

Lesson 33

Place Case

Vocabulary

buzh	conference; convention; “con”
lolin	to gather (of people); to assemble (of people)
mari	island
math	building
rodoni	wilderness [ro (weather) + doni (land)] {AB}
róo	harvest
rúu	to lie down; to be recumbent
than	to be underground
thoma	to be near [thed (far) + oma (hand)]
wod	to sit; to be seated

In the above list, we see “math” (building) and “róo” (harvest). We have actually seen “math” before in “róomath” (barn), whose etymology we can now give: [róo (harvest) + math (building)].

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Place Case

[VP CP–S CP–O CP–Mann
CP–Instr CP–Assoc
CP–Goal CP–Src CP–Place]

The Place Case Phrase locates an event or state as being at a specific location in space. To mark a Case Phrase as Place, add the suffix “-sha.”

When Suzette Haden Elgin first created Láadan, she designated “-ha” as the Place Case suffix. However, that ran into a problem when it interacted with nouns ending in “...ha” and with other suffixes that also closely resembled “-ha.” You might end up with a sequence like “...haha” or even “...hahaháa.” So Dr. Elgin offered an alternate suffix, “-sha,” for use on nouns ending in “...ha.” And then she had to offer an alternate for the other suffix (whose native form is “-háa”): “-sháa” in case it followed the “-ha” Place Case or a noun’s final “...ha.” The second generation decided that it would be far simpler to instead use “-sha” for the Place Case all the time and not have to use alternates at all. We will be using only the invariant forms in these lessons, but you might want to be able to recognize the archaic forms, should you happen upon them in older texts.

Along with the Place Case comes the conjunction “úshahú” (where). Not a question-word, “úshahú” introduces a clause that fulfills the Place case-role, as in the English sentence, “I know where the birds are singing.”

Historically, Suzette Haden Elgin coined a short series of conjunctions like “úshahú;” in fact, one—“widahoth” from “wida” (carry) + “hoth” (place)—filled the same lexical space as “úshahú.” Unfortunately, she only coined four of them. After her death, the second generation deemed it useful to have a set that included a conjunction for each of Láadan’s cases. So “widahoth” has been retired, and “úshahú” has taken its place; nevertheless, you should recognize “widahoth” if you happen upon it.

Examples

Bíi meham babí menedebe thoshesha wa.	There are many birds in the sky.
Bíi meham rosh i óol thoshesha wa.	The sun and moon are (present) in the sky.

Láadan doesn’t have—or need—the sort of verb called a “copula” (in English, “to be”). The use of “ham” in the two examples above is very formal, and stands in for such a verb. Less-formal Láadan simply does away with the verb altogether. In place of the examples above, “Bíi babí menedebe thoshesha wa,” and “Bíi rosh i óol thoshesha wa,” are both perfectly reasonable Láadan sentences. These less formal sentences do lack the sense of “there is/are” or “be present,” so the first would be translated as “Many birds are in the sky.”

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Báa ham esh bebáasha?

Where is there a boat?
Where is the boat (present)?

Bíi ham esh ilisha wa.

There is a boat in the water.
The boat is (present) in the water.

Note the two different translations possible for each of the sentences above. Since “ham” can mean either “be present” or “there is/are,” these are acceptable translations for the Láadan sentences. The choice of which English version to use will be contextual: was a boat being talked about already? If not, the “there is/are” translation will suit better; if so, the “be present” version will be more appropriate.

Less formally, “Báa esh bebáasha?” (or, even less formally, “Esh bebáasha?”) and “Bíi esh ilisha wa,” are both perfectly reasonable Láadan sentences. These less formal sentences do lack the sense of “there is/are” or “be present,” so they would be translatable only as “Where is the boat?” and “The boat is in the water,” respectively.

Bíi thib behid wa.

He stands.

Báa thib behid bebáasha?

Where does he stand?

Bíi thib behid déelasha wa.

He stands in/at a garden.

Bíi thib behid Méri besha wa.

He stands in/at/on Mary.

Bíi thib behid déela Méri bethosha wa.

He stands in/at Mary’s garden.

By this time it should be routine to note that personal names do not take suffixes, as in the fourth and fifth examples above, and that the Case ending will move to the end of the Possessive case phrase, as in the fifth.

Bíi medibíi bezh úshahú thib behid wa.

They (few) declare where he stands.

Bíi methib bezh nusha wa.

They (few) stand here.

Bíi methib bezh núusha wa.

They stand there.

Bíi methib bezh hisha wa.

They (few) stand in/at this/that (place).

Bíi methib bezh zhesha wa.

They stand in/at the same (place).

