

Lesson 9

What Are You Doing in Xining?

ཁྱོད་ཟླ་ལིང་ན་ཆེ་ཟིག་ལས་གི་ཡོད།

☛ Key Grammar Points in Lesson Nine:

1. Present Plain and Progressive Tense and the Auxiliary གི་ཡོད
2. Ergative Case Marking: -ས / གིས
3. Introduction to Amdo Verb Inflection
4. Duality Marker གཉི་ག་ Revisited
5. Location Word: ཐོག
6. Conjunction: འོ་གི་ *Because*

❖ 9.1 Dialogue

Dialogue 1 (Tom and John on the phone)

ཐའོ་མུའུ། ཨ་འོ། རྒྱུང།

རྒྱུང། ཨ་འོ། ཁྱོད་སུ་ཡིན།

ཐའོ་མུའུ། ང་ཐའོ་མུའུ་ཡིན། རྒྱུང། ཁྱོད་བདེ་མོ་ཡིན་ན།

རྒྱུང། བདེ་མོ་ཡིན། ངས་ཟླ་ལིང་ན་བོད་སྐད་སློབ་གི་ཡོད། ངས་འདི་ན་ད་རུང་ད་ཁྱིན་སྐད་ར་ཁྲིད་གི་ཡོད།
ཁྱོད་གང་ཞུ་ཡོད།

ཐའོ་མུའུ། ང་ཟེང་གོང་ན་ཡོད།

རྒྱུང། ཁྱོད་ཟེང་གོང་ན་ཆེ་ཟིག་ལས་གི་ཡོད།

ཐའོ་མུའུ། ངས་དེ་བོད་རིགས་གོགས་པོ་སློབ་བཟང་ར་མཉམ་གི་ཡུལ་བསྐོར་ཡེད་གོ། དེ་གཉི་གས་ད་ལྟ་བོད་སྐད་
བཤད་གི་ཡོད། ངས་འདྲ་བར་མང་པོ་ལེན་གི་ཡོད།

རྒྱུང། སློབ་བཟང་གིས་ཆེ་ཟིག་ཡེད་གོ་གི།

ཐའོ་མུའུ། སློབ་བཟང་གིས་བརྟན་འཕྲིན་ན་ལྟ་གི་ཡོད་གི།



American Students on a Study Tour to Qinghai and Tibet

Dialogue 2 (Rhangmo and Tserang)

དབང་མོ། ཚེ་རིང་། ཁྱོས་ཆེ་བེག་ལས་གི་ཡོད། ཁྱོས་ཁྱིམ་སྦྱོང་ལས་བྱ་འབྲི་གི་ཡོད་ནིས།

ཚེ་རིང་། མེད། ངས་སྐུ་དབྱུངས་ང་ཉན་ནས་ཡི་གེ་འབྲི་གི་ཡོད།

དབང་མོ། འདྲ་པར་ཐོག་གི་ཕྱི་འདི་གཉི་ག་ཁྱོ་ལ་མ་གཉི་ག་ཨི་རེད།

ཚེ་རིང་། རེད།

དབང་མོ། ཁྱོ་ལ་མ་གཉི་གས་བྱ་བ་ཆེ་བེག་ལས་གོ།

ཚེ་རིང་། དེ་ཨ་མ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་འུ་སློབ་དཔོན་ཆེན་མོ་ཡིན། ཁོས་བོད་གི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་བྲིད་གི་ཡོད། དེ་ཨ་མ་འ་བྱ་
བ་མེད།

དབང་མོ། མོ་གང་ན་ཡོད།

ཚེ་རིང་། མོ་དེ་ཨ་ཕེ་ཚང་ན་ཡོད།

དབང་མོ། དེ་ན་ཆེ་བེག་ཡེ་གོ།

ཚེ་རིང་། དེ་ཆའོ་འབྲོག་པ་ཡིན་ནོ་གི་ཡུལ་ན་ཐོག་འཚོ་གི་ཡོད།

Dialogue 1 (Tom and John on the phone)

Tom: Hello, John!

John: Hello, who is this? (Lit. Who are you?)

Tom: It's me, Tom. John, how are you?

John: Good. I'm studying Tibetan language in Xining. I am also teaching English here.
Where are you?

Tom: I'm in Rebgong (*Ch. Tongren*).

John: What are you doing in Rebgong?

Tom: I'm traveling with my Tibetan friend Lobsang. We two are speaking Tibetan.
I'm also taking a lot of photographs.

John: What is Lobsang doing right now?

Tom: Lobsang is watching television.

* * *

Dialogue 2 (Rhangmo and Tserang)

Rhangmo: Tserang, what are you doing? Are you doing homework?

Tserang: No, I am listening to music and writing a letter.

Rhangmo: Tserang, are these two in the picture your parents?

Tserang: Yes, they are.

Rhangmo: What do your parents do?

Tserang: My father is a college professor. He teaches history of the Tibetan people.
My mother doesn't have a job.

Rhangmo: Where is she?

Tserang: She is at my elder sister's home.

Rhangmo: What do they do there?

Tserang: Because we are herdsmen, they two herd livestock at home.

❖ 9.2 Vocabulary

9.2.1 Vocabulary from the Dialogue

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| 1. -ས། གིས། | affix | Ergative Case marker |
| 2. གློབ། | v. | to study |
| 3. གི་ཡོད། [བཞིན་ཡོད།] | aux. | (see 9.3.3) |
| 4. བྲིད། | v. | to teach |
| 5. རེབ་གོང། | place | Rebgong (<i>Ch. Tongren</i>) |

