Lesson 5

*Converbs: general remarks – the antecedent converb in {-āwo} –
imperfective/stative*

Converbs. One of the defining characteristics of Classical Newari is
the extensive use of converbs. Broadly speaking, whenever two actions
are in any kind of temporal ("after doing", "immediately after doing",
"while doing", "until doing", "as long as doing"), causal ("by doing",
"although doing"), or conditional relationship ("if doing", "when
doing", "even if doing"), the first action is usually expressed through a
converb. Classical Newari converbs are "participial" forms insofar as
most of them have a case marker as formant.[*] In narrating consecutive
events, Classical Newari prefers subordinated converb clauses, where
German or English would prefer coordinated finite verb sentences. It is
not uncommon, therefore, for a Classical Newari sentence to consist of
a relatively long sequence of subordinated VPs. Converbs are not
overtly marked for tense or mode, and have to be translated according
to the context provided by the main verb:

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(5.1) **thwo-∅ khaṅ-āwo   rājā-∅ rasa tā-sē bijyāk-a.**
this-ABS   *HEAR*-ANT.CONV king-ABS *REJOICE*-COV HON.AUX-PERF.PST
"When he heard this, the king rejoiced."
(or: "The king heard this, and rejoiced.")

(5.1') **thwo-∅ khaṅ-āwo   rājā-∅ rasa tā-sē bijyāy-uwo.**
this-ABS   *HEAR*-ANT.CONV king-ABS *REJOICE*-COV HON.AUX-FUT
"When he hears this, the king will rejoice."
(or: "The king will hear this, and rejoice.")

(5.1'') **thwo-∅ khaṅ-āwo   rasa tā-sē bijyā-hune.**
this-ABS   *HEAR*-ANT.CONV   *REJOICE*-COV HON.AUX-IMP.HGH
"When you hear this, rejoice!"
(or: "Hear this, and rejoice!")

Temporal converbs. Whenever two (or more) actions are represented
as being in any kind of temporal relationship, only the last action of the
sequence is usually expressed through a finite verb form, and the

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*) In Jørgensen's *Grammar* (1941), these are usually referred to as "conjunctive
participles"; in the *Dictionary* (1936), however, the term "converb" is also used.

other(s) through VPs with a temporal converb as head. For purely expository purposes, temporal converbs can be loosely grouped into three categories: (1) *antecedent converbs*, expressing an action that precedes the action of the main verb; (2) *coincident converbs*, expressing an action that is simultaneous to the action of the main verb; and a (3) *terminal converb*, expressing an action that will take place upon completion of the action of the main verb.

45   **The antecedent converb in {-āwo}.** This is by far the most common of all converbs (the cognate of the non-final form in {-ā:} in Modern Newari). It is formed by adding the sociative case marker {-wo} to the perfective participle (see above, § 39).

I	II	III	IV
khaṅ-ā-wo	**yāṅ-ā-wo**	**biy-ā-wo**	**ṅhel-ā-wo**
"saw, and ..."	*"did, and ..."*	*"gave, and ..."*	*"laughed and ..."*

NB – the following irregularities and variances occur: The copula verb **date** has two variants, **dayāwo ~ dāṅāwo**. Verbs that generally oscillate between the patterns of Classes II and III show both variants: **teye** "to put" > **teyāwo ~ teṅāwo** (also **thāṅāwo**); **dhāye** "to say, speak" > **dhāyāwo ~ dhakāwo**; **lhāye** "to say, speak" > **lhāṅāwo ~ lhāyāwo**. – Note that the glossing in the table above presupposes past tense marking of the main verb.

46   The temporal deixis of this converb is relatively weak; the temporal extent of the action is not clearly demarcated against that of the main verb. In addition to its core function, this converb frequently has causal or conditional force. In narrative prose, this is the most frequent of all verb forms: It is not uncommon to find three, four, or even more VPs describing a sequence of events combined into a single period, with all except the last action in the sequence being expressed by the converb in {-āwo}. Note that as with all CN converbs, use of the converb in {-āwo} does not imply identity of subject![*] In instances where the entire period does have a single subject (which is frequently the case), the latter is expressed only once, and is governed by the head of the VP in which it is located: if that head is an intransitive/non-controlled verb,

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[*] For the remainder of this coursebook, "subject" will be used as a blanket term for the agent of a transitive/controllable, and for the argument of an intransitive/non-controllable verb respectively.

the subject will be marked for absolute case, and if it is transitive/ controlled, the subject will be marked for ergative case.

