# སློབ་ཚན་དང་པོ། Lesson One
# བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། “Hello!”

**Objectives**

1. **You will be able to politely and informally greet somebody at various times of the day, ask and reply one’s name, country, ask & reply how one is doing and where one is going.**
2. **Based on the spelling rules, you will be aware of the pronunciation of any Tibetan syllable.**
   a) You will be able to recognize, know how to pronounce, transliterate (into Wylie), know the gender and write (like a first-grade school kid) the letters of the Tibetan alphabet.
   b) You will be able to identify each part and function of a syllable and therefore know how to pronounce and spell out aloud any possible combination of letters.
   c) You will be aware of the difference among the various Tibetan scripts.

## གླེང་མོལ།
## Dialogue

**དགོང་དག་གླིང་སྐོར་ལ།** *(Evening, at the* lingkor*)*

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| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ཀྲན་ལགས། དགོང་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། ཁྱེད་རང་ཞབས་སྐོར་ལ་ཕེབས་ཀྱི་ཡིན་པས། |
| ཀྲན་ལགས། | ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། དགོང་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། ལགས་ཡིན། ང་སྐོར་ར་གཅིག་བརྒྱབ་(བརྒྱག) གར་འགྲོ་གི་ཡིན། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ཀྲན་ལགས་ཁྱེད་རང་སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས། |
| ཀྲན་ལགས། | ལགས་ཡིན། ཨ་ནི་ཁྱེད་རང་སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ལགས་ཡིན་ང་(ཡང་)བདེ་པོ་ཡིན། (ཐུགས་ཆེ་གནང་།) |
| ཀྲན་ལགས། | ད་ང་ངལ་གསོ་གཅིག་བརྒྱབ་(བརྒྱག) ཀྱི་ཡིན། རང་ག་ལེར་རྒྱུགས་ཨ་། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ལགས་སོ། ཀྲན་ལགས་བཞུགས་གདན་འཇགས་གོ། ཨ་ནི་གཟིམ་འཇགས་གནང་གོ། སང་ཉིན་འཛོམ་གྲྭ་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། |

| **ཞོགས་ཀས་དངུལ་ཁང་ལ།** | *(In the morning, at the bank)* |
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| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། |
| བོད་པའི་ཨ་ཅག་ལགས། | ཞོགས་པ་བདེ་ལེགས། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | དེ་རིང་དངུལ་ཁང་ནང་ལ་མི་མང་པོ་འདུག་ག |
| བོད་པའི་ཨ་ཅག་ལགས། | ལགས་འདུག  བུ་མོ་ཁྱེད་རང་ལུང་པ་ག་ནས་ཡིན། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ང་ཨ་རི་ནས་ཡིན། ཁྱེད་རང་གི་ཁྱི་འདི་སྙིང་རྗེ་པོ་གཅིག་འདུག  མིང་ལ་ག་རེ་ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད་རེད། |
| བོད་པའི་ཨ་ཅག་ལགས། | ཁོའི་མིང་ལ་སེང་གེ་ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད་རེད། ཨ་ནི་བུ་མོ་ཁྱེད་རང་གི་མཚན་ལ་ག་རེ་ཞུ་གི་ཡོད། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ངའི་མིང་ལི་ཧྲི་ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད། |
| བོད་པའི་ཨ་ཅག་ལགས། | ཨ་ལས། མཚན་འདི་སྙིང་རྗེ་མོ་གཅིག་འདུག |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ། ང་ཁྱེད་རང་མཇལ་བ་དགའ་པོ་བྱུང་། |
| བོད་པའི་ཨ་ཅག་ལགས། | ང་ཡང་དགའ་པོ་བྱུང་། རྗེས་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། |
| ལི་ཧྲི་ལགས། | ལགས་སོ། རྗེས་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། |

## ཚིག་གསར་དང་
## གནས་ཚུལ་འཕར་མ་བཅས།

## Vocabulary
## With Supplementary Information

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|---|---|
| ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ། | Thank you! Thanks!<br>**ཐུགས་རྗེ་** = compassion; **ཆེ་** = ཆེན་པོ་: great, big |
| བཀའ་དྲིན་ཆེ། | I'm very grateful, so kind of you!<br>**བཀའ་དྲིན་** = kindness; **ཆེ་** = ཆེན་པོ་: great, big |
| དགོངས་དག | I'm sorry, my apologies!<br>**དགོངས་** = intent, thought (H)i; **དག** = pure |
| ཕྱག་ཕེབས་གནང་བྱུང་། | Welcome!<br>**ཕྱག་** = hand (H); **ཕེབས་** = to come (H) |
| བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། | Hello! Hi!<br>**བཀྲ་ཤིས་** = auspicious; **བདེ་** as in: **བདེ་**བ་ = happiness; **ལེགས་** = good, excellent |

སྔ་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good morning!
**སྔ་** = སྔ་པོ་ = early; **བདེ་ལེགས་** = good, excellent happiness

**ཞོགས་པ་**བདེ་ལེགས། Good morning!
**ཞོགས་པ་** = morning; **བདེ་ལེགས་** = good, excellent happiness

ཉིན་གུང་བདེ་ལེགས། Good afternoon!
**ཉིན་གུང་** = noon, mid-day; **བདེ་ལེགས་** = good, excellent happiness

དགོང་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good evening!
**དགོང་དྲོ་** = evening; **བདེ་ལེགས་** = good, excellent happiness

གཟིམ་འཇགས་གནང་གོ། Good night! Sleep well!
**གཟིམ་** = to sleep (H); **འཇགས་** = firmly, tightly

སང་ཉིན་མཇལ་ཡོང་། See you tomorrow!
**སང་ཉིན་** = tomorrow; **མཇལ་** (H) = ཐུག་ = to meet; **ཡོང་** = hopefully

རྗེས་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། See you later! Also: རྗེས་མ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། = See you next time!
**རྗེས་ལ་** = later; **མཇལ་** (H) = ཐུག་ = to meet; **ཡོང་** = hopefully

ག་པར་ཕེབས་ག། Where are you going? (H)
**ག་པར་** = where; **ཕེབས་** = to go (H)

ག་པར་འགྲོ་ག། Where are you going?
**ག་པར་** = where; **འགྲོ་** = to go

ག་པར། What's up? (inf.) pronounced: ག་བར། (lit. "where"?)
**ག་པར་** = where

བཞུགས་གདན་འཇགས་གོ། Goodbye! (HH) (said to the person staying) Also: Please take a seat!
**བཞུགས་** = to stay, sit (H); **གདན་** = seat; **འཇགས་** = firmly, stable

