The syllable finals of Tibetan loan words in Lepcha orthography

R.K. Sprigg

I. Reading and writing

Though Lepcha has probably been written at least since the reign of Chador Namgyal, the third Maharajah of Sikkim (1700-1717), the number of Lepchas with the skill to read and write the Lepcha script must always have been very small: a first estimate of the Lepcha population of Sikkim, in 1840, put it at only three thousand; in the Sikkim census of 1891 a total of 5,762 was recorded, to which should be added the Lepcha population of the Darjeeling District of Bengal, numbering 3,952 according to the 1872 census. It seems a fair assumption that only about a quarter of those 19th-century totals could have been adult males, and, therefore potentially literate in Lepcha. Moreover, the Lepcha population was scattered over a wide area; and the tree population was sufficiently numerous at that time to make communications difficult: The gazetteer of Sikkim records that nowhere in Sikkim was there a settlement large enough even to be termed a village. In the 18th century, therefore, reading and writing were probably confined to a few handfuls of Lepcha monks, perhaps less than a hundred, rendering Tibetan Buddhist texts into Lepcha; in the following century, in 1845, Stark and Niebel, Christian missionaries in Darjeeling, began extending Lepcha literature somewhat by translating The Bible. The year 1849 saw the beginning of printing in Lepcha, with Genesis and part of Exodus being printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta. Printing must have brought with it a greater consistency in letter shapes.

II. Vowel symbols

A. Tibetan

As far as vowel symbols are concerned, the Tibetan script has five, as I see it, three of which are superscript, i, e, and o, the fourth, u, is subscript, and the fifth, a, is symbolized syllabically or semi-syllabically, sharing a symbol with one of the thirty gsal-byed sum-cu, or radicals:

\[ \text{\texttt{a}} \quad \text{(\texttt{ka})} \quad \text{(\texttt{ka})} \quad \text{(\texttt{ka})} \text{,} \]

but alphabetically, by the postscript symbol a chung,

\[ -\text{\texttt{a}} \quad (-), \text{ e.g. } \text{\texttt{i\texttt{a}}} \text{ (\texttt{da\texttt{g}})} \text{,} \]

when it is necessary to avoid confusion between a syllable containing a member of the (five) sngon-‘jug, or prefix, series, prescript g, d, b, m, and i, and a syllable containing a member of the gsal-byed sum-cu in initial position, e.g.

\[ \text{\texttt{i\texttt{a}}} \text{ (\texttt{da\texttt{g}})} \text{.} \]
B. Lepcha

In order to symbolize the Tibetan vowel sounds the Lepcha script deploys a set of eight vowel symbols in open syllables, and a slightly different set, of nine, in closed syllables, with average phonetic values as follows:

```
open:    -a  -a  -i  -u  -u  -e  -o  -ô
[ -a:  -a:  -i:  -u:  -u:  -e:  -ô:  -ô:  

closed:  -â  -â  -î  -û  -û  -ê  -ô:  -ô:  
```

e.g.

open:    -  -e  -û  -û  -ê  -ô: 
closed:  -ô  -ô:  "  "  "  "  "  "

It will be seen from the above series that two vowel symbols, î and ô, are prescript, three, â, û, and û, are postscript, as also is ûa, one (e) is subscript, one (û) is superscript, and two (î and ô) are at once prescript and superscript, 

while for a the same principle as for Tibetan, sharing a symbol with an initial consonant, has been followed.\(^5\)

Some writers, however, use ã instead of a, e.g.

```
ãč  'ã-kâ [akâ:] 'hand',
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thus making the representation of the vowels entirely alphabetic, with one symbol to each vowel.

To add to the confusion, a, which I have shown above only in the open-syllable series, is used by some writers in the closed-syllable series whereas others use ã, e.g.

```
ãw  sam [sam] 'three',
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even by the same writer; this becomes possible because of the difference that I have shown above in the number of vowel symbols as between open syllables and closed syllables (and between nasal-initial and non-nasal-initial syllables).\(^6\)

The relationship of the vowel symbols to the initial-

consonant symbols suggests that the general principle has 

been followed of turning the model script, possibly a 
cursive Tibetan hand of the 'khyung-yig type, counter-clockwise 

through ninety degrees, with the result that the Lepcha 
symbols corresponding to the Tibetan superscript vowel 
symbols i and ô are prescript, and the Lepcha u and û are 

not subscript but postscript (e, however, is, irregularly, 

not prescript but subscript).\(^7\) Such a process would 

be familiar to Tibetan monks (and, perhaps, to Chador Namgyal himself during his years of exile in Lhasa) through the 

practice of using the symbols t-, th-, d-, n-, and sh- reversed for the
Sanskrit retroflex series t-, th-, d-, p-, and g-, none of which had been introduced into the Tibetan script in its original form. Accordingly, all the symbols corresponding to the rjes'-jug of the Tibetan script except two, -g, -c, -n, -b, -m, -r, and -l, appear in Lepcha not as postscript but as superscript; only -ng and its complementarily distributed anusvāra-like symbol nyin-do (Tib. nyi-zla 'sun-moon') -ang [⁻ang] differ, being prescript, with -ng preceding the prescript vowel symbols i, o, and ò; e.g.

