A History of the Moravian Church in India

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Introductory note

This essay originally appeared in *The Himalayan Mission*, a booklet commemorating the centenary of the Moravian Church in Leh in 1985. The booklet is now very hard to find, even in Leh, but I judge that it retains some value as a concise introduction to the history of the Moravians in the Himalayan region. I am very therefore pleased to have the opportunity to make this version available via the Internet.

My own engagement with this history started in the late 1970s. I spent a year teaching at the Moravian Institute in Rajpur from 1978 to 1979 and in 1980 moved to Leh where I helped restart the Moravian Mission School. While I was in Leh, I had the opportunity to read the Leh church library's holdings of the old mission magazine, *Missionsblatt der Brüdergemeine*, which described Ladakh as it had been a century earlier. I wrote some initial notes on the church's history while I was still in Ladakh. After moving to London in 1983, I continued my researches at the Moravian Church House Archives and Library as well as the archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society (and afterwards, too late for this essay, at the Archiv der Brüder-Unität in Herrnhut). Rev Stephen Hishey, who served as the Moravian pastor in Leh during the 1980s, encouraged me to write up my findings for the church's centenary.

The history of the Moravians in the Himalayan region has remained a lifelong interest, and both I and others have contributed a number of publications on related topics since 1985. Rather than review them here, I have included them in an extended updated bibliography of older and newer works at the end of the essay.

In the course of my researches for this essay, I incurred a number of debts of gratitude and it is a pleasure to acknowledge them now. These start with Rev Thsespal Kundan, a fellow student in Cambridge who introduced me to the Moravians and ultimately to Ladakh. In Rajpur, I benefitted from the hospitality of the Kundan family for a year, and first got to know Stephen Hishey. I would not have spent my year in Leh without the initiative of Nathaniel Batapa in pressing for the revival of the Mission School. I look back with great fondness to the kindness of the older Ladahi Moravians who have now passed away, especially Sungzin Phuntsog, Eliezer Joldan, Daniel and Benjamin Dana and Rev Standzin Razu. In a conversation in Leh bazaar, Nawang Tsering Shakspo impressed on me the importance of bibliographic citations. Rev P.D. Sham Rao published an earlier version of the essay in *Krisht Vidya*, the journal of the Christian Retreat and Study Centre in Rajpur In London, I am grateful for the support of the staff of Moravian Church House, particularly Rev Fred Linyard and Janet Halton, the then archivist, as well as Kathleen Cann at the Bible Society archives.

Finally, two points of detail: there are some gaps in the page numbering. I did not scan the pages containing photographs because the printing quality was very poor. The photograph on the front page is of Rev A.W. Heyde and his wife Maria together with their congregation in Kyelang, Lahul, in 1896. It comes from the Moravian Church House Archive and Library in London.

John Bray, Chiba, 23 December 2012

A HISTORY OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH IN INDIA
BY JOHN BRAY

1: OUTLINE HISTORY

Ladakh lies at the meeting point of India, Tibet, China and Pakistan and its capital town of Leh still displays the religious and cultural diversity of an important Central Asian trade centre. Among its Ladakhi, Tibetan, Turki, Kashmiri and Punjabi inhabitants there are Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and both Shia and Sunni Muslims. Somewhat unexpectedly, there is also a small but influential community of Ladakhi Chiristians belonging to the Moravian Church.

In 1985 The Leh Church celebrates its centenary and this is an appropriate occasion to recount how a Moravian outpost came to be established in Ladakh, thousands of miles from the church's origins in Central Europe. This study reviews the beginnings of the Moravian Church in Europe, tells how the first missionaries came to India and discusses the achievements - and failures - of the last hundred years.

From Central Europe to Central Asia

The Moravian Church is the oldest but still one of the smallest of the protestant denominations.[1] It traces its origins to Bohemia and Moravia which are provinces of what is now Czechoslovakia. In the early fifteenth century a priest from Prague named John Hus preached angrily against the corruption of the church hierarchy. In 1415 he was summoned to a council at Konstanz to explain his opinions. He was promised a safe conduct but the promise was not honoured. Hus was arrested, given a show trial and burnt at the stake.

His ideas survived him and in 1457 a group of followers founded the *Unitas Fratrum* or 'Unity of Brethren' which is still the official name of the church. Despite vigorous persecution they flourised so that within a century there were 200,000 members in three provinces, Bohemia, Moravia and Poland and they were recognised as fellow Protestants by Martin Luther. However, they were almost wiped out during the bitter fighting between Catholic and Protestant powers in the course of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). There remained only a 'hidden seed' of secret followers in Moravia and a small group of exiles under Bishop John Amos Comenius.

In 1722 Christian David led a small party of Moravian refugees over the Carpathian mountains to the province of Saxony, now in East Germany. There they founded the new town of Herrnhut (which means the 'Lord's watch') on the estate of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and renewed the ancient Unitas Fratrum under his leadership.

Zinzendorf wished the Moravians to come into the Lutheran fold until he realised that they were heirs to a Protestant tradition older than his own. Even later when he accepted the Moravian Church's separate identity he still insisted that its role was that of a 'church within a church'. They did found a scattering of specifically Moravian settlements in Germany, Britain and America but in areas where there were already Christians their main aim was to stimulate the faithful by forming societies rather than by stealing followers from the established churches. In Europe the Moravian Church has had only a few thousand full members at any one time but has exercised a strong influence beyond its denominational boundaries.

Christian unity was therefore an important Moravian preoccupation from the beginning. They

believed the Bible to be the only rule of faith and conduct but stressed Christian living rather than any specific doctrine. A much quoted motto was and is, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty and in things love".

In spite of their small size the Moravians were also among the foremost pioneers of the Protestant missionary movement. In 1732 they sent their first missionary to preach to the black slaves in the West Indies. Within a few years others set out for Greenland, Labrador, North America, Central Russia, Persia and even the Nicobar Islands. By the time Count Zinzendorf died in 1760 the Moravian church had sent out 226 missionaries in only 28 years. Today, after two and a half centuries of missionary activity, the largest Moravian community is in Tanzania while there are others in the USA, Canada, Central America, Surinam, the West Indies and South Africa.

Wherever they went, the Moravians brought a strong sense of religious discipline. For the ordinary brother or sister this would be expressed in the observance of regular Bible readings and church attendance. For the missionary it also meant loyal obedience to the Mission Board even in personal affairs. Converts were also expected to submit to this discipline by undergoing a thorough instruction period before baptism. After baptism they might be suspended - and frequently were - for any misdemeanour which suggested a compromise with the new faith.

There was also a strong emphasis on the spiritual value of productive work. Both in the home settlements and the mission fields the chruch organised small industries and businesses. While this policy brought considerable economic benefits it could also lead to conflict between the commercial and pastoral interests of church leaders.

Finally there was much stress on scholarship and on education whether of Yorkshire workmen or of South African Hottentots. Wherever they went the Moravians built schools. One reason for this was that people could not read the Bible unless they were literate and that they were more likely to want to read the Bible after going to a Christian school - but the Moravians' educational programmes certainly brought much wider social as well as religious benefits to their communities.

The same surnames come up again and again in Moravian history - often in widely separated mission fields. It is characteristic of the Moravian Church that it tends to produce long and distinguished family dynasties whose members may be scattered all over the world in mission work or in other areas of service. In 1896 140 'home' congregations supported no less than 400 missionaries.[2] The Moravians have been small in numbers but great in faithfulness to evangelical ideals.

The Mission to the Mongols

The founders of the Himalayan Mission originally set out to preach not to the Indians or to the Tibetans but to the Mongols, thus continuing a Moravian tradition which began in the eighteenth century. In the 1760's the Empress Catherine the Great had invited the Moravians to establish an outpost in Central Russia in the hope that they would promote commerce and industry. Accordingly in 1765 they founded a settlement at Sarepta near the town now known as Volgagrad.[3] In doing so they mixed commercial with missionary motives: in addition to their business activities they also planned to preach the Gospel to the Kalmuck Mongols who lived nearby and who practised Tibetan Buddhism. But while their businesses thrived they failed to make more than a handful of converts and in 1822 the Russian government forbade further missionary work altogether.

By 1914 when A.H. Francke, a German missionary who had served in Ladakh, visited Sarepta

the church was administered by the Lutherans but the Moravian background was still apparent, many of the inhabitants being German-speaking and of Moravian descent.[4] As a missionary Francke was disappointed to find a local firm manufacturing clay statues of the Buddha. He did not think this was an appropriate occupation in a former mission station.

The Sarepta settlement brought the Moravians into direct contact with Tibetan Buddhist culture and thus acted as the forerunner of the Himalayan Mission. A Moravian scholar, Isaak Jakob Schmidt (1779-1847) translated the New Testament into Mongolian and compiled a Mongolian grammar and a Mongolian-German-Russian dictionary.[5] He also wrote a German translation of the Gesser or Kesar Saga which is the national epic of the Mongols as well as the Tibetans and Ladakhis. Finally his researches into Buddhism led him to the study of Tibetan and he produced a Tibetan grammer, a Tibetan-German and a Tibetan-Russian dictionary.

In Russia it proved impossible to sustain a mission to the Mongols but in 1850 a pioneer China missionary named Karl Friedrich Gutzlaff arrived in Herrnhut to appeal for missionaries to the inhabitants of Inner Mongolia in the Chinese Empire.[6] The Mission Board accepted the challenge and chose two young men, August Wilhelm Heyde and Eduard Pagell, to take up the call.

The founding of the Himalayan Mission

Heyde was the son of a Silesian gardener. He had to leave school at the age of twelve to begin an arduous apprenticeship as a metal worker but was by no means uneducated since he managed to continue studying in his spare time and learnt English from a British pharmacy student in Herrnhut. Pagell also had an artisan background having worked in a marble factory, one of many Moravian Church businesses then operating in Germany.

In 1851 and 1852 the two studied Mongolian with the Moravian scholar H.A. Zwick who was the author of Mongolian grammar,[8] a copy of which still survives in the Leh mission library. They also studied the basics of medicine with the local doctor in Konigsfeld and the Charite hospital in Berlin. Then on July 13th 1853 they set out from Herrnhut. Only Heyde lived to return home, exactly half a century later. Pagell died in India in 1883.

The two missionaries went first to London and then, on August 1st, set sail from Portsmouth. Their destination was Calcutta.

They went to Calcutta because neither the Russian nor the Chinese governments would grant them permission to cross their territory. With considerable geographic vagueness they therefore planned to reach Mongolia by crossing the barely known land of Tibet from northern India.

After sixteen weeks at sea they reached Calcutta, continued by boat up the Ganges to Benares and then by ox-cart to Kotgarh near Simla. They arrived there on April 4th 1854 after travelling for nearly nine months.

In Kotgarh they stayed with a Dr. Prochnow, a German in the service of the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society. He encouraged them by declaring that Mongolia could not be so far distant - Mongolian caravans regularly passed his house - but on closer inspection these turned out to be Tibetan.[9]

The two men spent the summer and winter of 1854 in Kotgarh, revising their Mongolian and further studying Tibetan and Hindustani. The following year they set out north to Leh in Ladakh and then to the Panggong Lake which straddles the Tibetan border. They made three unsuccessful attempts to enter Tibetan territory but were turned back each time by border guards.[10] So, reluctant to return to

Herrnhut without having achieved anything, they applied to the Mission Board and the Indian government for permision to found a mission station in Kyelang, Lahul. Permission was granted and the first trees were felled on May 16th 1856.[11] The government provided fifty pine trees to help with the building.

With the founding of the Kyelang station the Mongolian mission turned into the Tibetan or Himalayan Mission. Its aim was to begin missionary activities in the Indo-Tibetan borderlands as a prelude to work in Tibet itself as soon as the border was opened to foreigners.

Geographical and cultural background

Kyelang is approached from the pleasant hill-station of Manali in the Kulu valley. The road climbs steeply through thick green forests to the 13,000 feet Rothang Pass. As soon as the pass is crossed there is a dramatic change in the scenery. There are hardly any trees on the barren mountains and few villages.

Poo, the second main mission station, lies several days' journey to the south-east of Kyelang in the upper reaches of the Sutlej valley. Ladakh, a fortnight's march to the north of Kyelang, is even more arid than Lāhul, a mountainous desert only rarely relieved by village-oases. In summer the emerald-green barley fields contrast vividly with the ochrecoloured wastelands which surround them. In winter there is nothing green at all except the odd prayer flag and, nowadays, the military uniforms of the local troops. But even in winter the stark, snow-covered mountains give the region a severe beauty.

As mission fields all three districts presented a tough challenge. The small population was thinly scattered in isolated hamlets: according to the 1891 census there were 7,982 souls in Lahul[12] and in 1900 there were 31,636 people in the whole of Ladakh which ranks as one of the largest districts in India.[13] Travelling between the small villages was made difficult in summer by swollen rivers and passes of up to 18,000 feet. In winter it was impossible because of heavy snow: from November until April the Rothang pass was closed and Kyelang was cut off from the outside world altogether.

The local people led an austere life. In the valleys most of them were settled farmers living off buckwheat or barley (usually roasted and ground into *tsampa* flour), wild vegetables, tea mixed with butter and salt, *chang* (barley beer), mutton and, as an occasional luxury, dried apricots.[14] On the Rupshu plateau between Lahul and Ladakh lived nomadic herdsmen and both communities supplemented their incomes with trade. Each autumn traders drove large flocks of sheep loaded with borax, salt and their own fleece down from the high plateaux through Lhul to Kulu. There they sheared the sheep and sold the wool in exchange for brass and copper vessels, sugar, wheat, rice and spices before returning to the high pastures in the spring.[15] Similar flocks of sheep travelled down from Tibet through Poo to Simla.

It was possible to achieve prosperity from trade and, if one had enough land, from farming. Many did not have enough land and ran themselves into debt to monastries and their richer neighbours.[16] Moreover, although their tough lifestyle made people hardy, they were still vulnerable to epidemics to cholera, smallpox and typhus, all of which were frequent, particularly typhus. Their livestock were also subject to rinderpest which carried off all the cattle in Kyelang in 1890.[17] Four years later an estimated 10,000 livestock in the area died in an exceptionally severe winter.[18] The lifestyle of nineteenth century Ladakhis and Lahulis certainly had its merits but it was far from the dreamlike Shangri-la which modern romantics, mostly westerners, would have us imagine.

