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A Grammar of Lepcha

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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
Ⓢ⓪	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 Samtshi district in south-western Bhutan. The tribal homeland of the Lepcha people is referred to as ལྷོ་མཚོ་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ *ne máyel lyáng* ‘hidden paradise’ or ལྷོ་མཚོ་མཚོ་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ *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 Samtshi 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 རྩོམ་ཆེན་ཀླུ་མུ་འུ་ལྷ་མོ་ *mútuncí róngkup rumkup* 'children of the Róng and of God', or simply རྩོམ་ཆེན་ *róngkup* 'children of the Róng'. Alternatively, the Lepcha people may call themselves རྩོམ་རྩོམ་ཆེན་ *róng ?ágít* 'the Róng tribe'. The Lepcha word for 'language' is རྩོམ་ཆེན་ *láríng*, and the Lepcha call their own language རྩོམ་ཆེན་ *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 རྩོམ་ཆེན་ཆུ་མུ་ལྷ་མོ་ *támsángmú*, the Lepcha from Sikkim are called རྩོམ་ཆེན་རྩོམ་ཆུ་མུ་ལྷ་མོ་ *renjóngmú*. The smaller group of Lepcha living in the Ilām district of Nepal are known as རྩོམ་ཆེན་ཤི་ལྷ་མོ་ *lilámmú* and the Lepcha who live in རྩོམ་ཆེན་ཕྱོད་ལྷ་མོ་ *prolyáng* 'Bhutan' are referred to as རྩོམ་ཆེན་ཕྱོད་ལྷ་མོ་ *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 རྩོམ་ཆེན་ཆུ་མུ་ལྷ་མོ་ 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 ཇ་ *dâ* ‘lake’ and ལུ་ *cú* ‘mountain peak’. The *cú* are regularly honoured in ལུ་ རྟུམ་པ་ *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་ལྷ་མོ་ *hlaso múng* ‘Lhasa Devil’ was killed by རྩ་མཚན་པ་ *támsáng thín* ‘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་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ *lúksómmú*, སུ་མཚན་པ་ *simíkmú*, ལ་ཇ་ལྷ་མོ་ *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 སུ་མཚན་པ་ *simíkmú*, anglicised and shortened, e.g. *Foning* from རྩ་མཚན་པ་ *fonyung rumsóngmú*, or the clan name may be substituted by the generic epithet ‘Lepcha’, e.g. *Dorji Tshering Lepcha*.

The native Lepcha female dress, ཇུ་མཚན་པ་ *dumdem*, also spelt ཇུ་མཚན་པ་ *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 ཇུ་མཚན་པ་ *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 ཐུ་མཚན་པ་ *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 ཨྱ *dum* ‘cloth’ for the *dumprá* themselves. The Lepcha are also famous for their unique knowledge of the medicinal properties of local plants. Bamboo, འཕྱུལ *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 ཨྱ *mun* and འཕྱུལ *bóngthín*, who both function as shamans. The *bóngthín* 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 *bóngthín* to develop into a *mun*, in Sikkim such healers are known as འཕྱུལ *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 *bóngthíns* 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 འཕྱུལ འཕྱུལ *lúngen 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 latinate 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, ཁྲུལྱུ་ཐུམ་སངས་ Khárpú Támsáng and འཕྲུལ་ལྷོ་ཤེན་ལུ་ཐོམ་ 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-

nent Lepcha authors ཡུ་ཤིཔ་མུ་ Úgen Shipmú, ཨེ་ཨ་ལ་ཤེ་ལ་མུ་ Karma Lode Righimú, འཕེ་ལ་ཤེ་ལ་མུ་ Nakú Tshering Likmú and རྟ་ཤེ་ལ་མུ་ Dorji Wángdi Kunchúdyangmú.

Ever since its first issue in 1997, the quarterly Lepcha bilingual news magazine རྟ་ཤེ་ལ་ *Aachuley* [ácu] published by the Lepcha Literary Organisation in Kalimpong and edited by ལྷ་ཤེ་ལ་ 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. ལུཀ་མརྟོང་ *lúk-hróng*, ལུཀ་ལྟ་ *zúk-lât*. If a syllable ends in a vowel the syllable boundary is not indicated, e.g. རཱེ *ʔáre*, རཱེལྟ་ *ʔámlem*, རཱེལྟ་ལྟ་ *ʔákrím*. 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~ɛ], *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>	[ʊ] <i>u</i>	[u] <i>ú</i>
half-close			[o] <i>o</i>
half-open	[e~ɛ] <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].

ʃ̃ <i>ríp</i>	[riʔp̚]	‘flower’
ʃ̃ <i>bi</i>	[bi]	‘give’
ʃ̃̃ <i>ʔík</i>	[ʔiʔk̚]	‘still’
ʃ̃̃ <i>ʔít</i>	[ʔiʔt̚]	‘create’

The phoneme /e/ varies in pronunciation between [e] and [ɛ] 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].

ꠤ <i>pe</i>	[pe]	‘grass’
ꠤꠤꠤ <i>renjóng</i>	[rɛnˈʒɔŋ]	‘Sikkim’
ꠤꠤ <i>len</i>	[lɛn]	‘than’
ꠤꠤ <i>jer</i>	[ʒɛr]	‘gold’
ꠤꠤ <i>heng</i>	[hɪŋ]	‘ginger’
ꠤꠤꠤꠤ <i>ʔámlem</i>	[ʔɑˈmlɛm]	‘face’
ꠤꠤ <i>klek</i>	[kleʔkʰ]	‘force, urge’

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

ꠤꠤꠤ <i>navár</i>	[nʌˈvar]	‘boat’
ꠤꠤ <i>bám</i>	[bam]	‘dwell’
ꠤꠤ <i>ngár</i>	[ŋar]	‘slice’
ꠤꠤꠤꠤ <i>ʔákâ</i>	[ʔaˈkʌ]	‘hand’
ꠤꠤꠤ <i>záti</i>	[ʒɑˈti]	‘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 ꠤ *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>	[fəʔkʰ]	‘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 [ʊ], sometimes realised closer to the value of [ɪ]. The phoneme /ú/ is a rounded close back vowel [u].

𐄓 <i>ʔánum</i>	[ʔaːnum]	‘younger brother’
𐄔 <i>ru</i>	[rʊ]	‘cane’
𐄕 <i>ʔulbú</i>	[ʔɪlːbu]	‘salesman, seller’
𐄖 <i>dú</i>	[du]	‘umbrella’
𐄗 <i>kajú</i>	[kəːʒu]	‘dog’
𐄘 <i>thúk</i>	[tʰuʔkʰ]	‘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. [ɔ̞].

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

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

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^j]. In syllable-final position, /k/ is found to be realised as a voiceless unreleased dorso-velar stop [k[̚]], usually reinforced with a simultaneous glottal stop [ʔk[̚]], as is the case in *kakyók* [kʌ·kʲəʔk[̚]] ‘nine’.

ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>kacer</i>	[kʌ·cɛɾ]	‘wheat’
ᱵᱚᱠᱟ <i>lúkʔál</i>	[luk·ʔal]	‘tomorrow’
ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>kít</i>	[k ^j iʔt̪]	‘snatch’
ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>rák</i>	[raʔk [̚]]	‘search, examine’
ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>ʔákrím</i>	[ʔa·krim]	‘bitter’

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

ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>khek</i>	[k ^h eʔk [̚]]	‘freeze’
ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>khák</i>	[k ^h aʔk [̚]]	‘choke’
ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>khú</i>	[k ^h u]	‘loaf of bread’
ᱵᱚᱴᱟ <i>khyú</i>	[k ^h ju]	‘bathe’

	labial	dental	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
voiceless stop	[p] <i>p</i>	[t] <i>t</i>		[ɽ] <i>tr</i>	[c] <i>c</i>	[k] <i>k</i>	[ʔ] <i>ʔ</i>
aspirated voiceless stop	[p ^h] <i>ph</i>	[t ^h] <i>th</i>		[ɽ ^h] <i>thr</i>	[c ^h] <i>ch</i>	[k ^h] <i>kh</i>	
voiced stop	[b] <i>b</i>	[d] <i>d</i>		[ɽ] <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			[tʃ] <i>ts</i>				
aspirated voiceless affricate			[tʃ ^h] <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^j]. The phoneme /g/ occurs only in syllable-initial, not in syllable-final position.

ᱵᱚ ᱛᱟᱞ	[gan]	‘old, aged’
ᱵᱚᱨ ᱛᱟᱞᱟᱱ	[goːruŋ]	‘either’
ᱵᱚᱨ ᱛᱟᱞᱟᱱ	[g ^j ekˌlaʔɽ]	‘birth’
ᱵᱚ ᱛᱟᱞᱟᱱ	[gju]	‘skill’

ᱥᱟᱱᱟᱹ *tagryú* [tʰgrju] ‘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].

ᱠᱟᱨ <i>ngán</i>	[ŋan]	‘remain, sit’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>ngol</i>	[ŋol]	‘early’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>ngung</i>	[ŋuŋ]	‘water’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>kryóng</i>	[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.

ᱠᱟᱨ <i>ngâk</i>	[həʔk̚ ~ həʔk̚]	‘look, observe’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>ngú</i>	[hu~hu]	‘fish’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>ngún</i>	[hun~hun]	‘become’

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

ᱠᱟᱨ <i>co</i>	[co]	‘tea’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>cí</i>	[ci]	‘cí, fermented grain liquor’
ᱠᱟᱨ <i>cho</i>	[c ^h o]	‘book’

ṡ chet	[c ^h εʔʔ]	‘relate’
ṡṡ cechók	[ce·c ^h ɔʔk]	‘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.

ṡ nyet	[ɲεʔʔ]	‘two’
ṡṡṡ nyilop	[ɲi·loʔp]	‘earlobe’
ṡṡ nyók	[ɲɔʔk]	‘delay’
ṡṡ nyín	[ɲin]	‘milk’

The phoneme /t/ is realised as a voiceless dental stop [t̪], 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 [t̪̚] or alveolar stop [t̚], usually reinforced with a simultaneous glottal stop, like [ʔt̪̚] or [ʔt̚].

ṡṡ tuknóm	[t̪uʔk·nɔm]	‘nose’
ṡṡ tímre	[t̪im·re]	‘respect’
ṡṡ tór	[t̪ɔr]	‘silk’
ṡṡṡ títrepót	[t̪iʔʔ·re·pɔʔʔ]	‘tamarind fruit’
ṡṡ tyút	[t̪juʔʔ]	‘scar’
ṡṡ ʔáhret	[a·ʔεʔʔ]	‘bone’

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

ṡṡ thámpót	[t̪ ^h am·pɔʔʔ]	‘fruit’
ṡṡṡ thikúng	[t̪ ^h i·kɔŋ]	‘great grandfather’
ṡṡ thop	[t̪ ^h oʔp]	‘get’
ṡṡ thyók	[t̪ ^h jɔʔk]	‘shelter’

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

ཨྱི <i>dī</i>	[d̪i]	‘come’
ཨྱིྱ <i>díng</i>	[d̪iŋ]	‘stand’
ཨྱི <i>dâ</i>	[d̪ʌ]	‘lake’
ཨྱིྱ <i>sadu</i>	[səːd̪ʌ]	‘slowly’

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

ཨྱིྱ <i>nâlá</i>	[nʌːla]	‘always’
ཨྱིྱ <i>nám</i>	[nam]	‘year’
ཨྱིྱ <i>mân</i>	[mʌn]	‘meat’

The phoneme /tr/ is an unaspirated voiceless retroflex stop [t̪], and the phoneme /thr/ is its aspirated counterpart [t̪ʰ]. The phoneme /dr/ is an unaspirated voiced retroflex stop [d̪]. The retroflex phonemes only occur syllable-initially, not syllable-finally. The retroflex series are written in the native Lepcha orthography as ཨྱི *kr* for /tr/, ཨྱིྱ *hr* for /thr/ and ཨྱིྱ *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 ཨྱིྱྱྱ *tagrikup* [taːgriːkuʔp̪] ‘boy’ is sometimes pronounced [taːd̪iːkuʔp̪].

ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>trínchen</i>	[tinːcʰen]	‘kindness’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>tróp</i>	[t̪ɔʔp̪]	‘winnow’
ཨྱིྱྱ <i>tre</i>	[t̪e]	‘mule’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>thri</i>	[t̪ʰi]	‘throne’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>thrim</i>	[t̪ʰim]	‘law’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>throm</i>	[t̪ʰom]	‘town, market’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>dri</i>	[d̪i]	‘fort, palace’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>dróp</i>	[d̪ɔʔp̪]	‘moment’
ཨྱིྱྱྱ <i>dre</i>	[d̪e]	‘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 [p̚], often glottally reinforced, viz. [p̚ʔ].

ʔ ^h <i>pel</i>	[pɛl]	‘be tired’
ɛ ^h (<i>plák</i>)	[plɑʔkʰ]	‘break’
ʔ ^h (<i>pano</i>)	[paˈno]	‘king’
ʃ ^h <i>pi</i>	[pi]	‘write’
ɛ ^h <i>po</i>	[po]	‘bamboo’
ʃ ^h <i>ríp</i>	[riʔpʰ]	‘flower’

The phoneme /ph/ is an aspirated voiceless bilabial stop [p^h], 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 ཨྵཱྀ ལྷཱུང tradition, the letter ཨྵཱྀ, 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.

ᄃ (<i>phám</i>)	[p ^h am]	‘defeat’
ᄂ (<i>pho</i>)	[p ^h o]	‘time, turn’
ᄃᄃ (<i>phíl</i>)	[p ^h il]	‘be distant’
ᄂᄃ (<i>fá</i>)	[fa]	‘swim’
ᄃᄃᄃ (<i>fik</i>)	[fiʔkʷ]	‘tear’
ᄂᄃᄃᄃ (<i>fungfing</i>)	[funŋ·fin]	‘blue’
ᄃᄃᄃ (<i>flet</i>)	[flɛʔʔ]	‘wash one’s face’
ᄃᄃᄃᄃ (<i>flók</i>)	[flɔʔkʷ]	‘peel’
ᄂᄃᄃᄃ (<i>fyek</i>)	[fjɛʔkʷ]	‘sharpen’

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

ʒ <i>bán</i>	[ban]	‘knife’
ʃo <i>bi</i>	[bi]	‘give’
ʃɔ̃ <i>bík</i>	[biʔkʷ]	‘cow’
ʒo <i>ʔábek</i>	[ʔaʰbeʔkʷ]	‘middle’

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

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

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

ᄎᄋ <i>tsám</i>	[tsam]	‘hold’
ᄎᄋ <i>tsót</i>	[tsɔʔt̚]	‘squeeze’
ᄎᄋ <i>tsúk</i>	[tsuʔk̚]	‘bite’
ᄎᄋ <i>tsurtsur</i>	[tsurːtsur]	‘twinkle’
ᄎᄋ <i>tshó</i>	[t͡shʰɔ]	‘aim’
ᄎᄋ <i>tshukpót</i>	[t͡shʰukːpɔʔt̚]	‘word’
ᄎᄋ <i>tshâlum</i>	[t͡shʰʌ-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 ᄎᄋ *shi* [ʃi~si] ‘see’.

ᄎᄋ <i>so</i>	[so]	‘rain’
ᄎᄋ <i>sagrek</i>	[saːgreʔk̚]	‘throat’
ᄎᄋ <i>sung</i>	[suŋ]	‘story’
ᄎᄋ <i>shâk</i>	[ʃʌʔk̚]	‘louse’
ᄎᄋ <i>sher</i>	[ʃɛr]	‘glass’
ᄎᄋ <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 [d͡z]. 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.

ꨀ <i>jâl</i>	[ʒʌl]	‘dry’
ꨀ <i>jer</i>	[ʒɛr]	‘gold’
ꨀ <i>jám</i>	[ʒam]	‘assemble’
ꨀ <i>zâ</i>	[zʌ]	‘err’
ꨀ <i>zok</i>	[zoʔkʰ]	‘trickle’
ꨀ <i>záding</i>	[ɕaːdiŋ~zaːdiŋ]	‘jug’
ꨀ <i>ʔázóm</i>	[ʔaːɕom~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 ꨀ *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. ꨀ *ra*, ꨀ *kor*, ꨀ *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 ꨀ *hr* is realised as a voiceless apico-alveolar trill [ɽ] and is only found in syllable-initial position.

ꨀ <i>ru</i>	[ru]	‘cane’
ꨀ <i>rám</i>	[ram]	‘thunder’
ꨀ <i>rok</i>	[roʔk]	‘read, study’
ꨀ <i>kor</i>	[kor]	‘wander, stroll’
ꨀ <i>krón</i>	[krɔn]	‘scratch’
ꨀ <i>tsur</i>	[tsur]	‘radiate’
ꨀ <i>hro</i>	[ɽo]	‘come up’
ꨀ <i>hryám</i>	[ɽjam]	‘jerk’
ꨀ <i>hrún</i>	[ɽun]	‘hot’

ᄎᆫ vóm	[vɔm]	'salt'
ᄎᆫᆫᆫ ᄎávyo	[ʔaːvjo]	'tibia'
ᄎᆫ vík	[viʔkʰ]	'soldier'
ᄎᆫ vyet	[vjeʔʰ]	'ask, inquire'
ᄎᆫᆫᆫ womú	[woːmu]	'spindle'
ᄎᆫᆫᆫ wómú	[woːmu]	'jackal'
ᄎᆫᆫᆫ wúrdo	[wurːdo]	'sling'

𐌛𐌳𐌹	[lɔʔɪ]	‘repeat’
𐌳𐌹	[lɔʔp]	‘bury’
𐌳𐌹	[liʔɪ]	‘sift’
𐌳𐌹	[wɪ]	‘sell’
𐌳𐌹	[nɔ]	‘skin’
𐌳𐌹	[ɔ]	‘hill’
𐌳𐌹	[lɔɪ]	‘harden, as yams’

ᵛ hlok	[loʔkʰ]	‘break, as eggs’
ᵛ hlyám	[ljam]	‘shake, quiver’

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

ᵛ hák	[haʔk]	‘carve’
ᵛ heng	[heŋ]	‘ginger’
ᵛ háp	[haʔp]	‘shut’
ᵛ híp	[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 [ʔiʔ] ‘create’.

ʔ soʔám	[soʔəm]	‘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].

ᵛ yok	[joʔkʰ]	‘top, summit’
ʔyók	[ʔjoʔkʰ]	‘work, job, chore’
ᵛ yel	[jel]	‘know a language’
ʔyel	[ʔjel]	‘divert’
ᵛ yá	[ja]	‘know’
ʔyá	[ʔja]	‘formerly’
ᵛ yor	[jor]	‘row’

ꨀꨣ ꠘyor	[ʔjor]	‘pitfall’
ꨀꨣ ꠘáp	[jaʔp̚]	‘grope’
ꨀꨣ ꠘáyap	[ʔjaʔp̚]	‘chop’
ꨀꨣ ꠘyen	[ʔjɛn]	‘last year’

2.3 Syllables

Each syllable in Lepcha contains a vowel phoneme at its core. The syllable contains an initial consonant or consonant cluster, and may or may not contain a final consonant. While all consonants may occur as syllable-initial consonants, not all consonants may be combined with the post-consonantal glides -y- and -r-, nor with post-consonantal -l-. All possible combinations for initial consonant clusters are listed in Diagram 3.

-y-	-r-	-ry-	-l-	-ly-
ꨀꨣ ꠘya				
ꨀꨣ kya	ꨀꨣ kra/tra	ꨀꨣ krya/trya	ꨀꨣ kla	ꨀꨣ klya
ꨀꨣ khya				
ꨀꨣ gya	ꨀꨣ gra/dra	ꨀꨣ grya/drya	ꨀꨣ gla	ꨀꨣ glya
	ꨀꨣ ngra			
ꨀꨣ tya				
ꨀꨣ thya				
ꨀꨣ dya				
ꨀꨣ pya	ꨀꨣ pra	ꨀꨣ prya	ꨀꨣ pla	ꨀꨣ plya
ꨀꨣ phya				
ꨀꨣ fya	ꨀꨣ fra	ꨀꨣ frya	ꨀꨣ fla	ꨀꨣ flya
ꨀꨣ bya	ꨀꨣ bra		ꨀꨣ bla	ꨀꨣ blya
ꨀꨣ mya	ꨀꨣ mra	ꨀꨣ mrya	ꨀꨣ mla	ꨀꨣ mlya
ꨀꨣ rya				
ꨀꨣ lya				
ꨀꨣ hya	ꨀꨣ hra/thra	ꨀꨣ hrya/thrya		
ꨀꨣ hlya				
ꨀꨣ vya				

Diagram 3: Syllable-initial consonant clusters

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 ཁཀྱུ *kakha* ‘ABC’, རྩོམ་ཐུག་ *chomíng* ‘written letters’ and རྩོམ་ཐུག་མཆོག་ *míngzât* ‘treasure of letters’. The native Lepcha orthography is systematically treated in the text རྩོམ་ཐུག་ལོ་མོ་ *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 རྩོམ་ཐུག་ལོ་མོ་ *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 ཁཀྱུ *ʔa* to མ ཁཀྱུ *ma*, and the second unit running from བ ཁཀྱུ *ha* to ཐ ཁཀྱུ *tha*, etc. Although most རྩོམ་ཐུག་ལོ་མོ་ *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 རྩོམ་ཐུག་ལོ་མོ་ *lazóng*, between the introductory summary of the alphabet in the opening part of རྩོམ་ཐུག་ལོ་མོ་ *lazóng* and the actual listing of all

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

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

Diagram 4: Original order of the syllabary

In the ལཱ་ཕྱེ་ *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 ལཱ་ཕྱེ་ *lazóng* does not contain running text as such. The traditional method of instruction is for the teacher to recite sections of the ལཱ་ཕྱེ་ *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 ལཱ་ཕྱེ་ *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 ལཱ་ཕྱེ་ *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 ཅྱ ka, འྱ kha, འྱ ga, ཏྱ nga, and ending with ཏྱ bla, ཧྲ mla, ཧྲ 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, ཇོ་མོ་གླེན་པ་ལྷ་མོ་ *Chögä Châdo 'Namgä* (*imperabat* 1700-1716). According to Lepcha tradition, the native Lepcha orthography was created by the Lepcha scholar མཁུ་ལོང་ མཁུ་ལོང་ *Thikúng Mensalóng*, who is believed to have been a contemporary of ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ *'Lama Lhatsün Chenpo*, i.e. ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ *'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 མཁུ་ལོང་ *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 མཁུ་ལོང་ *Mensalóng* with the invention of the Lepcha script, seems even more plausible when we realise that during the reign of *Châdo 'Namgä* not just the Lepcha script, but also the Limbu or Kiranti script was developed, not by *Châdo 'Namgä* himself, but by the Limbu monk *Śirijaṅgā* (van Driem 2001: 674-675).

