

# Tibetan language

for beginners



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# Contents

Introduction	5
<b>Part I – Grammar</b>	6
Sentence structure	7
Nouns	8
Articles	9
Personal pronouns	10
Genitive and dative cases	11
Possessive adjectives and pronouns	12
Demonstrative adjectives and pronouns	13
Qualifying adjectives	14
Interrogative pronouns	16
Postpositions	17
Verbs - To be	18
Verbs - To have	23
Verbs conjugation	24
Verbs - Infinitive	25
Verbs – Present tense	26
Verbs – Future tense	27
Verbs – Past tense	28
Verbs – Negative form	29
Verbs – Interrogative form	30

Questions and answers	31
Imperative	32
Verbs – Termination table	33
Want – need – can – like	35
Special structures	37
Numbers	39
Indefinite adjective and pronouns	40
Conjunctions	40
<b>Part II – Little phrasebook</b>	
Greetings – Making friends	41
In town and outskirts	46
Visiting a monastery	50
At the Barkor market	53
At the restaurant	55
At the hotel	58
Trekking	59
Weather	60
Time	61
Health	63
Common adjectives	65
Common verbs	67
<b>Tibetan alphabet</b>	70
<b>Bibliography</b>	72

# Introduction

These pages are intended to provide the basic rules to build simple sentences in Tibetan, suitable to have small conversations or ask information.

The [first part](#) contains simple grammar rules and many examples on how to use them.

The [second part](#) is a collection of words and phrases useful on different occasions (visiting towns and monasteries, trekking on mountains, eating at the restaurant, etc), where you can find some applications of the rules presented in the first part.

Hurried and lazy people can skip directly to the second part, using sentences without knowing nothing about their structure, but it will be much less amusing...!

## **Pronunciation rules**

Tibetan words have been transcribed using the Latin alphabet, trying to reproduce the original pronunciation. However the readers must take in mind that some Tibetan sounds have not a precise correspondence in western languages. For instance you can hear a sound that is not really *k* nor *g* but stays somewhere in the middle between them; the same happens for *p* and *b*, or for *d* and *t*.

At the end of this grammar you can see the Tibetan alphabet, consisting of 29 consonants and 5 vowels. For our western ears it can be difficult to perceive the difference between *k* and *k'*, between *ts* and *ts'*, or between *ch* and *ch'*. Sounds that for us are quite similar, for Tibetans are very different. In any case, don't get discouraged...Tibetan people can understand you even if you don't use the exact pronunciation and often, with a smile or a warm laugh, they will repeat what you have awkwardly tried to say, giving you the possibility to listen the correct way to pronounce it...

The Tibetan language is spoken in a very wide region, extending for thousands of kilometers. The written language doesn't change, but the pronunciation can vary a lot going from the western part of Tibet to the extreme eastern regions or to the Himalayan lands. In this grammar we will refer to the pronunciation used in Lhasa.

In general you can read the Tibetan sentences of this book as in English, but remember that:

**a** is like in *father*

**e** is like in *let*

**i** is like in *sing*

**o** is like in *low*

**ö** is like the French *eu* in *jeu*

**u** is like in *moon*

**ü** is like the French *u*

**ny** is like the Spanish *ñ* in *niño*

**g** is like in *goat*

**j** is like in *jam*

**r** is rolled, don't read it like the Italian nor the French *r's*.

**ng** is like in *sing*, but the *g* is almost silent (the very common word *nga*, that means *I*, is pronounced as something between *nga* and *na*).

**k,g** at the end of a word are almost silent (*yag*, the popular animal yak, and *chig*, the number one, are pronounced almost *ya* and *chi*)

**h** *h* after a consonant (except after *c*) means a breathy consonant. Don't read *ph* as in *photo* and don't read *th* as in *three* or as in *this*. Pronounce *thr* and *dhr* like in *tree* and *drum*.

In this book all the words are divided in syllables to make easier the learning. In a word the accent generally falls on the last syllable...but not always: at the restaurant remember to ask for *momò* (typical dumplings) and not for *mòmo* (grandmother)...

Good luck ! ... or better, Tashi deleg !



# Part I

## Grammar

### Sentence structure

In Tibetan language the structure of the sentence is:

**subject + object + verb**

The verb is always at the end.

#### Example:

I am Pema = **nga Pe-ma yin**

*I - Pema - am*

this is a book = **di teb re**

*this - book - is*

Tenzin is in Tibet = **Ten-zin Pö la du**

*Tenzin - Tibet - in - is*

## Nouns

In Tibetan language nouns can be monosyllabic or polysyllabic. Most of them are disyllabic.

### Example:

*monosyllabic*

earth = **sa**

mountain = **ri**

people = **mi**

water = **chu**

tea = **cha**

*disyllabic*

mother = **a-ma**

monastery = **gom-pa**

lama = **la-ma**

house = **khang-pa**

good = **yag-po**

Most of polysyllabic nouns end with the particles: **-pa, -po, -ba, -bo, -ma, -mo.**

In some cases, by adding the particle **-pa** to a word, a new term is created, denoting a man who is in some way connected to the item.

### Example:

horse = **ta**

horseman = **ta-pa**

Tibet = **Pö**

man of Tibet = **Pö-pa**

## Number and gender

To make a noun **plural** you can add the particle **-tso**.

### **Example:**

book = **teb**                      books = **teb-tso**  
person = **mi**                      persons = **mi-tso**

In many cases the terminations **-po** and **-mo** define the gender.

**Example:**    king = **gyel-po**                      queen = **gyel-mo**

Some nouns have a single form for masculine and feminine.

**Example:**    children (male and female) = **pu-gu**

In some case different words specifies different gender.

**Example:**    male yak = **yag**                      female yak = **dhri**

## Articles

In Tibetan the definite and indefinite articles do not exist.

Instead of the indefinite articles **a** and **an** you can use the word for the number one, **chig**, following the noun.

### Example:

**a boy = bu chig** (pronounce *chig* almost as *chi*),

**a girl = bu-mo chig**

Instead of the definite article **the** you can use, if necessary, the demonstrative adjectives **this/that** and **these/those**, always following the noun.

this = **di**                      that = **de**

these = **din-tso**              those = **den-tso**

### Example:

**the book (if it is near) = teb di**

**the books (if it is far) = teb den-tso**

*Note: demonstrative adjectives will be more extensively discussed at pag.13.*

## Personal pronouns

I	<b>nga</b>
you	<b>khye-rang</b>
he/ she	<b>khong</b> (honorific)
he	<b>kho / kho-rang</b>
she	<b>mo / mo-rang</b>
we	<b>ngan-tso</b>
you	<b>khe-rang-tso</b>
they	<b>khong-tso</b>

In practice for **he** and **she** you can always use **khong**, even if it is an honorific term, to be used talking of important people (for example lamas or professors).

## Genitive and dative cases

To form the genitive case (ex.: the book *of* Tenzin) one must insert the particle **gi** between the owner and the owned:

**owner + gi + owned**

### Example:

the house of the lama = **la-ma gi khang-pa**

*lama - of - house*

the price of the tea = **cha gi kong**

*tea - of - price*

To form the dative case (ex.: I gave it *to* you) one has to put the particle **la** after the noun or the personal pronoun that receives the action.

to = **la**

### Example:

to the lama = **la-ma la**

to me = **nga la**

Pronounce these sentences with the accent on the particle **la**.