Both Kyelang and Poo lay on trade and pilgrimage routes to Tibet but Leh was far more important than either of them as a commercial centre since it was a major staging post for the Central Asian Trade from Kashmir to Yarkand in the Chinese province of Sinkiang, then commonly known as Chinese Turkestan. Merchandise coming from Turkestan included silver, silk, porcelain, firs and *charas* (a narcotic) and this was exchanged for, among other British and Indian products, cloth, indigo, sugar and opium.[19] In the nineteenth century there were about 3,000 permanent inhabitants of Leh while some 20,000 traders passed through each year on their way to and from Tibet and Turkestan.[20]

Ladakh was an independent kingdom until the Dogra invasion of 1834. The region subsequently passed into the hands of the Hindu Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir.

The kings of Ladakh were allowed to keep their palaces at Stok and Leh (the latter an empty shell for most of the year except during the *Losar* Near Year celebrations when the king came into his own again) but the chief civil official was the *wazir* or governor appointed by the Maharajah. He shared responsibility for supervising the trade route with the British Joint Commissioner (BJC) who in the summer months resided in what is now the army's 'Alpha Mess' next to the mission compound. Poo was also part of a native state, in this case Bassahir. Only Keylang lay within British India : Lahul was administered by British District Commissioners as part of the Punjab. The head of the *Thakurs* or landlords of Kyelang functioned as *wazir* and Magistrate of the Third Class and was responsible for the local court in the District Commissioner's absence.[21] He therefore wielded considerable local influence and sometimes used it against the mission.

By religion the majority of people in all three areas were Tibetan Buddhists and nearly every village had its own monastery to the extent that an estimated one sixth of the population of Ladakh were either monks or nuns. The monasteries did have an educating influence - the literacy rate was markedly higher in Buddhist Lahul than in Hindu Kulu[22] but higher religions thought was generally considered to be a monkish speciality beyond the province of the average layman and indeed the average monk.

Despite Buddhism's egalitarian principles there was a pronounced social hierarchy. Among laymen the highest in status were the king and the aristocracy (*sku-drag*) and the lowest were the *rigs-nan* who included smiths and *Mon* travelling musicians.[23] Although this 'caste system' was not so rigidly enforced as that of the plains of India, men of the highest rank would never eat with the *rigs-nan*. In Kyelang and Poo, and initially in Ladakh, Christians were likewise considered to be ritually unclean and even their relatives refused to eat with them lest they 'lose caste'. The popular religion of Lahul was much influenced by Hinduism to the extent that Lahulis sometimes found it convenient to pass themselves off as Hindus when trading further south.

About half of the population of Leh was Muslim though some of the social precepts of Islam, such as the isolation of women in *purdah* were less rigidly observed because of the more liberal influence of the local Buddhists. Yarkandis tended to be stricter than Ladakhi Muslims.

The languages spoken reflected the region's cultural diversity. There were three main dialects in Lahul - Bunan, Tinan and Manchad - while the people of Poo and Ladakh also had their own distinctive speech, which varied slightly from village to village. All these are related to Tibetan rather as Swiss German is to High German. While the Spoken languages of Leh and Lhasa differed to the point of incomprehension, scholars in both towns wrote in the same language - classical Tibetan - unless they

were Muslims in which case they would write in Urdu. Yet another, Aryan, language is spoken by the Dards who live between Leh and Kargil. In the Leh mission library there are tracts in Tibetan, Hindi, Urdu, Balti, Turki, Chinese and English, and translations of Bible *extracts* in to each of the local *dialects.*

The Kyelang mission station (1856-1940)

In 1857 Heinrich August Jaeschke arrived in Kyelang. Already forty years old, he was to be the superintendent of the mission with the special responsibility of studying Tibetan and beginning translation work. He was a man of ascetic tastes and dismayed Pagell and Heyde, who came to meet him in Simla, by ordering them to sell their horses.[24] Quoting Isaiah 52.7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings", he explained that it was better for the missionaries to walk. He also disapproved of the plants for the mission house which he considered too luxurious.[25] Here the Mission Board overruled him and the house, which was simple enough by European standards, was built according to the specifications of Pagell and Heyde. Jaeschke was able, however, to insist on a sparse diet, strictly rationed as though in time of war. While united in the higher aim of spreading the Gospel there were, to start with, some tension between the three missionaries.

Once the building was completed and the mission securely established it was decided that the missionaries required wives. Arranged marriages, which are still common in India, were then familiar enough in Moravian missionary circles: the Mission Board in Herrunhut duly selected three brides and despatched them to Calcutta.[26] Pagell went to meet them and married his own intended, Friederike Machtle, in September 1859. In November Heyde and Jaeschke conducted each other's wedding ceremonies before an enthusiastic congregation of Kyelang villagers. Jaeschke's bride was Emilie Rosenhauer and Heyde's Maria Hartmann.

Maria Hartmann's parents had themselves been missionaries in Surinam but she had left them at an early age to go to school in Germany and, although they corresponded faithfully, never saw them again.[27] Such long separations from their parents were a common fate for missionary children. When the Heydes themselves returned to Germany in 1903 their daughter had already died but they were greeted by two surviving sons, one of whom has not seen them for thirty-five years and the other for twenty- five.[28]

The Kyelang mission station rapidly took shape. In 1858 Hedye obtained a lithographic printing press from Simla and the first of many mission publications, *Barths Bible Stories* translated into Tibetan by Jaeschke, came out soon afterwards.[29] Meanwhile Heyde made several preaching journeys - Pagell having preached the first public sermon in Kyelang in January 1859. Other mission ventures were the farm which was supervised by Heyde, the school which opened in January 1861, and knitting classes organised by the mission wives from 1862 onwards. Woollen socks, knitted German-style, are still one of the characteristic cultural features of Lahul.

In 1863 Rechler arrived in Kyelang and became superintendent so that Jaeschke could concentrate on language work. He was followed by Friedrich A. Redslob, who served in the Himalayas from 1871 till his death in 1891, and in the 1890's and early 1900's by Samuel H. Ribbach (1892-1913), Kurt Fichtner (1894-1905), Ernst R. Schnabel (1895-1920), Friedrich E . Peter (1898-1936) and Otto Gerhard Hettasch (1900-1911). However, Kyelang in the nineteenth century was famous above all for Wilhelm 'Papa' Heyde who was based there until 1898 when he moved to Darjeeling to work on the revised Tibetan New Testament with the British and Foreign Bible Society.

There were few converts from Kyelang. The first converts of all in 1865 were two Ladakhis, Sonam Stobgyes and his son Samuel Joldan from the village of Stok near Leh. They had been associated with the mission from the outset, having helped with the building of the mission house and worked in the mission press. The first male Lahuli, Dewazung, was baptised in 1872 and the second, Pal Trashi, only in 1909.

Once the Leh station was founded in 1885 the Mission Board several times discussed the possibility of closing the Kyelang station or at least withdrawing European missionaries in order to concentrate the missions limited resources on Ladakh. This very nearly did happen in 1910 but an English supporter donated money specifically to maintain a European missionary there. During and just after the First World War Kyelang actually was left without a missionary and the Christian community was led by Zodpa, an evangelist. In 1921 Joseb Gergan, one of the first two Ladakhi priests to be ordained, arrived to take over and stayed until 1926 when he returned to Leh and was replaced by Walter Asboe. Friedrich A. Peter, the last European missionary in Kyelang, served there with his sister from 1935 to 1940.

F.A. Peter and his sister were forced to leave Kyelang after the outbreak of the Second World War because the government suspected them of Nazi sympathies, although they were Swiss citizens, and wished to remove them from sensitive area.[31] It appears that the main reason for the governments suspicions was that their parents were then resident in Herrnhut in Nazi Germany. They spent the duration of the War at a Canadian Anglican mission in Palampur where Peter developed his skills as a 'rural uplift' worker for which he was subsequently awarded a *Kaiser-i-Hind* medal. After the War he briefly returned to Leh to review proposals for an irrigation project there but afterwards moved to western Punjab, by then part of Pakistan, where he served with distinction as a Church rural development worker.

Before he left, Peter had the dismal task of closing down the Kyelang mission station and selling the farmland, though the Christians were allowed to keep the chapel and burial ground. Three families moved to Leh and the veteran evangelist Ga Phuntsog was given spiritual oversight over the remainder, mainly members of his own extensive family. He died soon afterwards and, with the exception of another family which moved to Kulu, the rest of the congregation lapsed.

Almost all the few converts of the Kyelang congregation were Ladakhis rather than Lahulis. In the early years of the mission many of these Ladakhis were refugees from the Dogra wars (1834-42) or from the high taxes imposed by the Maharajah of Kashmir and forcefully collected by a particularly rapacious wazir called Basti Ram. Subsequently other Ladakhis came to Lahul as traders or as workers seeking employment.

Being outsiders the Ladakhis were less susceptible to social pressure not to associate with the mission. Such pressure came from two sources : first the families of potential converts, encouraged by the local monks, threatened to ostracise potential converts and, secondly, the *Thakurs*, the leading landowners, used their influence against the mission.

As early as the 1870's the missionaries believed that the Thakurs were plotting against them out of fear that their traditional predominance would be undermined by the mission.[32] In 1935 relations with the Thakurs deteriorated even further over an alleged murder case.[33] According to Walter Asboe three members of the ruling family killed a man in broad daylight. He therefore, went personally to

Dharamsala to report the matter to the authorities but when a government official came to investigate no witnesses were prepared to come forward and the case was dropped for lack of evidence. The Thakurs then threatened to sue Asboe and Zodpa, one of the congregation leaders, but subsequently withdrew their own case.

The mission's relations with the Thakurs remained strained. In 1938 the Kyelang community imposed a boycott on the Christians, refusing to sell them any goods and threatening to enforce a Rs. 50 fine on anyone who even talked to them[34] The missionary, F.A. Peter, received threats of violence. The ostensible reason for the boycott (an English word which had by then entered the vocabulary of the local dialect) was that the Christians were "such bad people" but Peter thought that the Thakurs were again responsible. They were managers of a company selling *kuth*, a new and profitable crop, and disliked the Christians because they feared that, being outsiders, they might undercut the company's prices. The boycott was lifted after the intervention of the District Commissioner but relations remained tense.

Quite apart from its relations with outsiders, the congregation was divided by internal quarrels and by friction between its ordinary member and the missionaries. The house was divided against itself: it is not surprising that it could not stand.

Forty years later traces of the Christian presence are still to be found in Kyelang. The chruch graveyard is there and many of the crops and plants the missionaries introduced still flourish. In particular potatoes, first brought to Lahul by the mission, have become a major and profitable export crop to the rest of India. But there are no Christians.

The Poo Mission Station 1865-1924

After Kyelang the next station to be founded was Poo which was opened in 1865 by Eduard Pagell, accompanied by his wife and child. Poo lies on the upper Sutlej and was chosen because it was a relatively large village on a trade route only two days' march across the Shipke pass to Shipke, the first village in Tibet.

The Pagells did not have an encouraging reception from the villagers. They were encouraged to build the mission house near a stream which was exposed to avalanches in the spring.[35] Had they done so it would soon have been swept away. Then there was a poor harvest which was attributed to the evil influence of the foreigners. A message was sent to a high-ranking lama in Gartok, Western Tibet, asking for instructions. The reply came back that their crops would improve if they were more friendly to the Pagells and thereafter the relationship improved.

In time Pagell became popular because of his medical skill. In 1867 he was actually invited into the Tibetan province of Tsotso to give inoculations to counter a smallpox epidemic.[36] However he was not allowed to return the following year and, apart from occasional journeys to Shipke, Tibet remained closed.

By 1875 Pagell recorded an average attendance of 40 to 60 at his Sunday services.[37] However, there were few baptisms. The most notable, in 1872, was a high-ranking lama from Lhasa called Zodpa Gyaltsen who was the son of a member of the Dalai Lama's cabinet.[38] He had left Lhasa because of one of the many nineteenth century Lhasa government intrigues.

Pagell christened him Nathaniel and had great hopes for him as a future evangelist. These were not altogether fulfilled. While a house was being built for him in Poo, Nathaniel had a furious

argument with a carpenter and hit him hard on the back with a hammer. The carpenter collapsed, apparently dead. He did survive, but Nathaniel left Poo. He stayed a short time in Kyelang and thereafter lived nomadic life in Lahore, Sikkim and Simla. In 1875 Heyde heard that he had been preaching in the bazar at Leh. He was apparently homesick for Lhasa but did remain a Christian.

Both Pagells died suddenly of typhus in January 1883. That summer they were temporarily replaced by Friedrich A. Redslob who stayed until 1885 when he moved to Leh and was followed by Julius Weber. Weber was much discouraged by his time in Poo. In 1889 he dissolved the congregation of three on the grounds that they were lying backsliders, only Christians for the sake of the benefits they could get from the mission; he would have to begin anew.[39]

Theodor Schreve, who succeeded Weber in 1891, was more successful. The backsliders repented and were restored to the congregation and Schreve set up a wool industry and revived the school. Soon there were new converts and by 1908 Poo, with 64 members, was the largest of the Himalayan congregations. Paulu the mission schoolmaster of Poo, who originally came from Spitti, made several evangelistic tours into Tibet.

The young congregation at Poo faced severe problems - above all on account of poverty. In 1894 Schreve estimated that of the 70 households in the village eight had a surplus of food sufficient to support the poorest if they wishe .[40] Thirty were self-sufficient but the remainder were poor and frequently in debt. Interest rates ran at 25-50% per half year and many of the debtors were forced to sell themselves into bonded labour.

Schreve was aware of the danger of 'rice-christians' - people who converted for the sake of material gains provided by the mission but thought that potential Christians would come under intense and effective pressure from their masters to abandon their new faith unless he provided some form of alternative employment. He therefore set up a small wool industry (weaving blankets) as a means of raising the economic standards of the villagers and thus making them independent of their former creditors. A second means of assisting the poorer Christians was to sell them cheap grain.

