

BUDDHIST TIBET CULTURAL TIES WITH LADAKH AND MUSTANG

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This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "**BUDDHIST TIBET CULTURAL TIES WITH LADAKH AND MUSTANG**", Submitted by **SONAM JOLDAN** is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University and this is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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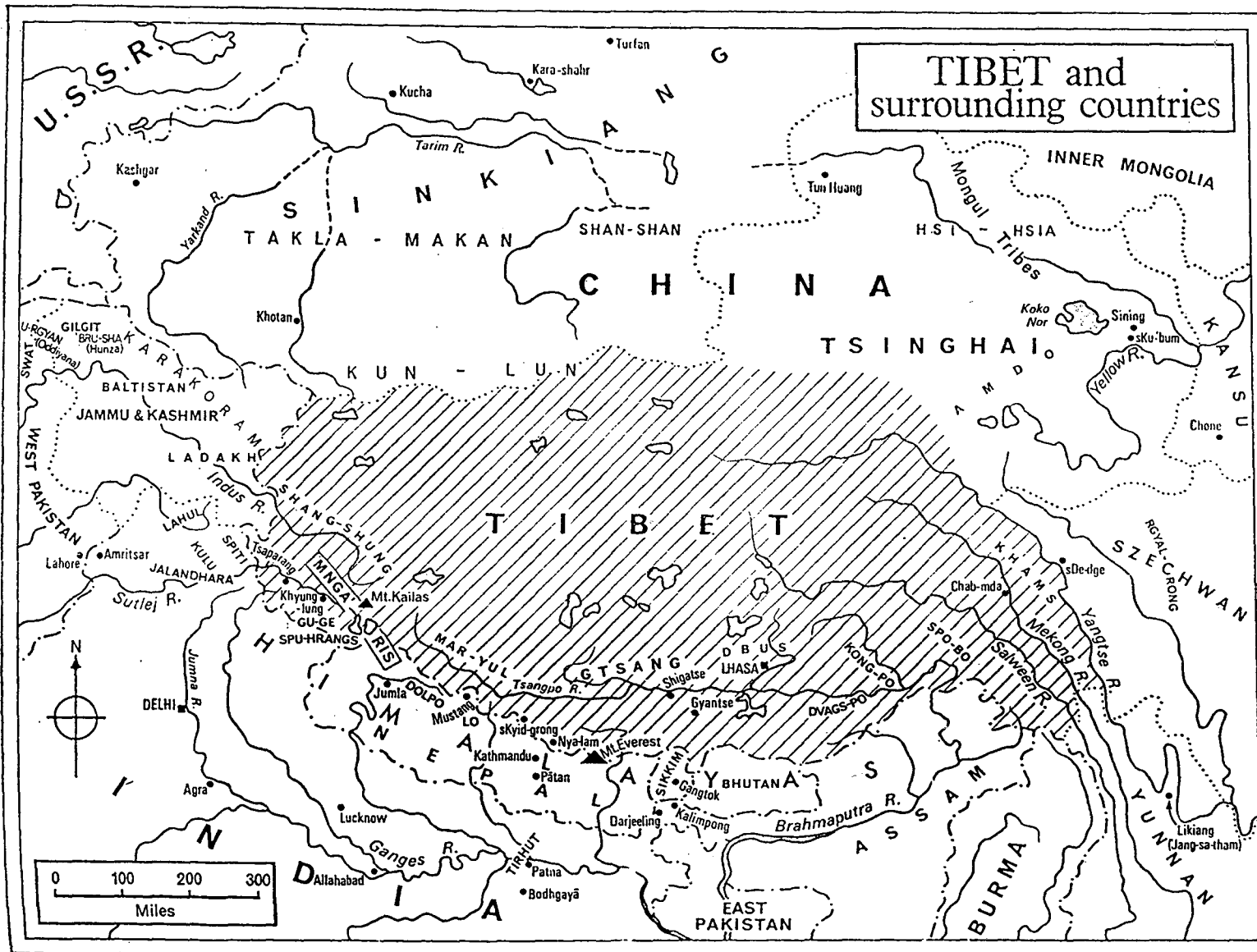
Finally, I would like to thank my parents, brothers, sisters and cousins for their self-less support and encouragement.

New Delhi


Sonam Joljan

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— Sources:— Snellgrove and Richardson, A cultural History of Tibet, London, 1968, p. 282.

Chapter I
**BUDDHIST TIBET CULTURAL TIES WITH
LADAKH AND MUSTANG**

Introduction:

The Term 'Cultural Relations' can be interpreted to include a number of aspects like paintings, sculpture, dance, music, films, theatre, literature, education and so on. But in this dissertation, the emphasis is on religious and spiritual ties.

The Tibetan polity and its culture have been decisively shaped by Bhudhism which, having originated in India, assumed particular characteristics in the Tibetan setting, both in its doctrine and its practice.

Buddhism was founded by Gatuma Buddha around 2500 years ago. The changes and developments within Indian Buddhism in its long history were enormous. It was during this long period that it gradually became the religion of the greater part of Asia. Buddhism has disappeared from India at the end of 12th century at the time of the Islamic invasion.

By that time Buddhism was already well established in Tibet. It entered into Tibet in the 5th century but for the first two hundred years its impact was not so strong. In the seventh

century, king Song-Tsen-Gampo gave firmer footing to Buddhism. He married two Princesses, one who was from Nepal and other who was from China. The two princesses played a major role in influencing the king to take interest in Buddhism and he used all his influence to spread Buddhism in Tibet.

The Chinese Princess brought an image of Skayamani Buddha and built a temple at Lhasa. The Nepalese Princess brought an images of Aksobhya Buddha, Maaitreya Buddha and Tara and a temple was built for them. The Chinese queen introduced butter, cheese and barley-beer and the people were told how to make pottery works and water mills. The King himself built a palace at Lhasa, on the red Hill where the Dalai Lama's palace known as Potala now stands. The king Songtsen Gampo sent the scholar Thomi Sambhota with sixteen others to study in India and they probably studied in Kashmir where 30 consonants and four vowels were derived from Devanagri. They came back to Tibet with Indian teachers and created the Tibetan writing system.

Another famous king Tisong Detsen ruled over Tibet during the latter half of the eight century. It was during his reign that Santrakshita and Guru Padmasambhave were invited to Tibet

from India. Guru Padmasambhava (better known in Tibet as Guru Rinpoche) was a Tantric master. He built the first Buddhist monastery around (766-767)! He is one of the patron Saints of Tibet and Chief Saint of the Red Hat Sect, the followers of the original Buddhism of Tibet. The great debate on whether the Tibetan king should choose the Indian form of Buddhism or the Chinese form took place during king Tisong Detsen's reign. The Indian Buddhist master won the debate and the king decided for the Indian version of Buddhism.

Under king Ralpachen (814-836) the translation of Buddhist Sanskrit text into Tibetan began. The king invited many Indian Buddhist masters to Tibet who engaged in the translation of Buddhist texts along with Tibetan collaborators. The above three kings Sontsen Gampo, Tisong Detsen and Ralpachen were the outstanding figures, both in war and peace, among the kings of Tibet. They are known to Tibetans as "the three religious kings, men of Power".

Then came in 9th century king Lang Dharma who was anti-Buddhist. He persecuted the Buddhist Sanga and destroyed many Buddhist Temples. He was killed by Lhalung Palgyi Dorje,

¹ Dawa Norbu, "Indo-Tibetan cultural ties through the ages", Tibet house Bulletin, vol.13, New Delhi, May, 1998.

a Tibetan monk. After Lang Dharma, Tibet disintegrated into a number of principalities and the central power of Tibet had vanished.

In the 7th and 8th centuries Buddhism had been confined to the royal court and Tibetan society as a whole were not influenced much by it. People were still practicing Bon, a form of nature worship. The Bonpo ministers with their armed forces could contain Buddhist ideas and values during their life time and after their death, specially after Lang Dharma, the Buddhist ideas and values were gradually released from the court and it spread throughout the society. After Lang Dharma's death, the Bonpo-Buddhist tussle led to the political disintegration of the Tibetan centralized military power. This period is what the Tibetan historians called, 'the dark kingless period, when Tibet had disintegrated into a number of principalities and the centralized power of the king had vanished. In this freedom people opted for Buddhism, this period is also called in Buddhist history as Tenpa Chiddar' the later period.

During this period, there was a Buddhist philosophical renaissance in Tibet. The moving spirit behind this Buddhist

renaissance which started in Western Tibet was to be found in, two holy men, Rinchen Zangpo the translator (958-1055) who had built many moasteries in Western Tibet, Ladakh and Lahaul Spiti and translated 250 titles from Sanskrit into Tibetan language, and the great Indian Buddhist Saint Atisa (982-1052). These two were the initiators of what Buddhist historians call the second spread of Buddhism in Tibet. During the period around 10th to 12th more translation work took place. According to Sarat Chandra Das 104 Indian Pandits engaged in translation and Buddhist teaching were invited to Tibet Many Tibetans came to India in search of Buddhist teaching. There is no record except for the 16 Tibetans who came with Thomi Sambhora during Sangtsen Gampu's time. Those were sent by the royal court were record but much more interest was shown in Buddhism by the common people of Tibet and here there is no account how many hundreds of people came to India in search of Buddhist teaching at that time and went back to Tibet and started teaching Buddhism.

Buddhism has brought tremendous change in the Tibetan society. As Prof. Norbu said, "it changed from warrior nation to a peaceful community, from warrior kings to Lama rulers, from

Bonpo Magic to Buddhist rationality and from violence to compassion. All the formation of the four major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism took place in the 12th century, in terms of doctrine, practice and monastic organisations. Tibet became a centre of Mahayana Buddhism headed politically and spiritually by the Dalai Lama from the 14th century. By 1959, there were about 2500 monasteries and 110,00 monks and nuns. Tibet is regarded as a sacred place, a Vatican of Mahayana Buddhism, and scholars, pilgrims and traders from the Himalayan states used to go to Lhasa and other holy cities of Tibet.

From Tibet Mahayana Buddhism spread to the cis-Himalayan areas, Ladakh, Mustang, Sikkim and Bhutan. Lama missionaries have played an active role in the spread of different sects of Mahayana Buddhism to the Himalayan states.

Though Buddhism in Ladakh first penetrated from Kashmir but the real influence came from Tibetan Buddhism. The spread of Mahayana Buddhism is closely connected with the famous Lotswa Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055). He founded many monasteries in Guge, Ladakh and Lahaul Spiti. By 1000 A.D. Tibetan language and culture had all spread throughout Ladakh and even further west throughout Baltistan. All four

Tibetan religious Schools had developed in Ladakh and out of these four, three Lamaist sects have played a larger role in Ladakhi history. They were in chronological order, the Bri-gun-pa, the dgelugs-pa and the Brug-pa.

In 1215 King Dnos-grub-mgon patronized 'Jig-rten-mgon-po', the founder of the 'Bri-gun-pa' sub-sect of bka-bgyud-pa. From that time the kings of Ladakh came under the influence of the Bri-gun-pa sect. Its main centers in Ladakh are is nowadays the Lamayuru and the Phying monasteries.

The 15th century saw the penetration and rapid growth of the influence of the new dge-lugs-pa school founded by Tsongkakpa (reformer). The king of Ladakh received an envoy from the reformer and the king built a Monastery of the new sect. By the second half of the 15th century the dGelugs-pa had gained the upper hand in Ladakh.

Another School the 'Brug-pa' sub - sect of bka-bGyud-pa at the beginning of the 17th century in Ladakh also played a major role in the history of Ladakh. There is today in almost every village a monastery of greater or lesser importance.

Guru Padmasambhave brought Buddhism in Sikkim and Bhutan through Tibet in the eight century. He is believed to

have visited Sikkim and Bhutan during his travel to Tibet and its western region.

The establishment of Mahayana Buddhism in Sikkim, however, dates from a later period, the time of Lhatsun Chhembo's arrival there about the middle of 17th century. This Lhatsun Chhembo was a native of Kongbu, in the lower valley of the Tsangpo, born in A.D. 1595. He spent many years in various monasteries and gained great reputation and fame by his learning and wisdom. He arrived in Sikkim with two other lamas of the Nyingmapa Sect. Most of the monasteries in Sikkim belong to the Nyingmapa and Kargyupa Schools of thought.

