



Hong Kong Linguistics Olympiad  
香港語言學奧林匹克

en

## Seventh Hong Kong Linguistics Olympiad

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

### Problems

- Listen carefully to the invigilators and follow their instructions.
- The contest lasts four hours. The problem set consists of five pages and it contains four problems. You may solve the problems in any order.
- You are not allowed to use any electronic device, written or printed material, or other external sources of information during the contest.
- If you have a question about any of the problems, write it on a piece of draft paper and hand it to an invigilator. The invigilator will consult with the jury and you will receive an answer back written on the same piece of paper.
- Rules for writing out solutions:
  - Do not copy the statements of the problems.
  - Write down your solution to each problem on a separate sheet or sheets.
  - Use only the front side of the answer sheet.
  - On each sheet, indicate your name, the number of the problem, and the page sequence of that sheet within the problem, e.g.:

Name:	...
Problem #	4
Page #	1 / 3

Name:	...
Problem #	4
Page #	2 / 3

Name:	...
Problem #	4
Page #	3 / 3

(meaning first, second, and third sheet out of three for the fourth problem.)

Otherwise, your work may be mislaid or misattributed.

- Unless stated differently, you should describe any patterns or rules you identified in the data. Otherwise, your solution will not be awarded full marks.

**The problem set must be kept confidential until it is published on the official HKLO website. Do not disclose nor discuss the problems online until that date.**

**Problem 1 (25 points).** Here are some sentences in Kuchean and their English translations:

1. **arañc ritāwa kuṣaimem ṣpā tukāmai**  
*I sought the heart and hid from the village.*
2. **ṣamāne plāc tukāskām sruketār ṣpā**  
*The monk conceals the word and dies.*
3. **eñkweṃ pālskāmo**  
*We remembered the men.*
4. **kattāke kuṣaim-ñ kātka**  
*The house owner crossed my villages.*
5. **śamaški-me srukānte**  
*Our boys died.*
6. **pyāpyaim-ne kolmaine ritanau trikemar ṣpā**  
*I seek his flowers on the boat and go astray.*
7. **kektseñām kaumaine klāyāskem**  
*We drop the bodies on the pond.*
8. **kattāki śamaškem trāppāskem**  
*The house owners trip the boy.*
9. **eñkwi plantānte ṣamānem ṣpā klāyare**  
*The men rejoiced and dropped the monk.*
10. **arañce-ne pālskanām-ñ**  
*His heart remembers me.*
11. **eñkwe trikāskām-me plontotār ṣpā**  
*The man misleads us and rejoices.*
12. **plācāmmem trikānte kattākem ṣpā oskaine sraukamo**  
*We went astray from the words and killed the house owners in the house.*

(a) Translate into English:

13. **plāci-ñ arañcām traikare**
14. **pyāpyo plānta-ne**
15. **kaumai kuṣaine-ne kātkanau**
16. **kektseñ-me ritanem kolmaiṃmem ṣpā troppomtār**
17. **kolmaiñ oskaiṃne tukentār**

(b) Translate into Kuchean:

18. *I concealed my body.*
19. *The men sought the boy and crossed the house.*
20. *The flowers fall from our boat and die in the ponds.*
21. *The monk gladdens the house owner.*
22. *The hearts remember him and rejoice.*

△ Kuchean, or Tocharian B, belongs to the Indo-European language family. It was spoken in the Tarim Basin of modern-day China, with manuscripts dating from 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

ā and ä are vowels. m, ñ, ś, and ṣ are consonants.

—Tam Lok Hang

**Problem 2 (25 points).** Here are some verb forms in Nuxalk and their English translations:

<b>mulmap</b>	<i>you<sub>pl</sub> dive</i>	<b>?ipwtit</b>	<i>they hide them</i>
<b>cpanu</b>	<i>you<sub>sg</sub> wipe</i>	<b>cptiap</b>	<i>they wipe you<sub>pl</sub></i>
<b>?ayaɬc</b>	<i>I walk</i>	<b>?aɬnapic</b>	<i>I know him</i>
<b>kxac</b>	<i>I see</i>	<b>slqtuɬx</b>	<i>you<sub>sg</sub> find us</i>
<b>?aɬnapcx</b>	<i>you<sub>sg</sub> know me</i>	<b>kxis</b>	<i>he sees him</i>
<b>?ipwtuɬnu</b>	<i>we hide you<sub>sg</sub></i>	<b>mustix</b>	<i>you<sub>sg</sub> feel them</i>
<b>musiɬ</b>	<i>we feel him</i>	<b>slqct</b>	<i>they find me</i>

(a) Match the following Nuxalk verb forms to their English translations:

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. <b>?awlatup</b>    | A. <i>we make him come</i>                 |
| 2. <b>musatums</b>    | B. <i>you<sub>pl</sub> make us walk</i>    |
| 3. <b>ckttuɬ</b>      | C. <i>you<sub>pl</sub> make him follow</i> |
| 4. <b>?ayaɬtumuɬp</b> | D. <i>we make you<sub>sg</sub> go</i>      |
| 5. <b>λaptumuɬnu</b>  | E. <i>he makes me feel</i>                 |

(b) The verb form **?awlsap** contains an error. Briefly explain why and translate the corrected verb form into English.