Schreve and his successors did their best to ensure that those who did seek baptism did so for purely spiritual reasons. They were not altogether successful. In 1907, for instance, when the mission stocks of grain ran out, one man declared, "If you will not sell us cheap grain, then we will not come to church!" - and never did come to church again.[41] In 1921 Henry Burroughs gave what was by then the generally accepted verdict, "The chief cause of trouble at Poo is, I am forced to think, that most if not all of these Poo people entered the congregation for a wrong motive (material) rathar than seeking a saviour".[42]

In these circumstances pastoral care proved exceedingly difficult. Like the Kyelang congregation, Poo was divided by internal controversies and the missionaries achieved little success in checking what they considered to be the chief prevailing vices - drunkennes and sexual immorality.

Two further factors inhibiting successful missionary activity were, again as in Kyelang, social pressure from the relatives of would-be converts and the fact that all the existing converts were low caste people belonging to the smith fraternity so that men of higher status regarded Christianity as a socially inferior religion.[43]

In the face of all these difficulties the mission considered closing the Poo station after the First World War. Bishop Arthur Ward gave it a reprieve during his visitation in 1920 but the difficulties of

transport and general expense made it unworthwhile to maintain the mission for so little reward. F.E. Peter finally closed it down in 1924. It was hoped that some other Christian body might supervise the congregation or that the remaining Christians might continue meeting, helped by occasional visits from other Moravians. In fact most of the congregation lapsed when the missionaries left, though as late as 1953 two old ladies were contacted in Poo. They were still Christians despite their isolation and met to sing hymns together. They moved to Leh for a time and were given charge of the Gospel Inn.

Another former member of the Poo congregation, Tharchin, went to Darjeeling and subsequently became a Church of Scotland minister. He was noted for among other activities, his Tibetan newspaper which was published in Kalimpong and circulated in Tibet itself.

The Chini mission (1900-1909)

In 1894 Schreve in Poo argued strongly that the mission should abandon its vocation to evangelise Tibet and concentrate on the more thickly populated foothills.[44] He pointed out that there was little prospect of Tibet ever opening to missionaries and that, even if it were opened, the population of western Tibet was sparse and it would be difficult to maintain communications with a mission there.

In spite of his recommendations Tibet remained the ultimate goal of the Moravians but in 1900 a station was opened in Chini which is half-way between Poo and Simla. It was manned by Julius T. Bruske for eight years and subsequently handed over to the Salvation Army.

Simla (1898-1905)

From 1898 to 1905 the Moravians had a station in Simla itself. It was thought that a Tibetan-speaking missionary might be able to work among Tibetans and Baltis working in that area. The mission therefore bought a house named 'Murrayfield' near the Tibetan colony of Sanjoli but they gave it up when they discovered that the Moravians were, after all, duplicating the work of other missionary societies. Most of the local Tibetans spoke Hindustani and could be reached in that language.

The church in Ladakh (1885-)

From the beginning the Moravians hoped to start a mission station in Leh because of its relatively large population and its importance as a regional centre but the Maharajah of Kashmir refused them permission. As W.H. Johnson, an India-born Englishman, one of his wazirs, later remarked, he probably feared that the missionaries would "criticise his mode of governing and would send reports home which would certainly touch on political matters" so that the mission would "keep a sort of unofficial watch over his country".[45]

Nevertheless Heyde made frequent tours of the area in the 1860's and 1870's-on one occasion, in 1865, to rescue Samuel Joldan from Basti Ram, the wazir, who wanted him to become his English teacher.

By the early 1880's many of the Ladakhi Christians in Kyelang were planning to return home so that it became even more important to have a resident missionary in Leh. Heyde spent the winter of 1882-83 there negotiating with the British Joint Commissioner and in 1884 Redslob had an audience with Lord Ripon, the British Viceroy, who promised to use his influence to persuade the Maharajah to grant permission for the new mission.[46] He was successful and Redslob duly moved to Leh as the first resident missionary in August 1885.

He stayed in the dak bungalow at first and after some months was granted the bungalow attached to the meteorological observatory. At this time foreigners were not allowed to own land or

buildings in Kashmir so the mission buildings, including the church which was built in 1886, technically belonged to the government which exacted a large rent.

In January 1887 Redslob started a small school. This was originally held in the bazaar and then moved to the mission compound where it was quieter. In April Dr Karl Marx (no relation to the communist philosopher, who had studied medicine at Edinburgh, set up practice as the first fully trained mission doctor.

By 1891 it looked as though the Leh station was firmly established but that year Marx caught typhus and died. Immediately after taking his funeral service Redslob also collapsed and followed his colleague to the grave a few days later. Becker Shawe, a young Englishman who had only been in Leh a year caught the disease as well but narrowly survived and accompanied the widows of Marx and Redslob to Bombay on their journey home.

The mission station also survived with the help of Julius Weber who came from Poo as soon as he heard of the deaths. Samuel Ribbach came from Kyelang to join him in 1894 and A. Hermann Francke arrived straight from Germany in 1896. The mission was unable to find a satisfactory replacement for Dr Marx until the arrival of Dr F. Ernest Shawe in 1897.

Once the school and the hospital were re-established it was possible to consider further expansion. In 1899 the mission opened a daughter station at Kalatse, three days' march from Leh towards Srinagar. Francke was the first missionary there and he was assisted by Chompel the evangelist who had been a monk at the great Tibetan monastery of Tashi Lhunpo.

At the outbreak of war between British and Germany in 1914 the German missionaries A.H. Francke, G.T. Reichel from Kalatse and E .R. Schnabel from Kyelang were sent to an internment camp at Ahmednagar because the British government classified them as enemy aliens. Neither they nor S.H. Ribbach, who was already in Germany on leave, were allowed to return to India after the war. Fortunately by 1914 Swiss and British missionaries were already serving in the field: Friedrich E . Peter (1898-1936), H.W. Kunick (1904-1930) Drs A. Reeve and Katherine Heber (1913-1925) - both husband and wife being medically qualified - Henry Burroughs (1913-1927) Hannah Birtill (1907-1917) and Ada Moore (1913-1927) in Ladakh and H.B. Marx (1903-1918) at Poo.

In 1920 Bishop Arthur Ward from London made a formal visitation to Leh. He expressed the hope that the West Himalayan Church would soon become self-dependent and to that end ordained the first two Ladakhi ministers, Joseb Gergan and Dewazung Dana. In 1921 the mission staff was further augmented by Walter Asboe (1921-1947), who later moved to Kyelang. Dr Mary Shawe came to take over the hospital in 1930 and her future husband, Norman Driver, arrived in Leh in 1933 and served in Ladakh until 1952.

In 1927 F.E . Peter was ordained the first and only Bishop of what was then the West Himalayan Province of the Moravian Church. He had already served 29 years in the Himalayas and finally retired in 1936.

Despite Bishop Ward's emphasis on the need to hasten self-dependence, there was little progress towards this ideal in the 1920's and 1930's. There had long been Ladakhi evangelists and congregation elders and there were now two Ladakhi ministers but the European missionaries still made all the key decisions. The traditional Moravian style of leadership was authoritarian from the Mission Board downwards: it was difficult to adjust to more democratic practises. Perhaps inevitably,

given contemporary European social attitudes, there was a wide gap in status between the foreign missionaries and the local church leaders. The missionaries were reluctant to devolve more responsibilities because they doubted the Ladakhis' administrative competence and because they feared a decline in the standards of spiritual discipline. Often underlying these arguments was the fear that the local leaders might rise too far above their humble station in life and become too proud. These European attitudes had an unhealthy impact on the life of the Ladakhi congregation. On the one hand local Christians often resented the missionaries' authoritarian leadership. On the other they retained a sense of dependency, a belief that the church could not survive without foreign support.

By the 1940's, as India moved towards political independence, the urgent need for more self-government in the Ladakh church became even more apparent. In 1941 Walter Asboe as Superintendent of the Mission and Norman Driver as Warden set out proposals to make the Leh congregation financially self-supporting. The Leh elders at first resisted this move, claiming that the congregation members were too poor and pointing out that "The churches at Poo and Kyelang vanished instantaneously with the cessation of mission work because they were dependent on the missions .... We are afraid more or less it is the same with the remaining churches of West Himalaya."[47] Nevertheless by the mid-1940's the Leh church was indeed financially independent of the mission and preparing to sponsor the theological studies of a young candidate for the ministry, Yonathan Paljor. Norman Driver served on the council of elders not *ex-officio* but as an elected member.

The Second World War from1939-1945 had undesirable side-effects - notably a steep rise in prices - but the actual fighting was far away. This was not true of the war which followed independence and the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. Both sides claimed Kashmir and Ladakh and in October 1947 an army of Pathan tribesmen invaded the Kashmir valley, nearly capturing the capital, Srinagar. By early 1948 the Pakistani forces were approaching Leh. In February they captured Skardu in Baltistan which was then administered as part of Ladakh. Eliyah Thsetan Phuntsog, one of the members of the Leh congregation, was serving there as *Naib Tehsildar* (a local government official). He narrowly escaped but the other officials, including the governor, were all killed.

On May 3rd 1948 the Pakistanis captured Kargil, cutting Leh off from Srinagar. They then advanced on Kalatse where they arrested Madta Chompel the evangelist and his brother on suspicion of spying and carried them off to a prison in Kargil. Fortunately after two months a Pakistani colonel, who had been a friend of Madta's at the Tyndale Biscoe school in Srinagar, saw them and ordered their release.[48]

Meanwhile the Pakistanis were closing in on Leh, coming as close as Phyang, only twelve miles away. The town had been passing through various stages of panic for several months. In February the Hindu merchants had packed their bags and prepared to leave for Kyelang in spite of the bitter cold on the high passes. The Buddhists had buried their treasures (including, in some cases, their pots and pans which made cooking rather difficult) and likwise fled for the hills whenever a particularly terrifying rumour reached the bazaar.[49] In May it was the turn of the Muslims to flee : 20 Sikh soldiers had joined the garrison and word passed round that they were preparing to follow the example of their brethren in the Punjab and massacre all the local Muslims.

The Drivers were the only missionaries left in Leh, the Asboes having resigned in 1947. They took the precaution of hiding their valuables under the floorboards but Norman Driver remembered a hymn

sung at his commissioning as a missionary and resolved to obey its command to "Never, never quit thy post!" Dr Mary Driver did what medical work she could succouring those who had fallen ill during their temporary sojourns in the hills.

Under the leadership of Dorje, a Christian leader and a skilful, largely self-taught engineer, the people of Leh built an airstrip so that reinforcements could fly in from Kashmir. The plan worked: on May 24th the first planes ever to reach Ladakh landed safely on the new airstrip. From then on Leh's prospects looked much brighter but fighting continued for several weeks longer. In all this the Christians played their part : Dorje helped build a cable-bridge across the Zanskar river under fire. Daniel Dana, who had fought in the Middle East during the war, helped train the newly formed Ladakh scouts, E .T. Phuntsog acted as supply manager for the Indian army and the elderly David Zodpel took meteorological readings, vitally important for the aeroplane pilots, and received a special commendation for his services from the Indian government.

At one point the Drivers feared that the army commander might expel them as suspected Pakistani spies but the local people vouched for their good faith and their fortunes changed dramatically in September when a new colonel arrived with full powers as Governor of Ladakh.

The Governor appointed a Council of Ministers with three members from each of the Buddhist, Muslim and Christian communities: thus Norman Driver became Prime Minister of Ladakh, the only Himalayan missionary ever to hold such high office, Mary Driver became Health Minister and Eliezer Joldan Education Minister.[50] In fact their powers and responsibilities were not as great as their impressive titles suggested. The "prime minister" modestly described himself as equivalent to the "chairman of the local council" and, finding that the jealousy of a local official impeded his work, soon resigned the premiership. By November 1948 the Pakistanis had retreated and life in Leh slowly returned to normal.

In November 1950 Pierre and Catherine Vittoz, the last European missionaries to serve in Ladakh, came from Switzerland to join the Drivers in Leh. Unlike their predecessors they did not make the tiresome two week's march from Srinagar: they came by plane in less than an hour.

The following year Eliyah Thsetan Phuntsog joined the mission as a full-time worker. E .T. Phuntsog was a high-ranking member of the Ladakhi nobility. As a young man he had entered the monastery of Rizong, which is renowned for its strictness, but his family put pressure on him to leave the monkhood because he was the only son.[51] He therefore left the monastery and entered Kashmir government service. Alongside his official duties he retained a deep interest in Buddhist philosophy and acquired a reputation as a Tibetan scholar.

In 1928 he came across a Christian tract entitled *Traveller's Guide from Death to Life* and was particularly struck by its account of Jesus Christ as a Saviour without sin, a contrast, he felt, to his own guru whose human frailties were all too apparent but who, by Buddhist tradition, had to be trusted and obeyed implicitly.[52] Pursuing his enquiries further he began to discuss the Christian faith with Joseb Gergan his future father-in-law whose scholarship matched his own.

Though convinced by Gergan's teaching, E .T. Phuntsog was at first reluctant to acknowledge his new beliefs publicly for fear of the hostility this would arouse and it was six years before he was baptised. The opposition to his conversion was all the greater because of his high rank. There were three attempts to poison him, his relatives attempted to disinherit him and he was the victim of a

...mpec up court case.[53]

By 1951 he had risen to the rank of *Tehsildar* of Ladakh but there were angry demonstrations ...ainst him in Leh partly because the people did not wish to be administered by a Christian and ...ecifically because they resented his proposals to introduce a new, phonetic style of writing Ladakhi:[54] ...ssical Tibetan, the traditional written language, though much more complicated, was also the ...nguage of the Buddhist scriptures. Buddhist leaders therefore held that any attempt to downgrade it ...nounted to a form of blasphemy. In the face of this opposition he decided to resign and enter the ...rvice of the church. Significantly he joined Driver and Vittoz as an equal, an acknowledgement that ...adakhi leaders now really did have the same status as foreign missionaries.

In 1952 the Drivers had to return to Europe because of Mary Driver's ill-health. For the next four ...ears Vittoz and E .T. Phuntsog worked in a creative partnership searching for a more authentically Tibetan expression of the Gospel. Thus E .T. Phuntsog composed Ladakhi Christian hymns, with Asian rather than European tunes, and wrote poems and plays to illustrate Bible stories. The two of them also began work on a revised translation of the Tibetan New Testament.

