

TIBETAN *lh-* AND *hr-* IN ALTERNATION WITH OTHER
INITIAL CONSONANTAL CLUSTERS, OR WITH SIMPLE
INITIAL *l-* AND *r-*

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Students of Tibetan grammar are well acquainted with the "Perfect" form *lhuñ* of *ltuñ* (*-ba*) "to fall". As such it has been given a special entry, not merely a cross reference, in some of our Tibetan dictionaries (from Csoma's dictionary on), a procedure which seems perhaps justifiable in view of *lhuñ* being an element of the compound *lhuñ-bzed*, which translates *pinḍa-patra* as the "container of what has 'dropped' into it". But the alternation to be observed in *ltuñ*~*lhuñ* is by no means limited to forms of one and the same verb, nor do our dictionaries allow of an easy and exhaustive survey of the relevant material by simply looking up words beginning with *lh-*, or for that matter *hr-*, nor has, as far as I am aware, any attempt been made to account from the phonetic point of view for these alternations. It may therefore be helpful to set out below such examples of them as I have been able to collect. With the exception of ex. 10 they have been arranged according to the stem-initials of the alternating clusters.

I *lh-*

A. Guttural Stem-initial

(i) voiceless

- Ex. 1 (a) *klog(-pa)* / *klag(-pa)*¹ "to read".
(b) Pf. *lhogs*,² Imp. *lhogs*.²

As a likely cognate word *lkog(-ma)* "throat" may be added. On the semantic side compare *hgrags-pa* "to utter a sound" by the side of *gre-ba* "throat".³

¹ I noted *klog-pa* instead of *klag-pa* in N(arthang Kanjur) hDul/Nya 259B⁸ = Ti(betan) T(ripitaka) XLIII, 204c: rig-byed-kyi bzi klag pañi ślad-duho. [It is for the sake of reading the Four Vedas.]

² Jäschke lists *lhogs* only as Imp. (by the side of *klog*). For the Perf. *lhogs* (as alternative to (b) *klags*) see the continuation of the passage quoted in note 1 [N. hDul/Nya 259 B⁷ = Ti.T.XLIII, 204c²]: dus c'uñ-zad-cig-gis rig-byed bzi lhogs-so // lhog-nas . . . [In a short time he (was able to) read the Four Vedas. After he had read (them) . . .]. As a noteworthy alternative to *bklags-te* we find *blags-te* in N. hDul / Ja 282 B⁵ = Ti.T.XLIII, 97a²: dge-skos-kyis dge-hdun-gyi dbusu yi-ge blags-te [the provost reading out the letter in the assembly. . .]

³ See "Tibetan Lexicography and etymological research", p. 103 in *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1964, 1965.

- Ex. 2 (a) *klon(-pa)* / *klan(-pa)* "to patch, mend".
(b) *lhan(-pa)* "a patch".
See also Ex. 3 (b).

(ii) voiced

- Ex. 3 (a) *glan(-pa)* / *glon(-pa)* "to patch, to mend; to return an answer". As cognates add *gla* "pay, wages, fee" and *glud* "ransom", with its alternatives *blud*⁴ (noted by Schmidt, *Wörterbuch*, p. 382) and *blus* (noted by Schmidt, *ibid.*, and by Csoma, *Dict.*, p. 100), as well as the verb *blu-ba* "to ransom".
(b) *lhan(-pa)* "a patch" (cp. Ex. 2(b)), *lhon(pa)* / *glon(-pa)* "to return, to give or pay back" (Csoma, pp. 284 and 25).
(c) *lan* "retaliation", "answer" (with the *figura etymologica lan klon-pa*, *lan glon-pa* or *ldon-pa*⁵) and "time, times"⁶.
(d) *slan(-pa)* "to mend, to patch", noted by Schmidt, *Wörterbuch*, p. 608.
- Ex. 4 (a) *glod(-pa)* "to loosen, relax, slacken" (Csoma, p. 284), *glod(-pa* or *-po)* "loose".
(b) *lhod(-pa* or *-po)* "loose".
(c) *lod(-pa* or *-po)* "loose".
- Ex. 5 (a) *glad(-pa)* "to thin".
(b) *lhad* "alloy"; *lhan* "together".
(c) *slad(-pa)* "to mix, adulterate"; *sla(-ba)* "thin (of liquids); easy"; *slan*, *slan-te*⁷ "thin, liquid".

