Hooker's expenses in Sikkim: an early Lepcha text

R. K. Sprigg

DOI: 10.1017/S0041977X0007885X, Published online: 24 December 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0041977X0007885X

How to cite this article:

Request Permissions : Click here
HOOKER’S EXPENSES IN SIKKIM:
AN EARLY LEPCHA TEXT

By R. K. SPRIGG

I. INTRODUCTORY

Some years ago I received from the India Office Library a xerox copy of a short document found at Kew among the papers of Sir Joseph Hooker, with an inquiry as to whether it was a permit for him to travel in Sikkim for the botanical research described in his Himalayan Journals (1854/1905). I knew enough Lepcha to be able to report to the India Office Library that the 42 lines of Lepcha script (romanized and translated at (II) below) were some sort of statement of accounts in East India Company rupees (küm-pä-nya kóm tsu; line 1);¹ but I was not able to arrive at the sense of the text in detail until my present stay in Kalimpong again put me in touch with Lepchas, especially Mr. A. Foning, of the Kalimpong Lepcha Association, whose help it is a pleasure to acknowledge.

In translating the text I also had some help from Hooker himself, once I had found the relevant pages in Himalayan Journals (1905, 196–261). A particular difficulty in the Lepcha text that Hooker made it possible for me to solve is the word shäng-kup (line 35); the context reads: ling-com ding-pän di shäng-kup zung-gri nön-to ká kóm nyat to-lop bi, for which my preliminary translation was ‘(when) the Lingchom Captain came, gave two rupees wages to the shäng-kup who went to Jongri’. The Lingchom Captain is referred to by Hooker as ‘the Kajee of Lingcham’. The lexical item -kup has its usual meaning ‘child’ or ‘boy’; but none of the entries in Mainwaring, 1898, under shäng, the commonest of which is ‘firewood’, fits the context. I was, however, aware that the Tibetan loan-word cho ‘(religious) book’ (Tib. chos) was sometimes rendered as sho in Lepcha; so it occurred to me that shäng might be a phonetic spelling for chäng (or chöng) ‘beer’ (Tib. chang); and Hooker confirmed my guess in the passage ‘... my friend the Kajee... was constantly followed by a lad, carrying a bamboo of Murwa beer slung round his neck, with which he kept himself always groggy’ (1905, 199).

A further difficulty in the text came from the short clause daje bd (line 31), which at first sight seemed to me to mean ‘when (he) drank a lake’, taking the honorific verb je (Tib. bzhes) to refer to Hooker; but, after reading the passage in which he described his visit to the Chojo lake, I had cause to change my syntactic analysis: ‘... the lake lies buried in a deep forest. ... Taking a rupee from me, the priest then waved his arm aloft, and pretended to throw the money into the water, ... shrieking at the top of his voice to the Dryad who claims these woods and waters as his own’ (256). As the Lepcha text succinctly puts it: horn hat nong, ‘one rupee went’ (line 31). The Lepcha author of the text has, therefore, used the honorific verb je as a token of respect.

¹ I have used the Mainwaring system of romanization for all Lepcha examples, including those from Mainwaring, 1898, in which Grünwedel, his editor, uses a competing system, but with the following modifications: (i) for Mainwaring’s ch- and chh-, c- and ch- respectively, consistently with ts- and tsh-; (ii) for Mainwaring’s syllable-initial initial vowels a-, a-, i-, etc., ‘a-, ’d-, ’t-, etc., consistently with ka-, khd-, gi-, and all other members of the syllable-initial series; consequently for Mainwaring’s ay-, which is misleadingly disyllabic in appearance, ‘y-; (iii) for Mainwaring’s superscript symbol rdn, which he did not romanize (1876, 5), ‘d.

For Nepali my romanization follows Turner, 1931, and for Tibetan it follows Wylie, 1959.
for the ‘Dryad’ (Lep. da-mi’t ‘nymph’, Mainwaring, 1898, 166), not for
Hooker; and da je ba should be rendered as ‘when the lake consumed (it)’
or ‘when the lake accepted (it)’.²

The Lepcha text covers these and other such transactions during the period
15 December 1848 to 19 January 1849, while Hooker was travelling from a
11,000-foot pass over the Singalila ridge on the Nepal-Sikkim frontier back to
his base at Darjeeling, with his party of 19, including a small Nepalese military
escort under a havildar (line 6; Hooker, 1905, 195).

The interest of the Hooker text arises not from the financial details of the
journey but from the light it sheds on the status of Lepcha as a written language
in the middle of the last century, and on Lepcha orthography at that time, and,
therefore, indirectly, on the phonology of the Lepcha language.³

The Hooker text can be precisely dated to the year 1849, which makes it
comparable in age to the two dozen or so Lepcha books that B. H. Hodgson,
Hooker’s host during his stay in Darjeeling (1905, 83), was at that time
collecting; these books now form part of the Hodgson Collection at the India
Office Library, contained in volumes 77–80. One of the books bears the date
[Vikram] sambat 1903 (a.d. 1847). At much the same time but on the other
side of Darjeeling, the Tukvar spur, two Christian missionaries, Start and
Niebel, had begun publishing in Lepcha, their first publication, in 1845, being
a lithographed edition of St. Matthew’s Gospel. This was followed, in 1849,
the year of the Hooker text, by Genesis and part of Exodus, and by St. John’s
Gospel, both books printed in Calcutta by the Baptist Mission Press. These
three facts, the use of Lepcha for the account of Hooker’s expenses, the Lepcha
books collected by Hodgson, almost all of them in the Lepcha script, and
Start and Niebel’s having thought it worth their while to publish, and even
print, in Lepcha, combine to suggest that Lepcha as a written language must
have been in fairly widespread use in the Darjeeling area at that time.

The importance of the spelling used by the anonymous author of the
Hooker text is due to the fact that, like the Lepcha books in the Hodgson
Collection, it precedes the more widely known spelling of Mainwaring, 1876
and 1898. The difference between Mainwaring’s spelling and that of the pre-
Mainwaring period is wide enough to lead me to suspect that he may have
deliberately departed in some respects from an earlier tradition. There is no
doubt that he tried to make a change in the Lepcha script, quite a useful one,
in fact: ‘I have introduced a sign (which the Lepchas, who have been taught
it, have at once adopted) to render the letters when bearing these pronunciations
[‘a hard rolling trill’, ‘an aspirated trill’, and ‘the sound of dr’] easily
distinguishable. A dot under the letter effects this, thus

\[K\v{r}a \, H\v{r}a \, Ra.\]

² Mr. Foning, however, takes je to refer to Hooker, and to mean ‘saw’ or ‘visited’, in this
passage and in lines 17 and 34, as an extension of the sense of je beyond the gloss given in
Mainwaring, 1898: ‘eat or drink, receive, accept, accept offerings, said of rum [god]’; cf. Tib.
\[\text{bzhes}‘\,\text{take, receive, accept: ... especially at meals, to take, to eat}’ (Jäschke, 1881/1934).

³ Beside Lepcha only two out of the many Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the Nepal-
Sikkim Himalaya have developed writing, and scripts of their own, Limbu and Newari. For
Limbu see Spriigg, 1959, for Newari cf. Spriigg to appear, (c), and for Lepcha, Spriigg to appear, (b).
According to one tradition, recorded in Sikkim, 1894, the 3rd Maharajah of Sikkim, Chodor
Namgyal (1700–17), devised a script for his Lepcha subjects (13): a Lepcha tradition, however,
ascribes the script to a Lepcha, Thikung Men Salong, minister of a Lepcha king, Turve Pano,
c. 1400 (Siiger, 1967, 27). The two traditions are not necessarily completely in conflict: the
3rd Maharajah might have delegated the responsibility for the script to a native speaker of the
language, possibly Thikung Men Salong, who loyalty gave the credit for his work to his royal
master.
Lepchas sometimes give these pronunciations to words that ought not to possess them, the following of this error ought to be guarded against' (1876, 11). He was also critical of Lepcha pronunciation and spelling: ‘the Lepchas are apt to pronounce this letter ['o'] as u, and hence when writing, to confound it with 'u, this error should be avoided, and corrected in the Lepchas’ (1876, 9); indeed, he was prepared to go further, and make changes in Lepcha pronunciation: ‘Wa, should be pronounced with the full rounded sound of the English W;* *It is not pronounced so generally by the Lepchas, but should be taught so’ (1876, 8). It therefore seems to me not improbable that he should have tried to improve on the spelling of older traditional works such as ta-she sîng, which he is known to have used in compiling his dictionary (Grüneweld in Mainwaring, 1898, II).4