In 1955 the Ladakh church joined the United Church of North India,[55] the body which subsequently became the Church of North India (CNI), joining together the former Anglican, Presbyterian and other churches. The Moravian Mission Board encouraged the Ladakh church's links with the Church of North India but, so far, the relationship remains somewhat tenuous and the Moravian churches in India are still administered through the British Province of the Moravian Unity.

The Vittoz's stay in Ladakh came to an end in 1956 when the Indian authorities gave them notice to leave the area. Before they did so Bishop Connor came from Britain to ordain E .T. Phuntsog and a younger Ladakhi, Yonathan Paljor, who had been serving as a church worker in Leh since his return from theological training in Saharanpur in 1950. From now on the church in Ladakh would have to be truly self-dependent since no Europeans would be allowed to serve there.

E .T. Phuntsog left Ladakh in 1959 to work with Vittoz on the Tibetan Bible translation in Mussoorie, Uttar Pradesh. His return was delayed first temporarily and then permanently by his work with Tibetan refugees in Rajpur, U.P. Meanwhile Yonathan Paljor continued to work as pastor of Leh until 1963 when he moved to All Saint's Church (C.N.I.) in Srinagar. On his departure Dewazung Dana, then in his 80's, came out of retirement. He in turn was succeeded by Standzin Razu who had previously worked as an evangelist and schoolmaster: he was ordained together with E . Stobdan of Shey in 1969. Since 1982 the pastor of Leh has been Stephen Hishey, a son-in-law of E .T. Phuntsog

Rajpur and the Moravian Institute[56]

The missions at Kyelang, Poo and Leh were originally intended as the prelude to work in Greater Tibet. But, apart from brief forays across the border, missionaries were prevented from working among the Tibetan proper. Over the last twenty years the original aim has been in some measure fulfilled. Tibet itself remains as rigidly closed to Christian workers as ever but now thousands of Tibetans have come to India and the Moravians have been thereto serve them, particularly in the field of education.

In 1950 the Chinese communists invaded and easily overran Tibet. They allowed the Dalai Lama to continue as a figure-head but real political authority passed to Peking. Some Tibetans tried to resist by force of arms, especially in the eastern province of Kham , and in March 1959 the people of Lhasa itself rose up against the Chinese. The rebels had no chance against the well-armed Red Army and the Dalai

Lama was forced to flee to India, accompanied by about 100,000 of his followers. The refugees arrived destitute in a strange land whose climate contrasted dramatically with the cool of their homeland. In the early years many of them died of previously unfamiliar diseases, especially TB.

The Dalai Lama made his first headquarters in Mussoorie in the Himalayan foothills 200 miles north of Delhi. At that time E .T. Phuntsog was in the same town completing his revision of the Tibetan New Testament: he decided to start relief work with a group of 200 families from Amdo province in North-eastern Tibet. In 1961 he helped them to settle temporarily in Rajpur and subsequently move permanently in Clement Town, both of which lie to the south of Mussoorie near Dehra Dun. With a grant from the Moravian Church he was able to set up small scale cottage industries for the refugees while TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) assisted with a medical dispensary. Then, in April 1963, with his daughter Mrs Zhidey Kundan as the only other teacher, he opened an open-air school for a dozen Tibetan children.

From these small beginnings grew the present Moravian Institute. In its early years the school moved to a succession of temporary sites in Rajpur - and for a time even accompanied the children's parents, who were then working in a Tibetan drama group, on their tours. In 1966 E .T. Phuntsog's brother-in-law S.S. Gergan became Principal, staying until 1972, and in 1968 the school transferred to its present site at "Zhan-phan-ling" which means "a place good for others" in Tibetan.

E .T. Phuntsog retired from day-to-day supervision of the Moravian Institute in 1971 because he had a weak heart, and he died suddenly of a heart attack in February 1973. However, the school retains its close connection with his family. His widow, Mrs Sungkil Phuntsog still leads the Board of Management while his son-in-law, Obed Kundan, took over the school administration in 1972 and has been at the Institute ever since. Another son-in-law Stephen Hishey was Principal from 1977 to 1980 and he was succeeded by a grandson, Thsespal Kundan, the present Principal.

Today the school has some 200 children, most of whom stay in the Institute's hostel. The majority are Tibetans, coming from refugee settlements all over India and Nepal, but there are also local children, Nepalis and, most recently, Nagas from North-east India. They study at all levels from *Kindergarten* to tenth class. The Institute also runs a carpet-weaving training centre and since 1978 there has been a branch school for primary pupils in the village of Sahaspur, the other side of Dehra Dun.

2 : THEMES AND ISSUES

Methods of Evangelism

The missionaries preached, first to local people. In the beginning they preached in the open air in the local bazaars but once the various stations were established they set up a more formal routine of services. Each Sunday there would be two services, one of which was specially designed for non-christians and often well attended in the early years, before the novelty wore off.[1] Three evenings a week there would be meetings for the congregation devoted to Bible stories, church history or hymn-singing. In the early years of the century there was a 'magic-lantern' show on Friday evenings. The magic lantern was a form of slide projector powered by a spirit lamp : the large glass slides depicted stories from the Bible. The audience was not always impressed. The people of Zanskar in 1908 thought the (European) pictures of Christ made him look like a low-caste Kashmiri.[2]

Each summer the missionaries would spend one or two months on evangelistic tours to outlying areas. Armed with Gospel, tracts, pictures and magic lanterns they would cover large distances on foot or on horseback. In 1899 for instance Samuel Ribbach went as far as the Panggong Lake on the Tibetan frontier.[3] Other missionaries based in Leh travelled to Nubra, Zanskar and the borders of Baltistan and those based in Kyelang and Poo made similar tours around their respective areas.

From the 1870's the missionaries set out to train native evangelists. As well as assisting in the mission stations these men also undertook lengthy tours, preaching and distributing tracts. Thus in 1928 Bishop Peter recorded that each of his six evangelists had spent 90 days of the year on the road.[4] Apart from their preaching tours the evangelists were also stationed in outlying villages to establish a more permanent Christian presence. Stanzin Razu for instance spent much of the 1930's in Nubra where, among his other activities, he organised a small school. Other Ladakhi evangelists in the 1930's and 1940's included Jor Phuntsog, Trashi Batapa, E. Stobdan and Madta Chompel.

Both missionaries and evangelists used a variety of visual aids. In addition to magic lantern slides they used pictures and paintings, some of them designed as Christian versions of Buddhist *thangkas*. In the 1930's some evangelists followed Buddhist precedent in another way by carving texts from the scriptures on rocks by the wayside. Twenty years later Pierre Vittoz and E.T. Phuntsog organised 'minstrel trips to Nubra singing hymns to eastern tunes and performing short plays to illustrate Bible stories.

The gates of Tibet

The missionaries would have liked to go to Tibet itself and in fact Pagell, Weber and Schreve did go as far as the Tibetan village of Shipke, the far side of the border from Poo. They were received kindly but strictly forbidden to venture any further. If they did proceed, they were told the villagers themselves would be punished and the headman executed. Tibetan justice was often violent: on his own visit to Shipke in 1909 A.H. Francke heard that a man had recently been whipped to death for failing to pay his taxes.[5]

One attractive feature about Tibet was that caste restrictions, very much in force in Poo,

disappeared as soon as the border was crossed.[6] Thus men of different castes could share their food and the communal *hookah* ('hubbly-bubbly pipe') with each other and with Europeans who technically ranked as outcastes.

One of the reasons given to explain why the missionaries were not allowed in was, "We know your policies. First you take our religion. Then you take our land."[7] This was an understandable fear in a country where Buddhism was very much linked both with the government and the national identity - though there was also a small Muslim population in Lhasa. The prohibition on entering the country also sometimes applied to local evangelists. Thus in 1905 Paulu the schoolmaster and evangelist from Poo, was told, "We are forbidden to allow sahibs to enter. You are not a sahib but you follow the religion of the sahibs. Therefore we dare not let you in either."[8]

Nevertheless on other occasions Paulu did make several journeys to Tibet and in 1898 E .R. Schnabel went on five days' march inside the country and there then appeared to be no opposition to his travelling further.[9] In the 1930's Bishop Peter sent several evangelists to Tibet, disguised as traders. Among them was Madta Chompel who recalls his fear that he might be turned back by the Tibetan government official in Rudok.[10] instead he was told, "Well, Englishman! Give me five annas and one of your books and then pass!" By such means Christian literature was smuggled into Tibet even though no missionaries or evangelists were ever allowed to stay there.

Medical Work

In the Himalayas as in other mission fields medical work went hand in hand with evangelism from the very beginning. Heyde and Pagell received a short medical training at the Charite Hospital in Berlin and they and their successors ran dispensaries and small hospitals in Lahul, Spitti and Ladakh.

There were, and still are, local doctors known as *amchis* who are trained in Tibetan medicine and there is a substantial cropus of Tibetan medical literature which includes detailed descriptions of the medicinal properties of herbs. Although many *amchis* have built up justified reputations as healers there are gaps in their knowledge which can be filled by western medicine and some of the village *amchis* of Lahul and Ladakh had so little skill that they often did more harm than good. It was a frequent complaint of missionary doctors that patients only came to them as a last resort after local medicine had failed - by which time their original sickness had got much worse. Even so the missionaries were often able to cure them and in this way they slowly established the usefulness of western medical techniques.

The missionaries also functioned as the local dentists. On at least one occasion while on tour Pagell extracted a painful tooth with a blacksmith's pair of tongs-he had left his dental instruments at the station

The British government subsidised the Kyelang and Poo dispensaries and in 1887 allowed the mission to take over the 'British Hospital' in Leh. This hospital had been set up to care for people who fell sick on the Central Asian trade routes and the list of patients for 1889 reflects the racial diversity of travellers passing through Ladakh at that time. There were 38 from Ladakh, 17 from Baltistan,8 from Purig (which lies between the Indus valley and Kashmir, 4 from Yarkand (Chinese Turkestan), 2 from Rupshu (Western Tibet), 2 from Zanskar and one patient each from Central Tibet, Jammu, Baghdad and Ireland.[11]

Many of the Yarkandis were travelling not for trade but for the pilgrimage to Mecca and they

frequently succumbed to frostbite when crossing the nigh Karakorum passes. A distinguished European archaeologist, Sir Aurel Stein suffered the same fate in 1901.[12] A Moravian medical worker in Leh, Sebastian Schmitt, helped preserve him for future scholarlv endeavours by amputatina some of his toes.

Cataract operations were among the specialities of the hospital and its reputation for healing the blind went even beyond the borders of Ladakh. In 1905 one old man came 48 days' journey from Tibet to have his cataracts removed.[13] To help such patients from outlying areas the mission doctors went on medical tours to remote villages in the Zanskar and Nubra valleys.

Apart from the hospital the doctors also ran a polyclinic for out- patients and, where necessary, visited them in their homes. Meanwhile Moravian women ran the Zenana Mission to minister medically and socially to the Muslim women of Leh. The *Zenana* is the part of the household to which women in *purdah* are confined. Although most Ladakhi Muslim women were more liberated than their counter-parts elsewhere in the Islamic world some, especially the Yarkandis, lived very restricted lives - and were certainly forbidden to have any dealings with male doctors. The missionary women visited between eighty and ninety such households regularly in the 1890's.[14] Apart from the medical benefits, many of their hostesses were glad to have a visitor to talk to and they discussed many topics - such as the merits of different varieties of soap, the differences between Ladakhi and German cooking and the beauty of Germany. Sometimes the conversation turned to religious topics and then the mission women were naturally glad to tell Bible stories.

In 1913 the Kashmir government gave permission and financial support for a leper asylum in Leh.[15] Leprosy cases were not infrequent in Ladakh, though rarer than on the plains of India. The disease was regarded as a punishment by the *Lu* spirits for such crimes as cutting wood from sacred trees and, as in other societies, the victims were often left to fend for themselves. The mission to Kyelang also cared for at least one such leper, an aged lama who had been abandoned by his people[17] The Christians provided a shelter for him and gave him food. Shortly before his death he asked for, and received, baptism.

From the late nineteenth century there were Kashmir government doctors in Leh but the mission hospital enjoyed a particularly high reputation. In 1904 the British Resident in Srinagar even suggested that the Kashmir government close down its dispensary in Leh and hand over the entire responsibility for Leh's medical care to the mission.[18] The government turned down the proposal because it did not wish to appear to be neglectng its Ladakhi subjects.

The effectiveness of the Leh hospital was reduced by discontinuity between doctors. Dr Karl Marx died of typhus in 1891 after only four years' service. With some difficulty the mission found a Dr Jones to replace him but he turned out to be an opium addict and was encouraged to resign. The next doctor, F.E. Shawe, served for ten years before himself succumbing to typhus in 1907. The mission was again left without a fully trained doctor for five years until the Hebers' arrival in 1912. There was a further interregnum between the Hebers departure in 1925 and the arrival of Dr Mary Shawe (Dr F.E Shawe's daughter) in 1930, though the gap was partly filled by a retired army doctor, a Colonel Berry, who served in the hospital for several stints in the summer months. Mary Shawe herself spent much of her missionary carreer with her husband, Norman Driver, in Kalatse with only occasional visits to Leh.

Even when the hospital was in full swing there was relatively little work for the doctors to do. In

1921 Dr Heber estimated that he had only 1,500 to 2,000 new cases a year, 60 to 70 hospital in-patients and 50 to 60 operations.[19] He thought this was insufficient work for one doctor, let alone both him and his wife, and suggested that his post be made part time and that he should spend the winter working in Kashmir.

By 1923 his professional frustration had deepened and he wrote, "The inhabitants here are so hardy, and so many of the diseases common to warmer climates are quite unknown. Often my actual professional work at Hospital is over in half an hour."[20] He therefore gave notice of his intention to resign after two years. Subsequently he considered sacrificing his medical vocation for a more directly evangelistic one but his daughter's ill-health clinched his decision to leave.

