

LESSON 14

THE PAST TENSE; IMPERATIVE FORMS

DIALOGUE

Nishâpet mâk Mânî

- | | | |
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| N. | <i>Tshîtshue ashissû!</i>
<i>Mishta-tshimuanîpan â utâkushît?</i> | It's really muddy!
Did it rain much yesterday? |
| M. | <i>Eshe,¹ mishta-matshenitâkuanîpan</i>
<i>utâkushît.</i>
<i>Nuîtshi-kânûtshemâ(tî) nishîm kie</i>
<i>nimishta-nipâ(tî).</i> | Yes, the weather was very bad
yesterday.
I played cards with my little
brother and I slept a lot. |
| N. | <i>Ek^a nîn, atâuitshuâpît nititûte(tî).</i>
<i>Pâkueshikan, pimî mâk</i>
<i>tûtûshinâpuî nitaiâ(tî).</i> | Me, I walked over to the store.
I bought some bread, butter
and milk. |
| M. | <i>Minu-tshîshikâu anûtshîsh.</i>
<i>Tshimiputâtshetâu mâk</i>
<i>tâshkaitshetâu.</i> | The weather is fine now.
Let's saw wood and split it. |

VOCABULARY

<i>aiâu</i>	(AI/II2 verb)	s/he buys it
<i>ashissû</i>	(II verb)	it is muddy
<i>itûteu</i>	(AI verb)	s/he goes (somewhere, by foot)
<i>matshenitâkuan</i>	(II verb)	it is bad, unpleasant
<i>nîtsh</i>	(dep inan noun)	my house
<i>pâkueshikan</i>	(an noun)	bread
<i>pimî</i>	(inan noun)	butter, grease, gasoline, oil
<i>tâshkaitsheu</i>	(AI verb)	s/he chops, splits (fire)wood
<i>tûtûshinâpuî</i>	(inan noun)	milk
<i>tshimiputâtshetâu</i>	(AI verb)	s/he saws wood
<i>tshîtshue</i>	(indecl part)	really, very
<i>uîtshi-</i> <i>kânûtshemeu</i>	(TA verb)	s/he plays cards with him/her

¹ *Eshe* is the formal pronunciation of *ehe* 'yes'.

POINTS OF GRAMMAR

I. The Past Tense

A past tense verb is typically formed in Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun not through the use of the perfective preverb *tshî*, but rather by means of a special set of past endings. Like the present tense suffixes, the past suffixes are added directly to the verb stem. Past tense forms are provided below for the AI verb, and are illustrated with the *â*-stem verb *nîpâu* 's/he is asleep'.

1	<i>ni</i>	<i>nîpâ</i>	(<i>tî</i>) ²	I was asleep
2	<i>tshî</i>	<i>nîpâ</i>	(<i>tî</i>)	you were asleep
3	-	<i>nîpâ</i>	<i>pan</i> ³	s/he was asleep
3'	-	<i>nîpâ</i>	<i>nîpan(i)</i> ⁴	s/he/they (obv) was/were asleep
1p	<i>ni</i>	<i>nîpâ</i>	<i>tân</i>	we (excl) were asleep
21p	<i>tshî</i>	<i>nîpâ</i>	<i>tân</i>	we (incl) were asleep
2p	<i>tshî</i>	<i>nîpâ</i>	<i>tâu</i>	you (pl) were asleep
3p	-	<i>nîpâ</i>	<i>panat</i>	they (pl) were asleep

The same past suffixes are found in other AI stem-types, with some minor differences (*n*-stems, for example, take a stem vowel *-î* in the past, as in *nitakushinî(tî)* 'I arrived').

II verbs, which occur only in the 3rd person, have past endings very similar to those of the AI. They are illustrated by means of the II *â*-stem verb *uâpâu* 'it is white'. In II *n*-stems, the past is written *-îpan* but can be pronounced as *-ûpan*, as in *tshimuanîpan* 'it rained', as noted in Lesson 10, page 53.

² There is variation in the pronunciation of the 1st and 2nd person singular subject forms. The *-tî* is not pronounced in Labrador but may be used in other dialects. Since the standard spelling uses the *-tî*, it will be written here, but enclosed in brackets.

³ In the case of *i*-stem verbs, the *i* is lengthened before the ending *-pan*, so that the 3rd person past form is *-îpan* (e.g. *mûpîpan* 's/he visited'). AI *u*-stems take the past ending *-uîpan* in the 3rd person, which is pronounced [-obun] in Sheshatshiu.

⁴ Although the recorded speaker does not pronounce the final *î* of the 3' form *nîpânîpanî*, this final vowel is pronounced by a number of speakers in the community.

3	<i>uâpâ</i>	<i>pan</i>		it was white
3p	<i>uâpâ</i>	<i>panî</i>		they were white
3'	<i>uâpâ</i>	<i>nîpan</i>		it (obv) was white
3'p	<i>uâpâ</i>	<i>nîpanî</i>		they (obv) were white

The past endings of TI and TA verbs are likewise similar to those of AI verbs, and, further, bear a resemblance to those of the corresponding present:

TI

1	<i>ni</i>	<i>tût</i>	<i>e(tî)</i>	I did it
2	<i>tshi</i>	<i>tût</i>	<i>e(tî)</i>	you did it
3	-	<i>tût</i>	<i>amûpan</i>	s/he did it
3'	-	<i>tût</i>	<i>aminîpan(i)</i>	s/he/they (obv) (e.g. his son) did it
1p	<i>ni</i>	<i>tût</i>	<i>etân</i>	we (excl) did it
21p	<i>tshi</i>	<i>tût</i>	<i>etân</i>	we (incl) did it
2p	<i>tshi</i>	<i>tût</i>	<i>etâu</i>	you (pl) did it
3p	-	<i>tût</i>	<i>amûpanat</i>	they did it

