi sum* - three persons

*'mi gera* - all men, everyone

*nyim lesha* - many days

## Articles

Articles have no exact equivalent in Dzongkha. Similar meanings can be expressed by the numeral 'one' and by demonstrative adjectives placed after the noun.

### - Indefinite article - 'a/an'

This is expressed in Dzongkha by the use of the numeral *ci*: 'one'. However it is not often used unless it occurs in the sense of 'one'.

*'mi ci*: - a/one man

### - Definite article - 'the'

The demonstrative adjectives (this/that; these/those) are placed after the noun to express specificity. Among them *di* is the most commonly used.

*pecha di* - this/that book

*pecha ditsu* - these/those books

## Pronouns

### - Demonstrative pronouns

#### Singular

*ani /ni/di* - this

*aphe* - that

#### Plural

*anitsu /nitsu/ditsu* - these

*phetsu* - those

They are all equally used as demonstrative adjectives.

Among them *di* is rather special. It is rarely used as an independent pronoun.

*ani gaci mo* - What is this ? (simple question)

*di gaci mo* - What is this ? (= What have you done ? = almost a scolding)

It is more commonly used for singling out a noun. In this case, *di* is placed after the noun as demonstrative adjective while one of the others (always singular) is placed before the noun as demonstrative pronoun:

*ani pecha di* - this book

*aphe pecha di* - that book

*aphe 'ma:p di gaci mo* - What is that red (thing) ?

*aphe 'ma:p ditsu gaci mo* - What are those red (things) ?

*nyi (gi) pecha di* - my book (literally: my - book - this)

## - Personal pronouns

### Singular

*nga* - I/me

*chö* - you / *na* (polite form)

*kho* - he/him

*mo* - she/her

### Plural

*ngace/ngaca* (*chachap*) - we/us

*chö/ce chachap* - you / *na chachap* (polite form)

*khong* (*chachap*) - they/them

## Some linking words

*da* - and

*kho da mo* - he and she

*ba da 'lang* - cow(s) and bull(s)

*ya /yäncin* - or

*ani ya aphe* - this or that

*yäncin dari yäncin na:pa* - either today or tomorrow

## About Bhutanese personal names

There is no standard system for romanizing Bhutanese names. The Roman spelling of a Bhutanese name is a phonetical one invented solely to represent more or less faithfully the pronunciation in Dzongkha. As a result, the same name in Dzongkha script can have more than one spelling in Roman alphabet, like Dorji/Dorje (/dorje/, according to the transcription system adopted in this manual), Namgye/Namgyel/Namgyal (/namgä/), Peljor/Penjor/Paljor (/penjor/), Rapten/Rubten (/raptän:/), Rigzin/Rinzin (/rindzin/), Sangye/Sangay (/sang-gä/), Singye/Senge/Singey (/seng-ge/), etc.

A Bhutanese personal name in Dzongkha is usually composed of two parts/names, each one usually of two syllables: Sangye Penjor, Dorje Tshering, Tshewang Rigzin etc. They are however not the Christian (first, given) name and the surname (family name). It should be noted that traditionally the Bhutanese do not have **family names**. The presence of the identical element **Tshering** in the second part of two personal names: Dorje **Tshering** and Tashi **Tshering** for example does not in any way mean that they are from the same family or are related to each other.

A woman does not take her husband's name but keeps her own, and the children may have names that are totally different from those of their parents and from each other. It happens for example that Ugyen Tenzin and his wife Tshering Lhamo have a son named Nyima Gyeltshen and a daughter named Kezang Wangmo.

A great majority of the names can be given without distinction to boys and girls. Therefore, unlike the Christian names, the Bhutanese personal names are no indication of the sex of the person. However a few names are typically feminine (they are usually used as the second part): Choeden, Choekyi, Dekyi, Drolma (Dem), Lhamo (Lham), Norzom, Tshokyi, Wangmo (Om),

Yangkyi, Yudron, Zangmo (Zam) etc. Thus, Rinzin Lham(o), Nyima Om, Dechen Zam, etc., are some typically feminine names.

### Adjectives (1)

Adjectives follow immediately the noun they qualify.

*meto 'ma:p* - red flower(s)

*la: lesha* - much work

Numerals, demonstrative adjectives, articles and plural signs are all placed after the adjective which immediately follows the noun:

Noun	Adj.	Dem. adj./ Article	Pl.	Numeral	
<i>meto</i>	<i>'ma:p</i>			<i>ci:</i>	- a (= one) red flower
<i>meto</i>	<i>'ma:p</i>			<i>sum</i>	- three red flowers
<i>meto</i>	<i>'ma:p</i>	<i>di</i>			- this red flower
<i>meto</i>	<i>'ma:p</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>tsu</i>		- these red flowers

Compare the following pair of examples:

<i>pecha</i>	<i>'ma:p</i>	<i>di</i>	<i>sum</i>	- three (copies) of this red book
<i>pecha</i>	<i>'ma:p</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>di</i>	- the three red books (which are there)

An adjective like 'red' in Dzongkha may also serve as a noun meaning '(a/the) red (one)', depending on its position in the sentence. For example:

*nga lu 'ma:p ci: go* - I need a red (one).

*kho ka:p di lu ga* - He likes this white (one).

#### - Colours, *tsho*:

black, <i>'nap</i>	blue, <i>höm</i>
green, <i>jangkhu</i>	green (dark), <i>jang-na</i>
green (light), <i>jang-se:</i>	grey, <i>theka</i>
orange, <i>liwang</i>	pink, <i>shakha</i>
purple (dark red), <i>jamu</i>	red, <i>'ma:p</i>
white, <i>ka:p</i>	yellow, <i>se:p</i>

#### - Some useful adjectives

*gera/gayera* - all

*shogu ditsu gera* - all these papers

*'mi gayera* - all the people, everyone

**lalu** - some

**'mi lalu** - some persons

**zhän(mi)** - other/another

**pecha zhän(mi) ci** - another book

**pecha zhän(mi)-tsu** - other books

**'mi zhän-tsu** - other people

**madrau** - different, various

**ri madrau** - different kind(s)

**choraci:chorathe** - same

**ani da aphe chorathe** - This (one) and that (one) are the same.

**gong choraci** - same price

### Lesson 3: Sentence construction

#### Word order

Dzongkha sentences normally follow the pattern: Subject - Object, Predicate, etc. - Verb.

*nga pecha ta-ni* - I will read a book (literally: I - book - read)

*kho la: be-de* - He is working (literally: He - work - do)

*ani meto 'ing* - This is a flower. (literally: this - flower - is)

*anitsu leshom du* - These are good. (literally: these - good - are)

*nga thimphu lu jo-ni* - I will go to Thimphu (literally: I - Thimphu - to - go)

Dzongkha is different from English in that the subject (and/or the object) may often be omitted if what is being talked about is clear from the context.

*(chö) to za-i ga* - Have you eaten ? (subject: *chö* is omitted)

*(chö ani) go ga* - Do you want this ? (both subject: *chö* and object : *ani* are omitted)

#### The verbs '*ing*'/'*imbe*' and *yö/du*

Dzongkha has four verbs '*ing*' and '*imbe*', *yö* and *du* to link the subject to the predicate noun or adjective.

*nga sonam 'ing* - I am Sonam.

*kho dru:p 'ing* - He is Bhutanese.

*kho zu: thungku 'imbe* - He is short.

*(di) leshom 'imbe* - (It's) good.

*chö gi alu-tsu leshom-be yö ga* - Are your children well ?

*gayera leshom-be yö* - They are all fine.

*dari 'nam hing sangsa du* - It's a fine day today.

*meto ni ka:p du* - This flower is white.

The difference between them is quite subtle. Their proper use in the appropriate circumstances is definitely one of the most difficult things to acquire for a foreigner. It can only be learned from native speakers of Dzongkha. The following general features can be observed as in the following examples:

- '*ing*' and *yö* are used to express a statement based on long-term personal experience or knowledge, generally accepted facts and universal truths.
- '*imbe*' and *du* are used when stating short-term specific or particular experience and observations.

## Examples

- *köncho gi jinlap di bo:m 'ing* - The benediction of the (Triple) Gem is great.(universal truth)
- *om gi do ka:p 'ing* - The colour of milk is white.(general feature)

Please compare the two examples of each pair:

- *nyi gi bu zu: thungku 'ing* - My son is short. (It is your own son and you know that he is short)
- *kho gi bu zu: thungku 'imbe* - His son is short (This is perhaps the first time you see his son and you find him short)
- *chö gi bum di 'name same jarim yö* - Your daughter is very pretty.(The daughter has been known to you for a long time)
- *bum di 'name same jarim du* - That girl looks quite pretty. (Pointing to a girl walking in the street)
- *thimphu ga toto yö ga* - Is Thimphu a pleasant place ? (Questioning a native or a long-time resident of Thimphu)
- *thimphu ga toto du ga* - Is Thimphu a pleasant place ? (Questioning a visitor or a newcomer to Thimphu)
- *seshe meto gi drim leshom yö* - The smell of marigolds is nice. (general feature)
- *meto di gi drim leshom du* - The smell of this flower is nice. (particular case)

The verbs *yö* and *du* are also used to express whereabouts, existence and possession, usually in conjunction with postpositions *lu* or *na*.

- *dau ci: na dänthra zhi yö* - There are four weeks in a month.
- *bü: (lu) ri madrau lesha yö* - There are many different kinds of snakes.
- *chö lu ap da 'ai yö ga* - Are your father and mother still alive ? (lit. 'Do you have your father and mother ?')
- *dari namkha lu samu lesha du* - Today there are many clouds in the sky.
- *chö lu alu yö ga* - Do you have children ?
- *kho lu alu du ga* - Does he have children ?
- *nyi gi dumra na(ng)(lu) meto lesha yö* - I have many flowers in my garden.(possession; It is your own garden)
- *kho gi dumra na(ng)(lu) meto lesha du* - There are many flowers in his garden.(You have seen his garden)



## Lesson 4: Postpositions

Unlike Sanskrit, Latin, etc., Dzongkha nouns and adjectives do not have a declension. A Dzongkha noun has only one form (stem), and its grammatical function may be indicated by a postposition. Postpositions are like English prepositions ('to', 'at', 'of', etc.) but they follow the noun. The three most important postpositions for Dzongkha grammar are :

**lu** : locative and dative;

**le** : ablative;

**gi** : genitive and instrumental.

- **lu**: denotes a location, direction, purpose of an action, and possessor of an object (see above).

*nga thimphu lu jo ni* - I am going to Thimphu.

*che chachap gate (lu) döp-mo* - Where do you live ?

*ngace paro (lu) döp-'ing* - We live in Paro.

*dropa chutshö gä:-lu sho* - Come at 8 o'clock in the morning.

*nga lu 'lap* - Tell me.

*nga lu gu dö* - Wait for me.

*chö lu gaci go-ni* - What do you want (literally: What is needed for you)?

*charo lu cho:m 'ing* - It is a gift for a friend.

- **le**: expresses the starting-point or source from which anything proceeds.

*chö gate le mo* - Where are you from ?

*nga japan le 'ing* - I am from Japan.

- **gi**: In written language the genitive and the instrumental suffixes have different forms, but they are pronounced in the same way. As a consequence, this suffix has the following four functions:

a) the agent or the instrument by or with which an action is performed:

*kho-gi be-i* He did it.

*gola gimtsi-gi dra* - Cut the cloth with scissors.

*thou-gi do trum* - Break stones with a hammer.

b) the reason: 'by reason of', 'because of',

*me yö-ni de-gi na dro toto du* - Because there is fire, it is warm here.