The 36 consonant symbols མཁུ་ལོང་ *chomíng 'ámo* or མཁུ་ལོང་ *'ámú 'ámíng* ‘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 མཁུ་ལོང་ མཁུ་ལོང་ *chomíng 'ákup* or མཁུ་ལོང་ མཁུ་ལོང་ *'ákup 'ámíng* ‘vowel signs, child letters, small letters’ and མཁུ་ལོང་ མཁུ་ལོང་ *'ákúp thámbyín* or མཁུ་ལོང་ མཁུ་ལོང་ *míngkup thámbyín* ‘diacritical vowel signs’, cf. Diagram 6. Mainwaring claims that the term མཁུ་ལོང་ *'ákup* was ‘formerly applied by the Lepcha exclusively to the Finals’ (1876: 3).

ꠄ	ꠅ	꠆	ꠇ	ꠈ	ꠉ	ꠊ	ꠋ	ꠌ
<i>pa</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>kha</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>nga</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>nya</i>
ꠍ	ꠎ	ꠏ	ꠐ	ꠑ	ꠒ	ꠓ	ꠔ	ꠕ
<i>ta</i>	<i>tha</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>pa</i>	<i>pha</i>	<i>fa</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>ma</i>
ꠖ	ꠗ	ꠘ	ꠙ	ꠚ	ꠛ	ꠜ	ꠝ	
<i>tsha</i>	<i>tsha</i>	<i>za</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>va</i>	
ꠞ	ꠟ	ꠠ						
<i>sha</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>wa</i>						
ꠡ	ꠢ	ꠣ	ꠤ	ꠥ	ꠦ	ꠧ		
<i>kla</i>	<i>gla</i>	<i>pla</i>	<i>fla</i>	<i>bla</i>	<i>m̐la</i>	<i>hla</i>		

Diagram 5: Consonant letters

꠨	꠩	꠪	꠫	꠬	꠭	꠮	꠯	꠰	꠱
<i>a</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>â</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>í</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ó</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ú</i>	<i>e</i>

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 ꠄ꠨ ꠄ꠨ ꠄ꠨ *tyelbú thámbyín* or ꠄ꠨ ꠄ꠨ ꠄ꠨ *múngtyel thámbyín* ‘final consonant signs’ are given in Diagram 7.

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

symbol	ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
transliteration	-k	-m	-l
name of symbol	ᵐᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐᵐ
	<i>lakát</i>	<i>lanyet</i>	<i>lasám</i>
examples	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>rok</i>	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>kím</i>	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>pál</i>
symbol	ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
transliteration	-n	-p	-r
name of symbol	ᵐᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐᵐ
	<i>lanun</i>	<i>lakup</i>	<i>ladar</i>
examples	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>bán</i>	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>óp</i>	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>kor</i>
symbol	ᵐ	ᵐ	ᵐ
transliteration	-t	-ng	-ang
name of symbol	ᵐᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐᵐ	ᵐᵐᵐ
	<i>lakat</i>	<i>lakang</i>	<i>nyíndo</i>
examples	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>fát</i>	ᵐᵐᵐ <i>róng</i>	ᵐᵐᵐ <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	ᳵ	ᳶ
transliteration	-y	-r
name of sign	ᳵᳵ <i>yathyú</i>	ᳶᳶ <i>rathyú</i>
examples	ᳵ <i>kya</i> , ᳵ <i>kra</i> , ᳵ <i>krya</i>	

Diagram 8: Affixed consonant signs

For retroflex sounds, which occur mainly in loanwords from Drän-joke, the clusters ᳵ *kra*, ᳶ *hra* and ᳷ *gra* are used, e.g. ᳵᳵ *throm* ‘town, market’, and ᳵᳶ *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. ᳵᳶ *krít* ‘hunger’, and ᳵᳶ *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 ᳶ *za* and ᳶ *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.

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

Diagram 9: Retroflex consonants

The ᳶ *rân* ‘circumflex’ sign is a diacritic flourish written over a consonant sign or over a vowel sign ‘ᳶ’, as in ᳶ *rân*, ᳶ *â* or ᳶ *í*. Although the original function of the ᳶ *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 ᳶ *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 ᳶ *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 Ṛ *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 Ṃ 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 *ʁ* 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 *ꠄ*, *jya* for *ꠅ*, *shya* for *꠆*, and *ta* for *ꠇ* as well as retroflex *ꠈ*, *da* for *ꠉ* as well as retroflex *ꠊ*, and *hta* for retroflex *ꠋ*. 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 *ꠌ* (ꠌ *nyíndo* sign; where others spell *ꠌ* *sang*, he spells *ꠌ*. In his *Lepcha-English Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Khárpú Támsáng (1980) does not romanise the *ꠍ* *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 *ꠍ* *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 ᑕ , and for the symbol ᑭ , *cha* is used instead of *chha*. The clusters *tra*, *dra* and *thra* are used for the retroflex sounds, the symbol ᑭ is systematically transcribed as *ʔ*, ᑭ is transcribed as *ʔy-*, ᑭ is used for ᑭ , and ᑭ is used for ᑭ .

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. ᑭ *í* vs. ᑭ *i*, and ᑭ *â* vs. *a* (for example in ᑭ *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 ᑭ *í* and ᑭ *i* are used in a systematic manner: ᑭ *í* is used only in closed syllables and ᑭ *i* only in open syllables. Since Mainwaring's time and possibly through his influence, the distribution of the orthographic symbols ᑭ *í* and ᑭ *i* has become much more random.

The function of the ᑭ *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 ᑭ *rân* sign in old texts is likely to shed more light on this matter.

The ᑭ *yathyú*, the infixed ᑭ -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 ᑭ *bi* or ᑭ *byi*, and the word for 'play' may be written either ᑭ *lem* or ᑭ *lyem*. The orthographic sequences ᑭ -ya, and ᑭ -yá of-

ten point to a realisation of the phoneme /e/ as [ɛ], as in རྩོམ་ *gyal* [gɛl], which is sometimes found written རྩོམ་ *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 རྩོམ་ *ʔyók* vs. རྩོམ་ *ʔyúk* ‘work’ and རྩོམ་ *thop* vs. རྩོམ་ *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 རྩོམ་ *o* and རྩོམ་ *ú*, Sprigg points to the fact that while the three rounded back vowels རྩོམ་ *ú* [u], རྩོམ་ *o* [o], and རྩོམ་ *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. རྩོམ་ *ú* and རྩོམ་ *ó*. In other words, Sprigg claims that there are only two lip-rounded vowel units in nasal-initial syllables, i.e. རྩོམ་ *ú* [ũ] ~ རྩོམ་ *o* [õ] and རྩོམ་ *ó* [õ] versus three, i.e. རྩོམ་ *ú* [u], རྩོམ་ *o* [o], and རྩོམ་ *ó* [ɔ] in other syllables. Sprigg also points out that a spelling with རྩོམ་ *o* would often yield a spelling closer to a Tibetan cognate, but that perhaps for this very reason many Lepcha prefer a spelling with རྩོམ་ *ú* (Sprigg 1989: 229).

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

Diagram 6: Romanisation systems

phonetic transcription	native grapheme	transliteration
[i]	ᳵ᳚	<i>i</i>
	ᳵ᳚̃	<i>í</i>
[e~ɛ]	ᳵ̣᳚	<i>e</i>
	ᳵ̣᳚᳚	<i>-ya</i>
[a]	ᳵ̣᳚᳚	<i>-á</i>
[ʌ]	ᳵ᳚̃	<i>â</i>
[ʌ]	ᳵ᳚	<i>a</i>
[u]	ᳵ̣᳚᳚	<i>u</i>
[u]	ᳵ̣̣᳚᳚	<i>ú</i>
[o]	ᳵ̣̣᳚᳚	<i>o</i>
[ɔ]	ᳵ̣̣̣᳚᳚	<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 ᳵ̣᳚ *u* and the consonant-inherent vowel *a*, i.e. when no vowel diacritic is added to a consonant symbol. The three spread vowels ᳵ̣᳚ *u* [u], *a* [ə] and ᳵ̣̣᳚ *á* [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. ᳵ̣᳚ *u* [ũ] ~ ᳵ̣̣᳚ *a* [ã] vs. ᳵ̣̣̣᳚ *á* [ã], which results in spelling variations between ᳵ̣᳚ *u* and the consonant-inherent vowel *a* (Sprigg 1989: 229).

The variation between spellings with *a* and *á*, in words like ᳵ̣̣̣᳚ *sám* ‘three’, which is sometimes written ᳵ̣̣̣̣᳚ *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 ᳵ̣̣̣̣᳚ *â* and the vowel

realised as [a~ɑ] may be written either ɶ́ *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{X} $\mathfrak{?á-}$ and a verbal root, as in the following examples.

$\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{?ít}$ ‘create’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?á?ít}$ ‘origin, creation’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{?óm}$ ‘shine’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?á?óm}$ ‘radiance’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{gó}$ ‘be happy’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?ágó}$ ‘joy, happiness’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{kón}$ ‘taste’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?ákón}$ ‘taste’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ \mathfrak{gek} ‘be born’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?ágek}$ ‘birth’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ \mathfrak{li} ‘say, speak’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?álin}$ ‘speech, talk’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ \mathfrak{zo} ‘eat’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?ázóm}$ ‘rice, food’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{ryú}$ ‘be good’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?áryúm}$ ‘good’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ \mathfrak{li} ‘carry’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?álim}$ ‘heavy’
$\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{dúm}$ ‘be white’	$\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?ádúm}$ ‘white’

The prefix \mathfrak{X} $\mathfrak{?á-}$, phonetically [$\mathfrak{?a}$], may be shortened to [$\mathfrak{?}$], e.g. $\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?áhrún}$ [$\mathfrak{?a-rún}$] vs. $\mathfrak{Y}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{hrún}$ [$\mathfrak{?rún}$], $\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?áhyâng}$ [$\mathfrak{?a-hjəŋ}$] vs. $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{hyâng}$ [$\mathfrak{?hjəŋ}$]. This optional variation prompted George Mainwaring to state that ‘the retention or rejection of the $\mathfrak{á}$, 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{X} $\mathfrak{-lá}$ creates adverbs when it is added to the verbal root, e.g. $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{ryú}$ ‘be good’, $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{ryúlá}$ ‘well’, $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ \mathfrak{thyen} ‘laugh’, $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{thyenlá}$ ‘laughingly’.

The suffix \mathfrak{X} $\mathfrak{-lât}$ is added to verbs or adjectives to create abstract nouns and *nomina actionis*, as $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{zúk-lât}$ ‘action, performance’ from $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{zúk}$ ‘make’, and $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{thyenlât}$ ‘laughter’ from $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ \mathfrak{thyen} ‘laugh’, $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{gánlât}$ ‘oldness, old age’ from $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{gán}$ ‘old’, $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{nók-lât}$ ‘blackness’ from $\mathfrak{X}(\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X})$ $\mathfrak{?ánók}$ ‘black’, $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{?állât}$ ‘freshness, newness’ from $\mathfrak{X}\mathfrak{X}$ $\mathfrak{?ál}$ ‘new’.

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

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

The suffix རྩ་ -*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. རྩ་རྒྱལ་པོ་ *renjóngmú* ‘Sikkimese’, རྩ་པི་མ་པོ་ *pâtmú* ‘Tibetan’, རྩ་ཤར་པོ་ *promú* ‘Bhutanese’, རྩ་ཡུ་པོ་ *gyagármú* ‘Indian’, རྩ་ཤུ་པོ་ *philíngmú* ‘Englishman’, རྩ་ཐང་པོ་ *tíngmú* ‘plainsfolk’. Another element རྩ་ -*mú*, derived from རྩ་མ་པོ་ *lámú* ‘mother’, occurs as a part of compounds in which it expresses the sense ‘main, origin, mother’, e.g. རྩ་མ་པོ་ རྩ་མ་པོ་ *rungnýít lámú* ‘the main stream of the Rungnyít’.

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

The word རྩ་ལུ་ *kup* ‘child, small’, also རྩ་ལུ་ *lákup* ‘child’, acts as a diminutive suffix in nouns, e.g. རྩ་ལུ་ *bán* ‘knife’, རྩ་ལུ་ *bánkup* ‘small knife’, རྩ་ལུ་ *lóng* ‘boy’, རྩ་ལུ་ *lóngkup* ‘small boy’. The word རྩ་ལུ་ *kup* may also be attached to other nominals, e.g. རྩ་ལུ་ *cu* ‘small, little’, རྩ་ལུ་ *cukup* ‘a little bit’, རྩ་ལུ་ *lára* ‘this’, རྩ་ལུ་ *lárakup* ‘just this’, རྩ་ལུ་ *kátkup* or རྩ་ལུ་ *kátlákup* ‘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.

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

᠋ᠣ – <i>bo</i>	‘father, uncastrated male parent animal’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠣ <i>mónbo</i>	‘boar, uncastrated male of swine’
᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>lóngbo</i>	‘bull’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠣ <i>bíkbo</i>	‘bull, steer’
᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ – <i>gú</i>	‘female animal that has given birth’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ <i>bíkgú</i>	‘cow’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ <i>mán-gú</i>	‘sow’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ <i>sakagú</i>	‘doe, female deer’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ <i>saʔárgú</i>	‘female goat’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ <i>sungvogú</i>	‘female buffalo’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠵ᠋ <i>saburgú</i>	‘female musk deer’
᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>lóng</i>	‘ox, steer’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>bíklóng</i>	‘ox’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>savínglóng</i>	‘stag’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>sungvolóng</i>	‘wild buffalo’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>saburlóng</i>	‘musk deer’
᠋ᠰ᠋ – <i>tsu</i>	‘male of pigs and goats’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>saʔártsu</i>	‘goat, billy goat’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>sakatsu</i>	‘buck, stag’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>móntsu</i>	‘boar, uncastrated boar’
᠋ᠰ᠋ – <i>mi</i>	‘female animal that has not had young’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>mónmi</i>	‘fallow sow’
᠋ᠠᠠᠣ – <i>bop</i>	‘young of bulls’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>bíklóngbop</i>	‘bullock, castrated male bovine’
᠋ᠠᠠᠣ – <i>cúng</i>	‘young of bulls’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>bíklóngcúng</i>	‘young bull’
᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>lóngcúng</i>	‘young bull’
᠋ᠠᠠᠣ – <i>sháng</i>	‘barren, sterile’
᠋ᠰ᠋ᠠᠠᠣ <i>mónsháng</i>	‘barren sow’
᠋ᠰ᠋ – <i>tâng</i>	‘corpulent male animal, pig or dog’

ꠄꠤ ꠘátâng	‘a fat male beast’
ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘajutâng	‘fat male dog’
ꠄꠤ ꠘóntâng	‘fat boar’
ꠄꠤ –bom	‘brooding female animal’
ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘíkbom	‘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.

ꠄꠤ bi ‘curry’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘáfong ‘green’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘifong ‘green leafy vegetable’

ꠄꠤ ꠘhyák ‘recognise, identify’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘáthyák ‘head’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘhyákdám ‘scalp’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘhyáktuk ‘hat, cap’.

ꠄꠤ lót ‘repeat’, ꠄꠤꠤ lóthi ‘come back again’, ꠄꠤꠤ lótho ‘put again’, ꠄꠤꠤ lóthi ‘give back’, ꠄꠤꠤ lótzúk ‘remake’.

ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘátsóm ‘hair’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘsómbleng ‘single hair’ ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘsómtrík ‘ribbon’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘsómčúng ‘pigtail’, ꠄꠤꠤ ꠘsómtrat ‘comb’.

Compounding sometimes results in the dropping of prefixes or bound morphemes, e.g. ꠄꠤꠤ satsuk ‘sun’, ꠄꠤꠤ tsukkyer ‘west’.

ꠄꠤ ꠘákâ ‘hand’, ꠄꠤ ꠘajóm ‘finger’, ꠄꠤ ꠘatáp ‘fist’ ꠄꠤ ꠘadóm ‘thumb’, ꠄꠤ ꠘatyám ‘muscle of the arm’, ꠄꠤ ꠘathi ‘little finger, pinkie’, ꠄꠤ ꠘayók ‘fingertip’, ꠄꠤ ꠘayóng ‘middle finger’, ꠄꠤ ꠘalít ‘ring finger’, ꠄꠤ ꠘalyók ‘palm of the hand’.

ꠄꠤ ꠘáthong ‘leg’, ꠄꠤ ꠘthongjóm ‘toe’, ꠄꠤ ꠘthongtung ‘heel’, ꠄꠤ ꠘthongpyól ‘footprint’

ꠄꠤ ꠘádyáng ‘lower leg’, ꠄꠤ ꠘdyánglyók ‘sole of foot’, ꠄꠤ ꠘdyángtung ‘heel’, ꠄꠤ ꠘdyángpók ‘calf’, ꠄꠤ ꠘdyânpak ‘knee’.

ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁámík ‘eye’, ᄁᄁᄁᄁ míkcom ‘eyelash, eyebrow’, ᄁᄁᄁᄁ míkmyóng ‘eyelid’, ᄁᄁᄁᄁ míkgrúng ‘tear’.

ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁáfo ‘tooth’, ᄁᄁᄁ fonyel ‘gums’ ᄁᄁᄁ fogóm ‘molar’, ᄁᄁᄁ fozâl ‘incisor’ ᄁᄁᄁ folún ‘wisdom tooth’.

ᄁᄁ zo ‘eat, food, rice’, ᄁᄁ rí ‘smell’, ᄁᄁᄁ zorí ‘fragrant rice’

ᄁᄁ thám- ‘thing, object’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám câng ‘animal’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám bík ‘insect’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám bóng ‘plant’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám bu ‘worm’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám pót ‘fruit’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám lí ‘seed’, ᄁᄁᄁ thám vyet ‘question’

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

3.4 Reduplication

Lexical reduplication yields adverbials of time, e.g. ᄁᄁ nám ‘year’, ᄁᄁᄁ námnám ‘yearly’, ᄁᄁᄁ tasó ‘yesterday’, ᄁᄁᄁ sósó ‘lately’. This process is different from the syntactic reduplication of words in colloquial speech, e.g. ᄁᄁ tú ‘who’, ᄁᄁᄁ tútú ‘such as who’, ‘who exactly’, ᄁᄁᄁ sabá ‘where’, ᄁᄁᄁᄁ sabásabá ‘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 ᳵ *kya* [kja], ᳶ *pya* [pja]. The palatal nasal [ɲ], however, is written in Lepcha orthography with the consonant sign ᳷ , 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.

ᳵ <i>nók</i>	‘push’
ᳶ <i>nyók</i>	‘cause to quiver, shake’
᳷ <i>mák</i>	‘die’
᳸ <i>myák</i>	‘kill’
᳹ <i>bám</i>	‘dwell, stay, reside’
ᳺ <i>byám</i>	‘keep, leave behind’
᳻ <i>plâ</i>	‘come forth, come out, rise’
᳼ <i>plyâ</i>	‘produce, bring forward’
᳽ <i>lú</i>	‘rise’
᳾ <i>lyú</i>	‘erect’
᳿ <i>ɣum</i>	‘ripe, sweet, tasty’
ᳺ <i>ɣyum</i>	‘ripen, bring to maturity’
᳽ <i>tyul</i>	‘fall’
᳾ <i>tyal</i>	‘fell’ (also spelt ᳽ <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. ᳽ *glú* ‘fall down’, ᳾ *glyat* (also spelt ᳽ *glet*) ‘drop, decline, suspend’ and ᳽ *bu* ‘carry’, ᳽ *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 ལྟེ *-re* ‘the’ and the dative marker ལྟེ *-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 ལྟེ *-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. རྩེ་རྩེ་ཉམ་ *rumdár-sang* ‘gods’ vs. རྩེ་ལྷུ་ཉམ་ *dutmúng-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 ཇམ་ཉམ་
 cho-pang
 book-PL.NH
 ‘books’

3 རྩེ་ཉམ་
 lóng-sang
 boy-PL.H
 ‘boys’

4 རྩེ་ཉམ་
 rum-sang
 god-PL.H
 ‘gods’

- 5 རྩ་མཚོ་ རྩ་མཚོ་པང་
thámbík thámcâng-pang
 insect animal-PL.NH
 ‘animals, creatures’
- 6 བུ་ལྔ་ རྒྱ་ལྔ་པང་
faleng nómleng-sang
 young.boy young.girl-PL.H
 ‘youngsters, teenagers’
- 7 རྩ་མཚོ་ རྩ་མཚོ་ རྩ་མཚོ་ རྩ་མཚོ་ རྩ་མཚོ་
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 པང་ -*sang* (PL.H) and པང་ -*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 (ᱵᱟᱨᱟ *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 ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟ
kasu-sá ṭákup 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 (ᱵᱟ *cho* ‘book’, in (ᱵᱟᱨᱟ *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 ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟ
ṭádo-sá ṭákup nyí-wám
 2S.OBL-GEN child be-PRG
 ‘Do you have children?’