ག་ལེར་ཕེབས་རོགས་གནང་། Goodbye! (H) (lit. "go slowly," said to the person leaving)
**ག་ལེར་** = slowly; **ཕེབས་** = to go (H); **རོགས་གནང་** = makes it polite

ག་ལེར་བཞུགས་རོགས་གནང་། Goodbye! (H) (lit. "stay slowly," said to the person
**ག་ལེར་** = slowly; **བཞུགས་** = to stay (H); **རོགས་གནང་** = makes it polite

ག་ལེར་ཕེབས། Goodbye! (lit. "go slowly," said to the person leaving
**ག་ལེར་** = slowly; **ཕེབས་** = to go (H)

ག་ལེར་བཞུགས། Goodbye! (lit. "stay slowly," said to the person staying)
ག་ལེར་ = slowly; བཞུགས་ = to stay (H)

ཕེབས་ཨ། Bye! (inf.) (H)

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| བཞུགས་ཨ། | Bye! (inf.) (H) |
| སྐུ་གཟུགས། | body (H) |
| | **སྐུ་**གསུང་ཐུགས་ = body, speech and mind (of the Buddha) |
| གཟུགས་པོ། | body |
| | **གཟུགས་** = form |
| བདེ་པོ། | well, healthy, comfortable |
| | **བདེ་** = **བདེ་**བ་ = happiness, well-being |
| བདེ་པོ་ཨོ་ཙོ། | not too bad, alright |
| | **བདེ་** = **བདེ་**བ་ = happiness, well-being; **ཨོ་ཙམ་** = more or less |
| བདེ་པོ་བདེ་ཀྱུང་། | perfectly fine, extremely well |
| | **བདེ་** = **བདེ་**བ་ = happiness, well-being |
| ཐུག་པ། | to meet, to encounter (ཐ་མི་དད་པ་) |
| མཇལ་བ། | to meet, encounter (H) (ཐ་མི་དད་པ་) |
| | **མཇལ་** as in: སང་ཉིན་**མཇལ་**ཡོང་། = See you tomorrow! |
| དགའ་བ། | to be happy, to be pleased (ཐ་མི་དད་པ་) |
| | as in the Four Immeasurable: **དགའ་བ་**ཚད་མེད་ = Immeasurable Joy |
| བོད། | Tibet |
| བོད་སྐད། | Tibetan language |
| | **བོད་** = Tibet; **སྐད་** = **སྐད་**རིགས་ = language |

## Expressions

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| མ་མཇལ་ཡུན་རིང་། | Long time no see<br>**མ་** = not; **མཇལ་** = to meet (H); **ཡུན་རིང་** = long time |
| གལ་གནང་གི་མ་རེད། | It’s fine, it’s o.k., no worries, no problem, nothing to mention<br>གལ་ = nothing; གནང་གི་མ་རེད། = doesn’t do (H) |
| འགྲིག་གི་རེད། | It’s fine, it’s o.k. |
| ལགས་སོ། | So it is, all right, very well |

| **DID YOU KNOW THAT...?** |
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| **གཟིམ་འཇགས་གནང་གོ།**<br>When you say “Good night”<br>you are *actually* saying:<br>“Sleep tightly”.<br>This syllable **འཇགས་** also appears in the<br>word སྙིང་འཇགས་, which means<br>“calm, peaceful, tranquil.” |

# ཉེར་མཁོའི་ཚིག་གྲུབ།
# Phrase book

**འཚམས་འདྲི། Greeting**

བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། – Hi! Hello!
མ་མཇལ་ཡུན་རིང་། – A long time since seeing you! (H)

**མཚན། Name**

ཁྱེད་རང་གི་མཚན་ལ་ག་རེ་ཞུ་གི་ཡོད། – What is your name? (H)
ངའི་མིང་ (ལ་) ·····ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད། – My name is …
ཁྱེད་རང་གི་མིང་ལ་ག་རེ་ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད། – What is your name?
ངའི་མིང་ (ལ་) ·····ཟེར་གྱི་ཡོད། – My name is …

**ཕ་ཡུལ། Homeland**

ཁྱེད་རང་ལུང་པ་ག་ནས་ཡིན། – Where are you from?
ང་·················ནས་ཡིན། – I'm from …
ཁྱེད་རང་ཕ་ཡུལ་ག་ནས་ཡིན། – Where are you from?

**སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་ཐང་། How are you?**

ཁྱེད་རང་སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས། – How are you? (H)
ང་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན། ཨ་ནི་ཁྱེད་རང་། – I'm fine, and you?
ང་བདེ་པོ་བདེ་རྒྱང་ཡིན། – I'm perfectly fine.

**ག་པར་འགྲོ་ག What's up?**

ཁྱེད་རང་ག་པར་ཕེབས་ག – Where are you going? (H)
ང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་ལ་འགྲོ་གི་ཡིན། – I'm going to class.
ཁྱེད་རང་ག་པར་འགྲོ་ག – Where are you going?

**མཇལ་ཡོང་། Bye!**

ང་ཁྱེད་རང་མཇལ་ཚང་དགའ་པོ་བྱུང་། – It was nice to meet you! (H)
རྗེས་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། – See you later! (H)

## ཚིག་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་དཔེར་བརྗོད་དང་བཅས་པ།
## Expressions with Example Sentences

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ། Thank you! Thanks!

ངས་ཁྱེད་རང་ལ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་ཞུ་གི་ཡོད། I thank you.

བཀའ་དྲིན་ཆེ། I'm very grateful! So kind of you!

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ། བཀའ་དྲིན་ཆེ། Thank you, so kind of you!

དགོངས་དག I'm sorry, my apologies

ཨོ། དགོངས་དག །ལམ་ཀ་གཏང་རོགས་གནང་། Oh, I'm sorry, please let me pass!

ཕྱག་ཕེབས་གནང་བྱུང་། Welcome!

རྒྱ་གར་ལ་ཕེབས་པར་དགའ་བསུ་ཞུ། Welcome to India!

བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། Hello! Hi!

གྲོགས་པོ་ལགས། བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། Hello, (dear) 1* friend!

སྔ་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good morning!

རྒན་ལགས། སྔ་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good morning, (dear) teacher!

ཞོགས་པ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good morning!

སྐུ་གཞོགས་ལགས། ཞོགས་པ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good morning, (dear) sir!

