

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LADAKH STUDIES

**LADAKH STUDIES**

**\_ 14, Autumn 2000**

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Support: Department of Ethnography and Social Anthropology, Aarhus University.

## EDITORIAL

I am pleased to present this fourteenth issue of Ladakh Studies, whose contents reflect the breadth of interests represented among our members and contributors. For example, Gabriele Reifenberg translates and introduces an account of a winter journey to Zangskar by Moravian missionary and scholar A.H. Francke, taking us back almost a century. And Professor Richard V. Lee reports on medical research carried out in Zangskar in recent years.

This issue also carries a call for papers and pre-registration information for the upcoming tenth Colloquium of the IALS, to be held at Oxford in September and convened by John Bray and Clare Harris. Otherwise, there is an in memoriam for Hugh Richardson, who passed away recently, a sampling of news from Ladakh taken from Indian newspapers, two book reviews and the traditional bibliography update.

As members will have noticed, we are running behind our publication schedule by a few months. Partly, this is due to problems with the reproduction and shipping of the last two issues, particularly distribution in India, where we are lagging even more. We apologize for these delays and hope to establish a system of production and distribution that is both economical and reasonably fast.

I would also like to take this opportunity to once again encourage you all to send contributions of news, reviews, or articles to the editor. This time, Louise Fournier helped obtain photographs of the flooding in Ladakh last summer, while Henry Osmaston and Janet Rizvi contributed different pieces of information. While we have managed to fill two issues per year without too much difficulty, a disproportionate share of the content is produced by the same handful of people. We would welcome more active contributions to the newsletter, so that we can perform our functions more effectively and be more representative of the wider membership of the Association.

## FROM THE HONORARY SECRETARY

Preparations for the next IALS colloquium are now well under way, and this will take place in Oxford from 7-10 September 2001. I hope most of you will already have received an application form by e-mail or by post, and an extra copy is enclosed with this issue of Ladakh Studies. Please send in your abstracts and registrations to me and/or Clare Harris as soon as possible. We will send further updates by e-mail and letter to everyone who registers.

We hope that a good number of Ladakhi and other South Asian scholars will be able to take part. We are applying to several foundations for funding to cover travel expenses, and so far have firm promises from the Michael Aris Trust and the South Asia Studies Committee of the University of Oxford. I would also be pleased to hear from individual IALS members who might wish to contribute to a 'travel fund' for Ladakhi participants. We hope to be able to welcome established scholars, as well as others who may not have travelled to the West before, or who come from regions that have been poorly represented at previous conferences.

As explained in the previous Ladakh Studies, this conference will have a comparative theme—'Ladakh in regional perspective'. Papers with specifically comparative themes will be particularly welcome, and we also plan to invite a number of scholars working elsewhere in the Himalayan/Karakoram region so that they can contribute to panel discussions on topics such as language and history. I would welcome suggestions on panels and on scholars who have hitherto had little contact with the IALS, but who might nonetheless be able to contribute.

Clare Harris is co-ordinating arrangements in Oxford. The Pitt Rivers museum will host a reception on one of the evenings. We will arrange for conference participants to see the Pitt Rivers' extensive Himalayan collection, as well as other libraries and museums of Indian and Tibetan interest. There will also be an opportunity to visit some of the more renowned colleges and other sites of Oxford.

All in all, this should be an exciting and enjoyable conference. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in September.

*John Bray*  
*Hon Sec IALS*



# **“LADAKH IN REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE”**

**OXFORD, 7-10 September 2001**

**CALL FOR CONFERENCE PAPERS**

The 10th Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies will take place from 7-10 September 2001 at Mansfield College, Oxford. This year we are planning to adopt a comparative theme, and invite proposals for papers and/or panels, both from scholars working specifically on Ladakh and from specialists on other parts of the Himalayan region.

IALS colloquia have been held regularly, usually every other year, since 1981, and are intended to bring together people from many disciplines interested in Ladakh studies. The proceedings of the first eight conferences have all been published, and the ninth is in preparation. Past conferences have provided a valuable forum both for formal informal discussion and debate.

We would particularly welcome papers on comparative topics, or on Ladakh's links with other regions. We will also accept contributions from other related regions in our thematic panels. These will include: history, gender issues, language and culture, material culture, and nomads—and we welcome further proposals.

The conference participation fee will be in the region of UKP40. A limited amount of accommodation will be available at competitive prices at Mansfield College. Except with the agreement of the Hon Sec., participants should be paid-up members of the IALS, but are welcome to join up or renew at the conference itself. Only those who are pre-registered can be sure to receive future communications regarding the conference, accommodation, etc.

Please send all communications by post or e-mail to the two convenors:

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LADAKH STUDIES  
TENTH COLLOQUIUM

Oxford, 7 – 10 September 2001

*Pre-registration form*

Name:..... Title..... (Mrs/Dr etc)  
Address:.....  
.....  
City:.....  
Postcode:..... Country:.....  
Tel..... Fax: .....

I hope to attend the colloquium; please send me further details

I offer a paper on the subject of.....  
.....  
and I enclose/will send a 250 word summary.

I propose to organize a panel on .....

Date:..... Signature.....



## **NEWS FROM LADAKH**

### **CONGRESS AGAIN DOMINATES LAHDC**

In what is almost a repetition of its 1995 performance, elections to the second Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh, were won overwhelmingly by the Indian National Congress party. The INC captured twenty out of the total of twenty-six seats up for election. An additional four members will be nominated directly by the Governor. The national Conference party managed to win the remaining four seats, while the BJP failed to win a seat.

The lack of success of the National Conference was reported to have come as a major blow to that party, which had fared well during the latest Lok Sabha elections. At that time, the Congress candidate, LAHDC Chief Executive Councillor Thupstan Chhewang was defeated by his National Conference opponent. This time, Chhewang contested two constituencies, Khaltse and Kungyam, winning both. In the showdown at Khaltse, he soundly defeated NC president for Leh, Tsering Nurbo, but at Kungyam the margin with NC candidate Dorje Mutup was a mere 81 votes (or 5.6%). Prominent BJP leader Spalzes Angmo was defeated in Phiyang by Congress (I) candidate Sonam Wangdus with a margin of 50.3 percent.

National Conference candidates won at Nyoma, Turtuk, Thikse and Chushot, while an independent candidate, Dawa Tsering, captured Skyurbuchan, narrowly defeating NC's Phuntsog Dorjey.

### **LAHDC SWORN IN; THUPSTAN CHHEWANG RE-ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN**

On November 4, the 26 newly elected members of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh, were sworn in by Deputy Commissioner Dheeraj Gupta. According to a report by Tashi Morup in the *Daily Excelsior*, Haji Abdul Qadir of NC party from Turtuk constituency was the first to take the oath.

During a brief round table meeting in the new conference hall of the LAHDC complex the lone independent candidate Dawa Tsering from Skyurbuchan constituency promised to work in co-operation with the majority party, but insisted he would seek the consent of the people of his constituency before accepting to join the Congress.

During this meeting the Congress members unanimously suggested Thupstan Chhewang to resume his position as Chairman of the Council, which he eventually accepted despite initial reservations.

At a formal meeting later in the afternoon, Deputy Commissioner Dheeraj Gupta, who is also the Chief Executive Officer, LAHDC, declared Thupstan Chhewang chairman of the second council. In his first address to the new Councilors Chhewang reiterated his firm desire to live up to people's expectations. He also said he would seek co-operation of both Central and State Government for the development of the entire district, especially the remote area.

Later talking to media Thupstan Chhewang said that it was due to the influence of Kushok Bakula, whose service to the people of Ladakh is lasting, that the Congress party won the election. He said that the Council would focus more on agriculture, education, and infrastructure including the communication sector during its new term. He appealed the State Government to release funds in time so that the Council would be able to function smoothly

### **CHHEWANG DISTRIBUTES PORTFOLIOS**



On November 11, Thupstan Chhewang appointed Rigzin Jora, Rigzin Spalbar and Tsultim Phunchok as Executive Councilors of the newly formed Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC). The fourth executive councillor will be picked by the the Governor of the State from among the four nominated members of the Council.

Tashi Morup reports: "While there are two new faces in this rank, one of the key luminaries Rigzin Jora has once again made it to the top spot much to the people's expectation. However this time he has a different arena unlike his previous Education field. Many, especially in the Education department, wonder why Nawang Rigzin Jora has a different portfolio this time. Is he avoiding the headache of problem-ridden Education sector, which is undergoing a major reform under Operation New Hope?

Talking to the EXCELSIOR Rigzin Jora clarified that it is Chairman's prerogative to assign a specific task to the Executive Councilors selected by him. He said, "for me it does not make any difference whether it is Works department or Education". Moreover, he said, there would not be any change in the attitude towards the ongoing pursuance of education reforms with Rigzin Spalbar taking over the charge.

Nawang Rigzin Jora will now take care of Public Works Department, which includes Roads, Bridges, Public Health Engineering, Minor and Medium Irrigation, Flood Control, Housing, Urban Development, Non Functional Buildings and Power (Non-conventional Energy).

Thupstan Chhewang himself will look after allotment, use and occupation of land vested in the Council, supervision and constitution of Notified Area Committees, development of Leh town including IDSMT, Community Development, Jawahar Rozgar Yajna and Employment Assurance Scheme, Desert Development Programme, Preservation of Environment and ecology and Co-ordination of Centrally sponsored and State Sector Schemes.

He will also take care of Health, Tourism, Hospitality and Protocol, Wildlife, Fisheries, Parks and Gardens, Food and Supplies, Garages and Information Departments, Social Welfare and Minority Affairs. The sets of power vested in other three Executives appointed by him are primarily Agriculture, Public Works Department and Education which further cover a range of charges.

Tsultim Phuntsog has in his custody formulation and periodical review of the progress and achievements of development plans and schemes and issues relating to Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Co-operative, Innovative Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (Green Houses), Forest, Command Area Development and Soil Conservation Department.

Rigzin Spalbar, the triumphant from Upper Leh, has formulation and periodical review of the progress and achievements of developmental plans and schemes and issues relating to Education, Promotion of Languages and Culture, Vocational Training, Small Scale and Cottage Industries, Handloom, Handicraft, Employment generation. Besides these alleviation of poverty, including IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, Tool Kits Programme, PMRY, J&K Self-employment Scheme, Youth Services and Sports, Archives Antiques and ICDS Department.

