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Rahul Sankrityayan, Tsetan Phuntsog and Tibetan Textbooks for Ladakh in 1933

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Rahul Sankrityayan, Tsetan Phuntsog, and Tibetan Textbooks for Ladakh in 1933

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Historically, Ladakh has shared a common literary heritage with Tibet. The spoken language is closely related to Tibetan and in earlier times both Buddhist religious texts and administrative documents were written in Tibetan script. However, the region has been politically aligned with South Asia since the mid-19th century. Nearly half its indigenous population are Muslims, and its inhabitants have been exposed to a range of other linguistic influences, notably from Urdu, Hindi and English. Successive generations of local scholars have therefore struggled with the question how best to preserve and promote Ladakh's literary connection with the wider Tibetan Buddhist cultural arena.

In this essay we show how the Indian scholar and social activist Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963) sought to meet this challenge, working together with his Ladakhi colleague Tsetan Phuntsog (1907-1973). In 1933 the two men compiled a set of four readers and a grammar. The books were innovative in that—unlike traditional Tibetan educational materials—they were graded

according to the levels of achievement of children studying in different classes. Moreover, they were printed by the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta (Kolkata) using a font developed by a Christian missionary. The contents included original articles and poetry by Ladakhi authors, as well as selections from Aesop's fables, local folksongs and extracts from the work of the Tibetan lama Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltzen (1182-1251). The language is literary Tibetan rather than Ladakhi colloquial.

The essay is based on a close examination of the readers and the grammar, as well as associated archival materials. It begins with a review of earlier Western-style Tibetan-language textbooks before presenting a detailed analysis of the contents of the 1933 books. In conclusion, we review more recent linguistic developments in Ladakh. Ladakhi textbooks in Tibetan script are still aligned with literary Tibetan rather than the spoken language.

Keywords: Ladakh, education, textbooks, modernization, Tibetan, language.

Introduction

In 1933 the Indian scholar and social activist Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963) compiled a set of four Tibetan-language readers and a grammar for use in Ladakhi schools, together with his Ladakhi colleague, Tsetan Phuntsog (Tshe brtan phun tshogs, 1908-1973). The readers contain a mix of material from Western, Indian, Ladakhi, and Tibetan sources. They include simple essays about 'air' and 'water,' selections from Aesop's fables, Indian folk stories, biographies of famous people in Ladakhi and Tibetan history, poems by Ladakhi authors, and extracts from the *Treasury of Elegant Sayings* by the Tibetan lama Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya paN+Di ta kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 1182-1251).

These books represent a distinctive literary and scholarly achievement that is representative of a particular period in the history of Ladakh. They also touch on a number of wider themes that are still highly topical. These include the relationship between religion and language: to what extent should written Tibetan be seen as a language for Buddhists rather than members of other communities? What is the most appropriate style of writing in a region like Ladakh, where the colloquial language differs markedly from literary Tibetan? How should this language be taught to school children?

To set the books in their historical context, we begin this essay with a review of earlier Tibetan schoolbooks published in British India, and then discuss the circumstances that led to Sankrityayan's involvement with the Ladakh textbooks. In the second part of the essay, we examine the contents of the readers and the grammar. Finally, we briefly review linguistic developments in Ladakh since their publication. Our overall argument is that the 'hybrid' quality of the textbooks represents a creative response to the cultural challenges of twentieth century modernization in Ladakh. However, even now, these challenges are at best only partly resolved.

Earlier Publications by Moravian Missionaries

To our knowledge, the first Western-style Tibetan textbooks for schoolchildren were prepared by German missionaries from the Moravian church, who worked in the Western Himalaya from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.¹ As will be seen, these textbooks formed part of a 'lineage' to which the 1933 readers ultimately belonged, although they of course drew on other cultural antecedents as well.

The Moravian textbooks were part of a broader literary project, including the translation of the Bible into Tibetan and the preparation of Christian tracts in Tibetan, as well

as the compilation of dictionaries and other research publications for an international audience. Heinrich August Jäschke (1817-1883), who was based at the Moravian mission at Kyelang in Lahul (India) from 1857 to 1868, was the leading pioneer in all these activities.² At the outset, he had to decide on a set of linguistic questions that still have contemporary resonance. The missionaries wanted to reach the widest possible audience, including lay people, across the Tibetan cultural world. So, what form of language was most appropriate?³ In Western Europe, Protestant Christians had focused on Bible translations that were close to the language spoken by ordinary people, as opposed to the Latin texts that were accessible only to an ecclesiastical elite. In the Himalayan region, the problem was that the spoken languages of Lahul (Bunan, Tinan and Manchad) had not been written down and were, in any case, spoken by only a few thousand people. A similar problem existed in Ladakh, where the spoken language is related to Tibetan but nevertheless distinct.⁴

Jäschke therefore decided to translate the Bible and other Christian texts into a simple form of literary Tibetan, even though this was not the spoken language in the areas where the Moravians worked, in the hope that this would be broadly accessible to educated lay people and monks across the Tibetan cultural region. However, he retained a close interest in regional linguistic variations, as reflected in the entries in his 1881 *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, and he translated part of the Moravian liturgy for Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter) into colloquial Ladakhi.

From the 1860s onwards, the British Indian authorities sponsored a series of Moravian schools in Lahul. The British wished to spread knowledge of Urdu, which was then one of the main languages of administration in northern India. The Moravians supervised local teachers who were competent in Urdu, and Jäschke prepared *An Introduction to the Hindi and Urdu Languages for Tibetans* for people who were literate in the Tibetan script but not the other two languages. At the same time, the Moravian schools also taught what might now be called basic literacy in Tibetan. Jäschke's other publications included *Ka kha'i dpe cha*, a beginner's guide to writing Tibetan (the title refers to the first two letters in the Tibetan alphabet, the equivalent of 'ABC'). All these books were written out by hand and printed on the Kyelang mission's lithographic press, the first time this technology had been used in the Western Himalaya.

A further challenge was to find appropriate reading materials for school textbooks. Paradoxically, in view of their religious objectives, the missionaries here played a secularising role.⁵ At this time, the best-known written texts in

Tibetan were associated with Buddhism and, understandably, the missionaries thought these were inappropriate for their purposes. Alongside their religious tracts, they therefore began to develop a series of secular texts for educational use.

An early example was Jäschke's *Bod nas phyi gling du 'gro ba'i lo rgyus* (Story of the Journey from Tibet to Europe), about his return journey from Lahul to Germany in 1869.⁶ In Langka (now Sri Lanka), he was able to go ashore. He noted that, according to Tibetan books, Langka was inhabited by female devils who ate foreign travelers, and he made a point of assuring his readers that these creatures did not really exist. With this exception, the booklet is devoid of overt preaching. His colleagues in Lahul subsequently printed it as a textbook (Jäschke 1870), and it was still in use in Moravian schools half a century later.

After his return to Germany, Jäschke continued work both on his Tibetan dictionary and on the Tibetan translation of the New Testament. Unlike his earlier publications, these were to be printed using moveable font, and he worked with Unger, a Berlin-based company, to develop a new font for the Tibetan *dbu can* script ('headed letters', the script normally used in religious texts and other formal publications). As a model, he used a fine text with silver letters against a dark background held by the State Library in Berlin (Schubert 1950: 298; cf. Halkias 2020). Walravens (2015) believes that this text may have been a manuscript edition of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom) in 25,000 stanzas that had been collected in Siberia in the early eighteenth century. The font was subsequently adopted by

other publishing houses, notably the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta, which later published the first edition of the textbooks by Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog.⁷

In 1885, the Moravians opened a station in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, and soon started a mission school. Like their predecessors, they faced a shortage of material that could be used as school readers. The Moravian missionary doctor, Karl Marx (1857-1891), solved the problem by drawing on the fruits of historical research he had been conducting with the Ladakhi scholar, Munshi Tsering Palgyas (Munshi Tshe ring dpal rgyas, c.1830-c.1920).⁸ When Marx found that there was no written history of the invasions of Ladakh by the Dogra general Zorawar Singh between 1834 and 1841, he asked Munshi Palgyas to prepare one (Francke 1910: 539).⁹ As soon as the draft was ready, Marx had it printed on the mission's lithographic press for use as a school textbook.