- 10 ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ
ṭádo-sá ṭányúr-re satet ṭátím 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 ᱵᱟᱨᱟ *-sang* can be used with proper names or kinship terms, e.g. ᱵᱟᱨᱟᱵᱟᱨᱟ *nyímá-sang* ‘Nyima and his friends’. Here the human plural suffix ᱵᱟᱨᱟ *-sang* conveys the sense of English ‘and the like’ or ‘and company’ or Latin *cum suis*. In this sense, the suffix ᱵᱟᱨᱟ *-sang* de-

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 *ᄎᆞᆯ* -*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 *ᄎᆞᆯ* *kát* ‘one’ is used to express explicit singular number.

- 11
- ཇེཧུ་རོང་སང་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མུ་
káyú róng-sang-re ʔácálá lúk-do
1P Lepcha-PL.H-DEF still get.up-self
- མ་ཁུ་ནེ་བམ་
ma-khut-ne-bám
NEG-be.able-NEG-PRG
- ‘We Lepcha are still unable to stand up for ourselves.’
- 12
- ཐིང་མུ་སང་པ་ནོ་པ་
tíngmú-sang ʔánók gum
plainsfolk-PL.H black be.AST
- ‘Plainsfolk are black.’
‘People from the plains are black.’
- 13
- ཇ་སུ་ཐིལ་པ་མེ་སོན་
kasu tyól fát-nón ma
1S.OBL friend lose-RES AST
- ‘My friend has disappeared.’
‘My friends have disappeared.’

- 14 ཇུ་ལྷ་མོ་སྒྲོལ་བཤུགས་པ་ལྟར་གསུངས་པ་
kasu tyól-sang fát-nón ma
 1S.OBL friend-PL.H lose-RES AST
 ‘My friends have disappeared.’

- 15 ཇུ་ལྷ་མོ་ཞིག་སྒྲོལ་བཤུགས་པ་ལྟར་གསུངས་པ་
kasu tyól-kát fát-nón ma
 1S.OBL friend-one lose-RES AST
 ‘One of my friends has disappeared.’

The plural morphemes ལྷ་མོ་ *-sang* (PL.H) and ལྷ་མོ་ཞིག་ *-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 ལྷ་མོ་ *-sang* (PL.H) and ལྷ་མོ་ཞིག་ *-pang* (PL.NH) follow the adjective, i.e. they follow the nominal constituent as a whole.

- 16 ཇུ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟར་གསུངས་པ་
go lóngngá-sang-re-m gó ma
 1S child-PL.H-DEF-DAT be.happy AST
 ‘I am fond of children.’

- 17 ཇུ་ལྷ་མོ་ཞིག་སྒྲོལ་བཤུགས་པ་ལྟར་གསུངས་པ་
lálóng muró látím-sang ma-nyí-n
 now man big-PL.H NEG-be-NEG
 ‘There are no tall men around at the moment.’

The suffix ལྷ་མོ་ཞིག་ *-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་ལྷ་མོ་ཞིག་
káyú-pang
 1P-PL.NH

‘we (collectively, as a group)’

- 19 ཨུ་ལྷ་ལི་ཐཱུ་མཱ་པང་
hu-nu li thámcang ?áre ?ábá-pang
 3S-ABL say animal this here-PL.NH

ལཱ་སྟེ་ཡཱ་ལྷ་
lá nyí-wám
 also be-PRG

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

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

- 20 ལཱ་ལྷ་ཐཱ་མཱ་པང་ར་
káyú róng-pang-re
 1P Lepcha-PL.NH-DEF
 ‘We, the Lepcha.’
 ‘We, as Lepcha’

- 21 ལཱ་ལྷ་ཐཱ་སང་ར་
káyú róng-sang-re
 1P Lepcha-PL.H-DEF
 ‘We Lepcha...’
 ‘Us Lepcha...’

The meaning of the morpheme ཐཱ་ *-sang* is in fact ‘whole, entire’ and the meaning of the morpheme ཐཱ་ *-pang* is ‘thing, things’. With regard to the non-human plural marker ཐཱ་ *-pang*, Grünwedel suggests that ཐཱ་ *-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’, *sä-re gñn-nä päñ* [*sare gunna-pang*] ‘every thing’, *kä-sü-sä päñ* [*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 ཐཱ་ *-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’, *kă-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* *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 བྱ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
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 རྒྱལ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
lingngá-kát dá-nyí-tho ma
 child-one sleep-be-EXH AST
 ‘One of the children is already asleep.’

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

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

The ending ལྟོ་ *-re* is the Lepcha definite article (DEF). The definite article ལྟོ་ *-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 ལྟོ་ *-re* is attached to nouns, e.g. རྒྱལ་ལྟོ་ *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 ལྟོ་ *-re* as a topic marker is a function of the meaning of a definite article.

- 28 གླིང་ལྷན་ (རྩོམ་པ་) བྲུང་
lí sare dorji-nun zúk-tho
 house which Dorji-ABL make-EXH

འདྲེན་པ་ གླིང་ བྲུང་
ḡore-re ḡáre gum
 that-DEF this be.AST

‘This is the house that Dorji built.’

- 29 རྩོམ་པ་ གླིང་ (རྩོམ་པ་) བྲུང་
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 འཇུག་ བྲུང་ གླིང་ བྲུང་
muró-nu zúk-tho-bú ḡázóm
 man-ABL make-EXH-FCT food

འཇུག་ གླིང་ བྲུང་
zo-ṣhang-re ḡájóm ngún
 eat-INF-DEF easy become

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

The fact that the numeral གླིང་ *kát* ‘one’ is a numeral and not a genuine indefinite article in the Western European sense is underscored by instances such as གླིང་ལྷན་ *kalók-kát-re* ‘the one mouse’, ‘that mouse’, in which གླིང་ *kát* is used in combination with the definite article ལྷན་ *-re*. The Lepcha definite article ལྷན་ *-re* is etymologically cognate with the root found in the Lepcha demonstratives གླིང་ *ḡáre* ‘this’ and འདྲེན་ *ḡore* ‘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 ལྷན་ *-re* as a stopgap when they pause in mid-sentence to formulate their thoughts, e.g. (31).

- 31 $\text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ})$
ren-do-m-re go-re jen-sung-lá kám
 sir-self-DAT-DEF 1S-DEF other-story-also little.bit
- $\text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ})$
vyet-shang sákcíng-bá-re ṛyá-nám-ká-re káyú
 inquire-INF think-then-DEF past-year-LOC-DEF 1P
- $\text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ})$
róng-sang-sá-re hlo-múng-sá sung-re
 Lepcha-PL.H-GEN-DEF peak-devil-GEN story-DEF
- $\text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ})$
ṛyá-sá munjú-sang-nu káyú-m-re
 past-GEN grandmother-PL.H-ABL 1P-DAT-DEF
- $\text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ})$
dun-ṛám-bá-re káyú-re ṛotet-ká-re
 tell-PRG-when-DEF 1P-DEF that.much-LOC-DEF
- $\text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ}) \text{ṛ}(\text{ṛ})$
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 ṛ -*re* can be affixed to pronouns to single out the person or persons in question, e.g. (32), (33).

- 32 $\text{huyú} \text{ nóng-ká} \text{ muró} \text{ páre} \text{ hu-re} \text{ páryúm} \text{ gum}$
 3P inside-LOC man this 3S-DEF good be.AST

‘Among them, this man, he is good.’

- 33 $\text{kasu-sá} \text{ líng-nu} \text{ li-bá}$
 1S.OBL-GEN younger.sibling-ABL say-when

$\text{hu-re} \text{ dok-bám}$
 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 -re , whereby the article in sentence (35) singles out the house in question and highlights the house as the topic.

- 34 $\text{pádo-sá} \text{ lí} \text{ sabá} \text{ gó}$
 2S.OBL-GEN house where Q

‘Where is your house?’

- 35 $\text{kasu-sá} \text{ lí-re} \text{ manegombú-ká} \text{ nyí} \text{ ma}$
 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. póng-re ‘the boy’, is marked by the definite article -re , whereas kajú ‘the dog’ is not, even though it is appropriate in the given context to translate kajú into English with a definite article.

- 36 རྩོམ་མེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ རྩོམ་
kalók-kát-re-m ?ályú-nun-do sót ma
mouse-one-DEF-DAT cat-ABL-self kill AST
‘The cat itself killed the mouse.’
- 37 རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་མེད་ཀྱི་ རྩོམ་
?óng-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. *མཚོ་མཚོ་མཚོ་ maró-re-re-m* [man-DEF-DEF-DAT] ‘to that very man’.

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

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

- 38 རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་ རྩོམ་
?áre kát-mu kát-ká bi
this one-IND one-LOC give

‘Give it to him and to no one else.’

- 39 (ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ) ᄃᄃ
 ʔore ʔyók hunyí nyet-mu-nu zúk
 that work 3D two-IND-ABL make
 ‘The two of them did that.’

- 40 (ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ) ᄃᄃᄃ
 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	ᄃᄃ go (1S)	ᄃᄃᄃ kányí (1D)	ᄃᄃᄃ káyú (1P)
2nd person	ᄃᄃ hó (2S)	ᄃᄃᄃ ʔányí (2D)	ᄃᄃᄃ ʔáyú (2P)
3rd person	ᄃᄃ hu (3S)	ᄃᄃᄃ hunyí (3D)	ᄃᄃᄃ huyú (3P)

Diagram 12: Personal pronouns

The third person ᄃᄃ *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 ᄃᄃ *hu* is used to refer to these animals. The morpheme ᄃᄃ *ka*, first person singular marker (S1) used in oblique and derived forms, forms a minimal pair with the morpheme ᄃᄃ *ká* (P1), the corresponding first person plural marker. These morphemes should not be confused with the locative suffix ᄃᄃ *ká* (LOC), or with the word ᄃᄃ *ka* ~ ᄃᄃ *kâ*, meaning ‘hand’, which is taken to be a shortened form of ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ *ʔáka* ~ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ *ʔákâ* ‘hand’. The first person plural marker ᄃᄃ *ká* (P1)

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

- 41 $\epsilon(\text{ㄨㄟ}) \text{ ㄗㄞㄣㄣ} \text{ ㄗㄞㄣㄣ} \text{ ㄗㄞㄣㄣ} \text{ ㄗㄞㄣㄣ}$
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 $\text{ㄏㄣ} \text{ ㄙㄞㄣ} \text{ ㄜ} \text{ ㄗㄞㄣ}$
hó saróng shú zúk-hát
 2S today what make-PRF
 ‘What have you done today?’

- 43 $\text{ㄏ} \text{ ㄢㄟㄣ}$
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 $\text{ㄙ} \text{ -sá (GEN)}$ 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
$\epsilon(\text{ㄨㄟ}) \text{ kasu}$	$\text{ㄗ}(\text{ㄨㄟ}) \text{ ʔádo}$	$\text{ㄏ}(\text{ㄨㄟ}) \text{ hudo}$
‘1S.OBL’	‘2S.OBL’	‘3S.OBL’

Diagram 13: Singular oblique pronouns

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

element 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. maródo ‘the man himself’, tado ‘oneself’, dodosá ‘personal, of one’s own’.

- 44 kasu-sá ?ábryáng
 1S.OBL-GEN name
 ‘my name’

- 45 ?ádo-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. kányísá , káyúsá , ?ányísá , ?áyúsá , hunyísá , huyúsá . Further usage of the genitive marker -sá is discussed below in Section 4.6.

- 46 káyú-sá kyóng
 1P-GEN village
 ‘our village’

4.3.2 Demonstrative pronouns

The Lepcha demonstrative pronouns ?áre ‘this’ and ?ore ‘that’ and the interrogative pronoun sare ‘what’ are morphologically transparent in the sense that they appear to consist of the element -re , cognate with the definite article, combined with one of the following deictic elements: the proximal morpheme ?á- , the distal morpheme ?o- or the interrogative morpheme 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. ʒ(ʌ) ʒásá ‘with this’. The proximal element ʒ(ʌ) ʒá- could conceivably be etymologically related to the pronominal root found in the second person pronouns ʒ(ʌ) ʒádo, ʒ(ʌ) ʒányí and ʒ(ʌ) ʒáyú.

In the following list of demonstratives, in which we find not only demonstrative pronouns but also adverbs, we see the proximal element ʒ(ʌ) ʒá- prefixed to other morphemes that refer to a location relative to the speaker.

ʒ(ʌ) ʒátháng	‘this up there (to or at any point that is considered higher)’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒáthú	‘this up over there, this up above there’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒábá	‘this here’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒábi	‘this right here’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒáfi	‘this just here, this nearby here, this in this direction, this to or towards here’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒáthól	(adj.) ‘very near, very close’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒápun	(adj.) ‘near, close’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒálem	‘in this direction, hither’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒálon	‘in this direction’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒálol	‘this way, in this direction’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒáchú	‘this down here, this down below, this lower down’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒácún	‘below, lower down, beneath’

Many of these demonstratives have counterparts formed with the distal morpheme ʒ(ʌ) ʒo-.

ʒ(ʌ) ʒótháng	‘that up there’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒóthú	‘that up over there’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒóchú	‘that down here’

In some demonstratives we recognise a noun indicating a location, such as ʒ(ʌ) ʒín ‘the other side, the opposite side’, and ʒ(ʌ) ʒon ‘side’.

ʒ(ʌ) ʒín	‘this on the other side’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒópín	‘that on the other side’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒábon	‘on this side’
ʒ(ʌ) ʒobon	‘on that side’

ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁᄁ ᄁᄁᄁ ‘on both sides, here and there’

Three other deictic elements commonly encountered are ᄁ *pe-*, also spelt ᄁᄁ *pí-*, ‘over there’, ᄁ *me-* ‘down there’, and ᄁ *tá-*, also spelt ᄁ *ta-*, ‘up there’. These elements may also be prefixed to the article ᄁ *re*, viz. ᄁᄁ *pere* ‘that over there’, also spelt ᄁᄁ *pír*, ᄁᄁ *pyir*, ᄁᄁ *pyur*; ᄁᄁ *mere* ‘that down there’; ᄁᄁ *táre* ‘that up there’, or to other deictic elements mentioned above, such as ᄁᄁ *petet* ‘up to that place over there’, ᄁᄁ *pefi* ‘there (near)’, ᄁᄁ *pelom* ‘in that manner’, ᄁᄁ *mebí* ‘there below’ (less distant than ᄁᄁ *mebá*), ᄁᄁ *mebá* ‘there below’, ᄁᄁ *melom* ‘like that down there’, ᄁᄁ *melon* ‘in that direction down there’, ᄁᄁ *tabá* ‘above there, up there’, ᄁᄁ *tarere* ‘the one there above’, ᄁᄁ *talem kón* ‘above there, in that direction’, ᄁᄁ *talom* ‘as it is there above’, combined with each other, e.g. ᄁᄁ *peme* ‘there, down there’, or reduplicated ᄁᄁ *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 ᄁᄁ *ᄁothá* ‘then, at that time’, ᄁᄁ *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 ᄁ *-bá*, indicating a location relative to the speaker.

ᄁᄁ	<i>ᄁábá</i>	‘here’
ᄁᄁ	<i>ᄁobá</i>	‘there’
ᄁᄁ	<i>pebá</i>	‘there’
ᄁᄁ	<i>mebá</i>	‘there below’
ᄁᄁ	<i>tábá</i>	‘there above’
ᄁᄁ	<i>sabá</i>	‘where’

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

ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>ʔálom</i>	‘like this’
ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>ʔolom</i>	‘like that’
ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>pelom</i>	‘like that’
ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>melom</i>	‘like that down there’
ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>tálom</i>	‘like that there above’
ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>salom</i>	‘how, like what’
ᐃᐃᐃᐃ	<i>salomlá</i>	‘anyhow, anyway’

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

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

The element ᐃᐃ *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’.

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

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

ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>ʔálon</i>	in this direction
ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>ʔolon</i>	in that direction
ᐃᐃᐃ ᐃᐃ	<i>talon kón</i>	in the direction there above

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

ᐃᐃᐃ	<i>ʔátet</i>	‘this much, this many’
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ᄀᄃᄃ	<i>ʔotet</i>	‘that much, this many’
ᄃᄃᄃ	<i>satet</i>	‘how much, how many’
ᄃᄃᄃ	<i>petet</i>	‘up to that place over there’

The morpheme ᄃᄃᄃ *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. ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ *satet khut tet* ‘as much as possible’. When used with verbs, the morpheme ᄃᄃᄃ *tet* is suffixed to the verb to express a limiting event with respect to the situation expressed by the main verb. Occasionally the element ᄃᄃᄃ *tet* also occurs as a verb meaning ‘touch, aim’.

- 47 ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ
gun-len ʔátím-nu gun-len ʔácum-tet
 all–than big–ABL all–than small–until
 ‘from the greatest of all to the smallest’

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

- 49 རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
ṛádo-sá tyól tú gó
 2S.OBL-GEN friend who Q
 ‘Who is your friend?’
- 50 རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
ṛáyú-m tú-nu lík-bám gó
 2P.OBL-DAT who-ABL call-PRG Q
 ‘Who is calling you?’
- 51 ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
go cálong-do shú-shú zúk gát
 1S now-self what-what do must
 ‘What should I do now?’
- 52 རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
ṛáre-zang shúmú-dep-re ṛádyút shúmátne
 this-like man-with-DEF fight why
- རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
dóng-shang gó
 search-INF Q
 ‘Why are you picking a fight with a guy like him?’
- 53 རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
zónggú-re sukdam-sá ṛáre-zang lyáng-kát
 Dzongú-DEF world-GEN this-like land-one
- རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
gum sare-ká-re sabá-re róng
 be.AST which-LOC-DEF where-DEF Lepcha
- རྒྱུ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
ṛágít 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་ *sabálá* ‘everywhere’, ལ་ལ་ *shúlá* ‘everything, whatever’, ལ་ལ་ *sathálá* ‘always’, ལ་ལ་ *túlá* ‘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་ *túdo* ‘any person, anybody, anyone’.

- 54 ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་
hó sathálá ma-yâ-n
 2S always NEG-know-NEG

 ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་
shúlá 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་ ལ་ལ་
go-nu shúlá ma-mát-ne
 1S-ABL everything NEG-do-NEG
 ‘I didn’t do anything.’
- 56 ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་ ལ་ལ་
ʔábi ʔân sabálá
 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་ལ་ *ʔáflík* ‘some’, ལ་ *gun* ‘all, every’, ལ་ *tyâng* ‘whole, all’, ལ་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

57 རྒྱུ་ཕྱེད་ལ་ཡི་ཀྱུ་ཁོར་
jen múnŋ-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.’

The meaning expressed by the adjective 𐌿𐌿𐌸𐌰 *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 𐌿𐌿𐌰 *maró* ‘man, person’ may also be used to express the notions ‘someone, someone else, anyone, whoever, another person’, e.g. (60).

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

- 59 $\text{pe kumdúng maró-re tú gó}$
 over.there other man-DEF who Q
 ‘Who is that strange man?’

- 60 $\text{pore-do ma-mát le maró thyo-sho}$
 that-self NEG-do REQ man hear-NPR
 ‘Please don’t do that. People will hear.’

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

- 61 $\text{jén maró kumdúng-sang-re}$
 other man different-PL.H-DEF

$\text{pábi-do lát ma-kón}$
 here-self return NEG-allow

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

The adjective páflik ‘some’, referring to either persons or things, is derived from the verb $\text{flí} \sim \text{flím}$ ‘divide, separate’, from which the adverb flík ‘apart, aside’ is also derived. The form káflik ‘some’ is also found, albeit less frequently.

- 62 $\text{páflik-re-m ma-bi-n}$
 some-DEF-DAT NEG-give-NEG

‘Some people were not given any.’

The form $\hat{r}el$ occurs as a noun expressing the meaning ‘piece’ and as an adverb in the sense ‘separate, separately, respectively’. As a main verb $\hat{r}el$ expresses the meaning ‘separate maize from the cob’. The form $\hat{r}el$ 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 $\text{v}\ddot{\text{y}}\ddot{\text{e}}\text{ } \hat{r}\hat{r}\text{ } \text{so}$
 $\text{huyú-m } rel-rel \quad bi$
 3P-DAT each-each give
 ‘Give one to each of them.’

For the concepts ‘all’, ‘every’ and ‘whole’, the words gun and tyâng are used. In order to grasp the difference between gun ‘all, every’ and tyâng ‘all, whole’, it is important to realise that when gun ‘all, every’ is used, everybody or everything that is referred to is seen as an individual person or item, whereas when tyâng is used a reference is made to the whole or the entirety of a group of things or people.

- 64 $\text{ʔábá-sá } lí \text{ } \text{gun } \text{ʔázuk-ʔázuk } nyí$
 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 $\hat{n} \sim \text{ny} -nun \sim -nu$ is source or cause. Lepcha $\hat{n} \sim \text{ny} -nun \sim -nu$ is cognate with the Limbu comitative suffix $-nu$ ‘with, from’, which also fulfils an ablative function. Lepcha $\hat{n} \sim \text{ny} -nun \sim -nu$ is suffixed to nominals, verbs or clauses and the apparently different types of meaning which the morpheme $\hat{n} \sim \text{ny} -nun \sim -nu$ 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 *ꠄꠤ -nun* after nouns and the form *ꠄꠤ -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 *ꠄꠤ -nun* and *ꠄꠤ -nu* are used seemingly at random. Two general tendencies can be observed. One is the tendency to use the form *ꠄꠤ -nun* more frequently in combination with nouns and the form *ꠄꠤ -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 *ꠄꠤ -nun* in the sense of ‘by, through’, whereas the abbreviated form *ꠄꠤ -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 *ꠄꠤ ~ ꠄꠤ -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 *ꠄꠄꠄꠄ ꠄꠄꠄ ꠄꠄꠄ*
ꠄábi-nu shúlá ma-shí-n
 here-ABL everything NEG-see-NEG
 ‘From here I cannot see anything.’