*kau cab-ni de-gi 'name same jang-me* - Because of the snowfall, it is very cold.

c) possession, having the general meaning 'of'

*chö gi ming gaci mo* - What is your name ?

*nyi (gi) ming penjor 'ing* - My name is Penjor. (Attention: not *nga gi* . The personal pronoun *nga* becomes *nyi* in the genitive form)

*di kho gi rochi 'ing-na* - Is this his dog ?

*meng mo gi 'ing* - No, it's hers.

d) adjectival sense: material, etc.

*shing gi zam* - wooden bridge (lit. 'bridge (made) of wood')

*ca gi thou* - iron hammer

*dru: gi gä(l)da:* - the Bhutanese National flag

## Lesson 5: Interrogatives and negatives

### Interrogatives

There are two main ways of formulating questions in Dzongkha.

- "Yes-or-no" questions, add an interrogative suffix at the end of the affirmative phrase.
- "Content" questions, use interrogative words such as: who, what, which, etc.

#### 1) Interrogative suffix - *ga*, *na*, 'mo, mo:

- *ga* *chö dzongkha she ga* - Do you know Dzongkha ?

*chö nga bo-i ga* - Did you call me ?

*di she-ci ga* - Did you understand this ?

*chö lu alu yö ga* - Do you have children ?

*kho dru:p 'imbe ga* - Is he Bhutanese ?

- *na* 'ing *na* - Is that so ?

*chö dru:p 'ing na* - Are you Bhutanese ?

*pecha di chö-gi 'ing na* - Is this book yours ?

*na ja zhe na* - Do you take tea ?

- 'mo (high tone): to form a tag question: isn't it, aren't you, etc.

*kho sonam 'ing 'mo* - He is Sonam, isn't he?

*chö na:pa wong-ni 'mo* - You are coming tomorrow, aren't you?

- mo (low tone): when asking for a choice between two items

*chö gi chim di mo aphe mo* - Is your house this one or that one ?

*ja zhe-ni mo chang zhe-ni mo* - Would you like to have tea or chang ?

#### 2) Interrogative words. The suffix *mo* is often added at the end of the phrase.

*ga* - who

*mo ga mo* - Who is she ?

*chim di ga gi mo* - Whose house is it ?

*gaci* - what

*ani gaci mo* - What is this ?

*gaci be-i* - What did you do ?

**gacibe** - why

*chö gacibe 'ngu-i* - Why did you cry ?

*chö na-lu gacibe wong-i* - Why have you come here ?

**gadebe** - how (condition and means)

*dru:-'ü di gadebe du* - How is Bhutan ?

*chö amtsu gadebe yö* - How is your wife ?

*chö gadebe jo ni* - How do you get there (lit. 'go') ? (by which means)

**gade(m)ci** - how much/many

*ni gong gadeci mo* - How much is this ?

*tiru gadeci trö ci* - How much did you pay ?

*chö dau gadeci dö-ci* - How many months did you stay ?

[**gade re** - how much (when asking the unit price (per kg etc.))]

*'lambenda gade re mo* - How much is the tomato (per kg) ?

**gate** - where

*chö gate (lu) jo(w)u mo* - Where are you going ?

*chö 'ü: gate le mo* - Where are you from ?

**nam** - when

*kho nam wong-ni mo* - When is he coming ?

### Negatives

Negatives in Dzongkha are formed by adding one of the negative particles/syllables before the verb:

-**mi(n)**: for the present and future tenses

*nga mi-jo* - I don't/will not go.

*nga kho ngo mi she* - I don't know him.

*cha:p mi cap* - It doesn't/will not rain

*kho min(d)u* - He is not there.

-**ma**: for the past tense and the imperative

*nga chang ma thung* - I didn't drink *chang*

*chang ma thung* - Don't drink *chang*.

*kho ma song* -He didn't go.

*ma song* - Don't go.

The verbs *'ing/imbe* and *yö/du* each have a special negative form:

<u>Affirmative</u>	<u>Negative</u>
<i>'ing</i>	<i>meng</i>
<i>'imbe</i>	<i>me(ng)mbe</i>
<i>yö</i>	<i>me(ng)</i>
<i>du</i>	<i>min(d)u</i>

- *mapa-le (ra/rang)* + negative = 'not at all'

*domsha mapa-le za-do meng* - We never eat bear meat.

*mapa-le mi she* - I don't know at all.

- *tsa-le ra(ng)* + negative = 'not at all'

*dzong na-lu pa: tsa-le (ra) tap mi cho* - Photography is strictly prohibited in the dzong.

*kho tsa-le nyän mi thub* - He will never agree/He doesn't agree at all.

*ci: ya(ng)* in a negative context means 'not a single' or 'not even one'

*meto ci: ya(ng) me(ng)* - There is not a single flower.

*ye/ya(ng)* 'also' in a negative context means 'not ... either'

*kho-gi ya(ng) mi she* - He does not know either.

*nga ye mi jo* - I don't go either.

Interrogative words with *ye/ya(ng)* in a negative context serve as negative indefinites: 'none', 'nothing', etc.

*ga ya(ng)* - nobody

*ga-gi ya(ng) mi she* - Nobody knows.

*ga ya(ng) ma lhö* - Nobody arrived.

*zhän ga-lu ya(ng) ma 'lap 'me* - Don't tell anybody else!

*gaci ya(ng)* or *gani ya(ng)* - nothing

*kho gaci ya(ng) mi she* - He knows nothing.

*gani ya(ng) me(ng)* - There is nothing

*gate ya(ng)* - nowhere

*nga gate ya(ng) ma song* - I went nowhere.

*nam ya(ng)* - never

*la: di nam ya(ng) mi tsha:* - This work will never be finished.

## Lesson 6: Adjectives (2) and adverbs

### Adjectives (2)

Predicate adjectives generally require either the verbe *du/min(d)u* or the linking verb *'ing/meng*.

*'nam hing sangsa du* - The sky is clear.

*na shing-drä kä toto du* - Fruits are cheap here.

*di leshom mindu* - This is no good.

*chu tshatom du ga* - Is the water hot ?

(cf. *chu tshatom yö ga* - Do you have hot water ?/ Is there hot water ?)

However, adjectives can form a predicate without a verb: in this case, suffixes like *ye* or *be* are often added at the end of the sentence.

*'inda gäpa lu ra(ng) drö che ye* - August is the hottest month.

*gong 'name same tho ye* - That is too/very expensive.

*doma di 'name same zhim be* - This doma is very tasty.

- adj. + *ra(ng)* [+ adj.] = expresses the idea of 'too' or 'very'.

*gong tho ra(ng) tho ye* - It is very/too expensive.

*nyi sim di dato chung-ku rang 'imbe* - My sister is too young at present.

- Comparison: *wa* and *le*

*dru:-lung wa ja-lung bo:m* - India is bigger than Bhutan.

*di wa gong chung-so ci: tön 'nang* - Show me a cheaper one than this.

*kho le mo ri:m* - She is taller than he is.

- Superlative:

1) *shö(ra)*

*dzamling na gälkhap bo:m-shö(ra) urusu 'ing* - The URSS is the largest country in the world.

*gong che-shö do:ji phalam 'ing* - Diamonds are the most expensive.

2) with terms expressing the superlative which are often combined with a comparison.

*pecha zhäntsu wa di le-be* - This book is the best. (literally, This book is better than the others)

*pecha ditsu na(ng) le di le-be* - This is the best book among those (literally, This one is good among these books)

*'inda gäpa lu ra(ng) drö che ye* - August is the hottest month. (literally, It is hot precisely in August)

## Compound adjectives

There are numerous adjectives which are formed with a stem followed by a disyllabic suffix (most often the second syllable is a partial reduplication of the first syllable).

### - pa(k)pa

*tu: pa(k)pa* - thick (solid material)

*kha pa(k)pa* - thick (liquid material)

### - sangsa

*hing sangsa* - clean

*dang sangsa* - clear

### - sisi

*khamlo sisi* - dirty

*pcha sisi* - thin/fine (thread, rope)

### - thröthrö

*sap thröthrö* - thin (cloth, paper)

*si thröthrö* - cold (water)

*yang thröthrö* - light

*kam thröthrö* - dry

### - tangta

*thrang tangta* - straight, honest

### - to(ng)to

*de toto* - well

*ga toto* - happy

*jam toto* - easy

*kä toto* - cheap

*tsang toto* - clean

*zhim toto* - delicious

### - tratra

*sa tratra* - hard

## Adverbs

Adverbs are placed before the verb or the adjective.

Most of manner adverbs are formed by adding the suffix *be* after the adjective.

*gole-be jo* - go slowly

*leshom-be ta* - look well

*hing sangsa-be dö* - stay clean (i.e. keep your home clean)

Others can be formed from nouns and pronouns with the help of postpositions.

*di lu* - here (lit. 'at this [place]')

*kha gi* - orally, verbally (lit. 'by (word of) mouth')

### - Some adverbial words

#### Adverbs of Place

*pchikha(-lu)* - outside

*na(ng) na(-lu)* - inside

*bana(-lu)* - between

*bu-na* - in the centre

*bolokha(-lu)* - near

*tha: ringsa* - far

*lä/jü-de* - through  
*dongkha(-lu)* - in front of  
*zukha(-lu)* - next to  
*'yön-khatu(-lu) / yön-le* - to the left  
*tshu-khatu* - this side  
*na* - here  
*ta-lu* - above  
*gu(-lu)* - on  
*ya:* - up  
*gate ye/ya(ng)* - everywhere

*hong-lu/cho-lu* - towards  
*japkha(-lu)* - at the back of  
*gä:* - past  
*'ye-khatu(-lu) /'ye-le* - to the right  
*pha:-khatu* - that side  
*pha:* - there  
*wo-lu* - below  
*wo-lu* - under  
*ma:* - down

They are usually connected to the noun with the genitive postposition *-gi*. For example:

*chim gi dongkha(-lu)* - in front of the house  
*chim gi japkha(-lu)* - at the back of the house  
*chim gi zukha(-lu)* - next to the house  
*chim gi na(ng) na(-lu)* - inside the house  
*chim gi bolokha(-lu)* - near the house

#### Adverbs of Time

*dato* - now

*tha:ma/shu-leting-le* - later, afterwards

*atara* - always

*threthre-ra* - often

*dari kapci:* - at present

*hemal'ngema* - before, formerly

*kapkab-le/lu* - occasionally

#### Adverbs of Manner

*jopa* - quickly

*lokte* - again

*gole-bel/drögi-be* - slowly

#### Adverbs of Degree

*halamci:* - almost (*halamci: tsha:-i* - (It is) almost finished)

*atsi(tsi)/dumdraci:* - a little bit (*atsitsi dra-i* - (I feel) a little bit better)

*'name same* - very (*'name same bo:m* - very big)

*leshom(be), well* (*kho dzongkha leshom(-be) she* - He knows Dzongkha well.



## Some useful words/expressions

**ye/ya(ng)** - 'also'

*nga ye jo ni* - I am also going.

*nga ani ya(ng) go* - I want this also.

*nga ya(ng) ani go* - I also want this.

**daru** - 'again, more'

*daru ci:* - one more

*daru tsha: ci:* - once more

**camci:** - 'only'

*di camci:* - only this

*kho camci: song i* - He went alone.

**mato** - 'except, besides' (with negative)

*kho mato ga ye mi she* - Except him, nobody knows.

*di mato me(ng)* - There is only this (= Besides this, there is nothing)

**dön-lu/le** - 'for' (in the interest of, for the purpose of)

*kho gi dön-lu* - for him

*gaci gi dön-le di nyo-nyo(w)u mo* - For what purpose have you purchased this ?

**(da) cikha/nyamci** - '(together) with'

*nga kho (da) nyamci jo ni* - I will go with him.