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|-----|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 6. | ལས། | v. | to do |
| 7. | མཉམ་གྱི། | adv. | together (also མཉམ་དུ) |
| 8. | ཡུལ་སློང་། | n. | traveling |
| 9. | ཡོད། [བྱེད] | v. | to do |
| 10. | ཡུལ་སློང་ཡོད། [ཡུལ་སློང་བྱེད] | v. (O-V) | to travel (lit. to do traveling) |
| 11. | གོ། [་་་་བཞེན་ཡོད] | aux. | contraction of གི་ཡོད། |
| 12. | བཤད། | v. | to speak |
| 13. | མང་བོ། | adj. (attr.) | a lot of, many, much |
| 14. | འདྲ་བར་ལེན། | v. (O-V) | to take pictures |
| 15. | བརྒྱན་འཕྲིན། | n. | television |
| 16. | སྟོ། | v. (obj.-ladon) | to watch, to look at, to read |
| 17. | ལས་བྱ། | n. | work, task |
| 18. | ཁྱིམ་སློང་ལས་བྱ། | n. (N-N) | homework (for school) |
| 19. | འབྲི། | v. | to write, to do (homework) |
| 20. | ནིས། [་་་་བ་ཡིན] | aux. | contraction of ནི་ཡིན། |
| 21. | སྐྱུ་དབྱུངས། | n. | music |
| 22. | ཉན། | v. (obj.-ladon) | to listen to |
| 23. | བསྐྱུར་ཡིག། | n. | letter |
| 24. | ཡི་གེ། | n. | letter, words written |
| 25. | ཕ་མ། | n. | father and mother |
| 26. | ཆེན་མོ། | adj. (attr.) | big |
| 27. | སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ། | n. (N-A) | university |
| 28. | སློབ་དཔོན་ཆེན་མོ། | n. (N-A) | professor |
| 29. | ལོ་རྒྱུས། | n. | history |
| 30. | འབྲོག་པ། | n. | herdsman |
| 31. | ཚོག་འཚོ། | v. (O-V) | to herd livestock |

9.2.2 Additional Vocabulary

| | | | |
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| 32. | སྲོང་སྲུང་། | v. | to sing |
| 33. | སློབ་སློབ་ཡོད། [སློབ་སློབ་བྱེད།] | v. (O-V) | to study (lit. to do studies) |
| 34. | རིན་ཚེ། | person | Rinchen |
| 35. | སློག་བརྗོད། | n. | movie |
| 36. | བརྗོད་པ། | n. | video (including DVD) |
| 37. | བྲ་བ། | n. | internet |
| 38. | བྲ་བ་ཁ་འབྲེད། | v. (O-V) | to access the internet |
| 39. | བྲ་བ་འ་བརྟུ། | v. (O-V) | to be online, to surf the internet |
| 40. | ངག་དབང་། | person | Ngawang |
| 41. | འདོན། | v. | to read |
| 42. | དུས་དེབ། | n. | magazine |
| 43. | ཚགས་པར། | n. | newspaper |
| 44. | ཚུལ་རིག། | n. | mathematics |
| 45. | རྒྱ་ཚུལ། | n. | art |
| 46. | སྲུ། | n. | song |
| 47. | བྱ་ཡིས། [བྱིས་པ།] | n. | child, kid |
| 48. | བོད་ཡིག་ཀ་ལ། | n. | Tibetan alphabet |
| 49. | མི། [མི] | n. | people |
| 50. | ཁ་བརྟུ། | n. | chatting |
| 51. | ཁ་བརྟུ་ཡོད། | v. (O-V) | to chat (lit. to do chatting) |
| 52. | སློབ་སྲུ་ཚེན་མོ་བ། | n. | college student |
| 53. | སློབ་ཁྲིད། | n. | class (meeting, lecture) |
| 54. | སྐད་ཚུ། | n. | conversation, talk |
| 55. | སྐད་རིགས། | n. | language |
| 56. | ལོ་པ། | n. | cattle (generic for yaks, cows, etc.) |

❖ 9.3 Grammar Notes

► 9.3.1 Relation Between Case and Thematic Role

As mentioned in Lesson 4, the Ergative-Absolutive case system operating in the Tibetan language (all dialects) is conceptually different from the Nominative-Accusative case system with which most English speakers are familiar. In a typical Nominative-Accusative language, the subject of a tensed clause, no matter what thematic (semantic) role it carries, is marked Nominative, while the direct object of a verb is marked Accusative. The subject of an intransitive verb is also marked Nominative. For example: (Pronouns are used here because they still reflect the different case markings in Modern English.)

(1) I (Nom) hit him (Acc). He (Nom) hit me (Acc) back.

(2) I (Nom) left. He (Nom) left too.

Ergative-Absolutive languages mark the subject of a transitive verb with the Ergative case and the direct object with the Absolutive case. The subject of an intransitive verb, however, patterns with the direct object of a transitive verb, receiving the Absolutive case. Examples:

(3) རས(Erg)'ར(Abs)'འབྲུང་། I drink tea. (Subject རས is marked Ergative.)

(4) ར(Abs)'འགྲོ། I go. (Subject ར is marked Absolutive.)

Compare the following Tibetan sentences with their English counterparts. One can immediately see that the subjects of the English sentences are consistently marked Nominative case while the subjects in the Tibetan sentences vary from Oblique case (marked by *Ladon* for verbs like ཡོད and ཟེར), Absolutive case (not overtly marked by any morpheme), to Ergative case (overtly marked).

(5) ཁོ་འ(Oblig)'དེ་ཆ་ཟེག(Abs)'ཡོད།

English: He (Nom) has a book (Acc).

(6) ཁི་དགེ་ཕྱིར་ར(Oblig)'ཐའོ་ཕུའུ(Abs)'ཟེར་གྱི།

English: His name (Nom) is called Tom (Acc).

(7) རས(Erg)'བོད་སྐད(Abs)'སློབ་གི་ཡོད།

English: I (Nom) am studying the Tibetan language (Acc).

(8) མོ(Abs)'འགྲོ་རྒྱ་རེད། (future tense, L10)

English: She (Nom) will go.

(9) ར(Abs)'འདེ་མོ་ཡིན།

English: I (Nom) am fine.

The above examples should convince the student to abandon attempts to associate any case (e.g., Nominative and Accusative) in the English grammar with a specific Tibetan case, Genitive being the only exception. The case assignment in the Tibetan system, as it turns out, is closely related to the thematic role each noun phrase carries in the sentence. We shall be more explicit about this "thematic" approach.