TA (1/2/3 subject → 3 object)

1	<i>n</i>	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>â(tî)</i>	I saw him/her
2	<i>tsh</i>	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>â(tî)</i>	you saw him/her
3	-	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>epan</i>	s/he saw him/her
3'	-	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>enîpan(i)</i>	s/he/they (obv) saw him/her/them
1p	<i>n</i>	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>âtân</i>	we (excl) saw him/her
21p	<i>tsh</i>	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>âtân</i>	we (incl) saw him/her
2p	<i>tsh</i>	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>atâu</i>	you (pl) saw him/her
3p	-	<i>uâpam</i>	<i>epanat</i>	they saw him/her/them

In addition, the 1st and 2nd person singular subject forms (without the *-tî*) may, optionally, take a final *-h* in pronunciation as in *nuâpamâh* 'I saw him/her', *ninipâh* 'I was asleep'. However, this *-h* is not represented in the writing system.

II. Imperatives

Imperative forms are characterized by a lack of subject prefix, as well as by a distinct set of inflectional endings. These are provided for the AI *â*-stem *nipâu* 's/he is asleep':

2s	<i>nipâ</i>	-		(Go to) sleep!
2p	<i>nipâ</i>	<i>k^u</i>		(Go to) sleep (you all)!
21p	<i>nipâ</i>	<i>tâu</i>		Let's (go to) sleep!

The same endings are added to other AI types (e.g. *pimûtetâu* 'let's walk', from the *e*-stem verb *pimûteu* or *mîshishu* 'eat!' from the *u*-stem verb *mîshishu*). To form the imperative of AI *n*-stems, the vowel *-i* is used, as in:

2s	<i>pimishin</i>	<i>î</i>		Lie down!
2p	<i>pimishin</i>	<i>i⁵</i>	<i>k^u</i>	Lie down (you all)!
21p	<i>pimishin</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>tâu</i>	Let's lie down!

While TI and TA imperative endings are similar to the above, they are sufficiently different to be provided in full below:

TI

2s	<i>tût</i>	<i>a</i>		Do it!
2p	<i>tût</i>	<i>amuk^u</i>		Do it (you all)!
21p	<i>tût</i>	<i>etâu</i>		Let's do it!

Should the object be 3' rather than 3rd person, a relational imperative is called for, as in the following example 'break it (e.g. his/her cane)':

2s	<i>pîkun</i>	<i>am^u</i>		Break it!
2p	<i>pîkun</i>	<i>amu</i>	<i>ek^u</i>	Break it (you all)!
21p	<i>pîkun</i>	<i>amu</i>	<i>âtâu</i>	Let's break it!

TA (forms are provided only for 3rd person goals)

2s	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	-		Look at him/her!
2p	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>ek^u</i>		Look at him/her (you all)!
21p	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>âtâu</i>		Let's look at him/her!

⁵ Pronounced as [uk^w]. For more examples of this process, see Lesson 1 (Labialization, page 6), along with the Guide to Common Pronunciations.

If the object is plural ('them'), the following endings are required:

2s	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>it</i>	Look at them!
2p	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>ekut</i>	Look at them (you all)!
21p	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>âtâuat</i>	Let's look at them!

Should the object be 3' rather than a non-obviative 3rd person, an *-(i)m* morpheme is added, as in the present tense endings previously seen, before the imperative ending:

2s	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>im a</i>	Look at him/them! (e.g. John's relative(s))
2p	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>im eku(i)</i>	Look at him/them (obv)!
21p	<i>tshîtâpam</i>	<i>im âtâu</i>	Let's look at them (obv)!

EXERCISES

I. Translate the following sentences into English:

1. *Nimishta-nipâtân utâkushît.*
2. *Tshuâpamâ(tî) â nimînûshim?*
3. *Mishpunûpan â utâkushît?*
4. *Tshitshîtûtetân atâuitshuâpît kie tshînân(u).*
5. *Pâssuepan â mashkua?*
6. *Utâkushît Tshân mâk ûtâuia tshîtûtepanat.*
7. *Pûshî.*
8. *Pimûtek^u.*
9. *Atussetâu.*
10. *Nete nîtshtî itûtetâu.*
11. *Nuâpamimâ(tî) utema.*
12. *Utâkushît nitakushini(tî).*
13. *Tshiminuâtâ(tî) â?*
14. *Âpashtâpanat.*
15. *Tshimâtâu â?*

Additional Vocabulary

<i>mishpun</i>	(II verb)	it is snowing
<i>pâssueu</i>	(TA verb)	s/he shoots it (anim)
<i>pûshu</i>	(AI verb)	s/he leaves (by vehicle)
<i>utema</i>	(an noun: irregular possessive form of <i>atim^u</i>)	her/his dog

II. Translate the following sentences into Innu-aimun:

1. I went to the hospital yesterday.
2. She walked a lot.
3. Go to the store.
4. Did you (pl) go home?
5. Let's eat.

III. In each case, you are given a 3rd person verb form. Provide the Innu-aimun imperative form requested:

1. *petam^u* (TI - s/he hears it) Let's hear it!
2. *minu* (AI/TI2 *n*-stem -
s/he drinks it) Drink it (pl)!
3. *uepinam^u* (TI - s/he throws it away) Throw it away (sg)!
4. *mîtshishu* (AI *u*-stem - s/he eats) Eat (pl)!
5. *mâu* (AI - s/he cries) Let's cry!