*pecha di chö da cikha zha* - Keep this book with you.

**gaci mo ze wa cin** - 'for' (the reason: lit. 'if [I] tell what is [the reason]')

*kho mi wong. gaci mo ze wa cin kho na-de (yö)* - He will not come, for he is sick.

*nga di mi nyo. gaci mo ze wa cin gong tho ra tho ye* - I don't buy this, for it is too expensive.

**de be(w)u da** - 'but'

*nga (lu) di go-be. de be(w)u da nga tiru me(ng)* - I want this but I don't have money.

*chim di leshom du. de be(w)u da yikishang le 'name same tha ri(ng)msa 'imbe*

- This house is nice but it is very far from the office.

**deba** - 'but'

*'män za i deba dra ni min(d)u* - I have taken medicine but I am not cured.

**deben** - 'then'

*deben tiru 'nga gi zhu ge* - Then, I'll take 5 Nu. worth.

## Lesson 7: Numbers

The numeral like the adjective follows the noun. When the noun is followed by an adjective, the numeral is placed after the adjective.

*'mi 'nyi*: - two persons

*rochi leshom sum* - three good dogs

### - Cardinal numerals

There are two number systems: decimal and vigesimal.

Further it should be noted that there is a specific way of "over-counting" to

*pche da sum* - two and a half (literally, (which with the addition of) a three)

*pche da cu-nyi* - eleven and a half

0, *lekor*

1, *ci*:

2, *'nyi*:

3, *sum*

4, *zhi*

5, *'nga*

6, *dru*

7, *dün*

8, *gä*:

9, *gu*

10, *cutham*

11, *cuci*

12, *cu-nyi*

13, *cusum*

14, *cuzhi*

15, *ce-nga*

16,  *cudru*

17, *cupdün*

18, *copgä*

19, *cugu*

#### Decimal system

##### Counting

##### Dates

20, *nyishu*

21, (*nyishu*) *tsaci*

22, (*nyishu*) *tša-'nyi*

23, (*nyishu*) *tsasum*

24, (*nyishu*) *tsazhi*

25, (*nyishu*) *tša-nga*

26, (*nyishu*) *tsadru*

27, (*nyishu*) *tsadün*

28, (*nyishu*) *tsagä*

29, (*nyishu*) *tsagu*

30, *sumcu*

31, (*sumcu*) *soci*

*nyerci*

*nyernyi*

*nyersum*

*nyerzhi*

*nyer-nga*

*nyerdru*

*nyerdün*

*nyergä*

*nyergu*

#### Vigesimal system

*khe ci*:

*khe ci: da ci: (20 + 1)*

*khe ci: (da) 'nyi:*

*khe ci: (da) sum*

*khe ci: (da) zhi*

*khe ci: (da) 'nga*

*khe ci: (da) dru*

*khe ci: (da) dün*

*khe ci: (da) gä:*

*khe ci: (da) gu*

*khe pche da 'nyi: (20 x 1.5)*

*khe ci: (da) cucu (20 + 11)*

32, (sumcu) so-nyi  
 33, (sumcu) sosum  
 34, (sumcu) sozhi  
 35, (sumcu) so-nga  
 36, (sumcu) sodru  
 37, (sumcu) sodün  
 38, (sumcu) sogä  
 39, (sumcu) sogu  
 40, zhipcu  
 41, (zhipcu) zheci  
 42, (zhipcu) zhe-nyi  
 43, (zhipcu) zhesum  
 44, (zhipcu) zhezhi  
 45, (zhipcu) zhe-nga  
 46, (zhipcu) zhedru  
 47, (zhipcu) zhedün  
 48, (zhipcu) zhegä  
 49, (zhipcu) zhegü  
 50, 'ngapcu  
 51, ('ngapcu) ngaci  
 52, ('ngapcu) nga-nyi  
 53, ('ngapcu) ngasum  
 54, ('ngapcu) ngazhi  
 55, ('ngapcu) nga-nga  
 56, ('ngapcu) ngadru  
 57, ('ngapcu) ngadün  
 58, ('ngapcu) ngagä  
 59, ('ngapcu) ngagu  
 60, drukcu  
 61, (drukcu) reci  
 62, (drukcu) re-nyi  
 63, (drukcu) resum  
 64, (drukcu) rezhi  
 65, (drukcu) re-nga  
 66, (drukcu) redru  
 67, (drukcu) redün  
 68, (drukcu) regä  
 69, (drukcu) regu  
 70, düncu

khe ci: (da) cu-nyi  
 khe ci: (da) cusum  
 khe ci: (da) cuzhi  
 khe ko da 'nyi: (20 x (1 + 3/4))  
 khe ci: (da) cudru  
 khe ci: (da) cupdün  
 khe ci: (da) copgä  
 khe ci: (da) cugu  
 khe 'nyi (= 20 x 2)  
 khe 'nyi da ci: (20 x 2 + 1)  
 khe 'nyi da 'nyi:  
 khe 'nyi da sum  
 khe 'nyi da zhi  
 khe 'nyi da 'nga  
 khe 'nyi da dru  
 khe 'nyi da dün  
 khe 'nyi da gä:  
 khe 'nyi da gu  
 khe pche da sum (20 x 2.5)  
 khe 'nyi da cuci (20 x 2.5 + 11)  
 khe 'nyi da cu-nyi  
 khe 'nyi da cusum  
 khe 'nyi da cuzhi  
 khe ko da sum (20 x (2 + 3/4))  
 khe 'nyi da cudru  
 khe 'nyi da cupdün  
 khe 'nyi da copgä  
 khe 'nyi da cugu  
 khe sum (20 x 3)  
 khe sum da ci: (20 x 3 + 1)  
 khe sum da 'nyi:  
 khe sum da sum  
 khe sum da zhi  
 khe sum da 'nga  
 khe sum da dru  
 khe sum da dün  
 khe sum da gä:  
 khe sum da gu  
 khe pche da zhi (20 x 3.5)

71, (düncu) dönçi  
 72, (düncu) dön-nyi  
 73, (düncu) dönsum  
 74, (düncu) dönzhi  
 75, (düncu) dön-nga  
 76, (düncu) döndru  
 77, (düncu) döndün  
 78, (düncu) döngä  
 79, (düncu) döngu  
 80, gäpcu  
 81, (gäpcu) jaci:  
 82, (gäpcu) janyi:  
 83, (gäpcu) jasum  
 84, (gäpcu) jazhi  
 85, (gäpcu) ja-nga  
 86, (gäpcu) jadru  
 87, (gäpcu) jadün  
 88, (gäpcu) jagä  
 89, (gäpcu) jagu  
 90, gupcu  
 91, (gupcu) goci:  
 92, (gupcu) go-nyi:  
 93, (gupcu) gosum  
 94, (gupcu) gogozhi  
 95, (gupcu) go-nga  
 96, (gupcu) godru  
 97, (gupcu) godün  
 98, (gupcu) gogä  
 99, (gupcu) gogu  
 100, cikja/jatham(pa)  
 101, cikja ci  
 102, cikja nyi  
 110, cikja cu(tham)  
 120, cikja nyishu  
 200, nyija  
 300, sumja  
 400, zhipja  
 500, 'ngapja  
 600, drukja

khe sum da cuci (20 x 3 + 11)  
 khe sum da cu-nyi  
 khe sum da cusum  
 khe sum da cuzhi  
 khe ko da zhi (20 x (3 + 3/4))  
 khe sum da cudru  
 khe sum da cupdün  
 khe sum da copgä  
 khe sum da cugu  
 khe zhi (20 x 4)  
 khe zhi da ci: (20 x 4 + 1)  
 khe zhi da 'nyi:  
 khe zhi da sum  
 khe zhi da zhi  
 khe zhi da 'nga  
 khe zhi da dru  
 khe zhi da dün  
 khe zhi da gä:  
 khe zhi da gu  
 khe pche da 'nga (20 x 4.5)  
 khe zhi da cuci (20 x 4 + 11)  
 khe zhi da cu-nyi  
 khe zhi da cusum  
 khe zhi da cuzhi  
 khe ko da 'nga (20 x (4 + 3/4))  
 khe zhi da cudru  
 khe zhi da cupdün  
 khe zhi da cupgä  
 khe zhi da cugu  
 khe 'nga (20 x 5)  
 khe 'nga da ci:  
 khe 'nga da 'nyi:  
 khe pche da dru (20 x 5.5)  
 khe dru (20 x 6)  
 khe cutham (20 x 10)  
 khe ce-nga (20 x 15)  
 nyishu ci:  
 nyishu ci: da khe 'nga  
 nyishu pche da 'nyi (400 x 1.5)

700, *dünja*  
 800, *gäpja*  
 900, *gupja*  
 1000, *ciktong/tongthra ci*:  
 2000, *nyitong*  
 3000, *sumtong*  
 4000, *zhiptong*  
 5000, *'ngaptong*  
  
 6000, *druktong*  
 7000, *düntong*  
  
 8000, *geptong*  
 9000, *guptong*  
  
 10000, *chikthri*  
  
 100000, *bum*  
  
 160000, *chikbum tongthra drukcu*  
 1000000, *saya*

*nyishu ko da 'nyi* ( $400 \times (1 + 3/4)$ )  
*nyishu 'nyi* ( $= 400 \times 2$ )  
*nyishu 'nyi da khe 'nga*  
*nyishu pche da sum* ( $400 \times 2.5$ )  
*nyishu 'nga* ( $400 \times 5$ )  
*nyishu pche da Gä* ( $400 \times 7.5$ )  
*nyishu cutham* ( $400 \times 10$ )  
*nyishu cu-nyi da khe cutham*  
 ( $(400 \times 12) + (20 \times 10)$ )  
*nyishu ce-nga* ( $400 \times 15$ )  
*nyishu cupdün da khe cutham*  
 ( $(400 \times 17) + (20 \times 10)$ )  
*kheche ci*:  
*kheche ci: da nyishu pche da sum*  
 ( $8000 + (400 \times 2.5)$ )  
*kheche ci: da nyishu 'nga*  
 ( $8000 + (400 \times 5)$ )  
*kheche cu-nyi da nyishu cutham*  
 ( $(8000 \times 12) + (400 \times 10)$ )  
*yangche ci*:

Note on the vigesimal system

*khe* = 20

20 *khe* = 1 *nyishu* (400)

20 *nyishu* = 1 *kheche* (8000)

20 *kheche* = 1 *yangche* (160000)

**- Ordinal numerals**

They are formed by adding *pa* at the end of the ordinal numbers. The only exception is the first which takes a completely different form: *dangpa*.

*dangpa* - first

*'nyipa* - second

*sumpa* - third

*zhipa* - fourth

*'ngapa* - fifth

*drupa* - sixth

*dünpa* - seventh

*gäpa* - eighth

*gupa* - ninth

*cupa* - tenth

*tha:ma /shüma* - last

## Other numeral expressions

- Distributive numerals: *re(re)*

*'mi re(re) lu 'ngülram sum(sum) re* - three Ngultrams per person

*nyim re(re) lu tsha: zhi(zhi) re* - four times a day

*'lambenda gade re mo* - How much are the tomatos (per kg) ?

- Alternative numbers are expressed by placing two numbers one after the other:

*'mi sum zhi* - three or four persons

- Approximate number : by placing *deci* after the number.

*'ngütram ja deci go* - I need about Nu. 100.

*zha cutham deci* - about ten nights

- Fractions are formed by placing the particle *cha* before or after the cardinal:

*cha-sum* - (divide something into) three equal portions

*sum-cha 'nyi:* - two thirds

*cha-zhi* - four equal portions

*zhi-cha sum* - three quarters

- *gang* and *do* - 'one' and 'two'(cups/glasses of)

*om damji gang lu gadeci mo* - How much is a bottle of milk ?

