

DEHONG DAI  
An Introductory Lesson  
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Script & Pronunciation

The Dehong Dai script is a relatively simple and straightforward abugida. You can find it summed up here:

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/tainua.htm>

<http://www.skyknowledge.com/dehong.htm>

<http://www.seasite.niu.edu/tai/TaiDehong/> (follow link for Introductory Pages to *Dictionary of Dehong, Southwest China*)

Personal Prounouns

I	ꠘꠔ	/kau <sup>33</sup> /
you	ꠘꠗ	/maə <sup>55</sup> /
he/she/it	ꠘꠗꠗ	/man <sup>55</sup> /
we	ꠘꠗꠘ	/tu <sup>33</sup> /
we (inclusive)	ꠘꠗꠗꠗ	/hau <sup>55</sup> /
you (plural)	ꠘꠗꠘꠘ	/su <sup>35</sup> /
they	ꠘꠗꠘꠘꠘ	/xau <sup>35</sup> /

Verbs

to be	ꠘꠗꠗꠗ	/pɛn <sup>33</sup> /
to be at/in (cf. 在)	ꠘꠗꠘꠘ	/ju <sup>11</sup> /

to be named	ṭṭ	/tsi <sup>33</sup> /
to speak	ṭṭṭṭ	/taɪn <sup>42</sup> /
to go	ṭṭ	/kaɪ <sup>11</sup> /
to come	ṭṭṭ	/maɪ <sup>55</sup> /
to want	ṭṭṭ	/xai <sup>42</sup> /
to like	ṭṭṭ	/kɛk <sup>33</sup> /
to write	ṭṭṭṭ	/tjam <sup>42</sup> /
to eat/drink	ṭṭṭ	/kin <sup>33</sup> /
to be able to	ṭṭṭṭ	/mo <sup>35</sup> /
to learn/study	ṭṭṭṭ	/fək <sup>11</sup> /
to read	ṭṭ	/au <sup>33</sup> /

Verbs are not inflected for person, number, or tense. Dehong Dai is a SVO language.

Verbs are negated by using either of the following words before the verb:

ṭṭ	/jan <sup>33</sup> /
ṭṭṭ	/ʔm <sup>11</sup> /

### Nouns and Noun Phrases

language	ṭṭṭṭ	/xaɪm <sup>55</sup> /
Dai language	ṭṭṭṭṭṭ	/xaɪm <sup>55</sup> tai <sup>55</sup> /
person	ṭṭṭ	/kon <sup>33</sup> /
Dai person	ṭṭṭṭṭṭ	/kon <sup>33</sup> tai <sup>55</sup> /
friend	ṭṭṭṭṭṭ	/tai <sup>55</sup> ko <sup>54</sup> /

teacher	မၢ်ဝဲၣ်ပၢ်ပၢ်	/mo <sup>35</sup> sɔn <sup>35</sup> /
book, text, letters	လၢၤ	/la:i <sup>55</sup> /
book	လၢ်	/lik <sup>33</sup> /
pagoda	ၤပၢ်ပၢ်	/kɔŋ <sup>55</sup> mu <sup>55</sup> /
rice	ဆၢ	/xau <sup>42</sup> /
rice noodles	ဆၢပၢ်	/xau <sup>42</sup> sɛn <sup>42</sup> /
water	လၢမၤ	/lam <sup>54</sup> /
tea	လၢမၤလၢ	/lam <sup>54</sup> lɛŋ <sup>42</sup> /
hot water	လၢမၤမၤ	/lam <sup>54</sup> mai <sup>42</sup> /

Note that Dehong Dai noun modifiers (such as adjectives, demonstratives, possessive pronouns, numbers, etc.) come after the noun.

Many verbs, when used in a general sense, sound more natural with a predicate. For example “to eat” is expressed as ၤပၢ် ဆၢ, literally “to eat rice”. Similarly, “to write” is expressed as ၤပၢ်လၢ, “to write letters/characters”.

### Question Words et al.

what?	မၤ	/saŋ <sup>35</sup> /
who?	မၤ	/p'aə <sup>35</sup> /
where?	မၤ	/t'aə <sup>35</sup> /
where?	တၢ်မၤ	/ti <sup>33</sup> t'aə <sup>35</sup> /
when?	မၤလၢ	/ja:m <sup>55</sup> laə <sup>33</sup> /
(interrogative particle)	မၤ	/hɪ <sup>35</sup> /
(perfective particle)	မၤ	/jau <sup>54</sup> /

## Example Sentences

I am learning Dehong Dai.

רם אַרל תלמדה דהונג דאי

I can speak Dai.

רם אקאן ספיק דהונג דאי

Can you speak Dai?

אלי אקאן ספיק דהונג דאי שפיק?

He cannot write Dai.

איה נאע אקאן טויער אלס דהונג דאי

Where is the pagoda?

און אהא אהא אהא?

Where are you going?

אלי אהא אהא אהא?

Where do you want to go?

אלי אהא אהא אהא אהא?

My friend is coming.

איה אהא אהא אהא

I want to go to Kunming.

רם אהא אהא אהא אהא אהא

They don't want to go.

איה אהא אהא אהא אהא

I want to read a book.

רם אהא אהא אהא אהא

I want to eat rice noodles.

רם אהא אהא אהא אהא אהא

I want to drink tea.

רם אהא אהא אהא אהא אהא

Note: Dehong Dai is usually written without spaces between the words. They have been added here for convenience.

## Conversational Phrases

What is your name?

אלי אהא אהא אהא?

My name is ...

רם אהא ...

Where are you from?

אלי אהא אהא אהא אהא?

I am from ...

רם אהא ... אהא

Have you eaten?

אלי אהא אהא אהא אהא אהא?

Goodbye

אהא אהא /ju<sup>11</sup> xan<sup>35</sup>/