When taking over the above entry 5(a) from Schmidt (p. 8), Jäschke (p. 80) refers both to *lhad* (5b) and *slad-pa* (5c), to which *lhan* (5b) and, confirming *glad-pa* (5a), *sla-ba* (5c) and *slan*, *slan-te* (5c) may be added as further cognates. The assumption, implied in 5c, that *sla-ba* "thin" (of liquids) and *sla-ba* "easy" are also etymologically one and the same word may be supported by reference to the opposites *ska-ba* "thick" (of liquids) and *dka-ba* "difficult", the latter word clearly belonging with *k'a-ba* "bitter" (Chin. 苦 *k'u*, archaic *k'o* Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 49 u) and *bska-ba* "astringent" (written *ska-ba* in the Tibetan translation of the *Hevajratra*, ed. D. L. Snellgrove, Vol. II, II iii, 46, p. 59).

- Ex. 6 (a) *glog(-pa)* "large ulcer".
(b) *lhog(-pa)* "large ulcer".

⁴ About the alternation *bl-~ld- < *dl-* cf. below p. 218 and n. 11.

⁵ Cp. the alternative *ldog-pa* for *lhog-pa* adduced below in note 10.

⁶ Jäschke, *Dict.*, p. 543 has already suggested s.v. *lan*: "originally perhaps 'turn', hence: (1) time, times".

⁷ A reference to this entry from Schmidt's dictionary (p. 608) was apparently intended by Jäschke when (p. 586) he referred from *slan-te* to *sla-ba*, but had dropped out, as did a reference under *bslan*.

The etymological identity of 6a and 6b and their identical meaning as first assumed by Csoma (p. 284) and thereafter included in Jäschke's dictionary (pp. 82 and 602). But the Mahāvīyutpatti⁹ lists 6b as translating Skr. *lohalinga*⁹ (Sakaki, 9507¹⁰) and 5a as translating *rajata*⁹ (Sakaki, 9540).

B. Dental Stem-initial

(i) voiceless

Ex. 7 (a) *ltuñ(-ba)* "to fall".

(b) Pf. *ltuñ*.

See the preamble to this paper.^{10a}

(ii) voiced

Ex. 8 (a) *ldug(s) (-pa)* "to pour".

(b) Imp. *lhug (-cig)*.

(c) Imp. *lugs (-sig)*.

About the metathesis *ld-* < **dl-* and the variants with *bl-*, cf. equation No. 41 of *Tibetisch-chinesische Wortgleichungen*, Berlin 1930 (= Mitteilungen des Seminars f. Orientalische Sprachen, XXII, 1929, Abteilung I), p. 11, and *ibid.*, p. 31 and n. 1.¹¹ Jäschke lists the Pf. *blugs* as the usual form, besides *ldugs*. Csoma (Dict., p. 283) notes 8b as Imp. of *lhug-par* or *blug-par*. Schmidt (Wtbch, p. 628) adduces *lhug-sig*. For 8c reference is made to N. hDul/Nya 390B⁴ (= Ti. T. XLIII, 236 b⁵).

C. Labial¹² Stem-initial

(voiced only)

Ex. 9 (a) *bla* "above; (upper) soul".

(b) *lha* "god"; *lhag* "more, beyond", *lhag(-pa)* "surpassing, superior", *lhag(-ma)* "remains, scrapings", *lho* "south".

(c) *la* "a pass; upon".