\[ \text{-k -t -n -p -m -r -l; -ng -ang} \]

The ninth and tenth members of the rjes'-jug class, -i and -g, have no corresponding symbol in Lepcha, except for the possibility that -g is derived from -i. If so, it is irregular, in being postscript rather than superscript (unless Haarh is correct in attributing its origin to the subscript a-chung used in Tibetan as equivalent to the a of Sanskrit; 1959, 119).

The ya-btags and ra-btags symbols of Tibetan, which are subscript, appear regularly as postscript symbols in Lepcha; e.g. 

\[ \text{ṣ, ṭ; kya, kra [kje: kra:]}. \]

Something rather similar to the turning principle, the mirror image, has been applied within the Lepcha script itself, to devise ml- from m-; e.g. 

\[ \text{ma ñ; a mla;} \]

but the other members of the lateralized series do not follow this principle, and, moreover, have no model in Tibetan:

\[ \text{kla gla pla fla bla hla} \]

(glā and fla seem to be modifications of ga and fa by adding a cross-bar or a loop). 4

III. Khampa Tibetan into Lepcha orthography

Having outlined the orthographic resources available to Lepcha writers at least by the 1840s (when Hodgson made a first collection of Lepcha manuscript books), including alternative means of symbolizing [a:] in open syllables as a or as å, and [a] as å or as æ, I can now proceed to my main task of describing how Lepchas seem to have dealt with the problem of fitting Tibetan loan-words into a Lepcha mould, bearing in mind the important fact that the majority of the Tibetans with whom the Lepchas first came in contact were immigrants from Kham, in the east of the Tibetan-speaking area, via the Chumbi valley; 10 their descendants claim Khampa ancestry to this day. 11
A. Tibetan -a, -ag(s), -ang(s), -ab(s), -am(s), -ar

With this Khamna origin in mind perhaps the most interesting relationship in Lepcha loan-word orthography is:

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<td>T. -a</td>
<td>-ag(s)</td>
<td>-ang(s)</td>
<td>-ab(s)</td>
<td>-am(s)</td>
<td>-ar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. -ö</td>
<td>-ak/-ök</td>
<td>-ang/-öng</td>
<td>-öp</td>
<td>-öm</td>
<td>-öp/-ö</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[ö'']

e.g.

i. rma brnyā gla ja 'dra-'dra dbyus-sgra
mō nyö lō có răn-rō ([l-d-]) 'ú-kro ([t-])
sore borrow wages tea equal hair

rgya kha mkha' dbyus-zha na-bza' slob-grwa
gyö/gyā khö/khö khö/khö 'ú-shö nā-zö lön-kro ([t-])
hundred mouth heavens hat clothes school

bya, snag-tsha khra nyi-zla
byö nök-tshö hrö nyin-dö
bird/fowl ink hawk sun-moon [symbol]

ii. ldag g.yag (b)klags/klog phyag nag snag-tsha a-rag
lōk 'yök hlok chök nök nök-tshö 'á-rök
lick yak read hand black ink arrack

bsag s 'bag-chags lags don-dag khrag thag-ring
shök pak/pök-chö jö/ják tán-dök hrok thak/thák-ring
repentence compassion tongue meaning blood long distance

lag
lōk
hand

iii. glang mang dmangs gnang dbang nang chang
lōng mōng mōng nōng böng nōng chöng/cháng
ox many crowd bless, grant power inside beer

-khang btang/gtong zangs a-zhang bang-chen rkang
-göng tōng/tong sōng 'á-lōng pōng-cen kōng/kāng

house dispatch/give copper uncle messenger foot
The lip-rounding that has resulted in phonetic spellings in ö in the Lepcha words in (i) -- (vi) above is one of the features in the phonetic realization of the /a/ phoneme in one of the Kham dialects of Tibetan described in Ray 1965 for two speakers from Hor and Dzahuk, to the north west of Kanze, in north-eastern Kham; e.g.

i. /jáwá/ ṭeγa- India, /ndá/ zla-ba moon

ii. /maqmi/ dág-mi soldier, /tág/ stág tiger, /syáq/ bshags resent, /tendág/ don-dag meaning, /tháq/ khrag blood, /tháo/ thag distance

iii. /TRAQM̃/ grang-mo cold

v. /lápágá/ lam-ka road, /nák-há/ nam-mkha' sky, /khár/ khams Kham, lháŋ/ lhám shoes; cf. also /mombo/ mang-po many, /kong/ rkang foot

vi. /yá/ var up.33

I have myself observed lip-rounding in the words glang 'ox', nang 'inside', and gtsang 'Tsang' as pronounced by Tenzing Namdak, a Khampa of Khungpo Tengchen (the Denchin Gomba of Teichman 1922, 79, 231), fifty or sixty miles to the north west of Kanze.