Dr Mary Shawe confirmed her predecessor's diagnosis that the hospital had relatively little importance purely as a medical centre though certain families and villagers preferred to come to the mission hospital.[21] Her nurse, a Miss Olsson who served in Ladakh from 1929 to 1933, had expected to find a much larger hospital and was so frustrated that she wrote, "I really feel like knocking someone down to be able to tie them up ,"[22] a reversal of conventional medical ethics. By the 1930's the mission hospital was still a valuable accompaniment to the wider work of the mission as a means of getting to know people but it was no longer as essential as it had been when the missionaries were the sole local practitioners of western medicine.

Since 1952 there have been no missionary doctors in Ladakh but their dedication is still remembered and the medical tradition lives on in the Ladakhi Christian community which has produced several doctors ana nurses, mostly in government service.

The Gospel Inn

In 1939 the mission renovated a house in the bazaar which had been left to it by a member of the congregation and turned it into a 'Gospel Inn' for the many travellers who passed through Leh. In its first year there were 4,000 guests[23] but despite its early popularity the Inn went into decline after the war because of the closure of the Chinese border and the ending of the Central Asian Trade. The Inn was closed in the winter of 1948-49.

Schools

The Moravians have always placed great emphasis on education and the first of many schools was opened in Kyelang in 1860. Jaeschke and Heyde wrote and printed a series of text books on subjects ranging from maths and geography to astronomy and church history. In Lahul, as elsewhere in British India, the government supported the mission's educational activities with special grants and by 1870 the mission was supervising four schools with a total of 150 pupils.

F.A. Redslob founded the first mission school in Leh in 1886. He held lessons in the bazaar at first but, finding that his lessons were interrupted by local rowdies, transferred his classes to a room in the mission compound. In Leh too the mission school received government patronage in its early years. In 1889 the Kashmir *wazir*, Radha Kishan, issued an official edict that families with more than one child should send at least one pupil to the mission school[24] The edict caused considerable confusion. There were rumours that the children were to be kidnapped and shipped off to England, that they would be made into Christians and that, having become scholars, they would become too proud to do ordinary work.

The missionaries themselves feared that they would not be able to cope with the expected influx

of children but they mustered a distinguished staff consisting of Karl Marx himself, Theodor Schreve, Gergan (Joseb Gergan's father and, according to family tradition, a former teacher of the Panchen Lama), Samuel Joldan (who doubled up as the p ostmaster of Ladakh) and the British Joint Commissioner's *munshi* (scribe). They offered a syllabus of Tibetan, Urdu, English Geography, Nature Study, Arithmetic and half an hour's voluntary Bible study.

About 70 pupils joined the school in the first week but Radha Kishan's edict was not rigorously enforced and their number soon settled to the more manageable total of 30. Meanwhile other schools started in Shey and Kalatse. For two years from 1898 S.H. Ribbach supervised a Muslim school in Leh which had classes in both the Bible and the Koran, an unusually ecumenical arrangement which came to an end when the school's teacher left for Kargil.

In the early years there was little local enthusiasm for the schools and some hostility. In Lahul the monks opposed both mission and government schools because they feared that a better educated laity might encroach on their own traditional preserves. Their fears were not altogether unfounded. In 1915 the Kyelang villagers employed school children rather than monks, who were presumably more expensive, to perform the reading of the Kangyur (Buddhist scriptures) in an annual rite to promote good crops.[26]

For their part the laity doubted whether the missionaries' education would actually be of use to their children. The schools are therefore only able to open for a few weeks in winter because the rest of the year children had to help their parents by herding sheep and goats and by working in the fields. The Moravians did fare better than a rival Roman Catholic school in Leh which had to close down in 1892 because the parents demanded payment for providing pupils.[27]

Among the pupils who were on the school roll in Leh in 1911 were two village headmen from Likir and Panggong who wanted to learn Urdu to carry out their government business.[28] Similarly in Kalatse Francke's school had only a handful of pupils - but with an age range from six to 60.[29] Among the more elderly pupils was the village headman who had a good start in arithmetic from long practice in computing taxes but lagged behind in writing.

Initially even the Christians were slow to send their children to school but nonetheless Christians generally became better educated than other communities and therefore gained a disproportionate number of government jobs. An early example of this trend is Derga Shredol who studied at the Kyelang school, became a Christian in 1874 and served as a government official in Spitti until he was poisoned because of his religion and died. Other examples include Samuel Joldan who was postmaster of Ladakh, Chimed Gergan who was murdered in governnent service in Zanskar in 1928, his brother S.S. Gergan who rose to high rank in the forestry service - and many others.

In 1900 there were a total of 275 pupils on the rolls of Moravian schools throughout the Himalayas but by 1913 this figure had halved to 134 and it was reduced still further to a mere 36 by 1936.[31] In these years the mission made a contribution in otherwise neglected areas such as girls' education in Leh and village schools organised by evangelists in Kalatse and Nubra but even these became increasingly marginal in the course of the 1950's and 1960's. Meanwhile individual Christians played an important role in the government schools. Eliezer Joldan, the first Ladakhi B.Ed. was Principal of the Leh Boys' School and Sara Angmo was principal of the Girls' school. The mission school itself lingered on with a handful of pupils until 1960.

In the 1960's and 1970's the only Moravian school was at Rajpur (see the section on the Moravian Institute) but in 1980 the Moravian School in Leh re-opened for children up to Class 3 and there was an immediate demand for places. Its popularity was explained first by the high reputation of Christian schools, whose teachers are said to be more deaicated than those in government institutions, and secondly by the demand for English-medium education. A good knowledge of English is considered to be passport to a prestigious job, preferably in government service. Since 1981 the school has opened one new class each year and, for the moment, its future seem assured.

Agricultural work

The mission farm in Kyelang was Heyde's speciality. He had several reasons for setting it up. First he wished to establish a model farm to demonstrate new, more rational ways of farming, introduce new crops and thus raise the material standards of the Lahulis. Secondly, however, he had a specifically missionary purpose : he wanted to demonstrate that crops could flourish without the ministrations of the lamas. He also hoped that through its secular activities the mission would come into contact with local people who would otherwise have nothing to do with it.

The most important and in the longer term the most controversial purpose of the farm was to provide employment for Christian converts who had either been ostracised from their own community or, as in the case of a former lama from Tibet, had come from another area altogether. Heyde thought it both necessary and desirable that recent converts should be joined as closely as possible to the mission to what one of his successors described, somewhat acidly, as a "benevolent serfdom".[32] Outside the mission new Christians would be subjected to both moral and in some cases physical pressure to go back to Buddhism. Only if they were fully supported both physically and spiritually could they be expected to survive in their new faith.

The risks of this strategy were apparent from the outset. To guard against 'rice-Christians' the missionaries always insisted on a long probationary period before converts were baptised so that it was certain that their motives for conversion were sincere. They continued to receive instruction after baptism and, to prove that Christianity was not a soft option, Heyde was keen to instil a typically protestant ethic of combining both prayer and work.[33]

The farm provided ample opportunity for prayerful work. The British government was happy to encourage new farming techniques and provided 190 acres of land but, before it could be put to use the mission had to dig ten miles of irrigation channels through stony soil and rocks.[39] In doing so they were able to demonstrate another valuable Western technique: the use of blasting explosives.

Once the farm was established it did make a valuable contribution to the Lahul economy. The Moravians introduced new crops such as turnips, lettuces and, best of all, potatoes which have now become a major cash crop in Lahul. They also planted new varieties of fruit trees, introduced the lombardy poplar and improved the quality of the local sheep by cross-breeding with other strains.

The mission also engaged in a little trading. In 1890 they made an arrangement with the nomads of Rupshu who were to drive 200 sheep to Kyelang each year.[35] The sheep would carry loads of wool and salt and would come to be shorn at Kyelang, thus providing plenty of wool for the mission's cottage knitting industry. They were then driven back up to Rupshu, this time laden with vegetables.

A similar farm was established in Poo. As in Kyelang its purpose was to provide employment - and grain - for the emerging Christian community and at its height it employed 40 men. The produce was

sold in Simla. Among other activities the mission also distributed improved varieties of German seeds.

In Leh the mission was only able to make use of a limited amount of land but it did maintain a garden which, again, was instrumental in advertising new varieties of crops. The missionaries also introduced a German method of preserving vegetables for the winter by burying them in the frozen soil which acted as a natural refrigerator.

The Kyelang farm was at its best when Heyde was there to administer it. After his departure it gradually went into decline until in the closing years of the Kyelang station it was more of a liability than an asset. Heyde's successors were short-staffed and therefore lacked time and energy as well as his personal agricultural enthusiasm. The solution from 1915 was to withdraw the missionaries from direct supervision of the farm and let it out to Christian tenants.

This arrangement was less successful than might have been hoped. The tenants proved inefficient farmers. One suggested reason to account for this was that they neglected the land because it was not theirs - had they been owner-occupiers they might have worked harder. Moreover since the resident missionary retained overall supervision of the farm there was still a potential conflict between his roles as pastor and landlord.

The future of the farm and indeed of the whole Kyelang mission came up for discussion several times in the course of the 1920's and 1930's but, each time it was retained. In F.A. Peter's time (1935-1940) the increased market for a new crop, *kuth* also known as *rusta*, offered a fresh opportunity to make the farm commercially viable. Peter certainly had the aptitude to do tis but it would have meant reducing his commitment to more directly missionary activities. Accordingly the prospect of selling off the farm altogether was already under discussion when the beginning of the Second World War and Peter's enforced departure finally clinched the matter and led to the closing of the station.

Both Asboe and Peter the last two European missionaries in Kyelang thought that the farming enterprise had turned out to be a mistaken mission strategy.While recognising the need to support the early converts, they felt that too much dependency on the mission — "bottle-feeding" in Asboe's words had been counter-productive.[36] Instead of adhering to Christianity solely for spiritual reasons the congregation had been over-concerned with the material side-benefits, such as land. In Peter's words: " However helpful the secular enterprises are in attracting people and establishing contacts, in the long run they are hurtful, because they confuse the issues. The farm has helped us to build a station but it ruined the character of the Christians".[37] A sad epitaph for what had begun as a promising project.

The closure of the Kyelang station was not quite the end of Moravian agricultural initiatives. F.A. Peter himself went on to develop his agricultural and irrigation skills at a Canadian mission in Palampur and, when he was allowed to return to Ladakh at the end of the war, came up with an ambitious proposal for an irrigation scheme to use the waters of the Indus at Spituk near Leh.[38] It was hoped that either Peter himself or Dorje, a skilful Ladakhi Christian engineer, might supervise the scheme but it was never implemented and Peter took his skills to a new field of mission service in Pakistan.

Handicrafts

In Kyelang the missionary wives organised classes for the local women to learn knitting - and Bible verses. The women were glad to have an extra source of income and before long were producing 1,100 pairs of socks a year, by Lahuli standards a sizeable cottage industry. Knitting classes became

something of a Moravian tradition and the wives of missionaries and evangelists carried it to Poo and Ladakh. Woollen socks, German style, are now part of traditional Lahuli costume.

Theodor Schreve in Poo embarked on a large craft enterprise in 1895 by importing looms to weave blankets. The purpose of his weaving industry, like the mission farms, was to provide employment for actual and potential converts, as well as generally boosting the local economy.

In Leh Walter Asboe, who had had some business experience before becoming a missionary, started a Cooperative Society.[39] The Society sold shares at Rs 12 each and aimed to buy commodities on a cooperative basis but the managers proved incompetent and the enterprise collapsed. He had somewhat more success with another cooperative venture which he encouraged: the Leh Spinners Association, started in 1939, aimed to capture the raw wool trade for the Ladakhis.[40] By the end of 1940 Asboe was able to record that the Association had bought some Rs. 30,000 worth of wool from the highlandes of Tibet and put the Kashmiri raw wool traders out of business.

Also in 1939 Walter Asboe started an Industrial School in Leh, with financial assistance from the Kashmir government. The Central Asian Trade had much diminished because of fighting in China and the purpose of the school was to provide alternative means of livelihood. It started with three instructors, eight apprentices and 25 spinners and Asboe introduced a new design of loom, wider than the traditional Ladakhi version, to produce shawls, blankets and broadcloth. The school also trained a number of Tibetan carpet weaving apprentices. Earlier the only carpet weavers in Ladakh had been a Kalatse villager who had learnt his trade in Tibet itself, and his family.

The Industrial School closed down in 1947 but it was eventually replaced by a government-sponsored handicrafts training centre, many of whose instructors had first learnt their skills through the Moravians. Meanwhile in Rajpur the Moravian Institute has also set up a carpet-weaving workshop to train both its own school children and apprentices from outside.

Linguistic Research

In order to preach, let alone translate, the Gospel it was clearly essential to learn the local languages but in the 1850's when the first Moravians arrived in Lahul very few Europeans had studied either Tibetan or the various regional dialects. The first missionaries had only two linguistic aids: a Tibetan-English dictionary prepared by the pioneering Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Koros in 1834 and a Tibetan-German dictionary based on the same work by Isaak Jakob Schmidt of St Petersburg (also a member of the Moravian Church) in 1841. The Mission Board therefore commissioned Heinrich August Jaeschke to undertake linguistic research in Kyelang with a view to translating the Bible into Tibetan.

Jaeschke was a descendant of one of the original Moravian refugees in Herrnhut and until he was nearly 40 had spent his life teaching in church schools in Germany. He was a man of many gifts - a skilled musician, a botanist, a teacher but, above all, a linguistic genius. In order to keep up his language skills he wrote his diary alternately in German, English, French, Latin, Greek, Danish, Polish and Swedish.[41] Besides these he was competent in Hebrew, Bohemian and Hungarian and had also studied Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit.

Soon after arriving in Kyelang in 1857 Jaeschke left for the village of Stok in Ladakh where he spent three months studying Tibetan, undisturbed by the building operations in Kyelang. He stayed at the house of one Sonam Stobgyas who had studied at Hemis monastery in Ladakh and was therefore

educated in literary Tibetan as well as the spoken dialects.[42] Within a year Jaeschke was able to begin translating tracts into Tibetan, albeit with extensive assistance from native speakers of the language The resulting pamphlets were printed on the mission's own lithographic press.