ཉིན་གུང་བདེ་ལེགས། Good afternoon!

ཨ་ཅག་ལགས། ཉིན་གུང་བདེ་ལེགས། Good afternoon, (dear) sister!

དགོང་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། Good evening!

དགོང་དྲོ་བདེ་ལེགས། རྨོ་ལགས། Good evening, (dear) grandmother!

གཟིམ་འཇགས་གནང་གོ Good night! Sleep well! (lit. sleep firmly)

སྐུ་གཞོགས་ལགས། གཟིམ་འཇགས་གནང་གོ Good night, respected sir!

སང་ཉིན་མཇལ་ཡོང་། See you tomorrow!

བཞུགས་གདན་འཇགས་གོ སང་ཉིན་མཇལ་ཡོང་། Goodbye! (HH) See you tomorrow! (H)

རྗེས་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། See you later!

རྗེས་མ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། See you next time!

ག་ལེར་བཞུགས་རོགས་གནང་། རྗེས་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། Goodbye, see you later! (H)

ག་པར་ཕེབས་ག Where are you going? (H)

བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། ག་པར་ཕེབས་ག Hi, where are you going? (H)

ག་པར་འགྲོ་ག Where are you going?

ཀྱེ་གྲོགས་པོ། ག་པར་འགྲོ་ག Hey, friend, where are you going?

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1 The term "dear" here is just an attempt to reflect the syllable ལགས། which is added to names and people to express respect

ག་པར། What's up? (informal) pronounced: ག་བར། (lit. "where"?)

བློ་བཟང་། ག་པར། Lobsang, what's up?

བཞུགས་གདན་འཇགས་གོ Goodbye! (HH) (said to the person staying) Also: Please take a seat!

རིན་པོ་ཆེ། བཞུགས་གདན་འཇགས་གོ། Good bye, Rinpoche! (H)

ག་ལེར་ཕེབས་རོགས་གནང་། Goodbye! (H) (lit. "go slowly," said to the person leaving)

སྐུ་གཞོགས་ལགས། ག་ལེར་ཕེབས་རོགས་གནང་། རྗེས་མ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། Goodbye, dear respected sir, see you next time!

ག་ལེར་བཞུགས་རོགས་གནང་། Goodbye! (H) (lit. "stay slowly," said to the person staying)

རྒན་ལགས། ག་ལེར་བཞུགས་རོགས་གནང་། སང་ཉིན་འཛིན་གྲྭ་ལ་མཇལ་ཡོང་། Goodbye, dear teacher, see you tomorrow in class! (H)

ག་ལེར་ཕེབས། Goodbye! (H) (lit. "go slowly," said to the person leaving)

ག་ལེར་ཕེབས། ལམ་ཀ་ལ་ཅག་པོ་བྱེད། Bye (H), be careful on your way!

ག་ལེར་བཞུགས། Goodbye! (H) (lit. "stay slowly," said to the person staying)

ག་ལེར་བཞུགས། སང་ཉིན་མཇལ་ཡོང་། Bye (H), I will see you tomorrow!

ཕེབས་ཨ། Bye! (informal) (said to the person leaving)

ཕེབས་ཨ། གཟབ་གཟབ་བྱེད་ཨ། Bye, take care!

བཞུགས་ཨ། Bye! (informal) (said to the person staying)

ང་འགྲོ་གི་ཡིན་ད། བཞུགས་ཨ། Bye, I'm leaving!

སྐུ་གཟུགས། body (H)

ཁོང་སྐུ་གཟུགས་ཐང་པོ་ཡོད་རེད། (S)he is healthy.

གཟུགས་པོ། body

ཁོ་གཟུགས་པོ་རིང་པོ་ཡོད་རེད། He is tall.

བདེ་པོ། well, healthy, comfortable

ཁྱེད་རང་སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས། Are you fine?

བདེ་པོ་ཨོ་ཙམ། not too bad, alright

དེང་སང་མོ་བདེ་པོ་ཨོ་ཙམ་རེད། These days, she is not bad.

བདེ་པོ་བདེ་རྒྱུང་། perfectly fine, extremely well

ཐུགས་ཆེ་གནང་། ང་ཡང་བདེ་པོ་བདེ་རྒྱུང་ཡིན། Thank you, I'm also perfectly well.

ཐུག་པ། to meet, encounter (ཐ་དད་པ་)

ཁ་སང་ཁྲོམ་ནས་ང་ང་རང་གི་གྲོགས་མོ་ཅིག་ཐུག་བྱུང་། Yesterday, I met a friend of mine at the market.

མཇལ་བ། to meet, encounter (H) (ཐ་དད་པ་)

དེ་རིང་ལམ་ཀ་ལ་ངས་ང་རང་གི་རྒན་ལགས་མཇལ་བྱུང་། Today, I met my teacher on the street. (H)

དགའ་བ། to be happy, pleased (ཐ་མི་དད་པ་)

ཁྱེད་རང་མཇལ་ནས་ང་སེམས་པ་དགའ་བྱུང་། It was my pleasure to meet you! (H)

བོད། Tibet

ང་བོད་ལ་འགྲོ་མ་སྨྱོང་། I have never been to Tibet.

བོད་སྐད། Tibetan language

ང་བོད་སྐད་སྦྱོང་གི་ཡོད། I study Tibetan language.

གལ་གནང་གི་མ་རེད། No worries, no problem, nothing to mention

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ། བཀའ་དྲིན་ཆེ། གལ་གནང་གི་མ་རེད། Thank you very much, so kind of you! No worries!

འགྲིག་གི་རེད། It's fine, it's o.k.

ངས་སྒོ་བརྒྱབ་ན་འགྲིག་གི་རེད་པས། - འགྲིག་གི་རེད། May I close the door? – It's fine.

ལགས་སོ། So it is, alright, very well (H)

ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེ་རྒན་ལགས། - ལགས་སོ། Thank you, dear teacher! – All right.

རྒྱལ་སྲས་ཞི་བ་ལྷའི་སྤྱོད་འཇུག་ལས།

**གོམས་ན་སླ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་བའི།།**

**དངོས་དེ་གང་ཡང་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།**

From Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacaryavatara*:

There is not a single thing

which does not become easier with familiarization.

Looking at the large and complex scope of this first lesson, please don't lose heart. Learning how to read and write Tibetan is just like any other skill: even though it might look difficult at first, it will become easy with habituation and practice.

