

# A Grammar of Lepcha

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative marker
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
AST	assertive particle
AUTH	authorative particle
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare
CMP	completive auxiliary
CRT	certainty particle
D	dual
DAT	dative suffix
DEF	definite article
DSC	discovery particle
DUB	dubitative particle
ed.	editor
eds.	editors
et al	<i>et alii</i> , and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , and the rest
EXH	exhaustive auxiliary
FCT	factitive marker
GEN	genitive suffix
GER	gerund marker
IFR	inferential particle
IND	individuative suffix
INF	infinitival marker
LOC	locative suffix
n.	noun
NEG	negative marker
NPR	non-preterite tense marker
num.	numeral
OBL	oblique form
P	plural

## ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

pf.	prefix
PL.H	human plural suffix
PL.NH	non-human plural suffix
PRF	perfect auxiliary
PRG	progressive tense marker
pron.	pronoun
PSB	possibility particle
PTC	participle
Q	interrogative particle
REP	reported speech particle
REQ	request particle
RES	resultative auxiliary
S	singular
sal.	salutation
sf.	suffix
v.	verb
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> , or by substitution
vs.	versus
[ ]	phonetic transcription; analytical note
//	phonological transcription
< >	morphological transcription
<i>italics</i>	transliteration
~	alternates (allomorphs, allophones)
–	word-internal morpheme boundary or boundary between a word and an affix in glosses
·	syllable boundary in phonetic transcription
-	syllable boundary in transliteration
⓪	vowel sign in Lepcha orthography
Ⓢ	consonant sign in Lepcha orthography
Ⓣ	vowel or consonant sign in Lepcha orthography



## ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Nepali is transliterated from the devanāgarī script conventionally in accordance with Indological tradition:

	a		ā	
	i		ī	
	u		ū	
		ṛ		
	e		ai	
	o		au	
	ṁ		ḥ	
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
t	th	d	dh	n
p	ph	b	bh	m
y	r	l	v	
	ś	ṣ	s	
		h		

The modern pronunciations of Dzongkha and Dränjoke are given in Roman Dzongkha, the official system for the phonological representation of Dzongkha, described in van Driem 1998.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Lepcha is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Sikkim, Darjeeling district in West Bengal in India, in Ilām district in Nepal, and in a few villages of Samtse district in south-western Bhutan. The tribal homeland of the Lepcha people is referred to as ལྷ་ཅཱེ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *ne máyel lyáng* ‘hidden paradise’ or ལྷ་ཅཱེ་ཅཱེ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *ne máyel málúk lyáng* ‘land of eternal purity’. Most of the areas in which Lepcha is spoken today were once Sikkimese territory. The kingdom of Sikkim used to comprise all of present-day Sikkim and most of Darjeeling district. Kalimpong, now in Darjeeling district, used to be part of Bhutan, but was lost to the British and became ‘British Bhutan’ before being incorporated into Darjeeling district. The Lepcha are believed to be the aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim.

Today the Lepcha people constitute a minority of the population of modern Sikkim, which has been flooded by immigrants from Nepal. Although the Lepcha themselves estimate their number of speakers to be over 50,000, the total number is likely to be much smaller. According to the 1991 Census of India, the most recent statistical profile for which the data have been disaggregated, the total number of mother tongue Lepcha speakers across the nation is 29,854. While their distribution is largely in Sikkim and the northern districts of West Bengal, there are no reliable speaker numbers for these areas. In the Darjeeling district there are many Lepcha villages particularly in the area surrounding the small town of Kalimpong. There are reportedly roughly a hundred Lepcha households in Ilām, mainly in the villages Nāmsālīn, Phikkal, Kolbuñ, Pañckanyā, Kanyām, Śrī Antu and Cisopānī, and approximately a thousand Lepcha speakers in Samtse District, in Denchukha north of the ’Amochu in Bhutan (van Driem 2001: 819). Although Lepcha is unmistakably a Tibeto-Burman language, its exact position within Tibeto-Burman is still unclear.

The English name ‘Lepcha’ derives from Nepali *lāpce* or *lāpcā*, which originally had the derogatory connotation of ‘inarticulate

speech'. Nowadays, the term 'Lepcha' is widely used without this connotation. The Lepcha call themselves རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *mútuncí róngkup rumkup* 'children of the Róng and of God', or simply རོང་ཁྱེད་ *róngkup* 'children of the Róng'. Alternatively, the Lepcha people may call themselves རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *róng lágít* 'the Róng tribe'. The Lepcha word for 'language' is རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *láríng*, and the Lepcha call their own language རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *róngríng*.

The Lepcha divide themselves into four main groups according to the region they inhabit. The Lepcha from Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik and Darjeeling are known as རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *támsángmú*, the Lepcha from Sikkim are called རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *renjóngmú*. The smaller group of Lepcha living in the Ilām district of Nepal are known as རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *lílammú* and the Lepcha who live in རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *prolyáng* 'Bhutan' are referred to as རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *promú*. The Lepcha of Kalimpong, though formerly part of Bhutanese territory, are Támsángmú and not Promú. There is some debate over whether the Lepcha from Kurseong, Darjeeling and Mirik should belong to the Renjóngmú or the Támsángmú Lepcha, as some people use the name Támsángmú strictly for Lepcha living in and around Kalimpong.

The four groups do not represent four different dialects; although there are regional differences between the Lepcha spoken in different areas, these differences are largely lexical. The Lepcha spoken by the Renjóngmú is generally more influenced by Dränjoke than the Lepcha spoken by the Támsángmú, which in itself is more influenced by Nepali than the Lepcha spoken by the Renjóngmú. Since there is a lot of mobility between Sikkim and Darjeeling district, with children going to school or college or finding jobs in areas different from where their parents live, the regional influences are not always straightforward. However, the sense of regional identity is strong enough, buttressed by a number of real cultural differences, between the Renjóngmú and the Támsángmú to make the distinction between these major groups within the Lepcha speaking community a vital one.

In Sikkim, Lepcha is one of eleven official languages. Lepcha is taught in schools, there is a textbook department that develops official learning materials, there is a Lepcha edition of a government newspaper, the Sikkim Herald, and the government radio station broadcasts news bulletins and cultural programmes in the Lepcha language. A special area in North Sikkim holds the རོང་ཁྱེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ Dzongú [*zónggú*] Lepcha reserve, a Lepcha conservation area where but few outsiders have

been allowed to settle. In the Darjeeling district, the Lepcha have had to struggle to get official status in order to receive special benefits and to be able to have air time on the official radio stations. The Lepcha Association, which is a social and cultural organisation with several different branches and chapters in which all Lepchas have organised themselves, coordinates evening classes in the Lepcha language and other social and cultural initiatives, such as festivals and archery competitions.

The Lepcha are divided into various clans or families known as ཏུལ་ *putsho* and each clan has its own ཨ་ *dâ* ‘lake’ and ལུ་ *cú* ‘mountain peak’. The *cú* are regularly honoured in ལུ་ རྟེན་ལུ་ *cú rumfát* ‘mountain worship’ ceremonies. In the Kalimpong area, the origin of the clan names is traditionally explained as follows: when the evil king མལ་ལཱ་ལྷ་ *hlaso múng* ‘Lhasa Devil’ was killed by རྩེ་ལཱ་ལྷ་ *támsáng thing* ‘Lord Támsáng’, then Lord Támsáng expressed his gratitude to 108 men by bestowing upon each of them an honorary title, as well as placing each of them under the protection of a specific lake and mountain peak. The honorary titles developed into clan names, such as ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *lúksómmú*, ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *simíkmú*, ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *sadámú*. Although most Lepcha know to which *putsho* they belong, they do not always know the corresponding *dâ* and *cú*. Today the full clan name may be shortened, e.g. *Simik* from ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *simíkmú*, anglicised and shortened, e.g. *Fonying* from རྩེ་ལཱ་ལྷ་ རྩེ་ལཱ་ལྷ་ *fonyung rumsóngmú*, or the clan name may be substituted by the generic epithet ‘Lepcha’, e.g. *Dorji Tshering Lepcha*.

The native Lepcha female dress, ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *dumdem*, also spelt ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *dumdyám*, is usually made of smooth cotton or silk and consists of one large piece of material that is folded over one shoulder, pinned at the other shoulder and held in place with a waistband over which part of the remaining material hangs. The ankle-length *dumdem* is worn over a long-sleeved blouse, which may be of a contrasting colour. The native male dress is knee-length and consists of a multicoloured hand-woven cloth called ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *dumprá* ‘male dress’, which is pinned together at one shoulder and held in place by a waistband. The *dumprá* is usually worn over a simple white shirt and knee-length trousers. The men wear the ལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *thyáktuk* ‘cap’, a flat round hat with stiff black velvet sides and a softer top of coloured material with a knot in the centre. The more traditional hat, now rarely seen, is made of bamboo and rattan strips and is cone-shaped with a narrow brim.

The Lepcha are known as excellent weavers and they weave the ༄) *dum* ‘cloth’ for the *dumprá* themselves. The Lepcha are also famous for their unique knowledge of the medicinal properties of local plants. Bamboo, ༄) *po*, plays an important role in Lepcha life and the Lepcha sometimes refer to themselves as the ‘brothers of the bamboo’, because of their skilful use of various kinds of bamboo and rattan in building houses, weaving baskets, constructing bridges, rafts, fences and making bows, arrows and all sorts of household utensils.

The central religious roles in the Lepcha community are traditionally occupied by the ༄) *mun* and ༄) *bóngthíng*, who both function as shamans. The *bóngthíng* is traditionally a male shaman who presides at recurring religious ceremonies and seasonal festivals and may heal acute illness. The *mun*, often but not necessarily a female shaman, is a healer who exorcises demons, helps to heal illness and guides souls to the afterlife. It is possible for a *bóngthíng* to develop into a *mun*, in Sikkim such healers are known as ༄) *padem*. In the eighteenth century, the Lepcha people were converted to Buddhism, although indigenous Lepcha shamanism managed to coexist with Buddhist customs and beliefs. Both Buddhist lamas and Lepcha *bóngthíngs* preside at many important ceremonies in Lepcha life, each to perform their own rituals. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, in the Darjeeling district a significant number of Lepcha people have converted to Christianity. Many Christian Lepcha people have lost their language and have distanced themselves from the old shamanistic rituals and beliefs. This stance occasionally gives rise to tension between Buddhist and Christian Lepcha.

The entire complex of Lepcha myths, legends, fables and fairytales that has been orally transmitted throughout the centuries is known as ༄) *lúngten sung* ‘mythology, legends’. The Lepcha have their own indigenous script which dates back to the 18th century, explained in the next chapter. Although many written Lepcha texts are adaptations of Tibetan Buddhist literature, they clearly display a Lepcha character. Further research is required in order to determine the precise nature of the influence of Lepcha oral traditions, regional folkloristic influences and Tibetan Buddhism on Lepcha literature (Plaisier 2003b, Klafkowski 1983: 172).

Archibald Campbell published a short list of Lepcha words in 1840. In 1842, the independent clergyman William Start brought more than twenty German missionaries to Darjeeling in order to start



a Christian mission post there. Although the initiative was not a lasting success, William Start and his colleague Karl Gottlieb Niebel did run a school for Lepcha children in Tukvár, near Darjeeling, for some time and translated parts of the Bible into Lepcha (Start and Niebel 1849, 1872). When Start returned to England in 1852, Niebel continued his missionary work in the area. A commemorative plaque in St. Columba's Church in Darjeeling reads: '1865. Karl G. Niebel, 23 years translator with the Lepcha, died' (Perry 1997: 31). Some of the other missionaries that Start had brought over settled in the region and started up various businesses. Joachim Stölke, for example, became a tea planter, as did his sons John and William Stölke, who together wrote an as yet unpublished extensive Lepcha-English dictionary around 1900.

At around the same time that William Start became interested in the Darjeeling area, Colonel George Byres Mainwaring of the Bengal Staff Corps made his first visit to Darjeeling. The Lepcha customs and way of life had a great impact on Mainwaring, who saw all the traits of Lepcha culture he so admired reflected in their language. He was the first to write a grammar of Lepcha, which was published in 1876. Mainwaring worked on a Lepcha dictionary as well, the manuscript of which was edited and published in 1898 by Albert Grünwedel after Mainwaring's death. Mainwaring's work has been of pivotal importance for the survival of the Lepcha language, although it has also been criticised because of its strong latinized bias.

Apart from editing Mainwaring's dictionary, Albert Grünwedel published translations of Lepcha texts based on Tibetan sources. Lawrence Waddell published an article with remarks on a number of Lepcha place names in 1892, and in an article in 1899 he translated and explained nine Lepcha songs. In his account of Tibetan Buddhism, Waddell (1895) also described Lepcha religious practices. These works were followed by different short accounts of the Lepcha language by Schott (1881), Drouin (1901) and Feer (1898).

Several studies on Lepcha culture or aspects thereof have been published, such as those by Stocks (1925), Morris (1938), Gorar (1938), Hermanns (1954) and later Klafkowski (1980, 1983), Thakur (1988) and Chattopadhyay (1990). The Austrian tibetologist René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz published extensively on the religion of the Lepcha until his early death in 1959. The most important anthropological

study of the Lepcha people and their culture remains the monumental work by Halfdan Siiger and Jørgen Rischel, published in 1967.

Notable 20th century publications on the Lepcha language consist of studies on the field of classification (Benedict 1972, Shafer 1955, Forrest 1962, Bodman 1988), orthography and inconsistencies in spelling (Haarh 1959, Sprigg 1983, 1989, 1997, 1998, Chakraborty 1978) and phonology (Sprigg 1966a, 1996b, Bodman 1989). In 1966, Prabhakar Sinha wrote an unpublished grammar of Lepcha as a Ph.D. dissertation at Deccan College in Pune.

Only after writing the present grammar was I able to understand much of Mainwaring's descriptions, shrouded as they are behind its latinate veil. The same applies *a fortiori* to the unpublished dissertation written by Sinha, which contains numerous lists but is not exceedingly insightful and usually omits descriptions of the meanings of grammatical morphemes. The articles by Haarh, Bodman and especially Sprigg are useful studies of highly specific aspects of the language.

The Lepcha Textbook Department of the Government of Sikkim and the various Lepcha Associations of Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Sikkim have been publishing periodicals, books, plays and collections of poetry in Lepcha for decades. The Lepcha author Arthur Foning published his influential book *Lepcha, My Vanishing Tribe* in 1987, and the book was reprinted in 2003. Two other outstanding Lepcha scholars, ཁྲུལ་པོ་ཐུགས་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ Khárpú Támsáng and འཇུག་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ Dóngtshen Luksóm, have both published grammar textbooks of Lepcha written in Lepcha, i.e. Támsáng (1978), Luksóm (1981), as well as other studies. These grammar books should not be seen as comprehensive grammatical descriptions of the Lepcha language, but rather as language textbooks. Both books are of a prescriptive nature, apparently written with an audience of language learners in mind. Although both grammars appear to be based on Mainwaring's grammar of 1876, Luksóm follows Mainwaring much less closely than Támsáng does and offers several original and insightful discussions and examples.

Several dictionaries of the Lepcha language have been compiled (Grünwedel 1898a, Cemjong 1970, Kumar 1978). Khárpú Támsáng's magnificent *Lepcha English Encyclopedic Dictionary*, published in 1980, is indispensable to anyone working on Lepcha. In 1983, a *Lepcha Hindi English Dictionary* was compiled by Dóngtshen Luksóm. In 1996, an *English to Lepcha Dictionary* was published by the emi-

nant Lepcha authors ཡུ་ཤིཔ་མུ་ Úgen Shipmú, ཨི་ལཱ་ ལཱ་ལཱ་ Karma Lode Righimú, ལཱ་ལཱ་ ལཱ་ལཱ་ Nakú Tshering Likmú and ལཱ་ལཱ་ ལཱ་ལཱ་ Dorji Wángdi Kunchúdyangmú.

Ever since its first issue in 1997, the quarterly Lepcha bilingual news magazine ལཱ་ལཱ་ *Aachuley* [ácu] published by the Lepcha Literary Organisation in Kalimpong and edited by ལཱ་ལཱ་ ལཱ་ལཱ་ Lyáng-sóng Támsáng, has proven to be an important forum for contributions on Lepcha language and culture written by authors from all over the world.

The present book is a descriptive study of the Lepcha language. The data for this study were collected during several pleasant sojourns amongst the cheerful Lepcha people in Kalimpong and Sikkim between 1994 and 1998. During my research, I also investigated the history and origins of old Lepcha texts. The results of this investigation have appeared in the form of a catalogue describing the unique collection of Lepcha manuscripts kept in Leiden, the world's largest collection of Lepcha texts. This catalogue also contains an introduction to Lepcha literary history and a survey of the smaller collections of Lepcha manuscripts in London, Gangtok and Vienna.



## CHAPTER TWO

### PHONOLOGY AND ORTHOGRAPHY

This chapter is concerned with the organisation of sounds as linguistic units in the Lepcha language. In this chapter, the phonemes of Lepcha are represented both in the romanisation used throughout this book, as well as in a phonetic transcription in the International Phonetic Alphabet. The phonetic transcription is given between square brackets. In example sentences, the original Lepcha orthography is included. The romanisation used in this book is in fact a transliteration of the native Lepcha orthography, which is faithful to the facts of the traditional orthography. Since the transliteration is consistent with the way text is written in traditional orthography, it remains possible at all times to derive the spelling in original Lepcha orthography from the transliteration. Moreover, the use of the transliteration eases comparisons to transcribed Lepcha forms used in other publications. The transliteration used here is largely phonological, the few phonological ambiguities that arise from the transliteration are discussed in this chapter. In the chosen transliteration, syllable boundaries in multisyllabic words are indicated by a hyphen only in those cases where they cannot be predicted on the basis of the phonotactic rules described in this chapter, or when it is necessary to separate phoneme symbols which might otherwise be read as a digraph for another phoneme, e.g. ལྷ་ཁྱེ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *lúk-hróng*, ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *zúk-lât*. If a syllable ends in a vowel the syllable boundary is not indicated, e.g. ལྷ་ལྷ་ *lára*, ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *lámlem*, ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *lákrim*. In phonetic transcriptions, syllable boundaries are indicated with the symbol [·]. In glossed example sentences, a dash [-] is used to indicate a word-internal morpheme boundary or the boundary between a word and an affix.

## 2.1 Vowels

Lepcha has eight phonemic vowels, symbolised as *i* or *í* for [i], *e* for [e~ε], *u* for [u], *a* or *â* for [ə], *á* for [a], *ú* for [u], *o* for [o], and *ó* for [ɔ]. The vowel phonemes are presented in Diagram 1, where their phonetic values are given between square brackets and their transliteration graphemes are given in italics. The qualitative contrast between the vowels involves four degrees of vowel height dimension and three degrees in the front-back dimension. There is no phonological vowel length, although a vowel in an open syllable tends to have a longer realisation than the same vowel in a closed syllable.

	front		back
close	[i] <i>i, í</i>	[u] <i>u</i>	[u] <i>ú</i>
half-close			[o] <i>o</i>
half-open	[e~ε] <i>e</i>	[ʌ] <i>a, â</i>	[ɔ] <i>ó</i>
open		[a] <i>á</i>	

Diagram 1: Lepcha vowel phonemes

The phoneme /i/ is an unrounded close front vowel [i]. In open syllables, /i/ is often realised as [i:]. In closed syllables, /i/ is generally realised as [i] but may occasionally move toward the more central quality of [ɪ].

ṣ̃ <i>rip</i>	[riʔp̃]	‘flower’
ṣ̃ <i>bi</i>	[bi]	‘give’
ṣ̃ <i>ʔik</i>	[ʔiʔk̃]	‘still’
ṣ̃ <i>ʔit</i>	[ʔiʔt̃]	‘create’

The phoneme /e/ varies in pronunciation between [e] and [ε] and sometimes [ɪ], especially before velar consonants. In general, we can

say that in open syllables the phoneme /e/ is realised as an unrounded half-close front vowel [e] or [ɪ] and in closed syllables the phoneme /e/ is realised as an unrounded half-open front vowel [ɛ]. However, the variation between the different allophones is in fact slightly more complex, since the realisation [ɛ] does not seem to occur before [ŋ] and [k]. Before [p], [m], [l], [n], [r], and [t] the phoneme /e/ may be realised as either [e], [ɪ] or [ɛ].

ꠄpe	[pe]	‘grass’
ꠄꠗ renjóng	[rɛnˈʒɔŋ]	‘Sikkim’
ꠄlen	[lɛn]	‘than’
ꠄjer	[ʒɛr]	‘gold’
ꠄheng	[hɪŋ]	‘ginger’
ꠄꠗ ꠄámlem	[ʔaˈmlɛm]	‘face’
ꠄklek	[kleʔkʔ]	‘force, urge’

The phoneme /á/ is an unrounded open front vowel [a], with allophones ranging to an unrounded back vowel [ɑ].

ꠄꠗ navár	[nʌˈvar]	‘boat’
ꠄbám	[bam]	‘dwell’
ꠄngár	[ŋar]	‘slice’
ꠄꠗ ꠄákâ	[ʔaˈkʌ]	‘hand’
ꠄꠗ zátí	[ʒaˈti]	‘nutmeg’

The phonetic value of the phoneme /a/, represented by the transliteration graphemes *a* and *â*, varies considerably. This vowel can be described as an unrounded central vowel that usually approaches the quality of schwa [ə]. This phoneme may also be realised as an unrounded half-open central vowel [ʌ] or as an unrounded central vowel [u]. From the point of view of widespread conventions regarding the use of diacritics with the Roman script, the circumflex accent above the *a* to represent a schwa may strike many as odd. However, this convention in transliterating Lepcha script dates back to Mainwaring and stems from the peculiar role of the diacritic flourish known as the ꠄ rân in Lepcha script and first described as a ‘circumflex’ sign by Mainwaring, a historically interesting orthographic device discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

𐄎 <i>dâ</i>	[dʌ]	‘lake’
𐄏 <i>fâk</i>	[fəʔkʷ]	‘scrape’
𐄐 <i>vâm</i>	[vəm]	‘song’
𐄑 <i>cang</i>	[cʌŋ]	‘foster, nourish’
𐄒 <i>patung</i>	[pəʔtʰuŋ]	‘shoulder’

The phoneme /u/ is an unrounded back vowel [u], sometimes realised closer to the value of [ɨ]. The phoneme /ú/ is a rounded close back vowel [u].

𐄓 <i>ʔánúm</i>	[ʔaːnum]	‘younger brother’
𐄔 <i>ru</i>	[ru]	‘cane’
𐄕 <i>ʔulbú</i>	[ʔɨlːbu]	‘salesman, seller’
𐄖 <i>dú</i>	[du]	‘umbrella’
𐄗 <i>kajú</i>	[kəːʒu]	‘dog’
𐄘 <i>thúk</i>	[tʰuʔkʷ]	‘season’
𐄙 <i>ʔút</i>	[ʔuʔtʰ]	‘otter’

The phoneme /o/ is a rounded half-close back vowel [o]. This rounded half-close back vowel is usually a bit raised, viz. [ɔ].

𐄚 <i>hlo</i>	[hlo]	‘hill’
𐄛 <i>dop</i>	[doʔpʷ]	‘burn’
𐄜 <i>go</i>	[go]	‘I’
𐄝 <i>ʔotshóng</i>	[ʔotʰɔŋ]	‘that day’

The vowel /ó/ is a rounded half-open back vowel [ɔ], usually raised, i.e. [ɔ̄].

𐄞 <i>ʔánóm</i>	[ʔaːnɔm]	‘elder sister’
𐄟 <i>món</i>	[mɔn]	‘pig’
𐄠 <i>myóng</i>	[mjɔŋ]	‘experience’
𐄡 <i>myón</i>	[mjɔn]	‘forget’
𐄢 <i>gó</i>	[gɔ]	‘be happy’
𐄣 <i>ʔót</i>	[ʔɔʔtʰ]	‘pluck, as fruits’

The distinction between the phonemes /o/ and /ó/ is clearly phonetically differentiated in reading pronunciations and the cultivated enunciations of many literate speakers. However, the distinction is lost in the speech of non-literate speakers, particularly those highly fluent in



Nepali, where no comparable phonological distinction exists. It is difficult to ascertain whether this distinction, i.e. /o/ vs. /ó/, is an original phonological distinction which is on the way out or an artificial distinction inspired by the Lepcha literary tradition, which was invented in the eighteenth century.

## 2.2 Consonants

The phoneme inventory of Lepcha consonants is listed in Diagram 2, with a phonetic transcription between square brackets, followed by the transliteration used throughout this book in italics. In contrast to the Lepcha vowels, the phonemic units of the consonant system match the transliteration graphemes in a straightforward one-to-one correspondence. The phonemes are briefly described below, beginning with the velar, palatal, dental, retroflex and bilabial stops and nasals, followed by fricatives, affricates, approximants, the trill and the glottal stop.

The phoneme /k/ is an unaspirated voiceless dorso-velar stop [k]. Before the vowels /i/ and /e/, /k/ is slightly palatalised [k<sup>ɟ</sup>]. In syllable-final position, /k/ is found to be realised as a voiceless unreleased dorso-velar stop [k̚], usually reinforced with a simultaneous glottal stop [ʔk̚], as is the case in *kakyók* [kʌ·kjɔʔk̚] ‘nine’.

ཅྱྱ <i>kacer</i>	[kʌ·cɛr]	‘wheat’
ལྱྱྱ <i>lúkʔál</i>	[luk·ʔal]	‘tomorrow’
ཚྱྱྱ <i>kít</i>	[k <sup>ɟ</sup> iʔk̚]	‘snatch’
རྱྱྱ <i>rák</i>	[raʔk̚]	‘search, examine’
འྱྱྱ <i>ʔákrím</i>	[ʔa·krim]	‘bitter’

The phoneme /kh/ is an aspirated voiceless dorso-velar stop [k<sup>h</sup>]. The phoneme /kh/ occurs only in syllable-initial, not in syllable-final position.

ཅྱྱྱ <i>khék</i>	[k <sup>h</sup> eʔk̚]	‘freeze’
ཅྱྱྱྱ <i>khák</i>	[k <sup>h</sup> aʔk̚]	‘choke’
ཅྱྱྱྱ <i>khú</i>	[k <sup>h</sup> u]	‘loaf of bread’
ཅྱྱྱྱ <i>khýú</i>	[k <sup>h</sup> ju]	‘bathe’

	labial	dental	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
voiceless stop	[p] <i>p</i>	[t] <i>t</i>		[ʈ] <i>tr</i>	[c] <i>c</i>	[k] <i>k</i>	[ʔ] <i>ʔ</i>
aspirated voiceless stop	[p <sup>h</sup> ] <i>ph</i>	[t <sup>h</sup> ] <i>th</i>		[ʈ <sup>h</sup> ] <i>thr</i>	[c <sup>h</sup> ] <i>ch</i>	[k <sup>h</sup> ] <i>kh</i>	
voiced stop	[b] <i>b</i>	[d] <i>d</i>		[ɖ] <i>dr</i>		[g] <i>g</i>	
voiced nasal	[m] <i>m</i>	[n] <i>n</i>			[ɲ] <i>ny</i>	[ŋ] <i>ng</i>	
voiceless affricate			[ʈs] <i>ts</i>				
aspirated voiceless affricate			[ʈ <sup>h</sup> s] <i>tsh</i>				
voiceless fricative	[f] <i>f</i>		[s] <i>s</i>	[ʃ] <i>sh</i>			
voiced fricative	[v] <i>v</i>		[z] <i>z</i>	[ʒ] <i>j</i>			
voiced trill			[r] <i>r</i>				
voiced approximant	[w] <i>w</i>	[l] <i>l</i>			[j] <i>y</i>		
voiceless approximant							[h] <i>h</i>

Diagram 2: Lepcha consonant phonemes

The phoneme /g/ is an unaspirated voiced dorso-velar stop [g]. Before the vowels /i/ and /e/, the /g/ is slightly palatalised [g<sup>j</sup>]. The phoneme /g/ occurs only in syllable-initial, not in syllable-final position.

ꠄ gán	[gan]	‘old, aged’
ꠄꠄ gorúŋ	[goːruŋ]	‘either’
ꠄꠄ gek-lát	[g <sup>j</sup> ekːlaʔt̚]	‘birth’
ꠄꠄ gyú	[gju]	‘skill’

ཅཱ་གའི་ tagryú [tʰɑːgrju] ‘cheek’

The phoneme /ŋ/, corresponding to the transliteration digraph *ng*, is a voiced dorso-velar nasal [ŋ]. The phoneme /ŋ/ also occurs in syllable-final position. There is a tendency to neutralise the difference between /ŋ/ and /n/ in syllable-final position. A small number of speakers occasionally realise an initial /ŋ/ closer to a dental nasal [ɲ].

ཉི་ ngán	[ŋan]	‘remain, sit’
ཉི་ ngol	[ŋol]	‘early’
ཉི་ ʔúng	[ʔuŋ]	‘water’
ཉི་ kryóng	[krjɔŋ]	‘praise’

In syllable-initial position, the phoneme /ŋ/ is sometimes realised as a voiced [h], as we can see in the three examples listed directly below this paragraph. The relationship between the relaxed state of the glottis and the lowered state of the velum conventionally termed nasality, is known as *rhinoglottophilia*. Examples discussed by Matisoff (1975), Michailovsky (1975) and Sprigg (1987), point to this phenomenon as an affinity resulting in the nasalisation of sounds such as [h] or [ʔ], but the examples in Lepcha operate in the opposite direction, from a nasal to an [h]. Although not many examples of this phenomenon were found in Lepcha, the few attested instances are very common and widespread among Lepcha speakers of different ages and of different regions. Nevertheless, most speakers would deny having pronounced the initial /ŋ/ as [h] when confronted with this observation, and the alternation would be rejected in written Lepcha.

ཉི་ ngâk	[ŋəʔk̚ ~ həʔk̚]	‘look, observe’
ཉི་ ngú	[ŋu ~ hu]	‘fish’
ཉི་ ngún	[ŋun ~ hun]	‘become’

The phoneme /c/ is an unaspirated voiceless palatal stop [c]. The phoneme /ch/ is its aspirated counterpart [c<sup>h</sup>]. The phonemes /c/ and /ch/ occur only in syllable-initial, not in syllable-final position.

ཅཱ་ co	[co]	‘tea’
ཅཱ་ cí	[ci]	‘cí, fermented grain liquor’
ཅཱ་ cho	[c <sup>h</sup> o]	‘book’

ḥchet	[c <sup>h</sup> εʔt̚]	‘relate’
ḥcechók	[ce·c <sup>h</sup> ɔʔk̚]	‘loveable’

The phoneme /ñ/, corresponding to the transliteration digraph *ny*, is a voiced palatal nasal [ɲ]. The phoneme /ñ/ occurs only in syllable-initial, not in syllable-final position.

nyet	[ɲεʔt̚]	‘two’
nyilop	[ɲi·loʔp̚]	‘earlobe’
nyók	[ɲɔʔk̚]	‘delay’
nyín	[ɲin]	‘milk’

The phoneme /t/ is realised as a voiceless dental stop [t̚], or as a voiceless alveolar stop [t]. The phoneme /t/ is truly dental in that the tip of the tongue actually touches the back of the teeth. In syllable-final position, /t/ is found to be realised as a voiceless unreleased dental [t̚] or alveolar stop [t̚], usually reinforced with a simultaneous glottal stop, like [ʔt̚] or [ʔt̚].

tuknóm	[t̚uʔk̚·nɔm]	‘nose’
tímre	[t̚im·re]	‘respect’
tór	[t̚ɔr]	‘silk’
títrepót	[t̚iʔt̚·re·pɔʔt̚]	‘tamarind fruit’
tyút	[t̚juʔt̚]	‘scar’
ʔáhret	[a·ʔεʔt̚]	‘bone’

The phoneme /th/ is an aspirated voiceless dental [t<sup>h</sup>] or alveolar stop [t<sup>h</sup>]. The phoneme /th/ occurs only in syllable-initial, not in syllable-final position.

thámpót	[t <sup>h</sup> am·pɔʔt̚]	‘fruit’
thikúng	[t <sup>h</sup> i·kɔŋ]	‘great grandfather’
thop	[t <sup>h</sup> ɔʔp̚]	‘get’
thyók	[t <sup>h</sup> jɔʔk̚]	‘shelter’

The phoneme /d/ is a voiced dental [d̚] or alveolar stop [d]. The phoneme /d/ occurs only in syllable-initial position, not in syllable-final position.

ཧྲི <i>di</i>	[d̥i]	‘come’
ཧྲིང་ <i>díng</i>	[d̥iŋ]	‘stand’
ཧྲི་ཨ་ <i>dâ</i>	[d̥ʌ]	‘lake’
ཨ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ <i>sadu</i>	[səːd̥ʌ]	‘slowly’

The phoneme /n/ is realised as a voiced alveolar nasal [n]. The phoneme /n/ occurs both syllable-initially and syllable-finally.

འདྲ་ལ་ <i>nâlá</i>	[nʌːla]	‘always’
འདྲ་ <i>nám</i>	[nam]	‘year’
མེན་ <i>mân</i>	[mʌn]	‘meat’

The phoneme /tr/ is an unaspirated voiceless retroflex stop [t̠], and the phoneme /thr/ is its aspirated counterpart [t̠ʰ]. The phoneme /dr/ is an unaspirated voiced retroflex stop [d̠]. The retroflex phonemes only occur syllable-initially, not syllable-finally. The retroflex series are written in the native Lepcha orthography as ཨྲྀ *kr* for /tr/, ཨྲྀྱ *hr* for /thr/ and ཨྲྀལ་ *gr* for /dr/. In Lepcha orthography, the retroflex consonants are often distinguished from the clusters /kr/, /hr/, /gr/, by a small dot written below the consonant cluster. Retroflex sounds occur mainly in loanwords from Tibetan, although some Lepcha words with one of the native initial consonant clusters /kr/, /hr/ or /gr/ are now sometimes pronounced with retroflex sounds, especially in Sikkim. For example, the word ཨྲྀལ་ཨྲྀྱ་ *tagrikup* [taːgriːkuʔp̠] ‘boy’ is sometimes pronounced [taːd̠iːkuʔp̠].

ཨྲྀྱ་ཨྲྀྱ་ <i>trínchen</i>	[t̠inːcʰen]	‘kindness’
ཨྲྀྱ་ <i>tróp</i>	[t̠ɔʔp̠]	‘winnow’
ཨྲྀ <i>tre</i>	[t̠e]	‘mule’
ཨྲྀྱ་ <i>thri</i>	[t̠ʰi]	‘throne’
ཨྲྀྱ་ <i>thrim</i>	[t̠ʰim]	‘law’
ཨྲྀྱ་ <i>throm</i>	[t̠ʰom]	‘town, market’
ཨྲྀལ་ <i>dri</i>	[d̠i]	‘fort, palace’
ཨྲྀལ་ <i>dróp</i>	[d̠ɔʔp̠]	‘moment’
ཨྲྀལ་ <i>dre</i>	[d̠e]	‘demon’

The phoneme /p/ is an unaspirated voiceless bilabial stop [p]. In syllable-final position the phoneme /p/ is often realised as a voiceless unreleased bilabial stop [p̠], often glottally reinforced, viz. [p̠ʔ].

ཤྤ pel	[pɛl]	‘be tired’
ལྔ plák	[plɑʔkʰ]	‘break’
པཎo pano	[paˈno]	‘king’
ཤྤ pi	[pi]	‘write’
པཎo po	[po]	‘bamboo’
རྩྤ ríp	[riʔpʰ]	‘flower’

The phoneme /ph/ is an aspirated voiceless bilabial stop [p<sup>h</sup>], which occurs only in syllable-initial position. The phoneme /f/ is a voiceless labiodental fricative [f], occasionally realised as a voiceless bilabial fricative [ɸ]. The phoneme /f/ occurs only syllable-initially, not syllable-finally. When children learn the Lepcha alphabet in the ལྔཱཱྤ lâzóng tradition, the letter ལྔཱྤ f, which is pronounced [fə], is sometimes pronounced as [frə], possibly to increase the contrast between the phonemes /f/ and /ph/. The difference between the two phonemes /ph/ and /f/ appears to be fading these days, no doubt under the influence of Nepali, although in the spoken language of some Lepcha speakers the contrast is still clearly audible.

ཤྤ phám	[p <sup>h</sup> am]	‘defeat’
པཎo pho	[p <sup>h</sup> o]	‘time, turn’
ཤྤ phíl	[p <sup>h</sup> il]	‘be distant’
ལྔ fá	[fa]	‘swim’
ཤྤ fík	[fiʔkʰ]	‘tear’
ལྔཱྤ fungfing	[fuŋˌfiŋ]	‘blue’
ལྔ flet	[fleʔtʰ]	‘wash one’s face’
ལྔ flók	[flɔʔkʰ]	‘peel’
ལྔ fyek	[fjeʔkʰ]	‘sharpen’

The phoneme /b/ is a voiced bilabial stop [b]. The phoneme /b/ occurs only in syllable-initial position, not in syllable-final position.

ལྔ bán	[ban]	‘knife’
ལྔ bi	[bi]	‘give’
ཤྤ bík	[biʔkʰ]	‘cow’
ལྔཱྤ ?ábek	[ʔaˈbeʔkʰ]	‘middle’

The phoneme /m/ is a voiced bilabial nasal [m]. The phoneme /m/ occurs both in syllable-initial and in syllable-final position.

ᄃᄂ <i>mák</i>	[maʔk̚]	‘die’
ᄃᄂ <i>mi</i>	[mi]	‘fire’
ᄃᄂ <i>món</i>	[mɔn]	‘pig’, ‘medicine’
ᄃᄂ <i>mlyá</i>	[mlja]	‘level, even’
ᄃᄂ ᄃᄂ <i>ʔárom</i>	[ʔaʔrom]	‘fear’

The phoneme /ts/ is a voiceless alveolar affricate [tʃ]. The phoneme /tsh/ is an aspirated voiceless alveolar affricate [tʃʰ]. The phonemes /ts/ and /tsh/ occur only syllable-initially, not syllable-finally.

ᄃᄂ <i>tsám</i>	[tʃam]	‘hold’
ᄃᄂ <i>tsót</i>	[tʃɔʔt̚]	‘squeeze’
ᄃᄂ <i>tsúk</i>	[tʃuʔk̚]	‘bite’
ᄃᄂ <i>tsurtsur</i>	[tʃurʔtʃur]	‘twinkle’
ᄃᄂ <i>tshó</i>	[tʃʰɔ]	‘aim’
ᄃᄂ <i>tshukpót</i>	[tʃʰukʔpɔʔt̚]	‘word’
ᄃᄂ <i>tshâlum</i>	[tʃʰʌ-lum]	‘orange’

The phoneme /s/ is a voiceless alveolar fricative [s]. The phoneme /sh/ is a voiceless alveopalatal fricative [ʃ]. Both /s/ and /sh/ occur only in syllable-initial position. The distinction between /s/ and /sh/ is neutralised before the vowel [i], as for example in ᄃᄂ *shi* [ʃi~si] ‘see’.

ᄃᄂ <i>so</i>	[so]	‘rain’
ᄃᄂ <i>sagrek</i>	[sʌgreʔk̚]	‘throat’
ᄃᄂ <i>sung</i>	[suŋ]	‘story’
ᄃᄂ <i>shâk</i>	[ʃʌʔk̚]	‘louse’
ᄃᄂ <i>sher</i>	[ʃer]	‘glass’
ᄃᄂ <i>shól</i>	[ʃɔl]	‘fox’

The phoneme /j/ is a voiced alveopalatal fricative [ʒ]. The phoneme /j/ occurs only in syllable-initial position, not in syllable-final position. The phoneme /z/ is a voiced alveolar or dental fricative [z], sometimes realised as a voiced alveolar affricate [dʒ]. The distinction between /j/ and /z/ appears to be fading in modern-day spoken Lep-

cha, as some speakers no longer distinguish between the two phonemes.

ꨛ̣ jāl	[ʒʌl]	‘dry’
ꨛ̣̣ jer	[ʒɛr]	‘gold’
ꨛ̣̣̣(jám)	[ʒam]	‘assemble’
ꨛ̣̣̣ zâ	[zʌ]	‘err’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣ zok	[zoʔkʰ]	‘trickle’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣ záḍing	[dʒaːdiŋ~zaːdiŋ]	‘jug’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ ʔázóm	[ʔaːdʒom~ʔaːzom]	‘rice, food’

The phoneme /r/ is a voiced alveolar trill [r], which occasionally has a flapped articulation [ɾ]. The phoneme /r/ occurs both in syllable-initial and in syllable-final position, and can also occur as a post-consonantal glide with a certain set of consonants in syllable-initial position. The initial consonants with which the post-consonantal glide /r/ may combine are /k/, /g/, /ŋ/, /p/, /f/, /b/, /m/, /h/ (cf. Diagram 3). The post-consonantal glide /r/ also combines with the post-consonantal glide /y/, in which case it always precedes the /y/, so we may find an initial consonant followed by the sequence /ry/, as in ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ mryóm ‘spread over the ground, creep’.

The Lepcha script distinguishes special symbols for the phoneme /r/ in its syllable-initial use, its syllable-final use, and its post-consonantal use, cf. ꨛ̣̣ ra, ꨛ̣̣̣ kor, ꨛ̣̣̣̣ pro. In this respect, Lepcha orthography structurally uniquely resembles the Limbu script, a writing system which was designed in the same region and time as the Lepcha script. The cluster ꨛ̣̣ hr is realised as a voiceless apico-alveolar trill [ɾ̥] and is only found in syllable-initial position.

ꨛ̣̣ ru	[ru]	‘cane’
ꨛ̣̣̣ rām	[ram]	‘thunder’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣ rok	[roʔk]	‘read, study’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣ kor	[kor]	‘wander, stroll’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣ krón	[krɔn]	‘scratch’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ tsur	[tsur]	‘radiate’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ hro	[ɾo]	‘come up’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ hryám	[ɾjam]	‘jerk’
ꨛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ hrún	[ɾun]	‘hot’



The phoneme /v/ is realised as a voiced labiodental fricative [v] and the phoneme /w/ is a voiced bilabial approximant [w]. The native Lepcha orthography offers a distinction between the two graphemes for [v] and [w], i.e. ཅ v for [v] and བ w for [w]. This distinction is still adhered to in written Lepcha, but in spoken Lepcha the distinction is marginal, and is only made when Lepcha speakers feel the need to contrast two lexemes containing either /v/ or /w/ that are spelt differently (but normally pronounced the same), or when the alphabet is read out loud. The phonemes /v/ and /w/ occur only in syllable-initial position, not in syllable-final position. Although the distinction between /v/ and /w/ is fading in spoken Lepcha, no doubt under influence of Nepali, which lacks a phoneme /v/, I have chosen to retain the distinction in writing.

ཅ བོམ	[vɔm]	‘salt’
མའལ ལཱལལ	[ʔaːvjo]	‘tibia’
ཧྱི བཱི	[viʔkʰ]	‘soldier’
ཅ ལལལ	[vjɛʔʰ]	‘ask, inquire’
མའལ མལལ	[woːmu]	‘spindle’
མའལ མལལ	[wɔːmu]	‘jackal’
མྱི མལལ	[wurːdo]	‘sling’

The phoneme /l/ is a voiced alveolar lateral approximant [l]. The phoneme /l/ occurs both in syllable-initial and in syllable-final position. The phoneme /l/ also occurs as a post-consonantal glide with a certain set of consonants in syllable-initial position. For these initial consonant clusters with /l/, there is a special series of consonant letters in the native orthography, i.e. ཧྱྱ k<sub>l</sub>a, མའལ g<sub>l</sub>a རྩྭ p<sub>l</sub>a, མའལ f<sub>l</sub>a, ལྱ b<sub>l</sub>a, ཧྱྱ m<sub>l</sub>a, མྱྱ h<sub>l</sub>a. All consonant letters in this series actually do represent consonant clusters, although the phonological cluster མྱྱ h<sub>l</sub>a is realised as a voiceless alveolar lateral fricative [ɬ].

མྱྱ ལལལ	[lɔʔʰ]	‘repeat’
མྱྱ ལལལ	[laʔpʰ]	‘bury’
ཧྱྱ ལལལ	[liʔʰ]	‘sift’
མྱྱ ལལལ	[ul]	‘sell’
མྱྱ ལལལ	[nɔl]	‘skin’
མྱྱ ལལལ	[lo]	‘hill’
མྱྱ ལལལ	[laŋ]	‘harden, as yams’

ᳵ <i>hlok</i>	[loʔkʰ]	‘break, as eggs’
ᳶ <i>hlyám</i>	[ljám]	‘shake, quiver’

The phoneme /h/ is a voiceless glottal approximant [h], which occurs only in syllable-initial position.

᳷ <i>hák</i>	[hɑʔk]	‘carve’
᳸ <i>heng</i>	[heŋ]	‘ginger’
᳹ <i>háp</i>	[hɑʔp]	‘shut’
ᳺ <i>híp</i>	[hiʔp]	‘shave’

The phoneme /y/ is a voiced palatal approximant [j], which can occur in syllable-initial position, but not in syllable-final position. The phoneme /y/ also occurs as a post-consonantal glide with a certain set of consonants in syllable-initial position. The initial consonants with which /y/ combines as a post-consonantal glide, are /k/, /kh/, /g/, /t/, /th/, /d/, /p/, /ph/, /f/, /b/, /m/, /r/, /l/, /h/, /hl/ and /v/, cf. Diagram 3.

Glottal hiatus is a pre-vocalic glottal closure followed by abrupt voice onset which occurs word-initially in words beginning with a vowel and word-internally between vowels. In native Lepcha orthography, a glottal stop is indicated by the symbol ʔ, e.g. ʔáre [ʔaːre] ‘this’, ʔí [ʔiʔiʔi] ‘create’.

᳻ <i>soʔám</i>	[soːʔəm]	‘summer’
ʔáre	[ʔaːre]	‘this’

The sequence that is written ʔy- at the beginning of a word, indicates an initial glottal stop [ʔ] followed by a voiced palatal approximant [j]. Some of the examples starting with ʔy [ʔj] listed immediately below form minimal pairs with words with an initial voiced palatal approximant [j].

ᳵ <i>yok</i>	[joʔkʰ]	‘top, summit’
ʔyók	[ʔjoʔkʰ]	‘work, job, chore’
ᳶ <i>yel</i>	[jel]	‘know a language’
ʔyel	[ʔjel]	‘divert’
᳷ <i>yá</i>	[jʌ]	‘know’
ʔyá	[ʔjʌ]	‘formerly’
᳸ <i>yor</i>	[jor]	‘row’



The following consonants may appear in syllable-final position: /k/, /ŋ/, /t/, /n/, /p/, /m/, /r/, /l/.

