Note

Tibetan √lan ‘reply’

NATHAN W. HILL1 AND ABEL ZADOKS2

Recognising the parallelism between the conjugation of a verb such as √lug ‘pour’ (pres. ldug, past blugs, fut. blug, imp. lhugs ‘pour’ and a verb such as √kru ‘wash’ (lkhrud, bkrus, bkeru, khrus), Li Fang-Kuei suggests deriving the present stem ldug from a reconstruction *hlug (1933: 149). In this sub-case of Conrady’s law, the change of *hl to ld- may be analyzed into the following changes: *hl > *hl d > *ld > ld (cf. Conrady 1896: 59, Li 1933: 149, Hill 2011: 446–447, Hill 2013: 193–195). This sound change obscures the synchronic relationship between verb forms beginning with ld- and other present formations, and the resultant synchronic opacity gives rise to analogical forms (e.g. the alternate present blug).

Consequently, the dictionaries present a certain level of confusion about the paradigms of lateral initial verbs. In many cases enough of the traditional lexicographical sources present enough of the etymologically correct stems for the pattern to emerge despite the noise. For example, a root √lud ‘give to drink’ on the model of lkhrud, bkrus, bkeru, khrus ‘wash’, should have the stems *ldud (< *hlud), *blud, *blud, *lud. Hill (2010: 159) presents the following paradigm for this verb on the basis of nine lexicographical sources; the digit following each stem is the number of lexica which report that form.

Pres. ldud (5), blud (4), lhud (1)
Past. bldud (1), blud (6), ldud (1)
Fut. ldud (3), blud (5)
Imp. ldud (3), blud (5), lhud (1)

Majority rule yields the paradigm ldud, blud, blud, blud, nearly what morphology predicts. The imperative lhud given in one source most closely matches the predicted *lud;1 although majority rule in some cases yields the right answer, is not a reliable method. In other cases the traditional lexicographical sources unanimously divide a verb into two, where morphological analysis suggests that the stems originally belong to a single paradigm. Thus, the dictionaries offer ldad, bldad, bldad, ldod ‘chew’ and blad, blad, blad, blod ‘chew’ as distinct verbs, where the morphology suggests the single verb ldad, blad, blad, *lod ‘chew’.

1The voiceless imperatives lhugs (from √lug ‘pour’) and lhud from (√lud ‘give to drink’) in place of predicted *lug and *lud, commends the devoicing of laterals in the imperative to further study. This phenomenon is perhaps to be compared with voice alternating verbs of the type lgegs, bkan, dgam, khun ‘fill’ (cf. Hill 2014). However, the formation of the future of voice alternating verbs with g- rather than b- weigh against this comparison.

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The paradigms suggested by morphology are hypotheses; only in two cases have textual attestations confirmed the validity of such hypotheses. 2

Traditional paradigm: klog, bklangs, bklag, klogs (lhogs)
Correct paradigm: klog, blags, klag, lhogs (cf. de Jong 1973, Hahn 1999)

Traditional paradigm: klub, bklubs, bklub, klubs

Attestations from Old Tibetan and the Kanjur allow /lan ‘reply’ with the paradigm ldon, blan, glan, lon, to be added as a third member to the list of lateral initial verbs for which philological attestations confirm the expected morphological stems against the analysis of the dictionaries.

The dictionaries give ldon ‘return, answer, reply’ as an invariant verb (Hill 2010: 160); they also give a verb with the confused paradigm pres. glan/glon, past glan, fut. glan/glon, imp. glan/glon ‘patch, answer’ (Hill 2010: 39–40). Morphological analysis suggests that these stems are better arranged into one verb ldon, blan, glan, lon ‘answer’; appropriate attestations of all four stems are not difficult to find. 3

Examples (1) and (2) show ldon attested as a present stem.

(1) mi rtsod ci n dri ba dris kya ni an thos kyi theg pas lan mi ldon te ci nas sain s rgyas kyi ye shes mnoon par rdzogs par htsha rgya ba de ltu bur lan ldon no/
Although they asked questions and did not argue, the Śrāvakas do not reply, they reply (with the question) how to be perfectly liberated in the manifest wisdom of the Buddha (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra, Derge Kanjur vol. 51, page 106a)

(2) Kau si ka kyis Lha hi bu zla ba Ḍhid ī nīd la dris sīg da n ṇ ṇ / Ḍhid ī nīd kyis khyod la lan ldon no/
O Kausika, ask thou this very Devaputracandra and he will answer thee (Traya śtri mātramārṣa-parivarta-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra Derge Kanjur vol. 63: page 141a)

In the first clause of example (1) the negation with mi ensures that ldon is either present or future; the context precludes a future reading (i.e. ‘to be replied’). In the second clause of example (1) and in example (2) the suffix -no rather than -to precludes the past and the context again weighs against the future.

Examples (3) and (4) show that glon is an alternate present stem to the verb ‘answer’.