Comparable lip-rounding has also been noted by Walsh (1905) in the Tromowa dialect, of the Chumbi valley (gro-mo), on the route by which the ancestors of leading present-day Sikkimese-Tibetan families entered Sikkim some four centuries ago; e.g.

i. lo-o gla-ba hire, ro-jo rwa- horn, pho-di pha-gi yonder, yo-di ya-gi that up there, nam-zo na-bza' apparel

ii. tog-ko skrag-pa frighten
iii. mong-pu mang-po many, long-po lang-ba rise, se-byom
sbrang-bu bee, long-sha glang-sha beef, nhong-po
bang-po bosom, byong brang breast, gyong-bo grang-mo,
cold, tong-bo btang/gtong dispatch/give

v. pho phar yonder

There are, however, a considerable number of exceptions
to the above relationship; e.g.

i  ii  iii  iv  v  vi
T. -a  -aga  -anga  -ab  -am  -ar
L. -ā  -āk  -āng  -āp  -ām  -ār; e.g.

i. lha sha dga'  grwa-tshang  bya  ka-ba  na
lhá shá gá/gó krá-tshóng (Ct -) pyá/cá ká-wó ná
god meat joy hermitage bird pillar illness

la  rta  nya  na-bza'  bkra-shis  ma-ni
lá  tá  nyá  nám-zó  krá-shi (Ct -) má-nyi
pass horse fish clothes Tashi (Ding) mani

ii. ljags  dmag  phag-ze  chag  sngags
ják  mák  phák-zu  chák/chók  ngá/ngó/ngók
tongue army hog's bristle fodder magic

iii. shangs  chang  grang-ba  byang  sprang-po
sháng  sháng k(h)yáng cáng  pyáng  long-po
nose beer cold north beggar

iv. yab  bslabs/slob  rg yab
yán  hláp  cyáp/cyóp
father learn/teach back

v. khams  khams  gnam  rnam-thar  skam-po
khám  khám  nám  nám-thár  kám-phó
Kham health sky legend dry

vi. dmar  bar  dkar-phyogs
már  pár/par  kár-chó
red middle white side

These exceptions I take to have entered Lepcha from one
of the Tibetan dialects in which vowel sounds corresponding
to the a of examples such as these have non-rounding as
their lip-action feature; e.g. (Lhasa)

(i) [ la tsha tyadzū:  (ii) dza:  -ma:  (iii) -pā:  -tshā:
    lha bya  grwa-tshang  ljags  dmag  shangs  chang
(vi) -jWP -lWP (v) -kham -nam (vi) -pha: -mar]
Some of these words have the spread-vowel phoneme /a/ in Ray's Kanze Khampa too, not his rounded-vowel phoneme /a/; e.g. /kā/ ka-ba pillar, /na/ ba cow, /sya/ sha meat, /ga/ dga' be better, smile, /ca/ ja' tea, /na/ na' sick, /la/ la pass, /tà/ rta' horse, /nya/ nya' fish, /kha lãq/ kha-lak food, /jā/ brgya hundred, /kabó/ dkar-po white, /mābó/ dmar-po red.

Similarly, -ag(s) corresponds to -ek in Lepcha in the case of khyag(s)-pa 'ice', for which the Sikkimese is khe(k) (Walsh 1905, 21).

B. Tibetan -o, -og, -ong(s), -ob, -om, -or

Since Tibetan words in -a, -ag(s), -ang(s), -ab(s), -am(s), and -ar, when taken into Lepcha, have been symbolized with lip-rounding, backness, and either openness or half-openness ([r̩-or̩-o-r̩:]), it is reasonable to expect a closer degree of aperture for the contrasting Tibetan finals in o when borrowed into Lepcha; and this is regularly so. I know of the following relationships:

i. i ii iii iv v vi
T. -o -og -ong(s) -ob -om -or
L. -o -ok -ong -op -om -or
[-o -ok -og -op -om -or/ɔr]; e.g.

i. gro do(-) rdo-rje sglingle lo hlo rdo rmo kyo to dor-ji, dūr-ji līng lo hlo do mo wheat load Darjeeling year south stone plough

ii. g.yog chog sgrag gshog
'yok'chok rok ([r̩/d̪-]) shok
work fit for read cut, cleave

iii. 'grong rdong gsongs tshong/btsongs stong
krong ([t̩-]) dong gong tshong/tsong15 tong
die face meditate trade/sell, Limbu thousand
grong gong
kyong/krong ([t̩-]) gong
village price

iv. thop dnon-slob
thop¹4 rān-lon/lok
get chief, Penlop (but slob-grwa 'school' is rendered
as lóp-kró rather than as lop-kró, perhaps through an association with bslabs).

v. sgom-chen khrom
gom-chen hrom ([th-])
hermit market

vi. 'khor-lo phyag-sor skor phor-pa nor
khor-lo chök-sor kor phor nor
wheel finger circle cup mistake, wealth; but
sgor-mo kóm (rupee) coin.