## Possessive adjectives and pronouns

To form possessive adjectives and pronouns simply add the genitive particle **-gi** to the personal pronouns ( in practice “your” is translated as “of you”, etc.) except “nga-gi” that becomes “nge” (pronounce *nge* like *ñe* with a long *e*).

For plural persons you can also change the termination **tso** in **tsö**.

my - mine	<b>nge</b>
your - yours	<b>khye-rang-gi</b>
his/her-hers/its	<b>khong-gi</b>
our - ours	<b>ngan-tso-gi / ngan-tsö</b>
your - yours	<b>khe-rang-tso-gi / khe-rang-tsö</b>
their - theirs	<b>khong-tso-gi / khong-tsö</b>

Possessive adjectives must be placed **before** the noun.

### **Example:**

my friend = **nge dhrog-po**

this is yours = di **khye-rang-gi** re

## Demonstrative adjectives and pronouns

this = **di**

that = **de / pha-gi**

these = **din-tso**

those = **den-tso / phan-tso / pha-gi-tso**

Demonstrative adjectives must be placed **after** the noun.

### **Example:**

**this** house = khang-pa **di**

*house - this*

**this** is my house = **di** nge khang-pa re

*this - my - house - is*

**that** is your friend = **de** khye-rang-gi dhrog-pa re

*that - your - friend - is*

## Qualifying adjectives

In Tibetan qualifying adjectives are always placed **after** the nouns and do not change with the gender.

The particle **-tso** to make plural or demonstratives used as articles are placed **after** the adjectives.

### Example:

**good person = mi yag-po**

**good persons = mi yag-po-tso**

**these good persons = mi yag-po din-tso**

### Some common adjectives

**big = chen-po**

**small = chun chun**

**hot = tsa-po**

**cold = dhrang-mo**

**good = yag-po**

**bad = dug-cha**

**long = ring-po**

**short = tung tung**

**old = nyim-pa**

**new = sar-pa**

To say **very + adjective** you can use:

**adjective + shi-tha** or **pe + adjective**

**Es.: very hot = tsa-po shi-tha** or **pe tsa-po**

To say **extremely + adjective** add the particle **-shö** to the adjective root.

**Example:**                **extremely hot = tsa-shö**

To say **too + adjective** add the particle **-tak** to the adjective root.

**Example:**                **too hot = tsa-tak**

To ask **how + adjective ?** add the particle **-lö** to the adjective root .

**Example:**                **how long is it ? = ring-lö re ?**

### Comparatives

To say **more + adjective** one adds the particles **-ua** to the adjective root. If the root ends with *g* or *r* instead of *-ua* you must use **-ga** or **-ra**. Sometimes the root is slightly modified.

**Example:**

big = **chen-po**                bigger = **che-ua**

good = **yag-po**                better = **yag-ga**

To make a comparison the particle **le** (pronounced with a long *e*) is used in the following way:

**Ex:**                my horse is **bigger** than yours =

nge ta, khye-rang-gi ta **le**, **che-ua** du

*my - horse - your - horse - than - bigger - is*

## Interrogative pronouns

what ? = **ka-re**

which ? = **ka-gi**

where ? = **ka-bar**

from where ? = **ka-ne**

how ? = **kan-dhre**

in which way ? = **kan-dhre-si**

how much ? = **ka-tsö**

when ? = **ka-dü**

who ? = **sü**

why ? = **ka-re se-na**

### Example:

**what** is it ? = **ka-re** re ?

**what** is there ? = **ka-re** du ?

**which** is your house ? = ke-rang-gi khang-pa **ka-gi** re?

**what** time is it ? = chu-tsö **ka-tsö** re ?

*hour - how much - is ?*

**how much** is the price ? = kong **ka-tsö** re ?

*price - how much - is ?*

## Post-positions

Post-positions correspond to English prepositions, but always **follow** the noun they address (often between the noun and the postposition the particle **gi** is inserted):

in, at, to, for, towards = <b>la</b>	from = <b>ne</b>
on = <b>gang-la</b>	under = <b>uog-la</b>
in, inside = <b>la / nang-la</b>	outside = <b>chi-log-la</b>
near = <b>thri-la</b>	far from = <b>gyang-la</b>
in front of = <b>dün-la</b>	behind = <b>gyab-la</b>
before = <b>ngon-la</b>	after = <b>je-la</b>
in middle = <b>kyil-la</b>	with = <b>nyam-du</b>
about = <b>kor-la</b>	

### Example:

in Tibet = Pö **la**                      with me = nga **nyam-du**

on the table = chog-tse **gi gang-la**

near you = khye-rang **gi thri-la**

I come **from** Italy = nga Ithaly **ne** yin

I talk **about** this = nga di **kor-la** lap-gi-yö

## Verbs - To be

In Tibetan language the verb **to be** has two different forms:

- a) to express **identity** (*ex: I am Tashi*)
- b) to express **location** (*ex.: I am in Tibet*).

The verb **to be** doesn't change with the number. This means that the conjugation of plural persons (we, you, they) is equal to the conjugation of singular ones (I, you, he/she/it).

**To be** also doesn't change tense. Tenses must be deduced by the general context of the sentence.

### a) Identity

I am	=	nga	<b>yin</b>
you are	=	khye-rang	<b>re</b>
he is	=	khong	<b>re</b>

### Example:

**I am Tashi = nga Ta-shi yin**

*I - Tashi - am*

**this is mine = di nge re**

*this - mine - is*

## b) Location, existence

To express existence in a place :

I am	=	nga	yö
you are	=	khye-rang	<b>du</b> / <b>yo-re</b>
he is	=	khong	<b>du</b> / <b>yo-re</b>

How to choose between **du** and **yo-re** ?

**Du** (pronounced almost like *dug*) is used when the speaker has personally experienced what he is talking about, while **yo-re** (pronounced with the accent on *re*) is used if he only knows the subject from other sources.

### Example:

I am in Tibet = nga Pö la yö

*I - Tibet - in - am*

If I have seen yaks in Tibet I can say:

in Tibet there are yaks = Pö la yag **du**

If I have only read on books that yaks live in Tibet I say:

in Tibet there are yaks = Pö la yag **yo-re**

## To be – negative form

The negative form of **to be** is obtained modifying the conjugation as follows:

<b>yin</b> → <b>min</b>	<b>yö</b> → <b>me</b>
<b>re</b> → <b>ma-re</b>	<b>du</b> → <b>min-du</b>

### Example:

he is **not** Tenzin = khong Ten-zin **ma-re**

*he - Tenzin - is not*

I **am not** in Lhasa = nga Lha-sa la **me**

*I - Lhasa - in - am not*

here **there are no** yaks = de yag **min-du**

*here - yaks - there are not*

Note that **ma-re** and **min-du** have to be pronounced with the accent on the last syllable.

## To be – interrogative form

The interrogative form of **to be** is obtained adding the terminations **pe** or **ge**, as shown in the panel.

<b>yin</b> → <b>yin-pe</b>	<b>yö</b> → <b>yö-pe</b>
<b>re</b> → <b>re-pe</b>	<b>du</b> → <b>du-ge</b>

**Ex:**     **is there** a monastery ? = gom-pa chig **yo-re-pe** ?

*monastery – a – is there*

Furthermore the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> persons are swapped, that is to say that in a question the verb is conjugated as expected in the answer (ex.: **are you** ? becomes **am you** ?).