### THE TWO TYPES OF TIBETAN WORDS

Before considering the technical details of the Tibetan script system, it may be helpful to share a little insight into the philosophy of Tibetan words. Some people consider Tibetan to be a "cute" language. The reason for this is that a considerable number of words have meanings that have not been given randomly. For example:

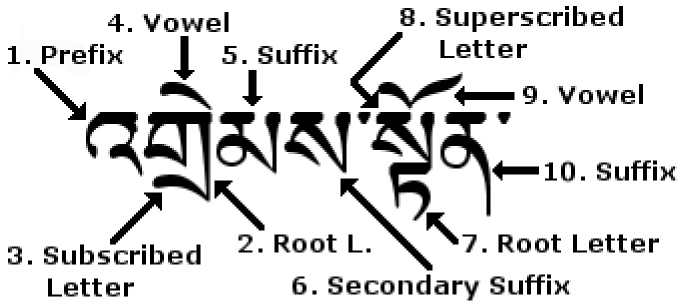
| | |
|---|---|
| གནམ་གྲུ་ | "sky ship" is an airplane |
| རྐང་འཁོར་ | "leg wheel" is a bicycle |
| གློག་ཀླད་ | "electric brain" is a computer |
| ཤྭ་ཁྲ་སྐེ་རིང་། | " short form of deer, colorful, neck-long" is a giraffe. |

Names such as these, which are given to things for a particular reason, are called རྗེས་གྲུབ་, which means "consequently given."

Names which are randomly given, however, such as ཆུ་ for water, are called འདོད་རྒྱལ་, meaning "king of (one's) wishes."

### THE PARTS OF A SYLLABLE

Every syllable within a Tibetan word consists of up to seven letters. These can have any of the functions shown in the graphic below:




Most of these letters should look familiar to you. Only the attached (i.e. subscribed) letter, the 3rd function, looks different from the way it would appear in the alphabet. Here, it is an attached ར་, which is called a ར་བཏགས།

As an aside, the word in the graphic consists of two syllables, separated by a ཚེག. It means *show* or *exhibition*. To find your way in this linguistic jungle, let's now examine each of the parts of the two syllables in the graphic, together with their functions:

| Letter | Function | Tibetan name |
|---|---|---|
| འ་ | prefix | སྔོན་འཇུག་ |
| ག་ | main letter | མིང་གཞི་ |
| ར་ | attached letter | འདོགས་ཅན་ |
| ེ | vowel | དབྱངས་ |
| མ་ | suffix | རྗེས་འཇུག་ |
| ས་ | second suffix | ཡང་འཇུག་ |
| | | |
| ས་ | head letter | མགོ་ཅན་ |
| ཏ་ | main letter | མིང་གཞི་ |
| ོ | vowel | དབྱངས་ |
| ན་ | suffix | རྗེས་འཇུག་ |

## THE FIVE PREFIXES སྔོན་འཇུག་ལྔ།

Five of the thirty consonants, གསལ་བྱེད་ can take the role of a prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག. These are all female letters.

A prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་ precedes the main letter, as indicated by its name – in both Tibetan and English. Prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་ are (mostly) mute, which means that it is important to memorize which one applies.

The **five prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་** are as follows:

**ག་ ད་ བ་ མ་ འ**

It may help you to memorize these prefixes by creating a little mnemonic, such as "**G**eorge **D**rives **B**y **M**ary **A**lways."

The sillier your sentence, the better it will stick in your mind! An interesting point for grammar enthusiasts and those who like rules: there are indigenous Tibetan grammar texts which provide lists of the prefixes which precede particular main letters, མིང་གཞི་ For precise pronunciation, it is important to know that **all** prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་ have an influence on the sound of certain main letters, མིང་གཞི། For example:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| གོ་ | (slightly aspirated): | to hear | **མགོ་** | (not aspirated): head |
| ཇ་ | (slightly aspirated): | tea | **འཇུག་** | (not aspirated): to enter |
| ད་ | (slightly aspirated ): | now | **བདག་** | (not aspirated): self |

Looking at the alphabet table, you can see that the above three letters (ག་, ཇ་, ད་) are all from the 3rd column (female letters).

**Pronunciation rule for letters of the 3rd column**
A main letter of the 3rd column loses its aspiration when it has a prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་ or a head letter, མགོ་ཅན་.
(This rule only applies for the first five rows of the alphabet.)

Prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་ also affect the sound of the 4th column (very female letters) **ང་, ཉ་, ན་, མ་** and the female letter **ཡ་**.

**Pronunciation rule for letters of the 4th column**
A main letter of the 4th column which takes a prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་ or a head-letter changes from *low* to *high* tone:
(This rule also applies only for the first five rows of the alphabet.)

For example:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ཡར་ | (low tone): | upwards | **གཡག་** | (high tone): yak |
| ནང་ | (low tone): | house, home | **གནང་** | (high tone) : to do (H) |
| ཉལ་ | (low tone): | to sleep | **གཉིས་** | (high tone): two |

**Pronunciation rule for letters of the 1st and 2nd columns**
If a prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་ precedes a letter of the 1st or 2nd column, i.e. the male and neutral letters, the sound of the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ is **unaffected**.

Examples for 1st and 2nd columns:

- བཀའ་མོལ་: speech (H) Main letter, མིང་གཞི་ "ཀ་" is from 1st column. This ཀ་ is pronounced in exactly the same way as in the word ཀ་བ་ (pillar), where it does not have any prefix.
- ནམ་མཁའ་: sky. Main letter, མིང་གཞི་ **"ཁ་"** is from 2nd column (neutral letters). The ཁ་ in this word is pronounced in exactly the same way as in the word ཁ་ (mouth), where it does not have any prefix.
- **མཚོ་:** lake. Main letter, མིང་གཞི་ **"ཚོ་"** is from 2nd column (neutral letters). This letter ཚོ་ sounds exactly the same as in the syllable ཚོ་ (plural marker) In summary, it seems that only female and very female letters are affected by the prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག

As stated previously, the prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་ are **mostly silent**. There are a few exceptions where they are pronounced. For example:

- **བློ་བཟང་:** sometimes pronounced "Lo**b**sang" rather than "Losang"
- ***ཨ་མདོ་:** pronounced "Amdo" rather than "Ado" (an Eastern province of Tibet).*

## The Ten Suffixes and Two Second Suffixes རྗེས་འཇུག་བཅུ་དང་། ཡང་འཇུག་གཉིས།

a) **The ten suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་བཅུ་**

Ten of the thirty vowels, གསལ་བྱེད་ can take the role of a suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་, namely a letter following the main letter.་These ten are:

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | ག | ང |
| | | ད | ན |
| | | བ | མ |
| | | འ | |
| ར | ལ | | ས |

An interesting thought for those who prefer philosophy to mere rules: All suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ are either female, very female or barren! The ten suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ follow after any of the main letters, མིང་གཞི་ and are pronounced without their inherent "a" sound. For example:

ལག་པ་ (pronounced *lag pa*): hand
ལེན་པ་ (*len pa*): to take
ནང་པ་ (pronounced *nang pa*): buddhist
ཁབ་ (*khab*): needle
ཡིན་ ( pronounced: *yin*): am
ཁམ་བུ་ (*kham bu*): peach

There is no need to memorize these suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་, as you will become accustomed to them by seeing and hearing them in every word that you read, say and write!