Bíi methib bezh beyesha wa.

They stand somewhere.

Bíi methib bezh rasha wa.

They stand nowhere.

Bíi methib bezh déela rasha wa.

They stand **anywhere but** in/at a garden.

Bíi methib bezh hizh hizhesha wa.

They stand in/at/on each other.

Notice the pair of examples using “rasha” [ra- (NON) + -sha (PLC)]. The first of these is a straightforward statement that there is nothing to which the Place Case applies. The second, on the other hand, states that the case does apply, but that the noun it would be applied to absolutely does not. In effect, this example *excludes* this noun from the Place Case function.

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Postpositions

English has a wide variety of prepositions which are used [...] to make [*locatory*] information more precise; thus, something will be said to be not just “**at**” a particular location but “**inside, between, underneath**” and so on. In English these prepositions are used as the first element in the phrase and could be said to be used instead of a more general case-marking preposition. In Láadan the general marker is always used, but there is a set of more narrow forms that can be added to the phrase to make its meaning more precise. We can say that “**-sha**” means “**at**” some place; if more precise information is required, the speaker puts an additional locational word at the end of the Case Phrase. [...] The set of [these words] (called postpositions) never change their form in any way; they take no affixes at all.

heb	Postposition: down
ib	Postposition: against; up against; beside; next to
ihé	Postposition: before (place); in front of
ihée	Postposition: after (place); behind, beyond
menedebenil	Postposition: among more than five [menedebe (#>5) + nil (inside)]
mesh	Postposition: across
nedenbenil	Postposition: among three to five [nedebe (#2-5) + nil (inside)]
nil	Postposition: inside; within
nol	Postposition: atop; on top of; upon (touching)
o	Postposition: around
ob	Postposition: by way of
obe	Postposition: through
óobe	Postposition: along
raheb	Postposition: up
ranil	Postposition: outside
ranol	Postposition: under; beneath; underneath; being sat upon by (touching)
rayil	Postposition: above (not touching)
shinenil	Postposition: between [shin (two) + nil (inside)]
yil	Postposition: below; under (not touching)

Formally, English uses “**between**” to refer to a location intermediate to two objects and “**among**” if the location is intermediate to three or more objects. Just so, Láadan uses different words to refer to a location intermediate to two, three-to-five, or more-than-five objects. They are “**shinenil**,” “**nedenbenil**,” and “**menedebenil**,” respectively.

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Quite a few of these are straightforward for English speakers:

Bíi sháad le belidesha wa.	I come/go at the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha heb wa.	I come/go down the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha ib wa.	I come/go next to the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha ihé wa.	I come/go in front of the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha ihée wa.	I come/go behind the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha menedebenil wa.	I come/go among more than five houses.
Bíi sháad le belidesha mesh wa.	I come/go across the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha nedeбенil wa.	I come/go among three to five houses.
Bíi sháad le belidesha nil wa.	I come/go inside the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha o wa.	I come/go around the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha ob wa.	I come/go by way of the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha obe wa.	I come/go through the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha óobe wa.	I come/go along the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha raheb wa.	I come/go up the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha ranil wa.	I come/go outside the house.
Bíi sháad le belidesha shinenil wa.	I come/go between two houses.

Some few of Láadan's postpositions' English translations are not particularly clear:

Bíi rúu le renesha nol wa.	I lie atop the carpet. <i>(touching the top of it)</i>
Bíi rúu le renesha ranol wa.	I lie under the carpet. <i>(it's resting atop me)</i>
Bíi rúu le renesha yil wa.	I lie below the carpet. <i>(not touching it; it's in the air above me)</i>
Bíi rúu le renesha rayil wa.	I lie above the carpet. <i>(not touching it; in the air above it)</i>

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Exercises

Translate the following into English.

- 1 Baa ham wolawida wohomid bebáasha? —or— Baa wolawida wohomid bebáasha?
—or— Ham wolawida wohomid bebáasha? —or— Wolawida wohomid bebáasha?
- 2 Bíi aril yod imá anadalesh úshahú ban beye anath bedim wáa.
- 3 Bé ril yom onida natha beth ehotháthosha nusha thed wa.
- 4 Baa eril ranilesháad ábedá ábedunede lanemid bethoden ihé urahusha ob?
- 5 Bée aril thod wothá uzheh thodinan thibá déelathusha wáa.
- 6 Bóo aril meyime nen mewoyide wowehehá hishesha obe.

In #2, how did you interpret “anadal” (meal) [ana (food) + dal (thing)]?