**Ex.:**     **are you** Tashi ? = khye-rang Ta-shi **yin-pe** ?

*you - Tashi - are (am)*

If in the sentence there is an interrogative pronoun (what, who, where, when...) the verb doesn't change.

**Ex.:**     **where is** the market ? = throm ka-ba **yo-re** ?

*market – where – is*

Note that the accent of verbs in interrogative form falls always on **pe** and **ge**, that must be pronounced with a long and open *e*.

## To be - Summary

### To be (identity)

	<i>Affirm.</i>	<i>Neg.</i>	<i>Inter.</i>	<i>Inter.-neg.</i>
nga	<b>yin</b>	<b>min</b>	<b>re-pe</b>	<b>ma-re-pe</b>
khye-rang	<b>re</b>	<b>ma-re</b>	<b>yin-pe</b>	<b>min-pe</b>
khong	<b>re</b>	<b>ma-re</b>	<b>re-pe</b>	<b>ma-re-pe</b>

### To be (location)

	<i>Affirm.</i>	<i>Neg.</i>	<i>Inter.</i>	<i>Inter.-neg.</i>
nga	<b>yö</b>	<b>me</b>	<b>yo-re-pe</b>	<b>yo-ma-re-pe</b>
khye-rang	<b>du</b>	<b>min-du</b>	<b>yö-pe</b>	<b>me-pe</b>
	<b>yo-re</b>	<b>yo-ma-re</b>		<b>yo-ma-re-pe</b>
khong	<b>du</b>	<b>min-du</b>	<b>du-ge</b>	<b>min-du-ge</b>
	<b>yo-re</b>	<b>yo-ma-re</b>	<b>yo-re-pe</b>	<b>yo-ma-re-pe</b>

## Verbs - To have

In Tibetan the verb **to have** doesn't exist.

To express the idea of possession you can use the verb **to be** in its *location form*, putting the particle **la** after the subject.

In practice “he has...” is translated as “by him there is....”

I have	=	nga	<b>la</b>	<b>yö</b>
you are	=	khye-rang	<b>la</b>	<b>du</b> / <b>yo-re</b>
he has	=	khong	<b>la</b>	<b>du</b> / <b>yo-re</b>

The choice between **du** or **yo-re** follows the same rules seen for **to be**.

### Example:

**I have** a house = nga la khang-pa **yö**

*I – house - have*

he **has no** yaks = khong la yag **min-du**

*he - yaks – has not*

**have you** a car ? = khye-rang la mo-tha **yö-pé ?**

*you - car – have*

## Verbs conjugation

The verb conjugation is one of the most delicate parts of the Tibetan grammar.

To conjugate verbs one must add a suitable termination to the verb root, that depends on the person and the tense.

The terminations are formed by particle as **gi** or **pa**, followed by auxiliary verbs (the two forms of **to be**).

The terminations do not change with the number (for example the 3<sup>rd</sup> singular person *he* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural person *them* have the same termination).

The termination also changes if the verbs is **active** or **passive**.

Active verbs define an action “actively” performed (as to go, eat, read...). Passive verbs refers to actions or sensations that the subject doesn't have control over (as to be hungry, to feel, to fall asleep...).

With some active verbs, the particle **gi** has to be insert after the subject.

## Verbs - Infinitive

Verbs are formed by a **root** (fixed) and a **termination** (that changes according to the person and the tense).

The termination of the infinitive is **-ua** or **-pa** depending on the verb.

### Example:

#### *Active verbs*

to go	<b>dhro-ua</b>	to come	<b>yong-ua</b>
to make	<b>je-pa</b>	to meet	<b>thuk-pa</b>
to eat	<b>sa-ua</b>	to drink	<b>thung-ua</b>
to read	<b>log-pa</b>	to write	<b>dhri-ua</b>
to see	<b>ta-ua</b>	to buy	<b>nyo-ua</b>
to give	<b>te-ua</b>	to stay	<b>de-pa</b>

#### *Passive verbs*

to be hungry	<b>dro-go to-pa</b>	to be thirsty	<b>kha-kom-pa</b>
to remember	<b>dhen-pa</b>	to fall ill	<b>na-ua</b>

## Verbs - Present tense

To conjugate the present tense add the following terminations to the verb root:

	<i>Active verbs</i>	<i>Passive verbs</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> person	<b>+gi-yö</b>	<b>+gi-du</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> person	<b>+gi-du</b>	<b>+gi-du</b>

### Exemple:

*active verbs:*

I **go** home = nga nang la **dhro-gi-yö**

*I - home - go*

he **eats** yak meat= khong yak-sha **sa-gi-du**

*he - yak meat - eats*

*passive verbs:*

I **am hungry** = nga **dhro-go-to-gi-du**

they **are thirsty** = khong-tso **kha-kom-gi-du**

## Verbs - Future tense

Terminations to add to the verb root:

	<i>Active verbs</i>	<i>Passive verbs</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> person	<b>+gi-yin</b>	<b>+gi-re</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> persons	<b>+gi-re</b>	<b>+gi-re</b>

### Example:

I **will go** to Lhasa = nga Lha-sa la **dhro-gi-yin**

*I - Lhasa - to - will go*

you **will drink** tea = khye-rang cha **thung-gi-re**

*you - tea - will drink*

we **will stay** at home = nga-tso nang la **de-gi-yin**

*we - home - at - will stay*

we **will meet** at the market =

= ngan-tso throm la **thuk-gi-yin**

*we - market- at -will meet*

## Verbs - Past tense

Terminations to add to the verb root:

	<i>Active verbs</i>	<i>Passive verbs</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> person	<b>+pa-yin</b>	<b>+song</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> persons	<b>+pa-re</b>	<b>+song</b>

### Example:

you **drank** water = khye-rang chu **thung-pa-re**

*you - water - drank*

I **understood** = nga **ha-ko-song**

I **forgot** = **je-song**

I **heard** = **ko-song**

**Note:** some irregular verbs change the root in the past, ex:

to go                    **dhro** → **chin**

to come                **yong** → **lep**

to eat                    **sa** → **se**

**Ex.:** I **went** to the restaurant = nga sa-khang la **chin-pa-yin**

*I - restaurant - to - went*

## Verbs - Negative form

The negative form is obtained by modifying the terminations in the following way:

**yin → min**

**yö → me**

**re → ma-re**

**du → min-du**

**song → ma-song**

### Example:

**I don't go** to the restaurant = nga sa-khang la **dhro-gi-me**

*I - restaurant - to - don't go*

**he doesn't go** to Lhasa = khong Lha-sa la **dhro-gi-min-du**

*he - Lhasa - to - doesn't go*

**he will not eat** meat = khong sha **sa-gi-ma-re**

*he - meat - will not eat*

**I have not understood** = **ha-ko-ma-song**

## Verb - Interrogative form

In order to obtain the interrogative form you must modify the terminations as follows:

<b>yin</b> → <b>yin-pe</b>	<b>yö</b> → <b>yö-pe</b>
<b>re</b> → <b>re-pe</b>	<b>du</b> → <b>du-ge</b>
<b>song</b> → <b>song-nge</b>	

Furthermore, as for the verb **to be**, the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> persons are swapped, that is to say that in a question the verb is conjugated as expected in the answer.

Note that the termination **gi-yin-pe** can be shortened as **ge**, while **pa-yin-pe** is shortened as **pe**.