Since Kyelang lay on a trade and pilgrimage route to Tibet Jaeschke was able to meet Tibetans speaking the whole range of regional dialects even though he himself never crossed the Tibetan frontier. In 1859, for instance, a lama from Lhasa stayed at the mission to help him with his studies and in 1865 Jaeschke himself made a visit to Darjeeling to further improve his understanding of the Lhasa dialect.[43]

Along with the spoken language he made a detailed study of Tibetan literature. His favourite work was the *100,000 Songs of Milarepa* about which he wrote a short article in a German scholarly journal.[44] He intended to write a translation and commentary on the entire work but his other preoccupations and his ill-health left him no time to do so.

Jaeschke published the fruits of his researches in a series of learned articles, published in German, Russian and Indian academic journals, which discussed the phonetics and regional variations of the Tibetan language.[45] In 1865 he published a Tibetan grammar on the Moravian mission press in Kyelang and this was followed in 1866 by a short *Romanized Tibetan and English Dictionary* and in 1867 by *An Introduction to the Hindi and Urdu Languages for Tibetans.*

Ill-health forced him to return to Germany in 1868 but despite his sickness he continued work on a Tibetan-German dictionary, published in 1871 and his linguistic masterpiece, the *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, published at the British government's expense in 1881. This was a considerable advance on previous dictionaries because it distinguished between the various dialects and cited examples from some thirty Tibetan works. It has been republished several times since then and the fact that it is still in print over a century later is an indication of its enduring value to scholars.

Jaeschke was both the first and the most brilliant of Moravian linguists but his colleagues and successors continued his tradition of linguistic research. When A.W. Heyde finally left Lahul in 1898 he went to Darjeeling to work on a revised version of the Tibetan New Testament. At the same time he collaborated with Graham Sandberg, an English chaplain, to revise, edit and contribute new words to Sarat Chandra Das's *Tibetan English Dictionary.*[46] This concentrated more on modern Tibetan than Jaeschke's work and is also still in print.

A. Hermann Francke was the most prolific of the Moravian scholars: he published over 150 academic papers and several books.[47] Francke first came to Leh in 1896 and moved to Kalatse in 1899 and Kyelang in 1906 before returning to Europe in 1908 because of his wife's ill health. His main contributions were in the fields of Bible translation and literary and historical research but he also contributed to the study of the Tibetan and Ladakhi dialects with articles on their grammatical system.[48] With his colleagues he contributed to the Tibetan volume of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, a government sponsored analysis of the languages and dialects of the sub-continent.[49]

Tibetan Bible Translation

All the missionary scholars believed that the main purpose of their linguistic and literary researches was to facilitate their preaching and in particular to enable them to publish an acceptable Tibetan translation of the Bible. This proved an unexpectedly protracted task. Jaeschke began preliminary translation work in the 1850's and parts of the New Testament came out from the 1860's onwards but

the full Tibetan Bible was not published until nearly a century later in 1948.

Bible translation into any language is arduous and often controversial but Tibetan presents special problems of its own. The first question was which dialect the translators should use. The missionaries wanted the Bible to be as accessible as possible to ordinary people and the ordinary people of Lahul and Ladakh spoke regional dialects which differed both from each other and from the more orthodox book language, classical Tibetan. A translation into one of these local dialects would have been understood in a limited area only. Moreover, scholars would have mocked its rustic style and, consequently, its contents. Jaeschke therefore chose to translate the Bible into clear classical Tibetan hoping that this would be understood all over Tibet and the border areas. In the circumstances this was certainly the best policy but it had important disadvantages: a classical Tibetan translation would be understood only by the educated and any attempt to simplify it would run the risk of lapsing into either western or eastern Tibetan dialect. Controversies over dialect were to prove the chief reason why the full Tibetan Bible was so long delayed.

Classical Tibetan had an important advantage over the local dialects in that it permitted greater precision in the expression of theological terms but there were still difficulties in expressing Christian concepts in a literary language which had been developed to express Buddhist philosophy. The most important gap was the lack of a word corresponding to the Christian understanding of God. One Mongolian version actually used the word 'Buddha', a translation which was obviously liable to create confusion. Jaeschke settled on *dkon-mtschog*, meaning the 'Precious One', a term which was more commonly used to describe the Buddhist 'three precious gems' of Buddha, the doctrine and the monkhood.[50] He hoped that in time the use of the word in the Christian sense would become generally accepted. For the 'cross' Jaeschke chose *brkyang sching*, an old Tibetan instrument of torture which resembled a rack: victims were tied on to it while burning sealing wax was dropped onto their breasts. Among other adaptations Jaeschke described the priests of Israel as 'lamas'.

The first translation, a Gospel harmony was published by the Kyelang mission press in 1861 and followed at regular intervals by the various books of the New Testament, all of them translated by Jaeschke except for Hebrews and Revelation which were done by Heyde and Redslob. By 1881 the draft New Testament was complete and work began on a new edition sponsored by the British and Foreign Bible Society which was to be printed by Unger brothers of Berlin. Jaeschke supervised the work but publication was delayed both by his ill-health and his fastidious pursuit of perfection: he died in 1883 before the final version could be completed in 1885.

Jaeschke himself was always modest about his own achievement. In 1863 he wrote that he considered his own version as a "preparatory work" until such time as learned Tibetan Christians should produce a more worthy translation,[51] and he seems to have retained this view until his death. Nevertheless his version was widely appreciated not only for its clarity but also for its typeface which was based on the script of a Zanskari scribe.[52]

The main objection to Jaeschke's work was that it was too high flown to be accessible to the common man, especially those Tibetans in Darjeeling who spoke an eastern dialect. The Bible Society therefore sponsored a revision committee in Darjeeling who were to produce a simpler version. The members of the committee, which began work in 1898, were A.W. Heyde, Graham Sandberg, J.F. Fredericksen of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, E. Amundsen and David Macdonald, a governme it

translator who was half Scottish and half Sikkimese.[53]

The committee's principal problem was the difficulty of reconciling eastern and western Tibetan dialects. The final version was still in classical Tibetan but in a plainer style than Jaeschke's.

It was published in Ghoom, near Darjeeling, in 1903 and subsequently reprinted in Shanghai. The revision did prove more acceptable to the Tibetans of Darjeeling but was never much liked by the Moravian congregations who found its style too stilted.

Meanwhile in the Western Himalaya the Moravians had begun work on the old Testament. Jaeschke translated Genesis and the first half of Exodus and his pupil F.A. Redslob, continued work on the remaining books of the Pentateuch which were published after his death, in 1905 and 1907.

Redslob was assisted by two former lamas from central Tibet. The first, Nathaniel Zodpa Gyaltsen who was baptised in Poo in 1872, has already been mentioned. The second was Gergan Sonam Wangyal, also a man of high rank, who had settled in the Nubra valley to the north of Leh where he met Heyde on one of his mission tours.[54] 'Gergan' means 'teacher' and, according to family tradition, he had been the tutor of the Panchen Lama, the second highest figure in the Tibetan hierarchy.[55] In 1854 the Panchen Lama died mysteriously, possibly from poison which was not an uncommon fate in nineteenth century Tibet. Gergan feared that he would be arrested and fled the country. Through his encounters with the missioneries he became sufficiently impressed by Christianity to move to Leh where, in addition to helping with translation, he taught in the mission school - but he was never baptised.

The Old Testament translation was delayed by Redslob's untimely death in 1891 but by the beginning of the twentieth century work was again in progress. This time the various books of the Old Testament were shared out between a team consisting of S.H. Ribbach, F.E. Shawe, T.D.L. Schreve and at least two Ladakhis, Samuel Joldan and Paulu Jor Phuntsog.[56] After Francke returned to Germany the initial drafts were sent to him to be checked.

He then sent the corrected version to David Macdonald and E. Amundsen to make sure that it was acceptable to speakers of eastern Tibetan dialects.[57] This was a slow and often frustrating process involving frequent disagreements between east and west which were hard to resolve by correspondence.

One possible solution to the dialect problem was to translate parts of the Bible into the local vernaculars. Francke did produce renderings of St Mark's Gospel in Ladakhi, and the Lahul dialects of Manchad, Bunan and Tinan. These were written phonetically and, since they therefore broke every rule of traditional Tibetan spelling, were much scorned by the local intelligentsia:[58] Jaeschke's policy of using classical Tibetan was clearly justified. Francke also began work on a Dardi translation of St Mark's Gospel, but did not complete it.

The translation was interrupted by the First World War but resumed in 1919 when Joseb Gergan began work on the remaining books of the OldTestament.Joseb Gergan was the younger and only surviving son of Gergan Sonam Wangyal. He had studied at the Tyndale Biscoe school in Srinagar before returning to Leh to become the mission schoolmaster and, in 1920, one of the first Ladakhi pastors. Though he was baptised in his youth he later made a point of studying both Islam and Buddhism and was widely respected as a scholar of classical Tibetan.

As before Joseb Gergan sent his drafts to Francke in Germany and he passed on the corrected versions to David Macdonald who had now become the British trade agent in Yatung, Tibet. Judges, Ruth and the first and second books of Samuel were published in 1924 and Kings and Chronicles in

1930. Francke died in 1930 but Bishop F.E. Peter in Leh took over the work of checking the drafts and the last book of the Old Testament was ready in 1934.

Isaiah and Jeremiah were printed in 1935 but there was then a gap of several years before the rest of the Bible was published. Only 8,000 copies of the Tibetan New Testament had been sold since 1903 and the Bible Society evidently felt that the low demand did not justify publication.[59] In the meantime Joseb Gergan, acting on his own initiative, began work on a further revision of the New Testament.

At last in 1945 the Bible Society asked Gergan to prepare a one volume edition of the whole Bible in Tibetan, a project for which a Mr Harold Avery of the Brethren's Mission had collected a considerable sum of money.[60] It was also agreed that the New Testament should be published according to Gergan's version rather than the Darjeeling one. So, under Gergan's supervision, a team of copyists in Leh began to write out the entire Bible on specially prepared sheets of paper so that it could be printed by the Bible Society auxiliary in Lahore. Joseb Gergan died in August 1946 before the work could be completed but his son-in-law, Eliyah Tsetan Phuntsog, and then Walter Asboe took over until the last sheet was ready in August 1947.

It then still remained to have the Bible printed and a man who understood Tibetan was needed in Lahore to check the proofs. Gapel, a Lahuli who had moved to Leh after the closure of the Kyelang station, set out for Lahore in early 1948 at a time when Pakistani raiders had begun their invasion of Kashmir.[61] The first time he got as far as Kargil before being turned back. The second time he was unable to get beyond Woyil bridge near Srinagar because the Indian army would not let him pass. At the risk of being taken for a spy Chandu Ray of the Lahore Bible Society set out to rescue him. Despite being a Pakistani he managed to persuade the Indian authorities to allow Gapel over the bridge and to let the two of them fly on an army plane out of Kashmir.

Even after reaching Pakistan their troubles were not over. Gapel could not stand the heat of the plains but fortunately they found a solution. He worked in a room piled high with ice whose temperature was closer to that of Leh. Having completed the work and seen the pages off the press he left at once with a copy of the Bible, without even waiting for it to be bound. He recrossed the border and walked back to Ladakh via Kyelang.

Joseb Gergan's translation was well received, especially in Ladakh. It was clearly an improvement on previous versions since it was written in idiomatic Tibetan by a native speaker of the language. Several copies found their way to Tibet and it is said that Chinese troops, who invaded Tibet in 1950, used the Bible as language aid because it was the only book available in both tongues[62]. It is not recorded whether they found it instructive.

However, the 1948 Bible was not so popular among Tibetan-speaking Christians in Darjeeling and Sikkim because, although it was mostly in classical Tibetan, it tended to lapse into Ladakhi colloquial.[63] Moreover Gergan had translated from English and Urdu versions rather than the original Greek and the result was often long-winded and clumsy.[64] Eliyah Thsetan Phuntsog and Pierre Vittoz, who between them knew both Greek and Tibetan, experimented and produced a sample extract which was shorter, dialect-free and more elegant. Accordingly a new Tibetan Bible Translation Committee met in Kalimpong in 1956 recommended that Phuntsog and Vittoz prepare a revised New Testament with the assistance of Tharchin of Darjeeling (and formerly of Poo) and two American

missionaries, M. Griebenow and G. kraftwho were authorities on the Amdo and Kham dialects.

Thus, since Vittoz was refused permission to return to Ladakh, he and E.T. Phuntsog moved to Mussoorie, Uttar Pradesh, to continue their revision and this, so far, is the latest and best of the various versions of the Tibetan New Testament. The Old Testament has not been reprinted since 1948 although Stephen Hishey, a son-in-law of E.T. Phuntsog and now pastor of Leh, began preliminary work on a revision in 1979.

Research into Tibetan, Lahuli and Ladakhi culture

Many of the missionaries were men of considerable intelligence and academic ability and in the course of their long periods of residence in the Himalaya they were able to acquire a knowledge of the local culture rivalled by few otherEuropeans.Much of this knowledge is hidden in mission reports and archives - or lost altogether - but in many cases their findings were published and thus reached a wider audience.

Heyde spent four and a half decades in Lahul - longer than any other European before or since. In addition to his agricultural and other activities he prepared a manuscript collection of pilgrim songs in the Bunan language[65] and contributed to the Kulu and Lahul volume of the Punjab gazeteer.[66] Dr. Karl Marx in Leh was the first Moravian missionary to make a serious study of Ladakhi history but his researches were cut short by his premature death in 1891. However,his revised texts and notes on Ladakhi chronicles were published posthumously in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*[67] and his analysis prepared the way for later scholars.

Meanwhile in Poo Julius Weber was researching into Tibetan literature. He prepared an unpublished translation of the poems of Milarepa and wrote an article for a German journal[68] but his greatest claim to fame was his acquisition of the so-called Weber manuscripts.[69] One day a Yarkandi traveller came to the mission house to purchase a pair of socks and, claiming that he had no money, offered a bundle of old papers from the deserts of Chinese Turkestan in exchange.

He himself was unable to decipher the manuscripts because they were written in a previously unknown script but he sent them to a Professor Hornle of Calcutta University who established that some of them were written in Sanskrit. These and other discoveries stimulated wide academic interest and, finding that there was a market for old documents, enterprising Yarkandi charlatans set up workshops to manufacture their own. Eventually the archaeologist Sir Aurel Stein travelled to Chinese Turkestan to inspect the remains of its culture at first hand. He exposed the forgers but brought back a set of new artifacts, paintings and documents to the British Museum.

