

LADAKH

THE WONDERLAND



TEG BAHADUR KAPUR

CC-0. Kashmir Research Institute, Digitized by eGangotri

THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD

LADAKH: THE WONDERLAND

(A Geographical, Historical and Sociological Study)

8.12.11

Brigadier TEG BAHADUR KAPUR, AVSM



Mittal Publications
DELHI-110035 (INDIA)

JADAKH :
THE WONDERLAND
(Social, Historical and Economic Study)

First Published 1987

© Brigadier Teg Bahadur Kapur

ISBN 81-7099-011-4

Published by

K.M. Mittal

for MITTAL PUBLICATIONS

B-2/19B, Lawrence Road,

DELHI-110035

Printed at

J.N. Printers, Padam Nagar,

DELHI-110007

Preface

I am making a sincere effort to describe, to the best of my ability, the wonderland that is Ladakh. I was privileged to come to know this marvellous region in a most intimate way, and since 1948 I have been closely involved in many capacities with this very fascinating region.

My close association with Ladakh culminated in a glorious tenure there as Commander from 1965 to 1967. To get this Command was a god-sent opportunity to come to know the land of my dreams in depth and I immediately became engrossed in the mysteries of this land of snowy mountains.

My study of the geography, history, and the habits and customs of the people was acquired first hand through field experience, by talking with the humble and holy people and helping them in any way that I could do so. In return they took me into their confidence and showered me with love and knowledge. I was always at close quarters to see exactly the kind of life they led, and what beliefs they held. I trust that this information would be

very valuable to our sociologists and anthropologists, more so since to go there is now very difficult even though some parts of it are open to tourists. These people however do not get more than a very superficial glance at the realities of Ladakh. The areas in which I did my study are till today out of reach for any but military personnel, most of whom were not involved with the people there as deeply as I was, for my interest in Ladakh dated back to over two decades prior to my posting there. The history of Ladakh was given to me by the *Lamas* there by their very own mouths. Later I checked this from Archival documents and found that there was a remarkable similarity between the two but they were by no means identical. This is the first time then that a historical account of Ladakh, *as told by* Ladakhis is being written. This would certainly be of great interest to our historians.

Finally the geographical descriptions of this book were personally checked out by me in the years of Command in Ladakh. Later I cross-checked these data and found that there had been some rather serious mistakes made about the same which later I had to correct.

However this work is mainly for those, who like me, fell in love with this most magnificently isolated and picturesque land, but are not able to go there personally for some time to come. I invite them to travel with me, through this work, to a land most marvellous, and also with the people both holy and humble.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	v
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Chapter 1</i>	
PHYSICAL FEATURES OF LADAKH	8
<i>Chapter 2</i>	
HISTORY OF LADAKH	125
<i>Index</i>	173

List of Illustrations

1. Locals of Trishe
2. Balties of Biagdangdo
3. Family of Rani of Hunder
4. Reception at Diskit Hospital, Ladakh
5. Approach to Kiari Def
6. Right approach to Kiari Def
7. The grazing ground of Dungli, 14500' (19.10.65)
8. Bahadur Path, North Ladakh

List of Illustrations

1. Location of Tishu
2. Map of Jammu
3. Map of Jammu
4. Map of Jammu
5. Map of Jammu
6. Map of Jammu
7. Map of Jammu
8. Map of Jammu
9. Map of Jammu
10. Map of Jammu

Introduction

Kie-Chha, which is the ancient name for what is now called Ladakh, was first mentioned by Fa-Hian, the famous Chinese pilgrim, who visited this part of the world, in A.D. 399-400. Fa-Hian travelled through Tsu-ho and Yu-hoei, and then went over the Tsu-Ling mountains. It took him a whole month to reach the fabled land of Kie-Chha (now Ladakh).

He found that snow never melted on these mountains, nor does it melt in modern times. Following this the people of this area were called 'people of the snowy mountains'.

Ladakh could in those days be approached only by two routes, which were open to travellers such as Fa-Hian. The Western route was through *Kukeyar* and the Southern route was via *Rudok*. Both these routes passed over the *Karakoram* mountains. Old lamas of Ladakh, when asked say that Fa-Hian

took the Western route to reach Ladakh. They told me that Lord Buddha's alms bowl, and one tooth of his were enshrined at Leh, in a solid mound of masonry. Later the holy tooth was dug out and carried away by Ali Sher of Baltistan. This event occurred some three hundred years ago. When Ali Sher invaded and plundered the snowy land, he barbarously threw away the holy relic of the Buddha into the river Indus. The alms bowl however still exists, and is exhibited in a temple north of Leh. It looks like a large earthen-ware vase, and is similar in shape to the two largest steatite vases excavated from the Bhilsa Tops. Another tooth of Lord Buddha, was formerly enshrined at Leh, in Dung-ten, and still exists, although Dung-ten itself is in ruins.

The name of Kie-Chha, and the designation of its people as 'men of the snowy mountains', both indicate that Ladakh which is still also known as Kha-Chan, is extremely cold. The Ladakhis are also locally called the Kha Chan-pa.

We find that in the middle of the seventh century, another Chinese pilgrim called Huan-Tsang had stated that from Khiu-Lu-To (now Kulu), a hill district north of Simla, and three hundred miles over the mountain ranges, lay the kingdom of Mo-Lo-Pho (low country). This coincides with the country where Tsang-Po (river Indus) flows in Ladakh.

In this connection it is interesting to note that in the seventh century, the Devanagari alphabet of India was introduced into Tibet from Kashmir. A

sage called Thumi Sambhota was the first to teach the Tibetans the use of the Kashmirian characters of alphabet which are the same even today.

In the beginning of the eleventh century, Palgyigon was the ruler of Ladakh. Much later, in the year 1314 A.D. Rinchina Bhoti attacked Kashmir. He advanced through *Dras* (one of the districts of Ladakh in those days), and entered the valley through Gagangir, situated on the river Indus. An army of 60,000 horses and horsemen was under the command of Dallach. Dallach was the main minister of a neighbouring chief Karana Sen. The marauders reached the capital which was severely plundered and set afire. The cowardly forces of Raja Sen Deva deserted the field of battle without giving a fight much to his agony.

Dallach grew increasingly bloodthirsty and he led his forces to continue devastating the eastern end of the valley and then finally withdrew to the pass of Tar-bal (Tar-hill in Kashmir).

Raja Sen Deva was also forced to flee the land and thus the marauding Bhotian chief was victorious and became the undisputed king of the country. To make his position even more firm he married the daughter of General Ram Chandra, who was one of the commanders in the routed army of Raja Sen Deva. He then ruled Kashmir for three years over 1315-1318 A.D.

Marco Polo also visited the Kashmir valley. He had been in the court of Kublai Khan, the great Emperor of China in 1265 A.D. He stayed in Kashmir as well to regain his health which had been

worn down due to his incessant travelling in adverse conditions. He describes both Kashmir and Ladakh of the thirteenth century in the most eulogistical terms.

Much later in 1774, Warren Hastings, the then Governor General of India sent an emissary George Bogle to Tibet, where Buddhist religion was predominant. During that period the then Dalai Lama (Ta-lhib Lama) or the Grand Lama was still a minor. In his place Tashi Lama of Tashi Lhumpo was ruling Tibet.

In 1785 A.D., Warren Hastings sent Captain Turner to Tibet. Turner's mission was to meet Tashi Lhumpo. When he met him the august lama prevented him from going further into Lhasa, the holy city. The lama dissuaded the ardent Captain from going on to Lhasa for fear of offending the Chinese. Turner's report on Tibet is however an interesting if somewhat peculiar document. In 1834 A.D., we find that General Zorawar Singh who was in the Army of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu invaded Ladakh on his behalf.

The Gyalpo of Ladakh made a desperate bid to save his kingdom with the aid of the British Government in India. The Gyalpo sent a frantic message to Henderson, an officer in the British Army who was visiting Leh at that time, much against the wishes of the British Government. The Gyalpo tried his best to persuade him to get armed help from the British so that he could foil Zorawar Singh's determined assault to take over his entire kingdom. However unfortunately for the Gyalpo,

Henderson proved to be entirely unwilling to do the least bit to help the Gyalpo out of his serious predicament. When the Government later heard of this most churlish behaviour on Henderson's part they did not allow him to leave Leh. He was ordered to stay in Ladakh permanently for his misconduct, and to be ostracised for his indignity.

Meanwhile through a series of misunderstandings General Zorawar Singh came to learn through his vast intelligence network that a Britishman by the name of Henderson was in Leh and was actively working out a plan to foil his attack against the Gyalpo of Ladakh. The matter was immediately reported to Raja Gulab Singh by Zorawar. The Raja then quickly informed Maharaja Ranjeet Singh who in turn demanded an explanation from the British political agent living in Ludhiana. It was then that the riddle was solved since the agent informed the Maharaja that Henderson had crossed the Sutlej and gone into Ladakh against the orders of his Government. He also assured him that Henderson had absolutely no plans concerning the creation of obstacles to the Maharaja's plans to conquer those northern territories. However it was easy to realize that Henderson had been sent by the British to spy in Ladakh, perhaps as a preliminary to an attack on it by the British Army itself. Thus Zorawar's attack, as a matter of fact proved to be planned before the British could directly attack Ladakh itself. As was the practice those days, a spy, if caught in the land he was not supposed to be in,

was denounced by his Government as an adventurer who had nothing to do with them at all.

Early in the year 1846 A.D., after the First Sikh War, Raja Gulab Singh became the undisputed ruler over Ladakh and all its dependencies. During this year Gulab Singh became the Maharaja, and bartered his Spiti District, for the Southern dependencies of Ladakh. The two Commissioners of India, Van Agnew and Alex Cunningham left for Ladakh on second August, 1846. The route that they took was through Mandi, Kulu, and Lahul. From there they went to the Bara Lach pass, and then into Zanskar in Ladakh.

Anant Ram the vizier of Shassa, who could speak as well as write Tibetan, accompanied these two Commissioners, as their interpreter and guide. He carried with him a letter from the Governor General addressed to the Chinese Governor of Lhasa. When he gave this to the Tibetans in Lhasa they refused to believe that it was authentic and did not allow him to proceed. Fortunately since he was expert in Tibetan he managed to convince them that it was of paramount importance that the letter from the Governor General be personally handed over by him to the Chinese Governor. It was only after great persuasion that he was permitted to do so. Inside the fort the Chinese Governor informed the surprised vizier that he had never communicated with the British. He said he only communicated westward with the Raja of Bisahar.

When the relieved vizier Anant Ram informed the Governor that he was indeed the vizier of the

same Raja and had come with personal orders for him from the Governor General to deliver the letter it was at last accepted.

The Governor assured Anant Ram that the letter in question would be forwarded to Lhasa for a reply and this would perhaps take a year. Anant Ram stayed in a tent provided to him by the Governor and his stay at Garo was comfortable.

It was only in 1847 A.D. that Chinese officials went to Garo under orders from the Governor of Lhasa. The Raja of Bisahar reported this to the British who promptly despatched a second commission to mark the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet. This commission comprised some efficient British officials and the matter was settled cordially.

Thus Ladakh has attracted travellers from ancient times and still continues to do so. It is a fabulous land with most interesting geography, history and customs. In this work an effort has been made to describe each of these in detail so that the interested reader may learn much about this still little known wonderland called Ladakh.

Physical Features of Ladakh

The most striking aspect of Ladakh are the mountain ranges which lie parallel to each other. These ranges stretch through Ladakh from south east to north-west. This general direction of the mountain ranges guides the courses of the rivers and also creates a natural division between Ladakh and India. Leaving apart a few parts such as the Nubra valley and the Indus valley the general aspect of Ladakh is nothing but extreme barrenness. It may aptly be described as a high altitude desert landscape. From the air it gives the clear impression of vast yellow plains broken in places with barren mountains capped with snow.

Thus *Pangkong* and *Tshomo Riri* lakes are literally like oases in this vast desert of rock and sand. However while travelling along the various tracks and roads that have been developed ever since India gained its Independence from the

British in 1947, one comes across many fertile tracts running alongside the rivers. These tracts are covered with luxuriant crops and many grand monasteries. The yellow plains along the river Indus are seas covered with flocks of Pasmia goats.

The entire landscape of Ladakh presents the feeling of being part of another world. The elevation and isolation amidst snow covered mountains gives this area the most singular climate in the world. There is burning heat during the daytime and a most piercing cold during the night which chills even the marrow. And everything, including vegetation, animals, and men is parched by the extreme dryness of the atmosphere. However the rarified atmosphere and very sharp rays of the sun are sufficient to ripen the barley, *thuramba* and other crops during the short summer, upto an altitude of 15,000 feet above sea level. The temperature regularly falls below freezing point each night. Even in this climate we find that a variety of animal life, such as yaks, donkeys, wild horses, and a variety of goats flourish.

Thus the plains between 16,000 and 17,000 feet above sea level are especially full of certain animal life. The *Dapsang* plain abounds with wild horses and hares. Very large flocks of domestic goats, wild mountain goats, and hares of the Alpine variety are found on the slopes of the mountains upto a height of even 19,000 feet. While no rain falls, usually there is a little snow.

Meat and fruits are dried and cured by mere

exposure to this cold and dry atmosphere. Dried apricots are in fact one of the fruits which Ladakh really has in plenty.

LOCATION OF LADAKH

Ladakh is the most Westerly part of India. Occupied by the Ladakhis (snowmen), it is basically an area where the Buddha and his teachings are held in great reverence. They have been following his precepts and teachings now for thousands of years. No firm date could be ascertained as to when this faith had entered into Ladakh in the course of discussions the author had with the learned lamas of this great land.

The *Karakoram* mountains on the north divide Ladakh from the Tibetan district of *Kotan*. On the east and south-east are the Tibetan districts *Rudok* and *Chumurti*. To the south are the districts of *Lahul* and *Spiti* of Himachal Pradesh. To the west lies Kashmir, and also Baltistan. Kashmir is separated from Ladakh by the natural barrier formed by the western Himalayas. Baltistan which was formerly a part of Jammu and Kashmir, and part of which is illegally occupied by Pakistan at the moment, is separated by an imaginary line drawn from the mouth of the river *Dras* right up to the sources of river *Nubra*.

Thus Ladakh extends from north-west to south-east, from the head of the river *Dras* (long. $75^{\circ}30'$) to *Chibra* on the Indus (long. $79^{\circ}10'$), a distance of two hundred and forty miles. Its breadth is two

hundred and ninety miles, measured from the Karakoram pass in the north (lat. $35^{\circ}10'$) to the *Rotang* pass in Lahul (Lat. $32^{\circ}25'$). Its mean length comes to two hundred miles and its mean breadth is a hundred and fifty miles. The entire area covered is nearly thirty thousand square miles.

The natural division of Ladakh are :

1. Nubra valley and the *Shayok* area;
2. Ladakhi areas on the river Indus;
3. The *Zanskar* area on the river *Zanskar*;
4. The *Rukchu* area, around the forementioned lakes;
5. *Purik* area *Suru* and *Dras*, on the various tributaries of the great river *Dras*.

Politically Ladakh was a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was only from October, 1947 that it became part of the Indian Union.

In olden days Ladakh was called by various names. Some of these names included *Latags-Mar-Yul* which means the low country with red land, and *Kha-Chan-Pa*, which means snow land. It has also been referred to rather poetically as 'the begging bowl of Buddha'.

Right upto the year 1833 A.D., the Raja of Ladakh paid a small monetary tribute to Lhasa. This tribute terminated when General Zorawar Singh conquered all of Ladakh for Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh remained under the Dogra Maharajas upto October, 1947.

Ladakhis previously used to call themselves *Bot-pa* and spoke a language which was very similar to that spoken by the Tibetans. They are Buddhists and are under the hierarchical spiritual rule of the lamas. Some of the old lamas that I questioned in this connection were of the view that the name 'Tibet' was entirely unknown to the people of the region and to the Indians as well. The country according to them was known as Bhutan, and the people were called Botias. The word Bot or Bhutan is not older than the tenth or twelfth century. This was about the time when Indians who had now become Buddhists were expelled for their heresy from the Indian plains and were forced to settle in the hill regions of north India.

It was thus natural that the area came to be known as Baudha-sthan, or Baudha-than, and from thence to Bod-Tan, or Bot.

Historically, Tibet is known to be a Mogul word. Klaproth mentions it in his writings, where he spells it as 'Tubet'. In A.D. 915 Abu Zaid Al Hasan wrote it as Tibet. This form of spelling was also followed by Ibn Haukal in 1030 A.D., and Abu Rihan. In 1154 A.D. Edrisi used the same spellings for the word Tibet. All this happened long before the great conquests of Changez Khan in the 13th century. Thus it is exceedingly unlikely that any Mogul names could have been used.

According to Mir Izzet Ullah, Tibet is a 'Turki', meaning that it looks like shawl wool. However this may also refer to the fact that Kashmiri shawls

used to come from this area, thereby giving this area the name of 'shawl wool' itself.

Ladakh consists of Nubra, the western part or Wessex, and Lho-yul, the southern part or Suffolk. To the south-east of Ladakh, but to the north of Ngara is Chang Thang, the extensive northern plains. Mar-yul, that is a lower elevation, and is a low land relative to surrounding areas and is often identified as being Ladakh itself.

Nubra is actually the north western part of Ladakh. It includes all the part drained by the rivers Nubra and Shayok. It is the largest area in Ladakh. It is hundred and twenty eight miles long and seventy two miles broad.

The total area it has is nine thousand and two hundred square miles. To its north are the marvellous Karakoram mountain ranges, and to the south is the equally wonderful Kailas range which divides the river Indus from river Shayok. It extends from the frontier of Baltistan, in the East (long. 77°) to the Pangkong Lake on the borders of Rudok. The mean elevation of the area which is inhabited is about twelve thousand eight hundred feet.

Important places in this area are *Thoise, Partapur, Hunder, Diskiot, Sosa, Panamik, Sarsoma, Thalm-butilla, Tutialik, Sasar La, Sultan Chusku, Daulat Beg Oldi*, and the Karakoram Pass.

However Ladakh is the central and most populous area, and the capital city is *Leh*. In olden times it was called *Mang-Yul*, which means 'home of many people'. The central portion of

this stretches along the river Indus in a north westerly direction from *Rukchu* to the frontier of Baltistan and *Bagdandu* at the banks of the river Shayok. It is hundred and twenty miles long with an average breadth of thirty three miles. The total area is about four thousand square miles and the mean elevation is about eleven thousand five hundred feet.

Important places in this part are *Leh*, *Kuyari*, *Dungti*, *Koyul*, *Kargil*, *Dras*. There is also the famous *Zozila* where in 1948 another famous Indian General called Thimmy assaulted the Pakistani posts with his tanks and created a record in tank warfare. He entered into Ladakh through *Zozila*.

The Zanskar part of Ladakh includes the parts lying along the two great tributaries of the river Zanskar, which flows from south-east to north-west.

Zanskar is situated south of main Ladakh, is west of *Rukchu*, and north of *Lahul* in Himachal. The southern boundary is marked by the great Himalayas. The western boundary is marked by *Singge La*, and the northern boundary is marked by the Trans-Himalayan chain. It is seventy two miles long and fifty two miles broad. It has a total area of three thousand square miles and the mean elevation is about thirteen thousand feet above sea level. Zanskar also means 'Zang-skar' which is white copper.

Rukchu is the very highest and loftiest inhabited area of Ladakh, and in fact the entire world. The mean height of the plains in that area is well

over fifteen thousand six hundred feet. The plain is ninety miles long and sixty miles broad.

Purik-Suru and *Dras* are the three important areas west of Zanskar situated on the main highway between *Baltal* (Kashmir) and *Leh*. *Dras* is the coldest place in the world also known by the name *Hem-Babs* meaning snow fed. *Dras* lies in the depression of the Himalayas and at the head of river *Dras*.

The humid vapours of Kashmir regularly pass towards the north of these high mountains, where they become condensed due to the cold and then precipitate rain or snow depending on the season of the year, and thereby further creating a drop in the already cold temperature.

These areas extend to the boundaries of Baltistan, upto Zanskar, a distance of eighty four miles. The breadth of the valley from *Phot-la* to *Suru* is fifty miles. The total area is about four thousand two hundred square miles. The mean height of the inhabited areas is well over eleven thousand feet.

The area north of Ladakh is called *Yarkand*, and the people living there are the *Kutans*. The language spoken in this area is 'Turki'. On the western side is Baltistan, which includes *Gilgit* and *Hunza* (occupied by Pakistan since October, 1947).

Towards the south is Himachal Pradesh, and the Districts of *Chamba* and *Kullu*. To the east and south-east are *Rudok* and *Chang Thang*.

In the olden days trade routes from *Yarkand-Karakoram Pass*, *Daulat Beg Oldi*, *Sasar La*,

Sasoma, Panamik, Khandung La, Leh were very frequently used by travellers and merchants.

Gilgit is located on the right bank of river Indus, along the lower course of the *Gilgit* river. *Gilgit* is hundred miles long from north to south and about twenty six miles broad. The total area of *Gilgit* is about two thousand five hundred square miles. Right upto nineteen forty seven a Governor from Jammu and Kashmir used to govern this area on behalf of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

Baltistan was also under the Governor of Ladakh who was appointed by the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, upto nineteen forty seven.

To the east of Ladakh are *Rodok, Chang-Thang* and *Ngari*. In area *Rudok* (now under illegal occupation by the Chinese) is the great *Pang Kong* lake. It is eighty miles long and about sixty miles broad. The whole of *Rudok* is about four thousand and eight hundred square miles, and is at an elevation of fourteen thousand five hundred feet above sea level. In the winter this lake gets completely frozen upto a depth of ten feet. The author has driven both a Nissan Jhonga and a one ton vehicle right over this frozen lake in December, 1965 while on tour in this area.

THE MOUNTAINS OF LADAKH

The magnificent Himalayas bound our country to the north, and comprises a chain of gigantic peaks which run from the bend of river Brahmaputra (the only male name for a river in the world)

to the holy and crystal clear Mansarovar lake in Tibet.

The Himalayas then extend to the west from the sources of river Sutlej, then to the beautiful peaks of *Dayamur*, and thence to the sources of Gilgit and *Kunar* rivers. The western half of the Himalayan chain is less lofty than the eastern part yet they are second to none.

Most of these peaks have been climbed by Indian and other mountaineers who have been attracted to them all of whom felt them to be a challenge to their stamina and skill. The Indian mountaineers have often attempted and climbed many of these peaks under the hardy and skilful leadership of the dynamic Colonel Narendra Kumar of the Indian army. This national hero has created numerous world records in mountaineering by climbing without his toes which he lost due to frost bite in one of his expeditions in the early sixties.

One of his most celebrated climbs apart from the successful expedition to the peak of Mount Everest, has been the first successful attempt on Mount Kanchenjunga, which gave him and the nation a great prestige.

A careful glance at the map of India shows that the *Bara Lacha* range is actually a continuation of the Himalayas themselves.

The Eastern Himalayas divide the waters of the river Brahmaputra from those of the Ganga, Jamuna and their tributaries. *Bara-Lacha* itself forms the water-shed between the river Indus and the five

great rivers that course through Punjab (Jhelam, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej).

There is a marked difference between the eastern and western Himalayan ranges. The eastern ranges generally run at right angles to their axis but the western chain mountains are mostly disposed in subordinate parallel ranges.

Beyond the Himalayas there are three distinct parallel ranges of mountains. These include the trans-Himalayas, the *Chusul*, and the Karakoram on the west.

Karakoram in Turkish means Black mountains, perhaps due to their dark purple hue in some seasons. These mountains form the natural boundary of Ladakh and Tibet. The river Shayok has its source in the glacier of Karakoram. It is believed by the lamas of Nubra valley that the pilgrim *Fa Hian* crossed the Karakoram pass (height 18,600 feet above sea level) in 399 A.D. Locals have named this mountain as the Onion mountain because wild *leeks* (a onion like plant) grow on these ranges and scent the air in all directions.

The Ladakh scouts in fact used to ascribe their frequent headaches and the difficulty they felt in breathing in this area to this very strong and unpleasant smell which pervades the atmosphere. The medicos posted under command of the author in that area in the sixties however broke this myth by going to the Karakoram pass with a large party and carrying out some tests. They confirmed the widely held view that headaches occurred in that area not due to the smell of the wild *leeks* but due

to the rarified atmosphere at that great height. However it is hard to deny that the strong smell of the vegetable growing wild would no doubt add to this 'headache effect'.

It is really quite surprising that at that great height of the Karakoram pass, the snow does not remain on the mountains for a greater part of the year. When I visited this pass in October 1966, with one of the subunits under my command I found hardly any snow there. Perhaps this may be due to the fact that after 12 a.m. right upto 4 p.m. very strong winds rage here reaching a speed of a hundred kilometres per hour. The general direction of these snow blowing winds is north-west to south-east. Due to these most inhospitable snow blizzards a number of caravans coming from *Yarkand* to *Leh* were entirely destroyed, both men and animals perishing in them. Two such caravans are still talked about by the name of Daulat Beg and Sultan Chusku.

Daulat Beg and his large caravan was entirely destroyed about eighteen miles from the Karakoram pass on the Indian side. When I visited this area I found to my horror that there was a profusion of human skeletons and skulls lying by the pathside of the trail. This spectacle is a grim reminder to any visitor or traveller of the perilous nature of this area even in our times. Nobody should try to negotiate this pass during the time that a snow blizzard is cooking up. He may not only lose his own life but would certainly endanger that of all those who are under his care. In fact

during my stay a group of strong and hardy Ladakhis who failed to take heed of this advice and went to the pass during the danger time (12 a.m. to 4 p.m.) had to pay dearly when they all lost their lives. By a miracle one of their horses survived but fell prey to the cold a few days after it had limped back to one of their houses.

Daulat Beg, who had first committed this folly was finally buried on the spot where he died and this place is now remembered by his own name (Oldi means 'kabar' or tomb).