Lepcha morphemes are monosyllabic. Many Lepcha words are composed of different syllables, with the stress usually on the second syllable. Richard Keith Sprigg analyses Lepcha as having contrastive stress (1966b: 199-200). The intonation of Lepcha is characterised by the clustering of syllables into groups, often these are phrases or groups of words marked by suffixes, postpositions or particles. The intonation of Lepcha from northern Sikkim is markedly different to the intonation of Lepcha from other regions, in that it is much slower and much less monotonous. This type of intonation is believed to represent an older and more elegant style of speaking, less influenced by neighbouring languages such as Nepali or Dränjoke.

#### 2.4 *Native Lepcha orthography*

The Lepcha script is written from left to right, with spaces between words. In Lepcha, no distinction is made between capital and lower-case letters. Punctuation marks are similar to the ones used in the Tibetan orthography, although nowadays full stops, commas and question marks from the Roman alphabet are also used. The ‘alphabet’ or ‘syllabary’ is referred to in the Lepcha language as ཡུ ཀཀམ་ *kakha* ‘ABC’, རྩམ་ཚུ མཚུགས་ *chomúng* ‘written letters’ and རྩམ་ཚུ མཚུགས་ལྗོངས་ *múngzât* ‘treasure of letters’. The native Lepcha orthography is systematically treated in the text ལཱུང་ལོང་ *lazóng*, the book on the Lepcha alphabet, which is traditionally used to teach Lepcha orthography (Plaisier 2003: 31-32).

The order of the Lepcha alphabet as given in the ལཱུང་ལོང་ *lazóng*, is different to the order in which the Lepcha alphabet is taught and read out today. The original Lepcha syllabary was built out of five units, as given below in Diagram 4, the first units running from ག ལཱུ *la* to མ ལཱུ *ma*, and the second unit running from རྩ ལཱུ *ha* to ལྷ ལཱུ *tha*, etc. Although most ལཱུང་ལོང་ *lazóng* books use the same order, occasionally there is some variation in the order of the units. A similar conclusion was pointed to by R. K. Sprigg in his article ‘Original and sophisticated features of the Lepcha and Limbu scripts’ (Sprigg 2003). The order of the consonant symbols within the five units may vary slightly between different versions of the ལཱུང་ལོང་ *lazóng*, between the introductory summary of the alphabet in the opening part of ལཱུང་ལོང་ *lazóng* and the actual listing of all

possible syllables in ལཱཱེེ *lazóng* books. However, the differences are minor and most of them are apparently oversights of the copyists.

ཧ ཇa	ཨ ka	ཨ ga	ཨ pa	ཨ fa	ཨ ba	ཨ ma	
ཨ ha	ཨ ra	ཨ kha	ཨ ta	ཨ tha			
ཨ da	ཨ la	ཨ kla	ཨ gla	ཨ pla	ཨ fla	ཨ bla	
ཨ mla	ཨ hla	ཨ va	ཨ nga	ཨ ca	ཨ pha	ཨ nya	ཨ na ཨ tsa
ཨ wa	ཨ ja	ཨ za	ཨ ya	ཨ sha	ཨ cha	ཨ tsha	ཨ sa

Diagram 4: Original order of the syllabary

In the ལཱཱེེ *lazóng*, all the orthographic symbols and combinations of symbols are treated in a specific order, building from simple consonant or vowel signs to more complex syllables. Apart from a few paragraphs which introduce the different sections making up the book, the ལཱཱེེ *lazóng* does not contain running text as such. The traditional method of instruction is for the teacher to recite sections of the ལཱཱེེ *lazóng* in a set melody and for the students to read and chant along with the teacher, until the students have memorised the values of the letters and the syllables and are able to read and to recite by themselves. Although most people nowadays learn to read and write Lepcha through primers and textbooks based on different methods, the traditional method based on recitation of the ལཱཱེེ *lazóng* is still practised. The list of possible syllables in Lepcha given by Mainwaring in his grammar (1876: 12-18), is clearly based on the ལཱཱེེ *lazóng*. The order of the syllabary that is mostly used in primers and textbooks today, clearly influenced by the order of the *devanāgarī* alphabet, is given in Diagram 5 below, starting with ཨ ka, ཨ kha, ཨ ga, ཨ nga, and ending with ཨ bla, ཨ mla, ཨ hla.

Although many Lepcha believe that a literary tradition existed among the Lepcha before the arrival of Buddhism in the area, thus far no evidence has been found to corroborate this claim. It seems more likely that the invention of the Lepcha alphabet was motivated by the

religious activities of Buddhist missionaries. The Buddhist monks were keen to communicate with the Lepcha people in their own language, and as so often happens when the influence of a new religion spreads, religious texts were translated into the local language of the area, in this case Lepcha, for which an alphabet had yet to be created (Plaisier 2003: 20-23, Risley 1894: 13, Sprigg 1983, 1996).

The Lepcha script is understood to be devised during the reign of the third chögel of Sikkim, ཚོ་རྒྱལ་ཕྱག་རྒྱུ་ཚོ་རྒྱལ་ *Chögü Châdo 'Namgü* (*imperabat* 1700-1716). According to Lepcha tradition, the native Lepcha orthography was created by the Lepcha scholar མེ་ལོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ལོ་ *Thikúng Mensalóng*, who is believed to have been a contemporary of ལྷ་མ་ལྷ་བཙུན་ཆེན་པོ་ *'Lama Lhatsün Chenpo*, i.e. ལྷ་མ་ལྷ་བཙུན་ནམ་མཁའ་འཇིགས་མེད་ *'Lama Lhatsün Namkha Jimi* (1597-1654), the patron saint of Sikkim, who is considered to have played a definitive part in the Sikkimese conversion to Buddhism. Since sources mention that རྩོ་ལོ་ལོ་ *Mensalóng* and *Lhatsün Chenpo* met each other (Foning 1987: 152), it might well have been the case that they worked together on the Lepcha orthography, which would account for a Tibetan tradition which ascribes the introduction of the Lepcha script to *Lhatsün Chenpo*. The Lepcha tradition that credits རྩོ་ལོ་ལོ་ *Mensalóng* with the invention of the Lepcha script, seems even more plausible when we realise that during the reign of *Châdo 'Namgü* not just the Lepcha script, but also the Limbu or Kiranti script was developed, not by *Châdo 'Namgü* himself, but by the Limbu monk *Śirijaṅgā* (van Driem 2001: 674-675).

The 36 consonant symbols མཚོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ *chomíng yámo* or རྩོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ *yámú yámíng* ‘consonants, mother letters’ are given below in Diagram 5 with a Roman transliteration of each symbol. When the consonant is not marked by any vowel sign, the inherent vowel of the consonant is the vowel transliterated as *a*.

Vowel diacritics may be added to the consonant symbols. The nine vowel diacritics are traditionally known as མཚོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ *chomíng yákup* or རྩོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ *yákup yámíng* ‘vowel signs, child letters, small letters’ and རྩོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ *yákup thámbyín* or རྩོ་ལོ་ རྩོ་ལོ་ *míngkup thámbyín* ‘diacritical vowel signs’, cf. Diagram 6. Mainwaring claims that the term རྩོ་ལོ་ *yákup* was ‘formerly applied by the Lepcha exclusively to the Finals’ (1876: 3).



Diagram 5: Consonant letters

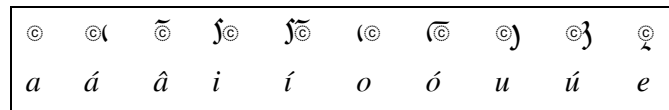


Diagram 6: Vowel signs

At the beginning of a syllable, any Lepcha consonant may occur. Although all Lepcha vowels may be found at the end of a syllable, only a limited number of consonants can occur syllable-finally. The consonants found at the end of syllables are: *-k*, *-t*, *-n*, *-p*, *-m*, *-r*, *-l* and *-ng*. The ꠱ꠤ꠰ ꠱ꠤ꠰ *tyelbú thámbyín* or ꠱ꠤ꠰ ꠱ꠤ꠰ *múngtyel thámbyín* ‘final consonant signs’ are given in Diagram 7.

The ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*nyíndo* sign, i.e. ‘꠱ꠤ꠰’), transliterated here as *-ang*, is used to indicate a final velar nasal when no specific vowel sign is indicated, as in ꠱ꠤ꠰ *sang*. The ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*lakang* sign) is used to indicate a final velar nasal in combination with diacritical vowel signs, as in the syllables ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*sáng*), ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*síng*), and ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*song*). The distinction between the ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*nyíndo*) and the ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*lakang*) is not always made when people discuss orthography, often the ꠱ꠤ꠰ (*nyíndo*) is used as a general term for a written final velar nasal.

symbol	ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
transliteration	-k	-m	-l
name of symbol	ᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐ
	<i>lakát</i>	<i>lanyet</i>	<i>lasám</i>
examples	ᵐᵐ <i>rok</i>	ᵐᵐ <i>kím</i>	ᵐᵐ <i>pál</i>
symbol	ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
transliteration	-n	-p	-r
name of symbol	ᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐ
	<i>lanun</i>	<i>lakup</i>	<i>ladar</i>
examples	ᵐᵐ <i>bán</i>	ᵐᵐ <i>óp</i>	ᵐᵐ <i>kor</i>
symbol	ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
transliteration	-t	-ng	-ang
name of symbol	ᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐ
	<i>lakat</i>	<i>lakang</i>	<i>nyíndo</i>
examples	ᵐᵐ <i>fát</i>	ᵐᵐ <i>róng</i>	ᵐᵐ <i>pang</i>

Diagram 7: Final consonant signs

For those consonant clusters in which the initial consonant is followed by one of the post-consonantal glides *-y*, *-r* or *-l*, the term ᵐᵐᵐ *míngthyú* ‘conjunct consonants, affixed consonants’ is used. The ᵐᵐᵐ *míngthyú* series includes the consonant symbols ᵐ *kla*, ᵐ *gla*, ᵐ *pla*, ᵐ *fla*, ᵐ *bla*, ᵐ *mla* and ᵐ *hla*, which are also sometimes referred to as the ᵐᵐᵐ *lathyú* ‘l-cluster’, literally ‘l-affix’. The orthography also has special symbols for post-consonantal *-y* and *-r*, i.e. the ᵐᵐᵐ *yathyú* ‘y-affix’ and the ᵐᵐᵐ *rathyú* ‘r-affix’. The ᵐᵐᵐ *yathyú* and ᵐᵐᵐ *rathyú* symbols can be used in combination with each other, as for example in ᵐᵐᵐ *fryóm* ‘suspect’. The ᵐᵐᵐ *yathyú* and ᵐᵐᵐ *rathyú* symbols may also be used in combination with the ᵐᵐᵐ *lathyú* series, as in ᵐᵐᵐ *mlyúk* ‘lukewarm, tepid’, in which case the ᵐᵐᵐ *yathyú* always follows either the ᵐᵐᵐ *lathyú* or the ᵐᵐᵐ *rathyú*. The ᵐᵐᵐ *lathyú* and ᵐᵐᵐ *rathyú* may not be combined with each other.



symbol	᳚	᳛
transliteration	-y	-r
name of sign	᳚᳚ <i>yathyú</i>	᳛᳛ <i>rathyú</i>
examples	᳚ <i>kya</i> , ᳚ <i>kra</i> , ᳚ <i>krya</i>	

Diagram 8: Affixed consonant signs

For retroflex sounds, which occur mainly in loanwords from Drän-joke, the clusters ᳚ *kra*, ᳛ *hra* and ᳚ *gra* are used, e.g. ᳚᳚ *throm* ‘town, market’, and ᳚᳚ ᳚᳚ *trók chí* ‘thank you’. The retroflex sounds are usually marked by a dot written below the graph, so as to distinguish these sounds from the unmarked non-retroflex sounds *kra*, *hra* and *gra*, which occur widely in Lepcha, e.g. ᳚᳚ *krít* ‘hunger’, and ᳚᳚᳚ *hróng* ‘come up, arrive’. This useful diacritic was introduced by Mainwaring (1876: 10-11), and is known as *Mainwaring’s dot*. Mainwaring suggests that the dot was also used with the letters ᳚ *za* and ᳛ *ra*, but this particular usage is no longer found (Mainwaring 1876: 11). Although not all Lepcha writers favour the orthographic innovation, Mainwaring’s dot still is widely used to indicate retroflex sounds.

᳚	᳚	᳛	᳚	᳚	᳛
<i>kra</i>	<i>gra</i>	<i>hra</i>	<i>tra</i>	<i>dra</i>	<i>thra</i>

Diagram 9: Retroflex consonants

The ᳚ *rân* ‘circumflex’ sign is a diacritic flourish written over a consonant sign or over a vowel sign ‘᳚’, as in ᳚ *rân*, ᳚ *lâ* or ᳚᳚ *lí*. Although the original function of the ᳚ *rân* sign is still unclear, it is often present in closed syllables, in which case the circumflex sign should be written above the final consonant sign. It has been suggested that the function of the ᳚ *rân* is to indicate stress or pitch, in order to distinguish stressable syllables from syllables that never appear in a stressed position, and this hypothesis may well be correct (Plaisier 2003: 28-29, Sprigg 1983: 316). However, because the function of the ᳚ *rân* sign is unclear to most writers, nowadays the sign is

used by the Lepcha in a variety of ways and opinions vary strongly as to which is the correct usage.

### 2.5 Romanisation and spelling

In order to represent Lepcha in the Roman alphabet, either a transliteration or a transcription system may be used. Transliteration systems carefully substitute orthographical symbols by Roman letters and should follow the same spelling conventions and particularities that are used in the native orthography. Transcriptions are devised with the pronunciation of a language in mind and are used to characterise the phonology of a language. Not all systems that are used for the representation of Lepcha in the Roman alphabet are fully systematic in the sense that they can be called either a proper transliteration or a transcription, but the most popular ones represented in Diagram 10 below are systematic and fairly easy to grasp.

The prevailing transliteration system is that of Mainwaring, and most other romanisations are based on his system (1876: 2-3), albeit with some modifications. The transcription system used by Gorer (1938) is based on the pronunciation of well-known western European languages such as English, French and German. The basis of the transcriptions of Stocks (1925) and Hermanns (1954) is unclear.

Grünwedel (1898: viii-xi) uses Mainwaring's system, but introduces several changes in order to conform to the spelling of Tibetan words according to the Jäschke transcription. Also, Grünwedel arrived at a different treatment of Lepcha vowels, as can be concluded from Diagram 10. Mainwaring did not romanise the  $\tilde{r}$  *rân* sign, which flaws his system, and Grünwedel chose to be more systematic in the transliteration of Lepcha vowels. Grünwedel also decided to romanise syllables with an initial  $\text{ʁ}$  as 'a-, whereas Mainwaring would have transliterated this initial as ay-. In Grünwedel's system, the retroflex sounds are not distinguished from the consonant clusters *kra*, *gra*, *hra*, but he does mark each form that he believes to be a Tibetan loan with an asterisk \*. Grünwedel's work is often criticised because it did not include the original Lepcha orthography. It should be noted that it was not his own choice to publish the manuscript dictionary left by Mainwaring and carefully edited by Grünwedel with just a transcription of the Lepcha words and examples, but that it was demanded by

the British Government, which commissioned the publication of the Lepcha dictionary manuscript (Grünwedel 1898a: ix).

In his publications on the Lepcha language, R.K. Sprigg also uses a transcription that is based on Mainwaring, although he replaces *ch* by *c* and *chh* by *ch*. Sprigg adds an apostrophe to indicate an initial glottal stop, and to avoid the suggestion of disyllabicity in words with an initial  $\text{ʔ}$  he chooses to romanise this initial as 'y- instead of with Mainwaring's *ay-*. (Sprigg 1983: 305).

The system of transliteration used in Siiger and Rischel's monograph (1967) is in principle the same as Grünwedel's system, but for typographical reasons some diacritics are replaced by consonants. Bodman (1988:1) also used a system based on Grünwedel's transcription with a few modifications. Bodman replaced *ñ* with *ng*, *š* with *sy*, *c* with *cy*, *c'* with *chy*, and *j* with *zy*. Bodman systematically represents aspiration with the letter *h*, and he replaced *ts* with *c*, and *ts'* with *ch*. The initial glottal stop is not represented in his transcription system.

K. P. Támsáng chose a transliteration system that is close to Mainwaring's in the realm of the consonants, apart from *chya* for  $\text{ɕ}$ , *jya* for  $\text{ʃ}$ , *shya* for  $\text{ɕ}$ , and *ta* for  $\text{ɕ}$  as well as retroflex  $\text{ɕ}$ , *da* for  $\text{ɕ}$  as well as retroflex  $\text{ɕ}$ , and *hta* for retroflex  $\text{ɕ}$ . As can be seen from Diagram 10 below, Támsáng's system differs a great deal from other systems in the representation of the vowels. Khárpú Támsáng chooses to avoid the  $\text{ɕ}$  ( $\text{ɕ}$  *nyíndo* sign; where others spell  $\text{ɕ}$  *sang*, he spells  $\text{ɕ}$ ). In his *Lepcha-English Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Khárpú Támsáng (1980) does not romanise the  $\text{ɕ}$  *rân*, although from examples in the Lepcha orthography it is evident that he uses the diacritic systematically in closed syllables where no vowel diacritic is used. Khárpú Támsáng sometimes uses the  $\text{ɕ}$  *rân* in open syllables ending in *-a*, i.e. in syllables where no vowel diacritic is used, which implies a distinction between syllables ending in *-a* and *-â*. In other words, Támsáng implies that the difference between open syllables ending in *-a* and *-â* is lexical.

Sometimes, Lepcha is transcribed in the *devanāgarī* script, which does not accurately reflect the original orthography but merely represents a phonetic approximation of Lepcha, which may lead to confusion as to the pronunciation and spelling of words. Nevertheless, many Lepcha find a representation in *devanāgarī* script helpful, especially those who are not familiar with native Lepcha orthography but

have learned to read and write Nepali in *devanāgarī* script. A standardised representation of Lepcha orthography into *devanāgarī* script could be helpful for this group of people.

The romanisation used throughout this book is based on Mainwaring's system, but the following modifications have been made: *ca* is used instead of *cha* for the consonant symbol  $\text{ɕ}$ , and for the symbol  $\text{ɕ}$ , *cha* is used instead of *chha*. The clusters *tra*, *dra* and *thra* are used for the retroflex sounds, the symbol  $\text{ɕ}$  is systematically transcribed as *ʔ*,  $\text{ɕ}$  is transcribed as *ʔy-*,  $\hat{a}$  is used for  $\text{ɔ̃}$ , and *í* is used for  $\text{ɨ̃}$ .

From Diagram 11, in which the native orthography, the transliteration used throughout this book, and a phonetic transcription of Lepcha vowels are put side by side, it can be seen that the native Lepcha orthography is not wholly phonological. On the one hand, the native orthography distinguishes between symbols that do not, or no longer, represent a phonological distinction, i.e.  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{í}$  vs.  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{i}$ , and  $\text{ɔ̃} \hat{a}$  vs. *a* (for example in  $\text{ɕ} \text{ka}$ ). On the other hand, the orthography does not adequately distinguish between the sounds [e] and [ɛ], as will be shown below.

In older manuscripts, the symbols  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{í}$  and  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{i}$  are used in a systematic manner:  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{í}$  is used only in closed syllables and  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{i}$  only in open syllables. Since Mainwaring's time and possibly through his influence, the distribution of the orthographic symbols  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{í}$  and  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{i}$  has become much more random.

The function of the  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{rân}$  sign in the Lepcha orthography remains unclear to me, although, as mentioned above, old texts suggest that the circumflex sign originally occurred mainly in closed syllables and could serve to point to the presence of a final consonant diacritic. It is also possible that the circumflex sign was used to indicate stress, or stressable syllables. Nowadays the usage of the circumflex sign appears to be unsystematic or even unpredictable, and a closer study of the usage of the  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{rân}$  sign in old texts is likely to shed more light on this matter.

The  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{yathyú}$ , the infixed  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{-y-}$ , is often used before the vowels /e/ and /i/ to indicate the palatalisation of certain consonants before these front vowels. Not all Lepcha writers favour this approach, which is found to be more common in Sikkim than in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling hills. The word for 'give', for example, can be found spelt as  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{bi}$  or  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{byi}$ , and the word for 'play' may be written either  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{lem}$  or  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{lyem}$ . The orthographic sequences  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{-ya}$ , and  $\text{ɨ̃} \text{-yá}$  of-

ten point to a realisation of the phoneme /e/ as [ɛ], as in ூଁ (gyal [gɛl]), which is sometimes found written ூଁ gyál [gɛl].

There is rather a lot of variation and some inconsistency in the spelling of many Lepcha words. Some spellings are spontaneous, others idiosyncratic. The spelling used in certain books or by certain scholars is often seen as indicative. Opinions about what is and what is not correctly spelt are generally strong. There are quite a lot of regional differences when it comes to the spelling of words, and some spellings are clearly influenced by either Dränjoke, Tibetan or Nepali.

Especially in the realm of vowels, the spelling of Lepcha words is often seen to be confusing if not inconsistent, although a number of recurring variations can be recognised. In several papers, Sprigg points to the phonetic reasons underlying a number of spelling variations. In short, we can conclude from his work that an important role is played by the difference in realisation between vowels that occur in closed syllables as opposed to vowels that occur in open syllables. The presence of certain distinctions between vowels in one kind of syllable and the lack of the same distinctions in the other kind of syllable appear to make it impossible for the vowels to alternate in a consistent manner, as is discussed in more detail below (cf. Sprigg 1983, 1989).

In some Lepcha words, variant spellings correspond to differences in pronunciation, such as in ூଁ ூଁ vs. ூଁ ூଁ ‘work’ and ூଁ thop vs. ூଁ thúp ‘get’, but at other times another phenomenon can be seen at work. This is the influence of nasalisation on the spelling of words. While it does not make a difference to the meaning of a Lepcha word if vowels are nasalised or not, it does appear to make the spelling of such words less straightforward. In the case of the variation between written ூଁ o and ூଁ ú, Sprigg points to the fact that while the three rounded back vowels ூଁ ú [u], ூଁ o [o], and ூଁ ó [ɔ] may occur in syllables with non-nasal initial consonants, in syllables with an initial nasal consonant the vowel is nasalised, and in such syllables only two back vowels occur, i.e. ூଁ ú and ூଁ ó. In other words, Sprigg claims that there are only two lip-rounded vowel units in nasal-initial syllables, i.e. ூଁ ú [ũ] ~ ூଁ o [õ] and ூଁ ó [õ] versus three, i.e. ூଁ ú [u], ூଁ o [o], and ூଁ ó [ɔ] in other syllables. Sprigg also points out that a spelling with ூଁ o would often yield a spelling closer to a Tibetan cognate, but that perhaps for this very reason many Lepcha prefer a spelling with ூଁ ú (Sprigg 1989: 229).

	Plaisier	Mainwaring	Grünwedel	Támsáng	
ㄏ	<i>ka</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>kǎ</i>	<i>ka</i>	ㄏ
ㄎ	<i>kha</i>	<i>kha</i>	<i>k'ǎ</i>	<i>kha</i>	ㄎ
ㄍ	<i>ga</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>gǎ</i>	<i>ga</i>	ㄍ
ㄍ	<i>nga</i>	<i>nga</i>	<i>nǎ</i>	<i>nga</i>	ㄍ
ㄘ	<i>ca</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>čǎ</i>	<i>cha</i>	ㄘ
ㄘ	<i>cha</i>	<i>chha</i>	<i>č'ǎ</i>	<i>chya</i>	ㄘ
ㄐ	<i>ja</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>jǎ</i>	<i>jya</i>	ㄐ
ㄐ	<i>nya</i>	<i>nya</i>	<i>nyǎ</i>	<i>nya</i>	ㄐ
ㄊ	<i>ta</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>tǎ</i>	<i>ta</i>	ㄊ
ㄊ	<i>tha</i>	<i>tha</i>	<i>t'ǎ</i>	<i>tha</i>	ㄊ
ㄉ	<i>da</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>dǎ</i>	<i>da</i>	ㄉ
ㄉ	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>nǎ</i>	<i>na</i>	ㄉ
ㄉ	<i>pa</i>	<i>pa</i>	<i>pǎ</i>	<i>pa</i>	ㄉ
ㄉ	<i>pha</i>	<i>pha</i>	<i>p'ǎ</i>	<i>pha</i>	ㄉ
ㄈ	<i>fa</i>	<i>fa</i>	<i>fǎ</i>	<i>fa</i>	ㄈ
ㄈ	<i>ba</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>bǎ</i>	<i>ba</i>	ㄈ
ㄇ	<i>ma</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>mǎ</i>	<i>ma</i>	ㄇ
ㄇ	<i>tsa</i>	<i>tsa</i>	<i>tsǎ</i>	<i>tsa</i>	ㄇ
ㄇ	<i>tsha</i>	<i>tsha</i>	<i>ts'ǎ</i>	<i>tsha</i>	ㄇ
ㄗ	<i>za</i>	<i>za</i>	<i>zǎ</i>	<i>za</i>	ㄗ
ㄗ	<i>ya</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>yǎ</i>	<i>ya</i>	ㄗ
ㄗ	<i>ra</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>rǎ</i>	<i>ra</i>	ㄗ
ㄌ	<i>la</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>lǎ</i>	<i>la</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>ha</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>hǎ</i>	<i>ha</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>va</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>vǎ</i>	<i>va</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>sha</i>	<i>sha</i>	<i>šǎ</i>	<i>sya</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>sa</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>sǎ</i>	<i>sa</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>wa</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>wǎ</i>	<i>wa</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>kla</i>	<i>kla</i>	<i>klǎ</i>	<i>kla</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>gla</i>	<i>gla</i>	<i>glǎ</i>	<i>gla</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>fla</i>	<i>fla</i>	<i>flǎ</i>	<i>fla</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>pla</i>	<i>pla</i>	<i>plǎ</i>	<i>pla</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>bla</i>	<i>bla</i>	<i>blǎ</i>	<i>bla</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>mla</i>	<i>mla</i>	<i>mlǎ</i>	<i>mla</i>	ㄌ
ㄌ	<i>hla</i>	<i>hla</i>	<i>hlǎ</i>	<i>hla</i>	ㄌ

	Plaisier	Mainwaring	Grünwedel	Támsáng	
ᵗ	<i>tra</i>	<i>ᵗra</i>	–	<i>ta</i>	ᵗ
ᵘ	<i>dra</i>	<i>gra</i>	–	<i>da</i>	ᵘ
ᵙ	<i>thra</i>	<i>ᵗra</i>	–	<i>hta</i>	ᵙ
ᵚ	<i>ʔ</i>	–	–	<i>a</i>	ᵚ
ᵛ	<i>ʔá</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>aa</i>	ᵛ
ᵜ	<i>ʔâ</i>	<i>aa</i>	<i>á</i>	–	ᵜ
ᵝ	<i>ʔi</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ae</i>	ᵝ
ᵞ	<i>ʔí</i>	<i>î</i>	<i>í</i>	<i>ai</i>	ᵞ
ᵟ	<i>ʔo</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ao</i>	ᵟ
ᵠ	<i>ʔó</i>	<i>ó</i>	<i>ó</i>	<i>aaó</i>	ᵠ
ᵡ	<i>ʔu</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ũ</i>	<i>au</i>	ᵡ
ᵢ	<i>ʔú</i>	<i>ú</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>aoo</i>	ᵢ
ᵣ	<i>ʔe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>aey</i>	ᵣ
ᵤ	<i>ʔy-</i>	<i>ay-</i>	<i>'a-</i>	<i>ay-</i>	ᵤ
ᵥ	<i>-á</i>	<i>-á</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-aa</i>	ᵥ
ᵗ	<i>-â</i>	<i>-â</i>	<i>-á</i>	<i>-a</i>	ᵗ
ᵘ	<i>-i</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-e</i>	ᵘ
ᵙ	<i>-í</i>	<i>-í</i>	<i>-í</i>	<i>-i</i>	ᵙ
ᵚ	<i>-o</i>	<i>-o</i>	<i>-o</i>	<i>-o</i>	ᵚ
ᵛ	<i>-ó</i>	<i>-ó</i>	<i>-ó</i>	<i>-ao, -oo</i>	ᵛ
ᵜ	<i>-u</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>-ũ</i>	<i>-u</i>	ᵜ
ᵝ	<i>-ú</i>	<i>-ú</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>-oo, -o</i>	ᵝ
ᵞ	<i>-e</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-ey</i>	ᵞ
ᵟ	<i>-y-</i>	<i>-y-</i>	<i>-y-</i>	<i>-y-</i>	ᵟ
ᵠ	<i>-r-</i>	<i>-r-</i>	<i>-r-</i>	<i>-r-</i>	ᵠ
ᵡ	<i>-k</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-k</i>	<i>-k</i>	ᵡ
ᵢ	<i>-m</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>-m</i>	ᵢ
ᵣ	<i>-l</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>-l</i>	ᵣ
ᵤ	<i>-n</i>	<i>-n</i>	<i>-n</i>	<i>-n</i>	ᵤ
ᵥ	<i>-p</i>	<i>-p</i>	<i>-p</i>	<i>-p</i>	ᵥ
ᵗ	<i>-r</i>	<i>-r</i>	<i>-r</i>	<i>-r</i>	ᵗ
ᵘ	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-t</i>	ᵘ
ᵙ	<i>-ang</i>	<i>-ang</i>	<i>-ǎñ</i>	–	ᵙ
ᵚ	<i>-ng</i>	<i>-ng</i>	<i>-ñ</i>	<i>-ng</i>	ᵚ

Diagram 6: Romanisation systems

phonetic transcription	native grapheme	transliteration
[i]	ᵚᵛ	<i>i</i>
	ᵚᵛ̄	<i>í</i>
[e~ɛ]	ᵚ	<i>e</i>
	ᵚᵛ	<i>-ya</i>
[a]	ᵚᵛ	<i>-á</i>
[ʌ]	ᵚ̄	<i>â</i>
[ʌ]	ᵚ	<i>a</i>
[u]	ᵚᵛ	<i>u</i>
[u]	ᵚᵛ̄	<i>ú</i>
[o]	ᵚᵛ	<i>o</i>
[ɔ]	ᵚᵛ̄	<i>ó</i>

Diagram 11: Transliteration and transcription of Lepcha vowels

Similarly, in this context, according to Sprigg, there is a discrepancy between the oral and nasalised sets of vowels that would account for spelling variations between  $ᵚᵛ u$  and the consonant-inherent vowel *a*, i.e. when no vowel diacritic is added to a consonant symbol. The three spread vowels  $ᵚᵛ u$  [u], *a* [ə] and  $ᵚᵛ ḁ$  [a] are clearly distinguished from each other in syllables with non-nasal initial consonants and, according to Sprigg, in such syllables no spelling variations should occur. Sprigg claims that the situation in syllables with an initial nasal consonant is such that only two spread vowel units may be distinguished from each other, i.e.  $ᵚᵛ u$  [ũ] ~  $ᵚ a$  [ã] vs.  $ᵚᵛ ḁ$  [ã], which results in spelling variations between  $ᵚᵛ u$  and the consonant-inherent vowel *a* (Sprigg 1989: 229).

The variation between spellings with *a* and *á*, in words like  $ᵚᵛ sám$  ‘three’, which is sometimes written  $ᵚᵛ sam$ , could, Sprigg explains, be attributed to the difference between open syllables and closed syllables. In open or vowel-final syllables, there is a distinction between an open front or back vowel [a~ɑ], romanised as *á*, and a half-close central vowel [ə], romanised as *a*. In consonant-final or closed syllables, the half-close central vowel [ə], is written as  $ᵚ̄ ḁ$  and the vowel



realised as [a~ɑ] may be written either @ *á* or not explicitly indicated by any consonant grapheme implied inherent vowel romanised here as *a* (Sprigg 1983: 317).



## CHAPTER THREE

### PARTS OF SPEECH

Lepcha distinguishes nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, numerals, postpositions, suffixes, conjunctions and particles. Nouns refer to objects, entities and individuals, and express the subject or object of verbs. Verbs describe states, events and actions, and relate to the referents of noun phrases. Adjectives modify nouns, while adverbs modify verbs to specify the time, manner, place or direction of the event described by the verb. Adverbs may also modify adjectives or other adverbs. Suffixes and postpositions express a range of semantic relations between the parts of speech they attach themselves to or combine with. Conjunctions are used to connect or combine words, phrases, clauses or sentences. Particles add a semantic notion to a whole sentence. Nouns, pronouns, adjectives and numerals comprise the group of nominals which may be pluralised and take nominal suffixes or postpositions. Verbs may be marked by auxiliary verbs and take verbal suffixes. A small group of suffixes and particles is used to mark nouns, verbs and whole sentences.

This chapter provides an overview of derivational processes in Lepcha. It should be noted that an analysis of word classes or parts of speech in a language cannot be made on purely formal grounds. A single root can belong to more than one word class, that is, it may function as a noun, as an adjective or as a verb. Apart from looking at the internal structure of words, the syntactic context and semantic properties of words should also be taken into account.

#### 3.1 *Derivational affixes*

When we look at the internal structure of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, we can recognise certain derivational relationships. For example, we see that verbs are often monosyllabic, whereas nouns, adjectives and adverbs often consist of two or more syllables. In many

nouns and adjectives we recognise the prefix  $\mathfrak{A}$  *ʔá-* and a verbal root, as in the following examples.

$\mathfrak{S}$ <i>ʔít</i> ‘create’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{S}$ <i>ʔáʔít</i> ‘origin, creation’
$\mathfrak{L}$ <i>ʔóm</i> ‘shine’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{L}$ <i>ʔáʔóm</i> ‘radiance’
$\mathfrak{G}$ <i>gó</i> ‘be happy’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{G}$ <i>ʔágó</i> ‘joy, happiness’
$\mathfrak{K}$ <i>kón</i> ‘taste’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{K}$ <i>ʔákón</i> ‘taste’
$\mathfrak{G}$ <i>gek</i> ‘be born’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{G}$ <i>ʔágek</i> ‘birth’
$\mathfrak{L}$ <i>li</i> ‘say, speak’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{L}$ <i>ʔálin</i> ‘speech, talk’
$\mathfrak{Z}$ <i>zo</i> ‘eat’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{Z}$ <i>ʔázóm</i> ‘rice, food’
$\mathfrak{R}$ <i>ryú</i> ‘be good’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{R}$ <i>ʔáryúm</i> ‘good’
$\mathfrak{L}$ <i>li</i> ‘carry’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{L}$ <i>ʔálim</i> ‘heavy’
$\mathfrak{D}$ <i>dúm</i> ‘be white’	$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{D}$ <i>ʔádúm</i> ‘white’

The prefix  $\mathfrak{A}$  *ʔá-*, phonetically [ʔa], may be shortened to [ʔ], e.g.  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{H}$  *ʔáhrún* [ʔa-ɾun] vs.  $\mathfrak{H}$  *hrún* [ʔrun],  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{H}$  *ʔáhyâng* [ʔa-hjəŋ] vs.  $\mathfrak{H}$  *hyâng* [ʔhjəŋ]. This optional variation prompted George Mainwaring to state that ‘the retention or rejection of the *á*, is merely a matter of euphonic consideration, it is in general more elegantly retained’ (Mainwaring 1876: 120). The prefix at once reminds one of the Burmese nominalising prefix *a-*.

The suffix  $\mathfrak{L}$  *-lá* creates adverbs when it is added to the verbal root, e.g.  $\mathfrak{R}$  *ryú* ‘be good’,  $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{L}$  *ryúlá* ‘well’,  $\mathfrak{H}$  *thyen* ‘laugh’,  $\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{L}$  *thyenlá* ‘laughingly’.

The suffix  $\mathfrak{L}$  *-lât* is added to verbs or adjectives to create abstract nouns and *nomina actionis*, as  $\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{L}$  *zúk-lât* ‘action, performance’ from  $\mathfrak{Z}$  *zúk* ‘make’, and  $\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{L}$  *thyenlât* ‘laughter’ from  $\mathfrak{H}$  *thyen* ‘laugh’,  $\mathfrak{G}\mathfrak{L}$  *gánlât* ‘oldness, old age’ from  $\mathfrak{G}$  *gán* ‘old’,  $\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{L}$  *nók-lât* ‘blackness’ from  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{N}$  *ʔánók* ‘black’,  $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{L}$  *ʔállât* ‘freshness, newness’ from  $\mathfrak{X}$  *ʔál* ‘new’.

The suffix  $\mathfrak{K}$  *-ko* creates concrete nouns from verbs or nouns, as  $\mathfrak{L}\mathfrak{K}$  *línko* ‘speech, statement’ from  $\mathfrak{L}$  *li* ‘say’, and  $\mathfrak{Z}\mathfrak{K}$  *záko* ‘planet’ from  $\mathfrak{Z}$  *zá* ‘circle’,  $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{K}$  *chúko* ‘energy, force’ from  $\mathfrak{X}$  *chú* ‘strength’,  $\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{K}$  *choko* ‘paper’ from  $\mathfrak{C}$  *cho* ‘book’,  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{K}$  *tángko* ‘basket’ from  $\mathfrak{A}$  *táng* ‘bundle’.

The morpheme  $\mathfrak{L}$  *lóm* ‘way, road, path’ adds its meaning to nouns to create manner nouns, e.g.  $\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{L}$  *mát* ‘do’,  $\mathfrak{D}\mathfrak{L}\mathfrak{L}$  *mátlóm* ‘conduct, act of conducting, guidance’.

The suffix ལ་ -*mú* creates nominals denoting people or things deriving from a certain place of origin, and is added to place names or location words, e.g. རྩོལ་ལ་ *renjóngmú* ‘Sikkimese’, ལྷོ་ལ་ *pâtmú* ‘Tibetan’, ལྷོ་ལ་ *promú* ‘Bhutanese’, ལྷོ་ལ་ *gyagármú* ‘Indian’, ལྷོ་ལ་ *philíngmú* ‘Englishman’, ལྷོ་ལ་ *tíngmú* ‘plainsfolk’. Another element ལ་ -*mú*, derived from ལ་ལ་ *lamú* ‘mother’, occurs as a part of compounds in which it expresses the sense ‘main, origin, mother’, e.g. ལྷོ་ལ་ ལྷོ་ལ་ *runngnyít lamú* ‘the main stream of the Rungnyít’.

The suffix ལ་ -*lu* forms deverbative nouns, e.g. ལ་ *mát* ‘do’, ལ་ལ་ *mátlu* ‘habit, custom’, ལ་ *dun* ‘say, tell’, ལ་ལ་ *dunlu* ‘remark’. The suffix ལ་ -*thup* creates adjectives from verbs, e.g. ལ་ *zo* ‘eat’, ལ་ལ་ *zómthup* ‘edible’, ལ་ *zúk* ‘make’, ལ་ལ་ *zúkthup* ‘manageable’. The suffix ལ་ -*shet* can be recognised in nouns and adjectives that are formed from verbs, e.g. ལ་ *thóng* ‘drink’, ལ་ལ་ *thóngshet* ‘drinkable’, ལ་ *li* ‘say, speak’, ལ་ལ་ *línshet* ‘speech, means of speaking’, ལ་ *ngán* ‘remain, sit’, ལ་ལ་ *ngánshet* ‘seat’.

The word ལ་ *kup* ‘child, small’, also ལ་ལ་ *lamúkup* ‘child’, acts as a diminutive suffix in nouns, e.g. ལ་ *bán* ‘knife’, ལ་ལ་ *bánkup* ‘small knife’, ལ་ *lóng* ‘boy’, ལ་ལ་ *lóngkup* ‘small boy’. The word ལ་ *kup* may also be attached to other nominals, e.g. ལ་ *cu* ‘small, little’, ལ་ལ་ *cukup* ‘a little bit’, ལ་ལ་ *lamú* ‘this’, ལ་ལ་ལ་ *lamúkup* ‘just this’, ལ་ལ་ལ་ *kátkup* or ལ་ལ་ལ་ *kátlamúkup* ‘alone’.

### 3.2 Gender-specific endings

Lepcha has no grammatical gender. There are gender-specific derivational suffixes, some of which are given below with examples.

ལ་ - <i>bu</i>	‘male of animals’
ལ་ - <i>mót</i>	‘female of animals’
ལ་ལ་ <i>mónmót</i>	‘sow’
ལ་ལ་ <i>mónbu</i>	‘boar’
ལ་ལ་ལ་ <i>sakamót</i>	‘female deer, doe’

ໂ– <i>bo</i>	‘father, uncastrated male parent animal’
໕ໂ <i>mónbo</i>	‘boar, uncastrated male of swine’
໔ໂ <i>lóngbo</i>	‘bull’
໓ໂ <i>bíkbo</i>	‘bull, steer’
໓– <i>gú</i>	‘female animal that has given birth’
໓໓ <i>bíkgú</i>	‘cow’
໕໓ <i>mán-gú</i>	‘sow’
໔໔ <i>sakagú</i>	‘doe, female deer’
໕໕ <i>sa?árgú</i>	‘female goat’
໔໖ <i>sungvogú</i>	‘female buffalo’
໕໖ <i>saburgú</i>	‘female musk deer’
໔໗ <i>lóng</i>	‘ox, steer’
໓໔໗ <i>bíklóng</i>	‘ox’
໔໘໗ <i>savínglóng</i>	‘stag’
໔໙໗ <i>sungvolóng</i>	‘wild buffalo’
໕໐໗ <i>saburlóng</i>	‘musk deer’
໓– <i>tsu</i>	‘male of pigs and goats’
໕໕໓ <i>sa?ártsu</i>	‘goat, billy goat’
໔໔໓ <i>sakatsu</i>	‘buck, stag’
໕໕໓ <i>móntsu</i>	‘boar, uncastrated boar’
໓– <i>mi</i>	‘female animal that has not had young’
໕໓໓ <i>mónmi</i>	‘fallow sow’
໓– <i>bop</i>	‘young of bulls’
໓໔໓໓ <i>bíklóngbop</i>	‘bullock, castrated male bovine’
໓໔– <i>cúng</i>	‘young of bulls’
໓໔໓໔໓໔ <i>bíklóngcúng</i>	‘young bull’
໓໔໓໔໓໔ <i>lóngcúng</i>	‘young bull’
໔– <i>sháng</i>	‘barren, sterile’
໕໔໔ <i>mónsháng</i>	‘barren sow’
໓– <i>tâng</i>	‘corpulent male animal, pig or dog’

ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒátâng	‘a fat male beast’
ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒajutâng	‘fat male dog’
ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒóntâng	‘fat boar’
ꠄꠟ –bom	‘brooding female animal’
ꠄꠟꠟ ꠒíkbom	‘female hen having chickens’

### 3.3 Compounding

Compounding is a common process in Lepcha word formation. A compound may involve verbal as well as nominal constituents.

ꠄꠟ ꠒi ‘curry’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒáfong ‘green’, ꠄꠟꠞꠟ ꠒifong ‘green leafy vegetable’

ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒhyák ‘recognise, identify’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒáthyák ‘head’, ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒhyákdám ‘scalp’, ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒhyáktuk ‘hat, cap’.

ꠄꠟꠟ ꠒót ‘repeat’, ꠄꠟꠟꠟ ꠒótthi ‘come back again’, ꠄꠟꠟꠟ ꠒóttho ‘put again’, ꠄꠟꠟꠟ ꠒótbi ‘give back’, ꠄꠟꠟꠟ ꠒótzúk ‘remake’.

ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒátóm ‘hair’, ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒsómbleng ‘single hair’ ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒsómriék ‘ribbon’, ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒsómúng ‘pigtail’, ꠄꠞꠟꠟ ꠒsómtrat ‘comb’.

Compounding sometimes results in the dropping of prefixes or bound morphemes, e.g. ꠄꠟꠟ ꠒatsuk ‘sun’, ꠄꠟꠟ ꠒsukkyer ‘west’.

ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒákâ ‘hand’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒajóm ‘finger’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒatáp ‘fist’ ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒadóm ‘thumb’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒatyám ‘muscle of the arm’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒathi ‘little finger, pinkie’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒayók ‘fingertip’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒayóng ‘middle finger’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒalít ‘ring finger’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒalyók ‘palm of the hand’.

ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒáthong ‘leg’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒthongjóm ‘toe’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒthongtung ‘heel’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒthongpyól ‘footprint’

ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒádyáng ‘lower leg’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒdyánglyók ‘sole of foot’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒdyángtung ‘heel’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒdyángpók ‘calf’, ꠄꠞꠟ ꠒdyângpak ‘knee’.

ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄámík ‘eye’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄíkccóm ‘eyelash, eyebrow’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄíkmyóng ‘eyelid’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄíkgrúng ‘tear’.

ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄáfo ‘tooth’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄonyel ‘gums’ ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄogóm ‘molar’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄozâl ‘incisor’ ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄolún ‘wisdom tooth’.

ꠄꠄ ꠄo ‘eat, food, rice’, ꠄꠄ ꠄrí ‘smell’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄorí ‘fragrant rice’

ꠄꠄ ꠄhám- ‘thing, object’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámccâng ‘animal’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámccík ‘insect’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámccóng ‘plant’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámccu ‘worm’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámccót ‘fruit’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámcclí ‘seed’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhámccvyet ‘question’

Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between compounds and juxtaposed elements, e.g. ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄvimân ‘kin, offspring, relatives’ (literally ‘flesh and blood’), ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄhánlon ‘not simultaneously’ (literally ‘before and after’).

### 3.4 Reduplication

Lexical reduplication yields adverbials of time, e.g. ꠄꠄ ꠄnám ‘year’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄnámccám ‘yearly’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄtasó ‘yesterday’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄsósó ‘lately’. This process is different from the syntactic reduplication of words in colloquial speech, e.g. ꠄꠄ ꠄtú ‘who’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄtútú ‘such as who’, ‘who exactly’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄsabá ‘where’, ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄsabásabá ‘such as where’, ‘where exactly’, which may well be an areal phenomenon influenced by Nepali.