**Effect of the ten suffixes on pronunciation**

The following rules are extremely important for correct pronunciation:

**ད་ and ས་**

The རྗེས་འཇུག་ (suffixes) **ད་** and **ས་** are **mute** but give an "umlaut" sound to two of the vowels, དབྱངས་, namely the **"o"** and **"u"**. (Note: in this context, according to Tibetan thinking, the inherent "a" sound does not count as a vowel, and neither do the two letters འ་and ཨ་.)

For non-German-speakers, "umlaut" means the following: (inherent) "a" becomes *ä*, so that **ངས་** is pronounced ***ngä*** (by me).

ན་རོ་ "o" becomes *ö*, so that གནོད་པ་ becomes ***nö** pa* (harm).
ཞབས་ཀྱུ་ "u" becomes *ü*, so that **དུས་** becomes ***dhü**[i]* (time).

**Note:** the sounds of both the གི་གུ་, "i" and འགྲེང་པོ་, "e" are unaffected by the two རྗེས་འཇུག་ (suffixes), ད་ and ས་. For example:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ཁྱེད་རང་ | is pronounced | *khyed rang* : | you |
| གནམ་གཤིས་ | is pronounced | *nam shis* : | weather |

**ན་ and ལ་**

The རྗེས་འཇུག་ (suffixes) ན་ and ལ་ are **pronounced** but also give an umlaut sound to the two vowels ན་རོ་ "o" and ཞབས་ཀྱུ་ "u" and to the inherent "a" sound. For example:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| སྨན་ | is pronounced | *män*: | medicine |
| སྒལ་པ་ | is pronounced | *gäl pa*: | back |
| བཞོན་པ་ | is pronounced | *zhön pa*: | to ride |
| སྐོལ་བ་ | is pronounced | *köl ba*: | to boil |
| བདུན་ | is pronounced | *dün*: | seven |
| སྐུལ་མ་ | is pronounced | *kül ma*: | encouragement |

**For grammar enthusiasts:**

The suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ are also subdivided into male ཕོ་, female མོ and neutral མ་ནིང་:

| **gender རྟགས་** | **suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་** | **example དཔེ་** |
|---|---|---|
| Male: ཕོ་ | ག་ད་བ་ས་ | སྒྲིགས། སྐད། སྒྲིབས། དུས། |
| Neutral: མ་ནིང་ | ན་ར་ལ་ | དཀོན། སྒྲོར། བསྐུལ། |
| Female: མོ་ | ང་མ་འ་ | རྐང་། བཀྲམ། དགའ། |

Knowing these classifications will help you to learn spelling more easily because suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ always determine the same gender in the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ of the following syllable.

Male suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ draw male main letters (of the next syllable):

དགག་པ། ཚོད་པ། སྒྲུབ་པ།

Male suffixes ག་ད་ and བ་ draw main letter **པ་,** which is male – ཕོ་.

Neutral suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ draw neutral letters (of the next syllable):

དགུན་ཁ། གསེར་ཁ། སྐོལ་ཁ།

Neutral suffixes ན་ར་ and ལ་ draw main letter **ཁ,** which is neutral – མ་ནིང་.

Female suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་ draw female letters (of the next syllable):

བྱང་མ། དགའ་མ། དམ་ག

Female suffixes ང་འ་ and མ་ draw main letters **མ་** and **ག་,** which are female – མོ་.

b) **The second suffixes, ཡང་འཇུག་**

ཡང་ in Tibetan means *again* or *also*, and thus a ཡང་འཇུག་ is *also and again* a suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་ - meaning a *second suffix.*

The second suffix. ཡང་འཇུག་ is added after the first suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་ and is mute. It therefore does not have any (notable) effect on the pronunciation of the word. There are two second suffixes, ས་ and ད་, but in spoken Tibetan only ས་ is used. For example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ཁམས་** | pronounced: *kham* | realm, Kham |
| | ཁ་ is the main letter མིང་གཞི་ | |
| | མ་ is the suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་ | |
| | ས་ is the second suffix ཡང་འཇུག་ . | |
| གྲོག**ས་**པོ་ | pronounced: *drog po* | friend |
| ལུག**ས་**སྲོལ་ | pronounced: *lug söl* | tradition |

## THE THREE HEAD (SUPERSCRIBED) LETTERS, མགོ་ཅན་གསུམ།

Three of the thirty consonants, གསལ་བྱེད་ can appear at the head, མགོ་ཅན་ of the main letter, མིང་གཞི་*.* The word མགོ་ means *head.* These three letters are ར་*,* ལ་ and ས་*.* When superscribed in this way, they are called: ར་མགོ་, ལ་མགོ་ and ས་མགོ་.

As for the sound, head letters, མགོ་ཅན་ are silent like the prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་ and have the same effect on the letters (of the first five rows) of the 3rd and 4th column. They thus remove the aspiration from column 3 and convert the letters of column 4 to high tone. For example:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ང་ | (low tone): | I, me | **ལྔ་** | (high tone): | five |
| ན་ | (low tone): | to be sick | **རྣ་** | (high tone): | ear |
| གོ་ | (slightly aspirated): | to hear | **སྒོ་** | (non aspirated): | door |

The following lists indicate which main letters མིང་གཞི་ can be superscribed by the three head-letters:

### The Twelve ར་མགོ་ Combinations

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| རྐ་ | | རྒ་ | རྔ་ |
| | | རྗ་ | རྙ་ |
| རྟ་ | | རྡ་ | རྣ་ |
| | | རྦ་ | རྨ་ |
| རྩ་ | | རྫ་ | |

Incidentally, you have just learned another few Tibetan words:

རྒ་ : old age, རྔ་ : drum, རྟ་ : horse, རྣ་ : ear,
རྩ་ : nerve, channel, རྨ་ : wound, sore, རྫ་ : pottery.

