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(Title of the Thesis) *TRADE AND CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN LADAKH AND THE NEIGHBOURING REGIONS (16TH – 18TH CENTURIES A.D.)*

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1. Two Day Natinal Seminar on Changing Trends in History and Historiography organized by Department of History, MANUU, 20-21st March, 2018. Paper entitled, 'Imagining Ladakh From earlier Times to Dogra Period'(National).

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I, AMJAD KHAN, hereby, declare that this thesis entitled “ TRADE AND CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN LADAKH AND THE NEIGHBOURING REGIONS (16TH-18TH CENTURIES A.D.)”

Submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. M.N RAJESH is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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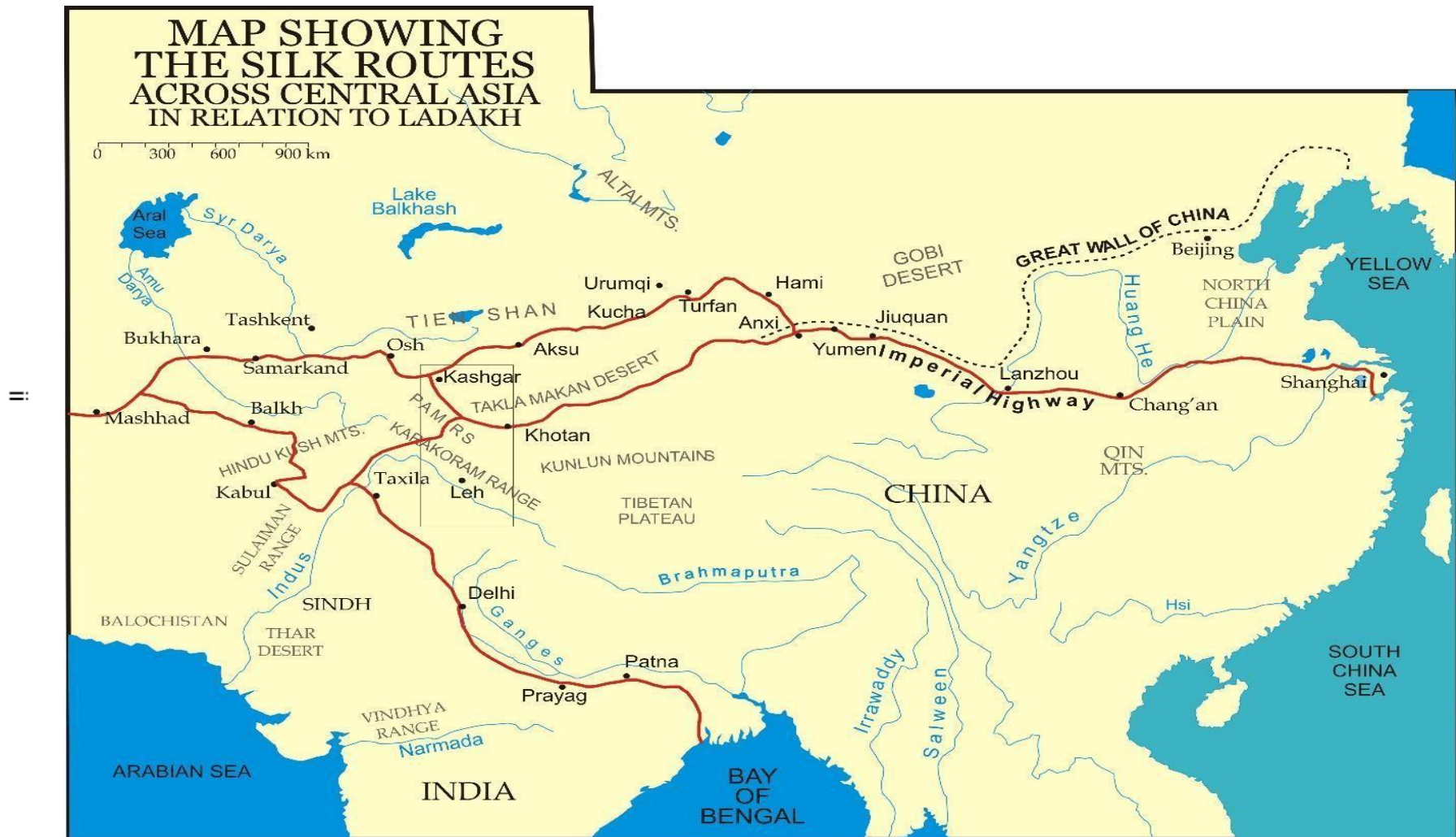
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Amjad Khan

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Map 0.1: Ladakh Connecting Silk Route

Chapter-1

Introduction

The thesis is titled Trade And Cultural Relations Between Ladakh And The Neighbouring Regions (16th to 18th centuries A.D.) This is a topic that is of prime importance to understand the unique evolutionary pattern of this region and how it developed the distinct personality. Trade and cultural relations at the central concern of this thesis spatially located in the borderland of Ladakh in the temporal span of the 16th to 18th centuries just before the onset of modernity in the southern edge of Ladakh that form the Indian culture area. One of the central problems encountered in the thesis is the problem of specificity versus generality as Ladakh displays many characters that go against the grain of generalisation. At the same time one has to link these specificities and understand the general trends in the historical evolution of the and the transformation of various activities like trade and cultural relations including religion that are suitably modified by the context. The thesis is divided into six chapters that are divided on thematic divisions followed by a bibliography.

The first chapter is titled introduction and introduces the reader to the location in its various contexts and also the problems along with the themes and methods employed in the thesis. This chapter also spells out the plan of the thesis and its organisation. Ladakh has a distinct history but has largely been ripped through the frames of dominant historiographical trends in the lines of many of the borderland societies. Because of the simple reason that borderland as a category acquired legitimacy only in the last two decades whereas the earlier focus was on borders that understood to distinct geographies as divided by borders. As such the land beyond the border was a new place, an entirely different region or an unknown region or a wasteland that was barren and unpopulated. Borders were thus understood as sharp markers of division between two different geographical regions. However, geographical regions are not devoid of human settlements and these settlements interact with the neighbouring cultures while getting modified also to suitably modify the neighbouring cultures. In this case Ladakh was understood in the dominant historiographical tradition as Little Tibet on account of its topographical and cultural contiguity with Tibet. Therefore, Ladakh was largely studied through

the historiographical frames that were applied to the study of Tibetan history. Within Tibet itself, we have many regional diversities as the three traditional divisions of Tibet testify. Each of these regions had distinct traditions. Further, Tibet was largely isolated from the currents of world history and kept itself in self isolation oblivious to the large scale events of world history in the 20th century. Ladakh on the other hand was annexed by the Dogra rulers after the fall of the Namgyal dynasty in the 19th century.¹ As the Dogra rulers ruled over both Kashmir and Ladakh from their base in Jammu, they employed similar frames of reference to rule over these regions that were understood to be the other of the Dogra. One of the important threads that connect the Moguls, Dogra, British, Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet is the threat of the woollen shawl. Economic interests converged on this particular item of the wool from the Tibetan antelope and led to a different type of government system in Ladakh where wool was procured from Tibet and was processed and sent to Kashmir where it was further processed and woven into the famed woollen shawls that also provided much-needed employment to thousands of craftsmen. These exchanges and the revenue system behind these networks created a system of government and administrative structure that was very different from that of Tibet which was a religious state. While the Tibetan state was characterised by the harmonious blend of religion and politics, Ladakh was owned by monarchy headed by the Namgyal dynasty and passed over to another ruling house, that of the Dogra from Jammu. Therefore, the chapter argues that the frames of reference employed for Tibet cannot be used wholesale to understand Ladakh as it has its own regional particularity. Similarly, in the postcolonial period a significant amount of literature on Ladakh employed frames of reference of Kashmir since Ladakh was a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Many of these references are not apt for the and this would amount to a misreading of the whole situation. Therefore, the regional particularity of Ladakh has to be explored in full bloom for which indigenous sources had to be placed in primacy and read in conjunction with the other larger questions like trade and religion which shaped the society of Ladakh to a great extent along with the patterns of patronage-Royal and lay patronage. In India many large states have various subregions that have a distinct geographical and cultural pattern which has been explored only recently and one can cite the examples of Uttarakhand, a hill state that has more in common with the neighbouring regions of western Himalaya than with Uttar

¹ C.L. Dutta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics: 1819-1948. The Dogra Conquest of Ladakh, Baltistan and West Tibet and Reactions of other Powers*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1973, p. 41.

Pradesh of which it was hitherto a part. The same is the case with the state of Himachal Pradesh, many of whose districts were part of the earlier Punjab region but they share more of the cultural patterns and topographical features with the neighbouring regions of western Himalaya's. Ladakh is also similar to Kashmir in many ways but also has significant differences and therefore the regional difference in the postcolonial period also did not pay much heed to the peculiarities of Ladakh. Highlighting this point, the chapter argues that while introducing the one has to use concepts and categories along with institutions in which they are embedded like the Monastery et cetera to understand the regional particularity of Ladakh.

In the second chapter the focus of the history of Ladakh and continues with the same issue of problem facing the history of Ladakh with regard to the question of generalisation versus regional specificity. It argues that there is ample material to rewrite the history of Ladakh from indigenous sources. Proceeding from this it also argues that though there are many other sources extraneous to Ladakh, the centrality of focus in some of the thematic concerns with regard to Ladakh gives vantage point to understand the sources not just as sources from outside but also sources that have an intrinsic relation with Ladakh. One point over the important work of the Hungarian writer Alexander most important contribution to the study of western Himalayas was in the making of the dictionary of the Tibetan language.² Alexander was himself Hungarian was baffled to the vexed question of the identity of the Hungarian people that partly came from the folklorist assumptions that they were the descendants of the Hun invaders who had ravaged Europe and led to the downfall of the Roman Empire by pushing the Germanic people to attack the Roman Empire. Unlike other ethnic groups in Europe who are either part of the Latin, Germanic or the Slavic groups with the exception of the Basque people of Spain, the Hungarians could not ally with any of these groups and therefore their ethnic identity was an enigma. Alexander came to the western Himalayas and learn the Tibetan language and also mastered some of the most important but his primary purposes went in vain as he could not find any correlation between the supposed origins of the Hungarians in Tibet. However, his effort was continued by other German travellers like Jaschke who compiled a dictionary of the Tibetan language. One of the peculiarities of these dictionaries is that they differentiate between the Tibetan language of central Tibet on one hand and the various regional dialects of Ladakh,

²Alexander Csoma De Koros, *Essay towards a Dictionary: Tibetan and English (1834)*, kessinger Publishing, Whitefish MT, United States, 2010.

Western Tibet and the various dialects of Eastern Tibet. It is important to trace the works of these people for they give us a entry point to understand the divergence between the classical Tibetan language and the dialects like the dialect of Ladakh and the dialect of Bhutan both of which are important along with the dialect of Sikkim as all these three qualities composed texts in their languages using the Tibetan script. This marks a point from the 15th century onwards when these vernaculars were also put into literary writing. Using this method one can also understand that Ladakh was ruled by the Namgyal dynasty from the 16th century to the 19th century, Sikkim was also ruled by another Namgyal dynasty from the 17th century till 1975. Both these dynasties are derived their literary culture from classical Tibetan while making significant divergences and creating new hybrids. It is also important to note that both of them are on the borderlines of India but their contact was primarily in Tibet, mainly during the annual Monlam festival in March.

One of the off shoots of this work on dictionary and grammar is that it paved the way for understanding the ancient texts from a fresh perspective and also opened up certain parts in historical linguistics particularly the themes. In this respect the history of Ladakh diverges largely from the history of Tibet from the ninth century onwards as we get only the religious texts in Tibet in a predominant number. On the other hand one of the most important texts for the reconstruction of the political history of Ladakh is the royal chronicles of Ladakh that belongs to the tradition of gyal- rabs, composed of two words meaning king and narratives or to condense it-the Royal narratives are the royal chronicles. As the name suggests the royal chronicles were patronised by the rulers and not by the ministries of the religious state and therefore are at a considerable character away from the religious perspective. In fact this book forms the base for the magisterial work on the history of Ladakh in 1978 by the Italian historian Luciano Petech named the kingdom of Ladakh.³ It marked the seminal shift in understanding the history of Ladakh and brought to the notice of the academic world and also to the layman the chronological reconstruction and the tangled histories of central Asia and other regions of India in the making of Ladakh. A more accessible work of history focusing on the European travellers was written by Prem Singh Jina named as famous Western explorers to Ladakh.⁴ It is not only gives a list of some of the important explorers but also the context and in addition to this the younger of travel writing which they brought about. Another important travellers mentioned as the Italian traveller

³Luciano Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh 950-1842*, Instituto Italiano Per IL Medio ED Estremo Oriente Rome, 1977.

⁴Prem Singh, Jina, *Famous Western Explorer to Ladakh*, Indus Publishing Company, 1995.

Ippolito Desideri,⁵ whose writing has recently created a storm. One of the important reasons is that Desideri's travels were largely centred in Tibet where he lived for a considerable period of time and try to convert the Tibetans to Christianity which was a failed project. As a failed project he detailed his accounts in his famous diary and spoke of the ambiguous nature of the religion of the Tibetans that he found it difficult to decipher as they always denied the existence of a creator while at the same time worshipping the Buddha. It is claimed by a writer named Allison Gopnik that Desideri's writings were the source of the famed European philosopher David Hume's writing that is celebrated across Europe-a treatise on human nature. According to Allison, David Hume had access to this writing of Desideri in the library of La Fleche in France which is the Learning Center for the Jesuits. This point thus brings Ladakh to the orbit of Europe and many of these travel writers ranging from the Jesuits to the Moravian mission represented by Karl Marx and other scholars also had come to Ladakh. On one side we have the traditional history of Ladakh according to the chronicles whereas on the other side it is continuously being refined by the new interpretations largely spurred by re-readings of classical sources and their interconnections as mentioned in the example above. While the 1960s and 70s were an important period for the study of Buddhism, the 80s marked a shift to identity studies that has affected the whole of Himalayas along with development which started from the 1990s. The current state of interest focuses on zomia and critical geography along with identity and cultural studies given a new twist to the study of Ladakh. One may argue therefore that as the focus of enquiry on Ladakh shifts, it is also spurred largely by extraneous factors that affected the internal narratives with as many aspects have become internalised like the discourse of ethnicity. In this climate of opinion trade is not a much sought-after topic.

The third chapter is on the geography of Ladakh and takes a very important questions that not only are in the domain of geography but also spill over to larger areas. There is a debate in geographical circles that has been raging on for more than a century regarding the relationship between history and geography. While the classical writers had argued about the geographical influence on history, it had underwent many changes leading to the erasure of geography from the discourse and taking the landscape as a given category. Further the growth of technology and proliferation of industry related development in many parts of the world replacing human and

⁵ Filippo De Filippi, *An Account of Tibet: The Travels of Ippolito Desideri of Pistoia*, S.J. 1712-1727, Routledge, 2004.

animal power in the case of inner Asia it was argued that the rise of steamship led to the decline of caravans and the end of caravan trade.⁶ Evidence on the contrary, reveals that in the case of Ladakh the caravan trade continued as late as 1959 and eventual 1962 and was stopped suddenly not because of technological factors but because of the collapse of old Tibet in 1959 after the Chinese invasion and the closure of Tibet. Geography was misinterpreted or thrust into the background and only in recent years we have new publication titled the revenge of geography,⁷ that seeks to look at the suitable place of geography in the evolution of societies. Keeping this in mind a chapter is devoted to understanding the context of Ladakh in its geographical setting. Unlike many works well chapter in geography forms the geographical preface and is not intertwined much but flows freely, in the case of Ladakh has a very important role and therefore one needs to essay the same in detail and analyse it with regard to many interrelated processes that are all affected by geography. Some of the debates are of a theoretical nature and focus on the vexed question of geographical determinism or geographical possibilism.⁸ While geographical determinism like any other determinism has been shown the door and totally debunked, it still holds a fascination for many people and they delight in taking the easy route to explain many factors based purely on geography notwithstanding the larger questions or even the commonsensical questions. The book, the revenge of geography comes as a refreshing breath of fresh air and brings geography once again to the forefront negating technological determinism and reinstating geography back in its place. At the same time it follows a nuanced approach by acknowledging the place of geography but not falling into the trap of graphical determinism as quoted in the example from the text geographer that mountains do not argue, they just are. On the face of it on my understand that since mountains are unsurmountable and therefore one has to only acknowledge their presence. On the other hand we see creative engagement with mountains that serve as a resource of both flora and fauna, particularly the will of the famed Tibetan antelope that is one of the most prized products of the. Similarly, the amount and also serves as an archive where we see many of the animals represent in the vicinity being visually represented the Ibex,goat et cetera that are peculiar to Ladakh and figuring prominently only in the

⁶Scott Levi, India, Russia and the Eighteenth-Century Transformation of the Central Asian Caravan Trade, Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1999), p.523.

⁷Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*, Random House, New York, 2012.

⁸David C. Hsiung, Geographic Determinism and Possibilism: Interpretations of the Appalachian Environment and Culture in the Last Century, Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association, vil. 4, environmental voices: cultural, social, physical, and natural (1992), p. 18.

petroglyphs of Ladakh but not in the petroglyphs of Spiti, that is downward but also do not figure in the petroglyphs of western Tibet which form the northern region. Therefore, the mountain as a geographical barrier has many uses and also serves as place for cult veneration and more importantly the snowmelt in the summer recharges the local streams leading to the reproduction of life. This engagement through human agency points to a scenario where determinism is displaced and possibilism can be accounted for.

Thus, the chapter on geography is very essential to understand the history of Ladakh and a special place has been accorded to the influence of geography and this thesis therefore devotes an entire chapter to geography of Ladakh. The main themes in this chapter are the landscape, the human interface and the continuation of settlements which gives an idea of the settlement pattern. Flowing from this is a description of the patterns of production and the regional disposal of the patterns of production and the evolution of institutions like the Buddhist Monastery that served as a mediating institution in a harsh landscape. Other aspect of geography include trade routes and the commodities along with a detailed note on the flora and fauna. In this respect Ladakh is very much like Tibet resembling high altitude landscape where barley and yak are the most suitable plant and animal species which are formed the inseparable bond between the people and the landscape. European travellers and their perception of the landscape also forms another important theme of this chapter.

The next chapter is titled cultural relations of Ladakh with the neighbouring regions and focuses on the religious and cultural elements. While many of the earlier works focused only on the religious aspect, we find that culture also has become a very important part of enquiry in the recent years. The celebration of the world Bhoti day has brought about a shift in the focus on religion to literary cultures. Similarly research in folklore and myth like the celebrated myth of the Gesar points to the transnational linkages of the myth tracing it all the way to the different parts of the Tibetan culture area as far as Mongolia and in the neighbouring regions of the Tibetan culture areas of Pakistan that have not been part of the focus of many academic studies. While the primary focus of this chapter is on the religious connections as both Ladakh and Tibet share common bonds of Buddhism, there is the large-scale monastic network that has a history of contacts from the ninth century which are very strong.⁹Till the fall of old Tibet many of the

⁹Luciano Petech, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 1999, pp. 106-108.

monks and nuns in Ladakh used to go to Tibet for higher studies to the famed ministries of Lhasa. One of the most important representatives of this trend is the late KushokBakula in whose honour the airport of Ladakh is named. As a young man he went to the famed ministries of Lhasa to study there and met many people from the Tibetan culture area as far as Mongolia and was oblivious to the plight of the Buddhist under communism. It is only part of a larger trend like many of the monks from the western Himalayas and all parts of the Tibetan culture area who converged to Lhasa. Lhasa was therefore the magnet for Tibetan Buddhists all over the Tibetan Buddhist universe. It was not only individual monks but many groups of monks to travel for pilgrimage also. Higher education in the monastic universities and also pilgrimage, religious retreats and many other aspects associated with religion including extended periods of stay in the ministries and the nunneries in Tibet were one of the important reasons for travel to Tibet. Some of the important festivals also attracted large number of people from Ladakh and many of these festivals were held in the famed ministries and people not only just attended the festival but also stayed there for extended periods of time. Further many of these festivals also depended upon the affiliations of the different people towards the various sects like the Sakya and the other traditions. The search for reincarnations was also another important motivation for travel. Some of the people also travel to the ministries in which their own kinsmen and relatives were admitted and they deemed it a honour to pay a visit to such a religious establishment.

The fifth chapter is titled a trade relations with Ladakh and the neighbouring regions and introduces the reader to a wide variety of regions and items and the networks in which these were traded in various trade channels and networks that spanned thousands of miles. One of the peculiarities of the Tibetan traders the whole dependence on the caravan trade. While most of the 17th century trade in major parts of Eurasia was affected by the introduction of the steamship, Tibet remained isolated and this current did not affect Tibet much. With the rise of the steamship, one is also able to chart the rise of many business communities like the Armenians and the Jews who created vibrant trading networks. While the Armenians had some presence in Tibet, the effect of the steamship trade was not felt here. Most of the items were brought by the hand was led in caravans from various points originating in Multan in Punjab in the South of Ladakh there is very important manufacturing centre and also one of the important outlets to the trade. It was from here that the steamship navigation led to the transport of these goods to the different parts of the world. The nature of commodities also marks a clear shift with the rise of

wool that emerged as the most important commodity along with many other commodities that included yak tails, butter and other pastoral produce like meat and animal skins. While these are items of large-scale consumption, there are also other items that did not have much volume and included musk which was highly profitable and also precious stones. Most of these items were not just moved Lhasa but also exchange their and transshipped or region as for engaging in these and also some came from Poland in the North to many other regions of West Asia and which all converged in the city of Lhasa.

A recent book titled *Muslim, Trader, Nomad, Spy* talks about the multifaceted nature of caravans arguing that it was composed of not just traders but a multitude of people hailing from different sections of the society all of whom wanted to go to Lhasa and beyond. It is in some of these caravans that many of the religious personalities travelled as they found it more secure like any other person travelling to Tibet to be free from the ravages of bandits and also from the vagaries of nature.¹⁰ Therefore, the religious travellers also did not travel for purely religious purposes but also carried out small-scale trade in the religious items and also in items which they would sell at a higher profit but which were of low volume and can be easily carried. It is commonly assumed that only the Buddhist religious practitioners travel to Tibet but when one reads the narratives of writers like Abdul Wahid Radhu,¹¹ we get a clear understanding that it was not just with this traveller but also many other Muslim travellers who travel to Lhasa.¹² Lhasa also had a small population of Muslims hailing from Kashmir and Ladakh and they maintain their individuality is different from the Chinese Muslims and the later generation of Muslim from India who settled Tibet. One of the important points of this trade is that Lhasa was the centre where many different caravans from eastern Tibet that had linkages to regions as far as Beijing on one side and also from the other regions of Mongolia that had links to Poland and Russia and many other groups which had links to West Asia converged. Therefore, trade was one of the important factors combined along with religion and pilgrimage or as a standalone affair that

¹⁰SulmanWasif, Khan, *Muslim, Trader, Nomad, Spy: China's Cold War and the People of the Tibetan Borderlands (The New Cold War History)*, The University of North Carolina Press; 1st Edition, 2015,p.10.

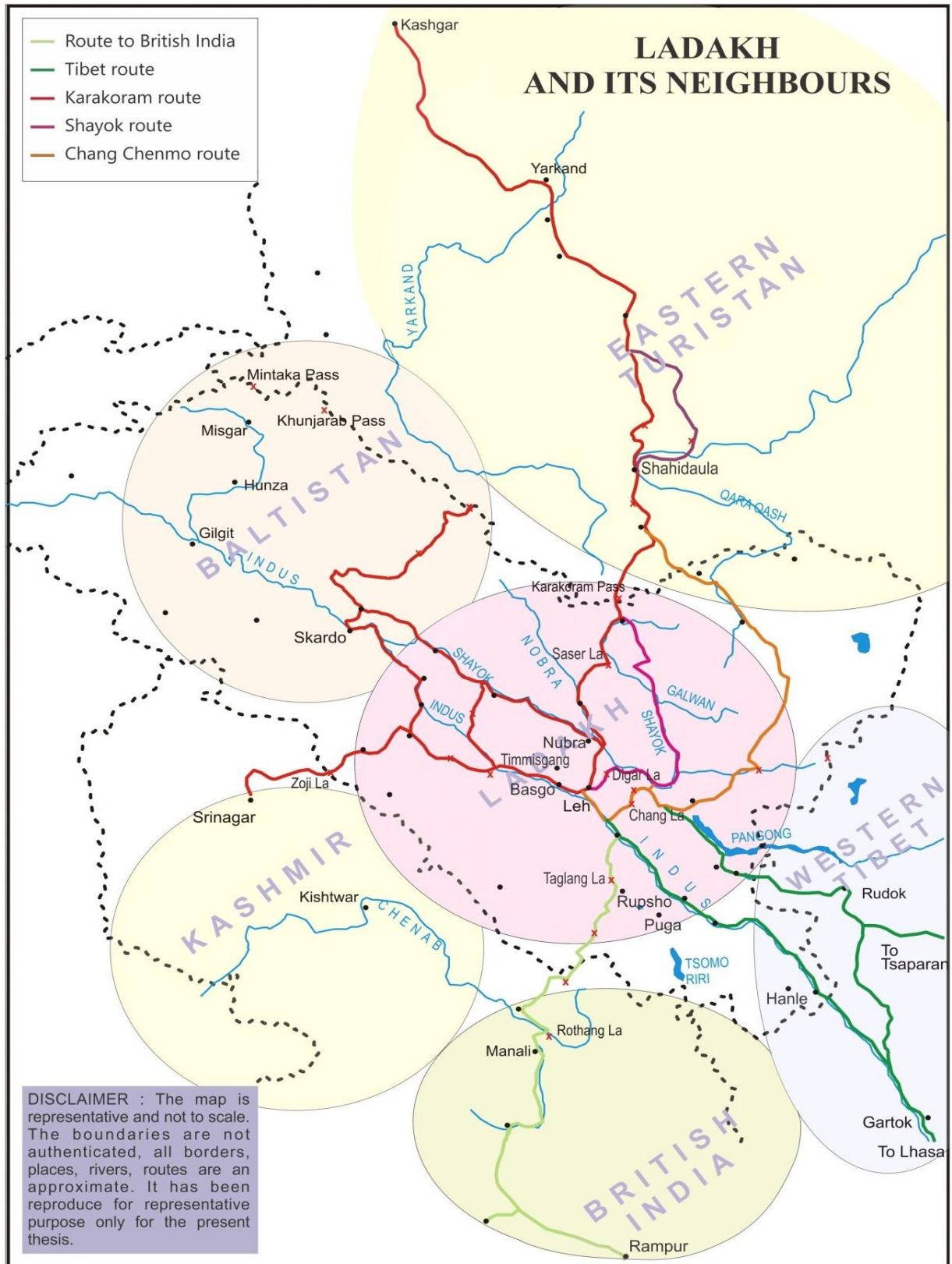
¹¹Abdul Wahid Radhu, *Tibetan Caravans: Journeys from Leh to Lhasa*, Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 4381/4 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi, 2017.

¹²Radhu, *Tibetan Caravans: Journeys from Leh to Lhasa*, p.103.

brought immense profits in the region that could be traversed only by travelling on foot or on the back of animals.¹³

The last chapter is titled as conclusion and gives a summary of the main chapters and the arguments followed by a detailed bibliography of primary and secondary sources that have been published till recently. The methods are largely adopted from economic history with special focus on the nature of trade and trade relationship and items of trade, history of religions and political history political history to situate the events in the larger context. A glossary of some of the important words is also added at the end. This chapter ends by arguing that there is a case for research on the history of trade and cultural contacts between Ladakh and the neighbouring regions based on the available material and the research gap in this area.

¹³Janet Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan Caravans: Merchant Princes and Peasant Traders in Ladakh*, Oxford University Press, 2004,p.141.



Map 02: Ladakh and Neighbouring Regions, Map based on Janet Rizvi's Trans-Himalayan Caravan (1999)

Chapter 2

History of Ladakh and its Relations: A Survey of the Main Trends

The earlier relation of Ladakh with the neighbouring areas can be ascertained by various facts. According to Ladakh's chronicle, the earlier residents of Ladakh were Dards and Mons.¹⁴ The Mons came from India,¹⁵ and the Dards from Gilgit.¹⁶ According to Luciano Petech, the earliest inhabitants of Ladakh were the Dardis.¹⁷ The Mons were the earlier inhabitants at a village near Gya after crossing the Thag-lang pass,¹⁸ and also earlier settlement in Zaskar before the settlement of Tibetans according to A.H Francke.¹⁹ The reference of the Dardis were recorded from different sources also, Herodotus makes mention of Dardis twice as Dadikai, Dardis were the dwellers of north and north-west of Gandhara.²⁰ Linguistic data proposes people of dardic speakers were the earliest dwellers of Ladakh.²¹ Likewise Dardis had been mentioned by different writers, as gold digging ants, Hermann connects it to gold washings in Baltistan and Ladakh.²² The residents in Ladakh are of the mixed race of Tibetan (Mongoloid) and Dardic (Indo-Iranian). By consulting the different sources, inference can be made that Dardis inhabited the whole of Ladakh.

The Kharoshti inscriptions found at the k'a-la-rtse bridge proves that in the 1st or 2nd century A.D., Ladakh had relations with the Kushana rulers. Some other Kharoshti and Brahmi inscriptions give the reference of cultural interaction with India through Kashmir. Chinese pilgrim, Huen Tsang mentioned of difficult terrain, flying snow and cold wind kingdom of Mo-lo-so also known San-po-ho.

¹⁴ A. H. Francke. A History of Western Tibet, (London: n/a, 1901 and reprinted, New Delhi: Cosmo publication, 1978), p. 19.

¹⁵ A.H. Francke.p.50.

¹⁶ A.H. Francke.p.31.

¹⁷ Luciano Petech, The Kingdom of Ladakh.p.5.

¹⁸ A. H Francke, "Antiquities of Indian Tibet I. p62

¹⁹ A H Francke, "Antiquities of Indian Tibet part I". Superintendent government printing, India, Calcutta. 1914. p54

²⁰ Ibid.p.5.

²¹ Andrea s wiley, an ecology of high altitude infancy: a biocultural perspective, Cambridge university press...p.45

²² Luciano Petech, The Kingdom of Ladakh.p.6.

In order to study the circumstances which led to the establishment of the kingdom of Ladakh and the connected history between Ladakh and Tibet, it becomes imperative to understand the developments taking place in Tibet. The many tribes of Tibet, in the seventh century came to be constituted as a single state for the very first time. Before that, Tibet had been parceled out among a number of clans, each headed by a chief. According to Petech, the unification of Tibet started after the sixth century, when one of the local chiefs succeeded in the subjugation of all the rival states and made Yarlung (the valley watered by the Brahmaputra, whose Tibetan name is *Tsangpo*; the valley is to the south east of Lhasa) the centre of unification.²³ Yarlung emerged as the centre of monarchy, where ancestors of the ruler who unified the Tibetans, Strongsten Gampo (569-650) resided. He, however later transferred his headquarters to Lhasa as it was centrally situated.²⁴ Soon after Tibet's unification, they embarked upon a policy of large - scale military expansion. Nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of Tibetan and Turkistan stock, who inhabited the land between Tibet and China were the first target of the Tibetan forces. After establishing their sway over them, the Tibetans pressed onto China, and in 635 their young king Strongsten Gampo was even married to a Chinese princess.²⁵

Strongsten Gampo was born in 569 and he was the first Buddhist ruler of Tibet. It was due to his marriage to two princesses, one from China and the other from Nepal both of whom were Buddhists that he himself turned to Buddhism.²⁶ The other important event of his reign was the adoption of the Tibetan script. According to the court chronicles, a Buddhist scholar Thonmi Sambhota was sent to Kashmir by Gampo to study the Buddhist texts and the script that was used there.²⁷ They came back from India and introduced the Tibetan Script derived from Indian Devnagiri alphabets. The script originally known as *Pod-vig* (literary translated as the script of Tibet) was eventually introduced in Tibet in the seventh century.²⁸ Unfortunately not much more is known about Strongsten Gampo or his reign as only these are the few points that were emphasized in the chronicles of Ladakh.

²³ Luciano Petech, Study on the Chronicles, pp. 30-31.

²⁴ Luciano Petech, Study on the Chronicles, p. 32.

²⁵ Charles Bell, The people of Tibet, First edition, Oxford 1928, Asian Educational Services, Delhi, 1991, p. 10.

²⁶ Bell, People of Tibet, p. 10.

²⁷ Tashi Radgias, Maryul, p. 24

²⁸ Tashi Konchok, Preservation and Development of Tibetan Language in Indian Himalayas. *In search of Truth*, Part-II, CIHTS, Sarnath, Varanasi, 2019, pp. 567-582.

According to the Tibetan chronicles, Ladakh was included in the domain of Strongsten Gampo and he extended the frontier of his kingdom to include parts of Nepal, China and Chinese Turkestan, Gilgit and Ladakh.²⁹ According to Petech, the only reliable source on the conquest of Strongsten Gampo lies in the Ladakhi chronicles, where there is no mention about Ladakh being conquered by him. In all probability Ladakh mentioned in the Tibetan Chronicles corresponds to Guge in Western Tibet, Ladakh only being a region in the vicinity.³⁰ Tashi Rabgais also believes that Ladakh remained divided among the various territorial chiefs at that time and was never brought under the Tibetan authority, though he admits that Tibetan forces probably only reached the vicinity of Ladakh.³¹

Earlier, in 670, Tibet defeated China and acquired control over Eastern Turkistan. But this conquest was temporary and in 692, a Chinese expeditionary force re-conquered the four garrisons at Kadhgar, Khotan, Kucha and Karashahr (all in eastern Turkistan).³² However, this powerful position of Tibet seriously endangered Chinese sovereignty over Turkistan and it continued to trouble China up to the beginning of the ninth century. Even after the death of Strongstengampo in 650, the Tibetan conquest of its neighbouring states continued. Among the later rulers, Ti-song Detsen (755-804) is also remembered for conquering western China and extending the Tibetan authority as it was claimed as far as the Bay of Bengal which was known as Tibetan sea. According to Charles Bell this claim of influence is confirmed on the basis of ethnological and linguistic domination of Tibetan in the region.³³

Besides the Tibetans, the Chinese from the eighth century onwards had to deal with the Arabs, who had started a career of conquest and were beginning to make their presence felt in Central Asia and Persia.³⁴ China had found an ally in Kashmir, which for about a quarter of a century had checked the Tibetan expansion into Turkistan in the first-half of the eighth century.

²⁹J.N Ganhar& P.N Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, MunshiramManoharlal, Delhi, 1956, p. 181.

³⁰Petech, *Study on the Chronicles*, p. 51.

³¹Rabgais, *Maryul*, p. 24.

³²Dutta, *Ladakh in Western Himalayan*, pp. 43-44.

³³Bell, *The People of Tibet*, p. 12.

³⁴David L Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya, Travel and Studies, in quest of the origins and nature of Tibetan Religion*, Bruno Cassirer (Publishers), Oxford London, 1957, p. 147.

This alliance lasted only till the death of king Lalitaditya in 760,³⁵ after which the Tibetans established their control over Baltistan and penetrated further into Central Asia and China. Thus, in the west, Tibet controlled Gilgit, Hunza and Swat; in the east, they occupied and administered almost the whole of Kansu and the greater part of Szechwan and northern Yunan. And by 763 Tibet reached its highest extent of empire with the occupation of Ch'angan western capital of Tang where the Tibetan commanders crowned a Tang prince as emperor of China, though for a short period of few days only.³⁶

By the first-half of the ninth century, three great dynasties that were in power in China (Tang dynasty), Tibet and Persia (Samanid dynasty) which had played a significant role in shaping the history of Central Asia were now in decline. The Caliphate soon after the death of Harun-al-Rashid in 809 disappeared from the political life of Turkistan. In China, the Tang empire (618-907) was also on the verge of extinction. Tibet having lost its position as an expansionist state soon ceased to exist as a strong power and disintegrated in small territorial states.³⁷

During the clash between Tibet and China, great P'o-lu (Baltistan) with Ladakh came under the influence of China; there are references of sending embassy by the ruler of Baltistan to China. In the first-half of the eighth century, references of great P'o-lu (Baltistan) came under the influence of Tibet, when little P'o-lu (Gilgit) king approached China for help, an inference that at this point of time, Baltistan was already part of the Tibet. Through the reference of Hui-Chao, Chinese pilgrim that the Baltistan with the Ladakh were under the Tibetan rule, though the people living in these areas spoke different languages, clothings and customs gives the impression that the people living in Ladakh were Dardic. The political allegiance of Ladakh may have shifted with China and sometimes with Tibet, the cultural relation was mainly with Kashmir as the religion of Buddhism reached and penetrated in Ladakh by crossing the Zojila pass through the inscription of Sarada at Drass and Chiktan dated 700-1200 A.D.³⁸

³⁵Kalhan, *Rajtarangini*, p. 357.

³⁶Dutta, *Ladakh in Western Himalayas*, p. 46.

³⁷Petech, *Study on the Chronicles*, p. 79-80.

³⁸Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*, p.12.

During the second-half of 8th and first-half of 9th century, Ladakh held a loose suzerainty with Tibet, through the reference of Hudud al-Alam,³⁹ which mentions about the people of Baltistan as merchants and living in tents, which was further ascertained by the Nestorian crosses carved at boulders near Drangtse by merchants of Sogdian Christian. Another source is the Sogdian inscription also found near Drangtse by merchant from Samarkand. These sources speak of trade relation during 8th and 9th century.⁴⁰ Trade relations with Turkestan as early as 700-900 A.D.⁴¹

The disintegration of the central Tibetan empire, i.e. after 842 freed Ladakh from the Tibetan dominion. Ladakh maintained its trade relations with Tibet. With the disintegration of Tibetan empire a branch of royal class people migrated towards the west of Tibet, i.e. in 10th century, the relation of Ladakh with the Tibet especially with the western Tibet became strong through the Tibetanization of Ladakh.⁴² The relation with the Tibet became stronger as the decline of Buddhism took place in Kashmir and the monks started migrating from Kashmir towards Tibet, in this connection Ladakh also looked towards Tibet now onwards, the Chinese traveler Hiuentasang when visited Kashmir mentions monks were migrating towards Tibet and the monasteries had deserted looks. The destruction of the Nalanda monastery in 9th century increased the migration from Kashmir.⁴³

During the migration on the way monks built several monasteries, at Zanskar kanika monastery, another monastery at Sumda and the third one in Alchi. These monasteries have different looks than other monasteries. The architecture or the style of these monasteries resembles with Kashmiri style, the lintels and door beams are thick, mythological design of wood carvings. The galleries at Alchi with trefoil arches exhibit Kashmiri style. The wall paintings inside the Alchi monasteries give the impression of Kashmiri style.⁴⁴ Some other monasteries which A.H. Francke makes mention consist of both Tibetan inscription and Sanskrit inscription in Sarada characters of Kashmir, the stone images at Drass with Sarada characters

³⁹ Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*, p.12.

⁴⁰ Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*, p.12.

⁴¹ A.H. Francke, 'Antiquities of Indian Tibet-I.p60

⁴² Ibid.p.13.

⁴³ A. H. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*.p.50.

⁴⁴ Ibid.p.51.

proofs the sculpture of Buddhist art from Kashmir.⁴⁵ The chronicles of Ladakh mentions that at this point of time Ladakh was divided into two upper Ladakh and lower Ladakh. The descendants of Kesar (Gesar) ruled upper Ladakh, whereas lower Ladakh was divided into small territories.

