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THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LADAKH STUDIES

Patrons: Tashi Rabgias

President: John Bray, 1208 2-14-1; Furuishiba, Koto-ku; Tokyo, Japan
jnbray1957@yahoo.co.uk

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Honorary Secretary:

Monisha Ahmed
Praneta, Flat 2, 23 B Juhu Tara Road,
Mumbai 400 049 INDIA
monisha@bom4.vsnl.net.in

Honorary Editor:

Prof. Kim Gutschow
Departments of Religion and Anthropology
North Building #338
Williams College
Williamstown, MA 01267 USA
Kim.Gutschow@williams.edu

Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary:

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For the last three decades, Ladakh (made up of Leh and Kargil districts) has been readily accessible for academic study. It has become the focus of scholarship in many disciplines including the fields of anthropology, sociology, art history, Buddhist studies, history, geography, environmental studies, ecology, medicine, agricultural studies, development studies, and so forth. After the first international colloquium was organised at Konstanz in 1981, there have been biannual colloquia in many European countries and in Ladakh. In 1987 the International Association for Ladakh Studies (IALS) was formed to establish contact and disseminate information and research findings among those interested in the study of Ladakh. Membership is open to all, by writing to the membership secretary or using Paypal through the IALS website. Please go to <http://www.ladakhstudies.org/Membership.html>

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Kim Gutschow

I am pleased to present the third issue of *Ladakh Studies* under my editorship. We are now producing two journals per annum with a strong mix of research essays, book reviews, notes and news concerning the IALS, and news from Ladakh. While our research essays form the backbone of the journal, I would welcome more research notes or field essays from members, as well as news about member's professional activities relating to Ladakh. This issue includes an insightful look at Nepali migrants working on the Chaddar, a historical overview of Russian travelers in Ladakh, and an analysis of changing dietary and agrarian practices in Leh district.

I would encourage younger scholars, researchers, and both new and old members of the IALS to contribute to our journal—whether with longer essays or shorter reviews of their recent research or experiences in the field, as both provide useful grist for other scholars working in similar or tangential fields.

This journal includes a preliminary list of papers for the 14th IALS colloquium that will be held in Leh from July 16 to 19, 2009. I am especially pleased that our conference will have as keynote speaker the noted Indian diplomat and grandson of Hashmatullah Khan, Salman Haidar, whom I have had the good fortune to meet in Delhi on several occasions.

Salman Haidar is the grandson of Hashmatullah Khan who served in the Jammu *darbar* from the late 19th century until 1930 and spent much of that time in Ladakh. Hashmatullah Khan is the author of '*Tarikh-i-Jammu*' (in Urdu)—a historic account of the rise and fall of dynasties that ruled in Ladakh, Jammu and Baltistan. Haidar (b. 1953) is one of the most distinguished members of the Indian Foreign Service who has held various high offices during a career that spans more than 35 years. After his education at Sherwood College in Naini Tal, St. Stephen's College at Delhi University and Magdalen College, Cambridge University, he served as Ambassador to Bhutan (1980-83), Deputy High Commissioner, London (1987-91), Ambassador to China (1991-92), and Foreign Secretary (1995-97). After his retirement in 1997, he was appointed High Commissioner to the UK. He has also served on the Executive Councils of Kashmir University and Aligarh Muslim University and currently serves as the Chairman of the Governing Council of National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad and as a Trustee of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.

According to Haidar, his connection with Ladakh is entirely through his grandfather Hashmatullah Khan. Haidar remembers him well and recalls much of what he used to tell his grandchildren about Ladakh. H. Khan was deeply immersed in the history of Ladakh and of other parts of the territories acquired by Jammu, including the 'Northern Areas' now under Pakistan. His massive volume contains much information that is not readily available elsewhere. The book has been reprinted in Muzaffarabad (POK) and has yet to be translated into English.

SALMAN HAIDAR BRIEF BIO-DATA:

- Joined Indian Foreign Service in 1960; Postings: Egypt as language trainee (Arabic); London as Second Secretary; First Secretary, Kabul.
- Seconded to Education Ministry on staff of Minister.
- Seconded to Prime Minister's Secretariat (Mrs. Indira Gandhi) - 1974-77.
- Deputy Permanent Representative in Indian Mission to the UN (New York), 1977-80.
- Ambassador to Bhutan, 1980-83.
- Returned to HQ; served as Official Spokesman; later as Chief of Protocol.
- Deputy High Commissioner, London 1987-91.
- Ambassador to China 1991-92.
- Returned to HQ as Secretary (East) 1992-95; responsible at various times for supervising divisions dealing with Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, Gulf.
- Appointed Foreign Secretary 1995-97.
- Appointed High Commissioner to UK 1998.

Since his retirement, Haidar's accomplishments include:

- Association with think tanks in New Delhi and Chandigarh.
- Serves on Executive Councils of Kashmir University and of Aligarh Muslim University.
- Weekly column on foreign affairs in 'The Statesman', Calcutta.
- Fellow at US Institute of Peace, Washington DC 2005-06.
- Currently Chairman of Governing Council of National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad; Trustee of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

Publications: Section on Bhutan in 'External Affairs: Cross-Border Relations', Roli Books 2003; 'Afghanistan' (ed), Manohar Publishers 2002; 'India-Bangladesh' (ed.) CRRID 2005. In progress is a study of negotiations with four of India's neighbors.

In the Shadow of Zangskar: The Life of a Nepali Migrant

— Jonathan Demenge

This article is a tribute to Thinlee, a Nepali worker who died last September in Chilling. He was a driller working on the construction of the road between Nyimu and Padum, along the Zangskar River. Like most other similar stories, the story of Thinlee could have remained undocumented, mainly because migrants' presence in Ladakh remains widely unstudied.

The story of Thinlee has a lot to tell about the living conditions of migrants who build the roads in Ladakh, their relationship to the environment—physical and imagined—and their relationship to danger. Starting from the biography of a man and his family, I attempt to understand the larger social matrix in which this history is embedded. Using the concept of *structural violence* (Galtung 1969; Farmer 1997; 2004) I try to shed light on the wider socio-political forces at work in this tragedy. At the same time, I point to a striking reality: despite the long and important presence of working migrants in Ladakh, they remain unstudied. In spite of their substantial contribution to Ladakh's history and development, both literally and figuratively, in the field and in the literature, migrants remain at the margin, or *in the shade*.

The life of Thinlee Sherpa

I started researching road construction and road workers in Ladakh about three years ago. Thinlee was one of the workers I learnt to know while I was conducting fieldwork in Chilling. Thinlee and his family were very engaging people, and those who met them will surely remember them. Every worker's story is unique, and I could have chosen to tell another one. But Thinlee's story and the tragic circumstances of his death are quite representative of other working migrants' situation and experience. They are also quite informative of the wider socio-political forces at stake. What follows is what Thinlee and his family shared with me. Thinlee was born around 1967 in a village called Kiangsing, near Pangarpu in the district of Sindhupalchok in Nepal. He was a Sherpa, and grew up close to the border with Tibet.

He started working far away from home to supplement the household's income at the age of 15, when he left to sell garments in the streets of Bombay and Karnataka. He came back after four long years and married Zangmo. He was not allowed to leave home just after the wedding and started rearing cattle with up to 15 cows. During those years, Thinlee and Zangmo had four daughters. Thinlee also sometimes worked in the wood business with Tibet, reinvesting his income in cows. Yet his business became unprofitable, he started experiencing losses and in 1998 he decided to leave again, alone, to work in

Bombay for the garments business. When he came back after a few months he bought 50 goats, but a disease killed most of them and he only managed to sell 10 of them. Furthermore, the political situation in Nepal was grim as the country was in the middle of a civil war. The national and local economy was deteriorating further. Thinlee and his family lived with the fear of forced enrolment by the Maoists and had to face exactions from both Maoists and government forces, as both asked the villagers for support.

In 2003, like many others, Thinlee and Zangmo decided to leave Nepal with their two oldest daughters and their fifth and newly born daughter Passang Dolma. The third and fourth daughter stayed with relatives back home. They started their journey to Zangskar in Himachal Pradesh. Thinlee went back to Bombay for three months but this time he could not earn enough to support his family, so he decided to try his luck in Manali. He and Zangmo worked there for a road contractor. Yet, as it often happens to migrants they were not paid. They heard that working conditions in Ladakh were better, so they decided to leave again. They worked in Stok, building walls and canals, but once again they were not paid the full amount that was due to them. From there, they went to Skalzangling, where Thinlee worked as a mason. This is where Zangmo gave birth to their sixth child and only son: Tashi. And whereas their economic situation had been deteriorating for years, and further since they had left Nepal, for the first time it started improving.

From Skalzangling they moved to Shey where they found work in stone breaking: a "very hard work", as he later told me (28.06.2007). They moved to Kargil in 2005 to work in road construction for a private contractor, and there Thinlee and Zangmo married their oldest daughter to a relative. When they heard about working opportunities for the army in Batalik they moved there, and Thinlee started carrying food rations from the main army camp to advanced posts. The work was well paid, but he had to work at night, carrying heavy loads in the snow, and most of all he was the only breadwinner there. So once again, they decided to leave.

The arrival in Chilling

In October 2006, Thinlee and his family reached Chilling. Some relatives were already working there, and he had heard about working opportunities with BRO (Border Roads Organisation) on the road being built in Chilling. This is how he recalled his arrival in Chilling when I first met him (in 21.04.2007):

The officer recruited us for that purpose [drilling]. We didn't want to, we were scared, but the officer said there is no vacancy for road maintenance and embankments, there is only vacancy for drilling. We had heard about the deaths, which we talked about before. The officer didn't tell me about the deaths. Because of the deaths in August the drilling had stopped, until December. So because of that they told me they would give me

employment as a driller. This is my first job as a driller.

I came here, and I heard from people who had been working here for a longer time that right at that place people died. And for the first three days I was really scared. Nobody was working there at that time, we were scared. From December to April we've received more money than what people normally get for drilling: Rs. 3,900 per month, instead of 3,200. This is more than what you get elsewhere.

(...) For the first few days I was really scared, we had heard that Guru Rinpoche resides in the mountain, he got angry and this is why people are dying. So I went to see people living here and asked them which god resided here, what do you believe? They said this is Guru Rinpoche. I am a Buddhist too, so I don't believe Guru Rinpoche would want to kill people. If this is Guru Rinpoche I don't believe he could harm anybody.

They made prayers. Before we came, people here got lamas to do prayers and lamas said now this is a safe place you can work here, the gods won't harm you.

That is how Thinlee and his family started living and working on the road near Chilling. Until June 2007, Thinlee, Zangmo, and three of their children—Mingmar, Passang Dolma and the little Tashi—shared a concrete shelter with another Nepali family next to the trolley over the river, on the upper side of the road. Their oldest daughter and her husband lived and worked in a restaurant in Nimu. In 2007, Thinlee's family along with about twelve other families were relocated to a campsite opposite the place where the Markha River flows into the Zangskar River, where the new trolley now stands. The new camp was closer to the construction site, but unlike villages there is no stream nearby, the water had to be brought by trucks.

Also, unlike Chilling or other villages in Ladakh that are situated in areas receiving a large amount of sun in summer and in winter, both areas where road builders lived were in the shade of high peaks and ridges most of the day, barely receiving two hours of sun in the middle of January. If the temperature inside the tents was close to tropical in summer, it dived far below zero during winter as the icy Zangskar wind blew along the river, penetrating the numerous tears and holes in the tents. When I asked an inhabitant of the camp in spring where the hens I had seen the previous autumn had gone, she told me she had to eat them as they had frozen overnight. And indeed, once the small *bokari* had stopped producing its heat and smoke the temperature became arctic; I remember staying awake and shivering the whole night in Thinlee's tent. In the early morning drillers left to build the road, severely underequipped, making small bonfires in order to get warm in the shade of the cold vertical walls that dominate the river, a thin dark blue ribbon partly covered with ice and snow at that time of the year. It was so cold that diesel oil was freezing and fuel tanks and engines had to be heated in the flame of a stove placed underneath the tipper before the engines could be started.

Thinlee and his family worked on the construction site for nearly two years: Thinlee as a driller, and his wife Zangmo as a *chokadar*, keeping the camp during the day and checking passage on the dirt track during the night to avoid people stealing road-building material. Mingmar—the second daughter—was also working on the road, mixing cement and building walls. Zangmo also distilled rice *chang* and *raksi*¹ over the fire during the day and sold it to the workers who stopped at the camp during or after work. Nepali, Jharkhandi, Bihari, Bengali, Punjabi: the whole of India was represented there, “united in diversity” Sometimes she also cooked for them. Along with the three wages paid by the Border Roads Organization, Thinlee and his family managed to make a living and save money.

Costs of living are high for migrants on the road: they do not have access to government rations and most of the income is spent on food and fuel for heating—wood and kerosene. Because costs of living are quite high, many workers do not manage to save much beyond what is required for their subsistence and that of their family. Sometimes men came to drink and eat and some day left the camp without paying their debts. Yet, Thinlee and his family were among the few who were doing well. It was the first time in his life Thinlee managed to save so much—around 10 to 12,000 rupees a month, on the average, mostly thanks to the selling of *raksi* and *chang*. They even had plans for their future back home in Kiangsing, as the situation in Nepal was improving. They still had a bit of land there and were sending money back home to build a house. They were planning to buy sheep and goats and to restart the cattle business. Zangmo even talked one day of buying a car—more or less seriously since there is no road to their village. Their daughter Mingmar was happy with these plans, as her dream was to go back to Nepal (26.06.2007): “I don't like working on roads. My dream is to become a goat keeper in Nepal. My dad told me we're leaving next year in October (2008). I'm looking forward.”

Death and danger

Of course building the road in Chilling was dangerous. Danger was obvious to anybody visiting the area. Still, many workers were willing to take risks. Here at least they were not cheated and payments came regularly. I first went to Chilling after the big accident that claimed the life of four workers during the month of August 2006. This is an extract of my field notes (15.09.2006):

The first thing they told us in the morning was that they had stopped working at the end of the road because of the accident that had happened there in August. Some road builders were working closer to the village, but even there the danger was palpable. The site was impressive, with these

¹ Beer and distilled alcohol made of fermented rice.

massive four to eight hundred meters high slopes, cliffs and hanging rocks dominating the light brown river of Zangskar. And somewhere fifty meters above the river there was this slim road carved into the slope, following the contours, with tiny humans working at falling rocks, picking up stones, digging with picks and shovels, loading a truck, preparing cement and building walls, and the drown of one or two bulldozers in the background.

Above and below the road, rocks were falling, lifting up storms of dust behind them, and in some places workers, wearing symbolic helmets were intermittently watching up for rocks falling from these high, unstable and steep slopes. This is probably what struck me the most: these people looking up when working, as if to emphasize that here the danger comes from above. Even when not working and when danger was out of sight, workers were still watching up, just as a reflex incorporated into their pool of gestures necessary to evolve in this world and on which survival ultimately depended, as if to signify that for the time they would spend here the threat of death would constantly be floating above them.

When I arrived I immediately felt a sense of danger, trying not to stop to those places that seemed the most unsafe to me, and also watching above. My heart was beating fast, and from time to time, when I was listening to them, I was happy to be able to hide my feelings behind my dark sunglasses. This feeling was even more extreme in places where nobody was working, as this silence and loneliness on an unfinished dirt road gave you the impression that the place had been deserted. There had been life, but there wasn't anymore, as if the workers had been forced to flee by overwhelming circumstances, living an impression of last frontier and defining the geographical limits of life. Workers were trying to extend this frontier further; and this hostile, almighty and deadly environment was firing back at them, forcing them into retreat.

Yet, what was fascinating was how workers—especially drillers—managed to deal with danger on a daily basis. They could not avoid it, so they seemed to be taming it, often with the help of their gods. I once asked Thinlee (21.04.2006):

- Are you less afraid now?
- Everybody prays to his gods in the morning, there is a small temple up there. We pray to our own gods.
- How is the work compared to what you expected?
- It's ok. The only fear is that we may die. Otherwise the work is not difficult. It's better than the other jobs I have done in Ladakh."

In May 2007, after a blast, Thinlee and the others went back to drilling. A whole section of the mountain collapsed, killing one of the drillers—Shanta—and injuring another. On the same morning, Shanta had told Thinlee he wanted to

quit this place and go back to Delhi for a safer job, even if for a lower pay. When the accident happened Thinlee was standing just next to Shanta, but he was not hurt. When we talked about it, Thinlee was trying to understand: “Why him and not me? He also respected the gods. Perhaps he didn’t believe sincerely...”

If drillers were the most at risk, danger was also affecting other workers and family member, although in a different way. After the accident of May 2007 “safety measures” were adopted. Somebody would look after the drillers and blow a whistle if blocks started falling. The measure seemed illusory because of the noise of the drill that covered the whistle. Mingmar became the “whistle blower” while her father was drilling: “Work is easy. I just have to carry the water and blow the whistle”. But “drilling is dangerous, I fear for my father. Stones can fall at any time”. Zangmo too feared for Thinlee. At 5 pm, in what had become like a ceremony, Zangmo and her neighbour were waiting outside the shelter, scanning the end of the road, anxiously waiting for the truck that would bring their husbands, sons and daughters back to the camp.

The last time I saw Thinlee and his family was in January 2008, before leaving Chilling for Leh in the back of a tipper with two Bihari workers freezing to death in their cotton trousers, acrylic socks in plastic flip-flops and tore woollen gloves. I wished I would meet Thinlee some day when they would be back to Nepal, and visit them in their place. Unfortunately that will not happen now. About a week ago, I received a message from a friend in Leh. She was just coming back from Chilling, carrying the bad news: Thinlee had died in a blasting accident in September in Chilling.

The wider story

The story of Thinlee and his family is unique, but some of its features are not, and are likely to be common to many road workers’ stories in Ladakh and elsewhere. There are probably many Thinlee and Zangmo whose story remains undocumented, *living in the shadow* of Ladakhi history and development. I could also have used the story of Nima Dorje, who disappeared a few months earlier, or Shanta, or Doma, or one of the four workers who died in the summer of 2006. These stories would also have unveiled “some of the mechanisms through which large-scale social forces crystallize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering” (Farmer 1997: 263).

Structural violence was first used by Galtung to differentiate it from *personal violence*. *Structural violence* is violence that no person is committing, but that is “built into structure” (1969: 171). Similarly to Bourdieu’s idea of *habitus*, it is both “structured and structuring”, or “*structuring*” in Farmer’s own words (2004: 315). Closed to a situation of social injustice, *structural violence* does not deny migrants agency, but it certainly curbs it and makes some people more at risk of suffering and death than others.

In the story of Thinlee, several factors may help us understand the conditions that drove them on roads, helped them accept working as drillers and bear intolerable risks and ultimately led to a tragic ending. Among the political, social and economic forces that structure risk, none has explanatory power on its own. It is rather the cumulative and simultaneous effect of these forces that may help us understand road workers situation, their willingness to bear risks and *structural violence*.

The first factor mentioned in Thinlee's story was the situation in Nepal, and the long history of labour out-migration. Estimations on the number of Nepali working in India vary between 250,000 and one million (Seddon, Adhikari et al. 2002). The situation was further exacerbated by the civil conflict, which drove many people who faced exactions and could not make a living in Nepal out of the country. This was a common feature in stories of other Nepali migrants in Chilling.

A second factor that aggravated the situation of Thinlee was the precariousness of work. From the moment they left Nepal in 2003, Thinlee and his family went to work in eight different locations in less than five years. Often, work was temporary, and once work was finished they had to look for another source of income.² Also, in two of these locations they were cheated and were not paid the full amount. This was a factor that led many migrants to work for BRO, where at least they received their full wage on a monthly basis.