- 66 *ꠄ ꠄꠄꠄꠄ ꠄꠄꠄꠄ ꠄ ꠄꠄ*
go kóm ?ore sabá-nu thop te
 1S money that where-ABL get DUB
 ‘Where would I get that kind of money from?’

- 67 *ꠄꠄꠄꠄ ꠄ ꠄꠄꠄꠄ ꠄꠄꠄ*
saróng-nu go cholí-ká nóng-sho
 today-ABL 1S school-LOC go-NPR

68 ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫ
 ʔálut-nu
 heart-ABL
 ‘from the bottom of my heart’

69 ᄃᆞᆫ ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫ
 hó sabá-nu
 2S where-ABL
 ‘Where are you from?’
 ‘Where do you come from?’
 ‘Where did you come from?’

70 ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫ ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫ
 dárjúlyáng-nun kálenpúng-tet
 Darjeeling-ABL Kalimpong-until
 ‘from Darjeeling to Kalimpong’

71 ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫ ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆯᆯᆫ
 ʔáthyák-nu ʔáti-tet
 head-ABL sole-until
 ‘from head to toe’

4.5 The lative suffix

In its ablative sense, the Lepcha ablative suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ}$ *-nun* \sim *-nu* contrasts with the Lepcha lative suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \text{-lóm}$ ‘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 ལྷྱ ~ ལྷྱ -*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 ལྷྱ ~ ལྷྱ -*nun* ~ -*nu*. In sentences (74)-(77), we see more examples of the suffix ལོམ -*lóm* ‘via’.

- 72 ལོམ ལྷྱ་ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ཁྱི
go prolyáng-lóm thi
 1S Bhutan-via reach
 ‘I arrived by way of Bhutan.’
- 73 ལོམ ལྷྱ་ལྷྱ་ལྷྱ་ ཁྱི
go prolyáng-nu thi
 1S Bhutan-ABL reach
 ‘I arrived from Bhutan.’
- 74 ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་
kúng-lóm kúng-kóng glet-nón ma
 tree-via tree-branch drop-RES AST
 ‘Branches fell down from the tree.’
- 75 ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་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 ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་ ལྷྱ་ལོམ་
láo-lóm go kóm-kám thop-sho
 2S.OBL-via 1S money-little.bit get-NPR
 ‘I’ll get some money through you.’

- 77 $\text{hu} \quad \text{mák} \quad \text{myóng} \quad \text{shumyú-sang-lóm} \quad \text{go} \quad \text{thyo}$
 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 ren ‘since’. Whereas ren ‘since’ has a straightforward temporal meaning ‘since’, e.g. (78), the use of the ablative suffix $\text{nun} \sim \text{nu}$ implies a cause, a change of heart or some similar implication because of its meaning denoting origin, e.g. (79).

- 78 tasó-ren
 yesterday-since
 ‘since yesterday’
- 79 tasó-nu
 yesterday-ABL
 ‘since yesterday, from yesterday on’

Another such suffix is the Lepcha ending kón ‘side, towards, in the direction’. This Lepcha morpheme to some extent resembles the frequent usage of the suffix -paṭṭi ‘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 kón translates into English as ‘side’.

- 80 $\text{hó} \quad \text{ka-sá} \quad \text{kón} \quad \text{tyúk}$
 2S S1-GEN side kick
 ‘You kicked it towards me.’

- 81 འོང་ཅི་འུ་
nóng-kón tho
 inside-side put
 ‘Put it inside.’
- 82 འོ་ཤུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ཅི་འོང་
go prolyáng-kón nóng-sho
 1S Bhutan-side go-NPR
 ‘I am going in the direction of Bhutan.’
- 83 འོ་ཤུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ཅི་འོང་
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 འོ་ -*sá* (GEN) expresses possession, part-whole relationships and related semantic functions.

- 84 གཤེ་ཅི་འོ་ཤུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་
ǵáre kasu-sá lí go ma
 this 1S.OBL-GEN house be AST
 ‘This is my house.’
- 85 ཅི་འོ་ཤུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ཅི་འོ་
kasu-sá ǵákâ nyet nyí ma
 1S.OBL-GEN hand two be AST
 ‘I have two hands.’
- 86 ཅི་འོ་ཤུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ཅི་འོ་
kasu-sá ǵákup nyet nyí ma
 1S.OBL-GEN child two be AST
 ‘I have two children.’

- 87 འཇུག་ལྷོ་རྩེ།
kúng-sá *ṣún*
 tree-GEN horse
 ‘a wooden horse’

- 88 རྩེ་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ལྷོ་
fát-sá *fâtyók*
 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 ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ལྷོ་ རྩེ་ལྷོ་
go *ṣúng-sá* *ṣákâ* *cóng-sho*
 1S water-with hand wash-NPR
 ‘I wash my hands with water.’

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

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

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

Whereas the suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -nun \sim -nu$ marks the agent performing an action, the Lepcha comitative suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -sá \sim -sa$ 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 $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -nun \sim -nu$ fulfils both comitative and ablative functions. In Lepcha, the suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -nun \sim -nu$ denotes origin, whereas the suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -sá \sim -sa$ denotes belonging and expresses the comitative sense ‘with’. The comitative suffix $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -sá \sim -sa$ 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 $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -nun \sim -nu$ could be used instead of Lepcha $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -sá \sim -sa$, whereas in sentence (96) the use of $\text{Ṛṇ} \sim \text{Ṛṇ} -nun \sim -nu$ 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 $\text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ}$
 go ṛámík-sá ngâk-bám
 1S eye-with look-PRG
 ‘I look with my eyes.’
- 94 $\text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ}$
 go ṛányûr-sá nyen-bám
 1S ear-with listen-PRG
 ‘I listen with my ears.’
- 95 $\text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ} \text{Ṛṇ}$
 go ṛábong-sá jók-bám
 1S mouth-with talk-PRG
 ‘I talk with my mouth.’

- 96 ལོ་ཅི་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་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 རྟེ་ ~ རྟེ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* and the Lepcha comitative suffix ལ་ ~ ལ་ -*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 རྟེ་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་
nyúgú-nu shú zúk-sho
 pen-ABL what make-NPR
 ‘What do you use a pen for?’

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

The comitative suffix ལ་ ~ ལ་ -*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 ལ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལ་ ལྟ་བུ་
khá-kát sa kát
 score-one with one
 ‘twenty one’

- 100 རྟེ་ལྟ་བུ་ ལ་ ལྟ་བུ་ རྟེ་ལྟ་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 ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ
sathang sá sacák punzók
 tiger with leopard forest

ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ
thámcâng-pang gum
 animal-PL.NH be.AST

‘Tigers and leopards are animals of the jungle.’

- 102 ᑭ ᑭ ᑭ ᑭ ᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ
hó sa go-re tyól ʔáryúm gum
 2S with 1S-DEF friend good be.AST

‘You and I are good friends.’

The postposition ᑭᑭ *dep* ‘together, along with’ is often used in combination with or as an alternant to the comitative suffix $\text{ᑭᑭ} \sim \text{ᑭᑭ} \sim \text{-sá}$ ‘with’. The postposition ᑭᑭ *dep* ‘together’ indicates accompaniment.

- 103 ᑭ ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ
hó hu-dep nóng
 2S 3S-together go

‘You go with him.’

- 104 ᑭᑭ ᑭ ᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ
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 ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭ
ka-dep nóng-ká le
 S1-together go-LOC REQ

‘Please go with me.’

- 106 བྱ) (ལྷེ(རྩ)ཏྲརྩ རེའོའོ
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 བྱ) བྱ)(རེལ་ (སྤྲརྩ
hu hudo-sá tyól-dep
 3S 3S.OBL-GEN friend-together

འཁོལ་ལོང་རེ ལོལ་
cálóng-do lát
 just.now-self return

‘He just came together with his friend.’

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

- 108 ལོ (རྩ་ཆོ) འོལ་
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 འོལ་ *-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 འོལ་ *-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 འོལ་ *-ká* are treated in Section 5.12. When the locative morpheme འོལ་ *-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 འོལ་ *-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 རྒྱུ་ཅི་ -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 ཁར་ *khar*, more usually pronounced *kha*, which particularly occurs in toponyms, might reflect the same etymon as Lepcha locative རྒྱུ་ཅི་ -ká, but it is unclear at this point whether an etymological relationship obtains between the two.

- 109 ལོ་ ལྷོ་ཅི་ འོ་རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་
 go lyem-ká nóng-det ma
 1S play-LOC go-move AST
 ‘I am going to play.’
- 110 རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་
 kányí dep theng-ká
 1D together sing-LOC
 ‘Come on, join us in singing.’
- 111 རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་ རྒྱུ་ཅི་
 lí ?áking-ká ribiríp nyí ma
 house front-LOC ribi.plant be AST
 ‘There are *ribiplants* in front of the house.’

The Lepcha locative morpheme རྒྱུ་ཅི་ -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 རྒྱུ་ཅི་
 lí-ká
 house-LOC
 ‘at home’

- 113 ལཱཱ་ཁྱེ་པུན་འུ་ཅི་ འུ་ལཱ་
sáthang punzók-ká bám-sho
 tiger forest-LOC dwell-NPR
 ‘Tigers live in the jungle.’

The locative ending ཅི་ *-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 ལཱ་ ཅི་ཁྱེ་པུན་འུ་ འུ་ལཱ་
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 ཅི་ *-ká* can be contrasted with the Lepcha dative suffix འུ་ *-m*, e.g. (115) vs. (116) and the discussion in Section 4.8.

- 115 ལཱ་ ཅི་ཁྱེ་ཅི་ འུ་ལཱ་
go kaju-ká kám zo bi
 1S dog-LOC little.bit food give
 ‘I gave some food to the dog.’

- 116 ལཱ་ ཅི་ཁྱེ་འུ་ འུ་ལཱ་
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 འུ་ *-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 ཅི་ *-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-

affected'. 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 ཁུ་ནུ་ མཚུ་ རང་སྤུ་ མཚུ་ བེ་སྤུ་
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 མཚུ་ནུ་ རྟེ་ མཚུ་
kasu-m-nu ?ore ma-yâ-n
 1S.OBL-DAT-ABL that NEG-know-NEG
 'I didn't know that.'

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

- 120 མཚུ་ འུ་
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 $\text{ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ}$ [face-DEF-DAT], rather than $\text{ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ} \text{ } \text{ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ}$ [face-LOC], it would have been clear that the act of coughing into someone's face had been deliberate.

- 121 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ
muró-sá ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ma-hleng
 man-GEN face-LOC NEG-cough
 'Don't cough into someone's face.'
- 122 $\text{ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ}$
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 ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ
hó kasu-m tyúk
 2S 1S.OBL-DAT kick
 'You kicked [it to] me.'
- 124 ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃ
hó ka-sá kón-ká tyúk
 2S S1-GEN side-LOC kick
 'You kicked it in my direction.'
- 125 $\text{ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ}$
go-nun hu lyáng-ká yuk klóng
 1S-ABL 3S land-LOC letter send
 'I sent a letter to his place.'
- 126 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ
ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ-re-m buk
 child-DEF-DAT hit
 'Strike the child!'

- 127 བཟླ་བ་ཅི་
fo-re-m tsám
 bird-DEF-DAT hold
 ‘Catch the bird!’
- 128 ཡེ་ཅེ་མེ་མེ་བཟོ་བ་
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 གཤེ་ *ʔá-* and sometimes suffixing མ་ *-m* to the verb root, e.g. རྩུ་ *ryú* ‘be good’, གཤེ་རྩུ་ *ʔáryúm* ‘good’, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Some common adjectives are listed below.

གཤེ་མེ་	<i>ʔáhyur</i>	‘red’
གཤེ་འོ་	<i>ʔánók</i>	‘black’
གཤེ་མེ་	<i>ʔádúm</i>	‘white’
གཤེ་འོ་	<i>ʔácor</i>	‘sour’
གཤེ་མེ་	<i>ʔázuk</i>	‘pretty’
གཤེ་རྩུ་	<i>ʔáryúm</i>	‘good’
གཤེ་མེ་	<i>ʔásúm</i>	‘spicy’
གཤེ་མེ་	<i>ʔáklyam</i>	‘sweet’
གཤེ་མེ་	<i>ʔáhyâng</i>	‘cold’
གཤེ་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. འོ་ གཤེ་ *lóm ʔál* [road new] ‘the new road’, although the order may be reversed for emphasis.

- 129 གཤེ་ གཤེ་མེ་ མ་འོ་
ʔúng ʔáhyâng ma-thóng
 water cold NEG-drink

‘Do not drink cold water.’

- 130 $\text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ}$
tukpópót-re ʔáklyam nyí
 peach-DEF sweet be
 ‘Peaches are sweet.’

Nouns are modified by adjectives, whereas adjectives may be modified by intensifiers, such as $\text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ}$ *ʔágyáp* ‘much, very’, sometimes shortened to ṣṣ *gyáp*, and ṣṣ *do* ‘self’, or a combination of both as in (131) and (132).

- 131 $\text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ}$
ʔáre tukpópót ʔágyáp-do klyam-bám
 this peach much-self be.sweet-PRG
 ‘This peach is very sweet.’

- 132 $\text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ}$
ʔare-re gyáp-do ʔákhú
 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 ṣṣ *len* ‘than, compared to’, which follows the element it modifies. In other words, the postposition ṣṣ *len* ‘than’ is suffixed to the element with which the comparison is made.

- 133 $\text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ}$
pemkít len nurkít ʔáryúm nyí
 Pemkít than Nurkít good be
 ‘Nurkít is better than Pemkít.’

- 134 $\text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ} \text{ṣṣ}$
ʔáre 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་ ལམ་ འོ་ ཅ
ʔore gun-len nahán nóng ma
 that all-than before go AST
 ‘He left before everyone else.’

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

- 138 ལ 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’
ཇཱཱ	<i>nyet</i>	‘two’
ཇཱཱ	<i>sám</i>	‘three’
ཇཱཱ	<i>fali</i>	‘four’

𐌲𐌳𐌰	<i>fangú</i>	‘five’
𐌲𐌳𐌱	<i>tarók</i>	‘six’
𐌲𐌳𐌰𐌶	<i>kakyók</i>	‘seven’
𐌲𐌳𐌱𐌰	<i>kaku</i>	‘eight’
𐌲𐌳𐌰𐌶𐌰	<i>kakyót</i>	‘nine’
𐌲𐌳𐌱𐌰𐌶	<i>kati</i>	‘ten’

full form

short form

ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati kát tháp</i>	ᑕᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kát tháp</i>	‘eleven’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati nyet tháp</i>	ᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>nyet tháp</i>	‘twelve’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati sám tháp</i>	ᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>sám tháp</i>	‘thirteen’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati fali tháp</i>	ᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>fali tháp</i>	‘fourteen’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati fangú tháp</i>	ᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>fangú tháp</i>	‘fifteen’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati tarók tháp</i>	ᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>tarók tháp</i>	‘sixteen’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati kakyók tháp</i>	ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kakyók tháp</i>	‘seventeen’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati kaku tháp</i>	ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kaku tháp</i>	‘eighteen’
ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kati kakyót tháp</i>	ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	<i>kakyót tháp</i>	‘nineteen’

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

ᑭᐱᑦ	<i>khá kát</i>	‘twenty’
ᑭᐱᑦᓴᑦ	<i>khá kát sá kát</i>	‘twenty-one’
ᑭᐱᑦᓴᑦᑦ	<i>khá kát sá nyet</i>	‘twenty-two’
ᑭᐱᑦᓴᑦᓴᑦ	<i>khá kát sá sám</i>	‘twenty-three’
ᑭᐱᑦᓴᑦᑭᑦ	<i>khá kát sá fali</i>	‘twenty-four’

The numeral forms discussed above are used in counting. Attributive forms of the numerals are formed by adding the factitive marker འ་ *-bú* to the numeral, e.g. འ་ འ་ *kátbú* ‘the first’. Some speakers add the form འ་ *frón* ‘number’ and prefer to say འ་འ་འ་ *kátfrónbú*, ‘the first’, or འ་འ་འ་ *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 འ་ *báng* ‘half of’. Kalimpong speakers of Lepcha, who are usually not closely familiar with this system of counting, consider the system based purely on འ་ *khá* ‘the score’ to be the original counting system, and claim that the འ་ *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.

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

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

- 139 འ་ འ་ འ་ འ་ འ་ འ་
sháng pore bán-sá báng le
 firewood that knife-with break REQ
 ‘Go ahead and chop up the firewood with the knife.’

The expression འ་འ་ འ་འ་ *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 འ་ *thep* ‘extra, additional, successive’, e.g. འ་ འ་ *theppa theppa* ‘successively’, which is introduced as a decimal morpheme.

ᵿᵿᵿ	<i>kati</i>	‘10’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>nyet thep</i>	‘20’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>nyet thep kát</i>	‘21’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>sám thep</i>	‘30’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>fali thep</i>	‘40’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>fangú thep</i>	‘50’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>tarók thep</i>	‘60’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>kakyók thep</i>	‘70’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>kaku thep</i>	‘80’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<i>kakyót thep</i>	‘90’
ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ	<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 *ᵿ ka*, which Mainwaring derived from the numeral *ᵿᵿᵿ kati* ‘ten’, e.g. *ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ kakát sá kát* ‘eleven’, *ᵿᵿᵿᵿ 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 *ᵿᵿ chó* ‘even number, pair, couple’, *ᵿᵿᵿ nyó* ‘odd number’, *ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ chólúng nóngshang* ‘multiply’ and *ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ dryándo* ‘equal to’. Specific units for counting are used in certain professions or in harvesting, such as the word *ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ 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 *ᵿᵿᵿᵿᵿ 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.

ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ	ᵿ
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 ལཱྱ tasó ‘yesterday’, sometimes shortened to ལཱ só, ལཱཱྱ Pyotshóng or ལཱཱྱ Pitshóng ‘day before yesterday, two days ago’, ལཱཱྱ Pyochám ‘three days ago’ and ལཱཱྱ Pyochót ‘four days ago’. The adverb ལཱཱྱ lúkál ‘tomorrow’ can be analysed as a compound of the verb ལཱཱྱ lúk ‘get up, rise’ (which also serves as the noun ‘morning’) and the adjective ལཱཱྱ lál ‘new’. Analogous to the way the adverbs of the immediate past are formed, days in the immediate future are expressed by the adverbs ལཱཱྱ katshóng ‘day after tomorrow’, ལཱཱྱ káchám ‘in three days’ time, after three days’ and ལཱཱྱ káchót ‘in four days’ time, after four days’. We also find ལཱཱྱ taŷen for ‘last year’ and ལཱཱྱ kátaŷen for ‘three years ago’. The adverb ལཱཱྱ Potshóng ‘that day’, containing the distal morpheme ལཱ ལo-, 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 ལཱ tshóng, ལཱ chám and ལཱ chót, which each appear to imply a specific number of days, have not been attested.

Words for now and later include ལཱཱྱ lálóng ‘now, at this very moment’, ལཱཱྱ lálóngbá ‘in a moment, in a little while’, ལཱཱྱ lálónglá ‘still’, ལཱཱྱ lya ‘formerly, a long time ago, in the days of old’, ལཱཱྱ lyo ‘before, formerly, some time ago’, ལཱ cá ‘just, a moment ago’, ལཱཱྱ cálong ‘just now, just a moment ago’, ལཱཱྱ cánáp ‘last night’, ལཱཱྱ cábá ‘some time ago’.

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

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

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

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

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

ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>kalók nám</i>	‘rat year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>lóng nám</i>	‘ox year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>sathang nám</i>	‘tiger year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>punthyóng nám</i>	‘eagle year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>sader nám</i>	‘thunder year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>bu nám</i>	‘snake year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>ʔún nám</i>	‘horse year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>lúk nám</i>	‘sheep year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>sahu nám</i>	‘monkey year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>hík nám</i>	‘chicken year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <i>kajú nám</i>	‘dog year’
ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ <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 ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *numtsám nyóm* ‘leap month’. The meaning of the names of the different months is not clear in all cases, although ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *glú* means ‘fall down’, ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *rá* means ‘hunt’, ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *ʔít* means ‘creation’ and ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *kursóng* is the name of an orchid and also means ‘bright’.

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

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

A week of seven days is referred to as རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *duntrók* ‘week’. The Lepcha names of the days of the week are listed below. Since སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *sanyí*, སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *suknyím* and སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *saʔyák* all are used for ‘day’, we sometimes may hear སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *mi saʔyák* and at other times སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *mi suknyím* or སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *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 སྤུན་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *nyín saʔyák* ‘day of milk’.

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

The Lepcha word for ‘clock’ is རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *tsugyer* and the word for ‘hour’ is རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *chútsât*, borrowed from Dränjoke and Dzongkha རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *chutshö*, although the Nepali loan རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *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 རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *bázá falibú ríp*. To ask the time, one may use the phrase རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *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 རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *chútsât tarók ngúnnón* ‘it has become six o’clock’, or རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *bázá tarók buknón* ‘it has struck six o’clock’. When telling time in half hours, one may say for example རྩུལ་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ *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 𐄡𐄢𐄣𐄤 𐄥𐄦𐄧𐄨𐄩 𐄪𐄫𐄬𐄭𐄮 𐄯𐄰𐄱𐄲 𐄳𐄴𐄵𐄶 *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 $\text{ṣṳ́} \text{ lín}$ vs. regular $\text{ṣṳ́} \text{ li}$

‘say’, ཇློམ་ *zóm* vs. ཇའ་ *zo* ‘eat’ and ཇཱློཏ་ *dít* vs. ཇཱློཏ་ *di* ‘come’, differ historically from the finals /t/, /n/ and /m/ of invariable closed verb stems, e.g. ཇློམ་ *kón* ‘let, allow’, ཇློམ་ *lóm* ‘walk’, ཇློམ་ *mát* ‘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 ཇློམ་ *lín* of the verb ཇློམ་ *li* ‘say’ corresponds to a final /n/ in the old deverbative form ཇློམ་ *ʔálín* ‘tongue’, whereas the final /n/ in the inflected stem ཇློམ་ *lín* of the verb ཇློམ་ *li* ‘carry’ corresponds to an /m/ in the nominal derivative ཇློམ་ *ʔálím* ‘heavy’. Some other examples of regular closed stems of verbs ending in /m/, /n/ or /t/ are ཇློམ་ *tsám* ‘hold, retain’, ཇློམ་ *tsum* ‘meet’, ཇློམ་ *dryóm* ‘attach’, ཇློམ་ *ngán* ‘remain’, ཇློམ་ *dun* ‘tell, narrate’, ཇློམ་ *ngún* ‘become’, ཇློམ་ *ngút* ‘cut, sever’, ཇློམ་ *mát* ‘do’ and ཇློམ་ *kít* ‘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. ཇློམ་ *khut* ‘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 ཇློམ་ *plâ* ‘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 ཇློམ་ *yâ* ‘know’.