*chang pho:p gang zhe* - Please have a cup of *chang*.

*chang pho:p do* - two cups of *chang*.

- *pche* - 'half'

*pche da 'nyi* - one and a half (can be also said : *ci: da pche* )

*pche da dru* - five and a half (can be also said : *'nga da pche* )

- *cha* - 'a pair'

*lham cha ci:* - a pair of shoes

- *ya* - 'one of a pair'

*lham ya ci:* - a shoe

- *tsha* (with cardinal number) and *go/theng* (with ordinal number) - 'time'(occasion)

*chö hema lhö-ci-ga* - Have you been (here/there) before ?

*nga tsha: sum lhö-ci* - I have been (here/there) three times.

*go dangpa* - the first time

*ni theng sumpa 'ing* - This is the third time.

- *tap* - 'times'(multiples)

*lok-tap* - double

*sum-tap* - triple

*ni sum-tap-gi gong bo:m* - This is three times as expensive.

## Lesson 8: Time

### The Time

*karma* - minute

*chutshö* - hour/o'clock

*chutshö pche* - half an hour

*dato chutshö gadeci mo* - What time is it now ?

*chutshö gä: da karma cutham 'ing* - It is ten past eight.

*chutshö pche da gu: 'ing* - It is half past eight.

*chutshö gadeci go:* - How many hours does it take ?

### - Other words

*dropa* - morning

*pchiru* - evening

*nyin-gung* - midday, noon

*numo* - night

*nyima* - daytime, afternoon

*namche/nup-che* - midnight

*nyim* - day

*zha* - night

*nyim 'nyi: gi lam 'ing* - It is at two days' distance.

*zha gadeci dö-ni mo* - How many nights will you stay ?

*dari* - today

*na:pa* - tomorrow

*khatsha* - yesterday

*'na:tshe* - the day after tomorrow

*kha-nyim* - the day before yesterday

*zhetshe* - in three days

*zhe-nyim* - three days ago

*na:pa 'na:tshe* - one of these days

*khatsha kha-nyim* - the other day

*dangsha* - the other day

*dari na:pa* - these days

*dato* - now

*dato-ra* - just now, immediately

### The days of the week

*dünthra* - week

*za* - day (of the week)

*dari za gaci mo* - What day of the week is it today ?

*za dau* - Sunday

*za mikma:* - Monday

*za lhakpa* - Tuesday

*za phurbu* - Wednesday

*za pasang* - Thursday

*za penpa* - Friday

*za nyima* - Saturday

## Months

Two calendars are used in Bhutan: the traditional lunar based system and the Gregorian calendar used in the west.

In theory, a Bhutanese month always has 30 days but some days may be doubled while others may be skipped: for example, one may have two consecutive third days in the same month while one may jump from the fourth day to the sixth day skipping the fifth.

*dau* - month, moon      *tshe* - day (*tshe ci:*, *tshe 'nyi*, --- *tshe sumcu* = 'namgang)

*'inda* - month, *'in-tshe* - day (in Gregorian calendar)

### Gregorian calendar

*'inda dangpa* - January

*'inda 'nyipa* - February

*'inda sumpa* - March

*'inda zhipa* - April

*'inda 'ngapa* - May

*'inda dru(k)pa* - June

*'inda dünpa* - July

*'inda gäpa* - August

*'inda gupa* - September

*'inda cupa* - October

*'inda cucipa* - November

*'inda cu-nyipa* - December

### Bhutanese calendar

*dau dangpa* - 1st month

*dau 'nyipa* - 2nd month

*dau sumpa* - 3rd month

*dau zhipa* - 4th month

*dau 'ngapa* - 5th month

*dau dru(k)pa* - 6th month

*dau dünpa* - 7th month

*dau gäpa* - 8th month

*dau gupa* - 9th month

*dau cupa* - 10th month

*dau cucipa* - 11th month

*dau cu-nyipa* - 12th month

## Seasons

*soka* - spring

*serkha* - autumn

*bjä:* - summer

*gün* - winter

## Year

A Bhutanese year usually has twelve months. However a month can be doubled (for example, the earlier fifth month and the latter fifth month) approximately once in three years, bringing the number of months in the year to thirteen.

The Bhutanese New Year generally occurs about one and a half months after the New Year in the Gregorian calendar, that is, the first month in the Bhutanese calendar usually begins sometime in February.

*lo* - year

*düci /doci* - this year

*nahing* - last year

*zhehing* - the year before last

*losa:* - the New Year

*sangpö* - next year



Bhutanese reckon years in cycles of twelve years, each year being designated by the name of an animal:

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>bjiu</i> - mouse    | 7. <i>ta</i> - horse   |
| 2. <i>'lang</i> - ox      | 8. <i>lu</i> - sheep   |
| 3. <i>ta:</i> - tiger     | 9. <i>tre</i> - monkey |
| 4. <i>yö</i> - hare       | 10. <i>bja</i> - bird  |
| 5. <i>dru(k)</i> - dragon | 11. <i>khi</i> - dog   |
| 6. <i>drül</i> - serpent  | 12. <i>pha</i> - pig   |

A cycle of sixty years, called *rapjung*, is formed by combining the cycle of twelve animals with the five elements (namely *shing*, wood; *me*, fire; *sa*, earth; *ca*, iron and *chu*, water) and the two genders (*pho*, male and *mo*, female).

Each element is added to two consecutive years of the cycle of twelve. The first year of this pair is called 'male', and the second, 'female'. Thus one has

*shing-pho-bjiu* - Wood-Male-Mouse

*shing-mo-'lang* - Wood-Female-Ox

*me-pho-ta:* - Fire-Male-Tiger

*me-mo-yö* - Fire-Female-Hare, etc.

The *rapjung* system of the cycle of sixty years started in 1027 A.D. and we entered into the 17th cycle in 1987. The third year of the current cycle: *sa-mo-drül* - Earth-Male-Serpent, which happened to have a total of thirteen months because the sixth month is doubled, started on February 7, 1989 and ended on February 25, 1990.

## Lesson 9: Verb

Unlike the verbs of Indo-European languages such as English, French, etc., **Dzongkha verbs** (except for extremely rare exceptions) **do not conjugate**, which means that:

1) they do not change form to show agreement with the person and the number of the subject. Let's compare the following examples of English and Dzongkha verbs to show the difference:

	<u>English: to be</u>	<u>Dzongkha: 'ing</u>	<u>English: to know</u>	<u>Dzongkha: she-ni</u>
1st person, sing.	I <b>am</b> Sonam.	<i>nga sonam 'ing</i>	I <b>know</b> Dzongkha.	<i>nga dzongkha she</i>
2nd person	You <b>are</b> Sonam.	<i>chö sonam 'ing</i>	You <b>know</b> Dzongkha.	<i>chö dzongkha she</i>
3rd person, sing.	He <b>is</b> Sonam.	<i>kho sonam 'ing</i>	He <b>knows</b> Dzongkha.	<i>kho dzongkha she</i>

2) they do not change form according to the tenses. For example:

	<u>English: to work</u>	<u>Dzongkha: be-ni</u>	<u>English: to eat</u>	<u>Dzongkha: za-ni</u>
Present (continuous):	I <b>am working</b> .	<i>nga la: be-do</i>	He <b>is eating</b> .	<i>kho to za-de</i>
Future:	I <b>will work</b> .	<i>nga la: be-ni</i>	He <b>will eat</b> .	<i>kho to za-ni</i>
Past:	I <b>worked</b> .	<i>nga la: be-i</i>	He <b>ate</b> .	<i>kho to za-i</i>

The only exception is the verb *jo-ni*, 'to go' which has a special form *song* for the past.

Present (continuous): *kho jo-de* - He is going.

Future: *kho na:pa jo-ni* - He will go tomorrow.

Past: *kho khatsha song-i* - He went yesterday.

As will be shown below, the tenses are marked by auxiliary verbs/affixes like *do/de* (present), *ni* (future) and *i* (past) in the examples given above.

### The infinitive : verb + ni

The infinitive form of a verb is formed by adding *-ni* to the stem of the verb.

*be-ni* - to do

*nyo-ni* - to buy

*dri-ni* - to paint

*thung-ni* - to drink

*jo-ni* - to go

*she-ni* - to know

*lha-ni* - to learn

*ta-ni* - to look

### Verbal noun

The infinitive form of a verb can be used as a verbal noun.

*rimo dri-ni lha* - Learn to draw/paint.

*rimo dri-ni lakha du* - It is difficult to draw/paint.

*kho thap ja-ni lu ga* - He is fond of fighting.

*nga (lu) thung-ni ci: go* - I want something (lit. a [thing]) to drink.

- verb + **ni** (= verbal noun) (**de**)-**gi** : 'because, as'

*dari nyim sha-ni de-gi 'name same drö yö* - Because the sun is shining today, it is very hot.

*me yö-ni de-gi na dro toto du* - Because there is fire, it is warm here.

*nga la: lesha yö-ni-gi mi kom* - As I have a lot of work, I am not free.

- verb + **mi** : relative pronoun like '(the person) who', '(the thing) which', etc.

*dzongkha she-mi ci: go* - A person who knows Dzongkha is needed.

*dzongkha ma she-mi tsu* - Those who don't know Dzongkha.

*paro ze-mi di lu:m bo:m ci: 'ing* - (What is called) Paro is a wide valley.

### Compound verb

One of the characteristic features of Dzongkha is its use of compound verbs, that is, verbs which are formed by adding after a noun a common verb having a general meaning like 'to do, to make, to send, to strike', etc.

- *be-ni* - to do

*la: be-ni* - to work

*rokram be-ni* - to help

*zhipcä be-ni* - to check

*güzhap be-ni* - to respect

- *cap-ni* - to execute

*cokha cap-ni* - to repair

*jangkha cap-ni* - to count

*zhaphra cap ni* - to dance

*'nyen cap-ni* - to marry

*go(p)sha cap-ni* - to divide

- *tang-ni* - to send

*tshön tang-ni* - to paint

*'nosam tang-ni* - to think

*mep tang-ni* - to spoil

- *tap-ni* - 'to strike'

*'mönlam tap-ni* - to pray

*so tap-ni* - to bite

*pa: tap-ni* - to photograph

*seu tap ni* - to request

- *zo-ni* - to make

*charzhi zo-ni* - to plan

## Lessons 10 : Tense (1): Present and future

The tenses are formed:

- 1) by adding auxiliary verbs/suffixes after the verb.
- 2) with the help of adverbial indicators of tense.

When followed by certain auxiliary verbs/suffixes, Dzongkha verbs inflect. The most common patterns are as follows:

### Group I: Verbs ending in -p and -m.

Examples	- da	- cin	- gang
<i>cap-ni</i>	<i>cap da</i>	<i>cap pa cin</i>	<i>cap pe gang</i>
<i>pham-ni</i>	<i>pham da</i>	<i>pham pa cin</i>	<i>pham pe gang</i>

Group II : Verbs ending in -n and -ng. The consonant -m is added; in practice -n and -ng become m.

<i>jin-ni</i>	<i>ji(n)m da</i>	<i>ji(n)m pa cin</i>	<i>ji(n)m pe gang</i>
<i>len-ni</i>	<i>le(n)m da</i>	<i>le(n)m pa cin</i>	<i>le(n)m pe gang</i>
<i>'nang-ni</i>	<i>'na(ng)m da</i>	<i>'na(ng)m pa cin</i>	<i>'na(ng)m pe gang</i>
<i>thung-ni</i>	<i>thu(ng)m da</i>	<i>thu(ng)m pa cin</i>	<i>thu(ng)m pe gang</i>

Group III : Verbs ending in a vowel. This group is further divided into two types.