Grünewedel, as editor of the Dictionary (Mainwaring, 1898), followed his author’s usage in the main, but not uncritically: ‘I sought in vain for any attempt at arranging the matter according to etymological principles. Nearly all the various spellings represented by the native manuscripts, nearly all the differently written prefixes and their combinations had been incorporated in extenso, …’ (III). The influence of the ‘etymological principles’ is to be seen in such remarks of Grünewedel’s as: ‘… in certain cases a difference arose between the assumed authority of orthography (the Bible translations) and the etymology. . . . The question whether to write ya, ye, e so well known to all students of modern Indian manuscripts was decided according to etymology; I wrote nyân causative of ngân, nyân from T. nyân(-ba); but nyen milk: all three roots are written nyân (or even nyân) and nyen in ta-she-sîng Mscts. promiscuously, etc. etc.’ (IV). It seems to me a pity that Grünewedel should have treated the orthography of the Bible translations as more authoritative than that of Buddhist books written in conformity with an older orthographic tradition. He even ignores some of the spellings to be found in the 15 lines of Lepcha script from the Berlin manuscript of the ta-she sîng that he himself gives as an example of his method (XII), e.g. (Berlin-manuscript spelling at (i), Grünewedel’s at (ii))

(i) bi, li, thi, di, mík, 'it, thik,
(ii) bi, byî (byî, 256), lî, thi, di, di, mík, 'yat, thik (thik, 272) (cf. also section III.A below).

There is, therefore, a possibility that Mainwaring and Grünewedel may have given a somewhat misleading impression of Lepcha phonology to specialists in Sino-Tibetan comparison and reconstruction, who usually know Lepcha only through the orthography of Mainwaring, 1876, and Mainwaring, 1898.5 I have therefore taken the opportunity of making an inquiry into the symbolization of certain Lepcha vowel units in the short Hooker text, dating back to the

---

4 Mainwaring’s attitude towards Lepcha was influenced by his conviction that it was ‘the oldest language extant’, ‘pre-eminently an Uroprache’, and ‘unquestionably far anterior to the Hebrew or Sanskrit’ (1876, xx). His ‘system’ of ‘the rudimental power of letters’ led him to compare a number of Lepcha words with supposed cognates in Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Gothic, and English, e.g. ‘shî the sight, soîr to know, to ken (compare Goth. kana, Tib. khyaen, Lep. khyaen to know, also Lep. ko to comprehend, to be cunning); (whence also, English can, Lep. khub to be able’ (1876, xi); and ‘take examples of h in the pronouns (the pronouns, primitively, representing the First Being); Lep. hô thou (the Being); Lep. hu, Sax. and Eng. he (the Being); Lep. hû-sa hû-sa (of he), Sax. and Eng. his (his); Inflection, Lep. hum, Sax. and Eng. him’ (1876, 103).

5 Benedict, for example, suggests that ‘Lepcha (or Rong), which exhibits many of the transitional qualities of Kachin, might equally be regarded as a separate nucleus linking Tibetan-Kanauri with Bahing-Vayu and groups on the south’ (1972, 8); this would elevate Lepcha to
pre-Mainwaring period, in comparison with that of subsequent works, Mainwaring, 1876 and 1898, and Tamsang, 1981.

Since my interest in the Hooker text is orthographic and phonological rather than stylistic, my first translation of it (section II) is a word-for-word translation. I have added current spellings of place names, where they differ from Hooker’s, as given in Karan, 1969, page references to Hooker, 1905, and occasional notes, especially on units of currency. I have romanized the text in accordance with the Mainwaring system (1876, 2-5) rather than the Grünwedel (Mainwaring, 1898, X), but with minor modifications (note 1). The 42 lines of text are numbered from 1 to 40, with two additional lines, later insertions, numbered -1 and 5a, and passages that had been crossed out enclosed in square brackets.

(The literal translation that follows is supplemented by a version in which I have tried to capture the style of the original. See Appendix, pp. 323-5.)

II. THE HOOKER TEXT

-1 sung-li hyök di bá sa-är zo hāk so bā 'Singalilah' cross came-when goat rice fowl served-when Singalilla, 15/12/1848; Hooker, 1905, 196

bük-shi thā-lā kāt bi baksheesh thala one gave

8-anna piece

1 küm-pá-nyi sa kōm tsu gum. rā la-vo nyar sam Company-of rupee accounts is. rā moon wane three
tampī (Nep.) 2nd month

tsōng ling-kōm kā ti lung thā-lā kāt sa wōm completed ' Lingcham ' -to reach-ing thāla one-of salt

Lingchom

2 pār. kōm kāt sa thā-lā zo pār. mú-se-mo lōt bought. rupee one-and thāla rice bought. Muse go-

Of mixed Lepcha

bo sang ki zo-cú tsho 'á-nā bi. thī tsōng -er-s-to journey-rice six anna gave. reach completed
descent chā (Nep.)

3 thī nyen 'á-ná nyat lon 'á-nā nyat sa nyen [bǒm reached milk anna two-after anna two-of milk [total-
lung thā-lā shū-kī gum]. kur-dong 'á-nā nyat. bā-dang

-ing thāla suki is]. plantain anna two. Badong

4-anna piece

kōm rupee

the same status as that of the seven ' primary divisions or nuclei ': ' Tibetan-Kanauri ', ' Bahing-Vayu ', ' Burmese-Lolo ', ' Kuki-Naga ', etc. (1972, 5). More recently, Chang and Chang, 1975, makes considerable use of Lepcha forms in reconstructing Common Tibetan-Gyarong, and claims : ' the frequent usefulness of comparisons with Lepcha will be apparent in our discussions below ' (398). Most recently, N. C. Bodman, who made a phonemic analysis of Lepcha in Kalimpong in the 1960s, uses Lepcha fairly widely in Proto-Chinese reconstruction in Bodman, 1980.

As an example of the way Lepcha spelling can mislead, I will cite two passages from Benedict, 1972: (i) ' Lepcha (ā-)myal ~ (ā-)myel < *s-mal ~ *s-mel ' (15), and (ii) ' Lepcha fo-nyel ~ fo-nyel < *s-ndl ~ *s-nel ' (16). As I point out below (III.B.2.a.i, Nasal-initial syllables), myel/myel/myal and nyal/nyel and nyel/nyel are each a set of variant orthographic forms for lexical items with the single syllable final -āl; so there can be no variation in the reconstructed form: *-el (as opposed to *-il) is sufficient.
4 'á-nyo ká nyat bi. póng-chen thit bo ká 'á-ná nyat lady-to two gave. messenger arrive-er-to anna two bi. [bóm lung kóm sam gum]. 'án hik kát fár gave. [total-ing rupee three is]. and fowl one price 'á-ná nyat anna two

5a ling-com to sóm-pú nón bo fa-lí ká kóm fa-lí bi. ' Lingcham ' up bridge go-er four-to rupee four gave.

5b nyar fa-ngo tsóng ling-com nun tul nóg sýo bá wane five completed ' Lingcham '-from upwards go-will-when kur-dong sa kyo ta-i bu-lát so bo ká lót plantain-and barley flour bring serve-er-to return bük-shí thá-lá kát baksheesh thala one

6 hül-dár nun dú-hí tsár 'á-ná sa lyo mó' 'á-ná kát havildar-by curds four anna-of received butter one-havaldar' dahi ēr (Nep.) sa lyo. krá-tshóng yuś-dyan ká thá-lá kát of- received. hermitage letter-faith-for thala one [bóm lung kóm [total-ing rupee

7 kát sa 'á-ná ka-kyak gum]. rung-nyit 'uńg thi one-and anna seven is]. ' Rungeet' water reach tsóng hik-tí pi-shá fa-ngo [bóm lung thá-lá kát gum]. completed egg pice five [total-ing thala one is].

8 rung-nyit 'uńg thi tsóng 'óng nyat ká 'á-ná nyat ' Rungeet' water reach completed child two-to anna two Rangit bi. mung-bryo ká hik fár 'á-ná nyat bi. gave. ' Mungbreu 'at fowl price anna two gave. Mangbru kyo-jing ká Kewzing-to

9 thi hik fár thá-lá kát bi. ka-jú fár kóm reached fowl price thala one gave. dog price rupee kát bi. ling-dam ká thi hik kát thá-lá bi one gave. ' Lingdam '-to reached fowl one-for thala gave hik kát fowl one-

10 ká tsho 'á-ná bi. tsha sám tsóng nyóng-góng -for six anna gave. date three completed ' Neongong ' Yangang thi lung cul dür-ji-ling * rák nón bo ká kóm kát reach-ing down ' Darjeeling ' mail go-er-to rupee one dák (Nep.)