- 140 ཇློམ་ཇློམ་ ཇློམ་
tukfyíl–sang plâ–wám
 ant–PL.NH come.out–PRG
 ‘Ants are coming out of it.’

- 141 ཇློམ་
plâm–kón
 come.out–let
 ‘Let them come out.’

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

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

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

The verb ʃo *bi* ~ ʔo *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 ʔo *bo* is used when something is given to a first or second person singular or plural recipient, e.g. ʔo *kasu-m bo* ‘give to me’, ʔo *káyú-m bo* ‘give to us’, ʔo *ʔádo-m bo* ‘give to you (S)’, ʔo *ʔáyú-m bo* ‘give to you (P)’. The stem ʃo *bi* is used when something is given to a third person singular or plural recipient, e.g. ʃo *hudo-m bi* ‘give to him/her’, ʃo *huyú-m bi* ‘give to them’.

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

 ʃo hudu-m go thyák ma
 3S.OBL-DAT 1S recognise AST
 ‘The boy who gave me this book, I recognised him.’

- 146 $\text{hík} \quad \text{sót-shang} \quad \text{go} \quad \text{ʔádo-m}$
 chicken kill-INF 1S 2S.OBL-DAT

$\text{bánkup} \quad \text{bo-sho}$
 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 cón ‘let, allow’, as in the following examples.

- 147 $\text{hudo-m} \quad \text{ʔúng} \quad \text{bín} \quad \text{ma-kón}$
 3S.OBL-DAT water give NEG-allow
 ‘Don’t allow anyone to give him water.’

- 148 $\text{go} \quad \text{hudo-m} \quad \text{ʔúng} \quad \text{thóng} \quad \text{kón}$
 1S 3S.OBL-DAT water drink allow
 ‘I let him drink some water.’

- 149 $\text{huyú-m} \quad \text{dyút} \quad \text{kón}$
 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 ᐱᐱᐱ ᐃᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐃᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
lyáng ʔáre-sá fát ʔáre-ká dúnggít
 land this-GEN earth this-LOC tradition
- ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
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 ᐱᐱ *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 ᐱᐱ *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 ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ
shú ngún-nón
 what become-RES
 ‘What happened?’
- 152 ᐃᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
ʔádo-sá bri ngún-nón
 2S.OBL-GEN marriage become-RES
 ‘Did you get married?’
- 153 ᐃᐱᐱᐱ ᐃᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ
ʔáshúm-ʔáshúm ngún-bám
 fat-fat become-PRG
 ‘He’s getting fatter and fatter.’
- 154 ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ
káyú tabá nóng ngún-sho
 1P up.there go become-NPR
 ‘Is it OK if we go up there?’

- 155 ལའ་ གཤམ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་
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 ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་
kasu-m ḡábi-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 ལའ་ *khu* ‘be able to’. The inflected stem of the verb ལའ་ *khu* ‘be able to’ is ལའ་ *khut*.

- 157 ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་
ḡáre 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 ལའ་ *yâ* ‘know, know how to’. The verb ལའ་ *yâ* is also used in the sense of knowing something, having knowledge about something being aware of something. The verb ལའ་ *thyák* ‘recognise’ is used in the sense of knowing someone or recognising who someone is.

- 158 ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་
shú mât-shang go ma-yâ-ne
 what do-INF 1S NEG-know-NEG
 ‘What to do, I don’t know.’

- 159 ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་ ལའ་
hu ma-thyák-ne
 3S NEG-recognise-NEG
 ‘I don’t know him.’

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

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

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

- 164 ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་
 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 ཐོཾ་ཏཱ་མ་ འཇེ་ ཡཾཇེ
vâm-do-m theng yâm gât-sho
 song-self-DAT sing know must-NPR
 ‘We ought to know how to sing a song.’
- 166 ཐོཾ་ཇེ་ ཐོཾ་ཏཱ་ རེ་ཐོཾ་ ཡཾཇེ
bánkup ?áre-do shúmátne gât-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 ཡཾ *go* and རྩེ *nyí*. The verb ཡཾ *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 ཡཾ *go* is homophonous with the first person singular pronoun ཡཾ *go*.

- 167 ཐོཾ་ འཇེ་ ཡཾ ཐོ
?áre cho go ma
 this book be AST
 ‘This is a book.’
- 168 ཐོཾ་ རྩེ་ཐོཾ་ རྩེ་ ཡཾ ཐོ
?áre kasu-sá lí go ma
 this 1S.OBL-GEN house be AST
 ‘This is my house.’
- 169 རུ་ རྩེ་ཐོཾ་ ཡཾ ཐོ
hu nyúrpanɡ go ma
 3S deaf be AST
 ‘He is deaf.’

The verb རྩེ *nyí* covers the attributive, existential and locative senses of English ‘to be’. The verb རྩེ *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 བོལ་ཤུལ་ཤུལ་ཤུལ་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་
vóm ṣákrím nyí ma
 salt bitter be AST
 ‘Salt is bitter.’
- 171 རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་
kasu-sá lí manegombú-ká nyí ma
 1S.OBL-GEN house Mane.Gomba-LOC be AST
 ‘My house is in Mane Gomba.’
- 172 རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་
kasu-sá ṣákup nyet nyí ma
 1S.OBL-GEN child two be AST
 ‘I have two children.’
- 173 རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ རྒྱུ་ལྡན་
ṣáre taṣyu ṣázuk nyí ma
 this girl pretty be AST
 ‘This girl is beautiful.’

The clause-final particle རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ *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 རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ *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 རྒྱུ་ལྡན་ *gó* (Q) in sentence (177).

- 174 ལོ་ ནམ་ བཅུ་ སྐུ་ལྟོ་ མེད་ མེད་
go nám tarók thák-nón ma
 1S year six be.complete-RES AST
 ‘I am six years old.’

- 175 རྩེ་ལྗང་ རྩེ་ལྗང་ རྩེ་ མེད་ མེད་
ríp-sá ?árí nyí ma
 flower-GEN scent be AST
 ‘The flower has a [strong] smell.’

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

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

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

- 178 ལྗང་ རྩེ་ རྩེ་ རྩེ་ ལྗང་ ལྗང་
lyáng ?áre róngkup bámlyáng gum
 land this Lepcha homeland be.AST
 ‘This land is the Lepcha homeland.’

- 179 ལོ་ རྩེ་ ལྗང་ ལྗང་
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 མེད་ *ma-* in combination with the negative suffix ལྟོ་ *-ne*, e.g. ལོ་ མེད་ ལྟོ་ *go mazone*

‘I didn’t eat’, $\text{ህ } \text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } hu \text{ } manónɡne$ ‘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 $\text{ሳ} -ne$ may be shortened to $-n$, e.g. $\text{ማሳ} \text{ } ma-nyí-n$ ‘there isn’t’.

- 180 $\text{ህ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } hu \text{ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } ma-lát-ne$
 3S here always NEG–return–NEG
 ‘He never came here.’

- 181 $\text{ሰላሳ } \text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } ሰላሳ \text{ } ሰላሳ \text{ } ሰላሳ \text{ } ሰላሳ \text{ } ሰላሳ \text{ } ሰላሳ$
 $hó \text{ } ma-nóng-ne \text{ } gang \text{ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ } \text{እኛ}$
 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 $\text{ከ} ma-$ to the regular stem of the verb, e.g. $\text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } ma-mát$ ‘don’t’, $\text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } ma-kyân$ ‘don’t fuss, don’t worry’, cf. (182). If the negative suffix $\text{ሳ} -ne$ were used in example (182), as in $\text{ከሰላሳ } \text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } vâm \text{ } ma-theng-ne \text{ } ma-jók-ne$, 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 $\text{ከሰላሳ } \text{ከሰላሳ} \text{ } vâm \text{ } ma-theng \text{ } ma-jók$
 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 $\text{ሰላሳ} -lung$ (GER) to the verb. When the ending $\text{ሰላሳ} -lung$ (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 $\text{ሰላሳ} -lung$ are one and the same,

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

- 183 རལུཧུ་ སྒྲུ་ལུག་ སྒྲུ་ལུག་
ʔályú lík-lung thít-nón
 cat call-GER reach-RES
 ‘The cat arrived here caterwauling.’

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

- 185 ལུག་ལུག་ (མ ལུག་) རལུཧུ་ ལུག་
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 ལུག་ *-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 ལུག་ *-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 ལུག་ *-wung*, and claim the past participial ending is spelt ལུག་ *-wung* after verbs ending in a vowel, *-ng*, *-n*, *-m* or *-l*, but ལུག་ *-kung* after verbs ending in *-k*, ལུག་ *-tung* after verbs ending in *-t*, ལུག་ *-rung* after verbs ending in *-r*, ལུག་ *-pung* after verbs ending in *-p*, e.g. (189), (190).

- 186 ལུག་ལུག་ལུག་ རལུཧུ་
thyen-wung-sá ʔáring
 laugh-PTC-GEN language
 ‘funny language’

- 187 $\text{ʃe-wung-re} \quad (\text{thyo-wung-re}) \quad \text{len} \quad \text{ʔáryúm} \quad \text{gum}$
 see-PTC-DEF hear-PTC-DEF than good be.AST
 ‘Seeing is better than hearing.’
- 188 $\text{go} \quad \text{thi-wung-sá} \quad \text{nahán} \quad \text{hu} \quad \text{zúk-hát}$
 1S reach-PTC-GEN before 3S make-PRF
 ‘Before my return, he finished it.’
- 189 $\text{hudo-sá} \quad \text{gyó} \quad \text{zúk-kung-sá} \quad \text{sung-pang}$
 3S.OBL-GEN quarrel make-PTC-GEN story-PL.NH
- $\text{káyú-sá} \quad \text{thikúng} \quad \text{ʔábo-sang-nu} \quad \text{ʔolóm}$
 1P-GEN great.grandfather father-PL.H-ABL like.that
- $\text{káyú-m} \quad \text{dun}$
 1P-DAT tell
 ‘The stories of the quarrels he got into, our fathers
 and great-grandfathers told them to us like that.’
- 190 $\text{hó-lá} \quad \text{ʔálut} \quad \text{mát-nu} \quad \text{rok-kung} \quad \text{ma-nyí-n-bú}$
 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 $\text{ʃe} \text{ -shang}$ (INF). Infinitives may function as the complement of a main verb. The infinitive indicates an action or situation as such.

- 191 ཡེ་ཤེ་མཐོང་མཐོང་
káyú mák-shang sák ma-cíng
 1P die-INF mind NEG-think
 ‘We do not even think about dying.’

- 192 མཚོ་མཐོང་མཐོང་
ǰázóm sathá zo-shang
 food when eat-INF
 ‘When are we going to eat?’

- 193 ཡོ་ཤེ་མཐོང་
go nóng-shang mát
 1S go-INF do
 ‘I acted as if I were going.’

- 194 ཐོ་ཤེ་མཐོང་
thám vyet-shang ǰázóm gum
 thing ask-INF easy be.AST
 ‘It’s simple to ask a question.’

- 195 ཡོ་ཤེ་མཐོང་
go shú yâ-shang
 1S what know-INF
 ‘What do I know?’

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

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

- 197 འཇ་ཤེ་ལེ་ རེ་ཁྱོ་ ལོ་ལེ
zo-shang-ká ?ázóm gát-sho
 eat-INF-LOC food must-NPR
 ‘In order to eat, there must be food.’
- 198 རེ་ཁྱོ་ རྒྱ་ལེ་ འཇ་ཁྱོ་ ལོ་
?átím 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་ རྒྱ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་
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 རེ་ཁྱོ་ རྒྱ་ལེ་ རྒྱ་ལེ་
?ádo lí-ká thi-shang
 2S.OBL house-LOC reach-INF
- རེ་ཁྱོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་ ལོ་
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 ལེ ག
 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 ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་
 tasó *go* *Dárjúlýáng* *nóng*
 yesterday 1S Darjeeling go
- ལེ་གྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་
 go-nu *?obi* *tshóng* *pár*
 1S–ABL there goods buy
- ལེ་གྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་
 go-nu *?ore* *lí-ká* *blá-yú-nu*
 1S–ABL that home–LOC take–descend–ABL
- ལེ་གྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་
 kasu *?áyu-do-m* *bi*
 1S.OBL wife–self–DAT give
- ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་
 ?ân *go-nu* *hudo* *kâ-shang* *li*
 and 1S–ABL 3S.OBL cook–INF say
- ལེ་གྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་
 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 ḡ ḡḡ
 hu lok-bám
 3S dance-PRG
 ‘She is dancing.’
- 204 ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ
 kasu-sá ?ámú-re jú-wám
 1S.OBL-GEN mother-DEF live-PRG
 ‘My mother is [still] alive.’

The verb ḡ *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 ḡ ḡḡḡ ḡ
 hu nóng-det ma
 3S go-move AST
 ‘He is on his way.’
- 206 ḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡ
 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 ḡ *-sho* (NPR) to the verb. The non-preterite tense is used to describe

207 ၥၵၵၵ ၵ ၵၵၵ^၆
lóng-sang cho rok-sho
 boy-PL.H book read-NPR
 ‘The boys go to school.’

208 (X-ၵ (လၢၵ ၵ^၆
hlo-ká sozóng-sho
 peak-LOC be.cold-NPR
 ‘It will be cold on the mountain peak.’

209 (X-ၵ (လၢၵ ၵၵၵ^၆ (ၵၵၵ^၆
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 𐌿 𐌹𐌶𐌰𐌱𐌰𐌽𐌰𐌸𐌰
 go vâm-kát thenḡ-sho
 1S song-one sing-NPR
 ‘I shall sing a song.’

- 211 ལོ་ཐོག་ལ་ཐོག་
 go *ṭádo-m* *cho* *bo-sho*
 1S 2S.OBL-DAT book give-NPR
 ‘I’ll give you the book.’
- 212 ལོ་ཕྱི་ལ་ལོ་
 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 ཐོག་-*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 ཐོག་
 bám-bú
 dwell-FCT
 ‘Are they staying?’
- 214 ཐོག་ལོ་
 tú *nóng-sho-bú*
 who go-NPR-FCT
 ‘Who will be going?’

The factitive marker ཐོག་-*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 ཐོག་-*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 ལཱ་ ཤེལ་ ལཱ་ ལྷོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་
 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 རྩོ་ (*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 རྩོ་ (*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 རྩོ་ (*hát* (PRF) is used are typically translated into English by using the English perfect, often accompanied by the relational adverbs ‘already’ or ‘just’.

- 216 ལཱ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་
 go རྩོ་-re-m kám kóm bi
 1S boy-DEF-DAT little.bit money give
 ‘I gave the boy some money.’
- 217 ལཱ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་
 go རྩོ་-re-m kám kóm bi-hát
 1S dog-DEF-DAT little.bit money give-PRF
 ‘I have already given the boy some money.’
- 218 ལཱ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་ རྩོ་
 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 $\text{saróng-sá so-nu kasu-sá nyót lók-hát}$
 today-GEN rain-ABL 1S.OBL-GEN field damage-PRF
 ‘Today’s rain has damaged our field.’
- 220 hu bri mát-hát
 3S marriage do-PRF
 ‘He’s already married.’

5.11.2 The resultative auxiliary

The resultative auxiliary nón (RES), which appears to be derived from the verb 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 mák-nón
 die-RES
 ‘He died.’
- 222 $\text{go-nu myón-nón hó shú li}$
 1S-ABL forget-RES 2S what say
 ‘I forgot what you said.’
- 223 $\text{tungvyeng thok-nón tú-nu thok}$
 door close-RES who-ABL close
 ‘The door is closed, who closed it?’

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

- Although a construction containing the resultative auxiliary 𐌲𐌹𐌸𐌺𐌰 *nón* also implies termination, the resultative auxiliary 𐌲𐌹𐌸𐌺𐌰 *nón* focuses on a transition in the past. By contrast, the exhaustive auxiliary 𐌲𐌹𐌸𐌺𐌰 *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 𐌲𐌹𐌸𐌺𐌰 *nón* and 𐌲𐌹𐌸𐌺𐌰 *tho* are sometimes used in combination.

- 226 ʰyɛʝ ʃi-nón
 huyú thi-nón
 3P reach-RES
 ‘Did they arrive?’
- 227 ʃi-nón-tho
 thi-nón-tho
 reach-RES-EXH
 ‘They arrived.’
- 228 tasó-do lát-nón-tho
 yesterday-self return-RES-EXH
 ‘They returned yesterday.’

The completive auxiliary *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.

- ### 5.12 The locative suffix with verbs

When the locative suffix 𐎧𐎫𐎴 *-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 ㄟ *-ká* may appear as the complements of verbs of motion as well as of other verbs.

- 233 ㄅㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ
hu *ɣádo-m* *ngâk-ká* *thi*
 3S 2S.OBL-DAT look-LOC reach
 ‘He came to see you.’
- 234 ㄅㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ
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 ㄟ *-ká* in combination with a verb is an adhortative function. The adhortative meaning of a main verb marked by the locative suffix ㄟ *-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 ㄟ *-ká* serve as main verbs themselves.

- 235 ㄅㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ
hudo-sá *lí-ká* *nóng-ká*
 3S.OBL-GEN house-LOC go-LOC
 ‘Let’s go to his house.’
- 236 ㄅㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ ㄗㄞㄟ
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 ㄟ \sim ㄟ *-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.

- Ergativity in Lepcha is manifested by the behaviour and meaning of the suffix $\text{ṣṣ} \sim \text{ṣ}$ -*nun* \sim -*nu* when attached to the agentive argument of a transitive verb. In this function Lepcha $\text{ṣṣ} \sim \text{ṣ}$ -*nun* \sim -*nu* works quite differently than a classic ergative. Lepcha $\text{ṣṣ} \sim \text{ṣ}$ -*nun* \sim -*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 $\text{ṣṣ} \sim \text{ṣ}$ -*nun* \sim -*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 $\text{ṣṣ} \sim \text{ṣ}$ -*nun* \sim -*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

ཏྲེ་ ~ ཏྲེ་ -*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 རྒྱུ་ཏྲེ་ རྒྱུ་ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་
kajú-nun ʔóng-re-m tsúk ma
 dog-ABL boy-DEF-DAT bite AST
 ‘The dog bit the boy.’
- 241 ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་
go-nu tasó ʔyók ma-zúk-ne
 1S-ABL yesterday work NEG-make-NEG
 ‘Yesterday I did not do any work.’
- 242 ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་
go-nu hudo-sá taʔyukup-re-m buk-hát
 1S-ABL 3S.OBL-GEN daughter-DEF-DAT hit-PRF
 ‘I hit his daughter.’
- 243 ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་
hudo-sá taʔyukup-nu kasu-m
 3S.OBL-GEN daughter-ABL 1S.OBL-DAT
- ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་ ཏྲེ་
lá buk ma
 also hit AST
 ‘His daughter hit me too.’

The occurrence of the Lepcha ending ཏྲེ་ ~ ཏྲེ་ -*nun* ~ -*nu* cannot be described by a mechanical rule. In many respects, the factors motivating the use of Lepcha ཏྲེ་ ~ ཏྲེ་ -*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 རྟོ་ ~ རྟོ་-*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 $\text{ḡ} \text{gó}$ (Q) and the assertive particle $\text{ḡ} \text{ma}$ (AST) have been discussed above in Sections 4.3.3 and 5.3 respectively. The adhortative function of the locative suffix $\text{ḡ} \text{-ká}$ (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 $\text{ḡ} \text{-bú}$ (FCT) is a common phenomenon in Lepcha.

6.1 *The request particle*

The particle $\text{ḡ} \text{le}$ (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 $\text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ}$
 $\text{ḡ} \text{ábá} \text{ di} \quad \text{le}$
 here come REQ
 ‘Could you come here please.’

- 245 $\text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ} \text{ḡ}$
 $\text{yupthen-kát} \quad \text{sóm} \quad \text{le}$
 moment-one breathe REQ
 ‘Do catch your breath for a minute.’

6.2 *The authorative particle*

The particle 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 ꠘꠢ ꠢáce ‘love’.

- 246 $\text{ꠘꠢꠟ ꠢꠟ ꠘꠢ ꠘꠢ ꠘꠢ ꠘꠢ ꠘꠢ}$
 $\text{ꠢábi thop pú dónɡ ce}$
 here get PSB search AUTH
 ‘You may find it over here, have a look.’

- 247 ꠢꠢꠟ ꠘꠢꠢ ꠘꠢ ꠘꠢ
 $\text{lín-bú ꠢáring nyen ce}$
 say-FCT language listen AUTH
 ‘Just listen to what is said.’

6.3 *The dubitative particle*

The clause-final particle 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 $\text{ꠢꠢ ꠢꠢ ꠢꠢ ꠢꠢ hó sabá tho hát}$ ‘where did you put it’, he stresses his uncertainty about being able to locate the object.

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

- 249 ꠢꠢ ꠢꠢ ꠢꠢ ꠘꠢ
 go nónɡ khut te
 1S go be.able DUB
 ‘Could I perhaps go?’

- 250 ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ_ၵ
 lyángxóng sabá nóng te
 Lyángxóng where go DUB
 ‘Where did Lyángxóng go?’