During the period of 600-1000 we get the reference of Ladakh's relation with Yarkand through trade, according to A.H. Francke that even when the local chieftains at war especially during the harvest season, when the village people of Kalatse had to be ready from the attack of Tagmachik by guarding the fields, but trade was continued and carried between India and Yarkand through western Tibet.⁴⁶ The historicity of Ladakh becomes clearer with the foundation of western Tibetan kingdom. Skyidlde NyimaGon (975-1000) who was the son of Ldepalkortsan (950-975) founded a kingdom at western Tibet (mNa-ris-skorgsum).⁴⁷

During the period, i.e., the second spread of Buddhism, Skyidlde Nyima Gon built Maitreya sculptures at Shey in about 975 A.D. Shey was capital at that time. According to sources there were three sons of Ni-ma-Mgon, dPal-gyi-lde Rig-pa-mgon, bKra-sis-mgon, lDe-gtsug-mgon,⁴⁸ thus the dynasty was known as the mgon dynasty. The mgon dynasty was distributed among three sons of NyimaGon. dPal-gyi-mgon, eldest ruled Ladakh proper, Zogi Pass to Rudog. The second son bKra-sis-mgon ruled the area of Purang and Guge and lDe-gtsug-mgon ruled over Zaskar, Spiti and Lahoul.⁴⁹

The ascension of Spal-Ki-Gon to the throne in 930 was the beginning of the first dynasty that ruled Ladakh.⁵⁰ The dynasty came to be known as the Lhachen' dynasty during which nearly seventeen rulers came to rule over Ladakh till the fifteenth century, with the last Lhachen King ruling from 1440-1470.⁵¹ The period marks one of the most significant phases in the growth of

⁴⁵ Ibid.p.52.

⁴⁶ A fortified custom house in ruined form had been found near Kalatse known as Balukar, custom house guarded an ancient bridge, the custom officer titled mdogtsonggtso, "lord of the trade in the lower valley." Tax was collected in kind rather than money, as beads were found but no coin was found there. A. H. Francke, A History of Western Tibet.p.49.

⁴⁷ A.H Francke, A History of Western Tibet.p.61.

⁴⁸ Luciano Petech, kingdom of Ladakh.p.17

⁴⁹ A.H Francke, A History of Western Tibet.p.53.

⁵⁰ Luciano Petech, Study on the Chronicles, pp. 108-109

⁵¹ Petech, Study on the chronicles, p. 113.

cultural and religious history of the region. According to Tashi Rabgias, this period witnessed the firm consolidation of Buddhism in the whole region, with the coming of great scholars like Rinchen Zangpo (tenth century) and Atisha (eleventh century) from Western Tibet.⁵²

Lha-cen Gyalpo 1100-1125 constructed the first monastery namely Klu-kyil of lamasery at likir.⁵³ The importance of the monastery traditions place the monastery as among the oldest one, in reality the monasteries built by the monks from Kashmir were older than the likir monastery,⁵⁴ and this shows that the people of Ladakh developed a great reverence towards the Tibet. During Lha-cen Utpala's reign the relation of Ladakh with the neighbouring areas becomes stronger as a large portion of area came under his control, he brought Kulu under his dominion, made the ruler to sign treaty and pay tribute.⁵⁵

During Lhachen Naglug's (1150-1175) rule the trade relation with Tibet became even stronger as he built palaces at Wanla and Kalatse.⁵⁶ According to the traditions the castle was the first castle, he also built bridge in order to demand taxes.⁵⁷

During the reign of Lha Cen Kunga Namgyal the treatises were written in the name of lamas, the literature were written in volumes.⁵⁸ Lhachen Ngorub in about 1300-1325, in order to get training in religious matter, monks turned towards central Tibet to get religious education, earlier education of Indian Buddhism got setback which the emigrants imparted to the monks, now the focus for religious education shifted to Lhasa the capital of Tibet, thus Lhasa became centre for religious and other education. The religious freedom which Ladakh enjoyed was somewhat curtailed as now on Ladakh had to depend for religious dignitaries from Tibet. This can be a reason that Ladakh has rich folklore culture.⁵⁹ The importance of Tibet became so

⁵²Rabgias, Maryul, pp. 40-42.

⁵³ Luciano Petech, The Kingdom of Ladakh.p.18.

⁵⁴ A.H. Francke, A History of Western Tibet.p.64.

⁵⁵ Luciano Petech, The Kingdom of Ladakh.p.18.

⁵⁶Kalatse was a dard colony before the advent of Tibetans, dard's had their colony in kalatse, castle had been built by the chieftains along the bank of river indus to protect bridge, the remnants of castle and the irrigation system for the fields proves the dard settling in Kalatse.

⁵⁷Francke mentions about the inscription related to the construction of bridge and also about the edict which ends with a threat for those for damaging the bridge.

⁵⁸A.H.Fancke, history of western Tibet.p.67.

⁵⁹ Ibid.p.68.

strong that the ruler ordered for massive Encyclopedia of Tibet for Lamaism known as Kangyur (108 volumes), for bringing the literature of central Tibetan to prominent position.⁶⁰ The king also repaired many monasteries constructed by the king's ancestors, like Likir monastery.⁶¹ King even made expensive offerings to Buddha like silver, gold, copper, pearls, coral beads, etc.⁶²

Lha Chen Gyalbu Rinchen, 1325-1350, the reference of the king had been mentioned in the Rajtarangini by Kalhan, according to Luciano Petech, the compilers inserted the name of the king in chronicle to show the importance of the Ladakh king ruling Kashmir.⁶³

A new situation was arising in Ladakh at Tibetan end a new sect was approaching towards Ladakh founded by the famous reformer of Tibet Tsong Khapa,⁶⁴ he felt the need of reforming the religion of Buddhism as evils had crept in the religion, Lhachen Dragspa bum lde was a great follower of Buddhism and built monasteries in Ladakh. An edict on rock from Mulbe the king wanted to purify Buddhism in Ladakh.⁶⁵ He ordered the people to stop killing animals in the name of sacrifice, as Buddhism speaks of non-violence and is against the killing of any living creature. The edict writes,

*"Oh Lama, (Tsongkapa), take notice of this! The King of faith, Bum lde, having seen the fruit of works in the future life, gives order to the men of Mulbe to abolish, above all, the living sacrifices, and greets the Lama. The living sacrifices are abolished."*⁶⁶

The king published his orders on wooden boards in other areas. He received the envoy of Tsong Kapa, king celebrated the event by constructing the dGe-lugs-pa monastery at dPe-

⁶⁰ Ibid.p.68.

⁶¹ A.H. Francke, history of western Tibet. P.68

⁶² Ibid, p.68. LhachenGyalbuRinchen 1325-1350, he was also known by the name of Rainchen Shah who had fight with his father and went to Kashmir, in Kashmir there was political chaos, the king had fled from Kashmir to kishtwar in order to save his life from the tartars who had attacked Kashmir. Rin-cen used the opportunity and became the king of Kashmir, there were different reasons pointed by the different writers in the king's conversion to muslim. He became the first muslim ruler of Kashmir.

⁶³ Luciano Petech, The Kingdom of Ladakh.p.21.

⁶⁴ Tsongkapa (1378-1441), highly respected and revered by the ladakhi ruler for being a great learnt personality, he had deep knowledge about Buddhism, he was also known as a great reformer, he founded many evils had crept into the practice of buddhism in Tibet. In order to purify and to reform those impurities he founded a new sect known as the "virtuous one,"

⁶⁵ A.H.Francke, history of western Tibet.p.78.

⁶⁶ A.H Francke, history of western Tibet.p.79.

t'ub.⁶⁷ During the rule of Bum Lde Kashmir witnessed the conversion to Islam, in this connection the King of Kashmir Sultan Sikander sent his minister Rai Magre to capture Baltistan and annexed it to Kashmir. Even though Ladakh did not directly face the brunt of this invasion, but Baltistan temporarily came under the Kashmir Sultanate. The presence of a strong Muslim state in the neighborhood was set to have an impact on the future course of Ladakh history.⁶⁸

Throughout the rule of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470) Ladakh itself suffered two invasions from Kashmir. The details are provided in the Kashmiri source by Jonaraja, but does not mention about the date of the invasion. Petech on the basis of Ferishta's record placed the date to the period immediately after his accession in 1420.⁶⁹ But on the basis of later researches carried by Petech himself and Neil Howard the date for invasion was assigned to around 1440s.⁷⁰ Zain-ul- Abidin carried his invasion to western Tibet, where he plundered the town of Guge. It appeared that Zain-ul-Abidin had no intention of permanently occupying these areas and returned after collecting plunder and extorting tribute.

Lodros Chogldan 1435-1460, he was the eldest son of the King Bum Lde, during his reign Ladakh's relation reached far and wide. He not only subdued vassals but also took control of Guge. The king got many things in the form of gifts.⁷¹

In 1460, Lhachen Bhagan (1460-1485), founded a new dynasty in alliance with the people of Shey, thus Blo-gros-mc 'og-ldan along with brothers Slab-bstan-dar-rgyas and Drun-pa Ali were defeated and Bhagan founded the Namgyal dynasty which lasted till the Dogra's rule.

During 1483 Ladakh and Baltistan came under the attack of Kashmir, Sayyid Hasan and Jahangir Magre were sent by Sultan Hasan Shah to invade Great and Little Tibet. Both went through different routes. Sayyid Hasan conquered Baltistan, Jahangir lost the battle in Ladakh and all his army got defeated.⁷²

⁶⁷ Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*.p.22.

⁶⁸ Petech, *Study on the Chronicles*, p. 115.

⁶⁹ Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 23.

⁷⁰ Neil Howard, 'Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's Raid into Ladakh', ed. John Bray, *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspective*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, 2011, pp.137-143

⁷¹ Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*.p.24.

⁷² Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*.p.26.

In 1532, Ladakh suffered one of the most disastrous invasions in the form of the Mongol onslaught from the north. Sultan Abu Said of Kashgar set out with his army for war against the Tibet.⁷³ One part of his army was placed under the command of Mirza Haider Dughlat. Prince Sikander Mirza, the sultan's son also accompanied the contingent. They took the old caravan route over the Karakoram and entered Ladakh from Nubra. After passing through Karakoram, Mirza Dughlat entered Nubra, plundered the inhabitants and forced them to embrace Islam. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* is the only text which gives an elaborate description about this invasion. The text does not mention Ladakh as separate territorial identity; instead the whole region including Baltistan was considered as part of Tibet. However, the mention about the siege of the castle of 'Mutader' has been identified with Hunder in the Nubra region of Ladakh.⁷⁴ From here onwards the invaders did not face any resistance; in fact, the ruler of Ladakh or Maryul, as referred to by Denison, the translator of the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, offered their submission.⁷⁵

As the winter set in, Mirza Dughlat did not find it suitable to make Ladakh as the winter capital and Kashmir was selected for this purpose. The khan of Kashgar also joined Mirza Dughlat but the former's health had been impaired by mountain sickness. The khan was appraised of the decision of staying in Kashmir for the winter, but he was not strong enough to cross the high passes leading in to the valley. It was decided that the khan would proceed towards Baltistan, which could be easily reached without causing much sickness to the rest of his soldiers. Meanwhile Mirza Dughlat proceeded to raid Kashmir.

When Mirza returned from Kashmir in the spring of 1533, he found that the Mongols who were left in charge of Nubra, had been driven out and took refuge in Leh (Maryul). Promptly retaliating, Mirza Dughlat put to death one Tashikun for aiding this revolt. The name Tashikun is understood by many scholars to be the king, Tashi Namgyal, as mentioned in the Ladakh chronicles.⁷⁶ Neil Howard, who also carried out studies on the chronicles of Ladakh to find out the gaps in the chronology appeared much later and the one mentioned by Mirza

⁷³Dughlat, *Tarikh*, p. 403.

⁷⁴Dughlat, *Tarikh*, p. 418.

⁷⁵Dughlat, *Tarikh*, p. 460.

⁷⁶Kaul, Ladakh, p.47.

Dughlat was a chief of Nubra and not the ruler of Maryul (upper Ladakh).⁷⁷ Pertinent to note here is the fact that an invasion of such a scale, having a significant impact on the political history of Kashmir, was to entail no substantial change in the course of Ladakhi history, even after facing the brunt of the invasion.

Mirza Dughlat's next attempt was the conquest of central Tibet. Meanwhile the khan decided to return to Yarkand but died on the way due to mountain sickness. Mirza heard the news of the khan's death, while he was on the way to central Tibet, but he did not stop and continued with his journey. He entered Guge in western Tibet and continued his advance without meeting any resistance. Still, he had to give up this expedition because of the difficulties faced due to the harsh climate and harsh terrain as many of his soldiers died on the way. He had to return to Ladakh with a small number of troops. He was given a warm welcome by the Ladakhi king who even hastened to offer his submission to Mirza Dughlat. Dughlat was allowed to establish his quarters at Shay, the winter capital of Ladakh and stayed there for two long years.⁷⁸

In the home country of Kashgar, the new sultan Rashid, had begun his reign by putting to death all those whom he suspected of plotting in favour of his brother Sikandar. Since Mirza Dughlat was known to be on friendly terms with Sikander, he feared that he might also be put to death. Thus, instead of returning to Kashgar, in 1536 Mirza Dughlat left for Badakshan via Kabul into the service of the sons of his late cousin Babur in Lahore, from where under the Mughals he started a new career till his death in 1554. During this period with the support of the Mughals, he defeated the Kashmiri king Sultan Ismail Shah in 1540 and Mirza Dughlat became the de-facto ruler of Kashmir.⁷⁹

After establishing himself securely in Kashmir, in 1545, Mirza Haider Dughlat again invaded Ladakh, with no lasting consequence; but in 1548 during his second invasion, he conquered both Ladakh and Baltistan. He even appointed governors for his new domain of Tibet (Ladakh and Baltistan) Mulla Baqi and Mulla Qasim two of his senior and high-ranking

⁷⁷ Howard, *What happened between 1450-1550*, p.130.

⁷⁸ Dughlat, *Tarikh*, p.460.

⁷⁹ Mansura Haider, *Mirza Muhammad Haider Dughlat Kurkan*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2019, p.149.

commanders.⁸⁰ However, as before, their rule was very nominal and Kashmiri suzerainty was short-lived, in the year 1551, Mirza Dughlat's control came to an end and Kashmir once again came under the heads of the weak rulers making it easy for Baltis and Ladakhis to throw away the nominal Kashmiri authority.⁸¹

bKra-sis-rnam-rgyal(1555-1575), reign saw the Ladakh's extension of border and construction of monasteries. His rule extended up to purig in the west, Guge towards the east, thus Guge remained under the suzerainty of Ladakh. The King constructed the first royal palace on the hill top of the Namgyal tsemo and chapel house (mGon-k 'an) below. He sends expensive gifts to monasteries of Sa-skya, Lhasa, Bri-gun, bSam-yas and Lhasa.⁸² The king built the monastery of sGan-snonbKra-sis-cos-rdzon at Pyi-dban (Phyang).

The last invasion of Ladakh from the Kashmir sultanate took place in 1562, when Ghazi Chak (1561-1563) sent an expedition under the command of his sons Ahmad Khan and Fateh Chak. The latter raided the capital, but retired upon a promise of tribute. Ahmad Khan tried to repeat this exploit, but was surrounded and his life was saved by the timely arrival of Fateh Chak, who in the course got killed.⁸³

Thus, till the late sixteenth century, Ladakh was subjected to raids and invasions from Kashmir and incidents of such raids had a partial impact on Ladakh. An important consequence of these invasions was the promotion it contributed to the spread of Islam in Baltistan and the Purig area around Kargil comprising the Suru Valley, Pashkyum, Mulbeg, Bodh Kharbu and Shakar Chiktan, which consisted at that time of a number of small principalities bound in loose quazi-feudal relationship to Ladakhi monarchy. On the other hand, central Ladakh did not come under the control of the invaders; neither was there any instance of conversion taking place under their influence. One common factor, which proved a great hindrance in the way of the invaders in all these expeditions, was the harshness of the climate and the difficulty of the terrain. The rulers of Kashmir, even after a successful attack, never felt motivated to redeem their position of

⁸⁰Pandita, *Baharistan*, p.119.

⁸¹Haidar, *Mirza Dughlat*, pp. 158-161.

⁸² Luciano Petech, *kingdom of Ladakh*, p.29.

⁸³ Luciano Petech. *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p.30.

political as well as religious ascendancy over Ladakh.

Tsewang Namgyal(1574-1595) rose in power and emerged as one of the most powerful kings of the Namgyal Dynasty. He led a successful invasion against the neighbouring state of Baltistan, which at that time was divided among many petty chieftains. With this invasion, the borders of Ladakh were extended from Mayum Pass located in the east to Baltistan and Chitral. According to the chronicles, Tsewang Namgyal planned to go to war against the Muslim kingdoms of Central Asia, probably to avenge the raid of Mirza Haider. But he had to abandon his plan in the face of representations from the people of Nubra, requesting him against taking such a step fearing a negative impact of the war on the transit trade that passing through the Karakoram.⁸⁴ The king constructed roads and bridges to have better connectivity with the neighbouring regions. His reign saw the Brigupa influence as official letters were sent from Mansarower to the rulers of Pu-ran, Gu-ge and Man-yul (Ladakh).⁸⁵

After the death of TsebanNamgyal, JamyangNamgyal (Jam-dbyan-rnam-rgyal) ascended the throne when Ladakh was ruled by the petty chieftains or vassals after the death of Tseban Namgyal. His first task was to put down the vassals who rose in revolt and declared independent themselves. He directed his attention towards the Purig, and the Chigtan, whose rulers had declared themselves as the Sultans; both the rulers had adopted the religion of Islam. Both rulers of Chigtan and Purig fought with each other. JamayangNamgyal decided to help the Chigtan ruler Tsering Malik.⁸⁶

On the other end the ruler of Skardu was waiting to take the revenge for the atrocities which Tsewang Namgyal inflicted. JamyangNamgyal was not aware with the preparation of Skardu ruler against the Ladakhi ruler, he started the campaign late in the winter season which can be ascertained through the tradition that the ruler celebrated the new year (Losar) before the Tibetan new year.⁸⁷ The Skardu ruler Ali Mir attacked Ladakh and destroyed the treasure of

⁸⁴Petech, *Study on the Chronicles*, p. 131.

⁸⁵ Luciano Petech.p..32.

⁸⁶ Alexander Cunningham, *Ladakh Physical, Statistical and Historical*.p.91.

⁸⁷ Alexander Cunningham.p.92.

Ladakh, many literatures were burnt and monasteries were destroyed.⁸⁸ Jamyang Namgyal was defeated in the battle. The king was imprisoned in Skardu. Ladakh came under the sovereignty of Skardu ruler Ali Mir,⁸⁹ The Baltistan ruler waited till the passes got blocked and attacked the army of Ladakh, after defeating the Ladakhi army Baltistan ruler attacked Ladakh and burnt repositories.⁹⁰

After the defeat at the hands of the Balti ruler, the king shifted his attention towards the religious activities. Although the king allowed the Muslim population to settle in Ladakh, the king presented precious gifts to the monasteries of central Tibet, Lamaist books copied in silver, gold and copper.⁹¹ The king also sent invitation to the 4th Brug-censprul-kudpag-bsam-dban-po for Ladakh but the incarnate didn't take the journey for Ladakh. The king also pledged to rebuild the monasteries and other religious buildings which were destroyed by the Balti attack.⁹²

The king had to regain his fame as a ruler, the king lessened the burden on the poor and made efforts for the betterment of the poor or on three occasions he made the rich and the poor equal. The donations for the monasteries and gifts to various sects gained the image of the king by copying the attribution of famous king of Tibet Mu-ne-bTsang-po.⁹³

Sen-ge-r Nam-rgyal ascended the throne when he was minor, his mother Gyal Khatun carried on the administration, his reign saw extension of Ladakhi rule. The king intended to bring the glory of Ladakh which was lost during the reign of his father. The king was determined to extend the boundaries of Ladakh which had been during the rule of his grandfather. He successfully subdued all the vassals who declared their independence. Gu-ge was annexed with the kingdom of Ladakh, as was requested by the military commander to annex Gu-ge after the death of the king of Gu-ge.⁹⁴ The conquest brought Ladakh close to Tibet. In 1638 Mongol raided the Gu-ge which made Sen-ge-Namgyal apprehended, he led his army against the

⁸⁸ Alexander Cunningham, Ladakh Physical, Statistical and Historical.p.318.

⁸⁹ In 1591 Ali Mir made diplomatic relations with the Mughal Ruler when his daughter married with the Mughal prince Salim.

⁹⁰ Baltis burnt the religious books and threw many in the water, and destroyed many monasteries..p.34, Luciano Petech.

⁹¹ Alexander Cunningham.p.321.

⁹² A. H. Francke.p.96.

⁹³ Luciano Petech.p.36.

⁹⁴ Luciano Petech.p.45.

Mongol, some of the Mongols were taken as prisoners, and the chief of Gu-ge Nor-bu-rin-cen was given free passage.⁹⁵

Sengge Namgyal marched towards the Purig to regain the lost provinces but was defeated by the combined forces of Mughal and Balti and was forced to pay tribute and accept the suzerainty of Mughal rule over Ladakh and also to give up his claim over Purig.⁹⁶ Ladakhi chronicle mentions of victory of Ladakhi ruler on the Mughal Balti forces. But the biography of Stag-tsang-ras-pa doesn't mention about the war, Mughal sources mentions defeat of the Ladakhi king and had to sign for peace and promised to pay tribute which was never taken seriously.⁹⁷ The trade route was closed from Kashmir towards Ladakh and no one was allowed from the route to enter Ladakh. The closure of the trade route had a negative impact on the economy of Ladakh as trade was the chief source of income for the inhabitant of Ladakh and the economy of Ladakh. The embargo lasted for many years.⁹⁸

During Sengge Namgyal's reign Stag-stang-ras-pa visited Ladakh, he constructed monasteries in Ladakh, and the monastery at Hanle was the first, followed by the monastery at Hemis.⁹⁹ Hemis monastery famous for the mask dance, Stag-stang-ras-pa had great influence on the life of the king, the king spent huge amount in religious matters, construction of monasteries, many walls, short and gigantic image of Buddha at Shey. Religious missions with expensive religious gifts were sent to Central Tibet. The king built royal palace in Leh this shifted the importance of Shey to Leh. The king died in 1642 at the age not more than 40 when he was returning back from an expedition against the Mongols. After the death of the king his wife Skalzang Dolma acted as regent for her minor sons. In 1647 the kingdom was divided amongst the three sons of Sengge Namgyal, all the three sons were declared king the eldest one as paramount. Delda Namgyal ruled Ladakh proper, Indrabodhi Namgyal the Guge area, Demchog Namgyal ruled Zaskar and Spiti.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Luciano Petech.p.46.

⁹⁶ Lahori, *Shahjahannama*, pp. 72-73.

⁹⁷ Luciano Petech.p.51.

⁹⁸ Luciano Petech.p.51.

⁹⁹ A. H Francke.p.100.

¹⁰⁰ Janet Rizvi, *ladakh crossroads of high asia..p..70*

During Deldan Namgyal's reign Ladakh had to face threats from the governors of the Mughal empire of Kashmir. Kashmir came under Aurangzeb (1658-1707) the Mughal emperor, who had sent not less than 12 governors to Kashmir. Aurangzeb himself visited Kashmir once in 1664 to restore his health as he had fallen ill in the summer of 1664.¹⁰¹ Deldan Namgyal resumed his father's promise of tribute and loyalty. He even sent presents to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb such as musk, jade, yak tails and crystal. When Aurangzeb left Kashmir, Deldan Namgyal became complacent and resorted to evading the tribute he had to pay and overlooking the other conditions. As a result, Saif Khan took prompt action and sent a force to Ladakh to restore the compliance of the agreement entered with the Mughals. In addition, the Ladakh ruler was also asked to embrace Islam, read Khutba and mint coins in the name of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Deldan Namgyal even agreed to build a mosque at Leh.¹⁰² This episode of Deldan Namgyal embracing Islam and giving orders for the foundation of the mosques missing in Ladakh chronicles, for the obvious reason that the royal scribe would not have considered it expedient to depict Deldan Namgyal as a subjected ruler under the influence of Islam. However, scholars like Petech and Francke through their supplementary research based on the study of inscriptions¹⁰³ and on the Mughal sources, have found ample evidence to authenticate this fact. Bernier himself witnessed and interacted with a member of the team that came to negotiate and offer their allegiance to Aurangzeb.¹⁰⁴ When Mughal ruler Aurangzeb left Kashmir, Deldan Namgyal didn't took the matter seriously, like his father he also seems of not showing any seriousness about the promises. In order to comply the orders of Aurangzeb, Kashmir governor sent forces on the border and with the help of Skardu ruler Deldan Namgyal promised to comply with the orders. The submission of Ladakhi king to Mughal ruler was announced through kharita (official letter) sent to Deldan Namgyal by Aurangzeb.

The relation of Ladakh with the Tibet took new shape after the enthronement of Deldan Namgyal. The chronicle does not mention him as king. Mughals and Tibetan mentions Deldan Namgyal during the Guge war. There was a quarrel between Tibeto-Mongolian and Bhutan, it was the quarrel of two sects, Bhutan followed the Drugpa or Red sect and Tibet followed

¹⁰¹ G.M.DSufi, *KashirbeingahistoryofKashmirfromtheearliesttimetoourown*, Vol. I Capital publishing House, Delhi, Reprint, 1996, p.274.

¹⁰² Bernier, Travels, pp. 422-424.

¹⁰³ A.HFrankie, *AntiquitiesofIndian TibetII*, p.118.

¹⁰⁴ Bernier, Travels, pp. 423-425.

Gelugspa sect. Ladakh followed the Drugpa sect, in a letter addressed to Tibet, Ladakh showed its allegiance with Bhutan.¹⁰⁵ This infuriated the Vth Dalai Lama of Tibet, after the peace was concluded between Tibet and Bhutan. Dalai Lama assigned the task to Lama dGa-ldan-tse-dban-dpal-bzan for invading Ladakh,¹⁰⁶ a small force was sent consisted Mongol horsemen mostly which fought with the Ladakhi troops near Guge, Ladakhi forces were defeated, they entrenched in the forts. When Reinforcement was sent from Tibet, Ladakhi forces retreated back, Tibetan forces entered inside the boundary of Ladakh, Tibetan forces met with Ladakhi forces near changla pass, they were defeated by Tibetan. The king and the general were pursued by the Tibetan forces. Tibetan forces continued their move towards Leh without any resistance. The king and the forces of Ladakh entrenched in the fortress of Basgo.¹⁰⁷ The Mongols attacked Zanskar, where the ruler was Indrabodhi (Intabhoti).

The situation was getting worse, the king had to approach Kashmir for help. A contingent was sent under the leadership of Fidai Khan which were joined by Lower Ladakhi and Baltistan forces. The Tibeto Mongol forces were defeated at the plain of Bya-rgyal plain between Ne-mo and Ba-sgo. They fled and halted at Trashisgang. In return of the help Mughal put conditions in front of the Ladakhi ruler, set new rules and relation with Ladakh. The tribute which was not paid had to be forwarded to Kashmir in 3 years which comprised of eighteen pods of Musk, eighteen piebald horses and eighteen yak tails of white colour.¹⁰⁸ The king in exchange was to receive 300 (or 500) rice bags. Deldan Namgyal had to accept Islam under the name of Aqibat Mahmud Khan,¹⁰⁹ the king also promised to construct Mosque in Leh.¹¹⁰ The coins to be struck in the emperor's name, in terms of wool trade, and the fine wool had to be sold to Kashmir only, four Kashmiri traders would be allowed to buy wool from the highlands nomads, who would be residing at spituk and had to do trading with the other kashmiris at spituk.

The treaty signed in 1683 also did some territorial changes, Nabsat or Dras came under Kashmir, upper Kulu occupied in 1682 remained in the hands of Raja Bidhi Singh. Baltistan and

¹⁰⁵ A. H. Francke.p.106.

¹⁰⁶ C.L Datta, Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics.p.62.

¹⁰⁷ Basgo fortress had the benefit of continued water supply and lots of grain was stored that for three years the king and his contingents stayed in the fort.

¹⁰⁸ Luciano petech,..p.. 74.

¹⁰⁹ Janet Rzvi.p.73.

¹¹⁰ William Moorcroft and Trebeck.p.337

Purig were restored to their former rulers. Tibet became concern about the relation with Ladakh, after the defeat it was not possible to pressurize Ladakh with force, the submission of Ladakhi king to Mughals and the conversion of king to Muslim felt the threat by the Tibetan ruler. Tibet was ruled by Sans-rgyas-rgya-mtso after the death of 5th Dalai Lama. Tibetan ruler discussed the situation with the head of the Brug-pa sect the 6thBrug-cen-Mi-pam-dban-po. Tibetan regent Sans-rgyas-rgya-mtso requested the Brug-pa head to meet the Ladakhi ruler, Brug-cen travelled to Ladakh and met with the Ladakhi ruler at Tingmosgang(gTin-bur-sgan), requested the king to abandon the Islam and reconvert to Buddhism as the subjects of Ladakh followed the faith of Buddhism. Thus the treaty of Tingmosgang in1684 was signed between Tibet and Ladakh, the border between Ladakh and central Tibet was fixed at Lha-ri stream near Dem-chog and the revenue of area of Men-ser in Guge were to be used for the expenses of the sacred lamps and for reading mantras in Tibet.¹¹¹Rutog, Guge were taken under the control of Tibet and the revenue from the areas were to be used by the Brug-cen.

The ruler of Ladakh required carrying out a mission to clerics of Tibet once in three years (Lo-pyag mission), the mission should consist of gifts to the lamas, the triennial mission for the head lama should consist of gold of thirty grams, ten weights of perfume, six roll of calico, one piece of cotton cloth.¹¹²The people associated with the mission would be given free stay, ration and fodder throughout their sojourn from Ladakh to Lhasa and vice versa. Every year there would be a yearly mission from Tibet to Ladakh known as Chaba mission goods worth 200 loads, the treaty with the Mughal and the treaty with the Tibet weakened Ladakh both economically and politically, the economy of Ladakh exhausted due to the extensive construction of many walls, monasteries, religious donations to the lamas of Tibet.¹¹³The closure of trade route from Kashmir by Sengge Namgyal in between 1639 to 1665 aided to the financial impoverishment of Ladakh.¹¹⁴ The information related to Delegs Namgyal was mostly from two sources, the war and the building of sTag-na monastery. Deleg had 4 or 5 sons. First (Ni-ma – nam-gyal), second Nag-ban-nam-gyal, third dBan-pyug-rnam-gyal(Dechok or De-skyon), Chholtan-grub or Chho-val-ton-grub and the last son was dGa-ldan-rnam-gyal.bDe-legs-nam-

¹¹¹ Luciano Petech.p.78.

¹¹² Luciano Petech.p.78.

¹¹³ Janet Rizvi.p.74.

¹¹⁴ Janet Rizvi.p.74

rgyal died in 1691.

Ni-ma-rnam-rgyal became ruler in 1691, the ruler issued grants in large number. The boundaries of the Kingdom had shrunk, and the king had to accept the terms, the king mostly spent time in resolving the internal issues, he was virtuous ruler whose judgment was equal to everyone, he appointed state functionaries who with the king took decisions on different matters.¹¹⁵ He appointed elders as officers who looked into the matters of land. Like his ancestors the king made donations to the monasteries of Tibet. The relation with the Tibet became more of dictated terms the supremacy of gelugs pa on both religious and political. Due to the weakening of the kingdom the bargaining power of the king also became weak. In 1691 the new abbot Krig-se was not locally appointed rather he was sent from Lhasa. The regent of Lhasa wanted to have control not only on Gelugs pa but also on the other sects so that Lhasa could become the centre for power, the regent of Lhasa appointed Nag-dban-pun-tsog-rnam-gyal, he was given the religious name Blo-bzan-nag-ban-pun-tsog. He was trained in Gelugs-pa and at the request of the De-ldan-rnam-rgyal granted an estate for getting education from Bras-puns monastic university.¹¹⁶ After nine year of studies in the college Blo-bsal-glin at Bras-spuns. He was appointed abbot at monastery of dPal-kor-cos-sde at Gyantse.

The document which the regent of Lhasa on behalf of Dalai Lama issued stated that the earlier Ladakh followed Brug pa sect, after dGa-ldan-tse-dban conquest, Ni-ma-rnam-rgyal showed his allegiance towards Gelugs-pa order. Therefore klu-skyil(Likir), dPe-tub, bDe-skyid, Kri-rtse and the other sects of monasteries as An-le (Wam-le), Ce-dre, Par-brtan (Bar-gdan in Zaskar), sGan-snon, Ma-gro (Ma-spro), sTag-sna, Brag-ltag, all were put under the Bras-spuns authority of gelugs-pa school.¹¹⁷ Blo-bzan-nag-pun-tsogs became the representative for the Gelugs-pa school in Ladakh. Blo-bzan became the Krig-se abbot and head of seven Ser-po-dgon (Gelugs-pa monasteries), for which rules had been set by Lhasa. The importance of the Krig-se abbot remained through the succession by re- incarnation and the supremacy over other Gelugs-pa monasteries. Though the importance of Krig-se and Blo-bzan-nag-pun-tsog were decreased as the Pe-tub monastery emerged in prominence and Nag-dban-rnamgyal became the representative

¹¹⁵ A. H. Francke.p.115.

¹¹⁶ Luciano petech .p.84

¹¹⁷ Luciano Petech.p.85.

from Lhasa. The relation of Ladakh with Tibet in the last quarter of 17 century was more of subordination. In 1697 Blo-bzan-don-grub an envoy from Ladakh reached to bKra-sis-lhun-po who again accompanied in 1698 with Nag-dban-blo-bzan-bstan-dzin, Nima-rnam-rgyal younger brother, the prince stayed in Lhasa till 1702 with a prince from Zanskar. At the end of 17 century Tibetan texts mention about the Dalai-Lama sovereignty of Ladakh.

In 18 century the relation of Ladakh developed with Bhutan, as one of the blon-po of Ladakh entered monkhood. In 1710 king of Ladakh sent envoys with gifts to the Brug-cen. the relation had started to build but could not develop. In the 18 century Seu-la Byams-mgon famous scholar of Bhutan visited Ladakh, he remained court chaplain of Ni-ma-rnam-rgyal. During his stay in Ladakh he was tutor of prince bsTan-zin-nor-bu. He took the prince with him to Bhutan. The prince was appointed as chief authority of clergy at Bhutan for seven years.

The relation with Lhasa determined by the situation in Tibet, Tibet was going through transformation, the control of the Dalai Lama in terms of temporal had decreased. Tibet was under the protection of Chinese (1721-1750). The king of Ladakh sent an envoy No-no blo-bzan-ni-ma before 1722 to Dsungar to assess the situation, but was not satisfied with the report. The king sent mission to China in 1723, the source of information about the mission has the information about the conquest of Tibet by China.

Ni-ma Nam-gyal maintained friendly relations with the Mughals, the king received khilat from the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb on his official accession to throne,¹¹⁸ he successfully checked the revolts to maintain the trade relations with Kashmir. Ni-ma-Namgyal married with a lady of Ka-pu-lu namely Zi-Zi Khatoon which brought the Ladakhi ruler in confrontation with the other rulers of Baltistan. The chief of Ka-pa-lu had to approach Ladakhi ruler for help against the Skardo and Si-sgar who supported the rebel son-in-law of Ka-Pa-Lu chief.¹¹⁹ The combined forces of Si-sgar and Skardo was defeated by the forces of Ladakh. The Skardu chief approached Ladakhi ruler in 1719 against the Si-sgar. But in 1722 Ladakhi king had to fight with a much

¹¹⁸ Luciana Petech.p.90

¹¹⁹ Luciano Petech.p.91

stronger Si-sgar chief whose area of influence included Baltistan, Skardo and Gilgit.¹²⁰ The commander of Ladakhi troops Tsul-rim-do-rje tactfully handled the situation and defeated the combined forces. The victory made cordial relation between Ladakhi King and Baltistan and Skardu duke. The relation between Ladakh and Baltistan remained cordial till the reign of Nima-Namgyal the Ladakhi ruler.¹²¹

When Nima Namgyal made Deskyong Namgyal the ruler of Ladakh. ZiZi Khatoon the second wife of Nima Namgyal wanted her son Trashi Namgyal be made the ruler of Purig. This was not accepted by the state officials as it was against the state law to have two rulers at a time.¹²² In order to control the situation Nima Namgyal again took the charge as ruler for several years. Deskyong Namgyal ascended the throne in 1720 but he was an incompetent ruler. The actual control of the kingdom was under ZiZi Khatoon. The queen married her daughter Trashi Wangmo with the chief of the Kishtwar but the marriage did not last long because of some problem with the husband and wife, the queen got killed the Kishtwar chief.¹²³

At this point of time Ladakh was governed by two rulers, one was centred at Leh pun-tsog-Namgyal and the other at Purik under Kra-sis-Namgyal. Both the rulers came face to face for war when the ruler of Purig tried to control the trade to Kashmir and to attack the ruler of Leh. The ruler of Leh in alliance with the Skardo ruler took control of Si-sgar castle to annex Purig.¹²⁴ Both rulers approached the Nawab of Kashmir for help. Ladakh was once again put under the war like situation which was averted but due to the timely interference of Dalai Lama. Katog the mediator sent by Dalai Lama made the negotiation with both the rulers at Wam-le in 1752.¹²⁵ An agreement was also signed in which the right to rule was granted to the eldest son. After the death of Purig ruler Trashi Namgyal, Purig was united with Ladakh and Tsewang Namgyal was chosen as the ruler.¹²⁶

Luciano Petech provides a detail information how Ladakh maintained its cordial relation with the China and Tibet when China defeated the Dsungar Mongols and advanced towards Yarkand and

¹²⁰ Luciano Petech.p.92.

¹²¹ Luciano Petech.p.93.

¹²² A H Francke.p.119.

¹²³ Ibid.,p.120

¹²⁴ Luciano Petech.p.103

¹²⁵ Ibid.p.105

¹²⁶ A H Francke.p.122

Kashgar area were attacked by China by not providing help to the khoja rulers.¹²⁷ Ladakh ruler had to interfere in the war between Skardo ruler and Ka-pulu ruler, as Ka-pulu approached Ladakhi ruler for help, Skardo ruler was defeated and the peace prevailed for many years.¹²⁸

Under the rule of Tsewang Namgyal the people were forced to pay heavy taxes as the Ladakhi ruler under the influence of Muslim Trader ordered for high breed Central Asian horses. King married a Muslim lady from Purig, under her influence king appointed her brother as Prime Minister and provided favors to other Muslim people which gave an impression that the king accepted Islam which further alienated the nobles and the people of Ladakh which led to the revolt against the King in which the king wife was killed.¹²⁹

Ladakh again saw revive of Islam when the king got influenced under his third wife. The amount spent on ceremonial lamps was spent on the upkeep of horses. The coins were struck and again people were put under heavy taxation which led to the revolt in 1782, the king had to abduct the throne. The king had three sons, two with the first wife and the third with a different wife. The eldest son Tsetan Namgyal was chosen as the King, but the ruler was minor. His brother Tsepal Namgyal was made monk in the Hemis monastery. This period saw the challenge to Ladakh sovereignty, as the chiefs of Sigar and Skardu planned an attack in 1785 and Ka-pu-lu chief had to approach Ladakhi ruler for help. Ladakhi ruler sent Sonam Norbu and defeated the Balti chief.¹³⁰

Ladakh ruler maintained cordial relation with Lhasa and sent invitation to the 8th Brug-cenKun-gzigs-cos-kyi-snan-ba to Ladakh, he was welcomed to Hemis by King's brother Tsepal Namgyal and had grand welcome with lavish gifts from the ruler of Leh. The king died in 1802 at the age of 24 due the smallpox and his funeral rites were performed by Brug-cen.¹³¹

Tsepal Namgyal, the brother of Tsetan Namgyal was enthroned. His Prime Minister who was his brother-in-law namely Tse-dpal-rnam-rgyal was practically ruling under whom the

¹²⁷ Luciano Petech.p.113

¹²⁸ Luciano Petech.p.115

¹²⁹ Luciano Petech. *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p.115-116

¹³⁰ Ibid.p.122

¹³¹ Ibid.p.124

kingdom prospered.¹³² The relation at the frontier where the chief of Baltistan in 1804 rose against the Ladakhi ruler and in 1806 Skardu chief rose against the Ladakhi ruler both chiefs were defeated. In 1811 Ladakhi ruler had to deal with the attack of Baltistan chief on Ka-pu-lu. At the other side Zaskar was raided from Kulu. The people of Zaskar appealed to the ruler of Ladakh for help but the ruler blamed the people.¹³³ In 1825, Zaskar was invaded by the governor of Chamba and made to pay tribute to Chamba.¹³⁴ At the other front Baltistan chief raided the areas of Ladakh.

