Lesson 9  What Are You Doing in Xining?

Key Grammar Points in Lesson Nine:
1. Present Plain and Progressive Tense and the Auxiliary བོད་
2. Ergative Case Marking: ཆི། / པོ།
3. Introduction to Amdo Verb Inflection
4. Duality Marker ང་། Revisited
5. Location Word: གཞི།
6. Conjunction: འེ། Because

9.1 Dialogue

Dialogue 1 (Tom and John on the phone)

Translation of Amdo Tibetan Dialogue

H R A = A %-(A R)

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Dialogue 1 (Tom and John on the phone)

Translation of Amdo Tibetan Dialogue

H R A = A %-(A R)
American Students on a Study Tour to Qinghai and Tibet

Dialogue 2 (Rhangmo and Tserang)

Rhangmo: ལོ་ཤེས་རྒྱུས་རྒྱུས་ཡིན། ཡེ་ཐབས་ཡང་བཞི་བཞི་ཡིན།
Tserang: མེད། རང་སྤྱི་ཞི་བཞི་བཞི་ཡིན།
Rhangmo: ནོར་བཞི་ཁུ་ཁུ་ཁུ་ཁུ་ཁུ་ཁུ་ཁུ།
Tserang: རེ་དེ།
Rhangmo: རིགས་གསོགས་གསོགས་གསོགས།
Tserang: བོ་སྐྱེ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ། རིགས་ལྷ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ་བུ། དེས་ཐད་བཟོ།
Rhangmo: རིང་ན།
Tserang: རིང་ན།
Rhangmo: དེ་ཐལ།
Tserang: དེ་ཐལ།
Rhangmo: དེ་ཐལ།
Tserang: དེ་ཐལ།

Colloquial Amdo Tibetan (2005, Revised), Kuo-ming Sung & Lha Byams Rgyal
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 (Rhagmo and Tserang)
Rhagmo: Tserang, what are you doing? Are you doing homework?
Tserang: No, I am listening to music and writing a letter.
Rhagmo: Tserang, are these two in the picture your parents?
Tserang: Yes, they are.
Rhagmo: 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.
Rhagmo: Where is she?
Tserang: She is at my elder sister's home.
Rhagmo: 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. ལྟ་ རྒྱ་ affix Ergative Case marker
2. འིན་ v. to study
3. བོད་རིས།["ལི་གིས།བོད།"] aux. (see 9.3.3)
4. ནང་ v. to teach
5. བོད། place Rebgong (Ch. Tongren)
6. རེ་ན། v. to do
7. སྣད་མོ་ཟླ། adv. together (also སོམ་དོན་)
8. ནག་མོ་ཟླ། n. traveling
9. ལེ། v. to do
10. སྣང་བོའི། v. (O-V) to travel (lit. to do traveling)
11. སྣ་ [་བོས་ནོ།] aux. contraction of སྣ་
12. ཡེ། v. to speak
13. དམ་བོ། adj. (attr.) a lot of, many, much
14. ཅུ་བོས། v. (O-V) to take pictures
15. སྣྱ་བོས། n. television
16. སྣ་ v. (obj.-ladon) to watch, to look at, to read
17. ཐོ་ན། n. work, task
18. ཐོ་བོས། n. (N-N) homework (for school)
19. སླེ། v. to write, to do (homework)
20. སླེ། [་བོས་ནོ།] aux. contraction of སླེ།
21. སྣུ་བོས། n. music
22. རོ། v. (obj.-ladon) to listen to
23. སྣུ་བོས། n. letter
24. སླེ། n. letter, words written
25. སྣུ་བོས། n. father and mother
26. སླུ་ན། adj. (attr.) big
27. སྣུ་བོས། n. (N-A) university
28. སྣུ་བོས། n. (N-A) professor
29. སྣུ་བོས། n. history
30. སླེ། n. herdsman
31. སྣ་ v. (O-V) to herd livestock