In the case of Bhutan also, Guru Padmasambhava brought Buddhism in the eight-century and many centuries later the main influence of Mahayana Buddhism from Tibet.

There was a constant movement of lamas to Bhutan from Tibet between the 11th to 15th centuries and the periods mostly devoted to spread of Buddhism and its various sects. In 1152 A.D., the Sakya lama Thimbe Rabyang came to Bhutan and built many famous monasteries like Chising and Langkar. In 1361, another Lama Ne Nyingpa came and built a monastery. Later this monastery changed its affiliation to the Geylup sect, the

Yellow Hat sect of Dalai Lama. Another well-known Lama called Drukpa Kinley came in the 15th century. His name is associated with several places in Bhutan specially Paro.

The Buddhist influence from Tibet was far mainly in Western Bhutan, which had easy access from Tibet. In 1506 A.D. lama Nawang Cheoki Gyalpo and his followers built many monasteries in Paro and extended the Buddhist influence upto eastern Bhutan. In 1616 A.D. Nawang Namgyal, a scion of the house of Gye of Druk at Ralung, came to Bhutan at the age of 23 and lived in Bhutan for 35 years. During these years he was continuously engaged in war to consolidate his temporal as well as spiritual hold in the country. He came to be known as Shabdung Rimpoche and the people of Bhutan came to be known as Drukpas. Many sects of Mahayana Buddhism had developed in Bhutan with Drukpa Sect becoming a leading one.

Mustang is heavily influenced by Tibetan civilisation. According to the legend, the great Saint Padmasambhava on his visit to Tibet, visited to Mustang and subdued a demon and blessed several places, which are now revered as holy spots².

². David Jackson, The Early history of Lo (Mustang) and Ngari, Journal of the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, vol. 4, No.1, 1976, p.39-56.

Little is known about the early popentates of Mustang but late 1300, one crucial figure emerges, a warrior named Ame Pal, regarded as the father of today's royal lineage. He constructed Lo Mustang and built many monasteries and temples. He invited the renowned Sakya lama and teacher, Ngorchen kunga Sangpo to Mustang from Tibet. The lama developed a special relationship with Mustang, initiating a religious revival and establishing a chain of monasteries. The lama's legacy is everywhere from the predominance the Sakya Sect to the wealth of art and sacred texts commissioned under his influence. As a result the kingdom grew rapidly in the 15th and 16th centuries to become one of the most important centre of religious activities in the Tibetan world.

Thus, the main influence of Mahayana Buddhism to the cis-Himalayan areas came from Tibet, and Lama missionaries had played an active role in spread of Mahayana Buddhism in the cis-Himalayan states.

There are two important reasons why the cis-Himalayan people looked upon Tibet as centre of Mahayana Buddhism. First of all Mahayana Buddhism directly came from Tibet to the cis-Himalayan areas and secondly, Tibet in due course of time

became a centre of Mahayana Buddhism and resident of leading lamas who taught Mahayana Buddhism.

In this study, I am looking at religious, spiritual and cultural ties between missionary country and the host societies. In the past there has been tendencies that the cultural ties having political significance in such that the cis-Himalayan was somewhat subordinate to Tibet. This thesis does not entertain such arguments. This is in keeping with the contemporary views of Ladakhis, Sikkimese and Bhutanese. The fact is that there have been considerable developments in the lamaist culture areas in the cis -Himalayas since the pre modern traditional forms of the relations between the Himalayan states and Tibet. First of all there is a steady growth of local identities in the Lamaist culture areas in the Himalayas. This is a new social fact, which we need to recognise and take into consideration when studying the relations between Buddhist Tibet and the Himalayan states. Secondly, there has been unprecedented modern historical developments which has transformed South Asia into an engine of change and economic growth which pulled indirectly, invisibly but very effectively the lamaist culture areas in the cis-Himalayan region towards India. This mean India has

become once gain the sources of change for these lamaist culture areas in the cis-Himalaya. Trade, economic development, education, science and technology etc. indirectly pulled these cis-Himalayan states which had looked upon the Buddhist Tibet as epicenter of their faith towards South Asia.

Chapter II

EARLY HISTORY OF LADAKH

The history of Ladakh prior to the birth of the kingdom in the 10th century is scarce. This is partly because the period has not received the attention of scholars and partly because written documents concerning it are limited.

According to the Ladakhi chronicle and some other sources, the earliest inhabitants of Ladakh were composed of the Mons and the Dardis of whom some remains are still found in the Dha-Hanu, Darchik and Garkon in the lower Ladakh. They migrated to Ladakh at an early time, but it is not possible to fix an exact time. According to Petech the Mons came from Karja (Kullu) who reconciled to a lower social status which still persists. The last ethnic groups mainly Mongols of Tibetans origin came in the eight and ninth centuries.

It is believed that Buddhism was first introduced to Ladakh from Kashmir during the reign of the emperor Ashoka. Ancient stupas built of stones from the time of Ashoka can still be seen in the villages of Sumda and Tiri.¹ The Statue of

¹ Nawang Tsering, An Insight into Ladakh, Leh, 1993.

Maitreya at Mulbhe is another monument of Kashmiri influence. The Kashmiri Buddhism in Ladakh shown by the Sara inscriptions at Dras and Chigtan seems to go back to a period c700-1200 A.D.

In the 7th and 8th centuries, the Tibetan influence took place in Ladakh. This is shown by the fact that Chinese chronicles of those years refer to the area of east of Baltistan as Tibet and Ladakh is what exist "east of Baltistan". Infact it is quite possible that the inhabitants of Ladakh felt Tibetan influence even earlier, for the nomadic Tibetans of Changthang would have good reason to have contacts with the Mon and Dard, exchanging grain for animals products as trade always played the greatest role in the Ladakhi economy. At any rate, by the mid-Seventh century, during the reign of the king Songstan Gampo of Central Tibet, Ladakh became increasingly aware of her eastern neighbour. During this period the Tibetan nomads of Changthang probably inter-married with the Mon and Dard Population and allowed a trading or bartering system to develop between the two groups of people.²

² Siddiq and Kenneth Strom Jr., Ladakh between Earth and Sky, N. Delhi, 1981, p.15.

Guru Padmasambhava is believed to have visited Ladakh in the 8th century A.D.³, Caves where he is believed to have meditated are still found in Ladakh.

The oldest monastery in Ladakh is Lamayuru or gyundrun-dgon-pa. Its site is said to have been selected by Naropa (956-1040) the famous teacher of Mar-pa, who drained away a lake to make it accessible. The oldest building of the monastery is called Sen-ge-sgan.

Then comes the famous Lotsawa Rin-cen-bzan-po (958-1055)⁴, who founded many monasteries in Gu-ge, Lahual, spiti and Ladakh. Indeed, the penetration of Buddhism into Ladakh is closely connected with him.

With the origin of the Ladakhi Kingdom in the 10th century the Tibetanization of Ladakh started. The origin of the Ladakhi kingdom is connected with the decline and fall of the Tibetan monarchy. After the murder of the king Glan-dar-ma (842)⁵ the whole structure of the state disintegrated into a number of

³ Tashi Rabgias, "Mar yul La dwags Kyi snon rabs kun gsal melon" or the history of Ladakh called mirror which illuminates all, Leh, 1984.

⁴ Snellgrove & Tadensz Skorupski, The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, England, 1977, p.5.

⁵ Petech L, The Kingdom of Ladakh, Roma, 1977, p.2.

principalities and resulted in state anarchy, and various chieftains were engaged in endless hostilities.

Under such circumstances, Ni-ma-magen alias K-ri-kyi-Idin of the ruling class emigrated to sTod mNa-ris to the west⁶. In this connection the chronicle relates a popular tale why the Ladakhi king used a giant napkin, on his way to Western Tibet skyid Ide-Nymagon was once in such straitened circumstances that he had nothing to eat but eggs and fish. His servant brought him this dish covered with a large napkin and was ever since used by the kings of Ladakh. Within a short period of time Skyid Ide-Nymagon conquered the whole of western Tibet and thus laid the foundation of the first Ladakhi dynasty.

According to Luciano Petech, Skyid Ide-Nymagon has three sons, dPal-gyi-Ide-mgon, bKra-sis-mgon and lde-gtsug-mgon, called collectively "the three STOD-mgon. The second and third sons got Gu-ge and spu-ran and the first one dPal-gyi-mgon took Ladakh. The actual conquest was effected by dPal-gyi-mgon himself.⁷ He was the real founder and organizer of the

⁶ Ibid ., p.3.

⁷ Chronicle of Ladakh, La dvags rgyal rabs, (LDGR) text edited in Francke 1926, 35,p.13-14.

Ladakhi Kingdom, and the chronicle gives a sketching description of its boundaries.⁸

According to the chronicle and some other sources, there were sixteenth Kings after they had succeeded after dPal-gyi-mgo (1000-1025)⁹ to the Lha-c'en Grags - bum-Ide. The information about these kings is scanty. But it is certain that during this period the cultural influences to Ladakh were mainly from Tibet.

Lha-c'en rgyal-Po (1100-1125) founded the klu-k'yil monastery at Li-kyir village about 50 km from Leh towards western side and it is one of the important monasteries in Ladakh today.

Another king Lha-c'en Utpala is said to have invaded Nunti (kulu) and obtained tribute forever.¹⁰

Then the next king who came to throne was Lha-c'en Nag-Lug who built the palace at Wanla in the tiger year and Kalatse in the dragon year. According to Francke the king also built the Bragnag castle on the rock towering above Kalatse.

⁸ Ibid, p.35, p.14-17.

⁹ Francke, History of Western Tibet, London, 1907, p.62..

¹⁰ Petech L, op. cit, p.18.

During the reign of Lha-c'en dNos-grub¹¹ the tradition of novices going to central Tibet for instruction was introduced. He not only repaired the existing monasteries but also wrote two sets of the Bka-'gyur (the words of the Buddha-108 volumes). He acted as patron of c'os-kyi-rje 'Jig-rten gsum-gyi-mgon-po¹² the founder of the monastery of Bri-gun and of the sect of that name.

Another king Lha-c'en ses-rab built the hamlet of Sen-ge-ggan on the top of the Hangrtsema in Sabu and one hundred and eight (108) stupas built at the top of Sengey sgang hill in Sabu. Many people settle there. His son Lha-c'en tri tsung Ide also built rows of chortens or stupas numbering 108 at Leh¹³.

Then comes the king Grags-bum-Ide, who was a great builder of temples and images. During his reign, he received an envoy from the reformer Tson-k'a-pa (1357-1419)¹⁴, and in order to commemorate the event he built the monastery of dPe-tub, reform sect or Ge-lugs -pa sect¹⁵. The above information allows us to conclude that Grags-bum-ide lived at the beginning of the

¹¹ According to petech his reign was around 1215 and Francke around 1300.

¹² Chronicle of Ladakh, 36, p. 9-12

¹³ Francke, op. cit., p.72.

¹⁴ Petech L, op. cit., 1977, p.22.

¹⁵ Chronicle of Ladakh, 37, p. 1-2.

15th century. He erected a number of religious building, statues and stupas. He erected the "Red College" on the Namgyal Tsoma Hill behind Leh and on the same hill he built Maitreya statue. The king is also said to have built the Maitreya statue at Timosgang and four Byang-Chub mchod-rten, each one for the four points of the compass on the lionshaped mountain.

According to Francke Graps-bum-ide's brother was Dragspa whose principle seats were the village of Teya Timosgang and Basgo. He is called the builder of the royal city of Timosgang. He also improved the ancient fortification at Basgo, to make them a stronghold of the first rank.

In the meantime the western Himalayan kingdoms confronted with the hostile power and a hostile religion at its door. By the end of the 14th century, Muslim rule had established itself over Kashmir. In 1405, King Sikander of Kashmir (1394-1416 A.D), conquered Baltistan and adopted most brutal means for converting its Buddhist population into Muslims. The conversion of Kashmir to Islam brought a new element of instability to the Western Himalayas. The first Muslim forces from Kashmir to cross the Zogi-la and to invade the country beyond the pass was led by Rai Madri in the reign of

Sikander (1394-1416)¹⁶ He conquered Baltistan and Ladakh escaped invasion.