⁹ Edited by R. Sakaki, Kyoto, 1916, Sanskrit Index by R. Sakaki, 1925. Reprinted (with the Tibetan Index by K. Nishio, 1941) as Reprint Series 1 (2 vols.) by the Suzuki Research Foundation (Tokyo, 1962).

¹⁰ See F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II: *Dictionary*, New Haven, 1953, *sub verbis*, pp. 465 and 449.

^{10a} Basing himself on the Peking print, Sakaki adduces the variant *ldog-pa* by the side of *lhog-pa*, while the Narthang Print of the Tanjur (mDo, Vol. 123, p. 376B²) has only *lhog-pa*.

^{10b} The Mahāvīyutpatti (Sakaki 3574) has *ltun-po* by the side of *lhun-po* for 'Meru'. *ltums-su* for *lhums-su* in the heading of Chapter VI of the Lalitavistara (Ti. T. XVII, 174a¹) may merely be an error in the cutting of the block.

¹¹ Cf. also *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, V (1941), p. 378.

¹² It must be left open whether the *b* of *bla* is the real stem-initial or whether *bla* goes back to an earlier **bla*, as proposed on p. 378 of the paper quoted in the preceding note, where *bla* was connected with *ldan-ba* < **ldan-ba* "to rise". In the latter case ex. 9 would have to be shifted to group B and group C to be deleted.

Professor R. A. Stein was the first to connect *bla* with *lha*, stressing both the meaning of "upper soul" in the case of *bla* and the graphical confusion between *bla* and *lha*.¹³ Of the other words adduced under 9b, only *lho* "south" may require a comment from the semantic point of view. The position of the sun as "(high) above" in the skies would seem to fit in well with *lar* "east" (from *hc'ar-ba*, Pf. *lar* "to rise") and *nub* "west" (from *nub-pa* "to fall gradually, to sink"). For 9c cf. p. 379 of the paper quoted in note 12.

D. Unknown¹⁴ Stem-initial

Ex. 10 (a) *sle(-ba)* | *bsle(-ba)* "to twist, to knit; distortion".

slu(-ba) "to ensnare, to entice".

(b) *lhc(-ba)* a further alternative of *sle(-ba)*, Pf. *lhas*; *lhas(-ma)* | *lhes(-ma)* "braid, wicker-work, texture"; probably also *lhen* (*-lcags-dreg*) "filth or dross in the bowels causing obstruction" (Csoma, Dict., p. 284).

II *hr-*

A. Guttural Stem-initial

(voiced only)

Ex. 11 (a) *gril* "a roll"; *hgril(-ba)* (Pf. *gril*) "to be made circular"; *sgril(-ba)* "to wind around, to roll".

(b) *hril(-po)* "round, globular".

(c) *ril(-ba)* | *ril(-po)* | *ril(-mo)* "round, globular".

(d) (with *r* ousted in the process of yodization¹⁵): *hk'yil(-ba)* "to wind, to twist"; *dkyil* "the middle = the thing about which something is wound round"; *skiyil(-ba)* not only "to bend" as in

¹³ See his "Notes d'étymologie Tibétaine" (*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Vol. 41 (1941), Hanoi, 1942, pp. 209-11, his article "Le liŋga dans les danses masquées lamaïques" (*Liebhenthal Festschrift, Sino-Indian Studies*, V, 3-4 (1957), p. 9, and *La civilisation tibétaine* (Collection SIGMA, I), Paris, 1962, p. 192. Professor Stein had the kindness of communicating to me by letter that "*lha* is often written *bla* in Tun-huang manuscripts", adducing (1) India Office, No. 740 (1) (F. W. Thomas, *Ancient Folk Literature*, pp. 140-1), §20 *rta-bla* "god of horses", cp. *ibid.*, *p'yugs-lha* and *lam-lha*, also often *sku-bla* "a god" (nowadays, e.g. in the epic, called *sku-lha*), and (2) Thomas, *Ancient Folk Literature*, p. 120, §2 *dgra-bla* (nowadays *dgra-lha*, but travellers have heard **dapla*).