* Although all 42 lines of text are clearly in the same hand, the author's spelling of the word for ' monastery ', a Tibetan loan-word, varies between gām-po (17), gām-pū (17), and gām-bo (34) Tib. dgon-pa), and for ' Darjeeling ' between dür-ji-ling (10) and dor-ji-ling (38-9).
bi. zo pár
gave. rice buy-

11
ká thá-lá kát nóng. nyóng-góng nyen fár 'á-ná nyat
-for thala one went. ‘Neongong’ milk price anna two
bi. kyo-jing hik-ti fár 'á-ná nyat. sa-nyek ká
gave. Kewzing egg price anna two. ‘Sunmook’-to
Senek, 31/12/48
thi
reached

12
thá-lá kát hik far bi. nyen sa lá-buk mung-gú
thala one fowl price gave. milk-and radish garlic
bi. chó lung thá-lá kát bi. krá-shi ding thi
vegetable agree-ing thala one gave. ‘Tassiding’ reach-

lung kóm
-ing rupee

13
kát zo pár. tsha ka-kyak tsóng pem yóng-tsu
one rice bought. date seven completed ‘Pemiongchi’
Pemayangtse

thi lung tuk-tuk kát fár thá-lá kát bi. má-nyi
reach-ing cap one price thala one gave. ‘mani’
gyóng bo ká thá-lá
chant-er-to thala

14
kát bi. tsong kát ká thá-lá kát bi. chúng-pung ká
one gave. ‘Limbu one-to thala’ one gave. ‘Tchongpong’-to
Chongpung

thi lung ci sa zo so bo ká kóm kát bi. zo
reach-ing beer-and rice serve-er-to rupee one gave. rice
thi tsóng
arrive completed

15
kóm fa-li sa shúk-ki zo pár. lúk lung kóm kát
rupee four-and suki rice bought. rise-ing rupee one
shúk-ki zo pár. hik kát sa hik-ti sa nyen sa
suki rice bought. fowl one-and egg-and milk-of
chó lung thá-lá kát
agree-ing thala one

16
bi. ’ik to-yu kát nun hik nyat sa zo-hyu bu-lát
gave. and woman one-by fowl two-and rice-pure brought-
bá bár 'á-ná bûk-shí bi. tsha ka-ti nyat thap
-when twelve anna baksheesh gave. date ten two-teen
bára (Nep.)
tsóng rúp-di
completed ‘Doobdi’
Dubdi (Tib. sgrub-sde)

17
gám-po ká 6 thi bà yúk-mun ká kóm nyat bi.
monastery-to reached-when priest-to rupee two gave.
sá-hep do gám-pú je ká kóm sam bi. tsha
Sahib self monastery accept-for rupee three gave. date
sam thap tsóng zúng-gri
three-teen completed ‘Jongri’
Dzongri
18 lem nong shi tsong ci-bu sa hik-ti la-buk towards go-about-to completed beer-load-and egg radish bu-thit bo ká kóm kát sa shük-ki bük-shi bi. carry-arrive-er-to rupee one-and suki baksheesh gave. bom-chen nun nyen sa lá-hermit-by milk-and rad-

19 -buk sa hik-ti ka-ku bu-thi so bo ká bük-shi -ish-and egg eight carry-arrive serve-er-to baksheesh thá-lá kót bi. tsha ka-kyót thap tsong zing-ri thala one gave. date nine-teen completed ' Jongri ' nun yak-sóm -from ' Yoksun ' -

20 ká lót thi tsong ta'-yu kót nun ci-bu kót hik -to go reach completed woman one-by beer-load one fowl 'á-bu 'á-mót nyat sung-gú kól-pót sa bu-thi bá male female two garlic walnut-of carry-arrive-when sá-hep Sahib-

21 sa bük-shi kóm kát shük-ki bi. rúp-di sa 'á-nyi -of baksheesh rupee one suki gave. ' Doobdi ' -of nun cú lá-mo thi bá sa'-ár kót hik kót hik-ti ka-ku arrived-when goat one fowl one egg eight

22 nó róng-cúng fa-li zo fri kót mung-gú mát bu-lát butter copper-small four rice fri one garlic make brought zangé-(chung?) (Tib.), bre (Tib.) measures bá bük-shi kóm kát shük-ki bi. 'ú-cho móng -when baksheesh rupee one suki gave. clergy many-

23 nun ci to-ró nyat zo-hyu fri kót hik-ti fa-li nyen -by beer napkin two rice-pure bre one egg four milk bo-tól nyat bu-thi bá sá-hep bük-shi thá-lá kót bottle two carry-arrive-when Sahib baksheesh thala one botal (Nep.)

24 tsha nyi-shú tsong bá-dang yá-bo sa ma-ró kót nun date twenty completed Badong high-rank-of person one-by hik kót 'á-rók pa-tek kót nyen shing re sóng la fowl one arrack vessel one milk wood-the trade-for

bu-thi bá bük-shi carry-arrive-when baksheesh

25 kóm kát bi. zing-ri nong bá lóm su bo ká rupee one gave. ' Jongri ' went-when road accompany-er-to bór-ro 'á-ná bi. zo fár kóm kát bi. twelve anna gave. rice price rupee one gave. bára (Nep.) khyum-shum ye tsong house-?small ?Limbu-
teum (place name, perhaps ' Buckeem ', 239, Bakkhim)
26 nun cu-bu kát zo fri kát hík-ti ta-rak sa
-by ?beer-load one rice bre one egg six-of
bic-bu, line 20
bu-thi bá bük-shi kóm kát shúk-ki bi.
carry-arrived-when baksheesh rupee one suki gave.
ci-nye yu nun hík-
Steward descend-after egg
spyi-gnyer (Tib.)

27 -ti ka-ku zo-hyu fri kát bu-lát ba bük-shi thá-lá
eight rice-pure bre one brought-when baksheesh thala
kát sa shúk-ki bi. yak-sóm ká tsha nyi-shú
one-and suki gave. ‘Yoksun’-at date twenty

28 tsón g sá-hep sa kóm há kát tát ba sa-’ár kát
completed Sahib-of rupee score one gave-when goat one
bic-bu kát shing re tshóng la mát bu-thít bo ká bük-shi
beer-load one wood-the trade-for do brought-er-to baksheesh

29 kóm nyat bi. yak-sóm nyen fár ‘á-ná sam bi.
rupee two gave. ‘Yoksun’ milk price anna three gave.
nyar kát tsóng ling-shú góng ká thi lung zo sa
wane one completed ‘Lungschung’ temple-to reach-ing rice-and
hík-ti egg-

30 sa nyen sa bük mung-gú shing re so bá bük-shi
-and milk-and yam garlic wood-the served-when baksheesh
kóm nyat bi. khe-sho pe-ri gám-pú je ká kóm
rupee two gave. ‘Katsuperri’ monastery accept-for rupee
mkha’-spjod dpal-ri
kát nóng.
one went.