Graggs-bum-Iden sent presents to the first rGyal-ba (Dalai Lama) Ge-dun-grub (1391-1471). He also patronized the dGe-lugs-pa scholar gSan-pu-ba Lha -dban-blo-gros, a pupil of mk'as-grub-rje (1385-1438). The chronicles say that during Grags-bun-Ide, his conquest of Na-ris skor-gsum, from where he brought to Ladakh a set of precious coats of mail, Swords, knives, turquoises saddles, horses etc.¹⁷

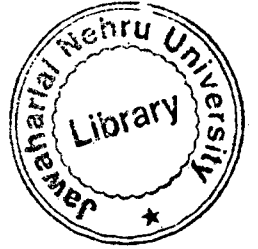
Blo-gros-me'og-ldan was deposed and imprisoned by a prince descending from a side branch of the family, and with him ended the first Ladakhi dynasty.

¹⁶ Petech L, op. cit, p.22.

¹⁷ Chronicle of Ladakh, 37, p.3-8.

Chapter III

MEDIEVAL HISTORY OF LADAKH (UP TO 1842), AND ITS CULTURAL TIES WITH BUDDHIST TIBET



The second dynasty is called rNamgyal dynasty, the last dynasty to rule Ladakh till 1842, when Ladakh came under Jammu and Kashmir.

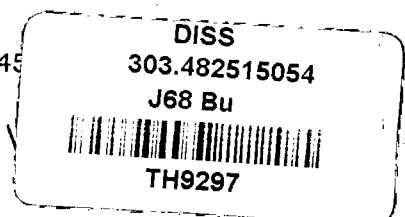
Lhachen Bhagan is regarded as the founder of rNnamgyal dynasty. Luciano Petech suggests a reign C 1460-1485 for Bhagan. He reunited the two kingdoms in Ladakh which were divided between two brothers during the reign of Grags-bum-Ide. The two kingdoms, one centre at Leh and Shey and other one of Basgo and Tingmosgang. Bhagan was a grand son of Bas-go King.¹ After reunited the two kingdoms, succeeding kings of this dynasty took the surname of rNamgyal, victorious.

The king Bhagan had two sons, Lha-dbang-rnamgyal and bKra-sis-rnamgyal and after their father's death, the younger brother seized the throne, ousting his brother by blinding and sent him at Lingshed, near border of Zanskar.

bKra-sis rnamgyal seems to have been energetic and able king, he extended his rule to eastward as far as Mustang, South over Kulu and west over Baltistan. He carried religious activities which were greatly appreciated. He made a rule regarding the

¹ Janet Rizvi, Ladakh, Crossroad of High Asia, New Delhi, 1983, p.45

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number of children that were to be sent by every village to become Lamas. Family having more than one male children have to send one to become a monk. The king sent previous gifts to the monasteries of Bri-gun, Sa-skya, dGa-Idan, Lhasa and Bsam-yas.² With the advice of the great Lama Ldan-ma of Bri-gun in Tibet, the king founded the sGan-Snon bkra-sis-cos-sdzom monastery (phying). Thus, during this reign marked a partial renewal of Bri-gun-pa sect influence in Ladakh.

The central Asian adventurer Mirza Haider Dughlat invaded Lakdakh in 1532,³ and he faced no resistance except at Nubra which he overcame. The Ladakh king, whoever he may have been, seems to have reached an agreement. After sometime Mirza Haider invaded Tibet but had to turn back after eight days march due to the climate and difficult terrain. He raid Ladakh again in 1545 and 1548 but not lasting consequence.

bKra-sis-rnamgyal dies childless and was succeeded by Tse-dban-rnamgual, the eldest, son of this blind brother. The empire witnessed significant expansion under him. He conquered in the south Dzum-la (Jumla) and Nun-ti (kulu), in the west Si-dkar in Baltistan. He wanted to attack the Khan of Yarkand in the north but Nubra people advised the king against it as it would seriously damaged the trade through the passes, which was a vital

² Petech, L., op. cit., p.28.

³ Ibid., p.26.

importance to Nubra. Gu-ge and Ru-tog were remained separate kingdoms but had to pay tribute.⁴

During his reign (1575-1595) was marked by a continuous of Bri-gun-pa influence. He maintained and added to the royal residence at Basgo where he built the Maitreya Temple which still stands.

Tse-dbang-rnamgyal had no heirs and he was succeeded by younger brother Jamdyans-rnamgyal. When he came to the throne, he faced a difficult situation as after death of his brother all the vassal princes in one place after another rose. The new king tried to re-establish his prestige intervening in a conflict between Tse-rin Malik of Cig-tan and other chief of Purig.⁵ The king Jam-dbyans-rnamgyal decided to go to the assistance of Tse-rin Malik of Cig-tan.

The popular tradition has the following about the beginning of his campaign. "It was late in the year, when the Ladakhi army was on the point of starting and it was not considered lucky to start before having celebrated the new year's festival. However, to wait for the Tibetan new year would meant a delay of two months. Therefore, the king decided that the new year's festival was to be celebrated two months before it actually fell. Ever since the year has been celebrated about two months earlier in Ladakh than in Tibet".

⁴ Chronicle of Ladakh, 38, p.6-13.

⁵ Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet, II*, Calcutta, 1926, p.173-74.

The outcome was disaster. The forces of Baltisan under the ruler of Skardo, Ali Mir had outmaneuvered the Ladakhi army and overrun the whole of Ladakh, plundering its riches and destroying its religious treasures with Iconoclastic zeal. The king was taken prisoner to Skardo. The king of Skardo placed the king of Ladakh in honourable confinement. The daughter of king of Skardo, named Rgyal Khatun, was placed in attendance to Jam-dbyans-rnamgyal, they fall in love and married. Popular tradition backed up by the chronicle has invested. "This love story, involving an affair of the heart between Jam-dbyans-rnamgyal and the Balti princess, Gyal Khatun, a secret marriage or perhaps illicit pregnancy and a dream in which her father saw a lion jump out of the river and enter her body and that very time Gyal khatun conceived." Whatever the truth, the kingdom of Ladakh was restored to Jam-dbyans-rnamgyal and for the time being ensured peace for Ladakh's western frontier, Gya Khatun recognized as an incarnation of white Tara.

After the disaster the king turned towards religious, sending presents to various monasteries of central Tibet.

During his reign (1595-1616), the first recorded visit of European to Ladakh took place, a merchant from Portugal Dioga d'Almedia and he stayed two years in Ladakh.

The next king who came to the throne was Sen-ge-rnamgyal, regarded as the greatest king Ladakh. He was son of the king Jam-

dbyans-rnamgyal and Gyal Khatun. He accended the throne about 1616 as a minor, his mother acting as regent.

His military campaign of Gu-ge in the east which he was victorious has earned him fame as the greatest king of Ladakh. The consequent of Gu-ge brought Ladakh into direct contact with central Tibet and the relations between central Tibet and Ladakh were seems to be cordial as missions to the different monasteries in Tibet were carried on during his reign. The other province which was annexed during his reign was Zanskar.⁶ Against the Muslim power to the west, there were contradictory reports about the outcome of his military campaign. While the chronicles recorded victory of the Ladakh forces over the combned Mughal-Balti army at Bodh Kharbu, the Mughal sources recorded the defeat of Ladakhi forces and settle for peace and promising tribute to the Mughal empire in Delhi which he never kept.⁷

The religious life of Ladakh under him flourished. He is remembered for his association with the great Lama Stag-tsan-ras-pa from Tibet who came to Ladakh during his reign. The great Lama achieved the gradual conversion of the royal house to the Brug-pa sect. The contribution in promoting Buddhism in Ladakh was significant. He was assisted by the great Lama were founded many monasteries of Brug-pa sect, including Hemis the most famous and the richest monastery in Ladakh even today. Besides,

⁶ Petech, op. cit., p.49.

⁷ Janet Rizvi, op. cit, p.50.

Hemis Wamle and Chimrey monasteries were founded. Apart from monasteries, the king also built Mani-Walls at Basgo and Lingshed. Finally, the present nine-storeyed royal Palace was built by the king.⁸

Sen-ge-rnamgyal dies at Wam-le on the 27th November, 1642.⁹ He was less than fifty years old. His reign is remembered as a glorious period in the history of Ladakh.

Sen-ge-rnamgyal had three sons, the b-De-Idan-rnamgyal the eldest son ascended the throne, his reach from Purig to the Maryum pass,¹⁰ second son, En-dra-bodhi-rnamgyal became ruler of Gu-ge and third son, b-De-mchog-mamgyal was made the king of Zanskar and Spiti.

After coming to the throne, the king b-De-Idan-rnamgyal built a places at Shey and Rudok in a similar style to the Leh palace. He built the temple and the three storey statue of Lord Buddha at Shey in memory of his father. Also, the king constructed Mani-Wall below Leh. And in keeping with the tradition of his father, he appointed one hundred monks in Zanskar, Nubra, Basgo and Tingmogang for recitation "Mani Tunchur" the chanting of a million mantras.

Ladakh suffered a raid by Turki (Hor) forces from Kashgaria in year 1647¹¹ led by Babak Beg and Sara Beg reached C'u-sod-

⁸ Chronicle of Ladakh, 40, p.13.

⁹ Petech L, *op. cit.*, p.56.

¹⁰ Petech L, *op.cit.*, p.101

¹¹ Petech L, *op. cit.*, p.58

gzun, where fight took place and it was the Lama Stag-tstan-ras-pa who mediated and avoid many casualties and damage. The Turks called the Lama by the Muslim titled Pir.

The king extended his kingdom to Baltistan in the west, where Ka-pu-lu and C-or-bad were bought back.

From Kashmir the king received envoys from Auragazeb when latter visited Kashmir in 1663 and according to Petech, the King Bde-Idan agreed to built a Masjid at Leh as it was promised by his father Sen-ge-mamgyal after the battle of mKar-bu.

With Tibet, Ladakh's elder brother in terms of religious and culture, relations were cordial. Missions were continuing. In 1645, a mission was dispatched, headed by 'Brug-pa-rdo-rje on behalf of Hemis monastery and Tub-bstan-Lha-dban and A-ku dkon-mcog on behalf of the Ladakhi court, this mission arranged for the funeral rites for Senge-rnamgyal at Lhasa during the Smo-lam of 1646.¹²

The great Lama, Stag-tsan-ras-pa, who played a major role in terms of religion and cultural development in Ladakh, passed away on the 29th of January, 1651 at Hemis.¹³ The relations with Tibet after the Lama, tended to deteriorate, owing to the treatment of the dGe-lugs-pa in Ladakh and Gu-ge and the Brug-pa in the dominions of the Dalai Lama, and under the next king of Ladakh a serious conflict had been taken place.

¹² Tucci G., *Tibetan printed Scrolls*, 2 vols., Rome, 1949, p.256.

¹³ Petech L., *op. cit.*, p.59.

The king b-De-Idan has three sons. About 1675/78 the king entrusted the affairs of the state of his eldest son, b-De-legs-namgyal, though remaining the titular ruler. The chronicle does not give b-De-legs-mamgyal of the royal title.

Whoever was the king during the time, the decisive event in the history of Ladakh was the three-corner conflict between Ladakh, Tibet, and the Mughal.

From the Tibetan point of view the causes of the war were the increasing hostility of the Ladakhi kings towards the dGe-lugs-pa sect and the raids carried out by the people of Glo-bo and Ru-tog against the Tibetan districts of Sa-dga and Gro-sod. According to another sources, the causes was the king of Ladakh support to Bhutan during the war between Lhasa and Bhutan in 1876. The Ladakhi king as a supporter of the Brug-pa-sect, sent a letter to Tibet saying that he would help Brug-pa ruler of Bhutan.¹⁴ The Tibetan responding by attacking Ladakh. The Tibetan army continued their westward march without much resistance until they came upon the remnants of the Ladakh army blocking their advance at Basgo for three years which was one of the beset defensive position. The king of Ladakh asked the Mughul to help him and with the help of Mughal army, the Tibetan forces retreat to Tashigon, beyond the present border.

After retreat of Tibetan army, the Mughal presented their conditions for the help and it was rather heavy. The conditions

⁴ *Chronicle of Ladakh*, 42, p.1-2.

were, the king had to accept Islam, a mosque to be built in Leh and certain trade regulation.¹⁵

After hearing the king of Ladakh embrace Islam, the Tibetan regent Sans-rgya-mtso, who ruled the country after the death of the 5th Dalai lama, was seriously concerned for the Buddhist religion in Ladakh and he requested the 6th Brug-cen-Mi-pam-dban-po (1641-1717),¹⁶ who was wielded great influence on the Ladakhi royal house to travel to Ladakh. The Brug-cen accepted the proposal.