However, most words are more complex than this, as illustrated by the following rules and examples:

**Rule:**

**Main letters མིང་གཞི་** may also have
**prefixes སྔོན་འཇུག་**, **suffixes རྗེས་འཇུག་** and **vowels དབྱངས་,**
even when they already have
**head letters མགོ་ཅན་** and **attached letters འདོགས་ཅན་**

For example:

**རྐང་པ་:** leg, foot
**ར་མགོ་** + main letter with suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་
**རྫོགས་པ་:** to run out, to be exhausted, to be finished
**ར་མགོ་** + main letter with suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་, second suffix ཡང་འཇུག་ and vowel དབྱངས་
**བརྟག་དཔྱད་:** analysis, investigation
**ར་མགོ་ + main letter with prefix སྔོན་འཇུག་ + suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་**

## The Ten ལ་མགོ་ combinations

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ལྐ་ | | ལྒ་ | ལྔ་ |
| ལྕ་ | | ལྗ་ | |
| ལྟ་ | | ལྡ་ | |
| ལྤ་ | | ལྦ་ | |
| ལྷ་ | | | |

(The letters are presented here in the order in which they appear in the alphabet, so that you can become accustomed to their groupings and genders. In this way, the rules make more sense.) The above rule (in the box) applies for *all* head letters, མགོ་ཅན་ and attached letters, འདོགས་ཅན།

Examples of ལ་མགོ་:

| | |
|---|---|
| ལྷ་ས་: | Lhasa [lit. place of god(s)] This pronunciation is an exception, the *ལ་མགོ་* here is *pronounced* – together with the *ཏ་*. |
| ལྡན་པ་: | to be endowed with, to have |
| བལྟས་པ་: | looked, watched (past tense of *to look*) |
| ཡུལ་ལྗོངས་: | landscape, scenery |

**The Eleven ས་མགོ་ combinations**

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| སྐ་ | | སྒ་ | སྔ་ |
| | | | སྙ་ |
| སྟ་ | | སྡ་ | སྣ་ |
| སྤ་ | | སྦ་ | སྨ་ |
| སྩ་ | | | |

Examples of ས་མགོ་:

| | |
|---|---|
| བསྟན་པ་: | teaching (religious), person’s name, to teach/show |
| སྙན་པོ་: | pleasant to hear, interesting |
| སྨོན་ལམ་: | prayer, aspiration prayer |

**Importance of correct spelling:**

Even though you are only in Lesson 1, you have already seen three words which sound quite similar:

| | |
|---|---|
| **གོ་** | to hear |
| **མགོ་** | head |
| **སྒོ་** | door |

You will soon be meeting a few more:

| | |
|---|---|
| **འགོ་**བཙུགས་ | to start |
| དགོས་ | to must, want, need, have to |

Thus you can see that correct spelling in Tibetan is important for correct pronunciation.

## THE FOUR ATTACHED (SUBSCRIBED) LETTERS འདོགས་ཅན་བཞི།

### a) The Seven Attached ཡ་ Letters ཡ་བཏགས་ བདུན་།

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ཀྱ་ | ཁྱ་ | གྱ་ | |
| པྱ་ | ཕྱ་ | བྱ་ | མྱ་ |
| | | | |

**Note:** some rows in the above table have been omitted because none of their consonants have an attached ཡ་.

It is useful to keep the same order, though, because it helps you to remember the correct pronunciation.

The 1st row in the above table is straightforward: the sounds of the letters remain the same, with just a ཡ་ added: ཀྱ་ is pronounced: *kya*, ཁྱ་ is pronounced: *khya,* གྱ་ is pronounced: *ghya.*

The sounds of the 2nd row in the above table (པྱ་, ཕྱ་, བྱ་, མྱ་) become different, however. They no longer have the sound of the main letter, མིང་གཞི་, namely པ་,ཕ་,བ་,མ་. Instead, they take on the sounds of the *actual* second row of the alphabet, namely ཅ་,ཆ་,ཇ་,ཉ་:

པྱ་ becomes ཅ་ (sound)
ཕྱ་ becomes ཆ་ (sound)
བྱ་ becomes ཇ་ (sound)
མྱ་ becomes ཉ་ (sound)

**Rule:**

**Main letters, མིང་གཞི་**
which have an **attached letter, འདོགས་ཅན་**
may also come in combination with any of the following:

**head letters, མགོ་ཅན་,**
**vowel, དབྱངས་,**
**prefixes, སྔོན་འཇུག་,**
**suffixes, རྗེས་འཇུག་.**

For example:

- **བརྒྱ་**: a hundred
  **This is an example of ཡ་བཏགས་** in a word which has: prefix སྔོན་འཇུག་ + head letter མགོ་ཅན་ + attached letter འདོགས་ཅན་.

- **ཕྱོགས་**: direction, side
  **This is an example of ཡ་བཏགས་** in a word which has: vowel དབྱངས་ + suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་ + second suffix ཡང་འཇུག་.

- **འཁྱགས་པ་**: ice
  **This is an example of ཡ་བཏགས་** in a word which has: prefix སྔོན་འཇུག་ + suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་ + second suffix ཡང་འཇུག་.

**Pronunciation**

**Note:** Although the *tone* will change with the presence or absence of a prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་ or head letter, མགོ་ཅན་, the effect of these on the actual *sound* of the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ will always be the same. This applies whether or not there is also an attached letter, འདོགས་ཅན་. (Refer back to point 3 of this lesson.) For example:

**གྱོན་** is pronounced ***ghyön***: to wear
**བརྒྱ་** is pronounced ***gya***: a hundred

**b) The Thirteen Attached (Subscribed) ར་ Letters – ར་བཏགས་བཅུ་གསུམ།**

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ཀྲ་ | ཁྲ་ | གྲ་ | |
| ཏྲ་ | ཐྲ་ | དྲ་ | ནྲ་ |
| པྲ་ | ཕྲ་ | བྲ་ | མྲ་ |
| | | | སྲ་ |
| ཧྲ་ | | | |

In the case of the attached ར་, the ར་བཏགས་, the pronunciation is a bit tricky.