¹⁴ Though *lh-* without an original plosive stem-initial would be possible, it is more likely that an original plosive stem-initial was lost. In the case of an original guttural cp. ex. 5, in the case of a dental the causative *slan-ba* | *slon-ba* "to cause to rise" of *ldan-ba* "to rise", Pf. *ldan* | *lan*.

¹⁵ Cp. the loss of the *r* owing to palatalization (*n > ny*) in *nyan* "to hear" going back to **nran* of identical meaning, belonging with *rna* "ear" and *rno/rnon* "sharp". See "Ear, Sharp, and Hearing—a Tibetan Word Family" in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, London, 1970, p. 487, and cp. also the loss of *l* owing to yodization in *lcuñ-ka* < **cluñ-ka* "jackdaw" by the side of *skyuñ-ka* < **shkyuñ-ka*.

skyii-k'ruñ "sitting crosslegged", but also "to coil";¹⁶ and, with loss of the final *l*,¹⁷ *hk'ri(-ba)* "to wind, roll, coil" and *dkri(-ba)* "to wind, to wind up".

- Ex. 12 (a) *grañ(-ba)* ("to complete" =) "to count"; *grañs* "(total =) number"; *hgrañ(-ba)* "(to make complete =) to satiate"; *hgrañs(-pa)* "satiated".
- (b) *hrañ* "(complete, self-sufficient =) alone"^{17a}.
- (c) *rañ* "(exclusively one's) own; self"; *rañs(-pa)* "entire, complete, unimpaired"; (*yid* or *yi*) *rañ(-ba)* ("with mind unimpaired =) to rejoice".

The words assembled above rather point to a guttural voiced plosive, not to a guttural voiced nasal (*ṅ*), which I had recently assumed.¹⁸ On the semantic side I may refer again to Skr. *kevala*, which combines the meanings of "exclusively one's own, alone, entire, whole, all",¹⁹ and, apart from the article quoted in note 18, to *Tibetan lexicography and etymological research*²⁰ and to "Tibetan *nyin-rañs* and *t'o-rañs*".²¹

B. Dental Stem-initial

(voiced only)

- Ex. 13 (a) *hḍral(-ba)*, Pf. *ḍral* "to rend asunder, tear to pieces".
- (b) *hral(-ba)* variant of 13a of identical meaning.
- (c) *ral(-ba)* "torn", alternative Pf. of 13a and 13b (cf. ad ex. 14b).
- Ex. 14 (a) *hḍrul(-ba)*, Pf. *ḍrul* "to become putrid, to rot".
- (b) *hrul(-ba)* "id."
- (c) *rul(-ba)* "id."
- (d) *srul(-ba)* "id."

The verb *hrul(-ba)* "to rot" (14b), though not in Jäschke or Das, has

¹⁶ I noted (Ti. T. XLIII, 260e¹⁻²) the following passage about Indra changing into a big poisonous snake, *coiled up* under the bed of a couple: *sbrul c'en-po bskyii-ba byas-te mal-gyi hog-tu hdug-pa dañ . . .*

¹⁷ Cf. *Tib.-chin. Wortgleichungen* (see above, ex. 8), p. 27, and the note to equation 312. Cp. also *tse-po / tsel-po* "basket" and *mnyel(-ba)*, *gnyell(-ba)* "to knead, tan" (Schmidt, *Wörterbuch*, p. 194) by the side of *mnyel(-ba)*, *mnyed(-pa)* "id." and *mnyem(-pa)* "soft".

^{17a} Jäschke (Dict., p. 598), though unaware of the basic meaning "complete" of *rañ*, refers from *hrañ* to *rañ* in its meaning "alone".

¹⁸ "Cognates of Tibetan *rañs(-pa)* (entire, complete) with guttural stem-initial", in *Bulletin Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, Vol. 39 (1969), p. 289.