### Example:

**do you go** to Lhasa ? = khye-rang Lha-sa la **dhro-gi-yö-pe**?

*you - Lhasa - to - go*

**did you understand** ? = **ha-ko-song-ge** ?

**will you go** ? = khye-rang **dhro-gi-yin-pe** (*short. dhro-ge*) ?

**did you go** ? = khye-rang **chin-pa-yin-pe** (*short. chin-pe*) ?

Remember, the accent of the verb falls always on **pe** and **ge**.

## Questions and answers

We have seen that in a question the **1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> persons are swapped**, that is to say that the verb is conjugated as expected in the answer.

To answer, if the answer is simply **yes** or **no**, you have to use the courtesy particle **la**, followed by the auxiliary verb used in the question, in its affirmative or negative form.

### **Example:**

*question:* are you Tibetan ? = khye-rang pö-pa **yin-pe** ?

*answer:*     yes = **la-yin**                   no = **la-min**

*question:* do you eat meat ? = khye-rang sha sa-**gi-yö-pe** ?

*answer:*     yes = **la-yö**                   no = **la-me**

*question:* is this a monastery ? = di gom-pa **re-pe** ?

*answer:*     yes = **la-re**                   no = **la-ma-re**

*question:* is there a market ? = throm chig **yo-re-pe** ?

*answer:*     yes = **la-yo-re**               no = **la yo-ma-re**

If you don't know the answer:     maybe = **chig che-na**

                  probably yes = **yin-pa-dhra**

                  probably not = **me-pa-dhra**

## Imperative

The ordinary form uses the termination **-ah** added to the verb root. For a more polite form add the termination **-nang** or **rog-nang** to the verb root (the **g** of **rog** is almost silent). For an exhortation use the termination **-scig**.

For a strong command or in an informal situation you can simply drop the termination from the verb root.

For the negative form put the particle **ma** before the verb root.

### Example:

come ! = sho-**ah**

please, read = log-**rog-nang** (the accent is on *rog*)

come on, read ! = log-**scig**

give me ! = te

look ! = ta

come here ! = de sho

go away ! = gyu

don't do that ! = **ma-che**

## Verbs – Terminations table

### Active verbs

*Affirm.      Neg.      Inter.      Inter.-neg.*

#### Present

nga	gi-yö	gi-me	gi-du-ge	gi-min-du-ge
khyerang	gi-du	gi-min-du	gi-yö-pe	gi-me-pe
khong	gi-du	gi-min-du	gi-du-ge	gi-min-du-ge

#### Future

nga	gi-yin	min	gi-re-pe	gi-ma-re-pe
khyerang	gi-re	ghi-ma-re	gi-yin-pe / ge	gi-min-pe
khong	gi-re	ghi-ma-re	gi-re-pe	gi-ma-re-pe

#### Past

nga	pa-yin	pa-min	pa-re-pe	
khyerang	pa-re	pa-ma-re	pa-yin-pe / pe	
khong	pa-re	pa-ma-re	pa-re-pe	

## Passive verbs

*Affirm.      Neg.      Inter.      Inter.-neg.*

### Present

nga	gi-du	gi-min-du	gi-du-ge	gi-min-du-ge
khyerang	gi-du	gi-min-du	gi-du-ge	gi-min-du-ge
khong	gi-du	gi-min-du	gi-du-ge	gi-min-du-ge

### Future

nga	gi-re	gi-ma-re	gi-re-pe	gi-ma-re-pe
khyerang	gi-re	gi-ma-re	gi-re-pe	gi-ma-re-pe
khong	gi-re	gi-ma-re	gi-re-pe	gi-ma-re-pe

### Past

nga	song	ma-song	song-nge	ma-song-nge
khyerang	song	ma-song	song-nge	ma-song-nge
khong	song	ma-song	song-nge	ma-song-nge

## To want, need, must, can, etc

To translate **to want, to need** something, you must use the verb **go** in the following way:

Ex.: I **want** some tea = nga la cha **go**

I **don't want** Tibetan tea = nga la Pö cha **ma-go**

**do you want** some tea ? = khye-rang la cha **go-pe** ?

answer:            yes = **go**                    no = **ma-go**

what **do you want** ? = ka-re **go** ?

To translate **to need, must + verb**, you have to use the present tense form of the verb and substitute the particle **gi** of the termination with the particle **go**.

Ex.: I **have to go** to the market = nga throm la **dhro-go-yö**

you **must go** = khye-rang **dhro-go-re**

To translate **to want + verb** you must use the present tense of the verb and substitute **dö** to **ghi**. Furthermore you must add a **-n** to the verb root.

Ex.: I **want to go** to Lhasa = nga Lha-sa la **dhron-dö-yö**

I **don't want to eat** = nga **san-dö-me**

To translate **can, to be able**, use the form **verb + tub + termination**:

Ex.: **I can go to Lhasa =**

= nga Lha-sa la **dhro-tub-gi-yö**

To translate **to have intention of...**you must use **tsi** in the following way:

Ex.: **I intend to buy this = nga di nyo-tsi-yö**

To translate **to be allowed** you must use the verb **cho**:

Ex.: **Am I allowed to go there ? =**

= nga pa-ghi **dhro cho-gi-re-pe ?**

*answer:* yes = **cho-ghi-re**      no = **cho-ghi-ma-re**

## **To like**

To translate **to like...**use the expression **ga-bo** in this way:

Es.: **I like tea = nga cha la ga-bo yö**

**I don't like tea= nga cha la ga-bo me**

**do you like tea ? = khye-rang cha la ga-bo yö-pe ?**

**I like tea very much = nga cha la ga-bo shi-tha yö**

## Special structures

A sentence made of two parts connected by the conjunction **if**, like:

**if [subordinate sentence], [main sentence]**

is translated in the following way:

**[subordinate sentence] na, [main sentence]**

Ex: **if he comes, I will go =**

khong yong-gi-du **na**, nga dhro-gi-yin

*he - comes - if, I - will go*

Expressions as **before + verb**, are translated with the form **ma-verb-kong-la**.

Ex.: **before he arrives... = khong ma-lep-kong-la...**

In expressions with **when + verb...**, the form **verb-dü** is used.

Ex.: **when we arrive to Lhasa... =**

nga-tso Lha-sa la **lep-dü...**

Expressions with **to, in order to + verb** are translated with the form **verb-ga**.

Ex.: let's **go to eat** = ngan-tso **sa-ga** dhro

## Who is doing the action

The termination **ken** added to the verb root indicates who or what is doing the action.

Ex.: the car that is going to Lhasa =  
= Lha-sa la **dro-ken** mo-ta

## Numbers

number = trang-ka

0 = le-ko	5 = nga	10 = chu
1 = chig	6 = dhrug	11 = chu chig
2 = nyi	7 = dün	12 = chu nyi
3 = sum	8 = gye	.....
4 = shi	9 = gu	20 = nyi shu

Numbers larger than 20 are formed in a similar way, but one has to insert a particle between the tens and the units. This particle (**tsa, so, sha** ...) changes for every decade, as shown in the following panel.

