

# G. J. Ramstedt as a scholar

Andrew Logie (University of Helsinki)

Chingduang Yurayong (University of Helsinki & Mahidol University)

21 December 2022 – The Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Bangkok



# Academic background

- ◇ Studied Classical Philology (Greek & Latin) at Imperial Alexander University in Finland
- ◇ Made 7 expeditions to Siberia, Central Asia and Mongolia, researching Finno-Ugric and Mongolic languages
  - *Seitsemän retkeä itään 1898–1912* (1951)
- ◇ Defended his doctoral thesis *Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-Mongolischen* in 1903
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<https://www.kaukaahaettua.fi/ramstedt.html>





*Seitsemän retkeä itään*  
[7 expeditions to the east]  
1898–1912 (1951)

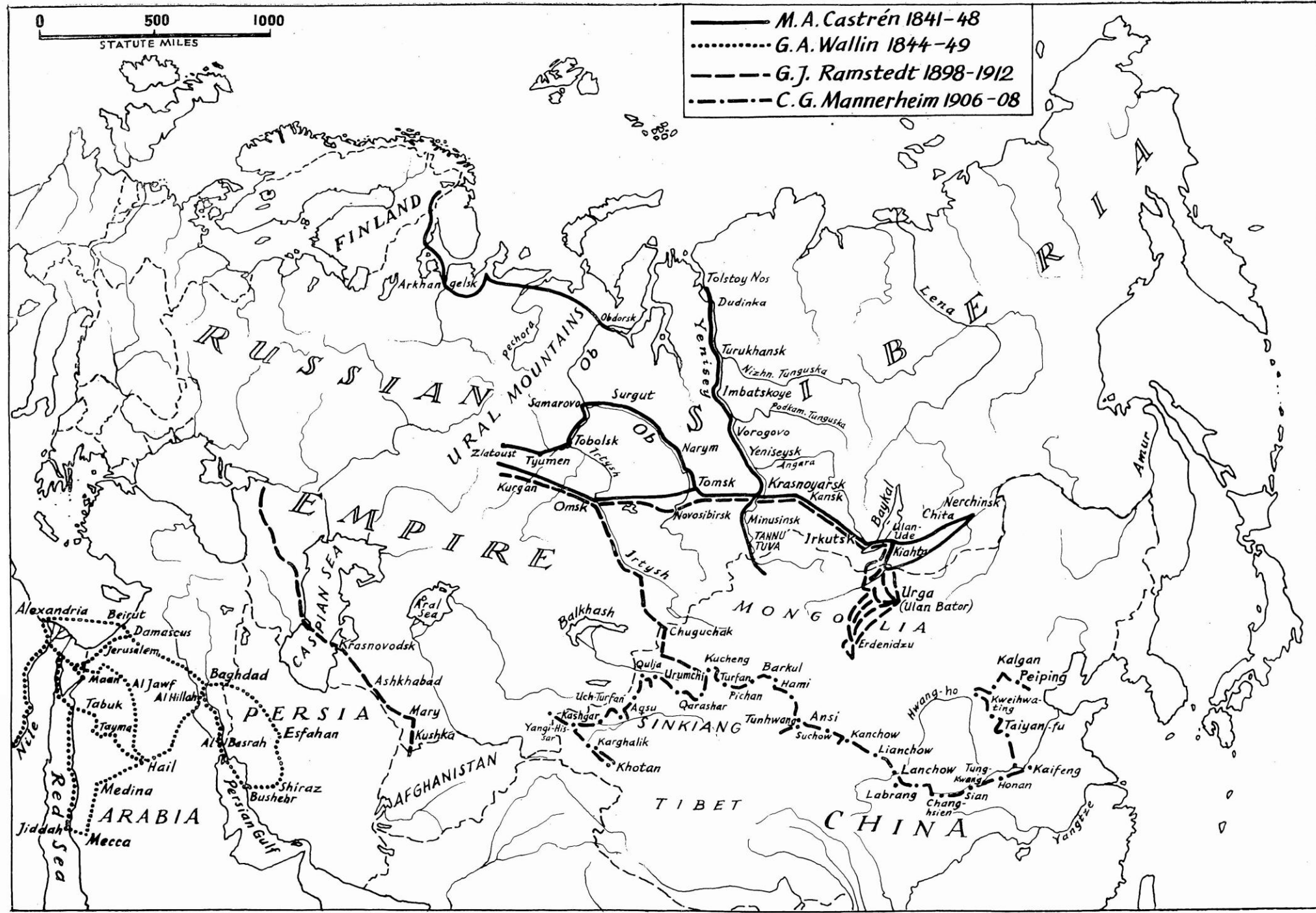
<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/palsi-ramstedt-trail/sakari-palsis-photographs-from-1909/>