Marx died of typhus in 1891 but his successor, August Hermann Francke (1870-1930), who arrived in Ladakh in 1896, continued his historical research and educational activity.¹⁰ Francke agreed with Jäschke's strategy of concentrating on classical Tibetan for the main Bible translation, and his contributions in this area were a major part of his life's work. However, he also prepared translations of the Gospel of St. Mark into Ladakhi, as well as the languages of Lahul. In order to study the colloquial language, he started collecting Ladakhi folksongs and folkstories (e.g. Francke 1902). He published a set of these stories for use as school textbooks on the Leh mission's lithographic press, together with a second book of fables (Francke 1903a, 1903b).¹¹ He

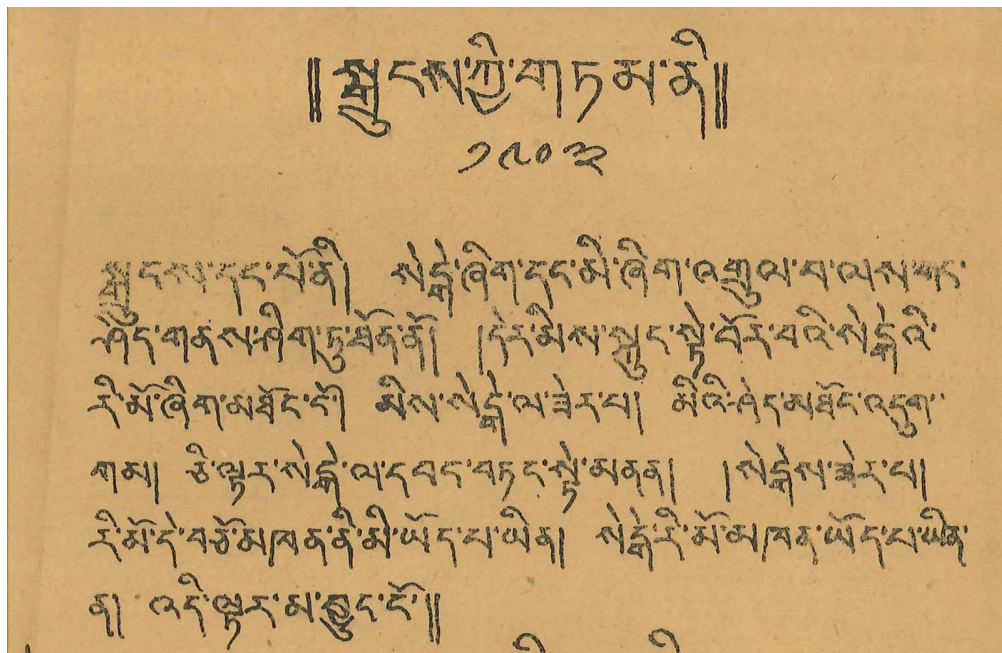


Figure 1. The first section of *sGrungs kyi gtam ni* (Francke 1903b), illustrating the style and format of the Moravian publications on the mission lithographic press.

(Courtesy of Moravian Church House, London)

also included folkstories in the *La dwags kyi ag bar* ('Ladakh Newspaper'), a monthly publication produced by the Moravian mission between 1904 and 1910.¹² As Francke (1906: 383) pointed out, the paper represented a new, more secular form of literature that had hitherto been unknown in Ladakh.¹³

Joseph Gergan (Yo seb dge rgan, 1878-1946)¹⁴ worked closely with Francke. Gergan served as a teacher at the Moravian Mission School in Leh from the 1890s until 1921, when he was ordained as one of the first two Ladakhi Christian ministers. Alongside his pastoral work, Gergan collected Ladakhi folkstories and folksongs, wrote his own expositions of Christianity from a 'Tibetan' perspective, and embarked on a translation of the Old Testament into literary Tibetan. He sent his drafts to Francke who in 1922 became a part-time lecturer at the University of Berlin and, from 1925, the first professor of Tibetan.



Figure 2. Joseph Gergan in the 1930s.

(Moravian Church House, London)

In the same period, Gergan produced a Tibetan grammar for adults, as well as a revised version of Jäschke's guide to Tibetan writing and a set of textbooks for use in primary schools (Gergan 1921a, 1921b, 1921c). The first of these complements Jäschke's primer, adding material that it had not covered, so that the two books in effect form a single whole. Gergan's textbook for the third primary class is a collection of moral tales, drawn from Indo-Tibetan tradition. For example, the tenth chapter is *Ro dngos grub*

can gyi sgrungs (The stories of the corpse dNgos grub can), a Tibetan series that has close parallels with similar stories in the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* of Śivadāsa.¹⁵ The moral principles of these stories are universal: there are no sources in the textbooks that are explicitly Christian. All these publications were handwritten on to lithographic plates and printed on the Kyelang press in a 'landscape' format echoing the format of traditional Tibetan loose-leaf books (*dpe cha*).¹⁶ As will be seen, these are the direct predecessors of the 1933 textbooks.

Tibetan Textbooks from the Eastern Himalaya

A second, parallel strand in the history of Tibetan textbook production comes from Darjeeling and Kalimpong in the Eastern Himalayan foothills. As Emma Martin (2016: 87) notes, these two towns served as cosmopolitan "contact zones" between Tibet and British India at a time when access to Lhasa was restricted. These contacts facilitated the production of a series of Tibetan dictionaries, grammars, and textbooks. The authors included both Westerners and—often far more importantly—a range of local interlocutors.¹⁷ A full survey of these publications is beyond the scope of this article but, since Sankrityayan studied Tibetan in part from Western sources, a selection is included here.

In 1874, the Bengal Government opened the Bhutia Boarding School in Darjeeling to provide an education to locally-based Tibetans and Sikkimese (Waller 1990: 193). A young Bengali, Sarat Chandra Das (1849-1917), was appointed headmaster. Other early members of staff included Ugyen Gyatso (U rgyan mgya tsho, 1851-1915), a monk from Pemayangtse monastery in Sikkim. With Ugyen Gyatso's assistance, Das made a series of journeys: first to Sikkim and, in 1879 and 1881-1882, to Tibet. Over the following decades, he established a reputation as one of the leading India-based scholars of Tibetan. His publications included a *Tibetan-English Dictionary* (1902), which built on Jäschke's earlier work, as well as an *An Introduction to the Grammar of the Tibetan Language* (1915).

In 1891, the Bhutia Boarding School merged with Darjeeling's English Middle School to form the Government High School. Ugyen Gyatso remained a key figure in Darjeeling scholarly and educational circles, and supervised the preparation of at least four Tibetan Primers for the school. The first two were prepared by Lama Wangdan (dBang ldan) in the late 1880s and reprinted with English translations in 1902. To date, we have not seen the third primer. The fourth volume was a Tibetan grammar produced by Lama Wangchen Dorje (dBang chen rdo rje), which was first published in 1893 and followed by a revised edition in 1924. As will be seen, this grammar was one of the sourc-

es of the grammar produced by Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog in 1933.

Early twentieth-century linguistic guides included the 1903 *Tibetan Manual* compiled by Vincent Henderson, a Yatung-based officer of the Chinese Customs, and edited by the Norwegian missionary Edward Amundsen. Sankrityayan later used this in his own studies of Tibetan (Chudal 2015: 68). In 1912 H. B. Hannah, a British judge, published *A Grammar of the Tibetan Language*, having studied Tibetan with the Sikkimese scholar Kazi Dawa Samdup (1868–1923).¹⁸ Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog acknowledge this work in their own grammar. Both these books were published by the Baptist Mission Press.