The mission of 6th Brug-cen was successful, the king and the ministers of Ladakh were declared their return to Buddhism. A treaty was signed at Tingmosgang in 1684 called Tingmosgang treaty. According to the treaty, it was declared that the quarrel between Ladakh and Tibet should be considered things of the past and maintain of friendly relations. The boundary between the two countries was fixed bisecting the Pangong lake as it exists presently and exchange of trade missions between Ladakh and Lhasa. As per the treaty Ru-tog, Gu-ge etc. were to annexed to Tibet for the purpose of providing the wherewithal for the sacred lamps and for the Smon-lam festival in Lhasa.¹⁷

¹⁵ Francke, *op. cit.*, 1907, p.109.

¹⁶ Petech L., *op. cit.*, p.76.

¹⁷ *Chronicle of Ladakh*, 42, p.13.

The next king who came to the throne was Ni-ma-rnamgyal who succeeded his father. He began ruling in 1691 and became titular king about 1694/95.¹⁸

He occupies a special place among the kings of Ladakh in the field of justice. He always consulted the state officers when delivering judgement personally. He appointed elders (rgan-po) on a lower level from each district to assist him. He instituted the council of state officers and elders, introduced the path on the symbols and laid down the rule that the primary origin of any dispute must be traced before the verdict was pronounced. On the whole, this resulted into a sharp decline of crime, such as robbery and theft.¹⁹

In the field of culture, the king encouraged printing and printing blocks of some devotional works were carved.

During this reign relations with Lhasa were cordial. According to the chronicle, he presented to all the monasteries of Tibet, beginning with Lhasa to bSam-yas, gold water and sacrificial lamps. To all the great lamas without distinction he made presents.

The king maintained good relations with the Mughal emperor. The traffic on the Kashmir route went on normal. This was witnessed by the Jesuit Manuel Freyre and Ignace Desideri who came to Ladakh in 1715 from the Zogi-la.

¹⁸ Petech, L, op. cit. p.81.

¹⁹ Tucci, G and Ghersi, E., Secrets of Tibet, London, 1985, p. 43-44.

But the relations with Balti chiefships were not cordial, a dynastic tie with the chief of Ka-pu-lu²⁰ could not translated into good relation, rather it exposed ka-pu-lu to eminity to the other chiefs and compelled Ladakh to shoulder a heavy military responsibility.

The king had married twice first one was from Shey and gave birth to bDeskyong-rnamgyal. The second one is from Purig and gave birth to bKra-sis-rnamgyal.

BDe-skyon-rnamgyal became the next king in 1729. He was ineffective ruler. The government proper seems to have been in the hands of the queen-mother, Zizi Khatun for a while.²¹ Her famous piece of diplomacy was the assassination of the Chief of Kishtiwari, who had married her daughter, Tashi wangmo.

The king s-De-skyon-rnamgyal's first wife was from Lo-Montang, what presently called Mustang. She gave birth Sa-skyong-rnamgyal but soon they separated on account of disagreement and the queen returned to Lo-bo. Then the King married a princess from Nubra, who gave birth to Pun-tzog-rnamgyal.

The king bDe-skyong rnamgyal died in 1739, bare four months after his father Ni-ma-rnamgyal. The queen sent to the Dalai Lama general offerings for her deceased husband bDe-skyon.

²⁰ Cunningham A , Ladakh, *Physical, Statistical and Historical*, London, 1854, p.30.

²¹ Francke, *op. cit*, 1907, p.120.

Early 1740 the Dalai Lama returned a courteous reply, referring to the funeral rites 'for two kings of Ladakh, father and son.

The second son Pun-tzog-rnamgyal became the king in 1740, as the first son was became a lame at Hemis. During the period, Purig was still ruling by his uncle Kra-sis-rnamgyal. Not much had been mentioned about these kings except that a crisis which was mediated by a Lama sent by the Dalai Lama.²²

According to the upper Ladakhi view of the matter was that the bKra-sis-mamgyal the king of Puring, tried to seize exclusive control of the Lucrative Kashmir trade and to encroach with fair or foul means on Ladakh proper.²³ What ever the case, the conflict became potential threat to the commercial interest of central Tibet. Therefore, in 1752 the Dalai lama deputed an incarnate lama namely Kathok Rigzin Chhenpo Tshewang Norbu to Ladakh to resolve the conflict.

The negotiations were concluded on the December 1752. According to it, "whatever the number of sons born at the castle of Ladakh may be, the eldest only shall reign. The younger ones shall become lamas at dPe-tub, K-rig-se etc. there shall not be two kings. The kings of Zanskar b-Stan-srun-rnamgyal having his domination at the frontier, shall remain king as before and the Henasku ruler shall also remain same. With these two exceptions, it shall not be permitted that one Kingdom exist two kings. Thus,

²² Petech L., op. cit., p.103.

²³ Chronicle of Ladakh, 45, p. 8-9.

this mean the introduction of 'primogeniture' and it saved further partitions of Ladakh. In 1758, the king of puring died and the Kingdom was re-united with Ladakh²⁴ The successive kings had to follow the rule that the eldest become the king and younger to become monk. Three kings were came to the throne after Pun-tsog-rnamgyal till the Ist Dogra invasion of Ladakh. About these kings not much had been written about.

During the reign of the king Tsepel Tundup-rnamgyal before the Zorawar Singh's first invasion, an Englishman, William Moorcroft had traveled to Leh and apparently without official sanction, tried to win over the king for British India.

Relations with Tibet was cordial and consistent, missions were going on regular basis.

From 1834-1842 Ladakh witnessed several invasions by Zorawar Singh, governor of Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and finally in 1842, Ladakh lost her Independence. In 1947, Ladakh along with Jammu and Kashmir comes under India.

Government and Administration

The government of the kings of Ladakh, ruling a purely Tibetan country, was quite different from that of the Dalai-Lamas of Lhasa. The supreme ruler was a lay king, popularly known as 'Gyalpo'. His office was hereditary.

²⁴ Petech, op. cit., p.110.

The king was assisted by a council of offices. According to the chronicles of Ladakh this council was made of three grade of officials. The first were Chief Ministers (bkhah-blons) four or five in numbers and hereditary. The second, the ministers (blon-po) and third, the elders. According to Cunningham and Moorcroft, the conduct of affairs was generally extracted to the Prime Minister, (Kahlon).

The territory of proper Ladakh was divided into a certain number of small district called (Yul), under an official called blon-po²⁵. The territory of outlying regions were under the feudatory chief. At the end of the kingdom there were eight feudatory chiefs including four Muslim chiefs of Pa-skynm (Purig), bStod (Purig), Suru and Daras, usually they were called, Jo others were the king of Zanskar, the only one for whom royal title was normally employed, the No-no of Spiti, the chief of Nubra and the chief of rGya, who was the only one situated within Ladakh proper. ²⁶

Justice was ministered on the old Patriachal pattern. No distinction between administration and judicial officers. As to procedure, punishment (C'ad-pa) include stripes (Lus-C'ad), imprisonment (btson-c'ad) and extreme cases banishment with branding and even death. However, the death penaly was seldom awarded and still rarely executed.²⁷

²⁵ Petech, L, op. cit, p. 156.

²⁶ Cunningham. A, Ladakh, Physical , Statistical and Historical, London, 1968, p. 258.

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 262-3.

This chapter has surveyed the medieval period of Ladakhi history, characterized by the emergence of Namgyal dynasty, and its patronage of Tibetan Buddhism sustained my Ladakh's spiritual ties with Buddhist Tibet. The leitmotif of the period, apart from local irrestuded, the emphasis shifted to primarily Buddhist preoccupation such as the patronage and support of construction of monasteries and stupas in Ladakh, and moving away from violence as a policy and way of life of the entire population. In terms of long historical development and evolution Ladakh paid for this dearly as well as earned the present day reputation as a peaceful Buddhist Community.

Chapter- 4

RELATIONS BETWEEN BUDDHIST TIBET AND LADAKH

Ladakh was commercially well connected with her neighbours due to her strategic location. The relations with surrounding states were important for the development of economy and culture and overall, its past relations with other states were good.

With Eastern Turkestan (Sinkiang), Ladakh was connected by a caravan trade route and had friendly commercial relations since the time immemorial.

In the West, with Baltistan, upto the 15th century Ladakh had friendly relations. From the 9th to 15th centuries, it appears that the both states had a common religion, i.e. Buddhism¹ and were on good terms with each other. Even today the people of Baltistan speak the Tibetan language. After the conversion of Baltistan into Islam in the beginning of the 15th century, Baltistan entered into an irreconcilable opposition with Ladakh. The two countries continued to indulge in plundering expeditions and border inroads because of any natural barrier between them.

¹ Snellgrove and Skorupski, op. cit., p. xiii.

With Kashmir and India, from the earliest times, Ladakh's relations were close one. As mentioned earlier, Buddhism first came to Ladakh from Kashmir. Beside, culture, commercial relations with Kashmir was very close. The famous items of the trade with Kashmir was goat wool or 'le-na', which was used for shawls.

With the central Tibet, Ladakh's relations were old and very close one. Ladakh appears to have come into contact with Tibetan in the 7th and 8th centuries when latter not only conquered western Tibet but also dictated terms to China.

With the establishment of Ladakhi kingdom of Tibetan origin in the 10th century, Ladakh shared with Tibet, the development of some lamaic institutions. The latter had no control over former, as Prof. Luciano Petech said, the political contacts with central Tibet were always rare and occasional inspite of the identity of language and religion.²

In its cultural impact Tibetan influence has been simply uniform. From the point of view of language, it has provided Ladakh with a western Tibetan dialect which is still generally spoken to this day by Ladakhi Muslims as much as Buddhists.

² Petech L., A study on the Chronicles of Ladakh, Calcutta, 1939, p.4.

As far as literature, the regular style of literary Tibetan have remained current in Ladakh from the 10th century to the 20th. As far religion, several schools of Tibetan Buddhism are developed in Ladakh.

The real influence of Buddhism in Ladakh came from Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, specially during the period, what in Buddhist history called, 'Tenpa Chidar' the later period.

During this period there was a Buddhist philosophical renaissance starting in Western Tibet was to be found in two holy men, Rinchan Zangpo the translator (958-1055)³ and the great Indian Buddhist saint Atisha(982-1054). These two people were the initiators of what Buddhist historians called the second spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo finds prominent place as a translator in the history of Tibetan literature. He translated many Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan.

The spread of Mahayana Buddhism in Ladakh is closely connected with the famous Rinchen Zangpo. He was not only excellent in translation but also great builders of monasteries and stupas. In Ladakh, Lahul-spiti, Guge, Purang etc. he built

³ Dawa Norbu, "Indo-Tibetan cultural Relations through the Ages", Tibet House Bulletin, vol. 13, May, 1998, p.3.

many monasteries. The main temples among them are the Tholing temples of Purang, the Khatse Gokhar of Guge and the Nyarma temples of Ladakh (set in Thikse village and now in ruins).⁴

The other main temples of Lotswa Rinchen Zangpo in Ladakh which have been preserved are in Alchi, Mangyu and Sumda in Zanskar, a ruined temple near Basgo, two ruined me'od-rten near Saspola, a little chapel at Mulphe⁵.

Alchi monastery which is associated with Rinchen Zangpo is one of the oldest monastery in Ladakh. According to Petech, its foundation goes back to the period about late 11th or early 12th century. One very old temple called the Lotsawa Lha-K'an which has his portrait painting is attributed to him, but the real founder was Alchi-pa bSkal-idan-Ses-rab, of the 'Bro family' as proved by three instructions in the assembly hall (dus-K'an).⁶ Alchi monastery is famous for its paintings which is mixture of Tibetan and Kashmiri paintings. On his return from his second journey to Kashmir Rinchen Zangpo brought back thirty-two craftsmen from Kashmir and built one hundred and eight

⁴ Nawang Tsering, op. cit., p.14.

⁵ Francke, Antiquities of Indian Tibet, vol. 1, Calcutta, 1914, p. 86-88.