9.2.2 Additional Vocabulary
32. གོང་མ། v. to sing
33. གོང་བོད་དི། [བོད་དི།] v. (O-V) to study (lit. to do studies)
34. གོང་ཐོ། person Rinchen
35. གོང་དོན། n. movie
36. གོང་ཞིབ། n. video (including DVD)
37. གོང་། n. internet
38. གོང་བོད་ཞི། v. (O-V) to access the internet
39. གོང་བོད་ཞི། v. (O-V) to be online, to surf the internet
40. གོང་ཞིབ། person Ngawang
41. གོང་། v. to read
42. གོང་བོད། n. magazine
43. གོང་ཞིབ། n. newspaper
44. གོང་བོད། n. mathematics
45. གོང་ཞིབ། n. art
46. གོང་། n. song
47. གོང་ཞིབ། n. child, kid
48. གོང་ཞིབ། n. Tibetan alphabet
49. གོང་། n. people
50. གོང་། n. chatting
51. གོང་བོད། v. (O-V) to chat (lit. to do chatting)
52. གོང་ཞིབ། n. college student
53. གོང་ཞིབ། n. class (meeting, lecture)
54. གོང་། n. conversation, talk
55. གོང་ཞིབ། n. language
56. གོང་། 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. ལྷ (Erg)-ྷ (Abs)| I drink tea. (Subject ལྷ is marked Ergative.)
4. ལ (Abs)| I go. (Subject ལ 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 ཕི་ and མཉ), Absolutive case (not overtly marked by any morpheme), to Ergative case (overtly marked).

5. ཤི་(Obliq)-ཞི་(Abs)|
   English: He (Nom) has a book (Acc).
6. ཤི་ི་(Obliq)-ཞི་(Abs)|
   English: His name (Nom) is called Tom (Acc).
7. ལ (Erg)-ཞི་(Abs)|
   English: I (Nom) am studying the Tibetan language (Acc).
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 སོིར་, ཀོན་, གདན་, and རྡོིལ་, 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) རོིིན་པར་ (Obliq)ལོག་ (future tense, L10)
   English: I fear ghosts. (I is not an Agent, but an Experiencer.)

(12) བོར་ཁྲི། (Obliq)ལོག་ (future tense, L10)
   English: I like lions.
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 Absolutive, 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 གཏོར་ to fear, གཏོར་ to like, and གཏོར་ 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: འ / ཀ

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: འ or ཀ. འ is attached to an open syllable; ཀ follows a closed syllable (i.e. with a suffix). For example:

1. འཁབ་སྦྱོར་བསྟུན་ གི། I study Tibetan.
2. འཁབ་སྦྱོར་བསྟུན་ གི། Tom is singing songs. (Lit. singing music)
3. འཁབ་སྦྱོར་བསྟུན་ གི། Teacher Wuchung is teaching history in Beijing.
4. འཁབ་སྦྱོར་བསྟུན་ གི། Mary is listening to American music.
5. འཁབ་སྦྱོར་བསྟུན་ གི། Sonam Drolma is studying English.
6. འཁབ་སྦྱོར་བསྟུན་ གི། Lobzang is online. (Lit. looking at the internet)
In Lesson 5, we learned about the absolutive case for the personal pronouns ㎞, ㎞, ㎞, ㎞, etc. Those were the unmarked forms. Below are a few case conversions:

(7) ㎞ (Absolutive) → ㎞ (Erg) ㎞ (Abs) → ㎞ (Erg)
㎞ (Abs) → ㎞ (Erg) ㎞ (Abs) → ㎞ (Erg)
㎞ (Abs) → ㎞ (Erg) ㎞ (Abs) → ㎞ (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: ㎞ to study, ㎞ to travel, ㎞ to speak, ㎞ to teach, ㎞ to work, ㎞ to read, ㎞ to write, ㎞ to sing, ㎞ to watch, ㎞ to chat, and ㎞ to listen. These ergative-assigning verbs come in three types: (A) monosyllabic transitive verb; (B) noun (usually disyllabic) plus a verb, ㎞ or ㎞, both with a generic meaning equivalent to the English to do (or suru in Japanese), and (C) verbs such as ㎞ to watch and ㎞ 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. ㎞ ㎞ I am taking a lot of photographs.
2. ㎞ ㎞ Rhangmo is teaching Tibetan art.
3. ㎞ ㎞ We are speaking Chinese.
4. ㎞ ㎞ 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.
Tserang and Renchen (Erg) are traveling in Tibet. (Lit. doing traveling)