The Lepcha hlók (Tib. klog) is irregular — one would have expected hlok — unless the Lepcha loan-word is based not on the present-tense form but on the past-tense form (b)klags.

For the Kham dialect of the Kanze area Ray 1965 ascribes lip-rounding to his /c/ phoneme, with a degree of aperture between /a/ and /u/; his examples include /syog/ gshog carve, /lön/ slob teach, /sh/ so tooth, /lho/ lho south, /mbo/ 'bab fall, /mhojbo/ sngon-po blue, /nthon/ 'thung drink (cf. Lepcha thang/thóng [thom], not thung or thung).

C. Tibetan -u, -ug(s), -ung(s), -ub(s), -um(s), -ur

The correspondences for the finals containing a and o, in sections (A) and (B) above, are pretty regular and almost free from exceptions; but this is not so for Lepcha correspondences to the above finals, containing u. Lepcha offers a choice between a rounded close or closish back vowel, symbolized by ú, and a spread close or half-close back vowel, symbolized by u; and both are to be met with, though the ú spellings are probably the commoner; so I give them first.

1. Lepcha -ú, -úk, -úng, -úp, -úm, -úr
   i ii iii iv v vi
   
   T. -u -ug(s) -ung -ub -ums -ur
   L. -ú -ú/úk -úng -úp -úm -úr/ú
   [-u: -u:/ok -ø -øp -øm -or/u:]; e.g.

i. sku dbu zhu chu 'khru bcu-dpon
   kú 'ú shú chú hrú-bum ([th-]) cú-pán

   body head petition water wash/holy vessel leader of ten
ii. bzhugs 'brug sku-rzugs thugs smyu(g)-cu mjug rmugs
   jú prú kú-zú thú nyú-gú júk múk
sit Bhutan body mind pen end mist

 'ug-pa
wuk-po
owl

iii. chung 'khrung gsung rlung
chúng hrúng ([tʰ-]) súng lúng
small be born speak wind

iv. sgrub-bde 'rub-thob mub
rúp-di ([d-]) rūn-thop ([d-]) mūp
Dubde saint west

v. shum 'bum yūm
shúm bún yūm (also, irregularly, yām)
weep one hundred thousand mother

vi. spūr gur 'gyur khur-ba phur-bu
pūr kur 'gyūr 'gyū khū phūr-bo, phu-bo
corpse tent change bread Jupiter, Thursday

Ray 1965 describes his Kham phoneme /u/ as being
rounded and back; his examples include: /sylq/, 'ju/zhu
melt, /luq/ klog read, /mūq/ rmugs mist, /nyuq/, smyu(g)-cu
pen, /sūn/ gaum three, /lun/ rlung wind, and /cuciq/
bu-scig eleven.

2. Lepcha -u, -uk, -ung, -un, -um

The other set of correspondences, of Tibetan -u, -ug(s),
-ung, -ub, -um, and -ur with Lepcha -u, -uk, -ung, -un,
and -um, is as follows:

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<td>-u</td>
<td>-ug(s)</td>
<td>-ung</td>
<td>-ub</td>
<td>-un</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>u/-uk</td>
<td>-ung</td>
<td>-up</td>
<td>-um</td>
</tr>
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[-w: -w/sk -n -p -m -w]; e.g.
i. g.yu  bsu  'bu  'ju/zhu  bu-tsha
   'yu  su  bu  ju/shu  nu-tsha
   turquoise  accompany  worm  melt  clan, generation

ii. dbyug lug  phyugs  phyug-po  rgyug  -gsugs
    'yuk  luk  phyuk  phyuk-bo  gyuk  mu/ma-zu
    throw  sheep  herd  rich  run  body

iii. snyung thung  gsung
     nyung  thung  sung/súng
     ill  short/scare  chronicle

iv. sscrub
    rup  ([d-])
    get

v. snum  zlum-po
    num  dum-po/nu
    oil  pillar

vi. phur-pa  phur-bu
    phu-bo  thu-bo,  phúr-bo
    peg  Jupiter, Thursday.

Ray's H'm-dialect phoneme /i/, 'mid central unrounded'
(1965, 5), has among its examples /mbi/  'bu worm, /ci/
bcu  ten, /si/  dmu  nine, /si/  su  who, /cha/  chu  water,
/nda/gi/  ndzugs/gu  finger, toe.