Sultan Chusku and his caravan met the same fate a few years later. The Sultan was a strong headed adventurer and had been taking great loads of merchandise with him. Against the advice of the locals he insisted in travelling in the danger time. He felt that his strong horses and his experience could save him. But he had reckoned only with his knowledge of the ordinary winds. The howling snow blizzard had enveloped the entire caravan before most of the men could dismount and the great Chusku was among the first to be thrown off his steed. His warm outer clothes were literally torn off his body and were later found about fifty miles away. His tomb too still stands testimony to his foolhardiness in ignoring local advice and in trying to defy the natural forces he lost his life and his merchandise. The tomb is about sixty miles inside the Indian territory, near the bank of river Shayok. A small tomb stone marks the place where this unfortunate Sultan was finally laid to rest. The locals of the area believe

that his ghost still haunts the Karakoram pass to this day and tries to push travellers off into the vast precipices that abound along the dangerous path.

Western Himalayan Range

The great Himalayan ranges form a natural boundary between India and Tibet. The general direction of the western Himalayas is the same as that of the other chains. The entire length of this mountain range from the peak of Monomangli to the source of rivers Gilgit and Kunar is well over six hundred and fifty miles in length.

IMPORTANT RIVERS

From the great mountains around the Mansarovar lake four great rivers of India spring out. These rivers are the Indus, the Sutlej, the Gogra and the Brahmaputra. The Hindus of India firmly believe that the classical Ganga flows from a cow's mouth. They also believe that the Indus flows from a lion's mouth. Similarly the belief runs among them that the Sutlej flows out of an elephant's mouth. In the same way they are of the view that the Gogra flows out of a peacock's beak and that the Brahmaputra gushes out of the mouth of a holy horse. These beliefs, the lamas told me arise from the fact that the beguiling scenery around the sources of these rivers gives rise to hallucinations and visions when they are meditated upon. At such a time, they said, one if

fortunate would actually be able to see these rivers gushing out of the various animals mouths that they are believed to come from. The Lamas of the area however feel that all these rivers spring out of the mouth of a yak, except for Brahmaputra which they say arises from the depths of a python. The most striking feature of the Indus and its great tributaries is the parallel nature of their courses which follow the directions of the principal mountain ranges.

The common name for any river in Ladakh is *Chhu* which means water, but generally refers to a river. Thus the name of Indus is *Singge-chhu*, which means the lion river, because of its mighty current and the roaring sound that its water makes when it is in spate.

The river system of Ladakh consists of the three great mountain feeders, the Indus, Shayok, and river Zanskar. There are many other small tributaries of these rivers. Thus the Sharyok has the tributaries of Nubra, Chang, Chenmahs, the Chip-Chep, and the Galwan. None of these tributaries is very long or powerful, less so in May and June when they are relatively weak. They pick up strength during the monsoons.

Indus

The authentic source of the great river Indus lies to the North-West of Mansarovar and *Rawan Hard* at a height of five thousand six hundred and thirty metres. The river begins from the south-western slopes of mountain Kailash. Even here the

river is seventy metres broad and one metre deep at its lowest in June and early July.

Above *Ranak* the river is fordable at most places and allows a traveller to go across in knee deep water. However there are some parts even here where the water is too deep to negotiate apart from being extremely cold. From *Ranak* to *Ladakh*, a distance of about two hundred kilometres, the river can only be crossed by stretching out over its width country-made wooden bridges. From *Leh* to the junction of the river *Dras*, which is also about two hundred kilometres, is also a territory of fast currents, which are very difficult to cross. From this point to the junction of the river *Shyok*, is a distance of about one hundred and twenty kilometres. The *Indus* flows through this area with a north, north-west direction and is a fast river. From the junction of the *Shyok* river to *Skando* is about forty eight kilometres. The *Shyok* river makes a majestic northward sweep and then returns to the south and resumes its course to the north, north-west. About forty kilometres south of this point at *Nyimo*, *Zanskar* empties its water into *Indus*. *Zanskar* river is dark, turbulent, and torrential, its water washing down even big boulders in many places. It is perhaps of even greater might than the *Indus* till it joins the *Indus* river at *Moral*.

At this point we find that the *Waka*, *Suru*, and *Dras* rivers also join the river *Indus*. Just above *Kris*, is the point at which river *Shyok* joins the *Indus* (at 2,275 metres above sea level).

As we have noted above from its source right

upto Ranak itself, the Indus is already a broad and formidable stream. Its sluggish water flows in these areas quickly through the wide grassy plain lands, and virtually rushes down where the land slopes appreciably downwards. Even in these parts the Indus is seventy six metres broad on the average. From Ranak to the junction of the Zanskar river it is virtually a brawling rapid flowing stream about fifty metres broad. From Ranak to river Zanskar's junction the stream rushes rapidly, however from that point onto its confluence with the Shyok river it is an indescribably furious torrent, raging from side to side of the narrow ravine that it flows through. Looking at the river thus swinging along its path one feels truly as if some great supernatural forces are trapped inside it and wish to free themselves. Little wonder then that the simple minded Ladakhi feels a great veneration for this river and all rivers. Any man or animal that was accidentally to fall into this river at this part would be drowned in less than a minute. Worse still its body would not be likely to be found as there are many underwater niches and whirlpools. At the Kallach bridge, the river is only about fifteen metres wide below and eighteen metres above it. In the months of December to January and in the early part of February the lower parts of the Indus get frequently frozen. It was here that General Zorawar Singh and his troops crossed the Indus in 1841 A.D. They could do so because large parts of the river were frozen and allowed them to cross over, and attack their enemy.

River Shyok

The principal mountain tributary of Indus is the Shyok which rises from the *Remo* glacier which is six thousand nine hundred and eighty three metres above sea level in height and lies south-west of the Karakoram mountains.

From its source right up to the Shyok Dam and to the neighbourhood of *Saser*, it makes a mighty sweep of a hundred and sixty kilometres down to the south keeping the great Karakoram range to the west. It then takes a turn to the north-west. A short distance above this great north-west bend river Chang Chhem Mo, joins Shyok. Below this bend river Long Kon Ma empties its water into Shyok. The township of Shyok is located on the west bank of the river. In fact the river takes its name from this town itself.

River Shyok goes from there to *Deshket* and *Thoise* and thence to *Yaglung*. The course it traverses is west, north-east and the total distance is approximately about a hundred and sixty kilometres.

At *Deshket*, the river Nubra, a stream of considerable proportions, has already been traversing a hundred and sixty kilometres since coming out of the *Siachen* glacier, one of the Karakoram family of glaciers. At *Deshket* it joins Shyok river and from that point it flows in the direction of the north-west.

At *Kris*, which is two hundred and thirty kilometres away from *Deshket*, Shyok joins river Indus. From its source in the distant Karakoram to *Kris*

the river Shyok traverse a full five hundred and forty kilometres and has a total drop of three thousand one hundred and eighty five metres.

In character river Shyok is just the opposite of its big sister, the Indus. In the upper course it rushes fast and is very turbulent while flowing down a narrow glen. However its middle course is broad and rapid. At Deshket, the author while in Command of Northern Ladakh (1965-1967) used to cross river Shyok in his Nissan Jhonga in the months November to April. However this was very difficult if not impossible in the months of August and September when the river gains volume due to the monsoons and becomes very fast and extremely deep in many parts. I remember one incident which will shed light on this matter.

I had been travelling in my Nissan Jhonga to Deshket to sort out some official matters. This involved my going across the river Shyok. I had done this many times during the months of November, right upto April. This time however the month was August and the work urgent. We put the Jhonga into the river at the regular crossing point, but had hardly got a few yards when the front part of the vehicle was slowly pushed aside, and almost made it capsize into the raging waters.

Thinking that it must have been due to some slippery boulders we tried again. However this time we took it inside right upto the rear wheels. We were swept nearly five yards when miraculously we were pushed to the bank again. I advise

nobody to repeat this experiment as it could lead to disaster, which we narrowly escaped.

The Zanskar River

The main Zanskar is the combination of SUM GAL and the Zanskar itself. The head waters of the Zanskar are the YUNAM, the SARCHU, and the CHERPA, all of which rise to the north of the Himalaya mountains, near the BARA LACHA pass. The source of the CHERPA which is itself the most remote water head of the Zanskar is also situated in the Himalayas, due east of mountain Topo Kama, which rises to a height of 6,094 metres above sea level. The stream which unites this to the Zanskar river is called the TASARAP LINGTI. This stream follows the north-westerly direction up PADAM, which is an important place in the Zanskar area. At this place a small stream from the west joins the LINGTI. Opposite ZIMO, the river ZANSKAR joins its big sister the Indus. Till that point it has flowed for three hundred and forty kilometres independently. It is thus an important tributary of the Zanskar river.

River Shyok

During my tenure as Commander Northern Ladakh I visited the Karakoram pass in the month of November 1966. My party left THOISE in Partapur on the route which traverses through HUNDER and DESKET. We crossed the SHYOK river at SHYOK village which touches its banks and then took the dry bed of the river on its

eastern bank. Our route then took us north, north-east right upto the famous SULTAN CHUSKU. We found that the Karakoram pass was just ninety five kilometres further up from this place. We went from Sultan Chusku to MURGO, and thence over to DESPANG plains to DAULAT BEG OLDI. From here we went to the Karakoram pass, which is five thousand, five hundred and seventy five metres above sea level. The above is the winter route to the pass and even with good provisions is a route that is not easy to traverse. For one there is a shortage of oxygen in the atmosphere as one goes higher making one feel dizzy and weak. For another all the provisions that one takes have to be strictly rationed. Not only do the men suffer from such exposure to the elements, even animals carrying travellers and their pack animals are not immune to the biting cold and the fierce wind and sun.

I found that the pass was free of snow despite its height due to the high velocity winds that raged through it, and removed any snow that could have fallen there. Even the early stages of this journey to the pass cause many difficulties. Thus on the way the river Shyok has been blocked and dammed. Without this dam the crossing of the Shyok would not have been easy at all. Even with this dam called Shyok Dam, things are not easy. The dam was formed when a large part of the KUMDAN Group of glaciers fell and slid into the eastern side of the glaciers and thus damming the way to the Shyok itself and partly falling into the river itself. This

has caused the way to Shyok from Partapur to be blocked by a large mound of loose snow and gravel. The place becomes very dangerous in May, June, July, August and September when the snow begins to melt and sends landslides of snow hurtling down towards the travellers path. To make matters worse the river is in spate during these months. Thus to cross over the Shyok is a risky matter in these months. Not only this if one waits till the afternoon to do so the sun often causes large boulders lodged in the snow to hurtle down right across the path of the caravan. I lost no less than three pack animals as a snow slide went dashing right past me and pushed three pack animal straight off the path and buried them irretrievably under it.

This dangerous snow dam is twenty seven kilometres from the junction of the Shyok and the CHIP CHEP river which is north of it. It is the same distance from SASER BRANGSA which is south-east of the described dam.

I went to the Karakoram pass in the summer months as well. The route I then took was through THOISE, HUNDER, DESKET, a route which crossed over at the junction of the Shyok and river Nubra. This time I went in caravan of one Jhonga and three—three ton vehicles. We motored to Desket on the west right up to TIRIT on the east bank of the Shyok. From then we went on to Panamik and SASOMA. Our route then was on foot which climbed over THALAMBUTILA to UMLUNG and TUT YAILAK, over the SASAR LA pass to

SASAR BRANGSA and the SHYOK dam and from there to Daulat Beg Oldi and the Karakoram pass.

This summer route took fourteen days coming and going, while the winter route takes 36 days coming and going in vehicles up to TIRIT and then on pack animals when they have to be used in certain places and also towards the last part of the journey into the Karakoram pass. The trade route through Yarkand has been closed for many years now and the caravans have stopped going through it for many decades now.

IMPORTANT LAKES AND SPRINGS IN LADAKH

The word 'TSHO' in Ladakhi means a pond or a lake. The Mansarovar lake which is 24 kilometres long and 24 kilometres broad is also called MAPHAN TSHO. So also a small pond where wild horse drink water, which has formed out of melting snow is called KYANG TSHO. The sea itself is referred to as the 'vast lake' or GYA TSHO. Except for one all the lakes in Ladakh are land locked and all of them are salt lakes.

Pangkong Lake

Pangkong lake is very long and very narrow. It extends from east to west. The famous CHUSHEL mountain is situated to the south of the heel of this lake and rises to a height of 4,337 metres above sea level. The eastern extremity of this lake extends deep into Tibet. This lake

is well over a hundred and forty kilometres long. The average breadth of this lake is about six kilometres. Thus this lake has a total area almost as much as that of the holy lake Mansarovar. PANG KONG in Ladakhi means 'Extensive Concavity' or an extensive pit. The author drove his Jhonga over this lake in the month of December, 1966, as this lake gets frozen upto a depth of about two and a half metres. The lake itself is about 4,345 metres above sea level.

On the north-western extremity of this lake the author noticed a dry stream which passed through a gorge in the limestone cliffs. This passes through Mugli and joins another tributary at TANGTSE. This tributary in turn joins the Shyok via DARBUK, just five kilometres south of the village Shyok. The extent of water that this source is capable of draining from the lake into the river Shyok cannot be said by me as when I visited this area in October and December, 1966, the entire area was frozen. However this steady stream emanating from the lake obviously drains it of water amounting to several thousand gallons each day.

Spangur Lake

This lake is situated about eight or nine kilometres south of the heel of the Pangkong lake. This lake is about twenty five kilometres long and about four kilometres broad. The water of this lake has dissolved so many minerals that it is extremely bitter to taste.

Springs

Many hot water springs exist all over Ladakh. The most famous of these are the hot spring of PANAMIK in the Nubra valley, the PUGA and the CHUSUL hot springs. I had a bath in the Panamik and Chusul springs and I found the water from them to be clear and hot. It is believed in Ladakh that a bath in these hot water springs cures rheumatism and drinking the water from them cures all diseases of the skin. The water from these springs is thus believed to have medical qualities and this will readily be believed because the water has dissolved many rare minerals before coming up to the surface of the earth. Miraculous cures have been associated with these springs and many people have been cured of chronic diseases by just bathing in these waters and drinking them. Thus many Ladakhis go to these springs when they are ailing and many of them become well again. At Panamik the locals have made a bathhouse which uses the hot water for its baths. My personal experience in this bathhouse was that if a person stays in the hot water for more than half an hour the strange mix of minerals and the steam from the water gives him a headache. However for upto thirty minutes in that hot spring water, the body is very safe and relaxes a great deal.

On the other hand the hot spring of Chusul is tasteless and its steam has no odour. But this spring too has water with medicinal value. In this spring the beauty is that the water is not very hot but just hot enough to give the body good relaxation.

In the winter I found a bath in this spring water to be soul bracing. In fact my leg which had been sprained while playing polo on my pony was much relieved and the pain and swelling disappeared a few hours after my bath in the spring.

IMPORTANT ROADS AND PASSES

In ancient times the main routes between Shrinagar and Yarkand through Leh over the Karakoram pass were the most important land routes. Those second in importance were those going to Lhasa through GARO. The third route was through RUKCHU, LAHUL, KULLU and Pathankot.

Certain other routes also deserve a mention because these were used by various conquerors of Ladakh. The Sultans under Ali Sher (1600 A.D.) invaded Ladakh from the west through the Indus valley. Around 1686 A.D. the Sokpos invaded Ladakh from the east along the route from RUDOK. Again, General Zorawar Singh conquered Ladakh from the south route which goes through KASHTWAR-SURU.

There is yet another very interesting route which connects east and west Ladakh. This route goes from DEMCHOK, FUKCHE, and DUNGTI over TSAKALA to CHUSUL and then to TOKUNG which is near the heel of the Pangkong lake and situated near its southern bank. From here the route goes on to LUKUNG and TANGTSE to DARBUK and over the CHANG LA pass

to Leh. This pass is about 5,570 metres above sea level.

There is yet another, comparatively difficult route which goes from the DARBUK passes to Shyok, and joins the winter route of the Karakoram pass.

The Western Road

This main route from Shrinagar traverse nearly the entire length from west to east across Ladakh. From the ZOJILA pass at the head of the river DRAS to Leh (the district town of Ladakh nowadays), the National Highway, which is one of the most picturesque roads (at such a majestic height is it that it affords an unparalleled view and experience for the tourists) passes through village Dras. Dras village is one of the coldest villages in the world and the temperature in it goes down to minus 80 degrees Celcius (in this area, as well). One of the reasons why it is so cold is that the sun's rays never reach this area at all. The road then goes to Kargil (2,676 metres above sea level) and thence to FATULA (4,094 metres above sea level), after which it reaches NIMO on the south bank of river Indus. It then goes on to Leh.

I travelled on this route in July, 1966. I can say with confidence that it is one of the most excellent roads which our engineers have built and lies open for ten months a year. General Zorawar, after conquering Ladakh in 1834 A.D. constructed this road, as well as all the bridges over the various rivers along the route. From Leh this road connects

KIARI and then goes on to CHUMATANG. From there it joins the route of DEMCHOK, DARBUK, and DUNGTI. The connecting routes from Leh to NUBRA valley are :

- (i) Leh via DIGERLA pass in the winter. From here the route continues to DISKET, DIGER LA and from thence to the crossings of SHYOK to PANAMIK.
- (ii) In the summer months the other routes are used and this goes over KHRDUNG LA from Leh and then connects with DISKET and PANAMIK and carries on right upto the Karakoram pass.

CLIMATE OF LADAKH

Winds

The constancy of the prevailing winds in different quarters of Ladakh is one of the most interesting phenomenas of nature. In the trans-Himalayan district of Ladakh the dry winds are nearly southerly and westerly both in summer and winter. However in contrast to this on the peaks which reach a height of 4,850 and 6,000 metres above sea level the winds are north-easterly or south westerly. The valleys also greatly influence the direction of these winds. During the warmer part of the day the early morning breeze soon transforms into a mighty wind or whirlwind, through the changes produced by the varying diffusion of solar heat through the atmosphere.

I noticed in my two and a half years stay in northern Ladakh that the gentle breeze at Karakoram pass in the morning hours becomes a high wind, or mighty hurricane during the midday.

At midday, that is after 1200 hrs, the lower strata of the atmosphere gets heated rapidly and the air which is rarified starts streaming towards the north as a light southerly breeze. But it turns into high wind as the day advances. In the afternoons the high winds blow steadily but occasionally these winds become violent and blow with great force and speed. Again as the sun begins to set and becomes fainter these mighty winds are transmuted into a gentle breeze.

My personal observations at the Karakoram pass were that between 1230 hrs to 1600 hrs in the summer the winds that went through the pass blew at a speed of between 90 and 110 kilometres per hour.

To be on the pass or even at Daulat Beg Oldi during this time interval was not only risky but extremely dangerous. As is well known all over Ladakh the great caravan of Daulat Beg met its ruin in this area because it attempted to negotiate this dangerous area when the winds blew like a gale. The caravan perished, some say that the great Karakoram pass took a sacrifice. To this day the skeletons of animals and humans that perished on that fateful day several centuries ago lie scattered all over the area. They have ironically not only become a perpetual reminder of the dangerous hours in that area but also a way by which a

traveller can find his way to the Karakoram pass without any difficulty from Daulat Beg Oldi.

My personal observation was that at regular intervals between 1200 hrs and 1600 hrs strong whirlwinds and most violent gusts of winds sweep through Ladakh. This takes place due to the meeting of string currents blowing in two different directions, in two different adjoining valleys. However according to the locals the JIGBU, a huge giant man, blows out his breath which he keeps in his lungs for the other hours of the day and night. This JIGBU is something of a Ladakhi 'yeti' and is often given as the reason for sudden and violent changes in the weather in Ladakh, especially Nubra.

During my stay in Ladakh, I visited a place called YAGLONG in June, 1966. This place is located on the southern bank of river Shyok. At about 3 p.m. one day a devastating tornado blew through the whole area. A great many huts of the locals and a whole mule caravan carrying expensive loads to Baltistan was trapped in this tornado. To my amazement the mules along with their loads were literally lifted from the ground by the tornado and thrown away out of sight. Later I checked and found that they had been hurled a kilometre away and lay broken and dead from their strange aerial journey. The locals once again referred to the JIGBU and other evil spirits as being the cause of this most unusual happening. However further research indicated to me that such tornadoes are not all that rare as I had first thought they were. In fact in YAGLONG there have been tornadoes

of such force that men have flown along with their huts for several hundred yards. I was told this by a local who happened to have been the survivor of one such incredible escapade.

Rain and Snow

It is surprising to note that the rain and snow in Ladakh is very little. In NUBRA, ZANSKAR, and Ladakh it drizzles for an hour or two at the most three to four times in a whole year. Snow falls more often but the quantity is not much never being more than six to eight inches deep. Even in the summer months light snow falls at night in the upper reaches of the mountains.

In September, 1966 while returning from the Karakoram pass my party was camping for the night at a place called TUTIYALIK on the southern side of SASAR LA. We were caught in the midst of a horrible blizzard which lasted almost twenty four hours. It was amazing to note however that the total snow which fell was not more than eight inches deep. This also disappeared the next day when the sun came out and melted it.

DRAS, however, which is one of the coldest places in the world has a very heavy snowfall. If the highway is not cleared of snow regularly at ZOJI LA, during the month of November the pass gets blocked by several feet of snow which make it very dangerous. During one such time a three tonner skidded and fell into the deep ravine beside the road, and could not be recovered.

Temperature

The climate of Ladakh has extremes of heat and cold and the atmosphere is extremely dry. In fact if one did not know one's geography one would feel that there was no air in the region. Thus the extremes of burning heat during the day and freezing cold during the nights make the temperatures of Ladakh almost unbearable to those who have not been born and bred there. Even to the native inhabitants these extremes of climate are not easy to put up with. However this phenomenon is not associated with Ladakh alone but is a fact found to be true in all areas as the height from the sea level increases. Such places have a very rarified atmosphere and extremes of heat and cold. In Ladakh itself, and particularly in the higher reaches, the dry and highly evaporative day breeze exhausts the atmosphere of the little moisture that it has. This causes this clear dry air to become extremely cold by the great terrestrial radiation under a clear sky. When I was located in a place called CHUNG-TASH, about 5,000 metres above sea level (in the Karakoram region), during the summer of 1966, the temperature used to drop well below the freezing point.

However during the day, on the other hand, the highly rarified atmosphere allowed the transmission of the sun's rays, that in the open sun it was literally burning hot and an exposure of the unprotected skin to the direct rays of the sun would singe it and cause it to peel off most painfully.

It is a strange and incredible fact that the noon

temperature of the bright sun on a clear day in Ladakh, is the same as it is in the plains of India, like in Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, or Kanpur. My personal records of the terrestrial radiation in Nubra valley and in other parts of Ladakh, like Leh, HANLE, Daugti, were taken during the day on a bright summer day for the summer. A bright winter day was chosen in the winter as well for such temperature readings. The night temperatures were taken at midnight on nights when the skies were clearly visible. In fact compared with many other parts of India such as Jhansi, Khajuraho, and several other parts the day temperatures of Ladakh are much higher than those found in these plains towns.

It must be added however that in the shade these temperatures are appreciably lower due to the cold breezes which act as a natural and very efficient air cooler. Thus the summer in Ladakh is very pleasant provided that one spends part of the day relaxing in the shade of the verandah, office, or a tree. This is in fact the only way not to suffer from over-exertion and fatigue, given by the rarified atmosphere, which often leaves one gasping for breath.

CLIMATIC ASPECTS OF LADAKH

My conversation with the aged Lamas, and the ABALE (old folks) of SAMUR in Nubra I was given to understand that in ancient times the climate of Ladakh was milder and bordered less on

the extremes. It was not so dry as it is these days. I also noticed the vast amounts of fossils of fresh water creatures, especially fish, during my various visits to Pangkong lake and the Spangur lake. Both of these are now salt water lakes. Folklore has it that once these lakes had fresh water in them but due to a curse on their land they turned into salt lakes and are not good for drinking purposes. The dryness of the climate is also blamed on this curse when a venerable Lama said bad words for Chenrezi, a great saint while bathing in one of these lakes. The lake immediately turned milky in rage and the Lama on tasting the water found to his horror and dismay that it had turned salty. He prayed for forgiveness and was promised that at some indefinite future the water of these lakes would once again turn into fresh water.

The aged people of Nubra told me that they had learned from their ancestors that the bed of the river Indus was once studded with a series of great lakes. It was from this that much moisture was released into the atmosphere, and this made the climate much milder than it is today. It was my personal fortune to set eyes on one such lake during my tenure as Commander of that area in 1966. This lake was situated between LOMA and NYOMA in the eastern part of Ladakh. From the accounts of the learned Lamas and locals it is possible to say that in olden days lakes must have covered a vast area of Ladakh. Thus the large lake Pangkong must have been about 160 kilometres long and about fifty kilometres wide. This lake and

other lakes must have spanned Ladakh with areas of water that raised the moisture level (humidity) of this entire area. Thus as one goes across the countryside one comes across GUMPHA MATTI, which comprises beds of fine clay, which stick to the rocks in horizontal strata which I feel must have been deposited by comparatively still water. So fine is this clay that I used it in the construction of many buildings in Nubra during my command there. The clay is as good as cement so long as water does not fall directly onto it which is the case in Ladakh with its low rainfall.

During my intensive reconnaissances of the area I came across the fossil of fresh water shells that were embedded in the sandy clay deposits around these lakes. Thus the claim of the Ladakhis concerning the fact that previously these were fresh water lakes.

The existence of such vast lakes obviously moisturized the atmosphere by the sun's rays. The water then condensed at night due to the extreme coldness and the country side would as a result be blessed with rain. The high mountain areas would thus have been covered with snow, to a much greater extent than they are now.

This in its turn must surely have caused numerous mountain streams to flow down from the mountains feeding these lakes, and forming in due course mighty rivers. One can see the dry beds of these rivers even to this day. This subject forms a really fascinating study for geologists and even as a layman one gets lost into the ancient depths to note

that what the present day Ladakh is has obviously gone through vast and major changes.

However the geologists viewpoint apart from these changes have been interpreted by the Lamas and ancient Ladakhis in terms of a vast fund of folklore which associate these changes in terms of gods, demons, spirits and evil souls.