21 = nyi-shu <b>tsa</b> chik	22 = nyi-shu <b>tsa</b> nyi
30 = sum chu	31 = sum-chu <b>so</b> chig
40 = shi-chu	41 = shi-chu <b>sha</b> chig
50 = nga-chu	51 = nga-chu <b>nga</b> chig
60 = dhrug-chu	61 = dhrug-chu <b>ra</b> chig
70 = dün-chu	71 = dün-chu <b>don</b> chig
80 = gye-chu	81 = gye-chu <b>gya</b> chig
90 = gu-chu	91 = gu-chu <b>go</b> chig
100 = gya	200 = nyi-gya
1000 = chig tong	2000 = nyi-tong

After “round” numbers as 20, 30, 100... is common to say the word **tam-ba** (Ex.: 50 = nga-chu tam-ba)

## Indefinite adjective and pronouns

much / many = mang-po

more = mang-ua

too much = mang-tak / mang drag-pa

a little = de-tsi / nyung nuyng / nyung-she

less = nyung-ua

how much / how many ? = mang-lö ?

all = tsang-ma / kang-ga / ka-yang

nothing = ke-e min-du / ga-yang me

few, some = ka-she

none = chig-yang

both = nyi-ka

half = che-ka

enough = dhrig-pa, dang-pa

every = re-re / ka-re yi-ne

other = shen-da

## Conjunctions ... and more

and = tang

or = yang-na

but = yin-na / yin-na yang

because = kang yin se-na (accent on *na*)

also = ye / yang

then = ten-ne / ten-du

otherwise = ya-me-na

in this case = di yin-na

since=tsang

about = tsam la / tsa

almost = pe-che

like, as = nang-shin

maybe = chik-che-na



## Part II

# Little phrasebook

### Greetings - Making friends

#### People and related words

people = mi

man/ boy / son = bu

father = pha-pa / pha-la

grandfather = po-po / po-la

child = pu-gu

brother = pin-gya bu / cho-la

husband = khyo-ga / cho-la

friend (male) = dhrog-po

age = lo

country = lung-pa

language = ke

Tibet = Pö

China = Gya-nak

India = Gya-gar

English = in-ji

family = mi-tsang

woman/ girl / daughter = bu-mo

mother = a-ma / a-ma-la

grandmother = mo-mo / mo-la

parents = pha-ma

sister = pin-gya bu-mo

wife = kye-men

friend (female) = dhrog-mo

work = le-ka

name = ming / tsen (hon.)

dialect = ke-lug

Tibetan = pö-pa

Chinese = gya-mi / ge-ri

Nepal = Pe-yul

foreigner = chi-gye

## Greetings and politeness

When you meet someone:

**ta-shi de-leg** (*good luck*) (the *g* of *leg* is almost silent)

**khye-rang ka-bar phe-ge** (*where are you going ?*)

How are you ? = **khye-rang ku-su de-po yin-pe ?**

( *is your body well ?* )

I am well = **la yin, nga sug-po de-po yin**

(*yes, my body is well*)

Note then the term body ( **sug-po** ) is expressed in the honorific form **ku-su** when it refers to the body of your interlocutor.

To say good bye, when you separate :

**ka-le-shu** (if you are going away, *stay peacefully*)

**ka-le-phe** (if you stay, *go peacefully*)

Note that in these sentences the honorific forms of go (**phe**) and stay (**shu**) are used.

See you later = **je yong**

See you tomorrow = **san-nyi je yong**

Goodnight = **sim-ja nan-go**

Thank you = **thu-je-che**

Excuse me = **gong-da** 42

It doesn't matter = **ke je-gi-ma-re**

Ok, it's all right = **dhri-gi-re / las-so**

## **Making friends**

What's your name ? = **khye-rang-gi ming-la ka-re re ?**

My name is Pema = **nge ming-la Pe-ma re**

**nga Pema yin**

How old are you ? = **khye-rang lo ka-tsö yin ?**

I am 30 = **nga lo 30 yin**

Where are you from ? = **khye-rang lung-pa ka-ne yin ?**

I am from Italy = **nga Italy ne yin**

What is your job ? = **khye-rang-gi le-ka ka-re re ?**

I am a farmer = **nga shing-pa yin**

professor = **nga ge-gen yin**

scientist = **nga tsen-rig-pa yin**

artist = **nga ri-mo-ken yin**

What is your religion ? = **khye-rang-gi chö-lug ka-re re ?**

I am Buddhist = **nga nang-pa yin**

Christian = **nga ye-shu yin**

Where do you live ? = **khye-rang ka-bar de-gi-yö ?**

I live in Lhasa = **nga Lha-sa la de-gi-yö**

When did you arrive in Tibet ? =

**khye-rang Pö la ka-dü yong-pa-yin ?**

Two days ago = **nyi-ma nyi chin-song**

How long will you stay in Tibet ? =

**khye-rang Pö la gyün-ring-lö de-ge ?**

I will stay 3 months = **nga Pö la da-wa sum de-gi-yin**

Please, come in = **phe rog-nang / ya phe**

Please, sit down = **shu-rog-nang**

Please, have a tea = **cha she-ro-nang** or **cha thung** ( informal)

What do you want ? = **ka-re go ?**

## **Language problems**

Do you speak English ? = **in-ji-ke shing-gi-yö-pe ?**

I speak a little Tibetan = **nga Pö-ke de-tsi shing-gi-yö**

Do you understand ? = **ha-ko song-nge ?**

I understand = **ha-ko song**

I don't understand = **ha-ko-ma-song**

Please, speak slowly = **ka-le la sung-rog-nang**

Please, repeat = **yang-kyer sung-rog-nang**

How do you call this ? = **di la ka-re sa ?**

What is the name of this ? = **di ming-la ka-re re ?**

Please, say it in Tibetan = **pö-ke la sung-rog-nang**

To attract the attention of someone, you must call the person using a different term depending on his/her age and gender:

	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>
<i>boy</i>	<b>bu</b>	<b>bu-mo</b>
<i>your age</i>	<b>cho-la</b>	<b>a-gia-la</b>
<i>older than you</i>	<b>pa-la</b>	<b>a-ma-la</b>
<i>very old</i>	<b>po-la</b>	<b>mo-la</b>

## In town and outskirts

### Buildings, roads etc

town = dhrong-kye

road = lam-ka

restaurant = sa-khang

shop = tsong-khang

bank = ngü-khang

palace = pho-dhrang

office = le-kung

hospital = men-khang

house = khang-pa

door = go

stairs = ken-za

at home = nang la

### Transportations

car = mo-tha

bus = lam-kor

taxi = te-ksi

motorcycle = pa-pa

plane = nam-dhru

boat = dhru

by car = mo-tha la

village = dhrong-sep

market = throm

hotel = dhru-khang / dhrön-khang

bar = chang-khang

post office = dhra-khang

museum = dhrem-tön khang

school = lap-dhra

prison = tsön-khang

roof = tho-kha

window = gi-kung

wall = tsik-pa / kyan

bicycle = kang-ga-ri

bus station = lam-kor kak-sa

driver = mo-tha tong-kyen

tractor = to-la-chi

airport = nam-dru thang

train = ri-li

by walking = kom-pa-gyab-ne

## Directions

place = sa-cha  
direction = chok  
right = ye  
left = yön  
up = ya  
here = de  
from here = di ne  
inside = nang-la  
behind = gyab-la  
close to = (gi) thri-la  
between = par-la  
around = gi ta-kor la  
north = chang  
east = shar  
map = sap-thra

distance = tha  
straight = shar-gye / kha-thu  
on the right = ye pa / ye cho-la  
on the left = yön pa / yön cho-la  
down = ma  
there = pha-ge  
from...to... = ... ne ...par-tu  
outside = chi-log-la  
in front of = tsa la / dün-la  
far = tha ring-po  
among = nang-ne  
upstairs = tho-ka  
south = lho  
west = nub  
toward south = lho chok la