D. Tibetan -ud, -un, -ul, -us

My Lepcha correspondences with Tibetan -ud, -un, -ul, 
and -ug are few in number; as regards vowel quality they 
correspond to the minority type given above, at (C2), for 
correspondences with Tibetan -u, -ug(s), -ung, -ub, -um, 
and -ur:
   i  ii  iii  iv
T. -ud  -un  -ul  -us
L. -ut  -un  -u  -u/-uí
   [-xt  -in  -u:  -ws/u:];  e.g.

i. phud  'tshud  mthud  hãud  yud
    phut  tsahut  thut  dut  yut
    first-fruits  enter  join  together  devil  moment
ii. sku-mdun bdun-phrag btsun-po thun dgun(-ka)
kum-dun dun-hröl tsun-mo thun gun
presence week revered space of time winter

iii. 'bul/phul sul sbrul 'phrul 'dül (exceptionally dngul-chu)
phu su bu hryu tyu ngül-chu
offer trench snake magic tame mercury

iv. nus; but lus dus rayus
nu; lyú tyú, tú' gyú
dare; body time intelligence.

Exceptionally, the Lepcha correspondence with 'khrud 'wash' is not khyut but khyú (cf. Sikkimese and Tromowa 'khyu-u'; Walsh 1905, 33).

Corresponding to sbrul 'snake' Sandberg 1895 gives 'beu (byu)' (26) for Sikkimese, 'Walsh 1905 gives 'bi-u' for Sikkimese, 'bi-u' for Lower Tromowa, and 'du; bu' for Upper Tromowa (30), and Byrne 1909 gives 'bû' for Bhutanese.

Ray's phoneme /ʒ/ occurs in /drʒ/ sbrul snake and in /gəɾkʰa/ dgun-ka winter; for 'seven' bdun he gives /deɾ/, containing the front-spread-vowel phoneme /e/ (1965).

E. Tibetan -od, -on, -ol, -os

For these four Tibetan syllable finals the corresponding Lepcha finals are:

T. -od -on -ol -os
L. -ât -ân -â/-ä -ô/-â

[-əːt -əːn -əː -əː/-əː]; e.g.

i. gcod bod bya-rgod 'dod mchod yod mdzod
cât pât dât/da chât yât zât
cut Tibet vulture desire sacrifice have treasury

'od dus-tshod
wât tú-tshât
light season

ii. tshon 'byon dkon, don maron dgon-pa
tshân cân kân tân grân/rân ([q-]) sâm-po/-pú/-bo
vaint go scarce meaning invitation monastery

yon-tan bcu-dnon duon-slob
yân-tan cu-pân rân-lon/k
excellence leader of ten teacher/Penlow
(smön, however, also corresponds to mūn in Lepcha when unstressed, as in mūn-lom [mən-] 'prayer'; doon, similarly, also corresponds to pūn in pūn-di 'queen', and to pā-n in pā-no 'king', Tib. doon-po 'lord', a title and term of address in Kham).

iii. gsol 'bol' skol 'dzol
sâ bâ kâ zâ
offer/serve carpet boil mistake

iv. chos gos tshos thos' dos
cho (earlier sho) ko tsho thyo do/to
religion/book clothing colour hear load
(for chos in the sense of book' cf. also 'cho' in Sikkimese; Sandberg 1895, 43).

snos 'os dngos
pâ wâ/wa nâ
incense suitable reality

For -od in mchod the corresponding Lepcha finals are:
-ât, -et, -e, and -o; e.g. chât phu 'offer a sacrifice' (mchod phul), chet mât tho 'make an offering', che-bo chet, chât-ten, cho-ten 'chorten' [stupa], presumably four different phonetic spellings for the same Tibetan lexical item varying with the dialect of origin from a central to a front vowel quality. It is interesting to note that the vowel sound that Ray heard for northern Khampa in bdun was more than centralized, so that he was obliged to assign it to his /e/ phoneme (front spread), as in /dey/ (1965, 9); it is not surprising, therefore, that he should also have assigned the vowel in bod 'Tibet', yod 'is', and dgon-pa 'monastery' and ga-tshod 'how much' to /e/, as in /pea/, /yea/, /gema/, and /katshe/. From my Khampa informant, Tenzing Namdak, I heard bzos in bzos-song 'made' pronounced with a central spread vowel.

P. Tibetan -ad, -an, -al, -as
The usual Lepcha correspondences with Tibetan -ad, -an, -al, and -as are:

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<td>-as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. -et</td>
<td>-an/-en</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
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</table>

[-et -en -e:/e: -e:]; e.g.

i. gshad khyad ltdad-mo lhad thams-cad; but pad-ma
   shet khyet tet-mo hlet thám-cet pe-ma
tell difference spectacle alloy all lotus
ii. snyan snyan nyan gsan gsan 'gran dran
can/cen nyan nyan dan/den sen ryan kren
eye ear listen cushion hear compete with long for

iii. khral zral zhal bal ryal ryal
khe khe she/jál vé se rye/ryál
revenue seat face wool clear win

iv. sras gnas las dbu-rngas mkhas-pa sdong-ras
se ne le 'u-nge khe dong-re
son cave action fate pillow wise wick
'bras-ljongs; but 'bras-khu
ren-jong [q/r-] byá-khú''
Sikkim rice water

In kren above the Lepcha final is not [ɛn] but [ɛn];
exceptionally, Tibetan -an corresponds to -őn, e.g. sman
món medicine (cf. Sprigg 1966, 8). Exceptionally, Tibetan
-al corresponds to Lepcha -al in nál-lóm 'dream' (mnál-lam),
nyal-hri 'couch' (nyal-khri), ryal/rye 'win' (ryal), and
and jál/she 'mouth' (zhal).