FAUNA OF LADAKH

Ladakh overflows with an exotic variety of animals and has some animals which are famous for belonging to it. Such are the wild horses which roam in large numbers in the plains of Chusul. These wild horses do not survive in captivity so they are not sought after as pack animals. Those that were captured did not retain their strength in domestic circumstances. They are however sometimes hunted for their meat which is considered to be delicious by those who eat it.

The yak is the most sure footed animal that can be found in Ladakh. They have an uncanny way of not stepping on loose stones. Thus when high mountain passes are negotiated in the winter these incredible yaks manage to avoid the pinnacles hidden under the layers of snow. If these are not avoided they are so sharp and strong that they can pierce the body like a long spear causing immediate death to an animal. The yak tail, a fine spray of hair is considered to be holy and is used in temples and gurdwaras as CHAMAR. They are beautifully

mounted in ornate silver handles and used as a fan over the holy book the *Granth Sahib*.

The Pashmina goat is also found roaming wild but most of them have been reared in domesticity and give the finest Pashmina wool. This wool is not only soft but has the capacity to keep the wearer warm in even the most cold places. As such this Pashmina is valued greatly by all in Ladakh.

On my personal excursions into the mountains I used to see a large number of goats near the high mountain tops. This is especially so on the route to the Karakoram pass via Panamik, Tutiyaalik, and the route passing near the SASAR LA. The meat of these wild goats is very tasty and health giving since they live on the fine herbal grasses of the high hills of that region. The skin and coat of these goats is often used by the Ladakhis as warm rugs laid on the floor to keep their lodgings warm. I had several such wild goat rugs made and found that they helped keep my residence cosy and comfortable.

Mountain deer are also found in abundance in this area. While crossing the SALTORO RANGE located between the rivers NUBRA and SHYOK I came across the deer, in large numbers. They roam in large herds and are in fact rather aggressive. If one is out hunting and does not take proper precautions these deers have been known to attack the hunter in a herd and even kill him.

As concerns the wild horses (some call them

asses), the Ladakhis call them KYANG (females are called MOR KYANG). These creatures resemble the zebra. Their facial line, as among the zebras, is highly arched. The ears are also longer than that of a horse, but shorter than those of an ass. A line of black hair extends from the centre of their forehead, over the neck, and goes on right upto the tail. The tail itself has a long tuft of hair at the end. The coat is reddish brown on the back and sides, and white or grey at the stomach. The Ladakhis believe and know from experience that these wild horses have a very soft back. This makes the KYANG neither fit for riding nor for load carrying. This is perhaps one of the reasons why their number is not dwindling but is in fact increasing steadily.

Markor

MARKOR are the big wild goats. I was able to see them in large flocks grazing on the mountains at a place called DUNGLI, on the banks of the river Indus. These wild goats called Markor are as big as a stag. They have reddish brown wiry hair all over except at the stomach where the hair is coloured white.

Shyin

SHYIN is another species of goat and are famous for their 'Shatus', which are shawls spun from the finest part of the soft underfleece of these goats. The original colour of the 'Tus' is a light brown, and is found in only a small quantity on

all the goats and as such it adds to the cost of the shawls. The cost is very high due to another reason which is the difficulty of procuring these wild goats. The wool has then to be separated from the hair and this raises the cost still further. These shawls are nevertheless worth having even at their exorbitant price for they are wonderfully soft and warm.

Snow Leopard

These live in the upper reaches of the mountain of Ladakh. During my numerous inspections of the high mountain posts at heights between 19,000 and 21,000 feet above the sea level in Baltistan and Nubra I came across these wonderful and sleek animals several times. One particular animal I saw several times north of BIAGDANDO in the area of the CHULUNG group of mountains, at a height of 6,620 metres above sea level. I spotted another of these animals near the high mountain pass of Sasar. The animal looked me square in the face and I regret that I had neither camera nor flashgun. Ladakhis consider it sinful to kill these animals and feel that they are the incarnations of famous Lamas.

Ladakhi Birds

The gigantic bird CHAKOR is found almost in all parts of Ladakh. While visiting the great battle field of Razangla, in October, 1966 (where the 13th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment, created world history in November, 1962), I came across hundreds

of these birds. I shot five of them with my rifle. Later in June, 1967, I shot another eleven of them in the Nubra valley near Sasoma and Shyok valley (close to PACHATANG on the south side of river Shyok). I found the bird good eating, and each of them was sufficient for a plate of four good eaters.

Smaller birds are also found in large numbers. During summer these birds migrate from the Baltistan and Kashmir valleys. The ducks and teals among them make good eating too but they are quite hard to shoot down. I made game of some of them in the Desket area during June and July.

Fish

All the rivers and streams in Ladakh have fish which have grown to a good size, and the jawans under my command enjoyed eating them in the winter months as well. In the winter when snow covers these streams the method we used for fishing was to dig a big hole over the snow covered stream. Then when a fish came up they used to either lance it, or even leap into the water and catch it in their hands and then throw it out on the snow. It was amazing to watch the jawans from the south leap in a brave the subzero temperatures to get their fish. Most of these fishes were Himalayan trout weighing between one and two kilograms. Their flesh was always juicy and soft.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

In Ladakh there is a wide variety of domesticated

animals which are used for very many different purposes. Thus there are ponies, asses, oxen, sheep, goats, yaks, camels, dogs, and fowls.

Ponies

The Ladakhi ponies are short, although very active and hardy. Over half of the pony population of Ladakh is the Yarkahand breed or the Zanskar breed, which are justly famous for their great stamina and willingness to work even under most tiring conditions. The asses are small but are very good load carriers.

Yak

Yaks are also known as the Chamar Tailed Bull, and the yak cow are also found in large numbers in Ladakh and are used as load carriers over difficult terrain, mainly the high mountain passes. The milk of the yak cow is thick and creamy, and butter is extracted from it by the locals to make their tea which uses butter as part of it. Yak milk has a strange odour until one gets used to it. During my command it was used for making rice and milk pudding in my mess. Once the odour has been overcome by use the milk is delicious and very refreshing indeed.

The Ladakhis have produced a mixed breed of cattle called DSO. These Dso's are bred through a yak and a common cow. The mixed cow (DSO MO) gives more milk than the yak cow. The milk is also richer in quality, the Dso looks more impressive and beautiful since it has long hair

which are black and white. In some cases these hair are reddish brown and white. The tails of these is also used as the sacred Chamar.

Sheep

Black faced HUNIYA sheep is used for carrying loads at great heights where neither human beings nor yaks can do this work. Yaks have the disadvantage of themselves being large and bulky animals. Man on the other hand is too weak and tires very easily at heights due to lack of sufficient oxygen in the atmosphere. Thus these Huniya goats are perfect for high altitude load carrying since they are strong and sturdy and have an admirable stamina. Thus the Huniya sheep are highly valued by the Ladakhis.

The PURIK sheep is used as a regular meat intake and supplements the diet of the Ladakhis. However there are not so many animals of this sort that it can be eaten on a daily basis and the meat of the Purik is eaten only when any such occasion demands it. The wool of this sheep is used as pattoo, a warm covering much cherished by the Ladakhis in their cold climate. In ancient times, old Lamas told me, this sheep was used as a load carrier. I was given to understand that a five to six thousand train of sheep, laden with merchandise, including shawl wool, common wool, borax and sulphur, used to go up and down to Kashmir, Kashtwar, Chamba, Lahul, Kulki and Kanawar. From these places other merchandise, foodstuffs, and other such goods were brought.

Goats

RABA goats are also famous for their high quality wool from which wonderful shawls are made. They are found mostly in the Nubra/Zaskar area or in Haunlay. The fleece of the shawl-kid is marvellously curly, glossy and very soft. It is very comfortable and warm. The wool is sent to Shrinagar (Kashmir), Amritsar, and Ludhiana for weaving excellent quality shawls.

Dog

In Ladakh the dogs (KHYI) are mostly shepherd dogs. They have shaggy coats, either black or light brown with a furry tail. They are quite vicious and strangers are always wary of going too near them. A dog bite from one of these animals is very painful and can sometimes cause death. One of the locals who I knew during my Command, was bitten by one such shepherd dog while stealing a cock from his neighbours coop. This man although very strong began to languish and within a week he was dead. He had not indicated any symptoms of rabies. However the Ladakhis believe that the teeth of these dogs have a type of saliva which is poisonous to human beings.

Another important trait of these Ladakhi dogs is that they cannot be trained. Many a fellow brother officer took down pups of this breed to Delhi where they came to be known as 'Leh poodles'. These dogs would suffer greatly from the heat and then die. Others became notorious for biting the people passing by without any apparent reason.

They thus developed a very bad reputation despite being attractive to look at. However their owners felt that they were very good watchdogs and never let a prospective thief come anywhere near their compounds. These dogs are alright in Ladakh but in the plains of India they are completely out of their element. I found these dogs to be rather unfriendly and unreliable even in Ladakh itself. One of the surprising facts is that there are no pie dogs in Ladakh. One of my orderlies said that this was due to the poorer sections of Ladakh catching such dogs and using them for meat. I tried to check this view out by personal inquiries but I think that my batman was exercising some of his imagination.

Vegetables

The progress in the harvest of vegetables since 1947 in Ladakh has been simply remarkable. During my Command in it I myself grew various vegetables such as tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, potatoes, country radish, and other vegetables. They grew very fast and attained a giant size.

Trees

Trees are scarce in Ladakh and to rectify this I had planted about *ten thousand* saplings in the Nubra valley in 1966. One of my friends Lt. General Rawat has since informed me that all these saplings are now fully grown. Most of these trees were willows and poplars. These trees are grown by keeping long branches which are cut off

from full grown trees. These branches are then put into water for a fortnight and then planted and watered regularly. In the winter months these saplings are completely bandaged to protect them from the severe winter. These saplings must survive two winters if they are to grow into trees. I am confident that if the troops in that area as well as the locals take to tree planting this high altitude desert will once again change into a green land. With this many of the ills inherent in the area will disappear.

In the valleys and near the rivulets many fruit trees are grown such as those of apple, apricot, walnut, mulberry, and GUN (vine). Apricot trees are grown upto an altitude of 13,500 feet above sea level. The GUN vine and apple trees are seen at BAIGO and SASPUL. Walnut is also grown in SASPUL. On one of my visits to the head Lama at the monastery of TAMISGONG in the month of May, 1967, I saw mulberry trees in profusion all along the Indus river where apple trees also abounded. Some of these apples were of a big size and very good in flavour. I found that the apricots in Ladakh were of a large size, but I felt that the apricots of BAGDANGDO in Baltistan were one of the finest varieties of this fruit in the world. This crop lasts for only fifteen days in June. They are full of juice and reddish in colour. Once plucked from the trees they cannot last for more than a few hours. The locals in the area dry them and then store them for the winter months. From the seed of these fruit they extract oil for cooking.

Grains

The main crops in Ladakh are barley, wheat, peas, and mustard. At BAGDANGDO the locals also grew a black seed crop called THURAMBA. At the latitude of 4,500 metres I saw patches of cultivation of all types of barley growing in the areas of FUKCHE, KOYUL, and HANLE.

Since the Independence of India, this region of the country is getting very special attention. Moreso after the November, 1962 war with China, Ladakh as a whole has made tremendous progress all round. Leh, the District town has grown, and gives the impression of a fine township. Particularly in the higher reaches of Ladakh, where jawans are located and the weather is very inclement with dry breezes the conditions for existence have been much improved.

MINERALS

All valuable minerals are found in Ladakh. When the system of communications becomes more perfect these will be exploited with great benefit to the Indian Nation. Although I am not an expert in this area, but what I saw from my aerial surveys through helicopter, convinced me of the verity of this fact. In my aerial survey of the region, whether over valleys or mountains I had the clear impression that most of the land was completely unprospected. One day, I am confident, this region will yield huge quantities of gold, silver, iron, mica, precious stones, sulphur and other minerals.

Borax is already found in large quantities. Soda, too is also found in many places in Ladakh. There are large stretches of 'soda plains'. Thus the lake called KAR TASO (South-east Ladakh) about 40 kilometres south of KIARI is full of various salts. In olden days it was one of the largest sources of supply for salt in this area.

TRADE : HOME AND FOREIGN

Since the days of General Zorawar Singh (1836 A.D.) the home and foreign trade of Ladakh has undergone a great change. From 1836 to 1947 Ladakh was a most remote and unattainable part of the country and was always under different rulers. Manufacture of blankets and woollens mainly for the local consumption and black mohair tents were made from the yak hair. Apart from these little else was produced in Ladakh during that period. The foreign trade to and fro was wool, borax, sulphur, and dried fruits.

Wool

The common sheep wool was produced in thousands of maunds. The good quality shawl wool was sent to Srinagar, Nurpur, Amritsar, for turning into fine and costly shawls.

Borax

Borax was also sent down country but the quantity was never more than five hundred to six hundred maunds. This is by no means a large export.

Sulphur

Sulphur was collected from the sulphur mine at PUGA, and other areas, where the famous hot springs mentioned earlier are located. According to the estimate of the Lamas this export came to about three hundred maunds, and was carried to the markets at NURPUR, KANGRA, and RAMPUR.

Dried Fruit

Dried fruit like apricots and small seedless raisins were also sent out to trade in the areas of Srinagar, Kangra, and the bazaars of Simla in Himachal. The main gain for Ladakh was able to make was by carrying foreign products from Tibet to India and from India back to Tibet and China.

The north-western part of India received tea, shawls, wool and borax. Tibet and China got back opium, saffron, brocades and shawls. It would be of interest to the reader to go through the list of Tibetan/Chinese articles which came from these trade routes to India :

- (a) Shawl wool
- (b) Charas (extract of hemp)
- (c) Silver bars (Yam bu in Tibetan)
- (d) Felts
- (e) Tea
- (f) Velvets
- (g) Silk
- (h) Gold

- (i) Gold zarri
- (j) Turquoises (from Persia via Bokhara)
- (k) Carpets (Kptan)
- (l) Gale patthar (a cure for swollen necks)
- (m) Ponies
- (n) Salt

Articles which went from India to Yarkhand were :

- (a) Laki (goat skin of red colour)
- (b) Cotton
- (c) Silk lungi
- (d) Shawls (of coarse quality in the main)
- (e) Brocades
- (f) Shawl cloth in lengths
- (g) Turbans
- (h) Opium
- (i) Indigo
- (j) Kalgi
- (k) Shoes
- (l) Condiments
- (m) Honey
- (n) Gur

This trade came almost to a halt in 1962, and has not restarted so far. Due to the Chinese aggression on the Indian Borders in Nov.-Dec. 1962 this trade route was completely disrupted and it is a moot point whether they will ever be able to function again.

THE RULERS OF LADAKH

The GYALPO (King) had ruled Ladakh either as a despot or a mild dictator depending on the individual personality of the Gyalpo on the throne. However the KAHLON (Prime Minister) in fact ruled the kingdom. He had however to ensure that the enjoyment and pleasures of his royal master were fully catered for and that he was never disturbed from his life of ease and comfort. So long as this was provided him the Gyalpo felt all was well with Ladakh and its people. Often a rich subject could behold the royal presence only by making an offering in money (gold) or in kind (lavish gifts). As this was an expensive pleasure the Gyalpo was hardly ever disturbed.

The choice of Kahlon was determined as in other native states of India either by royal favour and successive intrigues, or by greater hold on the royalty and outstanding abilities. In Ladakh in addition to the above, power and politics were made into a fine art and thus the office of Kahlon was usually retained in one family for many generations. The Kahlon thus was the petty raja, and the post of Kahlon continued until General Zorawar Singh, the Dogra General settled at Leh.

The towns had governors called LONPOS. These Lonpos governed towns such as Leh, Disket, Panamik, and Hank. They also helped the Kahlon in the general administration and the upkeep of law and order.

Fort commanders were also appointed and were

known as KHARPONS. All of them carried the name of the fort in the case of Commanders and also Governors. The latter were also called by the name of the town that they were in charge of. Thus the governor of Leh was known as LEH PON. The raja of Leh had a MAK PON, or a commander of the Forces. The Lord High Treasurer was called CHAG SOT. The chief Judge was called SHAKS PON, and the police had a kotwal called CHAGSI GOBA. Similarly the village headman was called GOBAS.

Relations with the neighbouring States were dealt with in a simple and straightforward manner. These were chiefly confined to political relations with BALTI and RUDOK. Commerce and trade relations were good with Yarkhand, and Kashmir. The people also had great reverence for the Lamas and especially the Daklam of Lhasa, since they were all Buddhists.

Before the 1962 War of India and China, Ladakh did not offer any temptation to the Chinese to conquer it, or any segment of it. It was only after consolidating their position in Tibet in 1955-56, that the Chinese thought of controlling these areas which were and are the Indian territory. According to the Chinese this would seal the influence of India over Tibet. As such, slowly and gradually, without the knowledge of the Indian Government the area of Askichin and other areas near East of Chusul, the Spangur Lake, the eastern portion of Pangkong Lake and the area of Dumchale Hills (where river Indus enters the Indian territory)

were stealthily occupied by the Chinese. When the evil intentions of the Chinese came out in the open there was a war. But India had lost this territory before the actual war. The Chinese were not keen to grab any more land for several reasons which we now mention.

The Chinese could not afford to grab any more land because of a very bloody nose. They wanted to avoid getting into another mess because the battles at Rezangla and Gurang Hill near the area Chusul amply indicated the strong fighting will of the Indian forces.

Secondly even if they wanted to grab land on the Indian territory, this would have created very serious command and control problems for them. Further still the supply problem would have been a great drain to their resources. This was one of the primary reasons why the Chinese declared a military cease-fire. Thus India too (like Tibet) was badly deceived, and stabbed in the back by a nation posing to be full of brotherly interest in India. The Chinese brothers to whom our late great Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru gave full and blind support in international politics let down this trust which is perhaps one of the most disgusting manners of the twentieth century. In fact this sheer deception by the Chinese caused Nehru to die in May, 1964, as a man whose cherished ideals of international friendship had been crushed by his own best friends Chou and Mao. This caused him to lapse into a shell and depression from which he did not recover. Before 1947, the Chinese governors

of Yarkhand and Kotan never thought of capturing Ladakh, or any part in it. They always felt that it was a high altitude desert where nothing grew, and the people were ridden with dire poverty. Ladakh therefore had friendly relations. The boundaries were well defined by piles of stones which were set up as early as 1687 when the Mongol attack was beaten back. In this the help of the then Kashmir ruler was obtained and the history does not mention any such invasion of the Chinese prior to 1962.

ANCIENT JUSTICE AND ADMINISTRATION

Justice in ancient Ladakh was administered through a panchayat system which was both cheap and speedy. The five Panch, were considered to be the representatives of God (Panch Parmeshwar). Apart from the Panchayat of the village, the injured or the aggrieved individual could go directly to the Gyalpo, Kahlon, or to the Goba of his village and place his case before him.

During my stay in Ladakh I observed that the olden system still exists in one form or the other. However in the capital town Leh the procedure observed was different in that the aggrieved reported his case before the Loupa, the 'city father', who in turn reported to the Kahlon. The Kahlon then asked the Shakspon (Keeper of Peace) to assemble a regular court consisting of five or seven Panch, depending on the importance of the case. In addition to these members some sitting subordinate

judges who knew the law of the land (or civil law) were also added. The court used to open and close on the sound of the trumpet. The awards of the justice keeper were quick sentences awarded by the court, and were implemented without much delay if any at all. In the case of capital punishment, the court went into very great details and permitted the accused one all the time required to prove his innocence.

The old Lamas informed me that such capital punishments were of few types: whip lashes, monetary fines, and imprisonment. The death sentence was rarely awarded. However if in case an individual was found guilty of sacrilege such as spoliation of temples or murder, the criminal was either crucified, or thrown into the rapids of river Indus with his hands and feet bound and tied onto a heavy stone. The common punishment was to brand the culprit with 'Dog, Expelled'. Before expulsion from the society the individual was disgraced publicly.

The crowds not only hooted the villain out of the village they also pelted him with stones and dirt. This alone was occasionally the cause of his death.

If a woman murdered a child, her one hand was cut off before she was expelled from the society. However by and large the capital punishment consisted of drowning and crucifixion. One type of drowning consisted as we have mentioned of binding the culprit hand and foot and then hurling him into the specially dangerous area of the lethal rivers

Indus, Shyok, or Nubra. If the culprit somehow survived this almost impossible punishment then this was considered to be god's intervention and the criminal was allowed to go scot free. I met one such man who had murdered his brother and was hurled into the Nubra. According to him as he was drowning some large fishes nibbled off his binding and he was able to get to the shore much bruised and hurt but still alive. He was reformed and spent the remainder of his life in holy works. However such providential escapes are very rare indeed.

In the case of the crucifixion punishment the criminal was escorted to the SONGSA, or the place of execution, by the SHETMA, or executioner. The SHAL SING, or crucifix was then fixed into the ground vertically. The offending person was then stripped off his clothes and his hands and feet were tied to the extremities of the cross very securely. His head was held upright by his own hair. The old laws had it that the criminal was never wounded in this type of punishment but was allowed to die under the agonies of thirst, hunger, and attendant physical sufferings. An alternative to this mode was that the criminal was quickly tortured to death by pouring boiling oil onto him. This is in accord with the religious view that no living thing should be made to suffer any bleeding wound.

For theft and other crimes the punishment was often corporal, or if less offensive a fine was imposed and the criminal sent to prison. A notable

feature of this punishment was that food had to be supplied to him by his friends and relatives.

In case of theft if the stolen property was recovered the same was rightfully returned to the owner from whom it had been stolen. An equal value of property was levied as a fine on the thief, and that amount handed over to the state 'kazana' or treasury.

In case the property was never located the thief paid double the amount. One and a half times the stolen amount went to the person who had lost the property and the balance was given to the 'Raj'.

Another punishment which was meted out to thieves was the piercing of their nails with bamboo splinters and beating with a strong stick on the sole of the feet while the culprit was hung upside down. In case the thief was unable to pay for the stolen property and it was not recovered his fate was even worse. He was made to walk through the town naked while he was pelted with large boulders till he dropped dead. Contrary to expectations such painful penalties for crime acted as a strong deterrent and the area was relatively crime free. The Kushak of Rezang, in one of my meetings with him also confirmed that in doubtful cases, where the evidence was unsatisfactory, the accused to prove his innocence had to either :

- (a) draw a red hot iron rod through his hand;
- (b) take a stone out of a pot of boiling oil without injury to himself;

- (c) hurt himself off from a precipice and remain alive when he reached the bottom of the pit.

If he succeeded in any of these test exercises he was considered to be innocent. However as will be readily noticed, such tests gave very little chance to the accused to emerge unscathed. Nevertheless there are cases on record that some accused did in fact emerge victorious from such a test. They were of course, in the main, holy men who had been wrongly accused. If the accused proved himself innocent by passing such a test then the person who had accused him had to undergo the same test to prove that he had not tried to be vindictive.

The Kushak of Rezang told me that since Ladakh became a part of Jammu and Kashmir, these practices had gradually and slowly become less widespread. Nevertheless he was quite clear that in the remote Ladakhi villages such implementations of law still continued to exist although in a modified form. His information was that such types of primitive punishments were on the decline. Nevertheless he upheld the fact that in areas where the long hand of the law was unable to reach, some peremptory form of law had to exist to keep all in order.

He was at pains to point out to me that all this was not against the religion of the Buddha and that the criminals were not *de facto* Buddhists.

Being the followers of Lord Buddha, people in

general are and were averse to killing, and no animal life was destroyed. The death sentence was seldom enforced. The old Lama confirmed to me that in 1845 the MAGNA, or Police Chief of Leh had been involved in one such case of law. He was a Dogra and was the representative of Maharaja Gulab Singh. He sentenced to death a blacksmith who was a habitual offender of the law but had managed to escape its hands for a long time. The Police Chief lay a dragnet for him, and he was finally caught red-handed in the act of stealing from the Churtan, which is the Mausolea of the HEMIS monastery. He was carrying away the entire set of copper gilt pinnacles.

The Police Chief, I was informed by the Lama did not listen to any mercy appeals on behalf of the offender. This was because the new Dogra rulers of Ladakh wanted to display a marked example of unflinching firmness while dealing with the law and order problem in their frontier state. What was worse the crime was against the religion of the Ladakhis. Thus the blacksmith was bound hands and feet and a heavy stone attached to his neck. He was then dropped from CHACHOT BRIDGE into the deadly river Indus.

During the Dogra rule of Ladakh upto 1947, killing kine got the offender a death penalty. The 'Milching Cow' of this area was banned food and one could kill it at the risk of one's own death only.

In 1841 in Nubra valley, at Leh in 1842, and in the same year at NYIMO, individuals caught

killing this animal were put to death without any arguments being heard from them.

REVENUE

In the days of the nineteenth century the main source of revenue in Ladakh was tax on property along with duty on merchandise. The KHRAL, or tax was imposed on the dwellings but the land was exempted. The land there is not very fertile and produces very little. As such it was not taxed and even to this day is not so.

The people of Ladakh earned their living by the transport of wool and other goods through Ladakh to Yarkhand or Kashmir. The THOB THANG, which was the import and export duty, was imposed by the government and the money thus collected went to the TERDSOT or treasury.

The tax on private houses was imposed according to their sizes. Till the end of the nineteenth century the house tax collection was meagre, never going more than Rs. 35,000.00. Out of a total of 18,000 houses that existed those days on record, 4,000 houses were alienated to support the monasteries. Another 1,000 houses were allotted to support the Rani of Ladakh and other members of the Royal family. The Gyalpo had his own villages with over 1,000 houses to look after his needs and expenses for doing his work. During the rule of Maharaja Gulab Singh the gross revenue of Ladakh from all sources was about Rs. 59,000.00 each year and it was a very neglected area. It was only after

the Indian Independence that this area attracted the concern and attention of the government, and a number of development schemes were initiated. These are still in progress and have changed the face of Ladakh. This is clear from the fact that today parts of Ladakh have become tourist attractions for people all over the world. It is worth relating that the Kushak of Rejang mentioned to me that unlike the soldier of today the old Dogra Ladakhi soldier cost the state only Rs. 4/- a month. As such he never received more than Rs. 3/- in cash each month. At Leh in the fort, 200 soldiers and a battery of four guns were stationed. Due to the rapid development of Leh town, this fort is now in the centre of the town and does not have any strategic importance left.