In #3, did you have any trouble with “ehothá” (geographer) [e- (SCloF) + hoth (place) = ehoth (geography) + -á (DOER)]?

Also in #3, we see “thed” (be far) used postpositionally to modify a Place case phrase, meaning “far from” the referenced place. This is perfectly acceptable Láadan. “Thoma” (be near) can also be used in this way, meaning “near to.”

In #4, did you understand “ranilesháad” (to exit; to come/go out) [ranil (outside) + sháad (come/go)]? Of course, “ranilesháad” also presupposes “nilesháad” (to enter; to come/go in) [nil (inside) + sháad (come/go)].

Also in #4, we see for the first time a postposition used with a case other than the Place case (...lanemid...den ihé...); it is perfectly acceptable Láadan to incorporate postpositional information in any case phrase when needed.

In #5, it would be perfectly understandable if you assumed the sage was going to write on a person who was standing. However, idiomatically, “thibá” means “wall” even though it is transparently derived from [thib (to stand) + -á (DOER)].

- 1 E: _____
- 2 E: _____
- 3 E: _____
- 4 E: _____
- 5 E: _____
- 6 E: _____

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Not

Incorporate the second noun phrase as a Place; translate into English before and after.

- | | | |
|----|---|------------------|
| 7 | Bíi eril medibithim lan netho wowoth wohoshemizh lethath wáa. | mari |
| 8 | Báa aril bedi ni ehasheth e ehotheth? | wohíthi wohibo |
| 9 | Bé eril meháana háawith thul bezhethadan wa. | both |
| 10 | Bée meham mewolirihul wohesh menedebe wa. | réele |
| 11 | Bíi eril mehim ehá miwithedim honede id hunedim wáa. | rabo |
| 12 | Bóo melolin nen habelidá yedethu. | hatham rodonithu |

In #7, how did you interpret “dibithim” (greet) [di (speak) + bithim (meet)]?

In #12, did you have any trouble interpreting “habelidá” (dweller; inhabitant) [habelid (dwell) + -á (DOER)]?

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|----|----|-------|
| 7 | E: | _____ |
| | L: | _____ |
| | E: | _____ |
| 8 | E: | _____ |
| | L: | _____ |
| | E: | _____ |
| 9 | E: | _____ |
| | L: | _____ |
| | E: | _____ |
| 10 | E: | _____ |
| | L: | _____ |
| | E: | _____ |
| 11 | E: | _____ |
| | L: | _____ |
| | E: | _____ |
| 12 | E: | _____ |
| | L: | _____ |
| | E: | _____ |

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Incorporate the postposition from the second column to the Place case phrase; translate into English before and after.

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|----|---|------------------|
| 13 | Bíi eril wóoban rul áruleth shan belidesha wa. | yil |
| 14 | Báa rilrili thib héena edanátho wethesha? | ihée |
| 15 | Bé aril ilisháad le wilidunesha wa. | e mesh
e óobe |
| 16 | Bóo medoth nazz háasherídan letha shamideth heshehothesha. | o |
| 17 | Bée eril ri berídanizh letha shub meworahil wozháawithethuth áabesha wáa. | nil |
| 18 | Báa dush un Elízhabeth haláth shinethab hanedim mathede shenisha hi? | thoma |

In #15, did you get the sense of “wilidun” (lake) [wili (river) + dun (field)]?

In #17, did you note the use of “shub” (to do) as a noun meaning “deed(s)?” And “rahil” [ra- (NON) + il (pay attention)] meaning “to ignore?”

- 13 E: _____
 L: _____
 E: _____
- 14 E: _____
 L: _____
 E: _____
- 15 E: _____
 L: _____
 E: _____
- 16 E: _____
 L: _____
 E: _____
- 17 E: _____
 L: _____
 E: _____
- 18 E: _____
 L: _____
 E: _____

Notes

Translate the following into Láadan.

- 19 Clearly someone is sitting or lying atop the tall tower.
- 20 Where (many places) will the conventions be?
- 21 Prithee fly (you many beloved) above the desert to the eastern mountains.
- 22 (WARN) One of his followers next to the entrance of the church is asking honored-William whom he called using his telephone.
- 23 I swear Steven's cousins are playing among the (many) trees at the edge of the forest.
- 24 I dream the student, the carpenter and all their children know where they are underground.

In #19, how did you do forming the word for “tower?” Consider a tower is a building that reaches up into the air. We use “shumath” (tower) [shum (air) + math (building)].

In #22, could you form “dothá” (follower) [doth (to follow) + -á (DOER)]?