- pa type	<i>lha-ni</i>	<i>lhap da</i>	<i>lha pa cin</i>	<i>lha pe gang</i>
	<i>lu-ni</i>	<i>lup da</i>	<i>lu pa cin</i>	<i>lu pe gang</i>
	<i>she-ni</i>	<i>shep da</i>	<i>she pa cin</i>	<i>she pe gang</i>
	<i>go-ni</i>	<i>gop da</i>	<i>go pa cin</i>	<i>go pe gang</i>
	<i>dö-ni</i>	<i>döp da</i>	<i>dö pa cin</i>	<i>dö pe gang</i>
- wa type	<i>za-ni</i>	<i>za(w)u da</i>	<i>za wa cin</i>	<i>za (w)e gang</i>
	<i>shi-ni</i>	<i>shi(w)u da</i>	<i>shi wa cin</i>	<i>shi (w)e gang</i>
	<i>gu-ni</i>	<i>gu(w)u da</i>	<i>gu wa cin</i>	<i>gu (w)e gang</i>
	<i>dzü-ni</i>	<i>dzü(w)u da</i>	<i>dzü wa cin</i>	<i>dzü (w)e gang</i>
	<i>be-ni</i>	<i>be(w)u da</i>	<i>be wa cin</i>	<i>be (w)e gang</i>
	<i>jo-ni</i>	<i>jo(w)u da</i>	<i>jo wa cin</i>	<i>jo (w)e gang</i>
	<i>khö-ni</i>	<i>khö(w)u da</i>	<i>khö wa cin</i>	<i>khö (w)e gang</i>

At the level of spoken Dzongkha, one has to learn for each and every verb whether it inflects according to the pa type or to the wa type. One cannot guess the inflection type of a verb

ending in a vowel unless one knows its classical (Chökä) orthography which is quite distant from its present colloquial form.

### Present

- **verb** (or adjective) **alone** without any auxiliary verb/suffix.

*dari tshé ce-nga 'ing* - Today is the 15th (= full moon) day.

*kho dzongkha she* - He knows Dzongkha.

*nga lu alu sum yö* - I have three children.

*kho thap ja-ni lu ga* - He likes to fight.

However, suffixes like **me**, **be** and **ye** are often added in order to express certain personal feelings. The difference between them is very difficult to understand for a beginner and can only be learned from the native speakers of Dzongkha.

- **me** (for the first person, or for the action of which one is an eye-witness or has direct knowledge) (requires the inflected form of the verb)

*chö da leshom cap-me* - You shoot well.

*nga guto na(w)u-me* - I have a headache.

*lham di leshom tho(ng)m-me* - This shoe looks good.

*kho atara ni be(w)u-me* - He always does this.

- **be**

*nga thung-ni ci: go-be* - I want something to drink.

*nga (lu) thung-ni gani ya(ng) mingo-be* - I want nothing to drink.

- **ye** (most often after an adjective)

*kho thap ja-ni lu ga-ye* - He likes to fight.

*gong 'name same tho-ye* - The price is very high.

- **Auxiliary verbs/suffixes**

- **'ing** : characteristic or habit (requires the inflected form of the verb) = 'present simple'

*'nam bya: lu cha:p cap 'ing* - It rains in summer.

*nga doma za(w)u 'ing* - I take doma.

*nga paro lu döp 'ing* - I live in Paro.

- **do** : the activity is in progress at present = 'present continuous' (usually used for the first and second persons)

*nga wong-do* - I am coming.

*nga shi-do* - I am dying.

*chö dato la: be-do ga* - Are you working now ?

- **de** : similar to **do** (but usually only for the third person)

*cha:p cap-de* - It is raining.

*kho kha 'lap-de* - He is talking.

### Negative forms

- **mi(n)+ verb**, mostly without any suffix

*dari tshe ce-nga meng* - Today is not the 15th (= full moon) day.

*gani ya(ng) mindu* - There is nothing.

*kho thap ja-ni lu mi ga* - He does not like to fight.

*'nam gün lu cha:p mi cap* - It does not rain in winter.

*kho mi wong* - He is not coming.

*nga (lu) thung-ni mingo(-be)* - I want nothing to drink.

- **verb + ra mi + verb** = 'not at all, never'

*nga chang thung ra mi thung* - I never drink chang.

*nga kho ngo she ra mi she* - I don't know him at all.

### Interrogative forms

1) Interrogative suffix at the end of the sentence

*kho dzongkha she ga* - Does he know Dzongkha ?

*kho dato la: be-de ga* - Is he now working ?

*dari tshe ce-nga 'ing na* - Is today the 15th (= full moon) day ?

2) Interrogative word

*kho dato gaci be-de* - What is he doing now ?

*chö gaci be(w)u mo* - What are you doing ?

*ga wong-de* - Who is coming ?

*chö gate döp mo* - Where are you living ?

### Future

The future tense is formed by adding the following auxiliary verbs/suffixes to the verb.

- **Auxiliary suffixes**

- **ni** (= the infinitive form) (+ **'ing**) : intention or will of the subject

*nga 'inda dangpa lu wong-ni(-'ing)* - I will come in January.

*nga di ba jo-ni(-'ing)* - I will take this.

- **wong** (the verb 'to come', used as auxiliary verb) : probability or likelihood

*na:pa cha:p cap wong* - It should rain tomorrow.

*chö jopa(ra) dra wong* - You should be all right soon.

## Negative forms

**mi** + verb, without any auxiliary suffix: There is no difference with the present tense. Only the adverbial indicator or the context determines the tense.

*nga 'inda dangpa lu mi wong* - I will not come in January.

*nga di ba mi jo* - I will not take this.

The negative form of the sentence with the auxiliary verb **wong**:

*na:pa cha:p mi cap wong* - It will not rain tomorrow.

*kho jopa(ra) mi dra wong* - He will not be all right soon.

## Interrogative forms

### 1) Interrogative suffix

*kho 'inda dangpa lu wong-ni ga* (or *wong-ni-'ing-na*) - Will he come in January ?

*chö di ba jo-ni ga* (or *ba jo-ni-'ing-na*) - Will you take this ?

*kho jopa(ra) dra wong ga* - Will he be all right soon ?

### 2) Interrogative word

*'inda dangpa lu ga wong-ni (mo)* - Who will come in January ?

*di ga-gi ba jo-ni (mo)* - Who will take this ?

## Lessons 11: Tense (2): Past

### - Repetition of the verb + 'ing (the repeated verb takes the inflected form)

*tshön lhadrip-gi tang-ta(ng)m 'ing* - The painting has been done by the artist.

*ni kho-gi nga lu jin-ji(n)m 'ing* - He gave me this.

*khasha-di lakpä tha-thap 'ing* - This cloth has been woven by hand.

### Auxiliary suffixes

Basically there are two groups:

**I) - i** (after verbs ending in a nasal consonant: *-m, -n, -ng* and a vowel which belongs to the *wa* type inflection) / **ci** (after verbs ending in *-p*, and a vowel which belongs to the *pa* type inflection): for the first person, or for the action of which one was an eye-witness or has direct knowledge.

- *nga gi nya bom-ci: zung-i* - I caught a big fish.

- *nga la: be-i* - I did the work.

- *'män za-i* - I took the medicine.

- *kho hago-i* - He understood.

- *mo lu 'lap ci* - I told her.

- *tiru sumja trö-ci* - I paid 300 Nu.

- *kho chtshö cu-nyi-lu lhö-ci* - He arrived at twelve o'clock.

### - da-i

*nga la: be da-i* - I have done the work.

*nga gi pho:p cha: da-i* - I have broken the glass.

*dari chö ja pho:p sum thung da-i* - Today you have had (lit. 'drunk') three cups of tea.

### - tsha:-i

*dato tsha:-i* - Now it's finished.

*thung tsha:-i* - I have finished drinking.

### - (ya) so-i

*ap shi so-i* - My father died.

*phetsu pham so-i* - They were defeated.

*nyi-gi azhim di 'nyen cap-de dau ci: ya so-i* - Since my elder sister got married, one month has passed (lit. gone).

**II) - nu** : for the action of which one was not an eye-witness or one has no direct knowledge. In general, it can not be used for the first person.

*kho gi yigu ci: dri-nu* - He wrote a letter.



- **da-nu**

*demi cap da-nu* - It is locked up. (= Somebody has locked up)

*shogu pe da-nu* - The paper is torn. (= Somebody has torn the paper)

(cf. (ng) *shogu pe da-i* - I have torn the paper)

- **tsha:-nu**

*mo tha thak tsha:-nu* - She has finished weaving.

*to be tsha:-nu* - The food has been prepared (= is ready).

- **(ya) so-nu**

*mo shi so-nu* - She died.

*chö-gi nga ngo je so-nu* - You have forgotten me.

*kho chup ya so-nu* - He became rich.

### Negative forms

- **ma** + verb, without auxiliary suffixe

*tshön hładrip-gi ma tang* - The painting has not been done by the artist.

*nga kho lu ma 'lap* - I didn't tell her.

- verb + **rang ma** + verb: 'not at all, never'

*nga kho thong ra ma thong* - I have never seen him.

*nga she ra ma she* - I never knew.

### Interrogative forms

- Forms with the repetition of the verb + **'ing**:

1) Interrogative suffix **na** is added at the end of the sentence.

*tshön hładrip-gi tang-ta(ng)m 'ing-na* - Has the painting been done by the artist ?

*ni kho gi chö lu jin-ji(n)m 'ing-na* - Did he give this to you ?

*khasha-di chö-gi tha-thap 'ing-na* - Have you woven this cloth ?

2) If the question is formulated with an interrogative word, **'ing** is dropped off.

*chö nam 'nyen capcap mo* - When did you get married ?

*demi ga-gi capcap mo* - Who locked up?

*'ma di gadebe thön-thö(n)m mo* - How did you get this wound ?

- Forms with auxiliary suffixes:

1) by adding **-ga** at the end of the sentence.

*da atsitsi dra-i ga* - Are you feeling a little bit better (lit. 'cured') now ?

*chö-gi 'ya(k) thong-ci ga* - Have you seen a yak ?

2) by using one of the interrogative words

*chö-gi gaci be-i* - What did you do ?

*tiru gateci trō-ci* - How much did you pay ?

*chō dau gadeci dō-ci* - How many months did you stay ?

*dzongkha gate lhap-ci* - Where did you learn Dzongkha ?

## Lesson 12 : Imperative, conditional and conjunctive particles

### Imperative

The infinitive form of the verb expresses also the imperative.

Infinitive

*be-ni* , 'to do'

*za-ni* , 'to eat'

Imperative

*la: be* - Work. (lit. 'Do the work')

*to za* - Eat. (lit. 'Eat the food')

The following two verbs are the only exceptions which have a special form for the imperative mode.

*wong-ni* , 'to come'

*jo-ni* , 'to go'

*na sho* - Come here.

*pha: song* - Go there.

Different auxiliary verbs/suffixes can be added to the verb to express more explicitly the imperative mode:

- verb + *me*

*chö gop-da nga bo-me* - Call me when you are in need.

- verb + *da*

*lhampa madrau tön da* - Show me different types.

- verb + *sh(i)* (familiar form, rude order)

*kha jang-sh(i)* - Open your mouth.

*nga lu ja pho:p gang ba-sh(i)* - Bring me a cup of tea.

- verb + '*mare* (order)

*nga besa: jön 'mare* - Come to my place.

*gole-be 'lap 'mare* - Speak slowly.