- When it is attached to the main letters of the 1st row (ཀ་,ཁ་,ག་), 2nd row (ཏ་,ཐ་,ད་) and 3rd row (པ་,ཕ་,བ་), the same unusual sound is produced. For example: ཀྲ་ sounds the same as ཏྲ་ which sounds the same as པྲ་.
- The sounds of the letters ན་, མ་ and ས་ remain unaffected by the ར་བཏགས་. However, it changes their low tone into high tone.

In terms of pronunciation, it is difficult to express these sounds by means of the English alphabet. It is best just to train with native speakers.

One could say that the sounds of the three columns are quite like “tra”, “thra” (aspirated, not the English “th” sound) and “dra”, respectively. The letter ཧྲ་ almost has a bit of a “sh” sound. Examples of ར་བཏགས་:

| | |
|---|---|
| སྐྲ་: | hair |
| གྲོགས་མོ་: | female friend |
| ངོ་སྤྲོད་བྱེད་པ་: | to introduce |

**c) The Six Attached (Subscribed) ལ་ Letters – ལ་བཏགས་དྲུག**

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ཀླ་ | | གླ་ | |
| | | བླ་ | |
| | ཟླ་ | | |
| རླ་ | | | སླ་ |

These are all pronounced with a high tone ལ་ sound, except for the **ཟླ་: This letter combination is an exception and is pronounced *da*.** For example: ཟླ་བ་ is pronounced *dawa* (moon, month, name of a person). Examples of ལ་བཏགས་:

| | |
|---|---|
| ཀླད་པ་: | brain |
| གློག་བརྙན་: | movie, film |
| རླུང་: | wind, air |

**Exceptions:**

**བ་:** When combined with a prefix ད་ OR when appearing as the second or third syllable of a word, it is pronounced (ཝ་) *wa.* For example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **དབང་** | *wang*: | empowerment |
| ཨ་རི་**བ་** | *Ariwa*: | American |
| རྒྱ་གར་**བ་** | *Gyagarwa*: | Indian |
| ཟླ་**བ་** | *Dawa* | Dawa, moon, month |

When: བ་ is the first syllable of a word or a suffix, then it is pronounced *ba*. For example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **བུ**་མོ་: | *bumo* | girl |
| **བ**་ཕྱུགས་: | *bachug* | cow |
| **བག་ལེབ་:** | *bagleb* | bread |

When there is a combination of prefix ད་, main letter བ་ + vowel or subscribed letter, only the vowel and/or subscribed letter are pronounced. **For example**:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ད**བྱིན་ཇི་ | *inji* | foreigner (lit. British) |
| འཇམ་**ད**བྱངས་ | *Jamyang* | sweet sound, Manjushri |

**d) The Thirteen Wasur Letters – ཝ་ཟུར་བཅུ་གསུམ།**

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ཀྭ | ཁྭ | གྭ | |
| | | | ཉྭ་ |
| | | དྭ་ | |
| ཙྭ་ | ཚྭ་ | | |
| ཞྭ་ | ཟྭ་ | | |
| རྭ་ | ལྭ་ | ཤྭ་ | |
| ཧྭ་ | | | |

The ཝ་ཟུར་ does not affect the sound of the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ in any way. Why is it there, then? In some cases it helps to indicate which is the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ or to distinguish two words with same sound but different meaning. For example:

**དངས་** This syllable has two possibilities of pronunciation:

**དངས་**
ད་ is the prefix སྔོན་འཇུག་
ང་ is the main letter མིང་གཞི་
ས་ is the suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་
In this case, it would be pronounced *ngä.*

**OR: དྭངས་**
ད་ is the main letter མིང་གཞི་
ང་ is the suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་
ས་ is the second suffix ཡང་འཇུག་
In this case, it is pronounced *dang* – (the correct pronunciation)

Thus, in order to recognize the main letter མིང་གཞི་within a syllable*,* a ཝ་ཟུར་ is added. Now there is no more ambiguity about which is the main letter: དྭངས་. Here are some examples of two words with the same sound where the presence of a ཝ་ཟུར་ changes the meaning:

| | |
|---|---|
| རྩྭ་: grass | རྩ་: vein, channel |
| ཚྭ་: salt | ཚ་: heat |
| ཉྭ་: calf (of the leg) | ཉ་ : fish |

**Note:** Any of the attached letters can **only** be attached to a main letter མིང་གཞི, never to a prefix སྔོན་འཇུག་ or suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་ However, the ལ་བཏགས་ can be added to an attached ར་བཏགས་, as in the following example: སློབ་གྲྭ་: school

## How to identify the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ of a syllable

The first step in being able to read is to identify the main letter མིང་གཞི་ of a syllable. There are a few rules and clues, as follows:

a) Whichever letter has a vowel དབྱངས་, head letter མགོ་ཅན་ or attached letter འདོགས་ཅན་ *MUST* be the main letter **མིང་གཞི་.** For example:

**མེ་ཏོག་ :** flower

མ་ and ཏ་ each have a vowel དབྱངས་ and are both main letters, མིང་གཞི་.

b) Whenever there are only two letters and no vowel, དབྱངས་, then the first is the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ and the second is the suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་. For example:

**དང་** : and     ད་ is the main letter, མིང་གཞི་ , ང་ is the suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་ .

c) Whenever there are three letters, the middle one is normally the main letter, མིང་གཞི་. For example:

བཀའ་: speech     བ་ is the prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་,
ཀ་ is the main letter, མིང་གཞི་,
འ་ is the suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་.

d) When the final letter is the ཡང་འཇུག་ (second suffix), ས་, then the first letter is the main letter, མིང་གཞི , the second the suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་ and the third the second suffix, ཡང་འཇུག. For example:

**གངས་:** snow     ག་ is the main letter མིང་གཞི་, ང་ is the suffix རྗེས་འཇུག་, ས is the second suffix ཡང་འཇུག་.

e) When there are *four* letters in a syllable written one *after* the other, the second is the main letter, མིང་གཞི་. This is because there is no third suffix. For example:

**བསགས་པ་**: accumulated     བ་ is the prefix, སྔོན་འཇུག་,
ས་ is the main letter, མིང་གཞི་,
ག་ is the suffix, རྗེས་འཇུག་,
**ས** is the second suffix, ཡང་**འཇུག་**

## HOW TO SPELL ALOUD IN TIBETAN – སྦྱོར་ཀློག་

བསྒྲུབ་པར་ཤོག་ = bao-sa-ga-tag-ga-ra-tag-dra-zhab-kyu-dru-ba-drub
pa-ra-par sha-na-ro-sho-ga-shog

The above line may sound strange and like a riddle or word play. However, it is actually a commonly used sounding-aloud spelling system.