### 3.5 Causative verbs

Lepcha causatives express transitive notions derived from intransitive meanings or causative motions derived from a base meaning. In the former cases, the subject of the intransitive verb, e.g. ‘die’, ‘stay’, corresponds to the object of the derived transitive verbs, e.g. ‘kill’, ‘keep’. In the latter cases, the semantic relationship between the two verbs connected by means of this now defunct morphological process is more subtle, e.g. ‘push’ vs. ‘cause to quiver’. A closed class of causative verbs is derived by palatalisation of the initial consonant of the base verb. Lepcha native orthography, as reflected in most trans-



literation and transcription systems, uses the symbol *y* representing the affixed glide /y/ to indicate palatalisation of consonants, as in  $\text{ᳵ}$  *kya* [kja],  $\text{ᳶ}$  *pya* [pja]. The palatal nasal [ɲ], however, is written in Lepcha orthography with the consonant sign  $\text{᳷}$ , which is transliterated here as /ny/. Some examples of causative verbs and the verbs they are derived from by palatalisation of the initial consonant are listed here.

$\text{ᳵ}$ <i>nók</i>	‘push’
$\text{ᳶ}$ <i>nyók</i>	‘cause to quiver, shake’
$\text{᳷}$ <i>mák</i>	‘die’
$\text{᳸}$ <i>myák</i>	‘kill’
$\text{᳹}$ <i>bám</i>	‘dwell, stay, reside’
$\text{ᳺ}$ <i>byám</i>	‘keep, leave behind’
$\text{᳻}$ <i>plâ</i>	‘come forth, come out, rise’
$\text{᳼}$ <i>plyâ</i>	‘produce, bring forward’
$\text{᳽}$ <i>lú</i>	‘rise’
$\text{᳾}$ <i>lyú</i>	‘erect’
$\text{᳿}$ <i>ʔum</i>	‘ripe, sweet, tasty’
$\text{ᳺ}$ <i>ʔyum</i>	‘ripen, bring to maturity’
$\text{᳽}$ <i>tyul</i>	‘fall’
$\text{᳾}$ <i>tyal</i>	‘fell’ (also spelt $\text{᳿}$ <i>tel</i> )

When the stem of the root verb ends in a vowel, in some cases a final /t/ is added to the derived causative, viz.  $\text{᳽}$  *glú* ‘fall down’,  $\text{᳾}$  *glyat* (also spelt  $\text{᳿}$  *glet*) ‘drop, decline, suspend’ and  $\text{᳽}$  *bu* ‘carry’,  $\text{᳾}$  *bet* ‘load’.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### NOMINAL MORPHOLOGY

This chapter is devoted to the morphosyntax of nominals, which comprise the following parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, adjectives and numerals. Nouns lack a grammatical gender distinction and show no agreement with articles, adjectives or verbs. Pronouns include personal, demonstrative, interrogative and indefinite pronouns. Adjectives may be used adnominally, predicatively or independently as nominal heads.

Nominals may be pluralised and may take case endings. Case endings are suffixes or postpositions attached to the nominal. In Lepcha, it is possible to make a distinction between ‘genuine’ case endings, which are suffixes that exhibit morphological behaviour proper to suffixes and postpositional case endings, which do not show any morphophonological interaction with the nominal which they modify. The set of ‘true’ case endings, as it were, comprises only the definite article  $\text{ɽ}$ -*re* ‘the’ and the dative marker  $\text{ᄁ}$ -*m*. All other case endings are actually postpositions. This having been said, all such case endings are treated together in this chapter for the sake of convenience. Two or more case endings may co-occur attached to a single noun when this yields a desired and semantically plausible combination.

A number of Lepcha morphemes index grammatical categories which can be combined with constituents of different syntactic status, i.e. with nouns, with verbs and with entire clauses. The apparent difference in sense expressed by such morphemes, e.g. the locative morpheme  $\text{ɽ}$ -*ká*, is a straightforward function of the difference in syntactic status of the constituent which they modify. The morpheme in question can be shown to express the same invariant meaning. For coherence of presentation, such morphemes are discussed in all the relevant chapters of this grammar and the sections pertaining to such morphemes are cross-referenced.

4.1 *Number*

Plural number in nouns is expressed by the suffixes ཉམ་ *-pang* and ཉམ་ *-sang*. The non-human plural suffix ཉམ་ *-pang* (PL.NH) is used to express plurality of animals, things and, indeed, all entities except humans. The human plural suffix ཉམ་ *-sang* (PL.H) indexes the plurality of human beings and personified, anthropomorphic beings such as benevolent heavenly creatures, gods, goddesses and good spirits. It is a point of ethnopsychological interest that nouns denoting benevolent supernatural beings take the human plural suffix ཉམ་ *-sang* (PL.H), whereas nouns denoting malevolent beings take the non-human plural suffix ཉམ་ *-pang* (PL.NH), e.g. རྩལ་ཉམ་ *rumdár-sang* ‘gods’ vs. རྩལ་ཉམ་ *rumdár-pang* ‘demons’. Despite the fact that the distinction described here between the two plural suffixes is used by most speakers of Lepcha, a small number of Lepcha speakers use the plural suffixes differently. These less fluent speakers use both suffixes interchangeably in free variation, without making any distinction between human or non-human referents.

1 རིམ་ཉམ་  
*bik-pang*  
cow-PL.NH  
‘cows’

2 མཉམ་ཉམ་  
*cho-pang*  
book-PL.NH  
‘books’

3 རྩལ་ཉམ་  
*ʔóng-sang*  
boy-PL.H  
‘boys’

4 རྩལ་ཉམ་  
*rum-sang*  
god-PL.H  
‘gods’

- 5      རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་  
*thámbík thám câng-pang*  
 insect    animal-PL.NH  
 ‘animals, creatures’
- 6      རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་  
*faleng nómleng-sang*  
 young.boy    young.girl-PL.H  
 ‘youngsters, teenagers’
- 7      རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་ རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་ རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་ རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་ རྩོམ་ཆུང་ཆུང་པ་  
*múng-sá    ʔáthong ʔákâ-pang    ʔámel ʔátím nyí*  
 devil-GEN    leg    hand-PL.NH    hair    big    be  
 ‘The hair on the devil’s limbs was very long.’  
 ‘The devil’s limbs were very hairy.’

About the distinction between རྩོམ་ -*sang* (PL.H) and རྩོམ་ -*pang* (PL.NH) George Mainwaring wrote:

The difference between the two plural terms, is, *sang*, is applied chiefly to human beings; *pang*, to inferior animals, and to inanimate things. *pang*, may, however, be made to denote the plural of human, or inferior beings, and of inanimate things, indifferently. *sang*, although it may be applied to all living animals, human or inferior, can never be correctly affixed as a plural sign to inanimate things...’ (1876: 27)

The plural category in Lepcha is not equivalent in meaning to the plural category in English or, for that matter, most European languages. In English, the grammatical category of plural indexes a meaning which means simply more than one of a countable entity or item. The Lepcha plural category denotes manifoldness. A fundamental distinction between manifoldness and plurality lies in the fact that plurality is numerically definite, i.e. European-type plurality expressly denotes a quantity greater than one of a countable item. Therefore, the plural is automatically used when an English nominal is modified by a numeral denoting a quantity greater than one, e.g. two boys. It is in-

herent in the meaning of manifoldness that a definite number of items precludes manifoldness. This is why the Lepcha ‘plural’ suffixes are not used when a nominal is modified by a numeral denoting a quantity greater than one, e.g. Lepcha (ꠄ꠆ꠘ *cho sám* ‘three books’. The definite quantity expressed by the numeral is incompatible with the meaning of manifoldness denoted by the Lepcha plural suffixes, e.g. (8).

- 8            ꠄ꠆ꠘ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ  
*kasu-sá            ?ákup    fali    nyí-wám*  
 1S.OBL-GEN    child    four    be-PRG  
 ‘I have four children.’

By the same token, whereas English has a zero-marked singular, Lepcha lacks a singular. A form such as (ꠄ *cho* ‘book’, in (ꠄ ꠆ꠘ *cho sám* ‘three books’ is simply not marked for number.

A Lepcha plural ending does not denote, but stresses what we call plurality in English. English or European plurality of a noun is often indicated by the context and in such cases is not expressed by a plural suffix in Lepcha. Modifiers like ‘many’ or ‘how many’ will take a plural in English, but not in Lepcha, for manifoldness need not necessarily be stressed in such a context, e.g. (9), (10).

- 9            ꠄ꠆ꠘ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ  
*?ádo-sá            ?ákup    nyí-wám*  
 2S.OBL-GEN    child    be-PRG  
 ‘Do you have children?’

- 10            ꠄ꠆ꠘ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ ꠄ꠆ꠘ  
*?ádo-sá            ?ányúr-re    satet            ?átím    go*  
 2S.OBL-GEN    ear-DEF    how.much    big        be  
 ‘Your ears are so big!’

Moreover, Lepcha plural endings such as the human plural suffix ꠄ꠆ꠘ *-sang* can be used with proper names or kinship terms, e.g. ꠄ꠆ꠘ꠆ꠘ꠆ꠘ *nyímá-sang* ‘Nyima and his friends’. Here the human plural suffix ꠄ꠆ꠘ *-sang* conveys the sense of English ‘and the like’ or ‘and company’ or Latin *cum suis*. In this sense, the suffix ꠄ꠆ꠘ *-sang* de-

notes a group surrounding a particular person. Since Nyima is the proper name of an individual, of which there is only one, a ‘literal’ translation with an English plural form, i.e. \*Nyimas, would yield an essentially different and somewhat absurd meaning. The notion expressed is the identification of a group surrounding an individual or set of individuals or, in other words, of more specimens of the same. The Lepcha plural in *ṣṣ* *-sang* occurs in such expressions as 𑄇𑄞𑄚 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚 *ʔábo ʔámú-sang* [father mother-PL.H], in the meaning ‘family’ or ‘forefathers’, e.g. (11).

The lack of plural suffix in (13) leaves unspecified the number of friends who have left the speaker, whereas the use of the human plural suffix *ṣṣ* *-sang* in (14) enhances the sense of desolation of the speaker and the manifoldness of the friends which have abandoned him. In sentence (15), the numeral 𑄇𑄞 *kát* ‘one’ is used to express explicit singular number.

- |    |                          |               |               |  |
|----|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| 11 | 𑄇𑄞𑄚 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚 |               |               |  |
|    | <i>káyú róng-sang-re</i> | <i>ʔácála</i> | <i>lúk-do</i> |  |
|    | 1P Lepcha-PL.H-DEF       | still         | get.up-self   |  |

𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚  
*ma-khut-ne-bám*  
 NEG-be.able-NEG-PRG

‘We Lepcha are still unable to stand up for ourselves.’

- |    |                    |              |            |  |
|----|--------------------|--------------|------------|--|
| 12 | 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚      | <i>ʔánók</i> | <i>gum</i> |  |
|    | <i>tíngmú-sang</i> | black        | be.AST     |  |
|    | plainsfolk-PL.H    |              |            |  |

‘Plainsfolk are black.’  
 ‘People from the plains are black.’

- |    |                  |                |           |  |
|----|------------------|----------------|-----------|--|
| 13 | 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚 𑄇𑄞𑄚𑄞𑄞𑄚    | <i>fát-nón</i> | <i>ma</i> |  |
|    | <i>kasu tyól</i> | lose-RES       | AST       |  |
|    | 1S.OBL friend    |                |           |  |

‘My friend has disappeared.’  
 ‘My friends have disappeared.’

- 14      ཇུ་ལྷོ་སྐྱོ་སྐྱོ་སྐྱོ་  
*kasu tyól-sang fát-nón ma*  
 1S.OBL friend-PL.H lose-RES AST

‘My friends have disappeared.’

- 15      ཇུ་ལྷོ་མེ་སྐྱོ་སྐྱོ་  
*kasu tyól-kát fát-nón ma*  
 1S.OBL friend-one lose-RES AST

‘One of my friends has disappeared.’

The plural morphemes ཇུ་ -*sang* (PL.H) and ཇུ་ -*pang* (PL.NH) are directly suffixed to the nominal constituent which they modify. This entails that the suffixes precede all case endings, postpositions, articles or demonstrative pronouns which modify the nominal, but that, when a nominal consists of a noun immediately followed by a modifying adjective, the morphemes ཇུ་ -*sang* (PL.H) and ཇུ་ -*pang* (PL.NH) follow the adjective, i.e. they follow the nominal constituent as a whole.

- 16      ཇུ་ རྩོམ་ཇུ་ལྷོ་ ཇུ་  
*go ríngngá-sang-re-m gó ma*  
 1S child-PL.H-DEF-DAT be.happy AST

‘I am fond of children.’

- 17      ཇུ་ལྷོ་ ཇུ་ལྷོ་ ཇུ་ལྷོ་  
*ǰálong muró ǰátím-sang ma-nyí-n*  
 now man big-PL.H NEG-be-NEG

‘There are no tall men around at the moment.’

The suffix ཇུ་ -*pang* (PL.NH), which is otherwise restricted to non-human referents, can be used with any nominal to convey the sense of a collective, group or gang.

- 18      ཇུ་ལྷོ་  
*káyú-pang*  
 1P-PL.NH



‘we (collectively, as a group)’

- 19      ཕུ་ལྷོ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་  
*hu-nu li thámchang ?áre ?ábá-pang*  
 3S-ABL say animal this here-PL.NH

ལེ་ རྒྱལ་  
*lá nyí-wám*  
 also be-PRG

‘He said that such an animal also lives over here with us.’

When the definite article རྒྱལ་-*re* is added, the specificity of the group in question is indicated.

- 20      རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་  
*káyú róng-pang-re*  
 1P Lepcha-PL.NH-DEF

‘We, the Lepcha.’

‘We, as Lepcha’

- 21      རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་  
*káyú róng-sang-re*  
 1P Lepcha-PL.H-DEF

‘We Lepcha...’

‘Us Lepcha...’

The meaning of the morpheme རྒྱལ་-*sang* is in fact ‘whole, entire’ and the meaning of the morpheme རྒྱལ་-*pang* is ‘thing, things’. With regard to the non-human plural marker རྒྱལ་-*pang*, Grünwedel suggests that རྒྱལ་-*pang* was not only used as a non-human plural marker attached to nominals, but also as a nominal head: *mlo-pän* [*mlo-pang*] ‘things’, *să-re gŭn-nă pän* [*sare gunna-pang*] ‘every thing’, *kă-sŭ-să pän* [*kasu-sá-pang*] ‘my things, mine’ (Grünwedel 1898a: 209). In his grammar, Mainwaring mentions the form *nyí-pang* ‘possessions’ (Mainwaring 1876: 97). Grünwedel also suggests that the use of རྒྱལ་-*pang* with human referents indicates a certain disrespect for these

referents (Grünwedel 1898a: 209). Although we do not, or no longer, find these usages, if the meaning of *ṣṣ* -*pang* was indeed at one point strongly associated with ‘things’, an implied disrespect would have made sense.

I have not been able to corroborate the analysis of the morpheme *ṣṣ* -*nyum* as a pronominal dual suffix, or as a dual suffix for nouns, as was first reported by Mainwaring in 1876, and repeated by Sinha (1966: 67) and Támsáng (1978: 10), for example in Mainwaring *maro nyum* ‘two persons’ (1876: 27), *go nun to nyum ká byi sho* ‘to whom (two) I shall give it’ (1876: 42). If the speaker intends to express the dual number of nouns explicitly, the numeral *ṣṣ* *nyet* ‘two’ is used, as in example (22).

- 22      *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ*  
*muró-nyet thi-wám*  
 man-two reach-PRG  
 ‘Two men are arriving’

Grünwedel analyses *ṣṣ* -*nyum* as a possible variant of the bound pronominal morpheme *ṣṣ* -*nyím*, as in *a-nyüm* [*ʔányum*] ‘you two’, *kǎ-nyüm* [*kanyum*] ‘us two’, but this usage appears to have fallen into disuse (Grünwedel 1898a: 108). Mainwaring provides examples such as *áre nyum* [*ʔáre nyum*] ‘these two’ (1876: 43), *áre nyumká sare ryú* [*ʔáre nyumká sare ryú*] ‘of these two which is good?’ (1876: 33), reflecting a usage of the morpheme *ṣṣ* -*nyum* in the sense of ‘a pair’. We indeed still find -*nyum* used in this meaning in spoken Lepcha today, e.g. (23).

- 23      *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ* *ṣṣ*  
*ʔáre nyum-ká sare ryú-wung gó*  
 this pair-LOC which good-PTC Q  
 ‘Which of these two is better?’

#### 4.2 The definite and indefinite article

The numeral *ṣṣ* *kát* ‘one’ is not an indefinite article as such, but can be used in some of the same functions as the indefinite article in English, e.g. (15), (24) and (25), where the speaker wishes to make explicit the singularity of the referent.

24      ཅུ་ལྷོ་ལོ་ལྷོ་རུ་འཇོག་པའི་ལོ་ལྷོ་  
*hu lát-thi-bú-re nám-kát nahán nón*  
 3S return-reach-FCT-DEF year-one before RES  
 ‘His return here was a year ago’  
 ‘He returned here a year ago’

25      རྩོད་ཀྱི་མུ་ལྷོ་ལོ་  
*řingngá-kát dá-nyí-tho ma*  
 child-one sleep-be-EXH AST  
 ‘One of the children is already asleep.’

Lepcha ལེ་ *kát* ‘one’ can be used in the sense of ‘a certain’ or ‘a’, e.g. ལྷོ་ལེ་ *muró kát* ‘a man, one man, a certain man’. It is also used in a few set phrases, like ལེ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལེ་ *kátnu plângká* ‘again and again’, literally ‘one and then on top of that’.

26      ལོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*go-nu saróng bu-kát pacák-do tyak-hát*  
 1S-ABL today snake-one almost-self tread-PRF  
 ‘I almost stepped on a snake today.’

27      ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*muró kát-do lá ma-nyí-n*  
 man one-self also NEG-be-NEG  
 ‘There isn’t even one person left.’

The ending ལྷོ་ *-re* is the Lepcha definite article (DEF). The definite article ལྷོ་ *-re* acts as a true suffix in that it forms a prosodic word unit with the stem or phrase with which it combines. The suffix ལྷོ་ *-re* is attached to nouns, e.g. ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *muróre* ‘the man’. Like the definite article in English, the Lepcha definite article fulfils a thematic or even contrastive function, e.g. (20), (28), (29). The use of Lepcha ལྷོ་ *-re* as a topic marker is a function of the meaning of a definite article.

- 28      ཤུ་ལཱ་ (རྩོམ་པོ་) རྩུ་ལཱ་  
*lí sare dorji-nun zúk-tho*  
 house which Dorji-ABL make-EXH

(ཤུ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་ལཱ་)  
*ʔore-re ʔáre gum*  
 that-DEF this be.AST

‘This is the house that Dorji built.’

- 29      རྩུ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་ལཱ་ (རྩུ་ལཱ་)  
*fán-tho-bú mân-re món-sá gum*  
 burn-EXH-FCT meat-DEF pig-GEN be.AST

‘The meat that was burnt is pork.’

- 30      རྩུ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་ལཱ་  
*muró-nu zúk-tho-bú ʔázóm*  
 man-ABL make-EXH-FCT food

(ལཱ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་ལཱ་)  
*zo-shang-re ʔájóm ngún*  
 eat-INF-DEF easy become

‘It’s easy to eat food that somebody else has cooked.’

The fact that the numeral ཧེ *kát* ‘one’ is a numeral and not a genuine indefinite article in the Western European sense is underscored by instances such as ལཱ་ལཱ་ ཧེ *kalók-kát-re* ‘the one mouse’, ‘that mouse’, in which ཧེ *kát* is used in combination with the definite article ལཱ་ *-re*. The Lepcha definite article ལཱ་ *-re* is etymologically cognate with the root found in the Lepcha demonstratives རྩུ་ *ʔáre* ‘this’ and ཤུ་ *ʔore* ‘that’, and it is easy to see how the meaning of the definite article is derived from the deictic function of the demonstrative. This also explains the speech habit of some speakers who use the definite article ལཱ་ *-re* as a stopgap when they pause in mid-sentence to formulate their thoughts, e.g. (31).

31 རྩོམ་པོ་ལ་གཞན་གྱི་ལོ་ལྟར་ མི་  
*ren-do-m-re go-re jen-sung-lá kám*  
 sir-self-DAT-DEF 1S-DEF other-story-also little.bit

ལྷོ་ཤར་ལོ་འཁོར་གྱི་ལོ་ལྟར་ ལྷོ་ལོ་ལྟར་ ལྷོ་ལྟར་  
*vyet-shang sákcing-bá-re gyá-nám-ká-re káyú*  
 inquire-INF think-then-DEF past-year-LOC-DEF 1P

རྩོམ་པོ་ལ་ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་  
*róng-sang-sá-re hlo-múng-sá sung-re*  
 Lepcha-PL.H-GEN-DEF peak-devil-GEN story-DEF

ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་  
*gyá-sá munjú-sang-nu káyú-m-re*  
 past-GEN grandmother-PL.H-ABL 1P-DAT-DEF

དུ་མི་ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་  
*dun-?ám-bá-re káyú-re ?otet-ká-re*  
 tell-PRG-when-DEF 1P-DEF that.much-LOC-DEF

ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་ ལོ་ལྟར་  
*ro-nu ryúlá ma-thyo-ne*  
 fear-ABL well NEG-hear-NEG

‘Sir, I want to ask you about another story as well.  
 In the past, when our grandmothers told us the  
 Lepcha stories about the devil of the mountains,  
 we were so very frightened, that we didn’t listen to  
 them very well.’

In contrast with English, the Lepcha definite article ལྟར་ *-re* can be affixed to pronouns to single out the person or persons in question, e.g. (32), (33).

- 32      བཤམ་ལོང་ཀ་ མུ་ལེ་ མུ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་  
*huyú nóng-ká muró lare hu-re laryúm gum*  
 3P inside-LOC man this 3S-DEF good be.AST

‘Among them, this man, he is good.’

- 33      ལེ་ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་  
*kasu-sá l’ing-nu li-bá*  
 1S.OBL-GEN younger.sibling-ABL say-when

མུ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་  
*hu-re dok-bám*  
 3S-DEF be.ill-PRG

‘According to my younger brother, he is ill.’

The following two examples illustrate the contrast between the use and the non-use of the Lepcha definite article ལེ་-*re*, whereby the article in sentence (35) singles out the house in question and highlights the house as the topic.

- 34      ལེ་ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་  
*ladó-sá lí sabá gó*  
 2S.OBL-GEN house where Q

‘Where is your house?’

- 35      ལེ་ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་  
*kasu-sá lí-re manegombú-ká nyí ma*  
 1S.OBL-GEN house-DEF Mane.Gomba-LOC be AST

‘My house is in Mane Gomba.’

There is no zero morpheme expressing an indefinite category in Lepcha, i.e. the non-use of the definite article in Lepcha is not tantamount to expressing the notion of indefiniteness with respect to a noun. In examples (36) and (37) below, one of two actants in the sentences, viz. ལེ་ལེ་ ལེ་ལེ་-*re* ‘the boy’, is marked by the definite article ལེ་-*re*, whereas ལེ་ལེ་ *kajú* ‘the dog’ is not, even though it is appropriate in the given context to translate ལེ་ལེ་ *kajú* into English with a definite article.

- 36      ཨོལ་ལྷོ་མེད་ལཱ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*kalók-kát-re-m      ʔályú-nun-do    sót    ma*  
mouse-one-DEF-DAT cat-ABL-self    kill    AST  
‘The cat itself killed the mouse.’
- 37      ལོང་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*ʔóng-re-m      kajú-nun-do    tsúk    ma*  
boy-DEF-DAT      dog-ABL-self    bite    AST  
‘The dog bit the boy.’

Clearly, the Lepcha definite article expresses another meaning than for example the English definite article category. In Lepcha, the grammatical category of definiteness, like the Lepcha plural, takes part in a privative opposition, and not in an equipollent opposition like the English definite article, that contrasts with the corresponding indefinite article. In colloquial speech, the definite article is even on occasion observed to occur twice, as if to emphasise the singling out of the referent, e.g. མའོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *maró-re-re-m* [man-DEF-DEF-DAT] ‘to that very man’.

Mainwaring (1876: 23) and Támsáng (1980: 655) mention yet another ‘definite article’ ལྷོ་ *-mu*. However, this morpheme is not an article, but an individuating suffix for people, evidently cognate with the first element in both Lepcha ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *muzu* ‘body’ and Lepcha ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *muró* ~ མའོ་ *maró* ‘person’. We find this morpheme also in expressions such as ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ *mu sâ* ‘purify the body after childbirth’, with ལྷོ་ *sâ* meaning ‘purify’, as in the expression ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ *múng sâ* ‘exorcise, purify ghosts’.

The human individuating suffix ལྷོ་ *-mu* (IND) is attached directly to the numeral. In combination with ཨོལ་ *kát* ‘one’, the individuating suffix conveys the sense of ‘that very person, that specific person’ and in combination with ལྷོ་ *nyet* ‘two’ it conveys the sense of ‘both of them’. In the following sentences, Lepcha ལྷོ་ *-mu* can be translated by the Nepali suffix *-cāhī*, although it would be premature to simply equate the two categories.

- 38      ལྷོ་ ཨོལ་ ལྷོ་ ཨོལ་ ལྷོ་  
*ʔáre    kát-mu      kát-ká      bi*  
this    one-IND      one-LOC      give

‘Give it to him and to no one else.’

- 39      (ᄃᄅᄇ ᄃᄅᄇ ᄃᄅᄇ) ᄃᄅᄇ ᄃᄅᄇ  
*ʔore ʔyók hunyí nyet–mu–nu zúk*  
 that work 3D two–IND–ABL make

‘The two of them did that.’

- 40      (ᄃᄅᄇᄃ ᄃᄅᄇ) ᄃᄅᄇᄃ ᄃᄅᄇ  
*throm–ká kát–mu kát–re–m klóng*  
 market–LOC one–IND one–DEF–DAT send

‘Send this to him and to him alone at the market.’

### 4.3 Pronouns

#### 4.3.1 Personal pronouns

The personal pronouns, listed below in Diagram 12, differentiate three persons and three numbers.

	singular	dual	plural
1st person	(ᄃᄅᄇ <i>go</i> (1S))	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃ <i>kányí</i> (1D))	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃ <i>káyú</i> (1P))
2nd person	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃ <i>hó</i> (2S))	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃ <i>ʔányí</i> (2D))	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃᄃ <i>ʔáyú</i> (2P))
3rd person	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃ <i>hu</i> (3S))	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃᄃ <i>hunyí</i> (3D))	(ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃᄃᄃ <i>huyú</i> (3P))

Diagram 12: Personal pronouns

The third person ᄃᄅᄇ *hu* denotes only human referents. When the referent is non-human a demonstrative is used, except in the case of fables or other tales in which animals are personified and the third person pronoun ᄃᄅᄇ *hu* is used to refer to these animals. The morpheme ᄃᄅᄇ *ka*, first person singular marker (S1) used in oblique and derived forms, forms a minimal pair with the morpheme ᄃᄅᄇ *ká* (P1), the corresponding first person plural marker. These morphemes should not be confused with the locative suffix ᄃᄅᄇ *ká* (LOC), or with the word ᄃᄅᄇ *ka* ~ ᄃᄅᄇ *kâ*, meaning ‘hand’, which is taken to be a shortened form of ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃ *ʔáka* ~ ᄃᄅᄇᄃᄃᄃ *ʔákâ* ‘hand’. The first person plural marker ᄃᄅᄇ *ká* (P1)



may be followed by a numeral to indicate the specific number of people included in the activity mentioned.

- 41       $\epsilon(\text{ㄨㄛ}) \text{ ㄗㄨㄛ} \text{ ㄗㄨㄛ} \text{ ㄗㄨㄛ} \text{ ㄗㄨㄛ}$   
*ká-sám-nun ʔyók ʔáre zúk-nu lel-ká*  
 P1-three-ABL work this make-ABL complete-LOC  
 ‘Let us three get this job over and done with.’

- 42       $\text{ㄏㄛ} \text{ ㄙㄞㄨ} \text{ ㄜ} \text{ ㄗㄨㄛ}$   
*hó saróng shú zúk-hát*  
 2S today what make-PRF  
 ‘What have you done today?’

- 43       $\text{ㄏ} \text{ ㄗㄞㄨㄛ}$   
*hu ma-nóng-ne*  
 3S NEG-go-NEG  
 ‘He didn’t go.’  
 ‘He isn’t going.’  
 ‘He won’t go.’

Singular possessive pronouns are formed by suffixing the genitive marker  $\text{ㄙ}$  -*sá* (GEN) to the oblique forms of the singular pronouns listed in Diagram 13. The oblique forms listed in Diagram 13 are also used with the dative suffix, e.g. Section 4.9.

1st person	2nd person	3rd person
$\epsilon(\text{ㄨ}) \text{ kasu}$	$\text{ㄗ}(\text{ㄨ}) \text{ ʔádo}$	$\text{ㄏ}(\text{ㄨ}) \text{ hudo}$
‘1S.OBL’	‘2S.OBL’	‘3S.OBL’

Diagram 13: Singular oblique pronouns

The meaning of the element  $\text{ㄙ}$  *su* in the first person singular oblique pronoun is as yet unclear. In everyday conversations, the first person singular marker  $\epsilon$  *ka* (S1) may be directly followed by the genitive suffix, as in  $\epsilon(\text{ㄨ}) \text{ ㄗ}(\text{ㄨ}) \text{ kasá ʔábryáng}$  ‘my name’. In the second and third person singular oblique pronouns we recognise the

element (ʔ *do* ‘self’, which accentuates the identity of the referent denoted by the constituent to which it is suffixed, in the sense of ‘this very one, by himself, on his own, of his own accord’, viz. ʔʔ (ʔ *maródo* ‘the man himself’, ʔʔ (ʔ *tado* ‘oneself’, (ʔʔ (ʔ *dodosá* ‘personal, of one’s own’.

44      ʔʔ (ʔ (ʔ (ʔ (ʔ  
*kasu-sá*      ʔábryáng  
 1S.OBL-GEN      name  
 ‘my name’

45      ʔʔ (ʔ (ʔ (ʔ  
*ʔádo-sá*      lí  
 2S.OBL-GEN      house  
 ‘your house’

Dual and plural possessive pronouns are formed by suffixing the genitive marker to the dual and plural personal pronouns, viz. ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ *kányísá*, ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ *káyúsá*, ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ *ʔányísá*, ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ *ʔáyúsá*, ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ *hunyísá*, ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ *huyúsá*. Further usage of the genitive marker (ʔ -*sá* is discussed below in Section 4.6.

46      ʔʔʔʔ (ʔ (ʔ  
*káyú-sá*      *kyóng*  
 1P-GEN      village  
 ‘our village’

#### 4.3.2 Demonstrative pronouns

The Lepcha demonstrative pronouns ʔʔ *ʔáre* ‘this’ and ʔʔ *ʔore* ‘that’ and the interrogative pronoun ʔʔ *sare* ‘what’ are morphologically transparent in the sense that they appear to consist of the element ʔ *-re*, cognate with the definite article, combined with one of the following deictic elements: the proximal morpheme ʔʔ *ʔá-*, the distal morpheme ʔʔ *ʔo-* or the interrogative morpheme ʔʔ *sa-*. The proximal and distal morphemes refer to a location relative to that of the speaker. Some speakers use the proximal deictic morpheme as a

nominal head in itself, e.g.  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$  *ʔásá* ‘with this’. The proximal element  $\mathfrak{A}$  *ʔá-* could conceivably be etymologically related to the pronominal root found in the second person pronouns  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$  *ʔádo*,  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$  *ʔányí* and  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$  *ʔáyú*.

In the following list of demonstratives, in which we find not only demonstrative pronouns but also adverbs, we see the proximal element  $\mathfrak{A}$  *ʔá-* prefixed to other morphemes that refer to a location relative to the speaker.

$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔátháng</i>	‘this up there (to or at any point that is considered higher)’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔáthú</i>	‘this up over there, this up above there’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔábá</i>	‘this here’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔábi</i>	‘this right here’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔáfi</i>	‘this just here, this nearby here, this in this direction, this to or towards here’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔáthól</i>	(adj.) ‘very near, very close’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔápun</i>	(adj.) ‘near, close’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔálem</i>	‘in this direction, hither’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔálon</i>	‘in this direction’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔálol</i>	‘this way, in this direction’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔáchú</i>	‘this down here, this down below, this lower down’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔácún</i>	‘below, lower down, beneath’

Many of these demonstratives have counterparts formed with the distal morpheme  $\mathfrak{A}$  *ʔo-*.

$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔotháng</i>	‘that up there’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔothú</i>	‘that up over there’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔochú</i>	‘that down here’

In some demonstratives we recognise a noun indicating a location, such as  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$  *ʔín* ‘the other side, the opposite side’, and  $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$  *bon* ‘side’.

$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔápín</i>	‘this on the other side’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔopín</i>	‘that on the other side’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔábon</i>	‘on this side’
$\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{C}\mathfrak{C}$	<i>ʔobon</i>	‘on that side’

ཇའོ་ཇའོ་ཇའོ་      *ʔápín ʔábon*      ‘on both sides, here and there’

Three other deictic elements commonly encountered are འ་ *pe-*, also spelt འོ་ *pí-*, ‘over there’, མ་ *me-* ‘down there’, and ཨ་ *tá-*, also spelt ཨ་ *ta-*, ‘up there’. These elements may also be prefixed to the article ར་ *re*, viz. འ་ར་ *pere* ‘that over there’, also spelt འོ་ར་ *pír*, འོ་འི་ *pyir*, འོ་འི་ *pyur*; མ་ར་ *mere* ‘that down there’; ཨ་ར་ *táre* ‘that up there’, or to other deictic elements mentioned above, such as འོ་འོ་ *petet* ‘up to that place over there’, འོ་མ་ *pefi* ‘there (near)’, འོ་ལོ་ *pelom* ‘in that manner’, མ་ལོ་ *mebí* ‘there below’ (less distant than མ་ལོ་ *mebá*), མ་ལོ་ *mebá* ‘there below’, མ་ལོ་ *melom* ‘like that down there’, མ་ལོ་ *melon* ‘in that direction down there’, ཨ་ལོ་ *tabá* ‘above there, up there’, ཨ་ར་ *tarere* ‘the one there above’, ཨ་ལོ་ལོ་ *talem kón* ‘above there, in that direction’, ཨ་ལོ་ *talom* ‘as it is there above’, combined with each other, e.g. འོ་མ་ *peme* ‘there, down there’, or reduplicated འོ་འོ་ *pepe* ‘that there, yonder’.

All the deictic elements introduced thus far form part of many demonstratives and their corresponding interrogatives in Lepcha, as for example in the pair ཇའོ་ *ʔothá* ‘then, at that time’, སའོ་ *sathá* ‘when, at what time’. The demonstratives encode notions such as whether or not an indicated or implied referent is close to the deictic center, whether the referent is at a higher or lower elevation, moving toward or away from the deictic center. Some common demonstratives are listed below in order to illustrate this phenomenon. In the first set of examples, all the demonstratives and the corresponding interrogative contain the element ལོ་ *-bá*, indicating a location relative to the speaker.

ཇལོ་	<i>ʔábá</i>	‘here’
ཇལོ་	<i>ʔobá</i>	‘there’
འོ་ལོ་	<i>pebá</i>	‘there’
མ་ལོ་	<i>mebá</i>	‘there below’
ཨ་ལོ་	<i>tábá</i>	‘there above’
སལོ་	<i>sabá</i>	‘where’

The following pronouns of manner contain the element (Ḷ ~ Ḷ) *lóm* ~ *lom*, ‘road, path’.

Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔálom</i>	‘like this’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔolom</i>	‘like that’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>pelom</i>	‘like that’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>melom</i>	‘like that down there’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>táalom</i>	‘like that there above’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>salom</i>	‘how, like what’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>salomlá</i>	‘anyhow, anyway’

The element Ḷ-*lem*, expresses the meaning ‘towards, in the direction of’, is found in the following demonstratives.

Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔálem</i>	‘in this direction, hither’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔolem</i>	‘in that direction, thither’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>salem</i>	‘in what direction, whither, where’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>tálem kón</i>	‘in the direction there above’

The element (Ḷ) *lol* ‘bend’ which forms part of a set of demonstratives is also used as a verb meaning ‘bend, bend onwards, turn or incline in a forward direction, be directed’.

Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔálol</i>	‘this way, in this direction’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔolol</i>	‘that way, in that direction’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>salol</i>	‘which way, in which direction, whither’
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>talol</i>	‘up above there’

In the following examples the morpheme (Ḷ) *-lon* ‘in this direction’ is found.

Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔálon</i>	in this direction
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔolon</i>	in that direction
Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>talon kón</i>	in the direction there above

The morpheme Ḷ *tet*, also spelt Ḷ *tyet* and Ḷ *tyat*, expresses the meaning ‘until, up to’.

Ḷ(Ḷ)	<i>ʔátet</i>	‘this much, this many’
------	--------------	------------------------

- ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་  
*ʔotet* ‘that much, this many’  
 ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་  
*satet* ‘how much, how many’  
 ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་  
*petet* ‘up to that place over there’

The morpheme ཇལ་ *tet* is used as an approximative suffix with nominals and verbs, indicating a limit or boundary, a continuation or extension as far or as much as specified, e.g. ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ *satet khut tet* ‘as much as possible’. When used with verbs, the morpheme ཇལ་ *tet* is suffixed to the verb to express a limiting event with respect to the situation expressed by the main verb. Occasionally the element ཇལ་ *tet* also occurs as a verb meaning ‘touch, aim’.

- 47 ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་  
*gun-len ʔátim-nu gun-len ʔácum-tet*  
 all-than big-ABL all-than small-until  
 ‘from the greatest of all to the smallest’

- 48 ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་ ཇལ་མཚོ་  
*hu satet zúk-tet go-lá zúk-sho*  
 3S how.much make-until 1S-also make-NPR  
 ‘I will also do as much as he has done.’

#### 4.3.3 Interrogative and relative pronouns

Many interrogative pronouns contain the element ཇལ་ *sa-*. In addition to these pronouns Lepcha uses the pronouns ཇལ་ *shú* ‘what’ and ཇལ་ *tú* ‘who’. Occasionally, as in (51), interrogative pronouns are reduplicated. The pronoun ཇལ་ *sare* ‘which’ is used with both human and non-human referents, whereas ཇལ་ *tú* ‘who’ is only used with human referents. Some interrogative pronouns are also used as relative pronouns, like ཇལ་ *sare* ‘which’ in example (53). The notion ‘why?’ is expressed by the expression ཇལ་མཚོ་ཇལ་མཚོ་ *shúmátne* ‘why’, sometimes spelt ཇལ་མཚོ་ཇལ་མཚོ་ *shúmátnu*. Questions containing an interrogative pronoun are sometimes facultatively marked by the clause-final interrogative particle ཇལ་ *gó* (Q). Yes/no questions are not marked by the interrogative particle.

- 49      རཱཱ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*ʔádo-sá tyól tú gó*  
 2S.OBL-GEN friend who Q  
 ‘Who is your friend?’
- 50      རཱཱུ་ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*ʔáyú-m tú-nu lík-bám gó*  
 2P.OBL-DAT who-ABL call-PRG Q  
 ‘Who is calling you?’
- 51      ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*go cálong-do shú-shú zúk gát*  
 1S now-self what-what do must  
 ‘What should I do now?’
- 52      རཱཱུ་ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*ʔáre-zang shúmú-dep-re ʔadyút shúmátne*  
 this-like man-with-DEF fight why
- ལོ་ ལོ་  
*dóng-shang gó*  
 search-INF Q  
 ‘Why are you picking a fight with a guy like him?’
- 53      ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*zónggú-re sukdam-sá ʔáre-zang lyáng-kát*  
 Dzongú-DEF world-GEN this-like land-one
- ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*gum sare-ká-re sabá-re róng*  
 be.AST which-LOC-DEF where-DEF Lepcha
- ལོ་ ལོ་  
*ʔágít thop-sho*  
 tribe get-NPR  
 ‘Dzongú is one of those places on earth in which, where, we can find Lepcha people.’

Notions such as ‘everywhere’ and ‘everyone’ are expressed in Lepcha by using interrogative pronouns reinforced with the morpheme ལ་ *lá* ‘also’, e.g. ལ་ལ་ *sabá lá* ‘everywhere’, ལ་ལ་ *shú lá* ‘everything, whatever’, ལ་ལ་ *sathá lá* ‘always’, ལ་ལ་ *tú lá* ‘everyone, someone, anyone, whoever’. When these are combined with a negative verb they convey the senses ‘nowhere’, ‘no one’, etc, e.g. (55). The pronoun ལ་ *tú* ‘who’ is also found reinforced with ལ་ *do* ‘self’, viz. ལ་ལ་ *tú do* ‘any person, anybody, anyone’.

- 54 ལ་ ལ་ལ་ ལ་  
*hó sathá lá ma-yâ-n*  
 2S always NEG-know-NEG

ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་ ལ་  
*shú lá ma-yâ-n li-sho*  
 everything NEG-know-NEG say-NPR

‘You’re always saying: I don’t know, I don’t know anything.’

- 55 ལ་ ལ་ལ་ ལ་  
*go-nu shú lá ma-mát-ne*  
 1S-ABL everything NEG-do-NEG

‘I didn’t do anything.’

- 56 ལ་ ལ་ ལ་  
*ʔábi ʔân sabá lá*  
 here and everywhere

‘here and everywhere’

#### 4.3.4 Indefinite pronouns

Common indefinite pronouns referring to unspecified persons or things are ལ་ *rel* ‘each’, ལ་ *ʔáflík* ‘some’, ལ་ *gun* ‘all, every’, ལ་ *tyâng* ‘whole, all’, ལ་ *kumdúng* ‘other’, ལ་ *rangsâ* ~ ལ་ *rangsâr* ‘other’, ལ་ *jen* ‘other’.

The adjective ལ་ *rangsâ* ~ ལ་ *rangsâr*, sometimes spelt ལ་ *rangsó* ~ ལ་ *rangsór* or ལ་ *rungsó* ~ ལ་ *rungsór*, expresses the



meaning ‘another, second, different’ in the sense of ‘a second one’, ‘one more’, but also in the sense of ‘a different one from the one at hand’. The adjective རྣམ་པོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ *ʔásâr* is taken to be a short form of རྣམ་པོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ *rangsâ* ~ རྣམ་པོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ *rangsâr*. The adjective ཇི་ཇི་ *jen* ‘other, another, different, additional’ might be a loan from Dzongkha or Dränjoke ཇི་ཇི་ *zhenmi* or ཇི་ཇི་ *zhen* ‘other’, although the Lepcha and Dränjoke meanings cannot be simply equated. In older texts, we find the form ཇི་ཇི་ *jemen* ‘other, another, different, additional’, which is taken to be an older form of ཇི་ཇི་ *jen*. The etymological relationship between the forms ཇི་ཇི་ *jen* and ཇི་ཇི་ *jemen* and the Dzongkha and Dränjoke forms is as yet unclear. The adjective ཇི་ཇི་ *jen* ‘other, another, different, additional’ is used in much the same way as རྣམ་པོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ *rangsâ*, e.g. ཇི་ཇི་ལོ་ *jen sung* ‘another story’ in example (31) of this chapter, or ཇི་ཇི་ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ *jen thámpang dep* [other object with] ‘with other objects’. The form ཇི་ཇི་ *jen* ‘other, another, different, additional’ is also used as what could be called a true indefinite pronoun, i.e. used independently as a pronominal head, which can be directly followed by suffixes and/or a definite article, e.g. ཇི་ཇི་ལོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ *jen-sang-nu* [other-PL.H-ABL] ‘by others’.

- 57 ཇི་ཇི་ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་  
*jen múng-pang lá gun ro-nu nóng ma*  
 other devil-PL.NH also all fear-ABL go AST  
 ‘All the other devils were also afraid and left.’

- 58 ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་  
*róng lí-kát nyí gang*  
 Lepcha house-one be if  
 རྣམ་པོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ རྣམ་པོ་ལས་ཉམས་པོ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་  
*rungsâr ʔágít-sá lí ʔágyáp nyí-sho*  
 other tribe-GEN house much be-NPR  
 ‘If there is one Lepcha house there, there will be many more houses of other tribes.’

The meaning expressed by the adjective ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ *kumdúng* is ‘other, different, strange, foreign, alien’, in the sense of ‘someone or something that does not resemble the person or thing referred to’. The noun ལོ་ལྟ་བུ་ *maró* ‘man, person’ may also be used to express the notions ‘someone, someone else, anyone, whoever, another person’, e.g. (60).

When the noun ገፍ *maró* is reinforced with ቁ *do* ‘self’, this yields the meaning ‘the man himself’, as in ገፍ(ቁ ፋ)ገፍ *maródo zúkbám* [man-self make-PRG] ‘the man is doing it himself’.

- 59      ገፍ ገፍ(ቁ) ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ  
*pe*              *kumdúng*      *maró-re*      *tú*      *gó*  
 over.there      other              man-DEF      who      Q  
 ‘Who is that strange man?’

- 60      ገፍ(ቁ ገፍ) ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ  
*ገፍ(ቁ ገፍ) ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ*  
*ገፍ(ቁ ገፍ) ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ*  
 that-self      NEG-do      REQ      man      hear-NPR  
 ‘Please don’t do that. People will hear.’

In example (61), we see the adjective ገፍ *jen* ‘other, another’, the noun ገፍ *maró* ‘man, person’, the adjective ገፍ(ቁ) *kumdúng* ‘different, strange’ and the plural suffix ገፍ *-sang*, all grouped together in one phrase.

- 61      ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ(ቁ) ገፍ  
*ገፍ*      *ገፍ*      *ገፍ(ቁ)*      *ገፍ*  
*jen*      *maró*      *kumdúng-sang-re*  
 other      man      different-PL.H-DEF

ገፍ(ቁ) ገፍ ገፍ  
*ገፍ(ቁ) ገፍ ገፍ*  
*ገፍ(ቁ) ገፍ ገፍ*  
 here-self      return      NEG-allow

‘Other people, outsiders, they were not allowed to come here.’

The adjective ገፍ *ገፍ* *ገፍ* *ገፍ* ‘some’, referring to either persons or things, is derived from the verb ገፍ *flí* ~ ገፍ *flím* ‘divide, separate’, from which the adverb ገፍ *flík* ‘apart, aside’ is also derived. The form ገፍ *káflík* ‘some’ is also found, albeit less frequently.

- 62      ገፍ ገፍ ገፍ  
*ገፍ*      *ገፍ*      *ገፍ*  
*ገፍ*      *ገፍ*      *ገፍ*  
 some-DEF-DAT      NEG-give-NEG

‘Some people were not given any.’

The form  $\dot{r}el$  occurs as a noun expressing the meaning ‘piece’ and as an adverb in the sense ‘separate, separately, respectively’. As a main verb  $\dot{r}el$  expresses the meaning ‘separate maize from the cob’. The form  $\dot{r}el$  is also used as an indefinite pronoun expressing the meaning ‘each’. More often than not the reduplicated form is used, expressing the meanings ‘one by one, one after the other, each one individually’.