## Photos, phone, postcards...

photograph = par  
ticket = pa-si  
letter = yi-gi  
address = kha-jang  
pen = nyu-gu  
paper = shu-gu

camera = par-che  
passport = lang-kyer  
postcard = dhrag-shog  
envelope = yi-go  
pencil = sha-nyu  
telephone = ka-bar

## **Walking in the town**

Where is the monastery ? = **gom-pa ka-bar yo-re ?**

Is it far ? = **tha ring-po yo-re-pe ?**

How far is the market ? =

**di-ne throm la tha ring-lö yo-re ?**

It is not too far = **tha ring-po shi-trha yo-ma-re**

Go north = **chang-chok la gyü**

Walking it takes two hours =

**kom-ba gyab-na chu-tsö nyi go-gi-re**

Where can I hire a bicycle ? =

**kang-ga-ri yar-sa ka-bar yo-re ?**

Do you hire bicycles ? = **kang-ga-ri yar-ye yö-pe ?**

How much does it cost for one day ? =

**nyi-ma chik la, kong ka-tsö re ?**

How much does it cost per hour ? =

**chu-tsö re-re la, ka-tsö re ?**

## Travelling

Is this the bus to Lhasa ? =

**Lha-sa la dro-ken lam-kor di re -pe ?**

What time will we leave ? =

**ngan-tso chu-tsö ka-tsö la dhro-ya re ?**

How long does the trip takes ? = **gyün ring-lö dhro-ya yo-re ?**

How far is Lhasa ? = **Lha-sa tha ring-lö yo-re ?**

From Lhasa to Sera how long does it take ? =

**Lha-sa ne Se-ra par-tu, chu-tsö ka-tsö go-gi-re ?**

The car is going too fast = **mo-tha gyo-tak gi-du**

I am afraid = **nga shi-gi-du**

Pease, go slowly = **ka-le ka-le dhro-rog-nang**

Stop please = **ka-rog-nang**

Wait a moment = **gu-nang**

## Visiting a monastery

### In the monastery and around

monastery = gom-pa

temple = lha-khang

altar = chö-shun

stupa = chö-ten

circumambulation = ko-ra

cave = dhra-pu

nun monastery = a-ni gom-pa

assembly hall = tsog-khang

statue = ku

lama's throne = la-ma shug-ti

prayer mast = dar-chen

rock painting = do la ri-mo

### Religious objects

painting = thang-ka

white scarf = kha-ta

incense = pö

vajra = dor-je

drum = nga

cymbal = bug-che

rosary = thran-ga

mani-stone = do-ko ma-ni

mandala = kil-khor

prayer flag = dar-chog

butter lamp = cho-me

bell = dhri-bu

trumpet = gya-ling / dung-chen

religious book = pe-cha

prayer wheel = ma-ni kor-lo

sacred food = tsog

### Rites and prayers

ceremony = se-ra-kom-ba

prayer = mu-lam

to prostrate = cha-tse

mantra = ma-ni / ngak

to meditate = gom gyab

religious dance = cham

festival = dü-chen

to pray = mu-lam gyap

to circumambulate = ko-ra gyab

to say mantra = ma-ni dang

divination = mo gyap

debate = tsö-pa

## People and deities

monk = ku-sho/ dhra-pa

abbot = khen-po

hermit = gom-chen

god = lha

Buddha = Sang-gye

Maitreya = Cham-pa

Yamantaka = Dor-ge Jig-je

protective deity = yi-dam

nun = a-ni

teacher = rim-po-che

pilgrim = ne-kor-ken

goddess = lha-mo

Avalokiteshvara = Chen-re-zi

Tara = Dhrol-ma

Dalai Lama = Ye-shin Nor-bu

bodhisattva = jang-chu sem-pa

## Religion

religion = chö

buddhism = nang-pe chö

christian = ye-shu

jewish = ju-is

muslim = kha-che

life = tse

karma = le

sect = chö-lug

buddhist = nang-pa

catholic = ye-shu ke-to-ly

atheist = chö khe-mi-len-ken

mosque = kha-che lha-kang

death = chi-ua

reincarnation = kye-wa nga-chi

## Useful sentences

When does Jokang open / close ? =

**Jo-kang go ka-dü che-gi-re /gyap-gi-re ?**

At what time do you open / close ? =

**chü-tso ka-tsö la go che-gi-re / gyap-gi-re ?**

May I come in ? = **nga nang-la yong-na dhri-gi-re-pe ?**

May I go there ? = **nga pa-ge dhro cho-gi-re-pe ?**

May I go upstairs ? = **nga tho-ka la dhro cho-gi-re-pe?**

May I look at those statues ? =

**nga ku pan-tso la ta-na dhri-gi-re-pe ?**

May I take a picture ? = **par gyap cho-gi-re-pe ?**

You can = **cho-gi-re**                      You cannot = **cho-gi-ma-re**

You have to pay = **ngü te-go-re**

You have not to pay = **ngü te-go-ma-re**

Of whom is that statue ? = **ku pa-gi su re ?**

What is the meaning of this painting ? =

**ri-mo di gi tön-ta ka-re re ?**

Where are the rock paintings ? = **do la ri-mo ka-bar yo re ?**

How many monks are here ? = **ku-sho ka-tsö yo-re ?**

When there will be a ceremony ? =

**se-ra kom-ba go ka-dü che-gi-re-pe ?**

Many buildings have been destroyed =

**khang-pa mang-po me-ba sö yo-re**

## At the Barkor market

price = kong

coin/yuan = gor-mo

bracelet = dro-tung

pearl = trang-dok

gold = ser

coral = che-ru

amber = po-shi

ivory = pe-so

skin = pak-pa

wool = pee

clothes = tung-lo

apron = pan-ge

knife = thri

painting = ri-mo

true = ngo-ma/ ngo-ne

*(for religious objects see pag. 50)*

money = ngü

thing = cha-lag

necklace = kye-gyen

precious stone = tha

silver = ngü

turquoise = yu

“eye stone” = zii

mother-pearl = mo-ti

bone = ru-ko

silk = tu-zi

Tibetan coat = chu-ba

foulard = gor-re

shell = tung

book = teb

false = zü-ma

### Useful sentences

I want to buy a necklace = **nga ke-gyen chik nyon-dö-yö**

Please show me those necklaces =

**nga-la ke-gyen pan-tso te-rog-nang**

Which stones are they ? = **tha ka-re re ?**

These stones are authentic ? = **tha di ngo-ma re-pe ?**

Which material is it ? = **di gi gyup-cha ka-re re ?**

Where can I find some tangka ? =

**tang-ka ka-bar ra-gi-re?**

This tangka is true or false ? =

**tang-ka di ngo-ma re, zü-ma re ?**

It seems false = **zü-ma nang-shin du** (*it is like false*)

How much for this ? = **di kong ka-tsö re ?**

How much for all this ? = **di tsang-ma ka-tsö re ?**

It's expensive = **kong chen-po re** (*the price is large*)