- verb + '*nang* (polite request)

*di wa gong chung-ku ci: tön 'nang* - Please show me a cheaper one than this.

*mächa di dam 'nang* - Please pack this blanket.

- verb + *de kadrin cang* (very polite request)

*chutshö ci: lu jön-de kadrin cang* -Could you please come at one o'clock.

### Negative :

- *ma* + verb

*za penpa lu ma song* - Don't go on Friday.

*ma be* - Don't do (it/that)!

*'äma lesa ma za* - Don't take too much chilli.

*chang ma thung* - Don't drink *chang*.

## Conditional

The conditional is formed by adding the auxiliary suffix *cin* to the inflected form of the verb.

*cha:p cap pa-cin nga mi jo* - If it rains, I will not go.

*kho lu 'lap pa-cin* - If you tell him,

*chö go pa-cin nga bo me* - If you need (me), call me.

*kho lhö pa-cin nga lu 'lap 'mare* - If he arrives, inform me.

*chö na wa-cin 'mänkhang na song* - If you are sick, go to the hospital.

*ta göm nyo wa-cin leshom wong* - If you buy a mare, it will be nice.

## Conjunctive particles

- **da:** 'when' (requires the inflected form of the verb)

*cha:p cap-da* - when it rains,

*kho lu 'lap-da* - when you tell him,

*chö gop-da nga bo-me* - Call me when you need (me).

*kho lhöp-da nga lu 'lap* - When he arrives, inform me.

*chö na(w)u-da* - When you are sick,

*kho go(w)u-da leshom mi wong* - When he hears (it), it won't be good.

- **ru(ng):** 'concession'

*gade be-ru sho* - Come by all means !

*kho me(ng)-ru khä me(ng)* - Even if he is not there, it doesn't matter.

*kho dru:p me(ng)-ru dzongkha she-be* - Although he is not a Bhutanese, he knows  
Dzongkha.

- **de:** 'by (doing)', 'after', 'since'

*phajoding lu ta zhön-de jo go* - One must go to Phajoding on horseback (lit. 'by riding a  
horse').

*meto sa:p to(k)-de ba-sh(i)* - Cut fresh flowers and bring them !

*nyi azhim 'nyen cap-de dau ci: ya so-i* - Since my elder sister got married, one month  
has passed.

- **zhimle** : 'after'

*to za-zhimle jo-ge* - Let's go after eating.

*chö lok song-zhimle kho lhö-ci* -He arrived after you left (lit. 'went back').

- **ma** + verb (inflected form) + **hema** : 'before'

*to ma za (w)e hema lap chu* - Before eating, wash your hands.

*ma cho(ng)m pe hema ta* - Look before you jump.

- verb (inflected form) + **pa/wa** : "in order to"

*kho lu 'lap-pa song* - Go tell him.

*da cap-pa song* - Go and practice archery.

*la: be-wa song* - Go to work.

*nga lakhe: ci: zhu-wa wo(ng)m-i* - I have come to get a pass.

- verb (inflected form) + **gang**: 'present continuous' .

*nga da cap-pe gang 'ing* - I am shooting.

*khong ja thu(ng)m-pe gang 'ing* - They are drinking tea.

*nga dato to za-(w)e gang 'ing* - I am eating now.

*kho dato la: be-(w)e gang 'ing* - He is working now.

- verb + **go** - 'want, need, have to' (very often the suffix **-be** is added)

*ditsu go* - I want these / These are needed.

*phetsu min-go* - I don't want those / Those are not needed.

*dro min-go* - Do not get scared.

*nga (lu) thung-ni ci: go be* - I want something to drink.

*chö 'mäkhap cap go be* - You have to get an injection.

- verb + **tshu** - 'can' (capacity)

*nga la: di be tshu* - I can do this job.

*khatsha di be ma tshu* - I couldn't do this yesterday.

*chö-gi tsang-chu-de gä tshu ga* - Can you cross this river ?

*chö dzongkha 'lap tshu ga* - Can you speak Dzongkha ?

- verb + **cho** - 'can' (permission)

*pa: tap cho* - Photography is permitted.

*ta(ng)mku thung mi cho* - Smoking is prohibited.

- verb + **ge** - Let's

*tsem tse-ge* - Let's play.

*lokde je-ge* - See you (again).

- sentence + **be song**: assumption

*kho chim na yö be song* - It is likely that he is at home.

*kho she be song* - It is likely that he knows it.

- sentence + **lo** (lit. 'talk'): to quote someone else's words or to report what one has heard.

*Sonam na:pa lhö ni lo* - (I have heard that) Sonam will arrive tomorrow.

*kho di go ni lo* - (He says/I have heard that) he needs this.

- sentence + **ze** (= speech particle < ze-ni, 'to say') + verb of speech : direct speech

*Dasho gi sho ze sung-de* - Dasho says: "Come !" (= Dasho is ordering you to come)

*kho mi she ze 'lap-de* - He says: "I don't know".

## Lesson 14: Honorifics

The Dzongkha words and expressions that have been used in this manual are familiar or informal forms which are appropriate for conversations between friends or persons of equal status.

However, Dzongkha has two other levels of speech, called polite and honorific, which are used to express politeness and respect.

The most common polite form is obtained by simply adding the particle *la(:)* at the end of a sentence. For example,

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Polite</u>
Hello	<i>kuzu zangpo</i>	<i>kuzu zangpo la</i>
Yes	<i>'ing</i>	<i>'ing la</i>
No	<i>me(ng)</i>	<i>me(ng) la</i>

The words (nouns, pronouns, verbs) are identical to those of the ordinary/familiar form. The use of this polite form is highly recommended even in the daily conversation.

The honorific form is much more elaborate than the simple polite form. Each Dzongkha word (noun, pronoun and verb) has a corresponding honorific form which is different from the familiar or informal one. The honorific form must be used in reference to a person of superior position, both when speaking to and when speaking about such a person. Learning this form is very important. Otherwise, one will appear uneducated, impolite, or even rude.

Certain patterns are noticeable with respect to honorific forms and we are going to give some examples below. However, these rules don't apply systematically to all words; there is no such rule for the verbs and one has to learn in each case its corresponding honorific form.

**ku(:)** (honorific form for 'body'): the body and different parts of the body

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
body	<i>zu:</i>	<i>kuzu</i>
blood	<i>thra</i>	<i>kuthra</i>
flesh	<i>sha</i>	<i>kusha</i>
picture	<i>pa:</i>	<i>kupa:</i>

**'u(:)** (honorific form for 'head'): things connected with the head

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
(head	<i>guto</i>	<i>'u: )</i>
hair	<i>ca</i>	<i>'uca/'uthra</i>
hat	<i>zham</i>	<i>'uzha</i>

**cha(:)** (honorific form for 'hand'): things connected with or manipulated by the hand

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
(hand	<i>lap</i>	<i>cha: )</i>
fingers	<i>dzumu</i>	<i>chadzu</i>
fingernail	<i>simu</i>	<i>chasem</i>
book	<i>pecha</i>	<i>chape</i>
work	<i>la:</i>	<i>chala</i>

**zha(p)** (honorific form for 'leg'): things connected with the leg

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
(leg	<i>ka(ng)m</i>	<i>zhap )</i>
knee	<i>pumu</i>	<i>zhapu</i>
toenail	<i>simu</i>	<i>zhapsen</i>
shoes	<i>lham</i>	<i>zhapham</i>

**sö** (honorific form for 'to offer, request'): things connected with food

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
meat	<i>sha</i>	<i>sösha</i>
tea	<i>ja</i>	<i>söja</i>
butter	<i>ma:</i>	<i>söma</i>
kitchen	<i>thaptshang</i>	<i>söthap</i>

But the majority of nouns change their form completely. For example,

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
clothes	<i>gola</i>	<i>namza</i>
daughter	<i>bum</i>	<i>sem</i>
eye	<i>'mikto</i>	<i>cen</i>
face	<i>dong</i>	<i>zhe</i>
father	<i>ap</i>	<i>yap</i>
horse (riding)	<i>ta</i>	<i>chip</i>
mother	<i>'ai</i>	<i>yum</i>
mind	<i>sem</i>	<i>thu</i>
mouth	<i>kha</i>	<i>zhä</i>
name	<i>ming</i>	<i>tshän</i>
residence	<i>chim</i>	<i>zimchung</i>
son	<i>bu</i>	<i>sä</i>
tongue	<i>ce</i>	<i>ja:</i>
tooth	<i>so</i>	<i>tshem</i>



As for the verb, there are always two distinct forms: one for the ordinary speech and the other for the honorific speech. For example,

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
to come	wong-ni	jön-ni
to die	shi-ni	sha(k)-ni
to do	be-ni	dzä-ni
to eat	za-ni	zhe-ni
to get sick	na-ni	nyung-ni
to give	trö-ni	'nang-ni
to go	jo-ni	jön-ni
to know	she-ni	khen-ni
to see	ta-ni	zi-ni
to sit/stay	dö-ni	zhu-ni
to speak/tell	'lap-ni	sung-ni (the subject is a superior) zhu-ni (to a superior)
to stand (up)	long-ni	zheng-ni
to take	ba jo-ni	'nam jön-ni

#### Examples of expressions in ordinary and honorific forms

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Honorific</u>
What is your name ?	chö-gi ming gaci mo	na-gi tshän gaci zhu mo la:
Where are you going ?	chö gate jo-ni mo	na gate jön-ni mo la:
Where are you staying ?	chö gate döp mo	na gate zhup mo la:
(Please) Come in.	na(ng)-na sho	na(ng)-na jön la:
(Please) Go.	song	jön la:
(Please) Have tea.	ja thung	söja zhe la:
(Please) Sit down.	dö	zhu la:
(Please) Take (this).	ba song	'nam jön la:

## Part II: Exercises, conversations and vocabulary

### Lesson 1: Greetings

- First encounter

A *kuzu zangpo la:*

- Hello.

B *kuzu:zangpo la:*

- Hello.

A *na gate-le mo. na-gi ming gaci mo*

- Where are you from ? What is your name ?

B *nga thimphu-le 'ing. nyi(-gi) ming dorje 'ing*

- I am from Thimphu. My name is Dorje.

*de na 'ü gate-le mo. na-gi ming gaci mo*

- (Then,) where are you from and what is your name ?

A *nga \_\_\_\_\_ le 'ing. nyi gi ming \_\_\_\_\_ 'ing*

- I am from \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

- Between friends

A *kuzu zangpo (la:)*

- Hello.

B *kuzu zangpo (la:)*

- Hello.

A *chö gadebe yö. kuzu zang-be yö ga*

- How are you ? Are you fine ?

B *leshom-be yö. na gadebe yö*

- I'm fine, and you ?

A *leshom-be yö*

- I'm fine.

### Lesson 2: Offering *doma* (areca nut)

A *kuzu zangpo la:*

- Hello.

B *kuzu zangpo la:*

- Hello.

A *na doma zhe-be na*

- Do you take *doma* ?

B *nga doma za(w)u 'ing*

- Yes, I take *doma*.

[B *gong ma thri. nga doma mi za*

- I am sorry (but) I don't take *doma*.]

A *doma zhe*

- Please have some *doma*.

B *mi zhu mi zhu*

- No thank you. (lit. 'I don't take' repeated)

A *zhe wö*

- Please have (some).

B *a kadrinche. doma di leshom du*

- Thank you. This *doma* is good.

### Lesson 3: Hospitality

(A pays a visit to B)

A *kuzu zangpo la:*

- Hello (= May I come in ?)

B *kuzu zangpo la: . na(ng)-na jön*

- Hello. Please come in.

*zhu zhu*

Please sit down. (lit. 'sit' repeated)

*na gaci zhe-na*

What would you like to have ?