What is a thematic role? Simply put, it is the semantic relation of a noun phrase with the verb. The most common thematic roles are Agent, Theme, Experiencer, Goal, Source, Instrumental, Beneficiary, etc. It is generally assumed that universally each noun phrase in a sentence has a grammatical case. It is also assumed from a semantic perspective, that each noun phrase must also have its own thematic role. In English, case is associated with syntactic position, which is why the subject of a tensed clause always gets the Nominative case regardless of its thematic role. In Tibetan, case is tightly associated with the thematic role, no matter where the phrase is placed (i.e., regardless of its syntactic position). For example, the Agent (doer of an action) always gets the Ergative case. This explains immediately why the subject of a typical Agent-Theme verb phrase receives the Ergative case. Subjects of non-Agent verbs such as ཡིན, རེད, ཡོད, and ཟེར, as we have seen, do not receive the Ergative case since none of the subjects can be thematically considered an Agent.

The correlation of the thematic role Agent and the Ergative case is further supported by the fact that, when a transitive verb is of the type experiencer-theme such as the following examples, the Ergative case is not involved.

(11) ར(Abs)'འདྲེ་འ (Obliq) ལྗག་གི། I fear ghosts. (*I* is not an Agent, but an Experiencer.)

(12) ར(Abs)'སེང་གེ་འ (Obliq) དག་འ་གི། I like lions.

(13) ར(Abs)སྐྱུ་དབྱངས་པོ(Obliq)སྐྱུན་གྱི། I dislike (am annoyed by) music.

It should be obvious that none of the above subjects carry the thematic role of an Agent, for these subjects experience a psychological emotion, involving no action whatsoever. Also notice that the subject of an intransitive verb is marked Absolute, as shown earlier in examples (8) and (9). The conclusion is that Ergative case is only assigned to the subject of a transitive verb of the Agent-Theme type. Other types of transitive verbs such as the psychological verbs such as སྐྱུན་གྱི *to fear*, དགའ་གྱི *to like*, and སྐྱུན་གྱི *to dislike* from (11) to (13) do not assign their subjects with Ergative. Lesson 11 will have more on how to express likes and dislikes.

We have been using the notion *subject* and *object* for Tibetan sentences as if they had the same meaning as for English sentences. While we will continue using these conventional notions for pedagogical convenience, we advise the learner to pay more heed to the thematic role of the noun phrase when it comes to case markings in Tibetan.

► 9.3.2 Ergative Case: -ས / གིས

Following our discussion above, we shall understand the assignment of ergative case not in terms of the transitivity of the verb, but in terms of its thematic property. If two noun phrases carry the thematic roles of agent and theme, the verb is a typical agent-theme transitive verb. The agent is marked with the ergative case and the theme with the absolutive case (unmarked). The ergative case marker comes in two forms: -ས or གིས. -ས is attached to an open syllable; གིས follows a closed syllable (i.e. with a suffix). For example:

- (1) རས་བོད་སྐད་སྦྱོང་གི་ཡོད། I study Tibetan.
- (2) ཐོའོ་མུའུ་གིས་སྐྱུ་དབྱངས་ལེན་གྱི་ཡོད་གི། Tom is singing songs. (Lit. singing music)
- (3) དགོ་ཚན་བུ་ཚུང་གིས་པེ་ཅིན་ན་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཁྲིད་གི་ཡོད་གི།

Teacher Wuchung is teaching history in Beijing.

- (4) མའེ་རེའེ་གིས་ཨ་མི་རི་ཁའི་སྐྱུ་དབྱངས་པོ་ཉན་གོ་གི། Mary is listening to American music.
- (5) བསོད་ནམས་སྦྱོལ་མས་དབྱིན་སྐད་སྦྱོང་གོ་གི། Sonam Drolma is studying English.
- (6) སྦོ་བཟང་གིས་བྲ་བ་ལ་ལྷ་གི་ཡོད་གི། Lobzang is online. (Lit. looking at the internet)

In Lesson 5, we learned about the absolutive case for the personal pronouns ང, ཁྱོད, ཁོ, མོ, , etc.

Those were the unmarked forms. Below are a few case conversions:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (7) ཁྱོད (Absolutive) → ཁྱོདས (Erg) | ཨ་ཕ(Abs) → ཨ་ཕས (Erg) |
| ང (Abs) → ངས (Erg) | སློབ་ཐབས (Abs) → སློབ་ཐབས་གིས (Erg) |
| ཁོ (Abs) → ཁོས (Erg) | ཁྱོ་གཉི་ག (Abs) → ཁྱོ་གཉི་གས (Erg) |
| ངེ་ཆ་བོ (Abs) → ངེ་ཆ་བོས (Erg) | |

► 9.3.3 Ergative Verbs: Regular, Intransitive O-V, and Object-Ladon Verbs

In this lesson, we will introduce several agent-theme transitive verbs: སློབ་ to study, ཡུལ་སློབ་ཡེ་ to travel, བཤད་ to speak, བྲིད་ to teach, བྱ་བ་ལས་ to work, འདོན་ to read, འབྲི་ to write, སྲངས་ to sing, ལྟ་ to watch, ཁ་བརྗེད་ to chat, and ཉན་ to listen. These ergative-assigning verbs come in three types: (A) monosyllabic transitive verb; (B) noun (usually disyllabic) plus a verb, ཡེ་ or ལས་, both with a generic meaning equivalent to the English to do (or suru in Japanese), and (C) verbs such as ལྟ་ to watch and ཉན་ to listen.

Verbs of Type A behave like regular English transitive verbs, with an agent subject and a theme object. Case marking in Tibetan is, as expected, ergative for the agent and absolutive for the theme. Examples:

- (1) ངས་འདྲ་པར་མང་པོ་ལེན་གི་ཡོད། I am taking a lot of photographs.
- (2) དབང་མོས་བོད་གི་སྐུ་རྩལ་བྲིད་གི་ཡོད། Rhangmo is teaching Tibetan art.
- (3) ངེ་ཆ་བོས་སྐད་བཤད་གི་ཡོད། We are speaking Chinese.
- (4) ཁོ་གཉི་གས་དབྱིན་ཡིག་སློབ་གི་ཡོད་གི། Those two are studying English.

At first, verbs of Type B do not seem to be transitive, at least from the English translation. To travel and to work do not usually take a direct object. Yet, the subject of these verbs does have the ergative marking. This is because the English translation does not reflect the inner structure of these Tibetan verbs, which already have a built-in direct object and a generic (aka light) verb to do. We call them intransitive O-V verbs to reflect its intrinsic (O-V) structure. With the built-in object, these verbs are treated as regular agent-theme transitive verbs. The learner must not be fooled by the English translation using intransitive verbs.