(5.2)   ओ पुरुषन हयाव फोडरपं सोरडास्यं ...

    wo purukha-n *hay-āwo* **pholalap-ā sola-ṅāsē ...**
    "When that servant *brought* (them) and split (them) to look inside ...''

(5.3)   थ्व सेया दुवने अमूल्य अमूल्य पञ्च रत्न खंडाव अतिहर्षमान जुयाव आदेश बिलं।

    thwo se-yā duwone amūlya amūlya pañca ratna-∅
    khaṅ-āwo **atiharṣamāna** *juy-āwo* **ādeśa bil-ā.**
    "*When* (he) *saw* five priceless jewels inside the fruit, (he) *became* extremely glad and spoke.''

(5.4)   थथ्यं धायाव राजान धालं।

    thathē *dhāy-āwo* **rājā-n dhāl-ā.**
    "When (he) *had* thus *spoken*, the king spoke.''

(5.5)   जोगीया वचन डेडाव राजा विक्रमकेशरी हर्षरोमांचितदेह याडाव क्षान्तिशीलयातं आदेश बिलं।

    jogī-yā bacan-∅ *ṅeṅ-āwo* **rājā bikramakeśarī-∅**
    harṣaromāñcitadeha *yāṅ-āwo* **kṣāntiśīla-yātā ādeśa bil-ā.**
    "When he *heard* the words of the yogin, King Vikramakeśarin *shuddered with delight*, and he spoke to Kṣāntiśīla.''[*]

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*) In (5.2), **wo purukhan** is strictly speaking only the subject of the subordinated VP governed by **hayāwo**; since there is no change of subject within the period, the subject of **pholalapalā solaṅāsē** "split and examined" is left unexpressed. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, in (5.3), where the subject is understood from the context of the preceding sentence. A change of subject does take place in (5.4), the subject of **dhāyāwo** being implied by the narrative context. (5.5) is more complex: All three VPs have King Vikramakeśarin as their implied subject; in the VP governed by **ṅeṅāwo**, it is left unexpressed because the emphasis is not on the act of hearing, but on the action(s) that follow. Although **yāṅāwo** is strictly speaking a transitive (dyadic) verb, the bristling of the body hair is an involuntary, non-controlled action, and hence **rājā bikramakeśarī** is marked for absolute, rather than ergative case. Cf. § 62 below.

(5.6)   भो सखा । थ्व पुष्करिनीस जलक्रीडा याङाव सीतल जलपान याङाव पद्मनाल
        नयाव चित्तस आनन्द याङाव सला नेम्हं लंख तोनकाव कोमल घास नकाव भिंङ
        वृक्षया छायास खंछि विश्राम याङाव छेजे नेम्हं थव गृह वने ॥

        bho sakhā, thwo puṣkariṇī-s jalakrīḍā *yāṅ-āwo* **śītala
        jalapāna** *yāṅ-āwo* **padmanāla-∅** *nay-āwo* **citta-s ānanda**
        yāṅ-āwo **salā ne-mhā-∅ lākh-∅** *tonak-āwo* **komala ghās-∅**
        nak-āwo **bhiṅa bṛkṣa-yā chāyā-s khāchi biśrāma** *yāṅ-āwo*
        cheje ne-mhā-∅ thawo gṛha won-e.
        "O friend, let the two of us *play* in the the waters of this pond,
        drink the cool water, *eat* lotus stalks, *enjoy* ourselves, *give* our
        two horses water to drink, *feed* (them) tender grass, *rest* for a
        while in the shade of a beautiful tree and go home."

47 **Imperfective/stative.** Imperfective actions and states are expressed
        through the stative participle; the temporal deixis of this form is rather
        weak, but in narrative contexts it is more often than not used with past
        reference. It is formed by adding {**-a**} to the zero grade of the stem
        (Class I: Allomorph in **-ṅ**, Class II: allomorph in **-k**), with the
        allomorph {**-wo**} for Class III verbs.