A third factor that mattered was the limited amount of bargaining power Thinlee had. When he came to Chilling with his family, Thinlee needed to work. He did not want to drill, but that was the only job he was offered. He was scared, but he had little choice. Most drillers were in a similar position: they were travelling with their family, had limited resources and needed to work. This helped them accept short-term contracts (6 months contracts that could be terminated unilaterally at any time) and dangerous jobs.

A fourth factor was the high costs of living they were facing while living on the road, and in Ladakh generally. As migrants did not have access to rations at subsidized rates, they had to bear heavy costs for food and heating: wood and kerosene oil. With three salaries and an extra income from the sale of *chang*, *raksi* and meals, Thinlee's family did not have to face exorbitant costs of living and managed to save (although they sometimes incurred losses due to customers who did not pay for their debts). Yet, for many road workers costs of reproduction of work (in the Marxian acceptation) were often a problematic issue. Moreover, the meagre savings were often dilapidated in health related expenses, sometimes in gambling and drinking, or they were used to pay for the living expense of family members back home. Those who managed to save often did not do so from a single wage, but could only save because they were cumulating wages, selling *chang*, *raksi* or shop items, or because they

² In a way working for BRO was also precarious: in 2005, due to a shortage of funds the construction stopped in Chilling and workers were laid off.

were involved in corruption networks or were very skilled at playing cards. This may also explain why many who wanted to quit the job stayed longer, as they were earning more than in most other jobs they could find (Rs. 3,200, and Rs. 3,900 in winter).

Finally, a fifth and decisive factor was the dangerousness of the task itself, and the widespread view that in road construction in difficult terrain casualties are unavoidable.³ As a supervisor working on the road once put it (15.09.2006): “because it [the road] is for defence, it has to be completed. For every worker who dies, BRO will recruit 50 others.” Hence casualties were seen as a price to pay, and it seemed that some people had to be sacrificed for the road. This factor was further aggravated by the necessity to build the road in the allocated time. Construction was lagging behind the targets set and the road had to be built quickly. As a result workers had to start drilling soon after the explosion while rocks were still unstable, walls were not cleaned properly, and illusory protective measures like the whistle were adopted.

An accumulation of social, economic and political forces—that are all at some point the result of human agency—at different stages in time and space in their migration journey may help us understand what drove them to work there, and what contributed to make conditions as dangerous as they were. Thinlee and his family were certainly not devoid of agency—and I think their story demonstrated it—but their agency was curbed at many turns. They may have found the forces they were facing powerful and constraining, and it is likely that their faith in gods helped them accept these constraints and feel protected.

Migrant workers in Ladakh

It may have appeared in the story of Thinlee that migrant workers live and work in the shade. This is true in the literal sense in Chilling, as road workers constantly evolve in the shade of the Zangskar gorge. But this is also true figuratively, as ecologically and economically speaking, migrants fill in the less desirable “niches”. Road construction is one of them.⁴ Yet, despite being agents and builders of Ladakhi development, building roads that are not for them, migrants are largely absent from local histories and consciousnesses. When I was in Padum I tried to investigate about the “big snow” (*Ka chenmo*) of

³ See Tan-Pei-Ying (1945) on the Burma road; Ispahani (1989) on the Karakoram highway; or as expressed on BRO’s website: “Let us not forget that roads in this difficult terrain have been built not only with mere cement and concrete, but also with the blood of men of the Border Roads Organisation of India”

⁴ With the exception of a gang of Ladakhi workers in Nyimu and two Ladakhi chokadar in Zangla, in all construction sites I have visited, all road workers were migrants, Nepali and Jharkhandi for the majority of them. Note that it was not the case for major roads built in the past such as the Srinagar-Leh road or the road to Padum. Historically, it is interesting to note the presence of Ladakhi road builders in Punjab and what is now Himachal Pradesh, during the second half of the 19th century (Rizvi 2005).



1987, which closed the Pensi La in early autumn and claimed the life of many migrants, many of whom had come to work on roads. Most people who were in Padum at that time did not remember: “Nobody died. We don’t have stories like that” was among the usual answers (18.08.2007). I finally found one person who remembered: “Nobody died... but many people died, Nepali, over the Shingo La, the Jumlam” (18.08.2007). Similarly, most deaths that happen on the road are not recorded, so that after some time they remain a vague memory. Unlike officers, it is very unlikely that road workers ever get a commemorative plate. In Chilling, nobody knows the exact number of casualties. Figures circulate, transmitted from worker to worker, but are never confirmed.

In Ladakh, stories about migrant road workers are sometimes heard. People often fear them. The first time I encountered some road workers evolving in a black cloud of burning tar on the Leh-Manali road, they were presented to me as “criminals and convicts sentenced to road building”, as if one has to be criminal to deserve such a punishment. I once heard the story of Bihari road workers who had stolen and eaten more than 150 goats. Another story concerns the passengers of a bus who were thrown burning tar at them by angry Bihari road workers. Sometimes the same story happened in Nyimu, sometimes in Nubra, generally far from home so that in the end no one knows whether it really happened. Migrants are absent from histories, or when they are remembered they are more likely to be perpetrators of crimes rather than victims. This is not surprising since personal violence is often recorded and documented. By comparison *structural violence* is silent: “structural violence may be seen as about as natural as the [thin] air around us” (Galtung 1969: 173).

Figuratively, in scholarly research too migrants are *in the shade* of Ladakh. The presence of migrants and foreign traders in Ladakh has long been

mentioned. In his extremely crude and contemptuous colonial language, Knight describes his arrival in Leh bazaar as “a sudden burst (...) into civilization”, further extrapolating on “the savage Tartars in sheepskins, and other outlandish men, [who] jostle with the elegant Hindoo merchant from the cities of Central India, and the turbulent Mussulman Pathan [who] scowls at the imperturbable idolaters from the Celestial Empire” (1893: 177-8), most of which were traders. A century later, any visitor to Leh, Khalitse or Padum may probably notice how multicultural these places are, bustling with people from different horizons involved in all kinds of trade: Kashmiri traders and bakers, Punjabi cooks in *dhabas*; gangs of Bihari agricultural coolies, sometimes standing at the informal labour markets at the *chowk* in Leh bazaar; Himachali hairdressers; Nepali involved in construction, hotels and restaurants; “shoeshine boys” from Jaipur; beggars; road workers; soldiers from all over India; without forgetting hordes of Indian and foreign tourists. In almost every village of Ladakh including the most remote ones “non-natives” work as coolies in the fields and construct schools, roads and community halls. Bray mentions in *Ladakh Histories* how Urdu, Hindi, English, Ladakhi, Tibetan, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Nepali and mother tongues of many visitors are to be heard in Ladakh (2005). Van Beek and Pirie also write “[t]he days when one could imagine Ladakh as having a single culture, economy, ecology and political system are long gone”, pointing to the complexities of Ladakh societies and environment (2008: 8). Ladakh is not a homogenous whole. Earlier, Aggarwal also called for an anthropology of Ladakh that would rightly grasp this complexity and freed itself from the “prison-like modes of thought which academic territorialism and imagination have defined and concretized”, in which “inhabitants or ‘natives’ living in these areas are then ‘incarcerated’ and quarantined” (1993: 21-2). Yet, one is forced to observe that except for western missionaries and explorers, and for a few remarkable studies in which working migrants are mentioned (Aggarwal 2004: 82-83), populations other than “native” Ladakhis remain widely unresearched, and the wide complexity mentioned above widely unexplored. In other words, if this complexity is to be grasped there is a need to document the different groups of people that are part of the Ladakhi *ethnoscape* (Appadurai 1996).

Therefore there seems to be a sad coherence between the place of migrants in Ladakh, and their place in the literature on Ladakh. In both cases migrants are absent. The story of Thinlee showed how migrants active in road construction live and work literally in the shade of Zangskar. It also exemplified the concept of *structural violence*, and helped us understand the many forces at work in constraining migrants’ agency and driving them onto the roads of Ladakh. Migrants are also figuratively *in the shade* of Ladakh in the sense that they contribute to the building and transformation of “modern Ladakh” but are absent from its history. Finally they are largely absent from the scholarly literature on Ladakh. In a way, their physical absence in the landscape, in

people's consciousness, and in the literature seem to be linked: as Farmer (1997: 280) rightly writes "the poor are not only more likely to suffer, they are also more likely to have their suffering silenced."

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Barley and potato chips: New actors in the agricultural production of Ladakh

— *Juliane Dame*

Cash crop production from the high mountain areas of the Himalayas for the markets in the South Asian lowlands is a recent trend (see for example Semwal et al. 2004, Kreutzmann 2006, Kreutzmann, Schmidt & Benz 2008). Yet, this development is new to Ladakh. This article thus sheds light on a first trial period of potato production under contract farming conditions in Leh District. It discusses first findings on the new contracting system against the background of recent land-use changes and the trend of income diversification. The research is based on data from expert interviews and on household studies in one village of Leh District which took part in the trial phase in 2008. In that year, more than 80 trucks loaded with potatoes for a chips production plant have returned to Punjab (*pers. comm. Pepsi⁵, October 2008*), representing this latest trend in Ladakhi agriculture.

The road passes connecting Ladakh with lowland India remain closed for approximately five months of the year, during which access to the peripheral region is only possible by plane. Between April and November, jeeps, cars and trucks are creeping up the road passes from the Indian lowland via Srinagar or Manali, crossing some of the highest motorable passes in the world, to reach the high mountain region of Ladakh. The trucks transport supplies including vegetables and fruits, kerosene and rice for the local population and the troops stationed in this border area of geopolitical importance. Besides of the vast influx of goods, most trucks return to the Indian plains without freight.

Today, these goods which are “imported” during the summer, help fulfil the needs of the local population. At the same time, mixed mountain agriculture remains the mainstay of food and livelihood security in rural Ladakh (Dame & Nüsser 2008, Mankelov 2008). Non-agrarian income opportunities have become additional pillars for local livelihoods, especially in Leh and its vicinity. Besides these developments, the marketing of agricultural products has so far been of lesser importance for local household strategies. Therefore, the impact of wider socio-economic and political changes and the question if “Ladakhi agriculture is dying” (Ladags Melong 2003) due to subsidized food items and a lack of monetary income from farming activities have been discussed in debates on sustainable development by international and local actors.

⁵ Information from Pepsi is based on interviews with local Pepsi contact, training and coordination personnel. In addition, information from flyers distributed to local farmers has been available. Consequently, information and viewpoints from Pepsi Co. India headquarters have not been included.

Recent land-use changes

The 'traditional' agro-pastoral land use system of Ladakh has seen manifold changes in recent years including a general trend of household income diversification which is similar to other high mountain regions of South Asia (e.g. Kreuzmann 2006, Nüsser & Gerwin 2008).

Mixed mountain farming has been fundamental to livelihood security for the Ladakhi population over centuries. Given the arid climatic conditions and topographic features (Archer & Fowler 2004, Klimeš 2003), among a total of 0.3% arable land (Fox et al. 1994), cultivated land commonly depends on glacier and snow-fed irrigation (*phu-lhags*). River-based irrigation is only possible on the alluvial plains of the Indus River and its main tributaries (*rgya-shod*). For an equitable, rotational distribution of water resources to the terraced fields during the short agricultural season between May and September, the land use system relies on community-based institutions for water management (Labbal 2000). As double-cropping is only possible below an altitude of 3000 m, single-cropping is dominant for the production of barley and wheat as staple crops of the local diet. Along with peas and mustard, horticultural products, such as cabbage, turnip, potatoes, spinach or tomatoes, are grown during the summer months and diversify food consumption patterns. Moreover, the cultivation of fruit trees (apricots, apples) and the collection of wild plants are important supplements to the local diet. In addition to the cultivation of crops, animal husbandry is the second and interdependent pillar of mixed mountain agriculture, helping to fulfil the need for manure, draught power and transportation while providing dairy products, meat, wool and dung for heating to the population (Osmaston 1994).

In the context of changing socio-economic and political conditions in Ladakh, this land use system has faced various modifications (cf. Tiwari & Gupta 2007, Mankelov 2008). The introduction of subsidised rice and wheat distributed to Ladakh through the national Public Distribution System (PDS) and changing food preferences have led to a decline of staple crop production in the region. At the same time, the cultivation of vegetables in home gardens and on small parcels at the edge of arable fields has increased. Especially over the last decade, the diversity of vegetables grown in Ladakh has risen, adding for example spinach, cauliflower, capsicum and tomatoes to the "old" varieties of turnip, radish, carrot, onion and local peas. The vegetables help to fulfil the nutritional requirements providing minerals and vitamins to the population, especially during the summer months. Apart from new varieties, governmental and non-governmental programmes have supported the introduction of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizer as well as the use of greenhouses and polysheets. While these changes have been relevant for local food security and household consumption patterns, farmers still see few marketing opportunities for agricultural products. With a boom in tourism and the large-scale deployment

of troops in this region due to its continuing geostrategic importance, the army and tourism sectors form the main local markets (Ladags Melong 2003). Yet inadequate marketing facilities make them difficult to access for a majority of the rural smallholders. Only in recent years, farmer cooperative societies have started to negotiate fixed prices and terms of supply with the stationed troops. Besides the demand for fresh vegetables, surplus of locally produced staple crops have no market, because of large-scale supplies of atta and rice through the PDS. Thus, most households opt for off-farm income opportunities.

Economic diversification and off-farm income

Today, many households in central Ladakh desire non-agrarian employment opportunities. While trade had offered additional income to selected families until the closure of the Indo-Tibetan border in the early 1960s, the political conflict constellation and resulting sealing of the borders put an end to the traditional trade and led to significant military presence accompanied by infrastructure extension. The deployment of armed forces opened up new possibilities for off-farm income to the local population. Fixed salaries attract young men to become part of the elite regiment of the Ladakh Scouts, the Indo Tibetan Border Police or work as a porter at Siachen glacier. The number of army personnel is currently estimated to be equivalent to one third of Ladakh's population (Rigzin 2005). Moreover, unskilled wage labourers are hired by the armed forces.

When travel restrictions for foreigners were relaxed by the Indian Government in 1974, tourism started to expand in Ladakh attracting travellers in search for trekking opportunities or for one last *Shangri-La*. Since then, tourism has been developed as a key economic sector (Singh 1998, Dawa 2008), with a yearly number of visitors rapidly rising to more than 20,000 by the end of the 1980s. After slumps in 1989, 1999 and 2002⁶, this economic sector has faced an exponential increase over the last six years. In 2007, more than 50,000 domestic and international visitors came to Ladakh. Tourism business is concentrated within a relatively short period between June and September. As income opportunities from this sector are only available during the summer months, women and—to a growing extent—wage labourers take over jobs in the agricultural sector, thus replacing the workforce of men. Yet, the benefits are distributed unevenly between villages, with a concentration on Leh. In addition to employment in the army and the tourism sector, government jobs as teachers or in public departments are considered as highly attractive job opportunities.

⁶ Reasons have been the Leh agitation in 1989, the Kargil crisis in 1999 and the 9-11 aftermath.

Contract farming as a strategy of livelihood diversification: pros and cons

Now, the trial period of a contracting system has been a new alternative for some Ladakhi smallholders to gain on-farm income and diversify livelihood strategies. Pepsi Co. India has been the first international company to introduce this system in the region in 2007 (see info box). Generally, three types of contracting systems can be distinguished (Singh 2002: 1621): procurement contracts, which encompass agreements on the marketing conditions, partial contracts which include the distribution of selected inputs by the company and the purchase at predetermined price and total contracts where all aspects of input and production are regulated while the farmer supplies land resources and labour. The scheme Pepsi has introduced in Ladakh can be classified as a partial contract system, where inputs such as potato seeds and chemical fertilizer are provided to the farmer at a predetermined cost and a guarantee on the produce purchase at a fixed price is given.

Info Box: :Potatoes from Ladakh for chips production in Punjab

In 2007, Pepsi Co. India initiated a trial phase for contract production of potatoes in Ladakh. Pepsi Co. has experience in contract farming in the country since 2001, with programmes in the states of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Jammu & Kashmir (Punjabi 2008). The enterprise is interested in contract farming in Ladakh for a counter-seasonal supply of its processing plants in Punjab when the monsoon season dominates the subcontinent. The company thus accepts the exceptionally high transportation costs to the Indian lowland in order to cope with supply shortfalls during the summer months.

After an initial and small-scale trial period, fifteen settlements with a good level of road connection have been integrated into the programme test in the second year of trial (2008). If enough farmers of a village agreed to purchase a predetermined amount of potato seeds at a price of 15 rupees/kg, the firm in turn promised the pick-up and buy-off of the entire produce at a fixed price of 9.75 rupees/kg. This price is just below the local market average of 10 rupees, but no transportation costs have to be added. In 2008, about 750 tons have been produced in Ladakh (pers. comm. Pepsi, Oct 2008), compared to a total of 57000 tons of potatoes grown under contract farming for Pepsi in 2007 (Punjabi 2008).

The impacts of contract farming as a means of rural on-farm income generation have been discussed in the research and development discourse over the last decades (see for example: Little & Watts 1994, Porter & Philipps-Howard 1997). While advocates of contract farming see new chances for farmers and emphasise the potential economic benefits, opponents criticise asymmetric power relations between (international) companies and the local producers leading to exploitative structures and dependencies. Case studies on contract farming in countries of the global South have shown that the effects of this type of agricultural production highly depend on the individual context and the involved actors with their specific interests and power-relations.

Economic possibilities arising from contract farming through an income opportunity with guaranteed purchase, price stability and low—if any—transportation costs have been brought forward as the central argument by advocates of the system. Yet critics name the financial assets which are indispensable to acquire inputs such as seeds and chemical fertilizer. In some cases, credit systems are therefore offered to the farmers, although the possible dependency on credits should be considered. While proponents point to the opportunity of market-access through a contracting system and the enhanced attractiveness given to rural livelihoods, opponents question whether farmers are merely “hired” and dependencies through monopolization and lack of alternative marketing options are created. They stress that contracting leads to capital intensive production, exploitative structures and risk transmission to the individual farmers, especially in regions where no competition between different (inter-) national companies exists. At the same time, growing self-esteem for rural smallholders and possibilities of power generation for female land workers are put forward as virtues (Singh 2002, Imbruce 2008).

Furthermore, studies have shown that the outcomes for local livelihoods remain ambiguous: On the one hand, the economic benefits resulting from contract farming lead to an improvement of livelihoods in some cases. On the other hand, the utilization of fertile area for cash crop production competes with the production of local food and fodder supplies. In certain contexts, contract farming can thus be susceptible to the adverse effect and harm the food security situation.

Consequently, for each individual case study, it must be questioned how power relations are shaped and re-shaped and if desires and expectations of all parties are fulfilled. Moreover, it is essential to evaluate in which way the given framework conditions and the influences of actors from the governmental and non-governmental sector encourage a win-win situation as a result of contract farming (Imbruce 2008).

Resource use and market orientation: the case of Igoo

In October and November 2008, a household survey has been conducted in Igoo village, in which 196 households took part. Data give impressions on the acceptance of the contracting programme, farmers' motivation to engage with this production system, satisfaction with the trial period and perspectives for the programme.

Situated in a side valley of the Indus river, approximately 50 kilometres east of Leh, Igoo is a long stretched village of 254 households and 1,163 inhabitants (Tata-LAHDC 2007). In Igoo, natural conditions allow for a single crop per year. Due to insufficient results from the cultivation of wheat in the past, barley is the only staple crop grown in the village. Potatoes are commonly grown in

the valley (87.2% of all households of the sample grew potatoes in 2008). The average household size of the sample (n=196) is 5.11 people. The majority of families⁷ living in Igoo (90.1 % of the sample) has access to off-farm employment. The army is the main source for income, with a large number of villagers being an active soldier or beneficent of a pension for ex-servicemen. Moreover, the proximity to the army post at the block headquarters in Kharu creates a large demand for wage labourers. As a result, almost every second family (48.98%) cannot rely on male household members as full-time workers in agriculture.