31 da je bá kóm kát nóng. pun-lok yu nun
lake accepted-when rupee one went. monk descended-after
lóp-kró bo móng nun zo ci lá-buk vót-thu pa-tek
school-er many-by rice beer radish vót-honey vessel
slob-grewa (Tib.) species of bee
so bá
served-when

32 bük-shi kóm nyat bi. nyar nyat tsóng tíng-leng ká
baksheesh rupee two gave. wane two completed ‘Tengling’-to
Thinglen (8)
thi bá kyi-mi nun sa-’ár kát ta-fá móng bo nun
reached-when magistrate-by goat one tafka millet gave-after
parehed rice
bic-bu
beer-load
33 zo shing re mát so bá bük-shi kóm sam bi. rice wood-the make served-when baksheesh rupee three gave. án kóm nyat kát bi. chung-pung ká zo thá-lá and rupee two one gave. ‘Tchongpong’-at rice thala Chongpung

kát sa pár one-of bought

34 chá-ngá shá-ling gám-bo ká thi nyat sam tsóng ‘Changachelling’ monastery-to reached wane three completed gsang-snags chos-gling thi gám-bo je ká kóm nyat nóng. zo reached monastery accept-for rupee two went. rice-sa vóm chá-chó lung kóm -and salt agree-ing rupee


36 to bu-dít bo nyat ká thá-lá kát ló bi. nyar load carry-come-er two-to thala one wages gave. wane fa-li tsóng ka-lyat ‘úng ká thi dá bá nyen four completed ‘Kulhait’ water-to reach rest-when milk Kalet

fár shúk-ki price suki

37 kát bi. ‘o-re nun hróng hi ká thi to bun bo one gave. that-by climbed ‘Hee’-to reached load carry-er ká kóm kát bi. nyar ta-rak tsóng rung- -to rupee one gave. wane six completed ‘Rungeet’

38 -nyit go-rát ká thi dá bá zám-dár nun shí-dó Garat-to reach rested-when jemadar-by ?tobacco (Nep.) jamdár tshes-tha (Tib.) so bá bük-shi kóm kát bi. ka-lyat nun served-when baksheesh rupee one gave. ‘Kulhait’-from dor- ‘Darjeeling’

39 -ji-ling to bu-thít bo ká kóm kát ló bi. gun load carry-arrive-er-to rupee one wages gave. all

40 gun-jam bóm lung altogether collect-ing
III. Comments on the Orthography of the Text

Points of interest in the spelling of the Hooker text arise from the author’s usage with regard to (A) i and i, and (B) a, especially as opposed to å, e, and ô.

A. i and i

The author of the Hooker text’s usage with regard to what Mainwaring calls the ‘short accent’ and the ‘long accent’ vowel symbols i and i, the latter of which incorporates the superscript symbol ran (1876, 8–9), is completely systematic: i occurs only in vowel-final syllables, e.g. sung-li, di, bük-shi (line –1), and i only in consonant-final syllables, e.g. hik, ling-com, thit (lines –1, 1, 4). The two symbols -i and -i are, therefore, complementarily distributed in relation to type of syllable final. In fact the sole function of the superscript ran component of the i symbol seems to be to draw attention to the presence of a final-consonant symbol (k, ng, t, n, p, m, r, l), all of which symbols are also superscript with the exception of ng, which is prescript. The seven superscript final-consonant symbols are sandwiched between the ran and the initial-consonant symbol.

The usage of the Hooker text is the same as that of Tamsang, 1981, except that Tamsang uses only i in syllables containing initial c, ch, j, and ny regardless of whether those syllables are of the vowel-final or the consonant-final type; it also agrees with the usage of the 15-line excerpt in Lepcha script from the Berlin manuscript of the ta-she sung given by Grünwedel in Mainwaring, 1898 (XII; cf. section (I) above), in which i is used in the vowel-final syllables bi, li, thi, and di, while i is used in the consonant-final syllables thing, mîk, ’it, thîk, shîm, and jîm. Mainwaring’s usage is almost the reverse of this; and all the examples in the Hooker text that contain i (at (i) below) are symbolized with i in Mainwaring, 1898 (at (ii) below):

(i) sung-li bi  
(thi fa-li ta-i ci ka-ti fri nyi-shú)

(ii) sung-li byi (bi) thi fa-li ta-i ci ka-ti fri nyi-shú

(lines –1, 1, 2, 5a, 5b, 7, 14, 16, 22, 24), except that for di (line –1) Mainwaring, 1898, gives both di and di, while Mainwaring, 1876, gives only di (111); and six of the seven lexical items that have i in the Hooker text have i in Mainwaring, 1898:

(i) hik ling rung-nyît ’ik shîng dîng-pâń

(ii) hik ling rung-nyît ’ik shîng dîng-pâń

(lines –1, 1, 7, 16, 24, 35); and the exception, thit (lines 4, 18, 39), though it has the spelling thît in Mainwaring, 1898, is spelt thît in Mainwaring, 1876 (111).

It is noteworthy that the syllables in which Mainwaring uses i are commonly those containing (i) final k or ng, (ii) final n, or (iii) final r or l, e.g. (i) hik, ’ik, bik ‘cow’, ling, shîng, dîng (1898), (ii) lin ‘speak’, byin ‘give’, nyin ‘be’ (1876, 47, 47, 106: but Mainwaring, 1898, has both byin and byin, and nyin and nyin), (iii) kir ‘pick out’, pyîr ‘become red’ (1898), pyîl ‘thither’ (1876, 72; but 1898 has pyîl, pil, pyîl, and pil), myîl ‘below’ (1876, 72), thûl-la ‘successively’ (1876, 76; but 1898 has thûl and both thîl and thîl). In syllables ending in (i) t, p, or m, on the other hand, or (ii) the vowel symbol itself, Mainwaring commonly uses i, e.g. (i) nyît ‘cherish’, mît ‘female’, dá-tim ‘large’, dá-lîm ‘heavy’ (1876, 137, 25, 30, 30), pa-hip ‘drinking tube’, ’ip ‘squeeze’ (1898), (ii) sung-li ‘net’, di, thî (1876, 132, 111, 111). This distribution suggests to me that Mainwaring might have been influenced to

7 Except for i in ting-leng (line 35), presumably an error; for it appears as ting-leng in line 32.
depart from the earlier orthographic tradition by purely phonetic features, the
difference in quality between the more open and somewhat centralized vowel
(i) characteristic of closed syllables ending in a velar (k, rj), a dental nasal (n),
or r or l, on the one hand, and the close front quality (i) appropriate to closed
syllables ending in a dental stop (t) or a bilabial (p, m) and open syllables.

B. a

Another interesting respect in which the Hooker 1849 text differs from
Mainwaring, 1876, and Mainwaring, 1898, is in its use of the vowel symbol a; indeed the author of the text himself varies somewhat in his own use of this
symbol: (i) sam alternates with sâm for the same lexical item, ‘three’, the
former occurring on lines 1, 17, 29, 33, and 34, and the latter on line 10
(Mainwaring, 1876, gives sâm (115); but Mainwaring, 1898, gives both); far
occurs, for ‘price’, on line 12, but fâr on lines 4, 8, 9, 11, 25, and 29 (Main-
waring, 1876, fâr (144)).

Either spelling, sam or sâm and far or fâr, is, in fact, valid for these two
lexical items, because of an overlap in symbolization. This is due to the fact
that a distinction in vowel-final syllables that requires the separate symbols
a and á does not apply in consonant-final syllables, and therefore makes this
degree of variation in spelling possible.

1. Vowel-final syllables : a versus á and e

(a) Stressed syllables

In vowel-final syllables, provided that these syllables are stressed, a, á,
and e symbolize phonological vowel units characterized by the following
features:

| a:   | half-close central spread long a: |
| á:   | open front/back non-rounded long á/a: |
| e:   | (i) half-close front spread long e: |
|     | (ii) half-open front spread long ɛ; e.g. |
| a:   | tsha, da (lines 10, 31) |
| á:   | thá-lá, kám-pá-näjí, rá, dâ (lines -1, 1, 1, 38) |
| e:   | (i) je, ci-nye, ’o-re (lines 17, 26, 37) |
|     | (ii) gye ‘win’, the ‘depart’ (Mainwaring, 1898, 61, 154) |

The symbol e occurs infrequently in the text, and therefore provides
examples of only one of the two phonologically distinct vowel units for which
it has to do duty; but the functional load carried by this distinction is, in
any case, light: the number of lexical items in which the latter unit occurs is
small; and they are confined to loan-words from Tibetan (cf. also Sprigg,
to appear (a)).

Consequently, only eight out of the nine vowel units that are phonologically
distinguished in vowel-final syllables are exemplified in the 42 lines of the
text, e.g.

| i: e: ɛ: ur: ə: a: u: ɔ: o: |
| dî, je, —, tsu, tsha, rá, ka-jú, zo, chó |

(lines -1, 17, —, 1, 10, 1, 9, -1, 12), to which may be added from elsewhere,
as an example of ɛ; gye (and qyal, Mainwaring, 1898) ‘win’ (Tib. rgyal).

In nasal-initial syllables, however, in which the vowel is nasalized, only six
vowel units can be phonologically distinguished in vowel-final syllables, four of which are exemplified in the text, e.g.

I: ː ː ː ː ː

\( \text{má-nyi, ci-nye, } -\text{'á-ná, 'á-nyo, } -\)

(lines 13, 26, —, 2, 4, —), to which can be added, as examples of ː: and ː:

from elsewhere, \( \text{ngu } (\text{ʁ})' \text{ get threadbare'}, \) and \( \text{mó } (\text{ʁ})' \text{ sore'} \) (Mainwaring, 1898; cf. also Sprigg, to appear (a)).