63       $\text{v}\ddot{y}\ddot{e}\text{ } \dot{r}\dot{r}\text{ } \text{so}$   
           *huyú-m rel-rel bi*  
           3P-DAT each-each give

‘Give one to each of them.’

For the concepts ‘all’, ‘every’ and ‘whole’, the words  $\dot{g}un$  and  $\dot{t}y\dot{a}ng$  are used. In order to grasp the difference between  $\dot{g}un$  ‘all, every’ and  $\dot{t}y\dot{a}ng$  ‘all, whole’, it is important to realise that when  $\dot{g}un$  ‘all, every’ is used, everybody or everything that is referred to is seen as an individual person or item, whereas when  $\dot{t}y\dot{a}ng$  is used a reference is made to the whole or the entirety of a group of things or people.

64       $\text{z}\ddot{a}\text{b}\ddot{a}\text{-s}\ddot{a}\text{ } \text{l}\ddot{i}\text{ } \dot{g}un\text{ } \text{z}\ddot{a}\text{z}\ddot{u}\text{k}\text{-z}\ddot{a}\text{z}\ddot{u}\text{k}\text{ } \text{n}\ddot{y}\ddot{i}$   
           *zábá-sá lí gun zázuk-zázuk nyí*  
           here-GEN house all pretty-pretty be

‘All the houses here are very nice.’

#### 4.4 The ablative suffix

The invariant meaning of the ablative suffix  $\dot{n}un \sim \dot{n}u$  is source or cause. Lepcha  $\dot{n}un \sim \dot{n}u$  is cognate with the Limbu comitative suffix *-nu* ‘with, from’, which also fulfils an ablative function. Lepcha  $\dot{n}un \sim \dot{n}u$  is suffixed to nominals, verbs or clauses and the apparently different types of meaning which the morpheme  $\dot{n}un \sim \dot{n}u$  expresses in these combinations are a function of the difference in the syntactic status of the constituent to which the morpheme is attached.

There are native speakers and Lepcha authors who consistently use the form ལྷོ་ *-nun* after nouns and the form ལྷོ་ *-nu* after verbs. This is generally regarded as proper or correct usage. However, this is clearly a cultivated norm because in practice most speakers and writers do not observe any distinction. This is just one facet of a wider sociolinguistic phenomenon in Lepcha, for in Lepcha textbooks norms of speech are often prescribed which deviate from the actual norms observed in natural speech. In the examples which I adduce below, the two allomorphs ལྷོ་ *-nun* and ལྷོ་ *-nu* are used seemingly at random. Two general tendencies can be observed. One is the tendency to use the form ལྷོ་ *-nun* more frequently in combination with nouns and the form ལྷོ་ *-nu* more frequently with verbs, an artificial tendency which, as already pointed out, is not observed consistently. A second tendency is to use the form ལྷོ་ *-nun* in the sense of ‘by, through’, whereas the abbreviated form ལྷོ་ *-nu* more often occurs in the sense of ‘from, since’, but here too there is little consistency. The situation therefore appears to be in flux, and widespread bilingualism may have exacerbated the confusion because in certain areas fluent monolingual speakers of Lepcha are in the minority.

One sense which the suffix ལྷོ་ ~ ལྷོ་ *-nun* ~ *-nu* expresses when affixed to nouns and adverbs denoting a place or time is the ablative, viz. to mark the source, origin or point of departure for the activity denoted by the main verb. In such contexts the ending is comparable in function to English ‘from’.

- 65 རལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*ʔábi-nu shúlá ma-shí-n*  
 here-ABL everything NEG-see-NEG  
 ‘From here I cannot see anything.’

- 66 ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*go kóm ʔore sabá-nu thop te*  
 1S money that where-ABL get DUB  
 ‘Where would I get that kind of money from?’

- 67 ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*saróng-nu go cholí-ká nóng-sho*  
 today-ABL 1S school-LOC go-NPR

‘As of today, I shall go to school.’

- 68      གཞུ་ལཱ་  
*ʔálut-nu*  
 heart-ABL  
 ‘from the bottom of my heart’
- 69      ཨོ་སའ་ལཱ་  
*hó      sabá-nu*  
 2S      where-ABL  
 ‘Where are you from?’  
 ‘Where do you come from?’  
 ‘Where did you come from?’
- 70      ཨ་ཨུ་ལཱ་ རྒྱ་ལཱ་  
*dárjúlýáng-nun      kálenpúng-tet*  
 Darjeeling-ABL      Kalimpong-until  
 ‘from Darjeeling to Kalimpong’
- 71      གཞུ་ལཱ་ གཞུ་ལཱ་  
*ʔáthyák-nu      ʔáti-tet*  
 head-ABL      sole-until  
 ‘from head to toe’

The Lepcha ablative suffix ལཱ་ ~ ལཱ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* can be affixed to nominals to express an agent, which in some other languages such as Limbu or Kulung would be termed ergative or instrumental. For a further discussion of the meaning and function of the ablative suffix, the reader is referred to Section 5.13 below.

#### 4.5 The lative suffix

In its ablative sense, the Lepcha ablative suffix ལཱ་ ~ ལཱ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* contrasts with the Lepcha lative suffix ལཱ་ -*lóm* ‘via, through’. The lative suffix indicates via which or through which motion a location is reached. Whereas the Limbu root -*lam* occurs both as a noun meaning ‘road, way’ and as a mediative suffix meaning ‘via, from’, the Lepcha

root ལོམ་ *-lóm* occurs as the lative suffix, as a noun in the meaning ‘road, way’ and as a verb in the meaning ‘walk’. Both the Lepcha and the Limbu forms reflect the Tibeto-Burman root *\*lam* ‘road, direction’. As examples (72) and (73) show, the Lepcha ablative suffix ལྷ་ ~ ལྷ་ *-nun* ~ *-nu* and the lative suffix ལོམ་ *-lóm* ‘via’ are closely related in function but distinct in meaning. Whereas in example (72) Lepcha ལོམ་ *-lóm* suggests a particular direction or pathway, in sentence (73) only the point of origin is suggested by ལྷ་ ~ ལྷ་ *-nun* ~ *-nu*. In sentences (74)-(77), we see more examples of the suffix ལོམ་ *-lóm* ‘via’.

- 72 ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་ལོམ་ མི་  
*go prolyáng-lóm thi*  
 1S Bhutan-via reach  
 ‘I arrived by way of Bhutan.’
- 73 ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ མི་  
*go prolyáng-nu thi*  
 1S Bhutan-ABL reach  
 ‘I arrived from Bhutan.’
- 74 ལྷ་ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལོམ་  
*kúng-lóm kúng-kóng glet-nón ma*  
 tree-via tree-branch drop-RES AST  
 ‘Branches fell down from the tree.’
- 75 ལྷ་ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལོམ་ ལྷ་ལོམ་  
*hu lí-lóm plâ yet-nón ma*  
 3S house-via come.out descend-RES AST  
 ‘He came out of his house and went down.’
- 76 ལོམ་ ལོམ་ ལོམ་ ལོམ་  
*ʔádo-lóm go kóm-kám thop-sho*  
 2S.OBL-via 1S money-little.bit get-NPR  
 ‘I’ll get some money through you.’

- 77      ཨུ་ མཱཱ་ མེ་ལོང་ ཤུམ་ཡུ་སང་ལོམ་ ལོ་ ཨུ་  
*hu mák myóng shumyú-sang-lóm go thyo*  
 3S die experience person-PL.H-via 1S hear  
 ‘I heard from these people that he died.’

There are a number of Lepcha suffixes which are similar in meaning but distinct from both the ablative and the lative suffixes. One of these is the Lepcha suffix རྩ་ *-ren* ‘since’. Whereas རྩ་ *-ren* ‘since’ has a straightforward temporal meaning ‘since’, e.g. (78), the use of the ablative suffix རྩ་ ~ རྩ་ *-nun ~ -nu* implies a cause, a change of heart or some similar implication because of its meaning denoting origin, e.g. (79).

- 78      རྩ་ རྩ་  
*tasó-ren*  
 yesterday-since  
 ‘since yesterday’

- 79      རྩ་ རྩ་  
*tasó-nu*  
 yesterday-ABL  
 ‘since yesterday, from yesterday on’

Another such suffix is the Lepcha ending རྩ་ *-kón* ‘side, towards, in the direction’. This Lepcha morpheme to some extent resembles the frequent usage of the suffix *-paṭṭī* ‘side’ in some varieties of colloquial eastern Nepali and, for that matter, the use of the English postposition ‘side’ in Bhutanese and Lepcha English, e.g. ‘He went Darjeeling side’, i.e. ‘He went to/towards Darjeeling’. As a noun, Lepcha རྩ་ *-kón* translates into English as ‘side’.

- 80      རྩ་ རྩ་ རྩ་ རྩ་  
*hó ka-sá kón tyúk*  
 2S S1-GEN side kick  
 ‘You kicked it towards me.’

- 81      ་ྲྀྱླ ་ཐ  
*nóng-kón tho*  
 inside-side put  
 ‘Put it inside.’
- 82      ་ལྷ ་ཤྲལྲཱླ ་ྲྀྱླ ་ྲྀྱླ  
*go prolyáng-kón nóng-sho*  
 1S Bhutan-side go-NPR  
 ‘I am going in the direction of Bhutan.’
- 83      ་ལྷ ་ཤྲལྲཱླེ ་ྲྀྱླ  
*go prolyáng-ká nóng-sho*  
 1S Bhutan-LOC go-NPR  
 ‘I am going to Bhutan.’

#### 4.6 *The genitive and comitative suffixes*

The Lepcha suffix ་ལྷ (-*sá* (GEN)) expresses possession, part-whole relationships and related semantic functions.

- 84      ་ཤྲལྲཱླ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ  
*ʔáre kasu-sá lí go ma*  
 this 1S.OBL-GEN house be AST  
 ‘This is my house.’
- 85      ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ  
*kasu-sá ʔákâ nyet nyí ma*  
 1S.OBL-GEN hand two be AST  
 ‘I have two hands.’
- 86      ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ ་ལྷ  
*kasu-sá ʔákup nyet nyí ma*  
 1s.OBL-GEN child two be AST  
 ‘I have two children.’



87      འཇུག་ལྷོ་  
*kúng-sá*      *ṛún*  
 tree-GEN      horse  
 ‘a wooden horse’

88      རྩེ་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་  
*fát-sá*      *fátyók*  
 earth-GEN      pot  
 ‘an earthen pot’

The Lepcha comitative suffix ལྷོ་ ~ ལྷོ་ -*sá* ~ -*sa* ‘with’ is partially homophonous with the genitive suffix ལྷོ་ -*sá*. Usage of the genitive suffix ལྷོ་ -*sá* is straightforward and ubiquitous in the language, but the usage of the comitative suffix requires some discussion and must be contrasted with the instrumental function of the Lepcha ablative suffix ལྷོ་ ~ ལྷོ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu*. The comitative suffix can be used to indicate the instrument or means by which an action is enacted or takes place.

89      ལོ་ རྩུག་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ རྩེ་  
*go*      *ṛúng-sá*      *ṛákâ*      *cóng-sho*  
 1S      water-with      hand      wash-NPR  
 ‘I wash my hands with water.’

90      ལོ་ རྩུག་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ ལོ་  
*go*      *nyúgú-sá*      *pi-sho*  
 1S      pen-with      write-NPR  
 ‘I write with a pen.’

91      རྩུག་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ རྩེ་  
*phyokmú-sá*      *lí*      *phyok*  
 broom-with      house      sweep  
 ‘Sweep the house with the broomstick.’

92      རྩུག་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ རྩེ་  
*ryúm-sá*      *dum*      *hráp*  
 needle-with      cloth      sew  
 ‘Sew cloth with a needle.’

Whereas the suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -nun \sim -nu$  marks the agent performing an action, the Lepcha comitative suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -sá \sim -sa$  marks the implement with which the situation is enacted, e.g. (93)-(96). The situation in Lepcha is markedly different from that in Limbu, where the Limbu comitative suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -nun \sim -nu$  fulfils both comitative and ablative functions. In Lepcha, the suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -nun \sim -nu$  denotes origin, whereas the suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -sá \sim -sa$  denotes belonging and expresses the comitative sense ‘with’. The comitative suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -sá \sim -sa$  is especially used when the referent of the constituent it modifies is the obvious choice of means by which to enact the situation denoted by the main verb, i.e. when the activity denoted by the verb, in a manner of speaking, belongs to the implement. It is via the sense of belonging that an etymological relationship with the nearly homophonous Lepcha genitive suffix becomes plausible. However, note that in examples (93) through (95), the ablative suffix  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -nun \sim -nu$  could be used instead of Lepcha  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -sá \sim -sa$ , whereas in sentence (96) the use of  $\text{᳚} \sim \text{᳚} -nun \sim -nu$  would yield an awkward or less obvious reading. This is because the notion of origin, cause or source would yield suitable applications in examples (93) through (95), but not in utterance (96), where the knife is merely an implement accompanying the action.

- 93       $\text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚}$   
*go*    *᳚ámík-sá*    *ngâk-bám*  
 1S    eye-with    look-PRG  
 ‘I look with my eyes.’
- 94       $\text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚}$   
*go*    *᳚ányúr-sá*    *nyen-bám*  
 1S    ear-with    listen-PRG  
 ‘I listen with my ears.’
- 95       $\text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚} \text{᳚}$   
*go*    *᳚ábong-sá*    *jók-bám*  
 1S    mouth-with    talk-PRG  
 ‘I talk with my mouth.’

- 96      ལོ་འཕྲུལ་ལྟེ་བུ་  
*go      bānkup-sá    tyók-bám*  
 1S    knife-with    cut-PRG  
 ‘I am cutting with a knife.’

In the following examples, both the Lepcha ablative suffix ལྟེ་བུ་ ~ ལྟེ་བུ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* and the Lepcha comitative suffix ལྟེ་བུ་ ~ ལྟེ་བུ་ -*sá* ~ -*sa* are used. The difference in meaning is that in example (97) the pen is depicted as a means or point of origin and therefore highlighted as the means by which the writing takes place, whereas in example (98) the pen is merely mentioned as the obvious means with no special highlighting of its function as the implement.

- 97      ལྟེ་བུ་ལྟེ་བུ་ ལྟེ་བུ་  
*nyúgú-nu    shú    zúk-sho*  
 pen-ABL    what    make-NPR  
 ‘What do you use a pen for?’

- 98      ལྟེ་བུ་ལྟེ་བུ་ ལྟེ་བུ་  
*nyúgú-sá    shú    zúk-sho*  
 pen-with    what    make-NPR  
 ‘Why are you using a pen?’

The comitative suffix ལྟེ་བུ་ ~ ལྟེ་བུ་ -*sá* ~ -*sa* ‘with’, is also used with numerals, e.g. (99) and Section 3.12. Occasionally, the comitative suffix is also used to coordinate arguments, e.g. (100), (101), (102) and (104).

- 99      ལྟེ་བུ་ ལྟེ་བུ་  
*khá-kát    sa    kát*  
 score-one    with    one  
 ‘twenty one’

- 100      ལྟེ་བུ་ ལྟེ་བུ་ ལྟེ་བུ་  
*phyuk-bú    sa    jen-bú            ma-flí-ne*  
 be.rich-FCT    with    other-FCT            NEG-separate-NEG  
 ‘Don’t distinguish between the rich and the poor.’

- 101       $\text{ᓄᓐᓂ ᓄᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ}$   
*sathang sá sacák punzók*  
 tiger with leopard forest
- $\text{ᓂᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐ}$   
*thámcâng-pang gum*  
 animal-PL.NH be.AST  
 ‘Tigers and leopards are animals of the jungle.’
- 102       $\text{ᓄᓐ ᓄ ᓄ ᓂ ᓂᓐ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐ}$   
*hó sa go-re tyól ʔáryúm gum*  
 2S with 1S-DEF friend good be.AST  
 ‘You and I are good friends.’
- The postposition  $\text{ᓂᓐ}$  *dep* ‘together, along with’ is often used in combination with or as an alternant to the comitative suffix  $\text{ᓄᓐ} \sim \text{ᓄᓐ} \text{-sá}$  ~ *-sa* ‘with’. The postposition  $\text{ᓂᓐ}$  *dep* ‘together’ indicates accompaniment.
- 103       $\text{ᓄᓐ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐ}$   
*hó hu-dep nóng*  
 2S 3S-together go  
 ‘You go with him.’
- 104       $\text{ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄ ᓂ ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐ ᓄᓐ}$   
*rúbá sa ngú ʔúng-ká dep bám*  
 tortoise with fish water-LOC together dwell  
 ‘The tortoise and the fish live together in the water.’
- 105       $\text{ᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐ}$   
*ka-dep nóng-ká le*  
 S1-together go-LOC REQ  
 ‘Please go with me.’

- 106      ཨུ་ (ཨྱེལ་ རྩུ་) རྩུ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་ལཱ་  
*hu throm-ká muró-dep ma-nóng-ne*  
 3S market-LOC man-together NEG-go-NEG  
 ‘He went to the market without anyone else.’

- 107      ཨུ་ ཨུ་ལཱ་ (ཨྱེལ་ རྩུ་)  
*hu hudo-sá tyól-dep*  
 3S 3S.OBL-GEN friend-together  
  
 རྩུ་ལཱ་ལཱ་ རྩུ་  
*cálóng-do lát*  
 just.now-self return  
 ‘He just came together with his friend.’

A verb that should be mentioned here is རྩུ་ *chó* ‘unite, join’. Tám-sáng lists the word རྩུ་ *nyíp* ‘together’, but no examples of this form have been attested (Tám-sáng 1980: 376).

- 108      ལཱ་ (རྩུ་) རྩུ་ལཱ་  
*go chó-nun nóng-ká*  
 1S join-ABL go-LOC  
 ‘I’ll join you and then let’s go.’

4.7 The locative suffix

The invariant meaning of the Lepcha suffix ལཱ་ *-ká*, which I have expediently labelled ‘locative’, is one of ‘direction’, and the locative suffix may be attached to nominals, verbs and entire clauses. The invariant meaning of direction yields the notion of a supine when the locative suffix ལཱ་ *-ká* is affixed to a verb, e.g. (107), and produces an adhortative meaning when suffixed to an entire clause, e.g. (108). The latter uses of the locative suffix ལཱ་ *-ká* are treated in Section 5.12. When the locative morpheme ལཱ་ *-ká* is suffixed to a noun, it denotes the site of an activity or the destination towards which an activity is directed. The supine, adhortative and locative senses of the Lepcha locative morpheme ལཱ་ *-ká* are all functions of the same meaning, i.e. the goal toward which the action or situation is directed. The locative, supine and adhortative senses of the Lepcha locative category are

treated in separate sections of the grammar, but the same gloss (LOC) is used throughout the grammar in keeping with the analysis of this morpheme as indexing a single grammatical category with a uniform *Gesamtbedeutung* in all cases. Comparativists should keep in mind that the fact that the locative རྒྱལ་ -ká in its various functions synchronically represents a single grammatical category in modern Lepcha does not necessarily preclude that the three syntactically distinct uses of this morpheme may actually derive from historically distinct etyma through convergent evolution or analogy. The Dzongkha locative suffix ཁ་ *khar*, more usually pronounced *kha*, which particularly occurs in toponyms, might reflect the same etymon as Lepcha locative རྒྱལ་ -ká, but it is unclear at this point whether an etymological relationship obtains between the two.

- 109 འོ ལྷོ་རྒྱལ་ འོ་ལྷོ་ འོ་  
*go lyem-ká nóng-det ma*  
 1S play-LOC go-move AST  
 ‘I am going to play.’

- 110 རྒྱལ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*kányí dep theng-ká*  
 1D together sing-LOC  
 ‘Come on, join us in singing.’

- 111 ལྷོ་ རྒྱལ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*lí ?ákíng-ká ribiríp nyí ma*  
 house front-LOC ribi.plant be AST  
 ‘There are *ribiplants* in front of the house.’

The Lepcha locative morpheme རྒྱལ་ -ká, when suffixed to a nominal constituent, can fulfil a regular locative function indicating the location, place or site of an activity or situation, e.g (112)-(113).

- 112 ལྷོ་  
*lí-ká*  
 house-LOC  
 ‘at home’

- 113      ལ་ཤཱ་པ་ རྩ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ འདྲེན་པེ  
*sáthang punzók-ká bám-sho*  
 tiger forest-LOC dwell-NPR  
 ‘Tigers live in the jungle.’

The locative ending ལ་ *-ká* can also express the destination or entity towards which an activity or situation is directed, e.g. (114)-(115). Example (112) can therefore be correctly translated into English ‘home’, in the sense of ‘homewards’ or ‘at home’, depending on which of the two meanings the speaker wishes to express.

- 114      ལ་ ལེ་ལྷོ་ཕུང་ལ་ འདྲེན་པེ  
*go kalenpúng-ká nóng-sho*  
 1S Kalimpong-LOC go-NPR  
 ‘I am going to Kalimpong.’

When affixed to a nominal denoting an animate referent, as in the following example, Lepcha ལ་ *-ká* can be contrasted with the Lepcha dative suffix ར་ *-m*, e.g. (115) vs. (116) and the discussion in Section 4.8.

- 115      ལ་ ལེ་ལྷོ་ལ་ རྩ་ཁྱེད་ལ་  
*go kaju-ká kám zo bi*  
 1S dog-LOC little.bit food give  
 ‘I gave some food to the dog.’

- 116      ལ་ ལེ་ལྷོ་ར་ རྩ་ཁྱེད་ལ་  
*go kaju-re-m kám zo bi*  
 1S dog-DEF-DAT little.bit food give  
 ‘I gave the dog some food.’

4.8 *The dative suffix*

The dative suffix ར་ *-m* (DAT) indicates the entity towards which the action or situation expressed by the verb is directed, but in a much more personal way than the locative suffix ལ་ *-ká*. The meaning expressed by the locative suffix may be called ‘local, directional’, whereas the meaning expressed by the dative suffix may be called ‘af-

ected'. The Lepcha dative suffix marks what in many Western languages would be called the 'direct object' of a sentence. When an activity expressed by a verb is directed 'to' or 'for' someone or something, the goal is marked by the dative suffix མ -*m*. The dative suffix may mark the place to or towards which the motion is directed, or the person or thing to whom the action is directed, or for whom the action is intended. In other words, the verb expresses an activity that is targeted at an entity or object and the affected target or beneficiary of the activity or emotion is marked by the dative suffix.

- 117 འཇུ་མུ་ཀ་མ་རང་སྤྱི་མུ་བུ་གི་མུ་  
*hu-nu kasu-m rangsâr cho bi-sho*  
 3S-ABL 1S.OBL-DAT other book give-NPR  
 'He'll give me the other book.'

- 118 མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་  
*kasu-m-nu ?ore ma-yâ-n*  
 1S.OBL-DAT-ABL that NEG-know-NEG  
 'I didn't know that.'

- 119 མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་  
*muró kányi-do-m shú sâkcíng-shang*  
 man 1D-self-DAT what think-INF  
 'What will people think of the two of us?'

- 120 མུ་མུ་མུ་མུ་  
*kasu-m dok-wám*  
 1S.OBL-DAT be.ill-PRG  
 'I am feeling ill.'

A combination of the meanings of the dative suffix with the meaning of the locative suffix is not semantically plausible. Therefore, the dative suffix is not likely to be combined with the locative suffix. The meanings of the two suffixes can be contrasted as follows: When a referent is marked by the locative suffix, the action is directed towards the referent, which may be a person, place or thing. When a referent is marked by the dative suffix, we can say that the described action or state is more emphatically intended to affect the referent, or



that the referent is or would be affected in a more immediate way. We can see this illustrated in examples (121) through (128) below. For example, in (121) the general act is expressed of more or less accidentally coughing in someone’s face without meaning to do so. If the speaker had used  $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆ}$  *ʔámlem-re-m* [face-DEF-DAT], rather than  $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ}$  *ʔámlem-ká* [face-LOC], it would have been clear that the act of coughing into someone’s face had been deliberate.

121      $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆ}$   
*muró-sá    ʔámlem-ká    ma-hleng*  
 man-GEN    face-LOC        NEG-cough  
 ‘Don’t cough into someone’s face.’

122      $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ}$   
*ka-sá    hunyí-ká    línshet    shúlá    ma-nyí-n*  
 S1-GEN 3D-LOC    speech    nothing    NEG-be-NEG  
 ‘I don’t have anything to say to them.’

123      $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ}$   
*hó    kasu-m        tyúk*  
 2S    1S.OBL-DAT    kick  
 ‘You kicked [it to] me.’

124      $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ}$   
*hó    ka-sá    kón-ká        tyúk*  
 2S    S1-GEN side-LOC    kick  
 ‘You kicked it in my direction.’

125      $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ}$   
*go-nun hu    lyáng-ká    yuk    klóng*  
 1S-ABL 3S    land-LOC    letter send  
 ‘I sent a letter to his place.’

126      $\text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄆᄆᄆ}$   
*ʔingngá-re-m    buk*  
 child-DEF-DAT    hit  
 ‘Strike the child!’

- 127      བཟུགས་ རྩེ་  
*fo-re-m            tsám*  
 bird-DEF-DAT hold  
 ‘Catch the bird!’
- 128      ཡེ་ཡེ་ཚུ་ མེ་མེ་  
*káyú-dó-m-re      ma-bi-ne*  
 1P-self-DAT-DEF NEG-give-NEG  
 ‘We were not given it.’

#### 4.9 Adjectives

The Lepcha equivalent to an English adjective may be an adjective or a verb expressing a state or a condition. Many adjectives are formed from verbs by adding the prefix གལ་ *ʔá-* and sometimes suffixing མེ་ *-m* to the verb root, e.g. རྩེ་ *ryú* ‘be good’, གལ་རྩེ་ *ʔáryúm* ‘good’, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Some common adjectives are listed below.

གལ་མེ་	<i>ʔáhyur</i>	‘red’
གལ་ལོ་	<i>ʔánók</i>	‘black’
གལ་ཚུ་	<i>ʔádúm</i>	‘white’
གལ་ཤོ་	<i>ʔácor</i>	‘sour’
གལ་ཚུ་	<i>ʔázuk</i>	‘pretty’
གལ་རྩེ་	<i>ʔáryúm</i>	‘good’
གལ་ལུ་	<i>ʔásúm</i>	‘spicy’
གལ་ཤོ་	<i>ʔáklyam</i>	‘sweet’
གལ་མེ་	<i>ʔáhyâng</i>	‘cold’
གལ་མེ་	<i>ʔákyâng</i>	‘light, bright’

An adjective describes or specifies the properties or attributes of a noun. Adjectives used adnominally generally follow the noun they modify, e.g. ལོ་ གལ་ *lóm ʔál* [road new] ‘the new road’, although the order may be reversed for emphasis.

- 129      གལ་མེ་ མེ་ཤོ་  
*ʔúng      ʔáhyâng      ma-thóng*  
 water      cold              NEG-drink

‘Do not drink cold water.’

- 130      ታኅፍፍራ ጸላኛ ነገሩ  
*tukpópót-re    ?áklyam    nyí*  
 peach-DEF    sweet    be  
 ‘Peaches are sweet.’

Nouns are modified by adjectives, whereas adjectives may be modified by intensifiers, such as ታግሃግሃ *?ágyáp* ‘much, very’, sometimes shortened to ግሃ *gyáp*, and ትፎ *do* ‘self’, or a combination of both as in (131) and (132).

- 131      ታግሃግሃ ታግሃግሃ ትፎ ነገሩ  
*?áre tukpópót    ?ágyáp-do    klyam-bám*  
 this peach    much-self    be.sweet-PRG  
 ‘This peach is very sweet.’

- 132      ታግሃግሃ ግሃ ትፎ  
*?are-re    gyáp-do    ?ákhú*  
 this-DEF    much-self    expensive  
 ‘This is very expensive.’

#### 4.10 Comparative and superlative constructions

A comparative construction is formed by means of the postposition ገን *len* ‘than, compared to’, which follows the element it modifies. In other words, the postposition ገን *len* ‘than’ is suffixed to the element with which the comparison is made.

- 133      ገን ገን ገን ገን ነገሩ ነገሩ  
*pemkít len nurkít    ?aryúm    nyí*  
 Pemkít than Nurkít    good    be  
 ‘Nurkít is better than Pemkít.’

- 134      ታግሃግሃ ነገሩ ነገሩ ገን ገን  
*?áre kajú-re    pe    len    cóng*  
 this dog-DEF    over.there    than    be.quick

‘This dog is quicker than that one over there.’

A superlative meaning is expressed by comparison with a totality expressed by ལྷོ *gun* ‘all, every’.

- 135 ཇུ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ འཕྱི་ འོ་ ཅ  
*ʔore gun-len nahán nóng ma*  
 that all-than before go AST  
 ‘He left before everyone else.’

- 136 ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ རྩོ་ ལྷོ་  
*go gun-len tím-bú gum*  
 1S all-than big-FCT be.AST  
 ‘I am the biggest one of all.’

A superlative meaning may also be expressed by suffixing རྩོ་ *-chúk* ‘most, worthy’, or རྩོ་ *-cho* ‘best, greatest’, to the root.

- 137 ལྷོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ ལྷོ་  
*hu muró tím-cho gum*  
 3S man big-most be.AST  
 ‘He’s the biggest man of all.’

- 138 ལྷོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ ལྷོ་  
*hu muró tím-chúk gum*  
 3S man big-most be.AST  
 ‘He is the biggest man.’

#### 4.11 Numerals

The Lepcha numerals from zero through ten are as follows:

ཇེ	<i>ti</i>	‘zero’
ཇཱཱ	<i>kát</i>	‘one’
ཇཱཱཱ	<i>nyet</i>	‘two’
ཇཱཱཱཱ	<i>sám</i>	‘three’
ཇཱཱཱཱཱ	<i>fali</i>	‘four’

ᄆᄇ	<i>fangú</i>	‘five’
ᄆᄈ	<i>tarók</i>	‘six’
ᄆᄉ	<i>kakyók</i>	‘seven’
ᄆᄊ	<i>kaku</i>	‘eight’
ᄆᄋ	<i>kakyót</i>	‘nine’
ᄆᄌ	<i>kati</i>	‘ten’

The numerals from eleven through nineteen are formed through suffixation of the morpheme ᄆ -*tháp* to the numerals from one through nine. The numerals for the teens have both a full and an abbreviated form. The full forms are felt to be more formal and precise. The abbreviated numerals are formed by dropping the decimal numeral ᄆᄌ *kati* ‘ten’.

<i>full form</i>		<i>short form</i>		
ᄆᄌᄆᄋ	<i>kati kát tháp</i>	ᄆᄋ	<i>kát tháp</i>	‘eleven’
ᄆᄌᄆᄈ	<i>kati nyet tháp</i>	ᄆᄈ	<i>nyet tháp</i>	‘twelve’
ᄆᄌᄆᄉ	<i>kati sám tháp</i>	ᄆᄉ	<i>sám tháp</i>	‘thirteen’
ᄆᄌᄆᄊᄆᄌ	<i>kati fali tháp</i>	ᄆᄊᄆᄌ	<i>fali tháp</i>	‘fourteen’
ᄆᄌᄆᄇᄆᄌ	<i>kati fangú tháp</i>	ᄆᄇᄆᄌ	<i>fangú tháp</i>	‘fifteen’
ᄆᄌᄆᄈᄆᄌ	<i>kati tarók tháp</i>	ᄆᄈᄆᄌ	<i>tarók tháp</i>	‘sixteen’
ᄆᄌᄆᄉᄆᄌ	<i>kati kakyók tháp</i>	ᄆᄉᄆᄌ	<i>kakyók tháp</i>	‘seventeen’
ᄆᄌᄆᄊᄆᄌ	<i>kati kaku tháp</i>	ᄆᄊᄆᄌ	<i>kaku tháp</i>	‘eighteen’
ᄆᄌᄆᄋᄆᄌ	<i>kati kakyót tháp</i>	ᄆᄋᄆᄌ	<i>kakyót tháp</i>	‘nineteen’

Starting with the numeral for ‘twenty’, Lepcha makes use of a vigesimal numeral system based on ᄆᄌ *khá* ‘one score’, which would appear to be the same root as reflected in Dränjoke or Dzongkha ཁ་ཅི་ *khäci* ‘one score’, viz. ᄆᄌᄆᄋ *khá kát* [score-one] ‘twenty’, ᄆᄌᄆᄉᄆᄌ *khá sám* [score-three] ‘sixty’. The coordinative conjunction ᄆᄌ ~ ᄆᄌ -*sá* ~ -*sa* ‘with’ is used to combine the vigesimal portion of the numeral with the lesser numeral.

ᄆᄌᄆᄋ	<i>khá kát</i>	‘twenty’
ᄆᄌᄆᄋᄆᄌ	<i>khá kát sá kát</i>	‘twenty-one’
ᄆᄌᄆᄋᄆᄈ	<i>khá kát sá nyet</i>	‘twenty-two’
ᄆᄌᄆᄋᄆᄉ	<i>khá kát sá sám</i>	‘twenty-three’
ᄆᄌᄆᄋᄆᄊᄆᄌ	<i>khá kát sá fali</i>	‘twenty-four’

𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá fangú</i>	‘twenty-five’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá tarók</i>	‘twenty-six’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá kakyók</i>	‘twenty-seven’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá kaku</i>	‘twenty-eight’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá kakyot</i>	‘twenty-nine’

After this, the system counts in a mixture of tens and twenties.

𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá kati</i>	‘thirty’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá kati kát thap</i>	‘thirty-one’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá kát sá kati nyet thap</i>	‘thirty-two’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá nyet</i>	‘forty’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá sám</i>	‘sixty’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>khá fali</i>	‘eighty’

The Lepcha word 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *gyó* ‘one hundred’ is cognate with the Dzongkha and Dränjoke numeral 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *cikja* ‘one hundred’, but note the more conservative consonantism of the Lepcha form. Alternatively, the word 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *so* ‘one hundred’ is found, e.g. 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭 *so fali* ‘four hundred’, 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭 *so fangú* ‘five hundred’. The forms 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *búm*, 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *soyá* and 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *cewo*, listed below, would appear to be loans from Dränjoke or Dzongkha 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *bum* ‘lakh’, 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *saya* ‘million’ and 𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭 *j’iwa* ‘crore’ respectively.

𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>gyó kát</i>	‘one hundred’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>gyó nyet</i>	‘two hundred’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>tunghrók kát</i>	‘one thousand’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>tunghrók kati</i>	‘ten thousand’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>hritsho kát</i>	‘one myriad’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>búmtsho kát</i>	‘one lakh’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>búm kát</i>	‘one lakh’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>soyá kát</i>	‘one million, ten lakh’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>cewo kát</i>	‘one crore’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>túngchúr kát</i>	‘one hundred million’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>sosotsho kát</i>	‘one billion’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>sosotshúr kát</i>	‘ten billion’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>therbúm kát</i>	‘one billion’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>thrókthrik kát</i>	‘ten billion’
𑄎𑄧𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭𑄭	<i>sosoyá kát</i>	‘one hundred billion’

The numeral forms discussed above are used in counting. Attributive forms of the numerals are formed by adding the factitive marker འཇུག་ -*bú* to the numeral, e.g. འཇུག་ འཇུག་ *kátbú* ‘the first’. Some speakers add the form འཇུག་ *frón* ‘number’ and prefer to say འཇུག་(འཇུག་) *kátfrónbú*, ‘the first’, or འཇུག་(འཇུག་) *nyetfrónbú*, ‘the second’, etc.

An alternative more fully vigesimal system augments the repertoire of numeral forms based on the score as mentioned above. This system uses the notion འཇུག་ *báng* ‘half of’. Kalimpong speakers of Lepcha, who are usually not closely familiar with this system of counting, consider the system based purely on འཇུག་ *khá* ‘the score’ to be the original counting system, and claim that the འཇུག་ *báng* system is a modern Sikkimese invention. In fact, this system for arriving at numerals 30, 50, 70, 90 and so forth matches the Dränjoke and Dzongkha vigesimal system.

འཇུག་(འཇུག་)	<i>khá báng nyet</i>	‘30’ [score half-of two]
འཇུག་(འཇུག་)འཇུག་འཇུག་	<i>khá báng nyet sá kát</i>	‘31’ [score half-of two with one]
འཇུག་(འཇུག་)	<i>khá báng sám</i>	‘50’ [score half-of three]
འཇུག་(འཇུག་)	<i>khá báng fali</i>	‘70’ [score half-of four]
འཇུག་(འཇུག་)	<i>khá báng fangú</i>	‘90’ [score half-of five]

The form འཇུག་ *báng* is also used as a main verb meaning ‘break, cut, chop wood or bamboo in short pieces’.

139 འཇུག་ (འཇུག་) འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་  
*sháng ?ore bán-sá báng le*  
 firewood that knife-with break REQ  
 ‘Go ahead and chop up the firewood with the knife.’

The expression འཇུག་(འཇུག་) འཇུག་(འཇུག་) *khábáng sámsám* ‘fifty fifty, an equal share’, is given by Khárpú Támsáng (1980: 257), but was not recognised by Lepcha informants consulted in Kalimpong and Sikkim.

Sikkimese Lepcha textbooks have introduced an additional decimal system, to which Sikkimese schools give preference in their instruction. This system is based on the form འཇུག་ *thep* ‘extra, additional, successive’, e.g. འཇུག་ འཇུག་ *theppa theppa* ‘successively’, which is introduced as a decimal morpheme.

ཅེཤེ	<i>kati</i>	'10'
ཅེཤེ	<i>nyet thep</i>	'20'
ཅེཤེཨེ	<i>nyet thep kát</i>	'21'
ཅེཤེཨེ	<i>sám thep</i>	'30'
ཅེཤེཨེཨེ	<i>fali thep</i>	'40'
ཅེཤེཨེཨེཨེ	<i>fangú thep</i>	'50'
ཅེཤེཨེཨེཨེཨེ	<i>tarók thep</i>	'60'
ཅེཤེཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེ	<i>kakyók thep</i>	'70'
ཅེཤེཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེ	<i>kaku thep</i>	'80'
ཅེཤེཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེ	<i>kakyót thep</i>	'90'
ཨེཨེཨེ	<i>gyó kát</i>	'100'

Another decimal system was introduced by Colonel Mainwaring at the end of the nineteenth century, for the purpose of teaching arithmetic in schools. (Mainwaring 1876: 116) This system was based on the artificial form ཅེ *ka*, which Mainwaring derived from the numeral ཅེཤེ *kati* 'ten', e.g. ཅེཨེཨེཨེཨེ *kakát sá kát* 'eleven', ཅེཨེ *kanyet* 'twenty', and so on. The system is not in use anymore and it is unclear whether it ever was popular.

In schools, some specialised vocabulary is used for counting and for arithmetic, for example ཨེ *chó* 'even number, pair, couple', ཨེ *nyó* 'odd number', ཨེཨེཨེཨེཨེ *chólúng nóngshang* 'multiply' and ཨེཨེཨེཨེ *dryándo* 'equal to'. Specific units for counting are used in certain professions or in harvesting, such as the word ཨེཨེ *nyíshu* 'twenty', which is used to indicate a certain amount of rice growing in the paddy. This form is evidently the same as the Dränjoke and Dzongkha form ཨེཨེ *nyishu* 'twenty' used in the Sikkimese and Bhutanese decimal system.

The symbols used to indicate numbers in native Lepcha orthography are listed in Diagram 14.

ཨ	ཨ	ཨ	ཨ	ཨ	ཨ	ཨ	ཨ	ཨ
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Diagram 14: Lepcha numbers



4.12 *Telling time*

The concept ‘today’ is expressed in Lepcha by the adverb ལཱཱྱ saróng ‘today’. Adverbs expressing days in the immediate past include ལྷཱ tasó ‘yesterday’, sometimes shortened to ལྷ só, ལྷཱཱཱ Pyotshóng or ལྷཱཱཱ Pítshóng ‘day before yesterday, two days ago’, ལྷཱཱཱཱ Pyochám ‘three days ago’ and ལྷཱཱཱཱཱ Pyochót ‘four days ago’. The adverb ལྷཱཱཱཱཱ lúkʔál ‘tomorrow’ can be analysed as a compound of the verb ལྷཱ lúk ‘get up, rise’ (which also serves as the noun ‘morning’) and the adjective ལྷཱཱ lál ‘new’. Analogous to the way the adverbs of the immediate past are formed, days in the immediate future are expressed by the adverbs ལྷཱཱཱ katshóng ‘day after tomorrow’, ལྷཱཱཱཱ káchám ‘in three days’ time, after three days’ and ལྷཱཱཱཱ káchót ‘in four days’ time, after four days’. We also find ལྷཱཱཱ taʔyen for ‘last year’ and ལྷཱཱཱཱ kátaʔyen for ‘three years ago’. The adverb ལྷཱཱཱ potshóng ‘that day’, containing the distal morpheme ལྷཱ ʔo-, was heard in a conversation when a speaker referred to a specific day that was mentioned before in the same conversation. Additional examples of words containing the morphemes ལྷཱ tshóng, ལྷཱཱ chám and ལྷཱཱ chót, which each appear to imply a specific number of days, have not been attested.

Words for now and later include ལྷཱཱཱ lálóng ‘now, at this very moment’, ལྷཱཱཱཱ lálóngbá ‘in a moment, in a little while’, ལྷཱཱཱཱཱ lálónglá ‘still’, ལྷཱཱ lya ‘formerly, a long time ago, in the days of old’, ལྷཱ lya ‘before, formerly, some time ago’, ལྷཱ cá ‘just, a moment ago’, ལྷཱཱ cálong ‘just now, just a moment ago’, ལྷཱཱ cánap ‘last night’, ལྷཱཱ cábá ‘some time ago’.

A period of twenty-four hours is referred to as ལྷཱཱ saʔyák ‘day, day and night’. The hours of daylight are referred to as ལྷཱཱ sanyí, also spelt as ལྷཱཱ sanyím or ལྷཱཱཱ suknyím ‘day, daytime’ and the night-time is referred to as ལྷཱཱ sonáp ‘night, night-time’. Another way of expressing a whole 24-hour period would be by using the expression ལྷཱཱ ལྷཱཱ sanyí sonáp ‘day and night’. The word ལྷཱཱཱ róngjín means ‘daily, every day’. Midday or noon is expressed by pointing to the fact that daytime is halfway over, by using ལྷཱ phet ‘half’, e.g. ལྷཱཱཱ sanyím phet or the shorter ལྷཱཱ nyímphet ‘midday’, and likewise the expression ལྷཱཱཱ sonápphet ‘midnight’ is used.

Other adverbs expressing the time of day include ལྷཱཱཱ nápmún ‘evening’, ལྷཱཱཱ náp-lúk ‘day and night, morning and evening’, ལྷཱཱ nápzâ ‘dusk’, ལྷཱཱ lúk-hróng ‘morning’, ལྷཱཱ somyer ‘dusk’, ལྷཱཱ

*solá* ‘twilight’, འོ་ལོ་ *sosóng* ‘dawn’, ཅུ་ལོ་ *tsuk-lát* ‘sunrise, east’, ཅུ་ལྷོ་ *tsukkyer* ‘sunset, west’, ཅུ་ལོ་ *tsukgi* ‘afternoon’, ཅུ་ལོ་ *tsukzán* ‘early morning, when sun is completely visible’, ཅུ་ལོ་ *tsuknáng* ‘mid-day’.

A period of time is referred to in Lepcha as ཅུ་ལོ་ *tatsât* ‘time, period of time’. Some names for seasons of the year are འོ་ལོ་ *so?âm* ‘summer’, འོ་ལོ་ *somyáng* ‘rainy season’, འོ་ལོ་ *sosá* ‘dry season’, འོ་ལོ་ *sozóng* ‘winter, be cold’.

The word ལོ་ལོ་ *lávó* for ‘moon’ in Lepcha is also used to indicate a lunar month. A calendar month is referred to as ལོ་ལོ་ *nám lávó*, the word ལོ་ *nám* means ‘year’. A cycle of twelve years is a ལོ་ལོ་ *námkor*, and the twelve years comprising a full cycle are listed below in chronological order. Some people call the fourth year ལོ་ལོ་ *kumthyóng nám* ‘kite year’, rather than ལོ་ལོ་ *punthyóng nám* ‘eagle year’.

ལོ་ལོ་ <i>kalók nám</i>	‘rat year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>lóng nám</i>	‘ox year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>sathang nám</i>	‘tiger year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>punthyóng nám</i>	‘eagle year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>sader nám</i>	‘thunder year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>bu nám</i>	‘snake year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>ʔún nám</i>	‘horse year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>lúk nám</i>	‘sheep year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>sahu nám</i>	‘monkey year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>hík nám</i>	‘chicken year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>kajú nám</i>	‘dog year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>món nám</i>	‘boar year’

The Lepcha year generally consists of twelve months, but during a period of nineteen years reportedly seven years will have thirteen months. The additional month is called ལོ་ལོ་ *numtsám nyóm* ‘leap month’. The meaning of the names of the different months is not clear in all cases, although ལོ་ལོ་ *glú* means ‘fall down’, ལོ་ལོ་ *rá* means ‘hunt’, ལོ་ལོ་ *ʔít* means ‘creation’ and ལོ་ལོ་ *kursóng* is the name of an orchid and also means ‘bright’.

ལོ་ལོ་ <i>kurnyít nyóm</i>	‘first month of the Lepcha year’
ལོ་ལོ་ <i>kursóng nyóm</i>	‘second month of the Lepcha year’

འཇཱཱ་ <i>thón nyóm</i>	‘third month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>sâm nyóm</i>	‘fourth month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>tafá nyóm</i>	‘fifth month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>blúng nyóm</i>	‘sixth month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>numkum nyóm</i>	‘seventh month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>purvím nyóm</i>	‘eight month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>glú nyóm</i>	‘ninth month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>gít nyóm</i>	‘tenth month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>rá nyóm</i>	‘eleventh month of the Lepcha year’
འཇཱཱ་ <i>már nyóm</i>	‘twelfth month of the Lepcha year’

A week of seven days is referred to as འཇཱཱ་ *duntrók* ‘week’. The Lepcha names of the days of the week are listed below. Since འཇཱཱ་ *sanyí*, འཇཱཱ་ *suknyím* and འཇཱཱ་ *saʔyák* all are used for ‘day’, we sometimes may hear འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *mi saʔyák* and at other times འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *mi suknyím* or འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *mi sanyí*, the same holding for the other days of the week. The fourth day of the week is referred to by some people as འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *nyín saʔyák* ‘day of milk’.

འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>mi saʔyák</i>	‘day of fire, Sunday’
འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>ʔúng saʔyák</i>	‘day of water, Monday’
འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>lang saʔyák</i>	‘day of stone, Tuesday’
འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>kúng saʔyák</i>	‘day of wood, Wednesday’
འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>sukmut saʔyák</i>	‘day of wind, Thursday’
འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>fát saʔyák</i>	‘day of earth, Friday’
འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ <i>punjeng saʔyák</i>	‘day of iron, Saturday’

The Lepcha word for ‘clock’ is འཇཱཱ་ *tsugyer* and the word for ‘hour’ is འཇཱཱ་ *chútsât*, borrowed from Dränjoke and Dzongkha འཇཱཱ་ *chutshö*, although the Nepali loan འཇཱཱ་ *bázá* ‘hour’ is also frequently heard. The four o’clock flower *Mirabilis jalapa*, which opens its flowers in the late afternoon, is referred to as འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *bázá falibú ríp*. To ask the time, one may use the phrase འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *bázá satet buknón*, ‘what’s the time, how many hours has it struck?’. For telling the time in whole hours, one may use several expressions, such as འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *chútsât tarók ngúnnón* ‘it has become six o’clock’, or འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *bázá tarók buknón* ‘it has struck six o’clock’. When telling time in half hours, one may say for example འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ འཇཱཱ་ *bázá sám sa phet buknón* ‘it has struck three and a half o’clock, it’s

half past three'. One may also tell time in terms of minutes after the whole hour, as in the expression 𑄎𑄓𑄗𑄓 𑄎𑄓𑄗𑄓 𑄎𑄓𑄗𑄓 𑄎𑄓𑄗𑄓 𑄎𑄓𑄗𑄓 𑄎𑄓𑄗𑄓 *chútsât fangú ngúnnu minetra khányet nón* 'it has become five o'clock and then forty minutes passed by, it's five forty'.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### VERBAL MORPHOLOGY

Lepcha has no elaborate conjugational morphology. There is no verbal agreement morphology and actants are not morphologically indexed in the verb. Tense, mood, aspect and other meanings of the verb are expressed by the use of postpositions and auxiliary verbs. Whilst the verbal system of Lepcha may lack the formal complexity of some Himalayan languages, the interest of Lepcha verbal morphology lies in the semantics of the grammatical categories expressed by the Lepcha repertoire of endings and auxiliaries.

#### 5.1 *Verb stems*

All Lepcha verbs have two stem forms, viz. a regular and an inflected stem. The majority of Lepcha verbs end in a consonant, and for these verbs the regular and the inflected stem are one and the same. In other words, all of the verbs with a closed stem and a minority of the verbs with an open stem are invariable. The majority of the verbs which regularly show an open or vowel-final stem, however, additionally exhibit an inflected stem with a final consonant before auxiliary verbs.

The final consonant preserved in the inflected stem of those verbs which show stem alternation may reflect a lost segment or, alternatively, the remnant of some now defunct morphological or morphophonological process. The consonants which occur as finals in such inflected stems are /t/, /n/ and /m/. If the open stem ends in /i/ or /o/, these vowels in the inflected stem systematically change to /í/ and /ó/ respectively. In the glossary, the longer, inflected stem of verbs that show stem alternation is specified because the inflected stem cannot be predicted on the basis of the short stem of the verb.

The question arises as to how the finals /t/, /n/ and /m/ occurring uniquely in inflected stems, such as inflected  $\text{ʃ}^{\text{̃}}\text{li}^{\text{̃}}$  *lín* vs. regular  $\text{ʃ}\text{li}$  *li*

‘say’, འོ་ཚོམ་ vs. འོ་ཟོ་ ‘eat’ and འོ་དྲི་ vs. འོ་དྲི་ ‘come’, differ historically from the finals /t/, /n/ and /m/ of invariable closed verb stems, e.g. འོ་ཀོན་ ‘let, allow’, འོ་ལོམ་ ‘walk’, འོ་མཱ་ ‘do’. Light is shed on this question by the indirect relationship between a final consonant uniquely occurring in an inflected stem and the final consonant occurring in a corresponding deverbative nominal. For example, the final /n/ in the inflected stem འོ་ལོན་ of the verb འོ་ལོ་ ‘say’ corresponds to a final /n/ in the old deverbative form འོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ ‘tongue’, whereas the final /n/ in the inflected stem འོ་ལོན་ of the verb འོ་ལོ་ ‘carry’ corresponds to an /m/ in the nominal derivative འོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ ‘heavy’. Some other examples of regular closed stems of verbs ending in /m/, /n/ or /t/ are འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘hold, retain’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘meet’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘attach’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘remain’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘tell, narrate’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘become’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘cut, sever’, འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘do’ and འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘snatch’.

Auxiliary verbs are a set of verbs which can be distinguished on the basis of both semantic and morphological criteria. Lepcha auxiliary verbs not only exhibit meanings which in other languages are often expressed by modal verbs, e.g. འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘be able, can’, the set of auxiliary verbs can also be defined morphologically in that they combine with the inflected stems of verbs and that they may be negated. Auxiliary verbs differ from particles, which combine with the regular stem or citation form of the verb and may not be negated. Example sentences (140) and (141) are related in that they form part of a dialogue and illustrate the inflected and regular stem of the verb འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘come out, come up, rise’. Examples (143) and (144) are both responses to the statement made in (142), and these three sentences offer examples of the inflected and regular stem of the verb འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ ‘know’.

- 140 འོ་ཇ་མཱ་ འོ་ཇ་མཱ་  
*tukfyil-sang plâ-wám*  
 ant-PL.NH come.out-PRG  
 ‘Ants are coming out of it.’

- 141 འོ་ཇ་མཱ་  
*plâm-kón*  
 come.out-let  
 ‘Let them come out.’

142      ᄃᄆᄆ ᄃᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆᄆ  
*ʔore-re      ʔáyú-do      yâm      gát*  
 that-DEF      2P-self      know      must  
 ‘You ought to be aware of that.’

143      ᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆ  
*go      ma-yâ-n*  
 1S      NEG-know-NEG  
 ‘I don’t know.’

144      ᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ  
*yâ-do      ma-gát-ne*  
 know-self      NEG-must-NEG  
 ‘I don’t have to know.’

The verb ᄆᄆ *bi* ~ ᄆᄆ *bo* ‘give’ also has two different stems, but in this case the choice for one or the other stem depends on the recipient of the verb. The stem ᄆᄆ *bo* is used when something is given to a first or second person singular or plural recipient, e.g. ᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ *kasu-m bo* ‘give to me’, ᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ *káyú-m bo* ‘give to us’, ᄃᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *ʔádo-m bo* ‘give to you (S)’, ᄃᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *ʔáyú-m bo* ‘give to you (P)’. The stem ᄆᄆ *bi* is used when something is given to a third person singular or plural recipient, e.g. ᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ *hudo-m bi* ‘give to him/her’, ᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ *huyú-m bi* ‘give to them’.

145      ᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ ᄃᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ  
*ʔóng sare-nun      cho      ʔáre      kasu-m      bo*  
 boy      which-ABL      book      this      1S.OBL-DAT      give

ᄆᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ ᄆᄆᄆ ᄆᄆ  
*hudo-m      go      thyák      ma*  
 3S.OBL-DAT      1S      recognise      AST  
 ‘The boy who gave me this book, I recognised him.’

146      ཉུ་ཤོ་ཤེ་ལཱ་མེ་ལོ་མེ་  
*hík*      *sót-shang*    *go*    *?ádo-m*  
 chicken    kill-INF      1S      2S.OBL-DAT

          ཐོ་མེ་ལཱེ  
*bánkup*      *bo-sho*  
 small.knife    give-NPR

‘I’ll give you a small knife to kill the chicken.’

This pattern of stem alternation in Lepcha resembles the patterns of stem alternation in biactantial verbal agreement systems observed in other Tibeto-Burman languages. The Lepcha alternation is clearly triggered by the personal number of the ‘patient’ or recipient, and in this pattern we see a vestige of a grammatical phenomenon of interest to the historical linguist.

### 5.2 *Permission, ability, opportunity, exigency*

To be allowed or permitted to do something is expressed by the modal verb ལོ་མེ་ *kón* ‘let, allow’, as in the following examples.

147      ལཱེ་མེ་ལོ་མེ་ལོ་མེ་  
*hudo-m*      *ʔúng*      *bín*      *ma-kón*  
 3S.OBL-DAT    water      give    NEG-allow  
 ‘Don’t allow anyone to give him water.’

148      ལོ་ལཱེ་མེ་ལོ་མེ་  
*go*      *hudo-m*      *ʔúng*      *thóng*      *kón*  
 1S      3S.OBL-DAT    water      drink      allow  
 ‘I let him drink some water.’

149      ལཱེ་མེ་ལོ་མེ་  
*huyú-m*      *dyút*      *kón*  
 3P-DAT    argue      allow  
 ‘Let them argue.’

Example (150) gives the first line of a song that was fairly well-known in the Kalimpong hills during the 1990s.



150      ላላግ ገላራ ሱ ገላራ ደገግ ገላራ  
*lyáng      ገáre-sá      fát      ገáre-ká      dúnggít*  
 land      this-GEN      earth      this-LOC      tradition

    ፍጥረት ላይ ገላራ  
*káyú-sá      mák      ma-kón*  
 1P-GEN      die      NEG-allow

    ‘Our traditions of this land, on this soil, don’t let them perish.’

The verb ገን *ngún* can be used as a main verb expressing the meaning ‘become, happen, occur’. In addition to its use as a main verb, the verb ገን *ngún* can also be used as a modal verb to express whether or not an action is seen as necessary, allowed, all right or as it should be. The verb may be used to express confirmation, affirmation or assent, like English ‘OK’. Example (151) may also be translated by ‘What’s the matter?’.

151      ግን ገን ገን  
*shú      ngún-nón*  
 what      become-RES  
 ‘What happened?’

152      ገላራ ገን ገን ገን  
*ገádo-sá      bri      ngún-nón*  
 2S.OBL-GEN      marriage      become-RES  
 ‘Did you get married?’

153      ገላራ ገላራ ገን ገን  
*ገáshúm-ገáshúm      ngún-bám*  
 fat-fat      become-PRG  
 ‘He’s getting fatter and fatter.’

154      ፍጥረት ገን ገን ገን  
*káyú      tabá      nóng      ngún-sho*  
 1P      up.there      go      become-NPR  
 ‘Is it OK if we go up there?’

- 155      (ω ε) ο( ωω(ε( ωδ τ ζ }  
*so    yu        bá        lyáng-ká    nóng ma-ngún*  
 rain descend when    land-LOC    go    NEG-become  
 ‘When it rains you should not go outside.’

- 156      ε(ω) ζ(δ(ε ζ }  
*kasu-m        ?ábi-do    ngún*  
 1s.OBL-DAT    here-self    become  
 ‘I’m comfortable right here.’

To be able to do something in the sense of being in a position to do something or being physically capable of doing something is expressed by the modal verb ζ *khu* ‘be able to’. The inflected stem of the verb ζ *khu* ‘be able to’ is ζ *khut*.

- 157      ζ(ε ζ(ε ζ(ε ζ }  
*?áre hó    rok    ma-khu-n*  
 that    2S    read    NEG-be.able-NEG  
 ‘Can’t you read that?’

To be able to do something in the sense of knowing how to perform a certain task or activity is expressed by the verb ζ *yâ* ‘know, know how to’. The verb ζ *yâ* is also used in the sense of knowing something, having knowledge about something being aware of something. The verb ζ *thyák* ‘recognise’ is used in the sense of knowing someone or recognising who someone is.

- 158      ζ(ε ζ(ε ζ(ε ζ }  
*shú    mát-shang    go    ma-yâ-ne*  
 what do-INF    1S    NEG-know-NEG  
 ‘What to do, I don’t know.’

- 159      ζ(ε ζ(ε ζ(ε ζ }  
*hu    ma-thyák-ne*  
 3S    NEG-recognise-NEG  
 ‘I don’t know him.’

- 160      ལོ་རྩེ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་  
*go róng-ríng yâ-wám*  
 1S    Lepcha-language know-PRG  
 ‘I know Lepcha.’

The verb ལྟོ་ *jel* ‘understand, know a language, speak a language’, is used specifically when the speaker wants to express whether he does or does not speak or understand a language fluently, cf. examples (161) and (162).

- 161      ལོ་རྩེ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་  
*go róng-ríng jel-bám*  
 1S    Lepcha-language understand-PRG  
 ‘I speak Lepcha.’

- 162      ལོ་མཁའ་ལོ་མཁའ་མཁའ་  
*go ?ádo-sá ?áring ma-jel-ne*  
 1S    2S.OBL-GEN language NEG-understand-NEG  
 ‘I didn’t understand what you said.’

- 163      ལོ་མཁའ་ལོ་མཁའ་མཁའ་  
*go ?ádo-sá ?áring ma-thyo-ne*  
 1S    2S.OBL-GEN language NEG-hear-NEG  
 ‘I didn’t hear what you said.’

The verb ལོ་ *gát* ‘must, need, require’ expresses a need or desire, and is used as a modal of exigency. When the verb ལོ་ *gát* is negated, it may express the sense of ‘it isn’t necessary’, ‘it isn’t wanted’ or ‘don’t want’.

- 164      ལྷོ་མཉམ་ལྷོ་མཉམ་ལྷོ་  
*lúk-hrong ngol-do lúk gát-sho*  
 morning early-self get.up must-NPR  
 ‘I’ll have to get up early in the morning.’

- 165      ཐོལ་ཏུ་མི་ལོ་ལེ  
*vâm-do-m            theng      yâm      gát-sho*  
 song-self-DAT      sing      know      must-NPR  
 ‘We ought to know how to sing a song.’
- 166      ཐོལ་ཏུ་མི་ལོ་ལེ  
*bánkup            ?áre-do      shúmátne      gát-shang*  
 small.knife      this-self      why      must-INF  
 ‘What do you need this knife for?’

### 5.3 Verbs ‘to be’

The verbs in Lepcha which cover senses of English ‘to be’ are ལོ་ *go* and རྩོ་ *nyí*. The verb ལོ་ *go* is used as an identity marker, to say that X is Y and so to express the identity or inherent quality of a person, entity or thing. Incidentally, the verb ལོ་ *go* is homophonous with the first person singular pronoun ལོ་ *go*.

- 167      ཐོལ་ཏུ་མི་ལོ་ལེ  
*?áre cho      go      ma*  
 this book      be      AST  
 ‘This is a book.’
- 168      ཐོལ་ཏུ་མི་ལོ་ལེ  
*?áre kasu-sá      lí      go      ma*  
 this 1S.OBL-GEN      house      be      AST  
 ‘This is my house.’
- 169      ཐོལ་ཏུ་མི་ལོ་ལེ  
*hu nyúrpanɡ      go      ma*  
 3S deaf      be      AST  
 ‘He is deaf.’

The verb རྩོ་ *nyí* covers the attributive, existential and locative senses of English ‘to be’. The verb རྩོ་ *nyí* may be used to ascribe a quality to someone or something, e.g. (170) and (173), to indicate the whereabouts of the subject of the sentence, e.g. (171), or in an exis-

tential sense to indicate the availability or presence of a person, commodity or thing, e.g. (172).

- 170      འོ་ཕྱི་མེད་པེ་མ་  
*vóm ʔákrím nyí ma*  
 salt bitter be AST  
 ‘Salt is bitter.’
- 171      ཡུ་ལུ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་མེ་མོ་ལ་འདྲེན་པེ་མ་  
*kasu-sá lí manegombú-ká nyí ma*  
 1S.OBL-GEN house Mane.Gomba-LOC be AST  
 ‘My house is in Mane Gomba.’
- 172      ཡུ་ལུ་ཕྱི་ལྔ་པེ་མ་  
*kasu-sá ʔákup nyet nyí ma*  
 1S.OBL-GEN child two be AST  
 ‘I have two children.’
- 173      རེ་ལྷ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་པེ་མ་  
*ʔáre taʔyu ʔázuk nyí ma*  
 this girl pretty be AST  
 ‘This girl is beautiful.’

The clause-final particle མ་ *ma* (AST) is the assertive particle, which adds force to a statement. Historically, the assertive particle may derive from an earlier Tibeto-Burman ‘to be’. The assertive particle མ་ *ma* can be translated into English as ‘it is so’, ‘it is the case that’. The Lepcha particle would appear to be cognate with the Hayu assertive particle *-m* and a copula reflected as a full verb in many Kiranti languages, the stem of which characteristically consists of an initial *m*-with some associated vowel (cf. van Driem 1990: 569, 1993: 168-176, Kortlandt 1984: 182, Michailovsky 1988: 93, 190, 192-193). In questions, the assertive particle may be used as in example (176), which may be contrasted to the use of the clause-final interrogative particle ལོ་ *gó* (Q) in sentence (177).

- 174      ལ འོ ཨོཾ་ མེཾ་ མེཾ་ མེཾ་ མེཾ་ མེཾ་ མེཾ་ མེཾ་  
*go nám tarók thák-nón ma*  
 1S year six be.complete-RES AST  
 ‘I am six years old.’

- 175      རྒྱལ་ལྗང་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་ རྒྱལ་  
*ríp-sá ḡárí nyí ma*  
 flower-GEN scent be AST  
 ‘The flower has a [strong] smell.’

- 176      རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་ རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་ རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་ རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་  
*hó sabá nóng-det gó*  
 2S where go-move Q  
 ‘Where are you going?’

- 177      རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་ རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་ རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་ རྒྱལ་ ལོཾ་  
*hó sabá nóng-det ma*  
 2S where go-move AST  
 ‘Where is it that you are going?’

The form ལོཾ་ *gum* (be.AST) is understood to be a contracted form of the verb ལོཾ་ *go* ‘be’ and the assertive particle མེཾ་ *ma*.

- 178      ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་  
*lyáng ḡáre róngkup bámlyáng gum*  
 land this Lepcha homeland be.AST  
 ‘This land is the Lepcha homeland.’

- 179      ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་ ལོཾ་  
*go tím-bú gum*  
 1S big-FCT be.AST  
 ‘I am the big one.’

#### 5.4 Negation

Negation of verbs is expressed by means of the negative prefix མེཾ་ *ma-* in combination with the negative suffix ལོཾ་ *-ne*, e.g. ལོཾ་ མེཾ་ ལོཾ་ *go mazoné*

‘I didn’t eat’, ɸ hu manóngne ‘he didn’t go’. The negative affixes can be seen as a single discontinuous morpheme and are attached to the regular stem of the verb. When the stem of the verb is open, the negative suffix ɲ -ne may be shortened to -n, e.g. ɸ ma-nyí-n ‘there isn’t’.

- 180 ɸ ʔábí sathálá ma-lát-ne  
 hu ʔábí sathálá ma-lát-ne  
 3S here always NEG-return-NEG  
 ‘He never came here.’

- 181 ɸ ma-nóng-ne gang ʔádom bo pú  
 hó ma-nóng-ne gang ʔádom bo pú  
 2S NEG-go-NEG if 2S.OBL give PSB  
 ‘If you don’t go, I might give it to you.’

The regular stem of verbs is used as the imperative. A negative imperative is formed by adding the negative prefix ɸ ma- to the regular stem of the verb, e.g. ɸ ma-mát ‘don’t’, ɸ ma-kyân ‘don’t fuss, don’t worry’, cf. (182). If the negative suffix ɲ -ne were used in example (182), as in ɸ ma-theng-ne ma-jók-ne, the sentence would not express a negative imperative but a negated preterite tense and could be translated as ‘He did not sing, he did not speak.’

- 182 ɸ ma-theng ma-jók  
 vâm ma-theng ma-jók  
 song NEG-sing NEG-speak  
 ‘Don’t sing, don’t speak!’

### 5.5 Gerund and the participle

A present gerund is expressed by adding the ending ɸ -lung (GER) to the verb. When the ending ɸ -lung (GER) is affixed to the verb, the resultant gerund expresses an activity which is simultaneous, concurrent or contemporaneous with the activity, situation or event denoted by the main verb of the sentence or syntagma. The subject of the main verb and the subject of the gerund in ɸ -lung are one and the same,

and the meaning of the suffix ལྷ -*lung* is simultaneity with the action expressed by the main verb. The morpheme ལྷ -*lung* happens to be homophonous with a verb meaning ‘spill, spill of liquids or grains, pour as water or rice’.

- 183 རལུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་མེད་མེད་  
*ʔályú lík-lung thít-nón*  
 cat call-GER reach-RES  
 ‘The cat arrived here caterwauling.’

- 184 ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་  
*zo-lung ngán le*  
 eat-GER remain REQ  
 ‘Carry on eating, please’

- 185 ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་  
*hu-nun cho rok-lung ʔázóm zo*  
 3S-ABL book read-GER food eat  
 ‘He ate his food whilst reading a book.’

The participle is formed by adding the ending ལྷ -*wung* (PTC) to a verb, e.g. (186), (187). Used as a gerund, modifying a clause, the participle precedes the event denoted by the main verb, e.g. (188). The ending ལྷ -*wung* appears to have both a participial and a nominalising function, e.g. (187), (190). Older speakers of Lepcha point to a residual morphophonological pattern affecting the initial of ལྷ -*wung*, and claim the past participial ending is spelt ལྷ -*wung* after verbs ending in a vowel, *-ng*, *-n*, *-m* or *-l*, but ལྷ -*kung* after verbs ending in *-k*, ལྷ -*tung* after verbs ending in *-t*, ལྷ -*rung* after verbs ending in *-r*, ལྷ -*pung* after verbs ending in *-p*, e.g. (189), (190).

- 186 ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་  
*thyen-wung-sá ʔáring*  
 laugh-PTC-GEN language  
 ‘funny language’



- 187       $\text{ʃi-wung-re} \text{ (} \text{thyo-wung-re} \text{ } \text{len} \text{ } \text{ʔáryúm} \text{ } \text{gum}$   
 see-PTC-DEF    hear-PTC-DEF    than    good    be.AST  
 ‘Seeing is better than hearing.’
- 188       $\text{go} \text{ } \text{thi-wung-sá} \text{ } \text{nahán} \text{ } \text{hu} \text{ } \text{zúk-hát}$   
 1S    reach-PTC-GEN    before    3S    make-PRF  
 ‘Before my return, he finished it.’
- 189       $\text{hudo-sá} \text{ } \text{gyó} \text{ } \text{zúk-kung-sá} \text{ } \text{sung-pang}$   
 3S.OBL-GEN    quarrel    make-PTC-GEN    story-PL.NH
- $\text{káyú-sá} \text{ } \text{thikúng} \text{ } \text{ʔábo-sang-nu} \text{ } \text{ʔolóm}$   
 1P-GEN    great.grandfather    father-PL.H-ABL    like.that
- $\text{káyú-m} \text{ } \text{dun}$   
 1P-DAT    tell  
 ‘The stories of the quarrels he got into, our fathers  
 and great-grandfathers told them to us like that.’
- 190       $\text{hó-lá} \text{ } \text{ʔálut} \text{ } \text{mát-nu} \text{ } \text{rok-kung} \text{ } \text{ma-nyí-n-bú}$   
 2S-also    heart do-ABL    read-PTC    NEG-be-NEG-NOM  
 ‘You used not to study very attentively either.’

5.6 *Infinitive*

The infinitival ending is  $\text{ʃe}$  *-shang* (INF). Infinitives may function as the complement of a main verb. The infinitive indicates an action or situation as such.

- 191 ཡེ་ཤེ་ མེ་ལོ་ མེ་མེ་  
*káyú mák-shang sák ma-cíng*  
 1P die-INF mind NEG-think  
 ‘We do not even think about dying.’
- 192 རྩེ་མེ་ མེ་ལོ་ མེ་ལོ་  
*ʔázóm sathá zo-shang*  
 food when eat-INF  
 ‘When are we going to eat?’
- 193 ལོ་ ལོ་ལོ་ མེ་  
*go nóng-shang mát*  
 1S go-INF do  
 ‘I acted as if I were going.’
- 194 མེ་ ལོ་ལོ་ རྩེ་མེ་ ལོ་  
*thám vyet-shang ʔájóm gum*  
 thing ask-INF easy be.AST  
 ‘It’s simple to ask a question.’
- 195 ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*go shú yâ-shang*  
 1S what know-INF  
 ‘What do I know?’

The infinitival ending ལོ་ *-shang* may also express intent or purpose, and could be translated as ‘in order to’. In such cases, the infinitival ending ལོ་ *shang* is often, but not necessarily, reinforced with the locative suffix ཡེ་ *-ká*.

- 196 ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་  
*go lí pár-shang kóm tsung-bám*  
 1S house buy-INF money save-PRG  
 ‘I am saving money to buy a house.’

- 197      འཇེ་ལེ་ རཱཱེ་ ལོལེ  
*zo-shang-ká    ʔázóm    gát-sho*  
 eat-INF-LOC    food    must-NPR  
 ‘In order to eat, there must be food.’
- 198      རཱཱེ་ རྩེལེ་ འཇེ་ལེ་ ལོལེ  
*ʔátím    ngún-shang    zo-thóng-do    gát*  
 big    become-INF    eat-drink-self    must  
 ‘One must eat and drink in order to get big.’
- 199      ལོ་ རྩེ་ ལོ་ ལོལེ་ འཇེ་ལེ་  
*go lí    drâm    khyâ-shang-ká    dâng-bám*  
 1S house    quick    arrive-INF-LOC    run-PRG  
 ‘I am running so that I will get home quickly.’
- 200      རཱཱེ་ རྩེ་ལེ་ རྩེལེ་  
*ʔádo    lí-ká    thi-shang*  
 2S.OBL    house-LOC    reach-INF
- རྩེ་ ལོ་ལེ་ འཇེ་ལེ་  
*tatsât    satet    zok-shang*  
 time    how.much    flow-INF  
 ‘How long will it take to get to your house?’

5.7 Aorist

The unmarked or zero form of the verb in Lepcha indicates a preterite tense, which denotes actions anterior to the speech moment without any inherent implication with regard to result or duration. The zero form of the verb may express just the transpiration of an event in past time, merely indicating that the situation took place at some point in the past. The zero form of the verb may also impose an inceptive reading of the situation, expressing that the situation has only just started to take place.

- 201      (ω ε)  
           *so yu*  
           rain descend  
           ‘It rained.’  
           ‘It’s raining.’ ‘It has begun to rain.’

When used in the context of a narrative structure in colloquial speech, the unmarked form of the verb is used to express a sequence of events.

- 202      ཇུ་ལོ་ལོ་མཚོ་ལོ་ལོ་  
           *tasó go Dárjúlyáng nóng*  
           yesterday 1S Darjeeling go
- (ων) ཇུ་ལོ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་  
           *go-nu ?obi tshóng pár*  
           1S-ABL there goods buy
- (ων) ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་  
           *go-nu ?ore lí-ká blá-yú-nu*  
           1S-ABL that home-LOC take-descend-ABL
- ε(ω) ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་  
           *kasu ?áyu-do-m bi*  
           1S.OBL wife-self-DAT give
- ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་  
           *?ân go-nu hudo kâ-shang li*  
           and 1S-ABL 3S.OBL cook-INF say
- ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་ ཇུ་ལོ་  
           *hu-nu ?ore kâ ?ân káyú-nu zo*  
           3S-ABL that cook and 1P-ABL eat

‘Yesterday I went to Darjeeling, I bought some things there, I brought them back home, gave them to my wife, and I told her to cook them, she cooked them and we ate them.’

5.8 *Progressive tense*

The progressive auxiliary verb ḡ( *bám* (PRG) expresses that the situation denoted by the main verb is in effect or in progress. The progressive auxiliary is used both with stative and with non-stative verbs, and is not restricted to dynamic verbs. When used as a main verb, ḡ( *bám* means ‘dwell, reside, be in or at a place’. When the progressive auxiliary is attached to a verb stem ending in a vowel, the allomorphs ḡ( *-wám* or ḡ( *-?ám* may be used.

203      ህ) ሰጋጋ(   
*hu    lok-bám*   
 3S    dance-PRG   
 ‘She is dancing.’

204      ፎ(ገ)ገ( ጸ(ገ)ገ ገጋግ(   
*kasu-sá            ?ámú-re            jú-wám*   
 1S.OBL-GEN    mother-DEF    live-PRG   
 ‘My mother is [still] alive.’

The verb ገ( *det* ‘move’ is used as a dynamic auxiliary with verbs of motion, e.g. (205). In example sentence (206), the meanings of the dynamic and progressive auxiliaries are combined in a single form.

205      ህ) ሰጋጋ ገ   
*hu    nóng-det    ma*   
 3S    go-move    AST   
 ‘He is on his way.’

206      ህ) ሰጋጋጋ( ገ(   
*hu    nóng-det-bám    ma*   
 3S    go-move-PRG    AST   
 ‘He is on his way.’

5.9 *Non-preterite tense*

A non-preterite tense may be signalled by adding the verbal ending ገ( *-sho* (NPR) to the verb. The non-preterite tense is used to describe

situations which take place in the non-past, i.e. in the present or the future, e.g. (207) or to describe situations which are true in general, e.g. (208). Sentence (207) may express a future meaning, e.g. ‘the boys will go to school’, but if the speaker had wanted to express that the situation was in progress, it is likely that he would have used the progressive auxiliary *ö* *bám*, e.g. «ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *ʔóngsang cho rokbám* ‘the boys are on their way to school’. The non-preterite tense marker *ᄃ* *sho* may be combined with other verbal endings or postpositions if this yields a semantically plausible meaning, viz. (209).

207      «ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ  
*ʔóng-sang cho rok-sho*  
 boy-PL.H    book read-NPR  
 ‘The boys go to school.’

208      (X-ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ  
*hlo-ká      sozóng-sho*  
 peak-LOC    be.cold-NPR  
 ‘It will be cold on the mountain peak.’

209      (X-ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ  
*hlo-ká      sozóng-sho    lyók*  
 peak-LOC    be.cold-NPR    IFR  
 ‘It will probably be cold on the mountain peak.’

The non-preterite tense may be used to describe a situation or activity which is taking place at the present time, an activity which the speaker is planning to perform, or an event or situation in that the speaker is certain or convinced will take place soon.

210      (ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ  
*go    vâm-kát    theng-sho*  
 1S    song-one    sing-NPR  
 ‘I shall sing a song.’

- 211      ལོ་མཚན་ལ་སློབ་ཆུང་།  
 go      *rádo-m*      *cho*   *bo-sho*  
 1S      2S.OBL-DAT    book   give-NPR  
 ‘I’ll give you the book.’
- 212      ལོ་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་སྐོར་ལ།  
 go      *punzók-ká*   *nóng-sho*  
 1S      forest-LOC    go-NPR  
 ‘I will go to the forest.’

#### 5.10 *The factitive marker with verbs*

When used with verbs, the factitive marker ལོ་-*bú* (FCT) conveys an imperfective meaning and indicates a state, a matter of fact or a situation as such. In other words, the Lepcha imperfective indicates whether an event has taken place or is taking place.

- 213      ལོ་ལྟོ་  
*bám-bú*  
 dwell-FCT  
 ‘Are they staying?’
- 214      ལོ་སློབ་ཀྱི་སྐོར་ལ།  
*tú*      *nóng-sho-bú*  
 who      go-NPR-FCT  
 ‘Who will be going?’

The factitive marker ལོ་-*bú* can be seen as a single grammatical morpheme with a varying syntactic scope, acting mainly as a verbal marker indexing imperfective aspect and as a clause-final marker nominalising a syntagma (cf. Section 6.11). In all cases the meaning of the suffix is one of reification. The factitive marker ལོ་-*bú* has close parallels in other languages of the Himalayas, where there often is a morpheme which both nominalises verbs and clauses and, when affixed to the main verb of a sentence, marks a type of imperfective aspectual meaning (cf. van Driem 1987: 193-199, 1993a: 190-197, 1993b, 2001: 654, Opgenort 2004: 244-246, Rutgers 1998: 231-263).

- 215      (ω) ʃeɔʒ ɛ̃ ɳ(ɔʒ) ʒɸ̃  
           go-nu    shi-bú      só            lát-bú      maró  
           1S-ABL   see-FCT    yesterday    return-FCT   man  
           ‘I saw the man who returned yesterday.’

### 5.11 *Aktionsart auxiliaries*

*Aktionsart* auxiliaries add a semantic dimension to the meaning of the verb they modify. The four such auxiliaries discussed in this section also occur as main verbs.

#### 5.11.1 *The perfect auxiliary*

The perfect auxiliary ɸ̃ (*hát* (PRF), which occurs as a main verb in the meaning ‘lose, leave behind’, signals that the situation occurred sometime in the past and is still relevant. The perfect auxiliary ɸ̃ (*hát* (PRF) points to the relevance of a situation to the current moment, e.g. (217), rather than simply locating the situation at some point in the past, e.g. (216). Sentences in which the perfect auxiliary ɸ̃ (*hát* (PRF) is used are typically translated into English by using the English perfect, often accompanied by the relational adverbs ‘already’ or ‘just’.

- 216      (ω) (ʒɸ̃) ɛ̃ (ɛ̃) ʃɔ  
           go    ʒóng-re-m    kám      kóm      bi  
           1S    boy-DEF-DAT   little.bit    money    give  
           ‘I gave the boy some money.’
- 217      (ω) (ʒɸ̃) ɛ̃ (ɛ̃) ʃɔɸ̃  
           go    ʒóng-re-m    kám      kóm      bi-hát  
           1S    dog-DEF-DAT   little.bit    money    give-PRF  
           ‘I have already given the boy some money.’
- 218      (ω) ʃɔ(ʒɸ̃) (ω) (ɳ̃) (ɸ̃) ɸ̃  
           go    thi-wung-sá    nahán    hu      zúk-hát  
           1S    reach-PFG-GEN   before    3S      make-PRF  
           ‘Before my arrival, he had already done it.’



219      𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅 (𐄆𐄇) 𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋 𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏 (𐄐𐄑) 𐄒𐄓𐄔𐄕  
*saróng-sá so-nu kasu-sá nyót lók-hát*  
 today-GEN rain-ABL 1S.OBL-GEN field damage-PRF  
 ‘Today’s rain has damaged our field.’

220      𐄖𐄗 𐄘𐄙 𐄚𐄛𐄜𐄝  
*hu bri mát-hát*  
 3S marriage do-PRF  
 ‘He’s already married.’

5.11.2 *The resultative auxiliary*

The resultative auxiliary 𐄞 *nón* (RES), which appears to be derived from the verb 𐄟 *nóng* ‘go’, signals that a state or an event exists as a result of a transition in the past. The resultative auxiliary stresses the result or outcome of the situation denoted by the main verb and implies an absolute transition. When the resultative auxiliary is used with verbs of motion, the meaning added by the auxiliary can literally be understood as ‘getting into motion’ in order to perform the action denoted by the main verb.

221      𐄠𐄡𐄢  
*mák-nón*  
 die-RES  
 ‘He died.’

222      𐄣𐄤 (𐄥𐄦) 𐄧𐄨𐄩 (𐄪) 𐄫𐄬 𐄭𐄮 𐄯𐄰  
*go-nu myón-nón hó shú li*  
 1S-ABL forget-RES 2S what say  
 ‘I forgot what you said.’

223      𐄱𐄲𐄳 (𐄴) 𐄵𐄶𐄷 (𐄸) 𐄹𐄺𐄻 𐄼  
*tungvyeng thok-nón tú-nu thok*  
 door close-RES who-ABL close  
 ‘The door is closed, who closed it?’

5.11.3 *The exhaustive auxiliary*

The exhaustive auxiliary  $\text{tho}$  (EXH) indicates that an activity or action has come to an end. This auxiliary focuses on the termination of the event. The form  $\text{tho}$  is also used as a main verb ‘put’.

- 224       $\text{go-nun-do cho } \text{?áre rok-tho ma}$   
 1S-ABL-self    book    this    read-EXH    AST  
 ‘I read this book myself.’

- 225       $\text{?ázóm ?áre tú-nu zo-hát-tho}$   
 rice    this    who-ABL    eat-PRF-EXH  
 ‘Who has eaten this rice?’

Although a construction containing the resultative auxiliary  $\text{nón}$  also implies termination, the resultative auxiliary  $\text{nón}$  focuses on a transition in the past. By contrast, the exhaustive auxiliary  $\text{tho}$  expresses the thorough enactment or performance of the activity or situation denoted by the verb. The action has been performed thoroughly, or the situation has been effectuated exhaustively. The suffixes  $\text{nón}$  and  $\text{tho}$  are sometimes used in combination.

- 226       $\text{huyú thi-nón}$   
 3P    reach-RES  
 ‘Did they arrive?’

- 227       $\text{thi-nón-tho}$   
 reach-RES-EXH  
 ‘They arrived.’

- 228       $\text{tasó-do lát-nón-tho}$   
 yesterday-self    return-RES-EXH  
 ‘They returned yesterday.’

5.11.4 *The completive auxiliary*

The completive auxiliary  $\text{𐌵} \textit{lel}$  (CMP), also used as a main verb ‘complete’ indicates that an activity is completed or fulfilled. The completive auxiliary specifies that the event described by the main verb is carried out to completion.

229       $\text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰}))$   
*ká-sám-nun ȳók ȳáre zúk-nu lel-ká*  
 P1-three-ABL work this make-ABL complete-LOC  
 ‘Let us three finish this work.’

230       $\text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰}))$   
*ȳázóm zo-lel-nu rok*  
 rice eat-CMP-ABL read  
 ‘After you have eaten your food, go and study.’

231       $\text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰}))$   
*go mák-lel-nu tagrikup ȳáre-nu shú mát te*  
 1S die-CMP-ABL boy this-ABL what do DUB  
 ‘What will this boy do after I die?’

232       $\text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰})) \text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰}))$   
*go-nun-do cho ȳáre rok-lel-hát*  
 1S-ABL-self book this read-CMP-PRF  
 ‘I read the whole book myself.’

5.12 *The locative suffix with verbs*

When the locative suffix  $\text{𐌵}(\text{𐌰}(\text{𐌰}))$  *-ká* is attached to a verb it may fulfil one of two different functions, i.e. a supine or an adhortative function. When the locative suffix marks the verbal complement of a main verb, it fulfils a supine function. When the locative suffix marks the main verb of a syntagma, it fulfils an adhortative function. The core meaning of the locative morpheme remains the same.

The supine expresses the sense ‘in order to’ and is attached to a verb by which it becomes the verbal complement, denoting a situation towards which the activity denoted by the main verb is directed. Su-

pine forms marked by the locative suffix  $\text{ㄝㄢ}$  *-ká* may appear as the complements of verbs of motion as well as of other verbs.

- 233     $\text{ㄕㄨㄥㄨㄛㄣㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄒㄩㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛ}$   
*hu*    *ɔádo-m*            *ngâk-ká*    *thi*  
 3S    2S.OBL-DAT    look-LOC    reach  
 ‘He came to see you.’

- 234     $\text{ㄕㄨㄥㄨㄛㄣㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛ}$   
*hu*    *cho*    *rok-shang-ká*    *yânthó-ká*            *nóng ma*  
 3S    book    read-INF-LOC    school-LOC    go    AST  
 ‘He went to school in order to study.’

The second function of the locative morpheme  $\text{ㄝㄢ}$  *-ká* in combination with a verb is an adhortative function. The adhortative meaning of a main verb marked by the locative suffix  $\text{ㄝㄢ}$  *-ká* is the result of the fundamental locative meaning of the suffix interacting with the highest syntactic node in the syntagma, thus expressing the goal towards which the entire event structure is directed. The supine verbs serve as complements of the main verb of a syntagma, whereas adhortative forms in  $\text{ㄝㄢ}$  *-ká* serve as main verbs themselves.

- 235     $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   
*hudo-sá*            *lí-ká*            *nóng-ká*  
 3S.OBL-GEN    house-LOC    go-LOC  
 ‘Let’s go to his house.’

- 236     $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   $\text{ㄕㄨㄛㄝㄢ}$   
*vâm*    *ma-theng-ká*            *hu*    *dá-nyí-wám*  
 song    NEG-sing-LOC    3S    rest-be-PRG  
 ‘Let’s not sing, he is resting.’

### 5.13 *The ablative suffix with verbs*

A verb marked by the ablative suffix  $\text{ㄢㄨㄣ}$   $\sim$   $\text{ㄢㄨ}$  *-nun*  $\sim$  *-nu* expresses a situation which serves as the source of the action denoted by the main verb. However, the meaning expressed by the ablative suffix is not so much a matter of cause as it is of point of origin.

237 གཤམ་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ཤེ  
*ḡámik ḡok-nu ngâk gang gun shi*  
 eye open-ABL look if all see  
 ‘If you open your eyes and look, you will see it all.’

238 ལུ་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་  
*shúmú-re ḡágyáp zo-nu dok-bám*  
 man-DEF much eat-ABL be.ill-PRG  
 ‘The man fell ill after he ate too much.’

239 ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་  
*hó tasó ka-sá lí-nu ngol-do*  
 2S yesterday 1S-GEN house-ABL early-self

ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་  
*nóng-nu-re go-nu sút dun-shang myón-nón*  
 go-ABL-DEF 1S-ABL message tell-INF forget-RES  
 ‘Because you left my house early yesterday, I forgot to give you the message.’

In what may be described as an ergative function, ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ ~ ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* tends to be suffixed to the agent of transitive verbs or the ‘transitive subject’, particularly in preterite time. A discussion on ergativity in Lepcha may shed more light on the meaning of the Lepcha ablative category.

Ergativity in Lepcha is manifested by the behaviour and meaning of the suffix ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ ~ ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* when attached to the agentive argument of a transitive verb. In this function Lepcha ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ ~ ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* works quite differently than a classic ergative. Lepcha ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ ~ ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* is used when an animate agent and an animate patient are linked by a transitive verb to make clear who is doing what to whom. The suffix ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ ~ ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* is also used to highlight the agentive character of an animate entity which acts as the agent of an activity, whether this be transitive or intransitive. Lepcha ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ ~ ལྟོ་སྐྱོད་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* likewise marks the instrument whereby an activity is performed or may indicate the cause of an activity or state. In an ergative function, Lepcha

ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ~ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ~ -*nun* ~ -*nu* is more likely to occur when the verb is transitive and, when the subject is animate because in these cases the agentive character of the subject is either more obvious or more pronounced.

- 240 རྩུ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (རྩུ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་) ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*kajú-nun lóng-re-m tsúk ma*  
 dog-ABL boy-DEF-DAT bite AST  
 ‘The dog bit the boy.’
- 241 (ལྷོ་) ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (ལྷོ་ལྷོ་) ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*go-nu tasó l’yók ma-zúk-ne*  
 1S-ABL yesterday work NEG-make-NEG  
 ‘Yesterday I did not do any work.’
- 242 (ལྷོ་) ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (ལྷོ་ལྷོ་) ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*go-nu hudo-sá ta’lyukup-re-m buk-hát*  
 1S-ABL 3S.OBL-GEN daughter-DEF-DAT hit-PRF  
 ‘I hit his daughter.’
- 243 ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (ལྷོ་ལྷོ་) ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*hudo-sá ta’lyukup-nu kasu-m*  
 3S.OBL-GEN daughter-ABL 1S.OBL-DAT
- ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་  
*lá buk ma*  
 also hit AST  
 ‘His daughter hit me too.’

The occurrence of the Lepcha ending ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ~ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ~ -*nun* ~ -*nu* cannot be described by a mechanical rule. In many respects, the factors motivating the use of Lepcha ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ~ ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ~ -*nun* ~ -*nu* in an ergative sense resemble the semantic considerations which determine the use or non-use of the ergative suffix in Dzongkha (van Driem 1998). For example, the ergative suffix is also more likely to occur in the past tense because the agentive meaning of the Lepcha ergative is more likely to be appropriate in contexts where the activity expressed has already actually taken place. In both Dzongkha and Lepcha, it appears that this phenomenon has to do with the widespread tendency in ergative lan-

guages to conceptualise an already performed transitive act as being more transitive than a transitive act which has not yet been completed. The meaning of the morpheme ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* in an ergative sense is entirely a matter of highlighting the agentivity of an actant which, in most cases, happens to be the subject of the sentence. As in Dzongkha, the factors which induce the use of ergative case marking in Lepcha are volition on the part of the subject, the degree of control which the subject has over the event denoted by the verb, the animacy of the subject and the transitivity and completedness of the event denoted by the verb.





## CHAPTER SIX

### CLAUSE-FINAL PARTICLES, COORDINATION AND SUBORDINATION

Several clause-final particles are used in Lepcha to express the mood or emotional attitude of the speaker towards what he is saying. The clause-final interrogative particle  $\overline{\text{g}}\text{ó}$  (Q) and the assertive particle  $\overline{\text{m}}\text{a}$  (AST) have been discussed above in Sections 4.3.3 and 5.3 respectively. The adhortative function of the locative suffix  $\text{éi}$  *-ká* (LOC) when suffixed to a clause has been discussed in Sections 4.7 and 5.12. This chapter deals with several clause-final particles marking attitudes such as doubt, certainty, likelihood and discovery. This chapter also briefly discusses coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Subordination of clauses by means of the factitive marker  $\text{ó}$  *-bú* (FCT) is a common phenomenon in Lepcha.

#### 6.1 *The request particle*

The particle  $\text{le}$  (REQ) expresses a polite request and is used when a person wishes to express reassurance towards the addressee or request the addressee to do something.

244       $\overline{\text{r}}\text{á}\text{b}\text{á} \text{ di} \text{ le}$   
          here come      REQ  
          ‘Could you come here please.’

245       $\overline{\text{y}}\text{up}\text{then}\text{-kát} \text{ sóm} \text{ le}$   
          moment-one breathe REQ  
          ‘Do catch your breath for a minute.’

6.2 *The authorative particle*

The particle  $\text{ꠘ}$  *ce* (AUTH) expresses authority on the part of the speaker and is used to request or urge the addressee to do something. The authorative particle may be related to the noun  $\text{ꠘꠘ}$  *ꠘáce* ‘love’.

- 246       $\text{ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘ}$   
*ꠘábi thop pú dónɡ ce*  
 here get PSB search AUTH  
 ‘You may find it over here, have a look.’

- 247       $\text{ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘ}$   
*lín-bú ꠘáring nyen ce*  
 say-FCT language listen AUTH  
 ‘Just listen to what is said.’