⁶ Petech L, op. cit., p.14.

temples in Ladakh including Alchi, Spiti and Guge in Purang region.⁷

Another monastery which the translator was responsible for its existence is Mangyu monastery. This monasteries lies three hours claim up from the hamlet of Sge-ra, which about five miles from Alchi. Local tradition associates Mongyu together with Alchi as a foundation of Lotsa Rinchen Zangpo. The main temples of the translator at Alchi, Mangyu and Sunda in Zanskar contain a statue of the Buddha Vairocana, one of the five Dhyni Buddhas.⁸ These temples are renowned for their architecture which includes rich wooden carvings and fine wall paintings.

The king of Guge Ye-shes od and Blon-Po Bhaq-dar-skyabs of Wanla (the administrater of the Sham region of Ladakh) were acted as Rinchen Zangpo's patrons and financed his activities.

The other earliest monastery in Ladakh which is not associated with the translator is Lamayuru monastery. Local tradition at Lamyuru asserts that the monastery was founded

⁷ Nawang Tsering, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15.

by Naropa himself. There is a small cave inside the main assembly hall, known as Naropa's Cave. It contains his statue together with those of Marpa and Mi-la Raspa. It is believed that the Naropa mediated there.

Lamayuru monastery belongs to the 'Bri-gung-pa branch of the Ka-gyu-pa order of Tibetan Buddhism. This order traces its origins back to two Indian Tantric master, Tilopa and his deciple Naropa. The relevant traditions were brought to Tibet by Marpa, who received them from Naropa, whence they passed to Mila Raspa and thence to sGampo-Pa (1079-1153) whose direct deciples founded as many as six famous schools based on his teachings.⁹ The 'Bri-gun-pa school is named after the monastery of Bri-gun which was founded by 'Jig-rten Gonpo (1143-1217). This monastery played a very important place in the Political life of Tibet. In 13th century it was main contender against Sa-Skya monastery for the favour of their Mongol overlords and thus for acknowledge supremacy throughout Tibet¹⁰.

According to Snellgrove, Lamayuru monastery may have been Kadampa Sect and having fallen into neglect was

⁹ Snellgrove and Skorupski, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.21.

eventually taken over by some Bri-gun-Pas. No date has been mentioned. Ladakh came under Bri-guyn-pa influences when the king dNos-grub-mgon in 1215 patronized 'Jig-rten mGonpo. The main centre of this sect in Ladakh nowadays Lamayuru and Phying monasteries.

Phying monastery comes up during the reign of king bkra-sis-rnamgyal. The king invited the religious teacher Chor-rje Gdan-ma kun-dga-grags-pa probably from Tibet. The lama came to Ladakh in the late fifties of 15th century¹¹. The Lama requested the king to donate some land so that he could built a monastery and the king gave him permission to take land wherever he wished for his purpose.

According to local tradition, regarding Lama's selection of the site for the monastery, one day the Lama arrived at the steam at Phying and from the turquoise colour hill of Phying, he saw a lady riding on a mule, waving and a arrow with scarves attached to it. He understood this to be a gesture of the goddess and selected the site for the present monastery called sGan-Snon or Phying monastery. Thus, the reign of kind sKra-sis-rnamgyal marked a partial renewal of 'Bri-gun-pa influence in Ladakh.

¹¹ Petech L, op.cit., p.29.

The 15th century saw the penetration and growth of the influence of the dGe-lugs-pa or the yellow sect was founded by Tsong Khapa. He was born in 1357 in the neighbourhood of the Kokonor¹² where his father was local official. He studied under many famous teachers. He was a monk of exceptional intellectual attainments, religious devotion etc. At the age of twenty five he was fully ordained and he began to become known as teacher and writer, although he still continued to study under eminent lamas. He built many famous monasteries in Tibet, like Jo-Khang (Catherel) in 1408, Ri-bo dGa-Idan in 1409. Tsong Khapa undertook to purify then the existing Lamaism and restore the pristine cult as propounded by Lord Buddha.

The king of Ladakh, Grags-bam Ide had received an envoy from the reformer, and in order to commemorate the event he is said to have built the monastery of dPetub for the new sect¹³ but the monastery had been actually founded by 'od-Ide of Guge in the 11th century, the king must have consisted in a thorough restoration and the transference to the yellow school.

¹² Snellgrove and Skorupski, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

¹³ See *supra* note, 18, Chapter 2.

The dGe-lugs pa in Ladakh developed rapidly and many monasteries were built, like Kri-rtse (Thikse), Klu-skyil (Likir) bDe-skyid in Nubra, Par-brtan (Barda) in Zanskar etc. These are important monasteries of dGe-lugs-pa sect in Ladakh even today.

The old chapel sTag-Lha-K'an to the north of Thikse was founded by sTod-Ses-rab-bzan-Po, a native of Ladakh and a disciple of Tsong Khapa. The monastery proper of Thikse was founded by sTod Ses-rab-bzan Po's nephew dPal Ses-rab grags-pa¹⁴. Shes-rab-bzan-po also founded bDe-skyid monastery in Nubra valley and built a shrine there for Tsong Khapa. He also visited Zanskar and introduced dGe-lugs-pa order at Karsha monastery.¹⁵

Disket monastery, the biggest in Nubra valley was offered to the mKhan-Po Rinpo-Che of Thikse by the king Tse-dbang-rnamgyal. Since that time the successive incarnation of Thikse Rinpoche have always acted as the abbots of Disket monastery.

By the second half of the 15th century the dGe-lugs-pa had gained upper hand in Ladakh. Supplanting the decaying 'Bri-gun-pa.

¹⁴ Petech L, op. cit, p.168.

¹⁵ Nawang Tsering, op. cit., p.19.

Then the another a forceful personality named sTag-tsan-ras-pa who was responsible for development of another school, the 'Brug-pa, sub-sect of the dKa-brgud-pa in Ladakh.

STag-tsan-ras-pa Nag-dbang-rgyamtso (1574-1651) was a scion of the 'K'on family, i.e. of the house of the Sakya prince and an outstanding member of Brug-pa sect.¹⁶ He traveled widely in central and eastern Tibet. Then in 1613 he started upon journey to Uddiyan (modern Swat), the account he wrote his travel has been translated by G. Tucci.¹⁷ During his journey he visited Zanskar, he received an invitation from Leh but he turn down the invitation to visit Ladakh for the moment being, as he had not yet accomplished the journey to Uddiyan.

Religious life of Ladakh, after the final return of sTag-tsan-ras-pa from Tibet in 1622 was a dominated by his forceful personality¹⁸ He achieved the gradual conversion of the royal house to the Re-lun branch of the 'Brug-pa sect. In the same year the king donated to sTag-tsan-ras-pa and his sect the estate of He-mis, Ma-gro etc.¹⁹

¹⁶ Petche L, op. cit., p.35.

¹⁷ Tucci G., Travels of Tibetans pilgrims in the Swat Valley, Calcutta, 1940, p.65-83.

¹⁸ Chronicle of Ladakh, 39, p. 24-40.

¹⁹ Francke, Antiquities of Indian Tibet, II, Calcutta, 1926.

The great lama founded many monasteries of 'Brug-pa-
sect in Ladakh. The most famous one in Hemis monastery
which in even today the most famous and the wealthiest
monastery in Ladakh. Beside, Hemis, he founded the bDe-c'en-
rnamgyal monastery at wam-le (1624), and Chimri monastery.

Brug- Pa sect ascendance was fully established by sTag-
tsan- ras-Pa. Moreover, the Yons-dzin Rinpo-ce of the bDe-c'en-
cos-kor monastery near Gon-Dkar in central Tibet came to be
regarded as the permanent dbu- bla of the king, although
actual intercourse was less frequent than might be expected.

Thus the development of the monasteries in Ladakh were
with the help of close contacts and active encouragement from
the main centre of the sect in central Tibet.

Though, all the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism had
developed in Ladakh but only three lamaist sects played a
major role in Ladakhi history. They were in chronological order,
the Bri-gum-pa the dGe-Lugs-pa and the Brug-pa sects. The
other remaining sects were the rNin-ma-pa, the monastery of
Brag- stag is belongs to them and last sect the Sa- skya-pa held
the monastery of Ma- spro, founded by Drun-pa rDo-rje-bZan-

po, Neither the rNin-ma-pa nor the Sa-skya -pa sects ever played a major influence in Ladakhi history.

The existence of the lay monarchy as an overall authority, independent of the church did not allow a complete ascendance by one sect, like in Bhutan. However, the head lamas had considerable influence on the royal house and the social and daily life of the people. There were many instances, that the head lamas became peacemaker or mediator during conflicts. STag-tsan-ras-pa on many occasions was successfully acted as peacemaker. One such example was in the year 1647 when Ladakh was raid by Turki (Hor) forces from kashgaria, he acted as peacemaker and avoid many casualties, the Turks called the lama by the Muslim title 'Pir', it shows that the respect for the head lamas not only by the Buddhist but also respected by the Muslims. Another example, was during the conflict between Ladakh and Tibet, the 6th Brug-cen Mi-pan-dban-po in 1684 was acted as peacemaker and a treaty was signed at Tingmogang in the same year called 'Tingmogang Treaty'. According to the treaty, beside, some trade regulations, the quarrel between Ladakh and Tibet should be considered things

of the past and promise to have close relations between two countries.

Thus, the lama missionaries have played a major role in development of different sects of Mahayana Buddhism and founding of monasteries in Ladakh and resulted in the development of close relations between Ladakh and Tibet.

Education

Tibet became an important centre for monastic education, as mentioned earlier it is a leading Mahayana Buddhist centre and residence for many leading Mahayana Buddhism's experts.

Many lamas from Ladakh went to the different monasteries in Tibet for studies. There were no record, how many lamas went to Tibet for education except those sent by the royal house, they were mentioned and recorded. Like the same case with Tibet, when they went to study in India, they did not recorded except for the 16 Tibetans who sent to India with Thonmi Sambhota by the royal court.

King dNos-rub-mgon of Ladakh laid down for the first time the rule that Ladakhi novices should go to dBus and gTsan for

higher studies and ordination.²⁰ According to Petech, this rule hindered the rise and original philosophic and literary in Ladakh.

Many lamas after getting education in different monastic centres in Tibet, came back to their native place and played an important role in spreading of different sects and sub-sets of Mahayana Buddhism in Ladakh. Many royal princes became monks and went to Tibet for higher studies. After coming back from Tibet became head of important monasteries in Ladakh.

King bDel-Idan-rnamgyal's second son named Blo-bzan-nag-dban-Puntsong studied at the monastic University of Bras-spun. The Prince made a rapid progress in the dGe-lugs-Pa hierarchy. After about nine years study in the Blogsal-ling college at Bras-spuns, he obtained the high degree of dge-bse-rab bYams -Pa. In 1694 he was appointed abbot of the dPal-Kor-cos-sde monastery at Gyantse²¹. Later he appointed the abbot of k 'rig-se [Thikse] monastery which heads of the seven Ser-Po-dgon [dGe-lugs-pa] monasteries in Ladakh. The seven monasteries are, Lha-Kan dBu-ma on Tse-mo hill at Leh, Krig-

²⁰ Chronicle of Ladakh, 39, p.9.

²¹ Petech L, op. cit., p. 85.

se, Pe-tub, Klu—k'yil, bDe-skyid of Nubra, dKar-Sa in Zanskar and bSam-dKar near Leh. Later the succession by incarnation of the k'rig-se abbot follows but their supremacy over the other dGe-lugs-Pa monasteries in Ladakh ceased, when at an unknown date a royal prince become abbot - of dPe - tub [Spituk] and made that monastery independent of K'rig- Se²².

Another royal family members who had a distinguished religious career in the yellow church during namgyal dyansty was Lha -stsun-bSod-nams migur- rabtan dPalzan - PO. He became a monk at dPe - tub, went to central Tibet, studied in Tashilhunpo and afterwards headed a school [grva - sKor] for the rab- bjam - Pa degree at - rTse- tan. According to Peteeh, in 1566 he taught the 3rd Dalai lama the astrological calculation of the Kalacakra.

Another famous scholar who was from Zanskar, named Phag- Pa-Shes-rab who was called Zanskar translator. He studied with Rinchen Zangpo's immediate pupil, the junior translator [Lo- chung] Legs- pai shes-rin²³. Phas-Pa-shes-rab completed the work initiated by Rinchen Zangpo. He spent most

²² Joseph Gergen, Bla dvags rgyal rabs ci-med gter, New Delhi, 1976, p. 438-39.