(5) ཚེ་རིང་ར་རིན་ཚེན་གཉི་གས་ [བོད་ན་ཡུལ་སྐོར་ཡེད]གོ་གི།

Tserang and Renchen (Erg) are traveling in Tibet. (Lit. doing traveling)

(6) སློབ་མ་ལདི་གསུམ་པོས་ [སློབ་སྦྱང་ཡེད]གོ་གི།

These three students (Erg) are studying. (Lit. doing studies)

(7) ཁི་ཚ་བོས་ད་ལྟ་ [བྱ་བ་ལས།]གོ་གི།

They (Erg) are working right now. (Lit. doing work)

Verbs of Type C (and in this lesson we have two of them, ལྟ་ *to watch* and ཉན་ *to listen*.) are peculiar in that they mark their theme object with the oblique case by using *Ladon*; however, as expected, they mark their agents with the ergative case. Perhaps this is because the object of the perception verb is regarded as the goal (usually associated with directional *Ladon*, Lesson 10) and not the theme, thus the oblique case marking. Putting speculations aside, the learner needs to remember ལྟ་ *to watch* and ཉན་ *to listen* as Object-Ladon verbs. (Recall that earlier we introduced Subject-Ladon verbs such as ཡོད་ for possession and ཟེར་ *to be called*.) Examples:

(8) སློབ་ཟང་གིས་སློབ་བརྟན་ན་ལྟ་གི་ཡོད་གི། Lobzang is watching a movie. (ན་ is the *Ladon*)

(9) རིན་ཚེན་གིས་སྒྲུ་དབྱངས་ར་ཉན་གི་ཡོད་གི། Rinchen is listening to music. (ར་ is the *Ladon*)

Recall that *Ladon* takes variant forms according to the pronunciation of the preceding syllable. In the above examples, it is the ན་ in སློབ་བརྟན་ན་ལྟ་ *to watch a movie* and the ར་ in སྒྲུ་དབྱངས་ར་ཉན་ *to listen to music*. In our next lesson, we will present a complete paradigm of the variants of *Ladon*.

Below is a summary of the three types of ergative verbs:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | regular transitive verbs: Agent-Ergative + Theme-Absolutive |
| | e.g. <i>to speak, to write, to sing, to study, to read, to herd, to take (pictures)</i> |
| B | intransitive O-V verbs: Agent-Ergative (Built-in Object-Absolutive) |
| | e.g. <i>to travel, to work, to study, to chat</i> |
| C | Object-Ladon verbs: Agent-Ergative + Goal-Oblique (marked by <i>Ladon</i>) |
| | e.g. <i>to watch (movies, videos, internet), to listen</i> |

Remember that true intransitive verbs (e.g. verbs such as *to go*, *to come*, *to arrive*, etc.) and psych-verbs (verbs of feelings and emotions) are not ergative verbs.

► 9.3.4 Verb Inflection: Preliminary Remarks

Classical Tibetan employs four inflectional forms for verbs: future, present, past, and imperative. The tenses are not in an absolute temporal sense like English but function in a relative way. For example, past tense may indicate anteriority with relation to another verb. Similarly, present tense may indicate simultaneity with regards to another verb. We shall discuss this property later. In this lesson, it is important to know that Tibetan verbs, although they themselves are inflected for tenses, need the accompaniment of specific auxiliary verbs to express different tenses and aspects. Generally speaking, inflected verbs stand by themselves in written language but not in spoken Tibetan, a fact true to all dialects.

Literary or classical Tibetan verbs are inflected according to the following paradigm, arranged in the traditional order: (The four components require memorization just like the English: *go-went-gone*; *do-did-done*; *sing-sang-sung*, etc.)

(1) Classical Four-Form Conjugation

| Future | Present | Past | Imperative | |
|--------|---------|-------|------------|----------|
| བཟུའ | ཟ | བཟས | ཟོ | to eat |
| བཏུང | འཐུང | བཏུངས | ཐུངས | to drink |

There is no single morpheme, like the English *-ed*, that functions as the default past tense marker to form "regular" verbs. In other words, Tibetan has virtually no regular verbs like English. A little less than one third of all verbs inflect for four distinct forms as A-B-C-D, such as ཟ *to eat* and འཐུང *to drink*. The rest have fewer forms to memorize. The good news is that, in colloquial Amdo Tibetan, the present and future tenses have merged into one form in most agricultural sub-dialect, effectively reducing the paradigm down to three components, namely, present/future, past, and imperative. In the most linguistically conservative areas, such as Zeku (ཕྱེ་ཁོག), where the nomadic sub-dialect is preserved in its "purer" (usually synonymous with

"archaic") form, the distinction between the present tense of ཟ [sa] *to eat* and the future tense འཇམ [za] remains audible.

Speakers who distinguish between present and future tenses tend to be in the declining minority. Given the fact that such inflectional distinction is considered neither standard nor prestigious, the authors, considering the linguistic trend as well as the pedagogical advantages for foreign learners, choose not to emphasize this present-future difference in this textbook. The more popular (and simpler) agricultural three-way distinction in verbal inflection is adopted in all lessons. For example:

(2) Modern Agricultural Three-Form Conjugation

| Pres/Fut | Past | Imperative | |
|----------|-------|------------|----------|
| ཟ | འཇམས | ཟོ | to eat |
| འཇུང | འཇུངས | ཇུངས | to drink |

In Appendix II (Verb Conjugations), however, all four forms are given. The student can simply ignore the future tense column to get the paradigm of the three colloquial forms. Since there is no distinct infinitival form for a verb, the present/future form can be regarded as its infinitival, or base, form and will be the form used in the formation of present (simple and progressive) tense. We will introduce other forms in the following lessons.