MATTHIAS ALEXANDER CASTREN  
(1813—1852)

Finnish  
expeditions



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ÜBER DIE  
KONJUGATION  
DES  
KHALKHA-MONGOLISCHEN  
VON  
G. J. RAMSTEDT

*Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-Mongolischen*  
[On the conjugation of Khalkha Mongolian] (1903)  
<https://tiedekirja.fi/fi/uber-die-konjugation-des-khalkha-mongolischen>

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# Teaching of Asian languages in Helsinki

## Pre-Ramstedtian era

1826 Persian (Sjöstedt)

1835 Sanskrit (Wallenius)

1855 Ottoman Turkish (Kellgren)

## Ramstedtian era

1907 Tatar (**Ramstedt**)

1908 Classical Mongolian (**Ramstedt**)

1908 Tungus (**Ramstedt**)

1909 Kalmyk (**Ramstedt**)

1915 Pāli (Reuter)

1916 Kyrgyz (**Ramstedt**)

1919 Uyghur (**Ramstedt**)

1932 Yakut (**Ramstedt**)

1934 Korean (**Ramstedt**)

1936 Manchu (**Ramstedt**)

1938 Japanese (**Ramstedt**)

1939 Buryat (**Ramstedt**)

1941 Chuvash (Räsänen)

1949 Yukaghir (Lagercrantz)

## Post-Ramstedtian era

197X Khalkha Mongolian (Halén) 2011 Burmese

1971 Tamil (Aalto) 2012 Thai (Yurayong)

1971 Classical Tibet (Aalto) 2014 Zhuang (Yurayong)

1972 Hindi/Urdu (Juneja & Khan) 2015 Kazakh (Janhunen)

1972 Mandarin (Malmqvist) 2019 Okinawan (Ryzhkov-Shukumine)

1979 Telugu (Pudas Marlow) 2019 Miyako (Ryzhkov-Shukumine)

198X Amur Tungus (Janhunen) 2021 Chagatai (Özalan)

1986 Nivkh (Austerlitz) 2021 Old Ottoman Turkish (Özalan)

1987 Indonesian (Laakso) 2022 Uzbek (Özalan)

1987 Burushaski (Tikkanen)

199X Cantonese (Elliot)

199X Vietnamese (Bùi Việt Hoa)

1997 Amdo Tibetan (Gurung)

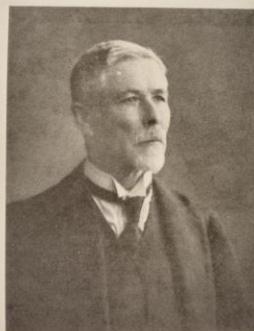


JULIO NATHANAEL REUTER

MINNESORD VID FINSKA VETENSKAPS-SOCIETETENS  
SAMMANTRÄDE DEN 19 DECEMBER 1938

AV

G. J. RAMSTEDT



*J. N. Reuter*

HELSINGFORS 1939

Sina studier i språkforskning, främst i sanskritliteraturen, fortsatte han därefter vid utländska universitet. Under åren 1886 och 1887 studerade han till en början i Jena, där den berömda språkforskaren DELBRÜCK var hans lärare, och senare i London och Oxford, där han förskaffade sig sin djupa kunskap i gammalindiska texter. Senare, åren 1888, 1889 och 1890, var Berlin hans studieort. Som resultat av dessa resor och av sitt utvidgade vetande presterade han sin mest betydande vetenskapliga publikation »*Die altindischen Nominalcomposita ihrer Bedeutung nach untersucht. Erste Abtheilung. Die Betonung der Copulativen und der Determinativen Composita mit einem Verbalnomen als Schlussglied*», och blev med detta arbete som akademisk avhandling filosofielicentiat den 3 april 1891. Samma år, den 3 juli, blev han ut-

Från år 1916 ha vi att nämna en kortare uppsats av JULIO REUTER i Finskugriska Sällskapets Journal XXX, där den ingår under numret 4 och med titeln »Some Buddistle Fragments from Chinese Turkestan in Sanskrit and »Khotanese» och där några gamla bokfragment tydas och kommenteras. Av liknande art är också den uppsats, som av REUTER publicerats i Finskugriska Sällskapets Journal XLVII, som dess 4. artikel med benämningen »Tocharisch» und »Kutschanisch». Dessa två upp-