In parallel, other Western missionaries in Darjeeling started producing their own textbooks. These include a *Tibetan Primer* by the Finnish missionary Kaarlo Waismaa (1911). In 1917 the Kalimpong-based Christian Dorje Tharchin (rDo rje mthar byin, often known as Babu Tharchin, 1890–1876) built on this earlier work with his *Bod skad kyi sgrog dpe gnyis pa yon tan nyer 'phel. Tibetan Second Book*.¹⁹ Again, both of these books were printed at the Baptist Mission Press. Tharchin had been brought up as a Moravian in Poo (Kinnaur) and, both at this time and later, he helped review the Moravians' draft Tibetan Bible translations (Bray 1991; Fader 2009: 543–616). However, his textbook does not seem to have influenced the Ladakh ones.

Demands for Educational Reform in Ladakh in the 1930s

In the early 1930s, the need for educational reform in Ladakh came to the forefront as an indirect consequence of a wider set of political and social controversies in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). In 1931 Hindu-Muslim clashes broke out in the Kashmir Valley, and these led to appointment of a Commission of Inquiry under the chairmanship of a British official, Bertram J. Glancy. The Commission's mandate was to investigate the grievances of the various religious communities, and the newly formed Kashmir-Raj Bodhi Mahasabha (KRBMS) spoke for the state's Buddhists.²⁰ All the KRBMS's leadership were recent converts to Buddhism from among the Kashmir Pandit community. However, they also took on the task of representing the 40,000 Ladakhi Buddhists and presented two memoranda to the Commission highlighting a range of economic and social issues, including the need to raise educational standards.

The KRBMS put a particular focus on education. Urdu was the standard medium of instruction in schools across the state, and it argued that Buddhist children were at a disadvantage because they were taught in a language that was not their mother tongue (a point that applied equally to Ladakhi Muslim children). This was in spite of the fact

that “printed text-books for all Primary-school subjects do exist in Tibetan and have been utilized with good results by the Moravian Mission at Leh” (KRBMS 1935: 11). Among its other demands, the KRBMS urged the J&K government to issue a new set of textbooks in Tibetan.

The Glancy Commission's final report accepted the need for improved educational facilities in the state as a whole, especially for the Muslim population, along with special provisions for Ladakh:

A complaint is made by the Buddhist community that sufficient instruction is not given in Bodhi, the common language of Ladakh. It appears that the Bodhi language is now taught in Primary classes and is optional in Middle classes. There is, however, a justifiable complaint in the fact that Bodhi text books are not provided. This defect should be remedied as soon as possible; it is understood that text books have actually been prepared in the State and merely require printing in the Bodhi language (J&K Government 1932: 17).

This paragraph has a wider significance because, to our knowledge, it marks the first time that ‘Bodhi’ was used in an official publication to represent the “common language of Ladakh.” ‘Bodhi’ appears to be an anglicised version of an Urdu/Hindi word that is itself derived from the Tibetan *Bod* (Tibet). Earlier variations such as ‘Bhutti,’ ‘Bhudi,’ and ‘Bhotia (Balti)’ had appeared in the 1901 census. Here, the use of the word ‘Bodhi’ has a special resonance because it is also a homonym for the Buddhist term for the knowledge that leads to enlightenment. This association reinforces the perception that the language of Ladakh, particularly the written language, is for Buddhists, and not necessarily for other communities.

It is not clear whether the Commission's reference to textbooks “that had actually been prepared” refers to the Moravian books or to another set that existed in draft. At all events, it still remained for the books to be finalized and printed. It is here that Rahul Sankrityayan made his most distinctive contribution.

Sankrityayan's Journey to Leh in 1933

Born into a Brahmin family in eastern Uttar Pradesh in 1893, Sankrityayan first visited Ladakh in 1926. By that time, he had been a Vaishnavite sadhu, an Arya Samaj activist, and a Congress party politician.²¹ After leaving Ladakh, he again changed course and studied Buddhism in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) before embarking on a fifteen-month journey to Tibet in 1928 and 1929, to look for the Sanskrit originals of Buddhist texts that had been lost in India. In June 1930, he was ordained as a Buddhist monk in Cey-

lon. In the course of his Buddhist studies, he developed a close association with the Maha Bodhi Society founded by the Ceylonese Buddhist reformer Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933). In 1931 and 1932 he travelled across Europe in the service of the Maha Bodhi Society, and met several leading Western scholars of Buddhism in England, France, and Germany.

These varied life experiences equipped Sankrityayan for the role he was to play in Ladakh in three important respects. First, although there is no evidence that he was a skilled writer of original Tibetan texts, he was a critical scholar who was able to draw on both indigenous and Western sources in his study of the language. Secondly, his experience as a social and political activist had given him organizational skills. Thirdly, he had a deep interest in education. Here, it may be noted that one of the strategies of the Arya Samaj was to use modern print media and Western educational models to promote a modernist form of Hinduism as a form of defense against both Christian religious influence and Islam.²² Dharmapala had made similar use of modern print media and educational strategies in promoting what Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 202-240) describe as 'Protestant Buddhism.'

Sankrityayan's activities in Ladakh may have drawn a degree of inspiration from both his past association with the Arya Samaj and his present engagement with the Maha Bodhi Society. However, the events that led him to

Ladakh in 1933 were largely a matter of chance. Always an inveterate traveler as well as an indefatigable worker, Sankrityayan hoped to spend the summer of 1933 escaping the heat of the Indian plains while working on his Hindi translation of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (the 'middle-length collection' of the discourses of the Buddha).²³ Originally, he had hoped to travel to Gilgit, but the British Joint Commissioner in Kashmir denied him a permit, while allowing him to travel to Ladakh instead.

While in Srinagar, Sankrityayan met the KRBMS, presumably as a result of their shared connections with the Maha Bodhi Society, and, together with the German monk Anagarika Govinda, "rendered invaluable service to the Buddhist cause by delivering highly edifying lectures" (KRBMS 1935: 4). The KRBMS would no doubt have briefed him on the findings of the Glancy Commission as well as their own campaign for Ladakhi educational reform.

Travelling together with Govinda, Sankrityayan arrived in Leh on 25 June 1933. He soon came into contact with Joseph Gergan, with whom he shared historical and literary interests, and expressed admiration for his "very profound knowledge of the culture, language and history of Tibet" (Sankrityayan 1950: 189). He also met other local leaders, and on 5 July wrote to his brother saying that he had agreed to take on the project of compiling Tibetan-language textbooks for use in Ladakhi schools (ibid 2011: 164). The first primer was already finished, and a second primer would



Figure 3. Rahul Sankrityayan (seated), taken in 1934 during his second visit to Tibet.

(Courtesy of Jaya Sankrityayana)

also be prepared while he was in Ladakh. The plan was to have the books printed in Darjeeling or Calcutta.

In the same letter, using English terminology, he wrote that “A Ladakh Buddhist Education Society is being established here” (ibid 2011: 164). On 15 July 1933, Sankrityayan (2011: 166) reported, “Today, a rather small association called the Laddākh-bauddh-śikṣa samiti was formed.”²⁴ All the Society’s office bearers were Ladakhis but Sankrityayan acted as an advisor. The President was Jigmed Dadul, the King of Ladakh. Kalon Lobzang Tsewang, a member of one of the leading families of Leh, was Vice-President. The Secretary was Nono Tsetan Phuntsog, who was to be Sankrityayan’s principal collaborator in the textbook project.