## **GOVERNOR'S NOMINEES TO LAHDC**

On December 21, the Government nominated four persons as members of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh. They are Smt. Spalzes Angmo, Hotel Lingzi, Leh; Smt. Rigzin Spaldon, Stakna; Mr. Ghulam Abbas Abidi, Thikse; and Mr. Mohammad Sadiq, Leh.

The governor has chosen to ignore the suggestions put forward in early November by the District Congress Committee and by the local BJP. The Congress nominees included Mr Ashraf Ali, former Executive Councillor, Mr Mohd Yokof Bijal, Mrs Tsechu Lamo and Mr Sonam Targais as administrator and social worker. The BJP favored retired IAS officer A Azim, Everester Sonam Paljor and two women Yangchan Dolma and Norzin.

## **SIX STATUES STOLEN FROM TASHI CHOLANG MONASTERY**

In yet another major theft from a monastic shrine, six statues were stolen from Tashi Cholang Gonpa of Sural village in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh recently. Earlier in a similar incident, twenty-one statues worth crores of rupees were stolen from Zongkul monastery in Zanskar region of Kargil district two years back. Those involved in the theft are still at large.

According to Norboo Mahayan, a resident of Sural, the old statues of Buddha (8 inches), Ganesha (18 inches), Milarepa, Avaloketesvara, Hashand and another one in the range of three to four inches were found stolen from the shelves when the monk taking care of the shrine returned after a nightlong stay at a house in Sural, where he had gone to perform a ritual.

## **DC LEH TRANSFERRED**

On 25 August, the Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Mr Navin Kumar Chowdhary was given a farewell party by the district police. The farewell party was attended by all the district officers of Leh including Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Nyoma and Khaltsi. Speaking on the occasion, the outgoing Deputy Commissioner thanked the district police for providing excellent cooperation to the district administration for maintaining law and order in the district during his tenure at Leh here. Later the Deputy Commissioner was taken in a car procession upto Leh Airport by district officers and leaders of various communities including the presidents of the Ladakh Buddhist Association and the Muslim Association. Mr Chowdhary also attended a farewell party organized by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh here last evening. Speaking on the occasion the chairman LAHDC, Mr Thupstan appreciated the role of the outgoing Deputy Commissioner as a District Magistrate and Chief Executive Officer, LAHDC. Mr Chowdhary thanked the council members for their cooperation with the district administration during his tenure at Leh.

## **SHABIR SHAH IN LEH**

On August 29, Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) chief Shabir Ahmad Shah arrived at Leh on his two day visit to Ladakh region. A DFP press note issued in Leh said that Shah was accorded a warm reception by the people of Leh. People belonging to various political parties met Shabir Shah and was apprised of the political developments in the region.

In his meeting with Ladakh Bhuddist Association (LBA) chief T Samphel, Shah was apprised of the wrong policies adopted by the Government in treating the people of Ladakh, the release said. It said that Shah in his speech, expressed regrets over the failure of the authorities in finding a peaceful solution to Kashmir issue. The DFP chief said that some vested interest were resorting to cheap tactics in keeping the Kashmir issue alive. In this context , he said that people in the name of region and religion were being forced to fight against each other for petty interests. He cited that Kashmiri Pandits were earlier forced to leave Kashmir by resorting to killing spree. Then the target of such elements was Sikhs as 35 of the community members were gunned down in Chattisinghpora this March. Recently, Amarnath Yatris were killed in cold-blood by the same elements who don't want to see peace returning to Kashmir, Shah asserted.

A delegation of Anjuman Moin-e-Islam which was headed by Haji Ghulam Hassan and vice-president Sheikh Mohd also met Shabir Shah. The delegation exchanged ideas over the measures to be adopted in maintaining communal harmony and universal brotherhood in the region, the release added.

## **LITTLE SUPPORT FOR SHABIR SHAH**

After what was said to have been a not so successful meeting with the leaders of Ladakh Buddhists' Association (LBA) on August 29, Shabir Shah, president of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) returned to Srinagar today after a short visit to Ladakh with his 25-member team in an effort to bring in its fold Ladakhi communities towards pressurising the Central Government to come out with a solution of the Kashmir issue.

Talking to the *Daily Excelsior*, Shabir Shah, while condemning the division of the State on any basis, expressed that the Ladakhi communities should also have the representation in the proposed trilateral talk (Kashmir, Pakistan and India) on Kashmir issue. He said that his team purposely came to Ladakh to aid the confidence shaken among the people under the ruling government and to convince various communities to stand up as one for the Kashmir issue or at least put their view on that account.

However, LBA leaders Tsering Samphel (president), Angchuk Tsao (vice president), P T Kunzang (General Secretary) and Youth Wing president Lobzang Nyantak in the meeting declined to get involved in the Kashmir issue. Instead, they stressed that they are only concerned about the demand of Union Territory status for Leh. Recently, the LBA relaunched an agitation for UT status, and a campaign rally is being held every third day "The struggle will persist until we get the UT status which we feel is a safer option as per the need of the situation," Kunzang was reported to have said.

On the Autonomy issue, Shabir Shah rejected it as futile and called for a permanent solution to the Kashmir issue in the interest of all. He also held a meeting with the Shia-Sunni co-ordination committee and met a cross-section of people. Earlier he visited Rangdum monastery in Zanskar to pay his condolences over the death of three monks.

## **LBA, JKNF resolve to launch joint struggle**

The need for close co-ordination between Ladakh Buddhists Association and Jammu and Kashmir Nationalist Front (JKNF) and other organisations favouring trifurcation of J&K was stressed in a meeting held between Mr T Samphel president Ladakh Buddhists Association and leaders of JKNF here on September 4.

As per a release, Mr Tilak Raj Sharma convenor of the JKNF and Dr Varinder Gupta president Jammu Mukti Morcha held the deliberation with LBA chief over the core issue. While the Bhuddhist leader expressed gratitude to the people of Jammu for their fullest sympathies and support for the cause of Ladakhis fighting for Union territory status, the leaders of JKNF were grateful to Ladakhis to launch for setting example before Jammu to launch prolonged struggle for achievement of their rights and redressal of demands.

It was decided to evolve a mechanism for a joint struggle and to hold regular consultations. Both the organisations resolved to fight jointly with tooth nails against the NC agenda of greater autonomy and divide Jammu and Ladakh on communal lines. It was stressed that any negotiations for future political set up of J&K within Indian constitution needed to be held with the representatives of Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir and only those who subscribe to Indian constitution should alone matter in any decision to be arrived at.

## **LADAKHI PORTERS' ROLE IN KARGIL CONFLICT**

The Defence Ministry has triggered a measure of resentment among scores of the people of Ladakh in eastern Kashmir by its unwillingness or inability to take a final decision on the question of recruiting about 1,200 Ladakhi porters in the Indian Army.

The Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) played a leading role making available for the Army 1,200 porters in ten days during the 1999 Kargil conflict. And the LBA, to quote Lama Lobzang, a senior Ladakhi leader and member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, had been assured that the porters, who had rendered the much-needed assistance to the Indian troops at difficult, dizzy heights in the trans-Himalayan region, would be absorbed in the Army.

Defence Minister, Mr George Fernandes, had conveyed his appreciation through a letter dated November 1999 to Lama Lobzang: "The LBA played an exemplary role during the current conflict with Pakistani Army and infiltrators extending utmost cooperation to the Armed Forces. The Government fully acknowledges the role played by the Association in extending cooperation in the recent Kargil crisis and will extend all cooperation to the Association as considered appropriate."

None in the power corridors of Delhi, particularly the Defence Minister, can deny the fact that the Kargil conflict took a turn for the worse when the large ammunition depot at Kargil was completely destroyed. At that stage the people of Ladakh led by LBA rose to the occasion. And the local truck-owners union marshalled 400 trucks which swiftly collected arms and ammunition from various depots and delivered them to the Army personnel at Kargil. This, undoubtedly, saved Kargil. And when during the second week of June 1999 the Indian troops desperately looked for porters, the Ladakh Buddhist Association pressed itself into action. A group of 36 LBA youth volunteers was sent to Yaldor front on June 23 to act as porters. This was followed by the march of hundreds of Ladakhi volunteers to the LBA headquarters for enrolment as porters for the Indian troops. Curiously, even as the Indian defence authorities admitted that the Buddhists of Ladakh in general and Ladakh Buddhist Association in particular had provided strategic assistance to the Army during the war with Pakistani forces, the question of providing "permanent" employment opportunity to the 1,200-odd Ladakhi porters seems to have been treated as unimportant during the post-Kargil period.

## **GOVT CLEARS RESTRUCTURING OF LADAKH SCOUTS**

On September 11, the Government cleared the proposal to restructure one of the Army's most decorated units, the Ladakh Scouts, on the lines of infantry regimental centres paving the way for raising more battalions of the famed fighters nicknamed 'Snow Tigers'.

With this restructuring, the regiment of Ladakh Scouts, with more than 300 gallantry awards to its credit including one Ashok Chakra, ten Mahavir Chakras and two Kirti Chakras, now obtains the same status as other regiments of the Indian Army, an Army spokesman here said. Ladakh Scouts, raised in 1963 in the wake of 1962 debacle against Chinese forces, was the first unit of the Indian Army to successfully launch the counter strike against Pakistani incursions in Kargil operations in 1999 in Batalik sector and was promised promotion in status by Defence Minister George Fernandes and Army Chief Gen V P Malik.

A proud Lt Gen S S Grewal, Adjutant General at Army Headquarters here and Colonel of the Scouts hailing the decision said, "Ladakh Scouts are the best fighting troops in the region, who have proved themselves in all the operations since 1965." Gen Grewal said the raising of 'additional battalions' of the Scouts would in the long run mean decrease in deployment from other sectors, thus saving high costs of redeployment. With the upgradation of status for the Ladakh Scouts, Indian Army would be left with only three scout units -Garhwal and Kumaon Scouts deployed on Indo-Tibet border and a small detachment of Dogra Scouts. Another famed mountain warfare unit,

the Special Frontier Force, though formed on scouts lines is the hush-hush unit controlled by Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

Gen Grewal who commanded the Ladakh Scouts from 1978 to 1980 said besides raising the status of the scouts, Army was planning to upgrade the Ladakh Scouts Schools in Karo and Partapur for families of scouts and people of the local area. "The restructuring would mean that scouts would be trained in the same manner as other troops, with constant efforts being made to fine-tune their natural skills in specialised mountain warfare training," he said.