In 2008, 21% of the households represented in the sample have taken part in the trial period of contract farming introduced by Pepsi Co. Except for two, all of these 45 households have access to additional, non-agrarian income and are thus able to purchase the required seeds and chemical fertilizer. The household studies have shown that mostly families with a monthly income of Rs. 3,000 and above are selling cash crops and take part in the contracting programme. While the marketing of agricultural products is an earning strategy pursued by 46.4% of all households of Igoo, the Pepsi programme has to a large extent attracted families that have not been marketing before (68.9%, n=45).

Data from Igoo suggest that the main factor influencing farmers' strategies to engage with the contacting system are access to information and cooperative decision-making. These households are clustered in three of the village's hamlets.⁸ In the case of "*pepsi alu*", farmers have followed a strategy of "careful experimentation" (cf. Mankelov 2008: 269). Some 60% of the households which took part in the trial phase planted potatoes on a limited scale with an initial seed purchase of two bags, i.e. 100 kg, or less. Only 13.3% of the households bought 5 bags or more of the high yielding potato seeds provided by Pepsi.

Various reasons have determined smallholders' engagement in the trial period. The company's requirements mainly affect the regional scale while individual farmers' strategies are decisive at the local level. The firm has only selected villages with good road access and comparatively bearable transportation costs. Moreover, a critical number of participants have been a prerequisite for launching the program in a selected settlement. Farmers have evaluated the possible lack in hay and fodder as well as a reduction of household food production resulting from an increased cultivation of potatoes as critical. Others have decided to abstain from the programme due to a lack of available labour and difficulties to bear with the input costs. Yet, data from

⁷ I alternatively use the term "family" instead of "households", though acknowledging that not necessarily all household members may be family members.

⁸ A different cluster arising from the same approach can be found in the hamlet of Langkor, where almost all families sell green peas to a contractor from Manali while other households from Igoo village are not taking part in this marketing chain.

the household survey show no significant correlation of wage labor employment and availability of household members working in the agricultural sector on a full-time basis and the decision to take part in the trial period.

In the 2008 household survey, contract farmers have been asked for their satisfaction with the yields. With an average yield of 2.7-times, the harvest of the high yielding “*pepsi alu*” remained below the expectations of the participants. Despite this result, the majority of farmers intend to take part in the programme in 2009 even with higher investments for purchasing more seeds.

From its medium-term planning perspective Pepsi Co.—as a profit-oriented actor—aims to focus its contracting system on those settlements where high yields correspond with high participation rates. According to Pepsi Co., an average yield of five times is considered as critical for the success of the programme. For Ladakh, harvests meeting this target and reaching up to nine times have been reported in 2008 (pers. comm. Pepsi Co., Oct. 2008). Yet, farmers in Igoo still have been rather unaware of these selection methods, probably given the fact that information channels highly depend on social networks.

Perspectives

The example of Igoo has illustrated the effects and issues of land-use change taking the introduction of cash crop and contract farming in the high mountains of Ladakh as an example. Despite the fact that farmer expectations have been fulfilled only in few cases, the majority of households wishes to continue the market-oriented cultivation of potatoes and further diversify household income. Yet, the international new actor in the agricultural sector—Pepsi Co.—has different demands and targets to be fulfilled for a continuation of the programme. In a local context where farmers lack alternatives to diversity on-farm income strategies, the benefits provided by a contract with guaranteed purchase and no transportation costs lead to a land-user's strategy of “careful experimentation”.

While the contracting system offers a new option for local farmers without the necessity of migrating and higher educational standards, the company follows a success-oriented strategy based on high participation and yield rates. The case study thus shows that expectations are evaluated very differently by the main actors involved. Not only power-relations but also information flow seems to be asymmetric and selective. Besides the prerequisite of available financial assets and manpower, access to information has been a central underlying factor for a household's decision to engage with contract farming. From a mid-term perspective, Pepsi Co. plans to focus its activities on selected villages which might increase inner-regional disparities and dependencies.

If contract farming will be a long-term success in Ladakh further depends on

the question of how power-relations between the actors will be shaped and reshaped. The system will moreover be influenced by developments in other economic sectors. In addition, the engagement of governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the agricultural sector in Ladakh can have a strong influence on its future development.

	Households selling to Pepsi and/or other markets (n=45)	Households selling to other markets only (n=46)	Households without marketing activities (n=105)	Total: Households of Igoo village (n=196)
Average number of household members	5.49	5.37	4.84	5.11
Average number of household members staying outside of the village for more than 6 months/year	1.91	2.24	1.32	1.67
Average number of household members with full-time engagement in agriculture	2.02	1.65	1.78	1.80
Average number of household members with part-time engagement in agriculture	1.60	1.93	1.50	1.62
Percentage of households with employment of <i>kulis</i> for agricultural work	22.2 %	34.8 %	16.2 %	21.9 %

„Did the yield of „pepsi alu“ in 2008 meet your expectations?“ (n=45)

	Number	Share
Yield exceeded expectations	11	24.4 %
Yield met expectations	4	8.8 %
Yield did not meet expectations	30	66.8%
Total	45	100 %

„Do you wish to take part again in the Pepsi programme next year (2009) ?“ (n=45)

	Number	Share
Yes, purchasing same amount of seeds	7	15.5 %
Yes, purchasing more seeds	25	55.6 %
Yes, purchasing less seeds	1	2.2 %
No	9	20.0 %
Don't know	3	6.7 %
Total	45	100 %

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RUSSIAN TRAVELLERS IN LADAKH

— Alexander Andreyev

Ladakh has never been of much attraction to Russian travellers, because of its remoteness and difficulty of access from Russian territory. In the late 18th to early 20th centuries this mountainous country was visited by only a few individuals—Russian natives and non-Russians who had some dealings of a commercial or political nature with the Tsars. In this paper I will briefly discuss the Ladakh travels of these people.

One of the earliest travellers was probably Philip Efremov (1750 - after 1811). A resident of Viatka, he served in the Russian army with the rank of sergeant, his unit being stationed in Orenburg, on the south-eastern fringes of the empire. During the 1774 Pugachov peasant rebellion, the young soldier was taken a prisoner by a band of Cossacks and muzhiks. He managed to escape from his captors only to find himself in the hands of the Kirghiz tribesmen, who sold him to a Bokharian named Khoja Gafur. The latter offered him as a present to his father-in-law, Daniar-beg the ruler of Bokhara. Two years later, already in the service of this feudal lord as head of his harem, Efremov fled again. However, his road to his homeland turned out to be long and circuitous: via the Central Asian khanates Samarkand and Kokand; Kashgaria; Kashmir; on to India; thence by sea to London; and finally to St Petersburg where Efremov arrived safely in 1782.⁹

In the book about his nine year-long adventures and travels that Efremov later published in Russia (1786) one will find a rather detailed description of “Tibet, or Tevat” (a common appellation of Ladakh), the land he traversed on the way from Yarkand to Kashmir with a merchant’s caravan. However, as demonstrated later by the analysis of his narrative, the Tibet chapter was not actually written by Efremov but is a literal translation from German of an article published in 1783 by Johann Friedrich Hakman, a Russian academician of German extraction, in the journal *Neue nordische Beyträge*.¹⁰ Be that as it

⁹ See: *Rossiiskogo unter-ofitsera Efremova nyne kollezhskogo assesora desiatiletnee stranstvovanie i prikluchenia v Bukharii, Khive, Persii i Indii i vozrastchenie ottuda cherez Angliiu v Rossiu*. St Petersburg, 1786; Filipp Efremov. *Deviatiletnee stranstvovanie*. Moscow, 1950 (edited and prefaced by E. Murzaev); “Stranstvovanie Filippa Efremova” (edited and prefaced by A.A.Vigasin) in: *Puteshestvia po Vostoku v epochu Ekateriny II* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 134-260. See also: *Russian travellers to India and Persia 1624-1798. Kotov - Yefremov - Danibegov*. Transl. and ed. By P.M. Kemp. Delhi, 1959.

¹⁰ See: A.A.Vigasin. “Stranstvovanie Filippa Efremova”, in: *Puteshestvia po Vostoku...* p.141. The source of Efremov’s story was J. Hakman’s “Nachrichten betreffend die Erdbeschreibung, Geschichte und natürliche Beschaffenheit von Tybet”, *Neue nordische Beyträge zur physikalischen und geographischen Erd- und Völkerbeschreibung, Naturgeschichte und Ökonomie*. Bd. IV. St Petersburg - Leipzig, 1783. The latter publication, according to Vigasin, was based on three sources: A. Georgi’s *Alphabetum*

may, the use of Hakman's material in Efremov's book does not discredit him as a visitor of Ladakh. The original version of Efremov's travelogue dated 1784 includes an authentic, though much shorter, text from his own pen, arranged in two short sections: "Description of Tevat" and "Funeral customs in Tevat".¹¹ From these one could learn only a few facts about the Ladakhis, for example, that they live high in the mountains, wear a special sort of dress made of broadcloth and raw horse-skin sandals, and eat oat flour mixed with "tea water" (obviously a reference to *tsampa*). They also have a very peculiar funeral rite, described as follows. A lama carries a corpse on his back, covered by a black cloth. Another lama leads the corpse-carrier by a rope tied around his neck. A group of other lamas walks in front of them, chanting and playing various musical instruments. Having ascended a high mountain, they lay the dead body on the ground in a seated posture. Then they put firewood around it, pour oil on its head and finally cremate it. After the cremation the same lamas make a burial mound putting on top of it a clay column, white-washed with alabaster, one *sazhen* high (7 ft). Upon completion of the rite they proceed to the home of the deceased where "they drink and rejoice".¹²

Another visitor to Ladakh was Rafail Danibegov (Rafiel Danibegashvili),¹³ a Georgian by birth. A resident of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia (Kartli-Kahetia kingdom) which by that time was already a vassal territory of Russia under the terms of the 1783 Georgievsk Treaty, Danibegov made two journeys to India, in 1795-1798 and in 1799-1813. Both of his journeys were prompted by political considerations. On his first trip he was to deliver presents from the Georgian ruler Heraclius II to Shamir-aga (Iakov Shahamirian), a well-to-do Armenian residing in Madras who secretly plotted for the unification of Georgia and Armenia into a common Christian state under Heraclius's auspices. Danibegov's second journey which lasted for nearly 14 years was undertaken in the interests of the Russian crown. In the opinion of L.I. Maruashvili, Russia seized the opportunity of a Georgian merchant going to India to "ascertain the prospects for economic relations with a country with which the Russians had wanted to trade since the days of Athanasius Nikitin".¹⁴

Tibetanum (Rome, 1762), an article by P.S. Pallas, "Nachrichten von Tybet, aus Erzählungen tangutischer Lamen unter den selenginskischen Mongolen", in: *Neue nordische Beyträge...* (Bd. I. 1781) and a letter from an English scholar Stewart to Sir John Bogle, published in the *Transactions of the London Royal Society* (1778, pt. II).

¹¹ This original version is preserved in the manuscript section of the "Pushkinsky Dom" (Institute of Russian Literature) in St Petersburg: Fond 265, op. 2, d. 1020).

¹² A.A. Vigasin. *Stranstvovanie Filippa Efremova*, pp. 163-164.

¹³ For his journey see: *Puteshestvie Rafaila Danibegashvili* (edited and prefaced by L.I. Maruashvili, with his comments and bibliography). Moscow, 1961; republished in: *Russko-Indiiskie otnosheniia v XIX v.* [Russian-Indian relations in the 19th century]. Moscow, 1997. Pp. 43-53. For the English translation of Danibegov's account see: *Russian travellers to India and Persia 1624 - 1798. Kotov - Yefremov - Danibegov*.

¹⁴ *Puteshestvie Rafaila Danibegashvili*, pp. 53-54.

Unfortunately, Danibegov's account combines his two journeys into a single narrative and provides no dates, so it is impossible to say when exactly he visited Ladakh. Most likely this occurred towards the end of his second voyage when he travelled from Pegu in Burma to Calcutta and then northwest across the Indo-Gangetic plain in the direction of Delhi and Kashmir. Danibegov reached Kashmir via Lahore and thence crossed into what he calls "a city of Tibet", which must be Leh. His description of the place is rather insipid and sketchy, like that of Efremov. What he finds worthy of mention about Ladakh is that they practice polyandry when three or four brothers are married to one and the same woman—"a custom most evil and making no sense at all"; their only food is a boiled mixture of oat flour, milk and butter; and a large quantity of "soft goods", including wool (fleece) for making shawls, is regularly delivered by sheep caravans from Lhasa and then forwarded on from Ladakh to Kashmir. It took Danibegov 40 days to get from Leh ("Tibet") to Yarkand in Kashgaria, the city surrounded by dense groves, which, in his words, "presents a rather lovely and comforting sight for a traveller", as compared to the rugged landscape of Ladakh.¹⁵

Danibegov's journey finally ended in 1813 in Semipalat (today's Semipalatinsk in the Kazakh Republic), then a fortress-city and a Russian outpost in Central Asia. He made his way from there to Moscow where two years later his travelogue was published in a Russian translation from Georgian under the title *Puteshestvie v Indiiu gruzinskogo dvorianina Rafaila Danibegova* (A Journey to India by a Georgian nobleman Rafail Danibegov). From the beginning of the 19th century, Tsarist Russia under Alexander I began to show a keen interest in distant Asian lands. This interest was generated largely by the desire to forge close economic and political ties with these countries, particularly India and the independent Himalayan princedoms, Kashmir and Ladakh, an aspiration that a few decades later would bring Russia into collision with another rapidly expanding super power, the British Empire. The main base for Russian penetration into Inner Asia was provided by the above-mentioned Semipalatinsk, the point of departure for Russian trade caravans to Persia, Bokhara, Afghanistan, Chinese Turkestan (Kashgaria) and northern India. The best known among pioneer Russian and Russia-connected caravan traders was Mehti Rafailov (Rafalla). A Jew from Kabul, he first worked as a *prikazchik* (merchant's clerk) of a thriving merchant Semion Madatov, and it was Rafailov who, as early as 1807, delivered directly to St Petersburg several bales of Kashmir shawls, a commodity then at the height of fashion with the Russian ladies' *beau monde*. The event was immediately reported to the minister of foreign affairs Count N.P. Rumiantsev, who concurrently acted as a minister of commerce, and this prompted the enterprising Russian statesman to take the entire business under his control. Rafailov was encouraged to return to India with a quantity of Russian goods, given a special permit "for free travel both

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 24-26.

ways” and provided with a financial subsidy. So in February 1808 Aga Mehti set out for another Eastern journey, having Kashmir as his final destination. When Rafailov returned to Semipalatinsk in 1811 he was interviewed by the military commander of the Siberian frontier, General Grigory Glazenap. Rafailov’s account of his trade mission was incorporated into Glazenap’s memorandum (*zapiska*) which was then forwarded to Rumiantsev. This had a separate section describing Ladakh—*Tibetskoe vladenie* (Tibetan State). Again, the description was laconic and uninspiring, similar to Efremov’s and Danibegov’s narratives. The Ladakhis were referred to as a race of generally “weak” and “almost exhausted” people, due to extremely unhealthy climatic conditions. Their capital city impressed Rafailov as “the poorest” settlement. Their only means of subsistence came from “the precious wool exported to Kashmir” and from the duties they collected from Indian, Kashmiri and Chinese merchants transiting their country.¹⁶

Rafailov travelled a few more times to Kashmir and India in subsequent years. In 1812 he came up with a “Project for Establishing Routes Leading from Russia to India” and submitted this to Rumiantsev. The document, like his earlier *zapiska*, provided various bits of information of a geographical, ethnographical and to some extent political character on the Asian countries and peoples that he had visited, namely, Bokharians (Muslim Tatars), Kirghiz-Kaisaks of the Middle Horde, Kalmyks and Tibetans (i.e. Ladakhis). Speaking of the latter, he again emphasized that Ladakhis were generally “ignorant and poor” people: all their well-being came mainly from the transit duties they collected and the “fine wool” they exported to Kashmir for the manufacture of shawls and other cloths. Quite importantly, the Kabul trader drew Rumiantsev’s attention to the fact that the British, “having laid bonds on the larger part of India and her Shah, prepare now to enslave the rulers of Punjab, still retaining their independence”. Therefore Rafailov offered the minister his services to help him “establish intercourse and friendly relations, by means of correspondence, with the Sikhs, the Afghan Khan, the Marathas and the heirs of Tippto-Sahib themselves”.¹⁷

As a result, General Glazenap sent with Aga Mehti, in September 1813, a letter to the “Tibetan ruler” (i.e. the king of Ladakh), calling him by his official Muslim name Akbar Mahmud Khan and inviting him to enter into trade relations with the Russians.¹⁸ The scheme worked out well. Rafailov safely

¹⁶ “Zapiska Mehti Rafailova”, in: *Rossiiskie puteshestvenniki v Indii XIX - nachalo XX v.* (Moscow, 1990) p.. 35.

¹⁷ *Rossiiskie puteshestvenniki...* pp. 44-45.

¹⁸ In 1683 King Deldan Namgyal of Ladakh had been obliged to adopt Islam, and took the name Aqibat Mahmud Khan, under the terms of a treaty with the Mughals at the end of the Ladakh-Tibet-Mughal war. Although neither he nor his successors appear to have practiced Islam, they continued to use this name in their communications with Muslim rulers until the end of the Ladakhi kingdom in the 1830s. See Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*. (Rome: ISMEO, 1977), p. 75. The Russian text says ‘Akbar-Mahmud’ but this may be a misreading for ‘Aqibat-Mahmud’.

reached Leh, presumably in early 1815. There he was welcomed by the king, who permitted him to conduct his trade operations unrestricted and free of duty, and promised to patronize Russian trade henceforth as much as he could. Moreover, the king handed the Kabul trader a letter for Glazenap, written in Persian, in which he expressed his willingness to open trade relations with Russia as well as his intention to dispatch his ambassador there.¹⁹ Upon his return to Semipalatsk Rafailov, submitted a new *zapiska* to the Russian government via Glazenap. In this he reported, *inter alia*, that the ruler of the Indian province and city of Lahore (i.e. Punjab) Radjitsin Badsha (Ranjit Singh) was seeking protection against the British who wanted to make him their vassal, “but he does not know where to find it”.²⁰

Rafailov's service to the Russians, which conveniently combined trade and diplomacy, proved fairly successful. He showed himself quite a skilful Great Gamer, having succeeded in forging a rather promising Russia-northern India link. In 1819 Mehti, already bearing the high rank of *nadvornyi sovetnik* (aulic councilor) in the Russian civil service, was sent to India again. This time he was charged with an important mission—to deliver several confidential letters from Russia's new foreign minister Count K.V. Nesselrode to the rulers of Punjab, Kashmir and Ladakh (“an independent part of Tibet”). In these missives, all written on the same pattern, Nesselrode wrote that the Russian emperor, Alexander I, having learnt through Rafailov of the “glory, splendour and power” of these Indian rulers, as well as the hospitality they showed to visiting Russian merchants, enjoined him (Nesselrode) to “enter into friendly intercourse” with these three sovereigns via his “loyal and diligent officials” so that both Russian and Indian merchants “could travel freely to their reciprocal regions”.²¹ All these three letters were written in Persian, each placed in a little bag made of dark red patterned brocade.