According to Moorcroft in 1821, the people of Ladakh rose against the king with the support of the Lama. The king agreed to abdicate his throne in favor of his son but the queen didn't allow the king rather she made the king to announce his continuation in front of those who pressurized the king.¹³⁵

In 1822 hoardings were pasted on the entry of the main gate in which the king was accused of his tyrant behavior. The placards also warned the ruler of dethronement if not listened to the elders.¹³⁶

The relation with Kashmir renewed after the Sikh rule was established in 1819. Ranjit Singh sent his envoys to Ladakh to collect customary gifts and tribute which was earlier paid to Afghans.¹³⁷

The history of Ladakh before the 10th century was considered as part of Nari Gogsum of Tibetan Empire. After the disintegration of Tibetan Empire, Ladakh became the part of Gon Dynasty founded by Nima Gon Western Tibet, Nima Gon distributed his kingdom among his sons, Palgi Gon ruled the area of Ladakh. During the Gon rule the centre of power was Western Tibet. After the establishment of Namgyal rule the centre of power shifted towards Ladakh. The rulers of Ladakh maintained political and religious relation with its neighbouring areas

¹³² Ibid.p.127

¹³³ C.L Datta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*.p.70, AH Francke.p.131

¹³⁴ C.L Datta.p.70

¹³⁵ William Moorcroft and Trebeck.p.333, C.L Datta.p.71

¹³⁶ William Moorcroft and .p 334 C.L Datta.p.71

¹³⁷ Luciano Petech.p.130

depending on the circumstances and beneficial for their rule. We thus find that Ladakh had multifaceted relations with the neighbouring regions. While some of them were trade and diplomatic relations, the actors were very different. Trade was largely pursued by individual traders while diplomatic relations were done through the ruling houses and the political elite. Religious contacts are more complex and they involved the state, or religious institutions and many a times just lay patrons or networks of patrons. Contacts were established from as early as the 9th century CE and became durable over the centuries and new areas were added to the networks of contacts and covered a large span in both the spatial and temporal domains making Ladakh a place of regular activity.

Chapter 3

Historical Geography of Ladakh

Ladakh is among one of the highest parts of the world. Its natural topographies comprise mostly of deep valleys and high plains. The high plain prevails in the east, shrinking slowly towards west. In south eastern part lies Rupshu, a region of large, brackish lakes and rugged mountains. Zaskar Range lies to the northwest of Rupshu; it is an isolated region where most of the activities like agriculture are not possible because of too much cold.

For its peculiar geographical settings Cowley Lambert describes Ladakh as “the prevailing features of this country are bare rocky mountains, bare gravel slopes, and bare sandy plains, with not a green thing, not a tree, not a bush not even a blade of grass, excepting a grey kind of prickly sage crop here and there”.¹³⁸ The most prominent topographical characteristics of Ladakh are the parallelism of its mountains, which run through South-East to North-West. The broader course of mountain ranges controls the borders of the area as well as the paths taken by rivers and their tributaries.¹³⁹

Besides its typical landscape, Ladakh is known for the presence of number of valleys. Indus, Nubra, Zaskar, Suru valleys are well-known. Indus valley is located in the central part and also known as central Ladakh. At its eastern part situates the Pan-gong valley. The settlements in Ladakh are generally observed around these valleys. Shyok and Nubra rivers are the source of irrigation for people in Nubra valley.¹⁴⁰ Suru valley constitutes enthralling and glaciated landscape with steep gulches, alluvial plains, and socio-cultural setting.¹⁴¹ It provides plethora of evidences to study the concepts of culture, ideologies, religion, art, norms and values and activities of everyday life.

Climate of Ladakh has been categorized by the great excesses of heat, cold and dryness. Because of this excessiveness in climatic condition, Cunningham writes “it is due to elevation by which the air is so rarefied as to be incapable of holding much moisture in suspension. It is also

¹³⁸ P.S. Jina, Ladakh: The Land and the People. P. 9.

¹³⁹ A. Cunningham, Ladakh: Physical Statistical and Historical, p. 16.

¹⁴⁰ A. Cunningham, Ladakh, P. 21

¹⁴¹ S.C Singh, impact of tourism on mountain environment. P.147.

partly due to the great radiation of heat from the bare soil, by which any moisture is rapidly evaporated. The dryness of climate increases with height and temperature of the dew-point is very low that the deposition of dew is quite unknown in the more elevated districts”.¹⁴² It witnesses arctic cold in winter season while the temperature drops below -25° Celsius. Ladakh being situated in the “yellow belt”, it gets an average rainfall of 15 inches.¹⁴³ Because of low rainfall, agriculture is reliant on natural water ways or snow-fed minor water canals called *yurba*; principally give rise to the few green coverings as one comes across at lower elevations are like oases in a desert.¹⁴⁴ Rainfall also varies throughout year. Table given below shows the quantum of rainfall pattern.

Months	Rainfall in (cms)	Months	Rainfall in (cms)
Jan	1.06	July	1.27
Feb	7.6	August	1.65
March	0.86	September	0.91
April	0.61	October	0.31
May	0.59	November	0.18
June	0.48	December	0.58

Source. A.N. Raina, Geography of Jammu and Kashmir, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1977.P. 57.

For communities located in the world’s high mountain ranges, climate change is creating erratic, hazardous, and at times unpredictable environment. Climate change effects are fluctuating ecosystem functions and the human actions that depend on them. Escalating air temperatures, receding glaciers, and life-threatening weather changes are increasing at the rate and speed that are posing substantial challenges to many mountain populations across the region.

¹⁴² A. Cunningham, Ladakh., p. 186.

¹⁴³ A. Cunningham, Ladakh, p. 18.

¹⁴⁴ Census of India, 1961, Jammu & Kashmir, District Census Hand Book, No.IV, Ladakh District, 1967, p. 1.

Further, climate influences and intensify continuing socioeconomic, political, cultural and ecological pressures, making it problematic to effectively retort to present and future risks.

In the Himalayas, climatic conditions interconnect with other forces within the broader political economy to reshape ways of living. Courses such as migration, tourism and globalization, unite with climate effects to disrupt traditional subsistence arrangements which in turn influence the local community.

Environment is considered to be the most substantial in economic, culture, ethnic growth. Physical environment is to be considered as the potent factor in determining and controlling human activities in any part of the world. In terms Ladakh's climate and unique environmental conditions potentially control the social life in the region. The mass characters of social, cultural and material aspects are molded through adaptation to environment. Ladakhis known for the rugged topography, mountains, and tough terrains.¹⁴⁵ Ladakh's culture is well-defined by uniqueness of environment and the nature of accommodation in that geographical arena. The dry land of Ladakh offers a unique chance to look back on the past of the people in various ways. Due to the little rainfall in this part of the Himalayas, Quaternary formations are largely preserved. The region's history has undoubtedly been greatly shaped by glaciations, which is thought to be the primary cause of climatic fluctuation.

Knowledge of the environment at particular place is fundamental to understand the range of human actions, as it influences the human affairs in multiple ways. For instance; mode of communication, trade, per capita income etc. As Ladakh remain isolated to the rest of the country in winter because of heavy snowfall and blockade of road transport. People now adapted themselves according to the changing climatic patterns. As possibilists including Lucian Febvre argued that the physical actions circumscribed to what human can do, he puts man at first place rather than earth or climate. The possibilists have no intention to degrade the environmental aspect and its influence to localities, but placed the role of cultural aspects in historical context is equally. Cultural origin and diffusion play crucial role in understanding how different societies

¹⁴⁵ David C. Hsiung, Geographic Determinism and Possibilism: Interpretations of the Appalachian Environment and Culture in the Last Century, *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association*, vol. 4, environmental voices: cultural, social, physical, and natural (1992), pp. 14-16.

evolve over the passage of time.¹⁴⁶ In particular the social actions and relations of a place grew out of variety of combined historical, geographical and cultural factors. The importance of all three is equally important in reshaping the societal aspects of human civilization, rather than climate and environment alone.

The mountain system of Western-Himalayan formed through the series ranges of mountain from the north-west to the south-east direction.¹⁴⁷ These ranges successively raise in parallel from the sub hills of Siwaliks. Ladakh is the northernmost region of India. It is a high elevation, arid region with rocky mountains and wide open plains to the north of the central Himalaya and to the south of the Karakoram mountain range.

The subcontinent's many geographical zones have never existed as separate entities. From the beginning, the human connections took place through the passes cutting across mountains, rivers and regions dictated by geographical topographies and human requirements. The mighty Himalayan Mountain can be crossed over at points including many important passes. During winters these passes remain mostly closed because of heavy snowfall. While during summer season these act as Ladakh's nostrils and allow connecting Ladakh with rest of India. There exists many passes such as the Karakoram, Zojila, Umasi La, Tanglang, Namkila, Nidar, Changla, Gomal, Bolan and Khyber Pass etc. and the subcontinent was linked to China, Central Asia, West Asia and Europe through a network of overland routes. The subcontinent's 7,500 km of coastline, which was home to thriving fishing and sailing populations for millennia, connected it to other parts of the Indian Ocean as well as places like Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Natural landscape settings have always played a significant role in human existence and have had a wide range of effects on how people think and act. The topography, climate, natural resources and type of soil influence population density, patterns of settlement, modes of subsistence pattern and trade. The environment along with the climatic conditions and cultural geographical and historical context has been transmuted by human being in numerous ways. Placing human history in its specific environmental context helps us understand the various cadences and patterns of cultural growth and development and relations in the various regions.

¹⁴⁶ David C. Hsiung, p, 18.

¹⁴⁷ O.C.Handa, Buddhist western Himalaya: a politico-religious history.p.54

However, as we'll see in more detail below, ecology also has a history, and the sub continental environments of today are very different from those of the past.¹⁴⁸

The geographical study of Ladakh is more historical as the scholarship recounts to the pre- modern times when the boundaries were palpable. Ladakh was well connected with the outer world, even though Ladakh was a landlocked area, but the passes connected it with the neighbouring world. The study focuses on how the indigenous populous learnt to accommodate with such a tough terrain, limited resources.

Ladakh at present comprises near about 95,876 sq.km. Area on the western side of the Trans-Himalayan ranges, Tibetan plateau; Ladakh is situated at the highest plateau in India. The different varieties of altitude consist of variety of landscape. The high raised position of the area makes the land exceptionally unproductive. Ladakh lies in between, north of latitude 30 degree 45' to 35 degree 50' and east of longitude 75 degree 45' and 80 degree 31', creates the northernmost part of India, its climate affected to a limited degree by the monsoon cycle of the regions of subtropical to its South and also the North-central Asian climate systems.¹⁴⁹ Very less rainfall takes place in July and August. In the winter the region witnessed another spell of flimsy precipitation. Ladakh being desert terrestrial regions, only 0.002% estimated coverage of forest. The temperature in Ladakh doesn't go higher than 25 to 30 degree Celsius; the mercury dips to very low to minus. The height of settlement places varies from 20,000 above sea level at some places in Chang-thang and 8000 feet, places near Kargil.¹⁵⁰

Ladakh is considered as land of high altitudes. The topography of the region determines the density of population. The density of population is three persons per sq/km. permanent inhabitation and cultivation is restricted to the access of water. The villages and the fields are generally nurtured with the glacial water supply through rivulets, terraced fields. The glacial river water is taken to different parts with the help of drainage system other numerous water systems nearby which habitation takes place. The major inhabitation is adjusted near the flood plains of Indus and its tributaries Drass, Shyok and Zaskar.¹⁵¹ Ladakh is surrounded by both manual and natural boundaries; Karakorum mountains on the north east. Changthang and Rudok

¹⁴⁸ Upindersingh, a history of ancient and early medieval india.p.4

¹⁴⁹ A. Cunningham, Ladakh., p. 20

¹⁵⁰ A. Cunningham, Ladakh., p. 36

¹⁵¹ Andrea s wiley, An ecology of high altitude infancy: a bio cultural perspective, Cambridge university press,..p.41

in the South-east and China in the East. Lahul and Spiti of Himachal Pradesh in the South. Kashmir and Baltistan (Pakistan) towards the West.

Historically speaking since the ancient times the kings made large donations to the monasteries, putting a large portion of Ladakhi wealth under the control of monasteries. Ladakhis considered as the centre of Buddhism. It is located at the cross route where Buddhist monks travel from different parts of world particularly China, Japan ,Tibet etc. we have the evidence of presence of number of monasteries which supports the presence of Buddhism. These religious places served as the administrative centers for different dynasties, and at times get the royal patronage by the king. Hemis monastery had large properties under its control.¹⁵² According to Cunningham, prior to the conquest by Dogra, 4000 households were allotted to monasteries, 18000 households were under crown, 1000 personally to king and 1000 by the royal families.¹⁵³ In 1885, the land under monasteries were 2,210 acres, state officials held 1,321 and land held by peasants were 14,140, the population of the Monastery was only 1/6 of total.¹⁵⁴

The monasteries are associated with villages, the patrons live in the same village and the monks come from that village. Jendak (sByin.bDag) is the name of those families who support the monastery, and the social structure of monastery depends on these families resources, their work their field.¹⁵⁵ The monasteries control lands in which the production directly goes to the monasteries. At the time of famine, drought or distress, people used to visit Gompas and the authorities distribute wheat, butter, barley, sattu other edible items to feed the needy. The resource of the Gompas were enhanced through the land holdings, livestock's, and contributions or donations and offerings made by the villagers.

According to Francke in the chronicles of Zanskar, the peasants of the village had to send grains to the monasteries. Donations and gifts were also made by the local rulers, as well as by the kings of Ladakh, and also by the rulers of adjoining areas particularly of Kulu.¹⁵⁶ The offerings were made in various forms like agricultural land, mountain tracts or forest. The lands donated to the monasteries are called *chos-gzhi* (religious estate). Grants were made for the

¹⁵² Pedro Carrasco, *land and polity in Tibet* ..p..175.

¹⁵³ Alexander Cunningham, *ladakh physical, statistical and historical*..p..270

¹⁵⁴ Pedro Carrasco, *land and polity in Tibet* ..p..175

¹⁵⁵ Himalayan Buddhist villages environment, resources, society and religion by crook..p..561

¹⁵⁶ Pedro carrasco, *land and polity in Tibet*..p..175.

maintenance of *Byang-sems* (lama), monasteries. Grants were also assigned for building monastery for individual lama. The land revenue dispensed to the monasteries was termed as *gon-pai-bun* (due to monastery).¹⁵⁷ Monasteries and Gompas provided loans to the needy people and it's obligatory that the people should return the loan on time. The cultivation and management of the land donated to Gompas were done by the village people without any remuneration expected. The monasteries were built near to the Indus River or around the vicinity of tributaries of the river.

Social Cultural history of Ladakh witnessed different prevailing patterns to compensate the limited economic resources in the region. For example the presence of Polyandry, this was followed in Ladakh as to mostly compensate with the limited resources. In this one woman was shared as wife between the brothers. The right and the owner on the property would be the eldest brother. The younger brothers remained at home, though they were free to marry but in such case they won't get any share from the family property. And the children born in the family would be considered as the offspring of eldest brother.¹⁵⁸

And another form of marriage practiced was polygynous wherein the eldest daughter was married to the man whom called *makpa*; the husband would not have any right on the property of his wife.

The scholarly studies on such practices was carried and found that the practice was to check the distribution and fragmentation of ancestral property into small units. So that maximum benefit can be procured from the limited resource area and also to the population for labor. In order to minimize the stress on the land, the family who had more than one or two sons the son had to join the monastery and the family with more than one daughter joined the monastery.

THE MAJOR TRADE ROUTES

The region, which borders Kashmir Valley, is situated between the Karakoram Mountain Range to the north and the Himalayan Mountain Range to the south. It is located on the Tibetan Plateau's western margin. The political districts of Ladakh, Leh and Kargil, are included in synchronic geopolitical expressions.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid..p..176

¹⁵⁸ Janet Rizvi, ladakh crossroads of high asia..p..134

Different trade routes in ancient Asia were able to cross seemingly impassable terrain, such as mountains and deserts, serving as Silk Road trade routes for ages. This highlights the brittleness of physical boundaries. Although the ancient empires of the nomadic grasslands of Central Asia may have been hindered in their attempts to expand south by the Karakoram and Himalayan Mountain ranges.

Since the beginning of time, Central Asia's overland trade routes, which link east and west and include places like South Asia, have been an important part of its history. There has long been trade along what is now frequently referred to as the "Silk Road" or "Silk Route" throughout Central Asia, particularly in the areas close to Ladakh. Few traders made full voyage, but traders from China to Eastern Europe dominated the use of the Silk routes.

Most traders would only cover a tiny portion of the routes starting from their starting point. The major Silk Roads diverged into northern and southern routes through the Taklamakan desert before joining up against at Kashghar, with additional divisions to transport in the nearby areas.¹⁵⁹ Due to the fact that several items essentially moved down these highways, the term "Silk Route" is confusing. A variety of goods were traded between Asia and Europe, including perfumes, precious stones, metals, cotton, medicines, spices, dyestuffs, wooden goods, coffee, tea, and works of art. Out of these early products, silk was the most well-known.¹⁶⁰ Early archaeological evidence shows the interchange of goods between Central Asian neighbors and other regions, with signs of trade societies from what is now contemporary India existing in Central Asian towns and the Central Asian populations in area nearby and in Ladakh as early as the second century.¹⁶¹ Ancient South Asia participates in some trading customs related to those in Central Asia. The commercial ties gave South Asian kingdoms access to silk as well as other valuable Central and East Asian resources. South Asia's late Gupta period, or about the fourth to sixth century, saw the conquest of the continent by Hunas from Central Asia. In the sixth century, Huna Kings emerged in Northern India, expanding as far south as modern-day Madhya Pradesh and its surrounding regions. The Gupta Empire was brutally undermined by their presence in the north because they gained possession of vital trade networks that had previously

¹⁵⁹ Jacqueline H. Fewkes, *Trade and Contemporary Society along the Silk Road An ethno-history of Ladakh*, p 37.

¹⁶⁰ R. De Bourbel, . *Routes in Jammu and Kashmir Arranged Topographically with Descriptions of Routes, Distances by Stages, and Information as to Supplies and Transport*, Calcutta, Thacker Spink, 1987, p 23.

¹⁶¹ R.N. Frye, R. N. *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion*, Princeton NJ, Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998, pp 124-25.

connected Central Asia with South Asia, Kashmir, Ladakh, Tibet and China among other places, destabilizing the Gupta's economic foundation.¹⁶² The involvement of Ladakh in the Silk Route was influenced by a number of factors, but its physical location was one of the most important. Leh township in Ladakh, which is located close to significant mountain passes, served as a commerce hub by giving travellers access to many routes.

The geographical positioning along with the presence of minerals made Ladakh as a trade center since the ancient times. The borax and sulphur is found in good quantity, in the region makes it even more important. Copper, limestone, granite, chromite, platinum, gypsum etc found in Shyok and Nubra valleys. Gold is mainly found in the Zaskar region. The caravans passing through Ladakh had to cross many ranges, Ladakh and Zaskar range, Karakorum and Kunlun range, these ranges were crossed through passes, the traders from India reached Ladakh by two different routes, one was from Hoshiarpur in Punjab to Kulu and Lahul in Himachal Pradesh, then from Rupshu had to cross the Zaskar range and Upshi to Ladakh. Some of the important trade routes passed through Ladakh were; Leh was connected to Lhasa, a Tibetan city, as well as other locations via the Tibetan road. This route consists of the routes that crossed the Chang-tang area near Pangong Lake from the east of Leh. To reach these areas, traders had to navigate Chang-la or Taglang-la mountain passes. This was a public thoroughfare in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for local, foreign, and Kashmiri administration-authorized commerce. The primary form of transportation along this route was cattle because of the rugged terrain (bulls, ox, Ponies).¹⁶³ The Tibetan road has historical significance because it created networks between Tibet and Ladakh that shaped the history of that region in the tenth century when political ties between the two areas became apparent.

Throughout the tenth century Buddhism as a religious belief and philosophy also moved in Ladakh, Buddhist teacher Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo of Western Tibet, who passed via the region on his way back from Kashmir. Despite the fact that Ladakh's historical records do not include Buddhist monastic organizations until much later, this exposure to the religion still indicated a cultural transition.

¹⁶² M.S. Ahluwalia, History of Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, Intellectual Publishing House, 1988, p 48.

¹⁶³ P.S Jina, Ladakh: The land and the people, New Delhi, Indus Publishing Co, 1996. P, 41.

The South Asian route, which numerous of the highlighted traders over the years traversed, is crucial. Through a network of highways, this route connected Leh to important trading centres in Jammu, Srinagar, Rawalpindi, Kullu, Manali, Lahore, and Amritsar; traders had ranges based on the location of the primary target. For instance, a merchant had to choose between travelling via Srinagar in the west and via Upshi to Hoshiarpur in the east to reach the Punjab in order to get from Leh to Amritsar. The eastern route to Punjab called for travelling from Upshi to Rupshu, across the Taglang-la, Lungalacha-la, and BaraLacha-la passes, and finally via the Lahul and Kullu valley districts. Because these roads were uneven, using animals as a mode of transportation may result in a painfully lengthy voyage. As a result, Punjabi traders began using the western route from south Asia to Ladakh starting in the 20th century.

By 1880 the route from Punjab got more importance, the merchants loaded their goods in train via Rawalpindi (Pakistan) to Srinagar through Jhelum valley and Baramulla. In Srinagar the loads were again packed for transport through horses, the animals laden with goods had to cross Zojila first, then Namkila and Fotula passes to reach Leh. The traders used to reach Leh from Kashmir through Zojila in 14 to 16 days.¹⁶⁴ From Leh to Yargand the routes had to pass through Karakoram pass. This depends upon the traders to choose the season. Whichever the season the traders choose to march from Leh to Yargand, it took more than thirty days. Karakorum pass remained open throughout the season. The route from Changchenmo to Yargand was made free to the traders from Central Asia during the British rule by signing the treaty in 1870. The route to Yargand after the treaty came to known as treaty route.

The traders from Leh to Lhasa had to travel three months or reaching Lhasa, the merchants planned their journey according to reach annual market at Gartok, main administrative and trading centre of Western Tibet. There were three routes to reach Gartok. The route from Indus through the gorge between Chumathang and Upshi met with the other routes at Demchok, then to Gartok. At Gartok traders from different regions met they bartered their products or sell in the market. The traders further proceeded towards the Lhasa.¹⁶⁵

The route of South Asia is a stance for Ladakh's sociopolitical and cultural history during the early 13th and 15th centuries that emphasizes the region's role in the transregional spread of

¹⁶⁴ Janet Rizvi, trans Himalayan caravans. p. 28.

¹⁶⁵ Janet Rizvi, trans-himalayan caravans. P.33-34.

Islam. As what is variously referred to as a king, prince, or chief by various chroniclers, a Ladakhi political figure by the name of Richen connected Ladakh to Kashmiri political managements over this path in the fourteenth century. Richen arrived in Kashmir with the intent of gaining control. By the end of 1320, he had managed to usurp Kashmir's crown through political manoeuvring.¹⁶⁶ The Kashmir accounts, the *Rajatarangini* upkeep this account through mention to a Gyalpo (king), Rainchan Bhoti, a Ladakhi or Tibetan in Kashmir.¹⁶⁷ The narrative has been disputed as a fabrication by a Ladakhi history expert who claims, that the kind Rinchen mentioned in Ladakhi chronicles was really GyalNgorub's son, and that his likely age does not fit the Kashmir timeline.¹⁶⁸

The Ladakh area has not been a significant market or a primary centre of industry since the late_nineteenth and the early_twentieth centuries. Ladakh, however, had an important part in historical trade and South Asian regional trade at this time as a commercial corridor that linked numerous geographic locations. Ladakh was a booming centre for global movements, with local involvement more concerned with travel and business than with centralized production or consumption. However, as India closed the northern borders in the middle and late 20th century, this regional identity was permanently changed. The Ladakh region is a lot geographically well-defined in relation to its environs.

The trans-Karakoram routes, which connected Ladakh to Central Asia, were the final set of routes from Leh and are crucial to the future history of trade connections in Ladakh. These roads were mostly utilized by traders who had to travel from Leh to places like Kashghar, Khotan, Yarkand, Kargil, and other townships in the Sinkiang area. It was dangerous to travel over the trans-Karakoram course; on northern route from Leh, traders had to cross the mountain passes at Khardung-la, Karakoram, and Suget, each of which was at least 4500 metres high.¹⁶⁹ According to Janet Rizvi, the difficult Ladakh route was used more commonly with Central Asia for trade purpose during nineteenth century than the easier path of Baltistan through Mustang mountain pass, which was used in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, since there was no possible substitute; the Baltistan road was bolted for political causes in the 19th

¹⁶⁶ Janet Rizvi, *Ladakh; Crossroads of high Asia*, OUP, 1983, p. 27

¹⁶⁷ Janet Rizvi, *transHimalyanCarvans*, p 43.

¹⁶⁸ Janet Rizvi, *Ladakh*, p 39.

¹⁶⁹ Janet Rizvi, *Trans HimalyanCarvans*, p 23.

century as Chitral and Hunza were politically unbalanced, and other courses had too many, occasionally unsteady, glaciers.¹⁷⁰

Crossway Due to its location at the intersection of the aforementioned important commercial routes, Leh's uniqueness as a market town was essentially that of a transit station. The majority of the items moving through this township were not traded in Ladakhi market places. Despite this, the Leh market was a hub of busy commerce as goods were exchanged, deals were made, and taxes were collected. The Leh market left a lasting impression on European's memories of Ladakh throughout late 19th and early 20th century, which is the subject of most explanations by Europeans about Ladakh during that time. Edward Knight mentioned, upon arriving the market in early spring "The passing through this wicket into the bazaar is a sudden burst from the wilds into civilization. The merchants, many of whom are white-robed Hindoos from Kashmir, were sitting cross-kneed among their wares at the entrance of their shops. But the bazaar was comparatively deserted at this early season".¹⁷¹

A review of travelogue texts indicates a astonishing number of depictions of the Leh marketplace, maybe more consistently accepted as significant place compared to any other particular site in the Kingdom of the than Jammu & Kashmir. The fact that it was the only focal point in Leh may have contributed to this; perhaps the wonders of Srinagar merely gave tourists more smeared impressions. It is mentioned at some points that, in the exchange linkages of Central Asia the utmost vivacious of the 'trading places were towns amongst populated and desolate divisions of roads, where merchants would relax and refill for moving further.

THE BORDERS POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

In borderland locations, borders are sensed and reinforced not only by what can be seen but also by non_territorial layers of boundary_making in the specific places. These ancillary coverings may consist of regional or local cultural displays, or they could be entangled in the norms that underpin daily interactions with others. Due to the daily nature of these less obvious border-making layers, the engagement of individuals at various locations along the same border might greatly vary. Furthermore, in communities impacted by war, boundaries can be fluid,

¹⁷⁰ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalyan Caravans*, p 34.

¹⁷¹ E.F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet: A Narrative of Recent Travel in Kashmir, Western Tibet, Gilgit and the Adjoining Countries*, London, Longmans, Green & Co 1905, p, 176.

coincidental, and transient, and they can apply to certain societies but not others.¹⁷² The understanding is in agreement with the idea that borders are created, pretended, and experienced by a variety of factors, including ecological (such as rivers and mountains), economic (trade), cultural (intra-communal divisions, philological), perforating (sacraments and other religious activities), ethnic, as well as religious elements. Many of these behaviours, institutions, and ecological systems are influenced by non-state actors who have power and are subject to national and state-level laws that regulate how boundaries are drawn, governed, and experienced in the present.

Ladakhis situated at a great altitude in the Himalayas. From the middle of the 10th century forward, it was an independent kingdom, and at its height in the middle of the 17th century, its actual frontiers reached as far as Ruddok, Gauge, and Prang (Western Tibet).¹⁷³ The forces of Dogra with the order of Raja Gulab Singh, assaulted this Tibetan Buddhist province in 1834. After Raja Gulab Singh's army was united into Princely State of Jammu&Kashmir in 1846, it continued to be ruled by British India until the subcontinent's partition in 1947. The main reasons for border control during the British era of rule were trade priorities with Western Tibet and Central Asia along with territorial dependability.¹⁷⁴

The British Raj considered the region to be useful buffer zone between British India and the territories of China and Russia. However, border administration took a turn toward war with the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 and intensified hostilities between China and India regarding Tibet in the middle of the 20th century. Ladakh has endured its fair proportion of border engagement and ongoing ownership issues, but the Kashmir Valley, a nearby region, has historically been the most violent section of the border. It was a crucial battlefield in the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, when China expanded and made claims to the Aksai Chin territory formerly held by India, a high, elevated desert region that had previously been a part of Ladakh ever since middle of the 19th century.¹⁷⁵ During the wars between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, the area-and notably the Kargil district-was on the front lines. In 1999, Pakistan invaded Kargil and started a conflict that India had already soundly defeated.

¹⁷² S. Wahid, S. and K.R. Storm, *Ladakh: Between Earth and Sky*, New York, Norton, 1981, p 49.

¹⁷³ J. Berry. *Ladakhi histories, Local and regional perspective*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2011, p 29.

¹⁷⁴ N. Howard, *The Development of boundary between, the State of Jammu and Kashmir*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2011, p 101.

¹⁷⁵ M.W Fisher, (etd), *Ladakh and Sino-Indian border crisis*, Asian Survey 1991, 2 (3), p. 5.

Since 1962, the Indian army has maintained an ongoing presence in Ladakh, and until 1974, when part of it was reopened to tourists, the region was mostly off-limits to foreigners. Since that time, some areas of Ladakh have been growing more swiftly. Capitalizing on Indian and international tourists' interest in the region's long-preserved customs and remote mountain culture, several Ladakh towns have developed "homestay" services for an increasing number of heritage travellers. The main city of Ladakh, Leh, has established itself as a destination both for quest (adventure) and mystical tourism in the wider area..

While certain Ladakhi citizens have seen positive economic effects, wider developmental impressions have been contested. Many difficulties have been associated with the region's historical borderland status in state and national government. The two commercial towns of Ladakh, Kargil and Leh, are difficult to access because of their location in the far-off Himalayas, as is debatable. In reality, getting to or among them during the winter is quite difficult, giving the impression of solitude and a connection between the locals and the rest of the nation. This distance is caused in part by various international wars and divergences from historical sense of centrality outlined in the preceding section, which originates from Ladakh's historical role as a trading hub on the Silk Road. However, since partition, the primary land roads to Central Asia were blocked due to the ongoing strife in Kashmir, antagonism with China, as well as China's control over Tibet. Due to India's greater integration with the global economy and the larger Central Asian society, Ladakh has had to economically reorient itself. China and Pakistan's external borders are strictly off-limits for trade. For the locals in both districts, this poses the biggest economic and lifestyle obstacles. For instance, because of the cyclical or seasonal, political and administrative borders, businesses must store goods ahead of time during the winter because they are rarely able to enter the city with additional goods when the pass gets closed by snow, which typically begins in October and occasionally lasts till the April. This not only necessitates taking out loans to pay for products and chattels up front for small-scale vendors, but it also affects consumers since some food is unavailable in the winter as prices rise to account for higher transportation expenses. Fresh meals like meat and vegetables are the main exception to this rule (that have to be interchanged with marinated food items and frozen goods for maximum time of the year). The situation in the Leh area has improved as a result of the airport and the numerous planes that fly in and out throughout the winter.

As a result, Kargilis adversely affected by Leh's intermittent isolation and closed Pakistani border. In accordance with the decision, all political offices are located in the Leh district, further marginalizing Kargil. Because Leh is home to the majority of the tourism business, Kargil is the socioeconomically weaker district. Building roads is now the most important and frequently the only route to transport people, publics, and commodities into and out of the Kargil region. At contrast to Leh, the airport in Kargilis now only used as a military runway and is not open to commercial air traffic.¹⁷⁶ The trade public in Kargil feels that the people in Leh are much better off with greater possibilities and arrangements, which is why they are obstructed by this erratic access to economic chances and progress. This contributes to the region's rigidities between the two groups and their purportedly unbalanced dealings with the predominantly Buddhist Leh and primarily Muslim Kargil.¹⁷⁷

However, the borders in Ladakh between India and Pakistan and between India and China are fully protected and provide little opportunity for shady and illicit trade. In light of this, Ladakh's geopolitical situation and cyclical boundaries are just part of the reason for the region's isolation; other factors include the region's trade policies and economic development. In order to solve this issue, the locals have called for reform.

Ladakh's closure of its borders with China and Pakistan in the middle of the 20th century, which resulted in the completeness of the region's character in trade and commerce with Central Asia, constitutes just one historical example of a border type. Social networks have been created across a number of political boundaries. Alistair Lamb, a prolific author of books about frontiers in the Ladakh area and elsewhere, argued and offers a useful insights how the borders are helpful for economic prosperity of a region through cross border trade.¹⁷⁸

The British India government had drawn the borders of Ladakh, after signing the treaty of Amritsar in 1846 with the Maharaja Gulab Singh. As Lamb notes, though, "within 20 years in the 1868 Kashmir Atlas this had changed, and the border had moved approximately 60 miles to the east to include more territory".¹⁷⁹ The British Indian government had expanded its control

¹⁷⁶F. Hussain, Contemporary Ladakh communal divide in Kargil&Leh. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Policy, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies,B7/3 safdarjung Enclave New Delhi-29, 2013,pp1-3.

¹⁷⁷ F. Hussain, p, 3.

¹⁷⁸ A. Lamb, Asian Frontiers: Studies in a Continuing Problem, New York NY, Fredrick A. Praeger, 1973,p4.

¹⁷⁹ A. Lamb, Asian Frontiers, p. 107.

over Leh town's north and east by the turn of the nineteenth century. Border instabilities defined various nineteenth century social and economic configurations in the area. Regional boundary delimitation was demanded by the professional traders and emerged on the form of trade modifiable associations like as customs markers and places for revenue officials, even though key requirements for the border delineation between Chinese-Central Asia and India emerged within the colonial political sphere of South Asian historical record.

In my debate of the Ladakh region's borders, I'm not only interested in the techniques used to delineate borders; I'm also curious about the historical circumstances in which these techniques were disseminated and sustained. This occurred at two border facades in Ladakh: the border to the northwest of the region that divides Ladakh from Pakistan during the partition of the sub-continent after British colonialism ended, and also the boundary to the eastern part with China, that became of great significance to the recent independent country in the 1950s and 1960s of India, respectively.

When we think of modern North India, the borders with Pakistan may be the first that spring to mind. The divide of the subcontinent into two Indian and Pakistani nations created a societal and political minefield, as assessments of the volatility and fury of the partitioning time in South Asia remind us. The task became considerably more difficult due the political structures built during the British era.

The closing years of British administration in the subcontinent saw the emergence of 500 or so princely republics that were essentially independent and resembled Jammu and Kashmir. The British government hastily tried to convince the monarchs of Pakistan and India to become independent countries and persuade and at other times luring them with political concessions for the convenience of the British government. The region of Jammu and Kashmir, which was governed by the Dogra King Maharaja Hari Singh, develops as a major focus of conservatism because to its advantageous geographical area on the border between what would developed India and Pakistan. As a result, the territory experienced a unique political climate as a result of the division of India and Pakistan, one that had profound socio political effects that are still being discussed in the Ladakhi political scene and public discourse.

In distinction, the establishment of a clearly defined Chinese-Indian boundary at the eastern limits of Ladakh was a gradual political process. From the late nineteenth century until about 1958, a number of political activities in the British India and the Chinese Central Asia increasingly stifled networks. This was not due to military success on the Chinese side of Central Asia commercial relations.¹⁸⁰ The resulting large-scale border conflict between India and China effectively ended Ladakh's status as a highly fortified border area in the 20th century. Before India gained independence from colonial domination, the seeds of the current conflict between China and India were already present. Due to contributions made to the Shimla treaty by Chinese, Tibetan, and British Indian officials, the McMahon Line, a border between China and India with weak demarcation powers, was established in 1914. The McMahon line provisions of the treaty were not ratified by the Chinese government.¹⁸¹

Early in the 20th century, governmental restrictions on commerce networks began to slowly evolve. Native uprisings in Chinese Central Asia in the 1940s caused various legal issues in Leh; traders on either side of the border were unable to go to deliver their products or communicate with their commercial partners how to arrange those commodities.¹⁸² Communication from this era shows a trading public caught between the difficult demands of localized politics of regional radical regimes and the worldwide apprehensions of powers like the Chinese and British domination in the past. The massive political movement of over 500 Turkic Muslim refugees fleeing the Chinese government was also sparked by the political unrest in Chinese Central Asia. Many of these exiles travelled to Ladakh because they had access to the trading networks there. Older Ladakhis remember the flood of these Central Asian migrants without a doubt, and they occasionally still extend a warm welcome.

The most profitable type of commerce in Ladakh came to an end once trade between Chinese Central Asia and South Asia remained still. There was one type of occupation that persisted: commerce that used Leh and surrounding regions like Kargil and Zaskar more as market places than as entrepôts. As a result, Ladakh was changed politically, as part of the Indian state, and as a new commercial sector as a result of the drafting of the new boundary. Many of the ancient Indian traders who had previously travelled through Ladakh on their way to another

¹⁸⁰ A. Lamb, p 104.

¹⁸¹ A.H. Steiner, H. A. India Looks to Her Northern Frontiers. *Far Eastern Survey*, (28), 1959, p, 177.

¹⁸² Steiner, P180.

location made the business decisions to develop markets in line with the new requirements and clientele demographics in Ladakh. Thus, despite the slow demise of a number of long-distance commercial linkages in Ladakh throughout the 1940s and 1950s, certain trade links were reconstructed to suit changing market conditions.

THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF LADAKH AND ITS PROMINENT ASPECTS

The region of Ladakh (cold desert) consists of unique topographical features including the conical hills and peaks with cluster of subdivisions. This resulted in the creation of V shaped valleys across the region. Ladakh makes the lofty lands in north-western Himalayan region. The physiographic divisions of the region are; high lands, conical hills and peaks, V shaped valley with sparse populated, presence vegetation and cultivation near the water course.

The prominent geographies of Ladakh region is the unique physiography with mountainous parched table lands, desert of unembellished crags and granite dust, and some flat and V shaped valleys. The mountains look like as formless oodles but physiographically they form a cluster of ranges running equivalent to the Great Himalayas from southeast to northwest. Taking them from north, series are the peaks like Karakoram, to the north east of the Shayak and Nubra valleys and to their south west the Ladakh.¹⁸³ It is an addition of the Kailash range and its adjoining areas. Some of the highest peaks of the Himalayan Mountains counting K2 (Mt. Godwin Austen) are existing in the Karakoram ranges. The highest mountain comprises SaserKangri (7,680m) with several glaciers.

There are no major peaks in particular to Ladakh range. The usual height is slight less than 6000m and some of its passes are less than 4800m. The river Indus is the natural gift to the Ladakh. It flows and spurts through massive mountains and diverse kinds of rocks and creates a valley popularly known as the “Indus valley”.¹⁸⁴ On the left side of the river Indus, is the Zaskar range whereas on its right side is the Ladakh region. The northern edges of the Ladakh region are bordered by the vast Karakoram Mountains. These ranges exude to south-east course from the Pamir knot. The Indus while flowing over these ranges creates deep and narrow gulches of classical nature on both side of the valleys of Indus, are existing alluvial plains, river terraces.

¹⁸³ M.D. Darokhan. 1989. Pasture Development in Ladakh. Desert Development in Ladakh. Desert Development Agency, Leh p.5

¹⁸⁴ M.D. Darokhan , p, 7.

The old town of Leh is positioned on alluvial plains of the region. At some places, on each side of the Ladakh, the alluvial plains stretches to a breadth of around 30 km. Seen from the above, these plains seems to be mere sequence of yellow plains and desolate snow capped mountains. Even though agriculture or farming is generally done in alluvial plains more specifically along the terraces of the river Indus and its streams including the Zaskar, Nyemo, Dras, Suru, and Wakha etc. however it is not constant due to inadequate irrigation facilities or the amount of moisture, low temperature throughout most part of the year. As there is pitiable soil profile growth, so soils of Ladakh area would differ not merely in their morphological and physicochemical stuffs but also in origins and taxonomy as well as biological properties. Such characteristics have profound impact on the growth of vegetation in the region. The soils of the cold parched Ladakh region are significantly subjected to diurnal as well as seasonal vagaries of temperature. This generates several shattering pressures due to variance extension and shrinkage in the surface strata of rocks.