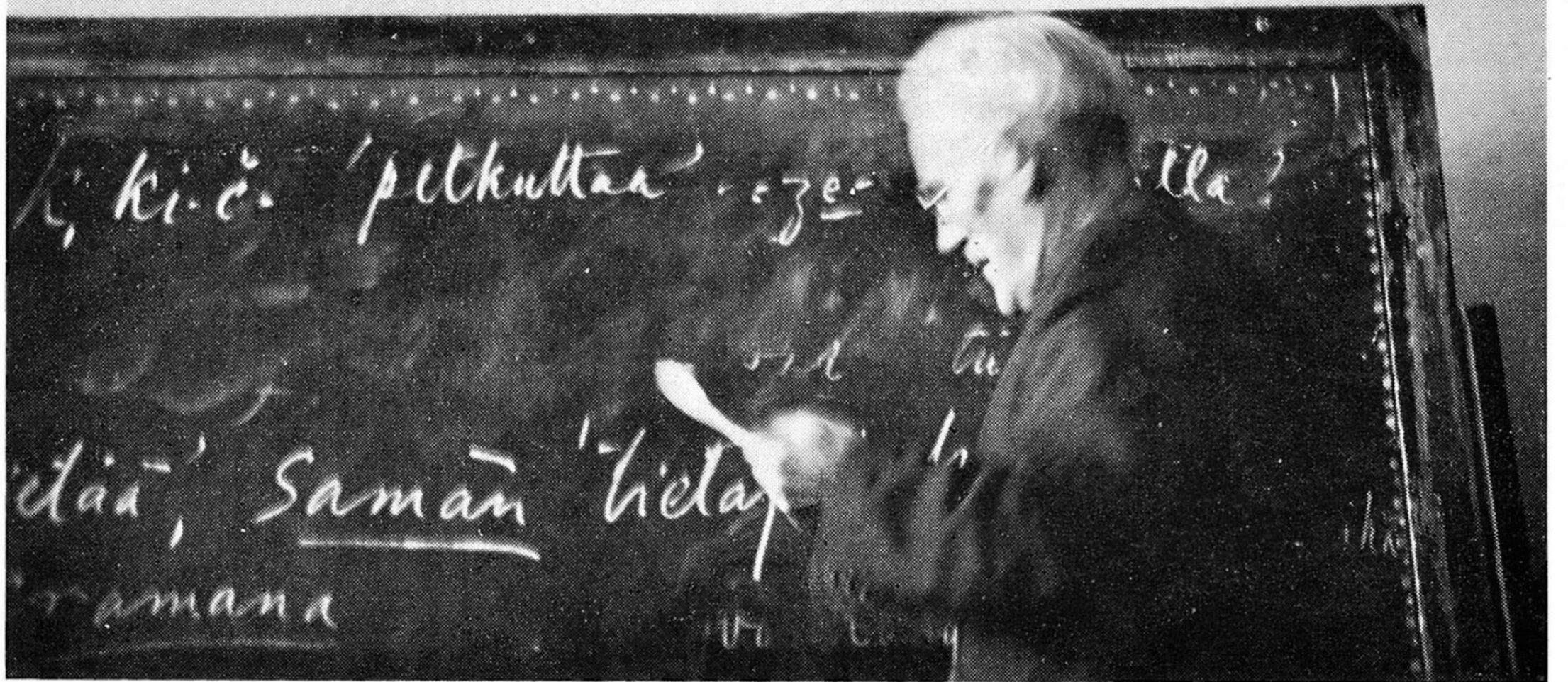
Som en av hans forna elever vid Universitetet vill jag, då jag avslutar dessa korta minnesord, inför Societeten bära vittnesbörd om, att JULIO NATHANAEL REUTER alltid velat sitt bästa för sin vetenskap och sina elever. Hans betydande insats i arbetet för fosterlandets väl är oss alla väl bekant.