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

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

Verbs of Type C (and in this lesson we have two of them, གཞི་ to watch and གཞི་ 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 གཞི་ to watch and གཞི་ to listen as Object-Ladon verbs. (Recall that earlier we introduced Subject-Ladon verbs such as གཞི་ for possession and གཞི་ to be called.) Examples:

8. རྒྱུད་ཤིམ་ཕྱིར་བོད་པའི་ལོབ་སྙང་། དཔའི་ཡི་ཤེས། Lobzang is watching a movie. (རྒྱུད་ is the Ladon)

9. རི་མ་ཆེག་བཞིན་བོད་པའི་རིན་ཆེན། Rinchen is listening to music. (རི་ is the Ladon)

Recall that Ladon takes variant forms according to the pronunciation of the preceding syllable. In the above examples, it is the རྒྱུད་ in རྒྱུད་ཤིམ་ to watch a movie and the ཀྲི་ in ཀྲི་མ་ཆེག་ 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Regular transitive verbs: Agent-Ergative + Theme-Absolutive</td>
<td>e.g. to speak, to write, to sing, to study, to read, to herd, to take (pictures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Intransitive O-V verbs: Agent-Ergative (Built-in Object-Absolutive)</td>
<td>e.g. to travel, to work, to study, to chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Object-Ladon verbs: Agent-Ergative + Goal-Oblique (marked by Ladon)</td>
<td>e.g. to watch (movies, videos, internet), to listen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>བོད་</td>
<td>དེ་</td>
<td>རོལ་</td>
<td>དོན་</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ཆོས་</td>
<td>སོགས་</td>
<td>རྡོ་རྗེས་</td>
<td>སྦུར་</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 དེ་ to eat and སྦུར་ 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 (ཞེ་ཐོ་), where the nomadic sub-dialect is preserved in its "purer" (usually synonymous with
"archaic") form, the distinction between the present tense of [sa] to eat and the future tense [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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pres/Fut</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[sa]</td>
<td>[sa]</td>
<td>[sa]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[za]</td>
<td>[za]</td>
<td>[za]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to drink</td>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to drink</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 [ši]. The objective perspective marker [ši] introduced in Lesson 6 can be added to [ši] to remove the subjective/in-group interpretation of the sentence. The combination [ši] can be contracted to [ši], a form commonly heard especially when [ši] follows. The pattern:

(1) Present (Progressive) Verb + [ši] (subjective perspective)

Verb + [ši] (subjective perspective)

Examples:

(2) [ši] What are you doing in Xining?
It goes with regular nouns such as ཁྲད་; therefore, སྲོག་ → སྲོག་ (Negative) and སྲོག་ → སྲོག་ (Interrogative). Examples:

6. སྲོག་ཞེས་པ་ན་འོང་། Ngawang is not studying.
7. སྲོག་པོ་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། Is your sister herding sheep right now?
8. སྲོག་པོ་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། 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, སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། My father teaches Music and སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། Tserang is listening to music right now both use the same \ V + སྲོག་(ི) pattern.

9.3.6 Duality Marker ཅེས་ Revisited

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

1. སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། We two are speaking Tibetan.
2. སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། They two are studying mathematics.
3. སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། What are you two doing in Rebgong?

