

Lesson 4

The verb system: general remarks – root and stem – perfective past – dative case – sociative case

The verb system of Classical Newari is marked by a twofold distinction for tense (past/non-past); in the past tense, the category of aspect (perfective/stative) is also morphologically marked, though not in the non-past. Generally speaking, temporal deixis is relatively weak, and aspect marking takes precedent over tense marking. 33

There are no conjugated forms in the sense that verb forms are generally not marked for person and/or number. There is, however, a fundamental morphological distinction between verb forms that are open to case marking and forms that are not; in this coursebook, these latter will be referred to as “finite”, the former as “participial”. 34

Verb forms can further be distinguished by their syntactic properties: Only certain forms can be the head of a non-subordinated VP. In addition to the finite forms *perfective past*, *imperative*, and *non-past*, this slot can also be filled by the *stative participle*, the *perfective participle*, and the *verb noun*. There is, in fact, a growing tendency to substitute the two latter forms for the respective finite forms in declarative sentences with first person reference, and in interrogative sentences with second person reference. This is the prehistory, so to speak, of the conjunct/disjunct system of Modern Newari, where verbs in the past and in the non-past are generally expressed with conjunct forms whenever (a) the action is controllable or intentional, and (b) the subject/agent and the evidential source are identical – which is typically the case with the first person in declarative, and with the second person in interrogative sentences. 35

Tab. 7: Conjunct and disjunct forms in Modern Newari

	<i>Controllable action verbs</i>			<i>Non-controllable action verbs</i>		
	<i>1st pers.</i>	<i>2nd pers.</i>	<i>3rd pers.</i>	<i>1st pers.</i>	<i>2nd pers.</i>	<i>3rd pers.</i>
<i>Declarative</i>	conjunct	disjunct	disjunct	disjunct	disjunct	disjunct
<i>Interrogative</i>	disjunct	conjunct	disjunct	disjunct	disjunct	disjunct

Tab. 8: Classical Newari functional equivalents of the conjunct and disjunct forms

	Conjunct		Disjunct	
	Modern Newari	Classical Newari	Modern Newari	Classical Newari
Past	past conjunct	perfective participle	past disjunct	perfective past, stative participle
Non-past	future conjunct	verb noun	future disjunct	non-past

In Classical Newari, this system is not yet fully established: The cognate forms of the conjunct forms in Modern Newari are frequently found in slots where the disjunct forms would be expected. Significantly, the distinction between controlled and non-controlled verbs seems not to be consistently observed in Classical Newari in this context.

- 36 **“Root” and “Stem”**. Classical Newari verbs can be grouped into four classes depending on their morphological properties; causatives and denominatives, which will be discussed later, constitute a fifth class. Roots generally have the structure $C_1(g)VC_2$, with $C_2 = \mathbf{n, t, l}$. Verbs of Class I end in **-n**, verbs of Class II in **-t**, and verbs of Classes III and IV in **-l**. Stems are formed from the root by triple gradation. The difference between Classes III and IV is the behaviour of root-final **-l**: in verbs of Class III, it is elided in the zero grade stem, whereas in verbs of Class IV, it is retained.

NB – The slot C1 can be filled not only by the glide phonemes /y/ and /w/ before /ā/, but also by the phonetic on-glide of the vowels /e/ [e] and /o/ [o]. In verb roots, vocalic onset is otherwise not permitted.

Tab. 9: Gradation of verb stems

	I	II	III	IV
Zero grade	kha- (khañ-)	yā- (yāk- , yāy- ,	ju- (juy-)	māl-
1 st grade	khan-	yāñ-)	jul-	māl-
2 nd grade	khana-	yāt-	jula-	māla-
	“see”	“do, make”	“become”	“be necessary”

NB – This system is the result of relatively recent changes in the *auslaut* of Old Newari roots; as late as the 16th century, many Class I verb roots ended in **-ñ** or **-j**, and Class II contains several roots with an original final consonant **-c** (Details in KANSAKAR 2005). The latter resurfaces in the older forms

of the causative (see below), and possibly in the allomorphs of the zero grade stem. There is also a number of verbs that follow the pattern of Class II in some forms, and that of Class III in others; the Class I verb **mhane** “to dream” likewise has some forms belonging to Class III.