► 9.3.5 Present (Progressive) Tense

The present tense is expressed by the present/future form of the verb plus the auxiliary verb གི་ཡོད. The objective perspective marker གི་ introduced in Lesson 6 can be added to གི་ཡོད to remove the subjective/in-group interpretation of the sentence. The combination གི་ཡོད can be contracted to གོ, a form commonly heard especially when གི་ follows. The pattern:

- (1) Present (Progressive) Verb + གི་ཡོད (= གོ) (subjective perspective)
- Verb + གི་ཡོད་གི་ (= གོ་གི་) (objective perspective)

Examples:

- (2) ཁྱོད་ཟེང་མིང་ན་ཆེ་ཟིན་གི་ཡོད་གོ། What are you doing in Xining?

- (3) ལུན་ཚོགས་གིས་ད་ལྟ་ཆེ་བློ་ཡོད་གི་ཡོད་གོ་གི། What is Puntsok doing now?
- (4) རི་ཨ་པས་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་ན་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཁྲིད་གི་ཡོད་གོ། My father teaches history at college.
- (5) སློལ་མས་བརྟན་པའ་བ་ལྟ་གི་ཡོད་གི་གོ་གི། Drolma is watching a video/DVD.

The negative and interrogative forms follow the pattern of ཡོད; therefore, གི་ཡོད → གི་མེད (Negative) and གི་ཡོད → གི་ཨོ་ཡོད (Interrogative). Examples:

- (6) ངག་དབང་གིས་སློབ་སྦྱོང་ཡེ་གི་མེད་གི། Ngawang is not studying.
- (7) རྩོུ་མིང་མོས་ད་ལྟ་ལུག་འཚོ་གི་ཨོ་ཡོད། Is your sister herding sheep right now?
- (8) ངས་དེ་རིང་སློབ་སྦྱོང་ཡེད་གི་མེད། I am not studying today.

This present tense can either indicate plain (habitual) present tense or an action in progress at the moment of speech. Therefore, རི་ཨ་པས་བོད་གི་སླུ་དབྱངས་ཁྲིད་གི་ཡོད། *My father teaches Music* and ཚོ་རིང་གིས་ད་ལྟ་སླུ་དབྱངས་ང་ཉན་གི་ཡོད་གི། *Tserang is listening to music right now* both use the same V + གི་ཡོད་(གི) pattern.

► 9.3.6 Duality Marker གཉི་གཉིས་ Revisited

In Lesson 8, we introduced the duality marker གཉི་གཉིས་. In this lesson, we introduced its ergative form གཉི་གས་. Examples:

- (1) རི་གཉི་གས་བོད་སྐད་བཤད་གི་ཡོད། We two are speaking Tibetan.
- (2) ཁི་གཉི་གས་རྩིས་རིག་སློབ་གི་ཡོད་གི། They two are studying mathematics.
- (3) རྩོ་གཉི་གས་རེབ་གོང་ན་ཆེ་བློ་ཡོད་གི་ཡོད། What are you two doing in Rebgong?

Recall that the morpheme གཉི་གཉིས་ *the two*, does not have to be attached to personal pronouns. It goes with regular nouns such as བ་མ་གཉི་གཉིས་ *both parents*. Examples:

- (4) རི་བ་མ་གཉི་གས་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་ན་སློབ་ཁྲིད་ཡོད་གི་ཡོད།
Both my parents teach at the university. (སློབ་ཁྲིད་ཡོད་ *do teaching*)
- (5) སློལ་མ་མཚོ་ར་རིན་ཆེན་ཉི་གས་ཀྱང་གོ་ན་ཡུལ་སློབ་ཡོད་གི་ཡོད།
Drolma Tso and Rinchen *two* are traveling in China.
- (6) བྱ་ཡིས་གཉི་གས་བོད་ཡིག་གཞུང་འབྲི་གི་ཡོད་གི།
The two kids are writing the Tibetan alphabet.

► 9.3.7 Pronouns: Colloquial Forms (Summary)

| person \ case | Absolutive (no marking) | Ergative (-ས or གས) | Genitive (-འི or གི) | Oblique (ལ་དོན) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| I, me, my, mine | ང། | ངས། | ངི། | ང་ལ། |
| we, us, our, ours (neutral) | ངེ་ཚོ། | ངེ་ཚོས། | ངེ་ཚོའི། | ངེ་ཚོ་ལ། |
| we, us, our, ours (inclusive) | འུ་ཚོ། | འུ་ཚོས། | འུ་ཚོའི། | འུ་ཚོ་ལ། |
| we two, etc. (neutral, dual) | ངེ་གཉི་ག། | ངེ་གཉི་གས། | ངེ་གཉི་གི། | ངེ་གཉི་ག་ལ། |
| we two, etc. (inclusive, dual) | འུ་གཉི་ག། | འུ་གཉི་གས། | འུ་གཉི་གི། | འུ་གཉི་ག་ལ། |
| you, your (singular) | ཁྱོ། | ཁྱོས། | ཁྱོའི། | ཁྱོ་ལ། |
| you, your (plural) | ཁྱོ་ཚོ། | ཁྱོ་ཚོས། | ཁྱོ་ཚོའི། | ཁྱོ་ཚོ་ལ། |
| you (dual) | ཁྱོ་གཉི་ག། | ཁྱོ་གཉི་གས། | ཁྱོ་གཉི་གི། | ཁྱོ་གཉི་ག་ལ། |
| he, his, him | ཁི་དགེ། | ཁི་དགེས། | ཁི་དགེའི། | ཁི་དགེ་ལ། |
| she, her | མི་དགེ། | མི་དགེས། | མི་དགེའི། | མི་དགེ་ལ། |
| | མོ། | མོས། | མོའི། | མོ་ལ། |
| they, them, their | ཁི་ཚོ། | ཁི་ཚོས། | ཁི་ཚོའི། | ཁི་ཚོ་ལ། |
| they, them their (dual) | ཁི་གཉི་ག། | ཁི་གཉི་གས། | ཁི་གཉི་གི། | ཁི་གཉི་ག་ལ། |

► 9.3.8 Adjectives: མང་པོ and ཆེན་མོ

མང་པོ can be analyzed as a word that consists of the adjectival root (མང་), which carries the meaning of the word (*many* or *much*), and a suffix -པོ, which surfaces when the adjective is used to modify a noun. ཆེན་མོ *big* is of the same morphological structure. Adjectives typically follow the noun they modify, for example, འདྲ་པར་མང་པོ many photos, ལུག་མང་པོ many sheep, ལྷི་མང་པོ

many people. The word སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་ *university* in Tibetan is a Noun-Adjective compound that literally means *school-big*. A college student is called a སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་བ་.