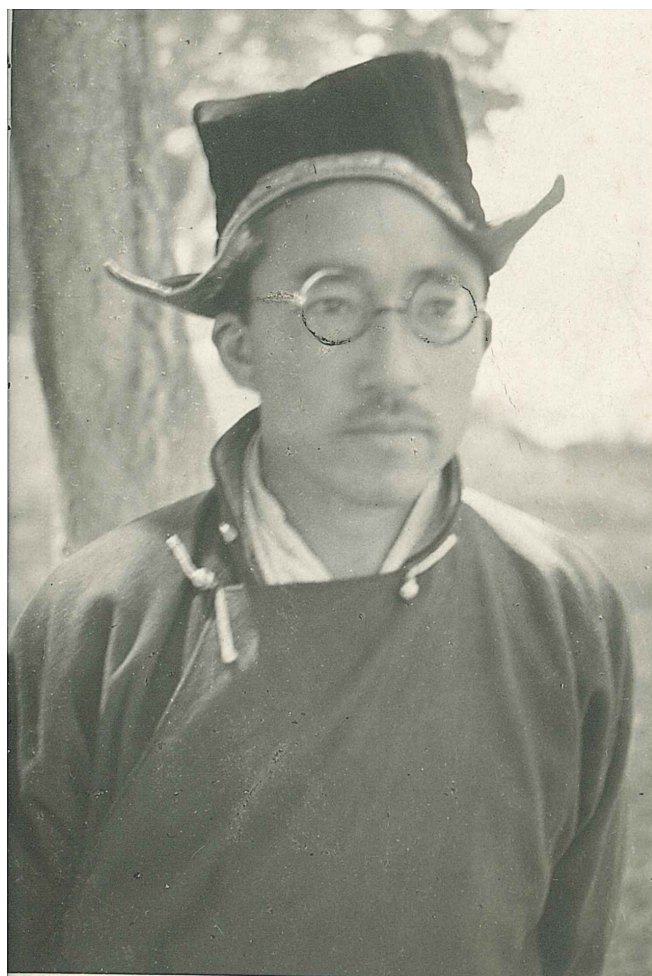


Figure 4. Tsetan Phuntsog in the 1930s.

(Moravian Church House, London)

Still only in his twenties, Tsetan Phuntsog had been born into a noble family in Saboo village near Leh. (Nono is, in this case, an aristocratic title.)²⁵ After leaving the Leh Middle School at the age of fifteen, he entered J&K government service in the land registry department. A devout

Buddhist, he had also spent time at Rizong (Ri rdzong) monastery, with which his family was closely affiliated, and would have liked to become a monk. However, his father, Tashi Paljor, died suddenly at the age of forty, and his family persuaded him to leave the monastery to assume his secular responsibilities. Sankrityayan (2011: 177) evidently held Tsetan Phuntsog in high regard, writing that “If the Ladakhi Buddhists may draw hope from someone, it is from that youth.”

The two men worked quickly, and the speed of their work suggests that they may have been working with the existing drafts mentioned by the Glancy Commission. On 15 July Sankrityayan (ibid: 166) wrote that he had already finished the first two readers and that work had begun on a third, as well as a small grammar. He estimated that it would cost about Rs 300 to produce the books, and he expected to be able to raise that money locally. He also noted that the work took quite a lot of his time. For each book, they needed to decide the number of lessons as well as the topics to include, and how much should be in verse and how much in prose.

On 14 August, Sankrityayan (ibid: 169) wrote that “The four Tibetan books (three readers and one grammar) have now been finished and the remaining two are almost done.” He was now thinking about the practicalities of publication and had written to the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta. As we have seen, this press was the most experienced in India in the use of the Tibetan script. However, it was also one of the most expensive, offering an estimate of Rs 1300 for the publishing costs. According to Sankrityayan, there were one or two alternative presses in Darjeeling, but these were not of the same standard.

By 10 September, Sankrityayan (ibid: 174) was able to write that “the four Bhot language books have been finished,” but he now needed 1200 Rupees to have them printed. Five days later, he wrote that 1500 copies of the ‘Bhot’ language books were to be printed (ibid). Finally, in a letter from Allahabad (Prayāg) dated 28 November, he wrote, “The first Tibetan primer has also been sent to the Baptist Mission. I would like to have the proofs in two to four days” (ibid: 206). The final versions presumably appeared shortly afterwards.

Presenting the Editors’ Credentials

The cover pages for all the books present the two editors’ names and titles: these are evidently intended to establish their scholarly and religious credentials, in effect serving as a sort of ‘manifesto’ for their joint project.

Sankrityayan styles himself *rGya gar dpal nA lan dA'i paN chen dge slong rA hu la saM kri tyA ya na*, meaning

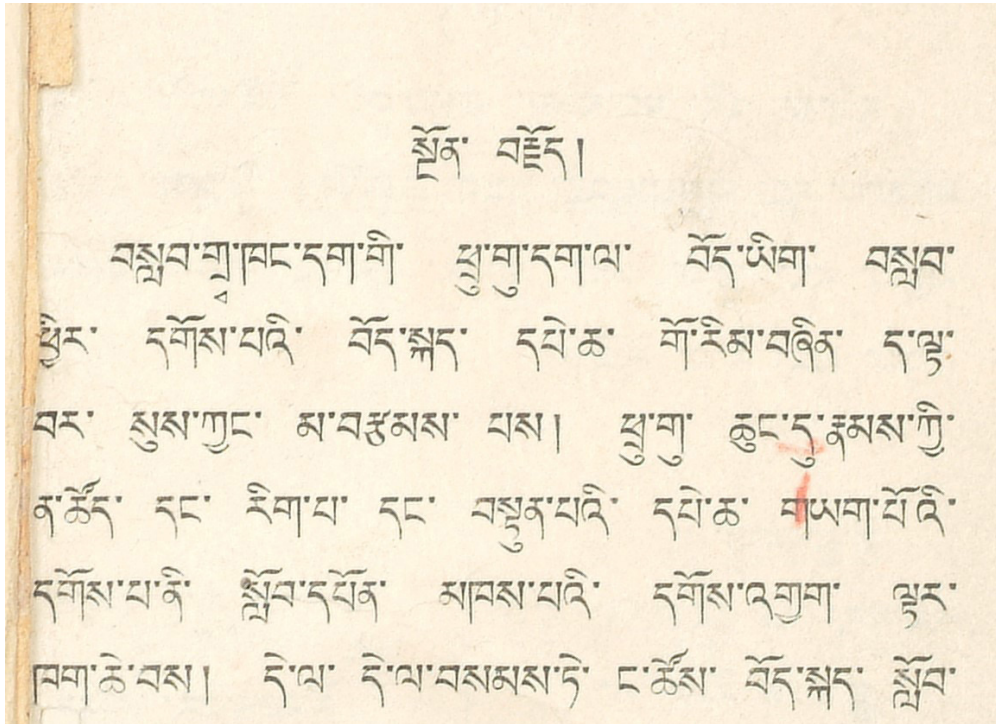


Figure 5. The first lines of the first primer, illustrating the spacing between the words and the use of the 'Jäschke font'

(Courtesy of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala)

'Mahāpaṇḍit Bhikshu Rahul Sankrityayan of the Glorious Nalanda in India.' The title 'Mahāpaṇḍit' was awarded to Sankrityayan in 1930 by the Kāśī Paṇḍitā Sabhā, an association of Sanskrit scholars in Benares (Varanasi) (Chudal 2016: 74).²⁶ The Tibetan version of this title—*pan chen*—is a literal translation (*pan* is an abbreviated form of *paṇḍita*, a title awarded to great scholars, while *chen* is an abbreviated form of *chen po* meaning 'great'). Historically, the title was applied to great scholars such as Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (Rong zom chos kyi bzang po, 1040-1159).²⁷ In more recent centuries, it has been associated with the Panchen Lama, who in the Gelug (dGe lugs) tradition has usually been seen as next in seniority to the Dalai Lama. Sankrityayan's evocation of the 'Glorious Nalanda' is also striking. The university of Nalanda in Bihar had been a center of Buddhist studies until its destruction at the hands of Muslim invaders in approximately 1200 CE. Already in his utopian novel *Bāisvīm Sadī* (Twenty-Second Century), which he wrote in 1924, Sankrityayan had imagined Nalanda's future revival. In evoking Nalanda here, he is placing himself within a historical tradition that would have been revered in both India and Tibet. He is also aligning himself with the Maha Bodhi Society. The objectives of the Society, which were printed on the inside covers of its journals, included founding "the nucleus of a Buddhist University on the lines of the ancient university of Nalanda."