6.4 The possibility particle

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

- 251 ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ_ၵ
 lyángxóng sabá nóng *pú*
 Lyángxóng where go PSB
 Where could Lyángxóng have gone?

- 252 ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵၵ ၵၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ ၵၵ_ၵ
 saróng-re pádo-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_ၵ
 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 ሰፍራላቸው ለገቢያቸው ገቢ
hó saróng-do lát-nón-tho pá
 2S today-self return-RES-EXH CRT


hó	pel-nón	lyók
2S	be.tired-RES	IFR

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

- 255 ʒádo m lí lát-shang ʒákán
 2S.OBL-DAT house return-INF hurry

ᠷᠠᠲᠢᠮ ᠨᠢ ᠯᠢᠣᠭ
Ṗátím 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 *ʔádóm 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 , *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 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 $\tilde{\text{D}}\text{O}$ *yâmbá* (DSC) marks information that the speaker has come to know and consists of the inflected verb stem $\tilde{\text{E}}$ *yâm* of the verb $\tilde{\text{E}}$ *yâ* ‘know’ and the postposition O *bá* ‘when’. The discovery marker $\tilde{\text{E}}\text{O}$ *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 $\tilde{\text{E}}\text{O}$ *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 PA *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 $\tilde{\text{E}}\text{O}$ *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་གོ་མོ་ཅེ་གི་མེད་པ་ཟེ་
 go nong-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 མྱུ་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 ལུ་ལྟུ་ མྱུ་ *shúshú mere* ‘what was that?’, ‘what did you just say?’. When a speaker chooses to use the reportative particle མྱུ་ *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 ལུ་ལྟུ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་ ལུ་ལྟུ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་
 káyú lyáng lúk?ál zóm-ká
 1P land tomorrow food-LOC

 ལུ་ལྟུ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་ མྱུ་
 tú-tú lát-shet mere
 who-who return-NOM REP
 ‘Who did they say are coming back to dine with us
 tomorrow?’

- 265 གཤམ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་ ལྷ་ལྷ་
 páre-zang páshúm shúmú lá
 this-like fat man also

ᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ ᐆ ᐃᑦ ᐆᑦ
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 *ᐃᑦ 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 *ᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ hunu li ma* ‘s/he said’.

- 266 *ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ*
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 *ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ*
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 *ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦᐃᑦ ᐃᑦ*
hu-nun huyú-m kasu ʔámlem ʔík sathálá
 3S-ABL 3P-DAT 1S.OBL face still always

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

- 269 $\text{punzók thám câng} \quad \text{?ân lí} \quad \text{thám câng}$
 forest animal and house animal
- ma-dúk-ne
 NEG-be.alike-NEG
- ‘The animals in the forest and the animals in the house are not alike.’
- 270 $\text{dorji lí-ká} \quad \text{nóng ma} \quad \text{?ân} \quad \text{go} \quad \text{?ábá lát} \quad \text{ma}$
 Dorji house-LOC go AST and 1S here return AST
- ‘Dorji went home and I came back here.’
- 271 $\text{hó} \quad \text{?ábá hro} \quad \text{?ân} \quad \text{go}$
 2S here come.up and 1S
- $\text{?ádo-m} \quad \text{róng-díng-sho}$
 2S.OBL-DAT wait-stand-NPR
- ‘You climb up there and I will stand here and wait for you.’
- 272 $\text{nyíma} \quad \text{?ân} \quad \text{kursóng} \quad \text{faleng} \quad \text{?ân}$
 Nyima and Kursóng young.boy and
- $\text{nómleng} \quad \text{gum}$
 young.girl be.AST
- ‘Nyima and Kursóng are a boy and a girl.’

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

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

- 273 ཡེ་ཤུ་ ཡེ་ འོ་ཤུ་ འོ་
hó yángne go nóng gát-sho
 2S or 1S go must-NPR
 ‘You or I will have to go.’

- 274 ཡེ་ཤུ་ རྟེན་ ཡེ་ཤུ་ རྟེན་ ལྟོ་
hó yángne ?áre yángne ?ore lyâ
 2S or this or that accept
 ‘You’ll have to accept either this or that.’

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

- 275 ལུ་མུ་ཀའ་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་
shumu-kát ?ádo-m tsum-ká thi-wám
 man-one 2S.OBL-DAT meet-LOC reach-PRG

ཞེ་ལྟོ་ ཡེ་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་
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 ལུ་མུ་ཀའ་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་
sukdum-ká nyí-tho-bú róng-kyóng sabálá
 world-LOC be-EXH-FCT Lepcha-village everywhere

ལུ་མུ་ཀའ་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་
káyú-nun ?ore shi ma-thop-ne shenlá
 1P-ABL this see NEG-get-NEG but

ལུ་མུ་ཀའ་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་ རྟེན་
?ore-zang ?álong ?ábá káyú-nun shím-thop
 this-like now here 1P-ABL see-get

6.10 Subordination

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

When the conditional conjunction *ḡ gang* is combined with the morpheme *lā* ‘also, even’, the combination expresses the meaning ‘even if’.

- 281 ሆ (ከሆነ) ጅ ሕይወት ግደላ
hó hryóp-pung ?ân mák-kung gang-lá
 2S cry-PTC and die-PTC if-also

ታሃ ጸጥ ሕይወት
ta?yu ?áre 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 *ግራንግላ* *gorúnglá* ‘although, even’, which is added to the end of the concessive clause.

- 282 ግራንግላ ሕይወት ግራንግላ
go-nu shúlá ma-mát-ne gorúnglá
 1S-ABL everything NEG-do-NEG even

ከህንጻው ላይ ስንገኝ
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 *ጃ tú* ‘who’, *ጃ shú* ‘what’, *ሥጥ sare* ‘which’, *ሥጥ sabá* ‘where’, *ሥጥ satet* ‘how much’, this process yields forms indicating any of all possible persons, things or places. This yields the forms *ጃ ግራንግላ tú gorúnglá* ‘whosoever’, *ጃ ግራንግላ shú gorúnglá* ‘whatsoever’, *ሥጥ ግራንግላ sare gorúnglá* ‘whichsoever’, *ሥጥ ግራንግላ sabá gorúnglá* ‘wheresoever, in any place whatsoever’. Similar expressions consist of the same interrogative pronouns combined with the phrase *ግደላ ganglá* ‘even if’, e.g. *ጃ ግደላ tú ganglá* ‘whoever’, *ጃ ግደላ shú ganglá* ‘whatever’, *ሥጥ ግደላ sare ganglá* ‘whichever’, *ሥጥ ግደላ sabá ganglá* ‘wherever’. As with the corresponding forms in *lā* (cf. Section 4.3.3), forms in *ግራንግላ 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 འཕྱོད་-*bú* (FCT) is the most important nominaliser in Lepcha. The factitive marker འཕྱོད་-*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 འཕྱོད་-*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 ལཱ་ཁྱེ་ཐོ་མཐོ་འཕྱོད་ རྩུ་ཤི་མའ་
 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 བུ་མ་ཁུ་ནེ་འཕྱོད་ རྩུ་ཐོ་
 bun ma-khut-ne-bú ʔádók
 carry NEG-be.able-NEG-FCT pain
 ‘unbearable pain’
- 285 རྩུ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ རྩུ་ཐོ་ རྩུ་ཐོ་
 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 ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ ཐོ་ཐོ་ཐོ་ ཐོ་ཐོ་
 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 གཅིག་ཅེས་ཀྱི་ཁོ་ལྟ་བུ་སྒྲིལ་བཤིག་
ʔotet-bek-ká yók-bík dók-bú-sang-nun
 that.much-middle-LOC yak-cow keep-FCT-PL.H-ABL

མེད་ཀྱི་ཁོ་ལྟ་བུ་རྒྱུ་ལྟ་བུ་
ʔágyáp yók-bík-pang ryák-lung
 much yak-cow-PL.NH follow-GER

པེ་ཟོ་ཅི་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་
pe-zót-ká lúngdi-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.’

THE MOUNTAIN DEVIL

[illegible]

[illegible]

(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 ʔálóng
 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 li
 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 bámbú 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

bá hó-ká há p-nu (29) hudo-m-re
 storage-LOC shut-ABL (29) 3S.OBL-DAT-DEF

nám-sám-ká kát?áp 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 ?olom
 man see NEG-EXH-NEG like.that

bá hó-ká há p-nu (30) hudo-m-re zo-re
 storage-LOC shut-ABL (30) 3S.OBL-DAT-DEF food-DEF

cukup ?ángpur-nu tháp-bi ?â zo
 little.bit opening-ABL put-give eh food

zo ?ân nalón cá dá lá hryá-nu
 eat and last rest also pull-ABL

?úng shú bi thám câng klán lá
 water what give animal resembling

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

jú-wung-sá-re (32) nám-sam-nu-re hu cá dá
 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

lúngnóng-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 nong-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 3S	tsám-tho-bú hold-EXH-FCT	sakakup-ká young.deer-LOC	hu-nu 3S-ABL	tsám-nu hold-ABL
jú-sang live-PL.H	tho put	(49) tho-bá-re (49) put-when-DEF	sonáp-fók night-throughout	
lík-nu call-ABL	sonáp-fók night-throughout	lík-nu call-ABL	(50) huyú-re (50) 3P-DEF	
dá-nyí-bá-re sleep-be-when-DEF	hlomúng-re mountain.devil-DEF	tahyut whistle	mát-nu do-ABL	
mát-lung do-GER	mát-lung do-GER	yu come	mere REP	ʔân and
yuptho-kát-ká-re moment-one-LOC-DEF	huyú 3P	bám-bú-sá dwell-FCT-GEN		
li-ká house-LOC	lóm-lung walk-GER	di come	mere REP	(51) di-bá-re (51) come-when-DEF
ʔotet-ká-re that.much-LOC-DEF	kasu-sá 1S.OBL-GEN	tyól friend	sherábú-nu-re hunter-ABL-DEF	
shi-wám-bú see-PRG-FCT	hudo-sá 3S.OBL-GEN	ʔothá-bá-re then-when-DEF		
ʔábong-ʔákâ-pang mouth-hand-PL.NH	gun all	lá also	hudo-sá 3S.OBL-GEN	ma-det-ne NEG-move-NEG
hu 3S	ʔolom like.that	ngún-nón-bú become-RES-FCT	bóng-nón-bú 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 REP	(61) 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	ʔálom 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 bâm (68) cálong satet
3S here-PL.NH also dwell (68) just.now how.much

lá nyí-wám-yang-sá sákcing-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.

THE STORY OF THE JACKAL

(1) ʔyá	nám-ká	lúngten-ká	káyú	pât-ká
(1) formerly	year-LOC	tradition-LOC	1P	Tibet-LOC

vóm	lyê-ká	nóng-shang-sá	sung	yâmbá
salt	accept-LOC	go-INF-GEN	story	DSC

(2) káyú	róng-pang-re	pât-ká	vóm	lyâ
(2) 1P	Lepcha-PL.NH-DEF	Tibet-LOC	salt	accept

nóng-bám-bá-sá	sung-kát-re	(3) saryók-nun	kát
go-PRG-when-GEN	story-one-DEF	(3) jackal-ABL	one

lóm-ká	plâ-bá-re	saʔár-kát	lóm-ká
road-LOC	come.out-when-DEF	goat-one	road-LOC

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

thâmcâng-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 ?ân punzók-ká lá thít-nón
 come.out-ABL and forest-LOC also reach-RES

?ân sa?ár-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.

THE GREAT KING GYEBÚ

[illegible]

[illegible]

(1) ren	ʔore	kyóng	ʔáre-sá	bâm.basti	róng
(1) sir	this	village	this-GEN	Bâm.Basti	Lepcha

kyóng-sá ʔân nahán-re ʔáre kyóng puntsáyât-sá
village-GEN and before-DEF this village assembly-GEN

gúlón-bú	lá	ngún	pá	mándráł	lá
guide=FCT	also	become	CRT	mandal	also

ngún	pá	(2) cálong-re	róng	shezúm-sá
become	CRT	(2) just.now-DEF	Lepcha	association-GEN

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	dárgjúlyáng-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) mûtâncí	róngkup	rum-kup
thus	say-PRG-FCT	(6) Mûtâncí	Lepcha	god-child

lín-bú-re ʔáre-sá tândók-re shú ngún pú
say-FCT-DEF this-GEN behalf-DEF what become PSB

(7) mûtâncí róngkup-do-m-re rum-kup yang
(7) Mûtâncí 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 Dárjúlyáng say-FCT

(10) cálong-sá kálenpúng-do-m-re ?yá-re
 (10) just.now-GEN Kálenpúng-self-DAT-DEF past-DEF

kálenpúng yang li-wám-bá-re ?o-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 ?ábryáng thóm-bú-re cálong
 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

?ábryáng-re gyebú-?áchúk-nu pano gyebú-?áchúk-nu
 name-DEF Gyebú-great-ABL king Gyebú-great-ABL

thóm-bú (14) hu-nu-re ?ábi ?áre
 put-FCT (14) 3S-ABL-DEF here this

kálenpúng-lyáng-re purtám-sá halá lyáng
 Kalimpong-land-DEF flat.land-GEN cleared land

?áre-re gum (15) ?áre-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 (21) gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá lyáng-re
 be-NPR (21) Gyebú-great-GEN land-DEF

gyebú-ʔáchúk-sá ʔábo-sá dri-re lóngshól-lyáng
 Gyebú-great-GEN father-GEN fort-DEF Lóngshól-land

gum (22) gyebú-ʔáchúk-re tagrikup hu
 be.AST (22) Gyebú-great-DEF boy 3S

kátʔáp-bú (23) hudo-sá ʔágyek-re káyú róng
 alone-FCT (23) 3S.OBL-GEN birth-DEF 1P Lepcha

ʔáfrón-ká-re món nám már.lavo tshâ
 number-LOC-DEF pig year twelfth.month date

kati.tarók.tháp go-sho (24) ʔyá nám-ká
 sixteen be-NPR (24) past year-LOC

gyebú-ʔáchúk pano-nu-re ʔáre
 Gyebú-great king-ABL-DEF this

kálenpúng-sá ʔápun pun-re ʔágyáp má
 Kálenpúng-GEN near near-DEF much secret

dri-pang zúk-tho (25) li ʔân dri-pang-re
 fort-PL.NH make-EXH (25) house and fort-PL.NH-DEF

cálóng-re sabá pú sabá mát lá
 just.now-DEF where PSB where do also

zúk-thóm pú ʔábryáng-re shú pú (26) káyú
 make-EXH PSB name-DEF what PSB (26) 1P

róng-sang-do-m-re tá pâtmú
 Lepcha-PL.H-self-DAT-DEF up.there 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 sóngtet 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) ʔáre cálóng
 Dámsáng fort-and Dálíng fort (31) this just.now

lá káyú-nu nóng-nu ʔá gyebú-ʔáchúk-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-ʔáchúk-do-m kálenpúng-ká ʔore
 (32) king Gyebú-great-self-DAT Kálenpúng-LOC that

ʔáthú renjóng-sá pano-nu-re nahán
 this.up.over.there Sikkim-GEN king-ABL-DEF before

chádóng fyenkyóp me li ʔâ 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 ʔáre kálenpúng-lyáng-ká
 (34) that.up.over.there-ABL-DEF this Kálenpúng-land-LOC

fyenkyóp-bá-re gyebú-ʔáchúk-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 nong-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) cálong	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
dwel	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 dí-t-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 *Darjúlýáng* in the past. What does that mean, *Darjúlýáng*?” (9) “*Dárjúlýáng* is the place where it is said that the gods rested after they had created the holy land of Máyel. They called it *Dárjúlýáng*, ‘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 Gyebú. (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 Gyebú, king Gyebú ?Áchúk of the Lepcha people, his father’s name was king ?Áprázáp, he is said to be his son, it is written in the old books.” (17) “What is the meaning of the name king Gyebú ?Áchúk?” (18) “It is true that the king Gyebú ?Áchúk’s father’s name was ?Áprázáp. (19) “His mother’s name was ?Áshekmít, his father’s name was ?Áprázáp, this is the truth. (20) So, his mother was ?Áshekmít and his father was ?Áprázáp. The parents of the great Gyebú were born in a place called Longshol. (21) Gyebú ?Áchúk’s father’s castle was in Longshol. (22) Gyebú ?Áchúk 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 Gyebú ?Áchúk 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, Gyebú ?Áchúk 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 Gyebú put there.” (32) “In Kalimpong, king Gyebú ?Áchúk 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 ?Áchúk 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 ?Áchúk in Kalimpong to fight a battle, what happened between them?” (37) “In order to fight Gyebú ?Áchúk, 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 ?Áchúk 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 ?Áchúk chúk chúk, Gyebú ?Áchúk chúk chúk.” (43) Gyebú ?Áchúk’s body had joined back together and they went back to the king and said that Gyebú ?Áchúk had returned. (44) The soldiers went back to kill Gyebú ?Áchúk again, but he was immortal. (45) Even when their swords were worn down from fighting, Gyebú ?Áchúk still could not be killed. (46) Now the story is that when they cut Gyebú ?Áchúk 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 ?Áchúk, the king of Bhutan said: “Now you have to bring me the severed head of Gyebú ?Áchúk”, 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.”

TWO LEPCHA GIRLS

[illegible]

ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ ᑦᑭᑦ
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(1) khámrimó khámri ?álem-do di le ?íng (2) khámri
(1) khámrimó khámri hither-self come REQ child (2) khámri

?ánóm khámrimó ?ánóm (3) saróng káyú kyóng-sá
elder.sister khámrimó elder.sister (3) today 1P village-GEN

?áring kát-nyet li-ká le ?íng-do-m
language one-two say-LOC REQ child-self-DAT

tsum-bá (4) shú ?áring línshet nyí gó ?ánóm
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 ?ánum-sang-do tsum ma-tho-n
how do-INF elder.brother-PL.H-self meet NEG-EXH-NEG

(7) tsum ma-gát ?ákâ ?álóng káyú-do zúk-ká
(7) meet NEG-must hand now 1P-self make-LOC

(8) ?olom gangne ?álóng ?ánóm-do yâ ma
(8) like.that if now elder.sister-self know AST

(9) trút mát-ká le káyú suknyím-kát káyú
(9) advise do-LOC REQ 1P day-one 1P

kyóng-sá gun-re-m lík-bán trút 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 lúkhroṅg-re lúṅg-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 lúṅgtár-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 ʔobálá (36) kám
 (35) 1S go NEG-EXH-NEG everywhere (36) little.bit

kor-shang lá mát 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) káflík-nu zúk-shang káflík-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 lúmkup (45) go róng go
 (44) 2S Lepcha or Nepali (45) 1S Lepcha be

róngkup-do (46) ?ádo-sá kúmíng shú
 Lepcha-self (46) 2S-GEN appellation what

(47) kasu-sá ?á?itámít róngkup
 (47) 1S.OBL-GEN ?Á?itámít Lepcha

(48) hó róngkup shúmatne pi róngkup ma-go-n gang
 (48) 2S Lepcha why write Lepcha NEG-be-NEG if

(49) ?ánóm-sá kúmíng shú gó
 (49) elder.sister-GEN appellation what Q

(50) kasu-sá ?óngmít róngkup
 (50) 1S.OBL-GEN ?Óngmít Lepcha

(51) ?ánóm-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 ?ácálá gek gát róng máyel sukdam-ká
 2S still be.born must Lepcha Máyel world-LOC

(53) káyú ?álong ?áлом bâm-nu ma-ngún
 (53) 1P now like.that reside-ABL NEG-become

(54) kyóng-ká ngâk gát róngkup-sang sabá-sabá
 (54) village-LOC look must Lepcha-PL.H where-where

tsóm-?ám sabá brám-?ám (55) ?álong 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 ?Áchúk?” (23) “I don’t.” (24) “Gebú ?Áchúk’s father’s name is ?Áprázáp, his mother’s name is ?Áshekmít, so ?Áshekmít’s son is Gebú ?Áchúk.” (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 ?Áchúk’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 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 ?Á?ítámít Lepcha.” (48) “Why do you call yourself Lepcha when you are not truly a Lepcha?” (49) “What is your name, sister?” (50) “Mine is ?Óngmít 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: ར k, ལ kh, ཤ kr, ས kl, འ g, ཡ gl, བ ng, ཏ c, ཨ ch, ཉ j, ཇ ny, ཐ t, ད tr, དྷ th, ན thr, པ d, ཕ dr, ཌ n, ཐ p, ད pl, ན ph, ཌ f, ཌ fl, ཌ b, ཌ bl, ན m, ན ml, ན ts, ན tsh, ན z, ན y, ན r, ན l, ན h, ན hl, ན v, ན sh, ན s, ན w, ན ?, ན -â, ན -a, ན -i, ན -í, ན -o, ན -ó, ན -u, ན -ú, ན -e, ན -y-.