In addition, Rafailov was commissioned with the task of procuring the six best Turkmen stallions for the state stud-farms as well as several Kashmir she-goats (actually pashm-yielding sheep) in Tibet for breeding purposes somewhere in Siberia. Mehti, however, argued that it would not be possible to bring the sheep to Russia as their export from Tibet was strictly prohibited by the local authorities. Also, as he pointed out in his memo to the Russian finance minister D.A. Guriev, the animals would not be able to endure the hardships of the long journey. Therefore he proposed to purchase the sheep's softest fleece (used to make only the finest shawls, gathered after the animals

¹⁹ V.G. Volovnikov. “Puteshestvia Rossiiskogo “kupza-diplomata”, in *Rossiiskie puteshestvenniki* ... p. 19.

²⁰ *Zapiska*..., p. 78. The originals of this and other memoranda by Rafailov are preserved in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AVPRI, Moscow. F. St-Petersburg. Glavnyi Archiv).

²¹ V.G. Volovnikov. Op. cit., p.. 20. Nesselrode's letter was published in: *Vneshniia Politika Rissii XIX - nachala XX veka*. Ser. II. Vol. III (XI). Moscow, 1979. Doc. No. 84 (pp. 234-235) and in: *Russko-Indiiskie Otnosheniia v XIX v.*, pp.41-43.

shed their coats), an idea he promised to negotiate with “Tibet’s ruler”. From this fleece the Russians could manufacture high quality Kashmir shawls at a special factory to be built in St Petersburg.²²

This plan was eventually approved by the finance minister who believed that its realization would bring Russia “incalculable benefits”. So on 30 April 1820 Rafailov set out from Semipalatisnk with his caravan accompanied by a strong Cossack convoy and headed for Chinese Turkestan. He reached this province unmolested and, having traded there for a while, moved southwards via Aksu and Yarkand to Leh. According to Russian sources, Rafailov fell ill during the journey and suddenly died. The Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Korös who had travelled in these regions at that time, however, claimed that the Russian merchant was murdered by his followers in the Karakorum Mountains “in a pass several days journey from Leh”. His property was plundered and consequently “by some means” Nesselrode’s letter to Ranjit Singh fell into the hands of the British traveller William Moorcroft. The latter employed Csoma to translate the dispatch for him and then communicated it to the British political agent in Delhi.²³

Rafailov’s journey to Ladakh in 1820 was actually Russia’s last and abortive attempt at a rapprochement with that still independent Himalayan principedom. It took over five decades before more Russian travellers appeared in those troubled regions, at a time when the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia, the Great Game, had already reached its critical stage.

In the summer of 1875 Ladakh was visited by the well-known Russian war painter Vasilii V. Vereshchagin (1842-1904) and his wife, in the course of their three-month Himalayan journey. The couple crossed into the region from Kashmir and then followed the main caravan road between Dras and Leh. The Ladakhi capital did not impress them much: “The city of Leh makes a rather sorrowful sight, with a little Raja, who is powerless, since all power is in the hands of the [British] resident. His palace of dark stone is atop of the rock, and there is a temple nearby, both structures being unimpressive”²⁴. In Leh Vereshchagin easily made friends with the resident, Capt. Moloy, who turned out to be a good shot, like himself.²⁵

²² Ibid. P. 21-22. See also: Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA, St Petersburg). F. 1643, op. 1, d. 63.

²³ See: P. Marczell. *Alexander Csoma de Korös*. Vol. II. *British India source documents* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 2007), pp. 48-50. On Rafailov’s part in the Great Game, see also: K. Warikoo. *Central Asia and Kashmir. A Study in the context of Anglo-Russian rivalry*. New Delhi, 1989.

²⁴ V.V. Vereshchagin, E.K. Vereshchagina, *Ocherki puteshestvia v Gimalai*. Part 1: Sikkim; Part 2: Kasmir, Ladakh. St-Petersburg, 1883-1884, p. 67. Vereshchagin had formerly (1867-1868) participated in the war against the Central Asian khanats under Gen. K.P. Kaufman and later (1874-1876) made his first journey to India.

²⁵ The British representative in Ladakh was known as the British Joint Commissioner, and shared responsibility for the administration of the Central Asian trade routes with the

During his journey the painter made numerous sketches of the terrain and of different types of people, with which he would later illustrate his travel account, and he also hunted regularly for animals, including the *kiangs* (wild asses). In the second volume of his book, one will find a long and very lively written chapter on Ladakh, which abounds in details relating to the Ladakhis' way of life and various natural history observations which exceed by far the laconic and rather unemotional descriptions by Efremov and Danibegov.

A year later, one of the leading Russian military geographers, retired Major-General M.I. Veniukov published a detailed description of the Aksu-Ladakh road via Yarkand in the *Izvestia* (Proceedings) of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. This was based on a little known manuscript from the Orenburg Krai and West Siberia frontier archives, in particular one of the files of the Chief Administration of West Siberia entitled: "On Foreign Trade, 1824-1828".²⁶ Veniukov's piece listed 49 intermediary stations between Aksu and "the town of Tübetü" in Ladakh (i.e. Leh), with information on the distance between stations and the availability of water, fuel and fodder. The length of the entire route was given as 1,328 versts. At the same time, Veniukov provided a valuable commentary on the list by comparing the places (stations) with those given on the maps of Western geographers, such as Klaproth's map of Central Asia and Walker's map of Chinese Turkestan. "This is very accurate information, though it became available to science only fifty years later and not through us, but through the British", wrote Veniukov in conclusion. "In those days [in the 18th - early 19th centuries] our chiefs had a common practice of collecting a great amount of material about neighbouring Asian countries, but they filed these as 'state secrets'. No doubt Russia and world science have lost much because of this system, and the Aksu-Ladakh route provides a brilliant proof of this".²⁷

Another Russian traveler in the same period was Nikolai Alexandrovich Notovitch (1858 - some time after 1916). A journalist and author of several books of patriotic—Russophile—orientation,²⁸ Notovich is remembered today mainly as a person who claimed to have discovered in November 1887, in Hemis monastery in Ladakh, a manuscript of what he himself alleged to be a

Wazir-i-Wazarat, or governor, appointed by the Jammu and Kashmir government. Captain Moloy may have been one of the many army officers who traveled to Ladakh in the summer months rather than the official representative.

²⁶ M. Veniukov. "Put' iz goroda Aksu cherez Yarkent v Ladak", *Izvestiia ISGO*, 12 (1876), No. 2, pp. 222-228.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

²⁸ Here are some of his many publications in Russian, listed in chronological order: *Patriotizm. Stikhotvoreniia*. St Petersburg, 1880; *Zhizneopisanie slavnogo russkogo geroia i polkovodtsa generala-adiutanta, generala ot infanterii M.D. Skobeleva*. [A biography of the famous Russian hero, general of infantry M.D. Skobelev]. St Petersburg, 1882; *Kvetta i voennaia zheleznaia doroga cherez pereval Bolan i Gernai. Tiflis, 1888; Pravda o evreiaikh*. Moscow, 1889; *Rossia i Angliia. Istoricheskopoliticheskii etiud*. St Petersburg, 1907 (2nd ed.: 1909).

Tibetan Gospel of Christ. The find caused quite a sensation among ecclesiastical circles and the general public in western Europe and in Russia, in particular after the text had been published first in French, under the title *La vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ* (1894), and then in the German, English, and Russian languages.²⁹ In the opinion of a large section of academic scholarship, the published manuscript was nothing but a fraud or a “popular hoax”.³⁰ Personally, Notovitch had to pay a high price for his discovery, being imprisoned in the Peter-and-Paul Fortress in 1895 and later sent into exile to Siberia. The Soviet (Russian) Indologist L.V. Mitrokhin suggests that Notovitch had got hold of some works by Christian missionaries, published in Tibetan and circulated in the Himalayas (Ladakh), which impressed him as writings by genuine Buddhist authors. However, these writings “do not lead us in any way to the text that he published under the heading of *The Unknown Life of Holy Issa*. Even if Notovitch had indeed used these Tibetan translations from the Bible, this only gave occasion to awaken his dormant literary abilities, having brought to life a work, which, although it is only a literary hoax, continues to this day to produce an almost magic charm on some Eastern and Western authors”.³¹ This conclusion concurs with that of Norbert Klatt, whose research provided a basis for Mitrokhin’s own investigation.

There is no doubt that Notovitch did travel in Ladakh and Kashmir, as well as Punjab, at the end of 1887, yet the purpose of his journey remains obscure. The fact that it coincided chronologically with an attempt by the deposed Punjab ruler Dalip Singh (1838-1893), son of Ranjit Singh, to foment an anti-British uprising in India with Russian military assistance suggests that his journey might have had a secret political dimension. We know that the maharaja came to Moscow in the spring of 1887 and he soon applied to the Russian emperor Alexander III offering his services, as well as those of other Indian princes, for the liberation of his countrymen “from the cruel British yoke” and calling upon the Tsar to adopt India as a Russian protectorate.³² Another Russian who was

²⁹ See: N. Notovitch. *Die Lücke im Leben Jesu. Aus dem französischen*. Stuttgart - Leipzig - Berlin - Wien, 1894; Notovitch. *The Unknown Life of Christ*. Transl. from the French by Violet Crispe. London, 1895; *Neizvestnaia Zhizn Khrista (Tibetskoe skazanie)* [The Unknown Life of Christ. A Tibetan Legend]. Transl. from the French by Archimandrite Khr., edited by V.V. Bitner. With a map of a part of Tibet. St Petersburg, 1910.

³⁰ See: J. Bray. “Nikolai Notovitch and the Tibetan Life of Christ” in *Tibetan Review* (1981, No. 5, pp. 21-22); N. Klatt. *Jesus in Indien. Nikolaus Alexandrovitch Notovitchs “Unbekanntes Leben Jesu”, sein Leben und seine Indienreise. Orientierung und Berichte*. 1986. No. 13. Stuttgart: EZW-Texte; H.L. Fader. *The Issa Tale That Will Not Die. Nicholas Notovitch and his Fraudulent Gospel*. Lanham: University Press of Maryland, 2003. A more sympathetic assessment of the claim by Notovitch that he found evidence of Christ’s visit to India while visiting Hemis monastery in 1887 can be found in: E.C. Prophet. *The Lost Years of Jesus*. Livingston: Summit University Press, 1983.

³¹ L.V. Mitrokhin. *Kashmirskaia legenda ob Iisuse Khriste*. Moscow, 1990 (Ateizm i Religia: Istoria i sovremennost. 1990, No. 8), p. 45.

³² See: *Russko-Indiiskie Otnosheniia v XIX v. Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov i materialov*.

intimately involved in this intrigue was Mikhail Nikiforovitch Katkov (1818-1887), a publisher of the *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow News) and *Russkii Vestnik* (Moscow Chronicle), a good friend of H.P. Blavatsky, who incidentally published her *Caves and Jungles of Hindustan* in the latter journal between 1879 and 1882.³³ The chief supporter of the maharaja in the Sikh community of Punjab was his cousin Thakar Singh Sandhanvalia. However both Thakar Singh and Katkov died in 1887 and the Tsar turned down Dulip Singh's proposal, which eventually dashed the entire scheme.

Whether Notovitch had anything to do with Dalip Singh's plot is unknown. His travel diary provides very scanty information about Ladakh and his references to the people he met with during his journey in northern India are doubtful and unreliable in most cases.³⁴ In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, India was visited by several Russian agriculturalists, specialists in tea-growing, and some officers of the General Staff, such as Captain Novitsky, Staff-Captain Snasarev and Colonel Polozov, with the permission of the Anglo-Indian authorities. One of them (Novitsky), on his return trip to Russia, passed through Kashmir and Ladakh, and described these regions in some detail in the book he published shortly after the completion of his journey under the title *Iz Indii v Ferganu* (From India to Fergana).³⁵

The Indian travels of Captain Vasily Fedorovich Novitsky (1869-1929) were organized in 1898 by the General Staff and the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and lasted for three months. He was commissioned to do some field research in India: to collect plants, minerals and insects, conduct meteorological observation and do some route surveys. More specifically, he was assigned the task of passing from India by a land route into Russian Turkestan. Basically, Novitsky's trip was a typical reconnaissance expedition, in the course of which he had done a considerable amount of visual observation, instrumental measurement, collecting work, as well as photography. In the book, which he later published about his journey, readers can find a general description of Ladakh's nature—its mountains, vegetation and fauna, done in a very professional manner. There were also some curious ethnographic notes. For example, Novitsky remarked that Ladakhis were an “exceedingly dirty-looking people”—they never change their dress and wear it

[Russian-Indian relations in the 19th century. A collection of archival documents and materials] (Moscow, 1997), pp. 269-270 (Doc. No. 116, a letter from Duleep Singh to Alexander III, 10 May 1887).

³³ On Katkov see: Martin Katz. *Mikhail N. Katkov: a Political Biography, 1818-1887*. The Hague: Mouton, 1966. There is also a chapter on Katkov in: K. Paul Johnson. *The Masters Revealed. Madame Blavatsky and the Myth of the Great White Lodge* (State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 90-93.

³⁴ For a discussion of these references see, for example, N. Klatt's *Jesus in Indien*.

³⁵ V.F. Novitsky. *Iz Indii v Ferganu. Opisanie puteshestvia, sovershennogo v 1898 g. iz Pendzhaba cherez Kasmir, Ladakh, Karakorumskoe nagorie, Raskem i Kashgariu v Russkii Turkestan*. St Petersburg, 1903 (2nd edition: 1909).

until it turns into “a heap of shreds”. Their braids “give shelter to entire colonies of insects, constantly tormenting their possessors”. At the same time, “a Ladakhi Tibetan is kind, honest and quite unselfish”. The Ladakhis’ family relations are dominated by polyandry, “when brothers have a common wife with whom they cohabit simultaneously”.

Novitsky also emphasized the piety of the Ladakhis. What surprised him most, were the “prayer machines” (prayer-mills) they rotated all the time. “What an amazing saving of time and human mental effort!”—exclaimed Novitsky. These prayer machines, in his words, made an “indispensable attribute” of every Buddhist monastery (gompa) in Ladakh. Talking of his everyday life, Novitsky complained about missing badly throughout his whole trip the traditional Russian tea (of Chinese make), usually drunk from a samovar (a “self-boiler”, with an interior heating tube to keep water at boiling-point for making tea). Unlike Russian tea, a drink which is “so palatable and thirst-quenching”, the Lipton’s tea from Ceylon that he was supplied with “is unpalatable and makes a rather strong and bitter infusion”, like all Indian teas.

Novitsky’s itinerary in Ladakh, as given in his book, led all across the country from the Kashmir border to the Karakorum Range, along the well-known track: Dras - the Indus - Kargil - Mulbekh - Lamayuru - Saspul - Nimu - Leh. In Ladakh’s capital Novitsky briefly met with his British counterpart, the political agent Captain Chevenix-Trench, who turned out to be a very amiable and friendly chap. He handed over to Novitsky a packet he had received for him by post from the Russian consul in Kashgar, N.F. Petrovsky, with a “Chinese passport” issued by the local *taotai* and a travel pass from the Russian consulate. The Briton also helped the Russian officer to find a guide to take him to Yarkand, a half-Tibetan, half-Muslim named Korban, who spoke no English but only Hindustani. Thus, on 24 June Novitsky finally left Ladakh for Kashgaria, via Shyok, Nubra and the Karakorum Pass, with a six-man caravan.³⁶ Initially, he had wanted to return to Russia via the Eastern Pamirs by the Gilgit route, but the latter was a no-go for foreign travellers, especially Russian ones. The British officials in Shimla told Novitsky that the Gilgit route was unsafe and suggested that he should take a safer road—from Kashmir via Ladakh to Kashgaria. So this was how Novitsky came to be in Ladakh, on a trip not really motivated or duly planned.

A few years later, in August 1907, when the Great Game was already drawing to a close, Ladakh was visited by two more Russian military officers, M.S. Andreyev and Captain P.A. Polovtsev (brother of A.A. Polovtsev, the Russian Consul General at Bombay). Again, as in Novitsky’s case, they only transited the country on the way home after a rather lengthy stay in India, where they studied the local dialects and apparently collected all sorts of political and military information. In his report of his time in India (spent for the most part in Bombay), Andreyev devoted a few pages to his visit in Ladakh. In these he

³⁶ Ibid. Pp. 60-115 (the 1909 edition).

dwelt on Ladakh's administration, commercial activities, and the way of life of the Ladakhis. According to him, Ladakh was ruled by the Kashmir governor "under the supervision of the British Joint Commissioner", and there was only one Englishman in the country, residing in Leh, one Captain Campbell. Apart from him, there were several German missionaries belonging to the Moravian church, all stationed in Leh. One of these missionaries published a newspaper, "the only one in the Tibetan language".³⁷ Andreyev also reported that the population of Ladakh was badly stricken with famine, the responsibility for which he put on the British. This was because the local inhabitants were obliged to feed the trade caravans, passing from Yarkand and Khotan to Indian markets, for which reason they were heavily taxed in kind, according to the system introduced by the British. They had no access to the food stores which accumulated all the basic foodstuffs and sold these for money only to traders. Reviewing contemporary trade in Ladakh, Andreyev expressed the optimistic opinion that some of the popular Russian merchandise could easily find its way to the Ladakh markets, especially printed cotton (chintz) and "devil's skin" (a kind of cheap hard-wearing cotton fabric). Interestingly, on his return journey from Leh to the Russian frontier, Andreyev kept a diary in which he recorded the details of the road and he also conducted some hypsometric observations, to determine the altitudes of terrain, with the help of several barometers, thermometers and a boiler that he carried with him.³⁸

Three years later, in 1910, Andreyev's companion, Captain of the General Staff Polovtsev, made another trip to India. Like Novitsky, he also wanted to return to Russia across the Indo-Chinese border via Gilgit - Kilik - Tashkurgan. However, the British again strongly objected to his plan because of the strategic importance of the route leading through the north-western frontier regions of India.³⁹ So it seems that Polovtsev had to take the Leh - Karakorum - Yarkand route instead, to his own obvious disappointment and that of his superiors in the War Ministry.

In 1911, a three-man Russian zoological party under S.N. von Wick visited the Sind, Sulaiman Mountains, Punjab and western Kashmir where they conducted field research. A year later von Wick tried to mount another expedition to the north-western corner of India, with strong backing from the Russian Academy. However, this time he was unable to obtain permission from the British authorities. The Russian Consul General in Calcutta K.D. Nabokov relayed to St Petersburg the reply he had received from the assistant secretary of the Foreign Department in Delhi which stated the reason: "... His Majesty's Government consulted us the other day as to Mr. v Wick's proposed journey,

³⁷ See: John Bray. 'A.H. Francke's La dvags kyi akhbar: the First Tibetan Newspaper'. *The Tibet Journal* 13 (1988), No. 3, pp. 58-63.