6.3 *The dubitative particle*

The clause-final particle  $\text{ꠘ}$  *te*, glossed as [DUB] for ‘dubitative’, indicates doubt, uncertainty or even confusion about the precise nature or result of an event. The context of example (248) is that the speaker is looking for something that the addressee put away. The speaker cannot find the object that he is looking for and rather than simply saying  $\text{ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ}$  *hó sabá tho hát* ‘where did you put it’, he stresses his uncertainty about being able to locate the object.

- 248       $\text{ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘꠘ} \text{ ꠘ}$   
*hó sabá tho-hát te*  
 2S where put-PRF DUB  
 ‘But where did you put it?’

- 249       $\text{ꠘ} \text{ ꠘ} \text{ ꠘ} \text{ ꠘ}$   
*go nónɡ khut te*  
 1S go be.able DUB  
 ‘Could I perhaps go?’

- 250      ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ  
*lyángsóng sabá nóng te*  
 Lyángsóng where go DUB  
 ‘Where did Lyángsóng go?’

#### 6.4 *The possibility particle*

The clause-final particle ၵၵ *pú* (PSB) expresses a hypothetical possibility.

- 251      ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ  
*lyángsóng sabá nóng pú*  
 Lyángsóng where go PSB  
 Where could Lyángsóng have gone?

- 252      ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ  
*saróng-re ၵádo-sá lyáng thít khut pú*  
 today-DEF 2S.OBL-GEN land reach be.able PSB  
 ‘Today we might be able to reach your place.’

In example (249), the speaker expresses doubt or uncertainty in that he is unsure whether he himself would be the best person to undertake the journey or task. In (253), the speaker points out that he is a possible candidate for the job.

- 253      ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ  
*go nóng khut pú*  
 1S go be.able PSB  
 ‘I could go.’

#### 6.5 *The inferential particle*

Inference or assumption is expressed by the morpheme ၵၵ *lyók* [IFR], which can also be used as a main verb meaning ‘resemble, look like’, e.g. (257). When the speaker of example (254) noted that the addressee had only just come back after a long journey, she inferred that

the addressee was probably tired. The addressee did not look particularly tired, nor was there any other evidence for her assumption.

254      ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ  
*hó saróng-do lát-nón-tho pá*  
 2S today-self return-RES-EXH CRT

ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ  
*hó pel-nón lyók*  
 2S be.tired-RES IFR

‘You just came back today! You must be tired.’

255      ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ  
*ʔádo-m lí lát-shang ʔákán*  
 2S.OBL-DAT house return-INF hurry

ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ  
*ʔátím nyí lyók*  
 big be IFR

‘You’re probably in a hurry to get home.’

In example (255), literally ‘it looks like there is a great hurry to get home unto you’, the speaker assumes or infers that the addressee is likely to be in a great hurry. She could also have said *ʔádom lí látshang ʔákán ʔátím nyí*, ‘you are in a great hurry to get home’, but this would have been tantamount to accusing the addressee of behaving impolitely by being in such a hurry. By using the ending ᄃᄃ *lyók*, she is being polite, and the message she is conveying is something like: ‘You must be in a great hurry to get home, I can see that you would be, I can’t blame you, anyone would be in a hurry under these circumstances, there is nothing in your behaviour that shows it, but it is just something that is to be expected under these circumstances’.

The context of example (256) is that the speaker’s mother was away visiting friends in a neighbouring village. Since there had recently been a death in the family, the speaker thought it likely that his mother would return home as soon as possible.

- 256       $\text{kasu-sá} \quad \text{?ámú} \quad \text{lúk?ál} \quad \text{lát-sho} \quad \text{lyók}$   
 1S.OBL-GEN    mother    tomorrow    return-NPR    IFR

‘My mother is probably coming back tomorrow.’

- 257       $\text{so} \quad \text{yu-sho} \quad \text{lyók-bám}$   
 rain    descend-NPR    resemble-PRG

‘It looks like it’s going to rain.’

### 6.6 *The certainty particle*

The meaning of the particle  $\text{pá}$  (CRT) combines an element of direct perception or direct observation with an element of certainty. It describes a conviction on the part of the speaker with respect to the situation described. There is also an element of proof, direct observation or control. The information does not have to be new or unexpected, although it may be.

- 258       $\text{hík-nu} \quad \text{?átí} \quad \text{tho-hát} \quad \text{pá}$   
 chicken-ABL    egg    put-PRF    CRT

‘The chicken has [just] laid an egg.’

- 259       $\text{ríp} \quad \text{?áre-re} \quad \text{?ázuk} \quad \text{pá}$   
 flower    this-DEF    pretty    CRT

‘This flower is beautiful.’

In example (260), the speaker has observed that the man about whom he has been talking has aged a lot. He speaks about it with certainty and is trying to convince the addressee of this fact.

- 260       $\text{shúmú} \quad \text{?áre-re} \quad \text{gán-nón-tho} \quad \text{pá}$   
 man    this-DEF    old-RES-EXH    CRT

‘This man has become a lot older.’

6.7 *The discovery particle*

The particle  $\tilde{\xi}\text{O}$  *yâmbá* (DSC) marks information that the speaker has come to know and consists of the inflected verb stem  $\tilde{\xi}$  *yâm* of the verb  $\xi$  *yâ* ‘know’ and the postposition  $\text{O}$  *bá* ‘when’. The discovery marker  $\tilde{\xi}\text{O}$  *yâmbá* may refer to all sorts of information that the speaker has come to know, whether acquired indirectly, through inference, based on direct evidence, by observable results or by general knowledge. There is also an extension of the meaning that could be called ‘mirative’. The particle  $\tilde{\xi}\text{O}$  *yâmbá* may indicate that the situation denoted was contrary to expectation, though not necessarily sudden, arresting or surprising. Sentence (261) implies that the speaker has not seen the man in question for quite some time but that he has come to know that the man is quite old now.

- 261       $\text{shúmu} \quad \text{?áre-re} \quad \text{gán-nón-tho} \quad \text{yâmbá}$   
           man       this-DEF    old-RES-EXH   DSC  
           ‘This man should be very old now.’

The context of example (262) is that the speaker went over to a certain place to find out what was happening to a friend who had been taken seriously ill. He then either heard or inferred that his friend had died. In example (263), the certainty particle  $\text{?á}$  *pá* is used whereby the speaker points out that he has acquired direct and personal evidence for the described event. He may have entered the house only to find his friend had died, so that he practically witnessed the event. By virtue of its mirative sense, the marker  $\tilde{\xi}\text{O}$  *yâmbá* is also employed to focus the listener’s attention to crucial points in a narrative.

- 262       $\text{go} \quad \text{nóng-bá-re} \quad \text{hu} \quad \text{mák-nón-tho} \quad \text{yâmbá}$   
           1S    go-when-DEF   3S   die-RES-EXH   DSC  
           ‘When I went over there, I gathered that he had already died.’

- 263      ལོ་འདྲེན་པའི་མེད་ཀྱི་འཇམ་ལུང་།  
 go    *nóng-bá-re hu mák-nón-tho pá*  
 1S    go-when-DEF 3S    die-RES-EXH CRT  
 ‘When I went over there, it turned out that he was  
 already dead.’

### 6.8 The reported speech particles

Something that was said by someone else may be marked by the phrase མེད་མེད་ *mere* (REP). This marker is used to indicate that the information did not come to the speaker’s knowledge through direct information or through inference, but rather by word of mouth. This particle is highly reminiscent of the Nepali reported speech particle *re* and the Limbu reported speech particle *mu*. The meaning expressed by this particle is not just a purely reportative marker, in that it adds a meaning of ‘s/he says’ to the reported information, as in ལྟོ་མེད་མེད་ *shúshú mere* ‘what was that?’, ‘what did you just say?’. When a speaker chooses to use the reportative particle མེད་མེད་ *mere*, this highlights the fact that the information is based on something someone said, and there is an undertone that suggests that the speaker cannot necessarily vouch for the information or is unsure whether the information is necessarily accurate.

- 264      ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་།  
*káyú lyáng lúkʔál zóm-ká*  
 1P    land      tomorrow    food-LOC
- ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་མེད་།  
*tú-tú      lát-shet      mere*  
 who-who    return-NOM    REP
- ‘Who did they say are coming back to dine with us  
 tomorrow?’

- 265      འདྲེན་པའི་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་།  
*ʔáre-zang ʔáshúm shúmú lá*  
 this-like    fat      man      also

(ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ) ᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ  
*ʔore bun ma-khu-n mere*  
 that carry NEG-be.able-NEG REP

‘Such a heavy fellow, and yet he claims he cannot carry that load’.

The quotative particle *ᄃᄃ yang* ‘thus’ marks a direct quote. This particle is placed at the end of the quoted statement and often followed by a phrase such as *ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ* *hunu li ma* ‘s/he said’.

266 ᄃᄃ(ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ) ᄃᄃ  
*hudo-sá lí-re ʔábi yang hu-nun li*  
 3S.OBL-GEN house-DEF here thus 3S-ABL say

‘His house is here, he said.’

267 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ  
*huyú-nu li-bá hu lúkʔál lát-sho yang*  
 3P-ABL say-when 3S tomorrow return-NPR thus

‘They said that he will return tomorrow.’

268 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ  
*hu-nun huyú-m kasu ʔámlem ʔík sathála*  
 3S-ABL 3P-DAT 1S.OBL face still always

ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃ  
*ma-ngâk-ne yang li ma*  
 NEG-look-NEG thus say AST

‘He said that they had never seen my face before.’

### 6.9 Coordination

The coordinative suffix *ᄃᄃ ʔân* ‘and’ coordinates arguments. This suffix connects two or more elements of a sentence, such as noun phrases, verb phrases or independent clauses.



- 269      ཟུང་ལོ་མོ་ རྩི་ ཉམ་ ལོ་མོ་  
*punzók thám câng ?ân lí thám câng*  
 forest animal and house animal
- མ་དུ་མ་  
*ma-dúk-ne*  
 NEG-be.alike-NEG
- ‘The animals in the forest and the animals in the house are not alike.’
- 270      འདྲེན་ ཉམ་ལའི་ འོ་ མོ་ རྩི་ ལོ་ རྩི་ ལོ་ མོ་ མོ་  
*dorji lí-ká nóng ma ?ân go ?ábá lát ma*  
 Dorji house-LOC go AST and 1S here return AST
- ‘Dorji went home and I came back here.’
- 271      འོ་ རྩི་ འགྲོ་ རྩི་ ལོ་  
*hó ?ábá hro ?ân go*  
 2S here come.up and 1S
- འདོ་ འགྲོ་མོ་  
*?ádo-m róng-díng-sho*  
 2S.OBL-DAT wait-stand-NPR
- ‘You climb up there and I will stand here and wait for you.’
- 272      ཉམ་ རྩི་ རྩི་ ལོ་ རྩི་ ལོ་ མོ་ རྩི་  
*nyíma ?ân kúrsóng faleng ?ân*  
 Nyima and Kursóng young.boy and
- འོ་ ལོ་ མོ་  
*nómleng gum*  
 young.girl be.AST
- ‘Nyima and Kursóng are a boy and a girl.’

The alternative conjunction འཤོ་ *yángne* ‘or, either’ indicates that an alternative exists, e.g. (273). In the sense of ‘either ... or ...’, the

conjunction ຍາງເນ *yángne* ‘or, either’ precedes both the first and the second alternative, e.g. (274).

- 273 ກັ ຍາງເນ ວ ນ້ງເນ  
*hó yángne go nóng gát-sho*  
 2S or 1S go must-NPR  
 ‘You or I will have to go.’

- 274 ກັ ຍາງເນ ງາ ຍາງເນ ງາ ລຳ  
*hó yángne ?áre yángne ?ore lyâ*  
 2S or this or that accept  
 ‘You’ll have to accept either this or that.’

The adversative conjunction ສຸນລາ *shenlá* ‘but’ expresses a contrast or opposition of some kind between two propositions.

- 275 ສຸມເກັ ງາດອມ ທຸມເກັ ທີເວມ  
*shumu-kát ?ádo-m tsum-ká thi-wám*  
 man-one 2S.OBL-DAT meet-LOC reach-PRG

ສຸນລາ ວ ທີ ສຸນ  
*shenlá go thyák ma-tho-n*  
 but 1S recognise NEG-EXH-NEG

‘Somebody has come to see you, but I did not recognise him.’

- 276 ສຸດຸມເກັ ນຢີເທບູ ຮ່ອງເກັ ສາບາລາ  
*sukdum-ká nyí-tho-bú róng-kyóng sabálá*  
 world-LOC be-EXH-FCT Lepcha-village everywhere

ເກັ ງາ ງາ ສຸນລາ ສຸນ  
*káyú-nun ?ore shi ma-thop-ne shenlá*  
 1P-ABL this see NEG-get-NEG but

ງາ ງາ ງາ ງາ ງາ ງາ  
*?ore-zang ?álong ?ábá káyú-nun shím-thop*  
 this-like now here 1P-ABL see-get

‘In all the Lepcha villages in the world we don’t find any, but if we look around over here we will find some.’

### 6.10 Subordination

Subordinating conjunctions introduce dependent clauses and indicate the nature of the relationship between the independent clause and the dependent clause. The conditional conjunction ལ་ *gang* ‘if’ is added to the clause specifying the condition.

277 ལ་ རུ་ལཱ་ རྩི ལ་ རུ་ལྷོ་ རྩི་ལེ་ལོ།  
*go ʔáre-zang zúk gang ʔáryúm ngún-sho-bú*  
 1S this-like make if good become-NPR-FACT

‘If I do it like this, will that be all right?’

278 ཨི་ རྩི་ལཱ་ ལ་ (ལ་ལྷོ་) རྩི་ལོ།  
*yâ ma-yâ-ne gang go-nun ma-lí-n*  
 know NEG-know-NEG if 1S-ABL NEG-say-NEG

‘Whether I know it or not, I am not going to tell.’

279 རྩི་ལྷོ་ ལ་ ལ་ རྩི་ལོ།  
*kányí-m vyet gang shú lí-shang*  
 1D-DAT ask if what say-INF

‘If they ask us, what are we going to say?’

280 རྩི་ རུ་ ལ་ ལ་ ལ་  
*món ʔáre zo gang*  
 medicine this eat if

འོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (ལྷོ་ལྷོ་) ལོ།  
*hó lúkʔál trókchi lyók*  
 2S tomorrow be.thankful IFR

‘If you take this medicine, you’ll thank me in the morning.’

When the conditional conjunction  $\text{ᠬᠠᠭ}$  *gang* is combined with the morpheme  $\text{ᠯᠠ}$  *lá* ‘also, even’, the combination expresses the meaning ‘even if’.

- 281      $\text{ᠬᠣ ᠬᠢᠵᠢᠭᠤᠯᠠ ᠶ᠋ᠢᠨ ᠮᠠᠯᠠᠭᠤᠨ ᠭᠠᠩᠯᠠ}$   
*hó hryóp-pung yân mák-kung gang-lá*  
 2S cry-PTC and die-PTC if-also

$\text{ᠲᠠᠯᠢᠭᠤ ᠶ᠋ᠠᠷᠢ ᠮᠠᠲᠤᠬᠤᠯᠠᠨᠢ}$   
*talʹyu yáre ma-thop-ne*  
 girl this NEG-get-NEG

‘Even if you cry or die, you won’t get this girl.’

Another subordinating conjunction is the concessive conjunction  $\text{ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$  *gorúnglá* ‘although, even’, which is added to the end of the concessive clause.

- 282      $\text{ᠭᠣᠨ ᠵᠢᠨ ᠰᠢᠭᠤᠯᠠ ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$   
*go-nu shúlá ma-mát-ne gorúnglá*  
 1S-ABL everything NEG-do-NEG even

$\text{ᠬᠤᠨ ᠬᠠᠰᠤᠮᠤ ᠪᠤᠬ}$   
*hu-nu kasu-m buk*  
 3S-ABL 1S.OBL-DAT hit

‘Even though I did not do anything, he hit me.’

When the concessive conjunction is added to interrogative pronouns such as  $\text{ᠰᠢ}$  *tú* ‘who’,  $\text{ᠰᠢᠬᠤ}$  *shú* ‘what’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠷᠢ}$  *sare* ‘which’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠪᠠ}$  *sabá* ‘where’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠲᠡᠲᠡ}$  *satet* ‘how much’, this process yields forms indicating any of all possible persons, things or places. This yields the forms  $\text{ᠰᠢ ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$  *tú gorúnglá* ‘whosoever’,  $\text{ᠰᠢ ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$  *shú gorúnglá* ‘whatsoever’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠷᠢ ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$  *sare gorúnglá* ‘whichever’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠪᠠ ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$  *sabá gorúnglá* ‘wheresoever, in any place whatsoever’. Similar expressions consist of the same interrogative pronouns combined with the phrase  $\text{ᠭᠠᠩᠭᠠ}$  *ganglá* ‘even if’, e.g.  $\text{ᠰᠢ ᠭᠠᠩᠭᠠ}$  *tú ganglá* ‘whoever’,  $\text{ᠰᠢ ᠭᠠᠩᠭᠠ}$  *shú ganglá* ‘whatever’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠷᠢ ᠭᠠᠩᠭᠠ}$  *sare ganglá* ‘whichever’,  $\text{ᠰᠠᠪᠠ ᠭᠠᠩᠭᠠ}$  *sabá ganglá* ‘wherever’. As with the corresponding forms in  $\text{ᠯᠠ}$  *-lá* (cf. Section 4.3.3), forms in  $\text{ᠭᠣᠷᠦᠩᠭᠯᠠ}$  *gorúnglá* can be used with a negative

verb to yield emphatic negative meanings such as ‘none whatsoever’, ‘nobody at all’, etc.

### 6.11 *The factitive marker*

The factitive marker འཇུག་-*bú* (FCT) is the most important nominaliser in Lepcha. The factitive marker འཇུག་-*bú* (FCT) nominalises verbs as well as clauses, and these nominalised constituents serve as adnominal attributes or as subordinated clauses. The meaning of the factitive marker འཇུག་-*bú* has been discussed in Section 5.10 and examples of the factitive marker used with numerals have been given in Section 4.11. When a nominalised verb or clause functions as a nominal head it can be pluralised and take case endings if the result is semantically plausible.

- 283 འཇུག་ལྷོ་འཇུག་ལྷོ་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་  
*go-nu tasó zúk-tho-bú ʔyok shi-hát*  
 1S-ABL yesterday make-EXH-FCT work see-PRF  
 ‘Did you see the work I did yesterday?’
- 284 འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་  
*bun ma-khut-ne-bú ʔádók*  
 carry NEG-be.able-NEG-FCT pain  
 ‘unbearable pain’
- 285 འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་  
*ʔádo-nu pi-tho-bú yuk ʔáre-do gum*  
 2S.OBL-ABL write-EXH-FCT letter this-self be.AST  
 ‘This is the letter you wrote.’
- 286 འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་ འཇུག་  
*dok-bám-bú bík-re kúng sagrá-m-ká sám nyí*  
 be.ill-PRG-FCT cow-DEF tree below-LOC dwell be  
 ‘The cow that’s ill is lying under the tree.’

287    ʒə̃təká (é̃d̃ k̃ɔ̃sɔ̃)   
*ʒotet-bek-ká            yók-bík      dók-bú-sang-nun*   
 that.much-middle-LOC   yak-cow   keep-FCT-PL.H-ABL

ʒágyáp (é̃d̃ɔ̃ ɣá̃)   
*ʒagyáp   yók-bík-pang      ryák-lung*   
 much   yak-cow-PL.NH   follow-GER

pe-zót-ká (lú̃ŋdi k̃ɔ̃)   
*pe-zót-ká            lú̃ngdi-det-bám*   
 grass-graze-LOC   bring-move-PRG

‘In the midst of all this, whilst the herders of the yaks and cows were chasing a lot of yaks and cows, he brought it to the pasture.’







(1) hán-mú-re go ʔáre múng me yang-sá  
 (1) before-NOM-DEF 1S this devil that thus-GEN

ʔáring-re go chet bo-sho (2) káyú  
 language-DEF 1S relate give-NPR (2) 1P

róng-nu-re múng me yang lín-bú-re káyú  
 Lepcha-ABL-DEF devil that thus say-FCT-DEF 1P

muzu-ká thi zók dok káyú mák-re  
 body-LOC reach strike be.ill 1P die-DEF

múng-re zo me li (3) shenlá múng  
 devil-DEF eat that say (3) but devil

lín-bú káyú-sá ʔáring-re rangsâr-do-m  
 say-FCT 1P-GEN language other-self-DAT

lá káyú múng yang li (4) hudo-sá shú  
 also 1P devil thus say (4) 3S.OBL-GEN what

khut nyí-wám-bú hudo-sá hu fát-bá  
 be.able be-PRG-FCT 3S.OBL-GEN 3S lose-when

fát khut-sho-bú shi-bá shi khut-sho-bú  
 lose be.able-NPR-FCT see-when see be.able-NPR-FCT

ʔo-zang khut nyí-wám-bú hudo-m lá káyú  
 that-like be.able be-PRG-FCT 3S.OBL-DAT also 1P

múng yang li-wám-bú (5) hlo-re hlo  
 devil thus say-PRG-FCT (5) mountain-DEF mountain

múng-re    múng    hu    hlo-ká            bám-bú  
 devil-DEF   devil    3S    mountain-LOC    dwell-FCT

(6) hu    múng    go-nu-re    hudo-m-re  
 (6) 3S    devil    be-ABL-DEF    3S.OBL-DAT-DEF

hlomúng            yang    li-wám-bú    (7) hlomúng-re  
 mountain.devil    thus    say-PRG-FCT    (7) mountain.devil-DEF

káyú            róng-sang-dep-re            nyákdo  
 1P            Lepcha-PL.H-with-DEF    very

chóm-nu-bám            (8) mung-sá    sung    ?ayá  
 be.friendly-ABL-PRG    (8) devil-GEN    story    past

ren-sang-nu    dun-lung    yu-tho            nyí    (9) ?acálá  
 sir-PL.H-ABL    tell-GER    descend-EXH    be    (9) moreover

káyú            támsángmú-sang-sá            ?ágít-ká-re  
 1P            Támsángmú-PL.H-GEN    tribe-LOC-DEF

hlomúng-re-dep-ká-re            bri-tho-wung-sá  
 mountain.devil-DEF-with-LOC-DEF    marriage-EXH-PTC-GEN

lá            ?áring    nyí    (10) kasu-sá            cálong  
 also            language    be    (10) 1S.OBL-GEN    just.now

go            nám    khá-sám-sá            kati-fali-tháp-ká  
 1S            year    score-three-with    ten-four-put-LOC

nóng-det    kasu-sá            ?ábo    ?ámú-nu  
 go-move    1S.OBL-GEN    father    mother-ABL

dun-tho-bú    (11) kasu-sá            bojo  
 tell-EXH-FCT    (11) 1S.OBL-GEN    grandfather

bojo-plang-sá      bojo-sá      lá      ʔányú-do-m  
 grandfather-on-GEN    grandfather-GEN    also    aunt-self-DAT

hlomúng-nu      lúgnóng-nu      lúgnóng-nu-re  
 mountain.devil-ABL    take-ABL      take-ABL-DEF

kúngbóng-ká      thóm-bú      (12) ʔámú-sá      ʔálong  
 tree.stump-LOC    keep-FCT      (12) mother-GEN    now

taʔyukup      kátʔáp-bú      lúng-nu      (13) hu-nu  
 daughter      alone-FCT    take-ABL      (13) 3S-ABL

lúgnóng-bá-re      hlomúng-do-m      ʔyok  
 take-when-DEF    mountain.devil-self-DAT    work

khut-bá      lá      hu      zúk-bú-sho      mere (14) myók  
 be.able-when    also    3S    do-FCT-NPR    REP    (14) son.in.law

ʔâ      saróng      kasu-sá      lí      zúk-shang  
 hey      today    1S.OBL-GEN    house    make-INF

nyí-wám      káwodámpú      lú-shang      nyí-wám  
 be-PRG      wooden.pillar    rise-INF      be-PRG

myók-nu      kám      tyól      gát      me      lí  
 son.in.law-ABL    little.bit    friend    must    that    say

gang      hlomúng-nu      thi-nu      sonáp-do-ká  
 if      mountain.devil-ABL    reach-ABL      night-self-LOC

thi-nu      káwodámpú      lú-bi-sho      mere  
 come-ABL    wooden.pillar    rise-give-NPR    REP

(15) myók            ʔâ    saróng   kasu-sá       ló-bú  
 (15) son.in.law   hey   today   1S.OBL-GEN   wage-FCT

nyí-wám   kasu-m       bi       ʔázóm   gát   me   li  
 be-PRG   1S.OBL-DAT   curry   rice   must that say

gang       saka   savíng   shángdri-ká   thík-nu       tungvyeng-ká  
 if       deer   stag   twig-LOC   tie-ABL       door-LOC

thi-nu       thík-tho   bi-sho       (16) me       yang-sá  
 reach-ABL   tie-EXH   give-NPR   (16) that     thus-GEN

sung       káyú-sá   ʔábo       bojo-sang-nu       ʔolom  
 story      1P-GEN   father   grandfather-PL.H-ABL   like.that

dun       (17) shenlá   taʔyukup   ʔálong  
 tell      (17) but     daughter   now

hlomúng-nu       lúngnóng-bú-ká   ʔámú-re       ʔálong  
 mountain.devil-ABL   take-FCT-LOC   mother-DEF   now

taʔyukup   thál-thál               tsum-ká       nóng  
 daughter   up.above-up.above   meet-LOC   go

(18) lyáng-nu-re   hlomúng-nu-re       ʔore-zang  
 (18) place-ABL-DEF   mountain.devil-ABL-DEF   that-like

ma-gát-ne-re       hu-nu       lát-nóng-nu-re  
 NEG-must-NEG-DEF   3S-ABL   return-go-ABL-DEF

taʔyukup-re-do-m       kúngbóng-nu       lúngnóng-nu  
 daughter-DEF-self-DAT   tree.stump-ABL   take-ABL

laháp-ká   tho   (19) laháp-ká   lá   tsum-nóng-nu-re  
 cave-LOC   put   (19) cave-LOC   also   meet-go-ABL-DEF

(20) ?obi-nu      lá      lúgnóng-nu      hu-nu      laháp  
 (20) there-ABL      also      take-ABL      3S-ABL      cave

?ánpur-ká      nóng-tho-nu-re      lang-sá      lá  
 opening-LOC      go-put-ABL-DEF      stone-GEN      also

dáp-pung-sá      sung      (21) ?ân      ?álong      kasu-sá  
 cover-PTC-GEN      story      (21) and      now      1P-GEN

ta?yúkup-re      mák-nón      bá      yang      kajóm  
 daughter-DEF      die-RES      when      thus      finger

tíng      blá-di-nu      hudo-sá      gyó  
 separate      take-come-ABL      3S.OBL-GEN      quarrel

zúk-kung-sá      sung-pang      káyú-sá      thikúng  
 make-PTC-GEN      story-PL.NH      1P-GEN      great.grandfather

?ábo-sang-nu      ?olom      káyú-m      dun      (22) nalón  
 father-PL.H-ABL      like.that      1P-DAT      tell      (22) last

kasu-sá      bojo      ?yáng      bojo-do  
 1S.OBL-GEN      grandfather      real      grandfather-self

hudo      ?ábryáng-re      píngke      (23) hudo-m      lá      nám  
 3S.OBL      name-DEF      Píngke      (23) 3S.OBL-DAT      also      year

kati-kaku-tháp-sá      tatsât-ká      hu      nám      ?otet  
 ten-eight-put-GEN      time-LOC      3S      year      that.much

thikúng-sá      tatsât-ká      hudo-m      lá  
 great.grandfather-GEN      time-LOC      3S.OBL-DAT      also

ʔáre hlomúng-nu lúngnóng-sá sung (24) lavo  
 this mountain.devil-ABL take-GEN story (24) month

kakyók-ká dóng-bám dóng-bám-nu lá  
 seven-LOC search-PRG search-PRG-ABL also

thop-pung-sá sung nyí (25) dóng-lung-bá-re kúng  
 get-PTC-GEN story be (25) search-GER-when-DEF tree

ʔátímmú ʔáre samálkúng ʔátím-sá ʔyók-ká  
 big this toon.tree big-GEN work-LOC

tabá ngán-nyí mere (26) ngán-nyí-bá-re  
 up.there remain-be REP (26) remain-be-when-DEF

hudo-sá dumdem bám-bú dum-pang lá  
 3S.OBL-GEN *dumdem* dwell-FCT clothes-PL.NH also

gun dumprá-pang lá gun hrík-nón-tho mere  
 all *dumprá*-PL.NH also all tear-RES-EXH REP

(27) hudo-m-re tabá shúmú-sang róng-sang  
 (27) 3S.OBL-DAT-DEF up.there man-PL.H Lepcha-PL.H

nóng-nu tabá-do tukpo-sá dám-nu hu-re  
 go-ABL up.there-self rope-with tie-ABL 3S-DEF

tít-sho mere (28) tado numnu-zang-do-m  
 flee-NPR REP (28) 3S.OBL brothers-like-self-DAT

shi bá hudo-m tsám-dám-nu tabá-nu  
 see when 3S.OBL-DAT hold-tie-ABL up.there-ABL

mebá lá glet-nu lí-ká blá-thi-nu  
 there.below also drop-ABL house-LOC take-reach-ABL

báhó-ká háp-nu (29) hudo-m-re  
 storage-LOC shut-ABL (29) 3S.OBL-DAT-DEF

nám-sám-ká kátʔáp hu-re shúmú  
 year-three-LOC alone 3S-DEF man

lá ngún mere hu mi ngâk ma-tho-n  
 also become REP 3S fire see NEG-EXH-NEG

shúmú ngâk ma-tho-n ʔolom  
 man see NEG-EXH-NEG like.that

báhó-ká háp-nu (30) hudo-m-re zo-re  
 storage-LOC shut-ABL (30) 3S.OBL-DAT-DEF food-DEF

cukup ʔángpur-nu tháp-bi ʔâ zo  
 little.bit opening-ABL put-give eh food

zo ʔân nalón cádá lá hryá-nu  
 eat and last rest also pull-ABL

ʔúng shú bi thám câng klánlá  
 water what give animal resembling

(31) hudo-m-re ʔolom nám sám  
 (31) 3S.OBL-DAT-DEF like.that year three

jú-wung-sá-re (32) nám-sam-nu-re hu cádá  
 live-PTC-GEN-DEF (32) year-three-ABL-DEF 3S rest

lá jók-shang káyú shúmú-dep-ká lá  
 also speak-INF 1P man-with-LOC also

chó-nu (33) bojo hu-re ?álong-re  
 unite-ABL (33) grandfather 3S-DEF now-DEF

hu-nu bri mát-nu-re (34) káyú-sá  
 3S-ABL marriage do-ABL-DEF (34) 1P-GEN

?ábo-sang gek-bú yang-sá sung ?olom  
 father-PL.H be.born-FCT thus-GEN story like.that

nyí (35) ?áre hlomúng-sá sung  
 be (35) this mountain.devil-GEN story

(36) hlomúng lín-bú-re sare-zang  
 (36) mountain.devil say-FCT-DEF which-like

múng-sang go sákcíng tyól-nu míkdúm-sang  
 devil-PL.H 1S think friend-ABL foreigner-PL.H

phíl-lyáng talyádâ phíl-nu shúmú-sang  
 be.distant-land sea be.distant-ABL man-PL.H

hlomúng dóng-ká ?ábá-bá thi  
 mountain.devil search-LOC here-when reach

sabá-sabá dóng (37) go sákcíng-bá-re  
 where-where search (37) 1S think-when-DEF

dóng-bú-sang-nu róng-sang-do-m-re lúng-nu  
 search-FCT-PL.H-ABL Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT-DEF take-ABL

nóng go-re tsum khut-sho lyók nóng go  
 go be-DEF meet be.able-NPR IFR go 1S

sákcíng (38) cálong cá dá sherbú-sang-do-m  
 think (38) just.now just sleep Sherpa-PL.H-self-DAT



lúgnóng-nu-re cálong cá dá  
take-ABL-DEF just.now just sleep

tsum ma-khu-n nóng ma-khu-n-bám  
meet NEG-be.able-NEG go NEG-be.able-NEG-PRG

shenlá róng-sang-do-m lúng-ne nóng go-re  
but Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT take-ABL go be-DEF

tsum khut-sho lyók (39) shúmátnu go jen  
meet can-NPR IFR (39) why be other

(40) róng-sang-dep-re róng-sang-nu lín-bú  
(40) Lepcha-PL.H-together-DEF Lepcha-PL.H-ABL say-FCT

ʔáring lá hu thyo-wung-sá sung kám  
language also 3S hear-PTC-GEN story little.bit

cá sung-nu-re káyú ʔolom kám  
just story-ABL-DEF 1P like.that little.bit

yâ (41) káyú róng-sang-do-m-nu ʔolóm  
know (41) 1P Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT-ABL like.that

dóng-ká lúng-nóng go-re thop-sho lyók  
search-LOC take-go be-DEF get-NPR IFR

(42) cálong-nu nám pacák khá-nyet-zang  
(42) just.now-ABL year almost score-two-like

thák-nón (43) kasu lyáng-re sadermi  
be.complete-RES (43) 1S.OBL land-DEF gun

nyí-wám-bú go-re ʔolom punzók-ká saka  
 be-PRG-FCT be-DEF like.that jungle-LOC deer

shú mân dryák-ká nong-bá (44) ʔotshóng-re  
 what meat pursue-LOC go-when (44) that.day-DEF

go ma-nóng kasu-sá tyól-re nóng-bú  
 1S NEG-go 1S.OBL-GEN friend-DEF go-FCT

róng-do (45) hu-nu nóng-nu ʔáre ʔore-zang  
 Lepcha-self (45) 3S-ABL go-ABL this that-like

shúmú shi ʔáre ʔore ʔálong hlomúng pú  
 man see this that now mountain.devil PSB

bá shi-wung pú shenlá pung-nu míl  
 when see-PTC PSB but mound-ABL down

kátʔáp shim-bú hu-nu pung-nu thál  
 alone see-FCT 3S-ABL mound-ABL up.above

hu-nu shi ma-khu-n (46) ʔáre shúmátnu  
 3S-ABL see NEG-be.able-NEG (46) this why

go jen (47) ʔálong langklyók-nu-re  
 be other (47) now big.flat.stone-ABL-DEF

tyóng-hát-nu-re hu-nu pung-nu míl  
 hide-PRF-ABL-DEF 3S-ABL mound-ABL down

shi-bá-re ʔáthóng ʔakâ-pang ʔámel ʔátím  
 see-when-DEF leg hand-PL.NH hair big

(48) lá salom mát-sho gang sakakup-kát  
 (48) also how do-NPR if young.deer-one

hu	tsám-tho-bú	sakakup-ká	hu-nu	tsám-nu
3S	hold-EXH-FCT	young.deer-LOC	3S-ABL	hold-ABL
jú-sang	tho	(49) tho-bá-re	sonáp-fók	
live-PL.H	put	(49) put-when-DEF	night-throughout	
lík-nu	sonáp-fók	lík-nu	(50) huyú-re	
call-ABL	night-throughout	call-ABL	(50) 3P-DEF	
dá-nyí-bá-re	hlomúng-re	tahyut	mát-nu	
sleep-be-when-DEF	mountain.devil-DEF	whistle	do-ABL	
mát-lung	mát-lung	yu	mere	ʔân
do-GER	do-GER	come	REP	and
yuptho-kát-ká-re	huyú	bám-bú-sá		
moment-one-LOC-DEF	3P	dwel-FCT-GEN		
li-ká	lóm-lung	di	mere	(51) di-bá-re
house-LOC	walk-GER	come	REP	(51) come-when-DEF
ʔotet-ká-re	kasu-sá	tyól	sherábú-nu-re	
that.much-LOC-DEF	1S.OBL-GEN	friend	hunter-ABL-DEF	
shi-wám-bú	hudo-sá	ʔothá-bá-re		
see-PRG-FCT	3S.OBL-GEN	then-when-DEF		
ʔábong-ʔákâ-pang	gun	lá	hudo-sá	ma-det-ne
mouth-hand-PL.NH	all	also	3S.OBL-GEN	NEG-move-NEG
hu	ʔolom	ngún-nón-bú	bóng-nón-bú	
3S	like.that	become-RES-FCT	dumb-RES-FCT	

(52) ?ân hu nóng-lung-sá-re hu ?otet  
 (52) and 3S go-GER-GEN-DEF 3S that.much

sáknón-re lát-nu-re (53) hu  
 conciousness-DEF return-ABL-DEF (53) 3S

ro-nu-re ?ân sháng tháp-nu mi ?átim  
 fear-ABL-DEF and firewood put-ABL fire big

ro-nu ?olom ngán-nu (54) muzu sonáp  
 fear-ABL like.that remain-ABL (54) body night

tyât-nu-re (55) lúk?ál-zang-re sakakup-re  
 cut.down-ABL-DEF (55) tomorrow-like-DEF small.deer-DEF

hu-re lyót-nu-re hu-re li-ká  
 3S-DEF free-ABL-DEF 3S-DEF house-LOC

thi-wung-sá sung (56) hu-nu ?áthóng  
 reach-PTC-GEN story (56) 3S-ABL leg

hudo-sá ?ámel muzu dyángpak-pang hu-nu  
 3S.OBL-GEN hair body knee-PL.NH 3S-ABL

gun shím-bú (57) hlomúng-re ?ábá-do  
 all see-FCT (57) mountain.devil-DEF there-self

lá nyí-wám pá yang hu-nu dun-bú (58) ?ân  
 also be-PRG CRT thus 3S-ABL tell-FCT (58) and

nalón kasu-sá nyót pe kafer-lyáng-ká lá  
 last 1S.OBL-GEN field that Kafer-land-LOC also

nyí-wám (59) go ?obá ?áre nyót-do-ká  
 be-PRG (59) 1S there this field-self-LOC

nóng-bá-re go-when-DEF	ʔobá-sá there-GEN	sherabú hunter			
thikúng-kát-nu great.grandfather-one-ABL		li say	ʔábi here	sathang-nu tiger-ABL	bík cow
thá-nu-re chew-ABL-DEF	káyú 1P	sonáp-ká night-LOC	nóng-nu go-ABL		
sathang-do-m tiger-self-DAT	sót-shang kill-INF	róng-bá-re wait-when-DEF			
sonáp-phet-ká night-half-LOC	sukmut wind	di come	mere REP		
(60) tagrikup-re (60) boy-DEF	hu 3S	dá sleep	nyí be	tagrikup-re boy-DEF	
miktráp-nón asleep-RES	mere (61) REP	hu-re (61) 3S-DEF	sadermi gun	bu-nu carry-ABL	
ngán-nyí-bá-re remain-be-when-DEF	sukmut wind	ʔáhyâng cold	di come	mere REP	
(62) sukmut (62) wind	ʔáhyâng cold	di-nu come-ABL	yuptho-kát-ká moment-one-LOC		
kúng tree	ʔáalom like.this	phíl-lung be.distant-GER	phíl-lung be.distant-GER		
di come	mere REP	di come	mere REP	(63) hu-nu-re (63) 3S-ABL-DEF	dróp moment

ʔárum-do-nu      shi-wám-bú      yâmbá      lávo      lóng-ká  
 far-self-ABL      see-PRG-FCT      DSC      moon      bright-LOC

phíl-lúng      di-bá-re      kúng-len      lá      ʔátho  
 be.distant-GER      come-when-DEF      tree-than      also      height

shúmú-sá      ʔápíl-zang      hu-nu-re      ʔolom      shi-nu  
 man-GEN      shadow-like      3S-ABL-DEF      like.that      see-ABL

(64) kúng      phíl-lúng      phíl-lúng      hróng-nu  
 (64) tree      be.distant-GER      be.distant-GER      come.up-ABL

hudo      lem      ma-dóng-ne-sá      ʔápil      kám  
 3S.OBL      direction      NEG-search-NEG-GEN      shadow      little.bit

phíl-lúng      (65) hu      thol      ʔáre      shángcóng-hlo  
 be.distant-GER      (65) 3S      near      this      Shángcóng.mountain

lín-bú      kón      ʔothá      nóng-wúng-sá      sung  
 say-FCT      side      up.there      go-PTC-GEN      story

hu-nu      lá      kasu-m      dun      (66) hu-nu      lá  
 3S-ABL      also      1S.OBL-DAT      tell      (66) 3S-ABL      also

li      thám-câng      ʔáre-re      ʔábá-pang      lá      nyí-wám  
 say      animal      this-DEF      here-PL.NH      also      be-PRG

pá      hu-nu      lá      kasu-m      dun      (67) káyú-re  
 CRT      3S-ABL      also      1S.OBL-DAT      say      (67) 1P-DEF

hu      ʔábá-pang      lá      bám      (68) cálóng      satet  
 3S      here-PL.NH      also      dwell      (68) just.now      how.much

lá      nyí-wám-yang-sá      sák-cíng-re      kasu-sá  
 also      be-PRG-thus-GEN      think-DEF      1S.OBL-GEN

sâm-ká            nyí-wám  
 mind-LOC        be-PRG

(1) First of all, I will tell you what we call a devil. (2) We Lepchas speak of a devil when our bodies have been struck by illness, when we die, we say that a devil has eaten us. (3) But there is also something else that we call a devil. (4) When something has the ability to do something, when something can make itself disappear, what we can see one moment, but can't see the next moment, we also call that a devil. (5) *Hlo* means mountain, *múng* means devil, it lives in the mountains. (6) It is a devil, so we call it devil of the mountains. (7) The Mountain Devil is very friendly to us Lepchas. (8) Our forefathers passed stories of the Mountain Devil on to us. (9) There is even talk about someone in our own clan, the Támsángmú, having once even been married to the Mountain Devil. (10) My parents told me this, I am 74 years old now. (11) My grandfather told me that my great-grandfather's own aunt was taken away by the Mountain Devil and held by it on a tree stump. (12) She was her mother's only daughter and she was taken away. (13) It is said that during the time that she was held captive by the Mountain Devil, it would do any work for them that it could. (14) "Hey, son-in-law, today there is some work to be done in my house. The wooden pillars have to be put up. Give us a hand." If they would say something like that, the Mountain Devil would come at night and put up the wooden pillars. (15) If they would say: "Hey, son-in-law, today a paid worker is coming, I need some rice and curry," it would catch a deer and a stag and tie these to the door. (16) My grandparents told us stories like that. (17) Yet, the Mountain Devil had taken away their daughter. So the mother went all the way up to see her daughter. (18) The Mountain Devil didn't want that. So it took the daughter away from the tree stump and put her in a cave. (19) She also went to the cave to see her daughter. (20) The story goes that it had taken her away from the cave into a tunnel and blocked the opening of the cave with a stone. "Now my daughter is dead," the mother said and took home the severed finger that she found there. (21) My father's forefathers told us these stories about quarrels with the Mountain Devil. (22) Later, my grandfather, my

own grandfather, his name was Pingke. (23) When he was 18 years old, that same year, he was taken away by this Mountain Devil. This is another story. (24) It is said that they searched and searched for seven months before he was found. (25) While they were searching, he is supposed to have been sitting on top of a very big tree, a toon tree. (26) He was sitting up there, and all of his clothes were torn to bits. (27) Some people, some Lepchas, climbed up there to tie a rope around him, but it is said that he got away. (28) But when he saw his own brothers climbing up there in order to tie him down, he climbed out of the tree and they took him home and locked him in the storage room. (29) He was all by himself for three years, then he became a human being again. He didn't see any fire. He didn't see any human being. He just stayed in the locked storage room. (30) He was given bits of food through an opening, he simply ate the food and slept, and, like an animal, he would jump at water or anything else that was given to him. (31) He lived like this for three years. (32) After three years of sleeping, he started speaking again and he was reunited with us. (33) My grandfather then got married. (34) That is the story of how my father and his siblings came to be born. (35) This is the story of the Mountain Devil. (36) I think that what we call the mountail-devil is the kind of devil that our friends, the foreigners from far away places, came looking for. They looked everywhere for it. (37) I think that, those who were looking for it, if they had just gone out together with some Lepchas, they might just have found it, that's what I think. (38) As it is, they only went looking for it with some Sherpas, and they haven't been able to find it, but if they had taken Lepchas along, they would probably have been able to. (39) Why is this so? (40) We know that there are rumours to the effect that it can understand some of the Lepcha language. (41) If they had taken us Lepchas along, they might have found it. (42) Now, this is a story of almost 40 years ago. (43) I owned a gun. So I went out to hunt for deer or any other meat in the forest. (44) That day I did not go, my friend went, he is also a Lepcha. (45) He went and then he saw something like a man, possibly the Mountain Devil, but, well, when he saw it, he could only see the lower half of it. He could not look up higher than that. (46) Why this is so? (47) Well, he hid himself behind a big flat stone, and when he looked down he saw big and hairy legs and hands. (48) And, as if it knew how to, it was holding a small deer, holding it and letting it live. (49) It held the deer and it cried all night long. It was crying all night



long. (50) When the others were all asleep, the Mountain Devil made a whistling sound and walked closer to them and nearly reached the house where everyone was staying. (51) When it came that close, and my friend the hunter saw it, his mouth and hands froze. He became like that, dumbfounded. (52) And just as it was leaving again, my friend came back to his senses. (53) He was afraid and put all the firewood together to make a big fire, he was afraid and stayed right there. (54) That night he held his body close to the ground, like a log. (55) The story is that by the next morning, he freed the small deer and went back home. (56) He had seen everything, the hair on its legs, its body, its knees. (57) He told us that the Mountain Devil was definitely out there. (58) And, later on, it was also hanging around in my fields up there in Kafer. (59) When I went to the fields there, one old hunter from around there said: "There is a tiger here that has eaten the cows. We went out in the night to kill the tiger, and when we were waiting, in the middle of the night there was a sudden wind." (60) "The boy was asleep, he had fallen asleep," he said. (61) He carried a gun and he was just sitting there, when there was a sudden cold wind, he said. (62) Just a moment after the cold wind, something like a tree was moving towards him from far far away, and it was coming closer, he said. (63) Far away in the moonlight, he could see something for a moment, far away but coming closer, something taller than the trees, with a shadow like a man's. (64) The far, far- away tree was coming closer to him, but it didn't look in his direction and went away again, still quite far away. (65) It went up there, near Shángcóng mountain, he told me. (66) He said that such an animal definitely still lives there, he told me. (67) Now we live there as well. (68) I have often thought that it is still there, that is what I think.





sacák-nu      thá-shang      tsám-bá-re      saʔár-nu  
leopard-ABL      chew-INF      hold-when-DEF      goat-ABL

li-bá      go      ʔálong      pát      nóng-nu      vóm  
say-when      1S      now      Tibet      go-ABL      salt

thá-bú      yu-nu      kám      ʔáshúm-sá      thá  
chew-FCT      descend-ABL      little.bit      fat-GEN      chew

le      (4) cálong      tá      go      vóm      thá-ká  
REQ      (4) just.now      up.there      1S      salt      chew-LOC

nóng-det      ma      li-nu      lát-nóng      ma      yâmbá  
go-move      AST      say-ABL      return-go      AST      DSC

(5) lát-nón-nu      lá      yu-bá-re      ʔálong      vóm  
(5) return-RES-ABL      also      descend-when-DEF      now      salt

thá-bú-nu      chúl      lá      lyáng-ká      lá  
lick-FCT-ABL      down.below      also      land-LOC      also

yu-bá-re      lóm-ká      ʔálong      sacák-nu  
descend-when-DEF      road-LOC      now      leopard-ABL

saróng      kasu-m      thá      trát-shang      go      li-nu  
today      1S.OBL-DAT      chew      tear-INF      be      say-ABL

hryóp-nu      lá      yu-bá-re      saryók-re      ʔobá  
cry-ABL      also      descend-when-DEF      jackal-DEF      there

thyo      dǐng      yâmbá      (6) ʔe      ʔabi      kasu-m  
hear      stand      DSC      (6) hey      here      1S.OBL-DAT

blá-nu      le      ʔádo-sá-do-m      zo-sho-bú  
take-ABL      REQ      2S.OBL-GEN-self-DAT      eat-NPR-FCT

múng-re go tyu-bo-sho (7) ?o-nu-re  
 devil-DEF 1S subdue-give-NPR (7) that-ABL-DEF

hudo-m saryók-do-m ?ácáng-ká kábu-nu  
 2S.OBL-DAT jackal-self-DAT back-LOC carry-ABL

sa?ár-dep lá yu-bá-re sacák-re  
 goat-together also descend-when-DEF leopard-DEF

hâng thá yang lóm-ká plâ-di  
 grr chew thus road-LOC come.out-come

(8) plâ-di-bá-re cá thá-shang  
 (8)come.out-come-when-DEF just chew-INF

mát-bá-re (9) hudo thangkú thóng  
 do-when-DEF (9) 3S.OBL tobacco drink

thangkú-sá kol-kát bu-wám yâmbá  
 tobacco-GEN box-one carry-PRG DSC

(10) ?o-re saryók-re-nu ?o-re  
 (10) that-DEF jackal-DEF-ABL that-DEF

shól-tho-bá-nu ?áre sukdam-ká tyâng gun-sá  
 scatter-EXH-when-ABL this world-LOC whole all-GEN

thám câng-sá tsum-re tshóng yâmbá  
 animal-with meet-DEF complete DSC

(11) sacák tsum-re ma-tshóng yâmbá  
 (11) leopard meet-DEF NEG-complete DSC

li bán yet-shang mát-bá-re sacák-re  
 say after descend-INF do-when-DEF leopard-DEF

plâ-nu                    ʔân    punzók-ká      lá      thít-nón  
 come.out-ABL          and    forest-LOC      also   reach-RES

ʔân            saʔár-re      lá      thór      yâmbá  
 and            goat-DEF      also    escape    DSC

(1) This is a story about how we used to go to Tibet to get salt. (2) Just one of the many stories about us Lepchas going to Tibet to get salt. (3) Once a leopard had captured a goat and wanted to eat it, and just when a jackal appeared on the road, the goat said: “I am on my way to Tibet to eat some salt, why don’t you eat me when I come back again, I will be a little fatter.” (4) “I am just on my way up there to eat some salt,” he said, and he resumed his journey. (5) When he was on his way back again, he said: “Today, now that I have eaten some salt, when I get down there again, the leopard will tear me to pieces and eat me,” and he had just started crying when he noticed that the jackal was standing in front of him and had heard what he said. (6) “Hey, let me take on the devil that wants to eat you, I will defeat him for you,” he said. (7) Then the jackal carried the goat on his back and they started climbing down, when, grrr, with a roaring sound, the leopard appeared on the road. (8) He came out of nowhere and stood there, his mouth watering. (9) The jackal carried a pack of smoking tobacco. (10) The jackal opened the pack, threw the tobacco around and said: “All the animals of the whole wide world end up like this.” (11) “You could be next,” and after he said this, he started to move closer to the leopard. The leopard rose and ran into the forest, and the goat escaped as well.