In the Hooker text the two examples of syllable-final \( \text{a}, \text{tsha}, \) and \( \text{da} \)

(lines 10, 31), belong to a typologically different category of symbol from those of the other seven vowel symbols exemplified there (i, e, u, etc.): their symbolization is not alphabetic but syllabic; and a single symbol serves for the whole syllable, both the initial consonant and the vowel, e.g. both for the \text{tsha} and for the \( \text{a} \) of \text{tsha} (10). The vowel unit of each of the other seven types of example in the text, on the other hand, and for ː: exemplified in \text{gye} above,

is symbolized separately from the consonant, and is, therefore, alphabetic, whether prescript (i, o), subscript (e), or postscript (u, á, ü), or both prescript and superscript (ó). Mainwaring also uses this syllabic type of spelling for \text{tsha} 'date' (1898) and for \text{da} 'lake' (1876, 139); but for certain other examples of this same vowel unit ː: his symbolization is alphabetic, through the use of the superscript vowel symbol \( \text{ran}, \) e.g. 'd, \( \text{yd} (' \text{warm}, ' \text{know'}, 1876, 111, 133; Grünwedel, however, in Mainwaring, 1898, gives alternative spellings of these lexical items, 'd/a' and \( \text{yd}/\text{ya}\); and, for another such lexical item, his symbolization is of both types: \( \text{ka/ká}, \) e.g. 'd-ka and 'd-ká 'hand' (1876, 19, 122).\(^8\) If this \( \text{ran} \) symbol were to be used consistently for the ː: vowel unit in the vowel-final type of stressed syllable, and \text{tsha}, \( \text{da}, \) and 'd-ka, for example, were to be regularly written as \text{tsha}, \( \text{da}, \) and 'd-ká, the symbolization of the vowel units (and the initial-consonant units too) would be entirely alphabetic.

(b) Unstressed syllables

Certain lexical items occur in both a stressed and an unstressed position in disyllabic words, with the result that for them there is a variation in vowel length, between for example, ː: in the former position and ː: in the latter, e.g. -\text{ka}: in 'd-ká 'hand' but \text{ka} in \text{ká-jak} 'forefinger' (Mainwaring, 1876, 134, 138). I have the impression that Mainwaring, 1876, uses ː in unstressed syllables, e.g. \text{ká-jak}, only for stressable lexical items, those which also occur in stressed position, e.g. 'd-ká; otherwise he uses ː in unstressed syllables, e.g. \text{sa-dr, la-vo, fa-li} (\text{sa-}, \text{la-}, \text{fa-}; 131, 20, 115); and in this respect his usage is the same as that of the Hooker text: \text{sa-’dr, la-vo, fa-li} (-1, 1, 5a).

Since the distinction made between ː: and ː: in stressed syllables (section (a) above) does not apply in unstressed syllables, in which only ː: occurs, there is sometimes alternation in spelling between ː and ː, e.g. \( \text{ma-zu} (\text{má-}) ' \text{body}' \) (Mainwaring, 1876, 141), for which Mainwaring, 1898, gives both \text{ma-zu} and \text{mu-zu}, though with a preference for the former. Since, however, the first lexical item of this compounds seems to be \text{mu} 'body', the latter spelling should be preferable on etymological grounds. In the case of the compound verbs \text{bu-lá-t ' bring from a definite distance'} (5b), \text{bu-thi ' bring to hand'} (19), and \text{bu-dít bo ' bringer'} (36), in each of which the first lexical item, \text{bu}, has its unstressed form \text{ba}, the spelling with ː agrees with the stressed-syllable pronunciation of that lexical item, \text{bu: ' carry'} (no example in the Hooker text; 

\(^8\) Mainwaring, 1898, gives both \text{ka} and \text{ká} for this lexical item; but \text{ká} is much the commoner.
but cf. the closed-syllable form in *bu* *bun* *bun* ‘carrier’, 37); the spelling *bu* for *be-* in these compound verbs is, therefore, etymologically satisfactory.

2. Consonant-final syllables

In consonant-final syllables alternation in spelling has already been shown to occur even in the text itself. The type of alternation varies somewhat with the type of syllable-final; thus, for syllables containing a final labial or dental consonant, or a rolled or lateral consonant (symbolized by *p*, *m*, *t*, *n*, *r*, or *l*) an alternation in symbol is possible between *a* and *á*, and, for some Lepcha writers, between *a* and *e*; but for syllables containing a final velar (symbolized by *k* or *ng*) the alternation is between *a* and *ó*. I take the former type of alternation first.

(a) syllable-final *p*, *m*, *t*, *n*, *r*, *l*

In dealing with syllables of this type a further division can usefully be made into syllables with (i) final -*ap*, -*am*, -*at*, -*an*, -*ar*, and -*al*, on the one hand, and (ii) final -*yap*, -*yam*, -*yat*, -*yan*, -*yar*, and -*yal*, to which can be added, for some speakers, syllables with an initial alveolo-palatal affricate (symbolized by *c* and *ch*) or fricative (*j*), or an initial palatal nasal (*ny*).

(i) -*ap*, -*am*, -*at*, -*an*, -*ar*, -*al*

I have already called attention to alternations within the Hooker text itself in the introductory paragraph to section (B), between *sam* and *sdm* (lines 1, 17, 29, 33, and 34 versus 10), and between *far* and *fár* (lines 12 versus 4, 8, 9, 11, 25, and 29). This alternation in symbol between *a* and *á* becomes possible because the half-close central spread vowel unit (*a*:) is symbolized in consonant-final syllables not by *a*, as in section (1) above, but by *á*, the (superscript) *rán* symbol, e.g. *án* (4), *gám-po*, *gám-pú*, and *gám-bo* (17, 17, 34; Tib. *dgon-po*), and *dáng-pán* (35; Tib. *dăng-dpon*), thus leaving *a* free to act as an alternative to *d* for the open back/front non-rounded vowel unit (*a*/a), e.g. *sam* and *sám* (1, 10), *líng-dam* (9; but Mainwaring, 1898, *dám* ‘mud’), *thap* (16; but Mainwaring, 1876, *tháp* (115)), *gun-jam* (40; but Mainwaring, 1898, *gun-jám*), *far* and *fár* (12, 4). There are no other examples of -*ap* and -*ar* in the text apart from *thap* and *far/fár*, and no examples of -*at*, -*an*, and -*al*; but such examples as the following can be found in Mainwaring, 1876 and 1898, and in Tamsang, 1981:

- *ap*: *lap* ‘bury’ (1876, 135); cf. *lap*, *láp* (1898), *láp* (Tam.)
- *at*: *mat* ‘blow’ (1876, 6); cf. *máti* (Tam.)
- *an*: *fan* ‘earth’ (1876, 101); cf. *fát*, *fát* (1898), *fát* (Tam.)
- *ar*: *far* ‘rust’ (1898); cf. *fár* (Tam.)
- *al*: *ál* ‘new’ (1876, 6); cf. *ál*, *dál* (1898)
- *mal*: *dibble* (1876, 6); cf. *mál* (1898), (Tam.)
- *lík-kál*: ‘tomorrow’ (1876, 71); cf. *lík-kál* (Tam.)

It is interesting, but not surprising, to note that Mainwaring, 1898, commonly refers the reader from a spelling in -*ap*, -*at*, etc., to a spelling in -*áp*, -*át*, etc., and vice versa, e.g. ‘*táp* see *táp*’, ‘*bám* i.q. *bám*’, ‘*mat* i.q. *mát*’, ‘*bán* see *bán*’, ‘*var*, *var-ra* see under *vár*’, ‘*fál* i.q. *fála*’.