³⁸ See: *Russko-Indiiskie Otnoshenia v 1900 - 1917 gg. Sbornik archivnykh dokumentov i materialov. M., 1999. pp. 237-239 (Doc. No. 172, dated 22 October 1907).*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 332-335 (Doc. No. 242).

and in reply we were forced to discourage it, as his itinerary is for the most part through disturbed areas where escorts would be necessary. It is most improbable that HM.'s Government will agree to the journey in the face of our reply. We are very sorry to have to pour cold water on the undertaking, but many of the places are such as our officers even are not permitted to visit without special sanction and arrangement".⁴⁰

Ladakh apparently became one of these restricted areas, judging by the above reply. However, in 1912, when the Russian Academy wanted to send another zoological expedition under A.N. Avinov and A.G. Yakobson to Northern India, including Sikkim, Quetta, western Kashmir, Ladakh and the Karakorum, it again faced strong opposition from both London and Delhi. The foreign secretary of the Government of India, Sir Henry McMahon confidentially informed the acting Russian Consul in Calcutta L.Kh. Revelioti that his government objected to Avinov's scientific journey to Ladakh and Karakorum for several reasons. One of these was that his projected visit to Ladakh and to one of the passes leading from India to Turkestan would "entail great efforts and difficulties on behalf of the local Anglo-Indian authorities, and when their efforts and troubles are rewarded with a reprehensible, from their point of view, conduct of the 'scientific travellers', there is no reason to do any special favor for these travellers" (in Reveleoti's quotation). Obviously, this was a lame excuse as in his conversation with the Russian consul McMahon did not cite a single example of serious misconduct by Russian travellers. Still, Revelioti pressed hard Avinov's case by saying that the person was not a casual traveller but a *Kammer-Junker* (gentleman of the Emperor's bed chamber) and a member of the Russian Geographical Society, well-known for his works on entomology, and, on top of that, his (Revelioti's) personal guest. As a result, the British diplomat had to abandon his "ironical tone" and state that "in such a case he will not object to M. Avinov's journey to Ladakh", provided the Viceroy (Lord Harding) gave his consent to it. The latter did give his sanction after a few days. However, an arrangement was made that Avinov and Yakobson would be accompanied by an English officer, Captain Marsh. The latter was to join the Russians in Rawalpindi, yet his orders were cancelled by his superiors the next day.⁴¹ It is not clear from the available Russian records whether the British provided a substitute for him, thus enabling the Russian team to carry out their project.

This episode clearly demonstrates that, despite the Anglo-Russian rapprochement heralded by the 1907 St Petersburg Accord, there still remained a great deal of mutual mistrust and misunderstanding on the part of both

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 378 (Doc. 282). Letter from the Consul General in Calcutta K.D. Nabokov to the senior councillor of the Ministry for Foreign Relations V.O. von Klemm à propos of the second zoological expedition by S.N. von Wick, dated 13 February 1913. Underlining in the original.

⁴¹ Ibid. P. 382-383 (Doc. No. 286). Letter from the acting Consul General in Calcutta L. Kh.

English and Russian officials, which made some of the areas along the north-western and northern Indian frontier practically inaccessible for Russian travellers, including Ladakh, a country to which the Russian General Staff had never attached much strategic importance.

The 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia revived the seemingly outlived Anglo-Russian rivalry throughout the whole of Asia to an unprecedented degree. India, the “stronghold” of British and hence “world imperialism”, immediately became a major target for subversive Bolshevik activities. Soviet leaders gave special attention to the “most revolutionary” Indian province of Bengal as well as Kashmir which occupied a key position in facilitating the importing of Bolshevik emissaries and propagandist literature via the Pamirs - Gilgit - Srinagar and Ferghana and the Kashgar - Yarkand - Leh routes. To prevent the entry of Bolshevik literature and agents into India from Soviet Central Asia, via Wakhan, and the frontiers of Kashmir, an additional police force was created by the British, and this was deployed at Ganderbal, Bandipora and Uttarmachipura—the gateways to Kashmir from Ladakh and Gilgit.⁴²

Despite the fact that Comintern records were fully declassified in Russia in the 1990s, we still know very little of the Comintern’s subversive operations in the Kashmir/Ladakh area.⁴³ However, there is some evidence from other Russian sources. For example, in early 1919 the Russian Committee for the exploration of Middle and Eastern Asia (an entity affiliated with the Bolshevik Foreign Ministry, Narkomindel), came up with a proposal for a scientific expedition to India along the Kashgar - Yarkand - Kashmir route (sic.),⁴⁴ under one Bravin, nicknamed “Kenzhoga”.⁴⁵ No details of the projected “exploration” work to be carried out by Kenzhoga are given in the surviving papers of the Committee, which leaves room for suspicion about the purpose of this bogus expedition.

The most distinguished Russian traveler in Ladakh in the post-revolutionary period was undoubtedly Nicholas (Nikolai) Konstantinovitch Roerich (1874-1947). A prolific painter, mystic and visionary, he emigrated from Russia shortly after the Bolshevik coup and in 1920 settled with his family, including his two sons, Yuri (George) and Sviatoslav, and wife Helen (Elena), in New York. There he engaged in active artistic and educational work, having founded several art institutions in 1921-23 (the Master Institute of United Arts, the “Corona Mundi”

⁴² See: K. Warikoo. *Central Asia and Kashmir*, p. 190.

⁴³ According to information supplied by the Russian author Oleg Shishkin, there are some relevant materials in the Russian archives, in particular the Russian State Archive of Socio-political History (RGASPI) and the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA), both of which are in Moscow.

⁴⁴ Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg Branch. F. 148 (Collection of the Russian Committee for the exploration of Middle and Eastern Asia), op. 1, d. 106.

⁴⁵ Nikolai Zakharovich Bravin (1881-1921), a graduate of the Oriental department of St Petersburg university, worked as a translator at the Russian Consulate General in Calcutta (1909-1911) and then in Abyssinia and Persia. After the revolution he officiated as the first Soviet diplomatic representative in Afghanistan.

International Art Center and the Roerich Museum, all based in New York City). More importantly, in the same years Nicholas claimed to have entered into a mystical communication with the *mahatmas*, believed to make the White Brotherhood, a secret spiritual community somewhere in Tibet and the Himalayas, an idea he borrowed from Blavatsky. The contact was established in the course of spiritualistic séances, through his wife, believed to be a clairvoyant and a good medium, whereupon both Nicholas and Helen, following Blavatsky's example, placed themselves under the superior guidance of these supra-human creatures. In 1923, acting on the "lofty instructions" (spiritualistic messages) of the *mahatmas*, the three Roerichs (Nicholas, Helen and Yuri) travelled to India, a journey which was undertaken as a part of their teachers' global "Great Plan"—to lay the foundations of the new world order, i.e. the "sixth human race", as had been predicted in Blavatsky's teachings.

The transformation of the world, in Roerich's vision, was to begin with the advent of Lord Maitreya, the Buddha-to-come, alias Jesus Christ and ... Mahatma Morya, who was already dictating telepathically to Helen (since 1921) his New Age revelation, Agni Yoga, in the same way that he had earlier communicated the *Secret Doctrine* to Madame Blavatsky. In 1925, from Darjeeling, the Roerichs set out on a journey—a great mystical tour in search of the "signs" of the Coming Messiah and heading ultimately for Shambhala, to catch up with the *mahatmas*. To the outside world, the trip was presented as an "American scientific expedition", having artistic and archeological purposes. The journey lasted for three and half years and encircled Central Asia, from Sikkim through Punjab, Kashmir, Ladakh, Karakorum, Khotan, Kashgar, Urumchi, Irtysh, Altai Mountains, Mongolia, the Central Gobi, Tsaidam, and finally Tibet.⁴⁶

There was a special reason for the Roerich mission's visit to Ladakh. Nicholas wanted to see the Tibetan Gospel, which he had learnt about from Notovich's book in late 1924. The Government of India granted Roerich permission for a period of a year, knowing of his anti-Bolshevik leanings, and gave his expedition all facilities. In the book Roerich would publish later about his Trans-Asiatic journey (*Altai-Himalaya*, 1929) his Ladakh journey was discussed in great detail, yet this was quite an unusual record. The three chapters devoted to Ladakh were filled with various legends, prophesies and simply bazaar rumours relating to the impending Maitreya's coming. Roerich mentioned one by one all the monasteries he visited in Mulbekh, Lamayura, Saspul and Sheh only to tell the reader that he found there "the great images" of Maitreya. "Beyond Dras we

⁴⁶ For a description of the journey, see: V.A. Rosov. *Rerikh—Vestnik Zvenigoroda. Ekspeditsii N.K. Rerikha po okrainam pustyni Gobi*. Vol. 1-2. St-Petersburg - Moscow, 2002-2004; A.I. Andreyev. *Gimalaiskoe Bratstvo. Teosofskii mif i ego tvortsy*. [The Himalayan Brotherhood: A theosophical myth and its makers]. Forthcoming. A fairly good discussion of Roerich's mysticism and his attempts to create a Buddhist theocracy in Central Asia can be found in John McCannon's "By the shores of white waters: the Altai and its place in the spiritual geopolitics of Nicholas Roerich", in: *Sibirica (Journal of Siberian Studies, UK)*, Vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 166-169.

encounter the first Buddhist message. Near the road are two stone *stelae* representing Maitreya. Nearby, a stone with the image of a rider. Is this rider not upon a white horse? Is this not a message of the new world? It is remarkable that this first Buddhist emblem happens to be just the image of Maitreya”.⁴⁷ Roerich gave special attention to Leh because “here the legends connected the paths of Buddha and Christ. Buddha went through Leh northwards, Issa communed here with the people on his way from Tibet”.⁴⁸ However, Roerich was unable to find the manuscript of the Tibetan Gospel in Hemis, judging by his own account. He only suggested that “these manuscripts” (the Tibetan Gospel and a book about Shambhala) are hidden somewhere—they “lie in the darkest place”, “out of sight”, and are “probably feeding the mice”.⁴⁹ To the Russian reader in the original Russian version of the same book (first published in the USSR in 1974) he would tell quite a different story: “... We have learnt about the authenticity of the manuscript about Issa. In Hemis, indeed lies an old Tibetan translation from the manuscript, written in Pali and preserved in a well-known monastery near Lhasa. ... Tales about forgery are exploded”.⁵⁰ In the English version of *Altai-Himalaya*, Roerich quoted abundantly from two manuscripts—the one published by Notovitch, but without acknowledging his source, and another one, speaking of Christ’s sojourn in Ladakh. This allowed some later Soviet authors, especially from the circle of Roerich’s sympathizers, to jump to the conclusion that he had indeed held in his hands an unknown copy of the Tibetan apocrypha, the one that Notovitch saw in 1887. Even more, they believe that he discovered in Hemis a new text, which specifically dealt with Christ’s preaching in Ladakh (which was in fact the legend Roerich quoted in the English version). To give more weight to this claim one of these authors, E. Lazarev, referred to a well-known Soviet Indologist and Roerich disciple, L.V. Shaposhnikova who had told him in a private interview that in 1979, while in Hemis, she too saw a manuscript of the Tibetan Gospel (sic.). However, “lack of time” prevented her from copying or translating the text.⁵¹ Commenting on Shaposhnikova’s sensational claim, another Soviet Indologist L.V. Mitrokhin, expressed great surprise that his colleague found no time to copy even one

⁴⁷ Nicholas Roerich. *Altai-Himalaya. A Travel Diary*. Delhi, 1996 (repr.), p. 102. The book was first published in 1929 in New York by the Corona Mundi International Art Center and the next year reprinted in London by Jarrolds Publishers.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.114.

⁵⁰ N.K. Roerich. *Altai-Gimalai* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 146-147. Entry for 19 September 1925. Compare with Roerich’s entry for the same date in the English version of his diary (pp. 125-126). To a Russian reader at least, this sentence implies that Roerich had found some proof of the existence of the Tibetan Gospel, but he does not provide any supporting evidence. It should be noted that, from his own perspective as a mystic, ‘proofs’ were often provided by the mahatmas through Helen Roerich, who received telepathic messages from them almost every day.

⁵¹ See: E. Lazarev. “Tibetskoe Skazanie ob Iisuse”, in: *Nauka i Religia*. Moscow, 1989 (No. 7), pp. 59-60.

page of the “mysterious manuscript” and did not even disclose to her interviewer how she had located it in the monastic library. Mitrokhin also regretted that both Lazarev and Shaposhnikova were apparently unaware of N. Roerich's strong denial of the discovery of “a manuscript from Christ's times attributed to him”, an opinion he expressed in an article published as late as 1941. Curiously, in the same piece N. Roerich also remarked that “in the long run” we must be thankful to those telling stories about his discovery because by doing so the storytellers attract our attention to the “treasures of the spirit”.⁵²

During his time in Leh, Roerich met with the members of the Moravian mission who agreed to rent him one of their houses “on condition that I sign an agreement to do no religious, semi-religious, etc. propaganda”.⁵³ This rather strange demand on the part of the missionaries has an explanation. While passing through Ladakh and Kashmir, Roerich named himself Mahatma Ak-Dorje and circulated everywhere Tibetan leaflets saying “Maitreya is coming”. In Spiti alone, he distributed among the local inhabitants about a hundred such leaflets.⁵⁴ The purpose of this hoax was obviously to spread word of the roaming messengers from the Northern Shambhala, i.e. the Roerichs. Along with these leaflets Roerich also circulated—in Ladakh, Kashmir and Chinese Turkestan—his own prophesies about an appearance in the near future, in the year 1928, of “the messengers of the warriors of Northern Shambhala”. The Asiatics were called upon to welcome these people and “accept the new glory of Tibet and Mongolia”. Moreover, Roerich told the lamas in the monasteries he visited—and possibly also the king of Ladakh who hosted him in his palace—of the necessity of forming a union with the Soviet Russian Republic, for only Russia could apprehend and support their feelings and aspirations. He also told of the need to “purify”, i.e. reform, the present-day Buddhist teachings in order to revive the ancient-pure-precepts of the Buddha Shakyamuni, which were perfectly in line with Communist doctrine.

These and other intriguing details relating to Roerich's Central Asian expedition became known to scholars only recently. They demonstrate clearly that Roerich was engaged in extensive pro-Soviet propaganda in the course of his much publicized journey. And in 1926, during his three-week visit to Moscow on the way to Altai, he even offered the Soviet leaders a 10-point plan for a Buddhist revolution in Asia accompanied by a letter from the *mahatmas* (members of a secret Himalayan *Maitreya Sangha*), who explicitly voiced their support of the Bolshevik regime. The Soviets however declined the proposal, not willing to place themselves under the “reign supreme” of the *mahatmas* although, strange as it may seem, they verbally acknowledged their existence.⁵⁵

⁵² According to Mitrokin, the article under the title “Legendary Azii” (The Legends of Asia) was published in the January 1941 issue of the Indian magazine *Scholar*.

⁵³ N. Roerich. *Altai-Himalaya*, p. 125.

⁵⁴ V.A. Rosov. *Roerich—Vestnik Zvenigoroda*. Vol. 1. p. 135.

⁵⁵ See on this: *Alexandre Andreyev. Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy* (Brill: Leiden, Boston, 2003), pp. 297-300.

Apart from Nicholas Roerich, his son George, who was later to become an eminent Oriental scholar, wrote his own book about the journey, in which he had participated, under the title *Trails to Inmost Asia* (Yale University Press, 1931). This included a rather lively description of Ladakh, showing his keen interest in the country's historical past and antiquities, an account much more sober and academically sound than that of his father. In 1950, he published a short article *Ladakh*, which was a summary of Ladakh's cultural history from the 9th to the 19th centuries.⁵⁶ There were probably more émigré Russian travelers in Kashmir and Ladakh in the period under discussion, such as, for example, Irma de Manziarli.⁵⁷ A theosophist and a close friend of the young J. Krishnamurti, she, together with her children, travelled in India in the mid-1920s, concurrently with the Roerichs. Yet her travel account is of little interest to students of Ladakh.⁵⁸

Epilogue

Since the 1990s, following the collapse of the USSR, India has become a real Mecca for Russian tourists, particularly yoga practitioners and Buddhists. They are particularly attracted to places like Goa and Dharamsala, as well as other popular cultural and historical sights, but not Ladakh. This is easy to explain: Ladakh is practically unknown to them. On the other hand, Russian scholars—mainly those engaged in Indian studies—have begun to show some interest in the region, marginal though it is as compared to mainstream scholarship focusing on India and Indo-Russian relations. Thus, in 1995 A.A. Vigin and S.G. Karpuk republished Efremov's travel account in their *Puteshestvia po Vostoku v epokhu Ekateriny II*, and a few years later *Vostochnaia Literatura*, an academic publishing firm in Moscow, brought out a huge collection of miscellaneous archival material in the two-volume *Indiisko-Russkie Otnosheniia* (Indo-Russian Relations, 1997-1999). These are mainly documents extracted from the diplomatic archive (AVPRI) which shed some light on the few and little-known Russian travelers in Ladakh in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This scholarly interest in Ladakh may grow in the future provided scholars, both Russian and Western, give more attention to the unique holdings of historical records in the Russian archives.

⁵⁶ This was published in the *Maha-Bodhi* (Calcutta), 1950 (Vol. 58, No. 12). For a Russian translation see: Yu. Roerich. *Tibet i Tsentralnaia Azia. Statyi, lektsii, perevody* (Samara, 1999), pp. 123-126.

⁵⁷ A Russian-born Petersburger Irma Vladimirovna Manziarli was a translator of theosophical and Buddhist literature into French, such as Th. Stcherbatsky's "La théorie de la connaissance et la logique chez les bouddhistes tardifs" Geuthner, 1926 (*Annales du Musée Guimet*, Tome XXXVI) which she translated in collaboration with P. Masson-Oursel.

⁵⁸ I. de Manziarli published a book about her Asian travels (*Peregrinations Asiatiques*. Paris, 1935) in which she only briefly mentions her visit to Kashmir and Northern India.

BOOK REVIEWS

■ *Trade and Contemporary Society along the Silk Road: An Ethno-history of Ladakh.*

By Jacqueline H Fewkes. London: Routledge (Contemporary Asia Series), 2009. 196 pages, including black and white plates, figures, maps and tables. \$170, or \$136 as ebook.

— Monisha Ahmed.

“You know, I have his business papers, would you like to see them?”⁵⁹—inspired by a single sentence uttered by a descendant of one of Leh’s prominent trading family’s, Jacqueline Fewkes set off on a research project to unravel the trading network of Ladakh from the late 19th to early 20th centuries. During this time Ladakh was neither a primary production centre nor a key market, but it was an important trading entrepôt on the routes that connected Central and South Asia. Ladakh’s role as a “dynamic centre of global flows” is the focus of Fewkes work, as well as a look at what happened to the trading networks after India’s independence and the formal closure of borders in the mid-20th century.

Fewkes’s book (originally a PhD thesis) provides a thorough and detailed discussion on the history of trade in Ladakh, and the role of the various players from the Arghuns to the Yarkandis, the Kashmiris to the Punjabis. Starting with a survey of various depictions of Ladakh during colonial and contemporary India Fewkes then situates Ladakh in the context of the historical trade routes and the regions connections to the Silk Road via three main routes: to Tibet, Central and South Asia. She begins by refuting common perceptions of trade in the area as being comprised mainly of silk and pashmina, to show that there was actually a trade in a wide range of products that included carpets, cloth, manufactured pharmaceuticals, drugs, weaponry, synthetic dyes, jewellery and household items.

Her work is a combination of ethnographic interviews, family histories and surveys carried out among trading families in Ladakh. The fact that she widened her research area and travelled outside Ladakh to meet with traders in the Punjab—Amritsar and Hoshiarpur—has certainly added to the story. Had she been able to meet traders in Srinagar, I am sure her account would have been more enriched but the trouble and violence in Kashmir prevented her from going there. And if she had included some of the international destinations (Pakistan and Turkey) it would certainly have been more interesting. But this can be a topic for further research.