Tsetan Phuntsog adopts a more modest, but still elevated, title: he styles himself *Bla dwags lo tsa wa no no tshhe brtan phun tshogs* (Ladakh Translator Nono Tsetan Phuntsog).

'Bla dwags' is an unusual alternative spelling for 'La dwags' (Ladakh) that was favoured by Joseph Gergan who used it in the title of his posthumously published history of Ladakh (1976). *Bla* means 'soul' or 'life force' and *dwags* can mean 'pure,' so the alternative rendering implies a higher spiritual status for the region.²⁸ The word *lo tsa wa* (translator) has powerful religious associations in that it evokes the scholars who translated the Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Tibetan, for example Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po, 958-1055). As noted above, 'Nono' is a Ladakhi aristocratic title.

Objectives and Contents

In the preface to the first reader, the two editors explain their objectives. So far, no one had written a systematic textbook for learning Tibetan, and there was therefore a need for good textbooks matching children's ages and levels of competence. This graded approach is familiar from Western styles of learning that were already widely practiced in India, but quite different from traditional Tibetan or Ladakhi monastic teaching practices. The two editors acknowledge the support of Joseph Gergan. They had also received support from Morup Gyaltsen, who was a teacher at the Leh Middle School as well as an Assistant Secretary of the Ladakh Buddhist Education Society.

A list at the back of the reader makes clear that the two editors had further plans. The first three books in the series were complete, and priced at four, six, and eight annas, respectively.²⁹ The fourth was in preparation, and

already priced at ten annas. They envisaged a total of eight volumes, together with a dictionary. As far as we know, the last four volumes were never finished.³⁰

Until now, we have been able to find examples of only three of the four readers that were published, together with the grammar. The first reader and the grammar are from the original 1933 edition and are printed in a clear *dbu can* font by the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta, on behalf of the Maha Bodhi Society. The second and third readers come from a later edition, dated 1942. The text is in *dbu can* script but, unlike in the 1933 version of the previous volume, it has been reproduced from a handwritten script rather than metal type. The front covers carry the English-language titles *Bodhi Series. Reader 2* and *Bodhi Series. Reader 3*, respectively. The 1942 editions were printed by the Normal Press in Srinagar on behalf of the Youngmen's [sic] Buddhist Association in Leh (rendered as *La dwags kyi sangs rgyas pa'i gzhon nu'i 'dus sdes*).

One striking feature in the Baptist Mission Press editions immediately catches the eye. As in contemporary Hindi and most other modern languages, the script has spaces between the words, rather than simply separating out the syllables with dots (*tsheg*) according to the usual Tibetan convention.³¹ Another difference from traditional Tibetan practice is the use of commas rather than the *shad* (vertical stroke) to separate clauses, and there are even a few question marks. The practice of including spaces between the words would make it much easier for beginners to read the texts, but perhaps proved controversial to conservative scholars. The 1942 editions revert to traditional Tibetan punctuation styles with no extra spacing.

The texts are written in a simple literary style that would be accessible to educated people across the Tibetan cultural arena. In that respect, they qualify as 'standard Tibetan,' albeit with some unusual expressions that appear to reflect a Ladakhi influence. However, the grammatical structures certainly do not represent spoken Ladakhi.

The books are clearly Buddhist in orientation. The front covers of the Calcutta editions carry a swastika surrounded by a circle, and the main texts start with the invocation *Sangs rgyas la phyag 'tshal lo* ([I] prostrate to the Buddha). As will be seen, the readers include a number of stories and sayings from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, mixed with more secular content such as might be found in any Indian textbook. The ethical principles that they convey would be broadly acceptable to any religious tradition.

The first reader, *Bod skad bslab bya dang po*, starts by introducing the consonants and vowels of the Tibetan alphabet, followed by a list of simple words and reading

passages. Lesson one begins with a series of imperatives: "Arise early. Wash up. Have breakfast. Carry the textbooks. Go to school. Respect the teacher. Study the text well." The second lesson offers a classroom conversation: "Whose writing board is this? There is no name written on it." Subsequent lessons include short passages on chickens, stationery, bees, ploughing fields, hygiene ("One must bath and wash one's mouth and hands on a daily basis"), winter, summer, knowledge (*rig pa*), cows, birds and dogs. Lesson Fourteen is a poem on "my mother," signed by Tsetan Phuntsog:

My loving mother who is very kind
There's nothing she has not done for me
Though shivering herself, ensconced me in warmth
Though hungry herself, fed me delicious food ...

Lesson Fifteen presents a short life of the Buddha. Lesson Sixteen switches back to the mundane with a short description of a yak. The book concludes with a chart of numbers and a sample of *dbu med* cursive script.

A close examination of the first volume of the 1933 readers points to clear continuities with Jäschke's primer and Gergan's textbook for the first primary class: it covers the same contents in the same order, using many of the same examples. For example, on page four it introduces the subscripts using the letter *ya*, and twelve out of eighteen examples are the same as in Jäschke's work. Another clue is the unusual use of the word *rgyugs*. In Tibetan, this normally means 'test' or 'examination.' However, in his dictionary, Jäschke (1881: 111) defines it as 'lesson,' and both Gergan and the 1933 textbooks use the word in this sense (e.g., for the first lesson, the second lesson, etc.). Although the 1933 volume covers the same material as the earlier books, it is a clear improvement, above all in its presentation on the printed page.

The second reader, *Bod skad dpe cha gnyis pa*, contains twenty-two short passages, some of which include simple comprehension questions. Many of the stories are similar to the ones in Gergan's reader, although there is no direct overlap. Lesson One is Aesop's classic fable about the clever crow who found a jar half full of water. Finding he could not reach the water, he put stones in the jar in order to raise the water level and quench his thirst. The fourth story, also from Aesop, is about the boy who cried 'wolf' too many times and was ignored when the wolf really did arrive. Other passages are more generic, for example discussions about the nature of fish and the importance of clothes (and the need to keep them clean). Lesson Seven draws from Hindu tradition with an extract from the

Ramayana. There are also collections of riddles, for example “Nothing is longer than me, yet I cannot reach a dog’s nose, what am I?” The answer is “a road.”

The second reader also includes three biographical articles. The first is about King Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po), the eighth century ruler of central Tibet. The second is about Sengge Namgyal (Seng ge rnam rgyal, 1614-1642), the seventeenth century monarch who is widely regarded as the greatest of the Ladakhi kings. This is the only passage in the book whose contents are specifically Ladakhi. The third biography is about the Mongol ruler Genghis Khan, also referring to his grandson Kubilai Khan, and emphasizing the latter’s credentials as a devout Buddhist.