In the following table I give examples of all possible types of syllable final appropriate to this section, with a supporting lexical item each, giving preference to syllables from the Hooker text, but, where it provides no examples,
drawing on Mainwaring, 1876 or 1898, with a reference to Tamsang, 1981 (alternative spellings and lexical items from these other sources have been enclosed in brackets):

\[
\begin{array}{llllllllll}
\text{ap} & \text{am} & \text{ar} & \text{at} & \text{an} & \text{al} \\
\text{exp} & \text{exm} & \text{exr} & \text{et} & \text{esn} & \text{exl} \\
\text{yp} & \text{ym} & \text{yr} & \text{yt} & \text{yn} & \text{yl} \\
\text{op} & \text{om} & \text{or} & \text{ot} & \text{on} & \text{ol} \\
\text{op} & \text{om} & \text{or} & \text{ot} & \text{on} & \text{ol} \\
\{\text{thap}, \text{sam} & \text{far} & (\text{mat}) & (\text{fan}) & (\text{'al}) \\
\{\text{tháp}, \text{sám} & \text{fár} & \text{mát} & (\text{fán}) & (\text{'ál}) \\
(\text{báp}) & \text{gám} & (\text{yár}) & (\text{gát}) & '\text{án} & (\text{kyál}) \\
-kúp & \text{gum} & (\text{tur}) & (-\text{dyut}) & -\text{mun} & \text{tul} \\
lóp & \text{kóm} & \text{mór} & \text{lót} & \text{nón} & \text{kól} \\
-lóp & \text{góm} & \text{dór} & (\text{cot}) & \text{lon} & (\text{ool}) \\
rúp & (\text{lúm}) & \text{dúr} & (-\text{shútl}) & (\text{yún}) & \text{húl} \\
\end{array}
\]

(lines 16, 1/10, 12/4, 28; 17, 4; 35, 1, 17, 15b; 31, 1, 6, 2, 5a, 20; 31, 18, 3, 39; 16, 10, 6); the lexical items in brackets, from Mainwaring, 1898, are glossed as follows, in order of appearance: ‘burn’, ‘new’; ‘monkey’ (báp-mo), ‘fowl louse’, ‘vulture’, ‘smooth’; ‘lukewarm’, ‘fighting’ (á-dyut); ‘help’, ‘pour (water) on’; ‘south’, ‘fat’, ‘carry’.

For syllables in the Hooker text that are unusual, because they are due to the phonetic spelling of foreign words such as húl-dár (Nep. havaldár ‘sergeant’), to-lop (Nep. talap ‘wages’), lóp-kró (Tib. slob-grwa ‘school’), and, possibly, shí-dó (?Tib. bzhes-tha(g) ‘tobacco’, or bzhess-pro ‘biscuits’), or to place-names such as rúp-dí ‘Doobdi’ (Dubdi) and dár-ji-ling and dor-ji-ling Darjeeling, I would substitute representative Lepcha lexical items as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{llllllllll}
\text{np} & \text{chóp} & \text{‘water’} & \text{(hon.)} & (1876, 135) \\
\text{op} & \text{thóp} & \text{‘get’} & \text{(1898; cf. also thóp thúp, Sprigg, to appear a)} \\
\text{or} & \text{dor-bi} & \text{‘mushroom’} & \text{(1898)} \\
\text{up} & \text{yúp} & \text{‘suck’} & \text{(1898)} \\
\text{or} & \text{‘yúr} & \text{‘bake’} & \text{(1876, 143)} \\
\text{ul} & \text{‘á-dúl} & \text{‘lips’} & \text{(1876, 134).} \\
\end{array}
\]

When the consonant-final type of syllable is compared with the vowel-final type (section (1) above), the following noteworthy differences can be seen in the symbolization of the vowel units a:, a:/a:, and a in the Hooker text:

\[
\begin{array}{llllllllll}
\text{a:} & \text{a:/a:} & \text{a} \\
\text{vowel-final syllable:} & \text{a} & \text{á} \\
\text{consonant-final syllable:} & \text{á} & \text{á, a} \\
\end{array}
\]

In consonant-final syllables there is, therefore, over-symbolization: for the a vowel unit both á and a are in use, though either of these two would be enough for the purpose; and, as between the vowel-final and the consonant-final type of syllable, the a: vowel unit is symbolized inconsistently, by a in the former type of syllable but by á in the latter, though here again either form of symbolization would be sufficient.

At first sight the use of -ap, -am, and -ar in the text for ap, am, and ar

*1 I symbolizes a palatalized lateral (‘clear l’) here; in syllables with palatalized initials or alveolo-palatal or palatal initials a closer quality than o is appropriate to labial syllable-finals, i.e. u; and the u of dental-final and lateral-final syllables is fronted.

*10 For the close vowel u in this example see note 9.
might appear to be modelled on Tibetan orthography, in which -ab, -am, and -ar regularly symbolize non-rounded vowel units with approximately similar degrees of openness to the Lepcha (-irp, -am, -a:) in, e.g. chab 'water' (hon.), zam-pa 'bridge', lam 'road', mar 'butter'; but Lepcha uses a rounded vowel (n, o) in corresponding loan-words from Tibetan, which it therefore symbolizes by ó, e.g. chóp (Mainwaring, 1876, 135), sóm-pu, lóm, mór (lines 5b, 25, 6). This is, presumably, because the Tibetan dialect from which these words were borrowed into Lepcha used lip-rounding where other dialects, notably the Lhasa, used non-rounding. I have noted lip-rounding from a speaker of a Kham dialect spoken to the north-west of Kanze; and P. S. Ray reports this same feature, in e.g. khams 'Kham', yar 'up', for the Kanze area, in the Upper Yalung (Nyag chu) valley (Sprigg, 1966, 9; cf. also Teichman, 1922, 3, 71–3, 79, 231).

(ii) -yap, -yam, -yal, -yan, -yar, and -yal; c-, ch-, j-, and ny-

Examples of these orthographic types of syllable, in -ya-, or, alternatively, in an initial alveolo-palatal affricate (ca-, cha-) or fricative (ja-), or a palatal nasal (nya~), are scarce in the Hooker text; they comprise nyat and -lyat (-£t), dyan (-en), and nyar (-er). To these can be added, from Mainwaring, 1876, jan 'bad', fyan 'foeman' (6), and sa-dyar 'thunderbolt' (20).

There are no examples of -yap, -yam, and -yal in the Hooker text; but Mainwaring, 1876 and 1898, give such examples as:

-yap -sp lyap 'smeared' cap 'bore' (1898)
-yam -em lyam 'play' dyam 'put on' (1898)
-yal -el jal 'pronounce correctly' pyal 'weary' (1876, 6, 135)

-yal and -el, and -yar and -er

The example nyar of the text (line 1) is spelt nyer in Mainwaring, 1898; and the example jal above (1876, 6) has an alternative spelling with -el (66), while Mainwaring, 1898, refers the reader from jel to jal. Other examples in which -yal and -el are given as alternative spellings, and similarly with -yar and -er, include kyal/kyel, nyal/nyel, and tyal/tyel/tel, and kyar/kyer, tyar/tyer, and sa-dyar or sa-dyer (1898). These alternative spellings are equally valid for symbolizing the syllable finals -el and -er respectively because there is no such distinction as -el versus *-el, or -er versus *-er. This means that for Mayel, the Lepcha paradise, either Mainwaring's spelling ma-yal (1898) or Tamsang's má-yel (1981) is equally valid phonologically (as far as the second syllable is concerned).

-yap, -yam, -yal, -yan versus -ep, -em, -et, -en

There is, however, a phonological distinction between a half-close (e) and a half-open (a) vowel for syllables having a labial or a dental final consonant (provided that the syllable-initial consonant is non-nasal; cf. Sprigg, to appear (a)); but, in the Hooker text, examples are confined to -ep, -em, and -en, e.g.

-ep -ep sd-hep (17) -em -em lem (18)
-en -en póng-cen (4; pang-chen, Mainwaring, 1898)

gom-chen (18)


The older Sikkimese Tibetan families claim to have come originally from Kham; the Sikkim royal family claimed to be of Minyak (me-nyag) origin, from Nyarong, the lower course of the Nyag chu (Yalung), immediately to the south and south-east of Kanze, for which area cf. Thomas, 1948, 15–18.
The following additional examples of these three syllable finals can be given, from Mainwaring, 1898, especially since sd-hep is a foreign word (Nep. sāheb), together with examples of -et, which is missing from the Hooker text:

-ep -ep lep 'press down' cep 'become dry', 'shrink'
-em -em lem 'pile up' cem 'edge' (vb.)
-et -et pyet 'vie (with)' cet 'interrupt'
-en -en len 'than' fren 'boil' (n.)

In non-nasal-initial syllables, then, either a twofold or a threefold distinction in vowel unit is made as follows, according to type of syllable final (examples that have had to be taken from Mainwaring, 1898, are again given in brackets):

ip im it in tr ul
ep em et en
εp εm st εn εr εl, e.g.
(h(y)ip) (pim) thit (lin-) (jir) (h(y)il)
(lep) lem (pyet) -cen
(cap) (lyam) -lyat -dyan (dyar) (jal)

(lines 4; 18, 4; 36, 6); Mainwaring, 1898, 'shave', 'skirt', 'speaker' (lin-bo), 'glittering', 'intimate with'; 'press down', 'vie (with)'; 'bore', 'play', 'lightning' (sa-’dyar), 'pronounce correctly'.