Recalling the chequered history of the scouts, the Colonel said that scouts fore-runners, the Nubra Guards, had in 1948 operations held on to Partapur sector against determined bid by Gilgit and Tochi scouts to save Leh. "In 1971 operations, the scouts led by twice Mahavir Chakra recipient Col Rinchen Namgyal had captured 800 sq kms of Pakistan occupied Kashmir in Turtok region and had led the counter strike in operation Vijay and had acted as guides of some key units or participated in others," Grewal said.

Adept in mountaineering, Ladakh Scouts have produced famous climbers like Chewang Nurbu who was part of successful Army expeditions to Everest, Kangchenjunga, Saser Kangri, Sia Kangri and Trishul, besides being the only unit in the Army to take part in National Winter Games. (PTI)

## **WWF INTERNATIONAL TAKES UP CONSERVATION INITIATIVE**

### **High altitude wetlands in Ladakh facing environmental degradation, Govt apathy**

By Gopal Sharma

Environmental degradation is on the rise in every corner of the world and almost every type of ecosystem has been affected due to its impact. Wetlands which are considered to be the most productive eco-system of the world are also facing similar problems induced by various types of growing anthropogenic activities.

Several wetlands in the State of Jammu and Kashmir including those at the high altitude have their own importance throughout the world as these waterbodies are breeding ground for a large number of migratory birds and other rare species. The high mountain lakes in Ladakh have the unique feature as these wetlands/ marshes are said to be the only breeding grounds for Bar-headed Geese in India and the black-necked crane outside China.

The conservation of these wetlands has become most important task as the rare bird species found in this region are at the verge of extinction due to ongoing hunting activity and other environmental threats. The Government of India or the State Government never paid any attention towards the conservation work at these sites. The International Environmental Organisation—the World Wide Fund for Nature—International (WWF) has taken up the project in hand for the conservation of three major wetlands in Ladakh region which include—Tso Morari, Tsokar and Pangong.

A young student from the Department of Environment Sciences, University of Jammu Mr Pankaj Chandan has been appointed as the Project Officer for the said project and he is carrying the research, documentation and the conservation work at these sites which are far away from Leh. He disclosed that realising the importance of these wetlands of Ladakh, the WWF has initiated this conservation programme.

In the initial phase, these three wetlands have been selected for conservation and proper scientific documentation. In order to carryout the conservation activities and field research two Field Officers of WWF have been deployed for the task. He disclosed that the main objective of this conservation programme is to involve the local people for various conservation activities. Several

conservation committees are being constituted around the selected wetlands. The committee members are being trained and educated in such a way that they may be able to react to various environmental problems. Awareness is also being created among the locals through these committees to make this project a major success.

Mr Chandan, who was recently in Jammu further disclosed that the major target group of this conservation programme is the local student community. The students are also being involved in this programme by enrolling them as members of the Nature Club with the assistance of their teachers. This way several Nature Clubs have been formed. Various teacher training workshops on this conservation project are being organised in the region.

According to a senior official of the WWF, the major threat to these wetlands is due to unregulated tourism. The tourists are also being provided with the education and awareness material. Sign boards depicting the importance of these wetlands and instructions for the visitors, have been fixed around these wetlands. In order to make this conservation programme a mass movement a close coordination is being developed with the involvement of a large number of governmental as well as non-governmental organisations, he maintained.

A national consultation on the conservation of wetlands of Ladakh was held from July 24 to 31 recently in which a large number of scientists from various institutions of the country participated. Besides them, several NGOs working in the region, local scientists, Army and civil governmental officials also attended. The participants gave various suggestions and recommended them for the implementation.

The official pointed out that these wetlands have become an important centres of attraction for the tourists as the area was thrown opened to them in 1995. The sudden influx of a large number of tourists to this eco-sensitive region of Changthang, has put immense pressure on the precious eco-system of the area.

## **SMUGGLING OF SHAHTOOSH IN J&K**

Incredible...but true that all the smuggling routes of Chiru wool (Tibetan antelope) lead to the Jammu and Kashmir state. The simple reason is that the Kashmiris are considered as the most expert in weaving Shahtoosh products and it is the only place in the world where the trade is not declared as illegal as yet. The pressure is being mounted on the State Government from the Centre and other International environment organisations to stop this activity. The intricate art of spinning and weaving a Shahtoosh shawl is carried out only in J&K, known for its carpets and shawls apart from its picturesque terrain. Of the many handicrafts from Kashmir, Shahtoosh has pride of place.

Most of the spinners and weavers are little aware about the actual source of wool they use and the fact that the Chiru is killed for wool. It is established fact that the Chiru is the Tibetan Antelope is the only source of Shahtoosh and the animal is killed for procuring the wool. It has been listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act since 1972. In 1991, trade in Schedule I animals or products was banned. WWF-Traffic India investigators have done an excellent job to unearth this smuggling nexus and the routes being used by those connected with this underground trade.

In the recent past, there have been many seizures within India and elsewhere involving Shahtoosh shawls and wool. Huge quantities of wool were seized ranging from 100 to 600 kgs through raids between 1993 to 1996. A good number of Shahtoosh shawls have been seized by the Wildlife authorities and Police in Delhi so far. Since 1995 more than 450 shawls have been seized in India.

Many such anti-poaching efforts are also being carried out in Tibet. Only in 1999, the Chinese police seized 190 furs, 2000 rounds of ammunition, over 1600 Chiru skins, 548 heads, 18 vehicles, 14 rifles, 12000 rounds of ammunition and arrested 66 poachers in its special drive to save this endangered species. Seizures have also been reported from Hongkong but the Jammu and Kashmir

Wild Life Department and the State police is least concerned about the trade and fate of Chiru which is at the verge of extinction.

A WWF-India official connected with the study disclosed that a migratory population of 200 to 250 of the Tibetan Antelope comes with Indian limits from Tibetan plateau around July in small herds and remain there till September before returning to their wintering grounds in Tibet, now in China. Their population is declining rapidly in the region. So far, no evidence of collection of shed wool has been received by the investigators. Moreover, no evidence found of existence of a breeding farm of the Tibetan antelope in Ladakh region as claimed by the local traders.

Ironically, Chiru is accorded the highest protection, listed as it is in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The International ban on the Shahtoosh trade has been in force for about 26 years now. Jammu and Kashmir is the only place where its trade continues to be legal, although traders are required to obtain a license from the Competent Authority prior to carrying out business but the fact remains that no licenses have been issued, implying that it is illegal to manufacture and sell Shahtoosh in the State.

The official said that despite Schedule II listing in J&K Wildlife (Protection) Act, the manufacture and trade in Shahtoosh, even within J&K is 'ipso facto' illegal because, transit of Shahtoosh wool from Tibet ( China) into India would require CITES permits even for non-commercial use. No such permits have been issued by the CITES Management Authority of Peoples Republic of China, for trade with India. Again, manufacture and trade in Shahtoosh shawls in J&K, require valid annual license from the competent authority under the J&K Wildlife Protection Act 1978, but no such licenses have been issued in J&K for several years now. The same has been confirmed by a senior official in the Wildlife Protection Department.

A recent investigation by the WWF-Traffic official revealed that all the smuggling routes of Chiru wool lead to weavers in the J&K state. Some routes take the from the high plains of China directly over mountain passes and into Kashmir, while others cross Nepal and other Indian states before arriving in Kashmir, sometimes passing through Delhi and other north Indian states. This wool is known to travel by horse back, truck, train and airplane, often hidden in shipments or parcels of wool from domestic animals such as sheep or pashmina goat, whose fine wool is a near equivalent to Shahtoosh. The bones and other parts of this animal are used in medicines and smuggled to Hongkong, China, India and other parts of the world.

The campaign, which has received considerable media attention, aims to inform and educate the public about the mindless slaughter of the Tibetan antelope. There is no other way to save the endangered species but to say "no" to Shahtoosh.

## **CLASHES IN LEH: 12 HURT**

Tension gripped Leh town on September 28 following a clash between Buddhists and Jammu Kashmir Armed Police (JKAP) in which over a dozen persons including two constables were injured. Agitated Buddhists attacked a camp of JKAP, damaged shops owned by other community and forced closure of all markets.

Following violent protests by Buddhists, the police authorities today ordered shifting of JKAP camp from the town, suspended a constable responsible for opening fire on the Buddhists' rally and ordered a magisterial inquiry into the firing incident and beating-up of Buddhists. The situation was well under control in Leh, SSP Ladakh Sunil Sharma told EXCELSIOR on the phone. He said police and para-military have intensified patrolling in the town as a precautionary measure to prevent flare-up of violence. Buddhists leadership was persuaded by police not to take out a procession in the town tomorrow, which could lead to fresh tension.

Correspondent Tashi Morup adds from Leh: Trouble started in the town at 1000 hours today when a JKAP constables objected to alleged 'wrong parking' of a Maruti Van near Old Bus Stand in which a Buddhist Monk was travelling. Occupants of the van took serious note of the policeman's threatening postures and entered into a verbal dual with him. Reports said the constable allegedly assaulted the Monk. This agitated the people standing around and they snatched rifle of the constable. A lady cop intervened and restored the rifle to cop.

A number of people then gathered at New Bus Stand. While they were holding protests against the assault on the Buddhist Monk, two policemen appeared on the road and handed out a severe thrashing to an old man, who was among the protestants. This irked the people, who turned violent and attacked JKAP camp near Bus Stand subjecting the camp to heavy stone pelting in which two cops were wounded. A Sentry on duty fired several shots in air to disperse the mob. Mob then marched to Leh town and forced closure of all shops. They pelted stone on some shopkeepers, who refused to down their shutters. Situation remained tense in the town for more than two hours. SSP Leh Sunil Sharma, DySP and SHO alongwith police and para-military rushed to the town and persuaded the agitated people to give up violence and assured them to consider their demands.

LBA president Tsering Samphel met the authorities and condemned police action. He demanded disbanding of JKAP camps from the town. Kushok Thiksay, MP and Kushok Togdan, a local Minister also supported the Buddhists demand and demanded action against JKAP cops, who assaulted people. Late in the evening, authorities agreed to shift JKAP camp from the town and ordered suspension of JKAP Sentry, who had resorted to firing on the procession. A magisterial inquiry was also ordered into the firing incident, the sources said.