Adjectives can also function as predicates similarly to stative verbs such as *to be many*, *to be big*. We will learn how adjectives function as predicates in the next lesson.

► 9.3.9 Localizer ཐོག

In Dialogue 2, Rhangmo asks Tserang འདྲ་པར་ཐོག་གི་མྱི་འདི་གཉི་ག་ཚུ་ལུ་མ་མ་གཉི་ག་ཨི་རེད། *Are these two in the photo your parents*, using a word ཐོག after འདྲ་པར *photo*. There is something conceptually important about this ཐོག. The English word *photo* can refer to the concrete object made of paper (e.g. *This photo is torn*) or the image shown on that piece of paper (*This photo is beautiful*). In Tibetan, the word འདྲ་པར is the concrete object, not the image. To refer to the image or content shown on the འདྲ་པར, one needs to say འདྲ་པར་ཐོག *what's in the photo*.

Literally *the top* or *the upper part* of an object, the noun ཐོག is a “localizer”, which is attached to a regular noun to change it into a place noun, before it can be taken by a preposition. This mechanism was introduced earlier in L7 when we learned the usage of རང *inside*. In this lesson, we introduce the combination of noun (Gen.) + ཐོག. འདྲ་པར་ཐོག is still a noun phrase so it can take the genitive case གི to form a larger noun phrase འདྲ་པར་ཐོག་གི་མྱི་འདི་གཉི་ག་ *these two people in the photo* (Lit. these two people of the photo image).

Note that when there should be a genitive case marker between the noun and ཐོག, it is often omitted in casual speech, especially when the noun ends with a suffix. Nouns ending with a vowel tend to retain the genitive འི. Examples:

- (2) ཚགས་པར་ཐོག in the newspaper (the content, the news and ads, not the 40-page object)
- (3) དཔེ་ཆའི་ཐོག in the book (Note that དཔེ་ཆ uses its Genitive form here)
- (4) དཔེ་ཆའི་ཐོག་གི་འདྲ་པར་འདི་སུ་རེད། Who is (the person in) the picture in the book?

Another localizer རང *inside* is used in similar contexts as ཐོག. The selection between རང and ཐོག could seem arbitrary to non-native speakers. For our purposes, use ཐོག for books, pictures, magazines, newspapers, etc. Use རང for TV's or computers (anything with a screen). For

example, འདྲ་པར་ཐོག་ *in the picture*, གློག་ཁྲུང་ནང་ *in the computer*, བརྟན་འཕྲིན་ནང་ *on TV*, དུས་དེབ་ཐོག་ *in the magazine*.

► 9.3.10 རོ་གི་ *Because*

The conjunction *because* is expressed by རོ་གི་, which links clause 1 (the reason or cause) and clause 2 (the result or effect). The pattern:

- (1) [clause 1 + རོ་གི་] + clause 2

Note that རོ་གི་ belongs to clause 1, syntactically. It makes clause 1, the clause which it takes as a complement, a subordinate clause. It is important to know that because the contrast of subjective-objective perspectives is only expressed in the matrix (or main) clause. Thus, there is no ཡིན་/རེད་ contrast in this subordinate རོ་གི་ clause. One should always use the default ཡིན་ and not རེད་ in the subordinate clause, regardless of the person of the subordinate subject. The following chart shows that the perspective-neutral ཡིན་ (the base form) is the verb used in subordinate or embedded clauses. The ཡིན་ we encountered in previous lessons in the main clause expresses subjectivity without overt markings. (In other words, one can imagine the subjective ཡིན་ in a main clause as the combination of the base (neutral) ཡིན་ with an invisible subjective marker.)

| form | base form | perspective marking |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| verb ཡིན་ <i>to be</i> | ཡིན་ (neutral perspective) | ཡིན་ (subjective) |
| | | རེད་ (objective) |
| clause type | subordinate / embedded | main / matrix |

This phenomenon further supports the idea that the ཡིན་/རེད་ contrast is not related to person but rather to perspectives. The same analysis also explains why the objective marker གི་ does not appear in a subordinate clause. Examples:

- (2) ཁི་ཚའོ་འབྲོག་པ་ཡིན་རོ་གི་ཟོག་འཚོ་གི་ཡོད།

Because they are herdsmen, they herd livestock.

- (3) ཁི་དག་བོད་རིགས་ཡིན་རོ་གི་བོད་མིང་ཡོད་གི།

Because he is Tibetan, he has a Tibetan name.

(4) ཚེ་རིང་མཚོས་ཤོད་ན་ཡུལ་བསྐྱོར་ཡེད་གི་ཡོད་ལོ་གི་ད་ལྟ་ཡུལ་ན་མེད་གི།

Because she is traveling in Tibet, Tserang Tso is not home now.

In the above examples, it is ungrammatical to say *རེད་ལོ་གི་ and *ཡེ་གི་ཡོད་གི་ལོ་གི་.

❖ 9.4 Cultural Notes

❖ 9.4.1 ལྷ་འབྲུམ་ *Kumbum* and རོང་བོ་ *Rongwo* Monasteries

The capital of the Qinghai province, Xining is the political and economic center of the Amdo region. In Huangzhong, just 25 kilometers south of Xining, is Kumbum Monastery (*Ch.* Ta'er Si), famous for its yak butter sculptures (མར་ཚོན་མཚོན་པ།) and relief embroidery work (འཚོམ་བྱུབ།). Further southeast, the town of Rebgong (རེབ་གོང་) boasts the prestigious Rongwo Monastery (*Ch.* Longwu Si) and the school of thangka painting. Built in the 14th Century during the Ming Dynasty, Rongwo Monastery had more than 2000 monks in its heyday. The picture below (bottom left) shows the sunken footprints left by centuries of devoted pilgrims' prostration in one of the halls in Rongwo. Rebgong painting is known for its delicate lines and audacious use of red, gaining the reputation of "Rebgong thangka burns like fire."