These variations lead to physical or mechanical weathering of the rocks or mountains. The temperature transformation also carries the exfoliation of surface cover of rocks, once water freezes in rock intersections, cracks and fissures in results the expansion of rocky surfaces.¹⁸⁵ The soils in the alpine regions of Ladakh at higher altitude points have been characterized mainly into three groups: i) Alpine pastures with inadequate or unfitting drainage (ii) alpine turf with proper drainage but are rich in organic matter especially in the surface soil possibilities. This grouping has, nevertheless, not been presented on the latest geographical map; relatively these soils have been demonstrated as mountain pastures.¹⁸⁶

The most remarkable aspect of the Ladakh is the mountain which runs almost parallel to each other. This mountain range generally defines the course and flow of rivers in the region. These mountains create natural division between Ladakh and rest of the world. Leaving apart some of its portions Nubra and Indus valley, over-all aspect of Ladakh is nothing but thrilling bareness. The *pan gong* and *TsomoRiri* lakes are two fine water bodies amidst vast desert of sand and rocks. Nevertheless while travelling along with various tracts and roads that have been developed since independence one witness many fertile tract of land across the river.

¹⁸⁵ R.D. Gupta. and B.R. Tripathi. Genesis of soils in wet temperate and sub-alpine/moist alpine climatic zones of the north west Himalayas. Journal of the Indian Society of Soil Science 40, 1992. Pp, 505-512.

¹⁸⁶ R.D Gupta, p 511.

The whole landscape of Ladakh presents the sensation of existence a different part of the world. The altitude and Segregation amidst of snow clad mountains give this region singular climatic condition in the world. That is the reason one witness the sweltering heat during day and chilling cold at night. Everything Vegetation, animals, human is parched by the desiccation of atmosphere.

THE MAJOR LANDFORMS OF LADAKH: THEIR EVOLUTION AND STRUCTURE

The desolate terrain of Ladakh offers a unique chance to look back on the evolution of the Earth's surface. Due to the little rainfall, Quaternary landforms in this region of the Himalaya are well preserved. Glaciations, which is thought to be the primary cause of climatic change, undoubtedly has a significant impact on the formation of the landforms of Ladakh. The fluvial sculpting and re-sedimentation of the glaciogenic (accretion amounts are reliant on basin history and basin form) deposits during glacier recession eras are responsible for the formation of the alluvial fan controlled mountain inclines and valleys.¹⁸⁷ Even though lacustrine deposits are important in terms of climate, they only make up a small portion of Quaternary landforms but are crucial in terms of climate data for bettering our comprehension of sequential fluctuations in moisture unpredictability. There is a precarious balance between wind concentration and sediment supply, as seen by the feeble sand dunes that cannot shield the river bottoms or the mountain slopes despite the cold, dry desert environment.¹⁸⁸ To unravel the history of landforms at high altitude, tectonically active, and dry terrain, Quaternary geomorphologists may be encouraged to visit the Ladakh Himalaya.

The Ladakh landforms have appealed the experts of soil primarily for two causes—(i) they grasp answer to decide the solution of the problems interrelated to the dynamic connection among the Eurasian Plates and Indian; and (ii), they could contribute to the understanding of the factors that govern the global climate change systems. Ladakh has a cryogenically weathered, quaternary glaciated, cold-desert environment with the effect of river and mass drive progressions superimposed. Periglacial situations happen at very high altitude. The damming of catastrophic downpours and the blockage of rivers are two of the main geomorphic activities in this landscape. Long ridges (such as the Ladakh and Zaskar Ridges) and protruding

¹⁸⁷ P.S Jina, Ladakh: The land and the people, p 49.

¹⁸⁸ P.S. Jina, Changing face of Ladakh Himalaya, Faridabad, India, Om Publications, 1999, p 56.

longitudinally valleys are first-order landforms (Indus and Shyok valleys). Glacial sums are all over the place in these valleys. Hill slopes shielded by colluviums and hoarfrost crushed debris are typical landscape features. The sturdy regulator of tectonics and lithology is obvious in Ladakhi landscape in general.¹⁸⁹

Glacial measures, which are well defined by both erosional and depositional landforms, have been the most significant geomorphic episodes to occur in the area over 3,000 metres in height. Topographies like the “U”-shaped valleys give the region’s landforms their recognizable aspect as a result of the extent and intensity of glacial sculpturing.¹⁹⁰ The glaciers that are still visible in these valleys are confined to the valley headwalls and have nearly completely disappeared. The hamlet of Leh is located to the northwest of the Khardung Glacier. The Leh region’s inhabitants depend on a stream of melt water that flows from this glacier for their very existence. Furthermore, the presence of finely striated (desert varnish) rocks and whaleback rock layers (roaches monotonies) provides evidence of the extent of previous glaciers in the region. Some substratum faces that have been glacially polished bear engravings of shooting scenes. Such engraved design is distinctive of Neolithic culture in Kashmir Valley.¹⁹¹

In arid and raised landscapes, debris-flow controlled are attributed to the redeposition of glaciogenic sediments in dry and elevated terrains, showing that the deposition of silt and other sand-like material is mostly post-dated by the occurrences of glaciations. The flat valley floor and the valley’s centre, where it is higher, are where these deposits originate. The Zaskar Ranges, on the southern bank of the river Indus, are the primary source of the fans that coalesce in the Indus River near (Bajada). The valleys from which they emerge are relatively modest in relation to the magnitude of the alluvial plains caused by debris flow. As a result of the accessibility of the glaciogenic sediments’ in the Ladakh region following the valley glacier’s halting, it is possible to speculate that this is the unique situation in which the effects of enormous volumes of material from small valleys can be understood.¹⁹² The adjacent and upright

¹⁸⁹ Vishwas s kale (ed.), *landscapes and landforms of india*..p..118

¹⁹⁰ T.B. Kapur, *Ladakh, the Wonderland: A Geographical, Historical and Sociological Study*, Delhi, India, Mittal Publications, 1987, p 90.

¹⁹¹ R.K. Pant, N.R. Phadatare, L.S. Chamyal *Reconstructing climate and seismic history of Ladhak-Karakoram region: potential of Quaternary landforms and sedimentary archives*. *CurrSci* (2005) 88

¹⁹² J.F. Shroder (ed) *Himalaya to the sea: geology, geomorphology and the Quaternary*. Routledge, London, 1993, pp 72–74.

sedimentary facades exhibit a significant variation in size of grain, ranging from boulders to clay, and may be utilized to recreate the post-glacial environment and seismicity in the parched alpine areas.

Though glaciers are effective rock and sediment diggers, their transportation capabilities are insufficient for large-scale movements. In connection with this, rivers are effective carriers in addition to just eroding of a combination of seismicity, unusual flash flood brought on by lake outbursts, and temporal variations in melt water discharge.¹⁹³ There are primarily three types of fluvial terraces in the area: (i) fluvial reformed rubble flows/lake burst terraces, such as those surrounding Tangtse Valley and Leh Town; and (ii) valley bung up outwash grit terraces, such as those near Sarchu and More Prairies. (iii) Strath terraces, such as those found close to the meeting point of the Indus and Zaskar Rivers. Understanding how river arrangements relate to latitudinal and sequential fluctuations in temperature and seismicity can be used to confirm the existence of additional fluvial landforms.¹⁹⁴

Present in the rain shadow, Ladakh have/had desert surroundings. Commonly, such regions comprise Aeolian landscapes, including sand dunes. In comparison to other landforms, these geomorphic sites of dryness are less common in the river basins like the Nubra-Shyok and Indus, are a distinctive feature of the sand dunes.¹⁹⁵ The deposit is locally derivative of the uncovered river banks. These dunes cannot consistently be linked to periods of high dryness and may or may not represent the influence of climatic conditions. In the upper valley of Indus, between Shey and Sabu on the Upshi-Leh road-roughly in opposition to Ladakh in the Karakoram hills, close to the junction of the Nubra and Shyok rivers-can be found well-preserved challenging sand dunes.¹⁹⁶ Absence of weathering regular deployment and replacement by supply of fresh sediment in the Shyok Valley and Nubra during extremely dry conditions.

The regional geomorphology advocated that glacial flows governed the ground after the ground after the Ladakh Himalaya's current architectural form developed. This is clearly shown

¹⁹³ J.M. Dortch, L.A. Owen, M.W. Caffee Quaternary glaciation in the Nubra and Shyok valley confluence, northernmost Ladakh, India. *Quatern Res*, 2010, (74):132–144.

¹⁹⁴ J.M. Dortch (et. Al), p 143.

¹⁹⁵ P.J. Taylor, A.W. Mitchell AW, The Quaternary glacial history of the Zaskar range, north-west Indian Himalaya. *QuaternInt*(65), 2000, p. 81.

¹⁹⁶ P.J. Taylor, p. 89.

by the presence of several “U”-shaped valleys and a widespread glacial deposit. Fluvial and alluvial progressions worked together to gradually reshape these landforms. Fluvial activities that reworked the glacial deposits resulted in considerable debris flow in managed alluvial fans. The presence of well-built strath terraces in areas close to the major structures is another sign of the tectonic overprinting on these landforms. There are many relict lake progressions that have been preserved in the area, and even though it is still unclear how these lakes developed, they serve as important records for reconstructing the still-uncertain high-resolution climatic history of this beautiful arid landscape with its variety of landforms and proof of thrilling events that altered the landforms, such as dam failure floods.

THE PLATEAU OF LADAKH- AN EXTENSION OF TIBETAN PLATEAU

One of the main questions with reference to the continental tectonics of Asia is to what magnitude has the double regular thickness of the crust layer of the Tibetan plateau area been extruded eastwards, on view of the tactic of the Indian indenter. Even though strike-slip faults in and round the Tibetan plateau are several of the most remarkable geological topographies, they do not display the actual expanses of offset that have earlier proposed by the geographers.¹⁹⁷

The Karakoram fault range and the extension AltynTagh fault are certainly exceptionally active faults at present, cutting glacial characteristics, pruning river terraces, shifting the course of rivers and vaulting rapidly elevating mountain ranges. Nevertheless, the appraisal of Holocene slip degrees cannot be dogged with accuracy without exact dating of the counterpoise geomorphological characteristics, and present-day slipup rates can definitely not be generalized back in the past further than the Holocene epoch of history. The arrangement of strike-slip faults in Asia ensures or proposes that some eastward wave of solidified Tibetan crust and extended it further to Ladakh range, but the amount of side extrusion can be of the direction of 100-200 km possibly. If it was of this order of degree the hopping strike-slip faults must display similar expanses of geological displacements.

There is similarity between the topography of Himalayas, Ladakh and Tibet. The topographic features of both Ladakh and Tibet have close connections. Himalayan rivers emerge

¹⁹⁷ G. PELTZER, P. B. TAPPONNIER. 1988. Formation and evolution of strike-slip faults, rifts and basins during the India-Asia collision: an experimental approach. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, (93), 1988, p, 159.

in Tibet; Pan Gong Lake in Ladakh extends up to Tibet. Zaskar and Ladakh ranges spread up to Tibet. Topographically Tibet is divided into northern and southern Tibet. Ladakh and Southern Tibet are among the regions which are drained by Indus and Brahmaputra. The northern part comprised ranges of Brahmaputra from north and Indus Valley. Likewise Himalayas, Kailash and Ladakh ranges follows the same trend and axis on the Tibetan Plateau.¹⁹⁸

In between the depression of Kailash range and Central Himalaya lies the Brahmaputra and Indus River. Both rivers flow in parallel with the ranges in east ward and west ward directions. Indus and Brahmaputra River starts from the Kailash mountain slopes. SingiKampa and Gartan Chu are the two streams which form the head water of river Indus. Indus is joined by its southern tributaries Zaskar, Hanle and Suru rivers in between Ladakh and Zaskar ranges.

A widespread geologic segment over the northwestern Himalayas is well visible in Ladakh. The collision among the Ladakh shield and the Tibetan raised area triggered large-scale intracrustal propelling and heaping up of the Himalayan napes. This compressional event was supplemented by prograde local metamorphism. The metamorphism arrays from low-grade arrangements in the Indus suture zone in the northeast to upper amphibolite position in the Higher Himalayas tectonic element in the southwest. The continuity of these ranges with varying degree of longitudinal and latitudinal elevation in the region shows the extension of Tibet and Ladakh Himalayas.

THE ECO ZONES OF LADAKH AND PATTERN OF EARLY SETTLEMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNDERSTANDING

The archaeological evidences are present in the length and breadth in the region along with the plethora of written sources. The Kharoshti and Brahmi writings and stone roof buildings at Indus valley implies that the confluence of Zaskar and Indus rivers forms the border with Baltistan and Upper Tibet; which was further confirmed by Franck through his observation that the remains found in Upper Maryul are mostly attributed to Mons and the remains found in Lower Maryul are attributed to Brogpa.¹⁹⁹ In other words the attributes of the Mon are found from upper Tibet to the Zaskar-Indus confluence along the Indus valley. Although attributed

¹⁹⁸ Naseeruddin Ahmad, SarwarRais, Himalayan Glaciers, p. 18.

¹⁹⁹ Quentin Devers, archaeological ladakh: recent discoveries redefining the history of a key region between the pamirs and the Himalaya..p..104-105

remains to the Brogpa can be located from the Baltistan to near Ubshi. Brogpakhar is in Leh and Takkar (Chemrey valley). From the material remains Ladakh seems to have been bifurcated culturally into two main regions eastern Ladakh and western Ladakh. Eastern Ladakh had influence of upper Tibet (Zhang Zhung), western Ladakh had Gilgit and Baltistan influence.

The fortifications attributed to the Mon and Horpa, Brogpa and Balti's greatly differ. The fortified settlement of the mons were spacious. Some were simple in design and seems to defend small attacks and were easy access so that the regular army can get easy access (e.g. Tamduk and Phugtse in upper Indus valley and Tarungtse in Zaskar. There were also fortification with advanced features of defense such as loopholes, built on impregnable terrain, such as stag lung and stok fort at upper Indus valley and Leh. The forts of Brogpa were without fortification and were smaller in size.

Through the petroglyph at Kharool (confluence of Suru and Dras rivers), rock art sites at Balukhar, Alchi and Khaltse, engravings at stupa along votive inscriptions at some stupa. The translation and analyzation of inscriptions at Kharool by Nils Martin showed that the contents of inscription in the above mentioned sites are same, the inscriptions mentions name and sometimes their titles and clans. One of the carvings under the ruler of Purang with date (1028) mentions that Burzha or Gilgit was under the Ngari rule. Forts have been built at the sites of Balukhar, Alchi and Kharool by the Ngari forces. Such petroglyphs and forts are found in Western Ladakh only, along the Purig and lower indus valley. The above mentioned evidences imply that the ruler Ye shes od (Yeshe O) conquered Purig, Lower Indus valley and perhaps also Gilgit and Baltistan.²⁰⁰ According to Vitali, "Maryul was acquired by Ngari in two stages. First the regions east of the Indus-Zaskar confluence were absorbed (whether donated by the Gyapa Jo or not), and then the regions west of the confluence-this time unquestionably by means of a large military operation."

According to the author, in late 10th and early 11th century the area around Shey of Ladakh as part of Ngari came to known from the Nyarma construction under Ye shes od (YesheO). The inscriptions in Alchi and Mangyu temples proves that the two villages were ruled by the two important families belonged to the kingdom of Ngari. According to Martin the

²⁰⁰ Quentin Devers, archaeological ladakh: recent discoveries redefining the history of a key region between the pamirs and the Himalaya..p..108

inscriptions are dated mid-12th century, this implies that the rulers ancestors belonged to Ngari Kingdom.²⁰¹

From the inscription inside the Wanla temple, during the late 13 and early 14 century both Mangyu and Alchi was part of the territory of Wanla King, Bhagdarskyabs. The inscription at Mulbe gives the impression that the Ngari rule in the late 13th century in Ladakh had declined and the indigenous rulers had established kingdoms earlier controlled by the rulers of western Tibet. From thirteen century onwards Ladakh underwent raids from Kashmir and Central Asia. During the raid from Mirza Haidar Dughlat in early 16 century, two kings were ruling with capital at Leh and Shey. According to Tarikhi Rashidi when Mirza Haidar Dughlat reached Ladakh, Ladakh was ruled by two kings, both kings approached to Mirza Haidar.²⁰² The base of Nagari rule was at shey, it didn't included Leh. Thus the raids from the Hor ended the rule from Nari Gogsum. According to Ladakh chronicles in 15 and 16 century there were different rulers ruled from Leh, Sabu, Tingmosgang and Basgo. During the period the settlements went through changes, the fortification of both settlements and forts increased in size. The fortification were built either near to the streams or by construction of underground tunnels, the walls of the fortification was also made with strong defense thickened ramparts, outpost towers.

There was also a marked change in the construction of the temple, prior to Hor attacks the majority of the temples were built in the bottom (e.g. Alchi, Nyarma) or the below, of fortification (Mangyu, SumdaChung). After 1450s new temples were built at the protected locations like at leh, spituk, thikse, tingmosgang, and later in Tangtse, BasgoNyoma.

During the namgyal dynasty reign the king Tashi Namgyal not only successfully defended his kingdom from Hor but also defeated them. He expanded his kingdom from Rurog to Baltistan and and from Zanskar to Nubra. Leh became the capital and throughout NamgyalruleLeh remained the capital.

THE PEOPLING OF LADAKH- MAJOR TRENDS

As the Ladakh region is different in terms of climatic condition and vegetation. Ladakh is historically speaking inhabited by the people belonging to different ethnic groups. Population of

²⁰¹ Ibid.p.110

²⁰² Ibid.p..111

the region is mainly affected by orographic, stratigraphic and commonly physiographic set up. According to A.H. Francke, the population of Ladakh has been a mixed blend of Mons, Dards and Mongolian. Mons and Dards belonged to Aryan, Mons from North India and Dards from Gilgit. And the Tibetans from Mongoloid. There were different references which had mentioned about the Dard people. The mention of Dadikai twice by Herodotus and also finds the mention of gold digging ants in Innermost Asia.²⁰³

The people who belonged to the Mongolian stock, Bhots who follows Buddhism religion, they are mostly located in Leh and areas of Zaskar. They came to Ladakh during the second spread of Buddhism. The other group who also belonged to the Mongolian stock were the Baltis. Baltis belonged to Baltistan, they converted to Islam. They are predominantly found in Kargil district of Ladakh. Baltis came to leh with GyalKhatoon (wife of JamyangNamgyal), and settled in the villages of Phyang and Chuchot.

Changpasare settled in the higher regions of Chang tang regions. They belonged to the mongoloid stock of Tibet. They live a nomadic life by grazing their livestock. They move with their flocks in search of pastures. With the new developments take place in Ladakh, the life of the Changpas also keep on changing over the years.

The people belonged to the Indo-Aryan stock are Dards whose settlements are in the areas of Dras, they converted to Islam. It is believed that the famous sufi saint Mir Ali Hamdani had visited Kashmir from Iran through Ladakh. During his visit Islam reached to ladakh. According to another view Islam reached to Ladakh from Kashmir through Shah Mir rulers in 14 century. Another stock of Aryans were the Brokpas, they are also Dards, neither they accepted Islam nor Lamaism.²⁰⁴ Brokpas inhabited the villages of Hanu, Da, Garkone and Darsik. Brokpas practices talismans, yantras, charms and amulets. The dress of the brokpasare different than the other inhabitants of Ladakh. They forbade drinking milk and having eggs, they believe that their God will get offensive. They are fond of grape wine and chang.²⁰⁵ In order to preserve their cultural practices brokpas follow endogamous marriage practices.

²⁰³ Luciano petech, kingdom of ladakh..p..6

²⁰⁴ A.H Francke, history of western Tibet..p..28

²⁰⁵ F Hussnain. fvl.TheBrokpaDards of Da. Hanu and Garkon. Opcit pp 27-28.

Mons holds the lowest strata in the Buddhist society. According to A.H Francke, Mons were the earliest Buddhist settlers of Ladakh. According to Prof F.M Hussnain, in the dictionary of Tibetan language, the meaning of Mon is different tribes and races who settled in between Tibet and Indian plains (Assam, Bhutan, Nepal and Kullo) with Aryan features and lived on hunting. The study doesn't mention Mons were from Kashmir.²⁰⁶

There are various views related to the original home of Mons. According to S.H Ribbach, Mons belonged to North West of India wherefrom they migrated to Ladakh.²⁰⁷ A. H Francke held that the other name for Ladakh was Maryul which actually means Monyul (Mon country).²⁰⁸ Mons mostly follows the profession of musician, they along with Beda are integral part of the society, they are the musicians and music is an important part of all the Ladakhi functions.

Argons were those who used to come to Ladakh for selling their products. Ladakh connected the people from different regions through the trade routes. People from Kashmir, Central Asia exchanged their products and Leh was the center for exchanging their products. The traders married with the Ladakhi bhot women who got converted to Muslim, the families born from these marriages are called Argons.

The statics of population show that the young age structure present in the region, with developed regions witnessed the high fertility rate. A population's sex composition affects the rate of births, deaths, and marriages and plays a vital role in population research.

The sex composition of a people plays a vivacious role in the population investigation; meanwhile, it upsets the rate of births, deaths and marriages. The migration rates and nearly all populace characteristics comprising socio-economic characteristics, and continuity in life are swayed by the sex arrangement of population and are in turn pretentious by these attributes.

The elevation is a crucial physical factor that affects population structure and its impacts have been thoroughly investigated. It must be kept in mind that the high elevation is not aself-governing entity of the physical setting however essentially form numerous characteristics and

²⁰⁶ A.H Francke, history of western Tibet..p..20

²⁰⁷ S.H Ribbach, culture and society in ladakh..p..12

²⁰⁸ A.H Francke, The Mysterious Land..p..26

environmental circumstances noticeable by high radiation, rugged terrain, cold, dryness, low rainfall pattern etc.²⁰⁹

MAJOR CROPS, FLAURA AND FAUNA OVER THE PERIOD

As a consequence of the cold and dry climatic condition, the natural vegetation of Ladakh region is scanty. Temperature and moistness are the two key factors in control for scarce and concentrated vegetation of the region. One discovers vegetation even at a high altitude of almost 5,000/m in case the surface gets sunlight and favour moisture holding. On the whole, natural vegetation is categorized by highly diminutive growth. On hills with southern disclosure, there are slightly open forest domains which comprise of limited but important species like Yew (*Taxusbaccata*) *Salix farvilis* and *Juniperus* with unreserved stands of, Pencil cader and Hippophae. On the southern side of Leh district, in alpine regions befall fine flower-patterned herbs of *Aconitum*, *Astragalus*, *Potentilla*, etc.²¹⁰ The trees comprises of willow, walnut, apricot, Pencil cedar. Pencil cedar is generally found in and around Hemis shukpachan village of Ladakh. These trees grow very fast and are tall upto 40 feet.²¹¹ Yew is another important plant species in Ladakh. Popularly known as '*Postal*' in earlier time's people used leaves of this tree as supernumerary to the tea.²¹² Elm is commonly found in Nubra valley. Cypress called 'Suru' in Ladakhi; the wood of this plant is durable. This plant has some medicinal value used to cure piles and blood purification. *Populuseuphraticais* mostly found in Indus Valley. The timber of this plant is not good but is useful in fuel formation. The twigs are used as brush. Willow occurs in Ladakh, often grown in as even plantation. *Salix fravili*, and *sailba* are the common types. The leaves are used as the winter fodder for animals and some medicines are made out of it.²¹³ Apricot, especially dry apricot locally known as 'Chuli' and 'Fating', is world famous fruit. It is generally collected when almost dried up. The wood of apricot is mainly hard but not used in furniture.

²⁰⁹ C.M. Goldstein. High-Altitude Tibetan Populations in the Remote Himalaya: Social Transformation and Its Demographic, Economic, and Ecological Consequences. Mountain Research and Development, Vol. 1, No. 1, May, 1988, p, 6.

²¹⁰ Kachroo, B.L. Per Sapru, And U. Dhar. . Flora of Ladakh an ecological and taxonomical appraisal. International Bock Distributors. Dehradun, 1977, p.100.

²¹¹ Prem Singh Jina, Ladakh: Land and People Indus Publishing Company, 1998. P 43.

²¹² Prem Singh Jina, p 45.

²¹³ Prem Singh Jina, p 45.

Like the variety of flora that exists in Ladakh, fauna also found in abundance in the region. Generally categorized in to following types. Wild animals, fish, birds, domestic animals, Mollusca, reptiles etc. The regions including Changthangrangelands, are forage repository, supports livestock in large numbers in limited resource environment. Large number of wild species of plants grows. Some of the species are Artemisia, Festuca, Lolium, Astragalus, Agropyron, Stipa and Orzopris. Gyabshen (Eurotiaceratoides, Chenopodia) widely grown shrub. It grows in sandy plains and lower slopes.

Domestic animals found in Ladakh are, Yak, zomo, cow, dog, ponies, goats, sheep, zo etc. These animals are used for both milk and flesh products, and are reared across the region. In Ladakh sheep is found in three types, Marino, Purik, and Huniya. Huniya is locally known as 'Luk'. This category is generally used in carrying load.²¹⁴ Purik is used for consumption of meat and its fur is used in shawl making. These shawls are considered as the finest quality and are famous in the world. Marino is imported from Australia, and is used in wool production.

Goats in Ladakh are called as 'Ra-Ma'. The shawl wool goats are popularly known as 'Changra' mainly found in Changthang region. They provide the finest quality of wool known as 'lena'. This is also used in making shawls.²¹⁵ Tibetan massif dogs are common in Ladakh. They have bushy coats and brownish in color. Yak found in abundance in the region, mainly black in colour. Having the small head and short horns and fur over the body, they generally used for carrying load (as beast of burden). Wild yaks are called as 'Dong'.²¹⁶ Generally found in Chang Chenmo and Aksai Chin region. Other wild animals found in Ladakh are; Kiang (Equushemionus), Marmot (Arctomys Himalyanus), hare (Genus Lepus), wild Sheep. Ladakh have limited but important varieties of animals (both domestic as well as wild) to support the local community.

There are various types of Bird species in Ladakh. Some important are; Rapka, Chakor, Eagle, Kite, the water fowl, black neck crane, wild goose, found in the region. Home sparrow, pigeon, crow and other are found in and around residential areas. Ladakh has mammoth flora and fauna species with multiple varieties. Maximum numbers are found in Changthang and Nubra

²¹⁴ Prem Singh Jina, p 47.

²¹⁵ Prem Singh Jina, p 46.

²¹⁶ A. Cunningham, p 197.

region. In winters some of the bird species migrate from the regions including Siberia. The migration cycle continues throughout summer and winter season.²¹⁷

Ladakh is home of different national parks. It includes Hemis high altitude national Park which covers area about 600/kms. This park constitutes different variety of fauna including Red fox, Bharal, snow leopard, wolf, Hare, marmot and variety of birds.²¹⁸ Changthang Cold Desert Sanctuary is located at the eastern part of Ladakh. It covers total area near about 4000/ sq. kms. Karakoram wildlife sanctuary, it covers total area nearly 5000 sq. /Kms.

RELATION BETWEEN MAN AND LAND IN LADAKH OVER THE MILINIEU; AN OUTLINE SURVEY OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

The population of Ladakh lives in a scattered way between above 8500 feet (2700 meters) to 14500 feet (4500 meters) above sea level, the difference in altitude had great impact on environment and climatic conditions. The lower regions between 2700 meters and 3200 meters down the Indus have enough long summer for double cropping and the higher plateau like Rupshu and Chusul,²¹⁹ where the temperature dips to freezing point and the cultivation worth nothing had to depend on pastoralism.

The people living in Changthang had known as changpas also mostly practice pastoralism. They rear sheep, goat and yak. The maintenance and rearing of herds possible only through tactfully organization of movements in search of pastures at particular time in the environment of cold desert. The practice of pastoralism is not an easy, it had to be managed by proper use of natural resources available in that environment. Pastures occurrence are seasonal and nomads depended on proper utilization. Nomads raise different herds of goats and sheep for animals and dairy products, domesticate horses, yaks etc. for good's transportation, humans. All nomads differentiate themselves with their business partners and neighbors as a group of traders and livestock owners. The pastures used by the nomads claimed their right on the basis of customary law. The nomads reside in tents near grazing grounds.

²¹⁷ Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, vivek Publishing house, New Delhi, 1991, p258.

²¹⁸ S.S.sagwal, Ladakh: Ecology and Environment, ashish Publishing House ND, 1997, p 139.

²¹⁹ Janet rizvi, ladakh crossroads of high asia, p.117-118.

Dras region also has very less cultivation due to harsh climate and heavy snowfall. It also has shortage of firewood. According to Moorcroft the residents of Dras were subjected to forced labor to porter age for which they were not provided compensation, the profits were reaped by the ruler of Ladakh and Malik or lord of Kashmir.²²⁰

Zaskar has long winter and harsh climate, the source of the people are both cultivation but at low level and livestock, the population of Zaskar adjust their living through little production and livestock. The people of Zaskar barter their grain for salt with Chang pa people from Rupshu area.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND HUMAN INTERACTIONS

The settlement in Ladakh is around rivers, Nubra is around the tributaries of Indus, Shayok and Nubra, originating from the range of Karakoram. It is 10,000 feet, above sea level. It is the largest valley with abundant water, thick grass grows on the slopes during summer, got the name, Nubra, which means green. Nubra lies north of Leh. The area is about 9216 of square miles, length about 128 miles and breadth about 72 miles. On the north bounded by Karakorum and by Kailash range on the south. The Nubra and Shayok River made the terraced fields rich with deposits of alluvial. Being warmer and fertile vegetation in Nubra valley is comparatively high than the other regions of Ladakh. Barley, wheat and peas are the main crops. Grain or Barley grows in rich amount. Apricots, apples, grapes and pears were also grown with some vegetables like potatoes, cauliflower, radish and cabbage. Diskit is the small town, Sumor, Khalsar, Pratapur and Hunder are the villages. Lingzi thang plain is also known as the Aksai Chin.

Indus valley, main Centre of Ladakh is longitudinally stretched from southeast to northwest at an elevation of about 3400 meters. The valley has been rendezvous ground for multiple and different ethnic and cultural groups since from the ages. Leh is the capital, largest and principal town of the whole region of Ladakh.²²¹ Valley is surrounded by high passes of Taglang and Khardongla. Indus river main source, flows from Leh town towards north-east to

²²⁰ Janet rizvi, Ladakh crossroad of history..p.118

²²¹ O. C. Handa, Buddhist western Himalaya: a politico-religious history.p.62

north-west.²²² The king of Ladakh Tashi Namgyal (1500-1532 A.D), inhabited the tract along the Indus at the right bank. The king built a castle and some families were rehabilitated which expanded the settlement; people came from different and distant places and got settled at Leh. Leh became the Centre for the merchandise products. Traders from Far East, Middle East, Central Asia and India met and exchanged their products. The prominence of the Leh further developed and became an important entrepot.

Suru valley is irrigated by the Suru River. Suru River forms the northern as well as western boundary of the Zaskar range. It receives water from both Shingo and Dras rivers joined at Marol (in Baltistan which is in Pakistan) by Indus river formed by the glacier beds of Nun Kun peaks. The river reached to the plains of Rangdum. The Suru valley's final inhabited site is Rangdum. Suru valley Rangdum being at high elevated had to depend on the livestock; the necessities of the population had to be fulfilled by exchanging their dairy products from the valley of Suru or from the Zaskar. The valley is about 9000 feet above sea level.²²³

Zaskar valley has an area about three thousand square miles elevation at 13,154 feet. It lies at south-west of Leh and Kargil to the east. Zaskar means, white copper land (zangs copper, ka white). The valley is about 200 km narrow stretch lies between mighty two ranges, while it is surrounded on the north by Zaskar Range and to the south by Greater Himalayas. Villages are located within 60 miles. The high elevation of the valley makes the climate dry and very cold. Zaskar has many monasteries along the rivers. The people of Zaskar practice both agriculture and animal husbandry.

The area of Ladakh is barren, cold, high altitude which makes it scarcely populated, clustered in the area where minimum requirement of living were met. The area is at high altitude, freezing temperature, climatic isolation makes hard for survival. The vast land of arid region with very less vegetation. The people made their way for their living. The harshness of the climate improves at the end of the May and the snow at the peaks melts down and make way through the streams to the narrow terraces. During the summer season the power of the sunrays able to ripen the barley at an altitude about 4000 metres. The climatic condition of the region makes it scarce in vegetation, only some thorny shrub varieties which has undergrowth than the

²²²Ladakh: The Land and the People, premsingh jina...p..16.

²²³Ladakh: society and economy, Nirmala bora..p..28

over surface. In such condition the people had to collect roots, twigs and grass for the harsh months of winter. In such situation the people had to collect huge piles of wood and grass from the mountains. People spent time in homes, they would practice some handicrafts, shawl weaving, knitting of woolen gloves and socks. The religious festivals of monasteries mostly celebrate during winter season.²²⁴

The Ladakhi economy has always been based mostly on agriculture, and the majority of the inhabitants were farmers. Many aphorisms referred the importance of land in social life. Nevertheless, in spite of number of developments over the years agriculture continues to be the mainstay of the Ladakh economy and the majority of the population is still connected to the soil. Agriculture was of supreme importance to the economy of the region. It was/is the main source of revenue and the principal source of livelihood of the people of the area. Nonetheless, harsh geo-climatic situations and inadequate factor grant position executed some serious constraints the agricultural growth of this area remains sluggish.

All the agrarian maneuvers had to be delimited to five or six months in a year owing to the protracted severe winter. Rainfall being insignificant, farming had to be restricted to such fields only which got a guaranteed supply of water both by artificial channels and from hill torrents. In the lack of a level surface in the area, this was perpetually done by terracing the grounds in a vertical style.

The possibility for widespread cultivation being limited, energies have thus to be determined on the judicious presentation of modern technology and proper use of inputs with special concerns to the local circumstances. Vegetable growth formed a significant part of the Agriculture Development Programme in the region. There was no clearly demarcated belt of vegetable developing area, but frequently the cultivation was commenced as kitchen gardening and the harvest was used for self-consumption, however a portion of the produce passes on to the market. The option of out-spreading the part at present-day was less without new regions were brought under agriculture.²²⁵

²²⁴ O.C Handa, Buddhist western Himalaya: a politico-religious history..p..77

²²⁵ J. Rizvi, Ladakh, p.68

In order to give stimulus to the program, determinations were prepared to promote the improved ranges of seed and the use of manures and subsidy and fund appropriation on the sale of seeds and sprouts. Though the severe cold climate and whether did not permit the addition of horticulture to large parts, there were, but, some parts of the area, which were quite appropriate for the development of fruits such as apricots, apples, grapes, peaches, barriers, and pears. In fact the apricots of Kargil region are like the apples of Kashmir are well-known all over the country.

The agriculturist benefited by renting out their grass and grazing fields to merchants and pony carters to fodder their ponies on. Though, this trade put a channel on the food means of Ladakh. Throughout the Dogra rule a regular quantity of 3-4 thousand mounds of barley grain was poised as land revenue form Ladakhi farmers.

CONCLUSION: TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF LADAKH AS BORDERLAND

This chapter put together ethnographic, archeological, archival, material and cultural evidence to shape the geographical position of Ladakh, topography, vegetation, border history along trading history (both internal and external) as a social system, and highlight how the past and the present are related in historical context. We have come to understand that several of the most persistent discourse currently taking place in Ladakhi discussion, which concern identity politics and their connections to global commodity networks, are connected to Ladakh's historical function as a crossroads between South and Central Asia and, respectively, the historical British, Russian, and Chinese empires.

Ladakh is the northernmost region of the modern Indian state and is geographically located at the westernmost end of the Tibetan plateau. However, it demonstrates several of the same ironies, ambiguities and dilemmas in the interaction among the religion, politics and economic growth. Although Ladakh is categorized by a tough climate and rugged topography, Ladakhis are knowledgeable to live in these adverse surroundings and to face the contests posed by nature. The point that Ladakhis have mostly been considered as a contented people, existing a frugal life, demonstrated to the success of their variation through manners of dress, farming and social rehearses such as polyandry and law of primogeniture. Foreign travelers such as Fa – Hein and Ou-Kong, who visited Ladakh in around 400 A.D, recount an obscure picture of this antique land in their travel records. According to them, it is a hilly country where not anything cultivates

due to severe cold. They have termed Ladakhis as the masses of snow, who are Buddhists. Nonetheless, major part of Ladakh does not have snowstorm for it is above the snow level. Mirza Hyder Dughlat in his well-known *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* who conquered Tibet in 1534 has appropriately construed topography of Ladakh. In 1846, Alexander Cunningham, a British East India Company official, stays in Ladakh. A typical book *Ladakh* by Cunningham was printed in 1854. Johnson the first European to had directed a geographical study of Ladakh, Kashghar and Khotan. He visited Ladakh in 1866. Shaw conceded over Leh in 1867 on his political assignment to Yarqand. Ladakh relishes an exceptional peculiarity in the country not only as of its strategic position but also principally because of its dynamic cultural heritage. There are no more places in the nation state where Buddhism still survives in the same unvarnished form as it does in Ladakh, as unique as it could have been in the fourth part of the twentieth century or earlier.

The route of a lucrative trade among India and Central Asia through Ladakh left a discrete imprint upon its socio-economic and cultural life of the people. Leh, the capital of Ladakh, attained a cosmopolitan appeal during the trading period when merchants of diverse nationalities upcoming from Kashghar, Bukhara, Yarqand, Tibet, Kabul, Amritsar, Kullu, Nurpur, and Kashmir reached at Leh to trade their goods. The thinly populated settlement of Leh abruptly hummed with bustle that lasted during the summer months. This trade fetched economic affluence to all those who were in one way or the other tangled in it. Nevertheless, Ladakhis profited from this only partly as very few of them conceded on their own commerce. Most of the Ladakhis being deprived and illiterate competed themselves lower rungs in the business and to act as pony-drivers and toddlers, or as providers of pack animals and fodder to merchants. The Ladakhis, Arghuns and Kashmiri incomers who merchandised with Tibet and Central Asia crooked into a wealthier and prosperous class equalled to the bulk of Ladakhi people that was poor. Buddhist merchants of Ladakh were mostly involved in local trade.

The frontier regions of Ladakh had several numbers of important trade routes. The Kashmir-Yarqand trade route passed through two important trade points' i.e. Kargil and Leh. The KuluYarqand route cross the threshold the Ladakh Tehsil from Lahul in the Indian Territory and was a preferred resort of the merchants from Hoshiarpur, Amritsar in Punjab etc. This and the first stated route organized made what was termed the Treaty High Road. The Khalsi-Chorbat route left the Treaty High Road nearby Khalsi and linked the Kargil-Skardu nearby

Kiras. The TarstriKhara route extended Ruddock via Man Pangam and Chushul. The GiahDemchok route headed to Lhasa. The Key route, that unlocked Baltistan to the external world, were the Kargil-Srinagar, KargilLeh roads. Since period age-old, Kashmir was connected with Lhasa and Yarkand through a road top over the Zojila pass which is still operational seasonally connecting Kashmir to Ladakh. This was the way over which Buddhist preachers from Kashmir toured to distant China and it was through this way that caravan loaded with silk, wool, silver and tea journeyed to Kashmir and with cotton fabrics, shawls, sugar etc. from there to china and other parts of central Asia.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries exchange trade links, a range of cultural/social individuals and groups collaborated together. These trade communities were formed via both business ties and social norms like marriage, and its members came from a variety of social and religious backgrounds. The economic aspects of this trading arrangement generated social niches as specific functions were developed to maximize tactics for profit within the dominating political and geographic elements of the system. The Arghun community, specifically, works a distinctive place in trade webs. This community made a sophisticated choice, over both exogamy and relationships to profitable merchandise, both as customers and transmitters of best materials that offered links to other profitable systems of cultures. The main item of food is barley flour (tsampa).²²⁶ With tsampa tea or butter tea is mixed. Thump is another item of food which is made of wheat flour boiled in water with some vegetables and meat?