Of 12 injured, condition of 28-year old Karma Tunop was said to be serious. He has been admitted in the district hospital. Eight other injured including two police cops were discharged from the hospital after first-aid. Meanwhile, prominent Buddhist leader and member of National Commission for Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes Lama Lobzang has demanded immediate withdrawal of State police from the Himalayan district. In a letter to Union Home Minister L K Advani, he alleged that the State police had been "letting loose repression" in Leh at a time when elections to Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council were round the corner. He claimed that the State Government was "panicking because it sees no chance for the ruling party nominees to win any seat in the Council." Seeking immediate intervention by the Centre, he urged the Home Minister to ensure that police was not further encouraged to "communalise the situation."

## **ASTROLOGY LOSES REPUTE IN LADAKH**

Once the cradle of the society astrology has lost the repute that it used to enjoy during the kingship in Ladakh and this diminishing practice, though highly established Buddhist science, got some boost with the formation of Hill Council whose funds to organize seminars aided this dying discipline.

Whether it's a birth of a child, an initiation of a work, a celebration or a death in every sphere an astrologer's advice was nearly a customary obligation and considered very important earlier. Even nowadays an astrologer's help is sought especially in preparing a child's horoscope, on a death of a person and in several other instances. However, with more and more educated people it is losing its glory of the past.

Yet with little aid astrologers meet occasionally in seminars in their effort to come up. A weeklong training on astrology organized by Ladakh Amchi Sabha that ended today had a fairly good participants of over 70 from all over Ladakh. During the exercise conducted under the two eminent astrologers Thupstan Shanfan and Venerable Lobzang the astrologers of all ages discussed and learned about the various aspects of the system.

However mere holding such meetings is not enough to encourage these astrologers who seem to bear a feeling of negligence in the wake of the popularity of its sister Amchi system. This is



apparent by their collective expression that astrology has much more role to play in day to day life than Amchi system. According to Thupstan Shanfan, this is a dire need of establishing a separate institute on this established system, whose origin is attributed to the Buddha and Manjushri. And this system has been always a significant part in the lives of the people of Ladakh since the beginning.

The practitioners can be classified into two called rTispa and Onpo. While rTispa on the basis of his calculations merely advice and give instructions where as Onpo performs the rituals while practicing it. Shanfan said, earlier rTispas and Onpos were given a special status by the King, who had bestowed several privileges including exemption from many obligations and also they also used to get the help from other community members in their household works. However, that status has greatly reduced and only in a few villages

Astrologers enjoy some of the customary privileges. 68-year-old Phuntsog, an Onpo from Taru village said, his family still enjoys exemption from some of the community obligations and they were even kept out of the compulsory porters' list during the Kargil war. Such surviving customs apparently is the mere cause for its practice today, otherwise is devoid of any substantial benefits in monetary terms. Thupstan Shanfan said, the diminishing interest among the people has further reduced the benefits of meager amount they are offered in their service.

## **ENTIRE KARGIL DISTRICT TO GET WATER WITHIN TWO YEARS**

Potable drinking water facilities will be made available to the entire population of Kargil district within next two years. This was revealed at a meeting of engineers held here today to review the achievements made under Public Health Engineering, Irrigation and PWD sectors in Kargil and Leh districts. The Works Minister, Mr. Ali Mohammad Sagar presided. The meeting was informed that out of 130 villages of the districts Kargil 80 villages have already been provided drinking water facility whileas 17 villages will be provided this facility by March 2001. The meeting was told that 17 drinking water schemes were under execution in the district at a cost of Rs 2 crores. The remaining 23 villages will get potable drinking water facilities in the year 2002. Mr. Sagar asked the officers to initiate steps to reactivate some defunct water supply schemes in the district immediately to augment drinking water supply.

While reviewing performance of the Irrigation sector, the meeting was informed that Wakharong irrigation project in Kargil district coming up at a cost of Rs 8.25 crores is likely to be completed by the end of next financial year. So far 65 per cent work on the project involving an expenditure of about Rs 5 crores has been completed. The project will provide irrigation facility to 680 hectares of land benefiting 15,000 souls of the area. Meanwhile sanction has been accorded to the Khumbathan Irrigation Project Kargil. The project will provide Irrigation facility to over 500 hectares of land covering 60 villages of the district.

While reviewing achievements in PHE sector in Leh district it was stated that eight water supply schemes at a cost of over Rs 1 crore have been taken up last year for providing potable drinking water to the people. The meeting was told that so far Rs 34 crores have been spent on the construction of Centrally Sponsored Igoo-Phey Irrigation canal in Leh and further Rs 7 crore for the project are being provided.

## **YOUNG MONK'S GOODWILL GESTURE FOR LADAKHI PATIENTS**

Deeply moved at the sight of suffering heart patients at Ladakh Buddhist Vihara in Delhi a young monk Geylong Thupstan Chogyal decided to do something for these poor patients from remote Ladakh. Since then Chogyal devoted himself to the service of the patients suffering from heart diseases common in Ladakh.

The high altitude, extremely cold climate and difficult living conditions in Ladakh result in high incidence of congenital and acquired heart diseases as well as causing a high prevalence of respiratory problems. However, for such diseases there is no treatment facility in the local hospitals. And thus a heart patient is left with the only option to go outside Ladakh to a place like Delhi, which is normally beyond his financial capacity.

Of all the heart problems Rheumatic Heart Disease is severest. The disease, which is often preceded by rheumatic fever, is a crippling disease, this is written in a pioneering journal on health (to be released shortly) by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sonam Dawa Lonpo and his assistant Ammanullah. The report further said that the consequent result of the Rheumatic Heart Disease is continuing damage to the heart, increasing disabilities, repeated hospitalization and premature deaths.

Although people of Ladakh are lucky in a sense that its health is taken care by highly efficient and sincere local doctors, yet many diseases including Rheumatic Heart Disease need a treatment facility which is not available in the Sonam Norboo Memorial Hospital in Leh. Such patients have to go outside Ladakh to a place like Delhi bearing the large expenses.

The cost of surgery to treat Rheumatic Heart Disease is 1,42,000 rupees and the average cost of Congenital Heart Disease, which is also in high prevalence in Ladakh, is 45,000 rupees. These prices are exclusive of costly travel expenses and accommodation charges for the patient and an attendant in Delhi. Thus it is a dreadful disease in Ladakh.

However, today these patients do not need to loose heart. Efforts made by Chogyal have resulted into a formation of the Ladakh Heart Foundation (LHF), a non-governmental organisation, devoted to help the needy patients. Since its establishment in 1997, LHF has helped the heart patients by giving financial assistance (raised from local organizations like "16 friends") to the needy ones besides bringing awareness among the common people about the heart diseases.

In medical camps all over Ladakh organized in collaboration with local doctors LHF has so far registered 108 cases of Rheumatic heart disease, 62 cases of Congenital Heart Disease, 16 cases of Coronary Heart Disease and 14 cases of Acquired Rheumatic Fever. In 1998 LHF invited a senior cardio-thoracic surgeon from AIIMS, New Delhi Dr. Sampath Kumar, who examined about 85 Rheumatic Heart Disease patients and suggested proper treatment. He also advised to get a machine called Colour Doppler Imaging System to facilitate the diagnostic capability of the local physicians. SNM Hospital presently possesses this machine and is fully functional. This considerably reduces the expenses of a heart patient as the initial diagnosis, earlier performed at Delhi, can now be done in Leh. However, soon a complete diagnostic center with operating theatre and a conference hall will be set up in Leh by the Heart Foundation. J&K government and LAHDC have already allotted land for this project. The doctors from AIIMS have promised to visit the diagnostic center every year. However, more intricate surgery of Rheumatic Heart Disease would still have to be carried out in Delhi.

## **GYA PEAK CLIMBED**

According to a report in *The Himalayan Club Newsletter*, Gya (6794) at the junction of Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir and Tibet was successfully climbed on June 15, 1999. The expedition, organised by the Indian Mountaineering Federation, was led by Ladakhi climber Chewang Motup Goba. The other members of the team were Nadre Sherpa from the Sonam Gyatso Mountaineering Institute in Gangtok, Sikkim; Cyrus Shroff, an engineer from Bombay; Lobzang Tsering, a trekking and mountaineering guide from Ladakh; and Amrish Jha, an employee in a garment export firm in Delhi.

The expedition left Leh by truck on May 22 after a private audience with H.H. the Dalai Lama. While establishing an advanced base camp, the weather turned bad, and on May 31st the team assisted in the rescue of a three member expedition from Bombay that had run into severe difficulties during their attempt at the same peak. Unfortunately, one of the three, Arun Samant, died later. On June 15, the summit was reached by Nadre Sherpa, Dawa Wangchuk Sherpa, Lobzang Tsering and Nima Thendup, followed the next day by Cyrus Shroff, Amrish Kumar Jha, Pasang Tenzing, Pasang Nurboo, and Chomber Sherpa. The first group found a piton on the summit. This piece of evidence, together with photographs and a piece of cloth with the names of summitteers and the date 12th August 1998, confirmed that Gya was indeed first climbed by the Indian Army expedition the preceding year. Due to a lack of evidence and poor record keeping, this expedition was previously believed to have summited the adjacent Gya North, rather than the main peak.

## **Nepal and Himalayan Studies Association**

The membership of the US-based Nepal Studies Association has voted to rename the organization to reflect the broader interests and diversity of its membership.

For more information on the organization, membership, and benefits—most importantly the journal *Himalayan Research Bulletin*—see:  
[www.macalester.edu/~guneratne/index.html](http://www.macalester.edu/~guneratne/index.html)



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## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

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- *Kim Gutschow* has taken up a two-year position as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Religious Studies at the Department of Anthropology at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, USA. Her new e-mail address is: [gutschow@brandeis.edu](mailto:gutschow@brandeis.edu)
- *Spalzes Angmo* has been nominated by the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir to serve as a member of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh.

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## OTHER NEWS

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### NEWS AND DISCUSSION LIST ON TIBETAN MEDICINAL PLANTS

The listserv <[tpp-tibmed-plants](mailto:tpp-tibmed-plants)> is owned and operated by Tibetan Plateau Project, a project of the nonprofit international environmental organization, Earth Island Institute. The mission of the Tibetan Plateau Project is to promote the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable development of local communities in the Tibetan Plateau region, which includes portions of Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. More information about TPP and project activities is available from their website at: <http://www.earthisland.org/tpp> .