²³ Snellgrove and Tedeusz Skotupdki, The cultural heritage of Ladakh, vol. 2, New Delhi, 1980, p.38.

of his time in Ngari [Western Tibet], However, most of his activities as a translator and teacher were in central Tibet. He was also active in his homeland.

The hallmark of Ladakhi Lamas were their pursuing a comprehensive course of study in various branches of Buddhist studies in some renowned monastic institution in Tibet and for Lamas, a visit to Lhasa their spiritual home was a cherished dream.

After 1959, the education in central Tibetan monasteries was no longer possible and the cultural sources dried up, it tended to cause a lowering of educational level among the Ladakhi monks, however, with the setting up a Buddhist philosophical school at Choklamsar by the government of India, which is intended for young monks from monasteries of all over Ladakh and settling of the Tibetan government in exile in India had helped in improving the level of monastic education in Ladakh, presently most of the major monasteries have schools for the young monks.

Trade and Pilgrimage :

In the olden days, Leh the capital of Ladakh due to its strategic location, had developed into an active and important

centre for commercial intercourse with Tibet, Yarkand, Persia and China on the one hand the plains of India on other hand.

Ladakh is connected with many trade routes. The central Asian trade routes, the southern route, the North-western route and the south-eastern route.

The central Asian route, connected Leh with eastern Turkestan and China. From Leh Yarkand Caravan Traders followed two different routes, the summer route and the winter route.

The southern route connected Ladakh with Kullu, Bashahr, Nurpur and other trade marts of Punjab.

The North-western route connected Ladakh with Skardo and other Mohanmaden districts up the bed of Indus river. This road was frequently traversed by the Baltis who carried dried apricots, which were in great favour and demand in the cold countries of Ladakh and Tibet.²⁴

The South-eastern road connected Ladakh with Tibet. The distance from Leh to Lhasa is about 900 miles²⁵. The route from Leh followed the course of the Indus upstream, then through

²⁴ Drew, Northern Barrier of India, London, 1877, p.239.

²⁵ Datta, Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics, New Delhi, 1973, p.12.

Gartok and Lake Mansarowar, it entered the valley of Tsang-Po and reach Lhasa. There were many other smaller routes which were used by the locals for exchanging the produce of one district with those of another.

Though majority of the Ladakhi lived by subsistence agriculture, yet trade played a vital role in development of its economy and culture. The participants ranged from the big merchants to ordinary peasant farmers, from bigger monastery to a lama entrepreneur.

The trade of Ladakh may be divided into two parts, internal and external trade. Among the regions of Ladakh, there was a barter system, exchanging the produce of a region with others of another, the lower region of Ladakh called Sham, and Shamas were used to go to Changthang region for the animals products such as wool, leather and meat bartering them for grain, dried apricots and other goods. The people of Rupshu brought salt to Zanskar and took barley in exchange. The Zankaris, further exchanged this salt with the inhabitants of Suru for Woolen cloth and others²⁶. Another important commodity the exchanged hands was blankets and coarse

²⁶ Drew, op. cit., p. 97.

woolens or sack cloth. The quantity of wool used in making blankets and sacks in 1846 was 40,000 Lbs.²⁷

The trade relations between Ladakh and Tibet is a old one. It is quite possible that the inhabitants of Ladakh felt Tibetan influence as early as mid-seventh century, for the nomadic Tibetans of Changthang would have good reason to have contact with the sedentary Mon and Dard, exchanging grain for animal products. During the period of mid-seventh century the Tibetan nomades probably inter-married with the Mons- Dards population and allowed a trading or bartering system to develop between the two groups of people.

Since the beginning of the Ladakhi dynasty the commercial and religious ties with Tibet became close one. Not only the royal court sent half commercial and half religious missions but also the major monasteries and ordinary peasants, nomads and porters were trading. One Zankari entrepreneur, lama Tashi Upasika managed to combine parallel careers as a monk and as a large scale trader with Tibet. From an impoverished background, he rose to become a successful

²⁷ Cunnighum, op. cit., p. 238.

businessman, but devoted most of his wealth to religious cause and ended his life in simple austerity once more.

During the life time of sTag-tsan-ras-pa, he sent more than ten religious missions to many monasteries in Tibet. In 1649, the queen of Ladakh sent to central Tibet a mission head by T'ub-bstan-Lha-dban A-k'u bZan rdga and bkra-sis-rdo-rje on behalf of the court and headed by Rin-c'en-dpal-byor and Sakya-zla-od on behalf of the Hemis monastery²⁸. They carried with them the funeral offering for A-K'u Gar-mo, who had died in 1646.

Then comes the two famous missions between Ladakh and Tibet, the exchange of periodic diplomatic, commercial and religious missions which was set up in 1684 as a result of the treaty of Tingmogang between Ladakh and Tibet.

The two missions were, the Lapchak and the Chaba of special importance linked Leh with Lhasa. The Lapchak mission went from Leh to Lhasa once in every three years. It was headed by a prominent Ladakhi or abbot, and it was accompanied by a leading Ladakhi Muslim (Arghun) merchant of that class which

²⁸ Petech L, op. cit., p. 59.

had by long tradition been permitted to trade in Tibet.²⁹ The missions carried letters and presents from the king of Ladakh to the Dalai Lama. This mission always passed through Gartok on its way to Lhasa. In returns of this mission, the Tibetan sent an annual mission, to Leh known as Chapa or 'Tea man' mission. According to Alister Lamb, its head was the Dalai Lama's personal trader to Ladakh, and was always a Tibetan official, either lay or monastic of some importance. The Chappa mission left Lhasa each June, the main items being with its from Tibet were Chinese brick tea and Shawl wool, or Pashm, the fine undercoat of that sheep or goat which seems to developed best in the dry climate of Tibetan pleasure and it arrived at Leh in December.

The two missions were the most important manifestations of the close relationship existing between Ladakh and Tibet. This missions give rise to a number of lesser missions. Feudatories of the king of Ladakh like Rajas of Stock and Matto were accustomed to send an annual trading mission to Gartok.³⁰ Certain Muslim traders possessed special privileges in

²⁹ Lamb A., British India and Tibet 1766-1910, London and New York, 1960 and 1986, p.45.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 46.

trading in Chinese brick tea between Gartok and Leh. The Garpons as well as the Tibetan commander of the fort at Gartok, came to Ladakh annually to trade. Many major Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh send combined religious and trading missions to Lhasa. A similar mission came to Leh from the great Tibetan monastery of Tashilhanpo.

The effects of the symbols of the traditional relationships which continued for hundred of years between Ladakh and Tibet were felt in nearly every Ladakhi village.

The trading Caravans of Asia's high lands gradually declined in importance, disappearing altogether after the Chinese communist rise to power in China and the subsequent occupation of Tibet. The borders were closed.

The hope for the Ladakhi is with the possibility of a relaxation of the present Chinese hold on Tibet and restorations of normal trading and cultural relations between Ladakh and Tibet.

Chapter V

HISTORY OF MUSTANG (TILL 1789) AND ITS CULTURAL TIES WITH BUDDHIST TIBET

Mustang is an area of Bhotia (Tibetan) people and culture in northwestern Nepal. It is located North of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountain ranges approximately eighty-four degrees longitude and twenty-nine degree latitude¹. Called Lo by its inhabitants and Mustang by others.

The climate and landscape of Lo are very similar to those of a number of the main Himalayan Range in Tibetan territory to the east and also are there similarities between the people, language, and culture of both Lo and in Tibet.

The lands, which the Mustang's rulers controlled in 15th century include all of upper and lower Lo (glo-bo-stod-smad) and Dolpo.² While the adjoining areas such as Thak Khola and Manang were their tributaries. Its location makes it a strategic position controlling what was once an important trans-Himalayan trade route. During its long political history, conflicts and encroachments of stronger states such as Gunthang, Jumla, Purang and Guge. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the present ruling line at the end of the 14th century Lo managed

¹ David Jackson, The Mollas of Mustang, Delhi, 1984, p.1.

² David P. Jackson, The Early History of Lo (Mustang) and Ngari, Journal of the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, vol. 4, no.1, December 1976, p.1.

for centuries to maintain its status as a separate political entity. And finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, Lo became a part of Gorkha Nepal, it continued to enjoy a great deal of autonomy.

Before its inclusion into unified Nepal, the people of Lo considered their land to be a border region of Ngari, a general place name designating most western Tibet.

The early history of Lo(Mustang) cannot be studied apart from the history of Ngari. Because of the scarcity of sources for the history of Lo (Mustang) in particular, in the earliest period gaps of two or three centuries at a time have to be filled by describing, the general trends of the whole region.

Under Srong-san-sgam-po and his descendents Tibet continued to be a dominant power in Central Asia and Lo together with Zhang-Shung kingdom in the region of Maunt Kailasa was under Tibet's sway. The chronicle of Ladakh (La dags Rgyal rabs) assert that Lo, together with Zang-Shung, was part of the Tibetan king Srong-btsan-sgan-po's seventh century conquests in the western border lands³. This is the earliest event in Lo's history.

By the reign of Khri-srong-Ide-btsan, who was born some hundred years later in the year of 742 A.D., the annexation of

³ Francke, op. cit, 1926, p.83.

Ngari into Tibet was becoming complete. That was the period when the great saint Guru Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet, and according to legend, he journeyed to Mustang subdued a demoness there, blessed several places which were now severed as holy spots. He is said to have invited to Tibet from Nepal, hence it is possible that he might visited Mustang.

Buddhist Renaissance in Western Tibet

After Langdarma's death and the resulting collapse of the central power structures, the once great dominion became broken up into many small principalities. Central Tibet was hardest hit by the following dark age. But in the western Tibet, particularly in Guge and Purang, the political fragmentation and the decline of Buddhism were not so long-lived. It was in the western Tibet that Buddhism were rekindled and, less than two centuries after the anti-Buddhist persecution by Langdarma, Buddhism were carried back to Tibet.

The ancient royal line of Tibet fractured into many branches after Langdarma. One side of the family, that descended from Langdarma's legitimate son 'Od-srung, came to control parts of western Tibet⁴, one of the kings of his line, Bkra-shis-mgon, who flourished in the mid-tenth century, succeeded

⁴ David P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

in uniting most of Ngari under his control. According to David Jackson, Lo and Dolpo were among the lands he ruled.

With the shifted of Tibetan civilization to the old Zhang-Zhung, the area now know as Ngari, consist of two main kingdoms, Purang and Guge, by the 10th century had been Tibetanized. The kings of these kingdoms were strong supporters of Buddhism and many Buddhist teachers were invited to Ngari in the 11th century. Tibetan missionaries went to Lo and Serib to convert the local population to various Buddhist sects.

At the beginning of the revitalization of Buddhism the main parts were played by their Tibetan translators and Indian pandits. Because of Ngari's geographical proximity to India and particular to Kashmir, and to the favourable circumstances afford there by the local rulers active patronage, it became an early centre of translation activities. Rinchen Zang po, the translator and Indian Pandit Atisa were played a major role in the western Tibet also. Rinchen Zangpo studied in Kashmir and in India where he mastered Sanskrit and the specialized teachings of Tantra and then returning to his homeland, Upper Ngari as a prolific translator and founded many monasteries.

The tremendous upsurge in religious activity was not limited to just Indian masters and the Tibetan translators, for during this same period another great figure, was beginning his

career in Lo. Since the first great spread of Buddhism in Tibet in the time of Padmasambhava, certain teachings of old translation period known as bka'ma had kept alive in an unbroken transmission from master to disciple. Some flowers of old tradition were trying to find fresh connections with Padmasambhava and the golden age of his teachings. This was done by "treasure revealers" who claimed to have the ability to find hidden texts (gter-ma). Such text have been concealed in special places by Padmasambhava himself, who intended that they be found there when time was ripe for them. According to David Jackson, the first treasure finder was Sangs-rgyas-bla-ma, and his first discoveries were made in Lo Gekar. It is easy to be skeptical about such texts authenticity. But some of them may have been genuine ancient documents if their description as being scroll of yellow paper is accurate, for that matches the appearance of the trove of eight and ninth century texts uncovered by western scholars at Tunhuang.⁵ The fact that first discovery of such texts was attributed to a place in Lo may be historically significant, whether they were authentic discoveries or not. Should they have been genuine texts, they would have definite proof of a visit there by Padmasambhava. But even if not, one can still surmise that at the time of their "discovery"

⁵ R.A.Stein, Tibetan civilization, London, 1972, p. 72.

there must have exist a strong tradition relating to the activities of Padmasambhava.