West.Bengal-sá	president	ngún-bú-sá		
West.Bengal-GEN	president	become-FCT-GEN		
tândók-nu	go-re	ʔáre	róng-sá	nahán
behalf-ABL	be-DEF	this	Lepcha-GEN	before
nahán-sá	ʔáring-pang-sá	ʔáring	kám	
before-GEN	language-PL.NH-GEN	language	little.bit	
nyen-shang	mát-nu	(3) ren-do-m	go	pano
listen-INF	do-ABL	(3) sir-self-DAT	1S	king
gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá	ʔáring	kát-nyet	vyet-shang	
Gyebú-great-GEN	language	one-two	ask-INF	
mát-nu	(4) saróng	ʔábi	thi	ngán
do-ABL	(4) today	here	reach	remain
				sir
d.t.támsáng	máyel.málúk-lyáng	nye-lyáng	lín-bú-re	
D.T.Támsáng	Máyel.Málúk-land	holy-land	say-FCT-DEF	
ʔáre-sá	tândók-re	shú	ngún	pú
this-GEN	behalf-DEF	what	become	PSB
(5) máyel.málúk-lyáng	lín-bú-re	renjóng-lyáng		
(5) Máyel.Málúk-land	say-FCT-DEF	Sikkim-land		
ʔílám-lyáng	kálenpúng-lyáng	dárjúlyáng-lyáng	gun-lá	
Ilám-land	Kalimpong-land	Darjeeling-land	all-also	
chó-nu-re	hudo-m-re	máyel.málúk-lyáng		
unite-ABL-DEF	3S.OBL-DAT-DEF	Máyel.Málúk-land		
yang	lín-bám-bú	(6) mútâncí	róngkup	rum-kup
thus	say-PRG-FCT	(6) Mútâncí	Lepcha	god-child

lín-bú-re      ʔáre-sá      tândók-re      shú      ngún      pú  
say-FCT-DEF    this-GEN      behalf-DEF    what    become    PSB

(7) mútâncí      róngkup-do-m-re      rum-kup      yang  
(7) Mútâncí      Lepcha-self-DAT-DEF      god-child      thus

lá      li-bám-bú      ʔore      róng      tyâng-nu-re  
also      say-PRG-FCT      that      Lepcha      whole-ABL-DEF

róng-re      ʔánáng      ʔátsóng      go-nu      rum-kup  
Lepcha-DEF      straight      pure      be-ABL      god-child

yang      hudo-m      li-bám-bú      (8) ʔyá  
thus      3S.OBL-DAT      say-PRG-FCT      (8) past

nám-ká-re      cálong-sá      dárjílíng-lyáng-do-m-re  
year-LOC-DEF      just.now-GEN      Darjeeling-land-self-DAT-DEF

dárjúlyáng      yang      li-wám      ʔáre-re      dárjúlyáng  
Dárjúlyáng      thus      say-PRG      this-DEF      Dárjúlyáng

lín-bú-re      ʔáre-sá      tóm-re      shú      ngún      pú  
say-FCT-DEF      this-DEF      speech-DEF      what    become    PSB

(9) dárjúlyáng      lín-bú-re      máyel.lyáng  
(9) Dárjúlyáng      say-FCT-DEF      Máyel.Lyáng

nye-máyel.lyáng      ʔáre-sá      lyáng-ká      gun-len  
holy-Máyel.Lyáng      this-GEN      land-LOC      all-than

zúk-bú      dá-nyí-bú      lyáng      go-nu-re  
make-FCT      rest-be-FCT      land      be-ABL-DEF

hudo-m-re      dárjúlyáng      lín-bú  
3S.OBL-DAT.DEF      Darjúlyáng      say-FCT

(10) cálóng-sá            kálenpúng-do-m-re            ʔyá-re  
 (10) just.now-GEN      Kálenpúng-self-DAT-DEF    past-DEF

kálenpúng    yang            li-wám-bá-re            ʔo-sá  
 Kálenpúng    thus            say-PRG-when-DEF      that-GEN

tândók-re        shú            ngún        pú            (11) kálenpúng  
 behalf-DEF      what        become    PSB        (11) Kálenpúng

lín-bú-re        ʔábryáng        thóm-bú-re            cálóng  
 say-FCT-DEF    name            put-FCT-DEF            just.now

nalón        go-sho        (12) hán-re            kálenpúng    lá  
 last        be-NPR      (12) before-DEF      Kálenpúng    also

máyel.málúk.lyáng-do        go        (13) kálenpúng  
 Máyel.Málúk.Lyáng-self      be        (13) Kálenpúng

ʔábryáng-re        gyebú-ʔáchúk-nu        pano    gyebú-ʔáchúk-nu  
 name-DEF        Gyebú-great-ABL        king    Gyebú-great-ABL

thóm-bú        (14) hu-nu-re            ʔábi    ʔáre  
 put-FCT        (14) 3S-ABL-DEF        here    this

kálenpúng-lyáng-re        purtám-sá        halá            lyáng  
 Kalimpong-land-DEF      flat.land-GEN    cleared        land

ʔáre-re        gum        (15) ʔáre-re        purtám        go-nu-re  
 this-DEF      be.AST    (15) this-DEF      flat.land      be-ABL-DEF

róng-sang-do-m            lá        zúk-shang        tândók-ká  
 Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT      also    make-INF        behalf-LOC

ʔábi-re ká len lá zúm-sá tândók-ká  
 this-DEF P1 gather also meet-GEN behalf-DEF

kálenpúng yang ʔábryáng bi-tho-bú  
 Kálenpúng thus name give-EXH-FCT

(16) pano gyebú-ʔáchúk-re róng-sang-sá pano  
 (16) king Gyebú-great-DEF Lepcha-PL.H-DEF king

gyebú-ʔáchúk-re hu-sá ʔábo-sá ʔábryáng-re  
 Gyebú-great-DEF 3S-GEN father-GEN name-DEF

pano ʔáprázáp hu-sá tagrikup-sá yang li-bám  
 king ʔÁprázáp 3S-GEN boy-GEN thus say-PRG

cho-ká lá ʔolom-do pi-tho (17) ʔáre  
 book-LOC also like.that-self write-EXH (17) this

pano gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá ʔábryáng-sá tândók-re shú  
 king Gyebú-great-GEN name-GEN behalf-DEF what

pú (18) gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá ʔábo-re ʔáprázáp-re  
 PSB (18) Gyebú-great-GEN father-DEF ʔÁprázáp-DEF

thâng go-sho (19) ʔámú ʔáshekmít ʔábo  
 true be-NPR (19) mother ʔÁshekmít father

ʔáprázáp-re thâng go-sho (20) ʔámú  
 ʔÁprázáp-DEF true be-NPR (20) mother

ʔáshekmít ʔábo ʔáprázáp gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá ʔábo  
 ʔÁshekmít father ʔÁprázáp Gyebú-great-GEN father

ʔámú hudo-sá ʔágyek lyáng-re lóngshól-lyáng-ká  
 mother 3S.OBL-GEN birth land-DEF Lóngshól-land-LOC

go-sho be-NPR	(21) gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá (21) Gyebú-great-GEN	lyáng-re land-DEF		
gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá Gyebú-great-GEN	ʔábo-sá father-GEN	dri-re fort-DEF	lóngshól-lyáng Lóngshól-land	
gum be.AST	(22) gyebú-ʔáchúk-re (22) Gyebú-great-DEF	tagrikup boy	hu 3S	
kátʔáp-bú alone-FCT	(23) hudo-sá (23) 3S.OBL-GEN	ʔágyek-re birth-DEF	káyú 1P	róng Lepcha
ʔáfrón-ká-re number-LOC-DEF	món pig	nám year	már.lavo twelfth.month	tshâ date
kati.tarók.tháp sixteen	go-sho be-NPR	(24) ʔyá nám-ká (24) past year-LOC		
gyebú-ʔáchúk Gyebú-great	pano-nu-re king-ABL-DEF	ʔáre this		
kálenpúng-sá Kálenpúng-GEN	ʔápun near	pun-re near-DEF	ʔágyáp much	má secret
dri-pang fort-PL.NH	zúk-tho make-EXH	(25) li (25) house	ʔân and	dri-pang-re fort-PL.NH-DEF
cálong-re just.now-DEF	sabá where	pú PSB	sabá where	mát lá do also
zúk-thóm make-EXH	pú PSB	ʔábryáng-re name-DEF	shú what	pú (26) káyú PSB (26) 1P
róng-sang-do-m-re Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT-DEF		tá up.there		pâtmú Tibetan

ʔárát-sang-nu káyú-m ma-ná-n  
Tibet-PL.H-ABL 1P-DAT NEG-take-NEG

(27) tá-ká yang pro ʔárát-sang-nu  
(27) up.there-LOC thus Bhutan Tibet-PL.H-ABL

ma-ná-n (28) tá-ká yang hu-nu-re  
NEG-take-NEG (28) up.there-LOC thus 3S-ABL-DEF

fyenkyóp-shang tândók-ká ʔátháng ʔálgará-sá  
fight-INF behalf-LOC this.up.there Álgará-GEN

ʔápín dâmsáng dri chó gúrúbáthán-sá  
this.on.the.other.side Dâmsáng fort join Gorubathan-GEN

ʔátán dálíng dri ʔân ʔáfi róngnyú  
short Dálíng fort and here Rongnyú

pun-ká rangsâr lín-bú zúk-tho  
near-LOC other say-FCT make-EXH

dri (29) dri-pang ʔácálá káyú nóng-nu ngâk  
fort (29) fort-PL.NH still 1P go-ABL look

gang shi pú ʔo dá-nyí-bú ʔá-sá  
if see PSB that rest-be-FCT that-GEN

lang-sang-re (30) cálóng sǒngtet tá  
stone-PL.H-DEF (30) just.now up.till up.there

nyí dá gun-len ʔázúk ʔátím dri-re  
be rest all-than pretty big fort-DEF

dámsáng dri-sá dálíng dri (31) ?áre cálóng  
 Dámsáng fort-and Dálíng fort (31) this just.now

lá káyú-nu nóng-nu ?á gyebú-?áchúk-nu  
 also 1P-ABL go-ABL there Gyebú-great-ABL

zúk-tho-bú lang-pang káyú shím-tho  
 make-EXH-FCT stone-PL.NH 1P see-EXH

(32) pano gyebú-?áchúk-do-m kálenpúng-ká ?ore  
 (32) king Gyebú-great-self-DAT Kálenpúng-LOC that

?áthú renjóng-sá pano-nu-re nahán  
 this.up.over.there Sikkim-GEN king-ABL-DEF before

chádóng fyenkyóp me li ?â fyenkyóp-bá-re  
 battle fight that say and fight-when-DEF

shú ngún pú (33) pâtmú pano pâtmú-sang-nu  
 what become PSB (33)Tibetan king Tibetan-PL.H-ABL

renjóng-lyáng-ká thi-nu-re róng-sang-do-m  
 Sikkim-land-LOC reach-ABL-DEF Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT

gun vík zúk-nu-re  
 all soldier make-ABL-DEF

(34) othú-nu-re ?áre kálenpúng-lyáng-ká  
 (34) that.up.over.there-ABL-DEF this Kálenpúng-land-LOC

fyenkyóp-bá-re gyebú-?áchúk-nu dryák-nu-re  
 fight-when-DEF Gyebú-great-ABL chase-ABL-DEF

tábá pákyong renjóng-lyáng-sá  
 up.there Pákyong Sikkim-land-GEN

pakyong-lyáng-ká nóng-nu ?obá sóngtet  
 Pakyong-land-LOC go-ABL there up.till

go-nu-re (35) ?obá pákyóng dri yang  
 be-ABL-DEF (35) there Pakyóng fort thus

lá zúk-tho-nyi (36) ?ân nalón-re  
 also make-EXH-be (36) and last-DEF

páro.penlóp páro-sá pano páro zóng pe  
 Paro.Pönlo Paro-GEN king Paro Dzong there

li-wám-bú-nu-re lá ladá kálenpúng-ká  
 say-PRG-FCT-ABL-DEF also also Kálenpúng-LOC

chádóng kyón me li gyebú-?áchúk-dep chádóng  
 battle suffer that say Gyebú-great-with battle

tsum me li ?ân huyú-dep-ká-re shú  
 meet that say and 3P-with-LOC-DEF what

ngún pú (37) pro-sá pano-nu-re  
 become PSB (37) Bhutan-GEN king-ABL-DEF

gyebú-?áchúk-dep-ká fyenkyóp-shang hudo-sá  
 Gyebú-great-with-LOC fight-INF 3S.OBL-GEN

vik-sang klóng ?ábá dálíng dri-ká  
 soldier-PL.H send there Dálíng fort-LOC

(38) di-nu-re huyú-sá fyen-re ?obi  
 (38) come-ABL-DEF 3P-GEN fight-DEF there

ngún pá (39) ?ochú di-nu-re  
 become CRT (39) that.down.there come-ABL-DEF



hu-nu-re      fyen      ma-kyóp-nu  
 3S-ABL-DEF    fight      NEG-fight-ABL

gyebú-?áchúk-do-m-re      yón-nu      (40) ?álong  
 Gyebú-great-self-DAT-DEF    visit-ABL    (40) now

káyú-re      ?ádo-sá      ?ámín      bám-sho      cí  
 1P-DEF      2S.GEN      under      dwell-NPR    cí

?ázom. ?áthen      bi-nu-re      lúng      shíng-nu-re  
 foodstuff      give-ABL-DEF      leisure      drunk-ABL-DEF

hudo-m      sót-nu-re      (41) kúzú-bóng-ká  
 3S.OBL-DAT    kill-ABL-DEF      (41) nettle-base-LOC

vá-vú      (42) kúzú-bóng-ká      vá-tho-bá-re  
 throw-tangle    (42) nettle-base-LOC    throw-EXH-when-DEF

món      zo      dóng-bú-nu-re      gyebú-?áchúk  
 medicine    eat      search-FCT-ABL-DEF    Gyebú-great

chúk      chúk      gyebú-?áchúk      chúk      chúk      li-nu  
 chúk      chúk      Gyebú-great      chúk      chúk      say-ABL

(43) gyebú-?áchúk-re      lá      shopdá-bá      hu-nu-re  
 (43) Gyebú-great-DEF    also    rejoin??-when      3S-ABL-DEF

pano-ká      lát-nóng      li-nu-re      (44) vik-sang-nu  
 king-LOC    return-go    say-ABL-DEF      (44) soldier-PL.H-ABL

thi-nu      cádi      gyebú-?áchúk-do-m      lá  
 reach-ABL    approach    Gyebú-great-self-DAT    also

sót shen hu-re ma-mák-ne-shum-bú  
kill but 3S-DEF NEG-die-NEG-NPR-FCT

(45) hudo-sá gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá-do payúk-nu  
(45) 3S.OBL-GEN Gyebú-great-GEN-self sword-ABL

ma-tyât-nu sangtyet hu  
NEG-cut.down-NEG up.till 3S

ma-mák-nu-shum-bú ngún-nu-re (46) álóng  
NEG-die-NEG-NPR-FCT become-ABL-DEF (46) now

gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá-do payúk-nu-do-nu  
Gyebú-great-GEN-self sword-ABL-self-ABL

hudo-sá ʔáthyák tíng-bá-re hudo-sá  
3S.OBL-GEN head divide-when-DEF 3S.OBL-GEN

ʔáthyák-re ʔáchú shel úngkyóng-ká nóng-nu  
head-DEF this.down.there wet river-LOC go-ABL

ván nóng ʔáthyák ma-thop-nu-bú-sá sung  
enter go head NEG-get-ABL-FCT-GEN story

(47) cálóng gun-lá-nu yâ-wám (48) ʔân pro  
(47) just.now all-also-ABL know-PRG (48) and Bhutan

pano-sang-re ʔábá kálenpúng-ká lá  
king-PL.H-DEF here Kálenpúng-LOC also

bám pú kríl lávúng-nón pú (49) nálón-re pro  
dwell PSB dirty turn.back-RES PSB (49) last-DEF Bhutan

pano-nu-re gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá ʔáthyák tíng  
king-ABL-DEF Gyebú-great-GEN head divide

blá-dí yang li-tho shenlá ʔáthyák-re  
take-come thus say-EXH but head-DEF

ʔochú úngkyóng-ká nóng-nu bán  
that.down.there river-LOC go-ABL after

nóng-sá-re ma-thop-nu-re (50) ʔore vík-sang  
go-GEN-DEF NEG-get-ABL-DEF (50) that soldier-PL.H

chádóng-ká dít-bú vik-sang huyú-do-nu  
battle-LOC come-FCT soldier-PL.H 3P-self-ABL

huyú-do lá sót-nu huyú-do-nu huyú-do  
3P-self also kill-ABL 3P-self-ABL 3P-self

mák-nu-re mebá lá ma-khu-n-sá  
die-ABL-DEF there.below also NEG-be.able-NEG-GEN

sung ʔolom nyí  
story like.that be

(1) “Sir D.T. Támsáng used to be chairman of the local assembly of the Lepcha village Bám *basti* and he was also the *mandal* of the village.” (2) Sir, at the moment you are president of the Lepcha Association of West Bengal, on this behalf I have invited you here to ask you a few questions about some legendary stories.” (3) “Sir, I would like to ask you some questions about the story about king Gyebú ʔÁchúk, the great king Gyebú.” (4) Whilst we are here, sir D.T. Támsáng, may I ask what is the meaning of the expression *Máyel Málúk Lyáng?* What is meant by this so-called ‘holy’ land?” (5) “What we call the land of *Máyel Málúk* is what we get when we combine all of the territory of Sikkim, Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Ilám. That is what we call the hidden paradise, *Máyel Málúk Lyáng.*” (6) “What does the expression *Mútâncí Róngkup Rumkup* mean?” (7) “The *Mútâncí Róngkup* are also called children of god or *Rumkup*, because all Lepcha

people are truly honest.” (8) “What we now know as Darjeeling was called *Darjúlyáng* in the past. What does that mean, *Darjúlyáng*?” (9) “*Dárjúlyáng* is the place where it is said that the gods rested after they had created the holy land of Máyel. They called it *Dárjúlyáng*, ‘Abode of Gods’.” (10) “What we now call *Kálenpúng* was also called *Kálenpúng* in the past. What is the meaning of this name?” (11) “The name *Kálenpúng* was only given recently. (12) In the old days *Kálenpúng* was just a part of the land of Máyel Málúk. (13) The name *Kálenpúng* was given by the great king Gyebé. (14) The area of *Kálenpúng* was flat and open. (15) Because of it being a flat area, the Lepcha people decided this was a place where we could all meet, and therefore they gave this place the name *Kálenpúng*, *ká* meaning ‘we’, *len* meaning ‘gather’ and *púng* referring to ‘place’. (16) The great king Gyebé, king Gyebé ʔÁchúk of the Lepcha people, his father’s name was king ʔÁprázáp, he is said to be his son, it is written in the old books.” (17) “What is the meaning of the name king Gyebé ʔÁchúk?” (18) “It is true that the king Gyebé ʔÁchúk’s father’s name was ʔÁprázáp. (19) “His mother’s name was ʔÁshekmít, his father’s name was ʔÁprázáp, this is the truth. (20) So, his mother was ʔÁshekmít and his father was ʔÁprázáp. The parents of the great Gyebé were born in a place called Longshol. (21) Gyebé ʔÁchúk’s father’s castle was in Longshol. (22) Gyebé ʔÁchúk was an only child. (23) According to the Lepcha calendar, he was born on the sixteenth day of the twelfth month in the year of the pig.” (24) “A long time ago, king Gyebé ʔÁchúk built many secret castles over here in the *Kálenpúng* area.” (25) “Those houses and castles, where were they built and what are they called?” (26) “We Lepcha’s did not take on those Tibetans from up there. (27) We did not take on those Bhutanese up there either. (28) In order to protect Álgará here from an attack, Gyebé ʔÁchúk is said to have built Dámsáng fort, near Gorubathan we have the Dálíng fort and near the Róngnyú river over here there is another fort. (29) If we go to the forts and look around, we can see that the ruins are still there. (30) Of all that remains, the most beautiful and largest forts are Dámsáng fort and Dálíng fort. (31) If we go all the way up there now, we can still see the stones that the great Gyebé put there.” (32) “In Kalimpong, king Gyebé ʔÁchúk is said to have fought a battle with the king from Sikkim, what was that about?” (33) “The Tibetan king and the Tibetans came to Sikkim and all the Lepcha people were made soldiers. (34) When they came from

all the way over there to fight here in Kalimpong, Gyebú ʔÁchúk chased them right back to Pakyóng in Sikkim. (35) He also built Pakyóng fort up there.” (36) “Later, the Paro Pönlo or ruler of Paro Dzong also said that he would challenge king Gyebú ʔÁchúk in Kalimpong to fight a battle, what happened between them?” (37) “In order to fight Gyebú ʔÁchúk, the Bhutanese king sent his soldiers up to Dáling fort. (38) When they arrived there, there was a battle there. (39) When they came down there, at first they didn’t fight and Gyebú ʔÁchúk visited them. (40) They claimed that they would live under his rule and they gave him all sorts of food and drink. When they were having a good time, when they were getting drunk, they killed him. (41) They threw him into the nettle bushes. (42) When they had thrown him into the nettle bushes, someone came over there looking for herbs, and the great Gyebú was saying “Gyebú ʔÁchúk chúk chúk, Gyebú ʔÁchúk chúk chúk.” (43) Gyebú ʔÁchúk’s body had joined back together and they went back to the king and said that Gyebú ʔÁchúk had returned. (44) The soldiers went back to kill Gyebú ʔÁchúk again, but he was immortal. (45) Even when their swords were worn down from fighting, Gyebú ʔÁchúk still could not be killed. (46) Now the story is that when they cut Gyebú ʔÁchúk with his own sword, his head fell into the river below and they couldn’t find his head anymore. (47) Everybody knows this now.” (48) “And the king of Bhutan and his men, did they stay here in Kalimpong or did they go back home?” (49) “After they killed Gyebú ʔÁchúk, the king of Bhutan said: “Now you have to bring me the severed head of Gyebú ʔÁchúk”, but they couldn’t find the head when they went down to the river. (50) Because of this, those soldiers fought the other soldiers and they killed each other and everybody died there, this is the story.”





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(1) khámrimó khámri ʔálem-do di le ʔíng (2) khámri  
(1) khámrimó khámri hither-self come REQ child (2) khámri

ʔánóm khámrimó ʔánóm (3) saróng káyú kyóng-sá  
elder.sister khámrimó elder.sister (3) today 1P village-GEN

ʔáring kát-nyet li-ká le ʔíng-do-m  
language one-two say-LOC REQ child-self-DAT

tsum-bá (4) shú ʔáring línshet nyí gó ʔánóm  
meet-when (4) what language speech be Q elder.sister

(5) káyú-sá kyóng-sá shezúm-re salom  
(5) 1P-GEN village-GEN association-DEF how

ngún-det-bám (6) káyú-sá kyóng shezúm  
become-move-PRG (6) 1P-GEN village association

salom mát-shang ʔánum-sang-do tsum ma-tho-n  
how do-INF elder.brother-PL.H-self meet NEG-EXH-NEG

(7) tsum ma-gát ʔákâ ʔálong káyú-do zúk-ká  
(7) meet NEG-must hand now 1P-self make-LOC

(8) ʔolom gangne ʔálong ʔánóm-do yâ ma  
(8) like.that if now elder.sister-self know AST

(9) trúť mát-ká le káyú suknyím-kát káyú  
(9) advise do-LOC REQ 1P day-one 1P

kyóng-sá gun-re-m lík-bán trúť mát-ká  
village-GEN all-DEF-DAT call-after advise do-LOC



- (10) ngún      ʔánóm      ʔolom      gangne      (11) sathá  
 (10) become    elder.sister    like.that    if            (11) when
- lík-shang    (12) tshâ-kati-ká      lík      gát-sho      lyók  
 call-INF      (12) date-ten-LOC      call      must-NPR      IFR
- (13) go      lúkhróng-re      lúng-sho      lyók-ʔám  
 (13) 1S      morning-DEF      be.free-NPR      IFR-PRG
- (14) tshâ-kati-ká-do      tho-ká      (15) ngún  
 (14) date-ten-LOC-self      put-LOC      (15) become
- (16) káyú      róngkup-sang-re-m      salom      mát-shang  
 (16) 1P      Lepcha-PL.H-DEF-DAT      how      do-INF
- (17) go      lá      shúlá      lín      ma-khu-n      ma-yâ-n  
 (17) 1S      also      nothing      say      NEG-be.able-NEG      NEG-know-NEG
- ʔánóm      (18) thál      lúngtár-shang-sá      sung-kát-sá  
 elder.sister      (18) up.above      develop-INF-GEN      story-one-GEN
- lá      ma-nyí-n      (19) linko-do      ʔánóm      ʔánóm  
 also      NEG-be-NEG      (19) talk-self      elder.sister      elder.sister
- róngkup-sá      vi-do      ma-nyí-n      lyók  
 Lepcha-GEN      blood-self      NEG-be-NEG      IFR
- (20) vi      shúmátne      ma-nyí-n      káyú      ryótkup  
 (20) blood      why      NEG-be-NEG      1P      orphan
- ma-go-n      káyú-sá      pano nyí      (21) pano-sá  
 NEG-be-NEG      1P-GEN      king be      (21) king-GEN
- ʔábryáng-re      shú      ngún      pú      kasu-m-nu  
 name-DEF      what      become      PSB      1S.OBL-DAT-ABL

ʔore ma-yâ-n (22) hó gebú.ʔáchúk  
 that NEG-know-NEG (22) 2S Gebú.ʔÁchúk

thyák ma-tho-ne (23) go thyák  
 recognise NEG-EXH-NEG (23) 1S recognise

ma-tho-n-ʔám (24) gebú.ʔáchúk-sá ʔábo-sá  
 NEG-EXH-NEG-PRG (24) Gebú.ʔÁchúk-GEN father-GEN

ʔábryáng ʔáprázáp ʔámú-sá ʔáshekmít  
 name ʔÁprázáp mother-GEN ʔÁshekmít

ʔáshekmít-sá tagrikup-re gebú.ʔáchúk go ma  
 ʔÁshekmít-GEN boy-DEF Gebú.ʔÁchúk be AST

(25) ʔe (26) hó-nu dálíng dri kor-tho  
 (25) ah (26) 2S-ABL Dálíng fort wander-EXH

(27) go kor ma-tho-n ʔánóm  
 (27) 1S wander NEG-EXH-NEG elder.sister

(28) dámsáng dri kor-tho (29) go sabálá  
 (28) Dámsáng fort wander-EXH (29) 1S everywhere

nóng ma-tho-n ʔácá (30) káyú-do  
 go NEG-EXH-NEG still (30) 1P-self

dabling-kyóng-ká-lá gebú.ʔáchúk-sá dri nyí-ʔám  
 Dabling-village-LOC-also Gebú.ʔÁchúk-GEN fort be-PRG

(31) sabá-do (32) sagór-ká ʔún-thík-lyáng  
 (31) where-self (32) rock-LOC horse-tie-place

(33) ʔánóm hó kor hát-tho (34) go kor  
 (33) elder.sister 2S wander lose-EXH (34) 1S wander

(35) go nǒng ma-tho-n            ʔobála            (36) kám  
 (35) 1S go NEG-EXH-NEG everywhere (36) little.bit

kor-shang lá mák le hó kyóng-ká  
 wander-INF also do REQ 2S village-LOC

(37) ʔálong go kor-sho            ʔánóm  
 (37) now 1S wander-NPR elder.sister

(38) kyóng-kyóng-ká shú ngún-bám kám ngâk  
 (38) village-village-LOC what become-PRG little.bit see

gát káyú (39) ʔálong-re-nu go kor-sho  
 must 1P (39) now-DEF-ABL 1S wander-NPR

ʔánóm (40) róngkup-sang-sá trút-re gun cá  
 elder.sister (40) Lepcha-PL.H-GEN advise-DEF all just

katʔáp ngún gát (41) káflik-nu zúk-shang káflik-nu  
 alone become must (41) some-ABL make-INF some-ABL

ma-zúk-shang ʔolom sákcing ma-ngún kát-nu  
 NEG-make-INF like.that think NEG-become one-ABL

ʔáthong hrúp gang gun-nu hrúp gát  
 leg pick.up if all-ABL pick.up must

(42) ʔánóm go ma-khu-n-sho lyók-ʔám  
 (42) elder.sister 1S NEG-be.able-NEG-NPR IFR-PRG

(43) hó ma-khu-n li-nu ma-ngún  
 (43) 2S NEG-be.able-NEG say-ABL NEG-become

(44) hó róng yángne lúmкуп (45) go róng go  
 (44) 2S Lepcha or Nepali (45) 1S Lepcha be

róngкуп-do (46) ʔádo-sá kúmíng shú  
 Lepcha-self (46) 2S-GEN appellation what

(47) kasu-sá ʔáʔitámít róngкуп  
 (47) 1S.OBL-GEN ʔÁʔitámít Lepcha

(48) hó róngкуп shúmatne pi róngкуп ma-go-n gang  
 (48) 2S Lepcha why write Lepcha NEG-be-NEG if

(49) ʔánóm-sá kúmíng shú gó  
 (49) elder.sister-GEN appellation what Q

(50) kasu-sá ʔóngmít róngкуп  
 (50) 1S.OBL-GEN ʔÓngmít Lepcha

(51) ʔánóm-sá kúmíng go saróng-do thyo-ma  
 (51) elder.sister-GEN appellation 1S today-self hear-AST

(52) hó-nu kasu-sá kúmíng saróng-do yâm-bú  
 (52) 2S-ABL 1S.OBL-GEN appellation today-self know-FCT

hó ʔácálá gek gát róng máyel sukdam-ká  
 2S still be.born must Lepcha Máyel world-LOC

(53) káyú ʔálong ʔáлом bám-nu ma-ngún  
 (53) 1P now like.that reside-ABL NEG-become

(54) kyóng-ká ngâk gát róngкуп-sang sabá-sabá  
 (54) village-LOC look must Lepcha-PL.H where-where

tsóm-ʔám sabá brám-ʔám (55) ʔálong hó go  
 limit-PRG where stray-PRG (55) now 2S 1S

ma-yâ-n            li-nu            ma-lí-n            (56) káyú  
 NEG-know-NEG    say-ABL        NEG-say-NEG    (56) 1P

kor-nu            lóm-nu            róngkup-sá        sáktsum        tyâng-sá  
 wander-ABL       walk-ABL        Lepcha-GEN       thought        whole-GEN

thyák-ká            ?ámú-sá            dúnggít-lá        tsum-ká  
 recognise-LOC     mother-GEN     tradition-also    meet-LOC

?ábryáng        ma-kyól-ne-ká            (57) káyú            róngkup-re  
 name            NEG-blend-NEG-LOC    (57) 1P            Lepcha-DEF

sabá-nu            ?ít            (58) cú-nu            (59) hó  
 where-ABL        create        (58) mountain.peak-ABL    (59) 2S

thyák-?ám        (60) ?ore        go            ?ámú-bo-nu  
 recognise-PRG    (60) that        1S            mother-father-ABL

kám-kám            dun-?ám-tho-nu        li-ma  
 little.bit-little.bit    tell-PRG-EXH-ABL    say-AST

(61) káyú        róngkup-sá        tân-ká        álom        zúk-nu  
 (61) 1P        Lepcha-GEN        behalf-LOC    like.this    make-ABL

?áryúm        ngún-nu            (62) káyú        tyâng        gun        kyóng-ká  
 good        become-ABL        (62) 1P        whole        all        village-LOC

kor-ká            (63) ngún        ?ánóm        kor-ká        ?álong  
 wander-LOC        (63) become     elder.sister    wander-LOC    now

(1) “Khámrimó, khámri, please come over here for a minute, sister.”  
 (2) “Khámri, sister, khámrimó, sister.” (3) “Since we’re here now,  
 let’s talk about our village for a bit.” (4) “What’s on your mind, sis-  
 ter?” (5) “How is our village association coming along? (6) “How is  
 our village association coming along? We’ve still not met up with our

brothers.” (7) “We don’t have to get together with them, let’s arrange things ourselves.” (8) “Well, we could, I suppose, you do know about such things.” (9) “Let’s set up a meeting and get the whole village together to discuss things.” (10) “All right sister, let’s do that.” (11) “When shall we have the meeting?” (12) “We should probably have it on the tenth.” (13) “I will be free that morning.” (14) “Let’s set it for the tenth then.” (15) “All right.” (16) “What can we do for our Lepcha people?” (17) “I really couldn’t say, sister, I don’t know.” (18) “I don’t really know any success stories.” (19) “That’s right sister, it’s almost as if there is no Lepcha spirit anymore.” (20) “Why do you put it like that? It’s not as if we are orphans, after all we have a king.” (21) “And what is the name of this king? I don’t know it.” (22) “Do you not know king Gebú ṽÁchúk?” (23) “I don’t.” (24) “Gebú ṽÁchúk’s father’s name is ṽAprázáp, his mother’s name is ṽÁshekmít, so ṽÁshekmít’s son is Gebú ṽÁchúk.” (25) “I see.” (26) “Have you been to Dálíng fort?” (27) “I haven’t been there, sister.” (28) “Have you been to Dámsáng fort?” (28) “I’ve not been anywhere yet.” (30) “Here in our village, in Dabling, there is also a fort of Gebú ṽÁchúk’s.” (31) “But where?” (32) “By the rocks, where they tie up the horses.” (33) “Have you been there, sister?” (34) “I have.” (35) “I have not been to any of these places.” (36) “You should walk around a bit more in our village.” (37) “Let’s do that right now, sister.” (38) “We should to go to all the villages to see what is going on.” (39) “I’ll go and look around right away, sister.” (40) “When we have the meeting with all the Lepcha people, all of us have to become as one. (41) Some of us are doing things, others are not doing anything. We should not think this way. If one of us makes an effort, we should all join in.” (42) “I don’t think I will be able to do anything much, sister.” (43) “It’s not right to say that you can’t do anything. (44) Are you Lepcha or Nepali?” (45) “I am Lepcha, of course.” (46) “What is your name?” (47) “It is ṽÁṽitámít Lepcha.” (48) “Why do you call yourself Lepcha when you are not truly a Lepcha?” (49) “What is your name, sister?” (50) “Mine is ṽÓngmít Lepcha.” (51) “I had not heard your name before, sister.” (52) “You’ve only just learnt my name? You must feel as if you are reborn into the Lepcha Máyel world. (53) The way we’re living isn’t right. (54) We should look around the villages to see where all the Lepcha people are and find out if they are feeling lost. (55) From now on, you shouldn’t say “I don’t know”, anymore. (56) Let’s walk around, so that we become

aware of all the thoughts of the Lepcha people and of the traditions of our parents, let's not get the names of things mixed up again. (57) Where do we Lepcha originally come from?" (58) "From the snowy peaks." (59) "You know it already!" (60) "I only said that because my parents told me a little bit about it." (61) "It would be good if we did things like that for the benefit of the Lepcha people as well." (62) "Let's walk over to all the villages." (63) "Yes, sister, let's do that straight away."





## GLOSSARY

This glossary lists the Lepcha words used in examples and texts in this grammar. The entries are listed by their initial consonants, according to the following order: ཅ k, ཆ kh, ཇ kr, ཈ kl, ཉ g, ཊ gl, ཋ ng, ཌ c, ཌྷ ch, ཎ j, ཏ ny, ཐ t, ད tr, དྷ th, ན thr, པ d, ཕ dr, བ n, བྷ p, མ pl, ཙ ph, ཚ f, ཛ fl, ཛྷ b, ཝ bl, ཞ m, ཟ ml, འ ts, ཡ tsh, ར z, ལ y, ཥ r, ས l, ས h, ཮ hl, ཯ v, ཰ sh, ཱ s, ི w, ཱི ? , ུ -â, ཱུ -a, ྲྀ -i, ཷ -í, ླྀ -o, ཹ -ó, ེ -u, ཻ -ú, ོ -e, ཽ -y-.