Ray 1965 gives the following comparable forms in /e/
from the Kham dialect of Kanze: (i) /syeq/ bshad tell,
/keq/ skad language, /gepko/ rdad-po old man, /cdeq/ bco-brayad
eighteen; (ii) /zyeq/ gzhan-pa other; (iv) /kandreq/
ga-'dras how.

G. Tibetan -e, -ęgs, -ęng, -ęb(s), -ęm(s), -er, -ed,
-ęn, -ęł, -ęs

The above Tibetan finals correspond with Lepcha as
follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>iv</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-ęg(s)</td>
<td>-ęng</td>
<td>-ęb(s)</td>
<td>-ęm(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>-e (-u, -i)</td>
<td>-ę(k)</td>
<td>-ęng (-ęng)</td>
<td>-ęp</td>
<td>-ęm (-ęm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-ę: -u: -i: -ę:/ęk -ęŋ -ęŋ</td>
<td>-ęp</td>
<td>-ęm -ęm]</td>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i. kh(y)e 'dre nye 'bre dge-ba bde-ba;
kh(y)e re, cre nye fri fe-wó de-wó;
cheap devil near measure merit joy;
tshe rtse; rdo-rje tshu tṣu; ḍor-je, ḍor/dúr-ji rūr-di ([q-])
life neak; ḍorje, jewel Doobdi
ii. legs-ngya 'gegs  'thegs reg
le-gyö  ge(k)  the  rek
good deed obstruct depart touch

iii. 'phreng-ba;  but  seng-ge
ph(y)eng-bo;  sung-gi
rosary  lion

iv. 'thebs gleb
theb  len ([ʔl-])'
grasp press down

v. tshems ltem;  but  sms btsems
 tshem  tem;  sam  tsam
tooth full;  mind sew

vi. gter  ner  gser  guyr-pa  snyi-nyer  sder-ma
ter  nyer  jer  nyer-bo  ci-nye  la-/lá-de
treasure wane gold housekeeper steward plate

vii. phyed  skyed  shed
phyet ([ph-])  k(y)et  shet
half  interest strength

viii. mkhyen  rt'en  bden  chen-po
khyen  ten  den ([-en])  chen-po/-bo
know  established  belief  large

ix. brél-ba  drel  sbrel;  exceptionally  shel
 nyo-wo  kre  byc;  sher
business  mule  fix  together;  glass

x. bzhes  bares-po  nyes;  but  tshes  nges
ie ([ʔ]-)  kre ([t-])  nye;  tsha  nga/â
eat, drink old wrong;  date  truth

rjes
ie
after
Since [ts(h)-], [s-], and [ɲ-] are not, or formerly were not, phonetically possible in close and half-close front-vowel syllables in Lepcha, the back and central vowels [-w:], [-ŋ-], and [-ɔ:] (-y, -a/-ά) have been used in order to preserve the initial [ts-], [tsh-], [s-], or [ɲ-], hence the spellings tshu, tsu, sung-, tsha, and nga/nga above (but, exceptionally -es correspond to Lepcha -o in zo (mdzes-po) 'beautiful').

It is interesting to note that the Lepcha orthographers who wrote -i for Tibetan -e in word-final position ([-i]) chose to follow their ears rather than their eyes; e.g.

T. rdo-rje agrub-nde seng-ge -e [-i]
L. dor-/dur-ji rūp-di sung-zi -i [-i].

H. Tibetan -i, -ig(s), -ing, -ib, -im(s), -ir, -id,
   -in, -il, -is

With the above Tibetan syllable-finals the corresponding Lepcha finals are:

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
T. | -i   | -ig(s)| -ing | -ib  | -im(s) |
L. | -i   | -ik/-i (-uk/-u) | -ing | -ip (-up) | -im (-um) |
[-i:] | -uk/i: | -yk/u: | -y | -ip | -im | -rm |; e.g.