 $\notin k-$

- 𐤊 *kâ* v. cook
 𐤋 *kât* v. order, command
 𐤌𐤍 *kaku* num. eight
 𐤌𐤎 *kakyók* num. seven
 𐤌𐤏 *kakyót* num. nine
 𐤌𐤑 *kacer* n. wheat
 𐤌𐤒 *kajóm* n. finger
 𐤌𐤓 *kajú* n. dog
 𐤌𐤔𐤕 *kajútâng* n. fat male dog
 𐤌𐤖 *katáp* n. fist
 𐤌𐤗 *kati* num. ten
 𐤌𐤘 *katyám* n. muscle of the arm
 𐤌𐤙 *kathi* n. little finger
 𐤌𐤚 *kadóm* n. thumb
 𐤌𐤛 *kábu* v. carry
 𐤌𐤜𐤝 *katshóng* adv. day after tomorrow
 𐤌𐤞 *kayók* n. fingertip
 𐤌𐤟 *kayóng* n. middle finger
 𐤌𐤠𐤡 *kalít* n. ring finger
 𐤌𐤢 *kalók* n. rat, mouse
 𐤌𐤣 *kalyók* n. palm of hand
 𐤌𐤤𐤥 *káchám* adv. in three days time, after three days

- 𐄂𐄆𐄇 *káchót* adv. in four days time, after four days
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉 *kátaʔyen* adv. three years ago
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊 *káflík* adj. some
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌 *káwodámpú* n. wooden pillar
 𐄂𐄇𐄈 *kát* num. one
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉 ~ 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊 ~ 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋 *kátʔáp ~ kátʔákup ~ kátkup* adv. alone
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉 *kán* v. pulverise, reduce to powder
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊 *kám* adv. little bit
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉 *ki* n. thread
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉 *ki* v. claim, demand, assert
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊 *kibri* v. twist, wind threads together
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋 *kiríl* v. roll thread into a ball
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌 *kiyâp* v. stitch together, quilt
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋 *kít* v. snatch
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋 *kor* v. wander, stroll
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋 *kol* n. box
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌 *kó* n. order
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍 *kók* v. fence in
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍 *kón* n. taste
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍 *kón* n. side
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍 *kón* v. let, allow
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎 *kóng* n. branch
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎 *kóm* n. money
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎 *kóm* v. curdle, congeal
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌 *ku* v. urge, impel
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍 *kup* n. child, small
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎 *kumdúng* adj. other
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏 *kumthyóng* n. kite
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐 *kursóng* adj. bright
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎 *kúng* n. tree
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐 *kúngbóng* n. tree stump
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑 *kúmúng* n. appellation, name
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑 *kúl* v. encircle, surround
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑 *ke* v. try, attempt
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒 *kyáng* v. freeze
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓 *kyok* v. churn butter
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓𐄔 *kyóng* n. village
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓𐄔𐄕 *kyón* v. suffer
 𐄂𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓𐄔𐄕𐄖 *kyóp* v. lock

ᳵ᳚ *kyól* v. blend, mix, confuse

ᳵ kh-

ᳵ᳚ *khá* num. score

ᳵ᳚᳚ *khák* v. choke

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚ *khámrí* sal. greeting

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *khámrimó* sal. greeting (more respectful than *khámrí*)

ᳵ᳚ ~ ᳵ᳚᳚ *khu ~ khut* v. be able to

ᳵ᳚᳚ *khú* n. loaf of bread

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚ *khek* v. freeze

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *khyâ* v. arrive

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *khyú* v. bathe

ᳵ᳚ kl-

ᳵ᳚ *kla* v. cleave

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *klánlá* adj. resembling

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚ *klít* v. polish, rub

ᳵ᳚᳚ *klo* adj. straightforward

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *klóng* v. send

ᳵ᳚᳚ ~ ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *klú ~ klúm* v. fall

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚ *klek* v. force, urge

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *klyam* v. be sweet

ᳵ᳚᳚ kr-

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *krít* n. hunger

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *kró* v. slice

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *krón* v. scratch

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *kryóng* v. praise

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚ g-

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚ *gâ* v. resist

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *gang* conj. if

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *gangne* conj. if

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *ganglá* even if

ᳵ᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚᳚ *gát* v. must, need, require

𐄎 *gán* adj. old, aged
 𐄎𐄎 *gánlât* 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 𐄎𐄎 *glet*)

𐄎 ng-

𐄎 *ngâk* v. look, observe
 𐄎𐄎 *ngán* v. remain, sit
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *ngánshet* n. seat
 𐄎𐄎 *ngár* v. slice
 𐄎 *ngol* adv. early
 𐄎𐄎 *ngók* v. grind
 𐄎 *ngú* n. fish
 𐄎𐄎 *ngút* v. cut, sever or divide with a knife
 𐄎𐄎 *ngún* v. become, happen, occur

C-

- ཁྱ རྩ རྩ རྩ *cang* v. foster, nourish
 ཁྱ རྩ རྩ *cá* adv. just, a moment ago
 ཁྱ རྩ རྩ *cáng* v. cross river
 ཁྱ རྩ རྩ *cánáp* adv. last night
 ཁྱ རྩ *cáp* v. thatch
 ཁྱ རྩ རྩ *cábá* adv. some time ago
 ཁྱ རྩ *cám* v. wink
 ཁྱ རྩ རྩ *cálóng* adv. just now, just a moment ago
 རྩ རྩ *ci* n. *cí*, fermented grain liquor
 རྩ རྩ *cí* v. dry meat or fish in the sun
 རྩ རྩ *cí* v. tread, tremble upon
 རྩ རྩ *cík* v. weigh
 རྩ རྩ *cíng* v. think
 རྩ རྩ *cít* v. split wood or bamboo
 རྩ རྩ *cíp* v. drain of liquids
 རྩ རྩ *co* n. tea
 རྩ རྩ *co* v. mend
 རྩ རྩ *cot* v. assist, help
 རྩ རྩ *com* v. oppress
 རྩ རྩ *col* v. pour water over body
 རྩ རྩ *cóng* v. wash
 རྩ རྩ *cóng* v. be quick
 རྩ རྩ *cóm* v. leave, depart
 རྩ རྩ *cór* v. be sour, be acid
 རྩ རྩ *cu* adj. small, little
 རྩ རྩ *cukup* a little bit
 རྩ རྩ *cup* v. restrain
 རྩ རྩ *cú* n. the snowy range, the Himalayas
 རྩ རྩ *cúk* n. kiss
 རྩ རྩ *-cúng* young of bulls
 རྩ རྩ *cút* v. rise of dough
 རྩ རྩ *ce* n. love
 རྩ རྩ *cechók* adj. loveable
 རྩ རྩ *cewo* n. crore
 རྩ རྩ *cek* v. hew, cut down
 རྩ རྩ *cet* v. thrust, stab, pierce
 རྩ རྩ *cep* v. bore, pierce

མྱོའི་ཆེ་ལ་ *cer* v. be lazy

མྱོའི་ཆེ་ལ་ *cer* v. milk

མ ch-

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chádóng* n. war, battle

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chárí* n. letter

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chí* n. example, model

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *cho* n. book

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *-cho* sf. best, greatest

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *choko* n. paper

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chokóng* n. offering of dough rice

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chokúng* n. brass lamp

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chochúk* v. copy, transcribe, reproduce

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chogyú* n. lesson

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chotân* n. essence of religion

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *choten* n. chörten, monument, memorial

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chodám* n. book binding

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chobúm* n. sacred scriptures of Buddhism

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chomí* n. religious lamp or light

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chotsóm* n. altar

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *choyântân* n. education

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *choyuk* n. literature

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *cholí* n. school

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *cholep* n. leaf of a book

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chó* v. unite, join

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chó* n. even number, pair, couple

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chómtun* n. friendship

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chór* v. pour

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chólúng nóngshang* v. multiply

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chú* n. strength, courage

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chú* n. cheese

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *-chúk* sf. most, worthy

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chúko* n. energy, force

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chúpí* n. sulphur

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chútsât* n. hour

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chúsung* n. crocodile

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chet* v. relate

མཆེད་ཆུང་ *chet* n. need, want, lack, demand, necessity

ꯊ j-

- ꯊꯪ *jâl* v. dry over fire
 ꯊ꯫ *ják* v. itch
 ꯊ꯬ *jáŋg* adj. stiff
 ꯊ꯭ *jáŋ* v. assemble
 ꯊ꯮ *jí* v. annoy, disturb
 ꯊ꯯ *jí* n. filth
 ꯊ꯰ ~ ꯊ꯱ *jí ~ jít* v. sift
 ꯊ꯲ *jók* v. talk, speak
 ꯊ꯳ *jóng* v. memorise
 ꯊ꯴ *jóp* v. flatten, make or become flat
 ꯊ꯵ *ju* n. thorn
 ꯊ꯶ *jú* v. live, burn
 ꯊ꯷ *jek* v. bud
 ꯊ꯸ *jen* adj. other
 ꯊ꯹ *jer* n. gold
 ꯊ꯺ *jel* v. understand, know a language, speak a language

ꯊ ny-

- ꯊ꯻ *nyák* v. exceed
 ꯊ꯼꯾ *nyilop* n. earlobe
 ꯊ꯽ *nyí* v. to be
 ꯊ꯿ *nyín* n. milk
 ꯊ꯾ *nyó* n. odd number
 ꯊ꯿ *nyók* v. delay
 ꯊ꯿ *nyók* v. cause to quiver, shake
 ꯊ꯿ *nyót* n. field
 ꯊ꯿ *nyóm* v. smell
 ꯊ꯿ *nyuk* v. grind
 ꯊ꯿ *nyum* n. pair
 ꯊ꯿꯿ *nyúgú* n. pen
 ꯊ꯿꯿꯾ *nyúrpang* adj. deaf
 ꯊ꯿ *nyet* num. two
 ꯊ꯿ *nyet* v. show, demonstrate
 ꯊ꯿ *nyen* v. listen

ᄃ t-

- ᄃᄃ *tân* n. cause, reason, behalf
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tândók* n. cause, reason, behalf
 ᄃᄃ -*tâng* sf. corpulent male animal, pig or dog
 ᄃ *ta* v. bear, endure
 ᄃᄃ *taʔayu* n. woman
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tabá* adv. up there, there above (also spelt ᄃᄃᄃ *tábá*)
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tabók* n. abdomen, stomach, belly, womb
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tado* pron. oneself
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tagrí* n. man
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tagrikup* n. boy
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tagryú* n. cheek
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tarók* num. six
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tatsât* n. time, period of time
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ *talon kón* adv. in the direction there above
 ᄃᄃᄃ *talol* adv. up above there
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *talemkón* adv. above there, in that direction (also spelt ᄃᄃᄃᄃ ᄃᄃ *tálemkón*)
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *talyáng* n. sky, heaven
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *talyádâ* n. sea, ocean
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tahyut* n. whistle
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tasó* adv. yesterday, sometimes shortened to ᄃᄃ *só*
 ᄃᄃᄃ *taʔyu* n. girl
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *taʔyukup* n. daughter
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *taʔyen* adv. last year
 ᄃᄃᄃ *taʔi* n. flour, meal, powder
 ᄃᄃ *tá-* pf. up there (also spelt ᄃ *ta-*)
 ᄃᄃᄃ *táng* n. bundle
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tángko* n. basket
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tálom* adv. like that there above
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tállyáng* n. highland
 ᄃᄃ *tí* num. zero
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tíng* v. separate
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *língmú* n. plainsman
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tít* v. flee
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tít-rekúng* n. tamarind tree
 ᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *tít-repót* n. tamarind fruit
 ᄃᄃᄃ *tím* adj. big

- 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tímre* n. respect
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tóm* n. speech
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tór* n. silk
 𑜋𑜨 ~ 𑜋𑜨 *tu* ~ *tut* v. wash, cleanse
 𑜋𑜨 *tuk* v. cover, protect
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tuknóm* n. nose
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tukfyíl* n. ant
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tukpát* n. knee
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tukpo* n. rope
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 𑜋𑜨 *tukpókúng* n. peach tree
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tukpópót* n. peach
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tungder* n. cockroach
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tunghrók* num. thousand
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *tungvyeng* n. door
 𑜋𑜨 *tú* pron. who
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *túngchúr* num. hundred million
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *túdo* pron. anybody, anyone
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *túlá* pron. everyone, someone, anyone, whoever
 𑜋𑜨 *tet* v. touch, aim
 𑜋𑜨 -*tet* sf. until, up to (also spelt 𑜋𑜨 *tyet* or 𑜋𑜨 *tyat*)
 𑜋𑜨 *tyâng* all, whole
 𑜋𑜨 *tyât* v. cut down, hew down
 𑜋𑜨 *tyak* v. tread
 𑜋𑜨 *tyal* v. fell (also spelt 𑜋𑜨 *tel*)
 𑜋𑜨 *tyók* v. cut
 𑜋𑜨 *tyóng* v. hide
 𑜋𑜨 *tyól* n. friend
 𑜋𑜨 *tyu* v. subdue, defeat
 𑜋𑜨 *tyul* v. fall
 𑜋𑜨 *tyúk* v. kick
 𑜋𑜨 *tyút* n. scar

𑜋𑜨 tr-

- 𑜋𑜨 *trát* v. tear
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *trínchen* n. kindness
 𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫 *trókchí* thank you
 𑜋𑜨 *tróp* v. winnow
 𑜋𑜨 *trút* v. advise

ᄃᄆ *tre* n. mule

th-

ᄃᄆᄆ *thangkú* n. tobacco

ᄃᄆ *thá* v. chew, eat

ᄃᄆ *thák* v. be complete, sufficient

ᄃᄆ *thám* n. thing, object

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámcâng* n. animal

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámbík* n. insect

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámbóng* n. plant

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámbu* n. worm

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámpót* n. fruit

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámlí* n. seed

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thámvyet* n. question

ᄃᄆ *tháp* v. put

ᄃᄆ *thál* adv. up above

ᄃᄆ ~ ᄃᄆ *thi* ~ *thút* v. reach

ᄃᄆ *thík* v. tie

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thikúng* n. great grandfather

ᄃᄆ ~ ᄃᄆ *tho~thóm* v. put

ᄃᄆ *thok* v. close

ᄃᄆ *thóng* v. drink

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thongjóm* n. toe

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thongpyól* n. footprint

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thongtung* n. heel

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thóngshet* adj. drinkable

ᄃᄆ *thop* v. get (also spelt ᄃᄆ *thúp*)

ᄃᄆ *thol* adj. near

ᄃᄆ *thór* v. escape

ᄃᄆ *thúk* n. season

ᄃᄆ *theng* v. sing

ᄃᄆ *thep* adj. extra, additional, successive

ᄃᄆᄆ ᄃᄆᄆ *theppa theppa* adv. successively

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *therbúm* num. billion

ᄃᄆᄆ *thyák* v. recognise, identify

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thyáktuk* n. hat, cap

ᄃᄆᄆᄆ *thyákdám* n. scalp

ᄃᄆᄆ *thyen* v. laugh

𐌿𐌽𐌾𐌿 *thyenlât* n. laughter
 𐌿𐌽𐌾𐌿𐌰 *thyenlá* adv. laughingly
 𐌿𐌽 ~ 𐌿𐌾𐌿 *thyo ~ thyóm* v. hear
 𐌿𐌾𐌿 *thyók* n. shelter
 𐌿𐌾𐌿𐌰 *thyór* v. set free
 𐌿𐌿𐌰 ~ 𐌿𐌿𐌰𐌰 *thyu ~ thyum* v. mix, combine, unite

𐌿𐌿 thr-

𐌿𐌿𐌰 *thri* n. throne
 𐌿𐌿𐌰𐌰 *thrim* n. law
 𐌿𐌿𐌰 *throm* n. town, market
 𐌿𐌿𐌰𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰 *thrókthrik* num. ten billion

𐌿 d-

𐌿 *dâ* n. lake
 𐌿𐌾𐌿𐌰 *dâpúk* n. shore
 𐌿𐌾𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dâlyáng* n. island
 𐌿𐌾𐌿 *dâng* v. run
 𐌿𐌾𐌿𐌰 *dâl* v. germinate, sprout
 𐌿𐌰 *dá* v. sleep, rest
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dátho* n. almanac
 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *dáp* v. cover
 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *dám* v. tie, bind
 𐌿𐌰 ~ 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *di ~ dít* v. come, approach
 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *díng* v. stand
 𐌿𐌰 *do* pron. self
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dodosá* adj. personal, of ones own
 𐌿𐌰 *do* v. collect, gather together, assemble
 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *dok* v. be ill
 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *dop* v. burn
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dó* v. announce, make known
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dók* v. keep
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dóng* v. search, seek
 𐌿𐌰𐌰 *du* n. disease
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dun* v. tell, narrate, say
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰 *dunlu* n. remark
 𐌿𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰𐌰 *duntrók* n. week

- ཅུ་མུ་གུ་ *dutmúng* n. demon
 ཅུ་ *dum* n. cloth
 ཅུ་ *dú* n. umbrella
 ཅུ་ ~ ཅུ་ *dú ~ dún* v. dig
 ཅུ་ *dúk* v. be alike
 ཅུ་མུ་མུ་ *dúnggít* n. tradition
 ཅུ་ *dúm* v. be white
 ཅུ་ *de* v. destroy
 ཅུ་མུ་ *delúk* n. resurrection
 ཅུ་ *dek* v. break
 ཅུ་ *det* v. move
 ཅུ་ *dep* sf. together, along with
 ཅུ་ *dem* n. dress
 ཅུ་མུ་མུ་ *dyángtung* n. heel
 ཅུ་མུ་ *dyângpak* n. knee
 ཅུ་མུ་མུ་ *dyângpók* n. calf
 ཅུ་མུ་མུ་ *dyánglyók* n. sole of foot
 ཅུ་ ~ ཅུ་ *dyu ~ dyut* v. argue

ཅུ་ dr-

- ཅུ་ *drâm* adv. quick
 ཅུ་ *drám* v. break
 ཅུ་ཅུ་ *drámdyân* v. break down
 ཅུ་ *dri* n. fort, palace
 ཅུ་ *drí* v. wind, roll or coil thread
 ཅུ་ *dríp* v. confine
 ཅུ་ *dróp* n. moment
 ཅུ་ *dre* n. demon
 ཅུ་ *dret* v. push
 ཅུ་ *dryák* v. pursue, chase
 ཅུ་ཅུ་ *dryándo* adv. equal to

ཅུ་ n-

- ཅུ་ *nâlá* adv. always
 ཅུ་ *nalón* adv. last
 ཅུ་ *navár* n. boat
 ཅུ་ *ná* v. take

- འཇམ་ *nahán* adv. before
 འཇམ་ *nám* n. year
 འཇམ་མཚའ་ *námkor* n. cycle of twelve years
 འཇམ་མཚའ་ *námnám* adv. yearly
 འཇམ་མཚའ་ *nápmún* n. evening
 འཇམ་མཚའ་ *nápzâ* n. dusk
 འཇམ་མཚའ་ *náp-lúk* n. day and night, morning and evening
 འཇམ་ *nók* v. push
 འཇམ་ *nók-lât* n. blackness
 འཇམ་ *nóng* v. go
 འཇམ་ *nóng* adv. inside
 འཇམ་ *nómleng* n. young girl
 འཇམ་ *nól* n. skin
 འཇམ་ ~ འཇམ་ *nu ~ nut* v. suck
 འཇམ་ *numnu* n. brothers
 འཇམ་མཚའ་ *numtsám nyóm* n. leap month
 འཇམ་ *nup* v. flood
 འཇམ་ *núl* v. crush, knead

པ p-

- པ་ *pâ* n. incense
 པ་མཚའ་ *pâtmú* n. Tibetan
 པ་མཚའ་ *pacák* adv. almost
 པ་མཚའ་ *patung* n. shoulder
 པ་མཚའ་ *pano* n. king
 པ་ *pá* v. beckon, signal
 པ་ *pár* v. buy
 པ་ *pi* v. write
 པ་ *pík* v. purify
 པ་ *pín* v. brush, brush off
 པ་ *po* n. bamboo
 པ་ *pung* n. mound, heap
 པ་མཚའ་ *punjeng* n. iron
 པ་མཚའ་ *punthyóng* n. eagle
 པ་མཚའ་ *punzók* n. forest
 པ་ *pup* v. cover
 པ་ *pe* n. grass
 པ་ *pe* v. agree

- རེ *pe-* adv. over there (also spelt རྩྭ *pí-*)
 རེཏེ *peñ* pron. there (near)
 རེའུ *pebá* pron. there
 རེམྱ *petet* adv. up to that place over there
 རེལྱ *pepe* adv. that there, yonder
 རེམྱ *peme* adv. there, down there
 རེལྱ *pere* adv. that over there (also spelt རྩྭ *pír*, རྩྭ *pyir*, རྩྭ *pyur*)
 རེལྱ *pelom* adv. in that manner
 རེལྱ *pelom* adv. like that
 རེལྱ *pel* v. be tired
 རྩྭ *prâ* n. cut bamboo
 རྩྭ *promú* n. Bhutanese
 རྩྭ *prú* n. ash
 རྩྭ *prýá* n. hymn
 རྩྭ *prýá* v. describe, give an account of something

ཐ ph-

- ཐུ *phám* v. defeat
 ཐུ *phi* v. wash of utensils
 ཐུམྱུ *philíngmú* n. Englishman
 ཐུམྱ *phúl* v. be distant
 ཐུ *pho* n. time, turn
 ཐུ *phu* v. offer, sacrifice
 ཐུ *phet* adv. half
 ཐུ *phyá* v. disjoin
 ཐུ *phyok* v. sweep
 ཐུམྱ *phyokmú* n. broom
 ཐུ *phyú* v. hatch
 ཐུ *phyuk* v. be rich

ཕ pl-

- ཕུ *plâ* v. come forth, come out, rise
 ཕུ *plák* v. break
 ཕུ *plí* v. deny
 ཕུ *plyâ* v. produce, bring forward

Ɔ f-

- Ɔ(Ɔ) *fâtyók* n. pot
 Ɔ̃ *fâk* v. scrape
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fangú* num. five
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fali* num. four
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *faleng* n. young boy
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fá* v. swim
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fát* n. earth
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fát* v. lose
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fán* v. burn
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fár* v. rust
 Ɔ̃ *fík* v. tear, pull apart
 Ɔ *fo* n. bird
 Ɔ *fo* n. tooth (also Ɔ(Ɔ) *ʔáfo*)
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fogóm* n. molar
 Ɔ̃ *fonyel* n. gums
 Ɔ̃ *fozâl* n. incisor
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *folún* n. wisdom tooth
 Ɔ̃ *fók* adv. throughout
 Ɔ̃ *fók* v. pierce, stab
 Ɔ *fót* v. taste
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fungfing* adj. blue
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fyo* n. brass
 Ɔ(Ɔ) *fyu* n. pot
 Ɔ̃ *fyek* v. sharpen

Ɔ fl-

- Ɔ *flâ* v. narrate, describe
 Ɔ(Ɔ) ~ Ɔ̃ *flí* ~ *flím* v. divide, separate
 Ɔ̃ *flík* adv. apart, aside
 Ɔ̃ *flík* v. separate, cleave
 Ɔ̃ *flók* v. peel, peel off skin or bark
 Ɔ̃ *flet* v. wash ones face