(3) don de ltu bas na nas mdo sde kun las nā hi ḍhkor du gto gs pa ni drin la lan glon no
For that reason I answer the questions of my disciplines from all the sūtras (Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra, Derge Kanjur vol. 52, page 128a)

2A similar correction to the paradigm of one rhotic initial verb is also available. The verb ‘to write’ has the traditional paradigm: h. bri, bris, bri, bris, but the etymological paradigm is: h. dri, bris, bri, ris (cf. Hill 2005). Relying on the type of analysis offered here for ‘give to drink’, ‘chew’, and ‘understand’ Jacques posits four paradigms for verbs with rhotic initials, without philological confirmation: h. drid, brid, brid, *rid ‘deceive’, h. drud, brus, bru, *rus ‘dig’, h. dreg, breg, breg, *regs ‘shave’, h. drad, brad, brad, *rod ‘scratch’ (cf. Jacques 2010).

3As Jäschke points out these verbs ‘answer’ are cognate to the noun lan ‘an answer’ (1881: 292, 543), guaranteeing that the root has a vowel ‘a’ and not a vowel ‘o’. The verb ‘answer’ often appears in a figura etymologica ‘answer an answer’ with this noun.
In example (3) the suffix -no rather than -to again precludes the past and context weighs against the future. In example (4) no tell-tale syntactic sign assures that glon is a present, but the generic reading weights against the past (cf. Zeisler 2004: 334–337) and the occurrence of glan as a future in the same passage, precludes that glon is the future. If glon is not the past or the future, then it must be the present.

Examples (5) and (6) show blan attested as a past stem.

(5) byain-chub-sens-dpah gsar-du slob-pa chos-kyi yi-gehi lugs-dai / tshul-khrims-kyi gzhuñ hdir hönis-pa-la brnyas-pahi sens-dai / nian-sens-dai / le-lohi sens-khyis geig-pu geig-pu-nas hdir-ba∫i lan na blan-na ltun-ba∫o / If with ill will, indolence, or scorn toward those who come to ask about the textual tradition of dharma and the code of conduct newly taught [by] Boddhisattvas, they do not answer the questions of each one, they will fall [into hell]. (Dharmamudrā, Derge Kanjur, vol. 66, page 83a)

(6) de-nas hjam-dpal la-sogs-pahi byain-chub-sens-dpah tshogs de dag-gis kya∫ de bzin-du tshigs-su bcad-pa de-níd-kyis lan blan-to / Then, the assembly of Boddhisattvas, Ma∫juśrī etc., answered in verse like that (Mahābhārata-parivarta-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra, Derge Kanjur vol. 63, page 119b)

The use of the negation prefix ma (in example 5) and the use of the suffix -to (in example 6) ensure that blan is a past stem form.

Examples (7) and (8) show glan attested as a future stem.


(8) skyes-na slar lan glan-zi∫i chi-nus-gyis bya-bahi rigso / / Given their birth, [children] shall have to repay [their parents] and do what they can. (Dialogue of two brothers, PT 1283, ll. 243–244, Imaeda et al. 2007: 169, cf. example 4)

In example (7) the coordination of glan with the future stem gdag (from the verb ḥdogs, btags, ḥdag, tshogs ‘vanquish’) ensures that glan is itself a future stem. In example (8) the coordination

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4Hill (2010: 149) on the basis of slim evidence divides this verb from ḥdogs, btags, ḥdag, tshogs ‘tie, fasten’, but the two are certainly to be identified etymologically.
of glan with the future bya (from the verb byed, byas, bya, byos ‘do’) ensures that glan is itself a future stem.

Examples (9) and (10) show lon attested as an imperative stem.


The venerable beloved monk Subhûti [said] this: “bodhisattva mahâsattva Maitreya, if you say you give answers regarding the intention, then give an answer re the intention, Invincible [Maitreya]!” (Âstasâhasrikâpajñânapamitâ, Derge Kanjur vol. 33, page 197a)

(10) brtan-po gan-dan gan-dag mia-bo che-chen-poh mdo ḍan-par ḍod-nas lhags-pa de-da bdag-gi ria-bo che bsgrags-pa gsan-nas dri-ba deh. i lan lon-cig !

Whosoever is steadfast, having come to hear the sûtra of the great drum, now, having heard the great beating of my drum, give answers to the questions! (Mahâbherâhârâparivarta-nâmamahâyâna-sûtra, Derge Kanjur vol. 63, page 119b)

The imperative suffix -cig suffixed to lon ensures that in both examples 9 and 10 this stem is an imperative.

These textual attestations demonstrate that paradigm of ‘answer’ is ldon ∼ glon, blan, glan, lon ‘answer’ as morphological analysis suggests.5 This case study shows that morphological analysis when confirmed by philological attestations, can bring order to the apparent chaos that the dictionaries sometimes present.

References


5Future research may explain the variation between the two forms of the present stem.


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**Nathan W. Hill**

*School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

**Abel Zadoks**

*School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*