Zhang zung territory consists of gauge, western Changthang, purang, spiti, Lahul and Ladakh. Zhang zung supported the agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan had contacts with ZangZung. It had contacts with Sogdiana, Bactria and Persia. The Kailash Mountain was Centre for ZanZun was also had been Centre for pilgrims to the Indians.

According to Nicola Di Cosmo, the term “greedy” and “ravenous” were attributed to pastoral nomads. Later studies by anthropologists suggested that the ‘greedy theory evolved into and termed as “needy theory”. The economy of highland Changthang pastoral nomads did not provide basic essentials of life. The Changpas had to depend on settled people for agricultural

²²⁶Tsampa is prepared the grain is fried and than grounded in the water mill or hand mill.

products. The Changpas bartered their products with food grains through trade. The trade for Changpas was not for greedy but it was their need.²²⁷

The geographical Possibilist school took the argument between geography and human to another turn. The determinist school was criticized by the Possibilist School. Possibilist School argues that the human are at the center, different sustainability method used by human living in same environment. According to Lucien Febvre, “There are no necessities, only opportunities everywhere, and since man is in command of these opportunities, he decides how to employ them.”

Gompas played multifarious role in the society of Ladakh. Gompas acted as medium in reproducing the society from pastoral to sedentary life. The people living in difficult terrain and with limited scope areas were held by the monasteries through various means.

Ladakh is a different geographical division and Ladakhis a diverse nationality with lot of cultural mixture geographically and physiographically. The region has its peculiar history, variety of customs, manners and multiple traditions. Small wonder, thus, if the general public of the area have some indefinite and defined category of amour- proper, which if gratified, may produce uninvited results. Conditions therefore demand a mild but careful treatment of the situation. The Ladakhis mostly complain that, more every so often than not, throughout the 113 years of Dogra rule in the state, well-organized, straightforward and sympathetic officials were not relinquished to run the government in the district.

Ladakh being captured by the Dogras in 1834, since than till 1947, it observed sluggish but profound and far-reaching social and economic deviations transported almost by the foreigners who travelled to Ladakh for the persistence of trade and christen mission accordingly. The waterways were yoked to water more and more land, roads, pullis and bridges were built. These growths and developments stirred trade and agriculture to a considerable extent. Though, certain religious notions and practices, social praxis like polygamy and polyandry, traditionalism, superstition still permeated every domain of life and obstructed economic development almost at

²²⁷ Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and Its Significance in Chinese History
Author(s): Nicola Di Cosmo
Source: The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Nov., 1994), pp. 1092-1126
Published by: Association for Asian Studies.p.1092.

every step. The position of women still called stridently for reform. The Christian Missionaries transmuted the lives of the general public to an excessive degree.

A vast bulk of the population stayed illiterate. The people condensed, spent and distributed possessions just as their ancestors had done before them. The primeval methods of production carry the day in agriculture and industry. The birth and death rates were very high and changing over time. To sum up, some developments could be traced in the overall standard of life of the population, else it was pitifully low. In Ladakh the main profession of the people was farming, in other words, farming was its chief industry. It is a contradiction that both farming and agriculturists were in a miserable state. This is elucidated by the statistic that Ladakh being a mountainous area, agriculture in such area was not lucrative and the rocky topography of Ladakh was a interruption in the approach of agriculture.

The weather, temperature, environment also was not much appropriate for a flourishing agriculture. Nevertheless, the change would perhaps have continued gradual, at least until Ladakh was taken in the possibility of India's main effort in economic development in the last twenty years or so, if it had not been for the disastrous actions of the period ever since 1947. In addition to their broader influence, these have had the ill-starred, in some features tragic consequence of unsettling Ladakh's centuries-old form of profitable, cultural and religious relations to outside world.

While it is easy to deduce that the all imposing and near unsurmountable geographical features have determined the course and pattern of life in Ladakh, geographical possibilism rather than determinism seems to offer us a much more convincing explanation. Human agency and the transformation of landscape and establishment of durable settlements and institutions like the monasteries etc. Adaptation to agriculture and pastoralism also were achieved through human agency and more surplus was achieved through advances in agriculture and introduction of new crops. Thus, while geography is one of the most important features that one encounters while essaying about Ladakh, it is an important element in the organization of Ladakhi society and the difference between Ladakhi society and the neighbouring societies with a similar topography brings out the rule of human agency and reinforces the idea of geographical possibilism.

Chapter 4

Cultural and Religious Relations of Ladakh in Medieval Period

The scope of cultural and religious relation in Ladakh during the pre-modern period: A survey

Ladakh situated in the northern part of India constitutes one of the most important regions in accordance to the Buddhist tradition. The region goes a long way in establishing relations with other parts through its commercial activities and cultural interactions. It was a region which was bounded by high mountains and steep peaks. But owing to its strategic location it could maintain its vitality as a center of commerce and cultural interactions. Several trade routes were laid right at the juncture of Ladakh. These trade routes were frequently busy with traders and merchants from various parts of the western world. Ladakh was located in the midst of the Silk Road as is famously known.

“These roads, regardless of how they were called, have been known to humanity for many centuries and, as far as the major routes are concerned for several millennia. Most of them are the descendants of natural roads following patterns of vegetation whose ecological qualities enabled man and beast to thrive in the days when Palaeolithic hunters tracked their game. These historical routes are also terrestrial and maritime, running from east to west and corresponding to waterways that run from north to south. Trade was conducted in all directions, crossing the Pamir’s and stretching from one water hole to another. Artefacts in lapis lazuli, jade, bronze and iron provide ample testimony to how this trade was carried on.”²²⁸

Ladakh came into contact with the Buddhist tradition since the early period and this connection grew stronger and broader with times. Much of its commercial and cultural aspects were interconnected with the Buddhist tradition. Thus the religious settings play a crucial part in influencing the history of the region as much of its facets were overwhelmingly viewed in accordance with the Buddhist tradition.

²²⁸Vadime Elisseeff, Introduction: Approaches old and new to the Silk road, in Vadime Elisseeff (Ed.) *The Silk Road: Highways of culture and commerce* (Berghahn Books, UNESCO Publishing, New York, 2000) p 2.

The geographical context of cultural relation of Ladakh

Ladakh holds a special position owing to its strategic location in the midst of global trade route. As a result of the flowing trading conditions, ethnic groups resided in the region. “The inner part of this region, from Kashmir to Jaunsar- Bawar and towards the north up to Spiti and Ladakh remained largely dominated by different ethnic communities. Some of these communities are indigenous to this region, and some happened to settle here during the historical period. Although, there has been intense racial cultural interfusion through the centuries of living together in different localities yet, certain ethnic traits may still be identified in different racial group.”²²⁹

The Baltistan region also plays an important role in establishing the cultural relations with Ladakh. “By Baltistan (Little Tibet) today is understood the valley of the Indus, running in a north westerly direction immediately to the south of the Karakoram range, the highest mountain range in the world after the Great Himalayas. It includes the lower valley of the Shyok River, a major tributary of the Indus. On its south- east, Baltistan borders Ladakh, the ‘Great Tibet’ of Mughal period Indian texts... It was in the time of Ghazi Mir that the Mughal emperor Akbar conquered Kashmir in 1586. Diplomatic relations thereafter developed between Baltistan and the Mughal emperor. A Balti princess was sent to the Mughal court, and the local tradition even speaks of a Mughal princess coming to Skardu. She built a Mughal style fort at Mandok with a garden and some marble structure. Whatever the truth of this legend, the Mughal sought to establish contacts with Baltistan as well as with Ladakh.”²³⁰

Ali Rai, the chieftain of the region of little Tibet and Great Tibet, accepted the suzerainty of Akbar, and make the relationship stronger with the Mughal Empire, he even entered into a matrimonial alliance, by marrying his daughter with Prince Salim, the son of Akbar. However, it was only during the reign of Aurangzeb that the whole of Baltistan and Ladakh came under the suzerainty of the Mughal Empire.

²²⁹ O. C. Handa, *Textiles, Costumes and Ornaments of the Western Himalayas*, (Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1998) p 163.

²³⁰ ChahryarAdle and Irfan Habib (Ed.) *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid- nineteenth century*, Vol. V (UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 2003) p 243.

The regions of Baltistan and Ladakh were vital for the Mughal Empire not only for their strategic location but also for the commodities that were received from these regions. “Fruits like walnuts were produced in Baltistan as well, along with grapes, melons, apricots, peaches, mulberry and a type of red apple. A very valuable animal product was musk, which was extracted from musk-deer found in Baltistan and Gilgit and was an item of export. Abul Fazl tells us that Kashmir imported silkworms' eggs for sericulture from Baltistan and Gilgit. In Gilgit and Baltistan raw silk was also produced besides the silkworm.... The major craft products of Kashmir were shawls, the best variety was that woven from Shahtoosh wool brought from Great Tibet. Jade was reported from Great Tibet in the second half of the seventeenth century along with crystal that was also found in Baltistan.”²³¹

It is also vital to keep in mind that ethnically both the regions of Baltistan and Ladakh have been historically different. Their cultural practices and religious affiliations were shaped differently. The region of Baltistan and Gilgit was mostly populated by Muslims while the region of Ladakh were mostly populated by Buddhists. “As anybody who has read Marco Pallis's book *Teaks and Lamas* will know, it looks like Tibet, its people are of Tibetan habit and language, and it is full of Tibetan monasteries. But it has a long history of association with India.”²³² Even if ethnically different both the regions of Baltistan and Ladakh were connected with each other.

The concept of cultural area

The concept of culture as a historical entity is a broader one. It encompasses different facets like the community, their life style, and their practices and believes. It expands much beyond geography and set amount of region. However, the concept of cultural area could be distinct from the concept of culture itself, as it limits to a region, shared by communities with shared cultural traits. Various scholars have attempted to define the term according to their own understanding.

“The geographical ruggedness and the difficult terrain restricted the movement of the population which mostly resulted in isolation. The cultural adaptation for habitation due to

²³¹FarzanaAshfaq, Relations of Kashmir with ‘Indian Tibet’ in Mughal times, (Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 2010-2011, Vol. 71 (2010-2011), pp. 266-273, Indian History Congress) p 269- 270.

²³²Olaf Caroe, The Geography and Ethnics of India's Northern Frontiers (The Geographical Journal, Sep., 1960, Vol. 126, No. 3 (Sep., 1960), pp. 298-308, The Royal Geographical Society) p 301.

variation in terrain and climate resulted in multiple ethnicity. The different ethnicity represented major cultural traditions. The mixture of various cultural traditions took place even in the isolation and tough terrain.”²³³ Famous German geographer Friedrich Ratzel's writings can be used to trace the concept of the culture area whose work influenced the evolvement of Kulturkreise (cultural circles) school.²³⁴

Culture area according to Nina Brown, the people in the region share similar cultural traits. The culture area can be explained through single cultural trait or group through community cultural traits. The writer further held that through the analysis of culture area helps in the historical rebuilding of cultural development.²³⁵ “The classification of human groups into culture areas has been critiqued on the grounds that the basis for these classifications, such as similar farming systems or pottery styles, are always arbitrary. Despite this limitation, the organization of human communities into cultural areas remains a common practice throughout the social sciences. Today, the definition of culture areas is enjoying a resurgence of practical and theoretical interest as social scientists conduct research on processes of cultural globalization.”²³⁶

The present use of the term "cultural area" has been broadened and regions other than Europe and United States are also viewed and examined through it. Even if the concept in criticized by various scholars, it can be hardly overlooked that it provides a common ground, based on which the cultural traits of a particular region could be recognized.

In the current study, this concept will be used as a tool to examine the culture area of Tibet and Ladakh. The cultural interaction of these regions will be examined which will on the other hand will help to establish its historical narrative.

The Tibetan cultural area and Ladakh

The region of Tibet and Ladakh can be said to share similar cultural and ethnic settings. Buddhist tradition and extended trade networks are the thread which binds both region. However, Tibet was also exposed to the Muslim population from Kashmir. However, it can

²³³ Gerald D. Berreman, *Peoples and the Cultures of the Himalayas*. (Asian Survey, Vol. 3, No. 6, University of California Press, pp 289- 304) p.290.

²³⁴ Nina Brown, Friedrich Ratzel, Clark Wissler, and Carl Sauer: *Culture Area Research and Mapping*. (Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science, University of California, 2001) p.2.

²³⁵ Ibid, p.2.

²³⁶ Ibid, p 2.

hardly be overlooked that the Buddhist tradition overwhelms in comparison to the Muslim tradition in the region of Tibet and to a large extent in Ladakh.

Prior to the coming and spread of Buddhist tradition in Tibet, the land mostly practiced the Bon religion. The nature of Bon religion was mostly related to the spirit deities. Lord ShenrabMibo was considered to be the founder of the Bon tradition. With the coming of the Buddhist tradition, the Bon religious practices were pushed to the background and many religious individuals associated with the religion, even fled from central Tibet, in fear of persecution. However, the Bon religion was not completely eradicated as they made a comeback.

“From the eighth to the eleventh centuries, we know practically nothing of the development among the Bompos. The revival of Bon began with the discovery of a number of important texts by ShenchenLuga in the year 1017 A.D. With him, the Bon tradition emerged as a fully systematized system. ShenchenLuga was born in a clan of Shen, which descended from Kongtsha Wangden, one of the sons of Tonpa Shenrab. The descendants of this important Bonpo family still live in Tibet.”²³⁷ Even if Tibet is known as a land of Buddhism, it is not the only living tradition in Tibet as monasteries and monks of Bon religion are found in Tibet.

Gerald D. Berreman has attempted to establish the relationship between Tibet and Burma. He uses the term Tibeto-Burman traditions for the ties between Tibetans and Southeast Asian or Burman traditions through linguistic tradition. Tibetan cultures consisted of Lamaistic Buddhism, language, agricultural and pastoral practices.²³⁸

Kashmir as a region is most known for the Islamic tradition, however, it is imperative to keep in mind that the Buddhist tradition had established its roots in Kashmir since earlier times. As early as the time of Asoka, the Mauryan emperor, Buddhist had entered Kashmir. But, some scholars believe that it might have been present in Kashmir even prior to the times of Asoka.

“Since Kashmir had intimate relations with Magadha and other states in mid India from remote antiquity, it is only reasonable to assume that a number of Buddhist monks had found their way into Kashmir long before the arrival of Asoka and his missionaries and succeeded in

²³⁷ Graham Coleman (Ed.) A Handbook of Tibetan Culture: A Guide to Tibetan Centers and Resources throughout the World (Penguin Random House, Ebury Publishing, London, 1993) p 3,4.

²³⁸ Gerald D. Berreman, Peoples and the Cultures of the Himalayas. (Asian Survey, Vol. 3, No. 6, University of California Press, pp 289- 304) p.293

establishing Buddhism as one of the living faiths in the valley. Surenra is perhaps the first Buddhist ruler of Kashmir. At any rate he was the first royal patron of the new faith in the Valley. Surenra erected the first *viharas* in Kashmir. One of these was in the city of Sauraka which he built near the country of the Dards. This Vihara or monastery was known as *Narendrabhavana*.”²³⁹

Islamic tradition was the most prominent religion practice in the region during the medieval times. The Islamic roots in the land of Kashmir can be attributed to various aspects. The Sufi saints form one such aspect that have arrived at the land during the early part of the 12th century and a large number of people were converted. However, there is also a direct link between Central Asia and Kashmir.

“Throughout the centuries it has been a cultural watershed between Central and South Asia. Islam came to the valley of Kashmir directly from Central Asia and ‘Khurasan’ and not through the South. In dress, life style and to some extent in architecture it has retained certain Central Asian features. The process of conversion, and their historical sequences in Kashmir are clearer than in other Muslim majority areas. In the middle of the 20th century almost ninety percent of the population of the valley was Muslim.”²⁴⁰

Gradually after the conversion of the population to Islam, the people of Kashmir had assimilated the tradition into their cultural settings. With time it had established commercial relation with the region of Tibet. “Kashmir was an important center for cultural interaction in 7th and 8th century where the Muslim traders from Kashmir got connected with Tibet. These traders got settled in Tibet and came to be known as Khache.”²⁴¹

The Mongol empire constituted one of the largest empires in history. It extended consisting large parts of Asia. However, it started to show signs of decline during the fourteenth century. With the end of the Mongol kingdom, Baltistan and Ladakh emerged as cultural

²³⁹J. N. Ganhar and P. N. Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, (Tribune Press, New Delhi, 1956) p 16.

²⁴⁰ Aziz Ahmad, *Conversion to Islam in the Valley of Kashmir*, (Central Asiatic Journal, Vol. 23. No. 1/2, 1979, pp. 3- 18. Harrassowitz Verlag) p 3.

²⁴¹Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, *Islam and Tibet: Cultural Interactions: An Introduction* in Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (Ed.), *Islam and Tibet interactions along the silk route*, (Ashgate Publishing, Routledge, New York, 2016) p 4.

interaction areas known as ‘little Tibet and middle Tibet. Both the regions were inhabited by the ethnic Tibetans who spoke Tibetan dialects.²⁴²

The religious tradition of both Buddhism and Islam being present in the region of Baltistan and Ladakh also proved to be beneficial. This relation was strengthen more by forming a matrimonial alliance between both the regions. This not only helped in maintaining power but also harmony between both the religious traditions.

According to Georgios Halkias, the reciprocal exchange of princess-brides, the tradition of royal inter-marital ties across the Buddhist-Muslim divide in the Himalayas is seen as an integral kind of interchange, primarily as it is reflected in regional folk songs and recorded histories. The exchange of brides among the aristocrats and peasants in Ladakh and Baltistan an age old practice. The Muslim queens as well as their heirs enjoyed the Ladakhi court. The matrimonial alliance expanded the basis of control. Both faith were practiced under one roof without disturbance.²⁴³

Trading connections, religious links and matrimonial alliances all contributed to maintain the cultural alliances between the region of Tibet and Ladakh along with Baltistan. Knowledge concerning different aspects along with strong connections were established due to these aspects. The ties only expanded and strengthen with times, taking more serious turn.

The fringes of the Persianate culture

The traces of Persian culture in the regions of Tibet and Ladakh highlights the fact that they both share some similar aspects. The relation between both the region of Tibet and Iran can be traced to the ancient past, even though they were separated by the mountains.

Material culture like paintings, artifacts like vessels, wine cups and wine bowls and also bronze items like rings and pendant highlights that the Iranian region was in contact with Tibet. Scholars like Bernard Goldman and GiuseppeTucci have talked about those aspects. The presence of these items and artifacts point out to the fact that cultural exchange was going on between these regions. Commercial relation in the form of trading also continued between Iran and Tibet.

²⁴²Ibid, p12.

²⁴³ Ibid, p13

The evidence of direct connection between Iran and Tibet could be also viewed in the writings of contemporary scholars and geographers. “Historical geography from later times suggests that direct transmission is likely to have taken place. Early Iranian treatises in Arabic and Persian refer to Tibet as adjacent to Iranian central asia, called in Islamic times *Māwarā’ al-nahr* (ar.) *Māverā an-Nahr* (ar./Pe.), ‘the lands beyond the river’. This is the case with the Iranian geographer *eṣṭakhrī* who wrote in Arabic and died in 323/920.¹⁷ later, an anonymous geographical treatise written in Persian in 372/982, *The Frontiers of the World from East to West* [*Hodūd al-‘Ālam men al-Mashreq ela’l-Maghreb*], notes that Tibet is bordered to the west by ‘part of the marches of *māverā an-nahr*’. The anonymous geographer, who is extremely concise, takes the trouble to inform the reader that ‘all goods from India come to Tibet, and from Tibet come to the cities of the Muslims’. His statement implies that direct commercial traffic with India was problematic at the time he (or an earlier informer on whose work he drew) was writing, and that Tibet was the area through which it transited towards the Iranian world. All this suggests a continuous flow of commercial traffic between Tibet and historical Iranian lands, particularly the great cities of Samarqand and Bokhara.”²⁴⁴

Nourozis celebrated as the New Year in Persian culture. It is a festival of hope and new beginning, which is celebrated with great joy and show. The celebration of this festival is also evident in the region of Ladakh. It is believed to be a time for renewal. It is a festival which can be said to have been assimilated with the local traditions of the region. However, the celebration of the festival in the contemporary period implies the presence of the Persian tradition and culture from the earlier period.

The borderlands and cultural areas Turkic and Inner Asian connections

The central Asia regions of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan are composed of diverse cultures. Among these regions Tajikistan is the one with Persian orientation. The other regions were of Turkic orientation. These regions have a strong Turkic connection.

²⁴⁴ Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Iran to Tibet* in Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (Ed.), *Islam and Tibet interactions along the musk route*, (Ashgate Publishing, Routledge, New York, 2016) p 92, 93.

Ladakh had connections with central Asia since earlier times. This connection could be witnessed in three aspects: trading connections, coming of the Sufi saints and coming of settling of communities. The mountainous routes of Ladakh provided one of the main routes for the purpose of trading. Various items like medicines, spices, silk etc. were traded with the aid of this route. The trading conditions also helped to establish the Turkic linkage with Ladakh. Ladakhis composed of not only a single Muslim community but rather a bunch of them like the Shias, Sunnis, Nurbakshis etc. The Sunni sect was mostly composed of the Turkic orientation.

Along with trading conditions, Sufi saints also travelled to Ladakh from the central Asian regions. “A number of Sayyids from Central Asia also came to Kashmir who further strengthened the roots of already established Islam in the entire Kashmir valley... Islam further firmed its roots in Kashmir including Ladakh with the arrival of Sheikh Shams –ud- din Mohammad Ali Isfahani also known as Mir Shams- ud- din- Iraqi. He was deputed in the court of Kashmir Sultan Hasan Shah (1474- 84). He propagated the Nurbakshiya teachings, founded by a Sufi Sayyid Mohammad Nurbaksh of Persia. The earliest mosques found in Skardu and Shigarare stated to have been constructed during that period. Some traces of the Nurbakshis may be found in Turtuk area of Ladakh.”²⁴⁵ The Sufi communities have made great progress in establishing and strengthening the Turkic links from the central Asian regions. They also could be said to have direct connection with the cities of Mecca and Medina. This factor on the other hand made them more authentic than any other region.

“It is the case in the 14th century for example of Sharaf al-Dîn, a dervish from the Suhrawardi order, who is credited with the conversion to Islam of Rinchana, the son of a Ladakhi chief, and of a considerable number of Buddhists.”²⁴⁶

The Argons or Turkic Muslims is a community which is found in the region of Ladakh. This community is an illustration of the direct link which Ladakh had with the Turkic orientation of Central Asia region. The Argon's were basically Sunni Muslims. The origin of this community could be traced back to the Turkic traders who settled and married women of the Ladakhi orientation. Gradually they succeeded in establishing a stable community in Ladakh and

²⁴⁵ Sanjeev Kumar Bhasin, *Amazing Land: Ladakh: Places, People and Culture* (Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2006) p 70, 71.

²⁴⁶ Thierry Zarcone, *Sufism from Central Asia among the Tibetan in the 16-17th Centuries* (The Tibet Journal , Autumn 1995, Vol. 20, No. 3, Tibetan Muslims (Autumn 1995), pp. 96-114) p 96.

their contribution could also be viewed in the language of Ladakh. Many words of Turkish origin became a part of the Ladakhi vocabulary.

“This definition of the Sunni Muslim community is nearly synonymous with that of Arghuns. Most modern authors, when establishing the criteria of descent, also establish the religious criteria of Arghun identity, either as a sub-section of the Muslim community of Ladakh, such as ‘Argon group of Muslims’ or with a distinction between ‘pure Kashmiris’ and ‘hybrid Arghuns’ thus specifically as the Sunni Muslims of Ladakh. An individual in Ladakh who had a Central Asian ancestor and who is Muslim is called an Arghun, not part Arghun or even descended from Arghuns. A Ladakhi Buddhist woman who in her youth married a Muslim trader of Central Asian descent, and converted to Islam, is called Arghun. Kashmiri merchants living in Ladakh, even for generations, are not called Arghuns unless married into a family designated as Arghun. This means that Arghun cannot simply be a synonym for Muslim. An Arghun, under this system of classification, is anyone with Ladakhi heritage who is Sunni Muslim.”²⁴⁷

The identity of Aragon Muslims in Ladakh is very specific. Any Sunni Muslim in the region of Ladakh could not be labelled as an Aragon. The precise linkage of Central Asian makes this community to stand out among the other Muslim population in Ladakh. This community could be said to have established the decisive communication between the trading communities and the Sunni sect in Ladakh from the Central Asian regions. This fact on the other hand goes a far way to establish the cultural traits of Ladakh with a Sunni background.

The NurBakshi community is mostly found in the region of Baltistan. This community is said to taken their origin from a Sufi saint name Syed Mohammad NurBakshi. This community was the result of a Shia Sufi amalgamation. Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamdani in 1374, visited Kashmir and Baltistan region. He could be pointed out as the one who brought the Sufi tradition to both these regions. Baltistan was a well popular region for many other Sufi saints coming from Persia and making their home in Baltistan. In the present context, NurBakshi’s amount for about 2-3 percent of the population in Baltistan. “The NurBakshis (a group professing beliefs

²⁴⁷ Jacqueline H. Fewkes, *Trade and Contemporary Society along the Silk Road: An Ethno History of Ladakh* (Routledge Publications, New York, 2009) p 151, 152.

slightly divergent from the Shias) are present in northern and north eastern regions of Baltistan, while Shias may be found in central, Southern and western parts of Baltistan.”²⁴⁸

“It is believed that in Iran, the country of its origin, NurBakshia got completely merged with the Shias some decades after the Safavid dynasty made Twelver Shi’ism the state religion. Similarly, in the valley of Kashmir too the NurBakshia Sufi order disappeared during the reign of the Chak dynasty. It is believed that the Sunni invader of Kashmir, Mirza HaiderDughlat severely persecuted the NurBaksh order in Kashmir in the mid-16th century. Nevertheless, in Baltistan, the NurBakshia has survived till this day as a sect with doctrines of its own. The NurBakshia as a unique band of Islamic culture is deeply rooted in the contemporary history of Baltistan.”²⁴⁹

The Yoabgo dynasty is another linkage between the Baltistan region and Central Asian regions. The Yoabgo dynasty has been active in the region of Baltistan for more than about two thousand years from 1500 to 1972. The Khaplu valley was considered to be inhabited with the immigrants who had come from Central Asian region. The valley comprises of the Turtuk area, whose population comprises of mostly Muslim population.

“There is reason to believe that ‘Amacha’ derives from Amacas, a title granted by the Chinese crown to the Kings of Khotan and that ‘Yabgo’ derives from Yabghu, the title of the eight century Turkic Buddhist rulers of Kundus in the Tokharistan region of Turkestan. In Baltistan, these dynasties came to rule under the title cho (chief in Balti/Tibetan). Thus a ruling class of ancient Turkestan origin (called Kha- Cho, brothers of the Cho) ruled over indigenous Tibetan speaking cultivators. The Balti state lost sovereignty and were gradually absorbed into the British Indian Empire beginning in the 1840, when Zorawar Singh conquered all of Baltistan and Ladakh.”²⁵⁰

The continuous trading relations, the coming of many prominent Sufi saints, and forming of specific Muslim communities as a result of these linkages like the Argon forming out of the trading connections and NurBakshis forming out of the Sufi connections, have laid a strong and

²⁴⁸Navnita Chadha Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir* (The Bookings Institution, Washington, 2006) p 194.

²⁴⁹ P. Stobdan, *Northern Areas: With Special Focus on Baltistan* in P. Stabdon and D. Suba Chandran (Ed.) *The Last Colony: Muzaffarabad Gilgit Baltistan* (Indian Research Press, New Delhi, 2008) p 16.

²⁵⁰ N. K. Singh and A. M. Khan (ed.) *Encyclopedia of the World Muslims: Tribes, Castes and Communities*, Vol. 1 (Global Vision Publishing House, Delhi, 2001) p 133.

dependable cultural connection between the Turkic orientation of the Central Asian regions and Ladakh along with Baltistan part. The Yoabgo dynasty in the Turtuk area of Baltistan also serves the relationship between Central Asian Turkic linkage and the region of Ladakh and Baltistan. Thus it is imperative that the Turkic linkage, their cultural heritage have to be kept in mind while looking at the region of Ladakh and Baltistan. These cultural heritage had been a part of these areas since long period of time.

The Inner Asia connection can hardly be ignored while discussing regions like Ladakh and Tibet. A closer examination of the Inner Asia part will give an idea of its connection with Turkey and Turkic culture. As Lattimore describes the region of Inner Asia “Inner Asia may be described as a group of regions that have neither a frontage on the sea nor navigable rivers leading to the sea. Under this definition northern, but not southern Iran and western but not eastern, Manchuria may be regarded as Inner Asian regions. Most of Inner Asia either touches or stands astride of the Soviet frontier in Asia—the longest frontier in the world, stretching from Turkey to Korea. Tibet, lying distant from Russia is a notable exception to this rule. As important characteristics of Inner Asia is that most of its political frontiers do not mark the edges of territories inhabited by people who differ from each other in language, economic activity, and social organization and in the kind of group loyalty that is founded on a feeling of kinship.”²⁵¹

Trade was one of the most important connecting links between the Inner Asian regions and Ladakh. The trading communities not only exchanged trading items but also religious ideas among them. Buddhism was such a common idea which travelled along with the trading items. Buddhist tradition could spread to these regions owing to the trading communities.

The world of the Nomads and Dards

Nomads could be defines as a community or group of people who move from place to place without settling down as a single region. They do not practice a settled way of life. Their way of life and culture is related to their nomadic ways. The shifting from a region to another could be based on several factors like season, food etc. The concept of nomadism is quite ancient. The hunting gathering community could be pointed out as the earliest nomadic group. In

²⁵¹ Owen Lattimore, The New Political Geography of Inner Asia, (The Geographical, Vol. 119, No. 1, March, 1953, pp 17- 30, The Royal Geographical Society) p 17.

the case of India, nomadic groups and communities could be found in various regions like Himalayas, Ladakh, Jammu, Rajasthan etc.

“The term ‘Nomad’ is derived from the Greek word ‘Nemo’ which means to pasture. It refers to people who herds of cattle, but with no land of their own and consequently no permanent home. They roam about with their herds of cattle, in search of grazing grounds for them. The word ‘nomad’ does not exclusively refer to all those persons, who constantly wander hither and do not lead a settled life. They neither possess any land of their own, nor have any home. They migrate with all their belongings either on foot or on burden animals like yaks, asses or mules, ponies or horses, bullocks or buffaloes or camels or in carts either at their will or on their being forced by circumstances, in order to find out better living conditions for themselves. They roam as acrobats, or rope dancers, magicians, oracles, fortune tellers. Palmist, musicians and dancers, physicians or surgeons, veterinarian, peddlers or petty merchants, carriers or artists.”²⁵²

In the region of Ladakh, the Changpa community could be considered a nomadic group. They have their origin in Tibet which is then stretched to Ladakh. They have become an identity of Ladakh. This community has been associated with the production of pashmina, a very silky material used to produce shawls. Even in contemporary times Kashmir and Ladakh are known for the production of pashmina. This nomadic group usually are associated with the shamanistic tradition which is mostly based on spirit of the nature. However, with the coming and spread of Buddhism, an assimilation of Buddhist practices and shamanistic practices could also be viewed.

“Just how, when and where nomadic pastoralists inhabiting Ladakh today originated remains a mystery. They are generally believed to be among the earliest inhabitants, and often regarded as the archetypical Ladakhis in popular imagination and not least among the Ladakhis themselves. It is generally agreed that they have always been nomads and trace their origin back to ancient Tibetan nomadic tribes. There is no historical evidence whatsoever for this, but the scenario did fit in well with the now superseded three stage theory associated with nineteenth century social evolutions writings that considered nomadic pastoralism to be an evolutionary stage in human history, following the hunting gathering and leading on to sedentarization and

²⁵²Shaym Singh Shashi, *The World of Nomads* (Lotus Press, New Delhi, 2006) p 22, 23.

agriculture. Such a hypothesis postulates that present day herders belong to the same stock and assumes that they have always been nomads.”²⁵³

Dards were an important community living in Ladakh. They were of the Indo Aryan racial group. They could be termed as a tribal community from the western Himalayan region who have settled in Ladakh. However, it cannot be pointed out the precise time period when they had migrated from the Himalayan regions. They had mostly settled in the unoccupied terrains of Ladakh.

According to Leitner, Dards are the race who resided in the Shinaki mountainous region of the areas in Chilas, Gilgit, Astoris, Dareylis, and they also inhabit the area of Yasin, Nagyr, Hunza and Kafiristan. He uses the term Dardistan for these areas.²⁵⁴ p..59

According to Drew, the people of Ladakh and Baltistan were pastoralists in south east region of Ladakh. The scanty resources pushed the population towards much available resources where the people adopted sedentary life with agricultural practices as their occupation and the remaining population continued to reside in the Chanthang plateau. The people who migrated towards the Baltistan got mingled with the Dardic population from West. On the basis of different dialects Biddulph differentiate between the Dards residing in Da Hanu and the Drass area. The writer uses the term Brokpa.²⁵⁵

The Dard community can be seen to have practice different religious traditions according to their settlements. “After the Muslim invasion in the 14th century, Dards who were settled in Dras, embraced Islam. In consequence they cut themselves off their original traditional customs and folklores. Moreover, on the other hand, Dards of Da- Hanu, Durchik and Garkon villages of Kargil district neither accepted Islam nor Lamaism. Thus they were able to preserve their centuries old traditions and they were known as Brogpas.”²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Pascale Dollfus, Transformation process in Nomadic Pastoralism in Ladakh (Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, Vol. 32, No. 1, Ladakh: Contemporary Publics & Politics No. 1 & 2, 2013) p 61.

²⁵⁴ G.W., Leitner, *Dardistan in 1866, 1886, and 1893: being an account of history, religion, customs...*, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1996, p.59.

²⁵⁵ Graham Clarke, Who were the Dards? A Review of the Ethnography Literature of the North-Western Himalaya, Oxford, p.338-339. The term Brokpa in Ladakhi were used for those who are outsiders and in Baltistan the term denoted to those who came later to Baltistan.

²⁵⁶ Prem Singh Jina, *Ladakh: The Land and the People* (Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1996) p 93.

A section of the Dards were also following Buddhist tradition. “Today Dards who are in Kargil district adopted Islam. The rest became Buddhist, after Muslim invasion in 14th century A.D. Dards who were settled down in Dras and at the border of Kargil district towards Leh embraced Islam. Moreover, Dards of Dah, Hanu, Darchik, Achinathang, Gaskon etc. though accepted Buddhism, but able to preserve their ancient old Aryan culture and tradition.”²⁵⁷

Their cultural assimilation with the Buddhist tradition, led to the formation of specific festivals. One such festival popular among them was the Harvest festival, which was celebrated during autumn. The festival was filled with various music and dance and also a feast. It was celebrated after every two years as they followed the Tibetan calendar of 12 years. During the celebration of the festival, the Tibetan connection can hardly be overlooked. E. Joldan²⁵⁸ have discussed the importance of this festival in details.

During the 16 century, the Pashtu Sunni missionaries from Swat introduced the religion of Islam to the people of Chilas, the Sunni belief reached in the east to Astor valley and in the north to Gilgit. The wave of Sunni belief reached to Baltistan which can be traced from Rundu, Sadpara and Kharmang population.²⁵⁹ A section of population resisted to the conversion to Islam and migrated from Gilgit under Gil Singe towards Da Hanu.

The people in Gilgit knew the language of Urdu, Brushuski and shena.²⁶⁰ The Shina language was grouped into different dialects, Chilas-Shingo-Darel-Dras. Harmosh and Gilgit, Astor-Rondu-Skardu. The dialect of Da Hanu was different from the above dialects.²⁶¹ Shaw refers the Dah Hanu Ardeikaro to the group of Darde of Astor valley.²⁶²

The Shina speakers from Chila reached towards Shingo and Drass through the Skardu rulers towards the. The Muslim rulers expanded their kingdom in various directions, with the conquering of the new areas the people also gets settled in the conquered areas by their rulers. In the 17 century the ruler of Skardu, Ali Mir defeated the Ladakhi ruler. After his father's passing,

²⁵⁷ Prem Singh Jina, *Cultural Heritage of Ladakh Himalaya* (Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2009) p 43.

²⁵⁸ E. Joldan, *Harvest Festival of Buddhist Dards of Ladakh and other Essays* (Kapoor Brothers, Srinagar, Kashmir, 1985)

²⁵⁹ P. Nicolaus, *Residues of ancient beliefs among the Shin in the Gilgit-division and western Ladakh* (Iran and Caucasus, Brill Publications, pp 201- 264, 2015) p.212

²⁶⁰ John Clark, *Hunza: Lost Kingdom of the Himalayas*. (Funk & Wagnalls, Company, 1956) p.24.

²⁶¹ Graham E Clark, *Who were The Dards? A Review of the Ethnographic Literature of the North Western Himalaya*. (Kailash, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1977, pp 323- 356) p.330

²⁶² *Ibid*, p.330

Ahmad Khan, the king's oldest son, ascended to the throne. The king's younger brother succeeded the throne which forced the sons of Ahmad Shah to establish small kingdoms at Astor, Rondu and Shingo.²⁶³ The people also moved with their rulers resulting in the settlement in the areas of Astor valley and the plateau of Deosei to Shingo and Drass valley.

Typologies of relations

Trade relations, matrimonial and commercial are the types of relations that Ladakh and Baltistan had succeeded in establishing with different regions of Central Asian and Inner Asian regions. The silk route could be pointed out as the most prominent factor in initiating these types of relations. Owing to the activities carried out through the route different trading communities frequently commute through the valley. Ladakh could be viewed as a region which could meet rather than as an isolated region. It led different communities a space to meet, assimilate and build up their own cultural narratives.

“The lines of the past followed in this narrative are roads that spread out from the Ladakhi trading hub, the town of Leh, within the historical arena of the Silk Route, and multiple political empires. This geographically oriented history should further challenge notions of the Ladakhi region as a traditionally isolated land; the interconnectedness of these historical narratives make it difficult to relegate the history of Ladakh to any one political, economic, or cultural region history.... Trading contact between the neighboring regions of Central Asia and other areas appears in the early archaeological record, with evidence for trading communities from the territory of modern India present in Central Asian cities and Central Asian communities in the region of Hunza near Ladakh as early as the second century.”²⁶⁴

Along with commercial commodities, the silk route also brought different communities and their culture into the valley of Ladakh. These communities gradually could penetrate deep into the Ladakhi culture. They had come to settle permanently in the region of Ladakh and becoming a part of their culture. Matrimonial relations between the members of the trading communities and the local population led to the assimilation of two different cultures.

²⁶³ Ibid, p.331

²⁶⁴ Jacqueline H. Fewkes, *Trade and Contemporary Society along the Silk Road: An Ethno History of Ladakh* (Routledge Publications, New York, 2009) p 38, 39.

The assimilation of two different cultures are visible in various facets like social customs, festivals, religious practices, linguistic trends etc. However, the affirmative aspect of the assimilation between the cultures was of non-violent nature. Both the communities accepting those assimilated aspects can celebrated it. A prominent interaction is also visible between the religious traditions of Buddhism, Islam and folk traditions of the communities.