Nubra, Zanskar, Karguil and Dras also had about 200 soldiers each stationed at them. This force was commanded by the Thanadars who were responsible for civil administration of their areas. After meeting the expenses the GYALPO used to send Rs. 25,000.00 to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. His understanding with the Maharaja's government was that the cash would not be sent. Instead the money was paid in kind and wool from Chang Thang, cloth and tea from Yarkhand was sent to meet the amount required.

19TH CENTURY MILITARY RESOURCES

There was no regular army under the Gyalpo, however every family was duty bound to furnish

one ready armed soldier as and when called upon to do so by the Gyalpo. The Kahlons, Lonpos, and Gobas were also obliged to supply four to ten men each if the occasion arose for their need.

In the year 1834, an Army of 22,000 strong soldiers was collected to fight General Zorawar Singh's attack. The same number of soldiers was collected when Gyalpo was at war with Ahmed Shah of Baltistan.

From the accounts of the Dogra Officer Basti Ram, the Kushaks, other Lamas and Gobas, this account appears to be factual.

When called for the services of their motherland the Malemi, or soldiers were divided into those selected for the cavalry or the infantry. The selection for the cavalry was contingent on the prospective cavalryman having a horse or pony that he could take to war with him. All those who did not have such a horse or pony and were selected were then detailed for the infantry. The MAKPUNG, or Commander in Chief was always from the royal family or was one of the principal Kahlons. Subordinate commands were given to junior Kahlons and Gobas. Kahlons who collected hundreds or a thousand soldiers were given their charge and went under the rank of STONG PON, or Colonel.

A Goba who could not get more than ten soldiers for the war was called CHU PON or Serjeant. In the Military Camps called MAGSGAR, only the Kahlons and SYAPONS had white blanket tents, while all the rest had black tents made of yak hair. Each evening the soldiers drank

their favourite 'Chang', a rice beer made locally. All disputes within the camp were settled without delay by awarding the offenders stripes or fines. The sentence awarded by the assembly of officers was always final and their sentences were termed the War Law (MAKKHRIM).

The forts of Eastern Ladakh are even now castellated monasteries. In olden days the defence of these monasteries was entrusted to the peace loving monks who were helped in the hour of need by the armed peasantry, which was placed under the command of the (Kiledar Kharpan) Fort Commander.

In the Western Ladakh several petty chiefs owned castles which were better located for defensive warfare. The Monastic Castles were usually built on high rocks.

I noticed during my visits to these regions in my Command tenure, that there was no provision for water. I also noticed that the daily duty of the garrison was to fetch water for the monks. I am of the opinion that had any of these monasteries had a proper supply of water inside and a large stock of food, their marvellous positions would have rendered them invincible to all common attacks. However the danger of being barricaded would remain. During my stay in Ladakh I had the good fortune of visiting the great monasteries of Hunder, Dekset, Shyok, Tangtse, Lammayurru, Phyang, Leh, She, and Haule. All these monasteries are built on steep cliffs, with stone walls, which are whitewashed and have hundreds of prayer flags. I

found all of them to be difficult of access and very picturesque. The monastery of Shyok is situated on the south bank of the river of the same name, and I found it to be really beautiful.

In the early part of the middle of the 19th century the best means that nature provided for the defence of the region of Ladakh was its general inaccessibility. During the six months of its severe winter, that is from October to March the passes into it were always covered with snow.

However General Zorawar Singh broke this myth of Ladakh's winter inaccessibility, and conquered this area by attacking it from the South, that is from Badarwa Khistwar.

Under Maharaja Gulab Singh Ladakh was controlled by garrisons of well trained and reasonably well equipped infantry and artillery soldiers. These soldiers were positioned in various forts which were built by Zorawar Singh and his successor.

The forts of Leh, Karguil, and Dras have been built on the banks of streams to ensure the unfailing supply of water without which the strongest fort would be untenable in its defence for a longer period.

However in the modern context of aircraft attacks, the old style of fort warfare has become obsolete. These forts are now simply symbolic, and remind us of the warfare and defence strategies of times gone by. They also hold architectural value and interest. The old Lamas that I talked to, felt that the various measures that Maharaja Gulab Singh had taken, and whose precedent was followed by his successors, to

maintain himself in power were very good. His policies were firm, judicious, and effective.

However the upper crust of Ladakhi society had a grudge against his administration, and felt that he had divested most members of their class of their powers. A Lama told me one incident that had happened to his very rich and powerful uncle who was a successful merchant. He had been summoned by the Maharaja, and refused to go initially on the plea that he did not have sufficient presents to give to the Maharaja. Now these presentations were a customary part of any person's visit to the Maharaja. A messenger was sent to this Lama's uncle telling him that he could bring with him only a token present if he did not have much wealth. The uncle was greedy and therefore pleaded he had nothing. It was then that Maharaja Gulab Singh asked his officers to arrest the merchant and take everything that they could get and deposit it into the royal treasury. No one could complain, not even the merchant, since he had claimed he was already in penurious circumstances. Thus the merchant really had nothing left. The Lama told me that in this manner the Maharaja did not brook any defiance from any rich person, who if he failed to pay tributes to the royal family would be divested both of his wealth and his power. The Maharaja however was a very kind hearted soul and spent much of the money that he had confiscated from the proud merchant class to raise the level of living of the poorer segments by gifting them food, and making shelters for travellers. He

was thus a much loved sovereign although he had at first been simply an unpopular conqueror.

Since August, 1947, the conditions in Ladakh changed rapidly for the better. The construction of good roads has brought the people together with the people of India. Prosperity is now evident in vast tracts of Ladakh and in fact has spread to some extent all over its area. The Ladakh landscape, beautiful in all seasons is now available for the tourists to admire. There is now a regular air service to Ladakh and the main highway from Srinagar through Zozila to Leh is open almost throughout the year except in deep winter when it gets snowbound.

PEOPLE OF LADAKH

Population

The cultivable land in Ladakh has been and still is limited to ensure that the land holdings remain in the paternal family and are not divided among the womenfolk. The women in Ladakh have more than one husband and the elder brother was the one who married a woman while the others shared his wife. This custom continues but has changed to some extent since the Indian Independence of 1947.

Since 1947, the government of India has taken great pains to improve the lot of the Ladakhis. The Ladakhis themselves have grown broader in outlook, and some of them go out of Ladakh for higher learning, and several of the traditional local

families are sending their sons to join the army and allied services. The progress in Ladakh is thus something extraordinary.

During my Command I was able to learn from reliable sources that before the rule of Maharaja Gulab Singh, around 1834, the population of Ladakh was around 1,65,000. Of this number about 12,000 were lamas and nuns. I was told that when the Gyalpo ordered a general mobilization to raise an army to fight Zorawar Singh in 1834 he was able to collect only 22,000 fighting men out of 24,000 households. The old Lama said each household had an average of seven persons which consisted of father, mother, two grown up sons, a wife, and two grandchildren.

During the period of 1834 to 1848, due to the devastation unleashed by the war the population was very much reduced. In the summer months of 1834, a small-pox epidemic broke out in Ladakh. This dreaded disease which has now been eradicated from earth, alone took a toll of 14,000 dead that year.

However this epidemic was helped by the habits of the locals which are very unhygienic. They rarely wash and change their clothes, and small-pox spreads much faster under such conditions.

This dangerous epidemic was followed closely by wars. Those who managed to escape with their lives from both the small-pox and the wars had to cope with the grave problem of the aftermath of war. They had to bewail the pillage of their property and the destruction of their homes.

During the various wars the invaders gave a rude shock to the pious mind of the Ladakhis by plundering their monasteries. Ladakhis in turn became the bitter enemies of the Lamas by resuming the monastic land. Lamas were so disgusted at these unholy happenings that they left en masse for the monasteries of Holy Tibet. I was told that at this time of 12,000 Lamas 9,000 left the monasteries for Tibet.

In Ladakh it is easy to observe if one is there for any length of time, as I was, that females outnumber the males. But in Baltistan (Indian side), the reverse case happens to be true. When I asked the local maulvee of BAGDANDO, situated on the north bank of the river Shyok, he informed me that they marry their girls at the age of ten or twelve. She becomes a mother at the average age of fourteen or fifteen. The Ladakhi girls on the other hand seldom marry before seventeen or eighteen years of age. This therefore is the reason for more male children born in Baltistan and more female children in Ladakh.

Origin of the Ladakhis

BHOTIAS, is the Hindu name for DOD PA, or a Buddhist. The people of Ladakh are largely Buddhist and a distinct race of people. Judging from their language and physical features it gives one the impression that they are the offshoot of the Mongol race. Their physical and moral difference may be due to severe cold and extreme dryness of the Ladakhi climate. It may also be due to the former

intimate connections of these people with the Hindus of the rest of India for many centuries, when the heyday of Buddhism was being witnessed in the heart of India, at Bodh Gaya.

I found that the Ladakhis are all of one race. They intermarry amongst themselves, eat together, and are all eligible as members of the priesthood.

During my travels in Ladakh, I noticed something rather interesting. In certain areas of north Ladakh, such as Panamick, Shyok, Phobrang, and other there is a class of dancing girls with attendants who play during their performance. Unlike in many parts of India, these girls are not looked down upon.

In my own Command I had the local force 'The Ladakh Scouts', which forms a valuable part of the Indian Army. During my tenure of two years and six months I noticed that the Ladakhi jawan, or 'NUNOO', as he is known, has a strongly marked Mongolian countenance. He is superior both in vigour and in stature to other Mongolian races of this belt.

I feel that this superiority could be ascribed to the pure climate of Ladakh, and also to the infusion of Hindu blood into their race. I have confirmed this observation while crossing the KHAR-DUNG LA pass in December, 1965 (5,602 metres, or 18,380 feet above the sea level). We climbed from the Nubra side en route to Leh. During this movement I saw some young girls hardly seventeen or eighteen years of age, carried with great ease complete kit boxes weighing not less than fifty

pounds. When I asked them what their mission was they said they had to go to Delhi to partake in the Republic Day celebrations of January, 1966.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

In Ladakh polyandry exists but is strictly confined to brothers only. This is prevalent to this date but is on its way out. However this change is not so rapid as to cause this change to occur in the next few decades, by when it may be in full force again. Much depends on the social changes in the entire area which in turn are dependent on changes initiated by the government. However I will discuss this matter as it existed during the years of my Command there.

In the polyandrous marriage I found that the most usual number of husbands was two, although three or even four are not really uncommon. Each family of brothers has only one wife in common. This custom exists and existed most often among the poorer classes. The well to do people, reversed this approach and had two or three wives per man, depending on how many they could afford. In any case for an area like Ladakh which did not produce enough food for its people, polyandry was the only answer to check the increase of population.

The Ladakhis are wonderfully cheerful and courageous people and take every opportunity possible to make merry and have a feast. During my Command in Ladakh I was invited by the local chiefs to their various social events. Apart

from the well cooked and tasty local food huge bowls of Chang used to be the chief attraction. Chang is made from fermented barley and wheat flour. To me it had a most disagreeable sour smell. It looks like whitish dirty gruel, and is locally distilled in each household for its own consumption. ARAK is also made out of the same items, and is also very potent.

Entertainments and merry making is the rule on all occasions of birth, marriages and even death.

The TSAS TON or birth feast takes place after the birth of the child. All the relatives get together at the mothers house and celebrate the birth of the child. According to the means of all the guests present some thing or the other to the mother. Cloth, food, or money is given as a present. All the guests then take their food, and with a bowl of chang the party ends. The mother remains in the house with the newly born for a month and ten days. However most mothers do not follow this rule, and being moving around after they feel strong enough to do so, which is about ten or eleven days after childbirth. An year after the birth the naming party called MING TON takes place. The child and the mother go before a great Lama. They then offer him grain and food from the family, and the Lama gives the name to the child. After this name has been given the family returns to the home where there is feasting, drinking and dancing.

The Marriage feast is called BAG TON and is observed in a very formal manner. On being engaged the bridegroom visits the house of his fiance

and takes with him a bowl and an adequate quantity of chang. During this visit the elders from both sides discuss the wedding day and other formalities once they have a consensus as to the date of the marriage. The groom is then under an obligation to send good food and chang daily to his fiance. After a period of twenty days relatives of both households get together, and bear witness to the bridegrooms present to his would be mother-in-law.

This present is made according to the economic means of the groom and many consist of money, an ornament, other jewellery, or simply a vat of chang.

Both parties then depart and assemble once again after a fortnight at the bride's house. They then take the bride in state, to the groom's house.

A party of Lamas awaits the arrival of the girl. They then read the prayers, following which the girl and boy are pronounced man and wife. A grand feast follows this joyous occasion. The chang flows in rivers and there is wonderfully good food to eat. Women participate as happily in all the proceedings, including drinking of chang, as do the men. According to the means of the bridegroom the feasting lasts from a few days to over a week. However each morning begins with the prayers of the Lamas, and all the half tipsy revellers seriously try to listen to these prayers.

The SHID TON, which is the feast held on occasion of the death of any person is also remarkable. In case of the rich families when a member dies a large number of Lamas are sent for. The duty of these Lamas is to read prayers each day until the

body is cremated. This ritual is carried out for a full fifteen days and nights. In the case of poor families only a few Lamas come and even one of them sometimes has to suffice. After just five days and nights of prayer readings the body is cremated.

During the period of death mourning a piece of cloth is fixed over the doorway. This has the obvious role of informing all those who know the rules that the family is in mourning. No doubt sociologically the explanation would be a more complex one. The Lamas who are reading the prayers are fed and looked after by the bereaved. On the day that the body is consigned to the flames the participating Lamas are presented with the clothes and the cooking utensils of the deceased. I was told by my good friend the Kushak of Rejang that on the death of the Gyalpo, or King, or even the Kahlon, the corpse is kept in the house for full twenty days. The Lamas read prayers incessantly. The number of Lamas for a Gyalpo can be several dozens. In fact the higher the rank of the dead person the more the number of Lamas that are to be called. This is not simply a ritual exercise it is also a way to indicate the ranking of the family and the pride it took in being associated with the dead person. The dead person is ultimately taken to the PUR KHANG, which is a place specially reserved for cremations. The royal and high ranking dead are burned in a metal vessel of very large proportions.

The PURTHAL, or ashes are carefully collected and an image of the dead is made out of these after mixing them in fine clay.

A CHHORTEN, or covered building is erected on the spot for the reception of the PURGOM, or urn. Various articles are deposited before the image of the dead. These include :

- (a) wheat, barley, rice and peas;
- (b) pearls, corals, and turquoise;
- (c) gold, silver, and copper; iron in any form ;
- (d) prayer rolls and holy writings;
- (e) pieces of the holy Skuhpa; and
- (f) white and red sandalwood.

Nowadays when some of these cannot be afforded they are increasingly being substituted by something which must represent the above listed articles.

The Lama of high rank has a special type of funeral ceremony. His body, after the usual prayers is placed in a PURGOM, or coffin, beautifully dressed in his ceremonial clothes. His knees are brought upto the chin, by cording it together in a sitting posture. By the side of the body, all the items as mentioned above are placed, in addition to his prayer wheel. In addition are placed all his religious instruments, his plate and cup, the images of SHAKYA THUBBA, JAMYA, CHANRAZIK, and his own figure go into the coffin, which is buried inside the CHHORTEN. For fourteen days food and water are offered in front of the CHHORTEN and a light is kept burning every day and night.

It is of incidental interest that on one of my visits to Bodh Gaya and Bhilsa I noticed that

precious stones, precious metals, other metals were buried with the relics of Sariputra and Maha Mogalana. One of the relic boxes I noticed inscriptions mentioning the names of ancestors and their titles. Their relics were also supposed to be present in the same shrine. This practice I noticed was followed all over Ladakh.

During my Command tenure of north Ladakh I visited Hanle monastery and climbed the adjoining hill. I was keen to learn of how they disposed of their dead in that area since wood is literally not available as anything but a rare luxury. I noticed then that the corpse was exposed on the hill that I had inadvertently climbed, and left for the vultures to eat. Wild dogs were also participants in this cleaning activity.

In Leh itself I noticed that the dead were put into a sitting posture with the aid of bands of cloth or string and then placed onto a firewood stove or what is called a CHULA. In this posture the body assumes a very small bundle like shape, and is cremated thereby with the use of a very little firewood. However in certain areas of Ladakh, I was reliably told by one of the very old Lamas, at a place called DUNGTI, on the south bank of river Indus, where I met him, that about a hundred miles from Halule and towards Leh, there are professional dead body choppers. The corpses are cut by these professional choppers, on request by the relatives of the deceased, into small pieces. They are then fed to the dogs. This type of funeral also is preceded by the usual reading of prayers by

Lamas and is a social custom. This is technically known as the earth funeral, or earthly funeral. The bones of the skeleton are shorn of their flesh and then pound into paste along with parched corn and then fed to the vultures. This part of the ceremony is called the 'Celestial Ceremony'. In this area custom considers this type of death ritual to be the most adequate way to reach the heavens. On no count however is the body buried under the ground and the accent is always on the removal of every trace of bone and flesh before the eyes of the relatives. This springs from the local belief that if any part of the body is not literally disposed of, it would lead to great discomfort for the deceased, and his or her surviving relatives.

Ladakhi Polo

Polo is one of the most favourite games of the people of Ladakh. Anyone who has a pony is theoretically eligible to take part in this game. However the polo ground is unlike the one that is witnessed on the plains. It is a full four hundred yards long and about sixty to eighty yards in breadth. It is marked all around by a boundary of stone, raised to the level of a wall. There are two teams each with a group of fifteen to twenty players on either side. The polo club is relatively crude and is made locally from strong wood, which is hardened in slow fire. The ball itself is made out of a root that has hardened and has been fashioned into a round shape by the local carpenter. The two opposite goals are fashioned out of two upright

stones set about twenty feet apart from each other.

The game begins when one of the players takes the ball and gallops to the centre of the ground and then hits it towards the goal of the opposing team with his club. When the ball goes through the goal post of one of the teams, the same team must take possession of the ball—only then is it counted as a goal. If the opposite team members manage to hit the ball back through the goal post from beyond the goal it is not counted as a goal. This makes the game very fast and exciting and there are many narrow misses due to the above rule. At Hunder, in Nubra, I introduced certain new rules to this ancient form of the game based on my knowledge of how modern polo is played.

The local polo stars were not in the least satisfied with the new rules introduced by me, and complained that such new rules as were introduced by me made the game far less exciting, slowing its pace down greatly. My experience of this game in Ladakh leads me to observe in all seriousness that to participate in it even as a referee is tantamount to putting one's very life at great risk. To get seriously injured or even killed is not unknown in these very rough and tumble polo matches.

In Ladakh the polo stars take an opportunity at the polo ground to display their mastery over their own steeds. Their riding is bold and active, and at times extremely risky when collisions occur. In one game that I was a referee one of the horsemen insisted on going across the line of the ball, which

is not a serious infringement of Ladakhi polo rules. I warned him in between chuckers, to avoid this dangerous play. But he laughed it away in characteristic Ladakhi manner. In the very next chucker there was a very serious collision of horse due to this very player in which a member of the opposite team was catapulted off his pony and fell into the dust and was kicked by one of the bucking steeds. The man and his steed were taken off the field both badly injured.

I convened a meeting and banned riding across the line of the ball. My warning was not heeded again and once more a similar incident took place. This time however the game was stopped when it was found that one of the three players who had fallen off had died of a broken neck. It was the player I had warned three times. He was however given a heroes funeral by his team-mates.

This game travelled to Ladakh from India itself to which goes the credit of inventing it. It was initially known as CHAOGAN, and the grounds named after this game when it began still exist in big cities such as Delhi and Calcutta, Bombay and Jaipur too have such ancient grounds where polo is still played regularly. In 1210 A.D. King Kutbud-din Aibak died while he was playing polo. As he dashed in a headlong gallop towards the enemy goal, his horse developed a sudden limp and missing the line of the ball took him straight into the stone goal post. The king stood little chance of survival as his head banged hard against the goal post. Legend has it that he died before his body

hit the ground. It is said that his horse died of grief for his master a few days later after refusing to eat or drink anything.

Indeed polo was, until the new rules were introduced a rear fatal game for some of the players. Thus in 1498 A.D., when King Sikander Lodhi played this game, in one of the matches Haibat Khan's club struck the head of Suleman instead of the ball. On witnessing this act the brother of Suleman, Kaizar Khan Lodhi galloped straight upto Haibat Khan and unleashed a club blow at his face. This led into a dangerous fracas on the field with the clubs suddenly turning into lethal weapons. With very great difficulty the king's aides Mahmud Khan and Khan Khanan Lodhi pacified the players but not before they too had been assaulted.

Brigg's who tells of this episode adds that the King Sikander Lodhi who was viewing this match walked off to his palace in disgust. However he too must have realized that in polo passions run high.

Public and Private Buildings

The most beautiful, strong, and large buildings in the whole of Ladakh are the majestic monasteries. These have a very large number of rooms and courtyards. They are without exception built on raised mounds or stone conglomerations, and thus command a very breathtaking view of the surroundings and are incredibly imposing to look at.

As a rule the outer walls of the monastery have

the living quarters of the Lamas. The interior is further divided by other buildings into many open courts. The most spacious and best room is used as a temple for the performance of daily prayer services. The outer walls of the monasteries are whitewashed using a white wash dug out from the hills. The battlements are ornamented with red bands which gives them a very dignified appearance. Numerous flags are placed all over and these flutter in the breeze giving it a very calm, peaceful, and happy atmosphere.

Some of these monasteries also have a plain outer wall for the purposes of defence. These outer walls are connected by square towers.

The house all over Ladakh consist of two or three or sometimes over four stories. The foundation and the ground floor walls are built of stone. The upper story walls are made with the aid of large sundried bricks. In some of the houses of rich citizens in Leh, Disket and Panamik etc. as that of Kahlon some of the rooms were of a very large size (25 feet by 18 feet), but the roofs are very low to keep out the extreme cold. The roofs were thus never more than eight feet high. These roofs were supported by plain wooden pillars.

In the construction of these houses poplar trees are used after they have been peeled white. The floors are generally of earth. In rich houses small silt pebbles, set in clay from a clean hard but smooth and lasting floor. To enjoy the sun either in the evening or in the morning all the houses of the rich folks have a balcony adjoining the main

room of the house, which is approximately twenty feet by two feet in area. To avoid cold winds there are very tiny loopholes in the walls and when the doors are closed the entire house gets darkened. This is no doubt a deficiency in the ventilation system of these dwellings.

In the houses of the commoners there are only two stories. In the ground floor are housed the cattle. The rooms are small with very low roofs, lower than six feet. The poor people of this area are habituated to sleeping in a crouching position with coarse blankets wrapped over them. They sleep without ever changing their clothes.

On one of my visits to Leh I was invited by the Raja of Leh, who was then serving as a Lieutenant at Leh in the Ladakh Scouts to his ancestral palace. I was really impressed by the fine large palatial building, which towers in lofty pre-eminence over the capital city. It has seven stories and is about 250 feet long. The outer walls, I noticed, have a great slope, their thickness diminishing rapidly with the increase in height. There are long and open balconies on the upper stories and on the south side. Carved wooden pillars support the beams of the roofs. The outside planks are painted with beautiful designs. I found the palace very imposing, but the greatest weakness was lack of water.

Religion in Ladakh

Buddhism is the religion of Ladakh, however this Buddhism has its own features which make it a distinct 'Ladakhi Buddhism'.

After the great battle of Kalinga in the third century B.C., Emperor Ashok of India, himself disgusted at all the misery and bloodshed of war, became a Buddhist and swore never to wage war again. With the large administration at his command he then began in earnest to propagate the teaching of the Buddha. During 241 B.C. he sent a large number of missionary teachers to all the surrounding countries. He successfully and peacefully spread the doctrines of Buddha.

Thus the monk THERO MAJJHATIKA was sent to Kashmir and to Afghanistan to spread the religion of the Buddha. In the Indus valley and beyond, in Sindh Buddhism was spread to the people who embraced it around B.C. 243.

However it was only in the early first century A.D. that Buddhism spread to Ladakh. From here it went on into China. In 650 A.D., the whole of Tibet embraced Buddhism. In fact the history goes that after having been defeated by Emperor Ashoka in 250 B.C., KHRI TSAMPO, the defeated Indian prince sought refuge in Tibet and later became King of Tibet.

KHRI TSAMPO and his community opposed Buddhism as long as they had any influence in Tibet—this lasted many centuries. Their views were highly respected, more so since their criticism of Buddhism was not simply in the negative. They were in fact the followers of the swastika, the mystic Hindu cross.

They believed in the doctrine of eternal annihilation after death. According to this doctrine

of theirs all men, good or bad, dissolve into their component elements for all time to come. There is thus no question of rebirth in this doctrine. However they were very clear in pointing out that all evil is followed by evil, in this life, and in this world.

KHRI TSAMPO believed that while it would not always be visible in the outer circumstances, in the mind of man evil always created great suffering and misery. This doctrine was thus not really atheistic. Rather it was a form of Hinduism which interpreted all the great truths laying emphasis on goodness in the visible world. In doing so one became pure and was thereby already in the eternal state of ecstasy and freedom without having to wait for his physical death to come and claim him before he achieved that much valued eternal state.

The followers of KHRI TSAMPO in fact called themselves TIRTHA KARAS, or the pure doers. When the prince had crossed over into Tibet he took the title of PUNYA, which means 'the pure'. In certain parts of Tibet the word PON from PUNYA still survives.

In A.D. 400, when the great Chinese traveller visited India, he confirmed that during his travels he found Buddhism flourishing in Ladakh (KIA CHHE), as well as in all the small states northward of TSUNG LING (the modern name which is Karakoram). FA HIAN, as early as 400 A.D. noticed that the Ladakhi Buddhists carried the prayer cylinders with them. These prayer cylinders can

still be seen in the hands of many Lamas and Ladakhis hands to this day.