### ཅ k-

- ཇྱ *kâ* v. cook
- ཇྲ *kât* v. order, command
- ཇླ *kaku* num. eight
- ཇྴ *kakyók* num. seven
- ཇྵ *kakyót* num. nine
- ཇྶ *kacer* n. wheat
- ཇྷ *kajóm* n. finger
- ཇྸ *kajú* n. dog
- ཇྐྵ *kajútâng* n. fat male dog
- ཇྺ *katáp* n. fist
- ཇྻ *kati* num. ten
- ཇྼ *katyám* n. muscle of the arm
- ཇ྽ *kathi* n. little finger
- ཇ྿ *kadóm* n. thumb
- ཇྺ *kábu* v. carry
- ཇྻ *katshóng* adv. day after tomorrow
- ཇྼ *kayók* n. fingertip
- ཇ྽ *kayóng* n. middle finger
- ཇ྿ *kalít* n. ring finger
- ཇྺ *kalók* n. rat, mouse
- ཇྻ *kalyók* n. palm of hand
- ཇྼ *káchám* adv. in three days time, after three days

- 𐄂𐄃 *káchót* adv. in four days time, after four days  
 𐄂𐄄𐄅 *kátaʔyen* adv. three years ago  
 𐄂𐄆𐄇 *káflík* adj. some  
 𐄂𐄈𐄉𐄊 *káwodámpú* n. wooden pillar  
 𐄂𐄋 *kát* num. one  
 𐄂𐄌 ~ 𐄂𐄍(𐄎) ~ 𐄂𐄏(𐄐) *kátʔáp ~ kátʔákup ~ kátkup* adv. alone  
 𐄂𐄑 *kán* v. pulverise, reduce to powder  
 𐄂𐄒 *kám* adv. little bit  
 𐄂𐄓 *ki* n. thread  
 𐄂𐄔 *ki* v. claim, demand, assert  
 𐄂𐄕𐄖 *kibri* v. twist, wind threads together  
 𐄂𐄗𐄘 *kiríl* v. roll thread into a ball  
 𐄂𐄙𐄚 *kiyâp* v. stitch together, quilt  
 𐄂𐄛 *kít* v. snatch  
 𐄂𐄜 *kor* v. wander, stroll  
 𐄂𐄝 *kol* n. box  
 𐄂𐄞 *kó* n. order  
 𐄂𐄟 *kók* v. fence in  
 𐄂𐄠 *kón* n. taste  
 𐄂𐄡 *kón* n. side  
 𐄂𐄢 *kón* v. let, allow  
 𐄂𐄣 *kóng* n. branch  
 𐄂𐄤 *kóm* n. money  
 𐄂𐄥 *kóm* v. curdle, congeal  
 𐄂𐄦 *ku* v. urge, impel  
 𐄂𐄧 *kup* n. child, small  
 𐄂𐄨𐄩 *kumdúng* adj. other  
 𐄂𐄪𐄫 *kumthyóng* n. kite  
 𐄂𐄬𐄭 *kursóng* adj. bright  
 𐄂𐄮 *kúng* n. tree  
 𐄂𐄯𐄰 *kúngbóng* n. tree stump  
 𐄂𐄱𐄲 *kúmíng* n. appellation, name  
 𐄂𐄳 *kúl* v. encircle, surround  
 𐄂𐄴 *ke* v. try, attempt  
 𐄂𐄵 *kyáng* v. freeze  
 𐄂𐄶 *kyok* v. churn butter  
 𐄂𐄷 *kyóng* n. village  
 𐄂𐄸 *kyón* v. suffer  
 𐄂𐄹 *kyóp* v. lock

ᄃᄆᄇ *kyól* v. blend, mix, confuse

### ᄆ kh-

ᄆᄆ *khá* num. score

ᄆᄆᄆ *khák* v. choke

ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *khámri* sal. greeting

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *khámrimó* sal. greeting (more respectful than *khámri*)

ᄆᄆ ~ ᄆᄆᄆ *khu ~ khut* v. be able to

ᄆᄆᄆ *khú* n. loaf of bread

ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *khek* v. freeze

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *khyâ* v. arrive

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *khyú* v. bathe

### ᄆᄆ kl-

ᄆᄆ *kla* v. cleave

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *klánlá* adj. resembling

ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *klít* v. polish, rub

ᄆᄆ *klo* adj. straightforward

ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *klóng* v. send

ᄆᄆᄆ ~ ᄆᄆᄆᄆ *klú ~ klúm* v. fall

ᄆᄆᄆ *klek* v. force, urge

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *klyam* v. be sweet

### ᄆᄆᄆ kr-

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *krít* n. hunger

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *kró* v. slice

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *krón* v. scratch

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *kryóng* v. praise

### ᄆᄆᄆᄆ g-

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *gâ* v. resist

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *gang* conj. if

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *gangne* conj. if

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *ganglá* even if

ᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆᄆ *gát* v. must, need, require

𐄎 *gán* adj. old, aged  
 𐄎𐄎 *gánlát* n. oldness, old age  
 𐄎 *go* pron. I  
 𐄎 *go* v. be  
 𐄎𐄎 *gorúng* conj. either  
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *gorúnglá* conj. although, even  
 𐄎 *gó* v. be happy, rejoice, be glad  
 𐄎 *gun* all, every  
 𐄎 *gum* v. to be  
 𐄎 -*gú* sf. female animal that has given birth  
 𐄎 *gek* v. be born  
 𐄎𐄎 *gek-lát* n. birth  
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *gyagármú* n. Indian  
 𐄎 *gyó* num. one hundred  
 𐄎 *gyó* v. quarrel  
 𐄎 *gyú* n. skill, experience  
 𐄎 *gye* v. win, gain the victory

### 𐄎 gl-

𐄎𐄎 *glí* adj. distinct  
 𐄎 *glót* v. kindle, set fire to  
 𐄎 ~ 𐄎𐄎 *glú ~ glúm* v. fall down  
 𐄎 *glyat* v. sag, drop, decline, suspend (also spelt 𐄎 *glet*)

### 𐄎 ng-

𐄎 *ngâk* v. look, observe  
 𐄎 *ngán* v. remain, sit  
 𐄎𐄎 *ngánshet* n. seat  
 𐄎 *ngár* v. slice  
 𐄎 *ngol* adv. early  
 𐄎 *ngók* v. grind  
 𐄎 *ngú* n. fish  
 𐄎 *ngút* v. cut, sever or divide with a knife  
 𐄎 *ngún* v. become, happen, occur

## C-

- 𑖇𑖇 *cang* v. foster, nourish  
 𑖇𑖆 *cá* adv. just, a moment ago  
 𑖇𑖆𑖇 *cáng* v. cross river  
 𑖇𑖆𑖇𑖇 *cánáp* adv. last night  
 𑖇𑖆 *cáp* v. thatch  
 𑖇𑖆𑖆 *cábá* adv. some time ago  
 𑖇𑖆 *cám* v. wink  
 𑖇𑖆𑖇𑖇 *cálóng* adv. just now, just a moment ago  
 𑖇𑖇 *ci* n. *cí*, fermented grain liquor  
 𑖇𑖇 *cí* v. dry meat or fish in the sun  
 𑖇𑖇 *cí* v. tread, tremble upon  
 𑖇𑖇𑖇 *cík* v. weigh  
 𑖇𑖇 *cíng* v. think  
 𑖇𑖇 *cít* v. split wood or bamboo  
 𑖇𑖇 *cíp* v. drain of liquids  
 𑖇𑖇 *co* n. tea  
 𑖇𑖇 *co* v. mend  
 𑖇𑖇 *cot* v. assist, help  
 𑖇𑖇 *com* v. oppress  
 𑖇𑖇 *col* v. pour water over body  
 𑖇𑖇 *cóng* v. wash  
 𑖇𑖇 *cóng* v. be quick  
 𑖇𑖇 *cóm* v. leave, depart  
 𑖇𑖇 *cór* v. be sour, be acid  
 𑖇𑖇 *cu* adj. small, little  
 𑖇𑖇𑖇 *cukup* a little bit  
 𑖇𑖇 *cup* v. restrain  
 𑖇𑖇 *cú* n. the snowy range, the Himalayas  
 𑖇𑖇 *cúk* n. kiss  
 𑖇𑖇𑖇 *-cúng* young of bulls  
 𑖇𑖇 *cút* v. rise of dough  
 𑖇𑖇 *ce* n. love  
 𑖇𑖇𑖇 *cechók* adj. loveable  
 𑖇𑖇𑖇𑖇 *cewo* n. crore  
 𑖇𑖇 *cek* v. hew, cut down  
 𑖇𑖇 *cet* v. thrust, stab, pierce  
 𑖇𑖇 *cep* v. bore, pierce

མྱོའ་མེད་པ་ *cer* v. be lazy

མྱོའ་མེད་པ་ *cer* v. milk

### མ ch-

མཆེད་མཆེད་ *chádóng* n. war, battle

མཆེད་མཆེད་ *chárí* n. letter

མཆེད་མཆེད་ *chí* n. example, model

མཆེད་ *cho* n. book

མཆེད་ *-cho* sf. best, greatest

མཆེད་ *choko* n. paper

མཆེད་ *chokóng* n. offering of dough rice

མཆེད་ *chokúng* n. brass lamp

མཆེད་ *chochúk* v. copy, transcribe, reproduce

མཆེད་ *chogyú* n. lesson

མཆེད་ *chotân* n. essence of religion

མཆེད་ *choten* n. chörten, monument, memorial

མཆེད་ *chodám* n. book binding

མཆེད་ *chobúm* n. sacred scriptures of Buddhism

མཆེད་ *chomí* n. religious lamp or light

མཆེད་ *chotsóm* n. altar

མཆེད་ *choyântân* n. education

མཆེད་ *choyuk* n. literature

མཆེད་ *cholí* n. school

མཆེད་ *cholep* n. leaf of a book

མཆེད་ *chó* v. unite, join

མཆེད་ *chó* n. even number, pair, couple

མཆེད་ *chómtun* n. friendship

མཆེད་ *chór* v. pour

མཆེད་ *chólúng nóngshang* v. multiply

མཆེད་ *chú* n. strength, courage

མཆེད་ *chú* n. cheese

མཆེད་ *-chúk* sf. most, worthy

མཆེད་ *chúko* n. energy, force

མཆེད་ *chúpí* n. sulphur

མཆེད་ *chútsât* n. hour

མཆེད་ *chúsung* n. crocodile

མཆེད་ *chet* v. relate

མཆེད་ *chet* n. need, want, lack, demand, necessity

## ꠘ j-

- ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jâl* v. dry over fire  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *ják* v. itch  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jáng* adj. stiff  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jám* v. assemble  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jí* v. annoy, disturb  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jí* n. filth  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> ~ ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jí* ~ *jít* v. sift  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jók* v. talk, speak  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jóng* v. memorise  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jóp* v. flatten, make or become flat  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *ju* n. thorn  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jú* v. live, burn  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jek* v. bud  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jen* adj. other  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jer* n. gold  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *jel* v. understand, know a language, speak a language

## ꠘ ny-

- ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyák* v. exceed  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyilop* n. earlobe  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyí* v. to be  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyín* n. milk  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyó* n. odd number  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyók* v. delay  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyók* v. cause to quiver, shake  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyót* n. field  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyóm* v. smell  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyuk* v. grind  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyum* n. pair  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyúgú* n. pen  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyúrpang* adj. deaf  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyet* num. two  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyet* v. show, demonstrate  
 ꠘ<sup>ꠘ</sup> *nyen* v. listen

## t-

- 𐄂 *tân* n. cause, reason, behalf  
 𐄂𐄃 *tândók* n. cause, reason, behalf  
 𐄂𐄄 -*tâng* sf. corpulent male animal, pig or dog  
 𐄂 *ta* v. bear, endure  
 𐄂𐄅 *taʔayu* n. woman  
 𐄂𐄆 *tabá* adv. up there, there above (also spelt 𐄂𐄆𐄇 *tábá*)  
 𐄂𐄈 *tabók* n. abdomen, stomach, belly, womb  
 𐄂𐄉 *tado* pron. oneself  
 𐄂𐄊 *tagrí* n. man  
 𐄂𐄋𐄌 *tagrikup* n. boy  
 𐄂𐄍 *tagryú* n. cheek  
 𐄂𐄎 *tarók* num. six  
 𐄂𐄏 *tatsât* n. time, period of time  
 𐄂𐄐 𐄂𐄑 *talon kón* adv. in the direction there above  
 𐄂𐄒 *talol* adv. up above there  
 𐄂𐄓𐄔 *talemkón* adv. above there, in that direction (also spelt 𐄂𐄓 𐄂𐄔 *tálemkón*)  
 𐄂𐄕𐄖 *talyáng* n. sky, heaven  
 𐄂𐄕𐄗 *talyádâ* n. sea, ocean  
 𐄂𐄘 *tahyut* n. whistle  
 𐄂𐄙 *tasó* adv. yesterday, sometimes shortened to 𐄂𐄚 *só*  
 𐄂𐄛 *taʔyu* n. girl  
 𐄂𐄜𐄝 *taʔyukup* n. daughter  
 𐄂𐄞 *taʔyen* adv. last year  
 𐄂𐄟 *taʔi* n. flour, meal, powder  
 𐄂𐄠 *tá-* pf. up there (also spelt 𐄂 *ta-*)  
 𐄂𐄡 *táng* n. bundle  
 𐄂𐄢𐄣 *tángko* n. basket  
 𐄂𐄤𐄥 *tálom* adv. like that there above  
 𐄂𐄦𐄧 *tállyáng* n. highland  
 𐄂𐄨 *ti* num. zero  
 𐄂𐄩 *tíng* v. separate  
 𐄂𐄪𐄫 *tíngmú* n. plainsman  
 𐄂𐄬 *tít* v. flee  
 𐄂𐄭𐄮 *tít-rekúng* n. tamarind tree  
 𐄂𐄯𐄰 *tít-repót* n. tamarind fruit  
 𐄂𐄱 *tím* adj. big



- 𑀓𑀲 *tímre* n. respect  
 𑀓𑀶 *tóm* n. speech  
 𑀓𑀷 *tór* n. silk  
 𑀓𑀹 ~ 𑀓𑀺 *tu ~ tut* v. wash, cleanse  
 𑀓𑀻 *tuk* v. cover, protect  
 𑀓𑀼𑀲 *tuknóm* n. nose  
 𑀓𑀼𑀳 *tukfyíl* n. ant  
 𑀓𑀼𑀴 *tukpát* n. knee  
 𑀓𑀼𑀵 *tukpo* n. rope  
 𑀓𑀼𑀶𑀹 *tukpókúng* n. peach tree  
 𑀓𑀼𑀷𑀲 *tukpópót* n. peach  
 𑀓𑀼𑀸 *tungder* n. cockroach  
 𑀓𑀼𑀹 *tunghrók* num. thousand  
 𑀓𑀼𑀺𑀹 *tungvyeng* n. door  
 𑀓𑀽 *tú* pron. who  
 𑀓𑀽𑀲 *túngchúr* num. hundred million  
 𑀓𑀽𑀳 *túdo* pron. anybody, anyone  
 𑀓𑀽𑀴 *túlá* pron. everyone, someone, anyone, whoever  
 𑀓𑀽𑀵 *tet* v. touch, aim  
 𑀓𑀽𑀶 -*tet* sf. until, up to (also spelt 𑀓𑀽𑀷 *tyet* or 𑀓𑀽𑀸 *tyat*)  
 𑀓𑀽𑀹 *tyâng* all, whole  
 𑀓𑀽𑀺 *tyât* v. cut down, hew down  
 𑀓𑀽𑀻 *tyak* v. tread  
 𑀓𑀽𑀼 *tyal* v. fell (also spelt 𑀓𑀽𑀽 *tel*)  
 𑀓𑀽𑀾 *tyók* v. cut  
 𑀓𑀽𑀿 *tyóng* v. hide  
 𑀓𑀾𑀲 *tyól* n. friend  
 𑀓𑀾𑀳 *tyu* v. subdue, defeat  
 𑀓𑀾𑀴 *tyul* v. fall  
 𑀓𑀾𑀵 *tyúk* v. kick  
 𑀓𑀾𑀶 *tyút* n. scar

### 𑀓𑀿 tr-

- 𑀓𑀿𑀲 *trát* v. tear  
 𑀓𑀿𑀳𑀲 *trínchen* n. kindness  
 𑀓𑀿𑀴𑀲 *trókchí* thank you  
 𑀓𑀿𑀵 *tróp* v. winnow  
 𑀓𑀿𑀶 *trút* v. advise

ᄃᄆ *tre* n. mule

ㅈ th-

- ᄃᄆᄆ *thangkú* n. tobacco  
 ㅈᄆ *thá* v. chew, eat  
 ㅈᄆ *thák* v. be complete, sufficient  
 ㅈᄆ *thám* n. thing, object  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámčâng* n. animal  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámbík* n. insect  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámbóng* n. plant  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámbu* n. worm  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámpót* n. fruit  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámlí* n. seed  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thámvyet* n. question  
 ㅈᄆ *tháp* v. put  
 ㅈᄆ *thál* adv. up above  
 ㅈᄆ ~ ㅈᄆᄆ *thi ~ thút* v. reach  
 ㅈᄆᄆ *thík* v. tie  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thikúng* n. great grandfather  
 ㅈᄆ ~ ㅈᄆᄆ *tho~thóm* v. put  
 ㅈᄆ *thok* v. close  
 ㅈᄆᄆ *thóng* v. drink  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thongjóm* n. toe  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆᄆ *thongpyól* n. footprint  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thongtung* n. heel  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thóngshet* adj. drinkable  
 ㅈᄆ *thop* v. get (also spelt ㅈᄆᄆ *thúp*)  
 ㅈᄆ *thol* adj. near  
 ㅈᄆᄆ *thór* v. escape  
 ㅈᄆᄆ *thúk* n. season  
 ㅈᄆ *theng* v. sing  
 ㅈᄆᄆ *thep* adj. extra, additional, successive  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *theppa theppa* adv. successively  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆᄆ *therbúm* num. billion  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thyák* v. recognise, identify  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆᄆ *thyáktuk* n. hat, cap  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆᄆ *thyákdám* n. scalp  
 ㅈᄆᄆᄆ *thyen* v. laugh

- 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *thyenlât* n. laughter  
 𐌸𐌶𐌻 *thyenlá* adv. laughingly  
 𐌸𐌶 ~ 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *thyo ~ thyóm* v. hear  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *thyók* n. shelter  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *thyór* v. set free  
 𐌸𐌶 ~ 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *thyu ~ thyum* v. mix, combine, unite

### 𐌸 thr-

- 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *thri* n. throne  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴 *thrim* n. law  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *throm* n. town, market  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴 *thrókthrik* num. ten billion

### 𐌸 d-

- 𐌸 *dâ* n. lake  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴 *dâpúk* n. shore  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴 *dâlyáng* n. island  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *dâng* v. run  
 𐌸𐌶 *dâl* v. germinate, sprout  
 𐌸𐌶 *dá* v. sleep, rest  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴 *dátho* n. almanac  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *dáp* v. cover  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *dám* v. tie, bind  
 𐌸𐌶 ~ 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *di ~ dít* v. come, approach  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *díng* v. stand  
 𐌸𐌶 *do* pron. self  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴 *dodosá* adj. personal, of ones own  
 𐌸𐌶 *do* v. collect, gather together, assemble  
 𐌸𐌶 *dok* v. be ill  
 𐌸𐌶 *dop* v. burn  
 𐌸𐌶 *dó* v. announce, make known  
 𐌸𐌶 *dók* v. keep  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *dóng* v. search, seek  
 𐌸𐌶 *du* n. disease  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳 *dun* v. tell, narrate, say  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴 *dunlu* n. remark  
 𐌸𐌶𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴𐌳𐌴 *duntrók* n. week

- 𐄎𐄏 *dutmúng* n. demon  
 𐄎 *dum* n. cloth  
 𐄎 *dú* n. umbrella  
 𐄎 ~ 𐄎 *dú ~ dún* v. dig  
 𐄎 *dúk* v. be alike  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *dúnggít* n. tradition  
 𐄎 *dúm* v. be white  
 𐄎 *de* v. destroy  
 𐄎𐄏 *delúk* n. resurrection  
 𐄎 *dek* v. break  
 𐄎 *det* v. move  
 𐄎 *dep* sf. together, along with  
 𐄎 *dem* n. dress  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *dyángtung* n. heel  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *dyângpak* n. knee  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *dyângpók* n. calf  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑 *dyánglyók* n. sole of foot  
 𐄎 ~ 𐄎 *dyu ~ dyut* v. argue

### 𐄎 dr-

- 𐄎 *drâm* adv. quick  
 𐄎 *drám* v. break  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *drámdyân* v. break down  
 𐄎𐄏 *dri* n. fort, palace  
 𐄎𐄏 *dri* v. wind, roll or coil thread  
 𐄎𐄏 *dríp* v. confine  
 𐄎𐄏 *dróp* n. moment  
 𐄎 *dre* n. demon  
 𐄎 *dret* v. push  
 𐄎𐄏 *dryák* v. pursue, chase  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *dryándo* adv. equal to

### 𐄎 n-

- 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *nâlá* adv. always  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *nalón* adv. last  
 𐄎𐄏𐄐 *navár* n. boat  
 𐄎𐄏 *ná* v. take

- ဂၢ် *nahán* adv. before  
 ဂၢ် *nám* n. year  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *námkor* n. cycle of twelve years  
 ဂၢ်(၂) *námnám* adv. yearly  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *nápmún* n. evening  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *nápzâ* n. dusk  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *náp-lúk* n. day and night, morning and evening  
 ဂၢ် *nók* v. push  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *nók-lât* n. blackness  
 ဂၢ် *nóng* v. go  
 ဂၢ် *nóng* adv. inside  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *nómleng* n. young girl  
 ဂၢ် *nól* n. skin  
 ဂၢ် ~ ဂၢ် *nu ~ nut* v. suck  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *numnu* n. brothers  
 ဂၢ်(၉) *numtsám nyóm* n. leap month  
 ဂၢ် *nup* v. flood  
 ဂၢ် *núl* v. crush, knead

## ၂ ပ-

- ၂ *pâ* n. incense  
 ၂(၉) *pâtmú* n. Tibetan  
 ၂(၉) *pacák* adv. almost  
 ၂(၉) *patung* n. shoulder  
 ၂(၉) *pano* n. king  
 ၂(၉) *pá* v. beckon, signal  
 ၂(၉) *pár* v. buy  
 ၂(၉) *pi* v. write  
 ၂(၉) *pík* v. purify  
 ၂(၉) *pín* v. brush, brush off  
 ၂(၉) *po* n. bamboo  
 ၂(၉) *pung* n. mound, heap  
 ၂(၉) *punjeng* n. iron  
 ၂(၉) *punthyóng* n. eagle  
 ၂(၉) *punzók* n. forest  
 ၂(၉) *pup* v. cover  
 ၂(၉) *pe* n. grass  
 ၂(၉) *pe* v. agree

- རྩ *pe-* adv. over there (also spelt རྩ *pí-*)  
 རྩཏ *pefi* pron. there (near)  
 རྩའ *pebá* pron. there  
 རྩེ *petet* adv. up to that place over there  
 རྩཎ *pepe* adv. that there, yonder  
 རྩཏ *peme* adv. there, down there  
 རྩཏ *pere* adv. that over there (also spelt རྩཏ *pír*, རྩཏ *pyir*, རྩཏ *pyur*)  
 རྩཏ *pelom* adv. in that manner  
 རྩཏ *pelom* adv. like that  
 རྩཏ *pel* v. be tired  
 རྩཏ *prâ* n. cut bamboo  
 རྩཏ *promú* n. Bhutanese  
 རྩཏ *prú* n. ash  
 རྩཏ *prýá* n. hymn  
 རྩཏ *prýá* v. describe, give an account of something

### ཐ ph-

- ཐཏ *phám* v. defeat  
 ཐཏ *phi* v. wash of utensils  
 ཐཏཏཏ *philíngmú* n. Englishman  
 ཐཏ *phúl* v. be distant  
 ཐཏ *pho* n. time, turn  
 ཐཏ *phu* v. offer, sacrifice  
 ཐཏ *phet* adv. half  
 ཐཏ *phyá* v. disjoin  
 ཐཏ *phyok* v. sweep  
 ཐཏཏ *phyokmú* n. broom  
 ཐཏ *phyú* v. hatch  
 ཐཏ *phyuk* v. be rich

### པ pl-

- པ *plâ* v. come forth, come out, rise  
 པ *plák* v. break  
 པ *plí* v. deny  
 པ *plyâ* v. produce, bring forward

## Ɔ f-

- Ɔ(Ɔ) *fâtyók* n. pot  
 Ɔ̃ *fâk* v. scrape  
 Ɔɔ} *fangú* num. five  
 Ɔɔʋ *fali* num. four  
 Ɔ·ʋ *faleng* n. young boy  
 Ɔ( fá v. swim  
 Ɔ( *fát* n. earth  
 Ɔ( *fát* v. lose  
 Ɔ( *fán* v. burn  
 Ɔ( *fár* v. rust  
 Ɔ̃ *fík* v. tear, pull apart  
 Ɔ *fo* n. bird  
 Ɔ *fo* n. tooth (also Ɔ(Ɔ ʔáfo)  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃ *fogóm* n. molar  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃ *fonyel* n. gums  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃ *fozâl* n. incisor  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃} *folún* n. wisdom tooth  
 Ɔ̃ *fók* adv. throughout  
 Ɔ̃ *fók* v. pierce, stab  
 Ɔ *fót* v. taste  
 Ɔ(Ɔ)Ɔ *fungfing* adj. blue  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃ *fyo* n. brass  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃} *fyu* n. pot  
 Ɔ̃ *fyek* v. sharpen

## Ɔ fl-

- Ɔ̃ *flâ* v. narrate, describe  
 Ɔ(Ɔ̃ ~ Ɔ̃(Ɔ̃ *flí ~ flím* v. divide, separate  
 Ɔ̃(Ɔ̃ *flík* adv. apart, aside  
 Ɔ̃(Ɔ̃ *flík* v. separate, cleave  
 Ɔ̃(Ɔ̃ *flók* v. peel, peel off skin or bark  
 Ɔ̃(Ɔ̃} *flet* v. wash ones face

## Ɔ b-

- Ɔ̃ *bâk* v. weed

- ㄨㄛˊ *báhó* n. storage, store room  
 ㄨㄛˊ *báng* v. break, cut, chop wood or bamboo in short pieces  
 ㄨㄛˊ *-báng* num. half of  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bám* v. dwell, stay, reside  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bámlyáng* n. homeland, residence  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bán* n. knife  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bán* adv. after  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bánkup* n. small knife  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bázá* n. hour  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bál* v. repeat  
 ㄨㄛˊ ~ ㄨㄛˊ *bi ~ bín* v. give  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bi* n. curry  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bifong* n. green leafy vegetable  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bík* n. cow  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bíkgú* n. cow  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bíkbo* n. bull, steer  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bíklóng* n. ox  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bíklóngbop* n. bullock, castrated male bovine  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bíklóngcúng* n. young bull  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bíl* v. fold of cloth or paper  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *bojo* n. grandfather  
 ㄨㄛˊ *-bom* sf. brooding female animal  
 ㄨㄛˊ ~ ㄨㄛˊ *bo ~ bón* v. give  
 ㄨㄛˊ *-bop* sf. young of bulls  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bu* n. snake, worm  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bu* v. carry  
 ㄨㄛˊ *-bu* sf. male of animals  
 ㄨㄛˊ *buk* v. hit, strike, thresh  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bun* v. carry  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bul* v. scrape  
 ㄨㄛˊ *búm* num. lakh  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *búmtsho* num. lakh  
 ㄨㄛˊ *búr* v. flower, bloom  
 ㄨㄛˊ *búl* v. boil over  
 ㄨㄛˊ *byám* v. keep, leave behind  
 ㄨㄛˊㄨㄛˊ *byúp* v. parch, dry in fire  
 ㄨㄛˊ *brám* v. stray, deviate, roam, be lost  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bri* n. marriage, union  
 ㄨㄛˊ *bret* v. separate, divide



## ㄹ bl-

- ㄹ(ㄴ) *blá* v. take  
 ㄹ(ㄹ) *-bo* sf. father, uncastrated male parent animal  
 ㄹ(ㄹ) *blók* v. separate the outer and inner part of bamboo or cane  
 ㄹ(ㄹ) *blen* v. be full, be filled up

## ㅁ m-

- ㅁ(ㅁ) *mân* n. meat  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *maró* n. man  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *má* v. hide, conceal from sight  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mák* v. die  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mán-gú* n. sow  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mát* v. do  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mátlóm* n. conduct, act of conducting, guidance  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *máthu* n. habit, custom  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mi* n. fire  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *-mi* sf. female animal that has not had young  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *míktráp* n. sleep  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *míkcóm* n. eyelash, eyebrow  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *míkgrúng* n. tear  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *míkdúm* n. foreigner (literally white eyes)  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *míkmyóng* n. eyelid  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *míl* adv. down  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *món* n. medicine  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *món* n. pig, boar  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *móntâng* n. fat boar  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mónbo* n. boar, uncastrated male of swine  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mónbu* n. boar  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mónmi* n. fallow sow  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mónmót* n. sow  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mónsu* n. boar, uncastrated boar  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *mónsháng* n. barren sow  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *-mót* sf. female of animals  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *múng* n. devil  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *munjú* n. grandmother  
 ㅁ(ㅁ) *muró* n. man

- མུ་མུ་ *muzu* n. body  
 མེ་ *me-* adv. down there  
 མེ་བའ་ *mebá* adv. there below  
 མེ་བའི་ *mebí* adv. there below (less distant than མེ་བའ་ *mebá*)  
 མེ་ལོ་ *melon* adv. in that direction down there  
 མེ་ལོ་མེ་ *melom* adv. like that down there  
 མེ་རེ་ *mere* adv. that down there  
 མེ་ལ་ *myák* v. kill  
 མེ་ལོ་ལ་ *myók* n. son in law  
 མེ་ལོ་གྲོ་ *myóng* v. experience  
 མེ་ལོ་བྲོ་ *myón* v. forget

## མ ml-

- མུ་ལུ་ *mlú* n. utensil, implement  
 མུ་ལ་ *mlyá* adj. level, even  
 མུ་ལུ་ལ་ *mlyúk* adj. lukewarm, tepid

## ཅ ts-

- ཅེ་ *tsám* v. hold  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ *tsóm* v. limit  
 ཅེ་ལོ་གྲོ་ *tsómcúng* n. pigtail  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsómtrat* n. comb  
 ཅེ་ལོ་རྒྱ་ *tsómrík* n. ribbon  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsómbheng* n. single hair  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsót* v. squeeze  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *-tsu* sf. male of pigs and goats  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsukgi* n. afternoon  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsukkyer* n. west  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsukkyer* n. sunset, west  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsuk-lát* n. sunrise, east  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsugyer* n. clock  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsuknáng* n. midday  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsukzán* n. early morning, when sun is completely visible  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsung* v. save up  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsum* v. meet  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsur* v. radiate, gleam  
 ཅེ་ལོ་ལྷ་ *tsurtsur* n. twinkle

ᄃᄆ *tsúk* v. bite

ᄃᄆ tsh-

ᄃᄆ *tshâ* n. date

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *tshâlum* n. orange

ᄃᄆ *tshó* v. aim

ᄃᄆᄆ *tshóng* n. goods

ᄃᄆᄆ *tshóng* v. complete

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *tshukpót* n. word

ᄃᄆ Z-

ᄃᄆ *zâ* v. err

ᄃᄆᄆ *zang* adj. like

ᄃᄆ *zá* n. circle

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *záko* n. planet

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *záti* n. nutmeg

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *záding* n. jug

ᄃᄆ *zo* v. eat, food, rice

ᄃᄆ *zok* v. trickle, flow

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *zorí* n. fragrant rice

ᄃᄆ *zók* v. strike

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *zómthup* adj. edible

ᄃᄆ *zót* v. graze

ᄃᄆ *zúk* v. make

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *zúkthup* adj. manageable

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *zúk-lât* n. action, performance

ᄃᄆ y-

ᄃᄆ ~ ᄃᄆ *yâ ~ yâm* know, know how to

ᄃᄆᄆ *yânthó* n. school

ᄃᄆ *yang* conj. thus

ᄃᄆᄆ *yángne* conj. or, either

ᄃᄆ *yáp* v. grope

ᄃᄆ *yok* n. top, summit

ᄃᄆ *yor* n. row

ᄃᄆ *yók* n. yak

ཅ དུ *yu* v. descend  
 ཅ དུ ཀ *yuk* n. letter  
 ཅ དུ རྩོམ་ ~ ཅ དུ རྩོམ་ *yupthen ~ yuptho* n. moment  
 ཅ དུ རྩོམ་ *yet* v. descend  
 ཅ དུ རྩོམ་ *yel* v. know a language

ར ར-

ར རྩོམ་ ~ ར རྩོམ་ *rangsâ ~ rangsâr* adj. other  
 ར རྩོམ་ *râ* v. hunt  
 ར རྩོམ་ *râk* v. search, examine  
 ར རྩོམ་ *râm* n. thunder  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rî* n. smell, scent, fragrance, odour  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *ribirîp* n. ribiplant, *Calamus latifolius*  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rîp* n. flower, blossom, flowering plant  
 ར རྩོམ་ *ro* v. fear  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rok* v. read, study  
 ར རྩོམ་ *róng* n. Lepcha  
 ར རྩོམ་ *róng* v. wait  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *róngjîng* adv. daily  
 ར རྩོམ་ *ru* n. cane  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *rungnyít rúngmú* n. main stream of *Rungnyít* river  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rúbá* n. tortoise  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rum* n. god  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *rumdâr* n. god  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rel* v. separate maize from the cob  
 ར རྩོམ་ *rel* adv. each  
 ར རྩོམ་ *ren* adv. since  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *renjóng* n. Sikkim  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *renjóngmú* n. Sikkimese  
 ར རྩོམ་ *ryák* v. follow  
 ར རྩོམ་ *ryú* v. be good  
 ར རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ *ryúlá* adv. well  
 ར རྩོམ་ *ryúm* n. needle

ལ ལ-

ལ ལྩོམ་ *lâm* v. fly  
 ལ ལྩོམ་ *lang* n. stone

- ႁႃႆႇ *langklyók* n. big flat stone  
 ႁႃႆႇ *laháp* n. cave  
 ႁႃႇ *lá* adv. also, even  
 ႁႃႇ *lát* v. return  
 ႁႃႇ *láp* v. bury  
 ႁႃႇႆ *lávo* n. moon  
 ႁႃႇ ~ ႁႃႆ *li ~ lín* v. say, speak  
 ႁႃႇ *li* v. carry  
 ႁႃႆ *lí* n. house  
 ႁႃႆ *lík* v. call  
 ႁႃႆႇ *línko* n. speech, statement  
 ႁႃႆႇ *línshet* n. speech  
 ႁႃႆ *lú* v. sift  
 ႁႃႇ *lo* v. dry, spread out to dry in the sun of corn or grain  
 ႁႃႇ *lok* v. dance  
 ႁႃႇ *lon* in this direction  
 ႁႃႇ *lol* v. bend, turn  
 ႁႃႇ *ló* n. wage, pay  
 ႁႃႇ *lók* v. damage, injure, harm  
 ႁႃႇ *lóng* n. ox, steer  
 ႁႃႇႆ *lóngbo* n. bull  
 ႁႃႇႆ *lóngcúng* n. young bull  
 ႁႃႇ *lón* lead, command  
 ႁႃႇ *lóm* sf. via, through, n. road, way, v. walk  
 ႁႃႇ *lót* v. repeat  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lótbi* v. give back  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lótthi* v. come back again  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lóttho* v. put again  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lótzúk* v. remake  
 ႁႃႇ ~ ႁႃႆ *lú ~ lúm* v. rise  
 ႁႃႇ *lúk* v. get up, rise  
 ႁႃႇ *lúk* n. sheep  
 ႁႃႇႆ *lúk-hróng* n. morning  
 ႁႃႇႆ *lúkʔál* n. tomorrow  
 ႁႃႇ *lúng* v. take  
 ႁႃႇ *lúng* n. leisure, v. be free, have free time  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lúngtár* v. develop, n. development  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lúngten* n. tradition  
 ႁႃႆႇ *lúngdi* v. bring

- ་ལྟེ་ལྷོ་ *lúgnóng* v. take, take away  
 ་ལྟེ་ལྷོ་ *lúmkup* n. Nepali, person from Nepal  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lút* v. skin, strip or deprive of skin, remove cover  
 ་ལྟེ་ *len* adv. than, compared to  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lem* sf. direction  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lel* v. complete  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyâ* v. accept  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyáng* n. land  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyók* v. resemble, look like  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyók* v. turn, divert, reverse  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyót* v. free  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyú* v. erect  
 ་ལྟེ་ *lyem* v. play

## ཕ h-

- ་ཕ་ *há* v. scrape, skim  
 ་ཕ་ *hák* v. carve in wood or stone  
 ་ཕ་ལྷོ་ *hánlon* adv. not simultaneously (literally before and after)  
 ་ཕ་ *hát* v. lose, leave behind  
 ་ཕ་ *háp* v. shut  
 ་ཕ་ *hík* n. chicken  
 ་ཕ་ལྷོ་ *híkbom* n. female hen having chickens  
 ་ཕ་ *híp* v. shave, scrape  
 ་ཕ་ *hong* adj. hollow  
 ་ཕ་ *hu* pron. he, she  
 ་ཕ་ *hu* n. bee  
 ་ཕ་ *heng* n. ginger  
 ་ཕ་ *het* v. hurt, harm  
 ་ཕ་ *hel* v. fill  
 ་ཕ་ *hyol* v. mix, blend  
 ་ཕ་ *hyóp* v. accompany  
 ་ཕ་ *hyu* v. purify  
 ་ཕ་ *hyúl* v. swallow  
 ་ཕ་ *hráp* v. sew  
 ་ཕ་ *hrík* v. tear  
 ་ཕ་ལྷོ་ *hritsho* num. myriad  
 ་ཕ་ *hro* v. come up  
 ་ཕ་ *hróng* v. come up, arrive from a lower place or region

- ḥḥ *hrún* adj. hot, warm, spicy  
 ḥḥ *hrúp* v. pick up  
 ḥḥ *hreng* v. dry wood, meat or vegetables in the sun  
 ḥḥ *hryá* v. pull  
 ḥḥ *hryám* v. jerk  
 ḥḥ *hryóp* v. cry

## x hl-

- ḥḥ *hláng* v. harden, as yams  
 ḥḥ *hláp* v. learn  
 ḥḥ *hlápjóng* v. memorise  
 ḥḥ *hlo* n. hill, peak  
 ḥḥ *hlok* v. break, as eggs  
 ḥḥ *hleng* v. cough  
 ḥḥ *hlentóp* v. help  
 ḥḥ *hlyám* v. shake, quiver

## ḥ v-

- ḥ ~ ḥ *vâ ~ vâm* v. chant, sing  
 ḥ *vâm* n. song  
 ḥ *vá* v. throw, hurl, fling  
 ḥ *ván* v. enter  
 ḥ *vi* n. blood  
 ḥ *vimân* n. kin, offspring, relatives (literally flesh and blood)  
 ḥ *vík* n. soldier  
 ḥ *vóm* n. salt  
 ḥ *vyet* v. ask, inquire

## ḥ sh-

- ḥ *shâk* n. louse  
 ḥ *sháng* n. firewood  
 ḥ *-sháng* sf. barren, sterile  
 ḥ *shángdri* n. twig  
 ḥ ~ ḥ *shi ~ shím* v. see  
 ḥ *shíng* adj. drunk  
 ḥ *shíng* n. garden

- ጸጅ *shíl* n. trap  
 ጸጅ *shól* n. fox  
 ጸጅ *shól* v. scatter  
 ጸጅጸ ጸጅ *shúlá* pron. everything, anything, whatever  
 ጸጅጸጸ ጸጅ *shúmátne* pron. why (also spelt ጸጅጸጸ ጸጅ *shúmátnu*)  
 ጸጅጸ ጸጅ *shúmú* n. man  
 ጸጅጸ ጸጅ *shenlá* conj. but  
 ጸጅጸ ጸጅ *shezúm* n. assembly, congregation, association  
 ጸጅ *sher* n. glass  
 ጸጅ *sher* v. rot, decay  
 ጸጅጸጸ ጸጅ *sherábú* n. hunter  
 ጸጅጸጸ ጸጅ *sherbú* n. sherpa

## ሠ S-

- ሠ ሠ *sâm* n. mind  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *saka* n. deer  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sakagú* n. doe, female deer  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sakamót* n. female deer, doe  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sakatsu* n. buck, stag  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *sacák* n. leopard  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *sagi* n. power, strength  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sagór* n. cliff  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sagrám* adv. below  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sagrek* n. throat, intestines  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sangúng* n. lizard  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sanyí sonáp* adv. day and night  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *sanyí* n. day, daytime (also spelt ሠ ሠ ሠ *sanyím* or ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *suknyím*)  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sanyím phet ~ nyímphet* adv. midday  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *satet* pron. how much, how many  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *sathá* pron. when, at what time  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sathálá* adv. always  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sathang* n. tiger  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *sadu* adv. slowly  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sader* n. thunder  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sadermi* n. gun (literally thunder-fire)  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ *saná* n. bear  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sanóng* n. snow  
 ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ ሠ *sanóngjum* n. snow flake



- (ᄒᆞᆫ) *safyu* n. garlic  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *safyum* n. breeze  
 (ᄒᆞ) *sabá* pron. where  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sabálá* pron. everywhere  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sabur* n. musk deer  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *saburgú* n. female musk deer  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *saburlóng* n. musk deer  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *samálkúng* n. toon tree, *Cedrela toona*  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *satsuk* n. sun  
 (ᄒᆞ) *sare* pron. which  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *saróng* adv. today  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *salem* adv. in what direction, whither, where  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *salol* adv. which way, in which direction, whither  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *salom* adv. how, like what  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *salomlá* adv. anyhow, anyway  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sahu* n. monkey  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *savíng* n. stag  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *savínglóng* n. stag  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sa?ár* n. goat  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sa?árgú* n. female goat  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sa?ártsu* n. goat, billy goat  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sa?yák* n. day, day and night  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sák* n. mind  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sákcíng* v. think  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sáknyín* v. recollect  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sákdi* v. feel  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sáktsum* n. thought  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sám* num. three  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sáryók* n. jackal  
 (ᄒᆞ) *so* n. rain  
 (ᄒᆞ) *so* num. one hundred  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *sonáp* n. night, night-time  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sonápphet* n. midnight  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *somyáng* n. rainy season  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *somyer* n. dusk  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sozóng* n. winter, cold, v. be cold  
 (ᄒᆞᆫ) *soyá* num. million  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *solá* n. twilight  
 (ᄒᆞᆫᆫ) *sosá* n. dry season

- (ᄒᄒᄒ) *sosóng* n. dawn  
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒ) *sosotsho* num. billion  
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ) *sosotshúr* num. ten billion  
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ) *sosoyá* num. hundred billion  
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒ) *so?âm* n. summer  
 (ᄒᄒ) *só* adv. yesterday  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) *sósó* adv. lately  
 (ᄒ) *sót* v. kill  
 (ᄒᄒ) *sóm* v. breathe  
 (ᄒ) *su* v. contain  
 (ᄒ) *sung* n. story  
 (ᄒ)(ᄒᄒ) *sungvogú* n. female buffalo  
 (ᄒ)(ᄒᄒᄒ) *sungvolóng* n. wild buffalo  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) *sukdum* n. world  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) *sukmut* n. wind  
 (ᄒ) *sut* v. purify  
 (ᄒᄒ) *súk* v. pound, strike  
 (ᄒᄒ) *sút* n. message

## ᄒᄒ W-

- (ᄒᄒᄒ) *womú* n. spindle  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) *wómú* n. jackal  
 (ᄒᄒ) *wó* n. tub  
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒ) *wúrdo* n. sling

## ᄒ ᄒ-

- (ᄒ) *ʔyá* adv. formerly, a long time ago, in the days of old  
 (ᄒᄒ) *ʔyáp* v. chop  
 (ᄒ) *ʔyo* adv. before, formerly, some time ago  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) *ʔyochám* adv. three days ago  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) *ʔyochót* adv. four days ago  
 (ᄒᄒ) *ʔyor* n. pitfall  
 (ᄒᄒᄒ) ~ (ᄒᄒᄒᄒ) *ʔyotshóng* ~ *ʔitshóng* adv. day before yesterday, two days ago  
 (ᄒᄒ) *ʔyók* n. work, job, chore  
 (ᄒᄒ) *ʔyum* v. ripen, bring to maturity  
 (ᄒᄒ) *ʔyel* v. divert

- 𐄂𐄃 *ʔyen* adv. last year  
 𐄂𐄄 *ʔân* and  
 𐄂𐄅 *ʔákâ* n. hand  
 𐄂𐄆 *ʔákán* n. hurry  
 𐄂𐄇 *ʔákíng* n. front  
 𐄂𐄈 *ʔákón* n. taste  
 𐄂𐄉 *ʔákup* n. child  
 𐄂𐄊 *ʔákyàng* adj. light, bright  
 𐄂𐄋 *ʔákrím* adj. bitter  
 𐄂𐄌 *ʔáklyam* adj. sweet  
 𐄂𐄍 *ʔákhú* adj. expensive  
 𐄂𐄎 *ʔágít* n. tribe  
 𐄂𐄏 *ʔágó* n. joy, happiness  
 𐄂𐄐 *ʔágek* n. birth  
 𐄂𐄑 ~ 𐄂𐄒 *ʔágyáp ~ gyáp* adj. much, very  
 𐄂𐄓 *ʔángpur* n. tunnel, opening  
 𐄂𐄔 *ʔácálá* adv. still  
 𐄂𐄕 *ʔácáng* n. back  
 𐄂𐄖 *ʔácor* adj. sour  
 𐄂𐄗 *ʔácum* adj. small  
 𐄂𐄘 *ʔácún* adv. below, lower down, beneath  
 𐄂𐄙 *ʔáce* n. love  
 𐄂𐄚 *ʔáchú* adv. this down here, this down below  
 𐄂𐄛 *ʔájóm* adj. easy, simple  
 𐄂𐄜 *ʔányúr* n. ear  
 𐄂𐄝 *ʔátâng* n. a fat male beast  
 𐄂𐄞 *ʔáti* n. sole  
 𐄂𐄟 *ʔátí* n. egg  
 𐄂𐄠 *ʔátím* adj. big  
 𐄂𐄡 *ʔátimmú* adj. big  
 𐄂𐄢 *ʔátet* adv. this much, this many  
 𐄂𐄣 *ʔátháng* adv. this up there  
 𐄂𐄤 *ʔáthong* n. leg  
 𐄂𐄥 *ʔáthól* adj. very near, very close  
 𐄂𐄦 *ʔáthú* adv. this up over there, this up above there  
 𐄂𐄧 *ʔáthyák* n. head  
 𐄂𐄨 *ʔádók* n. pain  
 𐄂𐄩 *ʔádúm* adj. white  
 𐄂𐄪 *ʔádyáng* n. lower leg

- 𐄂(𐄃) 𐄂ádyút n. fight  
 𐄂(𐄄) 𐄂ánók adj. black  
 𐄂(𐄅) 𐄂ánóm n. elder sister  
 𐄂(𐄆) 𐄂ánum n. younger brother  
 𐄂(𐄇) 𐄂ápíl n. shadow  
 𐄂(𐄈) 𐄂ápín adv. this on the other side  
 𐄂(𐄉) 𐄂(𐄊) 𐄂ápín 𐄂ábon adv. on both sides, here and there  
 𐄂(𐄋) ~ 𐄂(𐄌) 𐄂ápun ~ pun adj. near, close  
 𐄂(𐄍) 𐄂áfi adv. this just here, this nearby here  
 𐄂(𐄎) 𐄂áflik adj. some  
 𐄂(𐄏) 𐄂áfo n. tooth  
 𐄂(𐄐) 𐄂áfong adj. green  
 𐄂(𐄑) 𐄂ábá adv. here, this here  
 𐄂(𐄒) 𐄂ábi adv. here, this right here  
 𐄂(𐄓) 𐄂ábo n. father  
 𐄂(𐄔) 𐄂ábong n. mouth  
 𐄂(𐄕) 𐄂ábon adv. on this side  
 𐄂(𐄖) 𐄂ábek n. middle  
 𐄂(𐄗) 𐄂ábryáng n. name  
 𐄂(𐄘) 𐄂ámel n. hair  
 𐄂(𐄙) 𐄂ámík n. eye  
 𐄂(𐄚) 𐄂ámlem n. face  
 𐄂(𐄛) 𐄂ámú n. mother  
 𐄂(𐄜) 𐄂átsóm n. hair  
 𐄂(𐄝) 𐄂ázóm n. rice, food  
 𐄂(𐄞) 𐄂ázuk adj. pretty  
 𐄂(𐄟) 𐄂áyu n. wife, woman joined in marriage to a husband  
 𐄂(𐄠) 𐄂árí n. scent  
 𐄂(𐄡) 𐄂áring n. language  
 𐄂(𐄢) 𐄂árom n. fear  
 𐄂(𐄣) 𐄂árum adv. far  
 𐄂(𐄤) 𐄂áre pron. this  
 𐄂(𐄥) 𐄂áryúm adj. good  
 𐄂(𐄦) 𐄂ál adj. new  
 𐄂(𐄧) 𐄂állát n. freshness, newness  
 𐄂(𐄨) 𐄂álin n. speech, talk  
 𐄂(𐄩) 𐄂álim adj. heavy  
 𐄂(𐄪) 𐄂álóng adv. now, at this very moment  
 𐄂(𐄫) 𐄂álóngbá adv. in a moment, in a little while

- 𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑 *ʔálonglá* adv. still  
 𐄎𐄏𐄒 *ʔálon* adv. in this direction  
 𐄎𐄏𐄓 *ʔálom* adv. like this  
 𐄎𐄏𐄔 *ʔálol* adv. this way, in this direction  
 𐄎𐄏𐄕 *ʔálut* n. heart  
 𐄎𐄏𐄖 *ʔálem* adv. in this direction, hither  
 𐄎𐄏𐄗 *ʔályú* n. cat  
 𐄎𐄏𐄘 *ʔáhret* n. bone  
 𐄎𐄏𐄙 *ʔáhyâng* adj. cold  
 𐄎𐄏𐄚 *ʔáhyur* adj. red  
 𐄎𐄏𐄛 *ʔávyo* n. tibia  
 𐄎𐄏𐄜 *ʔáshúm* adj. fat  
 𐄎𐄏𐄝 *ʔásúm* adj. spicy  
 𐄎𐄏𐄞 *ʔáʔít* n. origin, creation  
 𐄎𐄏𐄟 *ʔáʔóm* n. radiance  
 𐄎𐄏𐄠 *ʔík* adj. still  
 𐄎𐄏𐄡 *ʔíng* n. younger sibling  
 𐄎𐄏𐄢 *ʔíngngá* n. child  
 𐄎𐄏𐄣 *ʔít* v. create  
 𐄎𐄏𐄤 *ʔochú* adv. that down here  
 𐄎𐄏𐄥 *ʔotet* adv. that much, this many  
 𐄎𐄏𐄦 *ʔothá* adv. then, at that time  
 𐄎𐄏𐄧 *ʔotháng* adv. that up there  
 𐄎𐄏𐄨 *ʔothú* adv. that up over there  
 𐄎𐄏𐄩 *ʔopín* adv. that on the other side  
 𐄎𐄏𐄪 *ʔobá* adv. there  
 𐄎𐄏𐄫 *ʔobon* adv. on that side  
 𐄎𐄏𐄬 *ʔotshóng* adv. that day  
 𐄎𐄏𐄭 *ʔolol* adv. that way, in that direction  
 𐄎𐄏𐄮 *ʔolom* adv. like that  
 𐄎𐄏𐄯 *ʔolon* in that direction  
 𐄎𐄏𐄰 *ʔolem* adv. in that direction, thither  
 𐄎𐄏𐄱 *ʔok* v. open  
 𐄎𐄏𐄲 *ʔóng* n. boy  
 𐄎𐄏𐄳 *ʔóngkup* n. small boy  
 𐄎𐄏𐄴 *ʔót* v. pluck, as fruits  
 𐄎𐄏𐄵 *ʔóm* v. shine  
 𐄎𐄏𐄶 *ʔúng* n. water  
 𐄎𐄏𐄷 *ʔút* n. otter

- ᐱᐅ ᐱᐅ *ᐱᐅ* n. horse  
ᐱᐅ ᐱᐅ *ᐱᐅ* adj. ripe, sweet, tasty  
ᐱᐅ ᐱᐅ *ᐱᐅ* v. sell  
ᐱᐅᐅᐅ *ᐱᐅᐅᐅ* n. salesman, seller

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