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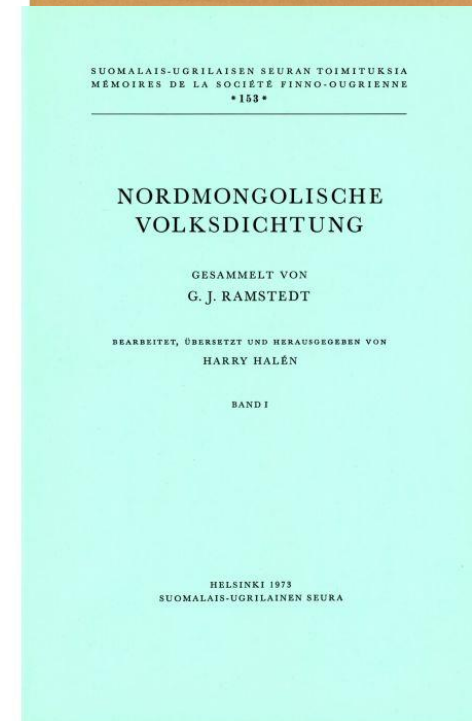
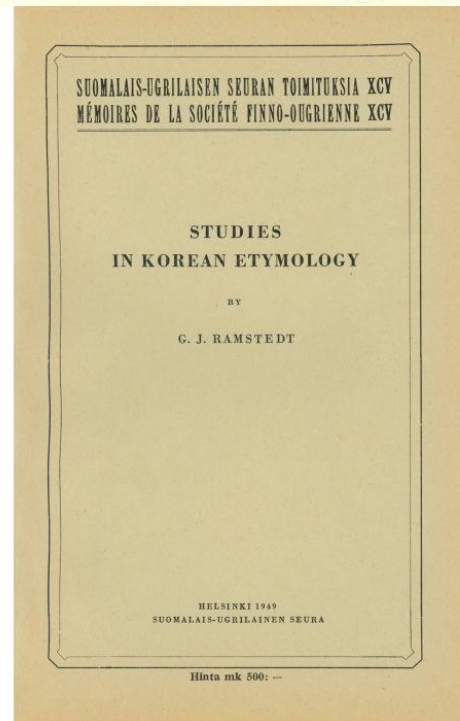
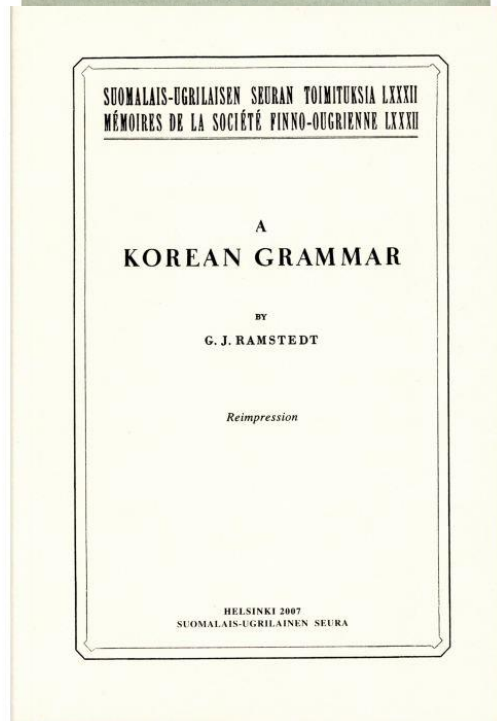
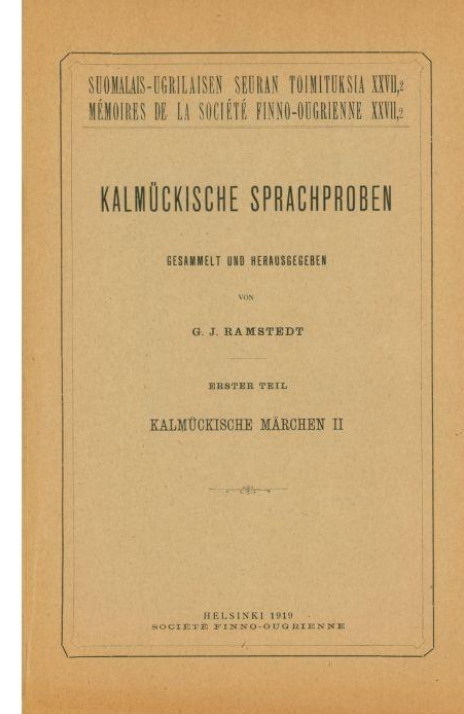
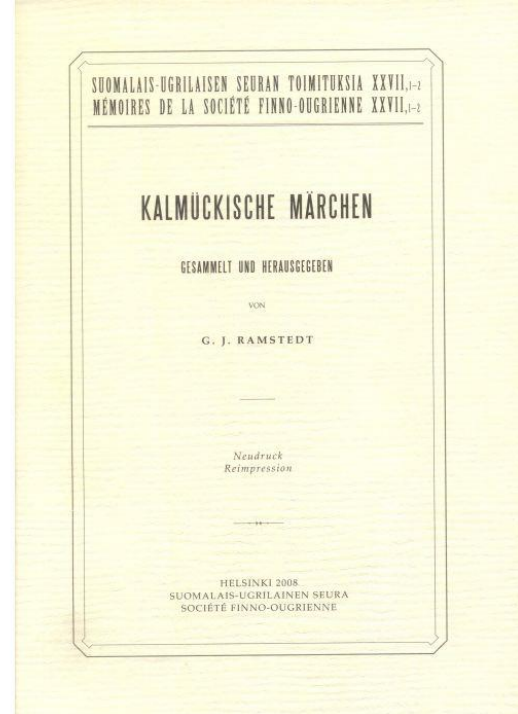
<https://www.kaukaahaettua.fi/ramstedt.html>