TPP takes a particular interest in the conservation of medicinal plants used in medical traditions of the Tibetan Plateau region, especially Tibetan medicine. The purpose of <[tpp-tibmed-plants](mailto:tpp-tibmed-plants)> is to promote, support and guide the exchange of information on the topic of medicinal plant conservation and the practice of Tibetan medicine. TPP compiles research, exchanges information and encourages collaboration on initiatives related to these topics, including:

- News and recent developments in conservation/research of medicinal plants of the Tibetan Plateau region or aspects of Tibetan medicine relating to plant use.
- New/recent scientific and popular literature (books, articles, reports, monographs, etc.)
- Exchange of information regarding the expertise and availability of colleagues in applicable or related fields.
- Notices/reports of conferences, workshops, courses, etc.
- Internet resources/contacts

Although the scope of <[tpp-tibmed-plants](mailto:tpp-tibmed-plants)> does not focus on strictly medical or epistemological topics (e.g., pathology, clinical practices, texts, etc.), it does relate to these topics from a medicinal plant conservation standpoint.

## HUGH RICHARDSON - IN MEMORIAM

The death of Hugh Richardson in early December 2000 breaks an important link with the past of both Britain and Tibet. Richardson was the last British representative in Lhasa, and served the government of independent India in the same capacity until 1950. After his retirement from government service, he maintained his connection with the Himalayas as scholar, author, and campaigner for Tibet. To the end he was generous in his willingness to share his knowledge with younger scholars, and in June 1999 I myself had the privilege of visiting him at his home in St Andrew's, Scotland. Instead of a formal obituary, this article offers some insights from that meeting.

St Andrew's is a market town on the coast of Fife. Its two main claims to fame are its university, which dates back to mediaeval times, and the Royal & Ancient golf club where the rules of the game are defined. Richardson was born in St Andrew's in 1905, the son of a military doctor. He went to Oxford University, where he studied Classics before joining the Indian Civil Service in 1932. Much later, he received an honorary doctorate from St Andrew's. He was also a lifelong member of the Royal & Ancient. At our meeting he recalled with apparent satisfaction that he had played golf with Lord Wavell, the penultimate British viceroy. He didn't say who won.

I visited Richardson at the flat where he had been living since the death of his wife four years earlier. The flat was crowded with books on Tibet, and the pictures included a signed portrait of the Dalai Lama with a silk katag. His desk was particularly jumbled with books and papers: no one but him was allowed to tidy it. After an hour or so at the flat, we walked a quarter of a mile to the Royal & Ancient for lunch and returned by taxi. Apparently this was a daily routine, and he said that the club had been a 'godsend' in his old age.

I began by asking Richardson about Heinrich Harrer, whose Nazi past had been a source of controversy during the filming of *Seven Years in Tibet*. Richardson said that Harrer had shown no hint of Nazi sympathies in Lhasa, whatever his opinions had been in the past. In this respect his behaviour contrasted with the 1938/39 Ernst Schäfer expedition to Tibet, which was openly Nazi and sponsored by the SS. Richardson's disdain for the Schäfer expedition was undimmed after 60 years. Apparently the Germans had accused him of intriguing against them. He claimed he had no need to do so as their own behaviour had been sufficient to alienate the Tibetans without any extra assistance from him.

Harrer and his colleague Peter Aufschnaiter arrived in Lhasa during Richardson's six-year absence from Tibet. When Richardson returned in 1946, the British authorities asked him to have the two men sent back to India. Richardson made discreet enquiries and found that they were well-liked in Lhasa, and therefore decided to let the matter drop. In his reports back to New Delhi he explained that he could take no action because there was no extradition treaty between Tibet and India.

Harrer enjoyed a close relationship with the Dalai Lama, and in that respect was a useful source of information. Richardson himself had only limited contact with the Dalai Lama: he had a long audience shortly before his departure in 1950, but that was a formal occasion, and they only really got to know each other personally after the Dalai Lama had gone into Indian exile. Richardson spoke of the Dalai Lama with great respect: he had a "disarming" personal manner, but was capable of being "very profound".

The British delegations duties in Lhasa were not particularly strenuous. On one occasion an official in the Foreign Office had commented that Richardson had been attending a lot of parties, and wondered what else he did. He wrote back indignantly that it was essential to go to parties as that was the only way to pick up information. And, in any case, it was very hard work.

He wore a uniform at official events and ceremonies. After the first occasion, he left out the spurs on his boots, as these proved to be very uncomfortable when sitting cross-legged. By contrast the cloak, which was also part of the uniform, had proved very useful in cold weather.

Richardson carefully recorded and photographed the annual cycle of festivals in Lhasa, and these formed the subject of his book, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year* (1993). However, he was not

keen on British ceremonial. On one occasion Wavell had visited him in Kalimpong and tossed a CIE (Companion of the Indian Empire) medal across the table. Richardson thought this was a good way to be awarded an official honour, and commended Wavell on his sensitivity.

When his duties in Lhasa were not too pressing, Richardson had time to travel within Tibet, and he had made a particular study of ancient stone inscriptions. These researches later bore fruit in books such as *Tibet & its History* (1962, revised ed. 1984), *A Cultural History of Tibet* (with David Snellgrove, 1968), and *Ch'ing Dynasty Inscriptions at Lhasa* (1974).

At Reting monastery he had come across a bundle of documents, apparently dating back to the time of Atisha. He begged to be allowed to copy them, but the bundle had been sealed by the 13th Dalai Lama, and could only be released by his successor. The documents had surely been destroyed after the Chinese invasion, and this still grieved him.

I asked about the Ladakhi community in Lhasa. These were “British protected subjects” and had good relations with the British mission, but it does not seem that Richardson had much work to do on their account. The leader of the Lopchak (*lo phyag*) mission always called on the mission, and Ladakhi residents in Lhasa organised a football team to play against the British mission.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Richardson worked with the Irish government to bring Tibet to the attention of the United Nations in New York. The Irish knew nothing about Tibet, but picked up very quickly. With their help, Richardson had made friends with the door-keepers at the UN headquarters, and was able to walk in without being challenged so that he could lobby diplomats inside. I remarked that he had probably looked quite official, and Richardson agreed—he had always worn a bowler hat.

By contrast with the Irish, the British mission was deeply unhelpful. On one occasion, Richardson called on the British UN representative with Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's brother. The ambassador asked Gyalo Thondup why he had come to the UN and was told “for justice.” The ambassador retorted, “You won't find that there!”

As one of the last foreign representatives in Lhasa, Richardson was well qualified to bear witness to the reality of Tibet's independence before the Chinese invasion. He was one of the co-founders of the UK Tibet Society in 1959, and insisted that the first of its objectives would be “by non-party political action to promote the cause of Tibetan independence.” To the end he continued to lend his support to Tibet campaigners and, just as importantly, to develop his own historical researches. His final book, *High Peaks, Pure Earth* (1998), edited by the late Michael Aris, was reviewed in *Ladakh Studies* just over a year ago: it is a collection of shorter published articles including both technical historical research and more personal reminiscences of his time in Tibet.

At our meeting, I asked whether Richardson whether he was doing any more writing. He replied, “No, I am fading away quietly.” Now he has faded away, but not from our memory.

**Ladakh, Himalaya Occidental:  
Ethnologie, écologie**

Edited by Claude Dendaletche and Patrick Kaplanian

This volume, unofficially known as Recent Research on Ladakh 2, has long been out of print, but efforts are underway to republish these proceedings of the Second Colloquium, held at Pau in 1985.

At this time, the editors are unable to give details on the exact number of pages, price, or the date of publication. It is likely that the volume will include some contributions in addition to those in the original edition.

We will inform you when further details become available.



## ARTICLE

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES AMONG ZANSKAR VILLAGERS

Richard V. Lee, M.D.

To the usual touring trekker on the trail between Lamayuru and Padum, Ladakhi villagers are hardy, hard-working folk, blessed with health and happiness by the pristine mountain country and an abiding faith in Buddhism. Appearances of course are deceiving. Over the past 14 years the State University of New York at Buffalo has organized self-supporting medical expeditions to Kashmir and to Ladakh (map) (Table 1). In order to record changes in health and development of villages beyond the reach of roadways for motorized vehicles, we have visited each village several times. Because most infectious diseases are treatable with relatively short courses of antibiotics we have emphasized the detection and treatment of infections in our clinical work.

Microbiologic diagnoses in the field are difficult and cumbersome. Serologic tests for antibodies circulating in the blood, skin tests for cell-mediated immunity, and simplified screening tests for select pathogens, like group A streptococci, are feasible and useful in understanding the infectious disease burden of a small community. However, there can be tenacious resistance to taking blood samples or giving skin tests among villagers unfamiliar with Western medicine, so that serologic and intradermal tests may be impossible to obtain. Therefore, most of the time clinical diagnoses, not microbiologic identification, are our standard reporting terms for infectious diseases.

#### *Eyes and skin:*

There are few places on earth where the external surfaces of the body are exposed to conditions so uniquely hostile to the integument and the eyes. Dryness, wind, dust, extremes of heat and cold, and intense ultraviolet radiation contribute to weathering. Red, chapped hands and faces, early cataracts, and conjunctival inflammation are the results. Ladakhi villagers dress for the climate and remain with most of their skin covered throughout the year, a practice that may contribute to vitamin D deficiency and rickets.

Among children scabies and impetigo are common findings. Bathing by whole immersion is not desirable in the villages so skin cleansing can be infrequent. The accumulation of natural oils can diminish the weathering effects, but contributes to the maintenance of superficial skin infections. I have not seen or been told about children with hematuria and edema suggesting post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis; but considering the reports about rheumatic heart disease I am sure the risk is present.

#### *Gastrointestinal infections:*

Diarrheal disease is common among children following weaning from the breast. Everyone in Zanskar drinks tea (butter tea, sweet tea, herbal tea, etc.) and chang (1), relatively safe liquids in terms of infectious potential, practices that account for a diminishing incidence of diarrhea in older children and adults, compared to communities where unboiled water, unpasteurized milk, and nonfermented beverages are used. Milk, meat, and eggs, common sources of gastrointestinal pathogens, are not prominent constituents of the Zanskari diet (2, 3). Diarrheal disease amongst children was more of a problem in the Warwan Valley of Kashmir (4-6), where we had thought to bring the rotavirus vaccine before it was taken off the market in North America.