Fewkes work is an important contribution to the existing literature on trade in

⁵⁹ Fewkes refers to the business papers as the “Khan archives”. These are the personal and business papers of two Arghun caravan route officials Bahauddin Khan and his son Shamsuddin Khan; they date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ladakh.⁶⁰ Her access to the Khan archives, which are pivotal to her work, make her research more meaningful and original. The fact that she also had access to the artefacts from the Munshi Aziz Bhat Museum in Kargil, validated her work and further strengthened her argument about the wide variety of goods that were traded through Ladakh. Her writing style is easy to read and informative, interspersed with evocative anecdotes of the search for and encounters with descendants of trading families. The fact that she talks about Ladakh's cosmopolitan elite, from both the Buddhist and Muslim communities, gives her work an even balance and makes her discourse more interesting. This book is definitely a must for students of Himalayan and Central Asian studies. It would also appeal to a wider readership, apart from those interested in the subject of trade, to those with an interest in late 19th to mid-20th century Ladakh.

■ *Peace and Conflict in Ladakh, The Construction of a Fragile Web of Order*
By Fernanda Pirie (London: *Brill's Tibetan Studies Library*, 13, 2007) 235 pages 104 €
— Patrick Kaplanian

Fernande Pirie est juriste de formation. Elle a même exercé la profession d'avocat avant de recommencer des études d'ethnologie. C'est dire à quel point elle est bien placée pour étudier cette niche laissée de côté par les autres spécialistes du Ladakh : l'anthropologie juridique. Le travail avait déjà été sérieusement entamé dans sa thèse (voir LS N° 18, p. 49). Il a été repris en profondeur dans ce livre.

Le lieu d'enquête choisi par l'auteur est double. Tout d'abord le village de Photoksar, sur le trajet Lamayuru-Padum. Il a l'avantage d'être isolé. Ensuite Leh, qui présente l'intérêt de permettre de mesurer l'évolution récente. Les règles "juridiques" sont assez simples.

1) Autant que possible on restreint le cercle. Si conflit il y a, on cherche à le résoudre en famille, sinon on fait appel aux voisins, au goba voire au conseil de village. Ce n'est vraiment que dans des cas graves et insolubles que l'on consulte une haute autorité, le roi (jadis), le *shaks Khang*, sorte de cour d'appel créée par le Ladakh Buddhist Association, aujourd'hui. En aucun cas on ne fait appel à la police (pp 136-137) au *Ihongo* d'Alchi (pp 137-138), ni à la justice indienne. "First the family will try to resolve a dispute (...) then the neighbours (...) then they will go to a mediator. If he cannot resolve the problem the *goba* and the members will be called and if they cannot solve it, the case will go to a whole meeting village" (p. 8).

2) Le médiateur est un médiateur. Il n'y a pas d'autorité qui tranche qui

⁶⁰ Amongst others, this includes Janet Rizvi's *Trans-Himalayan Caravans* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and Monisha Ahmed's *Living Fabric* (Orchid Press, 2003), the latter looks specifically at the trade in pashmina and wool.

juge en vertu de la loi. Une pression est faite sur les deux parties pour qu'elles parviennent à un arrangement. Et cet accord est la vérité même.

Le médiateur n'est pas nécessairement un noble (*lhonpo* etc) ou une notoriété (*onpo* etc). Ce peut être n'importe qui. Seule l'assemblée du village peut être amenée à prendre une décision (p. 83 et p. 135). Mais "even when the *yulpas* have imposed fines on the parties of a dispute, conciliation is still needed before a dispute is recognised as having been solved" (p. 84).

3) C'est la personne qui se met en colère qui se met dans son tort, même si la raison de sa colère est légitime. "What could be analysed a clash of interests is, rather, described as disturbance to order" (pp. 87-88).

4) Ainsi peuvent être résumés les quatre premiers chapitres. Après quoi l'auteur constate que ce système fonctionne indépendamment du monde des esprits (la trilogie *lhaltsanllhu*) et du bouddhisme. "Neither the moral order of Buddhism, nor the realm of spirits is related to the moral and political order of the village that I have described in previous chapters" (p. 90). La hiérarchie sociale non plus puisqu'il n'y a pas d'autorité qui tranche et que le médiateur n'est pas nécessairement un noble.

Le chapitre 6 décrit et analyse le *losar*. Le chapitre 7 est plus théorique. Il montre, entre autres l'inadéquation des théories de Durkheim et Mauss aux faits observés par l'auteur. Le chapitre 8 se penche sur le Tibet. Quelques textes y laissent entendre un système judiciaire différent de celui du Ladakh, mais la pratique effective confirme l'ethnographie ladakhi. Enfin le chapitre 9 traite de Leh et de l'évolution contemporaine.

Je ferai deux remarques :

a) "Most Ladakhis" sense of attachment to a wider community outside their immediate village is weak, save when it comes to their religious identity (p.176). Cela montre bien qu'il n'existe pas dans la conscience Ladakhi de notion d'un Ladakh qui engloberait bouddhistes et musulmans. Les musulmans ont d'ailleurs leurs propres institutions y compris aussi une sorte de cour d'appel (pp. 182-184). "The existence of the separate bodies, the LBA and the Anjuman, which both carry out quasi-political functions is, of course, an indication of a divided population in Ladakh and people's sense of religious, rather than regional, identity" (p. 184).

b) Le second est la fixité de la société qui se reproduit, autant que possible égale à elle-même. A peu de choses près la propriété de la terre n'a pas changé depuis les cadastres dogra. Ce qui une fois de plus montre qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une société à maison. Les "maisons" qui composent les "sociétés à maison", telles que les décrit Lévi-Strauss, sont très mobiles : on se marie au plus loin pour acquérir des biens, et au plus près pour les conserver.

C'est en tout cas un très beau livre. On lui reprochera deux petits défauts. Le premier est que l'auteur cite souvent des sources de seconde main. Le second est son prix : 104 € ! Faites marcher les photocopieuses !

■ *Etre musulman au Zangskar—Etude sur Padum.*

By Salomé Deboos (University of Paris: Ph. D thesis, 2007). 310 pp.

— Patrick Kaplanian

Pratiquement toutes les communautés du Ladakh ont maintenant fait l'objet d'études détaillées. Il en a au moins une laissée de côté: la communauté musulmane de Padum. C'est cette page blanche que Salomé Deboos a entrepris de remplir. La première partie : "la vallée du Zangskar, une unité spatiale" nous donne une première statistique intéressante. D'après le recensement de 2003 il y a 13200 habitants au Zangskar dont 2000 à Padum. Mais l'auteur a procédé à son propre comptage à Padum : 519 musulmans et 355 bouddhistes. L'auteur insiste à juste titre sur la surpopulation administrative : 480 fonctionnaires, ce qui est énorme et qui renvoie à la présence massive d'institutions étatiques, poste, police, armée, hôpital, école auxquelles s'ajoutent quelques institutions privées : boutiques, hôtels, guesthouses, écoles encore. Le chapitre est rempli de statistiques intéressantes sur la répartition des emplois entre les sexes et les religions, l'occupation des maisons, le bétail que possède chaque maison etc.

La seconde partie se tourne vers le mythe, le pourquoi de la venue des musulmans au Zangskar. La troisième décrit les rites de passage et les fêtes. C'est la dernière partie qui est peut-être la plus originale. L'auteur a bien compris que l'on ne peut décrire isolément la communauté musulmane. Elle montre les échanges et les interférences avec la communauté bouddhiste avec un luxe de détails : visites réciproques, participations réciproques aux fêtes et aux rites de passage, plaisanteries, mécanismes de régulation des différents, inter-mariages etc. Ainsi, par exemple, si le chef de village, appelé ici Lambardar, est un musulman, le roi de Padum, bouddhiste, reste un conseiller consulté, écouté et apprécié de tous.

On regrettera une première chose : l'auteur ignore superbement toute la littérature sur le Ladakh et le Zangskar. Quelques notes en bas de page pour faire scientifique ne trompent pas le lecteur. Un peu comme si Padum était un astéroïde dans le vide intersidéral. Cela amène à répéter des choses déjà dites (tout ce qui est culture matériel a déjà été dit par Friedl) et à ne pas faire des comparaisons qui auraient pu être fructueuses, entre le mythe de l'arrivée des musulmans à Padum et celui de leur arrivée à Leh, entre les cérémonies funéraires "musulmanes" qui ressemblent étrangement à celles des bouddhistes décrites par Brauen.

Réciproquement l'islam reste ignoré, ce qui empêche l'auteur de faire ressortir l'originalité de l'islam des Padumpa. Ainsi on apprend (p.238) que l'Aid-el-kebir, la grande fête, fait suite à l'ordre donné par Dieu à Mahomet de sacrifier son fils. L'auteur ne relève même pas qu'il aurait dû s'agir d'Abraham et que Mahomet n'avait de toute façon pas de fils. Une intéressante ethnographie, mais l'ethnologie reste à faire.

IALS NEWS AND NOTES

■ 14th IALS Colloquium—Paper Authors and Titles

- Aengst, Jennifer.** *Pronatalist and Pro-family planning?* (Graduate student, Anthropology, University of California, Davis).
- Akhtar, Rais.** *Environment and Disease in Leh Town.* (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi).
- Alexander, André.** *Dating an early Temple in Alchi.* (Leh Old Town Initiative).
- Amina, Christiane.** *King Pehar and the Politics of the Bro-clan—New Perspectives Regarding the Origin, History and Function of a Local Male Protector in Ladakh and Western Tibet around 1200.* (Research Associate, Austrian Academy of Sciences).
- Bellini, Chiara.** *The mGonkhang's Paintings at Phyidbang.* (Independent researcher).
- Bhan, Mona.** *Refiguring Rights, Redefining Culture: Hill-Councils in Kargil, Jammu & Kashmir.* (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana).
- Blaikie, Calum.** *The commodification of amchi medicines in contemporary Ladakh.* (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Kent (UK) / French Institute of Pondicherry).
- Blancke, Kristin.** *Mural paintings in the Chenrezig Lhakhang in Lamayuru: the Bar-do Thos-grol illustrated on a wall.* (Independent researcher).
- Bray, John.** *August Herman Francke's pioneering research on Ladakh: historical perspectives and future directions.* (President, IALS).
- Cameron, Drew.** *Imagining Backwardness: The impacts of formal education on the identity of Chang-pa Nomads in Ladakh.* (Post-grad student, University of Washington).
- Chandan, Pankaj*, Nisa, Khatoon and Phuntsog, Tashi.** *Conservation and Management of High Altitude Wetlands of Ladakh.* (Freshwater and Wetlands Programme, WWF-field office, Ladakh).
- Col R. T. Chacko.** *Threats to the Black-necked Cranes Breeding in Ladakh.* (Independent researcher).
- Dame, Juliane.** *Local production, regional policies and new markets: food system transitions in Ladakh.* (Dept. of Geography, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg).
- Day, Sophie.** *Imaging Ladakh: repatriating research data from the early 1980s.* (Goldsmiths College, London).
- Deboos, Salomé.** *Tourism influences in the way to view oneself belonging to one Community.* (CEIAS).
- Demenge, Jonathan.** *"We are puppets in the hands of nature". Road construction, migration and the transformation of people-environment relationships in Ladakh.* (DPhil Student, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex).

- Doerfel, Marianne.** *The early years of Leh Mission hospital.*
- Dollfus, Pascale.** *Masks and masking.* (CNRS, Paris).
- Dorje Dawa.** *Environmental Impact assessment of Tourism development in Ladakh.* (GERES India).
- Dorje Angchok and Shashi Bala.** *Common Property Resource Management through Local Institutions in Ladakh: A Conceptual Framework for Researcher.* (Defence Institute of High Altitude Research, Leh).
- Dr T Phuntsog.** *Rangeland Management and Livestock Production System in Changthang.* (District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Leh).
- Eichert, Dominik.** *The old town of Leh—Change and restoration of a historical city centre in the Trans—Himalayas.* (Department of Geography, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University).
- Galvin, Lauren.** *Seekers of Enlightenment in Female Form: The History, Practices, and Vision of the Nuns of Khachodling Nunnery, Zangskar.* (Student, Smith College).
- Ghulam Hassan Hasni.** *Amazing characteristics of Balti words.* (Balti poet, Skardu).
- Gupta, Radhika.** *Hill Council Elections 2008: A mirror to Kargili society?* (Phd student, Social Anthropology, Oxford University).
- Gutschow, Kim and Dr Padma.** *Maternal Mortalities and Moralities: The Power of Ethnography* (Lecturer, Williams College; Chief Obstetrician, SNM Hospital).
- Harrison, John.** *Conservation in Leh Old Town: the Munshi House.* (Conservation architect).
- Hein, Veronika.** *Oral and festival traditions of Western Tibet: A first look at some counting and alphabet songs from Spiti.*
- Heusgen, Wolfgang.** *WANLA-Temple: Renovation of the double roof in 2008.* (Professor, Graz University of Technology, Austria).
- Humbert-Droz, Blaise.** *Tackling the Changthang's Environmental Crisis—A turning point?* (Independent researcher).
- Jahoda, Christian.** *Oral and festival traditions of Western Tibet and their historical relationship with textual materials: some comparative perspectives.* (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna).
- Joseph T. Gergan and Renoj J. Thayyen.** *Some observations on Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) In the Ladakh Mountain Range.* (National Institute of Hydrology, Western Himalayan Regional Centre, Jammu).
- Kazmi, Syed Muhammad Abbas.** *Bulbul Shah—the first Muslim Preacher in Ladakh.* (Skardu, Baltistan).
- Khan, Kacho Akbar.** *Preventable Hearing loss among children in Suru Valley, Kargil.* (E.N.T. Specialist, District Hospital, Kargil).
- Khan, Kacho Mumtaz Ali.** *The old mosque of Chiktan and a Khanka of Yokmakharboo.*

- Konchok Tashi.** *Bhoti: the Origin, the Concept, the Ideology, the Usage & the Change with Reference to Leh, Ladakh.* (Senior Research Fellow, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore).
- Kozicz, Gerald.** *Some Notes on the Architectural History of the Alchi Sumtsek.* (Architect)
- Mehdi, Ghulam.** *Turtuk: Hidden Truths.* (PhD Student, Dept of Sociology, University of Jammu).
- Munshi, Nasir.** *Working of Autonomous Councils in Indian Federalism with special reference to Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil.* (Councilor, LAHDC, Kargil).
- Nawang Tsering Shakspo.** *Sacred Trees (lha-chang).* (Director—Leh branch, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages).
- Neuwirth, Holger and Christian Luczanits.** *The Development of the Alchi Temple Complex, an interdisciplinary approach.* (Researchers, University of Vienna)
- Ozer, Simon.** *Mental Problems in Ladakhi Youth in Relation to Modern Culture.* (MA student, University of Aarhus, Denmark).
- Padma Chozom.** *Educational Development in Ladakh.* (Research Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University).
- Pathak, Shekhar and Dan Jantzen.** *Pundit Nain Singh Rawat and his Visits to Ladakh and Beyond.* (NMML, Teen Murti House, New Delhi; Denver, Colorado).
- Phuntsog Dorjay.** *Pre-Islamic Heritage in the Kargil areas of Ladakh.* (Independent researcher).
- Pöell, Heinrich.** *The Wood Carvings of Lhachuse and their Art—Historical Context.* (Independent researcher).
- Rinchen Dolma.** *Death at Infancy—Need for a Sustainable and Accountable Press in Ladakh.* (Editor, Reach Ladakh).
- Rossi Filibeck, Elena De.** *A research report on the Ladakhi wedding songs kept in the ISIAO Institute, Rome.*
- Salik, Syed Bahadur Ali.** *Balti Folk Song with reference to Ladakh, Kargil and Baltistan.* (Skardu, Baltistan).
- Schmidt, Susanne.** *Land-Cover and Glacier Changes in the Trans-Himalaya of Ladakh.* (Department of Geography, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg).
- Singh, Ajay Kumar.** *Ruined Buddhist Temple of Sumda Chenmo, Ladakh and Its Wooden Images.* (Department of History of Art, Benaras Hindu University).
- Smith, Sara.** *The Domestication of Geopolitics: Policing Marriage and Fertility in Leh.* (Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).
- Sonam Wangchuk.** *The Cultural Significance of Pa-TaGonbo in the Nubra Valley.*
- Stanzin Tonyot.** *Governmentality and Religious Conflict in Leh District, J&K, India.* (MA Anthropology, University of Arizona).

- Sudbury, Jill.** *Monastic dance at Spituk monastery.* (Research Associate, University of Oxford).
- Thupstan Norboo.** *Mangyu enclave, a living testimony of Indo-Tibetan culture in Ladakh.* (Research Assistant, Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Leh and currently Ph.D student, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Jammu).
- Travnicek, Krystof.** *Acculturation and Innovation in Tibetan Buddhism: A Study of Contemporary Indian (Ladakhi) Cham Rituals in the Global World.* (PhD student, Department for the Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Czech Republic)
- Zeisler, Bettina.** *trolces yang rhtsikces: Ladaksirhnyingpelorgyusimagdan—deconstruction and reconstruction: foundations for the early history of Ladakh.*

■ QUADS IN LADAKH

SB Gurung

I have lately come across various e-mails regarding us starting a Quad operation in Ladakh. In this message, I would like to make things clearer and reassure you about this sensitive issue. As most of these messages came from people writing in English, I will reply in English so that everyone can understand.

Reading those messages, I was first very surprised to see how some people seemed to know so much about this operation, and were spreading so much information around without having even tried to know what was actually going on. Those people who started this so-called petition had not even tried to contact us to really know the facts and truth.

So let me tell you a bit more. I have read words and terms such as “commercial operation”, “import of quads”, “off-road riding”, “promoting Quad trips”, etc. Funny how the rumors can be spread, and so stupid! We have never intended nor planned to operate ATV Quad trips in Ladakh. I do not know where the people who spread this rumor found this information. It is neither on our website, nor in our brochures.

The fact and truth is that we did do a survey trip on Quads last summer, which took us from Leh to Shimla, and although we always followed roads or Jeep tracks, I admit we did two short off-road sections. Be re-assured, there weren't any trekkers, any shepherds or any wildlife to be disturbed. I could easily hide this fact but I want you all to know the truth. Anyway, this further convinced me that we should not do so, and I hope that no one will start doing this in the future. Believe me when I tell you that I know how fragile Ladakh and its eco-system are. I have been coming regularly to this part of the world since 1985, I have been trekking extensively all over the place, in all seasons.

Now why did we do this survey trip you must wonder? Well, we have been commissioned by a group of clients who had the plan to do a trip like this and wanted us to check its feasibility. There is no plan of a long term and regular operation, and there has never been. I could read that we were planning to operate regular Quad-trips mostly in the Changthang. Well, nothing is so untrue as there is no plan to promote such trips.

You should all be aware that Quads have been coming to Ladakh on and off, for quite a few years, and this without our help. I even remember seeing some myself in 1999. And this was done by Indian organizations or agents. We again saw some Quads in Sarchu last August. Quads are being imported in India, that's a fact, and we have nothing to do with this. We are a tour operator doing cultural and adventure tours in Asia, not an import-export company, and we have neither the intention nor the interest to import Quads into India at all. We do not do Quads in the Alps, and we won't do it in the Himalayas.

To conclude, I absolutely understand your concern. You are all right to be worried, or even angered, because you have been given the wrong information. We will not start selling Quad tours to Ladakh, we have never even thought of doing so. I do hope this has made it clearer for you and that you are reassured.

NEWS FROM LADAKH

— *Compiled by Abdul Nasir Khan and Tashi Morup*

■ **Demolition job at 17th century monastery**

New Delhi, Hindustan Times: September 29, 2008

The Hemis Gumpa, a 17th Century monastery in J&K's Ladakh region, is on the verge of collapse. Two floors and two walls of the monastery—listed as a protected monument by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)—have been demolished to prevent the structure from caving in. The ASI says it isn't responsible, and that this is the doing of workers hired by the lamas (monks) themselves. It told the parliamentary standing committee, which reported the monastery's condition to Parliament in August, that it wasn't allowed to take up conservation work by the lamas.