I noticed while discussing Buddhism with the learned Lamas in Ladakh, that SAKYA MUNI, the founder of Buddhism is usually called CHOM DAN DAS, or 'He who has been victorious'. However the common people call him Shakya THUBBA, or 'Mighty Sakya'. Buddha is considered to embody SANGYA KONCHOK, or the 'Supreme Intelligence'. The Lamas explained to me that dharma is CHHOS KONCHOK or the 'Supreme Law'.

So also the Sangha is GEDUN KONCHOK, or the 'Supreme Conglomeration'. Thus a Buddhist who has obtained Supreme Intelligence is styled SANGYA. As aspirer to this state is termed SANGYA PA, and the entire faith itself is called SANGYA KI CHHOS.

During my Ladakhi travels I discovered that the Ladakhis who follow Buddha still revere him. But they also worship PADMA PANI, JAMYA, and CHANRAZIK.

I found out that whenever they undertake a journey or any enterprise their prayers for its success are to PADMA PANI.

The Ladakhi Buddhists, like the Hindus believe in celestial beings. These are those divinities who are not subject to the eternal law of transmigration. Mortal beings are inferior to these immortal beings. As in the Hindu religion these celestial beings are divided into six categories. These six categories describe the journey of the soul from

inferior being to superior being till the soul merges with the Supreme Intelligence. After that merger of the soul with Supreme intelligence it is no longer subject to the law of transmigration.

These six stages are parallel to those of the older (indeed undated) Hindu religion. These are :

<i>Buddhist</i>	<i>Hindu</i>
(a) LHA or gods	DEVAS
(b) LHA MIN or demigods	ASURAS
(c) MI or Mankind	MANUSHYA
(d) DURBO or brutes	SHATAN
(e) YIDOK or goblins	BUT-PRETA
(f) MYALBA, or the damned	NARAKVASI

These are no doubt the mere skeletal outline of the categories and needless to say that each of these categories is further divided into various categories which delve into further details concerning the same. An example would suffice to explain this.

Among the gods themselves there are innumerable gods. Each of them has a different area over which his reign is supreme. They have too different legends and myths associated with them. An interesting fact is that the demigods of which there are also many types are often at war with the gods. However they never have any permanent victories to their credit. This type of analysis goes on to cover the entire progress of the soul till it merges with the Supreme, never to be reborn again.

The learned Lama of Hanle Monastery and I

had various in-depth discussions of the religion of Ladakh. I give here a brief of my discussions since to give them in detail would fill a volume in itself.

According to this learned Lama, the Buddha was a most compassionate man, and being an enlightened sage he sought to help mankind out by teaching them the eight-fold path that puts an end to suffering. According to the learned Lama of Hanle, the Ladakhis believe that the world was created out of the void. On dissolution the world will itself become nothing, and dissolve into oblivion. However the fact remains, said the Lama, that these are ways of expressing an inexpressible reality. Since the universe has no date in time but is eternal, though changing its form.

Human beings suffer misery due to their intense feeling of wanting whatever they set their eyes upon, or hear about. This leads to a slavery to efforts towards making what they want their possession. The trouble with this intense wanting of things or persons is that it creates an open ended demand which can never be fulfilled. Thus mankind always loses this battle of the mind and the spirit due to its alliance with the mind. Buddha, said the learned Lama had seen that one's mind could never be satisfied until the spirit in man had become the mind's most cherished objective. Once that was so, all that was necessary to life was retained. The intense wanting however fell away from the mind like a ripe leaf in the autumn.

This occurrence, said the learned Lama of Hanle, took many life-times to arrive at. The journey was

fraught with dangers and not all men could brave it. The Buddha was one great soul who emerged victorious. The difference between ordinary victory, and Buddha's victory was that his joy and knowledge could never be taken away from him as long as he lived. His achievement could not be reversed. An ordinary victory can be turned to defeat.

Thus men and women in Ladakh pray to the great Buddha to help them in their quest for Nirvana. The Lama of Hanle pointed out to me quite clearly that these were monastic teachings. The common man in Ladakh however knows the simple edicts of Buddha—such that one must not steal, go to another's wife, kill any living being, tell lies, forget his religious duties, and insult the teacher. He must be diligent, watchful, and pray each day for his deliverance from sorrow. In addition he must give alms to the needy and live an exemplary life. He must put his honour, and that of his family and nation before his own life. And that he must observe all the holy days and feasts and participate in all the religious ceremonies of his friends and relatives. He must not take drugs, alcohol, or putrid food. He must keep his body and mind clean, and lead a life which has a modicum of exertion and a modicum of rest, prayer, relaxation and pleasure. All this, the Lama said, would lead a man to experience a calm and tranquil state of mind. Preserved long enough, and given a scholarly life, peaceful surroundings, and regular contemplation, a man became like a tranquil lake singularly free from strife and misery.

The monasteries, the Lama told me, tried to provide precisely an opportunity to Ladakhis to reach such an exalted state of mind, when they were called *Bodddhisatva*, or 'He whose intellect has merged with Truth'.

The common Ladakhis however continue to believe in various types of disembodied souls and have beliefs closely corresponding to those of Hinduism. Thus the ordinary Ladakhis believe that an evil man is reborn as an animal on earth, after suffering intense agony for his sins in hell. The good man goes to heaven and becomes a demi-god. Or he may be reborn with better circumstances for his spiritual betterment. Some deluded men become disembodied souls that haunt men after their death unable to grasp that they are no longer of this world. These types of beliefs exist and there are many types of superstitions as well. Thus many Ladakhis that I met would not sit in the shade of a tree that had water running by it. When asked they said that if they did so, the spirit of the tree would drink their blood and it would turn to water.

However the majority of the Ladakhis follow the simple Buddhist dictum of 'Do good work, say no evil, and meditate for the deliverance of your soul from sorrow'. Thus Buddhism is a religion of peace, love, and dedication to work so that one's good deeds far outweigh the evil. The Ladakhi believes that the evil man cannot escape the workings of divine justice. Thus if he is cheated, and wrong is done against him, he accepts it as the

working of divine justice which will not let the perpetrators of evil in this world escape from the horrors of hell.

In Ladakh the Buddhist Lamas wear red/yellow dresses. The red dress sect are known to be the followers of NYIMAPA. It is said that around 1750 A.D. PADMASAMBHAVA (The gem of YRGYAN) was invited to Tibet by KRISONG DE TSAN. The main preaching of PADMASAMBHAVA was that 'Greed feeds on greed'. According to him greed was a most destructive element in the mind of man. This he said was the cause of all misery. In his later life he went to the extent of saying that a man's health, and even those of his friends was affected if he was a prey to greed.

He was believed to be an incarnation of DHYANA BUDDHA AMITABHA. The belief runs that in 1355 A.D. TSONG KHAPA or 'the Great Lama' was born and was an incarnation of Gautam the Buddha. After a lifetime of holy works he entered Nirvana in 1419 A.D. Before his death he had built GAHLDAM. The people of Ladakh were greatly influenced by him and more so by the teaching of his later life that 'Man may cheat man, and do all sort of evil. However the wheel of the Great Law shall exact from him punishment fit for his crimes'. This made the Ladakhis very god fearing and they are to this day very pious minded.

After his death, his following was however soon eclipsed by that of the TASHI LHUPO, who displayed greater learning and active zeal. However

the fame and piety of TSONG KHAPA reached far and wide and the sect of GELUKPA which he originated, still wears the yellow dress. The Dalia Lama and Panchan Lama also belong to this famous and pious yellow sect.

History has it that GEDUN GYA TSHO (Ocean of Lamas) was discovered while still a child, and he had on his person's certain marks that proved he was divine. It was he who founded the hierarchy of Dalai Lama at Lhasa in 1640 A.D. and became the God king of Tibet. Ladakh since then looks upto Tibet as the seat of their religious master and God. The still existing POTALA monastery in Tibet was built by him in 1643. After many solicitations from the Emperor of China, in 1650 he paid a visit to Emperor KHANG HI. His visit there as the first Dalai Lama and the fifth TASHI LAMA is engraved on stone in China. The whole of Ladakh soon came under the complete influence of the Dalai Lama.

It was also an education to me to learn of the great DHARAMARAJA another great Lama of Bhutan. In Ladakh as also in Tibet he is addressed as GYALBO RINPOCHE, which means Lord of the World. The great RINPOCHE laid great emphasis on having faith in the Supreme. According to him the entire foundation of the religious life is built on having faith in the existence of a divine intelligence. According to RINPOCHE the great Gautam Buddha had conquered the world due to his faith in the Supreme. RINPOCHE preached that unless one had great courage, and



Locals of Trishe.



Balties of Biagdangolo.



Family of Rani of Hunder.



Reception at Diskit Hospital Ladakh.



Approach to Kiari Det.



Right Approach to Kiari Det.



The grazing ground of Dungti 14500'. 19.10.65



Bahadur Path North Ladakh.

faith in the Supreme, his life would remain a barren, infertile one. This teaching of his was displayed in great feats of teaching and endurance in snow bound caves in Bhutan, Tibet and Ladakh where he travelled teaching the multitudes. It is believed that RINPOCHE had miraculous healing powers and could even raise people from the dead, cure diseases, or fly into the air. He is greatly revered in Ladakh.

Ritual Dress and Instruments

Most of the Lamas in Ladakh wear a red Guncha with long sleeves. The long skirt of the Guncha is secured with the help of a red girdle. They put on as footwear PAPUS of red colour. These are a type of high boot knitted of wool and keeps the feet very comfortable and warm in the cold climate. Most of the Lamas have their heads clean shaven of hair. This is true, as I saw of the grand Lamas of both the red and the yellow sect of Buddhism. In this habit of theirs they are similar to the Buddhists in India who are also obliged to shave the hair off their heads.

A myth exists in Ladakh that the sceptre DORJE is the vajra from India. This holy instrument is believed to have flown away from India and then alighted at SERA in Tibet. In India the vajra was an instrument which the rulers from 300 B.C., or even prior to that used to hold in their right hand. It was thus considered to be an object of great reverence and power, and was believed to protect the ruler that held it and paid it respect. It

was thus not simply an instrument, made of various metals. Instead it was conceived of as a living entity which had the power, if it so wished to attack the enemies of the ruler, or even to decimate a whole army. It was accepted by the rulers of those days that the Vajra might even attack the holder himself if he was not a strong and just man. On the rocks at UDEGIRI, one of the fine sculptures of Goddess Durga has her holding the Vajra in her right hand and using it to ward off the dangerous demon BHAINSASUR. This particular piece of sculpture is dated at the seventh century A.D. In Ladakh the Lamas feel that the CHOMO too is a seventh century sculpture. Till today there exist at DRAS a few pillars with Vajras on them, but they are not precise replicas of each other, but they are variations on the same form.

The ancient Indian Vajra has been depicted in the great sculptures at SANCHI (Fig. 1) and UDIGIRI (Fig. 2).

It is really surprising to note how the Vajra, due to regional variation, or as the Lamas put it, due to its flight from India, has changed shape, although the name and meaning remains the same. Witness the diagram on page 100.

The Prayer wheel (MANI-CHHOS-KHOR) is an ingenious instrument used for prayers. I first saw this instrument in Ladakh in 1948, during the first war of Pakistan with India. This prayer wheel has come to Ladakh from Tibet and does great credit to the genius of Tibetan Lamas. The prayer wheel consists of a brass cylinder with a diameter

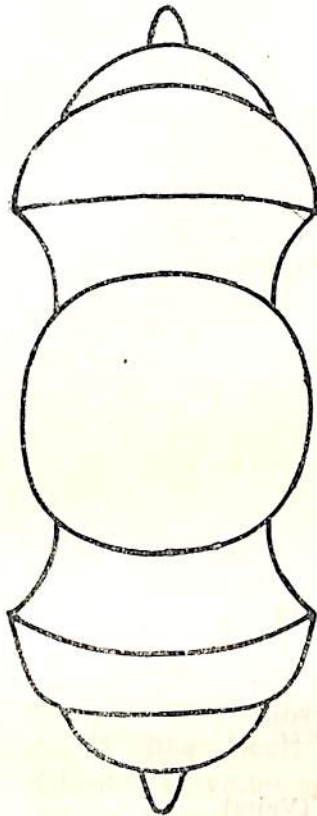


Fig. 1

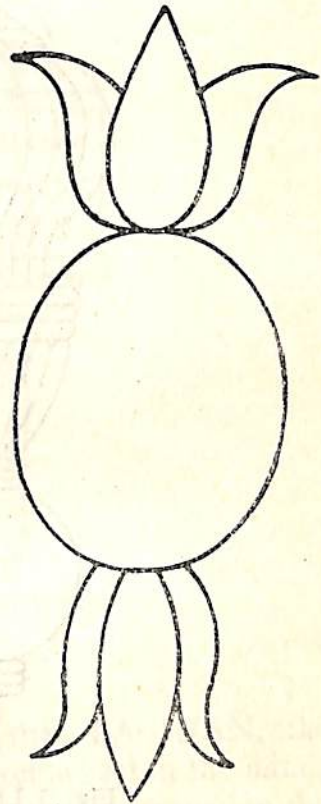


Fig. 2

of two and a half inches, and about three inches in height. It has a handle mounted on an axis to make the rolling smooth. This cylinder is filled with printed or written prayers and charms. Every Lama and old man carries such a cylinder which they keep on turning. The prayers thus revolve as the prayer wheel is turned round and round by a gentle and rhythmic motion of the right hand.

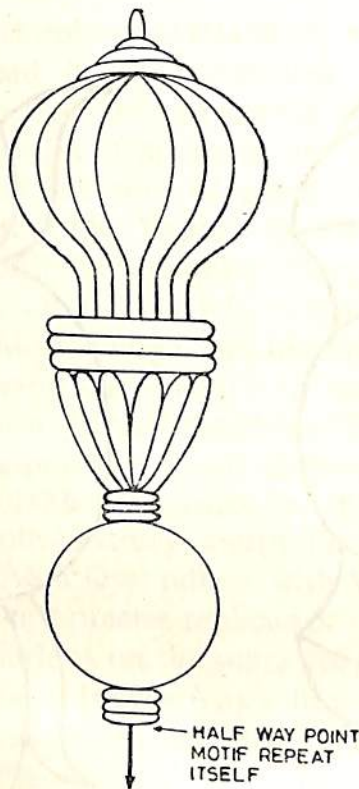


Fig. 3 Ladakhi Dorge^r (Vajra)

This motion is assisted by a piece of metal attached by a small thin chain to the outside and to the centre of the cylinder as well. Every revolution of the prayer is believed to be equivalent to its recitation. Thus the CHHOS KHOR is a wonderful instrument for multiplying the number of prayers of the individual who is rotating it. On the outside of the prayer wheel is engraved the holy mantra : AUM ! MANI PADMANE HUM ! .

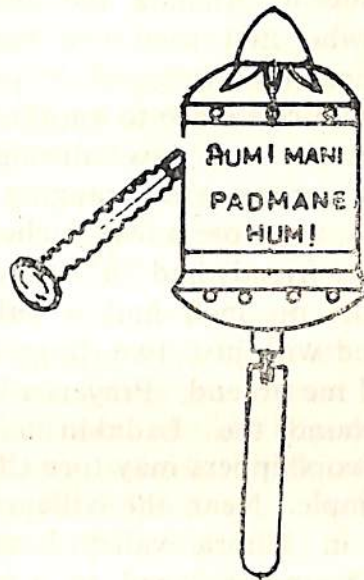


Fig. 4. The Prayer Wheel

It has been recorded that FA HIAN, the Chinese traveller saw this prayer wheel in the hands of the Lamas of Ladakh even as they moved in the streets of the capital of Ladakh. It is thus not a recent invention but traces its history back into antiquity.

The Lamas I talked to, told me that they believed that the prayer wheel was introduced by the Indo-Scythian beings in the early 1st century A.D., on the gold and silver coins of KUSHKA, the Indo-Scythian king. In that coin the king is holding the prayer wheel in his right hand. However they believed that the actual invention of this marvellous

machine is due to Ananda the chief disciple of the Buddha who first used it to help those who could not concentrate, to say their prayers even as they moved from one place to another.

Prayer wheels, as I saw during my stay in Ladakh are of various sizes ranging from those a foot in height, to those a few inches. One of my Ladakhi Lama friends had in fact a prayer wheel which was just an inch and a half. This wheel could be turned with just two fingers of one hand and fascinated me no end. Prayer wheels are often placed all around the Ladakhi temples so that pilgrims and worshippers may turn them as they go around the temple. Near the villages at Panamik and Dikshit in Nubra valley I saw that large prayer wheels were positioned in a way that they revolved perpetually due to the flow of the water channel taken from the rivers Nubra and Shyok. The inhabitants of these villages believe that these prayer wheels sanctify their fields and keep them safe. In fact these wheels are kept in good repair by the villagers who if they notice any flaw in their constant twirling, stop any work they may be doing at that moment and rectify the fault immediately. They would not risk losing a single prayer turning and thereby losing merit for the entire village to that extent.

The question is not entirely one of losing a single prayer. In fact the Lama I questioned on this matter told me that the idea was not just to amass numbers of recitations or turns of prayers. The point of attending to the prayer wheel lay

entirely in the idea that one must have a very reverential attitude towards the spiritual welfare of both oneself and the community. Thus the idea was to display a great zeal and enthusiasm towards the maintenance of these finely tuned prayer wheels.

I was told an amusing story about a Lama and his prayer wheel. This Lama used to always take his prayer wheel with him slowly turning it as he walked or talked. One day when he was climbing over a steep pass his prayer wheel slipped from his hand and fell out of sight into the deep ravine below. The Lama was beside himself with grief and sat down in despair. The bodhisatva KHE SANCHA appeared before him in a vision and asked him why he was so sad. 'Alas', said the crestfallen Lama, 'My prayer wheel has fallen from my hand into the deep ravine, and now I cannot recover it'. KHE SANCHA smiled and gave the Lama a brand new prayer wheel and said, 'Here take this as a present. But remember! The prayer wheel is to help you pray and not to make you feel helpless without it'. This story illustrates that what is important is prayer and that ultimately the prayer wheel is an adjunct to it.

Religious Buildings

During my stay in Ladakh I visited many religious edifices. These included the GONPAS, which house the Lamas and allow them to pursue an otherworldly life. Thus Gonpas are always built far away from influences that would disturb those

inclined toward a holy life. They are thus at a great distance from towns and villages and are positioned in the high hills. One of these Gonpas I spied from my helicopter when I was reconnoitering the area in the interior of Ladakh. I asked the pilot to stop the chopper in a small clearing about a kilometre from the Gonpa. Then leaving two officers guarding the costly machine I and the pilot made our way to this secret Gonpa. Although we knew we were close to it, to get to the Gonpa took us about an hour, so well hidden was it. When we reached there, there was no sign of anybody. At long last an old Lama greeted us. He said that he had a dream that two men from India would be coming. It was obvious that he was a very advanced adept and he told me my whole life history as if he had known me since I was a child. Not only this he taught me many methods of understanding oneself. Some of the secrets he revealed me then, and in my subsequent visits to him when he came nearer my Command headquarters, were so incredible that I was compelled to write a part of them in my book *Dhyana Mandala*. However that is a different story and must be told some other time.

The other type of buildings associated with religion are the *LHAKHANGS*, or the Temples of God. These temples as well as all others I saw in Ladakh are simply wonderful. In the larger temples the statues of Buddha or other images are of polished brass and are often very large indeed.

In small villages and in the interior, the statues of the gods are made of clay and are beautifully

painted. Another type of religious building is called the CHHOD TEN. This is in reality a shrine, a repository where offerings are made to the dead.

The dome of the Chhod Ten is crowned by the religious emblem of the dharma. This symbol is a monogram that is formed by the four radical letters of the old Pali language. Each of these represents one of the four basic elements, and put together the symbol is believed to represent the entire frame of man and the material universe as a whole.

These radical letters are ya- means air ; ra- means fire ; va- means water ; and la- means the earth, to which letter S, is added to represent Mount SUMERU.

Two eyes are always shown on the base of the Chhod Ten to indicate that that is the samadhi of an individual who was dedicated to the Supreme Buddha, SANGYA KONCHOK, the eye of the Universe.

Among the religious instruments or artifacts are included the DUNG TEN, which is a relic repository, and comprises a small vessel in which bones are kept. I was told this by the head Lama of Hanle, is actually a stupa which is prepared for relics.

In the Chhod Ten are kept various DUNG TEN vessels. It is the custom to build the Chhod Ten after the funeral of the deceased has taken place. However not every body is entitled to a Chhod Ten and this is constructed only over the relics of a great Lama or a great king, or anyone

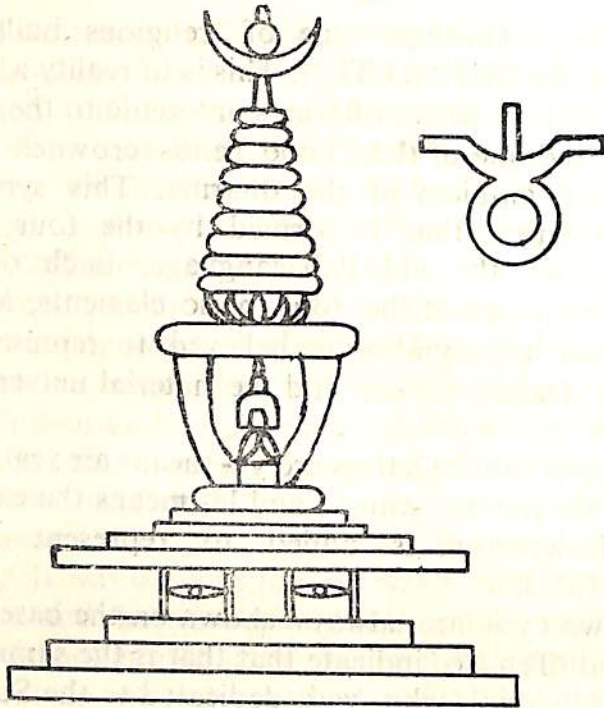


Fig. 5 A Chhod Ten

else who is considered to be sufficiently worthy of such an honour. These Chhod Tens are different from the various samadhis or chattries that are erected over the great dead in India. A close look at Figure 5 will indicate that the architectural detail of the Chhod Ten is clearly of the Buddhist type and has little similarity with Hindu shrines serving as reminders of great people of the past.

Another type of religious 'building' or carvings rather are the MANI boundaries and walls. This is a naturalized Sanskrit word. I noticed the

MANI around Leh, the capital city of Ladakh. These are stone dykes four to five feet high and six to twelve feet broad and between twenty feet to half a mile long. One of the Mani that I measured at Leh was 670 metres long. And another such dyke at Nubra near Hunder ran for a full 200 metres.

The surface of these manis is always covered with slates on which 'Om Mani Padmane Hum' is engraved. In some areas that I covered, these slates had 'Om! Vajra PANI HOM', inscribed on the slates of the mani. At Panamik in Nubra valley I noticed yet another inscription, 'OM! VAGIS-WARI HOM'. All these inscriptions are in olden Devagiri, letters called by the Lamas 'LANTSHA'. These slates on these manis are placed by all classes of people.

It is widely believed in Ladakh that the placing of such slates on a dyke (mani) creates merit for the placer, and is believed to be a type of worship that leads to the fulfilment of all ones wishes whatever they happen to be. There is thus hardly any family, if any at all that has not placed such a slate on a mani during its history. Some of the families in fact have placed many such slates. Such slates can be put for specific wishes also such as that for the birth of a son, or for a good harvest. They may be placed to have a safe journey and a happy return from the journey. The belief runs very wide and strong that once such a slate with one of the prayers described above is placed on a mani the wish of the individual will get fulfilled.

There is however another aspect to this belief. It is to be understood that the wish must not be harmful to anyone. One thus cannot wish anything that goes against the teachings of the Buddhist sages. Thus it is wholly inappropriate to place a slate and wish for the death of someone whose demise would perhaps benefit oneself in monetary terms.

I was told of an instance when a Ladakhi used this slate with a prayer inscribed on it to wish for the death of his neighbour who had been bothering him for many years and exploiting his family. This was a wrong wish and instead the man began to age prematurely himself and his hair began to fall off. Not until he had placed another slate wishing to be forgiven, did his face lose most of the wrinkles and regain his hair. Thus one must not have an improper wish when one places a prayer slate on a mani-dyke—else there will be dire consequences.

Each temple has a TSHA KHANG, or a room where small medallions containing the images of dead Lamas are received and put in a niche on the wall by the Lama in-charge of the temple. TSHA means a small medallion, which was originally made out of the ashes of a great dead Lama, after the ashes had been mixed with clay. A TSHA made of ashes and clay of the great Lama that it represents is believed to have the same power of blessing an individual as did the original flesh and blood Lama himself. It is believed to be a means through which the possessor of such a TSHA can communicate with the dead Lama and ask him

any question that is bothering him. He never fails to get a reply unless he is not able to communicate properly.

At the monastery of Razang near Leh I saw many TSHAs placed in the room specially meant for them. The dead Lama depicted in these images always is seated on the ground with his left hand in his lap and the right hand raised as if he is teaching the dharma to his students. Many of these figures are made of gilt.

The images of the grand Lamas who are no more in this world are made of silver or gold and are big in size. Of the images I saw two of them were made of precious metals. One of them was of gold and another of them was of silver. The KUSHAK informed me that the golden image was of the old Dalai Lama II.

I observed that Lord Buddha in his paintings (some of the original Ladakhi depictions of him are with me) has his right hand rested on his right knee, his left hand in his lap, on which he is holding an alms dish. In one of the paintings I have he is holding an alms dish in both his hands. In the paintings or statues the body of the Buddha is always yellow in colour, or of gilt. His hair is short, curly, and dark blue.

At SHE, near Leh I saw the copper gilt statue of SHAKYA THUBBA about 37 feet high, in a seated pose. It is 75 feet broad at the shoulders and twelve feet broad at the knee. It has long ears, each about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long. The alms dish itself

is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter. The circumference of the throne must be over 80 feet.