Ɔ b-

- Ɔ̃ *bâk* v. weed

- 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *báhó* n. storage, store room
 𐄎𐄎 *báng* v. break, cut, chop wood or bamboo in short pieces
 𐄎𐄎 -*báng* num. half of
 𐄎𐄎 *bám* v. dwell, stay, reside
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bámlyáng* n. homeland, residence
 𐄎𐄎 *bán* n. knife
 𐄎𐄎 *bán* adv. after
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bánkup* n. small knife
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bázá* n. hour
 𐄎𐄎 *bál* v. repeat
 𐄎𐄎 ~ 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bi* ~ *bín* v. give
 𐄎𐄎 *bi* n. curry
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bifong* n. green leafy vegetable
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bík* n. cow
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bíkgú* n. cow
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bíkbo* n. bull, steer
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bíklóng* n. ox
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bíklóngbop* n. bullock, castrated male bovine
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bíklóngcúng* n. young bull
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bíl* v. fold of cloth or paper
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bojo* n. grandfather
 𐄎𐄎 -*bom* sf. brooding female animal
 𐄎𐄎 ~ 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bo* ~ *bón* v. give
 𐄎𐄎 -*bop* sf. young of bulls
 𐄎𐄎 *bu* n. snake, worm
 𐄎𐄎 *bu* v. carry
 𐄎𐄎 -*bu* sf. male of animals
 𐄎𐄎 *buk* v. hit, strike, thresh
 𐄎𐄎 *bun* v. carry
 𐄎𐄎 *bul* v. scrape
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *búm* num. lakh
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *búmtsho* num. lakh
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *búr* v. flower, bloom
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *búl* v. boil over
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *byám* v. keep, leave behind
 𐄎𐄎𐄎𐄎 *byúp* v. parch, dry in fire
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *brám* v. stray, deviate, roam, be lost
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bri* n. marriage, union
 𐄎𐄎𐄎 *bret* v. separate, divide

ᄃ bl-

ᄃᄃ *blá* v. takeᄃᄆ *-bo* sf. father, uncastrated male parent animalᄃᄇ *blók* v. separate the outer and inner part of bamboo or caneᄃᄈ *blen* v. be full, be filled up

ᄆ m-

ᄆᄃ *mân* n. meatᄆᄆ *maró* n. manᄆᄇ *má* v. hide, conceal from sightᄆᄈ *mák* v. dieᄆᄉᄃ *mán-gú* n. sowᄆᄇ *mát* v. doᄆᄉᄆ *mátlóm* n. conduct, act of conducting, guidanceᄆᄉᄃ *máthu* n. habit, customᄆᄃ *mi* n. fireᄆᄃ *-mi* sf. female animal that has not had youngᄆᄃᄆᄃ *míktráp* n. sleepᄆᄃᄆᄃ *míkcóm* n. eyelash, eyebrowᄆᄃᄆᄃᄃ *míkgrúng* n. tearᄆᄃᄆᄃᄃ *míkdúm* n. foreigner (literally white eyes)ᄆᄃᄆᄃᄃᄃ *míkmyóng* n. eyelidᄆᄃᄃ *míl* adv. downᄆᄃᄃ *món* n. medicineᄆᄃᄃ *món* n. pig, boarᄆᄃᄃᄃ *móntâng* n. fat boarᄆᄃᄃᄆ *mónbo* n. boar, uncastrated male of swineᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃ *mónbu* n. boarᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *mónmi* n. fallow sowᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *mónmót* n. sowᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *mónsu* n. boar, uncastrated boarᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *mónsháng* n. barren sowᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *-mót* sf. female of animalsᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *múng* n. devilᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *munjú* n. grandmotherᄆᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃᄃ *muró* n. man

- མུ་ *muzu* n. body
 མེ་ *me-* adv. down there
 མེ་འོ་ *mebá* adv. there below
 མེ་འོ་ཐོ་ *mebí* adv. there below (less distant than མེ་འོ་ *mebá*)
 མེ་ལོ་ *melon* adv. in that direction down there
 མེ་ལོ་མ་ *melom* adv. like that down there
 མེ་ར་ *mere* adv. that down there
 མེ་ལ་ *myák* v. kill
 མེ་ལོ་ལ་ *myók* n. son in law
 མེ་ལོ་ལ་ *myóng* v. experience
 མེ་ལོ་ལ་ *myón* v. forget

མ་ ml-

- མ་ལུ་ *mlú* n. utensil, implement
 མ་ལ་ *mlyá* adj. level, even
 མ་ལུ་ལ་ *mlyúk* adj. lukewarm, tepid

ཏ་ ts-

- ཏ་ལ་ *tsám* v. hold
 ཏ་ལ་ *tsóm* v. limit
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsómcúng* n. pigtail
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsómrát* n. comb
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsómrík* n. ribbon
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsómbheng* n. single hair
 ཏ་ *tsót* v. squeeze
 ཏ་ -*tsu* sf. male of pigs and goats
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsukgi* n. afternoon
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsukkyer* n. west
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsukkyer* n. sunset, west
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsuk-lát* n. sunrise, east
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsugyer* n. clock
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsuknáng* n. midday
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsukzán* n. early morning, when sun is completely visible
 ཏ་ལ་ *tsung* v. save up
 ཏ་ལ་ *tsum* v. meet
 ཏ་ལ་ *tsur* v. radiate, gleam
 ཏ་ལ་ལ་ *tsurtsur* n. twinkle

𐄧𐄫 *tsúk* v. bite

𐄧𐄫 tsh-

𐄧𐄫𐄫 *tshâ* n. date

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫 *tshâlum* n. orange

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *tshó* v. aim

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *tshóng* n. goods

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *tshóng* v. complete

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *tshukpót* n. word

𐄧𐄫𐄫 Z-

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zâ* v. err

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zang* adj. like

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zá* n. circle

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *záko* n. planet

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *záti* n. nutmeg

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *záding* n. jug

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zo* v. eat, food, rice

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zok* v. trickle, flow

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zorí* n. fragrant rice

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zók* v. strike

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zómthup* adj. edible

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zót* v. graze

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zúk* v. make

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zúkthup* adj. manageable

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *zúk-lât* n. action, performance

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫 y-

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 ~ 𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yâ ~ yâm* know, know how to

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yânthó* n. school

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yang* conj. thus

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yángne* conj. or, either

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yáp* v. grope

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yok* n. top, summit

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yor* n. row

𐄧𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫𐄫 *yók* n. yak

ཅྱ *yu* v. descend
 ཅྱ *yuk* n. letter
 ཅྱཏྱ ~ ཅྱཏྱ *yupthen ~ yuptho* n. moment
 ཇྱ *yet* v. descend
 ཇྱ *yel* v. know a language

ར ར-

རྩྱ ~ རྩྱ *rangsâ ~ rangsâr* adj. other
 རྩྱ *rá* v. hunt
 རྩྱ *rák* v. search, examine
 རྩྱ *rám* n. thunder
 རྩྱ *rí* n. smell, scent, fragrance, odour
 རྩྱཏྱཏྱ *ribiríp* n. ribiplant, *Calamus latifolius*
 རྩྱ *ríp* n. flower, blossom, flowering plant
 རྩྱ *ro* v. fear
 རྩྱ *rok* v. read, study
 རྩྱ *róng* n. Lepcha
 རྩྱ *róng* v. wait
 རྩྱཏྱཏྱ *róngjín* adv. daily
 རྩྱ *ru* n. cane
 རྩྱཏྱཏྱཏྱ *rungnyít rúngmú* n. main stream of *Rungnyít* river
 རྩྱཏྱ *rúbá* n. tortoise
 རྩྱ *rum* n. god
 རྩྱཏྱ *rumdár* n. god
 རྩྱ *rel* v. separate maize from the cob
 རྩྱ *rel* adv. each
 རྩྱ *ren* adv. since
 རྩྱཏྱ *renjón* n. Sikkim
 རྩྱཏྱཏྱ *renjónmú* n. Sikkimese
 རྩྱ *ryák* v. follow
 རྩྱ *ryú* v. be good
 རྩྱཏྱ *ryúlá* adv. well
 རྩྱ *ryúm* n. needle

ལ ལ-

ལྱ *lâm* v. fly
 ལྱ *lang* n. stone

- ႁႃႏႃႏ langklyók n. big flat stone
 ႁႃႏ(laháp n. cave
 ႁႃ lá adv. also, even
 ႁႃ(lát v. return
 ႁႃ(láp v. bury
 ႁႃ(ႃ lávo n. moon
 ႁႃ ~ ႁႃႏ li ~ lín v. say, speak
 ႁႃ li v. carry
 ႁႃ lí n. house
 ႁႃႏ lík v. call
 ႁႃႏ(ႃ línko n. speech, statement
 ႁႃႏႃ línshet n. speech
 ႁႃႏ lút v. sift
 ႁႃ lo v. dry, spread out to dry in the sun of corn or grain
 ႁႃ lok v. dance
 ႁႃ lon in this direction
 ႁႃ lol v. bend, turn
 ႁႃ ló n. wage, pay
 ႁႃ lók v. damage, injure, harm
 ႁႃ lóng n. ox, steer
 ႁႃ(ႃ lóngbo n. bull
 ႁႃ(ႃႃ lóngcúng n. young bull
 ႁႃ lón lead, command
 ႁႃ lóm sf. via, through, n. road, way, v. walk
 ႁႃ lóv v. repeat
 ႁႃ(ႃ lóthi v. give back
 ႁႃ(ႃ lóthi v. come back again
 ႁႃ(ႃ lótho v. put again
 ႁႃ(ႃ lótzúk v. remake
 ႁႃ ~ ႁႃႏ lú ~ lúm v. rise
 ႁႃ lúk v. get up, rise
 ႁႃ lúk n. sheep
 ႁႃ(ႃ lúk-hróng n. morning
 ႁႃ(ႃ lúk?ál n. tomorrow
 ႁႃ lúng v. take
 ႁႃ lúng n. leisure, v. be free, have free time
 ႁႃ(ႃ lúngtár v. develop, n. development
 ႁႃ(ႃ lúngten n. tradition
 ႁႃ(ႃ lúngdi v. bring

- ལུང་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *lúgnóng* v. take, take away
 ལུང་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ *lúmkup* n. Nepali, person from Nepal
 ལུ་ *lút* v. skin, strip or deprive of skin, remove cover
 ལེ་ *len* adv. than, compared to
 ལེ་ *lem* sf. direction
 ལེ་ *lel* v. complete
 ལེ་ *lyâ* v. accept
 ལེ་ *lyáng* n. land
 ལེ་ *lyók* v. resemble, look like
 ལེ་ *lyók* v. turn, divert, reverse
 ལེ་ *lyót* v. free
 ལེ་ *lyú* v. erect
 ལེ་ *lyem* v. play

ཁ h-

- ཁ་ *há* v. scrape, skim
 ཁ་ *hák* v. carve in wood or stone
 ཁ་ལྷོ་ *hánlon* adv. not simultaneously (literally before and after)
 ཁ་ *hát* v. lose, leave behind
 ཁ་ *háp* v. shut
 ཁ་ *hík* n. chicken
 ཁ་ལྷོ་ *híkbom* n. female hen having chickens
 ཁ་ *híp* v. shave, scrape
 ཁ་ *hong* adj. hollow
 ཁ་ *hu* pron. he, she
 ཁ་ *hu* n. bee
 ཁ་ *heng* n. ginger
 ཁ་ *het* v. hurt, harm
 ཁ་ *hel* v. fill
 ཁ་ *hyol* v. mix, blend
 ཁ་ *hyóp* v. accompany
 ཁ་ *hyu* v. purify
 ཁ་ *hyúl* v. swallow
 ཁ་ *hráp* v. sew
 ཁ་ *hrík* v. tear
 ཁ་ལྷོ་ *hritsho* num. myriad
 ཁ་ *hro* v. come up
 ཁ་ *hróng* v. come up, arrive from a lower place or region

𐌿𐌺 *hrún* adj. hot, warm, spicy
 𐌿𐌺 *hrúp* v. pick up
 𐌿𐌺 *hřeng* v. dry wood, meat or vegetables in the sun
 𐌿𐌺 *hryá* v. pull
 𐌿𐌺 *hryám* v. jerk
 𐌿𐌺 *hryóp* v. cry

✕ hl-

𐌿𐌺 *hláng* v. harden, as yams
 𐌿𐌺 *hláp* v. learn
 𐌿𐌺 *hlápjóng* v. memorise
 𐌿𐌺 *hlo* n. hill, peak
 𐌿𐌺 *hlok* v. break, as eggs
 𐌿𐌺 *hleng* v. cough
 𐌿𐌺 *hlentóp* v. help
 𐌿𐌺 *hlyám* v. shake, quiver

𐌿 V-

𐌿 ~ 𐌿 *vâ ~ vâm* v. chant, sing
 𐌿 *vâm* n. song
 𐌿 *vá* v. throw, hurl, fling
 𐌿 *ván* v. enter
 𐌿 *vi* n. blood
 𐌿 *vimân* n. kin, offspring, relatives (literally flesh and blood)
 𐌿 *vík* n. soldier
 𐌿 *vóm* n. salt
 𐌿 *vyet* v. ask, inquire

𐌿 sh-

𐌿 *shâk* n. louse
 𐌿 *sháng* n. firewood
 𐌿 *-sháng* sf. barren, sterile
 𐌿 *shángdri* n. twig
 𐌿 ~ 𐌿 *shi ~ shím* v. see
 𐌿 *shíng* adj. drunk
 𐌿 *shíng* n. garden

- ሻ፭ *shíl* n. trap
 ሻ፮ *shól* n. fox
 ሻ፯ *shól* v. scatter
 ሻ፳ *shúlá* pron. everything, anything, whatever
 ሻ፳፫ *shúmátne* pron. why (also spelt ሻ፳፫፫ *shúmátnu*)
 ሻ፳፭ *shúmú* n. man
 ሻ፳፮ *shenlá* conj. but
 ሻ፳፯ *shezúm* n. assembly, congregation, association
 ሻ፳፱ *sher* n. glass
 ሻ፳፺ *sher* v. rot, decay
 ሻ፳፻፱ *sherábú* n. hunter
 ሻ፳፻፺ *sherbú* n. sherpa

ሠ S-

- ሠ፡ *sâm* n. mind
 ሠ፡፫ *saka* n. deer
 ሠ፡፫፯ *sakagú* n. doe, female deer
 ሠ፡፫፳ *sakamót* n. female deer, doe
 ሠ፡፫፵ *sakatsu* n. buck, stag
 ሠ፡፫፶ *sacák* n. leopard
 ሠ፡፫፷ *sagi* n. power, strength
 ሠ፡፫፸ *sagór* n. cliff
 ሠ፡፫፹ *sagrám* adv. below
 ሠ፡፫፺ *sagrek* n. throat, intestines
 ሠ፡፫፻ *sangúng* n. lizard
 ሠ፡፫፻፫ (ሠ፡፫፻፫) *sanyí sonáp* adv. day and night
 ሠ፡፫፻፫ *sanyí* n. day, daytime (also spelt ሠ፡፫፻፫ *sanyím* or ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *suknyím*)
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ ~ ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *sanyím phet ~ nyímphet* adv. midday
 ሠ፡፫፻፫ *satet* pron. how much, how many
 ሠ፡፫፻፫ *sathá* pron. when, at what time
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *sathálá* adv. always
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *sathang* n. tiger
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *sadu* adv. slowly
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *sader* n. thunder
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫፫ *sadermi* n. gun (literally thunder-fire)
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *saná* n. bear
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫ *sanóng* n. snow
 ሠ፡፫፻፫፫፫ *sanóngjum* n. snow flake

- (ᳵ᳚) *safyu* n. garlic
 (ᳵ᳚) *safyum* n. breeze
 (ᳵ᳚) *sabá* pron. where
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sabálá* pron. everywhere
 (ᳵ᳚) *sabur* n. musk deer
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *saburgú* n. female musk deer
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *saburlóng* n. musk deer
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *samálkúng* n. toon tree, *Cedrela toona*
 (ᳵ᳚) *satsuk* n. sun
 (ᳵ᳚) *sare* pron. which
 (ᳵ᳚) *saróng* adv. today
 (ᳵ᳚) *salem* adv. in what direction, whither, where
 (ᳵ᳚) *salol* adv. which way, in which direction, whither
 (ᳵ᳚) *salom* adv. how, like what
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *salomlá* adv. anyhow, anyway
 (ᳵ᳚) *sahu* n. monkey
 (ᳵ᳚) *savíng* n. stag
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *savínglóng* n. stag
 (ᳵ᳚) *saʔár* n. goat
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *saʔárgú* n. female goat
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *saʔártsu* n. goat, billy goat
 (ᳵ᳚) *saʔyák* n. day, day and night
 (ᳵ᳚) *sák* n. mind
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sákcíng* v. think
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sáknyín* v. recollect
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sákdi* v. feel
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sáktsum* n. thought
 (ᳵ᳚) *sám* num. three
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sáryók* n. jackal
 (ᳵ᳚) *so* n. rain
 (ᳵ᳚) *so* num. one hundred
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sonáp* n. night, night-time
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sonápphet* n. midnight
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *somyáng* n. rainy season
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *somyer* n. dusk
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sozóng* n. winter, cold, v. be cold
 (ᳵ᳚) *soyá* num. million
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *solá* n. twilight
 (ᳵ᳚᳚) *sosá* n. dry season

(ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sosóng* n. dawn
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sosotsho* num. billion
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sosotshúr* num. ten billion
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sosoyá* num. hundred billion
 (ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *so?âm* n. summer
 ᄒᄒ *só* adv. yesterday
 ᄒᄒᄒ *sósó* adv. lately
 ᄒᄒ *sót* v. kill
 ᄒᄒᄒ *sóm* v. breathe
 ᄒᄒ *su* v. contain
 ᄒᄒ *sung* n. story
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sungvogú* n. female buffalo
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sungvolóng* n. wild buffalo
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sukdum* n. world
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *sukmut* n. wind
 ᄒᄒ *sut* v. purify
 ᄒᄒ *súk* v. pound, strike
 ᄒᄒ *sút* n. message

ᄒᄒ W-

ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *womú* n. spindle
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *wómú* n. jackal
 ᄒᄒ *wó* n. tub
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *wúrdo* n. sling

ᄒᄒ ?-

ᄒᄒᄒ *?yá* adv. formerly, a long time ago, in the days of old
 ᄒᄒᄒ *?yáp* v. chop
 ᄒᄒᄒ *?yo* adv. before, formerly, some time ago
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *?yochám* adv. three days ago
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ *?yochót* adv. four days ago
 ᄒᄒᄒ *?yor* n. pitfall
 ᄒᄒᄒᄒ ~ ᄒᄒᄒᄒᄒ *?yotshóng ~ ?itshóng* adv. day before yesterday, two days ago
 ᄒᄒᄒ *?yók* n. work, job, chore
 ᄒᄒᄒ *?yum* v. ripen, bring to maturity
 ᄒᄒᄒ *?yel* v. divert

- [illegible]

- 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ádyút n. fight
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ánók adj. black
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ánóm n. elder sister
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ánum n. younger brother
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ápíl n. shadow
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ápín adv. this on the other side
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ápín 𐄢ábon adv. on both sides, here and there
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 ~ 𐄢𐄷𐄓 𐄢ápun ~ *pun* adj. near, close
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áfi adv. this just here, this nearby here
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áflik adj. some
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áfo n. tooth
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áfong adj. green
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábá adv. here, this here
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábi adv. here, this right here
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábo n. father
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábong n. mouth
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábon adv. on this side
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábek n. middle
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ábryáng n. name
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ámel n. hair
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ámík n. eye
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ámlem n. face
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ámú n. mother
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢átsóm n. hair
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ázóm n. rice, food
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ázuk adj. pretty
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áyu n. wife, woman joined in marriage to a husband
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢árí n. scent
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áring n. language
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢árom n. fear
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢árum adv. far
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áre pron. this
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢áryúm adj. good
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢ál adj. new
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢állât n. freshness, newness
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢álín n. speech, talk
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢álím adj. heavy
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢álóng adv. now, at this very moment
 𐄧𐄫𐄷𐄓 𐄢álóngbá adv. in a moment, in a little while

- 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔálónglá* adv. still
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔálon* adv. in this direction
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔálom* adv. like this
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔálol* adv. this way, in this direction
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔálut* n. heart
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔálem* adv. in this direction, hither
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔályú* n. cat
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔáhret* n. bone
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔáhyâng* adj. cold
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔáhyur* adj. red
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔávyo* n. tibia
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔáshúm* adj. fat
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔásúm* adj. spicy
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔáʔít* n. origin, creation
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔáʔóm* n. radiance
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔík* adj. still
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔíng* n. younger sibling
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔíngngá* n. child
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔít* v. create
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔochú* adv. that down here
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔotet* adv. that much, this many
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔothá* adv. then, at that time
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔotháng* adv. that up there
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔothú* adv. that up over there
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔopín* adv. that on the other side
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔobá* adv. there
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔobon* adv. on that side
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔotshóng* adv. that day
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔolol* adv. that way, in that direction
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔolom* adv. like that
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔolon* in that direction
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔolem* adv. in that direction, thither
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔok* v. open
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔóng* n. boy
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔóngkup* n. small boy
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔót* v. pluck, as fruits
 𐄧𐄫𐄮 *ʔóm* v. shine
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔúng* n. water
 𐄧𐄫𐄮𐄫 *ʔút* n. otter

ᲔᲗ Მ᲏Მ n. horse

ᲔᲗ Მ᲏Მ adj. ripe, sweet, tasty

ᲔᲗ Მ᲏Მ v. sell

ᲔᲗᲗ Მ᲏Მ n. salesman, seller

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