Hepatitis B seems to be uncommon in Zanskar. None of the villagers we have tested have antibody against hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis A, however, is very common. About 85% of our small sample had antibody against hepatitis A virus. Many of the people tested were in their teens suggesting that hepatitis A is a common, relatively benign, childhood disease that circulates in small village outbreaks. Hepatitis A, so-called infectious hepatitis, is spread by food contaminated by the

virus shed from infected individuals. Hepatitis A virus does not produce a chronic infection or carrier state so that the disease tends to occur in outbreaks. Hepatitis B, on the other hand, produces chronic infection and is often transmitted vertically from mother to infant. Hepatitis B is usually a blood-borne or sexually transmitted virus and is not usually transmitted by food or water. Hepatitis B is highly prevalent in many cultures as a childhood disease, and the chronic infection is associated with an increased risk of cancer of the liver. Of interest is our finding of a higher prevalence of antibody to hepatitis B among the Muslim villagers of the Warwan Valley in Kashmir, east of the Great Himalaya Range. I have no good explanation for the differences in hepatitis virus epidemiology between Zanskar and Kashmir. Further serologic testing of larger numbers in both settings will help define the situation.

Many mothers describe worms in the stool of their children. The climate of Zanskar is not conducive to the maintenance of hookworm in the environment. However, the small hookworm, *Strongyloides stercoralis*, is able to complete its life cycle in or on the human host. So it is possible that this parasite is present in the communities of Zanskar. The descriptions by mothers are, however, most consistent with infection by *Ascaris lumbricoides*, whip worms and pin worms. A systematic examination among villages for parasite ova and larvae in fecal specimens would be useful, especially since chronic infection with intestinal roundworms does affect growth and development.

### ***Respiratory tract infections:***

Upper and lower respiratory tract infections are collectively the most common complaint that brings villagers to our clinics. The absence of diesel fumes contributes to the unpolluted ambience of Ladakh except along the Srinagar to Leh road and in the larger townships. The role of indoor smoke from cooking and heating during the winters is documented by the coating of soot on the walls of the rooms that are used for cooking and heating functions. There is a substantial amount of indoor dirt and sand related to the widespread use of mud bricks for housing construction. The wind and aridity of Ladakh foster dust and sand particulates in the air. Previous studies by Drs. Norboo and Ball have documented the presence of pulmonary silicosis (7, 8). Atopic or allergic asthma appears to be uncommon. Although some children wheeze with acute bronchitis or pneumonia, allergic asthma is not prevalent. The frequency of dust storms and the heavy dependence upon dung and scrub wood for cooking and heating fuel are the principal source of injurious particulates in both indoor and outdoor air in Zanskar (7, 8).

**Ears, nose and throat infections:** Purulent nasal discharge, often soot stained, is a common sight among children of the villages. The chronic irritation of dust and smoke produces a chronic rhinitis, which is often not infectious in origin but readily colonized by pneumococci and streptococci. Nasopharyngeal inflammation, caused by aridity and particulates, is the precursor to eustachian tube dysfunction and purulent otitis media and to bacterial pharyngitis. I am sure that infections of the sinuses also occur, but in the absence of x-ray facilities, it is clinically difficult to separate sinusitis from purulent rhinitis.

Among children, otitis media is the commonest serious infection that we see in our clinics. Draining ears, indicating perforated eardrums, are frequent, and although the acute infection is suppressed by antibiotic treatment, the injury to the tympanic membrane and the ossicles of the middle ear is always a danger. Reinfection is common. Loss of hearing is a complication of perforating and recurrent middle ear infections. A simple audiometric hearing test for screening village populations would be of value.

Rheumatic heart disease is said to be a common cause of cardiac problems among Ladakhis, which implies that group A streptococcal pharyngitis among youngsters is prevalent (9-11). Curiously, we rarely see exudative pharyngitis, perhaps because streptococcal sore throat is more common during the winter months; and, because nasopharyngeal irritation is so frequent, children and their mothers do not complain or seek treatment for sore throats. Simple kits for rapid identification of group A streptococci are widely available in North America. If costs of such kits

could be minimized, training amchis and other responsible individuals in the villages in the use and interpretation of these kits would set the stage for rapid diagnosis and treatment of youngsters with sore throat. School-based throat culture programs among communities on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains in the United States helped 40 or 50 years ago to substantially reduce the incidence of post-streptococcal rheumatic fever.

***Pulmonary Infections:***

Ambient and indoor air pollution are certainly the most prominent contributors but the steady increase in tobacco smoking will add substantially to chronic respiratory irritation and inflammation (10). Bronchitis is far and away the most common lower respiratory tract infection in our clinics. Old-fashioned lobar pneumonia is rare. The pneumococcus is, around the world, the most common pathogen causing purulent otitis media. I wonder if the high prevalence of ear infections in children is a factor in the relative infrequency of pneumococcal (lobar) pneumonia. There are many serotypes of the pneumococcus and infection results in antibody formation directed against specific capsular compounds, and thus future immunity to infection by that particular serotype of pneumococcus. The capacity to immunize against the capsular antigens is the basis for the widespread use of pneumococcal vaccine in Europe and North America. Frequent ear and sinus infections by the pneumococcus during childhood would accomplish the same thing but at the price of impaired hearing. Modifications of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccines have opened the possibility of childhood immunization which offers the possibility of reducing both ear and pulmonary infections.

***Tuberculosis:***

The World Health Organization estimates that about one-third of the earth's human population is latently infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis (12). In the past three years we have started routine skin testing for tuberculosis in the villagers where we establish clinics. The data from Lingshed (Table 2) indicates that about a quarter of the population (teenagers and older adults) have been exposed to tuberculosis. How many cases of active tuberculosis are present is impossible to determine without facilities for x-rays and microbiologic diagnosis.

Strong positive tuberculin skin tests in individuals given BCG as children suggest repetitive exposure to M. tuberculosis, supporting the conclusion that tuberculosis is an active problem in Ladakh.(13). Because records of immunization are not well preserved it is impossible to determine how many individuals had been given BCG vaccine.

Table 1 Positive Tuberculin Skin Test Results in Lingshed Area

	Positive intermediate strength PPD	PPD reaction 2.0 cm or more	History of BCG vaccine	Totals
Monks	6	1	1	6/37 (16%)
Nuns	5	1	1	5/20 (25%)
Villagers	6	2		6/21 (29%)
				17/78 (22%)

There were a handful of PPD positive older men and women with chronic productive cough, breathlessness, and physical examination findings consistent with bronchitis. One older monk we were unable to skin test had experienced weight loss and occasional hemoptysis. He had no physical examination findings to suggest upper lobe cavity disease caused by tuberculosis. A chest x-ray would be essential, but because he is in his 80's, frail, and not likely to trek to the city, it is unlikely a chest x-ray will ever be done.

Differentiating active tuberculosis from common, acute and chronic respiratory complaints caused by altitude, dust, and smoke is extraordinarily difficult on clinical examination alone. The absence of adequate electricity supply and basic clinical laboratory facilities in the villages means that individuals at risk or suspected of having active tuberculosis must go to Leh or to Kargil for a chest x-ray. The absence of a road for motor vehicles obviates the possibility of transporting generator powered x-ray and laboratory services into and out of the village for screening clinics.

Most immunocompetent individuals who are infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* do not develop clinical disease. (12, 14-16) Longitudinal data from several clinical settings (BCG vaccine trials, follow-up studies of contacts with persons with contagious tuberculosis) indicate that about 5 to 10 percent of tuberculin-positive people will develop clinical disease during the first one to two years after becoming infected, and that an additional 5 percent will develop clinical disease at some future time. Contagious tuberculosis is the consequence of cavitation. Progression of active infection to cavity disease is greatest in young people. (14-17) In one well-documented longitudinal study the progression from PPD conversion to cavity lesions within a year occurred in 23 percent of those infected during ages 15 to 19 years, 13 percent in ages 20 to 24 years, 4 percent in ages 25 to 29 years, and only 2 percent of persons over 30 years old. (14, 15) However, the incidence of tuberculosis is highest among the elderly largely related to waning immunocompetence that fosters reactivation of old infection and enhanced susceptibility to new infection with a clinical course similar to that in adolescents (14, 17).

Tuberculosis is a problem in this remote community as indicated by the results of PPD testing. Unsuspecting trekkers and foreign pilgrims lulled by the hardiness of the people, the mountain air and brilliant sunshine may be at some risk when visiting, meditating, or praying with the monks within the rooms of the Gopa or when staying with villagers (18). Determining the severity of the problem, the risks to visitors, and the appropriate management of infected persons requires transportation of patients and/or equipment, conscientious education and continuous pharmacotherapy; tasks that are at present difficult or impossible. A regular program of PPD testing, logistically and educationally simpler, with treatment of all converters might be a beneficial and more practical alternative.

#### ***Occasional infections:***

Over the course of the past decade we have seen one case of chronic osteomyelitis of the leg and one developmentally retarded child who by history suffered from meningitis or encephalitis as a 5- or 6-year-old that left him with a severe neurological residual.

#### ***Some questions for future research:***

Aches and pains and dyspepsia are the commonest complaints of villagers seeking our attention. The ubiquity of epigastric discomfort suggests that infection with *Helicobacter pylori*, the acidophilic bacterium associated with ulcer disease and atrophic gastritis, could be widespread. Contact with domesticated animals (dzo, yak, sheep, goats) and animal products is a daily event in the villages. We have not seen individuals with clinical findings consistent with brucellosis or anthrax but I am sure these organisms are present in the animals and in the environment. Microbiologic methods to document the presence of the organism exist but it would be difficult in the field to obtain specimens for testing.

The altitude and aridity of Zaskar contribute to the absence of mosquito-borne infections like malaria and dengue fever. Serologic studies on the villagers of the Warwan Valley in Kashmir

showed no positives for Lyme disease, a tick-borne *Borrelia* infection. Because of the necessity for continuous wearing of clothes, we would expect louse-borne infections like typhus or relapsing fever to be present in the villagers. In fact, we have neither seen nor heard of patients with illnesses resembling these diseases, and the clinical manifestations of body lice infestation are rare: bite marks, nits in clothing, etc. We have not yet been able to obtain serum samples in Zanskar for testing for these infections.

In most remote villagers childbirth is attended by traditional untrained midwives. Maternal and neonatal deaths occur but the causes are not clearly defined. Obstructed labor and hemorrhage are the usual explanations we have been given, but there is no record keeping that would allow us to identify deaths from puerperal infection or from neonatal tetanus. There is paucity of clinical cases and stories describing tetanus, which has led some clinicians to speculate that tetanus is rare at high altitude (19). The rarity of spore-forming bacterial infections like tetanus and anthrax among animals at altitudes beyond 2000 meters has been noted (20). Growth of *B. anthracis* and *C. tetani* may be inhibited by the cold temperatures of the soil which in Ladakh can persist for 9 to 10 months of the year.