The lamas, for their part, say they engaged their own workers only after they failed to get any response from the ASI to their repeated requests. They also said they had second thoughts after the ASI's last repair job on the monastery roof some years ago. "Soon after, the roof started leaking rainwater. The seepage resulted in damage to the walls and foundation as well. The ASI had carried out the faulty repair work," Sangis Tsering at the monastery told HT.

"The Hemis Gumpa managing committee started the restoration work on its own to prevent the structure from collapsing. ASI officials haven't visited for the past three years. We asked for donations and took money from the committee funds for the repair work," Tsering said.

Officials at ASI—which had sent a proposal to include the Hemis Gumpa as a World Heritage Site in the late 1990s—were not available for comment. When contacted, this reporter was passed on from the office of the ASI director general in Delhi to the joint director general, then to a director (conservation) and finally to the conservation in-charge at the Jammu office. A person who picked the phone at the Jammu office said the superintending archaeologist was out of station for a week. The committee has recommended that the ASI coordinate with local representatives to convince the lamas to allow them to take up work to save the glory of the ancient Buddhist structure.

Recently, a team of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), J&K chapter, visited the monastery and found the workers engaged by the monks demolishing the first floor of the monastery. "We were shocked to see 30 labourers demolishing the top floor. No structural analysis or basic examination had been carried out before the demolition," wrote M. Saleem Beg, the teamleader, in his complaint to the ASI director general. Beg had visited the monastery on the request of the J&K tourism department to suggest measures for its restoration. Ladakh Development Authority chief executive

officer S. Marup confirmed two floors and two walls were demolished. "Some wall paintings had also been damaged," Marup added.

"The ASI needs to wake up and save one of the most treasured pieces of the country's cultural heritage. The neglect of this monument has resulted in collateral damage. It is sad that while the conservation plan for Hemis Gumpa was prepared by archaeologists like Romi Khosla, Anuradha Chaturvedi, Amita Beg and others with funding from the Japan Foundation, nobody has given any serious thought to it so far," said Beg.

■ **First ever cultural extravaganza at Leh**

Leh, October 18, 2008: Daily Excelsior

First ever high profile cultural extravaganza held at Leh Auditorium in which more than 250 artists of seven regional languages of the State participated. The programme under the title "Dhanak" was organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Art, Culture and Languages in collaboration with the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. The main attraction of the musical bonanza was the participation of eminent artists from the three regions of the State.

The Governor N.N. Vohra who was Chief Guest on the occasion described artists as ambassadors of peace and urged them to disseminate the message of harmony and love through various forms of art - music being the paramount of them. He had a word of praise for the local artists, singers, dancers, sculptors, painters etc, and observed that the traditional folk-heritage have caught the imagination of the art lovers across the country. He said that music transcends all boundaries and barriers and touches directly hearts irrespective of linguistic or ethnic considerations.

The Kashmiri Rouf, Hafiz Nagma, Dhamali Dance, Dogri Jagarna and Kudd were highly appreciated by the audience. The main attraction of the programme was the Ladakhi marriage dance, in which 25 local Ladakhi artists participated. This was for the first time that a team of tribal nomad Gujjars performed the much popular Gujjar dance on the occasion. In Pahari, the dancers from Karnah spell bound the audience during 2-day long festival at Leh.

Earlier, Secretary Academy, Zaffar Iqbal Manhas stated that the second and third phase of this Cultural Extravaganza would be held at Jammu and Srinagar in November and December. He said that Academy was planning to invite the State artists who are presently settled in different parts of the country to take part in these festivals to be organized for unity and integrity of the State.

Those present on the occasion were Ajeet Kumar Sahu, Deputy Commissioner, Leh, P Namgyal, Councilors of LAHDC, Shamima Janbaz Additional Secretary, Dr.A.S Amn Deputy Secretary , Frahat Lone and Nawang Tsering Cultural Officer intellectual, artists and prominent citizens of the area.

■ US Marines to hold joint exercise in Ladakh

Srinagar, October 18, 2008: Indian Express

After the Royal Marines, the US marines will also be holding a joint military exercise with the Indian Army in Ladakh. US Army Chief General George Casey along with his Indian counterpart Deepak Kapoor visited Ladakh and its adjoining areas to select the location where the Indo-US military exercises would be held. "Dates for these joint exercises could be decided only after the US Army chief will get satisfied with the venues for these exercises," Defence spokesman, Lt Col Anil Mathur told The Indian Express.

The visiting US General Casey was briefed about different venues and glacial peaks in Ladakh by the senior formation commanders of the Army. Lt Col Mathur said the aim behind the joint exercise would be to impart warfare techniques to each other especially in handling mountain warfare. "The joint exercise would be small and could take place at the company level," he said. The mountainous region of Ladakh assumes significance for the joint exercise as its terrain resembles that of the mountainous regions of Afghanistan, where the US marines are fighting Taliban and Al Qaeda militants as part of the NATO peace force. Sources said the aim behind the exercise is to learn from the military experiences of Indian troops, who have been dealing with insurgency for the past two decades.

Earlier in 2006, Indian and US Special Forces held mountain warfare exercises in the same region close to the China border. Pakistan, already had expressed annoyance over the visit of US Army chief to the Siachen glacier. However, it is not clear whether General Casey visited Siachen or not. The defense spokesman denied General Casey's visit to Siachen. "He (Casey) only visited Ladakh, not Siachen," said Mathur.

Last year, the UK marines were in Ladakh to participate in a similar joint exercise. The exercises were held for three weeks in September.

■ Train to Kargil? Railways seek report from govt

Kargil, October 28, 2008: The Tribune

The ambitious plan of the railways to link Kashmir with the rest of India may be in a limbo, it is now planning to connect the inaccessible Ladakh region, which shuts down during winter months, with Kullu-Manali in Himachal.

Initially, the central government had thought of rail connectivity between Kullu district and Leh, which is at 474 km from the Kullu-Manali, but it is now thinking of connecting Kargil, another Ladakh district which is a further 230 km from Leh towards Kashmir, to this proposed route as well.

Kargil District commissioner Satish Nehru told The Tribune that his office had been asked to submit a report on how beneficial rail connectivity could be for the district, the connectivity of which to the rest of country is worse than Leh,

another Ladakh district which receives much less snow and has round-the-year air connectivity. The railways had to factor in costs before they give the project green light, Nehru said, adding that the district would be immensely helped by the new route. "It's not only about its over one lakh population (and the Army has a massive presence here), it's strategically important too," he said.

Poor connectivity is probably the single biggest complaint of locals against authorities and they say they are always made to play second fiddle to Leh. Asgar Ali Karbalaie, Kargil's former chief executive councillor, who is chairman of the local development council and is given a cabinet-minister rank, says the project might be good for them but the central government should first try to make operational more feasible connectivity projects.

"The rail line is an ambitious plan which might or might not happen but what about long-pending proposal of blasting tunnels in Zojila, the Himalayan pass that connects Kashmir valley and Ladakh and remains snowbound for close to six months cutting off the hilly region?" Karbalaie asked.

He said it was announced that commercial flights would start from Kargil from August 15 this year but the plan came stuck with the fall of Ghulam Nabi Azad government. Absence of connectivity means that the people in the Muslim-majority district are forced to live a pitiable life in winter months when parts of the district like Zangskar valley are disconnected with even the district headquarter. Nehru admitted to these issues and said demands of constructing tunnels through Zojila or reviving old land routes with Kashmir were still at a nascent stage.

■ Chinese bugbear is too much with us, says MP Left out in Ladakh

Leh, October 31, 2008: The Tribune

Thupstan Chhewang, the local MP, is angry that the Chinese bugbear is hampering development in Ladakh region. "Our security set-up is obsessed with apprehensions about what the Chinese can or cannot do. Such a mindset has affected development of huge stretches of the Ladakh region bordering China and Pakistan," Chhewang told The Tribune.

He is vehemently supported by many of his party colleagues from the powerful Ladakh Autonomous Hill Developmental Council (LAHDC) as they launch into a broadside against New Delhi. Large areas of panoramic and adventurous Turtuk and Bongdok, which border Pak, and Changthang, close to China, have been virtually denied their share in the development and, consequently, the tourist inflow, in this 44,000 sq-km district just because of security concerns. Without a permit, for instance, one cannot visit many areas in the district while those more closer to the border are simply no-go zones.

"Security officials believe that if we build roads, these might come handy for

China. We are too defensive and negative," Chhewang says. LAHDC chief executive councillor Chhering Dorje nods in agreement. Their concerns are not a political blame-game that is rife in the state. District commissioner Ajeet Kumar Sahu says the Leh administration has been asking for opening of some of the restricted areas—the state government recommended them as well—"but the decision has to come from the top", which means New Delhi. Locals say a yes from defence set-up is key for work to be carried out in the sensitive border areas but officials are often too jittery to act.

The central government's paranoia resulted in the closure of the Kailash Mansarovar route from Ladakh. Pilgrims trek to this holy site from Pitthorgarh in Uttaranchal, which is much longer and arduous, while the much shorter and easier route from here remains, closed for "security reasons". Sonam Tsering, a councillor from a remote Changthang area, says people feel let down especially as they know that Chinese are building a new city and an airport on their side while there is no mobile connectivity on India's side.

At many places, Chinese television programmes are clearer than a fuzzy Doordarshan, which remains the only mode of entertainment for impoverished border people. Local officials admit their hands are tied; security concerns are paramount and everything else comes only later. Chhewang, a politician highly respected among the local Buddhist population, says the commitment of the people living on the border to Indian security concerns is unwavering but it should not be tested on frivolous grounds.

"China is a totalitarian state and, yet, it is providing material comfort to the people of Tibet living on our side. But, we deny such comforts to our people even though we are a democracy. Don't know how to justify something like that..." he says.

■ Identity politics on the wane

Chandigarh, November 1, 2008: The Tribune

Identity politics that swept across the twin districts of the Ladakh region before the 2002 Assembly elections and after is on a considerable ebb this time as the gains have been little for the people, making way for routine politics to return centrestage. However, the insecurities of their mammoth but thinly-populated region, which mean that Ladakh never finds the same attention as two other regions of the state, Kashmir and Jammu, in addition to the religious and regional cards exploited by a section of politicians and clergy continue to keep the pot simmering.

Prior to 2002, Leh's Buddhist clergy headed by the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) joined hands with the influential elite to almost force all local politicians at a meeting at a prominent gonpa (Buddhist temple) to dissolve their district party units, including those of the region's two foremost political

parties, the Congress and the National Conference, so that they could take a “united” stand for Leh, if not Ladakh’s, which also includes the Muslim-majority Kargil, Union Territory status.

“I was hugely surprised at the development. I have been a diehard Congressman but had to bow to the popular sentiment,” P. Namgyal, a three-term MP and former union minister, told The Tribune.

The Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF), which claims to speak for Buddhists, supported two independent candidates, Nawang Rigzin Zora from Leh and Sonam Wangchuk from Nubra. The Buddhist clergy warned their opponents of social and religious boycott and so strong was the wave, fuelled by religious identity, that both were elected unopposed.

Kargil was not far behind as its two main but squabbling Islamic bodies, the Islamia School and the Imam Khomaini Memorial Trust (IKMT), entered the fray. An independent, Haji Nissar Ali, supported by the IKMT, won from Kargil, while the National Conference candidate propped by the Islamia School won in Zangskar, the second Assembly seat from the district. When the NC MLA, Mohd Abas, died, both Islamic bodies, who oppose UT status for Ladakh, joined hands to send a common candidate to the Assembly.

Cut to campaign for the November 17 elections in both districts for the four Assembly seats, the LUTF is hardly undefeatable in Leh while the National Conference, though supported by the Islamia School, is emerging strong on Kargil’s two seats. LBA president Lobzang Rinchen says it was wrong for it to “mix religion with politics earlier” and they have disassociated from politics. “Regional passions had put all considerations in a shade. The LUTF said they would get us UT status and deliver Ladakh from being a perennial victim of Jammu and Kashmir and New Delhi’s biased politics. We all supported them but their promises remained just that,” Konchok Tsewang, a Congress worker, says.

Zora has decided to contest on the Congress ticket this time and is fighting his one-time mentor in the LUTF, Thupstan Chhewang, who is Ladakh’s present MP and is now contesting the assembly poll. Nubra will also see an animated fight between the Congress and the LUTF, says Namgyal.

“Sentiments have calmed down. People have realised that UT status would come with time and is subject to political developments in Kashmir,” he says. In Kargil, its popular leader Asgar Ali Karbalaie says people want development and their politics is for them. Locals say the LUTF and both Islamic bodies are bound to play divisive religious and regional cards. But it is no longer as effective as the fierce contests on all four seats suggest.

■ Tourism deptt to sell Kashmir, Ladakh as winter destinations

Srinagar, November 2, 2008: Greater Kashmir

Secretary tourism, Nayeem Akhter said on Sunday that his department is launching a vigorous publicity campaign across the world this year to promote winter tourism in Kashmir and Ladakh division.

“The winter season in Kashmir and Ladakh has remained understated and the department of tourism wants to introduce these places as genuine claimant for winter tourism,” Nayeem said on the onset of Kashmir Polo match-2008 played in valley after a gap of 61 years at S P College here.

The tourism secretary, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said these destinations would be projected in comparison with the winter destinations of Europe. “The Kashmir and Ladakh shall become the preferred destination for winter tourism in the world,” Nayeem added. Addressing the visiting delegations of tour operators from other states, Nayeem sought their support and cooperation in promoting the tourism in Kashmir and other divisions.

“I appeal the tour operators to dispel the myths about Kashmir situation wrongly projected by some of the media channels,” he said, adding the operators shall help the tourism department in building the tourism industry to its maximum potential. He said the polo games, which had become history, would be frequently organized in Kashmir from next year. “Not only the state and national polo championships will be held, but the department will try to organize international events,” he added. “The game of polo has an affiliation with Kashmir and was played at Polo Ground. I am happy that the department has revived the polo also called King of Games,” Nayeem added.

The director tourism, Farooq Shah who pioneered in holding the event after many decades while speaking on the occasion, said a global derby would be also organized in the month of March. Terming the event as a step towards revival of century's old sport and a major effort for promoting quality tourism, Shah said, “The department of tourism in its endeavour to preserve the heritage and revive age old traditions and attract tourists has launched several ambitious projects and schemes and revival of traditional sports is one among them.” The restoration of historic Ali Masjid and other religious places within and outside will give boost to the pilgrim tourism, he added.

About the winter games, he said the Gulmarg would remain the focus in the winter months as the department would be holding national level skiing championship there. He said the polo in Kashmir was played during the British period at Polo View which attracted scores of Europeans during the Second World War. “However, after the war, the game of polo showed decline in Kashmir leaving behind the symbolic Polo Ground and its street,” the director tourism added.

■ Manali-Leh rail project gathers steam

November 03, 2008: Indian Express

With visions of it becoming India's retort to China's recently-built 1,147-km Beijing-Lhasa railway track, Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal is leaving no stone unturned to see that the ambitious Manali-Leh rail link project gets off the ground as soon as possible. The strategic undertaking, first mooted by Dhumal, has become one of his pet projects ever since the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) gave its in-principle approval for a pre-feasibility study. Dhumal had emphasised the urgency of taking up the project, by asking both the PM and the President to keep China's close proximity in mind. He had argued that allowances should be made for its considerable cost as well as the 'viability factor' since it would boost not only the country's security but would also be a boon for the tourism industry in the state.

Since then, Himachal Pradesh has been periodically following up the proposal, especially after a private infrastructure company showed interest in taking up the project on Public-Private Partnership mode. Himachal has given a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Trans-Himalayan Railway Private Ltd—a subsidiary of Delhi-based engineering company ICC Holdings—to conduct a pre-feasibility survey.

The Ministry of Railway has also shown some interest in the project. An eight-member team of the Indian Railway Transport Service (IRTS) has visited Himachal Pradesh, including Kullu and Lahaul-Spiti district, for a ground study. Led by Chief Commercial Manager Buta Singh, the team assessed the feasibility of establishing a rail service across the snowy mountain passes, including Tanglang La (5,360 m), Lachalang La (5,065 m), Baralacha La (4,892 m) and Rohtang La (3,890 m). If the railway line is built along the route, it could serve as a vital link for movement of defence supplies to Leh-Ladakh and Kargil and will cater to special and strategic needs of the Armed Forces. It could also boost local economy and help immensely in promotion of tourism in this part of the country.

Currently, Trans-Himalayan Railway Private Ltd is working on extending the existing Pathankot-Jogindernagar railway line to Manali, Keylong, Pang and finally Leh. "The proposal for the 460-km rail line, which will cover elevations between 1,000 and over 5,000 metres, will have on-surface tracks as well as over 200 tunnels going up to 215 km. Currently, the estimated cost is around Rs 53,500 crore and the project is expected to take 96 months to complete," says Rakesh Saran Mathur, CEO of the company.

It is somewhat surprising that a private company is willing to take up a project that has a high risk of being economically unviable. Mathur, however, confirms that the mineral potential in the cold deserts of Lahaul-Spiti, apart from tourism and other developmental and industrial projects, could make the undertaking well worth the risks involved.

“The project can be viable once the railway line is laid and companies that will be made partners take up mineral exploration works in Lahaul-Spiti. Hydel projects coming up in the area will also be benefited,” he says. Earlier, in his letter written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the CM had sought the conversion of the Pathankot-Jogindernagar line into a broad gauge line. He even asserted that the project could not be shelved-despite a whopping estimated cost of Rs 1,000 crore-since it was a matter of “national security”.

■ Another airfield reopened on China border

New Delhi, November 4, 2008: Indian Express

India has reopened another strategic airstrip along its unresolved border with China in Eastern Ladakh that will give it the capability to rapidly induct troops in the region. The Fukche Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) was reactivated on Tuesday morning with the IAF landing an AN 32 medium transport aircraft on the newly refurbished airstrip. The ALG, located at an altitude of 4,200 meters, is barely three kilometers away from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). It was being used as a helicopter base by the Armed Forces and had not seen fixed wing aircraft operations since the 1962 Sino-Indian war.

The reopening of the Fukche airbase comes months after the Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) airfield, situated in the same region near the Karakoram pass, was reactivated by the Air Force earlier this year. While the DBO is the highest airbase in the world and was reactivated for maintaining supplies to the troops posted on the border, Fukche is the second highest landing ground in the world. IAF says that the airstrip will help carry out humanitarian missions in the region that is known to be prone to earthquakes and would also be used to promote tourism in the area. However, analysts believe that the airfield is a part of a series of steps being undertaken to improve connectivity along the China border.

India has been reviving advanced landing grounds and helicopter bases along the border from Ladakh to the North-East. Armed Forces have conducted status reports on reactivating airbases after directives from the PMO to promote tourism and to increase the reach of the army along the border. “The airfield will be used for humanitarian relief work and evacuation in case of natural calamities,” Air Marshal P K Barbora, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Air Command, told The Indian Express.

Work on the third major airfield in Ladakh along the Sino-India border, the Chushul Advanced Landing Ground, located at a height of over 5,000 m, is still to commence and the ALG is not likely to be reactivated in the near future.

■ 600 yrs old historic Silk Route documents found

Jammu, November 9, 2008: Daily Excelsior

In first of its kind recovery pertaining to the historic Silk Route, authorities have found two letters in Turkey and Tibetan languages written in 1410 AD, from the Changthang area of Durbook block in Leh district. Authoritative sources told EXCELSIOR that Border Roads Organisation (BRO) personnel during the construction of road from Shyok to Nubra Valley recovered two letters from near the Shyok River alongwith some human and animal bones.