Recall that the morpheme ཅེས་ the two, does not have to be attached to personal pronouns. It goes with regular nouns such as ཤུགས་པོ་ both parents. Examples:

4. སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། Both my parents teach at the university. (do teaching)
5. སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། Drolma Tso and Rinchen two are traveling in China.
6. སྲིའི་ཐོབ་ན་འོང་། The two kids are writing the Tibetan alphabet.
### 9.3.7 Pronouns: Colloquial Forms (Summary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Absolutive (no marking)</th>
<th>Ergative (-ི or གུ)</th>
<th>Genitive (-རི or གུ)</th>
<th>Oblique (མཐོང་)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, me, my, mine</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we, us, our, ours (neutral)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we, us, our, ours (inclusive)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we two, etc. (neutral, dual)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we two, etc. (inclusive, dual)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you, your (singular)</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you, your (plural)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (dual)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he, his, him</td>
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<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she, her</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they, them, their</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they, them their (dual)</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td>སྣ སྣ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 9.3.8 Adjectives: རྒྱ་ཏེ་ and བཤེས་

°རྒྱ་ཏེ་ can be analyzed as a word that consists of the adjectival root (རྒྱ་), which carries the meaning of the word (many or much), and a suffix -ཏེ, which surfaces when the adjective is used to modify a noun. བཤེས་ big is of the same morphological structure. Adjectives typically follow the noun they modify, for example, ར་ན་མ་མར་ many photos, བུན་སྣ་དོན་ many sheep, བཤེས་མ་མར་
many people. The word นิยม is a Noun-Adjective compound that literally means school-big. A college student is called aมิยติ.

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

In Dialogue 2, Rhangmo asks Tserang นิยม are these two in the photo your parents, using a word นิยม after นิยม photo. There is something conceptually important about this นิยม. 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 นิยม is the concrete object, not the image. To refer to the image or content shown on the นิยม, one needs to say นิยม what’s in the photo.

Literally the top or the upper part of an object, the noun นิยม 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 นิยม inside. In this lesson, we introduce the combination of noun (Gen.) + นิยม. นิยม is still a noun phrase so it can take the genitive case นิยม to from a larger noun phrase นิยม 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 นิยม, 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 นิยม. Examples:

(2) นิยม in the newspaper (the content, the news and ads, not the 40-page object)
(3) นิยม in the book (Note that นิยม uses its Genitive form here)
(4) นิยม Who is (the person in) the picture in the book?

Another localizer นิยม inside is used in similar contexts as นิยม. The selection between นิยม and นิยม could seem arbitrary to non-native speakers. For our purposes, use นิยม for books, pictures, magazines, newspapers, etc. Use นิยม for TV’s or computers (anything with a screen).
example, འབྲི་བཞིག in the picture, བོད་དོན་ཡེན་པ་ in the computer, བོད་དོན་བོད་པར་on TV, བོད་དོན་བོད་ in the magazine.

9.3.10 གཞན་Because

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

(1) [ clause 1 + གཞན ] + clause 2

Note that གཞན 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 མིན/ིན contrast in this subordinate གཞན clause. One should always use the default མིན and not བཞན in the subordinate clause, regardless of the person of the subordinate subject. The following chart shows that the perspective-neutral མིན (the base form) is the verb used in subordinate or embedded clauses. The མིན we encountered in previous lessons in the main clause expresses subjectivity without overt markings. (In other words, one can imagine the subjective མིན in a main clause as the combination of the base (neutral) མིན with an invisible subjective marker.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>base form</th>
<th>perspective marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb མིན to be</td>
<td>མིན (neutral perspective)</td>
<td>མིན (subjective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>བཞན (objective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clause type</td>
<td>subordinate / embedded</td>
<td>main / matrix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

(2) བཞན་བཞན་འབྲི་བཞིག གཞན་ཞིག་བཞིག་ཕྲོད།

Because they are herdsmen, they herd livestock.

(3) བཞན་བཞན་ཅིག་བཞིག གཞན་ཞིག་བཞིག་ཕྲོད།

Because he is Tibetan, he has a Tibetan name.
Because she is traveling in Tibet, Tserang Tso is not home now.

In the above examples, it is ungrammatical to say *ཞེ་ཤེ་ཇེ་ and *ཞེ་ཤེ་ནོ་རི་.

