

ཀ k make	* ཀ k <sup>h</sup> khaki	ག g grand	ང ng mango
ཅ ch lunch	ཅ ch <sup>h</sup> Chinese	ཇ j jam	ཉ ny canyon
# ཏ t	ཐ t <sup>h</sup>	ད d	ན n noon
པ p rope	པ p <sup>h</sup> positive	བ b boom	མ m mum
ཅ ts tse-tse	ཅ ts <sup>h</sup> tse-tse	ཇ dz	ཇ w wet
ཞ zh Brezhnev	ཞ z zero	འ a cup	ཡ y yes
ར r (trilled)	ས s son	ལ l lend	ཤ sh she
ཧ h hair	ཨ a cup		

\* aspirated consonants:  
pronounce with  
a puff of air

# unlike in  
English, the  
tongue touches  
the back of the  
teeth

# Alphabet

## 2 ALPHABET

In addition to the thirty letters, four vowel signs are also used:

ི

གི་གུ  
gigu

pronounce as  
i in "hit"

ུ

འབམ་མུ  
zhapskyu

zhapskyu

pronounce as  
u in "put"

ེ

e e

ོ

ན་རོ

naro

pronounce as  
o in "hot"

If no vowel sign is present in a syllable, pronounce it with the vowel **a** as in "father" or as the u in "cup".

Here are some examples of vowels combined with the main letters:

ཨ་ a, ཨི་ i, ཨུ་ u, ཨེ་ e, ཨོ་ o

ཀ་ ka, ཀི་ ki, ཀུ་ ku, ཀེ་ ke, ཀོ་ ko

# Vowels

The letters can be stacked, like this:

ས་ sa and ཀ་ ka form སྐ་ ska,  
 ར་ ra and ག་ ga form རག་ rga,  
 ལ་ la and བ་ ba form ལབ་ lba.

ཡ་ ya and ར་ ra look different when subscribed to other letters.

When spelling out loud, these subscribed letters are spelled out as "yasta" and "rasta".

ཀ་ ka and ཡ་ ya gives ཀྲ་ kya.

Combinations with the letter ར་ ra subscribed below other letters are pronounced with the tip of the tongue curled back; in the transcription, we mark these so called *retroflex sounds* by a dot under the letter.

ཀ་ ka and ར་ ra gives ཀྲ་ ṭa,  
 ས་ sa and ར་ ra gives སྲ་ ṣa.

# Combined letters

# 4 ALPHABET

In each syllable, there is always one main letter, in addition to which there may be six other optional elements (letters or vowel signs). Read the elements in the order suggested. Remember that if no vowel sign is present, the vowel is "a".