GUSTAF JOHN RAMSTEDT

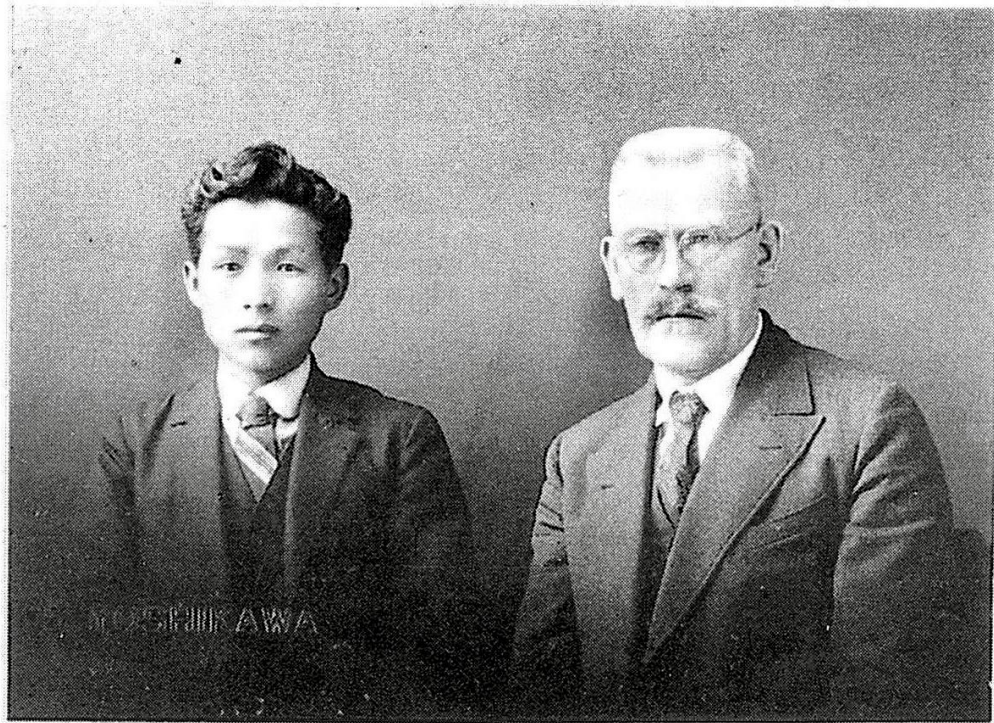
(1873—1950)