- A *gani ya(ng) mi zhu*  
 B *ja ci: zhe*  
 A *las de be wa-cin ja ci: zhu-ge*

- No, thank you. (lit. 'I take nothing')  
 - Please have some tea.  
 - Then I will have a (cup of) tea.

#### Lesson 4. General questions (interrogative words)

- A *di gaci mo*  
 B *di pecha 'ing*  
 A *chö gaci be i*  
 B *nga yigu dri i*

- What is this ?  
 - This is a book.  
 - What did you do ?  
 - I wrote a letter.

- A *chö nam wong-ni mo*  
 B *nga na:pa wong-ni*  
 A *chö nam song i*  
 B *nga khatsha song i*

- When are you coming ?  
 - I will come tomorrow.  
 - When did you go ?  
 - I went yesterday.

- A *kho ga mo*  
 B *kho trashi 'ing*  
 A *ani chim di ga-gi mo*  
 B *di tshering-gi (chim) 'ing*  
 A *di ga-gi be i*  
 B *di kho-gi be i*

- Who is he ?  
 - His name (lit. 'He') is Tashi.  
 - Whose house is this ?  
 - This is Tshering's (house).  
 - Who did this ?  
 - He did this.

- A *chö gate jo(w)u mo*  
 B *nga yiktshang na jo ni*  
 A *chö gate le mo*  
 B *nga paro le 'ing*

- Where are you going ?  
 - I am going to the office.  
 - Where are you from ?  
 - I am from Paro.

- A *chö gacibe song i*  
 B *nga trashi da pche-wa song-i*

- Why did you go ?  
 - I went to see Tashi.

- A *chö gadebe jo ni*  
 B *nga ka(ng)m to-be jo ni*  
 A *chö gadebe yö*  
 B *nga leshom-be yö*

- How do you get there (lit. 'go') ?  
 - I go on foot.  
 - How are you ?  
 - I am fine.

- A *chö lu alu gade(m)ci yö*  
 B *nga lu alu zhi yö*

- How many children do you have ?  
 - I have four children.

A *pecha di gong gade(m)ci mo*

B *'ngütram ce-nga 'ing*

- How much is this book ?

- It is 15 Nu.

### Lesson 5: About Bhutan

(B has just returned from Bhutan)

A *dru: -'ü di gade(be) du*

B *sacha ga toto du*

A *sidrö gade(be) du*

B *'nam bja: di 'name same drö mindu*

*deba: 'nam gün di si ra si ye*

A *drupe 'mi-tsu gade(be) du*

B *'mi leshom du*

A *dru: gi gäsa di gate mo*

B *dru: gi gäsa di thimphu 'ing*

A *thimphu throm bo:m du ga*

B *thimphu throm di 'name same bo:m mindu*

A *throm thimphu wa bo:m du ga*

B *phuntsholing throm di thimphu wa bo:m du*

- How is Bhutan ?

- It is a nice place.

- What is the climate (= temperature) ?

- In summer, it is not so hot.

- But it is extremely cold in winter.

- How are the Bhutanese ?

- They are nice people.

- What (lit. 'Where') is the capital of Bhutan ?

- The capital of Bhutan is Thimphu.

- Is Thimphu a big city ?

- Thimphu is not a very big city.

- Are there bigger cities than Thimphu ?

- Phuntsholing is bigger than Thimphu.

### Lesson 6: Shopping in the market

A *chum leshom yö ga*

B *yö yö zhe zhe*

A *ani chum 'ma:p di gade re mo*

B *tiru gu gu re 'ing*

A *gong atsi tho ye me(ng)-na.*

*atsi phap-ni me(ng) ga*

B *phap-ni meng-la. gera tiru gu gu re be tshong-de*

A *de be wa-cin keji (kg) 'nga zhu-ge*

*tshelu di na gi 'ing na*

B *'ing la. tshelu leshom yö. zhe*

A *gade re mo*

B *tiru ci: lu sum (sum) 'ing*

A *deben tiru 'nga gi zhu ge*

B *zhän gaci zhe-ni mo*

- Do you have good rice ?

- Yes I have. Please buy (lit. 'take') some.

- How much (per kg) is this red rice ?

- 9 Nu.(per kg).

- Isn't it a bit expensive ?

Can't you give (me) a discount ?

- No, I can't. Everybody is selling at 9 Nu.

- Then I will take 5 kg.

- Are these oranges yours (Are you selling them) ?

- Yes, they are good. Please buy some.

- How much are they ?

- 3 oranges for 1 Nu.

- Then, I'll take 5 Nu. worth.

- What else would you like to buy ?

A *deci ra 'ing*  
*chum da tshelu dom-de gadece mo*

B *tiru 'ngapcu (thampa) 'imbe*

A *las*

B *kadrinche*

### Vocabulary: Fruits *shing-drä*

apple, *kushu*

grape, *gündrum*

jackfruit, *dramtsi*

orange, *tshelu*

pear, *'li*

pineapple, *köng-tse:*

walnut, *ta:go*

### Vegetables *tshöse:*

bean, *semcum*

carrot, *laphu 'ma:p*

chilli, *'äma*

cucumber, *gön*

garlic, *cago(p)*

greens, *pätshe* (sag in Nepali)

mustard, *päka:*

pepper (black), *guru mecha*

pumpkin, *kakru/yam-yö*

Szechwan pepper, *ting-gä*

turnip, *yündo*

- That's all.

How much is it for the rice and oranges  
together ?

- It comes to 50 Nu.

- OK.

- Thank you.

banana, *ngang-la*

guava, *bepsiu*

mango, *amchu kuli*

peach, *kham*

persimmon, *andre*

sugarcane, *gunca*

cabbage, (*benda*) *kopi*

cauliflower, *meto kopi*

corn (maize), *geza*

eggplant (brinjal), *dolom*

ginger, *saga*

mushroom, *shamu*

onion, *gop*

potato, *kewa*

radish, *laphu*

tomato, *'lambenda*

### Lesson 7: Shopping in a general store

A *guram yö ga*

B *yö la*

A *gong gade re mo*

B *keji (kg) lu tiru cu-tham re 'ing*

A *keji (kg) sum zhu ge*

*gongdo yö ga*

B *yö la*

- Do you have sugar ?

- Yes, I have.

- How much is it?

- 10 Nu. per kg.

- I'll take 3 kg.

- Do you have eggs ?

- Yes, I have.

- A *sa:p 'ing-na*  
 B *sa:p 'ing. dari lhöp-ci ra 'ing*  
 A *gade re mo*  
 B *dazun lu tiru cu-nyi re 'ing*  
 A *dazun pche zhu ge*  
   *ape kayö atsi tön 'nang*  
 B *jami gi kayö 'ing. 'name same leshom du.*  
   *ci: zhe*  
 A *gade re mo*  
 B *tiru ce-nga be zhe*  
 A *de be wa-cin cha ci: zhu ge*  
   *gayera dom-de gadeci mo*  
 B *gayera dom-de tiru drukcu redün 'imbe*

- Are they fresh ?  
 - Yes, they just arrived today.  
 - How much ?  
 - 12 Nu. per dozen  
 - I will take half dozen.  
 - Please show me that cup.  
 - This is a Chinese cup. It is very good.  
   Please take one.  
 - How much is it?  
 - Take it for 15 Nu.  
 - Then I will take a pair.  
 - How much (do I owe you) in total ?  
 - In total, it comes to 67 Nu.

### Lesson 8: Asking time

- A *dato chutshö gadeci mo*  
 B *chutshö dru da karma cu-tham 'ing*  
   *chutshö dru da karma ce-nga 'ing*  
   *chutshö pche da dün [dru da pche] 'ing*  
   *chutshö dru da karma zhip-cu zhe-'nga 'ing*  
   *chutshö dün dung-wa: karma cu-tham 'ing*  
 A *na gi yiktshang dropa chutshö gadeci lu*  
   *go pche(w)u mo*  
 B *dropa chutshö gu lu pche(w)u 'ing*  
 A *pchiru chutshö gadeci lu go dam mo*  
 B *pchiru chutshö 'nga lu go dam-'ing*  
 A *na gi zhusa le yiktshang tshuntshö*  
   *karma gadeci go mo*  
 B *ka(ng)m to-be jo(w)u da karma nyishu tsa 'nga go(w)u me*

- What time is it now ?  
 - It is ten past six.  
 - It is a quarter (lit. '15 minutes') past six.  
 - It is half past six.  
 - It is six forty-five.  
 - It is ten to seven.  
 - At what time does your office open in  
   the morning ?  
 - It opens at 9 AM.  
 - At what time does it close in the evening ?  
 - It closes at 5 PM.  
 - How many minutes does it take from  
   your house to the office ?  
 - It takes 25 minutes on foot.

### Lesson 9: Asking directions

#### 1. In the street

- A *'lopön. dremkhang gate 'ing-na*  
 B *na-le ya: metra ja deci thrang-de jön*  
  
*de-le 'ye-khatu go:-de atsitsi ma: jön*

- Please, where is the post office ?  
 - From here you walk straight up for about  
   100 meters.  
 - Then you turn right and go down a little bit.

*de-le 'yön-khatu go:-da chim bo:m ci:*

*lam gi 'yön-khatu lu yö*

*dremkhang di ani 'ing*

A *kadrinche la*

## 2. In the office

A *dochen gi yiktshang gate mo*

B *dochen gi yiktshang de thoka 'ing*

*thoka lhöp-da-lu 'ye-khatu-le jön*

A *chapsang gate yö*

B *chapsang de woktho 'ing*

*woktho jön-da-lu 'yön-khatu 'ing*

## Vocabulary: Buildings

altar(-room), *chosham*

bank, *'ngü:khang*

conference hall, *tshokhang*

factory, *zokhang/thrukhang*

guest house, *gön-chim*

hotel, *zakhang*

hut, *ba:go*

library, *pedzö(khang)*

palace, *phodrang*

restaurant, *zakhang*

shop, *tshongkhang*

temple, *lhakhang*

- Then when you turn left, there is a big building on the left of the road.

- This is the post office.

- Thank you.

- Where is the office of the director ?

- The director's office is upstairs.

- When you get upstairs, turn to the right.

- Where is the rest room ?

- The rest room is downstairs.

- When you go down it is on the left side.

airport, *namdru-thang*

chorten, *chöten*

emporium, *lazo tshongkhang*

fort/castle, *dzong*

hospital, *'mänkhang*

house, *chim*

kitchen, *thaptshang*

office, *yiktshang*

press, *parkhang*

school, *'lopdra*

teahouse, *jakhang*

toilet, *chapsang*

## 3. Cardinal directions

A *trashigang sacho gate-khatu mo*

B *trashigang sha:-khatu 'ing*

- In which direction is Tashigang ?

- Tashigang is to the east.

## Vocabulary: Directions

direction, *(sa)cho*

east, *sha:*

north, *jang*

north-east, *jang-sha:*

south-east, *lho-sha:*

west, *nup*

south, *lho*

north-west, *jang-nup*

south-west, *lho-nup*

## Lesson 10: Telephone

1

- A *la 22573 (double-two-five-seven-three)'ing-na la* - Hello, is it 22573 ?  
B *'ing-la* - Yes.  
A *sonam zhu yō ga la* - Is Sonam there ?  
B *yō la* - Yes, she is.  
A *sonam atsi(tsi) jā-ge* - May I speak (lit. 'meet') to Sonam ?  
B *atsi zhu la, sonam bo-ge* - Please hold on. I will call Sonam.  
C *sonam zhu do la* - Sonam speaking.  
A *kuzu zang po nga trashi zhu do* - Hello, this is Tashi speaking.