I was told by the elderly locals that this statue was made by the King of Ladakh (financed by his treasury) DELDAN NAM GYAL in 1680 A.D.

The goddess Dharma is also popular and statues of her abound in Ladakh. Her local name is CHHOS KONCHOK, and she is depicted as having four arms. Two of these are raised in prayer, third holds a garland, and the fourth hand holds a lotus. She is depicted as being very fair and charming.

There is an interesting myth concerning this goddess. It is believed that when Buddha had become enlightened he had prior to his enlightenment been tempted by many goddesses. One of these happened to be CHHOS KONCHOK, who appeared naked before the Buddha. However the Buddha told her calmly looking her in the eye, 'Why would you ruin a sincere monk, my dear. Instead use your charm to lead men to the right path'. From that day the goddess turned away from seducing weak monks and gave all attention to spreading dharma, hence her name. In the statues and images of GEDUN KONCHOK or the SANGHA, he is depicted as sitting and holding a lotus in the left hand, with his right hand resting on his right knee.

I observed quite clearly that these gods and goddesses have a definite resemblance with the Indian gods and goddesses. I suspect that this is due to the slow diffusion of culture from central India as the Lamas of the Indian Buddhism gradually

travelled to Ladakh. They took with them statues and paintings of gods and goddesses which were then used as models for the Ladakhi versions of various gods and goddesses. The question of these similarities coming from Ladakh to India and not the other way does not arise since the spread of Buddhism has been from India outwards and not the other way round. Further the possibility also exists that in Hindu Ladakh the various gods and goddesses worshipped by them were slowly transposed into the pantheon of gods and goddesses that are now present in a full-fledged form in Ladakhi Buddhism.

The Ladakhis themselves believe that when the great Lamas of Ladakh returned from pilgrimage to SANCHI and Bodh Gaya they brought back with them specifically Hindu images on which were based variations suitable for Buddhism. This is not surprising since Hinduism is in any case the ground from which Buddhism initially sprung up and flourished. For example the Ladakhi tantrika **TODDE PHAG MO** at Dikshit greatly resembles the traditional Hindu goddess Kali. She is represented in the red colour, and is wearing a garland made out of human skulls. She is holding the thunderbolt or vajra in her left hand and in her right hand is a cup full of blood. There are other images of this goddess that closely resemble the Hindu Kali mata.

At Dras, which is the coldest place in the entire world, which remains inhabited in the cold, I saw beside the main highway two pillars of granite mica

slate. Their location was between Styalbo and village Dras. There are figures of women on these pillars which the locals call by the name 'CHOMO'.

The pillar on the eastern side has as its main figure a four armed female with two female attendants, one on each side of her. These were constructed by the Hindu kings of Kashmir.

The western pillar too has the main figure of a female, with the difference that there are four female attendants, two on each side of the female figure.

There is a third stone pillar, the like of which are to be seen in Rajputana. One side of this pillar has a horseman and the other side has a faded inscription. This pillar resembles greatly the 'Rajputni Sati' of the Indian medieval period.

CEREMONIES AND RITES

In various monasteries that I came across during my tenure at Ladakh. I observed that the Lamas perform religious prayers three times a day. As they have no modern watches, by and large, their old customs and traditions are used to determine the timings. The first service is carried out at sun rise. The second at noon, and the third at sunset. These timings are thus also dependent on the placement of the monastery in the area. Their prayers consist of chanting of the precepts (DO), or the rules of discipline (DULUA), which is then followed by their musical instruments. These instruments are : A large sliding trumpet, 5 to 6

feet long called CHHOS DUNG (the Holy Trumpet). I was able to get one made in copper and brass and this is now being used as a standard lamp by me.

There are large drums called CHHOS NA. The other instrument I noticed was a pair of large brass cymbals (BUL CHHAL). Sometimes they also use the SANKH, or conch, locally called DUNG KAR. When these instruments are played during the prayers the effect is very solemn and enables one to reach great depths of concentration. I felt great peace flooding me whenever any of these wonderful instruments began to accompany the prayer service. During all these services incense is kept burning just as is the case in the Hindu temples.

I was amazed to note that after the prayer service the devotees offer fruit, grain, and even meat to Lord Buddha, the one who preached to all, 'Ahimsa permo dharma', or 'Non-violence is the greatest goodness'. However it would be proper to remember here that the Buddha was no religious fanatic. It was his teaching, as the KUSKHAK often told me, that man must not increase the suffering in the world. However, to do good in the world meant that one remain healthy and alive. Thus under exceptional circumstances meat is offered and eaten by the presiding Lamas. In fact one of these Lamas told me that Buddha would eat meat if someone put it into his begging bowl.

At the Gonpas the lamas performed the daily prayers three times a day formally and the mantra that they used was 'OM MANI PADME HUM'.

The chanting is always accompanied by musical instruments, including those of the wind and drums.

At certain times of the day the Lamas gather together and loudly recite the various names given to the Buddha. I enquired of Major Rinchin a brave and very courageous officer of the Ladakh Scouts as to the reason for this practice and he told me that the Lamas recited mantras and tantras in order to remove the anger of the female energies of the furious goddess Kali because they believe that the Dhyanis Buddhas female energies in the tantrika Shaktis are aspects of the goddess Kali.

In fact the belief runs that Kali herself protects the peace of mind of the Buddha since she is very partial to holy men and like Siva Buddha had done a very strict penance for several years. Therefore, the gods who had watched his progress with much interest were not surprised when Kali fell in love with him and vowed to protect him for his arduous disciplines in which, it is believed the god Siva himself descended from his heaven and helped the Buddha.

However this had the effect of Kali sometimes feeling wrathful on the worshippers of the Buddha, because their chants always asked him to bless them and to help them. Thus the worshippers try to placate Kali and her Shaktis so that their prayers may reach the Buddha and that the goddess may not exhume them.

THE LANGUAGE

The Ladakhi language is based on the Devanagri alphabets of the seventh century, which are even now in use. For example :

का	खा	गा	घा
चा	छा	जा	झ
ता	था	डा	ढा

and so on. I am of the opinion that these alphabets made their way in through Kashmir to Tibet and back into Ladakh. Due to the proximity of Kashmir to Ladakh perhaps the influence of the Tibetans on the Ladakhis became very great as it is today.

The visit of the Dalai Lama, in his present incarnation to Leh in 1966 was observed as a great occasion and the language spoken by him was clearly understood by his eager and respectful Ladakhi audience.

Further there are certain words that have been taken from Devanagri. Thus 'GARH' in Hindi is 'KHAR' in Ladakhi. However here the similarity ends since the same word even if borrowed from Devanagri has an almost unrecognizable and different pronunciation in Ladakhi. Another of their lingual traits is that they always pronounce 'Two' as 'Do', and are incapable of pronouncing the 'T' clearly and always load it with a heavy 'D' oriented accent. This is one of their own peculiarities. Again the spoken language is always unclear

and enunciated in a long string of words which are hard to distinguish unless one has lived among them.

PAINTING AND PRINTING

On enquiring I was told that the painting and craft of printing came to Ladakh from Tibet. I myself saw the engraved wooden blocks that were used for printing. I thought that this was a most expensive and laborious process. Thus when a new book was to be printed first wooden engraved blocks were made of each page and then the printing was done. The blocks which I saw had been used so much that the original sharpness of the characters had greatly diminished. However when these blocks are first cut the characters come out beautifully sharp. In fact seeing these blocks I was reminded of the wooden blocks which are cut in India for hand printing of ladies sarees. The possibility is therefore strong that this trade could have gone from India to Ladakh, during the various trade trips of merchants.

At the Hunder Gon-pas I saw one of the Horn Books which had been printed from one of the engraved blocks. A large part of this book comprised of diagrams which were patterned after the mandalas of Buddhism. These mystic diagrams were engraved such that there were many circles. Of these circles I noticed that :

- (a) the centre circle was blank;

- (b) the second circle had mystic writings;
- (c) the third circle had 'HIH' written eight times in it;
- (d) the fourth circle had 'HUN' written ten times all around it;
- (e) the fifth circle has Tibetan alphabets which are arranged in Sanskrit style;
- (f) the sixth circle has HUN, inscribed five times around it.

The seventh circle is the largest and has the teachings of the Buddha inscribed in it; in it are inscribed the four noble truths and the eightfold path. Some of these diagrams even show pictures of the Buddha either in his famous lotus pose or in his reclining pose. Yet other diagrams are those which depict the temptation of the Buddha by Mara the evil tempter. There were diagrams in which the seventh circle was a pictorial representation of the Buddha leaving his wife and child for the quest of enlightenment. Other diagrams showed the Buddha's first sermon at Benaras (Varanasi) and the incident when he was invited by a concubine for a meal.

In this way this Horn Book is a mystic scripture and is used for concentrating the mind. There were certain Lamas that I met which called it the most sacred mystic scripture of Ladakhis. They use these diagrams which are believed to have been revealed to the great Buddhist seers in meditation or dream to heighten their concentration and to foretell the future. This Horn Book was used as much as a

century ago to foretell the downfall of Tibet at the hands of the Chinese. As such not everyone is even allowed to look at it let alone to touch it except the very holiest of Lamas. It was thus my good fortune that I could touch it, see all the many exotic and esoteric diagrams, and have their meanings explained to me by the Lama-in-charge of the Gon-pha. I was told that no other copy of this sacred Horn Book is in existence. The only other one at Lhasa monastery suffered a fate that no one can be sure of when the Chinese overran the Tibetan plateau.

To my surprise I even found that in the central diagram there were inscriptions which I had once seen at the great top of SARNATH which is about ten miles from Benaras Cantt., in Uttar Pradesh. I had been very keen to take this inscription down to further my studies and it went like this :

Om ! MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SWA
 HA !
 YAH DHARMA HETU
 PRABHAVA HETU TESHAN
 TATTHAGATO
 HYAVADAT TESHAN CHA YA NIRODHA
 EVAM VADI
 MAHASRAMANAS.

The meaning of this inscription is :

'In the name of Supreme Power !
 Oh, Seer, Seer, the Greatest Seer,
 Salutation and adoration !

Of all things which spring from
Cause; that cause hath the
Seer who has crossed over sorrow
Explained; as also the cause of their
Extinction—hath the great ascetic
So clearly proclaimed !'

I am thus fairly sure that the influence of Indian Buddhism is very great in Ladakh, and that in fact the best portions of this Great Religion are today best preserved in Ladakh, since Tibet the fatherland of post Indian Buddhism is now under Chinese occupation, and communists have no respect for religion at all.

During my stay of two and a half years in Ladakh, I was surprised to notice that there was no new construction so far as the CHAD TON MANE or the GOM-PHAs were concerned. Keeping apart a very few Gomphas and Chadton, even the repair work was hardly ever carried out. Perhaps this is because now Ladakhis are more modern and materialistic than they were in previous generations. The presence of large number of troops and civil administrative personnel have exposed them to the new world and the locals have found many opportunities to better their living and to become aware of processes in the world. With work opportunities knocking at their doors they have become financially strong and have been attracted towards the material world more than their non materialistic forefathers ever were. After August 1947, things

have changed for the better in an almost unrecognizable way.

Good fortune put me in contact with some Lamas in the Nubra valley who till that day painted and printed in the ancient technique. I was lucky to be able to get paintings of the Lord Buddha in various Mudra (poses) and also paintings of the famous Dragons who fought with Buddha and tried to prevent him from getting Nirvana. The local painters used a technique by which the paint and colour used became fast by the mixing of the Gompa clay, leather and a secret fluid. With this decoction the colours become rock hard, and unwashable as I found out when one of my orderlies left out a prized painting uncovered in a thunderstorm. After it had dried it was as if the painter had just finished painting it !

CALCULATION OF TIME

The Ladakhis have their own system for the calculation of time. They work in a cycle of 12 years while working out the age of a man or a woman. But in writing and accounting they use a sixty-year cycle. Perhaps they were influenced greatly by the Indian Book Chosr Gyan, which enunciates such a cyclical system of reckoning the passage of time.

While discussing this subject at Panamik in Nubra during August 1966 with KHALON and ABA LE (Grand Old Lama, father of Major Rinchin, MVC and Bar) that even now the old

people are working out the years in a twelve year cycle. Each year in this cycle is named as :

1. BYI LO — the mouse year;
2. GLANG LO — the ox year;
3. STAG LO — the tiger year;
4. YOS LO — the hare year;
5. HPORUG LO — the dragon year;
6. SBRUL LO — the serpent year;
7. STALO — the horse year;
8. LUG LO — the sheep year;
9. SPRE LO — the ape year;
10. BYA LO — the bird year;
11. KHYI LO — the dog year;
12. PHOG LO — the hog year.

One incident during my command of Ladakh brought to me rather graphically the vagaries of the use of such a system for reckoning age, at least to the non-Ladakhi.

I used to visit Hunder, a small town about 14 kilometres from my tactical headquarters. I met the local Rani on one such visit and found her to be an old woman with impressive looks and great dignity. She was affectionately called AMA LE by the local residents of Hunder and around. The word AMA LE means 'respected mother' in Ladakhi. On enquiring from her I found that she had a number of grand children and even a few great grand children. During my stay I asked an

escort to try and find her age since I did not feel up to confronting her with this question directly by myself. I felt that she must be about sixty years of age. I was taken aback when she told my escort that her age was just going to be fifty, but had not reached that age. In fact, she said, her age was 48 years to be exact.

The Goba of Hunder must have seen my bewildered expression and he gently explained to me the reason why AMA LE had yet not completed her 50 years. According to him she had yet not completed the full cycle of five groups of twelve years. She was running the fifth cycle of twelve years, and had still two years to go before she finished it. Till then she would always give the period of four cycles as her age, since she had completed them ten years ago. That is her age by western reckoning was 58, while by the Ladakhi method it was still 48, until it suddenly jumped to sixty years of age. This mode of age calculation is very important, since not until a child is twelve is he/she really considered to have been born. Before that he/she in reality has no age.

In my study of it I found that the cycle of sixty years was more elaborate. The Khalon told me when I asked him that the first cycle started from 1026 A.D. This system of time reckoning came to Ladakh from Tibet, who in turn had adopted it from the Chinese. Thus these cycles move as follows :

- (a) First cycle began in 1026 A.D.;

- (b) Second cycle began in 1086 A.D.;
- (c) Third cycle began in 1146 A.D. ;

This continues and the cycle changes every sixty years. And so we have :

- (d) Fourteenth cycle began in 1806 A.D.;
- (e) Fifteenth cycle began in 1866 A.D.;
- (f) Sixteenth cycle began in 1926 A.D.;
- (g) Seventeenth cycle began from the year 1986 A.D.

The present cycle therefore is the 54th-year of the Seventeenth cycle. However for normal working these days the Ladakhis use the present A.D. calendar, or use the Indian system as an alternative when the work is not being done in offices.

I tried hard to find out why these methods were used since it is obscure to me why they should use such a system of calculation that does nothing to add to the efficiency of the calculation. I was told that man has six cycles to go through and in each of these he must strive to do some particular task. Thus the idea it seems is religious in its basis and has a purpose to remind a man what he should be doing in any particular cycle of life to which he belongs. So also each sixty-year cycle has its own characteristics, which if known help man live peacefully.

- 1) The present cycle therefore in the 24th year of the Government cycle. However for normal working these days the Indians use the present A.D. calendar or use the Indian system as an alternative when the work is not being done in office.
- 2) I try to find out why these methods were used in the past and why they should not be used in the future of the calculation. I was told that the present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 3) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 4) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 5) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 6) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 7) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 8) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 9) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.
- 10) The present cycle is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past. It is not the same as the one used in the past.

History of Ladakh

THE RULERS OF LADAKH

The early history of Ladakh was very greatly related to and influenced by its large neighbour TIBET. This was true not only of political events but also true of its religious influences. Thus the chief Lama, or the head pontiff of LHASA played a major role in the day to day existence of the Ladakhis, being their temporal head, to whom all Buddhists of the region had to pay respect and obey. The political influence was however nominal, indirect, and more by implication than by direct order or suzerainty.

Throughout its history the Ladakhis asserted their independence. Two of the very strong and independent rulers were the vigorous Palayai Gon of the tenth century and the great Singge Namagal during the seventeenth century. The former king is attributed with the personal strength of being able to lift a horse all by himself. The stories of

his liking for women are to this day legion and repeated with awe.

Fa-Hian, the Chinese pilgrim who visited India in A.D. 400, travelled through Ladakh and went up to Sarnath the place where Lord Buddha attained his Enlightenment. The same Fa-Hian mentioned in his report that Kha Chan (or 'Snowland of Ladakh) was ruled by a king and many Lamas all of whom were strong adherents of the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

In B.C. 250 the Great Emperor Ashoka embraced Buddhism, in a Quinquennial Assembly, after his great sorrow at the bloodshed in the battle of Kalinga. Though this ceremony is no longer observed in India, the Buddhists of Ladakh perform it to this date with great gravity, pomp and glory.

Buddhism has taken firm root in Ladakh and it is a well known fact that Buddhist doctrines were initially spread widely in Tibet and Ladakh by five hundred Kashmiri Buddhist missionaries.

During the tenth century, the great empire of Tibet broke up due to wars and internecine feuds sparked off by the petty differences among the ambitious war lords who wanted to and did establish their own little kingdoms. One of the famous war lord turned king was Tashi Degon, and he ruled over the kingdom of Purang. Tashi Degon was in reality a despot and his kingdom quaked in fear whenever he was seen riding past with his retinue. He racked the poor people with compulsory presentations. From the tenth century to the seventeenth century the history of Ladakh

is unrecorded and this constitutes a big blank in the recording of developments there. This again is due to the irresponsible behaviour of Mir of Skardo who invaded Ladakh in the seventeenth century. Ali Mir, as he was known, ordered his minions to invade temples and monasteries, loot the treasuries, destroy all the historical and scriptural records they could find, and burn them, or throw them into the river Indus. Thus, the Kushak of Razang ruefully informed me, almost nothing was left of the historical records.

However as I found out this was not strictly a disadvantage since many Lamas had taken pains to reconstruct the history once again. Namgyal, King of Choving, who conquered Ladakh after Ali Mir was keen that the historical records be maintained and remade if lost.

This information is all in Tibetan and during my stay in Ladakh I arranged for Kallon Jr, a Ladakhi scholar who was my good friend to translate these records for me. These records covered the Ladakhi Lamas ideas of cosmogony, theogony, and of course the history of the region. It was thus by dint of sheer persistence and hard work that I was able to come by this most rare information.

The translated records revealed that Ladakhi history saw many invasions, twists and turns of fortune. King Chovan Namgyal, whom we are responsible for naming the Saviour of Ladakhi History, was a son of a Tibetan king exiled from Lhasa. The dispute was over a woman whom he

wanted to wed, but was not allowed to by his aging father, who instead of listening to his pleas forced him to elope with her. Unfortunately for him she died on the way to Ladakh where Namgyal took refuge and remarried again. At this time the Great Emperor Jehangir was ruling in India (A.D. 1580-1600). Namgyal was a great warrior and he raised his own Army, became ruler of Ladakh, by ousting those in power and beheading them as was the custom for those rulers who lost a battle.

Namgyal's ambitions knew no bounds and he conquered the neighbouring kingdoms of Chang Marangi, Lodang, Parang Guge, Lhojumlang, Lungti, Shigar, and Khalekar. Still unsatisfied with his bloody conquests Namgyal retired to his capital and busied himself with re-equipping his forces with horses and weapons to invade Nubra via the famous trade route of Yarkhand which led through (DIGARLA - PANAMIK-TALABUTI-LA SASAR LA-KARAKORAM) NUBRA.

On hearing about the impending invasion of this extremely ruthless king the Chief of Nubra himself crossed Khardungla and tendered his submission. He did this to avoid a battle which he felt he would lose, and with it his head, apart from causing untold misery to his people. He is thus still remembered by the people of that valley as a noble soul.

Namgyal accepted his surrender gladly and dispatched one of his worthy officers to govern the district of Nubra. He imposed an yearly tribute of

one hundred tillas (one tilla being then equal to Rs. 6/-, Indian currency) upon the landlords of Kukiwala, and upon Rudok an annual tribute of two hundred and seven tillas. In addition he was to receive one horse and ten unicorns. Namgyal also levied a considerable sum from the neighbouring districts.

Chovang Namgyal amassed a very large fortune as a result of his conquests. Eager for salvation now he desired to erect a grand statue of Lord Buddha in Satypal, and inscribe 'Snkya Bidung' (replete with extreme holiness) under the statue.

The king in the presence of his subjects made to the deity and then gave a great feast to celebrate this historic occasion. He also promised his beloved subjects that he would further the cause of religion by erecting many other such statues of famous deities with mottoes inscribed under them. He felt that he could educate the masses in this way and do them some good in this way also. Alas this was not to be for he fell pray to a mysterious ailment which consumed him before he could keep his promises and fulfil his cherished dreams. His death in A.D. 1600 came as a great shock to his widow since he had by then not managed to get an heir for himself, and in fact had not had any children from his queen at all.

Jamya Namgyal, his younger brother succeeded him, and ascended the throne of Ladakh. All the district chiefs remained loyal to him, except for a petty chieftain who ruled Purik. This chief was more loyal to Ali Mir, the Gyalpo of Baltie. This

was a source of both worry and irritation to Jamya Namgyal who was no novice in statecraft. He thus joined hands and forces with Chovang Malig, the ruler of Purik who was also being harassed by the same chieftain. They also succeeded in getting the support of the elder brother of this same rebel chieftain. King Jamya Namgyal himself joined the forces which were deputed to bring the rebel chief to task. He need not have gone but the task was considered to be so simple that he felt he could set a good example by personally going to war.

It was, therefore, under normal circumstances the most innocuous of war operations. However fate was not on the side of King Namgyal, and as ill-luck would have it the King and his forces were approached by and covered over by a violent blizzard of great intensity. The blizzard consumed a major portion of this hapless army of King Namgyal. It was most fortunate for the King that a few close friends and the guards deputed to look after his security kept their mind and were able to save him.

However this was really a small breather before disaster struck and overtook King Namgyal. All is fair in love and war, as the saying goes, and the Chieftain of Purik was not one to falter. Taking full advantage of the situation he took a most mobile group of horsemen with him and attacked the demoralized King and his soldiers and took them captive. They were tortured and made prisoners of war by the rebel chieftain and put into dungeons located within 'SKARDO', the Starry

Fort, in Baltistan. Very few prisoners escaped from it. However worse was yet to come. Ali Mir, the Mir of SKARDO, who hated the King of Ladakh was quick to take advantage of this situation. Soon as he learnt of the predicament of King Namgyal he marched upon Leh with a large force and captured it and thereby captured the rest of Ladakh having the capital under his control. Being a Muslim he hated all idol worship and destroyed the entire set of beautiful temples and monasteries. In his blood lust he went so far as to unthinkingly desecrate and destroy the peaceful statues of Lord Buddha, and often took the lead in these matters himself by smashing off an arm or the face of such a holy statue. Not satisfied with all this the Mir turned his destructive attention to bibliophilie and threw all the religious books and writings that he could lay his hands on into the river Indus, or burnt them. With this he felt that his conquest was well established and his blood lust subsided to some extent. He then appointed a governor for Ladakh and marched his forces back with much loot back to Skardo via Kargil and Chorbatala.

On his return Ali Mir proved that he was a master of statecraft and politically very mature. He thus decided to give one of his daughters in marriage to the imprisoned King Namgyal, who was brought out of his dungeon on his acquiescing to this liaison. With this Machiavellian move Ali Mir made an alliance which turned the hostile relation with Ladakhis into one of lukewarm friendship and still gave him the support of Ladakh.

The return of King Jamya was an occasion of much joy to his subjects who wept with joy at his arrival. They came from all over Ladakh to offer their congratulations for his marriage and make offerings of submission. Their common plea was that he restore their temples and monasteries so that they may have places to offer worship. King Namgyal wept with happiness at this affection of the people for him and his new queen. He set to work immediately to make the temples and monasteries usable and procured holy books from Lhasa and installed them again with due ceremony. With support from his people and prudent management he was able to achieve this in the shortest possible time. He restored the morale of the army by making a successful conquest of TANCHI.

The Baltian queen gave two sons to Namgyal and he called them Singge and Norbu. These two children in due time married. Singge married the daughter of Chowvang Gyalmo, who gave him two sons. On the happy occasion of becoming grandfather of two children who would carry on the monarchy Namgyal sent costly presents to the temples of Joborinche at Brakpipulka, near Lhasa. Under regal order from him the Gyatokisangsum (Secrets of Gyatok) were copied in letters of gold, silver and copper. Namgyal however died in great grief at not being able to complete the two remaining temples of Lord Buddha. His life had been eventful indeed.

King Jamya was succeeded by his eldest son Singge to the throne. Singge was a most ambitious

king, and was eager to establish himself as a military hero, like his brave uncle Chovang already had. To make such a reputation of a brave warrior for himself he attacked without reason the districts of Guge, Kiprok and Tipichangyap. He looted and pillaged these areas completely ruining the rich landlords of these areas. He then consolidated this area and ruled it well.

During Singee's reign a great saint Staktshang Raspa visited Ladakh and stayed in the village of Tamosgang below Leh. According to Staktshang, the World Teacher, the Enlightened One has already been born in the early years of the second half of the twentieth century. This incarnation of the Buddha will however not be like the previous one and he will lead the normal life of a householder, while preaching the dharma. Staktshang held the revolutionary theory that the Buddha had one incarnation left, in which he would live with his wife Yasodhara and child Rahul a rich and contented life of householding while preaching the law, and would be equally, if not more respected and famous than in his previous incarnation. According to this revolutionary theory this was a karmic debt that the Buddha owed to Yasodhara and Rahul who had not wronged him in any way and so also his parents, the noble king and queen. This was his famous prediction. Tamosgang prospered with the vibrations of this holy soul who only called himself the harbinger of the Buddha's reincarnation which he placed about two hundred years or more after he had departed.