It is interesting to note that certain lexical items that were pronounced with a half-open vowel (ε) by K. P. Tamsang, of Kalimpong, a speaker of the Tamsangmo dialect, were pronounced with an open vowel (a) by P. S. Targain, a Renjongmo-dialect speaker. from Sikkim (with corresponding differences in spelling):

'bore' 'knot' 'wrist' 'ball of thread'
Tam.: -ep cep; tep, tεp; ko'tem ka-tym; ki'tem
Tar.: -ap cap; τjap τyap; ka'tjam {ka-tyam; ki'tjam ki-tyam

From the above set of examples it will be seen that Tamsang uses syllable-final -ep and -(y)em to symbolize -εp and -εm respectively; since he uses the same symbolization for -ep and -em respectively too, he obscures a phonetic and phonological distinction that is entitled to be represented in the orthography, and is, in fact, distinguished in the Hooker text by -yat and -yan versus -ep, -em, and -en, to which can be added, from Mainwaring, 1898, -yap and -yam versus -et to complete the two series (and by -at, -an, -ap, and -am versus -et, -en, -ep, and -em for syllables containing initial c- or j-). The functional load carried by this phonological distinction in front spread vowels between half-close (ε) and half-open (ε) in labial-final and dental-final syllables may not be great; but it is certainly worth symbolizing when it has the warrant of orthographic tradition, both Mainwaring and pre-Mainwaring.

Nasal-initial syllables

The threefold distinction between vowel units with the features i, e, and ε in labial-final and dental-final syllables does not apply to syllables containing a syllable-initial nasal; in this latter type of syllable the distinction is only twofold. The only examples in the Hooker text are:

-er nyar (1; but nyer in Mainwaring, 1898, and Tamsang, 1981)
-ct nyat (13; but nyet in Tamsang, 1981)
To these two examples can be added, from Tamsang, 1981, mer (=-er) ‘have a nightmare’ (?Mainwaring, 1898, myer ‘see, as in a vision’) and, from Mainwaring, 1898, myat (=-et) (i) ‘do persistently’ and (ii) ‘have (something) fly into one’s eye’.

The remaining finals of this type, exemplified from Mainwaring, 1898, but following Tamsang’s pronunciation, include:

-ęn: man/myan (Tam. men) ‘ripe’; nyan (Tam. nyen) ‘listen’
-ęl: myal/myel/myal (Tam. mel) ‘feathers’; nyel ‘repeat’

(I have no such examples of -ęp and -ęm).

The twofold distinction in phonological vowel units for this type of syllable can be illustrated as follows (examples from Mainwaring, 1898, have been enclosed in brackets):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ip</th>
<th>im</th>
<th>it</th>
<th>un</th>
<th>ur</th>
<th>ul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(nyip) (mim) -nyit nyan? (nyir) (myil)

| — | — | nyat (nyen) nyar (myal/myel/myal) |

(lines 7 rung-nyit, 3, 3, 1); Mainwaring, 1898: ‘bind together’, ‘widow’, ‘fix’, ‘down’, ‘listen’, ‘feathers’. I have treated the nyen ‘milk’ of the text as an example of -ęn in accordance with Tamsang’s pronunciation, his spelling being nyin, as opposed to the -ęn of nyan, for which his spelling is nyen. Apart from this example, which is problematical, the closer of the two vowel units (i/i) is regularly symbolized by i, and the more open (e) by a in the Hooker text and commonly also by Mainwaring, 1898, but regularly by e in Tamsang, 1981: nyet, nyen, nyer, mel. Since either spelling is valid for the more open type of syllable, it is not surprising that there is, in Mainwaring, 1898, some variation, e.g. ‘nyel see nyal “the gums”’, ‘myal see myel’, ‘myer see myar’.

(b) syllable-final k, ng

(i) ek, eng

Before passing to a brief account of spellings for the velar finals -ak/-ök versus -ák, and -ang/-ön versus -ánɡ, I would mention that in front-vowel syllables the degree to which vowels are phonologically distinguished is also twofold: a close-to-half-close centralized vowel unit (ı) versus a half-close unit (e). The Hooker text contains the following examples:

-ık: hık, ‘ık (-1, 16)
-ıŋ: líŋ-com, kyo-jíng, díng, shíng (1, 8, 12, 28)
-ek: sa-nyek, pa-tek (11, 24)
-ęŋ: tíng-len (32),

to which could be added, from Mainwaring, 1898, num-lyeng ‘girl’ and fa-lyeng ‘youth’.

(ii) -ak and -ang, and -ök and -ön, versus -ák and -ánɡ

The Hooker text contains examples of -ak (-ńk) and -ang (-ńŋ) as follows:

-ńk: ka-kyak, ta-rak, yak-sóm (7, 26, 27) 12
-ńŋ: sang, bō-dang (2, 3).

12 For yak-só̲m, the etymology of which appears to be ‘top bridge’, Mainwaring, 1898, gives ‘yák-sóm “lama” “three” . . . the place of meeting of “the three lamas” to choose a rājā for the Lepcha’s [sic]’. Sikkim, 1894, however, gives Yaksun (8) and Yoksom (10).
The text’s three examples of -ak all have the same spelling in Mainwaring, 1876 (115, 115, 27), and in Mainwaring, 1898, though the latter mentions sōng as an alternative to sāng ‘in Msepts.’; but Tamsang, 1981, gives ka-kyōk and ta-rōk.

In section (1) above I pointed out that in vowel-final syllables a and ə symbolize different vowel units, ə: and ə; respectively, e.g.

-ə -ə:  tsha, da (10, 31)
-ó -ə:  chó, lōp-krô, lô, shi-dô (12, 31, 36, 38),

but that in consonant-final syllables the ə: vowel unit is symbolized by ə (2.a.i).

In the Hooker text there are no examples of this use of ə in syllables containing -k and -ng; but Mainwaring, 1876, provides the following examples:

-āk -ə:k  thýāk ‘spring upwards’;  ngāk ‘look’ (78, 68)
-āng -ən  dāng ‘run’;  hyāng ‘cold’ (112, 30).

The effect of this is that ə is again left free to alternate with one of the vowel symbols, but not with the same vowel symbol (ə) as it alternates with in labial-, dental-, rolled-, and lateral-final syllables, as in (2.a.i) above; in velar-final syllables ə alternates with ə, e.g.

-ŋk:  { ka-kyak, ta-rak, yak-sôm (7, 26, 19);  lak ‘pour’ (1876, 6)
   { hyōk, ‘ā-rōk (1, 24;  chôk ‘hand’,  ka-lōk ‘rat’ (1876, 134, 131)
   { sang (2);  lang ‘stone’, ‘ā-plang ‘upon’ (1876, 6)
-ŋn:  { tsóng, pōng-cen, kvâ-tshông, ‘ōng, nōng (1, 4, 6, 8, 11)

Not surprisingly there is some degree of variation between -ak and -ōk for syllable-final -nk, and between -ang and -ōng for -nn. For the pōng-cen of the text (4) Mainwaring, 1898, gives both pang-chen and pōng-chen, for sāng it gives ‘(in Msepts. -sōng)’, for rōng ‘Lepcha’ ‘also râng’, and for ‘tiger’ both sa-thang and sa-thông.

Tamsang, 1981, entirely ignores -ak as a means of symbolizing -nk, and uses only -ōk, e.g. ka-kyōk ‘seven’, ta-rōk ‘six’, lōk ‘pour’, mōk ‘target’, while for -nn he uses -ōng alone, apart from the following list of nine words: sang plural suffix, pang plural suffix, bang ‘group’, ‘ā-plang ‘upon’, gang ‘if’, shang future suffix, ‘ā-lang ‘now’, zāng ‘like’, lang ‘stone’. I am unable to give any phonetic reason for this distinction, except that Targain felt that the vowel was shorter in the examples spelt with -ang. Since, with the exception of lang ‘stone’, they are particles and other such forms, they are likely to be less prominent than nouns, verbs, and adjectives; so his intuition may be correct, though I was not convinced that a length difference was made consistently.