Eight Stupas (མཚོན་རྟེན་བརྒྱད་པ།)



Rongwo Monastery



Sunken Footprints at Rongwo Monastery



Painting Thangka

✿ 9.4.2 Taking Pictures in Tibetan Area

Tibetans usually don't mind being photographed. Generally speaking, no one would show an objection to taking pictures of festivals, weddings, or any form of celebration. As courtesy, one should ask བར་རྒྱལ་ན་ཨོ་ཚོག་གི་ *Is it OK to take pictures?* beforehand. There are, however, more somber occasions when one should refrain from acting like a trigger-happy, camera-toting tourist. During the observation of a sky burial, the traditional Tibetan burial ceremony, for example, one should pay due respect to the deceased and the family by not showing too much enthusiasm in trying to get the best angle and best composition of the day.

Most monasteries in Tibet charge a nominal fee for taking indoor pictures. The permit to shoot is usually equivalent to two to three US dollars. With it, one can take as many photographs as one wishes. Kumbum Monastery is a rare exception; photography is strictly prohibited in many of its halls.



Sky Burial Site, Langmusi, Gannan

* 9.4.3 Amdo Folk Songs

Amdo folk songs are popular among all ages of Amdo Tibetans, farmers and nomads alike. There are few people who can't sing, as singing is an essential component in all sorts of social gatherings. Hosts sing to the guests to express their hospitality and guests to the hosts to express their gratitude.

Among the various types of songs, one should pay particular attention to ལ་གཞས་, literally meaning "mountain song". ལ་གཞས་ is a type of love song that serves as the means for young men and women to get to know each other. Though melodious, romantic, and usually with the lyrics that wouldn't even surprise a ten-year-old American child, ལ་གཞས་ must not be sung in the presence of an elder generation; it is an absolute taboo. In fact, men do not sing it in front of their sisters or female relatives and vice versa. There are cassettes and VCD's of ལ་གཞས་ for sale

on the streets in most towns in Amdo; however, the shop owner will refuse to play it as a trial to avoid offending other customers.

❖ 9.5 Key Sentence Patterns

■ 9.5.1 Present and Present Progressive: Questions

- (1) མི་དགེས་བྱ་བ་ཆེ་བློ་ལས་གོ་གི།
What is she doing?
- (2) བོ་ཚོས་བྱ་བ་ཆེ་བློ་ལས་གོ་གི།
What are they doing?
- (3) བྱོ་ས་ཆེ་བློ་ལས་འདོན་གི་ཡོད།
What are you reading? (འདོན་ *to read* is a regular transitive verb)
- (4) ཚོ་རིང་གིས་སུ་ར་མཉམ་གི་ཡུལ་བསྐྱོར་ཡེད་གི་ཡོད།
Who is Tserang traveling with?
- (5) བྱོ་ས་གང་ན་བོད་གི་སྐྱུ་རྩལ་བྲིད་གི་ཡོད།
Where do you teach Tibetan art?

■ 9.5.2 Present and Present Progressive: Declaratives

- (1) ངས་བེ་ལིང་ན་བོད་སྐད་སློབ་གི་ཡོད།
I am studying Tibetan language in Xining.
- (2) ངེ་ཨ་པས་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་ན་ལོ་རྒྱུས་བྲིད་གི་ཡོད།
My father is teaching history at a college.
- (3) ངེ་ཨ་མས་ཡུལ་ན་ལུག་འཚོ་གི་ཡོད།
My mother is herding sheep at home.
- (4) མི་དགེས་བོད་སྐད་ལེན་གི་ཡོད།
She is singing a Tibetan song.
- (5) ངས་དོན་གྲུབ་བ་བོད་སྐད་བཤད་གི་ཡོད།
I am speaking Tibetan to Dondrup.
- (6) ངས་བསྐྱུར་ཡིག་འབྲི་གི་མེད། བྱོ་ས་སློབ་ལས་བྱ་འབྲི་གི་ཡོད།
I am not writing a letter. I am doing my homework.

■ 9.5.3 Object-Ladon Verbs

- (1) བོ་གཉི་གས་བརྟན་འཕྲིན་ན་ལྷ་གི་མེད་གི།

They two are not watching television. (ན Ladon)

(2) ངས་འཇར་པན་གི་སློབ་བརྟན་ན་ལྟ་གི་ཡོད།

I am watching a Japanese movie.

(3) ཁྱོད་ཚེ་ཟིག་ག་ཉན་གི་ཡོད།

What are you listening to? (ཚེ་ཟིག་ག་ marked with *Ladon*)

(4) ཁྱོད་བོད་གི་སླུ་དབྱེངས་ང་ཉན་གི་ཡོད་ལ།

Are you listening to Tibetan music? (ར Ladon, ལ Jeddul)

(5) ངས་དབྱིན་སྐད་ལ་ཉན་གི་ཡོད།

I am listening to English (the language). (ལ Ladon)

■ 9.5.4 Two People: གཉི་ག་ (Review)

(1) ཁྱོད་མ་མ་གཉི་གས་བྱ་བ་ཚེ་ཟིག་ལས་གི་ཡོད།

What do both of your parents do?

(2) ཁྱོ་གཉི་གས་བྱ་བ་ཚེ་ཟིག་ལས་གི་ཡོད།

What are you two doing?

(3) ང་གཉི་གས་འདྲ་བར་ལེན་གི་ཡོད།

We two are taking photographs.

(4) སློབ་མ་གཉི་གས་དབྱིན་ཡིག་གི་དུས་དེབ་བ་ལྟ་གི་ཡོད་ནི་ཨེ་རེད།

Are the two students reading an English magazine? (བ Ladon)

(5) རེན་ཚེན་ར་ལྟ་མོ་གཉི་གས་རེབ་རྫོང་ན་བོད་གི་སླུ་རྩལ་ར་སླུ་དབྱེངས་སློབ་གོ་གི།

Renchen and Lhamo are both studying Tibetan art and music at Rebgong.

■ 9.5.5 Localizers ཐོག་ and ནང

(1) བརྟན་འཕྲིན་ནང་གི་མྱི་དི་སུ་རེད།

Who is the person on TV?

(2) འདྲ་བར་ཐོག་གི་སློབ་དེབ་དི་ཚེ་ཟིག་གི་སློབ་དེབ་རེད།

What kind of textbook is that in the picture?