On the death of the famous Ali Mir, the Mir of Balti, his son Ali Sher ascended the throne of Balti. By now the relations between Balti and Ladakh had deteriorated and war clouds were again visible.

The Mir of Balti, Ahmed Khan his grandson, and Jehangir Shah his trusted general plotted to invade Ladakh from the north-west via Chorbatla. To guard his left flank he sent a small highly mobile force towards Turtuk. This was also to protect his rear lines of communication to Skardo fort.

Singee Namgyal himself was tense when he heard of the war movements along the front and was keen to avenge his father. He entrusted the guarding of Leh to Norbu his younger brother.

Blood lust was up in Singee and he cunningly drew his enemy into the defile at Kargil. When the entire force had gone in he sealed the front and rear of the enemy troops. He pounced on the enemy from the hill tops great confusion was created among the enemy and a great slaughter followed near Kharbu, on the left bank of the Kanji river.

The victorious King Singee was given a great reception by the king. But on hearing that the local chiefs of Guge, Chaprang, and Robostang had rebelled against him during his battle days, he lost no time in merry-making. Instead he diverted his entire army and advanced against the rebels who caved in without a fight and surrendered to him making vast offerings of wealth. To prove

their loyalty they joined forces with him in his invasion of Rudok, which their joined strength soon over-powered. Flushed with these heady victories Singee made preparations to invade Lhasa and did so when these were complete. Such was the terror struck by Singee's invading soldiers, and their reputation had reached such a high peak that again the ruler of Lhasa sent a personal envoy to make peace. Thus at Sri Kir Kiv, half way from Leh and Lhasa great offerings of wealth were made to the King Singee. He accepted these peace offerings and left the territory that he had occupied, and moved his forces back to the tract between Spiti and Garo. Singee Namgyal was a great warrior king and his exploits in war are legendary. The districts he conquered themselves make a very long list and include the area from Panang to Shakyamcho. He also conquered Guge, Zanskar, Spiti, Purik, Mangyunila, and Sedakh.

Singee Namgyal was proud father of three heirs, called Deldan, Indra, and Tenchhong respectively.

During his lifetime, the king divided his kingdom into three parts. To his eldest son he gave charge of Ladakh, Purik, Rudok, and Mangyaum as far as Dah on the river Indus. His second son was given charge of the district of Guge; to his youngest son he gave charge of Spiti and Zanskar. Singee Namgyal ruled his kingdom for a full five decades. He died in 1670.

Deldan Namgyal thus became the king of Ladakh, Rudok and the western districts of Purik, Suru, and Hembabs. He was of a religious bent

of mind and on assuming the throne he zealously constructed a large image of the Buddha of gold and silver and erected it in village She. This image exists to this day in She, but time has worn off its gilding. What remains is a colossal copper figure of Shakya Thubba in a squatting posture. Village She is about five kilometres from Leh situated on the right bank of river Indus. In memory of his great father he built a lofty tomb with a pinnacle of gold and silver. He made a monument for his mother as well. For the people he built important temples in Pushbuz and Tumnuz. In the Leh fort he built a statue of Chandra to be used for daily worship. Adjoining the image of Chandra he built a statue of the God of death Chanrazik, also for similar worship.

Deldan Namgyal appointed Shakya Gya Cho as his prime minister. Shakya was an unpopular man and the subjects revolted against his appointment to high rank. However Deldan did not take kindly to this show of resentment, and ordered Shakya to arrest dissident officers, which he did with the help of the army at his command. The offending officers were marched from Kharbu to Leh in chains to teach other dissident subjects a lesson. They were imprisoned in the fort of Hemis.

These punitive measures did not however help create a climate of peace. An year later rebellions began in Chigton, Shako, and Sod, in the Suru valley. Shakya however was more than equal to the quelling of this rebellion. He used his wife to capture Thai Sultan the leader of the rebels, at

Kharchu an important village in the Suru district. Thai was sent in disgrace to Leh as a prisoner, and there suffered a sad fate.

Deldan continued his father's expansionist policy and asked Shakya to continuously invade the neighbouring areas. Thus Khapalor was advanced towards and on the way Chorbalia was captured. Before Shakyas forces could begin their bloodshed the local chiefs of the area, Hatim Khan, Sultan Khan and Ali Khan offered surrender at Thorche-khar, which was accepted by Shakya.

Meanwhile the Governor of Kashmir plotted with the chiefs of Kharchu and Baltistan to surprise attack Shakyas forces. However Shakyas general Parak Namgyal was more than equal to the occasion and reduced the Balties and Kashmiris to a disorganized pulp in the ensuing battle. The enemy was forced to make an unconditional surrender, and Kharchu and Balti were thus annexed to Ladakh.

However this did not signal any kind of peaceful era for Ladakh. Hardly had the dust of battle settled down than Chobar Jongar and Lobzang Sherab, descendants of Greeks and Changez Khan, the Great Marauder, took on the Ladakhis at Dalang Kharmer and drove them back to Lung Khung. However due to the long lines of communications and supplies needed by them they could not press their advantage. The severe winter also took a toll on their armies morale. As such they were forced to retreat and leave the land once again for the Ladakhis to rule.

The following summer another bloody battle

ensued between the Ladakhis and the Mongol descendants. This battle of Chang La was fought in A.D. 1685-86 and forced the Ladakhi army to retreat into Leh. Sokpo Chief, and Galdan Jongar, the conquering generals captured the territory right upto Nyimo, twenty miles below Leh, on the right bank of the river Indus. They could not lay hold of numerous forts as those of Jaingang, Baku, Chimra and Tumnuz, with his forces. For six months they tried to capture these coveted forts to no avail. The repeated skirmishes between the enemy groups were marked for their heavy casualties.

Galdan Jongar employed the tactic of destroying the main bridge on the lines of communication of the enemy. He did this by making his troops throw heavy boulders on it but somehow the efforts failed. This event took place on the year of the Wood Mouse, or A.D. 1686-87.

Deldan in a fit of inspiration implored the help of the Governor of Kashmir, who in turn requested Emperor Aurangzeb to grant permission to despatch a highly mobile force of 6,000 from Delhi. This force was despatched post-haste to help the king of Ladakh under the command of five trusted and brave field Commanders. The large force crossed the river Indus at Khallach from Srinagar to Leh from the main highway.

At THANSKYA TANAG a mighty battle was fought and the force from Delhi pushed back the SOK POS and pushed them beyond the fort of PITAK, and the enemy took refuge in the fort of

Leh where the force from Delhi surrounded them and put to heinous death an entire garrison. In A.D. 1687-88, the year of the Wood Ox, the remaining soldiers of the Sok Pos, retreated under Ladakhī attack from Leh to KASHUN outside Ladakh. At this the army of the Emperor withdrew to Kashmir accompanied by the younger son of the Gyalpo of Ladakh. However in the year 1688-89, the SOK POS invaded Ladakh once again in a surprise move and destroyed the fort at Leh but on the mediation of Lama BURG PA PHOM BANGPO, the Sokpos agreed to withdraw on the condition that the district of Rudok be handed over to them by the Ladakhis.

These terms were agreed to by the Ladakhis and a permanent line and boundary pillars set up between the two. This line of demarcation stretched from village DECCHOG to the hill KARBONAS.

In the battered history of these times it is clear that war was the order of the day and that Ladakh was not at all immune from invasion from outside. Thus in the year A.D. 1748, the KALMAK TARTARS invaded Ladakh and forcibly occupied the capital Leh. The Gyalpo escaped to Kashmir and requested military aid from IBRAHIM KHAN, the governor of the province under Emperor Aurangzeb. This time however the forces were sent on the precondition that the Raja must embrace Islam and turn Mussalman, Ibrahim Khan led a strong force to Leh and after a most trenchantly fought battle pushed out the tartars from Ladakh.

Now Deldan Namgyal assumed the title of Akbal Mahmud and re-ascended the throne of Ladakh, as the first Moslem ruler-convert. He then built a mosque in Leh, which still exists to prove his loyalty to the faith he had embraced to save his people from devastation. However, after a brief honeymoon with Islam, which lasted only as long as conditions were unstable, the King reverted to his Ladakhi Buddhist creed. This apostasy was overlooked by the Emperor in Delhi in view of the encouragement given by Deldan Namgyal to Islam in Ladakh. I enquired after this strange aspect of Ladakhi history but the Kushak of Rezang and other learned Lamas did not agree with the account of Deldan Namgyal turning turtle on Ladakhi Buddhism at the time of crisis and under pressure from Aurangzeb. According to my informants the case was not as drastic and only tributes were paid to the Governor of Kashmir, and concessions made to Islam during the presence of Muslim troops in Ladakh. They said however that JIGBAL eldest son of Deldan Namgyal was converted to Islam and accompanied the Muslim troops to Kashmir when they withdrew there. This act of conversion and the mosque built at Leh satisfied the Emperor.

Mir Izzet Ullah in his *Oriental Magazine* No. V, p. 109, also confirmed that on the abdication of the Raja of Leh his fourth son DELEK NAMGYAL became the ruler of Ladakh and reverted to Buddhism, and the apostasy was overlooked at Delhi in consideration of the small annual tribute paid

to the Governor of Kashmir as the representative of the Emperor. In addition to this act of gratitude the new ruler gave encouragement to Mohomedanism.

Mir Izzet Ullah further states that the title given to the Raja was Akabet Mahmud Khan, and the Kashmiris addressed the Raja by that designation. The Raja used to coin the JUD in the name of Mohommed Shah, (one Jud being equal to 0.25 paise). This fact was confirmed by late Thakur Kartar Singh of Akhnoor to me in 1952. According to him the Dogra troops of General Zorawar Singh used to address the Gyalpo as Akabet Mahmud Khan.

The Kushak, on the other hand stoutly denied to me that the Gyalpo ever embraced Islam. He said that rumours were spread to that effect, and also, often believed in by the ignorant and educated alike. He however did admit that Islam got a foothold in Ladakh during the reign of Deldan Namgyal, and tributes were paid each year to the Governor of Kashmir to retain his goodwill. Deldan Namgyals battle chequered and colourful reign was from A.D. 1670 to 1705. Whatever his faults he had DELEK NAMGYAL, who ascended the throne after his father Deldan Namgyal married the gyalmo (princess) of Lomostang. She became proud mother of five male children. DELEK reigned Ladakh from 1705 to 1740. He too was a warrior by compulsion, and conquered the district of Spiti, Murad, and others. The Mir of Balti who reigned Baltistan from A.D. 1720 to 1750 invaded Ladakh and conquered it. From A.D. 1750

to A.D. 1834 the history of Ladakh was very much the repetition of the previous pattern of wars between Ladakh and Baltistan frequently and unabatedly. Tributes continued to be paid to the Governor of Kashmir even when it was under Sikh rule.

The repeated warning of the Sikh Governor alarmed the successive Gyalpos and soon each of them in succession made tenders of their allegiance to the British. However to avoid any misunderstanding with Maharaja Ranjeet Singh the British (East India Company) avoided making any acknowledgement of this tender of allegiance. From then on, this blunder led to the constant threat of the invasion of Ladakh by the Sikhs. They knew that their policy of alliance with the British against the Sikhs had failed and that it was a matter of time before the Sikhs overran their land with their superior fighting forces. In fact their fears were not false.

Of the Sikhs, Raja Dhyani Singh, and his brother Raja Gulab Singh were great warriors. Known as the 'Jammu Brothers', they were ever ready for battle. They had a powerful lobby in the Sikh durbar at Lahore. The Jammu brothers resolved to do battle and win Lahore and Baltistan for the Sikhs.

Gulab Singh conquered Kashtwar—with this the Jammu brothers power extended all over the hill states between river Jhelam and river Ravi. Only Kashmir remained outside their raj. Gulab Singh then ordered General Zorawar Singh to conquer Ladakh via the Kashtwar valley.

Mehta Bastiram, who later became the Governor at Leh noted that the expedition of Zorawar Singh comprised able commanders including Mia Tuta, and Vazir Khojah Bhunjah, apart from noteworthy commanders such as Sardar Uttam Singh, Zalim Singh, Mirza Rasul Beg and Singee Mankotiah. All of them had proved themselves in battle.

The well prepared Dogra army marched under General Zorawar Singh from Kashtwar and entered Ladakh via Suru valley pass which was easy to cross from the north side but steep and difficult on the south side. On the fateful day of 16 August, 1834, MANGAL, the Chief of Boti with 5,000 men marched on to the valley to defend his territory.

General Zorawar Singh decided to attack a hill defended by the Ladakhis. Chief Mangal fought the battle bravely for the entire day and both side suffered numerous casualties, however the Ladakhis lost less men than the Dogras. When the Ladakhis were dislodged and the death count was taken it was found that Dogras had lost 30 men and 40 of them had been wounded. The Ladakhis had lost just 7 men and 6 of them had been wounded.

The Dogra force encamped on the north side of the hill for the night and marched next morning to SURU where it halted for eight days. Zorawar forbade all his troops from indulging in rape, loot, and arson and this was well rewarded in that the local chieftains gained the trust of the General because he was very diplomatic in his camp orders and they could fearlessly approach him. During his stay at Suru Zorawar Singh began to build a small

Fort which when completed came to be known as 'KILLAH SURU KURRI',

Zorawar sent some of his troops back but himself stayed a month in this fort. He then advanced with his force to SHAKHAR fort belonging to THAI SULTAN. He took this over by force, and reinstated local chiefs JANGURI and SHAKHAR in their village. In addition he imposed a tax of Rs. 4/- per year on each house of that village for his protection. Zorawar left a force of thirty men in the fort and an additional detachment of ten men to guard the village bridge. The rest of the forces advanced by the valley of LANG KARCHU and MANJI to the bridge of PASKYUM. At this point the Ladakhis gave battle to the advancing Dogras. The struggle was protracted, however in this case the casualties were far greater on the side of the Ladakhis. While the Dogras lost eight men killed, the Ladakhis suffered a death toll of sixty men and had over hundred badly wounded. By a life saving manouevre the Ladakhis retreated hastily across the bridge which they destroyed after crossing. The next day however the army of Dogras crossed river Wakachu on inflated-got-skins and met no opposition. Meanwhile the Chief of Paskyum fled to the SOD fort. He collected the local Zamindars and raised a force to fight the Dogras.

Zorawar Singh stayed back at the fort of Paskyum to consolidate his gains. He ordered one of his commanders to attack the fort of SOD. The Dogras used their artillery as they attacked and

inflicted many casualties on the Ladakhis, however, they suffered many more by comparison. Zorawar Singh ordered Commander Basti Ram to mount a vigorous attack, which he did at dawn the next morning. Just as it turned light the artillery blasted at the fort and the force of five hundred men taking cover from it rapidly advanced to the assaulting position. By daybreak they had captured the fort and taken the Gyalpo as their prisoner. The other men taken as prisoners amounted to a massive 6,000 men. Having such a large gain Zorawar imposed very strict terms for a settlement and two months passed without any decision being arrived at.

During this stalemate the Gyalpo of Ladakh, Akabat Mahmud Khan with Banka Kahlon and four other chiefs, Gapalju, Dorje Namgyal, Chovang Nabdan, the Kahlon of Bazgo and Rahim Khan of Chachot all collected a force of 22,000 men and reached Mulbil. From this force of strength an envoy was sent to Zorawar to discuss the conditions for peace. Their intention was to frighten the Dogra army with their display of force. They however asked for an honourable settlement, and asked for a respectable and confidential representative to be sent to them for discussion of the terms of peace. General Zorawar agreed to this suggestion and hosted a large feast for the Botis and placed turbans on several of their heads. He deputed his able Commander Basti Ram along with five hundred men to be his representatives for the peace talks but these numbers were felt to be too large and

frightening by the Ladakhis for the villagers who would be alarmed to see such a large force.

Thus only five noblemen and two Zamindars were sent with the Dogra party as the representatives of Zorawar. However the Ladakhis displayed treacherous intentions, and seized the envoy and his group and sent them under five hundred troops guard to Darkech bridge. Only Suwar Ratan Singh managed to escape from such heavy surveillance and returned to report the treachery to the Dogra camp.

Meanwhile Banka Kahlon launched a surprise attack from the rear onto the Dogra army and caught them napping. He dealt mercilessly with the prisoners, by tying their limbs and hurling them into the river in full sight of their comrades.

Zorawar wisely ordered a retreat to Long Karchu in the Suru valley and took up a defensive position in the fort of Thai Sultan. The Dogras remained in this area for four months. Although they remained unmolested here their food supplies were so precarious that they had to subsist on plundered food alone.

The situation was very tense however and Zorawar spent a great deal of time brooding over the possible enemy plans for he was convinced that the Botis didn't have the welfare of the Dogras foremost in their mind. He came to know well in time what the Ladakhis were planning, and thus was well prepared for the advance of Banka Kahlon with a huge army of 22,000 men marching towards Lang Karchu.

Zorawar Singh knew that he stood no chance against the numbers of the Botis and felt that only deception could save the day. Accordingly he set about a desperate plan. He despatched about a hundred soldiers when the enemy was only two miles from his defences. The Dogra soldiers were to take tense and stage a master deception planned to confuse the Boti troops and their leader. They were thus to strew a large area of the snow with tents and go about erecting tents for a force 1,000 times larger than their actual number.

Although it was a desperate plan when the Ladakhis saw the immense area covered by the proposed camping sight they were completely deceived. They were exhausted from their long march and in no position to attack the Dogras without rest. They halted to discuss their position.

On seeing the hesitancy of their leaders, the entire troops sat down and began preparing the evening tea and meal not aware of the Dogras intentions. The Dogra scouts passed all this information to their commanders who were burning for revenge on their group of representatives.

Taking full advantage of this state of non-alert the Dogras lost no time in attacking the enemy with their swords and killed about a dozen of them initially. This however created utter confusion in the Boti camp, and the entire army was up in confusion. Seeing this confusion the rest of the Dogra army rushed in for the kill and caused a total rout. Banka Kahlon was alarmed and fled

with large numbers of his men following close on his heels. Four hundred Botis were killed due to the fall of a snow bed upon them as they fled along the river bed which was half frozen with ice. Another twelve hundred of them were taken prisoner and many important and influential commanders surrendered. These included Moru, Tadsi, the Kahlon of BAZGO and his son Gurmo. The Dogras too did not get away unscathed but their losses were relatively minimal. They lost three of their commanders—Uttam Vizir, Hazru Vizir, and Surtu Rana. About twenty of their members were killed and sixty were wounded.

This victory came as a windfall to Zorawar who advanced immediately with his forces to BASKYUN, and made the prisoners carry his army's baggage. The force marched by Shergol to Mulbil, where it camped for a fortnight, after which it advanced by Kharbu to Lama Yurru. Here Zorawar was met by an envoy of Sultan Akabat Mahmud Khan pleading for peace. This Sultan was non other than the former Gyalpo Tonduk Namgyal. The envoy carried the following message from the Sultan :

'...for the last eight months both the armies are at the throat of each other (August 1834—April 1835). Many lives of my men have gone in the vain struggle for Independence. If the General will faithfully promise that he will not take me prisoner then I will myself come and discuss the terms for peace.'

Zorawar readily agreed to this top level meeting

and assured the king in a written message that he need not be under any apprehension since the Dogras wanted nothing more than the regular payment of the tribute to Maharaja Gulab Singh. The Sultan was convinced of Zorawars good intentions, and advanced to Bazgo with his army and asked Zorawar Singh not to bring a large force to the meeting.

Zorawar Singh took with him a hundred trusted men and went into the camp of the Sultan who was amidst 2,000 men. This was indeed a reversal of the initial invitation of the Sultan but Zorawar was confident of emerging without mishap. The king begged the Dogra leader to move camp to Bazgo where his troops also were. Which he did. After ten days stay at Bazgo the king asked General Zorawar to accompany him to Leh with a small party of hundred men which he did. This was lest the villagers be alarmed that a war was upon them. On their arrival at Leh the General was preparing to make the usual offering of a Sadhaka, amounting to Rs. 101/-, placed in a bag and waved around the head and placed in the hand of the Gyalpos son. As he did this, the prince Chang Rapthan, aged seventeen-year mistook this action as an insult and drew his sword suspecting that any treachery could follow. The troops of both sides also unsheathed their swords, but the situation was saved by the presence of mind of the King who immediately fell upon his knees and tearfully kissed the hands of General Zorawar Singh. On seeing this the troops

of both sides felt that this was part of the religious ritual and they sheathed their swords again.

The Dogra soldiers however now suspected that the Botis planned to kill Zorawar for any lame excuse at hand and the message when conveyed to the Dogra commanders at Bazgo made them speed towards Leh with their entire contingent of 5,000 soldiers, which they reached by the next morning.

Zorawar stayed in Leh with his forces till October 1835, a total of four months replete with feasts and top level meetings with the king and his staff in which negotiations for a peace treaty took place.

These lengthy negotiations were finally at an end when it was decided that the king would pay a sum of Rs. 50,000 for expenses of the war between the Ladakhis and Dogra, for which he had to own whole responsibility. He also agreed to pay annually a sum of Rs. 20,000 as a tribute and a peace guarantee. The Gyalpo paid Rs. 37,000 of the Rs. 50,000 as expenses of the war before the General agreed to leave his capital city. The balance was to be paid in instalments over the next few months. Having satisfactorily resolved this rather large and untidy war between the Dogras and the Ladakhis General Zorawar Singh then withdrew to Lama Yurru.

However peace was not written in the fate of great General Zorawar Singh. Hardly had he returned to Lama Yurru then he was informed reliably that the Chief of SOD had attacked the fort and had captured it and killed the entire garrison of fifty men. The General ordered a strong

detachment to march to SOD fort. On hearing of this advance the enemy wisely avoided their own slaughter by taking flight.

The Dogra force stayed in SOD for a fortnight, and then moved to Suru a distance of fifty miles. They reached Suru in two days and surprise attacked the BOTIS during the night when they were asleep. The sudden attack demoralized the Botis and eleven prisoners were taken and hanged on nearby trees. The next day was worse. Chaos prevailed and the locals betrayed the whereabouts of the Ladakhis to save their own beheading. General Zorawar made two hundred prisoners in this way and rewarded the locals in cash and kind for their help. However his ruthless methods so frightened the local chiefs that they offered their submission and made him such presents as they felt would appease his wrath, for which he was by now infamous. They also promised to remain in submission to Maharaja Gulab Singh. The warrior blood of General Zorawar Singh was however keen to make the best of the situation. His forces advanced towards Zanskar, his next target, and reached it by nightfall on the tenth day via Suru. The local chiefs had no intention of fighting the Dogra forces and agreed readily to pay a protection tax of Rs. three and a half per house, and promised their loyalty towards the Dogra ruler of Jammu.

Hardly had the forces collected these taxes and the assurances that Zorawar's forces got the news that the Gyalpo of Leh along with Mihan Singh, Governor of Kashmir were in open revolt against

the General Zorawar's spies also told him that trade routes had been blocked by the rebels. They felt that in doing so they would divert all traders to go through Kashmir, and not to go through Kashtwar as it had since the time the Dogras had annexed Ladakh.

Mihan Singh had peremptorily confiscated by force the property of BANKA KAHLON, and AOURU TADSI. He had gone to the extent of capturing and torturing Munsii Daya Ram for his suspected loyalty to Zorawar.

The General was greatly pained at these happenings, and tired though he was asked for a reliable guide to the trouble spot. This was a hard task since the guide stood the chance of being killed if found out by the enemy forces even after the battle was over. However a local chief offered the name of MIDPHI SATA who on being interviewed by Zorawar exuded self-confidence, and displayed exemplary knowledge of the route. Being pleased with his bravery and willingness to lead the way Zorawar gifted him a pair of beautiful golden bracelets straight away. He was employed on Rs. 2/- per day and was assured protection in Zanskar in perpetuity on end of the mission.

It was November 1835; winter snow had set in the whole of Ladakh. All the higher passes were snowed in and unusable. The force had therefore to take a devious route and cover almost 300 miles in just ten days. The experienced guide led the force up the river Zanskar, over LUNGA LACH, then to THUNG LUNG passes to river Indus

below GYA. This was a novel route unknown to any one in Zorawar's force. The forces covered between thirty and forty miles each day. Their strong pack horse carrying 12 seers of flour and 12 seers of barley constantly got bogged down in the deep snow. However with the stamina and determination of the General these obstacles were not allowed to overwhelm the army. Thus in just ten days he had reached the village of TSUMUR, an important village in the area of CHIMRA, situated on the right bank of the river Indus, and directly connected with the high road to RUDOK. The rebelling Gyalpo had chosen this place as his hideout with the view that in case of emergency his wife and children could seek refuge in the Chinese district of RUDOK.

It was a stroke of luck for Zorawar when he learnt that the queen and her prince were residing in the village. Without loss of time he despatched a force of five hundred horsemen to capture them, dead or alive. However unfortunately for Zorawar the spies of the queen told her about the on-coming force of Zorawar and she fled into Leh.

The Gyalpo was however determined to settle issues with the General and waited for the General so that he could make peace with him. He positioned himself at CHACHOT on the left bank of river Indus. He was now repenting having gone against the Maharaja, and wanted to repledge his faithfulness to the Maharaja of Jammu. He was well aware that the Dogra General had run over the same area with his force of ten thousand, and had

then not left even a single Dogra soldier in Ladakh as an indication of his goodwill.

During their meeting, the Gyalpo promised to pay Zorawar Rs. 13,000 punitive money and also to cover the cost of Zorawars military expedition to Leh. To fulfil these promises the Gyalpo had to take the property of the royal ladies, and his minister ACHU GANPU offered tea, wool, gold and silver utensils and other valuable articles, which Zorawar accepted.

Zorawar bestowed upon MORU PA TADST, the Kahlon of Banza, the Government of Ladakh. He gave the Gyalpo a large village called Tok, which was on the left bank of river Indus, as a Jagir. Zorawar then ordered a fort built outside the town of Leh and appointed Dalel Singh the Commander with 300 men under him. In April 1836, Zorawar left for Jammu, taking with him the son of MORU TADSI and other well placed respectable men as hostages for the good behaviour of the king newly appointed by him. He also despatched 1500 foot soldiers under the command of Lakhpat Ram and Mehta Basti Ram to Balde by the Zanskar road.