**Conclusion:**

Despite the geographic isolation and distinct geography and climate of the region, there is no evidence for an infectious pathogen unique for Ladakh, or more particularly Zanskar. Around the globe, the high prevalence of infections of the ears, throat, respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts among rural villagers and the urban poor is well documented. Zanskar Villages, and Ladakh as a region, are no different. The infectious diseases of Zanskar villagers are those found in agricultural subsistence villages around the world. However, the geography of Ladakh appears to protect the human inhabitants from several infections of the temperate and tropical regions, like malaria and tetanus. Nevertheless, infections remain a source of concern and a common cause of disability and death.

**Study Villages Visited by the Medical Trek Program of the State University of New York at Buffalo**

1988	Basmina Village	Muslim farmers	Warwan Valley, Kashmir
1989	Basmina and Inshan Villages	Muslim farmers	Warwan Valley, Kashmir
1990	Korr Mission	Rendille, camel nomads	Northern Frontier District, Kenya
1991	Korr Mission	Rendille, camel nomads	Northern Frontier District, Kenya
1992	Kanji Village	Tibetan Buddhist farmers	Zanskar, Ladakh
1994	Kanji Village Basmina Village	Tibetan Buddhist farmers Muslim farmers	Zanskar, Ladakh Warwan Valley, Kashmir
1996	Kanji and Hanupatta	Tibetan Buddhist farmers	Zanskar, Ladakh
1997	Lingshed Gompa, Hanupatta Village	Tibetan Buddhist monks and farmers	
1999	Lingshed Gompa, Nunnery, and Village	Tibetan Buddhist monks, nuns and farmers	Zanskar, Ladakh

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## SNOWSHOES AND SLEDGES

Extract from “A Winter Journey from Leh to Amritsar” by Brother H. Francke<sup>1</sup>  
(Herrnhut Magazine nrs 38, 39, and 41, September and October 1897).

*Translated and introduced by Gabriele Reifenberg*

From time to time there has been talk in Ladakh of winter sports as part of the “adventure holidays” scene. Here we have an account of a nineteenth-century attempt to use snow sports equipment in Ladakh.

In his article, August Hermann Francke was writing to the Moravian Brotherhood’s centre at Herrnhut in Germany to describe a journey full of dangers that he made to meet his fiancée in Amritsar. He set off from Leh with one servant and a pony on 1 March 1897, taking a minimum of equipment. Everywhere, including the 250 mile-long track they had to complete, was covered in snow. It took the two men six days to reach Kargil. At Kargil Francke’s servant insisted that they could not take the pony any further. Two porters (coolies in the text) were hired to help the travellers on the next stage of their journey to Kharbu, a small village on the eastern bank of the Dras river, about four miles from Tashgarn, also known as Tashgam, a village in the Dras valley on the western bank of the Dras, or Tashgam river, 15 miles north east of Dras.

They reached here after ten hours, covering just 1.5 miles an hour and were totally exhausted. The next day, although it was still snowing heavily they continued to Tashgarn arriving there in the evening. They were both very depressed and felt quite hopeless, but Francke decided that he would prefer to die in a snowstorm rather than be buried alive in the dismal shelter they had found. So he asked the headman of the village to find two more porters to help them on their way the next day. The story continues:

We were on the point of setting off again when the coolies fell on their knees, lifted their hands as in prayer and pleaded stridently: “Have mercy on us, dear Sahib, and do not force us to proceed today. Even if we defy the storm we will surely be buried in a snowdrift.” I looked sternly at the poor men, ordered them to obey, and thus our day’s work began. There was not one sign of a track, just a huge expanse of snow before us and a thick shower of snowflakes falling on us. So as to set a good example I went first, jumped into the snow and saw that, because of its softness, it came up to my knees. I stumbled forward, fell down, disappeared completely, stood up again, fell down once more and in this way succeeded in taking five steps in five minutes. My servants did not move from the spot, so I had to complete the struggle by myself. Totally beaten, I returned to my faithless followers. I felt like Napoleon at Waterloo!

Don’t think, however, that I retreated to the inn with an air of utter defeat. On the contrary, I felt as though there was something of victory in my bearing and that I held my head high. How was that possible? Two great new thoughts had flashed into my brain and I was sure that if they could be realised we would triumph splendidly over our difficulties. The first thought was to make a pair of Norwegian snowshoes, and the second: a sledge. It was

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<sup>1</sup> August Hermann Francke, Moravian missionary, arrived in Leh in 1896 direct from Germany.

obvious that the main obstacle to progress was the very soft snow. If we could stop ourselves sinking in and with the help of snowshoes glide easily over the surface, then we could get on as fast as in summer. Our baggage could then be packed onto two sledges that my servant and I would pull, thus saving the money for the coolies. It looked as though it would be at least a week before the condition of the snow changed, so we had plenty of time.

We began our task that afternoon with the help of a blunt axe, the only tool that we could get hold of. It was not at all easy to find the necessary wood as the severe winter had already forced the unfortunate villagers to sacrifice some of their doors. However, when my trusty servant told them I would pay the highest prices, one of them brought me a large wooden door. The first pair of snowshoes was soon finished and ready to be tried out. I now faced an embarrassing situation. The news that I was making European winter shoes had spread throughout the village and the whole population came out to see the Sahib who created such wonders. As I had never used snowshoes before I was loath to take my first steps in front of all these people. But it had to be. After a few difficulties I reached the slightly downward sloping expanse of snow and saw that the shoes did indeed prevent my sinking in. But how was I to move in them? As soon as I lifted one foot the threads with which I had fastened the shoe threatened to tear. To glide downwards was equally tricky, since the forward edge of the rough shoe was not curved upwards. I do not need to give a detailed account of the opinion of the onlookers; that of my servant will suffice. He steadfastly refused to subject his feet to the same trials and nothing could persuade him to make another pair of snowshoes. So that idea had to be abandoned. However, I felt sure that my reputation would be restored when the second idea was put into practice. The snowshoes were to be converted into sledge runners. So we began work again with enthusiasm. Time passed pleasantly and working warmed us up. I did not consider it necessary to try out the passed pleasantly and working warmed us up. I did not consider it necessary to try out the result of our efforts on the same day. We intended to surprise people with an early departure and to show the coolies how superfluous they were. Just as we had finished our work we heard that the mail couriers from Kargil had arrived with letters (no-one had seen anything of those from Srinagar for three days), and that they were to try and continue on their way, through the snow, the next day. This news was music to our ears and we decided to attach ourselves to these couriers.

The sledge was just big enough to take our belongings. We placed it on the snow – and- oh dear - it sank completely; the runners were too short. Many attempts were made to get it to move, but to no avail. It stuck fast in the snow just as firmly as the man trying to pull it. After I had lost the last remnants of belief in my own wisdom and skill, I fortunately managed to find two of the coolies I had previously scorned, and we were able to join the mail runners.

Despite further terrible weather, especially over the Zoji-la<sup>2</sup>, Francke and his companions survived the journey and he arrived safely in Amritsar. He concludes his article: “What more need I say? My journey was over. Snowstorms lay behind me and the brightest of warm sunshine surrounded me.”

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<sup>2</sup> Zoji-la, also known as Seoji-la, Baltal Kotal or Dras Pass. It is the last pass to be crossed on the journey from Leh to Srinagar, and is at an altitude of 11,578 ft.



Francke married Anna Theodora Weiz on 30 March 1897.

# CONFERENCE REPORT

## HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT IN LADAKH

Leh-Ladakh, 17 - 20 September 2000

Health and Environment in Ladakh were the subjects of an international seminar held on the grounds of the Dalai Lama's summer palace in Leh on September 17th to September 20th, 2000. Speakers from the United Kingdom, India, and the United States and a sizable contingent from Ladakh addressed an enthusiastic audience which every day included a large number of senior high school students from all of the schools in Leh. The students were a refreshing and reassuring presence, asking questions and engaging speakers in conversation at tea and meals. Their curiosity and interest bode well for Ladakh's future. For the Tibet Environmental Network and the Ladakh Heart Foundation, organizers of the seminar, this future generation of environmentally conscious Ladakhis assures the success of the conference.

Traditional medicine, epidemiology, education, and managing refuse and garbage were important themes easily incorporated in the discussions of sustainable development and globalization. Items of particular interest to this reporter were the revelation in conversations that there are usable groundwater resources in the high altitude desert of Ladakh, that these water resources come from watersheds with sufficient iodine to reduce the risk of goiter, and the growing concern about HIV infection in Ladakh where increasing military presence and itinerant truck traffic increase the risk of importation of all sexually transmitted diseases.

Papers presented (in order of presentation)

18 September:

Dr R.V. Lee "The result of tuberculin skin testing and serologic tests for hepatitis A and B in Zaskar Valley

Dr Tsering Norboo (physician) "Non-occupational pneumoconiosis in Ladakh."

Tinles Yangjor (amchi) "Spread of Tibetan herbal medicine in Ladakh."

Phuntsok Tsering (amchi) "Amchi practices and their relationship with the environment."

Ven. Thupten Choegyal (LHF) "Community heart and health partnership."

Dolma Tsering (LWA) "Waste management in Leh."

Tsering Samphel "Leh: An emerging city in hazard."

Dalha Tsering (TEN) "Reduce, reuse, recycle . . . and removal of garbage."

Helena Norberg-Hodge (ISEC) "Impact of globalisation and economic development on health and environment."

19 September:

Sonam Wangchuk (SECMOL) "The need for preventative education in health and environment in Ladakh."

Stanzin Dawa "Health, environment and development in Ladakh."

Robert Cook "Sustainable development."

Vidya Kalyani "Disability in the context of social development."

Khewang Tashi Rabgias “Modernization and environment.”

S.K. Thakur “Soils of Ladakh and their management strategies.”

M.S. Nain “Extension services for agricultural development in cold arid zone of Ladakh: A focus on issues.”

Dr Ritesh Arya “Impact of groundwater development in Ladakh Himalayas: Implications for sustainable water solution for better health and environment.”