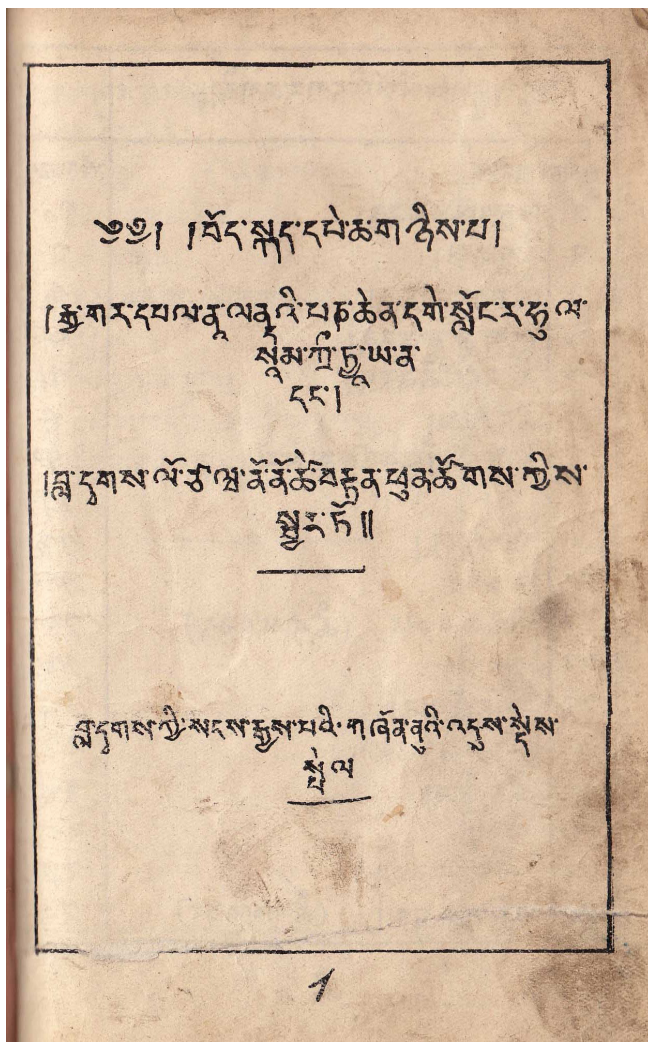


Figure 6. The Tibetan-language frontispiece of the 1942 edition of the second reader.

(Courtesy of Nawang Tsering Shakspo)

On a classic literary note, there are two extracts from the *Treasury of Elegant Sayings* by Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya pan di ta kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, 1182-1251).³² For example, Lesson Eleven includes the quotation: “If you

are a talented man, everyone gathers around you without being called: a scented flower, though far distant, attracts a cloud of swarming bees.” Sakya Pandita’s sayings are widely admired for their elegance and simplicity and, as Travers notes (2016: 122), were widely used in Tibetan schools during this period. Similarly, there are another two chapters from the *Hundred Waves of Elegant Sayings* by the Amdo scholar, Gungthang Konchok Tenpai Dronme (Gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa’i sgron me, 1762-1823).³³ An example in Lesson 18 runs: “If one perseveres with diligence, one can achieve anything: rivers, meandering gently, traverse vast lands to reach the ocean.”

Finally, the book concludes with a poem offering “Advice on Reading and Writing.” This is by Sras Rinpoche Lobzang Tsultrim Chosphe (Blo bzang tshul khriims chos ’phel, 1860-1926) from Rizong monastery in Lower Ladakh, whom Sankrityayan had met in 1926. The poem proclaims the importance of reading, penmanship and spelling, and concludes:

Writing with spelling errors
will mislead like a sly friend.
Spelling is more important than all three.
Hence whatever you are learning,
take care right from the beginning.

For the third volume, *Bod skad dpe cha gsum pa*, we have been able to examine a seventy-two page printed edition published in Srinagar in 1942, as well as a manuscript draft which is in the possession of Tsetan Phuntsog’s family and is in his handwriting. It consists of thirty-two passages and sets of reading comprehension questions. Since these are intended for more advanced learners, texts are longer and sentence structures are more complex. However, the range of contents is broadly similar. For example, there are texts on air and water, the second of which is signed by Joseph Gergan. On a rather banal note, Lesson Twenty-eight is about the ‘Country of the Angrez’ (literally, the ‘English,’ used generally for ‘Europeans’). It observes that “Their complexion is fair, long nose, hairy face, long-necked too...,” and includes a political statement, “In the world, the political dominion of the Angrez is greater than anyone else’s and the sun never sets on it.” This is evidently a reference to the then-popular saying that “The sun never sets on the British Empire.”

Returning to the world of Tibetan Buddhism, the book includes further sayings from Sakya Pandita and Konchok Tenpai Dronme, including a passage on “Seeking and relying on a spiritual teacher” in Lesson Three. Konchok Tenpai Dronme offers the advice that:

If one relies on the wish-fulfilling tree,
All that one wishes will be fulfilled spontaneously.
Likewise, seeking and relying on a noble teacher,
all goods and positives will be spontaneously realised.

In Lesson Twenty, Joseph Gergan offers his own “Heartfelt advice for children” in the form of an acrostic poem with each line beginning with letters of the Tibetan alphabet in succession. The conclusion is:

Firstly, to one’s kind Guru/ Secondly to one’s parents
Thirdly, your leaders and teachers/ Fourthly old and young alike
If you behave nicely to all/ You’ll become like a wish-fulfilling jewel!

Returning to historical topics, there are biographies of Skyide Nimagon (Skyi lde nyi ma mgon), the tenth century ruler who is widely regarded as the ancestor of the first Ladakhi royal dynasty (Petech 1977: 12-13), as well as the Western Tibetan ruler Lha Lama Yeshe Ö (Lha bla ma Yeshe ’od). Both of these are particularly important for the history of Ladakh and the neighboring regions, which in different historical periods formed part of the same polity. However, there are also representatives of other regions, including Atisha (982-1054), as well as Milarepa (1052-1135) and the Gelug reformer Tsongkhapa (1357-1419).

Lesson Twenty-four is a song believed to have been composed by Morup Stanzin (dNgos grub bstan ’dzin), the minister of King Tsepal Namgyal (Tshe dpal nam rgyal, r. 1802-1837, 1839-1840), the last independent king of Ladakh. It praises the beauty of the king’s garden in Karzu (Kar bzo) in Leh, and therefore evokes a certain nostalgia for the Ladakhi monarchy. Francke (1899: 6-7) included this text in his first collection of Ladakhi songs, and it has remained popular in recent times.

The Tibetan grammar prepared by Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog carries the title *Sgra la ’jug pa* (Introduction to Grammar). The introduction invokes Tönmi Sambhota (Thon mi Sam bho ta), the legendary eighth century scholar who is said to have invented the Tibetan script.³⁴ Since his time a number of Indian and Tibetan scholars had written commentaries for their own purposes, but there were a number of gaps. The main purpose of this grammar was therefore to present a clear explanation for school children using simple language. Tibetan and Sanskrit are different languages, but Sanskrit principles influenced Tibetan grammar when the Buddhist scrip-

tures were translated, and the chapter headings are presented in both languages. This arrangement clearly reflects Sankrityayan’s earlier scholarly training.

The introduction also acknowledges two earlier publications by Western authors: H.B. Hannah who, as noted above, had published a Tibetan grammar in 1912; and the German scholar Johannes Schubert (1896-1976), who had been August Hermann Francke’s pupil at the University of Berlin. Schubert’s 1928 doctoral dissertation was a study of two Tibetan grammatical treatises, the *Sum cu pa* (The Root Grammar in Twenty Verses) and *rTags kyi ’jug pa* (The Guide to Sign and Gender), attributed to Tönmi Sambhota. As Schubert (1928: 2-8) explains, his own analysis is based on the grammar prepared by Lama Wangchen Dorje which had been published in 1893 as part four of the “Tibetan Primer Series” in Darjeeling and reprinted in 1924. Sankrityayan had visited Berlin in December 1932 (Chudal 2016: 161), and it is therefore quite possible that he knew Schubert personally. Schubert (1936) later wrote a favorable review of the *Sgra la ’jug pa*, praising it as the best available exposition of Tibetan grammar to date because of its clear presentation of grammatical tables.