Matrimonial relations and emergence of a new community: The Arghons

Jamyang Namgyal, the ruler of the Namgyal dynasty succeeded to the throne after his father Tsewang Namgyal. When he was in power, Ali Mir, the ruler of Skardu attacked Ladakh. Jamyang Namgyal lost the battle with the ruler of Skardu, Skardu ruler Ali Mir imprisoned the Ladakhi ruler and was released only with the condition of marrying with the daughter. The release of the Ladakhi ruler also reestablished the boundary between Purig and Ladakh. Being a royal lady Gyalkhatoon the wife of the Jamyang Namgyal was followed by many followers, consisted of royal musicians (mkhar-mon), in order to celebrate the marriage.²⁶⁵

The Mughal control of the Ladakh region was laid out during the reign of Akbar. It remained so during the later rulers. The relation was made stronger by establishing matrimonial relations between the royal members. During the time of Aurangzeb the complete suzerainty of Mughal was established in the region. So, when Aurangzeb visited Kashmir in 1663, the Ladakhi king accepted Islam and promised to build a mosque. This dissemination of the Muslim faith throughout the kingdom. More people arrived in Ladakh with the Kashmiri merchants when the treaty of Temisgam was signed in 1684.²⁶⁶

The inhabitants of Kashmir were among the first to settle in Ladakh in the latter half of the 17th century. Mostly they were traders with religious personalities. They carried trade with Eastern Turkestan, Tibet, Ladakh etc.²⁶⁷ With times these traders began to get married with the Ladakhi women. The children born out of these relationships considered themselves as Ladakhi and they adopted customs and traditions of Ladakh. They were known as ‘ar-gon’, the English translation means, “half-blood or “hybrid,” “half-caste.” The off springs belonged to the Muslim

²⁶⁵ Pascale Dollfus, The history of Muslims in central Ladakh. (The Tibet Journal, Vol 20, No. 3, Tibetan Muslims, Autumn, 1995, pp 35- 58) p37

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p37

²⁶⁷ Ibid, p 40

father and Muslim converted mother.²⁶⁸ The traders belonged to different areas (Punjab, Baltistan, Kashmir, Yarkand, etc.).

According to H. Ramsay, the term argon is generally meant hybrid, but not always meant half-caste. Arghons are all Mahomedans, mostly were Sunnis, and Shias also. The Sunni argons were the off springs of Mahomedan traders who came to Leh for trading and married with the local women, the Shia argons were the off springs of men from Baltistan and women from Leh. The first generation progeny were, half-caste Tibetan Mahomedans named “arghons,” and these get married to Tibetan Women, their children would also be “arghons.” If a Tibetan man traces his descent connected with the Ladakhi woman and Mahomedan, he would be called an “arghon.” Because the arghons typically lack land, they must be resourceful in order to make a living. They have better trading skills than Buddhists, and for money readily available to work. They spoke Turkic and Tibetan or Tibetan and Kashmiri.²⁶⁹ These people preferred urban centers for their stay to remain connected with their family residing in Kashmir, Tibet, Chinese Turkestan.

The Argon community has succeeded in establishing themselves as a prominent part of the culture of Ladakh. Even if their origin could be linked to the trading communities and matrimonial relations with the local population, they became an integral part of the larger community of population.

Intersection of Trade and religious networks: A case study of Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa and their connection to Ladakh and beyond

The Muslim trading communities from Kashmir had settled in Tibet during the process of trading activities that were carried on by them. These communities had also succeeded in establishing their permanent religious roots into Tibet. They carried their culture with them. Along with these connections they also established matrimonial relations with the local population of Tibet which aided them in developing permanent footing in the region.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, p 42

²⁶⁹ ibid.p.43.

During the 15 century Kashmiri merchants resided in Central Tibet. Kashmiris traveler between Kashmir and Lhasa were the first Kashmiri settlers in the valley of Kathmandu.²⁷⁰ Kashmiri merchants got settled in important trading centers.²⁷¹

According to Ataullah Siddiqui, the conversions in Tibet took place mostly by intermarriage. Thomas Arnold held that Kashmiri merchants also carried Islam in Tibet. The businessman or merchants from Kashmir, Khurasan married with Tibetan women, Tibetan women mostly accepted the faith of their husbands.²⁷²

When Kashmir became the part of the Mughal empire in the latter half of the 16 century. The Muslim traders participated in the trade through Ladakh to Tibet. The traders formed relation with the Tibet.²⁷³ The Muslim traders of north India and Nepal were known as Kha-che in Tibet, these traders played important role in trading activity between India and Tibet.²⁷⁴ The chief centers were Lahore, Patna, Agra, Srinagar and Leh. The traders preferred the main centers for carrying their activities. Lhasa was the main residing place of the traders, as it was the chief center for trading activities. The other places of residents were Shigatse, Lhartse, Gyantse and Tsetang.²⁷⁵

The reference of Kha-che community in Tibet were from the period of 5th Dalai Lama. According to Jose Cabezon, the Tibetan scholar, the presence of Muslim community and the invitation of 5th Dalai Lama of (non Tibetan) peoples, as part of his policy for diverse economic, cultural and ethnic in Tibet.²⁷⁶ The Kashmiri merchants were called by 5th Dalai Lama as representatives of Mughal India.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁰ David G. Atwill, *Islamic Shangri-la Inter- Asian Relations and Lhasa's Muslim Communities, 1600 to 1960*. (University of California Press, Oakland, California, 2018) p 6

²⁷¹ Ataullah Siddiqui, *Muslims of Tibet* (The Tibet Journal, Vol. 16, No. 4, Thematic Issue: Western Religions and Tibet, 1991, pp 71- 85) p.73

²⁷² Ibid..p..73

²⁷³ Corneille Jest, *Kha-che and Gya-Kha-che, Muslim communities in Lhasa* (The Tibet Journal, Vol. 20, No. 3, Tibetan Muslims, 1995, pp 8- 20) p..8

²⁷⁴ Ibid..p..9

²⁷⁵ Ibid.p.9

²⁷⁶ David G. Atwill, *Islamic Shangri-la Inter- Asian Relations and Lhasa's Muslim Communities, 1600 to 1960*. (University of California Press, Oakland, California, 2018) p.7

²⁷⁷ John Bray, *Trader, Middlemen or Spy? The Dilemmas of Kashmiri Muslim in Early 19th century Tibet* in Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (Ed.), *Islam and Tibet interactions along the musk route*, (Ashgate Publishing, Routledge, New York, 2016) p 315.

The political stability and the accommodative nature of 5th Dalai Lama made the Kha-che community adoption of the Tibetan culture.²⁷⁸ The Kha-Che belonged to the Muslim community of Tibet though came from outside but accepted the culture, language and commercial activities.²⁷⁹ They were highly revered by Tibetan officials and dignitaries. They were allowed to perform their religious duties without any hindrance. The first mosque at Kha-che-lingkawas extended in 1755 exemplifies the importance of the Kha-Che.²⁸⁰ The Kha-Che community were present in Srinagar, east of Tibet in Kham, north of Tibet in Amdo, in the south of Darjeeling and Kalimpong.²⁸¹

The KhaChe community could be said to have somewhat official acceptance in the region of Lhasa and greater Tibet with them being accepted and permitted by the Dalai Lama. Along with this, being proficient and sufficient knowledge of the region and language they were successful in establishing their permanent relationship.

Foreign Merchants in Ladakh

Merchants groups and caravan merchants from various regions like that of Russia, Iran, Persia etc. travelled through Ladakh for their tradition purposes. These groups of merchants along with contributing to the economic settings of Ladakh also contributed towards the cultural and religious settings. The group of merchants might have travelled up to Tibet, however, the journey could be undertaken through Ladakh.

In general Indian merchants during the medieval period contributed towards long distance trade with established trade relations with regions like Russia, Iran etc. In particular merchants from Kashmir and Ladakh also participated among these activities. Thus, a continuous relationship was established among these regions which continued even till the 19th century. The illustration of this could be viewed in the case of the wool trade between Russia and Ladakh during the said period. The fine quality wool procured from the region was then converted into pashmina shawls which had a large demand in Russia.

²⁷⁸David G. Atwill, *Islamic Shangri-la Inter- Asian Relations and Lhasa's Muslim Communities, 1600 to 1960*. (University of California Press, Oakland, California, 2018) p 7

²⁷⁹ Ibid. p 3

²⁸⁰Corneille Jest, Kha-che and Gya-Kha-che, Muslim communities in Lhasa (*The Tibet Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Tibetan Muslims, 1995, pp 8- 20) p..10

²⁸¹David G. Atwill, *Islamic Shangri-la Inter- Asian Relations and Lhasa's Muslim Communities, 1600 to 1960*. (University of California Press, Oakland, California, 2018) p 5

“This, incidentally brought more information about Tibet to St. Petersburg, but as in the case of Efremov, the country referred to as Tibet in the Russian documents was again Minor Tibet i.e. Ladakh. According to Rafailov, Tibet’s major export item was fine sheep wool (pashm) the bulk of which was purchased by the Kashmiris for making shawls.”²⁸²

“Indian merchants were to be found all over west Asia, in port towns such as Bandar Abbas, Mocha etc. as also in inland caravan centers, such as Constantinople, Baghdad, Aleppo etc. The largest groups of Indian merchants during the period however, seem to have lived in Persia. According to a Russian observer, Suter, 10,000 Indian merchants lived in the Safavid dominions during the seventeenth century. We are told that the Safavid ruler not only allowed them to profess publicly their religious beliefs, but he even allowed them to have a priest to officiate over their ceremonies. From Iran, the Indian merchants spread to Balkh, Bukhara and Samarqand.”²⁸³

One of the most prominent exchanges between the merchant groups of these regions were their religious traditions and cultural aspects. The group of merchants carried their religious tradition to the distant lands. The presence and spread of Buddhist tradition in Russia and Iran were as a result of the trading activities. However, the role of Mongols in these aspects also cannot be overlooked.

European travelers and their cultural impact

The western travelers who had visited and traveled through the regions of Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet had left a vivid account of these regions. They had encountered the cultural and religious aspects of Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet and were somewhat fascinated by those. The western travelers who had visited Asian regions were much intrigued by the religious settings, as it displayed a system which was much different from their home place. The polytheistic and philosophical traditions like Hinduism and Buddhism were altogether dissimilar from the Christian tradition of Europe. This factor encouraged them to learn and gather more knowledge about these religious traditions.

²⁸² Alexander Andreyev, *Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy, 1918- 1930's* (Brill Publications, Boston, 2003) p 11.

²⁸³ Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals, Part 2. Mughal Empire* (HarAnand Publications, New Delhi, 2006) p 411.

One particular European traveler named Alexander Csoma De Koros stands out while discussing the regions of Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet. Koros was born in 1784, he was a Hungarian Orientalist and philologist. Koroas was a very learned man, he knew thirteen languages and had travelled many parts of Europe and Asia. He was interested in Tibet and had contributed much to the modern understanding and Knowledge of Tibet to the western world. However, while traveling and learning about Tibet, he also encountered the regions of Ladakh and Kashmir.

“After traveling all the way from Europe to Asia, finally Csoma arrived at the ancient trade center, Leh the chief town of Ladakh on June 9, 1822 on his way to Yarkend. But here when he saw no hope to proceed any further, he decided to go back to Srinagar and find a new route to his destination. Accordingly, after spending a couple of days in Leh, Csoma returned to Srinagar thorough the same old route. After travelling several days from Leh towards Srinagar, on July 16, 1822 at the village called Drass, he met William Moorcroft, a high official of the British Raj. When Moorcroft met Csoma, it seems he discussed with him the purpose of his visit and so on. After listening to Csoma, it appears that Moorcroft advised him to study the literature of Tibet, which according to him could help him attending his objective.”²⁸⁴

A great effort was made by Koros to learn and understand the Tibetan language as he did not had any prior knowledge of the language. He was successful in composing the first book on Tibetan grammar. He also took an interest in Buddhism while in Tibet. He spend few years in Tibet in order to learn the language and religious tradition i.e. Buddhism in Tibet. The knowledge of the Tibetan language aided in Koros motive to establish a close connection with the Dalai Lama at Lasha.

While in Tibet, Koros also gained knowledge about the geography, history, literature, customs and culture of the Tibetan population. Sanskrit texts available were also consulted by him. However, he took special interest in the Buddhist tradition. He gathered knowledge about the philosophy and the mythology surrounding it. He also learned about the Buddhist practices, rituals and their meaning. His name is well remembered for his contribution towards the Tibetan literature and the Buddhist philosophy in the land.

²⁸⁴NawangTseringShakspo, Alexander Csoma De Koros in Ladakh (The Tibet Journal, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1985, pp 42-47, Library of Tibetan works and Archives) p 42.

Ippolito Desideri was another western traveler who had visited the regions of Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet. He was born in 1684 and was an Italian Jesuit missionary. He decided to undertake a journey to Asia and then reached Ladakh. He was much interested in the region and then after reaching Tibet came into contact with Tibetan Buddhism. His contribution in the regions of Ladakh and Tibet were of a missionary context, undertaken under the banner of Jesuits. To complete their missionary work they even learned the Persian language.

“On May 30th, 1715, the Feast of the Ascension, they traversed the 3,500 meters Zoji Pass and crossed over into Tibetan territory for the first time, and on June 1st they had reached Ladakh border. After a rigorous trek of three weeks through snowdrifts, storms, avalanches, freezing torrents, dangerous precipices, snow blindness, swaying rope bridges, the party arrived on the 26th of June in Leh, capital of Ladakh, which Desideri believed was to be the end of his journey.”²⁸⁵ “Ippolite Desideri, a Jesuit missionary who lived in Central Tibet from 1716 to 1721, is best known for his *Historical Notices of the Kingdoms of Tibet*, which made scholars consider to be the first scientific description of Tibetan religion and culture.”²⁸⁶

“The two Jesuits, Desideri and Freyre arrived in Kashmir in early winter at a time when the pass to Ladakh was closed by snow. While waiting for the spring, they spent their time studying Persian and gathering what information they could about Tibet. They heard that there were two ‘Tibets’: ‘Little Tibet’ (Baltistan) was inhabited by Shia Muslims and seemed to offer poor prospect for missionary endeavor because, as Desideri remarked, ‘long experience had taught us only too surely to expect but little fruit in countries where rules the impious sect of Mahomet’. ‘Great Tibet (Ladakh) was linked to Kashmir through the shawl trade. They gathered no information about any Tibetan territory beyond Ladakh.”²⁸⁷

The coming of the western travelers into the land of Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet during the 18th and the 19th century opened up new knowledge and perspectives of these regions. They were interested not only in the geography but also in the history, literature, culture and religious traditions of the regions. They have contributed in opening up the knowledge of the regions far

²⁸⁵ Leonard Zwilling (Ed.) Mission to Tibet: The Extraordinary Eighteenth Century Account of Father Ippolito Desideri S.J. (Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2010) p 30, 31.

²⁸⁶ Trent Pomplun, Natural Reason and Buddhist Philosophy: The Tibetan Studies of Ippolite Desideri, SJ (1648-1733) (History of Religions, Vol. 50, No. 4, Jesuit Missionaries in China and Tibet, 2011, pp 384- 419) p 384.

²⁸⁷ John Bray, Ippolite Desideri and his Muslim Guide in the Buddhist Kingdom of Ladakh (Buddhist Christian Studies, Vol. 38, 2018, pp 15- 29) p 19, 20.

beyond Central Asian regions and trading communities. The European writings by missionaries, travelers and scholars explorers related to Ladakh and Tibet enriched the resources about the place and opened up the regions in new light. They opened up new systematic and scientific knowledge about the regions and upheld their culture in the European understanding.

Ladakh in particular acted as a spring bolt in the case of Tibet and western understanding of Tibet. It was such a region which had to be crossed to reach Tibet. And all the travelers, explorers and missionaries in order to reach Tibet had spent a substantial amount of time in Ladakh. During that time, they also explored the religious practices and culture of Ladakh along with Tibet. Moreover, while perceiving the region of Tibet, Ladakh was always considered to be an inseparable part of Tibet. More or less Ladakh was also given same amount of consideration as was given to Tibet by the travelers.

The Tibetan cultural area and spread of monasticism during the first and second transmission: RinchenZangpo period

Buddhism had traveled into Tibet from northern India as early as the 7th century. Bon tradition was the most prominent and practiced religious tradition in Tibet before the coming of Buddhism into the land. Buddhism could flourish in the land owing to the royal patronage it received. Along with that, the Buddhist tradition in Tibet could assimilate itself with the Bon tradition and became a sort of hybrid aspect. However, while looking at the transmission of Buddhism, it could be laid out that two different stages were visible.

During the reign of Songtsen Gampo in 7th century, Buddhism flourished, as the religion got the Royal patronage. The king unified the Tibet politically and enlarged his kingdom. The king made matrimonial alliances with Nepal and China which further made Tibet more powerful. The relation with China made Tibet culturally and professionally strong, as the aristocrats from Tibet came to Changan for education and various skills were imparted by the Chinese craftsmen to the Tibetans.²⁸⁸ He constructed many temples and established the first temple in Tibet. Many Buddhist texts were translated in Tibet in his reign. ThonmiSambhota was among the students

²⁸⁸ Sam Van Schaik, *Tibet: A History* (Yale University Press, London, 2011) p.10.

who were sent by the king to India to learn languages. With the Indian scripts Thonbi developed Tibetan alphabet.²⁸⁹ Sambhota translated Buddhist texts into Tibetan.²⁹⁰

Rinchen Zangpo is an important and significant figure while discussing the second propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. He was born in about 958 A.D. He had taken upon him the task of translating many important Sanskrit Buddhist texts into the Tibetan language. “Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo or Lochen Rinchen Zangpo was one of the foremost Tibetan translators during the ‘Later Propagation’ of Buddhism in Tibet.”²⁹¹ His contribution towards the cultural aspect of Tibet is also well received by scholars. He is credited to have constructed about 108 monasteries in regions like Ladakh and Spiti. He was also given the status of Buddhahood.

Toling Gumpa was built by the Guge ruler Yeshe O in 11th century, with the assistance of the famous Buddhist scholar Rin-chen Zangpo, under whom Buddhism revived in Western Tibet. The death of the Tibetan ruler Langdarma, resulted in the fragmentation of the Central Tibetan Dynasty and the foundation of the kingdom in Western Tibet with Guge as the center. Under the King Yeshe O along with the Rinchen Zangpo Buddhism flourished in western Tibet.²⁹² Many monasteries sprang up during this time with Tholing as an important seat of learning about Buddhism. The famous Buddhist scholar Atisa from India also stayed in Western Tibet.²⁹³ Atisa met with Rinchen Zangpo at Tholing.

The making of Tibetan monastic network

The Tibetan monastic network was set up along with coming of Buddhist in the land. The monastic order provided a proper set of rules and regulations in the lives of the people who followed the Buddhist tradition. The setting up of the network also was vital in the lives of the ordinary population. It also played a part in the culture, political, economic, art and social aspects of the land. The significance of the monastic order is well emphasized in the early Buddhist compositions. In the case of pre modern Tibet, they followed the earlier compositions of Buddhism, however, there were also compositions of the land itself. These type of compositions

²⁸⁹ Ibid.p.12

²⁹⁰ Sanjeev Kumar, Buddhist monasticism and education system in Korea, Thailand and Tibet (shodganga).p.142.

²⁹¹ Tsepak Rigzin, Rinchen Zangpo: The Great Tibetan Translator (958- 1055 A.D.) (The Tibetan Journal, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1984, pp 28- 37, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives) p 28.

²⁹² Michael Buckley, Tibet (The Bradt Travel Guide Ltd. UK, 2012) p.225

²⁹³ Sam Van Schaik, Tibet: A History (Yale University Press, London, 2011) p.59.

were mostly composed by the monks themselves. They included the rules, regulations and guidelines which had to be followed the community of the monks. This type of compositions relating to the monastic rules also give an idea about the spread of their network.

A large network of monastic order was established in the land. It could be estimated to be about six thousand. They were of both small and large establishments and were spread in various parts of Tibet. And they affected various facets of religious, cultural, economic and political settings of the society. Different monastic networks were established under different schools of Buddhist tradition.

The Geluk School stands out prominently in regard to the monastic network. “With regard to the religious affiliation of the texts, it is striking that the majority of the *chayik*(written address directed to a group of religious practitioners) that are generally available were written for Geluk monasteries. It is tempting then to assume that the compositions of monastic guidelines was largely a Geluk enterprise and to logically conclude that rules and regulations in the monasteries must have been deemed more important in the Geluk school than in others. Taking into account, however, the Geluk School’s greater access historically to printing presses and the fact that more collected works by Geluk masters have been (re)printed and digitized, it comes as no surprise that there is a greater wealth of monastic guidelines for Geluk monasteries available at the moment.”²⁹⁴The Geluk monastery was established in the Central Tibetan region.

The areas west to the Himalayas which were termed as Lamaist Himalayas comprised of Zanskar, Ladakh, Spiti and Lahauland they were part of the Western Tibet. Tholing was the important monastery for the Western Himalayan regions.

Gradually with times different sects emerged which were associated with different set of teachings and practices. Broadly they could be divided into two headings. First was the diffusion of tantric practice of Buddhism, which was known as old (rnyingma) tradition of Nyingma pa. Second division was the new (sarma) and it included Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug-pa.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Prganization in Pre Modern Tibet* (University of California Press, California, 2018) p 6, 7.

²⁹⁵Sanjeev Kumar, *Buddhist monasticism and education system in Korea, Thailand and Tibet (shodganga)*.p.154.

Nyingma pa tradition was the first in Tibet and it was said to be founded by Padmasambhava and Santarakshita. The followers of Nyingma pa school monks wore red robes and hats, and they were also called as the Red Hat School. The shamanistic practices was widely used by this school. Along with this many Bon features were also retained by the school. Nyingma: Nyingma School (old school) as founded by Padmasambhava, and from this school other Tibetan Buddhism schools emerged gradually.²⁹⁶

Kagyu pa sect was founded by Siddha Tilopa. The main teaching of Kagyu pa, were the realization of emptiness, freedom from samsara (world) and the inseparability of these two.²⁹⁷ Kagyu pa, was the first school which recognized Karmapa as the reincarnated Lama.²⁹⁸ Kagyu pa school were the power holders before the Gelug pa.

Sakya pa tradition was connected with the Khon family of Tibet. This tradition followed leadership based on hereditary tradition. The monastery of Sakya was established by abbot in 1073 A.D. who was from the Khon family. In the records of Sakya tradition, the five exalted were known as (gongmanga) i.e. masters which have special mention, among these five, the fourth Sakya Pandit was the most popular. His fame reached far towards China and Mongolia. Sakya tradition introduced Mahayana Buddhism in Mongolia and China.²⁹⁹

Gelug pa order was a break from Shamanism to monasticism. Gelug pa (school of virtuous), was also termed as Yellow Hat school. It became the most prominent school of Tibet at the end of fourteenth century. The founder of the school was Tsongkhapa, who strictly imposed monastic discipline, restricted meat and alcohol, celibacy was restored, raised the learning standard of monks. The Gelugs pa order could be said to be the fusion of Atisa's and Tsongkhapa's teachings. The leading disciple of Tsongkhapa Gendun Drup established TashiLunpo monastery in Shigatse in 1445. The most important aspect of the Gelug tradition was of Dalai Lama. Gendun Drup, was the first Dalai Lama.³⁰⁰

Gendun Drup was born in 1391 and he died in the year 1474. However, he was given the title of Dalai Lama only posthumously. There were many legends and myths which were woven

²⁹⁶Sanjeev Kumar, Buddhist monasticism and education system in Korea, Thailand and Tibet (shodganga).p.142

²⁹⁷ Ibid.p.155.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.p.155.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.p.155-156.

³⁰⁰Sanjeev Kumar, Buddhist monasticism and education system in korea, Thailand and Tibet.p.157.

around his birth and early life. He was portrayed in the legends and myths as a special child who was powerful and fearless. He was said to be religious from his early days. Earlier he was the abbot of the Sakya pa tradition.

The spread of the different tradition of Kagyu (Drukpa) and the formation of Kagyu monastic network from Ladakh to Bhutan

The propagation of Kagyu sect in Ladakh was attributed to Lama Marpa (the famous tantric and translator) in 11th century, when he visited Zanskarto get blessings from Naropa. StongdeGonpa in Zanskar was founded by Lama Marpa. StongdeGompalater followed Gelugs teaching after the visit of Gelug scholar StodSherabZangpo. LamaMarpa later propagated Kagyu teachings in Tibet followed byMilarepa. Kagyu teachings became famous under the Padma Karpo (1527-1592), who was Drugchen Rinpoche's fourth incarnation, he wrote 16 volumes on teachings and treatises of Kagyu. After him two popular lama and scholars became the contender of the Kagyu sect, DrukpaPagsamWangpo (1593-1641) and ZhabsdrungNgawangNagyal (1594-1651). NgawangNamgyal became more popular. Under him new sect Lho-Drukpa came into establishment and Bhutan became the centre for propagation.³⁰¹

Lho-Drukpa sect spread to Ladakh under the Lama ChosjeMoszin who visited Ladakh at the request of NawangNamgyal. Lama founded the Stagna Monastery with some techniques implored from Bhutan. Lama himself made thankas and statues for the Gompa. Many religious objects were brought to Stakna Gompa from Bhutan. The King of Ladakh JamyangNamgyal gifted lands of the villages for the financial support of the Gonpa. The teachings of the Lama also spread to Zanskar and Lahaul, Spiti (now in Himachal Pradesh), many monasteries sprang up in these areas which came under the Stakna Rinpoche. ChosjeMoszin took his last breath in 1624 at Stakna.³⁰²

Under the SenggeNamgyal, the Druk pa sect became more popular sect in Ladakh, and the king constructed a temple at Stakna and installed Avalokiteshwara statue. The king took the side of NgawangNamgyal against the Gelukpa sect and provided military help through his brother

³⁰¹NawangTseringShakspo, *A cultural history of Ladakh* (Centre for Research on Ladakh, 2014) p.132.

³⁰²Shakspo, *A Cultural History of Ladakh*, p.132

against the Tibet. The King even granted monasteries in the areas of NariGogsum. The visit of Stang Tsang Ras pa during Sengge Namgyal rule further consolidated the faith in Ladakh. Stangtshang Raspa established Hemis Gompa in 1630. Drukpa Kagyu became popular in Central Ladakh with Hemis, Stagna and Chemde as the main Gompa and in Zaskar Dzongkhul, Bardan, Sani and Stagrimo Gompa.³⁰³

The Kagyu Drukpa influence on Ladakh and the assigning of Monasteries of NariGogsum to Bhutan feared the Tibet. Ladakh had to sign a treaty in 1684 in which Ladakh lost the NariGogsum to Tibet. Lama Gyaltsen from Bhutan visited Ladakh during the reign of Nima Namgyal, and was the head of the Stakna Monastery. The king showed his obedience by constructing shrines and mani walls. The King also brought a vast Kagyur texts from Bhutan.

The great festivities of Tibet and Ladakh

The region of Ladakh and Tibet along with maintaining the monastic network, also celebrated few important festivals which held much symbolic and representational meaning for both the cultures. They were more or less related to their religious aspects. These various religious and cultural activities attracted people from different regions and a large participation was viewed from people of various classes.

The Monlam prayer was one of such festival in which people from various regions participated. It was a festival which was celebrated in Tibet. It was a prayer festival which was celebrated as an annual festival, and it owes its origin in the Gelukpa school. It is a prayer for the healthy and long lives of their spiritual leaders. It starts on the first day of the New Year of Tibet every year and lasts for around a week. People participate in that festival in large numbers.

“One well known Tibetan ritual institution that has been subject to increasing innovation is the Monlam or Vow festival, more commonly referred to as ‘Prayer festival’ in non-Tibetan sources. The nature and degree of these innovations in Tibetan exile Monlam celebrations can be well appreciated by comparing Diaspora period events with those that were staged in pre 1959 Tibet. Monlam celebrations in Tibet have a long history as one of the key rituals of the monastic traditions of the dominant Gelukpa School of Tibetan Buddhism and its Lhasa based Ganden Phodrang state that ruled over Central and Western Tibet for three centuries until

³⁰³ Ibid, p.133.

1959.”³⁰⁴The Moonlamchenmois thus a famous festival of Tibet in which people from different regions participate and traders exchanged their commodities with their neighboring regions.

Great Leh Festival (sledus-moche) is a festival of Ladakh. The monastic orders are related to the celebration of the festival which is celebrated with feast and dancing. “‘Great Leh Festival’ (sledus-moche) which takes place on the 28th and 29th of the 12th Tibetan month. Monks from the Gelugspa monastery of Tiktse and the Nyingmapa monastery of Trak-thok (Brag-thog) played the main parts, the ones with their monastic dances and the others with the elaborate preparation of ‘thread-crosses’, which having been infested ritually with all harmful demons are destroyed on the second day at the edge of the town. The Incarnate Lama of Tiktse presided. In former times, the royal family would have presided from the Fort. Following an earlier Tibetan system, going back before the time of the 5th Dalai Lama, the Buddhists of Ladakh celebrate the New Year on the 1st of the 11th month.”³⁰⁵

The Spituk Gustor festival is celebrated annually in the Spituk monastery which is situated in Ladakh. It is also a tradition of the Gelukpa School. It is celebrated to celebrate the victory of good over evil powers. It is a winter festival and celebrated in the form of a dance and drama which is woven around the central theme of sacrifice and victory of good over evil.

“During 17th century Deldan Mangyal was the king of Ladakh. He had been involved in war with Galdan Tsewang in 1670, sent his son Nawang to Thiksey monastery for ordination who later went to Tibet and studied in Draspang monastery. After getting Gyases degree from the same monastery he worked as Lhopon and Khanpo, thereafter becoming the head Lama of Thiksey monastery and returned to Ladakh. He made a plan to propagate Gelukpa tradition throughout Ladakh. And with the help of Spitukgonpa he did the same. On the line of Thiksey monastery, he established the tradition to celebrate annual festival ‘Gustor’ in Spituk monastery.”³⁰⁶

The Dosmochhey festival is the annual festival in the monasteries of Likir, Shachukul and Diskit of Ladakh. The Ghagon Chhiruk festival is celebrated in the Phiang monastery of

³⁰⁴ Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage & The Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008) p 360, 361.

³⁰⁵ David L. Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Vol. 1 (Aris & Phillips Ltd. England, 1977) p 102.

³⁰⁶ Prem Singh Jina, *Cultural Heritage of Ladakh Himalaya*, (Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2009) p 77.

Ladakh during January. The Matho monastery celebrates the festival named as MathoNaghrang festival also in the month of January. YuruKapgyat festival is celebrated in the Lama Yuru monastery. Along with the monastic festivals, the harvest festival of Ladakh is also an important celebration.

Different monasteries celebrated different forms of festivals which held their own symbolic and representational meanings. Each of these festivals were celebrated annually to commemorate their importance. Ritualistic dance and drama are an important part of the festivals along with colorful costumes and feasts. As the monastic order forms an important part of the culture in regions of Ladakh and Tibet, the festivals being associated with it is a usual phenomenon. The festival finds their relevance and vitality along with the monastic order. However, the celebrations of the festivals provide an opportunity for not only the monastic order but also the lay people to participate in it in full form.

Cultural patterns rested on a strong material base and most items that were part of the cultural matrix like dress, items of consumption, festivals, trade goods etc were all part of the surplus that was generated and exchanged in return for newer items. The vibrancy and variety of religious life was largely due to the fact that it received newer inputs that were exchanged and both these cultural exchanges had a strong material basis. The constant religious exchanges bring out the idea that cultural capital accrued in the form of exchanges and they helped to foster networks

Chapter 5

Trade Relations of Ladakh Till the Eighteenth Century

A depression has struck Leh. This was not a temporary depression. This was no seasonal or cyclical recession. The markets had not dried up owing to the natural causes that affect all markets. This was not demand and supply reacting in the classical way. Leh had reached the end of an era.³⁰⁷

This is how William O Douglas³⁰⁸ described Leh as one of the last foreigners to visit Ladakh before it was closed to all westerners in 1951. Leh, by then, has lost its cosmopolitan air with the stoppage of traffic from Central Asia and Tibet. However, this was not the case in the preceding century and the reduced significance of Leh can be seen by a comparative study of the above description with the nineteenth - century accounts of travelers.

The importance of Leh was not so much in the fact that it was the capital and seat of the royal government in Ladakh, but it was the focal point in the web of trade networks that stretched along the Indus and crossed the Himalayas and the Karakoram. Most of the nineteenth - century traveler's accounts make a conspicuous description of the Leh bazaar fascinated them more than royal palace. Heinrich Harrer noticed this in Cunningham's work on Ladakh where he finds only twelve lines devoted to the royal palace at Leh as compared to two full chapters devoted to trader routes.³⁰⁹ A comprehensive description of Leh was provided by a traveler who visited Leh at the turn of the twentieth century:

In summer it is crowded with Indian and Kashmir merchants bringing goods for dispatch to the north, and with Central Asian traders who have brought the products of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan to exchange for Indian merchandise. When business is at its height the bazaar is crowded with people who talk with volubility of travelers after a long and tedious journey. Clothes of different cuts and diversified hue add strangeness and colour to a scene that is entirely reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. The merchant from Yarkand is a personage straight from the pages that immortalize the bazaars of Middle Asia and

³⁰⁷William O Douglas, *Beyond the High Himalayas*, Double day and Comp, New York, 1952, p.226.

³⁰⁸William O Douglas was a Supreme Court Judge from U.S.A, he was a passionate mountaineer and a traveler. He visited Leh in 1950.

³⁰⁹Heinrich Harrer, *Ladakh; Gods and Mortals behind the Himalayas*, 1980, Penguin, p. 100.

his servant is own brother to the loiterers with whom Haroun-al-Raschid rubbed shoulders in the Imperial city of Baghdad. The strange head dress of Ladakhi women, the long streaming hair of the natives of Baltistan, and the wild, shaggy, sheep skin-clad wanderers from the West of Tibet is other elements that transfix the attention and help to make Leh one of the strange places of the earth.³¹⁰

In an otherwise rugged and deserted terrain, the bazaar provided the most vibrant space with a heterogeneous crowd of people. A fascinating description about this was found in a later work too, when Jean Fairley (1973) reflecting on the historical importance of Leh bazaar makes an invigorating portrayal of the bazaar that existed in the past:-

In the dark caves behind the shop fronts gold, silver and tinsel sparkle. Small ponies from Turkestan jog past the slow-moving, crescent-horned yaks. Fair - skinned Yarkandis, shaggily furred Tibetans, Mongols with long drooping moustaches and neat Indians brush shoulders in the narrow unpaved roads, and in a Babel of languages somehow communicate with each other, while the people of Leh benignly survey the world that to their profit has come to their high mountain door step.³¹¹

When Robert Shaw arrived in Leh in 1867, he had come to study Tibetan manners and customs, and to acquaint himself with the region and the people, before accompanying the Forsyth mission (1870). But a walk through the bazaar infused a greater interest in him, especially in the heterogeneous crowd of people and particularly the Yarkandis.³¹²

Thomas Thomson described Leh as the largest town in north Tibet 'during his visit in 1848. He found that there was no place better than Leh which served as a depot for the exchange of goods and a place for prolonged halt for the traders before they crossed the Himalayas to the south and Karakoram Mountains to the north.'³¹³ These descriptions about Leh conjure up an image of a town, which hosted a heterogeneous mosaic of people, jostling in the bazaar. However, these images also suggest that the locals were reduced to being mere spectators. Leh as

³¹⁰Fraser, *Trans-Himalayan*, pp.118-119.

³¹¹Fairley, *Lion River*, p.33.

³¹²Shaw, *Yarkand and Kashghar*, p.11.

³¹³ NAI: File No. 208, Foreign Dept. Political Branch, Year 1849.

atrade centre therefore was more significant as a meeting ground of the traders where exchange of goods took place and not as a place of consumption of these goods.

This attraction to the bazaar continued even until the third decade of the 20th century, until such time as the trade continued to pass through Ladakh. According to Janet Rizvi, the Trans-Karakoram trade virtually came to an end by 1937. And there was a drastic fall in the trade going to Punjab by the Kullu route by 1912-13.³¹⁴ Yet, the bazaar's attraction sustained for some more years. Thus, when Gompartz reached Leh in 1928, he could not help complaining-

...and then, when your tents are pitched, you will remark the immediate disappearance of every dervant you own caught by the lure of bazaar and the shops.³¹⁵

The position of Leh bazaar as a centre of exchange and a place of halt for the travelers had achieved such an unprecedented because of the introduction and implementation of well-regulated norms in the interest of making it a favourable place for traders. The other reason for the growth of Leh as an important trading town was because Leh was the seat of government for both the power, which brought many changes. Several efforts were made in Leh towards making it a favourable place of halt for traders and travellers. The building of sarais, court houses, jails, treasure offices, residential houses for the administrators, police stations and even planting of poplar trees in the bazaar were all carried out in Leh after the Dogra conquest.³¹⁶

The Kiraiya, an urdu word meaning fare, fee, hire.³¹⁷ The kiraiyakash were those who participated in the trade mostly as goods transporter, pony-men. They mostly lived in the villages, they were hired by the traders for definite journey. The kiryakashi acted both half time and full time traders, in the latter they were employed by the merchants to. Jacqueline mentions that the, "Kiraiyakash were laborers. Suppose someone had horses, someone had dzo, another has a yak...so from here shopkeepers or traders told them, "You go to Srinagar from here with your horses, dzo, donkey or yak. There is this much [in] our loads". We called them khor. "So

³¹⁴Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan*, pp.207-208

³¹⁵Gompartz, *Magic Ladakh*, p.165.

³¹⁶Sanyukta Koshal, *Ladakh, Land, Agriculture and folk traditions*, Vol.I, Om Publications, Delhi 2001, p.470.

³¹⁷ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*. p.241.

[you] load them and bring here, we will give you the labor charge". So this type of labor is called Kiraiyakash.³¹⁸

Trade was an important factor in the economic system of Ladakh, Kiraiyakash didn't have the capital needed for investment in the trade, they supplemented their income by participation in trade as labor and transportation. The demand for Kiraiyakashi were both for transKarakoram trade from Ladakh to Yarkand and also from Leh to Srinagar.³¹⁹ The nomads mostly depended on their livestock. They bartered their livestock items such as animal products and animals with essential commodities like food grains and other necessary products. The Changpa nomads traded milk, butter, salt etc with food grains. The Changpa nomads reside in the high plateaus of Changthang. The pastoralist Changpas were settled at western side of Tibetan Plateau.³²⁰ The salt brought by the Changpa has been used both as consumption and currency item. In order to get some profit some villagers bought more salt from the Changpa, as the value of the salt becomes more dearer after crossing Umasila to Padar, than they needed for their consumption. So that they can resale the salt and buy some necessary items needed for home consumption.

The Gaddis and other traders from Kulu, Kangra and Rampur Bashahar practiced small scale trading. They carried their merchandise products through Kulu. Many of them travelled upto Leh to get benefit from Leh, but others did their business in Amritsar and Kangra with the central Asian traders. The central Asian traders included Yarkandis, Andjanis, Kashgar, Khotan, Badakshan and Bokhara.³²¹ Many among the Central Asian traders participated in the trade were to finance their pilgrimage to Mecca.³²² The merchants of Amritsar employed agents of Kashmir to look after their business in overseas. Mention of a banker Kothee mull at Amritsar by Moorcroft who had invested two to three lakh in the business through Azim Joo, Rasool Joo and other Kashmiri merchants.

The conceptualization of Ladakh as an inaccessible land surrounded by the most elevated Himalayan mountains loses its relevance once we explore the commerciality that the region had in the past, the Himalayan mountain chain extending from Hindukush to Arunachal Pradesh in

³¹⁸ Jacqueline Fewkes, *trade and contemporary society along the silk road: An Ethno history of Ladakh*.p.98

³¹⁹ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.246.

³²⁰ Veena Bhasin, *Life on an Edge among the Changpas of Changthang, Ladakh*.p.93.

³²¹ Janet Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan caravans*.p.199

³²² Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.201.

North east India is dotted with many natural breaks in between the hills. These served as natural roads and passes for travelers and merchants, who passed into India from Central Asia and China since ancient times. Most of the semi-precious stones, such as agate, blood stones, jade, crystals and rough turquoise found at the prehistoric Neolithic sites like Burzahom in Kashmir-trace their origin to Central Asia. They were imported from Yarkand via Ladakh.³²³

The routes from Ladakh, and along the Great Himalaya between the Tibetan Plateau on one side, India and Nepal on the other were used by the traders for medium - distance and local trade till the mid of the twentieth century. The regions in Ladakh were dependent on each other as areas were not self-sufficient, through trade the areas exchanged their produce with each other and also with the regions neighboring to it.³²⁴

Gartok was meeting point for the traders from Ladakh, Kashmir, Lahul etc. traders from different places met in the month of August and September for selling and exchanging the merchandise. The traders from Lahul and Spiti used Rupshu plateau to Ladakh as route to reach Gartok.³²⁵

The access to Zaskar through Pensila was relatively easier than through other routes, the region of Zaskar was connected with Kargil and Leh through Pensila which remained opened for three to four months. Zaskar had trade connections with Kishtwar through Umasila. Depending on the season Zaskar connected with Leh through various routes. During summer the traders travelled through Zaskar range by passing through Zangla above the Zaskar river reached Lamayuru by crossing Wanla.