i. sli bzhi mi khyi khri shi dri
li ji/shi mi khyi hri ([th-]) shi ri ([q-])
apple four man dog seat die smell
ri spyi-snyer 'bri/bris
ri ci-nye pi (cf. Sikk. pi; Sandberg 1888/95, 51
mountain steward write

ii. mig rig rīgs; but tshig rtsig-pa vīg gzīga
mīk rīk/ri ri; tshuk tsuk-po yuk za
eye knowledge race; word wall letter see

iii. shing shing plīng snying ring lding-pon
shing shing ling nyīng ring dīng-sān
wood field region/slope heart far subaltern

iv. grib; but srib zhib bzhibs
krip ([t-]) sup shup zhīn/zup
stain darkness flour suck
v. szim khyim khrims
    zum/szim khyum hr(y)im/hryum ([th/tʃ-])
sleep house law

vi vii viii ix x
T. -ir -id -in -il -is
L. -ir (-er) -it -in (-un) -i (-u) -i (-u)
    [-ir -er -it -un -yn -i: -u: -i: -u:] e.g.

vi. btsir
    tser
squeeze

vii. 'khrid znyid brjid
    hrít nyít jít
lead sleep splendour

viii. drin spyin rin-chen;                       but zin
    krín ([t-]) nyín rín-chen;                   sun
kindness glue Rinchen (rin 'value');

ix. dril-bu;                                         but bsil
    hri-bo ([th-]), kri-bo/po ([t-]);           su
bell;                                             wash

x. znyis mkhris-pa phyag-bris;                     but rtsis-pa
    nyi khi-bo chók-/chák-/chá-ri;
    two gall letter;
    tsu-bo astronaut

In section (5) above I pointed out that Lepcha spellings
in u and a/á corresponding to Tibetan e for syllables with
initial [ts(h)], [s], and [ŋ] were due to the phonetic
impossibility of combining those initials with a Lepcha
half-close front spread vowel (e), hence either the syllable-
initial consonants or the vowel ([e]) needed to be modified;
in their case it was the vowel that was accommodated to
those types of consonant. Comparable modifications have
been applied to Lepcha syllables corresponding to Tibetan
finals in -ig(s), -ib, -im, -in, -il, and -is where the
Lepcha syllable has as its initial consonant [j], [ts(h)],
[z], or [s]; in order to preserve the syllable-initial
consonant there has been a change of vowel from i to u
([i, i(:)] to [r, u:]). Similarly, the Lepcha use of e
in (vi) tser corresponding to the Tibetan btsir may be
because [ts-] can combine with [-er] but not with [-ir].

Though the limited powers of combination of syllable-
initial [j], [ts(h)], [z], and [s] can be invoked to explain
some instances of -uk, -up, -um, and -u ([-yk, -xp, -sm, -yn, -w:]) as the corresponding Lepcha syllable finals to -ig, -igs, -ib, -im, -in, -il, and -ig, that explanation will not serve for the -yum of such lexical items as khyum and hryum ([tʃ]) and the -up of shup (Tib. zhib). As far as khyum is concerned, Benedict wishes to treat the Lepcha -yum as a reflex of PST *-yum, with -im as the Tibetan reflex and -ıg as the Chinese (personal correspondence), the Lepcha being, therefore, the most conservative of the three. My main reason for resisting the significance that he gives to the Lepcha form here is that I believe khyum to be less than three of four hundred years old in the language. I take khyum to have been introduced into Lepcha to account for the substantial stone-built structures that the Lepchas found early Tibetan immigrants introducing into Sikkim, houses appropriate to the much higher altitudes of Tibet, with its much colder climate, from Yatung, for example, in the Chumbi valley, at 9,950 feet. Such houses are well suited to areas of Tibetan colonization in northern Sikkim, where Lachen and Lachung are both at 8,800 feet; but for the warmer climate of the lower southern valleys, ranging from Peshok (2,600), Rongli (2,700), Rhenock (3,200), and Kalimpong (4,100) to the three former capitals of Sikkim, Pemionchi (6,910), Tumlong (5,290), and Gangtok (5,800), it was the Lepcha li, which could be easily dismantled to meet the needs of a semi-nomadic population, that was the more suitable type of dwelling.

Tentatively, I would account for the the -yu- ([-jy-]) of khyum and hryum, and the -u- of shup, as a fairly creditable phonetic approximation to the somewhat centralized close to half-close front vowel ([i]) that I have noted for Sikkimese Tibetan in, for example, [chum], [thum], [zim], and [jim] (khyim, khrims, gzim, nyl-ma), as opposed to the close front vowel ([i]) that I have noted for original Lepcha lexical items spelt with -im and -ip ([-im, -ip]); e.g. 'a-nim skirt, h(y)ip shave.

For Khampa forms corresponding to Classical Tibetan forms spelt with -i(-) Ray 1965 gives:

i. /syi/ shi die, /zyi/ bzi four (Sikkimese zhi;
Sandberg 1888/95, 59), /ra/ mountain ri, /cha/ khyi
dog;

ii. /sylq/ shiq house, /nyic/ mig eyes;

iii. /nyhing/ snying heart; vii. /nyic/ snyid sleep.