A Pan-Tibetan Project

The final pages of the first reader give instructions for how to order the textbooks: these make clear that the editors had in mind an audience across Tibet and the Himalayan region, not just Ladakh where they would be available from Tsetan Phuntsog. Elsewhere, the books could be obtained from the Maha Bodhi Society’s addresses in Sarnath and Calcutta. At the same time, there were also to be additional distributors in Tibet, Darjeeling, and Lahul. The first of the two Lhasa addresses mentioned is Chusrinsha (Chu srin shar): this is the name of a Nepali trading house whose head, Dharmaman Sahu, had assisted Sankrityayan on his first visit via Nepal to Tibet in 1929-1930 (Chudal 2015: 69). The second Lhasa name is Kusho Tendar (*sKu shog bstan dar*), the ‘head of telegraphs’ (*Tar khang dpon po*). The so-called Tarkhang school, run by a monk official who had been trained in telegraphy, was one of the largest and most highly regarded private schools in Lhasa during this period (Travers 2016: 120, 125). However, we do not know whether the books were actually used in any of these schools.

The Darjeeling distributor was to be Kazi Phag Tsering (Phag tshe ring, 1895-1943). He was listed in contemporary editions of *The Maha-Bodhi* journal as a representative of the society, and Sankrityayan would no doubt have known him in that connection. Phag Tsering was a Sikkimese aristocrat who—like Sankrityayan—had been ordained as a monk in

Ceylon, and who founded a Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) in Darjeeling in the late 1920s (Bhutia 2016: 134-136). In the early 1930s, he started a YMBA school at the Bhutia Basti district of Darjeeling. Sankrityayan's friend and colleague, the Tibetan scholar Gendün Chöpel (dGen 'dun chos 'phel, 1903-1951), is believed to have stayed at the school in 1935 and 1936, teaching Tibetan in return for board, lodging, and English lessons (ibid: 136). It is not clear whether the Tibetan readers prepared by Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog were used at the school.

The final regional distributor listed in the reader was Thakur Mangal Chand, the head of the local ruling family in Kyelang (Lahul). Sankrityayan had visited Mangal Chand in 1933 on his return journey from Ladakh at the recommendation of Henry Lee Shuttleworth, a former Indian Civil Service Officer (Sankrityayan 1950: 200-201; ibid 2011: 191-192). Shuttleworth was a former Assistant Commissioner of Kulu who had travelled widely in the Western Himalayan region and was a close collaborator of August Hermann Francke (Laurent 2017). Thanks to Shuttleworth's letter of introduction, Sankrityayan was received warmly by the Thakur and his relatives. While he was in Kyelang, he no doubt explained his publication plans for the textbooks. Again, we have no definite indication that they were ever used in Lahul.

Conclusion and Epilogue

Sankrityayan never returned to Ladakh, but his 1933 visit had lasting consequences in two respects. First, despite his doubts, the Ladakh Buddhist Education Society maintained its initial momentum. In 1938, it transformed itself into the YMBA. There is a direct institutional continuity between the YMBA and today's Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA), which continues to function as the main Buddhist social organisation in Ladakh. Second, and more importantly for the purposes of this essay, the textbooks that Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog compiled continued to be used in Ladakhi schools until the 1960s (Shakspo 2018). Arguably, they set a model for succeeding 'generations' of textbooks in the Tibetan script, whether or not this is recognised. However, the style and even the name for the language to be used in Ladakhi textbooks in Tibetan script is still contested.

In the 1960s, Yeshe Dhondup (Ye shes don grub, 1897-1980), a Ladakhi monk who had trained in at Tashilhunpo monastery in Central Tibet, prepared a new set of textbooks (ibid 2005: 350). These followed the example set by Sankrityayan and Tsetan Phuntsog in that they adopted a graded approach according to different levels of difficulty,

now extending from classes one to ten. The cover of the book for the eighth class (the only one that we have seen) carries the title *Bod yig rgyugs brgyad pai' dpe cha* (Eighth Tibetan Textbook). In the introduction, the author writes that he had adopted a simple everyday style, avoiding archaic terminology or complex grammatical constructions. The ninth and tenth textbooks would train students to read Buddhist literature. His overall objectives seem to be similar to those of his predecessors in 1933.

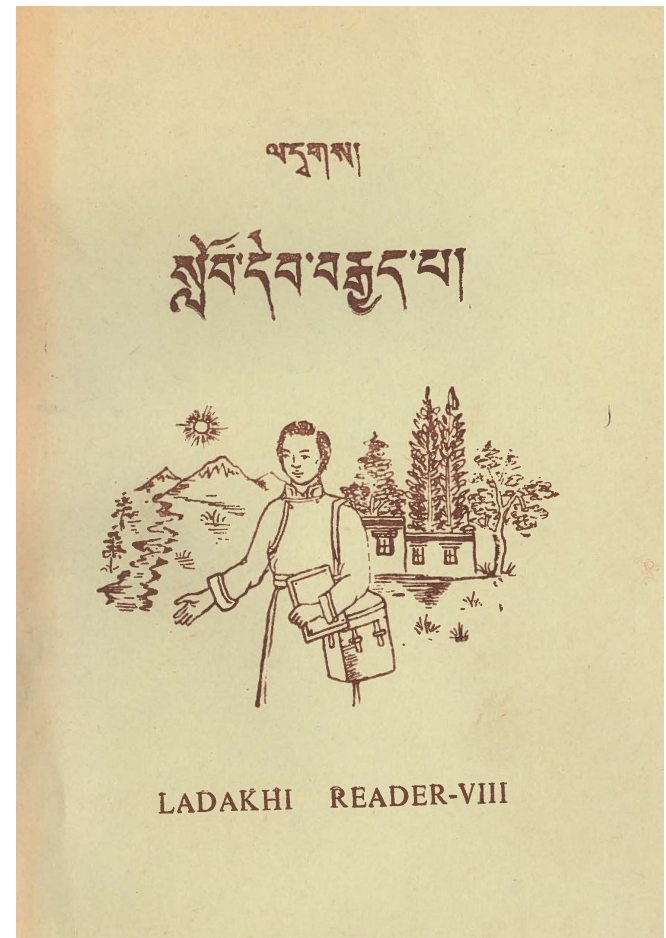


Figure 7. Volume Eight of the Ladakhi reader, published in 1990.

(Courtesy of Martijn van Beek)

The third generation of textbooks, which were published in 1990, affirmed a Ladakhi regional identity, at least in their titles. The authors were three leading Ladakhi intellectuals—Tashi Rabgias, Jamyang Gyaltzen, and Thupstan Paldan—and the books were privately published by a Leh bookseller. The first book in the series carries the title *sLob deb dang po* (First Textbook) in Tibetan script and *Ladakh's Book 1st Part* in English. Subsequent books in the series carry the heading *La dwags* (Ladakh) at the top of their covers followed by their number in the series in Tibetan script (e.g. *bslob deb brgyad pa*, or eighth reader), and then

the same in English at the bottom of the page (e.g. Ladakhi Reader VIII). Despite the titles, the contents of the books were still in standard literary Tibetan.

In 2014, a new set of textbooks in Tibetan script for children from the nursery class to class two appeared under the aegis of the Drepung Loseling Pethub Khangtsen Education Society (DLPKES) in Leh.³⁵ These offer another name for the language: *Bhoti skad yig*. 'Bhoti' is a relatively new term that has come into common use since the early 2000s. It derives from the Hindi/Sanskrit word *Bhot* and—like the earlier term 'Bodhi'—derives from the Tibetan word *Bod*, meaning 'Tibet.' However, it is regarded as more neutral because, unlike Bodhi, it is notionally free from association with a particular religious community. Also, even though Bhoti means the same as 'Tibetan,' it is at least an Indian word, and therefore thought to be more indigenous and less politically sensitive.³⁶ Regardless of these semantic distinctions, the language used in the textbooks is still a form of standard Tibetan.