Since it was not possible for the BRO personnel to read the letters because of being written in unknown language, the same were forwarded to the District Administration which further sought the help of Archives Department to understand the contents in the letters. According to the Archives Department, one letter was in Turkish, written in the Persian script, while another was in Tibetan and had been translated into Hindi, perhaps in 1410 AD.

The letter in Tibetan briefly states: "I am healthy and you must be in the same spirit. Please take care of the agricultural land", the Deputy Commissioner, Leh, Ajit Kumar Sahu said, adding "the letter seems to have been written by a trader using historic Silk Route to his family. However, the destination of the letter could not be found out". He informed that Shyok river was the part of the historic Silk Route connecting China with Central Asia. The Siachen belt which includes Sasoma area was connecting China with Skardu and then Central Asian countries besides providing link to South Asian countries through Leh.

"Since the traders used to travel in caravan with animals, the persons who had written letters must have fallen prey to snowfall in Shyok area", he said, adding "the translation of letter in Turkish will bring to light several facts".

He disclosed that the letter in Persian script and in Turkish language has been forwarded to the Director State Archives Department, Khursheed Ahmed Qadri and National Archives of India for translating the same for detailed study. Mr Qadri, when contacted, said that he has been making all out efforts to get the letter translated by taking the help of Persian scholars well versed with Turkish language, adding though the Archives Department has several manuscripts of 1400 AD yet these two letters are the first pertaining to historic Silk Route and will form the part of valuable collection of the Department. The Director Archives has also planned a visit to the area from where the letters were recovered by BRO, in summer next for further study.

■ Wildlife crime prevention: 3-day training program concludes at Leh

Leh, November 8, 2008: News Agency of Kashmir

A three-day training programme on wildlife crime prevention concluded today at Leh. The training programme was organised for the front line staff of wildlife

Divisions Leh and Kargil by the Department of Wildlife Protection in collaboration with Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), New Delhi. Apart from the front line staff of wildlife division Leh and Kargil, the Range officers of Leh Forest Division and members of Hemis Youth Association also participated in the training programme.

As per release, the training was organised to sensitize the front line staff of wildlife department about the prevailing wildlife crime scenario in the country. The participants were trained in various wildlife related legislations in general and the Jammu & Kashmir wildlife Protection Act in particular.

Speaking on the occasion Jigmet Takpa, Regional Wildlife Warden Ladakh expressed gratitude to A.K. Srivastava, Chief Wildlife Warden J&K for taking keen interest and initiative in organizing training courses in J&K. Deputy Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer (LAHDC) Leh, A K Sahu who was chief guest on the occasion appreciated the efforts of Wildlife Department, Leh for the training programme. He said that due to constant vigil and monitoring by wildlife officials there is no report of any poaching and smuggling of wildlife in Leh district.

S R Samuel SSP Leh who was also present during the concluding function emphasized the need to hold joint workshops with police authorities to sensitize the police officials about the Wildlife Protection Act and other related legislations so that police officials could also take cognizance under Wildlife Protection Act. He ensured that the police would extend all possible help to the Wildlife Department Leh in dealing with the wildlife crime. Other officers who were present on this occasion included Tahir Shawl wildlife Warden Leh, and Dr. Rakesh Singh programme co-ordinator wildlife Trust of India. Tsering Angchok-II, Wildlife Range Officer Tangtse, Tashi Tsering, Forester Hemis National park, Smanla Tsering wildlife Guard Hemis National Park were awarded for their best performance in the post training examination.

■ Ladakh employees seek pre-1982 pattern allowance

Jammu, December 18, 2008: Daily Excelsior

Co-ordination Committee of Leh-Kargil Districts Employees Association has demanded restoration of pre-1982 compensatory allowance system in favour of employees working in parts of Ladakh region. Addressing a joint press conference here today, leaders of committee including Tahir Hussain (from Leh), Mohd Hussain Yabgo (from Kargil), Gulzar Hussain, Tsewang Panchok and Syeda Bano convenor Leh-Kargil districts, expressed their confidence in the initiative taken by the State Pay Committee working for the implementation of Sixth Pay Commission report in J&K.

They pointed out that prior to pay revision of 1982, rates of compensatory allowance admissible to employees serving in Ladakh region including

Changthang, Nobra, Zanskar, Drass, Tikat, Sapi and Lingshed, rates of compensatory allowance were fixed at 100 % of basic pay in winter and 75 % of basic pay in summer months. Similarly for those working in other areas of the region, the rates fixed were 75 % of basic pay in winter and 50 % of basic pay in summer months. But unfortunately, instead of increasing the CA the State Government further slashed down during pay revision of 1987 and introduced a slab system. They demanded restoration of same allowance system as existed prior to 1982. They said in view of inclement weather conditions in the region during winters for the period of over six to seven months, employees face lot of hardships. They become reluctant to serve in these areas due to meagre allowance presently given to them.

■ J-K elections give hung Assembly: Democracy in Kashmir

New Delhi December 29, 2008: Business Standard

Jammu and Kashmir seems to him heading towards yet another spell of coalition rule—though with new partners—after the result of the seven-phase election to the 87-member state Assembly election gave a split verdict today. Although the National Conference led by Omar Abdullah emerged as the single largest party by winning 28 seats from all the three regions—Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh—it has lost most of its traditional strongholds to the People's Democratic Party (PDP), led by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and daughter Mehbooba Mufti, in Kashmir. The NC camp, however, has reasons to celebrate since both Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah won their respective seats. Farooq had contested from two seats—Hazratbal and Sonwar—while Omar wrested Ganderbal from the PDP. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has won 11 seats—all in the Jammu region, thanks to the two month-long agitation on the Amarnath land controversy in the area, is the biggest gainer of the result. However, the Congress party, which was faced with both anti-incumbency as well as political backlash for its inability to resolve the Amarnath controversy, managed a poor show with 16 seats, mostly in the Jammu region.

The elections have shown the PDP's emergence as a strong alternative political party in Kashmir, although it has won bulk of its seats from the South Kashmir region, which is home to the Muftis. Both Mehbooba and Mufti Sayeed won from Wachi and Anantnag with huge margins. The election results have also explained the surprisingly higher voter turnout in the Kashmir region. Now, it appears that the Assembly constituencies which had registered a dramatically higher percentage chose the PDP while those with low voter turnout opted for the National Conference.

Ladakh, which has four seats in the state Assembly, apparently rejected the votaries of the Union Territory status. The Ladakh Union Territory Front, which

had fielded four candidates, lost on three seats, conceding two seats to the NC and one to the Congress. The hung verdict leaves scope for the Congress to play the role of the kingmaker as the BJP has been virtually declared an “untouchable” by all the key contenders for power.

■ **Ladakh Muslims protest Israeli attacks on Gaza**

January 04, 2009: CNN-IBN

Ladakh: Muslims in Ladakh have protested the attacks that have killed more than 440 Palestinians and injured thousands. The rally began from the Leh Jamia Masjid and proceeded towards the Polo Ground. There clerics and other Muslim leaders addressed the gathering and memorial prayers were offered for the slain Palestinians. The Israeli strike on Gaza is in its second week now. Similar anti-Zionist regime scenes were witnessed in Delhi on Friday, January 2.

India has endorsed international calls for a halt to the conflict, and promised \$1 million in financial aid to affected families in Gaza. Israeli launched the offensive on December 27 with the stated aim of stopping Hamas rocket attacks on Israeli towns from Gaza. Since then at least 440 Palestinians have been killed and 2000 wounded, at least a quarter of them civilians, according to the United Nations. Foreign powers have increased pressure on both sides to halt hostilities whereas reports indicate public anger in Israel could move Tel Aviv to hit Hamas even harder. A protestor Syed Nakishah Razi said, "Once again Ladkah Muslims have expressed their solidarity with the victims of Palestine, we support them with our body and soul. We feel that our Government should end their ties with Israel."

■ **‘Chhewang always misled people for petty gains’: UT status linked to Kashmir solution: Jora**

Jammu, January 6, 2008: Daily Excelsior

The Cabinet Minister in the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference-Congress Coalition Government and a senior Congress leader from Leh, Nawang Rigzin Jora today said that Ladakh region will get Union Territory (UT) status only with the resolution of Kashmir issue. In an exclusive interview to the EXCELSIOR, Mr Jora said “the Union Territory (UT) status to Ladakh is not only the demand of certain organizations but of each and every individual of Ladakh region. Even we (Congress leaders) are in the favour of same”.

“But there should be pragmatic approach in this regard and attempts to mislead people on this issue for petty political gains should not be made as the same only create disillusionment”, he stressed, adding “this is a long struggle and linked with the resolution of complex Kashmir issue”.

Elaborating further, Mr Jora said that the demand of UT status to Ladakh began when the then National Conference Government passed with majority the Autonomy Resolution in the Legislative Assembly. "At that time, the people of Ladakh unanimously made it clear to all that if Kashmir has to be given Autonomy then they must be given the Union Territory status", he added.

"So, the demand of UT status to Ladakh will become reality only when the Kashmir issue was resolved and not prior to that", he asserted. Making it clear that Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh has no role to play in granting UT status to the region, the Cabinet Minister, who defeated his arch-rival and sitting Member Parliament Thupstan Chhewang, said "in the LAHDC elections, the Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) had promised to get UT status to Ladakh within three months despite being aware of the fact that the same was beyond their control and the hollow promise only disillusioned the people", adding "the defeat of such forces in the Assembly elections is a clear indication that people of Ladakh are not going to be misled on the issue anymore".

Thupstan Chhewang, who always claimed himself as champion of cause of Ladakhi people and so-called staunch supporter of UT status to the region, has never uttered even a single word about the demand in the Parliament, Mr Jora said, adding "his defeat in the Assembly elections clearly indicates that people of Ladakh have come to understand his petty politics for personal gains".

Even on the developmental front, his (Thupstan Chhewang) performance remained zero and he has proven worst ever Member Parliament from the region, said the Cabinet Minister, who held Power and Industries portfolios in the previous Congress-PDP Coalition Government, adding "Mr Chhewang is surely going to face defeat even in the Parliament elections for indulging in petty politics".

"Despite much base-less tirade against me by the Member Parliament, who was even supported by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and National Conference, I emerged successful only because I carried out much development in Leh during previous six years", Mr Jora said, adding "not only the common masses even the intelligentsia of Leh was with me and fully supported me in the elections". In response to a question, he said "Omar Abdullah is young and dynamic leader and everybody expects him to deliver good to the people of the State".

■ **Army goodwill schools changing Ladakh's education horizon**

Jammu, January 13, 2008: PTI

The rocky terrains of Ladakh's Drass and Batalik, regarded as one of the most educationally backward zone in Jammu and Kashmir, are set to turn into an oasis of education with the army opening nine goodwill schools in the area.

The schools set up under 'operation Sadbhavana'—the army's drive to build better ties with the community—has a total strength of over 1,104 students so far, defence officials said.

Equipped with modern facilities, the schools providing education from nursery to Class X have been opened in Harkabahadur, Cahanigund, Kaksar, Budgam, Batalik, Drass and Pherona, close to the Indo-Pak border in Ladakh region. Batalik and Drass have borne the burnt of the Pakistani shelling before border truce in 2003 and Kargil war in 1999 in which many villages were destroyed and had to be rebuilt. For the all-round development of children, facilities like computer training, teaching aids, sports, toys for nursery sections, mid-day meal to students and staff, free transport facility and television with direct-to-home services are being offered at the schools, they said. Nine women empowerment centres, for providing vocational training to unemployed young girls and seven adult literacy centres have also been established in the region, they said. To improve the quality of life of the local populace, the army has installed micro-hydel projects in 27 remote hamlets, the officials said.

■ **CM announces Rs 4 cr additionality in Leh district plan**

Jammu January 29, 2009: Daily Excelsior

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has complimented people of Ladakh region for secular traits adding that the region has remained a symbol of communal harmony and peaceful co-existence since ages.

Interacting with the Councillors of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh on Thursday, Chief Minister said that Ladakh region would get its due share in the development process. He assured equitable development of all regions of the State and said that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh would together march on the road to progress and development. The Chief Minister announced Rs 4 crore additionality for the District Plan, Leh in order to help complete various schemes within the current fiscal. With this additionality, the district plan for Leh would be of the order of Rs 66 crore. The Chief Minister discussed Daha, Hano and Dubak (Tangtse) power projects with the Councillors of Hill Autonomous Development Council and said that Government would initiate steps to arrange Rs 70 crore for the completion of these projects in the district. He also discussed Geo-Thermal Power Project, Puga Valley with LAHDC. He also discussed APRDP schemes and assured the Government's support in timely completion of the schemes.

Mr. Omar Abdullah said that Government would provide Rs 4.29 crore for completion of modern Ice Hockey Rink at Leh adding that this will give considerable fillip to the winter sports in the region. The Rink is being developed under the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan and requires Rs 7.29 crore for completion, while only Rs 3 crore is available presently. The

Chief Minister said that besides examining the enhancement in CA for the non-resident employees working in the district, the Government would also look into the possibilities of giving fast track promotions to the non-resident employees especially doctors who would serve in Ladakh region.

The Minister for Tourism Nawang Rigzin Jora, Executive Councillor C. Dorji, Executive Councillors and Councillors of the LAHDC, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Khursheed Ahmad Ganai, were present in the meeting among others. The Chief Minister also met a large number of deputations and individuals, heard their demands and gave directions to the concerned for looking into these for necessary action.

■ Scientists to clone pashmina goat

Jammu, February 20, 2009: kashmirlive.com

A team of scientists from Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana are working on a project to clone the famous pashmina goat. Jammu a team of scientists from Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana are working on a project to clone the famous pashmina goat, the success of which is expected to give boost to the dwindling trade in the sought-after fur. Under a World Bank aided project, the scientists from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology and National Dairy Research Institute will use somatic cells from the ear of a goat to produce the clone.

"The work on cloning of pashmina goat has begun under an ambitious World Bank aided project-National Agriculture Innovation Project-in joint partnership between National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)," Assistant Director Research, Animal Sciences, SKUAST, Dr Farooq Ahmed said.

Sanctioned by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research, the project comprises four components and has been granted Rs 9 crore aid by the World Bank. Out of this, SKUAST will get Rs 1.80 crore and rest will be given to NDRI, Dr Ahmed said. The project 'Value Chain on Zone Free Cloned Embryos Production and Development of Elite Germ Plasma Pashmina' hopes to change the pashmina production scenario in the state. Dr Ahmed said a six-member team will use somatic cells of the goat to clone the cell to produce new pashmina goat using a hand-guided cloning technique and the four-phased project would run for next three years.

The scientists would use small tissues from the ear of the goats to start the cloning mechanism. The oocytes (female eggs involved in reproduction) isolated from ovaries would be matured in-vitro (outside the womb and in a lab) and treated with enzymes to clear its outer coating. The egg will then be isolated with the help of a hand held fine blade. Then somatic cells from the ear of a donor goat will be electro fused with oocytes, grown in the laboratory

for a week and the resultant embryos would be transferred to recipient goats for the production of the offspring of desired gender. One goat gives birth to one offspring a year and a maximum of five in her lifetime but under the cloning methodology, one goat can give birth to over 50 offsprings.

There are over 1,50,000 pashima goats in Chanthang plateau in Ladakh region, which contribute to 90 per cent of pashima wool production in the country. There are 36,000 artisans associated with pashmina industry in Ladakh and Kashmir Valley and due to downfall in production, the industry is battling for survival.

Pashmina shawls are made from wool of the Pashmina breed of goat, which is mostly found in the Tibetan plateau and Changthan Valley, Karok and Karnaik areas of Ladakh area of Jammu and Kashmir and Chegu area of Himachal Pradesh. Known for its softness and warmth, Pashmina is made with the fur of these goats and each fibre is about one-sixth the width of a human hair, and one shawl requires about 24 ounces of wool, the annual output of about four goats.

■ Pak to send experts to site of Indian dams

Islamabad, February 22, 2009: The Hindu

Pakistan wants to send its experts to the site of dams being built by India on the Indus River in the Ladakh region to assess whether the projects are in compliance with the provisions of a water-sharing treaty. A request will soon be submitted to Indian authorities for allowing a team of experts, led by Jamaat Ali Shah, Commissioner of the Pakistan Commission of Indus Water, to assess whether the dams conform to provisions in the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960.

The decision to send the experts was made during a meeting chaired by Shah in Lahore on Saturday. Officials from the Water and Power Development Authority, Irrigation Department and Met Office attended the meeting to discuss the impact of the dams on Pakistan's water and defence interests. The meeting was convened after the armed forces expressed concerns over the dams. The armed forces were reportedly alarmed that the projects could "play havoc with the Northern Areas" if the dams "collapsed for any reason or malfunction", 'The News' daily reported.

A senior official, who participated in the meeting, said the Pakistan Commission of Indus Water would asked its Indian counterpart to arrange an immediate visit by the experts. The projects that were discussed at the meeting include the Nimoo Bazgo hydro-power project, Dumkhar project and Chutak project.

■ **LAHDC honors SNM Hospital doctors for conducting major surgery**

Leh, February 25, 2009: Excelsior Correspondent

To accolade and honour the Medical Department Leh, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh has extended appreciation to the doctors of SNM Hospital Leh for conducting major cardio Thoracic surgery on February 19 in the Hospital. It is for the first time in the medical history of Ladakh, a major cardio Thoracic Surgery of removal of huge hydrated cyst of right lung of a 30-year-old patient namely Tsewang Norboo was carried out successfully on February 19. The surgery was conducted by a team of doctors headed by Dr Tsering Morup senior Anesthetist and Dr Tashi Motup, senior surgeon. They were assisted by Dr Tsewang Namgyal, surgeon and Dr Yangzin, Anesthetist.

In a brief function at SNM Hospital Leh today, the Executive Councilor, Health, Mr Dorje Mutup offered “Khataks” to these doctors and congratulated them for performing a major cardio surgery successfully, thus setting an example of good achievement despite the limited resources. Mr Dorje Mutup while describing it as a big achievement said it is a pride moment for Leh district to perform such as challenging task with success. The Superintendent of SNM Hospital, Dr Wangchok also spoke on the occasion.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

***Ladakh Studies* is the official journal of the IALS:** It publishes information relevant to researchers with an interest in the broader Ladakh region, including both Leh and Kargil districts. We invite our readers to submit essays, book reviews, “Notes from the Field”, news stories, and other news of research projects, theses, films, and further materials related to Ladakh.

Submission Guidelines:

Ladakh Studies encourages submissions of short essays—**under 4,000 words**—about contemporary events or ongoing research in Ladakh. Essays may cover any social, cultural, political, ecological, or scientific topics of interest to IALS members. Book Reviews or “Notes From the Field” should be **under 2,000 words**. All material should be submitted in digital form as email attachments, in MS Word. We also accept digital files sent by CD but formatting may be altered. All illustrations should be submitted digitally as JPG files, under 2 MB.

The essays should be submitted single spaced, with left hand margins, in 12 point Times New Roman or Times font, formatted to US Letter size paper. Please consult previous issues of *Ladakh Studies* for further style guidelines. Please use social science citation guidelines with (Author, Date: page #) in text and in footnotes and a bibliography at the end of the piece. Please address editorial submissions and correspondence to:

Prof. Kim Gutschow
Honorary Editor, Ladakh Studies
Departments of Religion and Anthropology
Williams College
Williamstown, MA 01267
Kim.Gutschow@williams.edu

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All correspondence pertaining to membership and subscriptions should be directed to Hon.Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Ms. Francesca Merritt, 254 West End Road, Ruislip,, Middlesex HA4 6DX, U.K. Tel: +44 - 1895-674627. E-mail: francesca@merrittf.fsnet.co.uk