<https://tiedekirja.fi/fi/catalogsearch/result/?q=Ramstedt>

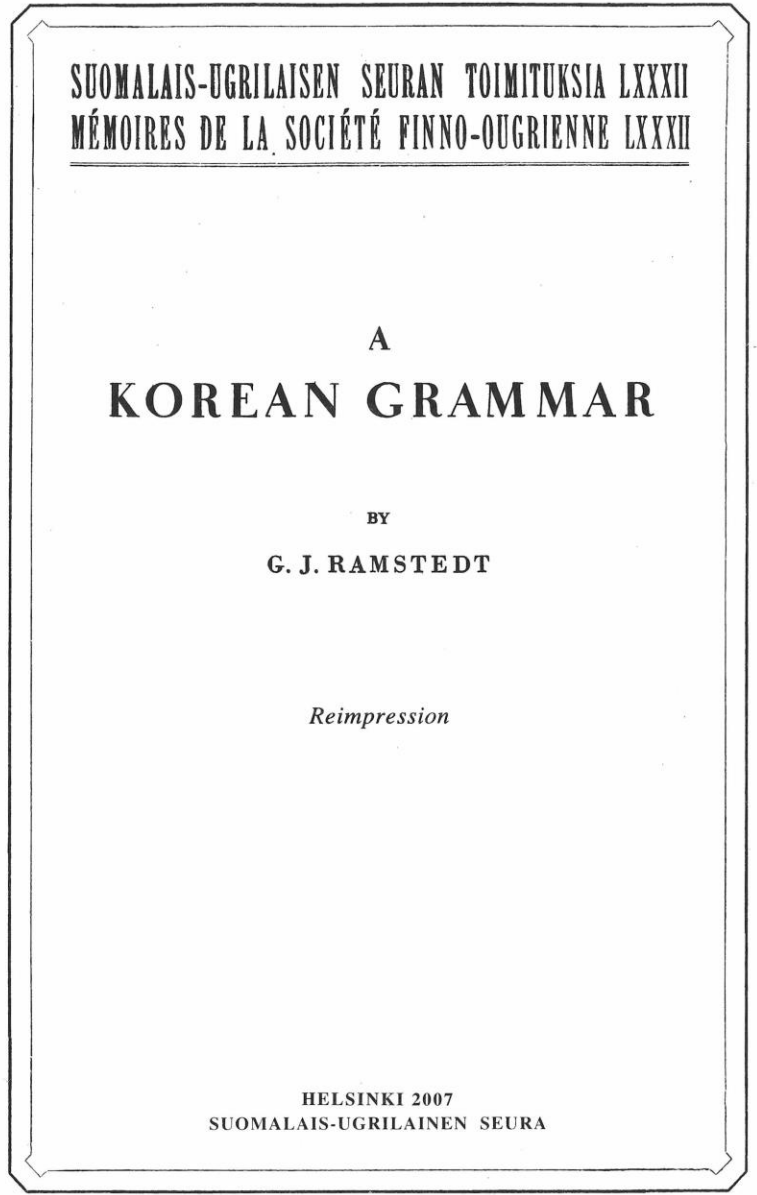
一九二八年四月三十日日本東京, 朝鮮  
紀念攝影

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*S. Yoshikawa*



Ramstedt and Ryu Chin-keel in 1928

## Preface.

In the encyclopaedias of the European countries the Korean language is mentioned as a language of unknown origin. During my stay in Japan I therefore took some interest in this language. The first words which seemed to me to give some clue to the solution of this problem were the pronouns *i*, *jɛ* 'this' and *tjɛ*, *ɛɛ* 'that', where the identity with the corresponding Mongolian and Tungus words is evident. Spurred on by this discovery, soon followed by other interesting observations, I took up seriously the study of the Korean language and in 1924—1926 employed a Korean student, Mr Ryu Čin-keŭ, as my teacher. I collected my material on the spoken and written language without making a journey to Korea, as I had in Tokyo opportunities enough to occupy myself with Koreans, of whom there are thousands in that town. With the help of Mr Ryu I tried to read Korean books and during my spare time from official work I studied all the available European grammars of that language. I was greatly helped by H. G. UNDERWOOD'S

Because I observed that my way of understanding the structure of this language, which hides itself behind the Chinese characters, in many respects differs from that of both the European grammarians and the Japanese scholars, I have dared to complete my annotations on the declension and the conjugation and compile a grammar, although my knowledge of the language is not so wide nor so profound as would be desirable. But I am sure that such readers as have some knowledge of Mongolian, Manchu or Turkish will easily find in this grammar so many interesting similarities that its appearance will be well received by them. They will agree that the Korean language is a branch of the Altaic family of languages. I have already propounded this view in some short articles: Remarks on the Korean Language (*Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* LVIII), The Nominal Postpositions in Korean (*ibidem* LXVII) and »Koreanisch *keŭs* 'Ding, Stück'» (*Journal de la Soc. F.-Ougr.* LXVIII, 4). I hope that the problem of the origin of the Korean language is on the right way to being finally solved and that this grammar will contribute to the better understanding of the character and construction of the language of the Koreans.

Helsinki, 1939.

*G. J. Ramstedt.*

16 Where *th* and *t* have been followed by vocalic or semivocalic *i*-sound, the N. Korean has retained this unaltered, but in S. Korean the development has given *čhi* and *či* (respectively *ži*). E.g.

*thjen* (Chin.) 'Heaven', S. Korean *čhen*  
*thjo-phi* (Chin.) 'sable skin', S. Kor. *čho-phi*  
*thjei* (Chin.) 'body', 'form', S. Kor. *čhe*  
*tje* 'that', S. Kor. *če*  
*tjohin* 'good', S. Kor. *čohin*  
*tikjen* 'boundary', S. Kor. *čigjen*  
*tjepsi* 'plate', S. Kor. *čepsi* (cf. Mongol. *tepsi*)

In North Korean there are dialects which in this case retain the dental sound and some which omit the *j*-sound; e.g. *tje*, *te* 'that', *tjepši*, *tepši* 'plate', *tohın*, *toun* beside *tjohın*, *tjoun*, etc. These North Korean dialects ought to be studied, as they are very good criteria and enable us to decide where present day South Korean *čhi* and *či* are original and where they are obtained through palatalisation from original *thi* and *ti*.