Meanwhile, there have been a series of experiments with writing in a style that is closer to the spoken language. In 1934 Tsetan Phuntsog became a Christian, in large part because of Gergan's personal influence. His new religious identity meant that he was not eligible to be an office holder in the YMBA. However, he maintained his interest in literary Tibetan throughout his life, for example by writing Tibetan verse and revising the Tibetan translation of the New Testament. He also took a close interest in the Ladakhi vernacular. In the early 1950s, he presented proposals for a radically reformed style of writing that was closer to spoken Ladakhi (Vittoz 1952).³⁷ Following the example of the 1933 textbooks, he proposed to introduce spaces between individual words. Even more radically, he called for modifications to the script. Yeshe Dhondup and other Buddhist leaders argued that these proposals amounted to an attack on Ladakh's religious heritage (Shakspo 2005: 346), and they never took root, least of all in the textbooks used in Ladakhi schools.

Since then, there have been further sporadic attempts to develop a written version of colloquial Ladakhi. For example, in the 1990s the local non-governmental organization, Students Educational Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL), included stories written in a vernacular Ladakhi in its *Melong* magazine. The proponents of a written form of Ladakhi colloquial argue that this would be much more accessible to students as well as ordinary lay people, and would therefore contribute to the survival of a language that in the modern world faces growing competition from Hindi, Urdu, and English. However, as Zeisler (2006) explains, some Ladakhi Buddhist scholars argue that de-

veloping such a language would lead to a form of cultural disintegration, detaching Ladakh from the wider Tibetan Buddhist world. The Dalai Lama has himself expressed similar views.

Tsetan Phuntsog's example suggests that there does not need to be a binary solution to Ladakh's language debates: it is possible to write in different styles—both vernacular and literary—according to circumstances. However, it would be a major task to develop a further set of textbooks that would be closer to the colloquial.³⁸ For now, Ladakhi textbooks in Tibetan script are still aligned with literary Tibetan rather than the spoken language.

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The original stimulus for the research leading to this paper was the conference on “Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963): Maha Pandita in the Land of Snow” at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts “New Delhi” in March 2018. For help in tracking down sources, the authors are grateful to: Zhidey Kundan, Thsespal Kundan, Naomi Sonam, Sonam Phuntsog (Achinathang), Nawang Tsering Shakspo, Rigzin Chodon, Isrun Engelhardt, Bettina Zeisler, Diane Lange, Hartmut Walravens and the staffs of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala), the University Library in Leipzig, and the State Library in Berlin. The authors thank Lorraine Parsons of Moravian Church House, London, for permission to publish the photographs of Joseph Gergan and Tsetan Phuntsog; and Jaya Sankrityayana for the photograph of her father in Figure 3.

Finally, John Bray would like to express particular appreciation for the work of our co-author Tsering Gonkatsang (1951-2018), who never lived to see the final version. In his combined role as a teacher and Tibetan linguist, Tsering approached the topic of this article with particular interest and enthusiasm.

Endnotes

1. For background on the Moravians and their activities in India see Beszterda (2014).
2. For further details on Jäschke’s research and literary choices, see Bray (1991).
3. On Jäschke’s translation strategy, see Bray (1991).
4. On the linguistic relationship between Ladakhi and Tibetan, see Zeisler (2005).
5. For a discussion on the relationship between Christianity and a form of secularism in the Tibetan world, see Willock (2016).
6. The front page is reproduced as plate seventy-one in Walravens & Taube (1992). For a German translation, see Francke (1925: 75-79). Well into the twentieth century, Moravian missionaries referred to Ladakh and Lahul as part of ‘Tibet’ or ‘Western Tibet,’ meaning ‘cultural Tibet’ rather than Tibet as a political entity.
7. The Press’s first use of the Tibetan script in an earlier font was for the 1826 *Dictionary of the Bhotanta, or Boutan language*.’ See Bray (2008).
8. For a succinct overview of their research, see Bray (2016: 29-30). Tsering Palgyas belonged to an aristocratic family who had served as officials to the Ladakhi monarchy. ‘Munshi’ means ‘writer’ or ‘secretary’ in Urdu and, in this case, is both a title and a family name.
9. On the Dogra wars, see Datta (1975).
10. On Francke see Bray (2019).
11. The front pages of these booklets are reproduced as plates 38-41 in Walravens & Taube (1992).
12. The word *ag bar* come from *akhbar*, the Urdu word for ‘newspaper’.
13. Walravens (2010) includes a facsimile of the entire run of the paper.
14. He used the name ‘Joseph’ when writing in English, and ‘Yoseb’ in Tibetan. For further details on his biography, see Bray (1994).
15. Here, there is a link with Gergan’s literary research: Francke (1923) published a German translation of a ‘Tibetan *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā*’ that Gergan had collected in Lahul.
16. For examples of *dpe cha* see Halkias (2020).
17. On the ‘lineage’ of Tibetan-English dictionaries, see, in particular, Viehbeck (2016).
18. On Hannah’s relationship with Kazi Dawa Samdup, see Martin (2016: 95-96).
19. On Tharchin, see *inter alia* Fader (2002-2009), Engelhardt (2011), Willock (2016).
20. On the KRBMS, see Bertelsen (1997a, 1997b) and van Beek (2001).
21. For a recent biography of Sankrityayan, see Chudal (2016). See also the biographical essays in Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (2018). For the 1926 Ladakh journey, see Sankrityayan (1939, 2011).
22. On this point, see Chudal (2016: 89-113) and Fischer-Tiné (2004).
23. For further details on the 1933 journey, see van Beek (2001).

24. His alternative term was the Laddākh-bauddh-śikṣa samiti, and this may reflect its official Urdu title as used for the registration of the society with the J&K government. In Ladakh, the organisation referred to itself as the La dwags kyi sangs rgyas pa'i gzhon nu'i 'dus sdes, (Association of Young Buddhists of Ladakh), in an apparent attempt to reflect the nomenclature of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA).

25. In this paragraph, we have drawn on information from Zhidey Kundan, Tsetan Phuntsog's daughter, as well as two of his grandchildren, Thsespal Kundan and Naomi Sonam. See Bray (1994) for a more detailed account of his life history.

26. Chudal (2016: 292-293) reproduces the Sanskrit-language felicitation certificate, together with an English translation. The certificate is addressed to 'Ramodar Sankrityayan,' the name that he used immediately before his ordination.

27. We thank Karen Lang for clarification on this point.

28. We are grateful to Roberto Vitali for this reading.

29. There were 16 annas to one Indian rupee.

30. However, Sankrityayan later prepared a Tibetan-Hindi dictionary and an edited version was published in 1972, nine years after his death, by his pupil S.K. Pathak.

31. More recently, the US-based Tibetan writer Tenzin Dickyi (2010) has come up with a similar proposal, referring to this style as 'aerated Tibetan.'

32. On Sakya Pandita, see Townsend (2010).

33. On Konchok Tenpai Dronme, see Samten Chhosphel (2010).

34. For recent research on the origins of the Tibetan script, see van Schaik (2011).

35. The DLPKES was founded in 2005 by Ladakhi monks from the Gelug school who had studied in the Tibetan exile monastery Drepung Loseling in the southern Indian state of Karnataka. See DLPKES (n.d.). The first set of textbooks launched by the society covered the nursery and first and second classes.

36. The proponents of 'Bhoti' are campaigning for its recognition as an official Indian language in accordance with the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution. They apply the word to the peoples speaking languages related to Tibetan across the Himalayan region from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. Historically, all these regions have used literary Tibetan as a written language but their spoken languages are not mutually intelligible. For the Eighth Schedule, see Ministry of Home Affairs (nd).

37. See Bray (1991, 1994) for Tsetan Phuntsog's later literary activities.

38. See the introduction to Norman (2019) for a discussion of the different varieties of spoken Ladakhi.

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