It's too expensive = **kong che-tak du**

Have you something cheaper ? = **kong chun-nga yö-pe ?**

Have you something better ? = **yag-ga yö-pe ?**

I give you 100 yuan for all this =

**nga cha-lag tsang-ma la gor-mo 100 te-gi-yin**

OK = **dhri-ghi-re**

Like this = **di nang-shin**

## At the restaurant

food/meal = ka-la

lunch = nyng-ku ka-la

table = chog-tse

plate = ta-ba

bowl = po-ba / ka-yül

chopsticks = kö-tse

knife = dri

bill = ngü-tsi

### Drinks

water = chu

tea = cha

sweet tea = cha ngar-mo

fruit juice = shin-tog ku-ua

### Milk and dairy products

milk = o-ma

cheese = chu-ra

### Cereals and first courses

bread = pa-le

rice = dre

soup = tang (chinese)

breakfast = sho-ghe/sho-cha ka-la

dinner = gong-ta ka-la

chair = kup-kya

glass = glas-si

bottle = she-tam

fork = kang-dra

spoon = tu-ma

beer = chang

butter tea = pö-cha

boiled hot water = chu kö-ma

butter = mahr

yogurt = sho

spaghetti = ghya-du

barley = ne

cake = ten-shi

## Second courses

veal/beef = lang-sha

yak = yag-sha

chicken = cha-sha

dried meat = sha-kam

lamb = lug-sha

pork = phak-sha

fish = nya-sha

egg = gon-nga

## Tibetan dishes

Tibetan food = Pö-be ka-la

dumplings = mo-mo

vegetarian dumplings = mo-mo sha me-ba

soup with noodles = tuk-pa

soya noodles = ping

toasted barley flour = tsam-pa

## Vegetables and fruit

potatoes = sho-go

beans = tre-ma

fruit = shing-do

pear = li

onions = tsong

tomatoes = tomato

apple = ku-shu

orange = tsa-lù-ma

## Condiments

salt = tsa

oil = num

sugar = che-ma ka-ra

vinegar = tshu

## Cooking styles

boiled = chu-tsö

roast = me-tag ghyab-pa

fried = ngö-pa

grilled = chag-top nang-la trag-pa

## Useful sentences

Where is a Tibetan (western) restaurant ? =

**Phö-be (In-ji) sa-kang·ka-ba yo ré?**

I am hungry = **nga tro-go tö-ghi-du**

I am thirsty = **nga ka-kom ghi-du**

I have to take breakfast = **nga sho-ghe ka-la sa-go-yö**

I want Tibetan tea = **nga la Pö cha go**

Please bring me a soup = **nga la tang chik te-ro-nang**

Have you some mo-mo ? = **mo-mo yö-pé ?**

This is good = **di shim-po du**

cold = **di trang-mo du**

rotten = **di ru-ba du**

Please bring me one more = **shen-da chik te-ro-nang**

Without meat = **sha me-ba**

This food is too much for me = **ka-la di nga la mang-tak du**

It's enough, I am full = **dhrik song**

How much is it ? = **ngü ka-tsö ré ?**

This restaurant is expensive = **sa-kang-di kong chen-po du**

## Accommodation

room = nyi-khang / khang-mi

sheet = nyi-je

bathroom = trü-kang

toilette = sang-chö

lice = bu

electricity = lok

bed = nyi-tri

pillow = nye-go

shower = sug-po tru-sa

kitchen = tap-tsang

key = di-mi

lamp = shu-ma

### Useful sentences

Have you a room ? = **khang-mi yö-pe ?**

Where can I find an empty room ? =

**khang-mi tong-pa ka-bar ra-gi-re ?**

Can I see the room ? = **khang-mi ta cho-gi-re-pe ?**

This room is all right = **khang-mi di dhri-gi-re**

How much for one night ? = **tсен chig la ka-tsö re ?**

It costs 10 yuan per night =

**tсен re re la gor-mo chu te-go-re**

I need hot water = **nga la chu tsa-po go**

When there will be hot water ? =

**chu tsa-po chu-tsö ka-tsö la yong-gi-re ?**

## Trekking

earth = sa  
mountain = ri  
rock = drag  
valley = rong  
mountain pass = la  
river = tsang-po  
stream = chu  
water fall = pap-chu  
grassland = tsa-tang  
mud = tak-pa  
forest = shing-nak  
tree = shin-dong  
field = shin-ka  
village = throng-seb  
farmer = shin-pa  
yak dung = cho-ua  
flash light = log-shu

## Animals

animal = sem-chen  
dog = kyi  
cow = ba-mo / pa-chu  
yak male = yak

sky = nam  
snow mountain = kang-ri  
ice, glacier = kyak-pa  
avalanche = kang-ru  
path = lam  
bridge = sam-pa  
lake = tso  
stone = do  
grass = tsa  
dust = te-la  
desert = che-tang  
wood = shing  
flower = me-to  
tent = gur  
herder / nomad = drog-pa  
fire = me  
backpack = gyap-pa

cat = shi-mi  
sheep = lug  
yak female = dhri

donkey = pung-gu  
pig = pak-pa  
chicken = cha-ti  
hare = ri-pong  
mountain rodent = a-bra  
insect = bu-sin  
snake = dhrü

horse = ta  
goat = ra  
cock / hen = ja-po/ja-mo  
bird = cha  
mouse = tsi-tsi  
fish = nya

## Weather

weather = nam-shi  
sun = nyi-ma  
moon = da-ua  
rain = char-pa  
hail = se-ra tang  
wind = lung / lag-pa  
cloud = thin-pa  
rainbow = ja  
cold = thrang-mo

air = lung  
star = kar-ma  
snow = kang pap  
lightning = lok  
fog = mug-pa  
storm = lung-char  
thunder = dru-ke  
hot = tsa-po

## Useful sentences

What's the weather like ? = **nam-shi kan-dre du ?**

The weather is good = **nam-shi yag-po du**

The weather is bad = **nam-shi duk-cha du**

It's cold = **thrang-mo du**

It's hot = **tsa-po du**

## Time

time = dü-tsö

day = nyi-ma

month = da-ua

hour / clock = chü-tsö

morning = sho-ge

afternoon = chi-tho

date = tse-ba

week = dün-tha

year = lo

minute = kar-ma

noon = nying ku

night, evening = gong-ta/ tsen

## Time adverbs

today = te-ring

tomorrow = san-nyi

yesterday = ke-sa

tonight = to-gong

often = yang yang

once = teng-chik

sometimes = kap kap-la / tsam tsam la

never = ka-dü-ye (+ verb neg.) / nam-yang

every time = teng ré ré

late = chi-po

before = kong-la

while = ring-la / kab-la

during = tü-la / kap la

again = yang-kyer

now = tan-da

day after tomorrow = nang-nyi

day before yesterday = ke-nyi-ma

this morning = ta-rang sho-ge

always = ka-dü yin na / tak-ba

twice = teng-nyi

everyday = nyin-tar

early = nga-po

after = je-la / shug-la

soon = gyok-po

immediately = lam-sang

## The days of the week

Monday = sa da-ua

Friday = sa pa-sang

Tuesday = sa mi-ma

Saturday = sa pem-ba

Wednesday = sa lak-pa

Sunday = sa nyi-ma

Thursday = sa pu-bu

## Seasons

spring = chi-ka

summer = yar-ka

autumn = tön-ka

winter = gun-ka

## Useful sentences

What time is it ? = **chü-tso ka-tsö re ?**

It' five o' clock = **chü-tso nga-ba re** (add **ba** to the hour)