I	II	III	IV
khaṅ-a	**yāk-a**	**ju-wo**	**māl-a**
"saw"	*"did"*	*"became"*	*"was necessary"*

        NB – The stative participle of **cone** "to stay, be (somewhere)" has a relatively
        common variant **cõga** or **cõgwo** (besides the regular form **coṅa**). This may be
        interpreted as a remnant of the original *auslaut* **-j** (verbal noun: **cõja**, attested
        in NS 500/1380 CE). However, similar variants are attested for **khane** "to see"
        (**khāga**), **thane** "to fill" (**thāgwo**), **bhine** "to be good" (**bhīgwo** besides
        regular **bhiṅa**), and **wone** "to go" (**wõgwo** besides regular **woṅa**, **wāṅa**),
        which might indicate that the velar consonant (also in Class II verbs) is part
        of the bound morpheme, not of the stem. Note particularly the irregular forms
        of **date** "to be, exist": **dawo**, **do**, **du**; more on this in § 112 below.

48 Like the perfective past, the stative participle is rarely used in contexts
        where the past conjunct form would be obligatory in Modern Newari.
        In these cases, the perfective participle is usually substituted.

(5.7) उत्तरदिसास नेपाल नाम देस दव। थ्व नेपाल देसस जसकेतु नाम राजा दव।

**uttaradiśā-s nepāl nām deśa-∅ da-wo. thwa nepāl deśa-s
Jaśaketu nām rājā-∅ da-wo.**

"In the north, there is a country called Nepal. In that country
Nepal, there is a king called Yaśaketu."

(5.8) भो कापालिक। छु निमित्तन ता दतो बिल्वफल तोहोन अमुल्य रत्न बिया।

**bho kāpālika-∅, chu nimitti-n tā dato bilbaphala-∅ toho-n
amūlya ratna-∅ *biy-ā*?**

"O kāpālika, why *have (you) been giving* (me) precious jewels
for a long time in the guise of bilva fruits?"

(5.9) महापुरुष वीर खोजलपं जुया।

mahāpurukha bīra-∅ *khojalap-ã juy-ā*.

"*I have been searching* for a great and courageous man."*

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*) As the adverbial **tā dato** "for a long time" indicates, the act of giving in (5.8) is
imperfective. For the form **khojalapā juyā** in (5.9), see below, § 152.

Exercise 5

Translate the following sentences.

1) थ्व खंडाव हास्य याडाव राजान आदेश बिलं।

    thwo khaṅāwo hāsya yāṅāwo rājān ādeśa bilā.

2) थ्व बेलस मृतक राजानः बोहोलस तयाव कापालिकया समीपस वने तेयकलंः ॥

    thwo belas mṛtaka rājān boholas tayāwo kāpālikayā samīpas wone teyakalā.

3) राजान कृष्णचतुर्दशी कुन्हुया रात्रीसः खड्ग जोडाव स्मसानस कापालिकया समीपस बिज्याक।

    rājān kṛṣṇacaturdaśī kunhuyā rātrīs khaḍga joṅāwo śmaśānas kāpālikayā samīpas bijyāka.

4) थ्व खंडाव पाहान विस्मय चालं।

    thwo khaṅāwo pāhān bismaya cālā.

5) शिषर देशया कर्णोत्पर नाम राजा दव।

    śikhara deśayā karṇotpala nām rājā dawo.

6) थ्व डेडाव थ्व धर्म्मदत्त रावण्यवतीयाके वोडाव थव कार्य ल्हालं।

    thwo ṅeṅāwo thwo dharmadatta lābaṇyabatīyāke woṅāwo thawo kārya lhālā.

Notes

2) **samīpas**: postposition, construed with the genitive; "near, with; towards"; see below, § 71. **wone teyakalā** "set out, proceeded".

6) **lābaṇyabatīyāke**: with animate beings, the postposition **samīpas** is more common to indicate the direction of a movement, but the locative case can also be used in this sense – see above, § 32.