Becoming quick in this skill is not only fun but also extremely useful. Perhaps you have already heard native speakers doing it. Whenever there seems to be slight confusion about whether the person addressed understands the term correctly, (educated) Tibetans will spell out the word.

Because the syllables are more complex than in other languages, the Tibetans have developed a special system. It is actually quite similar to Wylie. They also go letter by letter through the syllable, starting from the prefix, then head letters if any, then main letter, etc.

### The sounding rules:

### Only one letter

Main letter is sounded with its inherent "a".

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ཉ་ | fish | "nya" |
| ཇ་ | tea | "ja" |
| ལ་ | mountain pass | "la" |

### Main letter + vowel

Main letter is sounded with its inherent "a" and then the name of the vowel.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| བུ་ | boy | "bu-shubkyu bu" |
| ཉོ་ | to buy | "nya-naro nyo" |
| ཆུ་ | water | "chha-shabkyu chu" |

### Main letter + suffix

Each letter is sounded separately (with inherent "a") and then they are sounded together. (If there is a vowel, the inherent "a" sound of the main letter is in the end replaced by the sound of the vowel.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| དང་པོ་ | first | "dha-nga-dhang p**a**-naro-p**o** dang po" |
| ནང་ | house, home | "na-nga nang" |
| ནག་པོ་ | black | "na-ga-nag pa-naro-po nag po" |

**Main letter + suffix + second suffix**

First, each letter is sounded separately (with inherent "a") and then all are sounded together. Remember that the second suffix is mute.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ཁམས་ | realm, Kham | "kha-ma-sa   kham" |
| རོགས་པ་ | companion | "ra-naro-ro-ga-sa   rog pa" |

**Prefix + main letter**

Sound out the prefix + "o", the main letter, the vowel, then the sound of the whole word (prefix is mute).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| མགོ་ | head | "ma**o**-ga-naro   go" |

**Prefix + main letter + suffix**

Sound out the prefix + "o", the main letter, the vowel (if any), the main letter + vowel, the suffix, then the sound of the whole word.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| དགའ་ | to like | "dha**o**-ga-a   ga": |
| གཏོང་ | to send | "ghao-ta-naro-to-nga   tong" |
| དཀའ་ལས་ | hardship, fatigue | "dhao-ka-a-ka  la-sa-le   ka le" |

**Head letter + main letter + vowel + suffix**

Sound out the head letter, the main letter + ta, (**བཏགས་** means "attached") then the sound of these two together, then vowel, main-letter + vowel, suffix, then finally the whole word.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| འཇིག་རྟེན་ | world | a**o**-ja-kiku-ji-ga-jig  ra-ta**ta**-ta-dengbo-te-na-ten   jig ten" |
| རླུང་འཁོར་ : | ventilator (lit. wind wheel) | ra-la**ta**-la-shabkyu-lu-nga-lung  a**o**-kha-naro-kho-ra-khor   lung khor |

**Head and/or attached letters + main letter**

Same system as above, with ***ta*** also added to the attached letter.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| རྒྱུ་མཚན་ | reason | ra-ga**ta**-ga-ya**ta**-gya-shabkyu-gyu  ma**o**-tsha-na-tshen   gyum tshen |

**If there are prefixes, second suffixes, etc.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| སངས་རྒྱས་ | *Buddha* | sa-nga-sa-sang  ra-gata-ga-yata-gya-sa-gye   san gye |
| ཕྱི་ལོགས་ | outside | pha-yata-chha-kikou-chhi  la-naro-lo-ga-sa-log   chhi log |
| མཆོད་རྟེན་ | *stupa* | mao-chha-naro-chö-da-chhö ra-tata-ta-dengo-te-na-ten chhö ten |

## Punctuation

Since this is a colloquial textbook, only the main rules of punctuation are briefly introduced here. These are not the same rules as used in literary Tibetan, where there are also particular particles used for punctuation.

The purpose of writing these simple rules here is for the student to know where to stop and raise or lower one's voice.

## Punctuation Symbols

There is the inter-syllabic point ་ (ཚེག་), the perpendicular stroke ། (ཤད་ or ཚེག་ཤད་) and the double stroke: །། (ཉིས་ཤད་). As the name tells, the ཚེག་ is placed between two syllables and also words as there is no space between them.

A ཤད་ marks the end of a phrase or sentence and the ཉིས་ཤད་ is placed at the end of a verse. Before the ཤད་, there is no ཚེག་ needed. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས། | Hello! |
| ཁྱེད་རང་སྐུ་གཟུགས་བདེ་པོ་ཡིན་པས། | How are you? |
| གལ་ཏེ་བཅོས་སུ་ཡོད་ན་ནི།། | |
| དེ་ལ་མི་དགའ་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡོད།། | If it can be solved, / why worry? |

## Exceptions

There are two exceptions to the above rule:

1. When the last letter of a phrase or sentence is a plain letter ག་ no ཤད་ is used. For example:

   ཁྱེད་རང་ག་རེ་འཐུང་**ག** = What are you going to drink?

   The rule does not apply when the ག་ has a vowel or subscribed letter. For example:

   གཟིམ་འཇགས་གནང་**གོ**།། = Good night
   སློབ་**གྲྭ**། = School

2. The second exception is the letter ང་. When it stays alone at the end of a phrase or sentence, there is a ཚེག་ placed before the ཤད་. For example:

   སྐྱིད་པོ་བྱུང་**ང་**། = It was fun, wasn't it?
   ཧ་གོ་སོང་**ང་**། = You understood, right?

   It is said that if the ཤད་ was directly attached to the ང it might look like the letter ད
   Judge yourself: ང། …This probably depends on one's handwriting skills… ☺

**Test Yourself at the End of this Lesson:**

- Am I able to ask & answer name, country of origin, state of well-being and destination in different registers of politeness?
- Am I able to analyze the sounds of certain syllables, which I mispronounced?
- Am I able to experience, recall and share a moment of realizing that I can do something which seemed impossible two weeks ago?

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i (H) stands for 'Honorific' - a language register used for *others* to express one's respect towards them. (h), which is not very common, stands for 'humilific' - a language register mostly used for *oneself* to express one's humbleness.

ii Saying "dhü" here is not Wylie, but a type of phonetic - to remind you that the 3rd column letter ད་ is slightly aspirated when it has neither head letter nor prefix.