❖ 9.4 Cultural Notes

❖ 9.4.1 གམ་མདུན་ 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 (བོད་ཟོད་བོད་མོ་) and relief embroidery work (འབོད་མོ་). 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 (བོད་ཟོད་བོད་མོ་)  
Rongwo Monastery
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 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.
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 སྐེབས་, literally meaning "mountain song". ཟིང་པོ་ 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, ཟིང་པོ་ 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 ཟིང་པོ་ 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. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   What is she doing?

2. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   What are they doing?

3. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   What are you reading? (འབོད་ to read is a regular transitive verb)

4. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   Who is Tserang traveling with?

5. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   Where do you teach Tibetan art?

9.5.2 Present and Present Progressive: Declaratives

1. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   I am studying Tibetan language in Xining.

2. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   My father is teaching history at a college.

3. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   My mother is herding sheep at home.

4. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   She is singing a Tibetan song.

5. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   I am speaking Tibetan to Dondrup.

6. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
   I am not writing a letter. I am doing my homework.

9.5.3 Object-Ladon Verbs

1. འབྲི་མེད་ལ་འརིས་བཞི་གཞི་ཡིན།
They two are not watching television. (포 Ladon)

(2) ཨེལི་བཤེད་ག་མ་པར་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ བུ་བོ་མེད།
   I am watching a Japanese movie.

(3) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   What are you listening to? (ཆོས་ཞིང་marked with Ladon)

(4) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   Are you listening to Tibetan music? (포 Ladon, འ Jeddul)

(5) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   I am listening to English (the language). (포 Ladon)

■ 9.5.4 Two People: རི་ཤིན་ (Review)

(1) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   What do both of your parents do?

(2) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   What are you two doing?

(3) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   We two are taking photographs.

(4) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   Are the two students reading an English magazine? (포 Ladon)

(5) སྨིད་ཁོ་འེལུ་བཤེད་པ་ོ།
   Renchen and Lhamo are both studying Tibetan art and music at Rebgong.

■ 9.5.5 Localizers འགོག་and གོ་

(1) འབུན་ཤིང་ཤིང་པ་འི་ཤིང་ོ་ོོམ་
   Who is the person on TV?

(2) འབུན་ཤིང་ཤིང་པ་འི་ཤིང་ོ་ོམ་
   What kind of textbook is that in the picture?

(3) འབུན་ཤིང་ཤིང་པ་འི་ཤིང་ོ་ོམ་
   The photo on the computer is my family in the US.

(4) འབུན་ཤིང་ཤིང་པ་འི་ཤིང་ོ་ོམ་
   Whose is the dog in the picture?

(5) འབུན་ཤིང་ཤིང་པ་འི་ཤིང་ོ་ོམ་
   Is the language in the magazine English?
Because

(1) We are herdsmen, so we herd livestock at home.
(2) We are studying Tibetan, so we have Tibetan names.
(3) 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 Lobsang 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)  བོད་པོད་པོད་པོད།
(2) བོད་པོད་པོད།
(3) བོད་པོད་པོད།
(4) བོད་པོད་པོད།
(5) བོད་པོད་པོད།
(6) བོད་པོད་པོད།
9.6.3 Complete the Dialogues

(1) ฉัน__________โอรสเตรียมจะเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   ฉัน__________
   ฉัน__________
(2) ฉัน__________ท่านเตรียมจะเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   ฉัน__________
(3) ฉัน__________ท่านเตรียมจะเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   ฉัน__________
(4) ฉัน__________ท่านเตรียมจะเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   ฉัน__________
   ฉัน__________
   ฉัน__________

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

(1) ฉัน__________มาเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   (มีอะไรเรียนต่ออีกหรือไม่)
(2) ฉัน__________มาเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   (เรียนต่ออีกหรือไม่)
(3) ฉัน__________มาเรียนต่ออีกไหม?
   (เรียนต่ออีกหรือไม่)
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.