During autumn season when the water level recedes in the streams, a straight route was chosen through the Zumlungriver below the Zangla above Chharcharla, by crossing the Rebrang-la reached Markha Valley. The route was also used by the Changpa to barter their products of salt and wool with the foodgrains. During winter season when the passes were closed, the Zaskar river gets frozen due to which a dangerous path formed known as Chadar, route used by the people of Zaskar to exchange their products like butter in Leh.³²⁶

³²³ Lahiri, *Indian Trade Routes*, pp. 152-153.

³²⁴ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan caravans*, p. 37

³²⁵ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*. P., 37

³²⁶ Ibid. p., 40

The other passes alternative to Karakoram passes which remained opened almost throughout the season, Ladakh range was crossed through Digar la or pass and Chang-la which remained negotiable almost throughout the year. From Chang-la the caravans passed through the upper Shyok. The traveler travelled from Chip-chap valley through Daulat Beg Oldi which was only a day march towards Karakoram pass.

It is true that Sogdian and Arabic inscriptions at Tangtse, just north of the Chang-la, the first stage on the Changchenmo route after it diverges from the winter route up the Shayok to the Karakoram pass, could be an indication that merchants were perhaps travelling by Changchenmo and the bleak plateau to the north in the first millennium A.D. If so, it probably argues a commercial link between Ladakh and Khotan (rather than Yarkand), an important trading oasis on the south east fringe of the TaklaMakan desert, and probably at that period more important than Yarkand. In a few nineteenth-century texts there are tantalizing references to a route east of Changchenmo, sometimes called the 'royal road', and said to have been in use in Mughal times, between Khotan and Najibabad at the foot of the Himalaya in what is now Uttar Pradesh.

According to Moorcroft, 'the trade between Hindoostan and Khotan was formerly very extensive, and it is even said, "Though I presume rather figuratively, that a loaded cart could go all the way from Nujeebabad to Saraikia in the mountains of the Khotan. Saraikia, apparently, was a local name for the valley of the Karakash river; it was famous for its jade quarries, reportedly abandoned by the late 1860s, which may have been the source of some of the semi-precious stones used for the inlay work of the Mughal tombs at Agra. The road from Najibabad was said to have passed through Rudok and Gartok, and Moorcroft assumed it would have taken the Niti Pass over the Great Himalaya. The decline of trade attributed to its occasional interruption... consequent on the decline of Mughal power". On the other hand, the absence of any mention of such a route by Francois Bernier in his discussion of trade routes constitutes negative evidence that it might have fallen into disuse before the middle of the seventeenth century. At all events, by the time nineteenth-century travelers and writers were enquiring into the matter, the Tibetans have turned paranoid about allowing most outsiders to enter their territory, and there were no through routes across western Tibet.³²⁷

³²⁷ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p. 31-32

There were also other routes from Indian subcontinent to Yarkand through Leh. Punjab the centre for the trade between India and Central Asia, the traders could choose two routes for reaching Leh, from Hoshiarpur and Mandi reached Kullu valley, PirPanjal range crossed through Rohtang pass to reach Lahul, by crossing Bara-Lacha-La pass entered Rupshu region of Ladakh and by crossing the Zaskar range entered Upshi region near to Leh.³²⁸

The other route towards Leh was from Srinagar where the traders traversed the Zojila pass, both by means of horse and by foot depended on the seasons, by crossing Namkila and Fatula enters the region of Leh.³²⁹

The route from Hunza in Baltistan through Karakoram towards Yarkand, was not frequently used by the traders because of inhospitable glaciers and peaks. According to Francois Berneir, the French traveler, the route was used by the traders when the Ladakhi king SinggeNamgyal closed the route to Yarkand from Leh.³³⁰

The routes from Leh to Yarkand which converged at the Karakoram pass, the selection of the route for travelling depended on the season feasibility of the traders. Some traders choose winter season so that the caravans could be crossed through the frozen river beds rather than the highly difficult glaciated passes during summer. The time period taken to cover the distance between 726 and 829 km was more than a month. The merchants from central Asia preferred late summer season for reaching to Ladakh July to mid September. This season also gave them opportunity to meet the other traders from different regions as mostly all the traders preferred the same season so that crossing the transKarakoram during this season to avoid the severe conditions. This season also provided opportunity for the merchants to take their merchandise further south towards Kulubefore the passes gets blocked.³³¹

The caravans had to cross many passes, Ladakh range was crossed through the Khardung pass and Thulangbuti pass, through which it reached to Nubra valley and in the mountains of Saser between Nubra and Shyok. The Chang-la and upper Shyok valley route was used by the traders in winter, the route was impassable during summer due to the rise of water level in

³²⁸ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.27

³²⁹ Janet Rizvi, *trans Himalayan caravans*.p.27

³³⁰ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.26.

³³¹ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.201.

Shayok river, its tributaries gets increased, the route was used in winters by the travelers with their load laden animals, due to the extreme cold the river gets freeze and the traders with their animals laden with loads could cross it.³³² The Saser Mountain was crossed through the Saser La, which took the caravans and traders on the Karakoram Pass, Karakoram pass remained opened throughout the year being at high altitude received less amount of snowfall. Through the Sanju river the caravans reached the country of Karghalik and then to Yarkand.³³³

Another trade route from India to Lhasa through Leh was a three month journey. The traders planned their journey towards Lhasa through Gartok. During the festive season in Gartok the merchants met with their counterparts to exchange and sell their merchandise which was centre to Western Tibet. The traders choose to come in later season for getting more price for their merchandise preferred the route from Zojila as the pass remain more snow free longer period than the passes via Kulu. And during the winter season the can be used for foot traffic.

According to Janet Rizvi there were three routes to approach the trading centre, 'one was direct route through Indus which was passable only in winters. The route passed through the gorge between Chumathang and Upshi. The other route used in other seasons was to take detour of south from Taglang-la to Debring along the Pugar river down the Indus at Mahe above Chumathang. Another route detoured north of Chang la to tangtse, the caravan through the pang-gong range towards Chushul. The above routes joined on the Indus at Thangra, from Demchok about five days march reached Gartok. The further journey took place by crossing the Cherko la above the division between Sutlej and the Indus basin through which reached to lakes of Raka and Mansarovar. From the north of lakes a route through Rudok joined the road towards main Lhasa. The Mayum-la or pass, division between the Tsang-po and Indus valley, from Mayum la the traders travelled along the narrow gorges down the altitude for more than a month from Gartok reached villages with settlements, the important settlement towns of Shigatse, Gyantse and Yamdrok Tso were crossed to reach Lhasa.³³⁴

The mode of transport for carrying the merchandise were on the backs of different animals like horses, mules, donkeys, dzo, yak, camels and sheep. According to Moorcroft, "The

³³² Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p.216.

³³³ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p.28-29

³³⁴ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan caravans*, p.33-34

Central Asian breeds of horses used on the Karakoram route as being, ‘ugly and of coarse proportions but remarkable for the great depth and length of the chest and the great strength of their for legs’.³³⁵

The 1993 *Istoriya Uzbekistana* authors held that during the seventeenth and first half of the 18th century the economic crisis was due to many factors, the main was monopolization of the long distance trade by European maritime. The overland trade was declined due to the maritime trade, but overland trade of Eurasia had been widely connected with caravan routes linking urban centres. Bartold held that the, ‘the maritime routes developed in the 15 century by the western Europeans resulting in the diminishing of the caravan trade.’³³⁶

According to Niels Steensgaard the increase in the manufacture of ships by the European companies resulted in the enhance of trade which led to the decline of overland trade. He mentions that during the early 17 century, the shipment items to Europe were already equivalent to the amount carried through overland trade. Morris Rossabi held that the coming of European Companies didn’t end the caravan trade, it continued between China and Russia. He further argues that decline in the Central Asian caravan trade was more because of Political, religious and social changes rather than coming of Europeans in maritime.³³⁷ The political instability did impact the caravan trade through some routes from China and Central Asia, but overland trade continued from another route, south of Siberia and North of Central Asia during the late 17 century and early 18 century. Trade was dominated by the Russian merchants with peddlers from Bukhara.

Muzaffar Alam and Stephen Dale mentions that the overland trade was active through the caravan routes from India to Iran during the 18 century. Alam held that the overland trade continued to take place even in the hostile political atmosphere between Uzbek, Safavid and Mughal regions. Richard Steel held that the Portuguese and Safavid war in 1615 shifted the trade from Hormuz port and Qandahar caravan route towards Iran.³³⁸ The caravan trade continued with the maritime trade in late seventeenth century, English wanted to divert that overland trade towards maritime trade and had pact with the merchants from Armenia for transporting the goods

³³⁵ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan caravans*. P41.

³³⁶ India, Russia and the eighteenth-century transformation of the central Asian caravan trade..p.523

³³⁷ Ibid..p.524.

³³⁸ Ibid.p.525

to English ship from land route. But the Armenian traders transported products through overland in 18 century.

The overland trade activities on the Silk route or routes did not abruptly stop with the discovery of the Cape route and the invention of the steamships. In fact in the area that the present thesis is based on, the overland Caravan trade activities continued till the middle of the twentieth century. In the specific case of Ladakh and Tibet the trade activities and caravans were not simply commercial activities only. These activities also had political, religious and cultural symbolism associated with them and such symbolism was deeply entrenched and embedded in the local milieu. The special case of the *Lapchak* and *Chaba* missions are cases in point. These missions were not simply commercial and trade activities but carried very strong symbolisms of political sovereignty along with them. The treaty of Temingsgam was signed in 1684, which ended the war between Ladakh, Tibet and Mughals. The provisions of the treaty were fixed, the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet was redrawn and Ladakh had to send triennial mission to Lhasa known as Lo phyag. The representatives from Ladakh were sent with precious gifts on the occasion of Tibetan New Year to the government treasury office, headed by the Dalai Lama.³³⁹ The mission combined trade with ceremonial gifts prescribed for the Dalai Lama.³⁴⁰

The Lophyag mission leaders were provided with u lag (corvee transport labour) of animals on both the frontiers.³⁴¹ The mission consisted with large caravan amounted 200 animals with the provisions.³⁴² In return Tibetan government sent mission to Ladakh annually known as La dvagsgzhungtshong (Ladakh Government Trade). The mission reached Ladakh at the time of

³³⁹ John Bray, tsering D. Gonkatsang, Three 19th Century Documents From Tibet and The Lo Phyag Mission from Leh to Lhasa. p1

³⁴⁰ John bray, trader, middleman or spy? The dilemmas of a Kashmiri muslim in early 19th century Tibet. published in islam and Tibet. interactions along the musk routes, pp. 313-337. edited by annaakasoy, Charles burnett, and ronityoeli-tlalim. Farnham: ashgate, 2011. p3.

³⁴¹ John Bray, 'Ladakh's Lopchak Missions to Lhasa: Gift Exchange, Diplomatic Ritual, and the Politics of Ambiguity. p.44

³⁴² John bray, trader, middleman or spy? The dilemmas of a Kashmiri muslim in early 19th century Tibet. published in islam and Tibet. interactions along the musk routes, pp. 313-337. edited by annaakasoy, Charles burnett, and ronityoeli-tlalim. Farnham: ashgate, 2011, p1

Ladakh new year with tea, cloth, apricot and other trade goods.³⁴³ The mission was known as Chaba (Tea man) in Ladakh.³⁴⁴

When China invaded East Turkestan in 1759, Ladakh maintained its trade relation with China. The trade continued to flourish as traders from Andijans, Kashmir, Khoqand Tibet participated in the trade activities. According to Janet Rizvi, the Chinese officials (Ambans) continued with the earlier tariffs structure of one twentieth for foreigners and one tenth for locals, but the tariff was found heavy and it was restructured and fixed at one thirtieth for foreigners and one twentieth for locals, the tariff for cotton, silk and fur were marginally kept high. The duties Baltistan and Kashmir were fixed at one fortieth.³⁴⁵

During the Mughal rule in Kashmir, the Kashmiri carpet industry flourished, the wool needed for the Kashmir industry were supplied from Western Tibet which made Kashmir dependent on wool with Ladakh.³⁴⁶

When the king of Ladakh had to call for Mughal help in order to counter the combined Tibet and Mongol forces, then Mughal ruler Aurangzeb agreed to help as it provided an opportunity for the Mughal ruler to get control over the trade of wool. Ladakhi ruler had to accept the suzerainty of Mughal rule and had to pay tribute in every three years which consisted of 18 piebald horses, 18 white yak-tails and 18 pods of musk. Four official traders were to be allowed in Ladakh who would trade wool from Ladakh to Kashmir. In return the Ladakhi king was to receive 300 to 500 bag of rice from the jagir of Naushahr.³⁴⁷ After the decline of Mughal Empire the trade relation of Ladakh with the Kashmir continued. The subjects under the king had to obey the ruler. Ladakhi ruler was offered salaam from Kashmir by person namely Malik who visited Ladakh with a hundred pony men. In return the king had to send from Kalatse, known as Dragchosdondrub with gifts.³⁴⁸ The wool and Pashmina will be supplied to Kashmir only which continued under Afghan and Sikh.³⁴⁹

³⁴³ Ibid., p3

³⁴⁴ John Bray, 'Ladakh's Lopchak Missions to Lhasa: Gift Exchange, Diplomatic Ritual, and the Politics of Ambiguity', p.44

³⁴⁵ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p.184

³⁴⁶ A H Francke, *History of Western Tibet*, p.111

³⁴⁷ Luciano Petech, p.74-75

³⁴⁸ A.H Francke, *History, Folklore and Culture of Western Tibet*, p.134

³⁴⁹ Luciano Petech, p.75.

The trade was carried through two modes, intra regional trade and inter regional trade. In intra regional trade the items exchanged were mostly necessary items. And in inter regional the trade was mostly carried in luxury items. The intra regional trade was done for local consumption of subsistence commodities by the local traders. According to the research done by Fanny, William Workman and Giotto Dainelli. Workman found unused sheds on the route towards Siachen and Daniellion on the basis of oral traditions found that the glacier of Siachen through Baltistan reached to the Kondus or Saltoro valley through further crossing reached to the oasis of Teram Shahr, and by passing from the Teram glacier by downward movement reached to the Rimo glacier.³⁵⁰

The regions of Ladakh had its own specificity, the areas of Ladakh differ with each other. Local trade played crucial role in attaining the self-sufficiency of Ladakh. The eastern part of Ladakh, Chang-tang,³⁵¹ which bordered with the Tibet depended on the other regions for the foodgrains. The residents of Chang tang known as Changpas carried their livestock items, wool, Pashm and salt to exchange with foodgrains. Wool, Pashm and salt were further carried by Shamma traders towards Baltistan. The traders carried wool and salt towards Skardu and exchanged with apricots in Baltistan.³⁵² The residents of Ladakh and Kulu carried merchandise from Kulu, Chamba and Ladakh, the main item was the wool carried mainly on the back of the ponies and sheep were used for carrying goods and grain.³⁵³ The residents of Ladakh and Kulu carried merchandise from Kulu, Chamba and Ladakh, the main item was the wool carried mainly on the back of the ponies and sheep were used for carrying goods and grain.³⁵⁴

During the travel there were villages where the pack of animals had to be unloaded and the merchandise was carried by the porters on their back. In order to avoid the difficult terrain towards Skardu capital of Baltistan, the local traders from Sham area had to make detour over Fatula and Namkila towards Kargil. From Kargil the traders travelled through the Drass Suru river

³⁵⁰ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*. p.36.

³⁵¹ Chang tang is described as, "a wind-swept expanse of bare mountains and shallow valleys filled with brackish lakes, that find no outlet for their waters. Hardly anywhere does the surface sink below the level of the highest point of the Alps." A Wool Mart of the Indo-Tibetan Borderland

Author(s): H. Lee Shuttleworth

Source: *Geographical Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Oct., 1923), pp. 552

³⁵² Janet Rizvi, *Peasant-Traders of Ladakh: A Study in Oral History*. p.14

³⁵³ William Moorcroft, *Travels in the Himalayan provinces*, vol.1.p.198-199

³⁵⁴ William Moorcroft, *Travels in the Himalayan provinces*, vol.1.p.198-199

route and through the mountains reached to Khaltisi. Another route to reach skardu was from the Chorbit-la, through the Shayokand Keris.³⁵⁵

The necessary stuffs needed on the routes for long day trails as the areas were mostly mountainous and had to be crossed mainly through the passes. The products included food items like barley for both the travelers and also for the animals. According to Janet Rizvi, 'Supplies were available for some days out from the two end-points at Leh and Yarkand; however, the distance for which all rations, for horses as well as men, had to be carried along was probably not less than 12 days march, whether on the summer or the winter route. Even leaving the grass out of account, this would involve the carriage of not less than 60 pounds of barley per horse, and a corresponding decrease in the weight of goods it could carry'.³⁵⁶

The commodities needed for daily purpose came from outside, Padar was the only one source for the villagers of Zaskar, and the people depended on Chamba and travelers from Manali and Lahul through Shingo la. The people residing in the upper part of Zaskar relied on Suru valley traders for the commodities.³⁵⁷

The people who doesn't indulge in direct trade depended for the essential commodities from the above mentioned traders or bought from the Padar merchants who came to barter their products with the salt. The items exported from the Zaskar were butter, grain and Zanskari horses. Zanskari horses were in great demand because of their stamina, hardiness, strength in the entire western Himalayas. The trade carried on horses was relatively done at larger scale than the trade in sheeps and goats which were mostly for the subsistence purpose.³⁵⁸

The mode of transaction was mainly barter³⁵⁹, in order to pay the revenue in cash, the people sold their livestock, the people who had extra live stocks, would sell some of their livestock to pay land revenue (Malia).³⁶⁰

The abundance of pasture lands in Zaskar made the breeding of livestock more, the people from Lahul came to Zaskar to purchase livestock. The availability of less pasture lands,

³⁵⁵ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p. 39

³⁵⁶ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p. 42

³⁵⁷ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p. 129.

³⁵⁸ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p. 130.

³⁵⁹ Nearly a century earlier when Andrew was writing, p. 130

³⁶⁰ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, pp. 130-131.

lesser breeding of livestock. Dzomo for milk, dzo for ploughing field, horses for carriage, these animals were the livestock for the residents of Lahul. Due to the less availability of pasture lands in Lahul the people had to buy from Zaskar in order to fulfill the needs.³⁶¹

The need for the livestock of the Lahul people and the land revenue payment in the cash form by the people of Zaskar created a relationship between the two. The people of Pader brought butter to exchange with the salt. The resident of upper Stod valley where livestock rearing was the mainstay of the economy exchanged their livestock items with the Suru valley traders. The people residing in the central part of Zaskar bartered salt with butter of Pader³⁶².

Butter was an essential constituent mixed with salt tea drunk by the people, butter was also used for lighting up the lamps in the monasteries and homes in front of the dieties, and people offered butter to gompas, thus it carried spiritual importance also.³⁶³ The butter from Zaskar was traded to Leh; the trade was carried in the autumn season.

The shortage of grain in the upper Zaskar was mostly made by the Suru valley as the Central Zaskar production of grain was mostly diverted towards the east to Changpa. The traders from Suru also traded in livestock with the upper part of the Zaskar by exchanging dzo and cows with horses and yaks. They mainly dealt with the Chanpa salt in Zaskar.³⁶⁴

The Suru valley procured rice from Kashmir by the valley of Chelong and was bartered with the villagers of Zaskar for salt, purchased from Changpa, or for barley. The other products brought by the Suru traders were onions, tobacco and dried apricots from Baltistan. Pattu was also traded.³⁶⁵ Suru valley fields were more productive than Zaskar due to its lower altitude, the streams were fed by glaciers, plentiful water supply for irrigation. The valley was centrally located which made it connected to nearby regions.

The long distance trade carried broadly between India, China and Central Asia. According to Janet Rizvi, it has generally been seen that the goods carried over long distance trade were largely luxury items with the potential to earn enough profit to make up for the huge

³⁶¹ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.131

³⁶² The import of butter by the people of Pader mentioned in the account of the Drew, this trade was practiced at least from the middle of the nineteenth century. P..132, trans Himalayan caravans

³⁶³ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.132

³⁶⁴ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.135

³⁶⁵ Drew had noted in 1860.p. 136, transhimalayan caravans.

amount of expenditure of money and time incurred in such trade.³⁶⁶ The traders used two routes from India towards Ladakh. One route was from Hoshiarpur, to mandi reached Kulu Valley through PirPanjal by Rohtang Pass towards Lahul(now in Himachal Pradesh). From Lahul to Keylang and by crossing the great Himalaya through triple pass, bara la cha la, crossing through the Lahul boundary, reached to the province of LadakhRupshu. By crossing the two passes of Lungalachala and Taglang la over the Zanskar range reached to Upshi of Indus valley then onwards journey to Leh.³⁶⁷

The importance of transKarakoram trade between India and central Asia as one important strand was the import of bullion in India. The summary of ‘commercial connections’ of Leh by Moorcroft confirms the bullion- yambos, two seers weight of silver ingots, ‘ in the shape of a boat without a keel and bearing in its hollowed or upper surface several stamps in Chinese characters’,³⁶⁸

From Punjab the silk and cotton cloths both dyed and plain were traded. About, 40 horses laden with loads of red leather, coarse copy of Morocco, single load of 200 skins transit for Yarkand, Sugar, indigo, tobacco, spices, medicinal drugs. To the Punjab yamboo bought up for the mint [to be] alloyed and coined. China silks, shawl goats hair carpets, high quality texture, cut and, of brilliant colours, boots, tea, gloves, stockings, brocades of rissia, dutch broad cloth, leather, coarse spices and other articles. To Yarkand Punjab cloths both dyed and plain, Benaras brocades, cotton and silk goods, Kashmir shawls to Bokhara and Russia, red leather.³⁶⁹ These writings in Moorcroft’s account. The felts and carpet items from Yarkand were destined to Kashmir and some or found limited market of Ladakh, sheepskin coats had mostly for the residents of hills.

In 1820-21, consequent upon the generally depressed state of the trade, arrivals of bullion at Leh were disappointing; the few horse loads that had come were ‘principally for Yarkundees who have accounts to settle at Amritsar. The above statement clears that the trade products from

³⁶⁶ Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p.188.

³⁶⁷ Janet Rizvi, *trans Himalayan caravans*, p.241

³⁶⁸ Rizvi, *Trans himalayan caravans*...p.188

³⁶⁹ Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, p.188.

Yarkand, bullion was in significant amount going to Punjab, and these bullions were exchanged with variety of textiles of India and other items which had market of Central Asia.³⁷⁰

The important products like gold, musk, yak tails, medicinal plants, shawl wool and other articles. The products were highly priced and were in great demand across the world. The product high in demand was musk, musk had medicinal value and was also used for making perfumes in Asia and Europe. Musk is obtained from the deer namely *Moschus moschiferus*.³⁷¹ The deer found in the mountainous region of Tibet, Manchuria, Tonkin, Korea, Altai, Siberia. The deer was hunted for musk pouch located under the stomach which is a small outgrowth weighing about twenty or thirty grams and which secretes oily, brown red coloured, thick substance, high odour. The musks of Tonkin and Tibet were mostly sought in the international market in the seventeenth century for its purity and strict measures by the government on adulteration. The musk was used for various medical treatments like treatment for snake bite, tonic for heart, antispasmodic, to help in child birth and for many other ailments. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier the French merchant who was in India from 1638 to 1668 he purchased 7,673 pouches, plus 452 ounces in one year from Tibetan merchants. Tavernier paid approx 14,357 French livres, or francs, but the vendors preferred amber and coral in exchange rather than paying in silver or gold coin. In the words of Tavernier, for quality maintain the “king” instituted checkup of merchandise: musk pouches to be presented open, so that the adulterated substance by mixing in blood or mashed flesh from the animal, or to increase the weight lead was added. After the inspection the officials sealed the pouches and were sent to India, Nepal and the other parts of the world.³⁷²

The musk from Agra, Delhi and Surat were further traded through sea bound for port on the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea, or to Europe by going around from Africa, from Red Sea to the ports of Alexandria and Arabia. The musk was further trade through overland route from Kabul to Central Asia, Isfahan, Tauris, Kandhar and the Mediterranean shores of the Middle East.³⁷³

Another item which was in high demand for trade was gold, Gold found in the provinces of Tibet. The reference of “ant’s gold” mentions in the account of Herodotus as early as fifth

³⁷⁰ Rizvi, *trans Himalayan Caravans*, p.189.

³⁷¹ Gray Tuttle, Kurtis, *A study of Tibetan History*, p.464.

³⁷² Gray Tuttle, Kurtis, *A study of Tibetan History*, p.465.

³⁷³ Gray Tuttle, Kurtis, *A study of Tibetan History*, p.465.

century B.C, gold were found in the ground, marmots made burrows, while digging the burrows light particles of gold were brought out from the earth which were collected by the populations living in their nearby regions, it was paid as tribute to the king of Persia.³⁷⁴ The foreign merchants were not attracted much with the quantities of gold supply but with the supply. The price ratio between gold and silver was of 1 to 14, or 1 to 25 in the West and 1 to 10 in China and in Tibet the prices were 1 to 10 and even lower to 1 to 9.³⁷⁵ Tibet also exported the gold without any hindrance. The gold exported to Ladakh and Xining for Chinese market, the Armenian merchants procured Gold from Lhasa and Xining to sell in the market of India.³⁷⁶

As per the edict issued by Peter the Great, the ruler planned to send some experts in mining to Tibet in the pretext of Trade to obtain information. Gold was obtained by separating from the earth places near the rivers. Kham province was known for providing great quantity in silver and gold.³⁷⁷ Gold found in the rivers of Chan than, and in the sands of the Shayuk.³⁷⁸

Tea was an important item of trade which was imported to Ladakh in bricks form from China through Lhasa, as tea was an important item it consumed by the people of Ladakh and Kashmir. Latterly tea was also grown in Yarkand. Tea became an important item of transKarakoram trade as was also grown in India and exported to Yarkand. In 1860s and 1870s tea export consisted not only of tea grown near to the, main line of the Kangra valleys but as 'sea board' tea, the import of tea from china through sea, reaching Amritsar, entrepot for tea in Punjab, 11 via either Bombay or Calcutta.³⁷⁹

The manufacture of shawls for which Kashmir earned distinction in the world represented not only the origin of a large portion of revenue of successive governments of Kashmir, but the livelihood of a vast number of people including children also.³⁸⁰ The shawl industry, which achieved its highest watermark from the time of Mughal rule in Kashmir, soon became the mainstay of the economic life of the people. Kashmir's identity came to be associated with the

³⁷⁴ Gray Tuttle, Kurtis, a study of Tibetan History.,p. 465.

³⁷⁵ 1 gram of gold worth 14 to 15 grams of silver.

³⁷⁶ Gray Tuttle, kurtis, a study of Tibetan History.,p.465.

³⁷⁷ Mission to Tibet: book 1. The extraordinary eighteenth-century account of Father Ippolitodesideri, S.j. Translated by Michael j. Sweet Edited by Leonard Zwilling. Wisdom Publications, Boston.2010.p215

³⁷⁸ Moorcroft, Travel in the Himalayan provinces vol 1 .p. 314

³⁷⁹ Janet Rizvi, *trans Himalayan Caravans*,pp. 198-99

³⁸⁰ Francois Bernier, Travels in the Mogul Empire A.D. 1656-1668, tr. Arcchibald Constable, 2nd ed. Vincent A Smith, London, 1916,p.402.

shawl to the extent, that any gift or tribute offered by the rulers of Kashmir was incomplete without the shawl. Even the name Kashmir became synonyms with the shawl and also the material representation of Kashmir to the outside world, Europe, America, Persia and Turkey was found in the shawl.³⁸¹

During the Afghan rule in Kashmir (1753-1819), Nadir Shah considered the Kashmir Shawl prestigious and valuable enough to be included in the fifteen elephant loads of lavish gifts that he presented to the sultan of Constantinople in 1739.³⁸² And from here, Napoleon returned with a Kashmir shawl after his Egyptian campaign in 1800, which he presented as a gift to his wife Josephine, who was responsible for making it popular in France with her enormous influence in French fashion style.³⁸³ Napoleon is also remembered for having made a lavish wedding gift to his second wife, Marie-Louise in 1810, which included seventeen Kashmiri Shawls.³⁸⁴ The enormous impact of the Kashmiri shawl on French fashion style can be testified by the fact that by the nineteenth century France became the largest exporter of the Kashmir Shawl among European countries.³⁸⁵ Sending the shawl was also a deliberate attempt on the part of Ranjit Singh, as through it the Sikhs wanted to underscore their domination of their region of Kashmir, the centre of shawl production in India.³⁸⁶ And when Kashmir was transferred to Gulab Singh under the treaty of Amritsar in 1846, the goat that the wool for shawl is from was made one of the important constituents of the tribute to be paid to the British in acknowledgement of their supremacy.³⁸⁷ The tribute in the form of goats, however, had to be discontinued as the animals died on the way, and also it was suggested that instead of the goats, the Pashm or Pashmina wool with addition of grey and white wool should be substituted as the tribute.³⁸⁸

These shawls also adorned the courts of rulers-the shawl was the striking feature of Ranjit Singh's durbar. The display of the shawl in the court of Ranjit Singh had the desired impact on

³⁸¹ Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, Permanent Black Ranikhet, 2003, p. 80.

³⁸² Brigid Keenan, *Travels in Kashmir: A Popular History of its people, places and crafts*, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 199.

³⁸³ Perviz Nemati, *Shawls of The East from Kerman to Kashmir*, Super Book House, Mumbai, 2003, p. 77.

³⁸⁴ Michelle Maskiell, *Consuming Kashmir Shawl and Empires, 1500-2000*, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 13.No.1, 2002, p. 39.

³⁸⁵ *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, p. 75.

³⁸⁶ Alexander Burnes, *Travels in Bokhara*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 12.

³⁸⁷ Louis Enech, *Ranjit Singh, the Shawl and the Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab*, *Sikh Formation Religion Culture and Theory*, Vol. 11, No. 1-2, 2015, p. 95.

³⁸⁸ Diwan Kripa Ram, *Gulabnama*, tr., Sukh Dev Singh Charak, Light and Life Publisher, Delhi, 1977, p. 337.

Mohan Lal, a traveler visiting the Lahore durbar in 1831, who was a west ruck, at seeing the abundant use of the Kashmiri Shawl. Through the shawl Ranjit Singh made a subtle projection of sovereign power, more than with any of the armies and weapons at his command.³⁸⁹ And when Mohan Lal reached Persia, at the court of Shah Abbas, where he was asked to compare the magnificence of his court with that of Ranjit Singh's court, he modestly but firmly replied that Ranjit Singh's durbar tent was made of shawls and that even the floors were spread with the costly materials.³⁹⁰

The earliest literary reference about the Kashmir shawl, as found by Parvez Nemati was from the fourteenth century work *Sarur-us-Sudar*, where it was mentioned that Kashmir shawl are available in Delhi and that Nizamuddin Auliya has one such shawl.³⁹¹ However a brief description about the shawl manufacture was found in the Mughal source, *Ain-i-Akbari*;

Beautiful shawls are woven and they [the artisans of Kashmir] manufacture

Woolen stuff (Saqarlat) extremely soft, Durmah, pattu

And other woolen materials are prepared, but the best are brought from Tibet.³⁹²

Except for this reference about Tibet as the suppliers of the best quality wool, there was no detailed information about the wool trade that passed through Ladakh. Jigar Mohammad, having explored most of the sources of the Mughal period with references to Ladakh found that the only source of the Mughal period giving details regarding the wool trade taking place between Kashmir and Ladakh was found in Bernier's account.³⁹³ Expressing his fascination for the wool coming from Ladakh (Great Tibet), Bernier adds that the shawls made from the most superior quality wool (Touz) were purposely made for the Mughal Omrahs.³⁹⁴ And during his visit to Kashmir in 1663, he found this trade with Ladakh had been interrupted.³⁹⁵ According to Janet Rizvi this does not seem to have brought a complete halt to the supply of wool to the

³⁸⁹Natinal Aechives of India (NAI): File No. 229-230, Year 1883, Proposal submitted by Ney Elias, British joint commissioner regarding the change in the tribute, Foreign Dept. A, Political E, N. Delhi.

³⁹⁰Fenech, Ranjit Singh, p. 93.

³⁹¹Mohan Lal, *Travels of Mohan Lal*, First Publication (1846) by ICHR, Delhi 977, p. 64.

³⁹²Nemati, *Shawls*, p. 43.

³⁹³Abulfazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, tr. H.S Jarret, J.n Sarkar, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1949, p. 356.

³⁹⁴Jigar Mohammad, *Mughal Sources on Medieval Ladakh, Baltistan and Western Tibet*, ed. John Bray, *Ladakh Histories Local and Regional Perspectives*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, 2011, p. 159.

³⁹⁵Bernier, *Travels*, p. 403.

Kashmir shawl industries, as the supply continued reaching through around about route down the Shayok valley and through Baltistan.³⁹⁶

After the Mughal rule, the various political vicissitudes that Kashmir passed through, from Afghans (1757) and Sikhs (1819) Ladakh continued to facilitate the flow of shawl wool to Kashmir. During the oppressive Afghan rule also the importance of the shawl was acknowledged as it contributed to a bill of the revenue coming from Kashmir. This was found by George Foster during his visit to Kashmir in 1789.³⁹⁷ It was also mentioned in his records that the oppressive Afghan rule was most cordial and respectful to merchants and traders for they brought wealth to the province.³⁹⁸ So in all probability, the trade in shawl wool did not suffer on account of the oppression being inflicted on the Kashmiris by the Afghans.

Having attained such historical status, and popularity in the international market, the Kashmir shawl became a symbol of its regional identity. The name Kashmir which came to be spelt as cashmere in Europe from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries became associated with any exotic luxury in nineteenth century Britain. The name cashmere was even appropriated by the western world to give distinction for locally produced products with imitation Kashmir shawls produced in Europe known as cashmere.³⁹⁹

A product of such stature, whose identity did not remain associated with Kashmir alone, but even came to represent India at art exhibitions held in Europe in the nineteenth century, attained distinction as a true Indian art form.⁴⁰⁰ It appears quite consistent on the premises of the above historicity of the Kashmir shawl that in the course of colonial expansion towards the north, the appropriation of this product remained one primary consideration of the British.

The emergence of the British in the western Himalayas from the nineteenth century onwards can also be studied with the above developments as the backdrop with respect to their interest in Kashmir shawl. The British did not remain complacent with the rise of Gulab Singh as their ally in the north, rather they became concerned about their commercial aspirations in

³⁹⁶Bernier, *Travels*, p. 426. This momentary interruption seems to have been caused due to the growing clash between Ladakh and Western Tibet, which ensued after SinggeNamgyal's invasion of western Tibet in 1640.

³⁹⁷Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan*, pp. 52-53.

³⁹⁸George Foster, *A Journey from Bengal to England, Thriugh the Northern Part of India, Kashmere, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia by Caspian-Sea*, Vol. II, London, 1808, p. 21.

³⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴⁰⁰Maskiell, *Consuming Kashmir Shawl*, p. 28.

western Himalayas getting affected by the Dogra presence. And there remained a constant source of apprehension regarding the motivation behind Gulab Singh's military adventured in western Tibet under his general ZorawarSingh in 1842. This invasion was expected to have a disastrous impact on British ties with the Chinese empire, and even though the Doigras failed in this invasion, a potent source of fear remained with the British consequent to the Dogras possession of Ladakh.

It was envisagedthat the Dogra authorities in Ladakh might cause hindrance in the passage of British Indian trans-Himalayan trade.⁴⁰¹ Based on these apprehensions, the incidents of British interference in the affairs of the state of Jammu & Kashmir became proverbial with each passing year. The treaty of Timisgang (1684), the wool to be sold to Kashmir, price being one rin-dnul (price-silver; a rupee) or two Dnul-dmar-zog ("red silver goods") for eighty nags (one nags = 4 ¼ oz.) of long-haired wool,⁴⁰²which secured the biggest and the same clause of the treaty getting strengthened in the treaty of 1842, between GulabSingh and the Tibetans, further accentuated their fear of losing commercial aspirations in this sector.⁴⁰³ The British expressed doubts about the validity of the clause of the treaty of 1842, granting monopoly to the Kashmiri traders in the wool trade, on the grounds that since Gulab Singh had accepted British paramountcy, traders from British territories should be allowed to trade freely with western Tibet.⁴⁰⁴

But none of the efforts employed by the British could prove successful in getting the clause of the treaty annulled which granted monopoly to Kashmir in the wool trade of western Himalayas.⁴⁰⁵ So the British resorted to sending boundary commissions to demarcate the boundaries between Tibet, Ladakh and British India. The first survey team under J.D Cunningham and P.A Vans Agnew dispatched I 1846, made a survey and identified the landmarks to be considered while making the demarcation. In 1847, the second commission consisting of three members:- Alexander Cunningham, Lt. Henry Starchy and Dr. Thomas Thomson was dispatched to complete the task of demarcating the boundaries. And the members

⁴⁰¹Maskiell, *Consuming Kashmir Shawl*, p. 46.

⁴⁰² Luciano Petech.p.77.

⁴⁰³Neil Howard, *The Development of the Boundary between the State of Jammu & Kashmir and British India, and Its Representation on Maps of the Lingti Plain*, ed. John Bray, *Ladakhi Histories Local and Regional Perspective*, Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharashala 2011,p. 218.

⁴⁰⁴NAI: File No. 61-63, Translation of treaty between the Chinese and Sikhs, Foreign Section, Secret C, Year 1842.

⁴⁰⁵Howard, *Development of the Boundary*,p. 218.

of the commission were given particular instructions to demarcate the boundary in such a way so as to ensure that it took account of the needs of the British Indian trans-Himalayan trade.⁴⁰⁶ Accordingly Spiti, the region bordering Ladakh and the British province of Bashahar was detached from Ladakh and brought under direct control of the British; which facilitated the direct flow of shawl wool to the British provinces from western Tibet avoiding the territory of Maharaja Gulab Singh.

Thus, the putative recognition of Kashmir as the producer of shawl was built up from the fifteenth century onwards. Kashmir could achieve this position due to the feat achieved by its weaving industry and as the preeminent market for the shawl wool of western Tibet, which found its way through Ladakh. The wool consisted of raw unprocessed wool called Pashmina extracted from the under fleece of goats reared in the high-elevated areas of western Tibet. It also included another material called Toosh or Touz, often referred to as Aasli or genuine Tous, a fibre even softer than the ordinary Pashmina, which also had considerable commercial value. This extracted primarily from the Chiru or Tibetan antelope.

Caravan trade fetched not only great profits but also high risk. The traders travelled in groups accompanied with armed people. In order to save from arbitrary customs from different rulers and also to protect their life from the nomadic tribes, the merchants exchanged their products at intermediate cities. The Caravan trade was a great source of income for the governors, there was always an effort by the rulers to safeguard the routes and the merchants.

Caravans not only consisted of traders but also pilgrims and translators. Among them were many Mecca bound Hajis, financing their pilgrimage by trading along the way-as many as 800 in 1869.⁴⁰⁷ Caravan sarais or rest houses were built so that the merchants and other travelers did not face problems.

There were many challenges faced by the travelers while crossing the mountains through the passes, at the bottom had to cross the frozen rivers had to be crossed due to high altitude both humans and animals had difficulty in breathing, slippery surface. Travelling on the passes

⁴⁰⁶ Dutta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan*, pp. 188-189. In this connection it is stated in the book the British dispatched a native of Bashahar, Anant Ram with a letter from Lord Hardings to Lhasa requesting them to modify the clause of the treaty by including the names of the traders of British Territories. But Anant Ram failed in his mission and was not even allowed to proceed beyond Gartok in western Tibet.

⁴⁰⁷ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*. p.200.

becomes difficult due to the melting and freezing of surface. The crossing of ranges through the passes and crossing the frozen rivers at the bottom of the mountains were not only the dangerous trail the travelers had to cross, the travelers had to travel through the hazardous terrain by descent and ascent of the routes.

