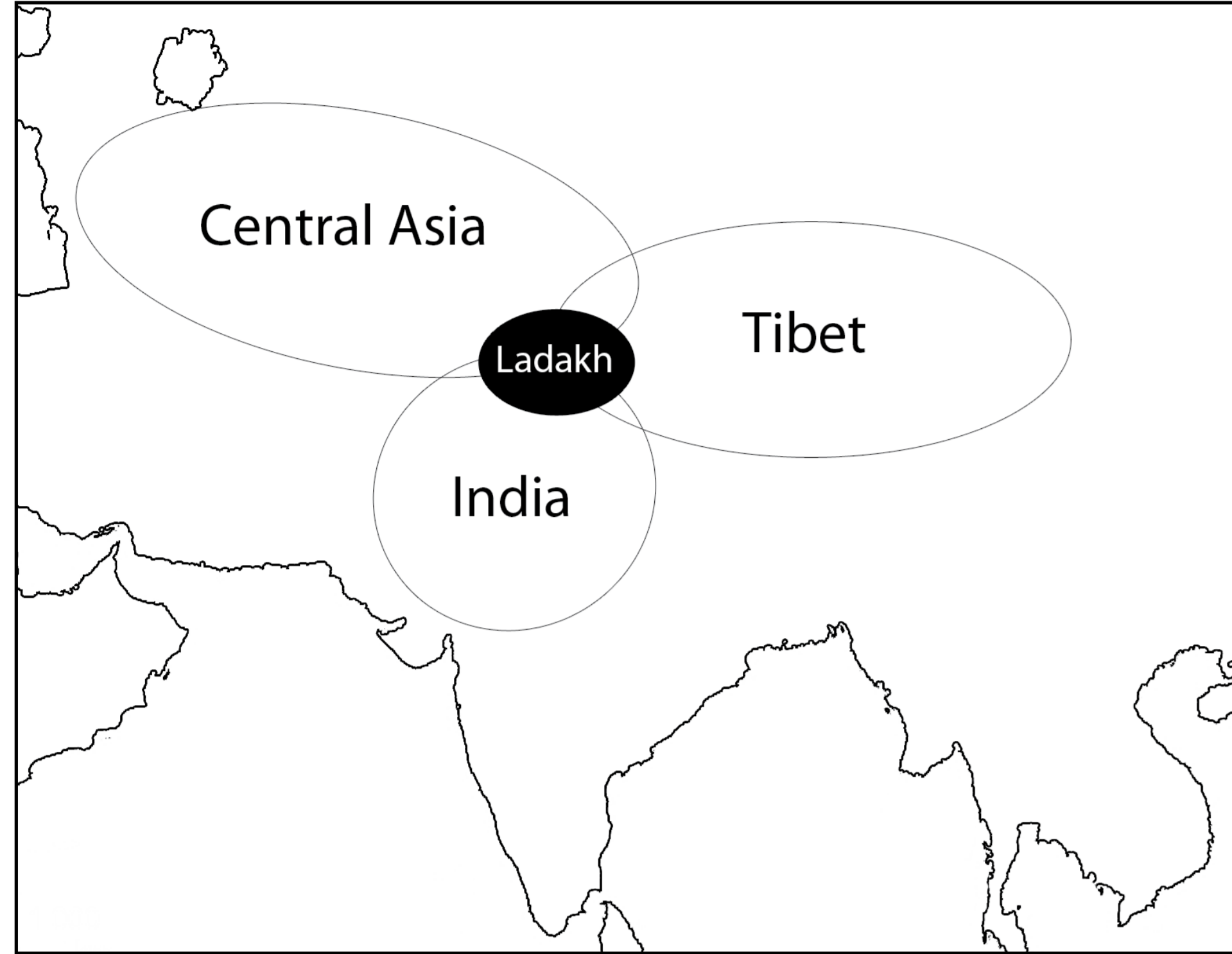
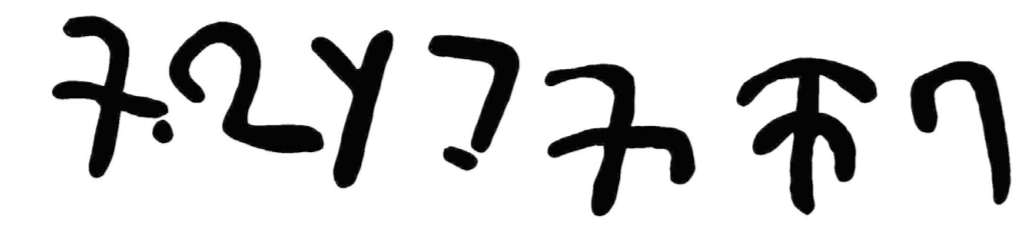