Among them were a collection of ancient Tibetan manuscripts. No one in London could interpret them so Stein sent them to A.H. Francke in the Moravian mission in Ladakh. He showed the first document to his evangelist, a Tibetan named Chompel, and was much astonished when, after reading the first few lines, Chompel looked up and recited the rest by heart. As a boy-monk he had had to study the text in the Tibetan monastery of Tashy Lhunpo. Stein published their notes on the text in his book *Ancient Khotan.*[70] During his missionary career A.N. Francke successfully combined preachng and scholarship by, for instance, a visit to the village of Skyurbuchan when it was celebrating a harvest festival. With the collusion of the village headman the villagers were summoned to dance at a certain spot - but found missionary Francke there armed with a sermon.[71] Afterwards Francke recorded the songs of the shepherd boys, an interesting cultural exchange.

Collecting songs was only one of Francke's specialities. He also studied and published papers on the Ladakhi Kesar Saga, folk tales, rock inscriptions, historical documents and the various dialects of Ladakh and Lahul. His first major book was the *History of Western Tibet*, published in 1907, which was the first full-length history of Ladakh in English.[72]

Francke left India in 1908 because of his wife's ill-health but returned alone the following year to undertake an archaeologial survey at the invitation of the Indian government. In the course of this he travelled from Simla to Poo, just across the border to Shipke in Tibet, and from there via Spitti to Leh and Srinagar. This journey is described in the first volume of *The Antiquities of Indian Tibet* published in Calcutta by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1914. The second volume published in 1926 is a collection of annotated historical documents.

In 1914 Francke made a still more dramatic journey by land across Russia via the former Moravian settlement in Sarepta to Yarkand in China and from there across the Karakorum Pass to Leh.[73] His purpose was to collect material for a museum in Munich and, having arrived in India, to continue his linguistic studies to further his Bible translation work.

For several weeks he was cut off from the latest news from Europe but soon after crossing the Karakorum pass into India he met a scientific expedition led by the Italian Dr Filippo de Filippi who informed him that Germany was at war with Russia. It was not until he reached Leh in September 1914 that he heard the disagreeable news that Germany had also been at war with Britian for over a month.

As a citizen of hostile country Francke was interned in a camp at Ahmednagar, where he gave lesson in Tibetan in exchange for Sanskrit tuition. In 1916 all the German missionaries in the camp were repatriated via London and Holland. Francke then served as an interpreter in a special camp in Rumania for Indian prisoners of war before himself being captured again at the end of the war by the Serbians.

After the war he was refused permission to return to India but continued his researches and Bible translation work from Germany. Unlike Jaeschke Francke gained wide academic recognition. In 1911 the University of Breslau awarded him an honorary doctorate. In 1922 he began teaching Tibetan at Berlin University and became a Professor in 1925. He died in 1930.

Samuel Ribbach was Francke's contemporary, serving in Lahul and Ladakh from 1892 to 1913. He contributed to Francke's *Ladakhi Songs*[74] and, after his return to Germany, worked as a research assistantat the Hamburg Museum fur Volkerkunde where he prepared a paper on portraits of the Tibetan Buddhist saint Padmasambava.[75] His most important work was *Drogpa Namgyal*, an account of the life of a villager from Dragshos house in Kalatse.[76] He intended it to be a scholarly study but wrote it in the form of a semi-fictional biography in order to make it more accessible to the non-specialist reader.

Joseb Gergan was Francke's colleague in his historical and cultural researches as well as in Bible translation. He assisting him by seeking out historical documents and later by researching on his own account. He contributed a paper onLadakhi funeral ceremonies to Ribbach's *Drogpa Namgyal* and his compilation of " A thousand Tibetan proverbs and wise sayings" was published by the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.[77] His main work was his history of Ladakh, *Lad-vags Gyalrabs Chimed Gter* which was edited by his son S.S. Gergan, himself a scholar of note, and published in 1976.[78]

Drs A. Reeve and Katherine Heber, who served in the Leh hospital from 1912 to 1925, wrote a

lively account of their work and Ladakhi life in general, *In Himalayan Tibet*.[79]

Walter Asboe was the local correspondent of the Royal Anthropological Society and contributed articles to its journal, *Man*, and to the *Royal Central Asian Society* and *Folklore*.[80]

F.A. Peter, the last missionary at Kyelang, prepared a paper on Tibetan iconography which was published by the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1943.[81] After the war he was diverted to Pakistan but in his retirement he returned to the study of Ladakh and prepared a paper on its place-names.[82]

The last European missionaries in Ladakh, Pierre and Catherine Vittoz, reflected on their experience in *Un autre Himalaya* which gives a valuable insight into the Leh church in the 1950's.[83]

By the nature of their training the Moravians' contribution to scholarship was greater in the arts than in the natural sciences. However, Jaeschke was an enthusiastic botanist and identified several flowers previously unknown to western science. Six such flowers are named after him and four after Heyde.[84] Moreover the missions at Kyelang, Poo and Leh all kept meteorological records which they despatched to the government's weather experts.

Finally, it is worth noting that the mission was frequently of assistance to visiting European scholars. The Schologintweit brothers, who travelled to yarkand in 1857, were the first in a succession of distinguished travellers to call in on the Kyelang station. Later on, the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin was entertained by the mission both in Leh and Poo. In a photograph in the January 1909 *Missions-Blatt* he appears astride a two-humped Bactrian camel on his way to Yarkand. He wrote appreciatively of the mission's work and presented it with a gold watch.[85] In the 1930's both Joseb Gergan and E.T. Phuntsog helped Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark in his anthropologial researches.[86]

The missionaries also received frequent postal requests from less adventurous researchers. Thus Dr Heber gallantly pursued rare Ladakhi mosquitos for some distant enthusiast while Norman Driver received an even stranger request: an American gambler wanted to trace a Tibetan clairvoyant to help him place his bets. On this occasion the missionary did not oblige.

Christian Literature in Tibetan

The Bible was the most important but by no means the only book to be translated into Tibetan. As noted earlier the first of many books produced by the Kyelang mission press was *Barth's Bible Stories* and there soon followed a wide range of other Christian books and pamphlets. These included a hymn-book, a revised edition of which is still in use today, and a series of litanies, a catechism and various service books. For the more theologically advanced Christians Heyde translated *Beck's Glaubenlehre*, a German work on dogmatic theology which ran into 564 pages and Francke translated extracts from Luther's catechism.[87]

In addition to translations the missionaries prepared their own tracts in Tibetan. Heyde's include titles such as *skyabsmgon yeshu suyin*? (Who is Jesus?) and *dkonmchoggis srulpa bdenpa* (The true incarnation of God).[88] Redslob does not appear to have produced any printed pamphlets but manuscripts of his Tibetan sermons, neatly written on blue notepaper, survive in the mission library in Leh while Francke prepared a booklet of stories about Jesus in the Ladakhi dialect.[89]

Jaeschke and Heyde wrote a series of text-boks for their school in Kyelang covering a wide range of subjects: Tibetan writing, Hindi, arithmetic, Indian history, Asian geography, farming and astronomy.[90]

More scholarly works produced in Kyelang include Jaeschke's fist Tibetan Grammar and his *Rômanized English and Tibetan Dictionary* which was published on the mission press in 1866. Later in Leh Francke used the press to publish the initial results of his researches on folk-tales, Ladakhi songs and rock inscriptions - many of these were later re-published in academic journals.[91]

A.H. Francke, commenting on the early translations, pointed out that they sacrificed a smooth Tibetan style for the sake of clarity but he hoped that once Christian ideas were more fully understood a new, more authentically Tibetan Christian literature would emerge.[92] Among the most distinguished Ladakhi authors was Joseb Gergan, the Bible translator, who composed a complicated poem on Jesus, each line of which began and ended with a letter from the Tibetan alphabet in sequence.[93]

His other works included *The Spectacle of the Human Soul* which Asboe translated into English.[94] Its theme is man's conscience which can point to the need for liberation:

"In the strong dungeon of self
I am the helpless prisoner.
The desire of the flesh is my warder.
Greed is my treasurer.
Deceit is my trade master ...."[95]

He then recounts his own story: he was baptised as a young man but then studied both Islam and Buddhism to make sure he understood the alternatives before concluding that Christianity was indeed the surest path to salvation.

A second work, *Understandable expressions of moral thoughts*, is in the form of a dialogue between a master and his disciple.[96] Their discussions are interrupted for several years because the disciple loses interest. As the master says, "When bears and marmots are in their winter sleep they cannot feel hungry .... so the desire for deliverance cannot grow in you when you are in a comatose state..." But eventually the disciple does return and again they discuss Islam and Buddhism before discovering, not unexpectedly, that Christianity offers the best hope for mankind: " There is hope for the fish caught by the hook".

Eliyah Thsetan Phuntsog, like his father-in-law, was a scholar of repute. One of his particular concerns was the need to present the Gospel in a truly Tibetan idiom and he composed hymns with eastern verse forms and tunes, wrote three plays and prepared a lengthy poem in traditional Tibetan style, *Chhagthsal Gyanchuma* (Eighty stanzas of adoration depicting the life of Christ). He also attempted to introduce a reformed spelling system, writing Ladakhi phonetically instead of using Classical Tibetan but, as has been noted, this proved exceedingly unpopular.

E.T. Phuntsog was the last editor of the Moravian newspaper which was published on the mission press. This was started by A.H. Francke in March 1904 under the title *Ladvags P'onya* (Ladakh Messenger)[97] It had a small circulation of some fifty copies but each one was shared by a number of readers and some found their way into Tibet. In 1904 the Ladakhis were particularly interested in the newspapers coverage of the British military expedition to Lhasa. The Buddhists refused to believe that a Tibetan army wearing religious talismans had after all proved vulnerable to ordinary bullets. The second section of the paper consisted of a story serialised over several issues and the final section was a Christian exposition of Ladakhi proverb.

The paper closed with the departure of the editor but Walter Asboe revived it in Kyelang initially

under the title of *Kyelang Ki Akhbar* (The Kyelang News). He printed 40 copies monthly and included articles on local and world news, health care and excerpts from, among other stories. Aesops fables[98] In later years, particularly during the Second World War (1934-45) Asboe listened to the world news on his radio and pasted regular news bulletins outside the Gospel Inn. E.T. Phuntsog subsequently took over the editorship of the paper until the late 1950's.

The Development of the Christian Community

The growth of the Christian community has proved slow and painful. It took nine years of labour before the first converts were baptised in 1865. By 1883 there were 33 baptised Christians and by 1914 before the first converts were baptised in 1865. By 1883 there were 33 baptised Christians and by 1914 a total of 162.[99] After the closure of the Poo station in 1924 numbers sank to 133.[100] Ten years later the tally had risen to 143 and it remained at around that figure until after the Second World War. The present total number of Moravians in India has risen to 400 of which 140 are communicants but any growth is explained by natural increase rather than new conversions. It has long ben the case that the most common means of becoming a Christian in Ladakh is to be born into a Christian family.

The slow pace of growth contrasted with that of more successful Moravian mission fields such as those in East Africa and the Mission Board several times considered withdrawing from the Himalayas altogether but were naturally reluctant to do so after already investing so much effort into laying the foundations of the Christian community. They consoled themselves by reflecting that the quality of converts was more important than quantity and by pointing out that as a proportion of the total population, the small congregations in the sparcely populated Himalayas were roughly equivalent to that of the churches in the more heavily populated Indian plains.

The fact that the population was scattered certainly made preaching more difficult. Regular preaching tours enabled a large number of people to hear about Christianity but their contact was superficial. This was recognised at the time. The missionaries talked of scattering a large number of seeds over a wide area in the hope that one or two would germinate, perhaps many years later. Very few did - though the elder Gergan is one example of a man who came into contact with the church through meeting missionaries on tour.

A shortage of manpower further restricted the activities of the mission. The expatriate mission staff was at its largest in 1896 with 26 men and women.[102] In 1914 there were 21[103] but after the First World War (1914-1918) German missionaries were forbidden to serve within the British Empire and it was difficult to find replacements because the Mission Board was short of funds and because other more successful mission fields tended to take priority. By 1928 there were only five expatriate missionaries.[108] The Leh mission superintendents repeatedly appealed for new recruits but with little success: there were no new arrivals at all between 1933 and 1950.

Another impediment was ill-health, partly caused by long periods of residence at high altitudes. Several missionaries suffered from series illnesses, particularly typhus. Those who died in the field include both Pagells, Dr Karl Marx, F.A. Redslob and his wife Dr F.E. Shawe, his first wife, Mrs E. Chester (who assisted in the Leh hospital from 1928 to 1930) and some thirty mission children who died in infancy. Many others had to return to Europe earlier than planned because of sickness within their families. In addition to physical ill-health, expatriates had to combat the psychological strain of extended periods of isolation from other Europeans - the long years of separation from their children

were particularly painful. From 1865 until her death in 1883 Mrs Pagell never left Poo and thus never encountered any other European women at all. In 1926 and 1930 successive missionary wives in Kalatse were diagnosed as having suffered nervous breakdowns.[105] Physical and mental stress must have taxed the most resilient.

The physical constrains on the expatriate mission staff were important but do not provide a sufficient explanation for the unenthusiastic response to their message. A more thorough analysis must examine the contradictions, both social and intellectual, between a specifically western, Protestant branch of Christianity and the Tibetan Buddhism practised in Ladakh. The variety of Buddhism with which the mission had most contact was not so much the higher philosophy as the popular religion of the farmers and traders.