(c) Translate into English:

- |                   |                       |                |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 6. <b>λaptumx</b> | 7. <b>slqatumuɬap</b> | 8. <b>cpip</b> | 9. <b>kxtis</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|

(d) Translate into Nuxalk:

- |   |                                      |                              |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10. <i>you<sub>pl</sub> hide</i>        | 12. <i>I follow them</i>             | 14. <i>they feel him</i>     |
| 11. <i>I make you<sub>sg</sub> hide</i> | 13. <i>you<sub>sg</sub> know him</i> | 15. <i>they make me dive</i> |

△ Nuxalk is an endangered language of the Salish family spoken in the Bella Coola region of Canada.

? , ɬ , and λ are consonants.

—Faraz Ahmed

**Problem 3 (25 points).** Below are some equalities written in Meyah:

- a.  $\text{egéns} \times \text{setka kuṅkob cinjá erfens} + \text{setka egeka noba tohkuru} = \text{setka tohkuru} = 40$
- b.  $\text{cinjá} \times \text{cinjá orfomu} = \text{setka tohkuru} = 40$
- c.  $\text{egeka} + \text{setka kuṅkob jah enama erfens} = \text{setka kuṅkob jah enama orfomu} = 13$
- d.  $\text{setka kuṅkob jah enama erfens} + \text{cinjá tohkuru} = \text{setka egeka} = 20$
- e.  $\text{tohkuru} + \text{setka egeka noba erfeka} = \text{setka egeka noba cinjá erfens}$
- f.  $\text{setka} + \text{cinjá erfeka} = \text{setka kuṅkob cinjá erfeka}$

(a) Write the above equalities in numerals.

(b) Write in digits:

- g. **orgomu**
- h. **setka cinjá erfeka**
- i. **setka egeka noba cinjá**
- j. **setka kuṅkob jah enama tohkuru**

(c) Write in Meyah: 6, 12, 19, 28, 90.

△ Meyah is an East Bird's Head language spoken by 16,000-20,000 people in North Manokwari, Indonesia.

◌́ in **á** and **é** denotes rising pitch.

—Farhan Ishraq

The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.

**Problem 4 (25 points).** Here are some Classical Tibetan verb forms and all of their possible English translations:

<b>sos</b>	<i>feed!</i>	<b>dkrol</b>	<i>will play</i>
<b>byon</b>	<i>travelled, will travel, travel!</i>	<b>phud</b>	<i>pulled off, pull off!</i>
<b>bza</b>	<i>will eat</i>	<b>khol</b>	<i>use as a servant!, spin!</i>
<b>dbrad</b>	<i>will scratch</i>	<b>gtad</b>	<i>will lean on</i>
<b>mñan</b>	<i>listened, will listen</i>	<b>bkru</b>	<i>will bathe</i>
<b>phral</b>	<i>separated</i>	<b>bsad</b>	<i>killed</i>
<b>bkal</b>	<i>spun, will spin</i>		

(a) Translate into English:

- |                 |                |               |                 |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>bkrol</b> | 3. <b>zos</b>  | 5. <b>gso</b> | 7. <b>phrol</b> |
| 2. <b>btad</b>  | 4. <b>dpud</b> | 6. <b>ñon</b> |                 |

All forms only have one possible translation.

(b) Translate into Classical Tibetan:

- |                             |                          |                     |                     |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 8. <i>used as a servant</i> | 10. <i>will separate</i> | 12. <i>bathe!</i>   | 14. <i>scratch!</i> |
| 9. <i>bathed</i>            | 11. <i>will kill</i>     | 13. <i>lean on!</i> |                     |

△ Classical Tibetan, also known as Written Tibetan, is a Sino-Tibetan language of the Bodic branch. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it has been the main literary language of Tibet and associated regions. Traditionally, Tibetan is written in the Tibetan script, but in this problem it has been transliterated into Latin script.

**ñ**  $\approx$  *ny* in *canyon*; an **h** after a consonant indicates aspiration.

—Wong Tok Shing Henry

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**Editors:** Farhan Ishraq (editor-in-chief), Vlad A. Neacșu (technical editor), Tung-Le Pan, Tam Lok Hang, Wong Tok Shing Henry

Good luck!