5:30 = **chü-tso nga tang che-ka re**

5:10 = **chü-tso nga tang kar-ma chu re**

20 to 5 = **chü-tso nga sim-ba-la kar-ma nyi-shu du**

At what time .....? = ..... **chü-tso ka-tsö la re ?**

At 9 o' clock = **chü-tso gu-ba la**

About at 9 o' clock = **chü-tso gu-ba tsa la**

From 4 to 6 o' clock = **chü-tso shi-ba ne truk-ba par-tu**

Every hour = **chü-tso re-re la**

## Health

doctor = am-ji

medicine = men

fever = tsa-ua

altitude sickness = la-du na

headache = go na

cold = cham-ba na

cut = ma

hospital = men-khang

oxygen = sog-zin lung

disease = na-tsa

pill = ri-pu

cough = lo

nausea = kyu-me lang-ua

toothache = so na

stomachache = tro-go na

pulse = tsa

pharmacy = men-tson-khang

## **Parts of the body**

head = go

mouth = ka

nose = na-kug

throat = mik-ba

stomach = tro-go

heart = nying

hand/arm = lak-ba

foot/leg = kang-ba

blood = trak

eye = mi

teeth = so

ear = am-jo

tongue = che

chest = pang-ko

back = gyap

finger = tzu-gu

body = sug-po

urine = chin-ba

## Useful sentences

Is there a doctor who speaks English ? =

**in-ji shin-ken am-ji yo-re-pe ?**

Please, call a doctor = **am-ji ke ta-rog-nang**

I don't feel well = **nga de-bo min-du**

I feel sick = **nga na-ghi-du**

It hurts here = **de na-tsa gya-gi-du**

I have a fever = **nga la tsa-ua yö**

I have a cough = **nga lo gyap-gi-du**

I have diarrhoea = **nga tro-ko she-gi-du**

I feel nauseous = **nga kyu-me lang-gi-du**

I am dizzy = **nga go-yu kor-gi-du**

Is serious = **nyen-ka-chen-po re**

Take these pills = **ri-pu din-tso sa-nang**

Take them twice a day =

**nyi-ma chik la teng nyi sa-nang**

Take them on an empty stomach = **tro-go tong-pa la sa-nang**

Take them with food = **ka-la nyem-do sa-nang**

## Common adjectives

alone = chik-po

bad = duk-cha

beautiful (people)

= tse-po (m) / tse-ma (f)

beautiful (thing) = nyin ge-po

big = chen-po

cheap = ke-po

/ kong chun chun

clean = tsang-ma

close, near = thri-la / gyap

cold = trang-mo

delicious = shim-po

different = ka-gak

difficult = kag-po

dirty = tsog-pa

dry = kam-po

easy = le-la-po

empty = tong-pa

expensive = kong chen-po

false = zü-ma

far = ta ring-po

fast = gyok-po

first = tang-po

full = keng-pa

good = yak-po

happy = ki-po

hot = tsa-po

hungry = tro-go to

ill = na

important = ke-chen-po

last = ta-ma / chug-la

long = ring-po

low = ma-po

narrow = tok-po

near = nye-po

new = sar-pa

noisy = ke chen-po

old (thing) = nyim-pa

old (people) = gen-go

open = che / ka-che-ne

other = shen-ta

pleasant = ki-bo

quiet = ka ka-de  
rich = chuk-po  
right = ma-nor-ua / dhrig-pa  
ripe = mim-pa  
sacred = ke-chen-po  
sad = kyo-po  
short = tung tung  
similar = chik-pa  
small = chun chun  
slow = ka-lé / te-po

strong = shuk chen-po  
sure = ten-den  
sweet = ngar-mo  
tall = tho-po  
tired = thang che  
true = ngu-ne / ngo-ma  
ugly = do nyi-bo  
wet = löm-pa  
wide = sheng-ga chen-po  
young = shön shön/shön-pa  
/ lo chun chun

## Colours

colour = tsö-shi  
  
black = nak-po  
blue = ngom-po  
green = gyang-gu  
orange = ma-se / li-uang  
red = mar-po  
white = ka-po  
yellow = se-po

## Common verbs

### Roots of verbs

arrive = yong

ask = tri / lap

ask a question = ke-cha tri

barter = je

be afraid = je

be born = kyi

be hungry = thro-go-tö

better = yag

be thirsty = ka-kom

boil = khö / chu-tsö

bring = kye

broke = chak

build = so / sö (p)

buy = nyo / nyö (p)

call = ke tang

change = je

change money = ngü sil-ma

choose = dem

circumambulate = ko-ra gyap

climb = za

close = gyap / go gyap

come = yong / lep (p) / sho

cook = ka-la so-ua

count = tsi gyag

drink = tung

do, make = che / sö

drive = mo-ta tang

die = drong / chu / shi

eat = sa/se(p)/she(h)

enter = zuh

fall (thing) = sa

fall (people) = ri

fall ill = na

feel cold = kyag

find = nye

finish = tsar

forget = je

give = te / trö / pül (h)

go = dhro/chin (p)

/ phe(h)

go down = pap / mah pap  
go out = thön  
go up = za  
grow = kye  
hear = ko / tö  
help = rog-pa che  
hire = yar / la  
kiss = ka-kyel  
know = she / shing  
know (people) = ngo shing  
learn = jang  
like = ga  
listen = nyen  
live = te / sön  
look = ta  
loose = lah  
meditate = gom gyap  
meet = tuk  
move = tang  
need = go  
obtain = ra  
offer = chö / pül(h)  
open = go che  
paint = tsön-tang / la-dri

pay = ngü te  
phone = ka-bar tang  
photograph = par gyap  
pour = lu  
pray = mu-lam ghap  
          / ghap su-chi  
prostrate = cha-tse  
put = sha  
rain = char-pa tang  
read = log  
remember = dren  
ride = ta shön  
say = lap / sung (h)  
see = tong  
sell = tsong  
send = tang / kur  
show = te  
sleep = nyi-ku  
stay / sit = de / shu (h)  
steal = ku  
stop = kah  
study = lop-jung che  
take = len  
take (food etc) = she (h)

talk = she / ke-cha she

teach = lap

think = sem

travel = ta-kor che

understand = ha-ko

wait = gu

walk = kom-ba gyap

wash = tru

work = le-ga che

write = dri

(p) = past

(h) = honorific

## Tibetan alphabet

Tibetan Consonants							
ཀ་	ཁ་	ག་	ང་	ཅ་	ཆ་	ཇ་	ཉ་
ka	k'a	g'a	nga	cha	ch'a	j'a	nya
ཏ་	ཐ་	ད་	ན་	པ་	ཕ་	བ་	མ་
ta	t'a	d'a	na	pa	p'a	b'a	ma
ཚ་	ཛ་	ཌ་	ཝ་	ཞ་	ཟ་	ར་	ཡ་
tsa	ts'a	dz'a	wa	zha	za	'a	ya
ར་	ལ་	ཤ་	ས་	ཧ་	ཨ་		
ra	la	sha	sa	ha	a		
Tibetan Vowel Modifiers							
ཨི་	ཨུ་	ཨེ་	ཨོ་				
i	u	e	o				

1	2	3	4	5
ཅཱིཅ	ཅཱིཅ	ཅཱུམ	ཅཱི	ཅཱ
ྱ	ྱ	ྱ	ཅ	ཅ
chik	nyi	sum	zhi	nga
6	7	8	9	10
ཅཱུ	ཅཱུན	ཅཱུད	ཅཱུ	ཅཱུ
ཅ	ཅ	ཅ	ཅ	ཅ
dr'uk	dün	gyä	gu	chu

*by Sonam Tenzing*

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