The philosophical contradictions extend to the most fundamental issues. As we have seen Jaeschke could find no existing Tibetan word corresponding to the Christian conception of God and had to adapt one, *dKon-mtschog* The nature of God remained a stumbling block even to better-educated Tibetans. In 1931 a well-travelled monk from Drepung monastery near Lhasa spent several weeks studying Christianity with the Leh mission and came to the following conclusion, "I have learnt that a sinner, however great, can be saved if he puts his trust in the cross of Jesus. But I cannot understand what God is".[106]

Given that the Buddhists did not share the Christian conception of God it naturally followed that the popular attitude to prayer was also very different. In 1908 while on a preaching tour in Zanskar O.G. Hettasch was told, "We pray more than you."[107] This is technically true. The famous mantra, "Om mane padmeHum"is forever on the lips of the devout Buddhist, prayer flags hang from the roof of his house and if he has no prayer-wheel in his hand he frequently has a water-powered prayer wheel in his irrigation ditch. Hettasch therefore had to agree but he added, "but we pray from the heart" He and his colleagues believed that the Buddhists 'methods of prayer were too 'mechanical' and they interpreted the acquisition of religious merit by such means as an attempt to attain salvation by 'works' rather than by 'faith'.

They made the same criticism of religious ceremonies where the scriptures are commonly read at a speed which makes their contents unintelligible. Buddhists believe that the words themselves bring blessing and the reading is not therefore intended as a means of edifying either the listener or the reader. While most monks were literate only a minority were sufficiently educated to attain more than a rudimentary understanding of the scriptures they recited. In contrast the Moravians devoted years of labour to the Tibetan translation of the Bible precisely because they believed that their scriptures should be accessible to all believers and not just an elite of priestly scholars.

In all areas of Tibetan culture religious learning was generally considered to be the speciality of the monkhood. It was their special role to perform religious services for the laity who therefore had less incentive as well as less opportunity to study. Higher teachings were restricted to selected initiates. Thus in 1859 a friendly lama commented on the subject of the Gospel, "Vulgar people cannot understand this. They are vile as oxen"[109] and in a collection of Ladakhi proverbs, Francke quotes a saying, "One should not pour gold dust into the ear of a donkey", which was interpreted to mean that it was a waste of time to give religious teaching to the laity.[109] Many of the 'vulgar people' agreed. A standard response to the missionaries' attempts to initiate religious discussion was: "We are as stupid as oxen.

That is the lamas' business".[110]

Of all the lamas, the most revered were the Skushogs who were believed to be saints who had renounced Nirvana in order to be reborn again and again to serve suffering beings who had not yet achieved enlightenment. Even to be in the presence of such a man was to be blessed and to give him offerings of food or money was to gain still more merit. The missionaries held it to be particularly inappropriate that the Skushogs should be considered 'saviours' (*Skyabs-mgon*), a title they reserved for Jesus alone. Moreover they pointed out that the honour given to Skushogs was open to abuse. Heyde writes of one alleged Skushog who lived off the offerings of the Lahuli peasantry and then died over-drinking.[111] Buddhists themselves have been puzzled by occasional undevout behaviour by Skushogs. The usual explanations are either that the Skushog has been wrongly identified or that he has good reason for apparent misdeeds and must not be judged by the standards of ordinary men

There were undoubtedly abuses and imperfections in popular Buddhism as there have been in popular Christianity: in neither case do the abuses of themselves invalidate the original teachings. A more thorough philosophical comparison of Christianity and Buddhism would show clearly wider sources of disagreement than the popular religion of Ladakh and the opinions of the Moravian mission. Such a comparison might be able to shed light on some of the apparent contradictions but, quite apart from philosophical considerations, the historical point remains that communication between the two religions was exceedingly difficult. In 1884 Heyde discussed the teaching his congregation still found hard to grasp.[112] These included the belief in a personal God to whom all are responsible and the doctrines of sin and grace, all fundamentals from Heyde's point of view. If baptised Christians found these teachings difficult, uninitiated Lahulis and Ladakhis must have found them even more so.

In the 1950's Eliyah Thsetan Phuntsog told Pierre Vittoz that the Western character the Gospel had acquired through the missions was the most important reason for the hostility towards it.[113] This might be so on several levels. First, Christianity too often did appear to be the religion of the sahibs. Perhaps Jaeschke's ascetic tendencies were well-founded and it would have been better not to be encumbered with large mission properties. Secondly the forms of worship were obviously Western - Ladakhi hymns to German tunes. Thirdly the theology was based on Western preoccupations and experience.

In discussing his own faith Phuntsog commented that the traditional Moravian emphasis on predestination, justification and salvation did not move him as much as St Paul's words, "It is not I who lives but Christ who lives in me .... We have died in him and we shall live with him. He thought there should be a 'Tibetan theology' more suited to the contemplative virtues of his race. As has been seen, in order to express the Christian message in an idiom more appropriate to Ladakh's cultural background he wrote hymns and poems using eastern verse forms and tunes. he also translated a book on contemplative prayer, *When ye pray* by Dom Bernard Clements, a Benedictine monk.

In this context one wonders how the Ladakhis might have reacted to other Christian traditions which placed more emphasis on contemplative prayer. In the Orthodox Church for instance devotees have 'prayed without ceasing' by constantly repeating the *Jesus Prayer* in a manner which, superficially at least, is reminiscent of the Buddhist use of the 'Om mane padme Hum' mantra. There was briefly a Roman Catholic mission in Leh in the 1890s. It seems that the Ladakhis found the 'Mary-religion' more congenial than the 'Jesus-religion' because the priests of the former had statues in their temples[114] - but the Roman Catholics did not stay long enough for a real comparison to be made. Even if they had done

it is probable that the social objections to actual conversion - on which more below - would have been as great as with the Moravians.

In practice one of the more common reactions to Christian preaching was indifference because religion was considered to be the monks' affair. There was also a tendency to think of all religions as one - a proposition which the Moravians vigorously rejected. Sometimes this was expressed defensively with one man even claiming, "But our Buddha also died on the cross for all mankind"[115] At other times it was more positive. Julius Weber in Poo once sent a gospel to a hermit of high family who spent his days meditating in a cave.[116] In reply he received a 'courteous oriental' letter: the hermit also reverenced the Lord Jesus and honoured Weber's predecessor, J.L.E. Pagell, as a father. Another hermit, Tsepal who lived near Kalatse, used to actively exhort people, to listen to the wise words of the missionaries. Some did absorb their teachings although not in the manner intended. They used pages from Christian tracts to make protective amulets, in the belief that they had a magical power, or even made them into medicinal pills.[117]

Buddhist tolerance rarely extended as far as actual conversion, mainly because religion was not so much a matter for an individual's conscience as part of his social and communal identity. To renounce that identity was often seen as an act of betrayal and potential converts faced determined and often violent opposition from their relatives.

An example of this was Stobgyas from Kalatse who was baptised in 1904.[118] His mother tried to dissuade him with tears while his brothers used threats. Let him even become a Muslim rather than a Christian! Soon after his baptism there was a village festival. A goat was slaughtered and Stobgyas's brothers came to join in the dancing but were turned back because they were accused of being *Kilistan* (Christan). This was taken as a great insult and in the fight that followed one young man nearly had his skull smashed in by a huge stone. The missionary was called to succour him. In becoming a Christian Stobgyas lost his wife and friends and was disinherited of his house and lands. Other converts such as Jonathan from Ladakh in 1873 or E.T. Phuntsog in the 1930's were the victims of poison attempts.

In Kalatse villagers believed that the presence of a Christian in the house would anger the house-god (*Pa'lha*).[119] In Kyelang and Poo, where there was a caste system, converts could no longer share food with their families after loosing caste through baptism. There were frequent relapses in Poo of former Christians who found social pressure too much for them and restored caste by drinking Ganges water. On one occasion caste did work to the mission's advantage. The mother of a potential convert did not wish to be estranged from her and therefore asked to be baptised at her side.

Despite the tolerant attitude of individual monks and lamas potential converts also faced considerable hostility from the monasteries: the missionaries attributed this attitude to the monks' fear that a large Christian community or even a better-educated laity would rob them of their livelihood. Thus in 1894 when Jor Phuntsog became a Christian in Leh he and his family were ostracised by order of the Skushog.[120] According to Francke many other would be converts were deterred by the fact that they were in debt to the monasteries and would have to repay their loans.[121] Monkish hostility to the mission was a constant hazard. In 1943 local monks in Kalatse were so determined to prevent the building of the new church there that they had a prayer-wall erected on the building site.[122]

In Poo a large proportion of potential converts were in debt not to the monasteries but to secular land-owners - this was one of the reasons why T.D.L. Schreve thought it so essential to give the Christian

community an alternative source of income through the mission farm and the weaving industry. In Kyelang, as we have seen, the local landlords intrigued against the mission even to the extent of organising a boycott against the Christian community.

So in the face of all these pressures who did become Christians? Often they were men who had already been working in the service of the mission, or who had been brought up by it as orphans, and were thus in particularly close contact with it. The very first converts, Sonam Stobgyes and Samuel Joldan, are examples of this, having been working with the mission for nearly ten years in the building operations and the printing press. It is noteworthy that as Ladakhis they were relatively free from social pressure. Not so the local Lahulis. In 1909 a friend of Pal Trashi, who was about to be baptised, commented that he too would become a Christian but for the trouble this would create for his wife and children.[123]

The missionaries themselves always imposed high standards on potential converts. Before baptism each candidate had to undergo a long period of instruction to prove his or her sincerity. Ga Phuntsog, a future evangelist, had to wait a whole year before Heyde baptised him and similar requirements were made of others like him.

In 1920 the eccentric Skushog of Thikse came seeking baptism.[124] He had been identified as Skushog in his teens and had not therefore been brought up to the idea of living in a monastery. Not long after being installed in Thikse he resigned his position, renounced Buddhism and made approaches to the mission in Leh. A converted Skushog would clearly have been a boost to the Moravians but they doubted his motives, suspecting that he hoped to gain favours from the British government if he were baptised. He was therefore asked to wait but lost patience and returned to his home in Tibet.

The baptism of converts was only the first step towards the establishment of the new church. In the face of so many outside pressures it was by no means certain that the early Christian congregations would survive at all. To ensure that they did survive the missionaries initially sought to establish a close, essentially paternalist relationship, with their converts both in order to continue teaching them and in order to protect them from external pressures to renounce their new religion..Hence the need for farms and handicraft industries to provide an independent source of livelihood for them.

While this strategy may have been justified as a means of succouring the initial converts it inhibited the longer term development of a truly independent indigenous church because it led to a confusion of spiritual and material aspirations. In Poo especially, many of the members of the congregation appear to have regarded their Christian allegiance as part of a contract in return for which they received work, cheap grain and other benefits from the missionaries.

At first their status as employers strengthened the missionaries' authority but they were never wholly successful in imposing, or inducing, their own high standard of spiritual discipline on their parishioners. Christians who by their actions compromised their faith, for instance by attending Buddhist festivals, could be and frequently were suspended from the congregation.

By the 1920's this authoritarian style of leadership was already becoming less effective, especially in Ladakh where many Christians were already economically independent of the mission. Indigenous leaders found it harder to accept the authority of expatriate missionaries, many of whom were younger and far less experienced. The ordination of Joseb Gergan and Dewazung Dana in 1920 demonstrated

the mission's willingness in principle to hasten self-development but in practice progress was slow. One reason for this was the social gap and even distrust an unconscious absorption of colonical attitudes, which all too often divided expatriate missionaries from indigenous Christians.

This made it all the harder to resolve the bitter personal disputes which are a hazard of all small, inward-looking communities. Such feuds became all the more divisive because a dispute between any two individuals rapidly involved their families and soon engulfed the whole congregation.

Another factor inhibiting the growth of the congregation was the difficulty of finding Christian wives and husbands for its younger members when they had such a small circle to choose from. This was a constant theme from the 1890's, when Samuel Joldan had to import a Christian husband from the plains of India for one of his daughters, to the 1950's when the lack of betrothals led E.T. Phuntsog to refer to the current 'marriage strike'. Frequently therefore younger Christians married or eloped with Buddhists or Muslims, often with their parents' encouragement. The more strong-minded were able to bring their spouses or children into the church but many others were lost to the Christian community.

Other Younger Christians, often the most talented, left their home districts for Kashmir and elsewhere in search of more prestigious job opportunities, often in government service. Examples might include Joseb Gergan's two sons who joined the government forestry service or Rigdzin, the son of an evangelist, who, among other positions in a varied career held the post of official photographer to the Maharajah of Kashmir. This is a trend which still persists: both the pastor and several members of the Church of North India congregation in Srinagar are Ladakhis. They have been able to compete for prestigious posts outside Ladakh because of their superior education, typically from the Tyndale Biscoe school in Srinagar. It is to the credit of the Christians that they produced such people but emigration weakened the home congregations because it deprived them of potential younger leaders. In the 1920's the missionaries planned to address this problem by establishing their own Bible College to train Ladakhi church leaders in Leh but this never came to anything.

Thus for a variety of reasons the development of an indigenous, independent church proved painfully slow. In Poo and in Kyelang the chruch failed to establish a viable community. As F.A. Peter wrote of Kyelang in 1940, "Our Christians by being uprooted from their former bonds within the community from which they sprung did not enter the bonds of a new community. In a wider sense they became homeless, and in an extraordinary percentage made a hash of their newly gained Christian freedon."[125]

In Leh the congregation was more successful: it was always larger, there were more opportunities tor gaining a livelihood independently from the mission and a local leadership did emerge of whom the most outstanding figures were Joseb Gerdan and Eliyah Thsetan Phuntsog. As has been seen, the church gained financial self-sufficiency in the 1940's and *de facto* independence with the departure of the last missionary in 1956.

The years since then have seen rapid changes in Ladakh. With the building of the new motor road from Kashmir and the establishment of a passenger air service the area was become much more accessible. The army, government initiatives and tourism have all brought new opportunities and, economically, the Christians have prospered. In addition to the main congregation at Leh there are small chruches at Shey, eight miles to the east, and Kalatse - plus the Moravian Institute at Rajpur. In the field of education the schools at Leh and Rajpur make an important contribution to the wider

community.

The congregations continue to suffer the handicaps, some self-inflicted, of their small size, but while they cannot afford complacency, there is certainly room for hope. Their European and Ladakhi predescessors showed many talents as well as inevitable human weaknesses but perhaps their greatest quality was a persistent dedication in the face of great odds and despite repeated disappointments. If further Ladakhi Christians live up to this tradition then their faith will be proven much more than a matter of mere ancestral allegiance. The original Moravian community in Herrnhut demonstrated, albeit in different historical circumstances, that a small but dedicated community may have an influence for good far out of proportion to its numbers.

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