(3) སློབ་ཁྲིམས་ནང་གི་འདྲ་བར་འདི་དེ་ཨ་རིའི་ནང་མྱི་ཡིན།

The photo on the computer is my family in the US.

(4) འདྲ་བར་ཐོག་གི་ཁྱི་འདི་སུའི་རེད།

Whose is the dog in the picture?

(5) དུས་དེབ་ཐོག་གི་སྐད་ཆ་དབྱིན་ཇི་གི་སྐད་ཨེ་རེད།

Is the language in the magazine English?

■ 9.5.6 རོ་གི་ *Because*

- (1) རི་ཚའོ་འབྲོག་པ་ཡིན་ནོ་གི་ཡུལ་ན་ཐོག་འཚོ་གི་ཡོད།
We are herdsmen, so we herd livestock at home.
- (2) རི་ཚོས་བོད་སྐད་སློབ་གི་ཡོད་ནོ་གི་རི་ཚའོ་བོད་ལྗེང་ཡོད།
We are studying Tibetan, so we have Tibetan names.
- (3) ངས་དབྱིན་ཡིག་སློབ་གི་ཡོད་ནོ་གི་དབྱིན་ཡིག་གི་དཔེ་ཆ་ཡོད།
I am studying English, so I have an English textbook.

❖ 9.6 Exercises

9.6.1 Listening Comprehension

Dialogue 1: answer the following questions in English

- (1) What is Sonam doing?
- (2) What is Lobzang doing?
- (3) How many classes does Lobsang have today?
- (4) What are Sonam and Lobsang doing together?

Dialogue 2: choose the right answer

- (1) Sonam's younger sister is a
(a) student (b) teacher (c) herdsman
- (2) Sonam's younger sister is ___ years old
(a) thirteen (b) fourteen (c) fifteen
- (3) Sonam's family has ___ sheep.
(a) seventy (b) eighty (c) ninety
- (4) Sonam's family also has _____ yaks and cows.
(a) twenty (b) thirty (c) eighty

9.6.2 Fill in the Blanks: mark the nouns with the correct case

- (1) ང་_____བོད་ཡིག་_____དུས་དེབ་_____ལྟ་གི་ཡོད།
- (2) ཁི་དགོ་_____སྐད་བྱུངས་ལེན་གི་ཡོད་གི།
- (3) རི་ལྗེང་_____ཐུན་ཚོགས་ཟེར་ར།
- (4) རི་ཨ་ཕ་_____སློབ་ཤུག་མེད།
- (5) རི་ཚའོ་_____གཡག་གསུམ་ཡོད།
- (6) རི་གཉི་ག།_____མགོ་ལོག་_____ཡུལ་སྐོར་ཡོད་གི་ཡོད།

- (7) ང་_____སྐྱུན་_____ཕྱིར་ང་སྐལ་བཟང་དོན་གྲུབ་ཟེར་དཀ།
 (8) བསོད་ནམས་_____ལྷ་ས་རྒྱ་_____ཕྱི་ས་རིག་ཁྱིད་གི་ཡོད།
 (9) ཁྱོད་_____སློབ་གྲོགས་_____ཚོག་མཛོད་གང་ན་ཡོད།
 (10) ང་_____ངེ་ཚའོ་_____དགེ་གན་_____དཔེ་ཚེ་ལ་ལྷ་གི་ཡོད།

9.6.3 Complete the Dialogues

- (1) ཀ _____?
 ཁ ངས་བསྐྱུར་ཡིག་ཟིག་འབྲི་གི་ཡོད།
 ཀ _____?
 ཁ ངེ་ཨ་མ་ཁྱི་ཀ་ན་ཡོད།
- (2) ཀ _____?
 ཁ ངེ་ལྷ་བོ་ལོ་སྐུམ་ཅུ་ཐམ་པ་ཡིན།
 ཀ ཁི་དགེ་ས་ཚི་ཟིག་ཡེད་གི་ཡོད།
 ཁ _____ . (to teach; art)
- (3) ཀ ཐའོ་ལུ་ལྷ། _____?
 ཁ ཁི་དགེ་ས་ཚི་ཟིག་ས་པོ་ཡིན།
 ཀ _____?
 ཁ ཁི་དགེ་ས་དབྱིན་སྐད་གི་སྐྱུ་དབྱེངས་ལེན་གི་ཡོད་གི།
- (4) ཀ སོ་རྒྱུ། ཁྱོས་སྐད་རིགས་ཚི་ཟིག་བཤད་གི་ཡོད།
 ཁ _____ . (French)
 ཀ ཁྱོ་རྒྱ་རན་སི་གི་ཨ་ཡིན།
 ཁ _____ . (No. Canada)

9.6.4 Pattern Practice: answer the following questions with the given patterns

- (1) ཁྱོད་ཕྱིར་མོས་ད་སྐབས་ཚི་ཟིག་ལས་གི་ཡོད།
 (ཟི་ལིང་ན་སློབ་གྲྭ་ད་སློབ་...)
 (2) ཁྱོ་གཉི་གས་འདི་ན་ཚི་ཟིག་ཡེད་གོ།
 (ཚོགས་པར་ར་ལྷ་...ལས་བྱ་འབྲི...)
 (3) ཁྱོད་ཨ་མས་ཚི་ཟིག་ཡེད་གོ།
 (སློབ་གྲྭ་ཚེན་མོ་...ཕྱི་ས་རིག་...ཁྱིད་...)

- (4) ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ལོ་མཆི་ཟིན་ལས་གི་ཡོད་གི།
(གྲོགས་པོ་ར་མཉམ་གི་བརྟན་འཕྲིན་ན་ལྟ་...)

9.6.5 Translation

- (1) Sophie is traveling in Yulshul. She is taking pictures there.
- (2) Are you reading an English newspaper? Is it your teacher's newspaper?
- (3) Both my elder brother and elder sister are studying Tibetan history at Tibet University.
- (4) My parents are not farmers. They are herdsmen. They herd sheep, goats and yaks at home.
- (5) A- What language are John and Akimi (two) speaking.
B- They are speaking Amdo Tibetan. They are studying Tibetan at a university in Xining now.