LADAKHI ROCK INSCRIPTIONS / ladakhi rock inscriptions



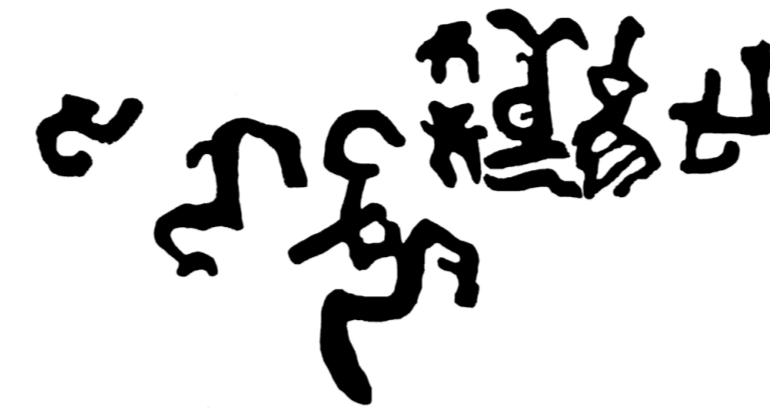
More than 400 rock inscriptions have been documented in Ladakh. If three quarters of them are written in Tibetan, a variety of other scripts are also used, which are, alphabetically : Arabic, brāhmi, Chinese, kharosthi, Tocharian, śārāda and Sogdian inscriptions. In Ladakh the inscriptions engraved in the rock are mostly personal names and they contain little information of historical significance. However, the diversity of writings testifies to the importance of the region as a cultural crossroads since the beginning of the Christian era. To date, the oldest written document of Ladakh consists of a kharosthi inscription (1st century BC or 1st century AD) engraved between Kaltse and Dah. This script along with brāhmi and śārāda are firm testimonies that Ladakh was in contact with the Indian subcontinent right through the end of the first millenium AD. In the last centuries of that millenium (8th-11th centuries) Arabic, Chinese, Tocharian, Sogdian but also Tibetan inscriptions show that Ladakh was not totally foreign to the political turmoil that took place in Central Asia at the time.

INDIAN SCRIPTS / Indian Scripts



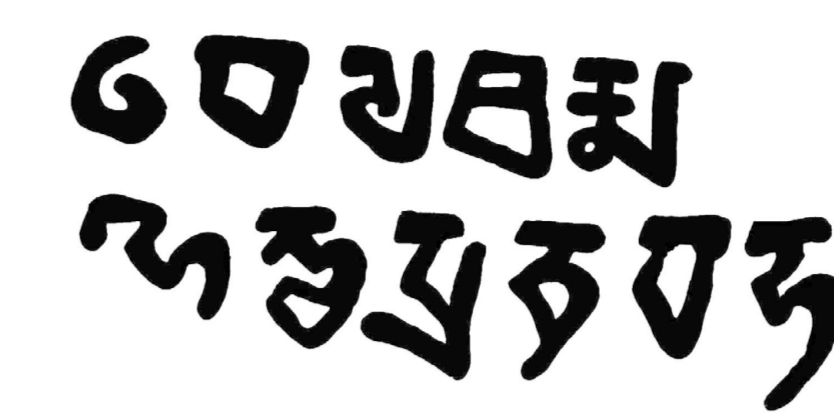
Kharosthi

Kharosthi is a script used in northern india between the 3rd c BC and the 4th c AD. Five inscriptions dating roughly from the 1st c BC or AD have been recorded along the lower Indus.