During the twelfth century a new political order emerged in Ngari. The old dynasty of Guge which descended from Bhra-shis-mgon came to an end, and they were replaced by the dynasty of the western Mallas. This new lines of kings was founded by one named Nagaraja (or in Tibetan sources, Nagadeva)of the Khasa tribe, an ancient Indo-Arian people who inhabited what is now western Nepal.⁶ The Tibetan chronicles portray their dynasty as being an extension of the Guge royalty whose line they replaced. The western Mallas kings seem to have become Tibetanized, and first four generations of rulers following their founder, were known by Tibetan names. And even after this practice was discontinued, they continued to patronize Tibetan Buddhism.

Meanwhile, in the far west of Ngari another princely line which was descended from Bkra-shis-mgon's older brother, Dpal-gyi-mgon, was building a strong base of power in Ladakh.⁷ Around the beginning of the twelfth century, one of these kings Lha-Chen-Utpal, conquered Lo and all territories between it and Purang. Finally towards the end of the eleventh and beginning of twelfth centuries, the power of yet another kingdom rising was at Dzongka in Gungthang to the west.

⁶ David P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.42.

Nevertheless, the general cultural trends of the time can be seen. Tibetan translators and Indian pandits continued to be important. Monasteries as great and powerful centers of ordained monks. Temples sprang up on the sites where particularly charismatic masters had been active. When a great teacher was followed by able disciples, patterns of local patronage became established. Noble families became allied or identified with religious lineage. When a noted teacher from the family was succeeded by an outstanding son or nephew a kind of religious aristocracy with increasing inherited prestige came into being. The 'Khon' family of Skya (Sa-Skya) had such origins. Sakya monastery was founded in 1073 by 'Khon Dkon' mchog-rgyal-po (1034-1102), but its main teaching lines came to Sakya through his son, Sa-chen kun-dga-Snying-po (1092-1158). These teachings appeared to have reached Lo (Mustang) very quickly because one of Sa-chen's disciples is said to have stayed in Lo (Mustang).

In 1252 Gunthang had gained sufficient strength to send an army against Jumla and to conquer Lo and Serib.⁸ To consolidate its power in the area, Gunthang established a fort near Muktinath. In the 13th century the people of Lo spoke a

Charles A.E. Ramble and Michael Vinding, the Nem-Chag village Record and the early history Mustang district, Journal of Himalayan studies, vol. XIII, Kathmandu, 1987, p.8.

Tibetan dialect while the population in the present Baragau and Thak Khola spoke se-skad, a language akin to the present day Thakali.

The reign of king "Bum-Ide-mgon (1253-1280) of the Gunthang royal line, was marked a high point in this dynasty. The name of the Tibetan ruler 'Phas-pa' is often mentioned in connection with this king. As evidence of the great power of Gunthang during his reign, the Gunthang kings chronoler, kahthog Rig-dzin Tshe-dbang-nor-bu (1698-1755), quotes a list of more than a dozen forts which 'Bum-Ide-mgon founded. These include forts in upper, middle and lower Lo (Mustang), Dolpo, Manang, Guge-Purang, La-stod Byang and Lho, Nubri and Kyirong.

During this period a very important monk from Lo, emerged as a great translator, Glo-bo Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab-rin-chen. This learned master of Vajrayana Buddhism, working together with pandits from Yatshe or Jumla, and according to David Jackson, probably elsewhere translated a considerable number of Sanskrit texts into Tibet language. His special contributions were in the translation and transmisson of the Red Yamantaka (gshin rje gshed dmar po) cycle of tantric precepts which descended through Virupa, and in his translation of the

Svarodaya Tantra, the basis for the gyul rgyal system of astrology.⁹

In the middle of the 14th century the power of Gunthang weakened and Lo was conquered by Jumla.¹⁰ Towards the end of the 14th century Gunthang once more became a dominant power and the Gunthang general Shes-rab bla-ma conquered Lo, Shes-rab-bla-ma's descendants established themselves in Lo and his grand son, A-me-dpal was the founder of the Lo royal house from whom the present Lo(Mustang) Maharajas are descended.

A-me-pal, regarded as the father of today's royal lineage. He constructed Lo Mustang and built many monasteries and temples. He invited the renowned Sakya lama and teacher, Ngorchen Kunga Sangpo to Mustang from Tibet and honoured him as his chief religious preceptor. They founded the Tarang Thub-bstan-bshed-sgrub-dar-rgyas-gling seminary (Chos-grwa). According to David Jackson, he established a monastic center that included more than two thousand monks who had the vows of a correct bhiksu. He respectful recognition to the Buddhist community and discontinued the taxation of his subjects.

The successor was his son the religious king A-mgon-bzang-po,¹¹ who had also taken great interest in religious

⁹ David P. Jackson, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁰ Ramble and Vinding, op. cit., p.8.

¹¹ David P. Jackson, op. cit., p. 147.

activities. He sponsored the building of the Brag-dkor-theg-chen-ling monastery, also sponsored the building of the great Maitreya image and temple in Monthang. He commissioned the making of sacred scriptures, including the Kanjur, the Tanjur, the collected works of the five Sakya founders etc. all of them being written with powdered gold. Many restoration works had been done under him.

The next king who succeeded was his son, A-ham-Tshang-chen-Bra-shis-gon. This king established the monastic center at Namgyal called Thub-bstan-dar-rgyas-gling. He sponsored the building of both the temple and sacred image of the Thub-chen-rgyal-bai-pho-brang.

This king's younger brother was the Lord of learning Glo-bo mkhan-chen Bsod-nams-Lhun-grub-legs-pai-byang-gnas-rgya-mtshan-dpal-bzang-po. He was enthroned as "abbot" (mkhan-po) of the great monastic center Thub-bstan-bshad-sgrub-dar-rgyas-gling. He continuously taught the profound and vast cycles of religious teachings. And he became famous in all monasteries as a model of pure monastic discipline and of propagating the teaching and realization of religion.

The next king who came to the throne was A-ham Grogspa-mtha-yas. This king maintained the religious and secular laws of his father and ancestors. He worshipped the saint

(phags-pa) with offering and revered those who upheld the Doctrine. He invited from Ngor the ninth mkham-po Rgyal-ba Lha-chong-Seng-ge and the tenth mkhan-po, Dkon-mchog-Lhun-rub and revered them as his chief spiritual teachers. He spread the doctrine of the Buddha and made the monastic centers flourish.

Under the next king, A-ham-Don-grub-rdo-rje built the Tsarang palace, Bsan-grub-dge-phel and restored the temple of Lo Gekar, and many others.¹²

The next king, A-ham-Bsan-grub-rdo-rje erected at Tsarang the Thub-bstan-bshad-sgrub-dar-rgyas-gling main temple hall and commissioned many scared painted images. The king's brother, Bsod-nams-dpal-byor was enthroned as the religions seat and he spread the doctrine of both teachings and practice.

Another king, A-ham-grub-rab-brtan who came to the throne and like his ancestor he was keen supporter of religion, commissioned the making of sacred images, scriptures and stupas.

Another king who has shown keen interest in religious activities was A-ham-Tshe-dhang who established the Mngon-dga-byang-chub-gling monastic center. He also understood the

¹² Ibid, p. 149.

Sakya, Kargyu and Nyigma religious sects without confounding them.

Dbang-rgyal-rdo-je, restored the Lo Gekar temple and built the Smon-grub Lha- khang, Dhang-dus Lha-khang and Bam-mkhar. He established a monastic centers at many places, scriptures and stupas in central Tibet (dbus), Southwest Tibet (gtsang) and Munthang (Smon).

The above information are based on the Mollas of Mustang specially Tsarang Molla which considered the most reliable of them. The Mollas are the written text of speeches whose contents include historical information. David Jackson, in his book, the Mollas of Mustang' has translated several Mollas, including the Molla of Tsarang.

Coming back to the political situation, the 16th century was a difficult one for Lo (Mustang). Gonthang the protector of Lo lost its power and never regained it. In addition, Lo was plunged by internal conflicts.

In the end of the 16th century when the army of king Tshedban-rnamgyal of Ladakh (1555-75) invaded Purang, Jumla and Lo¹³. Although Lo came under Ladakhi supremacy, affinal ties between royal houses created a close relationship between the kingdoms.

¹³ Ramble and Vinding, op. cit., p.8.

In 1719, the king of Lo married to Ladakhi princess (whose own mother was from Lo).¹⁴ On her way back to Lo the princess was captured and imprisoned at Kagbeni by the Jumla army, but was later freed when help arrived from Ladakh.

A few decades later Jumla again attacked Lo and this time Ladakh was unable to help Lo which subsequently came under Jumla supremacy.

In the second half of the 18th century king Prithive Narayan Shah of Gorkha conquered the numerous small kingdoms comprising contemporary Nepal. Parbat fell to Gorkha in 1768. In 1788, the Gorkhas fought a war with Tibet and Jumla used the occasion to invade Lo and some villages further South. The war between Gorkhas and Tibet, however, soon came to an end and in 1789 Gorkhas conquered Jumla and since that time the present Mustang District has been under the Shah kings of Nepal.

Economy

There were three main sources of the economy of Lo (Mustang), agriculture, animal husbandry and trading. All three of these means of livelihood have probably been important in Lo (Mustang) since ancient times.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.9.

Agriculture is and probably always was the main sources of human substance, the most important crops are barley and buckwheat and also the growing methods have probably remained unchanged for the last millenium or more. This more or less static agricultural base could not support a large or greatly expanding population, furthermore, it is clear that farming alone could never produce enough wealth to make Lo a permanent political and economic power in the Kali Gandaki.

Another important sources of livelihood in Lo is livestock breeding and herding. Yaks and goats grazed on the alpine pastures high above the villages of Lo, though available pasturage is not enough to support large herds, specially in winter and any large herds of animals have to be taken to the Tibetan "steppes" north of the border. This was customary practice in the past.¹⁵

The third important means by which people in Lo gain their livelihood was their participation in the transit trade in between Tibet and Nepal or India. The Importance of this trade in the economy of Lo seems to have fluactued a great deal but for the Kali Gandaki region as a whole it was always an economic mainstay. The most important form of trade pursued by the people of Lo was bartering grain for Tibetan salt.

¹⁵ David Jackson, 1984, op. cit, p.3.

The Kali Gandaki river valley was an important route for trade passing back and forth between western Tibet and northern India.¹⁶ The main commodities passing through Lo involved the exchange of Tibetan salt, minerals, and nomadic products for grain and manufactured goods from the South. Since Lo controlled the passes leading to Tibet, it occupied a strategic position. The crucial spot was Thak Khola, the entrepot for goods coming from north and south. Traders from the south seldom went all the way to Tibet. Tibetan traders also never traveled the whole distance to India. Since the southern and northern trails were best traveled at different times of the year, it was convenient to have a central meeting point where goods from both directions could be stored and later exchanged. The half way point of this trade was in the Thakali inhabited area of Thaksat sae. According to David Jackson, at times in the past, the meeting point for trade was at Kabang (Larjung) at the "Temple of the lower place" (Smad kyi Lha Khang), later times the entrepot was at Thukche.

Effective control of the trade passing through the Kali Gandaki valley could lead to great wealth as demonstrated by certain Thakali families who in the last century monopolized the salt under Nepalese custom contract. The benefits to be derived

¹⁶ Ibid, p.3.

from controlling the Kali Gandaki trade were no doubt to the ancient ruler of Lo and adjoining regions. The long series of intrusions by Jumla into Thak Khola was also motivated primarily by the desire to control or profit from this commerce.

Education of Lamas in Tibet

Lamas from the cis-Himalayan states used to go to the different monastic centres in central Tibet for their education.

From Mustang too monks went to central Tibet for their education. It was necessary for the head or incarnate Lamas from Lo (Mustang) to go to the different monastic centre in central Tibet for their higher education. After completed their studies, came back to their native places and played a major role in spreading of Mahayana Buddhism. There were no record how many Lamas from Lo went to Tibet for education. There are some references which indicates that there were many Lamas from Lo and adjoining areas studying in different monastic centres in central Tibet during the 15th to 17th centuries. For example, in connection with the conflict between the king of Lo and his minister, the clergy was also involved and in 1682 monks from Lo (Mustang) and Serib fought at a monastery in central Tibet.¹⁷ This shows that during that time many Lamas from Lo

(Mustang) and adjoining areas were in central Tibet, studying in different monastic centres.