In addition to these, there is a fourth grade of the stem, which we will here refer to as the extended stem. It is formed by adding {-**ñā**} to the second grade stem. The extended stem behaves morphologically like a participle insofar as it is open to case marking, but does not take tense or aspect markers. It does not seem to occur in isolation (or rather: with absolutive case marking), but only with the ergative/instrumental, locative, and sociative case markers; the functions of these forms will be discussed in due course. 37

The perfective past tense. This is formed by adding the formant {-**ā**} (varr. {-**a**}, {-**o**}; dialectal variant {-**ā**}, Bhp.) to the first grade of the stem. It is generally used with past reference for completed actions. It is by far the predominant form in narrative texts, but as the cognate of the past disjunct form of Modern Newari, it is not generally used with the first person in declarative, or with the second person in interrogative sentences. 38

I	II	III	IV
khan-ā	yāt-ā	jul-ā	māl-ā
khan-a	yāt-a	jul-a	māl-a
khan-o	yāt-o	jul-o	māl-o
“saw”	“did”	“became”	“was necessary”

NB – The variance has been interpreted as a remnant of Proto-Newari personal endings; according to Jørgensen, the form in {-**o**} tends to be used with first and second person subjects, but the data from the NVP does not support this assumption. On the whole, the forms in {-**a**} and {-**o**} are relatively rare with the exception of **julo**, which is the standard form of **juye** as perfective auxiliary – see below, § 152.

For the first person in declarative sentences and the second person in interrogative sentences, the perfective participle (the cognate of the past conjunct form of Modern Newari) is regularly substituted for the (finite) perfective past. It is formed by adding {-**ā**} to the zero grade of the stem (allomorphs in **-ñ** and **-y** in Classes I, II and III respectively). 39

I	II	III	IV
khañ-ā “saw”	yāñ-ā “did”	juy-ā “became”	māl-ā “was necessary”

NB – More often than not, the personal pronoun is left unexpressed in conjunct contexts.

(4.1) कन्दर्प नाम बनियाव विवाहा यातं ।

kandarpa nām baniyā-wo bibāhā-Øyāt-ā.

“(She) got married to a merchant by the name of Kandarpa.”*

(4.2) थनी तुनी विवाहा याडा ।

thani tuni bibāhā-Øyāñ-ā.

“Only today have (I) married (her).”

(4.3) अरे रे मृतक छाडान था वया ।

are re mṛtaka-Ø, chāñān thā woy-ā?

“Hey corpse, why (have you) gone up?”

40 **Dative case:** The dative case marker {-tā} (frequent variants: {-tā}, {-ta}) is not usually found with inanimate nouns; with animate nouns, it is added to the genitive case marker. With 1st and 2nd person pronouns, it is added directly to the stem – again with the exception of **chalpol**. In the plural, the dative case marker is only attested for animate/honorific nouns.

(che-tā) “for the house”	rājā-yā-tā “for the king”	rājā-pani-s-tā “for the kings”	je-tā “for me”
khicā-yā-tā “for the dog”	thwo-yā-tā “for him/her/it”	thwo-pani-s-tā “for them”	je-mi-s-tā “for us”

The primary function of the dative case is to mark the third argument, e.g. the receiver of something given:

* For the sociative case marker {-wo} see below, § 41.

(4.4) कापालिकन राजायातं आशिर्वाद बिलं ।

kāpālika-n rājā-yātā āśīrbāda-Ø bil-ā.

“The kāpālika (gave a blessing to=) blessed *the king*.”

(4.5) छ क्षणस बिष छुडा पक्कण मंत्रिपुत्रयातं बिस्य हरं ।

cha kṣaṇa-s biṣa-Ø chuṅ-ā pakwān-Ø mantriputra-yātā bi-sē hal-ā.

“Once, (she) gave *the minister’s son* a dish that was laced with poison.”