It would be reasonable to expect the -ak and -ang spellings for -nk and -nn to be modelled on the -aq and -ang of Tibetan (cf. also, for -ap, -am, etc., (a.i) above), the lip-rounding that these spellings symbolize in Lepcha being borrowed from the Kham dialect of the Tibetan immigrants into Sikkim of three or four centuries ago (cf. Sprigg, to appear (b)); but these spellings also occur in words from the original Lepcha component of the language, such as ka-kyak, ta-rak, lang, and ‘ā-plang above as well as in loan-words from Tibetan such as pak-chó (also pôk-chó; Tib. bag-chags) ‘passion’, rak (Tib. rág) ‘brass’, rang (Tib. rang) ‘self’, sāng-gye (also sōng-gyó and sōng-gye; Tib. sangs-rgyas) ‘Buddha’. On the other hand, it is difficult to regard -ōk and -ōng as a purely Lepcha spelling device: it appears in loan-words from Tibetan such as the ‘ā-rōk of the text (line 24; Tib. a-rág), and nók ‘ink’ and kōk ‘hinder’ (Tib.
snag, 'gag'), and in the tsong, pöing-cen, and kра-tshöng of the text (lines 1, 4, 6; Tib. 'tshang, bang-chen, grwa-tshang).

Having already given examples of the velar-final type of syllable when containing front-vowel units, I now, for the sake of comparison and completeness, give a set of the six remaining phonologically distinct vowels (with examples from Mainwaring, 1876, again enclosed in brackets):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ok} & \quad \text{un} \quad \{ \text{ka-kyak, ta-rak} ; \quad \text{sang, bá-dang} (7, 26 ; 2, 3) \\
\text{hyók} & \quad \text{'á-rók} ; \quad \text{tsong, nong} (-1, 24 ; 1, 56) \\
\text{a} & \quad \text{a} \quad \{ \text{rák, ('á-thyák) ;} \quad \text{shäng, ('á-bryáng)} (10 ; 35) \\
\text{ná} & \quad \text{ná} \quad \{ \text{(ngák), (thyák) ;} \quad \text{(däng), (hyäng)} \\
\text{kx} & \quad \text{vú} \quad \{ \text{lá-buk, tuk-tuk} ; \quad \text{cúng-pung, lúng} (18, 13 ; 14, 1) \\
\text{ok} & \quad \text{on} \quad \{ \text{lák, bálk} ; \quad \text{'úng, són-cúng} (15, 30 ; 7, 22) \\
\text{on} & \quad \text{on} \quad \{ \text{pun-lok, (rok) ;} \quad \text{kur-dong, tsong} (31 ; 3, 14)
\end{align*}
\]

(Mainwaring, 1876, 133 ' head ', 135 ' name '; 68 ' look ', 78 ' spring upwards ', 112 ' run ', 30 ' cold '; 145 ' read '.)

Some of the above examples from the text are lexically a little strange, place-names, like bd-dang and cúng-pung, and foreign words, like rók, shäng, and són-cúng; the following more usual examples, from Mainwaring, 1876, can be substituted for them:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lang} & \quad \text{ják} \quad \text{shäng} \quad \text{'á-fung} \quad \text{súng}
\end{align*}
\]

(6 ' stone', 134 ' tongue', 132 ' firewood', 135 ' corpse', 133 ' speak').

Short and repetitive though it is, Hooker's account of his expenses in Lepcha, which has survived among his papers at Kew for well over a hundred years, can serve, with the help of a few examples from Mainwaring and Tamsang, as a useful introduction to the study of Lepcha orthography and phonology, especially through alternative spellings of the same lexical item.

**Appendix**

When we crossed over Singalilah, gave one thala baksheesh when goats, rice, and fowls were provided.

These are accounts of Company rupees. Reaching Lingcham when three days of the waning moon of Ra (2nd month) had been completed, bought one thala's worth of salt. Bought rice for one rupee and a thala. Gave six annas' worth of rice for the journey for the departing Muse people. Having completed the journey, after two annas' worth of milk on reaching there, two annas' worth of milk. [Adding it up it is a thala and a suki.] Two annas' worth of plantains. Badong; gave two rupees to the lady. Gave two rupees to the messengers who arrived. [Adding it up it is three rupees.] Besides, two annas as price of one fowl. Gave four rupees to the four Lingcham men who went up to the bridge. When about to go up from Lingcham on completing five waning days, one thala baksheesh in return to those who brought and provided plantains and barley flour. The havildar received four annas' worth of curds; received one anna's worth of butter. One thala for the hermitage certificate. [Adding it up it is one rupee and seven annas.] On completing the journey to the river Rungeet, five pice worth of eggs. [Adding it up it is one thala.] On completing the journey to the river Rungeet, gave two annas to two children. At Mungbreu gave two annas as price of a fowl. Reached Kewzing, and gave one thala as price of a fowl. Gave one rupee as price of a dog. Reached Lingdam, and gave a thala for one fowl. Gave six annas for one fowl. Reaching
Neongong on completing the third day, gave one rupee to those who went down to Darjeeling with mail. One thala went on buying rice. Gave two annas as price of Neongong milk. Reached Sunnook, and gave one thala as price of a fowl. Gave one thala by arrangement for milk, and radish and garlic vegetables. Reaching Tassiding bought one rupee's worth of rice. On completing the seventh day, reaching Pemiongchi, gave one thala as the price of one cap. Gave one thala to the 'mani' chanter. Gave one thala to a Limbu. Reaching Tchongpong gave one rupee to someone who provided beer and rice. When the rice had arrived, bought five rupees and a suki's worth of rice. Going up, bought one rupee and a suki's worth of rice. Gave one thala, by arrangement, for one fowl, eggs, and milk. Further, when a woman brought two fowls and husked rice, gave twelve annas baksheesh. When we reached Doobdi monastery, on completing the twelfth day, gave two rupees to the priest. The Sahib himself gave three rupees for the Monastery to accept. When just about to go towards Jongri on completing the sixteenth day, gave one thala baksheesh to someone who brought and supplied milk, radishes, and eight eggs from the hermit. On having completed the journey from Jongri to Yoksun on completing the nineteenth day, when a woman brought a beer load, two fowls, cock and hen, garlic and walnuts, gave one rupee and a suki of the Sahib's as baksheesh. When Chu Lamo, a nun of Doobdi, arrived, when she brought one goat, one fowl, eight eggs, four small songs (copper containers) of butter, one fri of rice, and garlic, in total, gave one rupee and a suki. When the clergy brought two napkins of beer, one fri of husked rice, four eggs, and two bottles of milk, the Sahib [gave] one thala baksheesh. When a high-ranking person of Badong brought a fowl, one vessel of arrack, milk, and wood for sale, on completing the twentieth day, gave one rupee baksheesh. Gave twelve annas to someone who guided us on the road when we went to Jongri. Gave one rupee as the price of rice. When a Limbu of (?) Khyumshum brought one beer load, one fri of rice, and six eggs, gave one rupee and a suki baksheesh. When the steward, having come down, brought eight eggs and one fri of husked rice, gave one thala and a suki baksheesh. At Yoksun, on completing the twentieth day, when I gave one score of rupees of the Sahib's, gave two rupees baksheesh to someone who brought, in all, one goat, one beer load, and wood for sale. Gave three annas as the price of Yoksun milk. Reaching Lungsching temple on completing one waning day, when rice, eggs, yams, garlic, and wood were provided, gave two rupees baksheesh. One rupee went for the Katsuperri monastery to receive. One rupee went when the lake received it. After the monks came down, gave two rupees baksheesh when the people from the school served beer, radishes, and a pot of wild-bee honey. On completing two waning days, when we reached Tengling, after the magistrate gave one goat, parched rice, and millet, when they provided the load of beer, rice, and wood, all told, gave three rupees baksheesh. At Tchongpung bought one thala's worth of rice. Reached Changachelling monastery; reached three waning days complete; two rupees went for the Monastery to accept. Coming to an agreement over rice and salt, bought one rupee's worth. The Lingcham Captain came; gave two rupees salary to the beer-boy who went to Jongri. Gave one thala wages to the two who brought a load from Tengling. On completing four waning days, when we reached, and rested at, the river Kulhait, gave one suki as the price of milk. Climbed up from that place; reached Hee; gave one rupee to someone carrying a load. On completing six waning days, when we reached, and rested
at Garat, on the Rungeet, gave one rupee baksheesh when the jemadar provided (?) tobacco. Gave one rupee wages to someone carrying a load from Kulhait to Darjeeling. Gathering it all together.

REFERENCES