And in #22, did you have any trouble forming a word for “entrance?” Consider that an “entrance” is a “way in;” how about “nileweth” (entrance; way-in) [nil (inside) + weth (way; path; road)]? And “nileweth” (entrance) also suggests “ranileweth” (exit; way-out) [ranil (outside) + weth (way; path; road)].

Also in #22, how did it go forming a word for “to call?” We use “dithed” (to call) [di (speak) + thed (far)]. Of course, as a communication verb, “dithed” takes the person called as its Goal.

And in #22, were you able to form a word for “telephone?” We use “widadith” (telephone) [wida (carry) + dith (voice)].

In #23, the concept of “edge” is interesting. There is a word “nodal” translated “edge, non-sharp;” however, that very construction gives rise to the observation that the edge of something can be discussed as the “ending” of that thing—the place where *thing* becomes *not-thing*. Therefore, in this sentence we could use “noholin” to mean “edge of the forest” without having to define a new word; it's simply the meaning that the prefix “no-” (FINISH) would bring when applied to a noun.

Also in #23, the English seems to present two successive Place case phrases. The Láadan has that as one option; another would be to use the Partitive (False Possessive). We will present both in our answers.

- 19 L: _____
- 20 L: _____
- 21 L: _____
- 22 L: _____
- 23 L: _____
- 24 L: _____

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1 Where is the pregnant horse? 2 I understand the traveler will eat a meal where someone gives her/him food.
 3 I swear beloved-your family is safe at the geographer's home far from here. 4 Did the farmer exit the farm-yard
 with her/his dog ahead (of her/him) by way of the gate? 5 (WARN) I understand the sage will write a symbol through
 a writing-implement on the garden-wall. 6 Prithee, you-many hungry shopkeepers run in the future through the
 snow.

7 Your friends greeted my wise granddaughter, I understand. Bii eril medibithim lan netho wowoth woshosheemizh
 lethath marisha wáa. Your friends greeted my wise granddaughter on the island, I understand. 8 Will honored-
 you learn astronomy or geography? Báa aril bedi ni ehasheth e ehotheth wohithi wohibosha? Will honored-
 you learn astronomy or geography at the high hill? 9 I swear the children slept with (pleasurably) their parent. Bé
 eril mehdana hadawith thui bezhethaddan bothesha wa. I swear the children slept with (pleasurably) their parent
 at the hotel. 10 (WARN) There are many extremely colorful boats. Bée meham mewolirihul woshesh mendedebe
 réelesha wa. There are many extremely colorful boats at the harbor. 11 I understand the scientists traveled from
 the west to the city and then to the north. Bii eril mehim ehá miwithedim honode id hunedim rabosha wáa. I
 understand the scientists traveled from the west to the city and then to the north in the plain. 12 Prithee, you-
 many residents of the valley, congregate. Bóo melolin nen habelidá yedethu hatham rodonithusha. Prithee,
 you-many residents of the valley, congregate in the center of the wilderness.

13 The cat gave birth to five kittens at the house. Bii eril wóoban rui áruleth shan belidesha yil wa. The cat gave
 birth to five kittens below the house. 14 Might the linguist's heart-sibling be standing beyond the road? 15 I promise I
 shall swim in the lake. Bé aril ilishád le willidunesh e mesh e óbe wa. I promise I shall swim either across or
 along the lake. 16 Prithee, my beloved several young nieces/nephews, follow the domestic animal in the park.
 Bóo medoth nazh hadasheridan leth a shamideth heshehothesha o. Prithee, my beloved several young nieces/
 nephews, follow the domestic animal around the park. 17 (WARN) I understand my aunt recorded the deeds of
 ignored seniors in a book. Bée eril ri beridadziz leth a shub meworahil wozhadawithethuth dabesha nil wáa.
 (WARN) I understand my aunt recorded the deeds of ignored seniors inside a book. 18 Must Elizabeth lead 12
 workers southward from a building at this intersection? Báa dush un Elizabetch haláth shinehab hanedim
 mathede shenisha hi thoma? Must Elizabeth lead 12 workers southward from a building near this intersection?
 19 Bii ril wod e rúu hib beye shumathesha nol wi. 20 Aril buzh bebdanesh a? 21 Bóo meshumáad nan
 mewohene wobodim shésha ryal. 22 Bée ril dibáa dothá bitho nede Wilem bidim nileweth dathamethusha
 ib údimú dithed bi widadith bitthonan wáa. 23 Bé ril mehelash edin Thiben betha yádaninesha mendedebenil
 noholinesha wa. —or— Bé ril mehelash edin Thiben betha yádanin noholinehusha mendedebenil wa. 24 Bii
 melothel bedihá, belidá, i shem bezetha woho úshahú methan ben we.

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