Sociative case: This case seems to be largely restricted to animate nouns (non-honorific: singular, honorific: singular and plural) and 1st and 2nd person pronouns; the marker {-wo} (mostly spelt <va>, sometimes <vo>, in younger MSS predominantly <o>) is added directly to the stem – with the exception of the plural of animate/honorific nouns and of pronouns, where it is added to the genitive case marker. In most instances, its function corresponds to that of the English preposition “(together) with”.

(che-wo) “with the house”	rājā-wo “with the king”	rājā-pani-s(a)-wo “with the kings”	je-wo “with me”
khicā-wo “with the dog”	thwo-wo “with him/her/it”	thwo-pani-s(a)-wo “with them”	je-mi-s(a)-wo “with us”

NB – With inanimate nouns, the sociative case marker usually only occurs with the postposition **tule** <tulya> “equal to”; see below.

(4.6) कन्दर्प नाम बनियाव विवाहा यातं ।

kandarpa nām baniyā-wo bibāhā-Ø yāt-ā.

“(She) got married *to a merchant* by the name of Kandarpa.”

(4.7) हे रावण्यवती । छ सावित्रिव तुल्य ।

he lāvaṇyavatī-Ø, cha sāvitṛī-wo tule.

“O Lāvāṇyavatī, you are like *unto Sāvitrī!*”

Exercise 4

Translate the following sentences.

- 1) लास चौलव नपा लातं ।
lās caurawo napā lātā.
- 2) छन्हुया दीनस दैवयोगन चन्दनपुर नाम नगर थेनं ।
chanhuyā dinas daibayogan candanapura nām nagara thenā.
- 3) लिथे कन्दर्प नाम बनियाव सुदिन कुन्हु विवाहा यातं ।
liṭhē kandarpa nām baniyāwo sudina kunhu bibāhā yātā.
- 4) कापालिकन हर्षमानन राजाया स्तुति यातं ।
kāpālikan harṣamānan rājāyā stuti yātā.
- 5) जेन समस्त खां सेया खङ्गविद्यां सया ।
jen samasta khā seyā, khaḍgabidyā sayā.
- 6) छन्हुया क्षनस राजपुत्रन थ्व सुकयात प्रस्र यातं ।
chanhuyā kṣaṇas rājaputran thwo śukayātā prasna yātā.

Notes

- 1) the subject of this sentence is not expressed; translate “she”; **lā** is the Bhp. cognate of **lā** “way, road”.
- 2) **daibayoga-n**: the ergative case marker here functions as adverbial formant; again, the subject is not expressed; translate “he”.
- 3) subject: “she”.
- 5) **khā** (**khā-ā**), **khaḍgabidyā** (**°bidyā-ā**): for the emphatic clitic {-ā}, see § 74 below; **khā** is the Bhp. cognate of **khā** “speech, story; thing said”.

The nominal morphology of Classical Newari can be summarised as in the tables below; rare forms have been given in brackets, unattested forms are indicated by n.t. Cases where the marker is added directly to the stem have been referred to as ‘primary’, where it is tagged onto the genitive case marker, as ‘secondary’ cases. Note that not all variants mentioned in lessons 3 and 4 have been included in the tables. 42

Tab. 10: Inanimate nouns: che (var. chē) “house”

	primary	secondary
ABS	che-∅	
INSTR	che-n	
GEN	che-yā	
DAT		(che-yātā)
LOC	che-s	
SOC	che-wo	

Tab. 11: Animate/non-honorific nouns: khicā “dog”

	Singular		Plural	
	primary	secondary	primary	secondary
ABS	khicā-∅		khicā-ta-∅	
ERG	khicā-n		khicā-ta-sē	
GEN	khicā-yā		khicā-ta-s	
DAT		khicā-yā-tā	n.t.	
LOC		khicā-yā-ke	n.t.	
SOC	khicā-wo		n.t.	

Tab. 12: Animate/honorific nouns: rājā “king”

	Singular		Plural	
	primary	secondary	primary	secondary
ABS	rājā-∅		rājā-pani-∅	
ERG	rājā-n, rājā-sē		rājā-pani-sē	
GEN	rājā-yā		rājā-pani-s	
DAT		rājā-yā-tā		rājā-pani-s-tā
LOC		rājā-yā-ke		rājā-pani-s-ke
SOC	rājā-wo			rājā-pani-s(a)-wo