B. Das “An eco-friendly horticulture: A sustainable agricultural endeavour in Ladakh.”

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Trans-Himalayan Caravans. Merchant Princes and Peasant Traders in Ladakh*, by Janet Rizvi. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. xvi, 359 pp., maps, illus. ISBN 0195648552 UKP 18.99, IRS 695.**

This is an important book on an important topic. Far from being a backwater, Ladakh was for centuries an important staging post on a network of regional and international routes linking India, Central Asia and Tibet. The participants ranged from the merchant princes of Rizvi's title to ordinary peasant farmers, nomads and porters. Inevitably, trade links were affected by wider political and economic developments but, particularly at the local level, the basic patterns must have continued for hundreds of years. For many ordinary people, trade made the difference between penury and a modest, hard-earned prosperity. For Ladakh as a whole, it made the difference between obscurity and participation in an international exchange of languages, arts and religious ideas along with trade goods.

Now all these trading patterns have changed for ever, and this means that Rizvi's work has an elegiac quality. The international boundaries with Tibet, Xinjiang and Pakistan are closed. At a regional level, jeeps, trucks and aeroplanes have replaced once-familiar pack animals such as donkeys, mules, horses, yaks, camels and—perhaps most importantly—sheep. The old trading methods are still within living memory, but only just. Many of Rizvi's informants have already died, and this means that much of her research is already impossible to repeat.

The book begins with an overview of the main trade routes Inner Asia. It then looks in more detail at the pashm trade; the activities of the Shamma of Lower Ladakh; links between Zaskar and the outside world; the Leh-Lhasa trade; and the Trans-Karakoram trade. The penultimate chapter looks at the essential, unsung role of the Kiraiyakash, the transporters and labourers who provided much of the basic human muscle power. The book closes with a brief review of developments in the last 30 years.

Rizvi has given IALS readers a preview of her work with papers on the Trans-Karakoram trade in Recent Research on Ladakh 7 and on pashm in Recent Research on Ladakh 8. However, this is the first time all of her material has been brought into a single publication, and the bulk of it is entirely new. The book is well-produced with clear maps of the main routes, and colour photographs of Rizvi's informants. It also includes black-and-white photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries from Western travellers such as Sven Hedin.

Rizvi shows how the Shamma of Central and Lower Ladakh were bound in a system of mutual dependence with the nomads of Ladakhi and Tibetan Changthang. There is limited pasture in Sham, and the Shamma therefore relied on Changthang for animal products such as wool, leather and meat—bartering them for grain, dried apricots and other goods. The Shamma travelled as far as Gertse, a considerable distance inside Western Tibet. Their trading relationships were based entirely on trust, with no written contracts or records.

Meanwhile, Zaskar had its own regional trading network based on items such as butter and grain. One Zaskari entrepreneur, Lama Tashi Upasika managed to combine parallel careers as a monk and as a large-scale trader with Tibet. From an impoverished background, he rose to become a successful businessman, but devoted most of his wealth to religious causes, and ended his life in simple austerity once more. The centerpiece of the Leh-Lhasa trade was the Lopchak (lo phyag) mission which was set up in 1684 as a result of the Treaty of Tingmogang between Ladakh and Lhasa. The mission set out from Ladakh in the autumn of every third year, and its arrival in Lhasa was timed to coincide with the New Year celebrations. The mission had a combined political, religious and commercial role. Ostensibly, it was led by a Buddhist, but Rizvi shows how it was managed by a leading Muslim family from Leh in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Unusually in an otherwise thoroughly researched book, Rizvi has left out an important documentary source in the reports on the Lopchak by Captain H. Ramsay, who was British Joint

Commissioner in the late 1880s. These are to be found in the India Office archives in London, and there are presumably duplicates in the National Archives of India. Ramsay's correspondence is discussed in an article on the Lopchak by this reviewer in the *Tibet Journal* (Vol. 15, No.4 - Winter 1990). Ramsay argued that the Lopchak implied that Ladakh was somehow subservient to Tibet, and that it should therefore be abolished. Although, his proposal was rejected, his testimony is a valuable source on the state of the Lopchak at the time when he was writing. Rizvi more than makes up for this omission with evidence from other documentary sources, as well as surviving participants of the Ladakh/Tibet trade. One of the most valuable aspects of this chapter is the clear explanation of the role of leading Leh families in both Ladakh and Tibet.

The Karakoram trade was even more politically sensitive than the Lhasa route. In the mid-nineteenth century the British feared that the Karakoram pass might be a potential Russian invasion route. This concern, combined with the hope of selling British and Indian products in the markets of Central Asia, led to the establishment of a formal agreement with Kashmir on the maintenance of the 'Treaty Road' from Kashmir to Ladakh and Xinjiang. In practice, political upheavals in Central Asia, and the physical difficulties of the journey, limited the prospects for commercial expansion. However, the trade played an important part in the economy and culture of Ladakh until the early 1940s.

Rizvi's particular achievement is the skilful combination of documentary research with evidence gathered from interviewing more than a hundred elderly survivors. Her historical analysis is thorough, but the most distinctive—and irreplaceable—aspect of the book is the personal testimony of her human informants. No one can understand Ladakh's history without considering its trading relations. No one can now afford to speak or write about Ladakhi trade without first reading this book

*John Bray*

***Tibetan Border Worlds: A Geohistorical Analysis of Trade and Traders*, by Wim van Spengen. . London: Kegan Paul International, 2000. Pp. ix, 307, maps, illus. ISBN 0 7103 0592 3. Hb UKP 45, USD 76,50.**

Geographer Wim van Spengen sets out to offer a geohistorical explanation for the relative success of the Nyishangba community of Manang district in Nepal as international long-distance traders. The general argument and approach is informed by the structuralist geohistory of the *Annales* school, but the author draws on the notion of *genre de vie* as developed by early twentieth century French geographers Vidal de la Blanche and Sorre to give greater attention to culture than Fernand Braudel did in his seminal work on the Mediterranean.

After a summary overview of the geopolitical history of Tibet proper, the first part of the book presents a structuralist discussion of the regionality of what may be called “ethnographic” Tibet, emphasizing the region's relative cultural-historical homogeneity, its spatial interconnection through networks of monasteries, towns and routes, and its broader regional setting in relation to adjacent *économies-mondes* with their own specific geohistorical structures, such as those of China and India. Despite a considerable level of cultural homogeneity, it is argued that Tibet remained fragmented due to the unevenness of its internal economic relations and the scattered nature of its demographic distribution, while the major regional clusters were oriented towards the *économies-mondes* on whose frontiers they were located. Against this background attention then turns to the geohistory of Tibetan trade, focusing on the changes in the “traditional” local and regional barter complex and the growing importance of long-distance trade in luxury goods. Here the (temporary) rise to prominence of Bhotia communities of the Himalayan borderlands in the trade between Tibet and India is explained through their particular geohistorical setting and the dynamics of the respective *économies-mondes*.

In the second part of the book, one such case is then analyzed in detail. While the experience of the Nyishangba exemplifies structural geohistorical features laid out in the first half of the book, the specificities of the case show how a range of contingent factors contributed to the success of this community. In part, their rise was based on the opening up of culturally specific markets for musk and herbs, for example because of the settlement of large numbers of Nepali workers in Assam and beyond. However, gradually, Nyishangba traders diversified in response to changing geopolitical and economic opportunities and constraints, becoming involved in Burma in the trade in gems, as well as arms and possibly drugs. With the emergence of Singapore and after the second world war Hong Kong as sources of mass produced cloth and other cheap manufactured goods Nyishangba traders extended their trade operations all across Southeast Asia. More recently, some have become involved in the booming tourist sector in Nepal. In his conclusion, van Spengen reiterates that neither culture, nor locational opportunity or state support alone can explain the relative success of the Nyishangba. Rather, such instances must be understood in the context of long-term dynamics of particular *économies-mondes* in interaction with medium-term processes of state formation.

Van Spengen draws on an impressive range of literatures from different disciplines for his argument, and the case study of the Nyishangba incorporates material collected by the author during fieldwork in Nepal in 1981. Although some readers may be disappointed by the relative paucity of original ethnographic material and historians by the lack of primary sources in general—issues taken up directly by the author in the appendices—the strength of the study is that it is quite unique in the breadth of its scope and its synthetic objective. In addition to its demonstration of the usefulness of a broadly Braudelian approach, van Spengen provides a useful review of the literature on trade, economy, history, and anthropology of the Tibetan world. Disciplinary specialists may take issue with some arguably dated concepts in some of the discussions, but the author offers fresh perspectives, challenging propositions, and especially in the case study interesting and original material. Ladakh figures only marginally in this study, as one would expect, but the broad structural analysis presented here provides a useful context in which also the history of the trade through

Ladakh can be placed. In this sense, van Spengen's book is nicely complementary to Janet Rizvi's recent study *Trans-Himalayan Caravans*. For all these reasons, this is a welcome contribution to the literature on the (geo-) history of Tibet, Himalayan populations, transnational communities, and trade.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LADAKH SUPPLEMENT NO. 11

by John Bray

This is the latest in a series of supplements published in *Ladakh Studies* which lists additions to my *Bibliography of Ladakh* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988). A new edition of the bibliography is currently in preparation, and this will be published by White Orchid Press, Bangkok. Please send new references to John Bray (Central Lodge, 55 B Central Hill, Upper Norwood, LONDON SE19 1BS. E-mail: JNBray@aol.com).

- van Beek, Martijn. 2000. "Lessons from Ladakh? Local Responses to Globalization and Social Change." In *Globalization and Social Change*, pp. 250-266. Edited by Johannes D. Schmidt and Jacques Hersh. London: Routledge. ■ A critical examination of conceptions and representations of Ladakh as a model of/for sustainable development, comparing these with local development discourse in the region.
- van Beek, Martijn. 2000. "Dissimulations: Representing Ladakhi 'Identity'." In *Perplexities of Identification: Anthropological Studies in Cultural Differentiation and the Use of Resources*, pp. 164-188. Edited by H. Driessen and T. Otto. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press. ■
- Crook, John. 1999. "The struggle for political representation in Ladakh." *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-faith studies*. 1, No. 1, pp. 137-160. Amman. Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies. ■
- Crowden, James P. and Lumsden, Fiona M. 1976. *Bristol University Ladakh Expedition*. Unpublished report. 65 pp. ■ Includes information on local society and farming. Copy in Bristol University Library.
- Douglas, William Orville. 1952. *Beyond the High Himalayas*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co. 352 pp. ■ Travel account by a US judge who visited Ladakh in 1951. Describes an encounter with the young Stagtshang Rinpoche in Hemis, and speculates on the region's political future in the light of the communist threat.
- Dollfus, Pascale. 1999. "Phu mkhar rdzong, un lieu de pèlerinage au Ladakh." *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 86, pp. 33-64. ■
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