17 In the same North Korean dialects, the South Korean *čh* and *č* appear in some words as *čh* and *č*, in others as *ch* (= *tsh*) and *c* (= *ts*). Here *tsh* is original *čh* and *ts* original *č*, while *čh* corresponds to original *čhj* and *č* to original *čj*. E.g.:

*čal* 'well', N.Kor. *tsar*  
*čul* 'line', N.Kor. *tsur*  
*čarada* 'to be sufficient', N.Kor. *tsarada*  
*čakta* 'to be small', N.Kor. *tšakta*, i.e. \**čjak-*  
*čęžin* 'wet, watery', N.Kor. *tsędzin*  
*čelmın* 'young', N.Kor. *tšermun*, i.e. \**čerm-*

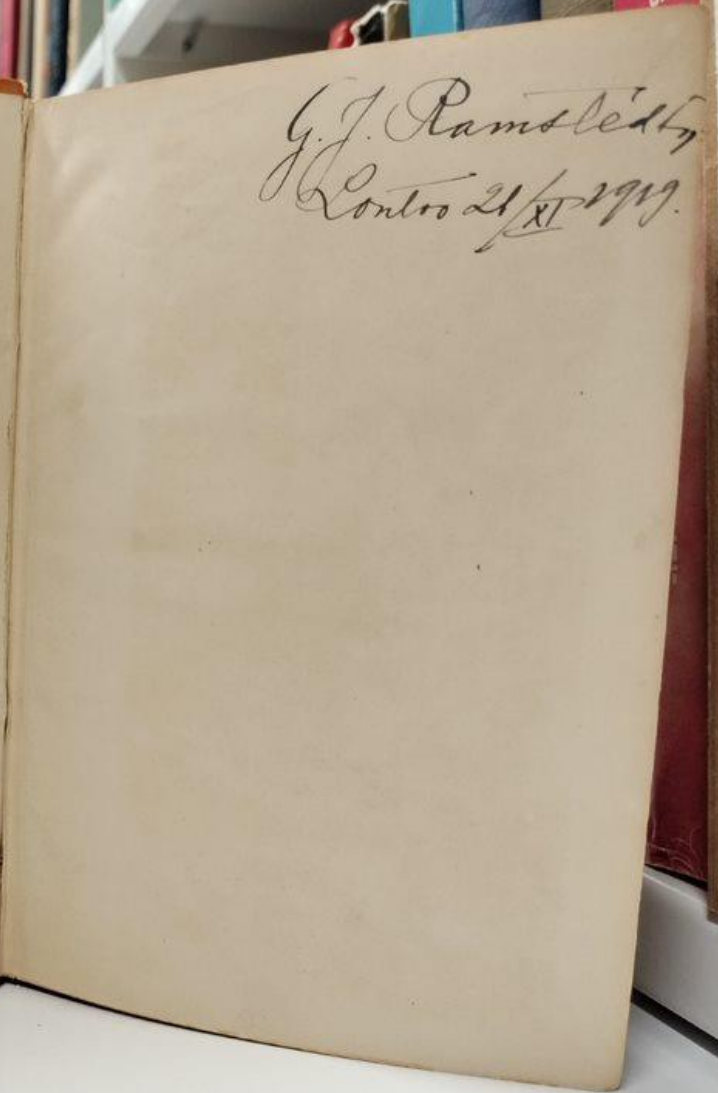
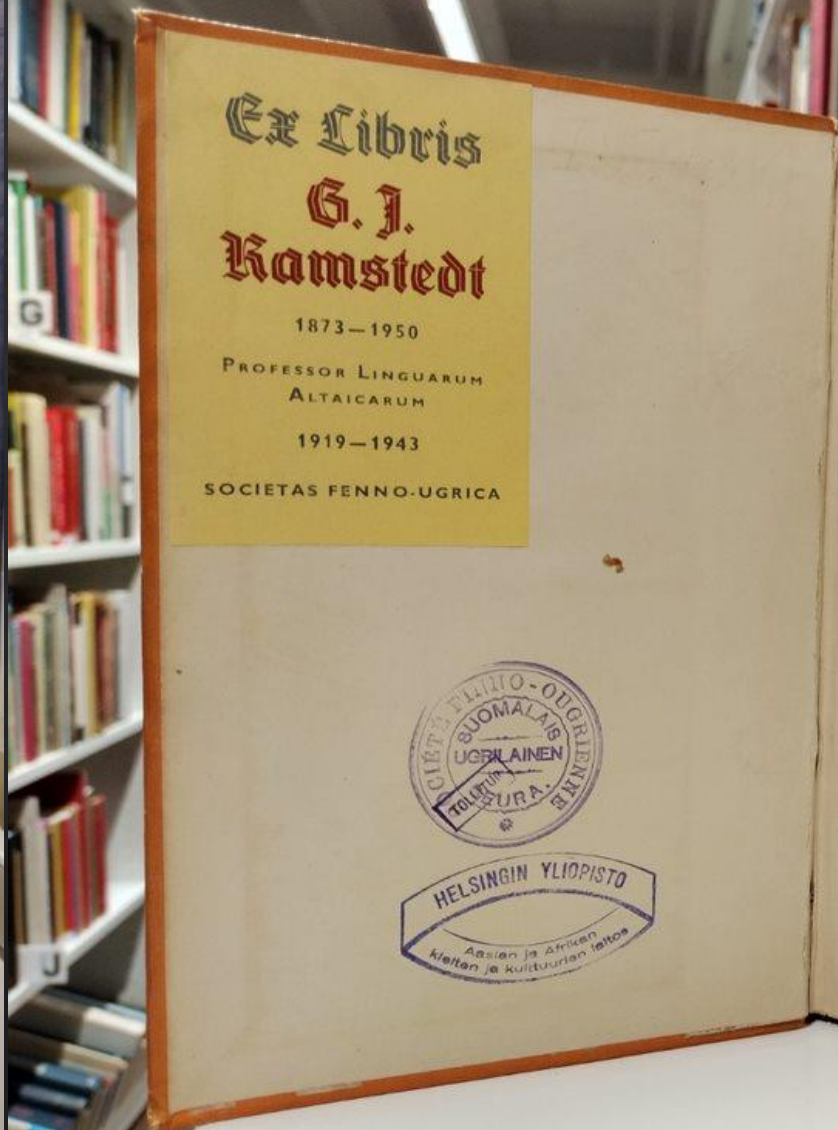
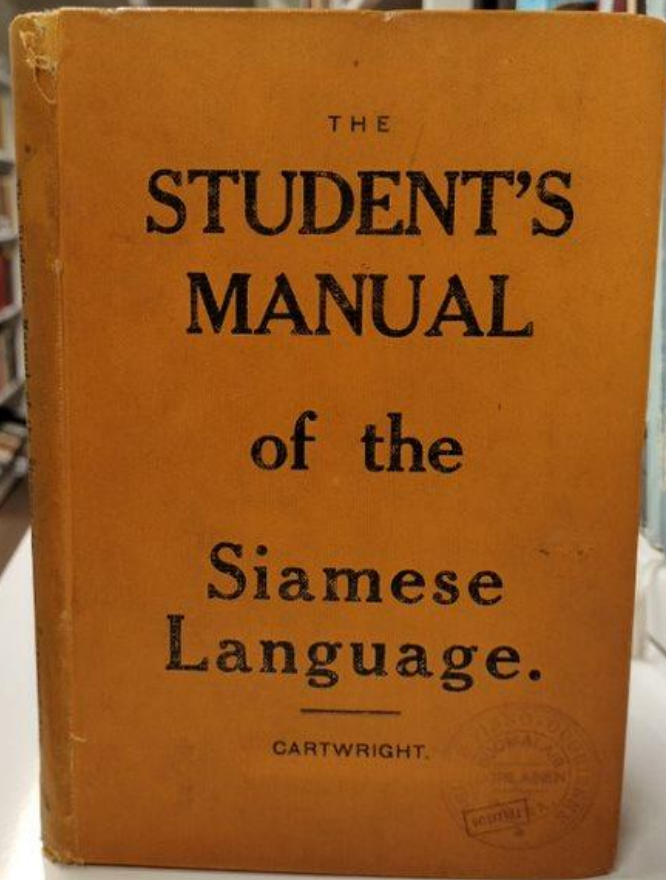
18 Antevocalic *s* in South Korean is pronounced in North Korean either as *s* or as *š*. Where the North Korean dialects show *š* (*š*), the original has been *sj*. Before the vowel *i* the N.Kor. pronunciation of a written *s* is always *ši*, e.g.