According to Janet Rizvi, the route between Khaltse and Lamayuru the road passed through, 'a slit in the rock through which a horseman may just pass but horses loaded with merchandise must have their burdens carried through by men'.⁴⁰⁸ The travelers especially the traders and ponymen had to pass through the severity of routes. The paths of many route were not more than tracks which were used by the travelers. The snow bound paths were cleared by the traders and the animals. Even yak were also used to clear the path at the onset of the summer.⁴⁰⁹

During the visit of Desideri and his team from Ladakh to Tibet, information regarding the routes from Ladakh. In August 1715 Desideri left Ladakh, after travelling for several days through populated areas that were either mountainous or hemmed in by mountains. Then the team arrived at Jangthang (Ciang-Thang), meaning "northern plain." These plains were covered by stagnant water. Desideri explains that the rottenness of water and the condition of the tainted air is very dangerous for travelers, as well as for horses and other animals, in, particular it can lead to a severe and excruciatingly painful inflammation of the gums and lips in both humans and beasts that can even be life-threatening. In order to safeguard one has to abstain as long as possible from drinking the water, and also one should chew aromatic herbs, including aloe, which is a most effective medicine. The same should be given to the horses by mixing these drugs in their feed of roasted barley flour kneaded into a paste with water.⁴¹⁰

On 7th of September the Desideri team reached Tashigang, the first area under Greatest Tibet. It was surrounded on all sides by excellent city walls and large ditches with drawbridges, the team was warmly received through many gestures of esteem and assistance from the lama, the governor and the commander of the fortress. Kashmiri Merchants were also present at that place. Desideri and his team moved further under the protection of commander with the troops.

⁴⁰⁸ Janet Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.43

⁴⁰⁹ Janet Rizvi, *trans Himalayan Caravans*.p.42

⁴¹⁰ *Mission To Tibet* "The Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Account of Father Ippolito Desideri, S.J Translated by Michael J. Sweet Edited by Leonard Zwilling,.p.167

On the 9th of October they left Tashigang and after two days of journey on 11th of October the team reached the Gartok (Cartoa) district where sizeable amount of Tibetans and Tartars armies were guarding Gartok and the nearby areas, where the team stayed for several days. On 9th of November the team reached NgariJungar, the place was highly venerated by the local people because of an Urgyen (Urghien), the founder of the religion or sect practiced in Tibet. On 1st December reached to Drosho (Toscioa), a vast plain area with snow free but very sandy, travelers found resting in tent with their herds of animals like mules, horses and wild cows. Further the team proceeded by crossing a plain area Ruthok where a huge lake that take days to go around and considered as the source for Ganges. The Ngari Jung Mountains are the source for the river Ganges and Indus. The sands on the shore of the lake consisted of minute particles of gold in great quantity. Tibetans and other merchants make great profits from these gold. The lake is also venerated by the people and gathered their time to time for pilgrimage and circumambulation.⁴¹¹

On 22nd of December the team reached at another plain area, where tents of herdsmen found herding the livestock of King and Grand Lama. The team reached at Saga on 4th of January 1716, where governor, depa (Deba) and chief of the province Tsangto (Zzango-to) resided. During the entire travel from Tashigang to Saga the team had to carry all the provisions for themselves like butter, tea, parched barley flour, rice and meat as well as for the horses due to the meager fodder on the snow covered ground as the areas were not inhabited by population. Because of the lack of the fodder and the ever present of snow among so many mountains and glaciers, many horses died in the middle of the journey or became incapable of going farther. Added to all this are the hardships of the journey itself: the terrain everywhere grim and rugged, the interminable climbing up and down the most terrifying mountains, the endless trekking over the snow and ice, and the constant exposure to inclement weather, privation and the bitterly cold, piercing winds.⁴¹²

The produce of a country plays a very important role in establishing its regional identity. But Ladakh failed to achieve this status, even after playing a major role in the supply of shawl wool to Kashmir.

⁴¹¹*Mission To Tibet*, p.170

⁴¹²*Mission to Tibet*, p.173.

Thus, the chapter was an attempt to rediscover the central position of Ladakh, emphasizing the role it played in the cultural and commercial interface with its neighbors through its natural boundaries. In the event of recognizing the geo-historical position of Ladakh, its commercial linkage with the neighbors comes to play a very important role. Trade was an important component and was very essential for Ladakh and the caravan trade was the mainstay even after the 17th century steamship revolution marked the end of caravan trade in many parts of Inner Asia but continued in Ladakh and the Tibetan Culture Areas. Trade also helped many youngsters to find an outlet to the outside world and in this way helped to bring about a cosmopolitanism. This cosmopolitanism was emerging in the urban centre of Leh and thus paved the way for the later missionaries who understood the role of these networks. A study of trade also helps to dislodge the idea of Ladakh as a secluded and self-sufficient region that is historically untrue. In many ways Ladakh also helps us to understand the generalities of Inner Asian landlocked societies and their need for trade and connection to the entrepôts and the route to the sea. In this case, the main pivots were Multan and the Arabian Sea.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The thesis is an attempt to rediscover the central position of Ladakh, emphasizing the role it played in the cultural and commercial interface with its neighbours through its natural boundaries. In the event of recognising the geography and history and how the tough and hostile topography contributed in shaping the history of Ladakh, as well as its neighbours. Looking from the centre of India, Ladakh appears to be a hostile region lying at the periphery, having little to contribute to the shaping of the history of the subcontinent. However, it was the centrality of the region which positioned it between Central Asia in the north and the Tibetan region in the east that gave Ladakh its importance. What appears today to be a region at the edge of India, was in the past, a center connecting India with central Asia and Tibet.

The chapters began by focusing on geo-historical position of Ladakh, especially in forming a close connection with Tibet. We have highlighted how the territorial contiguity with Tibet contributed to the foundation of the Ladakhi Kingdom from the 10th century, with a distinct territorial identity. In this domain it was important to reflect on the political developments taking place in Tibet from the eighth to tenth century CE, in order to locate the historical position of Ladakh. Reflecting on this revelation was also significant to strengthen the argument of amplifying the emergence and existence of Ladakh kingdom for the establishment of religious and cultural ties. its commercial linkage with the neighboursthat came to play a very important role.

The relation of Ladakh with its neighbours, namely that of the cultural and commercial ties had far reaching influence. Kashmir played an important role in shaping the cultural history of both Ladakh and Tibet. Buddhism provided the first linkage between these two regions even as Kashmir was a centre of Buddhist learning from ancient times. It was from Kashmir that Buddhist scholars first travelled to western Tibet, and from where the diffusion of Buddhism took place to Ladakh and further on to China as well.

Although Tibet and Ladakh had contact with each other prior to the spread of Buddhism, Tibetan culture came to predominant in Ladakh from the tenth century onwards. The influence was reinforced and confirmed with the migration of a Tibetan ruling class that eventually made

Ladakh a country inhabited by a mixed population predominant among them being those who spoke a form of Tibetan, while politically being independent but subordinate to Tibet in religion and culture. In establishing close ties with Tibet, western Tibet (Nari-Skor-Sum) played the cardinal role in providing the linkage between Tibet and Ladakh. As part of the Tibetan culture Area, Classical Tibetan became the 'Latin of Central Asia' and the Great Tradition and texts were written in Tibetan and were circulated here and constantly reproduced in the monasteries as a living tradition. A monastic network based on the Tibetan Great tradition anchored Ladakh to the Buddhist and the Bon religious influence extending to as far as Bhutan and Tawan emerged. Monks and pilgrims traded and Ladakhi, Tibetan and Chinese Muslim pilgrims to haj also engaged in trade through Leh

Many reincarnate lamas came from Ladakh from 14th CE and settled in parts of Tibet and till 1959, monastic students from all parts of the Tibetan Culture Area flocked to study in the great monasteries (Gompas) of Lhasa and beyond. Some travelled to Bhutan also to study based on their affiliations to the different traditions.

In Tibet Monasteries had hostels (Khamtsens) in the Gompas for students from different nationalities, from Ladakh to Tawang to Mongolia and Russia leading to the travel of ideas and cultural flows. KushokBakula was one of the last of these persons and interacted with the Russian Buddhists from Burvatiya, Kalmykia and the independent republic of Tuva and moved by their plight raised their issues.

No doubt, Ladakh's linkages in culture and religion remained the dominant theme of its connected history. In this domain, we find that the history of Ladakh was interwoven especially with that of western Tibet, which constituted one of the most important provinces of Tibet. At times both Ladakh and western Tibet became victims of the same aggressor and occasionally during the reign of a strong Gyalpolike Sengge Namgyal (1616-1642) of Ladakh, western Tibet too came under the ambit of his rule, although not lasting for more than a few decades. During this period there was an even greater push towards cultural and religious ties of Ladakh with central Tibet. However, the dynamics of these ties changed with the fifth Dalai Lama assuming both the spiritual and temporal power of Tibet from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. For the first time, we witness Tibet initiating an expansionist policy towards Ladakh acting under the influence of the Mongol chief Gursi khan (1582-1655). The Buddhist sectarian conflict between

Geylugpa (Yellow hat sect) dominant in Tibet and Drug pa (Red hat sect) that was predominant in Ladakh has been considered to be the main cause of this conflict in popular literature. However, the prospect of economic gain by establishing political ascendancy over western Tibet was also an important determinant among the factors leading to this conflict.

The war against Ladakh by Tibeto-Mongol force that took place between (1679-1684) led the Ladakhi Gyalpoto seek help from Kashmir resulted in shaping Ladakh's ties with its neighbours in which the trade in shawl wool held a key position. This had a tremendous impact on the commercial history of Ladakh. The treaty of Timmisgang (1684) signed between Ladakh, Kashmir and Tibet opened the grounds on which the future ties of Ladakh with Tibet and Kashmir were structured. The exclusive monopoly secured by Kashmir in the shawl wool trade of western Tibet, was the most important article of the treaty of Timmisgang which was even accepted by the Tibetans. The trade condition of the treaty continued until the 20th century, even when the seat of power at Kashmir changed hands from the Afghans (1753), to the Sikhs (1819) to the Dogras (1846). The importance of the treaty of Timmisgam can be found in two distinct spheres. In the supply of raw wool from western Tibet to the shawl industries of Kashmir, Ladakh's cardinal role at providing passage was further strengthened which stipulated Kashmir in maintaining stable ties with Ladakh. For Kashmir, whose economy was dependent on its shawl industries and considering the fact that most of the wool for manufacturing came via Ladakh, Ladakh held an important place amongst its neighbours.

The other important part of the Treaty of Timmisgang which was also the instrumental in maintaining stable ties with Tibet, was the ceremonial-cum-commercial tribute called Lopchak, described in length in chapter 5, along with the trade in shawl wool, the chapter shows these two elements viz, _monopoly of Kashmir in the wooltrade and _Lopchak devolved from the treaty of Timmisgang remained a constant in Ladakh's ties with Tibet and Kashmir. The other important items traded through Ladakh were Musk, borax from Tibet were important trade items along with block printed religious texts that came from the Narthang printing press in Tibet. Afghanistan and Iran in the west for turquoise, and inner Asia for horses, China for tea through Tibet and other commodities like barley, wool and butter. Multani merchants found it profitable and used Leh as a springboard for inner Asian trade.

Wool was pre-eminent item which was traded and by the 18th century Leh emerged as a wool mart with links to Tawan in the east and Czarist Buryatiya in the north. Rising trade led to the urbanization and the emergence of Ladakh as a wool mart by the 18th century and Leh became a cosmopolitan center with many people from distant regions settling there like Yarkand, Tibet, Multan, Nepal.

The thesis has explored the emergence of Ladakh as an independent state in its own right and the relations with its neighbours from the fourteenth century to Eighteenth century. The thesis has seen these relations through the traffic of commercial items, especially sheep wool as well as cultural and religious ties. While such themes had not been dealt within existing historiography adequately, the thesis has tried to analyse these themes in greater detail.

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casados rose to the position of bourgeois and wielded enormous power, economically and politically. This ended in the struggle between the casados and the *fidalgos* (noblemen) and the Crown extended its full support to the casados.

Chettis

The Chettis were another group of merchants whose business has been described in the writings of the Chinese travellers in the fifteenth century. The Tamil Chettis with a strong base in the ports of Coromandel, were great merchants, owners of ships and traded with Cambay, Dabul and Chaul. They traded in areca, coconuts, pepper and palm sugar. The Tamil Chettis were called "*nagarathar*" (city dwellers) who resided in *nagarams* i.e. cities. The significant group of them settled in Burma, Malacca, Singapore and Sri Lanka also (Stephen 1997:135;139).

The Telugu Chetti castes 'Komatis' and 'Kavarai' had migrated from Andhra during the Vijayanagar period and had settled down in Coromandel. There were many groups among these Chettis on the basis of their specialization in particular commodities. The Kudiraichettis specialized in precious stones, gold, and other metals. They also assessed and valued them. They fixed the price of pearls, seed pearls, precious stones and polished rough corals according to their carats, beauty and perfection. The Kudiraichettis in spite of being suppliers of horses to the Pandyas did not take an active part in the horse trade between the Portuguese and the Vijayanagar empire though Joao da Cruz who was responsible for the conversion of the Paravas belonged to a Kudiraichetti community. Komatichettis dealt with food items and all kinds of fruits and vegetables. Berichettis collected textiles from weavers and exported many varieties of textiles to Malacca.

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1. The Strait of Malacca, connects the Pacific Ocean to the east with the Indian Ocean to the west.
2. A previous name of Aceh, Indonesia.
3. Pegu is a city and the capital of Bago Division in Myanmar.
4. Macao was both the first and the last European colony in China.
5. Pasai also known as Samudra was a Muslim harbour kingdom on the north coast of Sumatra.

POLITICS, HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IMAGINATION: LADAKH THROUGH THE AGES

Amjad Khan

There were different terms used for Ladakh like mo-lo-so by Alexander Cunningham, Marsa and Maryul by A. H. Francke. Ladakh was considered for a long period as a part of Tibet. With the disintegration of central empire of Tibet it began the formation of small kingdoms. The West of Tibet (east to Ladakh) a kingdom was established by Nyima Gon.¹ He compartmentalized his kingdom among his three sons. Palgyi Gon, the eldest who received the proper Ladakh from the Zojila pass to Rutog was the largest portion. The second son Trashis Gon, received the Purang and Guge. Lde tsug Gon, the third who ruled over the southern provinces of the kingdom, which includes Zaskar, Lahoul and Spiti. In their regime more people began to get access in the Ladakh region, monasteries were sprang up in Ladakh. Lha chen rgyalpo (1100-1125), who built Likir monastery has been considered as one amongst

the ancient monasteries. During this period Ladakh has been considered as a part of Western Tibet.

According to the Ladvag's gyalrab (royal chronicle of Ladakh) during the reign of Gyalpo Lachan Takbumde, his brother Takpabum declared himself as independent. Concomitantly Ladakh was divided into two regions, the lower Ladakh comes under Takpabum who ruled from Temisgam as its capital and the upper Ladakh by Takbumde from Shey. In fact Ladakh separated into two kingdoms with new seat of power. During Bhagan, the son of Takpabum, who united the kingdom by defeating the Leh ruler and founded the Namgyal Dynasty with his surname Namgyal (Namgyal means victorious), thus the foundation of an independent kingdom was led by Bhagan.² He was succeeded by Tsewang Namgyal. His death without being any

natural heir to took over the power began an internal clashes among the vassals, which ultimately lead them to declare as independent.

The changed political scenario made the younger brother of Tsewang Namgyal, Jamyang Namgyal as new ruler on throne. The first task in front of the Jamyang Namgyal was to subdue the local chieftains. In the parallel time there was scuffle in the neighboring area of Purig. The rulers of Purig had accepted the religion of Islam, the two chiefs of Chigtan and Kartse had declared themselves as Sultan. Both rulers were fighting for their supremacy of the place, thus in this situation, the ruler of Chigtan called Jamyang for the help. Jamyang Namgyal decided to help Tsering Malik of Chigtan.

According to the traditions the time was not suitable for war, as the festival of New Year was approaching, but the king was in haste and proceeded to help the Chigtan ruler. At the other end the Balti ruler Ali Mir was waiting for an opportunity as the earlier ruler Tsewang Namgyal made inroads into the Balti province, resulting in the destruction of the area. Thus when Jamyang Namgyal reached Purig, Balti ruler has deployed its army to counter the Jamyang's soldiers. Both the armies fought each other on the battle ground of Purig. A fierce battle was fought between the two in which Balti ruler succeeded and Jamyang Namgyal was imprisoned. Ali Mir found it difficult to rule Ladakh as the population were mostly belong to the Buddhist faith. Hence he concluded a treaty with Jamyang Namgyal. Jamyang Namgyal will continue as the ruler of Ladakh but he had to marry with the daughter of Ali Mir namely Gyal Khatoon and the child between them will be the successor of Jamyang Namgyal, which inturn means Jamyang Namgyal had to disinherit the sons with his earlier wife. Jamyang Namgyal had to obey as there was no other option for him. He married with Gyal Khatoon.³

According to the sources, during the war Ali Mir desecrated many Monasteries due to which Ladakh lost many valuable sources because Monasteries were not only the religious place but also acted as repositories of information. Another point was that the Balti ruler wanted to convert Jamyang Namgyal into muslim and put muslim ruler on the throne of Ladakh, but it doesn't seem a fact as Jamyang

ruled Ladakh without converting to Islam, rather he sent golds, silver and other precious things to Lhasa and gave dinner to the lamas of monasteries in order to redeem for the destruction made to the gompas. He also promised to restore the books and erect the sacred places.

After Jamyang Namgyal, Sengge Namgyal ascended the throne.⁴ He was considered most successful ruler of Namgyal Dynasty. He extended his area of influence far and wide. In order to complete the unfulfilled task of his father, he built monasteries and invited the famous Lama Stag Tsang Ras Chen to Ladakh. In a fierce battle with the ruler of Guge, Sengge Namgyal defeated the Guge ruler. Sengge Namgyal constructed many buildings, some of the important buildings are Leh castle (it is of nine storeys), Hemis monastery (in which a huge statue of Stag Tsang Ras Chen is built and also monastery is famous for devil dance) he copied books in gold, silver and copper, and sent costly offerings of coral, silver, gold, pearls to Central Tibetan monasteries. Sengge Namgyal presented costly gifts and many other objects to Stag Tsang Ras Chen like 100 ponies, 100 yaks, 1000 sheep, 1000 rupees, 300 grammes of gold, 3000 loads of grain, 1 string of pearls, 1 string of coral beads, 1 string of turquoise beads, 25 match-locks, 25 spears, 25 swords, 25 pieces of silk, 10 pieces of brocade, 25 pieces of blessing, and other presents. by sending the gifts and other articles, Sengge Namgyal wanted his position to be strong, no one can claim his right over the throne.

Deldan Namgyal ascended the throne, he was the eldest amongst the three sons of Senge Namgyal. The position of Ladakh became precarious during the reign of Deldan Namgyal, the king in order to show his great respect to the Red sect of Buddhist religion took the side of Bhutan against the Gelukpa sect of Tibet. The Tibetans with the aid of Mongols declared war against Ladakh. Ladakhi army were driven away from the territory held as boundary between Ladakh and Tibet. Tibetan army followed the Ladakhi army and the latter had to run away for their life and had to hide in the fortress of Basgo. Tibetan army stayed near the Basgo fortress for three years from 1680 to 1683. In order to safeguard Ladakh from the Tibetan army, Deldan Namgyal sent his emissary to Kashmir for the

help. The help was granted with some conditions. Both Tibetan army and Mughal army fought battle near Basgo, Mughal army defeated the Tibetan army.

The conditions put forth by Mughal governor for safeguarding the Ladakh were: Deldan was to become Muslim with the new name Akabat Mahmud Khan, in order to make certain of Deldan's change of religion, his wife and son were to remain as hostage for three years. Coin has to be struck in the name of Mughal Empire. Every encouragement has to be given to the muslims in Ladakh and a mosque was to be erected in Leh.⁵ The wool trade has to be carried out with Kashmir only. To carry out the trade four Kashmiris shall reside at Spitug and do the trading with the Kashmiris. Annual tribute has to be send to Kashmir consisting of 18 piebald ponies, 18 pods of musk, and 18 white yak tails. In exchange the governor offered to send 500 bags of rice annually. With the departure of Mughal army from Ladakh, Tibetans were waiting for the opportunity, this time Tibetans were not for the war but for peace treaty. Deldan Namgyal had to agree as it was direction from the supreme Lama, called Mipam wangpo.

The famous treaty of Temisgarri of 1684 was signed between Ladakh and Tibet, the boundary between the Tibet and Ladakh was fixed, and the tax of the villages within the boundary of Ladakh and Tibet will be used as the expenses for the sacrificial lamps and the reading of prayers in Tibet. This led to the loss of territories of Guge, Purang, and Rutog in the name of religion. Another provision was the trade regulations, the king of Ladakh had to send a mission once in three years known as Lapchak mission, in which thirty grammes of gold, ten weights of scent, six pieces of calico, and one piece of soft cotton cloth were sent to the Dalai Lama. In addition separate presents were also to be send to the lamas. The members of the mission shall receive daily ration and fodder for the animals. On the other hand, the government trader of Tibet shall come every year with 200 loads of brick-tea.

The conquest of Ladakh by Dogra general Zorawar Singh in 1834 put Ladakh under the Lahore Durbar, he took the route from Kishtwar and Zaskar. Ladakh at that point of time was without a strong leader, at the same time the weapons were old type, there was no standing army due to which the fighting spirit among the soldiers were lacking. Thus we have a picture not of an army in any real sense of the word, nor even a militia, but rather a rabble of untrained conscript. Dogras were allowed to advance without meeting any real opposition, till they reached Sankhu, above Kargil. There was a small contingent posted but were easily defeated by the dogra soldiers. An opportunity was provided by the nature as winter was approaching and the dogra general was well aware of the difficulty they had to face if they don't retreat to a suitable place for them. So the dogra general offered peaceful settlement by payment of 15000 rupees as retreating amount.⁶ The chronicle records that the king and his ministers were ready to take the advantage of the offer but the interference of the queen led to the abandon of the offer. Dogra general waited in Sankhu for the new season. Dogra forces waited till April when the snow gets melted and the passage became possible, the Ladakhi forces posted in small contingents were defeated and chased almost all the way to Leh. Ladakhi forces were unsuccessful to defend and such was the havoc of Dogra general that the envoys from villages like Saspul, Alchi, Likir and Nyemo brought presents and were ready to pay homage to the General. At Basgo the king himself came to meet the Dogra general and had to agree the terms which was huge. The king was to pay war indemnity of 50,000 rupees and an annual tribute of 20,000 rupees, and henceforth to consider Ranjit Singh's vassal.

The death of Zorawar Singh in the battle against the Tibet raised the hope of restoration of the indigenous rule but the Dogra ruler Gulab Singh came with his force and defeated the army of Ladakh, thus crushing the hope of resurgence and signed the treaty in 1842 thus putting Ladakh under the Dogra rule. The Dogra wars brought Ladakh into the world conflicts. It put an end to the independence it enjoyed earlier. With the treaty of Amritsar in 1846 Ladakh came under Jammu and Kashmir.

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4. Even Sengge Namgyal didn't followed his mother's faith.
5. The Jamia mosque in Leh.
6. A.H. Francke, *A History of Ladakh*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, (1907) 2008, p. 60.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF J. DEVIKA IN WOMEN'S LITERARY WRITINGS OF KERALA

S.S. Anuja

Introduction

The Malayalam literary public is one of the most vibrant in India, and thrives on the long history of widespread literacy in the state of Kerala. It is well described as the 'beating heart' of Kerala's public life. Historically, it has been the space in which entrenched power structures encountered their earliest challenges. Not surprisingly, then, critiques of patriarchy in twentieth-century Kerala were first heard and continued to be raised there, even when they had become muffled in wider public discussion.

J. Devika (full name Jayakumari Devika) has written on the intertwined histories of gender, culture, politics and development in her home state, Kerala. She is bilingual and translates both fiction and non-fiction between Malayalam and English and also writes on contemporary Kerala on www.kafila.org. Devika did her Master of Arts in Modern History (1991) from Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and obtained her Ph.D. in History from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. She currently teaches and researches in the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala. Her language is simple, and much care has been taken to make 'dry' theory edible for a non-academic reader.

Significance of Women Writing

Women's literary writing in Kerala has gained a fairly wide market. Even as younger women authors have succeeded in breaking earlier stereotypes and frameworks of depiction, the category of 'penneshuthu' (Women Writings) has come to be questioned as a defining term that limits, instead of enabling. Incisive feminist critiques of contemporary patriarchy now draw upon a variety of disciplines, with the result that

long held notions defining Malayalee womanhood are being questioned with increasing regularity. Concomitantly, stereotyped frameworks and the pulls of the market continue to exercise a powerful influence. It makes it all the more necessary to foster independent initiatives in feminist knowledge generation in Kerala. "Women's Imprint", a women's publishing venture in Malayalam is involved in such efforts to help create new networks of resistance and towards ensuring that gender remains a contested category in public debate.

Malayalam has a large number of books on feminism and women's studies. But such a book targeting non-academics and beginners, with such high production values, is a rarity. Years ago, when J. Devika was in her 20's, most of these books were written by "doleful and bearded men." And she wanted to show that she could do it much better without a beard. "So my earlier writing as an academic was highly technical and found place in journals, read by about 30 people," Devika said, at the release of her new book ***Pennorumbettal Lokam Marunnu*** at the Institute of English, in Thiruvananthapuram.¹

Her Works

For the book ***Pennorumbettal Lokam Marunnu; Linganeethiyude Viplavangal (When Women Dares, World Transforms: Revolutions of Gender Justice)***, "I choose 10 of the most frequently asked questions and treated them as chapters," Devika says.² She also spoke to women workers from Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and learners from Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society. They wanted a visually imaginative book. And that's how she collaborated with designer Priyaranjan Lal to turn it into "provocative pieces of art". She followed the same methodology for



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LADAKH IN HISTORICAL OUTLINE : FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO MODERN TIMES

Amjad Khan

The history of Ladakh as an independent Kingdom can be traced from 10th century when after the disintegration of Central Tibetan Empire which resulted in the formation of small kingdoms. Earlier Ladakh was considered as part of Yarlung dynasty's Tibetan Empire. After the disintegration of Tibetan Empire, a group of royal lineage people migrated towards the west part of Tibet, founded the Gon dynasty around the areas of Nyari Gogsum. The founder of the Gondynasty Nyima Gon compartmentalized his kingdom among his three sons. Palgyi Gon, the eldest who received the proper Ladakh from the Zojila pass to Rutog was the largest portion.¹ The second son Trashis Gon, received the Purang and Guge. Ldetsug Gon, the third who ruled over the southern provinces of the kingdom, which includes Zaskar, Lahoul and Spiti. In their regime more people began to get access in the Ladakh region, monasteries were sprang up in Ladakh, Lha chenrgyalpo (1100-1125), who built Likir monastery is been considered as one amongst the ancient monasteries. During this period Ladakh has been considered as a part of Western Tibet.

According to Ladvag's gyalrab (royal chronicle of Ladakh) during the reign of Gyalpo

Lachan Takbumde, his brother Takpabum declared himself as independent. Concomitantly Ladakh was divided into two region, the lower ladakh comes under Takpabum who ruled from Temisgam as its capital and the upper ladakh by Takbumde centred at Shey. In fact Ladakh separated in to two kingdoms with new seat of power. During Bhagan, the son of Takpabum, who united the kingdom by defeating the Leh ruler and founded the Namgyal Dynasty with his surname Namgyal (Namgyal means victorious), thus the foundation of an independent kingdom was led by Bhagan.² He was succeeded by Tsewang Namgyal. He died childless, without any natural heir for the throne, there occurred power scuffle among the vassals, resulting in independence declaration.

The changed political scenario made the younger brother of Tsewang Namgyal, Jamyang Namgyal as new ruler on throne. The first task in front of the Jamyang Namgyal was to subdue the local chieftains. In the parallel time there was scuffle in the neighboring area of Purig. The rulers of Purig had accepted the religion of Islam, the two chiefs of Chigtan and Kartse had declared themselves as Sultan. Both rulers were

fighting for their supremacy of the place, thus in this situation, the ruler of Chigtan called Jamyang for the help. Jamyang Namgyal decided to help Tsering Malik of Chigtan.

The war against the Kartse proved detrimental, as according to the traditions the time was not suitable for war, as the festival of New Year was approaching, but the king was in haste and proceeded to help the chigtan ruler.³ At the other end the Balti ruler Ali Mir was waiting for an opportunity as the earlier ruler Tsewang Namgyal made inroads into the Balti province, resulting in the destruction of the area. Thus when Jamyang Namgyal reached Purig, Balti ruler had deployed its army to counter the Jamyang's soldiers. Both the armies fought each other on the battle ground of Purig. A fierce battle was fought between the two in which Balti ruler succeeded and Jamyang Namgyal was captured.⁴ Ali Mir found it difficult to rule Ladakh as the population were mostly belong to the Buddhist faith. Hence he concluded a treaty with Jamyang Namgyal. Jamyang Namgyal will continue as the ruler of Ladakh but he had to marry with the daughter of Ali Mir namely Gyal Khatoon and the child between them will be the successor of Jamyang Namgyal, which inturns means Jamyang Namgyal had to disinherit the sons with his earlier wife. Jamyang Namgyal had to obey as there was no other option for him. He married with Gyal Khatoon.⁵

According to the sources, during the war Ali Mir desecrated many Monasteries due to which Ladakh lost many valuable sources because Monasteries were not only the religious place but also acted as repositories of information. Another point was that the Balti ruler wanted to convert Jamyang Namgyal into muslim and put muslim ruler on the throne of Ladakh, but it doesn't seem a fact as Jamyang ruled Ladakh without converting to Islam, rather he sent golds, silver and other precious things to Lhasa and gave dinner to the lamas of monasteries in order to redeem for the destruction made to the gompas. He also promised to restore the books and erect the sacred places.

After Jamyang Namgyal, Sengge Namgyal ascended the throne.⁶ The reign of Sengge Namgyal had been a successful rule. He extended his kingdom far and wide. In order

to complete the unfulfilled task of his father, he built monasteries and invited the famous Lama Stag Tsang Ras Chen to Ladakh. In a fierce battle with the ruler of Guge, Sengge Namgyal defeated the Guge ruler. Sengge Namgyal constructed many buildings, some of the important buildings are Leh castle (it is of nine storeys), Hemis monastery (in which a huge statue of Stag Tsang Ras Chen is built and also monastery is famous for devil dance) he copied books in gold, silver and copper, and sent costly offerings of coral, silver, gold, pearls to Central Tibetan monasteries. Sengge Namgyal presented costly gifts and many other objects to Stag Tsang Ras Chen like 100 ponies, 100 yaks, 1000 sheep, 1000 rupees, 300 grammes of gold, 3000 loads of grain, 1 string of pearls, 1 string of coral beads, 1 string of turquoise beads, 25 match-locks, 25 spears, 25 swords, 25 pieces of silk, 10 pices of brocade, 25 pieces of blessing, and other presents.⁷ By sending the gifts and other articles, Sengge Namgyal wanted his position to be strong, no one can claim his right over the throne.

Deldan Namgyal ascended the throne, he was the eldest amongst the three sons of Sengge Namgyal. The position of Ladakh became precarious during the reign of Deldan Namgyal, the king in order to show his great respect to the Red sect of Buddhist religion took the side of Bhutan against the Gelukpa sect of Tibet. The Tibetans with the aid of Mongols declared war against Ladakh. Ladakhi army were driven away from the territory held as boundary between Ladakh and Tibet. Tibetan army followed the Ladakhi army and the latter had to run away for their life and had to hide in the fortress of Basgo. Tibetan army stayed near the Basgo fortress for three years from 1680 to 1683. In order to safeguard Ladakh from the Tibetan army, Deldan Namgyal send his emissary to Kashmir for the help. The help was granted with some conditions. Both Tibetan army and Mughal army fought battle near Basgo, Mughal army defeated the Tibetan army.

The conditions put forth by Mughal governor for safeguarding the Ladakh were: Deldan was to become Muslim with the new name Akabat Mahmud Khan, in order to make certain of Deldan's change of religion, his wife and son were to remain as hostage for three years. Coin has to be struck in the name of

Mughal Empire. Every encouragement has to be given to the muslims in Ladakh and a mosque was to be erected in Leh.⁸ The wool trade has to be carried out with Kashmir only. To carry out the trade four Kashmiris shall reside at Spitug and do the trading with the Kashmiris. Annual tribute has to be sent to Kashmir consisting of 18 piebald ponies, 18 pods of musk, and 18 white yak tails. In exchange the governor offered to send 500 bags of rice annually. With the departure of Mughal army from Ladakh, Tibetans were waiting for the opportunity, this time Tibetans were not for the war but for peace treaty, Deldan Namgyal had to agree as it was direction from the supreme Lama, called Mipam wangpo.

The famous treaty of Temisgam of 1684 was signed between Ladakh and Tibet, the boundary between the Tibet and Ladakh was fixed, and the tax of the villages within the boundary of Ladakh and Tibet will be used as the expenses for the sacrificial lamps and the reading of prayers in Tibet⁹. This led to the loss of territories of Guge, Purang, and Rutog in the name of religion. Another provision was the trade regulations, the king of Ladakh had to send a mission once in three years known as Lapchak mission, in which thirty grammes of gold, ten weights of scent, six pieces of calico, and one piece of soft cotton cloth to the Dalai Lama. In addition separate presents were also to be sent to the lamas. The members of the mission shall receive daily ration and fodder for the animals. On the other hand, the government trader of Tibet shall come every year with 200 loads of brick-tea.¹⁰

The conquest of Ladakh by Dogra general Zorawar Singh in 1834 put Ladakh under the Lahore Durbar, Gulab Singh collected a force of about 5000 men and sent under the command of Zorawar Singh Kahluria,¹¹ he took the route from Kishtwar and Zaskar, Ladakh at that point of time was without a strong leader, at the same time the weapons were old type, there was no standing army due to which the fighting spirit among the soldiers were lacking. Thus we have a picture not of an army in any real sense of the word, nor even a militia, but rather a rabble of untrained conscript. Dogras were allowed to advance without meeting any real opposition, till they reached Sankhu, above Kargil.¹² There was a small contingent posted

but were easily defeated by the dogra soldiers. An opportunity was provided by the nature as winter was approaching and the dogra general was well aware of the difficulty they had to face if they don't retreat to a suitable place for them. So the dogra general offered peaceful settlement by payment of 15000 rupees as retreating amount.¹³

The chronicle records that the king and his ministers were ready to take the advantage of the offer but the interference of the queen led to the abandon of the offer. Dogra general waited in Sankhu for the new season. Dogra forces waited till April till the snow got melted and the passage became accessible, the Ladakhi forces posted in small contingents were defeated and chased almost all the way to Leh. Ladakhi forces were unsuccessful to defend and such was the havoc of Dogra general that the envoys from villages like Saspol, Alchi, Likir and Nyemo brought presents and were ready to pay homage to the General. At Basgo the king himself came to meet the Dogra general and had to agree the terms which was huge. The king was to pay war indemnity of 50,000 rupees and an annual tribute of 20,000 rupees, and henceforth to consider Ranjit Singh's vassal.

The death of Zorawar Singh in the battle against the Tibet raised the hope of restoration of the indigenous rule but the Dogra ruler Gulab Singh came with his force and defeated the army of Ladakh, thus crushing the hope of resurgence and signed the treaty in 1842 thus putting Ladakh under the Dogra rule. The Dogra wars brought Ladakh into the world conflicts. It put an end to the independence it enjoyed earlier. With the treaty of Amritsar in 1846 Ladakh came under Jammu and Kashmir. And Ladakh remained part of Dogra Kingdom till 1947. After the partition of India and Pakistan, Ladakh with Jammu and Kashmir became part of India.

Thus the foundation of Gon dynasty broke Ladakh's political lineage with the Tibetan Kingdom which became stronger with the foundation of Namgyal Dynasty by king Bhagan. After staying independent for centuries Ladakh's independency came to end under the Dogra rule and in 1947 Ladakh with Jammu and Kashmir became part of Indian Dominion.

End Notes

1. A.H. Francke, *A History of Ladakh*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, (1907) 2008, p. 63.
2. Janet Rizvi, *Ladakh Crossroads of High Asia*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1996, p. 57.
3. A.H. Francke, *A History of Ladakh*, p. 91.
4. Nawang Tsering Shakpo, *A Cultural History of Ladakh*, Kyle Gardener (ed.), Centre for Research on Ladakh The Solitarian, Sabu-Leh, 2010, p. 123.
5. According to Cunningham, during the attempts to re-strengthen Buddhism in Ladakh, the colossal stone Maitreya at Mulbe is said to have been probably erected. This is quite improbable, as such an event would certainly be mentioned in the chronicles. Besides, the custom of erecting stone images is very much older. Judging from the few dateable ones, we may say that not many were erected after 1000 A.D. The Mulbe image was probably carved by one of the Purig chiefs during their first time of independence.
6. Sengge Namgyal didn't followed his mother's faith.
7. A.H. Francke, *A History of Ladakh*, p. 100.
8. The Jamia mosque in Leh.
9. Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh, 950-1842*, Serie Oriental Roma Li, Roma, Instituto Per. Il, Medio ed- Estremo Oriente, 1977, p. 77.
10. Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh, 950-1842*, p. 78.
11. Ibid, p. 139.
12. C.L. Datta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics: 1819-1848: The Dogra conquest of Ladakh, Baltistan and West Tibet and Reactions of other Powers*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi. 1973, p. 107.
13. Ibid, p. 109.

B.N.SASTRY'S (1932-2002) HISTORICAL WRITINGS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE - A CRITICAL NOTE

G. Anjaiah

The fact that some non-historians contributed to the enrichment of historical writings in India is indispensable. D.D. Kosambi (1907-1966) a mathematician by profession extended his valuable insights to history and all his historical writings were appreciated by eminent historians. To this genre belongs, the Telugu scholar Bhinnuri Narsashima Sastry, (1932-2002) who occupies a special place in the scholarly world of Andhra Pradesh for his contribution to Telugu literature, History and Culture. The formation of Telangana State on June 2nd 2014, made the government, Historians and Scholars to focus on the importance of history of Telangana from pre-historic times to contemporary period. In the process of tracing back the intellectual wealth of Telangana, the historical works, inscriptional volumes, Zilla Sarwasvaalu (District encyclopedias), Historical novels, plays etc., of B.N. Sastry became much sought after by historical scholars. To renew B.N. Sastry's works, his students E. Shivanagi Reddy, K. Suryakumar and Kurra Jithendrababu and his associate Sreeranga Chary, historians Adapa Satyanarayana and I made a humble attempt to revisit and highlight the great contribution of B.N. Sastry towards the regional history of Telugu people. The primary objective

of this research is to focus on major contributions of B.N. Sastry to Historical writings of Andhra Desa on the basis of his works.

Bhinnuri Narasimha Sastry, popularly known as 'Shasanaala Sastry' (Sastry of epigraphs) was born on 10th December 1932 in Nalgonda. He was a renowned scholar in Telugu, Sanskrit, Brahmi, Urdu and English. B.N. Sastry was a multifaceted personality. His works speak about his commitment to write a fact based empirical history and culture. All his published works were self-financed and never accepted any aid from government, institutions or individuals. Sastry condemned the policies of state government in his editorial articles in a monthly journal '*Moosi*' until he breathed last. He is considered to be a unique personality of Nizam State. He toured more than two thousand villages of Andhra Desa and collected nearly eight thousand Telugu inscriptions which provided elaborate and interesting details about the History of Ancient and Medieval Andhra Desa.

The following are the important works of B.N. Sastry on Epigraphy, History and Culture:



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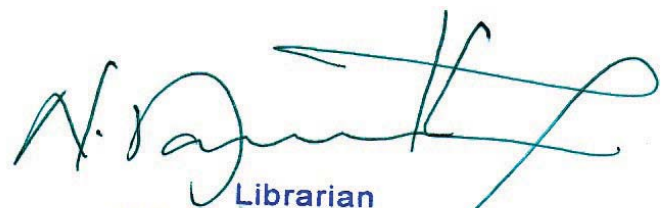
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