2

- A *naktshā lekhung 'ing-na la* - Is this the Department of Forests ?  
B *'ing-la* - Yes.  
A *dochen wokma zhu yō ga la* - Is the Deputy Director in the office ?  
B *ma jōn la, na ga(le) sung mo la* - No, he has not arrived. (May I know) who is speaking ?  
A *nga sheri lekhung na(ng)-le trashi zhu do* - This is Tashi from the Department of Education.  
*drasho jō(n)m-da 22564 na(ng)-lu atsi kadrin cang da* - When Dasho arrives, please ring me up at 22564.  
B *las la* - Yes(, I will).

## Lesson 11: Family

1

- A *mo na-gi gaci pho-ni mo* - How is she related to you ?  
B *mo nyi-gi tsham 'ing*  
*mo nyi-gi azhim gi-bum 'ing* - She is my niece.  
A *na lu tshau da tsham zhān yō ga* - She is the daughter of my elder sister.  
B *zhān ya(ng) yō. nyi-gi phogem lu* - Do you have other nephews and nieces ?  
*bu ci: da bum ci: yō* - Yes, I have (some) others. My elder  
*de le nyi nocu lu bum ci: yō.* brother has one son and one daughter.  
*de num lu alu me(ng)* - My younger brother has one daughter, and  
*dom-de-gi tshau ci: da tsham sum yō* my younger sister doesn't have any children.  
- In total I have one nephew and three nieces.



2

A *na lu alu yō ga*

B *la nga lu bu ci: da bum ci: yō*

A *bu de lo gademci mo*

B *kho dato lo ce-nga 'ing*

A *na gi azhim 'nyen cap-ci ga*

B *mo 'nyen cap-de dau ci: ya so-i*

A *na gi akhu lu bum yō ga*

B *la bum 'nyi yō*

### Vocabulary : Family and relations

aunt, *amcum*

baby, *alu meche*

brother (younger), *nocu*

child, *alu*

daughter-in-law, *'nam*

father, *ap(a)*

girl, *bum*

grandmother, *ang-ge:*

man, *phoja/phoge:*

niece, *tsham*

person, *'mi*

sister (elder), *azhim*

sister (younger, of a man), *sim*

son, *bu*

uncle (maternal), *azhang*

wife, *'nem/netshal/amsu*

- Do you have children ?

- Yes, I have one son and one daughter.

- How old is the boy ?

- The boy is fifteen years old.

- Has your elder sister got married ?

- She got married a month ago. (lit. 'Since she got married, one month pas passed')

- Does your paternal uncle have a daughter ?

- Yes, he has two daughters.

brother (elder), *phogem*

boy, *bu*

daughter, *bum*

family, *zatshe*

friend, *totssha(ng)/charo*

grandfather, *age:*

husband, *'map/phoja*

mother, *'ai*

nephew, *tshau*

relative, *pinchal/nyeo*

sister (younger, of a woman), *num*

son-in-law, *'map*

uncle (paternal), *akhu*

woman, *amsu*

### Lesson 12: Health and common illnesses

1

A *kuzu zangpo la:*

B *kuzu zangpo la:*

A *na gadebe yō kuzu zang-be yō ga*

B *dari atsi zu: de toto meng*

A *gaci na(w)u mo*

B *guto na(w)u-'ing*

- Hello.

- Hello.

- How are you ? Are you fine ?

- Today I don't feel well.

- What are you suffering from ?

- I have a headache.

- A 'män za-i ga  
 B 'män za-i deba: dra ni minu  
 A de be(w)u-cin 'mäkhang na jo(w)u-be  
 drungtsho lu tön

2

- A chö gaci na(w)u mo  
 B nga pho na awa sha de-le droba cap-me  
 A nam-le na-na(w)u mo  
 B khatsha pchiru-le na-na(w)u 'ing

- A 'mäkhap ci: cap go-be  
 de-le 'män ditshu za  
 tsagä ma 'lang chö jopa(ra) dra wong

3

- A chö gaci na(w)u mo  
 B nga zu: 'name same ya(w)u me  
 A gate ya(w)u mo  
 B lap ya(w)u me  
 A chö (gi) lap ta-ge mo  
 chö gi nye di kong zumci: du  
 zu: chu chu-be ani 'män di ya sa-lu 'u  
 di-le pha: zu: tsang toto-be dö-go

- B las kadrinche-la

### Vocabulary: Parts of the body

abdomen, *phocum*  
 beard, *jamsho*  
 body, *zu:*  
 brain, 'lep  
 buttocks, *abu*  
 chin, *mangkhe*  
 eye, 'mito  
 finger, *dzum(a)*

- Have you taken (any) medicine ?  
 - I have taken medicine but I am not cured.  
 - Then go to the hospital and see a doctor.

- What are you suffering from ?  
 - I have a stomachache, diarrhoea and fever.  
 - Since when have you been feeling sick ?  
 - I have been feeling sick since yesterday evening.  
 - You have to get an injection.  
 - Then take these medicines.  
 - Don't worry. You will be all right soon.

- What are you suffering from ?  
 - My body is itching very much.  
 - What part of your body (literally 'where') is itching ?  
 - (My) hands are itching.  
 - Let me see your hands.  
 - This (lit. 'Your illness') looks like scabies.  
 - Take a bath and apply this medicine to the itchy parts.  
 - From now on, you will have to keep yourself clean.  
 - Yes(, I will do). Thank you.

back, *ge:p*  
 blood, *thra*  
 bone, *ruto*  
 breast, *om*  
 chest, *bjangkho*  
 ear, 'namco  
 face, *dong*  
 flesh, *sha*

foot, *ka(ng)m*  
 hand, *lap*  
 head, *guto*  
 heel, *ti:m*  
 joint, *tshi:to*  
 leg, *ka(ng)m*  
 mouse, *kha*  
 nail, *simu/si:m*  
 nose, *nhapa*  
 pus, *'na*  
 skin, *pako*  
 testicle, *lhip*  
 tongue, *ce*  
 throat, *köm*  
 vein, *tsa*

forehead, *pceu*  
 hair, *ca*  
 heart, *do-nying /dong-hing*  
 intestine, *juma*  
 knee, *pumo*  
 lip, *chip*  
 moustache, *jau*  
 neck, *ke /tako* (back)  
 penis, *je*  
 shoulder, *pcata*  
 stomach, *phou*  
 thigh, *'ledu*  
 tooth, *so*  
 vagina, *tu*  
 waist, *kep*

### Lesson 13: Clothes

A *tshongpön go tsemtshem yö ga*

B *yö la go gadem zhe ni*

A *bumthang mathra gi (go) yö ga*

B *yö la tsho ye leshom yö thakhäm ye  
 leshom ci: gi thathap 'ing*

A *gong gademci mo*

B *tongthra ci: 'ing*

A *phoja gi tögo da kera ya yö ga*

B *yö la jache gi kera da bura gi tögo yö*

A *gong gade re mo*

B *kera di-lu 'ngütram 'nyija da tögo lu  
 'ngütram cikja 'ngapcu 'ing*

A *las de be wa-cin kera ci: da tögo ci: ya zhu ge*

B *las kadrinche la gayera dom-de-gi  
 'ngütram cikdong sumja 'ngapcu 'imbe*

- Do you have a ready made *go* ?

- Yes. What kind of *go* do you want (literally take) ?

- Do you have (a *go*) of Bumthang mathra ?

- Yes. This is of good dye and has been woven by a good weaver.

- How much is it ?

- It is 1 000 Nu.

- Do you also have a man's shirt and belt ?

- Yes. I have a woolen belt and a *bura* (= raw silk) shirt.

- How much are they ?

- The belt is 200 Nu. and the shirt is 150 Nu.

- Then I'll also take a belt and a shirt.

- Thank you. The total comes to Nu. 1 350.

## Vocabulary: Wearing apparel

belt, *kerá*  
bracelet, *dopcu*  
brooch chain, *japtha*  
dress (female), *kira*  
earring, *sincu*  
hat, *zham*  
ornament, *gencha*  
scarf (ceremonial, for men), *kapni/kapne*  
shirt (man's), *tōgo*  
socks, *'omsu*

blouse (woman's), *onju*  
brooch (attaching a woman's dress), *koma*  
clothes, *gola*  
dress (male), *go*  
finger ring, *dzuki*  
jacket (woman's), *tōgo*  
sword, *pata(ng)*  
scarf (ceremonial, for women), *rachu*  
shoes, *lham*

## Lesson 14: Invitation to a dinner

### 1. Invitation

A *na:pa pchiru chala: gani yang me(ng) ga*

- Don't you have any work tomorrow evening ?

B *gani yang me(ng)*

- I have nothing.

A *de be wa-cin na:pa pchiru tsho zhe-wa nga besa: jōn*

- Then, please come to my place for dinner tomorrow evening.

B *mi zhu*

- No, thank you.

A *jōn wō*

- Please come.

B *las de be wa-cin chutshō gademci lu wong-na*

- Thank you. Then at what time shall I come ?

A *chutshō dru deci lu jōn*

- Please come around six o'clock.

B *las na:pa pchiru je-ge*

- All right. See you tomorrow evening.

### 2. Next day

A *kuzu zangpo la:*

- Hello.

B *kuzu zangpo la:*

- Hello.

A *na(ng)-na jōn na zhu*

- Please come in. Please sit down (lit. 'here').

*na chapchu gaci zhe-ni mo*

- What would you like to drink (lit. 'What drink do you take') ?

*ara, chang, changkō na(ng)-le gaci zhe-ni mo*

- There are *ara, chang, and changkō (chang cooked with egg)*. (lit. 'What do you take out of .....?')

B *chang ci: zhu-ge*

- I will take a (cup of) *chang*.

*chang di 'name same zhīm toto du*

- This *chang* is very tasty.

A *da tsho zhe-ge me(ng)-na*  
 B *las*  
 A *'name same leshom gani yang drang-ni minu*  
*to phaksha pa: 'äma datsi nake-gi tshöm*  
*'äze camci-ra 'ing*

*di be-ru drom-be zhe*

B *'name same chodri ke-nu*

A *leshom-be zhe-i ga*

B *'name same soera zhu-i kadrinche*  
*da go:m zhu-ge*

A *na jön-de 'name same sem ga-i*  
*leshom-be lok jön*  
*na:pa-le je-ge*

#### Vocabularie: Food and drinks

beef, *no:sha*

butter, *ma:*

cheese, *datsi*

chilli powder, *äp-pchi*

curry, *tshöm*

egg, *gongdo*

flour, *pchi*

liquor (local), *ara*

meat, *sha*

oil, *makhu*

rice, *chum*

soup, *thüp*

tea, *ja*

tea (butter - ), *su:ja*

water, *chu*

- Dinner is served (lit. 'Let's now have dinner')

- Yes.

- There is nothing specially tasty to offer.

- There are only rice, pork, emadatsi (chilli cooked with cheese), fiddle-heads curry, chilli salad.

- However please eat well.

- You have prepared such a feast. (lit. It imposed much preparation for you)

- Have you eaten well ?

- I have received such a treat, thank you.

- Now may I take leave ?

- I'm very happy that you came.

- Please be careful on your way home.

- See you soon (lit. 'from tomorrow').

beer (local), *chang*

breakfast, *drop(a) ja*

chicken, *bjasha*

curd, *zho*

dinner, *pchiru to /tsho* (honorific)

fish(meat), *nya(sha)*

food, *to /zhego* (honorific)

lunch, *nyima to /seu* (honorific)

milk, *om*

pork, *pha(k)sha*

rice (cooked), *to*

sugar, *goram*

tea (black), *jadang*

tea (with sugar), *'nga:ja*

wheat, *ka:*