Lama O-rgyan dpal-bzang (1617-1677), was a native of Southern Mustang and founder of the monastery sku-tshab-ger-Inga near present day Thini. His ordination took place in the year 1668. At the age of seventeen following the advice of his teacher, he proceeded to central Tibet and took his studies at the Sakyapa monastery rTa-nag Thub-bstan rnamgyal.¹⁷ Like him many other Lamas were active in spread of different sects of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. The predominant sect in Mustang apart from rare penetration by the "ancients", Nyingmapa (rNin-ma-pa) and the Kagyud-pa (bka-rgyad-pa), is the Sakyapa sect. The wave of Mahayana Buddhism which flowed back from Tibet to Mustang and other areas were actually started with the Lama missionary work of different schools. Many Lamas were invited from Tibet and actively took part in development of religious activities like founding of monasteries and stupas. The kingdom of Mustang developed rapidly in the 15th and 16th centuries to become one of the important centres of religious activities in the Tibetan world.

¹⁷ Ramble and Vinding, op. cit., p.9.

¹⁸ Franz Karl Ehrhard, Sa-dul dgon-pa : A Temple at crossroad of Jumla, Dolpo and Mustang, Ancient Nepal, No. 140, Kathmandu, 1998, p.4.

The record history of the present Mustang District dates from as far back as the 7th century, situated along an important trade route, neighbouring powers have through the past millenium controlled the area, Tibet from 7th to 9th century, Gunthang from the 13th through the 14th century, Jumla in the 16th century, Ladakh in the 17th century, Jumla again in the 18th century and Gorkha from the end of the 18th century.¹⁹ The rise of new powers and the decline of the old both within and outside area caused numerous wars and invasions. However, spread of Mahayans Buddhism in and around Mustang never declined, infact religious and spiritual ties with central Tibet was uniform, resulted in development of Tibetan culture, language and different sects of Tibetan Buddhism in Mustang.

¹⁹ Christian G. Seeber, Reflection on the Existence of Castles and Observation Towers in the Area under Investigation, the South Mustang, Ancient Nepal, 136, Kathmandu, 1994, p.81.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

To conclude, the Buddhist Tibet religious and spiritual ties with Ladakh and Mustang was very close. The cultural aspects played a significant role in developing a close relations between Buddhist Tibet and the cis-Himalayan states.

The increasing importance being placed on the religious and spiritual factors could noticed in the preceding chapters, here I am briefly summarizes the main points that have been analysed. The second chapter is on the easily history of Ladakh. The first Tibetan influence in Ladakh felt in the 7th and 8th centuries and with the establishment of the first Ladakhi kingdom of Tibetan origin in the 10th century, the cultural influence had wide spread throughout Ladakh. The third chapter is on Medieval history of Ladakh and its cultural ties with Buddhist Tibet.

The two chapters has surveyed the early and medieval period of Ladakhi history, characterized by the origin of the first Ladakhi dynasty and then by emergence of Namgyal dynasty and its patronage of Tibetan Buddhism sustained by Ladakhs's spiritual ties with Buddhist Tibet. The leitmotif of the period, apart form local iresistudes, the emphasis shifted to primarily Buddhist preoccupation such as the patronage and

support of constructions of monasteries and stupas in Ladakh, and moving away from violence as a policy and way of life of the entire population. In terms of long historical development and evolution Ladakh paid dearly as well as earned the present day reputation as a peaceful Buddhist community.

The next chapters is on the relations between Ladakh and Buddhist Tibet, besides, cultural, there was a close commercial relations between Buddhist Tibet and Ladakh for many centuries in the past. Infact, religious and economic situation are often very interrelated, as in the past Buddhism became the major religion of the whole Asia by following the routes of Merchants. Ladakh and Tibet were connected by the two important missions, the Lapchak and the Chaba, the exchange of periodic diplomatic, commercial and religious missions.

The two missions were the most important manifestation of the close relationship existing between Ladakh and Tibet. This missions give rise to a number of lesser missions.

The last chapters is on history of Mustang and its cultural ties with Buddhist Tibet.

This two chapters have surveyed the important tools by which the Tibetan Buddhism spread to the cis-Himalayan states, Ladakh and Mustang. In its cultural impact Tibetan influence has been simply uniform. Lama missionaries has played a significant role in spreading of Mahayana Buddhism in Ladakh

and Mustang. The more Lama missionaries active in these region, more diffusion in the areas.

Lamas from the cis-Himalayan states, Ladakh and Mustang were used to go to the different monastic centres in Tibet for education. After 1959 when Chinese occupied Tibet and the education in the central Tibetan monasteries was no longer possible, the cultural sources dried up, it tend to cause a lowering of educational level of the monks of the cis-Himalayan states.

In the last four decades, the level of monastic education in these areas are flourishing again, here it must be noted that two important sources of inspiration for its flourish. The 14th Dalai Lama and his government settling in India which helped and source of inspiration to Buddhism in the cis-Himalayan states. Another important sources specially in the case of Ladakh is setting up a Buddhist philosophical school in Leh by the government of India which intended for young monks from monasteries all over Ladakh. Today almost all major monasteries has monastic schools.

The hope for the Ladakh is that the possibility of a realization of the present Chinese hold on Tibet and restoration of normal trading and cultural relations.

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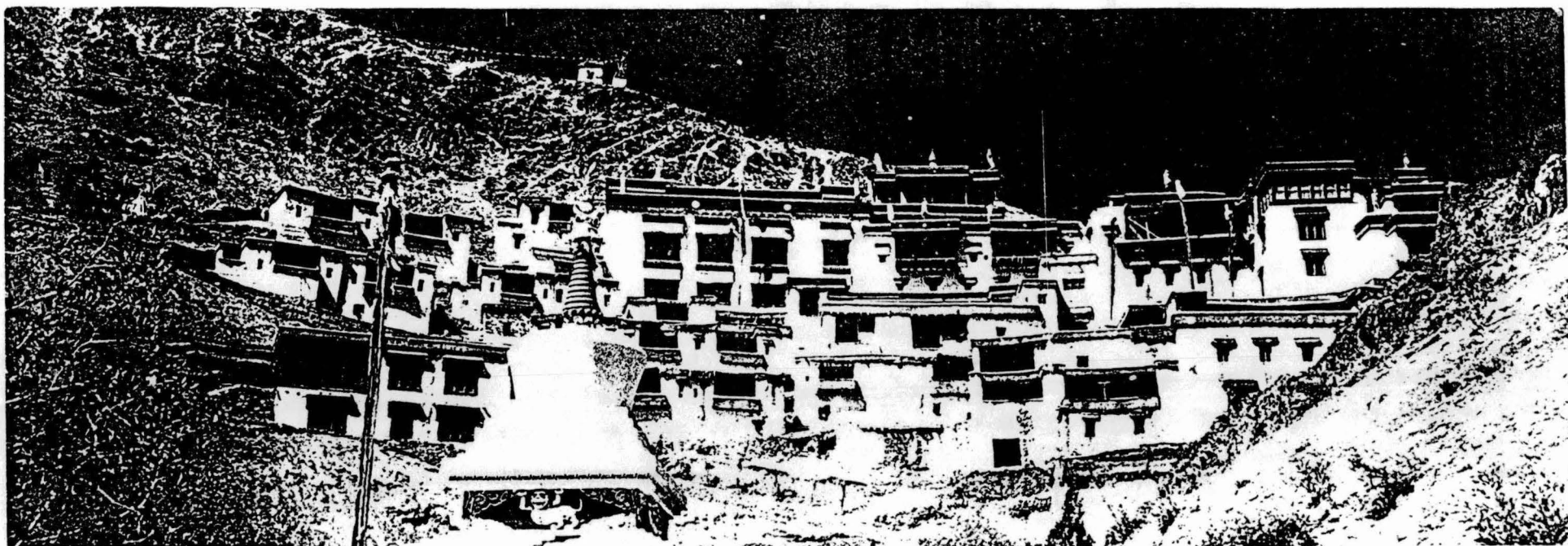
Lamayuru - Ladakh

photograph by H. Quinley



Thikse Monastery.

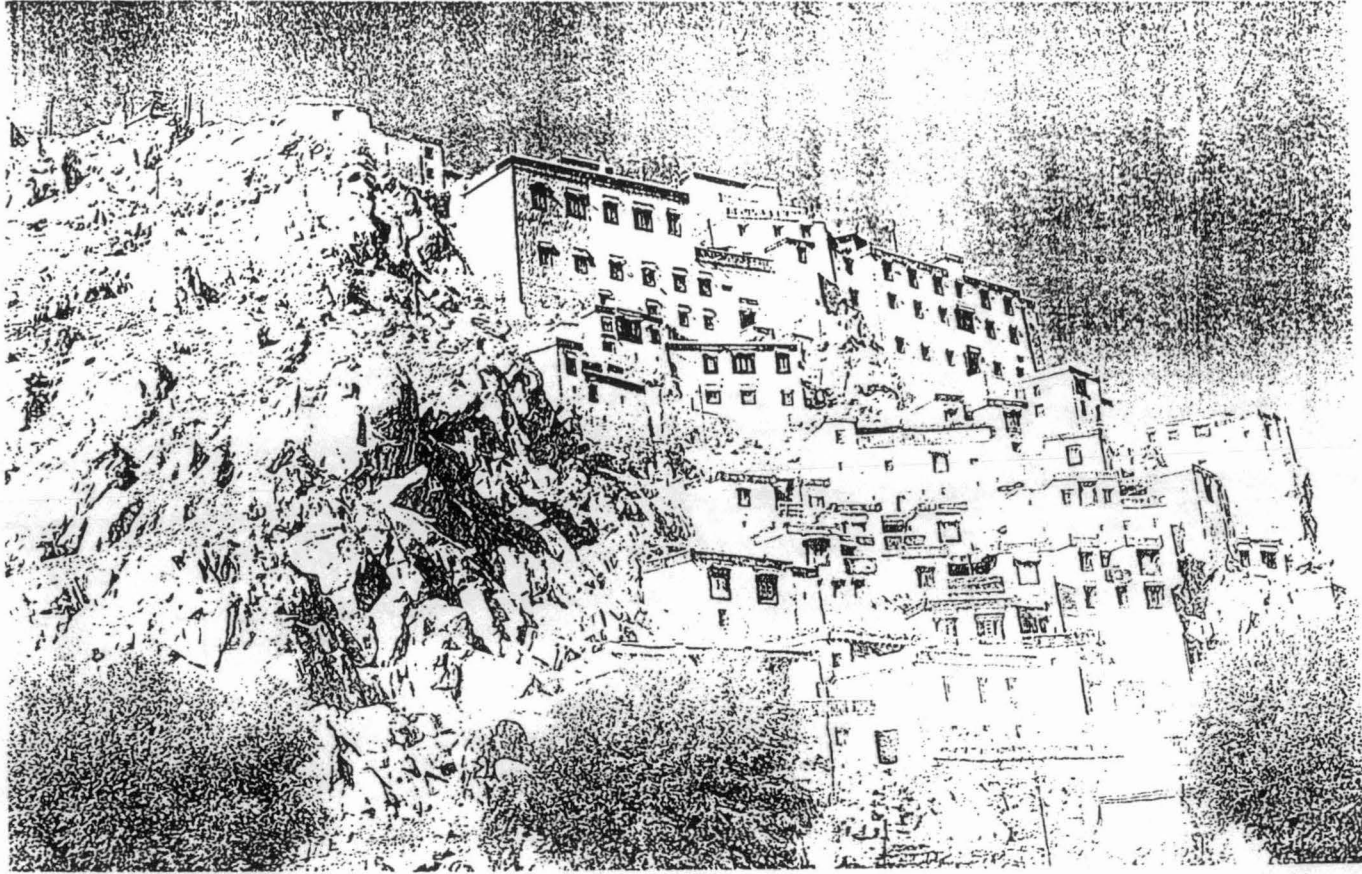
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people in Traditional dress during Ladakhi festival,
photograph by T. Dorji (Chita).