The degree to which the Lepcha language has admitted loan-words from Tibetan might appear from my lists of examples to be very great indeed; but it should be borne in mind that it varies with the spoken dialect and with the written style. The two dialects associated with Sikkim and with the court life of the Sikkim ruling family, the Ilamo and the Renjongmo dialects, contain loan-words, especially honorific words (cf. Mainwaring 1876, 133-5), that were unfamiliar to my informant K.P. Tamsang, a
Tamsangmo-speaker from Bong Bustee, near Kalimpong: the Kalimpong area was under Bhutanese administration from approximately 1707 to the end of the Anglo-Bhutan War, in 1865. Further, Mainwaring included in his Dictionary words from the Lepcha Buddhist text ta-she sung and from the Gospel translations that may well be confined to literary usage, especially where the translation is from a Tibetan original. The number of loan-words that I have cited in my examples is, therefore, likely to be misleadingly large.

NOTES


2. Sikhim 1894, 4.

3. From Sikhim 1894 (257-8) I calculate the total population of the five monasteries to which Lepchas could be admitted as 113; but probably a fair proportion of these monks would have been of Tibetan stock (Sikhim Bhutiyas).

4. Cf. de Körös 1834, 1-2, 17; on the syllabic status of ɾi, ɾu, ɾu (ka, kha, ga), etc. in an otherwise alphabetic writing system see Sprigg 1978, 185.


7. This turned relationship was first brought to my notice by my former colleague Burton-Page, Lecturer in Hindi and Nepali, at the School of Oriental and African Studies; later I found the same relationship published in Haarh 1959. I cannot, however, follow Haarh in attributing this process to Chinese influence: 'the old Lepcha script was written in vertical columns, in Chinese style from the right to the left, while the single word was written in Indo-Tibeto-Burman style in the normal horizontal direction' (110); and 'the old Lepcha script was shaped at a time when the Lepchas were under Chinese influence' (113). There is no evidence that the Lepchas, in the impenetrable forests of Sikkim, south of the Himalayas, were ever in contact with Chinese, except very indirectly, from the 16th century onwards, through immigrants from eastern Tibet.

8. Cf. de Körös 1834, 21, and the log-yig drug (ta, tha, ga, na, ge, and kga of Das 1902, xix; for an undated gloss on the sryal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long referring to na-log, tha-log, and thal-log see Kiiler 1976, 90, 92.

9. This device therefore follows the principle used in representing the assimilated initial clusters of Greek: ὡ, ἡ, ἥ.

10. Hodgson's collection of Lepcha books as made in the
East India Company's newly established settlement of Darjeeling in the 40s of the last century, and was deposited in the India Office Library in 1864. The books, approximately 27 in number, have been bound in volumes 77, 79, 80, and 81 of the Collection. They are probably the oldest extant.

11. Cf. also Sprigg 1982, 19-20; the Sikkim royal family traced its origin to Minyak, Menyak, or Menya, the valley of the lower Yna, or Yalung, to the south-east of Darchendo (Tachienlu), between Lithang and Derge (Sikkim 1894, 7, note; cf. also Teichman 1922, 4.

12. But [-5:] when the syllable-initial consonant has nasality, e.g. mo, nyo; cf. Sprigg to appear.

13. It is noteworthy that Ray 1965 does not report comparable lip-rounding for the Tibetan dialect of Bathang in southern Kham, though it is considerably nearer to Sikkim than Kanze is.

14. Commonly pronounced [ʔɔjɔk] and [θɔʔ] in the Kalimpong area, whence the spellings 'yúk, thún; cf. Mainwaring 1876: 'The Lepchas are apt to pronounce this letter [θ] as y, and hence when writing, to confound it with ʤ, this error should be avoided and corrected in the Lepchas' (9).

15. Cf. Sikkim 1894: 'The Lepchas and Bhuteas call them [the Limbus] Tshong (which in the vernacular means 'a merchant' and the Limbus were the chief cattle-merchants in Sikkim)' (37). This etymology, though doubtful, seems to me more likely than the alternative suggestion gtsang 'Tsang', because gtsang should have given a Lepcha spelling tson ('tsɔŋ).

16. The final -yú of the Lepcha lyric and têyú may be an attempt at a phonetic spelling for the close front rounded vowel ([y]) of lus and dus as pronounced in the Lhasa dialect; cf. also thyo for thos (Lhasa [θɔː]) at (E) below.

17. Cf. also Sikkimese [beja?] 'paddy', from my own notes, and, from Walsh 1905, Sikkimese and Tromowa bya-su 'bras-sus' 'grain (pardche)' (19).

18. The Lepcha syllable-initial glottal-plosive clusters are not distinguished orthographically from simple initials apart from [ʔj-] versus [j-] ([y- v. y-]; they comprise: [ʔm-, ʔn-, ʔl-, ʔs-, ʔr-] (Sprigg 1966, 6-8).

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