¹⁹ See e.g., Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v.

²⁰ See p. 107 of the article quoted in note 3.

²¹ See *Asia Major*, N.S. XII (1966), pp. 180-1.

been listed both by Chos Grags²² and Sumatiratna.²³ The adjective and noun *hrul(-ba)* "ragged; raggedness" (Jäschke, p. 598) or *hrul-po* (Ch'os-Grags, p. 953) may be a cognate of *ral(-ba)* "torn" (ex. 13c) with *a~u* vowel alternation (umlaut).^{23a}

III The phonetic developments

It will be helpful for the consideration of the phonetic developments to be observed in the above alternations, to set out the foregoing examples arranged according to their stem-initials in an abbreviated form (alternations a-c only), excepting ex. 10, whose stem-initial, if it existed, we have been unable to ascertain.

A. Voiceless Stem-initial

- Ex. 1 (a) *klog* (b) *lhogs*.
- Ex. 2 (a) *klon* (b) *lhan*.
- Ex. 7 (a) *ltuñ* (b) *lhuñ*.

B. Voiced Stem-initial

- Ex. 3 (a) *glan* (b) *lhan* (c) *lan*.
- Ex. 4 (a) *glod* (b) *lhod* (c) *lod*.
- Ex. 5 (a) *glad* (b) *lhad* (c) —
- Ex. 6 (a) *glog* (b) *log* (c) —
- Ex. 8 (a) *ldug* (b) *lhug* (c) *lugs*.
- Ex. 9 (a) *bla* (b) *lha* (c) *la*.
- Ex. 11 (a) *gril* (b) *hril* (c) *ril*.
- Ex. 12 (a) *grañ* (b) *hrañ* (c) *rañ*.
- Ex. 13 (a) *ḍral* (b) *hral* (c) *ral*.
- Ex. 14 (a) *ḍrul* (b) *hrul* (c) *rul*.

The assumption of original initial consonantal clusters consisting of a plosive followed by an aspirated *l* or *r* suggests itself as an obvious inference from the above table, the traditional writing *lh-* and *hr-* pointing to a subsequent *l-* metathesis in the case of the first cluster. It would seem futile at the present stage to speculate on the exact phonetic nature of the spirant concerned. χ certainly is a possibility. The assumption of an original χ (and its subsequent loss) might account for the metathesis of *l* in *lhog-ma* (*lhog* < * $k\chi$ log²⁴) as a further alternative development to either its complete loss

²² *Brda-dag miñ-tsi'ig gsal-ba. Tsang-wen ts'u-tien*, Peking, 1957, p. 953 *hrul-ba rul-ba ham srul-ba*.

²³ *Bod-Hor-gyi brda-yig miñ-tsi'ig don gsum gsal-bar byed-pa mun-sel sgron-me*, Vols. VI/VII, Ulan Bator, 1959; Vol. 2, p. 1311.

^{23a} Csoma notes *rul-po* for *hrul-po*. Cp. also Kenneth Ch'en on *ral-rul* "tattered garments" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 9, (1945-47), p. 255, and N. dKon / (a 329B³ = Ti. T. XXIV, 80a.⁸

²⁴ Cf. the assumption of the loss of a *va-zur* in *rgal-ba* "to cross" (*rgal* < **grwal*, see *Asia Major*, N.S. Vol. I, p. 14).

without causing metathesis in *klog-(pa)* "to read" or to the loss of the stem-initial in *lhogs* (< **kχlogs*).

In the case of *voiceless* plosives we observe only clusters with *l* (not *r*): *k* (exs. 1 and 2; *t* (ex. 7). We witness either loss of aspiration (plus metathesis in ex. 7), or loss of the stem-initial. *Voiced* stem-initials show a threefold development. In addition to the loss of aspiration or loss of the stem-initial also alternations with simple *l* or *r* occur.

In conclusion it may be observed that in a number of cases the alternations reveal as such members of one and the same word family and indeed link them together.