On its way this force had to battle with the District Chief, Budhi Singh Mithania. However the Dogras won the battle. Both sides however lost a couple of dozen men each and the Dogras stayed over two weeks in that area to stabilize the region before they moved on. The force Commander also thought it fit to leave a garrison of 20 men

in the fort of Chatragarh, which is built on the right bank of river CHENAB.

Maharaja Gulab Singh was very sore with General Zorawar for handing over Ladakh to Moru Tadsi, who in fact had no claim to the throne, though of royal lineage.

However Gulab Singh was forced to swallow his displeasure since most of the news given him by the General was very favourable and encouraging. And he was in any case very fond of Zorawar who had fought brilliantly many a war for him and had become a most dependable veteran. Nevertheless, Zorawar assured his Maharaja that he would remove Moru Tadsi from power at the very first misdemeanour by him. In April 1836, this chance came when Zorawar got news of a revolt by Moru Tadsi, the newly appointed king of Ladakh. This was made worse by the ominous news that the Fort Commander at Balde and his 20 men had been ruthlessly butchered by a much larger attacking force of Moru Tadsi. Further still all Dogra soldiers in Ladakhi forts were beleaguered and were in want of food.

Zorawar informed the Maharaja of the position, and marched towards Leh with an army of 3,000 infantrymen. In 60 days he reached Balde. Due to the summer (July-August) snow had melted and the rivers were in deadly spate. Thus it was only in the month of September that Zorawar was able to attack CHATRAGARH, which he carried by storm with a loss of only 15 men. The enemy lost twice that number of men (killed) and another

30 were taken prisoner. To teach the enemy a lesson Zorawar had their ears and noses cut off. This act frightened the people so much that they surrendered without further resistance. Zorawar then advanced over the mountains, after leaving a strong garrison in the fort of CHATRAGARH. He crossed the pass at a height of 19,000 feet above sea level and his forces had to cross a glacier which was as high as 14,500 feet above sea level. Before he could reach ZANSKAR Zorawar lost twenty five men (dead) due to the killing cold. Another twelve men lost their feet and hands due to the same extreme cold.

On reaching ZANSKAR Zorawar was pleased to note that enemy had fled from the scene of battle. He then stayed there for two months restoring the confidence of the subjects and making administrative arrangements. When he was satisfied with these he sent his commanders RAI SINGH and MIA TOTA at the head of a force of 1000 men to reconquer Leh. On hearing about the advance of these formidable forces, MORU TADSI, the new Gyalpo (KAHLON OF BANKA) fled from Leh. He was however closely pursued and captured at village TABO in SPITI, after a brief show of resistance. He was brought back to Leh as a prisoner, and kept there in gaol.

The old Gyalpo, Akabat Mahmud, and his adviser and successor for a while Moru Tadsi were both brought before the General who interviewed them for the august appointment. Zorawar reinstated Akabat on the basis of his promise that

he would pay the old annual tribute of Rs. 23,000. In addition he agreed to pay the expenses of the occupation army. Having assured himself that all revolts will be successfully tackled behind him, Zorawar marched back to Jammu where he stayed for one year.

In the year 1839, Zorawar moved to Ladakh with a force of 5,000 men with the intention of punishing Moru Tadsi the Kahlon of Banka, and Chang Nabdan, the Kahlon of Bazgo—both of them were plotting against Gyalpo Akabat appointed by Zorawar. Along the route march Zorawar learnt that Ahmed Shah of Baltistan was also joining hands in the general uprising against Dogra Authority in Ladakh along with the two rebel Kahlons. This information gave the militant Zorawar a long awaited pretext for the invasion of Baltistan.

As mentioned earlier, in 1835, when Ahmed Shah was unhappy with his son he had disinherited him and had inaugurated his younger son Muhammed Ali. At that time Mohommed Shah had fled to Suru to join Zorawar and seek his protection. Zorawar was only too willing to grant him this protection but was shrewd enough not to create another front on Baltistan while the campaign in Ladakh was going to take place. He made sweet promises to Mohommed Shah for all help and assistance at the most opportune moment to overthrow his fathers regime. When Mohommed returned to his father he was neither warm nor cordial toward him. Thus in early 1840, Mohommed

fled to Leh and sought refuge with the King of Ladakh. Unfortunately the King himself was a puppet in the hands of Kahlon of Banka and the Kahlon of Bazgo. Both were happy and anxious to capture the Balti prince and thereafter sent him to the Balti Chief whom they wanted to please, so that they could rise against Zorawar with the aid of Ahmed Shah. Ahmed Shah was asked to despatch a small force of 50 men to capture the Balti prince. For this he was assured all assistance by the two rebel Kahlons.

At Zanskar, Zorawar was informed about the flight of Mohommed Shah to Leh. He sent strict orders to the two Kahlons to treat him with all due respect and kindness. He was happy and wanted to take full advantage of this situation and use the prince as a tool for the furtherance of Maharaja Gulab Singh's aim of conquering Baltistan. Before he could march on to Leh, both the Kahlons made sure that the Balti troops captured the prince and were moving towards Baltistan once again.

When this news reached Zorawar his reaction was twofold—he was furious with the Kahlons, but happy at getting an excuse to attack Baltistan. He made initially a diplomatic move and told the ruler of Baltistan, Ahmed Shah that his troops had violated the boundaries of Ladakh by entering into Leh, and forcibly carrying off his son who had sought protection with the Maharaja. He asked him to send back the prince forthwith, failing which the Dogra army would enter Balti to force the release of Prince Mohommed Shah. No reply came

for this letter to Zorawar for over eleven months causing much anxiety and speculation in his camp as to the fate of the unfortunate prince.

Thus in the month of December, 1840, General Zorawar Singh mobilized an army of 15,000 soldiers and a large number of loyal Ladakhis for the conquest of Baltistan. The chief of Balti also prepared himself for the struggle. All discontented Ladakhis joined the Balti force. After crossing river Indus they destroyed all the bridges to delay the advance of the Dogra army. Zorawar was forced to march down the right bank of river Indus. For twenty five days he marched along this bank without finding a suitable crossing place for his army. On his way however he received the submission of the chiefs of Khatachan and Khapolor. He then despatched a force of 5,000 troops under the command of Mia Nidhan Singh, by way of Shigar to find out a road and to collect rations for the army as the situation of provisions was becoming very serious. Balti intelligence kept the track on these movements and permitted Mia Nidhan Singh's force to advance fifteen miles deep into their territory. When the force reached into a narrow valley, the Baltis, numbering several thousands, attacked the Dogras. The Dogras were surrounded by high hills, with no place to manoeuvre could not give a fight. The Baltis thus massacred the major force, and only about four hundred men escaped back to the Dogra camp. They told of their hopeless defeat and loss in the battle. However no revenge could

immediately be planned the winter having set in. Heavy snow fall had closed all the passes, and the rations were extremely scarce. Troops of Zorawar were badly demoralized and their self discipline was seriously affected. Majority of the troops did not obey any orders as they faced death in battle preparations. Ahead was the great turbulent river Indus with its vast sprays of death; and they were surrounded by the cold and freezing mists and snows of winter. Neither advance nor retreat was feasible and did not promise any relief to them. For a long fortnight the Dogra army lay exposed to winter frosts at night and suffered hunger during the days. Many of the troops sought shelter from the onslaught of the snow under the overhangs of the rocks, and boulders. Their state of weakness made them utterly indifferent whether they would survive the war or perish by an enemy sword.

Zorawar saw the desperate state he and his troops were in and to get out of the trap he took a handful of his most loyal soldiers to discover a passage way across the river Indus. Throughout the day he would go in search of a suitable crossing place but it was all in vain. He returned to camp late in the evening. Zorawar then summoned Mehta Bastiram his trusted commander to his shelter under a rock. He explained to him the hopelessness of the whole situation and the winter trap they were in. He gave Bastiram the mission of finding a crossing for the entire army so that they could be extricated from this most dangerous situation of

their own making and in which the enemy had no hand at all.

The party under Bastiram examined the banks of the river for several miles downstream. At mid-night Bastiram took just one soldier for his examination of a possible crossing while his men made a decoy fire to deceive the Baltis on the other bank of the river. At last Bastiram discovered a place where the river was frozen over thick enough to take a man's weight. Only twenty feet in the middle of the river the ice was thin. He ordered his men to fell trees and to bolster the weaker parts of the ice with their trunks. He ordered ten such lanes to be made across the river. In this manner by five in the morning the Indus was bridged. Information of this great and badly needed success was sent to Zorawar Singh, who ordered his army to march at once. This news of action was received with great happiness and restored the morale of the soldiers.

At the same time Zorawar despatched a fresh runner with the orders that Mehta Bastiram and his force must establish a bridgehead on the opposite bank. These orders were carried out. Once again Bastiram lost twenty eight men just due to the severe cold. Unmindful of these losses and hardships Bastiram established the much sought bridgehead on the opposite bank. On seeing this the Botis hastened to attack while the force was still small. On the other hand Zorawar roused a number of his troops and reached the post very fast to give support to his general. Speed was vital

to secure control over the bridgehead. A very cold and bloody action was fought. The Botis gave a very hard fight before retreating with over two hundred dead and about a hundred seriously wounded in battle. While the Dogras lost just twenty five men killed and sixteen wounded yet their plight was equally bad since about five hundred of their number were not fighting fit being disabled due to frost bite on arms and legs. Yet the Dogras were not disheartened—they followed their General willingly. The retreating Botis were given the chase and massacred over a trail of nine miles right upto Marwan.

There the victorious general called a halt to give some respite to his jubilant soldiers, and to collect the food and equipment the retreating enemy had left in their hurry to escape the slaughter. The news of this miraculous crossing and victory spread upto Skardo as a wildfire—by now Zorawar had established for himself the reputation for being unconquerable.

Zorawar stayed at Marwan for two days and during his stay richly rewarded Mehta Bastiram and his forty brave troops. He was most anxious to continue the advance and press home his advantage. The rest and good food had restored the fighting condition and self confidence of his force. With rosy promises of food, rest and rewards, the whole army was got ready to attack Skardo. The army was sure of getting all they needed if they conquered Skardo.

Zorawar then advanced towards his objective.

Ahmed Shah and his army was panic-stricken at this news. In a fit of sheer cowardice Ahmed Shah set fire to his own palace even before Zorawar's arrival. He then retired with his army into Skardo fort. After fighting minor actions on the route Zorawar reached Skardo and surrounded the fort. Ahmed Shah was now cut off from the rest of the world. Within a week's seige of Skardo fort the forces of Ahmed Shah ran out of water and provisions and were weak with hunger, and prostrated for lack of water to drink. Zorawar chose this opportunity to storm the fort. There was little resistance from the starving troops and Ahmed Shah was forced to surrender himself and thus Zorawar conquered the whole of Skardo and Baltistan. In place of Ahmed Shah he enthroned his eldest son Mohommed Shah. He had to pay Rs. 7000/- annual tribute to Maharaja Gulab Singh, which he promised to do. However Zorawar had enough of trusting his enemy. This time he ensured that no revolt would brew after his departure by putting a strong garrison of trustworthy soldiers in a new fort on the bank of the river Indus. On his return journey to Leh Zorawar took with him as prisoners Ahmed Shah and his favourite son. This campaign had cost the Dogras two hundred men, while the Baltis had lost three hundred men. However warfare was not at an end for even as Zorawar was conquering Skardo, the king of Ladakh Tonduk Namgyal (Akabat Mahmud) had been intriguing with Ahmed Shah for a simultaneous uprising of Botis and Baltis against Zorawar. Zorawar Singh had seen

through this plan and had forced Tonduk Namgyal on his expedition against Skardo. With the downfall of Skardo and the capture of his conspirator Tonduk Namgyal was a despondent men. He died a month later victim of small-pox and the abyss of madness at seeing his homeland under the yoke of the Dogras. It was indeed a sad blow for him that Baltistan was annexed to the Dogra dominions as well. On the death of Tonduk Namgyal his grand son a mere boy was made a puppet king by Zorawar. The father of the boy fled to Hundar in Nubra valley and thence to Spiti valley. He died in his youth in mysterious circumstances leaving behind his wife and his regally installed son.

DOGRAS INVASION OF TIBET

Zorawar consolidated the administration of Ladakh and Baltistan, the conquests of which had bolstered his position considerably. However his expansionist tendency was insatiable and he soon thought of attacking Yarkhand. His field commanders however cautioned him against this initially but later advised him to raise the claims to Yarkhand from the Ladakhi viewpoint. When Singee Namgyal was ruler of Ladakh Yarkhand had belonged to Ladakh. The main benefit of conquering Yarkhand was the Pashmina Wool trade which would all go into the hands of his master, Maharaja Gulab Singh.

Zorawar also planned to loot the rich monasteries and build up a sizeable plunder of gold, silver and

jewels. With this aim in view, Zorawar advanced up the valley of river Indus in May, 1841, with a force of five thousand at his command. He ruthlessly plundered the monasteries of Hanle and Tashigong. His advance guard penetrated into Rudok and Garo both of which surrendered to the Dogras with hardly a fight.

Zorawar then went beyond the sources of river Indus and established headquarters on the river Suttlej at Tirthapuri in Guge, the principal place of pilgrimage in the holy vicinity of lake Mansarovar. The entire area thus came under the occupation of Ladakhi and Dogra troops. Mehta Bastiram was appointed the commander of Takla Khar (Kot), for his loyal and brave war efforts.

Similarly on the canal of Gogra river, which is near the Kumaon and Nepal frontiers, Rahim Khan of Chachot was placed in command. As was the trend Ghulam Khan, his son-in law was allowed a free hand in plundering the monasteries and temples. He executed this work efficiently and with burning iconoclastic fury. The gold, silver and jewels he reserved for the General, however the images, books, and holy books became subject of his bigoted wrath. They were all indiscriminately destroyed.

The government at Lahasa came to know about the invasion of the Dogras and were greatly perturbed. However to their relief a Chinese force began moving towards Zorawars troops on 7 November, 1841. Zorawar promptly despatched a force of three hundred men under Nono Sunnam, younger

brother of the Kahlon of Bazgo, to oppose the advancing Chinese. At Kar-Dam-Khar, south of Lake Rawan Hard, Nono's force was fiercely and efficiently cut to pieces, and it was with great difficulty that Sunnam himself escaped a similar fate. On 19th November 1841 he was ordered once again to tackle the Chinese threat with a force of six hundred men. He had with him the able commander Ghulam Khan to help him out. This force too was moved down in a short battle and the commanders taken prisoners. Zorawar Singh could not believe his ears, when he heard the news and contemptuously advanced against them from Tirthapuri, with all the available force. He knew that the Chinese army was ten thousand strong whereas he had only three thousand men under his command.

On 10th December 1841 the battle began in a desultory way with a few shots being exchanged in a hasty manner. Such firing continued at intervals over three days. On 12th December one such shot accidentally caught Zorawar on the shoulder and he fell wounded from his horse. As misfortune would have it, the Chinese saw this happen and their vanguard charged forward and surrounded the General. However the Dogras would not let them have him as an easy prey and a hand to hand battle ensued between the two sides. The Chinese too were eager to press home the advantage and a reinforcement of troops arrived just as the Dogras were about to rescue their wounded General. However the battles of the Great Zorawar were at an end and this battle saw both Zorawar and his bodyguards

ruthlessly slaughtered by the Chinese who did not believe in taking prisoners so long as they could kill the enemy. However in this case the number was too much and six hundred Dogras were captured including all the main commanders. In this war the Dogras had lost the large number of five thousand men and only three hundred men had managed to escape alive. Lest it be thought that Zorawar had lost his touch, it must be kept in mind that it was a case of sheer overestimation of his own strength viz-a-viz the enemy. This over confidence cost him his life and ended his brilliant career with a disastrous and unqualified failure. No doubt his troops fought under a great disadvantage, the battle field being above 15,000 feet above sea level. In the month of December when even the day temperature had been below freezing point. The intense night cold had made his soldiers suffer widely from sleeplessness, frost bite of fingers and toes and breathlessness due to the altitude. The only fuel which was procurable was the Tibetan Furze, which gave less fire and more smoke. Thus the cold climate itself became a major foe for them. In their sheer desperation to keep their circulation going they recklessly burnt the stocks from their muskets thus disabling them from waging war at all. At least half the forces of Zorawar had burnt the stocks from their muzzles by the time the call came for war. Zorawar had not been told this for fear of his wrath and naturally miscalculated his strength due to this. It was death alround for them and the Chinese were in their most demoniac mood. After the slaughter they rounded

up the prisoners and then carried out a systematic plunder of the dead. They were sure that the Dogra soldiers who had fled their hands would die anyway, for the unrelenting frost would spare no one without fabulous provisions. Nevertheless a tiny detachment did reach Takla Khar almost dead with starvation and uniformly suffering from frost bite. The garrison at Takla Khar who considered Zorawar to be a god was traumatized at the news of the defeat and could scarcely believe what they heard. However this news threw such a scare on them that they fled the area without waiting to be attacked. In their hurry to get out of the way of the advancing Chinese forces they rashly went over the snowy ranges to the Lipu Lake pass close to the source of the Kaliganga at Kalapani which was under the British in the Kumaon region.

In this panic stricken unprovoked flight fifty per cent of the deserters were killed by the severe and merciless frost. Most of them lost their fingers or their toes and very few indeed reached safely without serious impairment of their limbs by the cold.

The Chinese had captured Ahmed Shah and his son who were also with the Dogra forces as their prisoners. The Chinese accorded him good treatment, but the old man died heart broken in a few months under their care.

The other prisoners taken by the Chinese were tortured by methods favoured by them. Rai Singh, Zorawar's Deputy Commander, and the Kahlon of Bazgo were slowly starved of food while the latter's

buxom wife entertained the officers of the Chinese forces. Nono Sungnam, and Ghulam Khan close friends of Zorawar were tortured with hot irons. Both of them had desecrated Buddhist temples and now no mercy was shown to them. Their flesh was burnt with red hot irons and the roasted meat slowly picked off with pincers. When they were mangled and bleeding profusely salt was rubbed into their gaping wounds and no heed was paid to their horrible screams to Allah. They were then left to starve to death in a most agony filled wait for the curtains to fall on them, and release them from earthly bondage.

The same winter the Chinese occupied all of Garo and overran Leh in 1842 where the boy king JIGMET NAMGYAL was forced to join hands with them.

Maharaja Gulab Singh took a long time to recover from the death of his star General and the Tiger of Ladakh and Baltistan. He soon sent Hari Chand and Vizier Ratanu at the head of a strong contingent to sort out the Chinese and Ladakhis. Their reign had lasted just six weeks when this force broke the backs of the would be heroes, and captured their leaders. A treaty confirming the old line was made and peace was restored. A brief rebellion in 1846 was quietened quickly by Bastiram who had taken the position of Zorawar, and the whole country became passive after that.

Thus in just twenty years of systematic war, Maharaja Gulab Singh had annexed the whole of Ladakh and Baltistan, from the sources of the

Shyok to the head of the Gilgit river. The likes of such a Maharaja was not to be seen in the history of Kashmir again.

For almost a hundred years Maharaja Gulab Singh and his sons ruled Ladakh and Baltistan as a part of their kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir, with an iron hand. A governor of Gilgit and Ladakh with a strong force of infantry with mountain guns ruled the area on behalf of the Maharajas.

By the end of the 19th century the Maharaja had signed a treaty with the British India Government and thus Jammu and Kashmir became one of the native states of British India. Being a frontier state the British had their representative at Gilgit and thus controlled the external affairs. The history upto 1947 thus remained almost indifferent to Ladakh and Baltistan.

On 15 August, 1947 India regained Independence, but the conditions of the country before this achievement became appalling. India was divided into three parts. One part became Independent India; the northwest part became Pakistan; and the province of Bengal was divided into east and west, the eastern part becoming East Pakistan.

The Indian states in India were given the option of joining either India or Pakistan. Most of the native states joined one or the other. The ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, for reasons unknown, (Maharaja Hari Singh), delayed his option indefinitely. The result was that in October, 1947, the newly created country of Pakistan invaded the state

and occupied a large portion of Jammu and Kashmir, as also Baltistan and Ladakh. The Maharaja raced to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru begging him to save his state, which Nehru agreed to do on condition that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, are given the free will if they wish to join the Indian Union. Once this was agreed to, the Indian Army units were rushed to help the people of the state, who were being looted, raped and plundered and dead bodies were strewn at random all over the state wherever a battle had ensued. Though it was a difficult task, most of the territory of the State was recaptured from Pakistan by the Indian Army.

Ladakh and Battistan were cut off and captured by the Pakistani forces. However due to the great generalship of K.M. Cariappa, Kulwant Singh and Thimayya, most of the state was saved from being occupied by force by the enemy. Under Thimayya a unique tank battle took place at Zozila Pass located at a height of 12,000 feet above sea level. Pakistani forces were crushed to death and slaughtered and Kargil was recaptured. Leh was freed, Nubra and Shyok valley were freed. Nehru, the 'man of peace' declared an immediate cease-fire when Indian forces had taken over the initiative and would have got back all the land stolen by force from their territory. This cease fire with the enemy on the run betrayed an appalling lack of practical wisdom so far as military matters are concerned. This was not the last time that Nehru was to make a grievous error of judgment concerning martial problems. Till 1962 Ladakh again

went into a deep slumber. This time due to political bungling, once again under the august leadership of Nehru the country misread the Chinese 'bhai-bhai' slogans, and were completely deceived by the Chinese propaganda and lack of moral scruples to a hitherto unimaginable extent.

Since the Chinese politico-military bungle, Ladakh has witnessed much negative warring action. The chief development to bring good cheer is that the state government, and Centre Government are doing what they can, in the development of this region of the country.

Index

- Ahmed Khan, 134
Ali Mir, 127
Ali Sher, 2, 33, 53, 134
Ama Le, 121
Anant Ram, 1
Aurangzeb, 138, 139, 140
- Bagdangdo, 52, 53
Basti Ram, 145
Bhotias, 74
Bhot Rinchina, 3
Brahmaputra, 21
Bul Chhal, 113
- Cariappa, 171
Chachot Bridge, 165
Chakor, 46
Chamar, 43
Chandra, 136
Chang, 69
Changez Khan, 137
Chanrazik, 136
Chaogan, 84
Chaprang, 134
Chhorten, 80
- Chhos Dung, 113
Chhos Konchok, 110
Chhos Na, 113
Chigton, 136
Chomo, 112
Chorbatla, 134
Chung Tash, 39
Chu Pon, 68
Chushel, 30, 32
- Dallach, 3
Dapsang Plain, 9
Daulat Beg Oldi, 13, 19, 28, 36
Deldan, 138
Deldan Namgyal, 11
Desket, 25, 26
Devanagari, 2
Dhyan Singh, 142, 143
Do, 112
Dorje, 97
Dras, 3, 10
Dso, 48
Dulua, 112
Dung Kar, 113
Dung Ten, 105

- Dungti, 81
 Fa-Hian, 1, 18, 101
 Gagangir, 3
 Ganga, 21
 Gedungya Tsho, 96
 Gendun Konchok, 110
 Goba, 122
 Gonpas, 113
 Gulab Singh, 4, 5, 6, 11, 70,
 71, 142, 143
 Gumpha Matti, 42
 Hastings, Warren Governer
 General, 4
 Henderson, 4
 Horn Book, 118
 Huniya, 49
 Indus River, 22
 Jammu, 4
 Jawahar Lal Nehru, 171, 172
 Jehngir Shah, 134
 Kahlon, 57, 68, 70
 Kanchenjunga, 17
 Karakoram, 1, 10, 11, 18, 27,
 37
 Karana Sen, 3
 Kashmir, 2, 3
 Khar Dung La, 75
 Khral, 66
 Khri Tsampo, 88, 89
 Khyi, 50
 Kie-chha, 1, 2
 Kublai Khan, 3
 Kulwant Singh, 171
 Kukeyar, 1
 Kushak of Rezag, 64
 Ladakh, 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 11
 Ladakhi Polo, 82, 83, 84
 Lama Dalai, 4
 Lama Grand, 4
 Lama Tashi, 4
 Lantsha, 107
 Leh, 2
 Lonpos, 57
 Lord Buddha, 2, 3
 Magna, 65
 Makpung, 68
 Mani, 106, 107
 Mani-Chhos Khor, 98
 Mansarovar Lake, 21
 Marco Polo, 3
 Markor, 45
 Mehta Bastiram, 143
 Mia Tuta, 143
 Ming Ton, 77
 Mir Izzet Ullah, 12
 Mo-Lo-Pho, 2
 Namgyal, 127
 Narinder Kumar Colonel, 17
 Nubra, 10, 11, 13
 Nyimo, 65
 Palgyigon, 3
 Pang Kong, 8, 31, 58
 Papus, 97
 Pitak, 138
 Poplars, 51

- Potala, 95
Purgom, 80
Purik, 49
Pur Khang, 79
Purthal, 79
- Raba, 50
Rahul, 133
Ranjeet Singh Maharaja, 5
Remo Glacier, 25
Rinchin Major, 120
Robostang, 134
Rudok, 1
- Sakya Muni, 90
Saltoro Range, 44
Sambhota Thumi, 3
Sangya Konchok, 105
Sendev Raja, 3
Shakya Thubba, 109
Shal Sing, 62
She, 109
Shetma, 62
Shid Ton, 78
Shyin, 45
- Shyok, 22, 24, 25
Songsa, 62
Stong Pon, 68
Sultan Chusku, 19, 20
Sumeru, 105
Sutlej, 21
- Tashi Degon, 126
Thanskya Tanag, 138
Thero Majjhatiko, 88
Thimayya, 171
Thob Thang, 66
Tibet, 4
Todde Phag Mo, 111
Tsang Po, 2
Turner Captain, 4
Tutiyalik, 38
- Yaglong, 37
Yak, 48
Yassodhara, 133
- Zanskar, 11, 23, 24
Zojila, 34, 38, 171
Zorawar Singh General, 4, 24,
33, 34, 54, 70, 143