Brāhmi

Brāhmi is a script used in india since the Mauryan dynasty in the 3rd century BC. Four inscriptions dated from the first half of the 1st millennium AD have been found along the lower Indus.



Śārāda

Śārāda is a script used in Kashmir between the 8th and the 10th c AD. Three inscriptions have been documented: two near Pangong lake and one near the Zoji La pass on the way to Srinagar.

CENTRAL ASIAN SCRIPTS / Central Asian Scripts



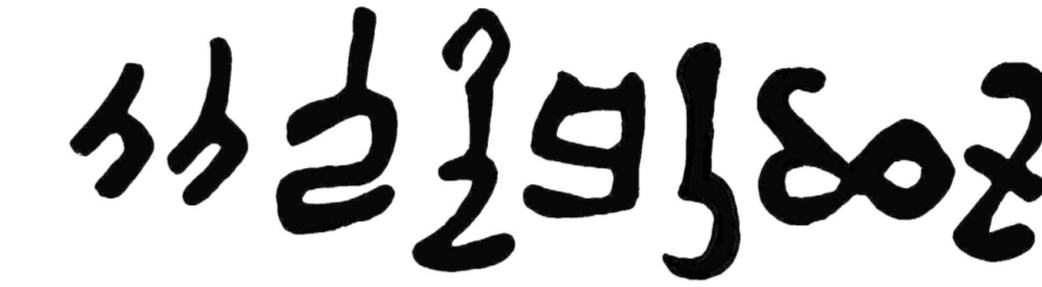
Chinese

Chinese script was in use in Central Asia after the conquest of the Tarim Basin by the Han Dynasty in the 2nd c. BC. Four Chinese inscriptions have been found so far, along the lower Indus.



Sogdian

Sogdian is a script used between the 4th and 13th c. AD. Until the 10th c. AD it was one of the main scripts used in Central Asia. Sixteen inscriptions dating from the 9th c. have been documented near Pangong lake.



Tocharian

Tocharian is a script derived from brāhmi that was exclusively used in the Tarim Basin between the 6th and the 8th c. AD. Only one such inscription was found in Ladakh, near Pangong lake.



Arabic

Arabic inscriptions in Ladakh were made between the 9th and the 11th c. During this period, it was one of the main scripts used in Central Asia. About 20 inscriptions are known, located in a single site near Pangong lake.

TIBETAN SCRIPTS / Tibetan Scripts



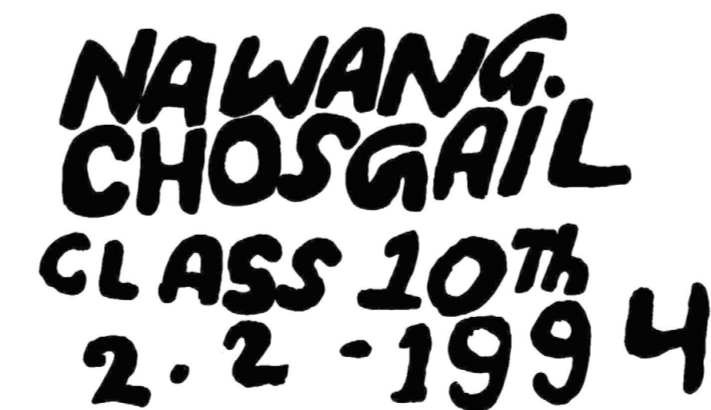
Tibetan Empire Period

The first Tibetan inscriptions in Ladakh were made by the armies of the Tibetan Empire in 8th and 9th c. AD. It became then the official writing system in Ladakh, still in use. There are thus numerous inscriptions all over Ladakh, dating from the 8th c. onwards.



More Recent Tibetan
Used for votive formulae.

MODERN INSCRIPTIONS / Modern Inscriptions



Latin script

In modern times, inscriptions are written in Tibetan, Urdu and English languages. New inscriptions are made all over Ladakh, sometime damaging existing carvings. Inscriptions written in Tibetan are mostly the "Om Mani Padme Hum" formula, while those written in Urdu and English are personal names.



Urdu



Modern Tibetan