This primary formation has the ending *-ča*. Possibly it is identical with the nomen resultatis (*-ča*) in Mongolian and the nomen perfecti in the Tungusian dialects (*-ča*, Turkish *-š*).

It expresses the following main action as taking place immediately after the first action. E.g. *nä ga kaža ahädjiri tara-gatta* 'I went out, and immediately the children ran away', *jagıl mekča*

342 *Unfinished sentences*. The sentence is normally closed with a verb in a finite form, but the Koreans can also use elliptical or unfinished expressions. In orders, commands and explanations, we find the whole utterance ending in converbs or postpositions or case endings. In this use the rest may be omitted as understood. The same seems to be the rule in answering questions.

Leaving the sentence unfinished can also have a social reason. As explained in the chapter on verbs, the Koreans have many different forms for the predicate, all paying some attention to politeness. If the speaker is uncertain what form or what kind of politeness he has to show, the most convenient way out of the dilemma is to use an unfinished sentence. The perfect converb in *-a*, *-ę* has been used from the oldest times as substitute for other forms, and it is this converb from the passive stemformation (i.e. originally *-w-a*, *-w-ę*) which has created the middle polite verbal form in *-o*, now used as the most convenient and sufficiently polite way of ending a sentence.





Ramstedt and Kho Songmoo in 1981



Ramstedt last Friday

